

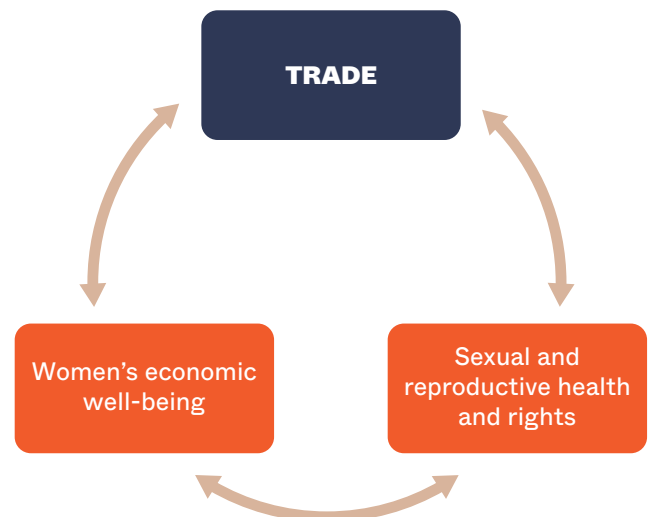
Trade, women's empowerment, sexual and reproductive health and rights are mutually reinforcing.

Policies and systems that strengthen sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to abortion, fuel empowerment, economic expansion, and trade growth. Conversely, trade can substantially improve economic outcomes for women, by increasing employment and wages, creating better jobs, and lowering costs. International, more open, gender-inclusive trade can boost women's role in the economy, reduce gender equality gaps and expand women's empowerment, health and education.

Countries that have a more skilled, innovative and productive workforce enjoy multiple benefits, including greater competitive capacity and potential for foreign investment, as well as improved health care services. Sexual and reproductive health and rights are the cornerstone of women's social and economic participation and without them women, families, communities, and nations will not benefit from economic growth nor achieve sustainable development. Economic policies and laws that give or deny access to sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion, influence not just individual decisions, but also the economic welfare of nation states. Essentially, when women have bodily autonomy and accessible, affordable, quality health care, they can contribute to the economy, and to trade.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Trade can lead to new employment opportunities for women, potentially improving their economic status by creating better jobs for women, with benefits, training and job security which in turn benefits families and communities. In low- and middle-income economies, women make up 33% of the workforce of exporters, which employ more women. Trade increases women's wages: doubling the value of exports in a country's manufacturing sector would **increase the average women's wage** share—the proportion of a country's total pay income earned by women—from 24 to around 30%.



* adapted from *Trading Women's Health and Rights*

Trade openness translates into income gained for women. Removing import tariffs, for example, increases income in women-headed households **2.5 times more** than those headed by men.

When women have greater earning power, decent work and social protection, they have more control over their time, their resources, and their bodies. When women have access to reproductive health care, such as comprehensive sexual education, family planning and contraception, and abortion, they are better able to participate in the workforce and **they earn more over their lifetimes** than women who have limited or no access. If women don't have the decision-making power over when or if, and even how they become parents, they have little economic power. The unpaid work of feeding and caring for children makes up **80 percent of the global gender pay gap**. Women's economic empowerment and bodily autonomy are interlinked—both drivers and outcomes.

ACCESS TO, AND CONSUMPTION OF, GOODS AND SERVICES

Trade not only affects women as members of the workforce and individual and household decisionmakers, but more open trade without tariffs also boosts women's consumption. Trade can facilitate access to, and lower the costs for, **reproductive health goods and services**, including contraceptives and healthcare, potentially improving reproductive health outcomes. It can also increase access to advanced **health and medical technologies**, which can improve the

quality of reproductive health services. Digital health is an important and growing approach for sexual and reproductive health care. Digital health services and knowledge exchanges across borders can improve **access and quality** of reproductive health care.

Trade also supports better health system infrastructure through access to medical equipment, training and expertise, and can improve supply chains, making essential sexual and reproductive health commodities more available.

Increase in wages for women means they are more likely to consume goods and services which helps to fuel economies. Not only are women employees, but they are also employers of other women, particularly in small shops or services. If they make more money, they create more jobs. And when women have more money to spend, they are more likely to spend it on their families and the well-being of their children thereby contributing to future social capital.

“Investing in women is smart economics,” said Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, the first woman and first African to lead the World Trade Organization. But that investment must include investment in sexual and reproductive health and rights—economic empowerment is intimately linked to reproductive empowerment. Initiatives and policies aimed at girls' education and **“getting women into the labor force will fall far short of their goals without attention to their reproductive health and rights.”**