

Learning Activity 3.2

Production pressures in the horticulture industry in Ethiopia

Overview

Production pressures may result in stress at all levels in the working environment. This activity looks at the issue of production pressures and the impact that this potentially has on workers' risks of gender-based violence. A role play is proposed to allow participants to appreciate the issues from different angles.

This Learning Activity is linked to [Case Study 3.3](#). ➡ It is also more effective if used after Activity 1.2 (Following the Flower) has been carried out.

Suggested time

90 minutes

Aims

- Understand ways in which production pressures can result in violations of rights and gender-based violence.
- Understand the challenges faced by managers, supervisors, workers and unions.
- Get an insight into how problems can be resolved in a practical way at workplace level.

Target group

Representatives from:

- Lead companies aiming to improve supply chain organization;
- Global, national and local employer organizations and trade unions;
- National and local government responsible for legislative implementation and factory inspection;
- Multi Stakeholder Initiatives and social auditors;
- Global, national and local NGOs and women's organizations.

Preparation

- Prepare the activity by collecting sources of information for the group work session, including relevant case studies.
- Provide contextual information and tips about the issues that can be discussed.
- Elaborate a version of the scenario in the hand-out which may be appropriate to the group, then prepare cards for the different roles, as detailed below:
 - Farm manager, responsible for getting the order out on time.
 - Supervisor, who will lose his job and status if he fails to keep up high productivity.
 - One or more female workers, who both have family responsibilities and know that their husbands will be angry with them if they are not home to cook their meals.
 - One worker who is a union member and has attended a gender-awareness course recently.

Setting

Any setting where a role-play for the proposed scenario may be easily carried out.

Materials

Scenario and role play cards

Time/Steps

Step 1: Reading (suggested time: 15 minutes)

Participants are asked to read *Case Study 3.2 Dealing with production pressures in the horticulture industry in Ethiopia* to gain an insight into the problems arising from production pressures.

Step 2: Role play (suggested time: 45 minutes)

Next, the group is split into small groups of 4 or 5 in order to develop a role-play to address the proposed scenario.

Step 3: Discussion (suggested time: 30 minutes)

When the role-play has been completed hold a discussion about each of the roles played:

- What are the main challenges faced by the farm manager, the supervisor and the workers?
- How can these challenges be resolved?
- What does the role-play tell you about the pressures on suppliers in global supply chains and the impact on workers?
- Finish by discussing what has been learnt about the pressures on suppliers in global supply chains and the impact this has on workers – and the solutions.

How to adapt it

If there is less time available the scenario can be discussed rather than role-played in small groups or in a plenary session.


Tips

The aim should be to stimulate a discussion about how different players can help to resolve the problems highlighted in the scenario. Start by identifying the arguments that each player is likely to make (manager, supervisor, worker or union). Then look at how they can resolve the problems.

To know more on how to design and run roles plays you can consult the ITCILO Compass:

<http://compass.itcilo.org/methodology/role-play/>

Resources

Case Study 3.3.  Dealing with production pressures in the horticulture industry in Ethiopia (and other resources in this module).

Hand-out

For all Participants – The Scenario:

It is the week in which roses are being picked for export to meet increasing demand for flowers on Valentine's Day, 14 February. All is going well, with (women) workers picking, grading, packing, harvesting, tending beds, and watering as planned. But three days before Valentine's Day – 11 February – a European supermarket increased its order so as to keep up with unexpectedly high demand. If the increased order is not fulfilled in the time demanded and to the quality expected, the farm, which is foreign owned but run by both local and expatriate managers, will lose all future orders from the supermarket. Local workers, especially front-line supervisors, know that they will not get a similar job nearby and so would need to move to work away from their home and family. Workers find it hard to get by on their low wages. While they depend on overtime pay, they are tired and have begun to make mistakes and to be careless.

Cards to be handed over individually to key players

Farm Manager

You are the one responsible for getting the order out on time.

From authoritative sources you can draw on the following information:

- Research has shown that working more than 48 hours per week:
 - Is bad for workers' health.
 - Reduces productivity and quality of work.
 - Causes stress.
 - Makes caring for children and dependents difficult.
- Tips for setting reasonable working hours:
 - Ensure good communication between supplier and buyer on orders (supermarket/brand).
 - Set reasonable production targets and schedules based on realistic labour efficiency rates.
 - Closely coordinate human resources plans, production targets and orders.
 - Predict the seasonal order pattern and plan accordingly.
 - Continually upgrade workers' skills through training, mentoring and coaching.
 - Improve communication with supervisors and line managers and between line managers and workers
 - Form a team of trade union members/worker representatives to supervise changes and provide on-going feedback.

Supervisor

You will lose your job and status if you fail to keep up high productivity.

From authoritative sources, you have heard that:

- Working more than 48 hours per week:
 - Is bad for workers' health.
 - Reduces productivity and quality of work.
 - Causes stress.
 - Makes caring for children and dependents difficult.

Female worker

You have family responsibilities and know that your husband will be angry if you are not home to cook his meal. It is also difficult for you to care for children and other dependents. However, you heavily depend on overtime pay to make a living.

From authoritative sources, you have heard that:

- Working more than 48 hours per week:
 - Is bad for workers' health.
 - Reduces productivity and quality of work.
 - Causes stress.

Worker who is a union member

You have attended a gender-awareness course recently.

From authoritative sources you can also draw on the following information:

- Research has shown that working more than 48 hours per week:
 - Is bad for workers' health.
 - Reduces productivity and quality of work.
 - Causes stress.
 - Makes caring for children and dependents difficult.
- Tips for setting reasonable working hours:
 - Ensure good communication between supplier and buyer on orders (supermarket/brand).
 - Set reasonable production targets and schedules based on realistic labour efficiency rates.
 - Closely coordinate human resources plans, production targets and orders.
 - Predict the seasonal order pattern and plan accordingly.
 - Continually upgrade workers' skills through training, mentoring and coaching.
 - Improve communication with supervisors and line managers and between line managers and workers.
 - Form a team of trade union members/worker representatives to supervise changes and provide on-going feedback.