

Insights
Series

PRACTICAL
PARTNERSHIPS
PILOTS

QUARTERLY LEARNING REVIEW
LEARNING SUMMARY 2
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Key Learnings:

- Coordination across authorities and stakeholders builds buy-in and sustainability.
- The integration of stakeholders into formal project management structures strengthens ownership.
- TVET mechanisms and processes must be designed to collate, listen, and respond to the needs of the market.
- Innovative training design is emerging to reflect the needs of the context.
- Digital communication solutions are maturing as accepted practices for the pilots and their stakeholders.

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.

The Insights Series will regularly track and share the progress and learning being generated through the pilots. They are 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

In March 2020, four pilot projects joined the programme with three new pilots joining in August 2020. 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.

Existing Pilots:

Hamro Krishi Sahakari Sanstha Limited (HKSS)		National Environment and Equity Development Society			
	Project: Hamro Krishi Karyakram		Project: Promoting market led technical and vocational skills for employment		
	Sector: Agriculture				Sector: Cross cutting through all 3 sectors
	Geography: Sarlahi and Mohatari		Geography: Kanchanpur, Kailali and Bajhang district		
	Project Focus: Enhance the employability of rural youths by equipping them with practical hands-on commercial farming techniques which are required and endorsed by the private sector.		Project Focus: Improved employability for unskilled and semi-skilled youths on agriculture, tourism, and construction sectors through increased cooperation of public and private sector and market-relevant training approaches.		
Sajha Byawasaya Sip Bikas (SBSB)		TRACE Private Limited			
	Project: Skills for Agro-Enterprise Project (SAEP)		Project: Skill and Rewarding Employment Project		
	Sector: Agriculture		Sector: Construction		
	Geography: Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mohatari and Dhanusa		Geography: Kanchanpur, Kailali		
	Project Focus: Upgrade farmers' agro-enterprise knowledge and skills by partnering with government, training institutes, farmers' associations, cooperatives, and traders to improve the curriculum on the off-season vegetable farming, dairy products, and poultry.		Project Focus: Enhanced skills and employability for youths within the construction section through a semi-apprenticeship and employment model.		

New pilots joined in August:

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

Underprivileged Children’s Educational Programs (UCEP)	
	Project: Enhancing partnership-based demand led technical skills
	 Sector: Construction and Agriculture
	Geography: Bajhang and Bardiya
	Project Focus: Training youths on new areas of agriculture through a field-based apprenticeship model to create employment and income generating opportunities.

Deurali Janata Prabidhik Shikshyalaya (DJPS)	
	Project: TVET Awareness, Skill Development, Capacity Strengthening and Employment Project
	Sector: Agriculture
	Geography: Butwal and Nawalparasi
	Project Focus: Enhancing employability in agriculture and construction sectors by training youths on demand-driven, market-oriented modules.

Nepal Agriculture Cooperative Central Federation Ltd. (NACCFL)	
	Project: Sustainable Rural Employment Project
	Sector: Agriculture
	Geography: Working across 16 Districts across the 7 Provinces
	Project Focus: Promote sustainable youth employment in agribusiness through market relevant

Progress & Insights

Pilots in Numbers:



Case Study

Building robust support mechanisms: HKSSL's Project Coordination Committees (PCC)

Mayor Ganesh Prasad Prasai of the Hariwon Municipality sees many opportunities for the agricultural sector during the pandemic:

"There is potential in agriculture. This pandemic, and return of migrant workers, should be taken as an opportunity for our agriculture to flourish. Off seasonal vegetable farming can provide good incomes to the farmers and it has good scope in the Hariwon Municipality."

The HKSSL pilot aims to enhance the employability of rural youths by equipping them with practical hands on commercial farming techniques which are required by the private sector. As part of the project, HKSSL established a PCC to provide oversight and advice to the pilot team. Mayor Ganesh Prasad Prasai joined the PCC and has been an active in increasing the accountability of the project to stakeholders, communities, and to the targeted trainees.

"The approach of Project Coordination Committee is very helpful for the people who are concerned about the ongoing programs in the community. As a Chief of this municipality, I am intrigued by the progress of programs going on in my community. This committee is the effective way for the programs to update us on the activities. It is also a channel for us to seek and gain information on it. Intermixing other municipalities in the same committee has given us the opportunity to exchange our experiences among one another. The PCC will be a great platform for us to share the experiences and learn from one another."

According to the Mayor, communication, coordination, and buy-in from the local municipality were pivotal over the next year- something which could be achieved through the PPC coordination mechanism. The HKSSL team reflected:

"The formation of the PCC has made it easier for us to coordinate at the municipality level. The stakeholders feel the ownership towards the project when they are involved in coordination directly. The PCC support us to guide to work in the difficult situation and provides suggestion to work in line with the government policies."

Key Insights

Coordination across authorities and stakeholders builds buy-in and sustainability.

Continued meaningful engagement with stakeholders is a core tenet of the pilot projects. 365 local and TVET stakeholders have been engaged in dialogue during this period to increase awareness, create excitement, and building confidence and buy-in for the pilots.

NEEDS have found that regular consultation and coordination with local authorities and TVET stakeholders is an essential foundation of their project. Without this, key elements of the context are missing, and decision making is less robust as local and technical stakeholders provide much needed insight for the team.

Implementation is much smoother, and potentially more sustainable, when local authorities and stakeholders understand and support the aim and approach of the pilot. The NEEDS pilot has found that many of their targeted stakeholders were unaware of national employment guidelines which reduced their initial engagement with their pilot. By engaging stakeholders, such as the Bark Bahadur Rokaya, President of Khaptad Channa Rural Municipality, on the aims and benefits of the project mechanisms they were able to secure endorsement for their activities.

"Collaboration with various organizations and individuals has created a conducive environment for the success of the program." TRACE pilot.

SBSB has gained the trust and support of the municipal functions, local mayor, and other related officials who have committed to collaborating closely with the pilot and allocating budget from their respective municipalities to create long-term sustainability for the training approach. This support has been built over the extended inception period which has allowed for strong relationships and collaboration to flourish- something which is not always possible when organisations are seeking to implement projects at speed.

The integration of stakeholders into formal project management structures strengthens ownership. Governance structures such as HKSSL's Project Coordination Committee (PCC) and TRACE's two Apprenticeship Coordination Committees (ACC) are developing much more structured relationships and roles for stakeholders.

These structures have provided technical advice to the pilots on new approaches, such as the roll-out of HKSSL's rapid market assessment (RMA), and given guidance on project adaptation, including how best to select trainees and deliver the training. These structures are an active and meaningful part of the pilot- TRACE's ACC have even sought confirmation that they will not be merely be a formality but an impactful resource for the project.

In both structures, the development of the committees has made wider stakeholder coordination much easier by creating a direct link from the project governance to local actors and TVET stakeholders. It has created ownership of the project by involving stakeholders in the decision making of the project- moving one step on from keeping stakeholder informed.

TVET mechanisms and processes must be designed to collate, listen, and respond to the needs of the market. Pilots are investing mechanisms which promote coordination amongst market value chain actors for the identification of the most in demand skills. As the SBSB reflects:

“Training institutions often focus more on theory which makes it difficult for graduates to enter the workforce with the competence and confidence expected by employers.”

SBSB's Market Information Sharing Forum (MISF) is supporting the identification of required skills within the agricultural market. MISF committees have been established in four districts with support from 39 stakeholders, including 22 employers and private sector actors, representatives from seven civil society organisations, and five Government of Nepal representative. The committees will meet regularly to gather and manage information to

bridge gaps in knowledge sharing of offseason vegetable farming, village animal health workers (VAHW) and poultry.

Meanwhile, HKSSL have conducted a rapid market assessment (RMA) through digital and in person engagements with cooperatives, private sector companies, farmers, returnee migrants and local government representatives. This has improved understanding of the agricultural sector, the potential added value of TVET graduates, and the skills which are most relevant to their employability. HKSSL are using this information to adapt their curriculum and strengthen their trainee selection processes.

“Discussion with different stakeholders during Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA) has helped to highlight the actual significance of the program and plan the curriculum of training for its better effectiveness. The stakeholders have shown the interest to the program after the interviews for RMAs.” HKSSL Report.

The insights and data being generated through these mechanisms are being used to create intelligent and responsive TVET models at a very basic level, these mechanisms are supporting engagement, interest, and confidence amongst TVET stakeholders in the pilot projects.

Innovative training design is emerging to reflect the needs of the context. The four pilots have chosen to implement through face-to-face training delivery approaches, which will commence in the next period, because of the need for TVET students to practice hands on skills. This has required some significant adaptations and new approaches to ensure that they can maintain a safe environment for their students and staff.

HKSSL is taking an innovative approach to their training by shifting to a 'home-coaching' modality. This approach will link small groups of five farm-based trainees to a roaming trainer who will provide direct support to them in their own homes reducing the need for large gatherings within training centres.

TRACE and NEEDS are reviewing the size of their classrooms to assess viability for smaller teaching groups which will protect the training courses

from potential restrictions on sizes of gatherings. Additional health and safety requirements have been incorporated by all pilots with dedicated and extended budget lines to support the development of safe spaces for trainees and trainers.

These adaptations will increase the pilots' resilience to the pandemic and allow them to implement their trainings irrespective of the some of the external conditions. As HKSSL reflect, these adaptations allow them *“utilize their time rather than waiting for the things to get normal.”*

Digital communication solutions are maturing as accepted practices for the pilots and their stakeholders.

The opportunity to shift towards digital remote processes has given the pilots, as HKSSL notes, the chance to explore new technologies and ways of working. The pandemic has put digitalization on the radar of organisations long before it may have organically appeared; a move to digital tools, such as Zoom, is supporting pilot organisations to future proof their approach and organisation. HKSSL have even used digital approaches to collect data for their rapid market assessment (RMA) and found it to be as effective as traditional in person data collection approaches.

Whilst digital and remote approaches are not without their challenges- being dependent upon good phone and internet coverage and requiring additional time for clear transmission and understanding of messages- they have allowed the pilots to progress their projects whilst face-to-face engagements were not possible.

Key Next Steps

Training commencement: 940 students will begin their TVET courses with the HKSSL, NEEDS, SBSB, and TRACE pilots in the next period. Pilot promotion and trainee selection and retention will be supported by local authorities and stakeholders who have been engaged by the pilot over the first 6 months of the programme.

Inception period for 4 new pilots: The BMTTC, DJPS, UCEP and NACCFL pilots will all commence their inception period to set up their teams, create connections with stakeholders, and finalise the planning for their activities.

Resource & Coordination Development: The pilots will continue to develop resources and mechanisms which strengthen the market relevance of their approaches and bring together the knowledge and insights of key stakeholders.

Expansion of pilot programme: By the end of October 2020, Dakchyata will have welcomed the final two Practical Partnership Pilots. These additions will expand our programme to 10 pilots with a planned total programme reach of 4,000 TVET students.

“

I have seen many organisations provide long and short term trainings but this training will be very effective for trainees because this course focuses on more practical knowledge as well as supporting their confidence to become an entrepreneur after receiving skill development training.”

SBSB: Mr. Khadag Kumar Mainali,
a government officer in Chandrapur,
Rautahat

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