

WOMEN AT WORK

CASUALISATION AND IMPLICATIONS
FOR DECENT WORK FOR FEMALE WORKERS
IN THE HORTICULTURE SECTOR OF ZIMBABWE



© General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union in Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) 2019

© Labour & Economic Development Research Institute (LEDRI) 2019

© Hivos Southern Africa 2019

Research undertaken and compiled by LEDRI.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, stored in a database and / or published in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Designed by House of Quinn Pvt Ltd

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Research	1
1.2 Research focus.....	2
1.3 Methodology and Approach	2
SECTION 2: PERFORMANCE OF THE HORTICULTURE SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE	3
2.1 Introduction	3
2.2 Performance of the horticulture sector.....	4
2.3 Horticulture export trends	4
2.4 Employment levels in horticulture sector	5
SECTION 3: CASUALISATION AND THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN ZIMBABWE	6
SECTION 4: THE RESEARCH FINDINGS	8
4.1 Decent employment creation pillar	8
4.2 Workers' right pillar	13
4.3 Social protection pillar.....	21
4.4 Social dialogue pillar	23
SECTION 5: SUMMARY FOR RESEARCH FINDINGS	25
SECTION 6: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS	28

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Trends in horticulture production, 2009-2015.....	4
Table 2: Employment Forms	9
Table 3: Women participation in horticulture plants processes.....	11
Table 4: Wages, Food Poverty Line (FPL) and Poverty Datum Line (PDL)	12
Table 5: ILO Fundamental Principles and Core Conventions.....	13
Table 6: Social dialogue challenges.....	24
Table 7: Violation of worker securities due to rise in casualisation of labour	25

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Trends in horticulture exports	5
Figure 2: Emerging forms of non-standard employment	8
Figure 3: Structures for social dialogue in Zimbabwe's Horticulture Sector	23

ABBREVIATIONS

CBA s	Collective Bargaining Agreements
DWA	Decent Work Agenda
FGM s	Focus Group Meetings
FPL	Food Poverty Line
GAPWUZ	General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union in Zimbabwe
LA	Labour Act
LEDRIZ	Labour & Economic Development Research Institute
LFCLS s	Labour Force and Child Labour Surveys
NEC	National Employment Council
NSSA	National Social Security Authority
OSHE	Occupational Safety, Health and Environment
PDL	Poverty Datum Line
PPC	Personal Protective Clothing
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research

Casualisation of labour¹ in Zimbabwe has significantly increased in the last decade and the agriculture sector has been one of the worst affected sectors. What makes the agriculture sector susceptible to casualisation is the feminisation of work especially in the horticulture sector. The 2004, 2011 and 2014 Labour Force Surveys (LFSs) confirms that women constitute more than half of workers in the agriculture sector. The 2004 LFS indicated that female workers constituted 53.3%, increasing to 54.6% in 2011 before slightly declining to 54.0% by 2014. It seems, there is a preference to hire female workers especially in the horticulture sector due to their perceived natural skills, ability to handle produce carefully and provision of constant attention to crops. In addition, female workers are regarded to be naturally diligent, reliable and proficient at delicate and repetitive tasks which is key for the horticulture sector. Female workers are also regarded as a less aggressive workforce on issues of rights at work, as a result, employers tend to violate their rights at work without no recourse.

In general, casualisation of labour in the agriculture sector, where women dominate brings with it various challenges, which include decent work deficits characterised by job insecurity, poor occupational safety and health, lack of voice representation by trade unions, income insecurity, lack of social security and career insecurity among others. These challenges escalate further for women after factoring what they experienced in most forms of gender-based violence at the workplace such as sexual harassment and the lack of maternity protection which undermines full enjoyment of women workers' rights and decent work. With these arising challenges skewed against women workers, specific and strategic actions are required to deal with the challenges female workers are facing due to casualisation.

In order to provide the solutions, there is need to first undertake research (situation analysis) to ascertain the nature and extent of casualisation among women in the horticulture sector as well as identifying the arising and specific challenges to them, their families and the trade unions. It is out of this assessment that relevant and appropriate strategies are developed to deal with the casualisation crisis in the horticulture sector and its detrimental effects on female workers. It is therefore the intention of this project to provide an in-depth analysis of the nature and extent of casualisation in the horticulture sector of Zimbabwe and its implications on decent work for female workers. The report will conclude with recommendations on the appropriate strategies for female workers to enjoy decent work.

¹ Casualisation of labour is the process of shifting from full-time and permanent employment to contract, short-term and non-permanent employment (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workforce_casualisation).

1.2 Research focus

The research focused on the following areas:

- i. The current legal and regulatory framework which relate to casualisation;
- ii. The nature, forms and extent of casualisation among women working in the horticulture sector;
- iii. The specific challenges that women workers are facing as a result of casualisation;
- iv. The impact of casualisation on attainment of decent work for women workers and their families;
- v. The role of the key institutions involved (including employers, NEC, trade unions and government);
- vi. The role that the trade unions and international auditors such as Global Gap are playing in addressing the specific challenges that the women are facing;
- vii. The recommendations to address the various challenges that the women and their families are facing; and
- viii. The role of relevant institutions.

1.3 Methodology and Approach

The following methodology and approach was applied:

- i. **Desk Review:** A review of background information on; the horticulture sector and working conditions of female workers in the sector, trade unions and trade union membership was undertaken.
- ii. **Field Research:** The researchers applied the triangulation method which included both quantitative and qualitative techniques: including but not limited to questionnaires, direct observation, focus group meetings (FGMs), key informants and photographs so as to capture the worker's voices and their working environments as much as possible.
- iii. **Sampling:** A sample of horticulture farms was developed with the guidance from General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union in Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ). Horticulture farms in Harare (Kenval and Running Dog), Concession (Heyshot, Luxafor Roses and Callinghood), Ruwa (Keymar and Lilipad), Bulawayo (Concob and Mandalay) and Beitbridge (BK Cawood and Nottingham) were selected.
- iv. **Validation:** Validation of findings was conducted with workers (both females and males) from the selected horticulture farms in December 2018 through a workshop. The purpose of the validation workshop was to provide quality assurance of the research findings and report.

SECTION 2

PERFORMANCE OF THE HORTICULTURE SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE

2.1 Introduction

Horticulture involves the growing, marketing and selling of fruits, vegetables, flowers, nuts and ornamental trees and plants. Horticulture has grown significantly in the last decade and has realised rapid changes in relation to global value chains (Sections 2.2 to 2.3). Value chains in this sector have gained wide momentum as they are a major source of foreign currency generation, employment creation and general economic growth and development. Whilst the sector is fast growing in terms of demand and market opportunities at the national, regional and international levels; value chains in the horticulture sector have tended to focus on improving the capacity of one set of actors, largely producers, with little attention being placed on the working and living conditions of workers in this sector.

Historically, the horticulture sector contributed immensely to exports, employment and foreign currency generation. This saw Zimbabwe being among Africa's traditional major exporters of horticultural products, alongside Kenya and Ethiopia from the late 1980s up to the early 2000s. The growth of the sector was also attributed to Zimbabwe's internationally competitive edge which was characterised by adherence of specifications on product quality such as food safety standards and hygiene requirements, among other criteria.

As such, in the 1980s and 1990s, horticulture sector grew rapidly and contributed between 3.5 to 4.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and was second to tobacco in foreign currency earnings². However, the Fast Track Land Reform Programme of 2000 had a negative impact on the sector, for instance, major horticultural producers such as Kondozi Estate in Manicaland and Marondera's Mitchell and Mitchell which had a combined \$50 million in annual export sales were negatively affected by the land reform programme³. Other producers affected included Hortico in Shamva and Southern Roses in Harare. Overall, the contribution of agriculture to total output declined from an average of 20.6% during the crisis period 1997-2008 to an average of 10.4% during 2009-16, reflecting the impact of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme and the crisis (FES, 2018).

2 Elita Chikwati. "Govt to revive horticulture sector." The Herald June 16, 2018. <https://www.herald.co.zw/govt-to-revive-horticulture-sector/> Accessed 30 September 2018.

Francisco Netho. "Lifeline for horticulture farmers." The Patriot, January 29, 2015. <http://www.thewest.com.au.https://www.herald.co.zw/govt-to-revive-horticulture-sector/> Accessed 30 September 2018.

3 The Source. Zimbabwe horticulture exports top \$72mln, Netherlands main buyer." The Source October 5, 2016. <https://source.co.zw/2016/10/zimbabwe-horticulture-exports-top-72mln-netherlands-main-buyer/> Accessed 30 September 2018.

2.2 Performance of the horticulture sector

Table 1 indicates horticulture production and exports by category (citrus, flowers, fruits and vegetables from 2009 to 2015). Citrus exhibited a positive trend in production from 2009 to 2014 before declining in 2015.

Citrus production increased from 1.5 million kilograms in 2009 .9 million kilograms to 3.1 million kilograms in 2012 and further to 4 million kilograms in 2014 before declining to 3.4 million kilograms in 2015.

Whilst flowers declined in production between 2009 and 2010, from 5 million kilograms to 2.1 million kilograms, the trend was reversed by 2012 showing a positive growth trend till 2013 where it recorded 4.6 million kilograms before declining in 2014 to 1 million kilograms.

Fruits and vegetables production exhibited a marginal increase from 1.9 million kilograms in 2009 to 2.2 million kilograms in 2011 and further to 2.5 million kilograms in 2013 before declining sharply to 0.9 million kilograms in 2014 before recovering again to 1.9 million kilograms in 2015.

Table 1: Trends in horticulture production, 2009-2015

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Agricultural Exports (US\$mil)	413.3	519.3	893.8	979.6	1047.5	981.2	964.1
Horticulture Exports (US\$mil)	23.5	16.2	17.4	23.2	27.6	10.2	13.3
Citrus (US\$mil)	1.5	2.5	2.6	3.1	3.1	4.0	3.4
Volume (m kgs)	5.0	7.0	7.3	8.5	8.2	10.5	9.1
Price (US\$/kg)	0.3	0.35	0.36	0.37	0.375	0.38	0.375
Flowers (US\$mil)	17.5	8	8.6	13.4	17.6	3.8	4.6
Volume (m kgs)	5.0	2.1	2.2	3.5	4.6	1.0	1.2
Price (US\$/kg)	3.5	3.82	3.825	3.83	3.835	3.845	3.837
Fruits & Vegetables (US\$mil)	4.5	5.7	6.2	6.7	6.9	2.4	5.3
Volume (m kgs)	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.5	0.9	1.9
Price (US\$/kg)	2.45	2.7	2.8	2.78	2.75	2.8	2.777

Source: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Balance of Payments⁴

2.3 Horticulture export trends

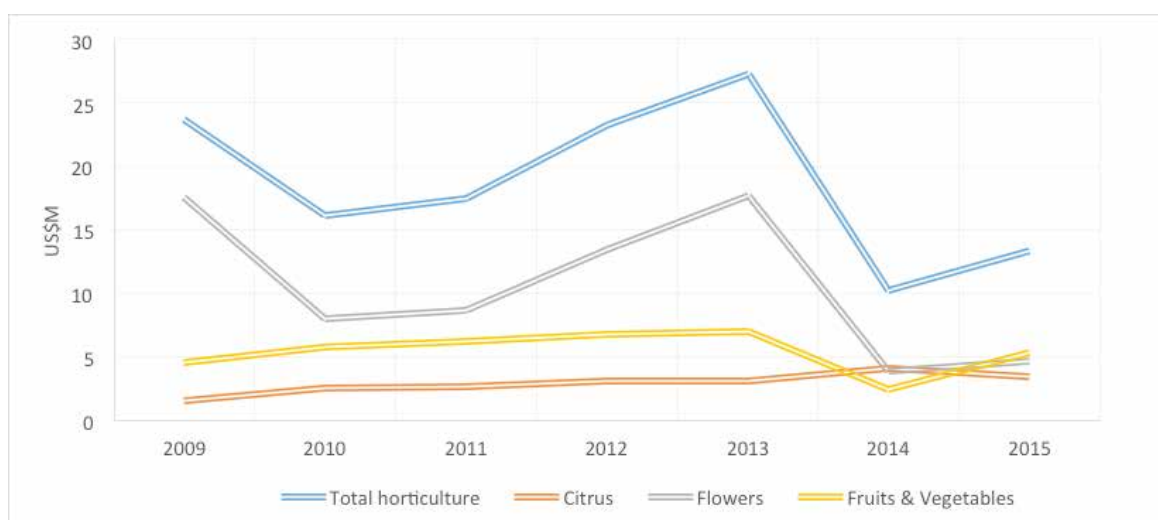
Horticulture exports increased from only US\$6 million in the 1987/88 season, to US\$103 million by 1997. The exports grew by an annual average rate of 25 per cent for the period 1998 to 2004 peaking at above US\$250 million by the early 2000s.

⁴ <https://www.rbz.co.zw/assets/balance-of-payments.pdf>, Accessed 30 September 2018.

Figure 1 shows the trend in total horticulture exports and by category from 2009 to 2015. Total horticulture exports displayed a declining trend between 2009 and 2010, from US\$23.7 million to US\$16.1 million by 2010. Thereafter, total horticulture exports improved to US\$17.4 million in 2011 and further to US\$27.2 million by 2013 before declining sharply to US\$10.2 million in 2014 before recovering to US\$13.3 million by 2015. Export earnings from flowers exhibited a positive correlation with total horticulture exports.

Citrus and vegetables export earnings both displayed a gradual increase between 2009 and 2013 before fruits and vegetables declined slightly to US\$2.4 million in 2014 before bouncing positively to US\$5.3 million by 2015.

Figure 1: Trends in horticulture exports



Source: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Balance of Payments⁵

Data from media attest to the fact that the sector has potential to grow stating that:

“Government is targeting to surpass the \$143 million mark from horticultural export proceeds next year after extending the sector to Command Agriculture Scheme.” The Herald Newspaper, 1 May 2018

2.4 Employment levels in horticulture sector

Whilst there is a lack of data on the actual number of workers in the agriculture sector, it is with no doubt that employers in this sector have a preference to hire female workers due to their perceived natural skills and ability to handle produce carefully and give constant attention to crops. In addition, female workers are regarded to be naturally diligent, reliable and proficient at delicate and repetitive tasks which is key for the horticulture sector, whilst at the same time are also regarded as a less aggressive workforce on issues of rights at work. As a result, employers tend to violate their rights at work without no recourse.

⁵ <https://www.rbz.co.zw/assets/balance-of-payments.pdf>, Accessed 30 September 2018. Official data on horticulture exports beyond 2015 could not be obtained during the research.

SECTION 3

CASUALISATION AND THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN ZIMBABWE

This section covers the provisions related to casual work as provided by the Labour Act.

i. The Zimbabwean Labour Legislation regarding casual work

The Labour Act (LA) Chapter 28:01 recognises casual work. According to the Labour Act, casual work means:

“work for which an employee is engaged by an employer for not more than a total of six weeks in any four consecutive months.”

Furthermore, the Labour Act stipulates in Section 12:3a that:

“a casual worker shall be regarded a permanent worker if he or she exceeds a total of six weeks in any four consecutive months.”

ii. The Labour Amendment Act, 2015

In 2015, after the Supreme Court judgement of July 2015 (Don Nyamande and Another vs Zuva Petroleum SC. 43/15) which gave the employers the right to fire workers on notice, the Labour Act Chapter 28:01 was amended. Section 12 of Cap. 28:01 Section 12 (“Duration, particulars and termination of employment contract”) of the principal Act was amended (a) by the insertion after subsection (3) of the following subsection:

“(3a) A contract of employment that specifies its duration or date of termination, including a contract for casual work or seasonal work or for the performance of some specific service, shall, despite such specification, be deemed to be a contract of employment without limitation of time upon the expiry of such period of continuous service as is:

(a) fixed by the appropriate employment council; or (b) prescribed by the Minister, if there is no employment council for the undertaking concerned, or where the employment council fixes no such period; and thereupon the employee concerned shall be afforded the same benefits as are in this Act or any collective bargaining agreement provided for those employees who engaged without limit of time.”

This therefore means that the role of Labour Amendment Act of 2015 designated the role of determining permanency of work to the National Employment Council (NEC), in this case NEC for the Agriculture Sector. At the time of research, the unions and the employers in the horticulture sector were still negotiating on the period to which a casual worker can sign back to back contracts before migrating to permanent employment. This implies that workers in the sector will continue to sign back to back fixed term contracts until such an agreement is reached at NEC level, thus undermining decent work. For employers, fixed term contracts are obviously very attractive for several reasons which include cutting labour costs, evading statutory obligations and employee benefits such as leave days, maternity leave, pension and medical aid, among others.

Legitimate expectation: When an employer renews or rolls over a fixed term contract continuously an expectation that it will be renewed again may be created especially if it happens over a long period of time. The expectation is deemed as legitimate and is protected in accordance with Section 12B of the Labour Act. If a legitimate expectation has arisen summary termination of the contract may be deemed as unfair dismissal.

The principle of legitimate expectation has been tested many times even in Zimbabwe highest courts. However, most Supreme Court judgments have generally not been favourable to employees and to the fight for decent work for workers. Thus, it is critical for the NEC Agriculture to quickly finalise the time limitations for signing fixed terms contracts required before a worker can migrating to permanent employment.

Source: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/02/casualisation-of-labour/>

SECTION 4

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research used the ILO Decent Work Agenda (DWA) framework to investigate and assess the impact of casualisation on decent work for women workers in Horticulture Agriculture sector.

Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men

Source: www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work

The DWA framework is made up of four pillars namely decent employment creation, workers' rights, social protection and social dialogue. Therefore, the research findings were divided into these four pillars in order to adequately trace and assess the implications of casualisation of work on each of the four pillars.

4.1 Decent employment creation pillar

i. Types of employment

The research identified the growth in non-standard forms of employment in the horticulture sector that women were subjected to. The opportunity for most women in the sector to get permanent employment have reduced drastically over the years. This has seen most women being employed in casual, precarious and unclear contracts of employment. Figure 2 illustrates the emerging forms of employment in the horticulture sector.

Figure 2 indicates the non-standard forms of employment/casualisation of labour that exist in the horticulture sector. The research revealed that there were more verbal contracts than written contracts under these non-standard forms of employment resulting in uncertainty about each party's rights and obligations at work.

Figure 2: Emerging forms of non-standard employment

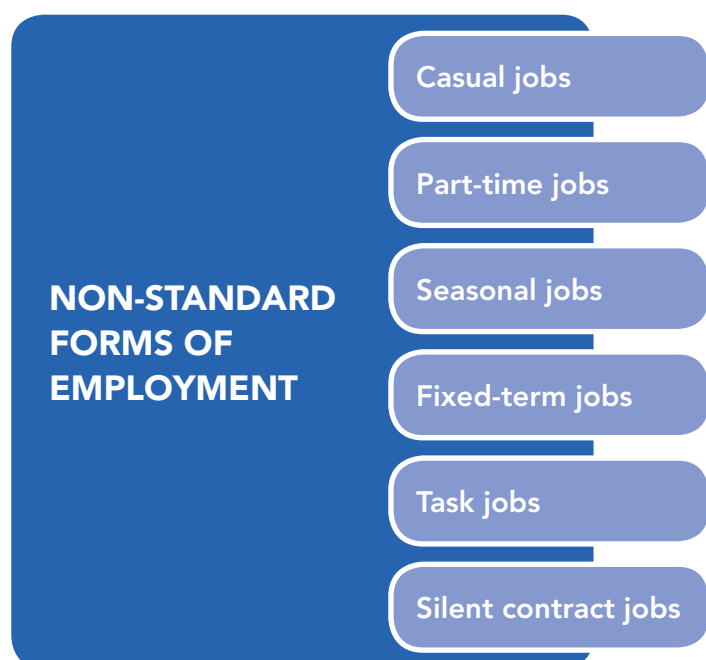


Table 2 further explains the non-standard forms of employment existing in the horticulture sector.

Table 2: Employment Forms

Employment forms	Period of tenure	Explanation and additional information
Casual/part-time	1 week to 1 month	There are workers who are employed during the peak periods of work, such as land preparation and harvesting. They also do not have social security benefits.
Fixed-term	1-3 months	This is where workers are employed for a particular period of time. These are now the majority of contracts offered to women workers in the horticulture sector. Most women reported that they now have back to back contract lasting for more than five years. The majority of the workers under such contracts do not have social security cover or benefits, hence are vulnerable.
Seasonal	6-9 months	These are workers employed during the season of the crop. Once the crop is off season contracts of employment are seized. Whereas in the past there was high levels of re-engagement into employment when the new season kicked off, the opportunity now are less.
Task (mugwazo)	As per task	This is task work, where one is employed to perform a certain task, once the task is done/completed, the contract of employment also seizes. One is sometimes required to bring their own tools to be able to get the employment contract.
Silent contract	Contract of employment attached to a spouse	This type of employment has been most experienced by women workers. This is whereby a woman is employed due to the fact that the husband is employed at the farm. Sadly, the holder of the contract of employment is the husband. Although the woman would get her wages the records of the farm would only show the employment of the man. Upon termination of the husband's contract of employment the woman's contract is also terminated. Accommodation and other employment benefits (e.g. food rations) are attached to the husband only.

Source: Author's compilation of research findings

Box 1: Decent employment is characterised by:

- i. *Work of acceptable quality*: decent employment should not be precarious in nature and should be void of occupational risks. It should also be characterised by decent wage and adequate social protection.
- ii. *Opportunities*: having a job is a right on its own. Therefore, the concept of work opportunity relates to the availability of work for those who are available for and seeking employment. It also refers to work that is freely chosen and work that is not forced on individuals.
- iii. *Remunerative employment*: Everyone works in order to earn money that should be able to meet their basic necessities in life. Hence, remunerative employment refers to the right to a living wage (one that can enable an average family to meet their basic requirements).
- iv. *Productive work*: refers to the ability to produce better and more output with a given quantity of resources.
- v. *Conditions of work*: this relates to fair treatment in employment, stability and security of work and occupational health and safety. Poor conditions of work are evidenced by poor morale among working people, shirking, moonlighting, multiple-jobbing, low productivity, high turn-over and corruption, which undermine human development.

Source: LEDRIZ, 2010

Sadly, the emerging types of employment in the horticulture sector and the attendant casualisation of labour undermines decent work elements. Contrary, the elements of decent employment are explained in Box 1.

ii. Areas of employment where women are mostly found

Women play an active role in various production and post-production activities of horticultural crops. There is a dearth of information regarding the actual number of females working in the horticulture sector. However in practice, it is clear that the involvement of women in various operations of cultivation and post-harvest handling and storage is very high. Horticultural crops are different from field crops in respect of their cultivation and the majority crops are not directly seeded. They are raised through seedling production in nursery beds and thereafter planting in the main fields. The seed cleaning, preparation of seed and sowing in the field is done by the women irrespective of the crops (Table 3). Traditionally in the agriculture sector, women normally perform farm operations, which involves manual, repetitive tasks which do not require more physical strength but involve lot of labour.

Table 3: Women participation in horticulture plants processes

Activity	Women Participation Range
Land preparation activities	60-80%
Manure or fertilizer application	40-60%
Cleaning of field in nursery and field	80-100%
Transplanting	80-100%
Frequent watering and proper nurturing of the newly planted seedlings	80-100%
Intercultural operations such as irrigation, weeding thinning and crop watch	70-90%
Harvesting	80-100%
Cleaning, grading and packaging (pack shade)	80-100%

Source: Author's compilation of research findings

iii. Notable employment practices

During the research the following were notable employment practices in the horticulture sector:

- **Forced employment:** due to the fact that one's husband worked on the farm, some women were forced to work on the farms, as the employer noted that he/she would not give free accommodation to the wife of the employee. In the event that the wife or husband would quit employment, the other spouse who also have their contract of employment terminated. Thereby forcing both the husband and the wife to stay in employment to secure each other's contracts of employment.
- **Multi-tasking:** women reported that they were subjected to multi-tasking, where they were now required to undertake more tasks than those that they were initially employed to undertake. The challenge that has also emerged from this is that they are not trained to undertake the additional task, hence injuries are on the increase. Multi-tasking has also been a common problem causing overworking, as in most cases workers are requested to undertake additional task after they would have completed their daily tasks. At one farm, women were tasked with building a bridge at the farm – work which they were not paid for!

iv. Wages

Whereas the agriculture sector is the biggest employer contributing 67.2% of the working population (2014 LFCLS) with women accounting 54% and the second contributor to foreign earnings for the country after the mining sector, the sector remains the lowest paying in the country. Given that horticulture employs more women than men, this therefore means more women workers are subjected to poverty wages.

Table 4 shows the minimum wage earned in the horticulture sector compared to the food poverty line (FPL) and poverty datum line (PDL).

Table 4: Wages, Food Poverty Line (FPL) and Poverty Datum Line (PDL)

Wage/Grade	As a percentage of FPL as of September 2018 (US\$195.00)	As a percentage of PDL as of September 2018 (US\$598.00)
Minimum Wage (Grade A) US\$82.00	42%	14%
Highest Wage (Grade C2) US\$162.00	83%	27%

Source: ZimStat data and NEC Agriculture, 2018

Table 4 shows that the wages in the horticulture sector are poverty wages, with workers and the sector falling under the category of the **working poor**⁶. The wages in the sector for the lowest paid and highest paid worker are below both the food poverty line and poverty datum line. One whose wages are below the food poverty line is said to be extremely poor, yet in this case the person is working, thereby falling under the category of the working poor. Mathematical calculations would show that even if we take the highest paid workers Grade C2 and we assume that their spouse is also in the same grade, their combined wages will still be way below the poverty datum line, at 54% of the PDL.

v. Promotion

It was gathered during the research that a few women hold supervisory positions. The ratio in most farms was 4 men to 1 woman. There were a few cases where the ratio was 1:1. It is sad to note that although the Zimbabwe ratified ILO Convention 100 on Equal Remuneration, the research revealed that women workers that are promoted to supervisory positions were not remunerated the same as men. There was need to have this corrected especially given the great potential for women to be in supervisory positions.

Overall, the research revealed that all the elements of decent work indicated in Box 1 were being undermined especially due to the nature of the employment contracts that are highly casual and precarious. The research also revealed that non-standard forms of employment illustrated in Figure 2 are on the rise in all the regions where the research was undertaken.

⁶ The working poor are working people whose incomes fall below a given poverty line due to low-income.

4.2 Workers' right pillar

Workers' rights is one of the pillars of decent work agenda. The research sought to investigate casualisation and the level of adherence of employers in the horticulture sector to the rights of female workers.

The research analysed the state of workers' rights in relation to the ILO's eight core Conventions (Table 5).

Table 5: ILO Fundamental Principles and Core Conventions

Fundamental Principles	Fundamental Conventions
Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to CB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
The elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
The effective abolition of child labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)

The research revealed that there is an intricate relationship between the type of employment and adherence or lack of adherence to workers' rights in the horticulture sector. The research revealed that the high rise in precarious (non-permanent) work was also giving rise to serious violation of workers' rights and in particular female workers' rights such as freedom of association and collective bargaining; occupational safety, health and environment; decent wage, working time, training and skills development, maternity protection and social security.

The section below provides testimonials from the female workers that took part in the research.

i. Violations to freedom of association

There was general consensus by the female workers that employers including their supervisors were violating this right. Interviews with the female workers revealed that they were victimised and threatened with non-renewal of contracts if one joins a trade union or is found to be associating or being vocal about trade union rights. In some cases, the employer forced the workers to join a trade union aligned or linked to the government the workers indicated had no interests of addressing workers' rights and is sympathetic to the employer. One of the female workers stated:

"We were forced to join this government-linked trade union by the employer. But since we joined they never came to address us as workers to find out what our problems are. They are only interested in taking our union dues only."

Since the majority of the females are non-permanent workers with job insecurity, they end up succumbing to the pressure by the employer to join a union not of their choice so that they can keep their jobs.

ii. Forced and compulsory labour

This was cited as a rising challenge at the farms. In cases where a male worker gets a job and moves to the farm with his wife and family, and gets accommodation from the employer, some employers were then forcing the wives to work at the farm or else the husband risked losing the job and/or accommodation. However, the research noted that the wives were not officially recognised as farm workers in the books of the employer, leaving the employer benefiting from “free labour” without the responsibility or obligations such as paying pensions or contributing to the worker’s compensation fund.

iii. Child labour

None of the horticulture farms that took part in the research had child labour.

iv. Discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

Non-discrimination speaks to the payment of equal pay for work with equal value. However, at some of the farms, women complained of not getting equal pay as their male counterparts. This was prevalent in grades including the supervisory level. It was revealed by some of the female workers that some farming communities and workplaces were still steeped in traditional gender norms where male workers were seen to be superior than their female counterparts. Hence, the gender wage gap existed even for the same job levels.

Discrimination was also found to be high between permanent and non-permanent workers. In some cases, permanent workers were not exposed to unpaid overtime compared to casual, seasonal or fixed-term contract workers. In addition, some non-permanent workers were not given the same treatment as permanent workers such as decent accommodation, PPC/PPE, off days and incentives. One female casual worker noted that:

“If I insist on taking my off days, the employer records this as absenteeism but a permanent worker is free to take off days. This is unfair because it is my right, we are all workers and should be treated the same.”

v. Sexual harassment

The rampant employment of casual, fixed-term, seasonal and contract workers was increasingly exposing female workers to sexual harassment in exchange for job security and renewal of contracts. One female worker noted:

“Some supervisors request sexual favours from females if they want their contracts to be renewed and some women end up giving in to save their jobs and provide for their families.”

The research revealed that most victims of sexual harassment fear disclosure due to the stigma associated with sexual harassment especially in farming / rural communities steeped in gender norms and culture. Another female worker highlighted that:

“We have few women in supervisory and management positions. The majority are men so women do not feel free to disclose sexual harassment to a male supervisor or manager. Maybe if we have more women in those top positions, women can feel free to disclose this problem to another woman.”

Another female respondent stated that at times the perpetrator of sexual harassment is the same man in management whom they are supposed to report their problems to, thus, leaving women with no other mechanisms to address the issue. One union official highlighted that female victims of sexual harassment only report the case after losing employment and non-renewal of contract. The perpetrator will then respond indicating that it was just “bad blood” between him and the female worker just because he did not renew the contract.

However, at some farms, there were few notable examples of cases of sexual harassment which were disclosed and the perpetrators were either punished or lost their job.

vi. Lack of payslips

Getting a payslip is a right of a worker. The research revealed that the lack of payslips was a serious challenge for most casual workers, the majority who are females. The absence of payslips meant that women workers were not aware of their employment grade, wage, pension deductions, overtime calculation and payment, leave days accumulated or any other deductions from their wages. From the interviews, it was revealed that women workers were at the mercy of their employer who could undermine wages or overtime calculations.

vii. Wage theft

Wage theft refers to the non-payment, delayed payment or part-payment of statutory wages (LEDRIZ, 2016). Whilst wage theft is a serious challenge across the country, the implications for farm workers especially female farm workers was more grave than other sectors. Firstly, the wages in the agriculture sector were far below the PDL, thus any non-payment, delays or part-payment of wages further entrenched farm workers into abject poverty. From a gender perspective and the gender roles assigned to women of caring for the family, lack of wages puts more financial strain and stress on women workers in terms of provision of adequate food in the home, in the event of sickness in the home and school fees for children. All this further worsened the caring burden for female workers who were also expected to report to work and function fully at the workplace. Some of the women workers noted that wage theft and its associated negativities threatened women’s concentration at the workplace further exposing them to occupational hazards.

Moreover, wage theft coupled by the rising inflationary pressures and the use of plastic and mobile money transfers continued to put pressure on the women workers as it meant the erosion of the real value of the meagre wages, further worsening the care burden of female farm workers.

viii. Lack of provision personal protective clothing/ equipment (PPC/PPE)

This was cited as a serious challenge in almost all horticulture farms. The majority of the female workers were found in departments or areas that required adequate PPC and PPE. For instance, the majority of female workers are located in green houses, pack shades, cold rooms and fields.



These areas have high usage of chemicals and require adequate PPC and PPE all times in order to protect the safety and health of the worker. The most required PPC and PPE include gloves, work suits, aprons, masks, gumboots, hats, raincoats and goggles. Whilst the Labour Act and the sectoral Collective Bargaining Agreement were clear on provisions of PPC/E, the research found out that employers were not obliging to these statutory provisions. In fact, the Labour Act gives powers to a worker to refuse dangerous work if not provided with adequate PPC/E. However, casual workers feared exercising their right to refuse work for fear of victimisation and termination of employment.

Due to inadequate PPC and PPE, the research revealed that the most common workplace injuries and health challenges included cut fingers and pickled fingers – some cases became serious to the point of losing fingers or getting operated at hospital. Other health challenges highlighted by the women workers included skin irritations/diseases especially for sprayers; falling in greenhouses due to slippery floors; and high cases of flue, diarrhoea and headaches due to chemical usage. All these health hazards posed serious challenges to female workers especially when pregnant.

One female worker lamented:

“Without provision of masks and protective clothing, we are asked to go into our workstations where sprayers would have just finished spraying the and we end up inhaling those chemicals everyday exposing ourselves to health dangers.”



Another female worker lamented:

“I lost a finger because I was cut with the roses and I had no gloves. When I told the supervisor he just said go and wash your finger and come back to work. So I did that and the chemicals on the roses entered the wound. I had no money to go and get treatment at the clinic. So the wound continued to grow and became more painful such that I could not go to work. I later borrowed money and went to the hospital and that is when the doctors told me that the finger had been seriously infected to the bone and had no choice but to cut it off immediately. My employer refused to foot the hospital bill. It pained me but I had no choice and I had to come back to work so that I can feed my children.”

The above story is one of the many more cases of females who work especially in the flower industry. Some of them showed the researchers their disfigured fingers due to cuts by thorns due to working without gloves.

A breastfeeding worker working in a pack-shade bemoaned that:

"We do not have aprons or work suits. So some of the chemicals get on to my clothes. During break times I have to rush home to breastfeed my baby and I end up exposing my baby to these dangerous chemicals."

Another female worker working in the green house also bemoaned:

"The employer refused to buy us gumboots. He said that gumboots are too big and you will step on to the nursery. He is forcing us to use slippers which expose us to dangers of falling on slippery ground, getting prickled on our feet, exposure of our feet to chemicals among other health dangers. Moreover, many of us working in this greenhouse complain of headaches and flus every time because we do not have masks."

Other female workers stated that:

"The employer only provides us PPC and PPE when he knows that the Auditors are coming to inspect the workplace. So we now know that: No Auditor means no PPC and PPE".

"There is no regular timeframe for the provision of PPC and PPE. We were last given uniforms as far back as 2016 if not 2015."

"Some of us casual and task workers are provided with second-hand clothing and uniforms."

"The employer told us that if we want to keep our jobs and we are serious and committed to work, we should bring our own overalls, gumboots and hoes."

"At times our employer applies selective allocation of new PPC and PPE to workers. He first allocates PPC and PPE to workers who are not trade union members as a way of discouraging workers from joining the trade union."

ix. Long working hours and unpaid overtime

This was cited as a serious challenge by almost all female workers especially non-permanent workers. The research revealed that this was causing serious health challenges such as swollen legs, back pains (aches), heart problems, chest pains, high blood pressures, among many others.

Most of the female workers lamented that long working hours puts pressure on them to rush home after working late to perform their care work responsibilities such as cooking, doing laundry, ensuring children do their homework, and general housekeeping.

One female seasonal worker lamented:

“Because we finish our shifts late, as women we find it difficult to participate in workplace meetings that are done off hours including trade union related meetings or work because we will be rushing to cook for our husbands and children.”

x. Lack of adequate and decent housing

The research found out that provision of housing varies from farm to farm ranging from one room to four rooms depending on status of employment or grade level.

The most cited challenges with housing noted by the female workers were:

- i. Some of the Blair toilets were full and some had been completely shut, resulting in shortages of toilets in the compounds;
- ii. Lack of free space to build new toilets. Workers and their families were resorting to the bush system and in the fields;
- iii. Gender-based discrimination in allocation of houses between males and females. Male workers are given preferential treatment than female and single parent female workers;
- iv. Shared houses between two families regardless of family size, resulting in overcrowding;
- v. Dilapidated houses without repairs;
- vi. Lack of other social amenities associated with adequate housing such as adequate water and waste management systems—some compounds only have one borehole or tap resulting in water shortages and social conflicts;
- vii. Single female farm workers living in a single dormitory and without privacy;
- viii. Gender bias in registration of houses. Some employers mostly registered the farm house in the name of the male worker. However, in the event of death of the male worker, women workers and their families would be evicted despite the fact that the widow was working at the farm;
- ix. Emergence of farm worker-land barons who were allocating and selling small pieces of land to desperate workers at a farm, without the knowledge of the employer. It was noted that the land barons were mostly permanent workers or those that have stayed long at the farm; and,
- x. Some employers were instructing parents with children above 18 years old to vacate from the farm, thus causing family disintegration.





Source: Author's photos taken during the research

xi. Safety and health risks and hazards

The research discovered the most common challenges were as follows:

- Absence of functional OSHE Committees at most farms - Those that were functional were mostly dominated by men thus women issues were highly underrepresented;
- Absence of farm clinics - Most clinics were shut down due to lack of medicines. Those that were still open only provided pain killers such as paracetamol pills. Women workers therefore had to walk many kilometres to access pre- and post-natal care services;
- In cases of illness or workplace injuries, the employer gave workers medical assistance which later turned to be loans without workers' prior knowledge;
- Overworking causing workers' health challenges for female workers– swollen legs, backaches, headaches among others;
- Absence of adequate waste management systems at the workplace and compounds;
- Limited and at times absence of health check-ups. In most cases they were only undertaken prior to international audits by FairTrade and Global Gap Auditors. At one farm it was highlighted that the flushing toilets for workers are only opened during the compliance auditing process and closed immediately after the audit until the next audit was conducted. Most of the health standards were only "superficial" or for "window-dressing".
- Absence of tissues, soap, and sanitary wear and bins in female toilets;
- Absence of changing-rooms especially for female workers who mostly work with chemicals;
- At some farms toilets were far away from working spaces and women had to use the bush system to relieve themselves thus removing women workers' dignity; and,
- Some female workers carried buckets of water (20 litres-buckets) on their heads to water plants and crops.
-



xii. Multi-tasking without multi-skilling

Multi-tasking occurs where a worker performs more duties than the one(s) "officially" hired to perform without any increment in wages or salaries. This challenge was highlighted by most women in the horticulture sector. Sadly, the rise in multi-tasking was not being accompanied by multi-skilling and provision of PPC and PPE required as the worker shifts in between jobs. Consequently, this exposed women workers to workplace hazards since the worker was forced to perform work without the requisite skills training. This resulted in high risk of occupational injuries and diseases and health challenges such as fatigue and overall inefficiency due to overloaded work. Multi-tasking was also a serious health hazard to pregnant women workers, making them vulnerable to miscarriages and still births.

4.3 Social protection pillar

Social protection is one of the pillars of the decent work agenda. According to the ILO, social protection refers to the provision of benefits to households through public or collective arrangements to protect against low or declining living standards. In essence, social protection in the world of work seeks to protect workers at their workplaces against unfair, hazardous and unhealthy working conditions, sickness, unemployment, maternity, invalidity, loss of a provider or old age.

Two of the fundamental ILO social protection Conventions that specifically speaks to the rights of female workers include ILO Convention No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities of 1981 and ILO Convention 183 on Maternity Protection of 2000. The research sought to investigate the state of social protection for female workers who were in non-permanent workers in the horticulture sector and whether Conventions 156 and 183 were being adhered to.

i. The state of pensions and worker's compensation contributions

The majority of the female workers noted that their employer deducted pension from their wages, they were however not completely sure if the employer remitted the funds to the National Social Security Authority (NSSA). The research revealed that some employers were deducting NSSA contributions from workers' wages but not remitting the funds to NSSA. Similarly, most employers were not contributing to the NSSA's workers' compensation fund as per the requirement of the law. Some of the workers only got to know of the fraudulent actions of the employers upon retirement or when they get injured at work. Thus, the high rate of pension submission defaults by employers meant that workers and their families were at risk in cases of sudden death, or workplace accident or injury.

In addition, given that most of the female workers in the horticulture sector were casual, seasonal and task based, with structural breaks in working periods, their pension pay-outs will also remain lower than their male counterparts, thus worsening the care burden after one's end of productive life. It was clear from the research that some of the women workers would not be able to enjoy any pension as they would have failed to accumulate the required minimum ten-year contribution to access a monthly pension.

Furthermore, the majority of women were often interrupted from their working lives due to family responsibilities and pregnancy, hence their pension contributions and eventually the pension pay-outs will remain lower than their male counterparts.

The research also found out that the employers were deliberately hiring casual, fixed-term, contract and task workers so as to avoid the obligations of providing social protection obligations such as medical aid, pensions and allowances such as housing.

ii. Medical aid and funeral assistance

None of the farms had a medical aid scheme offered to non-permanent workers, clearly indicating social security deficits for the female workers who are in the majority. At one farm, the employer was deducting funeral cover premiums from workers' wages but not remitting to the funeral insurance company for several months, leading to the insurance company deregistering the workers. Additionally, due to poverty wages, female workers indicated that they were not able to afford to

join private medical or insurance schemes. More worrying, wage theft meant that workers would not be able to access medical treatment for them and their families. Thus, the majority of the women workers suffered social security deficits.

iii. Maternity leave

The research observed that women who were non-permanent workers were being denied the right to maternity leave and associated benefits in breach of the provisions in the Labour Act and the constitution of Zimbabwe. There were a few cases of provision of maternity benefits to permanent workers, who generally were small in numbers compared to non-permanent female workers. Clearly, the employment practice (casual, part-time, task-work etc.) threatened provision of maternity benefits.

Some women workers lamented that:

“Because there are no maternity benefits especially pay for most casual workers, some women come back to work the following day or a few days after giving birth in order to secure their employment. However, coming back to work early exposes them to health problems.”

“If I go on maternity there is no guarantee of getting my job back after maternity leave.”

“Getting pregnant and going on maternity leave is another way of terminating your own employment.”

“This is also causing marriage challenges where one has to choose between either not getting pregnant and saving your job, or getting pregnant and saving your marriage because culturally women are expected to bear children for the clan.”

“Most women casual and contract workers do not enjoy the benefits of taking leave to attend family responsibilities. Therefore, they have to make a choice between work and family.”

iv. Child care facilities

The research observed good practices in the majority of horticulture farms which established child care facilities such as crèches at the workplace so that women workers can leave their babies and children in safe hands as they go to work. This is a good practice which was applauded by most women workers.

v. Clinics at the workplace

Most farm clinics have closed down due to lack of drugs and medical staff. For those farms with clinics, they have only one drug available (Paracetamol pills). For any other medication, workers had to walk long distances. Given the cultural and gender norms, the burden of caring for the sick is the responsibility of women. Meaning that, if a family member gets sick, a female worker may have to take time off from work to either provide care for the sick children or to walk longer distances to a nearby clinic and hospital. Resultantly, non-permanent workers lose their wage for that particular day or days they are off from work caring for the sick.

The research also observed that first aid kits which were available at some farms were however are not adequately and timeously replenished, hence they good as non-existent.

4.4 Social dialogue pillar

According to ILO, social dialogue is referred to as all types of joint and collaborative relationships which include negotiations, consultations and exchanges of information between representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. This section traces the implications of casualisation of labour on social dialogue at the workplace.

Structures for social dialogue in Zimbabwe's Horticulture Sector

There exist three structures for social dialogue in the horticulture sector namely: Shop floor level (Works Council/farm), sub-sector level (horticulture) and national sector level (agriculture) as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Structures for social dialogue in Zimbabwe's Horticulture Sector



Source: Author's compilation

The Labour Act states that the NEC negotiates the minimums whilst the works councils negotiates the actuals based on company performance. In this regard, the non-functionality of the works council undermined the setting up of better wages and conditions of work beyond the NEC level. Some of the reasons for non-functioning of the Works Council include:

- The fear of victimisation and non-renewal of contracts of non-permanent workers if found to be active in the Works Council or workers' committees;
- Lack of training of Works Council member's roles and responsibilities; and,
- Responses from the interviews and FGMs clearly indicated that social dialogue and collective bargaining processes were facing serious challenges. Table 6 divides challenges into three categories, that is, those emanating from
- (i) the government and political dynamics; (ii) employers; and, (iii) National Employment Councils (NECs).

Table 6: Social dialogue challenges

Source of Challenge	Challenges described
<p>Challenges emanating from the Government and Political factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agriculture sector as a whole is a political mine-field, where efforts to increase wages for workers are seen as a direct attack to the land reform. This has seen government suppressing down the wages in the sector; • Some government officials and Members of Parliament are now employers and have power to influence negotiation process to the disadvantage of workers; • Facilitation of multiplicity of trade unions in the horticulture sector by the government and politicians. As a result, employers choose to register an agreement with the union offering lower wage increases; • Delays in the registering of Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs); and, • The continued linking of ZCTU affiliates to the opposition party, MDC.
<p>Challenges emanating from the employers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refusal to award wage increases, and non-compliance with agreed wages or timely payment of wages. Currently employers in the sectors are not paying the gazetted wages and are refusing to pay back salaries as from February 2018; • Unwillingness to negotiate in good faith. Some employers pay very high salaries at the top management level, while pleading inability to pay at the lower end, whilst others declare false information or deliberately withhold information at the negotiating table; • Non-remittance of union dues by employers thereby paralysing trade union functions; • Application of delay tactics by employers. At times employers do not submit counter positions or they delay responding to the trade union's position papers. The NEC regulations provides that both parties (employers and employees) should submit their position papers well on time to allow both parties to come to the table on an informed position; and, • Increase in corrupt employers who have potential to bribe some NEC agents to the disadvantage of workers.
<p>Challenges emanating from the NECs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political interference by some members of NECs who are now employers. • Narrow focus by NECs on wage negotiations alone with little or no attention given to other critical factors affecting negotiations and performance of the sectors; and, • The developing trend of shifting from negotiation at NEC level to company / workplace negotiations which at times undermines the NEC structure and has tendencies of suppressing casualised labour.

Source: Author's compilation

SECTION 5

SUMMARY FOR RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings revealed that the majority of female workers working in the horticulture sector are facing serious decent work deficits, which can be traced back to the precarious nature of employment contracts and relations. There was a common trend of precarious and ambiguous employment relations in all the geographical areas. Enjoyment of all four pillars of the decent work agenda namely decent employment creation, workers' rights, social protection and social dialogue are being seriously undermined due to the changing nature of work towards non-permanency of work. Whilst the trade unions were trying their best to address the challenges, the draw back mainly emanated from the workers not reporting cases to the unions due to fear of victimisation by management and loss of employment.

Furthermore, all the seven decent work securities that ILO promoted were turned into insecurities. These securities include labour market security, employment security, job security, work security, skills reproduction security, income security and voice security. Table 7 summarises the state of each of the securities as per the research findings.

Table 7: Violation of worker securities due to rise in casualisation of labour

Security Type	Description	Summarised research findings
Labour Market Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to reasonable income-earning activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of job description and distortion of grading systems e.g. all workers are placed in Grade 1 regardless of different jobs • Lack of pay slips • Wages are below the PDL • Exploitation due to overloading of work • High rise in sexual harassment due to non-permanent jobs
Employment Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection against • Unfair and arbitrary dismissal; • Workers obtain redress if they are subject to unfair dismissal. • Social protection in case of job loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-remittance of pensions and workers' compensation funds to NSSA by employers • Due to lack of written contracts, female workers are at the mercy of the employer who can easily hire and fire workers • Absence of worker's gratuity

Security Type	Description	Summarised research findings
Job Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities of building a career; • e.g. within the same firm a worker's tasks and skills cannot undergo changes that will force him/her to adjust or even discontinue the job or change occupations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no prospects of career development especially for female workers who face huge barriers in terms of promotion at the workplace mainly due to gender social and cultural norms • Multi-tasking does not provide opportunity for growth, promotion in a specifies line of job and its negatively affects women's health especially when they are pregnant
Work Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational health & safety • Maternity protection • Restrictions on night work • Limits on hours of work • Paid holidays • Protection for disabled workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None provision of adequate PPC and PPE thereby exposing workers to health and safety risks, diseases, illness • Provision of second-hand PPC and PPE to non-permanent workers • Maternity leave utilization may head to termination and non-renewal of contract • Some casual, contract and task workers are denied their right to paid leave • Rampant increase of unpaid overtime • Some breast-feeding mothers are forced to continue working night shifts • Some are forced to buy and bring their own protective clothing as a commitment to work • There is selective allocation of PPC and PPE with those linked to trade unions being sidelined as a way of discouraging workers from joining the trade unions
Skills Reproduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of a wide range of opportunities for training, apprenticeship • and education whereby knowledge and skills can be acquired and refined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate OSHE training is no longer the priority of the employer • Multi-tasking is not being accompanied by multi-skilling hence women workers are highly vulnerable to health risks and hazards • On the job training

Security Type	Description	Summarised research findings
Income Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guaranteed and reliable income Regular payment of wages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wage theft is on the increase negatively affecting female workers more due their gender roles and responsibilities Erosion of wages due to inflationary pressures and use of plastic money that is discounted in the market Lack of knowledge of actual pay calculations, benefits, overtime pay due to lack of pay slips. Women workers mostly affected as they occupy more casualised jobs Failure to meet demanding targets by non-permanent female workers resulting in non-payment of wage regardless of circumstances beyond the workers
Voice Representation Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers can express voice Can defend their interests on work-related issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casual, seasonal and task based female workers find it difficult to defend their rights as they fear that their contracts may not be renewed if they speak out Not allowed to join trade union – joining trade union may lead to termination or non-renewal of contract Few women are in workplace structures such as Workers Committee and OSHE Committee Victimisation/intimidation by employers for those who join trade union If one is a trade union member, employer gives heavy workload to ensure the worker does not have time for trade union activities

SECTION 7

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the above analysis, the following conclusions and recommendations are proposed:

i. Strengthening membership recruitment

The research revealed that there is substantive membership potential for trade unions. In some farms, workers admitted to have been duped by trade unions aligned to the employer or the government, hence, there is need to re-recruit these workers to become members of authentic trade unions. For example, some of the farms, like those in citrus farming who export their produce and have established markets, employ a large number of workers and at times close to 2,000 workers but a few women were trade union members. Therefore, there is need for trade unions to invest in a recruitment drive in the horticulture sector. What came out of the research was that the more the workers join a trade union, the lesser the chances of workers' right violations.

ii. Facilitation of written employment contracts and payslips

Whilst some workers at some farms have employment contracts, most employers were evading signing employment contracts with workers and providing payslips, leaving employment relations ambiguous and prone to manipulation by employers. Lack of clear employment contracts and payslips means higher chances of violations of workers' rights especially women workers who are relatively regarded as "passive" workers. Given that the majority of the horticulture farms were well established businesses with export linkages, it is imperative that their workers have clear employment contracts and payslips. Thus, trade unions need to engage employers on this matter since provision of a clear employment contract and payslip are fundamental workers' rights provided for in the Labour Act.

iii. Strengthening workers' education, training and consciousness on women workers' rights

The research found out that there is a lack of information on women workers' rights at the farms. Furthermore, because more women workers were in low skilled, low paid jobs, they rarely got opportunities for training on their rights. Rights such as maternity benefits, hours of work, freedom from sexual harassment, non-discrimination at the workplace, women-friendly PPC and PPE needed to be inculcated in the women workers so that they are able to demand these rights fearlessly irrespective of their type of contract.

Trade unions need to develop manuals and facilitate women-focused study circles at the workplaces where women meet and discuss challenges facing them at the workplace and educate each other on their rights and empowerment programmes. There is proven record of effectiveness of such study circles in trade unionism.

iv. Development of popular version material on women workers' rights

To compliment education, training and conscientisation drive, there is need to develop popular version material on women workers' rights such as flyers, posters, t-shirts and caps, among others. These materials should be written in vernacular languages in order to ensure that they capture all intended audiences. Apart from being educative, the materials can also be used as a recruitment tool by trade unions to attract more members.

v. Women leadership training

The research revealed that there were women with potential to take up leadership roles in workplace structures such as Workers Committees and OSHE Committees but the majority of them lack confidence and some of them were still deeply seated in gendered cultural and societal norms. Given that the majority of workers in the horticulture sector were women and there was no reason why they should be fewer in leadership positions in workplace structures. This training should also integrate gender training, economic and financial literacy and mentoring programmes in order to boost their confidence levels in fighting for decent work.

vi. Engagement of trade unions during compliance audit processes

The research revealed that at most farms, compliance auditors from companies such as Fair Trade and Global Gap undertake audits without involvement of the trade unions. In the end, their reports were either biased towards the employers or are "half-baked" thus, not representing the real situation of worker's rights violations. Workers and trade unions bemoaned that most of the reports were window-dressed to please the international markets. Thus, it is important for trade unions as critical stakeholders to be involved in the audit process in order to flag out issues which the workers may fear to freely express in the presence of their employers or supervisors. Engagement of the trade unions in the audit process assist in overcoming the language barriers as well.

vii. Housing

The challenge of inadequate, overcrowded and dilapidated houses came out strongly in the research findings. Trade unions need to undertake a campaign on the right to decent accommodation for farm employees. Provision of adequate housing should also be accompanied by provision of other social services which include adequate and safe water and sanitation, electricity, security, privacy and functional waste management systems. Allocation of houses should also be free from discrimination based on gender, marital status and type of employment- all workers should be treated the same. The materials used to construct the houses and their size should be in line with the CBA of the agriculture sector. It is therefore important for trade unions to regularly inspect these houses.

viii. Alliance building and exchange programmes

The world of work, production systems and value chains in horticulture sector are becoming highly globalised and requires innovative and critical thinking, sharing and learning best practices regionally and internationally. Employers are strategising globally, so workers must do the same in order to remain relevant providing each other the necessary solidarity support and practical solutions to casualisation of labour. Hence, it is critical that Hivos supports such kind of initiatives (alliance building and exchange programmes) that strengthens the capacity of local trade unions to deal with emerging challenges in a globalised world of work.

References

1. Elita Chikwati (2008). "Govt to revive horticulture sector." The Herald June 16, 2018. <https://www.herald.co.zw/govt-to-revive-horticulture-sector/> Accessed 30 September 2018
2. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (2018), Building from the Rubble: The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe since 2000, Weaver Press, Harare, Zimbabwe
3. Francisco Netho. "Lifeline for horticulture farmers." The Patriot, January 29, 2015. <http://www.thewest.com.au.https://www.herald.co.zw/govt-to-revive-horticulture-sector/> Accessed 30 September 2018
4. Government of Zimbabwe (1992) Labour Act (LA) Chapter 28:01
5. Government of Zimbabwe (2015) Labour Amendment Act of 2005
6. LEDRIZ (2010) Decent Work in Zimbabwe
7. LEDRIZ (2016), Working without Pay- Wage theft in Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe
8. Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Balance of Payments <https://www.rbz.co.zw/assets/balance-of-payments.pdf>, Accessed 30 September 2018.
9. The Source (2016) Zimbabwe horticulture exports top \$72mln, Netherlands main buyer." <https://source.co.zw/2016/10/zimbabwe-horticulture-exports-top-72mln-netherlands-main-buyer/> Accessed 30 September 2018
10. ZIMSTAT (2004) Labour Force Survey
11. ZIMSTAT (2011) Labour Force Survey
12. ZIMSTAT (2014) Labour Force and Child Labour Survey

Casualisation of labour in Zimbabwe has significantly increased in the last decade and the agriculture sector has been one of the worst affected sectors. What makes the agriculture sector susceptible to casualisation is the feminisation of work especially in the horticulture sector. The 2004, 2011 and 2014 Labour Force Surveys (LFSs) confirms that women constitute more than half of workers in the agriculture sector. The 2004 LFS indicated that female workers constituted 53.3%, increasing to 54.6% in 2011 before slightly declining to 54.0% by 2014.



HORTICULTURE INVOLVES THE GROWING, MARKETING AND SELLING OF FRUITS, VEGETABLES, FLOWERS, NUTS AND ORNAMENTAL TREES AND PLANTS.