

Gender & Trade

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Trade, trade policy and trade liberalisation have very different impacts on women and men due to gender roles and relationships of unequal power. An understanding of the relationship between gender and trade is critical in the current global environment. Trade policies and agreements are increasingly being linked to poverty reduction strategies, and have a massive impact on people's daily lives. This issue of *In Brief* shows how development interventions can integrate an understanding of the links between gender and trade. It also looks at two of the key issues in debates around gender and trade: addressing gender-specific barriers to participation in trade and measuring the gender impact of trade. The Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association has worked for over ten years to support business development and networking opportunities for women in Uganda. The Women's Edge Coalition trade impact review (TIR) is a successful initiative designed to measure the impact of trade policies in different national contexts.

Making trade work for gender equality

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2005 WAS AN IMPORTANT year for work on gender and trade. It saw the tenth anniversary of both the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) (*see box on page 2*) and the drawing up of the Beijing Platform for Action. But the coincidence of these two events by no means indicates a coherence of agendas. The general view is that trade liberalisation will reduce poverty and will do so for men and women equally. However, human rights and gender analyses of the concepts of trade and the impacts of liberalisation policies tell a very different story.

In June 2003, the Director-General of the WTO acknowledged the key role that women play in development and their contribution to global trade. Why then does gender remain on

the sidelines? Men and women's different experiences of trade liberalisation arise from their different gender roles, and the different opportunities and constraints they face. This includes inequalities in access to and control of economic and social resources (land, credit and information) and influence over decision-making. Moreover, the gendered division of labour means that certain jobs – usually formal, income-generating jobs such as cash crop farming – are more often performed by men. Work in or centred around the domestic sphere, both paid (home working) and unpaid (childcare), is generally the domain of women. These gender roles not only dictate that men and women's work is different, but that men's work is more highly valued and rewarded.

Gendered impacts of trade

Trade liberalisation can be both positive and negative for women, and can have direct and indirect impacts, including on gender relations. For example, women who previously had no paid employment may now have greater opportunities for employment in new businesses such as information and communication technology (ICT) firms or small enterprise for export. Trade liberalisation has also ushered in agricultural policies that promote the farming of cash crops for export over that of food staples. As cash crops tend to be farmed by men, they are in a better position than women to benefit from such policy shifts.

Although women, in their role as consumers, may benefit from lower prices of imported goods, women who are small-scale producers may be negatively

‘Mainstream trade policies need to change in order to promote women’s access to resources, employment rights and decision-making on trade issues’

affected by these policies. Moreover, the reduction in government revenue due to less money coming in from tariffs may have an impact on the amount of money available for national spending on social services – money which tends to be more important to women in their role as carers.

Trade liberalisation in many areas has led to a growth in informal employment. The pressure to produce high quantities of goods for export, together with the need for production to adapt to shifts in global markets, mean that there is a growing need for large numbers of flexible workers. Women are disproportionately represented in this sector for a number of reasons, including the fact that they have fewer employment options and less power than men to negotiate their terms of work. This restricts their ability to claim labour rights and to organise as workers, and

may undermine any empowerment gains made due to increased income.

What work has been done to date on gender and trade?

Discussions over the relationship between trade, development and human rights that emerged in the light of the Seattle and Doha WTO Ministerial conferences (see box) have, over the past decade, facilitated efforts to link gender and trade. At the macro level, organisations like the International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN), Women in Development Europe (WIDE) and Women’s Edge Coalition (*see final article in this bulletin*) have used impact analysis tools to lever gender considerations into trade agreements. In turn, gender-sensitive value chain analysis assists by linking the macro to the micro. A value chain shows the range of people and processes involved in the production of a product or service from the very start until its completion. This can be used to illustrate inequalities in the chain, such as gender disparity in the value of different parts of the process.

Multilateral agencies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) have implemented gender mainstreaming policies in their activities to strengthen the rights of workers. The ILO has also put in place initiatives to support women entrepreneurs, as has the International Finance Corporation and the International Trade Centre. At the national level, gender advocates in countries such as Uganda have successfully influenced their official delegations attending WTO meetings. There are also associations of women entrepreneurs being established in many countries (*see following article*). Some donor agencies, for example, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), have developed trade-related capacity-building (TRCB) initiatives that include a gender component.

However, in many cases, measures to promote women’s entrepreneurship and their access to markets tend to target women as an isolated group. This often fails to take account of unequal relationships between women and men, and of women’s unpaid labour. In reality,

Ten years of the Wor

The WTO is an international membership organisation set up in 1995 to establish and monitor rules for trade that are then ratified in the parliaments of its 148 member countries. The rules are laid out in trade agreements that facilitate the liberalisation or opening up of national economies to global trade.

In 1999, more than 700 organisations and up to 60,000 people took part in protests against the WTO’s Third Ministerial meeting in Seattle. A dynamic gathering of civil society groups, human rights activists and development practitioners took part in a fundamental rejection of what they saw to be unfair global terms of trade that signalled disaster for many developing countries.

The activism around Seattle caused a sea change in debates about trade, both among civil society actors but also on the part of developing country governments,

the pressure to earn an external income may increase women’s already overstretched time burden without being accompanied by significant benefits.

Ways forward and recommendations

Although there are good examples of gender mainstreaming in organisations such as the ILO, much of the work on gender and trade has so far amounted to piecemeal capacity-building and market access initiatives for women, which do not challenge the mainstream macro policies. Mainstream trade policies need to change in order to acknowledge the gendered impacts of trade and to promote women’s access to resources, employment rights and decision-making on trade issues. Recommendations include the following points:

- More collection of gender-disaggregated data is needed, together with detailed research into the impact of trade liberalisation on gender relations and women’s lives.
- Entry points such as trade review mechanisms and mainstream impact assessments must be utilised to draw attention to gender-sensitive impacts.
- Women involved in trading activities must be enabled to participate in determining priorities for trade and

World Trade Organization (WTO)

frustrated by the continual lack of a developing country perspective in global trade. A 'human rights approach' to trade has emerged over the past decade, which has put poverty and livelihoods at the centre of trade debates, building on the growing public support for fairer trade regimes. This has linked actors in developed and developing countries in ongoing public debate over issues such as agricultural subsidies. These social actors have promoted ethical trade and corporate responsibility, which promote the rights of workers and producers. Those espousing the human rights approach have also called for the increased participation of civil society and others involved in trading activities in trade negotiations.

The Fourth WTO Ministerial meeting in Doha resulted in the 'Doha Development Agenda'; this ensured that poverty,

livelihoods and financing for development, as part of the global economic system, became a part of discussions over trade. This in turn led to the explosion of capacity-building programmes to support the ability of developing country governments to engage meaningfully in trade negotiations and to effectively create domestic policies to account for and maximise the gains of trade liberalisation. In Cancún at the Fifth Ministerial meeting (2003), developing countries demonstrated a stronger and more unified voice in negotiations. The unwillingness of richer countries to incorporate their demands led to an impasse, and the negotiations spectacularly broke down. The Hong Kong Ministerial meeting in December 2005 signals the final chance to complete the round of talks that make up the Doha agenda.

employment policies – potentially using national processes such as Poverty Reduction Strategies. This requires capacity building, economic literacy training and dissemination of information.

- Development agencies and trade ministries need to ensure that market access programmes change so that they acknowledge the unequal power between women and men, together with the burden of women's unpaid work, rather than just trying to include women in existing programmes.

- Strategic alliances must be forged between gender equality advocates, trade justice activists and development actors working on policies and programmes. This will ensure that workers' rights initiatives, market access programmes, ethical trade schemes and human rights campaigns address gender equality and contribute to social and economic justice for all.

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Ugandan women Uganda Women

ISOLATION AND LACK of adequate business support and networking are problems that continue to face businesswomen the world over. Restricted business opportunities due to lack of information, training or finance consistently undermine the potential of women's hard work and their ability as entrepreneurs. When the Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association (UWEAL) was set up in 1987, women were meeting to discuss their business ideas in corridors, hotels and people's homes.

Statistics show that only 7 per cent of women in Uganda own land and only 30 per cent have access to and control over resources. They also face gender-specific disadvantages, such as the pressures brought about by their caring responsibilities and associated ideas about their 'proper' role in society as being in the home. Without gender-sensitive business or networking support, women find it very hard to develop and find markets for their products.

UWEAL is unique in the range of business support services it offers to women entrepreneurs. Many Ugandan businesswomen joined at a time when they were under intense pressure. Their businesses were closing down, they were heavily indebted and had few places to go for advice. Now UWEAL has over 1,000 members.

Membership is open to women entrepreneurs, aspiring businesswomen, professional women, women's groups and businesses that are co-owned or managed by women. The businesses range from micro to small, medium and large enterprises, but most members own small or medium enterprises employing between 1 and 20 people. Sectors include handicrafts, textiles, tourism, education, food processing, groceries and agriculture. UWEAL is also proud to include women pioneers in a number of sectors such as contract cleaning, land and property sales, funeral services and construction, which have traditionally been seen in Uganda as only for men.

en empower the nation: the story of the n Entrepreneurs Association

RUTH BIYINZIKA MUSOKE, *Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association*



UWEAL members in a textile development workshop

UWEAL programmes: from business support to trade

UWEAL builds the capacity of its members through tailored business training, business counselling and product development workshops. These allow women to network and to develop their business skills and discuss their ideas in a safe and supportive environment.

My business got a lift since I joined UWEAL. I managed to increase my sales through UWEAL networks.

Craft producer Alice Mbuga

UWEAL operates seven autonomous branches in up-country districts of Uganda. The district branches run their own product development workshops where women entrepreneurs comment on each others' products and give recommendations for improvements. They also organise savings clubs where members commit to saving a certain amount per month.

UWEAL activities, particularly in the district branches, differ from those of mainstream entrepreneurs' associations in that they actively seek to address the gender-specific disadvantages that women face. For example, the branches run HIV programmes and provide maternity advice – two key issues that impose barriers to the development of women's businesses. In a country where most women have never seen or touched a computer, they are also running the Commonwealth Service Abroad Programme (CSAP) Link-IT project, where women are given

the opportunity to learn how to write financial and business reports and to use the internet for business information.

UWEAL also undertakes advocacy on behalf of its members. It is currently lobbying for guarantee loans for businesswomen through the African Development Bank, and has participated in debates on land law legislation, advocating land ownership and succession rights for girls.

As the Ugandan focal point for the International Trade Centre-supported 'Access Programme', UWEAL will be linking its business support activities to a wider initiative providing training on export requirements and processes.

After this training I can now venture [into] the export [market] without any fear.

Joyce Rwakasisi

Another programme, this time sponsored by the World Bank gender section, was a series of workshops facilitated by two international product development experts who evaluated the readiness for export of

**'Without gender-sensitive
business or networking
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over 800 products. UWEAL also provides information and advice on international trade fairs and exhibitions in order to better support women's integration into the international trade arena.

UWEAL has many success stories:

I entered UWEAL as a professional woman, I did not have any idea of starting a business. After three years in UWEAL, I own three commercial apartments.

*Sarah Lubega,
winner of the Achievers Award 2004*

However, UWEAL's scope remains limited. The association covers only 7 out of Uganda's 30 districts and there is a need for capacity-building work within the district branches. Nonetheless, UWEAL continues with the struggle for women's economic empowerment from the grass roots upward, firm in its belief that a wealthy woman is a wealthy nation.

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Rural women in UWEAL Luwero branch attending a computer lesson

Bringing the benefits of trade to women

– the Women's Edge Coalition trade impact review

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INCREASED TRADE between countries brings the potential for economic growth, the creation of jobs and political stability around the world. However, in order for this potential to be fully realised, trade policies need to take into account the underlying cultural and social conditions that might prevent some members of society, particularly women, from enjoying the benefits trade has to offer. When trade policy is crafted to maximise economic opportunities for both poor men and women, trade will translate into real increases in living standards and, ultimately, sustainable poverty reduction.

How can the needs of poor women be best factored into trade policy? The Women's Edge Coalition is a nonpartisan organisation based in Washington DC, which works to shape US trade and assistance policies to maximise economic benefits for poor women around the world. The Women's Edge Coalition's trade impact review (TIR), developed in 2002, is a comprehensive report that reviews the key findings of economic, trade policy and legal literature on the potential and actual impacts of trade and investment agreements on women.

By applying the TIR tool prior to major shifts in trade policy, policy-makers could identify and avert any potential negative impacts and incorporate approaches that would generate meaningful economic opportunities for poor women. For instance, if it had been applied to the recent Central America–Dominican Republic–United States Free Trade Agreement (commonly referred to as CAFTA or CAFTA–DR), the TIR could have helped negotiators identify the potential consequences the agreement would have for poor women in the region. In Central America, the introduction of CAFTA has necessitated a very costly process to patent traditional knowledge. As custodians of indigenous designs and medicinal practices, this will disproportionately affect women and their livelihoods – particularly as they are less likely to have the resources or information needed to apply for patents. A trade impact review of the countries involved in CAFTA could have evaluated the extent of this particular

problem, hopefully leading to the development of a reasonable trade mechanism to account for it.

The TIR tool is tested, easy to use, and balanced. Utilising existing sector-by-sector analyses of a country's economic and legal regime, the TIR highlights economic sectors in which the poor are particularly active, and it identifies potential effects that a change in policy or law might produce. While the TIR is generally most effectively applied prior to negotiation of a trade agreement, the Women's Edge Coalition has also used it as a tool to evaluate the impact of an existing agreement. They have conducted two trade impact reviews, one to determine the impact the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) had on poor citizens in Mexico, and another to determine the impact of a potential Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) on poor women and men in Jamaica. While the cost and duration of a trade impact review depends on the depth of analysis, a review could cost as little as \$150,000 and be completed within six months, as was the case with the Mexico study.

The results of the Mexico case study showed that the livelihoods of corn and bean producers were seriously affected in the years following NAFTA's implementation, but that employment greatly increased in the flower sector and other non-traditional agricultural export sectors in which women are heavily employed. The Jamaica case study found that poultry farmers are disproportionately female, partly because women face barriers in accessing credit and are, therefore, attracted to the industry because of its relatively low start-up costs. As Jamaica lowers its tariffs on agricultural products, poultry producers have had to contend with an influx of cheaper, imported poultry, a policy that disproportionately affects Jamaican women.

Building on the Mexico and Jamaica case study models developed by the Women's Edge Coalition, the US Government has begun to put the TIR methodology to good use. The US Agency for International Development (USAID), in partnership with Development and

Training Services, Inc., has established the Greater Access to Trade Expansion (GATE) Project. This will use the basic elements of the TIR to evaluate how to improve USAID's assistance to women in order to remove gender-based impediments to economic growth and increase women's participation in international trade. A pilot project is underway in Bangladesh, and USAID plans to expand the GATE Project to include seven other developing countries.

Women are the vast majority of the world's poor, and efforts to end global poverty cannot be successful if trade and economic policies do not create real economic opportunities for women. Trade policy impacts the lives of women around the world, often more than any other economic policy tool, including development assistance. The TIR framework is one mechanism that governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) alike can use to ensure that trade agreements address rather than ignore the needs of the world's women. While the Gate Project at USAID demonstrates how the TIR framework can help accomplish this goal, it is just a beginning. In the future, the TIR framework could be broadly applied to help policy-makers, development organisations and other interested parties identify ways to reduce poverty in their communities by ensuring that women are empowered to be active economic participants.

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Women's Edge
COALITION

The trade impact review tool can be downloaded from the Women's Edge Coalition website at:
<http://www.womensedge.org/documents/tradeimpactreviewfinal2003.pdf>

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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Useful websites

International Gender and Trade Network
www.igtn.org

International Labour Organization Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) unit
http://www.ilo.org/dyn/empent/empent.portal?p_lang=EN&p_prog=S&p_subprog=WE

Red Internacional de Genero y Comercio, capitulo Latinoamericano (International Gender and Trade Network, Latin American branch)
<http://www.generoycomercio.org/>

Siyanda
<http://www.siyanda.org>

Women in Development Europe (WIDE)
<http://www.eurosur.org/wide/eco%20lit/TR.htm>

Women's Edge Coalition
<http://www.womensedge.org/>

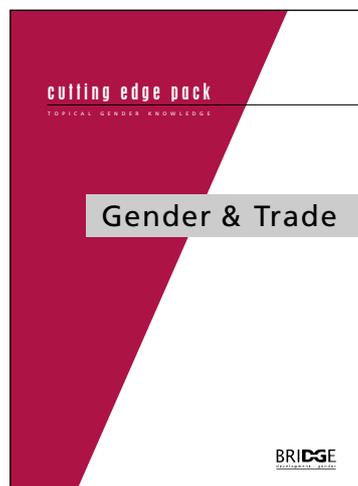
Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice
<http://www.wicej.addr.com/>

Please note, all internet addresses are current as of November 2005

INBRIEF

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Also Available -

cutting edge pack

on Gender and Trade

As well as this bulletin the pack includes:

- Overview Report outlining the main issues, examples of good practice and recommendations
- Supporting Resources Collection, including summaries of key texts, case studies, tools, online resources, and contact details for relevant organisations.

InBrief and the *Cutting Edge Pack* will also be available online in French and Spanish on the BRIDGE website from January 2006

BRIDGE

BRIDGE supports the gender advocacy and mainstreaming efforts of policy-makers and practitioners by bridging the gaps between theory, policy and practice with accessible and diverse gender information. It is a specialised gender and development research and information service based at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in the United Kingdom. This In Brief has been undertaken with the financial support of the Department for International Development (DFID) Trade Team and the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Thanks also to Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and again DFID for their ongoing support of the BRIDGE programme.

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