2030 Agenda explicitly recognizes the role of the private sector, including cooperatives, and of civil society organizations in the achievement of the SDGs. We know that in rural areas of developing countries collective action may help smallholders and other artisanal producers in the primary sector to overcome a number of barriers, constraints, asymmetries and enhance their access to markets, assets, technology and information. By using a combination of the capability approach and of institutional analysis, we present a comparative analysis of five representative case studies of producers’ organizations in the primary sector, each one in a different developing region (Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, South Asia, East Asia). The study is based on original field research which combine and triangulate quantitative and qualitative methods. Our main objective is to verify if and how collective action may contribute to reduce poverty, fostering social inclusion, reduce inequalities and address sustainability in rural areas, with special attention to gender issues and indigenous people. We intend to explore the conditions and circumstances under which rural producers’ organizations –especially genuine cooperatives– become inclusive institutions that foster both people’s basic capabilities and agency, as well as organizations' limitations that restraint participation and empowerment of the poorest. We think that this study may contribute in better understanding and emphasizing the fundamental –but underestimated– contribution that collective action may give to the implementation of 2030 agenda, and more in general to sustainable human development and economic democracy.