



WHAT MADE RURAL COMMUNITIES THRIVE AFTER DECADES OF POVERTY?

"We are proud of our personal achievements, though we achieve more by collaborating and working together".

In a few days, I will be in Rwanda to launch the second [International Conference On Business Models In Agriculture](#) (IBMA), March 25-28, with this year's theme, *Reshaping Agribusiness Models for Building Prosperous Rural Communities*.

Whatever we do or say, our goal remains one: **transforming impoverished rural communities into prosperous ones.**

We always stay true to our goal of building prosperous communities. When we fail, we ask, "WHY?" and then, "HOW can we change this?" And "WHAT do we need to do differently?"

We are not the first to ask those questions and provide them with answers.

The President of Rwanda, Mr. Paul Kagame, stated, "*When we work together, we achieve more and go even further... We believe in cooperation and working together. Those are the values we stand for*".

The historian Prof. Yuval Noah Harari echoed a similar sentiment, stating, "*What really made us successful, what made us the rulers of the planet, and not Chimps and not the Neanderthals, is not any individual ability, but our collective ability; our ability to cooperate flexibly in very large numbers... and this is our secret of Success*".

Keep It Simple Stupid (KISS) is always good advice.

Is such a one-word message simple enough?

My goal in this column is to help you remember **only one word** (!) and ensure you place it within the proper **context**.

If you do this, you will gain the power to turn impoverished smallholder communities into thriving ones.

The story I am about to share with you is a true one. It is about a community of impoverished farmers who embraced that word with its whole meaning, placed it in the proper context, and acted upon it.

By doing so, they revolutionized rural communities' models, changed the history and fate of their own and their families' lives, and put the agro sector and the nation's economy on the fast track to success.

You must think, "*Ye ye, more stories; it may happen once but will never repeat*".

Then, you will make an imaginative long list of reasons and explanations why you and everybody else can't repeat it.

"It always seems impossible until it's done".

Nelson Mandela

IT IS COMPLICATED MAKING THINGS SIMPLE

In previous columns, we discussed the fundamentals, principles, models, and values that explain the root cause of smallholders' poverty.

To do that, we had to dive deep into the "hard stuff" that no one likes to deal with, as it can get complicated, complex, and even philosophical.

Just like we can't skip from kindergarten directly to a Ph.D., we had to deal with the hard stuff, which explains precisely why some farmers prosper while others do not. AND ...on the way, we kill some "sacred cows" and myths.

Delving into the enigma of poverty and prosperity yielded valuable knowledge about its source and root causes.

Our reward is that now that we have the background knowledge, we can simplify our solution and reduce it to a single word that is easy to understand, explain, and use (practice).

This word will not be any of the following, which makes me dizzy just from thinking about them – pesticides, fertilizers, seeds, machinery, infrastructure, high-tech, science, irrigation, IOT, land, water, subsidies, etc.

This is not to say that these are insignificant but to emphasize that they shouldn't be on our top list when we set on a mission to eradicate poverty and create prosperity.

Warning: The forthcoming one-word concept defies conventional poverty-fighting tools like technology. Instead, it hinges on self-responsibility, good intentions, and leadership. Be prepared.

THE ONE-WORD CONCEPT

After all the scholarly explanations, reasoning, theories, models, and principles, people need something simple and understandable that can be implemented and bring the desired result.

For that purpose, I have reduced everything there is to know about decreasing smallholders' poverty and replaced it with prosperity with one word -

COLLABORATION.

Definition - Collaboration is a partnership, a union, the act of producing or making something together.

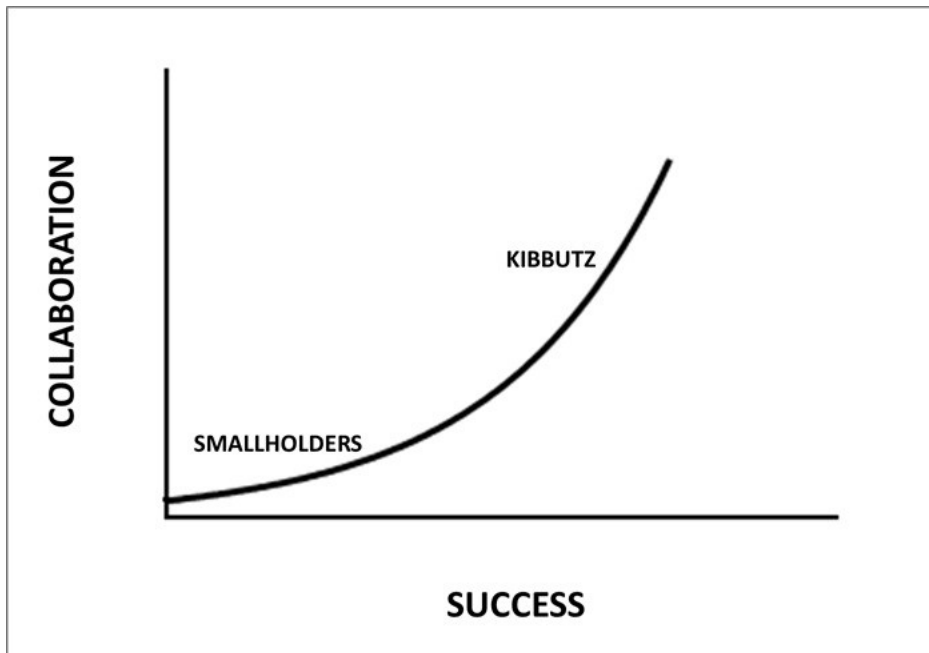
In this context, Collaboration refers to its broadest sense as “Strategic Collaboration,” one meant for years ahead versus a momentary collaboration, which is not part of our discussion.

Since this is not a philosophical, theoretical-oriented column but a result-oriented one, Collaboration represents what one needs to do to achieve superior results.

At its core, Collaboration represents and contains values and principles.

But that is not all. When we "push forward" the Collaboration concept, it becomes a powerful, beyond imagination, model for almost any topic we wish to catapult, including (separated or combined) business, organization, and social.

One example of such an organizational model is the Kibbutz model, which we previously discussed and is highly relevant for those who care about the well-being of small-hold farmers.



Human Collaboration and success are interlinked.

We can ignore it, shut our eyes and years, hate it, or turn our heads the other way.

Still, to create prosperity for impoverished rural communities, we must return to "collaboration" in a form tailored to our needs.

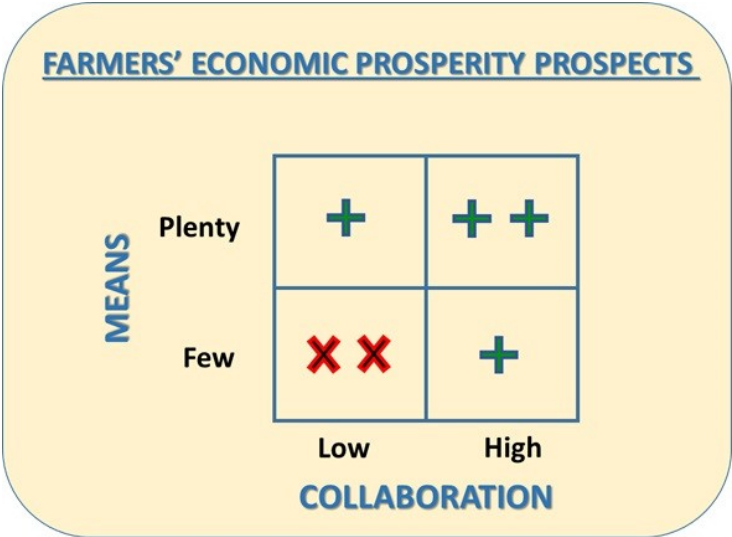
THE CRITICAL ROLE OF COLLABORATION

We can determine our future (or else I wouldn't urge you to change), but not where we are born.

5% of global farmers are lucky to be born into prosperity, having plenty of means.

With that birth edge gained by sheer luck, they still struggle to maintain their status as the pack's leaders.

However, 95% of farmers, those less lucky, are born into poverty with a starting point of having few means. Many of those live in poverty, and some even suffer hunger.



Smallholders have few means and low collaboration levels and hence suffer persistent poverty.

Hundreds of millions are born into the second group. After looking around, many see no hope, as none of their friends ever escaped the poverty trap of an agricultural-based livelihood. So they quit farming and go to the big city.

While there are stories about impoverished farmers who built themselves based on agriculture and escaped poverty, those are sporadic stories that were never scaled up to entire communities.

In contrast, when did you last see a community of impoverished farmers who have all become prosperous and are part of the middle class?

It is not surprising that you have never seen such a community, for those are rarer than unicorns.



But there is one exception to the rule: one land where unicorns are the norm!

That land is far and remote, and its story began like that of every developing economy, with impoverished rural communities that had no particular advantages and struggled to survive.

This exceptional story began in the 19th century when people moved to that land of desert and malaria (at that time) to inhabit it by practicing agriculture and establishing new villages.

Collaboration between the farmers in that new village was as minimal as in the old villages.

It was the type of minimal temporary Collaboration between business owners who, by coincidence, happened to be on the same street.

The farmers in those old and new villages were poor.

Poverty was not the lot of farmers or individual villages but a widespread phenomenon, the rule that indicates the exception to the rule.

In this depressing environment, where it seems there is no way out, something miraculous happened when a group of young farmers decided to establish a new agricultural community "with a twist".

They established the community next to other rural communities, sharing the same land, water, sun, technologies, knowledge, value and supply chains, and markets.

The "twist" had nothing to do with agriculture, though it was about to impact the country's agriculture and farmers profoundly.

The "twist" concerned how they organized their community and the worker/member-community relationships.

They established their community based on the principle of pre-agreed **intensive Collaboration**.

It means Collaboration becomes part of every subject and matter of personal-community interaction, including education, housing, food, livelihood, healthcare, infrastructure, transportation, etc.

Did it change anything?

Well, while the other rural communities around them continued to lose money and suffer poverty, as it always was, this newly formed community presented profitability.

The difference was as big as it is between managing multimedia on the iPhone 14 versus the Nokia 1100, that is, performance at a different level.

From then on, all new rural communities were established based on and according to the novel principle of that group of young farmers, i.e., collaboration-oriented communities.

Against any statistic known before (or since), all new rural communities thrived and continue to prosper to this day.

You may wonder what happened with the farmers in the villages established before introducing the collaboration-oriented community model.

Those villages ceased to exist as villages and transformed into cities or collaboration-oriented communities (Moshav).

If you haven't guessed yet, this is the story of rural development in Israel since 1850.

THE SOCIAL CHANGE AND SUCCESS

The narratives of Israel's rural communities—Villages, Kibbutzim, and Moshavim—originated during the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire, evolved through the British Mandate era, and culminated in establishing the State of Israel a century later.

Unlike the Kibbutz and Moshav models, the Village model didn't prosper under the Ottoman and British empires.

Furthermore, the Israeli farmers discovered that the "minimal collaboration" village model business results pale compared to novel collaboration-centric approaches like Kibbutz and Moshav.

The result was inevitable; the Village model disappeared from Israel even before the establishment of the state.

In contrast, with more stringent community collaboration, the Kibbutz and Moshav thrived under the three types of governing, i.e., Ottoman, British, and Israeli, which shows the resilience of that model to changing governance environments.

Israeli village communities were as miserable and impoverished as those in developing countries today, maybe even more. 100% of those communities suffered poverty.

In contrast, rural communities based on Collaboration thrived and prospered anywhere around Israel. That is why you will only find today in Israel Kibbutz and Moshav and none of the Village-like communities (named in Hebrew Moshava).

THE THREE DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

Overall, farmers can take one of the following three paths;

(1) Those with plenty of means become Farm Enterprises. These are typical of developed countries and can prosper like any commercial company.

(2) Those with few means but enhanced Collaboration, typical of Israel, can act like and even better than Farm Enterprises and prosper.

(3) Those with few means and little Collaboration, typical to developing countries, can't compete with Farm Enterprises and suffer poverty.



We don't choose to be born farmers, nor if we are born to a wealthy family or one of smallholders with far fewer means.

Suppose those born to an impoverished family want to continue farming. In that case, there are two ways forward: They can follow in their fathers' footsteps and remain poor or rethink the

community organization model and show social innovation skills by intensifying the community members' Collaboration.

As promised at the beginning of the column, one word will change the livelihoods of millions: the agro sector, the national economy, the future, and much more.

It sounds simple, for it is simple.

By the way, did you notice that we had a meaningful discussion about rural communities' poverty and prosperity, yet we said nothing about technology!?

If you insist on the importance of technology to agro-sector success, look at the title picture to see the "advanced" technology the Israeli Kibbutz pioneers used. Is technology king?

What keeps you from shifting impoverished rural communities into thriving ones?

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Here are four ways you can work with me to help your rural communities step forward to shift from poverty into ongoing prosperity:

* **Consultancy** on rural communities' models: Why, What, and How, e.g., based on the Kibbutz and Moshav lifestyle models.

* **Local & National programs related to agro-produce export models - [Dream Valley](#)** global vertical value and supply chain business model and concept connects (a) input suppliers with farmers in developing economies and (b) those farmers with consumers in premium markets.

* **Crop protection: [Biofeed](#)**, an eco-friendly **zero-spray control technology and protocol** solution, is most suitable for developing countries.

* **IBMA Conference - To learn, share, and practice novel business models: the [IBMA 2024 conference](#)** theme is "*Reshaping Agribusiness Models for Building Prosperous Rural Communities.*" Register now or contact me.

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TAKEAWAY MESSAGES

- **WHEN EMBRACED** and practiced at the community level, Collaboration is **the** game-changer and a vicious "poverty slayer".
- **COLLABORATION** requires social innovation and skills.
- **SOCIAL MODELS ARE FIRST** in the efforts to eradicate poverty; everything else, including technology, follows.

More on the October 7th genocide in South Israel:

[Humanity is one organism](#)

[Videos - The October 7 genocide](#)

If you got to here, read this column, and enjoyed it, please be nice to your friends, share it with them, or help them [Subscribe](#).

"Change begins with a decision that the existing reality is a choice and not a decree of fate."

See you soon,

Nimrod



Dr. Nimrod Israely is the CEO and Founder of [Dream Valley](#) and [Biofeed](#) companies and the Chairman and Co-founder of the [IBMA conference](#). +972-54-2523425 (WhatsApp), or [email nisraely@biofeed.co.il](mailto:nisraely@biofeed.co.il)

P.S.

If you missed it, here is a link to last week's blog, "[History Proves Rural-Community-Innovation Is The Key To Prosperity](#)".

P.P.S.

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

You can also follow me on [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), and [Facebook](#).

*This article addresses general phenomena. The mention of a country/continent is used for illustration purposes only.