

Rural Women Producers and Cooperatives in Conflict Settings in Arab States

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Gender dimensions of employment

- Employment patterns
- Security deficits, including social security
- Fertility rates and early marriage vs. mortality
- Increase in women-headed households
- Physical security and mobility
- Lack of education
- Access to and control over resources
- Formal and informal institutions
- **Cooperatives remain marginal**

Not every 'cooperative' is a cooperative

Attributes	Cooperatives	Private Enterprises	Non Profit Organizations
Ownership	Members	Entrepreneur owned	Often not owned by anyone
Control	Democratic	Entrepreneur, bank	Board, leaders, beneficiaries
Purpose	Self-help	Maximize returns	Serve public interest
Funding	Member equity	Capital markets	Tax-exempt, public or private donations, funding
Social Responsibility	Community Development	Some community activities	Collective action for a common good

Source: OCDC, 2007.

Lessons learned

- **Donor dependency has become pervasive**
- **Skills development is central to sustaining cooperatives**
- **Training needs adaptation to the local context**
- **The focus on 'women-only' is insufficient: gender responsiveness is necessary**

Ways forward: building alliances for women and men in cooperatives

- Among women only and other cooperatives
- Among cooperatives and their federations
- With cooperative departments in public sector
- With trade unions
- With other local support institutions
- As well as other development actors

Targets for Rural Cooperatives

- Advocate for improved legislation and policies
- Set up better training and support systems
- Better management and marketing practices
- Increased membership and returns to members, women and men
- Better data and research on cooperatives
- Address gender issues such as unpaid work, sharing responsibilities, gender based violence