

# Economic growth through education

By DAVIS MULENGA

**O**PEN and distance learning has helped to catalyse Zambia's development of human capital, says Justice Minister Given Lubinda.

In his address to the University of Africa (UoA) 6th graduation ceremony recently held in Lusaka, Lubinda said the mode had equivalent status of conventional education, and played an important role to overcome challenges of building the necessary human capital needed to realise outcomes of the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP). The plan was a precursor to Vision 2030.

"Our economy needs to grow faster. Getting your diplomas and degrees is a step in the right direction but we want you to do more in creating sustainable development, specifically, you need to apply your newly acquired skills to make a positive difference to yourselves and society," Lubinda told the jubilant graduates in a speech read for him by a representative from his ministry.

In his summation of the graduation theme of "Upholding a transformative education as key for social culture and economic development", he challenged the graduates to have a tangible impact on the realisation of the key outcomes of 7NDP.

The outcomes included economic diversification and job creation; poverty and vulnerability reduction; reduced developmental inequalities; enhanced human development.

"The growth of distance learning has acted as a powerful lever to accelerate building of the necessary human capital we need as a nation. Women, working people and those disadvantaged by lack of money, distance and other

obstacles are now getting higher education in great numbers. For example, the majority of graduates today are women. Thanks to open and distance learning and University of Africa that has helped to expand this mode of attaining tertiary qualifications," Lubinda said.

The impact of distance learning is significant given that there were only 100 graduates when Zambia attained independence in 1964.

Thus emerged the importance of educating the masses as a prioritised national task, and was a hobbyhorse by the first Republican President Dr Kenneth Kaunda who spent much of his administration hammering away at the importance of education in eradicating poverty, disease and hunger which he termed as offshoots of ignorance.

However, up until 2013 when the University Act of 1999 was replaced with Higher Education Act, there were only two public universities that were bursting at the seams due to increased enrollment of students amidst deteriorating learning conditions, including infrastructure.

The new law paved way for more growth of higher learning institutions currently standing at seven public universities and nearly 70 private.

Reiterating the importance of higher education in development, Chancellor Ruth Mubanga said with Zambia sought radical and urgent solutions to attain key outcomes of 7NDP, the relevance of transformative education would become



• **CHUNGU Kabaso, Head of Commerce and Development Studies, leads the procession of the 6th University of Africa graduation ceremony held in Lusaka recently.**

more poignant.

Dr Mubanga said injecting transformative learning in the current education system would ensure a critical mass of a new breed of graduates who are able to make a positive difference to society.

She listed disruptive thinking, effective communication, including the simple skills of listening, and collaborative problem-solving as the main attributes of transformative education.

"At UoA we strive to shape

our learners in transformative education. This allows them to master existing frames of reference as well as learn new ones to transform points of view as well as shift mindsets.

"This is best captured in the Zambian proverb in Bemba:

*'Tekuti ulabe unulimo untu waishiba bwino'*. For the benefit of speakers of other languages, this simply means that you cannot forget a skill that you have mastered well," she said.

Dr Mubanga said as

the word 'transformative' essentially implied a being or thing changing from one form to a completely different nature, embracing it would establish a firm foundation for every Zambian to effectively contribute to development.

"Embracing transformative education at all levels would eventually re-shape the belief system of the nation, including the notion that government was solely responsible for creating sustainable development.

"Our belief system shapes who we are and who we become. It is this belief system that will shape our contributions to the development of our community. If as a people we believe there is a government that will do everything for us, it will be expected for government to pick up the trash we carelessly dispose of, then we shall not take care of our environment and in the end shall indiscriminately dispose of our skills," she said.

Thomas van der Zee, representing ADVTECH, the major shareholder in UoA, said they were committed to play a complementary role to government's efforts in creating sustainable development.

On the difficulty graduates faced in finding employment, he says more than 70 per cent of students in various private learning institutions of ADVTECH, the major shareholder in UoA, got jobs after graduation.

ADVTECH counted Rosebank College, Varsity College, Vega and other premium private schools in addition to UoA among its assets in the provision of private education. It boasted of more than 40,000 graduates under the bouquet of its private higher learning institutions. The company's investment private education sector was in excess of K3 billion.

On future priorities, Van der zee said ADVTECH was seeking further expansion in the Zambia and the rest of Africa where it had a student base of more than 2,000.

## Ulendo: Claude's African Journey into war and Passion

**A**N important book, making refreshing and unusually significant contributions to the colonial history of Zambia, has recently landed on the local book market.

*Ulendo: Claude's African Journey into War and Passion* by Malcolm Alexander, is a compelling account of his uncle and a colonial officer, Claude Oldfield, who arrived in Northern Rhodesia in mid-September 1911 and left the British protectorate in 1932.

He returned to the United Kingdom because of the world economic depression of 1929-1935 forced downsizing the colonial civil service in Northern Rhodesia.

He was 22-years-old when he arrived, and lived

in Northern Rhodesia for the next 21 years. He was not a brilliant student at Cambridge.

He qualified for the colonial service by virtue of having studied at the University of Cambridge, that rebel institution that broke away from Oxford University at the beginning of the thirteenth Century.

Universities of Oxford and Cambridge eventually specialised and acquired an additional function of producing a British colonial civil service.

Oldfield's colonial service was a journey with a purpose. Ulendo is more than "going for a walk in the bush". This journey (*Ulendo*) requires careful planning, a timeline

and mobilisation of resources.

The planning will include a categorical statement of objectives and strategies of attaining those intentions. Written reports are required after the tours.

In colonial Zambia these formed that rare archival data known as District Notebook. It is an invaluable, common and systemic assessment of colonial policies at local levels.

Regular and well-planned journeys were those for tax collection or monitoring those that had not paid taxes. Some of these inspections were surprise raids in many parts of colonial Zambia.

These tours were also used to monitor levels of cleanliness in various

villages. Rural residents were required to have pit-latrines and rubbish pits where garbage or waste matter was thrown.

During some of these administrative tours some chiefs lost inherited authority. Some of these detronements have remained a thorn of contention in independent Zambia.

Thus Claude Oldfield was a field operative in a colonial system where he was in frequent contact with colonial subjects.

The book is therefore a study of how the colonial state functioned, using carefully planned tours.

Dying at 74 on 21 February 1963, Claude Oldfield closely followed advancing decolonisation in Zambia, particularly from 1956.

Oldfield served briefly in Ndola, Mkushi, Mporokoso, Fort Rosebery (Mansa), and provided leaver cover in Serenje and Lundazi. Between the mid- and late 1920s while the British Colonial Office deceived Zambians on building indigenous institutions through introduction of the Policy of Indirect Rule, Oldfield cast covetous eyes on missionary Mabel Shaw and fathered a daughter with Dorothy, a wife of his close associate.

In rare clarity of presentation, Alexander brings out the symbolic connections of private dishonesty among colonial officials, agents of imperial rule and British colonial policies.

It remains a curiosity how long the voice of Oldfield's illegitimate daughter and only child shall remain silent.

As we await that voice, Zambian historians or all interested in Zambiana studies are challenged by Alexander's high quality of scholarship. Despite suppressing the voice of Audrey (daughter of Oldfield with Mrs. Dorothy Jeffreys, p. 408) Malcolm Alexander carried out a systematic research into primary and sources.

The book is well written because diverse engagements of Claude Oldfield are situated clearly in major policy

during critical events in the empire as seen through the protectorate of Northern Rhodesia.

Oldfield served in North-Eastern Rhodesia, mainly in what is now Northern Province of Zambia.

His base was Mbala (then known as Abercorn). The north is a part of Zambia where

developments in colonial Zambia well up to the time Oldfield was in retirement in the United Kingdom and independent Zambia was born.

Alexander presented his findings in emphatic clarity and ways that portray history as a study of activities of human beings.

### Book Review

Alexander's focus on human activity is also vividly shown in releasing the book at a time Zambia celebrated the centenary of the end of the First World War on a correct date (25 November 2018) rather than the wrong date the World had done in the past one hundred years.

Oldfield was part of the parade where General von Lettow-Vorbeck, Commander of German Army in German East Africa surrendered at Mbala, some 200 kilometres north of Kasama where he had received instructions to surrender.

This is a particularly significant challenge for the review of Zambia's role in the First World War.

Alexander concludes his great uncle's ulendo, fast forward, by surmising what Claude Oldfield's views or reactions would have been had he lived during the period when British colonies and protectorates in Africa, more specifically, Northern Rhodesia and those bordering, struggled for and attained political independence.

Unfortunately, the chapter contains a number of minor misrepresentations in terms of facts and context.

Prominent among these, are statements associating Sylvester Chisembele as one of the leaders of rival political parties during the leadership of Kenneth Kaunda (p.378); "Kaunda grudgingly recognised the need for reform;" "Chiluba, despite an unsuccessful coup attempt in 1997, was eventually forced to stand down in 2002;" "That government was replaced by the Patriotic Front, a

new opposition party, led by Michael Sata, until his death in October 2011." (p.380).

It is common knowledge that growing unrest, food riots and blatant public opposition to one-party dictatorship gave Kaunda no choice but forced to reform. Similarly, it was the growing mounted opposition to an unconstitutional third term rule by churches, lawyers, members of parliament, civil society organisation that forced Frederick Chiluba to stand down in 2001 (not 2002).

Furthermore, Michael Sata died in 2014 (not 2011).

I should further note that the finest excellence has negotiable weaknesses. I shall mention only two.

First, the book should have

been given one title. Second, the appendix on First World War is confusing because it is not clear whether there is one document or there are two documents.

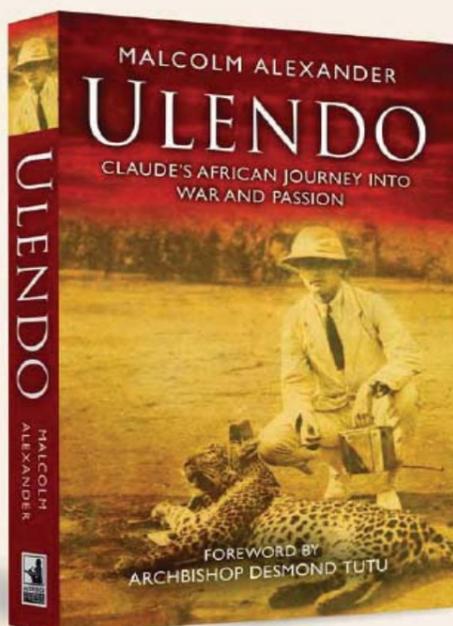
Both its strengths and weaknesses, nonetheless, make this book a significant scholarly product on Zambia and beyond.

A History of Empire seen through the Life of Claude Oldfield (1889-1963): British Colonial Officer, Northern Rhodesia (London: Aldridge Press, 2018), pp. xxii+ 424, ISBN 9780952065159.

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