

**Case Report***Copyright © All rights are reserved by Esteban Valtierra-Pacheco*

# Amaranth-Processing Famienterprises in México City

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## Introduction

In Mexico, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MiSyMEs) represented more than 95% of the established economic units, as it is in most of Latin-American countries. The contribution of micro and small enterprises to the National Gross Product is small, but they are the main sources of employment and contribute to a better distribution of income with the generation of jobs and growth with equity, this is especially true in rural areas. In developing countries, it is common to refer to micro or small enterprises as family enterprises because a family does most of the work of an enterprise to produce something, however, in developed countries sometimes transnational enterprises are called family enterprises because most of the shares belong to one family, for example, Walmart, Ford or Samsung. The term famienterprise was created to differentiate the first type of small enterprises from the second type.

We found the first reference to famienterprise (famiempresa in Spanish) in 2005, when a manual of cooperativism and solidarity-based economy [1] published in Colombia, but this author did not define this term precisely. Famienterprise can be defined as a conjunction between living and open systems: family and enterprise, where the main objective is the survival of oneself and of the family, generating self-employment and occupation to the members of the family, who represent 60% or more of its employees [2]. The famienterprise is an organization with very strong ties between the family and the enterprise, that make difficult to differentiate the dynamic of a family as a unit of social reproduction and a unit of production. The initial capital is collected among members of a family without any support from external source or credits and

generally is enough only to start an informal small business. Most of the employees are members of a family in first or second level. The work schedules are fixed or flexible or the combinations of both [3-5]. We studied the processing famienterprises of amaranth in Santiago Tulyehualco, Mexico City. The main processed products of amaranth are bars of grain (called alegrías), flour, and roasted grains to be added in beverages or foods. The grain of amaranth has high quality of nutrients, a portion of 100 gr. has 3.8 gr. of protein, 18.69 gr. of carbohydrates, 1.58 gr. of lipids, and 2.1 gr. of fiber, and it is rich in vitamins and minerals [6]. The main objective was to characterize their cultural, economic and affective characteristics that let them to survive.

## Methodology

The sampling criteria to select amaranth factories were factories with more than 3 years of operation and less than 50 employees. The data collection was based on surveys applied to owners and workers of micro and small processing factories of amaranth. This was combined with semi-structured interviews and observation in production plants.

## Findings

The main findings show that the owners created their famienterprises for self-employment of their families and continue the tradition of amaranth processing that come from their fathers or grandfathers. The main characteristics of these famienterprises are: more than 50% of the enterprise belongs to a family, and frequently is 100%; the enterprises have an average of 7.1 workers and 67% of them are owner's relatives; some owners grow the amaranth that

they process (20%); it is common that factory and family home are part of the same building (86.3%); in famienterprises there is no fixed work schedules (93%); family members can receive a salary (46.7%) if they work fulltime or they do not receive any salary if they work some hours a week like children (40%); the capacities development is built on the family knowledge, transmitted from one generation to next generation (80%); most of them (80%) have never done a marketing study; the relationships with customers are based on direct contact using little or null publishing media to promote their products; entrepreneurs do not do precise administrative records keeping (80%), owners would like to expand their enterprise, but a few of them have achieved this goal, however most of them (80%) are satisfied for creating a family patrimony and employment for their family. The main threat of famienterprises is the lack of interest of new generations to continue the family business.

In conclusion, micro and small amaranth processing enterprises are famienterprises because they have a strong identity tie between

families and enterprises in the village of Santiago Tulyehualco, México City.

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