

EAEO Exchanging ideas regarding Employers of the Year Award

Many English speaking African Eos -united in the East African Employers' Organisation (EAEO)- organize annually an Employers of the Year Award. They award company's best practices in different fields of industrial relations and HR management, with subcategories in issues such as employee relations, compensation and benefits, inclusive HR practices, training and development, etc. These awards are often the event of the year, and uphold or boost the EOs image, its reputation, its income and its direct links to companies. In some cases, it also became the jumping board for the EO to start to develop guidance in HR.

Whilst the practice is wide spread, the approaches are often differing country per country. Some limit to members, others include non-members, some have awards more in societal issues (CSR, inclusiveness, AIDS HIV policies) whilst others are more in the essence of HR (compensation, talent management, employee engagement etc.); some organise a simple award ceremony, others combine it with genuine audits and post award meetings; for some, it represents an important income, for others sustainability remains an issue.

These many different approaches, practices and experiences were shared and exchanged during a 1,5 day workshop amongst the different specialist of the countries involved (Zambia, Malawi, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania). The process of exchange was extremely interactive and open. Questions and comments were exchanged on all the issues which are raised by the Employers of the Year practice, and concerned both general issues as very technical topics. Supporting documents were exchanged. All to make sure that every EO could benefit to a maximum of the positive or negative experiences of its neighbours and would gain time, funds and achieve increased quality and reputation by taking these experiences on board. The outcome was a list of points for improvement which each country made.

The very positive evaluations indicated that this type of exchange, stimulated by DECP, was replying perfectly well to the expectations of the participants, and achieved an important step forward in this type of service, offered by the EOs to their members.