

“No Silver Bullet”: Interrogating donor assumptions of “entrepreneurship” in Micro- and Small-Enterprise Interventions in Northern Sri Lanka

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Frameworks and assumptions

- The majority of the poor are in MSEs- by helping the MSEs, wellbeing levels of the majority of the target population can be improved
- All conflict affected individuals are at the same level in terms of entrepreneurial skills
- Specialised products will make MSEs competitive and successful
- Women are accountable and responsible in managing enterprises and credit
- Creating collectives will strengthen the target population and enable enterprise growth

The majority of the poor are in MSEs?

Project theory of change vs local reality

Income is integral to well-being

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graph TD; A[Income is integral to well-being] --> B[Income is earned through wages or self-employment]; B --> C[Micro and small businesses employ majority of the poor]; C --> D[Improving MSE performance leads to higher incomes for the poor];
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Income is earned through wages or self-employment

Micro and small businesses employ majority of the poor

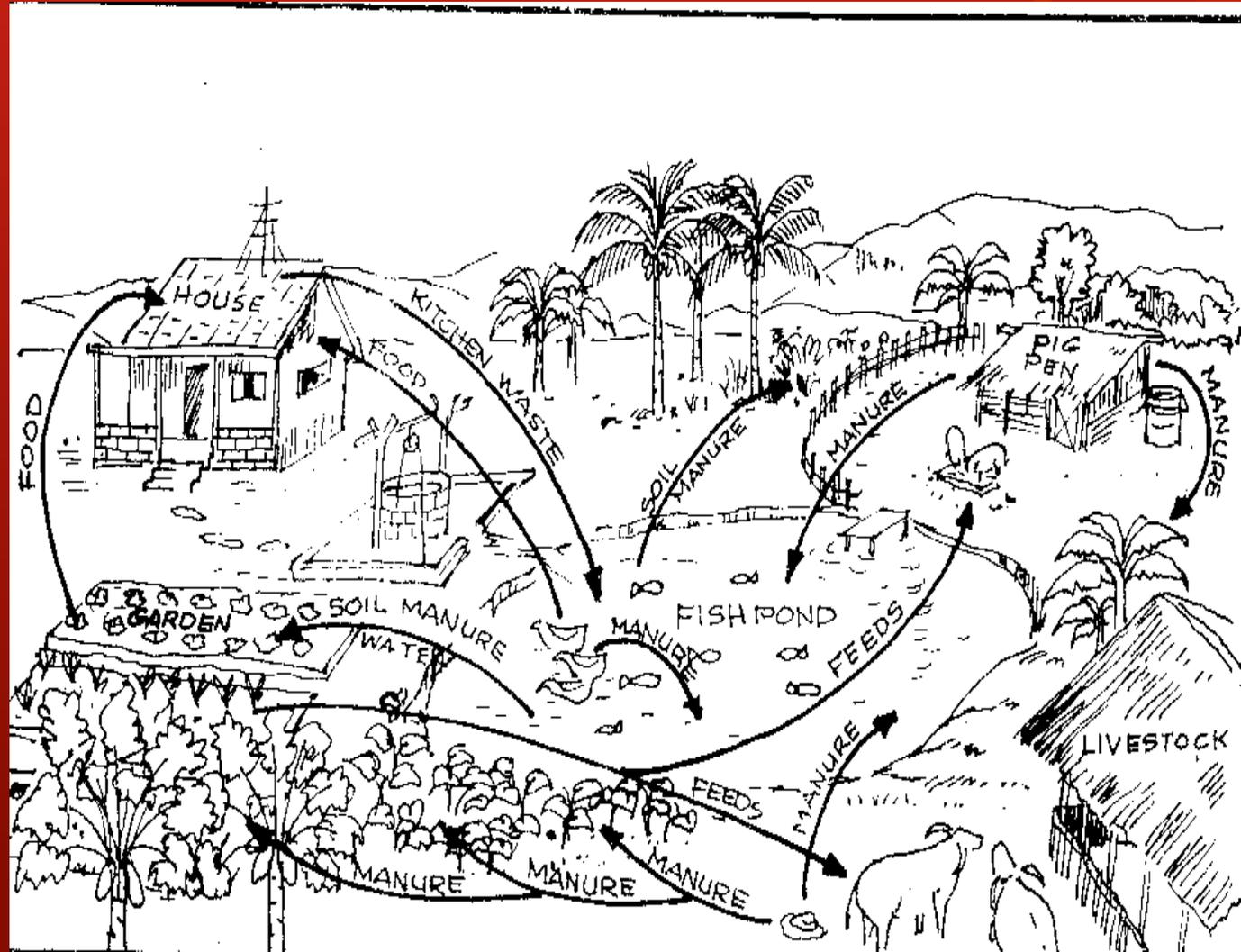
Improving MSE performance leads to higher incomes for the poor

Local Reality

Districts	Percentage of Self Employed/own account worker Households	
	Poor (%)	Non-Poor (%)
Kilinochchi	7.53	92.47
Mullaitivu	29.59	70.41
Vavunia	10.77	89.23
Mannar	20.79	79.21

Specialised production will create successful MSEs

Story of dairy farmers



Women are accountable and responsible in managing MSEs and credit

Story of women entrepreneurs



Creating collectives will strengthen MSE activities

Story of producer collectives

People like to engage in MSE activities **individually than being in a group**. In Othiyamadu, a rice mill was provided for a group of people, but they did not start because they did not like going to the group leader's house to do that. Same thing happened to the milk collection center in Kanakarayan kulam; even though they were given a center, they did not start it. On the other hand, if these people are given support individually, they would do. Keeping the equipment at the group/society president's house or having to go to president's house to engage in the MSE activity is stopping them from engaging with the group activities.

(Industrial Development Board, Vavuniya)

In conclusion...

- Local realities and development knowledge- whose knowledge counts? The balance between the local knowledge and 'expertise'
- Local knowledge-Local reality as seen and lived by the people
- Intervene based on the current reality and not what is envisaged
- Nature of economic development that is promoted-does it take the continuities of war economies into consideration?
- Time factor in the post war timeline-Is this the correct time to 'responsiblise' the communities?