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# roses before fairtrade

**Maria Akamba** works for FlorUltra, a Kenyan flower producer exporting roses to Europe

## health & safety

We had to go into the greenhouses without protection straight after the roses had been sprayed with pesticides banned in Europe. We often felt sick or got dizzy and had headaches. We were often denied time to go to the toilet by our supervisors.

## job security

My best friend was raped by our supervisor and got pregnant. She was sacked when she stopped work to give birth. Her baby was severely deformed and died soon after.

## community benefits

The land was bought from poor subsistence farmers too poor to pay off their debts.

## environment

Village farmers were getting angry as wells were running dry, due to the amount of water used to grow water-hungry roses instead of local food.

## pay & conditions

We worked long hours and couldn't say no to overtime especially around Christmas, Easter and Valentine's Day. Our salaries were too low to pay for our children's food, clothing or schooling; so they often had to work too.

## unionisation/cooperative

Any attempts to establish trade unions were repressed – people could be put in prison or had 'accidents'. Striking was illegal.

## to find out more

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





photo: Dave Richards/RISC

# roses after fairtrade

The flower company agreed to independent audits to qualify for Fairtrade accreditation.

## health & safety

We now have masks and protective clothing which is better but very hot to wear. Pesticides have changed to those that are legal in Europe.

## job security

We cannot get sacked for getting pregnant. The company's fair trade buyers sign a contract that pays more per rose than on the world market. The payment never falls below the production cost, which means the company can plan. Fairtrade roses cost 10-15% more to consumers in Europe.

## community benefits

The company still uses what was previously food-growing land for local needs. But some of our children can now go to school.

## environment

The company still uses too much of the area's ground water and although pesticides are less dangerous they still leach into our environment

## pay & conditions

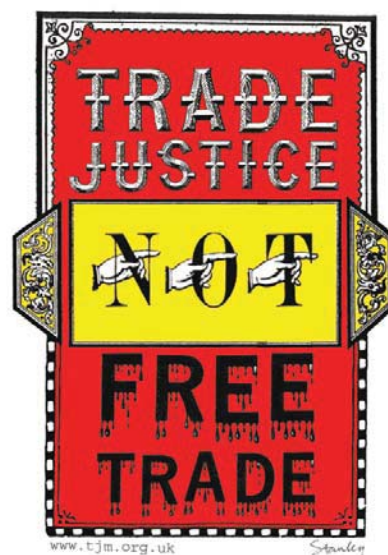
We now have a contract and get better pay than other flower workers in the area. Children are no longer allowed to work here.

## unionisation/co-operative

We still work hard but have now formed a union and can raise problems and press to change our conditions for the better without fear.

## to find out more

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



[www.tjm.org.uk](http://www.tjm.org.uk)