

Partnership Snapshot: Genese Solution Transforming Tech-based Education and Employment in Nepal

UKaid Skills for Employment (सीप) Programme's partnership with Genese Solution has promoted industry-aligned skills development initiatives that expanded and expedited the adoption of Amazon Web Services (AWS) and other cloud-based solutions by industries in Nepal through enhanced capacity of academia and employability of students.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is one of the fastest growing sectors globally, and in Nepal. As per the World Economic Forums' (WEF) Future of Jobs Survey, 2020, most of today's job roles will be transitioned to Cloud Computing, Engineering, Data and AI roles. In this backdrop, it is critical for countries like Nepal, to harness the benefit of global digital shift, by investing in ICT talents corresponding to the global market needs. As per Nepal Investment Board's (NIB) ICT profile, over 5,500 ICT graduates are produced every year in Nepal, while annual growth rate of employment is 21%. Nepali students have ICT degrees, but not the right skills to fit into the global workforce, or the local market demand. Meanwhile, the labor force participation rate of women in Nepal is stunningly high, but the proportion of these women who have careers in data and tech is very small. According to Nepal's 2017–18 Labor Force Survey, 81% of the female population over 15 years old is economically active, but only 0.5% of women and girls work in the ICT sector. Genese Solution, headquartered out of the U.K., specializes in the cloud computing ecosystem. The company serves clients in the U.K, Europe more broadly, and Asia. Genese's business growth depended on availability of a skilled workforce in its team as well as in its client base. Lack of adequate skilled developers and engineers caused delays in project completion, difficulty in communication with clients, affected employee retention, pace of business development, and often led to higher costs of delivering on projects. In 2018, Genese initiated the Genese Cloud Academy (GCA) to build work-readiness of graduating students on diverse cloud computing disciplines to incentivize and support its industry clients' as they migrated to the cloud—in Nepal as well as internationally.

Through catalytic co-investment and technical assistance from UKaid सीप, Genese was able to institutionalize the GCA and enter and integrate a skills development model in its business operations—so that job seekers have the right skills, certification, and linkages that are vital to enter and meet the demands of the industry more effectively. This partnership, since 2019, through Genese's skilling wing GCA, has enhanced skilling capabilities of 50 partner colleges across Nepal and established linkages with five job placement firms to build stronger pathways for students to enter the workplace—enabling companies in Nepal to better access the talent required to effectively adopt and use cloud computing solutions.

KEY FACTS:

Duration: August 2019-May 2021

Geographic Coverage: Provinces 2, Bagmati, Gandaki, and Lumbini Province

Results:

- Introduced globally recognized cloud computing curricula, with likes of Amazon, Microsoft, among others, at scale through system strengthening approach with capabilities and linkages enhanced of and between Nepali academic institutes, students, employers, and job placement firms.
- Work-readiness of over 1,500 students upskilled in various cloud computing disciplines.
- Strategic job placement ties built, and formalized, with four job placement firms: Job Dynamics, Mero Jobs, Rolling Nexus and Talent Connect Partnerships with employers expanded from 90 to over 200.
- AWS Academy introduced to Nepal, at the loE - Pulchowk Campus, Tribhuvan University. This will continue to give thousands of students across Nepal access to globally recognized upskilling and certification opportunities on various cloud computing disciplines for emerging high-growth job roles.
- Partnerships established with 50 colleges in Nepal, TOTs conducted for over 50 teachers at these colleges, along with improved access to tools, curricula, and certification from Amazon and others.
- Secured growth funding of GBP 330,000—important also from a Covid-19 recovery perspective—with the Business Oxygen Fund through SEP's linkage.

Summary of Achievements

- Built strategic ties with 50 academic institutes, in Provinces 2, Bagmati, Gandaki and Lumbini—to encourage adoption and better access to internationally recognized online training modules from the likes of AWS and Microsoft. This has created pathways for teachers as well as students to access and avail tools, courses, and certification on emerging cloud computing subjects like Application Developer, Cloud Support Associate, Cloud Support Engineer, Cybersecurity Specialist, Data Integration Specialist, among others. Using a blended online training and in-person instruction approach, aided by training-of-trainers for teachers, Genese has upgraded the capacity and standards of the academic institutes.



“ICT is as much for girls, as for boys,” says Sakshi, a certified AWS Cloud practitioner, skilled and placed by Genese Solution. / Courtesy: Genese Solution

- Mobilized in-person classroom-based workshops, bootcamps, and orientations at partner colleges and Genese’s e-learning platform to encourage uptake of AWS curriculum and upskill students. Genese also secured a deal with Zoom to serve as an authorized Zoom reseller in Nepal, which greatly eased the pivot to digital training mode for many academic institutes as well as industries in response to Covid-19’s impact on education. Through partners like Anterprerana, Genese also delivered soft skills and entrepreneurship training for selected students.
- Expanded engagement with employers to link students for jobs in demand. Genese is also paving the path for accredited graduates to be linked to Amazon’s jobs portal that can give Nepali graduates access to over 4,000 employers offering freelance and online jobs in the global market.
- Catalyzed the launch of Girls in Tech - Nepal to promote greater participation of women in ICT. Girls in Tech is a U.S. based non-profit working to bridge the gender gap in technology. In January 2020, Genese and UKaid सीप jointly launched a Province 2-specific chapter as well of Girls in Tech - Nepal in the presence of the Chief Minister and other leadership from the government. With facilitation from UKaid सीप, Genese secured scholarships from the Prabhu Bank and Nepal SBI Bank—setting up a CSR fund to support skilling of girls from Province 2.

Innovations Generated and Applied

- Empowering Nepali students for the futuristic job market through access to world-class Amazon, Microsoft, Google courses and certifications.
- Equipping Nepali students to gain access to Amazon’s job portal for freelance projects.
- Collaboration forged with *Antarprerana* to support students with entrepreneurial ambitions in addition to tech skills.
- Catalyzed the introduction of the U.S. based Girls in Tech to Nepal to onboard more women in cloud computing courses—to bridge the gender divide in the ICT-based education and employment space.
- Partnerships established between a private service provider (Genese Solution), academic colleges (50 across Nepal), job placement firms (4), and employers to upskill and improve employment pathways for Nepali students.