

Initiatives in Kenya

Strengthening a CIB Nation

CIB aims to engage individuals in honest conversations on the broad issues associated with globalization and the role that the individual can play in bringing positive changes in business and economic life. In order to take this idea ahead, I visited Kenya in 2013. I met various industrialists and businesspersons who instantly wanted to be part of the larger precept of CIB. Unfortunately, things did not quite work out as planned. Therefore, the effort to revive the CIB Kenya chapter began on May 24, 2017. A friend's daughter in Nairobi hosted me.

Our attempt was to form a core team to drive this initiative and involve industry in the dialogue to improve its effectiveness through integrity. In order to fulfill this, help from the local team was necessary. Therefore, Joseph Karanja, an old IofC friend, came over to discuss the way forward and plan how to make best use of our time there. We started by meeting Johnson Mwakazi, a dynamic media person running his own Company.

As Mwakazi got to know more about CIB and its efforts, he arranged for me to meet members of the Kenya National



James Mageria, Chairman, Karen Hospital

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI). He himself agreed to be part of the CIB core team.

Another key person was Dr. James Mageria. Mageria is the Chairman of the Karen Group of Hospitals, which is one of the largest hospitals in Kenya. He is also part of a 'Think Tank'. The members of this group are many top industrialists, businessmen and influential people from the government. Joseph and I were invited to join them at their breakfast meeting for about forty-five minutes. However, as the discussions went on, they got so involved, interested and excited with the whole idea that the meeting continued for more than two hours. Together we discussed the possible shape, structure and sustainable activities of CIB in Kenya.

Mageria agreed to go through the Constitution of CIB and sign the MOU. His main concern seemed to be sustaining the movement since in his previous attempts, industry Heads had asked him what Industry



Ashwin Patel, Senior Partner, Ashwin Brothers

could gain from aligning themselves in this. They wanted long-term interactions at different levels to continue to bring about a mindset change for all levels in Industry.

Ashwin Patel, Chairman of IofC, Kenya, whom we met next, expressed the same thoughts. He also wanted a sustained effort to continuously engage business & industry the

way we do in India for bringing about worthwhile change.

Faced with this challenge, we met another old friend, David Bernard-



(R to L): David Bernard-Stevens, Dr. Amit Mukherjee and Ms. Ruth Jepngetich Bernard-Stevens

Stevens, an ex Senator from the US who has settled down in Kenya to bring about mindset change, through training people at all levels.

Through International

Peace Initiatives, a multinational organization, he has established a Training Centre in Meru, outside Nairobi.

With this in our kitty, we went to the KNCCI. When asked why we wanted to bring change in Kenyan Industry, we expressed how we were pained to see that Kenya was importing most of what the common man used, including used clothes and shoes, while assembling cars and mobile phones in Kenya. We also wondered whether any efforts were being made for import substitution, which has given India a huge advantage and created a huge market. This has also enhanced the purchasing power of the common man by providing more jobs and opportunities to earn.

George Klondo, CEO of KNCCI and Kassim Were, their Manager for Trade, Research & Policy, wanted to know more and bring a delegation to CIB, 2018.

Next, I was invited to attend a Breakfast Meeting of some of the leading thinkers for Kenya. It was a joy to meet some who I had met earlier

and remembered our rendering of the 'Gap Song'. I had to do it again and it got recorded for airing over the Nairobi media. Out of the many I met that morning were Morompie Ole-Ronkei, Chairman of the Talta Taveta University; Mr. Gabriel Odhiambo Achayo, a very popular Student Leader in Kenya: Mike Harries, CEO, Karamaini Estate: Samuel E. Owen, an influential Church Leader and Charles K. Mwiti, CEO, Lindberg Co. which also has a Travel business. Charles decided to bring as many from the group to CIB 2018 through his Agency.

We were then invited by another old friend Ms. Joy Mbaabu, who runs an Institute to train Entrepreneurs, mostly women. She wants to bring a delegation to CIB 2018 too. And, she knew Charles Mwiti, who she entrusted to make their travel arrangements. They requested to be shown some industries in the Pune area.

With all these happenings, we met our good old friend Bedan Mbugua, CEO of an Agricultural Company and the Africa Head of a Health



Bedan Mbugua, Director, Herbal Garden Ltd.

Product importing company. He is a very respected person in Kenya because of his stand on honesty, even opposing the President, for which he was put in jail for long terms. It has not broken him at all. He is still ready to go! In fact he not only wanted to be a member of the core committee of CIB, but wanted to kick start the process by asking Safaricom, the largest company in Kenya, to nominate their top brass, whom he knew, for a training program in Meru.

To wrap up all these, we had another meeting with Dr. James Mageria and Ashwin Patel. Both wanted more people to be involved in rolling CIB out in Kenya. So, we fixed a meeting, on my way to the airport, with James and Mike Muikia who is a young, dynamic, media person. He makes documentaries for Institutions and Corporate Houses.

Mike agreed to work with Joseph to co ordinate future action and chase up on all the leads we have. They have the blessings of James, Bedan and Ashwin, along with the support of David's Training Program at Meru.



(R to L): Joseph Karanja, Dr. A. Mukherjee, Mike Muikia

The last I heard they had convened their first Core Group Meeting to assess the training program and start rolling it out to get the active participation of Industry.

The rest is in God`s hands!

*Dr. Amit Mukherjee
India*