

ARCHITECTURAL TRAINING AND RESEARCH IN THE FOREIGN ID-FUNDED KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY 1950s–1980s



(1) Bertil Melin, the Swedish director of the Nordic Tanganyika Project in Kibaha, showing a model of low-cost housing to (2) President Julius Nyerere, c. 1963-64. To the far left, (3) Mr. Dennis, the carpenter who made the models, co-designed the housing project, and "test-lived" in the first constructed house with his family. From Torvald Åkesson, 'Education - In Marble Halls or Under Trees. Low-Cost Houses in East Africa, Especially Ethiopia and Tanzania', compiled self-published report, c. 1965, Stockholm. Collection KTH Library.

Two-day symposium
KTH School of Architecture
Stockholm
9-10 September 2021

Submission deadline:
1 April 2021

From the 1950s to the late 1980s, the politics and economies of foreign aid — instigated by both the 'capitalist West' as well as the 'communist East' — gave rise to a whole infrastructure destined to assist the progress of 'developing countries' on their 'path to development'. The various North-South exchanges that took place in the name of 'development' have left a deep imprint on the geopolitical landscape of postcolonial Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Largely instituted through bilateral relations between individual states, these 'aid' initiatives involved not only financial and material resources but also various forms of knowledge and expertise; as such, the modalities of this global, foreign aid-funded infrastructure boosted the creation and reinforcement of all sorts of institutional actors to efficiently exchange knowledge — largely through training courses, educational programs and/or research projects. In the light of widespread rural migration and intensive, rapid urbanization processes, expertise on the built environment was a particularly salient form of knowledge to the aims of foreign aid. Hence, architecture, urbanism and planning were no strangers to an emerging foreign aid-funded knowledge economy — a context in which the production

and circulation of knowledge were intimately tied to the political-economic value attributed to them by foreign aid diplomacy.

How did architectural knowledge figure in foreign aid-sourced international relations, and what frameworks were set in place to efficiently exchange that knowledge? For this two-day symposium, we seek scholarly work that critically analyzes, contextualizes, or theorizes the establishment and functioning of such institutional actors, training courses, educational programs, research centers, and other infrastructures for knowledge exchange that emerged under the aegis of development and targeted 'Third World' clients. We welcome a wide range of methodological and creative perspectives as well as less empirical (but well-informed) theoretical approaches that interpret this phenomenon from a postcolonial or decolonizing perspective. We also encourage contributions that scrutinize the intersections of these histories with discussions of gender, race, religion and nationalism.

Submit 300-word abstracts to
architectureforeignaid@arch.kth.se
by 1 April 2021.

Theme Outline

After World War II, the impetus for international cooperation was more pronounced than ever on the global political arena: the United Nations was established on the ruins of the League of Nations in 1945 to safeguard peace and security; the Bretton Woods institutions laid out the monetary framework for a global playing field of interconnected markets for several decades to follow, and the Council of Europe was founded in 1949 to champion the values of human rights and democracy across the continent's nations. It was soon followed by the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952 — a more limited yet more effective six-nation trade agreement that marked the de facto start of a long and piecemeal trajectory to what would become the European Union. Kindled by the United States' Marshall Plan for Europe's recovery in 1948 and to no small extent magnified by the Cold War polarity and the scramble for ideological hegemony in the crumbling colonial empires, the 1950s to the 1980s would become the heyday of 'aid' as a powerful flag under which international politics sailed. As more and more former colonies in the Global South embarked on their journey toward independence — a trajectory ridden with conflict, war and mass migration — substantial funds were allocated for 'assisting' these newly founded nations on their 'path to development'. Thus, under the flag of 'foreign aid', 'technical assistance', 'development cooperation' and the like, this new global order of the postwar decades saw praiseworthy humanitarian impulses ambiguously crisscrossed with economic and geopolitical motives in the name of a "great crusade for human progress" and "based upon the assumption that it is possible and practical to transfer knowledge and techniques from one area to another for the purpose of advancing the economic and social development of the people of the world," as former director-general of the United Nations' Technical Assistance Administration Hugh Keenleyside once put it (Webster 2011, 260).

Epitomized by the UN conferences on the Human Environment (Stockholm 1972) and on Human Settlements (Vancouver 1976, a.k.a. Habitat I), the social, political and environmental aspirations with which architecture was invested in this increasingly global mindset posed renewed challenges to the discipline of architecture (D'Auria 2018). The 'foreign aid' phenomenon figured in myriad ways in the agenda of architecture through the doings of architects, planners, firms, experts, consultants,

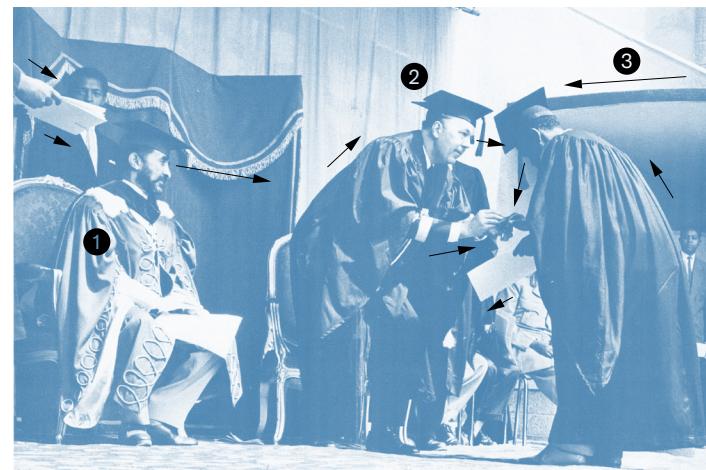
and other professional avatars, and a wide range of vantage points have recently been taken to chart and critically assess architecture's role in taking up these challenges. Some of these are centered on key protagonists — with a greater or lesser emphasis on the international networks in which they take part — or on specific projects. Others offer autobiographical accounts, an intellectual history of 'Human Settlements' as a discipline, a thorough analysis from the standpoint of global governance, or a solid account of the state socialist countries' investments in this endeavor (f.i. Harris 2003; D'Auria et al. 2010; Benninger 2011; Lagae & De Raedt 2013; Shoshkes 2013; Scott 2016; Stanek 2020 – see also the recent projects and conferences of CCA 2018; Cupers 2021; Aggregate forthcoming).

The numerous training and research programs to which the agenda of foreign aid gave rise are less thematized in this regard. Architecture and planning figured on this agenda both as actual construction works but also — and increasingly — as one of many fields of 'expertise' to be hired and exchanged. Widely varied training and research programs were thus set up to facilitate that exchange of knowledge. Initially, this foreign aid-funded knowledge economy gave rise to a pool of global experts and consultants, such as Jacob Crane, G.A. Atkinson, Ernest Weissman, Charles Abrams and Otto Koenigsberger, who roamed the world to offer their expertise to governments in the Global South. They were commissioned by agencies such as the UN Centre for Housing, Building and Planning and remunerated as part of aid packages or engaged through foreign loans. Increasingly however, 'local capacity building' gained the upper hand on these directly consumable forms of expertise and consultancy, which led to more structural investments in knowledge exchange, most notably through training and research programs. In 1963 for instance, the UN established an autonomous Institute for Training and Research in this spirit, arguing that "the unprecedented wave of decolonization created a critical need for assistance, as many of the newly-independent States lacked the capacity to train their young diplomats" (UNITAR 2008). As this spirit not only affected the need for trained diplomats, an increasing number of research and/or educational institutions were founded or integrated in various architecture schools, centers and institutes, with the explicit intention of mobilizing architectural and urbanistic expertise for development goals.

Several of these were offshoots of earlier colonial involvement or grew out of existing programs. The Development Planning Unit (DPU) in London, for instance, originated in the Department of Tropical Studies and was established at the Architectural Association in 1954, and Rotterdam's Bouwcentrum ('Centre for Building') was created immediately after the war in response to the Dutch housing shortage; it soon saw its expertise solicited by foreign countries and reorganized its international branch as the Institute for Housing Studies (IHS).

Many other institutions were established without a noteworthy prehistory and solely with the purpose of catering to the development context, however. By the 1970s it had become a widespread global phenomenon, ranging from initiatives in London and Rotterdam in the 1950s to Ford Foundation-sponsored programs at MIT and Harvard in the US in the 1960s; from the Post Graduate Centre Human Settlements in Leuven, Belgium of the 1970s to the Committee on Habitat and Development Studies in Lund, Sweden in 1979; from the Centre for Architectural Research and Development Overseas in Newcastle, UK (1972) to the Centre for Human Settlements at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada (1976); from the Postgraduate Course in Urban and Regional Planning for Developing Countries in Szczecin, Poland (1965) to the Housing Research and Development Unit in Nairobi, Kenya (1967); and from the Ethio-Swedish Institute of Building Technology in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1954) to the Norwegian-funded National Housing and Building Research Unit in Dar es-Salaam, Tanzania (1971) — to name just a handful. As the development impetus grew, centers, institutes and programs were established at architecture and planning schools in the North, South, East and West to assist architecture's contribution to development — each with their own particular approach to the issue.

This plethora of newly established centers was supported by an increasing interest in 'Third World' issues by a politically committed post-1968 generation of students and practitioners; additional strength came from a more general desire to reconnect architecture to a social agenda that it somehow lost in preceding decades, as well as the momentum generated by the UN's 1976 conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver, in addition to an economic rationale. In a pragmatic sense, by channeling foreign aid budgets into their own architecture schools and other entities, governments had the additional benefit of seeing their



(1) Emperor Haile Selassie and (2) Prince Bertil with (3) unnamed graduate at a graduation ceremony of the (3) Ethio-Swedish Institute of Building Technology, Addis Ababa, 1959. From *Prins Bertil berättar* [Prince Bertil Tells] (Helsingborg: Bra Böcker, 1983).

foreign aid spending double as investments in their domestic knowledge economies. More generally, the implosion of the Bretton Woods landscape after the Nixon administration's 1971 decision to suspend the dollar's direct convertibility to gold — making long term international investments more unpredictable — undoubtedly impacted the foreign aid sourced investments; it was certainly not conducive to a more coordinated approach of these investments, and most likely helped foster the patchwork of educational and research centers established through local initiatives.

Whatever the causes, this foreign aid-funded knowledge economy gave rise to a heterogeneous institutional landscape with a global reach that straddled the various spectra from a training and educational focus to a research orientation, from a focus on architecture to one on planning, from being initiated by the capitalist West to the socialist East or the Non-Aligned Countries, and from having its base in the 'Global North' and offering 'South-oriented' programs to support the creation of knowledge centers located in the 'Global South'.

In recent historiographic efforts to document architecture's entanglement with development, the many institutes that have emerged out of this context within or in cooperation with many schools of architecture largely figured tangentially, and they have seldom been considered a topic of interest in their own right. Their possible epistemological legacies in relation to today's architecture schools in the 'Global South' are discussed even less (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018; Olweny 2020). While several of these institutions have

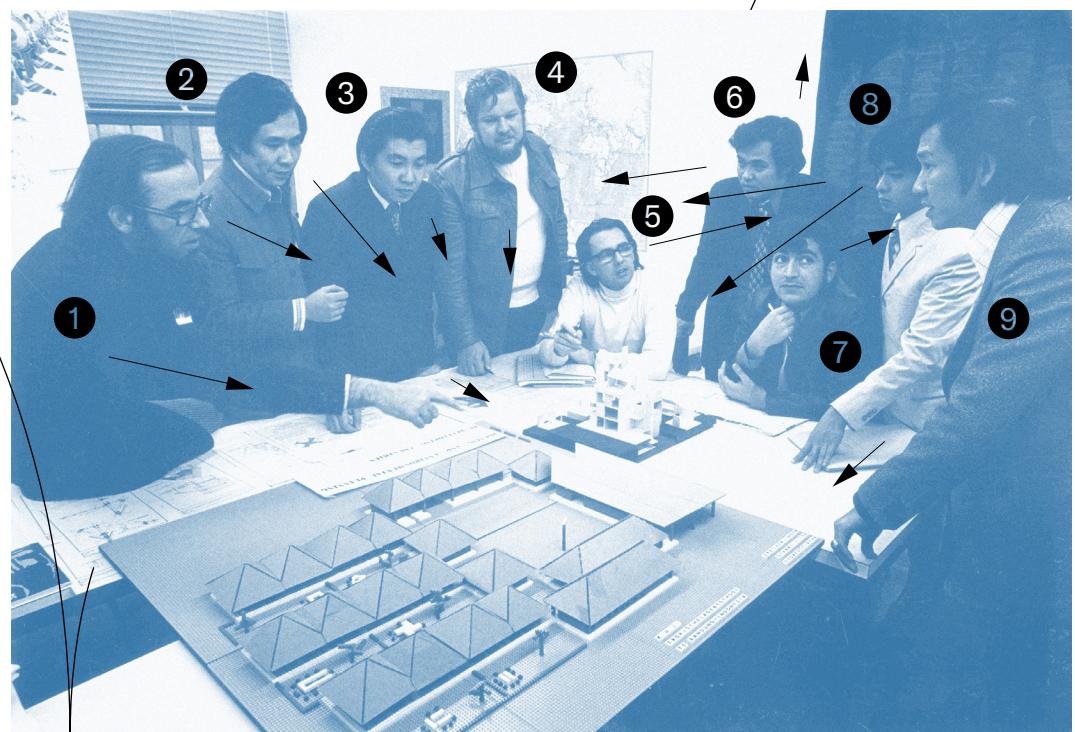
been active in documenting their own histories (often reverting to the apparent neutrality of a 'timeline', juxtaposing events of global purport with the ins and outs of the local scene), critical accounts are currently limited to a very small number of high profile institutes. These are mainly the DPU in London and the MIT-Harvard Joint Center for Urban Studies regarding 'South-oriented' programs in the 'Global North', and the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara and – indirectly through the biography of Jacqueline Tyrwhitt – the School of Regional and City Planning at the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) with regard to the increasingly important sites of expertise in the 'Global South' (Mumford 2013; Muzaffar 2013; Shoshkes 2013; Wakely & Levy 2014; Chang 2016; Erdim 2020).

Studies of the AA's Department of Tropical Studies such as those by Jiat-Hwee Chang, Vandana Baweja and Hannah le Roux evidence the importance of such lines of inquiry (Le Roux 2003; Baweja 2010; Chang 2016). They show how such institutes and educational programs were not only important factors in the contemporary figuration of the 'Global South', but that they also were hybrid places of encounter, often fostering a stimulating intellectual climate that had repercussions for architectural culture as a whole, far beyond the walls of the institute, and far from limited to 'the South'. As they were often amalgams of dispersed activities, based on very contingent factors, opportunities, collaborations, and a motley mixture of 'human resources', there were considerable (and often overlooked) spillover effects to the wider, domestic architecture culture in each of these centers where the required expertise for training and research mandates was gathered.

For this two-day symposium, we seek scholarly work that critically analyzes, contextualizes, or theorizes the establishment and functioning of such institutional actors, training courses, educational programs, research centers, and other infrastructures for knowledge exchange that emerged under the aegis of development and targeted 'Third World' clients. We are not aiming simply to gather historical facts about previously overlooked cases, but we specifically invite work that takes these histories to critically reflect on how architectural thought had to and must still maneuver between conflicting demands, part-time engagements, asymmetrical power relations, a globalizing discourse, stringent financial pragmatism and the high hopes of serving a good cause.

Thus, we welcome a wide range of methodological and creative perspectives: from focusing on the material produced by participants within the context of such training programs to interpreting the curriculum on offer; analyzing the job market it created for academics and professionals; piercing the bureaucracy of information (mis)management; tracing the legacies of such programs on current-

day practices and schools; or addressing the fate of related archives, to name just a few. We explicitly welcome also less empirical (but well-informed) theoretical approaches that interpret this phenomenon from a postcolonial or decolonizing perspective. We also welcome the intersections of these histories with gender, race, religion and nationalism; with feminism, liberation theology and other emancipatory movements, as well as non-institutionalized forms of training and research relevant to architecture, such as 'street pedagogy'.



Discussion on a project for a school building in Bandung at the Post Graduate Centre Human Settlements (PGCHS), Leuven, Belgium, between (1) Jan Delrue (PGCHS), (2) Tam Hway Tak (China), (3) Adjie Harsadi (Indonesia), (4) Han Verschure (PGCHS), (5) Mark Van Naelten (PGCHS), (6) Sandi Siregar (Indonesia), (7) Simion Salaam Abdulahad (Iraq), (8) Miguel Caluza (Philippines), and (9) Jeffrey Kijono Utomo (Indonesia), c. 1974. Archives KU Leuven, Department of Architecture.

Practical Information

Please visit our website for up to date information:
architectureforeignaid.arch.kth.se

This two-day symposium will be held in Stockholm on 9–10 September 2021. In light of the current pandemic the event will be organized either in a hybrid format, allowing for both in-person and online attendance, or, if health regulations dictate, as a fully online event. The symposium is envisioned as one long, thematically well-focused discussion, without parallel strands, and aims to bring 12 to 15 established as well as young scholars together from every discipline that engages with the topics outlined above. Currently confirmed keynotes are Hannah le Roux and Mark R.O. Olweny.

We're happy to receive anonymized abstracts of up to 300 words and 1 optional image until 1 April 2021, submitted via email to architectureforeignaid@arch.kth.se. Acceptance will be dependent on an anonymous review of the abstract by the scientific committee. If a different format than that of a presentation based on a paper would be more suitable to your work, please contact us (same deadline applies).

Authors will be notified of acceptance by 15 April 2021. In order to host a strong discussion, we expect full papers two weeks prior to the symposium; i.e., by 27 August 2021. These will be distributed to the other presenters in the designated session.

There will be no proceedings, but we do intend to work towards either a journal theme issue or an edited volume with the contributions that meet the quality requirements.

Please note that we have several pending requests for funding and that we intend for participation to be free of charge, but depending on the outcome, there might be a participation fee of maximum SEK 1500 or €150. If funding is a concern that prohibits you from participating, please contact us.

For any other questions or concerns, please contact us: architectureforeignaid@arch.kth.se

CFP SCHEDULE	CFP Submission Deadline 1 April 2021	REVIEW PROCESS
	Notification of Acceptance 15 April 2021	
	Full Paper Submission Deadline 27 August 2021	

Two-day Symposium (KTH, Stockholm) 9–10 September 2021

KEYNOTES	Hannah le Roux Wits University, Johannesburg
	Mark R.O. Olweny University of Lincoln
	TBC

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