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Women & trade

Samoa's
coconuts go global

Taking
female-led
businesses from
local to global

Women at
the helm of
Senegal's
mango industry



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“ Voices for trade and development in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) ”

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Trade for Development News is a place to share EIF stories on the ground, across 47 Least Developed Countries (LDCs), 4 recently graduated countries and several themes and sectors. From op-eds to impact stories, videos to photo essays, this platform is a window into the far-reaching impact of the EIF.

Also designed with a strong focus on partner content in mind, Trade for Development News is intended to be a knowledge hub on all things trade for development and aid for trade. We invite you to share your stories with us, so we can disseminate them further to our readers.

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Samoa's coconuts go global

February 18, 2018 | **Women & Trade**

“Coconuts are both culturally and economically important to Samoans,” says Alberta Vitale, Associate Director of Samoa's Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI).

This organisation was originally set up to create opportunities and a regular income for women in Samoa, but today, whole families are involved, helping to gather the coconuts and make coconut oil.

Samoa is a group of nine islands in the South Pacific. Coconuts have, for a very long time, played an important role in the local island economies. There may be as many as 85 words in the Samoan language referring to the tree or its parts.

However, things have been changing in the past few decades. While two-thirds of Samoans rely on agriculture and fishing for their income, the lure of lucrative urban jobs has more and more people moving away from agrarian lifestyles. Across the Pacific,

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both the rate of population growth and rate of urbanization is high, bringing social and infrastructural challenges.

Bolstering trade in a local and sustainable commodity, in this case coconuts may aid in addressing some of these challenges. “The coconut trade is helping our family stay in the village instead of moving to the city to find work,” says Luagalau Kelemete Lautafi, WIBDI organic certified grower and coconut oil producer.

With the growth, harvest and trade of coconut growing to be a billion-dollar global industry, largely due to a recent boom in consumption of organic health foods, “the time is right for Samoa to increase our supply of these products”, says Pulu Lyndon Chu-Ling, CEO of Samoa’s Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour.

Through its Trade Sector Support Programme (TSSP), the Enhanced Integrated Framework has been helping a number of Samoan organisations work together to meet the booming global demand for coconuts and coconut products.

Seeing a future

The first hurdle to overcome was Samoa’s ageing coconut trees. Though resilient through volcanic activity and cyclones, they are nonetheless susceptible to the ravages of time.

“Many of the coconut trees in Samoa were planted 50 to 60 years ago and were well past their productive years,” says Patea Lilo Malo, CEO of the Samoa Trust Estates Corporation - a state-owned enterprise and the largest landowner in Samoa.

“This is why we started a replanting program: to revitalise this sector for the future.”

With the aid of an excavator to work the challenging but fertile volcanic soils, Samoa Trust Estates Corporation are planting 300 additional acres of both coconut and cocoa trees (having already planted 200 with the TSSP in 2016).

They are also employing village community groups to clear and maintain the plantations.





“Not only has this project helped us financially but it has also helped strengthen the bond among our youth group members and the community,”

Mafulaga Sio, a villager from Manono Tai.

Adding value

Selling raw coconuts at market is not the only way the industry can grow. Samoa has also been increasing its capacity to process its newly abundant raw resource.

WIBDI has been working in 183 Samoan villages, mainly with women smallholder

producers, to nurture certified organic agricultural enterprises. Now, over 650 farmers across the islands have achieved organic certification, earning them SAT\$600,000 (US\$237,000) annually.

“For many, this means being able to send children to school, to pay bills and importantly, to have control over their lives instead of relying on remittances,” says Vitale.

They’re also building a new warehouse, which will enable raw materials like organic coconuts and cacao to be processed into higher-value exports like coconut oil, water,

cocoa liquor, and chocolate in a certified food-safe environment. The warehouse will also provide proper storage space for products waiting to be shipped – important in a humid, wet environment.

The Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa has been advising WIBDI on which processing equipment to purchase, and carrying out experiments to both test for heavy metals such as Cadmium and optimize the quality of the processes (for example the optimum length of time for cocoa beans to be roasted).

Kuinimeri Finau, Assistant CEO of the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa, says that these refined-in-Samoa products not only fetch a higher export value for farmers, they are easier to trade in light of quarantines and biosecurity measures with raw products.

The results are showing: Samoan products are being recognised by multinational brands, with the The Body Shop and C1Espresso touting their Fair Trade coconut oil and coffee partnerships with WIBDI on their websites.

“These partnerships with international brands have been invaluable in terms of stimulating the economies of the villages in which we work,” says Vitale.

The additional income gained from agriculture and processing provides locals with funding to maintain other traditional island crafts, such as fine mat weaving. In turn, these handicraft products can also be sold for extra income.

Buy Samoa made

A number of these products have now been showcased in trade fairs across the Asia Pacific as part of a campaign to “Buy Samoa Made.” After of the launch of the campaign in New Zealand in 2013, total exports have increased by 11%.

“It’s amazing to think how far we’ve come since 2006, when the coconut and cacao industry was reasonably small,” says Chu-Ling.

“Sustainable Development is important and even more so, Development should be in line with Samoa’s values, culture and tradition,” says Vitale.

Coconuts, resilient, local and sustainable, seem to be the right place to start.



Taking female-led businesses from local to global

Deanna Ramsay

March 08, 2018 | **Women & Trade**

International Women's Day discussion highlights the need for entrepreneurship and markets, and what comes next

The flashing images show women from across the world at work – in fields and offices, on boats and streets, at home and abroad.

The film, produced by the International Trade Centre (ITC) as part of its SheTrades initiative, pairs two sister fisherwomen in Alaska and a woman-led cooperative in Ghana that cultivates flowers, along with messages about female potential.

The featured stories are just two examples of small businesses that have gone global, with the women profiled sending their salmon catches to China and blossoms to the Netherlands.

ITC executive director Arancha Gonzalez said ahead of the screening that “Today’s progress is yesterday’s plan.” The ambitious SheTrades plan is to connect one million women to market by 2020.

Doing so will require change on many fronts, and a discussion after the film delved into those details, with women from a variety of sectors describing their experiences with business and with markets.

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SHE BUILDS





Sefa Gohoho runs the Ghana cooperative featured in the film, and spoke of harnessing local culture and historical experience to empower herself and the women who work with her. She noted that her initial attempt to pay female employees a solid wage was rejected on the grounds that they couldn't make more than their husbands.

In her opening remarks, Gonzalez said, "At the family level – economically empowered women invest most of their income in the education and welfare of their family. At the company level – greater participation of women in the workplace leads to higher revenues. At the macro level, closing the gender gap results in double digit increases in GDP."

For women in the world's poorest countries, income differences are deeply marked, as is access to education and work, and many during the evening discussion made a point of noting this. The Enhanced Integrated Framework works with ITC and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to address women's

economic empowerment in the Least Developed Countries, including targeted projects that link women in agriculture to markets.

At the opening of the event, UNCTAD deputy secretary general Isabelle Durant spoke to both the individual lives of women and the larger issue, saying that there are benefits to developing countries when women are better incorporated into the economy, after their daily experiences of struggling and striving.

"Women can be important players in international trade at the service of development," she said.

For small-scale woman traders the world over, progress on the ground amid assorted local conditions, bigger changes in attitude and improved policy-level conditions are all needed for female-led businesses to materialize and to thrive.

And so the short ITC film shows two different success stories that reflect what must be overcome and what individuals can accomplish.

"It's hard to be what you can't see," said Michael Moller, director general of the United Nations in Geneva, adding that the film is an example of the ways we all need to work to challenge and to change attitudes and deconstruct stereotypes through example.

Gonzalez closed her remarks with a science fiction reference that gestures to how distant victory may seem while inspiring with the possibility, by noting that this work "takes us boldly where no man has been before."

For women in both developing and developed countries, that some already are is both a sign of progress and motivation.





Women at the helm of Senegal's burgeoning mango industry

Annette Mutaawe Ssemuwemba & Michelle Kovacevic |

November 26, 2017 | **Women & Trade**

Aminata Dominique Diouf was seven years old when her father bought a small farm 15 minutes from the Senegal-Gambia border.

"At that age I didn't really know what agriculture was," she says. "I was just dazzled by the colours: running, jumping, touching, watching people working under the warm sun and the songs of birds."

A few years later she got the chance to travel to the USA to visit her penpal and improve her English. Next to her penpal's house was a large tract of land where she saw a man driving a tractor.

"I was surprised, amazed and full of questions so one day I decide to visit him. He explained why he chose this job instead

of working in an office. Since that day I decided to be a farmer. I told my dad that I wanted to take over his mango farm when I graduated college," says Aminata.

And 2017, at the age of 26 she did just that, becoming the CEO of Domaine Agricole de Nema. With 35 full-time employees, 20,000

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mango trees and partners in five countries, Domaine Agricole de Nema has become one of Senegal's largest agricultural estates and perhaps the only one with a woman at the helm.

The Domaine Agricole de Nema now has more than 150 employees and is highly mechanized. Located in the village of Nemanding in the Fatick region, it is a mere fifteen-minute drive from the Gambian border. The estate covers an area of 172 hectares, with three plots, called Kawsara, Khelkom and Nema

“We have been working with Aminata for the past 24 months, helping her fight white fly in her crops and introducing her to new markets for Senegalese mangoes,” says Cheikh Saadbouh Seck, Coordinator of National Implementation Unit of the Enhanced Integrated Framework at Senegal's Ministry of Commerce.

The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) seeks to support least developed countries improve their supply of products to the global market, strengthening employment, tackling poverty and taking vital steps forward in terms of socio-economic development.

Between 2012-2013, EIF identified that Senegal's mango sector had a lot of untapped potential.

“At the time we were producing 150,000 tonnes of mangoes per year [in Senegal] but didn't have the right certifications to export to international markets,” Seck says.

The mango project formulation started in 2013. Approved in August 2014 by EIF, it began being implemented in 2015.

“Since the beginning of this project in 2015 we've been working to build the standards needed to access these markets: providing

technical training to farmers to improve their practices and building infrastructure such as ports, shipping services, storage and processing plants so Senegal can export a wide variety of mango products.”

In recent years, Senegal has become the second most important West African source of mangoes, after the Ivory Coast.

Women's empowerment can lead the export drive

There is a sharp distinction in the roles allotted to men and women in the production and sale of mangos, though women represent 45% of the actors in the sector overall.

“On the African continent, women participate in farming and food processing and play a huge role in food security, but they don't have the same rights as men regarding the land. Women generally don't have their own land,” Aminata says.

The concerns and inclusion of women were integrated throughout the implementation of the project, using an inclusive approach that looked at female participation at every step of production: from growth, to harvest, to export. In mapping the value chain, it was revealed that women represented 90% of the players in marketing, and 80% of the export packaging labour force.

In total, 1211 producers, companies, harvesters and transporters have been trained under the EIF project in harvesting methods, quality norms and techniques to combat mango pests. Youth were organised into six associations that allowed for greater participation in training schemes.

Aminata decided to join the training for several reasons: “I wanted to improve my company in the best way and carefully expand into the international market. I was also happy to see our government investing

more in agriculture in order to reduce the unemployment rate of youth in this country,” she says.

By applying what she learnt about pest reduction and making extensive use of irrigation and modern equipment, Aminata has been able to supply fresh mangoes to market before the official opening of the season, giving her business a leg up on other producers.

She has also managed to get international certification with Tesco Nurture and GLOBALG.A.P., and was given an opportunity to attend trade talks in Morocco. Introductions to importers, port managers, customs and government officials were incredibly helpful for the future of her production in this new market, she said.

Aminata’s story illustrates Senegal’s success in strengthening mango supply chains. By situating her business at the centre of the deepening mango value chain, Aminata has been able to offer benefits to the wider society.

“This project has had a huge impact on my life and the lives of others. Most importantly it has allowed me to hire and support young people from surrounding villages,” she says, adding that her company offers on-site housing for worker families and a health centre for people of the surrounding villages.

“We now know the international market better and how to find solutions to weaknesses in our company. This project has allowed me to be trusted by financial institutions in order to get bank loans.”

With the bank loans and knowledge learnt from participating in the project activities, Aminata was able to open her first food-processing facility. In Senegal, women represent 83% of labour force at the processing level in the mango industry.

“We will export fifteen high quality products to new market: dried mangoes, mango juice, vinegar, jam, chutney, syrup, compote... even mango baby food!”

Challenges still remain. Even now only a handful of companies — like Domaine Agriculture — can export to the EU and US, and only one company exports to Canada. The challenge of adding value to exports is ever-present.

“We are committed to working together — government, private sector, civil society, development partners — to spur spillover and multiplier effects of EIF support and to improve everyone’s capacity. We are also working towards having the best possible strategy for mango sector throughout the value chain, from production to processing, logistics, and marketing to consumers. If all of us work together we can resolve any problems,” Seck says.

Aminata considers herself one of the ‘lucky ones’.

“I have had the chance to get more than 172 hectares in Senegal. I intend to push for more Senegalese women to have their own private enterprise farms in Senegal,” she says.

“It is time to stand up, wake up, look to the land and invest massively in farming and women.”

Annette Mutaawe Ssemuwemba is the Deputy Executive Director, Executive Secretariat for the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF).





Making Aid For Trade work for women

Anoush der Boghossian

Originally published in International Trade Forum

Studies show benefits of a more inclusive economic model

Let us go back 12 years, to when the Aid for Trade Task Force was created. Gender was written into the initiative's guiding principles: "Aid for trade should be rendered taking full account of the gender perspective. Donors and partner countries jointly commit to the harmonization of efforts on issues such as gender."

Fast forward to today. It turns out that momentum on gender has been building. Some 87% of Aid for Trade donors surveyed for the Aid for Trade Global Review in 2017 have integrated women's economic empowerment into their Aid for Trade programmes. Similarly, most of developing countries believe the programme can meaningfully contribute to women's economic empowerment. All surveyed countries and Aid for Trade donors consider that it contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

While momentum is growing, a lot remains to be done. We also need to do it effectively.

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WOMEN'S TRADE CAPACITY

Supporting the participation of women in international trade is one of its key components of the inclusive trade solutions many governments want to employ. Through Aid for Trade, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has been focusing on women with the aim of building their trade capacity and using trade as a tool for their development.

Past Global Reviews have highlighted a broad range of areas in which Aid for Trade support is effective... [< READ THE REST ONLINE >](#)



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In Vanuatu, 'Market Mamas' are taking care of business

Simon Hess, Deanna Ramsay

Originally published in *International Trade Forum*

The island nation of Vanuatu is surrounded by bright blue ocean, so it should come as no surprise that tourism makes a hefty contribution to the country's economy.

That model was disrupted in March 2015 when Cyclone Pam struck, devastating the country and its tourism-dependent income. Its recovery from that natural disaster has been assisted in no small part by the hands of women whose livelihoods depend on tourism dollars.

Rosalie Vatu is a so-called 'market mama', an arts and crafts trader who sells assorted items ranging from t-shirts and baskets to carvings and colourful dresses. Her day starts at 4 a.m. making coconut cr me rolls for a shop down the road. She is also the founder of Bulvanua Arts and Handicrafts, a cooperative of more than 30 women who sell and promote products made in Vanuatu.

Tourism economy

Over the last decade the country has become an increasingly popular tourist destination, with its number of international visitors growing by 42% and its tourism sector employing 55% of Vanuatu's total labour force. Tourism represents nearly two-thirds of GDP.

However, increased tourism has been a mixed blessing for some entrepreneurs. Foreign-owned hotels have sprung up across the main island, luring tourists

to spend the majority of their time and money in those spaces rather than in local markets.

"Profits were leaving the country as quickly as they arrived. The key to retaining the benefits of tourism was to be found in sourcing local products and presenting these to tourists, preferably outside the hotel environment," Luen said.

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The Enhanced Integrated Framework brings together partners and resources to support the Least Developed Countries in using trade for poverty reduction, inclusive growth and sustainable development.

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