



**AGRI
TERRA**

SYMPOSIUM: THE ROLE OF VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT IN AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

**SESSION 5: WORKING WITH AND THROUGH
CHANGE AGENTS**

AN INTRODUCTION

**23 SEPTEMBER 2025, HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY, BERLIN
GB BANJARA**

WORKING WITH AND THROUGH CHANGE AGENTS

- Why change is so difficult?
- Who are change agents in a VC/Agrifood system? Where do they come from?
 - Inside or outside the VC?
- How to spot them?
- Why work with/through them?
- How to engage with them?

CHATGPT SAYS

A **change agent** is an individual, group, or organization that acts as a catalyst to initiate, facilitate, and drive **positive change within a system**, such as a business or organization. Key attributes of change agents include **leadership, communication skills, adaptability, problem-solving, and the ability to inspire others**. They can be internal, like employees or managers, or external, like consultants, bringing both expertise and new perspectives to the process.

'QUICK AND DIRTY' LISTING OF CHANGE AGENTS (20 YEARS OF MY VCD EXPERIENCE):

- Hybrid maize seed supplier (multinational company) in Bangladesh
- Biopesticide introducer (national company) in Bangladesh
- Vocational school on Bonsai making in Vietnam
- Agriculture Export Board in Rwanda
- District Agriculture office(r) in Bhutan
- **Export pack house operator in Rwanda**
- Youth who started the first hi-tech commercial hydroponic farm in Rwanda
- Large scale private milk processing company in Nepal
- A multi donor funded agriculture project in Bangladesh
- Horticulture Cooperative (washing centre, aggregator and processor) in Rwanda
- **Seed company that introduced Quality Seed Mini Packets in Bangladesh**
- **National coffee chain company in Nepal**
- NTFP community group in India
- Rice research institute in Bangladesh that introduced stress tolerant varieties of rice
- Bio-digester company that pioneered pre-fabricated modular biodigester across Africa

List goes on.....

CASE 1: STORY OF RWANDA'S HORTICULTURE PACKHOUSES

- in 2017, Government of Rwanda created NAEB to increase export of horticulture.
- Critical constraint identified for export growth: lack of modern packhouse.
- Packhouse considered public good (with no profitable business case), thus no private sector interested in setting up one.
- NAEB set up 1st pack house in Rwanda in 2017
- Main products: avocado, green chillies, beans, passion fruits etc.
- HortInvest initiated engagement with **Garden Fresh** in 2019, packhouse set up in 2020 (first private sector packhouse in Rwanda).
- 2018 export USD 25 mln, 2023 USD 58 mln, 2024 USD 75 mln.
- A new large scale mechanical packhouse established in 2024 by a British company Premier Food Wholesale.



QUESTION..

Who is a change agent in this case?

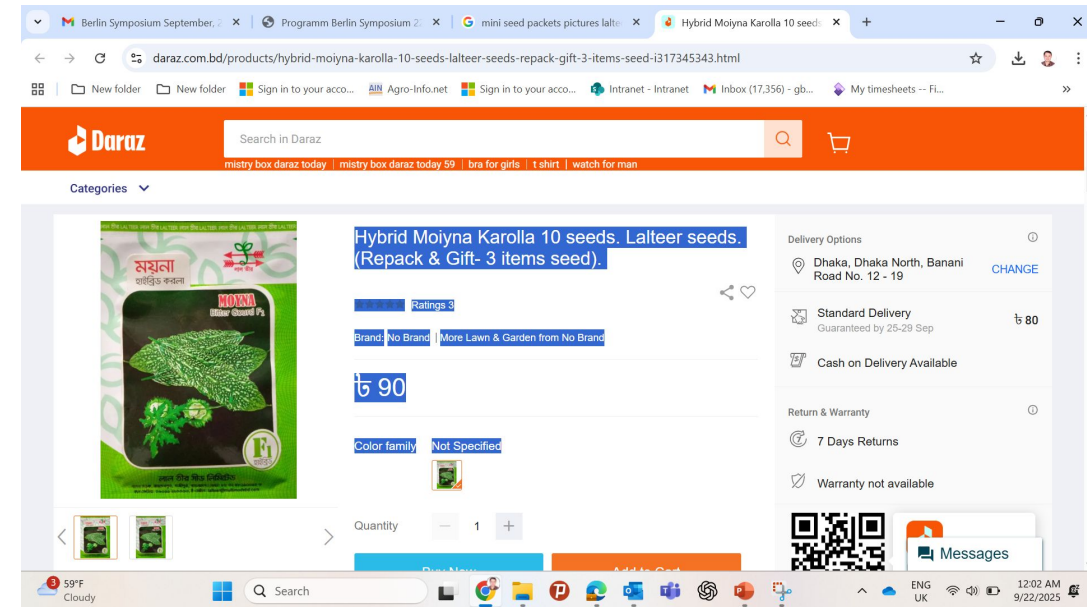
- NAEB ?
- Garden Fresh ?
- HortInvest?

Or all of them?



CASE 2: LALTEER'S MINI SEED PACKETS FROM BANGLADESH

- Key constraint: **Farmers not adopting** the quality seeds, this was particularly true among the marginal farmers.
- Farmers with little land grew vegetables on micro-plots, mostly for self consumption.
- Research identified, the key reason of low adoption, **size of the seed packet !**
- But none of the companies were ready to try out as this was against the established practice (larger packets, more seed sold, more revenue)
- A company '**Lalteer**' came out to try this approach.
- They first piloted the '**mini vegetables seed packets**' in a limited area. After its wild success, it was rolled out nationally.
- Other companies too followed this practice later.



Product details of Hybrid Moinya Karolla 10 seeds. Lalteer seeds. (Repack & Gift- 3 items seed).

- Hybrid Moinya Karolla seeds.
- Improved Lalteer seed.
- Own packet of 10 seeds.
- High yielding variety.

- Suitable for roof garden, home garden and commercial use.
- Free Gift: Jhal Chili 20+seeds, Kalmishak 10+seeds, Puishak 10+seeds.



CASE 3: STORY OF HIMALAYAN JAVA COFFEE CASE OF NEPAL

- Traditionally Nepal is a tea drinking country. Coffee was neither produced nor consumed.
- One company called **Himalayan Java** established in 1999 changed that scenario.

<https://himalayanjava.com/>

- Over 70 outlets, barista training school, coffee machines, franchise.
- Typical customer, smartphone using/laptop welding youngster (GenZs)



CASE 3:

On 9th September 2025, a sudden GenZ revolution toppled the country's government.

And no one saw this coming !

Because, revolution's seeds were sown in the capital's coffee houses and platforms such as discord and bitchat.....



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**