

Seeds of change Bangladesh



How Katalyst enabled half a million small farmers to step up vegetable production



Interventions

Innovations in seed packaging,
access to critical information
via mobile seed vendors



System Change

Poor farmers' access to quality
seeds becomes the new normal



Impact

Income and nutritional benefits for
millions living in rural poverty



A market system approach to the issues

- Why vegetable farming? →  A vital source of food & supplementary income for 4 million poor rural households
- The missed opportunity →  Growing urban demand; but farmers (esp. women) held back by low yields & risks of crop failure
- System diagnosis →  Risks exacerbated by limited access to quality seeds & reliable information on how to use them
- Root causes →  Seed suppliers unaware of opportunity, and fail to invest in distribution innovations

MSD interventions that catalysed innovation & behaviour change



Integration of mobile seed vendors

Seed suppliers offered incentives for informal vendors, to draw them into a formal distribution system

Formalising training for vendors

Suppliers trained vendors to provide technical information to poor farmers

Seed package innovation

Tamper-proof mini-packs assured farmers of high quality seeds at a price they can afford



How MSD interventions led to system change & impact



Katalyst's market research convinced seed suppliers that the smallholder market was large enough to justify their investment in innovation

Katalyst supported pilots proved mobile vendors were an effective way to reach smaller farmers with quality seeds and information

Mobile vendors selling mini-packed seeds along with better advice led to huge increases in sales to small farmers. Other agri-input firms copied the model

Larger & more reliable yields convinced many other small farmers to invest more, step up cultivation and achieve higher incomes

Signs of lasting market system change

Mini-packed seeds became hugely popular



750,000 mini-packs sold within two seasons

- Half a million households using mini-packs across 85% of the country

Poor farmers' incomes increased



US\$ 14m est. increase in value of vegetable production in 18 months

- 80% of vendors' customers are people living in poverty

Companies took ownership of training vendors



1000 vendors trained by Katalyst's main partner

- Est. 4,500 vendors trained by copying companies

Mini-packs & informed vendors the 'new normal'



More training centres established by other agri-input businesses

- Better access to reliable information on crop production & protection.

Katalyst (Phase II) in context



A multi-sectoral MSD programme funded by DFID, SDC, CIDA & the Netherlands.

Economic sectors

Vegetables, maize, potatoes, jute, fisheries, agri-inputs, furniture, ICTs.

Budget

\$ 53m over five years (2008 – 2013)

Impact

Estimated benefits for 2.3m farmers & small businesses

Income increases of US\$ 296 m