

TEACHING MATERIAL ON

TRADE AND GENDER LINKAGES:

THE GENDER IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL UPGRADING IN AGRICULTURE





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TABLE OF CONTENTS

AC	CKNOWLEDGMENTS	III
LIS	ST OF BOXES	V
LIS	ST OF FIGURES	V
LIS	ST OF TABLES	V
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Gender in the economy: Key concepts and relations	2
3.	Gender and trade: A bi-directional relationship	9
4.	Women's roles in agriculture and trade	10
<u> </u>	Agricultural technology and trade	12
6.	Technology in agriculture and women's participation in trade	14
_	6.1 Technology in all nodes of the food chain	14
	6.2 Digital technologies	15
	6.3 Gender-differentiated effects of agricultural technologies	16
	6.4 Technology in global value chains: Opening opportunities for women	17
	6.5 Organic farming, green technologies, and agroecology: Striving for sustainable agriculture	19
7.	Factors affecting women's adoption of technologies	20
	7.1. Gender bias in agriculture research and development	21
	7.2 Extension services and access to information and knowledge	22
	7.3 Innovative approaches to research, development, and extension	23
	7.4 Other constraints	25
	7.4.1 Women's autonomy and participation in leadership and decision-making	25
	7.4.2 Access to financial services	26
	7.4.3 Access to productive resources	26
	7.4.4 Access to information and communications technology	27
	7.4.5 Women's work burden and time poverty	27
8.	Conclusions and policy recommendations	28
Ex	vercises and questions for discussion	30
An	nnex 1. Overview of technologies in agriculture	31
An	nnex 2. Case studies	33
	A.2.1. Florence Kondylis, Valerie Mueller, Glenn Sheriff and Siyao Zhu (2016): "Do female instructors reduce gender bias in diffusion of sustainable land management Techniques? Experimental evidence from Mozambique"	33
	A.2.2 Munyaradzi Junia Mutenje, Cathy Rozel Farnworth, Clare Stirling, Christian Thierfelder, Walter Mupangwa, and Isaiah Nyagumbo (2019): "A cost-benefit analysis of climate-smart agriculture options in Southern Africa: Balancing gender and technology"	
_	A.2.3. Sophie Theis, Nicole Lefore, Ruth Meinzen-Dick, and Elizabeth Bryan (2018): "What happens after technology adoption? Gendered aspects of small-scale irrigation technologies in Ethiopia, Ghana, and Tanzania"	34
RE	FERENCES	35
EN	NDNOTES	40

LIST OF BOXES

Box 1	Gender equality: International legal instruments and goals	8
Box 2	Artificial insemination technologies that support goat and sheep production in the Caribbean	14
Box 3	Addressing constraints on women's mobility: Nano Ganesh	16
Box 4	Technology is not gender-neutral: Mechanized potato selection and gender roles	22
Box 5	Women's empowerment in agriculture and innovation in Southeast Asia	23
Box 6	Gender impacts of participatory plant breeding programs	24
Box 7	Papa Andina: Promoting women's participation in agricultural research and innovation	24
Box 8	Women-only branding and rural producer organizations: Café Femenino and Las Hermanas	25
Box 9	Communal leasehold forestry arrangements and labour-saving forestry and livestock practices in Nepal	26
Box 10	"Banish the hand hoe to the museum:" Sustainable agricultural mechanization in Africa	27

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	jure 1 Average time per day spent on unpaid work by sex, selected countries			
Figure 2	igure 2 Ratio of female to male labour force participation rate by region, 2019			
Figure 3	igure 3 Female representation in leadership positions by region, latest year available			
Figure 4	International distribution of total employment by status and sex, 2019	5		
Figure 5	Population with at least some secondary education, by sex and region, 2010–2018	5		
Figure 6	Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile money service provider, by sex and region, 2017	6		
Figure 7	Female agricultural holders by region (weighted), 2015	6		
Figure 8	Factor-weighted gender pay gap by region, 2008–2017	7		
Figure 9	Employment in agriculture by sex and region, 2019	11		
Figure 10	Export markets of agricultural products by value, 2017	12		

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Part-time employment by sex, selected countries, 2018	4
Table 2	Gender Development Index by region, 2018	8

1. Introduction

This study examines the nexus between technology in agriculture and trade from a gender perspective. It is part of the teaching package on trade and gender prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)¹, though it also serves as a stand-alone module.

The study begins with an overview of the relationship between trade and gender that will provide the reader with the basic foundational concepts. It then explores the opportunities for women and the challenges they face in the process of technological innovation and adoption in agriculture. Typically, women face many barriers in access to agricultural technologies, and those technologies that are available often fail to address women's particular needs. This study aims to understand how inequality in the process of innovation and dissemination of technology affects women's access to trade in agriculture, and to evaluate how reducing this form of inequality could strengthen women's opportunities to participate in and benefit from trade-related activities in the sector. Access to appropriate technology and the capacity to use it effectively are important factors to support women in agriculture, both as instruments for women to undertake new productive initiatives and/or to expand existing activities in agrifood value chains.2

The next section provides an introduction to the role of gender in the economy, with an emphasis on the multiple dimensions of gender inequalities and the economic relevance – apart from reasons related to human rights and social justice – of pursuing gender equality. Section 3 presents the two-way relationship between gender and trade: gender-based inequalities affect trade outcomes and trade has gender-differentiated effects. Section 4 begins a gender

analysis of technology in agriculture and trade with an overview of women's roles in agriculture, and Section 5 then examines the interplay between agricultural technology and trade. Section 6 discusses various kinds of technologies in agriculture, and explores how technology can help support the participation of women in agrifood value chains (from production to storage, processing, packaging, and distribution) and foster ecological sustainability. This section also examines the channels through which agricultural technologies can impact women's participation in agricultural trade. Section 7 examines the barriers constraining women's adoption of technology. The final section concludes and offers policy recommendations.

At the end of this module, students should be able to:

- Understand why gender matters in the economy
- Describe the interplay between gender and trade
- Appreciate the impact of gender inequalities in agriculture on trade outcomes
- Understand the relationship between technology and trade in agriculture, and explain why it matters in the process of economic development
- Know the types of technologies from basic to advanced digital – used in agrifood value chains (from production to harvest and postharvest) and in sustainable agriculture
- Appreciate the effects of agricultural technology on women's participation in trade
- Identify the constraints influencing women's adoption and use of agricultural technologies, as well as possible solutions
- List policy recommendations to foster women's access to technology and trade in agriculture.

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