

Tea



Twinnings' Sourced with Care initiative

December 2021

Twinnings' Sourced with Care program aims to improve the lives of communities from which it sources its tea and herbs, with a focus on life opportunities (including health and nutrition), living standards and livelihood/land, depending on local needs.



Scope

Sourced with Care reaches tea estate workers and smallholder farmers in several countries: this case study focuses on projects in India (Assam), China (Cangyuan county), and Kenya. To date, the program has reached at least 34,000 young women in India, 16,000 children in China and 37,000 women farmers and workers in Kenya.



Motivation

As a premium brand, Twinnings recognises its responsibility to source ethically and its ability to act as a force for good by improving conditions in their supply chain. The program seeks to enhance the quality of life of its sourcing communities, ensure sustainable supply of good quality tea, and contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Timeline

Work in India started in 2010, in China in 2011 and in Kenya in 2015. The overarching Sourced with Care program, which brings together a range of pre-existing and new initiatives, was launched in 2016. Now that COVID-19 has put some Sourced with Care activities on hold or shifted attention to COVID prevention, the company aims to resume activities as soon as it is possible to do so safely. Twinnings' goal is to empower a further 250,000 women by 2025, with health and nutrition remaining a key factor of this work.



Impact

Data from India and China shows promising improvements for the target population, such as reductions in anaemia and child mortality due to better nutrition knowledge and feeding practices. Because the programs have been running for a decade, these changes indicate long-term impact due to changing habits.



Motivation

Twinings states that it puts care at the heart of everything it does, and therefore recognises its **responsibility to source ethically and its ability to act as a force for good** by improving conditions in its supply chain, which includes addressing malnutrition. By ensuring the health and prosperity of its tea communities, the company hopes to ensure sustainable supply of good quality tea. Additionally, the company recognizes that consumers have high expectations from brands (especially premium brands) to behave in the right way and contribute to the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)¹.

The project

Each Sourced with Care initiative begins with a Twinings Community Needs Assessment (TCNA) to **understand needs in its tea-growing communities**. The TCNA framework was created in consultation with expert organizations, and assessments are carried out every two to three years by Twinings' Social Impact team. It looks at housing, water and sanitation, labour standards, gender, children's rights, livelihoods, and (for smallholder farmers) land rights / farming practices – and health and nutrition. **Health and nutrition are a key priority not only for health's sake, but also to raise incomes and improve the life chances of family members**. The nutrition assessment includes looking at the year-round adequacy of food provision and the dietary diversity available (to women in particular). Based on the TCNA, Sourced with Care selects project sites, **tailoring its projects specifically to the needs of communities**.

- In Assam, India, the aim is to reach the 350,000 people that make up the communities in 63 tea gardens. Working in partnership with [UNICEF](#)², the initiatives focus on **nutrition, women's empowerment, and child protection**. There is a particular focus on the health of young women and children due to the prevalence of malnutrition and hypertension, coupled with social challenges such as early marriage. On the nutrition side, the initiative delivers monthly **nutrition and health education sessions**, covering a wide range of issues including dietary diversification, cooking demonstrations and folic acid supplementation compliance. This is supported by **establishing kitchen gardens and shops** selling a range of healthy food in the tea-growing communities, which increases access to good, affordable nutrition.

About Twinings



Twinings is an international tea brand, acquired by Associated British Foods in 1964.

- In Yunnan, a province in south-western China, access to basic services in rural and remote areas is often limited and, consequently, the child mortality rate is high, double that of urban areas. Twinings and [Save the Children](#) have been working to **enhance children's health and reduce mortality rates of children under the age of five by training village healthcare providers, improving facilities, and raising community awareness on important health issues, including breastfeeding and nutrition**. The partnership has just been renewed for a further three years, to benefit even more community members in their supply chain.
- In Kenya, improved access to health services and health literacy were identified as essential needs in the local community. Twinings has partnered with [BSR](#) to deliver the [HERhealth](#) project to smallholder farmers and tea workers, which **trains peer health educators to raise awareness of essential issues among women workers**. Each program lasts for 12–15 months, with a new module each month, tackling issues such as reproductive health and family planning, sexually transmitted infections, menstrual hygiene, pre- and post-natal care, nutrition, and non-communicable diseases.

¹ The Sustainable Development Goals are 17 interlinked goals set up by the United Nations General Assembly. The goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice.

² UNICEF is a United Nations agency mandated to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.



Impact

Overall, the Sourced with Care initiative has delivered training to over 1,000 community healthcare professionals. More than 23,000 children have been reached with health interventions and 43,000 new mothers reached with messages about the importance of good nutrition during the first 1,000 days of their baby's life.³ Many of the initiatives have been running for years, which has given time for habits to become embedded, a sign of the sustainability of the programs. This impact is assessed either by the partner organizations or by third parties:

- In China, within six years, the mortality rate of children under five in Cangyuan county reduced from 43.1 to 10.8 per 1,000 live births, with the rate of exclusive breastfeeding among babies under six months increasing almost tenfold from 8.7% to 83.3%. More than 16,000 children have been reached directly by the program to date, and 5,000 more will be targeted by the next phase of the program, which will focus on feeding practices of babies and young children.
- In Assam, Twinings' interventions have reached more than 34,000 young women to date, with programs centered on nutrition, empowerment, and child protection. Following a series of community-based nutrition interventions, including distribution of folic acid and the establishment of kitchen gardens, anemia prevalence has fallen by over 20%, which has also led to an increase in girls' attendance at school.

Challenges and lessons learned

One of the strengths of the Sourced with Care program is the use of participatory needs assessments, in which the risks and challenges unique to each community are identified, so that the program can be tailored to each setting and have the greatest impact. Listening to the voices of people in the community is vital: outsiders cannot assume that they know the on-the-ground

realities. The needs assessment can also identify any existing initiatives within the industry, to avoid duplication and build on existing models. Assessments are carried out on a rolling basis every two to three years by The regional Twinings social impact team. The in-country teams have a wide range of expertise, ranging from Water and Sanitation to Agriculture Strategy. When conducting the TCNAs, the topic of nutrition works as a useful starting point of discussion with community members. It acts as an entry point, bringing community members on board with the Assessment, which helps to build trust, thereby facilitating further discussion and addressing other issues.

Next steps

Although COVID-19 has put many Sourced with Care activities on hold, some aspects were able to continue and could extend to health messaging around COVID-19 itself. For instance, awareness-raising aspects were adapted for delivery via mobile phone, and messaging on breastfeeding was extended to include the importance of handwashing. The company appreciates that it is as important as ever to continue support during the pandemic, resuming activities as soon as it is possible to do so safely. Twinings' aim is to empower a further 250,000 women by 2025, with health and nutrition remaining a key factor of this work.

³ The first 1,000 days of life - the time spanning roughly between conception and one's second birthday - is a critical period for a child, as this is the time when the foundations of optimum health, growth, and neurodevelopment across the lifespan are established.

More information and tools

Twinings, Sourced with Care [https://www.sourcedwithcare.com/Twinings Community Needs Assessment Findings Report \(January 2021\)](https://www.sourcedwithcare.com/Twinings%20Community%20Needs%20Assessment%20Findings%20Report%20(January%202021).pdf)

<https://sourcedwithcare.com/media/1651/tcna-findings-report.pdf>

Twinings Sourced with Care Progress Report 2021

https://www.sourcedwithcare.com/media/1650/twinings_sourced-with-care_progress-report-2021.pdf