

## Partnership Snapshot: Upaya: CityCargo Building Digitally Literate & Connected Workforce in Logistics and Agriculture Space

UKaid Skills for Employment (सीप) Programme's partnership with Upaya: CityCargo is designed to build digitally-literate and-connected Nepalis who can reap the benefits of the country's transition to a digital economy in the logistic sector, while connecting smallholder farmers directly with consumers—eliminating the need for middlemen—through Upaya's agri-food tech partner DV Excellus Kheti. Among others, this partnership proposes an approach that builds on and expands its efforts to collectively raise digital awareness, incentivize and accelerate adoption of digital services, including internet connectivity, and stimulate digital skilling and livelihoods for rural-based youth, enterprise start-up, and growth for MSMEs — pivotal for last mile delivery, especially in view of COVID-19 for rural economies to recover. Upaya: CityCargo, entered the market in April 2019 with a tech-based on-demand, intra-city logistics service. Upaya's system aggregates logistics demand and closes information gaps.

### KEY FACTS:

**Duration:** February 2021 – June 2022

**Geographic Coverage:** Kathmandu, Butwal, Bhairahawa and Pokhara

### Impact so far:

- Developed a cohort of digitally literate human resource—695 two and four-wheeler driver/riders onboarded on Upaya's logi-tech platform to date.
- Incorporated 600 farmers on the Kheti Food platform—ready for tech-enabled jobs.
- Expanded self-employment opportunities. Current average earnings of Upaya's four-wheeler driver-partners is approximately NPR 40,000/month (£250), significantly higher than other commercial drivers.



Upaya's driver partner, Laxman Bishwokarma, delivering food and medical essentials in Kathmandu | Courtesy: Upaya

When a trip is requested, drivers nearest to the customers—tracked on a real time basis using geolocation—are assigned the trip to ensure quick turnaround. UKaid सीप's partnership with Upaya is also helping propel Upaya's foray into agriculture. Upaya has made a strategic investment in DVExcellus Kheti, an online marketplace for farm products and provider of end-to-end solutions for farmers and small agri-enterprises. This has enabled farmers to be connected directly with consumers, while bringing farmers into the fold of e-commerce. UKaid सीप's partnership with Upaya is designed to accelerate and strengthen its digitally powered intervention to spur growth of e-commerce and address systemic logistics gaps in the supply chains for various sectors (including agriculture and manufacturing) by building digitally literate workforce and transforming self-employment pathways for drivers and farmers.

### Summary of Key Activities

#### Generate skilled and productively self-employed driver partners

1. Implemented market development strategies in expanded geographies (Butwal, Bhairahawa, and Pokhara) tapping into untapped markets; and entered into the two-wheeler market segment, in addition to four-wheelers, to service the rapidly growing e-commerce-based enterprises. Upaya has so far developed a cohort of 695 two and four-wheeler driver/riders on their logi-tech platform and 600 farmers on the Kheti Food platform—ready for tech-enabled jobs.
2. Upaya is mobilizing social media and coordinating with automotive dealers, NGOs, and other firms to leverage their channels (targeting transportation hotspots) and platforms to build awareness and attract driver partners.

3. Design and implement job seeker-centric and market-relevant curricula and training. The training has been tailored to help prepare the participants (i.e., underemployed drivers and new drivers) to successfully join and reap the benefits of the digital economy. Training is delivered via a blended medium—classroom, online, and on-the-job—and features a four-part module covering digital literacy, financial literacy, customer relations, and vehicle maintenance and road safety. Training is conducted free of cost as part of its on-boarding process on the Upaya/ Kheti App and digitized to optimize cost and ensure use even during periods affected by COVID-19.
4. Forge strategic partnerships with financial institutions and two-wheeler/four-wheeler vehicle dealers. Post-training, self-employment will be enabled through an attractive financing package developed in partnership with financial institutions. Returnee migrants and other job seekers can buy pickup delivery vehicles directly from the authorized dealers like Sipradi—distributor for Tata vehicles in Nepal.
5. Integrate inclusion-building and green actions. While the transportation sector is fairly inclusive for disadvantaged groups, Upaya is actively promoting and seeking participation of women riders/drivers and also exploring 'green actions' by exploring opportunities to promote electric fleets for greener mobility/ e-mobility.
6. Provide industry-recognized certification to build recognition of self-employment as a driver partner with Upaya.

### **Agri-business integration to improve market access for farmers**

1. Develop a similar skilling model for farmers focused on digital literacy, digital payments, and customer service.
2. Onboard farmers to provide market access and agri-logistics through online and offline communications. Upaya will incorporate 600 farmers and their agri goods on the Kheti App based on field-based assessment of agri-businesses across 11 target districts.
3. Evaluate Kheti's Farm Management Tool (*illustrated below*) for efficient supply chain management to ensure that Kheti and farmers both use data to manage farm produce and predict output and harvest quantities. These predictions will enable better connections to B2B customers.
4. Integrate agri-logistics platforms such as cooling boxes and load pooling mechanisms to improve the supply chain for perishable agri goods and help the farmers to fetch a fair price.

