

Event Covered: The Ethical Tea Partnership and IDH the Sustainable Trade Initiative TEAM UP 2015 and ETP Members Strategy Day held in London, United Kingdom from June 16–17, 2015



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Ethical Tea Partnership and IDH the Sustainable Trade Initiative TEAM UP 2015 and ETP Members Strategy Day

This report documents the latest TEAM UP event collaboratively hosted by the Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP) and the IDH the Sustainable Trade Initiative in London from June 16–17, 2015. TEAM UP is much more than a play on words. Over the last three years, it has successfully convened stakeholders within the tea supply chain to develop strategies for moving the sector towards sustainability. TEAM UP 2015 focussed on pushing boundaries, and covered a number of issues including the need for mitigating and adapting to climate change, addressing gender issues, establishing more collaboration within the supply chain, making tea more attractive to consumers, learning from the coffee sector and empowering smallholders. Over 200 delegates from over 80 organizations participated, representing all parts of the tea value chain, including the highest number of tea producers since the first TEAM UP event. TEAM UP 2015 demonstrated that sustainability in its many forms (i.e., climate resilience, gender equity, poverty reduction) represents important opportunities to increase the viability and profitability of the tea industry.

TEAM UP Discussions

Ian Midgley, Chairman, ETP, and Joost Oorthuizen, Executive Director, IDH, opened TEAM UP by addressing the importance of moving the tea sector towards sustainability. TEAM UP 2015 consisted of panel discussions and four parallel interactive sessions held on climate change, landscapes, futures markets and agrochemicals within the context of tea supply chains.

Developments in 2014

The ETP and IDH reported on their progress in Asia and Africa, where they, along with local partners, aim to improve the lives of tea workers and smallholder farmers, as well as the conditions of the natural

environment in which tea is produced. Sarah Roberts, ETP's Executive Director, moderated a panel comprised of ETP and IDH staff from Africa and Asia. The African panellists highlighted how farmer field schools have helped farmers increase income through productivity and diversification. Training efforts have led to: partnerships for sustainable tea production inclusive of smallholder farmers in Malawi; a sustainable landscape initiative in Kenya; agricultural diversification for improving income and food security in Rwanda; and climate change adaptation training for over half a million smallholder farmers, leading to the adoption of innovative energy-saving measures. Climate change and landscape degradation were highlighted as important challenges for the tea sector in Africa. The Asian panellists discussed steps to organize smallholders and manage pesticide use. By the end of 2014, under the *Trustea* program, India had verified 67 million kilograms of tea. ETP's and IDH's first partnership was a smallholder project in Indonesia that enabled farmers to increase productivity and income—in some cases, these more than doubled. International health and safety standards were attained for tea producers and workers in China. An innovative tea industry project in Sri Lanka continues to bring together managers and workers to solve challenges faced by surrounding communities.

Changing Lives in India

Climate change, pesticide use, mechanization, smallholder organization and capacity building were described as the main challenges facing the tea industry in India. Arun N. Singh, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Goodricke Group Limited, noted that these issues affect tea quality. Richard Fairburn, IDH Vice-Chairman of the *Trustea* program, affirmed that *Trustea* is addressing these challenges by promoting stakeholder ownership and inclusion, food safety, good manufacturing practices, lower certification costs and support for compliance. He also mentioned that organic tea could not be considered a realistic alternative yet. One reason is a change in rainfall patterns, brought about by climate change, which has led to increased incidence of pestilence and disease on tea gardens. According to Mr. Fairburn, the way forward is safer pesticides with fewer active ingredients.

Ms. Anuradha Chandran, Senior Programme Specialist at UNICEF, spoke about the ETP-UNICEF collaboration to protect children from



Participating panelists from ETP and IDH Asia.

Box 1: Addressing Gender Equity in Agricultural Voluntary Sustainability Standards

TEAM UP 2015 raised the important role that voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) have in addressing gender diversity and equity and the empowerment of women in tea supply chains. Women have a crucial role in enabling sustainable consumption and production,¹ and a clear business and development case needs to be made for gender diversity and equity across value chains. One of the outcomes of the discussion was the following important question: Could VSS promote changes by structuring rules and contracts that address gender diversity and equity? Exploring this important question is fundamental to moving the tea sector towards sustainability.

The [ISEAL Alliance research agenda on the gender impacts of VSS](#) provides a starting point to answer the important questions tabled at TEAM UP 2015. To remain coherent and credible, VSS need to work towards gender equity within their standard-setting and governance systems. They can then work towards understanding the gender dynamics where they operate by: 1) identifying tea production regions where there are gender inequities; 2) understanding the roles, responsibilities and participation of women and men in households and communities where tea is produced; and 3) assessing the effectiveness of gender training. ETP has been working on all three elements and has recently, along with IDH and the [Kenya Tea Development Agency Holdings Ltd.](#), concretely demonstrated the positive effects that gender equity training has in improving work environments for women in the tea sector.

In general, understanding the constraints and pathways for men's and women's participation in tea production and management is required for VSS to shape their gender equity programs and interventions. One example is in enabling changes in gender distribution and roles in elements of tea production such as land ownership and farmer cooperatives. To ensure that they remain effective, unintended effects of gender equity strategies, such as exclusions in buying and selling processes and employability due to VSS female labour protective measures, need to be mitigated.

exploitation in Assam tea communities. The project is attempting to educate tea supply chain stakeholders and their families on the need to protect children's rights and assist governments with shaping education and child policies to improve their quality of life. Ultimately, the partnership will give thousands of children living on tea estates in Assam better life opportunities and provide a framework for other child protection initiatives.

Women in Agriculture

Stephanie Barrientos, Professor at the University of Manchester, made recommendations for empowering women and increasing gender diversity in the tea sector based on comparative research in over 20 countries. She stated that promoting gender equity and empowering women led to greater financial success, better quality of life, more health and education investments, and overall socioeconomic development. Jane Nyambura, ETP Program Coordinator for Africa, reported on the results of a three-year gender equity training project in Kenya undertaken by ETP, IDH and Kenya Tea Development Agency Holdings Ltd. The training, which addresses gender awareness, advocacy, leadership and governance, and issues of gender discrimination and harassment, is achieving results. Sexual harassment and gender discrimination issues are being addressed by communities, and women are undertaking community and professional roles traditionally fulfilled by men.

The Rwanda Experience

Panelists discussed experiences and challenges in developing the tea industry in Rwanda. The targeted activities discussed included investing downstream, working with smallholder cooperatives, increasing smallholder yields, adding value to production and capacity building. The panelists acknowledged that these actions are important to ensuring tea quality, empowerment and ownership of smallholders, improvement of livelihoods and overall development of Rwanda's tea industry. They also emphasized the important role government plays through its commitment to privatizing the sector.

Interactive Sessions

Four interactive sessions were held to discuss climate change, landscapes, futures markets and agrochemicals within the context of tea supply chains. Changing temperatures and rainfall patterns in Assam, India, and Yunnan, China, are challenging the viability of tea production. To improve yields and climate resilience, the participants proposed the following solutions: water capture for irrigation, crop diversification via agroforestry and reducing deforestation by developing agricultural waste fuel. A landscape approach for tea must be founded on three principles: 1) tangible issues requiring the mobilization of stakeholders beyond a supply chain or business; 2)

¹ According to Stephanie Barrientos, women tend to consume more sustainably and are also an important part of the smallholder and labour workforce in agriculture.



Delegation presenting the Malawi 2020 programme.

involvement of all major stakeholders and influencers of the landscape; and 3) improved planning, collaborative actions and aligned incentives leading to beneficial collective coordinated land uses (financial, markets, jurisdictional).² Futures markets³ could enable producers to sell their product into a more transparent market. Additional research is required on setting up elements of the market, establishing a tea price standard, incorporating production costs and ensuring producer participation, to adequately design them for tea markets. The participants also discussed the need for supporting smallholders that use agrochemicals, a collaborative approach to address agrochemical issues, stopping the misuse of agrochemicals and developing agrochemicals tailored for tea production. The participants concluded that ETP could establish a working group as a first step towards addressing agrochemical issues in the tea industry.

The Malawi 2020 Programme

The Honourable Dr. Allan James Chiyembekeza, Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development of Malawi, spoke about the revitalization efforts of the tea industry in Malawi via the launch of the **Malawi 2020 Tea Revitalisation Programme**. Malawi has designated tea as one of its strategic crops since the tea industry contributes 8-11 per cent to foreign exchange, employs 50,000 people and provides livelihoods for approximately 15,000 smallholder farmers. The Malawi 2020 Programme is structured after successful private-public partnerships that support smallholder farmers in improving and increasing productivity. Consequently, it focuses on shared responsibilities and benefits among all stakeholders, especially smallholder farmers, to move the tea value chain towards sustainability. Its key objectives include: 1) an industry that is investing in its future and workforce; 2) significant improvements in wages and benefits for workers—supply chain commitment towards a living wage by 2020; 3) improvements in smallholder farming practices, yields, quality, income and income diversification; 4) a healthier, motivated and productive workforce, with greater opportunities for women; and 5) an improved wage-setting process with greater worker representation.

Sector-Wide Systemic Change

Penny Lawrence, Deputy Chief Executive of Oxfam GB, Sally Uren, Chief Executive at Forum for the Future, and Tensie Whelan, President of Rainforest Alliance, discussed challenges, needs and recommendations to advance sustainability in tea supply chains. They highlighted making tea more attractive to consumers, promoting more engagement and

inclusion on the production side, and organizing smallholders. The speakers also recommended the following leadership traits to shift the tea sector towards sustainability: authentic, transparent, purpose-driven, systems thinking, long-term planning and capacity to manage complexities.

Coffee Versus Tea

A dynamic discussion on how the tea sector could learn from the coffee sector took place between Sarah Roberts, ETP Executive Director, and Melanie Rutten-Suelz, 4-C Association Executive Director. Although coffee has been well branded and commands attention in sustainability discussions, it is still working on many of the challenges (e.g., climate change, smallholder farmers, etc.) discussed in the previous TEAM UP 2015 sessions with regard to the tea sector. Gender and harassment, as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, are key areas where a joint approach could benefit both commodities.

ETP Members Strategy Day

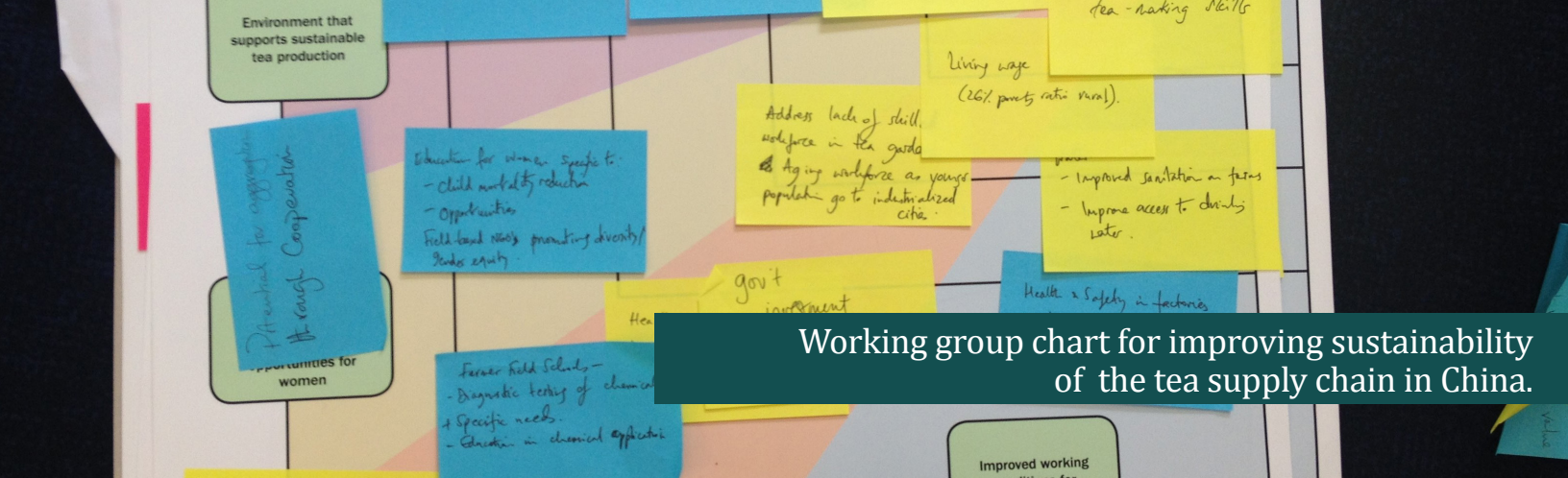
The ETP Members Strategy Day covered ETP's progress in fulfilling its strategic pillars to enable sustainability: Raising Core Standards; Improving Worker Lives & Livelihoods; Improving Smallholder Lives & Livelihoods; and Climate Change & the Environment. The discussion focused on identifying the issues to which ETP should give more or less attention. The Annual General Meeting was also conducted to go over administrative issues such as finances and membership criteria. A session was organized for members to provide feedback on the organization and discussions of TEAM UP 2015 and ETP's and IDH's priorities in shifting the tea sector towards sustainability.

Feedback Session

Participants discussed and presented their reflections on TEAM UP 2015 in small groups. Overall, participants concluded that the discussions were well thought out and organized, but more time should have been allotted to interactive discussions on the topics that were addressed. The groups highlighted that a broad range of essential issues for sustainability in the tea sector were covered. Nevertheless, some groups recommended that TEAM UP should focus on elaborating an action plan to address the challenges and potential solutions that were discussed. According to the TEAM UP participants, the following sustainability issues in the tea supply chain require further attention by ETP, IDH and the sector as a whole:

² The steps towards a landscape approach were obtained from interactive session summary notes collected by ETP.

³ A futures market is a financial trade where people agree, through a contract, to buy or sell specific quantities of a commodity at a specified price and delivery time in the future (Source: U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission, <http://www.cftc.gov/ConsumerProtection/EducationCenter/FuturesMarketBasics/index.htm>)



Working group chart for improving sustainability of the tea supply chain in China.

- **Sustainability is Profitability:** Sharing responsibilities in the supply chain (i.e., the Malawi example) and making tea more profitable is the pathway to sustainability. More focus is required on smallholders and workers to improve their livelihoods, which is still a great challenge for the industry.
- **Marketing and Branding:** More work should be done on branding and romanticizing tea. Other markets in addition to Europe and North America need to be discussed. Consumers need to understand what tea producers are doing to ensure sustainability.
- **Looking to the future:** Further work is required on climate change, and there should be more exchange of best practices with other countries. Looking at the coffee sector could provide lessons learned for addressing sustainability issues. There is a need for the tea industry to become more appealing to younger demographics.

ETP Strategy

Sarah Roberts, ETP's Executive Director, revised their activities and efforts to fulfill ETP's 2013-2016 strategic pillars (see above). ETP's strategy will adapt to the sustainable development goals once they are confirmed, so that ETP can contribute to achieving them, similar to how it contributed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Thriving Sustainable Tea Industry

Participants worked in groups representing China, India and Sri Lanka to propose measures, actions and strategies to fulfill the following objectives: 1. an environment that supports sustainable tea production; 2. a healthy, motivated and productive workforce with improved opportunities for women; 3. better livelihoods for smallholder farmers and their workers; and 4. improved working conditions for workers. The participants compiled a chart to be presented at ETP's Board of Directors meeting. The Sri Lanka working groups covered broad topics such as social poverty, gender equality, forestation and biodiversity. The India working group made reference to reviewing the Plantation Labour Act. The China working group discussed health, safety and quality of life along the tea supply chain from producer to consumer. All groups saw the importance of farmer field schools to improve skills and build capacities to move the sector towards sustainability.

Measuring Impact: ETP's Theory of Change

Rachel Cracknell, ETP's Project Manager and Climate Change Expert, presented their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) programme to measure impacts through ETP's theory of change (ToC). ETP's four strategic pillars have a ToC documenting desired changes to the tea supply chain, as well as deliverables and activities to achieve them, that are linked to ETP's ultimate goal of a thriving tea industry that is socially just and environmentally sustainable. The M&E system will be used to measure the impacts of ETP's activities as it strives to fulfill the ToC of its strategic pillars.

Author: Jefferson Andrade & Vivek Voora **Photo credits:** Ethical Tea Partnership & Jefferson Andrade

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