



# Learning Together

an **Education Manual** for  
workers on the flower and  
vegetable export farms of  
East/Southern Africa



## Acknowledgements

This manual was produced by organisations working together in a project called 'Developing Strategies for Change for Women Workers in African Horticulture', namely:

- Women Working Worldwide (UK)
- National Federation of Farm, Plantation, Fishery and Agro-Industry Trade Unions of Ethiopia (NFFPFATU)
- Tanzania Plantation and Allied Workers Union (TPAWU)
- Uganda Workers Education Association (UWEA)
- Zambia Workers Education Association (ZWEA)

Most of the modules were written by experienced educators from these organisations, based on their work on the farms and in liaison with other local groups. They were assisted by Celia Mather, a British-based consultant on workers' education materials, who also wrote several of the modules and edited the manual as a whole:

- Flavia Amoding, UWEA: Modules 4 and 7
- Phillipina Mosha, TPAWU: Modules 8 and 9
- Mike Chungu, ZWEA: Module 6
- Rachel English, WWW: Module 2
- Celia Mather: Modules 1, 3 and 5.

Contact details of all the organisations involved are given at the end of the manual.

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An education manual for workers on the flower and vegetable export farms  
of East/Southern Africa


## Contents

The Six Key Demands.....	2
Why we produced this manual.....	3
How to use this manual.....	4
<b>1</b> How and why the export farms grew .....	7
<b>2</b> Us in the world.....	19
<b>3</b> How we farm workers are treated .....	31
<b>4</b> Our workplaces must be safe and healthy.....	49
<b>5</b> The environmental impact of our farms.....	69
<b>6</b> How unions can help farm workers.....	83
<b>7</b> Unions and women workers.....	97
<b>8</b> Combating sexual harassment at the workplace .....	107
<b>9</b> Cooperatives = workers' economic empowerment.....	119
Contact details.....	128

## Why do education work with farm workers?

 *It has meant we now get 60 working days for maternity leave as provided for in the law.*

*Before this, women workers were getting 45 days or less, and some workers could not get any leave as they were just dismissed.*

*Now female workers go on maternity leave and even return to work after the leave.* 

Rebecca, a flower worker, commenting on the results of training in workers' rights by the Uganda Workers Education Association (UWEA)





## The Six Key Demands

These six demands for workers on the horticultural farms of East/Southern Africa were developed by the organisations which collaborated in producing this manual.

### 1 A Living Wage

What is a job if it doesn't provide a living? Increase workers' wages and end injustice.

### 2 Training Workers in their Rights

An informed worker is a responsible worker: to herself, her colleagues and her employer. Train workers in their rights.

### 3 Women's Voices in Trade Unions

We must have a system of mature industrial relations in which women are leaders and can raise their voices.

### 4 Health and Safety Policies

No-one should suffer physical harm at work. OHS guidelines should be followed to protect all workers.

### 5 An End to Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment must end now on these farms!

Train your workers, your supervisors and your managers.

Get policies working and stand behind them.

Workers are your sisters and brothers: treat them accordingly.

### 6 Flowers Shouldn't Cost the Earth

Work hard to eliminate the damage you are doing to our land and our planet.





## Why we produced this manual

Thirty years ago, all 53 member countries in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) promised to:

“ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women”

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981



This manual was produced through a collaboration between Women Working Worldwide (WWW) based in the UK, and its current and past partner organisations in several countries of East/Southern Africa (see the list on the inside front cover).

This joint project, running from 2005, has been aimed at improving the working conditions of women workers on the export horticultural farms there.

Most important has been the mass training of workers, particularly the women, to inform them of their rights and to encourage them to join unions and to take up leadership positions within the unions.

A key part of our collaboration has been sharing what we have learnt from these programmes so as to improve our training materials and practices. This manual is one result.

### Our main aims in producing this manual are:

- ❖ To encourage a greater understanding among the farm workers of such issues as:
  - the development of the horticulture industry in their region, and their role in it as the workforce on which the industry depends;
  - the common experiences they share across farms and across countries;
  - what rights they have – as workers and as women – and how they can organise together to get these rights better respected and to raise their living conditions.
- ❖ To help the farm workers to develop action plans that will foster greater organisation and collaboration among themselves to improve their situation and have their rights to a decent working life respected.





## How to use this manual

This manual is not designed to use from page 1 through to the end. Rather, we suggest you use whichever modules and elements seem most useful for the workers on the farms where you are.

Training workers will achieve best results if you start with the issues that are of most concern to them. That means first asking them what those issues are.

Experienced facilitators will know which education methods are most likely to stimulate the interest and activism of the particular workers concerned. As an aid, we have included throughout the manual:



**Notes for facilitators:** to help prepare for using the module with workers.



**Case studies and testimonies of workers:** these are intended to be motivational, to encourage participants to appreciate what others are doing or have done, and to feel more confident that they too can make positive change.

Take particular pages or case studies and read them out aloud – or ask individual workers to do so – to all the participants. Then use them as a basis for discussion.



**Questions for discussion:** to help you foster discussion among the farm workers, so that they share their experiences as well as gain a deeper understanding of the topic.

Often it is useful to break down large groups of workers into small ones for such discussions. This encourages everyone to speak up, rather than have just a few dominate.

Each group should elect someone to report back to the plenary, where you can help to summarise the points made.



**Activities:** these are designed to be done in small groups rather than as individuals; some may be more useful for workers from the same farm, others also for workers from various farms.

Many of the Activities are designed for the workers to draw up an Action Plan as a result of what they have learnt.

Summarising the Action Plan onto paper will help the participants have a record of what they decided, to guide their future activities.



**Tips:** to give guidance to workers.



**For more information:** suggested websites, printed materials, and organisations where you can find information to help prepare for or follow up after sessions.



**Please note:** where sources are not given, this means the information came from research undertaken by the organisations involved in compiling this manual.

On the pages that follow are some **more suggestions for training methods**.

## Who this manual is for

This manual has been designed for use by workers' education facilitators in the trade unions and other workers' education bodies of East and Southern Africa.

It is for those who are concerned to end any exploitation or abuse and to improve the working conditions and lives of workers on the horticultural farms there. It is designed to address the specific needs of women workers, who make up the majority workforce. But we also encourage its use among men workers to improve their understanding of these issues too.



## Some useful training methods

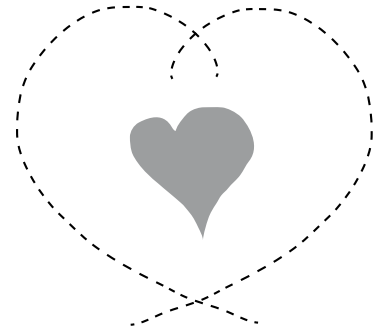
### 1. 'Head, Heart, and Hand'

Ask workers their responses to the information according to their:

**Head:** What did you learn from this information?

**Heart:** How did this information make you feel?

**Hand:** What could you do – as an individual or collectively – about this?



### 2. SWOT analysis

**SWOT** stands for **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, **T**hreats

Take a big sheet of paper and divide it into four sections - or take four individual pieces of paper - and label each one with one of the above words.

Then invite the participants to suggest / write down ideas in each section.

Use this as a basis for drawing up a plan of action: dealing with the negative weaknesses and threats, and drawing on the positive strengths and opportunities.

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have Train the Trainers</li> <li>• Active Women's Committee</li> <li>• Union rights in our CBA</li> <li>• New labour legislation</li> <li>• General awareness of women's rights + workers' rights among workers, union + managers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women still not confident</li> <li>• Lack of resources in the union</li> <li>• Hard for women to attend late meetings</li> <li>• Low levels of education</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unions are in the workplace</li> <li>• Good collaboration between unions, also NGOs</li> <li>• International awareness + support</li> <li>• Laws exist on maternity rights + against sexual harassment</li> <li>• Active women's committee can recruit through meetings</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <p>Women do not feel union is important to them</p> <p>Negative attitude by employers to unions</p> <p>Gender-blind union leaders + employers</p> <p>Male dominated union leadership</p> <p>Farms closing because of economic difficulties.</p>

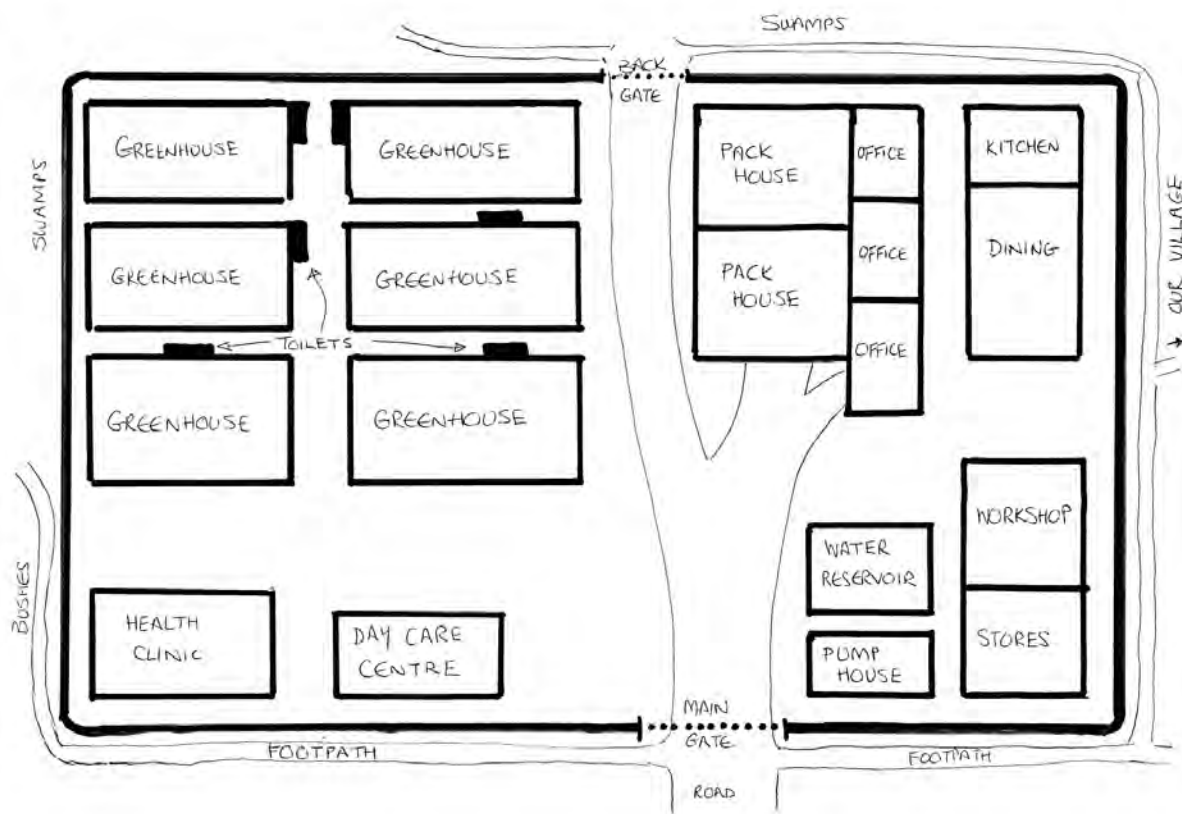


### 3. Workplace mapping

Ask the participants to draw a map of their farm and then mark on it the areas where there are particular risks.

This is a method for helping workers to identify concrete places where there are health and safety risks (Section 4, see page 51).

It can also be used for other situations, such as environmental hazards (Section 5), or where sexual harassment or bullying takes place most (Section 8).



### 4. Other methods

These have proved useful, especially among workers with poor literacy:

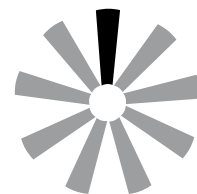
- \* Role play and drama
- \* Using photographs and other visual imagery, including T-shirts with messages on
- \* Celebrating such occasions as International Women's Day (8 March) and St. Valentine's Day (14 February)
- \* Raising publicity through the media, including TV and radio
- \* Workers' exchanges between farms and between regions/countries.

*I am 39 years old and I grew up in plantations my whole life and so did my family. But I have never heard of or witnessed such training in my life before. Nobody was concerned about raising our level of awareness on these issues before. But today I am really happy to be part of this training and I ask you not to stop here.*

Testimony from a worker in Ethiopia







# 1 HOW AND WHY THE EXPORT FARMS GREW

## Aims



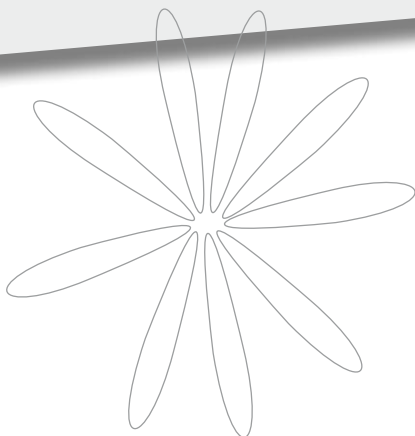
- To give workers an overview of the development of export-oriented horticulture in East/Southern Africa: why the industry came to this region of Africa, where the farms are, who owns them, and who they employ
- To raise awareness of the importance of the horticultural sector to the country and region's economy, and its possible disadvantages
- To start generating ideas from the workers as to what their needs are.



Some workers may well be considering broader questions about how and why these export farms where they work started up in their region; others have perhaps not yet started to think about this. So, this Module aims to develop that discussion.

It starts with a broad 'mapping' Activity for the workers to situate their own farm in this industry in their country. It will be useful if the facilitator adds in from the information given on later pages, especially the country fact sheets, as appropriate.

Later on (see page 17) there is an Activity to discuss the benefits and disadvantages of this industry to their country.



## NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## ACTIVITY

## Mapping the farms in our area

In small groups, write down the names of export farms that you know of in your area, including your own.

Discuss and write down what you know about each farm:

- How long it has been there
- What it produces
- Who owns it
- Where its produce goes to
- How many workers are employed there
- How many of those workers are women.

Discuss why you think those investors chose to come to your area.





## Why did this industry come to Africa?

The growing of fruit, vegetables and flowers in East/Southern Africa for export was largely developed by European interests to supply the European market. The Netherlands (also called Holland) was a big grower of flowers and vegetables for this market, and auction houses there had come to dominate the trade. But labour, land and energy costs are high in Europe, whereas they are relatively cheap in Africa, as are international transport costs.

At the same time, very large retail chains became more dominant in the market for fresh vegetables, fruit and flowers in Europe. In intense competition with each other, they try to supply consumers with a wide range of products that are available all year-round, at high quality, and at cheap prices.

So, from the 1980s, European companies started looking elsewhere to put their farms. They found that Kenya and then other countries like Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Ethiopia suited their needs. The industry grew there through the 2000s. As it did so, other investors joined in from India, Israel and Saudi Arabia, for example. Markets expanded to the Middle East and Japan.

From 2000 to 2008, the area of roses grown in Holland fell to 400 hectares, one-third of where it was. Over the same period, the area of flower production in East Africa grew to 5,000 hectares, by some estimates.

### So why did the producers choose these countries of Africa?

- \* Year-round growing conditions: flower production in the cold months in the Northern countries can only be achieved with high fuel bills for heating and lighting.
- \* Available land and water supply
- \* Relatively cheap fuel and air freight costs
- \* Political and financial support for export-oriented agriculture, from African governments, the European Union, international financial bodies like the World Bank, and aid programmes like USAID.
- \* Cheap labour

“ There is unlimited labour willing to work in flower farms and labour costs are about 10% of the equivalent labour in Northern Europe. ”



Louise Labuschagne, Technical Director, Real IPM Company (Kenya) Ltd., Pesticides News, No.82, December 2008

Now, European consumers are used to eating fruits and vegetables which are not native to their climate, such as bananas, oranges, lemons, aubergines, red peppers, and avocado pears. They have also developed a desire to eat all year round produce which they can only grow themselves during the warmer seasons, such as peas and beans.



And they like to give flowers on important social or romantic occasions even when they are out of season – such as roses on St. Valentine's Day, which is on 14 February in the middle of European winter when no roses flower there.



## Who are the main players?

When it comes to cut flowers, the Dutch auction houses dominate the international market. 80-90% of all flowers sold worldwide still go via them, now organised on the Internet.

But for other fresh produce from Africa, the large European retailers have the main say. They prefer to purchase directly from large farm producers or through large wholesalers. For them, it is more efficient than dealing with lots of small farmers. That way, they can better control the quality and the price that they pay.

Fresh produce from small African farms is also being exported. Some goes directly through independent wholesalers to European markets. But more and more is going via the large farms operating in Africa. They enter in arrangements with the small farms, where they supply the smallholders with seeds, chemicals, equipment and training, often on credit; and then they take in the small farmers' produce, bring it together, store and transport it, and even market it.

In this way, the production of fresh produce for export has become increasingly dominated by the big producers supplying the big retailers.

## Global challenges

From late 2008, this export industry has faced several challenges:

- \* The global financial crash in late 2008 means there are fewer loans to finance the companies
- \* The bail-out of the international banks by governments has led to cuts and recession in many of the consuming countries; people are losing their jobs, and so are less willing to spend money on 'luxury' items such as cut flowers for gifts
- \* The value of international currencies (euros, pounds sterling, and the US dollar) in which African fresh produce is traded fluctuates, causing losses for some farms

**Kenyan flower export earnings dropped by 35% in 2008-09.**

- \* Costs of fuel and airfreight costs are rising

**Freight charges out of Kenya shot up by 30% in 2007.**

- \* Many consumers are concerned about the environmental impact of this industry, given the climate change that we are all facing, and the need for African land and water to be used for African people
- \* The eruption of a volcano in Iceland, far to the North, in May 2010, halted all international air freight for a while; a lot of fresh produce died before it could be exported, with the farm companies bearing much of the cost.



**This shows how much the global situation has a direct impact on the African farms.**







## HOW THE HORTICULTURE/FLORICULTURE INDUSTRY DEVELOPED IN EAST/SOUTHERN AFRICA

### Kenya

This is the country where vegetable and flower export farms first set up in Africa, in the mid-1980s, largely around the lakes north of the capital city Nairobi. Now Kenya is the largest exporter of fresh produce from Africa. The industry has become the biggest earner of foreign exchange for the country, and about 2 million Kenyans rely on it for their livelihoods, giving the industry a lot of political significance too.

The main flowers exported from Kenya include roses, carnations, and static. More than 80% of them are sold in the European Union, half of those in the UK. The cut flower industry alone employs about 56,000 (and some estimates say many more) Kenyan workers. About two-thirds of them are women.

Exported vegetables include french beans, peas, chillies, aubergines and okra. Mangoes, avocados, and passion fruit are the most important export fruits.

Most of the produce goes via the Jomo Kenyatta Airport in Nairobi, where there are processing and packing units, and a centralised hub which brings the products together ready for air freighting to Europe.

The industry grew massively for two decades. But in 2009 it was hit by the global recession (see page 10) as well as lower production because of less rainfall in Kenya that year. So, while Kenya still earned US\$405.5 million from the export of cut flowers in 2009, this was down by a third from 2008. Also, at least one big Dutch company has closed down in Kenya and moved north to Ethiopia (see page 15).

Rainfall in Kenya picked up in early 2010, but then was hit by the volcanic eruption that halted flights out of Nairobi in May (see page 10). And the global recession continues.

When the export industry first developed in Kenya, many firms were involved. However, today it is dominated by just a few large firms – those which have enough capital and technical capacity to meet the demands of the buyer companies and to survive economic downturns and climate problems.



### HOMEgrown

Kenya's largest exporter of flowers and vegetables is Homegrown. It started operations in 1982, buying produce from Kenyan smallholders. In 1988 it got its first farm, Flamingo Farm in Naivasha, and its other farms now include Kingfisher, Hamerkop, Siraji, and Ibis. Homegrown is certified to supply Fairtrade flowers and vegetables to the UK (see page 26) from some of its operations.

Homegrown still also buys in products from outgrowers in Kenya for processing and export, and it has moved into distribution and marketing. It has its own air freighter (MK Airlines), which travels to the UK every evening, and it has an import company in the UK. Its main customers are the big UK retail stores, along with Omniflora, a leading German flower company.

Today, Homegrown is owned by Finlays, a company which has interests in tea and flower production in other countries too such as Sri Lanka and China. Finlays employs about 50,000 people worldwide, including 10,000 in Kenya. Finlays itself is owned by an even bigger multinational corporation, the Swire group, which has interests in property, airlines, and shipping, mostly in Asia.

Another of the big flower growers/exporters in Kenya is Oserian (see page 23).



## HOW THE HORTICULTURE/FLORICULTURE INDUSTRY DEVELOPED IN EAST/SOUTHERN AFRICA

### Tanzania

The first farm in the country was set up in 1987 by Tanzania Flowers Ltd. The industry grew for the next two decades, supported by government loans, subsidies and tax exemptions, as well as aid from the European Union, Dutch Government and USAID.

By 2008, there were 21 farms, occupying over 208 hectares mostly in the regions of Arusha and Kilimanjaro. That year, they brought US\$140 million into the country, up one hundred times the earnings (US\$1.4 million) just six years before. By 2009, however, the industry in Tanzania started suffering from the global recession, like its neighbouring countries.

Flowers – mostly roses and chrysanthemums - make up about 80% of the exports. Other products for export include fruit such as raspberries, plus vegetable seeds.

The sector employs about 10,000 workers, about 60% of whom are women.

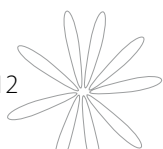
The sector is dominated by foreign firms. For example:

- \* Tanzania Flowers, Fides, and Dekker Bruins/Dekker Breeding from the **Netherlands**
- \* Mount Meru Flowers from **Austria**
- \* Hortanzia from **Greece**
- \* Q-Sem from **Belgium**
- \* Kiliflora (at Loliondo and Nduruma) from the **Netherlands, UK and China**

Meanwhile, Arusha Blooms is Tanzanian-owned.

The produce goes mostly to Western Europe, with some going to the Middle East and the US.

A lot of the produce goes across the border into Kenya, to be exported via Nairobi airport, 400 km to the north. But cargo-handling facilities at Kilimanjaro airport are being improved, and MK Airlines (owned by Homegrown in Kenya, see page 11) now flies produce out of there.





## Uganda

The horticulture industry in Uganda took root from 1993, and grew rapidly for 15 years. It was able to take advantage of cheap land, and water supplies from Lake Victoria, plus international connections from nearby Entebbe Airport. The farms are mostly located along the shores of the Lake in the Wakiso and Mpigi districts, covering about 200 hectares.

Investors got a lot of support to get the industry going: feasibility studies by the World Bank, zero interest financing and soft loans from the Bank of Uganda, government incentives such as a 10-year tax holiday, and no import duty on machinery and raw materials. The US aid programme USAID funded vegetable trials, helped build the cold store for cut flowers at Entebbe Airport, and helped set up an exporters' association.

By 2007, the horticulture sector employed about 20,000 workers, of which the floriculture sub-sector employed about 12,000 workers. On most farms, women are 50-70% of the workforce.

By 2008, the flower export industry earned Uganda US\$35 million, making it fourth in Africa after Kenya, South Africa, and Tanzania. Flowers became the country's seventh most important foreign exchange earner.

The first farms were all locally-owned. But foreign companies started investing and the industry changed hands. By 2008, eight out of the 18 flower exporting firms had become 100% foreign-owned (three of them Dutch), seven were 100% Ugandan-owned, and the rest were joint ventures between Ugandans and foreign investors.

By the end of the 2000s, the industry had started to struggle. Orders declined, and producers got worried. There had been no new foreign investors for several years. Instead, some growers were scaling back their operations and one, Victoria Flowers, had closed completely.

By 2007, the horticulture sector employed about 20,000 workers in Uganda. Most – about 12 000 workers – are in flower production. On most farms, women are 50-70% of the workforce.



### MAIRYE ESTATES

Mairye Estates is a Ugandan-owned farm, based in Wakiso district, that started exporting produce in 1996. The farm directly employs about 700 people, producing vegetables (courgettes, chilli and okra), chrysanthemum cuttings, and roses.

In 2004, Mairye Estates set up a subsidiary, called Farm Fresh, to work with local smallholder farmers. All of Mairye Estates' out-grower farmers must secure the seeds, chemicals and equipment they need from Farm Fresh, mostly on credit. Farm Fresh also gives them technical training. It then buys the vegetables produced by the smallholders, which it passes on to Mairye Estates for export. Several hundred small farmers are involved in the scheme.

Mairye Estates has also formed an alliance with a South African vegetable exporter to supply the retailer Tesco in the UK. This means Tesco can get an all-year round supply, buying from South Africa or from Uganda, wherever the supply is better. Meanwhile, the alliance has let Mairye Estates penetrate the relatively large consumer market in South Africa, supplying the big retailer Woolworths there.





## HOW THE HORTICULTURE/FLORICULTURE INDUSTRY DEVELOPED IN EAST/SOUTHERN AFRICA



### Zambia

Zambia used to be very dependent on copper for its export earnings. But the price of copper dropped dramatically on the world market. So the country needed other ways of earning foreign money. International bodies like the World Bank and European Union started giving financial incentives to investors to develop export farms.

Between 1995 and 2002, production of roses in Zambia for export grew one and a half times, and vegetables nearly two and a half times. By 2005, the export flower industry earned the country about US\$32 million. By 2010, Zambia was exporting 120-150 tonnes of flowers and vegetables to Europe each week.

Roses account for 95% of the flowers exported. Almost all the production is sold to European markets, particularly the UK, as well as some to nearby South Africa.

Zambia is further from Europe than many other countries in Africa, however. Flowers have to get to Europe within 48 hours or they will wilt, and this makes transporting them more costly. So some farm companies are considering shifting more to vegetable production, with which they hope they can compete better.

It has been especially difficult for small farms to stay in the industry. They are less able to meet the high costs for transport and cold storage and the depreciation in the value of the Zambia Kwacha, to comply with many regulations and varying codes of conduct from buyers, to handle unfair trading practices by other companies, and so on. And then there was the 2009 world financial crash and recession. So, many closed down, leaving the industry in the hands of big farms who can weather the storms better.

But overall, in recent years this industry in Zambia has been declining. At its peak, up to 15,000 workers were employed; by late 2010 there were about 6,000. About half are women. With an average family size of six, that makes about 36,000 people dependent on the industry.

### KHAL AMAZI

Khal Amazi has 61 hectares in the Chalimbana Valley outside Lusaka. There, it produces sweetheart roses for the European market, mostly selling to big British retailers such as Tesco and Asda. In 2009, it exported 138 million stems. It has been buying up smaller farms as they get into difficulties.

Chalimbana Fresh Produce grows vegetables on the 2,000 hectare Kalangwa farm, 60 kms. north of Lusaka.

Both farms are part of a bigger group, PGI Group Ltd., which is based in the UK and has other agricultural operations in Malawi (tea and macademia nuts) and Zimbabwe (tea), as well as property in Russia.



### TIP

This company information was found by searching on the Internet for 'Khal Amazi' and finding: [www.pgi-uk.com](http://www.pgi-uk.com)







## Ethiopia

Commercial farming developed more recently in Ethiopia than in other countries of East Africa. But it became Africa's second-largest exporter of flowers, and by now may have even overtaken the first – Kenya. About 50,000 workers are employed, of whom about 70% are women.

Mostly flowers are produced, especially roses, but there is some vegetable production too, such as peas, fine beans, garlic, tomatoes, and chilli peppers.

The first farm, Meskel Flowers near Lake Zeway, started in 1993. But the industry grew a lot after 2002 when the Ethiopian Government began offering investors many incentives so as to compete with neighbouring Kenya – including free state-owned land, a five-year tax holiday, and more than 1 billion Birr (US\$104 million) in loans (equal to about half the country's total budget on health).

The companies also realised that Ethiopia is two hours flying time closer than Kenya to Europe, which is important when freight costs are so high. Plus the country's central highlands have cooler temperatures and reliable sunlight which also make it easier to produce flowers such as high quality roses.

At least five large flower farms relocated from Kenya to Ethiopia. Now there are up to 100 companies involved, on nearly 1,600 hectares, sending about 100 tonnes of fresh produce to Europe every day. The value of flower exports grew to US\$170 million by 2008. Within a few years, the sector might even outgrow Ethiopia's other famous export, coffee.

About two-thirds of the companies are foreign-owned, for example by Dutch, Indian and Israeli interests. About three-quarters of the flowers are traded through the Dutch auction FloraHolland. They are sold to consumers in the UK, Belgium, and the Netherlands, as well as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Japan.



### SHER ETHIOPIA

Today, the largest flower company in Ethiopia is the Dutch-owned Sher Ethiopia, which started up in the country in 2005. It operates from Zeway where it has 450 hectares, and Awassa about 100 km to the south with a further 150 hectares. Sher used to run the world's largest rose farm in Kenya but sold it to another company in 2007 after it moved to Ethiopia.

In Ethiopia, Sher's business model is different. It does not grow any produce itself. Instead, it leases out greenhouses to other companies (some local and some foreign) to grow roses and vegetables there. It also propagates seeds and supplies them to these farms, as well as chemicals and fertilisers. It then takes their produce and distributes it under the trade mark 'Afri Flora', earning commission from all these services.

Sher is also expanding into specialised fruits and vegetables production in Meki town of Oromia, 134 km from Zeway. It has a similar out-growers scheme, where Sher provides local farmers with seeds and teaches them the farming techniques, and then exports their produce to international markets.



## Who works on the export farms? A lot of women!

Most of those who work on East/Southern African farms producing vegetables, fruit and flowers for export are young women.

Women make up 50-70% of the workforce on most farms. They do many jobs, including propagation of seeds, watering, harvesting, grading, packing, batching, cleaning growing beds, collecting rubbish, and sweeping.

Meanwhile, men tend to be taken on to spray flowers, or do maintenance and construction work. There is a very strong division of labour between the genders. (See more in Module 3)

Why are so many women employed on the farms?

**In Tanzania**, farm managers told researchers that women are preferred because they are more 'obedient', 'careful', 'industrious', 'have little complaints' and are 'not aggressive like men'.

**In Uganda**, managers told researchers that women are "less demanding, more stable and can easily be managed". By 'stable', it seems they mean that women employees are much less likely to leave the farm to look for new opportunities.

We also know that women workers are cheaper than men when they can be paid lower wages, and when employers can avoid their responsibilities for such things as maternity leave.

Most of the women workers are under 35 years old, and many are said to be 'alone', that is to say single, widowed, divorced or separated. But many are parents with children to support. So there are a lot of single mothers working on the farms.

**In Tanzania**, researchers found that 47% of workers they interviewed were single mothers. There is a high percentage in Zambia too.

This means that many workers are also providing for dependents, elders as well as children. Some calculate 5-6 people are provided for out of a single worker's wages.

As well as those employed directly on the farms, the industry also stimulates jobs in related industries. This includes the construction of greenhouses, transport and storage, and supply of inputs such as fertilisers and insecticides. Some calculate 1.5 – 2 extra jobs for each 1 job in the horticulture/floriculture industry.

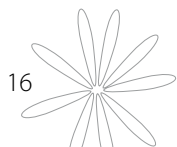
On top of this, the money from these wages goes into the local economy – to shops and market traders, bus and taxi companies – and circulates onwards.

So, the industry has brought jobs and a fresh supply of money to the African countries where it is based. The big question is whether the workers are getting a fair amount out of the profits which the producers and the buyers are making.



“ *Africa will continue producing as long as there is a demand... and, of course, cheap labour. Therein lies Africa's competitive advantage.* ”

FloraCulture International, 11/1/2006





## ACTIVITY

### Benefits and disadvantages of this industry to our country

In small groups, write down:

- What you think are the benefits of this industry to your country
- What you think are the disadvantages of this industry to your country

Check with the lists below, adding any you think are appropriate to your lists.

Or, this exercise could be done as a 'SWOT' (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis (see page 5).

### Benefits include:

- \* It is a good source of foreign exchange: when the products are sold to foreign countries they earn foreign currency; each country needs this in order to buy imports from other countries.
- \* Job creation – thousands of workers are employed by this industry, and the majority are women; this gives women workers access to their own income.
- \* The wages earned by the farm workers sustain them and their families; the money also circulates in the wider economy when they spend it on food, housing, transport, etc., which means that even more people benefit.

### Disadvantages include:

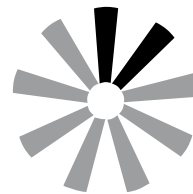
- \* Some farms are not paying workers enough for their basic needs; some farms are not respecting the rights and needs of their women workers, such as maternity leave; such farms are not helping to reduce poverty.
- \* Local resources are exploited and can be damaged; for example, flower farming has contributed to a 10 meter drop in the water levels of Lake Naivasha – threatening the livelihoods of local fishermen.
- \* There is concern that farmers have been encouraged to shift from producing food for local markets to produce for export – which means less food security for local people.
- \* Small farmers are angry at the level of financial support for the big (and often foreign) investors compared with what they get from their government and the international financial institutions.
- \* The industry and its workers are affected by what is happening in the wider world – such as economic recession, changes in what consumers want to buy, changes in the global climate – which are beyond their control.



## NOTES

[illegible]





## 2 US IN THE WORLD

### Aims

To help workers on farms producing flowers and other fresh produce to:

- Understand how the produce that they plant, nurture and harvest reaches the homes of the people around the world that buy it.
-  Understand that they are part of a global production system and hear from workers in other countries doing the same jobs as them.
- Learn more about consumers in European countries and their concerns about the working conditions on the horticultural/ flower farms.
- Understand the ways in which international unions and other organisations can help improve working conditions.



## Notes for facilitators

This Module builds on Module 1 by encouraging workers to investigate and understand better the actual 'supply chain' in which they are involved – where their produce goes to, which are the companies involved, and who the final consumers are.

It also encourages an awareness of workers in other parts of the world, working on export farms similar to theirs.

The Activities and Questions for Discussion intend to help them understand this as a series of relationships that they have to others in the world, and therefore where the pressure points and sources of support may be.

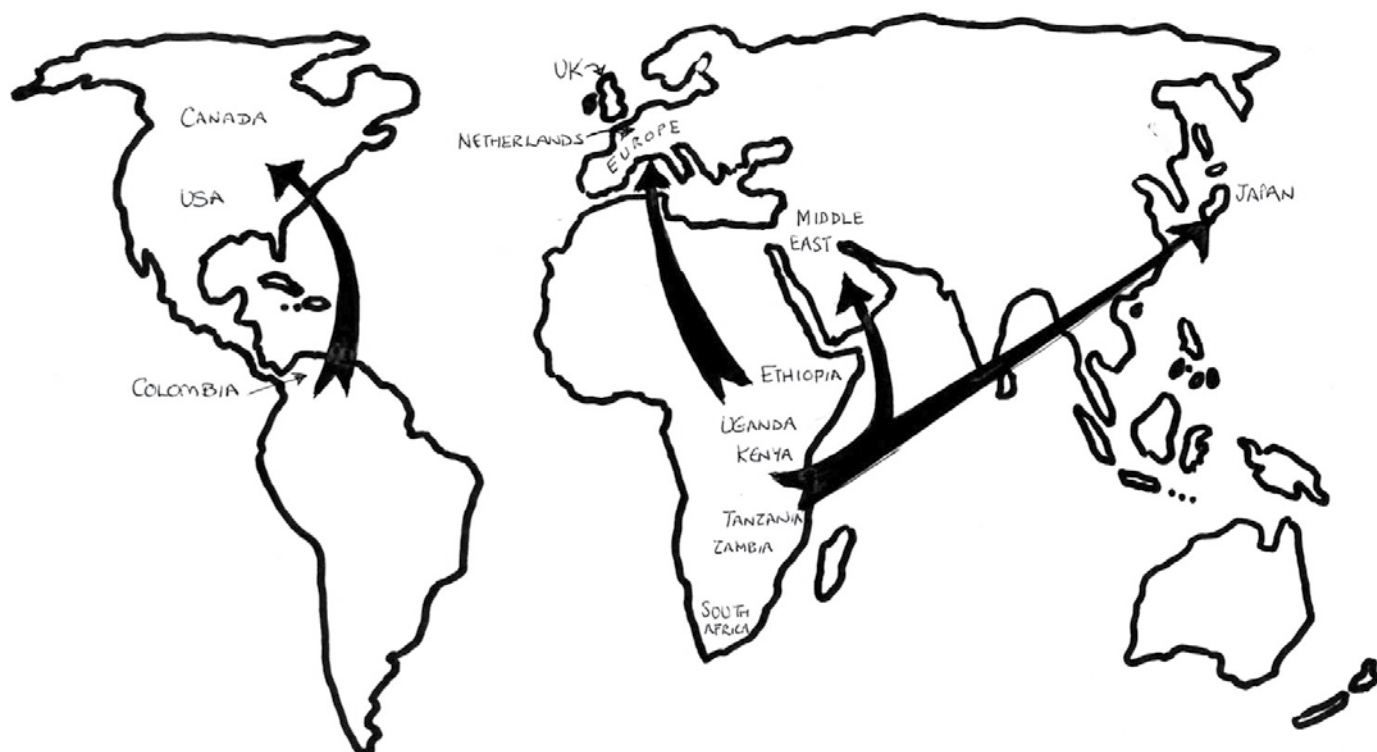
“ The farm produces melons, cucumber, tomatoes, and all kinds of pepper. I don't know to which countries the products are exported.

I ask the buyers to put pressure on the company to increase our salaries. We earn 2,500 Uganda Shillings (just over US\$1) per day and we work 6 days a week. Commodity prices are high now. If you have a family, even a monthly salary of 75,000 Uganda Shillings cannot sustain you.

Our products are of good quality. So salaries should also increase. ”

A man working in a horticultural farm in Uganda

## Where our produce goes – across the world





## The horticulture industry around the world

If you work on a farm that grows flowers, fresh vegetables or fruits for export, you are working in the global horticulture industry. Across the world, this industry produces over 1,230 million tonnes of fruit and vegetables each year.

Countries that produce a large amount of horticultural produce for export include:

- \* **Europe:** the **Netherlands** is the largest producer of flowers in the region, and Dutch companies dominate this global industry; **Spain** produces a lot of vegetables
- \* **East Africa:** **Kenya** (the largest producer in the region), **Tanzania**, **Uganda**, and more recently **Ethiopia**, sending produce mostly to Europe and Japan; but with recession in Europe, they are also looking to sell more in the Middle East
- \* **Southern Africa:** **South Africa**, **Zambia** and **Zimbabwe**, sending produce mostly to Europe and Japan; Zimbabwe's industry was badly affected by the political instability there
- \* **Central Africa:** the official US aid programme USAID is supporting a new industry in **Rwanda** to export horticultural produce
- \* **North Africa:** **Morocco** is a new producer, sending produce to Europe, especially France
- \* **West Africa:** **Ivory Coast** and **Cameroon** are new export producers, sending produce to Europe
- \* **Latin America:** **Equador**, **Columbia**, **Peru**: sending produce mostly to North America (USA and Canada), though also to Europe
- \* **Asia:** **China** and **Malaysia** exporting horticultural produce around Asia, Australia and the Middle East
- \* **Middle East:** **Israel** and **Egypt** exporting horticultural produce mostly to Europe.

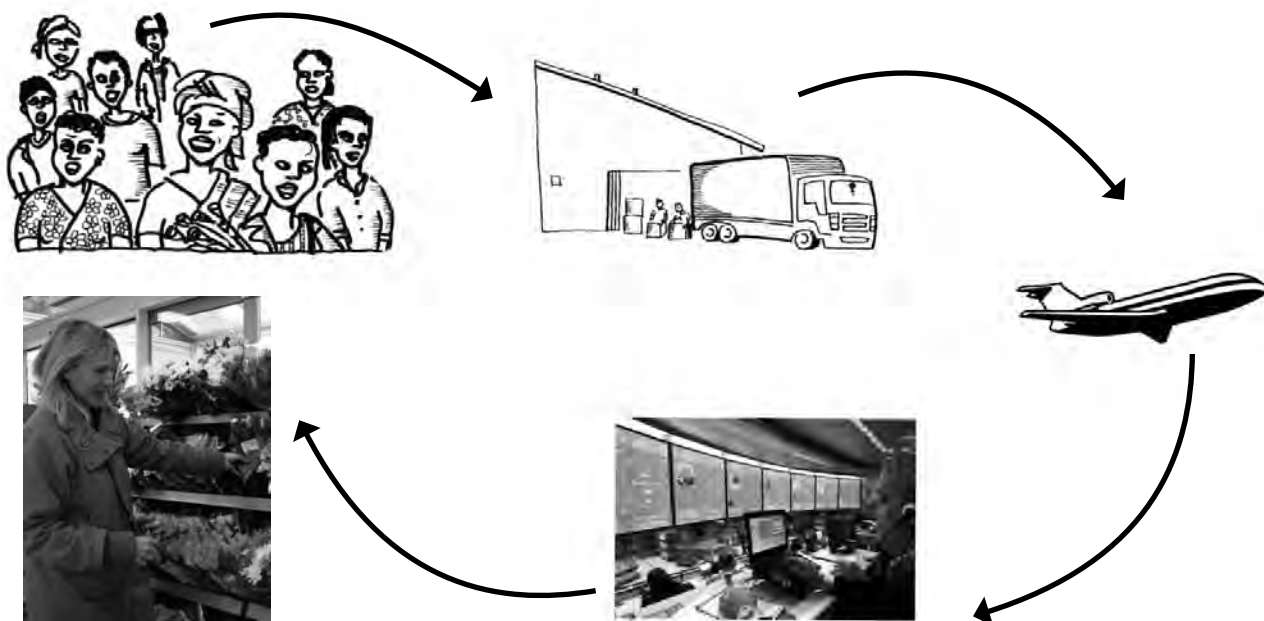
Horticultural production has been expanding in developing countries since the 1980s, and still more countries are starting to produce for export. Why is this?

- \* The cheaper labour of poorer countries means that the companies – growers and their buyers – can get products at lower cost and so make more profit
- \* The governments of poorer nations which have large debts to rich nations have been pressured by powerful organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to make goods for export from which they can earn foreign money to pay off the debts
- \* The industry in many African countries has been supported by trade policies of the European Union
- \* Governments need to create jobs for the people; sometimes they offer incentives (lower taxes, for example) to companies to set up farms in their countries
- \* Consumers want to eat more fruit and vegetables for health reasons
- \* Some European consumers want these products all year round and are not willing to wait until summer when they grow best in their own colder climate.

The countries that import the most horticultural products are developed countries with a population that can afford to buy them. These include Western European countries, the United States and Canada, Japan, Australia and the Middle East.



## How our products reach the consumers



This graphic shows a 'supply chain'. This is the term used for the network of companies and their workforces – producers, distributors, transporters, warehouses and retailers – involved in making a particular product and bringing it to the consumer. Those at the top – the retailers and auction houses – have the most power in the 'chain'.

- (A) **Production** takes place on farms that can be large, directly employing thousands of workers. Big farms also take in produce from smaller farmers and smallholders. The big farms are sometimes owned by nationals, but often by foreign companies. Some companies own farms in more than one country.
- (B) **Distribution and warehousing:** Once the produce has been cut, prepared and packed, it is transported to its markets. There are import/export companies who organise transport and storage, often on contract to the auction houses and retailers. Or some big companies that own farms also do distribution activities.
- (C) **Auction houses:** In the case of cut flowers, about 60% of the world flower trade – 40 million blooms a day – goes through powerful auction houses in the Netherlands. They do not involve the general public but the retailers and other distribution companies. As the flowers are sold by auction and there are more producers than buyers, this drives down the prices that producers (the farms) can get.
- (D) **Retailers:** Supermarkets and shops sell flowers, fruit and vegetables to the public, or 'consumers'. They get the produce directly, or from the importers/exporters, or from the flower auction houses. There are also smaller florists, grocers and market-stall holders who specialise in selling flowers, fruit and vegetables.

**Supermarkets** are large stores selling food, household goods, and often clothes and entertainment items. They can have many thousand outlets in their home country and in other countries. Examples are Tesco from the UK, Walmart from the United States, and Carrefour from France. They sell very large quantities of produce, and make very large profits. For example, Tesco made £3 billion (US\$4.68 billion) profit in 2008/2009.

These very large retailers have a lot of power. They are able to dictate prices, timing of orders, quality standards and more to the other businesses in the 'supply chain'. This puts pressure on the farm owners, who in turn put pressure on the workers.



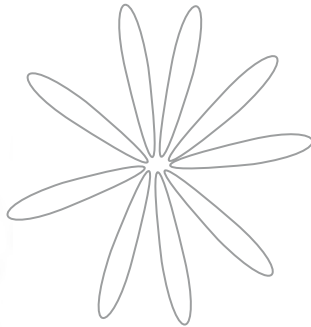


## TIP



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All this information was found by looking for Oserian on the Internet and finding: [www.mavuno.com](http://www.mavuno.com) and then [www.floraholland.com](http://www.floraholland.com)



## OSERIAN

Oserian: part of a family of companies bringing Kenyan flowers to European consumers

Oserian Farm is one of the largest farms in Kenya. It employs 5,000 workers, and also takes in produce from up to 1,000 smallholders. It supplies roses, mostly to Europe through its parent company Mavuno.

In Kenya, Mavuno also operates an air/sea freight company called Airflo. In Europe, it has distribution companies selling to big retailers and smaller shops in the UK (World Flowers) and the Netherlands (Bloom). Altogether, Mavuno directly employs 6,000 people.

Mavuno has also been operating one of the largest auction houses TFA (Tele Flower Auction), trading in 60 countries on-line through the Internet. In 2010, TFA merged into FloraHolland, a marketing cooperative in the Netherlands which handles 125,000 auction transactions every day, or 12 billion cut flowers and over half a million plants a year.



## ACTIVITY

### To understand the Supply Chain we are in

This task is for a group of workers from the same farm:

- Discuss and write down what you know about where your products go once they leave the farm. Which country or countries do they go to? Which companies are buying them?
- If you don't know yet, how could you find out? Are there labels on the products, do managers say, or do you know a supervisor or office workers who might tell you?
- Who do you think has the power to set the prices that your farm gets for your products?
- Can you think of any times when the buyer has done something that has put pressure on you as workers, for example by putting in an order late which made you work overtime?
- What recommendations would you like to give to your employer and the buyers of your produce so as to improve the working conditions on the farm?





## How are other workers treated in this global industry?

Hundreds of thousands of workers around the world have similar to experiences to you:

**Israel:** *Workers on the cut flower farms are mainly migrants from far away countries like Thailand in South-East Asia. Many have paid a lot of money to a labour agent to get the job, and so they find themselves trapped until they can pay off the debt.*

*This leaves them very vulnerable: they are often not given proper employment contracts; some are paid well below the legal minimum wage, certainly not what they need to live on; and they are made to work very long hours. The Thai women workers report that sexual harassment is also a big problem that they face.*

From: Kav Laoved (Workers' Hotline), Israel: [www.kavlaoved.org.il](http://www.kavlaoved.org.il)

**Columbia:** *Columbia in Latin America has the second largest flower production industry in the world. Most of the production goes to the USA. 96,000 workers are employed in the industry, and 65% of them are women. They experience long working hours and don't get paid overtime. They often earn very little money each day, and there are high rates of work-related illnesses.*

*Some workers are made to have a pregnancy test – or even have their tubes cut – before they are allowed to start work – so that their employers do not have to give them maternity leave. The workers also find it very difficult to join unions because the employers are so hostile.*



*Women flower workers in Colombia, a country in Central America, also often earn less than they need to live on. Much of their produce goes to North America*

“ I am always short of money. The supervisors were very harsh. If anyone was sick, they would send you a memorandum or a sanction. Right now I feel like a cripple. ”

Esperanza

“ I won't have health insurance by the time the baby is born. And with so many diseases, I don't know whether he will be healthy. ”

A pregnant worker called Claudia

These flower workers in Colombia were interviewed by War On Want, UK.



### Question for discussion

- ❖ How similar or different are these workers' experiences from our own?



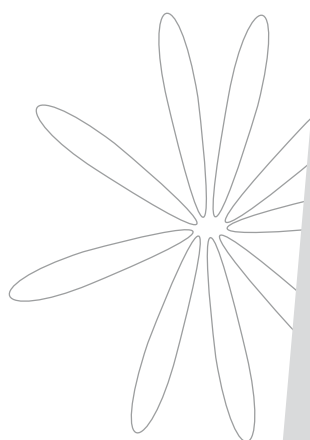


## HOW MUCH DO OUR PRODUCTS SELL FOR?

In the consumer market, horticulture products fetch a good price.

*Some prices in the UK supermarket Sainsbury's in early 2010*

12 'Fairtrade' roses from Kenya	£4.99
15 roses from Zambia	£2.99
Roses and carnations posy from Kenya	£1.00
200g trimmed green beans from Kenya (or two packs for £2.50)	£1.50
500g white seedless grapes from South Africa	£2.69
227g strawberries from Egypt	£1.99
£1 =	3,080 USH
	2,100 TZS
	120 KES
	7,270 ZMK
	20 Birr

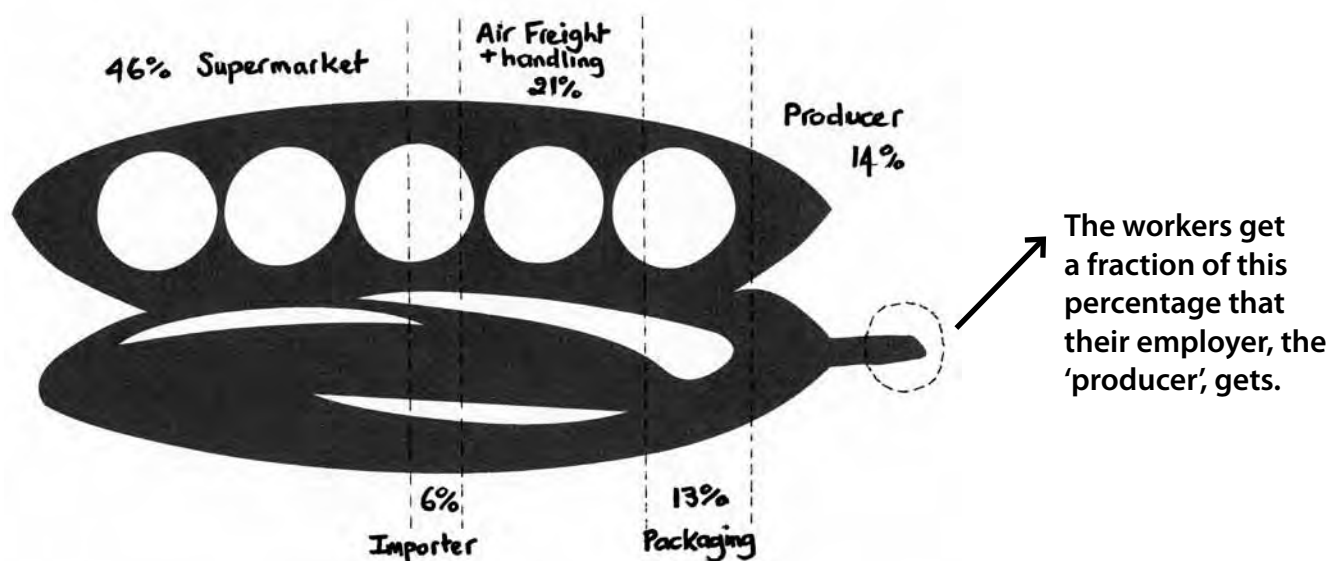


### ACTIVITY

#### Do workers get a fair share of the money?

- Look at the prices of the products on sale in the UK, above.
- Convert these prices in £ sterling into your own currency, using the information provided.
- Compare these prices with the wages you are earning on your farm.
- What conclusion can you draw from this comparison? Do you think workers get a fair amount out of the money that the consumers pay? Who do you think gets the most?

#### Who gets what from the price?



Data from: 'Global Agri-Food Chains: Employment and social issues in fresh fruit and vegetables' by Sarah Best and Ivanka Mamic, ILO, Employment Sector Employment Working Paper No. 20, 2008, Table 4: [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_105107.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_105107.pdf)



## Solidarity from consumers

Over the past twenty years, trade unionists and other activists have been raising awareness among consumers in Europe and the United States about the conditions suffered by workers who make the products they buy. Newspapers and magazines run stories of men, women and children working in terrible conditions making clothes, footballs, shoes, fresh produce and more. This has shocked the public and the sales of some retailers dropped as a result.

In 2002, Women Working Worldwide worked with a women's magazine in the UK to publish a story about the poor conditions on Kenyan flower farms. They focused on the low pay, long hours, and poor health and safety provisions. The big supermarkets in the UK panicked, concerned that consumers might not buy Kenyan flowers. A group of them visited Kenya to see the conditions, and put in place a strategy to improve the situation.

Since the public buying the goods has become more aware of the bad treatment of workers, they have started to demand that workers should be treated well.



“ Since I've read all of the newspaper articles, I try to buy products that are 'ethical'. By this I mean that I buy from shops where I think they make sure that workers are treated well. It's difficult to know whether this is the case, but there are certain brands such as Fairtrade which have a reputation for a good standard of treatment for workers. ”

Caroline, a consumer in the UK

In all countries it is still women who do most of the household shopping. So, solidarity between women is essential if we are to improve conditions on horticulture farms.

## What is 'Fairtrade'?

As you can see in the box on page 25, consumers pay a lot more for produce labelled 'Fairtrade'.

### Why is this?

In the consuming countries, there are organisations which promote trade that is based on fairness for the workers and the small farmers who produce the goods. This means the buyer companies must pay a fair price for the goods, one that never falls below what it costs to grow the goods, and workers must receive decent wages and working conditions (including trade union rights). Workers also receive a Fairtrade premium to invest in projects they choose, that benefit the whole community.

Companies which can prove they are supplying goods to these standards can put a label on their goods to say so. They usually then charge a higher price to the consumers to pay for the extra cost. Consumers who support decent wages and conditions for the workers see the label and are happy to pay that bit extra.

In the UK, the Fairtrade Foundation licenses the use of the Fairtrade Certification Mark on flowers and vegetables from Kenya grown to Fairtrade standards by companies such as Homegrown, Oserian, Finlay Flowers, and Ravine Roses.



[www.fairtrade.net](http://www.fairtrade.net)





## Questions for discussion

- ❁ How would we workers ask consumers in Europe to help us?
- ❁ How might we find out where to contact them?
- ❁ What would we ask them to do?

### Ideas include:

- Contact our union and see if they have any links to consumer campaigns abroad
- Ask a journalist to investigate our story.

In 2008, many workers in **Uganda** were not allowed to join a trade union. They asked for support from the unions, who were in touch with activist organisations in Europe like Women Working Worldwide in the UK and FIAN, an international human rights network that focuses on the right to food.

These organisations in turn asked consumers in Europe to send letters to the Ugandan export association UFEA requesting that unions were allowed on the farm. Many letters were sent, and UFEA urged its members to allow trade unions on farms. Now all farms in Uganda are unionised.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**'Growing Pains: The human cost of cut flowers in British supermarkets'**, War on Want, UK, March 2007: [www.waronwant.org/attachments/Growing%20Pains.pdf](http://www.waronwant.org/attachments/Growing%20Pains.pdf)

**Flower Campaign:** This is based in the Netherlands, a collaboration between NGOs and the FNV Bondgenoten trade union there; it follows the ICC code (see page 64): [www.flowercampaign.org](http://www.flowercampaign.org)

**Fair Flowers Fair Plants:** An 'ethical' label for consumers in the European market, launched in 2005. It is 'multi-stakeholder' which means that producers, retailers, human rights and environmental organizations, and trade unions are involved, in both producing and consuming countries: [www.fairflowersfairplants.org](http://www.fairflowersfairplants.org)

“ I feel I would be abusing my basic human right to breathe should I not support your cause! Equality for everyone - Believe in your power to make a positive difference! ”

'OA', a consumer in Manchester, UK

“ Equality & respect & a decent wage for workers everywhere! ”

Jane, another British consumer



**More testimonies from British supporters can be found on the WWW website at:**

[www.women-ww.org/index.php/support-cards-a-messages/read-support-messages](http://www.women-ww.org/index.php/support-cards-a-messages/read-support-messages)



## How the big companies can help improve your working conditions

Responding to the pressure from consumers about working conditions, many companies such as the big retailers of Europe have signed a 'code of conduct' about how they will behave towards the workers who make their products.

Such **company codes of conduct** contain a set of standards, usually based on internationally agreed rights of workers (see information on the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on page 45), and/or on national laws such as those on minimum wages and hours of work. When a big retailer places a contract to buy produce from a farm, they should make sure that the farm does not violate their code of conduct. How well each farm does is monitored by 'social auditors' who visit the farms.

There are many of these codes operating on farms in East/Southern Africa. Some of them are: **Fair Flowers Fair Plants, ETI Base Code, MPS Socially Qualified, and Fair Trade**. Some companies have their own codes, such as **Natures Choice** of the British supermarket chain Tesco. There are also codes that have been formed by local bodies such as the **Kenya Flower Council Gold Standard**.

Sometimes a farm is selling to more than one buyer. Then more than one code may apply to the farm. This can be very confusing to farm managers as well as workers.

Company codes of conduct are not legally-binding; workers cannot take a company to court for not properly applying a code. They are a form of 'self-regulation'. But they can be used to put pressure on local management, especially if workers and their trade unions make sure they are involved when the social auditor visits the farm.



### TIPS

#### How to use company codes of conduct for the benefit of workers

- Find out about any code(s) of conduct that should apply at your farm.
- Look at each code to understand what it says about how workers at your farm should be treated.
- Check particularly if the code includes a complaints mechanism that workers can use to complain about wrong treatment without being victimised by management.
- You should be told by management when a social auditor is about to visit your farm to find out how well the code is being applied there.
- Workers and your representatives should be introduced to the auditor; tell the auditor if the farm managers are not meeting the standards in the code; and make sure the union is involved – they are a vital source of information for the auditor.
- If workers are not permitted to speak freely, complain to your union and the auditor.
- Make sure the auditor is talking to all workers – including those that are not permanent, and women.
- The union has a right to see the auditor's reports afterwards; reports should not be 'confidential' for only management to see.







## Direct communication with companies

Some companies with codes have telephone numbers that workers can call, or addresses that they can write to, to complain about conditions on their farm.



### TIP



Make sure you have as much public support as possible before contacting companies directly as there is a risk that they might just stop sourcing from your workplace, which will badly affect your jobs.

## The importance of union organising

Most company codes of conduct include the right of workers to form or join a union of your own choice. The single most important thing that a worker can do to improve your conditions at work and gain the rights that you are entitled to under law is to join a union (see Module 6).

Also, a union provides the best route to dealing with codes of conduct. So it is well worth using company codes of conduct to win your union rights.



## Global solidarity

By joining a union you are also joining an international movement of workers fighting for change. The Global Unions are international union federations. See page 94 for more information on the one uniting farm workers' unions: the International Union of Food Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Association (IUF).

One of the strongest codes is one developed by the trade unions and NGOs – the International Code of Conduct for the Production of Cut-Flowers (ICC), see page 64.



## Questions for discussion

- ❖ Do we know if any codes are operating on our farm?
- ❖ If we don't know, how might we find out?

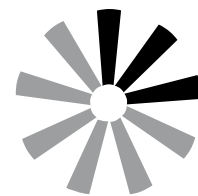
**Some suggestions are:**

- ask supervisors
  - check notice boards
  - check the walls of the managers' offices
- ❁ How could we use such a code for our own benefit, especially to strengthen our union organisation?



# NOTES

[illegible]



# 3 HOW WE FARM WORKERS ARE TREATED

## Aims

To help workers on farms producing flowers and other fresh produce to:

- To encourage flower and horticulture farm workers in East/Southern Africa to:
- Identify and discuss the employment problems that they face – such as low wages, lack of good jobs, discrimination in promotion, etc.
- Know what their employment rights are
- Know where to find more information/help
- Develop action plans to deal with their most pressing employment problems.



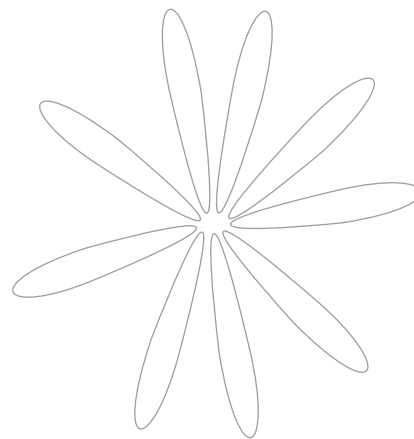
## Notes for facilitators

This module looks at the employment problems faced by workers in the horticulture industry in the region, and how they might take action together to overcome those problems.

It starts with an Activity in which the workers can outline the problems that their employer specifically needs to address. You can use the first section with its shocking story to kick-start discussions. Or go directly to the second section, if you feel that is more appropriate for the workers in question.

Having identified their issues of key concern, the facilitator can then follow up, using the briefings on the employment problems that horticulture/floriculture workers commonly face: such as on pay, working hours, and lack of decent contracts. These briefings emphasise how gender discrimination affects women workers' terms and conditions of work.

The final Activity encourages workers to prioritise what their employer urgently needs to resolve, and come up with an action plan to try to make this happen.



## NOTES

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## ACTIVITY

### What are the pressing issues we face at work?

This activity aims to get workers from the same farm discussing together the key problems that they face at work, and where they may go for support to deal with these problems.

1. Ask a worker to read out this story to the other workers, and then discuss together the questions that follow.

#### ***Pregnant and forced to do overtime: she lost her baby***

*Mildred had worked at Farm X in Uganda for over two years when she got pregnant. She was still working in the ninth month of her pregnancy, harvesting flowers, when the Human Resource Manager approached the workers in her greenhouse.*

*It was almost time to stop work. But it was a peak season, and the Manager asked them all to work overtime that day so as to meet the demand of the buyers.*

*After he left, Mildred started feeling labour pains and other signs of childbirth. She told her supervisor what was happening, but she said she had no powers to give her permission to go home and sent Mildred to the Manager. Mildred approached him with fear and explained her problem, but he just told her to go back and work.*

*Later, Mildred was rushed to a nearby health centre to deliver her child. However, by then she had developed complications and had to be referred to hospital. After two days Mildred gave birth to a still-born child.*

This is a true story, which happened before the workers had learnt about their rights.

- Have we ever experienced anything as shocking as this at our farm?
- If so, what happened, and how was it resolved?
- Who could have helped Mildred with her right to give birth safely?

2. In small groups, discuss and write down:

- What are the most pressing issues which workers on our farm face? Particularly include those that affect women workers.
- Which of these issues are the most urgent to deal with? Rank them in order of priority, and note down your reasons.
- Who can help us find solutions to our workplace problems? Consider in particular local trade union representatives.
- What arguments can we use to persuade others why these matters need resolving? Consider your co-workers, your employer, trade union representatives, government officials, or even your family members. Note your arguments alongside each relevant issue.



**Keep all your notes for future planning.**





## Decent Pay?



“We work for stones!”

Woman farm worker, Uganda

Without decent wages, people live in poverty – which is an obvious fact.

Are the wages you earn from your farm work enough to cover your basic needs – food, housing, transport, education for your children, and medical bills?

In a survey in **Uganda**, most farm workers were earning 50,000-80,000 USH (US\$28-46) each month, far too little to meet the basic needs of them and their families. Meanwhile, most managers were getting 2-4 million USH (US\$850-1700), which is 30-60 times more.

Workers in **Zambia** said that the basic wage is so low that they have to do overtime to get a decent income.

In some countries, for example Uganda and Ethiopia, wage levels are set through collective bargaining between the trade unions and each employer. But where there is no such bargaining, wages are simply what the employers say they will pay.

In other countries there are minimum wage levels set by law, that employers have a legal duty to respect. **The legal minimum monthly wage for both men and women agricultural workers in 2010 was:**

<b>Kenya:</b>	2,536 Shillings (US\$31), excluding housing allowance
<b>Tanzania:</b>	65,000 Shillings (US\$44)
<b>Zambia:</b>	268,000 Kwacha (US\$56)

Many employers do not like such legal responsibilities and try to dodge them by employing workers on short-term or other kinds of poor contracts (see more on page 40). Or they pay according to the output of the worker or the team, on ‘piece-rates’. Piece-rates can be very exploitative, with high targets that put extreme pressure on the workers. Farm workers paid by the piece include harvesters in greenhouses and packers.

In any case, even legal minimum wage levels can be below what is actually needed to survive, i.e. below the poverty-line.

In **Tanzania**, this is how a woman worker who is single with two young children spent her salary of 66,000 Shillings in 2010:

Food and fuel	36,000
House rent	10,000
Care for her children while she is at work	10,000
Medical costs	3,000
Transport	3,000

Much of the remaining 3,000 Shillings went on deductions for social security, and there was not enough to send her six-year old child to a good school or for savings. So the wage, which was above the legal minimum, was still too low.



This is why, in many countries around the world, workers are now demanding what they call a ‘living wage’.





**'A Living Wage':** this is a wage that meets our basic needs of food, housing, clothing, health, education, and transport, plus a little extra income for us and our dependents to spend how we like to or to save for the future (called 'discretionary income'). All workers have the right to such a living wage, but how many of us actually get one?

Average wages in the cut flower industry in **Zambia** in 2006 were only just over half the legal minimum wage, and just 13% of a living wage as defined by the country's Central Statistics Office.

From: 'Cut Flower Industry in Zambia', Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Zambia, 2006: [www.fes.org.zm/publications.php](http://www.fes.org.zm/publications.php)

There is no international agreement on what is a 'living wage' and how to calculate it. But there are ways of getting a good estimate, see the Activity below.

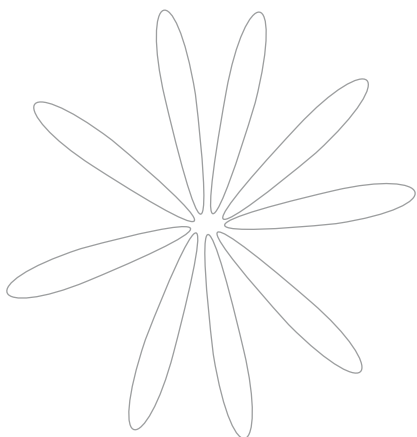


**Note:** A 'living wage' should be earned in the legal maximum working hours, not by doing overtime.



## Questions for discussion

- ❖ How does this 'living wage' we have calculated compare with what we currently earn without doing overtime?
- ❖ How could we use this calculation in our fight for a decent wage?



## ACTIVITY

### To calculate a 'living wage'

In a small group, use the following steps to calculate how much money each worker needs each month to cover food and other vital costs for their family:

#### A. Food: How much money does it take to feed one worker?

List down the type of good food a worker should eat in a day. Include food and drink items for breakfast, lunch, evening tea and supper. Allocate against each item the amount of money it costs. The total of all these items will give you the amount of money a worker needs to spend daily on food.

Multiply this by 30 to turn the daily cost into a monthly sum.

#### B. Non-food: How much money does that worker need for other vital costs?

Add up how much you spend each month for housing, clothing, healthcare, childcare, education, fuel, and transport. Add in anything else you think is necessary, plus an amount for savings.

Another reasonable way of looking at it is to say that the cost of all these elements is roughly equal to the food element, that is to say 1:1.

#### C. The whole family: A living wage is needed not just for one worker.

A reasonable estimate is: 2 adults + 2 children (at half each) = 3 people in total.

#### So, the steps to calculate a 'living wage' are:

1. The cost of food for one adult for a month (see A above)
2. This sum x 2 to include non-food costs (see B)
3. This second sum x 3 to include the dependents (see C)

**This gives a figure for a 'living wage' for each worker each month.**



## Equal Pay?

Women workers all over the world suffer discrimination in pay. It is the same on the horticulture and floriculture farms of Africa.

Women are recruited for jobs which are seen as 'women's work' – such as cleaning and sweeping – because it is similar to our domestic role at home. This work is always undervalued, and so poorly paid.

There are other jobs on the farms – such as seed propagation, weeding, harvesting, sorting and packing – where women are deliberately recruited because women are seen as less likely than men to damage the delicate produce, and somehow what women do is 'lighter' work.

*"Horticulture employers promote a stereotype that, due to the size of their fingers, women are able to handle flowers more carefully and are better suited to work in horticulture... due to the height of their bodies and the slenderness of their physique, women can perform particular tasks much better, faster, more efficiently and cost-effectively than men in production of fresh vegetables, fruits and cut flowers. However, they maintain that the work is unskilled... (it) is light and requires little energy."*

TPAWU, 2010

Such discrimination in job evaluation is common across the world.

But are the women truly 'less skilled' than the men who spray flowers or do maintenance and construction work and get better paid for it?

Are women workers not also tired at the end of the day, having given all the energy they have to their work?

**In Uganda**, there have been calls by the trade unions, the Workers Education Association (UWEA), and others for jobs that require a delicate touch, such as picking and packing, to be reclassified as skilled.

Women are also rarely considered for promotion into higher paid jobs. Plus men have greater access to bonuses and overtime.

**In Kenya** in 2007, the average monthly salary for women workers on farms was 2,850 Kshs (US\$38) while that for men was 3,000 (US\$39).

All this means that women take home less pay than men and, over the years, the difference in earnings can be a huge sum. So poverty affects women more than men, even though many women are the ones who take most responsibility for their families.

Such discrimination comes from how societies value women and the work we do. Women are often seen as worth less than men and their work, and as 'secondary' income-earners to men, even though many women are the sole head of household. It can also be how women see themselves, not putting themselves forward for better jobs.





But pay discrimination is unfair, and violates one of our fundamental human rights:

“Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.”  
United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Article 23(2)



Knowing what is ‘equal work’ is difficult to prove when there is so much stereotyping about what is ‘men’s work’ and what is ‘women’s work’.

So, sixty years ago, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) decided to promote ‘**equal pay for work of equal value**’. (ILO Convention No.100 on Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, 1951)

This term means that jobs have to be evaluated by employers, governments and workers/unions with an objective eye, not based on simple stereotypes of skill or effort. Different jobs can be compared with each other. Where the value of the work done by one worker is similar to the value of work done by another, then those workers should get the same pay and conditions, no matter if they are men or women.



## Questions for discussion

- ❁ On our farm, which jobs are given to men, and which to women?
- ❁ Do we think women workers on our farm are being paid fairly, compared with the men workers?
- ❁ Are women’s skills are being properly recognised on our farm?

## Training / promotion

**In Uganda**, only about 3% of senior managers are women.

UWEA, 2010

In all countries, management positions are dominated by men. Women are seen as ‘less serious’, ‘less committed’ to work than men, ‘less well educated’ or simply ‘less worthy’.

At the same time, women are seen as more reliable workers, less likely to leave to seek other work. Many do get supervisory positions, though with little decision-making power.

Women are often not taken seriously for training or promotion higher than supervisory level. On many farms, promotion seems to depend more on personal relationships with managers rather than actual skills for the job, which also puts women at a disadvantage.

Plus women do not always step forward for skills training and promotion when we might.

However, on some farms women do get training and promotion. And the experience of the TPAWU union in Tanzania is that, if more gender awareness training is done with managers, they do respond and promote more women. This shows that management training in gender awareness should be done much more.

**In Tanzania**, over half of supervisors are women, but there are many fewer women at higher levels of management.

Even so, half of the women senior managers that there are had been workers and got promoted after training.

TPAWU, 2010



## Access to social security

As well as wages, workers in most countries have access to some social security benefits. These may include old age pensions, unemployment benefit, health insurance, maternity benefits, and so on. Social security rights such as these are set down in national laws.

Such benefits improve the quality of life of ordinary people, and are important for relieving many people from the worst effects of poverty. Access to them has been fought for, over many years, particularly by workers through their trade unions. They vary from country to country, according to how much has been won through this struggle.

Unfortunately, access to social security benefits is also not usually equal between men and women, with men often benefitting more. Sometimes this is because only workers with permanent employments contracts are entitled to them, and relatively more women workers are put on temporary contracts (see more on page 40).

In **Tanzania**, every employee has the right to social security. This is compulsory and not a choice of either the employee or the employer. Farm workers are registered with the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) which covers seven benefits: old age pension, health insurance, invalidity, maternity, employment injury, funeral expenses, and death benefits (support for dependents when a worker dies). All provisions apply to both men and women workers.

In **Uganda**, social benefits are still very few: old age, invalidity, survivors' benefit, the right to withdraw savings from a benefits scheme under certain circumstances, and an emigration grant to leave Uganda to settle in another country. Some workers on Ugandan flower farms also get a housing allowance; but it is too little, forcing workers to look for cheap housing without the basic utilities like power and water. Organisations including the Platform for Labour Action (PLA) and UWEA are lobbying for reforms of the social security system.

## Sick leave

In **Tanzania**, the law gives every employee the right to paid sick leave of 126 days in a year. Half of this (63 days) is at full pay, and half at half pay.

In **Uganda**, sick leave is fully paid for two months; but if the sickness continues after that, an employer is allowed to lay the worker off.



## Questions for discussion

- ❖ What social security benefits are we getting?
- ❖ What social security benefits are we entitled to by law?
- ❖ If we don't know, how can we find out?







## Maternity/paternity leave

This is one of the most important social benefits, not just to the individual workers who are mothers and fathers, but to all of society.

When women do not have the right to take maternity leave and return to their job afterwards, to take breaks to breast-feed their babies, and to be given lighter work during pregnancy, their children suffer. Women workers know this, and it is a source of great stress. They become forced to choose between earning a wage and looking after their family. Women on non-permanent work contracts face this crisis most, but even some on permanent contracts don't get their maternity rights respected.

**In Kenya**, most farms do respect maternity leave rights, and yet large numbers of women flower workers are not entitled to it - mostly because they are on casual employment contracts. On two farms, researchers found women dismissed if they became pregnant. On others, pregnant women were expected to do the same work as their non-pregnant colleagues.

**In Ethiopia**, only 42% of women flower workers interviewed in early 2010 said they got paid maternity leave.

**In Tanzania**, on twelve farms where the TPAWU union is active, women are now getting lighter duties when pregnant, 4 months' maternity leave at full pay, plus breast-feeding breaks. However, other farms grant maternity leave only once in every 3 years.

**In Uganda**, the new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) (see page 91) provides all women workers on flower/horticultural farms with 60 days' maternity leave on full pay. If, during this time, the mother or baby develops complications related to childbirth or miscarriage, the mother is entitled to more maternity leave, which must be taken within 8 weeks after the childbirth or miscarriage and she must give 7 days' notice to the employer in writing if asked to do so.

Men workers who are fathers should have the right to paternity leave. When men are able to take their fatherhood seriously and help care for their family at childbirth or when a small child is ill, the welfare of children obviously improves – and therefore so does society in general.

In Tanzania, the Employment and Labor Relations Act No. 6 & 7 of 2004 provides for 3 days' paternity leave for working men, which must be taken during the first week when a child is born. Both women and men have been negotiating for more and some CBAs now provide 4-5 days.

In Uganda, male employees are entitled to 4 days' paternity leave a year; it must be taken immediately after delivery or miscarriage by a registered wife and so workers who are not officially married cannot take this leave.

## Compassionate leave

This is another important leave that recognises that workers are family members too. It allows them to attend to a family emergency, such as a death or serious illness.

**In Kenya**, workers are entitled to 5 days' compassionate leave in a year.





## We need good jobs, not casual ones

If you are hired on a permanent job contract, your employer is legally responsible to give you such things as paid annual leave, maternity leave, set working hours, overtime pay, sick pay, and access to social security. You will have an employment contract that sets these rights out.

But too many employers do not want to fulfill such legal responsibilities. So they offer few permanent jobs. Instead, they hire workers on short-term contracts, even repeatedly, time after time. Many farms like to hire workers daily at the gate, for example. Or they keep workers on as 'probationers' long after they have learnt how to do the job. Some workers are hired as 'seasonal', even when there are no real 'seasons' affecting the work.

Such 'casual' employment contracts mean that employers can fire these workers at any time, and the workers lose many of their employment rights. Employers call it 'labour flexibility', and it helps to reduce their labour costs.

Part-time work contracts also let employers avoid the legal responsibilities that they have for full-time workers. Many women workers like part-time work because it gives them more flexibility to integrate their income-earning jobs with their domestic responsibilities. However, such working arrangements should be negotiated with the workers, not imposed by the employer as a way to avoid his/her legal responsibilities.

A growing practice by employers in many sectors, though perhaps not so much on the farms in Africa, is to side-step their legal duties by hiring workers through labour supply agents. When this happens, the workers may not be sure who actually is their employer with the legal responsibilities: the company where they work, or the agent that supplied them?

Such practices give employers flexibility with their budgets. If they have fewer workers permanently employed, they don't have to meet the regular cost of wages, social security contributions, paid holidays, and so on. Meanwhile, the casualised workers and their families bear the burden – they are much less protected by the law, more vulnerable and poorer.

**Research among flower workers shows at least 50% in **Uganda**, 65% in **Kenya** and 77% in **Zambia** are on temporary or casual contracts.**

**In **Kenya**, the law gives 21 days' paid leave after 12 months in the job. But almost 50% of farm workers were getting no paid holidays because they are on casual contracts. Some women workers told researchers they could only get a permanent contract by giving bribes or sexual favours to supervisors.**

In fact, it is women workers who are more likely to be on casual or temporary contracts than men, and so face an even bigger burden. Employers particularly do not want to accept responsibility for maternity leave, and with casual work contracts they can more easily fire women workers when they become pregnant.



*“It is my right to become pregnant, and it is not wrong. But it is an offence to the managers.”*

Woman worker from a farm in Kenya, speaking to an international conference in Nairobi, September 2009.

**In the export vegetable labour force in **Kenya**, 63% of women are on flexible contracts, compared to 38% of men.**  
ILO, 2008

Short-term or casual contracts also mean that those workers are much less likely to become members of a trade union. Non-permanent workers are much harder for unions to organise, and to include in Collective Bargaining Agreements with the employer (see also Module 6).





## Excerpts from the TPAWU Collective Bargaining Agreement

- 80% (Eighty) of the workers will comprise of permanent employees.
- No female employee will be subjected to pregnancy test as a precondition for recruitment.
- The employer shall not utilise child labor.

## TPAWU fights casual labour on the farms

The employment law enacted in Tanzania in 2004 says there should be no casual labour. All workers must get a contract of employment. As well as permanent contracts, the law does allow contracts for a specific period or for a specific task, but with clear conditions. This is now also written into the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) that the TPAWU union has with farms (see above).

These developments have led to a drop in casual labour on the farms, down from about 85% of workers in the 1990s to about 30% by the end of the 2000s.

However, some employers still try to side-step the law. They give task-related contracts, one after another, to workers who actually work for them for a long time. Or they resist giving any employment contract at all. The union has been educating workers to report such problems to them, and has been taking the issue up with bad employers.

For example, at one farm the TPAWU union found that 300 out of 450 workers had no employment contract, even though they had been working there for over three years. They were not registered with the national social security fund, and they were not yet union members.

So TPAWU took action. The union threatened to take the employer to court if he did not comply with the law. Under this pressure, he relented and issued letters of contract to the 300 workers, and later registered them for social security. All 300 became TPAWU members, and the union started negotiating a CBA to benefit all the 450 workers.

“ Without the efforts of the trade union to monitor compliance with labour legislation, 300 workers would have remained without their rights. The opening up of one right gave way to other rights. The workers are now enjoying both labour and trade union rights. ”

Kabengwe Ndebile Kabengwe, General Secretary, TPAWU





## Contract of Employment

Many farm workers do not know the terms and conditions of their employment, such as what their regular working hours are, how much paid holiday they get, or how their wages are calculated.

Without a written employment contract and pay slips, workers are at the mercy of their employers.

- ✱ Each worker is entitled to a written Contract of Employment from their employer with complete details of their employment conditions; it should set out - in language that workers can understand - the various rights and duties both of the worker and of the employer; workers should be given a copy of their contract.
- ✱ Each worker should also get a pay slip when they collect their wages; it should show clearly the days worked, the wages earned, and any deductions that have been taken.

### Contract of Employment – some typical text

#### From a flower farm in Zambia – for a daily-paid worker with a 12-month contract

Between (Employer) and \_\_\_\_\_ (employee)  
 Job title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Duration: \_\_\_\_\_ (twelve months)

Working hours: Minimum will be 6 days of 8 hours/day per week.

Off-days to be set by management.

Wage rate: Basic: ZMK \_\_\_\_\_ per day, or ruling piecework rate.

The employer will deduct PAYE tax and NAPSA contributions

Leave: Leave will be paid at 2 days of basic pay per month served under this contract. Leave can only be taken as leave and must be by prior arrangement with management. Leave cannot be commuted, except by written agreement with management. Additional days off with or without permission will be deducted from leave allowance.



### Questions for discussion

- ✱ What kinds of employment contract are common on our farm? What proportion of the workers has a permanent work contract? What proportion has a casual contract?
- ✱ Is there any hiring of workers at the gate or through labour agents?
- ✱ Do women workers tend to get a different type of contract from men workers?
- ✱ What are the main problems that workers on casual contracts face?
- ✱ What does the employment law in our country say about work contracts? If we do not know, how can we find out?
- ✱ How can workers fight against casual labour and for permanent employment contracts?





## Hours of work – balancing work and ‘life’

Working hours are another issue which is of great concern, especially to women workers. Most women have a dual role: their income-earning work and their care for their families. But this is not well-enough recognised by employers, and it puts women workers particularly under great stress.

Working hours are included in employment law in each country. Often the law allows employers to demand a lot of time from their workforce. But many employers are demanding even more.

**Uganda:** the legal maximum working hours are 10 hours a day, or 56 hours in a week. Often employment contracts give the working day as 8 hours, but many workers say they are required to work more than this, and are not paid overtime. They even have to do up to 5 hours extra, even though this makes 13 hours in a day, well over the legal maximum. Long working hours are said to be causing more family breakdowns for women flower workers.

According to the CBA signed in 2010, workers who do extra hours (overtime) are entitled to one and a half times of the normal hourly rate of gross pay on normal working days. Any employee who works on a public holiday is entitled to overtime pay of 2 times the gross hourly rate.

**Tanzania:** the maximum anyone can work by law is 12 hours a day, 45 hours a week, and 6 days in a week. Overtime should not exceed 3 hours per day or 12 hours per week. Anyone working more than 5 hours continuously is entitled to a break of at least 60 minutes.

**Zambia:** overtime is common but only sometimes paid; managers prefer workers to take time off instead of getting overtime pay.  
FES, 2006

**Ethiopia:** a survey of nearly 500 flower workers showed that many workers do not know what the legal working hours are: 34% said they have no weekly day off at all, and only 44% were getting paid annual leave.

Compulsory overtime seems to be a problem particularly on farms that grow flowers for export. At some times of the year, consumer demand rises dramatically. Europeans like to give flowers to their special loved one on St. Valentine's Day on 14 February, and on Mothers' Day (whose date varies from country to country), for example. Then, flower farm employers come under extra pressure from the foreign companies that buy from them. They in turn demand overtime from their workers, even though they have no right to do so, and no matter if this interferes with their workers' need to care for children or elders.

Overtime should **never** be compulsory. If it is, it is forced labour which is banned internationally (see page 45).

Sometimes, employers even demand overtime on that very day, not giving their workers any opportunity to make alternative childcare arrangements. This has a huge impact especially on women workers.

So, women workers are the ones around the world arguing most for '**work-life balance**'. Whether we are women or men, we do not live to work; we cannot just be at the beck and call of our employer. We need to live **and** work. Family well-being is fundamental to a stable society, and employers who do not recognise this are being irresponsible.





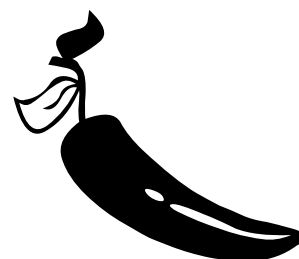
## What are our employment rights?

In each country, there are national laws governing the employment of workers. For example:

<b>Ethiopia:</b>	Labour Proclamation No. 377 of 2003
<b>Kenya:</b>	Employment Act of 2007
<b>Tanzania:</b>	Employment and Labour Relations Act (ERLA) No. 6 & 7 of 2004
<b>Uganda:</b>	Employment Act No.6 of 2006
<b>Zambia:</b>	Minimum Wages and Conditions of Employment Act (CAP 276) of 2002

These laws contain many elements such as:

- \* minimum wages
- \* hours of work
- \* paid leave and public holidays
- \* sick leave
- \* minimum age
- \* maternity/paternity rights
- \* the right to a written contract of employment and a pay-slip
- \* termination of contract
- \* redundancy pay
- \* apprenticeship
- \* occupational health and safety
- \* trade union rights



This means that workers do have rights under law.

The first step is to know our rights, and that means finding out what is in the employment laws in our own country.

It is, of course, one thing to have rights under law. It is another to have those rights respected. So, the next step is to know how to claim those rights. This is discussed more on page 46.



### Questions for discussion

- \* What do the employment laws in our country say about the workplace problems which we identified earlier? See pages 33, 37, 38 and 42.
- \* If we do not know, how can we find out?





## All workers, everywhere, have rights

Nearly one hundred years ago, in 1919, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) was founded to promote social justice in the world. The ILO is the part of the United Nations that handles employment issues. It promotes what it calls 'decent work' - good jobs at good wages, good public services, social protection, and social dialogue between governments, employers and unions.

The ILO is the only international body where employers and workers sit as well as national governments. At the ILO, workers are represented by the trade unions. So your voice is represented there by the trade unions of your country and the Global Unions (see page 93).

In the ILO, the three parties negotiate and agree to international standards on work and social policy, called Conventions and Recommendations. They cover many issues such as working hours, maternity rights, health and safety at work, and so on.

Once a Convention is agreed at the ILO, national governments in each country are supposed to 'ratify' it, which means putting it into national law. Of course, it can take a long time and a lot of lobbying from the trade unions to get some governments to do this.

Some standards, however, cover rights that are so important, so 'fundamental', that they apply to all workers, everywhere in the world, whether or not any particular government or employer agrees. They are called the 'Core Conventions' and they are:

- The freedom to form and join trade unions
- The right for trade unions to negotiate with employers
- An end to forced labour
- An end to child labour
- An end to discrimination in the workplace
- Equal pay for equal work

So these are your rights that no-one can argue against. You can use this in your negotiations with your employers and government.

The ILO's main office for East Africa is in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It also has an office in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, that covers Kenya and Uganda too, and another office in Lusaka, Zambia. These offices promote the labour standards, job creation, and other aspects of 'decent work', with research, education, and support for social dialogue between workers (trade unions), governments and employers.

[www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

**ILO on-line databases:** [www.ilo.org/public/english/support/lib/dblist.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/support/lib/dblist.htm)

Including:

- **Travail and Natlex** on conditions of work and employment laws in individual countries
- **ILOLex** on international Conventions and Recommendations



## Where to go for help

Workers in dispute with their employer can take up cases, for example with local labour offices (where they exist) or through the industrial courts. But it is very difficult to do this as individuals, or even in small groups. Workers have very little power compared with employers.

### ●●● Trade unions

The most effective way of claiming your rights is to organise in trade unions. Unions have the right to represent workers in negotiations with employers and the government.

Where there is an unresolved dispute between workers and an employer, unions can take the matter to the courts or to the labour office. Unions can campaign to raise public awareness and put pressure on employers. (See more on the role of trade unions in Module 6).

There are other potential sources of support for action to resolve employment problems too. These routes are always stronger, though, if workers take them via their trade unions.

### ●●● Government labour inspectors

Most governments have some form of labour or factory inspectorate. Often there is a body to check that occupational health and safety standards are being maintained in workplaces. There may also be officials responsible for checking that employment contracts, wages, social security, and working hours are meeting legal requirements.

In many countries, these bodies are too under-staffed to make regular workplace visits. However, they do exist and may have regional offices as well as national ones. Workers can make a complaint to them.

### ●●● Company code monitors

Many horticulture/flower farms in East Africa are now operating under Codes of Conduct which state they will respect employment law and treat their employees decently. Your farm may sometimes be visited by someone whose task is to monitor how well that code is being implemented. Workers should be able to approach that monitor - without any managers or supervisors present - to report any employment problems you are facing. (See Module 2).

### ●●● Community-based organisations

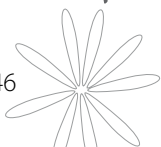
Because the way that you are employed has an impact on your families and communities, you should be able to find allies among women's groups, workers' education associations, other labour support groups, church-based groups, and so on.

### ●●● ILO offices

The ILO has offices in various African countries (see page 45). In the ILO African office in Addis Ababa, there are officials from the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV). Their role is to strengthen independent and democratic trade unions, and they carry out training and capacity-building.



**Such organisations can help you have your rights as workers and citizens respected.**





## ACTIVITY

### An Action Plan to tackle our employment problems

Use the notes gathered from your earlier discussions (see page 33) where you identified the most pressing employment problems you face, and the arguments you can use to persuade others.

- Check whether you wish to revise your priority demands
- Check whether you have more arguments to use
- Develop an action plan to take these issues up:
  - Whether you need to do more to persuade more workers to join in and, if so, how you will do this
  - Who to approach with your demands (for example, which farm managers, or government representatives), and which arguments you will use to persuade them
  - Who to approach for support (particularly in the trade union but also in the community), and which arguments you will use with them
  - What tasks need doing to make the plan work
  - Who from amongst you will take up which tasks
  - When you will take these actions.

### *Workers' Rights are Human Rights!*

It is **every worker's** right – woman or man –  
to be free of discrimination and to equal opportunities:  
to have her/his human rights respected  
so as to realise her/his full potential.



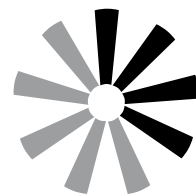
Remember this when arguing for better pay, proper jobs,  
skills training, promotion, and so on.



## NOTES

[illegible]






# 4 OUR WORKPLACES MUST BE SAFE AND HEALTHY

## Aims

To help farms worker and union representatives become:

- More aware about the health and safety risks they may face at work, in particular from the chemicals that they use.
-  ● Better able to identify hazards and take action to prevent or reduce the risks.
- More aware of the preventative and control measures that can and should be taken by employers, and encourage them to organise to make sure this happens.



## Notes for facilitators

*In this module, we focus on the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) hazards commonly found on horticultural farms, especially in flower farming. We look at how farm workers can work together to learn about the risks they face, and then try to prevent or minimise them.*

*Many workers are not aware of the health and safety hazards, or of their rights not to be put at such risk. Also, unemployment puts workers in a very difficult situation, forcing many to work in very poor conditions just for survival. Many employers put more effort into making profits than in their workers' health, safety and welfare. Some even blame workers for accidents or ill-health because they do not want to take responsibility.*

*So it is very important to help workers become more knowledgeable and informed about the real hazards at the workplace and how they can organise to overcome the risks they face.*

*Occupational Health and Safety involves some very technical detail especially, for example, concerning chemicals. So that participants can carry out some of the activities, facilitators will need to prepare the technical information for them, using the sources we suggest.*

## What is OHS?

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) concerns the social, mental and physical well-being of workers. An ideal workplace is one that is free of ill-health and accidents. It is the responsibility of employers, the government, and the trade unions to ensure a healthy and safe working environment for all workers.

OHS involves:

- \* Promoting and maintaining the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of all workers.
- \* Preventing adverse effects on the health of workers and protecting us from poor working conditions.
- \* Proper planning, design and adaptation of work to suit the physical and mental needs of workers, rather than putting workers in hazardous situations.

## Occupational Health and Safety Hazards

OHS hazards are risks or dangers in the workplace that endanger one's health or personal safety, causing ill-health, injury or even death.

They can happen in an instant, such as being scalded by boiling liquid, or bitten by a snake when tending plants.

Or their effects can be felt long afterwards. For example, workers exposed to pesticides can suffer from tuberculosis or cancer many years after they have left the job. Some chemicals result in miscarriages, premature births, malformed babies, or contaminated breast milk in women, plus impotency in men.

This is why OHS should be taken seriously by all.

*I have worked in this flower farm for three years now as a sprayer. During the spraying, I sweat a lot and by the end of the day I get exhausted. When I go home I just want to have enough rest so that I can have strength to work the next day. Before I came to work in this flower farm I was a strong young man but now I have lost my 'power' as a man.*

A young male worker from a farm along Entebbe Road, Uganda

*The buyer may have set a deadline for the farm to meet, and so some workers must pick the roses when others are spraying just nearby. In the packing sheds, workers have no protective clothing but the thorns prick the workers' arms, and carry the residues of pesticides into their blood. Also, in this era of HIV-Aids, you never know.*

Union organiser on farms in Zambia



## ACTIVITY

### What are the workplace hazards that we face?

Below are two 'mapping' activities which workers can do together to help identify the risks that they are facing in their workplace.

Once workers have identified the risks, the information on the following pages can be used to gain more understanding, and then develop a plan of action.

### Body mapping

*"When one person has an ache, it's an ache. When everyone has it is almost certain it is an occupational health problem. Body mapping allows you the chance to see if 'your problem' is really a work problem."*

Hazards magazine, UK

- Get together in a group of women who share the same or similar job.
- Draw the outline of a woman's body, and ask each woman to place on it a mark where her body aches or hurts. The facilitator can offer suggestions from the following pages.
- Use the results to see whether a number of you are suffering similar symptoms.
- If so, discuss what the reasons might be and any ideas for solutions – using the information in this manual.
- Take the outline and your ideas to your union and your employer.

#### Body mapping fact sheet:

[www.hazards.org/diyresearch/bodymapping.pdf](http://www.hazards.org/diyresearch/bodymapping.pdf)

### Workplace mapping

- Get together in a group of women who share the same workplace.
- Draw a plan of the workplace.
- On the plan, mark where the unsafe areas are, using different colours to mark different types of problems. The facilitator can offer suggestions from the following pages.
- Use the plan to consider how safety could be improved (such as better design of buildings and vehicles, safer machinery, better lighting, noise prevention, security cameras and guards, training for work colleagues, etc.)
- Take the plan and your ideas to your union and your employer.

#### Workplace mapping fact sheet:

[www.losh.ucla.edu/losh/resources-publications/fact-sheets.html](http://www.losh.ucla.edu/losh/resources-publications/fact-sheets.html)



## Types of workplace hazard

**Chemical Hazards:** These are very common on flower farms, particularly from pesticides (see more on the pages that follow).

**Physical Hazards:** Threats include unguarded machinery, moving parts or vehicles, noise, very low or high temperatures, poor lighting, vibration, sharp objects (knives, nails, de-thorning machines, and sorting machines), pressure bursts or leaks, poor electrical installation, slippery floors, debris on floors, or radiation.

**Biological Hazards:** These come from living organisms such as bacteria and viruses which, if they come into contact with the human body, can cause infections and sometimes serious illness. Sources include infestations of insects or animals like snakes, rats, bees, cockroaches, as well as fungi, pollen, thorns, etc.

**Psychological Hazards:** These come as a result of stress and strain at work, for example, working long hours without a break, isolated work, night shifts, casual labour, repetitive and strenuous work, or sexual harassment.

**Ergonomic Hazards:** These happen where there are badly designed machines or tools, or hazardous work practices such as standing for long hours, poor work posture, or dangerous lifting of heavy loads.

COMMON HAZARDS ON FLOWER FARMS:

- Pesticides
- Extreme temperatures
- Working for long hours without a break, which can cause accidents

“ I worked as a sprayer when nitric acid splashed onto my hands and eyes, and burnt me severely. My right eye cannot see any more and the left eye also cannot see very well.

I was rushed to a hospital in Entebbe and given first aid, and then referred to hospital in Kampala. After some time, the problem worsened and I was taken by management to an eye clinic where the farm doctor assured me that I will not lose my eyesight. However, the pain in my eyes continued. A specialist doctor examined me and put me on medication. He recently told me that my right eye will never work again, and he promised to recommend some compensation for me.

The farm management has never sympathised with me. I'm being forced to work as a Scout in a greenhouse and yet the bright light there causes me much pain and I cannot see well with the remaining eye. At night I cannot sleep because of too much pain in the eyes. I have nowhere to go and am forced to accept work, and yet the conditions are bad for me. I have five children and a wife to look after. ”

A man working on a flower farm in Uganda





“Each chemical has its own toxicity, and we have seen women with rough, black patches, and rashes all over their skin. One said, ‘which man will want to marry me like this?’”

Union educator on farms in Kenya

## Toxic chemicals

Exposure to chemicals is one of the greatest hazards for horticulture/flower workers, though workers are often not told about this.

Commercial farms use a wide range of chemicals:

- \* to kill pests (pesticides, insecticides, rodenticides against rats/mice, molluscides against snails)
- \* to combat diseases (fungicides)
- \* to reduce the presence of weeds (herbicides)
- \* to feed the plants (fertilisers)
- \* to process/store products (for example, preservatives, drying agents and dyes)
- \* to clean equipment and premises (such as disinfectants).

Chemicals used on farms come in several forms:

- **Solids** in the form of paste, pellets, or powder. They can cause poisoning when they get onto the skin or are taken in through the mouth. They can be used directly or dissolved, for example in water, to make a liquid, or heated to produce a gas or vapour (see below). Some can be even more dangerous when changed into dust, vapour or liquid.
- **Polyurethane foam is safe in its solid form, but gives off deadly gases when it burns.**
- **Liquids** are the most commonly used form of chemicals and many are hazardous. They can be absorbed into the body through the skin, go into the blood stream, and travel to organs where they can cause a lot of damage.
- **Gases** are chemical substances in vapour form. Some can be easily detected by their colour or smell, but some cannot. When sprayed, some pesticides give off vapour which, if inhaled, is highly poisonous. The effects may not be noticed for a long time - a worker can suffer from lung cancer 20-30 years after exposure to cadmium pesticides. Gaseous chemicals can also be flammable or explosive, exposing a worker to risk of burns or death.



**Carbon monoxide is not detectable by sight or smell, but a worker exposed to it may suffer from headaches, nausea, burns, unconsciousness, or even die.**





## TIP

If you do not know the names of the chemicals you are using, look at the labels on the containers in which they arrive at the farm.

## ACTIVITY:

### Are we using dangerous chemicals?

1. Working in small groups, list down the names of the chemicals used on your farm, and the name of the manufacturer.

There are usually three sorts of name on the label:

- manufacturer's name, for example 'Syngenta'
- common name of the chemical, for example 'Paraquat'
- chemical name: for example '2,4, Dichlorophenoxyacetic Acid'.

It is the common name that you usually use to check the hazards of the chemical.

There is more information about reading chemical labels at:

[www.sustainablefood.com/grower/pestapplication/label.html](http://www.sustainablefood.com/grower/pestapplication/label.html)

If you don't find the information you need on the labels, ask someone in Supplies Department or management to provide you with a list.

2. Check these names that you have gathered against the information on dangerous pesticides provided by your facilitator, or in these databases:

**Pesticides Action Network:** [www.pesticideinfo.org/Search\\_Chemicals.jsp](http://www.pesticideinfo.org/Search_Chemicals.jsp)  
**World Health Organisation** list of pesticide hazards: [www.inchem.org/pages/pds.html](http://www.inchem.org/pages/pds.html)

**International Programme on Chemical Safety**, 'Chemical Safety Training Modules', Annexes 4-6: [//actrav.itcilo.org/actrav-english/telearn/osh/kemi/ctmmmain.htm](http://actrav.itcilo.org/actrav-english/telearn/osh/kemi/ctmmmain.htm)

3. If you find that you are using dangerous – or even banned – chemicals, together take this up with management, your trade union, and others such as environmental campaigners and the media. Remember: it is your right to be protected from such hazards at work.

**Uganda:** The following chemicals are found on horticultural farms:

Insecticides:	<u>temik/aldicarb</u> (WHO1a), <i>methomex/methomyl/Fenamiphos</i> (WHO1b)
Nematicides:	<i>fenmiphos/fenamiphos</i> (WHO1b)
Fungicides:	mancozeb, florissant/aluminium sulphate, hortisan/quaternary, meltatox/dodemorph acetate, cadusafos (WHO1b), <i>thiofanate-methyl</i> (WHO1b)
Herbicides:	glyphogan/glyphosate, diurexSC/diuron

**Tanzania:** Insecticides: aldicarb (nematicide), *carbaryl*, *cypermethrin*, *diazinon*, *endosulfan*, *lambda cyhalothrin*, *permethrin*, *profenofos*. Fungicides: mancozeb, triforine.

**Ethiopia:** Flower farms have imported 96 types of insecticides and nematicides and 105 types of fungicides; of these, 37 have not been registered in the country.

Underlined = extremely hazardous. *Italics* = moderately hazardous. As listed by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Data from: a chemical list compiled by the Ugandan Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries. See UWEA, August 2008. Also Pesticides Action Network (PAN) UK, 'Pesticide News', No.82, December 2008.





## How chemicals enter the body

When chemicals come into contact with the surface of the human body – skin, eyes, nose and throat – this can cause irritation, rash, blisters, burns, etc. But chemicals can also enter the body and do deep damage.

### THE SKIN:

Chemicals can be absorbed through skin pores. From there, they go into the bloodstream and are carried to organs such as the liver and kidneys, which they can damage. When high temperatures and humidity prevail, the skin pores open wider and chemicals enter the body faster.

**Workers who do not wear proper protective clothing when spraying, mixing, or storing chemicals are at great risk.**

**Spraying near to where other workers are harvesting is very dangerous; it puts those workers who are not protected at very high risk. Spraying must not be done simultaneously with harvesting.**

**Sometimes workers think that these chemicals can help to heal wounds; but applying them to the skin is very dangerous and should not be done.**

### THE LUNGS: (inhalation)

Chemicals in the form of gases, dust, vapours, and fumes can enter the body by breathing them in. They can find their way deep into the lungs, and cause breathing problems or lung diseases.

**Workers are at risk when they smell contaminated flowers or spray while facing into the wind.**

### THE MOUTH: (ingestion)

Dangerous chemicals can get into our digestive system. The stomach has certain acids that can neutralise or destroy some chemicals. But others can be absorbed very quickly from the digestive tract into the bloodstream and go on to vital organs such as the kidneys and liver.

**It is very dangerous to mix chemicals using bare hands.**

**It is dangerous to eat in a hazardous workplace – especially if you have handled chemicals and then not washed your hands before eating.**

**Containers used to store chemicals should never be used as household containers.**

### THE EYES:

When chemicals come into contact with the eyes they can cause; irritation, damage or total blindness.

**A female store keeper in one of the flower farms in Mukono district, Uganda, was exposed to chemicals for a long time. Eventually, she became mentally ill and blind.**

**Workers should wear a face mask or shield when spraying or mixing chemicals Dust masks are useless in this situation.**

Union representatives should make sure that workers wear the proper protective clothing (see page 56).

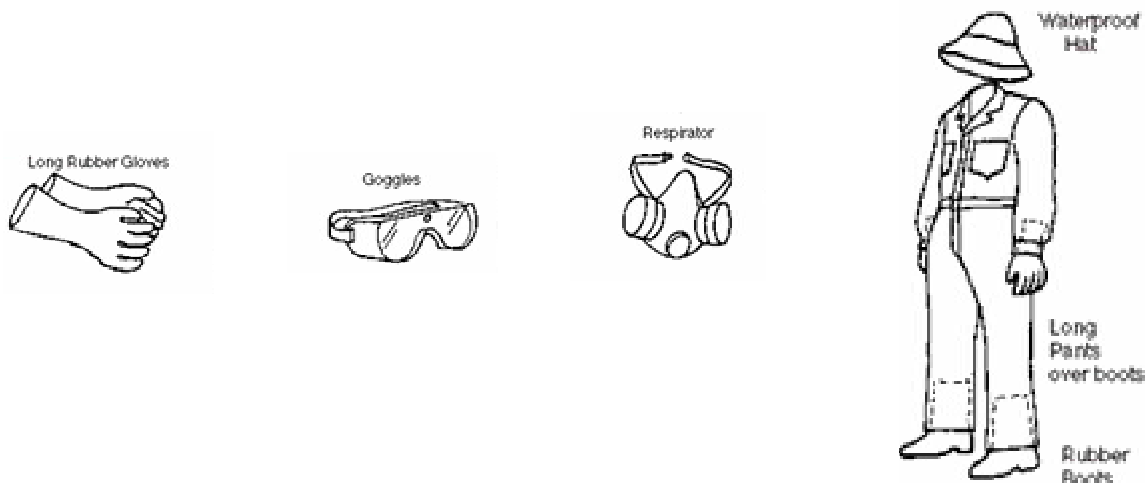


“ I have been working as a harvester for three years now. From the day I started, I have never been given gloves. I don't have overalls, and not even gumboots. I'm affected by chemicals simply because sometimes they spray the flowers in the morning and after one or two hours we are forced to go back to the greenhouse. You harvest the flowers with one hand, and the other arm is to hold the flowers, with no protective clothing at all. Look at my arms - they are now rough and black because of chemicals. ”

A woman flower harvester on a farm in Uganda

**For information on dangerous chemicals used in Uganda, see page 54.**

## Protective Clothing and Equipment



### Coveralls

Wear long sleeved coveralls over full length pants and long-sleeved shirts. Make sure the coveralls are closed at the neckline and wrists.

Remove your coveralls as soon as you have finished your pesticide activities.

Remove them immediately if they become wet through with pesticide. Wear waterproof clothing if you might get wet during pesticide application.

Some disposable coveralls are suitable for pesticide use. Check with your supplier to see which ones can be used for pesticide application.

When removing disposable coveralls, take care not to contaminate the inside if you will wear them again.

Between wearing, hang them in a well ventilated area away from other clothing.

Do not launder disposable coveralls. But do wash clothing worn under disposable coveralls as you would other clothing worn during pesticide use.

Replace with a new coverall when severe pilling (balls on the surface), rips or holes appear.

To discard, place in a plastic garbage bag and take to a landfill site. Do not burn.





## Chemical Effects

Workers must be very careful in handling chemicals because:

- \* Some chemicals are **highly toxic** – they can cause severe effects even with very low exposure over a short period.
- \* Exposure to **large amounts** of chemicals, whether highly poisonous or not, can cause very severe effects.
- \* Exposure over a **long period** is also very dangerous: a worker exposed to hazardous chemicals for a long time is likely to suffer much more severe effects than one who is less exposed. A standard time for work where chemicals are being used should be set and strictly observed.
- \* Spraying **during windy conditions** puts the sprayers at very high risk as wind allows easy entry of chemicals into the body through breathing and unprotected body parts. Also **when humidity is high** and high temperatures prevail, the skin pores open wider, making the entry of chemicals into the body much easier.

Some effects are **acute**, occurring immediately, such as a skin reaction.

Other effects are **chronic**, appearing and lasting a long time after the exposure to the hazardous chemical. They include:

Cancer – some take 20-30 years to develop

Miscarriages and still births

Sterility and impotency in men

Liver and bone damage

Heart problems

Brain damage

Damage to the nervous system

Asthma and emphysema (breathing difficulties and associated heart problems).

Some industrial chemicals have both acute and chronic poisoning effects.

Effects can be **localised** to one part of the body - such as an acid burn on the skin, or irritation in the lungs after inhaling ammonia, chlorine, welding fumes or exhaust fumes.

But they can also be **systemic**: a hazardous chemical can enter a particular organ or part of the body, for example the bones, brain, liver, kidney, or bladder, and do widespread damage, even leading to death. For example:

Anaemia, a disorder of the blood – caused by many chemicals such as lead, beryllium, cadmium, mercury compounds and benzene.

Leukaemia, a form of blood cancer – caused by benzene which damages the cells that form blood.

Liver damage – caused by benzene, DDT, dioxin phenol.

Kidney damage – caused by carbon tetrachloride, mercury, cadmium, carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide.

**Effects of TOXIC CHEMICALS – Signs and Symptoms**

Mild poisoning	Moderate poisoning	Severe poisoning
Headache Dizziness Weakness/fatigue Nausea/vomiting Diarrhoea Excessive sweating Unclear vision Chest pain Watery eyes/nose Salivation Muscle pain/cramps Skin rashes	Unusual weakness Difficulty in walking/talking/concentrating Confusion Muscle twitching Small eye pupils	Skin turning bluish Very tiny eye pupils Breathing difficulties Involuntary urination or defecation Frothing from nose or mouth Convulsions Unconsciousness or coma Death

**Who is affected most?**

- ✱ An **unhealthy worker** is more likely to be more affected by chemical poisoning than a strong and healthy one.
- ✱ **Pregnant women** are especially vulnerable for themselves and their unborn children.

Some employers respond by removing workers who show signs of poor health or are pregnant. They replace them with workers who they think are more resistant to hazards (sometimes they even call them “super-workers”). This is the wrong response. Employers should not put any workers at risk.

“Regular medical examinations must never be used by the employer to eliminate ‘vulnerable’ workers, such as women of childbearing age.”

‘Your Health and Safety at Work: Chemicals in the Workplace’, ILO, 1996:  
<http://actrav.itcilo.org/actrav-english/telearn/osh/kemi/ciwmain.htm>



There is also evidence of employers using **workers on short-term contracts** to do dangerous work without giving them the right protection. These workers may develop symptoms of ill-health after their contract has ended, making it easier for employers to avoid their responsibilities.

In **Tanzania**, non-permanent workers were often not given personal protective clothing (PPE). Employers made the excuse that these workers were “unreliable”. Similar practices have been found in **Uganda**.

**ACTIVITY****Are workers on our farm suffering effects from chemicals?**

- Look at the table ‘Effects of Toxic Chemicals – Signs and Symptoms’ above.
- Did workers report any of these symptoms when doing the ‘body-mapping’ or ‘workplace-mapping’ exercises (see page 51).
- If so, which workers were they – doing what work, men or women, on what type of employment contract?
- Discuss how you can use this analysis to take action together.







## Extreme Temperatures

Workers' health can be affected when exposed to extreme temperatures, and this is common in certain locations in flower farms.

**High temperatures:** In greenhouses, the temperature is generally 30-36°C. When workers wear PPE there, they experience even greater heat. High humidity in greenhouses, caused by irrigation and spraying, also increases the threat to workers' health because it causes skin pores to open wider, making entry of chemicals via the skin easier. High temperatures affect women more because they tend to sweat less.

Other sources of high temperatures are direct sunlight and work equipment/machinery.

### Effects of HIGH TEMPERATURES – Signs and Symptoms

Fatigue and exhaustion

Heat stroke, which can lead to death if untreated

Dehydration, which can lead to impotency in men

**Low temperatures:** Cold temperatures are found in coldrooms used to store produce, and in transport vehicles, as well as during cold weather conditions.

### Effects of COLD TEMPERATURES – Signs and Symptoms

Pneumonia

Asthma

Impotency in men

Numbness

Feverishness in pregnant women

Exposure to extreme temperatures for long periods poses a very high risk to workers' health.

**The longest time a worker should work in extreme temperatures is only 2 hours a day and for a period of 4 – 6 days**

**Where there are extreme temperatures, the work should be rotated between different workers.**





## Long working hours



“ You bend the whole day while sowing or weeding, and at the end of the day you have backache... Sometimes you feel very tired due to standing for such a long time. ”

Woman worker on a farm in Tanzania

“ I wish they would provide some seats or stands to support our backs. ”

Woman worker from a farm in Kenya, speaking to an international conference in Nairobi, September 2009

Long working hours are a health and safety hazard because they increase the frequency of accidents, as well putting great strain on workers. On top of this, they are bad for family life.

### Effects of LONG WORKING HOURS – Signs and Symptoms

Dizziness  
Fatigue  
Backaches  
Headaches  
Frequent accidents at work

Workers should have at least three breaks during normal working hours. These breaks help workers to access fresh air and avoid chemical exposure for long hours.

## Training for workers

Employers are responsible for training workers in health and safety issues. For example, not only should they provide PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) but also train workers how to use it properly.

Only 15% of 150 workers from 15 small flower farms in **Kenya** said they had any training on health and safety. And yet 57% said they had suffered from work-related ailments.



## Question for discussion

- ✿ How can we make sure that employers fulfill their responsibilities to provide us with proper health and safety equipment and training in how to use it?





## What trade unions can do

Occupational health and safety is one of the primary issues for trade unions to take up with management and include in their negotiations for Collective Bargaining Agreements.

Certain aspects are very important to include:

- \* A gender perspective, because OHS hazards can affect men and women differently, and there is a great risk to pregnant women and unborn children
- \* That employers give the proper PPE and OHS training to the workers
- \* That all workers are covered, including those on non-permanent contracts.

### LABOR CONDITIONS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

#### Excerpt from TPAWU Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), Tanzania:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The employer shall bear responsibilities of protecting the health of workers and that of the environment hence.</li> <li>● Shall establish a policy on OHS and working environment in line with ILO Conventions.</li> <li>● Shall adhere to international standards and codes of conduct relevant to the cut flowers industry.</li> <li>● Shall organise work in such a way as not to endanger the safety and health of employees.</li> <li>● Shall avoid use of banned pesticides and adhere to TPRI regulations in regard to chemicals in the higher risk group class 1A and 1B.</li> <li>● Shall provide pesticides and safety information to employees in Kiswahili. High risk areas such as spraying yards; construction sites shall have optimum supervision.</li> <li>● Shall maintain an accident and health hazard record.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shall allow the establishment of OHS committees and shall facilitate their activities.</li> <li>● Shall provide functional First Aid Kit on the premises and provide appropriate training to the employees for their use.</li> <li>● Shall provide free medical service and regular medical examination to its employees by way of its clinic as recommended by the company's medical officer/doctor.</li> <li>● Shall provide clean and safe drinking water during working hours at reachable distance.</li> <li>● Shall provide uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to its employees.</li> <li>● Shall ensure safe disposal of pesticides and their containers.</li> <li>● Shall ensure that waste water is treated or disposed in a way that does not endanger employees and the environment.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



## Government responsibilities

It is the responsibility of our governments to pass laws and regulations that set the health and safety standards which employers should abide by – and make sure they are properly implemented. There are international Conventions and Recommendations to form the basis for such laws and practices (see opposite page). OHS laws in countries of East/Southern Africa include:

### Uganda:

National Environment Statute No.4 of 1995: Section 56 has guidelines for management of toxic and hazardous chemicals and materials. See also the Control of Agricultural Chemicals Statute, 1989.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act No.9 of 2006, every employer is required by law to establish a safety and health committee at the workplace. Each such committee should have 20 workers on it and their role is to act on behalf of the whole workforce, keeping under review the measures the employer is taking to ensure their safety and health. Workers should report cases to and consult with these safety representatives.

### Tanzania:

Industrial and Consumer Chemicals (Management and Control) Act, 2003 (No. 3)

Governments should also have a department of health and safety inspectors whose job it is to visit workplaces, unannounced, and check that the legal standards are being met. There are usually not enough inspectors, however. Horticultural/flower farms are noted for their use of hazardous chemicals and so government inspectors should inspect farms.



## Questions for discussion

- ❖ How can we find out more about the national laws in our country applying to health and safety at work?
- ❖ How often is our farm visited by a government health and safety inspector? Can we, or our trade union, raise the problems we face with them?
- ❖ What pressure can we put on the government to improve our health and safety at work?



“Investing in health, particularly the health of the poor people is central to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).”

World Health Organisation African regional operation: [www.afro.who.int](http://www.afro.who.int)

## WORLD DAY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

28 APRIL EACH YEAR

A day to take action to raise public awareness of health and safety issues, for example through the press and media.





## International standards

As well as national laws in each country, there are international instruments to protect workers and their rights. These are agreed by governments, employers, and trade unions together in the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (see page 45).

Some international Conventions cover health and safety issues, and some are specifically for agricultural workers, including:

- **ILO Convention No.170 (1990) on safety in the use of chemicals at work**

Plus its supporting ILO Recommendation No.177 (1990).

Ratified by Tanzania, but not yet Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda or Zambia.

Article 2: **“Hazardous chemicals shall... be labelled, in a way easily understandable to the workers, so as to provide essential information regarding their classification, the hazards they present and the safety precautions to be observed.”**

- **ILO Convention No.155 (1981) on occupational safety and health**

Ratified by Ethiopia, but not yet Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda or Zambia.

Article 16: **“Employers shall be required to provide, where necessary, adequate protective clothing and protective equipment to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, risk of accidents or of adverse effects on health.”**

It is also the employers' responsibility to make sure that workers have adequate training so that workers know how to use protective clothing and equipment properly.

- **ILO Convention No.184 (2001) on safety and health in agriculture**

Plus its supporting Recommendation ILO Recommendation No.192 (2001)

Not yet ratified by any East African government.

The Convention covers:

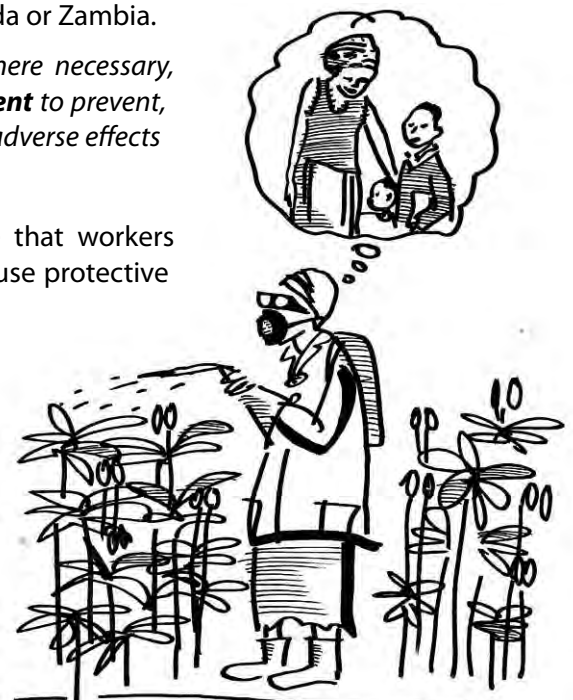
**Risk assessments** on equipment, chemicals and work activities

**The rights of workers to be consulted**, to have safety representatives, and to remove themselves from danger without victimisation

**Accommodation standards**, which is important for the security of women against sexual harassment

**Seasonal and temporary workers.**

Article 18: **“Measures shall be taken to ensure that the special needs of women agricultural workers are taken into account in relation to pregnancy, breastfeeding and reproductive health.”**



All ILO instruments, and information about them, can be found through the ILOLEX database at: [www.ilo.org/ilolex](http://www.ilo.org/ilolex) or by contacting the ILO office in your country.





## Company Codes of Conduct

There are also international codes and voluntary certification systems that apply to horticulture (see Module 2) which include health and safety standards.

The strongest of these codes is the one developed by the international trade union movement and concerned NGOs for the cut flower industry – the ICC, see below.

### International Code of Conduct for the Production of Cut-Flowers (ICC)

#### Extracts

#### 5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

A safe and hygienic working environment shall be provided. Companies shall provide free and appropriate protective clothing and equipment and comply with internationally recognised health and safety standards. (ILO Convention No. 170).

Workers and their organisation must be consulted, trained and allowed to investigate safety issues. There should be regular monitoring of workers health and safety.

Companies shall supply drinking water; provide clean toilets and offer showers and washing facilities.

Where housing is provided, it should comply at least with the minimum standard for size, ventilation, cooking facilities, water supply and sanitary facilities. (ILO Convention 110, Articles 85-88).

#### 6. PESTICIDES AND CHEMICALS

Every company should assess the risks of chemicals used and apply measures to prevent any damage to the health of their workers.

Companies shall record and reduce pesticides and fertilizer use by adequate techniques and methods. No banned, highly toxic (WHO1) or carcinogenic pesticide and chemical should be used.

Safety instructions and re-entry intervals must be strictly observed and monitored. Spraying, handling and storing pesticides and chemicals should be done by specially trained people with suitable equipment.

Stores, apparatus and equipment must be clean, safe, handy and conforming to international standards.

[www.ilo.org/dyn/basi/docs/F272/Cut%20Flowers%20Code.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/basi/docs/F272/Cut%20Flowers%20Code.pdf)

“Possibly the most advanced voluntary codes are the Kenya Flower Council's (KFC) and Florverde, the Colombian flower exporters' scheme, but **both lack independent verification**... plantations can be given advanced notice of inspections, coach their workers about what to say, and do not allow workers to speak to auditors without a supervisor present.”

Pesticides Action Network (PAN) UK, 'Pesticide News', No.82, December 2008, (emphasis added)





## CHECKLIST:

### Steps towards a healthy and safe workforce

- ☐ Insist that the employer provides proper protective gear – such as gloves and masks when handling chemicals – along with training in how to use it; make sure all workers use it too
- ☐ Never spray flowers near where other flowers are being harvested; refuse to do jobs such as weeding, picking, sorting, near spraying or immediately afterwards
- ☐ Never re-use chemical containers for household use
- ☐ Wash your hands after using chemicals, especially before eating
- ☐ Collect the names of chemicals being used in the workplace off labels, for example on drums, and check them against the list of toxic ones (seek help with this from the union or government inspectors if necessary)
- ☐ Gather information from workers about the risks they face (such as through workplace mapping), or the symptoms they show (such as through body mapping, see page 51); draw up remedial plans, and take these to the union, employers, and buyers
- ☐ Investigate any complaints from workers, and take them up with the union and the employer
- ☐ Make sure that workers do not work in a highly hazardous situation for a long time
- ☐ Insist on health and safety training for workers
- ☐ Elect workers' health and safety representatives to negotiate with management
- ☐ Make sure there are frequent medical check-ups for workers, with any necessary follow-up treatments
- ☐ Find out who in your government and union are responsible for health and safety inspections; ask for the results of any inspections done by the employer, union or government inspectors
- ☐ Find out if the buyers of your farm's flowers are operating to an international code or certification system which includes health and safety standards; raise health and safety issues with buyers' representatives whenever possible
- ☐ Lobby your government to ratify ILO Conventions concerned with health and safety at work
- ☐ Raise public awareness about the impact of chemical use on the workers, and the local environment such as water supplies.

#### TIP



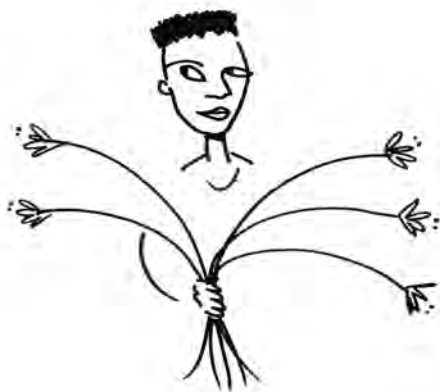
**Taking up health and safety issues is a key way to impress workers that organising together can resolve problems in the workplace and elsewhere.**



## ACTIVITY:

### To develop an Action Plan against the hazards we face

1. Working together, summarise the information you have gathered:
  - The major health and safety hazards that we face in our workplace
  - What can we do to minimise the risks, especially from chemicals
  - What further information we need, and where we might get it
  - Who might support our fight for a healthier and safer workplace
  - What arguments can we use to support our case.
2. Discuss together the list of actions on page 65, and draw up an action plan.
  - Prioritise which steps you should take immediately
  - Decide which other steps you will take later, and say when
  - Say who should take which steps
  - Consider who else will help you take these steps.



## SOME ARGUMENTS WE CAN USE

- It is a myth that only men do dirty and dangerous jobs: women's reproductive capacity is at risk from chemicals, and women are more likely to be on precarious employment contracts with less protection from the laws that do exist.
- Chemicals and other conditions, like high temperatures, have an impact on male reproductive systems too, on sperm count, for example. More activities by and for women workers on health and safety at work could encourage more men to take these issues up for themselves too.
- Dangers to workers are linked to dangers to the public and the environment.

From: 'All for One = One for All', IUF, 2007: [www.iufdocuments.org/women/2008/All%20for%20One.pdf](http://www.iufdocuments.org/women/2008/All%20for%20One.pdf)

We discuss the wider environmental impact of the farms in Module 5.

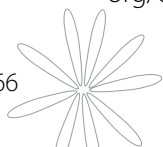


## FOR MORE INFORMATION

'OHS Guidelines for Horticultural Farms', UWEA, Uganda, August 2008, especially chapter 6 on pesticides, and chapter 8 on guiding principles for environmental protection.

'Harvest of Sorrow: Farmworkers and Pesticides', training videos and manuals for US farmworkers, Pesticides Education Centre, US: [www.pesticides.org](http://www.pesticides.org)

Hazards Magazine, UK, with links to many resources on OHS 'Do-It-Yourself Research' for workers: [www.hazards.org/diyresearch](http://www.hazards.org/diyresearch)





## Where to find more information/help

### National bodies concerned with OSH activities in your country. Check for:

Your Government OSH agency

For example, in **Tanzania**, it is the Commission for Occupational Health and Safety (OSHA) under the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Trade union health and safety officers

Academics specialising in OSH

Relevant NGOs

### International bodies active in your country. Check for:

#### World Health Organisation (WHO)

The WHO provides technical support to countries in Africa, including 'community-based projects', a regional Occupation Health and Safety Newsletter, and joint work with the ILO on OHS: [www.afro.who.int](http://www.afro.who.int)

#### International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The **ILO SafeWork** programme has many OSH information and training materials: [www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/training/english/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/training/english/index.htm)

Training modules on chemicals in the workplace and other useful information: '**Your Health and Safety at Work: Chemicals in the Workplace**', ILO, <http://actrav.itcilo.org/actrav-english/telearn/osh/kemi/chemical.htm>

'**Chemical Safety Training Modules**', International Programme on Chemical Safety: <http://actrav.itcilo.org/actrav-english/telearn/osh/kemi/ctmmain.htm>

#### IUF global union federation for workers on farms and plantations

The IUF has a **Global Pesticides Project**, including activities in East African countries. Contact: IUF Health, Safety and Environment Coordinator, Omara Amuko, from NUPAW, Uganda.

**Pesticides Risk Reduction e-Programme**, on-line resources at: [www.healthandsafetypractices.co.uk/IUF/pesticides/](http://www.healthandsafetypractices.co.uk/IUF/pesticides/)

'**Health, Safety and Environment**', a series of trade union education manuals for agricultural workers, ILO and IUF, 2004: [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed.../wcms\\_111413.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed.../wcms_111413.pdf)

#### Pesticides Action Network (PAN)

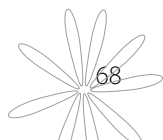
A network of 600+ non-governmental organisations, institutions and individuals in 90+ countries working to replace the use of hazardous pesticides with ecologically sound and socially just alternatives. [www.pan-international.org](http://www.pan-international.org)

**PAN Africa** is coordinated from Senegal in West Africa and publishes a newsletter 'Pesticides & Alternatives': [www.pan-afrique.org](http://www.pan-afrique.org)

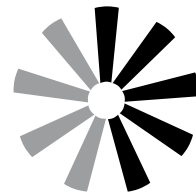
'**Flowers: a Tale of Beauty and the Beast**', Pesticides Action Network (PAN), UK, Factsheet, December 2008. PAN in the UK campaigns to put pressure on supermarkets to stop allowing the use of pesticides in their supply chains: [www.pan-uk.org](http://www.pan-uk.org)



## NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.





# 5 THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF OUR FARMS

## Aims

To raise awareness among horticultural workers of:

- the environmental impact of the farms where they work - on themselves, their families and communities, and the wider population, as well as on the air, land and water supplies and other living beings – now and for future generations.



- the action they can take to reduce the potentially harmful effects of the farms where they work, and promote environmental protection.



## Notes for facilitators

*The focus of this module is for farm workers to discuss what 'the environment' is and why it is important, to develop their ideas for steps they can take to help limit environmental damage, and to offer ideas where they can go for more information and support.*

*The workers are encouraged to discuss their own farm and its environmental impact on land, water and the atmosphere. This includes pollution from chemicals used and from wastes such as plastic, as well as emissions caused by the use of energy for production and transport of the produce to consumers far away.*

*These issues are also being discussed in the consuming countries, where there is concern about the negative impacts of the export farming industry, particularly its contribution to climate change. So this is an opportunity for the farm workers to consider their own engagement in those important discussions.*

*The impact on workers' own health is discussed more in Module 4.*



## Questions for discussion

- ❁ What are the main environmental concerns where we live?
- ❁ How do we think the farm where we work affects or impacts on the environment?
- ❁ Are there any negative effects which worry us?





## What are the main environmental problems from our farms?

The main environmental problems related to horticulture farms are:

- \* pollution from chemicals such as pesticides and fertilisers, which is reducing the quality of air, food and water available for humans, animals and plant-life
- \* the high use of water, which may be adding to the drought of recent years
- \* the production of wastes which take many years or even generations to degrade, especially plastic
- \* the use of land and water which might otherwise be farmed to feed the local population, reducing food security
- \* emissions from the energy used by the farms (such as electricity used for cold storage) and from the fuel used in the transport of products to markets in far-off countries, which is contributing to climate change.



## Why is the 'environment' important?

The 'environment' is everything around us, including ourselves. It comprises:

- \* Air, water, soil, light, sound
- \* Life-forms - from micro-organisms, to plants and animals, and humankind
- \* The built environment created by humans – such as buildings, roads, villages, cities, factories, equipment, etc.

We depend on our environment for our food and water supplies, for shelter, and for our health and well-being. We also need to maintain the natural resources we have inherited for future generations to come.

Every day, we are involved in making decisions and taking actions, both individually and together, which have an impact on our environment. We can and should do this positively, to use natural resources in a way that is sustainable. And we have to be actively involved in efforts to reduce the problems that do exist.

The world and all its people and other forms of life are facing a critical moment: the possibility of catastrophic climate change. This has been caused by a build-up of gases such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere, which is trapping heat and resulting in global warming. It is sometimes called the 'Greenhouse Effect'.

That build-up has been caused by human activity, largely in the industrialised countries of North America, Europe, and Japan and now the newly industrialising countries such as China and India. Meanwhile the poor of the world, such as those in Africa, have contributed very little to this situation. However, they – especially women, who are a greater proportion of the poor - will be the most badly affected. The droughts and floods already occurring in parts of Africa are a symptom of climate change.

Most of the necessary changes in behaviour have to take place in those countries which are doing most damage. However in Africa too, we need to make sure that we do not repeat the same disastrous patterns and add to the problems.

Horticultural farms, like any other human activity, have environmental impacts which need to be examined with a clear eye. And where there are problems, these must be addressed.

Farm workers can and should be part of finding solutions to any negative impact of the farms that employ them, not only for themselves, but for their families and for wider communities, now and for future generations. This is summed up by the slogan:

Think Global.

Act Local.





## Toxic chemicals

Commercial farms use a wide range of chemicals (see page 54). In Module 4, we discuss the risks to workers. Some of these chemicals are dangerous to the wider community and the environment too, although their effects may take years to be seen.

For example, some chemicals cause long-term genetic changes; some can reduce human fertility. Some reduce the fertility of soil. Insecticides can kill not only unwanted insects but also bees, on which the world depends to pollinate plants, including food crops.

Such effects threaten biodiversity – the variety of animal and plant life – which in turn again threatens the well-being of humankind. Some are so dangerous that they have been banned internationally (see page 78), and many are subject to national regulation each country. However, some governments are not rigorous in enforcing these laws, allowing companies to use substances in a dangerous and polluting way.

### Ethiopian farms not properly regulated

In 2006, the Ethiopian Agriculture Research Institute (EARI) showed that 18 types of pesticides imported into Ethiopia for use on flower farms were not registered for use (MPS-Code 2006). Nor were 19 imported fungicides. The EARI research led to great concern. Pesticides not only pose hazards to workers; they also impact on the environment – the soil, air and water.

So the National Flower Alliance (NFA) was formed, involving the Forum for the Environment (FfE), the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), the Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA), the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society (EWNHS), the Organisation for Social Justice in Ethiopia (OSJE) and PANOS-Ethiopia. The NFA got involved in government policy initiatives and provided training even for the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). This was needed – a senior EPA official was quoted by the press in 2008 as saying, *"If you put in place compulsory inspection, it will have a cost... The market itself is a regulator"*. A year later, the EPA started to bring in a procedure to assess farms.

Information about pesticides is circulated to the farms by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. However, union research shows that most farms still have no or inadequate strategies to reduce the harm caused by their wastes, for example to nearby Lake Zeway.

From: 'Ethiopian NGOs work to improve conditions for flower producers', Pesticides News, PAN UK, No.82, December 2008: [www.pan-uk.org/pestnews/Issue/pn82/PN82\\_p4-5.pdf](http://www.pan-uk.org/pestnews/Issue/pn82/PN82_p4-5.pdf)

Plus research by NFFPFATU. Also, 'Ethiopian incentives attract floriculture investors', Bloomberg, 2 July 2008: [www.africanagricultureblog.com](http://www.africanagricultureblog.com)



### Questions for discussion

- ❖ Which chemicals are being used at our farm? (If you did the Activities in Module 4, you can use the information gained there.)
- ❖ What do we know about their negative effects on the wider community and the environment?
- ❖ Have we been given training on how to use these chemicals responsibly with regard to the wider environment?





## Impact on water supplies

Water falls as rain from the atmosphere onto the land, the rivers and the ocean, and then evaporates back up again to the atmosphere, and so on, round and round again. But human activity is interfering with this cycle, and we are in danger of damaging water supplies.

Horticultural farms take a lot of water to sustain their growing plants, sometimes so much that it is contributing to lower water levels. This is particularly significant in areas like East Africa where there is already drought from climate change.

Some analysts are now using the concept of 'embedded water' to express the fact that products such as fresh vegetables, fruit and flowers 'contain' the water used in their production. They say that importing countries are effectively importing the water of the country from where the produce comes.



“Each rose stem on sale in the UK produced in Kenya represents 2.7 litres of blue water that was evaporated for its production and 1.3 litres of polluted water in Kenya. ... (The) production of green beans from Africa to the UK uses the equivalent amount of water to supply 13 million Kenyan people for one year.” Kenya is classified as a 'chronically water scarce' country.

From: 'Fair Miles?', 2008

Horticultural farms can also pollute the water supplies, especially if they discharge water contaminated with chemicals (see page 53) and other residues such as traces of heavy metals.

The polluted water is then carried down streams and rivers, and onwards into lakes, wetlands and the sea. It is often unsafe for humans or animals to drink, causing health problems that can show themselves immediately, or over time. Even scientists do not yet know the full impact of releasing such different mixtures of chemicals into the water supply.

One effect is already being felt. Chemical fertilizers and manure effluent can cause toxic blue-green algae and plants like water hyacinth to flourish in the water. They block out the light and reduce the amount of oxygen in the water, meaning that fish and other animal and plant life-forms below the water surface die. This leads to less food for animals and the humans who feed on them.

In **Kenya**, in early 2010 there was huge concern at the sudden death of fish in Lake Naivasha, a lake which is already extremely low due to drought. A local fisherman called Mungai told the press that he and many others living near the shore blame the environmental impact of 30 or so flower farms set up around the lake in the past decade. There was some discussion in the press about whether farms that overuse water from the lake might lose their licences to operate. But Mungai was doubtful, saying "We have tried to complain but nothing can be done because they (the farms) contribute a lot to the Kenyan economy".

From: 'Kenyan flower farms around lake face closure over pollution fears', by Cosmas Butunyi, 28 February 2010, and 'The Standard', Kenya, 8 March 2010: [www.africanagricultureblog.com](http://www.africanagricultureblog.com)





## Impact on land

Polluted water often continues on to farmlands downstream. Chemicals and heavy metals are deposited in the soil but do not break down quickly. They can accumulate and be passed on into the animal and human food chain.

Certain chemicals can also damage soil particles, meaning that the land produces less food.

Other damage to land comes from waste being dumped into landfill sites, or even just thrown away as litter. Plastic and metals take years to degrade, and leave their residues in the soil long after they disappear to the eye.

## Impact on air and the atmosphere

At ground level, the air can be badly affected by poor practices on the farms. The burning of plastic materials such as empty pesticide containers is especially bad as it produces toxic chemicals such as dioxin.

“... haphazard open-air burning of plastic produces dioxins, while the burning of containers produces toxic fumes that may affect workers and surrounding communities.”

Yahya Khamis Msangi, TPAWU, 'Occupational health and safety in the flower industry: the role of international certification systems', WHO African Newsletter on Occupational Health and Safety, No.1, 2007: [www.ttl.fi/Internet/English/Information/Electronic+journals/African+Newsletter](http://www.ttl.fi/Internet/English/Information/Electronic+journals/African+Newsletter)



But the atmosphere above us can also be badly damaged by irresponsible farm activities, contributing to the dangerous climate change that the world is facing.

For example, some chemicals used on farms contribute to global warming. They give off vapours which destroy ozone in the atmosphere - and the loss of ozone is a major reason for the world's changing climate. They include methyl bromide, a pesticide which has been heavily used in cut flower production across the world. The Montreal Protocol (now signed by every country) bans all such chemicals which deplete ozone.

The United Nations environmental and development bodies, UNEP, UNDP and UNIDO, have been promoting phase-out of ozone-depleting chemicals, with research and training activities in **Kenya**, for example.

[www.unep.org/roa/projects\\_programmes/ozone/mb/projects/kenya\\_projects.asp](http://www.unep.org/roa/projects_programmes/ozone/mb/projects/kenya_projects.asp)

The storage and long-distance transport of fresh produce is another area of concern relating to climate change. Because flowers and vegetables soon rot in the African heat, they have to be stored and carried in refrigerated containers, and this uses a lot of energy.

The big companies also demand the goods are moved quickly. Some farm produce is taken by road to seaports, to be loaded onto huge container ships. But most goes to airports, to be moved by plane. The extra weight of refrigerated containers and the speed mean that even more fuel is used.

**Kenya's** largest exporter of vegetables, Homegrown, air-freights produce to the UK every day.



All these journeys contribute not only to air pollution, but also give off dangerous emissions, especially carbon dioxide. The rise in carbon dioxide in the upper atmosphere is a major reason for the world's climate changing and becoming more extreme, for example producing heavier rain in some places, more drought in others.

Scientists now largely agree that the world is heading for potentially disastrous climate change, affecting all eco-systems and all human beings, unless the responsibility to cut emissions is taken very seriously.

Most governments have signed up to various international agreements aimed at combating global warming, including the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and the Copenhagen Accord (2009). Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia are among the signatories. The main polluters – particularly China and the countries of the European Union – have agreed to meet particular targets. However, little progress is being made, as governments and powerful companies are more concerned with economic growth than trying to find imaginative solutions to climate change.

**Currently, each person in the UK is responsible for emitting 9.2 tonnes of carbon a year. The African average is 1 tonne, though the majority of Africans emit far less. It is calculated that a sustainable future is based on 1.8 tonnes for each person in the world.**

As the effects of climate change are felt more and more, pressure will increase on governments and powerful private companies to take action to reduce emissions. It is already coming from concerned consumers in Europe, who are thinking carefully about their own lifestyles and what they buy.

Some consumers are using the concept of '**carbon footprint**' to express the amount of 'greenhouse gases' produced from fossil fuels so as to support their individual day-to-day lives – for cooking, heating, transport, etc. or in the production of their food, clothing, etc.

Another concept is '**embedded carbon**' which means the amount of greenhouse gases used to produce and supply an individual product, and therefore 'in' it. Some retailers are considering 'carbon labelling' to say how much 'embedded carbon' there is in each product.

Some consumers are using the concept of '**food miles**' – the distance that food travels to their plate – and they are deciding to buy more locally-grown produce rather than that which has come from far away.

As awareness of climate change increases among consumers, there is a possibility that retailers will respond by sourcing less from far away. Some retailers are already planning this.

**The UK retailer Sainsburys has a target of 90% of domestically-sourced food.**  
From: 'Fresh Insights'.

Importing fresh vegetables and flowers from Africa is a tiny part of the total emissions of a European country. But it is something that can be relatively easily dropped, especially non-essential goods such as cut flowers. So European countries may start importing less fresh produce from Africa as part of their duty to reduce their own emissions, and the market for these products may decline.

### i

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Global Campaign on Climate Action:** [www.globalclimatecampaign.org](http://www.globalclimatecampaign.org)  
with local groups listed for each country.





## Consumers concerned about climate change

Many European consumers are very pleased to buy fresh produce from Africa – most of all during the winter season when little grows in their own countries. However, there is a growing number who are very concerned about the environmental impact of this industry, on African countries, and on the global climate.

*I definitely support the farm workers' rights. But actually I don't like to buy fresh flowers or vegetables from East Africa. I'm trying to reduce my impact on the environment, my 'carbon footprint' as we call it. So I'm buying much more local, seasonal produce, not things that have been transported from far away. Also, I don't want Africans who are facing drought and food shortages to export their water to us, which is effectively what happens if we buy their flowers.*

Jill, a concerned consumer in the UK



Concerned consumers are asking if this is really a sustainable industry. Many would prefer that African land and water is used to feed African people. They also want to do what they can so that climate change is averted as much as possible – so that the poor of Africa suffer as little as possible from extreme weather and rises in sea level.



### Question for Discussion

- ❖ What would you like to say to European consumers who are concerned about the environmental impact of buying food produced in Africa?

## "8. PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT"

*Companies should make every effort to protect the environment and the residential areas, avoid pollution and implement sustainable use of natural resources (water, soil, air, etc.).*

International Code of Conduct for the Production of Cut-Flowers, 1998

Kiliflora in **Tanzania** (see page 12) is a farm that follows this International Code of Conduct. There, the management and workers have jointly formulated an environmental policy, and there is an Environmental Officer who liaises with an Environment, Health and Safety Committee on which workers' representatives sit. They do environmental awareness training with the farm workers, and they carry out such practices as waste recycling and the safe disposal of pesticides containers and equipment, water recycling (hydroponics) and a soak pit for waste water, tree and grass planting to avoid soil erosion, and composting of old crops within the company premises.

*We saw it as important because 98% of our flowers are for export and, so long as we are dealing with international countries, we should have to comply with them.*

Shao D. Colman, Import-Export Manager, Kiliflora, Tanzania, speaking on the video 'Sowing the Seeds of Women's Rights', ILO:  
[www.ilo.org/global/About\\_the\\_ILO/Media\\_and\\_public\\_information/Broadcast\\_materials/Video\\_News\\_Release/lang-en/WCMS\\_082572/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Broadcast_materials/Video_News_Release/lang-en/WCMS_082572/index.htm)



## Environmental laws, standards and codes

To help foster a safe and sustainable environment in the world, governments from across the world have agreed some international standards. These include:

- \* **International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides**, agreed at the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations
- \* **Rotterdam Convention** (PIC) which says that pesticides traders must declare if a pesticide has already been banned somewhere.
- \* **Stockholm Convention** to eliminate or reduce the production and use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) which include some pesticides.
- \* **Montreal Protocol** on substances that deplete the ozone layer (see page 75)
- \* **Kyoto Protocol** and **Copenhagen Accord** on reducing dangerous emissions into the atmosphere (see page 76)
- \* **Basel Convention** to control the movement and disposal of hazardous wastes across borders.

Each country has a duty to put such international standards into national laws and practice. In many African countries, there are such laws but in others they are still being developed.

**Ethiopia:** Environmental Policy, 1997

**Tanzania:** Environment Act of 2004

**Uganda:** National Environment Statute, No. 4 of 1995

**Zambia:** Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Act, No.12 of 1990

Meanwhile, countries that import fresh produce also have laws that govern imports. For example, there are often regulations that ban dangerous chemical residues in imported food.

Companies in the supply chains for fresh produce are legally and morally obliged to respect these international standards and national laws where they exist.

There is also an international system of standards called 'ISO' (International Organisation for Standardisation). Companies can adopt particular ISO standards, and then put on their labels that they are ISO registered. For example, there is ISO14001 which sets out how a company can design and implement an effective environmental management system.

The British retailer Marks and Spencer uses a system that breaks down ISO14001 into different stages that suppliers need to meet.

From: 'Fresh Insights'

**GlobalGAP** (Good Agricultural Practice) is another voluntary standard for suppliers to meet for their food to be sold by many European retailers. Some buyer companies include aspects of environmental protection in their own codes of conduct and policies for suppliers.

Plus, producers in the various countries have developed their own Codes of Practice/Conduct, often aiming to meet the GlobalGAP standards. They include:

**Ethiopia:** EHPEA Code of Practice for Sustainable Flower Production

**Kenya:** Kenya Flower Council Code of Practice

**Zambia:** ZEGA Code of Practice







To make sure that farms are respecting such international standards and national laws, as well as company codes of conduct, farms should be visited by government inspectors and company auditors who carry out environmental impact assessments.

Workers and their unions should have the right to be consulted by any such inspectors and auditors. However, such a big range of laws, regulations, standards, and codes to follow can be very confusing for managers as well as workers on farms.



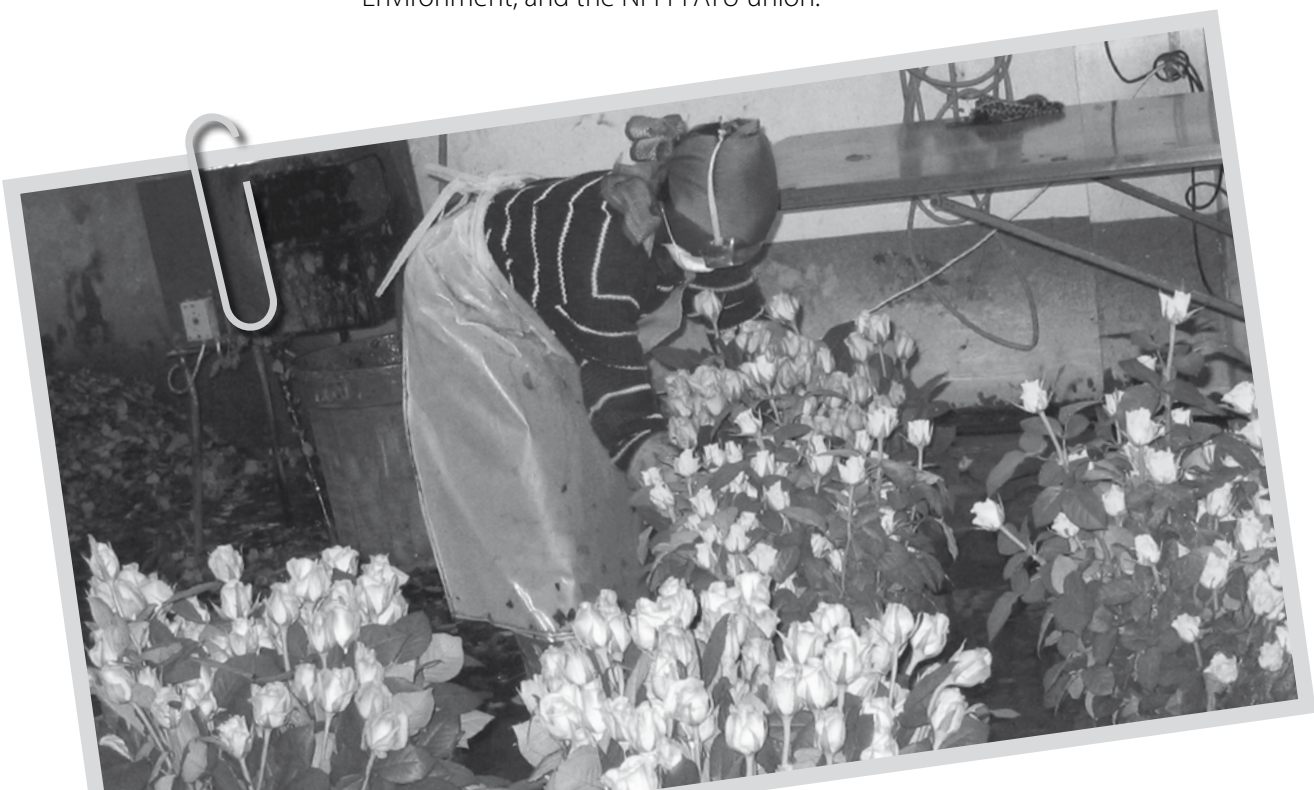
## Questions for discussion

- ❖ What do we know about national laws, international standards, and company codes of conduct relating to the environmental impact of our farm? Have we been given any information or training in this?
- ❖ Do environmental impact auditors visit our farm? If so, do they consult with workers and our unions, as well as managers?



### FOR MORE INFORMATION AND ADVICE

- Tanzania:** Farm workers can seek advice from the Environment Commission, and TPAWU's Department of Education, Gender and Youth which handles environmental issues.
- Zambia:** There is the Environmental Council of Zambia, and workers can raise environmental issues with the NUPAAW union through normal grievance handling procedures.
- Uganda:** Information can be obtained from the National Environment Management Agency (NEMA), the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Labour, Gender and Social Development. See also UWEA 'OHS Guidelines for Workers in Uganda's Horticulture', August 2008.
- Kenya:** The Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources
- Ethiopia:** The Ethiopia Environmental Protection Authority, the Forum for the Environment, and the NFFPFATU union.





## Some steps to reducing environmental damage of farms

- \* Comply with all national regulations on pollution control as a minimum
- \* Comply also with any codes of conduct that the buyer companies have
- \* Workers and managers collaborate to develop and implement an environmental policy for the farm, based on best practice
- \* Training for workers in how to reduce the environmental impact of their activities through cleaner production practices and better disposal of wastes.

### Preventing damage before it happens:

- \* Use the minimum amounts of chemicals possible or, better, substitute them with less hazardous substances such as biological controls

In a system called Integrated Pest Management (IPM), beneficial insects are being introduced into greenhouses to eliminate harmful ones, with flower farms in **Kenya** leading the way. Having access to good bugs is not enough, however. For IPM to be effective, training of workers is essential.

From: 'Kenyan Floriculture Leads the Way', Pesticides News, No.82, December 2008

- \* Replace plastic with biodegradable materials such as paper, such as for packaging
- \* Prevent pollutants from leaking into the soil, water, air or foodstuffs, such as:
  - sweeping rather than hosing floors
  - having clearly-marked, separate areas for storing chemicals that are paved, not bare soil, and have no access to a drain if there is a spill; with double liners on tanks/containers
  - never carrying containers of pesticides on the same transport as food products
  - clear labelling of chemical containers
  - having rapid response clean-up kits ready in case there is a spill
- \* Reduce the amount of energy used, such as switching off electricity whenever possible.

### Better disposal of wastes:

- \* Return any unused pesticides to the supplier
- \* Return used chemical containers to the supplier for re-use, or disposing of them at a government-approved site, along with other plastic wastes such as packaging

**Sometimes workers take old chemical containers home, for reuse as storage vessels, even for food. But this is extremely hazardous to human health, and should not happen.**

- \* Collect any liquid waste that cannot be reused or recycled, store it in an impermeable container, and take it for safe disposal at a government-approved waste facility, remote from any sensitive environment.



**Please note: This is a set of suggested steps which workers can try to make sure are taken at their farm. However, it is not a complete list.**





## Questions for discussion

Look at the 'Steps' on the opposite page.

- ❖ Which of these steps is our farm doing well?
- ❖ Which are the ones where our farm needs to improve?



### ACTIVITY

#### To improve the environmental impact of our farm

Together, draw a map or plan of your farm. On the plan, mark where you think there are hazards to the environment, what the hazards/impacts are, and what the sources are.

#### Discuss:

- Which of these environmental hazards/impacts are the main priorities our farm should deal with?
- How can we workers take this up?
- Who might help us?

Draw up an action plan to help reduce any negative environmental impact from your farm.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**SustainLabour** (International Labour Foundation for Sustainable Development):  
[www.sustainlabour.org](http://www.sustainlabour.org)

**International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, Food and Agriculture Organisation** (FAO), United Nations.  
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/009/a0220e/a0220e00.pdf>

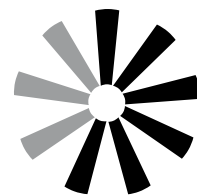
**United Nations Environment Programme** (UNEP) has an African regional office in Nairobi, Kenya, and an office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Information on hazardous substances can be found at: [www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances](http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances)

**Pesticides Action Network** (PAN), see page 67.

'Poisoned Blossoms. Withering Hopes: The Floriculture Industry in Asia', PAN-Asia/Pacific, 2009, with case studies from China, Bangladesh and the Philippines. [www.panap.net](http://www.panap.net)

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# 6 HOW UNIONS CAN HELP FARM WORKERS

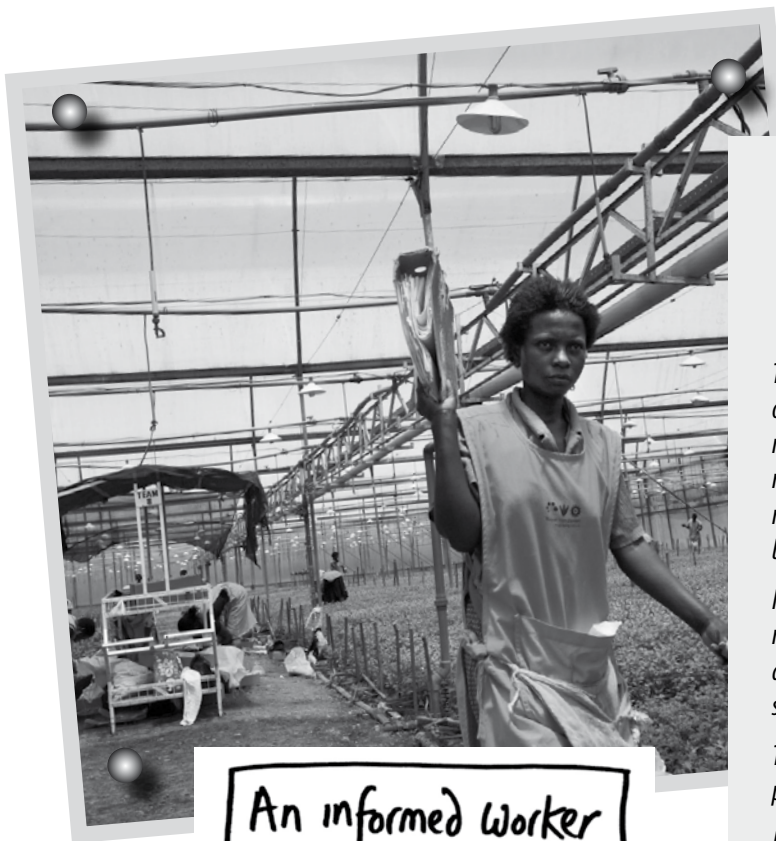
## Aims

To help horticulture and flower workers:

- Know what a trade union is and does
- Consider how being union members can help overcome their work-related problems
- Understand more about international workers' rights and union solidarity
- Draw up ideas for organising more workers into the trade union.







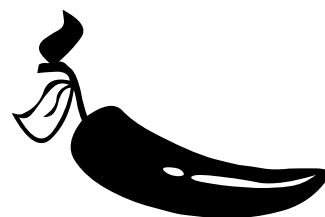
## Notes for facilitators

*This module is intended to build deeper awareness about the organisation and role of trade unions. Union membership on many flower/horticultural farms in East/Southern Africa is still relatively low because many workers are not aware of their rights to organise in unions, or they have been scared off unions by their employers.*

*However, there are many efforts by the trade unions in the region, and this module is aimed at raising awareness and appreciation among workers about why they should join in and strengthen the unions.*

*The module starts with an introductory Activity to explore the participants' own experience of trade unions.*

*For later activities, facilitators should prepare information on the situation in your own country, for example the latest developments in Collective Bargaining Agreements on the farms, or the nature of employment/labour legislation in your country. We have given suggestions for where you might find such information.*



## Questions for discussion

- ❖ Is there is a trade union at our workplace?
- ❖ Who amongst us are members of the union, and if so for how long?
- ❖ What benefit have they got from being union members?
- ❖ What questions do we have about trade unions?
- ❖ Why do we think trade unions are important?







## What is a Trade Union? Why is it important to workers?

“A Trade Union is a voluntary, permanent and democratic organisation formed by workers to protect their interests.”

Mine Workers' Union of Zambia manual, 1994



The trade union movement has a long history. It was born at the very beginning of the capitalist economy in the 19th century in Europe. The capitalist system of production brought together a mass of property-less workers (proletarians) producing and creating wealth but systematically denied the full fruits of their labour. Meanwhile, a small group of capitalists (the bourgeoisie) – the owners of the means of production such as factories, mines, plantations, construction, etc., – came to control and determine the products of the workers' labour, through their private property rights. So the capitalist system was based from the beginning on a conflict between labour and capital.

This led to the development of the trade union movement. The workers needed to build their own organisations so as to defend themselves against exploitation by their bosses. As the capitalist system spread across the world through colonisation and industrialisation, so workforces in other continents such as Africa also formed unions.

Through the workers' struggles – such as strikes, mass protests and other political actions including lobbying and advocacy – trade unions won some vital rights for all workers, everywhere in the world. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (see page 45) has agreed some Conventions which give all workers the right to:

- \* form and join independent trade unions (ILO Convention 87, 1948), and
- \* bargain collectively with their employers (ILO Convention 98, 1949).

These are 'fundamental' rights, that is to say that all workers are entitled to them whether or not their own government agrees. But many countries in the East and Southern African region have also passed Labour Relations Acts to embody these ILO Conventions. So, no employers have the right to victimise their employees for trade union activities.



### Questions for discussion

- \* Does our country have a law (a Labour Relations Act) which confirms our right to form or join an independent trade union and our right to bargain with our employer?
- \* If we don't yet know, how could we find out?



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

All **ILO Conventions and Recommendations** can be found on-line at: [www.ilo.org/ilolex](http://www.ilo.org/ilolex)

The national labour, social security and human rights laws for your country can be found at: [www.ilo.org/natlex](http://www.ilo.org/natlex)

or from your Government's Department of Labour.

The trade unions also have access to specialist labour lawyers.



## What do trade unions do?

### CHECKLIST: TRADE UNION AIMS

- (1) To unite the workers into a strong and democratic organization
- (2) To challenge the power and interests of the employers
- (3) To negotiate and reach Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) with employers:
  - For recognition by the employer of the union and workers' elected representatives / shop-stewards
  - For decent wages and conditions of work
- (4) To protect workers:
  - From unfair dismissal and unfair labour practices
  - From discrimination and abuse
  - From employers breaking agreements

Sometimes this means taking industrial action, such as a strike or go-slow, as a last resort.
- (5) To lobby government:
  - To pass laws which acknowledge workers' fundamental rights and protect workers from abuse
  - To implement fully the employment laws which already exist
  - To put in place social security systems to support the most vulnerable workers and their families
- (6) To educate workers:
  - On their rights at work and how to enforce these rights
  - On how to carry out their trade unions tasks
  - On wider socio-economic and political rights



### ACTIVITY

#### What does our union do?

Working as individuals or in a small group of members of the same union:

- Make a list of what you know about the key aims and activities of your union.
- Compare your list with the checklist of trade union aims (see above).
- Discuss which activities are stronger in your union, and which are weaker, and why this might be.





## Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining is a process of negotiations between workers and their employers about wages and other working conditions. The term collective means “together” and the term bargaining means “negotiations”. It is one of the main activities undertaken by trade unions on behalf of their members and the wider workforce.

Collective bargaining helps to regulate the unequal power relationship between employers and their workforces. Employers own the ‘means of production’ – the workplace, the equipment, the inputs – and the output produced, and they strive to get maximum profits out of the labour of the workers. Workers acting as individuals can never have power equal to this. But acting together, through collective bargaining, workers can negotiate to get the best they can in return for their labour, such as:

- \* Higher wages and fair bonus systems
- \* Shorter working hours, longer holidays
- \* Better social security such as maternity leave, pensions, sick pay
- \* Better access to transport, housing, education/training
- \* Proper occupational health and safety protection
- \* Action against any discrimination, bullying or harassment
- \* Fair procedures for grievances, dismissal, or retrenchment

Unions often focus on wages but there are many other things the union can negotiate for. The topics for collective bargaining should be based on workers’ actual needs.

When unions negotiate with management, it is very important that the union members give their active support. If the union negotiators seem isolated, employers will use this to undermine them and weaken any agreement reached.

The aim of the negotiations is to reach a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The CBA is a document that sets out in detail what the union negotiators and the employers have agreed.

The significance of CBAs is that they are legal documents. Both sides are legally responsible for fulfilling their part of the agreement. So, if an employer fails to implement their side of the agreement, workers or the union can take legal action against the employer.

The possibility of entering into a collectively negotiated agreement that sets out mutually accepted rules for the workplace is one of the main reasons why workers join the union.

*“United We Bargain. Divided We Beg.”*

Union slogan in Zambia



### Questions for discussion

- \* Are we already covered by a CBA negotiated by the union and our employer?
- \* If we don't know, who could we ask?



## **Uganda: Unions and farms sign a path-breaking agreement**

It took a lot of activity over several years but, on 8 September 2010, a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) was finally signed between the Uganda Horticultural and Allied Workers' Union (UHAWU) and the Uganda Flower Exporters Association (UFEA), the association of horticultural farms in the country. It is a huge achievement which paves the way to realising flower farm workers' rights in Uganda.

Many farm workers in Uganda were being denied their trade union rights. The union would work hard to recruit workers at a particular farm, but then managers would threaten the workers or bad-mouth the union, saying things like:

*"If you value your job and wish to have peace at work, leave the union and we shall promote you, and you will not be dismissed."*

*"Those union people are just robbing you of your little money; they cannot do anything for you."*

Meanwhile, some employers were refusing to resolve workers' problems like low pay, poor health and safety standards, sexual harassment cases, and so on. Workers were feeling aggrieved, and conflict on the farms was rising.

So the union set out to persuade managers to meet with them, with the aim of getting each farm to sign an agreement accepting the union's right to organise there. UHAWU got a lot of support from the Uganda Workers' Education Association (UWEA), as well as from the Workers and Environmental Rights Network (WERN) which is an alliance in Uganda of civil society organisations, human rights organisations, trade unions, and the union centres NOTU and COFTU.

First they first collected the facts about each farm's behaviour towards its workforce. Then they wrote to the farm management, seeking a meeting. They copied the letter to all partners, and to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to add pressure. Meanwhile, they prepared the workers to speak up about how they were being treated.

Gradually, farm managers agreed to meet with the union. By early 2009, UHAWU and UWEA had developed a strategy of roundtable dialogue meetings with the management at the farm premises, with the UFEA, the Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE), and district government representatives also invited. Through these meetings, it became clear that some employers were simply ignorant of the labour laws; so it was necessary to inform them.

The next step was to convince them to accept negotiation, and to sign a Recognition Agreement with the union. Some managers were still saying things like:

*"Can the union do better than we already offer our workers?"*

*"We don't need a union here; a union's work is to destabilise our operations."*

*"All I need from you people is literacy education for my workers."*





The union replied with a key argument – that an agreement between employers and the union would help deal with the growing conflict on the farms. It would regulate the relationship between the workforce and the employer. Without such an agreement, the conflict would be harder to resolve; it might even get out-of-hand; workers might get hurt, and the employer incur losses.

Some managers still refused to budge, even after the union asked the Ministry to remind them of their legal duty. So, on two occasions, international supporters were asked to write letters to the management concerned to respect their workers' rights – and this worked (see also Module 2). UHAWU managed to sign Recognition Agreements with several horticultural farms.

These negotiations were backed up with training for union organisers and representatives on conflict resolution and how to do collective bargaining. There were also farm-level general awareness meetings and training sessions for workers, helping them to understand their rights at work and encouraging them to work together in solidarity by joining the union. These sessions were key catalysts in uniting the workers. Today, UHAWU has about 3,000 members.

The workers learnt more about what a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) is. They were asked what they would like to see in one, and a model CBA was drawn up. Much of the training was done by UWEA, and they made sure that women's issues were included. They also got more ideas from the union's Women's Committees that were formed on a few farms.

UHAWU at first used the model CBA to negotiate with individual farms. Then, nine farms agreed to come together to negotiate with the union. Other farms heard and wanted to join in. So, UHAWU decided to try for a joint CBA with the employers' association, the UFEA, for all the twenty flower farms that belong to it. A further international letter campaign played a key role in getting the employers to agree to this.

A Joint Negotiating Committee was formed. Of the five members from the union side, two were women. Negotiations started on 9 February 2010, and it was not an easy process. There was much pulling of ropes between the two parties that caused several adjournments. But about eight months after negotiations started, the Joint CBA was signed.

There are extracts from a draft of the CBA on page 91.

*Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining is a difficult thing in the flower farms. Workers are intimidated and are losing their jobs because of joining the union. However, there is now some improvement because the union is fighting hard to have its roots firmly established in the horticultural industry through the signing of CBAs.*

Justine Akalei, National Women's Representative, UHAWU, Uganda.



Justine herself suffered victimisation for helping to organise the union on her farm but she remains determined.



## Key Arguments used by UHAWU to win union rights on farms:

- A union is a very good thing for maintaining good industrial relations on the farm, reducing conflict, especially between management and workforce.
- Refusing unionisation on the farm is an abuse of workers' right to freedom of association and collective bargaining; this right is upheld in the national labour laws and in the international ILO Conventions 87 and 98.
- Should you refuse to allow us recruit and organise workers into the union on this farm, we shall be left with no option but to report your farm to flower consumers and our international partners, and a campaign will be launched against your farm at international level and locally.
- The sexual harassment cases reported to us from this farm are grave; since there is no grievance handling mechanism here, we are filing these cases with the police; the culprits must face the law.
- We have evidence of intimidation of workers by two of your senior managers; for example, workers have been made to pay money to them to retain their jobs; a worker used by the managers to collect such money is ready to testify, and so are some of the workers who were intimidated.

### ACTIVITY

#### How to get our employer to negotiate with the workforce

Ask a worker (or several workers taking turns) to read out to fellow workers the case study from Uganda on pages 88-89.

Then discuss together:

- What are the key lessons from this case study for our own situation?
- What are the best arguments we can use with managers to persuade them to negotiate with the union?



*“Hurry up with the negotiations. Please do not let our hopes die. If the CBA is concluded we hope to get better things.”*

A man farmworker from one of the big farms in Uganda







## What a Collective Bargaining Agreement can include

Below are some extracts from a draft of the Joint Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) signed by the Uganda Flower Exporters' Association and the Uganda Horticultural and Allied Workers' Union in September 2010 (see pages 88-89).

... Both parties hereto agree to be always guided by the following:

- a. To attain the improved working conditions, workers' earnings, standards of living and environmental protection.
- b. To improve productivity and efficiency, regulate and promote good working relationship with a view to attracting and retaining high quality employees.
- c. To ensure the principle of equal work for equal pay irrespective of one's race, sex, creed or colour.
- d. To safeguard the economic and social interests of both the employees and the Employer.

**Hours of work** - The normal standard working hours per week, shall be a maximum of 48 hours excluding meal time for all workers of the Employer. ... Any extra time worked shall be considered as overtime and shall be paid for.

Each week shall include a period of one rest day of not less than 24 hours of continuous service for six consecutive days.

**Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare** - Where applicable, the Employer shall provide suitable uniforms, protective gears and clothing as provided by the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2006.

**Annual leave** - Having worked for six continuous months an employee shall be entitled to twenty one working days leave.

**Maternity leave** - A female employee shall, as a consequence of pregnancy, have:

- i) the right to a period of sixty working days leave from work on full wages ... of which at least four weeks shall follow the childbirth or miscarriage.
- ii) the right to return to the job which she held immediately before her maternity leave or to a reasonably suitable alternative job on terms and conditions not less favorable...

**Paternity leave** - A male employee shall, immediately after delivery or miscarriage of a registered wife, have the right to a period of four working days leave from work yearly ... He shall be entitled to the payment of his full wages and return to the job which he held immediately before his paternity leave.

**Sexual harassment** - If an employee is sexually harassed in any way... by the employer or employers representative, the employee is entitled to lodge a complaint (through) the established grievance handling procedure.

**Gender and Equality** - Both the Employer and the Union shall establish a gender and equality sub-committee composed of two representatives each and chaired by a person agreeable to both parties to study, inform/ advice and make recommendations... The Employer and the Union shall endeavor to put in place a women workers committee to address female gender specific needs and together promote representation of women at different committees.

**Child labour** - The company shall not engage in employment of children below the ages of 18, with the exception of students on vacation of 16 years who can be employed for short seasonal employment under supervision.

**Please note: these are just extracts; the whole CBA contains a lot more.**



## National Labour/Employment Laws

Another very important role of the trade unions is to lobby governments for better labour/employment laws and regulations, and for proper implementation of them.

Without trade union action in the past, many laws and standards that exist today – at national and international level - to protect the working poor would never have been achieved. Such laws include:

- \* Minimum working age
- \* Minimum wages
- \* Statutory social security provision
- \* Occupational health and safety responsibilities of employers
- \* Working hours

Improving such laws, making sure they are implemented, and using them to defend workers (as individuals or collectively) remain vital elements of trade union activity.

Laws vary from country to country, and so it is important to find out about the actual labour/employment laws in your country, see 'For more information' on page 85.

### How the union helped us

Cathy Sikazwe is a single parent of two young children. She and other women were employed as casual workers at one of Zambia's biggest rose flower export farms in Lusaka. They had worked for five years but were never given a permanent job. They often had to work overtime in order to get enough wages.

Cathy says:

*"Any time you felt sick, there was no medical care because the manager would simply say, 'You are casual and so you are not entitled to such benefits.'"*

The workers knew about the union, but they were afraid to seek help because managers intimidated them, saying that union membership is not open to seasonal and casual workers, only those on permanent contract.

Dainess Lupande is a regional organiser for National Union of Plantation and Agriculture Workers in Zambia. She recalls:

*"In 2005, we received terrible reports about women casual workers facing rampant sexual harassment. So we sought interpretation of the law from the Ministry of Labour, and they confirmed that seasonal and casual workers, like any other worker, have the right to join a union."*

So Cathy and some of her colleagues joined the union, and the union started negotiating on their behalf with the company. They won the case. In fact, these casual workers should have automatically become permanent workers after six months, because that is what Zambian law says.

Cathy and her co-workers now feel more secure in their jobs, and they enjoy Mother's Day off and get sick leave, even though their wages are still too low. Another of the workers, Marvis, adds:

*"We also join other women in attending the educational programmes provided by the union, and we have the protection of the union against unfair dismissals."*





# Some principles of trade unionism

## 1. DEMOCRACY

- All workers who are members of the union are equal. All have the same rights and duties. This means that the union has to fight against all forms of racism, sexism, ageism and other forms of discrimination among members.
- Final decisions are taken by majority vote.
- Members elect representatives who speak and act for them.
- Elected representatives must always speak and act with a mandate from the workers they represent. They must always give report back to the members.

## 2. WORKERS' CONTROL

- The union is not the office, but the membership.
- Workers must be the majority in union structures.
- The union must strengthen ways for the members to participate in decision-making.
- The union must seek to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of the members through education programmes.

## 3. INDUSTRIAL UNION

- Big national industrial trade unions are stronger than smaller unions and can fight better for their members' interests.
- Even big national industrial unions must have firm roots at plant level.

## 4. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

- Trade unions are based at the workplace; their first job is to advance and defend the interests of their members at work.
- But trade unions cannot close their eyes to the struggles and problems of their members in the whole society; for that reason, all progressive trade unions should fight for workers' interests in all areas of life.

## Structures of trade unions – from the workplace to the world

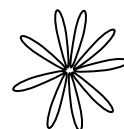
Within each country, the actual structure of trade unions varies. But typically it is like this:

- The backbone of the union is the membership of ordinary workers, organised within their workplace or in a local union branch.
- The members of a workplace union branch elect certain people from amongst themselves (called 'shop stewards') to represent them in negotiations with management.
- The union also coordinates its activities in the region, district or province, through a leadership elected at union meetings at each level.
- There are also national office bearers, elected at national conferences.
- The union's national conference is the supreme decision-making body for the major policies of the union.
- The day-to-day running of the union at the national level is done at the head office, by the full-time General Secretary and other officials in charge of such things as research, workers' education, building the organisation, and publicity.
- Unions in different industries or sectors unite within a national federation.
- Unions at the national level join with national unions from other countries in the Global Unions (see, for example, the IUF, page 94).



*You people rescue us. Our salaries are too low. We cannot afford to rent good houses, nor feed our children well - good meals are a luxury to us.*

A woman farmworker in Uganda, speaking to union researchers





## The IUF – global solidarity for farmworkers



**The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)** is a global federation of trade unions from across the world that represent workers employed in such industries as:

- \* agriculture and plantations
- \* the preparation and manufacture of food and beverages
- \* hotels, restaurants and catering services

The IUF was formed in 1920. It currently has 336 trade unions in 120 countries affiliated to it, representing over 12 million workers. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland, and it has regional organisations in Africa, Asia/Pacific, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and North America. The IUF's core activities are:

**Strengthening Affiliates:** through mutual support, including:

- \* assisting affiliated unions in their organising drives and in conflicts with employers and governments
- \* coordinating and implementing solidarity and support actions
- \* research and publications
- \* promoting women's equality at the workplace, in society, and in the union movement
- \* union education programmes to help build the strength and independence of affiliated unions.

**International Recognition and Collective Bargaining:** Big transnational corporations (TNCs) increasingly dominate the world economy; they also set the international social and political agenda. The IUF says these global companies must be made to respect internationally negotiated rights and standards. The IUF has won agreements with some TNCs that they will respect trade union rights in their global operations.

**Defending Human, Democratic and Trade Union Rights:** The IUF says, "For the trade union movement, defending these rights is a fundamental class issue for the simple reason that workers cannot organise in defense of their interests, nor maintain the gains they have achieved, in an anti-democratic environment". The IUF gives active support to movements everywhere struggling against oppression. It responds internationally to attacks on its affiliates and on the labour movement, and builds alliances with human rights, environmental, consumer and other organisations who share similar objectives.

In **Southern and East Africa countries**, the IUF is supporting organising projects in the horticulture farms with its affiliated unions (see page 67) including:

- Ethiopia:** National Federation of Farm, Plantation, Fishery and Agro Industry Trade Unions (NFFPFATU)
- Kenya:** Kenya Union of Commercial, Food and Allied Workers (KUCFAW)
- Tanzania:** Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers' Union (TPAWU)
- Uganda:** National Union of Plantation and Agricultural Workers (NUPAW)
- Zambia:** National Union of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers (NUPAAW)

'Improving Working Conditions in the Cut-Flower Industry: A Trade Union Manual', IUF/FIAN/FES, 2001.

[www.iuf.org](http://www.iuf.org)





## TIPS:



### How to organise more workers into unions

- Compile as complete a list as possible of all the workers in the workplace, regardless of occupation, or employment contract, or gender. Don't leave anybody out.
- Make effective contact with the workers. Start by talking with people that you know.
- Find out who the informal leaders are - who influences the opinions and actions of others on the shop-floor? You need to make contact with them and win them over to the union; otherwise, you may find them opposing you.
- Take time to build relationships. It obviously makes organising much more difficult if first impressions are bad or if there is no rapport or understanding between the union representative and potential workplace leaders.
- Get a good idea of the particular issues affecting workers on the shop-floor, especially those that are widely and deeply felt - low overall rates of pay, or poor health and safety conditions, for example.
- Whatever you do, don't try to force workers into joining the union. Simply putting across your own opinions and not listening to what workers have to say about their own concerns will put them off as they'll feel their views are being ignored.
- Ask the workers, "What do you think our bosses are going to do when they find out we're organising a union?" Prepare them for an anti-union campaign by management. There may be harassment and propaganda such as firing union activists, meetings where workers must meet with the managers and get told what a terrible thing it would be to organise a union, one-on-one meetings aimed at intimidating workers, anti-union mailings, promoting union leaders to management, rewarding snitches, etc. You can defuse workers' fears if you let them know you know what's going to happen and are ready to deal with it.
- Show how other workers in similar situations have dealt collectively with problems of the kind these workers are facing. This, of course, requires preparation. Reading up on case studies on the internet or in trade union newsletters can help.

Some unions or union branches are stronger and more willing to fight on behalf of their members. There are others that form 'sweetheart' agreements with employers. However, this makes educating and organising extremely difficult and only leads to a weak union and a weak movement.

Strong, fighting unions can only be realised with the support of committed and united workers on the shop-floor.



### Questions for discussion

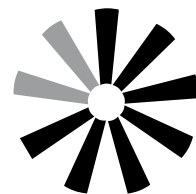
- ❖ What are workers' attitudes towards trade unions at our workplace?
- ❖ What could we do to strengthen the union in our workplace?



## NOTES

[illegible]





# 7 UNIONS AND WOMEN WORKERS

## Aims

To increase awareness among women and men workers about how the equality gap between them in the world of work can be narrowed, by:

- Identifying the reasons why women are less involved in trade unions than men, and how to overcome this.
- Exploring the best ways of organising women workers into unions.
- Encouraging women's active participation in unions and empower them to lead.

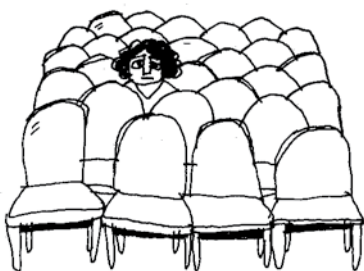


- Looking at collective bargaining from a gender perspective.



The multiple roles of a woman rob her of opportunities to engage in decision-making processes. Something has to be done to make unions more women-friendly.

...women officials  
in trade unions.



## Notes for facilitators

*Women's workplace issues are trade union issues. So, both men and women need to understand them and work together if we are to bridge the gap between women and men, and to strengthen trade unions.*

*Gender training is the way to go if unions are to develop and be vibrant in all their activities. This module is therefore **not** intended only for women workers.*

*However, in situations where women are not very confident, or men may over-dominate discussions, it may be wise to have women-only discussion groups.*

*Each topic has points for discussion in small groups.*

*Plus there are two Activities:*

- *To enhance women's participation in collective bargaining*
- *To draw up action plans, by women workers, and by everyone acting together.*



*Victory! The newly-formed union Women's Committee at the Oasis Nurseries farm in Uganda*







## Women's experience of unions

All over the world, women are entering the labour force in greater numbers than ever before. However, they are facing many problems at work, especially lower wages and fewer permanent jobs than men, (see Module 3).

Trade unions are democratic organisations formed by workers to protect and promote their interests and rights at work. It is through unions that workers' problems can be solved (see Module 6). This should include women workers and their problems too.



Many women workers do join unions when recruited by union organisers who give them a clear explanation of what the union is and how it can benefit them. However, the majority remain passive members. Women rarely attend meetings or participate in other activities organised by the union. This is partly because women have so many other responsibilities in their lives, especially to care for their families. At the end of the working day they need to go home rather than to a union meeting. Unions rarely hold their activities at a time and place which suits busy women workers.

 *What I have observed is that, as women, we find it difficult to balance union work with the job as well as family responsibilities. So we usually fail to attend union meetings which are held after working hours or a few minutes before the end of working time.* 

Hannah Mwesigwa, UHAWU Branch Secretary, Wagagai Ltd., Uganda



What is more, union leadership tends to be male-dominated, making it difficult for women who are union members to participate fully at all levels. As in many other organisations, in trade unions women are often ignored by those in positions of authority who think that women cannot handle big responsibilities or very important and delicate issues. For many decades now, especially since the 1975-1985 International Women's Decade, women have fought such misconceptions so as to gain equality with men and recognition for their abilities. However, to date, true equality in the union movement is still hard to reach.

 *Men in the union tend to think that they are above the women and therefore they should be the only ones to take decisions and lead. They expect women to remain under the carpet and just say yes and endorse every decision taken by men and, since they are always the majority in leadership, women fear to speak up.* 

Alice Akello, a woman union organiser, UHAWU, Uganda



Meanwhile, many other women are reluctant to join unions. Some think that unions cannot help them keep their jobs or address their problems as women at work. This can be aggravated by supervisors/employers who intimidate and threaten women not to join the union if they still love their jobs or want promotion.

There are therefore many reasons why women are less involved in unions than men.



## Questions for discussion

- ❁ What are the key problems that women are facing: (1) at work and (2) in the union?
- ❁ What are the causes of the problems we have identified?
- ❁ How can we overcome these problems (1) as women and (2) in our union?



## Attracting more women into unions

The majority of workers recruited into precarious jobs are women (see Module 3). Organising such workers into unions is very difficult precisely because they have a job one day and are retrenched the next, and their rights are weaker under labour legislation. What is more, women have multiple responsibilities at home as well as at work. So it is hard for women to participate effectively in union activities.

This does not mean that we cannot do anything about it. Unions must not ignore groups of workers just because they are difficult to organise. The main aim of the employers is to weaken and destroy unions. So leaving out such workers from the union only helps to promote the employers' interests. Meanwhile the union voice weakens and dies off. Yes, it might be costly and time-consuming. But, remember, a union's strength is in its membership: the larger the membership, the stronger the union.

There are many ways through which women can be attracted into unions and have them as active participants, regardless of the type of job they do. Such ways include:

- \* Considering and taking seriously women's safety and health at the workplace (see Module 4).
- \* Ensuring equal opportunities at the workplace by including equal pay, and equal terms and conditions such as work contracts and access to promotion in collective bargaining (see Module 3)
- \* Campaigning on issues of concern to women like better maternity protection, equal pay, sexual harassment policies (see Module 8), and so on.
- \* Developing women role models who can attract others into the union through their positive attitudes and activities. Women leaders can and should spearhead this by identifying potential leaders among other women and mentoring them.



“Union committees such as the women's committee have made a big difference. People now know their rights and how to demand them. For example, now our farm is buying protective wear for all workers, as workers have started to demand this.”

Woman farm worker, Zambia,  
speaking to War on Want, 2010







## Increasing women's participation in unions

We are born equal. The only difference between men and is biological, relating to child-bearing. But society expects women to do certain specific roles, while men have other specific roles. Women therefore find themselves facing challenges just because of this sexual division of labour imposed on them through traditions and beliefs in our cultures. However, culture is dynamic and can change over time and between cultures. This gives us all the opportunity to find ways of changing the situation for the better.

Unions are very useful organisations through which women can stand up for their rights, rise up in solidarity to support fellow workers locally, nationally and internationally and have their voices heard loud and clear. Women cannot and should not have to just be passive union members and look at the men doing and deciding things on their behalf.

*I have served as a leader in the union for two years now.. (and) management now recognises me as a very important person in the area of good industrial relations at work. I am known by all the workers, and they are very supportive because they know that the union protects and promotes their rights at work. I have been exposed to the outside world – a thing I had never even dreamed of. I have gained skills in grievance handling, teaching skills, and many others.*

Hannah Mwesigwa, UHAWU, Branch Secretary, Wagagai Ltd., Uganda



### Questions for discussion

- ❁ What are the main setbacks to women joining the union?
- ❁ What steps can and should the union take to solve these problems?
- ❁ What better ways are there of attracting women to join the union?

*I am 32 years old, single, with two children. I am employed as harvester. When I started working, in 1999, I was not given a contract of employment by my employer. Also there was no Collective Bargaining Agreement at the workplace. After training through the women's project, I and other workers realised our rights and we started claiming for a written contract of employment and a CBA. Also, myself, I have gained capacity to train my fellow workers. I am able to prepare training sessions especially on sexual harassment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).*

Fatuma Juma, a woman worker on a farm in Tanzania





## The importance of women's committees


Women's committees are women-only structures within the union, put in place to look in-depth into women's concerns and to give women a voice at the workplace and in the union, so as to find solutions. This not only enables unions to take up women's issues more effectively, but also improves the image of the union.

Women's committees help women to raise issues that may otherwise be overlooked by the male-dominated union leadership. Many women prefer to have women-only meetings to voice their concerns together and gain confidence before taking them up with men in the union. Women committees also act as platforms for problems which can be difficult for women to discuss openly when men are present, like sexual harassment and violence against women, including rape. Counseling by fellow women encourages the women to open up about the problems and challenges they face.

Women's Committees encourage women's participation, improve their confidence, and promote solidarity among women. Through Women's Committees, women can learn new skills that enable them to participate effectively in union decision-making bodies; they become more aware of their rights not only at work but in the wider society; they can coordinate their participation in other union activities; and they can inform and influence other union bodies on gender issues, thereby making women's issues an integral part of the union agenda. Women's Committees help foster the realisation of women's rights as workers and as members of the union.

When women see these special structures for them, they gain confidence to join the union. They know they can express their experiences without fear or feeling intimidated by men's presence. So the committees also help to recruit women into the union.

Women committees should not be looked at as 'unions within unions', or as a way of sidelining or ignoring women issues, or used as window-dressing for public relations. Women's committees need to be integrated into the full life of the union. They must fit into the union structure, from branch level to national level. Members of the Women's Committee at each level of the union should be incorporated into other union structures. For example, two or three women from the Branch Women Committee should be included in the Union Branch Committee, and so on. The formation of Women's Committees and their representation in other union structures should be included in the union's Constitution.

 *“Women Committees are the only major way women can discuss, dissect and articulate their issues without being over shadowed by the men. And, through Women's Committees, women's issues can be recognised and dealt with seriously. Men do not understand our issues very well. We need to discuss them and present them to the union systematically.”*

Alice Akello, a woman union organiser, UHAWU, Uganda



## Questions for discussion

- ✿ What are the reasons for and against having women's committees in the union?
- ✿ What needs to happen so that more women are active in women's committees?







## Gender Committees – a way of involving men

A major obstacle to women's advancement is of course the attitudes of men who do not yet understand or continue to be hostile. Acting on our own, it is very hard for women to make progress. To make unions and workplaces women-friendly, we do need to win the support of more men.

Issues such as maternity rights, work-life balance and sexual harassment should not be separated off as 'women's issues' to be dealt with only by women's committees and ignored by the rest of the union. They are 'union issues' for everyone to deal with.

So, in many parts of the world there have been attempts at what is called 'gender mainstreaming'. This is a process through which women and men accept joint responsibility for rooting out gender inequality.

In the unions, it means:

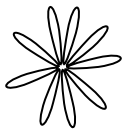
- \* identifying how existing union policies and practices reinforce gender inequalities, and then changing them
- \* making sure that all new union policies and practices are targeted at overcoming past discrimination by actively promoting gender equality
- \* finding and winning allies among the men who do already understand the importance – and benefits to all – of gender equality
- \* more training for men who do not yet understand; isolation for those who resist.

Issues such as occupational health and safety, or access to union training programmes, are not gender neutral. In fact, gender runs through everything, which is why it needs to be 'mainstreamed'.

In some countries, such as South Africa, the unions now have 'Gender Committees' or 'Gender Forums' which are integrated into the union structures. It is a way of ensuring that the women's activities are not sidelined, and that male union leaders are also kept involved.

*In South Africa, we have Gender Forums. We think it is necessary for men to be there and become gender sensitive. While we had Women's Forums, you could preach and preach but they would never understand. You have to involve the men so that they understand. The FAWU President, for example, attends the Gender Forum... Past union leaders did try to say it is a waste of time, but now it functions.*

Pulane Maine, First Vice-President, Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU), South Africa,  
Quoted in 'All for One = One for All', IUF, 2007



Some women are skeptical of gender mainstreaming, however, because they have seen it used as a decoy, a way of doing away with women-specific activities and then not replacing them with something more effective. And in gender forums, men can come to over-dominate again.

However, perhaps both are needed. If gender mainstreaming is properly implemented – alongside women-specific activities – then gender equality is even more possible.

*In the 1990s, women thought that unions were only about men. Women had no confidence in speaking up, especially about sexual harassment. They would just withdraw themselves, for fear of losing their jobs. This is changing. I found my role through a women's empowerment programme, and the more women there are in leadership, the more our issues are discussed.*

Mutebele Kunda, a NUPAAW union organiser on the farms in Zambia





## Collective Bargaining and Women

Women rarely get opportunity to participate in collective bargaining negotiations (see Module 6) mainly because they tend to lack experience or training. Yet experience has proved that women can be just as good or even better negotiators.

Sometimes women's issues are not well negotiated by the men who dominate negotiating teams because they do not understand them well. For example, men are not so good at negotiating for menstruation leave because they don't know much about it. Men sometimes ignore maternity leave issues, even despite it being in their interests to protect their own wives and children.

It is therefore very important that women are trained in collective bargaining and are allowed to participate in the bargaining process. The more women are involved, the more they will gain experience in negotiation skills, and in raising and analyzing issues for negotiations. Helping women build their self-confidence and experience will open up routes for them to senior bargaining and leadership positions.

Involving women in collective bargaining will promote balanced negotiations as well as cover issues of all union members without prejudice. Effective and well coordinated gender-sensitive collective bargaining also improves the image of the union and therefore attracts more membership, particularly by women.





Training both men and women on gender issues will give men a better understanding of how increased participation by women can boost the image, organisational efficiency and experience of trade unions.

In **Uganda**, negotiations on the Collective Bargaining Agreement with flower farms (see page 88-89) involved several women on the trade union side.

*I have just been nominated to be a member of the Joint Negotiation Council for my union and 10 flower farm employers, and have so far attended two meetings. It is so exciting to be part of the negotiating team, although negotiations are challenging. I feel I can speak out for the women workers' concerns.*

Hannah Mwesigwa, UHAWU Branch Secretary, Wagagai Ltd., Uganda

The CBA, agreed in 2010, now contains elements of great value to women farm workers. For example:

-  *"The Employer and the Union shall endeavor to put in place a women workers' committee to address female gender specific needs and together promote representation of women at different committees."*
-  Pregnant women cannot be given work involving chemicals such as spraying; they are entitled to perform lighter duties if this is recommended by a medical practitioner.
-  Breast-feeding breaks are mandatory in all farms; each farm can determine the period of breast-feeding breaks but it will be monitored by the union.
-  Sexual harassment is gross misconduct, and will lead to instant dismissal.  
(See more in Section 8)








## ACTIVITY

### Improving women's participation in collective bargaining

In small groups, discuss and list down:





- What needs to happen so that women can participate meaningfully in the collective bargaining process
- The issues that horticultural women workers would like to be included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement
- The arguments we can use to make sure women's concerns are adequately put forward in the negotiation agenda.

In **Tanzania**, TPAWU has taken many steps to improve the situation for women workers through collective bargaining with employers. In its Collective Bargaining Agreements negotiated with 12 horticulture farms, women workers now have better benefits such as:

-  The right to breast-feed babies for longer periods during working hours;
-  Full pay when they attend maternal and child health clinics;
-  Pregnant women are given lighter duties and are protected from any hazardous work environment; on 4 farms pregnant women have a special room to rest in;

Maternity leave with full pay has been increased to 90 days, and women have the right to their job back after maternity leave.

TPAWU has also increased women's access to equal opportunities within the union:

-  The union's Constitution now has gender issues embedded in it;
-  Positions in the union's leadership have been set aside specifically for women;
-  Women's committees have been formed; there are now about 60 such committees active at branch level across the country;
-  The union has adopted a sexual harassment policy, to help prevent this abuse of women's human rights.

### i

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

'All for One = One for All: A gender equality guide for trade unionists in the agriculture, food, hotel and catering sectors', by Celia Mather, IUF, June 2007:  
[www.iufdocuments.org/women/2008/All%20for%20One.pdf](http://www.iufdocuments.org/women/2008/All%20for%20One.pdf)

**UWEA Educational Modules**, 2007, (due to be posted on the Internet), especially:  
 Module III on the Rights and Freedoms of Female Workers  
 Module IV on Sexual Harassment  
 Module VII on Workers' and Employers' Rights



## ACTIVITY:

### To improve women's participation in the union

Together, look at the ideas below, and discuss which are your priorities:

#### What women workers can do:

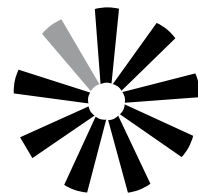
- Unite and gain solidarity amongst ourselves
- Support the election of fellow women into leadership positions
- Step forward to be nominated for union positions
- Be creative in finding new ways to encourage women to be active in the union
- Take up short courses to add to the skills we have (a knowledgeable leader is a powerful leader)
- Organise mentoring workshops to encourage young women to become active in the union and become future leaders
- Seek the expertise and advice from senior women in the labour movement.

#### What we all can do:

- Organise assertiveness training courses to build women's confidence
- Encourage unions to organise activities with childcare facilities so that women with children do not miss out
- Advocate for union meetings not to be organised during late hours so that women can participate
- Organise events where women and their husbands can participate in union celebrations, like an end-of-year party, or on May Day (1 May), or on International Women's Day (8 March)
- Organise gender training workshops where men are also involved, including union leaders and possibly husbands
- Organise women leadership training where women can learn different skills so as to prepare them for leadership positions in the union
- If there are no Women Committees in our union yet, advocate for them to be set up
- Encourage the union to organise Collective Bargaining training workshops, with participation by women as well as men
- Nominate women to be members of the union negotiating team; vote for them and support them when they join the team
- Advocate for all union policies to become gender-sensitive
- Organise women-only exchanges across regions/countries, to learn from each other.

#### Then discuss who to take your priorities up with:

- ▷ Women workers at our workplace
- ▷ All workers at our workplace
- ▷ The Women's Committee in our union
- ▷ The union leadership



# 8 COMBATING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

## Aims

- To create awareness among workers about sexual harassment at the workplace, the forms it takes its serious effects, and how it can be prevented, including what workers, unions and employers can do, and enforcing the law against perpetrators.



- To help workers draw up a plan of action to combat sexual harassment at work.



## Notes for facilitators

Sexual harassment can be a difficult subject for open discussion, particularly in mixed-gender groups of men and women, and for those who are victims. However, it is common and has a very negative impact, not only on the victims, but on the workforce as a whole, the company as a place of employment, and the wider community.

So, this module provides information on what is sexual harassment, why it is so common, and the effects it has. It gives guidance on what victims of sexual harassment can do and the roles of workers, trade unions, employers and government in combating it.

The Activities are designed to explore the question without putting any individuals in a difficult or embarrassing situation, and also for workers to come up with a plan of action.



## What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is a serious problem affecting working women and men at the workplace. A significant number of women and men experience sexual harassment at the workplace at some time in their working lives.

It interferes with workers' performance, undermines job security, and creates a threatening or intimidating work environment. So it is a serious problem, not only for the individuals concerned but the whole workforce, and therefore the employers too.

- ❖ **Harassment** is a form of "discrimination" and so it is illegal. The most prevalent form of harassment is sexual harassment.
- ❖ **Sexual harassment** can take the form of verbal or sexual advances, or sexually explicit statements or remarks made by someone (or a group of people) which are unwelcome or offensive to the worker(s) involved and make them feel threatened, humiliated, patronised or harassed.
- ❖ Sexual harassment in the workplace implies that the victim has to comply sexually or forfeit their job or other benefit such as promotion. In most cases the harasser has the power to punish or reward based on his/her occupational status. It is an expression of power.
- ❖ Sexual harassment is not just acts perpetrated by individuals but sometimes by a group. Or it can be with the collusion of a group – where, for example, one person commits the offence and others know about it but keep quiet.
- ❖ Sexual harassment is most commonly perpetrated by men against women. But both women and men can be harassers, and both men and women can be victims. It can be heterosexual (aimed at a person of the other gender) or homosexual (aimed at a person of the same gender).







# JUST SAY "NO" TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT!



"A supervisor was leaning and touching me without my consent.  
I don't want this behavior! It is sexual harassment!"

## Forms of sexual harassment

- \* **Physical contact** that is unwanted, ranging from touching to sexual assault, strip search by or in the presence of the opposite sex, or rape.
- \* **Verbal forms** including sex-related jokes, insults, graphic comments about a person's body or sexual orientation, or unwelcome innuendos.
- \* **Other non verbal forms** of sexual harassment include any unwelcome sexual gestures, indecent exposure, whistling, and display of sexually explicit pictures and/or objects.
- \* **Sexual favoritism:** This is when a person in a position of authority rewards those who respond positively to his or her sexual advances, whilst other employees who do not submit are denied those rewards. Such rewards may be in the form of promotion, a bonus or salary increase, or any other employment privileges.

### ACTIVITY: On the causes and effects of sexual harassment

In groups, discuss:

- Have any of us come across sexual harassment at our workplace?
- If so, what form did it take?
- What was the impact on the victim(s)?
- Was there any action taken to stop it?
- How did we feel about it?



## What should she have done?

One evening, when most workers had gone home from their flower farm in the Mukono district of Uganda, Imoot (not her real name) was lured into sex with her supervisor in a greenhouse on the promise of promotion at work and other gifts.

A male worker who was passing by caught the two in the act, and threatened to report them to management unless Imoot slept with him too. She was very frightened and didn't know her rights. So she felt she had little choice and accepted, hoping to save the promotion and gifts promised to her.

Later, Imoot confided in a woman activist, who reported the case to Imoot's line manager, another woman. But she too was ignorant of the law and said there was little she could do. Imoot was later diagnosed as HIV positive.

## Why is sexual harassment so common?

Sexual harassment is more likely when the following conditions exist:

- \* The workplace environment is unprofessional; proper employment standards are not being respected; and the employer has no sexual harassment policy or procedure
- \* There is little knowledge among workers about any sexual harassment or grievance policies that do exist, or about existing laws and regulations
- \* A sexist atmosphere prevails, with stereotypical views of women and men; everyone keeps silent, seeing sexual harassment as 'part of life' or blaming the victims as the cause of their own harassment
- \* Sexual harassment is treated as if it is an individual problem, not an employment or trade union issue
- \* There is a fear of reprisals; victims lack confidence that others will support them, and so remain silent
- \* A stereotype prevails of women as readily available for sexual gratification; so the harasser does not accept rejection and persists; this is a product of socialisation which claims that a man is entitled to conquer a woman even if without her consent, as if when women say "NO" they really mean "YES"
- \* Few women are employed and/or given only subordinate positions, with little or no representation in decision-making bodies.





## The effects of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment has a serious impact. For example:

- \* It reinforces women's state of powerlessness in relation to their male colleagues; it serves as a warning to all women, even those who are not direct victims, to limit their ambitions
- \* It makes women less able than men to control their careers and professional destinies
- \* Sexual harassment is often an act of violence, and it can cause injuries and erodes women's sexual autonomy
- \* Victims' self esteem can go down, leading to frustration, depression and even suicide; they may leave their jobs and lose their income
- \* It can lead to favoritism or corruption, where those who give in to sexual advances get benefits or privileges like training, pay rise, promotions, while others who may be equally qualified are denied them
- \* If victims drop out of work, management loses experienced people
- \* It has a negative effect on the whole workforce and a wider community, it reduces harmony among workers, making it less possible for management to create teamwork and achieve organisational goals
- \* A sexist environment is a fertile ground for the spread of HIV/AIDS.

"I am saying 'NO' to sexual harassment!"

If you continue, I will report you!!"





## What can victims of sexual harassment do?

- \* Do not blame yourself or feel guilty. Harassers are responsible for their own actions
- \* If you are able to, confront the harasser. Use your right to say "No". Your message must be clear and strong, leaving no doubt that you mean what you say
- \* Seek support from fellow workers you trust, and find out if others have experienced any similar problem
- \* Keep evidence of all events and actions that have taken place
- \* Report to the Women Workers' Committee if one exists, or your union branch committee, or your employer, or the police.

### She refused to submit

At a farm in Wakiso district, **Uganda**, Zera (not her real name) was a greenhouse supervisor. Zera was liked very much by the women workers. But whenever the headman Peter was present there was tension because of the vulgar language he hurled at Zera: insults like "So, do you think you are any good in bed?" One day Peter told Zera that if she accepted sex with him he would recommend her for promotion. Three other women fell victim to his harassment on the promise of promotion and job security.



Zera was also a union leader and did not take such demands lightly. She reported it to her line manager, also a woman, but she didn't take it seriously. Things became worse after her union sent Zera abroad on a course. On her return, Zera was demoted, on the grounds that she was concentrating too much on the union and neglecting her duties at the company.



She reported the case to the union, and immediately a meeting was called with management. The union won the argument. The harasser was sternly warned and told to desist from such acts. The harassed women were assured of protection by management, and it was agreed that the sexual harassment policy would be improved and strictly observed.



To date, the women workers have not been dismissed or harassed again. Zera is happy in her new job, despite its lower position, and is more active than ever in the union. Management has offered to sponsor her to university if she leaves the union but, to their surprise, Zera has refused their seductive offer.





## What can workers do?

Workers have a big role to play in stopping sexual harassment from happening at the workplace. You can:

- \* Check your own behavior and challenge sexual harassment when you see it happen.
- \* Support co-workers who are being harassed.
- \* Refuse to participate in or condone any form of sexual harassment.
- \* Report any practice of sexual harassment to management and/or the union.
- \* Make sure your trade union has a sexual harassment policy.

### Women workers at the Kiliflora horticulture farm in Arusha, Tanzania, held a workplace seminar on strategies to combat sexual harassment.

Martha Mwashitte, Chairperson of the Women Workers' Committee at Kiliflora says:

“Gender-based violence used to be there but, since the awareness training, it has decreased.”

From: 'Sowing the Seeds of Women's Rights', ILO video at: [www.ilo.org/global/About\\_the\\_ILO/Media\\_and\\_public\\_information/Broadcast\\_materials/Video\\_News\\_Release/lang--en/WCMS\\_082572/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Broadcast_materials/Video_News_Release/lang--en/WCMS_082572/index.htm)



## What can trade unions do?

- \* Ensure that employers comply with labour legislation which prohibits discrimination in the workplace.

In **Tanzania**, the Employment and Labor Relations Act No. 6 and 7 of 2004, Section 7 (1) says:

*“Every employer shall ensure that he promotes an equal opportunity in employment and strives to eliminate discrimination in any employment policy or practice.”*

- \* Ensure that each employer establishes a strong and clear policy against sexual harassment, as well as a policy to promote equal opportunity in the workplace
- \* Negotiate with employers to include clauses on sexual harassment in Collective Bargaining Agreements
- \* Launch a membership awareness campaign against sexual harassment
- \* Ensure all union education programmes contain a topic on sexual harassment
- \* Establish a network of advisors and counselors to support workers trying to combat sexual harassment
- \* Lobby Government to pass legislation that prohibits sexual harassment, and to enforce that legislation (see page 110).





## MODEL POLICY STATEMENT

For adoption by trade unions and employers

- All workers have the right to be treated with dignity
- Sexual harassment in the workplace will be taken seriously and action will be taken when a complaint is made
- Sexual harassment denies the right of an individual and cannot be tolerated
- Sexual harassment is a trade union issue; it should be prevented
- Empowering workers to oppose sexual harassment will make it less common and its effects will be reduced
- Anyone who victimises those who make a complaint or give evidence will be dealt with severely.

## Excerpt from a Collective Bargaining Agreement, UHAWU, Uganda

### Article 32 Sexual Harassment Policy

- a) The company and the union agree to establish and always maintain a zero tolerance policy against sexual harassment in the company.
- b) A supervisor, manager, union leader or an employee who seeks for sexual intercourse, contact or any other form of sexual activity shall have committed an offence of sexual harassment if his /her actions contain any or all of the following;
  - I. Implied or express promise of preferential treatment in employment
  - II. Implied or express threat of detrimental treatment in employment
  - III. Use of language written or spoken of sexual nature
  - IV. Uses visual material of sexual nature or demonstrates behaviour of sexual nature.
- c) Any manager, supervisor, union leader or an employee who sexually harasses any company employee shall upon proof be dealt with in accordance with this agreement and the law in force.
- d) An employee who feels sexually harassed shall have the right to report the matter and have it addressed through the grievance handling procedure established in this agreement and the laws in force.







## What can employers do?

- \* Fulfill their responsibility to ensure a good working environment that protects their employees
- \* Acknowledge that sexual harassment happens in the workplace and that it is detrimental to the good running of the business
- \* Adopt and enforce a policy and/or reach a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the union that prohibits sexual harassment at the workplace; the policy/CBA should have explicit procedures for reporting, investigating and responding to complaints (see the example on the opposite page).
- \* Communicate the policy/CBA to all supervisors and employees, including new employees
- \* Include protection from sexual harassment in any company code of conduct
- \* Provide education for all employees to increase their awareness and understanding of sexual harassment, and to fully explain the company's sexual harassment policy and procedures
- \* Take action against harassment as soon as problems come to light, even if a formal complaint has not yet been received; act quickly according to any existing rules or to any recommendations made by an investigation
- \* Train managers and supervisors on how to deal with sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment does not only happen in the workplace itself. Women workers are especially vulnerable when traveling at night, for example after management has requested long overtime hours. It is management's duty to provide not only a safe environment in the workplace itself but also safe transport, especially if they are demanding their workers travel at night.





## What can the Government do?

- ✱ Adopt laws against sexual harassment as a form of discrimination

For example, in **Tanzania** the Penal Code (CAP. 16 R.E 2002) says:

"Any person who, with intention, assaults or by use of criminal force, sexually harasses another person, or by the use of words or actions, causes sexual annoyance or harassment to such other person, commits an offence of sexual harassment and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or to a fine not exceeding two hundred thousand Shillings or to both the fine and imprisonment, and may also be ordered to pay compensation of an amount determined by the court to the person in respect of whom the offence was committed for any injuries caused to that person."

- ✱ Enforce the law, and promote public awareness of sexual harassment as a human rights issue, how it affects victims, families and communities, and how it can be combated.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS A CRIME.**

**So legal and punitive approaches to sexual harassment are necessary.  
But a preventive approach through workers' education is more important.  
We must fight it and create a workplace free from sexual harassment!**



“ We tell workers not to wait. We advise them, ‘When you see even small signs of victimisation, come to the union immediately... Any bit of sexual harassment may seem minor now, but it could become a big issue. We will take it up with the employer.’ One lady was suspended from work when she became pregnant with the child of her boss; if only she had come when the harassment started.

*There is little solidarity from men at the workplace. Even some men shopstewards say that sexual harassment is a ‘personal issue’ instead of helping the women. But we are planning to have more gender training with the men.* ”

Dorothea Makhasu, General Secretary, Hotel, Food Processing and Catering Workers' Union (HFPCWU), Malawi.

Quoted in 'All for One = One for All', IUF, 2007





## ACTIVITY

### To develop strategies to combat sexual harassment at the workplace

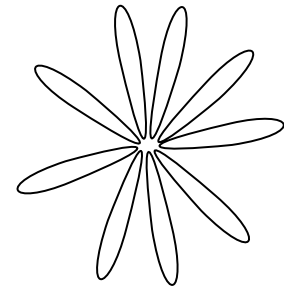
Ask a worker to read out this text to the other workers:

In small groups, discuss:

- Which of these steps have been taken by our trade union or at our workplace?
- How well they are working? How could they be improved?
- Are there any other steps which could be taken too?

Also look at 'What can workers do?' and 'What can trade unions do?' on page 113 to add in further ideas.

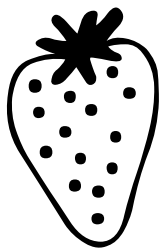
Once you have your ideas about the steps to be taken, rank them in a list of priorities, and indicate who should take which action.



In **Tanzania**, the Tanzanian Plantation and Allied Workers' Union (TPAWU) has:

- adopted a sexual harassment policy for the union
- encouraged the formation of women workers' committees at the workplace, and strengthened them to be able to deal with sexual harassment issues
- run awareness training on sexual harassment and women workers' rights
- encouraged workers and managers to get together to formulate sexual harassment policies at the workplace.

In **Uganda**, the Collective Bargaining Agreements signed between the Uganda Horticultural and Allied Workers' Union (UHAWU) and flower farm companies have a special article on sexual harassment.



## i

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

'Being safe at work', Section 1.2 of '**All for One = One for All: A gender equality guide for trade unionists in the agriculture, food, hotel and catering sectors**', IUF, 2007:

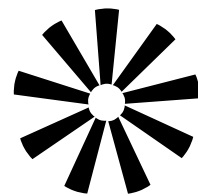
[www.iufdocuments.org/women/2008/All%20for%20One.pdf](http://www.iufdocuments.org/women/2008/All%20for%20One.pdf)

'Promoting Gender Equality: A Resource Kit for Trade Unions', Booklet 3, pages 21-24 on sexual harassment, ILO, 2002: [www.ilo.org/global/What\\_we\\_do/Publications/ILOBookstore/Orderonline/Books/lang--en/WCMS\\_PUBL\\_9221127540\\_EN/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/What_we_do/Publications/ILOBookstore/Orderonline/Books/lang--en/WCMS_PUBL_9221127540_EN/index.htm)



## NOTES

[illegible]



# 9 COOPERATIVES = WORKERS' ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

## Aims

To help workers understand better:



- What are cooperatives and their different types, how workers can be involved in cooperatives, and their benefits to workers, especially women workers
- The nature of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs) in particular; how they are formed, and how workers can benefit from them, especially women workers
- How to strengthen existing SACCOs and attract more members to them.



## Notes for facilitators

*This module looks at the different types of cooperatives that exist in countries of Eastern and Southern Africa. Facilitators can prepare with information about cooperatives in your country from the sources given on page 127.*

*Even where women are members, often their cooperative is dominated by men. But cooperatives are or should be democratic organisations. So women workers should be encouraged to play a full part in them.*

*It focuses in particular on savings and credit cooperatives societies (SACCOs), and ends with an Activity to encourage women workers to set one up at their own workplace.*

## What is a 'Cooperative'?

“An autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.”

ILO Recommendation No.193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives, 2002



Cooperatives are enterprises which are jointly-owned and democratically-controlled, where members cooperate together to meet their economic, social and cultural needs.

Cooperatives are based on:

- \* **values** of self-help, self-responsibility, equality, justice, solidarity, honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others
- \* **principles** of voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member economic participation, autonomy and independence; member education and training, and concern for the community.

Some call this the 'solidarity economy'. It is very different from the capitalist private enterprise that dominates our world, where only a few owners get almost all of the benefit



“Co-operatives are enterprises that put people at the centre of their business and not capital.”

[www.ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop)

In most countries, there are specific laws governing cooperatives.

Across the world, over 800 million people belong to cooperatives, and 100 million are employed by them.

## Different types of cooperative

Cooperatives can be set up for various types of activity. There are:

- \* **Production cooperatives** where workers who produce the same goods or services can share the cost of raw materials, equipment, transport, etc., and together find a better market to sell their products
- \* **Marketing cooperatives** where people who produce goods or services get together to find better markets for their enterprise
- \* **Savings and credit cooperatives** where members contribute savings and can borrow from this capital that they have collectively built up
- \* **Consumer cooperatives** where people get together to buy goods in bulk, at a cheaper price; sometimes they run shops where they, and perhaps others in the local population, can buy food and other daily necessities at a better price
- \* **Housing cooperatives** where people collectively own and run the premises where they live, so as to secure better quality housing at a price they can afford.







## Cooperatives in East/Southern Africa

Cooperatives of all sorts – production, marketing, savings, etc. - form a very important part of the economy in many East and Southern African countries. They support and encourage many small producers as well as workers.

In many countries in Africa, cooperatives used to be government-controlled. But now many more are autonomous, run by and for their members, with government agencies to register and support them.

To encourage more cooperatives, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has been running a special programme called **CoopAfrica**, based in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

The CoopAfrica website gives information on cooperatives in individual countries including **Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda** and **Zambia**, along with the contact details of each national federation of cooperatives: [www.ilo.org/coopafrika](http://www.ilo.org/coopafrika)

The international body uniting and supporting cooperatives across the world is the **International Cooperative Alliance**. In Africa, the ICA has a regional office in Nairobi, Kenya, to support and facilitate the growth of cooperatives in the continent.

[www.ica.coop/africa](http://www.ica.coop/africa)

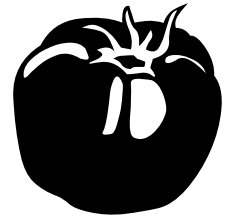
ICA Africa members include:

Kenya Union of Savings & Credit Cooperatives Ltd (KUSCCO)

Tanzania Federation of Cooperatives Ltd (TFC)

Uganda Cooperative Alliance Ltd (UCA)

Zambia Cooperative Federation



### 7 million cooperative members in Kenya

Cooperatives are very important to economic growth in **Kenya**. By 2007, there were over 11,000 registered cooperative societies, with at least 7 million members and 250,000 people directly employed. They mobilise about one-third of the national savings, worth Kshs. 30 billion (US\$37 million).

There are cooperatives for coffee and cereal growers, dairy farmers and many others, under the umbrella of the Kenya National Federation of Cooperatives. There are also over 2,000 savings and credit societies (SACCOs) registered with the Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (KUSCCO).

### Cooperatives expanding in Ethiopia

Cooperatives have grown rapidly in **Ethiopia** in the last 15 years. According to the Federal Cooperative Agency, about 14,423 cooperatives were registered by 2005. Most are in the service sector, including housing, and savings and credit cooperatives. In agriculture, there are cooperatives in grain, coffee, vegetable, dairy, fish, irrigation and honey production.



## Women in Cooperatives

Women can especially benefit from cooperatives – the social economy – because in many societies they have less access than men to ownership in the private economy.

There is still much to do to get women to participate fully in cooperatives, however. In most African countries, women are still under-represented, whether as cooperative employees, as members, and especially as leaders. When households register to be in a cooperative, it is usually the male 'head of the household' who is listed, which makes women less involved.

**In Ethiopia**, only 18% of cooperative members are women.

**In Kenya**, women comprise 40% of employees in agricultural cooperatives, but only 26% of members, and just 9% of management.

The democratic nature of the cooperative does mean, however, that women members, like men, can have a stronger voice in cooperatives than in other types of enterprise.

One of the key aims of both the ICA and ILO programmes in Africa (see page 121) is to promote the participation of women, and equality between men and women in all decision-making and activities within the cooperative movement.



“Special consideration should be given to increasing women's participation in the cooperative movement at all levels, particularly at management and leadership levels.”

ILO Recommendation No. 193 (2002) on the Promotion of Cooperatives

In **Uganda**, the Uganda Cooperative Alliance (UCA) is encouraging better representation of women in cooperatives:

- It adopted a Gender Policy in 2005;
- It has been giving training on gender equality to staff, and has produced a gender manual;
- It requires that a third of those taking part in any capacity-building activity must be women, and that a third of the board members of co-operatives in the UCA must be women.

From: CoopAfrica



## Questions for discussion

- ❖ Are there workers' cooperatives in our country? What kind of cooperative are they (see page 120 for the different types)? Do any of them involve horticultural farm workers?
- ❖ Are any of us a member of a cooperative, or do we know anyone else who is – especially women? If so, what do they say is the benefit of being a member?
- ❖ If we want to know more about cooperatives, where would we go to find out?





## SACCOs – A very useful type of cooperative

SACCO stands for **Savings and Credit Cooperative Society**.

It is a form of cooperative association, aimed at improving workers' access to finance.

In a SACCO, workers set up a cooperative society with a bank account. They put their cash savings into this account, thereby building up some capital that they own. Each individual can then borrow from this capital, according to the regulations of the society.

Most workers in Africa, especially in the agriculture sector, live on a very low income which often does not meet their family needs. SACCOs provide an extra form of income support for them.

SACCOs also contribute to the country's plan to improve the income of the people and reduce poverty. Plus SACCOs have shown themselves to be more resilient at a time of global financial crisis – as they are driven by the members' collective needs rather than the private gain of individuals.

The biggest threat to SACCOs is when members do not honour their responsibilities to the other members, for example by not repaying loans properly.

SACCOs involving horticultural farm workers exist in **Tanzania** and **Uganda**.

In **Zambia**, farm workers often have their own savings and credit groups, though usually they are not formally registered.

**Workers at the Kiliflora farm in Tanzania, during a training session about SACCOs**





## How do SACCOs benefit workers?



“ Before I joined the SACCO I lived in a one rented room house, with my family (three children - two boys and one girl). The room was not enough for me and my family but I had to live there for 4 years because of lack of an alternative. I was paying Tanzania Shillings 10,000 per month and this was too much for me!

Three years ago I decided to join the SACCO. This year, in January, I borrowed some money and built a two room house on my plot. Through the SACCO I have solved my family's problem. ”

A woman worker on a horticulture farm in Arusha, Tanzania.

In a SACCO, the workers pool their savings, however small. They are then able to get loans from the SACCO – which is their own money – and use this to pay for such expenses as educational costs for their children, medical costs, buying plots of land to build a house, buying bicycles or cars, as start-up capital for income-generating activities, for social activities, or for any other household or family needs.

In this way, savings and credit societies such as SACCOs give low paid workers access to capital which they would not otherwise have. Commercial banks rarely lend money to people on low incomes. It is also rare for an employer to operate a credit scheme for his/her workers. Women workers have even less access to banks or other savings/credit schemes than men.

In **Kenya**, only 3% of women have access to the formal financial sector, whereas about 44% of men do.

From: ILO CoopAfrica

So SACCOs are a very good way for workers, especially women workers, to organise their own savings and credit scheme.

In **Tanzania**, women's SACCO membership is growing, up from 86,000 in 2005 to nearly 272,000 in 2008. Women are now over one-third of SACCO membership in that country. The new Women's Bank there is working with SACCOs to ensure that more rural women are reached. (From: ILO CoopAfrica)

“ Before joining a SACCO I was not in the habit of saving money. I faced very serious financial problems because I was not able to meet the costs of school fees for my children. After realising the benefits, I am very comfortable to save a small amount per month. I know it is through the SACCO that I can afford to pay in full the school fees for my children. ”

A woman worker on a horticulture farm in Tanzania who has benefited from being a SACCO member.

For more on SACCOs in Tanzania, see page 126



## How do SACCOs work?

### The money in a SACCO comes from:

- ❖ **Membership fees:** Every new member who joins a SACCO pays a membership fee. This fee is not refunded when that person stops being a member.
- ❖ **Shares:** Every member who joins the SACCO buys at least one share, also to qualify as a member. Each member decides the amount of shares they want to own. Shares are the member's own money and are refundable when that person stops being a member.
- ❖ **Members' savings:** Every member makes regular savings into the SACCO, for example once a month. Sometimes a SACCO decides to operate other types of savings and investment too. These savings remain the member's own money and are refundable when that person stops being a member.

### How the money in a SACCO is used:

- ❖ Any SACCO member who has savings and needs credit can apply for a loan.
- ❖ How much a member can borrow depends on how much savings they have put into the SACCO, their ability to repay, and their reasons for borrowing.
- ❖ When someone borrows from the SACCO, they have to pay interest as well. The rate of interest is decided by the SACCO members.
- ❖ Any delay in repaying loans plus interest cannot be allowed because it can destroy the SACCO.

Workers should be trained on how to join and form SACCOs





## **SACCOs in Tanzania: a “saviour”**

There are some 4,500 SACCOs in Tanzania, and the number is growing. Even some workplaces encourage the formation of SACCOs as a way of helping workers solve their economic problems.

It is important to make sure that SACCOs are run properly so that they protect their members' savings and do not collapse. In Tanzania, they are governed by the Cooperative Society Act No. 20 of 2003, and each SACCO must be officially registered. The trade unions and other workers' associations are responsible for providing education, information and guidance to their members on how to establish and run a SACCO.

The minimum number of people needed to set up a SACCO in Tanzania is 20. The members elect an Executive Committee and agree a set of rules for their SACCO.

SACCO members can borrow two to three times their savings. The more one saves, the more one can borrow. For example, someone who has saved Tanzania Shillings 100,000 can borrow Tanzania Shillings 200,000 - 300,000. Requests for credit are dealt with by the Credit Committee, which is also elected at a General Meeting of the SACCO. This Committee has to make sure that the proper procedures are followed so that no borrowers abuse the SACCO. For example, a member that wants to borrow has to provide the names of two Referees (or Guarantors): people who are ready to pay back the loan if the borrower fails to do so. And once a loan is agreed, the borrower and the referees have to sign a credit contract which sets out how the repayment will be made.

### **A SACCO for trade union employees**

Those who work for the Tanzania Plantation and Allied Workers' Union (TPAWU) have a SACCO.

The objectives of their SACCO are:

- 🍓 to help TPAWU employees develop a habit of saving and borrowing money to address their economic problems; and
- 🍓 to set an example for TPAWU union members to encourage them also to form SACCOs at their workplaces.

It was set up and registered in 1998 with a start-up capital from the union of Tanzania Shillings 3,000,000 (about US\$2000). Twelve years later, by early 2010, the SACCO had 55 members (37 men and 18 women) and was worth Tanzania Shillings 70,382,112 (about US\$47,600).

The TPAWU SACCO members use this capital to take out loans for such purposes as their children's school fees, building houses, buying cars or household items, and emergency needs. They repay the loan at an interest rate of 2% over 24 months. Every member has taken out a loan at least twice.

The TPAWU SACCO is a great success. Members call it their “saviour”.





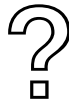


## ACTIVITY

### An Action Plan to set up a SACCO at our workplace

In your group, prepare a plan to establish SACCO at your workplace. Set out:

- the steps to be taken, and who will take them
- what you need to know, and where you can find help.



## Questions for discussion

- ✿ Are there SACCOs or something similar in our country? If we don't know, how would we find out?
- ✿ Are any of us a member of such a savings and credit society, or do we know someone who is? If so, what do we think are the benefits? What message would we give to fellow workers who are not yet in a SACCO?
- ✿ If none of us have ever been a member of a SACCO or something similar, how do we think it might benefit us and our families?

## i

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**International Cooperative Alliance:** [www.ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop)

**ILO CoopAfrica:** [www.ilo.org/coopafrika](http://www.ilo.org/coopafrika)

**'Promising practices: How cooperatives work for working women in Africa',** and **'How cooperatives work for working women: Voices from the movement',** CoopAfrica, March 2010.

**'Handbook on Cooperatives for Use by Workers' Organisations',** by Guy Tchami, ILO, 2007: [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_ent/documents/publication/wcms\\_094046.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_094046.pdf)

**'Let's organise! A SYNDICOOP handbook for trade unions and cooperatives about organising workers in the informal economy',** by Stirling Smith, Syndicoop, 2006: [www.ledknowledge.org/UserFiles/UserAdmin/File/Document-Blog/Manualsyndicoop\\_report.pdf](http://www.ledknowledge.org/UserFiles/UserAdmin/File/Document-Blog/Manualsyndicoop_report.pdf)

**Ethiopia:** Federal Cooperative Agency

**Kenya:** Kenya Union of Savings & Credit Cooperatives Ltd (KUSCCO)

**Tanzania:** Tanzania Federation of Cooperatives (TFC)  
Savings and Credit Cooperative Union League of Tanzania Limited (SCCULT)

**Uganda:** Uganda Cooperative Alliance Ltd (UCA)  
Uganda Cooperatives Savings and Credit Union Limited (UCUSCU)

**Zambia:** Zambia Cooperative Federation

3 July each year - International Day of cooperatives

2012 - United Nations International Year of cooperatives



## Organisations involved in producing this manual

### Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers' Union (TPAWU)

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“ I appreciate the level of consideration given to the existing issues in farms and the effort made to train us on these issues which will make us one step closer to solving the problems we have in our workplace. ”

Testimony from a worker in Ethiopia





# Learning Together



women working worldwide

## *an **Education Manual** for workers on the flower and vegetable export farms of East/ Southern Africa*


This manual was produced through a collaboration between Women Working Worldwide (WWW) based in the UK, and its current and past partner organisations in several countries of East/Southern Africa.

This joint project, running from 2005, has been aimed at improving the working conditions of women workers on the export horticultural farms there.

Most important has been the mass training of workers, particularly the women, to inform them of their rights and to encourage them to join unions and to take up leadership positions within the unions.

A key part of our collaboration has been sharing what we have learnt from these programmes so as to improve our training materials and practices. This manual is one result.

For more information and resources, please visit: [www.women-www.org](http://www.women-www.org) Or get in touch with us directly.



Flowers must not cost  
people's health or  
the earth.

