

INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS BETWEEN RWANDA AND BURUNDI: A CASE STUDY OF FEMALE AND MALE SMALLHOLDER TRADERS OF BUGESERA DISTRICT, RWANDA

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DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to God almighty, to my lovely husband Mr. Alex Rwubuzizi, our children; Innocent Manzi and Ashley Keza.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | | |
|----|--------|--|
| 1 | EAC | East African Community |
| 2 | EACCUP | East African Community Customs Union Protocol |
| 3 | EASSI | Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative |
| 4 | EAT | Enabling Agricultural Trade |
| 5 | GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| 6 | ICBT | Informal cross-border traders |
| 7 | IOM | International Organisation for Migration |
| 8 | ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| 9 | MINEAC | Ministry of East African Community |
| 10 | MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| 11 | NISR | National institute of statistics of Rwanda |
| 12 | REMA | Environment Management Authority |
| 13 | SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| 14 | UNECA | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa |
| 15 | UNDP | United National Development Program |
| 16 | UNESCO | United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| 17 | UNDFW | United Nation Development Fund for Women |
| 18 | TMEAC | Trade Marker East African Community |
| 19 | WFP | World Food Program |
| 20 | WTO | World Trade Organisation |

ABSTRACT

The smallholder men and women are involved in informal cross border trade of agricultural commodities regardless of the establishment of East African Community customs union protocol that guarantee removal of customs duty on the same commodities, removal of non-tariff barriers and removal of visa charges among other. However, there has been inadequate documentation on the characteristics of informal cross border trade of agriculture commodities that has hindered the development of strategies based ICBT. In order to document these characteristics, a qualitative research using a case study was conducted in the border district of Bugesera district. The district was sampled out of 6 border post that Rwanda share with other countries. A sample of 28 respondents were selected from both formal and informal cross border traders and interviewed. Amongst them were 10 males and 10 females (informal traders) and 4 males and 4 females (formal traders).

Furthermore, observations and informal conversation were conducted aiming to complement the information provided through interviews. The study highlighted corruption and sexual harassment practices by Rwandan customs and police men and Burundian soldiers. Limited access to trainings, lack storage facilities. The study revealed that majority are women constrained by the above challenges influenced by limited access to financial facilities, limited access to information on trade related policy and traditional norms and beliefs. The study show that ICBT is important for smallholder traders regardless of the mentioned challenges. The findings showed that ICBT ensures employment and income generation and hence contribute to food security in the household of smallholder traders.

Therefore, the recommendations were provided for the MINEAC to incorporating ICBT within formal trade would contribute immensely on socio-economic setup of government of Rwanda. Therefore, the recommendations were provided for MINEAC to come up with strategies that would create an enabling environment for smallholder informal traders. In order to address these challenges MINEAC in collaboration with Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Customs Authority, Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Internal Security from both countries should organise women's right and gender equality trainings for customs officials and police men and soldiers to ensure gender sensitive in their service delivery. In addition, mobilizing women smallholders to work in groups and link them with micro-finances, organise trainings for women and men smallholder traders on trade policy, knowing their rights, gender roles and division of labor within household.

Key: Cross border trade, Informal cross border trade and smallholder

1.0 CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Rwanda is an African landlocked country with an estimated population of 10, 537222 (National Institute Statistics of Rwanda (NISR, 2012). It has a total land mass of 263,338 sq. km (Rwanda Environmental Management Authority (REMA), 2009).The economy of Rwanda mostly depends on agriculture with 80% population involved in farming and agro-business activities (Rwanda Country Report, 2010). Since the Rwandan genocide of 1994, which left the population with widows, youth and orphans, family structures have changed with an increased number of women headed household due to either death of the husband or long term imprisonment because of their participation in the genocide. This has resulted into high rate of school drop outs amongst the youth because of inadequate support and consequently increased poverty. According to World Bank, 44.9% of the people in Rwanda live below poverty line (World Bank, 2011). In response to this, the government drafted Rwanda vision 2020 which aims to transform the country from low-income to middle income through creating enabling environment by transforming agriculture sector and creating off-farm and non-farm employment opportunities. In order to achieve this, Rwanda joined the East African Community regional integration that consists of Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Burundi. The East African Community (EAC) creates a wide market of goods and services for the participating countries and therefore has an opportunity to transform the economy through trade and employment opportunities which seeks to improve trade amongst countries. It is seen as an avenue for poverty eradication and economic empowerment by the government of Rwanda and other EAC countries.

This is part of globalization of trade which has opportunities to boost trade (Momsen, 2004). In relation to global economy, East African Community Customs Union Protocol (EACCUP) aims to further liberalize intra-regional trade in goods on the basis of the mutually beneficial trade arrangements among the partner states. It also seeks to promote efficiency in production, enhance domestic and cross border trade, promote foreign investment in the community, promote economic development, diversification and industrialization (EAC Secretariat, 1999). Under customs union protocol (CUP), the wholly products originated from the EAC countries are free customs duty since the commencement of EAC customs union protocol (EACUP). The protocol explains that a product to be called original from EAC countries should be a product wholly produced in the EAC countries without any outside additional value.

Such goods include; vegetable, fruits, beans, banana, potato and live animals such as pigs, goats, cows, and chickens among others.

This has prompted smallholder farmers to increasingly practice cross-border trading of agricultural products and livestock. However, from the literature agricultural products are traded informally across the border regardless of the EACUP (Enabling agricultural trade (EAT, 2013).

In Rwanda under the EACCUP arrangement, the government seeks to opening up free trade in goods and services; removal of customs duties, elimination of non-tariff barriers, removal of visa charges, easy access to business and traveling documents, improved infrastructure, access to certificate of origin, and improved inspection at border point (U.S. International Trade Commission, 2012). It is expected that this will among others promote local industries, reduce bureaucracy in border posts, promote investment, increase employment opportunity and reduce informal trade. It is also expected that these developments will increase participation of male and female traders both large and smallholder traders due to the available market but also the improved facilities that EAC trade agreement. These would reduce poverty and increase economic growth. For instance, the reduction in informal cross border trade would help increase government revenue through taxes which improves the services amongst its citizens.

However, the EACCUP has not been implemented as initially planned. There are a lot of challenges in the implementation of EACCUP by the EAC countries. The following are some of the challenges:

Tax differences: There are tax differences amongst member states. The customs valuation procedures vary from one country to another and often result in different computed value for taxation (Makame 2012).

Complexity in rules of origin: There are complexities in giving the certificate of origin for the commodities produced within EAC countries. This has resulted into protectionism of commodities.

Non-Tariff-Barriers: The custom union guarantees non-tariff barriers among its member states. However, the studies show the tariffs still exist.

Limited awareness: There is limited sensitization of EACCUP which results into inadequate awareness on the benefits of the EACCUP. Moreover there are language barriers amongst countries. The EACCUP documents are in English and mostly not accessible by the EAC citizens (Mugisa, et al, 2009)

Inadequate capacity and limited resources: There is inadequate human and financial resources to implement the EACCUP. The structures lack necessary equipment such as computers, vehicles and internet facilities to enhance implementation of the EACCUP. For instance, there is inadequate knowledge of the clearance requirements and shortage of clearance agents in some borders, resulting into the delay of goods and services.

This result into a lot of non –recorded goods crossing the borders (Mugisa, et al, 2009). These inefficiencies in the performance of the EACCUP amongst the EAC member states have resulted into slow economic benefits (Mugisa, et al, 2009).

1.3 Problem Statement

Since 2009, Ministry of East African Community (MINEAC) in Rwanda engaged in sensitization meetings to raise awareness to Rwandan citizens on regional integration including free movement of trade and services in EAC countries (Integration Affairs, 2013). Customs union protocol guarantee non-tariff barriers and customs duty free to wholly produced products from EAC member states, and the assumption was that small scale traders would embrace these new protocols as beneficial to them, and that informal trade would therefore diminish or even disappear. However, male and female smallholder traders of agricultural products wholly produced from Burundi and Rwanda are traded informally across the border regardless of the EAC customs union (enabling agricultural trade (EAT, 2013). There is inadequate information on smallholder informal cross border traders of agricultural products between Rwanda and Burundi specifically Bugesera border district.

This is problematic because smallholder informal traders are in risky business. Their operations are not protected by laws of EAC in cases of loss of their commodities, harassment, and violence during trade. In addition some smallholder informal traders are forced to pay extra money or sometimes give their goods to the customs officials particularly those who travel by foot (Brenton, et al, 2011). The government also loses a lot of tax from these goods traded informally. This hinders the development of better strategies to address the problem. The researcher therefore was to find out the characteristics of this informal cross border trade between Burundi and Rwanda.

1.4 Research objective

To create a better understanding of the informal cross-border trading of agricultural products between Rwanda and Burundi hence the development of strategies based ICBT.

1.5 Main research question

What are the characteristics of informal cross border trade of agricultural products between Rwanda and Burundi?

1.5. Sub-Questions

1. What agricultural commodities are traded in informal cross border trade?
2. How do male and female smallholder informal cross border traders of agricultural products operate?
3. What is the knowledge of ICB traders on the trade related services offered through EAC regional integration?
4. What are the benefits that contribute to informal cross border trading of agricultural products?
5. What are the challenges faced by male and female smallholder informal cross border traders of agricultural products during the trading processes?

1.6 Significance of the research

The outcome of the study provides detailed information from the informal cross border traders of agricultural products that will help MINEAC's to re-strategize on how to raise the awareness of traders specifically smallholder traders on the EAC customs union protocol and how it benefits them. Additionally, the study will provide comparative information on types of commodities traded informally, how ICB traders operate, the benefits accrued from ICBT and the challenges faced by ICB traders of agricultural products. This will help MINEAC to incorporate gender issues in cross border trade strategy hence equally benefit male and female informal cross border traders of agricultural products. The recommendations will be made to address the challenges which will be identified from analysis of the information given by the informal traders and help for evidence based policy making.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The research did not cover the whole of Bugesera district because it was focused on the sectors near boarder post and including limited resource. Three sectors located near the border to and from Burundi were selected namely: Rweru, Ngeruka and Ruhuha. Gathering information for the first interviews was a challenge in different ways as follows; the first challenge was that there are limited literatures on ICBT between Rwanda and Burundi and in particular for Bugesera district. Secondly, most male traders were afraid to be arrested as they assumed the researcher to be from Rwandan Revenue Authority. And this was because there are government officials who are deployed at all border posts and shortcuts between Rwanda and other EAC countries to identify the quantity of goods traded informally.

To avoid this fear researcher shown them her student card, a letter from the University and through her introduction she told them where is working from. Research being an employee from Ministry of East African Community had contributed much in gaining information on ICBT. It also created friendship between her and respondents by appreciating and giving information as if their reporting their issues to MINEAC and happy because their living conditions are going to be known by many people through written report.

1.8 Organization of the report

The report is organized into six chapters: Each chapter has various subjects. Chapter one is an introductory part of the report constitutes the contextual information of the problem, problem statement, research objective, research questions, significance of the research, limitation of the study and report organization. Chapter two is literature review. It constitute the following concepts; Cross border trade, Informal cross border trade, smallholder. It also covers trade information in Rwanda and gender equality in Rwanda. Chapter three is the methodology administered while carrying out the research. This chapter contains; research strategy, research design, sampling and selection of the study area, data collection methods and data analysis. Chapter four covers findings and chapter five covers analysis and discussions of the findings with support from literature review. Chapter six contains summary of the study in conclusions and recommendations.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Cross border trade

Cross border trade (CBT) refers to formal and informal trade in legitimately produced goods and services between neighbouring countries. The formal cross border trade is registered trade which is practiced in relation to government rules and regulation. On the other hand, informal cross border trade is defined as imports and exports of legitimately produced goods and services which directly or indirectly escape from the regulatory framework and procedures set by government, and often go unrecorded or incorrectly recorded into official national statistics of trading countries (Ogalo, 2010). CBT is known to play an important role in poverty eradication such as creating an environment for redistribution of income through employment and business opportunities created by the trade. East African Sub-regional support Initiatives (EASSI, 2012), argued that through CBT male and female traders improve their access to income which can help them increase food security. Their involvement in trade also helps to develop self-esteem and additional skills such as negotiations skills in trade and also enhances capacity of the household to earn income.

The researcher sought to tackle informal cross border trade between Rwanda and Burundi as members of EAC regional integration. In relation to EAC regional integration, customs union protocol governs cross border trade as a key factor in regional development. This is in relation to EAC common market protocol which guarantees free movement of trade a cross EAC member states among others. The objective of the customs union protocol is liberalizing intra-regional trade in goods on basis of mutually beneficial trade arrangements among the partner states among others (EAC secretariat, 1999).

2.2 Informal Cross border Trade

Tekere (2001), explained the origin of informal cross border trade (ICBT), as it started in pre-colonial periods when the communities and peoples of the area interacted and traded without need for formal registration of such a trade. When the border posts were erected, this trade became illegal: tariff and various non-tariff barriers were imposed thus disrupting these economic activities of the communities particularly living along border areas. Cross-border trade emerged later and is associated with low income earners and unemployed people who had no alternative ways of living.

Due to economic conditions, it is not only the unemployed that were engaged in the cross-border trade but mostly women were involved. The volume of exchange of goods depends on a number of factors: the market opportunities, the exchange rate, economic and political conditions prevailing in the partner economies.

Traders will always look at the local marketability of goods obtainable in the neighbouring countries and those that can be fetched from far countries. Most women among Zimbabwe and South Africa trade in crotchets, kitchenware, jewelers, sandals, dress materials and handbags.

Informal cross-border trade has positive gains:

- Employment opportunities: those engaged become gainfully employed turn a chain of service providers such as transport and commuter operators get jobs.
- Enhancing household incomes and foreign currency reserves
- Respond to food security
- Alleviating poverty and Government loss of revenue; and Empowerment of women

Ogallo, (2010), defined informal cross border trade as imports and exports of legitimately produced goods and services which directly or indirectly escape regulatory framework and procedures set by government, and often go unrecorded or incorrectly recorded into official national statistics of trading countries. Informal cross-border trade is also regarded as legitimately produced goods and services, which escape the government rules and regulations purposely to avoid tax and regulatory burdens, customs duty payments and other charges. Informal cross-border traders (ICBT) pass through unofficial routes or official routes depending on where opportunities are for the informal traders (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 2013). These goods are characterized by under-invoicing and under-declaration of invoices.

Additionally, the International Art (2012) has described the smallholder informal trade as a survival strategy and a tool for income generation mostly for people who has suffered from the conflicts and thus poses limited access to economic opportunities particularly in East African Community. Argued that, through ICBT most women are assured of economic independency and it contribute to economic growth for the neighbouring countries. Informal cross border traders sometimes perceive as if they are not important traders to be registered due to small volumes per transaction. ICBT are in three categories, unregistered operating entirely outside the formalities, registered but fully evade trade related regulations and duties and registered but partially evade regulations by resorting to illegal practices or smuggling. In this study, informal smallholder cross-border trade referred the first category which stands for individuals who operating entirely outside the formalities; government rules and regulations. This is because this category of informal cross border can easily be identified because of their mobility. Secondary, this category does not follow government rules at all. Most literature indicate that majority of informal cross border traders are mostly female involved in agricultural products.

According to United Nation Development Fund for women (UNDFW) in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, 70% percent of women are informal cross border traders and in the Western and Central parts of Africa, almost 60% of female are involved in informal cross border trade (Makombe, 2011). Additionally, Informal cross border trade in EAC is largely dominated by the female with an estimate of 74% percent (International Art, 2012). Currently, the informal cross border trade contributed to about US 92 million dollars of exports from Rwanda to Burundi, DRC, Tanzania and Uganda (Imani Development, 2013) and is dominated by female.

2.3 Smallholder

Smallholder trader to access market, they need to be organized into groups, associations and cooperatives and offer different levels of support to their members. In the context of economic globalization, smallholder farmers are defined based on their characteristics such as: cultivate less than one hectare of land, (10) hectares on semi-arid areas, (10) head of livestock including those who have diverse sources of livelihood including significant off-farm income yet are still vulnerable to economic shocks(Narayanan et al, 2006).

Additionally, in Rwanda, like many EAC countries, a smallholder farmer are those groups of people who cultivate (2) hectares of land, at least have (5) or less livestock and have small business for income earning and also may sell or buy in small volume. This is the general characteristic of small holder farmers in Rwanda due to their nature of subsistence agriculture. Smallholders may buy or sell their production in and across the country as a survival strategy or can be influenced by decision making within a household level where by most male are engaged in cash crop production whereas female are engaged in food crops (Ellis, 2000).

2.4 Trade in Rwanda

In line with EAC regional integration, Rwanda has successfully shifted from subsistence farming to market oriented production. The Government of Rwanda has developed structures to support agricultural sector and agribusiness development for both male and female farmers. The support is provided to promote value addition through provision of credit facilities. This is to ensure equitable improved market access, information availability and quality of production. World trade organization (WTO, 2012), argued that the government of Rwanda has made investments in infrastructure such as feeder roads and collection centers to increase access to markets. Also market access information due to improved technology and ICT has been adopted by the government of Rwanda. The Government of Rwanda through the ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources also introduced an *e-soko* project which is a mobile network that helps the farmers to access market information such as price changes and availability of agricultural products through mobile telephones and internet.

These have resulted to increased access to market opportunities for male and female farmers from within Rwanda and across the borders. In addition, Trade Marker East Africa (TMEA, 2012) explained that the government of Rwanda has also created a market environment by putting in place a trade strategy that promotes equality in trade amongst male and female. The strategy provides an opportunity to create equal benefits through the support to women ventures in cross border trade (Rwanda national export strategy, 2011). Despite the intergovernmental effort to improve trade facilities, there are notable challenges that hinder formal cross border trade. The recent studies in EAC show that they are high tax charges among traders within EAC countries. In addition, the border posts have very slow document verifications mechanisms which hinder the smooth running of trade. The study also indicated issues of corrupt practices by the customs officials on some board posts (Karega, 2009). Challenging factors such as non-tariff barriers, inadequate capacity, limited awareness and complexity of rules of origin for the wholly produced products originate from EAC countries (Mugisa et al, 2009).

2.5 Gender Equality in Rwanda

United Nations (2006), defines gender is a relationship between girl and boy, male and female, materially and perceptual and it constructed by the society. Gender equality is social attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female. In addition, Life Impact Foundation International (LIFI, 2012), stated that that gender refers to the economic, social, cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female. In most societies male and female differ in the activities they do, access to, control over resources and their involvement in decision making.

In line with the stated definitions, Rwanda like many other countries is a signatory to international and regional legal framework that promote the equality of male and female in social, economic and political development. The legal framework includes; Beijing declaration, platform for Action and EAC treaty among others. According to United Nations Development Program (UNDP) human development report, labor force participation of female in Rwanda is 86.4 and 85.4 for male, (UNDP, 2013). The government continues to promote women's participation in decision making and currently 51.9 per cent of parliamentary seats are held by women. Rwanda is committed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). MDG three promotes equality of male and female including empowerment of female so as to ably participate in social economic and political aspect of the country. It is also worth noting that principles of male and female equality are enshrined in Rwandan constitution of 2003, which not only grants equality to marginalized groups of male and female but also encourages even the other actors to provide resources to promote equality between male and female.

However, (Republic of Rwanda, 2009) report have pointed out the existing challenges that hinder equal treatment of male and female in Rwanda society such as unequal access to resources such as credit facilities and other finances, cultural barriers and unequal labor divisions. In addition, EAC Secretariat (2009), in its report gender and community development analysis, reported the cultural and traditional practices such as; unequal division of labor among women and men, girls and boys, that still hinder the gender equality in Rwandan community. In addition, gender based corruption is also a challenging factor as indicated by (Transparency International, 2011).

2.2. 1 Types of Commodities Traded informally

IOM (2011) estimated the commodities traded informal in EAC as predominately agricultural products and livestock. The big part of informal trade is staple food commodities which have direct impact on reducing food insecurity, second hand shoes and cloths textile. Lesser, C (2009), have described the informal cross border trade of agricultural products as it is one represents informal trade of in Sub-Saharan African. The report argued that the agricultural plays key important role in livelihoods of citizens of the member countries. In East African Community, 80% percent of the citizens depend on agricultural products as the main and key livelihood survival. It is used for food consumption and cash crops. This means the earn money from it as they sell or exchange it purposely to earn income /agro-business constitute 70% percent (Onyango, 2010). In Rwanda the agricultural products are pre-dominants where the exports constitute 82% percent among other EAC countries (Mugisha, 2013).

2.2.2 Informal Cross border Trade Operations

International organization for migration (IOM, 2010), detailed the ICB traders operation thus they move small amount of goods from a country to another, often trading in informal sector markets and operate outside the regulations. They often use shortcuts and hidden roads. Most of the traders use bicycles, while others carry on head. Titeca et al (2012) argued that female informal traders in great region are moving in darker seeking for survival by transporting commodities from one country to another for sale or buy. In this study, the researcher focused on agricultural commodities traded between Rwanda and Burundi using the case study of Bugesera district.

2.2.3 Benefits accrued from informal cross border trade

Njikam (2011), gave the detailed description of the opportunities offered through ICBT by informal traders in Cameroon and argued that it contributes to living conditions of it's the actors in different ways. Most female and male ICB trade perceives it as an employment; income generating activity, female perceives it as changing roles and decision making initiatives. More to this, the opportunity delivered from ICBT varies according to the actors such as existing business people expands their business through ICBT, diversification opportunity from farming to non -farming acting or off-farming and learning new ideas, knowledge and skills from interaction with other regional traders (EASSI,2012).

2.2.4 Challenges faced by informal traders

Despite all the existing government trade policies in Rwanda, informal cross-border trade is still practiced with lots of challenges. For instance, mostly female traders are sexually abused by the law enforcers while some male counterparts are imprisoned losses of goods sometime in shortcut and border posts in checking processes contribute to financial vulnerability of the informal traders. Lack of the access to information is also indicated as a challenge to the informal cross border traders. This information includes: regional trade agreements and protocols and customs duty and tax related information that make some traders continue practicing informal trade. Sexual harassment and rape is highlighted as crucial issue. This is done by the immigration/customs and police and also male traders (UN Women, 2008). In addition, an administrative procedure which leads to bureaucracy is one of the factors that influence big number of female traders to operating informally in their business.

Furthermore, (Njikam et al, 2011), highlighted number of challenges by female informal cross border traders; pay customs duties on goods that are not supposed to attract duties due to illiteracy or lack of knowledge and information. Lack of information on how to apply for certificate of origin is also contributing factor to the challenges facing female and male informal cross border traders. More to that, language barriers, complexities of cross border rules and regulation, lack of market linkages and poor infrastructure also barriers to ICB traders. Additionally, limited access to finance and credit facilities which would facilitate female and male informal traders to ably sell and buy larger volume of trade (An Action Research, 2012). More to the above, CHAO Sandra (2013), reported that smallholder farmer in EAC are raging behind as they poses limited information on EACCUP and EAC common market protocol.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Strategy

A case study was used to collect information. The case study has been chosen because the researcher needed to collect in-depth information on the characteristics of female and male smallholder ICBT between Republic of Rwanda and Republic of Burundi. The researcher used set of questions for interviews and observation with informal discussions. The researcher found it very important to use a case study because informal traders are secretive due to the fact that, they are unregistered and they evade government taxes. These strategies were needed so as to gain deeper and detailed information from them. The researcher selected 28 informal cross borders and formal cross border traders and each respondent were visited twice in order to get in-depth understanding of ICBT.

3.2 Research design

The researcher used qualitative research design in the study to create and capture a better understanding of the informal cross-border trade of agricultural products between Rwanda and Burundi. The researcher developed matrix methodology for data collection. The matrix table can be seen in the annexes; Annex 3.

Three qualitative research techniques were used notably: In-depth conversation interviews with twenty eight 28 interviewees. Twenty 20 out of 28 interviewees were engaged in informal cross-border trade while eight 8 were engaged in formal cross border trade. Observation and Informal discussion and desk review documents. Among the respondents 4 were selected as key informants and the representatives of *Ikimina* (traditional associations). Out of 4 informants 2 female and 2 male and were selected from twenty 20 ICB traders. The reason of selecting 4 the representatives of *Ikimina* is because of their influence with ICB traders. More to this, *Ikimina* representatives are the in charge of collective finance management and conflict resolution within *Ikimina* members. Another reason for choosing the representatives of *Ikimina* is because they are also engaged in ICBT thus they know more about the situation. Patton (2002) stated that in qualitative study the researcher goes to the real world of the problem to get closer enough to the situation owners and his/her circumstances to capture the real story from their perspective.

3.3 Sampling

In order to create a better understanding of the informal cross-border trading of agricultural products between Rwanda and Burundi, the researcher conducted a review of all border posts where informal cross-border trading was taking place between Rwanda and her neighbours.

With the help of staff from Ministry of Trade and Industry, research identified five key border posts where informal cross-border trading takes place. Rwanda has four Provinces and within four Provinces there are thirty districts. In the three Provinces of Rwanda, Eastern Province, Northern and Southern Province there have the following five border posts: Gatuna borders Rwanda and Uganda in northern province, Kagitumba borders Rwanda and Uganda Eastern Province, Rusomo borders Rwanda and Tanzania in Eastern Province, Kanyaru borders Rwanda and Burundi in the Southern Province and Nemba borders Rwanda and Burundi Eastern province and Cyanika borders Rwanda and Uganda in Northern Province, (EAT, 3013).

There are six border posts in total that borders Rwanda and its neighbours. Two border posts were found in Northern province, one border post in Southern province and three border posts were found in Eastern province. The researcher purposively selected Eastern province because it has more border posts thus more informal cross border trading among other province. Secondary, researcher based her sought on the third integrated household living condition survey (EICV3, 2011), that highlighted Bugesera district as one of the poorest district in province and the poorest in all thirty districts of Rwanda and was found to have a border post between Rwanda and Burundi. In addition, the National average employment rate is 84%, unemployment rate is 0.9% and economic inactivity constitute 15% of the whole Rwandan population whereas the average employment rate of population of Bugesera district is 85%, unemployment rate 0.3% and economic inactivity rate is 14%. More to the above, 78% of the population depends mainly on subsistence agriculture.

The main crops cultivated in the district are; beans, maize, cassava, banana, cabbage, tomato and Pineapple's (Bugesera district official website, 2010). Based on the above information and Bugesera being a district bordering Burundi and Rwanda the researcher sought that most of Bugesera citizens practice ICBT with Burundi counterpart as their survival strategy to cope up with unemployment by generating income to improve their living condition (MUZVIDZIWA, 1998). More to this, common languages that exist between Rwandans and Burundians also qualifies Bugesera district to attract ICBT. Furthermore, 1994 genocide in Rwanda, Bugesera district was the most hit heard thus left most female headed household and most of the poor (Bugesera district official website, 2010).

In 2012, Republic of Rwanda and Republic Burundi signed a memorandum of understanding on one stop-border-post at Nemba in Bugesera district in order to promote free movement of trade and formalized trade between both countries. Below is the Bugesera map.

Map of Bugesera District



Source: <http://www.google.nl/search?q=bugesera+district+map&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=MH4aUrbHOIfChAfGxICQAw&sqj=2&ved=0CEUQsAQ&biw=1280&bih=664>
 [Accessed 26 August 2013].

The district has fifteen (15) sectors. The researcher purposively selected the sectors that boarder Nemba border post and these include Ngeruka, Rweru and Ruhuha. According to international journal of economics and finance (Njikam, 2011), described the demographic of the ICB traders as the residence of the border posts.

Table 1- Respondents per Sectors

| Selected Sectors | Female respondents | Male Respondents | Type of Traders |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Ngeruka | 4 | 4 | Formal traders |
| Rweru | 5 | 5 | Informal Traders |
| Ruhuha | 5 | 5 | Informal Traders |
| Total | 14 | 14 | 28 |

The reasons of choosing citizens near the border is because are most likely to be attracted by cross border trade especially when free movement of persons, trade and services among others are guaranteed and protected by laws (EAC Common Market Protocol, 2009).

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data was collected during July and August, 2013. Data collected were focused on in-depth interviews, observation with informal discussion and desk review. In this study, researcher wanted to gain profound insight the types of commodities traded informally, ICBT operations, Knowledge of ICB trades on EAC trade related services, opportunities contributes to ICBT and constraints faced by ICB traders.

In addition, because informal cross border trade is a sensitivity topic, in order to start the field study; researcher requested a letter from her Institution (MINEAC) describing the purpose of her study. The letter was attached with the a letter from VNH University for the purposes of the truth worth or confirming that she is a student doing her research.

The researcher sought to seek the supporting information from Ministry of trade and industry about the routs used by ICB traders to and from Rwanda to Burundi. This was based on the usual collaboration between MINEAC and Ministry of trade and on the several literatures. Such as; new national strategy to enhance cross border trade (2012), argued that the ICBT is increasing between Rwanda and other EAC countries and indicates that Republic of Burundi is second largest cross border market and it constitutes 8 billion Rwandan Franc in the year 2011. In addition, researcher also based on the newspaper (th New Times), where the Governor of national bank of Rwanda argued that ICBT has increased by 45% (Gasore B., 2013). *What are routs of informal cross border traders particularly to and from Rwanda to Burundi?* Questions asked by researcher with purpose to know the shortcuts/crossing points. Following the information from Ministry of trade, researcher started her visits to the crossing points (shortcuts) and border point to and from Burundi. The selection of respondents was done by the researcher and markets near the border and crossing points were attended.

All ICB traders were selected based on sex (female and male) and each respondent were asked if he or she belongs in informal association, groups or cooperatives called *Ikimina* so as to know their representatives and the key informants in this study. The address or phone numbers of their representatives were asked in order to request them the interview appointments. Three (3) days were spent in selecting respondents and requesting for appointments. The same procedures were applied also in selecting the formal trader's respondents and requesting for appointments. The researcher found them at the Nemba border post and waited for them until the end of declaration of their goods and migration procedures. Each respondent gave his or her convenient time and place for interviews.

Out of 20 ICB traders 15 were visited at home, 3 were found in the farm and 2 were found in trading Centres as par their choice. Additionally, out of 8 formal traders 6 were interviewed

from trading centres and 2 at home. Interviews were administered in local language as all Rwandan use the same language. All interviews were conducted individually. This was done because researcher wanted to compare the information from female and male traders who is engaged in ICBT and the ones in formal CBT. During the interview process, 45 minutes were spent with each respondent.

3.4 1 Desk review

Desk study was conducted with relevant information on ICBT. Online surveys, research papers, reports, Journals and research thesis.

3.4.2 In-depth conversation interviews

In-depth conversation interviews were administered to all 28 respondents constitutes this study. The researcher has applied set of questions because of the sensitivity of this topic. In-depth interview are very important for ethical considerations of the sensitive information which were provided the ICB traders themselves. It provides not only in- depth information but also hidden and detailed (Allmark et al, 2009). In this study, 14 and 14 male respondents were interviewed and each respondent were interviewed twice.

3.4.3 Observation

The researcher adopted selective observation to complement the collected information from the in-depth and probing conversation interviews. The reasons of selecting a selective observation as research technique in this study, is because researcher was focused on specific areas, such as observing the types of commodities traded informally, the ICBT operations and challenges faced in this type of cross border trade (Kawulich, 2005).

In addition, informal cross border is a hidden business which does not pay tax nor obey government regulations that governs CBT trade, for the purposes of reliable information selective observation were applied as to verify and compare the information given by the respondents with the facts. Hannan(2006), argued that knowing human behaviours needs more than one technique thus applying observation would be of great important because a good study need to go beyond the subjective and impressionistic and for elimination of researcher's bias on the situation.

3.4.4 Informal discussions

Informal discussion was applied while observing the ICBT situations from the starting point of the study to the end. In the informal discussions, researcher gained detailed information on the characteristics of the ICBT between Rwanda and Burundi, a case of Bugesera district.

The importance of this technique is that it does not require appointments or time schedule, it allows respondent to speak freely and in detail and it provokes the openness on the social phenomenon (Cohen et al, 2006).

As there is no literature information on the ICBT particularly for Bugesera district, researcher sought to gain more information rather than relying on the interviews and observation.

3.5 Ethical considerations

The researcher interviewed male and female engaged ICBT and formal CBT. Because ICBT is a sensitive topic and researcher requested a letter from the MINEAC attached with VHL letter where both letters was presented in the Ministry in charge of trade in Rwanda for information. The same letters was also presented to the Manager of Nemba border post to allow the researcher to carry out an observation and to talk to formal traders who were crossing at border to and from Burundi. The permission was granted to carry out the research and fieldwork. The participation of the traders both ICBT and CBT was voluntary and because of sensitivity of the topic, interviewee was granted secrecy in the consent and introduction given by the researcher.

3.6 Data analysis

The study results from male and female smallholder informal cross border trade was translated into English for easy analysis. The information provided by 20 male and female smallholder informal traders and 8 male and female formal cross border traders were analysed and discussed. The information provided by both female and male were analysed and compared so as to come up with disaggregated information. Additionally, the information provide by formal and informal cross border traders were analysed compared. All information was presented in tables and descriptive statistics. Further, it was analysed and discussed referring to the literatures review.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR- STUDY FINDINGS

This chapter presents the study findings on the characteristics of female and male smallholder informal cross border trade of agricultural products between Rwanda and Burundi. The study included 28 respondents. 8 were formal traders and 20 informal traders. Amongst the 20 informal traders 10 were males and 10 were females. The 8 formal traders had 4 male and 4 female dependences.

4.1 Agricultural commodities traded informally

The study revealed the types of commodities traded informally, where ICB traders buy and sell their commodities and reasons of choosing agricultural commodities. The table below indicates the types of commodities traded informally. These responses are based on 10 males and 10 females in the ICBT.

Table 2- types of agricultural commodities traded informally

| Informal cross border traders | | |
|-------------------------------|------|--------|
| Commodities traded | Male | Female |
| Maize | 9 | 2 |
| Beans | 8 | 3 |
| Cassava flour | 5 | 3 |
| Onion | 3 | 8 |
| Tomatoes | 6 | 6 |
| Avocado | 6 | 10 |
| Lemon | 8 | 9 |
| Mangoes | 6 | 8 |

Source: Research data (2013)

From the above table, the respondents stated that agricultural commodities traded informally across the border are cereals, fruits and vegetables. These include maize, beans, cassava flour, avocados, lemon, mangoes, onion and tomatoes. From these commodities, cereals were reported to come from Rwanda to Burundi whereas fruits and vegetables come from Burundi to Rwanda.

From the above results, the majority of men are engaged informally in trading maize, beans, cassava flour (cereals) whereas the majority of the women stated that they are engaged in trading avocados, lemon, onions and mangoes (fruits and vegetables). Out of 10 male respondents, 8 said that they are able to raise the high start- up capital for cereal businesses which yields high profit. On the other hand, all female respondents mentioned that they are engaged into trading fruits and vegetables because this business requires less capital to establish since these commodities are cheaper in price than cereals.

Additionally, from the information provided through interviews and observations, both women and men are engaged in trading tomatoes. They stated that it is cheap to buy tomatoes from Burundi and fetch high profit in Rwanda.

Men respondents indicated that they buy large volume and sell it in bulk with tomato industry agents. On the other hand, women said that they are engaged in this tomato trading, but in small volume. They further added that they sell these commodities in the market and door to door since it is expensive for them to buy in bulk.

4.2 Informal cross border trade operations

In the informal cross border trade operations, the researcher collected information on the following; their period of involvement and why that time, whether traders work for themselves or an agent, whether they work in groups or individually, means of transportation and the time for crossing in informal foot paths to and from Burundi, sources of capital and startup amount. The researcher also wanted to know how they market their commodities and how they access the information regarding the availability of products.

The table below provides the responses from 10 males and 10 females ICB traders on each category listed below. The table also highlights the differences between men and women in trade operations. The detailed list of the questions can be found in the annex 1, question 2.

Table 3- Informal cross border traders operations

| Interviewee | Period in ICBT | | Owner of Business | | Working as | | Transport | | Crossing using informal foot paths | |
|-------------|----------------|---------|-------------------|-------|------------|------------|-----------|------|------------------------------------|-------|
| | 1-7yrs | 8-15yrs | Own | Agent | Group | individual | Means | | Time | |
| | | | | | | | Bicycle | Head | day | night |
| Men | 3 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 4 | 6 |
| Women | 10 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 2 |

Source: research data (2013)

The table shows that the majority of men have been in the ICBT for a longer period of time, ranging between 8 – 15 years. They said that the reasons of having many years in ICBT, is that they followed what their fathers were doing early 19980's by moving the caws from other countries including Rwanda and selling informally to Burundi and vis-vasa. Female traders have been in the business 1 – 7 years. The women respondents said that in the past they were not allowed by traditional norms to be engaged in the activities far away from home but currently this has reduced and they are allowed to participate in different activities especially businesses activities. The findings revealed that the majority of both men and women are working for themselves except for 2 men who stated that they are working as agents for other businessmen who don't want to be identified as informal cross border traders.

These two men further stated that they work for others because they have limited capital to start their own businesses. One of them said: *“being engaged in this kind of job it’s not a joke, we do it as a survival strategy. We are hungry with our families, but these rich people (business men) who don’t want to be known as ICB Trader, give us money but it is more like already a loaded gun (the money they give them is risky because if they misuse the money they can be easily killed). The rich people tell us that if you lose or you fail to work as per agreed, you will either sale assets to repay or lose your life. It is not safe for female ICB traders to be engaged in it. This is about surrendering your life and property. For unmarried who are the decision makers in their family can do the same but the married female can’t be allowed by their husbands to be involved in this trade”.*

Furthermore, male respondents added that their sources of capital is from selling livestock, loans and their labour also they may work informally as agents of rich businessmen from Kigali city and Gisenyi. However, female respondents said that their main source of capital is through borrowing money from friends, own savings and through *Ikimina* (own revolving loans). From the findings, men and women in ICBT stated their start-up capital; most men start ICBT with at least between 18000 and 36000 frw (Euro 20 - 40) whereas, most females start with between 2000 and 8000 frw (Euro 2.5 – 10). The findings also revealed that both male and female do not work in groups but work as individuals because they are secretly participating in ICBT, avoiding to be reported to the revenue authority on evading tax payment.

The respondents further mentioned the customers of their commodities; it was interesting to note that males are engaged in supplying commodities to retailers while women are engaged in door to door selling of their commodities and selling at the market place. From male respondents, the reasons of supplying their commodities is the strategy to escape the market charges whereas females argued that because they have small volume of commodities they cannot supply, hence move from door to door and in the market places seeking for customers.

Bicycles were the dominant means of transporting commodities by all male respondents. Women are carrying the commodities on their heads. From the interviews male respondents, it was found out that they are able to buy bicycles as they can access finances from loans and selling assets. On the other hand, female respondents stated that they have limited finances to buy bicycles since they have limited control over assets.

In addition, all the men stated that they cross the shortcut at any time, preferably in the night so as to escape bribery by Burundian soldiers. On another hand, majority of females cross the shortcuts during the day because they feel it is safer as they fear sexual harassed/rape at night when crossing in the forest. However, this increase they risk of paying bribes. In this regard, a female trader said: *“We try our best not to meet the Burundian soldiers by crossing the border shortcuts during lunch hours, but if we are caught by these soldiers we have to pay bribes to them to allow us to cross the shortcut, if not they take our commodities”*.

Nevertheless, 2 of the female respondents stated that they cross shortcuts at night because it reduces the risk of meet Burundian soldiers. But during that time, females need male escort like other fellow traders or relatives to feel safer than when they are alone. Although females have expressed the negative feelings about Burundian soldiers but they stated that the presence of soldiers have stopped robbery, rape cases and killing by *Intaragahanga* robbers who were staying in the forests of the border territory. To deplore these immoral practices of *Intaragahanga* robbers against females, a female respondent said: *“Barakicwa na macinya [I wish them to be killed by dysentery], they don’t respect that you are the same age as their parent or older than their mother!”*

In addition to the above, the respondents stated the means in which they are accessing marketing related information. All men said they use mobile phones to communicate with their customers and to search for information regarding the availability of the commodities. Contrary, the majority of the women stated that for them to access trade related information they have to walk to the market to ask their fellow traders.

4. 3 Knowledge of the traders on EACCUP services

In this section, the researcher wanted to know the understanding of both formal and informal cross border traders on the following EACCUP services; free movement of traders, whether they are equally treated like Burundian traders when they are in Burundi for trade related matters, removal of non-tariff barriers, removal of customs duty on wholly produced commodities from EAC country members and removal of visa charges.

The table below presents the answers provided by 8 formal cross border traders. Among them, 4 were males while 4 were females.

Table 4- Knowledge of formal traders on EACCUP services

| Knowledge | Male | | Female | | Male+Female | Male+Female |
|---|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| | Have knowledge | Have no knowledge | Have knowledge | Have no knowledge | Total Have | Total do not have |
| Free movement of traders | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 2 |
| Equal treatment of traders | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Removal of non-tariff barriers | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Removal of customs duty on wholly produced commodities from EAC | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 2 |
| Removal of visa charges | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 8 | 0 |

Sources: research data (2013)

The findings revealed that all the males in formal cross border trade have knowledge on free movement of traders because they have accessed trainings. They also get information from radio programs as well as meetings with their local leaders. On the other hand, out of 4 female formal cross border traders 2 stated that they have knowledge on free movement of trade. They also indicated that they get information from other formal traders and rarely listen to radio programs due to too many household chores. It was surprising to find out that among formal female traders 2 do not have knowledge on free movement of traders like others. They stated that their lack of knowledge is due to having no access to trainings and other related forums that could provide EACCUP services.

The findings further revealed that majority of men have knowledge on equal treatment of traders whereas only few women have the same knowledge. However the women felt well treated since there is no distinction between Rwandans and Burundians when they are in Burundi for business purposes.

In addition, 2 males out of 4 stated that they have knowledge on removal of non-tariff barriers whereas the other 2 males surprisingly stated that they have no knowledge on the same. From the interviews with 2 male respondents, the information received through radio programs on EACCUP services is not clear to them. On the other hand, 3 out of 4 females also stated that they have no knowledge on non-tariff barriers and indicated that it is because they don't have time to attend the forums that are involved in giving information as they are busy taking care of the household chores.

The findings further revealed that all the males in formal cross border trade have knowledge on removal of customs duty on wholly produced commodities originating from EAC countries. On the other hand, 2 females out of 4 stated that they know the same information and they had been informed by their friends. However, the 2 other females stated that they have no knowledge on removal of customs duty because they have not seen any document with a list of products that do not attract customs duty. In addition, the findings further indicated that all the 4 men and 4 females had knowledge on removal of visa charges since they stated that they have been crossing the border without paying visa charges.

4. 3.1 Knowledge of the informal traders on EACCUP services

The table 5 below presents the answers provided by 20 informal cross border traders on their knowledge about EACCUP services. Amongst these 20 respondents, 10 were males while 10 were females.

Table- 5 knowledge of informal traders on EACCUP services

| Knowledge | Male | | Female | | Male+Female | Male+Female |
|---|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| | Have knowledge | Have no knowledge | Have knowledge | Have no knowledge | Total Have | Total do not have |
| Free movement of traders | 4 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 15 |
| Equal treatment of traders | 6 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 12 | 8 |
| Removal of non-tariff barriers | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Removal of customs duty on wholly produced commodities from EAC | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 20 |
| Removal of visa charge | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 20 |

Source: Research data (2013)

The table above indicates the level of awareness in terms of knowledge of men and women involved in informal cross border trade on the following aspects: free movement of traders, equal treatment, and removal of non-tariff barriers, removal of customs duty on wholly produced commodities from EAC and removal of visa charges. The study found that out of 10 male respondents 6 had no knowledge on free movement of traders in EAC countries including Burundi whereas amongst 10 female respondents only 1 had knowledge on free movement of traders. From the interviews with 4 male respondents, they got the information on EACCUP services from radio and informal meetings with other males whereas 1 female stated that she has rarely heard about EACCUP services from radio programs.

A female respondent said that it was difficult for them to get time to listen to radio programs as they are busy with other schedules at home such as cooking, caring about children, washing clothes and home cleaning. Some women have expressed frustration on the implications of “freedom of movement”. This is also making them feel bitter about listening to the radio.

This was confirmed by one female informal respondent who narrated: *“I sometimes listen to radio and hear them saying that EAC offers free movement to people...”, but I wish to ask them about that freedom of movement. They are stopping us to go to Burundi to bring even food, can you imagine, and then everyday they are exhausting my radio battery saying freedom, freedom. Which freedom is that? Tell me, you’re a parent like me and you know how much it costs to give birth, then somebody who is full of mayonnaise and meat is busy dancing on you saying freedom, freedom. I don’t even wish to hear it anymore”.*

In addition, woman said that their mobility is restricted by their husbands since for them to attend any meeting or going anywhere they first request for authorization from their husbands. On the contrary, one male respondent indicated that they are unable to trade freely because government officials still request legalized identity cards despite the fact that they advocate for freedom of movement of traders. These documents include passports and Laissez- passer. The respondents said that these documents are often expensive especially to females whose businesses are small and have marginal profits.

The findings revealed that both male and female informal cross border traders are equally treated like Burundians when they have gone there. However, they did not attribute it to the equal treatment right they have as members of EAC. They said that in buying or selling their commodities they are not discriminated because they are Rwandan. They said it is easy to report any problems that they can face when they are in Burundi. They attribute this treatment with friendship they have with Burundians. In addition, the findings show that both sexes did not have any information relating to removal of non-tariff barriers, custom duties on wholly produced commodities within EAC and removal of visa charges. All respondents mentioned that they have never attended the forums about EACCUP and its services. For them, it is only hearing the word East African Community and free movement of traders but they do not know how this works.

4. 4 Benefits accrued from informal trade by smallholder traders

In this section, the 20 informal cross border traders were asked about why they engaged in ICBT, and what they are benefiting from ICBT. The table below presents their benefits. The majority of the respondents stated that the reasons they are engaged in informal trade of these commodities are because they had been informed by the formal traders that taxes are higher when crossing the border. This was confirmed by one female respondent who used to be in formal trade and now is engaged in informal trade and she stated: *“it’s better to lose our commodities and pay money to Burundi soldiers in cross border shortcuts than passing at the border where we pay higher taxes to the Rwandan government”*.

In addition, some of the respondents stated that the process of checking migration documents and verifying the types of commodities to be traded takes time. For example, 7 women stated that they save time by using cross border shortcuts to Burundi to get their commodities faster than when they use the recommended formal procedure that ‘wastes’ their time as they have to wait for a long time to be checked.

Table 6- benefits accrued from informal trade by smallholders traders

| Informal cross border traders | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Benefits | Male n=10 | Female n=10 |
| Income generation | 7 | 10 |
| Employment | 4 | 9 |
| Diversification | 7 | 4 |
| Learning new skills | 8 | 5 |
| Improving decision making | 2 | 10 |
| Changing household roles | 0 | 10 |
| Geographic location | | |
| Cheaper products in Burundi | 8 | 10 |
| Lower exchange rate of Burundi money | 9 | 5 |
| Time saving | 2 | 9 |

Source: Research data (2013)

The study found that income generation and purchasing cheaper products in Burundi were perceived the most important benefits by both male and female respondents. Diversification of income sources, learning new skills and lower exchange rates were rated as accrued benefits by most men as compared to females. The females saw employment creation, improving decision making, changing household chores, and time saving as the accrued benefits from ICBT. They further said that the money they generated from ICBT gave them an opportunity to take part in decision making. The earned income helped women to purchase household items for their families such as food, clothes, soap and even other school requirements for their children.

In addition to this, these ten females mentioned that ICBT helped them to change household roles. For instance, whenever females went for business ventures, their husbands would cook or take care of the children. They further stated that before they started ICBT most of them were jobless and could not have acquired items to satisfy their needs.

Moreover, males also viewed their participation in ICBT to have created opportunities through income earned to own certain assets that they did not have before. Out of 10 male respondents 9 mentioned that they have managed to own phones, bicycles, radios, and 4 among them managed to build their own houses and purchase livestock like goats, and cows. From the male respondents, they indicated that since the district of Bugesera is dry and sometimes with drought, the ICBT was their strategy to survival.

One male respondent argued: *“yes we know that government officials nicknamed us thieves and accusing us of selling prohibited goods such as marijuana, local alcohol called kanyanga and plastic bags, this is not true, we only buy and sell food to support our families. So, we do not agree that we don’t obey government regulations because we cannot cross the border post, while we pay taxes like others in the market”*

One female ICB trader said: *“a good parent is the one who can provide for his/her family not just to sit and wait for problems to happen. Without ICBT we could not be alive for sure. This district is dry and also government officials know about that, even though they are trying to solve some issues like giving us water but still, it is challenging us. Informal cross border trade is our strategy for survival”*.

4. 5 Challenges faced by formal and informal cross border traders

Formal and informal cross border traders were asked about the challenges they face in their trading operations. Two different tables illustrate the different challenges faced by both types of traders. Table 7 summarizes the challenges faced by the 8 formal cross border traders.

Table 7 - Challenges faced by formal cross border traders

| Challenges | Male n=4 | | Female n=4 | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| | Have challenges | Have no challenges | Have challenges | Have no challenges |
| Higher charges of CBT documents | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| Higher taxes in Rwanda | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Sexual bribery | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Corruption in terms of money | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 |

Source: research data (2013)

The table above illustrates the challenges faced by female and male formal cross border traders in their trading operations.

These findings show that out of 4 formal male respondents 1 said that it is challenging to get trade requirements. The respondents stated that the reason for having difficulties in getting trade requirements is that the trade documents are expensive. On the other hand, all female respondents indicated that the trade requirements charges were expensive and the distance where the documents are applied for is far away. The female respondents reported having limited knowledge on how to apply for the cross border trade documents.

All the male and female formal cross border traders indicated higher taxes in Rwanda as a constraint in their trade operations. The female respondents stated that the tax law does not consider the capital traders invested in their businesses, whereby for instance the traders with small business were charged the same as the traders with large scale type of businesses.

The findings showed that 2 out of the 4 female respondents stated sexual bribery as a challenge in trading operations. They said that customs officers and the police were demanding sexual favors from the female traders in exchange to the trade services rendered. Additionally, as showed in the table above, 1 out of 4 males had challenges with corruption in the trading operations. The respondent stated to acquire trading documents within a short period other than the formal days of processing the documents; they would rather bribe the customs authorities to get the documents as soon as possible. It was also noted that some of the male respondents would rather bribe the customs officials in order to pay less taxes compared to the normal tax charges.

Female respondents stated that when they don't have all the trade required documents they bribe the customs authorities so as to allow them cross the border with their commodities. More to this, female respondents stated that they often bribe the officials so that their goods do not undergo the quality control check at the border before they trade. Table 8 below presents the answers provided by ICB traders on the challenges faced in their trading operations. ICB traders were represented by 20 respondents; 10 males and 10 females.

Table 8 -challenges faced by informal traders in their trading operations

| Challenges | Male | | Female | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| | Have challenges | Have no challenges | Have challenges | Have no challenges |
| Financial accessibility | 2 | 8 | 7 | 3 |
| Higher market charges in Rwanda | 1 | 9 | 8 | 2 |
| Corruption | 2 | 8 | 7 | 3 |
| Storage | 3 | 7 | 8 | 2 |
| Sexual harassment | 0 | 10 | 2 | 8 |

Source: research data (2013)

7 out of the 10 female respondents stated that limited access to finance hindered the development of their trade. The interviews with majority of female respondents let the researcher record that they have limited control over physical assets within the household. They further said that it is because traditionally all assets within the household belong to the males. Likewise, they said that they have limited access to loans as they don't have collateral and they are not in formal associations to receive the finances. They further stated that another reason that hinders their access to finance is that for them to decide on borrowing from their friends needs the authorization from their husbands.

The findings have revealed again that the majority of female informal cross border traders are challenged with market charges. They said that without realizing their capital, they are charged higher market revenues that results to most of them into stopping their business. This was confirmed by one of the female respondents who said: *"I am a widow and a survivor of the 1994 genocide and alone, taking care of five (5) children. I have to feed them, find clothes and other requirements for them to look like others. This was easy when my husband was still alive. Going to Burundi and coming back through border post was ok, no one could ask them money but now it's difficult, even the small volume we are bringing so as to have food for our children, government wants taxes from it. You can imagine, my capital is 2000frw but they charge me 500frw as revenue in every market day. So tell me if I am to pass through the border post! The payments for trade requirements are more expensive even than taxes. Tell me, what can I remain with? EACCUP services are accessible and affordable by rich people only, not poor people"*.

This was provided by one woman as per the picture below, which shows the informal conversation with a female ICB trader in the market place.

Picture 1: Informal conversation with a female informal trader



Source: research data (2013)

The majority of female respondents stated that their major challenge is sexual harassment and corruption. They are sexually harassed by male traders, and Burundi soldiers in the process of crossing the shortcuts to and from Burundi.

Eventually, they have to bribe Burundian soldiers and sometimes sexually harassed by Burundian soldiers so as to let them cross. They said that their fellow male informal cross border traders also harass them especially during night hours.

They further said that it is insecure to go with men's escort because they sometimes request for sexual favors. Few male respondents stated that even in the night hours they sometimes meet with the Burundian soldiers who bribe them. They further added that when they do not have money for bribery, the soldiers remain with their commodities.

The findings showed that the majority of females are faced with storage problems. This is because the types of commodities they trade are perishable and expensive to maintain. This is contrary to their male counterparts as they can supply and wholesale their commodities which reduce their risk of paying market charges as indicated by both female and male ICB traders.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE – ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following chapter discusses the characteristics of informal cross border trade between Burundi and Rwanda specifically the findings from Bugesera district. The chapter will look at the types of commodities traded, ICBT operations, knowledge on services offered through the EACCUP, benefits and the challenges faced by the ICB traders.

5.1 Types of commodities informally traded

According to the study findings, the commodities traded in ICBT include beans, maize, cassava flour, onions and fruits as indicated in the table 2. Males and females trade different commodities. More males trading maize, beans and cassava flour than women who mostly trade fruits and vegetables. These findings are contrary to the study by Tekere (2001), who found that the females informal cross border traders of Zimbabwe, mostly trade in crotchets, kitchenware, jewellers, sandals, dress materials and handbags.

Additionally, the findings are contrary to the findings by Perberdy (2000), who found out that informal cross border trade between Mozambique and South Africa is mostly on processed commodities such as drinks, groceries, electrical goods and carpets just to mention a few. He further found that more men are involved in fruits and vegetables than women whereas in this study the findings show that more females are engaged in fruits and vegetables than males. This could be due to the fact that vegetables and fruits in Burundi are very cheap that women can afford buying them.

The findings by Masinjila (2000), agrees with the findings in this study that most females were into perishable products than men in ICBT. This could be attributed to the low capital that is involved in trading perishable goods which becomes an opportunity for women to become engaged in trade. Females in Bugesera district have a low capital base and therefore found it easy to trade in low income goods than men.

5.2 Informal cross border traders operations

The findings have revealed that both male and female participate in informal cross border trade. These findings are contrary to what was found by Makombe (2011), who said that ICB traders of Central Africa are predominantly females.

Regarding the operations of the ICBT, male and female traders operate differently. The findings showed that females carry their products on their heads whereas males mostly use bicycles to carry their commodities. This is because it is expensive for female to buy bicycles as a result of limited access to finance and also female do not know how to ride bicycles as a result of traditional beliefs.

The findings by Killick (2001), argued that limited access and control over assets limit the capability of individual to ably access important support like bicycles and mobile phones which would help women to transport bulk products and access more customers. This finding is in line with report by Masinjala (2009), which state that females ICB traders among Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, did not use available vehicles to transport their commodities instead they carry on head due to traditional norms and culture.

The study also found that trading hours for females and males were different. Most males preferred transporting their commodities at night hours while females transport their commodities mostly during the day. Crossing the shortcuts during night hours reduces the risk of meeting with Burundian soldiers who request bribes to let the ICB traders cross. However, crossing day time increases the risk of paying bribes. The reasons why women use day time may be attributed to fear of sexual harassment by Burundian soldiers and their fellow traders. These findings differ from the study by IOM (2010), which revealed that women move the small volume of their commodities across the border at night. Titeca (2012), also found out that females ICB traders between Rwanda and DRC Congo move during night hours. This research finding also is contrary to the study by Kimanuka and Titeca (2012), who found out that in the ICBT of the great lakes region traders operate during the night are subjected to “informal taxes” from the soldiers than those who operate during the day.

Furthermore, female and male sources their capital to start ICBT differently. More female source their capital from borrowing, own saving and revolving loans (*Ikinimina*) whereas male sources their capital from bank loans, selling their livestock's working as agents of rich business men. The reasons that female have limited access to finance seem to be limited control over resources such as land and livestock within a household. Also this may be a result of cultural and traditional norms where females are limited to bargain with males especially their husbands. These findings agree with the findings by EAC Secretariat (2009), which state that culture and tradition hinder women and girls to access finance facilities.

More to the above, the study findings differ from the latest publication on ICBT within the great lakes region by Titeca and Kimanuka (2009), who found that there were no differences between male and female traders acquisition of capital for businesses.

They both obtain their resources from household resources, family and friends. In Bugesera, small holder females did not have access to household resources such as livestock and land except male traders. The informal cross border traders operate individually because their business is secretive and they do not want to be known. The reason of working individually seems to be lack of trust among the ICB traders.

5.3 Knowledge of formal and informal traders on the EACCUP services

The East African Community as regional community has collective agreements (protocols) to guide their activities. Through EACCUP, cross border trade is one of key determinants hoped to economic development of members of EAC countries. The EACCUP offered several services that are supposed to help promote formal trade and therefore reduce the participation in informal cross border trade. In contrast to this, both male and female traders continued to trade informally. When asked on their knowledge as regard to the EACCUP services such as free movement of traders, equal treatment of traders, removal of non-tariff barriers, removal of customs duty on whole produced trading items from EAC countries and removal of visa charges, there was a difference between males and females as regard to their knowledge on the mentioned EACCUP services.

The findings revealed that males in formal cross border trading are more knowledgeable than females in formal one. On the other hand, the findings revealed that female informal cross border traders have limited knowledge on the EACCUP services compared to men informal traders. This finding is in line with the findings by CHAO (2013), for whom women smallholders in EAC countries have limited knowledge on EACCUP services related to CBT. The reason why we have more males who knew about the services offered through EACCUP can be attributed to the differences to their frequency of participating in the meetings and trainings. Female traders became prone to issues of corruption because they do not know quite a lot about EACCUP. Male traders are likely to avoid unnecessary corruption demands from the security personnel. However, even though men seem to understand some information on free movement, their assumption is that they do not need any document to travel. This is completely opposite to government agreements on EACCUP. The citizenry of the EAC needs to have accepted documents such as passport or other government authorized documents to be able to freely travel within the EAC countries.

In addition, the reasons females have limited knowledge on EACCUP services would be attributed to their limited time to attend trainings and listening to the radio programs as a result of the gender roles at household level. It could also be due to limited finance to be used for transport to attend the trainings and limited access to radio as men decide on when and which program to listen to.

Generally, lack of knowledge may also be attributed to how services are delivered and how traders are identified so as to attend trainings, meetings and their social networks. These findings are in line with ADB (2008), whose report recommended to government of Rwanda to do more on providing information to female entrepreneurs.

5.4 Benefits accrued from informal trade

The findings have shown that informal trade benefits both females and males through employment, diversification, learning new skills and income generation. These findings agree with Njikam (2011), who said that the ICBT is an employment and income generation opportunity for female and male ICB traders. Additionally, the study also agrees with the findings by EASSI (2012), who reported that ICBT contributes to the living conditions of the ICB traders by improving their skills, diversification from farming to non-farm activities.

More to the above, income generated by females through ICBT has improved their decision making at household level and within the community in a limited way. This study agrees with the report by Friedberg (2006), who found that the earnings of individual within a household and in the community, improve their bargaining power and decision making. In addition, female ICB traders benefit from changing gender roles in the household. The study shows that men also take up the household activities when their wives are away in the business.

This is an indicator that gender roles can be changed and an encouraging step in right direction considering EAC Secretariat (2009), report which stated that cultural and traditional practices such as division of labor among women and men, girls and boys still hinder the development of Rwandan community.

5.5 Challenges faced by both formal and informal cross border traders

The findings have shown that formal traders face high taxes in Rwanda compared to Burundi counterpart. This can be attributed to fact that taxes are not harmonized in EAC, each country has its own taxes charges regardless of being in the same community by Karega (2009).

In addition, the findings of this study have revealed the unbelievable situation where Burundian soldiers, who are supposed to protect people, are the ones who in occasions bribe and sexually harass female ICB traders.

Based on the findings, the living conditions of the informal traders, are poor, especially those of the women, and in trying to support their families they put themselves in this risky business. In the same way as the formal female traders, they face corruption and sexual harassment problems with customs officials and policemen at border post. This can be attributed to the intimidation and aggravated by low levels of education: many of the women don't know how to read and write hence they have to request support from customs officials which makes them more vulnerable to sexual harassment. In the same way, illiteracy or a lack of knowledge and information on how to apply for certificate of origin, was a limitation as found by Njikam (2011). He found that in Cameroon more female formal traders than male ones pay customs duties on goods that are not supposed to attract duties. This study agrees with that as also illustrated in

table 4: more formal female traders lack knowledge on EACCUP services including customs duty on wholly produced goods originate from EAC countries.

From the researcher's observations at the border post most customs and migration officials are male which also may contribute to more women feeling unconfident to bargain with the officials. Additionally, it is made worse by gendered beliefs that women should not bargain with men.

These findings correspond with the report by Transparency International (2011), in their press release, they argued that 85% of women in Rwanda are victims of sexual bribery especially in working environments. Finally this study is in agreement with the information provided by UN Women Survey (2008), which stated that taxes and sexual harassment hinder female traders to enjoy their business returns.

The same observations done in this study found that the administrative procedures (stamps, paperwork, and goods declaration) at the border post are quickly delivered. This is a positive contrast with the earlier mentioned UN women survey (2008), which says that the bureaucracy administrative services by customs officials at border is time wastage for cross border traders. Women formal traders are faced with higher charges of the trade documents than men. This is because women have limited access to finance which would help them to acquire trade documents. Also as revealed by the findings females are constrained by limited control over resources such as livestock and land which could help them to pay document charges.

Like their formal trader sisters, the informal female traders are faced with higher market charges than males. This is because males rarely sell their commodities in the market, instead they supply or wholesale their commodities.

Furthermore, more females reported to have storage challenges for their products than males. This is because the commodities traded by females are quickly perishable, and yet they have limited access to finance and therefore cannot construct their own stores. The issue pertaining this is also limited control over resources such as livestock which they can sell and use proceeds to construct storage facilities.

Additionally, women's right to decide on what and how to get money is limited by traditional norms. For example women have no right to borrow money without authorization from their husbands. These findings are in line with Action Research (2012) as well as Jawando (2012), who found that cultural beliefs and /or women's limited access to credit facilities makes most of them turn to informal trade as their mechanism to support their families.

6.0 CHAPTER SIX - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

This study has explained several characteristics of informal cross border trade of agricultural products traded between Rwanda and Burundi, particularly Bugesera district. The disaggregated information was provided for both men and women participating in formal and informal trade. Therefore, this study can conclude that both women and men traders participate in ICBT but each works individually due to lack of trust among them.

Women and men have different preferences and quantities in commodities they trade. More males trade mostly in bulky commodities such as maize, beans and cassava flour whereas females traded in small quantities of perishable fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes, avocado pears and mangoes. The reasons for the preferences are social and economic. Women informal traders have limited access to finance and culture and traditional still hinder their participation in economic activities and also limited control over assets within household. This influences women's trade operations, as they experiences lower returns from their business hence only affording smaller quantities. The limited resource compels them to participate in ICBT as the economic activity does not need a lot of capital to start their business compared to formal trade. In addition, women are marketing style which is especially door to door commodity selling shows how vulnerable women are in Bugesera district. Women are also still participating in ICBT because they have limited knowledge and information about the services offered by trade policy. Furthermore, women do not listen to the radio frequently due to time shortages caused by gender roles at household. This is also worsened by their failure to attend trainings and meetings which results into lack of information on trade policies, prices changes and commodity availability among others. They incur losses when their commodities get bad due to lack storage facilities and in case there is no customers. Generally, the low capital requirements of vegetables will attract them until this becomes a vicious circle and inescapable poverty trap.

On the other hand, Even if men have some knowledge on the legal requirements and services offered by trade policies they still prefer ICBT because it's affordable compared to formal cross border trade. Their reasons of participating in informal trade are somehow different from those of women. Although men have a comparative advantage on their access to finance and assets they are also poor so they are attracted by ICBT due low capital requirements of this business. Men are participating also due to the lucrative returns from reputable business men who do not want their names to be known that they are involved in informal cross border trade.

Generally, East African Community customs union protocol (cross border trade policy) could have been an opportunity for smallholders to do their business legally but the study revealed that the unfair behaviors such as corruption and sexual harassment of policy implementers such as customs officials, policemen including Burundian soldiers has turned that opportunity into limitation to traders mostly marginalized women regardless of other mentioned challenges.

6.2 Recommendations

Considering the economic benefits and to some extent the gender-redistributive effect of being a small scale trader for the inhabitants of border areas, it is worthwhile for Rwandan public institutions to stimulate and promote the phenomenon. It is necessary to address the challenges and take away some of the constraints faced by smallholder ICB traders. The trading profession should be at least safe rather than prone to violence, harassment and intimidation. If the authorities manage to make the route through the official border posts safer and more attractive, then traders will also be encouraged to stop taking the illegal border crossings, and informal trading will be diminished in volume. That way the authorities can even kill “two birds with one stone”.

In order to address these challenges MINEAC in collaboration with Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Customs Authority, Ministry of Defence and Security from both countries should organise women’s right and gender equality trainings for customs officials and police men and soldiers to ensure gender sensitive in their service delivery.

- To organise and encourage women smallholders to working in groups so as to able to access loan without collateral and easily be reached in case of trainings and other related information.
- Organise training sessions for women and men smallholders focusing on their rights and ensure trainings are held closer to their villages to avoid transport costs and time wastage.
- Billboards indicating which goods are free from customs duty can be placed at the market places, trading centres and at border post.
- Develop interactive methods of informing smallholder traders about their rights by involving local leaders, religious leaders, private and non-profit organizations.
- MINEAC in collaboration with gender institution to organise gender equality trainings for smallholder traders especially division of labour within household
- Diminish lawlessness by encouraging small traders who are victims of intimidation, bribery or harassment, to report the officers (or other person) who committed the crime

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: List of questionnaire to guide the field study

Indicate whether a female is or male by tick

Female () Male ()

What agricultural commodities are traded in informal cross border between Rwanda and Burundi?

What types of agricultural commodities do you trade?

Where do sell and buy the commodities?

Why did you choose to trade these commodities?

How do male and female smallholders informal cross border traders of agricultural products operate?

How long have you been involved in informal cross border trade and why?

What are your sources and amount of start-up capital for this business?

Who are your customers in this trade?

How do you access the information regarding the availability of market for agricultural commodities ?

Do you work in groups or individual? If yes or no why ?

At what time do you transport your commodities?

What mode of transport do you use to transport your commodities?

What is the knowledge of male and female smallholder informal cross border traders of agricultural products on trade related services offered through EACCUP?

(In line with the following terms the research sub-question needs participants to state whether they have heard, understanding the meanings of the terms and how their being applied).

Do you know that through EACCUP offer free movement of people/traders?

Do you know that EACCUP offer equal treatment of EAC citizens/traders?

Have ever heard of removal of non-tariff barriers?

Have ever heard of removal of customs duty on wholly products originates in EAC countries?

Have ever heard of removal of visa charge while crossing the border to EAC countries?

How do you access the information on EACCUP?

What are the benefits contribute to informal cross border trading of agricultural products?

Why did you decide to engage in informal cross border trade?

How do you benefit from informal cross border trade to and from Burundi?

What different benefits do female and male gets from informal trade?

What are the challenges faced by male and female smallholder informal cross border traders of agricultural products during the trading processes?

What challenges do you face while passing at the border post with your commodities to and from Burundi?

What challenges do you face while passes in shortcut load to and from Burundi?

What are the specific challenges faced by female involved in this trade?

What are the specific challenges faced by male involved in this trade?

How do you access CBT documents?

Thank you very much for your time

ANNEX 2: Informed Consent

Informed Consent

My name is Merab Mutoni.

I am currently a Masters student at Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied science in the Netherlands. I am doing research on informal cross-border trade as part of my thesis. The findings of this research will be entirely used for academic purposes.

In this interview, you will be interviewed twice. Each interview will approximately take 45 minutes. The participation in this interview is voluntary. The information given to me will be confidential and I am the only who will use it for academic purposes. Furthermore, I will not require your identity for you to take part in the interview. If at any point after the interview you wish to make additions to your contribution or you have remembered something that relates this research and is worthy sharing, you may contact me through the numbers given below by calling or texting. I will be available until 21 of August, 2013.

Signature.....

Contact Details

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ANNEX 3

Methodology Matrix to data collection

| Methodology matrix | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|----------|-------------|----------|-----------------------------|--------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Sub- questions | Interviews | | | | | | Observations/inf. Discussion | |
| | Formal 8 | | Informal 16 | | Informal & key informants 4 | | Market | Border post |
| | 4 Male | 4 Female | 8 Male | 8 Female | 2 Males | Female | | |
| What agricultural commodities are traded in informal cross border between Rwanda and Burundi? | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| How do male and female smallholders informal cross border traders of agricultural products operate? | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| What is the knowledge of ICB traders on trade related services offered through EAC regional integration? | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | |
| What benefits contributing to informal cross border trading of agricultural products? | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | |
| What are the constraints faced by ICB traders in their trading process? | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |