

Las reinas de sus colmenas: Examining women’s empowerment in Kuxtalil cooperative’s network in Yucatán, Mexico.

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1. THE ISSUE

In developing contexts like Yucatan, Mexico, especially in rural areas, women remain disempowered. Through participation in cooperatives, Mayan women can be socially and economically empowered by allowing them to produce more, earn better incomes, and raise the living standards and economic and food security of their families.

2. OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Assess how participation in the Kuxtalil women’s cooperative relates to women’s collective action and empowerment
- ✓ Identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) faced by the network with respect to the various operations of producing and commercializing honey and its byproducts
- ✓ Develop a set of tools and recommendations to enhance commercialization strategies of the Kuxtalil cooperative network



3. METHODS

- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with cooperative members. A total of 11 FGDs with 5-10 participants/group
- Strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis
- Semi-structured interviews (SSIs) with 11 cooperative members



MAP OF FGDs / SWOT / SSIs LOCATIONS



- For these women, the cooperative was both a place of employment and a center of solidarity. This is significant because it pertains to issues of social inclusion and a sense of belonging, not just employment chances

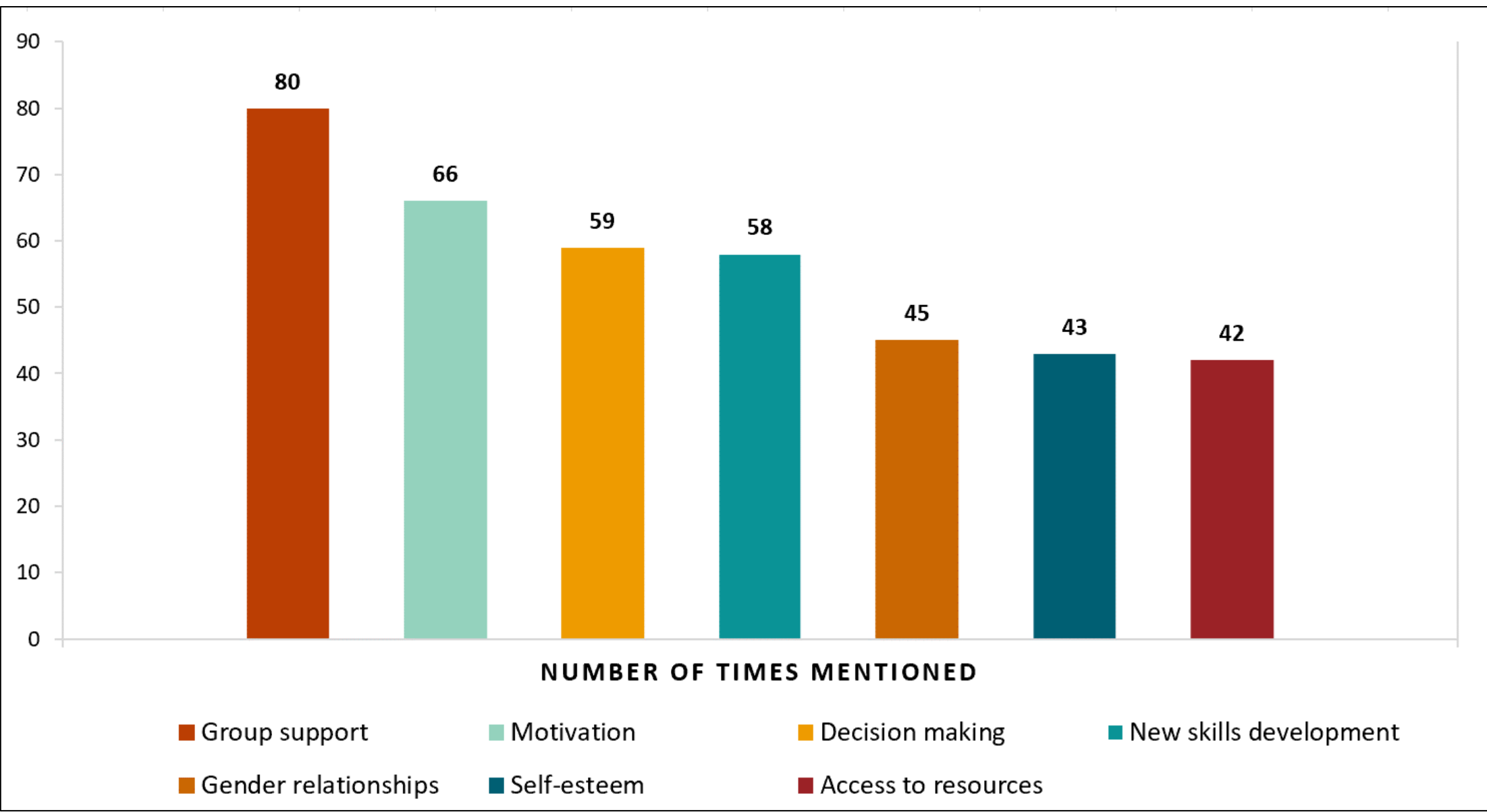
5. CONCLUSIONS

- Women’s empowerment is context-specific, and empowerment is not only economic, it goes beyond that
- Cooperatives are proven to be an excellent vehicle for initiating women’s empowerment, but they are not universally effective
- Cooperatives influence women's skills, knowledge, confidence, resources, and networks to weather times of scarcity enabling women to change if they choose to



4. FINDINGS

Categories



Themes

Achievements from the cooperative	Short-term goals	Contribute to household income	Sense of belonging to the cooperative	Lack of marketing structure
Me time	Increase of motivation	Autonomy	Perception of the role of a married woman	Overload of responsibilities due to gender norms
New skills development	Feeling productive	Building networks	Support of a group (family, friends, cooperative).	Lack of self confidence
		Access to external resources		

- Through cooperatives, women make more strategic decisions in their lives, boost self-esteem and decision-making ability. Facilitate access to training opportunities and external economic resources
- Women made critical contributions to a better life through their network of members who face similar issues and obstacles
- When it comes to improving gender relations, cooperatives are not viewed as active agents of change. However, it must be admitted that they do help to the challenge of gender norms to some level