

IPOR Newsletter Vol.1 Issue No.2 | April-June, 2023

IPOR BELIEVES IN BUILDING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS



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Editor's note



Dear Stakeholder! I welcome you to our Second Quarter Newsletter Edition. We are grateful to the many readers who shared feedback on our maiden issue earlier in the year. We keep learning and working to improve the content and design of the Newsletter to ensure we meet desired standards.

As a Malawian research and consulting institution, we will continuously work to provide services that are in response to national, regional and global issues. This is in line with Malawi's overarching long-term development blueprint, the Malawi 2063, as well as the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

I wish you enjoyable reading as



As a Malawian research and consulting institution, we will continuously work to provide services that are in response to national, regional and global issues.



you go over this issue. As previously stated, we will appreciate your feedback through email, or write us through our social media platforms shared in this Newsletter.

Steve Chilundu

Editor-in-Chief

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The Director's Message



We believe in partnerships, dialogue and exchange of ideas, as means for fostering institutional growth and development.



It was pleasing to get your feedback after the circulation of our maiden IPOR Newsletter. We are very encouraged to do more to improve the quality and content of the Newsletter. We will continue to strive to share the progress that we are making as an organisation, through this quarterly Newsletter and other platforms that we have. We commit to producing this Newsletter as a window to share our work with the outside world because we believe that we cannot work in silos. We believe in partnerships, dialogue and exchange of ideas, as means for fostering institutional growth and development.

We at IPOR believe that in an increasingly dynamic world, partnerships are strategic levers for service delivery as well as the national development agenda. Consequently, we believe that through this Newsletter, we are also conforming to the underlying spirit

of Malawi's Access to Information Act, which calls on all of us to voluntarily share information to our partners and the wider public. As a good corporate citizen, IPOR has an open-door policy, which entails being transparent and accountable to the people whom we serve. Enjoy the reading and make a date with us in the third Quarter.

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

IPOR Board Chairperson Interview

*In this interview, our Board Chairperson, **Dr. Hopestone Kayiska Chavula**, explains the importance of having IPOR Board of Governors and the Board's vision for the Institute. Excerpts:*

Please, share with us a brief background about yourself?

I come from Chipetu-petu Mvula village, in Enukeni, T/A Mtwalo, Mzimba District. I did my undergraduate and all my post-graduate studies at the University of Malawi, formerly Chancellor College, where I studied Economics and Computer Sciences. I worked in the Information Technology (IT) industry in different companies and capacities, the Government of Malawi under the National Statistical Office, and the University of Malawi as a Lecturer in both Economic and Computer Sciences for a total of 11 years, before joining the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in February 2008. I am married to Winnie Chavula and we are blessed with 2 sons, Samuel and Max-Paul. I am a third-born son in a family of 6 boys.

We understand you have been with ECA for some years now, please, share with our readers the role that you play at ECA and how it benefits Africa and Malawi?

In short "yes". I am an Economist at the Economic Commission for Africa under the Macroeconomics and Governance Division whose objective is to achieve structural transformation and inclusive growth among African countries through strengthened and effective development planning, macroeconomic policy analysis, and enhanced public sector finance management and governance. We provide economic policy advice to different African countries in support of their development objectives and goals, including capacity building, economic policy research, analysis and advice in different areas of economic significance to the countries, as well as providing a platform for policy makers to deliberate on key policy issues, in relation to the key challenges affecting African countries, with the aim of devising long-term solutions. I play a key leadership role in the design and implementation of these activities.

How did you become IPOR's Board Chairperson?



Chavula heads IPOR Board

This was an honour bestowed upon me by the founding partners of IPOR, Prof. Blessings Chinsinga and Prof. Boniface Dulani, so that I could contribute to the management of the institution in guiding its growth and development so that it becomes a leading research institution and a renowned Think Tank on the continent and even beyond. I thank both of them for the belief and trust they have had in me throughout this

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period.

What is your role in the IPOR Board and that of your Board Members?

As you might be aware, am currently the Chairperson of the Board of Governors for IPOR, which is a governing board responsible for defining and guiding its strategic direction and providing fiduciary oversight to ensure good corporate governance. The Board provides strategic guidance and direction with regards to development and implementation of IPOR's strategic activities, by adding value, advising and contributing to the institution's strategies and policies. And as Chairperson of the Board, I take the overall lead in these processes and activities to make sure the intended institutional objectives are achieved.

Where would you like IPOR to be at the end of your tenure of office?

By the end of my tenure, as Chairperson, I would love to see IPOR as a well-developed and recognized, not only as a research institution of choice, but also as a well-grounded, independent and focused Think Tank, not only in Malawi but in Africa and beyond. This should not only be in the area of social research, which is our main area of focus now, but in all critical areas in relation to the key challenges affecting the country and Africa as a whole. Our research work, should further aim at informing and contributing to the development and implementation of government policies, especially to the Malawi Agenda 2063 and in achieving the continent's Agenda 2063 goals and the globally agreed upon sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. I expect IPOR to be a leader in policy research, advocacy, influence, design and implementation. For us to do this, we will need to be a dynamic and innovative institution so as to be responsive and remain relevant to the ever-changing socioeconomic environment.

Please, share with us what you think is the role of research in development?

Research is key in providing data and information that informs the development and implementation and influencing of development policies in any country. Strengthening evidence-based policy making by government officials, based on well researched issues, is at the core of the effectiveness of these policies. Research in developed nations ranks highly and is fundamental to the accomplishment of any advanced learning and knowledge-based economy. Every single economy requires reputable and well established research centres,

that should adapt to the changing economic environment and contribute to government policies, taking into consideration the socioeconomic challenges that come with rapidly changing and often volatile global economy. In this regard, research ensures that development policies and programmes are appropriate to the challenges they aim to address.

And what role would you say IPOR is playing in research for national development?

IPOR is playing a key role especially in the area of social research and development. Through the different research projects that IPOR has been undertaking, it has come up with key findings and results that have informed policy makers and the general public on key issues. For example, the results and findings of the opinion surveys on the 2020 parliamentary and presidential elections, the poverty monitoring in the context of Covid-19 and the perceptions of people on Covid-19 in Malawi, the state of the judiciary in Malawi, the education sector improvement project and gender study on political attitudes and participation, among others, have had significant impact on policy design, development and implementation in the country. It was pleasing to note that the actual results of the 2020 Fresh Presidential Elections, were exactly in-line with IPOR's findings, hence enhancing the credibility of the institution and confidence among the general public in IPOR's research

work.

Many research organizations have recently emerged on the local scene. What would be your advice to IPOR Management and staff to withstand the emerging competition?

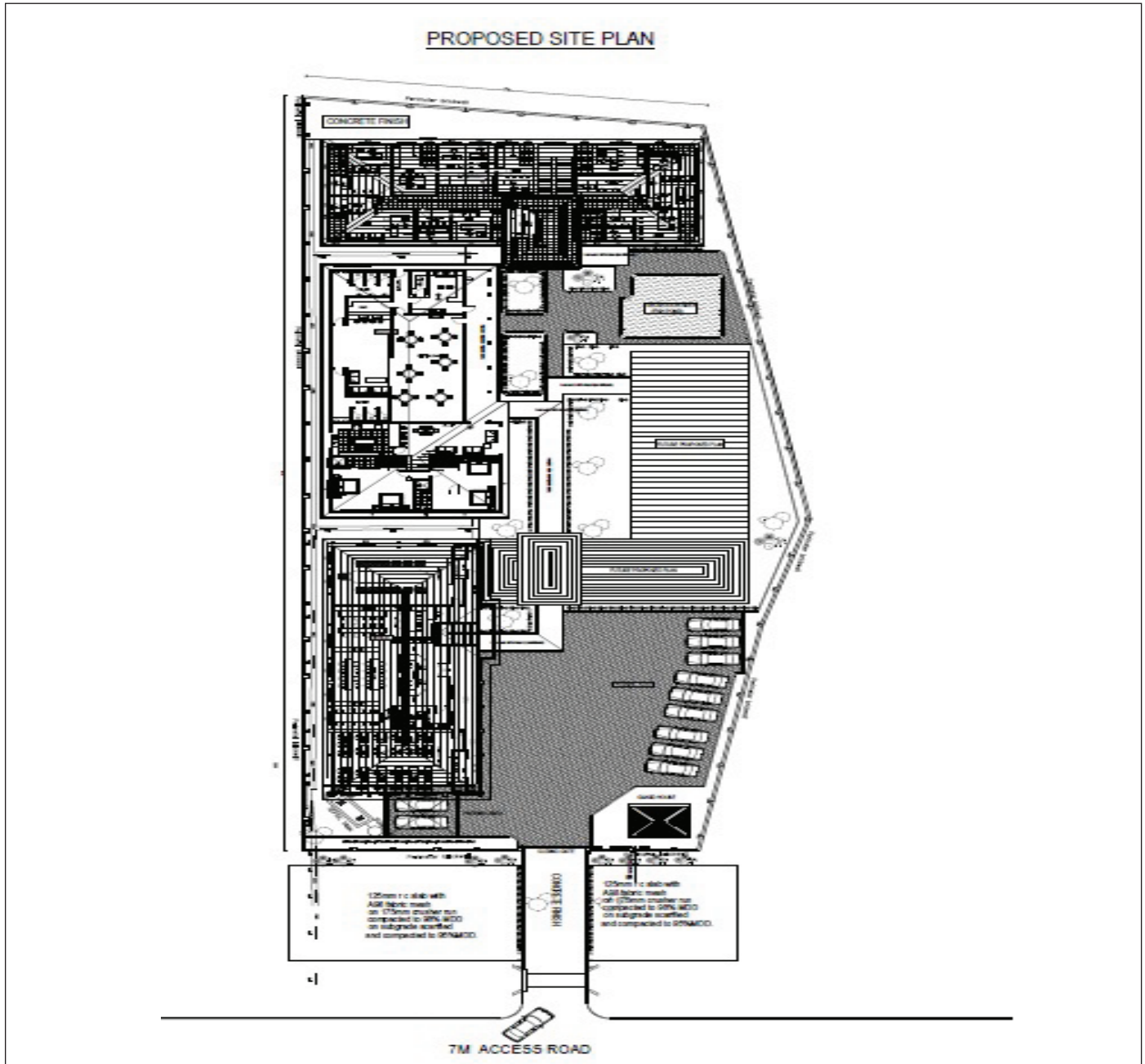
There is need to have a good and concrete picture of the challenges affecting the country, hence devise methods to be innovative and creative and identify our niches based on these key challenges, where IPOR could add value without repeating what other institutions are doing. This calls for the need to widen the scope of our research spectrum to include key areas such as economics, health, education etc.

Any last words?

I am happy to see what IPOR has achieved up to this moment and what it is aspiring to achieve in the next 4-5 years, as stipulated in its 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. I believe that if we put our efforts together and support management and staff in the implementation of the activities outlined in the plan, IPOR will be a step ahead of most of the research institutions in the country and it will be a key as well as an institution of choice, in providing evidence-based policy advice to government and other stakeholders. I thank IPOR management and staff for the excellent work they are doing towards achieving the goals and objectives of the institution.

I expect IPOR to be a leader in policy research, advocacy, influence, design and implementation.

IPOR Office Complex project takes off



The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) has embarked on the construction of its own office premises in our home city, Zomba. This development forms a major cornerstone of IPOR's long-term sustainability strategy.

Director of Research and Operations, Boniface Dulani, said in an interview, that the office construction project is one of the key milestones embedded in

IPOR's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

Director Dulani said: "We are delighted that we have finally embarked on this ambitious project. It will help us grow further and build a solid foundation for the future of IPOR.

This is in line with our vision, at the same time, cementing our promise to our valued stakeholders that IPOR is here to stay, to deliver on our mandate".

Director Dulani explained that the project will be implemented in phases based on the Institute's financial plan. The office complex will include offices for staff, auditoriums and lecture theatres, a state of art library, and a staff recreational centre. There will also be two flats for hosting visiting researchers.

IPOR is using its own self-generated funds to finance the construction project.

Communities welcome Metaketa V session II



IPOR enumerators conduct a pilot survey in Zomba

The Malawi phase of the Metaketa V project entered its second phase which involved training women on building up their confidence to demand local development projects that directly respond to their community needs.

The project is being run with women Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) groups in Mzimba and Zomba districts.

Participants in the study Session II have expressed satisfaction with the sessions, with commitment to use their groups, to channel their developmental needs to duty bearers.

One of the Project Managers at IPOR, Ms. Loveness Soko, said, in the Metaketa V Session II, women VSL groups are encouraged to know their Village Development Committee's (VDC) leadership and familiarize themselves with how the VDCs conduct their business and the role of ordinary citizens in the processes.

According to Soko, this training is aimed at giving the women groups a chance to relay their development needs, to the Village and Area Development Committees, which guarantees reaching the District Council for practical action.

The Metaketa V study is jointly being conducted in collaboration with Ohio State University, Vanderbilt University, Mzimba and Zomba District Councils and Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP).

The study intends to test whether participating in women's Village Savings Loan (VLSA) increases women's political participation and whether participating in trainings meant to foster collective efficacy, offers an additional benefit.

The Malawi study is part of a wider set of Metaketa V projects that are seeking to establish how women can be better mobilized to participate in consultative processes that would likely improve public services provision.

Apart from Malawi, the project is also being implemented in Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Vietnam. The project is funded by Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP), a global research, evaluation and learning network that promotes rigorous knowledge accumulation, innovation, and evidence-based policy in various governance domains.

Field Research for Beginners course launched

The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) successfully launched its first series of Field Research for Beginners training course in Zomba on 17th April 2023.

An additional two training sessions were also carried out in Blantyre and Lilongwe, with the aim of imparting basic field research skills to interested Malawians, who have the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) qualification and above.

IPOR's Director of Research and Operations, Dr. Boniface Dulani, who facilitated the training, along with IPOR's high powered team, introduced the participants to the basics of successfully doing fieldwork.

Drawing from his vast experience, Dr. Dulani, who is also the Director of Surveys for the African research network, Afrobarometer, explained with practical examples from the many research projects that he has been part of.

Among many things, Dr. Dulani emphasized the importance of embracing team work in the field as a key prerequisite to surmounting challenges that may hamper data collection.

IPOR's Research Associate, Ms. Funny Muthema, who also presented at the training session in Zomba, highlighted the critical role of obtaining Informed Consent from study participants, before commencing any data collection exercise, whether qualitative or

quantitative.

In order to acquaint the training participants with practical field skills, Ms. Muthema discussed various Interviewing techniques and offered tips on how to ensure that research participants, feel comfortable to share their knowledge and experiences with researchers.

IPOR's Director of Training and Programmes, Dr. Michael Chasukwa, commended the participants for taking keen interest, to learn about research, which is one of the key catalysts for national development.

Dr. Chasukwa highlighted the importance of collecting high quality data, pointing out that poor data brings any research organization into disrepute and becomes costly at the same time.

He observed that reputation takes time to cultivate and build, but can be destroyed with one single reckless act of unprofessionalism and carelessness by field researchers.

In his facilitation in Lilongwe, IPOR's Director of Strategy and Management, Professor Blessings Chinsinga, said field work interviewing techniques remain key in establishing facts in a research project.

Professor Chinsinga hence challenged the would-be field research workers, to take great interest in interview techniques, if

they are to become the best in the what is increasingly becoming a very competitive field.

Making a guest appearance at the Lilongwe training session, one of IPOR's founding Researchers, Mr. Atusaye Zgambo, told participants that field researchers should be respectful of communities from whom they will collect data. He then encouraged the trainees to refrain from being dishonest in the process of data collection.

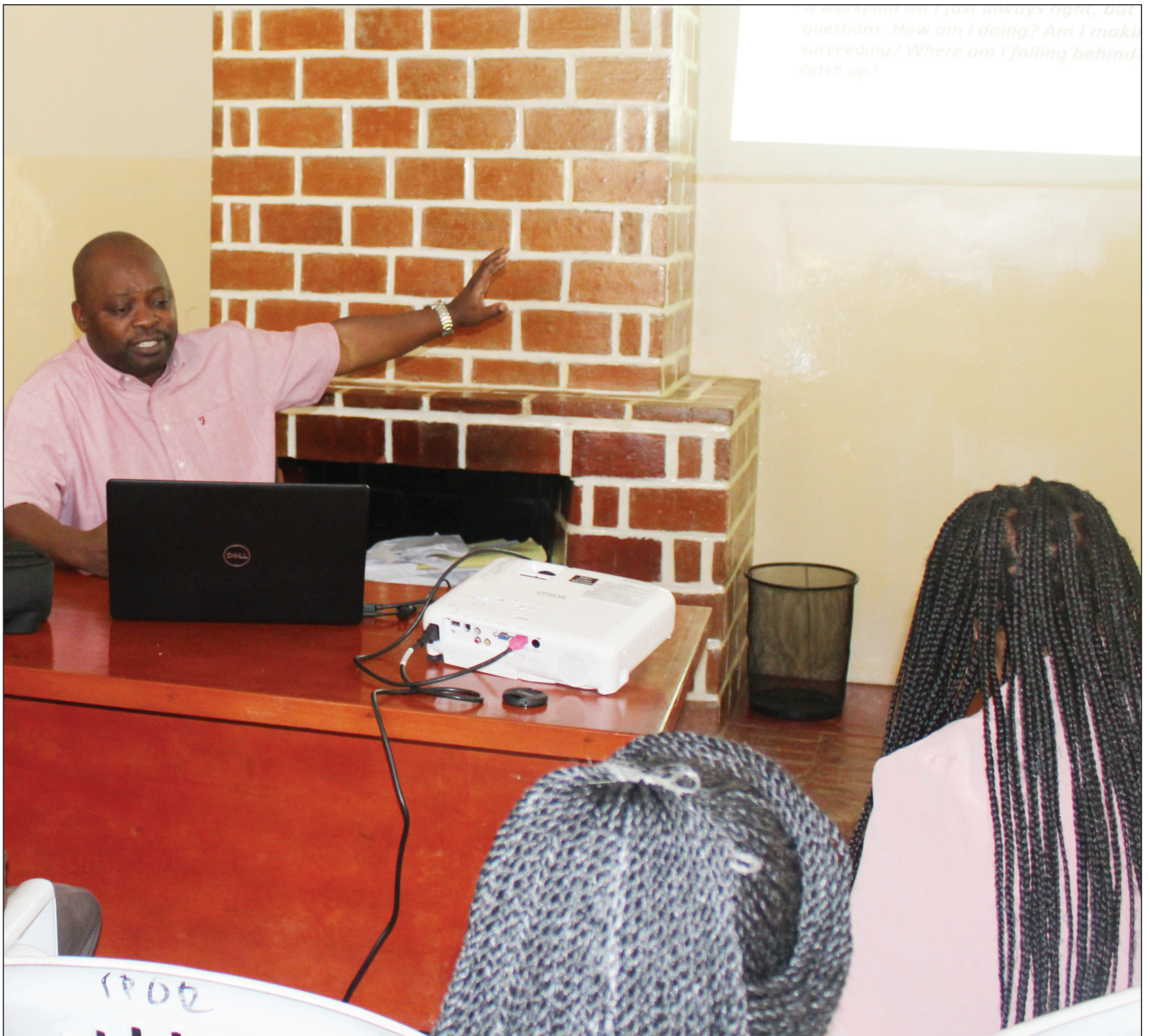
Writing on her LinkedIn page, one of the participants from Zomba, Ms. Hellen Kazibelo Harawa, commended IPOR for the initiative, describing the training as "so informative, educative and an eye opener, with profound insight".

She said the training exposed her and colleagues, to the critical basics of doing field work, with particular emphasis on the role of a field worker, when it comes to data collection and other important aspects.

The training initiative, is one of IPOR's pillars of portfolio of work, embedded in the Institute's Programmes. Through this pillar, IPOR will be offering a wide range of short-term professional training courses in research and related areas such as data analysis, project management, monitoring and evaluation, project proposal development etc.



IPOR staff pose with participants at the end of the Lilongwe training



Prof. Chinsinga during the training

DSM imparts work plan techniques

The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) conducted an in-house capacity building workshop on Work Plan development, to inculcate a culture of planning among staff as a means of enhancing overall productivity.

IPOR Director of Strategy and Management, Professor Blessings Chinsinga, who facilitated the workshop, described a Work Plan as a

roadmap on how to accomplish goals as an individual, department and organisation.

In his opening remarks, Professor Chinsinga told IPOR staff that work plans are critical to organizational performance.

“It is important for organisations to build a culture of developing work plans and implement them. Inability to do so is a sure recipe for failure. Work Plans are critical,

because they offer a bridge between strategy and impact. The rule of the thumb is that do not promise what you cannot deliver in the plan, but of course, the plans have to be realistic,” said Chinsinga.

Professor Chinsinga said, a Work Plan helps with self-assessment with regard to progress toward deliverables, by measuring what is working and what is not working and finding solutions about problematic areas.

GLD Land Management project on course



Mr. Ngwira and IPOR enumerators brainstorming about field work

During the second quarter of 2023, the Governance and Local Development Institute (GLD) at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, commissioned IPOR to field a series of Focus Group Discussions (FGDS), as part of a project titled “Social Institutions and State Reach, Examining Change in Gendered Land Rights.”

Speaking to this Newsletter, Mr. Suzgo Ngwira, who served as IPOR’s Field Manager on the project, said the study, which was being implemented in eight districts across Malawi, was aimed at understanding how state reach and lineage systems, influence land management practices in different communities. Outlining IPOR’s role in the project, Mr. Ngwira

said: “We started with the recruitment and training of enumerators which centered around familiarizing them with the data collection tools. Thereafter, we undertook a pilot study to check our readiness and preparedness to roll out the study. We have started data collection and we are happy and convinced that everything is on course as scheduled”.

Among several areas, the study sought to explore the extent to which access to the state, leads individuals to exercise their right, to make claims for inclusion in land management and examine whether this is mediated by the village head or directly, via citizens’ access to the state (advocacy mechanisms).

The study also seeks to

examine the extent to which access to the state, leads individuals to be more aware of their right to be included in land management, and examine whether information flows directly from the state to citizens, or through the village head/leaders (i n f o r m a t i o n mechanisms).

Furthermore, the study sought to explore, whether males are more engaged in land management in matrilineal systems, than women are engaged in land management in patrilineal systems. In other words, whether land management is more gender-equal in matrilineal systems than in patrilineal systems.

Considering that Malawian societies are split between practicing

patrilineal and matrilineal traditions, the study objectives included exploring whether individuals within patrilineal systems, are more likely than those in matrilineal systems, to reject joint land management practices, and if so, why they do so.

At the time of writing, data collection was ongoing. The participating districts are: Mangochi, Machinga, Nsanje (Southern region), Dedza, Ntcheu, Kasungu (Central region), Rumphu and Mzimba (Northern region). At the end of the study, enumerators will transcribe the interview discussions and submit a set of transcripts to our research partners at GLD.

IPOR staff trained on project Proposal Development



IPOR staff pose with certificates at the end of the training

The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) conducted a four-day in-house workshop on Project Proposal Development. The aim of the training was to equip IPOR staff with skills and expertise to produce winning proposals that would help bolster organizational viability, competitiveness and long-term sustainability.

IPOR Director of Strategy and Management, Professor Blessings Chinsinga, who led in facilitating the training, said the workshop was key for realizing IPOR overall goal of maintaining its position, as Malawi's leading center for social science research, surveys, advisory and

consulting services.

During the training, which took place at Hapuwani Lodge in Mulanje district, IPOR staff from four departments (Administration, Data & Communications, Research and Training) were taken through the full cycle of the project proposal development process.

The topics covered included the following: understanding project proposals; problem statement; background and literature review; goals and objectives; project design, monitoring and evaluation; project implementation and management; management plan; institutional capacity

and experience; and budgeting and budgetary requirements.

IPOR Director of Training and Programs, Dr. Michael Chasukwa, whose department coordinated the training, said the workshop was timely, as it built capacity for members of staff, emphasizing that sometimes there is proposal writing fatigue, which can be broken by going over and above board in the highly competitive business environment.

At the end of the course, participants received certificates of attendance.

IPOR Completes THES regional workshops

The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) concluded the convening of three regional Transforming Higher Education System (THES) workshops that are part of the ongoing project on Malawi Higher Education Portfolio Assessment.

IPOR is jointly implementing the project with the Pulte Institute for Global Development at the University of Notre Dame in the United States, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Three sets of workshops were conducted in Lilongwe, Mzuzu and Blantyre and workshop participants were drawn from university students and alumni, lecturers and private sector employers.

The purpose of the workshops was to inform programming of the THES project which is being implemented by Michigan State University (MSU) with an overall objective of improving employment opportunities and job readiness, as well as removing barriers to employment (faced by students and employers alike) in the fields of agriculture and technology in Malawi.

IPOR Director of Strategy and Management, Professor Blessings Chinsinga, who led a team of workshop facilitators from IPOR said the THES workshops are using a concept or metaphor called the Bridge.

This concept, which has three distinct stages, comprises matters relating to the student's higher education application and enrolment; matters relating to student life while at the University; and matters relating to job placement.

Through a critical and practical



Prof. Chinsinga delivering a keynote address

assessment of the experiences across the bridge with stakeholders, different lessons will be learnt with potentially transformative impact on the nature, form and outcomes of the Higher Education Sector in the country.

Professor Chinsinga said: "Ultimately, our expectation is that at the end of the implementation of the project, there will be a synthesis of the insights that we will have learnt from the project and that these will be pushed into the policy processes, with the aim of

transforming the Malawi higher education system, so that it is in sync with the development and aspirations of the country".

He explained that education is one of the critical building blocks for the country's development, therefore, there is need to have an education system that provides the needful for people going through it, to acquire skills, knowledge and expertise that they would be able to put to use particularly in the task of developing the country.

IPOR launches monthly in-house seminar series

The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) has embarked on holding monthly In-house Seminar Series, where staff members will be presenting papers on different topics of interest, but as they relate to IPOR's four programmatic pillars.

The aim of these seminars is to build knowledge on how to conceptualize ideas, prepare presentations and effectively present to key audiences. These seminars will help especially the young and emerging researchers to learn and build confidence for them to excel in the wider community of practice.

In kick-starting the journey, IPOR's Director of Research and Operations, Dr. Boniface Dulani, presented a paper titled: From Athens to Zimbabwe: The evolution of presidential term limits, in historical perspective.

Among other things, Dr. Dulani argued that respect of presidential term limits, remains part and parcel of a consolidated democracy. Tracing term limits to classical Athens to the modern era, Dulani observed that term limits were imposed after realization that precedence of leaders who willingly step aside after serving briefly in office was not a sufficient guarantee against individuals

seeking to remain in office for life.

Referencing the Malawi case, Dulani observed that term limits were incorporated in the 1994 constitution as a safeguard against presidential life-tenure, as happened during the 30-year presidency of Malawi's founding president, the late Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda.

Although the inclusion of term limits in the Malawi 1999 constitution was widely welcomed, this did not prevent former President, Bakili Muluzi (1994-2004) from attempting to remove the clause when approaching the end of his second term in office. However, with term limits enjoying popular support among Malawians, Muluzi failed in his quest to remove the term limit clause and was forced to step down in 2004.

Dr. Dulani said Malawians believe that alternating presidential terms, is good because it gives room for the people, to elect new presidents and to test new leadership ideas. This is why Malawians have fiercely resisted any attempts to renege on the constitutional commitment to presidential term limits.

Additionally, he explained that from 1994,

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IPOR staff pose for a group photo at the end of the seminar

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Malawians have shown the powerful effect of presidential alternation, as seen, for instance in 2020, when they changed the ruling government, meaning that there is a consensus to remove a leader who does not perform, in line with expectations of the majority.

When asked for his views on whether term limits should be extended to vice presidents, Dr. Dulani

said he did not believe it would be proper to extend the rule to the Office of the Vice President, explaining that, it may deter presidential running mates, who may harbour presidential ambitions in future.

He, however, acknowledged that an earlier Malawi Supreme Court ruling had determined that the term limit clause applies to both the president and his or her deputy, and noted that this is an issue that requires further reflection.

Edward Chiwayula Trust beneficiaries invest in knowledge

Two of the Edward Chiwayula Trust beneficiaries, Chrissy Ulemu who is second year Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration student and Ali Hamisi, who graduated in 2023 with a Bachelor of Social Science degree majoring in Economics, have invested some of their upkeep money for knowledge sake.

The two, are amongst the 24 student beneficiaries from the University of Malawi (UNIMA), who are getting a monthly K60,000 upkeep, during their stay at the institution.

In an Interview, Ms. Ulemu, said the upkeep support from IPOR's Edward Chiwayula Trust, has been of great help to her, saying since she started getting the funds, she is able to pay rentals in time and manages her daily needs without any hustle.

She said: "It was through this Fund that I was able to attend the Zomba IPOR Field Research for Beginners Course, that was conducted recently. I was motivated to broaden my experience and as it would help me, as someone who is going to be an administrator, knowing that I will not only be working from the office, but also doing field work, so prior knowledge is important for me".

Ulemu said she also wanted to give back to the Fund, through the IPOR training course, as a responsible student, adding that



Ms. Ulemu speaks on behalf of fellow students during a meeting with IPOR staff

paying for the training was not wastage, but a medium to long term investment, in her academic and future career journey.

She expressed delight, that following the short course, IPOR has already started engaging her in research projects, which is a plus for her, as she has already started accumulating experience while studying at the UNIMA,

hence encouraged fellow beneficiaries to use the upkeep responsibly.

On his part, Mr. Hamisi, who will be graduating with a Bachelor of Social Science Degree majoring in Economics, said he was saving part of his upkeep from the Chiwayula Trust for future use. He decided to invest some of these

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savings to attend the IPOR training course as it has always been his dream to become an expert in the field of research.

“Hearing that IPOR, the leading organisation in research, was conducting this training, I was ecstatic because it was obvious to me, that being trained by people who have vast experience and knowledge in the same, would practically make me to easily fulfil my dream,” Hamisi said.

He said his field of study requires him to extensively conduct research, therefore, the training was critical, adding that now that he has knowledge and skills in research, he can now easily do a good job in research.

Earlier in an interview, Director of Strategy and Management at IPOR, Professor Blessings Chinsinga, urged the 24 recipients of the Edward Chiwayula Trust funds to exercise high levels of discipline so as to excel in their studies.

He said: “You will be sustained on the list of beneficiaries of the ECT, during your academic journey at UNIMA, if you will continue passing courses above average. Our plea is therefore simple, dedicate your time to learning, to become a productive citizen of Malawi”.

Making his remarks, Director of Student's Affairs at Unima, Dr. Jonas Mwatseteza, thanked IPOR for supporting the 24 students with upkeep support and pointed out that IPOR's monthly upkeep is the second

highest that learners are getting. Mwatseteza observed that the Edward Chiwayula Trust student support, which translates to MWK540,000 per academic year, offers a better and more realistic support package at a time when the Higher Education Students' Loans and Grants Board (HESLGB) supports students with K340 000 per academic year.

Mwatseteza said: “This entails that student beneficiaries under the ECT support, will be getting more upkeep than others, which means that their welfare, will be uplifted and make their learning environment conducive”.

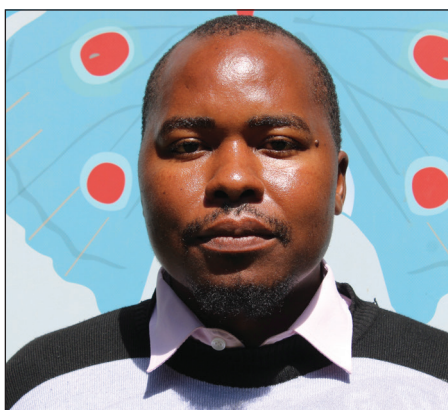
IPOR runs the Edward Chiwayula Trust which supports disadvantaged students at the University of Malawi, as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

IPOR recruits Resource Mobilization Officer

The Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) has recruited Mr. Eliphaz Kuseni as its Research Associate with a brief on Resource Mobilization. Mr. Kuseni reported for work at the beginning of May, 2023.

Speaking in an interview, Mr. Kuseni expressed gratitude to IPOR management for offering him the opportunity to join such a highly motivated and dynamic team of researchers and promised to contribute towards building up IPOR research portfolio.

“I am excited to embark on a new journey by joining IPOR. To me, this opportunity is something many people only dream to get. My roles include but not limited to identifying research project proposal opportunities, writing research project proposals, conducting research, analyzing results, and



Kuseni to contribute towards building up IPOR research portfolio.

writing research reports,” he said, adding “this role is an excellent fit for me due to my skills and previous experience. With over 5 years of experience in research.”

Mr. Kuseni, who is in the final stages of his MA studies in Economics, studied Agricultural Economics at the Lilongwe

University of Agriculture and Natural Resources and has worked with several research organizations before joining IPOR.

The Newsletter caught up with Mr. Kuseni and engaged him further in a one on one interview:

Newsletter: Welcome Mr. Kuseni to IPOR once more. Can you share with our readers and IPOR staff your work philosophy?

Kuseni: I firmly believe in the power of collaboration and teamwork. As a new recruit, I look forward to actively engaging with colleagues, exchanging ideas, and working together towards common goals. By fostering open communication and a spirit of collaboration, I aim to contribute to a productive and supportive work environment

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that encourages creativity and innovation.

Newsletter: We understand you are in the final stages of your Masters Degree in Economics. Can you tell us more why you embarked on the new academic journey?

Kuseni: I am a strong advocate for continuous learning and personal growth. I believe that staying updated with the latest industry trends, emerging technologies, and best practices enables me to bring fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to the Institute. Apart from my academic studies, during my time at IPOR, which I

consider to be a destination job, I am eager to participate in professional development opportunities, attend conferences, and engage in ongoing learning to enhance my skills and contribute effectively.

Newsletter: What moved you to consider joining IPOR?

Kuseni: As I mentioned earlier, the mission and values of the organization deeply resonate with me. The Institute's commitment to promoting continuous learning and growth aligns with my own passion for becoming a seasoned researcher. I was impressed by the Institute's reputation for excellence, its impact on local governance and policies, and its dedication to making a positive difference in the world. This alignment in

values and the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to a cause I deeply care about moved me to consider joining this organization and be part of its transformative work.

Newsletter: What are your first impressions of IPOR?

Kuseni: During my research and interactions with the institute, I was impressed by the prevailing culture that fosters collaboration, innovation, and a supportive environment where individuals are encouraged to grow both personally and professionally. I am pleased to say that since joining, my expectations have been exceeded and I feel very welcome and I am honored to be part of such a wonderful and welcoming team.

Birthday celebrations at IPOR



Ms. Kasakula (L) and Ms. Muthema (R).

IPOR's Liaison and Engagement Officer, Ms. Chimwemwe Kasakula and Research Associate, Ms. Funny Muthema, celebrated their birthdays during the quarter. Ms. Kasakula was born on 1st April, while Ms. Muthema was born on 29th April.

Speaking at a reception that IPOR hosted to celebrate the two birthdays, Ms. Kasakula, hailed IPOR management for considering to celebrate

her day in a special way, describing the occasion as unique, considering that some organisations do not hold such celebrations for their staff.

On her part, Ms. Muthema said it was a great honour, to have a celebration with all IPOR staff, saying it shows that the organisation has the welfare of employees at heart.



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