



THEME Migration

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Freeway - Free to move

Freedom to travel is regarded as a human right, but not freedom to settle, to migrate. We Zambians tend to regard the 'brain drain' as benefiting other countries at our expense. Yet we fail to welcome the 'brain gain' when foreign professionals come to Zambia, even as temporary immigrants. On the contrary, we tend to resent it. That suggests muddled thinking.

Confused thinking on this aspect is, of course, not confined to Zambia, or to Africa. It is common too in already developed countries, despite the fact that they have all benefited enormously from immigrants.

The latest issue of 'The Economist' magazine has a supplement on Migration, which contains the following statement. "Over the past few decades the freer movement of capital and traded goods has brought enormous benefits to human welfare. Similar benefits can be expected from a freer flow of people." It goes on to point out that 10% of people in Britain are now foreign born, and to add, "assuming that migrants are in work,

they are bound to benefit the economy as a whole".

This issue of the Journal contains contributions on migration from five diaspora Zambians. Most of them, while lamenting the effect of the brain drain on their home country, go on to point out that emigration also provide benefits. These include remittances to family members, contacts with foreign companies and NGOs, and valuable homecoming investments. Such investments can be especially fruitful when the migrant returns home, as one contributor has done, to manage them with newly gained knowledge and expertise.

Diaspora Zambians also offer suggestions – that we should take another look at dual citizenship, since it can benefit the home country by greatly encouraging remittances for investment, and that the government should interact with associations of Zambians living abroad.

Clearly there is need for fresh thinking on this important subject.

Living with a leaking bucket

- Chola Mukanga

Zambia's development story is one of filling a leaking bucket. The more we educate our youth, the more we suffer from the brain drain. The government can try to expand the quantity of educated Zambians, but until we find ways of reducing the leaks we won't develop fast enough to create real wealth. To address this problem, various solutions have been proposed ranging from the appeal to patriotism to stigmatising living abroad. These approaches are ineffective, and indeed cannot be expected to work as they are built on a limited understanding of the underlying causes of the brain drain problem.

Good economics is about understanding incentives and finding policies that realign those incentives to create positive outcomes. In our quest to cope with the brain drain problem, we first need to understand these incentives and then suggest how we can address them. There are two fundamental incentives that contribute to the brain drain problem. First, there are strong positive economic incentives for being abroad. As individuals, we are all trying to do what is best for ourselves and our families. If a job abroad will help feed our families and look after our people back home, why not take it? Secondly, for many Zambians abroad the political situation in Zambia acts as a strong disincentive for people to return after they complete studies. Uncertainty about our political institutions, the rule of law, constitutional rights, lack of open competition for top government jobs, and weak governance discourages the return of people who are used to expressing their views openly and working unhindered.

The rapid pace of globalisation means that Zambia will continue to face increased competition from other nations for human capital. So we must ask ourselves how the loss can be reduced. Short of rapid economic and institutional reform, the solution lies in finding ways of living with a leaking bucket. Instead of just wringing our hands, we should focus on tapping into the expertise that is outside Zambia, without necessarily asking people to move back home.

How could this work? Let's take the example of Charles, an economist. If the Government asked

Charles to relocate back to Zambia, he would most likely refuse because the personal benefits to Charles of working abroad outweigh the benefits of working in Zambia. But if Charles was asked to lend government a month each year as a consultant, Charles would readily do that because the personal costs of doing so are probably outweighed by the personal gains in other areas e.g. the psychological benefit of directly helping Zambia develop. The key point here is that this action comes at little cost to Charles, since he does not need to quit his permanent job. This is the same for doctors, engineers and other professionals.

The Government needs to think of creative ways in which people can contribute to development without necessarily residing in Zambia. This could be through external forums, monthly programmes as above, or easing the way Zambians abroad invest back home. There's a lot the Government can and should do to get around the brain drain problem.

But this is not just a government problem, Zambians abroad need to be proactive in coming up with such networks. There are already positive signs that this might happen. Zambians abroad have come together to create the Zambians Abroad Skills Network (ZASN). ZASN is aiming to link skilled people living abroad, in various domains, including academic, cultural and commercial, who wish to contribute to Zambia's economic and social development, and to connect them with local experts and projects. Through this organisation Zambians abroad can help share knowledge gained from their vast exposure to the outside world. The Zambian Diaspora can help provide consulting services in technology, medicine, real estate and business. They can supply information on college scholarships, they can make available research papers, provide social commentary, promote tourism – the list is endless. In turn members of the Diaspora can be kept abreast with real time events and opportunities in Zambia; what bills are

going to parliament, opportunities for investment and employment, social trends, etc. It's a win-win situation for Zambia and its Diaspora. The challenge is to Zambians abroad and government to achieve results by working together.

Author: Chola Mukanga is a member of Her Majesty's Government Economic Service, UK, where he currently advises on aviation policy. He regularly reflects on Zambian issues at his New Zambia blog

<http://zambian-economist.blogspot.com>

Zambia needs her Diaspora

- Chisanga Puta-Chekwe

In my farewell address as head of Oxfam Canada, I suggested that the resources of the organisation might be better employed developing strategies to cope in the global world, rather than fighting globalisation. I suggested that whether we liked it or not globalisation was now a reality. That speech was delivered almost ten years ago.

There can be little doubt today that we do indeed live in a global village. Despite this reality, however, Zambia appears to have no strategies in place to help us compete and succeed in the global world.

The term "globalisation" describes a world in which goods, services, labour, technology and capital throughout the world, move with little or no hindrance. In recent years new technologies, such as the internet, have greatly increased the pace of globalisation. Globalisation offers Zambia both opportunities and challenges. It creates opportunities for Zambian nationals with internationally marketable skills to work in foreign countries and earn significantly more money than they would do at home. On the other hand globalisation may expose the Zambian economy to cheaply produced goods from abroad and thus undermine local industry. This is one reason why any strategy designed to increase Zambia's ability to compete in the global economy must include investment in research and development. Zambia must aim to produce goods and services of international quality, even though this may well take a few years to achieve.

In the meantime however, Zambia does have nationals who are highly skilled and whose services are in great demand in the world's industrialised countries. Many of them have already left Zambia, after deep soul searching, to seek opportunities elsewhere. Nor is Zambia the only African country to "suffer" this fate. It is estimated that at least 20,000 African professionals leave the continent each year.

To the extent that Zambia has any policy on this brain drain, it seems to be that Zambians should avoid working abroad. But this policy offers no alternatives for Zambians who find that this is the only way they can support their families. The need to feed, clothe, and educate children is, however, not the only reason why Zambian professionals emigrate. Other reasons cited are lack of respect for professionalism, and the absence of intellectual freedom. Fortunately, some progress has been made with respect to the latter over the past fifteen years.

But even if local discouragements were suddenly removed, it would still not be a bad thing for some of our professionals to work abroad. Nor should foreign study be discouraged. As members of the global economic system, we must ensure that the skills we develop are comparable to the very best in the global economy. This requires cross-pollination of ideas.

There are also immediate gains to be derived from a Diaspora of skilled professionals. The evidence is overwhelming that, when given the chance to do so, Zambians abroad have a huge interest in investing in their country. This investment may take the form of simple remittances to family members or the construction of homes for future use, or indeed the purchase of shares in companies.

Unfortunately none of this is easy. Zambia is one of the most expensive places in the world to send money to. For example, a \$100 international money

order sent to a person in Zambia will attract local banking charges of \$20! So Zambians abroad tend to avoid the banking system when sending money home, relying instead on such methods as “hand-in-hand transfers”. Despite these challenges, Zambians abroad sent \$201 million home in 2006 (New Zambia, Nov. 25, 2006). They would send even more, if only local banking charges were reduced.

Zambia should also seriously consider allowing dual citizenship. This will increase the chances of Zambians abroad accessing highly paid jobs, normally reserved for citizens.

There also seems to be a correlation between dual citizenship and remittance levels.

For example, in 1990-1991, Indians abroad, sent \$2.1 billion home. In 2005, India permitted dual citizenship. The following year, Indians abroad sent \$24.6 billion to their homeland. Similar evidence comes from Ghana. In 1999 Ghanaians abroad sent \$31 million to their homeland. In 2003, Ghana allowed dual citizenship. Three years later, Ghanaians remitted \$6 billion home, which helped fuel a spectacular housing boom.

Clearly there are significant benefits from having a Zambian Diaspora and incorporating that community fully in the national affairs of the country. The Zambian Diaspora is critical in our efforts to make our country more competitive in the global economy.

**Author: Chisanga Puta-Chekwe.
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Beyond remittances

- Gracewell Mwansa

Time has come for innovative, forward thinking and positive ways for Zambia to engage with its nationals in the Diaspora who want to reach out and participate in the development of the country. The Zambian Diaspora is now a big and significant constituency which should not be ignored in the development of the country.

Zambians in the Diaspora are today showing increasing interest in their homeland, perhaps due to its reported economic resurgence; and,

for some, in the wake of immigration concerns in their countries of residence. This has promoted active discussion on Zambian websites and in associations for cultural and social get-togethers. New structures, protocols and guidance are now needed to harness and progress this desire to engage with Zambia at a more substantive level.

Historically, at the micro-economic level, evidence abounds on the role remittances from the Zambian Diaspora have played, and continue to play, in supporting family members with various financial and material needs. In addition there have been individual investments, the supply of books and computers to needy schools, of medical supplies to hospitals, and of scholarships for vulnerable school children. These efforts operate outside the ambit of mainstream development structures.

Leadership by the Government and other agencies/institutions is needed to encourage

Ø symposiums in countries with high concentration of Zambians, in order to bridge-build, discuss and compare notes on engagement with Zambia, and to chart the way forward;

Ø the Zambian Diaspora to forge and promote interest groups on health, the economy, education, etc., and, where these already exist, to strengthen them in readiness to engage with the homeland at a macro-level;

Ø donors, in their development assistance, to recognize and support, materially and financially, programs between the Zambian Diaspora and their homeland

Zambia stands to benefit from fostering a welcoming approach to those nationals outside Zambia who want to participate in the country's development

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An emigrant returns

- Alinani Simumba

Twelve years ago I left Zambia for America, attracted by my TV impressions of life in the USA and by a thirst for academic advancement. My mind was made up: this was where I wanted to live. Armed with my Zambian degree in management and my experience as production coordinator at an engineering subsidiary of Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines, I set forth on life's journey.

No one had told me about life on a tight student budget, or of restrictions on work by foreign students. Working in a grocery store and living on a shoe-string budget whilst pursuing further education was tough. I found myself questioning my decision.

But five long years later, after graduating from university, life's gates opened up and it seemed that I had made the right decision. The challenges of being an immigrant had been worth while, and had changed me from an introvert to an extrovert. With that foundation I went on to work at regional management level for Mettler Toledo, a global leader in weighing solutions, and also to obtain an MBA. America offered a bright future.

But Zambia also beckoned. Family links had remained strong, and I wanted to be with my aging parents and to share my success with them. My wife and I also want the children to benefit from the close family culture which they can only experience in Zambia. Moreover, I was now well equipped by higher education and my global cultural and professional experience, to make a positive impact at home, where today there is plenty of opportunity for Zambians with qualifications and determination. So my wife and I decided that the time had come for us to move back home to a new life in our own environment.

Author: Alinani Simumba, after 12 years abroad, is now returning home as an entrepreneur.

The pros and cons of migration

- Chiara Chiumya

With globalisation, changing demographics, and differences in wages and opportunity, migration

is a topical issue. Historically, the migration of professionals, termed the "brain drain", was generally considered to be one in which the recipient country benefited at the expense of the source country.

The flight of human capital has been a major concern for a number of years, especially for African countries which can ill afford to lose skilled labour. The availability of statistics in this area is scant. There has been no systematic record of the number of skilled professionals that Africa has lost to the developed world. However, it is estimated that more than one third of the most highly qualified African nationals live outside their country of origin. According to the Economic Commission for Africa an estimated 27,000 highly qualified Africans (lecturers, engineers, doctors, etc) left the continent between 1960 and 1975. By 1987, the annual number of emigrants had risen to approximately 8,000, and over 20,000 in the 1990s.

Perhaps the most striking impact has been in the healthcare sector. In Zambia, for instance, in 2000, the World Health Organisation estimated that 1,500 doctors were needed for the country's health system. At that time, 800 medical doctors were registered with the Zambian Medical Council. Although, Zambia had trained over 600 Zambian medical graduates, only 50 of these worked in the public sector.

There has been increasing acknowledgement in recent years, however, that source countries may benefit from emigration; and with this shift in thinking, a change in terminology from "human capital flight" or "brain drain" to "professional mobility".

This article briefly analyses the advantages and disadvantages of migration:

The most direct effect of migration to the source country is the reduction of highly

skilled professionals who are critical to productivity and economic growth. These professionals are often the highest taxpayers in their countries and their departure results in the loss of a substantial source of income which could be taxed and redistributed. Related to this is the loss of investment in education and training. Especially where the education and training has been subsidised, the source country bears the costs, but does not benefit from the returns to its investment in human capital. Furthermore, to compensate for the loss of human capital, the source country may have to incur additional costs of attracting foreign staff.

Migration can also lead to a sharp decrease in the availability and quality of services in the source country, the effects of which tend to be felt mainly in rural areas and the public sector, where Zambia in recent years has experienced a mass exodus of health care professionals and teachers..

For these reasons, the emigration of skilled professionals is generally considered a major development constraint for the African continent. It has a negative effect on the source country's economic growth and can hinder its long term development and poverty reduction.

As noted in the introduction, there has been increasing acknowledgement of the benefits to be derived by the source country from the emigration of its skilled professionals.

Firstly, because emigration is seen as beneficial by the populace, it provides an incentive for source country's citizens to invest in education in anticipation of being able to migrate once they become highly skilled. Since not everyone will be able to migrate, there may be an increase in the source country's post-migration level of human capital, with a subsequent positive impact on productivity and, ultimately, the stimulation of economic growth.

Secondly, source countries benefit from the impact of migrant remittances on poverty reduction, foreign reserves and the balance of payments. These funds improve household incomes and indirectly enhance local trade. Even if spent on consumption, remittances have "GDP multiplier effects" which increase national income. In some countries,

remittances represent a significant proportion of GDP.

Thirdly, emigrants maintain contacts, connections and networks with their home countries that facilitate trade, capital flows and knowledge diffusion. These networks can yield a flow back of knowledge and new technologies that boost productivity and the source country's economic growth and development. Moreover, a number of migrants do return to their home countries, bringing back their skills and work experience from abroad, thus boosting productivity. This is sometimes referred to as "brain circulation".

As mentioned above, recipient countries also benefit from migration.

Firstly immigrant labour fills gaps in the labour force, caused by a number of factors such as an aging populations and skills shortage. In developed countries unskilled labour tends to be employed in jobs that the locals shun or would have been outsourced.

Secondly, immigrants increase domestic labour supply, because they demand goods and services, the overall effect of which is to increase demand and stimulate economic growth. Jobs are created and there's an increased demand for labour, leading to higher wages. An expanding labour force provides an incentive for capital investment and leads to faster economic growth.

Furthermore, because skilled and unskilled labour complement one another in the production process, the skilled immigrants may have a significant positive impact on low-skilled workers' productivity and wages, thus reducing poverty and income inequality.

Thirdly, immigrants, through the provision of certain services, such as childcare, make it possible for more skilled local labour to work, once again increasing productivity.

Fourthly, immigrants, especially professionals, broaden the recipient country's tax base.

It is often argued that immigrants displace the local workforce, depress wages, and are a fiscal burden. But as the above discussion on advantages shows, these disadvantages are insignificant in relation to the overall benefits derived by the recipient country. On the other hand, there is still considerable debate as to whether these benefits do in fact outweigh the costs incurred by source countries. What is immediately apparent, however, is that African countries have not benefited from the loss of their skilled professionals.

Much of the brain drain in Africa is attributable not only to poor economic conditions, but also to other factors such as political violence, the repression of human rights, and the lack of professional and technological environments that are conducive to self-fulfilment. The situation has been exacerbated by developed countries that employ active and open poaching of talent, using a range of incentives and institutional arrangements to attract skilled labour. There is, therefore, a need for developing countries to implement policies that address the root causes of migration noted above, and to engage appropriately in the exchange of skills taking place in the global labour market.

Author; Dr. Chiara Chiumya is Bank regulator with Bank of Zambia currently on secondment to the University of Pretoria.

The Squirrel and the Grasshopper A Cautionary Tale from Britain

- Anon

The squirrel works hard in the withering heat all summer long, building his house and laying up supplies for the winter. The grasshopper thinks he's a fool, and laughs and dances and plays the summer away. Come winter, the squirrel is warm and well fed.

A professional social worker finds the shivering grasshopper, calls a press conference and demands to know why the squirrel should be allowed to be warm and well fed while others less fortunate, like the grasshopper, are cold and

starving. The BBC shows up to provide live coverage of the shivering grasshopper; with cuts to a video of the squirrel in his comfortable warm home with a table laden with food. The British press inform people that they should be ashamed that in a country of such wealth, this poor grasshopper is allowed to suffer so, while others have plenty.

The Labour Party, Greenpeace, Animal Rights and The Grasshopper Council of Great Britain demonstrate in front of the squirrel's house. The BBC, interrupting a cultural festival special with breaking news, broadcasts a multi cultural choir singing "We Shall Overcome".

Ken Livingstone, Lord Mayor of London, declares that the squirrel got rich off the backs of grasshoppers, and calls for an immediate tax hike on the squirrel to make him pay his "fair share", and increases the charge for squirrels to enter inner London. In response to pressure from the EU, the Government drafts the Economic Equity and Grasshopper Anti Discrimination Act, retroactive to the beginning of the summer. The squirrel's taxes are reassessed. He is taken to court and fined for failing to hire grasshoppers as builders for the work he was doing on his home, with an additional fine for contempt when he told the court the grasshopper did not want to work.

The grasshopper is provided with a council house, financial aid to furnish it and an account with a local taxi firm to ensure he can be socially mobile. The squirrel's food is seized and redistributed to the more needy members of society, in this case the grasshopper. Without enough money to buy more food and to pay the fine, the squirrel has to downsize and start building a new home.

A Panorama special shows the grasshopper finishing up the last of the squirrel's food, though spring is still months away, while the council house he is in crumbles around him because he hasn't bothered to maintain it. He is shown to be taking drugs. Inadequate

government funding is blamed for the grasshopper's drug 'illness'.

The grasshopper gets arrested for stabbing an old dog during a burglary to get money for his drugs habit. He is imprisoned, but is later released immediately by the court because he has been in custody for a few weeks. He is placed in the care of the probation service to monitor and supervise him. Within a few weeks he has killed a guinea pig in a botched robbery.

A commission of enquiry, that will eventually cost £10,000,000, is set up. Additional money is put into funding a drug rehabilitation scheme for grasshoppers and legal aid for lawyers representing asylum seekers is increased.

The grasshopper dies of a drug overdose. The usual sections of the press blame it on the obvious failure of government to address the root causes of despair arising from social inequity and his traumatic experience of prison. They call for the resignation of a minister.

The squirrel ? He moved to Australia.

Quotation of the month

Most often migration is about young, motivated, dynamic people seeking to better themselves by hard work. History has shown that immigration encourages prosperity. Tens of millions of Europeans who made it to the New World in the 19th and 20th centuries improved their lot, just as the near 40m foreign-born are doing in America today. Many migrants return home with new skills, savings, technology and bright ideas. Remittances to poor countries in 2006 were worth at least \$260 billion - more, in many countries, than aid and foreign investment combined.

The movement of people also helps the rich world..... Indeed, advanced economies compete vigorously for outsiders' skills. Around a third of the Americans who won Nobel prizes in physics in the past seven years were born abroad. About 40% of science and engineering PhDs working in America are immigrants. Around a third of Silicon Valley companies were started by Indians and Chinese.

The Economist Newspaper' 5th January 2008

Zambia's Civil Service Reforms:

Where are the results?

- Njunga Mulikita

1. Purpose of the Civil Service Reforms in the 3rd Republic

In 1993, following the landmark elections of 1991, which restored multiparty politics in Zambia, the government announced the launch of the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP).

The overall goal of the programme was to improve the quality, delivery, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the Public Service to the people of Zambia. In order to realize this goal the Public Service Reform Programme had three specific objectives:

§ To improve government capacity to formulate, analyze national policies and perform its appropriate functions.

§ To effectively manage expenditure to meet fiscal stabilization objectives.

§ To make the Public Service more efficient and responsible to the needs of the country's population.

2. Influence of New Public Management Vision on Zambia's Civil Service Reforms

Zambia's PSRP was underpinned by assumptions of the New Public Management (NPM) which had gained widespread prominence in western countries such as the USA, New Zealand and Canada in the late 1980s.

The NPM School essentially calls for the infusion of private sector results based work culture into the civil service in order to refocus the civil service from adherence to procedures and processes to outputs and results.

NPM is underpinned by 10 characteristics:

1. Governments should steer rather than row, and monitor services provided rather than delivering them.

2. Community empowering - encouraging local groups to solve their own problems, rather than dictating bureaucratic solutions.
3. Competitive - deregulating and privatizing activities that could be carried out better by the private sector or non-governmental organizations.
4. Mission driven - setting goals, and allowing employees to find the best ways of meeting them.
5. Results oriented - funding outcomes rather than inputs.
6. Consumer driven - meeting the needs of citizens rather than those of the bureaucracy.
7. Enterprising - earning revenues rather than just spending tax resources.
8. Anticipatory - aiming to prevent problems rather than solve them.
9. Decentralizing – working through participation and teamwork among government agencies and with groups outside government.
10. Market oriented - solving problems through market forces rather than government programmes.

In short, these ten key NPM assumptions underpinned the civil service reforms launched in 1993. In essence NPM calls for smaller, less costly and more efficient government.

3. Where are the Results of the Civil Service Reforms?

a) Downsizing

A vital dimension of the Civil Service Reforms was to downsize the civil service so as to cut back on bureaucratic and unproductive expenditures. The World Bank Report of 1991 on “the Public Sector Management Review” had recorded that the public service grew at an average rate of 60 percent per annum between 1975 and 1990, while private sector wage earners declined from 250,260 to 135,471. The share of public servants in total formal employment had doubled from about one-fifth in 1975 to over half in 1990.

Since 1993 the government has been downsizing the civil service through targeted retrenchment and eliminating ghost workers. However, gains in reducing the size of the bureaucracy have been cancelled out by the government's inability to pay out statutory severance payments. Current labour laws

dictate that employees must be kept on the payroll until their severance packages are paid.

Secondly, gains from downsizing the civil service were negated by a phenomenal expansion of the political bureaucracy in the 3rd Republic. There are far too many Ministers and Deputy Ministers in government. The core work of any government Ministry is performed by the Minister, as the political Head of the Ministry, and the Permanent Secretary. Deputy Ministers are for the most part 'spectators' with no clear Terms of Reference (TORs), while requiring huge overheads in salaries, vehicles, fringe benefits, etc.

b) Serving Citizens More Effectively

Today Government Ministries and Departments display their mission statements in an effort to increase public sector accountability. But where is the complaints mechanism to afford citizens the opportunity to report rudeness or non-delivery of services? Despite the rhetoric aimed at promoting more honest and transparent government, no national surveys have been carried out to gauge the impact of the reforms.

As a result many departments, such as the Department of Lands, have become synonymous with poor service delivery. The much talked about health reforms led to the creation of a bureaucratic top-heavy Central Board of Health (CBoH) that had to be dismantled on account of devouring resources needed in the rural sector. It is commonplace to read about government ministries not only violating financial regulations, but even obstructing the Auditor-General. It is difficult to see how the civil service can serve citizens more effectively, when billions of kwacha cannot be accounted for.

c) Decentralization

Zambia now has a decentralization policy aimed at empowering local

authorities in order to improve the quality of life of people in their jurisdictions. Implementation of the policy, which repeats previous similar attempts, enjoys the good will of many donors. An elaborate Decentralization Implementation Plan (DIP) provides a road map. However the DIP has become a hostage to bureaucracy and party politics. Bureaucrats contest its location and measure of independence from the Ministry of Local Government, while politicians fear that it might enable the opposition Patriotic Front, which controls many local authorities, to run a 'parallel government'. Implementation of the DIP is therefore highly uncertain.

4. Conclusion :

Zambia's Civil Service reforms have been under implementation for over a decade. It is, however, difficult to show tangible and measurable results. For Zambia to become a more capable state, debate about civil service reforms should not be confined to the offices and corridors of elite bureaucrats in Cabinet Office, but rather be opened to the public.

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. They are not necessarily shared by members or by ZIPPA, which has no official view.

A wiki for ZIPPA

ZIPPA needs an active web site. And now we have it, in the form of a wiki. Visit it at zippawiki.org

Wikis are not yet well known in Zambia. But they soon will be. To quote an official description, 'A wiki is a browser-based collaborative writing environment, in which a community may amass and exchange information on particular topics, and to which anyone can contribute without having web programming skills. In other words, a wiki is a piece of software that is used for collaborative content creation.'

Users of Wikipedia, the on-line encyclopedia, already have wiki experience. Wikipedia has been built up over the past 5 years, until it now has 80 times as many articles as the famous Encyclopedia Britannica! And those articles have been contributed by its readers. Accuracy is ensured by the fact that anyone can visit Wikipedia and improve existing entries by making corrections or additions to ensure greater accuracy and fuller information.

zippawiki is based on the same software, called WikiMedia, and therefore has the same limitless capacity as Wikipedia. So we now have a potential encyclopedia for information and ideas relevant to and useful for ZIPPA's vision of 'a vibrant national economy, leading to continuous improvement in the country's Human Development Index', and its mission: 'To promote wider appreciation of the key role of free markets and competition in economic development.'

The wiki will be open to anyone and everyone who cares to visit it. We aim to make it a mine of information and ideas. As for contributions, amendments and discussion, individual ZIPPA members will be able to log in as participants. Institute and company members will be free to nominate employees.

Wikis are extremely easy to 'navigate', and the Help page explains just how to find your way around. So visit zippawiki.org and enjoy it, and let us have your comments and ideas for improvement.

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Next Theme

Economic Empowerment will be the theme of the April Journal. What are your views ?Send an article of up to 600 words to The Editor, zippamail@gmail.com or P O Box 20516, Kitwe.

Membership applications and renewals are still welcome and at quarter price for new members. Please give ZIPPA your support by returning the attached form with your subscription.

ZAMBIA INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

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