

F4E Annual Mental Health Break

Ceverene Mureithi, Head of People & Strategy

When I introduced the concept of a mental health break at Food for Education, it was very validating to be met by such receptive leadership and genuine excitement at being able to hold such a space for the team. Having done this at my former organisation, it was completely befitting that a progressive one such as F4E be an ally. Most people think the main limiting factor in the work day is the number of hours. In my experience the primary limitations are your personal energy levels and overall productivity. On a personal note, my first mental health break in the workplace came at such an opportune time, having come very close to burnout as a result of a very busy time at work in addition to other responsibilities (lockdown with an active toddler 🙄).

As we embark on F4E's second Annual Mental Health Break, I wanted to share a few thoughts. In an ever-evolving world, the workplace has not been left behind. Mental health is increasingly becoming a crucial part of our 'New Normal' (cue global pandemic) when it comes to employee wellness and work<=>life integration/balance. The modern workplace must place emphasis on overall wellness being equally as important, if not more so, as getting results; and we as the designers of the modern workplace, have a responsibility to lead from the front. At F4E, we are strong believers that HR and/or People policies don't have to be crafted *only* with the organisation in mind - they should also heavily revolve around the employees, who in our case, make the very fabric of F4E.

The #F4EMentalHealthWeek is about taking collective time-off to fully unplug, get proper R&R and #FeedtheMind. When we *ALL* take a break, no one is tempted to 'quickly check Slack' or call with a 'quick one' or send 'one last email' when on break (I hope you feel seen 😊). We piloted this last year with a 5-day break which went quite well - we saw a significant turnaround in the team, post-break. This year we will also take a 5-day break - the MHB is fully-paid and not part of PTO/annual leave (save those days for the rest of the year). The cadence of this may change in coming years as some deciding factors become more predictable but safe to say it is here to stay. We may even experiment with breaking it down into 2 mini-breaks - who knows! 🤖

Friends, what a time to be alive! Living in a world where an African-led, women-led social enterprise is feeding 140,000+ children everyday with fresh nutritious hot meals and a cup of porridge (uji) is insanely inspiring! In 2023, we are gearing up for an audacious year that will see us possibly doubling (maybe tripling 🐒) our current numbers. An absolute honour and achievement - take a bow #TeamF4E 🙌🙌

See what our team had to say about the #F4EMentalHealthWeek below, as we take a break from **#FeedingtheFuture** and focus on **#FeedingtheMind**.

