

## **LLTC UPDATE ON THE THIRD PARTY ASSESSMENT IN MALAWI**

Control Union (CU) assessed Limbe Leaf Tobacco Company's (LLTC) implementation of the Agricultural Labour Practices (ALP) program in September, 2014. There were several adjustments needed to the reporting methodology and format which impacted the release of the report. LLTC appreciates the risks identified by CU during the assessment and came up with an action plan undertaking various initiatives to deal with the risks and to improve the living and working conditions on farms from where LLTC sources its tobacco. This report provides a brief overview of the progress made by LLTC on the implementation of the said action plans.

### **Program Management and Internal Processes**

#### **i. Field Technicians (FT's)**

The ALP structure has been enhanced to ensure that not only managers have sufficient understanding of the ALP program but also FT's who are responsible for imparting knowledge to the farmers and farming communities. There has therefore been enhanced and focused training to ensure that the FTs are fully equipped to impart knowledge to farmers. FTs knowledge on the legal minimum wage and definition of hazardous work and the ALP code has been enhanced through a Modular Training Program. LLTC has retrained 104 FTs on all the seven principles and legal aspects of the ALP code. To ensure an in-depth understanding of what comprises hazardous /light work, a Hazardous/Light work list has been distributed to all FTs. The list has increased FT awareness on what tasks children can or cannot do. FTs have also been trained on farm monitoring procedures and handling of Prompt Actions upon identification. A Prompt Actions List has been provided to all FTs.

Training of personnel in the ALP structure is ongoing.

#### **ii. ALP Committees**

To increase community buy in of the ALP code, the ALP Committees play an important role. To improve the Committees' efficiency, LLTC has trained 110 ALP Committees on the seven principles of ALP code and on farm monitoring. 400 T-shirts with messages on child labor and safe accommodation have been distributed to motivate the ALP Committees and spread the message on child labor and safe accommodation. A well trained and competent ALP committee will be able to train other farmers but also monitor and report breaches.

## **a) Internal Monitoring**

### **i. Farm Profile**

CU found that of the farms sampled, 91% had updated data of which 52% was accurate. To ensure that there is data accuracy and continuous updates of farm profiles, LLTC through the IT agronomy section trained 104 FT's on farm monitoring, data capture and data accuracy.

#### **ALP Communication to farmers**

Communication to farmers is through one on one interaction with field employees, group training, drama, distribution of leaflets as well as radio.

#### **a. ALP & Green Tobacco Sickness (GTS) Leaflets**

ALP and GTS Leaflets have been amended to include the recommended legal provisions. The amended versions have been translated into local languages and distributed to farmers and farmer wives.

#### **b. Training**

CU noted that levels of awareness on ALP principles amongst LLTC's contracted farmers was highest for topics that had been prioritized (child labour and safe working environment). To ensure that farmers have equal knowledge of the ALP principles, LLTC has trained 100% of contracted farmers (11,732) on all ALP Principles. Training has been extended to farmer wives and children. 4,552 children were trained on child labor through school awareness programs.

The benefit of the farmer wives training under the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) has had ripple effects. Through the VSLA's the farmer wives have acquired knowledge not only on the seven principles of ALP but also on financial literacy. Farmer wives continue to learn about business and investments. From the proceeds of their business they have managed to acquire livestock, pay fees for their children in school and employ temporary labor.

Training was conducted through Individual and group training, radio skits and drama. 95 Drama sessions and 164 radio skits have been aired. 2000 ALP Leaflets have been distributed to communicate the ALP principles to farmers and other people on the farms.



Figure1: Farmer training



Figure 2: VSLA in Rumphi



Figure 3: School awareness

## **Farm Level Initiatives**

### **a. Child Labor**

LLTC has trained field staff, farmers, farmer wives and ALP Committees to increase their awareness on child labor. Apart from training, LLTC continues to align its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) budget to education activities and for the crop year 2017 CSR budget has 4 classrooms, provision of learning materials to 3 primary schools and 3 Community Based Childcare Centre (CBCC), a library and under 12 and under 15 primary football and netball for all Lilongwe rural and urban schools among corporate responsibility projects.



*Figure 4: Farmer in a VSLA in Kasungu*

- **Support CBCC's**

LLTC recognizes the vital role of early childhood development. The CBCC's not only assist in child hood development but also reduce the number of children exposed to hazardous work as parents are able to leave their children at the center and go to the field. Currently LLTC has 3 CBCC's with over 300 children. In addition to the learning materials mentioned above, LLTC has supported the CBCC's with provision of nutritious porridge and play materials.



*Figure 5: Chipeni CBCC-Dowa*



*Figure 6: Nutritious food*

**b. Safe work environment**

LLTC considers a safe work environment as critical and as part of the ALP program trains farmers on safe work environment. During the assessment, CU identified some gaps under Crop Protection Agents (CPA), Green Tobacco Sickness and safe Accommodation. LLTC continues to implement various initiatives to address safety on farms and has since the CU assessment increased focus on training. As at date of this update:

- 11732 contracted farmers and 2171 workers have been trained on GTS and prevention methods.

- 5220 (87% of target) farmer wives trained on GTS and tasks which are considered hazardous to pregnant and nursing mothers.
- 6453 Farmers have been trained on safe usage of CPA's and provided with PPE and CPA storage buckets.
- 2000 leaflets have been distributed to farmers.
- 69 drama sessions and 164 radio skits on GTS prevention and safe usage of CPAs have been played and aired.

LLTC has trained 1269 farmers that hire labor on the need to provide adequate accommodation.

#### **c. Income and Work Hours**

To enhance farmer and worker awareness on the legal income and working hours, LLTC developed template agreement for farmers and their workers. 5000 copies of the template have been distributed. The template contains provisions of the minimum wage and a table to record wages and legal working hours for ease of reference. To complement the contract templates, LLTC has also distributed 2000 ALP leaflets again containing legal provisions on income and work hours to farmers and members of VSLAs. 6,536 farmers and 2,171 workers have also been trained on income and work hours.

#### **d. Fair treatment**

During the CU assessment it was found that some workers were unable to file grievances. LLTC has taken an initiative to extend the functionality of the ALP Committees by mandating the ALP Committees to also serve as a grievance mechanism body.

In addition, LLTC is planning an in-house help line that will act as a support mechanism. LLTC is in the process of purchasing the toll line equipment.

These support mechanisms will help LLTC to reduce incidences of unfair treatment on the farms as workers will be able to report grievances allowing for prompt solutions.

#### **e. Forced Labor**

LLTC continues to monitor incidents of forced labour on farmers during farm visits as well as sensitizing farmers on what would constitute forced labour. 2055 farmers have been trained.

#### **f. Freedom of Association**

To ensure that workers have the freedom to associate, LLTC has trained 1309 farmers and 2171 workers on freedom of association.

**g. Compliance with the Law**

CU found that some workers were not informed of their rights and duties in the workplace. To avoid abuse of workers in the workplace, LLTC has trained 1220 farmers on the importance of having written agreements with their workers and as stated above has distributed 5000 farmer-worker contract templates to encourage written agreements between farmers and workers.

**Conclusion**

LLTCs ongoing commitment to bring ALP code awareness to tobacco farming communities and in particular LLTCs contracted farmers continues to entrench the principles of the ALP code. This commitment capacitates farmers and farming communities to make decisions that significantly contribute to child labour elimination. Child labour elimination and implementation of fair labour practices require a multi-sector and a multipronged approach, to that effect LLTC continues to engage with relevant government ministries and other stakeholders in the supply chain. Sustainable progress will require each stakeholder to appreciate its role and to take responsibility. LLTC is committed to do its part and share best practices.

The multipronged approach of sensitizing, providing education infrastructure, imparting financial literacy, introducing child care centers among other initiatives is providing positive results. LLTC will continue to invest in these initiatives to ensure action plans addressing the risks identified by CU are fully achieved and the ALP code is fully entrenched in the communities from where LLTC sources its tobacco.