

Corporate social responsibility and private employment regulation: a challenge to precarity and inequality in neo-colonial supply chains?

1. What does CSR have to do with regulation?
2. What is this industry case study all about?
3. How do tales from Kenya highlight the key challenges for creating sustainable jobs?
4. Your comments and questions?



Dr Jill Timms and Dr David Bek

@JillTimms

jill.timms@Coventry.ac.uk

@DaveDBRS

David.bek@Coventry.ac.uk

1. What does CSR have to do with regulation?

CSR as a slippery but useful umbrella concept

- Persistence in usage
- Draw together different elements of responsibility
- Always needs interrogating for how being used



Competing agendas of CSR discourse (Timms, 2016)

Political Vs Corporate Vs Professional Vs Activist

1. What does CSR have to do with regulation?

CSR as facilitating private or soft regulation

- Political agenda – negotiating tool for business support
- Corporate agenda – to avoid hard regulation, control discourse, gain commercially
- Professional agenda – a market of specialists, certification bodies, auditors
- Activist agenda – using to hold to account, gain leverage, improve standards



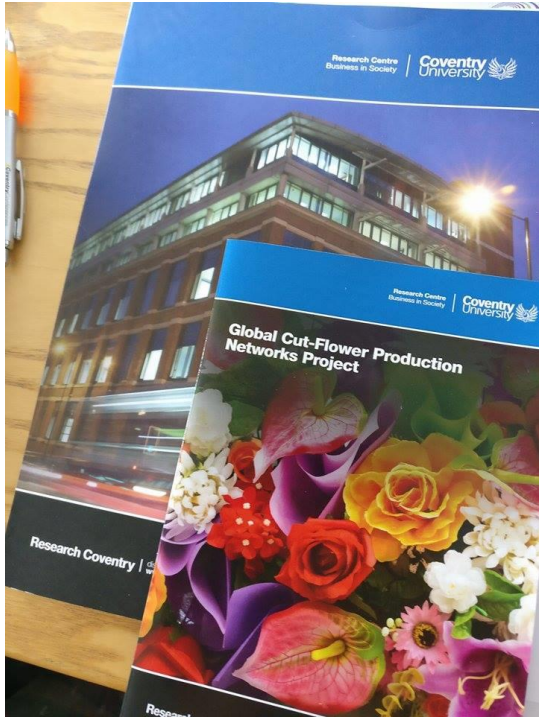
The Responsible Business Show

Designated **'territories'** depending on status and fee

NGO 'marketplace' to facilitate corporate/NGO **'matches'**

1. What does CSR have to do with regulation?

Best illustrated and unpacked through an industry case study



Global Cut-Flowers Production Networks Project:

Based at Centre for Business in Society, Coventry University

Inter-related research funded by the British Academy/Leverhulme Trust, WWF-SA, Coventry University Pump Prime grants, IMPAKT-SS funds and Impact Acceleration Funds

Range of university, commercial and NGO partners

Acknowledgements to: Co-Lead Dr David Bek (CBiS, Coventry),
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Nora Lanira (CBiS, Coventry)

2. What is this industry case study all about?

- To investigate how the promotion of ethical flowers can contribute to **improved environmental and working conditions** in supply chains
- To understand the role of **private standards** in global regulation of business
- To examine how demand for ethical flowers could **benefit businesses** and promote sustainable improvements for all stakeholders in supply chains (REF Impact Case)

Key ethical issues

Water footprint: Flowers are thirsty, impact of chemicals on water quality

Carbon footprint: Distribution systems, greenhouse production

Labour and social issues: Precarious work, reports of H & S problems/discrimination, poor infrastructure and unreliable regulatory systems, wider regional instability e.g. Ethiopia – social unrest

Floristry practice: Lack of training in buying consideration and impact



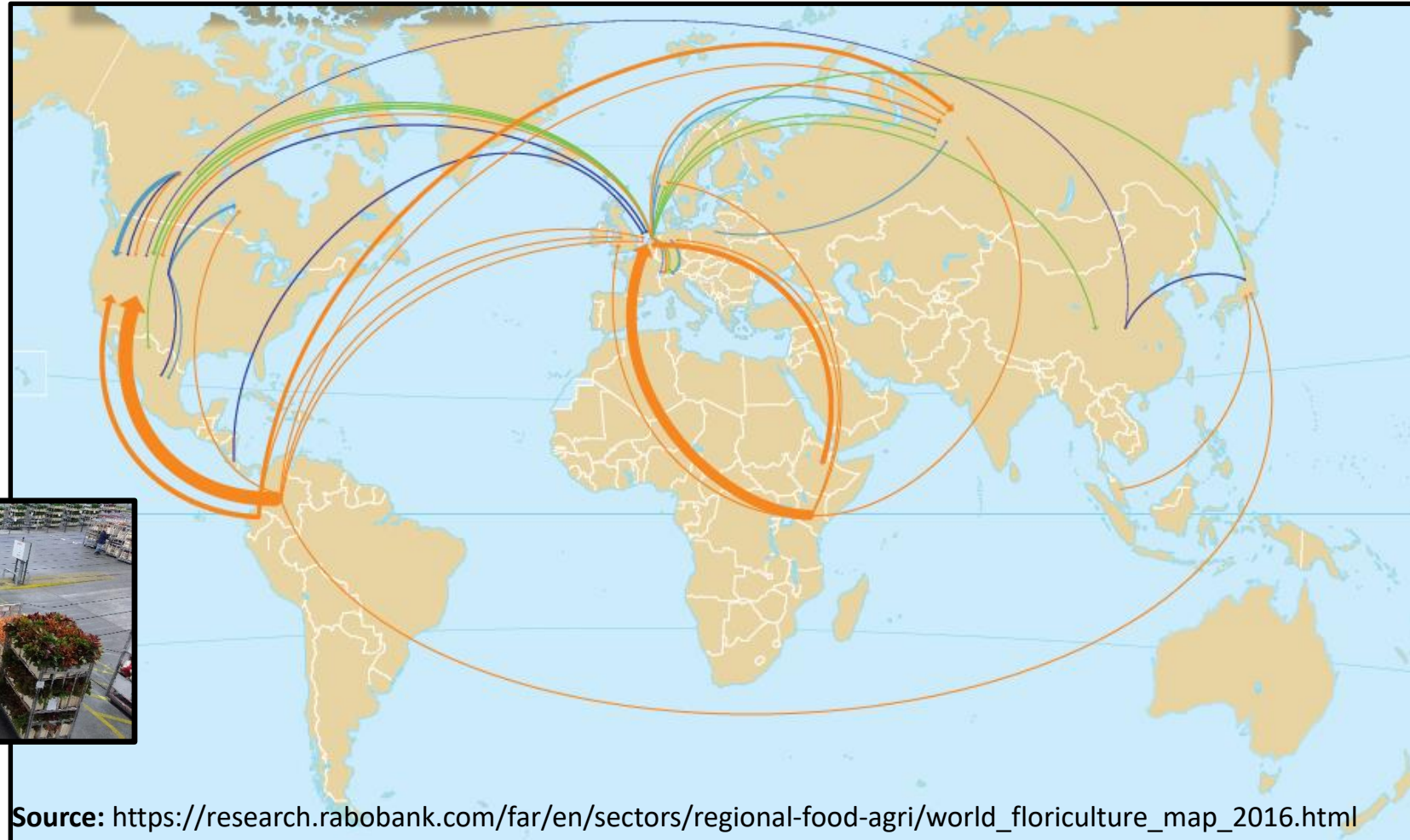
2. What is this industry case study all about?



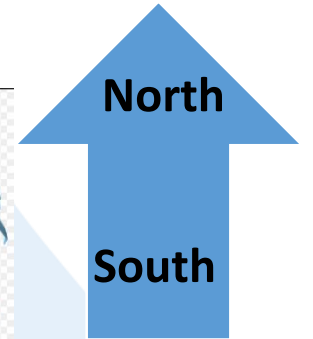
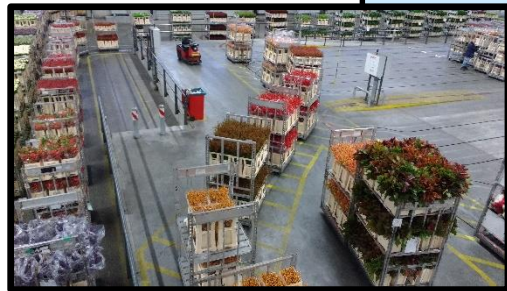
- **Documentary** sources, academic, media and industry
- **Interviews** with florists, auction houses, certification bodies, campaign groups, industry bodies and wholesalers
- **Observations** at international trade fairs, flower festivals, wholesale markets, industry events, local events
- **Experiments** with florists, wholesalers and supermarkets
- **Network and impact events** with key stakeholders



Floriculture: Global Production and Trade Patterns 2015



Netherlands
as 'global
epicentre'.



Floriculture: Governance, Value Chains and Production Networks

❖ Southern agency

- Pursuit of export-oriented growth strategies by Southern governments

❖ Northern dominance

- Dutch and North American firms in particular own farms in Global South and control other parts of the supply chain.
- Netherlands as historic hub for cultivation, technological development, auctions and logistics.
- Control of Dutch firms over several parts of supply chain, especially the 'cool chain'.



'We also have locations in important production regions in order to maintain optimal control on the supply chain of products and logistics on-site', DFG website.

Three Key Findings

a. Private standards have been developed to attempt to overcome problems

- **Plethora** of standards, accreditations and certificates exist
- Vast **variation** in terms of:
 - Cost
 - Complexity
 - Ownership
 - Aims and scope
 - Audience
 - Level of standard
 - Auditing
 - Consequences
- Becoming a **big business** in itself, as in other sectors
- Matter as determine **access** and terms of **participation**



GLOBALG.A.P.



b. The Invisibility Puzzle: Certification is lost along the supply chain

- Despite investment, information on standards is mostly **unavailable** to consumers or misunderstood
- Data from **growers, wholesalers and florists** shows lack of awareness, interest or ability to prioritise



'It is not a consumer label... not something to communicate with the consumer, even if they wanted to, there is no material for that...' Heenskerk, MPS.

'The auction does that for you, it's all taken care of.'
New Covent Garden Wholesaler.

'It's about the flowers being right, it's about filling orders. I wouldn't look for that [certification] as I would never be asked.' UK Florist.

c. The ethical flower debate is widening beyond certification

- Questioning of what an **'ethical flower'** is
- Influence of grow **local**, reduce footprint efforts
- More buy **British** campaigns, partly linked to Brexit
- **Criticism** of private standards and audit systems
- Move to **continuous improvement**, 'beyond audit'



Long-planned research trip included:

- Workshop with Fairtrade Africa
- Visiting farms
- Establishing collaborations
- Building key stakeholder links
- Gather further local knowledge and context
- Two examples illustrate inadequacy of private regulation...



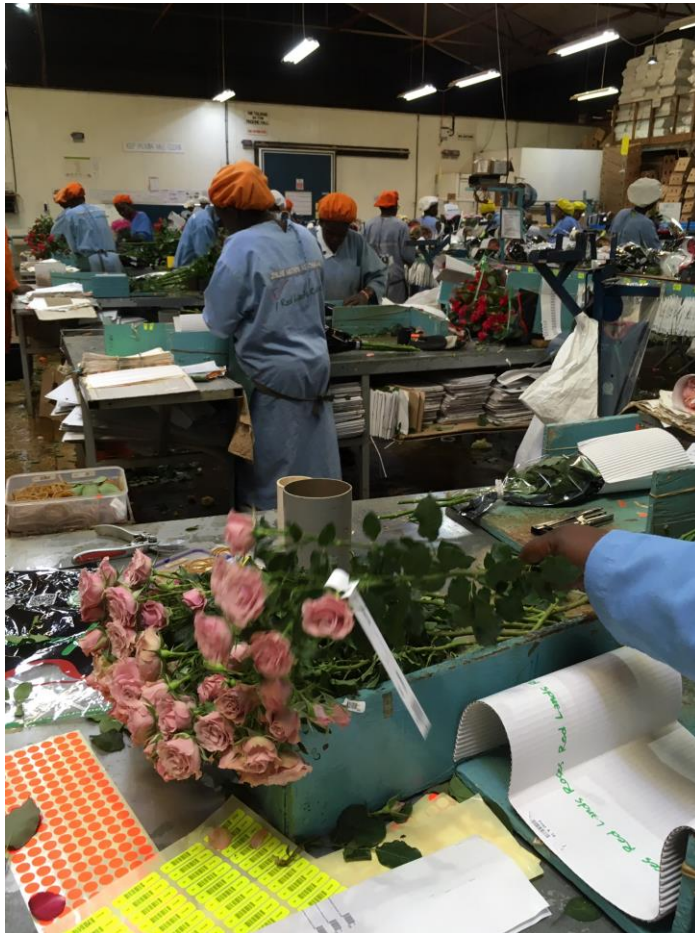
Red Land Roses Best Practice – environmental and biological

- Driven by sustainability of business... but limited to who can significantly invest



Red Land Roses Best Practice – quality and standards

- provides a unique selling point... but only available for some

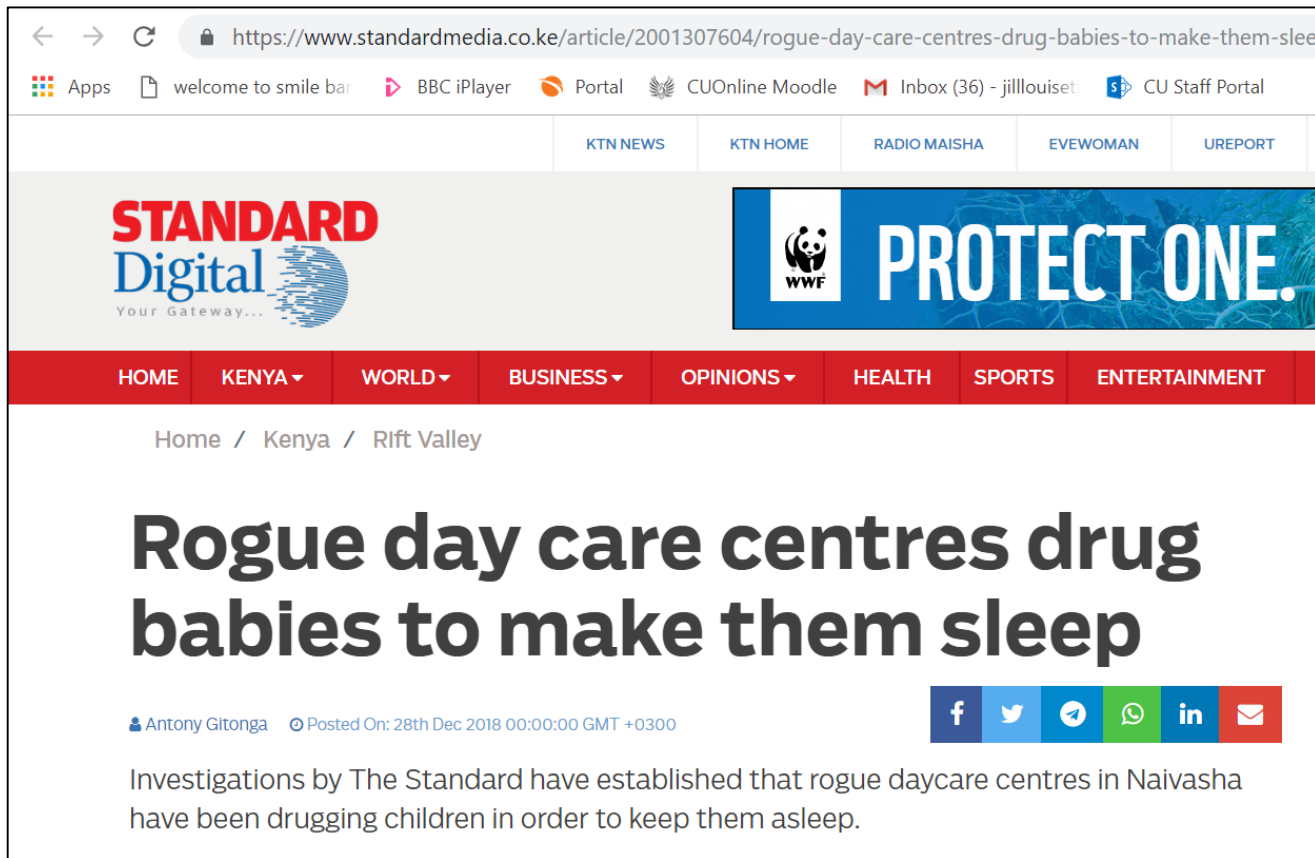


Red Land Roses Best Practice – workforce protection and care

- ‘good employer’, part of CSR marketing and business sustainability...
- some elements more ‘on paper’, demonstrates paternalistic European values



Example of bad practice




← → ↻ <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001307604/rogue-day-care-centres-drug-babies-to-make-them-slee>

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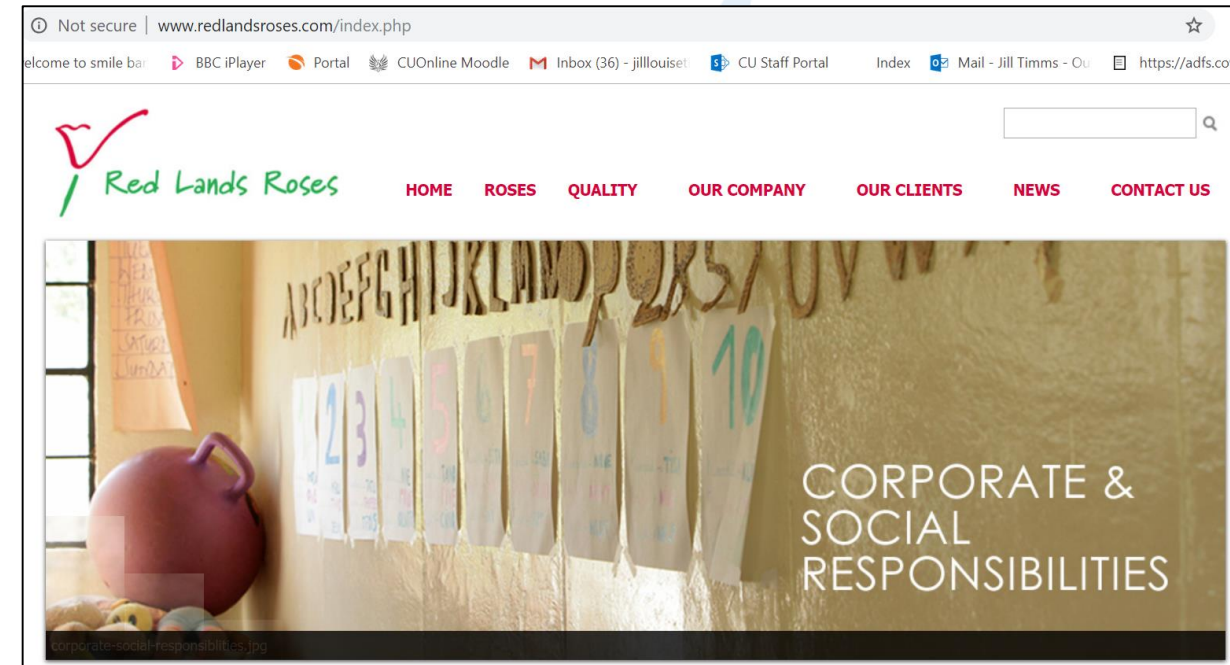
Rogue day care centres drug babies to make them sleep

Antony Gitonga Posted On: 28th Dec 2018 00:00:00 GMT +0300

Investigations by The Standard have established that rogue daycare centres in Naivasha have been drugging children in order to keep them asleep.


Compared to Red Land Roses


<http://www.redlandsroses.com/>



Not secure | www.redlandsroses.com/index.php

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Guide 2019

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The Times and Sunday Times
Good University Guide 2019

2nd in UK for Teaching
Excellence (TEF)

Times Higher Education metrics
ranking 2017 - Gold winner

Queen's Award
for Enterprise

International Trade 2015

3. How do tales from Kenya highlight the key challenges for creating sustainable jobs?

- Industry case demonstrates dominance of corporate and professional CSR agendas
- Standards do bring improved **transparency, traceability, access, good practice**, but **complex**
- Invisibility of standards results from **neo-colonial dominance** of these value chains
- Standards mostly benefit lead firms/**northern stakeholders** (supermarkets, owners, cert bodies)
 - Satisfy **risk management** goals and **control** over ethical discourse
 - Result in **dependency relationships** once producers investment in certificates
- Reflects wider debates on private regulation and CSR seen as: **Imperialistic** (Khan and Lund-Thomsen, 2011), **Orientalist** (Sklair and Miller, 2010) and **ethnocentric** (Banerjee, 2008)
- A challenge to precarity and inequality in neo-colonial supply chains? Short term local benefits, but whilst corporate agendas dominate CSR can **hide** the structural issues at source of inequality

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Thank you

Jill.timms@Coventry.ac.uk
@JillLTimms