

Sustainable and Inclusive Aid for Trade (SIAT) International Symposium

Theme: Inclusive Participation of Women in Trade for Sustainable Development

17th to 19th September 2019

Nairobi Kenya

1. Background

In recent years, the nexus of trade and gender has become one of the topical political economy issues across the globe and is at the centre stage of today's policy discussions on how to make trade not only pro-poor but also pro-women. The push for gendered trade policies comes amid a plethora of empirical economic findings that converge on one key conclusion: the effects of trade in an economy are gender sensitive with women being the most losers than men. Thus, the on-going policy discussions are cognizant of the long-pedigree fact that trade can significantly impact the economy, and given that the economy is a gendered structure, trade interventions will, to a varied degree, have an impact on both men and women. It is from this background that the global community, and agencies that are in the trade space are actively working towards promoting trade approaches that embrace the indispensable role women play specifically in trade and more generally in economic development.

In a wake of the on-going invigorating push for gendered trade policies and approaches, international organisations such as UNCTAD, the WTO, NGOs, and other Aid for Trade (A4T) agencies including TradeMark East Africa (TMEA)¹, are collaborating to produce synergies in vast areas of trade related domains impacting gender. Similarly, the same push has extended to the research spaces where scholars and practitioners have been engaged in back and forth debates that have seen discussions moving from the conventional trade-development nexus to more focused but nuanced discussions on participation and empowerment of women. Critical questions in this debate remain, and ones that create opportunity for researchers, policy makers and development practitioners to collaboratively address. What is the evidence that trade empowers women? Can the evidence be generalised for all groups of women? What does the evidence point to as far as the inclusion of women in policy formulation and programming is concerned? What innovative ways can development agencies employ in measuring women participation and empowerment in trade? How can women participation and empowerment in trade be mainstreamed and made sustainable?

To address these critical questions, we propose to convene the Sustainable and Inclusive Aid for Trade (SIAT) international symposium, the first of a series, to be held on September 17th -19th in 2019 in Nairobi Kenya. Among others, the symposium is expected to provide a platform for researchers, policy makers and practitioners to mutually exchange and share expertise, knowledge and experiences to shed light on some these pressing questions. The symposium will be hosted by TMEA and in partnership with the University of Portsmouth (UoP). The symposium shall provide a platform for sharing of rigorous applied research findings and practical experiences that can be an impetus for evidence-based policy making in the A4T arena, particularly on women participation and empowerment in trade. Beyond promoting peer-to-peer learning on best practices and cross-pollination and fertilisation of new ideas in A4T, the outcome of this symposium is aimed at offering practical lessons that policy makers and development practitioners can pilot and experiment with as part of evidence-based policy making.

2. Strategic Priorities and Relevance to Development Goals (DG) and Official Development Assistance (ODA)

It is both symbolic and strategic to open our trade Symposiums series with gender related issues. Gender is indeed at the centre of our Institutes strategy. It is, for instance, a priority for the University of Portsmouth Democratic Citizenship Thematic Initiative, and a key cross-cutting theme in all of TMEA's programmatic work. At the global stage, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically Goal 5 places emphasis on the need for participation of women in economic decision-making and development for the realisation and contribution to long term sustainable development. Goal 8 - Decent Work and Growth, as well as Goal 13 - Climate Action, also provide opportunities for an expanded discussion on the role of aid for trade and particularly women participation in contributing to the realisation of these goals.

¹ TMEA is one of the largest A4T organization in Eastern Africa (i.e., in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan, Eastern DRC, Burundi, and Ethiopia) with a total of capital investment of roughly US\$500 mil directed towards trade facilitation interventions in the region.

On the other hand, Official Development Assistance (ODA) as defined by the OECD Development Assistance Committee, does too recognise the need and importance of ensuring aid promotes gender equality. In line with this, TMEA continues to strengthen its Women in Trade programme to ensure gender balanced outcomes of its interventions.

3. Structure of the symposium

For maximum participation that accommodates diversity of interests (e.g., between academic researchers and practitioners in the policy world), the symposium shall adopt a hybrid-form including both academic-style and policy-style sessions including panel sessions, conferences, master classes, impact workshops and poster sessions. Researchers with completed, ongoing and early stage research works shall, through a call for papers, be invited to submit their research work on selected sub-themes to inform discussions during the symposium. The call shall also invite submissions covering innovative theoretical and practical development approaches on AfT.

A scientific committee (SC) comprised of subject matter experts shall review and evaluate received papers based on their scientific rigor, methodologies used, policy relevance and resonance to TMEA's work. Based on this review and evaluation, the SC shall determine papers to be presented during the panel sessions at the symposium. The symposium shall adopt two presentation modalities: live presentations for research papers and policy work at an advanced stage of writing (completed or near-completion stage) and poster presentations for early research work, project designs, and policy lessons (e.g. during TMEA's Strategy I or any other on-going work in Strategy II).

a. Plenary session

These sessions have been designed to provide an interactive platform where researchers and practitioners of selected papers will present their findings to a larger audience for discussion. The sessions will be moderated to provide a broad range of discussants an opportunity to interrogate findings and share practical experiences on thematic areas. Key note speeches by subject matter experts will kick-off the sessions, with each session expected to run for three (3) hours. Four (4) plenary sessions are planned during the symposium.

b. Break-out sessions

Break-out sessions will delve deeper into the symposium sub-themes and will provide participants with a choice of which sessions to participate. These will include presentation of research and project papers to smaller groups of participants for purposes of theoretical and practical discussions.

c. Impact workshops

These are designed to give TMEA and other development agencies/practitioners an opportunity to show case their Women in Trade programmes, for purposes of sharing experiences and lessons learnt. Participants will be invited to share their experiences and adopted models in implementing WiT programmes. The objective of these sessions will be to provide a platform for a South-South sharing of experiences.

d. Master classes

Three practical and hands-on knowledge transfer sessions by subject matter experts to a select audience of practitioners and policy makers. The objective of this session is to expose participants to both theoretical and practical skills useful in designing and implementing effective, inclusive and sustainable WiT programmes. Three broad topical areas shall be covered;

- Trade policy and gender equality.
- Gender and climate change.
- South – South learning and collaboration for inclusive trade.

4. *Symposium Theme*

This year's symposium shall take a South-South learning and collaborative approach, with an EAC and South East Asia experiences framing the discussions of the conference. The broad theme shall focus on ***Inclusive Participation of Women in Trade for Sustainable Development***. The mix of research and policy papers shall therefore focus on innovative theoretical and practical approaches that can be employed by policy makers and development partners/agencies in ensuring trade development programmes are designed to be inclusive and sustainable.

The sub-themes for discussion shall include;

1. Impact measurement for policy formulation and programming: Data availability, accessibility and analysis.
2. Making sense of gender trade data. A theoretical and practical approach for developing countries.
3. Harnessing technology gains for effective participation of women in trade.
4. Bridging information asymmetry for increased participation of women in trade.
5. Empowerment through access, use and availability of finance/credit for women traders.
6. Decision-making in trade policy: Finding the voice of women
7. Women in Trade and the climate change debate.

5. *Symposium Objectives*

The main objectives of the symposium shall be to:

- i. Provide a platform for both research and policy discourse on women participation in trade.
- ii. Influence the discussions on formulating the EAC's regional and specific national policy agenda on gender and trade from the research findings and experiences generated from the symposiums.
- iii. Raise the visibility of TMEA locally, in Africa, and internationally as a thought leader in promoting inclusive participation in trade.
- iv. Influencing the research agenda on the measurement of '*hard to measure*' results in AfT and particularly women in trade programmes.

6. *Expected Outputs and Way forward*

- *Advocacy*
- *Trainings.*
- *Case Studies*
- *Publications.*