

Insights
Series

PRACTICAL
PARTNERSHIPS
PILOTS

QUARTERLY LEARNING REVIEW
LEARNING SUMMARY 3
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Key Learnings:

- TVET providers must have the human resource capacity to respond and adapt to dynamic and challenging contexts.
- Digital communication solutions are increasingly becoming a successful component of fledgling and well-established relationships.
- TVET stakeholders require different levels of engagement and ownership of TVET projects.
- TVET works best when it listens to the needs and wisdom of market stakeholders.
- Innovative training models must respond to market requirements.
- TVET courses are a community endeavour which require local legitimacy.
- TVET students require additional support and encouragement to ensure they remain engaged.

The Practical Partnerships Pilots

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nepal has made great progress over recent years, and yet many employers find that new recruits do not have the skills and knowledge required for entry level positions.

Every year, 130,000 TVET graduates enter the employment market but, for Nepal's economy to grow sustainably, it is essential that the workforce has the relevant knowledge and skills to capably meet labour market needs.

Led by the Government of Nepal, the TVET sector is creating opportunities that develop new skills based on employers' needs, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

As part of these efforts, the Dakchyata: TVET Practical Partnership project is supporting several new skills development partnership models to be developed and piloted across the tourism, construction, and agriculture sectors. Known as Practical Partnerships Pilots and launched in March 2020, they aim to:

- Encourage closer engagement and relationships between public and private sector actors.
- Test, codify, and refine TVET methodologies across the agriculture and food production, construction, and tourism sectors.
- Improve TVET students' access to technical and soft skillsets which boost their enterprise and employment opportunities.
- Embed shared sectoral intelligence, learning, and innovation about what works in TVET.
- Enables learning for the future through TVET experiences, captured in a Nepalese context.

This Insights Series regularly tracks and shares the progress and learning being generated through the pilots. It is intended to draw together emerging findings from the Practical Partnership Pilots each quarter to provide an overview of how they are developing and implementing projects and adapting to these unprecedented times.

Pilot Profiles

Since March 2020, 10 pilot projects have joined the programme. Over the course of 18 months, these projects will spearhead the testing of new employer engagement models and share vital insights with the public and private sectors on what works in TVET.

KEY		Project		Geography		Agriculture		Construction		Tourism
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Commenced March 2020:

Hamro Krishi Sahakari Sanstha Limited (HKSSL)										
Hamro Krishi Karyakram		Sarlahi & Mohatari			Enhancing rural young people's commercial farming techniques.				Agriculture	

Sajha Byawasaya Sip Bikas (SBSB)										
Skills for Agro-Enterprise Project (SAEP)		Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mohatari and Dhanusa			Upgrading farmers' agro-enterprise knowledge and skills in off-season vegetable farming, dairy products, and poultry.				Agriculture	

National Environment and Equity Development Society (NEEDS)										
Promoting market led technical and vocational skills for employment		Kanchanpur, Kailali and Bajhang district			Improving employability of unskilled and semi-skilled youths on agriculture, tourism, and construction.				Cross cutting through all 3 sectors	

TRACE Private Limited										
Skill and Rewarding Employment Project		Kanchanpur, Kailali			Enhancing skills and employability for young people within the construction sector through a semi-apprenticeship and employment model.				Construction	

Commenced August 2020:

Brilliant Manpower Training Centre (BMTC)										
Skilling Tourism Sector for Sustainable Employment Project		Kathmandu-Chitwan and Pokhara			Cater to changing needs of the tourism sector by training young people through innovative models including apprenticeship, employment, and space sharing to enhance their employability.				Tourism	

Deurali Janata Prabidhik Shikshyalaya (DJPS)										
TVET Awareness, Skill Development, Capacity Strengthening and Employment Project		Butwal and Nawalparasi			Enhance employability in agriculture and construction sectors by training young people on demand-driven, market-oriented skills.				Agriculture	

Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP)										
Enhancing partnership-based demand led technical skills		Bajhang and Bardiya			Train young people on new areas of agriculture through a field-based apprenticeship model to create employment and income generating opportunities.				Construction & Agriculture	

Nepal Agriculture Cooperative Central Federation Ltd. (NACCFL)										
Sustainable Rural Employment Project		Chitwan, Dhading, Jhapa, Kathmandu, Makwanpur, Morang			Promote young people's employment through market-relevant commercial farming and agro-industry skills training.				Agriculture	

Commenced October 2020:

Central Tea Cooperative Federation Ltd. Nepal (CTCF)										
Skill Development for Quality Tea Production		Dhankuta, Ilam, Jhapa, Lalitpur, Panchtar, Sankuwasava, Therathum			Enhance the technical skills of tea farmers, cooperatives, and processing factories on tea cultivation, management, and processing for increased productivity of the tea sector in Nepal.				Agriculture	

Ilam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI)										
Skill Development for Sustainable Employment		Ilam			Enhance the market relevance of tourism focused TVET based on sector needs and increase the supply of highly skilled tourism sector workers.				Tourism	

Progress & Insights

Pilots in Numbers:



PPP Pilots Learning Areas

ADAPTABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS	COLLABORATION	SCALABLE MODELS AND APPROACHES	INNOVATIVE, IMPACT FOCUSED, AND SUSTAINABLE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to respond to changing circumstances. 2. Technological adaptation, including through COVID-19. 3. Responding to market conditions and employer needs, through use of labour market information and feedback loops. 4. Robust, evidence-based, project management contributing to sound implementation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effective methods for collaboration in project design and delivery. 2. Productive dialogue and collaboration with key stakeholders/employers. 3. Capacity development, engagement within organisations and between organisations and their stakeholders. 4. Equitable decision making. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflecting national TVET goals and policies and local and national market needs. 2. Clear model/TOC that describes the change process. 3. Credibility/legitimacy with stakeholders/locally owned and embedded. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Addressing long standing challenges in new ways. 2. Evidence of developing capacity and understanding through changed norms and adoption of common practices. 3. Green, low-emission, climate resilient outputs and outcomes. 4. Providing clear evidence of intended outcomes and, where possible, wider system impacts. 5. Generating real-world outcomes for trainees, employers, and local economies.

Key Insights

Through the PPP pilots we will be developing a body of evidence against 4 key areas of learning:

ADAPTABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

The ongoing crisis means the pilots have had to be flexible in the design and implementation of their projects. Since March 2020, the pilots have all made adaptations in their plans - from recruiting staff through online interview processes, to reducing classroom sizes and adapting delivery modes. This has required considerable capacity from those managing the pilots to develop contingency plans, support their staff (including TVET trainers) through major change processes, and to set realistic targets to continue to achieve their goals.

Digital communication solutions are increasingly becoming a successful component of fledgling and well-established relationships:

Local authorities are now focusing on curbing the pandemic and have limited time and resources with which to engage with the pilots. Since March 2020, the pilots have built strong relationships with local authorities based on a mixture of face-to-face meetings and digital communications, such as email and telephone calls.

For UCEP, they have tried to embrace digital communications with municipalities, such as local authorities, to ensure that their progress is not defined by their ability to host physical meetings. However, as valuable as this digital relationship has proven to be, the pilots still see the value and need for engagement in person.

“We have learnt that alternate ways can be adopted, and digital medium can be good platform for work in this pandemic situation. However, physical meeting provides us the platform of easy communication without disturbance. It helps in better understanding each party and helps lead to sound relationships.”

UCEP Project Staff

COLLABORATION

TVET Stakeholders require different levels of engagement and ownership of TVET projects:

Since March 2020, the pilots have engaged and collaborated with over 273 stakeholders from the public and private sector actors. During this time, the pilots have engaged these stakeholders for different purpose and to different extents; a collaboration hierarchy is beginning to emerge which reflects the different layers of collaboration and the commitments required:

Inform: Awareness raising has taken place across stakeholder groups and communities to build understanding of the aims and interventions of the pilots. For example, SBSB has hosted community sensitisation sessions and UCEP has engaged the Federation of Contractors Association, Bardiya, to share information on the semi-apprenticeship model they would use. In the case of the former, the informing stage was simply to raise awareness whilst in the latter it represents a first step in a potentially more intensive collaborative relationship.

Consult and Share: The pilots have established ways to gather stakeholder perspectives to shape their models and plans. As seen with NACCFL, which recently completed a mapping of potential catchment areas and farms, researchers engaged representatives from member cooperatives, local government, cooperative farms, and private farm owners. These perspectives are being used to influence decision making on locations of their trainings.

It is encouraging that pilot stakeholders are beginning to act together for the common benefit of improving TVET provision. For example, NEEDS recognised the potential value for their agriculture trainees of aligning their training with the work of UNDP in the Bheemdatta municipality. Through discussion and joint planning, UNDP agreed to supply 10 plastic growing tunnels to support trainees in the Nayakatan area.

Endorse and consent: It has been essential to gain permission from local authorities for the pilots to take place. Some pilots have found that, due to the context, limited face-to-face meetings,

and stretched capacity, it has taken more time than expected to inform, consult and then, seek permission from the relevant authorities. However, according to HKSSL, this ongoing engagement with authorities and municipalities ensures the longer-term sustainability of the impact of training.

Ownership: A key benefit has been the integration of stakeholders into formal project management structures. This often takes the form of project level committees which have formalised responsibilities and influence over the design and implementation of the pilots. One example is NACCFL's District Level Coordination and Market Linkage Committee (DLCMLC), formed of cooperatives, private traders, government representatives, and trade associations, which supports the selection of farms for field-based training and take an active role in brokering relationships between trainers and farms.

Official Partnership: All pilots have formed partnerships to bring stakeholder organisations together. Within these partnerships there is official recognition of respective roles, formalised joint planning and strategising for the pilot, and pooled funding - provided by the European Union through Dakchyata's grant system. Partnerships have been found to have the potential for mutual capacity

growth and sharing of knowledge. However, they require high levels of communication and integration to ensure they run smoothly.

SCALABLE MODELS AND APPROACHES

TVET works best when it listens to the needs and wisdom of market stakeholders: Pilots have been investing in mechanisms which promote coordination amongst market value chain actors to identify the most in demand skills. These structures and processes - whether it is HKSSL's Rapid Market Assessment, BMTTC's Skills Gap Analysis, or SBSB's Market Information Sharing Forum - are all designed to identify the gaps in the current markets, understand the needs of key stakeholders, such as employers and the private sector who have often had limited engagement in the design of TVET, and identify the most appropriate models for addressing these issues.

The processes are helping to contextualise initiatives and ensure that they are relevant for the local market and context. For example, HKSSL's Rapid Market Assessment helped the pilot team to understand more about the specific needs of migrant returnees and how to engage them in agriculture.

Case Study

New skills for a greener future

Dinesh Rana, a 24-year-old resident of Bheemdatta Municipality-14, has grown vegetables alongside his farmer father for many years using the methods commonly used in his community.

Over the last few months, he has received training from the NEEDS pilot and has begun to learn more about the benefits of diversifying into off-season vegetables cultivation. The training has provided him with new information on the physiological and physical changes that occur in various life cycles of growing vegetables; information that will enable him to use his land more effectively.

"The training is very good for learners who want to learn new ideas and technical work."

The training has also provided new information on insect infestation, organic farming techniques and various crop calendars. Before the training, Dinesh and his family relied upon harmful pesticides and fertilisers without understanding the impact of these materials on the land and their health. Through the training, Dinesh learnt about the benefit of organic compost and animal manures and they have reduced their use of chemical-based products.

Dinesh has since started to apply these new approaches to his farm. He has decided to grow off-season vegetables commercially using a tunnel approach and has reduced his reliance on harmful pesticides in favour of organic approaches. Dinesh has reported that the vegetables are growing well with these new approaches in comparison to the previous techniques.

Innovative training models must respond to market requirements: Insights from stakeholders are having a visible impact upon the shape of the TVET models and their implementation. For example, evidence from the Market Information Sharing Forum has helped SBSB review the curricula for Off-season Vegetable Producers, Poultry Farm Workers, and Village Animal Health Workers, and include new relevant skills which will be applied to training and further shared with CTEVT/NSTB for respective curricular revisions.

TVET courses are a community endeavour which require local legitimacy: All pilots are based on the assumption that TVET works most effectively when it is given legitimacy to operate by local communities and stakeholders. Since September 2020, five pilots have conducted specific activities, such as inauguration ceremonies, to strengthen their legitimacy with the community.

The inauguration ceremonies hosted by BMTC, HKSSL, NACCFL, NEEDS, and SBSB were attended by a range of local actors including local government authorities, local mayors, civil society organisations, private sector actors from the agricultural, construction, and tourism sectors, and local political party leaders. The ceremonies provide a chance to inform stakeholders about the objectives of the training programmes and, importantly, as NACCFL notes, build rapport.

“It is great opportunity for the local people for involving in such need-based training. The ward will coordinate and assist to support the trainees of the training programmes.”

Uttam Bist, Ward President of Bheemdatta Municipality 14

INNOVATION, IMPACT FOCUSED, AND SUSTAINABLE

Since September 2020, NEEDS and TRACE have begun technical TVET training courses with 440 students (34% female), whilst SBSB has reached 317 young people with pre-training counselling and 40 trainees have been selected to participate in the HKSSL pilot. Courses offered to the students include off seasonal vegetable farming, integrated pest management - including NEEDS' low environmental impact organic farming techniques, brick laying and masonry, plumbing, electrical, carpentry and plastering.

TVET students require additional support and encouragement to ensure they remain engaged: It is pivotal for TVET providers to understand their trainees and their specific needs. All pilots have integrated components in their projects to ensure they are accessible and inclusive for a varied, and potentially disadvantaged, group of trainees.

It is essential that TVET providers understand trainees' specific needs. For example, one pilot experienced absences on the first day of training as trainees had lost interest or motivation since being accepted onto the course.

“Due to this pandemic situation, it is not as easy to run programmes as it had been previously. Trainees need to be consulted and motivated for their continuity in the training programs”

NEEDS Project Staff.

To increase engagement and retention, pilots are integrating new activities, such as HKSSL's online motivation course and SBSB's Boot Camp and Pre-Training Counselling which shares vital information on the project, selection criteria, requirements, and time commitments to ensure trainees are informed about the training, passionate about being involved, and committed to engaging fully.

Key Next Steps:

Commencement and continuation of technical training. By the end of February 2021, over 1,300 students are expected to have completed their TVET trainings with the 10 pilots.

Structures and resource development. The pilots will continue to develop curriculums, resources, and mechanisms which strengthen the market relevance of their approaches and bring together the knowledge and insights of key stakeholders.

Sustainability initiatives to start. Pilots, such as HKSSL and TRACE, will invest in post-training support initiatives that link students to relevant markets and stakeholders and allow them to continue to develop their new skills after the end of training.

“

I have been engaged in a number of committees and organisations in various roles but leading the Jhapa District Level Coordination and Market Linkage Committee has made me more serious and responsible. The discussion held between us in today's meeting helped us enlarge our vision in the Field-Based Apprenticeship model and involvement of various stakeholders within the process. I will try to accomplish the task provided to me accountably with better coordination”

NACCFL: Ms. Meena Dhakal
Chair of the Jhapa District Level Coordination and Market Linkage Committee

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