



The Transformative Power of Poultry

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The Transformative Power of Poultry

During my travels on behalf of the Gates Foundation, I have the honor of meeting with heads of state, government ministers, donors and philanthropists, leaders of aid organizations, and others who share our mission of lifting people out of poverty and helping them live better, healthier lives. But my favorite part of these trips is when I get to go out into the field, where I can see the fruits of our labors first-hand.

I recently took a trip to East Africa, where I met with many partners and public officials, including Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania, to discuss issues such as improved access to financial services, addressing the agricultural challenges of climate change, and women's economic empowerment.

One of the highlights of the week was a visit to a poultry farm in Tanzania, where I learned how rearing chickens can transform the lives of smallholder farmers and their families. Now, I've been to plenty of chicken farms in my day. In fact, living in Seattle, I see chickens roaming around urban yards and penned in elaborate coops all the time. But here in Tanzania, poultry producers have taken a highly scientific approach, implementing innovative practices that are revolutionizing the budding industry and allowing farmers to reap benefits never before seen in the region.

The farm we visited was an AKM Glitters site where grown chickens are reared, eggs are harvested, and hatchery facilities produce day-old chicks that are sold to smallholder farmers. The founder and CEO of AKM Glitters, Elizabeth Swai, has created a network of more than 100 farmer groups, whom she provides training and support so they can eventually rear their own chickens. Swai places a heavy emphasis on getting women farmers involved, empowering them to create their own businesses and take an active role in providing for their families.

Like other organizations in the region, such as Silverlands in Tanzania and EthioChicken in Ethiopia, AKM Glitters offers a wide range of tools, services, and training to ensure the success of its partners. It begins by breeding the most appropriate chickens for the region, ones that are able to lay four times as many eggs as those commonly seen in African villages. The organization also provides affordable high-quality feed, vaccinations and other veterinary services, technical extension training, marketing and business development, and access to financial services. Of course, these farmers, some of whom are new to

entrepreneurship, face a number of challenges. Banks often refuse to give them loans and accounts, and creating the necessary infrastructure to transport their product and keep it cold is difficult. That said, AKM Glitters is experiencing impressive and rapid growth, signaling that the interest and talent is there.

The rise of poultry farming is having far-reaching effects on individuals, families, and the communities where they live. Farmers are not only increasing their income, they're improving the nutrition, health, and education of their families. The rural communities where the farms operate are seeing greater access to clean water and safe sanitation. Most of all, women and young people are getting the opportunity to develop their business skills, become self-sufficient, and find a way out of poverty.

I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to see the impacts of our work in action, and am all the more inspired to continue advocating to provide underserved people throughout the world the knowledge and tools they need to succeed.

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Isfandiyar Shaheen

Infrastructure Sharing Advocate

6mo ...

Loved this! In Pakistan, highest number of self-made dollar millionaires are from the poultry sector! The sector has attracted \$3 billion of investment WITHOUT any major business group or external capital provider getting involved. The sector rarely gets press coverage but it's the only truly competitive sector (measured by feed-conversion-ratio) that I came across.

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Rasheed Narejo

Data Analyst at NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA)

6mo ...

We are ignoring many variables behind the success of this industry - little regulation, no tax payment, harmful feeds to grow chicks in shortest time and a lot of risk in terms of outcome (disease, price volatility).

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Isfandiyar Shaheen

Infrastructure Sharing Advocate

6mo ...

Abdul Rasheed Narejo agreed on the tax part, didn't know about the rest.

That said, Pakistan is a fairly challenging market to operate in: high energy costs, poor law and order, court cases take a while

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