

FOSTERING EQUALITY AND GROWTH: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF WOMEN MEMBERS IN THE DAVECO AGRARIAN REFORM BENEFICIARIES COOPERATIVE**Cherrelyn P. Campaña, Ph.D.*¹****Glaydin E. Bungalan²****Pia Marie Cabarrubias³****Jerell L. Paden⁴****Michelle V. Saburnido⁵**

*^{1,2,3,4,5}, College of Development Management Graduate Program, University of Southeastern Philippines, Mintal Campus, Davao City

ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study examined the women's role in the DAVECO Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARB) Cooperative. Ten (10) women members, composed of regular and officer members, were selected as participants. Observation, guided questions, and audio recordings were utilized in key informant interview (KII) to gather data. This single-case study ensures that ethical considerations and the research process were observed and followed during its conduct. There were four (4) essential themes generated; beneficial, participation constraints, economic empowerment and opportunity equalization, which provides insights of the participants to recommend initiating activities or programs that will further foster women's empowerment as members of the cooperative. Based on the narrative and thematic analysis, the study revealed the transformative potential of cooperatives in uplifting and empowering women within rural communities. The study emphasized that by addressing existing constraints and fostering an inclusive environment that champions women's active participation and leadership, cooperatives like DAVECO hold the key to economic empowerment, social progress, and community development.

Keywords:

Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries, women empowerment, cooperative, roles

INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector faced multifaceted challenges, encompassing concerns related to land ownership and inadequate agrarian infrastructure. Large farms are commonly identified as needing more diversification and being focused on exporting, exposing them to shocks. On the other hand, small-scale farms mostly rely on rainwater for irrigation and have challenges in terms of restricted access to transportation infrastructure and markets (Ogoyi, 2023). The escalating expenses associated with agricultural inputs such as seeds, labor, fertilizers, and gasoline and the unpredictable and depressed pricing of agricultural and food products have presented a formidable challenge for small-scale farmers in generating sufficient income to alleviate poverty and foster resilience, according to the report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, 2017. The effects of these problems have varying implications for men, women, and young farmers, with women experiencing disadvantages. UN Women highlights that women handle multiple burdens in securing food, water, and energy in many regions. In low- and lower-middle-income countries, women predominantly work in agriculture. Women are primary providers, especially during droughts and erratic rainfall, working harder to secure resources and income for their families (Explainer: How Gender Inequality and Climate Change Are Interconnected | UN Women—Headquarters, 2022).

In Southeast Nigeria, agriculture is pivotal, especially for women, yet the sector grapples with barriers limiting their full engagement and recognition. Agriculture plays a crucial role in the economic development of many countries, and women make up a significant portion of the threatening population (Chukwujekwu et al., 2021). However, a number of obstacles limit their potential in the agricultural sector. Addressing these hurdles through a comprehensive

IJETRM

International Journal of Engineering Technology Research & Management

www.ijetrm.com

understanding can drive effective policies and interventions, reducing gender disparities and empowering women in agriculture. (Chukwujekwu et al., 2021).

The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that if women had the same access as men, agricultural output in 34 developing countries would rise by an estimated average of up to 4 percent. This could reduce the number of undernourished people in those countries by as much as 17 percent, translating to up to 150 million fewer hungry people. Greppi, E. (n.d.) FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). On the other hand, cooperatives have garnered acknowledgment as a powerful mechanism fostering the evolution of women's socio-economic status while catalyzing broader economic development within societies. The prevalent belief underscores that cooperative participation extends beyond mere income enhancement, exerting multifaceted advantages. This recognition has prompted international development agencies and governments at the national level to fervently endorse and champion the role of cooperatives in empowering women (Ferguson & Kepe, 2011; Mukarugwiza, 2009). In Mindanao, the situation of women members in agrarian reform cooperatives is complex and multifaceted. A study conducted on three clusters in Mindanao highlighted the issues and challenges women members face in agrarian reform cooperatives (Montiflor et al., 2011). In addition, the study emphasized the need for gender sensitivity in farming systems research and development to address these issues and contribute to gender equity effectively (Verma et al., 2020). This signifies that the situation of women in agrarian reform cooperatives in Mindanao is characterized by active participation and persistent gender disparities. Despite their crucial roles in the agricultural sector and active participation in cooperatives, women in Mindanao still face challenges such as limited resource access and gender inequality. (Santos et al., 2022)

An illustrative instance of this case is the DAVECO ARB Cooperative, wherein female individuals are included as cooperative members. Nevertheless, women face disparities due to the Certificate Land Ownership Award (CLOA) registered under the names of male farmer members, resulting in an overrepresentation of male farmers within the cooperative. The International Labor Organization discusses and explains this issue in their Gender and Sensitivity Training Trainers Manual: An Introduction to Gender Analysis in Cooperatives. This study, *Fostering Equality and Growth: Examining the Role of Women Members in the DAVECO ARB Cooperative*, seeks to examine the role and experiences of women individuals who are members of the DAVECO ARB Cooperative in Davao City, considering the prevailing circumstances and existing reality.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study sought to determine and gain insight into the roles, aspirations, and challenges experienced by women involved in the cooperative. In addressing the previously mentioned research problem, the study sought answers guided by the following questions:

1. What are the socio-demographic profiles of the participants in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age
 - 1.2 Civil Status
 - 1.3 Educational Background
 - 1.4 Roles/Functions
 - 1.5 Number of Years as a member of the Cooperative
2. What are the experiences and roles of women members in the DAVECO ARB Cooperative?
 - 2.1 How do you describe your experiences as a women member of the DAVECO ARB Cooperative?
 - 2.2 Did you encounter any challenging experiences as a women member of the DAVECO ARB Cooperative? If yes, can you tell us? What are those challenging experiences?
 - 2.3 How did you overcome those challenges and experiences?
3. How do these roles of women members influence their economic status, employment, access to resources, and cooperative services?
 - 3.1 Have initiatives or programs within the cooperative specifically focused on enhancing women's employability or skill development?

IJETRM

International Journal of Engineering Technology Research & Management

www.ijetrm.com

- 3.2 How has being a member of the cooperative influenced women's access to resources such as land, credit, technology, or training?
 - 3.3 How do you perceive the overall societal impact when women are actively involved and economically empowered through cooperative participation?
4. Insights
 - 4.1 How can the DAVECO ARB Cooperative ensure that women members have equal access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes in the future?
 - 4.2 How do women members participate in decision-making processes within the cooperative, and what factors influence their level of participation?
 - 4.3 How do women members balance their roles as farmers and cooperative members, and what strategies do they use to manage these competing demands?

METHODOLOGY

The research study employed a qualitative research design using a single case study approach, in which focus group discussion (FGD) operated as a method to gather data. Yin (2014) calls case study research design a 'craftwork', because on how rigorous and sharp the design is constructed which ultimately determines the efficacy, reliability and validity of the final case study outcome. The researchers conducted a key informant interview to confirm the validity and reliability of the responses gathered from the participants. According to Gill (2008) the interview method is designed to collect data that gives the importance of the perspective of an individual within the context of personal experiences and Nyumba (2018) said that a focus group discussion involves gathering people from similar backgrounds or experiences together to discuss a specific topic of interest. It is a form of qualitative research where questions are asked about their perception, attitudes, beliefs, opinion or ideas.

Hence, this method of gathering data were used for the ten (10) women members of DAVECO ARB Cooperative in Calinan, Davao City who were selected as participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Socio-Demographic Profile of the Participants

This study was participated by ten (10) women members of the DAVECO ARB Cooperative. As shown in Table 1, three (3) participants were aged between 61-65 and 71-75 years old, while four are between 66-70 years old. In terms of civil status, the majority of the participants were married, with three (3) widows and one (1) participant each identified as single or separated. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of the participants were college graduates, followed by three (3) high school graduates while there is one (1) participant each for high school undergraduate, college undergraduate and postgraduate levels. For the participants' roles/ functions within the cooperative, five (5) of them function as regular members while the remaining five (5) hold positions as officers. All ten (10) women members have been part of the cooperative for a period ranging from 25-30 years.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants in the Study

Sex	
Female	10
Ages	
61-65	3
66-70	4
71-75	3
Civil Status	
Single	1

Married	5
Separated	1
Widowed	3
Educational Background	
H.S Undergraduate	1
H.S Graduate	3
College Undergraduate	1
College Graduate	4
Post Graduate	1
Role/Function	
Regular Member	5
Officer	5
Number of Years as a Member	
25-30	10

2. The Experiences and Roles of Women Members in the DAVECO ARB Cooperative

This single case study delves into women's collective experiences and roles within the DAVECO ARB Cooperative since its inception in 1995. This study aims to examine and gain insight into the roles, aspirations, and challenges experienced by women involved in the cooperative. The data gathered from participant interviews underwent thorough transcription and manual coding, encapsulating essential themes, subthemes, and thematic statements from the women members, presented in Table 2. The thematic analysis of the case was grounded in verbatim transcriptions of participant interviews, facilitating the categorization and summarization of their shared experiences. Two themes were drawn from the interview with the women members: Beneficial and Participation Constraints.

2.1 **Theme 1 - Beneficial.** This is one of the two themes that emerged during the interview regarding the experience and role of women members of DAVECO ARB Cooperative. The participants pointed out that becoming a member of the DAVECO ARB Cooperative has a significant impact on their experiences and roles as women members. According to their statements, being a member of DAVECO has enabled them to access benefits from the programs and services of the cooperative. Additionally, the cooperative actively encourages their participation in various technical training and seminars. Mhembwe and Dube (2017) supported this notion by emphasizing that communities stand to benefit from engaging in cooperative programs. They further highlighted that cooperatives play vital roles in rural communities, which include poverty reduction, employment creation, improved food security, women empowerment and human capital development. Based on the data gathered, the results showed the following sub-themes: engaging and beneficial.

Engaging and helpful. Based on the data gathered, one of the emerging sub-themes found in the study is engaging and beneficial. The participants pointed out that becoming a member of the DAVECO ARB Cooperative significantly impacted their experiences and roles as women members of the cooperative. According to their statement, the cooperative engages us to attend technical training and seminars such as pineapple processing. The cooperative also helped us, as DAVCO workers, gain benefits from the program and service of the cooperative. The following are their responses:

Dako ang nahimung tabang sa coop, particularly sa amua nga nahimung ARB members gikan sa pagka DAVCO worker lang sauna. (CSA)

Engaging nitabang gyud ko sa pag pa lambo sa coop. (EAA)

Pinaagi sa coop makakuha mi ug benepisyo kada tuig parehas anang patronage ug dividend. (JCO)

Helpful, especially during emergencies. (MAS)

2.2 Theme 2 - Participation Constraints. Another theme generated in the experiences and roles of women members in the DAVECO ARB Cooperative is participation constraints. Although participants generally find the cooperative beneficial, they have encountered constraints that limit their active engagement in the cooperative. Time is an example; for instance, MAS, not her real name, experienced scheduling conflicts between the cooperative activities and her work, while EAA, not her real name, couldn't attend meetings due to domestic chores. Participants also expressed their lack of interest in taking up leadership and decision-making positions within the cooperative. In the case of VML, not her real name, she felt discouraged in pursuing a leadership position due to the prevailing perception that women are incapable of handling significant roles. These individual experiences of the women members help to interpret the constraints that hinder their full participation in the cooperative, despite the perceived advantages it offers. These findings align with the research by Huot et al. (2023), which identifies domestic work burden, lack of capacity, and low education as some of the key barriers that impede women from participating in leadership positions in cooperatives. Based on the data gathered during the interview, the women members revealed the following sub-themes: time constraints, lack of interest and gender bias.

Lack of Interest and Gender Bias. This is another sub-theme that emerged in the challenges experienced by the cooperative women members. According to them, they are discouraged; most women members are not interested in running or accepting responsibilities in the cooperative. Some think women cannot handle big roles in the cooperative because they are weak and usually agree on whatever is planned and decided. Below are the statements pointed out by the participants:

Feeling a bit discourage, kay sauna ni dagan ko as officer, wala ko kadaog kay paminaw nila weak ang babae mag dala sa Coop. (VML)

As officer, ako nakit-an nga daghan ang members nga babae sa DAVECO pero wala gyud kayo managan as officers kay mahadlok nay katungdanan ug busy daw sila. (CSA)

As a woman member, dili jud kaayo willing to run as officer, magsalig sa lalaki members sa una, kay ang kultura nato pud na ang lalaki ang leader. Even though, naa gud sa huna huna mo run as officer pero kapoy na, ug sa na-andan, kung sa family amahan ang maglead same pud sa company. (ESR)

Table 2. Emergent Themes and Sub-themes in the Experiences, Roles of Women Members, and Challenges within the DAVECO ARB Cooperative

Essential Themes	Subthemes	Thematic Statements
Beneficial	Engaging and Helpful	<i>Dako ang nahimung tabang sa Coop, particularly sa amua ng nahimung ARB members, gikan sa pagka DAVCO Worker lang sauna. (CSA)</i>
		<i>Engaging, nitabang gyud ko sa pag pa-lambo sa Coop. (EAA)</i>
		<i>Pinaagi sa Coop makakuha mi ug benepisyo kada tuig parehas anang patronage ug dividend. (JCO)</i>
		<i>Helpful, especially during financial emergencies. (MAS)</i>

Participation Constraints	Time Constraints	<i>Conflict schedule, labi na ako kay naa kos opisina ga work. (MAS)</i> <i>I can't attend meetings due to work and household chores. (EAA)</i>
	Lack of Interest and Gender Bias	<i>As a woman member, dili jud kaayo willing to run as officer, magsalig sa lalaki members sa una, kay ang kultura nato pud na ang lalaki ang leader. Even though, naa gud sa huna huna mo run as officer pero kapoy na, ug sa na-andan, kung sa family amahan ang maglead same pud sa company. (EFR)</i>
		<i>As officer, ako nakit-an nga daghan ang members nga babae sa DAVECO pero wala gyud kaayo managan as officers kay mahadlok nay katungdanan ug busy daw sila. (CSA)</i>
		<i>Feeling a bit discourage, kay sauna ni dagan ko as officer, wala ko kadaog kay paminaw nila weak ang babae mag dala sa Coop. (VML)</i>

3. Roles of Women Members in the DAVECO ARB Cooperative that Influence their Economic Status, Employment Opportunities, Access to Resources, and Cooperative Services

Despite the women's experiences and challenges, the cooperative provided various programs and services that significantly impacted and influenced their economic status, employment opportunities, access to resources, and cooperative services. However, from the interview, the participants emphasized that support should be extended even to non-active cooperative members. This collective effort might ensure the societal impact of women's active involvement and economic empowerment through cooperative engagement.

Presented in Table 3 is the data gathered from the interview. The transcripts were used to extract significant themes based on the recurring ideas and identify sub-themes and supporting statements for deriving the data. One theme emerged from the influence of the roles of women members in the DAVECO ARB Cooperative, which is an additional source of income. One essential theme came out, which is economic empowerment.

3.1 **Theme 3 - Economic Empowerment.** This theme emerges from the influence of various roles of women as members of cooperatives on their economic status, employment, access to resources, and other cooperative services. Based on the data gathered during the interview, the results revealed the following sub-themes: Profit Sharing, Additional Financial Family Support and Supportive Engagements

Profit Sharing and Additional Financial Family Support. During the interview, participants pointed out that being a cooperative member and receiving financial and profit sharing was one of the cooperative's privileges, initiatives, or programs specifically focused on enhancing women's employability or skill development. They utilized loan services for emergency and educational assistance for their children. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2012) says cooperatives can help fix women's challenges. It has been found that adequately managed co-ops can aid and empower their members, improving their economic and social status. These better business methods give everyone adequate job opportunities. These jobs last longer, even in tough times or when much change happens. For this case, it is the experience of participant JCO, not her real name, that as a member of the cooperative, it helped her to access services such as a loan to capital for business after she resigned as a DAVCO worker, and it helped her to send her children to school. Men and women have equal opportunities for these loan services, and no standard qualifications exist. One of the cooperative's BOD members, participant EFR, shared another experience. She claimed that as a member of the DAVECO

IJETRM

International Journal of Engineering Technology Research & Management

www.ijetrm.com

ARB Cooperative, they receive additional income from their land lease, and some members also receive educational loans, patronage refunds, or dividends each year during their regular assembly. These benefits helped them generate income and meet their family's daily needs. Below are statements from the participants:

Additional income kay arkilahan ang yuta, availment of an educational loan, patronage refund, or dividend, for every assembly. (EFR)

Nakatabang parehas anang mka loan ka unya isugod ug capital sa negosyo nya nakatabang ug pagpaskwela sa mga anak. Sa trainings tanan lalaki ug babae makaapil sa coop. (JCO)

It helps to sustain and provide for our financial needs, especially during the school enrollment of my children. I was able to avail of the loan services. (EAA)

Supportive Engagements. It arose from women's multifaceted roles within DAVECO ARB Cooperative, influencing economic status, employment, resource accessibility, and diverse cooperative services. Participant interviews highlighted sentiments emphasizing the empowering impact of cooperative membership. Through encouragement, members participate in training sessions and seminars. However, support should be extended even to non-active cooperative members. This collective effort might ensure the societal impact of women's active involvement and economic empowerment through cooperative engagement. Participant JCO has shared that, for a long time as a member, she has not been updated with the current programs of the cooperative, but as far as she is aware, there is no program intended only for women except for loans. Another participant, an officer member MAL, not her real name, shared that there is a need to engage women members and make them understand that the cooperative is not only providing loan services but that there is another benefit from availing services and programs, especially now that there is an NGO that is currently supporting the cooperative on strengthening their Gender and Development Programs and the creation and formation of women that offer various capacity development training and support for women enterprise projects. The cooperative should engage these women so that they have more significant roles and contributions to the cooperative. Although there has been development in the cooperative sector, it is necessary to address and intervene in gender equity and gender-responsive programming, particularly at the cooperative and farmers' organization levels. The International Labour Organization (ILO), in its publication titled "Advancing gender equality: The Cooperative Way, asserts that despite progress, women's empowerment still faces numerous barriers, and disparities persist even within the cooperative movement. Cooperatives, guided by the seven principles, are well-equipped to promote leadership roles, strengthen the engagement of women, and emphasize their contributions to the growth of institutions and sectors. These are their statements below:

Maka generate sila ug income ug mas maencourage sila nga adunay gyud dako nga tabang ang coop dili lang siya kutob sa loan. (CSA)

Wala kaayu ko kabalo sa ubang program karun sa Coop kay dili man gud ko aktibo nga membro. (JCO)

Ang GAD wala kaayu na napasabot pod sa amua unsaon mahimong functional ug unsay purpose. Wala pod magsugot nga mga officers nga mag gunit anang GAD Program nga makahatag pod unta ug awareness sa amua nga maencourage ang ubang babaing miyembro nga naa silay role ug contribution. (MAL)

Table 3. Essential Themes and Sub-themes that Emerge in the Roles of Women Members that Influence their Economic Status, Employment Opportunities, Access to Resources, and Cooperative Services

Essential Themes	Subthemes	Thematic Statements
Economic Empowerment	Profit Sharing and Additional Financial Family Support	<i>Additional income kay arkilahan ang yuta, availment of an educational loan, patronage refund, or dividend, for every assembly. (EFR)</i>
		<i>Nakatabang parehas anang mka loan ka unya isugod ug capital sa negosyo nya nakatabang ug pagpaskwela sa mga anak. Sa trainings tanan lalaki ug babae makaapil sa coop. (JCO)</i>
		<i>It helps to sustain and provide for our financial needs, especially during the school enrollment of my children. I was able to avail of the loan services. (EAA)</i>
	Supportive Engagements	<i>Maka generate sila ug income ug mas maencourage sila nga adunay gyud dako nga tabang ang coop dili lang siya kutob sa loan. (CSA)</i>
		<i>Wala kaayu ko kabalo sa ubang program karun sa Coop kay dili man gud ko aktibo nga membro. (JCO)</i>
		<i>Ang GAD wala kaayu na napasabot pod sa amua unsaon mahimong functional ug unsay purpose . Wala pod magsugot nga mga officers nga mag gunit anang GAD Program nga makahatag pod unta ug awareness sa amua nga magengage ang ubang babaing miyembro nga naa silay role ug contribution. (MAL)</i>

4. Insights

Table 4 below emphasizes the insights of this case study on Fostering Equality and Growth: Examining the Role of Women Members in the DAVECO Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries. This study delved into the dynamic insights of the participants on how the cooperative can involve strategies and mechanisms to ensure equal access, encompassing resources, opportunities, and inclusive decision-making. Participants shared valuable insights on how the cooperative can guarantee equal resource access for women members and their involvement in decision-making processes. Based on their insightful point of view, one theme is drawn from the interviews with the women members: Opportunity Equalization.

4.1 **Theme 4 - Opportunity Equalization.** This emerging theme is to recommend to initiate activities or programs that will foster women's empowerment, particularly focusing on the youth. Participants emphasized the necessity for the cooperative to initiate activities or programs promoting women's empowerment. One of the participants, EFR, not her real name, highlighted the significance of active involvement from the youth as this is important considering that the majority of women within the cooperative are seniors, unlike the youth who have the energy and vigor to actively engage in such initiatives. This aligns with the conclusion of Clarion et al. (2022) that cooperative initiatives empower

IJETRM

International Journal of Engineering Technology Research & Management

www.ijetrm.com

women through various means such as providing seminars, training sessions and other women-focused programs. These initiatives enable women to develop leadership skills, enhance socialization and acquire other life skills applicable both at home and notably in advancing the overall development of the cooperative. Based on the data gathered during the interview, the results revealed the following sub-themes: Mentorship programs for women's advancement and women's leadership roles and participation in decision-making

Mentorship programs for women's advancement. This is one of the sub-themes that participants emphasized. For DAVECO ARB Cooperative to enhance women's participation in decision-making and influence their engagement, we should be provided with various training and seminars explaining the cooperative's purpose beyond being solely a loan provider, which is crucial. The cooperative should emphasize the importance of cooperative membership and help us understand that cooperative membership offers earning, safe space, and other opportunities, not just financial aid. Additionally, we need a mentorship program to help establish income-generating initiatives. These initiatives are seen as guides to augment income and support women in the cooperative. These are their statements below: These are their statements below:

Para paimpluwensiyahan ang women hatagan ug women seminars para mapasabot sila nga dili lang loan nga pwede sila pod makaincome kay dako na siya nga tabang sa mga babai. (MAL)

As officers sa Coop dili man laborious ang trabaho maong makaatiman pa gihapon mi sa amung pamilya. Hatagan ug paapilun ug training dapat unta kadtu bata bata pa ang mga miyembro kay kaya pa nila pero karun halus senior na. (CSA)

During the meetings, they actively participate and voice out their brilliant ideas (MAS)

Women's Leadership Roles and Participation in Decision-Making. This emerged as another sub-theme from participant insights gathered during interviews, shedding light on how cooperatives strive for opportunity equalization, especially for women members. Findings revealed that despite equal programs within DAVECO Agrarian Beneficiaries Cooperative, women need more recognition to take on leadership positions. Based on our experience as members for many years, women had limited involvement in decision-making, but now there is a shift as women officers are actively engaged. There are instances where our opinions might have been disregarded due to gender, yet they noted a positive change in being heard compared to earlier experiences. Below are some shared participant experiences:

Decision making dili kaayo before, but now officer nako apil na, pero mabitin ghaon ko kay isa rko babae, pero maminaw man nuon sila. To motivate others example kanang maka formulate ug policy then there's improvement its fulfilling to achieve this and help the members to carry their voice. (EFR)

Mapakusgan gyud ang formation of women committee nga naa silay safe space nga sila gyud ang magmanage ug maghimu ug decision. (CSA)

Table 4. Themes and Sub-themes that Outline the Insights of how DAVECO Cooperative Ensures that Women Members have Equal Qccess to Resources, Opportunities, and Decision-making Processes in the Future

Essential Themes	Subthemes	Thematic Statements
Opportunity Equalization	Mentorship programs for women's advancement	<i>Hatagan ug paapilun ug training dapat unta kadtong bata-bata pa ang mga miyembro kay kaya pa nila kay karon halos senior na (EFR)</i>
		<i>Para paimpluwensiyahan ang women hatagan ug women seminars para mapasabot sila nga dili lang loan nga pwede sila pod makaincome kay dako na siya nga tabang sa mga babai. (MA-Ligue)</i>
	Women's Leadership Roles and Participation in Decision-Making	<i>Hatagan sila ug oportunidad nga modagan as leaders ug ipalawum gyud sa ilaha ang purpose sa coop. (MAL)</i>
		<i>Mapakusgan gyud ang formation of the women's committee nga naa silay safe space nga sila gyud ang mag-manage ug mahimu ug decision. (CSA)</i>
		<i>Decision making dili kaayo before, but now officer nako apil na, pero mabitin ghaon ko kay isa rko babae, pero maminaw man nuon sila. To motivate others example kanang maka formulate ug policy then there's improvement its fulfilling to achieve this and help the members to carry their voice. (EFR)</i>

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This qualitative single-case study examining the experiences and roles of women within the DAVECO ARB Cooperative has uncovered multifaceted insights into the transformative impact of cooperative membership on women's lives. They started their membership by being beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) and established an Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Cooperative in 1995. This study has sought to examine and delve into the roles, aspirations, and challenges women actively implicated in the cooperative face.

Based on the results of the findings, two themes were used to describe the experience and roles of women members in the DAVECO ARB Cooperative. One of the themes is Beneficial, and another is Participation Constraints that have a significant impact on their lives as cooperative members for long years as officers and regular members. While this progress transpires and is helpful to them, regular women still face multiple underlying barriers and challenges. These include time constraints from their household responsibilities, the prioritization of generating income, and family accountability as the female member. Moreover, their lack of interest and gender bias in selecting leaders within the cooperative discouraged them.

On the other hand, regarding the roles of women members in the DAVECO ARB Cooperative that influence their economic status, employment opportunities, access to resources, and cooperative services, there is one essential theme generated with two subthemes: Economic empowerment. The majority of the participants have shared that the cooperative's services somehow support improving their economic and social status, influencing them to stay in the cooperative. Based on the data gathered during the interview, the results revealed the following sub-themes: Profit Sharing, Additional Financial Family Support, and Supportive Engagements. The results show that being part of the cooperative can significantly affect women members, giving them access to various benefits, programs, income sharing, and services. Women are encouraged to engage actively in technical training and seminars. They can benefit

IJETRM

International Journal of Engineering Technology Research & Management

www.ijetrm.com

from the cooperative's programs, which have a huge positive impact on their economic status, employment opportunities, and resource access.

While on the insights of how DAVECO ARB Cooperative ensures that women members have equal access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes in the future, the result of the finding generated one essential theme and sub-themes that further discuss the participants' insights. The essential theme is Opportunity Equalization, and the sub-themes that emerged are Mentorship programs for women's advancement, women's leadership roles and Participation in Decision-making. The findings provided valuable insights from the participants on strategies for ensuring equal resource access for women members, fostering their participation in decision-making processes, and effectively balancing their dual roles as farmers, laborers, and cooperative members. The thematic statements underscored the importance of initiating programs that foster women's empowerment, mainly targeting the youth to ensure cooperative sustainability, creating leadership opportunities, and promoting gender-inclusive leadership roles within cooperatives.

Lastly, the researchers would like to recommend that based on the findings of this case study, addressing the constraints and fostering active participation among women within the cooperative can lead to profound societal benefits. This includes poverty reduction, augmented employment opportunities, enhanced food security, amplified women's empowerment, and bolstered human capital development in rural communities. The interview insights stress the pivotal role of cooperatives in augmenting women's employability, fostering skill development, and facilitating access to financial support crucial for emergencies and educational purposes. By addressing existing constraints and fostering an inclusive environment that champions women's active participation and leadership, cooperatives like DAVECO hold the key to economic empowerment, social progress, and community development. Moreso, DAVECO should enhance their existing policies, review their cooperative development /strategic plan, and GAD Plan to provide safe space and equal opportunities for the women members that will strengthen their leadership and influence them to become active contributors and sustainable actors for the cooperative.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researchers express their gratitude to their families and friends, who have been a constant source of inspiration throughout the completion of this study. Additionally, heartfelt thanks are extended to their research adviser, Dr. Cherrelyn P. Campaña, for her unwavering support and invaluable guidance during the course of this research. Lastly, sincere appreciation is extended to the DAVECO Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Cooperative for their active involvement and significant contribution which played a crucial role in the realization of this study.

REFERENCES

- [1] *CDA MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2011-15 - REVISED GUIDELINE FOR THE REGISTRATION OF PRIMARY COOPERATIVES - Supreme Court E-Library*. (n.d.). [https://elibrary.judiciary.gral.development.gov.ph/13\(2\),94-106](https://elibrary.judiciary.gral.development.gov.ph/13(2),94-106). <https://doi.org/10.5897/jaerd2021.1227>
- [2] Clarion, J. M., Dacanay, K., Dacles, G., Daganasol, A., Rosales, R. M., & Tongco, C. J. (2022). The Cooperatives' Initiative for Women Empowerment in Selected Primary Cooperatives in Metro Manila: A Study of its Effect and Significance. *Social Science Research Network*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4248433>
- [3] *DAR to organize more ARBOs*. (2021, March 5). News | Department of Agrarian Reform. <https://www.dar.gov.ph/articles/news/102434>
- [4] Domingo, C. C. (2021). Utilization of the Department of Agrarian Reform Common Service Facilities in Isabela Philippines: Effects to Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization Members Productivity Yield and Income. *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research*, 10(s1), 11–25.
- [5] Druza, K., Aregu, L., & Tsegaye, M. (2021, February 4). Agency, Gender and Development in Oromia, Ethiopia. *Cadernos De Estudos Africanos*, 41, 15–75. <https://doi.org/10.4000/cea.5991>
- [6] *Explainer: How gender inequality and climate change are interconnected | UN Women – Headquarters*. (2022, February 28). UN Women – Headquarters. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/02/explainer-how-gender-inequality-and-climate-change-are-interconnected>

IJETRM

International Journal of Engineering Technology Research & Management

www.ijetrm.com

- [7] Ferguson, H., & Kepe, T. (2011). Agricultural cooperatives and social empowerment of women: A Ugandan case study. *Development in Practice*, 21(3), 421-429.
- [8] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Rome, 2017. (n.d.). *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Rome, 2017, ISBN 978-92-5-109551-5*.
- [9] Food and Agriculture Organization, 2010–2011, the State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development, P. 40) . (n.d.).
- [10] Huot, S., Jensen, L., Bates, R. M., & Ader, D. (2023). Barriers of women in acquiring leadership positions in agricultural cooperatives: The case of Cambodia☆. *Rural Sociology*, 88(3), 708–730. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ruso.12490>
- [11] *Impact of access to land on food security and poverty: the case of Philippine agrarian reform*[11] - E.A. Guardian. (n.d.). <https://www.fao.org/3/j0415t/j0415t08.htm>
- [12] *Mandate, mission and vision*. (n.d.). Department of Agrarian Reform. <https://www.dar.gov.ph/about-us/mandate-mission-and-vision/>
- [13] Ogoyi, D. (2023, February 13). *5 Challenges the Agricultural Sector Faces in 2023* | Earth.Org. Earth.Org. <https://earth.org/challenges-farmers/>
- [14] Mhembwe, S., & Dube, E. (2017). The role of cooperatives in sustaining the livelihoods of rural communities: The case of rural cooperatives in Shurugwi District, Zimbabwe. *Jamba: Journal of Disaster Risk Studies*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.4102/jamba.v9i1.341>
- [15] Santos, S. G. G. D. L., Pantoja, B. R., & Rañeses, F. P. (2022). Gender equality in selected Philippine agrarian reform cooperative management: the women-members' perspectives. *International Journal of Gender Studies in Developing Societies*, 4(3), 229. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijgsds.2022.121105>
- [16] Trainer's Manual Gender Sensitivity Training An Introduction Gender Analysis in Cooperatives. (n.d.). Trainer's Manual Gender Sensitivity Training an Introduction Gender Analysis in Cooperatives. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-manila/documents/publication/wcms_761804.pdf
- [17] VERMA, N., SINGH, M. P., NATH, A., KASHYAP, P., SINGH, S. P., & PANWAR, A. S. (2020, March 2). Feminine farm operational methods, involvement, hardships and sensitivity in farming systems analysis. *The Indian Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 90(1), 96–101. <https://doi.org/10.56093/ijas.v90i1.98552>
- [18] *Qualitative research*. (n.d.). Google Books. https://books.google.com.ph/books?hl=en&lr=&id=uQa6EAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1939&dq=theory+use+for+live+experience+in+qualitative+researches&ots=PEznl6jZRf&sig=hZJzvf3ql20XecgGwS27SvYIczM&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=theory%20use%20for%20live%20experience%20in%20qualitative%20researches&f=false