

# CASE STORY ON GENDER DIMENSION OF AID FOR TRADE

**Capacity Building in Gender and Trade**

**The Commonwealth Secretariat Capacity Building in Gender and Trade Project Case Story – Esther Eghobamien Head of Gender STPD, Commonwealth Secretariat**

**1.0 Background and Introduction:**

Enhancing trade investments and opportunities of its members is a core business for which the Secretariat has earned the respect and place of trusted partner. The Secretariat's work is informed by the recognition that in many developing countries, credible and coherent trade policies are virtually non-existent. Trade ministries are often weak and have low analytical capacity for adequately dealing with intricate global trade agenda and attendant issues. Conversely policies around trade related sectoral issues e.g. agriculture, rural development, human capital development and private sector/business development are usually better formed and corresponding links between donors, governments and civil society on these subjects better developed. The focus and priority given by country governments to these sectors, provides a unique partnership opportunity to stimulate 'bottom up' dialogue that can contribute to the better linking of trade development policy to these sectors and therefore to poor and vulnerable people including women. The primary goal of the gender and trade project is to exploit and strengthen these linkages from a gender perspective.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD), which houses the Gender Section is committed to building capacity on gender and trade among member countries. This is reflected and mandated in the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005 – 2015, and the Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan 2008-2012. Given the trajectory of the Secretariat's work on trade and expansion of investment opportunities of members, the multi-pronged capacity building project in gender and trade was conceptualized by the Secretariat and co-funded by DFID. The project worked systematically to build capacity at national and regional levels with key government ministries and private sector institutions involved in trade policy formulation, implementation and negotiations.

**Key Gender Issues:**

The project design and delivery approach was informed by the following key gender considerations:

**i. *Building evidence base at the national level***

Recognition of the need for increased national level research, noting the challenges of paucity of gender disaggregated data. This is a pre-requisite for evidence-drive advocacy with key sectors to fully inform trade policy makers and negotiators on the gender distinctions and differences within the economy;

**ii. *Gender Social Impact Analysis and the Monitoring of Trade Agreements***

The need to deepen gender analytical research in all areas of trade at the national level, especially gender and trade impact analysis of any major **Agreements** taking place at the international, regional or bilateral levels.

**iii. *Raising awareness and building capacity at the national and regional levels***

The acknowledged need to develop understanding on the importance of gender linkages within and across ministries of trade, relevant sectoral ministries, (agriculture, commerce, tourism or industry), private sector organizations and international institutions. This includes the implications of and nexus between trade policy, gender, poverty and sustainable development.

**iv. *Aid for Trade***

The timelines of the Aid for Trade agenda and unaddressed issues as a tangible opportunity and entry point for Commonwealth countries to explore. Given the extensive discourse around Aid for Trade as a facilitator of redistribution and compensation for the inevitable adjustment costs that come from trade liberalisation, building the supply side capacity and the requisite human resource pool of developing countries was identified as a missing link.

### **Project Objectives**

The project seeks to enhance national and regional capacities of public and private sector institutions and civil society organizations to integrate gender analysis and equity in trade related negotiations, policy implementation and service delivery through the following four objectives:

- i. Evaluate and deepen research at the regional/national level to generate data and enhance knowledge on gender and trade
- ii. Link appropriate resource materials and training related to trade development with existing resources and established gender work
- iii. Improve capacity at global/regional/national levels for gender and trade related issues gained through monitoring and evaluation processes.
- iv. Enhance awareness in advocacy and policy processes within partnerships, WTO, EU and regional trade bodies and key players in these institutions

### **Strategic Approaches:**

In pursuit of the objectives and as a direct response to the identified needs and issues, the project adopted a four pronged iterative strategy as the delivery approach:

1. Research and Monitoring – research, analysis and monitoring of findings.
2. Tools and Resources – participatory development of resources, training materials and training course.
3. Capacity Building – across Commonwealth regions and at country level.
4. Advocacy and Policy – with international partners WTO, UNCTAD, EU-ACP SADC, CARICOM and ESA. Integrating gender perspectives into Aid for Trade dialogue.

Outputs and key lessons from each set of activities were reviewed and integrated into the next cycle of implementation over the four years of the project. The revised model then serves as the framework activities in the following year and for engaging with other member countries.

Thus the strategic aim of the project has been to work systematically to build capacity and realise actual outcomes at national/regional level with key government ministries involved in trade policy formulation, implementation and negotiations. The intention is to create a body in each country that understands gender and trade related issues and can advocate and champion the integration of such perspectives leading to the realisation of actual outcomes in real terms for gender and trade.

The success of this approach has also derived largely from the use of a multi-stakeholder approach. This has entailed:

- Working directly with Commonwealth governments regionally and nationally.
- Working closely with civil societies and collaborative partnership with One World Action (OWA), including UNIFEM, CARICOM, SADC and the ITC.
- Utilising unique approaches formulated through previous successes.

### **Key Results and Impact:**

1. Development of a complement of gender and trade resources to avail policy makers and practitioners of much needed tools namely:
  - a) “Gender and Trade Action Guide” - A training resource developed during the initial round of regional capacity building workshops across the Commonwealth and subsequently with projects by other organisations such as CIDA, UNECA and the North South Institute.
  - b) GATI Website - This has been a successful internet site and has proved a good source of continuity for many participants of the capacity building workshops, policy makers, the academia as well as the general public
  - c) “Trading Stories”– This recent Commonwealth Secretariat publication, highlights 20 inspiring regional and country case studies. The book pulls together some of the key

- links between trade, gender and economic development. Ten of the case studies focus on the gender impacts of trade policies, detailing the different consequences on men and women. Ten link women with global markets – including FairTrade, organic, niche and mainstream markets – through a range of best practices.
2. Capacity Building held in Two Commonwealth Countries:
    - a) Embedding of technical gender and trade experts in two countries (India and Uganda) to strengthen institutional capacity for gender and trade analysis and support preparatory activities for the steering committee on gender and trade.
    - b) Gender and Trade Technical Training of:
      - i. Government officials and policy makers from trade, gender commerce, agriculture and export promotion ministries.
      - ii. Trainers – drawn from training institutes and civil societies led by Trade Ministry Gender Steering committee.
  3. Capacity Building across Commonwealth Regions – delivery of four regional capacity building workshops across East and Southern Africa, South Asia and the Caribbean. This covered twenty (20) countries with over eighty (80) participants from government, civil society, regional organisations, multi-laterals and the private sector.
  4. Gender and Women's Rights Analysis of the EU – ACP Economic Partnership Agreements – undertaken in partnership with One World Action. This research component focused on gender analysis of the EU ACP EPAs in three countries – Jamaica, Tanzania and Mozambique. Regional dissemination workshops on gender and trade considerations were held in three concerned regions i.e. the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. Participants were drawn from all Commonwealth countries within these regions and relevant EPA negotiating configurations and institutions.
  5. Advocacy at the International Level – The project delivered advocacy at the international level in several fora, including the WTO Public Forum (2010), UNTAD XII, the 8<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (2007), and with EU DG Trade and DG Development (2010). These were well attended meetings with representation and panel presentations at a very high level, including the UNCTAD Secretary General, various Ambassadors at the WTO and the EU, and Permanent Secretaries of Trade from Commonwealth countries in the South.
  6. Advocacy: Market access for Pakistan women artisans through advocacy, skills enhancement and participation in trade Exhibitions.

### **Lesson Learned:**

Several key lessons emanated from the project:

- ***The value for a systematic and collaborative approach:*** The need for a systematic, multi-level approach was clearly demonstrated by the project, with one of the project's key strengths being the manner in which it developed, delivered and finally embedded the training at the national level. This approach should be replicated and enhanced through partner collaboration.
- ***Participatory training and resource development:*** Different countries have different levels of openness to training. It was often necessary to dedicate significant time to issues of trade, growth and poverty substantively, followed by an introduction to gender and poverty, to pave the way for dialogue and understanding of the linkages between gender and trade.
- ***Ownership by the Ministry of Trade:*** Without ownership by Ministries of Trade at the national level, capacity building in gender and trade will have difficulty leading to outcomes that impact trade expansion initiatives. More strategic approaches for engaging trade technocrats and officials should be explored;

- **Strategic collaborations:** The Donor, Government, CSO partnership was invaluable. OWA and its partners resulted in some of the most ground-breaking dialogue and sensitisation meetings held in the participating countries and regions;
- Awareness of time and process issues: Unexpected process issues regarding the endorsement of sub-projects, along with delays in identification of researchers demands more realistic project timelines given the limited technical expertise in this area of work.

**Next Steps and Future Action:**

In the next phase, the **primary focus will be on leveraging relationships/Partnerships** for the development of sustainable capacity on Gender and Trade in Commonwealth countries by establishing, where they do not yet exist, and deepening initial co-operation with existing development partners specialising on trade.

A two-fold focus for consolidating results will:

1. Engage and array the optimal combined resources of key mainstream trade advisory partners in light of their
  - a) Direct and constant working relations with country actors;
  - b) Institutional influence; and
  - c) Depth, breadth and expert capacity on trade and development issues and commitment to integrating G&T perspectives into their work.
2. Help extend and deepen the impact of the reach by intensifying and strengthening mainstream methods of delivery of gender capacity, as well as widen the resource base for engendering capacity for a more effective use of project resources. The EU funded ComSec Hubs and Spokes project and regional trade work of the Economic Affairs Division of the Secretariat are internal platforms for extending the project approach and results further.

Other activities will be the continued development/maintenance of the resources, further advocacy work, and two further regional workshops to cover the remaining Commonwealth members who have yet to benefit from the training module.

# ComSec Gender and Trade Project Model

