



Committee for  
the promotion  
and advancement  
of cooperatives

Women and Cooperatives:  
Gender Equality and Women's  
Empowerment  
A Literature Review

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# Scope of Research

1. Highlight and assess the contributions of cooperatives to gender equality and women's empowerment
2. Identify ways that cooperatives can further contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment



# Methodology

Online texts

Journals, reports, website publications

Tools used:

Zotero (sorting and storage)  
and NVivo (themes)

190 total publications

65 core publications



# Findings from Literature Review

Diverse disciplines and target audiences

Saturated in some areas

Case studies – mostly from Global South

Challenges – socio-cultural norms, state policies,  
financial, training, capacity

Diverse type, sector, rural and urban



## Findings from Literature Review cont.

Lack of universal, standardized data

Few empirically based, “measured” research

Lack of attention from academics

Scant number of comparison studies

Growth in number of women’s cooperatives

Women under-represented in cooperative leadership



# Findings from Sectoral Analysis

## **Agriculture:**

Great opportunities

Issues around land ownership, access to equipment, seeds and financing

Prominent in rural cooperatives such as SACCOS, valued-added production, food processing and artisanal goods

## **Finance:**

Participation on the rise giving access to finances and often the majority

Not in leadership positions, voices not being heard

## **Consumer:**

Providing jobs in marginal sectors to marginal people

Often in care and informal sectors



## Findings from Practical Publications

Very few in circulation – two have been translated into a number of languages.

Many non-cooperative gender equality or women's empowerment materials could be adapted.

Many announcements about training, but no supporting documents are shared on the web.

Equality mentioned in reference to principles, but not gender equality specifically



# Recommendations from Literature

More research needed:

Empirical

Using common index, measurement tools

Comparisons

Disaggregated gender data collected and made available

Develop indicators for cooperatives on gender equality



# Recommendations from Sectoral Analysis

## **Agriculture:**

Sector leaders advocate for ownership reforms.

Awareness building of the cooperative model to develop women's cooperatives.

## **Finance:**

Sector leaders should model gender parity in their leadership positions.

Support gender equality awareness programs and policies by developing and implementing them.

## **Consumer:**

Sector leaders support in developing cooperative integration in supply-chains.

Support development of cooperatives and women's cooperatives in under-valued sectors.



## Recommendations from Practical Publications

Creation and dissemination of practical publications for cooperatives on gender equality and empowerment.

Adapt current practical publication for cooperatives.

Publish practical publications including training documents on websites to share.

Central repository of gender equality and women's empowerment practical publications that cooperatives could use.



Thank you for your participation!

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