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APRIL 2021



# CELEBRATING PROFESSIONALISM IN AFRICA

EDITION #B01

**Britam**  
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*'Nurturing insurance professionalism'*  
By **Alex Shayo**  
Human Resources Manager  
Britam Insurance (Tanzania)

*'Celebrating professionalism in Africa'* is a pioneering series of case studies, published by the Chartered Insurance Institute, to showcase professional practice and innovation in insurance

# NURTURING INSURANCE PROFESSIONALISM



By **Alex Shayo**  
*Human Resources Manager  
Britam Insurance (Tanzania)*

**Britam Insurance Tanzania Ltd is a subsidiary of Britam Holdings Plc, a leading diversified financial services group with primary interests in insurance, asset management, banking and property. The company has more than 20 years' experience in the provision of short-term insurance solutions in Tanzania, having being officially incorporated in 1998 after the liberalisation of the insurance industry in the country.**

## **Why the need to nurture insurance professionalism?**

Britam recognises that to survive and stay ahead of the competition it must have competent professionals. For this reason, Britam invests heavily in staff professional development initiatives. Prior to 1998, when the insurance industry in Tanzania was liberalised, only the government through the National Insurance Corporation and Zanzibar Insurance Corporation offered insurance services. Due to the absence of competition, professionalism in the insurance sector was not taken particularly seriously and recruitment focused mainly on academic credentials.

Liberalisation of the industry in 1998 brought in a number of providers from outside Tanzania. Britam was one of the early entrants to the Tanzanian insurance market. Like all other new entrants in the market, Britam quickly noticed that the industry was starved of insurance professionals, leading to the need to recruit expatriate staff in all technical areas. This strategy was not sustainable in the long term, so, as an early priority, the company initiated internal learning and mentorship programmes to equip local staff with the requisite skills in underwriting, claims and reinsurance, to ensure critical skills were transferred to local staff.

The next phase in the process of nurturing professionalism in insurance was to expose local staff to recognised international insurance certification programmes. This was not easy as at

the time, because academic qualifications were the most valued in Tanzania. Only a few professions (accountancy and legal) had professional certification programmes locally that were mandatory for growth in the professions over and above academic qualifications. The absence of a local certification institute for insurance further complicated our efforts to communicate the significance of professional certification in insurance. It was not until 2007 that we started to see serious commitment to pursue insurance professional qualifications.

Britam decided to partner with CII for the professional certification of its staff. The company facilitates membership registration and pays all fees for staff to access study materials and exams. Initially, pass rates for the exams were very low, so, to encourage staff to persevere, we attached monetary rewards to each exam passed. This led to a gradual improvement in the pass rate, which in turn generated more interest from the staff. It took us up to 2010 to get our first certified CII-qualified staff.

With this milestone, we introduced accelerated promotions for all Certificate, Diploma and ACII-qualified staff. The qualified staff with sufficient experience were given supervisory roles, while those with limited experience were exposed to more complex technical assignments. Recognising the need for soft skills, we also initiated a number of programmes (development needs assessments, online learning, coaching and mentorship) to equip the qualified staff with managerial and business skills.

Britam Insurance Tanzania Ltd celebrated its first ACII-qualified candidates in December 2016, when three of our staff were awarded ACII certificates. A fourth had exited the company just before the award, for a CEO position with another insurance company. We have since seen three other individuals who started their careers at Britam and were inspired by this initiative qualify for ACII. All are now senior



*We believe insurance is a global business with global standards*



Upskilling agents on products and standards

managers in the insurance industry in Tanzania. A second has been appointed CEO of an insurance company. Among these, one is expected to qualify for FCII once the Fellowship Advisory Board favorably considers his “statement of personal development”. As I write this article, all technical positions at Britam Insurance Tanzania Ltd are manned by local staff with a minimum of Diploma CII certification.

Having put in place a system that enables us to develop insurance professionalism locally, we also benefit from our holding company where our staff are attached to other entities within the group for greater exposure. As insurance penetration continues to increase, we see immense opportunities for professionals to excel.

We continue to attract top graduates from universities each year to join our graduate trainee programme, which exposes them to all facets of insurance and provides an accelerated path for growth in the sector. Coupled with a track record of excellent performance, we have witnessed CII qualifications open doors for many of our current and former staff.

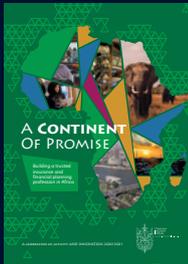
Nurturing professionalism in insurance has come with a price for Britam, as our competitors fish from our growing talent pool. This has not in any way discouraged us from continuing to invest in the professional development of our staff. This is because we believe insurance is a global business with global standards. Professionalism contributes immensely to improved service delivery for our industry and hence indirectly benefits our brand.

We believe current and former staff who have benefited from our professional development programme will continue to be our ambassadors and initiate similar programmes in their careers outside Britam. This will ensure that the entire industry has the right quality and quantity of insurance professionals to grow the industry ethically and make a meaningful contribution to our country’s economy. ■

|   |   |  |  |                   |                               |                    |   |   |   |
|---|---|--|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---|---|---|
|  <p><b>Overview:</b> Britam is a leading diversified financial services group, listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange</p> | <p><b>Date established</b><br/> <b>1998</b> - First established<br/> <b>2014</b> - Joined Britam Holdings</p> | <p><b>Staff</b><br/> <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; text-align: center;">79</span> in 8 branches in Tanzania</p>   | <p><b>Key financials</b><br/>         [Britam Holdings]<br/> <b>Shs 36bn</b> income<br/> <b>Shs 126bn</b> total assets</p> |                   |                               |                    |   |   |   |
| <p><b>Vision:</b> To be the leading diversified financial services company in our chosen markets across Africa<br/> <b>Mission:</b> Providing you with financial security every step of the way</p>             | <p><b>Key locations</b><br/>         Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda</p>     | <p><b>Sector focus</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td>General insurance</td> <td>Life and protection insurance</td> <td>Financial planning</td> </tr> <tr> <td>●</td> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> </tr> </table> |  | General insurance | Life and protection insurance | Financial planning | ● | ○ | ○ |
| General insurance   | Life and protection insurance   | Financial planning   |  |                   |                               |                    |   |   |   |
| ●   | ○   | ○  |  |                   |                               |                    |   |   |   |

**For more information:** [www.britam.com](http://www.britam.com)

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CII qualifications guide

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