These are challenging times but we remain optimistic that things will get better soon. As employers, we know that you are adept at managing challenges and this is what sets you apart. You can count on us for additional support to manage the current challenges especially those linked to the business environment, people issues and strategy.

This month we had an employers’ digital meeting focusing on managing employment relations and business continuity. We have also developed a number of guides for employers during this period; working from home, employee wellness and managing employment contracts among others. In case you have not yet got your copy, please send a request to info@fuemployers.org.

During this period, change is being forced on employers by COVID-19 so you need to have the right tools to be able to respond appropriately. I would like to share with you a business model that I learnt from my mentor and friend Thor-Philip Hauge. He introduced me to a business model called ERIC (Eliminate, Reduce, Increase and Create). The ERIC model works with the understanding that resources are limited and opportunities are available for us to exploit by working within our current means in order to be able to eliminate and create or to reduce and increase certain activities, things or processes in our businesses.

Everything may be important, but not everything is a priority so by using the ERIC grid a company can be in a position to determine what to eliminate, reduce, increase or create for continuous progress. Using the model any business or even a non for profit organisation can cause fundamental changes in the organisation to reduce wastage while at the same increasing resource utilization and creating new opportunities.

During this pandemic, companies must use the best approach to ensure that they continuously reduce their costs while at the same time creating and increasing revenues whenever possible. The ERIC model can be of great help for this purpose using the four elements as follows:

1. Eliminate (E): The focus is on eliminating activities, initiatives or things that the organisation is doing although they do not add any meaningful value
2. Reduce (R): The attention is on certain activities or things that the organisation is over doing to the detriment of the overall performance
3. Increase (I): There is need to consider increasing productive activities or things that are more valuable for the organisation
4. Create (C): Certain things could be good for the market or the organisation and yet they are currently not being offered so they need to be created. It could be new services that need to be offered.

Eliminate implies that the company should seek to do away with activities, things or processes that do not add meaningful value to the organisation so that it is possible to use those resources to create new things that could add more value. Furthermore, in order to be able to increase certain activities or things, the organisation needs to reduce certain activities or things especially since resources are limited.

The organisation can go through an exercise to generate the things which need to be eliminated, reduced, increased or created. This will make it possible for the organisation to enhance its performance and focus on things that can yield the best results. Over time it is possible for the company to get involved in doing so many things that do not add value so the ERIC model is a good tool to use.

Together for Employers!

Douglas Opio
Executive Director, FUE
The Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) hosted its first Employers’ Digital Meeting under the topic “Managing Employment Relations and Business Continuity in the face of COVID-19” on Thursday 28th May 2020 from 2:00pm to 4:00pm. The meeting attracted a number of Employers from the different sectors of the economy. COVID-19 has affected organizations and business enterprises worldwide with research showing that 195 million jobs have been lost, 4/5 employees affected and 9/10 businesses affected by measures to curb the spread of the virus.

The Executive Director, FUE made a presentation on Business Continuity and requested businesses to re-calibrate, re-focus and re-direct by evaluating the necessity of their services, assessing roles of staff members towards achieving a common goal and allocating resources. He suggested that organizations review their strategy with management team and all staff, assess existing contracts and services like payments of NSSF, PAYE & others, support employee mental health and put in place a business continuity plan. He likewise shared a model namely ‘Ask E.R.I.C’ (Eliminate, Reduce, Increase, and Create) encouraging participants to re-align their operations by assessing their organization and see what they can eliminate, what they can reduce, what they may want to increase and what they have to create after the crisis to get going post COVID-19.

Under the aspect of Managing Employment Relations, the Head of Employment Relations and legal advised employers to follow the legal procedures when implementing annual leave, pay cuts, temporary lay-off and termination amid COVID-19 because whatever is agreed upon affects the employment contracts by virtue of section 59(4) Employment Act 2006. The pandemic has exposed that the way of doing work has changed, new jobs have been created and others phased out while some jobs can’t be performed. In view of the above, FUE recommends that Employers have force majeure (force of God) clauses in employment contracts which can be added as addendums to the existing staff contracts to suffice during emergencies, explore options where employees work from home and develop a policy to support this, employee wellness initiatives are implemented, Ministry of Health (MoH) guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for those that will resume work are observed, workplace health and safety enhanced and returns filed as required by MGLSD in compliance with section 19 Employment Act 2006.

FUE also highlighted the guides developed to support members during Covid-19, and also what the Ministry of Gender labor and Social Development and government had issued out to employers in regards to Covid-19 and employment relations.

All in all, employers are required to assess their businesses and organizations in order to find the best way to continue operating post COVID-19 and ensure all actions taken especially toward staff and contracts is done within the confines of the law. Despite all challenges brought by this pandemic, the IMF expects global growth to rise to 5.8% next year if the virus clears by the next half of 2020.
H.E President Yoweri Museveni has requested Employers not to lay off workers and instead advocated for flexible arrangements to keep jobs due to the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on business enterprises and organizations nationwide. He made this appeal during his address to the nation on 1st May 2020 as the world commemorated International Labour Day. This year's Labour Day celebration was under the theme “improved access to financial services for employment creation” and held at State House Entebbe, aired on TV and online for public audiences due to the pandemic.

H.E the President’s statement was in response to a decision taken by Employers to terminate workers contracts in a bid to cut costs and keep businesses afloat necessitated by covid-19 and the lockdown. He proposed that instead of termination, workers could be sent on leave without pay with a promise to return when the situation becomes stable. His Excellency pointed out that although some parts of the economy had been shaken, the critical sectors were progressing and was optimistic that the economy would survive and thrive after this crisis.

President Museveni differentiated the economy in two levels such as “the economy of survival and livelihood” and “the economy of pleasure and leisure”. The first level consists of nine sectors he believes are vital for continued existence which include food production, clothing, shelter, medicine, security, infrastructure, education and spirituality. He emphasized the need to focus on the above and maximize them to create a number of jobs for the population.

Furthermore, the President encouraged citizens to support import substitution and exports in Africa. In Uganda, Nytil and other local companies in the private sector are manufacturing masks and sanitizers which are very crucial in the fight against the spread of COVID-19 hence creating jobs for people. In light of this, he requested the Uganda Development Bank to lend money at low interest to these enterprises to make the economy independent and export – oriented.

According to the President, the economy of pleasure and leisure is inclusive of tourism, hotels, entertainment, sports which has been hit severely by the pandemic would eventually be able to prosper again since they are not so vulnerable or sensitive to life. So, it is important for all citizens and Employers to start planning on how to ensure that the economy exceeds its previous stage with a major focus on the sectors of survival.

Therefore, this pandemic has taught us that we have a lot of potential locally that needs to be promoted and invested into like the leather we can get from our animals to make shoes and clothing, sugar to make medicine, maize to make animal feeds instead of importing these raw materials and losing money. Once we focus on the parts of the economy tagged to livelihood, the government can work on enhancing relevant technical skills and create jobs for thousands of people.
**EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE ECONOMY**

In a bid to save lives through curbing the spread of COVID-19, Governments all over the world have taken drastic measures some of which have had a big impact on their economies. Uganda has also implemented some measures such as declaring a partial lockdown that seem to rein in the public health crisis, but is taking a toll on economic activities.

The Parliamentary Committee on National Economy has considered interfacing with the private sector and other stakeholders to examine the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and explore modalities to recommend Government stimuli for affected sectors of the economy.

FUE is set to represent Employers at Parliament on 1st June 2020.

We would like your responses on the following questions to enable us compile a comprehensive and true representation of Employers’ views.

1. How have the measures taken by Government to control the COVID-19 pandemic economically affected business/firms in your sector in terms of the following areas? (where applicable)
   a) Business activity
   b) Income and expenditure performance
   c) Supply and demand of Labour (employment) including remuneration of workers
   d) Access to raw materials/inputs
   e) Demand for goods and services
   f) Prices of goods and services
   g) Availability of credit, and
   h) Financial and liquidity position, including servicing of debt and tax obligations.

2. What strategies business/firms in your sector have put in place or are planning to put in place in the short, medium and long term to contain the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic?

3. What are some of the future expectations for your sector, in the event that the COVID-19 containment measures persist?

4. What are your perspectives/proposals regarding the practical policy options that Government should undertake to revive economic activity for business/firms in your sector?

Kindly send your responses to info@fuemployers.org

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**WORKPLACE COVID-19 AND HEALTH RESPONSE**

The Federation of Uganda Employers with support from International Labour Organisation is promoting Decent COVID-19 Workplace responses in Uganda. The intervention aims at provision of relevant and inclusive information, messages and guidance on applying the recommended control measures of COVID-19 in workplaces. Guidance is also provided on the recommended measures, ensuring protection of workers’ rights, including workers with vulnerable conditions such as persons living with HIV&AIDS, Persons With Disabilities and productivity of companies.

Contact FUE for decent workplace health support and interventions

Tel:0392-777410/1, 0414220201 | Email: info@fuemployers.org | Website: www.fuemployers.org

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COVID-19 Workplace Response Trainings

The African Union’s priority in the face of the rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic is the safety and health of all workers and the public. It is against this background that the AU-Department of Social Affairs, Africa-CDC, AUDA-NEPAD and ILO, in consultation with Business Africa, OATUU and ITUC – Africa organized a series of COVID-19 Workplace Response Trainings from 18th-25th May 2020 on Occupational Safety and Health for all sectors.

The trainings focused on the following:

- Setting up coordination team and work streams.
- Epidemiology and management of COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Return to work post COVID-19 illness and lockdown.
- Implications of COVID-19 in the workplace.

FUE was honored to be part of the COVID-19 response trainings and we are in position to offer these trainings to members.

The International Female Future Alumni Webinar

The employer’s organizations from Norway, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda have come together and established an International Female Future Alumnae (IFFA).

The goals of the alumnae include to:

- To establish international relations and networks for personal growth, motivation and career support for the FFP ladies.
- To increase number of women on boards and management positions by making the network of IFFA available for national and international businesses.
- To influence gender policies.

The IFFA alumnae activities shall include:

- Webinars,
- Sharing articles and documents of special interest,
- Inviting IFFA for gender conferences as participants and also as speakers,
- Encourage peer to peer learning,
- Actively use the LinkedIn group for sharing experience and documentation

On 19th May 2020, the International Female Future Alumni (IFFA) held its first webinar on the topic “LEADING AT THE TIME OF THE PANDEMIC – WHAT REMAINS EVERGREEN?” The guest speaker was Mr. Thor Phillip Hauge, a renowned Business strategy consultant from Norway.

This was the beginning of many more impactful engagements for positive woman leadership across the globe.
WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

FUE invites you to the E-conference in commemoration of World Day Against Child Labour slated for 12th June 2020 under the theme

"COVID-19: Protect Children Against Child Labour Now More Than Ever"

The high level debate will stimulate dialogue on the importance of protecting children from child labour in COVID-19 response and recovery plans while looking forward to the international year on elimination of child labour (2021) and the SDG target to end child labour in all its forms by 2025.

Save the date!
More details will be sent in due course.
MEDIA APPEARANCES

Morning @NTV Show
Topic: Labour Relations after COVID-19

Day Breaker Show Record TV
Topic: E-Conference on COVID-19 at the Workplace

Spark TV Know your Rights Show
Topic: Documentary on Rights of Workers
FUE COVID-19 AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

My name is Patience B. Tumwebise, I work with FUE.
During these unprecedented times awareness is key in curbing the spread of COVID-19. I appeal to Ugandans to always verify the authenticity of COVID-19 related information before sharing with anyone.
Thank you!

My name is Yusuf Nabuuga, I work with FUE.
Health experts have deemed social distancing as one of the most practical ways to stop the spread of COVID-19. I call on Ugandans to practice social distancing to stay safe.
Thank you!

My name is Beatrice Majumbi, I work with FUE.
Health experts assert that COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through human contact. I implore the need to explore alternative means to interact and make transactions.
Thank you!

My name is Mustaphar Fagayaa, I work with FUE.
A number of essential workplaces are operating amid COVID-19. I appeal to Employers to provide personal protective equipment like face masks and hand gloves to ensure safety of workers.
Thank you!

My name is Horriet Auma, I work with FUE.
Covid-19 has posed a great risk on vulnerable children. I appeal to guardians to keep children safe at home to protect them from the pandemic and child labour now more than ever.
Thank you!

My name is Geoffrey Kobi, I work with FUE.
The COVID-19 pandemic has adverse effects on business and employment worldwide. I implore the business community to engage in meaningful dialogue to navigate through these tough times.
Thank you!

My name is Ruth Atim, I work with FUE.
I encourage Employers to adopt creative and innovative ways to continue work from home amid COVID-19. It’s time to fully embrace technology and new methods of doing business.
Thank you!

My name is Patrick Ajuma, I work with FUE.
COVID-19 has claimed thousands of lives globally and continues to be a great threat to humanity. I appeal to the public to continue observing the health regulations and COVID-19 by the Government. Meanwhile, in the prevailing cloud of uncertainty, let’s see set of the solutions to restore our economy.
Thank you!

My name is Resty Namuliira, I work with FUE.
I encourage Employers to adhere to the directions from the President and guidelines from the Ministry of Health in effort to combat the spread of COVID-19 and while all it, comply with the prevailing Labour Laws for smooth operations.
Thank you!

My name is Redress Muhindo, I work with FUE.
Covid-19 is an immense danger to everyone. Therefore, it is very important for all Ugandans to follow the health guidelines in place. Wash your hands every 20 minutes and wear a mask whenever you go out in public.
Thank you!

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