



Women and Cross-border Trade

Pre- and post-pandemic outlook

Characteristics of ICBT



Estimated 30 - 40 % of total regional trade



An estimated 70% of ICBTs in Sub-Saharan Africa are women



Unrecorded business transactions undertaken across borders (under-declaring, misclassifying or under-invoicing)



ICBT → small scale trade: Small transactions, subsistence traders with limited possibilities to scale up their business



Food items and livestock account for the bulk of informal exports: ICBT key for food security



Source of employment and livelihood for the poor in border areas: often the only option to generate income

Why informality?



Costly, rigid and burdensome customs procedures:

- Multiple fees and taxes at border posts, undue tariffs even when trade is duty free, low transparency
- Customs documentation, SPS, inspection requirements, delays at the borders, immigration procedures



Lack of awareness of rights and responsibilities



Lack of storage, market infrastructure or other facilities at borders



Corruption and insecurity: GBV - bribes / sexual favors

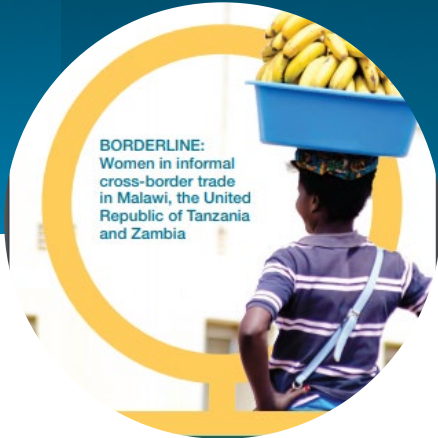
UNCTAD projects on women and ICBT

2016-2019 DA project “*Informal cross-border trade for empowerment of women, economic development and regional integration in Eastern and Southern Africa*”

Target countries: Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia

2020-2022 Inter-agency DA project “*Global Initiative towards post-Covid-19 resurgence of the MSME sector*”

Target countries: Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia

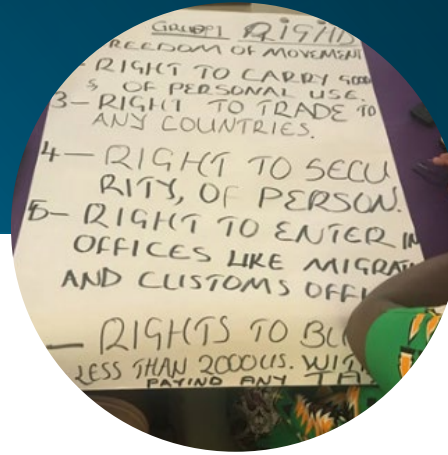


BORDERLINE:
Women in informal
cross-border trade
in Malawi, the United
Republic of Tanzania
and Zambia

Case study on
Women in ICBT in
Malawi, Tanzania
and Zambia



Traders' guides
to trade rules and
procedures



Border workshops
on trade rules and
procedures,
entrepreneurship
and COVID-19
resilience



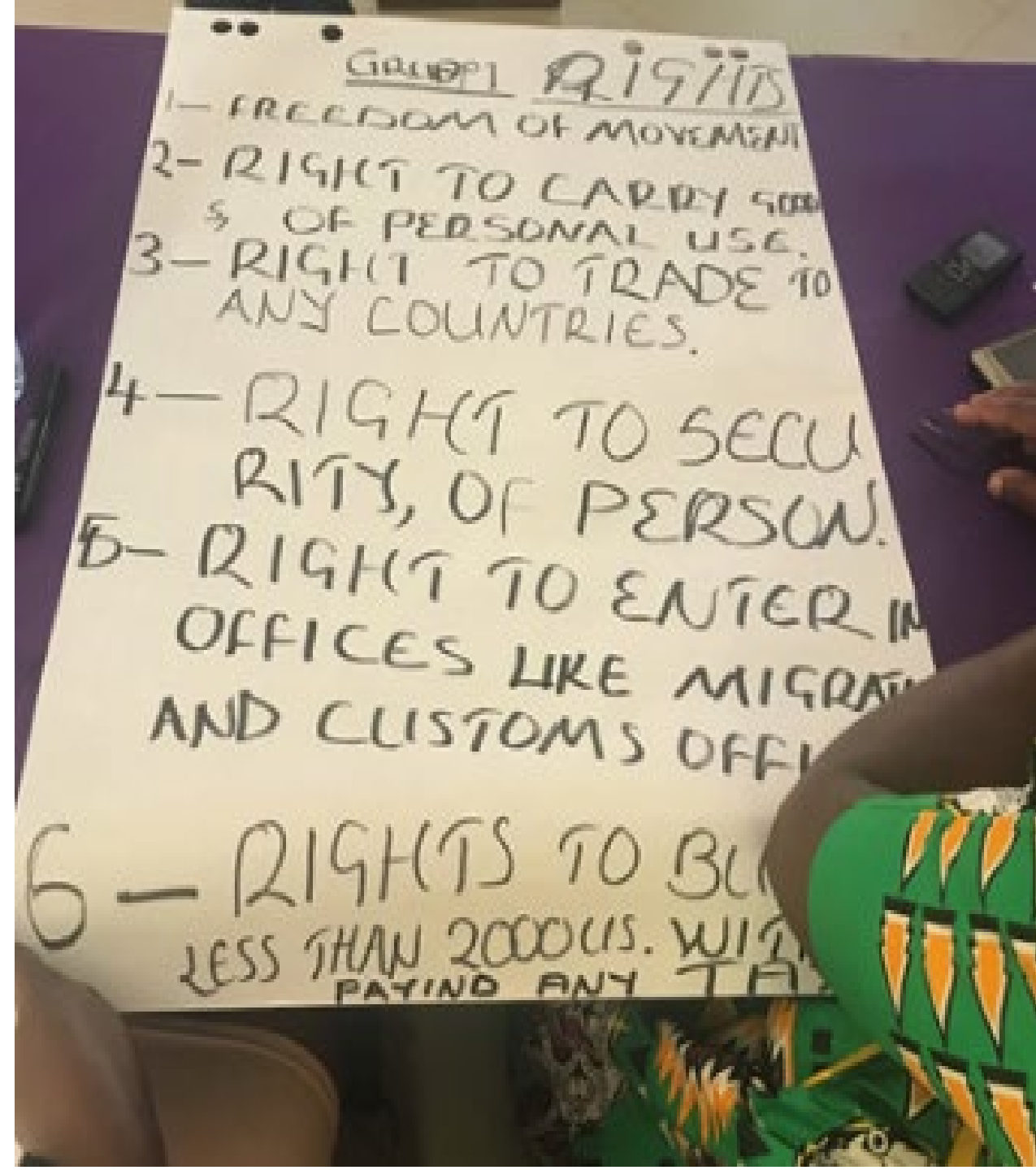
Regional policy
dialogues



Impact
assessment of
capacity-building
activities

Objectives of the training workshops:

- **Enhance understanding** of trade rules and customs procedures, rights and obligations
- **Share information** about new COVID-19 measures
- **Raise awareness** about process and benefits of business formalization
- **Strengthen** entrepreneurship skills and business resilience



13 workshops

410 participants trained

8 border crossings in
Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and
Zambia



Impact assessment: *Cross-border trade in the pre- and post-pandemic environment*

Objectives:

- Assess the impacts of COVID-19 on ICBT
- Determine the effectiveness of the training

Period covered: 2019 and 2021

Interviews targeting 60 informal and small-scale cross-border traders who participated in the training workshops

Online survey to government officials and representatives of CBTAs involved in the design and implementation of the training sessions (25 respondents)



Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on ICBT

Most cross-border trade businesses were negatively affected by COVID-19:

- Over 42 countries in Africa introduced either complete or partial lockdowns in 2020
- Border closures allowed only commercial trade
- Supply chain disruptions
- Shortages of essential goods due to stockpiling
- Shrinking number of clients
- Loss of perishable goods
- Increased business and travel costs due to new measures (e.g. PCR test)



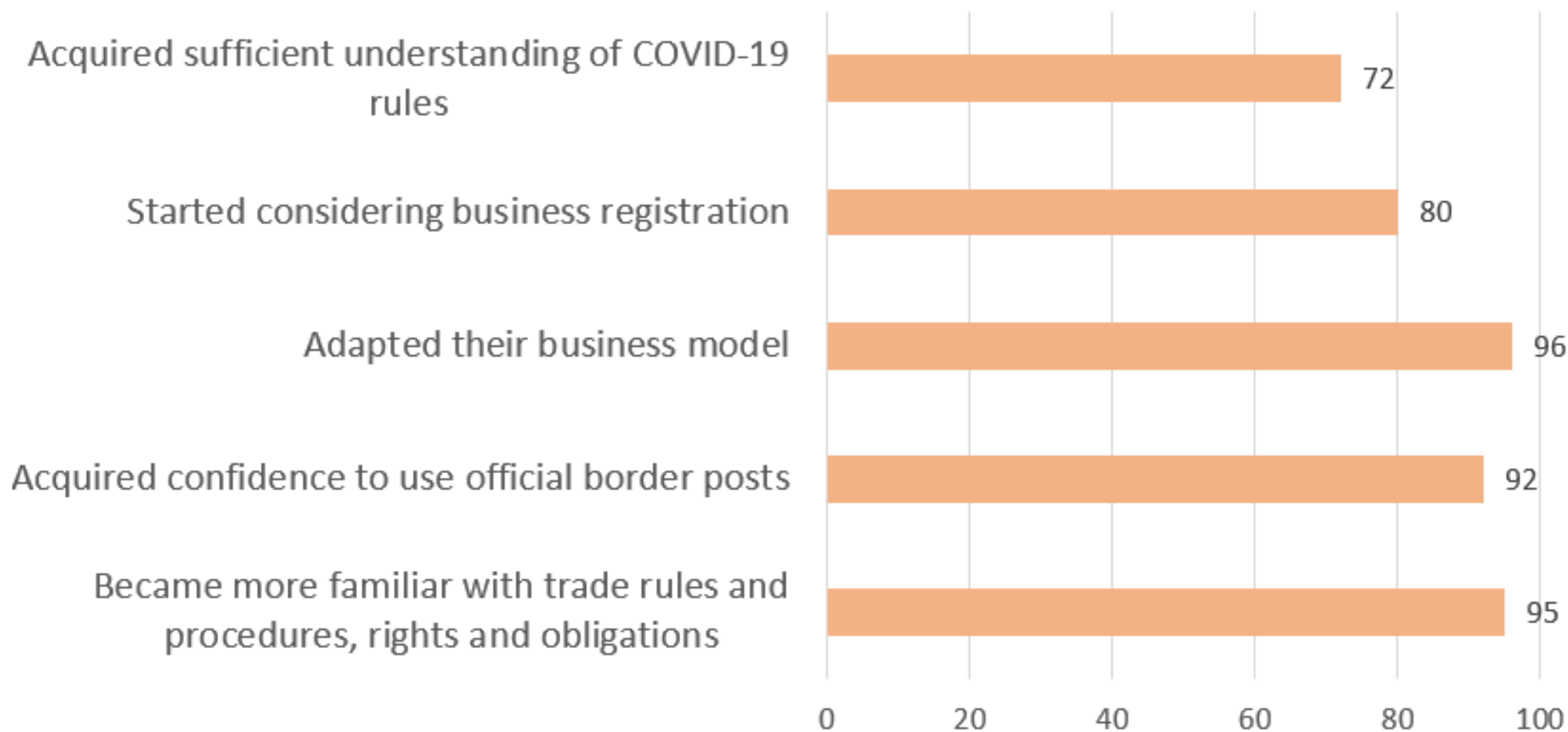
New strategies adopted by traders

- Use of **digital tools**: Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp groups, and online platforms
- Sell **locally produced goods** instead of relying on imports
- Establish **home delivery** services
- **Open makeshift structures** to sell their products (e.g. food items)
- Use **transport companies**
- Turning to **farming** to grow the products to put on the market



Overall outcomes of UNCTAD training:

(percent):



Participants' feedback

“Personal tax rebate avoids us paying duties on personal goods”

“Bribes can be more costly than duties and taxes”

“Now that I know the rules I spend less time clearing my goods”

“I am no longer afraid of border officials”

→ **Improvements reported also by border officials**

Thank you!



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