TRADE AND WOMEN IN CAMEROON
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Cameroon
1. introduction
2. Some stylized facts
3. Measures taken by Cameroon Government to increase benefit from trade for women
4. How to secure benefits from trade for women in Cameroon
Introduction (1)

• Choudhury (2008:115) why trade should be concerned with gender

“The object and purpose of many trade agreements is to raise standards of living and to fulfill the objective of sustainable development. As gender inequality has been recognized as an impediment to the promotion of economic development, it must also negatively impact opportunities to increase living standards and sustainable development. Accordingly, if trade agreements are to meet their stated objectives, gender inequality must be addressed.”
Trade

- Increased production
- Long-term employment
- Further demand
- Higher wages to spend
- Trade policies are most likely, just like many other economic policy, to have gender differentiated effects, (Fontana, 2003).
- Cameroon started to liberalize its international trade in 1990.
- In the early 1990s, numerous waves of deregulation, reductions in tariffs, and elimination of import barriers increased the country degree of international integration.
Many trade agreements are being negotiated or already implemented (such as the Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union, or trade agreements with Nigeria and Morocco).

Cameroon is a beneficiary of AGOA since 2000.

The Cameroon government has started to pay attention to gender.

Since 2010, Cameroon has been implementing its 10-year development plan contained in the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper, which aims to promote strong economic growth and create decent jobs, especially for vulnerable groups such as women and youth (IMF, 2010).
• The Government ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the WTO- Most informal traders are women in Cameroon.

• Adopted in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals which are more inclusive, SDG 5 is a wide-reaching plan for equality and empowerment (number 5 is on gender equality and reaches out to virtually all aspects of women’s lives).
How do trade policies impact women’s lives in Cameroon?
Stylized facts: Recent trade pattern in Cameroon (1)
Stylized facts: Recent trade pattern in Cameroon (2)
Stylized facts: Descriptive evidences on the gender wage gap (3)
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<th>Institutional sector</th>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>19.6</td>
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The causes of a negative linkage

**Gender-related effects of trade reforms**

- Cultural norms limit women's opportunities (for example, in education and work)
- Women acquire different skills relative to men
- Women are concentrated in certain sectors
- Women are employed in specific occupations
- Women have limited access to resources (for example, land and credit)

**Trade reforms are not gender neutral**
How to make trade more profitable to women?
Measures to increase benefits from trade for women

• Reduction of pre-existing gender imbalances at the macro, meso and micro levels that determine the differential impact of trade on women and men, girls and boys.
• Reduction in taxation bias
• Changes in Gender stereotypes: women are better suited to certain types of work (children, house, husband, picking, packaging, horticultural sector, sewing in the garment sector, repetitive and manual work).
• Increase women access to natural, physical, financial and human capital necessary to fulfill their export and trade potential.
How to secure the benefits of trade for women?
How to make trade more profitable to women?

Trade policy makers:

• Facilitate the understanding of adequate trade export requirements, opportunities, information, and business network to female entrepreneurs and producers.

• Encourage deductions and exemptions in type of employment where women are more likely to be eligible.

• Enhance tax codes exemptions for interest or dividend payments on stocks, equities, and assets that women are more likely to own.
How to make trade more profitable to women?

Trade policy should:

• put in place gender sensitive trade facilitation since women are more present in informal cross-border trade.

• take into account that they can displace women means of livelihood and erode their income by trade liberalisation.

• take into account producers women although trade liberalisation in some sectors (agriculture, elimination of tariff on foods products, basic consumption goods) impact some women positively.
How to make trade more profitable to women?

Trade negotiators should:

• emphasize when negotiating trade liberalisation on sectors that are women intensive.

• ensure that the loss of revenue consecutive from tariff cut should not reduce social services that favour women.

• be aware of the fact that trade liberalisation can creates or destroys source of independent income for women.

• focus on the impact of trade Policies trade reforms on women, including informal traders.

• Include gender provisions in trade agreements.
At the level of the society:

• A voice should be give to women; they should participate in the formulation and implementation of trade policies-in sectors in which a large proportion of women are involved (services, textiles, agriculture and commodities);

• Appropriate education policies and expanded access to technical training for women working in expanding sectors;

• Upgrading of workers skill to help women climb up the ladder of the value chain in manufacturing and services;
How to make trade more profitable to women?

• Complementary policies need to be implemented along side trade liberalisation to ensure women empowerment:
  • Reduction of bureaucratic constrains-barrier to entry for women processors.
  • Provision of education and training to ensure acitve participation of women in exports sectors.
  • Formation of network and collaborative organisations.
  • Development of appropriate credits markets, program to provide credit to women.
  • formation of clusters to favour the sharing of knowledge among women.
  • Construct affordable and accessible childcare services, transportation and ICT’s to access services and market opportunities.
THANK YOU