

CONNECTING SKILLS TO OPPORTUNITY

BUILDING MORE INCLUSIVE TVET SCHOOLS: STEPS TO SUCCESS



The Strengthening Employer Engagement in CTEVT Schools (SEECs) project was established by Dakchyata to support the development of sustainable approaches for increasing the quality, accessibility and relevance of the CTEVT school sector's delivery and responsiveness to labour market needs.

SEECs was primarily implemented in nine identified Dakchyata Supported Schools (DSS) and extended through a SEECs school mentorship programme to four Dakchyata Supported School Mentored (DSSM).

A key objective was to promote approaches that improve equitable access to pilot training for female learners, unemployed youths, and disadvantaged groups.

SEECs established 7 vital steps that support increased inclusivity within schools.

Engage and cooperate with local community groups and stakeholders to identify inclusivity issues: As a primary step, build up knowledge of the targeted groups and the challenges they face in accessing and being part of TVET. To do this, identify and draw on the insights of leaders of local community clubs, social welfare groups, and the local GESI cell of the rural municipalities. These groups are also well placed to help identify targets and promote their participation in training.

Wherever possible, speak directly to underserved and disadvantaged groups to gain their perspectives on needs and best solutions. They should be continuously engaged to gather perspectives throughout their TVET journey.

Assess GESI capacity and build a realistic strategy: Schools should conduct an honest assessment of their leadership, governance, staff, infrastructure and recruitment, retention, attainment of underserved groups to review the extent that the school supports inclusivity. The resulting GESI report should form the basis of a GESI strategy that will set a clear inclusivity mission and achievable targets.

GESI journeys are ongoing and long-term; strategies and plans must establish this as an ongoing area of improvement for the school. Reaching underserved groups may cost more and potentially take more time; it is important that strategies, plans and budget realistically reflect the change process for underserved groups.

Invest in resources and infrastructure: To ensure momentum and effective delivery against the GESI plan, it is important to assign a GESI Lead, or a GESI Unit with dedicated staff. Whilst all staff will have a role to play in GESI achievement, it is beneficial having dedicated personnel who have the mandate to spearhead change.

Resource and time will need to be invested in ensuring accessibility to the built environment, such as classrooms, employer visits, workstations, sanitation areas, dormitories and transport, to meet the needs of all students, especially those with mobility issues, or additional health needs or childcare responsibilities.

Common adaptations required are inclusion of new sanitation facilities such as sanitary pad vending machines, female or third gender changing rooms, childcare facilities, ramps and wider entrances.

Mainstream GESI into the school culture: To create an inclusive environment, all students and staff must engage in GESI. This will require clear principals for everyone to follow, such as non-discriminatory language. These principles need to be easy to understand and built into the schools' day-to-day workings until they are commonly practised. Students should also be engaged in GESI awareness raising sessions to discuss topics and improve understanding.

This can be further supported through teacher training and sector leadership development to promote inclusive understanding and practices. Instructors will be key in promoting, and enforcing, GESI-friendly language and practices within the classroom so it is vital they are supported to develop their own thinking and skills in this area.

Develop curriculum and training that support accessible learning: Curriculum and learning materials and approaches for underserved groups should reflect their specific needs and challenges that they may face whilst accessing training e.g., lower literacy levels, limited time for training courses. Additionally, soft skills which can be underdeveloped within these groups should be incorporated into curriculum to broaden skillset.

Common soft skills required by underserved groups include communication, negotiation, decision-making, grit, and risk management.

Ensure application processes are easy to engage with and promote underserved groups' inclusion. For example, there is a need to directly engage communities to raise awareness about courses - limited digital literacy will prevent many from discovering courses or applying online. Also, ensure that applications can be done offline. In addition, prepare clear selection criteria and consider quotas for underserved to ensure inclusion.

A key decision to make is whether students from underserved groups will be integrated into mainstream training or whether they will receive bespoke training for the group. A specific 'GESI' training group will help to ensure that the specific needs of the group can be met, however, this will create parallel training schemes within the school and other approaches will need to be taken to ensure the full integration of underserved students into school life.

When bringing employers and private sector actors into the classroom to directly engage with the students either through talks, lectures or training provision, try, wherever possible, to identify employers who come from marginalised or underserved backgrounds: this will support students to see examples of success that they can aspire to.

Support longer term achievement of underserved students: Underserved groups face additional challenges in accessing work post training. It is important to build a wider set of skills that will support their employment and self-employment opportunities. Careers, information, advice and guidance (CIAG) initiatives can promote use of individual learning plans that have a direct line of sight to employment. In addition, building direct linkages to employers through networking opportunities, apprenticeship schemes, or work placement processes will improve their chances of long-term success.

Build clear evidence of progress: It is important to track the progress of underserved students to understand whether their journey and achievement is in line with other learners and to identify any areas where they are excelling or falling behind. Students should be tracked using a consistent set of metrics and all data should be disaggregated and segmented based on grouping with regular data analysis helping to identify key actions that may need to be taken. This data will also support reflections on the achievement of the GESI strategy.

For more information, visit the Dakchyata website: <https://www.dakchyata-nepal.org/>

Dakchyata: TVET practical partnership is a skills development programme, funded by the European Union and delivered by the British Council in partnership with the government of Nepal, to realise the potential of young people who - equipped with the right skills - can contribute to national economic success in the agricultural, tourism and construction industries.

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