

CONNECTING SKILLS TO OPPORTUNITY

SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO TRANSITION FROM TRAINING TO WORK: 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 through increased employer engagement.

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).

In the past, TVET learners have not always been effectively supported to think through and plan their post-education journey. Students have often completed courses which they have limited interest in following long term or they feel confined to seeking employment rather than establish their own enterprise. The schools have therefore worked hard to ensure learners are better prepared for their post-education journey through quality advice and information on careers and promotion of self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

SEECs established 7 vital steps that support transition from training to work.

Build career guidance and enterprise capacity within the school: Career advice and guidance (CAG) and enterprise development requires specialised knowledge and skills. If this is not already present within the school, look to hire specialists who can lead the process. Additionally, conduct capacity building training with existing staff so that they can better support students in this area.

Develop CAG and Enterprise strategies and plans: Clear strategies and plans for development of CAG and entrepreneurial pathways within the school over the next 3-5 years should be developed as an initial step. These strategies, and the process for developing them, should follow a public-private partnership model and ensure that the private sector is fully engaged and contributing to the contents. This will ensure that industry related information is relevant and appropriate and modernise the content of advice to match newer skills in industry.

For enterprise strategies, this may include an assessment of relevant skills, and identify which would best lend themselves to self-employment and ways in which students can best be supported to take advantage of these market opportunities.

Provide careers advice materials, expertise and activities on an ongoing basis: CAG works best when it is delivered regularly throughout the duration of training. This gives students numerous opportunities to think through their future options. The activities provided should be varied and give students chance to engage with industry, gain advice, and reflect on their options. Suggested approaches include:

- Inviting local employers into the schools to provide talks and Q&As on their specific trade

- Industry visits to understand more about the world of work
- Job fairs to bring a varied group of trades and employers into the school
- Dedicated careers advice sessions with a trained CAG specialist.

Build soft skills of students: Communication, decision making, networking, and grit are often recognised by private sector actors as being essential for any worker- whether they are employed or self-employed. Such soft skills should be integrated into training programmes to ensure students have the right balance of skills as they move into work.

Develop incubators to foster and grow small enterprises: Entrepreneurs often have few sources of support as they design, develop and grow their enterprises. To address this, schools can develop an incubator within the school to support students to ideate, establish their enterprise and set goals, and begin to grow their business. Incubators should also provide enterprise resources and learning opportunities to budding entrepreneurs. These could include talks by successful entrepreneurs, networking sessions, signposting to legal and financial advice, and access to mentors and coaches as they progress on their journey.

Build production units: Where suitable, schools should consider the building of production units to support students to produce high-quality products and access a more extensive value chain by leveraging the schools' linkages. Production units work best when:

- There is a clear market need (established through a market assessment) for the products being focused on
- The private sector is involved and supports quality assurance processes
- The school has modern equipment and tools to support production
- Local value chains are understood and leveraged to the benefit of the unit.

Support budding entrepreneurs to understand the routes to finance: It is particularly important to link with institutions that provide affordable and suitable financial services and products to micro, small and medium sized enterprises. Establish and develop linkages with financial institutes and raise awareness about the specific needs of budding entrepreneurs who need to secure funding, in particular, the needs of female and other underserved entrepreneurs.

Where access to formal finance schemes may be challenging, consider developing a revolving fund within the school and coordinate with local authorities, industry associations, and cooperatives to diversify funding pools for entrepreneurs.

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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