



FEEL

Fellowship for Emerging
Empathic Leaders

Personal Reflection and Action Project Report

Submitted to

MY EMOTIONS MATTER

Submitted by:
Shristi Garu
Srajesh Tuladhar

MY
Emotions
MATTER

Acknowledgment

Every individual who continuously supported and guided us throughout the fellowship and made the action project successful is highly acknowledged. The My Emotions Matter (MEM) team is acknowledged for providing fellows with a platform to learn emotional intelligence, empathy, and inclusivity and put their understanding into practice.

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Shristi and Srajesh
FEEL fellows, 2023

Summary

This report is the deliverable of the 6-month-long fellowship journey of fellows from the second cohort of FEEL, which started on April 26, 2023, to October 10, 2023. The report includes the understanding of fellows on empathy, inclusivity, and leadership. The fellowship is intended to help young people work on their understanding of emotional intelligence and give them simple tools to work on self-empathy and empathy towards others. When they become future leaders, empathy is an important component of their leadership. The FEEL program allowed the fellows to reflect on their insights, make intentional choices, and become more empathetic leaders.

The fellows designed, planned, and implemented the action project “Women in Tech” with a design thinking framework to gather the perspectives, challenges, and aspirations of employees working in the “Upaya Business Hub” and “Project Solace”. A reflective space was created so that each team member understood the unique experiences faced by each in the tech industry, discussed the barriers they encountered, and explored ways to overcome them. The fellows learned about empathic leadership skills, emotional intelligence, and project development. Practices such as active listening, asking questions, sharing personal experiences, and giving and receiving feedback during the fellowship journey made learning and applying empathy in day-to-day life possible.

Keywords: Technology; Gender Inclusivity; Empathy; Emotional Intelligence



List of Abbreviations

DEI	Diversity, Equality and Inclusion
EI	Emotional Intelligence
FEEL	Fellowship for Emerging Empathic Leaders
IT	Information Technology
MEM	My Emotions Matter
Q&A	Question and Answer
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
Tech	Technology
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States



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Chapter 1

Overview of FEEL Fellowship

1.1 Background

The Fellowship for Emerging Empathic Leaders (FEEL) program is a 6 months fellowship program designed to bring together budding leaders from various walks of life, help them cultivate self-awareness and upskill them with empathic leadership skills. The fellowship program is based on an Emotional Intelligence (EI) curriculum that enables reflective learning, immersive professional engagement, and impactful action projects for hands-on learning opportunities and contributions.

1.2 Introduction to FEEL Fellows

Shristi is a public health graduate willing to boost her confidence, work on selfdevelopment and learn about empathetic leadership. She learned about the FEEL program from her friends. The journey of the FEEL fellowship led her to an enriching experience of learning about Emotional Intelligence, especially labelling emotions. She also took away important frameworks and tools for self-reflection while learning different aspects of project management.

Srajesh, who introduced himself as 'Tech Guy', has learned to introduce himself as a 'Tech Person' because that's a more inclusive term, something he has discovered in the last few months. Speaking about his profession, he has worked as a Software Engineer, Project Manager and Digital Marketer. He is focusing more on Project Management these days.

1.3 Objectives for Joining the Fellowship

- To understand the underlying needs beneath the emotions we feel,
- To understand the EI mindset,
- To learn about project management by using a design thinking framework.

Reflection on the FEEL Journey

2.1 Shristi's Reflection

Entering the journey of FEEL with the initial idea of self-development, the journey was an emotional rollercoaster leading to self-development along with helping me learn prerequisites in professional settings. I learned that emotions come from needs, which helped me see emotions as useful data. I hesitated to show my vulnerabilities before due to the fear of judgment, but later I learned to be vocal about my needs. The entire journey was indeed an experience of learning, unlearning, and relearning.

Getting to know about different frameworks such as the problem framing template of 'User profile-User needs-Insight', holding oneself accountable, Ikigai, consequential thinking framework of 'Theory of Change', Rose-Thorn-Bud framework, design thinking framework, and Emotional Intelligence mindset were some of the major deliverables of the FEEL journey. Navigating the use of Basecamp and peer learning of a project management tool called Jira and other technical aspects were a plus for the outcomes the FEEL journey had on me.

I had proposed the initial idea of working for the inclusivity of queer people in the community, which was later refined and dropped due to some systemic barriers. This made me realize the need for flexibility and readiness for new ideas and perspectives. The session planned for "Women in Tech" helped us to empathize with the employees working in the tech industry. It helped the employees understand and reflect on who had privileges and hindrances due to their gender identity, individual differences, and the organization they were working in. The session on "Women in Tech" was helpful for me as it has broadened my working scope in terms of profession and to consider the need for equality in every space.

I am grateful for the mentorship we received from different individuals by listening to their life experiences and learning skills from them.

Also, the sessions helped me to understand the perspectives of experts. I think I have grown as an active listener, a curious fellow who has become vocal about her needs and who has learned to empathize. The project journey has helped me learn and develop facilitation skills, rapport-building skills, and, more importantly, negotiation skills. I now I now always try to pause and reflect on the impact of any action I am about to take instead of making prompt decisions. The changes in my personal growth can be better illustrated by the figures below.

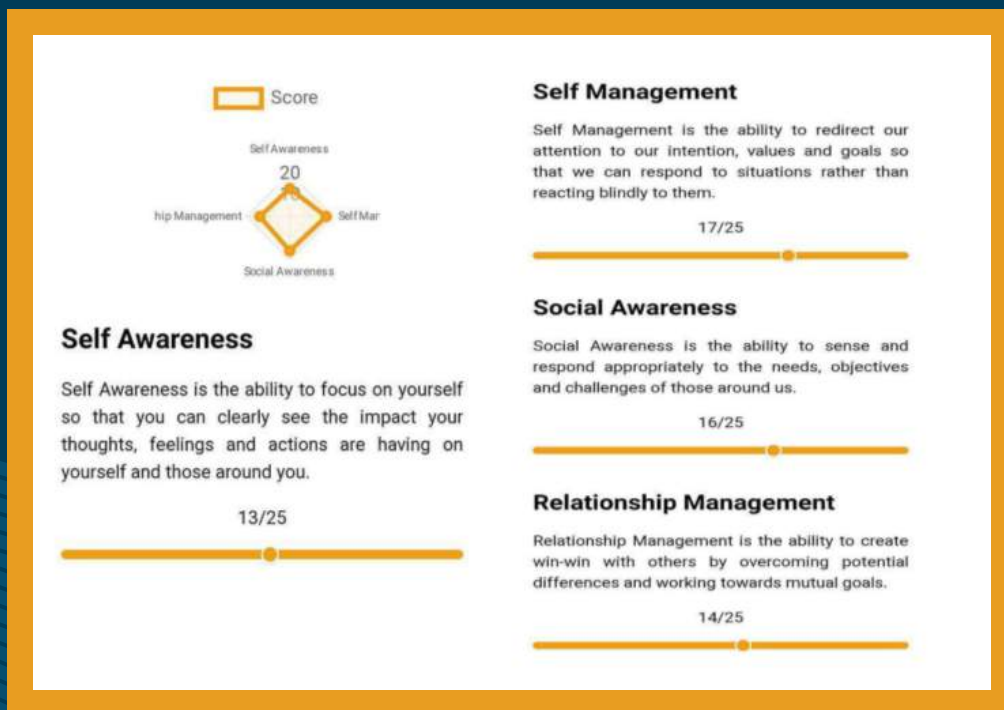


Figure 1: Shristi's Survey Result Before Fellowship

I now I now always try to pause and reflect on the impact of any action I am about to take instead of making prompt decisions. The changes in my personal growth can be better illustrated by the figures below.



Figure 2: Shristi's Survey Result After Fellowship

2.2 Srajesh's Reflection

It is nostalgic to look at the journey of the last six months retrospectively. There were a few ideas initially and a general sense of how things might pan out. However, it turned out much better than I had imagined. Let's reflect on it through three important aspects: personal, professional, and long-term.

Personally, one of the major goals for me in joining the FEEL fellowship was to make EI and its application easier in my life. For instance, I think I am naturally an empathic person. This is because I care about others, something a lot of my friends and family have observed. However, the trouble I have had was expressing these emotions to others. Since the last six months of learning about different emotions and techniques such as the Empathy Archery tool, the process of communicating my emotions to others has become much easier. These six months have been fruitful. Not only have I studied new and old frameworks of EI during this period, but I have also slowly brought them into application among my friends, family, and others.

Professionally, this was always going to be a challenge as it was a voluntary participation. I had understood that before joining. However, I was able to make it economically viable through various jobs and work during this period. This was a new learning experience for me. Also, various facilities and logistical help from the My Emotions Matter team certainly helped to reduce costs during this fellowship journey. Six months was a long time, but I think I was able to learn a lot from the experience and derive great value. I learned a lot more about the challenges such as logistics, collaboration and awareness in conducting sessions and programs. These details were something I may have overlooked at the start of this idea. I have a much better understanding of it now.

Lastly, what's next after it ends? We have discussed it as a team and even among co-fellows in some capacity. However, the future is uncertain. "Am I being inclusive or not?", "How can I make everyone feel seen in the team?", or "Does this organization value inclusivity? Can I make a difference here?" are some of the questions I ask myself regularly. This value seems to have trickled into my projects and team as I have learnt more about it during this program.



In the coming years, I certainly think the concept of inclusivity and empathy will hold a strong value for me and any organization I will become a part of. Nevertheless, the true scale it or any other project like it reaches depends on multiple factors many of which we are still figuring out. It has immense potential though. This FEEL journey has been a great foundation for it. This journey has helped me hone my planning and management skills to not only think of good ideas but also to implement them in the real world. I am now more confident about my abilities and potential. I feel more aligned with my goals and the approach I choose to achieve them after this fellowship journey. The changes in my personal growth can be better illustrated by the figures below.



Figure 1: Srjesh's Survey Result Before Fellowship

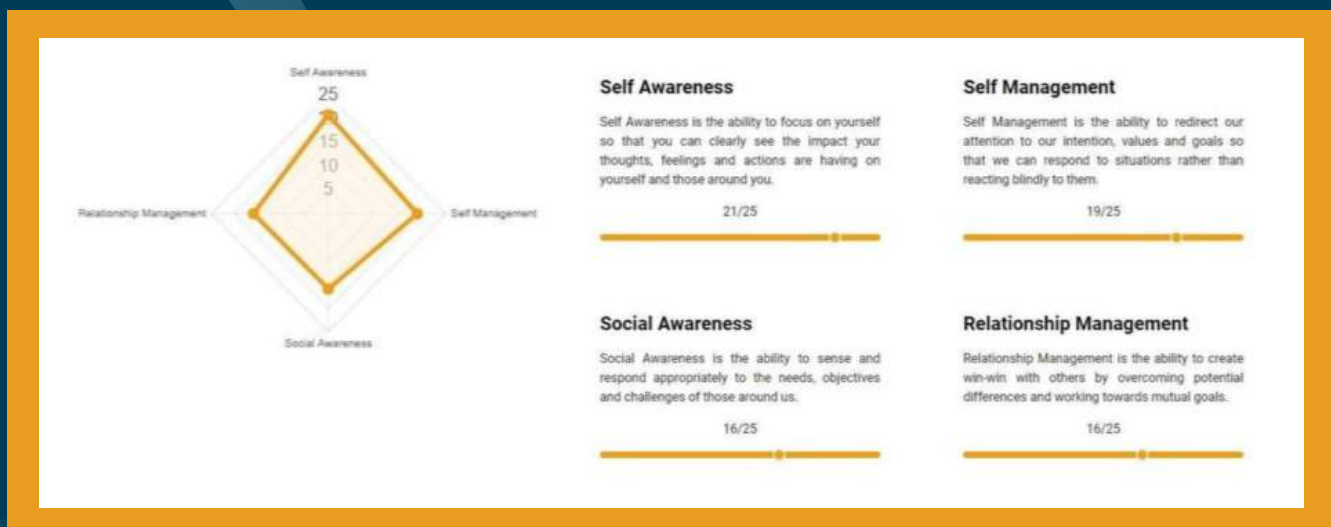


Figure 2: Srjesh's Survey Result Before Fellowship

Understanding Empathic Leadership

3.1 Shristi's Understanding of Empathic Leadership

Empathic leadership means empathizing with the concerns of others, building rapport to gain trust, forming connections, and creating a safe environment where opinions are freely expressed and heard. Traits of empathy, flexibility, compassion, and emotional intelligence were identified for empathetic leadership. It is important to keep oneself in the shoes of others to understand their perspectives so that we correctly identify what their needs are. When a leader is empathetic, strong connections can be built, and trust flourishes between the leader and team members, allowing them to have meaningful conversations and take actions that are desired.

3.2 Srajesh's Understanding of Empathic Leadership

Empathic Leadership is the combination of two of my favourite words: Empathy and Leadership. Although I had a vague idea about what it is and what it means in general, this concept was better realized during this fellowship journey. We learned about it through the application. We had to understand our target audience, our users, their problems, and their challenges to try to solve them. Looking at problems from previous experiences or knowledge is one thing, but looking at the problem from the point-of-view of the people facing it is powerful. This idea is still novel though. Many organizations we collaborated with during this journey had some idea of leadership and some idea of empathy, but perhaps they hadn't yet fully understood empathic leadership. We tried to understand it during these six months with moderate success.

Chapter IV

Role of Emotions in Gender Inclusivity

4.1 Shristi's Understanding

Gender inclusivity is an emerging issue that is based on the idea of equal opportunities for all, regardless of which gender identity they belong to. Expressing and understanding each other's emotions lead to empathy, and empathic dialogues help individuals acknowledge their privileges and reflect on whether their privileges are hindering other people's needs. When individuals can connect on an emotional level, they can understand the perspectives of others. Empathy helps to understand and share feelings and realize the underlying need for equality to ensure gender inclusivity. People can be resistant to change. However, change can be more acceptable when people understand the impact of their actions on the people around them, especially if it's negative.

4.2 Srajesh's Understanding

Emotions play a major role in gender inclusivity. I can recall that during our journey to understand gender inclusivity, we first began by understanding EI. This includes labelling different emotions, expressing the needs behind those emotions, and empathetically communicating those needs. During the six months of the FEEL journey and working with different organizations, we observed that gender inclusivity is a broad and sensitive term. I think the term inclusivity should refer to understanding the underlying needs behind why someone feels or doesn't feel included. One of the participants in our sessions also explained the importance of being Emotionally Intelligent first before understanding more about gender inclusivity, which was a key learning experience for us. We have incorporated this more in our later sessions after the useful insight.

Chapter V

Application of FEEL Fellowship

5.1 Application in Shristi's Life

I have become confident, vocal, and responsible. The FEEL journey was enriched with meaningful holistic activities and self-reflection that helped me develop as an empathetic person. The journey pointed out my strengths and areas for improvement. Feedback from the mentors and self-awareness activities played an important role in figuring out the biases I had that would have gone unnoticed. I used to be ignorant and tended to avoid voicing my needs due to fear of rejection, but after the fellowship, I have learned that my feelings come from my needs, and I should work on my unmet needs as a sustainable approach to my emotional well-being.

5.2 Application in Srajesh's Life

This fellowship became a platform for a project that I had been trying to work on for a few years, "Women in Technology." I was able to not only connect with multiple women working in the tech industry but also understand their problems, challenges, and expectations in the real world. The platform has given me a wider perspective than I had previously. Hopefully, it will make my actions and choices more inclusive in the future in various tech organizations or projects that I will be part of. These new values have trickled into my personal and professional life in the past few months and will continue to do so in the coming days.



Chapter VI

Action Project

6.1 Background

According to different studies, US technological companies employed over 12 million workers in 2022, but 73.2% of those employed within the tech industry were men, while women held just 26.7% of technology jobs (Flynn, 2023). This pattern is visible in the technological companies of Nepal as well. The gender ratio is woefully unbalanced. EI and its various tools can help not only current women working in a men-dominated IT industry to better adjust but also create an inclusive environment through proper systems so that this disparity can be lessened in the future. To facilitate women to have their space in the tech organization and adapt to the work culture by building trust and rapport in the team and helping every team member to empathize with each other, the session "Women in Tech" was developed and implemented. The session aimed to enable the participants to reflect on their behavior and actions in the workplace and empathize with others in the team, especially women to ensure inclusion and diversity.

6.2 Introduction

The disparity in the number of men and women is not just in entry-level roles but becomes even more drastic as we move up the hierarchy in the tech organization. An informal survey of some of Nepal's biggest IT companies illustrates just how stark this gender disparity is. For instance, Deerwalk Institute of Technology has two women, out of 10 positions, in upper management, while Braindigit's leadership and management team is composed of three men. Cloud Factory's 13-person leadership team also consists only of two women professionals (Rana, 2019). The STEM gender gap is an issue in itself. This has become even more apparent as the technological revolution is currently taking place, but the place of the women's gender in it is minuscule.

Women in tech are still underrepresented, underpaid, and often discriminated against. The lack of women in the industry can be attributed to many reasons, including the scarcity of women role models and workplace culture. Despite women's qualifications, companies and investors might often choose to invest in male employees. Even if women employees are hired, they quit their jobs due to problems with work-life balance and weak management support.

6.3 Rationale of the Project

One of the reasons for the decrease in women in tech is the brogrammer culture in the tech industry. The term "brogrammer" (a mash-up of "programmer" and "bro," the stereotypical fraternity-house salute) has sprung up recently as a sarcastic take on this breed of computing entrepreneurs. Similarly, the disparity in salaries and promotions for women in the technology industry is on the rise. According to the Shequal Foundation, women earn 28% less than men on average in the same tech roles. This can be another demotivating factor (Shequal Foundation, 2023). This can not only be a challenging situation for women already in the technological industry but also lead to men's bias in the technologies developed due to low women involvement. This is a vicious cycle. It leads to biased products and systems rather than inclusive ones. As technology expands to all aspects of life, from payments to food delivery, the role of more women's inclusivity and better systems for their inclusion becomes even more pivotal.

Having people from diverse groups can benefit the organization, as different points of view and approaches come from different life experiences, sparking innovation and creativity and helping the organization grab new opportunities. By creating an inclusive workplace, organizations can reduce stress, increase job satisfaction, and create more positive relationships among co-workers.

Few studies have shown that a strong relationship exists between diversity in leadership teams and the likelihood of financial outperformance for companies: the most gender-diverse companies are 48 per cent more likely to outperform the least gender-diverse companies (Lorenzo & Reeves, 2018). The way women lead with empathy, collaboration, and creativity is a welcome change from the place of men's leadership.

According to Girls in Tech, only 52 women are promoted in tech for every 100 men, leading to just half as many leadership opportunities for women. They hold only one in 16 tech leadership positions. The tech industry would be better off with more women leaders and a more balanced gender ratio. This would lead to new ideas, new perspectives, and new solutions.

6.4 Objectives of the Project

The main objectives of the project were as follows:

- To improve communication among the team and foster team bonding,
- To develop an understanding of gender equality,
- To create a reflective space of gender inclusivity in the workplace.

6.5 Methodology

To validate if there were any biases and gender disparity in tech organizations, a focus group discussion was conducted in Deerhold. After the discussion, we found that women employees felt not being included in the organization and the unnoticed biases in the organization were highlighted. Two sessions were planned to ensure inclusivity in the organizations by creating awareness about inclusivity and its needs. One was planned for a well-established organization, Upaya Business Hub and another session was planned for team solace, a group of women tech employees working in different companies. We planned the session for the lower level of management so that they could voice out their needs. Each session was of 1 hour and 30 minutes duration.

Table 1: Overview of the Session Implementation

Beneficiary	Employees of Upaya Business Hub-a reputed tech-based organization	Members of Project Solace, along with interested individuals from the tech industry
Date	September 26, 2023	October 8, 2023
Number of participants	6 (4 women and 2 men)	8 (7 women and 1 men)

Ethical Consideration:

The participants were informed about the purpose of the session. Informed consent was obtained from every participant for photos during the session. The information they provided will be used in the report. The confidentiality and privacy of the participants were maintained throughout the session.

The details of each activity in the sessions are mentioned below.

Table 2: Detailed Session Implementation

S.N.	Time	Activity	Description	Objectives	Methods	Materials
1.	15 minutes	Introduction and tone setting	A brief overview of MEM and FEEL, an introduction to FEEL fellows, and the purpose of the session were explained.	To familiarize participants with MEM, FEEL and the session	Discussion	Slides
2.	10 minutes	Icebreaker	One of the participants was asked to initiate a sentence, and another member was asked to continue adherence to the sentence to form a story. Each participant got the opportunity to contribute statements to the story, considering the time limitation.	To build connection and rapport among participants and facilitators	Group Activity	
3.	25 minutes	Empathy tool	The team was divided into two, ensuring gender diversity. Each group was provided with a specific question, and they were asked to discuss and write it down from the perspectives of different gender identities on chart paper within 7 minutes. They shared their reflections with the overall participants within 4 minutes each. A debriefing was done on the findings by the facilitator.	To help the participants empathize with each other	In-person communication	Chart paper Sign pen, sticky notes
4.	10 minutes	Break	The team was provided with a 5-minute break. A few filler questions were asked so that participants had an idea about privilege walks.	To have breaks in between for refreshment and demonstration of privilege walk	Group Activity	
5.	20 minutes	Privilege Walk	The team was asked to stand in a line, and they were asked questions about the privileges they had experienced. If they had the privilege, they stepped forward, and if not, they stayed where they were. In the end, reflection was done on the position of each participant.	To allow the participants to self-analyze on the privileges they have had	Group Activity	
6.	10 minutes	Activity reflection and Q&A session	The participants were asked to reflect on how they felt after the activities to promote team bonding and self-reflection on inclusivity in the workplace.	To let the participants reflect on the learnings they had and ask if they had any queries	Group Discussion	

6.6 Findings

The various sessions, focus-group discussions, and interviews brought to the surface lots of useful insights about women in the tech industry. Particularly, it highlighted certain key needs of the participants that were either fulfilled or not fulfilled by their current organizations. These needs such as trust, acceptance and community were used as data in design thinking to navigate towards the common problems they were facing and possible solutions to address them.

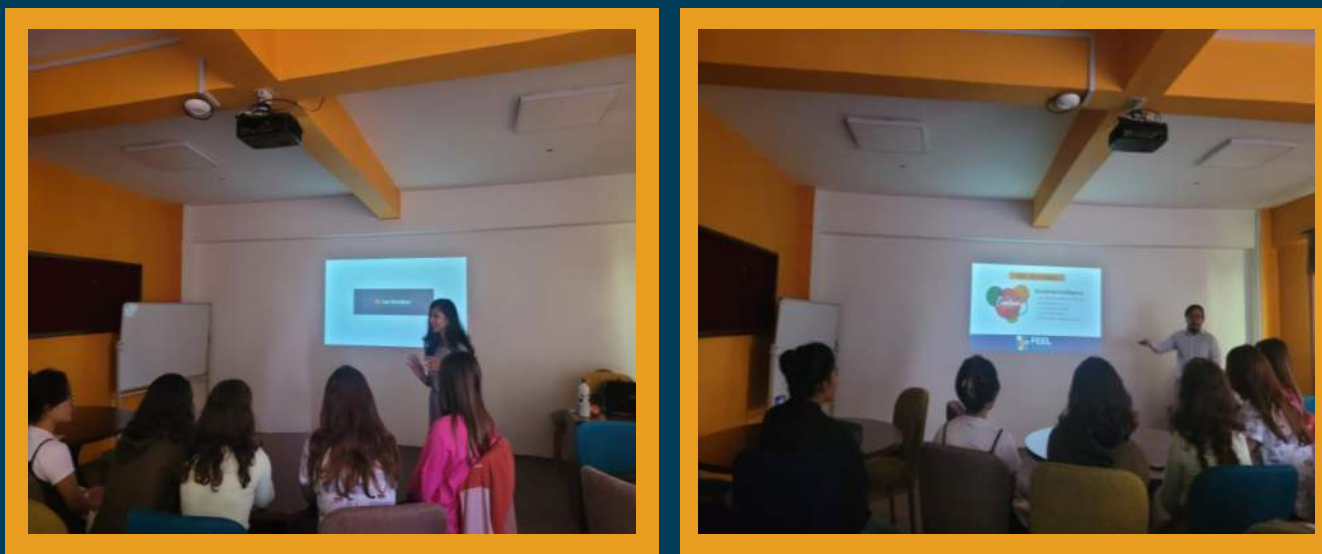


Figure 5: FEEL Fellows Facilitating Sessions

Some of the major findings of the focus group discussion and sessions were as follows:

- Tech organizations in Kathmandu are still understanding and trying to understand Gender Inclusivity,
- Employees in Tech organizations wanted their respective organizations to be more inclusive,
- There was a lack of women's representation at the top level, which created a gap of empathizing with women-based problems on different levels,
- There was lack of awareness about inclusivity among the employees in various Tech organizations and why it was important,
- Bringing inclusivity into day-to-day actions is more important than limiting it to just policies.

Further sessions and collaborations are needed with more tech organizations in Kathmandu for more comprehensive data. However, with each session and participant, the challenges that get in the way of creating an inclusive culture were highlighted.

6.7 Discussion

Different surveys conducted globally showed that STEM is still a men-dominated field and women are underrepresented, underpaid, and often discriminated against (World Economic Forum, 2021). The workplace culture gap is a hindrance for women in the tech industry. With the same idea and findings from the focus group discussion conducted at Deerhold, a session called “Women in Tech” was developed so that the participants could self-reflect, understand the perspectives of others, and respond to the existing gender disparity in the organizations they were working.

The initial assumption of a men-dominated tech field was different in the case of the organization Upaya Business Hub, where we conducted the initial session. Gender inclusivity was considered important in well-established and long-run organizations according to our findings in Upaya Business Hub. This finding led to the belief that even though tech organizations have men dominance in general, the spectrum of inclusivity varies according to the organization and the leader.

The second session conducted for Team Solace and other interested individuals reflected that men think women have the privilege of being more easily accepted and socially connected than men in the organization. Women employees felt the privilege of getting leaves more easily than their male counterparts, being treated gently, and conversing cautiously. Despite these privileges, women felt their opinions were not heard; they were taken for granted, which ultimately led to late promotions. Women felt like they had to prove their capabilities time and again, but it was not the same case with men employees. For instance, Women employees are often asked about their plans to get married or have kids by the companies. However, such questions are rarely presented to men in the same companies. The problem of unhygienic washrooms persisted in both the organizations where the action project was implemented.

In the tech industry, more women were found in quality assurance and management aspects, whereas men were in data and more technical fields. According to UNESCO, women still account for only 28% of engineering graduates, and even among them not all pursue work in technology. The issue of no proper mentorship persisted among the few staff in our surveys.

It can be said that organizations have made policies to ensure diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI); however, the problem is in the implementation part. The policies in organizations regarding inclusivity should be broader and more robust with the measures of holding people accountable. This needs to happen to make the implementation more effective and sustainable.

6.7.1 Impact of Action Project

The participants reflected on their understanding of inclusivity and learned to acknowledge the privileges they had. The participants reflected on ensuring empathy in teamwork and the importance of reaching out to others to listen and make them feel valued. Everyone's emotions and opinions matter, and respecting each other's opinions was the key takeaway from the session. This understanding among the participants made them reflect on the inclusivity existing in the organizations they were working.

6.7.2 Long-Term Outcome of Project

Since the team in the organization is a collective effort, the environment in the organization depends on how each member approaches it. The first step we took in the project was creating awareness in men about the privileges they may have. The privileges men employees have may not be there for women counterparts which is something they easily overlook. Women employees were helped to empathize with other women on the challenges and discrimination they were facing. This highlighted all the employees to empathize with one another and to work together for significant changes.

Chapter VII

Conclusion and Recommendation

7.1 Conclusion

The initiative of the FEEL Fellowship by MEM helped fellows to lead with empathy. The overall fellowship journey in the organization was a valuable period to adapt to a new environment. The fellowship enhanced our engagement and communication skills, understanding and application of inclusivity, and ability to brainstorm innovative ideas and perspectives. The tools and frameworks on emotional intelligence helped with work-life balance and better conflict resolution. It led us to understand that we often don't find appropriate solutions because the real problems are not well-framed. The action project helped us enhance our project management and facilitation skills and develop self-confidence.



7.2 Recommendation

7.2.1 Recommendation for MEM

- MEM can collaborate with academic institutions for the fellowship as students can learn about EI during their academic journey and be ready to enter the job market as empathetic leaders.
- The action project can be made more agile with Agile Methodologies and tools such as Jira for more efficiency and adapting to unexpected changes.
- The fellowship duration can be shortened from 6 months to fit other commitments of the future fellows better. Similarly, weekends (Saturday and Sunday) can also be utilized for fellowship activities rather than weekdays for on-site activities to provide more flexibility with time for the fellows.

7.2.2 Recommendation for Tech Organizations

- All the employees should be accountable for maintaining clean and hygienic physical space in the organization.
- Programs and workshops that foster the belongingness of employees towards the organization should be continued.
- Tech organizations should check with all their employees from time to time about their grievances and take action timely to make them feel more inclusive.
- Encouraging team leaders and managers to take on training and workshops related to Inclusivity at the workplace will be beneficial for all.
- Start using more inclusive terms such as “Tech person” not “Tech Guy”, “Thanks everyone!” instead of “Thanks guys!” or “Job application for IT person” rather than “Job application for IT guy” in all forms of communication within the Tech Organization.

Closure of the Fellowship

8.1 Closing Ceremony of Fellowship Journey 2023

FEEL Fellowship finally concluded with an event on November 29th where the team of My Emotions Matter organized an event which was dedicated to increasing the inclusivity of women in tech spaces of Nepal.

The event began with a paper presentation by Ms. Abhilasha Rayamajhi who demonstrated her research findings on how women remain limited to middle-level or lower-level management in tech spaces and what can be done to promote them to top-level management. The paper presentation was followed by a panel discussion talking about what the current scenario of tech spaces looks like in Nepal and how change has to begin with people's mindset to solve the problem of women's inclusivity from households to organizational leadership. Two female representatives from tech organizations in Nepal, Ms. Niharika Khanal working at Women Leaders in Technology (WLIT) and Ms. Rashmita Khatri working at Reduct Nepal alongside Mr. Prayas Rajopadhyaya of Homini Labs were a part of the panel discussion moderated by the co-founder of My Emotions Matter, Mr. Sagar Satyal. The event concluded with the graduation of the fellows.

The event was organized as a starting step towards creating discussions related to how emotions and the awareness of one's needs and other people's needs can help create a world where people are accepted and included just as they are regardless of what gender identities they have. The consistent discussions and observations made by the fellows in building their action project where they used to bring ideas and have conversations regarding how women and people from minority communities have lived experiences of discrimination or not being treated as equal to their male counterparts were the primary motivation behind organizing this event.

At My Emotions Matter, the value of a community is heavily emphasized and the team wanted to build a community where people could come together to talk about making tech spaces more inclusive for women and people of all genders.

With a presence of around 40 people at the event, new insights were garnered. One interesting insight that came during the event was how we now need to move towards the 2nd level of awareness which focuses not on creating awareness among young individuals but among people from previous generations for whom concepts like feminism and gender equality may be fairly new. Similarly, another insight that came up was how conversations regarding gender equality and steps for gender equality have become so normalized in our culture that people don't step out and clap when they see that the work responsibilities including household chores and financial responsibilities are divided equally among males and females. The more we treat these things as abnormal and huge, the more they will become luxuries that are accessed only by a privileged few rather than becoming a norm that has to be followed by all.

During their graduation, the fellows too shared their journey of growth in the fellowship which included becoming vocal about their needs and emotions, understanding the implications of using the tools related to emotional intelligence and using them in day-to-day life and understanding more about the ideologies of inclusivity which is slowly translating to them living by the ideology instead of it being on the books only.

The team of My Emotions Matter concluded the event on the note that emotional intelligence - the capacity to understand one's and other's emotions is foundational in solving larger community problems like gender discrimination and lack of inclusion in society.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Reflections of the Project Coordinator

This was my very first experience mentoring a pair of people for six months. When I started my journey as a program associate, I felt like my role would be limited to just coordinating the communication between Shristi and Srajesh. However, as the program took on, I realized I wore a lot of different hats which included being a mentor for the fellows, designing the program, sometimes providing emotional support to the fellows and coordinating with all the stakeholders during the entire duration of the program.

Annex 1.1 Reflections on My Personal Growth as a Mentor and as a Person:

One of the most profound learnings from the six-month journey of fellowship is realizing that as a mentor, as an educator, as a partner, as a friend, as a caregiver, (whatever role you take in life), you can influence other people and provide them with alternative perspectives to think and that is where your power ends. For a long time, I have always had this subconscious way of operating in life where I tried changing others who came into my life because I somehow felt the need to impose my ways of thinking and living on other people. Unconsciously, this was also leading me to believe that I somehow was superior in terms of wisdom to others which pushed people further away from me. With the journey of mentorship, I realized that trying to change other people and their beliefs is like throwing a pebble on a huge river and believing the river will stop flowing. As a friend, companion, educator and mentor, you can influence other people and introduce them to newer ways of thinking but that is where the power ends and it should end. Not everybody has to walk the same walk in life and hence not everybody you come across has to operate with the same belief system as you do.

The second most important thing I learned from my journey at FEEL Fellowship was the real-life application of the concept 'Intention V/s Impact'. This was a concept that was taught to me by the co-founder of My Emotions Matter, Mr. Sagar Satyal where he talked about how we may have the best of intentions for other people but until and unless the impact on them is positive, there is no way to assess the effectiveness of your efforts.

During the mentorship, at various checkpoints, I took feedback from the fellows on how their journey was going with me and what I could do to become better as a project coordinator. The process of digesting these feedbacks didn't always feel good and sometimes I got defensive. Sometimes, I wanted to blame the fellows but eventually, when I opened my mind to the feedback the fellows gave, I realized that there could be gaps between my intentions and the impact it was creating on them. This also provided me a more self-compassionate space to make improvements and each time I changed something about the program based on the feedback the fellows provided, it did change the effectiveness to better which was great. The third thing I learned from my journey in the fellowship is the importance of providing a listening space through systems like one-on-one check-ins. As an educator, a leader, and a mentor, having individual meetings and building personal relationships with the people you work with and seeing them as humans before you see them as professionals will help you become more empathetic and eventually come up with ideas and solutions that will not only encourage your team to work together with you but will also create a system through which they can work with ease when working with you.

Annex 1.2 Reflections and Feedback on Fellows:

As a mentor, I realized that when it comes to fellowships like this that are mostly intended to have a long-term impact on the fellows but remain unpaid, the fellows have to develop a high tolerance for stress and an ability to multitask. While not the direct objective, an indirect outcome of programs like this remains to increase people's tolerance of stress and to help them navigate multiple commitments together. And a sense of willingness and openness from the side of fellows is required for such benefits to take place.

When it comes to implementing any programs which are intended to have a minority community as the beneficiary, it can and should happen only with the minority community people also becoming a part of the program. If the program happens without them, then the lived experiences and the systemic challenges that come with such experiences and one's identity can completely go missing which eventually reduces the impact of the program. So, if any solutions are being given for the benefit of any community members, members of the community have to be a part of the solution formation phase equally.

Annex 1.3 Reflections and Feedback for the upcoming cycles of Fellowship:

Programs like FEEL should be specifically dedicated to people from minority communities or who have a higher chance of having gone through experiences where they may have experienced discrimination.

Since people who come from such communities have more history of having gone through difficult experiences, the tools provided at FEEL Fellowship may help them decode their experiences and reflect on them with a zoomed-out lens to see how they may still be impacting them and their life choices.

When the candidates are selected for the process of FEEL Fellowship, there has to be a selection criterion that also assesses the ability to multi-task and tolerate stress within the fellows. This assessment criteria can help in the prevention of future problems by helping us select the fellows who can deal with the hassle that comes with the tassel of the fellowship without letting it become a strain on their mental well-being.

Annex 1.4 Final Words on FEEL Fellowship:

The past six months as a mentor and as a project coordinator were beautiful and full of immersive learning. Through the completion of this fellowship, I noticed the desire in me to explore therapy and life coaching as a profession and hopefully, in days to come, I shall be taking steps towards this dream of mine. Thanks to my fellows for accepting me as a mentor - for without them I would not have the joy of discovering this side to myself and thanks to the team of My Emotions Matter for their programs, ideas and concepts always leave me thinking. I hope to see the upcoming cycles of FEEL Fellowship grow and flourish in the days to come.

Annex 2: Questions used in the session

Annex 2.1 Empathy Tool Questions

- In what moments in the workplace have you felt grateful for the gender you belong to?
- In what moments in the workplace did you feel you should have been born the other gender?

Annex 2.2 Filler Questions

- Do you think your colleagues are fun to be with?
- Were Ross and Rachel from the Friends TV series on "BREAK"?
- Do you prefer Tihar over Dashain?

Annex 2.3 Questions for privilege walk

- Do you have the luxury of having time to do things that you like, either at home or in the office? If yes, take a step forward.
- Do you think you have the luxury of wearing whatever you are comfortable with in your workplace? If yes, take a step forward.
- Do you think you have the luxury of having hassle-free and safe transportation on your way to and from the workplace? If yes, take a step forward.
- Do you feel you have the privilege of clean and hygienic restroom facilities? If yes, take a step forward.
- You feel the people you work with treat each other with respect. If yes, take a step forward.
- You feel welcomed when engaging in group projects. If yes, take a step forward.
- You feel you get proper guidance in your work in the workplace. If yes, take a step forward.
- Do you think you have the luxury of feeling safe and socially connected in your workplace? If yes, take a step forward.
- Do you think the IT organization offers equal opportunities for all gender identities for career growth? If yes, take a step forward.

These questions were also asked in the Nepali language in the sessions.

Annex 2.4 Reflection Question: One key takeaway from session

Annex 3: Photo Gallery

Annex 3.1 Session for Team Upaya Business Hub:



Figure 6: Session Implementation in Upaya Business Hub

Annex 3.2 Session for Team Tech Solace and Interested Individuals:



Figure 7: Session Implementation for Project Solace and Interested Individuals

Annex 3.3 Closure of FEEL Fellowship Ceremony



Figure 8: Few Glimpses of Closing Event



Figure 9: Group photo after the Closing Event