



# WOMEN GROWERS IN KENYA'S FLORICULTURE SECTOR

Written by:

WORKERS RIGHTS WATCH and  
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**Building  
Bridges** for  
Women's Economic  
Empowerment



## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>BBWEE</b>	Building Bridges for Women Economic Empowerment
<b>FAO</b>	Food Agricultural Association
<b>FCAM</b>	Fondo Centroamericano De Mujeres
<b>FEMNET</b>	The African Women's Development and Communications Network
<b>FIDA-KENYA</b>	Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya
<b>FPEAK</b>	Fresh Produce Exporters Associations of Kenya
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>HCD</b>	Horticultural Crops Directorate
<b>KIPPRA</b>	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
<b>KEPHIS</b>	Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service
<b>SH</b>	Sexual Harassment
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>WW</b>	Women Win
<b>WRW</b>	Workers' Rights Watch
<b>WWS</b>	Win-Win Strategies

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women-owned flower farms (WOFF) have huge potential to drastically improve the position of women through promoting more women entrepreneurs and role models while also creating better working conditions for women workers. However, very little information is available on WOFFs in Kenya's flower sector. In developing an approach to boost their position in the floriculture sector, it is key to have a better understanding of who they are, what challenges they face, and where opportunities lie for furthering the position of women-owned/led businesses in the flower sector.

Objectives of the research are to assess the challenges faced by WOFF and to identify opportunities to improve the position of WOFF in the floriculture sector. Most WOFF are small- to medium-sized businesses with their own set of unique challenges, in part because of the typical size of WOFF and in part because of prevailing gender norms. Challenges include the high costs of participating in certification schemes, land ownership, limited access to markets and credit facilities, balancing business with unpaid care work, and lack of access to information and training opportunities. There is a clear need for greater capacity strengthening, while also creating platforms for women entrepreneurs in the floriculture sector to meet, connect, and gain greater access to a wider network of buyers in the sector. In that sense, this research deepened understanding of the landscape of women-owned flower farms

in Kenya, determining what it takes to innovate, prioritise relevant capacity strengthening needs of women entrepreneurs in the sector, and scope for key entry points to access market opportunities through appropriate business tools. While many new insights have been gained, the research also highlighted the need for more research within this specific area.

Key recommendations from the research are geared towards four key stakeholders/actors, namely buyers (including auctions, supermarkets and retailers), certification bodies, governments and embassies, and civil society organisations/initiatives (including multi-stakeholder initiatives). In conclusion, these recommendations call on all actors to join hands in solidarity to ensure that women-owned flower farms are supported and can blossom in Kenya's floriculture sector, thereby contributing to broader gender equality in the sector and beyond.

## Buyers

- Supermarkets and retail chains need to package, and label certified and noncertified flowers distinctively to enable the end consumer to make an informed decision.
- Global auctions and relating actors should come up with a structure/framework that ensures that buyers flowers with certified social and ethical standards are competitively priced as to not be out shadowed by the lower price of noncertified flowers.
- Increase access for women-owned farms and small-scale women growers to directly sell to auctions and/or supermarkets and retailers. For example, the creation of a forum where growers participate in evaluation and negotiation of prices can support an increase in access to markets.
- At events like IFTEX and other important floriculture trade fair events, it is key to provide women-owned flower companies and growers with a platform.
- Supermarkets and retailers should re-evaluate their procurement policy to actively try to source more intentionally from WOFF.

## Certification bodies

- Certification bodies should have adjusted pricing of membership fees that are more fair and accessible to women-owned farms.
- There is need for a more uniform certification scheme that brings together all categories of certification to make it less time- and resource-intensive for WOFFs to meet all the certification requirements.
- Certification bodies can be more proactive in identifying gender-specific challenges that hinder WOF from becoming certified.

## Governments and Embassies

- Ensure to have continuous dialogues and consultative meetings with key horticultural government bodies, on national and county levels, to ensure the perspective of WOFFs is included in any policy and legislative frameworks.
- Governments and embassies to promote WOFF in trade negotiations and create policies and incentives for trading partners to source from WOFF.
- The Kenyan government can support the growth of WOFFs by having a one stop tax system for both the national and county governments.
- The Kenyan government can support WOFFs by subsidising farm inputs, pesticides and fertilisers to reduce key business costs of WOFFs.

## Multi-stakeholder initiatives & civil society organisations

- Multi-stakeholder initiatives like Floriculture Sustainability Initiative (FSI) and Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI) should create a platform or forum for WOFFs to share their experience, learn from one another and build synergies.
- Multi-stakeholder initiatives can also play a huge role by bringing buyers together to meet WOFFs and provide opportunities for direct engagement.
- Women's rights organisations should support by providing capacity building trainings for women growers on topics including: leadership, financial literacy, sexual harassment and gender-based violence and work-life balance.
- Women's rights organisations and other civil society organisations should aim to foster closer partnerships with key prominent stakeholders in the floriculture sector to support stakeholders in adopting a gender lens to policies and procurement practices.

## BACKGROUND

### Building Bridges for Women's Economic Empowerment and Resilience

Win-Win Strategies (WWS) is a brand within The Netherlands-based women's fund Women Win. WWS connects the power of business with the deep assets of women's funds and organisations to empower women globally. The Building Bridges for Women's Economic Empowerment and Resilience (BBWEE) programme is a 5-year programme implemented by Win-Win Strategies and funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A specific focus is placed on global value chains that connect Kenya and The Netherlands. The programme aims to economically empower women working in global value chains and increase women's economic resilience.

### The Research Team

#### Workers' Rights Watch

Workers' Rights Watch (WRW) is an independent, non-profit, civil society organisation founded in 2009 under the society Act (Laws of Kenya). WRW exists primarily to promote healthy work environments within Kenya's horticulture and other businesses. WRW's work is based around four thematic areas namely: responsible governments, responsible businesses, responsible organisations, and responsible citizenry. Since its inception, it has undertaken a number of initiatives on creating an enabling environment for enhanced participatory governance and democracy within the cut flower sector to ensure that worker leaders' capacity and policies are put in place and adhered to in Kenya and that women workers are free from all sort of violations such as Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Violence.

#### FIDA-Kenya

FIDA-Kenya is a non-profit, non-partisan and non-governmental membership organisation committed to the creation of a society that is free from all forms of discrimination against women through the provision of legal aid, women's rights monitoring, advocacy, education, research, policy formulation and referral. Over the years FIDA-Kenya has undertaken projects to empower women workers in Kenyan flower farms with relevant information which enables them to demand and realise their labour rights. Other projects also focus on enhancing Human Rights Compliance in the Horticulture Sector in Kenya as well as lobbying duty bearers and stakeholders (both at the county and national level) for better implementation of the existing laws in Kenya and building their capacities on how to monitor them.

# CHAPTER 1:

## INTRODUCTION

During the International Day of Rural Women 2020, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) urged the recognition of women's significant role in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security, and eradicating rural poverty. Currently, however, women still face considerable gender-based inequalities in paid labour workforces, unpaid domestic responsibilities as well as limited access to, control over and utilisation of resources.<sup>1</sup> African cultural norms and traditions also continue to restrict women's capabilities to fully own and engage in agriculture. Bridging the gender gap in agricultural productivity has the potential to lift a significant number of beneficiaries out of poverty.<sup>2</sup> Policy makers, governments, funders and development partners must understand the importance of women empowerment in devising more effective and gender-sensitive interventions to increase agricultural productivity, enhance household and national economic growth and better the livelihoods of all actors in Kenya's agricultural sector.

The role and status of women in different work environments has continued to evolve over time with more women decision-makers and more women-owned businesses. This research takes a closer look at women entrepreneurs in the floricultural sector in Kenya. The horticulture industry is a large foreign exchange earner, ranking third in contributing to Kenya's economy.<sup>3</sup> Flowers are a major export product with 95% of Kenyan-grown flowers leaving for international markets.<sup>4</sup> The flower sector provides direct employment opportunities to about 150,000 people, majority of whom are women. Indirectly, the industry supports over 2 million livelihoods.<sup>5</sup>



Women-owned flower farms have huge potential to drastically improve the position of women through promoting more women entrepreneurs and role models while also creating better working conditions for women workers. However, very little information is available on women owned/women-led businesses in Kenya's flower sector. In developing an approach to boost their position in the floriculture sector, it is key to have a better understanding of who they are, what challenges they face, and where opportunities lie for furthering the position of women-owned/led businesses in the flower sector. This research gathers knowledge on women owned/led flower farms in Kenya and highlights the need for more research within this field. Objectives of the research are to assess the challenges faced by women owned (or led) flower farms (WOFF), to identify relevant areas of capacity strengthening and to outline the best advocacy platforms/strategies that can be used to support the WOFF.

<sup>1</sup>Director-General's Welcome Remarks at the RBA International Women's Day 2020. FAO, 2020.

<sup>2</sup>The Cost of Closing the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity. UN Women, UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, 2015.

<sup>3</sup>Export Statistics Report. Horticultural Crops Directorate, 2020.

<sup>4</sup>Update on The State of The Horticulture Industry in Kenya 2020. Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya, 2021.

<sup>5</sup>Fairtrade is a Lifeline for Kenyan Flower Workers. Fairtrade, 2020.



## CHAPTER 2:

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research targeted women owners of large, medium, or small-scale farms within Kenya. This study mapped 20 women owned flower farms in Kenya and 7 small scale women growers who out-source to Wilmar flowers. A sample size of 10 farms was drawn out with 6 farms and 4 small scale growers participating in the research as show in the table below. The 10 farms span 7 different counties in Kenya, namely Machakos, Murang'a, Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Kiambu, Laikipia and Nakuru.

A mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis was used in this study. A semi-structured interview questionnaire was developed for the various categories of respondents. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews with the owners of the six farms. These have been coded Farm A, B, C, D, E, and F to maintain confidentiality. The respondents were also requested to fill in a questionnaire which captured any additional information that may have been missed during the interview. This qualitative approach was used to establish an understanding of the general outlook of WOFF within the horticultural sector. It also served to complement and rationalise quantitative data and information. Participatory methodologies were deployed for this purpose, including conference calls, interviews and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). During field visits, site observations were carried out to provide more context for both the quantitative and qualitative data, help establish

whether growers had different policies in place, and undertake a "spot check" of reported information. The researchers observed the organisations' structures, notice boards, reporting and feedback mechanisms among other things.

However, there were some limitations to the research. The lack of previous studies in the research meant we had no information on WOFF to reference to. There were time constraints in execution of the baseline survey and the research took a lot of time in mapping out women owned/led farms due to no database on women owned/led flower farms being available. It also has not been easy to access women owned farms and therefore get more farms on board. The research team was only able to interview a limited number of growers due to willingness so the sample data size collected cannot be generalised to the wider sector. The research team also had no control over the selection process. Some of the respondents left blank spaces in the questionnaires administered making it hard for the lead researcher to determine their views. This was because the data relied upon was evaluated and analysed from answered questionnaires, information gathered during focus group discussions and key informant interviews. These limitations only highlight the need for more robust research to be done on WOFF in order to accurately map and improve the sector.

## CHAPTER 3:

### RESEARCH ANALYSIS

Rose production is dominant with 3 of the farms producing only roses, 2 producing roses and other flowers such as lisianthus and carnations while 5 farms export non-rose flowers including hypericum and Zantedeschia. The principal market region for all flower farms sampled is Europe. Within Europe, Great Britain and Netherlands are the main market destinations, with one of the flower farms selling almost 100% of their product into Dutch auction markets. Other export regions include Dubai, the Middle East, Australia and the USA.

The next section focuses on one of the research objectives which was to find out the main challenges facing women owned/led farms in the floriculture sector. It is important to note that some needs/gaps by large exporters and medium sized exporters are different from gaps/needs by the small sized exporter and outsourcing farms. An example of this is certification. While certification is termed expensive for all growers and a huge gap within the industry, the large and small medium exporters already have certification while the small growers do not yet have certification, due to lack of funding to access certification.



# Challenges for Women Owned Businesses in Kenya's Floriculture Industry

## 1 Land Ownership

Land is one of the most important assets any farmer needs for productive farming. 4 of the women interviewed acknowledged that the land they used for flower farming is registered in their husband's name, 4 of them own the land jointly with either their husbands or siblings while only 2 of the women interviewed legally own the farming land. Women growers cited that women's land and property rights continue to be a major challenge and a roadblock to sustainable farming. One of the women growers noted that it is difficult to enter farming contracts that could provide alternative sources of capital or result in higher income since she has to first seek her husband's consent despite her running the farm and bearing all the responsibilities of the farm on her own.

Some of the respondents gave examples of friends who have experienced domestic violence upon using matrimonial land as collateral for a loan to run the business without their husband's approval. Many women are still unable to access inheritance from either their late husband's or family's estates or as part of division of matrimonial property upon divorce. Respondents also noted that they knew of other women who would love to engage in flower farming, but land ownership remains one of their greatest obstacles.

## 2 Combining Paid and Unpaid Work

90% of the respondents noted that as women there is a greater demand to manage both the home and the business without either of them failing.

According to research recently done by FAO on the role of women in Agriculture, on average, women-run farms produce 20 to 30% less than farms run by men. The reasons for this "crop gap," according to the FAO, is not due to an aptitude for farming but rather gender-specific obstacles faced by women.<sup>6</sup> None of the women respondents admitted that their men counterparts in the industry perform better. However, they did cite that there is indeed pressure as women to manage house chores, children, societal expectations and business while there are no such expectations put on men. Childbearing and maternity leave taken means that women have to spend more time away from work, to attend to their young ones thus reducing the number of hours they have to dedicate to income generating activities.

30% of the women growers acknowledged that they have support from their husbands especially in taking care of their children and cannot fail to attribute part of their success to this.



Working in this Industry is hard work and means being 100% involved. As a woman I'm expected to balance my chores at home and still run a business. I have been able to survive this far just because my husband is understanding and supportive. But how many women have that privilege?

– Farm A

<sup>6</sup>The Role of Women in Agriculture. FAO, 2011.

### 3 Male Dominated Sector

The floriculture sector is known to be a male dominated sector with few women taking up leadership positions. One farm noted that women are more vulnerable due to this. young ones thus reducing the number of hours they have to dedicate to income generating activities.

30% of the women growers acknowledged that they have support from their husbands especially in taking care of their children and cannot fail to attribute part of their success to this.



When I took over from my Father there was a particular male supplier who would still call my father to negotiate prices, rates and discuss issues despite me taking over in leadership of the farm. I felt disrespected and continuously asked that he should call me to discuss any affairs of the farm. But because I am a woman, he would not do so until I had to discontinue the particular supplier. I have since built stamina and have a great team surrounding me.

– Farm C

90% of the women growers noted that they have felt vulnerable in one way or another along the value chain because of their gender. Areas of vulnerability as highlighted were, dealing with male suppliers, dealing with male employees, negotiating for different prices either with government agencies or the markets, negotiation of different foreign exchange rates with the banks and the demand for work life balance.



I have had to build stamina. Male employees in the industry tend to look down on women as leaders. This is stemming from a culture where women have not been entirely accepted as leaders and where women are still believed to stay at home, do house chores and take care of children. My husband used to assist me in running the business. The employees would listen to his instructions and ignore mine. I had discussions with my husband regarding the issue and we agreed that he should not set foot at the farm. I now run the business on my own.

– Farm F

99% of the farms interviewed have at least 50% of the management team as women. A report by Kenya Human Rights Commission highlights the plight of women workers in the sector and ways in which women are less likely to be selected for leadership roles.<sup>7</sup> It further emphasizes that with fewer women in leadership, there is a missing perspective and that “the male perspective dominates decision making.” Farm E has been very deliberate to have at least 50% of women in management positions. According to the Human Resource manager she believes that this positive step can be attributed to the fact that the director of the farm is a woman and is very passionate about women empowerment. Farm B stated that “my husband and I work in collaboration but there are definitely areas where his maleness means that negotiation is easier particularly with male suppliers, male employees and government agencies.”

### 4 Challenges in access to Credit Facilities and Farm Input

Accessing and negotiating prices for key agricultural inputs such as improved seedlings, fertilisers, pesticides, machinery continue to be a major challenge for many women growers. The women growers acknowledged that their husbands and their male directors play a critical role when they need to access and/or negotiate for prices in government offices and financial institutions.

Flowers production activities are seasonal in nature. Between production and sale, 80% of the women growers experience financial challenges and are unable to access credit from financial institutions that can then cushion them from economic downturn.

Lack of collateral was highlighted as a major reason that prevented most of the women growers from borrowing money. Without adequate funds for capital investments, women growers continue to struggle to buy fertilisers, seeds, engage in sustainable agricultural practices, and other advanced farming tools and techniques that increase crop yields

<sup>7</sup>Wilting in Bloom: The Irony of Women's Labour Rights in the Cut Flower Sector in Kenya. Kenya Human Rights Commission, 2012.

## 5 Certification/Compliance Requirements

Certification bodies play a significant role in compelling farms to comply with set standards and policies within the sector. Women growers noted that consumers and importers place emphasis on flower production being ethically, socially and environmentally sound. Farm B stated that “being a member of a certification body has its pros and cons” 50% of the farms sampled are members of at least one certification body thereby facilitating ease of access to markets. The research ascertained that certified flowers are mainly sold through three main channels, retail, flower/ florist shops and supermarkets thus fetching better prices.

According to Farm C, the farm undergoes regular audits to ensure monitoring and evaluation of progress made by the farms thus assisting the farms in self-audits and implementing good practices. However, 100% of the growers noted that multiplicity in certification demands by some certification bodies has made it too costly for them to sustain. High costs of certification continue to prevent the small-scale growers from accessing certification. Farm D and E noted that they could not afford to maintain Fairtrade certification limiting the kinds of markets they have access to. All farms sampled, expressed that certification costs and expectations are too high and unrealistic for any grower.



Lack of certification means lack of access to various markets. Certification costs are so high. Furthermore, Fairtrade Africa does not have a model for small growers hence we are locked out from exporting to markets that require Fairtrade certification.

– Farm F

Farm D prefers to sell to the Middle East Market since the certification costs required are lower and more flexible. 90% of the growers expressed that the certification bodies have promised to lobby for their bargaining of prices along the value chain yet implementation of that has been a challenge. The cost of certification audit processes has great implications for they differ from one standard to another. This presents the need for harmonisation either in costing or in the market demands for the women owned/led growers to continue being relevant and remain in the market.

## 6 Accessibility to Markets

80% of the farms sampled sell their produce directly to international markets. 20% of the farms sampled outsource to other growers within the country who have high demands from the market. The small growers in most cases are forced to sell their produce to the bigger farms without much negotiation power. This in turn means that the prices and contracts are decided by the larger farms which poses a great danger in the sustainability and progress of the women smallholder farms.

None of the growers sampled sell their produce locally. Limitations to fully exploring local markets were identified as a lack of awareness where Kenyans did not appreciate the different types of flowers, flowers being perceived as expensive and an elitist commodity, the Kenyan market being negligible in terms of the consumption of flowers and a lack of open markets for locals to easily access the flowers.

### Main challenges faced when accessing different markets:

- a** The negotiating tables at the market level are male dominated. Women have to be confident, understand their products and business in more detail than men to boost their negotiating power.
- b** Markets do not distinguish flowers from certified farms from those from non-certified farms. They end up purchasing flowers from both farms at the same price thereby exposing women growers from certified farms to more loss. Markets need to understand that a certified farm incurs extra costs during production and certification processes.
- c** Rejection of flowers at the market level where farms are forced to incur losses.
- d** Instability in freight charges makes it difficult to plan and determine prices.

## 7 Financial Support and Access to Capital

Different Farms noted various ways of accessing finances to support their business. 80% of the farms interviewed finance their businesses through sales generated. The growth rate is however very slow.

Farms noted that the financial sector is yet to fully embrace the floriculture sector as a bankable sector and few banks are willing to lend them but at high interest rates.



There is a need to have banking products that are specifically tailored for the flower sector.

– Farm C

80% of the growers also noted that they have resulted in relying solely on profits as banks remain unwilling to invest in the sector. They also noted that the floriculture sector is a very sensitive sector thus making sales unpredictable due to changes in freight costs, perishability of the flowers/rejected flowers and change in prices at the market level.

## 8 Government Support

90% of growers noted the need to have a unified tax system either at the county or national government level. The cost of production is so high especially because of increase in taxes on farm inputs such as fertilisers, seeds and different chemicals. Farm B noted that they were willing to build the murrum road that connects the tarmac road to the farm, but the county government would not give them a go ahead. 5 years down the line the road remains a major challenge to transport the flowers and for workers to access especially during bad weather.

The government has also failed to regulate freight costs which translates to high production costs. 100% of the growers interviewed noted that restrictions on passenger flights arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These were previously using to transport flowers to their export markets at a more affordable price. There are few cargo flights and it usually involves connections through other countries. This in turn accrues taxation at every connection point thus more expenses on the growers. Farm C outlined the heavy taxation has translated to very high production costs making the business expensive to run and sustain.



In this era everything is taxed. We pay taxes at international level, national level and county level

– Farm B

In 2020, Kenya Flower Council witnessed some

successful less expensive trials in transporting flowers via ship.<sup>8</sup> Growers interviewed are aware of the efforts by Kenya Flower Council however they cited concern on the government's willingness to adjust on taxes and clearance fees at the port. This is because the government has hardly supported the floriculture industry despite it being a leading foreign exchange earner.

## 9 Access to information, policies, and training

Currently there are no training forums for women growers. The certification bodies train workers on various components especially those areas around audit queries. Women growers registered a concern that there is a need to train and upscale the growers' knowledge to ensure they remain relevant and responsive to the market needs. At the consumer level, there is a need to inform and educate customers/markets/retailers on the various varieties available and the impact certification has on pricing.

The market is determined by the quality of flowers that growers present to the market. "To reliably produce high quality cut flowers in consistent quantities requires optimum production management" said Farm E. The large farms have policies in place while the small growers have no policies in place. Unlike the bigger farms, the smallholder growers have challenges in training of workers. Since most of the farms rely on certification bodies to train their workers, small sized exporters and small growers with no certification have to incur extra costs to train their employees. Farm E noted due to the large number of growers, that training of workers on different issues such as sexual harassment and gender-based violence is done by the Human Resources. They therefore requested whether the markets could support training women on Sexual Harassment, Gender-Based Violence, leadership, best farming practices, financial literacy, and workplace policies.

## 10 Climate change

With droughts as an increasing threat to production, climate change could impact Kenya's flower sector in the years to come as the industry's need for guaranteed water supplies will become more pressing, while expanded cold chain logistics capacity will be increasingly necessary to ensure products reach shipping hubs fresh ahead of export. Women growers acknowledged that unforeseen weathers patterns such as excessive rain and extreme cold weather are a great challenge in planning different farming seasons

<sup>8</sup>Kenyan flower exporters intend to diversify markets, logistics. Libin Chako Kurian. Logistics Update Africa, 2020

## Closing the gap for small scale women growers



This research defined small-scale growers as those farming flowers on less than 5 hectares of land. These growers depend majorly on family labour and have at least two hired employees majority of whom are men. This is because in their opinion, men have proven to be more available and flexible to work. All the small-scale women growers interviewed outsource to a larger company in Kenya. The Company's business model is that of one-year outsourcing agreements with small holder farmers. They rely on agronomist support per region, with one agronomist supporting about 100 farmers. They also register in groups at the offices of social services. Each group should have a minimum of 15 farms and a maximum of 40 farms. New entrants are required to raise capital after which the outsourcing company retains ksh1 per every stem bought after the first harvest to assist the farmers in

buying further inputs such as farm fertilisers, pesticides and more seeds and directs farmers on where to buy quality seeds.

The outsourcing company exports solely to the Dutch auction markets in the Netherlands since they provide internal logistics to enable the trading process thus reducing general logistical expenses.

Although outsourcing companies have done an excellent job in bridging the gap between small scale women growers and international markets the small-scale women growers continue to face different challenges that not only limits other women from engaging in the business but also limits the growth and sustainability of the current small-scale growers.

## 1 Limited Financing

A new entrant needs approximately 1 ha of land and approximately Ksh.10,000 - Ksh. 15,000 to buy seeds. In case the small-scale farmer has no land to use for farming further costs are incurred to lease land. They are not facilitated with financial support by the outsourcing companies with none of the small-scale growers having access to proper financing.

The growers showed the impact the lack of financing has on their ability to purchase critical farm inputs, hire additional labour, to enhance productivity, leverage appropriate technology, maintain operating capital, and access storage. This limited access to finances was mainly attributed to lack of knowledge on relevant financing institutions and lack of collateral needed to borrow money from financial institutions. 90% of the women cannot use land as collateral for loans as the land is in the husband's name and they have to seek approval from their husbands first even to begin farming. They outlined a need to be trained on financial literacy and how to save money.



God forbid, na mzee akikufa (translated as God forbid, what if my husband dies). The title deed is in my husband's name and I could lose the farm to his family despite having children and farming on this land for 3 years now. I wish I knew how to write a will."

– Small scale grower

They also recommended whether they could have training on basic Kenyan laws and procedures such as how to write a will, inheritance and marriage law

## 2 Fixed Contract Terms

The small-scale women growers interviewed noted that they do not have direct access to markets and therefore outsource to organisations that have access to markets. This process is sealed regionally by contractual agreements with farmers' groups. Outsourcing organisations dictate the prices depending on the prices offered by the markets. This means that the small-scale farmers have no control on prices. They continuously incur losses when flowers are rejected and thus recommended

whether the markets could advise on which flowers are preferred. The small-scale growers also recommended capacity building on the contract making process.

## 3 Price fluctuations at Market Level

The small-scale farmers outlined that price fluctuation is a major challenge since they are unable to plan accordingly and hence end up bearing huge costs of farming and thus incurring losses. They recommended that markets should standardise prices for ease of projection.

## 4 Training

Small scale women growers lack basic skills in floricultural farming and management. Providing training on farm management and an understanding of farming as a family business will equip the small-scale growers with requisite skills and in turn improve their production. Other training needs highlighted were on Gender-Based Violence, Leadership skills, good agricultural practices such as crop rotation, pest management and financial management amongst others. Farm F recommended that small scale growers should receive training on computer literacy to enhance communication with different stakeholders.



I believe this [training] will enhance the very important skill of communication and especially email writing with clients and suppliers.

–Farm F

## 5 Access to Farm Inputs

High quality seeds and modern farming machinery can drastically improve farm productivity but purchase costs are high. Credits and loans are always subject to collateral requirements such as land title deeds which are mostly registered in the men's name. Enabling women's increased access to farm inputs such as fertilisers and tools will go a long way in increasing their productivity.

## CHAPTER 4:

### RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter outlines the different recommendations highlighted by women growers. They are divided into five main levels namely

1. Buyers, including auctions, retailers and supermarkets;
2. Certification bodies;
3. Governments and Embassies;
4. Multi-stakeholder and Civil Society initiatives.

#### 1 Buyers

- Supermarkets and retail chains need to package, and label certified and noncertified flowers distinctively to enable the end consumer to make an informed decision.
- Global auctions and relating actors should come up with a structure/framework that ensures that buyers flowers with certified social and ethical standards are competitively priced as to not be out shadowed by the lower price of non-certified flowers.
- Increase access for women-owned farms and small-scale women growers to directly sell to auctions and/or supermarkets and retailers. For example, the creation of a forum where growers participate in evaluation and negotiation of prices can support an increase in access to markets.
- At events like IFTEX and other important floriculture trade fair events, it is key to provide women-owned flower companies and growers with a platform.

- Supermarkets and retailers should re-evaluate their procurement policy to actively try to source more intentionally from WOFF.

- Supermarkets and retailers should acquire a standard code of practice formulated in consultation with all players within the value chain which promotes the social welfare of workers in the supply countries.

#### 2 Certification bodies

- Certification bodies should have adjusted pricing of membership fees that are more fair and accessible to women-owned farms.
- There is need for a more uniform certification scheme that brings together all categories of certification to make it less time- and resource- intensive for WOFFs to meet all the certification requirements.
- Certification bodies can be more proactive in identifying gender-specific challenges that hinder WOF from becoming certified.

#### 3 Governments and Embassies

- Ensure to have continuous dialogues and consultative meetings with key horticultural government bodies, on national and county levels, to ensure the perspective of WOFFs is included in any policy and legislative frameworks.
- Governments and embassies to promote WOFF in trade negotiations and create policies and incentives for trading partners to source from WOFF.
- The Kenyan government can support the growth of WOFFs by having a one stop tax system for both the national and county governments.
- The Kenyan government can support WOFFs by subsidising farm inputs, pesticides and fertilisers to reduce key business costs of WOFFs.

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Parliament should fast track the legislation and enactment of the horticulture crops authority bill to enable better management and support to the industry, whilst ensuring a gender lens is included.
- Key government bodies, including the Ministry of Agriculture and the Horticulture Crop Directorate Authority, should create a regulatory framework/a code of practice that addresses the submission of orders to the farms and cancellation of the same since it affects both women growers and workers.

#### 4 Multi-stakeholder initiatives & civil society organisations

- Multi-stakeholder initiatives like Floriculture Sustainability Initiative (FSI) and Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI) should create a platform or forum for WOFFs to share their experience, learn from one another and build synergies.
- Multi-stakeholder initiatives can also play a huge role by bringing buyers together to meet WOFFs and provide opportunities for direct engagement.
- Women's rights organisations should support by providing capacity building trainings for women growers on topics including: leadership, financial literacy, sexual harassment and gender-based violence and work-life balance.
- Women's rights organisations and other civil society organisations should aim to foster closer partnerships with key prominent stakeholders in the floriculture sector to support stakeholders in adopting a gender lens to policies and procurement practices.

We call on all actors to join hands in solidarity to ensure that women-owned flower farms are supported and can blossom in Kenya's floriculture sector, thereby contributing to broader gender equality in the sector and beyond. resource-intensive for WOFFs to meet all the certification requirements.



## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the recommendations cited here can go a long way in ensuring that more women growers are empowered. Moving forward, there is need to conduct similar research on women growers who engage in farming of herbs, fresh produce and fruit farming with the intention of supporting them to commercialise their farming activities. Empowering these women growers in all sectors and increasing their access to finances, land rights, resources and training provides a golden opportunity in reducing food shortages and poverty in Kenya. All actors should join hands in solidarity to ensure policy-level interventions and implementation of laws that safeguard WOFF so that gains made in achieving gender equality are not lost.

Growers applauded this research as timely and relevant, outlining that past research projects in the floriculture sector have focused on the needs of employees. The growers recommended that the research should raise awareness and educate markets to understand that women growers are vulnerable as well to patriarchal mindsets, cultures and norms that continue to see their businesses hindered in growth and sustainability.