

Project Name: Women Win

Theme: **People Power**, [search words] gender mainstreaming, women empowerment, employee engagement, flower sector

Project Summary: The Women Win project was a collaborative endeavor recognizing women's crucial role in Kenya's thriving flower industry. Through research and coordination, we mapped past initiatives to empower women in the industry and assessed their impact. By engaging with various stakeholders, including government bodies, civil society, and industry players, we facilitated a learning exchange program to understand existing knowledge and initiatives. This culminated in three workshops where stakeholders convened to review trends, successes, challenges, gaps, and opportunities in promoting gender equality, such as in women-owned businesses in the flower sector. The objectives were to deliberate on these challenges, share experiences from business owners and active organizations, discuss practical strategies for business initiation, growth, and sustainability, and propose interventions to strengthen women-owned enterprises and start-ups in the flower sector. Together, we crafted an action plan to drive meaningful change and create a more inclusive and equitable environment for women in Kenya's flower industry. The key focus of this project was to truly understand what women need and how they can be supported.

Objective: To address gender disparities within Kenya's thriving flower industry and recognize women's vital role.

Target Group: The project targeted women-owned enterprises and start-ups (not flower cutters) in the flower industry. We also engaged with various stakeholders, including government bodies, civil society, and industry players.

Impact: Including multiple stakeholders gave us invaluable insights into women's challenges and actual needs in the flower industry. This project, conceived just before the COVID-19 pandemic and executed during it, highlighted the difficulties faced during times of crisis. We drew on research conducted by KEPSA, which underscored the severe impact of the pandemic on the agriculture sector, particularly women's economic resilience. Challenges for women-owned businesses included access to financing, information, markets, institutional capacity, and barriers to entry. The project's findings and recommendations have the potential to significantly enhance the industry's gender equality and women's economic empowerment, making a tangible difference in the lives of women in the flower industry.

Flower farm owners, NGOs, and the private sector discussed strategies to prevent job loss among women on flower farms, tackle the lack of skills, capital, and market access, and improve literacy and education levels. The project emphasized training on vocational and entrepreneurship skills and efforts to combat transactional sex among flower farm workers. Other topics addressed included gender inequality, legal obligations, access to land rights, mental health, and inadequate support systems. Partnerships and advocacy were identified as key strategies to address these challenges, providing a clear roadmap for future action.

Funding Partners: Sustainable Inclusive Business led the project, supported by Hivos, Haki Mashinani, and FEMNET.

Duration: 4 months prep – 3 exchange sessions