

Impact Story 8:

SEEDS OF PROSPERITY IN INDIA



THE OPPORTUNITY

India's tea industry provides direct employment to over 1 million people and indirect employment to another 10 million. Women constitute **51%** of the total tea workforce in India making it one of the largest employers of women among the organized industries. Low levels of education, low wages, limited access to markets, and long working hours are common.¹

On average the rate of anaemia in non-pregnant women in India has increased in the past 7 years and currently stands at **30%** - in part due to unhealthy diets. Over 12 million premature deaths every year are due to unhealthy diets.² A good proxy indicator for the quality of diets is the Minimum Dietary Diversity-Women (MDD-W) indicator which helps us understand the extent to which women in a specific population group consume a diet diverse enough to meet micronutrient needs (determined as consuming at least 5 out of 10 defined food groups in the previous day).

From workplace nutrition studies in formal work settings the evidence tells us that the benefit cost ratios of investing in health and wellbeing range from 3:1 to 6:1.³

Can such benefits be realised in less formal work settings in food value chains? If they could be realised, they would not only benefit workers they would be good for the employers as there is significant evidence to show healthier adults are more productive.⁴

Which interventions can deliver these improvements in diet quality in the context of value chain workforces?

THE SOLUTION

GAIN, Unilever, and the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) saw an opportunity to improve the nutrition and health of farmers, workers, and their families in supply chains, whilst working to increase supplier and worker satisfaction, productivity and brand loyalty.

A successful pilot programme in tea estates and factories in Assam and Tamil Nadu, India would increase the number of food groups that supply chain workers are eating, with the aim of improving both their intake of essential micronutrients. The "Seeds of Prosperity Programme" was designed to make tea value chain workers become aware of the value of a nutritious diet, pledge to eat from 5 food groups a day, keep track of their food purchases and diets, and receive a game at the end of the programme as a reward and reminder of what has been learned.

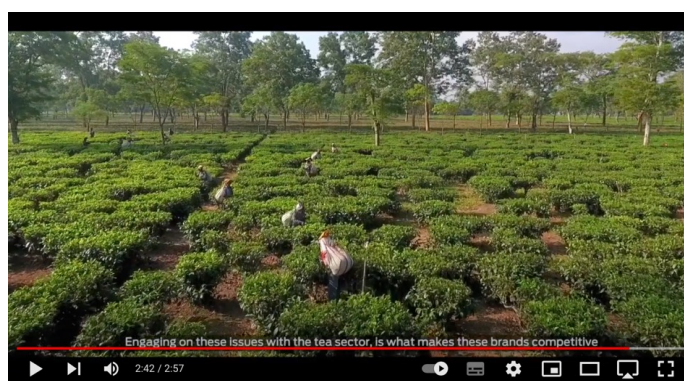


Figure 1: [Video](#) Showing the Assam Seeds of Prosperity Programme

1 Nyhus Dhillon, C., Vossenaar, M., Weiligmann, B, Sanwal N., Djimeu, E.W., Kneepkens M., Mushahary, B., Stone, G., and Neufeld, L.M.. "A Nutrition Behavior Change Program Moderately Improves Minimum Diet Diversity and Handwashing Behaviors Among Tea Workers in Assam and Tamil Nadu, India." *Food and Nutrition Bulletin* (2022): 03795721211070706.

2 <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/?country-search=india>

3 <https://www.gainhealth.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/evidence-for-workforce-nutrition-programmes-overview-2019.pdf>

4 Cole, M. A., & Neumayer, E. (2006). The impact of poor health on total factor productivity. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 42(6), 918-938.



Figure 2: The Seeds of Prosperity Intervention

THE IMPACT

The impact of the programme was assessed using a baseline-endline, treatment-comparison (non-randomized) survey. In Tamil Nadu the assessment covered 12 months of operation of Seeds of Prosperity and in Assam it was over a 6 month operating period.

Despite running for a short period of time, the programme improved the proportion of women consuming food from at least 5 out of 10 food groups (the MDD-W indicator) between 15-24 percentage points.

Figure 3 The impacts of the Seeds of Prosperity Programme on the % of women consuming a minimum diversity diet (MDD-W)

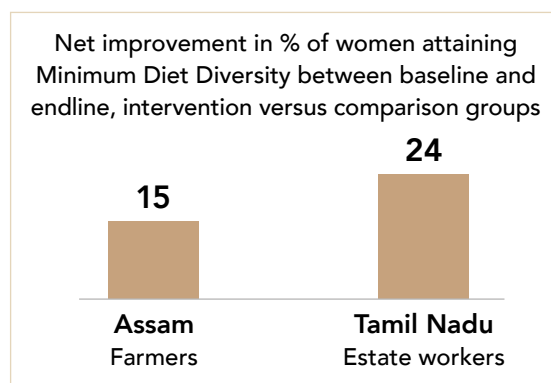


Figure 3: The impacts of the Seeds of Prosperity Programme on the % of women consuming a minimum diversity diet (MDD-W)

The improvements are fairly sizable since the MDD-W indicator was between 50-60% without the Seeds of Prosperity programme and are all the more notable given the short duration over which the programme was evaluated.

Based on the success of this pilot, GAIN is expanding the 'Seeds of Prosperity' programme to tea value chains in other locations in Tamil Nadu, Assam, Kenya and Malawi, benefiting a further 300,000 people together with the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) and Unilever.

The potential of the programme to expand further is significant. GAIN is currently working with Unilever and 6 other tea companies to improve upon and expand the model to reach over 500,000 tea workers and their family members in Assam, Malawi and Kenya. The 'Seeds of Prosperity' programme demonstrates the impact business can have on building healthy communities and on strengthening their most important crop—their families.

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