

Local Development of Rural Population: A Case Study from Women Shareholders of Development Cooperatives

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Abstract

Agricultural cooperatives play an important role in supporting small agricultural producers and marginalized groups such as young people and women. They empower their members economically and socially and create sustainable rural employment through business models that are resilient to economic and environmental shocks.

Women are represented in various forms and types of cooperatives in Turkey, but, the ratio of women membership in agricultural cooperatives is extremely low. Women in rural cooperatives often produce food items and handicrafts. The mind-sets of cooperative members are often not oriented toward the consumers or the market. Taking pride in their products, they struggle with valuing their products according to consumer tastes rather than the quality of their homemaking skills. These products may be intended for the local market or for export. For local market, a key issue is transport to urban areas. For export, it is important to build relationships with reliable partners. In term of the activities performed by women, in 2004, a cooperative founded in which Vakıflı village of Hatay province has a unique characteristics called Turkey's change makers. Our paper focus on the activities, economic and social acquisitions implemented obtained by women's branch of Vakıflı Development Cooperative. We also investigate social and economic returns in terms of the cooperative's members and inhabitants of village. Thus, we aim to evaluation alternative solutions (especially for rural areas suffered from large population migration) taking into account a case, Vakıflı Development Cooperative. To reach study aims, we conducted face to face interviews using by full census method with women shareholders of Vakıflı Development Cooperative.

Keywords: Rural Development Cooperatives, Women's Organizations, Rural Migration

Jel Codes: Q1, Q13