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IPOR

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear esteemed stakeholder!
Welcome to the first quarter edition of the IPOR Newsletter for 2024.

We are immensely proud to announce the finale of a significant Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, the IPOR – Anti-Corruption Bureau partnership on the Ziphuphu Njee Secondary Schools sports tournament, totaling K20 Million.

This underscores our unwavering dedication to fostering positive change and enhancing the well-being of the communities we serve.

We invite you to get acquainted with our new board member, whose expertise and vision, will further bolster IPOR's commitment to excellence and innovation.

We have institutionalized the collaboration between IPOR and the University of Malawi (UNIMA) students through the signing of Edward Chiwayula Trust contracts, and constant engagement with UNIMA through the office of the Dean of Students. This underlies our commitment to supporting higher education students, by providing them with



financial support for their upkeep at UNIMA.

As we start a new year, we extend our gratitude to our partners, stakeholders, and the dedicated IPOR team whose relentless efforts make these achievements possible.

We hope this edition of the newsletter inspires a deeper appreciation and understanding of IPOR's commitment to positive and transformative change. Your continued support motivates us to strive for excellence at all

times. Thank you for being an integral part of the IPOR community.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Voila! - Happy 2024. I am excited to reminisce with you the incredible journey we travelled together the past year. This quarter marks a crucial moment to reflect on our collective achievements, celebrate our successes, reflect on our challenges, and plan ahead. This year is special to us as we clock 10 years since our founding, and we are gearing for celebrations to mark this important milestone. All thanks to the contributions of our staff and you, our partners.

Throughout the year that just ended, our commitment to transformative and solution-oriented research has been steadfast. We have executed a series of groundbreaking projects that have not only advanced our understanding but have also brought tangible benefits to our society.

Collaboration has been the cornerstone of our success. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners who share our vision and passion for transformative research and advisory services. These partnerships have expanded our horizons, enabling us to explore new avenues and deepen our resolve to making the world, especially the developing world, a better place for all. Our organizational growth in 2023 has been



unprecedented. Many thanks to the collective efforts of the IPOR family. We owe it to the dedication, ingenuity, and resilience of our team and partners. The enduring team spirit at IPOR fosters an environment that nurtures creativity and innovation propelling us to greater heights.

Looking forward to 2024, IPOR's prospects are brighter. We are energized to undertake even more ambitious initiatives, collaborate with new partners and deepen and broaden existing partnerships, and leverage cutting-edge

technologies to push the boundaries of research further. The year ahead holds endless possibilities, and I am confident that together, we will continue to lead in pioneering research that makes a lasting difference on livelihoods of communities in Malawi and even beyond.

Prof. Blessings Chinsinga
Director of Strategy and Management (IPOR)

The K20M Ziphuphu Njee CSR tournament praised

Stakeholders involved in the K20 Million Ziphuphu Njee 2023 football and netball tournament for Zomba secondary schools, have praised the Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) for financing the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) anti-graft initiative.

In the tournament, IPOR collaborated with the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), the Ministry of Education through the Malawi Secondary Schools Sports Association (MASSSA) and other

like-minded partners.

ACB Director General, Ms. Martha Chizuma, who was guest of honour at the final games held at the Zomba Police Mess Ground, praised IPOR for bankrolling the initiative which engaged learners in an outside classroom atmosphere.

She described the tournament as a unique tool in the fight against corruption, that enhanced the dissemination of anti-corruption messages amongst

the youth.

Ms. Chizuma called for the private sector to emulate IPOR to replicate similar initiatives across the country.

Director of Strategy and Management at IPOR, Professor Blessings Chinsinga, said as an organization, they are proud to have succeeded in the implementation of the tournament in line with the Institute's CSR objectives.

He said: "Our collaboration with the Anti-Corruption Bureau for the tournament is a testament to our commitment to address the root causes of corruption and invest in our future. Sports, with its excitement and passion, provide a unique platform to engage our youth in this noble cause".

The South East Education Division Manager, Mr. Mac

Auden Msakatiza, commended IPOR for considering to support the anti-corruption knowledge dissemination drive in secondary schools, citing sports as a unifying tool, hence pleaded for the tournament to be held annually.

During the final games, Chirunga Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) played Balamanja CDSS in netball and won by 18 baskets to 9. In football, Songani CDSS won by 3 goals to 2 against Cobbe CDSS. In the netball, third place play off, Malindi Secondary School won by 21 baskets to 20 against Luntha CDSS while in football, Malindi Secondary School beat Namitembo CDSS by 3 goals to nil.

First place winners for both football and netball went away with laboratory equipment worth K1.5 million, second place winners received equipment worth K1 Million while third place winners received K500,000 worth of equipment.

There were also individual prizes in various categories. The key objective was to ensure that the lessons from the anti-corruption messages provided throughout the tournament will mold the learners into responsible and ethical citizens, thereby contributing positively to the growth and prosperity of Malawi.

The tournament commenced on 4 November 2023 and ended on 20 January 2024. Sixty secondary schools participated in the tournament.



Know our new board member



Greetings Governor Yona. Can you please tell us about yourself?

I am Mac Ian Chisankho Yona born on 15th July 1972. I am happily married to Prisca Yona with whom I have four children. Professionally, I am a chartered accountant dully registered with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Malawi (ICAM). I have a Bachelor of Accountancy degree from Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences, MUBAS, formerly the University of Malawi (Polytechnic). In addition, I have a master's degree in commerce specializing in Business Management and Financial Crime and Governance from Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia.

In terms of work experience, I started my career as an auditor with Ernst & Young where I worked for three years before joining the Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi (ESCOM) as an Internal Auditor. I later worked with Roads Authority again as an internal auditor before moving to the Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority (MERA) in 2009 as head of internal Audit, a position I held until 2019 when I transferred to finance department at my current position as Finance Manager.

You were recently appointed into the IPOR Board based on your expertise on financial matters. How did you receive this appointment?

I am greatly humbled to have been appointed to this position. The news came when I least expected it, and I could not hide my excitement. It is an honour for me to serve in this Board of Directors comprising very high caliber individuals.

What do you see as your role in the IPOR Board?

My role as a finance person is to advise the Board on finance management and help interpret financial reports. In that way, I think I will help the Board in its oversight function of ensuring that IPOR complies with financial reporting standards in its financial reporting.



The recent audit report for IPOR came out unqualified, what does this signify for the Institute regarding financial management?

An unqualified audit report indicates that the independent auditor was satisfied that IPOR financial statements, for the period under review, presented a true and fair view of its operations. The auditor concluded that the financial

statements were free from any material misstatements. It gives confidence and comfort to the key stakeholders of the institution including the Board of Directors.

What were your first impressions of IPOR after attending your maiden Board meeting at Sigelege Beach Resort in Salima?

I was fascinated by the level of success the institution has achieved over the years. It made me greatly admire the hardworking spirit of the two founding directors, whose individual efforts and sacrifices, have made what IPOR is today.

Getting back to knowing about you: please, tell our reader what you like to do outside work?

Outside work, I am a farmer of crops such as maize and groundnuts and have some cattle. I also spend some considerable time working at the finance office of our parish, especially over the weekends.

Any last words?

Once again, I wish to sincerely thank the founders of IPOR for finding me worth to serve in this Board of Directors as a finance expert. I appreciate the warm welcome I have received from fellow members and staff of IPOR. I do not take all this for granted.



STEP Workshops Held

The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR), partnered with the University of Notre Dame's (UND) Pulte Institute for Global Development, to host two workshops, on Strengthening Teacher Education Practices (STEP) in Malawi.

The workshops, designed to inform programming implemented by Florida State University (FSU) on behalf of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), brought together some stakeholders in the education sector, to deliberate on the current state of

primary school teacher attrition, especially within the first five years, after joining the teaching profession. According to Professor Blessings Chinsinga, the Director of Strategy and Management at IPOR, quality education is a cornerstone of national development.

Professor Chinsinga said: "In order to address the issue of teacher attrition effectively, we must first understand it from all possible angles so as to create a better future for our children".

He described the

collaborative efforts between IPOR and its partners on these workshops as a beacon of hope for the efforts to revamp Malawi's educational system by making it teacher friendly throughout the career cycle. The first workshop engaged current and former (recent) Standard/Grade 1-4 Literacy teachers who teach both English and Chichewa. This group of educators provided and shared a unique perspective on the challenges faced by teachers in their early years of the profession.

The second workshop, brought together Ministry of Education officials from Education Division Offices, District Education Offices, and Zones. This workshop provided insights into the official perspective on teacher attrition and their role in shaping policies and programs to address the issue.

By integrating the experiences and feedback of teachers and officials, the initiative aims to develop systematically tailored solutions that will bolster the retention of teachers during the first five years of joining the profession. The STEP is a five-year USAID funded project aimed at improving education systems in Malawi.

OSISA grant hailed

The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) says the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa's (OSISA), \$50, 000 (about K85 million) grant has helped to improve quality of governance and operations at the institution.

IPOR's Controller of Finance and Administration, Mr. Wyson Mwabvula, said they received the OSISA grant to implement the Strengthening Governance Systems and Operations for Delivery Quality Services project.

He said the grant, which was utilized from January to December 2023, focused on strengthening internal governance systems and operations of IPOR by supporting several activities. Mr. Mwabvula said through the grant, IPOR has

managed to conduct activities such as team building sessions and board meetings; developing the Strategic Plan; acquiring ICT equipment for the administration of surveys; website reorientation and staff compensation, particularly those on internship.

In a statement, OSISA and its partners said they have developed the integrated One Africa strategy to better maximise resources and impact in African countries including Malawi.

Reads the statement in part: "We need to more strategically deploy the resources we are entrusted to manage. This means changed thinking, ways of working and partnerships".



SSLRP project on course

The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) in collaboration with the Center for Evaluation and Development - C4ED on behalf of the World Bank, is implementing the baseline survey for the Social Support for Resilient Livelihoods Project (SSRLP), in Nkhatabay and Dedza districts.

The survey, that seeks to measure the impact of SSRLP, interviewed 3, 300 beneficiaries from Savings and Loan Groups (SLGs); cash transfer program; and climate smart enhanced public works programs from the two districts.

Prior to the data collection exercise that lasted 21 days, a five-day enumerator training was conducted in Lilongwe followed by a pilot in the area of Traditional Authority Masumbankhunda in the same district, to assess the robustness of the survey instruments before rollout.

The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) on 1st and 2nd December, 2023 successfully conducted a two-day training for the second cohort of the Field Research for Beginners short course in Zomba.

The training targeted those with Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE), Diploma or Bachelor's Degree and are interested to work as Research Assistants, Data Officers and Field Officers in relevant sectors.

Director of Training and Programs at IPOR, Dr. Michael Chasukwa, who facilitated the training together with the IPOR team, described the training as important in the field of research.

Dr. Chasukwa said: "We would like to build a strong foundation of professional researchers who can consider it as a lifelong career. Well trained field researchers will translate into us having better research outcomes,

which is why we are conducting this training so that we can recruit some of them for our work at IPOR".

The participants were introduced to field research; main fieldwork activities and considerations; conducting

fieldwork using different tools or methodologies; the ideal fieldworker; and challenges of fieldwork and their solutions.

At the end of the course, 43 participants were given the prestigious IPOR certificate of attendance.

Field researchers mentored



IPOR, UNIMA students sign ECT contracts

The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR), and the University of Malawi's 23 beneficiaries of the Edward Chiwayula Trust (ECT) have signed contracts to officially cement the support.

In the agreement, IPOR through the University

of Malawi (UNIMA), is providing K60, 000 monthly up-keep for the disadvantaged students.

Director of Strategy and Management at IPOR, Professor Blessings Chinsinga, encouraged the students to work hard in class and to maintain good character to continue benefiting from the support.

On his part, Director of Students Affairs at UNIMA, Dr. Jonas Mwatseteza, commended IPOR for coming to the rescue of the students, hence he encouraged them to take the support as a privilege explaining that there are many disadvantaged students in need of upkeep.

Speaking on behalf of fellow students, Mr. Thoko Justin, who is pursuing Bachelor of Education in Physics, promised to be Ambassadors of the ECT by working hard in their studies as a show of gratitude for the support.

The fund was established to honour Edward Chiwayula, who untimely passed away on April 17th, 2016 while working as an enumerator on the Governance and Local Development Project, a collaborative venture between IPOR, the Program on Governance and Local Development at the University of Gothenburg, and the Chr. Michelsen Institute.



Field experiences with Flossy

Give us a brief background about your academic and professional career?

My academic journey started when I got 14 points in my Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE). I was selected to Chancellor College, then a constituent college of the University of Malawi, now the University of Malawi in 2018. I am proud to say that I have recently graduated with a credit in Bachelors of Arts Public Administration, which has given me a solid grounding in the area. In 2021, I was fortunate enough to work as an enumerator on a research project with IPOR, where I gained useful experience and in 2022, I worked as an intern for the Public Private Partnership Commission, which introduced me to an office setting. In July 2023, I joined IPOR as an intern as well.

How do you describe your experiences working at IPOR?

Working at IPOR provides me with numerous opportunities for professional growth. I am exposed to a variety of research methodologies and I keep on gaining hands-on experience in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This experience enhances my research skills.

The second opportunity is networking. Since I came to IPOR I have interacted with professionals in research and I am building a strong network. I have the chance to collaborate with experienced researchers and analysts, which will broaden my knowledge in research. I get motivated working with IPOR because of project diversity. From July 2023, I have

had the chance to work on projects spanning different sectors, including politics, public opinion, and social issues. This diversity of projects enriches skills which I will use even in my further studies. Working with IPOR gives me so much joy because of the community impact that it has. I feel a sense of purpose knowing that the work we do could inform policy decisions and positively impact people's lives.



The challenge that I can point out working at IPOR is tight deadlines. Meeting these deadlines while maintaining research quality could be challenging and require efficient time management and organizational skills.

You have been participating in various research projects, what have you learnt so far?

My experience in field work has been great; it has allowed me to actively engage in data collection processes. The experience ranges from conducting surveys, interviews, and observations. I have worked in diverse environments, from urban



settings to rural communities, gaining a holistic understanding of how people think. Fieldwork has enabled me to interact with the people or communities being studied. I have had the privilege of interacting with people around Malawi hearing their perspectives, concerns, and insights, which has been fun and insightful at the same time. Fieldwork often presents unpredictable situations and challenges. It has enhanced my ability to adapt, think on my feet, and find creative solutions when faced with unexpected obstacles.

What has been the most interesting and challenging aspects in doing field work?

Honestly speaking, travelling and meeting different people, learning how they live their lives are the most interesting aspects of fieldwork. It has also been a learning ground for me, in both research skills and cultural terms. The challenge I encountered revolved around my interaction with individuals enduring severe poverty. While their suffering was evident, I had to uphold the ethical responsibility of not interfering with their circumstances to maintain data integrity. This internal conflict left me feeling a profound sense of sadness and powerlessness.

Any last words?

IPOR is a great place to work at.

Years on, skip loader track aiding ZCC

The Zomba City Council (ZCC) says the skip loader track and the eight skips that IPOR donated about four years ago have helped to increase refuse collection in the city by, at least, 10 percent.

In an interview with this Newsletter, ZCC Director of Health and Social Services, Mr. Busta Chiona, said before IPOR donated the skip loader and the skips, they were only managing 15 percent refuse collection in the city.

Mr. Chiona said: "The coming in of the skip loader track and



the skips that we received from IPOR, helped us to increase the rate of waste collection to around 25 percent. I should be quick to point out that because of the new skip loader, the Council also bought additional skips, now we have around 15 skips around the town and that has really enabled the Council expand waste collection services into areas that were not previously served".

The donation was part of a research project that sought to assess whether residents would be more willing to pay city rates when services such as refuse collection, are duly provided by the Council. The research was implemented by University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in partnership with IPOR with financial support from Britain's Department for International Development (DfID).

The Malawi Police Service has hailed the positive impact on service delivery arising from the computers and printers that IPOR donated last year. The computers and printers were donated to the Eastern Region and the Zomba Police Station following the need the two offices has had.

In an interview with this Newsletter, Deputy Public Relations Officer for Eastern Region Police, Sergeant Tionge Kayenda, said before the computers and printers were donated, there was slow service delivery.

Sergeant Kayenda said: "For us to deliver good services timely and with quality, we need a lot of equipment, so before IPOR donated the equipment, our service delivery was challenged, but now the equipment is

IPOR ICT equipment impact MPS service delivery

quickenning our processes, resulting in the timely services rendered to the community".

She said in the Eastern Region, a computer and one printer is being used by the Secretary to the Commissioner, while two other computers and two printers are with the Zomba Police Station's

Administration office, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and one printer is at the Community Policing office.

"You can see that these are big offices that show the relationship between the police and the community it serves, so without such equipment, work is negatively affected", she said.

Birthdays

at IPOR



**Prof. Blessings
Chinsinga**



**Mr Jacob
Saikolo**



**Mr Finly
Dulani**



**Mr Benison
Mwachande**



**Mr Eliphaz
Kuseni**



**Ms Flossy
Kambuku**



**Dr. Boniface
Dulani**

The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) in the quarter celebrated four birthdays.

The major highlight of the birthday celebrations was the Director of Strategy and Management, Professor Blessings Chinsinga's 50th birthday, which invoked memories of commitment and dedication to excellence in the growth and development of IPOR.

Similarly, the Institute celebrated birthdays with several staff members: the Data Manager, Mr. Jacob Saikolo; the Driver, Mr. Finly Dulani; the Executive Officer, Mr. Benison Mwachande; the Research Associates, Mr. Eliphaz Kuseni and Ms. Flossy Kambuku.

In his brief remarks, IPOR Director of Research and Operations, Dr. Boniface Dulani, described the in-house birthday celebrations at the Institute as more than just an occasion but a testament to the strong bonds that tie the IPOR team together.