



How The Attitude of Israeli Farmers Can Help Create Prosperity Among Smallholders?

"Inspire to be the best in whatever you do, for you'll never be better than what you inspire to be."

There were 13 children in my age group in the Kibbutz. Most of us grew up together, living in the same building, one bad next to the other, from birth till 18.

Our parents had different jobs, but we, the children, enjoyed equal conditions of a high standard of living, free of worries.

EQUALITY OUT OF STRENGTH

How could it be that less than 20 years after a group of poor young orphans climbed on a rocky dry hill, they reached economic prosperity by practicing mainly agriculture?

The secret was always in the set of self-expectations and how they thought others perceived them.

They were poor, with no significant experience in agriculture. Still, they knew everybody expected them to excel and lead, so they "excelled" and became "leaders" in agriculture and whatever they did.

Their motto was, "*We are always first...*," a line from the Palmach army unit anthem, meaning we will always be at the forefront, the first to challenge any national problem and difficulty.

Accordingly, they set their goals high – to set an example to everyone else in Israel, give and not take, and never be afraid of challenges.

They valued agriculture as a lifestyle while perceiving it as **agro-business**, a source of high income, like any other profession.

There was never a conflict between agriculture and business; they were one.

You see, in the Kibbutz, it never mattered what job your parents worked, for we received equal treatment and life conditions.

How could it be? Because our parents had very similar incomes, including those doing farming activities.

Based on economic considerations, they would replace the unprofitable farming activity with ones more profitable to secure their business and lifestyle expectations. Farming, as a business activity, had to compete with other business activities, and it did well.

This attitude wasn't limited to agriculture; those farmers and their children took the same attitude to other sectors, like industry, science, business, etc., and excelled in them all.

Those achievements didn't happen in a vacuum but in a supportive social environment that respected and even admired those farmers and the sacrifices they made to withstand the many difficulties on the way to unprecedented achievements.

Those business and professional achievements are partially a result of the *Pygmalion effect*; when high expectations lead to improved performance and vice versa, low expectations lead to worsened performance.

Israeli farmers believed they were the best and set very high targets for themselves, which they pursued, achieved, and excelled in, leading them, unintentionally, to be leaders in agriculture and later other sectors.

For example, the Kibbutz movement is as little as 1.2% of the Israeli population but accounts for 9% of Israel's industrial output (worth US\$8 Billion) and 40% of its agricultural output (worth over US\$1.7 Billion).

Ultimately, our achievements reflect our life journey **attitude**. How we perceive ourselves is influenced by how others, including our government, perceive us and what we do.

Sub-summary

Pygmalion effect – farmers (people) who identify with goals will go above and beyond to fulfill the expectations of others and turn those into their own expectations. The will to fulfill expectations provides us with a "superpower."

Your **attitude** will determine your fate - if you choose "not to be poor," and if you choose "economic prosperity," you will achieve your goal. Now, think of smallholders and Israeli pioneers.

Business - Agriculture is a business capable of sustaining a middle and upper-class standard of living.

THE MEGA-PROJECTS MESSAGE

In response to the previous column, discussing agro mega-projects, several comments mentioned that there is enough food in the world and that the problem is the logistics and costs involved in getting it to impoverished rural communities.

Since impoverished rural communities can't pay for the costly logistics or depend on others to finance it, they suffer hunger.

Now, let's flip-flap the previous sentence – *If rural communities had the funds to pay for the food and logistics, they wouldn't be hungry or considered impoverished.*

We learn from this that food will reach those who have money, not necessarily those in need and hunger.

Hence, a strategic solution to hunger must include increasing farmers' income in rural communities.

Agro mega-projects are field factories for food production, emphasizing production efficiency.

Do agro mega-projects solve the pain of logistics? It may ease it, but it doesn't solve it.

Do agro mega-projects help to increase farmers' income? NO!

Yet, the most significant damage agro mega-projects cause is elsewhere.

If you are a poor smallholder growing maize and see your government financing and establishing a mega-project for growing and processing maize, what message do you get from it?

Is this a message of trust and confidence in smallholders' ability or an opposite statement reflecting the loss of trust in smallholders' ability to escape poverty and even to provide themselves with enough food, which is why the mega-project is necessary?

Most of the African and Indian smallholders I met reflected the low level of government expectations from them and their low self-expectations from life.

What do you think is the cumulative effect on farmers (people) whose leaders' and public expectations from them are down to "*do your best not to suffer hunger and not be poor*"?

Sub-summary

Smallholders in developing economies identify with their government's low expectations of them.

The overall government attitude is, "*Don't starve and do your best not to be poor. In case you fail in doing even that, we have a food production mega-project so you don't starve.*"

Think of this in terms of the *national attitude* and the *Pygmalion effect* created by the government and reflected in those in the agro sector, which often constitute over 50% of the national workforce.

PROSPERITY

Small-hold farmers constitute over 50% of the workforce in many developing economies.

They are the nation's beating heart and soul and the litmus paper to the nation and its leadership's state.

Leaders can see beyond the apparent present into the future and how things will be once actions are taken.

To have such actions be taken, leaders can instill the attitude of winners by creating a positive *Pygmalion effect*.

The current national leadership and small-hold farmers' relationship starting point is that of mutual distrust, disrespect, and disbelief.

The direct and indirect messages small-hold farmers receive are -

- **You were** poor and hungry and will remain so.
- **You will** continue to be a source of concern for hunger, poverty, and political instability.
- **You are** so many, but your economic impact is negligible.
- **You are** a burden.
- **You are** a source of pain, losses, and expenses.
- **You cause** continuous national distress.

The ongoing poisonous farmers-government relationship hurts the nation and must be exchanged with one reflecting mutual trust and respect, delivering a genuinely positive message.

We can use the Israeli farmers' life attitude as a benchmark for what we can achieve by positive thinking. Consider the reflection of the following attitude to the farmers in your country -

- **You** (farmers) are the solution to our national challenges.
- **You** will ensure healthy quality food is abundant.
- **You** can grow as much as we need, with a significant surplus.
- **You** can live in prosperity and contribute to the national rapid GDP growth.
- **You** can help increase our foreign currency reserve through export.
- **You** are a source of stability, power, and economic growth.
- **You** are a central and critical component of the national resilience.
- **You** are a source of national pride and happiness.
- **You** are the change we have waited for.

The path to a national-scale change is revolutionizing our attitude to farmers and how we perceive them.

The positive change will arrive when leaders and business people in developing economies genuinely believe and act in the spirit that **farmers are not the problem but the solution.**

And one other thing, don't be afraid to set high business goals.

This change must be reflected in our verbal messages, simultaneously with actions.

Actions and policy change are crucial; only those will convince farmers and others that you believe in what you say.

The first action is investing in tens/hundreds of rural communities (instead of one mega project) under a novel model, e.g., adjusted and tailor-made Kibbutz or Moshav models or applying the Israeli-based ready-to-use Dream Valley model.

Such projects shouldn't involve companies suited for the mega-projects, as the models and attitudes required are fundamentally different.

MASTER

Don't look around; you are the master of your future.

You can ignore, vilify, and even try to vanish them, but small-hold farmers are the change and opportunity developing economies need.

Begin by changing how you perceive small-hold farmers, then turn it into words and messages and those into actions.

How you answer those questions and then act will determine the future and prosperity of you and others.

NOTE. If you are happy with how things are, keep doing whatever you do, the following questions are not for you.

- **Are you tired** of decades of agro mega-projects, where small-hold farmers become poorer and negatively impacted by those projects?
- **Do you want** to continue investing in agro mega-projects with negative ROI?
- **Is it time** to redirect your investments and efforts to profitable, game-changing projects with small-hold farmers?
- **Is it time** to use and benefit from the Pygmalion effect to improve farmers' performance?
- **Do you like** to profit from a pure Israeli attitude enforced with a steel bar business model, tech, science, knowledge, and market connections?

If you answer "Yes" to at least one of those, you must do things differently than you have done so far.

It would ease your decision to act if you knew that small-hold farmers are the most significant business opportunity for governments, business people, and investors looking to capitalize on developing economies. And yes, agro-business is more needed, profitable, legitimate, and sustainable than mineral trading!

Want to change the rural community's development trajectory in your country or elsewhere? Are you unsatisfied with a running rural project or want to plan a new one? Message me +972-54-2523425

Whether you agree or not, share your thoughts with me.

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

- **PYGMALION EFFECT** –smallholders must believe they can be the best, and one day, they will.
- **ATTITUDE** – Farmers must strive to be the best to reach prosperity.
- **AGRICULTURE** is a business, which is also a way of life.
- **MEGA-PROJECTS** are field factories to produce food efficiently.
- **FOOD** reaches those who have money.
- **INCREASING** farmers' income is the ultimate way to ensure zero hunger.
- **DEDICATED** income-increasing projects in rural communities should replace mega-projects.
- **RURAL PROJECTS** must use novel models, unlike those for the mega-projects or others that didn't confirm the high expectations.

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**** Mental and Economic Freedom Are Interconnected ****

See you soon,

Nimrod



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P.S.

If you missed it, here is a link to last week's blog, "[Is Agro Mega-Projects The Solution To Developing Countries Challenges.](#)"

P.P.S.

[Dream Valley](#) is a field-proven disruptive business model based on the successful Israeli model.

To learn more and become a Dream Valley partner, contact me at nisraely@biofeed.co.il, +972-542523425 (WhatsApp/Text)

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***Change Begins With A Decision
That The Existing Reality Is A Choice
and Not A Decree of Fate***