

Episode 26: Mariam Babu - Cross Border Trader, Uganda



Mariam chairs the **Busia Women Cross Border Traders Cooperative Society Ltd., Uganda (BWCBTCS)**. She is a member of the Eggs Cluster.

Mariam is a reformed smuggler who changed her ways after the women cross border traders in Busia, Uganda elected her to serve as their Chairperson. She had to set a good example! She is an excellent anti-smuggling ambassador because she has traded on both sides of the law and can testify that legal trade is actually more profitable and definitely less stressful than smuggling.

Changes Observed at the Border: Mariam has seen several changes occur at the border over the last several years. Key improvements include the establishment of the East African Community which established new trade rules and regulations. Under the East African Community Common Market, goods produced in the Member States may be imported into other Member States with a zero-rated import tariff. This has had a positive impact on the profits of Cross Border Traders like Mariam who trade in goods of East African origin. Mariam is particularly excited about the Simplified Trade Regime which fast-tracks custom's clearing of goods in consignments of under US\$ 2,000 in value. Faster border crossings save money and time.

Benefits From the GIZ-Funded Cooperatives Accelerator: Although Mariam chairs her cooperative; prior to participation in the Accelerator they had not received any training on how to operate the cooperative. The Accelerator provided important training on cooperative leadership, governance and operations, all of which enabled the Busia cooperative fulfill overdue statutory requirements. The Accelerator also encouraged unprecedented trade between women cross border traders on both sides of the Kenya/Uganda border. This in turn has led to an improvement in the quality of produce supplied by Ugandan traders to Kenyan traders because the face-to-face interaction between the traders provides an opportunity for the Kenyan traders to specifically define the quality of products they are willing to buy.

Dreams: Mariam dreams of becoming an exemplary woman trader in Busia, Uganda. She also hopes to see the establishment of an export zone for traders at the Busia, Uganda border in the very near future.

Useful Resources

GIZ: <https://bit.ly/2R6if75>

IIDEA: <https://www.eaciidea.net/>



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