

TOPIC: Gender and macroeconomics – trade

Conceptual rating: [BASIC to INTERMEDIATE level](#)

Suggested module objectives:

1. Enable participants to see that changes in trade policies can affect females and males in a multitude of ways depending on their roles and other aspects of their social location/identity, in addition to their gender.
2. Offer some basic facts and a gendered analysis of “trade liberalization” in order to provide a context for current trade issues and trends in the participants’ own country.

Key concepts:

1. International trade and foreign investment – definitions and relationship between the two.
2. Trade “liberalization” and the role of the WTO in promoting this.
3. Examples of gendered implications of trade and foreign direct investment.

Cross references:

- ***Link with Module 7:*** Gender and investment. It is helpful to explore how investment and trade are intertwined, because often people do not think of this.
- ***Link with Module 8:*** Trade and finance linkages. The WTO, the World Bank Group, and the IMF form what is sometimes called “The Iron Triangle”. This module explores the policy inter-linkages and some of the consequences for Southern nations.

Time required: at least 90 minutes

Suggested methodology: Large group DISCUSSION. MURAL DRAWING /VISUAL MAPPING. Mini LECTURE, if needed.

Relevant readings:

- Durano, Marina and Francisco, Josefa “Gigi”, “Gender Issues in International Trade in the Asia-Pacific: An Overview”, paper for UNIFEM’s Asia Pacific Regional Desk, 2000.

- Misra, Joya and Merz, Sabine N., “Neoliberalism, Globalization, and the International Division of Care”, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- Seguino, Stephanie, “Gender Inequality in a Globalizing World”, The Levy Economics Institute, Working Paper No. 426, 2006.
- Sparr, Pamela, “A Gender Primer of Trade & Investment Policies”, Economic Literacy paper No. 2, International Gender and Trade Network.
- Sparr, Pamela “ Basic Building Blocks for a Gender and Trade Analysis”, Economic Literacy paper No. 1, International Gender and Trade Network.

Preparation and supplies needed:

- Newsprint pad/flip chart paper and markers to record certain parts of the discussion; several different colors of markers for the mural; a large piece of paper placed on the wall for drawing. (Be sure it is placed where everyone can see it easily.) 1 blank sheet of notebook size paper for each participant – some extra pencils or pens for those who might not bring one to the session.
- Review suggested reading material.
- Assemble some basic facts related to the types, quantity, and role of trade and investment in your country. Identify current major trade agreements your country is party to and those which it is currently negotiating. If you think participants would find it helpful, use these to produce a reference sheet/handout for the session.
- Decide whether you will identify in advance one or more participants who like to draw (stick figures are fine so they don’t have to be gifted artists) or whether you will ask for spontaneous volunteers. Note: only fall back on your drawing skills if you absolutely cannot get a volunteer. Audience interest and participation is increased if someone else draws. This also frees the facilitator to focus on engaging the audience in the analysis.
- A batch of large cards and some kind of sticky tape. Write large (so people at the back of the room can read the card) on each card one role. For example: parent, spouse, child, neighbor, grandparent, worker, business owner, investor, citizen, property owner, consumer. These roles should relate to different roles played by males and females in the different economic spheres (social reproduction –i.e. the caring economy; and production – informal sector; formal sector; “illegal” sector.) Make sure there are many extra blank cards to write on during the session.

Suggested content to be covered:

- Define international trade. Give examples and a few relevant facts from your own country, such as the relative importance of trade to your country’s economy. What % of food has to be imported, for example? Consider letting people know that in addition to the traditional definition of international

trade as the movement of goods and services across national borders, World Trade Organization agreements partially cover the movement of people (to provide services) and other topics that represent an expansive view of the WTO's purview, such as intellectual property rights, and government procurement.

- Explain the connection between trade and investment, particularly foreign direct investment, and therefore the need to analyze both.
- Develop the framework of a gender analysis of trade – the different spheres (social reproduction – the caring economy involving unpaid work in the home and community; and production – the informal, formal and “illegal” sectors – paid and unpaid work in all three of these.)
- Examine examples of how trade and investment policies and the actions of companies engaged in foreign trade have affected females and males differently in these various spheres. What has this meant for various indicators of gender equality in your country? In analyzing these examples, consider how other aspects of people's identity other than gender (e.g. age, racial-ethnic identity, class, location) played a role in the effects of policies or how people responded to changes in opportunities or conditions.
- Define “trade liberalization” and talk about the various types of policies related to this goal.
- Return to the gender framework and talk about how different aspects of this agenda can affect males and females differently, relating this to what has already been said and described where possible.
- Mention current major trade policies and negotiations affecting your country. If there are active trade advocacy groups or campaigns in your country, describe current efforts and/or provide information for participants if they wish to follow-up.

Description of how to conduct the session:

1. By the time you begin the session, make sure all participants have a blank sheet of notebook paper.
2. Welcome by host group(s) and introduction of facilitator(s); provide any needed logistical information; outline goals for session.
3. Depending on size of group, invite participants to introduce themselves, share an expectation or question they bring. (Record expectations or questions on newsprint, if you are doing this step, and refer to them throughout the session.)
2. **Large group DISCUSSION.** Ask the group a series of quick questions to discern their pre-existing knowledge of this topic and to help you provide quick facts for everyone. Ask for a definition of international trade, examples of major companies in your country engaged in it, key products or services either exported or imported, etc. This also is meant to establish the

- importance and relevance of the topic to your audience. Keep this to about 5 minutes. Treat it as an audience “warm up”.
3. **MURAL/VISUAL MAPPING. Part 1:** Ask every participant to quickly sketch on the blank piece of notebook paper one way they personally benefit from, are affected by or participate in international trade. They should use images, no words on this picture. Give people a very short time to do this (1-2 minutes). When through, have each person turn to one other participant and briefly talk about their picture, no more than 2 minutes a piece. (5 minutes total) Ask participants to look at their picture. Silently to themselves, name what role they are playing in their picture. For example, a consumer? A worker? A business owner? A market trader? Have them write on their paper the role.
 4. **MURAL/VISUAL MAPPING. Part 2:** Introduce the concept of a gendered economic analysis and briefly describe the different spheres (social reproduction – involving unpaid work in the home and community; production, involving paid and unpaid work – informal, formal and “illegal” sectors.) Invite the drawer(s) to come to the blank mural paper and explain that they are going to draw the audience’s gendered analysis of trade, using the participant’s pictures as starting points. Note to facilitator: if there is more than one person drawing, construct a division of labor on the mural to make it much easier. One person could do “social reproduction” – in the home and community, another could do the production segments... Ask participants to call out roles they drew. Make sure that there is at least one card listing the roles mentioned. Make new cards to fill gaps. Quickly get a sense of how many people drew pictures related to each role, by asking for a show of hands. (15 minutes)
 5. **MURAL/VISUAL MAPPING. Part 3:** Work through various roles. As you discuss a role, tape each card onto the top of the mural near the “sphere” that will be illustrated and ask 1 participant to describe their picture. Have the drawer put that on the mural. Note: there will be arrows, people, money symbols, etc. going between spheres. It is ok if the map gets messy. Just make sure the audience understands the symbols and the drawing is big enough for people to see. More than one person can be drawing at a time. If time permits, before moving on to another role, ask if anyone in the audience experienced a different effect in that role and add that to the mural. As you are able, explore class, racial-ethnic, age, location differences in how people relate to trade or are affected by it. Conclude this section by a brief review of roles and effects of trade on those roles (allow 30 minutes if you are also covering liberalization in this session).
 6. **Large group DISCUSSION and Mini LECTURE.** Make an appropriate segue from step 5 to this step depending on your country’s experience with trade liberalization. Work with the group to define “trade liberalization” and provide examples of related policies. Explain the how these trade policy tools work, as needed. Refer back to the mural/map and identify scenes on the

- map that depict each policy at work/the impact. Where missing, add this to the mural. (about 30 minutes)
7. Conclude the discussion by restating the objectives of the workshop and relating the issues to trade agreements, negotiations or other current political debates in your country. Refer to any advocacy groups or campaigns that exist.
 8. If this is part of a larger economic literacy effort, link this session to the next one. Provide logistical details related to the next session, as appropriate. Thank the audience for their participation.

Ideas for alternative methodologies/modification of the level of discussion:

- **For a basic audience:** This is likely to be too much material to cover in one session, unless you have 2 hours or so. If this is the case, consider one of two courses of action. One option is to have one session and cover just the first four content points described above, concluding with the gendered analysis of trade. The second option is to offer two sessions. The first session would cover the first four content points described above while the second session would explain and discuss “trade liberalization”, further elaborating upon a gender analysis of trade begun in session one. The second session could conclude with reference to current trade negotiations or trade policy issues related to the participants’ country.
- **For an advanced audience:** include a **DISCUSSION** of the debate whether gender inequality contributes to a country’s trade competitiveness and growth in trade. Some specific case studies are available for some of the “Asian Tigers” like Taiwan. See the Seguíno article for a review of the literature.
- **For an advanced audience:** consider including a **DEBATE** among participants to assess the rationale for trade liberalization and its impact. This also could be done as a **PANEL or mock TV interview** where invited guests with specific expertise in this area are interviewed. Showing a **VIDEO** is another option to spur debate and discussion. One possibility: “The Yes Men”.
- **For a more activist audience:** Enrich the political analysis by discuss the fact that the WTO is operating outside of its initial mandate, and the notion of the “Iron Triangle” – how the IMF and WB promote trade and investment liberalization as well as the WTO. See the work of Walden Bello, Martin Khor, and Nancy Alexander for a discussion of this, and link this with the information from Module 8.

Some useful organizations or websites related to this topic:

- International Gender and Trade Network, www.igt.org. Note: different regional sections within this website may offer analyses and economic literacy materials in languages additional to those in English.

- Third World Network, www.twinside.org.sg
- Focus on the Global South, www.focusweb.org
- DAWN, www.dawnnet.org
- University of Massachusetts/PERI, www.umass.edu/peri