

Factsheet “Women flourish without violence. Prevention of gender-based violence within the flower industry”

Following a diagnosis that 56% of women working in the flower sector in Ecuador admit to having experienced violence, a gender-based violence prevention program was developed, involving 1,300 people and 18 farms in the south and north of Quito. In 2012, Expoflores has included the theme of violence against women in its quality seal “Flor Ecuador” through new criteria and has participated in the edition.

▶ Fighting Violence against Women in Latin America

“Women flourish without violence”

Prevention of gender-based violence within the flower industry

Context
EXPOFLORES is the association of Ecuadorian flower exporters and importers. The flower sector is one of the largest employers in the central zone of Ecuador and a priority for tourism in the region.

In 2008, EXPOFLORES started to implement the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on the flower farms with the support of the Gender Development Center (GDC) from UNICEF (EXP/08/000003). The project started focusing on the prevention of violence against women within the CSR framework. The strategy is directed not only at employees but also at employer management.

Competition
Competition between EXPOFLORES and EcuadorFlora began in 2009 with a diagnostic study that indicated that 56% of all female employees reported violence in the Ecuadorian flower industry had been victims of violence – physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, and moral – and also that in numerous farms, there was no internal grievance mechanism and that women did not know the laws against the flower farms. The focus was on the prevention of violence against women within the CSR framework. In total, 1,300 people have participated from 18 farms (north and south of Quito). The program includes sensitization activities as well as training on violence prevention for employees, such as human resource managers, technicians, and medical staff. The project is also working in a study that seeks to investigate the relationship between violence against women and organizational

as well as other job changes by female workers. The study has identified a number of specific design indicators to which the organizations could give the benefit of violence against women on the farm.

Specifically, a communication strategy called “Women flourish without violence” (‘Mujeres florecen sin violencia’) was developed as a result of the research. It is based on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25, 2012), which focuses on the gender of violence. It is a national awareness campaign that seeks to raise awareness of violence against women in the flower industry, which is one of the sectors with the highest number of violence against women. The aim is to raise awareness of the problem and to give it the visibility it deserves in the public sphere.

Lessons Learned and Impact
A program's success in competing with the private sector depends on several factors. It is of fundamental importance to take into account the interests and opinions of the employees. Gender equality is a prevention program should meet the firm's specific requirements and interests. It should lead to visible, positive, long-term results.

In the case of the flower farms, the organization had already been taking the issue of gender equality into account for some time. The program has been a key factor in this process.



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