

TRADE, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: A PATH TO INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT



GLOBAL CONTEXT

Economic growth, as well as inclusive sustainable development, requires women's empowerment. Some 70 per cent of the people living in extreme poverty are women. Globalization through increased trade and investment has been associated with rising employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for women. In some cases, however, it has exacerbated existing gender inequalities and worsened women's economic and social status. One key reason for this is that trade policies, as well as economic policies more generally, have long been gender-blind – they do not factor in the effects of different policies on women as a distinct and often disadvantaged group in the economy.

Mainstreaming gender into trade policy involves assessing the impacts of trade policies on the well-being of women and men. Such an assessment helps in the following:

- (a) Better understanding the specific challenges and opportunities that women face from markets
- (b) Designing and implementing complementary policies aimed at maximizing opportunities for women;
- (c) Facilitating women's access to more competitive markets.

UNCTAD has been conducting analytical work on gender and trade policy since the early 2000s. This extensive experience in accompanying and monitoring the gender dimension of trade led to the establishment in 2010 of a dedicated work programme on mainstreaming gender in trade policy. The programme conducts country and regional studies and training activities, specifically designed to address the persistent lack of awareness, data, analysis, representation and action on women's empowerment in trade and trade policy.



WHAT ARE SOME STEPS TOWARDS MAINSTREAMING GENDER?

Programme activities are aimed at building the human and institutional capacities of key national stakeholders – policymakers and trade practitioners – to mainstream gender in trade policies. Activities encompass country and regional studies, a teaching package and a trade and gender toolbox.

Country and regional studies contain an analysis of the country's or region's trade flows that identifies sectors that have been positively or negatively affected by trade and market opening, their repercussions



PROGRAMME FACTS AND FIGURES

Scope: All regions
Start date: 2010
Reviews per year: 2 (average)
Country studies: 7
Regional studies: 2
Online courses: 4
Trade agreements analysed through the Trade and Gender Toolbox methodology: 1
Website: unctad.org/gender



Sustainable Development Goals addressed:

Directly: 5 and 8
Indirectly: 1, 10 and 17



DONORS/ FUNDING SOURCE

Current: Finland, Sweden, United Nations Development Account and Trade Mark East Africa

Past: Norway

on women, especially in the labour market, and the existing scope for using trade policy – and complementary policies – as a tool for gender equality and women’s empowerment. The studies also consider the bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements to which a country is a party. Country and regional studies are initiated at the request of Governments. The counterpart ministry or agency is involved throughout the process and takes ownership of the policy recommendations.

The teaching package on trade and gender aims to strengthen understanding of the links between trade and gender and the capacities to formulate gender-sensitive trade policies. It targets academics, policymakers and representatives of civil society involved in research, teaching, policy formulation and implementation or in field work on trade and gender. The teaching package consists of a training manual and online courses, namely a standard course addressed to stakeholders in all developing regions and region-focused courses that address trade and gender issues within a specific economic grouping. The standard course contains three modules and spans seven weeks, and the regional courses contain an additional teaching module and span eight weeks. To date, UNCTAD has developed an online regional course for the member countries of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and is developing two additional regional courses for the East African Community and SADC.

The trade and gender toolbox is the first attempt to provide a systematic framework to evaluate the impact of trade reforms on women and gender inequalities prior to their implementation. The methodology has been applied to date to a specific trade agreement, namely the Economic Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the East African Community, and is used to assess the likely impact of the Economic Partnership Agreement, mainly through employment, on gender equality and the well-being of women in Kenya, a partner country in the East African Community. The same methodology can be used to assess the gender-related impacts of any other trade agreement or trade reform in other countries. This form of ex ante gender analysis aims to answer the question: what may happen to women if a given trade policy is implemented?



RESULTS AND IMPACT AT A GLANCE

- The UNCTAD programme on trade, gender and development has been under way for some seven years. There are thus now indications of enhanced capacity at the national level to include gender considerations in the formulation of trade policy in Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Rwanda and Uruguay. For example, in October 2016, Uruguay signed a free trade agreement with Chile that incorporates

a gender chapter. The free trade agreement recognizes the importance of gender mainstreaming for achieving inclusive economic growth and the key role that gender equality policies can play in fostering socioeconomic development. Some of the provisions align with the priority areas for policy action identified by UNCTAD to strengthen women’s productive participation in the economy of Uruguay, showing that concrete steps have been taken at the national level to ensure that gender considerations are factored into trade policy formulation.

- Three iterations of the standard online course on trade and gender were offered in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Of 338 participants, 233 graduated – 148 women and 85 men – from all developing regions.
- A regional course for the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa was held in 2017. Of 73 participants from 13 partner countries, 50 graduated. All participants agreed that the courses had met or exceeded their expectations and enhanced their knowledge of trade and gender links, with a number noting that the relationship between trade and gender was new to them and that the courses had helped them to learn more. According to the feedback received, the courses had succeeded in preparing participants to conduct their own research on the topic and/or incorporate trade and gender-based concepts into their teaching and policy-related work.

“Dear Secretary-General Kituyi, ... Your firm personal commitment and the excellent achievements of your collaborators to establish clear links between trade policy, gender equality and women’s economic empowerment mark a milestone in the nexus of human rights and trade. ... I am impressed with how much you and UNCTAD have accomplished in this area”.

Minister for European Affairs and Trade, Sweden

