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The cooperative movement in Uganda: an examination of performance of agricultural cooperatives

Author(s): Nathan Hagobi Hasahya, Marie G. Nakitende, Simeon Wanyama & Gideon Nkurunziza

Abstract:

This chapter explores the evolution of agricultural cooperatives, main determinants influencing their performance, together with approaches for their restoration and strengthening in Uganda. It reviews the historical path of cooperative performance, outlining the drivers of both success and decline, drawing on existing studies and examples from selected cooperative unions, guided by Ronald Coase's (Economica, 4, 386–405, 1937) theory of the firm. Through these case illustrations, the chapter highlights the role of cooperatives and the reasons for their varying outcomes, which are largely shaped by internal organizational practices, such as shared institutional values and transparent leadership, alongside state involvement, the depth of social networks, and community integration. Consequently, for stakeholders seeking to reestablish cooperatives in Uganda, emphasis should be directed toward fostering member-based and locally owned entities that are democratically managed, engaged in high-value agricultural production and marketing, and guided by a collective vision with accountable and responsible leadership.

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