

PEOPLE FOCUS

ISSUE 12 | QUARTER 2 | 2026

READY
TO SERVE

THE 2026 - 2028 GOVERNING
COUNCIL TAKES OFFICE



What the Employment
(Amendment) Act 2025
means for employers

Highlights and key actions
from the 5th Labour and
Employment Law Conference

The 4th
Annual
Sports Gala

Changing the narrative
around men's mental
health

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FOREWORD

**Moses
Waswa**

Editor in Chief

Director, Public Relations and
Marketing, HRMAU

Dear Colleagues, welcome to Volume 12, Quarter Two 2026 of the People Focus Newsletter. This has been one of the busiest and most consequential quarters in the Association's recent history, and the theme we have chosen for it — **"Ready to Serve"** — could not be more fitting.

We opened the quarter at the Mestil Hotel for our 5th Annual Labour & Employment Law Conference, hosted jointly with the East Africa Law Society and Signum Advocates under the theme **"Employment Law in Transition: Governance & Workforce Transformation."** Judicial officers, labour practitioners, risk and compliance leaders, and HR professionals from across Uganda and the East African region sat in the same room to wrestle with the same question:

How do we build workplaces that are fair, well governed, and ready for what technology and reform are bringing next?

You will find the key takeaways for both employers and employees inside this issue.

That question found an urgent answer in April, when Parliament's recent legislative agenda produced the most sweeping overhaul of Uganda's workplace regulatory framework in over a decade. Our compliance feature walks through what the Employment (Amendment) Act 2025 changes for every employer — from anti-harassment obligations and probation rules to severance formulas and dismissal procedures. It is essential reading, and I encourage every HR office to treat it as a working document, not a one-time read.

This quarter also marked a leadership transition for HRMAU itself. At the Sheraton Kampala, we thanked the outgoing Governing Council led by Mr. Ronald Bbosa for their stewardship, and we welcomed in a new Council led by Mr. Paul Rumanda Rugambwa for the 2026–2028 term. Leadership handovers are always a moment to reflect on continuity — on the work that carries forward even as the hands doing it change. I have every confidence the incoming team will build well on what has come before.

None of these matters, however, if we forget that HR is, first, a profession of people — including ourselves. This issue's conversation on men's mental health, run in partnership with StrongMinds, and the HRM SACCO's reflection on building long-term financial wellness are both, at heart, the same reminder: the people who take care of everyone else deserve to be taken care of too.

My thanks go to our sponsors, our contributors, and the Editorial Team who turned a quarter of conferences, ceremonies, and reforms into the pages you are about to read. As always, I welcome your feedback — this newsletter is written for you, and it is better when we hear from you.

Enjoy the read.

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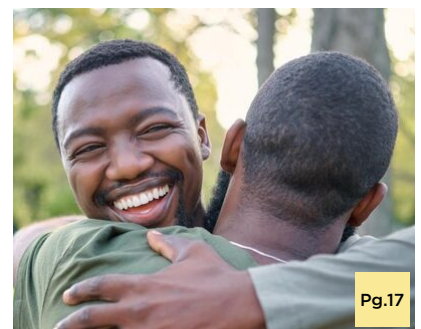


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By Susan Winniefred Adikini



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By Sophie Jjemba Nabirye, Chairperson, HRM SACCO



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

**Paul
Rumanda
Rugambwa**

President, HRMAU

Dear Members and Partners, It is with deep gratitude and a profound sense of responsibility that I write to you for the first time as President of the Human Resource Managers' Association of Uganda. On 24th April 2026, at the Kampala Sheraton Hotel, the Governing Council 2026-2028 was sworn in. On behalf of my colleagues, I thank you, the members, for the confidence you have placed in us. I also pay tribute to the outgoing Governing Council, led by Mr. Ronald Bbosa, whose dedicated stewardship has strengthened the Association and elevated its voice.

The quarter that followed was one of the most consequential in recent memory for our profession. It was my honor to represent the Association at the National Labor Day celebrations in Buikwe, graced by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda, who made important commitments towards the housing of factory workers. Most significantly for our fraternity, His Excellency assented to the Employment (Amendment) Act on 29th April 2026. The Act was gazetted and came into effect on 5th June 2026, ushering in the most far-reaching reform of Uganda's employment law framework in over a decade. This edition of People Focus carries a detailed analysis of the new compliance landscape, and I encourage every member to study it closely.

Against this backdrop, we successfully hosted the 5th Annual Labor & Employment Law Conference, organized jointly with Signum Advocates and, this year, in partnership with the East African Law Society. I extend my sincere appreciation to our keynote speaker, Hon. Justice Monica Mbaru; to the judges of the Industrial Court of Uganda, Hon. Lady Justice Linda Lillian Tumusiime Mugisha and Hon. Justice Anthony Wabwire Musana; to our sponsors; and to the members and delegates whose participation made the conference a resounding success.

Internally, the new Governing Council wasted no time in getting to work. In early May, we held a manifesto alignment session at which the Council embraced Governance-Led Transformation as a shared priority for our term amongst the five pillars, anchored on a clear separation of roles between the Governing Council and the Secretariat, and on stronger transparency, accountability, and performance tracking. In June, we took our first deliberate step on that journey at our Strategy Retreat, where JKC Consulting facilitated a Strategic Governance Orientation session. The session sharpened our collective understanding of fiduciary duty in voluntary service, the boundaries between governance and management, and what it truly means to shift from event-driven oversight to strategy-led, institutionally focused governance. Over the coming months, we will work through the recommendations from that session, with tangible benefits for our members, our Secretariat, and the Association as a whole.

The quarter also gave us moments to celebrate our profession. We marked International Human Resources Day with our members, and during International Coaching Week, we joined Imagine Me, Africa as they celebrated 12 years of impact by launching Uganda's first International Coaching Federation-accredited coaching program, a milestone for our professional landscape, and a timely reminder that coaching is not merely a "soft skill" but a critical leadership competence.

As we look to Quarter Three, which marks the start of the new Government financial year and the fiscal years of many of our member organizations, we remain alive to the realities of the high cost of living and its impact on both our organizations and the employees we serve. We enter the quarter with fundamental changes in the law, and as an Association, we are running dedicated sessions to support our

members in navigating the new compliance environment. We also look forward to engaging with the newly appointed Ministers responsible for Public Service and for Gender, Labor and Social Development as we advance the interests of the profession.

I warmly invite all members to participate in the exciting activities ahead, including the 4th Annual HR Sports Gala, the HR for Non-HR Managers program, the Chartered HR Business Partnering certification, and the Africa HR Summit in Arusha, among others, as detailed in the Professional Development Calendar in this issue.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the Association and to the advancement of the Human Resource profession in Uganda. We are ready to serve.



JKC Consulting facilitated a Strategic Governance Orientation session.



Swearing-In Ceremony of the Governing Council 2026 – 2028

Speaking at the Swearing in ceremony of the new governing council held on 24th April 2026 at the Kampala Sheraton, the Chief Guest Mr George Wafula who was representing the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Service thanked the outgoing council for a job well done.

He invited the council to be resilient, innovative and to offer strategic leadership to enable organisations to adapt, remain competitive and to deliver results. He emphasised that Human Resource professionals play a critical role in fostering positive workplace environments, nurturing talent, strengthening organizational culture, and promoting employee well-being.

He commended the collaborative efforts that have been undertaken toward the enactment of the Human Resource Professionals Bill, 2025. This legislation is a significant milestone that will enhance standards, promote professionalism, and ensure accountability within the HR

fraternity. He affirmed that the Ministry of Public Service would take the lead in ensuring that this Bill is handled appropriately and enacted into law to fully oversee the professionalization of Human Resource practice in Uganda.

He highlighted the fact that the Ministry of Public Service has embarked on a wider reform agenda aimed at professionalizing all cadres within the Public Service and across the entire country. He invited Human Resource professionals to be at the forefront of championing this agenda since they are the custodians of talent, standards, and organizational culture, and therefore your leadership in this transformation is indispensable.

In line with this the Ministry has developed a Professionalization Strategy and Framework to guide this process. We have also established a collaborative framework between universities and higher training

institutions to ensure that the skills and competencies of graduates align with the needs of the Public Service and the wider economy.

It is important that HR professionals actively contribute to shaping the curriculum and training content of our institutions. Your practical insights are critical in ensuring that graduates are not only qualified but also relevant and responsive to the demands of the workplace. He invited HRMAU to strengthen collaboration with the Uganda Public Service Human Resource Network so that together, we can harmonize standards, share knowledge, and collectively advance professionalism in HR practice across the country.

HE recognized the outgoing Governing Council led by Mr. Ronald Bbosa for championing employee wellness and health in the workplace since it's fundamental to productivity. He thanked Mr Bbosa and the outgoing council for their leadership, dedication, and stewardship that have significantly strengthened the Association and advanced the HR profession in Uganda.

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL SWEARING CEREMONY PICTORIAL



| Cake cutting Ceremony



| The Outgoing HRMAU Governing Council with their Appreciation Plaques



Mr. Patrick Ngolobe appreciates the outgoing President Mr. Ronald Bbosa.

5th Annual Labour and Employment Law Conference Highlights



Group Photo with some of the delegates at the conference.

Human Resources Managers Association of Uganda in collaboration with Signum Associates hosted the 5th Labour & Employment Law Conference at the Mestil Hotel in Kampala, Uganda from May 28–29, 2026. The theme of the event was “Employment Law in Transition: Governance & Workforce Transformation”. The conference was sponsored by MTN, Coca Cola, Deposit Protection Fund, Prudential Insurance and East Africa Law Society.

The conference brought together legal practitioners, Human Resources professionals, Judicial officers,

Risk and Compliance managers, In-house Disciplinary committees, labour officers and delegates from Uganda, Kenya and the East African region to examine evolving workplace governance frameworks,

The purpose of the conference was to foster thought leadership and to bring to the fore issues affecting the employment landscape. Through the conference delegates were empowered with skills and information to support them navigate the complex and evolving legal challenges arising from modern work environments.



Left to Right; Mr. Gabriel Acaye, Hon. Justice Anthony Wabwire Musana, Mr. Patson Arinaitwe, Hon. Justice Monica Mbaru, Hon. Lady Justice Linda Lillian Tumusiime Mugisha, Ms. Lilian Olouch-Wambi and Mr. Paul Rumanda Rugambwa

EMPLOYER COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST



Update Template Contracts

Reflect new dismissal grounds (s.64A), notice periods, and probation terms (1-month notice).



Publish Anti-Harassment & Anti-Intimidation Measures.

Display conspicuously at all premises per s.6(4) and s.6A.



Establish Breastfeeding/ Child-Care Facilities

Required for staff with children aged 3–36 months under new s.56A.



Revise Disciplinary & Dismissal Procedures

Build in s.65 hearing rights, and check every dismissal against s.64A grounds and the s.65C protected list.



Review Casual & Probationary Staff

Confirm no casual employee exceeds the new 6-month cap; update probation notice to 1 month.



Update Sick-Leave Policy

Reflect new 2-month full-pay/ 4-month half-pay structure before termination on sickness grounds.

What the 2026 Amendment Changes, and Why It Matters to Employers.

The Employment (Amendment) Act, 2026 makes the most significant changes to Uganda's employment law since the principal Act of 2006. It rewrites the rules on dismissal and termination, introduces new severance and breastfeeding obligations, and creates entirely new regulatory regimes for recruitment agencies and migrant workers.

Every employer in Uganda must update HR policies, contracts, and disciplinary procedures to remain compliant from the 5 June 2026 commencement date.

AT A GLANCE:

31

Sections amend, repeal, or insert provisions in the principal Act

02

Entirely new Parts created: Recruitment Agencies (IVA) & Migrant Workers (IXA)

64A

New statutory grounds employers must rely on to dismiss

08 WEEKS

Minimum compensatory award for unfair dismissal (up from 4 weeks)

Six Areas of Substantive Change



Workplace Conduct

New duty to prevent harassment; intimidation now a criminal offence.



Casual & Piecework

Casual work capped at 6 months; piecework formally recognised.



Breastfeeding Facilities

Mandatory facilities for children aged 3–36 months.



Dismissal & Termination

Wholesale rewrite — new grounds, hearing rights, unfair/wrongful tests.



Recruitment Agencies

New Part IVA — licensing regime for local & foreign recruitment.



Migrant Workers

New Part IXA — restricted jobs, entry permits, exemption certificates.



Other Notable Changes Affecting Day-to-Day HR

PROVISION	2006 ACT	2026 AMMENDMENT
Breastfeeding & Child Care (New s.56A)	No equivalent provision existed.	Every employer must provide time, space, or a facility for breastfeeding and child care for children aged 3–36 months; Minister to prescribe operating standards.
Sick Pay (s.54)	Full pay for 1st month; termination permitted if sickness continues past month 2.	Full pay for first 2 months; half pay for a further 4 months if sickness continues; termination only after 6 months.
Probation (s.66)	Notice to end probation was 7 days.	Notice extended to 1 month; if an employer keeps paying after probation lapses without extending it, the employee is deemed confirmed.
Collective Redundancy Notice (s.80)	Employer had to notify before terminating 10+ staff.	Notice must now be given 30 days before the termination takes effect.
Severance Calculation (s.88)	No fixed formula was set out in the Act itself.	Fixed statutory formula: one month's salary for each year worked.
Protected Categories (s.33, s.96)	List of protected categories needing special protection.	"Domestic workers" and "casual employees" expressly added to the protected categories.

Compensation for Unfair Dismissal: Key Numbers Have Moved

2006 ACT

- Remedies for unfair termination: reinstatement/re-employment, or compensation (s.76, 2006).
- Basic compensatory order: 4 weeks' wages (s.78, 2006).
- Additional compensation capped at 3 months' wages; no stated minimum.

2026 AMENDMENT

- Remedies still flow through the labour officer (now decided under s.70, with s.76 limited to granting the compensation order).
- Basic compensatory order doubled: 8 weeks' wages, in all cases (s.77(1)).
- Additional compensation: minimum 1 month's wages, maximum 3 months' wages, a floor is introduced.

Factors the Labour Officer Weighs for Additional Compensation (s.77(2))

- Length of service
- Value of severance allowance due
- Employee conduct contributing to dismissal
- Reasonable expectation of continued employment
- Unpaid wages/expenses owing
- Failure to mitigate losses
- Opportunities for comparable employment
- Expenses caused by the dismissal
- Any ex gratia payments already received

Escalation at a Glance

Maximum fines under each Act, expressed in currency points (1 point = UGX 20,000).

2006 — General default:
24 currency points (UGX 480,000)

24

2006 — Forced labour:
48 currency points (UGX 960,000)

48

2026 — repeat default offence:
700 currency points (UGX 14,000,000)

700

2026 — migrant / recruitment offence:
1,000 currency points (UGX 20,000,000)

1000

Penalties: Higher Stakes for Non-Compliance

1 currency point = UGX 20,000 (Schedule 2, 2006 Act, unchanged).

2006 ACT

Forced labour offence: ◀
Fine up to 48 currency points (UGX 960,000) or up to 2 years imprisonment, or both, plus 4 currency points per day of continuing breach.

General default penalty (no offence specified): ◀
Fine up to 24 currency points, rising to 48 currency points or 2 years on repeat conviction.

Migrant-worker / recruitment offences ◀
not separately addressed.

2026 AMENDMENT

▶ **New offences under s.95 (migrant workers / entry permits / false documents):** Fine up to 500 currency points (UGX 10,000,000) or up to 5 years imprisonment, or both.

▶ **On a second or subsequent conviction for the same offence:** Fine up to 700 currency points or up to 7 years imprisonment, or both.

Recruitment-agency offences under s.38E carry a parallel fine of up to 1,000 currency points or up to 5 years imprisonment for individuals in control of the agency.



LABOUR &
EMPLOYMENT LAW
CONFERENCE

Thank You

Partners & Sponsors



We extend our sincere appreciation to our sponsors and partners for supporting the 5th Labour & Employment Law Conference 2026. Your commitment enabled important conversations on labour law, compliance, governance, AI, and the future of work. We are proud to partner with you in shaping future-ready workplaces in Uganda and beyond.

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Congratulatory Messages for Ministers & Members of Parliament



**HON. LT. GEN. TUMUKUNDE
HENRY KAKURUGU**

**MINISTER OF GENDER, LABOUR
AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Congratulations on your continued leadership and commitment to advancing gender equality, labor development, and social progress across Uganda. Your dedication inspires positive change and inclusive growth.



**GENERAL
KATUMBA WAMALA**

**MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE
UGANDA**

Congratulations on your dedicated service and leadership in strengthening Uganda's public service sector. Your commitment to improving governance, efficiency, and service delivery continues to contribute to national development and better outcomes for citizens across the country.



**HON. MARGARET
RWABUSHAIJA**

**FEMALE WORKERS MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT 2026-2031**

We celebrate your outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to service. Your dedication inspires positive change and a brighter future for all.



HON. NAKKU FIONA

**FEMALE WORKERS MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT 2026-2031**

A remarkable achievement and a powerful step toward shaping a better future for all. We celebrate your dedication, leadership, and commitment to the people.



**HON. ARINAITWE
RWAKAJARA**

**MALE WORKERS MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT 2026-2031**

Congratulations on your remarkable achievement! Your vision, perseverance, and dedication to the community set a powerful example for future leaders.



Human Resource
Managers' Association of
Uganda



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This year, we're playing for inclusion,
raising autism awareness and
celebrating neurodiversity.

4TH ANNUAL

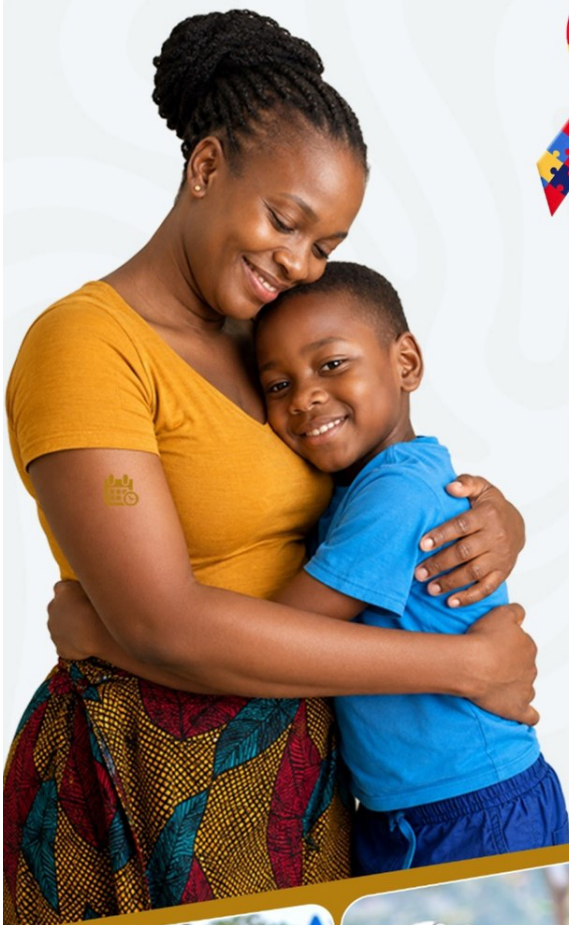
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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW HRMAU Q2 MEMBERS 2026



CAROLINE
NABATEROGGA



CAROLINE
ZAWEDDE



CATHERINE ALUKA



CATHERINE
NAKYAZZE



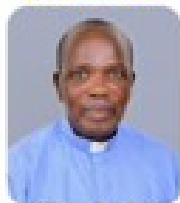
DR. PRADEEP
KUMAR



ESTHER ASIO



FLORA AKELLO



GEORGE OCHIENG



ISAAC MUKWAYA



GLORIA
KALIGIRWA



HAKATO
PRISCILLA



JOJO JOY



JUSTINE JANE
AUMA



JUSTINE
NANTUME



NICCONCO
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MARY KEVINE
AKOTH



MUGARIA
GEOFFREY



MUGERWA GERALD



NAKONG ESTHER



NALUGODA
RACHEAL JOY



NASSUNA
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NICHOLAS
EGOLET



NZIMA NICOLE



PATRICK
SSEKAMANYA



SUSAN NALWANGA



PROSPER KAYAGA



RACHEAL MUSOKE
TUMUHAISE



RITAH FLAVIA
NAMBASA



VIVIAN MWENDWA
MUSUNJI



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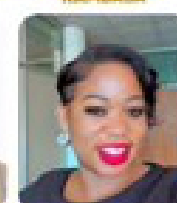
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ISABELLA
KYONGO



NINSIMA FLAVIA



ARYATWETA
DEBORAH



GABRIEL OKELLO



Building Your Blueprint for Long-Term Wealth.

By Sophie Jjemba Nabirye,
Chairperson HRM SACCO

One day, our careers will slow down, our children will grow up, and our pay slips will stop coming. When that day arrives, what story will our financial decisions tell?

We spend our lives preparing for tomorrow; helping others navigate careers, championing employee wellness, supporting families, and encouraging prudent financial decisions. But how often do we intentionally prepare for the day when our income must work harder than we do? If we are honest, many of us find it easier to advise others than to apply the same principles to our own lives.

Between family responsibilities, work commitments, school fees, community obligations, and the endless demands of adulthood, it is easy to keep earning, spending, and surviving without intentionally building the future we desire. We tell ourselves that we will start saving next month, investing next year, or planning for retirement when life becomes less demanding.

Unfortunately, that perfect time rarely comes.

Financial freedom is not reserved for the wealthy or the fortunate few. It is built through daily choices, consistent habits, and a willingness to think beyond immediate needs.

Like constructing a house, financial wellness begins with a blueprint. No one lays a roof before establishing a foundation. In the same way, lasting wealth requires planning before prosperity arrives.



1. The first step is defining what financial freedom means to you. For one person, it may mean educating their children without anxiety. For another, it may mean owning a home, supporting ageing parents, preparing for retirement, or creating a legacy that outlives them. When goals are clear, financial decisions become easier because every shilling has a purpose.
2. Equally important is understanding where our money goes. Many of us work hard for our income but have little visibility over how it is spent. Small expenses can quietly consume resources that could otherwise be invested in meaningful goals.
3. Tracking income, expenses, assets, and liabilities is not about restriction; it is about awareness. What we measure, we can improve.

Life is unpredictable. Organizations restructure, markets change, and unexpected responsibilities emerge. Relying on a single source of income can leave us vulnerable.

Building additional streams of income, however modest, provides greater security and flexibility. Diversification is not merely a financial principle; it is a life principle. Financial freedom also requires discipline in managing debt and cultivating a savings culture. Debt can be a useful tool for growth, but it becomes a burden when it finances

lifestyles rather than opportunities. Likewise, saving what remains after spending often leaves very little.

Consistent saving; even in small amounts; creates momentum over time. Wealth is rarely the result of dramatic breakthroughs; it is often the outcome of small, disciplined decisions repeated consistently.

As income grows, another challenge emerges: lifestyle inflation. While there is nothing wrong with enjoying the fruits of one's labour, true financial growth occurs when increased earnings strengthen assets and investments rather than simply expanding expenses.

At the heart of wealth creation is continuous learning. New opportunities emerge, markets evolve, and economic realities shift. Those who remain curious, seek guidance, and invest in financial education position themselves to make better decisions for themselves and their families.

Beyond money, the principles that build financial freedom are the same principles that build successful lives: intentionality, patience, consistency, stewardship, and delayed gratification.

Financial wellness is not simply about accumulating wealth; it is about creating

options, reducing unnecessary stress, and increasing our ability to support the people and causes that matter most.

Scripture offers timeless wisdom in Ecclesiastes 11:1: "Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again." Seeds planted today may not produce immediate results, but consistent effort eventually bears fruit.

As HR professionals, we understand the value of investing in people. Let us extend the same intentionality to investing in our financial future. Through the HRM SACCO, members have an opportunity to cultivate disciplined savings habits, access affordable credit, and participate in a community committed to financial growth and mutual support.

The future we desire will not be built by chance. It will be built by the decisions we make today. Let us remain committed to building a financial blueprint that serves not only ourselves, but also our families, communities, and generations to come.

For God and My Country.



**HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGERS' SACCO**

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Naguru, P.O. Box 1427 Kampala, Uganda

Telephone: +256 780 487 303
Email: sacco@hrmau.org.ug



HR FUNHOUSE THE WELLNESS BASH

Cultivating wellness beyond the workplace:
Reflections from the HR Funhouse wellness bash
2026.

Written by:

NASSER KAAYA MAYOMBWE

in collaboration with the **HRFH EXCO**

In today's workplace, where pressure often disguises itself as productivity, maintaining these dimensions is increasingly important. Organizations benefit not merely from employees who are present but from individuals who are healthy enough to contribute fully, think creatively, and relate positively with others. Wellness, therefore, is not simply about exercise or diet; it is about cultivating a life that is whole, grounded and sustainable. The wellness bash was an opportunity for HRFH members to appreciate that.

The Human resource profession is often described as the heartbeat of every organization. HR practitioners recruit talent, resolve conflict, manage performance, guide organizational change, comfort employees in moments of grief, enforce discipline and shape workplace culture. In doing so, they become custodians of other people's wellbeing while frequently neglecting their own.



DATE: 27th June, 2026.

Venue:

Extreme Adventure Park, Busiika,
Luweero District

Organising Committee:

- Mr. Joel Kafiire (**HRFH President**)
- Ms. Winnie Busingye (**HRFH EXCO Vice President**)
- Ms. Marion Violet Kusoniwa (**Treasurer**)
- Ms. Dorah Baguma (**General Secretary**)
- Mr. Joseph Duku (**Public Relations and Resource Mobilization**)
- Mr. Joel Omwansu
- Mr. Wilberforce Nsamba

Committee members:

- **Wellness Bash emcees;** Mr. Kabugo Hussein and Ms. Sheilla Kemigisa.
- **Wellness talk:** Coach Nicholas
- **Poetry:** Ms. Bathsheba
- **Dance session:** Mr. Felix Okumu of KOONA dance.

Event Activities:

Quad Biking, Go-Karting,
Zip Lining, Paintball and
Combatica.

Shoulder to Shoulder: Changing the Narrative Around Men's Mental Health.

If you are a man reading this, consider this question:

**What is the burden you carry
that no one else knows about?**

Perhaps it is a broken relationship, a loss of trust, a financial setback, job loss, a difficult diagnosis, or a personal struggle you have been carrying alone.

For generations, men have been taught to carry the weight and shoulder the load. They are expected to be providers, protectors, and problem-solvers. While resilience is important, it is equally important to know when to put the weight down.

Because there is a fine line between perseverance and suffering in **silence**.

The reality is concerning.

Men account for approximately 75–80% of suicide deaths globally, yet many men who die by suicide had no known or documented mental health condition. Their struggles often go unnoticed until it is too late. Think about the man who died by suicide in a hotel room with no apparent warning signs, or the adolescent boy whose death left family and friends searching for answers. Too often, the pain was there, but it remained unseen.

At a neurobiological level, men often process stress differently. Research suggests that men are more likely to activate the brain's "fight-or-flight" response when under stress, resulting in anger, aggression, withdrawal, or emotional suppression rather than openly expressing sadness, fear, or vulnerability. Yet despite these challenges, men remain far less likely to seek professional mental health support.

But perhaps the question is not simply:
Why aren't men seeking help?

The better question is:

**Where are men seeking support, and
what makes them feel safe enough to
ask for it?**

Many men seek support in spaces where trust already exists among friends, peers, teammates, colleagues, and community groups. Traditional therapy often requires sitting face-to-face with a stranger and being vulnerable from the outset, which can feel unfamiliar and intimidating for some men. We therefore need to change the narrative and meet men where they are emotionally, socially, and in how they naturally express distress and seek support rather than relying on traditional help-seeking models that often do not align with how men communicate, process emotions, or reach out for help.



WHEN MEN CONNECT MEN HEAL

The real enemy is often not depression, anxiety, or stress alone, it is isolation.

Real change happens when men connect, talk, and support one another. It happens when we create environments where mental health is understood rather than stigmatized. It means creating safe spaces where men can talk openly, organizing peer-to-peer walks and conversations, and promoting platforms where men can engage with positive role models who demonstrate empathy, kindness, patience, and vulnerability. Many men process experiences shoulder to shoulder rather than face to face, making connection and shared experiences powerful tools for healing, resilience, and support.

To every man reading this:

- You do not have to carry every burden alone.
- Seeking support is not weakness, it is wisdom.
- Checking in on a friend is not interference; it is care.
- Looking after your mental health is not a distraction from your responsibilities; it is what enables you to fulfil them.

This conversation is not only about preventing crises. It is about creating a future where we build platforms for community, conversation, and lived experience—where we meet men where they are, shoulder to shoulder, so they feel safe to be human, to be vulnerable, and to seek support without fear of judgment.

By Susan Winniefred Adikini.
Quality Assurance Coordinator — StrongMinds Uganda

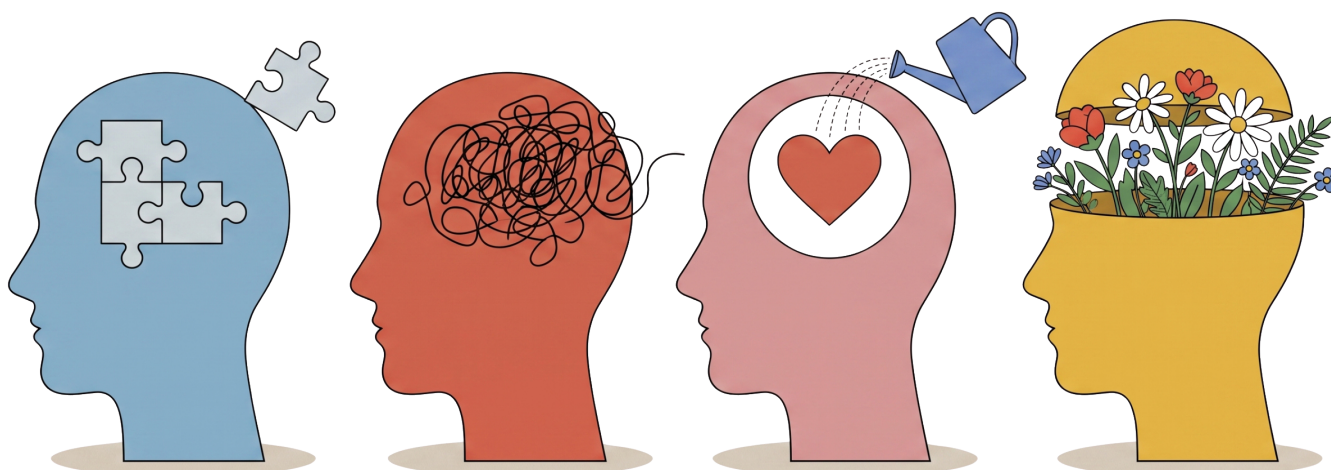
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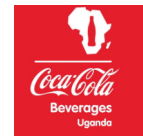


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