The Corporate Citizen, July - September, 2016

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VISION

To be the center of excellence in corporate citizenship by creating responsible competitive well governned sustainable and profitable business enterprises in Africa.

MANDATE

Promote the role of business in development
EDITORS NOTE

Our Dear Readers,

The 2nd issue of the Corporate Citizenship for AICC financial year 2016/17 is yet another exciting edition that goes beyond the normal reporting but also strive to effectively inform, educate and propagate the notion of Corporate Citizenship across all sectors in the country.

In this edition we look at how the private sector can effectively contribute to the development of this country, not only through Corporate Social responsibilities but also through direct involvement in social intervention programmes. However for this to be achieved there is need for close collaboration between the private and public sectors, thus AICC has been fostering such collaborations in all areas of its operations. On the same note, in this edition, we also highlight the benefits of collective efforts at community level as well as in the corporate world. Our argument still remain as corporate citizens we can only achieve a lot if we work as one and reduce the duplication of efforts across all sectors.

As we strive to keep all our audiences updated as well as respond to numerous communications demands, we have restructured some of our communication channels such as the website and the Corporate Citizenship newsletter. We have also increased our online presence by among others creating our own YouTube channel that we will be using to share various documentaries that AICC produces and other videos that adds value to the cause of AICC. We are currently also on tweeter and in no time we will be linking all these accounts in order to reach more people.

It is our sincere hope that we will continue to get feedback on various communications you receive from AICC so that we continue to improve and address various gaps that may exist.

Warm Regards

Charles Ziba
Communications Officer

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Welcome our dear readers to yet another edition of the corporate Citizen newsletter. In this edition we highlight some notable activities and successes the organisation continue to register in various areas of its operations.

In line with the core principle of the organisation’s establishment which is to promote Corporate Citizenship across all sectors in the country, AICC took a number initiatives in order to propagate the notion across all platforms in the country. The official launch of corporate citizenship toolkits was among others a key development that was registered during the quarter. It is indeed my belief and of course the vision of AICC that the publications will go a long way facilitating sensitizations, awareness and trainings on corporate citizenship which will eventually lead to promotion of responsible business among various players across all sectors in Malawi.

On the same note, the introduction of outlook publications for various agriculture value chains yet another notable achievement that AICC registered during the quarter. It is indeed quite a challenge to get readily available information on various agriculture commodities in Malawi, conquerently as a knowledge management hub, our quest was to ensure that we address such a gap.

As we strive to keep our readers updated and well informed on what is happening at AICC, a number of initiatives have been undertaken in order to intensify our communication channels. The restructuring of our website and our newsletter is among others a persuasion to keep our communications relevant as well as informative at all cost. Your feedbacks to our publications are always appreciated and helps a lot in shaping our approaches.

As we venture into the last quarter of AICC operational year, I look forward to yet another successful quarter that will see a lot collaborations between the Public and private sector across all sectors.

Enjoy the newsletter.

Felix Lombe, PhD
Chief Executive Officer
The African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) Chief Executive officer Dr. Felix Lombe has urged government to critically scrutinize potential investors in the country before making any commitment for the country to fully benefit from the several investments foreign individuals or companies are making in the country. Lombe made the appeal at Bingu International Conference Center (BICC) in Lilongwe during the official launch of 6 corporate citizenship manuals AICC developed.

Speaking during his brief presentation on the publications, Lombe noted that, despite several investments Malawi has witnessed over the years, the country is yet to benefit from such investments as evidenced by poor returns the country continue to get from big investments made by foreign companies or individuals. Lombe further argued on the need to have permanent and responsible investors, who will have the social impact of their business at heart as opposed to tourist investors who do not care about the social impacts of their businesses.

“As a country, there is a need to be cautious of individuals or companies making any type of investments in this country. As much as we need more investors in country, we need to settle for investors that care about the social impacts of their business as well as businesses that add value to the development of the country as opposed to tourist investors that are only concerned about their profits than the development of this country” said Lombe.

Lombe further added that as one way of ensuring private sector involvement in development activities there is need to intensify public private partnerships. He argued that sustainable development in the country can only occur when the public sector start to directly involve the private sector in implementation of social interventions programmes.

By Charles Ziba
“As AICC, our firm argument is that Africa will continue to face challenges in development, if strides to promote private and public sector partnership are not intensified. This is to say apart from engaging government in socio-economic interventions, there is a need for NGO’s or Civil Society organization to also start engaging the private sector for sustainable development. This will ensure that all players in various sectors are playing their part in development as a result this will highly accelerate development in this country” Lombe articulated.

The guest of honor during the event, Dr Joseph Mkandawire, Finance and administration Director in the Ministry of Industry, trade and tourism, concurred with Lombe’s sentiments saying Government has also been in the fore front promoting corporate citizenship phenomenon among Malawians as it is key to the development of this country. Mkandawire further narrated that over the years government has been intensifying its efforts to promote public private partnerships as witnessed by the continuous engagement of the private sectors in its development strategies as they are also key players in various sectors.

“The public sector cannot be vibrant on its own, this is why government continue to intensify its relations with the private sectors by among many aspects ensuring that there is a conducive environment for their operations. It is the hope of government that the private sector will also continue to support government in implementations of its programmes for the common benefit of all players’ said Mkandawire.

In his closing remarks, Mkandawire urged farmers and all individuals to embrace the manuals that have been developed by AICC to help eradicate poverty in the country. The launched six manuals which are a culmination of intensive and extensive hands on expansion of AICC staff on Corporate Citizenship and Private Sector Development issues have been described as valuable toolkits for private sector in agricultural investment, NGOs and public agencies working in linking farmers to markets as well as institutions that are interested in fostering mutually beneficial Public Private Partnerships.

With all the six manuals centering on the corporate citizenship phenomenon, the publications have been developed to help various players in all sectors to understand, adopt and get trained on corporate citizenship as well as the importance of multi sector platforms and Private Public sector partnerships. Thus the

“As a country, there is a need to be cautious of individuals or companies making any type of investments in this country, as much as we need more investors in country, we need to settle for investors that care about the social impacts of their business as well as businesses that add value to the development of the country as opposed to tourist investor who do not care about the development of this country”
As efforts to intensify the delivery of the FISP programme across the country continue, government has indicated that it is contemplating on up-scaling the private sector involvement in the implementation of 2016/17 FISP programme after a successful pilot study last year. This was revealed at a conference organized by the African Institute of corporate Citizenship (AICC) that aimed at discussing the future prospects of the FISP in Malawi.

Speaking during the conference, the Chief Director in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Brighton Kumwembe indicated that government has decided to upscale private sector involvement in FISP implementation as one way of improving service delivery of the programme. Kumwembe said government recognize that there are several challenges FISP programme was facing in the past that can be dealt with if the private sector was fully engaged.

“The FISP programme will continue to undergo various reforms as we strive to ensure that the programme is carried out effectively, the involvement of the private sector is one of the reforms that government has decided to implement this year as one way of improving the input delivery system. As government we realize that there are some challenges that we meet during the implementation phase that the private sector can ably address, for example issues of transportation, we used to leave it in the hands of the private sector such challenges will be mitigated easily” said Kumwembe.

A study that was conducted by to establish the effectiveness of involving the private sector in retailing of FISP inputs revealed that as much as they were strong positives of the process there was a also need to pay attention to some aspects that tend to be overlooked at times. The study that was done in central and southern region districts, where the private sector fertilizer retailing pilot study was conducted established that as much as the private sector can be an effective distribution and retailing tool for the inputs. Some players shun hard to reach areas as at times they incur a lot of cost than what they anticipated. Furthermore the study also established that in some scenarios the locals, do not trust the private sectors as they think they are there there to exploit them.

However the members suggested that an effective way of ensuring that this does not take place was to introduce incentives for the players allocated in hard to reach areas.

Promoting the Role of Business in building Resilient Communities – NEWS

By Chrispin Namwera

A cross section of participants during the FISP validation workshop

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For many years, smallholder farmers in Demera EPA Lilongwe were used to selling their produce individually and to unreliable markets. However, the introduction of SALF programme by the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship in the area has changed the practice. Through the SALF programme, AICC has been involved in offering trainings and capacity building to farmers on market access and entrepreneurial skills with an aim of ensuring that smallholder farmers in the area, start to regard farming other than a mere survival activity.

AICC whose main role in the SALF programme is to ensure that there is an increase in market and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills among smallholder farmers in the area has been facilitating various market linkages as well as promoting collective marketing and marketing negotiating skills. The acquisition of skills in searching and negotiating for good market prices and aggregations of produce has evidently led to a number of success stories of collective marketing in the area. Demera EPA lead farmers Chairlady, Alaika Kachenje, is one of the many farmers whose living to enjoy the fruits of collective marketing. Kachenje narrated that ever since she decided to join the collective marketing group she has lived to enjoy the group and does not regret her decision. She indicated that through collective marketing she is now realising more than what she used to

AICC INTEGRAVES COLLECTIVE MARKETING IN DEMERA EPA

By Rejoice Mlozi Jenda

Reacting to the presentation, members of the private sector that were present during the conference admitted that the issue of shunning hard to reach areas can indeed occur especially when there is no difference in terms of returns between players delivering in easy to reach areas and hard to reach areas. The members argued that economically, this meant the probability of realizing more profits is diminished hence members shunning such places. However the members suggested that an effective way of ensuring that this does not take place was to introduce incentives for the players allocated in hard to reach areas.

The private sector involve is yet another reform that has been implemented after the programme was introduced some 16 years ago. AICC has been participating in FISP since 2013/14 season by among others, coming up with innovative models aimed at increasing efficiency and stimulating private sector participation. AICC participated in the 2015/16 FISP Private sector fertilizer supply chain management which government piloted the incorporation of the private sector in the FISP programme to ensure that the programme is carried out effectively.

Demera EPA farmers captured after selling their crops at aggregation center

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Rice farmers in Mphinga Rice Irrigation Scheme are now facing noble fruits of their effort by getting profits from Rice farming. With the coming of AICC to Mphinga Rice Irrigation Scheme, farmers have a privilege of selling their rice at a higher price than ever before.

This improvement has come as a result of the trainings facilitated by African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) to rice farmers at the scheme. Rice Platform under AICC’s MAP Programme, not long ago introduced Farm Business School (FBS) where farmers are trained in entrepreneurial skills so that they are business minded farmers on their farms.

In such institutions, farmers learn the best ways of producing products in high demand on the market and they are also trained on pricing for their products. In addition to that, farmers are familiarized about the location of their markets.

Rice Platform manager at AICC, Sangwani Makoko explained how most farmers have benefitted from such trainings. She stated that ever since the farmers got trained in value addition and other entrepreneurial skills, they now realize profits from their rice production than it was a case before.

“Farmers had no say in terms of the offer to their buyers and the quantity. But now it’s a different thing, as farmers are able to negotiate with the buyers. Vendors were bringing their own pails (18Kgs) to buy rice from farmers but now farmers have the standard pail (15Kgs) which is used when selling rice,” Said Makoko

A pail weighing 18Kgs which the Vendors were using when buying rice from farmers last year was selling at K2,700 to K3,000 and now a standard pail which is filled with rice weighing 15Kgs is selling at K3,500 to K4,500, price depends on the variety of rice. On the same note, Kilombero and Faya which was selling at K3,000 in negotiating for the prices. Farmers are also not getting tricked in this production year by use of dubious scales that are found in informal markets.

“Through collective marketing we have managed to penetrate the formal market easily and we have more negotiating powers on the market. Previously we used to give in easily to any price as we didn’t have a choice of another market but now that we have the marketing searching skills we decide where we want to sell our products. On top of that, our earnings have increased a lot and we no longer face any tricks on the market especially on the use of fake scales by buyers’ articulated Kachenje.

During the 2016 marketing period, Demera EPA established 3 aggregation centres in Kabudula, Kasiya and Mbalame areas where farmers participating in SALF programme managed to sell 30 tonnes of soya to Gaffar and Atupele investments, realising a total of MK9, 600,000.00. This has made many farmers in the areas to seriously regard farming as a business in the coming season since they have been satisfied with prices offered and weighing scales used during the collective selling of their produce.
African Institute of Corporate Citizenship under the CORIC platform introduced the Farmer Business Schools in Nkhotakota District. The Farmer Business Schools enable farmers to learn and improve their knowledge, change attitude and improve farm commercialization. The approach followed in the FBS is practical and based on learning by doing. The learning process is designed to enable farmers learn continuously and to improve their knowledge.

Owing to this farmers from Tipindule and Lilezi visited AHLX and ETG in order to initiate a network with potential buyers and input suppliers for the farmers to have a clear picture of what AHL commodities Exchange does and what type of Farm produce ETG is buying as of now and on what prices. Farmers in the country are faced with a number of challenges, one of them being access to markets as well as improved inputs.

The Regional Manager for Export trading group; Mr Sandeep Patel explained to the farmers about the kind of commodities they are buying as of now which among others was Maize, Soya beans and Ground nuts. They have not yet started buying rice but they promised the farmers that soon ETG will start buying the rice and that farmers should start processing their rice as ETG only buys milled rice. The farmers brought samples of their rice to ETG which according to the regional Manager will be taken to their head office in Lilongwe for testing. If the samples pass the test then they are going to buy all the rice from the farmers.

On the inputs, Mr Sharad Kadam explained that apart from buying farm produce, ETG also sells farm inputs like chemicals and fertilizer. ETG prefers selling inputs to farmers who are in groups and a 10% discount is given to farmers who are in groups and have bought inputs of about 2 tones and above. Transport is arranged...
for the farmers to carry their inputs to their designated areas. He also explained how different chemicals are used for different crops. An example was given on how chemicals like Cypermethrin, Dimethoate and Lambda work in rice field to control stem borer and army worms and other weed control chemicals which have just been introduced by ETG and are so good for weed control in rice fields, these are: Acetochlor and Glyphosate. Mr Sharad suggested that a field day should be organized during the season for him to come and demonstrate how to apply these chemicals.

At Auction Holdings Limited, Mr Robert Luhanga the Manager for AHL commodities Exchange for the Northern region explained to the farmers that AHCX act as a middleman between the producers and the buyers. Commodities are brought to their warehouse and a sell order is given to the seller to write the price that the seller wants their products to be sold. The seller is the one who decides on what price he wants to sell his produce. The products are brought to AHCX’s warehouses where they are kept for sale and a little storage fee of K230 per week is charged. After the buyer has been found, they just deposit the money into the account of the seller. Samples of rice were also given to AHCX and they have recommended it. According to the AHCX Manager, rice is on high demand at the market since it’s in low supply due to erratic rains that was experienced in the previous season. They have assured farmers that their rice will be bought at a good price because there are so many buyers at the market who wants to buy. AHCX has promised to engage the farmers in contract farming so that next season they can have a good supply of rice on the market.

Farmers have benefitted so much from the visits as all their questions had been answered and AHL Commodities Exchange has already visited their sites to verify if indeed these farmers have the quantity of rice they were talking about. The farmers are looking forward to selling their produce through AHL commodities Exchange as well as Export Trading Group.

“The aim of the visit was for the farmers to network with potential buyers and input suppliers for the farmers to have a clear picture of what AHL commodities Exchange does and what type of Farm produce ETG is buying as of now and on what prices”
COTTON FARMERS ASSOCIATION (COFA) FINALLY REGISTERED

By Isaac Tembo

The ‘Cotton Farmers Association’ (COFA) has been operating as a farmer based organization spearheading the plight of cotton farmers in Malawi since 2009. Though operating as an “Association”, the institution has been unable to engage in other commercial activities owing to its legal mandate as the organization was not duly registered under any laws of Malawi.

African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) is currently supporting COFA activities aimed at strengthening the organization especially at grassroots level. AICC is currently working with other stakeholders in the cotton sector especially the Cotton Council of Malawi (CCM) and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development to develop strategies aimed at strengthening COFA operations.

One key strategy of strengthening COFA was to have the organization registered under the laws of Malawi based on the type of business model members of the organization wanted to operate under. Based on a series of meetings and trainings that members attended, the general assembly chose to have their organization registered as a Trust. It is to our delight that COFA has finally been registered after laborious efforts and dedication from partners and stakeholders.

The registration of COFA has come at the right time as it will finally bridge the information gap between farmers and actors in the cotton value chain and strengthen the capacity of members and affiliates, through improving their access to production services, lobbying for efficiencies in marketing, and representing them in all policy fora.

Under the developed constitution it is expected that the newly registered trust shall ensure that farmers are provided with up to date information on prices, practices.
MWALUGHALI PRAISES THE COTTON DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

By Funny Nkhunda

Cotton Development Trust yanibenula ine’ those were the words of Mr Lughsambo Mwaluhali, a 68 year old cotton farmer from Karonga District, Lupembe EPA, Gumbi section who has benefited from the cotton demonstration plot program. This program is coordinated by the Cotton Platform which was known as the Cotton Development Trust. The demonstration plot shows two technologies all enhancing Good Agriculture Practices (GAPs) through the five finger approach.

The five finger approach makes sure that each demo has:

1. Prepared the land early
2. Planting, thinning and gap-filling are done early
3. Regular and timely weed control
4. Plant nutrition and
5. Integrated pest management.

Mr Mwaluhali has been hosting the demonstration plots for four years and during these four years he has been provided with inputs and knowledge on GAPs. Before this demonstration plot program Mwaluhali did not follow GAPs on his field. For instance, he would plough his land, make ridges, plant three seeds per planting station, and failed to properly manage pests with the use of pesticides. As a result, it did not lead to higher yields.

However, after learning from the cotton demonstration plots, he now replicates the technologies learned from the demos to his other cotton fields. His life has really changed both socially and economically as he now lives in a modern house which was built from the income gained from cotton sales; he also has livestock that were acquired through cotton farming. In the 2014-2015 growing season Mwaluhali has managed to harvest 1150 KG of cotton despite the poor rains and he was able to sell at MK 210 per kg. He is grateful to the cotton platform for this program and he is looking forward to new technologies.
CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE A KEY TO FOOD SECURITY

By Robert kachedzula

Subnet Thawuzeni, a 55 year old smallholder maize farmer from Lilongwe district Mpingu Extension Planning Area is one of the beneficiaries of the NRC demonstration plot which is commonly known to him as “Agri-Business”. He strongly believes that conservation agriculture is the key to food security.

AICC runs a 10-hectare demonstration farm at NRC in Lilongwe as a public-private partnership model and this initiative is known as the Sustainable Agri-business Initiative (SABI). Different private companies, international organizations and government institutions demonstrate novel approaches/technologies that can be scaled at national level. These demonstration plots also showcase conservation agriculture technologies and farmers from around the area come to learn the technologies that are showcased and go back home to practice these technologies on their own land.

Thawuzeni was one of the out-grower farmers of the NRC demonstration program in the 2014-2015 growing season. He used about a quarter acre of his land to mount a demonstration plot where he planted Njobvu variety of maize seed from seed-co. Following some Good Agriculture Practices (GAPs) that he learnt from the demonstration program, Thawuzeni made sure he made minimal disturbance to the soil by digging pits/basins instead of making ridges as is conventionally done, retained crop residues on the soil surface, planted early on in the season, and applied both organic and inorganic fertilizers in the form of kraal manure and NPK and Urea before planting.

As he decided to use only part of his land to try out the conservation agriculture methods, the other part of his land was used conventionally by ploughing the soil and making ridges. However, he harvested much more than he used to on the quarter acre that he planted using conservation agriculture.

“At first, on a quarter acre of land I would harvest only one or two 50kg bags of maize. But when I used the conservation farming method, I managed to harvest thirteen bags on the same size of land. This is amazing to me,” he said.

He added that when people experienced a dry spell in the season, the maize on the conservation farming plot was still very healthy and green while the maize on other plots was wilting.

“When people experienced a dry spell in the season, the maize on the conservation farming plot was still very healthy and green while the maize on other plots was wilting.”

He plans to plant maize not only for subsistence purposes as usual but mainly for commercial purposes.
They say dreams do come true if you only believe. This has been shown through the Village Savings and Loan initiative by African Institute of Corporate Citizenship which has assisted a lot of people to achieve their dream. The Programme has assisted not only a lot of groups but also many smallholder farmers in developing their homes and communities.

Cecilia Chinthalo a 35 yrs old divorced woman, is one of the beneficiary of the initiative in Zomba. Chinthalo joined the Village Savings loans group in 2014 as she was also a member of Likangala Irrigation scheme.

Her success story started with the AICC Village savings and Loan training she attended which was facilitated by AICC Field officer. Having attended such a training, she was encouraged to plan her visions about the future. Upon looking at her state and the big responsibility she had, she thought of building herself a moderate house. That marked the genesis of her major vision which also pushed her to start saving purposely.

“I was saving a little to my account until it paid off well,” Chinthalo started explaining.

During the first share, she stated that she managed to save K247 000 to her account which enabled her to start molding bricks for the house. Having estimated the benefits she was getting out of the first share, she was not reluctant to joining them the second time.

Thus when she gathered her courage and increased the amount of the shares to K500. In June this year when time came for the sharing of savings, she managed to come out with the total of K547, 300.

“I was very happy with the outcome because I knew that I had fulfilled my dreams. This was a dream come true. I was able to carry on with my house project and it was successfully finished. Look at me now, I live in my dream house with bricks and iron sheets.” She said. Chinthalo did not just build a house with the loan she got, but she also used the balance to buy a new sofa set in for the house and she furnished the inside of the house.

“I have achieved my dreams through AICC. I will always be grateful to AICC for the establishment of village savings and loan group here at Likangala irrigation scheme,” she lamented.

Chinthalo encouraged her friends and other groups to utilize the Village Savings and Loan programme. She shared her story with joy for the good work AICC did for her.

“Use these people wisely because they are here to help us grow. AICC has assisted me in fulfilling my dreams. A time has come for the farmers to change their mind set on development. Let’s support the companies like AICC who are shaping our society,” she concluded.

AICC trainings has helped in improving the rice production in Likangala from 450kgs/0.1 to 600kgs the same area.
Growing up engulfed in extreme poverty, the thought of success never crossed their mind. Their entire life, they grew up believing that life was meant to be survived and not enjoyed. They may not have been the poorest within their vicinity but one undisputed fact is that they had lived a hand to mouth type of life or worse still, at times they could sleep on an empty stomach. This is a story of one distinctive family in Vibangalala EPA in Mzimba. Though in their old ages, the family of Geoffrey and Jean Tchuwa is now a role model to many families not only in Vibangalala section but even to other families outside the section.

It is not long ago, when Geoffrey and his family used to live a below average type of life. Farming has been the older of their lives, even though they never realized anything tangible from it, but quitting was never going to be a choice to them as this was the only income generating activity they knew and got indulged in. Despite their endless effort to become a food secure household and have a good shelter as well as clothes, the family continued to face chronic poverty such that at times they could sleep on an empty stomach.

Just like many smallholder farmers in the country, Geoffrey and his family also took farming as a way of life other than regarding it as an established business. Even though the family was involved in selling their crops after harvesting, rarely did they sell their crops and realized substantive income out of it. However, the coming in of AICC through the SALFP programme in the area has highly revolutionized the perception of many smallholder farmers in the area including the Tchuwa’s family such that they now look at farming as a business than a way of life.

However, it is another thing to promote the increase in production while not addressing other pertinent issues that still count after production. Access to markets is one key challenge smallholder farmers continue to face in the country and in order to address such a challenge, AICC through its Market Access programme is involved in capacity building activities on how farmers can organize themselves and identify markets for their crops. Through the programme, AICC has been promoting collective marketing as one effective way of establishing effective market links. One of the families that have benefitted a lot from such an intervention in Vibangalala EPA is Geoffrey’s Family.

Before AICC interventions in the areas, smallholders farmers in Vibangalala EPA used to sale their produce at an individual level but after the several trainings the farmers have undergone since 2014, they have now organized themselves into groups and sale their products collectively. According to Mr Tchuwa who is one member who has benefitted a lot from the collective market, the farmers

By Charles Ziba

AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER
now have a strong voice when it comes to determining prices of their commodities as well as attract big companies to buy their produce. Furthermore, Tchuwa expressed that the fact that they started selling their commodities collectively, farmers now have a wider choice of markets and they get a fair deal from buyers.

“Ever, since we started selling our commodities collectively, we have experienced a great difference in terms of our returns, on top of getting fair prices most of the times, we find it easier to find markets with companies that commodities in high volumes. At first, everyone was required to transport their commodities to the nearest trading centre to make a sale of 3 or 4 bags, as most buyers could not travel this far to buy such small amounts of soybean. However, through collective marketing and given the skills AICC trained us on how we can link ourselves to markets, buyers now follow us in our area to buy the commodities. This has lessened the hustle we were going through when it came to selling our products’ Narrated Tchuwa.

Tchuwa further added that of late many farmers have increased their farming areas as they have realized that they can benefit more from farming. In his case, Tchuwa indicated that he is still farming on the same piece of land but still realize a lot from it compared to the other years. Before AICC started implementing its project in the area, Tchuwa could only get MK34 000 to MK56,000 from 7-11 bags of soya he would realize in a year.

“Usually I would sale my soybean at MK75 to MK120 per kg, but then I didn't mind as that was the only readily available market I knew and due to high levels of poverty then, I would just sale it at such low prices just to survive for the day. I was literally living a hand to mouth type of life as the money was usually not enough to cater for my family expenses” expressed tchuwa.

After realizing 500kgs in the 2014/15 growing season, Tchuwa capitalized on the trainings AICC offered to them on how they can engage buyers as well as on collective marketing. Tchuwa together with other farmers within the area, formed a group and brought all their crops together so that they could sale them as one. The very same year of exploring the viability of collective marketing, Tchuwa realized more than what he expected. Unlike previous years, Tchuwa realized almost a MK100,000 from the sells, depicting a 100% increase from the previous sale. This was dispite the fact that his quantity never changed.
This is when Tchuwa’s life took a turn, little did he know his life will never be the same. In the same year Tchuwa used part of the money to buy a cow worth MK60,000 and other farm inputs like fertilizer in preparation for the next farming season. Having all the necessary inputs at his disposal, Tchuwa realized more yields in the next growing. In 2015/2016 he sold 770kgs of soya at once which brought him MK231,000. In the past years he could only sell farm produce when the need arise and buy basic needs but now he had all his income at once which allowed him to plan for it very well. With the funds realized from the sales, he bought iron sheets with which he roofed his house and also bought an ox-cart.

“My life has greatly changed since AICC started its initiative in this area. I used to be a very poor person and my family used to suffer from chronic food shortage almost every year but ever since I attended and started to utilize the AICC trainings I have managed to do a lot of things for my family, even our eating diet has greatly improved. Said Tchuwa.

Though in his old age, Tchuwa indicated that many of his friends flock to their house to learn how they have managed to beat poverty at such a short period of time. He has ever since expressed that he will continue to advocate and ask his colleagues especially those who have not joined any group to join collective marketing groups so that they can also benefit as he has done.

In a bid to enhance and strengthen partnership among various rice value chain players in Zomba district, the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) facilitated a district council meeting that among others aimed at sharing success and challenges that rice chain players in the district meet or encounter in the course of implementing their programmes.

During the meeting, AICC shared with the council on the progress of AICC programmes in Khanda and Likangala irrigation schemes. Among various successes, AICC shared on the improvement in rice production, the schemes have been registering since the start of the intervention. On average, the schemes have registered an increase of 150kgs basing on the very same area of production.

Furthermore AICC also shared with the house on how the Village savings and loan (VSL) groups that it established has helped to improve the lives of the farmers in the area. Additionally, AICC also mentioned the marketing aspect AICC programmes contain that aims at facilitating market linkages with various buyers or potential buyers.

Reacting to the presentation made, Zomba District Agricultural Development Officer Patterson Kandoje together with other partners who were present commended AICC for the good work it has been carrying in the schemes. Kandoje pointed out to the house that his office indeed noted that there was a great improvement the schemes have registered over the years and asked ‘AICC to continue with initiative and even extend to other schemes as government cannot manage to reach all the corners.

“Let me recommend AICC and all other stakeholders here for the numerous efforts you are putting in place to compliment government efforts in improving the livelihood of local Malawians. On the same note let me thank AICC for facilitating such a meeting. It is indeed through such meetings that we can share knowledge and see how best we can collaborate and avoid duplication of efforts for the greater benefit of our people” said Kandoje.

The council meetings was represented with about 35 stakeholders from Zomba including partners from the World Vision, Save the Children, Emmanuel International, Hunger project, The Malawi Police services, Zomba DADO office, NASFARM just to mention a few.
**A SNEAK PEEK INTO THE 2015/16 LEGUMES MARKETING SEASON**

With the tobacco industry being under threat due to high intensity of the anti-smoking campaign, the legumes sub-sector continues to be a sub-sector of interest in Malawi. After registering high prices last growing season, 2015/16 domestic marketing season for Legumes has been characterized with generally low prices even for the highly anticipated Pigeon Peas. This article seeks to provide some highlight of the Market season as per the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship’s Legumes Development Trust (LDT) –

Most of the major legume crops such as Groundnuts, Soybeans and Beans have already been absorbed by the market. Prices for Soybeans fluctuated within a short period of time from early June at Mk 290/kg to Mk 360/kg over a 3 – 4 weeks’ period. The price change was due to panic amongst traders which was triggered by speculations that due to dry spells, Soybean will be in short supply. Prices dropped and stabilized at an average of Mk 325/kg at which a large proportion of the year’s produce was absorbed by the market. Current prices are trending between Mk 300 and Mk 350 per Kg.

Groundnuts were characterized by low production which was attributed to the erratic rains within the 2015/16 season. Prices averaged at Mk 600/kg in end June which was deemed lower compared to the previous season. Due to the low production, there was a lot of quality compromises in terms of grading continue to be made by traders and sellers. This has generally affected prices offered on the market, Prices continue to fluctuate, with prices floating around Mk 500 to Mk 580 in August.............to page 20

“Due to low production, there was a lot of quality compromises in terms of grading by both traders and sellers”
The Market for Beans continues to be small and highly unmonitored. Red Kidney and Red Speckled beans continue to be the most popular varieties on the domestic and international markets. Supplied in Mixed forms on the formal market, this led to floating of prices just between Mk600/kg and Mk 700/kg on average.

As usual, Pigeon Peas is the terminal legume on the Market and probably the most highlight anticipated by producers whom in reference to the surge of prices to at least Mk1,200/kg during 2014/15 season pegged prices at Mk1,000/kg at the start of the 2015/16 marketing season. However, Prices are currently trickling in at Mk450 and have continued to downfall to as low as Mk250 per kg as reported in other areas.

In conclusion, much as the season has been quoted as “bad” for most producers, there is hope for improvement as interventions to ensure access to markets by smallholder farmers continue to grow in the subsector. Furthermore, experience has shown that, with each passing season, more farmers are getting comfortable with trading on the Malawi commodity exchange platforms thus moving into the structured market system will not be a difficult shift. Lastly, there has been an increase in access to market opportunities through the Agricultural Commodity Exchange (ACE) and AHCX which within the season identified and announced of the availability of markets for legumes amounting to US$ 275 million. This continuous indication of available opportunities is likely to trigger more production.

“In conclusion, much as the season has been quoted as “bad” for most producers, there is hope for improvement as interventions to ensure access to markets by smallholder farmers continue to grow in the subsector”
Investigative journalism in Malawi is facing various difficulties, including inadequate training, lack of resources, and inexistence of an access to information law, intimidation, political interference and lack of available time for investigative pieces.

Given the key role that the media play in unraveling corruption cases and the many challenges that the media face in this regard. The National Integrity Platform, with support from Transparency International and GIZ, has in the past months facilitated a number of trainings for journalists in order to address these identified gaps.

Recently, the NIP organized a 2 days training in Blantyre for 9 journalists who were selected on the basis of a story idea on integrity issues in Malawi, the journalists were introduced to key concepts and tools in investigative journalism, including the formulation of a hypothesis, drafting of a source map and a story planner to plan their investigative work. The journalists were given elaborate feedback on their story ideas and were helped to turn those ideas into a story concept that is worthwhile and feasible to investigate.

Collins Mtika, an experienced investigative journalist who is the director of the Center of Investigative Journalism in Malawi, facilitated the workshop. In October the journalists regrouped to present their revised story concepts. Currently they are working on their stories with small grants which the Center of Investigative Journalism in Malawi was able to offer with financial support from GIZ.

A follow-up workshop, supported by GIZ, took place in November and had a wider outreach: 20 journalists participated. They were trained by Will Fitzgibbon, the Africa reporter of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

Fitzgibbon had previously worked in Malawi when investigating the Kayelekera uranium mine as part of an investigative project on the Australian mining company Paladin. He showed the participants how international networks can help investigative journalists to overcome the above-mentioned difficulties. Teaming up with journalists from other countries can give Malawian journalists access to grants, knowhow and equipment that is not readily available in the country. Kandani Ngwira, freelance journalist and a participant in the workshop, could not agree more: he enthusiastically presented his experience working with the US-based Center for Investigative Reporting on a story on the malpractices of charity DAPP in Malawi. At the end of the workshop, journalists were asked to present a story idea. Topics ranged from corruption in orphanages, to mining companies, illegal deforestation and mispricing in the construction industry.

Both workshops started by elaborating on the various problems that journalists face when they want to do investigative work in Malawi but ended by explaining how all these problems can be overcome. The workshops proved to be a useful forum for the exchange of experiences between journalists from different media houses. Issues of corruption are rife and journalists therefore have plenty of ideas, they just need a little push, in the form of technical, financial support and collaboration, to get those stories out there.
In the year 2014, the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) was selected to be the host of the UN global compact local network in Malawi. Several developments have happened ever since the movement was started in Malawi, our reporter Ellen Zangewa caught up with AICC CEO, Dr. Felix Lombe to learn more about the UN global compact movement.

Briefly what is the UN Global Compact?
The UN Global Compact is a movement that was established to provide a platform for businesses to act responsibly on development, support companies to do business responsibly by aligning their strategies and operations with ten principles on human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption. Thus the Global compact movement is the largest world initiatives at mainstreaming the ten principles in business activities mainly focusing on labor, environment, human rights and Governance.

How did the movement come about and when did the movement start? Is it a new initiative?
Well, I can’t say the GC is a new initiative but maybe if we take it in Malawi scenario, then it might sound new since we are still in awareness stage. However if we are talking GC as a whole then the movement started as early as the year 2000. In his landmark speech during the World Economic Forum in the year 1999, the then United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, observed that the single minded goal of profit in business at any cost was fracturing societies and destroying the environment, thus business was threatening the very elements that underpinned its own existence. Kofi Annan therefore called for a revolution in how business operate, and this is what later on resulted in the birth of the UN Global Compact.

Earlier on, you pointed out that, there are guiding principles in GC, basically what are these principles and what are the goals for instituting these principles?
Basically, as I indicated earlier own the ten principles in GC are there to ensure that businesses, as a primary drivers of globalization, can help ensure that markets, commerce, technology and finance advance in ways that benefit economies and societies everywhere. However in order to realize this vision, the initiative seeks to mainstream the Global Compact’s Ten Principles in business strategy and operations around the world. These principles are in essence benchmarks for evaluating the success of mainstreaming the GC initiative. The principles are:

Principal 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human Rights
Principal 2: Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses
Principal 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the Right to collective bargaining
Principal 4: The elimination of all
forms of forced and compulsory labour

**Principal 5:** The effective abolition of child labour and

**Principal 6:** The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

**Principal 7:** Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

**Principal 8:** Undertake initiatives to promote great environmental responsibility; and

**Principal 9:** encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

**Principal 10:** Businesses should work against corruption in all forms

**From your explanation you seem to mainly focus on business oriented entities, is the GC limited to profit making companies only?**

The GC is an open movement which both profit making organization and Nongovernmental organization can join. However the emphasis seem to dwell on companies because of the vast nature of their operations. It more likely for companies to act astray than Non-profit making institution because probably most of their operations are already aligned to such principles within their operation. Not demonizing the private sectors, there are other players who have taken heed of such principles already and highly contributing the development of the country. But with the private sector being sideline in most of the social interventions programes the GC is also such a good platform that the Pvt sector can act collectively for a good cause.

**Why should companies and other interested institutions join the GC Movement? What are the benefits associated with GC.**

There are a number of benefits that institutions who have registered to be members of the GC can benefit from the movement. Apart from the fact that institutions can advance sustainability solutions in partnership with a range of stakeholders, including UN agencies, governments, civil society, labour, and other non-business interests. Meopportunity to members also have the adopt an established and globally recognized policy framework for the development, implementation, and disclosure of environmental, social, and governance policies and practices. Share best and emerging practices to advance practical solutions and strategies to common challenges. In addition the movement also act as a platform for linking business units and subsidiaries across the value chain with the Global Compact’s Local Networks around the world — many of these in developing and emerging markets. And members have the opportunity to access the United Nations’ extensive knowledge of and experience with sustainability and development issues as well as utilise UN Global Compact management tools and resources, and the opportunity to engage in specialized work streams in the environmental, social and governance realms.

**What is the role of AICC in this GC, taking into perspective the fact that AICC is not a UN institution?**

AICC as a an institution that was established with a mandate to promote the role of business in development was essentially chosen to be the host of the UN global compact local network in Malawi because of its active role in mainstreaming corporate citizenship. You might wish to know that the Globe compact movement is the world’s largest corporate citizenship initiative aimed at mainstreaming the ten principles in business activities around the world and catalyse actions in support of broader UN goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s). this is simply in line with AICC operations that are essentially centered on the phenomenon of Corporate Citizenship.

**For interested companies, how do they join the local network? Is it a complicated process.**

The process is not that complicated. Actually it is very easy and quick. Interested parties can simply approach AICC and request for a membership form which stipulates the basic fundamentals of the UN global compact, then they are requested to sign the form if they are in agreement with the stipulated conditions. Then they will be registered in the UN global compact system.

**Are there any Financial Expectations of Becoming a member of Global Compact**

The UN Global Compact is a voluntary initiative, not a formal membership organization. Upon joining the UN Global Compact, companies are asked to make a regular annual contribution to support the work of the UN Global Compact. This revenue is critical to the development of value-maximizing programmes, projects and resources for the benefit of all participating companies. These contributions are received, administered and distributed through the Foundation for the Global Compact.
MEET HENRY CHIWALO
AICC FINANCE AND ADMIN MANAGER

Having served AICC since 2011, Henry Chiwalo is one of the longest serving staff of AICC, however there are a lot of untold stories about Henry in general and even his experience with AICC that a lot of inquisitive people would be interested to know. Our reporter Charles Ziba caught up with Henry to learn more about his life and career.

1. Tell us more, who is Henry Chiwalo?

Alright, Henry Chiwalo is the second born son of Mr and Mrs Chiwalo. born on 17 May, 1970 in Zomba, Am married to Alice Kasakula and together we have 2 children, Clement 18 and Chifundo 13.

I did my secondary school from 1986, at Livunzu MCDC center, those days if one fails to go to proper main line secondary school you would go to what used to be called correspondence centers. So I did my form 1 and form 2 there before I moved to Malosa secondary school where I did my form 3 and form 4. In 1990 I wrote my MSCE, and I got 15 points, I got selected to go and pursue a bachelor degree in Accountancy at the University of Malawi the Polytechnic. Our group was the pioneer of the 4 year programme. Before then, people used to first do a diploma in commerce and then they would specialize in third year and the programme used to end on diploma level.

After finalizing my studies at Polytechnic in 1994, I was employed at college of professional studies in Blantyre where I was a lecturer. This is where I met my wife, who was also teaching at the same place. Of course we already knew each other as classmates in college. But we started dating and ended up in marriage while we were at the same working place.
After working at the institution for some 6 months, I left the place and went to Galaxy travel where I worked as an accountant, I worked at galaxy travels for some 9 months before I joined MBC. In 1995 I started working with MBC as an accountant responsible for creditors. I worked with MBC for 2 yrs, after that I was employed by Escom where I was an accountant for ledgers. In 2000 I left escom and joined Malawi post Corporation as an accountant I worked there for 5 months then I joined Business Consult Africa, I worked with BCA for 3yrs. In 2004 I joined PTC as senior accountant officer. This is the last place I worked with before I joined AICC in 2011 as Finance and Administration Manager.

Well from your narration you seem to have a vast experience in your field, briefly can you tell us what your job entails?

As you have rightly observed, I have indeed worked with a number of entities since 1995, That means am quite conversant with various accounting systems as well as able to deal with various issues and being able to tap them into my already existing knowledge. Basically, as accountants our role is to manage the book keeping aspects, whereby we are recording all the transactions in the book of accounts, also it involves the categorization of those records into various expenditure lines, revenue lines and also fixed assets as well as liabilities. In accounting they are principles that will follow, it’s called an accounting equation which is easy for accountants to understand than anyone outside the filed. This equation is the one that helps us in all our work. The equations says assets plus debtors is equal to liability and capital. As such in accounts we follow what we call a double entry thus for every transaction there should be a corresponding transaction. In essence our job basically involves ensuring smooth operations of every activity by AICC. Apart from expenditures, we are supposed to ensure that resources are managed effectively while at the same time avoiding abuse of such resources. The other important part is procurement of items. The administration is also responsible for procurement of various items for AICC. However, in order to maintain and safeguard the system there is a procurement committee that was set up to assist the administration in procurement hence the administration now works hand in hand with IPC when procuring various items for AICC.

As indicated earlier on, You are one of the few people that have served AICC for a very long period of time, what has been your experience like with AICC?

Working with AICC has been a quite wonderful experience. There are a number of things that I would point out. At AICC we have a free working environment that allows people to grow not only in his field but in many areas that AICC is working on. I will give you an example, I am at Accountant by profession but sometimes it comes a time where I have to attend technical meetings of other platforms, even make some remarks on behalf the CEO at those meetings. Therefore, as much as I am a finance and administration profession, I also need to know the other technical details form other platforms and...
by doing so am expanding my knowledge in many fields.

When I joined ‘AICC in 2011, AICC was just a small organization with a few employees compared to what we have today. I should say I was also fortunate enough to have interacted with AICC in the past, before I even joined the team, when it was still a house based organization. We have made quite a big progress and it’s my belief that we will even surpass the current status in the next 5 years or so.

How do you strike a balance between your profession and your personal relationships with members of staff, bearing in mind that your job calls for someone who needs to be stiff in order to control and avoid abuse of office resources.
Well it’s always hard to strike a balance between your job and personal relations when you mixed the two Generally speaking, professionalism and personal relations need not to mingle, so in my case I have always tried to balance between the two by separating them. When it is time to act as a professional then I act as a professional, when it is time to act as Henry Chiwalo then I also do that.

On top of that, whenever there is any professional issue with someone I always try to engage the person concerned so that He/she might know where she went wrong other than just jumping into conclusion and penalize that person.

For a while, when I just arrived at this place I was convinced you are one of these tough people that no one can joke with but seeing you around I can say you at times act crazy to the surprise of everyone, why are people so scared of you? (laughs) people are scared of me maybe because when am in my professional mood, I at times act very serious maybe than what I do in the corridors so people are scared of me because they don’t understand how I operate . Frankly, speaking am also a human being, I have emotions, I eat and laugh but all this cannot happen together, in my professional capacity I might be tough with them and maybe within minutes I smile at them when we have moved away from the professional issues to personal issue. So this issue of people being scared of me is mainly because they simply fail to figure me out. Its like I pretend. But all in all, over the years I have learnt that we all cannot be on the same page especially at a dynamic organization like AICC and one effective way of managing such diversity is to act freely and respect other people's opinions.

So far what are your outstanding moments with AICC and what are your sad moments are.
There are many moments that I would describe as best moments at AICC and among them is the very First SA trip that I went on Office duties. The trip was just awesome and had the opportunity to appreciate several developments that are happening in SA. When it comes to sad moments, then it’s when I see a colleague resigning. You see when we are working like this we develop a certain bond and that bond grows stronger each passing day so when you see your colleagues leaving it creates a certain pain in the mind.

Any last words you might wish to put across to our readers,
Yes, you see some of us might not be there in the next 5 to 10 years coming but one thing that am very assured of is that the notion of corporate citizenship is actually the key to solving many problems Africa is facing. What needs to be done is to mainstream it across all sectors and across the whole region of Africa so that people can appreciate corporate citizenship. To AICC staff, all I would say is, let maintain the momentum we have always have had when it comes to ensuring that we are impacting Malawi. I have come to realize that Malawi and even Africa as a whole needs us more than we might think.