



PEOPLE FOCUS NEWSLETTER



HRMAU HOSTS LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW CONFERENCE

IN THIS ISSUE

CONSULTATIVE
MEETING WITH MPS
ON HR BILL, 2023

HR
SPORTS
GALA

YOUR
MENTAL HEALTH
MATTERS

EMERGING
TRENDS IN
HR TODAY

EDITOR IN CHIEF



Dear Member,
It is with great honor that I welcome you to this edition of our newsletter. I am thrilled to present the latest insights, developments, and stories that are shaping our professional terrain today.

In our ever-evolving field, staying informed and connected is paramount. This publication aims to be a beacon of knowledge, offering you the tools, strategies, and inspiration to excel in your roles and drive positive change within your organizations. Our commitment is to bring you high-quality content that reflects the diverse and dynamic nature of our profession.

The editorial team and I are so excited you are on board and since you have already started reading, I would like to alert you that what we have cooked is worth your time in this edition. I believe that you will be glued to read letter by letter till the end.

Through the pages, you will read about our recently concluded events like the impactful Employment and Labour Law Conference. I trust that you will enjoy reading from our colleagues on various topics that we believe will add value to you.

We have also been intentional about preaching the gospel of mental wellness for our members and your respective teams especially during the mental health month and the men's mental health awareness month, however, we continue to emphasize that mental health ought to be a way of life rather than an event.

I want to equally take this opportunity to thank our esteemed sponsors; CFAO Mobility Uganda Limited and Brighter Monday. You are not only sponsors but also our very own HRMAU members. Thank you for believing in us and supporting your own Brand.

I appreciate each and everyone of you for being an integral part of the people focus magazine. Your dedication to advancing the field of human resources is what makes our community strong and vibrant.

Together, let us continue to push boundaries, innovate, and lead with purpose.

Waswa Moses - Director Public Relations and Marketing

Editorial Team: Ronald Bbosa | Shamim Walusimbi | Moureen Nakimuli | Andrew Kawesa Ssebwalunnya | Juliet Mpiima | Joseph Rwabutomize | Leticia Iguma

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If you would like your article to be featured in the next edition, please send it through email to connect@hrmau.org.ug with the subject

Disclaimer: This publication is a quarterly newsletter intended for our members and stakeholders.

THE PRESIDENT



Dear members,
On my behalf and the organizing committee of the recently concluded Labour and Employment Law Conference, I take this opportunity to thank all our members, partners and stakeholders for your overwhelming support. The conference held under the theme; **“Navigating the Evolving Landscape of Employment Law”** aimed at addressing the recent employment law reforms and trends that have affected labour and employment relations in Uganda. I appreciate our Conference partners NBS TV and International Rescue Committee, all our panelists, speakers and our Chief Guest and Key note speaker, The Ag. Head of Industrial Court, Hon. Justice

Linda Tumusiime for their contribution to this milestone event.

The key outcome from the conference among many resolutions held that employment laws evolve therefore all members need to stay informed and abreast with changing employment laws, promote a culture of compliance, engage in proactive measures so that they may have minimal legal risks.

Further still, during the quarter, we had a consultative meeting with parliamentarians on the Human Resource Management Professionals Bill, 2023 which seeks to regulate the conduct of the HR profession in the country. I invite you to participate in this important process when invited.

Our commitment to the professional growth of our members still remains the biggest inspiration to do more. That is why we shall be bringing one of the biggest professionals event in the country, the Annual HR Conference, November 2024, with opportunities to learn, connect and network for broader opportunities for growth.

I also take the honor and privilege to invite you all to the upcoming HR Sports Gala that will be held on 31st August 2024 at MUBS Play Ground under the theme **“Competitive Health Choices for Better Work Performance”**. This year’s Gala will be held as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations and will include activities like competitions in different games with an aim of making us healthy. In an era of mental health challenges and life style diseases we all need to be champions and ambassadors of healthy living. In this edition, we shall call upon the members and the general public to participate in a blood donation drive as part of this occasion.

Lastly, I will join the HR professionals from Uganda and other countries at the Africa Human Resource Summit to be held in Kigali from 21st to 23rd August 2024. The theme will be, **“Aligning Human Resource Strategy and Practices to the African Union Agenda 2063.”**

I look forward to seeing you in all our upcoming events.

Ronald Bbosa - President



COUNCIL UPDATES

LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW CONFERENCE 2024 EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The Third Labour and Employment Law Conference was held at Mestil Hotel from 23rd to 24th May 2024 under the Theme :

“Navigating the Evolving Landscape of Employment Law.”

The event was attended by over 250 Human resource managers, People and Culture Leaders, Advocates, In-house Legal counsels, industry leaders and key stakeholders in Employment and Labour sector.

The event was held to address the recent employment law reforms and trends that have affected labour and employment relations in Uganda. Other areas that were discussed included proposed labour law reforms, legislative changes, and compliance obligations among many other issues.

EMERGING THEMES ADDRESSED

The conference addressed the following themes; Incorporation of Terms - Company Policies, Probationary Contracts vs. Probationary Period, Incompatibility as a ground for termination, Constructive Dismissal, Performance Management, Use of technology, social media and data privacy policies, Remote work (working from home) associated with risks such as Occupational Health Safety

and Environment, Restructures, Redundancies and Collective terminations, Whistle blowing vs. A right to fair hearing, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and the Talent War, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), Quiet Quitting and Labor Outsourcing and Managing a Borderless Workforce.

CALL TO ACTION

1. COMPLIANCE

- a) Stay informed on current and proposed legislation.
- b) Promote a culture of compliance on all matters from Occupational Health Safety and Environment, Uganda Revenue Authority, NSSF, and Pension among others.
- c) Regularly review HR Policies and procedures that are synchronized with the new legislation and current trends.
- d) Educate People and Culture leaders, lawyers to become educators on Risk and Compliance.
- e) Review your Human Resource Manuals regularly for compliance. Don't duplicate manuals each business is exposed to unique risks.
- f) Mind how your contracts are drafted.
- g) Review, Recruit and Retain in-house legal advice or outsource professionals to address the various Labour and Employment organizational needs.

2. COURT HEARING ATTENDANCE

- a) a) Attend hearings and contribute information with confidence.
- b) b) Stay abreast with decisions from courts and changing Employment laws.
- c) c) Document effects of new laws and trends particularly in financial terms.

3. ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

- a) Use strong membership organizations to lobby and contribute to the new proposed legislation.

4. DATA PROTECTION AND TECHNOLOGY

- a) Study the policy and review how you collect, process and utilize personal data.
- b) Ensure compliance as you utilize personal data.
- c) Execute data protection impact assessment to support monitoring employees.
- d) Does your organisation have the right Human Resources software?

5. LABOUR OUTSOURCING, WORK ORGANISATION, TALENT WAR

- a) Take the risk and embrace remote working, this promotes wellness and has been proved to increase productivity.
- b) Study the risks introduced by remote working and cater for them in the Human Resources Manual.
- c) Exclude biases while recruiting and review the different generations and what they can offer in the workplace.
- d) The Young generations at the workplace can do reverse mentorship. Approach learning from younger generation with humility and willingness to adapt.

6. DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION(DEI)

- a) Reconsider employing refugees. We are all candidates of disability and refugee status.

- b) Can we consider having a Refugee ID?
- c) Embrace the new direction of DEI to include Belonging and Justice.
- d) Begin to review more perspectives on DEI beyond traditional perspectives.

7. LABOUR OFFICES

- a) Utilise the support of labor officers countrywide. All services are offered free of charge.

8. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- a) People management business should be managed well all the time. Avoid managing staff out of employment.
- b) Equip line managers to manage employee performance.
- c) Guide the interview panel on the law regarding interviewing including the fact that an interviewee can ask for their interview report.
- d). Performance has enablers. Ensure these are available all the time.
- e). When administering Performance Improvement Plans – Ensure processes are followed.
- f). Study the law regarding all areas linked to recruitment, performance, probation, disciplinary and align accordingly.

LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW CONFERENCE PICTORIAL

PANELS AND ATTENDANCE



Wilson Jingo; Labour Officer, Kampala City Council Authority (Extreme Left), Bridgett Kusiima Byarugaba; Partner, Shonubi, Musoke Advocates(Centre) ,Allan Josh Mwesigwa; Director of Strategy & Corporate Affairs, Uganda Development Bank and Deborah Kakande; Head of Human Resources, ICEA (Extreme Right)



Moderator: Agather Atuhiire Extreme Left; Panel: Dr.Daniel Ruhweza ; Lecturer, Makerere Law School , Kaitani Tina Nasasira; AdvocacyManager Rebuild Program, International Rescue Committee, Museema Miragi, Senior Investigation Officer at Equal Opportunities Commission and Rose Amulen ;Gender and GBV, Initiative Specialist.



Moderator: Ernest Kaliballa, Partner, AF Mpanga Advocates(Extreme Right)
 Panel(From Left) : Darius Niwaha - Chief Executive Officer, Octagon Africa, Rita Nansasi Wasswa - Chief Executive Officer URBRA, Agnes Isharaza Tibeyita -Company Secretary National Social Security Fund and Rosemary Nakuya -HR Director Hariss International Limited



The Key Note Speaker, Hon. Justice Linda Tumusiime awarded by Mr. Patson Arinaitwe of Signum Advocates after delivering the Key note address. Looking on is the President, HRMAU, Ronald Bbosa (extreme left) and the CEO, Uganda Christian Lawyers Fraternity, Mr. Martin Sabiiti (extreme right).



Arshleyne Kipusa Mubiru (Extreme Right), Patricia Kemirembe, Head of Legal Finance Trust Bank, Panelists : Ronald Bbosa, President HRMAU ,Priscilla Mwandha, Senior Business Partner People & Culture-Stanbic Bank and Patson W. Arinaitwe Partner, Signum Advocates



Moderator: Deborah Maitum HR Director NCBA Extreme Right.
Panelists: Racheal Kembabazi - Principal Associate, Signum Advocates, Patrick Ngolobe - Human Resource Consultant, Gloria Tibakunirwa : Human Resource Consultant and Paul Rugambwa, HR Director IDI



Day One Session in progress



The Organising committee

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HRMAU HOLDS CONSULTATIVE MEETING WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS



HRMAU Council joined by Parliamentarians and HR Managers from different organizations during consultative meeting

The Human Resource Manager's Association of Uganda (HRMAU) has held a series of consultative engagements and meetings on the **Human Resource Management Professionals Bill 2023 (HR Bill 2023)**, since 2023.

The HR Bill 2023 was officially introduced to Uganda's 11th Parliament on August 23, 2023 by Hon. Margaret Rwabushaija, a member of the Ugandan Parliament and Workers Representative at the National level.

This motion aimed to secure parliamentary approval for the bill, focusing on establishing regulations for professionals engaged in Human Resource Management.

The bill's main objective is to regulate the human resource management profession, since there is currently no legal framework regulating the HR practice in Uganda despite the country's social and economic development being dependent on the quality of human resource it possesses.

The absence of regulation has contributed to challenges in managing the practitioners and increased legal disputes related to labour issues.

This month, Friday, June 21, 2024, the HRMAU held another consultative meeting on the Bill with over 50 Members of Parliament (MPs) at Imperial Royale Hotel.

Hon. Margaret Rwabushaija, the mover of the motion, led discussions with the MPs.

The ongoing process aims to ensure all viewpoints are considered before the bill is passed. Also present at this meeting were HRMAU council members led by President Ronald Bbosa and different Human Resource professionals.

There is light at the end of the tunnel.



Hon. Rwabushaija leads the session.



Hon. Sarah Opendi makes her contribution.



Hon. Agnes Kunihira Workers MP putting up her hand to stress a point. Inset; Hon. Jane Pacuto from Packwach



President Ronald Bbosa listening to contributions



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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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CALENDAR 2024

TRAINING PROGRAM	DATES OF TRAINING	COST	FORMAT
Corporate Governance for HR leaders (What you need to learn for your career growth)	04th July	Free	Online
HRBP Certification	22nd -26th July	Paid	Physical
Performance management- (Building a purposeful performance Mgt culture for organization Transformation)	1st August	Free	Online
2nd Edition of HR Sports Gala	31st Aug	Free	Physical
HR for non-HR Managers-(Enabling line managers to approach their people management responsibilities with confidence)	19th Sept	Paid	Physical
Total Rewards (Creating a comprehensive EVP that attracts & and retains top talent)	3rd October	Free	Online
HR Digitalization/Technology (How to embrace technology for successful people strategies)	24th Oct	Free	Online
First Annual HR Conference & HR Reveal	27th, 28th & 29th Nov	Paid	Physical

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UPCOMING EVENTS



Human Resource
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SAVE THE DATE HR ANNUAL SPORTS GALA



DATE:
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MEMBERS' ARTICLES

TECHONOLGY CORNER



AI-Driven HR Transformation for Work, Workplace and Workforce

**Contributor – Ms. Evelyn Angeyo
Head of Human Resources at CFAO
Mobility Uganda Limited
Board Chairperson/Director at Gender
Tech Initiative -Uganda**

ChatGPT has been making waves in the AI world for good reasons. However the concern of most people is that it creates fear of job redundancy. Technology is revolutionizing the workplace by enabling professionals including Human Resource to save time, boost efficiency and productivity.

Despite the immerse publicity surrounding generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) over the last two years, many people continue to harbor misconceptions about its usefulness, potential impacts, and the threat to human connections.

But I want to believe, all these tech evolutions should pose to the HR professional a unique dilemma rather than “buying into the hype”. Use AI to develop ambitions, skills, curate personal uniqueness and capabilities across the work force.

The HR professional should start to think and be proactive with AI as this will largely improve their employee experience and feedback time after time. There are creative ways to incorporate AI learning and adoptions in your HR strategy to prepare employees for smooth transition of careers. Let’s flash back to the internet revolution times with the introduction of computers, despite the potential pitfalls then, early adoption has its advantages. With GenAI, the landscape now is even more complex and rapid, but it is still very possible to prepare employees for such changes. Fortunately for us all there is more awareness, literature, webinars, workshops, trainings, and general information given on AI.

As HR professionals, we should think out of the traditional collective trainings to a more personalized approach of preparing employees’ potential to match skills sets that will propel growth not just for the individual employee but for the success of the organizations.

Here are quick checks for HR;

- 1. Business Strategy:** What is your business strategy? What is the business appetite for technology to improve business process, elevate employee experience and provide the WOW experience to the customers?
- 2. Conduct a skills audit:** Do you know the current skills of your talent? Doing and skills health check will enable you to understand the individual capabilities and desires.
- 3. Data Mining:** Every piece of information is relevant! How does your organization gather, store, and use data for its business growth?
- 4. Future skills needed for your organization:** What future skills are needed for your business? Start by mapping your talent to desired roles and develop their potential to the skills required in your organization.
- 5. Innovation for change:** Do you have an innovation club or culture at the workplace? Design Thinking very necessary for organizational growth and transformation. You can drive the innovative/creative culture across your organization through your talent pool.

ChatGPT and AI are redefining many businesses and thus HR practitioners need to be present in the discussions that will enable these changes. Human Resource professionals should note that digital interruptions will not spare our functions with AI starting to do HRBP functions.



Emerging Trends; Why Human Resource Professionals Should Care

Julie Muyenje
Senior People & Culture Director
International Rescue Committee
based in New York

As a Human Resource professional leading teams in Asia, East Africa, Great Lakes, Latin America, Middle East, West Africa), with a focus on ensuring a safe and welcoming culture for all people, organizational performance, and efficiency and effectiveness of work processes I am glad to share from experience some of the emerging trends we need to understand as we do our work.

The major emerging trends for HR leaders globally is a very wide topic and in considering what I could write about, I thought of the place for technology, diversity, equity and inclusion, data privacy, the Workforce as a blend of Full-time Employees, Part-Timers, Contingent Workers, and Digital Workers, four-day work-weeks, greater pay transparency, and more. I have chosen to lean into topics that could be of greater relevance to the Uganda and East Africa labor market, as I see it. This article is written with a recognition of globalization and its impact on our labor market and is based on my subjective point of view.

Over twenty years ago I 'bumped into' what turned out to be an exciting and rewarding profession-Human Resources. I knew that I enjoyed drawing out the best in people and coming alongside others but had never quite pined how that played out from a career perspective. Human Resource Professionals have the unique opportunity, like no other career to engage at intimate and personal level, sometimes with employees being willing and sometime not (could be as part of a grievance process, change management, redundancies, workplace accommodation process etc). This is both a privilege and a huge responsibility. The emerging trends as I see them, cut across geographies and sectors and to be successful in the field, one has to acquire and exercise a span of capabilities that include but are not limited to coaching, mental health first aid, strategic thinking, diplomacy, change management, emotionally intelligence, cultural awareness and more.

The emerging trends that we grapple with include the fast-moving digital trends and so leveraging technology solutions in data analytics (to drive data driven decision making), AI to enhance the employee experience, deliver faster and at more scale and is critical. Automation also calls for a continuous growth mindset for practioners as well as bringing leadership and organizations along on this journey. It is important to call out the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the workplace, with many organizations opting for hybrid work arrangements.

Supporting these with appropriate tools, policies and the change management required has been the unrelentless task of any HR leader post 2020. Organizations that have been slow to adapt stand an uphill battle for talent.

It is also critical to add that platforms like LinkedIn and Glassdoor are increasingly becoming popular tools for employers, employees and potential candidates leading to an even greater emphasis on focusing on the employee experience. HR leaders are vital in supporting organizations build and shape structures that focus on the overall well-being, engagement, and satisfaction of employees, encompassing physical, mental, and emotional health. This will include benefits, strong onboarding systems, career pathing and more. Part of the employee experience also builds on how organizations create inclusive workplaces through structures that amplify staff voice, streamlining user experience of systems, fostering open, transparent, and inclusive communication channels to build trust and a sense of belonging. High trust and flexibility among colleagues, as well as diverse teams defined by local and global context, are crucial for fostering an inclusive and supportive workplace.

In a world that is continuously evolving and questioning how to build inclusive workplace- gender, visible and invisible disability, and more, HR leaders are called to consider what inclusion and belongingness looks like for each organization (offices and teams) in building the kind of culture that will enable them attract and retain the right talent. Building programs and policies and getting leadership to lead this charge is every HR leader's priority.

These trends highlight the increasing complexity and strategic importance of the HR function. HR leaders today need to be adaptable, tech-savvy, and focused on creating a positive and inclusive workplace culture to navigate these emerging challenges successfully.



Creating a Culture of Inclusivity: “Why Workplace Needs a Breast Feeding/ Lactation Center”

Ethel Nagaddya Ahura
Employee Wellbeing Manager
National Social Security Fund

In most busy offices and corridors of our workplaces, there's a silent struggle playing out in the hearts and minds of fresh mothers. Whether it's your colleague or your partner who recently returned from maternity leave, the emotions run deep. Picture the guilt of leaving behind a tiny, helpless soul each morning, the worry of being judged by friends and relatives, and the endless stream of questions in the mother's mind: Will the baby take the bottle? Will they cry for mommy? Will the bond remain strong? Will proper hygiene be maintained by the house help? Will the baby feed on time and stay healthy? And amidst it all, the heartache of missing out on witnessing those precious early developmental milestones.

For these mothers, the anxiety only intensifies with each passing day, anticipating that dreaded phone call relaying news of their baby's distress: Baby has a temperature, baby has refused to feed, baby has been crying nonstop and a lot more. These fears, unfortunately, are all too often confirmed, leaving fresh moms torn between their careers and the well-being of their babies.

Remember, in the wee hours of the night, while the world sleeps, these mothers are kept awake, breastfeeding their babies and expressing milk for later use. The fatigue and disorientation that follow are overwhelming, and worse still the growing feelings of anxiety and guilt are all part of a working mother's pain.

And for some, the demands of their job are relentless, forcing them to return home late, leaving their babies in the care of inexperienced caretakers and later, this exhausted mother takes over after returning from work. This routine goes on and on.

But there is hope. Drawing from my five years' experience of running a workplace breastfeeding center we dubbed the 'Creche', we have witnessed a remarkable transformation. Staff satisfaction rates have soared, sick leave due to nursing babies at home has decreased, and mothers report increased peace of mind, engagement, retention, and productivity. In 2023, our organization received an award from UNICEF and Ministry of Health for enabling breastfeeding and making a difference in the lives of working mothers.

On a personal note, I was honored with the Employee Health and Wellness Initiative Award at the HR Reveal Awards in March 2022 for championing workplace programs that support breastfeeding mothers, among various other initiatives. Simply put, providing childcare and breastfeeding support at the workplace is a game-changer for the working mothers and offers significant benefits for employers as well.



The author with her award

The International Labour Organization's maternity protection recommendations highlight the importance of establishing facilities for nursing mothers at or near the workplace.

To achieve this, employers must enact policies that enable mothers to balance their careers with raising a family. Setting up childcare facilities not only supports infant nutrition and care but also enhances staff productivity. Employers and policy makers should advocate for the rights of their breastfeeding staff, including providing breastfeeding breaks and privacy for breastfeeding mothers, in order to promote the benefits of breastfeeding for both infants and mothers.

Practical initiatives employers can adopt include –acting on feedback received through staff

surveys, securing buy-in from their Boards and top management, benchmarking from industry leaders that have set up this facility, budgeting for resources, and finally establishing these lactation centers. These centers should offer private, comfortable spaces with necessary amenities, flexible break times, educational resources, and supportive policies that govern them.

Furthermore, consider having professionals to oversee these facilities to ensure quality care for both infants and mothers. Our experience with employing professionals at the creche/ breastfeeding center has demonstrated a positive impact on children's development and overall well-being of both the babies and the mothers. The mothers are encouraged to exclusively breast feed their babies for the first six months before weaning takes place at the recommended age. From the testimonies of the mothers, there is a noticeable difference between their children that were raised at our creche and the other children in their community. The children's milestones are attained faster, they are more alert, social and livelier than their peers. Their fine and gross motor skills develop much faster. These include physical development, cognitive development, language development and social-emotional development. The close monitoring of the children's development milestones helps with the identification of those with delays to be professionally supported or recommended for medical attention where necessary.

Ultimately, supporting the needs of the breastfeeding mothers in our workplaces not only benefits families but also contributes to a healthier, happier, and more productive workforce. Employers who prioritize their staff wellbeing create a workplace where everyone thrives individually, thrives professionally, enjoys a good work-life balance and greatly prides in their employer.



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Mother's Day Tribute: Honouring their Sacrifices and Embracing their Future

**Kafiire Joel MBA, CHRBP,
Senior Human Resource Business
Partner - TrueNorth Consult Ltd**

Life doesn't come with a manual, it comes with a mother. Mother's Day is a special occasion dedicated to celebrating the incredible women who shape our lives with their boundless love, unwavering support, and unparalleled sacrifices. As a son to a 70-year-old mother, husband to a beautiful mother of two children and as an HR practitioner that profoundly associates with mothers in the profession through our uniting associations like Human Resource Managers Association of Uganda and Human Resource Funhouse, I have witnessed first-hand the profound impact mothers have on our families, workplaces, and communities. This day is not just about flowers and cards; it is about acknowledging their sacrifices, recognizing their rights and responsibilities, and envisioning a future where their contributions are fully valued and supported.

The Unseen Sacrifices of Mothers

Mothers are the unsung heroes of our lives, often putting their needs and aspirations aside to ensure the well-being of their families. From the sleepless nights tending to newborns, the countless hours spent nurturing and guiding their children, the daily operational homestead issues that they handle to their efforts directed towards transforming organizations into competitive entities, mothers demonstrate an

extraordinary level of dedication and resilience.

Consider the physical sacrifices: the toll of pregnancy and childbirth, labour pains, the sleepless nights, and the endless energy required to keep up with young children. Then there are the emotional sacrifices, such as the constant worry about their children's health, happiness, and future. Many mothers also make significant career sacrifices, opting for flexible or part-time work to be more present in their children's lives, often at the expense of their professional advancement and financial security.

Mothers' Rights and Responsibilities

Despite these sacrifices, the rights of mothers often go overlooked. Mothers have the right to adequate maternity leave, sick leave, access to affordable childcare, and the flexibility to balance their professional and personal lives without discrimination or penalty. These rights are essential not only for the well-being of mothers but also for the health and development of their children and the prosperity of society as a whole.

Mothers also bear a tremendous responsibility, often serving as the primary caregivers and emotional anchors of their families. They play a crucial role in shaping their children's

values, education, and sense of security. This responsibility is both a privilege and a heavy burden, one that should be shared more equitably with partners, families, and communities. "When a child makes a mistake, they are often seen as the mother's responsibility. However, when a child succeeds, they are frequently acknowledged as a father's pride"

Envisioning a Better Future for Mothers

As we celebrate Mother's Day, it is crucial to reflect on how we can create a better future for mothers, they deserve more love, respect, emotional, physical, and spiritual support. This future should include:

1. Supportive Policies and Workplaces

We must advocate for policies that provide paid maternity leave, sick leave and paternity leave, medical insurance, affordable childcare, counseling services, Training, and development of mothers into positions of leadership and flexible work arrangements. Policies against sexual harassment and discrimination against mothers are highly necessary too. Employers should recognize the value of supporting working mothers and create environments where they can thrive professionally while fulfilling their family responsibilities.

2. Shared Responsibilities

Parenting should be a shared responsibility. Encouraging fathers and partners to take an active role in childcare and household duties can alleviate some of the burdens mothers face. Societal attitudes must shift to support and normalize this shared approach. Husbands must provide direction in their homesteads, support their wives with homestead operational activities, provide guidance to children on general life challenges, values and highly support their wives during periods of pregnancy through escorting them for antenatal sessions and providing them with all the support throughout this period.

3. Access to Education and Healthcare

Ensuring that mothers have access to education and healthcare is fundamental. Education empowers mothers to make informed decisions and pursue their dreams, while healthcare is essential for their physical and mental well-being. When you educate a girl child, you educate a nation. A healthy mother is a cornerstone of a healthy family.

4. Recognition and Appreciation

Beyond Mother's Day, we should continuously recognize and appreciate the contributions of mothers. Simple gestures of gratitude, support, and acknowledgment can go a long way in making mothers feel valued and loved. Take them for romantic dates, buy them flowers, take them on vacations, give them money for no reason and most importantly, always remind them of how beautiful, supportive and valuable they are to the universe.

A Personal Tribute

To all the mothers and soon to be mothers in the HR fraternity, we celebrate your dedication, compassion, and tireless efforts in balancing the demanding roles of motherhood and those of your respective organizations. You are the heartbeats that keep both your families and workplaces thriving. To my 70-year-old mother, your strength and wisdom have been a guiding light in my life. Your sacrifices have laid the foundation for who I am today, and I am forever grateful. To my beautiful wife, the mother of our two children, your love and dedication inspire me every day. Your ability to balance motherhood with grace and determination is nothing short of extraordinary.

I trust that each mother reading this celebrated Mothers Day. I invite us to honor all mothers for their unparalleled sacrifices and commit to a future where their rights are upheld, their responsibilities are shared, and their contributions are celebrated every day.

"Proverbs 31:28-29"



My Walk With The Uganda Martyrs Pilgrims

Maureen Namaweje Lule
HRMAU Professional Member

I got to appreciate the Uganda Martyrs more through the lens of where it all started, the Uganda Martyrs' Shrine Munyonyo. My recent walk from Munyonyo, where the story of the Uganda Martyrs began, to Old Kampala, took me on a learning and reflection journey.

The learning began with the story of Andrew Kaggwa, one of the major catechists of Uganda who was brutally killed at the spot where the shrine was erected on 26th May 1886, a day after the rest of the martyrs were taken from Munyonyo. His remains are buried in the Munyonyo Shrine. He is a patron of teachers, catechists, and families.

The tragedy of the martyrs started on the afternoon of 25th May 1886, when the King of Buganda, Kabaka Mwanga, went out hunting with the hope of killing a Hippopotamus. Unfortunately, this was not possible and he was only able to hunt a few birds. To make it worse, his gun fell into the lake. Before this, several unfortunate tragic events had happened at the palace in Mengo.

After hunting, he arrived at the shores and none of his servants were there to receive him, he was told that they were learning religion. This was a final blow to all the King's frustrations and it is against this background that he ordered for all his Christian and Muslim subjects to be killed. Denis Ssebugwawo, a 16-year-old male, met his death by a spear at the hands of the King himself on the evening of Tuesday, May 25th,

1886, but did not die until the following day. He is the patron of singers and choirs.

The journey of the martyrs proceeded as they walked to their death, tied with ropes and bundled up with other criminals led by the main executioner, Mukajanga. At Salaama, St. Ponsiano Ngondwe (35 years old), tied to the rope with a Muslim, Abdul Aziz Buliwadda, was stabbed three times to death and his body was hacked to pieces, on Wednesday 26th May 1886. He was the fourth martyr to be killed. The tree trunk on which he was killed was reserved and erected at the altar of the church built in his honour in Salaam. St. Ponsiano is the patron of the army and security personnel having been a soldier himself.

As we proceeded with our holy walk in the footsteps of Uganda Martyrs, we also stopped by the spot in Mengo where St Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe was killed. He is the Ugandan pro-martyr who was killed earlier on 15th November 1885 under the orders of the King at the age of 25. He and St Andrew Kaggwa were the first Martyrs to be baptized and become catechists. He was beheaded because he condemned the King's involvement in slave trade and the killings of Bishop Hannington, as well as being wrongfully accused of trying to overthrow the King with the white man.

He is the patron of politicians and chiefs. At this same spot, St Athanasius Bazzekuketta was killed on 27th May 1886 during the martyrs journey to Namugongo.

We proceeded to our final spot in the journey of the Martyrs, at Old Kampala where St. Matia Mulumba was killed on 30th May 1886 in his 50s. He like any other Martyr faced the most excruciating death, all his limbs were cut and he was left alive and only succumbed to death after three excruciating days of suffering. Before his conversion to Christianity, he was polygamous, upon his conversion and at the time of his death, he had only one wife. He is the patron of chiefs and families.

The pilgrimage is an opportunity for us all to reflect on one's life and faith. These were loyal subjects to the King, relatable to the civil servants of today and yet they stood by what they believed in to death. St Joseph Balikuddembe demonstrates a pivotal aspect of leadership when he speaks up and points out the wrongs of the King in his decisions about killing Bishop Hannington and the homosexual acts, he subjected to his pages.

As HR professionals, we have a lot to learn from this and we are encouraged to objectively guide and advise management for the betterment of the entire organization and the employees by maintaining a balance of both stakeholders as opposed to HRs being viewed as puppeteering and working in best interests of only Top Management.

Through the martyrs' stories, one cannot fail to notice how inclusive and diverse the composition of the martyrs was. There were martyrs as young as 16 and 14 years who braved the outcomes of their choice – their faith. This speaks a lot to me as an HR professional, that even in life or the work environment, one has something to offer regardless of age, tribe, or background. Not all martyrs came from families that were decent or from parents with specific standards of holy matrimony expected of a martyr. We see these young men who were raised by uncles or single mothers like St Denis Ssebugwawo, and those from polygamous backgrounds, and yet

despite all these differences they accomplished evangelization of their country by making the ultimate sacrifice of death. In the same way, we should embrace a borderless workforce to strive towards a common goal and not be biased by our differences.

Another takeaway for me is that people can change completely if they believe in your vision or purpose, and as such can go the extra mile to ensure that this is achieved. This can be demonstrated in St. Ponsiano Ngondwe, St Matia Mulumba, and St Denis Ssebugwawo's transformation from traditionalists to sainthood. They believed in the religion of the whiteman and evangelized it to many, and even chose to die for their belief. In the same way, employees must believe in your vision and the systems entrusted to drive this vision to get extraordinary results. Emotional intelligence is paramount, the King ordered the massacre of 22 martyrs out of frustration and insecurities of Christianity, which decision did not solve his problems but rather tripled the numbers of Christianity. HR professionals need to speak to the problem first and understand from the other point of view before making rush decisions. Otherwise, we risk bleeding the organization we represent.

Above all, faith in ourselves will get us the results we need. As we guide management as well as give direction to our subordinates, there is a need to believe in ourselves and have faith in ourselves. It is the faith of the Uganda Martyrs that we emulate every day as Christians and as professionals. It is through the faith of the Uganda Martyrs that Uganda has been internationally recognized as a symbol of faith and the home of the Uganda Martyrs, because of the ultimate sacrifices they made.

May we emulate what the martyrs stood for in our lives, actions, responses to people, and conversations knowing that we may be the only true representations of Uganda Martyrs someone may ever read.

Uganda Martyrs Pray for us!



HEALTH FITNESS AND FUN



A One on One Interview With a Human Resource Professional: Tribute to the Late John David Lwanga --- True Story from Evelyn Lwanga Ssematimba

Question: Please tell us about yourself?

My name is Evelyn Lwanga Ssematimba, a Human Resource Professional, currently serving as Head of Human Capital & Administration for MUA Uganda and the HR Projects Coordinator for the East Africa region, MUA Group.

Question: You approached our team to share your Mental Health Testimony; Why does this matter?

The content of this story is not aimed at frightening the reader or causing any form of negative feeling, but rather to bring out the role of family, siblings, parents, religious leaders, employers and the society at large to promote mental health. Reader discretion is advised for young readers and those who are affected by stories that relate to trauma and suicide. My

purpose for sharing is to avail the reader with practical ways to handle mental health.

Question: What inspired you to share your story?

My inspiration sadly is from a sad incidence, I recently lost my brother John David Lwanga to clinical depression which was diagnosed at Butabika Hospital. The background to this depression is a series of childhood events that happened which led to pre-mature death of both our parents (in a space of just 18 months) which John attributed to himself. Sadly my brother committed suicide.

The trauma of John's death was a devastating blow. It was a combination of many unresolved issues that finally took a toll on him. The signs

were there, but we didn't see the full extent until it was too late. The regret of not understanding or acting on those signs sooner haunts us, but his meticulousness, even in his final moments, showed the depth of his suffering.

I realized that we need to share some behavior in our workplaces that point to some danger signs including;

- a) Not being engaged in meetings, sudden quietness that a colleague didn't have before.
- b) Withdrawing from family activities, in my case my late brother John wanted to be alone, he didn't want to interact with people. He didn't want to come home for Christmas. In other people's cases on a Sunday, they don't appear for family meetings. When you call they don't pick or WhatsApp, they blue tick you. They just disappear. In my brother's case, just 7 days before his tragic death when he came for Easter lunch, he did not talk to us. I think he didn't want us to be all over him, that's why he came. But did he really come? He was physically present but in reality he wasn't there. I remember an incidence where my baby touched his leg and he did not react? He didn't push him away, he didn't smile, he didn't get annoyed, and he didn't do anything – almost like a statue sitting on my couch. So these are some of the signs that you can see in the office. For me, I really think by the time an employee is jumping over fences, it's late. Things have gone to their head.
- c) When a colleague is suddenly missing deadlines, without a bother, their grooming has gone down. If you see an employee coming to office in un-ironed clothes or smelling alcohol, please pay attention.
- d) When colleagues are in perpetual debt or indulging in over drinking, don't take it lightly.

Question: Tell us about your journey to healing after loosing your brother?

At the funeral, I spoke up and this is some of the advice; I gave It's Ok for mourners to say nothing to the bereaved family, just hug them and mind the words you speak. In my case I chose to worship God and talk to him in prayer, I cried many times asking him to take the pain away. It took me around four months to get my sleep again, each time I slept I saw John. It took me six months before I could go to the bathroom alone. As Human Resource professionals let's be empathetic to bereaved families.

I was annoyed with so many people, desperately looking for someone to blame. It was bad, but I think I can finally say that I've healed, which is why I can tell you the whole story without shedding a tear.

My advice to families is please pay more attention. We should have, as a family, paid more attention, especially in the last days, where he told us, "You're not gonna see me for a long time." "Let me die alone in my house." "The guys have given me a deadline." I can go on and on Where he told his HR, "I'm not going to go through this weekend." Those are really strong statements - pointers that we should have looked out for and taken him back to the hospital. It's true, patients can still end their life in the hospital, but chances are less. And also, we wouldn't be in this position of self – blame, had he died in the hospital. We'd be like, "Hey, but we did our best." It wasn't an issue of lack of for money, we could afford the treatment, and he had medical insurance.

I also think we need to pay more attention as employers and leaders in general. I was so annoyed at religious leaders because I started scrutinizing the messages they preach in church, and I started drawing distinct lines between messages that are actually speaking to the congregation and messages that are hyping the congregation. So, I am very critical and I have learnt how to dissect messages now.

The other key area I to seek counseling and partnership to raise more awareness.

How has this affected you and how would you want other Human Resource professionals to behave?

We need to understand that we are dealing with real human beings with different stories. Underneath some of these stories is pain rooted in untold stories. For the ladies and I will use my example beyond the lipstick, smile and makeup, there is pain, a journey, healing and a story but who is equipped to find this out?

I am talking about this so that we can deal with childhood trauma, work at having employee assistance programs in place after work. It is true that some organizations may not afford such initiatives. We need to think of a win win situation for the employer and employees. Can we engage with donor funded organizations to get help?

I believe these organizations have people that are trained to deal with mental health related issues in the workplace.

I invite Human Resource professionals to work with Employers and line managers to enable reduction of stress in the workplace by having initiatives like flexible work arrangements, providing training on workload management and delegation for managers, and creating a supportive work environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their challenges.

Understand that addressing mental health issues requires collective effort from HR professionals, managers, colleagues, and individuals themselves. It starts with acknowledging the prevalence of mental health challenges and taking proactive steps to support and empower those who may be struggling.

I also recommend that you find trusted friends to help you embrace your story and to handhold you in case you or a family member are dealing with mental health challenges. As you share your story, its part of the healing process and a lot of weight is lifted off your shoulder.

Are there any organizations you can recommend?

It's crucial for HR professionals not to position themselves as mental health experts but instead to facilitate access to these resources. Sensitizing employees to recognize the signs of mental health struggles can empower them to seek help or support their peers in doing so.

I highly recommend Strong Minds.

As Captured by Shamim Walusimbi

Your Mental Health Matters

Nyamahunge Grace
Clinical Psychologist
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Mental health remains a global concern and, on the 10th October, every year, Uganda joins the rest of the World to celebrate the World Mental Health Day. On this day we do global mental health education, awareness and advocacy against stigma in the communities where we live.

According to WHO, mental disorders are common, affecting over 1 in every 8 persons or over 970 million people globally at some time during their lives. Mental disorders contribute over 14% to the global burden of disease, but it is estimated that the real contribution is even higher due to their complex interactions of physical illnesses, consequences of pandemic outbreaks like COVID-19, and increased cases of substance use.

In Uganda, the MOH hasn't published clear figures about the actual prevalence of mental illnesses in the country. However, the recent research by the Makerere University School of Public Health and Butabika National Mental Referral Hospital last year, showed that over 14 million Ugandans, about 30% suffer from mental disorders, the most common being the substance and addiction-related disorders as well as other neurotic or mild mental disorders. What is mental health?

Mental health is a state of well-being in which

an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stressors of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is capable of making a positive contribution to his or her own community.

It therefore addresses; how one feels about himself or herself and others, how one responds to the day to day demands of life, how one thinks, feels and acts in the face of daily life problems and how one handles stress, relates with others and makes choices that make the individual enjoy normal life.

This therefore, means that mental health doesn't only mean the mere absence of a mental illness but the foundation of effective overall functioning of an individual. It so, opens our insight that it is a concern of all of us not only the individuals battling with already diagnosed mental disorders.

What is a mental illness?

Is a condition which alters one's thinking, feeling, sensations and behavior leading to poor mechanisms of coping or adjusting to stress, poor interpersonal relationship and poor self-value.

Most people mistakenly say that we are all mentally ill with varying degrees. But the reality is that we are instead all mentally healthy though

with varying degrees. The justification of this is the reality that one incidence of abnormal behavior or a short period of abnormal mood does not signify the presence of a mental or behavioral disorder, but instead, a risk of developing one.

The current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders includes over 20 groups of mental disorders, over 100 individual mental disorders and every mental disorder has its clearly defined diagnostic criteria.

Who may get a mental illness?

It should be known that the number one risk factor for developing mental illness is having the brain. Mental illnesses are all universal, affecting people of all countries and societies, individuals at all ages, women and men, the rich and the poor, from urban and rural settings.

However, the risk is higher among the poor, the homeless, the unemployed, the victims who face gender-based violence, emigrants and refugees, children and adolescents, persons with low education, the uncared-for elderly and the grieving.

What are the most common illnesses in Uganda?

There are a number of mental illnesses in Uganda but the most common are;

Substance and addiction related disorders for substances such as alcohol, cannabis (enjaga), nicotine (cigarettes), prescription drugs, usually pain killers and sedatives, depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury induced disorders, neurodevelopmental disorders in children, neurodegenerative disorders (dementia) among the elderly, schizophrenia and bipolar disorders where people are usually stigmatized as “mad” because they present with extremely strange behavior, among others

What commonly causes mental illness?

There isn't a known single factor that causes

mental illness. However, a combination of a number of factors are known to increase the risk of occurrence of mental illnesses and these are usually biological, psychological and social factor such as;

A positive history of mental illness in the family, Infections especially the ones associated with high grade fever, convulsions and also capable of crossing the blood brain barrier, head injury, Changes in brain chemicals (usually neurotransmitters and hormones), stressful situations e.g loss of a job, a loved one or property, irrational drug use, poor nurturing environments and styles characterized by broken homes, violence in homes, wars and disasters among others.

How do we identify a mentally ill person?



As noted earlier that there are over 100 mental disorders, each with its own diagnostic criteria, people with mental health issues usually present with unusual behaviors and appearances and the most common manifestations are;

Overwhelmed fear, persistent extreme sadness, excessive worry, loss of interest in previously pleasurable activities, having unjustifiable false beliefs, abnormal interpretation of events, sensory perceptions in absence of any stimulus e.g hearing voices or seeing things that other people can't see or hear, neglecting one's hygiene, excessive unnecessary happiness, uncontrolled pressured talking that may not be connected, inappropriate response to situations,

inability to remember important events, excessive aggressive and irritable tendencies, disturbed sleep patterns, restlessness, among others.

How can we help the mentally ill?

Some mental illnesses totally cure but some don't, meaning that even after subsidence of signs and symptoms, the affected individuals will keep living with the illness for the rest of their lives.

This therefore means that they can be better supported by love, care and having them involved into our very social roles other than isolating them. The most challenging part of their ill-life is stigma, which goes beyond to prevent them from seeking professional attention.

It's even more painful that when people come out to talk about their mental health, they are judged to be attention seekers, and yet when this painfully and silently overwhelms them to a level of costing their lives, the same society finally says, "I wish they spoke out".

We live in a society that stigmatizes mental health and mourns suicide and this has to change and can be better changed by we, ourselves.

If we care and properly manage people with mental illnesses, they can get better and regain a significant potential of their capability to contribute to the development of their communities. We can therefore, help through;

Understanding and accepting them, identifying mental health problems early and seeking professional help early enough, Supporting and caring for them to ensure that they adhere to their treatment guidelines, conducting mental health promotion in schools, isolated communities and others areas with high vulnerabilities.



The Transformative Impact of HR Fun House on HRMAU Members

Florence Nabbika

The Human Resources Management Association of Uganda (HRMAU) is committed to advancing the professional development and overall well-being of its HR practitioners. A significant initiative supporting this mission is the HR Fun House (HRFH), a unique platform that has profoundly influenced HRMAU members by enhancing their professional lives, work-life balance, networking opportunities, and personal well-being.

Launched on January 25, 2018, the HRFH was established with several key objectives:

- Improve the work-life balance of HR professionals.
- Enhance social engagement within the HR profession.
- Make social activities more affordable through membership discounts.
- Foster strong bonds among HR practitioners.
- Provide various social benefits.
- Define and invest time in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs.

These objectives have significantly contributed to the professional development of HRMAU members, primarily through voluntary participation and the positive atmosphere fostered within the social club.

HRFH offers a dynamic environment where HR practitioners can enhance their knowledge and skills through knowledge sharing and recommendations. These learning opportunities substantially improve the competencies of HRMAU members, enabling them to excel in their careers and contribute more effectively to their organizations. This aspect of voluntary continuous professional development aligns seamlessly with HRMAU's mission to promote excellence in HR practice.

By providing a supportive and engaging platform, HRFH not only strengthens the professional capabilities of its members but also enriches their social interactions and overall quality of life through the following areas:

● Strengthening Networking Opportunities

One of the standout features of HRFH is its ability to foster networking among HRMAU members. The platform facilitates interactions through social events, team-building activities, and professional gatherings. These events enable members to connect with peers, share experiences, and build valuable professional relationships. The networking opportunities provided by HRFH are crucial for career advancement and knowledge exchange, reinforcing the collaborative spirit that HRMAU advocates.

- **Promoting Personal Well-being**

The well-being of HR practitioners is a key focus of HRFH. The platform offers various wellness programs, recreational activities, and relaxation sessions designed to reduce stress and enhance overall well-being. By participating in these activities, HRMAU members can achieve a better work-life balance, prevent burnout, and maintain their health. This emphasis on personal well-being supports HRMAU's commitment to fostering a healthy and balanced professional life for its members.

- **Building a Supportive Community**

HRFH plays a vital role in creating a supportive and inclusive community among HRMAU members. The platform encourages collaboration and mutual support, helping practitioners from different organizations and backgrounds connect and support each other. This sense of community is essential for personal and professional growth, as it provides a network of support and shared resources. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and support, HRFH aligns with HRMAU's core values.

- **Market Days and Sponsorship Opportunities**

HRFH also offers market days every Friday and Saturday, providing members with opportunities to market their side businesses. This initiative not only supports members' entrepreneurial ventures but also fosters a culture of support and collaboration within the HR community.

Additionally, HRFH offers several sponsorship opportunities where members' products are promoted by the Executive Committee (EXCO). We are grateful to our sponsors who have supported us since the inception of HRFH. Their continued support has been instrumental in the success and growth of HRFH.

Alignment with HRMAU Principles

HRFH's initiatives are closely aligned with the core principles of HRMAU. The focus on professional development, networking, personal well-being, and community building reflects HRMAU's mission to support the growth and excellence of HR practitioners in Uganda. By offering these benefits, HRFH enhances the value of HRMAU membership and strengthens the association's role in the professional lives of its members.

In conclusion, the HR Fun House has had a profound impact on HRMAU members, enhancing their professional development, fostering networking opportunities, promoting personal well-being, and building a supportive community. This alignment with HRMAU's principles underscores the importance of HRFH as a vital resource for HR practitioners in Uganda. As the HR field continues to evolve, initiatives like HRFH will remain essential in supporting the growth and success of HR professionals.

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