

# PEOPLE FOCUS

## NEWSLETTER



# HRMAU HOSTS THE 4TH LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW CONFERENCE

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**D**ear Esteemed Reader,  
Warm greetings to you!  
It's my pleasure to bring you our Second Quarter Edition of our People Focus Magazine. We appreciate your support and contributions as we work together to grow our connections within the HR Community.

In this issue, we shine a light on some of our recent milestones—most notably the 4th Annual Employment Law Conference, which sparked important conversations around the evolving world of work.

We have featured insightful excerpts and thought-provoking articles from our conference speakers, giving you a chance to redigest key messages and stay up to date with crucial developments in Uganda's employment law landscape.

As we continue to grow, connect, and advance the HR profession across the region, I am pleased to warmly invite you to all our upcoming events for the rest of the year;

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**13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> August 2025** – *Global Conference for Human Resource (GCHRA)*

Join us in **Ghana** for this world-class gathering of HR professionals, thought leaders, and innovators shaping the future of work.

**23<sup>rd</sup> August 2025** – *3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of HR Sports Gala*

Experience unity, fun, and wellness as the **entire HR community takes it to the grounds** at MUBS, celebrating teamwork and resilience through sports.

**27<sup>th</sup>–29<sup>th</sup> August 2025** – *7<sup>th</sup> East Africa HR Symposium*

We head to **Rwanda** for powerful regional insights, policy discussions, and best practices in HR across East Africa.

**19<sup>th</sup> September** - *The Young HR professional Summit (The future starts now)*

**5<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> November 2025** – *2nd Annual HR Conference & HR Excellence Awards (HR Reveal)*

We'll wrap up the year in style with our **premier HR event**, combining knowledge-sharing, networking, and the **prestigious HR Reveal Awards**.

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We will be honored to have you join us at these impactful gatherings as we continue to shape the future of the HR profession across Africa.

*Thank you for being an important part of this journey. With warm regards,*

Moses Waswa - Director, Public Relations and Marketing

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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](mailto:connect@hrmau.org.ug) with the subject

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

Editorial Team: Andrew Kawesa Ssebwalunnyo | Dorah B. Baguma | Brian Musisi | Emmanuel Otim | Calvin Ongole



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 4TH LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW CONFERENCE

## CONFERENCE FORMAT

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The conference was held at Mestil Hotel Kampala from 22nd to 23rd May 2025 under the theme “**Traversing the Legal Uncertainties of the New World of Work**”. Its format comprised of a Keynote Address on “*The Judiciary as a Guardian of Fair Employment Practices*”. A number of thematic areas were handled by different panels of experts and stakeholders.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

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The purpose of the conference was to support the attendees to understand how to navigate the complex and evolving legal challenges brought by the changes in modern work environments. The different panels explored legal frameworks, policy adjustments, and best practices to help businesses, workers, government bodies, lawyers, Labor Officers, and Courts adapt to the rapidly changing world of work while ensuring fairness, protection, and compliance.

It was confirmed that many employment laws in Uganda were designed for traditional workplaces and so the attendees discussed which laws need to be updated, how human resource professionals and in-house counsel can interpret laws to protect workers’ rights in the new work arrangements.

## WHY THE THEME

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The conference theme focused on navigating the complex and evolving legal challenges brought by the changes in modern work environments. During the different panels legal frameworks were explored with an aim of discussing possible policy adjustments and best practices to help businesses, workers, government bodies, lawyers and Courts adapt to the rapidly changing world of work while ensuring fairness, protection and compliance.

It was confirmed that there is need to discuss the impact of technology on jobs notwithstanding the ethical considerations of AI. The conference also discussed the mental well-being of staff among many themes.

## WHO ATTENDED

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The conference was attended by Chief Executive Officers, Human Resource professionals, Judicial Officers, In-house and External Lawyers, Labor Officers, Risk and Compliance Managers, Inhouse Disciplinary Committees, not for profit organizations, Academia and the media.

## THE OPENING CEREMONY

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The President Human Resources Managers Association of Uganda, Mr. Ronald Bbosa thanked all the invited guests, sponsors, partners and attendees for believing in the association and its cause. He shared the progress of the HR Professionals Bill, affirming its importance.

While giving his remarks Mr Gerald Batanda Managing Partner, Signum Advocates thanked all the partners and sponsors including NBS, Deposit Protection Fund of Uganda and Mestil. He gave a background to why this conference was started and thanked the Industrial Court for always turning up. He further said that they are the only court that takes feedback and learns from it. He affirmed that it's now much easier to advise clients on a number of issues. Speaking on the theme he mentioned that the work space is now like a crime scene, one day is a long time in the Human Resources space. There is always something new that can come up therefore the legal and human resource professionals should keep abreast with the changes.

The Uganda Law Society was represented by the Vice President Mr Anthony Asiimwe who said that every day brings new challenges. This platform provides an opportunity for all the stakeholders to contribute and change the work space. He invited the attendees to agree on common solutions rather than leaving each stakeholder on their own.

The conference was opened by the Head Judge, Industrial Court Hon. Lady Justice Linda Lillian Tumusiime Mugisha. She thanked the organizers for yet another opportunity to attend such an important ceremony and unveiled the theme affirming that it focuses on the evolving labour and employment law in the era of changes. She mentioned that this conference is a platform that brings together legal professionals, human resource practitioners, employers and government to explore the future of work.

Speaking about the world of work she affirmed that there is a new shift which introduces a number of legal uncertainties including; Classification of Gig workers, the rise of Artificial Intelligence and its implication to the work place and finally the impact of remote working on the economy mentioning the fact that the work place dynamics are evolving. Employees today are seeking more than a pay cheque they want purpose, inclusivity and equity.

Employers therefore must stay compliant with regulations but also manage the different complexities. Through collaborative dialogue, insightful conversation, we will build a framework that addresses the current challenges and anticipates future needs. The heart of the Labor and Employment Law conference lies in fostering harmony in the workplace. It is a call to action where legal clarity meets work and we all need to work together to create conditions for better and decent work.

She ended by highlighting the fact that the world of work evolves and no one should be left behind. We all need to ask difficult questions and seek innovative solutions.

# KEY NOTE ADDRESS: THE JUDICIARY AS A GUARDIAN OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

**THEME: “TRAVERSING THE LEGAL UNCERTAINTIES IN THE NEW WORLD OF WORK”;** Delivered by Head Judge, Industrial Court Hon. Lady Justice Linda Lillian Tumusiime Mugisha who represented the Deputy Chief Justice, Hon. Justice Dr. Zeija Flavian

The Judiciary’s role as a guardian of fair employment practices is indispensable. It is the cornerstone of stability and fairness. The new world which has a lot of uncertainties and opportunities requires boldness. We are all invited to take keen interest in Labor dispute resolution, push the boundaries of advocacy and let the ILO conventions and EAC protocols be our compass.

## MESSAGE FOR EMPLOYERS:

- See compliance not as a burden, but as a badge of honor. Formulate and implement knowing that compliance is a winning business growth strategy.
- During investigations, ensure there are no ulterior motives. Follow the law and accord the employee all the support upholding fairness in the process.

## MESSAGE FOR GOVERNMENT AND COURTS:

- Be the visionary, the regulator, the enabler and—when needed—the protector.
- To all our courts, from the Industrial Court, the High Court, to the Supreme Court: continue to be the accessible, innovative, and fearless guardians of Labor justice.
- Labor justice is everyone’s business. In the ever-evolving world of work, characterized by globalization, technological advancements, and shifting societal norms, the role of the judiciary has never been more critical.
- The new world of work presents unique challenges. From the rise of the gig economy to issues surrounding workplace discrimination, fair compensation, and workers’ rights in a globalized context, labor relations are undergoing profound transformations.

## MESSAGE FOR HR PROFESSIONALS

- Be mindful of the different age groups you have in the workplace. Take care of the different seasons your workers are going through including grief.
- During staff exits, reinforce the culture that we want and ensure to get insights from the exits. Realize that separations affect the brand, ensure your organization have separation policies.
- Avail mental health support for your teams. Human capital is the bloodline of the business or economy. Don’t strip your employees of their identity and dignity.
- Always ask yourself whether you are a butcher or a surgeon. Approach employee relations as a spirit, let the Human resources policy be a guide to how you work.

- Develop sexual harassment policies for your workplaces.
- Appoint a sexual harassment committee and designate a person to receive the complaints.

## CHALLENGES COURT IS ADDRESSING TODAY

- Gig Economy Workers:** The judiciary is grappling with questions about employee classification, benefits, and protections for gig workers.
- Workplace Discrimination:** Courts have reinforced principles of equality by addressing cases involving gender, racial, and other forms of discrimination.
- Globalization:** Labor jurisprudence has expanded to address cross-border disputes, international labor standards, and the impact of global supply chains on workers' rights.

## QUESTIONS WE NEED ANSWERS TO:

- Are our laws fit for purpose in a world of AI, gig work, and cross-border employment?
- Are our courts accessible, fast, and fair?
- Are we protecting the most vulnerable—women, youth, informal workers?
- Are we ready to harmonize our jurisprudence with our neighbors, or will we be left behind?
- What can be done better?
- Who is calling who to action?



Hon. Lady Justice Linda Lillian Tumusiime Mugisha after receiving her appreciation plaque at the conference. Looking On; Extreme left President Ronald Bbosa from HRMAU, Mr. Gerald Batanda, Managing Partner, Signum Advocates and Extreme Right Vice President Asimwe Anthony from Uganda Law Society

# KEY TAKEOUTS ON THEMATIC AREAS

## OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- a) It can be utilized to accelerate the hiring process.
- b) AI knowledge bases allow a company to store large volumes of information enabling users to ask questions and receive instant, accurate responses based on the stored content.
- c) AI is used by Legal and HR professionals that handle large volumes of documents in document drafting/reviewing.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN USE OF AI IN THE WORKPLACE

### a) Replacement of Employees

- One of the biggest concerns arising around the discussion of AI use in the workplace is the potential of AI replacing humans and taking up their jobs. The reality is the unique human qualities and nuance brought to a job are not likely to be replicated by AI anytime soon. AI is more likely to complement human work than necessarily replace it.
- This highlights the fact that there is still a need for a human workforce in the labor arena. AI continues to remain far from ably replacing humans in the workplace.

### b) Bias and Discrimination

- AI technology is likely to perpetuate bias encoded into the data on which it is trained. This is bound to negatively affect individuals especially where AI is used to determine recruitment of employees.

## REGULATION OF AI USE IN UGANDA

- Article 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides for the right to ownership of property. This right protects intellectual property which may not be used in AI systems without the consent of the proprietor.
- This right to property is operationalized by The Copyright and Neighboring Rights Act (CNRA), Cap. 222, wherein Section 3 provides for the protection of original work reduced into material form. However, ideas and concepts are not protected by copyright. (See Section 5 CNRA)
- The National Information Technology Authority Uganda Act Cap. 200 establishes the National Information Technology Authority with a mandate to coordinate supervise and monitor utilization of information technology in the public and private sector.
- The National Development Plan II seeks among other objectives to promote technology, science and innovation. It points out the need in the country to invest in research, innovation and human capital development in the context of the information technology sector.

## DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY WITH AI MODELS

- Section 7 of Data Protection and Privacy Act (DPPA) Cap 97 requires consent before data is collected or processed for any purpose, with a few exceptions.
- Employees and clients are data subjects who must consent to collect or process personal data. (See Section 10 DPPA - provides for the protection of privacy)

- AI models may be involved in automated decision making. Section 7 of the DPPA grants a data subject a right to object to any decision taken that affects them made via an automated decision arising from the processing of personal data. Section 21 further highlights data subjects' rights in relation to automated decision making.

## THE EMPLOYMENT ACT AND AI MODELS

- The Employment Act prohibits discrimination in employment under Section 5 of Employment Act Cap. 226. Discrimination, especially in recruitment processes, as a result of AI can be suspect.
- Can the negligence or use of AI outside accepted parameters laid by the organization constitute misconduct? This matter can be addressed with the HR Manual.

## COMPARISONS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) remains largely unregulated world over. One of the most prominent laws regulating AI is the **European Union AI Act**.
- The **EU AI Act** creates a risk-based framework for AI systems. “**High risk**” AI systems refer to those that affect fundamental rights including systems that affect employment rights.
- The **EU AI Act** categorizes as high risk the use of AI systems to evaluate applicants and in the recruitment of employees as well as the use of AI systems used to make decisions i.e. promotions and dismissal.
- This Act further provides that employers are required to inform their employees if they use high risk AI systems concerning the employees or affected persons. Risk management system and data governance as conditions.
- While there is no explicit law that governs AI use in Uganda or its applications to labor law, general legal principles still apply to AI use

that is copyright law, right to privacy, data protection, right to non-discrimination.

## WHAT APPROACH SHOULD ORGANISATIONS TAKE?

- Organize internal trainings to understand AI, its opportunities and risks.
- Incorporate an AI Policy providing for;
  - a) Transparency and declaratory obligations on employees to inform supervisors where tasks have incorporated AI.
  - b) Identifying what tasks can be concluded with the assistance of AI.
  - c) Streamlining what company data or client's data can be transmitted into AI subject to the consent requirements.
  - d) Principles to be followed when AI is used.
    - The Organization should take a position on the use of open sourced LLMs or related models e.g. ChatGPT, Gemini, among others.
    - Address the impact of AI use on performance assessment and evaluation.
    - Create a compliance tool kit that factors in the applicable data protection and intellectual property laws.

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON AI IN THE WORKPLACE

- Train stakeholders on AI use, risks and opportunities.
- Define the acceptable use of AI and its effect on performance under the HR Manual.
- Each organisation should implement an AI policy.
- Each organisation should incorporate a data protection policy which states out the use of data in the organisation in relation to AI.
- Ensure consent before using automated decisions through AI.
- Seek legal advice on the incorporation of internal AI models.

# CONFERENCE PICTORIAL



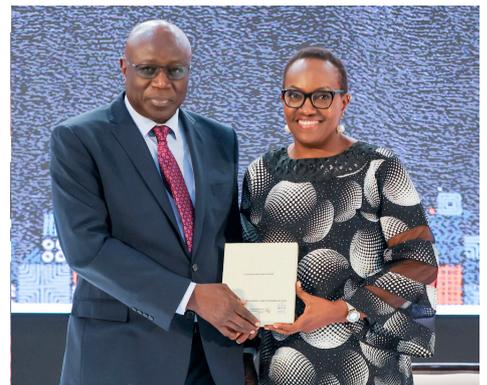
From Left: Angel Ayebazibwe, Vice President HRMAU Ms Esther Nampijja, Philip Karugaba ; Partner, ENS Africa, Augustine Idoot ; Partner, Kampala Associated Advocates, Sarah Kajumba Kwehangana; Director, People and Culture -Global Health Corps and Patson W. Arinaitwe; Partner, Signum Advocates



The Hon. Mr. Justice Anthony Wabwire Musana, Judge Industrial Court of Uganda



Extreme Left to Right :Tetteh Ayitevie, Chief Executive Officer, Prudential Assurance Uganda, Ms Joyce Nakalema (Second Right) HRMAU Finance Director, Jeremiah Nyagah, Country Director, World Vision, Doreen Asaasira Muhangazi ; Chief People and Strategy Officer, Postbank Uganda and Andrew Kironzo, Chief Executive Officer, Uganda Breweries Limited



Mr. Famari Barro, Country Director Save the Children hands over gift to Ms. Jackie Mwesige after delivering her talk



From Left Ms. Doreen Kansime, Dr Phiona Mpanga Muhwezi, Lecturer Labour Law, Makerere School of Law, Mr. Amon Ariho, Head of HR, Uganda Baati, Godwin Matsiko, Employee Relations Manager, Stanbic Bank and Olivia Kyarimpa Matovu, Partner, Ligomarc Advocates



The Director of Professional Development Mr. Andrew Kawesa Ssebwalunnyo closes the conference



*Extreme Left to Right: Caroline Bonabana Kwikiriza Director Legal Affairs Office of Auditor General, Ruth Kamuntu, Country Human Resource Manager Malaria Consortium Ambassador Lady Goldy Oboma, Ambassador, Mental Health at the Workplace Uganda, Federation of Uganda Employers, Darcy Uwera Birungyi, Senior People and Culture Strategic Partner, Compassion International and Brian Kambaho, Head of Legal and Company Secretary, Guaranty Trust Bank*



*Mr. Moses Apell Odongo from Deposit Protection Fund of Uganda shares his presentation at the conference.*



*Extreme Left to Right: Juliet Aweko, HR Manager Mestil Hotel, Kansiiime, M. Taremwa, Associate at Signum Advocates., Ivan Engoru, Partner, Engoru Mutebi Advocates, Paul Rumanda Rugambwa, Human Resource Director, Infectious Disease Institute, Ruth Nambejja, Senior Legal Officer, UAP Old Mutual Insurance Uganda Limited and Alex Ntale, Senior Associate, MMAKS Advocates.*



*Mr. Joel Busoga from H&G Advocates delivering his talk.*



*Extreme Left to Right: Patrick Mugalula, Senior Associate, KATS Advocates, Ms. Martha Nalubega, HR Manager Nile Breweries, Bridgette Kusiima Byarugaba, Partner, SM & Co. Advocates, Grace Nabakooza of Federation of Uganda Employers, Primah Kwagala, Executive Director, Women's Probono Initiative and Horace Nuwasasira, Principal Associate, Signum Advocates*



*HRMAU Director PR and Marketing; Moses Waswa and Vice President; Esther Regina Nampijja at the event*



## SPONSORS



## THANK YOU

*To all our Sponsors, Partners and Attendees for Making the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Employment Law Conference a Success.*



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# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS: THE FINANCIAL JOURNEY OF EMPLOYEES

By Darius Niwaha; The Chief Executive Officer of Octagon Pension Services Limited



Mr. Niwaha receives his gift from Mrs. Charlotte Mirembe Ssekayombya of PSI during the conference

## WHY SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

Social Security is now a matter of national importance. We need to pay emphasis on it for the following reasons;

- Increasing life expectancy.
- Protect Post -Retirement Lifestyle.
- Increasing Cost of Health.
- Breakdown of traditional support systems.
- Falling Interest Rate Scenario.
- Protection for Spouse/Dependants.

## EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS

- Shifting attitudes towards saving.
- Hungry for Information.
- Improved service delivery.
- Demand for better governance.
- Artificial Intelligence
- Drive for better results.

## PENSION SECTOR IN UGANDA

According to URBRA Website, below are some of the Key Facts about the Pension sector in Uganda;

Key Facts	
1	2 Million working Ugandans are covered under some retirement benefits.
2	65 licensed pension schemes.
3	Pension Obligations amount to 25 Trillion.
4	Pension schemes cover less than 10% of population.
5	Government's liabilities to members of pension schemes amounts \$4.9 Billion >23% GDP.
6	NSSF Financial Assets represent atleast 25% of the financial system's total assets.
7	NSSF has assets equivalent to a value of UGX 20 Trillion under its management.
8	By 2050, about 8 million people will be over 60 years old, hence require a pension or some sort out elderly support.
9	Less than 2% of the elderly people in Uganda are currently receiving a pension.
10	Less than 5% of Uganda's working population are directly saving for their retirement.
11	NSSF has 450,000 workers contributing to their pension.

## WHAT DIFFERENT GENERATIONS WANT FROM THEIR EMPLOYERS

GENERATION	BOOMERS	GEN X	MILLENNIALS	GEN Z
NEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phased retirement and part time working opportunities.</li> <li>• Health employee benefits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independence, control and not being micro-managed.</li> <li>• Flexible working to care for the family.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job stability and convenience.</li> <li>• Education and support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial security.</li> <li>• Mental health support.</li> </ul>

# FINANCIAL LIFE JOURNEY

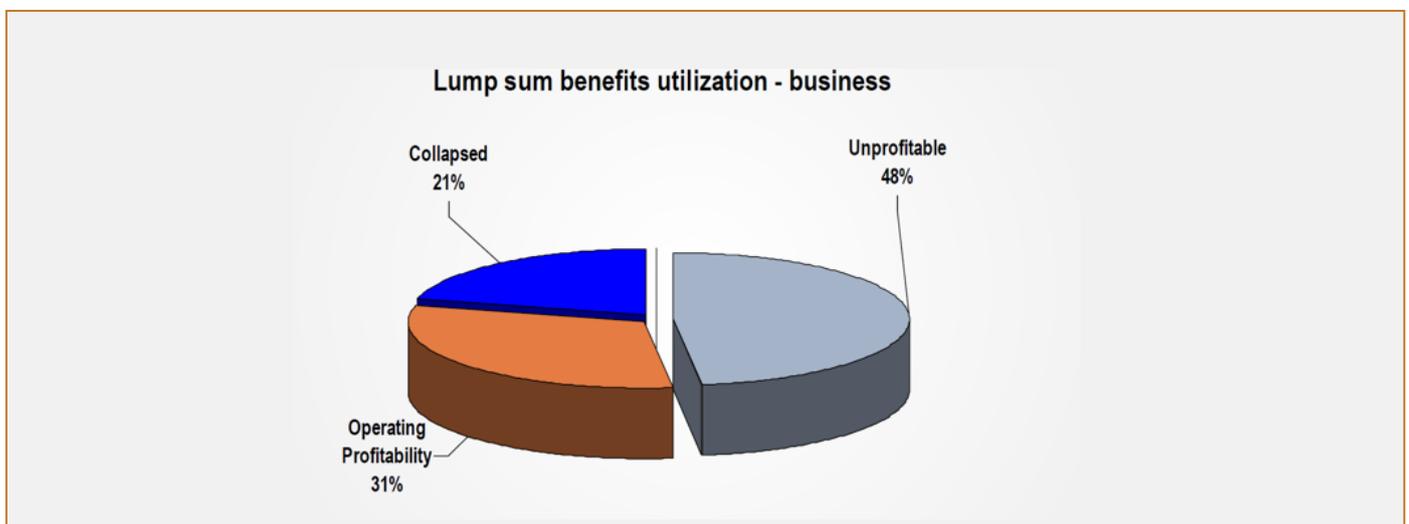
The HR Professionals were advised to understand their employee's financial life journey which takes the shape below;

0-22	22-30	30-35	35-40	40-50	50-75	Above 75
Dependent Learner	Young Adult	Focus Stage	Wealth Build Up	Excellence	Bliss	Appreciation
Age to grow and accumulate knowledge	Explorer	Family and Career Focus	Focus on Accumulation	Fruits of Hard work	Time to Enjoy	Life of good planning

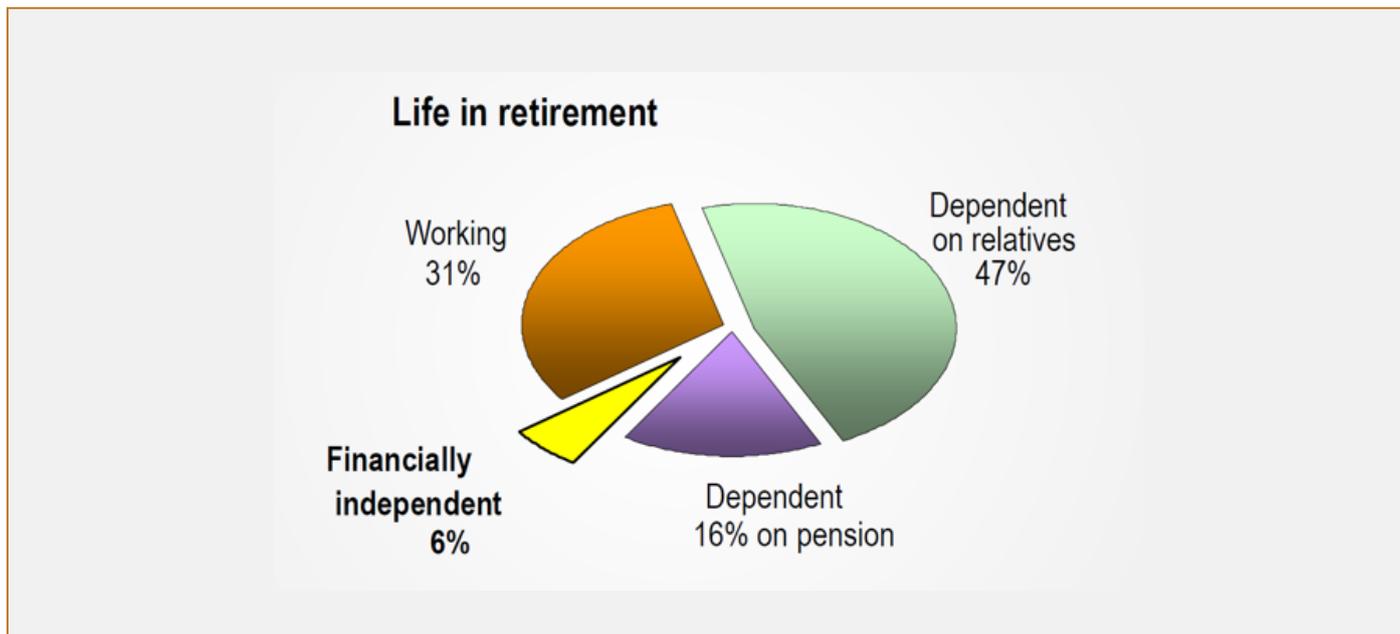
Some of the common responses regarding Pension from these age groups include;

	Age	Comments
1	25	I am too young to think of pension
2	35	I will think of pension when I hit forty-five
3	55	I should have started twenty years ago
4	75	I wish I started when I got my first job

From research it's been said that those who start business after retirement, the business is 48% unprofitable.



From the statistics on Life in Retirement only 6% are financially independent, 16% are living on pension. As Human Resource Professionals pay attention to this and create solutions that can prepare your teams for retirement.



### KEY TAKEAWAY FOR ATTENDEES:

Support your workers on their journey to financial independence. You are the guardian of this process.

Human Resource  
Managers' Association of  
Uganda



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR 2025

NO.	PROGRAM	DATES	INVESTMENT	FORMAT	CPD
1	Global Conference for Human Resource	13 th -16 th August	\$500 Standard \$1,470 VIP	Ghana-Accra	10CPD
2	3rd Edition of HR Sports Gala	23 rd August	Free	Physical	1CPD
3	7 th East Africa HR Symposium	27th - 29th August	\$590	Rwanda-Kigali	10 CPD
4	HR Break- HR Beyond the Office	11 th September	100,000/-	Physical	5 CPD
5	The Young HR professional Summit (The future starts now)	19 th September	200,000/-	Physical	5 CPD
6	HR Analytics Certification	22nd -26th September	\$1800	Physical	10 CPD
7	2nd Annual HR Conference (Theme: HR Transcend)	5th , 6th and 7th November	1,500,000/=	Physical	10 CPD
8	HR Excellence Awards (HR Reveal)	7th November	300,000/=	Physical	5 CPD

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# ANNUAL HUMAN RESOURCE SPORTS GALA

The **3rd Annual HR Sports Gala** is back. It will be held at Makerere University Business School Sports Ground on 23rd August 2025. The event is expected to be bigger and better with lots of games, networking and fun.

We invite you to sign up to participate using this link :

[lnkd.in/dvYPDZxT](https://lnkd.in/dvYPDZxT)



Human Resource  
Managers' Association of  
Uganda



**SAVE THE DATE**  
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**SPORTS GALA**  
**23rd August 2025**  
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# INTER SOCIETY MEET AND GREET EVENT

The HRMAU President Ronald Bbosa, Director Professional Development Andrew K Ssebwalunyo and Director Public Relations Moses Waswa led a delegation of HR professionals at the recently concluded Inter-society Meet and Greet event under the theme '**One Voice (Stronger together, building community in a fragmented world)**'.

The event was organized by Uganda Marketers Society Uganda, Uganda Advertising Association, Public Relations Association of Uganda and Human Resources Managers' Association of Uganda (HRMAU).



HRMAU President, Bbosa, gives his remarks at the event



Participants at the Meet and Greet. Courtesy photo: Next Media



President Bbosa joined by HRMAU council members at the event

# MUBS ANNUAL HR DINNER PICTORIAL



Students join HRMAU leadership at the event



Student representative on HRMAU governing council, Angel Ayebazibwe, joins HRMAU leadership at the dinner



The MUBS leadership Council cuts cake



President HRMAU Ronald Bbosa addresses the students



Students' photo moment at the dinner

# HR FUNHOUSE: WHERE HR MEETS PURPOSE AND COMMUNITY

In an increasingly complex and fast-paced work environment, the concept of having “fun” at work might seem an afterthought, reserved for weekends, holidays, retreats or even team-building. However, the trend points to a compelling truth: fun is not a distraction; it is a deliberate and strategic catalyst for performance, engagement, and well-being. The emerging world of work indicates that employees are no longer driven by money, but by being in a space where their peace of mind is protected and given the attention it deserves.

Fun at work does not mean compromising or diminishing the seriousness of work. Rather, it acknowledges a fundamental insight: when employees feel safe, valued, and supported, they perform at their best. This could be a shared laugh during a challenging moment or a random celebration of team wins. Fun at the workplace fuels emotional connection, and that connection drives collaboration, innovation, and retention.

The saying “Work without play makes Jack a dull boy and Jill a dull girl” points to the fact that “Fun is not the opposite of work. It’s what makes good work possible.” The submission in this piece will be guided by an interesting African saying, “You cannot pour from an empty calabash,” simply meaning - “You cannot give what you don’t have”.

While Engineers handle the hardware, HR deals with the far more nuanced “heart-ware” – the people. This involves focusing on how they feel and relate at work. From the HR point of view, we are required to take care of other people, but the question is, **“WHO TAKES CARE OF HR?”**

The good news? HR Funhouse is here to support you – and we take that role seriously. With pride, purpose, and unwavering intent, HR Funhouse continues to be a space where HR professionals connect, recharge, and grow – both personally and professionally.

Maybe let me clarify what HR Funhouse is really about. It’s more than just a professional network – it’s a social club exclusively for HR practitioners, founded on Thursday, 25th January 2018. Since then, it has stayed committed to being a space where connection is intentional, and where emotional and psychosocial support aren’t just nice-to-haves – they’re essential.

To every HR professional reading this who hasn’t yet joined our community, we ask: How are you taking care of your mental health? How do you disconnect from the pressures of work and stay afloat in the often-turbulent world of HR? Here’s Why HR Funhouse should be your go-to place. We invite you to become part of a community designed specifically for you to share experiences, gain support, and just as importantly, have fun while doing it.

## **By joining HR Funhouse, you gain access to:**

- Work-life balance support tailored for HR professionals
- Meaningful social interactions and professional networking
- Member-only discounts and offers to make your social life more affordable
- Strong bonds and peer support within the HR field
- Purposeful CSR initiatives you can actively participate in

**And yes – the good news remains: *Our doors are open, and it's never too late to take that step and join the community as a member.***

Over the years, The HR Funhouse has evolved and redefined “Fun” from superficial to intentional experiences that enable members to have fun, disconnecting from the usual routine to connecting in a fun-filled manner, now code-named VIBE WITH PURPOSE. Among these is the recently held “HR IN THE WILD PARTY” that took place on May 31, 2025. The theme was animal print and jungle outfits. The event took members out of the ordinary city environment to fresh and uncharted territory. It also ensured members were strangers to “please find attached email environment..”

The idea behind this HR Funhouse event was simple yet powerful: to give HR Funhouse members a chance to refresh and unwind after weeks and months of dedicated hard work. Surrounded by the lush green cover of the Great Outdoors, we found peace and reconnection

in nature’s embrace. It was more than just a getaway; it was therapy in its purest form. We danced to music that blended with the rhythm of the wind, our movements mirroring the gentle sway of the trees. The rustle of the leaves became our soundtrack, and each breath of clean, fresh air reminded us of the simple joys we often forget. It was a weekend of laughter, movement, stillness, and renewal. It was a beautiful reminder of how vital it is to step away, connect with nature, and just be.

Our members, Claire Kisakye and Allan Obore, took the crown of Queen and King of the Jungle as best dressed. The event was organised by the HR Funhouse EXCO under the solid leadership of Joel Kafire, the President of the HR Funhouse. The event was proudly sponsored by MUA insurance, Uganda Breweries, Ashley Motors, the Great Outdoors, Edxtravel, Credo Management Limited, Jay Fashions Store, and Hariss International. They graced the event with their presence and forged a long-term partnership with HR Funhouse.



Creating a fun, flourishing workplace is not the responsibility of HR alone; it is a collective effort, embedded in daily interactions. We don't run on assumptions that one is fine by face validity. The rationale is that genuine check-ins create emotional presence and connection. Understanding what drives your colleagues through informal conversations and profiling your peers can turn a workplace from transactional to transformational. This technique, championed by Christian Lenana, is a subtle yet profound way to personalize engagement and motivation.

As mentioned above, this could be through celebrating even the smallest wins, bringing your energy - not just your output, and encouraging purpose over pressure.

The call to action is that we must challenge the outdated binary of work versus play.

We should instead build workplaces where laughter and results coexist because when work feels good, people do good work. Together, let's improve the quality of life for HR professionals. Let's vibe with purpose as a member of the HR Funhouse.

Ultimately, dedicating just a few minutes each day to learning something new can significantly boost your expertise and make you a more valuable asset in your profession. This continuous commitment to self-improvement can not only enhance your current skills but also open up new opportunities for growth in your career.

### **3. Speak Up in Meetings**

Many individuals often feel hesitant to voice their ideas or ask questions in the workplace. This hesitation can stem from a fear of judgment, a concern about being perceived as inexperienced, or simply feeling out of place in larger discussions. However, actively making a habit of contributing, even in small and seemingly minor ways, can significantly enhance your visibility and reputation among colleagues and supervisors.

When you share your thoughts, whether in team meetings, brainstorming sessions, or casual conversations, you are not only showcasing your unique perspectives but also demonstrating your willingness to engage and collaborate. This proactive approach reflects confidence in your abilities and a readiness to take initiative, both of which are essential qualities for effective leadership.

Moreover, consistently participating in discussions indicates that you are invested in your work and committed to contributing to the team's success. As you build the habit of sharing your ideas, you may also inspire others to do the same, fostering a more open and innovative workplace culture. Ultimately, embracing opportunities to contribute will help you stand out as a valuable team member and position you for future growth and leadership opportunities.

### **4. Document Your Wins**

It's easy to forget achievements when you're busy. Keep track of your successes—big and small. Whether it's solving a problem, leading a project, or improving a process, noting your contributions makes it easier to negotiate raises, apply for new jobs, or get recognized at work.

### **5. Show Up with a Positive Attitude**

How you approach your work matters. Being reliable, showing enthusiasm, and handling challenges with a good attitude makes you someone people want to work with. A strong work ethic and positive energy can lead to new responsibilities, mentorship, and promotions.

By: Joel Omwansu and Joseph Duku

FOREVER IN  
*Our Hearts*

*Everlyne Silayo  
Lenaiyasa*



*13<sup>th</sup> June 2025*

*Victoria Nabyonga  
Kabuye*



*7<sup>th</sup> May 2025*

# GUEST ARTICLES



## Beyond Compliance: The Board's Role in Enabling Workplace Well-being and Mental Health

Brian Kambaho Karogo - Legal and Corporate Governance Professional | Company Secretary

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, one thing has become increasingly clear—employee well-being is no longer a side conversation. It has evolved into a defining governance issue, touching every corner of organisational life.

Mental health, once cloaked in stigma or passed off to under-resourced Human Resource departments, is now recognised as a strategic concern. As more companies grapple with work-related stress, burnout, absenteeism, and disengagement, boards and senior leadership must rise to the moment.

This was the central theme in a recent panel discussion where I served as a panelist, titled *“Navigating Workplace Mental Health and Well-being: Work-Life Integration and Family-Friendly Employment Policies”* at the recently concluded 4th Labour and Employment Law Conference

organised by the Human Resource Managers Association of Uganda (HRMAU) and Signum Advocates. The discussion revealed a shared realization: that corporate wellness must be embedded not just in policy, but in governance—not just as a box to tick, but as a strategic, measurable priority.

Governance begins with values. If the board doesn't believe well-being is strategic, then policies become shelfware—never lived, never felt. I dare ask *“Why should boards and employers care?”*

At its core, the issue is moral. The workplace, designed to bring dignity, purpose, and structure, has in many cases become a source of distress. Companies have a moral duty and social responsibility to consider the health of their workers and this includes mental health. Ethically, employers are duty-bound not to cause

psychological injury. Yet, poor management, toxic leadership, unrealistic workloads, and systemic discrimination often go unchecked, fostering environments where mental health deteriorates silently.

The numbers speak louder than opinion and the business case is equally compelling. According to the World Health Organisation, 1 in every 6.8 employees is currently experiencing mental health issues. In Uganda, the Federation of Uganda Employers (2023) reports that only 19% of employers have a mental health policy, while over 60% of workers report stress, and a mere 12% seek help.

Work-related stress causes an average of 24 lost workdays per affected person per year, while Deloitte (2023) places the global cost of poor workplace mental health at \$1,900 per employee annually—across the entire workforce, not just the unwell.

***“What gets measured gets managed. And what is disclosed builds trust.” – Larry Fink, CEO, BlackRock***

This isn't just about empathy. It's about performance, retention, legal compliance, and reputation. Investors and stakeholders are watching. Disclosure on employee well-being in sustainability reports is no longer “nice to have”—

it's fast becoming a proxy for sound governance. Investors are now asking companies: ***How do you treat your people?*** Disclosures on mental health signal whether a company manages its human capital or exploits it. In the wake of COVID-19, remote work burnout, and mass resignations, employee well-being is now tied to shareholder value.

As investors and regulators link well-being to sustainability, governance, and ESG performance, corporate boards can no longer afford to view mental health as a peripheral HR issue. Instead, they must be integrated into risk management,

internal controls, and organisational culture.

Let us now explore how boards and senior leadership can turn good intentions into governance practice. We must ask: ***How can corporate boards become champions of healthier workplaces? How do we move from policy to practice, from awareness to accountability?***

The first step is recognition. Leadership must publicly acknowledge mental health as a corporate priority. This includes statements in annual reports, health and safety policies, or workplace wellness declarations. More importantly, however, the messaging must be consistent with action—because initiatives without a strategy are like shooting into space.

The next step is governance accountability. Mental health cannot remain in the shadow of HR. It should fall under the purview of board committees such as Risk, HR, or ESG. Board charters and leadership KPIs must reflect well-being metrics. Policies like the Code of Conduct, Leave, and Anti-Harassment guidelines should incorporate a mental health lens. One promising tool is the “Right to Disconnect” policy, designed to curb burnout in digitally demanding workplaces.

***“Good governance today must go beyond financial oversight. It must encompass human capital stewardship.” – OECD***

True ownership requires concrete goals. Organisations can appoint mental health focal persons or Wellness Officers, a model increasingly adopted by Kenyan and Nigerian corporates. Goals might include training 100 managers annually in mental health literacy, providing anonymous reporting tools, or operationalising Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).

Boards must also insist on visibility. Key performance indicators such as absenteeism rates, employee turnover, engagement scores,

and EAP usage should be measured and disclosed. Mental health metrics can be embedded into Sustainability Reports, aligned with GRI or SASB standards. Governance audits should include regular psychosocial risk assessments.

A policy without enforcement, however, is just paperwork. To protect employee well-being, legal frameworks must have teeth, and employers must have will. Yet in Uganda, we must confront a sobering truth: we are not there yet.

Mental health remains underreported in corporate disclosures. Few boards treat it as a risk mitigation or productivity issue. Many organisations default to charitable donations to mental health causes instead of prioritising internal reforms.

The recent public discourse surrounding businessman Mohan Kiwanuka's battle with Alzheimer's disease was eye-opening. It showed that our society—and our boardrooms—are still unprepared for vulnerable, informed conversations about mental health in leadership and succession planning. Now, therefore, is the time to prepare.

What responsible governance demands today is leadership from the top. That means board-approved wellness and work-life charters. It means mandatory non-financial disclosures on psychological safety. It means training board members to identify toxic leadership patterns and support inclusive, supportive workplace cultures. Wellness must be embedded into ESG strategies, CSR frameworks, and corporate compliance agendas.

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast” - Peter Drucker, and well-being is the culture multiplier. As governance professionals, legal experts, HR leaders, and citizens—we are all custodians of corporate culture. And in every boardroom sits the power to build a workplace where people are valued not just for what they do, but for who they are.

We often ask: what kind of legacy shall we leave in governance? I say—let it be one where people didn't have to burn out to prove they were dedicated. Let it not be about policies filed away in drawers—but about lives improved, burnouts prevented, and cultures transformed.

Let us ensure the boardroom is not the last place where mental health is taken seriously, but the first place where well-being is defined, protected, and stewarded for future generations of work.

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## About the Author

**Brian Kambaho Karogo** is a legal and corporate governance professional with expertise in financial services, ESG, and organizational compliance. He frequently advises boards and speaks on the intersection of human capital, mental health, and sustainable governance in East Africa.



## Why Credit Reference Bureau services are a necessity in HR Operations

Maureen Namaweje Lule – Human Capital Manager at Metropol Credit Reference Bureau

To lay a foundation for those who may be new to the concept of Credit Reference Bureaus (CRBs), their key role is to collect information on your credit transactions from credit providers authorized to submit data to the Credit Reference Bureaus and process this information to produce credit reports for individual and non-individual borrowers or companies. These credit reports are thereafter used by these credit providers and other parties to assess the credit worthiness of borrowers when they apply for credit facilities or to determine the financial character of the individuals or companies they are dealing with.

If you are wondering how this fits into the Human Resource function, you need to think along the lines of recruitment. Identifying the right candidate with the right skill sets and qualifications through interview sessions has become easier with the adoption of Artificial Intelligence as well as global recruitment platforms. These enable a wider scope for candidate interactions across boundaries as opposed to the days before advanced technology, where access to job applications was limited to candidates within the same area/region in which the job advertisements were placed.

Much as identifying the right skill sets has been

eased, a crucial area that remains under utilised in many sectors is conducting background checks on candidates' credit profiles and more especially the repayment history of their credit facilities. This speaks directly to the financial character of an individual and how the handling of their credit obligations will affect their performance on the job.

### For example:

Overindebted staff members may not concentrate on their jobs as they are always thinking of how to get out of the debt trap. This affects productivity and also creates a fertile ground for fraudulent behaviour among staff members in a bid to raise money to pay their credit obligations. As a Human Resource Manager, having knowledge of staff credit obligations and how they are being managed enables you to devise ways of helping them out in case some are struggling to clear their debts. For job applicants, a poor credit repayment history may be treated as a red flag that can fail a candidate to make it to the short list especially for supervisory, managerial and executive positions. In the financial services sector, candidates for managerial and executive positions have to be vetted by Bank of Uganda before they are formally appointed and one of the required documents is a credit report.

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Some ruthless Money Lenders often arrest their defaulting clients from their work places to cause them embarrassment and corner them into clearing their loan obligations. This does not only embarrass the staff in question but also the organisation that employs the person, causing reputational damage. This damage could be avoided if the Human R Manager regularly has a view of staff credit obligations through reviewing their credit reports obtained from the Credit Reference Bureaus.

In an era where mobile loans are increasingly becoming popular, many staff members may have one or more of these loans from different lenders. Some borrow with the intention of not repaying and end up changing their mobile phone numbers from time to time.

This may affect the flow of communication especially from clients who deal with the affected staff members to obtain services from the company. Subsequently, some business may be lost, affecting the revenue performance of the organisation. To tame this, it's important to always track the credit transactions of staff members. Once they know that Human Resource tracks these transactions, they will most likely work towards having a clean credit profile by paying their obligations in a timely manner.

As I conclude, it is time for Human Resource departments across all sectors to consider Credit Reference Bureau reports as mandatory when conducting background checks on new recruits but also regularly (preferably on a quarterly basis) reviewing credit reports for existing staff members to determine those financially stressed with a view of devising ways of helping them out so as to improve their productivity and avoid reputational damage.



## SERIES: NAVIGATING WORK-PLACE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING

### Subtopic: Workplace Mental Health—a Salient Glimpse on Men

**A**ll People Leader & C-Suite Leaders, From 2024, deliberate efforts on Mental Health Awareness saw the Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) roll out a series of mental health and wellbeing at the workplace, with specific focus on Men's mental Health in June 2025. This was followed by several events not limited to awareness raising, joint partnership engagements, and the publication of articles that commemorated World Mental Health Day on 10th October 2024 with the theme 'It is Time to Prioritize Mental Health in the Workplace.'

As we understand Men's Mental health we refer to the World Health Organization (WHO) definition. ***"It is "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community".*** In other words, it is the general state of mind and wellbeing which should be intentionally looked after as there's no health without mental and social wellbeing.

The WHO definition highlights the positive connotation of mental health as opposed to the prevailing stigma and misconceived information generally associated with mental health in the workplace. It goes ahead to underpin the fact that everyone has mental health in line with

the mental health continuum varying degrees, from positive mental health to mental illness with some severe mental health problems and may need help. Mental health involves one's emotional, psychological, social well-being and more still physical, spiritual, economic, and nutritional as well since it affects ones cognitive that is how you think, feel, and act—holistically.

One may ask why Men? Yet overall global statistics on Mental Health according to work place health report 2023 indicated more symptoms of anxiety and depression among women than men; including Uganda ranking among top 6 countries in Africa with over 14 million mental disorder cases with 35 out of 100 Ugandans battling a mental health problem with females at 5.1% and 3.6% males on anxiety and depression in post Covid-19 era. According to the 2025 Gallup State of the Global Work place Report, global employee engagement declined by 21%, a significant drop from previous years & the first decline since COVID-19 pandemic which is largely attributed to a decline in managerial engagement as a primary driver particularly among younger and female managers. In any workplace, an actively disengaged employees points to trend of declining life concerns that indicates broader issues of mental health and well-being in the work place with depression and anxiety alone accounting to 12 billion lost

working days globally each year, costing the global economy to an estimated 1 trillion USD in lost productivity annually.

This points to the crucial role of leaders and managers in driving mental well-being and team productivity, and the consequences of their disengagements have far-reaching impacts and problems of mental health in work places lead not only on overall business performance rather potentially hindering economic growth, higher rates of alcohol and substance use, increased absenteeism or presenteeism, greater risk of conflict or aggression at work, higher turnovers, sickness absence, reduced productivity and engagement, accidents and injuries, errors at work, violence and harassment, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and unemployment. With many reports that mental health affects work performance, particularly among younger workers (under 44 years old) including loss of lives as witnessed in extreme cases of mental health illness and violence incidents where an employee recently shot & murdered senior officers in the employer's premises due to unexpected termination from the job.

Today's unprecedented work place mental health surge has further been impacted by the geo-politics and global conflicts leading to withdrawal of donor support to governments and civil societies, project closures in most developing countries, which has greatly affected work place productivity, increased stress levels among the active productive skilled labour.

This specifically, focus on Men's mental health, usually salient yet often understated, and under-discussed issues within Men's Mental Health landscape, largely shaped by distinct challenges men face deeply rooted in masculine barriers and societal norms, stigma, persistent work place pressures, and traditional gender roles expectations that prevent men from seeking help from colleagues, professional assistance, under reporting of struggles or even acknowledging

mental health struggles hence calling for specific targeted culturally sensitive interventions.

Some of the Common Mental Health Challenges in Men include;

- Depression often goes unrecognized because it may manifest as irritability, anger, or fatigue rather than sadness.
- Anxiety masked by overworking, controlling behaviors, or excessive substance use, sleep problems or fatigue.
- Substance abuse and misuse ; men are more likely to use substances like alcohol and drugs to cope with mental distress.
- Suicide men die by suicide at significantly higher rates than women, often due to lack of support or untreated conditions.
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) common in veterans, abuse survivors, or those exposed to violence or trauma.
- Work-related stress expectations to be providers or "tough" can increase emotional pressure hence chronic stress leads to burnout, anxiety, depression, and physical health problems.
- Burnout and overworking ; men may work longer hours to meet societal or personal expectations to "provide." A high percentage of employees (76%) experience burnout at least occasionally, and those experiencing regular burnout are more likely to take sick days or seek new employment.
- Dementia; loss of memory due to persistent sadness or hopelessness.
- Pressure to perform ; workplace culture often emphasizes strength, control, and endurance—qualities men may feel forced to uphold even when struggling due to fear

of job loss, judgment, or missed promotions keep many men from seeking help.

- Stigma and silence ; many men fear being seen as “weak” if they admit to stress, burnout, or emotional struggles which leads to under reporting and untreated issues. Men talking about their feelings are seen as weakness in many cultures.
- Lack of supportive structures ; most mental health services at work are generic, not addressing men’s specific needs or communication styles with limited role models or leaders who openly discuss about mental health.
- Lacks of awareness ; some men don’t recognize the signs of mental health problems. Withdrawal from friends, family, or activities, increased irritability or anger, risk-taking or reckless behavior.
- Masculinity syndrome ; “man up” culture discourages emotional vulnerability, men are told not to show emotions, to “be a man” an illusion outrageously blown out of proportion.

#### Proposed Action Strategies for Employers;

1. Increase access and resources to curb limited or uncomfortable options for the men and actively promote Mental Health Awareness by normalising discussions—especially for men to challenge Stigma.
2. Managerial support. Train and Equip Managers to recognize signs of emotional distress and respond appropriately to address mental health concerns at work place.
3. Offer Tailored Resources and provide access to male-focused support, counseling, or peer support groups.
4. Offer flexible Work Options that allow adequate time for rest, therapy, or family responsibilities to avert mental ill-health.

5. Institutionalize male role models to champion mental health behaviors at work place by sharing their own mental health stories to break stigma.
6. Provide incentives and rewards for men to speak up to a supervisor, HR, or colleague that leads to meaningful support.
7. Provide specialized Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) with confidentiality free support services at work place. In addition, prioritize well-being –build capacity of men to appreciate self-care, take breaks, make time for sleep, exercise, and social interactions at work place.
8. Introduce Mental Health Culture by leaders in organizations—for employers it’s time to redefine strength as many employees (56%) view company culture as more important than salary, and companies with good culture report higher revenues.
9. Promote open communication & conversions—organizations encourage emotional expression without judgment, seek help, being vulnerable, and care for mental well-being as signs of resilience—not weakness fosters increased employee retention.
10. Supportive environment—build resilience through integrated approach of prevention, protection & promotion, access to therapists, support groups, or help lines and Men supporting fellow men to reduce vulnerability makes a huge impact.

In the world of work today, for mental health initiatives to be truly effective, impactful and sustainable, there is need to recognize the significant role of a multifaceted approach for a robust engagement and strategic investment at board room levels to improve Mental Health at the work place not merely as advantageous

but as absolutely essential. For all Employers in Uganda, Africa and globally, a great opportunity lies in rising global engagement levels to 70%, to unlock a \$9.6 trillion increase in productivity with focus on employee well-being, particularly manager well-being, as essential for creating a thriving and productive global work force as per Gallup.

This high-level commitment ensures that ethical responsibilities are seamlessly integrated with tangible business objectives, reinforcing the organization's dedication to its people from the highest echelons of leadership—when people have good working conditions, good management practices, their mental health & well-being is protected, they are better able to cope with stress, realize their own abilities, learn & work well to actively contribute to their organizations, communities and national development.

All the above underscore the pervasive nature of mental health challenges across the workforce, highlights the specific obstacles faced by men, and quantitatively demonstrate the compelling Return on Investment (ROI) associated with comprehensive mental health interventions in the workplace and actionable recommendations emphasizing integrated, confidential, and de-stigmatized support systems, inclusive manager training, promotion of flexible work, and the establishment of a clear governance framework for measuring mental health impact at the workplaces that is regularly reviewed by the C-suite Leaders to prevent, promote, protect and support enabling environments.

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**PEOPLE FOCUS**

# NEWSLETTER

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