How do gender, culture, and other cross-cutting concerns influence the undertaking of building resilience in food systems?

Cooperatives and women in leadership roles
What is a Cooperative?

A cooperative, in its simplest definition, is an association of people engaged in an enterprise.

*Member OWNED*

*Member CONTROLLED*

*Member BENEFIT*

*Source: International Labor Organization & USDA*
Cooperative values and principles

Cooperative Values:
1. Self-help
2. Self-responsibility
3. Democracy
4. Equality
5. Equity
6. Solidarity

Cooperative Principles:
1. Voluntary and open membership
2. Democratic member control
3. Member economic participation
4. Autonomy and independence
5. Education, training and information
6. Cooperation among cooperatives
7. Concern for community
Economic Impact

In 2017 the top 100 Cooperatives in the United States represented $207.9 billion of the nation's economy:

- Agriculture: $116 billion
- Grocery: $33.6 billion
- Energy & Comm.: $19.1 billion
- Finance: $16.7 billion
- Hardware: $11.8 billion
- Healthcare: $6 billion
- Other sectors: $4.5 billion

(revenue measured in billions)

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2 National Cooperative Bank – 2017 Coop 100
What is a Cooperative?

Source: International Finance Cooperation: Agriculture Leadership Program, Cooperative Foundations curricula
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Membership = Ownership

General Assembly: The boss

Board of Directors: Represents the boss

Supervisory Committee: Ensures the boss is well represented
Power of Ownership
Power of Ownership
Women Owners in Leadership
Why should women lead?

- Representation in their business
- Bold new ideas
- Expanded benefits to membership
- Important perspective on community issues
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Where are the women?

- Little incentive to participate
- Too many other responsibilities
- Don’t meet criteria
Are we moving the needle?

Technology, transparency and trust
Are we moving the needle?

Technology, transparency and trust
Are we moving the needle?

Technology, transparency and trust
Are we moving the needle?

65% of the board members of SACCOs (credit unions) in Tanzania were women.

(WSJ, IFC, Co-op)
Cooperatives and resilience

A feature of resilient food system are elements of society that allow for income generation with an eye toward building community.
When women lead

• Improved business outcomes
• Builds morale among members
• Focus on benefits to their community
• Builds internal and external networks
Co-ops are Cool...

When the cooperative business is functioning as intended, with women represented in leadership roles, it will be an enduring and resilient part of the community.

Thanks!