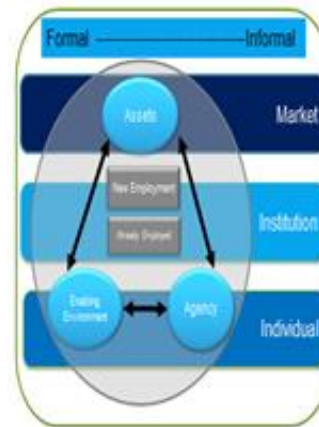


## UKaid Skills for Employment (SEP) programme: Catalyzing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) *Driving Inclusion Together with Enterprise Growth-centric Skilling and Job Creation Approach*

Funded by the British Embassy in Kathmandu, UKaid Skills for Employment (SEP) programme, is brokering transformational partnerships with the private and public sector to propel growth of inclusive employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in priority sectors – commercial agriculture, light manufacturing, tourism, ICT, and construction – primarily in Province 2 and Lumbini Province. UKaid SEP uses an innovative Challenge Fund – i.e. co-investment and technical assistance – to expand industry-aligned skilling, affordable financial products, and ethical migration services linked to gainful livelihoods for Nepalis, especially women, disadvantaged groups, and youth, while also enabling sustained growth within industries. The programme has launched 17 diverse partnerships to date.

Only 22 percent of working age women are in paid employment in Nepal. Across all partnerships, the programme is working with the private sector to understand the transformational challenges that firms as well as women face in order to address key barriers and expand livelihood enablers for women, including in non-traditional and emerging job roles. UKaid SEP's technical assistance, along with co-funding for gender-intentional activities, are helping improve mobilization, recruitment, growth, and retention of women in high-growth sectors. SEP's partners are upgrading/expanding skilling and job-linked systems and services that support women to pursue empowering jobs.



**Domain 1: Assets, Services and Opportunities**  
Education, Skill levels (perceived and real) and development, Poverty and low income levels, Asset ownership, Access to finance, Digital assets, Social capital, Information asymmetry, Relocation challenges, Absence of supportive facilities at work or trainings, Sector services

**Domain 2: Voice and Agency**  
Control over assets, Sexual harassment at the workplace and public transport, Negotiating capacity

**Domain 3: Enabling Environment: Formal and Informal Institutions**  
Discrimination and dignified employment, Norms about the desirability and suitability of paid work for women, Norms about respectability that limit women's mobility and their ability to work in mixed-gender environments, Norms about care, domestic work and time use that limit women's time available for paid work

The programme uses a three-tiered domain approach (pictured on right) to assess GESI gaps for targeted solution-designing with partner firms. [Recommended read](#) for more on SEP's GESI strategy and conceptual framework.

### Illustration of activities and progress:

- Through Morang Earth Movers Pvt. Ltd (MEPL) supplier of JCB's heavy equipment operators for the **construction sector**, SEP has catalyzed expansion of job-linked training infrastructure to underserved regions of Nepal, so that women and other disadvantaged groups are better able to access and avail well-paying jobs right inside Nepal. As a JCB-certified and licensed operator, and one that can command upwards of £250 and £885 monthly in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. This partnership has deployed several complementary gender-integration activities, including recruitment of women as trainer-role models, to dismantle gender stereotypes in a heavily male-dominated sector.



Through Label STEP, SEP has triggered decentralization of the **carpet manufacturing process**—taking weaving workshops and jobs, linked to fair trade-based national and global carpet value chains, to rural Sarlahi in Province 2. This has made-possible local women-centric jobs for the first time. In addition to weaving jobs, the programme has tactfully groomed women as master weavers—demonstrating women in leadership roles to attract and onboard more women workers.

- In the **ICT sector**, through the U.K.-headquartered Genese Solution, the programme promoted female 'role models' and financial aid to shape the choices by, and opportunities available to women for skilling and employment.



Master weavers like Suryamaya Pakhrin use an App to monitor progress made by weavers

In addition to expanding internationally-recognized skilling and certification to build work-readiness of students across 49 colleges, SEP catalyzed introduction of Girls in Tech-Nepal in 2020 to encourage greater participation of women in ICT. The programme, through bank partners like Prabhu Bank and Nepal SBI Bank, also helped Genese Solution mobilize scholarships for deserving female candidates from Province 2.

- In the **agriculture sector**, through Shreenagar Agro Farm, the programme has supported expansion of quality industry-led training and a range of essential livelihood-creating services to Province 5 targeting rural farmers, who are predominantly women. Shreenagar's end-to-end solutions, now available in the last mile, is poised to sustainably enhance farm-based productivity, incomes, and enterprises.
- In the **Yarn industry**, SEP's partnership with the Nepal Yarn Manufacturer's Association (NYMA) has catalyzed inclusion-driving skilling and employment practices alongside improved factory capability—with robust emphasis on gender-sensitive processes and infrastructure—at five large-sized factories. As a result, factories like Jagdamba Spinning Mill and Triveni Spinning Mill opened their doors for women in 2020—for the first time in the factory's 16/20-year history—in addition to creating space for women taken on higher-value job roles.

*Kamala Sharma Panthi, from Rupemdehi, started layers chicken farming after getting skilled in 2020. She currently has 1,000 chicks & produces over 800 eggs a day.*



- In the **Palpali Dhaka fabric** industry, to boost ability of women weavers to set up and sustain their own enterprises (in addition to job access), UKaid SEP facilitated partner Palpali Dhaka Association's (PDA) linkage with a range of service providers in the enterprise development ecosystem—from training, financial access, raw material supply, fair-trade standard certification, innovations, and growth markets. Equipped with skills and networks, PDA's training graduates are choosing to purchase handlooms and start their own workshops.



Today, women are increasingly opting to join job roles traditionally considered as a bastion for men only—in the fields of ICT and construction, for instance. SEP partners are expanding skilling-based livelihood opportunities for women, and as a result, industries in the agriculture, yarn, carpet, and Palpali Dhaka (fabric) are reaping the benefits

of a productive and stable workforce. Similarly, the programme is 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.

In the migration space, the programme is working closely with the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security to improve coordination of Government-to-Government dialogues—with added emphasis on skilling and safer migration opportunities for women—to open new more-lucrative destinations and job roles for Nepali migrants like as nurses in the U.K.

