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Department: Development Studies

Title: *The Socio-Economic Impact of the Floriculture Industry on the Livelihoods of Communities Hosting Flower Farms in Uganda.*

Abstract: This study examines the socioeconomic impact of floriculture industry on the livelihood of flower farm workers in Wakiso District, Central Uganda. It also explores the industry's influence on gender roles, Occupational Health and Safety implications of flower farming and environmental impacts, particularly the ways in which the chemicals and other agro-inputs employed in the propagation of flowers are invariably affecting the fragile landscapes within and around the Lake Victoria basin where the farms are located. To achieve these objectives, this study employed an exploratory sequential mixed method design and methodology. The first phase entailed using the qualitative approach that informed the next quantitative phase. The techniques used to collect the data in the first phase included the review of secondary data, individual in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions, whereas, in the second phase, an employee survey was employed to collect the data. The study found that the flower farms had availed jobs to the rural dwellers thereby giving them constant income that they used to meet their needs. Such demands included buying food, paying their children's school fees, paying for the rents and to some extent, constructing their own houses. The presence of the flower farms in these communities was also found to have improved the entrepreneurial activities in form of rental houses, salons, kiosks and food canteens. Further the study has revealed that farms, in their attempt to fulfil their corporate social responsibilities, provided medical services to the workers and the neighbouring communities. They have also constructed and maintained roads that had made it easy for the locally produced products like cereals, vegetables and fruits find their way into the urban centres where their demand was great. Despite the above benefits some of the participants reported negative impacts of flower farms, highlighting environmental pollution, and deplorable working conditions. Empirical evidence on environmental degradation was on chemical drifting into the neighbouring water bodies and communities thus, contaminating wells and polluting the environment. Whereas on the deplorable working condition participants reported chemical exposures, backaches, and broken limbs as a result of falling during greenhouse construction. Poor remunerations was reported by a number of the respondents. Despite the fact that farms did give additional in-kind benefits in form of breakfast and lunch there is need to review the salary in line with the living wage. Looking at some of the positive socioeconomic impacts that the farms have on the workers' livelihood, this study recommends that, through the farms' umbrella, Uganda Floriculture Export Association, more inclusive policies should be put in place to curb some of the above-mentioned challenges. Without considering some of these challenges emanating from the farms, the original intention of extending such projects in the rural communities might not be met.

Supervisors:

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Date: 20th December, 2022

Time: 9.00am

Venue: Smart Room CHUSS