

CELEBRATING IMPACT

DAKCHYATA'S PRACTICAL
PARTNERSHIP PILOTS

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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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Overview of Dakchyata's Practical Partnership Pilots

TVET in Nepal has made great progress over recent years, with 130,000 TVET graduates entering the employment market every year.

For all this success, the Nepal economy still lacks a workforce with the relevant knowledge and skills needed for sustainable growth and employers lack recruits with the skills and knowledge required for entry level positions.

Dakchyata: TVET Practical Partnership project has set out to provide long-term solutions to these challenges by supporting the development of a raft of initiatives, from labour market-led interventions and capacity building of CTEVT school systems to pioneering TVET models and partnerships trialled across the tourism, construction, and agriculture sectors.

This document highlights the impacts and key learning from Dakchyata's ten Practical Partnership Pilot projects developed to test new approaches to employer engagement and TVET training delivery in the construction, agriculture, and tourism sectors.

Launched in March 2020, the ten Practical Partnership Pilot projects have provided training for 3,734 learners (44% female, 41% aged 15-24 years old). An estimated 70% of these trainees are already in employment or have established their own business. Dakchyata's Tracer Study, due to commence data collection in July 2022, will confirm these and other outcomes.

During this time, the pilots have adopted different TVET delivery models, from Farm-Based Apprenticeships (FBAs) to space sharing solutions, to Semi-Apprenticeship Employment (SAE) models.

Beyond the individual successes, the pilots have delivered strategic results, impacting across four key pillars of ambition – guiding principles vital for delivering the sustainable solutions needed by employers and the Nepal economy as a whole:

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|---|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Building public-private sector collaboration | 3 | Taking an inclusive approach |
| 2 | Prioritising TVET models that improve practice | 4 | Building for a greener future |

1 Building public-private sector collaboration

At the forefront of the pilots' approach, is the understanding that a TVET system which prioritises the voice and needs of the private sector will be better placed to develop job-ready trainees. The pilots have worked tirelessly to create and grow these linkages and ensure that the private sector engages in a truly meaningful way in the design, implementation, and governance of the pilots. This has resulted in:

- Development of governance committees which bring private sector actors and TVET providers together and create opportunities for the private sector to lead the shaping of TVET to meet market demand. These committees have shaped all elements of the pilots - from selection of trainees to the identification of most needed skills, from direct delivery of training to linkages to future work.
- Further formalising of these committees, with routes identified for their long-term sustainability and models for private sector actors working alongside local authorities and TVET providers to take them forward beyond the pilot life.

2 Prioritising TVET models that improve practice

A major challenge faced by the private sector was a lack of job readiness amongst the workforce. Whilst TVET trainees were certified and had the theoretical knowledge they often lacked the ability to implement practical 'job-ready' skills. Therefore, the Pilots all based their work on the principle that practical application must be prioritised. This has resulted in:

- Pilots working to minimise theory-based learning to a maximum of 20% to ensure that 'learning by doing' is core to the projects
- Each pilot ensuring that trainees learn within a real work context to give them greater understanding of what will be required of them in the world of work.
- Trainees not only better prepared for the world of work, but through the models, linked to potential employers and experts who can support them to access work and continue to develop their skillset.

3 Taking an inclusive approach

Inclusivity is a long-term process that requires dialogue and insight on groups' specific needs and the ability of TVET providers to meet these needs in a sustainable way. Inclusive TVET approaches therefore go beyond issues of parity within training centres and have resulted in:

- Adaptations to all pilots to increase accessibility and inclusion of many groups who have been traditionally underserved by TVET, such as women and marginalised caste and ethnic groups. This has often required strong relationships with Communities, CBOs, and local authorities to be able to understand the needs of these groups and to be able to support them.
- Improved access to TVET is allowing many underserved groups to build their confidence and self-esteem alongside their technical skills.
- The dropout rate has remained extremely low at 0.1% despite the challenges and ongoing impacts of COVID-19. This is testament to the additional learning supports provided by the Pilots on everything from motivation and life skills to career counselling sessions.

4 Building for a greener future

All the pilot projects have taken steps to improve their capacity for greener TVET provision. This has involved:

- Ensuring the school campus maximises its green potential by introducing well thought-out systems to manage and reduce waste.
- Creating a greener culture by supporting staff and students to engage in green conversations and capacity building.
- Supporting a greener curriculum to align green beliefs with what is taught. Several pilots have sought to change training techniques to ensure students have green skills which will reduce their environmental impact as workers, examples with agriculture include a focus on organic approaches over chemicals.



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OUR PRACTICAL PARTNERSHIP PILOTS

Skilling Tourism sector for Sustainable Employment

The **Skilling Tourism** sector for Sustainable Employment (STSE) Project was launched in 2020 to cater to the changing needs of the tourism sector by training young people using innovative models including apprenticeship, employment, and space sharing to enhance their employability

Led by the **Brilliant Manpower Training Center**, the 15-month project also set out to capacitate hospitality industry stakeholders through innovative models, such as semi-apprenticeship and employment and space sharing models.

It worked with three hundred trainees, 240 of them on the Apprenticeship and Employment Model and the remaining sixty on the Homestay Initiative and operated in four areas: Kaski; Chitwan; Lamjung and Tanahun. Implementing partners included hotel and bar association/restaurant associations and tourism committees.

Project Impacts

Almost 90% of graduates are now placed in jobs with decent employment in the tourism sector (there were no dropouts from the pilot).

More than half the three hundred participants were from the key target under-25-year-old age group and nearly three-quarters were from low-income backgrounds.

Students have broadened their perspectives and thinking around the world of work through life skills and career guidance and counselling sessions.

Industries have responded positively to the performance of apprentices and want the model to continue in the future.

There is far greater ownership by industries, their associations and local level government of initiatives and understanding of respective responsibilities for implementing the TVET programmes. The Hotel Association has agreed to take over responsibility for the committee so it can continue to support apprenticeship schemes.

Employers are finding that they do not need to spend so much time preparing new staff to work in their industry.



Individual Impacts

Dilip Shrestha, a 34-year-old farm labourer, joined the cookery apprenticeship training in Sauraha. The course led to him gaining a job as a hotel chef at Hotel Chitwan Paradise and even inspired him to share his new skills with his wife so they could simultaneously open their own small hotel, the Khajaghar. His wife is now earning a good income from the new business and the couple say the apprentice training has also increased their self-esteem, confidence, and socio-economic status

Purnima Gurung, a 20-year-old young woman from a remote Bihadi Rural Municipality of Parwat district, was forced to leave school in Year 12 because the family could not afford to let her stay in education. She applied for the training as a receptionist cum cashier in the hospitality sector in Pokhara. Her hard work and skills impressed the owner of the Tuki resort, and he offered her a job. Purnima is now working in the Tuki Resort as a full-time employee, handling the reception and cash of the hotel. She is getting good salary; about 17,000/month and can afford school fees for her siblings who were also happy to have opportunity to study in the tourism city Pokhara.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ The apprenticeship model of training delivery in the TVET sector has proved an effective mechanism for addressing the skills gaps both in demand and supply side, reducing youth unemployment and contribute to poverty reduction in the country.
- ✓ This model is new to many people and requires shifts in how they operate and conceptualise their work. Sufficient capacity building and orientation must be provided to ensure stakeholders and staff are able to implement effectively.
- ✓ Working with specialist organisations, such as Dalit groups and women's groups, grew the understanding of different groups needs and helped to open access to groups who had traditionally struggled to enter TVET.
- ✓ Career Guidance and counselling sessions organised for potential trainees helped reduce dropout rates and filter out people who were not a good fit for the training. They also helped change students' attitudes towards the world of work and employment.
- ✓ Activities like workplace level orientation for industry owners, managers and the senior workers helped implementation of apprenticeships. They also helped build industries' capacity for developing enabling work environments for the learners, encouraged assessment and evaluation of apprentices' learning, and communication with the apprentices/workers etc.
- ✓ Employers prefer to recruit from formal apprenticeship programmes rather than institution-based training because apprenticeship learners have more work-related exposure, and they have better chances to acquire work related core and soft skills.
- ✓ Formation of an Apprenticeship and Employment Coordination Committee (AECC) supports the effective implementation of the project provided learning opportunities among the stakeholders.
- ✓ AECC members helped conduct joint monitoring of the programmes in different industries and this helped identify best practice which could be replicated in other work areas.

Hamro Krishi Karyakram

The **Hamro Krishi Karyakram** project, implemented by **Hamro Krishi Sahakari Sanstha Limited (HKSSL)**, piloted a new partnership model with private sector employers which was designed to improve the employability of young people in four rural municipalities and prepare them for work in commercial agriculture by enhancing rural their commercial farming techniques.

The two-year project, which ran from March 2020, aimed to give young people in Sarlahi and Mahotari job-ready skills through a combination of hands-on experience of improved farming techniques and instruction from CTEVT/Ministry of Agriculture Development curricula.

A key aim was preparing young participants with the skills they need to adapt to market demand and seasonal fluctuations in the vegetable, dairy, and poultry sectors. More than half of the three hundred trainees taking part were female and 12% were migrants returning home (180 of the participants took part in off season vegetable training, one hundred in junior poultry technicians training and twenty in dairy products and / sweet making training).

Project Impacts

Out of the three hundred participants, 52% were women trainees belonging to Janjati, Dalit, Madhesi and other groups. They were found to have low incomes, be socially deprived, and often educationally lagging. They were empowered through employability opportunities.

121 (40%) trainees were upskilled, 86 (29%) re-skilled and 93 (31%) skilled from the market relevant agriculture training to youths.

Almost two thirds of trainees reported improved knowledge and skills.

90% passed their NSTB skills test.

The **Hamro Krishi Karyakram** project has directly contributed to business development and growth in the sector.

Chicken mortality rate has been reduced as a result of poultry junior technicians learning to diagnose various disease themselves through operation technology.

Financial management has improved through the training and linkages with financial institutions. 148 (49%) trainees have opened a new bank account since the training and another 78 (26%) are planning to do so.

Agriculture employability training has not only increased the capacity of entrepreneurship amongst local women, but also empowered them socially. Shanti Devi Yadav, a female trainee said: "Before the training, my household territory was my world, now I feel training are also other means to socialise with others."

Around 50% of the returnee migrants who took part are now running their own agriculture enterprises.

Project Coordination Committee (PCC) members and stakeholders have now clear understanding of project delivery and outcomes

Individual Impacts

Apsara Silwal, 42, a small hold farmer from Sarlahi, had one hundred cows but was often left with surplus milk during lockdown so she and her daughter attended dairy and sweet making training to how to create products from their surplus. Despite the disturbances of training due to pandemic COVID-19, Apsara and her daughter completed the 450-hour training programme and learned about milk, lab testing method, pasteurisation method, making various sweet items and hygiene methods. She has since purchased a paneer processing machine, chilling vat, and other machines and is now employing seven people on her farm to make products that can be sold at a higher price than the milk alone.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Returnee migrants are comparatively more active when it comes to starting their own businesses back in Nepal. Business training would have been more beneficial if it had run alongside technical training to allow them to start businesses much quicker.
- ✓ Delays in skill testing send negative messages to both trainees and the public. Skill testing is more effective if it happens soon after the training sessions are completed. It should also be supported by proper preparation, with counselling and review sessions to boost trainees' confidence.
- ✓ Successful collaboration provides opportunities for leveraging of resource. For example, through ongoing project engagements, **HKSSL** were able to collaborate with Muktinath Agriculture Company and agree on the distribution of organic compost (Vermin-compost) to trainees.
- ✓ Coordination with local government bodies such (as municipalities, line agencies and private companies) is much easier when conducted through a PCC which requires time to engage them, explain the project and is based on the principles of private sector engagement.
- ✓ Lessons learned by trainees are transferable to other situations. For example, use of organic liquid pesticide (Jholmol) is not only useful for vegetables but rice and other agriculture crops.
- ✓ Field-based apprenticeships were particularly effective because they improved knowledge through practical application, revision, and repetition.
- ✓ Most of the trainees who took part in off-season vegetable, junior poultry technician and dairy and & sweet making training are now involved in private self-enterprises.



Skills Development for Sustainable Employment (SDSE)

The **Skills Development for Sustainable Employment** pilot was set up October 2020 to help ensure supply of highly skilled human resources in the hospitality sector within Ilam district through technical and vocational training.

Led by **Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), Ilam**, it aimed to enhance the market relevance of tourism focused TVET based on sector needs and ran for 20 months, delivering Level One Hotel Management training to a total of 313 participants - 200 of them under the age of 25-years.

The project specifically targeted socially disadvantaged groups, women, unemployed youths, migrant workers, and other individuals selected through criteria within the Ilam district.

Project Impacts

More than three hundred men and women engaged in level 1 hotel management training curriculum, with just seven dropouts.

Training has directly led to creation of new hotel businesses, new income for trainees and increased employment within the sector.

The quality of trainees and training is demonstrated by the fact that 70 out of 183 people (38%) involved in on-the-job training (OJT) were subsequently employed in the hotel which hosted their training and around 62% of those who completed SAE accessed other forms of employment.

CCI Ilam has formed the Training and Employment Coordination Committee involving representatives from relevant stakeholders for the sustainability of the project model in the future endeavor.

CCI Ilam also developed an independent committee, with significant involvement from the private sector, to support internal assessment of learners as an alternative way of validating skills learned whilst NSTB faced major COVID-19 related delays.



Individual Impacts

Nirmal Magar, 24, is originally from Maijogmai Rural Municipality-6. He was working in his sister's hotel when he found out about the hotel assistant training opportunity. The training based on the SAE model gave him experience of real hotel environments and motivated him in his studies, with the hotel owner/instructor sharing his knowledge experience and encouraging Magar even more. Magar has recently set up his own hotel 'Unique khajaa ghar' and currently has a daily turnover of around Rs. 3,000.

Skills from the Hotel Assistant training have helped 34-year-old **Mina Rai** make a real success of her hotel business. Mrs Mina says lessons on overall hotel management and everything from housekeeping and food and beverage to front office and communication skills have really helped the business. After initial doubts that she could compete with more established businesses, she now welcomes fifty guests a day to her own hotel and employs six staff.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Motivation and guest sessions on topics such as green economy, entrepreneurship and the tourism sector are valuable for sensitising learners and broadening perspectives.
- ✓ Practical exposure to different working environments during training gave trainees immense knowledge and familiarised them with different working conditions.
- ✓ One month OJT after the training completion was valuable and allowed trainees to deploy their technical skills for the benefit of 'real' hospitality sector customers.
- ✓ Active participation of the hotel association at the inauguration and closing events of the technical training was effective for promoting their commitments to coordinating of OJT and job placements.
- ✓ The formation of Training and Employment Coordination Committee was crucial for sustainability of the SAE model of skill development and for coordinating and continuation in the future endeavors.
- ✓ When conducting internal assessment processes, it is vital to include local private sector and authorities to help add weight to the assessment and ensure it is recognised in the local area.
- ✓ The semi-apprenticeship model is effective for familiarising trainees with the real workplace.
- ✓ Reskilling training activities were valuable for enhancing the skills of exiting workers and converting them into certified and trained workers.
- ✓ Information dissemination and notice calls through social media were effective in alerting and informing interested participants throughout the district about the training.
- ✓ Residential training is effective in reducing student dropouts and effective in training organisation and management.
- ✓ Many youths with poor financial conditions were not able to participate in training as they were the sole bread winners of the family. Therefore, if such training is to be delivered there should be incentives for such youths.

The Sustainable Rural Employment Project

The **Sustainable Rural Employment Project (SREP)** was led by **Nepal Agriculture Cooperative Central Federation Ltd (NACCFL)** and aimed to promote youth employment through needs-based skill trainings on commercial farming and agro-industry sectors.

It focused on group farming models and creating business opportunities for graduates who opt for self-employment. It targeted farmers who are directly involved in vegetable farming and livestock raising for reskilling training and young people involved in family agriculture businesses who want training on Community Livestock Assistant (CLA) and Community Agriculture Assistant (CAA).

It ran in six districts for 21 months from September 2020, involved 420 participants, 40% female, and provided training in dairy products and sweet making.

Project Impacts

Sustainable Rural Employment Project training has directly improved the economic success of participant trainees and helped agricultural businesses flourish.

A total of 420 trainees learned about group farming, its modality, approaches, and benefits and about the value of chain actors (wholesalers, suppliers, transporters, retailers, processors etc) and linkages with them.

Training also supported 100 CAA, 60 CLA and 60 dairy products and sweets maker participants to develop business plans for application in vegetable farming, goat farms and other situations. Training in financial planning involved a chartered accountant and representatives from local banks and cooperatives. They shared their experience (lending process, interest rates, financial products, repayment) with the participants.

Trainees have formed social media groups to discuss relevant farming issues amongst one another. Social media group (messenger group) had been formed following each training event and participants have been regularly interacting with each other and providing support.

The **SREP** supported participants' employment journey by producing three books - one on each subject. These books have been a significant help to the farmers and sweet makers as they serve as reference materials on farming techniques, plant protection and other parts of agriculture.

NACCFL have been delivering training to substantial number of youths for a long time, but it was the first time they have delivered trainings using CTEVT curriculum and linking the graduates to Nepal's TVET system.



Individual Impacts

Sarita Khanal, aged 35, is a resident of the Jwalamukhi Rural Municipality-6, Sindhbhanjyang of Dhading district. She is a small-scale animal farmer but regularly lost animals to disease because of lack of available vets. She has now learned about livestock diseases, goat management and other livestock related knowledge and is no longer dependent on vets for medicines because she can diagnose and prescribe common livestock problems. She is saving money as a result and has completely taken over running the farm from her husband. She credits the training with giving her technical knowledge required for increasing the size of her herd and plans to borrow money to grow to one hundred goats.

Shila Sirish is manager of the Parijat Bote Women's Group Farming at Padampur, Chitwan. At first the community farming project simply involved subsistence farming but the training motivated group members to apply their new knowledge on a wide range of subjects (from pest management to irrigation techniques) and develop commercial group farming. In addition, after receiving the training, they got a loan from the local small farmer agriculture cooperative ltd (SFACL). They used the money to buy new tools and lease more land needed for their new commercial ambitions and group approach.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ The practical learning aspect of training was particularly effective because the selected farm owners were also the farm supervisors/assistant instructors. Their dual role helped establish a healthy environment of cooperation amongst the trainees and the farm owners. Although the training has been completed, the teaching-learning process still is going on in times of need among them which has been helpful for the farmers.
- ✓ Involvement of local trainers helped minimise dropouts as trainees were supported to remain motivated and engaged.
- ✓ The long interval between training and exam can affect the performance and presence of trainees in the skill test examinations. Mock tests regularly conducted by the trainers helped train participants effectively.
- ✓ The Field-Based Apprenticeship for agriculture training model seems effective and should be continued.
- ✓ Basic entrepreneurship skills should be included as a key element of training within agricultural models.
- ✓ The model of linking participants with financial institutions was particularly effective.
- ✓ There is value in group farming amongst low-income trainees: Many of the participating farmers are still at a subsistence level. A group approach can initiate commercial level of farming and uplift their economy.

Skill Development for Quality Tea Production

The **Skill Development for Quality Tea Production** project set out to 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 by delivering Assistant Tea Technician training to nearly three hundred participants from twelve districts.

Led by the **Central Tea Cooperative Federation Limited Nepal (CTCF)**, the project ran from October 2020 to June 2022, with under 25-year-olds making up 48% of the cohort.

297 people completed the training, including three people with a physical disability and 37% women. The project has less than 2% dropouts.

Project Impacts

The project is already increasing productivity of tea farms run by farmers involved.

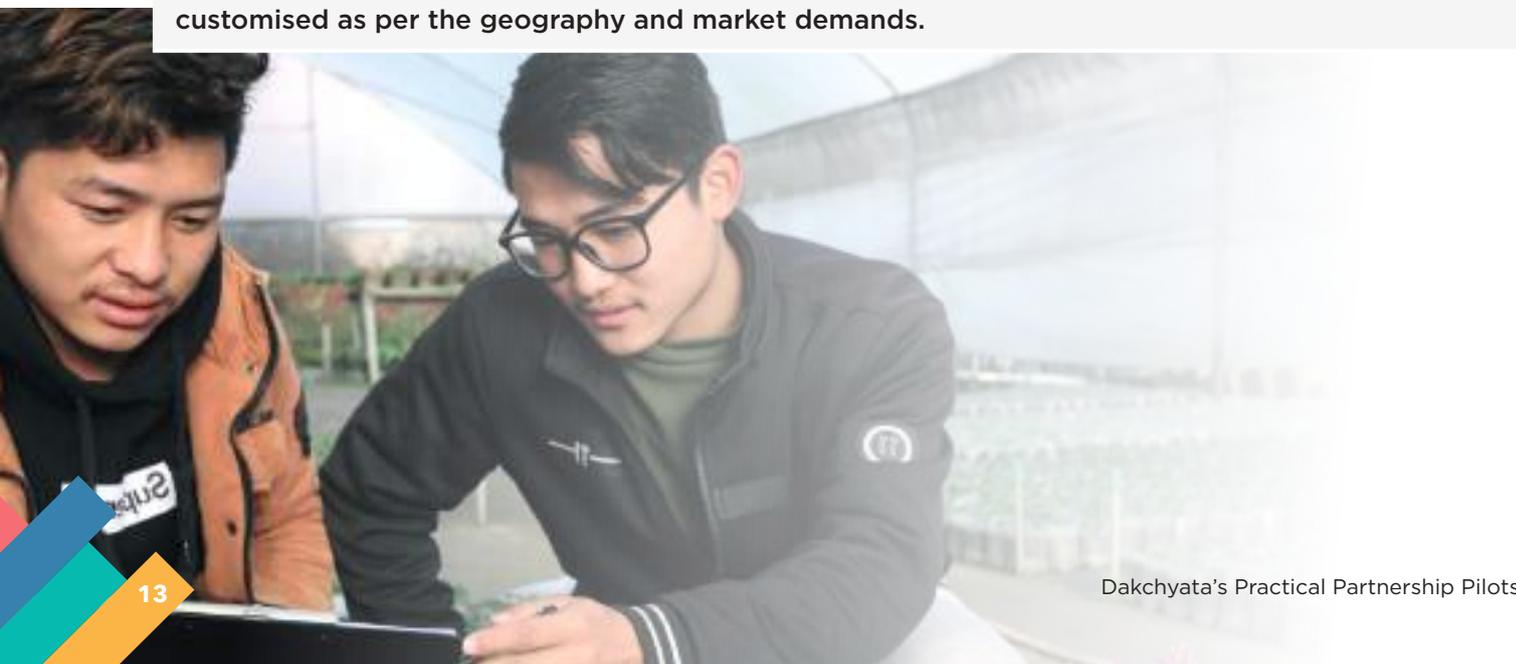
Some of the participants have increased their tea plantation area and planted a nursery for further extension.

The project is encouraging increased productivity on other farms too. For example, in Ilam, a Ward Chairperson has requested all participants to apply the knowledge in their own field and coach the neighbouring tea farmer.

CTCF Nepal is discussing the possibility of developing the elementary course of tea for new growers in the new plantation area of Nepal with local level government and national tea and coffee development board.

Eleven trainees from the first phase of Assistant Tea Technician training were mobilised as co-trainers and have conducted training on tea pruning to the tea farmer in the community level both practically and theoretically. Altogether, 81 one day training events were conducted over 11 days and 2,429 tea farmers trained by assistant tea technicians.

Where skills are new or have had limited focus in the past, **CTCF** found it important to develop resources, such as **CTCF's** reference book for assistant tea technicians, to provide sustainable learning aides to trainees that can be used after the training. The book contains updated information on many topics which were lacking in the original curriculum and has been customised as per the geography and market demands.



Individual Impacts

Chandra Prasad Acharya has worked in tea fields in Mist Valley in Deumai Municipality of Ilam district since he was just six years old – he is now 40. He started training as an assistant tea technician (level 1) and credits the experience with changing his overall knowledge, skills, and attitude towards the tea sector. Besides the core content of the training, Mr. Acharya developed his competency and efficiency to fulfil his daily work responsibilities. For example, during his field visit to the farmer’s garden, he instructed the farmer on pruning, plucking, manuring, weed management and pest and diseases management according to the knowledge gained by the training. His employers have directly benefited from his learning, and it is likely he will be promoted to the higher paid post of internal control supervisor (ICS) as a result of his training.

Manoj Khatiwada, 25, was a tea farmer but made little money from his garden and had limited knowledge and few skills. His learning from the training had such an impact that, in one year alone, he increased his crop from 500kg to 750kg. Manoj also made valuable contributions to training policy with suggestions for phase 2 to move beyond cultivation to focus on tea processing and marketing and the introduction of ‘soft loans’ to help tea farmers innovate.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Employment engagement for trainees can create a positive environment and motivate trainees. The private sector facilitated some of the technical sessions of training which supported job-oriented skill development and helped to support to identify skill gap between demand and curriculum.
- ✓ Joint monitoring visits with external parties, including local government, government agencies, local TVET actors and tea stakeholders, has enhanced the visibility, transparency, accountability, responsibility, and communication of the project.
- ✓ Roving Instructors with experience in tea cultivation and processing should be hired as guest trainers for effective learning to encourage and motivate trainees.
- ✓ Close collaboration with stakeholders supports employment engagement of trainees. For example, close work with the National Tea and Coffee Development Board (NTCDB) helped to create job employment for trainees from the first phase training. Stakeholder engagement in monitoring, clear information dissemination about the skilled manpower, regular lobby, and advocacy with stakeholder according to lobby mapping (Power & Interest) are necessary factors to create those linkages for jobs.
- ✓ There is value in targeting Assistant Tea Technician Training towards tea farmers, tea workers and cooperative members to create a multiplier effect of technical skills amongst tea workers and farmers.
- ✓ A minimum daily allowance is needed to reduce dropout of tea workers as they are concerned about loss of work and income because of prolonged training.
- ✓ Local government engagement and close collaboration during the project activities helps to mitigate challenges (such as those presented by COVID 19 pandemic management).
- ✓ Regular communication and contact with trainees help to manage trainee dropout.
- ✓ The semi apprenticeship and employment models used in the project, and engagement of private sector, can add value to training. Private sector stakeholders facilitated some of the technical training sessions and this supported job-oriented skills development and helped identify skill gaps between demand and curriculum.

Promoting Market Led Technical and Vocational Skills for Employment

The **Promoting Market Led Technical and Vocational Skills for Employment** training project launched in March 2020 with the aim of improve the employability of unskilled and semi-skilled youths in the agriculture, tourism, and construction sectors and help fill gaps in the labour market or aid trainees to move into self-employment.

The 27-month project, led by **National Environment and Equity Development Society (NEEDS)**, Nepal, took place in Kanchanpur, Kailali, and Bajhang districts and involved a total of 720 trainees. Of these, 58% were female and 41% were under the age of 25 years.

Project Impacts

Training has been effective in supporting employment. 85% of their trainees have continued employment with their training provider, started their own business, or gained employed with another employer.

Monitoring shows that all agriculture trained graduates are self-employed, almost all mason trained graduates are employed; some of the building trained graduates are self-employed and some gained employment opportunities; and cook trained graduates are also self- employed.

Trainees have experienced increased pay rates and many Nepalese workers have now chosen to stay in the country to work rather than seek employment in other countries.

Training programmes have helped challenge construction stereotypes by highlighting inspirational examples of how women can succeed in the trade.

Curriculum revision reflected local need and allowed for a fully localised approach for the first time.

One of the major achievements of the project activity is developing guidelines for the Employment Dialogue Forum. The major objective for forming EDF is to support the formulation of sustainable and strong practical partnership linkage mechanisms. These guidelines were developed and endorsed by ten municipalities of project districts.

Chemical pesticides, fertilisers were not used in the training programmes. Instead, farmyard manures, compost manures, bio pesticides such as jhol-mol were used which eliminate excessive use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers and support the greener economies.



Individual Impacts

Kalawati Rana, a 37-year-old single parent from Janjati community, had worked as a helper mason but only ever got paid Rs 400 per day and she struggled to pay her bills. She got the opportunity to join the Mason training programme conducted by NEEDS Nepal in Bedkot municipality. Taking part has improved her skills and knowledge and highlighted some of the poor practices of construction companies which put profit before building quality.

The training has allowed Kalawati to increase her income and has given her the confidence to build her own house, with help from three other women on the course, despite neighbours' belief that it was impossible for women to complete such a challenge.

Dipendra Gurung, 31 and a resident of Bedkot municipality, returned from working in India during lockdown after losing his only income. He joined in the off-season vegetable training programme and, as well as learning about off-season cultivation, learned about growing seasonal vegetables commercially. He has since shared techniques and concepts that he learned from training with others, including his wife.

He first grew vegetables in two katha and but has now expanded to four katha and constructed tunnels for production of off-season vegetables. He has now cultivated vegetables in four katha and used a tunnel for offseason cucumber and bitter gourd. Dipendra has found a market for his organic produce with customers who want healthier food and is earning up to 1,000 Rs a day in vegetable season. He had originally planned to return to India for work but decided to stay at home and develop his commercial crop production his success following the training.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Skill testing increased trainees' motivation and gave them confidence to believe that they can continue to improve.
- ✓ Creating platforms to support interaction between training graduates and employers helps with job placements and employment opportunities.
- ✓ Training courses need to be longer to cover the volume of course content.
- ✓ Refresher sessions are valuable in cases where there is a gap between trainees' learning and their actual skill tests.
- ✓ Organic low-emission approaches can still produce high-yields and should be promoted with all trainings.
- ✓ Employers were helpful in identifying gaps in the curricula of respective training programmes and sharing their expertise and ideas for making them effective in local contexts. They have further supported low-income trainees to with small stipends to maintain them on the training course.
- ✓ The working partnership with HAN Kanchanpur for the cook training delivered several major benefits, including the selection of participants, regular monitoring the training activities for effectiveness of training, and provided employment opportunities for all trained graduates in the programme.

Skill and Rewarding Employment

The **Skill and Rewarding Employment Project** launched in March 2020 to enhance skills and employability for young people within the construction sector through a semi-apprenticeship and employment model.

Based in two districts, Kailali and Kanchanpur, it provided skills training on everything from plastering and painting to electrics and masonry and was led by **TRACE Private Limited**.

It trained 520 people and was set up after it was found that many workers working in construction sector did not have adequate skills demanded by the market. Construction companies were facing challenges to recruit skilled laborers.

Project Impacts

Trainees who took part in the programme are already providing employment for others and sharing the skills they learned.

Income earned by newly trained workers is helping others around them start their own businesses in different sectors.

The programme is helping challenge traditional employment stereotypes, for example, by promoting the success of women workers in male dominated construction professions.

After completing the first training phase of twenty-one events, most of the trainees were engaged in work related to the technical skills they had received.

Effective post-training support initiatives can link students to relevant markets and stakeholders and allow them to continue to develop their new skills after the end of training.

Stakeholders have been engaged in project briefings and COVID-19 related adaptations, project steering committees, student selection criteria and processes, and technical modalities are being used for their advantage. Local Mayors and Administrative Offices have advised on implementation and the need to address the disparity between practical and theoretical TVET skills, and they have generally been responsive to calls for the pilot initiative to be integrated into municipality planning.

TRACE conducted many assessments to understand the construction market in construction sector. Although various organizations were delivering training programmes the component of employer engagement was missing. To address all these issues **TRACE** formed the Apprenticeship Coordination Committee to gather local representatives, employers, government representatives and workers itself.

TRACE's Apprenticeship Coordination Committee took time to build but has been based on the core principle that the private sector and local authorities should lead these structures to ensure long-term accountability.

The involvement of Contractors' Association of Kailali was vital to the smooth running of the project and the ability to deliver on time.

Only two trainees did not undergo testing because of health and work issues. This is a good result given the prolonged nature of testing and the risk of dropouts.

Individual Impacts

Bishnu Chaudhary was 17 years old working as a building labourer. His mother worked as a dish washer and was struggling to support Bishnu and his sister. Bishnu heard about training opportunities in his area and sign up for plastering. After completing the three months of training in Ghodaghodi, Jabalpur, he was able to get work which paid up to 30000 Rs a month. His new income meant he could support his mother who was then able to start a small hotel business which meant she could increase her own income to up to 15,000 Rs.

Manuri Dhami, was a 40-year-old single parent working on a variety of jobs such as labour work, thread roll making and plastic rope making to support her family. Her local church had no money for a decorator, so she offered to help and was spotted painting by a building painting trainer/roving instructor who told her about the training opportunity. Since finishing her training, she has been in such demand that she is able to pass on her new skills to others and employ up to five other people.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Practical training increases trainees' confidence about working in the 'real world.'
- ✓ Roving instructors continued support help trainees to hone and master skills within their apprenticeships.
- ✓ Coordination with the National Skill Testing Board needs to be improved to ensure trainees are tested in a suitable amount of time post-training.
- ✓ Creating space for local authorities to engage and meaningfully influence the project is important. It is advised to avoid limiting their involvement to purely authorising implementation.
- ✓ When given this space and opportunity, private sector actors will take roles as leaders of governance structures, such as the Contractors' Association of Kailali (CA-K) taking over the apprenticeship coordination committee to ensure continuation of the apprenticeship model within the construction sector.



Agro Self-Employment for Partnership (ASEP) Project

The **Agro Self-Employment for Partnership (ASEP) Project** run by **Deurali Janata Prabidhik Shikshyalaya (DJPS)** set out to pilot integrated Public Private Partnership (PPP) approaches in agriculture sector by introducing formal apprenticeship training offering opportunities.

Further, it aimed to enhance the employability of young people by training them in demand-driven, market-oriented skills and make sure that agriculture trainees - who often end up in end up in self-employment rather than employment - have a basic level of business development and market knowledge.

ASEP involved 280 participants (just over half of them were women) and took place in province number 5 covering eight Municipalities of four districts (Rupandehi, Kapilvastu, East Nawalparasi and West Nawalparasi) of Nepal.

Project Impacts

Given the importance of self-employment in these areas, trainees were provided with basic training on business planning and management to prepare them for this career route. Trainees felt more confident in their ability to run an enterprise after this training.

Trainees attended exposure visits across the local areas to visit various farms and agricultural sites to learn new things and connect with farmers.

Joint monitoring was conducted with ward representatives and employers on an ongoing basis which created buy-in to the project amongst stakeholders and leveraged the technical skills and knowledge they had to offer.

Trainees have become adaptive to situations that they may face e.g., flooding or drought and are able to apply their skills to minimise impact.

Trainees are now familiar with banking facilities for farmers and knowledgeable about the concept and procedures for securing soft loans provided at low interest rates by banks, Kisan Credit Card, performing economic activity through bank, and savings approaches.

Trainees also received training in self-motivation; decision making; risk mitigation; preparing business plans; the characteristics of successful entrepreneurs; types of enterprises; record keeping on profit and loss.

Employers have a positive attitude towards the project's farm-based training activities, planning, monitoring and evaluation methods.

Individual Impacts

Samichhya Sinjapati, 33 years old and from Nawalparasi, was a subsistence farmer who wanted to improve her economic impact on the family. As part of the vegetable processing training, Samichhya learnt about the different products that can be made using locally available vegetables and how processing could significantly increase the value of her produce.

Samichhya was inspired by training and lectures from successful pickle entrepreneurs and visits to see processes in action. As a result, she has started working alongside two other trainees to create products which have already raised a profit for the women and fitted into their normal schedules and household responsibilities.

Dil Bahadur Gurung, a 23-year-old young man from Sunawal, had travelled outside Nepal to access work prior to the training. On his return, he decided to rear pigs but was hampered by continual challenges and was reliant upon support services from the local vet. On accessing the Community Livestock Assistant training, Dil was able to learn about animal rearing, including management of farm, animal care, treatment of animal, animal feeding activities. After improving his skills and knowledge, he has now changed his approach and is less reliant upon the vet services which ultimately increases the farm income.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ FBA models tend to support self-employment so access to business skills and finance elements are beneficial for future career paths.
- ✓ Engagement of local authorities is vital for running the project. Not only do they authorise training but provide advice and support throughout.
- ✓ Joint monitoring was conducted with ward representatives and employers on an ongoing basis which created buy-in to the project amongst stakeholders and leveraged the technical skills and knowledge they had to offer.
- ✓ It is important to be able to adapt to conditions, for example, constructing plastic tunnels for nursery raising as well as hot beds for crop growing or making of sewage water and electric motors to overcome water shortages in various locations.
- ✓ There is a need to balance training times with the other business commitments of trainers.



Enhancing Partnership Based-Demand Led Technical Skills

The **Enhancing Partnership Based-Demand Led Technical Skills** project focused on the construction and agriculture sectors, training young people through a semi-apprenticeship and employment and field-based apprenticeship model to create employment and income-generating opportunities.

Led by **Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP)**, it started in September 2020 and worked with 396 trainees. 49% were under 25 years old and 32% were women.

At a strategic level, the project aimed to directly transform the employment potential of a cohort of rural young people; identify gaps in current CTVET skills training for the commercial agri and construction sectors and strengthen partnerships between the relevant associations, private sector companies and training providers.

Project Impacts

Nearly four hundred marginalised youths from Bardiya and Bajhang now have enhanced skills and employability through vocational training courses on construction and agricultural related occupations.

Eighty trainees have completed skill training in off-season vegetable producer, mushroom producer, and community livestock assistant at Bajhang.

160 trainees have completed training in construction related occupations at Bardiya district namely building electrician, building painter, junior plumber, brick layer mason, and excavator operator.

Trainees have been taught organic approaches and they report that they remain competitive within the market when pursuing organic, low-emission agricultural techniques demonstrating that this model is market relevant, as well as better for the environment.

Life skills are essential for trainees to broaden their horizons and encourage them to engage in topics that they may never have discussed before. Life skills are considered integral by UCEP and are comprehensive, covering effective communication, stress management, problem solving skills, gender, gender equality and social inclusion etc.

Post training interaction programmes has been conducted at Bajhang and Bardiya district to link graduates opting for self-employment with micro finance institutes.

Construction firms and associations were not previously aware of CTEVT's training programmes and had been recruiting raw people and training them on the job to fulfil the high labour demand. Through the SAE model there was an opportunity to work with these employers closely which supported awareness about training programmes and helped bridge the gap between demand and supply.

Individual Impacts

Shreeram Tharu, aged 26 and from Gulariya 12, Bardiya, is part of a family of six all dependent on agriculture and seasonal migration to India for their livelihood. Shreeram had been working as labour around Bardiya as well as various places of India and heard about the building electrician training opportunity through a friend. After completing the training, he is now earning around 17,000 Rs a month with a wiring contractor and plans to become self-employed in the near future.

Durgathali resident **Umesh Rokaya**, aged 26, was finding it hard to get a decent job and was unable to continue formal education because of the cost so he helped his parents on their land. He heard about the free vocational training being offered to unemployed and interested youths in off-season vegetable farming at Durgathali, Bajhang, and decided to apply. The training he received involved producing brinjals, capsicum, and tomato and chilly at the farm of Sarathi Krishak Samuha. Umesh then sold the produce in markets at Chaughare, Bhagauda and Mauri Bagar of Durgathali. He is now being employed by the same farm and he and his training friend plan to produce cauliflowers, cabbages and tomatoes and expand their market area beyond Durgathali.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Festivals like '*Maghi Parba*' can act as good platforms for publicising training programmes and connect with potential training participants as many youths return from India to celebrate the festival in Nepal, especially from Tharu community of Lumbini Province.
- ✓ Involving the District Contractor's Association (DCA) and industry supervisors in the selection process of training helped encourage trainees to enroll.
- ✓ Collaboration with DCA, Bardiya, in training has helped in providing market-based training as well as identifying working sites and industry supervisors.
- ✓ The post-training interaction programme at Bajhang and Bardiya was valuable in helping link trainees with potential employers and micro finance companies were able to provide credit facilities to start up their own businesses.
- ✓ Seasonal migration to India was the single biggest reason for dropouts on the project (there were eight dropouts). Advocating for the importance of vocational training and possible job opportunities after training to graduates has helped reduce dropouts.



Skills for Agro-Enterprise Project (SAEP)

The **Skills for Agro-Enterprise Project** launched in March 2020 by **Sajha Byawasaya Sip Bikas (SBSB)** with the ambition of upgrading farmers' agro-enterprise knowledge and skills in off-season vegetable farming, dairy products, and poultry.

It operated over two years in Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mohatari and Dhanusa and involved 300 trainees, providing training in off season vegetable production (200 trainees), village animal health workers (60) and junior poultry workers (40).

Project Impacts

183 (61%) of those trained in off-season vegetable production were female and 42% were under 25 years old.

280 (93%) were tested by NSTB.

The FBA model was implemented in collaboration with local farmer associations and co-operatives to deliver training in farm settings. It helped trainees to adopt skills immediately in the field and learn to use training equipment.

All 300 trainees were trained in enterprise and business planning, financial literacy and linkages and digital literacy.

Finance training directly led to some trainees accessing subsidies for their businesses.

Market Information sharing forums were set up to encourage the graduates to build networks with other farmers and employers across nearby districts to establish market linkages. The forums comprise members from the municipality, leading agricultural professionals; agro based local bodies like agriculture resource centre, and agro-vet centres.

The project lead, **Sajha Byabasaya Sip Bikash Private Limited**, has a plan to work with partners to link employers with skilled labour by sharing information. It is also now lobbying the municipality to endorse a one-door policy for conducting training inside their territory. The policy would reduce the duplication of training and help save financial resources allocated for trainees.

Family and community level sensitisation supported access to TVET for underserved groups as people better understood the impacts and were more likely to promote and support it to potential trainees.



Individual Impacts

Achinta Kumar Singh was jobless and looking for an animal husbandry skills training programme when he found out about the Village Animal Health Worker project. He decided to become a livestock farmer and developed a farming business plan after an inspirational visit to a firm established at Gaushala. He has now started his own buffalo farm and is putting his training into practice and earning 2000 NRP daily from milk alone with a small herd of 4 Murrah buffalos and 2 hariyana cows.

Jay Kishor Chaudhary, 39 years old and from Rautahat, started a small poultry farm after retiring from the army. However, he lacked the skills to make a proper success of the business. After signing up for the SBSB training, he gained new practical knowledge about the poultry cycle, medicine, and general poultry management. This allowed him to grow his farm and have better coordination with the local vet regarding the health of the chicks. Within a short space of time, he was able to access the market with his products and improve his income.

Lessons Learned

✓ It is important to prepare trainees and communities for TVET through sensitisation sessions. Potential trainees, their families and communities must have the right information about the skills opportunities to be able to make the right decisions about joining.

✓ The Field-Based Apprentice Model helped trainees learn valuable, practical skills, and showed them how to manage training equipment from the outset. Trainees appreciated this approach as it gave them extra support in starting up their own businesses.

✓ The SBSB survey provided invaluable market information to identify the real skills gaps in each market area and this meant trainees could practice the precise skills needed. For example, the existing poultry curriculum only focused on producing farm broiler chickens, but the survey highlighted market demand for turkey, local chicken, and local duck.

✓ The Market information Sharing Forum found that most agriculture professionals limit themselves to their farm or agricultural sites and are not affiliated with any groups or forums which severely affected their business growth. A key principle of the project was to therefore, link these trainees to local and district groups to support them in expanding their network.

✓ Greater clarity about daily allowances for trainees in training selection information would help manage the expectations of daily allowance workers thinking of becoming trainees.

✓ Coordination with employers and the private sector is key to implement training and update curricula. This collaboration and coordination also help to identify the gaps in off-season vegetable training, junior poultry training, and village animal health training.

✓ Certification is important, especially for underserved groups, who can find it difficult to access work without a recognised certificate.

✓ **SBSB** found it important to create space and opportunity for staff and trainers to engage with the greening process and improve their own understanding and capacity. For trainers, who have the most direct engagement with trainees and who will often set the standard for behaviour, it is important that they are fully engaged with a green mission and have buy-in on its importance.





