

Participation of Farmer Leaders in Local and National Governance Structures: Will it Work?

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This paper aims to present the outcomes of participation of farmer leaders elected to local and national government positions. At the local levels, these positions include being chiefs of villages, members of the local village council, mayor, and municipal councilor; while at the national level, being representative of a party list in Congress. This research looks into the outcomes on four aspects: on the individual leader, specifically on their views regarding the parliamentary struggle and its contribution to advancing their development agenda; on the benefits that accrue to the people's organization; on the services that were rendered to the community; and how the leaders achieved and promoted their sectoral development agenda as elected officials. The study also intends to surface lessons and implications to community development theory and practice in terms of leadership development, community organizing, community governance and empowerment..

The case studies provide rich insights on the role of farmer leaders in local and national governance. The cases show the importance of practicing the values of being persistent, consultative, participatory, and selfless service, which the leaders have learned from their respective organizations and carried with them even when they are now in government positions. Their experiences demonstrate that people's organizations are good training ground for future leaders in government. Moreover, the leaders have shown that if elected officials have the welfare of people in mind, remote areas will not be neglected and will be provided with basic infrastructure and social services which people have aspired for over the years.