



## Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/hand-pollination-passion-fruit-increases-productivity-and-rural-employment-kenyan-women>

# Hand-Pollination for Passion Fruit Increases Productivity and Rural Employment for Kenyan Women



Grace Ndunge

All Fruit EPZ Ltd trains women farmers on hand-pollination techniques.

All Fruit EPZ Limited, a fast-growing fruit processing company based in Mombasa, has partnered with Feed the Future to help thousands of smallholder farmers scale up production of new varieties of yellow passion fruit. A field exchange visit to Brazil organized through the partnership provided local passion fruit producers the opportunity to learn best practices from Brazilian farmers.

One best practice that has the potential to increase employment among rural women is hand-pollination. Passion fruit flowers are self-sterile, meaning they can only produce fruit through cross-pollination, a process that requires bees. However, farmers can also mimic this pollination process by hand, a technique that passion fruit farmers in Brazil have used to increase production by 20 to 30 percent.

In a pilot project in Kenya involving 3,100 smallholders, farmers are reporting that hand-pollination has increased production up to 20 percent. The practice is labor-intensive: it takes one person a full day to hand-pollinate an acre of passion fruit. But since hand-pollination also generates such impressive yields and returns, hiring more workers is a good investment for companies like All Fruit EPZ, and it is creating employment opportunities for rural women.

Elizabeth Kimote is one of the farmers who learned the hand-pollination process from All Fruit EPZ agronomist Robert Waithaka, who received training in Brazil. After retiring from a fast-paced job in Uganda, Kimote returned to her native Kenya and persuaded her mother to try growing passion fruit on the family land instead of the usual maize and beans.

Elizabeth, who did not have any farming experience before working with All Fruit EPZ, appreciates that the company invested the time to train her on the best practices to meet the quality standards for the export market. Even better, she has a guaranteed buyer in All Fruit, who will purchase her crop knowing she has the training to produce a high-quality harvest.

“Looking for a market is tough,” Kimote says. “It’s a weight off my shoulders. I am assured that my produce will be picked every Friday.”