

Skills for Employment (सीप) Monthly Bulletin: February 2021

Funded by the U.K. Government, UKaid सीप, since 2019, is brokering transformational partnerships with the private and public sector to propel growth of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in priority sectors – commercial agriculture, light manufacturing, tourism, ICT, and construction – primarily in Province 2 and Lumbini Province. सीप uses an innovative Challenge Fund to expand market-aligned skilling, affordable financial products, and ethical migration services linked to gainful livelihoods for Nepalis and growth for industries.

The Month that was: सीप Partner Highlights

सीप's Partnership with Palpali Dhaka Association: An Embodiment of a Real Public Private Partnership to Enable Sustainable Jobs and Propel Industry Growth. In early February, the first batch of 50 women graduated in Tansen with skills, employment, and entrepreneurship support services—with option to work with Dhaka manufacturing entrepreneurs/ Palpali Dhaka Association (PDA) or start their own home-based business. To enable revival and growth of the industry, in addition to three-month apprenticeship-based skilling to create stronger gainful employment prospects for women weavers, सीप's partnership entails building reliable linkages to the following for PDA and its weavers:

1. Financial solutions through partners like the NMB Bank for women weavers to buy handloom technology for setting up their self-employed business; and for the entrepreneurs to access growth capital.
2. Yarn suppliers in and outside Nepal, like Triveni Spinning Mill in Birgunj and Aquafil in Italy, to build reliable raw material supply chains as well as work with recyclable environment-friendly products.
3. Emerging market players in and outside Nepal, including innovation and standardisation in design and product quality, through consortium partner Label STEP.
4. Stronger storytelling, traceability, and marketing capability; and institutionalisation of fair-trade standards to boost the Palpali Dhaka brand.



“Let’s make Tansen the city of entrepreneurs,” Mayor Ashok Kumar Shahi of Tansen Municipality noted as he honored the first graduating batch.

These solutions will collectively optimise the value of skilling for at least 500 women (before November 2021) and enable lasting growth for Dhaka enterprises and industry—by addressing critical systemic constraints and gaps at the firm, industry, and workers’ levels. **Read The Kathmandu Post’s** report on the सीप-PDA partnership titled [Palpa Acts to Revive Hand-woven Dhaka](#).

More Women Poised to Become Heavy Machine Operators and Mechanics through Morang Earth Movers. Encouraged by the growing demand from women to build skills and find employment in heavy equipment operator-using construction industry, सीप partner Morang Auto Works Private Limited (MEPL) is pledging scholarships for women starting this month. When job-linked skilling, with provision of globally and nationally recognised certification (JCB and CTEVT), financing support, and accommodation facilities are closer to home, more women can access and avail the skilling and build dignified jobs right here in Nepal. MEPL has facilitated JCB-aligned skilling for nearly 600 Nepalis, as of February 2021, via local skilling partners in Bhaktapur, Nepalgunj, and Janakpur Districts. Over the coming months, women are expected to constitute a growing proportion of MEPL's graduates. In addition to scholarships from its MAW Foundation, MEPL has effectively mobilised funding from six different municipalities, covering Province 2 and Lumbini Province, to co-fund the cost of skilling for socioeconomically disadvantaged people from underserved geographies. MEPL also secured funding from NGO Sahamati for 41 trainees this month. Look out for details on the scholarship next month.



Chuna Magar (pictured above) is on her way to build career in the heavy equipment operation sector. Originally from Khotang District, Chuna recently graduated from MAW Skills Academy partner Underprivileged Children's Education Programme in Bhaktapur. [This video](#) on YouTube featuring Nepal's first woman heavy equipment operator inspired Chuna to enroll. As Chuna awaits her license, another JCB-certified trainee Sushila Jogi, prepares for her upcoming trial in March. Last month, we shared news of Kamal Buda from the remote far-western district Jajarkot who has successfully found an employment as an assistant instructor of heavy equipment operator after her skilling in Nepalgunj.

Nepal Yarn Manufacturers' Association Expands Gender Inclusive Jobs. Reliance Spinning Mill, led by Pawan Golyan, is poised to exceed its job creation goal after hitting the 2,002-target mark in February 2021. This makes Reliance the first industry, among the five consortium partners in the सीप-NYMA partnership, to reach its goals. This month also saw Jaya Spinning Mill officially join the partnership to enable skilling-based job creation. Jay Spinning located in Simara, Province 2, manufactures yarn for domestic as well export markets under Chairperson Padma Jyoti's leadership, and will seek to improve its skilling curricula and gender inclusion plans by drawing on the standards built over the last year through सीप's support to NYMA. Jay Spinning's onboarding is especially timely given frequent closures of the production facility at Triveni Spinning Mill since November 2020, and the resulting skilling and job placement gaps. To make up for the job creation declines at Triveni, NYMA member Jagadamba Spinning

Mill also stepped up with increased recruitment and skilling-based jobs for local youths, particularly women. **Read The Kathmandu Post** feature of Jagadamba’s inclusion building efforts: [Factories in Bhairahawa switch to hiring women as high male employee turnover hurts productivity](#). To date, NYMA has successfully created 2,409 jobs, and expects to reach nearly 4,000 jobs by April 2021.

Tips to Introduce and Institutionalise Gender Inclusion at Nepali Companies

Based on conversation with Kriti Giri, Project Coordinator, NYMA



1. Sustained, visible advocacy for gender and social inclusion (GESI) from the leadership, which is also communicated and reinforced regularly at all levels, especially by the human resource management team and floor-level managers, is critical. Having industry leaders like Pawan Golyan, the Chairperson of Reliance and NYMA, champion the importance of GESI, has greatly helped drive up acceptance and pace of NYMA’s GESI efforts.
2. Consider GESI assessment, to improve understanding of current state-of-play re: factors that can lead to increased and improved recruitment and retention of women. These questions can be useful starting points: a) What are the needs and interests of women workers?; b) What’s stopping more women from productive work opportunities; and c) What are examples of GESI-oriented best practices and policies adopted by other companies? After seeing Triveni’s success with recruitment of women, Jaya Spinning, for instance, organically began putting in place mechanisms for inclusive recruitment. Similarly, given Reliance Spinning Mill’s long-standing leadership on GESI, other firms like Jagadamba have learned and are picking up several best practices.
3. Show and etch GESI in the company's recruitment strategy and plan itself—to turn commitments into action. Without a deliberate approach and plan to “open the door wider” for women, inclusion will remain a “token effort”. Recruitment plans should look at where and how best to target, find, attract, and onboard women. NYMA members like Jagadamba Spinning Mill, for instance, reached out to local networks and groups such as NGOs, government’s Employment Service Centres (ESC), women’s groups, and community forest users’ groups. Such local organisations have direct access to women and can serve as trainee mobilisation partners if they understand “what’s in it for them?”.
4. As part of the recruitment plan, ensure that enrollment of women is not restricted to entry-level jobs, but also mid and senior-level jobs. Once more people, women and men alike, see more women – successfully recruited and performing well at different roles, including supervisors and trainers – this creates a ripple effect. **Seeing is believing!**
5. Take a multi-tiered approach to GESI to build need-based holistic service provisions for women. For example, Jagadamba has built separate washrooms, changing facilities, accommodation provision, and introduced transportation services along various routes since December 2020.
6. GESI and safeguarding against sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment should go hand-in-hand. Given the safeguarding challenges at four factories, NYMA rolled out a safeguarding guideline in November 2020 to ensure that women and other workers from historically disadvantaged communities are safeguarded and empowered.

Rojgari Services Reconnects with Government and Industry Leaders in Birgunj. The Rojgari team met Mayor Bijay Sarawagi in Birgunj, Province 2, in early February to discuss collaboration opportunities, following-up on previous engagements by सीप with the Mayor since 2018. Coordinated by UKaid सीप’s Regional Manager Mohammad Sabir, the Mayor reiterated his interest in expanding livelihood opportunities by expanding the municipality and सीप partners’ ongoing efforts. In line with सीप’s approach

to strategic alliance building, Mr. Sarawagi also emphasised the value of forging multi-sectoral collaborations with financial institutions, the government’s ESCs, and other donor programmes like SaMi. This engagement with the Mayor comes on the heels of Rojgari’s successful partnership with Lumbini Province Government, also facilitated by सीप, to connect and cross-promote private sector and government-owned digitally driven recruitment portals <www.rojgari.com and rojgari.lumbini.gov.np>. सीप’s partnership with Rojgari, a medium-sized growing business, given the growth potential it presents, is also benefitting from equity funding from Business Oxygen Fund (Bo2). Co-funded by the U.K. Government, Bo2’s funds will support Rojgaris with post-COVID 19 recovery to ensure sustainability and growth of its operations.

In response to market demands for skilled workers, Rojgari also ran several on-the-job skilling initiatives linked to job/self-employment, including Mithila Art-work for 34 women this month. Led by local partners Relative Nepal and Janaki Women Awareness Society, these women are now engaged as creators and suppliers of Mithila art-based products. By March 2021, Rojgari plans to enable job placements for nearly 1,500 youth.

Reconnecting with Mayor Sarawagi in Birgunj.

Mithila art workers, trained by Rojgari’s local partners, have been connected to different local and national buyers.



Sreenagar Agro Farm Harnesses Power of Digitisation to Better Reach, Connect, and Serve Farmers and Enterprise Network. Shreenagar Agro Farm (SAF) is currently testing and fine-tuning its mobile-based Shree Kisan App, which will serve as a source of information and linkage-building platform for farmers/entrepreneurs to access inputs (e.g. day-old chicks and feed), market price information, skilling courses, and buy-back guarantees via SAF’s market outlets. This app complements SAF’s offline efforts to train and secure productive livelihoods for its growing farmers’ network in various target agriculture value chains in Lumbini Province. To date, SAF has secured gainful livelihood for nearly 1,500 farmers. Building on the assets created through its partnership with सीप, SAF plans to sign an agreement with the USAID Feed the Future KISAN II project to digitise and institutionalise market-aligned curricula that are now available in Nepal. Five सीप-supported curriculums (layer, broiler, cattle, goat, and aquaculture) and five KISAN II-supported curriculums (rice, vegetable, maize, lentils, and ginger) will be housed in Shree Kisan Innovation Hub’s website, with a self-learning approach, to ensure sustained availability and utilisation by interested candidates—both in and outside Nepal.

Genese Solution Drives Systemic Changes by Enhancing Capabilities and Networks of Colleges and Students. Since 2019, Genese has successfully onboarded 45 colleges across Nepal through which students can avail Amazon Web Services (AWS) Cloud Computing courses as electives. Building on this successful endeavor, this month, AWS India greenlit Genese's proposal to set up an **AWS Academy** in Nepal, for the very first time, within the Institute of Engineering (IoE), Pulchowk Campus under Tribhuvan University. This will give IoE faculty access to ready-to-teach cloud computing curriculums and upskilling opportunities; and students, across the 14 IoE-aligned colleges, the opportunity to pursue internationally-recognized skills, certifications, and emerging job roles of the future. As cloud technology evolves and expands globally, Genese continues to facilitate and enable higher rates of adoption by industries such as Sasto Deal, Gyapu, and UrbanGirl, in Nepal too, which in turn drives up demand for cloud skill workers. The AWS Academy inauguration at IoE is slated for March/April 2021.

Upaya City Cargo Kick-starts Partnership by Expanding Team, Testing Offline Trips in New Geographies (at Pokhara and Butwal), and Leveraging Siprodi Trading's Skilling Assets. Upaya is also testing offline trips to enter the two-wheelers market segment in Kathmandu. Efforts to design/refine the skilling manual for two-wheeler and four-wheeler drivers are underway as well as coordination with recognised industry leaders like Siprodi Trading. Upaya will mobilise Siprodi's access to returnee migrants, skilling facility in Naikap, Kathmandu, and its well-equipped 'Skilling on Wheels' vehicle to deliver mobile skilling for driver partners at the 'driver hotspots' in Butwal, Pokhara, and Kathmandu. Committed to easing entry barriers for women and People with Disabilities, Upaya is also developing a GESI mobilisation framework. As part of this, an initial meeting was held with National Federation of Disabled – Nepal to identify areas of collaboration, with a especially tailored programme that supports physically disabled women and men through Upaya City Cargo's platform and industry partners.

Rising Uptake of Financial Products at Prabhu Bank in Wake of Migration Destinations Opening after COVID-led standstill. Bolstered by its collaboration with different recruitment agencies, other donor-funded programmes like SaMi, local skilling providers, and its financial literacy-oriented promotional campaign (including through the mobile app SAMPATTI developed by partner Arya Solutions), the number of migrant returnees, aspiring migrants, and migrant households serviced by the bank has grown by 36 percent since December 2020.

Nepal SBI Bank Continues to its Outreach to Increase Uptake of its Financial Products. Using a combination of radio jingles through Radio Janakpur and Radio Saugat, coupled with printed promotional materials, and interactions with various local stakeholders, Nepal SBI Bank, with support from सीप's Regional Manager Mohammad Sabir Ansari, is making an effort to better connect with aspiring and existing migrants and their households. This included a financial literacy skilling for Manakamana Training and Skill Development Centre's trainees to encourage savings and affordable credit uptake.