



Evolving the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Kathmandu

A Fresh Perspective in 2020 for Entrepreneurs, Ecosystem Influencers, Academics and Policy Makers



1 quick coffee
10 mins read

Partners



Forward

“Educational & Enlightening”

In February 2020, influencers supporting the growth of entrepreneurship met to constructively consider how best to evolve the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kathmandu. This report shares observations and thinking as extracted during this collaboration. The Thinktank of contributors ranged from entrepreneurs, leaders of entrepreneurial support groups, deliverers of accelerator programs, investors, academics and other ecosystem builders. Together they provided a broad and balanced perspective; a reflection of the current situation.

Using the Whether System™ design thinking tools, contributors combined critical and creative thinking to advance ideas and upgrade understanding.

Report Overview

Written with exceptional thanks to House of Management, Upasana Shrestha, NYEF Vice President, for coordinating and sponsoring this valuable collaboration, this report is not prescriptive. It is not an indication of any one personal opinion. It shares a collective overview with objective insight and reflections of the current situation to be used for open source suggestion. As you read this report, please think for yourself and consider your project or perspective to extract value as best aligns to your aims and ideas.

Thank you for reading.

Evolving the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Kathmandu



Abstract

Success is defined as more innovative companies, creating higher quality jobs, at less risk, with greater economic growth, global connectivity and sustainability.

Goals are gained as Kathmandu retains the next generation of young talent and attracts or attracts back talented, skilled people who may have migrated abroad.

Gaining goals requires more collaboration and partnered projects, shared success stories and role models, more resource support, dramatic risk reduction, further teacher training and parental pioneering, as well as skill upgrading in innovative thinking, from kindergarten to government.

“We win by parenting and teaching innovative thinkers”.

“We win with an innovative mindset in Government”

Immediately, the ecosystem evolves with focused specialisation and new ways to work together. Long term, supportive government policies and risk reduction strategies must link to educational reform for greater innovation and entrepreneurial growth.

Definitions of terms:

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: the collective people and social economic environment currently incubating creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship with significant impact on the success thereof.

Entrepreneurship: the activity of setting up new business, innovatively assuming financial risks with expectation of eventual profit.

Young entrepreneurs; not just young people but including anyone of any age, new to building a business and actively engaged in developing nascent ideas.

Ecosystem players including established entrepreneurs, mentors, leaders of networks, support organisations, entrepreneur accelerator programs, event hosts, activity organisers and other supporters of entrepreneurial growth.

Educators; trainers, academics, teachers and importantly, parents.

Funders; individuals or organisations with financial interests either invested, donated, sponsored or otherwise contributed to the ecosystem.

Government; referring to the broad governing body (rather than any specific political party) including policy makers and maintainers.

“This is only the tip of the iceberg”

The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Kathmandu is active and evolving, with plenty of Ecosystem Players hopeful for the future, active entrepreneurs engaged in knowledge transferring and seemingly an increasing group of young people desiring to become entrepreneurs. There is strong belief in the opportunity, particularly if more and better ways are developed to incubate ideas, work together and overcome the real risks and persistent challenges.

Top Tips



Inter-Ecosystem Competition Stunts Growth

Accessible support is scarce. Seemingly Ecosystem Players secretly compete, for funds, causing friction and frustration. This is not conducive to constructive collaboration and is likely to slow greater growth.



TIP

Consider working together instead of actively competing.

Lack mindset

Emphasis is given to the 'lack' of support, 'lack' of funds, 'lack' of skill, 'lack' of access, etc. Attention is drawn to a need for mindset training suggesting much may be gained from accepting and working readily with what is easily available, right now.



TIP

Focus on working with what is available and accessible.

Real risks

“You go to jail for trying to do something good”

Innovation – turning a brainwave into a business is fraught with risk. Each development journey is unique and enters the unknown. Attempting such exploration requires grit and determination. It requires strength together, training and support. If policy wishes to support Innovators and Entrepreneurs, more must be done to safeguard beginners as they embark on journeys of learning in action; taking manageable risks, assessing real results and designing next-step decisions to evolve.



TIP

Push for policy safeguarding the situation

Being everything to everyone is unnecessary

Who do you target, specifically? What part of the process do you play, particularly well? Know your position! What strength and opportunities do you offer? What do you hope to gain or what challenge do you need to overcome? With clarity and constructive collaboration, a group of people will deliver a greater individual outcome than any one person may otherwise have achieved alone.



TIP

Know what you do best and do more of it.

Specialize in Constructive Co-Creation.

Recognizing the silo we stem from, developing deep knowledge in specialist sectors and then opening access to our understanding by stepping out to share learning, stimulates thinking and creates greater growth. By suspending judgement to broaden our perspective, we generate opportunities for innovative ideas to emerge.



TIP

Share ideas and listen with open-minds, for fresh insight.

Communication

As always, the key is constructive communication: Say what you think not what you think you should say. Hear what is said not what you think you should hear. Objectively accept and creatively assess a broad perspective to maintain clarity, focus and flexibility of mind - especially during rapidly evolving or seriously concerning times.



TIP

Ask for help by expressing what you need.

Resources and Support

The Ecosystem is crying out for support: Support from Government, supporting policy, support from Educators, support from funders, support from the collective community. More resources magnify the excellent efforts of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Kathmandu, making what is already happening bigger and better. More support serves to accelerate and sustain the movement for longer and deliver results faster.



TIP

Suggest what you can do to support.

Become Community Collaborators

The suggestions of a 'Community Collaborator' or 'One body' overseeing the situation, holding Ecosystem Players together, was suggested to create more connection, expose opportunity and assume responsibility for mediating or mentioning, when relevant, at the time.



TIP

Connect and create connection to be of community value.

Create More Certainty

It easy to think what is wanted or needed is more financial support. In certain situations, this is critical to survival however, it should not be seen as the one-drop, easy answer. Certainty in the situation and risk reduction secures more sustainable growth. Schemes that provide subsidized space, access to technology and facilities with connection to expertise and industry, incubate ideas, stimulate growth and may more rapidly provide more innovative, forward thinking and profit-rendering organisations.



TIP

Minds over money, generate innovative ideas.

Share Space

The ecosystem relies on the continual transfer and development of learning, knowledge and skills. Progress is accelerated if environments are conducive to collaboration, enabling people to easily surround themselves with like-minds. The concept of a state owned 'Startup Tower' was suggested as a way to further invigorate the ecosystem.



TIP

Surround yourself with a strong support system.

Sustainability

Moving from models reliant on donor funding or investment backing to a focus on for-profit trading potentially creates and attracts investment and talent to Kathmandu, its ecosystem, environment and opportunity.



TIP

Focus on evolving and improving Human Resources.

Drive Educational Reform

Further thinking is required to design how best to deliver the advances required to reform education at all levels. From pre-school to adult learning a need to include training skills in design thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship was exposed as urgent if the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and national economy is to evolve more prosperously.



TIP

Develop a design thinking skills and an innovative mindset.

Reduce Risks Rapidly

“The mentor is dead. You are your mentor”

Success stories shared elsewhere don't always deliver the same results when replicated. Trust yourself and what you are doing. Build a trusted team. Find problems and solve them. Support one another to quickly discover what works best and then do more of this. Develop specialist expertise and share this outside of silos to cross-pollinate a culture of constructive innovation and sustainable regeneration.



TIP

Support active attitudes and train specialist skills

Celebrate Success

When you do discover what works for you, celebrate success by sharing your story. Encourage others to share their success stories too as inspiration to the next generation.



TIP

Share learning and success.

Powered by Policy

“It's a Win-Win opportunity”

Gaining greater participation in innovation and entrepreneurship requires rapid risk reduction; lowering barriers to entry, developing further skills, improving access, inclusivity and sign-posting, albeit pointing people in the direction of the specialist rather than aiming to be everything to everyone. Such strategies must be supported at national, local and legislative levels if progress is to be made in leaps and bounds.



TIP

Evolve with greater trust in yourself and each other.

Fuel for Further Thinking: Ideas



Fuel for Further Thinking: Ideas

The best innovation is always born in solution to the real problems:

The problems of risk, education and limited resource competition persist. Strong calls for policy and education reform exist. The concepts of 'one body' coordinating and connecting the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Kathmandu emerged strongly, as did suggestions for 'one fund' for startups and a state owned 'startup tower'. These are possible ways to reduce competition, increase collaboration and incubate ideas in Kathmandu however, the real needs to reduce risks and cushion young entrepreneurs remain.

Connect, Collaborate, Create: **'Super Startup Support System'**

What if the Educators, Ecosystem Players and Government collaborate to create field-based incubation programs designed to deliver improved results?

Improved Results include:

1. **Higher skilled workforce.**
2. **More growing new businesses.**
3. **More impactful innovative ideas.**
4. **Readily attractive investment opportunities.**
5. **Creation of and access to new markets.**

What if Young Entrepreneurs, the participants in such programs, were given 3-years with which to start a business, as if participation equated to further education, much like a degree?

What if Government backed such programs by giving participants 3-years of legislative immunity in which to start and learn, through trial, error and within protective policy parameter, if they have a viable a new business?

Could Young Entrepreneurs be awarded academic qualifications in Innovation and Entrepreneurship, making them greater assets to the workforce, irrespective of whether their business builds or fails over the 3-years?

Could such supportive regulation generate innovation?

How else may innovative business prevail?

Your Takeaway





Graphic Overview



Evolving the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Kathmandu

Mapping with the Whether System™



Contributors derived deeper meaning by considering the situation from 7 different mindsets, building a broad and balanced perspective whilst allowing fresh thoughts to emerge.

7 Whether System™ mindsets:



Lay of the Land
Objective, emotive current perspective.



Sun Mindset
Optimistic, energetic, bright positive outlook.



Rain Mindset
Pessimistic, problem-orientated, depressive outlook.



Wind Mindset
External influence; prevailing and localised forces.



Rainbow
Vivid imagination and fantastical ideals.



Snow Mindset
Prioritizing survival in a cold, frosty climate.



Whether Report
Summarizing thinking with evolved ideas.

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