



THE VOICE OF THE EMPLOYER

ANNUAL
REPORT

2020

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61st AGM

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the 61st Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Employers' Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ECA), will be held, as follows:

Friday, 25th November 2022 | 9:00 a.m.

Location: Online

(Further details to be posted on the ECA's website, www.ecatt.org)

AGM AGENDA

Reading of the Notice Convening the 61st AGM

Chairman's Remarks

Confirmation of Minutes of the 60th AGM

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Auditor's Report

Overview of Financial Statements

Appointment of Auditor

Election of Directors

Other Business

Vote of Thanks

by Order of the Board of Directors, ECA

Mr. Ronald Ramlogan, Secretary

For Registration, please contact:

Mr. Nirmal Maraj | 675-9388/5873 ext. 257

Email: nmaraj@ecatt.org | communications@ecatt.org

or **Register Online:** www.ecatt.org

The ECA is the largest association of Employers in T&T, and a dedicated advocate for a stronger, more resilient and informed Employer community. The organisation is committed to representing, with excellence and professionalism, the interests of Employers as they relate to labour and social policy at the national and international levels. These interests are informed and shaped by our diverse membership, which range from micro to large, domestic to multinational, covering all industry sectors in T&T.

The ECA not only possesses a clear understanding of potential issues that are likely to arise from a poorly managed workforce but is also capable of identifying and implementing strategies to mitigate these human capital risks. The ECA understands that proper management of human capital will result in the achievement of both strategic and operational goals of any organisation. This, we believe, will ultimately contribute to the socio-economic success of our nation.

As a representative body and a recognised social partner, the Employer community is represented on a number of State Boards and National Committees. At the regional and international levels, the ECA has also established a number of strategic associations, rooted in the ECA's exclusive recognition status with the International Labour Organisation as the official Employers' organisation in T&T, thereby strengthening the Association's ability to serve and represent the Employer community.

In addition to representation and advocacy, the ECA provides a wide range of professional services in the areas of human resource management, industrial relations, payroll outsourcing, and development training to persons at all levels of the organisation.

FUNDAMENTAL PILLARS

The ECA's inspiration and direction is guided by its Vision, Mission, Mandate and Values. These fundamental pillars inform the management and strategy of the Association.



Vision

To be the premier Employer's Representative for Human Resource, Industrial Relations and a prominent Advocate for best-practice in business in Trinidad and Tobago.



Mission

The ECA shall promote the employer's agenda for the creation of optimum sustainable value for all stakeholders through effective business leadership, advocacy, lobbying and the provision of quality Industrial Relations and Training services.



Values

Integrity
Respect
Open-Mindedness
Member-Focused
Trustworthy
Collaboration & Teamwork
Equality & Equity
Innovation

OUR MANDATE

To provide employers with informed innovative and transformational representation at the organisational, national, and international levels in order to ensure the strength and success of the employer community for the socio-economic well-being of the nation.



Chairman's Message

Onward to a post-pandemic era with a renewed focus

It is with a great sense of honour that I extend greetings and welcome each of you to this 61st Annual General Meeting of the ECA.

Let me begin by assuring you that the Board of the ECA, which I have had the privilege to Chair since 2017, is firmly committed to maintaining the highest standards of corporate governance. Despite the immense challenges we faced in 2020, and which has continued in varying degrees even as I pen this message, we have ensured that we are able to come before our membership, though a bit delayed, and report on the activities and performance of **our** Association.

Since our inception in 1960, even before Trinidad and Tobago became an independent nation, the ECA has been flying the flag of the employer community and I am proud to say that we have been able to withstand the test of time. I think we can all agree that 2020 was a year like no other – at least in our lifetime, and despite the unexpected trials and tribulations, our Association has proven its resilience amid continued economic headwinds and the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the Board remains confident that the business model and mandate of the ECA will continue to deliver for you our members and provide opportunities for continued collaboration with our partners and stakeholders as we move into a post-pandemic era that will undoubtedly include some emphasis on economic, environmental and societal resilience and sustainability.

From a financial perspective, the ECA was not spared in 2020, much like many other businesses, as we tried to weather the disruption occasioned by the crisis that faced us. However, despite a 20% decline in total revenue when compared to 2019,

we were still able to realise an overall profit position, due in large part to reductions in our operating expenses for the year. Our balance sheet, though not where we would like to be, also saw some improvement in 2020, due mainly to favourable increases in our current assets.

Central to the ECA's favourable results is the hard work and commitment of our members of staff. Indeed, our results was not without sacrifice, but their creativity and resilience in adapting to changing and extremely challenging conditions and decisions, combined with continuity of services to our members during several periods of mandatory lockdowns were integral to the ECA's ability to emerge from the throes of the pandemic.

You will agree with me that much of what we do at the ECA relies on relationships, and I must especially commend the entire team, led by its then Interim CEO, Ms Stephanie Fingal, for pivoting in the digital context and shifting our service delivery online, which allowed us to ensure that service delivery continued in some way.

The Board is also very proud of the ECA's response to the pandemic. Having observed what was emerging in China during the early phases of the spread, the ECA started to engage its membership early in 2020, even before our first case was officially reported, to underscore what was likely to happen and to prepare employers for the inevitable.

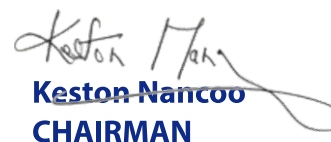
In addition to direct employer sessions, our periodic advisory bulletins were widely recognised by members and non-members, as we sought to guide the employer's response to the Government's public health restrictions and provisions, in keeping with the principles of good industrial relations practice.

We were also able to leverage our long-standing affiliations with the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) to provide useful resources, tools and guidelines for our members, which remain available even today via our online membership portal. In this regard, I must extend a special thanks to the IOE and the ILO for their consistent support and commitment to the ECA.

Finally, and most importantly, I thank you the membership for your support to the ECA during what has been a difficult but defining year for so many. The road ahead will not be easy, but I am deeply optimistic that having endured what we did, we are now better placed to progress beyond the pandemic and drive the priorities of the ECA, propelled by you our members, into what is a rapidly changing domestic and international context.

Nonetheless, my promise is that we will not stop working for you as long as you continue to put your belief in us, as you have done for the past sixty-one (61) years.

Yours Sincerely,


Keston Nancoo
CHAIRMAN

Board of Directors

Employers' Consultative Association



Keston Nancoo
Chairman
Senior Advisor
Office of the Group CEO
Guardian Group



Farzan Ali
Vice Chairman
Director, Talent & Government Affairs
Grand Bay Paper Products Ltd/
Trinidad Tissues Ltd



Neil Derrick
Director
Managing Director,
Replete Support Services Ltd



Ruben Mc Sween
Director
Founder/President,
Eve Financial Services Ltd



Giselle Estrada
Director
Industrial Relations Manager,
Republic Bank Ltd



Lennon Ballah-Lashley
Director



Gwendoline Mc Laren
Director
Director, Human Resources
Massy Stores



Narendra Kirpalani
Director
Director,
Interior/Exterior Decorators Ltd



Lennon Ballah-Lashley
Director



Umesh Rampersad
Director
Chief Executive Officer,
Shore Medical Private Hospital



Hayden Newton
Director
General Manager,
Airports Authority of T&T



Naiema Mohammed
Divisional Manager - Human Resources,
Chief Brand Products



Earl Wilson
Director
Managing Director,
Business Equipment and Interiors



Earl Wilson
Director
Managing Director,
Business Equipment and Interiors



Stephanie Fingal
**CEO (Interim)/
Secretary**

The ECA's Board of Directors is constituted by professionals from its member organisations. They also serve on several sub-committees, each of which focuses on specific areas integral to the ECA's operations and its ability to execute its mandate to the membership and the wider national community.

40+

participation in digital meetings, conferences and sensitisation sessions with strategic partners and other stakeholders to exchange employer experiences and approaches, acquire knowledge and information, and develop member capacity on issues ranging from employer responses to COVID-19, to business and human rights, youth employment, trade, skills development, sexual harassment and family violence, and the multilateral system. Host and co-hosts institutions included: IOE, ILO, IADB, TTMA, NTA, various UN agencies, CEC and GIDC, among others

15+

stakeholder consultations and online dialogue sessions on employer issues ranging from COVID-19 to tourism, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), apprenticeships, education, migrant labour, and various legislative amendments/updates

2020

...BY THE NUMBERS

60+

training sessions on various world-of-work topics, including managing and responding to COVID-19

20+

free membership engagement forums and dissemination of knowledge-sharing tools including advisory bulletins, summary reports of industrial court judgments, engagement/consultation surveys and sensitisation sessions relating to COVID-19, workmen's compensation, the Global Forum, social media in the workplace and business continuity

40+

new members welcomed into the ECA family in 2020

750+

member companies representing all industries and sectors in Trinidad and Tobago



Chief Executive Officer's 2020 Report

It is indeed my honour, on behalf of the ECA, to present a summary report on the organisation's activities and performance for fiscal 2020.

This is an especial occasion for me, this being the first time that I will be presenting to an annual meeting of members as Chief Executive Officer of this esteemed organisation.

As you may be aware, Ms Stephanie Fingal, who served as Interim Chief Executive Officer since January 2018, demitted office at the end of January 2022. I think you can all agree with me that Ms Fingal would have served the ECA well, going above and beyond to give of her time, expertise, wide knowledge and wise counsel to the organisation, its staff members, membership and wider clientele.

Moreover, Ms Fingal was at the helm of this organisation during what was undoubtedly one of the most uncertain and unprecedented periods in the history of the ECA, successfully steering us through the worst of a global pandemic.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, management, staff and membership of the ECA, I must take this opportunity to publicly extend our gratitude to Ms Fingal for her dedicated service and building so well on the foundation that was laid over the prior sixty plus years.

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

I would now like to share a note on the COVID-19 pandemic relative to the operations of the organisation. Nothing could have really prepared us for what was to take place in 2020. In many ways, 2020 was one of the most difficult years that we have had to face as employers and businesses, as individuals, and as a nation. Given all of the restrictions and uncertainties faced, the unfortunate loss of jobs and income earning potential for many, and the tragic loss of life, the COVID-19 pandemic was a major disrupter.

The series of mandatory and partial lockdown measures imposed as a public health response to the situation at the time, led to the temporary closure of many businesses in sectors not deemed "essential". Many enterprises suffered low-capacity utilisation, while others were starved for raw materials and other goods due to worldwide border closures resulting in massive supply chain disruptions. In other areas, consumption was low or non-existent as consumer demand fell drastically, leading to massive revenue losses, liquidity shortfalls and even financing constraints.

It is important to emphasise that these events in the business environment had a profound impact on the general revenue flow of the Association as well as all profit centres and revenue generating services under the ECA's subsidiary, the Employers Solution Centre (ESC), experienced disruptions or reductions. This situation lasted for three (3) months before we started to see any uptick in service demands in May 2020, though not at the levels which previously existed.

Administratively, the organisation was able to demonstrate some foresight and agility, having observed what was taking place in other parts of the world between December 2019 and February 2020. The management team began to make internal preparations for what eventually became a reality – the shutting down of all non-essential operations in the country. The organisation, and

its people, was able to quickly transition to a virtual environment in keeping with the requirements at the time, with only minor disruption in our ability to deliver services to members and other employers, and with the help of some minor upgrades to our ICT system to facilitate continuity of operations. However, due to the negative impacts previously articulated, the organisation could not sustain a full work week.

For the first two (2) months, with the agreement and support of our staff members, we reduced the work week to 50% of normal working hours with a commensurate 50% reduction in salaries in an attempt to preserve the jobs of as many staff members as possible. Regrettably, with the significant loss of revenue, even these new measures were not sustainable. As this report is being written, we now stand at ten (10) permanent staff members, down from seventeen (17) prior to March 2020 – this reduction due in part to job redundancies and attrition.

For remaining staff, we promoted cross-training and inter-departmental support as much as possible. This initiative was important to ensure that we were prepared for any eventuality, improve our resiliency, ensure upskilling and re-skilling of resources and provide support to departments that may have experienced a reduction in headcount.

Support to Employers

Thankfully, our free membership advisory line remained active, even as we were forced to transition from in-office work to remote work, and we were able to continue providing practical and speedy advice to employers on how to manage COVID-19 issues, how to navigate major changes in the environment at the time and even how to access available support from national agencies.

We also produced a series of advisory bulletins, four (4) in 2020, containing important guidance and key information to employers about COVID-19, its progression globally, updates on public health restrictions in T&T, management of COVID-19 related leave, travel policies, occupational safety and health, business continuity planning, communication and education in the workplace and relief measures introduced by the Government pertinent to businesses.

The ECA further contributed to the Government's policy responses on COVID-19 impacts on business and public health restrictions, via submissions to the National Tripartite Advisory Council (NTAC) and direct submissions to pertinent Government Ministries. The ECA advocated for a holistic economic stimulus package, financial injections into vulnerable sectors, emergency assistance for vulnerable businesses - especially small businesses, moratoriums and extensions for statutory payments, VAT refunds, providing support to affected workers using the national insurance scheme (NIS), and moratoriums/extensions through banks and other financial institutions, among other initiatives. Many of our submissions were informed by the conduct of two (2) membership impact surveys conducted with the support of the ILO.

In August 2020, the ECA made representation to the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and the Board of Inland Revenue on behalf of its membership regarding the delay employers were experiencing in receiving replies from the BIR in respect of applications submitted for severance benefits payments. Though acknowledging the challenges facing the BIR at this time, our representation sought to address the legal and financial ramifications for employers when severance payments are not made within the legislated period.

We were also able to leverage our association with the ILO and IOE to present several free membership seminars relating to the challenges facing employers in 2020, guidance on emergency response planning and business continuity, remote work, occupational safety and health, and national insurance. In particular, our virtual roundtable discussion in May 2020, which focused on The Role and Accountability of Key Stakeholders in the Recovery and Sustainability of Business and Employment post-COVID-19, attracted over 200 participating organisations as we brought together social partner representatives and industry experts to explore what could be done to boost the recovery of business and employment.

Our online membership portal was updated to include a dedicated COVID-19 resource folder where we uploaded various tools, guidance documents and templates, including the following, among others:

- Teleworking in the times of Covid-19
- Surviving Covid-19 and coming out strong
- Diverse Labour Measures Implemented by Employers in Response to COVID-19
- Restructuring for recovery and resilience in response to the COVID 19 crisis
- The 6-step business continuity plan for SME's
- Employer's Guide on managing your workplace during COVID-19

I must admit that 2020 was indeed a hard year for the ECA family, including our membership. In many ways, we faced personal and professional challenges – either alone or together, but for most of us, we were able to learn and perfect new skills and adapt to new ways of working and conducting business. Some members, unfortunately, were not able to make it through this period and were forced to close their doors. There is still a great deal of work to be done, and with what we hope is the worst of the pandemic behind us, our pledge is that we will continue to work for you.

PERFORMANCE OF THE COMPANY

In 2020, the organisation's overall consolidated income fell by just over 20% due mainly to the challenges occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic and the related national public health responses. The biggest reduction occurred in the training department, which experienced a revenue shortfall of almost 40%, year on year.

On the expense side, the organisation was forced to give up its training space in an effort to reduce monthly rental costs. While this decision was consistent with the limitations at the time related to public gatherings and physical distancing, the loss of the training centre also meant a loss of facility rental revenue for most of 2020 and beyond. Administratively, staff expenses had to be adjusted and operational expenses were also scrutinised and where possible, reduced.

Overall, the organisation reduced its annual expenses by 25% when compared to 2019, which contributed significantly to the ability to realise a small profit in 2020, improving on the 2019 loss position.

Advocacy and Representation

Given all that transpired in 2020 and the related impact on employers and businesses, the ECA partnered with the International Labour Organisation's (ILO's) Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean who facilitated a series of bipartite conversations between the Association and the trade union federations, in 2020. These conversations continued in 2021 as the situation with the pandemic continued to evolve. Trade union representatives included the National Trade Union Centre (NATUC), the Joint Trade Union Movement (JTUM) and the Federation of Independent Trade Unions and Non-Governmental Organizations (FITUN).

The inaugural conversation was held in

“
**We see this opportunity
as leading us to the
arrival of a shared
common understanding,
which is now critical.**

**...This forum is going to
test the quality of
leadership that we bring
to the table to
successfully navigate
the challenges brought
about by this crisis.**

KESTON NANCOO, CHAIRMAN, ECA
Opening remarks at 2nd bipartite meeting, 2020



1st Bipartite Meeting
ECA/Trade Unions, August 2020

September 2020 focused primarily on issues related to the treatment of leave due to sickness or quarantine, how both social partners can collaborate to mitigate the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic, and how we can begin to rebuild a more resilient labour market.

A follow-up conversation was held in November 2020 where there was some consensus on a roadmap for COVID-19 crisis recovery with a joint call for strengthened national tripartite dialogue. At this meeting, the ECA presented several priority areas to be considered and addressed through bipartite action, including:

- Discuss findings of the second ECA survey to inform responses to other areas of impact and come to mutually acceptable approach for addressing issues around retrenchment, variation of employment terms, etc.
- Working with government to accelerate the amendments of relevant labour legislation such as the Retrenchment and Severance Benefit Act and the Occupational Safety and

Health Act;

- Advocate for the finalization of the Minimum Employment Standards to level the playing field and advance the decent work agenda;
- Advocate for stakeholder collaboration on government's proposed remote work policy;
- Agree on an approach for meeting and treating with small employers who ran afoul of good industrial relations practices and are now facing disputes and litigation;
- Identify ways to explore and advocate the introduction of unemployment insurance to address future related crises; and
- Lobby lending institutions for more easily accessible financial support for small and medium enterprises and reasonable concessions for borrowers.

This type of bipartite approach, we believe, was integral to shaping the kind of environment

required to allay some of the concerns facing employers at the time and to find consensus around some of those issues in reducing any related human capital risks and associated costs.

Much of our dialogue was informed by the results of two (2) COVID-19 needs and impact surveys. These surveys were administered in May and November, 2020, and were designed to measure the impact of the prevailing environment on employers, as well as determine how employers were responding to developing circumstances in the management of their people, financing decisions, business continuity plans and other operational considerations. The results of these surveys were not only shared with the membership, but with policy-makers and the general public in an attempt to provide concrete data on the impacts of the pandemic as well as the needs of employers. In this regard, we sincerely thank the ILO for facilitating this important exercise, and the ECA's membership, for participating and sharing your perspectives.

Despite the prevailing public health restrictions, the Association also continued its representation of employers at various consultations and conversations, with participation by members of the Board of Directors, management, or staff of



Membership Dialogue
Impact of Petrotrin Closure

the ECA. These included:

- ECA Membership Dialogue – An Industrial Relations Response to the Impacts of the Closure of the PETROTRIN Refinery
- Stakeholder Meeting - One-Year Strategic Action Plan | Tourism Trinidad Limited
- Extreme Weather Insurance | International Labour Organization and The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility
- Business & Industry on Financing the SDGs and GSD activities | International Organisation of Employers
- Strengthening Collective Action to Address COVID-19 Impacts and Enhancing Cooperation between UN Resident Coordinators (RC), Employer and Business Organisations and their company members | International Organisation of Employers, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
- Regional Consultation - RCM (Puebla Process) | Global Forum on Migration and Development
- Revision of ISO 26000 | Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards, International Labour Organization
- Study on main impacts of COVID-19 | International Labour Organization
- Articulating New Solutions and Innovations to Drive Youth Employment Post COVID-19 | Global Apprenticeship Network
- Regulations and financing for promoting quality apprenticeships | International

Labour Organization

- UN75 Dialogue Session and Survey | Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator
- Consultation on Covid/Employers Response | International Labour Organization (via SACODA Services)
- Stakeholder Contribution Session on the Revision of the Draft National Tourism Policy (2020 – 2030) | Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts
- Tripartite Working Group on the Reform of Labour Legislation: Protection of the Rights of Domestic Employees | Ministry of Labour
- CXC Stakeholder Consultation Meeting | Caribbean Employers' Confederation, Caribbean Examinations Council
- Development of a new business continuity management tool for SMEs (Online Consultation) | International Labour Organization, German Agency for International Cooperation
- Developing action plan to address the impact of covid-19 in Trinidad and Tobago | International Labour Organization
- Effective Partnerships in the Prevention and Prosecution and the Protection of victims of human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago (Virtual Stakeholder Consultation | National Task Force Working Group to develop a National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons 2021-2023
- Panel Discussion on Race and Employment | University of the West Indies Faculty of Social Sciences
- Stakeholder Presentation on the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Windscreen and Window Tint) Regulations | Ministry of Works and Transport

- Stakeholder Consultation on the Recruiting of Workers Act | Ministry of Labour
- National Consultation – Transforming Education | Ministry of Education

In addition to participation in the aforementioned consultations and dialogues, the ECA represented its members at over forty (40) local, regional, and international discussions, knowledge-sharing forums, conferences, and capacity-building sessions, much of which dealt exclusively with the

business response to the COVID-19 virus and related public health restrictions, as well as the development of sectoral and national capacity to manage the attendant issues and recovery.

The ECA's membership benefitted from invitations to some of these sessions or representations made by the ECA, on behalf of its membership, to local authorities and international bodies.

The ECA also continued to advance the interest of its members through ongoing representation on several key state Boards and Committees, though many meetings were curtailed in 2020. These include:

- Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT)
- ILO 144 Tripartite Consultative Committee
- Industrial Relations Advisory Committee (IRAC)
- Minimum Wages Board
- National AIDS Coordinating Council (NACC)
- National Insurance Appeals Tribunal
- National Insurance Board of Trinidad and Tobago (NIBTT)
- National HIV/AIDS Advocacy and Sustainability Centre (HASC) Advisory Board
- National Productivity Council (NPC)
- National Training Agency (NTA)
- National Tripartite Advisory Council (NTAC)
- Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA)
- PAN Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP)
- Pesticides and Toxic Chemical Control Board
- Registration, Recognition and Certification Board (RRCB)
- Standing National Labour Market Council (SNLMC)

It should be noted that conduct of the 109th Session of the International Labour Conference was deferred from 2020 to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

MEMBERSHIP

Despite the closure of businesses, restrictions on business activities and the massive public health crisis, we are pleased to report that our membership base experienced a net increase of 4% with more than forty (40) companies joining the ECA family in 2020.

This we believe, is a testament to the value of the ECA's membership and the practical solutions that we continue to provide, especially in supporting employers in handling troubling labour issues and helping them navigate difficult organisational circumstances.

We welcome all our new members for 2020!

1. 1Air Technology Limited
2. Altech Services Limited
3. Anfield Services Ltd
4. Artemis Energy Limited
5. ASCO Logistics Limited
6. Bakers Enterprises Limited
7. Bella Forma Resorts (Coco Reef)
8. Champs Wellness Centre Limited
9. Contractors Warehouse Limited
10. CQ Offshore Marketing Ltd
11. DMS Digital
12. Edan k Properties
13. Gemini Inks Caribbean Limited
14. Habitat for Humanity
15. House of Chan
16. KC Confectionary Limited
17. Kenson Group
18. KLMN Solutions Limited
19. Lifestyle Motors Limited



Submission of Comments

for
Ministry of Education National
Consultation 2020
"Transforming Education"

NOVEMBER 2020

- 20. Manuchar Trinidad Limited
- 21. Massy Limited
- 22. Megabrite Industries Limited
- 23. Mohammeds Electrical Co. Ltd
- 24. Nelster Company Limited
- 25. Payless Hardware & Electric Store
- 26. Piranha International Limited
- 27. Power Tech Electrical Services Co. Ltd
- 28. Primary Distributors
- 29. R.I.K Services Limited
- 30. Rancho Quemado
- 31. Southern Systems Limited
- 32. Spa Euphoria Limited
- 33. Starlite Group Limited
- 34. TISI
- 35. Total Dentistry
- 36. Tranquillity Credit Union Co-Op Society Limited
- 37. Trincity Multi-Family Limited
- 38. Ultimate Eyewear Limited
- 39. Valdez & Torry International Limited
- 40. Vanus Investments
- 41. WFL Investments Limited
- 42. Williams Offices (Invader's Bay) Ltd. (TA REGUS)

For those that discontinued their membership in 2020, the main reasons surrounded the financial realities of trying to operate in a pandemic with significant restrictions on revenue generation business activity.

The ECA also ensured that our membership appreciation activities continued in 2020, hosting its first ever fully virtual membership appreciation day in December. In addition to various service discounts, we had three (3) free sensitisation sessions on offer:

- Workmen's Compensation: Key Insights for Remote Work Arrangements (Presented by: Agostini Insurance Brokers)
- Keeping Your Doors Open During Covid-19: Harnessing the Power of Social Media
- Measuring Absenteeism

situational update on the COVID-19 virus and pandemic, as well as allow members to share their own experiences, challenges, concerns or success stories.

Additionally, our first of a series of COVID-19 Q&A sessions, held in 2020 and 2021, commenced in May 2020, allowing members to engage our industrial relations and human resource management advisors on various new and ongoing day-to-day issues facing workplaces.

The PR Department was also instrumental in preparing and disseminating various resources and information updates on the COVID-19 situation, through updates to the website and online membership portal and the development of our COVID-19 bulletins.

Spotlight Project

In 2020, the ECA accepted a partnership role with the local office of the UNFPA and ILO to execute the Spotlight Initiative in Trinidad and Tobago. The Spotlight Initiative is a joint EU-UN global, multiyear year project focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls.

Throughout the years the ECA has recognized the threat posed by various forms of gender-based violence within the workplace, and the fact that one (1) in three (3) women in T&T will be impacted by some form of violence within their lifetime. Although the data points to a significant impact on women, we also recognize that men are at risk and can become victims of various forms of gender- based violence. In partnering with the UNFPA and ILO on this project, we closed the year by formulating a strategy plan for 2021. This included initiatives which aimed to 1) sensitise the Employer community in T&T on GBV as a workplace issue, 2) demonstrate the impact it has on the workplace, employees and the bottom line of organisations, and 3) provide a framework to employers for understanding how to manage this issue i.e., through training and the development of a model workplace policy.

The ECA participated in a pre-launch television interview, together with the ILO and NATUC, to discuss GBV as a workplace issue, with the formal project launch taking place virtually on December 8th, 2020.

PR DEPARTMENT

The PR Department issued thirteen (13) press releases in 2020, primarily focused on many of the attendant workplace issues triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, including the management of COVID-19 in the workplace, treatment of leave and quarantine issues, remote work and hybrid work, the impact and related issues surrounding public health restrictions.

The Department also partnered with the Industrial Relations Solutions Centre to host two (2) direct member engagement sessions. In April 2020, the Association invited members to an open dialogue, the objectives of which were to provide a

'Tis the Season to Receive!
...courtesy the ECA

OPEN HOUSE 2020
MONDAY, 14TH DECEMBER

10:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.	10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Workmen's Compensation: Key Insights for Remote Work Arrangements	Keeping Your Doors Open During Covid-19: Harnessing the Power of Social Media	Measuring Absenteeism (excerpt from 2015 Conference: Culture Shock - Exploring New Strategies Towards a Reduction of Absenteeism in the Workplace)
Live via Zoom Presented by: Agostini Insurance Brokers	Live via Zoom Presented by: RL Communications	Facebook Live facebook.com/ecatnt

ALL SESSIONS ARE FREE! REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED



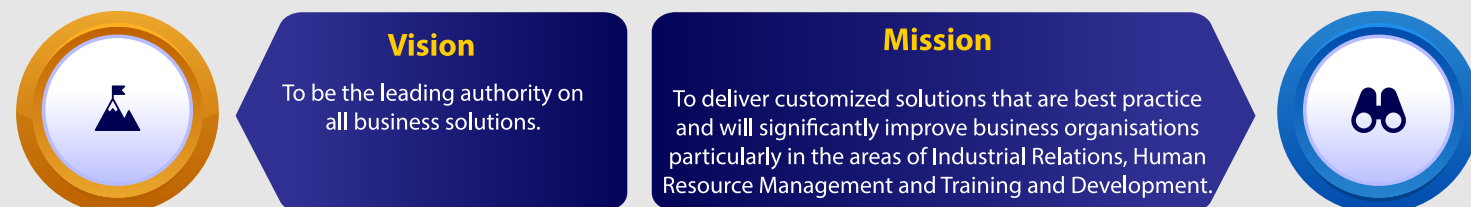
2020 REPORT

EMPLOYERS SOLUTION CENTRE LIMITED

The Subsidiary of the Employers Consultative Association

The Employers Solution Centre (ESC) is the subsidiary and business arm of the ECA. The ESC was incorporated in January 2008, just before the so-called "global financial crisis" began to take effect in many economies across the globe, including Trinidad and Tobago. The organisation was formed to provide services to all Employers, members and non-members of the ECA, in the following areas:

- Industrial Relations Services
- Human Resource Products and Services
- Professional Training and Development
- Payroll Outsourcing



Industrial Relations Solution Centre (IRSC): Equal Justice for Employers

Geared towards resolving workplace conflict between employers and workers, this centre is committed to mitigating risk by identifying problems, clarifying perspectives and concerns, while reaching mutually satisfactory agreements. It also encourages the right to justice by providing high quality dispute resolution and the promotion of the principles and practices of good industrial relations.

The IRSC offers a comprehensive suite of industrial relations services, chief of which include:

- Daily Advice and Consultancy on employer-employee issues
- Industrial Relations Retainers
- Industrial Relations Audits
- Drafting Industrial Relations Correspondence
- Drafting Employment Contracts
- Review of Workplace Policies
- Conducting Disciplinary Hearings

- Representation at Ministry of Labour
- Representation at Bi Lateral Meetings
- Representation at Collective Bargaining
- Representation at the Registration Recognition and Certification Board
- Representation at Industrial Court

The IRSC's performance at the Industrial Court continues to be noteworthy, by maintaining an average 92% "positive result rate" in matters for which representation is provided. This means that 92% of disputes were either dismissed in favour of the employer or settled at amounts that were significantly less than what was initially being asked of the company.

Training and Development Solutions: Building Resilient Organisations and Professionals

The Training and Development Solutions Centre focuses on increasing the competitiveness of businesses by improving the competencies and capacity of its human talent. It's all about gaining a competitive advantage and continuous training is an important tool for improving the performance and productivity of your staff by ensuring that they have the right skills to meet the needs of your business and the ever-changing world of work.

The Training Department currently offers training and development solutions under three (3) main Units:

National Training

National training is conducted every month on various workplace issues of topical interest. The goal is to offer you the best training experience possible by ensuring you have:

- Courteous and Friendly Training Coordinators
- Experienced Facilitators and Industry Practitioners
- Current and Relevant Topics
- Training that is Practical and Immersive

- Individual Attention
- Feedback and Follow-up
- Networking Opportunities

In-House Training

Do you prefer to train your staff onsite? Our in-house training solution allows you to conduct training where you want, when you want and how you want. This solution is highly customisable so organisations can make important training interventions that are specific to their business and organisational structure. Whether it is skills development, human resource training, industrial relations solutions, customer service, leadership development, OSH training and sensitisation, general institutional strengthening, or other specialised intervention, you are assured a perfect mix of theoretical and practical training delivered by our highly qualified professionals and facilitators.

The Academy of Industrial Relations

The Academy of Industrial Relations is an internationally accredited, intensive, 11-week programme, which immerses participants in the fields of industrial relations and labour laws in Trinidad and Tobago. This programme is an excellent option for human resource practitioners, professionals, administrators, students and business owners who wish to gain knowledge and develop their industrial relations skills. The following accredited certificates can be attained via the Academy:

- Advanced Certificate in Industrial Relations Management, EduQual Level 3
- Advanced Certificate in Labour Laws in Trinidad and Tobago, EduQual Level 3
- Professional Certificate in Labour Laws in Trinidad and Tobago, EduQual Level 4

Human Resource Solutions: Practical Solutions, Exceptional Results

Improved business performance ultimately

depends on enabled, engaged and capable people. In this regard, investing in efficient and relevant Human Resources systems will significantly contribute to achieving your goals and objectives. We offer full consultancy in all areas relating to human resource management and practice, with an objective to optimise organisational performance through Human Resource Management strategies. Whether you are a Human Resource Specialist within a multi-national corporation, a Human Resource Generalist at a mid-sized company, or an Owner or Manager of a small business or start-up venture, you'll find that our solutions can fit all of your needs.

The ESC's people management solutions and services include:

- Strategic Planning Consultation
- Performance Management systems
- Change Management Initiatives
- Reward and Recognition Programmes
- Recruitment and Selection
- Policy and Procedure Review and Development
- Job Analysis, Job Evaluation and Job Descriptions
- Complete outsourcing of the HR function
- HR Audits

Payroll Processing

Do you find yourself overwhelmed when payroll time comes around? Let the ESC take care of your complete payroll processing needs from start to end – inclusive of benefits management, overtime pay and other allowances.

Whether you are a small business or large corporation that simply wants to take the hassle and uncertainty out of processing weekly, fortnightly or monthly payrolls, we encourage you to speak with us at the Employers Solution Centre. This service is also ideal for employers who are planning to start operations in T&T and need a solution for navigating and correctly applying the country's labour laws, custom and practices, taxation laws, statutory requirements and best practice.

Our experienced team will provide optimal support and a hassle free, low cost and efficient solution, ensuring that you have more time to build your business and grow your bottom line.

PERFORMANCE OF THE ESC



Immediately after the first COVID-19 case was announced, one of the first things the ESC experienced was an almost complete freeze in new service requests and cancellation or postponement of some existing service requests. This situation did not begin to improve until two (2) to three (3) months into the pandemic, although, not at the levels that existed prior to March 2020.

Overall, the ESC's revenue fell by 26% when compared to 2019, due in large part to a 38% reduction in revenue from the Training Department. It should be noted that during the five (5)-year period 2015 – 2019, the Training Department contributed as much as 50% of the ESC's overall annual revenue, at an average of 43% over this five (5)-year period, which demonstrates the importance of this department to the overall success of the organisation.

However, between March and May 2020, over 75% of the revenue booked by the training department – either through registrations for National Training or scheduled In-House Training sessions, was not realised due to cancellations and postponements. All training programmes previously scheduled for March, April and May 2020 had to be pulled and new programmes developed in keeping with the prevailing environment. The training team, though challenged by work-from-home restrictions and all of the “new” workplace issues facing employers,

was able to revisit their plans and introduce a suite of training and sensitisation sessions relevant to the existing and future needs of employers, while making the transition to a fully virtual mode of training delivery – which did not exist prior to 2020.

These sessions focused on issues like the implementation of remote work systems, the management of remote teams, key guidance relating to layoff and alternatives to retrenchment, revisiting employment contracts, workplace discipline in a virtual environment, financial strategies for recovering and thriving post-COVID-19, among others. However, this new training environment also meant that prices and contact hours had to be reduced for the online world.

The Academy of Industrial Relations, which offers 11-week certificate courses in industrial relations and labour law, also could not be delivered in 2020, as the mode of delivery was not designed for a virtual environment. This Unit typically accounts for close to 20% of the training department's annual revenue. Despite this loss of revenue, the organisation used the opportunity to pursue international accreditation for these Courses through EduQual, a globally recognised national qualifications regulator in the UK, approved by SQA-Accreditation.

This strategic decision, together with a partnership forged with the Bureau for Employers Activities at the International Labour Organisation (ACTEMP), allowed us to successfully analyse and reformat the Academy's courses and re-introduce them in 2021 as a fully virtual option, delivered through our new online e-Campus.

The Industrial Relations Solution Centre (IRSC) contributed 24% of revenue earned by the ESC in 2020, approximately 21% less than 2019. Despite the uncertainty facing the world of work, there was a significant reduction in demand for

traditional industrial relations services and support. Seemingly, all employee issues stopped, and the IRSC was primarily focused on servicing calls for advice pertinent to COVID-19 and related guidance. The reduction in IR revenue was also due in part to a cessation of most collective bargaining exercises and the shutting down of the Industrial Court, which meant no requests for representation or advocacy at negotiations, trade disputes or conciliations.

Despite these challenges, the IRSC was able to

maintain service to the ECA's free membership advisory line, ensuring that employers were able to access the guidance they needed during a very challenging period. The IRSC also supported the development of advisory bulletins issued by the ECA to its membership in respect of COVID-19 and other workplace issues.

Despite an almost 25% reduction in operating expenses, the ESC still recorded a small loss of just over (\$45,000) for 2020.

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in Trinidad and Tobago

Our Affiliates





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