

**International meeting for organisations working to  
support horticulture workers**

**Luther King House, Manchester UK  
12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

**Hosted by  
Women Working Worldwide**

**MEETING REPORT**

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## **1. Introduction to the Report**

The “International meeting for organisations working to support horticulture workers” - a two-day workshop in Manchester hosted by Women Working Worldwide (WWW) – was held in April 2011 with 21 participants from 16 organisations from Europe and Eastern Africa.

This Report, jointly written by Annie Hopley and Rachel English aims to capture key points from the presentations, discussion and group work. Its structure mirrors that of the agenda and the Appendices contain extra detail for each session along with a list of information resources, provided by participants. It is hoped that the report will thus provide a meaningful record of the workshop and a useful reference for both those who attended and other interested readers.

As the event facilitator, I wish to thank Rachel English (Project Co-ordinator) and her colleagues at Women Working Worldwide for help with building and delivering the agenda. I would also like to thank the attendees for their rich contributions and good-humoured participation throughout.

***Annie Hopley***

***April 2011***

## 2. Meeting Focus and Participants

### Focus

In a pre-event note to potential participants, Rachel English (WWW Project Co-ordinator) invited input to the meeting's objectives and agenda, and set the context, tone and aims of the event as follows:

*“Women Working Worldwide has been working with women horticulture workers in East Africa since 2005<sup>1</sup>. We are now in the final months of our current project, and our partners in Uganda, Ethiopia and Tanzania are completing their work.*

*WWW is planning a two-day workshop bringing together different activists/organisations working with East African horticulture workers... **to map our work and identify best practice, to discuss potential strategies for addressing the Living Wage problem and to discuss current changes/challenges in respect to social codes of conduct and fair trade.***

*We wish the workshop to be as **beneficial and relevant** as possible **to all...** to be **exploratory** with a view to **strengthening our work through shared learning and identification of common strategies and synergies.** All discussions should be sensitive to/consider gender”.*

Within this context, three key topics were identified as the **meeting focus**:

- a. East African Horticultural Workers – Strategies for Change**  
To discuss a best practice model for change to improve conditions in this sector.
- b. Living Wage – Challenges and Opportunities**  
To discuss potential strategies for achieving a Living Wage in the horticultural sector.
- c. Social Codes of Conduct – Engagement and Development**  
To discuss how workers, their representatives and other civil society organisations can be better involved in auditing and corrective actions.

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<sup>1</sup> Information about this project on the Women Working Worldwide website: [www.women-ww.org](http://www.women-ww.org)

## Participants

All the participants supplied their contact details (see below). They also gave information about current work in to improve working conditions in horticulture (Appendix B) as well as further contacts for and sources of useful information (Appendix F – “Resources”).

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Email address</b>
Phillipina Mosha	Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union	phillipina.mosha@yahoo.co.uk
Flavia Amoding	Uganda Workers Education Association	flaviamodi@yahoo.com
Caroline Elliot	War on Want	CElliot@waronwant.org
Fiona Gooch	Traidcraft	fionag@traidcraft.co.uk
Joyce Gema	Representing Traidcraft	jgema@reactafrica.com
Sue Longley	International Union of Food Workers (IUF)	sue.longley@iuf.org
Kees Hoek	OLAA	keeshoek@olaa.nl
Peter Williams	Independent Consultant	peterkwilliams@fastmail.fm
Sloane Hamilton	Oxfam	SHamilton@oxfam.org.uk
Barbara Evers	Capturing the Gains	barbara.evers@manchester.ac.uk
Lone Riisgaard	Capturing the Gains	lor@diis.dk
Sophie Vessel	FIAN Austria (Fair Flowers Campaign)	sophie.vessel@fian.at
Cristiano Calvi	Fiori e Diritti	cristiano.calvi@bottegasolidale.it
Caroline Wildeman	HIVOS	cwildeman@hivos.nl
Anne Tallontire	Leeds University	A.M.Tallontire@leeds.ac.uk
Rachel English Benedicte Brahic Marta Medusa Olaiya Joanne Smith	Women Working Worldwide (WWW)	rachel.women-ww@mmu.ac.uk B.Brahic@mmu.ac.uk marta.women-ww@mmu.ac.uk jo.women-ww@mmu.ac.uk
Maggie Burns	WWW Consultant	mburns@gn.apc.org
Annie Hopley	Facilitator	annie.hopley@gmail.com

### **3. East African Horticultural Workers – Strategies for Change**

The aim of this session was to create a working opportunity for participants themselves to propose sustainable change strategies, and in a way that would demonstrate the benefits of collaboration and focus on shared, critical issues.

The session comprised three presentations which are attached in Appendix C, open discussion and small group work.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April</b> 2.30 – 3.30pm <b><u>Presentations and Discussion:</u></b></p> <p><b>What are the most important issues, goals and drivers for change for East African horticulture workers?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Barbara Evers</u> (Panel Chair) – Capturing the Gains Project <u>Sue Longley</u> – International Union of Food Workers (IUF) <u>Phillipina Mosha</u> - Tanzanian Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union (TPAWU) <u>Kees Hoek</u> – Fair Flowers and Plants/OLAA</p> <p>3.45 – 5.30pm <b><u>Group Work:</u> What are the key issues, stakeholders, drivers and goals for change?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April</b> 9.00 – 10.15am <b><u>Group Work:</u> What are the gaps and good practice?</b> 10.30am – 12.30pm <b><u>Group Presentations</u> of change strategies</b></p>
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#### **Group Work on Change Strategies**

Stimulated by the speakers and open discussion, each group worked on the common elements of key issues, stakeholders, drivers and agents for change, gaps and good practice. This work resulted in the following key points:

Key Issues	Contextual Trends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Violations of labour rights including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Low 'poverty-perpetuating' wages</li> <li>○ Lack of regular employment</li> <li>○ Lack of freedom of association and the capacity to organise and bargain collectively</li> <li>○ Health and safety problems</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Women's issues including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gender-based discrimination/sexual harassment</li> <li>○ Childcare and management of family responsibilities</li> <li>○ Empowerment of women leaders</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Lack of adequate law and enforcement</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increasing use of labour agents</b> and reduction of employer accountability for labour</li> <li>• Higher degree of <b>outsourcing to small producers</b></li> <li>• <b>Production shifts</b> eg to Ethiopia</li> <li>• <b>Export shifts</b> eg to new emerging economies</li> <li>• <b>Changes in production methods</b> such as longer logistics due to increased use of shipping and decreased use of planes</li> <li>• <b>African supermarkets</b> are now a market for African produced flowers. What impact will this have on labour standards?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Conditions on small farms and smallholders</b> where it is harder to track conditions</li> <li>• <b>Environmental damage and serious health and safety issues</b></li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="778 1003 1072 1039"><b>Drivers for Change</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and organizing <b>workers</b></li> <li>• <b>Collective bargaining</b> and workplace negotiation</li> <li>• <b>Government</b> ratifying and enforcing national and international labour law</li> <li>• Owners of <b>codes of conduct</b> setting and implementing higher standards</li> <li>• <b>Buyers</b> sharing risks and demanding accountability</li> <li>• <b>Civil society</b> campaigns and programme implementation</li> <li>• <b>Donors</b> prioritising labour and human rights.</li> </ul>

## **GAP ANALYSIS: What needs to be done?**

### **Influencing national and international governments:**

There needs to be more emphasis on working with national governments to influence them to:

- a) Increase inspections and vastly improve enforcement of labour laws
- b) Improve legal framework where appropriate.

More work also needs to be done to analyse the role of governments in buyer countries and regional/international governmental institutions.

### **Engaging with the Dutch Auctions:**

Some participants noted that the Dutch Auctions could be a potential agent of change but NGOs and unions are not engaging with the Dutch Auctions enough. Please note that Kees Hoek has written an information piece on the Dutch Auctions that is appended to this document (see Appendix G).

### **Better influencing business strategies:**

Issues were raised such as:

- a) Prices set by buyers should better cover labour costs
- b) What is the business case for improving working conditions?

### **Sharing of learning across other sectors:**

Has the focus on horticulture meant that other sectors have been neglected and have not benefited from shared learning? Workers in different sectors are not collectively sharing learning; an example given was that workers from the horticultural and tea sectors in Kenya should be encouraged to meet and discuss their conditions and remedial actions.



*Flavia Amoding presenting on Living Wage on Day Two*

## STRATEGY IDEAS FOR IMPROVING LABOUR RIGHTS

### a) **Build capacity amongst workers and unions to create change**

- Apply existing learning and good practice to new strategies

### b) **Fill knowledge gaps and inform organising and campaigning through research.**

One group suggested that it would be especially useful to fill gaps in understanding in the following areas:

- a. What is the situation in different countries with regard to employment patterns?
- b. What is the situation on the smaller farms?
- c. What is the role of labour agents?
- d. Need information on wages and working conditions
- e. Changing patterns in markets eg. Is there a production shift to Ethiopia? Is there an export shift to new emerging economies (for example Brazil, Russia, India and China (the BRICS group)) with less consumer awareness of working conditions?
- f. Understand regional developments eg. East African Community developments regarding labour law.
- g. What are the micro level business strategies of individual firms. How are the products costed? What are the changing patterns of investment?

The group also emphasised that work must involve *all* stakeholders (horticulture workers, workers committees, EATUC and national agricultural unions, labour-oriented NGOs, growers/producers associations, government (trade, agriculture, labour, health, women/equality), consumers in Africa, EU and UK.

### c) **Tackle problems in smallholdings and smaller farms.**

- Use ETI<sup>2</sup> Smallholder Guidelines<sup>3</sup> approach

### d) **Engage with Dutch Auctions**

### e) **Lobby labelling initiatives**

- Advocate for improvements in labels
- If labels set best practice, promote them

### f) **Lobby donors to increase their support for this work**

### g) **Develop a strategy for Kenya**

- How can organizing be strengthened through the union?

### h) **Organise a popular campaign involving many stakeholders to promote a living wage and improved conditions for flower workers**

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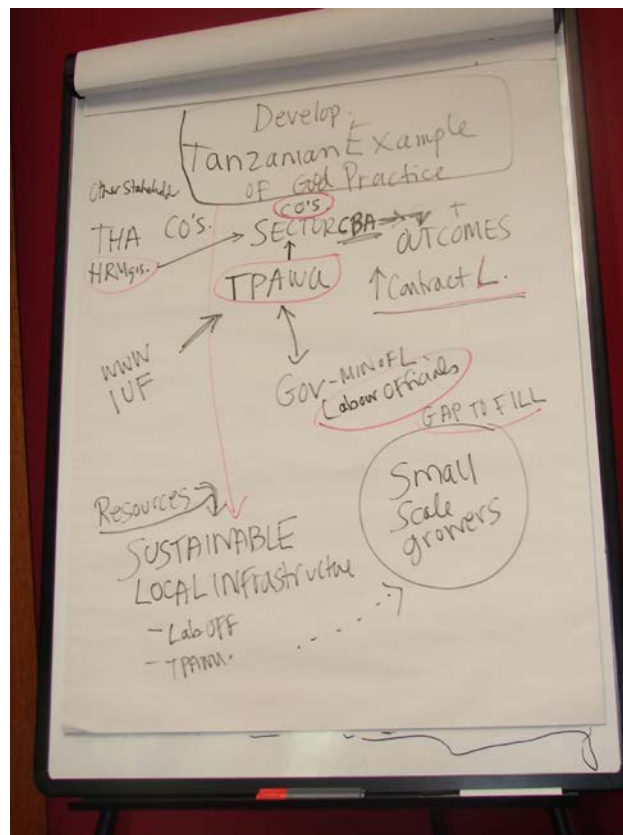
<sup>2</sup> ETI : Ethical Trade Initiative <http://www.ethicaltrade.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ethicaltrade.org/resources/key-eti-resources/eti-smallholder-guidelines-eng> -

- There are many challenges associated with this. The flower industry is complex and some of the issues faced by workers are difficult to campaign on. There are now so many labels in the flower sector that it could be confusing for consumers.
- i) **Promote solidarity between workers in different sectors**
  - Techniques such as workers' exchanges can be expensive
- j) **Sharing/disseminating information and networking between NGOs, academics and labour unions working to improve conditions**
  - Use internet, facebook, you tube and other social media  
Eg <http://www.flowers-for-human-dignity.org/09/>  
<http://www.fioriediritti.org>  
[www.women-ww.org](http://www.women-ww.org)
  - Use an online medium to collate research
  - WWW agreed to investigate different knowledge management systems by which information could be shared.

### SOME EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

One group highlighted that work done by the Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union (TPAWU) was an example of good practice. However there is still more to be done such as accessing small-scale growers and building a network of local infrastructure.



Other examples of best practice cited were:

- Collective bargaining (sectoral CBAs in Uganda and Tanzania, enforcement of CBAs by Kenya Flower Council, shop stewards being involved in negotiations across the region, effective grievance procedures included in some CBAs)
- Workplace policies on sexual harassment and HIV/AIDS in various countries
- Women's committees especially if integrated with unions (various countries)
- ETI supervisor training programme<sup>4</sup>
- Savings and Credit schemes established by unions in Uganda and Tanzania
- Housing for migrant workers (Habitat for Humanity project)

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ethicaltrade.org/training/eti-supervisor-training-programme>

#### **4. Living Wage – Challenges and Opportunities**

The theme of a Living Wage, inevitably, ran through the whole event: its fundamental importance to improving basic living conditions for horticultural workers; its role in breaking the poverty-cycle; the impact of collaboration among trade unions, NGOs and other key advocates; the business case and moral arguments; the untapped potential of government intervention.

This session was designed to offer participants a constructive focus on particular aspects of the Living Wage challenge, with a view to identifying some immediate actions (“next steps”) in what is often seen as an intractable problem. As before, the session followed the format of presentations<sup>5</sup>, discussion and group work which, on this occasion, addressed five key Living Wage questions:

##### **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April**

1.15 – 2.30pm **Presentations and Discussion:**

**Is a Living Wage possible for horticultural workers: what is the need and the challenges, barriers and opportunities?**

Maggie Burns (Panel Chair) – Women Working Worldwide

Flavia Amoding – Uganda Workers Education Association

Sue Longley – International Union of Food Workers

Peter Williams – Independent Consultant

2.45 – 5.20pm **Group Discussion and Feedback on Living Wage Questions**

5.20 – 5.30pm Kees Hoek - **Summary of Living Wage Session**

##### **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April**

9.00 – 10.30am **Open Discussion:**

**A Living Wage for horticulture workers – Next Steps**

Maggie Burns (Session Chair) – Women Working Worldwide

***“You cannot say you are living a decent life if you don’t earn a living wage”***

***“It is appropriate to start a Living Wage campaign in order to address the vicious cycle of poverty and enable workers to lead a decent life”***

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix D

## Group Work on Living Wage

The following table shows some of the points that were raised when discussing opportunities and barriers to achieving a Living Wage for horticultural workers.

Strengths/Opportunities/Actions	Barriers/Challenges
<p><b>Trade Unions and collective bargaining</b></p> <p><i>Strengths:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Good trade union skills and best practice experience</li> <li>○ NGOs and TUs in East Africa are working well together (on the whole)</li> </ul> <p><i>Opportunities/Actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strengthen capacity of trade unions to negotiate higher wages</li> </ul>	<p>Uneven capacity of TUs/civil society to negotiate</p> <p>Workers may prioritise having a job because of wide spread unemployment and poverty and not fully support a Living Wage campaign.</p>
<p><b>Government and intergovernmental institutions</b></p> <p><i>Strengths:</i></p> <p>East African Community has agreed regulation on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Minimum Wage</li> <li>○ Land Purchase</li> <li>○ Free movement of products</li> </ul> <p><i>Opportunities/Actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The East Africa Community could seeks to reduce perverse competition between countries on incentives for investment and/or harmonise common social standards.</li> <li>○ Target key ministers that could make/influence a high level strategic decision to support a living wage</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Retailers</b></p> <p><i>Strengths:</i></p> <p>Some UK supermarkets have expressed an interest in getting involved in the living wage campaign.</p> <p><i>Opportunities/Actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Retailers could write to supplier governments to improve minimum wage</li> <li>○ Retailers could give positive incentives to farms that pay higher wages</li> </ul>	<p>Supermarket price wars</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We need to build the business case for improving wages at retailer level</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Employers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need to build the business case for improving wages at employer level</li> </ul> <p>E.g.: gains from a better paid/motivated workforce, lower turnover of staff, higher production?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Companies which are paying higher wages could be allies in negotiations of a sector-wide CBA or MW negotiations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need evidence for local level business case</li> <li>○ Can they afford to pay more? No information on their profits</li> <li>○ Employers/producers may not agree as it may increase market price and decrease competitiveness.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Codes of Conduct</b></p> <p>Labels have opened space for dialogue with TUs</p> <p>Could show strong leadership on the Living Wage issue.</p>	
<p><b>Living Wage campaigning</b></p> <p><i>Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Learnings from Living Wage campaigns in other sectors.</li> <li>○ The shared agenda of the diverse actors present at WWW seminar!</li> </ul> <p><i>Opportunities/actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Campaigning - as a tool to show that (some/women) consumers are willing to pay more to ensure that women workers get decent wages</li> <li>○ Linking Living Wage to ILO and UN work on the Millenium Development Goals and food security</li> </ul>	<p>A campaign needs to be carefully organised. Any work by campaigning organisations should be done in close collaboration with workers and unions at national level. Starting a Living Wage campaign is also a long term commitment that requires many resources.</p> <p>Lack of proper statistics with which to start a campaign</p>
<p><b>Supply chains</b></p> <p><i>Strengths</i></p> <p>The Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative, (IDH), is well placed to engage around the Dutch Flower Auctions</p> <p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Study distribution of value down the chain – identify opportunities to raise wages.</li> <li>○ Track auction prices and compare</li> </ul>	<p>Different EU supply chains (direct, vertically integrated, chains, auction, suppliers)</p> <p>Dutch Flower Auctions have little traceability</p>

against wages	
<p><b>Production</b></p> <p>Because flowers are a luxury, are sales less sensitive to price?</p> <p>More information is needed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Labour component of production costs.</li> <li>- Cost of sustainable production (would FLO be able to share information?)</li> </ul>	<p>Over-production in flowers and regional competition make this a tough environment in which to increase costs: increasing pressure for race-to-the-bottom competition is anticipated. Impact of higher wages on cost, especially of food products, is likely to be a significant problem.</p> <p>Lack of information on production costs (apparently in Tanzania farm managers have said that wage was 6% of costs and in turn management salaries were the majority of that cost – not verified).</p> <p>Rising costs of fuel (transport) and oil-based agro-chemicals</p>

**Kees's Key Questions!**

At the end of the group discussions, Kees Hoek kindly agreed to pose some questions to the group for us to reflect on, including:

*How do we convince producers that they should pay a living wage in the face of rising production costs?* Ideas included a partnership between importers to try to establish a higher Freight On Board (FOB) price and building a business case around the advantages of motivating and retaining workers.

*How can we take inflation into account in our wage negotiations?* Ideas included building the capacity of unions to undertake collective bargaining and influencing producers to see the living wage as a figure that changes with inflation.

## **Wrap up session on Living Wage**

There was general agreement that the time *is* right to start a campaign for a Living Wage for horticultural workers. Collectively, participants articulated the following set of **Guiding Principles and Next Steps** for a successful campaign:

### **Guiding Principles**

- There needs to be a long-term commitment by TUs and NGOs
- There should be collaboration and clear roles
  - Unions negotiate wages
  - National institutions lead
  - Driven by workers and workers organisations
- There should be political commitment to raise wages in a staged process.

### **Summary of Next Steps**

- Coalition building:
  - Agree aims, message and scope (global?)
  - Agree roles
  - Note that it was not agreed at this meeting to form a formal coalition but to explore ideas for working on this issue
- Information/research – what do we need/have?
  - Information from/about workers – some information available from WoW/WWW/IUF but need to build on it
  - Human interest stories – (OLAA, WoW, WWW, IUF)
  - Data on internal migrants
  - Profile of families/expenditure (perhaps some information from Leeds University (unpublished), WWW and FIAN?, SOAS work on Ethiopia and Uganda)
  - Information from companies:
    - Value chain
    - Attitudes to LW and evidence for the business case
    - Analysis of companies/investors (IUF may have some information on this to share in the future)
- When will we meet again? War on Want are having a conference later this year which may present a chance for us to further develop ideas.

## 5. Social Codes of Conduct – Engagement and Development

The thinking behind this session on Social Codes of Conduct (COC) and fair trade was to explore and discuss frankly the reasons for continuing participation in COCs; their impact in improving conditions in the sector; how they are changing; the role of trade unions and NGOs; the potential need to move “beyond audits”.

**Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> April**

10.45am – 12.00noon **Presentations and Open Discussion:**

**Social codes of conduct: perspectives on engagement between civil society, auditors and retailers and the limitations of audits.**

Rachel English (Panel Chair) – Women Working Worldwide

Sophie Vessel – FIAN Austria:

Empowerment of workers through training on workers’ rights and the international code of conduct (ICC)

Joyce Gema – representing Traidcraft:

Participation of local unions and workers’ representatives in codes of conduct – possible next steps

Anne Tallontire – Leeds University:

What do auditors and retailers want from civil society?

Maggie Burns – Women Working Worldwide:

Limitations of auditing and the way forward for civil society engagement

The presentations<sup>6</sup> stimulated lively discussion and responses. The selection below gives a flavour:

- [The experience] in Tanzania is that four farms comply with the International Code of Conduct. The good practice on these farms has been an example to other farms, and the managers of these farms have influenced others to improve their standards
- [The experience] in Uganda is that “auditing is not bad”. Auditors would ask, for example, about women’s committees which in turn would encourage their establishment. These women’s committees then challenge and make demands on the auditors (eg about toilet facilities). However, there was one case of a farm falsifying evidence for an audit. This was ultimately rectified with the farm and the situation has improved
- Workers’ committees and trade unions should insist on their participation in audits and certification committees, and on being fully informed, prepared and valued
- Codes of Conduct should be locally negotiated and reviewed by workers’ committees (*n.b.* employers have their own networks for reviewing Code contents)

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix E

- Workers' committees are good on local issues, but they have no bargaining power and "no legal bearing" in the process
- Workers' committees do not charge workers a fee for their participation in auditing (*n.b.* trade unions do) – but that is because these committees are often funded and controlled by management
- Trade unions should build their capacity to audit, eg to check on audit company competence; run benchmark audits; offer feedback on what is happening in-between audits; identify buyers who are not auditing and campaign to bring them on board
- The IUF is sceptical about auditing and certification – and trade unions generally do not have the resources to prioritise it. It is worth having a look at what the ITUC Congress says on this<sup>7</sup>
- There are problems with auditing to assess qualitative aspects, eg freedom of association. How *do* auditors assess it?
- Donors are confused about the real value and impact of Codes of Conduct
- Auditing is not doing the job it is supposed to do. [It] shows no change, but in reality, there has been a decrease in wages and conditions have worsened. There are some islands of good practice but no real improvement
- \$65b per year is spent on auditing. Where *should* our energies be going to bring about real change for women workers? Surely this huge sum of money could be better targeted to bring about improvements for workers?
- The focus of energy and resources should be to create decent workplaces:
  - Train and encourage whole workforces (including human resources and middle managers) towards union membership
  - Audit training should be locally resourced and run
  - Transparent, negotiated grievance and disciplinary processes
  - Employee handbooks setting out clear roles and responsibilities, company rules, terms and conditions

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<sup>7</sup> "Resolution on Global Unions, Global Business", ITUC Congress, June 2010 – see Appendix F

## 6. Round-Up and Next Steps

During the final, round-up session, participants were invited to respond briefly to three questions:

1. Did you get what you wanted from the event?
2. As a result of attending this workshop, what will you do next?
3. By way of feedback for future events, can you offer one key comment?

1. Everyone reported that they had indeed “got what they wanted”, for example:

- made new contacts and expanded networks
- learned what others are doing and where the good practice is
- understood better how academics and their research can contribute
- the opportunity to re-connect with NGOs
- stimulated by new ideas and knowledge
- achieved detail (small group work and focus) as well as the big picture
- enjoyed catching up
- identified gaps in own research programme
- clearer understanding about the impact of diverse approaches and developing relations with the industry.

2. Having played an active part in the workshop, participants volunteered the following commitments to:

- write a report for colleagues with suggestions for action
- share information about current research priorities and future events
- take ideas back to FLO<sup>8</sup>
- talk with affiliated organisations to co-ordinate their work with WWW and avoid duplication
- increase advocacy and lobbying, among unions and employers, for a Living Wage
- use new contacts for better collaboration
- write an article for publication on Dutch organisations related to Living Wage
- identify, in home-country, researchers interested in coalition-building
- in support of lobbying for a Living Wage, assemble compelling human interest stories.

3. In addition to expressing unanimous satisfaction with the meeting structure, format, agenda and venue, participants offered some specific comments for future events:

- invite speakers from the industry (eg producers) to hear their point of view on Living Wage
- longer breaks (for networking)
- create space in the agenda for each organisation to give a 10-minute presentation on its work.

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<sup>8</sup> FLO: Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International – standards and certification body for the Fairtrade movement

### **Next Steps and Final Thoughts**

At the close of the meeting, WWW agreed to reflect on its role and how best to disseminate the ideas and information from the meeting.

Women Working Worldwide would like to thank those that attended this meeting for all their hard work over the three days.

We hope those reading this report will find it useful and informative in their work to improve conditions and wages for horticultural workers. We look forward to engaging further with those interested in driving forward living wage and improved conditions in this sector.

In solidarity and sisterhood  
Women Working Worldwide.



## Appendix A

**International meeting for organisations working to support horticulture workers**

**Luther King House, Manchester UK  
12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

### **Agenda**

#### **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April**

**1pm – 1.30pm Welcome drink and sandwich**

**1.30pm – 2.30pm - Introductions**

**2.30pm – 3.30pm Panel: What are the most important issues, goals and drivers for change for East African horticulture workers.**

Chair –Barbara Evers – Capturing the Gains Project

Sue Longley – International Union of Food Workers

Phillipina Moshia Tanzanian Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union

Kees Hoek – Fair Flowers and Plants/OLAA

Discussion

**3.30pm – 3.45pm Break**

**3.45pm – 5.30pm Group work: what are the key issues, stakeholders, drivers and goals for change?**

Close of day

#### **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April**

**9.00am – 10.15am Group work: Gaps and good practice**

**10.15am – 10.30am Break**

**10.30am – 12.30pm Presentation of change strategies and discussion**

**12.30pm – 1.15pm Lunch**

**1.15pm – 2.30pm Panel: Is a Living Wage possible for horticultural workers: what is the need and the challenges, barriers and opportunities?**

Chair: Maggie Burns

Flavia Amoding – Uganda Workers Education Association: The need for a Living Wage for East African horticultural workers

Sue Longley – International Union of Food Workers

Peter Williams – Towards a Living Wage in the Garment, Tea and Banana sectors

Discussion

**2.30pm – 2.45pm Break**

**2.45pm – 4.15pm Group discussion on Living Wage**

**4.15pm – 4.30pm Break**

**4.30pm – 5.20pm Feedback from groups and discussion**

**5.20pm – 5.30pm Summing up of the Living Wage discussion: Kees Hoek**

Close of Day

7.30 pm – Meeting dinner hosted by WWW, Punjab Tandoori, Rusholme

### **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April**

**9.00am – 10.00am “A Living Wage for horticulture workers”; discussion of guiding principles.**

**10.00am – 11.15am Social codes of conduct: perspectives on engagement between civil society, auditors and retailers and the limitations of audits.**

Chair – TBC

Sophie Vessel – FIAN Austria: Empowerment of workers through training on workers’ rights and the international code of conduct

Joyce Gema – participation of local unions and workers’ representatives in codes of conduct – possible next steps

Anne Tallontire – Leeds University: what do auditors and retailers want from civil society?

Maggie Burns – Limitations of auditing and the way forward for civil society engagement

Discussion

**11.15am – break**

**11.30am – 1pm: meeting round-up**

Participant feedback on key learnings from the meetings, gaps or points for further discussion.

**1pm- 1.30pm – sandwiches and departure**

## **APPENDIX B: Participants' Details**

### **1. Barbara Evers, Capturing the Gains**

Barbara is working as part of the Capturing the Gains programme (<http://www.capturingthegains.org/>). The programme aims to promote strategies for economic and social upgrading in global value chains and production networks in Sub Saharan Africa. As part of this work, they are looking at improving women's working conditions and pay and to support greater gender equality in smallholding households, including in horticultural industry. Barbara is focused in Uganda where she conducts research. The key achievement of the project so far is successfully bringing researchers and activists together. She is based in the University of Manchester.

*Expectations:*

- 1) Make better links with WWW
- 2) Make links and find out what is happening in Uganda and find research partners

### **2. Christina Lechner from Organisation for a World of Solidarity (OEW)**

Unfortunately we were unable to support Christina's attendance at the meeting but she has submitted the following update on OEW's work:

The aim of OEW is to encourage the development of critical and sustainable consumer habits when buying flowers. OEW, in collaboration with the Association of Florists and flower growers in South Tyrol, the botteghe del mondo, Centro Consumatori, Caritas, "Katholische Frauen-und Männerbewegung" and Südtiroler Katholische Jugend-SKJ " have launched awareness raising activities around Valentine's Day, which have seen school children undertaking public actions to raise awareness on the problems in flower producing countries and on fair flowers. Many florists and flower shops have subsequently committed to keep fair flowers in shops all year round. The participants also promoted 'regional flowers' in order to support regional economies.

### **3. Sloane Hamilton, Oxfam**

Sloane works at Oxfam GB and is based at their headquarters in Oxford. Oxfam's Ethical Trade team work to improve working conditions around the world by providing advice on labour standards best-practice to businesses in Europe. We have a history of campaigning on labour issues and our current work is done through alliances (for example the Oxfam International Labour Rights Team, the Oxfam International Fair Trade Working Group and the Ethical Tea Partnership wages programme). We are also active members of the ETI which we co-founded. Currently, we are supporting Oxfam's programme in Morocco to address poor working conditions of women workers in Moroccan strawberry fields. Oxfam has programmes in 74 countries, and our next campaign will be on the topic of Food Justice in a Resource Constrained World. We are increasingly working with smallholder farmers and the Ethical Trade team is keen to learn more about labour issues in agriculture. Recently, we published Better Jobs in Better Supply Chains which is available here: <http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/better-jobs-better-supply-chains>

*Expectations:*

- 1) To learn about best practices
- 2) To collect information and data to insert in campaigning

### **4. Lone Risgard – Capturing the Gains**

Lone is project researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies in Denmark affiliated to IDS Nairobi. She is taking part in the international research network and programme '[Capturing the Gains](#)'.

planning to look at the effect of participatory auditing methodologies as implemented in the Kenyan cut flower industry.

So far, the debates concerning the merits of different monitoring and implementation methodologies and styles are based mostly on anecdotal evidence or assumptions. Hardly any data exist which allows a testing of the links between different monitoring methodologies, and specific outcomes. The planned research aims at providing such data. This research and analysis will seek to establish whether participatory implementation and monitoring methodologies are able to:

- 1) Identify and address different (and less visible) compliance issues (such as e.g. gender discrimination and the right to freedom of association),
- 2) Whether they identify and address issues specific to different groups of workers (such as women/casual/migrant workers) and
- 3) Whether they lead to more consistent, timely and sustainable remedial action.

*Expectations:*

- 1) learn about experiences with different kinds of audit methods
- 2) learn from the experiences of participants and use this to ensure that my research is useful

## **5. Sue Longley – IUF**

The IUF is a global trade union federation representing workers throughout the food chain. IUF is currently composed of 372 affiliated organizations in 119 countries. Many of IUF affiliated trade unions represent workers in horticulture and run their own programmes to organise and defend horticultural workers, especially migrant workers e.g. the Dutch trade union FNV Bondgenoten or Unite in the UK. They share information with IUF on this work.

IUF itself has 3 specific projects targetting horticulture:

- (i) Organising cut flower workers in East and Southern Africa (2009-2011);
- (ii) Colombia - trade union rights and organising in the flower sector (some outreach to Ecuador);
- (iii) Health & safety for agriculture/planation unions in Africa.

All of these projects have the same objective - to assist trade unions to organise horticultural workers and to improve their living and working conditions through collective bargaining.

All projects work at several levels - farm, national and international - with training, workshops, etc. IUF has a global workshop (provisionally Oct 2011, Ethiopia).

In addition IUF is working with FLO on the application of their hired labour standard in East African tea and cut flower production.

IUF is a member of Fair Flowers, Fair Plants (FFP)

Key achievements so far - African research on working conditions; increased trade union membership in several countries; better global awareness about working condition in the sector.

*Expectations:*

1. Better understanding on what other institutions are doing in support of workers in horticulture
2. Better cooperations among participating organisations

## **6. Peter Williams – Independent Consultant**

Peter took part in the Ethical Trading Initiative working group on smallholders, developing guidelines for code implementation, which were tested in the Kenyan horticulture (and tea) sectors.

The guidelines themselves were an achievement, but it is not known to what degree they are being implemented, beyond anecdotal reports, since there was no follow-through.

Peter is the coordinator of the Ethical Trading Initiative NGO Caucus and has worked extensively on labour rights projects in a number of different sectors.

*Expectations:*

1) Learn how NGOs and Unions can work together to help workers win better wages

## **7. Fiona Gooch and Joyce Gema – Traidcraft**

Traidcraft works along Kenya – UK supply chains in tea, coffee, veg (beans) and flowers. Its work has focused on improving livelihoods of small farmers contributing to supply chains serving the UK market, through influencing UK retailers and importers, and through working directly with workers and smallholders. (from in their website).

Achievements – retailers, importers and trade associations are aware of the impact of their decisions on farmers, after the 2007 report ‘Fresh Perspective’ focused on what responsible purchasing looks like from developing countries’ points of view.

*Expectations (Joyce)*

1) To have a livelihood improvement programme for smallholders and labourers in Kenya

2) To learn from others what they’re doing and what is working/what is not

## **8. Cristiano Calvi - FIORI E DIRITTI (Flowers & Rights)**

Fiori e Diritti ([www.fioriediritti.org](http://www.fioriediritti.org)) is a movement established by La Bottega Solidale, a no-profit solidarity organization involved in fair trade, social and environmental rights in southern countries. Since July 2005, La Bottega Solidale has started a national campaign to raise consumers’ awareness for the defence of human and environmental rights in flowers sector. Fiori e Diritti has undertaken public awareness campaigns, supported southern workers’ organizations from southern countries.

Key achievement: the establishment of a producers’ certification, “Fiore Giusto”, with 15 enterprises already certified.

*Expectations:*

1) Reinforce the network for future campaigns

2) Collect information and exchange experiences

## **9. Caroline Elliot - War on Want**

War on Want works in partnership with trade unions in the horticultural sector. Currently, War on Want has a project in Zambia with the National Union of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers (NUPAAW). Previously, War on Want has also worked with trade unions on flower farms in Colombia and Kenya and on fruit farms in South Africa. The aims of this work has been to

- increase awareness of women’s rights and labour rights among women flower workers, employers, trade unions and the general public;
- empower women workers through achieving positions of leadership and through strengthening women’s committees;
- strengthen trade unions and
- improve occupational and sexual health of women flower workers.

The main activities undertaken have included:

- running raising awareness campaigns of women workers’ rights and labour rights;
- forming and strengthening women’s committees, whilst increasing union membership on flower farms;

- providing training to members on a range of topics such as HIV/AIDS, workers' rights and occupational health and safety and
- providing peer counseling and support.

War on Want provides technical assistance for this work and assists in finding funding and managing it. War on Want also conducts research and raises awareness of the conditions faced by flower workers in the UK through the media and public campaigns and events. Key achievements include the formation of numerous study groups and women's committees on flower farms in Zambia; a 13% increase in the minimum wage in South Africa for farm workers; improvements in occupational health and safety; the introduction of a supermarket ombudsman in the UK to investigate the supply chains of major supermarkets.

*Expectations:*

- *Networking*

- *Sharing best practice*

### **10. Anne Tallontire - University of Leeds**

Anne is a senior lecturer at the University of Leeds. Her work has focused on the ethical sourcing policies of UK retailers and how these have been applied in Kenya and in Zambia, through the following research projects: the Ethical Trade in African Horticulture project (2001-4) and Politics of Private Standards project (2007-2010) and the work of the Natural Resources and Ethical Trade programme at the Natural Resources Institute (1998-2007). Most recently, I have worked closely with Maggie Opondo (University of Nairobi) and Valerie Nelson and Adrienne Martin at NRI. Ann has applied for a Follow-on grant to enhance the impact of our research, particularly for civil society groups.

### **11. Sophie Vessel - FIAN Austria**

FIAN Austria works in collaboration with Fair Flowers Campaign in Germany, Belgium, Czech Republic and on the European level towards the Commission and The European Parliament

The objective of FIAN's campaign is to raise awareness among German, Austrian, Belgian and Czech local authorities, representatives of churches and civil society, consumers and retailers active in Europe on development problems related to the production of cut flowers in sub-Saharan African countries.

Key activities especially in Austria: press work, workshops, panel discussions, speakers tours with guest from producing countries, work in networks on a sustainable public procurement, lobbying e.g. through petition, studies on flower production in Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya

Achievements: In the past FIAN played an important role in supporting the development of the International Code of Conduct and the Flower Label Program where FIAN Germany and FIAN Austria are members in the Human Rights chamber.

*Expectations:*

- *Exchange ideas about Living Wage strategies*

- *Understand how other organisations work from a Human Rights perspective*

### **12. Kees Hoek - OLAA**

OLAA works in South America (Colombia, Ecuador and Costa Rica) and in Africa, in Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and South Africa. In ASia, Sri Lanka and India. In Europe of course the Netherlands.

Olaa developed a code of conduct for the cut flower industry. This resulted in the FFP criteria for a sustainable floricultural sector.

The criteria contain both environmental and social issues. It is targeted towards production farms of cut flowers and pot plants. Its main objective is a more sustainable production of cut flowers and pot plants. We regard the label as a tool to improve social conditions of workers and to a more environmental friendly mode of production.

Benefits: a more decent life for the workers on the plantations due to the fact of improved labour conditions, reasonable payment for the job and less use of pesticides which improves the health of workers and communities surrounding the plantations. Due to the audit structure of FFP, inside information on what happens on the plantations from our observers, who at the same time control the work of the auditor.

Key activities:

- \* Benchmark of the FFP scheme against other national or international schemes
- \* improving, checking and developing new social and environmental criteria
- \* training of observers for the audits
- \* developing protocols on audits and trace and tracking
- \* inform workers on their rights
- \* discuss the impact of the criteria for the different participants and farmers.
- \* coordinate international campaigns and publicity around a sustainable floricultural sector.

Key achievements:

- \* developing sustainable criteria which are internationally accepted by the main industrial players.
- \* trained observers in several production countries.
- \* in some countries consumers can now buy certified flowers
- \* a workable structure with the various stake holders

*Expectations:*

- 1) Learn more about living wage and flexible work especially by women
- 2) Talk about carbon foodmiles issue
- 3) How to convince consumer and farmers about incentives for environmental processes

### **13. Caroline Wildeman - HIVOS**

Caroline works in Kenya with LARC (Labour Awareness and Resource Centre) in Nairobi. They work with women in flower farms in Naivasha (Van den Berg, Mayflower and Shaka Rukari) and the Kenya Horticulture Flower Union.

Other organisations in East Africa (Uganda Tanzania and Kenya) who work on women labour rights in agriculture, plantations and food production are:

Kazi Riziki working on education and training of workers to increase their role and influence within trade unions. They conducted leadership training for 900 women workers of coffee plantations.

Faida Mali in Northern Tanzania, they work with women small holder farmers to empower them to access reliable markets through farmer producer groups.

KRC Kaberole Research centre in Uganda, on farmer enterprise development.

*Expectations:*

- 1) To achieve change in strategy for business and policy makers in order to benefit women

#### **14. Phillipina Mosha – Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union**

Phillipina has coordinated a three year project on ‘Developing Strategies for Change for Women in African Horticulture’. The project is funded by COMIC RELIEF through Women Working Worldwide (WWW). The project is implemented by Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union (TPAWU), in 24 horticulture farms engaging more than 5,000 workers (66% women). Key activities of the project include; action research and data collection on working conditions and need of the workers, awareness training and advocacy action. Key achievements include; 75% of the workforce organized into trade unions, 90% of the farms formed workers committees and women’s committees, increased women in trade union leadership (branch committee members 48%) , there is improved maternity protection, a cadre of 150 trained trainers established, 90% of the farms are benefiting from collective bargaining agreements (CBA), about 50% of the workers aware of their rights, compliance of management and workers on labour legislation.

*Expectations:*

- Support for women workers in horticulture – to learn from others, strategies, good practices
- To learn if NGOs can support the work in horticulture
- To learn if fair trade is contributing to improvement of workers conditions

#### **15. Flavia Amoding – Uganda Workers Education Association**

Flavia Amoding is a project coordinator for UWEA, and has worked with Women Working Worldwide on projects to empower women workers in the horticulture sector for over six years. As a result of the latest project ‘Developing Strategies for Change for Women Workers in African Horticulture’, UWEA have reported that the project has contributed to outcomes including trebling the number of workers on permanent contracts, 145% increase in unionization, increase in the number of female union leaders and training of over 4,000 workers.

#### **16. Women Working Worldwide**

WWW has been working with partners in East Africa to improve the lives of women horticultural workers. Through two projects over the past 8 years, WWW has supported initiatives designed to tackle the causes of the labour rights problems on the farms and strengthen the capacity of local organisations to support women horticultural workers.

We have used Advocacy, Worker Empowerment, through Training and Trade Union organising, and Action Research to promote improvement in the following areas:

- Casual contracts converted to seasonal/permanent contracts
- Increase in salary
- Written contracts in a language that the workers understand with their full benefits and rights/obligations documented.
- Freedom to organise in Trade Unions
- Women’s committees formed and women as branch secretaries
- Adequate protective clothing for all workers
- Medical facilities to be accessed by workers
- Improved sanitary provisions

*Expectations (Benedicte)*

- 1) To know more about strategies and debates on Living Wage

**RESOURCES**  
**Recommended by participants**

- Agricultural value chain development: Threat or opportunity for women's employment?, Gender and Rural Employment Policy Brief 4: [www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2008e](http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2008e)
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier de Schutter, UN General Assembly, Human Rights Council, 13<sup>th</sup> Session, A/HRC/13/33: [www.ap.ohchr.org/documents](http://www.ap.ohchr.org/documents)
- Resolution on Global Unions, Global Business, ITUC 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress: [www.ituc-csi.org/resolution-on-global-unions-global](http://www.ituc-csi.org/resolution-on-global-unions-global)
- The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11 – Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development: [www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e](http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e)
- Route Map to an Asia Floor Wage: 10 steps brands and retailers can take toward implementing a minimum living wage: [www.asiafloorwage.org/resources/campaignreports](http://www.asiafloorwage.org/resources/campaignreports)
- Research on sustainable flower markets on the resources' section of the website of a Belgian development agency: [www.befair.be](http://www.befair.be)
- Studies on the flower industry in Zimbabwe, pesticide use on Uganda's farms and water use in Ethiopia at [www.flowers-for-human-rights.org](http://www.flowers-for-human-rights.org)
- TRADE MARK EAST AFRICA: a multi-donor funded agency providing support for increased regional trade and economic integration in East Africa, [www.trademarkea.com](http://www.trademarkea.com)
- Trade union research on i) working conditions in cut flowers in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Ethiopia; ii) African flower investors and companies: [www.iuf.org](http://www.iuf.org)
- Fair Flowers Fair Plants (FFP): an initiative to stimulate the production and trade of flowers and plants cultivated in a sustainable manner and with good working conditions: [www.fairflowersfairplants.com](http://www.fairflowersfairplants.com)
- "Die Rosen Story", 45-minute documentary in German on EU imports of cut roses from Kenya: view online at [www.ndr.de/fernsehen/sendungen](http://www.ndr.de/fernsehen/sendungen)
- "A blooming business", 55-minute documentary on the flower industry around Naivasha, Kenya: [www.newtonfilm.nl/blooming\\_business](http://www.newtonfilm.nl/blooming_business)

- “Slaves of Naivasha”, 5-minute video on the labour conditions of workers in the cut-flower industry in Kenya: view on YouTube
- “Support decent working conditions for flower farm workers”, online petition promoted by Fair Flowers for Human Rights (FIAN): [www.ipetitions.com/petition/fairflowers](http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/fairflowers)
- A “super easy” platform to create, customise and share a social networking site: [www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com) (examples of how Oxfam is currently using Ning are: Grow. Sell. Thrive. <http://growsellthrive.org> and Raising Her Voice <http://raisinghervoice.ning.com> )
- “Protect, Respect and Remedy”, recently published (April 2011) framework drawn up by Professor John Ruggie, the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative on Business and Human Rights – Ruggie Framework: [www.ethicaltrade.org/news-and-events](http://www.ethicaltrade.org/news-and-events) and [www.ergonassociates.net](http://www.ergonassociates.net)
- During her presentation (appended), Sue Longley highlighted the situation of Getrud Hambira, The Zimbabwean Union leader who has been forced into exile. Details of a campaign to support her can be found here <http://amnesty.name/en/news-and-updates/zimbabwean-union-leader-hiding-after-police-raid-2010-02-24>.
- The women working worldwide website [www.women-ww.org](http://www.women-ww.org) for copies of recent research from project partners in Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia.

## Appendix G

### **The position of the Dutch auction in the flower value chain by Kees Hoek**

I will highlight the position of the Dutch auction from an African producers point of view. If you recently started a flower plantation you soon will be confronted with an important question. Whether or not will I export my flowers to the Dutch auction or what other viable alternative are there to export my flowers?

Exporting your flowers to the Dutch Auction is not at all simple. For most producers other alternative might be even more difficult. In case you like to export your flowers you need a wholesaler or big retailer who is willing to introduce your flowers in his retail network. Usually they only will do so if you have a special product which is not in their assortment already and they think the flower might be liked by consumers. An other reason is that the profit per stem on your flower is better than on the stem of your competitor. In case you can deliver the same volume and quality the wholesaler will pick your flowers in stead of the one of your competitor.

The international flower market is a dangerous and insecure market. Sometimes producers think they have a deal because a wholesaler told them he/she is interested in buying your flowers. You agreed on a price per stem and you think on the agreed date a lorry will come to collect your flowers and bring them to the airport. Then all of a sudden I turned out that the wholesaler is no longer interested in your flowers because he managed to find the same kind of flowers half a cent per stem cheaper than you offered. He did not bother to inform you on this, so suddenly you are in big problems. The flowers should be harvested and shipped, but there is no one to import them and sell them. For a starting producer this might mean your bankrupt. You will not be able to sell your flowers and will not receive any money.

Unfortunately the above mentioned example is not unique. The most difficult issue for a local producer is finding the trustworthy wholesaler for your product and one who is willing to do some marketing for your product. Only if you manage to find such a wholesaler, you are more or less safe and you can obtain a regular steady income

The other alternative is to export to the Dutch auction. In that case you have to contact the auction. They will send an expert/consultant to your farm. That person will explain how the auction works, the costs involved and what the producer can be expected of the auction. At the same time the expert will check the basic information of your flower farm like:

- the product variety you grow
- the quality of your flowers
- the volume you are able to ship to the auction
- the financial solvability of your farm .

These are four key questions for the auction. The auction generally is not interested in yet another rose producer offering his product to the auction. The auction is only interested in your product when you are able to produce top quality product in large volume. An exception to these rules are the so-called specialties. If you produce a flower which is not offered to the auction yet, or a flower the expert think might be of

interest for the consumer, the auction might show interest in your product and even might help you to comply with required quality standards.

Remember the auction counts with around 9.500 producers worldwide. For the in total 39 clocks daily 125.000 transactions are realized. Around 12 billion stems per year are sold and half a billion of pot plants. As you might imagine the auction is not very much interested in your product, unless you comply with the above mentioned criteria of the auction.

The auction has its own quality standards. It is not the same as the MPS/ECAS system, but it has also the A quality, the best own and the B and C quality. Usually the auction is not interested in any flowers qualified lower then a B level. In case of flowers where there is a lot of supply, like certain varieties of roses, the auction will only accept A level quality.

Apart from the quality standards the auction is only interested in the large volume deliverance. A delivery of flowers once a week is not looked very favorably upon. Two to three times delivery per week is regarded as a minimum certainly when there is a lot of supply. So the expert or consultant will make a first assessment whether or not you have an interesting variety of flower, you are able to meet quality standards and produce sufficient volume to be of interest for the auction.

When complying on all issues you might become a potential producer of interest for the auction, in which case the auction will indicate to the producer that there exist an interest in their product and in case the producer is interested in exporting the flowers to the auction, the producer should become a member of the auction and pay its membership fee with a maximum of 1.750 Euro per year. Usually this means that you are expected to ship all your A level flowers to the auction. In return the auction guarantees the producer that he/she can export their product, use all facilities of the auction, like cooling cells etc. and the flowers will be brought before the auction clock. The price of the flowers will be determent by the clock and the producer will receive payment for his flowers within an agreed period of time.

A disadvantage of this system is that as a producer you never know the price of your flowers. So it is difficult to plan production and investments in advance. On the other hand you are sure to receive payment for your product within the agreed period of time. You can make use of the facilities and logistical service of the auction. Of course you have to pay for these services, but the prices are kept rather economically and as an individual producer you will never be able to achieve the same facilities and logistical means, nor will the retailer or wholesaler for that matter.

An increasing amount of flowers will not pass the auction clock anymore. They are sold directly by big retailers or wholesalers for a fixed price per stem. For instance when a supermarket like Carrefour buy your roses because it weekly needs 20.000 bouquets of the same kind of flowers, same lengths of stem etc, etc. the retailer or wholesaler use the facilities of the auction, paying the handling of the product etc. and occasionally will buy some extra flowers from the clock in case of shortage of supply. In that case the flowers will not pass the clock anymore, nevertheless the auction is earning its money due to its elaborate logistical and infrastructural

services. Also e-commerce is gaining in importance. The flowers are offered on display on the website and traders can buy them from the site. But generally spoken most traders like to see the product before they buy it.

The auction can best be regarded as a huge market square where producers meet buyers and clients every day. The auction profit margin on its sales is 4 billion Euro per year. At 04.00 o'clock the auction starts its quality controls and awards the flowers a A or B level. At 06.00 o'clock the flowers appear for the auction clock where approximately 5.600 officially registered traders can buy them. After the purchase the flowers are quickly distributed to the place on the auction floor which is rented by the wholesaler. The wholesaler starts at 07.00 o'clock its deliveries of the flowers to the retailers or to for instance specialized companies which will make bouquets of the flowers.

From the above mentioned information it might become clear that for instance a campaign like asking for a decent living wage is of no interest for the auction as such. These are considered by the auction as producers' costs which a producer either can try to compensate by getting a better price for its product or economizing on its production costs. This does not mean the auction is not interested in sustainable production or fair trade. The auction will do everything to maintain the positive image of flowers for consumers. In case consumers do not buy flowers anymore, the auction does have a problem. So in general terms the auction will support activities to promote the positive image of the product by consumers.

But there are limits to what the auction will promote in order to get the production of cut flowers and pot plants more sustainable. Do not forget that the actual owners of the auctions are a cooperative of Dutch producers. If they are not in favor of any policy of the auctions with regard to fairly produced flowers or pot plants in their yearly annual meeting they might "correct" the board of the auction. So the auction as such is not against accountable entrepreneurship of sustainable initiatives, but as a mere trading organization is not always the most involved partner and it certainly has its limits to what they are allowed to support.

The Dutch auction is a superpower within the production, trading and promotion of cut flowers worldwide, but it is not a producer itself. It employs approximately 4.500 workers and is specialized in logistical handling of products, has a huge infrastructure in facilities, know-how of the flower market and a tremendous distributional power. It manages to produce small quantities of mixed bouquets of flowers for small retail producers, flower shops etc for a very economic price. No other company so far can deliver this on a worldwide scale. This is the power of the Dutch auction. It will continue to act as an intermediate between the producers and the wholesalers and retailers.