

the
gender
dimension of
Aid for Trade



International
Trade
Centre

EXPORT IMPACT
FOR GOOD

BACKGROUND

Expert roundtable on the gender dimension of Aid for Trade

It is widely recognized that trade in general and international trade in particular is a powerful device to wealth creation and poverty reduction and in so doing, to socio-economic development. However, all trade actors/parties are not in an equal position. Women, particularly in developing countries, can find themselves less able to make use of the opportunities that trade brings due to inequalities in economic, political and legal rights and their access to banking and credit facilities. And experience has shown that impacts of trade policy and even trade agreements can have a differential impact on men and on women given their positioning in the economy. These impacts need to be better understood by trade policymakers, to unlock women's trade potential.

Women are already actively engaged in trade for global and regional markets, including in agro-processing, in Export Processing Zones and in producing goods in home-based enterprises.

African women, for example, have been the most active in cross border trade. In some instances this has allowed some entrepreneurs to grow their trade to global dimensions, despite the legal and financial constraints they face. Women also 'give back' in their businesses to the communities they serve. Assisting women to succeed in trade means that families directly benefit and poverty reduction can ensue.

But the voice of women and women traders needs to be better heard. One of the purpose of the Expert Roundtable on the Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade jointly organized by the World Trade Organization and the International Trade Centre with the support of the governments of the Republic of Rwanda and United Kingdom, was to hear what women have to say to make the current Aid for Trade initiative more gender responsive.



WHAT CONSTRAINTS DO WOMEN FACE IN TRADE?

Cross border trade - Gender Neutral?

“ A recent UNIFEM study on the trade border activities across Africa demonstrated consistent harassment against women as cross border traders, including corruption, sexual harassment and abuses by middlemen. This is despite the fact that women as cross border traders contribute significantly to economic growth. Women depend upon trade for security for their families. ILO showed trade to be the most important source of employment among self employed women in Sub Saharan Africa providing 60% of non-agricultural employment. It is estimated in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) alone, women’s contribution to cross border trade was estimated at USD 17.6 billion annually and in west and central Africa, women traders contribute to employment in their businesses, support 3.2 children and 3.1 dependents. Women in cross border trade in fact make up Africa’s ‘real economy’.

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Tacko Ndiaye,
UNIFEM,
Expert Round-table on
the Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade

“In East Africa, studies show cross border traders just as active.

A joint Uganda Bureau of Statistics/Bank of Uganda Informal Cross Border Trade Survey estimated that in 2007, Uganda’s informal cross border trade with her neighbours amounted to just under US\$ 777 million. Women form the bulk of these traders. Yet in almost every survey on cross border trade, harassment by the police and customs officers may be in the form of a male officer insisting on conducting an unnecessary full body search of a woman trader or, it could be a direct request for a bribe.”

Dorothy Tuma,
DMT Consultants,
Expert Round-table on
the Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade

Potential solutions under Aid for Trade:

- Information is power. Ensure that the existing legal tariff and non-tariff barriers are widely known using the media and other relevant forms of information
- Educate border-post officials on the importance of cross border trade and the need for border-post officials to be trade facilitators.
- Attract the business community to invest in safe, clean affordable accommodation and storage facilities at or close to the border posts and ensure women’s access to trade facilities.

Infrastructure – Gender neutral?

Transport, for example, has been identified as a priority issue in trade diagnostics. Consideration of the extension of transport systems to integrate women producers or to move women and younger workers safely to places of employment, such as export processing zones, can enhance trade. Export opportunities for home based service providers, many of whom are women, are facilitated by access to Internet that extends outside the central business district. Such access would be embraced by young women and men, quick to take-up technology and keen to access international markets. Cross countries studies suggest that trade offer employment opportunities for women and men particularly in the export processing zones (EPZ).

However, women tend to occupy lower paid jobs, working in difficult situations. Gender inequality in access to and control over market information and services impedes women's effective participation in and benefit from trade. Adequately responding to constraints women face to accessing transport to visit trade support institutions, participate in meetings and meet clients, could increase women's contribution to economic productivity and qualitatively improve household welfare.

It is important to look at who uses infrastructure and who could benefit from better access. Women are rarely consulted when transport corridors are being planned, yet studies show they are significant users if such infrastructure and could benefit from it being more inclusive.

Solutions under the Aid for Trade:

- Ensure donor funded facilities that are being designed to support transport corridors such as TRADEMARK (East Africa, or South Africa etc), build in a gender dimension to their feasibility studies and support mechanisms.
- Ensure that the informal sector is not marginalized in schemes of trade modernization. The informal sector supports the majority of women's livelihoods that, in turn, support the family needs.
- Transport surveys that consult users for feedback on how to improve the transport systems, further marginalize women who do not yet enjoy the same access to transport as men. Consult women.
- Design road systems and networks in a way that facilitates trade and employment opportunities for women and for men.

GENDER RESPONSIVE TRADE MECHANISMS

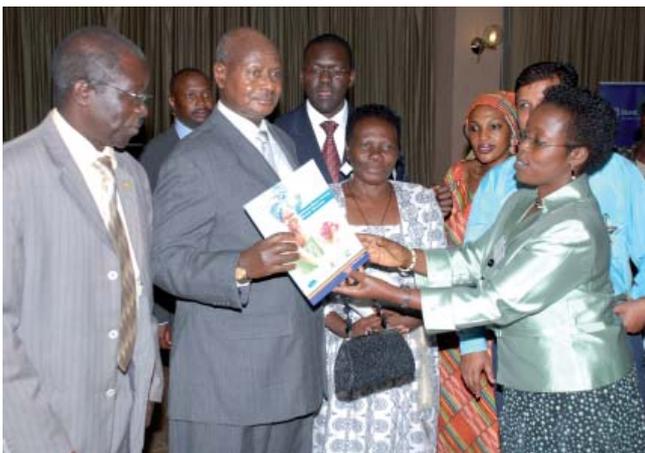
It is critical that a gender dimension is added to national development plans. That is the only way that governments will make aware and respond to the needs of half of their respective populations. These include Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP); diagnostic trade integration studies under the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), and Trade and National Export Strategies. If gender dimensions are not explicitly stated in these and monitoring mechanisms not in place, 'policy evaporation' can occur and the needs of women overlooked.

National export strategies

These are the blue prints for realizing export potential. But export and trade strategies can be created behind closed government doors. Women are largely marginalized from these negotiations or processes. They are not systematically represented in private sector organizations or even Chambers of Commerce so their voices are seldom heard. One government listened. The government of Uganda launched the first ever gender responsive National Export Strategy, visualizing and analyzing steps to be taken to ensure sectors that can support women's livelihoods are prioritized.

“ The vision of the Uganda National Export Strategy was to create a more dynamic and competitive export-driven economy for national prosperity and development, with more participation by women. We took a multi-stakeholder and participative approach. This resulted in the commitment of resources to begin to address supply side challenges women face. And to enhance the participation of rural women in particular into national development and wealth creation. ”

Rosemary Mutubale,
Business Advisory Services Enterprise Uganda
Expert Round-table on
the Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade



Regional economic integration

Regional Economic Integration is the buzzword in trade circles. There are plans to develop free trade agreements, customs unions, monetary unions and even political unions in efforts to enhance regional trade paradigms and strengthen regional blocks. To what extent are women involved, despite their high proportion in cross border trade?

Efforts to infuse this process in Africa have been challenging and could be an area for Aid for Trade to assist. The TRADEMARK facilitation mechanisms should undertake studies to determine women traders and businesswomen's needs.

“ The East African Community is on course in implementing the move towards regional economic integration that encompasses: a customs union; joint administration of a Common External Tariff (CET); elimination of all non-tariff barriers to cross-border trade and a common market that guarantees free movement of goods and services. Despite all the positive changes and recorded increase in cross border trade since the treaty, all indications are that benefits are tilted in favour of the formal trade sector. This is despite strong suggestions that the women-dominated informal cross border trade sector contributes greatly to regional integration because of the large numbers of traders involved and goods and services exchanged, as well as contributing to efforts to reduce poverty within the region. Little effort (by respective governments) has been put into understanding the ICBT sector, documenting its trends and contributions and making policy and procedures that also include them. Even less effort is evident in making women (traders) part of the process of developing the sector. ”

Masheti Masinjili,
Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development,
Expert Round-table on the Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade

Gender sensitive trade organizations

Most trade ministries and organizations are predominantly staffed by men. What is not changing rapidly are trade policies and processes that demonstrate a gender dimension to their work. There are, however, some emerging examples that demonstrate a better understanding of the need to address the concerns of women in business and trade mechanisms. The Government of South Africa has a Gender Desk within its Trade Division. The SADC Gender Unit has been training its trade policy makers in gender awareness. The Government of Cambodia has gender mainstreamed all its ministries and emerged with a gender-sensitive silk sector strategy. The Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) has had in place a gender policy and an alliance with regional business women. The Africa Trade Policy Centre of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa recently 'gender mainstreamed' its organization to help it to become an interlocutor between African Ministries of Trade, Regional Economic Communities and women.

“ The African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC), situated within UNECA strives to become a centre of excellence of gender & trade with the production, and distribution of specific regional & African research on gender & trade and targeted dissemination to gender networks as part of mainstreaming. ATPC continues its practice of being seen as a strategic interlocutor between gender advocates and trade policy makers by using its convening power to communicate directly with trade ministers and senior officials in Africa to be more enabled to include gender issues in trade preparations and negotiations; highlighting the valuable contribution women make to intra African trade dynamics and the issues and impacts they face in global and regional trade agreements through the dissemination of policy briefs; highlighting evidence-based gender research within its own research programme for uptake by trade policy makers; organizing colloquia promoting new studies or innovations in gender and trade approaches; and driving an electronic dissemination of these materials. After all, a bird cannot fly with only one wing. ”

Dr Amal Elbeshbishi,
Regional Advisor and gender focal point for the Africa Trade Policy Unit, UNECA
Expert Round-table on the Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade

ENGENDERING POLICY APPROACHES

Gender and Aid for Trade: A Win – Win Scenario

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor asserts that ‘increasing the participation of women in entrepreneurship is critical to long-term economic prosperity’. Aid For Trade is a comprehensive initiative and a catalyst to increasing an effective participation of developing countries to trade, for growth and poverty reduction. As such, it is a critical to integrate women to achieve this aim: Gender equality makes Aid for Trade more effective.

A fuller understanding of the gender dimension can bring a value added to trade as it can change the definition and priority of interventions supported under the Aid for Trade. It is critical therefore that in preparing national development plans, that women’s interests in trading and producing are taken into account so as to ensure the incorporation into national action plans, export strategies and other trade-related poverty reduction strategies. Gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms can help to ensure future success in the process are also important.

Three Components of Aid for Trade

An ex-ante analysis and articulation of gender issues into three components of Aid for Trade:

Trade related technical assistance and capacity building such as training in gender analysis and understanding the differential impacts of trade measures upon men and women as practiced by the SADC Gender Unit to its trade policy units.

Trade-related infrastructure such as examining who uses infrastructure such as roads and transport corridors, street markets and border crossings and meeting both men and women traders needs, including for safe passage and for storage facilities.

Building productive capacity is essential to addressing gender constraints in producing goods for the market, in developing women’s capacity in finding and supplying markets for their goods and services, developing regional networks for ensuring supply and quality control and improving women’s positioning in value chains of production.



Hearing women's voices: Sharing case stories

Describing how women in trade are successfully integrated into and benefit from Aid for Trade, that can then be used by governments, agencies and others working to achieve outcomes that benefit women as well as men in each intervention. The Expert Round-table on the Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade, collected case stories on:

- Negotiating better conditions for young women to benefit from better technology in trade
- Increasing the numbers of women scientists in agriculture to address gender issues
- Making trade organizations more gender responsive
- Investing in poor women cell phone for business transactions
- Assisting Banks and Finance companies to see the potential of women's small businesses
- Lessons learned from trade policies and their impacts on women
- Building small producers productivity to reach global markets
- Designing trade mechanisms that work for women too.
- Targeting Women in Building productive capacity can make a difference
- Building capacities for linking women with Export Markets
- The Boeing Company: A business case for Supplier Diversity
- Empowering Young Women in better trade paradigms through technology
- Special export Zones and impact upon women in the garment industry
- Building an 'inclusive workplace' matters
- Mainstreaming trade organizations: The case of the African Trade policy Centre UNECA
- Women informal Traders; Myths facts and Ways Forward

And many more. These can be useful to see the difference that can occur when adopting a gender perspective.

Developing a results framework and indicators

This can monitor and track the integration women in trade in Aid for Trade processes and activities to ensure that they will benefit under Aid for Trade activities. This means ensuring that the indicators to track and monitor Aid for trade contain indicators that monitor impacts on women and support the contributions that they make to trade

Creating a network of trade experts

The establishment of a network of gender and trade experts that governments, core agencies and others could engage to provide advice/implement activities/work on monitoring and evaluation to secure benefits to women under Aid for Trade.

Linking to the Aid for Trade initiative

It is hoped that it is hoped that governments will be inspired and armed with such tools to take the next steps towards unlocking the potential of women in trade development, especially young women. The output of Expert Round-table on the Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade, might also provide useful input into subsequent meetings on Aid for Trade at the national, regional and global levels, including future Aid for Trade Global Reviews.

For more information see www.intracen.org/womenandtrade

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