



Prosperity and the Evolution of Human Organizational Structures

“Often, the solution to a big problem is right at our doorstep, and all we need to do is reach out and use it.”

A Modern Model with Ancient Roots

Imagine standing at the dawn of humanity’s first village or city—an epoch-making moment we can only speculate about today. However, in the case of the Kibbutz revolutionary community lifestyle, we have a far more tangible origin story.

It begins in 1909 on the north bank of the Jordan, where the river flows out of the Sea of Galilee and begins its winding route south to the Dead Sea. A young, idealistic group of

eight pioneers—many still in their late teens or early twenties—approached Dr. Arthur Ruppin, the visionary leader at the Kinneret Farm, with a bold proposition: to fuse a cooperative ethos with solid business principles, believing they could break agriculture's age-old association with poverty.

With Dr. Ruppin's approval, these pioneers crossed the Jordan to its southern bank and set up an experimental community on their own terms. Within a year, they not only dispelled doubts but generated substantial profits—proving that ambition and ingenuity, paired with innovative organizational and business models, could ignite prosperity even under the most challenging conditions.

Their success was just the beginning. Having proven that the "impossible" was indeed possible, the original group moved on. In 1910, a second group, known as "The Hadera Commune", settled permanently at the same site on the banks of the Jordan River. Applying the same principles and organizational model, they replicated the earlier success and formally established Group Dgania, later renamed Kibbutz Dgania.

Far more than just another farming settlement, Dgania marked the birth of a revolutionary communal model—a structure that defied the norms of its time and provided a powerful framework for achieving the pioneers' boldest aspirations. What began as a humble experiment quickly evolved into a transformative way of life, offering new possibilities for communities and enterprises worldwide.

My family's story and personal life are deeply intertwined with the larger history of the Kibbutz. In 1925, my paternal grandparents joined Kibbutz Ayelet HaShahar, which had been founded in 1915 as the third Kibbutz ever established. Then, in 1948, my mother and her friends—many of them Holocaust survivors—settled on a rocky hill west of Jerusalem to establish Kibbutz Tzuba. My father joined them shortly after. These pivotal moments in my family's history reflect the enduring power of the Kibbutz model to transform barren land and shattered lives into thriving, resilient communities.

Their success in transforming barren soil into fertile farmland symbolized the Kibbutz movement's extraordinary ability to turn shared ideals into tangible achievements. **Most Kibbutzim became profitable within just a few years**—a feat that, even today, remains rare in comparable farming projects in the developing world. In 1983, at the age of 18, I had the privilege of spending a year with a group of pioneers who had established Kibbutz Kadarim only three years earlier. That experience deepened my understanding of the Kibbutz model's unique power to combine vision, collaboration, and structure to achieve remarkable success against the odds.

None of these successes were miracles. They demonstrated that when people unite around shared, mission-driven goals and adopt advanced organizational structures, they can achieve prosperity even in the most challenging environments. The Kibbutz model stands as proof that unity, a clear shared purpose, and an innovative organizational framework can drive remarkable growth and resilience where others might see only hardship and obstacles.

To understand why the Kibbutz succeeded where the other community models fell short—and why the Kibbutz concept holds such extraordinary promise for communities worldwide—let us journey through humanity’s most transformative community structures, from the tribal fires of early hunter-gatherers to the Kibbutz in Israel.

The Tribe: Humanity’s Original Blueprint

Long before the Agricultural Revolution, for nearly 2.5 million years, tribes defined how humans lived. In these small hunter-gatherer bands, each member’s survival depended on the well-being of the entire group, forging a profound sense of belonging and mutual reliance. Even after the advent of farming, it took 6,000 years before half of humanity embraced agriculture and the village community model. By sheer longevity, tribal life remains unmatched, and our inherent inclination to seek connection, meaning, and safety in a close-knit community still resonates today.

The Village: Humanity’s First Industry

Roughly 12,000 years ago, the Agricultural Revolution introduced agriculture on a larger scale, transforming nomadic bands into **villages** where people could grow and store food. These settlements drove population growth and gave rise to more complex social structures, but they also eroded the deep interdependence of the tribe. Families in villages became more isolated, each handling its own fields and survival. Over time, **solonist farming**, i.e., smallholders, became commonplace, with limited collaboration among households. Despite its power to feed more people, the village model took 6,000 years to become the primary livelihood for over half the global population, indicating a slower transition than one might expect. Early villagers often contended with significant challenges despite the advantages of larger, more stable communities. The higher population densities in villages created fertile conditions for the spread of disease, while narrower diets, reliant on a limited range of crops, often led to malnutrition. Additionally, the repetitive nature of farming labor took a toll on physical health, contrasting sharply with the more varied activities of nomadic hunter-gatherers. This mix of stability and hardship underscores the complexities of humanity’s first great leap in societal organization.

The City: Scaling Up the Village

About 6,000 years ago, some villages expanded and evolved into what we now call cities. Driven by trade, governance, and specialization, cities offered protection,

marketplaces, official rules, and a wider range of professions—creating significantly more business opportunities than villages could.

However, cities also exacerbated some of the inherent problems of the village model. Families often felt even more isolated, households struggled to survive independently, and wealth became increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few. While cities represented a leap in societal complexity, they amplified many of the challenges rooted in the organizational shortcomings of their village origins.

Cities retained many of the same general economic and social patterns as villages, but with larger populations and greater demands on resources. Surprisingly, it was only in 2007 that the global urban population surpassed the rural population, highlighting just how enduring and resilient the older village model has been throughout history.

Although cities may seem modern, their framework is rooted in a design first developed 12,000 years ago during the rise of villages. It's akin to trying to run a modern computer on a 50-year-old operating system—functional but outdated and inefficient, urgently calling for an upgrade. While cities are larger and more complex than villages, they still carry many of the same fundamental weaknesses inherited from their village roots. These limitations highlight the pressing need for a new community model—one that is better suited to address the challenges of today's interconnected, fast-changing world.

The Ltd Company: Industry Without Community

When the Industrial Revolution began, the limited liability company (Ltd Company) became popular and changed the world of business. It allowed people to invest money in large-scale projects without risking everything they owned. This new style of company boosted manufacturing and trade, making them bigger and more efficient, and it spread across the globe. However, it also pushed workers away from having a real say in how the business was run. As a result, many communities suffered because they had little control over how local resources were used.

Even though modern technology has moved Ltd companies into the digital world—where they often act across borders—one problem remains: people work in huge organizations that do not usually satisfy deeper human needs. We still want to feel a true sense of belonging, have shared goals, and support each other in meaningful ways, but large companies are rarely designed to meet those needs.

The Kibbutz: A New Fusion of Community and Business

The Kibbutz emerged in the early 20th century as a hybrid that pulled together the strengths of both ancient and modern systems. It resurrected the tribe's communal

spirit, bringing family, livelihood, and social life under one roof, yet it also borrowed organizational efficiency from Ltd companies. Unlike corporate employees, Kibbutz members co-own the enterprise, aligning personal well-being with organizational success. Instead of giving most profits to a small group of shareholders, a Kibbutz puts its earnings back into the community. This means building housing, providing healthcare and education, and improving existing businesses or creating new ones. This structure has helped it excel not only in agriculture but also in diverse industrial ventures and export-oriented businesses. By taking this approach, the Kibbutz shows that running a profitable business and maintaining a strong community can go hand in hand.

Challenges and New Directions

Like a Ltd company, whose existence depends on having and achieving specific missions, the Kibbutz relies on a unifying sense of purpose to thrive. Its founding mission—transforming barren lands, building an egalitarian society, and contributing to the establishment of a Jewish State—was largely fulfilled by 1948, with the creation of the State of Israel.

Ironically, this success, which effectively eliminated the Kibbutz's original mission, left it without a clear, shared purpose to sustain its unity. The failure to redefine a new mission initiated a process of decline and fragmentation, as the absence of a guiding mission undermined the togetherness and motivation that had fueled its earlier achievements.

This underscores a vital truth: for mission-driven communities like the Kibbutz, having and pursuing clear, evolving goals is not optional—it is the foundation of their survival, growth, and success.

Note. The same principle applies at the state level, where a nation's ability to thrive hinges on its capacity to define a shared mission—one that fosters a sense of togetherness and unites its people around common goals. Without such a mission, the bonds that hold a society together risk weakening, undermining its resilience and capacity for progress.

Still, the story of the Kibbutz is far from over. In Israel, the Kibbutz movement has the potential to reclaim a leading societal role by addressing national or global grand challenges. Internationally, the Kibbutz presents an appealing model for developing regions, offering a pathway to transition beyond smallholder agriculture into more diverse and sustainable industries, including the agro-industry.

Even in advanced economies, grappling with social fragmentation and inequality, the Kibbutz provides valuable lessons. Its proven ability to integrate cooperation, shared prosperity, and innovative structures demonstrates how communities can balance

economic productivity with human connection, offering a framework for tackling some of today's most pressing challenges.

Dispelling Misconceptions

Many people picture Kibbutzim as communities where children live away from their parents or where everyone eats together in a communal dining hall. While it's true that I grew up in such a system—one that no longer exists—this was never the foundation of the Kibbutz's success. The real strength of the Kibbutz lies in its unique organizational structure: shared ownership, equal rights and decision-making, and a strong shared vision and mission that unites its members and drives collective prosperity.

Sometimes, people get caught up in specific cultural details from a certain time or place, missing the bigger picture. The Kibbutz model is not defined by these practices; rather, it's a flexible framework that can be adapted to any community striving to remain productive, while placing people and relationships at its core. Its principles—collaboration, equality, and purpose—are timeless and universal.

The Pattern: New Needs, New Structures

A clear historical pattern emerges: tribes suited our hunter-gatherer ancestors, villages supported early agricultural societies, cities developed around trade and specialization, and the Ltd Company fueled industrialization. Each structure arose to meet the needs of a particular era. Yet the Ltd Company arrived without an accompanying community model that could sustain people's deeper social and emotional needs. The Kibbutz fills this void by combining a company-like community organization structure with the tribal ideals of mutual care and equality.

Beyond Smallholders: Reimagining the Future

Solonist farmers once formed the backbone of rural economies but now face systemic obstacles in a rapidly changing world. Their struggles often stem not from a lack of technology or education but from an organizational structure that dates back 12,000 years. In contrast, the rest of the world has evolved to more flexible and powerful models—cities, Ltd companies, cooperatives, and the Kibbutz among them. In an era demanding scale, collaboration, and specialization, smallholders find themselves at a disadvantage.

The Kibbutz model offers a different path: it provides an integrated, community-based approach that can simultaneously tackle economic, social, and emotional needs, whether in agriculture or advanced manufacturing.

Toward a More Inclusive Era

As we confront significant global challenges such as climate change, social inequality, immigration, and poverty, few might consider community models as potential sources of innovative solutions. Yet, these models embody timeless lessons in resilience, cooperation, and adaptability, making them increasingly relevant in addressing the complex problems of our modern world.

Yet while no single idea can fix everything, the Kibbutz shows how people can unite around a shared goal, support each other as a community, and still adapt to change. It mixes the close bonds of a tribal group with the organized structure of a modern company, bringing many interests together under one mission. Because of this, the Kibbutz is more than just a historical curiosity—it offers a real example of how we can grow our economy and strengthen our human connections at the same time.

Rethinking Prosperity and Belonging

It took about six thousand years from the appearance of the first villages until early cities began to form, and another six thousand years after that before cities became the main way most people lived. Now, because of cities, the world faces major problems like overcrowding, inequality, and climate change. At the same time, many people want more of a sense of belonging, mutual care, and security in their communities. This means our world might be ready to explore new ways of living together. In the Jordan River region—where both villages and cities (like Jericho) first appeared—the Kibbutz also came to life. This shows how people have always found new ways to organize their societies.

We do not know if Kibbutzim will ever become as common as cities, but one thing is clear: **communities that blend economic efficiency with strong shared values can achieve things that villages and cities have often struggled with.** By combining effective business methods, a communal way of life, and a clear shared goal, Kibbutzim shows what the next stage of human society could look like. They challenge the idea that large-scale industry and close-knit communities cannot coexist. Instead, they prove that prosperity can go hand in hand with true human connection, joining our oldest tribal instincts with the newest advances of modern life.

Takeaway Messages

- » **Organization shapes success:** Kibbutzim blends business efficiency with communal unity.
- » **History proves** that novel community structures can tackle today's global challenges.
- » **The Kibbutz model proves** that unity, purpose, and organizational structure lead to prosperity.

Let's collaborate to redefine prosperity. Act today—your involvement can shape a better future.

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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, "[The Rules That Define Prosperity—and Those That Don't.](#)"

P.P.S.

Here are ways we can work together to help your agro sector and rural communities step forward and shift from poverty into ongoing prosperity:

- * **Nova Kibbutz and consultancy** on rural communities' 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.

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