

PARADIGM AND VISIONS

Poultry in Poverty Alleviation

**Proceedings from a workshop
edited by Frands Dolberg and Poul Henning Pedersen**

by

Hans Askov Jensen

**Development Worker's Course
March 22 to March 26, 1999.
Tune Landboskole
Denmark**

<http://www.husdyr.kvl.dk/htm/php/tune99/3-AJensen.htm>

Abstract

In spite of that the majority of that rural poor keep a small flock of chickens, poultry has long been neglected in the development community. Networks, based on rural poultry, have recently been established and the interest for using poultry as a means in poverty alleviation and food security programmes is increasing. However, the accessibility to literature, documents, guidelines, manuals, etc. is a main constraint. Consequently, previous experiences are often lost and new projects or programmes often start from scratch. Even though the interest is increasing and more development professionals than ever are involved in rural poultry keeping, ways of communication and sharing experiences are still in its conception phase.

A successful model is developed in Bangladesh in which the main elements are: community group formation, establishment of an enabling environment, and capacity building for establishing and maintaining a smallholder poultry sector. Till now, more than 1 million families have been established with poultry activities and within a five years period the concept will probably be in operation in more than 50,000 villages. This development has been the inspiration both to formulate a paradigm and to emphasise more on visions and capacity buildings in the project formulation phase. A paradigm in which experiences are accumulated and disseminated, a paradigm which learns from its own mistakes and successes and a paradigm which constitute the framework for dissemination of experiences and information. With more than 1 billion people living in extreme poverty, it is stressed, that development programmes have to be designed with a build in mechanism for replication, which mainly means local capacity buildings.

Key words: Village poultry, rural poultry, back yard poultry, paradigm, capacity buildings, institutional development, networks.

Smallholder Livestock Development Model and Networks

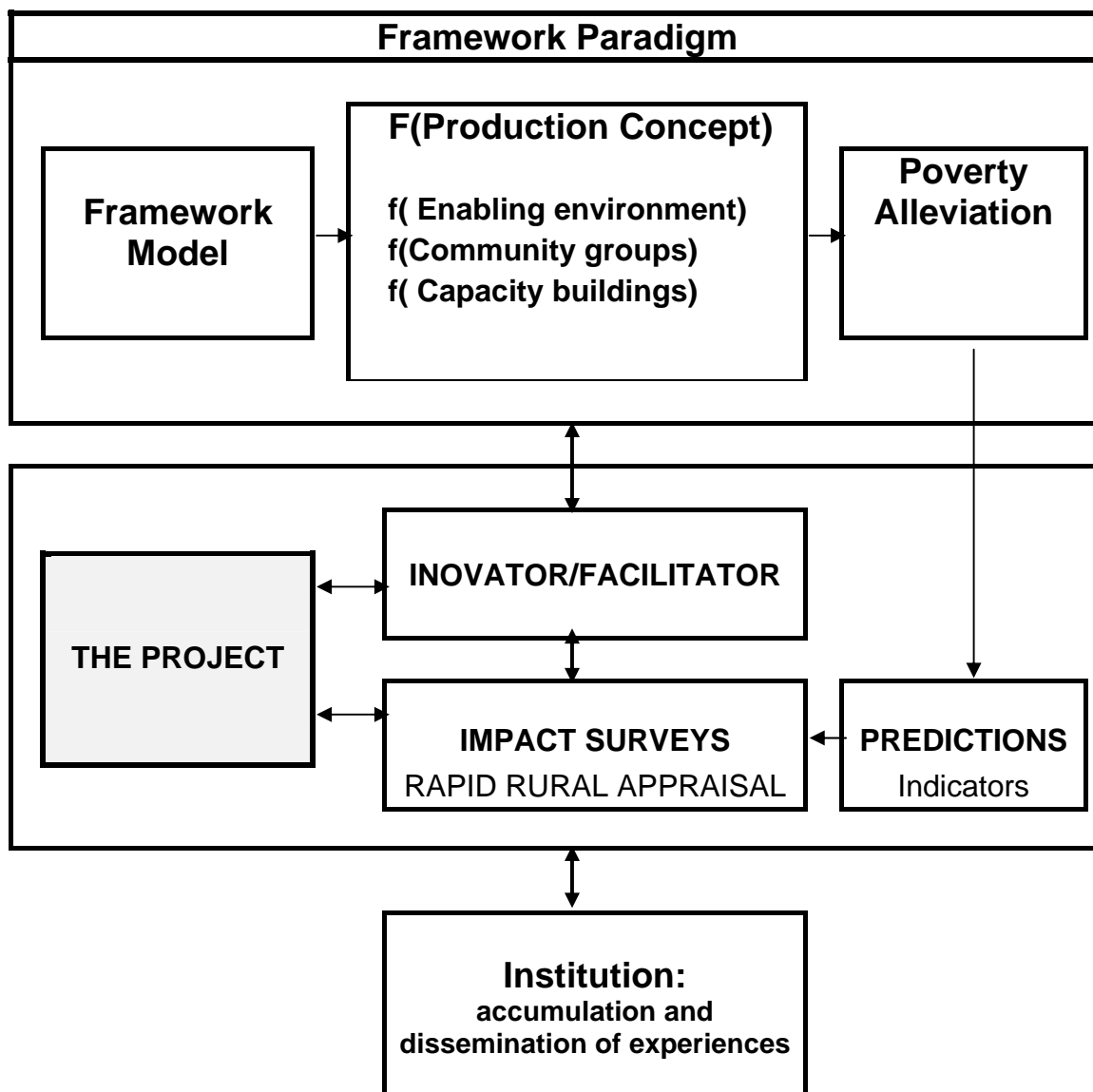
The success of a model developed in Bangladesh, in which poultry is used as a tool in poverty alleviation, fostered the idea to establish an institution with the objectives to develop methods, based on the same principle, to be used in poverty alleviation programmes in other developing countries.

A broad outline of the background and the intention of such a Network was presented at this workshop in 1998 (Jensen 1998). Another Network, the International Network for Poultry Development, is supported by FAO.(Branckart and Guéye 1999, Sonaya 1999a,1999b)

Poultry has in the past been, and still is, a neglected animal by the development community compared with other livestock. However, in the late 1970s BRAC identified poultry rearing as a source of income for the landless, particularly destitute women (Saleque 1996). Others have since confirmed that poultry keeping are a common denominator for the majority of the poor in rural areas in developing countries. Currently is the relation between poor and poultry more or less recognised as a fact. Furthermore, about 70 % of the rural landless women are directly or indirectly involved in poultry rearing activities, which therefore represent skills known to them.

Paradigm

A paradigm means in this context: 1) a framework concept comprising a set of mutually supporting activities, 2) a set of values expressing or clarifying the impact of the framework activities on poverty alleviation, and 3) methods to continuously improve and disseminate the concept and knowledge related to the subject (capacity building).



The framework concept is based on a model developed in Bangladesh in close cooperation between Department of Livestock Services (DLS) and the NGO : Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), (Saleque and Mustafa 1996, Fattah 1999, Saleque 1999)

The basic in the model is a Smallholder with some 10 hens supported by a number of small entrepreneurs, all available in the village, to provide the inputs and the services need to maintain a flock of 10 hens.

The concept is glued together by community groups, awareness programmes, training, and access to micro-credits. Even though the different entrepreneurs are established as an integrated production chain each unit operate on free market condition and are free to sell to customer outside the integration chain.

The framework concept's main activities are: 1) establishing and maintaining community groups and activities in the community groups (the learning process), 2) establishment and maintaining an enabling environment – in this case: all the activities needed to establish and operate a small flock of poultry, and 3) local capacity building.

It is stressed that the concept is not a replication of the Bangladesh model, but adaptation of the principles to the prevailing structure and culture in a specific country.

The values are socio-economic parameters, and not production parameters, and used in the process of adaptation in a specific country. Achievement made in single-discipline-oriented programmes are not sustainable even though the production efficiency is improved, (Kitalyi 1998). Alam (1996) has in impact surveys focused more on socio-economic parameters in order to document the positive impact of the smallholder model in Bangladesh.

By choosing socio-economic parameters instead of production parameters the paradigm became circular rather than linear in its development. An activity, such as improved breed, may show a positive effect on the egg yield, but have a negative effect on the family livelihood because the new breed do not have the required brooding traits for producing chickens.

The values are the socio-economic parameters with which to judge an increase in the families' livelihood security and thereby ensure a sustainable and circular development by continuously adjusting the mutually supporting activities which constitute the framework concept.

The Methods used in poultry development programmes have till now been rather one-sided, vaccination campaigns or cockerel exchange programmes, and with nearly no feed-back procedures build-in in the projects.

Terminologies used in village poultry are rather confusing and have often a different meaning. For some back-yard poultry are the same as village poultry and for other not. For some indigenous breed has a low productivity when the egg yield is below 50 eggs per year, for others 50 eggs per year have no meaning, but if the 50 eggs means 4 clutches and 4 hatches and the outcome are 30 saleable chickens per year it is a remarkable high productivity.

Accessibility to information/experiences is troublesome: with no textbooks, data base, journals, or other media in which results and findings are published. The main parts of publications are in proceedings known only to a limited number of development workers.

Different projects, based on rural poultry, are uncoordinated either because there are different donors involved or because different persons are responsible. The consequences are often that the same mistakes are passed over from one project to the next. The smallholder project in Bangladesh is, in this respect, in a rather unique position, the implementing institutions in Bangladesh have been the same, DLS and BRAC, over 5 projects in more than a 10 years period and Danida, is or had been, as donor involved in 4 of these projects. The experiences from one project have been accumulated in the same institution that is responsible for preparation and implementing the succeeding project of same type.

With establishment of the International Network for Poultry Development supported by FAO and the Danish Network supported by Danida the first steps are taken to establishment of a learning process in which not only a terminology is developed, but also methods of adaptation and dissemination are refined. (Branckear and Guéye 1999, Sonaya 1999a,1999b)

The methods recommended to be used by the Danish Network are: (1) through a systematic feed back process to continuously improve the supporting concepts, (2) adaptation, through pilot projects, of the framework concept to other countries than Bangladesh, and (3) through capacity building make the concept and experiences available for wider application.

The capacity building is integrated in the pilot projects for local dissemination and in the Network for application in other countries and for diffusion of innovations.

Observations and Generalisations

The experiences with micro-credits to the poor have over the past 2 decades clearly documented that the poor are credit worthy and that they are willing to take a calculated risk assuming they can comprehend the consequences (Helen Tood 1996 and 1998). In the process of developing the micro-credit programmes it has also been experienced that women are better managers of loans than men are. As BRAC express it: ‘ BRAC’s experience shows that as the poor rural women are constrained to manage the entire household with extremely limited resources, they develop as better managers than their male counterparts. When a women benefits, her entire household benefits and the impact is more sustainable’.

When poor people, even illiterate, get the opportunity they behave rational: diversify the income generating activities, make savings, send children to schools, improve the family nourishment, and improve the family health. (Helen Tood 1996 and Jahangir Alam 1996).

However, micro-credit alone is not enough as expressed in a statement by the International Food Policy Research Institute at the: MICROCREDIT SUMMIT WASHINGTON JANUARY 31 1997,

‘Rural finance alone will not relieve poverty. More credit does not necessarily means less poverty. Appropriate policies and good governance are critical for creating an environment in which financial

services can make a difference for the poor. People must be educated and healthy enough to use credit in productive activities. Efficient, functioning markets are also critical for small-scale farmers and entrepreneurs to obtain the inputs and outputs they need to produce and get their production market. Investment in social safety net, as well as roads, electricity and communication infrastructure, are necessary to enhance the impact of credit in relieving poverty.'

The activities constituting the framework concept are in line with this statement: the community groups are the educational part and the enabling environment enhances the impact of credit and relieving poverty.

It is the local environment, in which the poor accidentally live, that cause the poverty and not the poor that create the miserable environment. Furthermore, even illiterate people can work themselves out of poverty if they get an opportunity they can comprehend. Consequently, focus must be on establishing an enabling environment.

Poultry are a unique tool to reach the poor women with minimum disturbance of the patriarchal family pattern. Traditionally, poultry are women's domain and the income from poultry is in the hand of women, consequently an increased income from a small flock of hens is easier kept under women's responsibility than e.g. and increased income from cattle.

In order to develop a standard concept with which to reach a vast number of the rural poor, especially the poor women, poultry are a unique entity because:

- the majority of the poor are familiar with poultry keeping;
- the investment is low;
- the turn-over is fast;
- the results are visible;
- the educational values of using poultry in participatory learning process are considerable.

Based especially on experiences from Bangladesh it seems obvious that poverty alleviation is most effectively done by creating an environment in which the poor women have the opportunity to establish an income generating activity without any subsidy involved at user level. Poultry is a unique entity as starting points for such a development and micro-credits are an essential, but not the only one, in creating an enabling environment .

Vision and scale

Potential and policies

More than a billion people live in extreme poverty – on less than \$ 1 a day - and the pressing question is: how can development assistance be most effective at reducing global poverty?

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has a task as the principle strategy-setting of the major bilateral donors. These strategies are elaborated on in Shaping the 21st century: 'The role of Development Cooperation, produced

by the DAC¹. Some of the goals set forth by the donor community are:

- Reducing by one half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.
- Making progress toward equality of the sexes and the empowerment of women by eliminating disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005.
- Implementing national strategies for sustainable development in all countries by 2005 to ensure losses of environmental resources are reversed both nationally and globally by 2015.

‘All this points to a different role for aid. Development assistance is more about supporting good institutions and policies than providing capital. Money is important, of course, but effective aid should bring a package of finance and ideas-and one of the keys is finding the right combination of the two to address different situations and problems.’ (quoted from *Assessing Aids*)

Eradication of poverty has priority on the development agenda and it is realised that money alone is not enough, new ideas and new concepts has to be developed and implemented. To reach the target set by DAC approximately 50 million people shall every year be lifted above the poverty line, from now till 2015, and this in addition to the existing effort with which the proportion of poor only is standstill. Furthermore, institutional development, with emphasis on health and education, shall be improved.

According to FAO (FactFile: Number of hungry people rising) the absolute number of chronically undernourished people rose between 1990-92 and 1994-96 in three out of five developing regions of the world, inter alia Sub-Saharan Africa, Near East and North Africa, and South Asia. The number rose from 822 millions in 1990-92 to 828 millions in 1994-96. Only in East and South East Asia the number decline while it standstill in Latin America and Caribbean.

In order to change the present situation with a more or less standstill in reduction of poverty to a reduction from approximately 20 % of the world population living bellow the absolute poverty line to 10 % by 2015 requires not only political visions, but also wider visions in our methods to eradicate poverty than currently practised.

Capacity building will be a key-word in the effort to reach such target. BRAC as well as the Grameen Bank has proved that it is possible to build up an institutional capacity with which to reach a large proportion of the poor. Both NGOs have each a member accession of about 200,000 per year. Assuming each member represent a family of 7 persons, then 2.8 million new persons are every year involved in a programme in which the main objective is poverty alleviation. Regarding BRAC’s members, more than 50 % start with poultry as their first income generating activity.

It is an unrealistic dream that capacity building in other countries can be done in same way as in Bangladesh. However, if the political statements regarding poverty alleviation shall have any meanings, it is an absolute necessity that capacity building

¹ Assessing Aid 1998: A World Bank Policy Research Report. pp 9-14

is integrated in poverty alleviation projects in such a way that pilot projects, in a specific country, are succeeded by a countrywide dissemination programme.

Interaction between project design and visions

Between 1973 and 1986, the World Bank lent US\$ 19 billion for nearly five hundred(498) rural development projects, the total cost of which were estimated at \$ 50 billion. The outcome for these was a large proportion of failures, especially in sub-Saharan Africa(World Bank, 1988 passim). In the words of the Bank's own, commendably self-critical evaluation: 'the Bank apparently lost sight of the reality that the cost of failures, in what were identified from the outset as risky experiments, would be born by the borrower countries and not by the Bank'. The evaluation concludes that there are many lessons to be learnt. They included problem arising from:

- institutional and managerial complexity;
- lack of the viable technical packages(which had been assumed); and
- supply-driven lending, high targets, and urgent large-scale action without pilot projects.

Robert Chambers 1997: Whose Reality Counts?

The above project strategy certainly has had a vision, 500 projects of similar types and an investment of US\$ 50 billion. However, it could had been interesting to see the results if the rural development programmes, from the very beginning, have had a framework concept in which experiences are transmitted from previous projects to new projects with a circular feed back process. Then we would today have had a project concept that had been developed and refined over 500 steps.

The interaction between the vision and the project-design may be the most important element in the design of the pilot project. The pilot project shall encompass involvement of all the stakeholders intended to participate in the final project.

Human resource development and institutional capacity development for dissemination (replication) are important element in poverty alleviation strategies and will as such be an integral part of the project design in different countries

References:

Alam, J. (1997). Impact of Smallholder Livestock Development Project in some Selected Areas of Rural Bangladesh. Livestock for rural Development:

<http://www.hcm.fpt.vn/inet~lrrd9/3/bang932.htm>

Assessing Aid (1998) A World Bank Policy Research Report. pp 9-14

Branckaert, R.D.S. and E.F. Guéye (1999). FAO's programme for support to family poultry production. In Frands Dolberg and Poul Henning Petersen (eds.), Women in Agriculture and Modern Communication Technology. Proceedings of a Workshop. Tune Landboskole, Denmark. In press.

Chambers, Robert (1997). Whose Reality Counts?. London: Intermediate Technology Publication.

Fattah, Kazi Abdul (1999). Poultry as Tool in Poverty Eradication and Promotion of Gender Equality. In Frands Dolberg and Poul Henning Petersen (eds.), Women in Agriculture and Modern Communication Technology. Proceedings of a Workshop. Tune Landboskole, Denmark. In press.

Hyden, Goren (1996). Changing Ideological and Theoretical Perspectives on Development. Dar es Salaam: Institute of Development Studies.

Jensen, Hans Askov (1998). Network for Poultry Production and Health in developing Countries. In Frands Dolberg and Poul Henning Petersen (eds.), Women in Agriculture and Modern Communication Technology. Proceedings of a Workshop. Tune Landboskole, Denmark. pp. 48-65.

<http://www.husdyr.kvl.dk/htm/php/tune/tune.htm>

Kitalyi, Aichi J (1998) Village chicken production systems in rural Africa. FAO Animal Production and Health Paper 142.

Saleque, Md. A. and Mustafa (1996). Landless Women and Poultry: the BRAC Model in Bangladesh. In Frands Dolberg and Poul Henning Petersen (eds.), Integrated Farming in Human Development. Proceedings of a Workshop. Tune Landboskole, Denmark. pp. 37-55.

<http://www.husdyr.kvl.dk/htm/php/tune/tune.htm>

Saleque, Md. A. (1999). Scaling-up. Critical Factors in Leadership, Management, Human Resource Development and Institution Building in going from pilot project to large scale implementation. Poultry as a tool in Poverty Eradication and Promotion of Gender Equality. In Frands Dolberg and Poul Henning Petersen (eds.), Women in Agriculture and Modern Communication Technology. Proceedings of a Workshop. Tune Landboskole, Denmark, In press.

Tood, Helen (1996). Women at the Center. Grameen Bank Borrowers after one Decade. Westview Press.

Tood, Helen (1998). Climbing out of Poverty through Credit: or What do Cows have to Do With It? In Frands Dolberg and Poul Henning Petersen (eds.), Women in Agriculture and Modern Communication Technology. Proceedings of a Workshop. Tune Landboskole, Denmark. pp.13-22.

<http://www.husdyr.kvl.dk/htm/php/tune/tune.htm>

Sonaiya, E. Babafunso (1999). International Network for Family Poultry Development: Origins, Activities, Objectives and Visions. In Frands Dolberg and Poul Henning Petersen (eds.), Women in Agriculture and Modern Communication Technology. Proceedings of a Workshop. Tune Landboskole, Denmark, In press.

Sonaiya, E. Babafunso, R.D.S. Branchaert and E.F. Guèye (1999). Research and Development Options for Family Poultry. First INFPD/FAO electronic Conference on Family Poultry .