

Skills for Employment (सीप) Monthly Bulletin: March 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.

Message from the Leadership

The International Women's Day campaign theme for 2021 '#ChooseToChallenge' perfectly reverberated with what we, at Ukaid सीप, stand for. At सीप too, we confront bias and inequality and push for a more inclusive environment at work and the communities that we support. By challenging systemic gender constraints and integrating gender-inclusive solutions, firms can accelerate the move towards a stronger, sustainable economy. सीप's technical assistance to private sector partners, as part of our Challenge Fund co-funding model, is a core tenet in our approach to catalyzing inclusive skills-based job creation alongside industry growth in Nepal.

Working closely with several partners, we've strived to understand the transformational challenges that firms face and have jointly explored how Gender Equality and Social Inclusion integration can contribute to addressing the challenges—to enhance the skills of women and disadvantaged communities for gainful employment, higher wages, and improved working conditions. [Recommended read](#) for more on सीप's GESI strategy and conceptual framework.

What's on our mind? Only 22 percent of working age women are in paid employment in Nepal. To what extent are women, disadvantaged groups, and people with disabilities included in the design and implementation of our companies and programmes? How can we better ensure broader access to, mitigate barriers, and create equal opportunities for all regardless of gender or where they come from?

Our efforts, in partnership with our diverse pool of partners in the private and public sectors, including the leadership of the Province 2 and Lumbini Province government, is yielding promising changes. Women are increasingly opting to join job roles traditionally considered as a bastion for men only—in the fields of ICT and construction. Our partners are expanding skilling-based livelihood opportunities for women, and as a result, industries in the yarn, carpet, and agriculture sectors are reaping the benefits of a productive and stable workforce. Similarly, we are working out ways to tackle entry barriers for women and people with disability to join the fast growing two- and four-wheeler delivery service industry.

This Monthly Bulletin captures some of the progress and impacts that are unfolding. There is much more to be achieved, and we will continue to raise the bar for ourselves as well as for our partners and stakeholders. Because when women are able to realize their potential and contribute to their families, communities, enterprises, and nations—everyone prospers!

With Regards,

*Baljit Vohra, Team Leader and Stuti Basnyet, Deputy Team Leader and Director of Partnerships and Innovations
– Ukaid सीप*

The Month that was: Update from Partners

Upaya City Cargo Tackles Job Entry Barriers and Digital Gaps to Expedite E-commerce.

Upaya is expanding job opportunities in the two-wheeler and four-wheeler delivery service industry, deliberately and systematically, to create a more inclusive workforce. The सीप -

Upaya partnership is in the process of facilitating financing through partner Kumari Bank so that the aspirants can acquire two-wheeler and four-wheeler vehicles at affordable rates; integrating digital skilling to drive up adoption of digital technologies; and skilling in driving and license acquisition via Siprodi Trading and other partners. With सीप's support, Upaya is also entering the two-wheeler market and expanding its services to Butwal, Bhairawa, and Pokhara—to generate self-employment for 2,000 driver-partners by 2021.

This month, on March 30, Upaya launched a QR code payment system for its driver-partners, in collaboration with Kumari Bank. Launched in the presence of key market actors, including driver-partners (photo on the right), who are enabling and essential to Nepal's transition to a digital economy, such as F1Soft, Nepal Rastra Bank, among others, the event called for stronger collaborative actions to accelerate movement to a digital Nepal, build digital literacy, and expedite job creation. WATCH the event proceedings: <https://bit.ly/3rDKPgE>



Photo: Shan Rai and Sana Aryal (in the picture) are on their way to being registered as Upaya City Cargo riding partners. Through collaborations with Blue Diamond Society, NIU electric scooters, and others, Upaya is striving for not just inclusiveness, but also a greener economy. If you know people interested in finding productive jobs as Upaya's driver-partners, contact the team: tseringdolma07@gmail.com



Photo: Bikash Dongol, 26, one of the driver-partners of Upaya has already done upto 600 trips in two years. He has seen a significant growth income. He has access to insurance while digital payment service has made transactions with clients more convenience

Promoting Financial Aid to Close Gender Digital Divides and Bringing Amazon Web Service Educate Center to Nepal. Promoting female 'role models' and financial aid can shape the choices by, and opportunities available to women for skilling and employment in ICT sector in Nepal. This is why, our partner **Genese Solution** and Girls in Tech-Nepal, are collaborating to close the gender digital divide. Here's how:

- Genese's partnership with सीप, since 2019, is making job-linked skilling, including courses and certification from international partners like AWS Educate and Microsoft, more accessible to build work-readiness of students. Forty-nine Nepali colleges have already joined hands with Genese so far, including the Institute of Engineering at Pulchowk Campus, which has access to fifteen thousand students across Nepal. Next month, Genese, IOE, and सीप are gearing up to launch the AWS Educate Center at the IOE. Stay tuned for updates!



Photo: Staunch champion of Women in Leadership, Development Director at the British Embassy Kathmandu, Lisa Honan, inspired girls (and men) at the Girls in Tech-Nepal launch.

- सीप played a catalytic role in introducing Girls in Tech-Nepal, last January, through Genese to encourage greater participation of women in ICT. Since then, Girls in Tech has successfully mobilised its networks to challenge perceptions and inspire more girls and women—to claim their rightful space.
- With सीप’s support, through bank partners like **Prabhu Bank** and **Nepal SBI Bank**, Genese Solution is now offering scholarships for deserving female candidates. 28 girls have received scholarships, so far, to start their Amazon Web Services (AWS) Cloud Computing courses.

Interested in contributing to the scholarship fund to promote more girls in tech? Contact aruna.sharma@genesecloud.academy

Nepal Yarn Manufacturers’ Association (NYMA) Reinforces Inclusive and Safe Work Environments.

NYMA celebrated IWD 2021 by recognizing contributions of the women who are fuelling sustainability and growth of the yarn industry. Yarn is among Nepal’s largest export commodity, and a sector that holds tremendous growth and job creation potential. Despite the impact of COVID-19, the manufacturers within NYMA managed to generate more than NPR 21.7 billion in sales this fiscal year. Efforts to build a more inclusive and diverse workforce can be greatly strengthened when efforts to build stronger protection measures for women and other disadvantaged groups are in place too.



Photo: Itahari’s Deputy Mayor Laxmi Gautam inspires women workers at a IWD commemorative event.

“It was only after we started systematically recruiting more women, that production at our factories became stable.” - Pawan Golyan, Chairman NYMA.

After designing a Safeguarding guideline in 2020, in response to perceived gaps at the four partner factories, this month NYMA doubled down on its commitments. Building on previous efforts, NYMA rolled out grievance forms to strengthen reporting mechanisms across the four factories – Triveni Spinning Mill, Jagadamba Spinning Mill, Reliance Spinning Mill, and Tricot Industry. The concept of Safeguarding Committees has also been introduced.

Master Weavers Expand Skilling for Job Creation and Carpet Industry Sustainability—For, By, and With Women. Meaningful support for, and engagement of women, can boost sustainability and growth of an industry, create more jobs, stimulate local economies, and secure reliable incomes for families. Sardha Dhimal, Master Weaver at a Label STEP supported artisan village in Sarlahi, is a role model for weavers, both men and women—in and around her village. 32-year-old Sardha, originally from Morang District, has woven hand-knotted carpets for nearly 14 years now. Chosen and skilled as a Master Weaver, Sardha has already skilled over 300 women to build productive livelihoods.



Motivated and qualified women weavers and master weavers like Sardha are reinvigorating the hand-woven carpet industry. With सीप's support, STEP has taken Nepal's carpet manufacturing hub from Kathmandu to underserved geographic areas in Sarlahi and Siraha. Our joint efforts have led to development of high-quality weaving workshops linked to the national and global high-value carpet industry. At these workshops, many women, mostly from migrant families, are skilled and employed → <http://seepnepal.com/step-case-study.html>.

Photo: Sardha is also a black belt holder, a national-level referee, and Taekwondo trainer. A trade union member too, she actively advocates for weavers' well-being and helped set up a savings group as well.

Boosting Ability to Set Up and Sustain Enterprises. Deepa Rana (in the photo), 25, from Tansen completed her three-month skilling from the **Palpali Dhaka Association (PDA)** last month. Since then, equipped with skills and networks, Deepa has purchased nine handlooms, and has started building her own workshop in Tinau Municipality and plans to also recruit other skilled graduates. सीप convened and catalyzed the PDA, and its partnerships with the Provincial and Municipal Governments, to integrate skilling and associated growth-promoting interventions, to enable sustained job creation in the Dhaka industry → <https://bit.ly/3wespXC>.



Photo: Equipped with skills and networks, Deepa Rana, has purchased handlooms and started building her own workshops, and also plans to recruit other skilled graduates

Continuing Industry and Government Engagements, also Striving to do Better with Inclusion. Over the course of the सीप -**Rojgari Services** partnership, about 38 percent of those who have secured on-the-job training-based job placements have been women (nearly 500). This encompasses job roles such as Mithila Painting Artisans, Data Keeper, Accountants, PR Personnel, Technical Assistant, and others. This month, Rojgari also followed-up with the Birgunj Municipality, based on the linkages renewed last month with support from सीप's Regional Manager Sabir Ansari, to provide job-linked skilling for local youth.

Enabling Women’s Economic Empowerment for Farmers and Agri-enterprises. **Shreenagar Agro Farm (SAF)** is increasing efficiency and productivity for aspiring and existing farmers and agri enterprises in the Lumbini Province. Access to gender-friendly technology coupled with farmer-oriented practical skilling and improved market linkages can make a substantial difference for individual farmers like Sunita Chaudhary (in the photo). Equipped with a maize dryer, Sunita is able to dry 250 kilos of maize in about three hours. For Sunita, integrated market-based solutions from locally-based companies like SAF means she can sustainably enhance production and secure better and reliable income as a self-employed farmer, while having her workload reduced. SAF reports indicate skilling for nearly 1,500 farmers in various curricula, such as maize farming, fish farming, and hatchery management, so far.



Photo: For Sunita, integrated market-based solutions mean she can sustainably enhance production and secure better and reliable income, while having her workload reduced.

SAF collaborations with the local and Provincial governments, the Agriculture Knowledge Center, and local Cooperatives have continued as well. This collaboration is aiding production of domestic maize for feed production. SAF’s engagement is aimed at streamlining the supply chain of local maize with industry-led training and market linkages so that the right quality and quantity of maize is produced, stored, and marketed by the famers, while also building viable livelihoods for farmers, especially women and migrant returnees in the maize sector. With सीप’s support, SAF has integrated and institutionalised hands-on practical skilling in its end-to-end value chain and business operation. The skilling is now offered through their training center in Butwal, mobile skilling across the Lumbini Province, and agri-service centre at their factory premises in Rupendehi.

Mobilizing More Women in Non-traditional Roles through GESI-sensitive Communications and Collaborations.

Encouraged by growing demand from women like Kamala Buda and Chuna Magar (pictured), who are on their way to building a thriving career as heavy equipment operators, सीप partner **Morang Earth Movers Pvt. Ltd. (MEPL)** pledged scholarships for women, starting this month, through its Foundation. Originally from Khotang District, as Chuna awaits her license, another JCB-certified trainee Sushila Jogi prepares for her upcoming trial in Bhaktapur. Meanwhile in Janakpur, Safalta Kumari Gole and Sanjita Lama have begun their skilling! Last month, we celebrated Kamala

WE
#CHOOSETOCHALLENGE

BECAUSE WE
ARE ALL EQUAL



Buda's news: originally from Jajarkot, she graduated from MEPL's training partner Citizen Prabidhik Sikshalaya at Nepalgunj.

To reach more women like Kamala and Chuna, MEPL is scaling-up community mobilization events. Targeting youth, this month, information dissemination events, tailored in local languages, were held in Sarlahi in Province 2 and Nepalgunj in Lumbini Province. When job-linked skilling, with provision of globally and nationally recognized certification (JCB and CTEVT), financial support, accommodation facilities are closer to home, more women can find and build dignified jobs. In addition to its scholarships, MEPL is effectively mobilising co-funding from municipalities and NGOs.

Prabhu Bank Leverages Technology to Expand Financial Literacy for Migrants and their Families. The Bank is experimenting with technology for outreach and knowledge-sharing. Together with partner Arya Solutions, it is finalizing an android based mobile app 'Sampatti' focused on financial literacy. The app has already been downloaded more than 4,000 times and can help build stronger financial management savvy. The Bank is also in the process of finalizing videos for promotion via various digital platforms.

In other News

सीप uses a facilitative leadership and multi-stakeholder engagement approach to catalyze collaborative actions among various ecosystem actors, including to attract and unlock public and private capital in pursuit of common goals. Building meaningful shared-value collaborations through strategic and sustained stakeholder engagements and communications can enable and accelerate replication, scale up, and sustainability of the partnerships and innovations forged.

Collaboration Formalized with B02. Over the last year, सीप connected and recommended its partners, particularly medium-sized and growing enterprises Rojgari Services and Genese Solution, to B02 for injection of equity funding. B02's support will strengthen the ability of these enterprises to recover from the setbacks of COVID-19 and ensure sustainability of business operations; this is integral to ensure sustainability and sharpening of the skilling-based job creation models introduced and improved via सीप's support. Among the impacts of our approach has been the enhanced visibility of and for the enterprises—elevated demonstration of their innovations, value propositions, and growth potentials. This has built a pipeline of companies that are poised for accelerated growth especially if their financial gaps get plugged by progressive, like-minded efforts like B02. सीप's support enabled these firms to improve investment readiness, establish metrics for performance, and the enhanced ability to engage key identified actors in the country's emerging angel, venture capital and private equity market to promote cross-sector investments.



Based on the recommendations and linkages established by सीप, BO2 commenced its exploration and due diligence to evaluate the financial and business viability of the two companies between 2020-2021. Rojgari Services is awaiting Nepal government's foreign investment approval before Bo2 injects GBP 312,070. Similarly, Genese Solution is undergoing an active due diligence process that may lead to an investment of GBP 343,278 this year.

Reconnecting with Tech Integration Enthusiasts.

In October 2020, सीप hosted a virtual panel on 'Catalyzing Collaborations to Promote & Expand Digitally-Enabled Jobs and Enterprises'. This month, we reconnected with some of the panel members – movers and shakers in the digital economy – for a mini-reunion. At सीप, we take great pride and pleasure in connecting diverse market actors, co-creating solutions, and catalyzing shared-value partnerships. One way we've done this is through systematically organized Stakeholder Engagements.

Our quarterly Skill Matters talk series, like the one that brought this talented crew together, representing Sasto Deal, Upaya CityCargo, Genese Solution, Fusemachines, and others, stimulates collective learning, fosters relationship building, sparks creative thinking, and generates a pipeline of potential investment ideas. The session last October, led to a tailored design and launch of our partnership with Upaya CityCargo. It also fuelled other collaborations between Genese Solution and Sasto Deal, and between Upaya CityCargo and Sastodeal.

