



CO-OPERATIVES LEARNING SERIES



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**Global
Communities**
Partners for Good



How can development projects facilitate improved empowerment of women through co-operative development?

EMPOWERING LOW-INCOME WOMEN PRODUCERS PARTICIPATING IN CO-OPERATIVE GROUPS

CONSTRAINTS TO POOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN CO-OPERATIVES

Very poor women face their own set of constraints in interacting in co-operatives and their markets. Women are often limited from actively participating in business activities owing to: risk of physical, sexual, and other gender-based violence; limited social standing or social capital in the community with limited

access to certain market opportunities or group structures; social or cultural confinement and immobility; inadequate legal protection or enforcement of existing laws; traditional gender roles and expectations; and lack of control over resources (in particular, property).

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES ON WOMEN

As development projects work

to strengthen co-operatives, changes can take place that are considered positive, but which may, ultimately, have unintended consequences on women. It is important to take these into consideration and recognize how to minimize their negative impact on women and household relationships.

Introduction of new technologies and agricultural practices

Inside this Learning Note

1. Constraints to poor women's participation in co-operatives
2. Unintended consequences on women
3. Example from the Field: Make It Happen Campaign in Rwanda

