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Women Without Borders: Gender and Informal Cross-Border Trade

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Sait Mboob, USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Environment, and Education



Sait Mboob is a Foreign Service Officer at USAID. He serves as an economist and most recently completed a tour in USAID's regional office in Bangkok, Thailand. During that tour, he managed the U.S. Government's economic growth portfolio in Laos. He also performed regional economic analyses, including in Timor-Leste and the Philippines. In his current Washington, D.C. assignment, Sait works on a multi-donor public-private partnership that focuses on promotion of the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization. He also serves as USAID's liaison to the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) - the U.S. Government's other development agency.

Lis Meyers, Banyan Global



Lis Meyers is the Senior Gender Specialist at Banyan Global, where she focuses on gender integration and women's empowerment across sectors. She has led research on child, early and forced marriage, women's role in informal cross border trade, and gender-related social norms. She is also a facilitator of the SEEP Women's Economic Empowerment Working Group and currently chairing the technical advisory committee for the 2017 Women's Economic Empowerment Global Learning Forum. Ms. Meyers is an experienced gender trainer, and has designed and facilitated gender 101 and advanced gender integration trainings, as well as Persuasive Communication and Negotiation workshops for women entrepreneurs and business owners. From 2012 to 2016, Ms. Meyers served as a Gender Advisor for the Southern Africa Trade Hub, where she designed, oversaw, and co-wrote "Women Cross-Border Traders in Southern Africa: Contributions, Constraints, and Opportunities." Ms. Meyers has led and managed gender work in Southern Africa, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Cambodia, and the Philippines. Ms. Meyers has a Master's Degree with Distinction from the London School of Economics and a BA in History from Brown University.

Women Without Borders Gender and Informal Trade

Sait Mboob

Why does gender matter to trade?

- Trade liberalization = more jobs for women and men
- But what if the promoted industries are male-dominated?
Trade may exacerbate gaps
- Measurable economic benefits of gender equality

How does gender matter to trade?

1. The business case
2. The development case
3. The human rights case

Behind the Border

- Women and men generally experience access to markets quite differently.
- Labor markets – entry into the formal sector
 - Education, training, workforce development
 - SME market systems analysis
- Financial markets – access to finance
 - USAID Digital Lab
- Access to markets for goods & services
 - E.g. electricity, agriculture

At the Border

- Which border?
- Transportation infrastructure?
- Gender awareness and diversity of border personnel
- Equal access to public services and personal security
- Transaction costs and wait times

Beyond the Border

- Trading arrangements are not always negotiated with mindfulness around gender differences
- How to promote greater appreciation of gender equality priorities?
- World Bank – Charter for Cross Border Trade in Goods and Services

USG/USAID Policy & Guidance

- ADS 205 – Integrating Gender and Female Empowerment in USAID’s Program Cycle
- Toolkit for Integrating GBV Prevention and Response into Economic Growth Programs
- Toolkit for Integrating GBV Prevention and Response into USAID Energy & Infrastructure Projects
- “Women Cross-Border Traders in Southern Africa” – Policy Recommendations?

Women Without Borders: Gender and Informal Cross-Border Trade

Lis Meyers

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Case Study



Objectives

- Promote understanding of contributions of ICBTs
- To better understand constraints and challenges women ICBTs encounter
- Recommendations
- Create learning and information dissemination tools
 - 3-page factsheet on Women ICBTs
 - Video clip



Methodology

- Qualitative, rapid gender assessment
- 2-person research team: International Gender Specialist and regional ICBT expert
- Policy and Literature review
- Field Research at 2 borders: Mwanza, Malawi and Kazungula, Botswana



ICBT in African Context



- Fluid
- Efficient
 - Shorter delays at border than formal trade
 - Custom delays of 12.1 days for formal trade in Africa
- Widespread
 - Provides an income source for 43% of Africa's population

Women in ICBT

Prevalence?



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Profile of Women ICBTs

- Higher level of educational attainment
- Heads of household
- Responsible for children and additional dependents (often OVCs)
- Involved in other formal and informal work
- Serve as retailers
- Gender differences
- Flexible



Commodities



CONTRIBUTIONS

- Women ICBTs control their businesses and incomes
- Increased decision-making within household & family
- ICBT activities help provide for households
- Women using ICBT income for children's school fees
- Incomes contribute to family health, nutrition, food security, and housing
- Benefits to women's self-esteem
- Respect within community and household



CONTRIBUTIONS

Regional & National Economies

- Contribute between 30 to 40% of intra-SADC trade, up to 60%
- Contribute to governments' revenues, via duty, license and passport fees.

Addressing Unemployment & Under-employment

- Income Source
- Reducing criminality

Food Security

- Food transported from areas of abundance to shortage

Peace Building and Conflict Mitigation



CONSTRAINTS



CONSTRAINTS



- Economic
- Information/Awareness
- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Corruption
- Gender-based violence
- Health
- Wild animal corridors

OPPORTUNITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS



- **Address** problems in areas of transportation, health, border infrastructure, including through public-private partnerships to improve storage facilities, accommodation, water & sanitation
- **Fulfill** ICBT's "right to information" by posting information at each border agency
- **Support** stronger communication between ICBTs and trade officials, particularly at border posts
- **Create** forums for ICBTs to discuss issues, receive support and identify collective solutions
- **Address** GBV and harassment of traders through rights awareness campaigns, forums & support mechanisms for ICBTs

OPPORTUNITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS



- **Provide** culturally-sensitive training for border agents on appropriate behavior when interacting with ICBTs
- **Promote** continuous regional dialogue on ICBT by governments, private sector, civil society, NGOs, etc.
- **Provide** support (financial, administrative, technical, logistical) to aid existing and to form new ICBT associations
- **Facilitate** access of ICBTs to trade fairs, skill-building, organizations/cooperatives & social safety nets
- **Implement** further research with “front-line” border officials

TOP TAKE-AWAYS

1 Features of ICBT in African Context

Fluid, efficient and widespread (provides an income source for 43% of Africa's population).

2 Profile of Women ICBTs

Heads of household, responsible for children and additional dependents, involved in formal and informal work

3 Personal/Local Contributions

ICBT incomes contribute to family health, food security and housing, and benefit women's self-esteem and respect

4 Regional/National Contributions

Contributes between 30 to 40% of intra-SADC trade, helps address unemployment and under-employment

5 Diverse Constraints

Economic, awareness, infrastructure, transportation, corruption, gender-based violence, health

6 Recommendations

Infrastructure, communication & training, regulatory environment, direct support, further research

Questions and Answers

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