



# A POSITIVE APPROACH TO LIFE

*Marian Lamptey*

*The experience gained during the early years serves as a tool to reach greater heights in the later stages of life.*

As the Chief Corporate Services Officer for the African Cashew Alliance, 32 years old Mrs Marian Lamptey has had a very interesting life!

## **Early life**

Born in a small town near Ghana's industrial city, Tema, to parents who were both working in the field of Education, she is the youngest among her six siblings. As a child, she grew up observing her father who was enthusiastic about farming. Along with his regular job as an Education Officer, he managed an animal and crops farm where he grew maize, tomatoes, pepper, vegetables and reared animals like rabbits, goats and poultry.

Besides this, he also involved his seven children and allotted them an individual piece of the farm to manage after school. Thus, the love for farming had been instilled in Mrs Lamptey from a very tender age.

## **She credits her success to her interest in farming since childhood**

Reminiscing about the past, she beams that her ability to stay working in cashew for 7 years now, starts from the inbuilt interest in farming as part of making a living right from childhood. At that age, she could see how her parents took farming seriously because the regular income was not enough to take care of seven children.

Although she did not have any experience or trainings in the cashew sector in particular, it so happened that her first job after university was cashew. In fact, she laughs that apart from the fact that cashew tasted delicious, and would spend her last penny to buy a packet to enjoy; she had never paid attention to how the delicious packet came about or taken any step to research on it. In fact, she did not have the least experience in commodities.

## **Not hesitant to learn new skills**

However, when she found herself in the sector eventually, she developed great interest and considered it as a good opportunity to offer her services in support of making life better for others by improving their livelihoods. When she first joined ACA, given her limited knowledge on these nuts, she had a big task of learning from her colleagues, reading,





researching and understanding the dynamics of the industry in her own way.

As for some of the skills she already possessed, she says that when she took up the job, she had a great language background which was essential to working across West Africa. Being proficient in French and English gave her an added advantage. However, in order to acquire good administrative, communication, analytical, HRM, and PP presentation skills, she allowed herself to be taught and mentored by her supervisors along with taking up courses in all the above mentioned areas. Being part of organizing the famous ACA conference every year and also in charge of administering the ACA membership program, gave her the opportunity to learn the skills of events and relationship management as well as marketing.

### ***Offering valuable services***

Currently working alongside her co-workers, seven of which are women, when asked to give us a layout of her daily schedule, she says she works eight hours a day and is in charge of corporate services. This includes overseeing membership, Human Resources, Administration, Conference and Communication.

A normal day for her is packed with ensuring adherence to office policies and regulations, staff well being and satisfaction, writing, ensuring smooth running of the office by acquiring all necessary tools, ACA member satisfaction and acquisition, organizing of and organizational implementation in collaboration with the MD and Management team as directed by the Executive Committee.

In a nutshell, she contributes to the provision of services that enhance, inform and equip cashew businesses in Africa and worldwide.



### ***Managing an otherwise predominant mindset***

Speaking of working alongside men, she comments that although men in the African setting always have the feeling of being superior, in her work place, they are able to manage this very well. There are equal opportunities offered to all and men are not over emphasized in any way. Both men and women respect and learn from each other.

Keeping this in mind; she does not think she is denied rewards in their comparison. Salary or promotions are based on qualification, experience and competence as well as ability to achieve organizational set goals and targets

### ***A tough yet satisfying job***

Given the enormous amount of work, she confesses that it's not always easy. Combining busy work demands with family commitments is an enormous challenge. Her husband and two toddlers who need full attention from their mother, in the face of work related travel, meetings and commitments that take her away almost the whole day, sometimes even a week or more, has not been easy to manage. She always has to find a way of making up for lost time with the family and sometimes it conflicts with work needs.

But she still does her best not to compromise on either side, trying to balance both areas perfectly. She makes sure that after every job commitment that takes her away for a long duration, she takes some days off to spend time with her



family, thus making up for lost time.

### ***Striving for a perfect balance***

She makes a conscious effort in this area, to commit work hours to work and hours after that to family and personal endeavors. She considers her weekends very personal and a much needed break, hardly trading it for work. Because of this, she spends a lot of time working during the week, sometimes even staying longer so she does not carry work to the house.

### ***Thus, this way she is able to do justice to all tasks at hand!***

### ***Blessed with an encouraging husband***

When asked about her family, she is grateful to God for having blessed her with a husband who understands

her job commitments and extends his complete support. In fact, she says that he looks after the children so well that sometimes her absence at home is hardly felt. While he is extremely committed at his work place as well, he stands up for her all the time, playing her role when needed.

### ***A long way to go***

At this stage in life where she is focusing on building a career, she says that her profession means a lot to her. Right now, she sees herself at the beginning with a long way to go. This mindset leads her to take her profession very seriously, making use of every opportunity to learn and add to what she has acquired. In the years to come, she sees herself becoming an influential woman and a resource to the cashew industry, imparting knowledge and expertise to other women.

### ***Women can excel if they try***

In her opinion, women in the industry need more encouragement than they are getting currently. By large, the issue of equality still exists in the African region and women in the industry need to be assured that gender is not a barrier. She firmly believes that they can equally excel if only they are willing and push themselves a little harder. She thinks women generally are still fighting or battling with a complex and a negative mindset already kills dreams.

### ***Recognized in the sector***

As for being acknowledged for her work, she states that she is recognized in the cashew business even in the midst of a male dominated industry. Consistency, commitment, perseverance and the will to make it at all cost has driven this success. She confesses that there is scope for enormous improvement in the job and while proper funding might not be the answer, capacity building will serve as a greater tool to achieve a better post and recognition.

### ***Determined and motivated***

Thus, we see that Mrs Marian Lamptey is an ambitious woman with a practical approach to life. Her interest for the cashew sector lies deep and her love for her work makes her look beyond the impossibilities. Besides this, her positive approach is reflected in the quote she shares as at the end of the interview, where she says,

“Cashew is a hard nut but can be cracked by any human being, provided you have the right tool!”

We couldn't agree more to these wise words!

