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

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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
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

Finance:
Participation on the rise giving access to finances
Not in leadership positions, voices not being heard

Consumer:
Providing jobs in marginal sectors to marginal people
Often in care and informal sectors
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. Equality mentioned in reference to principles, but not gender equality specifically.
More research needed:
Empirical
Using common index, measurement tools
Comparisons

Disaggregated gender data collected and made available

Develop indicators for cooperatives on gender equality
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 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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