

POLICY BRIEF

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WOMEN IN CROSS-BORDER AGRICULTURAL TRADE

Agricultural sector strategies increasingly recognize the critical contributions that women make to food security and agriculture-led growth. While much attention has been given to women as producers, the role of women in cross-border trade should not be overlooked. Security, mobility, and service delivery constraints can disproportionately limit women's access to markets, particularly markets across borders. Increasing opportunities for formal cross-border agricultural trade by women has the potential to generate economic growth and increase food security while reducing poverty among vulnerable households.

Policymaking in many developing countries suffers from a lack of sufficient data and understanding of the roles of women in cross-border agricultural trade. Anecdotally, we know that the roles of these women are diverse: from informal, small-volume traders at the border to customs agents and freight forwarders to women who own and operate larger agribusinesses from the capital. Extrapolating from existing data on women in trade, it is likely that the majority of cross-border agricultural trade by women is conducted informally in small volumes.¹ Studies show that informal trade makes up a significant portion of total trade in developing countries and that a disproportionate number of informal traders are women.² While men tend to dominate the trucking sector carrying large cargo loads over long distances, women are more likely to face time, mobility, and asset constraints that limit their trade participation to the transport of small cargo loads via foot, bicycle, cart, or small vehicle.³

Studies of women in cross-border trade have tended to focus on these informal, small-scale traders, while omitting the experiences of women working in trade services, such as customs brokering, freight forwarding, and the trucking industry, as well as women working as employees, managers, and executives in large-scale agribusiness. Existing studies give us credible reason to believe that the policy recommendations below will contribute to the establishment of a more hospitable trade environment for all women in cross-border agricultural trade, regardless of type of employment, business size, or formal status. However, we strongly recommend increased data gathering and the use of baseline studies for pilots of gender-oriented trade interventions. By collecting sex-disaggregated statistics in border processes and throughout public service delivery, governments will be able to better identify gender discrepancies in cross-border agricultural trade.

¹ Though "formal" and "informal" are frequently used as rigid descriptions, informality is actually a spectrum made up of a number of different qualities, including unlicensed business status and inability or unwillingness to follow official trade procedures. The degree to which a woman trader is viewed as informal relates to the frequency and degree to which she is engaged in non-compliant trade. UN Women (2011). *Unleashing the Potential of Women Informal Cross Border Traders to Transform Intra-African Trade*. New York: UN Women.

² See UNIFEM (2009), *Sharing the Findings of the Baseline Studies on Women in Informal Cross-Border Trade in Africa*, Addis Ababa: ECA/ATPC Inception Workshop on Mainstreaming Gender into Trade Policy; World Bank.

³ Ibid.



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The central tenet of this paper is that, for developing economies to achieve their goals of broad-based and more equitable economic growth, food security, and poverty reduction, trade reform interventions must specifically target the participation of women cross-border agricultural traders. The recommendations below are organized into three guiding principles for donors and policymakers seeking to integrate gender considerations into trade reform activities. First, women's rights to security, privacy, and equal treatment in the border process must be established and protected. Second, public policy should promote increased market opportunities for women traders, particularly those who may be disadvantaged by the existing trade environment. Third, the policy-planning process should be designed to ensure that the voices of women traders are heard.⁴

Why Women Matter to Cross-Border Agricultural Trade

In much of the developing world, legal, regulatory, and institutional obstacles to the use of formal border processes have led to widespread informal trade.^a The value of informal cross-border trade in southern Africa, seventy percent of which is conducted by women, is estimated to be above US\$7 billion.^b Informality not only limits government revenue but also constrains business growth by limiting access to formal credit and making businesses more vulnerable to harassment and the inconsistent application of trade policies.^c In one survey, the majority of women engaged in informal cross-border trade expressed that they would prefer to operate formally, paying all legally required duties, if they could be treated respectfully like business people instead of smugglers.^d Improving the trade environment for women would stimulate greater formalization, increased national revenue, and new opportunities for women-owned businesses.

Increasing the ability of women to engage freely in cross-border agricultural trade also has the potential to improve food security and reduce poverty among vulnerable populations. Women play a significant role in the trade of produce and other food crops in many regions. In West African countries, women traders handle 60-90 percent of domestic produce production and delivery from harvest to consumption, and women traders play a similar role in the Caribbean and in the Andean region of Latin America.^e Women's cross-border agricultural trade frequently includes economically disadvantaged women for whom increased formal access to markets can have a powerful effect on alleviating poverty. In West Africa, women in cross-border trade support an average of over six dependents, and in Kenya, 79.3 percent of women cross-border traders rely on cross-border trade as their sole source of income.^f By helping these women traders formalize through greater security, greater mobility, and better service delivery, governments have the ability to increase the flow of agricultural products to food-deficit areas and increase income for women traders and their families.



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^a Estimates vary regarding the value and volume of informal trade. UNIFEM estimates 30-40% of intra-SADC trade is informal, while informal trade in Uganda may be as high as 86% of the value of official exports. UNIFEM (2009).

Higgins, K. (2012). *Gender Dimensions of Trade Facilitation and Logistics*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

^b UNIFEM (2009).

^c Djankov et al. (2002). *Going Informal: Benefits and Costs*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

^d UNIFEM (2009).

^e Ogbonna, K. I. and Okoroafor, E. (2004). *Enhancing the Capacity of Women for Increased Participation in Nigeria Mainstreaming Agriculture: A Redesigning of Strategies*. Nigeria: Farm Management Association of Nigeria Conference.

^f UNIFEM (2009). See also Masinjila, M. (2009). *Gender Dimensions of Cross Border Trade in the East African Community - Kenya/Uganda and Rwanda Burundi Border* (African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) No. 78). Nairobi: Economic Commission for Africa.

⁴ Throughout this brief, the term "women traders" is used to distinguish between the concepts of gender orientation (women vs. men) and sex (female vs. male physical characteristics).

PRINCIPLE 1: Ensure protection of the rights of women to equal access to public services and personal security at the border.

An increase in women's access to trade and related government services begins with equality in the legal framework. Where there is not equality under the law, for instance, where married women do not have the right to hold a passport, women's participation in trade will be severely curtailed. The absence of a legal framework for equality contributes to wide-reaching negative effects on women, including both direct legal limitations on their activity and the creation of a hostile and discriminatory environment. However, a change in the legal framework alone is not enough. Steps must be taken to ensure that women's legal equality in the trade environment is respected in practice, including gender training for border officials, investments in infrastructure to ensure safety and privacy, greater communication with women on their rights in the border process, and provision of an avenue for redress in the event of harassment or discrimination.

TRAIN CUSTOMS AND BORDER OFFICIALS IN POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT ENCOURAGE THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN.

Women often face discrimination in the border process. Surveys in India found that women wait 37 percent longer than men to see the same customs official,⁵ and studies in East Africa have shown that women cross-border traders are forced to pay larger bribes than their male counterparts or provide sexual favors to get released when border officials detain the trader or confiscate her goods.⁶ A survey in Central Africa found that although the majority of women traders pay appropriate duties, customs officials commonly perceive those who trade in small quantities as "smugglers."⁷ Similarly, at the Mangochi border between Mozambique and Malawi, only traders transporting more than 25 bags of maize require an export license, yet unlicensed women trading fewer bags are still perceived as noncompliant.⁸

Capacity building programs for customs officials can help to address these biases and misperceptions. Specific programs that have shown success in reducing discrimination apply messaging, peer counseling, and sensitization training for workplace teams in both the public and private sector.⁹ Increased training on the needs of women and the importance of their role as cross-border agricultural traders, as well as on how to recognize and report assault, trafficking, and harassment by colleagues, creates an environment in which the incentives to marginalize women traders are diminished. Additionally, customs agencies should promote the recruitment and retention of women customs officials, particularly where customs regulations allow physical searches of the trader's person.

UTILIZE SMALL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS TO INCREASE SAFETY, HYGIENE, AND PRIVACY FOR WOMEN TRADERS.

Customs and border areas are often dangerous and lack adequate infrastructure to ensure safety, privacy, and proper hygiene for women traders. Poor physical infrastructure, including areas that are dark or isolated, creates an environment conducive to corruption, harassment, and assaults on traders. Women cross-border traders in the Great Lakes region of Africa frequently encounter acts of violence, threats, and sexual harassment,¹⁰ and in the Côte d'Ivoire, reports of women traders facing violent physical searches, intimidation, and humiliation spiked in 2010.¹¹ Governments can make several simple investments to mitigate violence

LEGAL RESTRICTIONS ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN CROSS-BORDER AGRICULTURAL TRADE

Women face a wide range of legal restrictions that limit their ability to participate in cross-border agricultural trade. While limitations on the right to own a passport or other identification clearly prevent cross-border activity, other laws may create an effective prohibition by limiting women's independence or mobility. In Indonesia, for example, women are not allowed to legally enter into a contract on their own behalf. Until 2008, Mongolia prohibited women from working in several sectors, including transportation, and the Philippines and Papua New Guinea place limitations on the ability of women to work at night.

Source: World Bank (2012). *Toward Gender Equality in East Asia and the Pacific*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

⁵ Higgins, K. and Turner, L. (2010). *Integrating poverty and social analysis into Aid for Trade programs: trade facilitation and trade-related infrastructure* (Brief 3). London: UK Department for International Development.

⁶ Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD) (2006). *Women and cross-border trade in East Africa: Opportunities and challenges for small-scale women traders*. Nairobi: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

⁷ Brenton, et al. (2011) (discussing the difference between "illegal" trade (dealing in a prohibited product) and "informal" trade (not registered and/or for which duties are not paid)).

⁸ Bata et al. (2005). *A Report on a Joint Rapid Assessment of Informal Cross-Border Trade on the Mozambique-Malawi Border Regions*.

⁹ For example, the EQUAL Community Initiative, financed by the European Social Fund and co-funded by the EU Member States, released targeted messaging about the potential growth that would result from capitalizing on the specific knowledge and skills of marginalized groups within a wide variety of public and private sector work environments. EQUAL, Anti-Discrimination Pillar I (2000). See also International Labor Organization (ILO) (2008). *BCC toolkit on HIV/AIDS Behavior Change Communication for the Workplace*. Geneva: ILO.

¹⁰ Brenton et al. (2011).

¹¹ USAID West Africa Trade Hub (2011). *Excerpts from the Civil Society Convention of Côte d'Ivoire report on free movement*. Accra: USAID.

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, women traders identified poor bathroom facilities as a main obstacle to engaging in agricultural trade, above concerns about paying duties or travel logistics.

in the border environment. Adding lighting and surveillance cameras can help increase transparency and security by reducing the opportunity for officials to exploit women cross-border traders. Well-lit bus stops and transit points have proven very effective in enabling women to safely travel in South Africa and Bangladesh.¹²

In St. Vincent and Grenadines, women traders identified poor bathroom facilities as a main obstacle to engaging in agricultural trade, above concerns about paying duties or travel logistics.¹³ By adding clean bathrooms and separate toilets at bus depots, border crossings, and markets, governments can encourage increased participation from women traders, particularly those who currently rely on male relatives or middlemen for trading. The installation of private bathrooms in the school environment, for example, has been shown through cluster-randomized trials in Kenya to increase attendance of girls by 58 percent in a two-year period.¹⁴ In Bangladesh, the Asian Development Bank's Third Rural Infrastructure Development Project constructed bathrooms, designated women-only market stalls, and designed public transport vehicles with lower steps for women, resulting in increased employment and mobility for 2,000 women.¹⁵

COMMUNICATE WITH WOMEN TRADERS ON THEIR RIGHTS AND PROCESSES.

Women cross-border traders often have more limited access to and understanding of trade policies and procedures than their male counterparts, due to differences in education, access to communication technology, and participation in business networks. This difference in trade knowledge is especially pronounced between households headed by men and those headed by women, as illustrated in both Asia-based and Africa-based studies.¹⁶ Women cross-border traders in East Africa identified a lack of knowledge about taxation policies and how they operate as one of the primary reasons for not seeking to expand their agribusinesses into new products.¹⁷ Government-led campaigns may be able to combine expanded awareness of trade rights and processes with outreach for other purposes. For example, Egypt's "Your ID, Your Rights" campaign paired rights-oriented educational materials with outreach to issue IDs to undocumented women throughout the country.

PROVIDE WOMEN WITH EFFECTIVE AVENUES FOR REDRESS.

In order to institutionalize the safe and equal treatment of women cross-border traders, women must have an accessible procedure for reporting harassment or discrimination and faith that authorities will act on these reports. Women must also have standing to bring a claim in an adjudicatory environment that is, itself, free of harassment. Managers should maintain a zero tolerance policy against harassment, and negligent managers should be held accountable for harassment perpetrated by their staff. In the context of United Nations peacekeeping operations, penalties imposed on peacekeepers accused of sexual exploitation have included contract termination, suspension, or withholding pay. Though these punishments do not eliminate the incidence of harassment, they have been shown to serve as a deterrent for inappropriate behavior.¹⁸



PHOTO BY FINTRAC INC.

¹² World Bank, FAO, and IFAD (2009). *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*. Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

¹³ UNIFEM (2004). *Feasibility Study on Supporting Women Traders in the Eastern Caribbean*. New York: UNIFEM.

¹⁴ Freeman et al. (2012). "Assessing the impact of a school-based water treatment, hygiene and sanitation programme on pupil absence in Nyanza Province, Kenya: a cluster-randomized trial" (*Tropical Medicine & International Health* Vol. 17 No. 3).

¹⁵ Mehra, R. and Gupta, G.R. (2006). *Gender Mainstreaming: Making It Happen*. Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women.

¹⁶ Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI) (2011). *Mapping of women engaged in cross-border trade in the East African Community, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2*. Kampala: EASSI. A recent survey found that only 25 percent of women traders in East Africa were aware of the East African Customs Union, which allows for duty free and quota free trade on reciprocal basis.

¹⁷ EASSI Vol. 1 (2011).

¹⁸ Spencer, S. (2005). "Making Peace: Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation by United Nations Peacekeepers" (*Journal of Public and International Affairs*).

National emergency helplines can also increase the ability of women to report incidents of harassment or corruption by providing information, advocacy, support, and crisis counseling. Sexual assault hotlines are heavily used in South Africa and in Haiti, which deals with about 40 cases a month.¹⁹ However, many gender-based violence hotlines focus largely on counseling and referral. High-risk border areas should adopt fraud and corruption-oriented hotlines that use hotline reports to monitor, investigate, and discipline inappropriate staff conduct. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) uses a strong anti-fraud reporting system that can serve as a model.²⁰ Women's and traders' helplines allow callers to remain anonymous and receive free information about rights and options in a number of languages.²¹

PRINCIPLE 2: Support policies that promote market opportunities for women in cross-border agricultural trade.

Apart from legal discrimination and harassment, women are often disadvantaged in the trade environment due to lack of market information, low capital and trading volumes, and time, mobility, and literacy constraints. Regulations that relate to traders' capital or education or require certain time commitments might not include an explicit distinction between men and women traders. In practice, however, such requirements are more likely to limit the participation of women traders, who may have slimmer profit margins or greater conflict between work and home responsibilities. Effectively recognizing and responding to these needs will permit the increased involvement of women in cross-border agricultural trade.

ENCOURAGE WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TRADE NETWORKS.

In many regions, women lack access to the same trade opportunities as men due to their exclusion from professional networks, trade fairs, and other export promotion activities. In Asia, domestic obligations often prevent women from accessing information on market opportunities available to their male counterparts.²² In the West Bank, women dominate the agricultural sector, yet the Women's Business Forum is excluded from the group of advisory members for the Palestinian Trade Center (PalTrade), resulting in a lack of women's voices in the advocacy process and fewer networking opportunities for women traders.²³ Private trade networks among women, as well as broad professional networks that include women, can bolster business relationships and generate opportunities in credit, transport of goods, cold storage, trade promotion, and advocacy for better conditions at the border. The 1500 member Women in Cross Border Trade Association of Liberia provides advocacy for women traders that focuses on the inconsistent treatment of women by immigration officials and lack of recognition of women's Laissez-Passer travel documents or ECOWAS passports.²⁴ The association has also enabled its members to benefit from the Mano River Union duty-free trade benefits, which are not available to individual traders.²⁵ On a regional level, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Confederation of Women's Organizations brings together women's organizations from throughout the ASEAN region to advocate for the advancement of women.

Women's trade networks can bolster business relationships and generate opportunities for credit, transport of goods, cold storage, trade promotion, and advocacy for better conditions at the border.

¹⁹ Moloney, A. (2012). "Rape hotline a lifeline for Haitian women" (Reuters).

²⁰ United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Investigations. http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/operations/accountability/audit/office_of_audit_and_investigation.html.

²¹ United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) (2005). *Good practices in combating and eliminating violence against women* (Report of the Expert Group Meeting). Vienna: UNDAW.

²² World Bank (2012) (*Toward Gender Equality*) (finding that women's domestic obligations leave them far less time to develop the social networks critical to professional growth). By contrast, women traders in the Central Asian Republics are not only members but often leaders of trade associations. World Bank (2012) (*Borderless Bazaars*).

²³ Booz Allen Hamilton (2010). *BizCLIR: For the Palestinian economy*. Washington, DC: USAID.

²⁴ A laissez-passer is a travel document issued by a national government or international organization to allow travel by people who are stateless, unable to obtain a passport, or whose government is not recognized by the issuing country. The ECOWAS passport is issued by 10 of the 15 member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to their citizens.

²⁵ UN Women (date unknown). *Strengthening Accountability, Sustaining Trade: Who Responds to Women Informal Cross Border Traders*. New York: UN Women.

PHOTO BY FINTRAC INC.



UGANDA EXPORT PROMOTION BOARD

The Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB) recently launched a pilot project focused on developing a trade facilitation regime for Ugandan women involved in cross-border trade. The project targets four of Uganda's key borders and includes a fast-track clearance process, a customs integrity action plan, trade capacity hubs targeting women at each border crossing, and capacity building modules developed and approved by women involved in informal trade. Through training on export opportunities and capacity building for trade participation, the project is expected to assist informal women traders to formalize their agribusinesses and become small and medium-sized export businesses by building the quality of their products and forming market linkages with international buyers.

Source: Higgins, K. (2012).



PHOTO BY INTRAC INC.

INCREASE WOMEN TRADERS' ACCESS TO AND USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT).

ICT can empower women in cross-border agricultural trade by increasing access to market information and heightening awareness of traders' rights and border processes. Thirty-eight percent, or 1.1 billion of the 2.9 billion women in low and middle income countries have mobile phones.²⁶ By expanding the use of computer, internet, and cell phone infrastructure for trade, governments can limit corruption and harassment and improve efficiency in agricultural markets for both men and women. When Ghana computerized custom services related to cross-border taxes and regulations, reports of abuse and sexual harassment decreased, and there was estimated 35 percent reduction in occurrences of corruption.²⁷ In India, phone systems have allowed rural women to obtain direct information on the price of food crops, enabling them to better negotiate prices with middlemen.²⁸ The extent to which women are computer-literate and able to use technology resources may vary greatly by region and culture. The roll-out of new ICT services should be accompanied by skill-building workshops held at locations and times convenient to women. As an example, the Groupe Spéciale Mobile Association (GSMA) Development Fund's mWomen program, which aims to reduce the gender gap in mobile phone ownership by 50% by 2014, will pair the expansion of mobile phone ownership by women with technical literacy programs.²⁹

LOWER TRANSACTION COSTS AND SHORTEN WAIT TIMES AT THE BORDER.

Women in developing countries are frequently in a state of time poverty due to both professional and domestic obligations.³⁰ A four-country study in sub-Saharan Africa found that women spend an average of 3.9 hours a day on domestic obligations, nearly 40 percent more than the time spent by men.³¹ Simplified visa processes, inspection methods, and "one-stop shops" that integrate border institutions are widely beneficial for all traders and can mitigate and regularize time spent at the border; enabling women to travel longer distances and access a greater number of markets. In Costa Rica, the switch towards a simplified, automated single window warehouse clearing, electronic customs declaration, and risk management with automated method of selection made it possible to reduce customs clearance times from an average of six days in 1994 to 12 minutes (115 minutes in case of physical inspection) in 2000.³² A similar program was successfully implemented more recently in Senegal in 2005.³³

The low volumes traded by many women-owned agribusinesses also have a negative effect on the rates of formal cross-border trade.³⁴ In a Liberian study of informal cross-border traders, 40 percent of women reported purchasing less than ten 50 kilogram bags of food products,³⁵ in which case it may not be economically viable to follow official documentation procedures. Some governments and free trade zones have begun to address this issue by allowing alternate requirements for small-volume traders. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) uses a simplified trading regime that allows small-scale traders to import and export small consignments (less than US\$500) without paying duty, thereby incentivizing these traders to move into formal channels. Similarly, the Exporta Fácil model used by Brazilian and Peruvian authorities frees small-scale exporters from

²⁶ GSMA Development Fund (2010). *Women & Mobile: A Global Opportunity*. Though women are less likely than men to own a cell phone, women's cell phone ownership averages 36% across 17 African countries and less than 30% in India. An additional 20 percent of women have access to mobile phones through family members or friends. See Gillwald et al. (2010). *Gender Assessment of ICT Access and Usage in Africa*. See also Roy, N. (2012). "Mobile Phones Offer Indian Women a Better Life" (New York Times).

²⁷ International Trade Centre (ITC) (2008). *The Gender Dimension of the Enhanced Integration Framework*. Geneva: Expert roundtable jointly organized by ITC, WTO, Government of Zambia and Government of Lao PDR.

²⁸ World Bank, FAO, and IFAD (2009).

²⁹ GSMA mWomen Programme. http://www.mwomen.org/wiki/GSMA_mWomen_Programme

³⁰ World Bank, FAO, and IFAD (2009).

³¹ Benin, South Africa, Madagascar, Mauritius. Charnes, J. (2006). *Gender, Time Use, and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Working Paper 73). Washington, DC: World Bank.

³² Lesser, C. and Moisé-Leeman, E. (2009). *Informal Cross-Border Trade and Trade Facilitation Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa* (OECD Trade Policy Working Papers, No. 86).

³³ United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (2006). *Case Studies on Implementing a Single Window*. Geneva: United Nations.

³⁴ World Bank, FAO, and IFAD (2009).

³⁵ UN Women (2012). *Informal Cross-Border Trade Report: Liberia*. New York: UN Women.

dealing with customs agencies for consignments of less than 30 kilograms.³⁶ By focusing on reducing the cost and time associated with trade, governments can open up new trading opportunities for women.

INTRODUCE INFORMATION AT THE BORDER TO ACCOMMODATE THE ILLITERATE.

Two-thirds of all illiterate adults worldwide are women.³⁷ Women often have unequal access to formal educational systems due to poverty and institutional and cultural biases.³⁸ Illiteracy, including the inability to read, write, or speak the national language, may force women traders to rely on the assistance of border officials or resort to the use of intermediaries to facilitate the border crossing process.³⁹ Customs intermediaries at best charge a fee for this service and may use their position to take advantage of illiterate women,⁴⁰ seriously diminishing women's profit margins and disincentivizing their participation in cross-border trade. Governments can limit the need for intermediaries by ensuring the availability of staff who speak local languages and increasing the use of border crossing forms and instructions that use graphics regarding fees and fines by type of product to facilitate access for illiterate traders. As an example, a current World Bank project in the Great Lakes region of Africa will facilitate the participation of illiterate cross-border traders by preparing a handout that describes border processes and required fees through the use of illustrations.⁴¹

PRINCIPLE 3: Include a gendered perspective in the policy and development planning process.

The ability of developing country governments to encourage women's participation in trade depends on the inclusion of gender considerations in the policy planning process. Planning for transportation infrastructure, public transportation, trade facilitation, and trade policy frequently includes consultation with the private sector but may focus only on large companies, thus excluding the majority of women traders whose businesses are much smaller. By including women traders in this consultation process, governments can increase the likelihood of addressing their concerns and enabling them to increase their trade activity.

INCLUDE WOMEN'S GROUPS IN THE DESIGN PROCESS FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.

Women and men often have different patterns of mobility due to differences in domestic and professional responsibilities and social norms that govern where, how, and when they can travel. Women tend to have less access to vehicle transportation and often utilize pedestrian routes, non-motorized vehicles, and public transportation. In sub-Saharan Africa, women primarily move by foot, while in Asia women also travel on bikes, rickshaws and motorcycles.⁴² The inability to travel long distances safely and quickly can deter women's participation in cross-border trade. In West Africa, women's travel via poorly designed public transport has been shown to result in frequent delays, missed market days, and perished goods.⁴³ Women in Cambodia are often able to get the best prices for their goods only if they are at the market very early in the morning. Without access to feeder roads, the extensive travel time forces some women to sleep in their market stalls at high risk to their personal safety.⁴⁴

³⁶ OECD/WTO (2011). *Aid-for-Trade Case Study Brazil: "Exporta Fácil" in South America*.

³⁷ CIA. *World Fact Book*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html>. The Arab states, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia have the lowest literacy rates, with half of all women and a third of all men lacking literacy.

³⁸ This is particularly true in Sub-Saharan Africa. United Nations (2012). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012*. New York: United Nations. By contrast, in East Asia and the Pacific, education levels of women have been nearing or in some cases surpassing those of men in recent decades. World Bank (2012) (*Toward Gender Equality*).

³⁹ CCGD (2006).

⁴⁰ Simavi, S.; Manuel, C.; and Blackden, M. (2010). *Gender Dimensions of Investment Climate Reform. A Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners*. Washington DC: World Bank.

⁴¹ Higgins (2012).

⁴² Higgins (2012). In Malawi, for example, women own only 10% of all cars, 15% of bicycles, and less than 2% of all animal-drawn carts. ITC (2008).

⁴³ Morris, G.A. and Saul, M. (2000). *Women's business links: A preliminary assessment of women cross-border traders in West Africa*. Washington, DC: USAID. See also UNECA (2010). *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa Vol. 4: Enhancing Intra-African Trade*. Addis Ababa: UNECA.

⁴⁴ Cambodia Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry. *Agricultural Market Information: Gender Roles in Agricultural Marketing*. <http://www.agriculturalmarketinformation.org.kh/en/information-resources/gender>



Simple pictorial instructions

THE PERU RURAL ROADS PROJECT

The Peru Rural Roads project used quotas for women's involvement in committees and the procurement process, as well as gender-related indicators to measure project success. Subsequent road designs included types and locations of roads that were demanded by women and resulted in 15,000km of rural roads and 7,000km of paths used by women and children. Of women surveyed at the end of the project, 70 percent said they traveled more and further away, and 67 percent said they traveled more safely. Forty-three percent of the women said that the improved roads and tracks also provided greater income opportunities for them. The project also reduced poverty by nine percent in targeted communities.

Source: World Bank (2004). "Making Rural Roads Work for Both Women and Men" (Promising Approaches to Engendered Development).

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Investments in small feeder roads, safe pedestrian crossings, and efficient public transportation can enable more women to participate in trade without sacrificing their safety. Yet local-level transportation design committees that determine the locations and design of new infrastructure projects tend to be male-dominated, and women's concerns are frequently underrepresented in the decision-making process.⁴⁵ Studies have shown that without a deliberate, proactive focus on including women in the consultation process, their voices are likely to go unheard.⁴⁶ The use of quotas in rural roads committees is a short-term solution that has been shown to be an effective bridge to more permanent inclusion of women in the economy in several country contexts, including Peru (see page 7). In Asia, the Greater Mekong Sub-region East-West Corridor Project increased access to regional routes for over 22,000 women by integrating gender into rural road design.⁴⁷

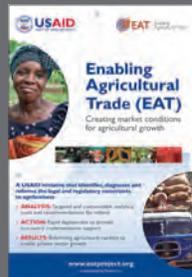
INCLUDE WOMEN'S GROUPS IN THE DESIGN PROCESS FOR TRADE FACILITATION ACTIVITIES.

Consultation with stakeholders regarding the reform of customs and border procedures frequently focuses on large, formal agribusinesses, thus excluding women traders, who largely operate as informal micro-, small-, or medium-sized enterprises.⁴⁸ Customs reforms often target major transit points and neglect to investigate border operations at smaller border points and pedestrian crossings.⁴⁹ Governments should ensure that women's voices and concerns are adequately represented in the formulation of a trade facilitation strategy, such as through the consultation of women's agricultural trade and business associations, women traders (both informal and formal enterprises of different sizes), representatives from the Ministry of Gender or gender representatives from other ministries (e.g. Ministry of the Economy), chambers of commerce, and civil society organizations that represent women's interests.

Beyond inviting women's groups to public consultations, governments must take additional steps to ensure the participation of women traders is truly facilitated, including arranging consultations in a single-sex environment if gender-based separation is the cultural norm and planning meeting times and locations with women's schedules and responsibilities in mind.⁵⁰ In Afghanistan, the National Solidarity Programme successfully increased the participation of women in local government by establishing women's working groups and separate voting venues for men and women.⁵¹

CONCLUSION

Improving the participation of women traders in formal cross-border agricultural trade can benefit communities, nations, and regions by providing opportunities for increasing national exports, improving the flow of agricultural products to food-deficit areas, and generating income for impoverished households. A strong legal framework for equal treatment, though a good first step, must be combined with infrastructure development, trade process reforms, and supportive policies that create a safe, transparent, and accessible trading environment for all women traders.



ABOUT THE EAT PROJECT

The Enabling Agricultural Trade (EAT) project, funded by the United States

Agency for International Development (USAID), supports the U.S. government's global efforts to create conditions for agricultural growth. USAID established EAT based on substantial academic and field experience suggesting that a sound legal, regulatory, and institutional environment is a prerequisite to economic growth in the agricultural sector. EAT offers a suite of targeted and customizable analytical tools and implementation support to identify, diagnose, and reform agribusiness enabling environment (AgBEE) constraints that hinder start up and growth across the agricultural sector.

⁴⁵ In 2003, of 52 countries from all continents, the average proportion of women in local councils stood at 15 per cent. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2005). *Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World*. Geneva: United Nations.

⁴⁶ Environmental Resources Management (ERM) (2012). *Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) Strategic Regional Environmental and Social Assessment: Interim Report*. London: ERM.

⁴⁷ Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2008). *Lao People's Democratic Republic and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Greater Mekong Subregion: East-West Corridor Project*. Manila: ADB.

⁴⁸ See e.g., UNIFEM (2009); World Bank (2012) (*Toward Gender Equality*); International Finance Corporation (IFC) (2011), *Strengthening Access to Finance for Women-Owned SMEs in Developing Countries*, Washington, DC: IFC.

⁴⁹ Based on a survey of the proceedings reports from public-private dialogue events on trade, livestock, and energy in five developing countries from 2006-2011 that included largely multinational and national firms, with limited representation and input from MSMEs. See also Brenton et al. (2011) (discussing pedestrian crossings).

⁵⁰ Higgins (2012).

⁵¹ UNDP (2008). *Innovative Approaches to Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment*. New York: UNDP.