
TRADE, GENDER AND EQUITY IN LATIN AMERICA: GENERATING KNOWLEDGE FOR POLITICAL ACTION 2006-2007

This project is part of LA-IGTN's research programme oriented to produce theoretical and empirical evidence to give coherence to the advocacy strategy on global, regional and inter-regional trade issues from a gender perspective.

All LA-IGTN's Focal Points (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Uruguay) will participate of its research and advocacy activities.

The conceptual and methodological framework as well as the different stages of the research work will be supported by an "Advisor Committee" formed by Ph.D Irene van Staveren, Ph. D. Nilufer Cagatay and Ph. D. Mariama Williams, belonging to the "International Working Group on Gender, Macroeconomics and International Economics".

I. Justification

The research proposal aims show that despite trade liberalization does not create the – structural- gender inequalities, the trade reform that it engenders can impact for better or worse the labour and life conditions of women and men and, therefore, the system of gender relations prevailing in every society.

II. Users

Research results are oriented to:

- (a) policy makers, by showing them the importance of a gender sensitive consideration of trade rules and their impact on social and labour market dynamics
- (b) women's machineries in each of the countries involved and gender sensitive institutions participating in trade negotiations (such as Women's Specialized Meeting – REM- in Mercosur), reinforcing their arguments and participation in public debates on trade issues.
- (c) social and women's movements and trade-unions, to support their effective incidence in the field of trade negotiations and their gender and social impacts.

III. Specific objectives

1. To estimate the impacts of different trade liberalization and regional integration patterns on incentives for and patterns of labour market participation of men and women
2. To identify modifications in the care economy stemming from changes in the public/private and paid/unpaid provision of caring services and their links to trade liberalization and changes in labour market participation
3. To examine the resulting changes in the allocation of tasks between men and women within the households and their implications on wellbeing and the distribution of power.
4. To develop policy recommendations to inform ongoing debates on economic integration strategies and the 'complementary' domestic policy agendas with a view to reducing gender inequalities.
5. To inform the strategies and strengthen the capacities of relevant actors, including national women machineries and women's and other civil society organizations engaged in trade and gender equity debates.

IV. Research blocks and outputs

The research-incidence strategy is divided into three blocks:

Block 1: Gender impacts of trade policy strategies. Focus on labour and “care economy sectors” in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Uruguay.

Research activities in this Block will be starting in June, 2006 and they will end in December, 2006. The research outputs will be the following:

- (a) a theoretical-methodological paper to orient the research work on the gender impacts of trade liberalization on labour markets and the care economy.
- (b) papers containing the main features on the institutional aspects of the care economy sector as well as on the employment impact of different trade strategies according to sex, in each of the countries under analysis.
- (c) a country-comparative study containing the main overall findings referred to the intertwines between changes in economic conditions, care economy and gender equity in each country.

Block 2: Case studies to explore the links between trade liberalization policies and changes in the care economy based on a value chain approach for Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay.

This research phase will take place between January and October, 2007 and its outputs will be as follows:

- (a) a theoretical-methodological paper to orient the research work.
- (b) Documents containing the results from each country’s research work
- (c) Summary document

Block 3: Advocacy strategies. This phase will start in October, 2007.

- (a) Conduction of a researcher’s advocacy workshop based on the arguments resulting from the gender analytical approach of this research proposal.
- (b) Policy papers based on the main research results
- (c) Briefings on the research results
- (d) Training Materials (in Spanish and Portuguese).

Different national meetings with policy-makers, women’s machineries, and social and women’s organizations will be held all through the three research blocks.