

## Raising Industry Wide Labour Standards in Ethiopian Floriculture: Developing Internationally Recognised Ethical Standards Along with Local Capacity for Compliance and Access to International Markets



Left to right: Workers participate in a group discussion during training, Workers tend to flowers at a flower farm, A worker displays picked flowers, Workers display wrapped flowers

Ethiopia is the world's 4th largest supplier of cut flowers. The lowlands and highlands offer ideal conditions for a wide range of flowering plants, long hours of sunshine and ample supply of fresh water enable roses, gypsophila, hypericum, limonium, carnations and chrysanthemum to flourish. Over 85% of cut flowers are exported to Europe with floriculture accounting for 8% of export earnings and employing 85,000 Ethiopians.

Despite phenomenal growth and job creation, the industry has been criticised for poor working conditions on some farms. From 2011 to 2013, Partner Africa collaborated with Finlays, Marks & Spencer and The Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association (EHPEA) to develop a programme that would enable producers to meet internationally recognised ethical standards, thereby improving conditions for workers, whilst also meeting the needs of European buyers. Partner Africa was involved in training, project management and the monitoring and evaluation of this project.

*"Partner Africa are great at providing practical support in training, implementing and managing projects and we have found this service useful to support suppliers." Louise Nicholls, Head of Responsible Sourcing, Marks and Spencer*

Initially, ethical standards were developed within the EHPEA. The standards were benchmarked against Global Gap Standards to improve access to European markets.

Partner Africa helped develop a training programme that could be easily adopted by the EHPEA, thereby developing the capacity of a local team to deliver high quality training across the industry to achieve sustainable practices. Specific activities included:

- Ethical Trade Awareness training for EHPEA managers, trainers, internal auditors and union representatives
- Training of Trainers at EHPEA and farms to increase knowledge and skills
- The development of high quality training materials in the local languages of Amharic and Oromifa (manual and DVD)
- Training to improve technical and labour standards on farms
- Supporting the EHPEA training team to enable 6 pilot farms to achieve the new standard, as well as roll out new training and standards to other farms
- The development of 8 training modules, including Supervisor Training and Workplace Communication

*"Before the ETA training we did not pay attention to complying with the local laws. The training has helped us to put systems in place that has enabled us to comply with the local laws as well as the ETI Base code." Flower farm worker,*

### Key Outputs:

- **6 pilot farms received training and support**
- **Leading to a further 169 workers and managers from 30 farms receiving training**
- **The progress made by the EHPEA was promoted and direct contract opportunities were realised, with Marks & Spencer guaranteeing the purchase of 500,000 roses from farms that met the new standard**

An independent review (by Imani Development) concluded that overall the project was a success, with farm level training being *'beneficial in raising social, environmental and production standards on farms, in particular the module 'Improving Workplace Communication' has positively impacted worker-management relations'*.

With the increased awareness of ethical standards across the industry and the local capacity to support farms in achieving compliance, the Ethiopian Floriculture industry is now in a better position to access international markets and be recognised as a robust industry to source from.