



PROJECT AMBER REPORT
EMPOWERING LIVES
EMBRACING COLLABORATION

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भारत सरकार
कौशल विकास और उद्यमशीलता मंत्रालय
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT
AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Foreword



Skill development is the cornerstone of our nation's growth and progress. It empowers individuals, enhances productivity of industry, and drives economic development. In today's rapidly changing world, powered by latest technologies and innovation, the importance of equipping our workforce with the necessary skills can hardly be overstated.

Project AMBER, an initiative under the SANKALP program of MSDE, presents a unique model of short duration skilling, by embedding fresh elements of better screening and alignment of candidates with the available courses; handholding the training partner during the training; and incentives to training partners linked to outcomes. Some of these elements may have relevance for scaling up under flagship skill development programs of the Government.

This report highlights the approach and progress of the project, illustrating its success in improving employment and retention outcomes for beneficiaries across the country. The project's focus on inclusivity, with a goal of 50% women participation, is also noteworthy.

As we look ahead, it is our continuous endeavour to learn from innovative models and best practices everywhere to drive better outcomes of skilling initiatives. I congratulate all the partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries of Project AMBER for its successful implementation.

Atul Kumar Tiwari
(Atul Kumar Tiwari)



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project AMBER (Accelerated Mission for Better Employment and Retention) is a joint initiative of **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**, **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** and **Generation India Foundation (GIF)** under **Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP)** - a **World Bank funded MSDE programme**. The project aimed to demonstrate improved employment and retention outcomes for **30,000 trainees** using Generation's 7-step methodology, targeting **50% women participation**. The project follows a blended financing model, combining funding from the government and the private/philanthropic sector, establishing a **unique public-private partnership**.

The project is designed to drive systematic impact, by focusing on sustained employment through retention. **The project has been operational since 2021**, demonstrating positive outcomes with a high placement and retention rate, as evidenced by an external evaluation study conducted by Mathematica, a global research firm.



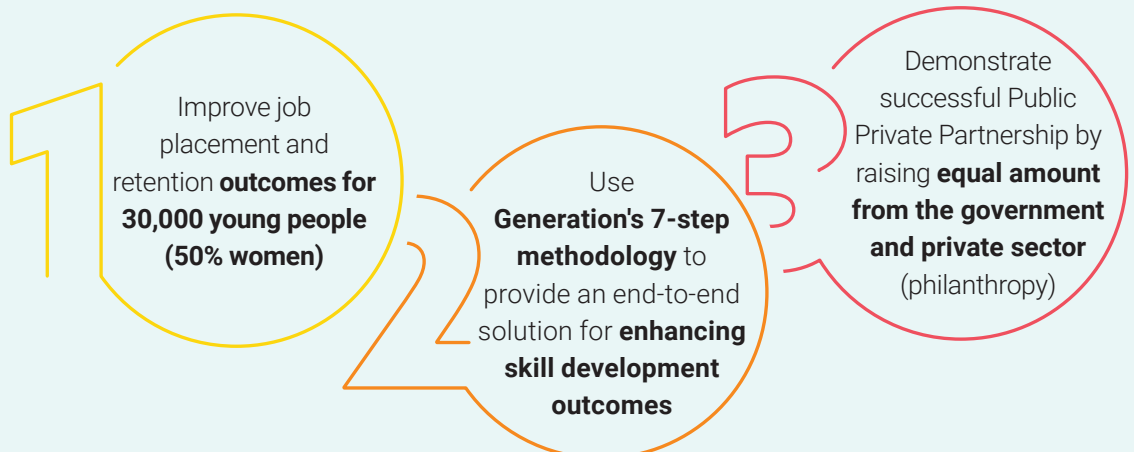
GOAL

Drive **higher quality skilling, improved employment, and retention outcomes** for young people throughout India through a **scalable and sustainable model of skill development**.



PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project is currently ongoing, and we are making progress towards achieving the following objectives:



KEY STAKEHOLDERS

MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP (MSDE)

is responsible for co-ordination of all Skill Development efforts across the country, removal of disconnect between demand and supply of skilled manpower, building the vocational and technical training framework skill up-gradation, building of new skills and innovative thinking not only for existing jobs but also jobs that are to be created. MSDE is co-funding the AMBER Project and has contributed 50% of the funding, thereby enabling the conceptualisation of a unique Public Private Partnership (PPP) model of skilling

NATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (NSDC)

has supported Project AMBER in its conceptualisation, design and execution. It has provided support by enabling access to its ecosystem i.e., centres, processes, and data management systems, and is also overseeing and monitoring the project.

GENERATION INDIA FOUNDATION (GIF),

has established the Project Management Unit (PMU) with the support of NSDC and is enhancing the capacity of Training Partners (TPs) and ensuring the robust implementation of its comprehensive 7-step methodology. Along with NSDC, it has reached out to, and has raised funds from CSR and private philanthropy

UNIQUE FEATURES

1 PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Equal funding by Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Private/CSR/Philanthropy.

2

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Employer tie-ups with national & state level employers, collaborations with job portals & local employers.

3

MENTORSHIP

Counselling support to learners during & post-training to ensure their well-being & better retention outcomes.

5

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

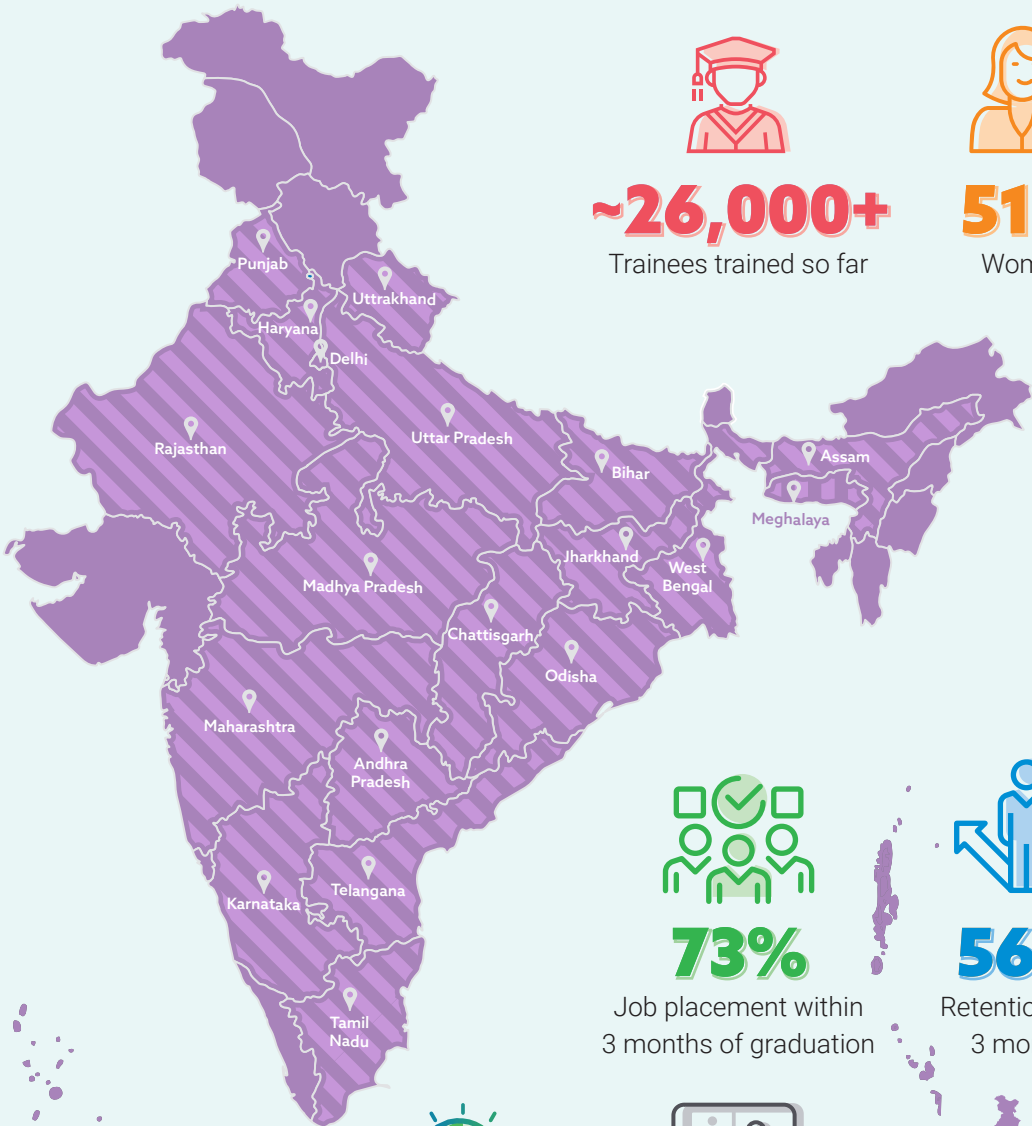
Leveraging technology for effective monitoring and governance

4

OUTCOME INCENTIVIZATION

40-45% Training Partner payout linked to actual placements and retention of the learners to drive towards quality training & invest in long-term wellbeing of learners.

ACHIEVING OUR PROJECT OBJECTIVES - IMPACT IN NUMBERS



~26,000+

Trainees trained so far



51%

Women



73%

Job placement within
3 months of graduation



56%

Retention after
3 months



Generation's 7-step
methodology used



8

Sectors Covered



23

States Covered

*As on 24th July 2024

THE NEED WE ARE ADDRESSING

Across the world, many young adults struggle to find full-time employment. A potentially important factor in this crisis is a mismatch between the skills that youth possess and the skills that **employers are seeking from entry-level workers.**

While both the **Central and State governments** have been funding skilling programmes in India for over a decade, **the primary challenge in the skills ecosystem remains reaching a large number of people, with quality training at a low cost.**

The current placement outcomes in skilling schemes are low, with retention rates proving difficult to achieve. This undermines the effectiveness of skilling efforts, **as the lack of quality training results in unmet industry demand for skilled workers and hampers trainees' aspirations.**

The skill development ecosystem in India faces several challenges to achieve the desired employment outcomes.

- 1** Training Partners often prioritize inputs like **enrolment or certification, encouraging high-volume, low-cost programming.**
- 2** Limited industry involvement in programme design and no placement alignment with employers, leads to a lack of **job opportunities upon completion of training.**
- 3** Many programmes focus solely on training without adequately **addressing job creation and placement opportunities,** while the quality of training itself could be improved.

To address this need, we must create scalable and sustainable skill development models that foster inclusive growth and development. Project AMBER was designed to achieve this by uniting the efforts of the public and private sectors.

With this report we are collectively reflecting on our journey so far, showcasing the invaluable learnings we've gathered along the way; and delving into how Project AMBER has contributed to supporting economic mobility and driving systemic changes.



OUR APPROACH

1

Implementing Generation's 7-step methodology* to achieve **higher placement and retention rates**.

3

Shifting towards incentivising **Training Partners for higher placement and retention**.

5

Targeting the Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP) segment and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, **with a particular focus on achieving 50% women participation**.

7

Redesigning the **industry demand-based curricula for blended/online delivery**.



2

Aligning with the industry for jobs, by developing industry demand-based curriculum and ensuring that the **student's training** and mindsets are **aligned to industry requirements**.

4

Adopting a blended finance model with **50% private sector** contribution (through CSR donors), and **50% contribution** from MSDE under the **SANKALP Programme**. Ensuring adequate private sector participation in funding, through awareness and reach out.

6

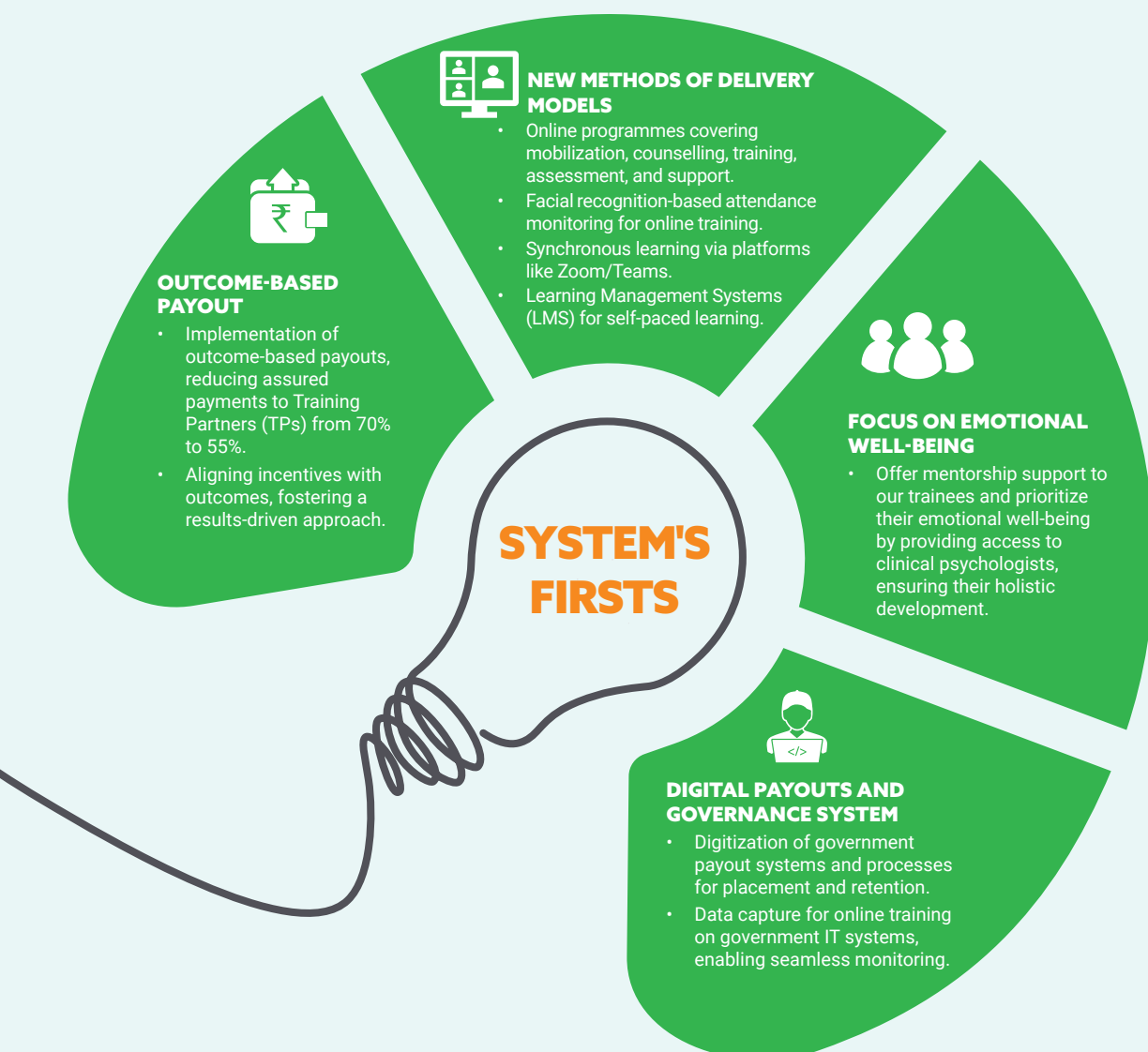
Building **capacities of Training Partners** to perform better as per a defined project Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and alignment with the industry.

***Generation's 7-step methodology is based on a deep understanding of what is needed for education-to-employment success, which includes**

i) Jobs and employer engagement on Return on Investment (ROI) from the start. ii) Recruit students based on intrinsics, effort, and standards for the profession. iii) Profession - specific technical, behavioural, and mindset training while providing social supports. iv) Interviews with employers for rapid job placement. v) Mentorship and an alumni community that follows trainees into the workplace. vi) Return on investment for employers, students, and society. vii) Data at the centre.

THE DIFFERENCE THAT WE HAVE MADE

Project AMBER represents a paradigm shift in skill development, driving efficiency, transparency, and inclusivity within the ecosystem. By pioneering new methods, financing models, and governance systems, AMBER has set the stage for a scalable and sustainable model of skill development. The project has not only provided a new approach to skilling, but has also empowered individuals to thrive in the dynamic job market.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

DRIVING SYSTEMIC CHANGES



Extensive capacity building of Training Partners' Staff

Onboarded and upskilled 23 new Training Partners enhancing their capacity to deliver impactful training programmes. 700+ trainers have been trained through dedicated Train the Trainer (TTT) and 22 Instructional Coaches have been on-boarded.



Towards an Inclusive Workforce

Established robust processes and fostered community engagement to encourage women's participation during mobilization and job alignment. The project has 51% women participation.



Intrinsic Motivation-Based Trainee Selection

The project adopts an innovative trainee selection process based on intrinsic motivation. By identifying individuals who demonstrate a genuine interest and passion for the chosen field, the programme ensures higher levels of engagement and commitment from trainees.



Online Training Delivery

Tech job roles implemented in completely online mode through synchronous (through Zoom) and asynchronous modules (on Canvas LMS).



Digital Tools and Platforms

Leveraged digital tools and platforms such as Gen recruiting, Torsh, and mentorship apps to improve efficacy and data accessibility.



Market-Relevant Certifications

Introduced market-relevant certifications such as AWS and Code Academy to enhance trainee employability.



Integrated Employer Engagement

The project incorporates a unique approach by actively involving employers from the start, which ensures that the training provided aligns with the industry needs.



Extensive Placement Support

Ensured 1.5x job alignments before batch start and aggregated jobs centrally before job role launch, enhancing efficiency.



Social Support Measures

Our trainees often face barriers to employment due to education, economic background, or other factors. We provide them with essential guidance, mentoring, and counselling to help them overcome personal and professional challenges, which helps in enhancing retention rates.



Meticulous Data Collection and Third-Party Verification

The project implements a rigorous data collection system to track and measure various parameters such as job placements, retention rates, and wage increases. Streamlining third-party verification processes, simplifying document verification in alignment with market realities.



STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION

At its core, Project AMBER aims to create a significant impact on individuals and communities. Here are stories of transformation that demonstrate the widespread Impact of our collaborative efforts.

SARANYA S R

Customer Care Executive Graduate
Placed at: G-TEC EDUCATION
Salary: ₹ 2.4 LPA



I enjoyed the training programme and gained valuable knowledge and skills required by the industry. The placement team supported us throughout, guiding us in finding suitable opportunities and boosting our confidence for interviews.

DHEERAJ SRIVATSA K S

AWS Re/Start Graduate
Placed at: UKG
Salary: ₹ 8.7 LPA



Project AMBER has completely changed my idea about life, future, and struggle. Meeting people from diverse backgrounds broadened my perspective and reshaped my career aspirations.

CHAITRA D BOKANAVAR

Junior Software Developer Graduate
Placed at: Verizon Pvt. Ltd.
Salary: ₹ 6.6 LPA



My trainers supported me during the training and Project AMBER helped me secure a job.

RAHUL MENON

AWS Re/Start Graduate
Placed at: New Relic One India. Pvt. Ltd.
Salary: ₹ 11 LPA



Through Project AMBER, I was able to get a job even after a career break. The 12-week full time intensive programme helped me get a much needed daily schedule, necessary skills and confidence to apply and appear for employment opportunities

A WORD OF APPRECIATION

FROM EMPLOYER



Trainees hired from Project AMBER are better trained and professional in nature. These candidates also have shorter learning curve. We are positive that in future these people would surely offer their innovative individual perspectives in ensuring our organization's unparalleled success.

Joy Ghosh, Compass Group

FROM TRAINING PARTNER



The entire skill ecosystem has a lot to learn from this model of skill delivery. The whole paradigm has changed with ideas like Day Zero, outcome based learning, trainer recruitment model and training delivery monitoring, the EGA framework etc. We have emerged more stronger and better because we adopted the methodologies suggested by the AMBER team.

Prashant Pachisia, CEO, EduJobs Academy Pvt. Ltd.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF PROJECT AMBER: KEY FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS

Mathematica, a global research firm, conducted a multi-year impact evaluation of AMBER programmes in India in 2022 and 2023. This evaluation assessed short-term outcomes (3-6 months post certification) in Phase 1 and longer-term outcomes (12-18 months post certification) in Phase 2 using qualitative and quantitative methods. The study assessed Project AMBER's impact

outcomes for trainees, employers, and delivery partners using a quasi-experimental design in India by comparing outcomes for AMBER trainees to those in public training programmes for the same or similar professions.

KEY FINDINGS

66% of our trainees found employment within 90 days of graduation vs 21% in the comparison group, a 3X multiple.

85% trainees were employed in jobs directly related to their training, while 51% in the comparison group were able to do so.

14-38% higher wages earned by our trainees than the comparison group at three to six months post programme, varying by profession.

44% of trainees continued to be employed at ~15 months post certification versus 25% among the comparison group. Mathematica was able to conclude with reasonable confidence that the positive difference in employment of 19 percentage points between the two groups is attributable to Generation's methodology.

Our programmes are **more cost - effective** than those of the comparison group – that the cost per percentage point of long - term employment achieved and per rupee of average trainee earnings generated are both about **30 percent lower for our programme than for public training programmes.**



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS & LEARNINGS FROM THE PROJECT

Project AMBER was conceived as a pilot project with a comprehensive learning agenda, focusing on best practices and insights gathered during the implementation period. The project's learnings and experiences were intended to inform a scale-up strategy, aiming to amplify the impact of the successfully tested pilot to benefit more youth across India and drive lasting policy and programmatic changes.

Project AMBER underscores its commitment to delivering tangible results. The outcomes also indicated promising retention rates, reinforcing the programme's efficacy. With demonstrated success and a solid foundation in place, there lies immense potential for scalability and replication of this model across diverse geographies and sectors. By leveraging the lessons learned and insights gained, we can further define strategies that can cater to the evolving skill development needs.

In the next part we are sharing the key achievements and learnings in **Training Processes & Delivery; Curriculum & Trainer Development; Placements & Employer Engagement; Project Management** and **Finance & Fundraising**.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS & LEARNINGS IN TRAINING PROCESS & DELIVERY

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Certified close to **20,000** trainees with approx. **51% women trainees**.
- **High placement** figures across Training Partners (**73%**) with high **3-month retention**.
- **Capacity building of Training Partners** at both project and center levels, training nearly **1,300 staff members** from **23 Training Partners**.
- Implemented **online and blended training**, apart from regular classroom.
- Extensive use of various tech **tools and applications in training** E.g. Senpiper, Torsh, Canvas, Screening tools, Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH), Salesforce, Power BI.
- Kept connect with alumni across regions, with close to **1,000 alumni participating** in AMBER events.
- **Various Training partners appreciated the capacity building** efforts and adopted the best practices & learnings in projects beyond Project AMBER
- **Online and in-person screening** processes, including activities like Week Zero, to screen and select the right trainees.

OUR LEARNINGS

- **Enhanced Inclusivity:** Targeted outreach and an inclusive curriculum ensure a balanced gender ratio and support diverse trainee needs.
- **Increased Competence:** Multi-level training and accreditation systems for Training Partners ensure consistent quality and adherence to standards.
- **Flexible Learning:** Flexible learning platforms and blended learning models cater to different learning preferences, increasing accessibility.
- **Holistic Support:** Providing holistic support services and early mentorship helps address trainees' personal and professional challenges, enhancing retention, completion rates, and job readiness.
- **Continued Support:** Robust alumni networks and alumni ambassadors provide ongoing support and mentorship, fostering a sense of community and continuous engagement.
- **Effective Coordination:** Comprehensive onboarding and regular communication with Training Partners ensure alignment with the project's vision and methodologies.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS & LEARNINGS IN CURRICULUM & TRAINER DEVELOPMENT

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Implemented **clear criteria, thorough evaluation, unbiased assessments, and consistent communication** to ensure fair selection of trainers.
- **Trainers became goal-oriented**, enhancing instructional skills through structured development, personalized coaching, and continuous feedback.
- Senior Instructional Coaches **rigorously monitored cohorts and supported trainers**, driving collaborative achievement of outcome-based goals, transforming training outcomes.
- Developed **online training** to emphasize adaptability, effective communication, technology integration, and trainee engagement for successful remote learning.
- Focused on well-being of **trainees, aiding in training, placement**, and job retention.
- Implementing **industry-aligned curriculum** helped enhance trainee employability and placement rates. Integrated platforms like Canvas and Codecademy.
- Implemented **formative assessments and weekly governance calls** to improve training progress tracking and uphold academic standards.
- **Utilized tools like Canvas, Codecademy, Zoom, WhatsApp, Senpiper, and Torsh** to streamline content delivery, automate attendance tracking, and enhance trainer development.

OUR LEARNINGS

- **Selection Process:** There can be increased effectiveness of training programmes through rigorous selection processes. Various Training Partners are using the best practices of screening, trainer development, trainer monitoring, placements etc.
- **Senior Instructional Coaches:** Designating senior coaches can provide essential support to trainers, improving their performance and trainee outcomes. Many Training Partners in the AMBER scheme has established the Senior Instructional Coach designation in their organization using our provided job description.
- **Industry Alignment:** Aligning training with industry needs can improve student employability and placement rates. Now many Training Partners have partially adopted the AMBER training values.
- **Streamlined Onboarding for Employers:** The implementation of a standardized and cost-effective process has streamlined operations, significantly enhancing efficiency.
- **Better Governance:** Regular governance calls enhance oversight and accountability, leading to improved training quality and outcomes and many major Training Partners of the ecosystem now have adopted the governance call process.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS & LEARNINGS IN PLACEMENTS & EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Achieved **higher placement and retention rates**.
- **Curriculum curated based on employer needs**, with a key focus on impacting business outcomes, reducing onboarding time.
- Ensured **1.5x job alignments before batch start** and aggregated jobs centrally before job role launch.
- **Realigned jobs** based on trainee/parent preferences mid-course.
- Advocated for **provision of food and accommodation for migration-based** trainees with employers, for better retention in various job roles.

OUR LEARNINGS

- **Ensure Curriculum Relevance through Alignment with Market Needs:** Ensuring the curriculum is aligned with employer needs improves the relevance and applicability of training programmes, making them more effective in preparing trainees for the job market.
- **Improved Placement Efficiency:** Pre-batch job alignment guarantees placement opportunities for trainees, improving employment rates and trainee satisfaction.
- **Personalized Career Opportunities through Customized Job Matching:** Realigning jobs mid-course based on preferences ensures that trainees find career paths that suit them, increasing retention and success rates.
- **Supportive Employment Conditions by Addressing Migration Challenges:** Providing food and accommodation support for migrant trainees removes significant barriers to employment, increasing acceptance rates of job offers.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS & LEARNINGS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Coordinated with **23 Training Partners across more than 100 centers**, monitoring their entire value chain of training process.
- Developed a **seamless process for uploading of placement and retention proofs** on the Skills India Digital Hub, with active support of NSDC technology teams.
- The project has streamlined the system readiness and **mechanisms for placement and retention payouts**. This includes reducing technical hurdles, **enhancing efficiency, and ensuring timely disbursements** through digital platforms.
- Ensuring outcomes-based **payouts are established as successful, with all stakeholders** including donors, government and Training Partners.

OUR LEARNINGS

- **IT Governance Systems:** The IT systems were calibrated to drive placement and retention payouts to the Training Partners. By leveraging technology, the system has become more transparent, accessible, and user-friendly, ultimately leading to better outcomes in placement and retention efforts and subsequent payout to the Training Partners.
- **On-ground Support:** Direct involvement and support from the Project Management Unit (PMU) enhances the implementation process and ensures adherence to the methodology. An integrated IT solution for end-to-end monitoring of the training programme will ensure seamless integration across the entire value chain, optimizing efficiency and enhancing outcomes.
- **Capacity Building of Training Partners:** As part of our capacity building initiatives in AMBER, we developed a comprehensive set of targeted interventions for Training Partners. Our aim will now be to institutionalize the capacity building effort by offering a comprehensive training programme (synchronous and asynchronous), through the use of technology. To manage the learning curves of different Training Partners, differentiated support would be offered.
- **Adaptability:** Being responsive to market conditions ensures that training remains relevant and effective, leading to better outcomes for trainees.
- **Focus on results:** Incentivizing stakeholders based on outcomes like placement and retention drives better performance and ensures accountability.
- **Outcome-driven approach:** Designing programmes with a focus on measurable outcomes leads to higher success rates and satisfaction among trainees and employers.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS & LEARNINGS IN FINANCE & FUNDRAISING

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Combined government resources with private sector** philanthropic contributions at a 1:1 leverage ratio.
- **Raised ~INR 31 crore from private funders and philanthropies**, including Axis Bank Foundation, Bank of America, Credit Suisse – a UBS company, Globant, JPMorganChase, McKinsey & Company, Microsoft Philanthropies, etc.

OUR LEARNINGS

- **Resource Availability through PPP Model:** This funding model exemplifies effective public-private partnerships, significantly enhancing resource availability for skilling initiatives. By leveraging combined funding, ensuring efficient utilization, gaining government recognition, and planning for expansion, these initiatives contribute to a more resilient and effective skilling system. These improvements not only increase resource availability, but also establish a sustainable model for future skilling programmes, benefitting both trainees and the broader economy.
- **Simplified Processes and better reporting:** For CSR funders, utilization of funds, adherence to compliances and timely reporting are critical. The Project ensured prioritizing these aspects, making it convenient for the CSR entities.
- **Stakeholder Alignment and Policy Advocacy:** It is imperative that all stakeholders are aligned to project objectives, aware of the challenges and kept abreast of challenges and solutions that emerged. Policy advocacy is a consistent requirement to ensure stakeholders realise how change is important and they are there to support and cheer on those challenges. It is important to build trust and co-ownership.

CONCLUSION: COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE AND SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

In conclusion, Project AMBER's journey has been marked by innovation, collaboration, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. Project AMBER has achieved significant outcomes in enhancing placement and retention rates through a successful blended financing model and standardised training approach. It has also laid the foundation for a scalable and sustainable change within the skilling ecosystem.

WAY FORWARD



**TAKING THE SUCCESS OF
THIS PILOT TO A LARGER
COHORT** to establish the
scalability of this model and
the methodology.



**MAINSTREAMING THE KEY
LEARNINGS AND BEST
PRACTICES** from Project AMBER
to larger projects by leveraging a
strategic blend of technology and
standardised processes.

As we move forward, we remain committed to driving further impact and empowering individuals to realize their full potential in the ever-evolving job market.



OUR THANK YOUS

On this journey, we are grateful to have benefited from generous funding, strategic and operational support from a range of partners, including

SUPPORTING PARTNERS



KEY STAKEHOLDERS



EMPLOYERS - WHO HIRE FROM OUR PROGRAMMES



AND MANY MORE

REFERENCES

If you would like any further information, please reach out to dipti.singhal@generation.org or mehwash.siddiqui@generation.org.

The figures presented in this report (as of July 24th, 2024) are approximate and have been rounded to the nearest whole number or percentage point.



PROJECT AMBER EMPOWERING LIVES EMBRACING COLLABORATION





Accelerated Mission for Better
Employment and Retention

Project AMBER (Accelerated Mission for Better Employment and Retention) is a joint initiative of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Generation India Foundation (GIF) under Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) - a World Bank funded MSDE programme.

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