

New Hall Eases Student Congestion

In an attempt to ease off congestion at the student halls of residence, the University of Nairobi has put up one of the most modern and spacious hall on campus - architecturally designed with the concept of self-sufficiency in mind. The Mamlaka Road Hall, as it is popularly known, is estimated to cost KSh.78 million upon completion. So far, 95% of the work has been completed with only a few finishing touches like landscaping, remaining to be done.

Situated along the Mamlaka Road and directly opposite the famous students centre, the three-storied hall which is already in operation, has two wings-each with a capacity to house 250 students - and a kitchen at the centre. The kitchen is further designed with two in-built dining halls-each one of them appropriately facing the wing it serves.

According to the director of the Students Welfare Association (SWA), Mr. Jeremiah Laanoi, the new Mamlaka Hall's kitchen, has helped to ease congestion when feeding students due to the swell in student population, especially after this year's double-intake consisting of 3,200 "A" level students and about 3,000, 8:4:4 freshers.

Initially, the Central Catering Unit (CCU) used to feed over 2,000 students in both its upper and lower sections while Kitchen 1 fed about 1,300 students. However, the opening of Mamlaka Hall and its kitchen which feed over 1,000 students daily says Mr. Laanoi, has further decentralized the feeding system and thus eased off pressure from the other two older kitchens.

Prior to the admission of the 8:4:4 candidates to the main campus mid-last month, the CCU used to feed 1,958 students, Kitchen One 1,380 and Mamlaka about 1,200 daily under the existing shift feeding system. This number, says Mr. Laanoi, must however have increased after the admission of the last batch of 8:4:4 students in this year's double-intake.

Mr. Laanoi observes that the feeding situation usually worsens on days when all the kitchens serve special meals like chicken, meat balls and *chapatis*, popu-

larly called 'dialogue' or 'albums' by students. On such days he laments, some students roam from one kitchen to another thus forcing cateresses to plan to feed extra heads so as to avert any ugly incidences which food shortage could provoke.

According to Mr. Laanoi, the Mamlaka Road Hall, like the Mandela Hall in Upper Kabete Campus of Agriculture, was designed by the University's Research and Consultancy Unit, with the concept of students halls of residence being self-sufficient in all aspects. As a result, each of the two wings (A and B) is equipped with a T.V. room and a recreation hall. Another noticeable facility is the underground water tank with a water capacity of about 50,000 litres, which helps out in times of water shortage.

Such a construction design, Mr. Laanoi says, helps to make student life more comfortable. "It gives students ample time to study and relax. It gives them a sense of belonging and helps them build a spirit of comradeship among students living in the small hall community" he said adding that it was for such reasons that Mamlaka currently remained the high hall of residence in demand by students.

To further ease the life of students

who in the past had to suffer dust during the dry season and mud in the rainy season, Mr. Laanoi says, the University also had the Mamlaka road which lies adjacent to the hall, tarmacked and high bumps constructed at strategic distances in order to reduce the speed of motorists and discourage matatu drivers from using it.

At the Kikuyu Campus also, a hall similar to Mamlaka but one being built on a much grandeur scale, is coming up. The new hall, known as the Kikuyu Complex when completed will boast of having its own kitchen, dining hall, recreation rooms, T.V. rooms, a student centre and students common rooms on every floor thus stretching the idea of self-sufficiency, even further.

The University of Nairobi also gave the Central Catering Unit (CCU) a major facelift in a bid to make life more comfortable for students at the main campus. In the period prior to this year's graduation ceremony, the CCU's floors were redoned with wooden tiles, the sides of the walls repainted and wooden-panelled while the workshop and dressing rooms on the ground floor were also renovated. It is currently the University's formal reception venue for the Vice-Chancellor, especially for functions which involve a large gathering of people.



Alleviating student Congestion: The Giant Mamlaka Hall built at a cost of Kshs.78 million.