FIGHTING POVERTY WITH ROSES IN RWANDA

VIDEO

MISTY
LANDSCAPE/GREENHOUSES
WOMEN WALK INTO FRAME/EUGENIE IN FRONT
MUKANTWALI ON-CAMERA
BEATRICE GAKUBA INSPECTING ROSES

AUDIO

NARRATION

In Rwanda one effort to eradicate poverty starts with the early morning mist. The abundant moisture promotes the growth of greenhouse roses. They are a luxury item for export. They bring in much needed foreign currency and provide local farm workers a higher than average salary and social benefits. (20")

Of the two hundred employees at this rose farm 80 percent are women. Many suffer from the consequences of genocide and war that devastated Rwanda twelve years ago. Eugenie Mukantwali lost her parents and siblings. (15.5")

MUKANTWALI: (In French) “Bodies, I saw very many of them. If I start to talk about them, I will cry.” (4.5")

NARRATION

After the genocide Beatrice Gakuba returned from exile to rebuild her country. She began to
grow roses from the ashes of the genocide.  

NARRATION
Rwanda had only exported tea and coffee.  
Gakuba’s gamble paid off. Today, her farm,  
Rwanda Flora, exports 400 tons of roses a  
week to the International flower market in  
Amsterdam. Jacqueline Yezakuzwe is  
pleased.  

YEZAKUZWE: (In English)
“We are happy about what we’re doing. We  
are paid every month, and well.”  

NARRATION
Even if a machine could cut the stems, it is  
done by hand. No special skills are required.  
New employees can be trained in a very short  
time.  

PACKING ROSES FOR EXPORT
A customs officer makes sure that only roses  
go into the boxes. Once the roses are packed,  
they need constant refrigeration. Sometimes  
the electricity fails and a week’s work wilts  
away. This is bad for business and also for the  
workers. Gakuba cares about both.  

MAN CARRIES BOX OF ROSES  
TO REFRIGERATOR

GAKUBA: (In English)
“My experience at the UN has taught me that I  
can combine both the business and give social  
services to my workers.”
Besides flowers, roses grow sharp thorns. If a worker pricks her finger she finds care at a nearby health centre. The rose farm pays for all employees to join the government’s healthcare system. (14”)

During the workday the women leave their children at school. With the money they make, they can afford to keep educating their children, unlike many other Rwandan families. (10”)

“We even have a contract. We are registered in the social security programme, so we won’t have problems in old age.” (6”)

Rwanda Flora with its responsible and enlightened business approach represents a new kind of enterprise in the African context. These roses that may end up as a birthday bouquet in a far-away land, have a direct impact on the lives of poor people in Rwanda. The success here may inspire others to try new agricultural exports to make the economy grow and help achieve the development goal of cutting poverty by half in the coming decade. (30”)

This report was prepared by the United Nations.