

# WOMEN WORKING WORLDWIDE

MMU Manton Building  
Rosamond St West  
Manchester  
M15 6LL  
Charity no: 1119101

11th January 2008

Dear Friend,

## **Urgent Appeal – Financial Support for Women Workers in Africa**

WWW need to raise a total of £25,000 to support women workers in Africa who need immediate funding at a critical time of change.

Women Working Worldwide (WWW) is a charity that works to promote women workers' rights in global supply chains. WWW has a history of 20 years working with local women's groups in Asia, Africa and Central America to ensure that employees work in safe conditions, in dignity and with respect to their human rights. In this way we help consumers buy products that are not made in exploitative conditions.

### **Our work**

For the past 3 years we have been working with women's groups in Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya in the flower and vegetable industry. The majority of flowers and exotic vegetables sold in UK supermarkets are exported from these countries. Whilst the horticulture industry in all countries is working to improve labour conditions, more work needs to be done to alleviate problems such as:

- **Extremely low pay** – leaving women unable to cover basic living costs such as nutritious food, schooling for children and basic health costs.
- **Job insecurity** – leading to a lower income and lack of access to vital benefits such as annual leave and sick pay.
- **Poor health and safety** - including exposure to pesticides leading to breathing problems, skin disorders and miscarriage
- **Forced and unpredictable overtime** - which impacts families as well as children who are often left unattended
- **Sexual harassment**

In partnership with local women's groups we have done research on working conditions, trained over 6,000 workers about their rights at work and held dialogue with key stakeholders who have the ability and influence to improve working conditions. At a farm level our project has meant that workers are provided with protective clothing to stop the harmful effect of pesticides, safe drinking water and toilet facilities. Maternity leave has been given to mothers, childcare facilities have been provided and medical check-ups are offered.

### **How your support would be used?**

Your support will be used by our partners to continue to engage and lobby key industry stakeholders including farm management and export bodies to improve labour conditions in reaction to research published last year.

Positive meetings were held in 2007 and vital follow-up work needs to take place in order to ensure continued improvement in working conditions and to ensure the impact of 3 years hard work is not lost. This is a critical time of change in this sector and the effect of our inability to continue our work would be extremely damaging to workers' lives.

### **Why support WWW's work?**

- WWW is a small NGO without the capacity to easily access funding.
- Your support would be going straight towards activities in Africa that will directly benefit women workers.
- Bearing in mind what we've already achieved, continued work in this area is expected to reach 50,000 women.

Finally, by supporting our work you will contribute towards a growing movement for ethical trade. More and more UK consumers are showing their concern for workers' rights by choosing ethical produce. Cheap food and flowers is often at the expense of the poor overseas. So as we approach Valentine's Day perhaps lets think about the real cost of the red roses we will be buying for our sweethearts and do something to contribute to women working safely, in dignity and with respect.

We appreciate any support you are able to offer us. If you would like more information please visit our website [www.women-ww.org](http://www.women-ww.org), email [kate.women-ww@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:kate.women-ww@mmu.ac.uk) or ring 0161 247 6171.

Please make cheques payable to Women Working Worldwide or ring 0161 247 to organise a bank transfer.

Please see our website ([www.women-ww.org/giftaidform.pdf](http://www.women-ww.org/giftaidform.pdf)) for a Gift Aid form which allows us to claim an extra 28p for every £1 you donate if you are a UK taxpayer.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Byron  
Information and Advocacy Officer

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