

Original article

Empowerment of rural women in agricultural cooperatives

El empoderamiento de la mujer rural en las cooperativas agropecuarias

O empoderamento das mulheres rurais em cooperativas agrícolas

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ABSTRACT

The agricultural cooperative sector in Cuba, like others, is inserted in social processes to meet the needs of women and take advantage of all their potential, capabilities and opportunities that promote more equitable gender relations and the empowerment of women in rural areas. This research was carried out in the period March-September 2022, in six agricultural cooperatives of the Limonar of Monte Ruz and was aimed at developing activities for the empowerment of rural women in the inter-cooperation of agricultural cooperatives. The results obtained in the diagnosis, through the indicators determined, show that there are still insufficient actions and activities aimed at the participation in the incorporation of rural women from their traditional knowledge, low incidence of the role of rural women in intercooperation and their direct participation in the diversification of traditional agricultural productions and low economic acquisition for themselves and their families. The experience has an impact on the empowerment of rural women in intercooperation and the

transformation of new knowledge, know-how and traditions, who assume new ways of doing and producing in the economy and are trained through bulletins on basic concepts of gender, empowerment of rural women, self-esteem, knowledge management and documents on the implementation of policies established for Cuban women and, especially, women in the cooperative sector transform the attitude of men and women in the diversification of productions.

Keywords: rural women; empowerment; agricultural cooperative.

RESUMEN

El sector cooperativo agropecuario en Cuba, como otros, se inserta en procesos sociales para la atención de las necesidades de las mujeres y aprovechar todas sus potencialidades, capacidades y oportunidades que propicien las relaciones de género más equitativas y al empoderamiento de las mujeres en la zona rural. La presente investigación se realizó en el período marzo-septiembre del 2022, en seis cooperativas agropecuarias del Consejo Popular Limonar de Monte Ruz y estuvo dirigida a desarrollar actividades para el empoderamiento de la mujer rural en la intercooperación de las cooperativas agropecuarias. Los resultados obtenidos en el diagnóstico, a través de los indicadores determinados, evidencian que aún son insuficientes las acciones y actividades dirigidas a la participación en la incorporación de la mujer rural desde sus saberes tradicionales, baja incidencia del papel de las mujeres rurales en la intercooperación y su participación directa en la diversificación de las producciones agrícolas tradicionales y baja adquisición económica para sí y las familias. La experiencia impacta en el empoderamiento de la mujer rural en la intercooperación y la transformación de nuevos conocimientos, saberes y tradiciones, que asumen nuevas formas de hacer y producir en la economía y se capacitan a través de boletines sobre conceptos básicos de género, de empoderamiento de la mujer rural, de autoestima, de gestión del conocimiento y documentos sobre la implementación de políticas establecidas para la mujer cubana y, en especial, la mujer del sector cooperativo transforma la actitud de hombres y mujeres en las diversificación de producciones.

Palabras clave: mujer rural; empoderamiento; cooperativa agropecuaria.

RESUMO

O setor de cooperativas agrícolas em Cuba, como outros, está envolvido em processos sociais para atender às necessidades das mulheres e aproveitar todo o seu potencial, capacidades e oportunidades para promover relações de gênero mais equitativas e o empoderamento das mulheres nas áreas rurais. Essa pesquisa foi realizada no período de março a setembro de 2022, em seis cooperativas agrícolas do Conselho Popular de Limonar de Monte Ruz e teve como objetivo desenvolver atividades para o empoderamento das mulheres rurais na intercooperação das cooperativas agrícolas. Os resultados obtidos no diagnóstico, por meio dos indicadores apurados, mostram que ainda são insuficientes as ações e atividades voltadas para a participação na incorporação das mulheres rurais a partir de seus conhecimentos tradicionais, baixa incidência do papel das mulheres rurais na intercooperação e sua participação direta na diversificação da produção agrícola tradicional e baixa aquisição econômica para si e suas famílias. A experiência tem impacto no empoderamento das mulheres rurais na intercooperação e na transformação de novos conhecimentos, saberes e tradições, que assumem novas formas de fazer e produzir na economia e são capacitadas por meio de boletins sobre conceitos básicos de gênero, empoderamento das mulheres rurais, autoestima, gestão do conhecimento e documentos sobre a implementação de políticas estabelecidas para as mulheres cubanas e, em particular, para as mulheres do setor cooperativo, transformando a atitude de homens e mulheres na diversificação da produção.

Palavras-chave: mulheres rurais; empoderamento; cooperativa agrícola.

INTRODUCTION

At present, addressing the gender issue remains complex due to the diversity of cultures and levels of perception of the phenomenon in society with inequalities and more deeply rooted as a sociocultural phenomenon in rural areas that limits the development of women, even when there are directives and political will in different countries.

In Cuba, progress has been made since the triumph of the Revolution and the incorporation of rural women and girls into training and educational activities. However, there are social manifestations of discrimination against women, which are still not visible in society, exercised by a patriarchal, sexist and authoritarian society, assumed by many women who limit themselves and, others, who from

their own educational and family model assume or transmit patterns of this culture destined for men and women in socioeconomic and productive work, among others.

In the history of Cuban women, the spirit of the struggles for their rights to participation and social justice is enhanced by the triumph of the Revolution and the creation of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) in 1960, an organization that from its beginnings set out to transform the discriminatory mentality towards women and make them active subjects of social transformation. Nevertheless, Cuban society plans actions that contribute to the empowerment of women in all areas, while recognizing the unity of women and men in all social processes.

From the first United Nations World Conference on Women in 1975 until the Beijing Conference, there have been substantial changes in international law, especially with the adoption in 1979 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Arévalo Zurita et al., 2022).

The approval in 2015 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in its 17 Goals and 169 targets, signified the commitment of all countries to the search for a new development paradigm. This is reflected in the fifth of its goals "gender equality", which refers to the need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women (Martínez Montenegro & Baeza Leiva, 2017). All these norms and laws serve as a basis in the conformation of a legislative framework in Cuba such as: the Labor Code, the Family Code, among others, which favor the incorporation of women to the labor framework, to the social construction with the same rights that made viable their participation in public spaces.

However, their participation in rural development in recent years, despite offering an important role, does not always offer them opportunities and conditions for their participation from their knowledge and potential in the institutions or cooperatives where they live, in such a way that their role and personal development is fractioned and minimized.

In the Conceptualization of the Cuban Economic and Social Model of Socialist Development, the principles that govern these agricultural cooperatives are established, among which the following stand out: those of cooperation and mutual aid, social responsibility, contribution to the economy, education and welfare of their members and family members, collaboration and cooperation between cooperatives and with other entities (Communist Party of Cuba, 2016, as cited Orcel Adéis et al., 2024), here is the invariable direction of justice and equity for women in these areas.

In the context of the Cuban economy, women make up an important reserve of productivity in all spheres of social and economic development, given the characteristics of their level of education and general preparation.

This research addresses the problematic situations of the context based on participatory techniques in meetings with the board of directors, in assemblies of members and other factors. In addition, a historical analysis of the incorporation of rural women into cooperatives and agricultural inter-cooperation is carried out. The strategies and plans of the cooperatives for the strengthening of rural women are consulted and individual exchanges and talks are held with rural women without labor ties, where the limitations that hinder the incorporation and participation of women within the cooperatives and the particularities of this phenomenon in the Cuban rural environment are studied in depth.

This contextualized experience for the agricultural cooperative movement in inter-cooperation is carried out in six agricultural cooperatives in the Limonar popular council(C/P) of the municipality of El Salvador in the province of Guantánamo, some shortcomings are identified such as:

1. Little visualization of concrete actions on gender within the Development Programs of the cooperatives.
2. Little participation of women in the analysis and decision-making in the management processes of the general assemblies of the cooperatives.
3. Insufficient sensitization and training of women and young people for their incorporation into the cooperatives' production.
4. Insufficient participation of rural women in activities with other cooperatives that encourage and promote their self-development and productive social, economic and environmental development for intercooperation.

The current situation of socio-productive demands, which involve women and men in the rural sector and the needs for sustainability of agricultural production, demand intercooperation with the active and conscious involvement of rural women to manage their personal, productive, economic and family self-management and active social participation. Therefore, the objective is stated as: to develop activities for the empowerment of rural women in the intercooperation of agricultural cooperatives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The qualitative methodology of action-research-participation (Hernández Sampieri & Mendoza Torres, 2018) is used from a participatory gender diagnosis, which is carried out from workshops in the different cooperatives in the C/P Limonar de Monte Ruz. It has a descriptive and correlational approach, with a qualitative assessment of the incidence of female participation in the Cuban cooperative sector.

Different methods are used, such as: historical and logical, abstraction, analysis and synthesis procedures that allow the theoretical foundation and positioning, as well as the conceptual interpretation of the empirical data found, techniques that allowed a deeper analysis of the gender gaps detected. In addition, for the diagnosis, collection and processing of information, observation, interviews and documentary analysis. The study focuses on women's participation from a social and gender equality perspective. These forms of cooperative organization are selected considering their potential for the participation of women members in different organizational processes of the cooperatives.

Population and sample

The research is carried out in the cooperative sector of the Limonar de Monte Ruz People's Council, El Salvador municipality in the province of Guantánamo. The population is 301 people from the six cooperatives, such as: Cooperativa de Créditos y Servicios (CCS) Luis Carbó, CCS Elio Cabrera, CCS Sixto Acosta, CCS Orlando Pantoja, Unidad Básica de Producción Cooperativa (UBPC) Marco Martí and UBPC Batalla de la Indiana. The sample selected is 30 people for each cooperative, including producers, members of the board of directors, retirees and other social actors, elements determined from an initial exploratory study. The Excel database CaTaMu and MuEstPro (Gamboa Graus, 2019a, 2019b) is used to find the stratified probability sampling, which considers an error of 0.028 and a confidence level of 98%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In addressing the empowerment of rural women today, it must be started from the construction of social subjectivity, from a new configuration of the conception of the world, from the resignification of history, society, culture and politics.

According to Alemán Salcedo et al. (2020) and Lagarde (1996), the recognition of gender diversity and diversity within each gender leads to the need to act to transform the reality of men and women in the rural context. However, at present the most significant factor is the production and cooperation of cooperatives in product diversity, the sustainability of the economy and the environment, and sustaining sociocultural development services that support the population and its participation in these substantive processes in the countryside.

The National Program for the Advancement of Women summarizes the feelings and political will of the Cuban State, constitutes a legal basis for establishing strategies in favor of women and promotes the development of gender equality and equity in the various contexts, hence the support for the proposals for the empowerment of women and, in particular, rural women in their necessary link with the productive activities of agricultural cooperatives that promote a potential for social, economic and personal contribution, which are built from the conditions and planning of strategies and programs in the cooperatives.

The Spanish word *empoderamiento* comes from the English word empowerment and means to become empowered, enabled, authorized (Hernández Herrera et al., 2018). Applied from feminism to the condition and situation of women, empowerment literally consists of the process through which each woman is empowered, enabled and authorized.

Empowerment is addressed for the first time in 1995 at the IV Beijing Conference, which from the analysis and proposals of women is assumed as: empowerment to the process of transformation through which each woman, little by little, and sometimes in big steps, stops being the object of history, politics and culture, stops being the object of others, that is, stops being-for-others, and becomes the subject of her own life, being-for-self, the protagonist of history, culture, politics and social life (León, 2001). This analysis is necessary in the contexts of cooperatives and families in order to understand the process of transformation in social practice.

Fundora Nevot et al. (2017) and Munster Infante and Fleitas Ruiz (2019) state that when women become empowered and take control of their lives, it is possible for them to have access to different spheres and thus obtain greater representation, achieving a fairer and more equitable participation. Therefore, empowerment means autonomy, self-control and willingness to grow in science and technology, in culture and to assume responsibility as a social subject in their social, economic, legal and political rights. In other words, to be a subject of culture in the sense of thinking and feeling legitimacy to say, communicate, act, experience and grow in the diverse contexts of society.

Empowerment is a personal process that each woman undertakes and that it is not possible to empower other people and, above all, those who do not want to be empowered. It is not a spontaneous combustion, but requires conditions to create a (socio-political) awareness that allows women to change their self-image, thus being able to demand their rights and encourage them in the conviction of their capabilities for the role of external agents of change (Munster Infante & Fleitas Ruiz, 2019).

In the analyses made by the aforementioned authors, necessary elements for the empowerment of women are offered, such as: it is a personal process, recognizing herself in her fullness, communicating, acting, experimenting and creating, having her self-esteem, leadership in the spaces of her development. In addition to offering the conditions and spaces for participation as an individual being capable of transforming herself and her environment, it is to develop in all areas of overcoming each goal, each dream.

It is our opinion that Cuban women, particularly rural women, have developed from the educational process with the principles of participation, independence, collaboration, humanism and personal and collective responsibility that allow them to make decisions, share criteria and develop professionally. However, in the processes of family culture, norms and macho taboos are transmitted and reproduced over and over again, limiting their personal development, since women themselves reproduce macho patterns without becoming aware of them and do not form men with respect for masculinity.

This is a cultural gap for rural women, who are heavily burdened with work in the fields, at home and in society, which affects their individuality and their spaces. The Federation of Cuban Women in its structure reaches all women and deploys coordination actions and the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), which allows addressing the rights and duties in all contexts, the preparation

and training of women for their labor, social and cultural deployment, however, gaps are identified in relations between offers and working conditions, preparation of women to undertake new tasks or obligations and have been identified in rural areas in cooperatives (Council of State, 2023).

The agricultural production cooperatives must comply with the norms and resolutions dictated for the attention of gender and assume as a necessity the participation of women, mobilizing them in their environment to the incorporation of the productions that magnifies values of the society of equality and social rights for all.

Authors such as Labrador Machín et al. (2018, 2020), Marín de León et al. (2021) and Núñez Llerena et al. (2021) posit that cooperatives are constituted as economic entities possessing legal personality of entrepreneurial character and that cooperation among cooperatives is considered as a necessary principle for the full development of the cooperative identity. However, the relevance of such links is seen rather in their economic, social and political implications. The articulation between cooperatives and between cooperatives and other entities offers answers to the need to be competitive, to seek access to sources of financing and to acquire new technologies.

This cooperation and relations established by agricultural production cooperatives, or intercooperation, allows the productions of several cooperatives to be involved in competitions based on the quality of productions, the exchange of experiences and the need to incorporate young people and women for the sustainability of productions and to achieve permanent growth for intercooperation based on their planning.

In this process, a necessary aspect in the cooperation between cooperatives is the systematic exchange of boards of directors that allow them to take experiences, identify needs and communicate to the inhabitants to encourage their participation, always seeking the incorporation of women and cultural transformation in the performance of traditional production tasks that women create and are a source of exchanges of production for economic, environmental and social development.

Intercooperation as a friendly proposal developed by the Support Project for Agricultural Intercooperation (APOCOOP), is part of the 2011-2016 Strategy of the Swiss Cooperation in Cuba, which promotes the creation of non-state organizations (second degree cooperatives) aimed at providing services and products to improve the productivity of small producers and agricultural cooperatives that favor cooperatives to offer skills and initiatives for women and men in production exchanges that were not always visualized by the cooperative members or partners.

These arguments allow the actors in these processes to broaden their vision of the aspects to be taken into account in inter-cooperative strategies, planning and organization, assuming a conception of gender with equity and equality in socio-productive participation, where everyone contributes and everyone receives the benefits for their territorial development and women are incorporated into active life, not only in the home, but also as managers of new productive enterprises that satisfy their economic, social and family needs and make them sustainable.

The popular council of Limonar de Monte Ruz, a community located in the mountainous massif Nipe Sagua Baracoa in the municipality of El Salvador, Guantanamo Province, nestled in a mountainous coffee-growing area, is 30 km from the provincial capital, bordered to the north by the C/P Sabaneta, to the east by the C/P La Escondida, to the west by the C/P Bombí, to the southeast by the C/P Palizada and to the southwest by the C/P Bayate. It is bordered to the north by Sabaneta, to the south by Palizada and La Sidra, to the east by La Escondida and to the south by Bayate. It has an area of 27.5 km² and a population of 2174 inhabitants.

Its main source of employment is agriculture, which has six productive forms, three Cooperativas de Créditos y Servicios Fortalecidas: "Orlando Pantoja" in the town of El Toro, Evio Cabrera in the town of "Yambeque" and "Luis Carbó" in Limonar de Monte Ruz; as well as two UBPC: Marcos Martí in the town of Olimpo and La Batalla de la Indiana in La Indiana. The main crops grown are coffee and to a lesser extent various crops (banana, yam, malanga, corn, beans and rice), fruit trees (orange, sapote and avocado) and livestock.

In the interview conducted with community members, the review of some documents on the statistics of women who belong to the FMC and other officials of the board of directors and cooperatives, 475 women were selected out of a total of 703; of these, 67% do not work. It was identified that these women perform unpaid domestic activities and report that it is difficult for them to work because they do not have a place to take care of their children to perform other activities that provide them with a salary to pay the high rates in the childcare centers and, in some cases, their cultural level does not allow them to have a job with a salary in accordance with the current situation we are living in.

In the few job offers by institutions and cooperatives in the area, women participate in coffee activities on their own initiative and without commitment, with productive forms, only during the harvest period, with little flexibility in schedules that allow them to develop activities and

responsibilities of the household, little visualization in participating in the household economy and prevailing features of patriarchal culture in the division of labor.

The arrival of the APOCOOP project at the Luis Carbó cooperative has been an opportunity for these women to participate and visualize employment. Nine unemployed women were selected, prepared and trained and incorporated into the activities of the technified nursery. The analysis of the Plan for the Advancement of Women and the resolutions that regulate the incorporation of gender and its treatment in the strategies and plans of the cooperatives and their evaluation by the boards of directors was instigated.

It has as a result the acquisition of new knowledge and know how that promote gender relations from equality and equity, that enriches the socio-productive relations, that favors exchanges, reflections, the construction of gender distinctive features, skin color, the right to participate and role management in all processes, sexual rights, sharing household chores and the care and education of children, among others. In addition, it should be promoted from a perspective of integration for the stability of production and sustainable income of the cooperatives.

Table 1 shows the results of the SWOT matrix of the six research cooperatives that allowed effective and efficient intervention in empowered women, reflecting on the relationship between women's empowerment and cooperativism as a way to enable the social and economic participation of rural women for their individual development and in the context. Among the weaknesses, the most significant was identified as the insufficient participation of women in management activities within the productive forms, little incorporation in agricultural activities and the personal self-limitation of women.

Strengths include a group of women motivated to offer their traditional products, with interest and knowledge of agricultural activities, support from FMC-ANAP, legal foundations on gender and the institutions that develop research in the area Municipal University Center (CUM) and the Research Center for Mountain Development.

Table 1. SWOT matrix of the six cooperatives

Weaknesses	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Insufficient women in management activities within productive activities. 2. Insufficient training. 3. Little interest by some women in taking on decision-making positions or activities in the cooperatives. 4. Deficient prominence of women. 5. Little incorporation of women in agricultural activities. 6. Deficient agricultural technology. 7. Poor mastery of the principles of cooperativism. 8. Poor conditions to undertake agricultural work. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remoteness from work areas. 2. Insufficient maintenance and recovery of access roads to mountain communities. 3. Meteorological events associated with these zones. 4. The intensified U.S. blockade of Cuba affects access to supplies. 5. Climatological and environmental events.
Strengths	Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Motivated and interested women. 2. Enterprising women with knowledge of agricultural activities. 3. Supporting organizations and institutions (FMC, CUM, Research Center for Mountain Development). 4. Strengthening of resolutions and regulations for the treatment of gender in plans and strategies. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political will of the leadership of the municipality, province and country. 2. Laws on women's participation in empowerment. 3. Opportunities for women in the cooperative sector. 4. Project experiences in other territories. 5. Formulation of project proposals. 6. Access to technical-professional studies.

Source: Own elaboration

Figure 1 shows the results for the different forms of production, related to the number of members, number of women and men. In the Luis Carbó CCS, there is a total of 86 associates; of these, 17 are women and 69 are men, followed by the Elio Cabrera CCS, which has 53 associates; of these, 7 are women and 46 are men; the Sixto Acosta CCS has 47 associates: 5 women and 42 men, the Orlando Pantoja CCS has 51 associates: 8 women and 43 men, the Marco Martí UBPC has 50 associates: 8 women and 42 men and the Batalla de la Indiana UBPC has 34 associates: 7 women and 27 men.

These results show that there are a total of 321 members per cooperative, of which 52 are women and 269 are men. This reflects only 16.6% participation of women in agricultural activities in the cooperatives. These results show that in the CCS Luis Carbó there is greater potential for women in the cooperative sector, while the CCS Sixto Acosta has the lowest potential for women's participation.

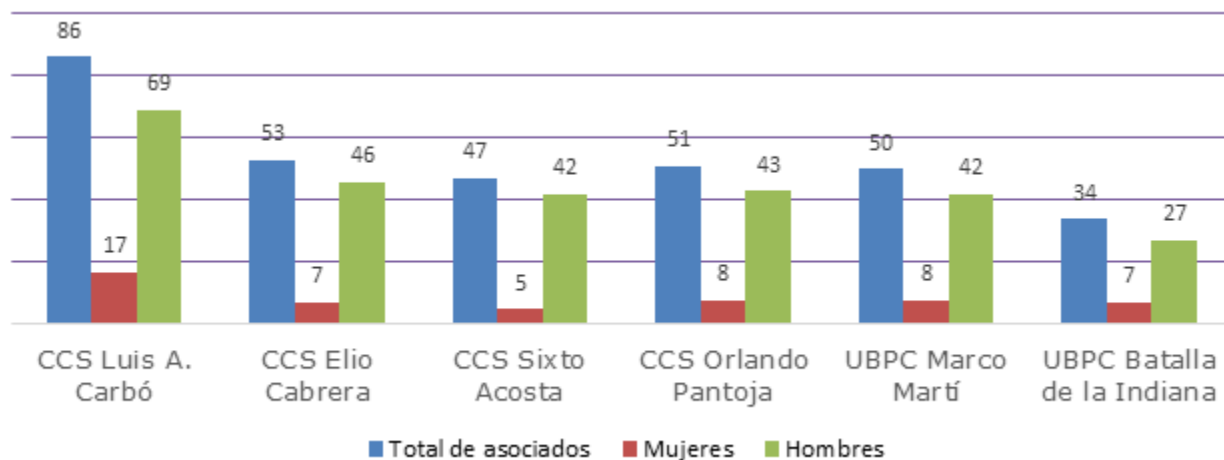


Figure 1. Members by agricultural cooperatives

Source: Own elaboration

Figure 2 shows the leadership of rural women in the productive forms based on the positions held by women associates on the board out of a total of 52 women. Twenty-eight women hold positions of responsibility, representing 53.8% of the total number of associates, six women with positions, no women on the board of directors, four in the grassroots association (two in the Luis Carbó, one in the CCS Elio Cabrera, one in the CCS Sixto Acosta and 18 women farm owners, of the latter seven are elderly or retired women, three are women landowners whose husbands control all the processes).

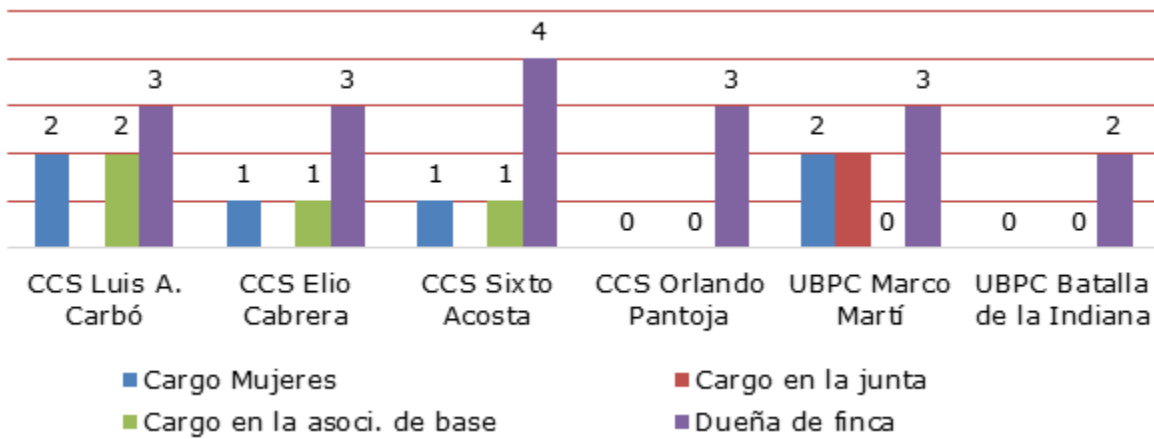


Figure 2. Women's Leadership in Agricultural Cooperatives

Source: Own elaboration

Figure 3 shows the results of the level of schooling of rural women associated with agricultural production in the People's Council of Limonar de Monte Ruz. Of 52 associates, there are 23 at the primary level, 18 at the secondary level, 9 at the pre-university level and 2 at the technical level. In the CCS Luis Carbó, there is a total of 17 women, followed by the CCS Orlando Pantoja and UBPC Marco Martí with 8 women, the CCS Elio Cabrera and the UBPC Batalla de la Indiana with 7 women and the CCS Sixto Acosta with 5 women. It is identified that in the agricultural cooperatives there are no university personnel, and there is a need for higher level qualification.

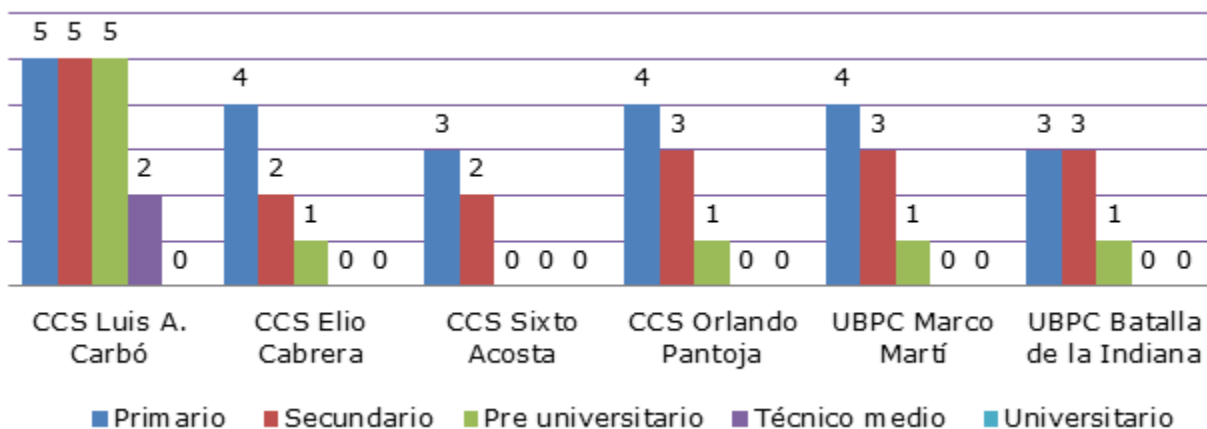


Figure 3. Educational level of women in agricultural cooperatives

Source: Own elaboration

The productive forms under study in the C/P Limonar have as their fundamental mission the production and commercialization of high quality cherry coffee and agroforestry products that satisfy the needs demanded by the clients and the community, raise the standard of living of the cooperative members, their families, the community and contribute to the economic development of the territory, an important task of this C/P to maintain production and inter-cooperation in harmony with the environment, based on the sustainable use of natural resources.

It should be noted that the Luis Carbó cooperative is the only one of the six cooperatives under study that is actively involved in an international collaboration project (APOCCOOP), related to the support of cooperative inter-cooperation, which benefits from new technologies for the construction of a technified nursery for the production of coffee seedlings, transportation for land clearing and the transfer of coffee, and accessories for water recovery as a family alternative, which favor not only the production process; but also the incorporation of rural women and new employment opportunities to improve C/P services. In addition, there is scientific-technological training that facilitates the development of the cooperative members, the board of directors and women in particular.

The strengthening of cooperatives with the development program favors the organization of agricultural, commercial and cooperative processes. However, concrete actions that favor rural women and their incorporation are not always inserted, basically visualized in the lack of integrality in cooperative management, in the preparation and leadership for the lack of knowledge of the principles of cooperativism and its potentialities to generate intercooperation processes and little knowledge of intercooperation as a management alternative that favors cooperative women.

During the development of the related study in the different cooperatives in the C/P, the objective was to determine the participation of rural women in productive activities and it was possible to verify: low levels of active participation in positions related to management or in productive processes.

One of the issues that affects women's participation in management activities within the board of directors and member assemblies for decision-making is the cultural level, an aspect that has been addressed repeatedly in gender studies and is an indicator that affects all the cooperatives in the research.

This study shows that women members participate in the socioeconomic activities of the cooperatives related to (cultural attentions to crops, cooperative assemblies and other activities). The greatest

female participation in management or responsibilities is at intermediate and secondary levels, with an auxiliary profile in the performance of administrative economic functions, organizational functions and human resources management. Although this is not true for all the cooperatives studied.

It was found that, in the development programs of the cooperatives under study, there are no actions in the design of training or counseling activities to prepare women cooperative members for other functions and work performance, an aspect addressed in the action plan of this research.

In the inquiry with the board of directors, management levels and associates, the lack of knowledge of the legislation on women's rights for the gender strategy in agriculture was demonstrated, as well as the Presidential Decree Law 198, which approves the National Program for the Advancement of Women, which summarizes the feelings and political will of the Cuban State and constitutes the cornerstone in the development of policies in favor of women, while giving continuity to the progress and development of gender equality in the country, as this right is institutionalized.

There are also other regulations since the emergence of the FMC until today. The difficult economic situation that the country is experiencing has a greater impact on women's personal, professional and labor performance, which requires a sensitive, transformative and inclusive approach according to vulnerabilities and conditions in rural socio-productive contexts.

With the current socio-productive opening for all forms of production, it is significant that there is still no intention, in the plan of the cooperatives, to incorporate forms of production to rescue cultural traditions, where women are active participants to increase new results in the cooperatives, such as: making carriers, baskets, decorative items for the home, production of condiments for food production from natural products of the cooperatives (turmeric, sago, vanilla, achote, coriander, oreganito, leek garlic, chili, sweet pepper, cimarron tomato, among others) and production of canned products (vinegar, jams, pickles, sweet in syrup).

As a result of the traditional cultural wisdom passed down from generation to generation of our peasant women, today the young population of this area is unaware of and does not facilitate the rootedness to the land. On the other hand, the cultural traditions of the community are not brought to the local market as natural products. The women who are members of the agricultural cooperatives cultivate a diversity of endogenous resources that are not marketed in the cooperatives to achieve new income and family sustainability.

In summary, it is evident through the different methods and processing of the information that the treatment of gender and the incorporation of rural women in personal and family economic development continues to be a gap that needs to be addressed through compliance with the norms and legislation established for agriculture. It is reaffirmed in the indicators with the highest prevalence that only 18 women own land dedicated to agricultural production, in addition to the lack of incorporation of young women who need to be sensitized in these productions in agricultural activities in the C/P Limonar.

It is necessary to promote inter-cooperation among cooperatives as a way to develop rural women and empower them to assume new roles in management, production and personal and family economy, and to incorporate endogenous traditional production into the commercial production chain.

In the practical implementation of the proposal, it is determined to carry out a training plan with a system of actions to be implemented for the empowerment of rural women in the intercooperation of agricultural cooperatives, which become theoretical and practical tools to promote knowledge about the empowerment of women, particularly rural women and their visibility from the strategies of intercooperation in new productive forms that can generate income for all participants and create new traditional productions with the participation of women, take advantage of their creativity and communication to exchange new products. It is presented, in summary, some workshops developed and results in the agricultural cooperatives in the C/P Limonar.

Workshop 1: Gender diversity and intercooperation

Objective: To reflect on gender diversity based on the concept of gender, gender identity and gender expression, empowerment of women, women in production. Supported with audiovisuals on the topic.

Main activities carried out:

- Exchange from the definitions of gender, gender identity and gender expression, establishing the differences and relationships between these concepts, traditional perceptions of gender male and female in social roles.
- Viewing of some audiovisuals that will allow them to identify how gender diversity manifests itself based on what they have learned.

Results: Exchange based on the definitions of gender, gender identity and gender expression, establishing the differences and relationships between these concepts, traditional perceptions of gender, male and female in social roles.

Workshop 2: Women's empowerment

Objective: To reflect on the impact of women's personal growth on production in cooperatives. Potentialities of women in intercooperation.

Main activities carried out: Establishment of regularities and reflections on their impact on the establishment of social relations, as well as on the development of each subject's self-esteem, active participation in new forms of production, satisfaction of needs.

Results: Established regularities and reflections on their impact on the establishment of social relations, as well as on the development of self-esteem of each subject, active participation in new forms of production, satisfaction of needs.

Workshop 3: Women's experiences in agricultural cooperatives in agroecological practices that empower their development

Objective: To reflect on the use and implementation of agroecological techniques on women farmers' farms.

Main activities carried out: Exchange of knowledge on agroecological techniques based on their experiences in their areas of cultivation and soil conservation.

Results: Sharing of knowledge on agroecological techniques based on their experiences in their areas of cultivation and soil conservation.

Workshop 4: Practice of women's handicrafts based on the endogenous resources of the cooperatives and the community.

Objective: To achieve opportunities for women in agricultural cooperatives based on experiences and the use of endogenous resources of the community.

Main activities carried out: This exercise, organized by the grassroots organizations of the cooperatives and the council's FMC, as well as other social actors, enabled women to make their products available to their families and to improve their income, living conditions and lifestyles.

Results: The exercise, organized by the cooperatives' grassroots organizations and the council's FMC, as well as other social actors, enabled the women to make known to their families the improvements in their incomes, living conditions and lifestyles through clothing and the production of products within their reach.

Workshop 5: Policies established for Cuban women and especially for women in the cooperative sector

Objective: To make women aware of the policies established at the country level and in the cooperative sector.

Main activities carried out: Update on the laws that are in place and according to interviews conducted with women from the cooperatives and communities, they do not know them, they say they know about the FMC as the governing organization, which focuses its role in these communities on the collection of contributions, limited recreational activities and participation.

Results: It was updated the topic related to the established laws, according to interviews with women in the cooperatives and communities, they are not aware of the them, they say they are aware of the FMC as the lead organization, which focuses its role in these communities on the collection of contributions, limited recreational activities and participation.

Workshop 6: Integration of knowledge in intercooperation of women cooperative members

Objective: To deepen the lessons learned from the experience on gender, empowerment, intercooperation and productions for economic, collective, personal, environmental and social development.

Main activities carried out: Conduction of the workshop that integrated all the aspects developed in the previous workshops where the active participation of most of the cooperative women was achieved, which showed interest in the laws and decrees that protect the Policies established for

Cuban women and, especially, women in the cooperative sector and the potentials they have in their locality that due to their lack of knowledge are not implemented and developed.

Results: an integration workshop was carried out with all the aspects developed in the previous workshops where the active participation of most of the cooperative women was achieved, which showed interest in the laws and decrees that protect the policies established for Cuban women and, especially, women in the cooperative sector and the potentialities they have in their locality that are not implemented and developed due to their lack of knowledge. The content of the three bulletins on basic concepts of empowerment of rural women and the role of cooperative women, among other topics, is evaluated.

The results of the application have had an impact on the empowerment of rural women in intercooperation. In the first actions developed, active participation was difficult, then they incorporated knowledge and proposed new ways, such as: the realization of 6 workshops with different themes related to the action plan, 6 conferences and 12 talks on gender, social roles, unemployment, empowerment and women's rights; the work of women was disseminated through the media (radio, television, social networks, written press), in the assemblies of the boards 4 women were incorporated after the assembly process with responsibilities to assume positions on the board of directors and 11 are preparing for job offers in the technified nursery of the CSS Luis Carbo.

A total of 4 actions were incorporated into the cooperatives' strategies: training, economic empowerment of women, visualization and communication and social inclusion, as well as the insertion of social actors in the process of empowering women for intercooperation in agricultural cooperatives, with active, conscious and committed participation. Validation of the results of the application of the proposed actions in the empowerment of rural women in intercooperation processes in agricultural cooperatives was achieved with the different endorsements in agricultural cooperatives, ANAP's Technical Advisory Council and Agriculture.

In the actions carried out through the workshops, the impact of the contents developed in the sensitization of men and women managers of the cooperatives, their scope in the ways of perceiving the orientations in resolutions and directives on gender incorporation and the reality of debating these contents stand out. The collective construction on equality and equity, women's roles, work overload, the need to participate in inter-cooperation and women's traditional knowledge, impact on men to rethink them as economic and inter-cooperative activists.

The incorporation of rural women from their productive potential to the forms of agricultural production and inter-cooperation was dynamic in the participants and achieved visibility in plans and programs of the board of directors, the assemblies of associates and the incorporation of women and young people to the planned improvement to occupy different positions or processes in an ascending way.

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Conflict of interest

Authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contribution

Nelly Camejo Leyva, Celia Díaz Cantillo and Frank Yudier Gómez Cera systematized the theory on the topic, designed the study and analyzed the data. They applied and processed the instruments in the selected population and elaborated the draft.

Nelly Camejo Leyva and Frank Yudier Gómez Cera were involved in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data.

All the authors reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approve the version finally submitted.



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