



Assessing the Role of Cooperative in Resolving Labor Issues in Tuna Catching, General Santos City, Philippines

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Abstract

Cooperatives are envisioned both as a social and economic enterprise. In the Philippine setting, cooperatives were organized to serve as labor provider for various industries, under the scheme of agency hiring, or declaring the hired workers as member/co-owner of the cooperative. The study aims to examine the economic and social gains, as well as the risk taking of the members and business partners. In particular, an assessment of the social gains (e.g., resolving labor issues, vulnerability of workers to exploitation, and workers capacitation) will be analyzed to probe the cooperative as a venue for workers' empowerment. Key informant interviews were conducted with the officers and members of two cooperatives: (1) type A – workers' cooperative organized by an agency (labor provider) and (2) type B – workers' cooperative organized by the workers themselves. The findings revealed that the type B cooperative generated more economic and social gains for both members and business partners, while the type A cooperative delivered less. Type A cooperatives did not resolve the labor issues while type B cooperatives enhanced worker entrepreneurship, capacity building, and participation with increased compensation and benefits. It is recommended that concerned government agencies must strictly monitor the operations of cooperatives. Business partners must also be encouraged to deal with cooperatives who are organized to serve the interest of the workers.