



FEEL
Fellowship for Emerging
Empathic Leaders

Fellowship for Emerging Empathic Leaders 2024 Cohort

Theme: Emotional Literacy in Education

(A Personal Reflection and Action Project Report)

Submitted to:

My Emotions Matter

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Once again, your trust and support mean the world to us, and we deeply appreciate it.

Kriti and Utsav

FEEL Fellows, 2024

Executive Summary

This report summarises the journey and outcome of the third cohort of the FEEL Program 2024. The program focused on equipping fellows with tools to enhance self-awareness, empathic leadership, and emotional intelligence, which they would then use to implement an action project that would contribute to society. The report portrays the FEEL journey of the fellows, emphasising their reflections, understandings, insights, and details of the action project.

With respect to the 2024 fellowship theme, 'Emotional Literacy in Education', the fellows designed and implemented an action project aimed at school students aged 14–16. The approach included careful planning with the Golden Circle framework, learning objectives, session plan, and designing the content. The sessions were two hours long and incorporated real-life examples, games, roleplays, and discussions. The project engaged students from three schools, reaching a total of 65 students, and taught them to take responsibility for their actions, needs, and feelings, and to empathise with others' needs as well.

Despite challenges such as time constraints, large class sizes, and short attention spans, the project received enthusiastic participation and positive feedback. A post-session survey indicated that most students found the sessions valuable and expressed interest in further learning about EI. The long-term outcome of the project involves fostering emotional literacy, empowering empathetic leaders, breaking presumed taboos, and lastly, creating a safe and inclusive environment.

The FEEL project highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in the educational setting and its ability to unlock the potential of the students in both academic and personal growth.

Keywords: Emotional Literacy; Emotional Intelligence; Empathy; Leadership;

List of Abbreviations

FEEL	Fellowship for Emerging Empathic Leaders
EI	Emotional Intelligence
MEM	My Emotions Matter
SEL	Social-Emotional Learning
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

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Chapter 1: Overview of the FEEL Fellowship

1.1 Background of the FEEL Program

My Emotions Matter (MEM) launched the Fellowship for Emerging Empathic Leaders (FEEL) program in 2022 to help young leaders develop self-awareness and empathic leadership skills.

Through workshops centred on self-reflective learning, fellows gain a deeper understanding of Emotional Intelligence (EI). They apply this knowledge by designing and implementing impactful action projects and gaining practical experience as empathic leaders. The program further encourages fellows to bring their insights into their communities, organisations, and personal lives to create meaningful contributions.

The 2024 FEEL fellowship marked the third cohort of the program and spanned four months from August 9, 2024, to December 6, 2024. This year's theme was '*Emotional Literacy in Education*.'


1.2 Objectives of the FEEL Program

The main objective of the FEEL program is to build a cohort of emotionally intelligent and emotionally aware leaders and community shapers to create effective leadership in communities, institutions, and organisations.

1.3 Introduction to 2024 Fellows

Kriti:

Kriti is currently pursuing her BBA at the Presidential Graduate School and is a passionate advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), a presumed taboo topic in Nepal. She discovered the FEEL fellowship through her cousin, Isha Paudel, and was drawn to it by her interest in challenging presumed societal taboos in Nepal. Through her journey with the fellowship, Kriti has additionally embraced the challenge of addressing another least discussed subject in Nepal which is "Emotional literacy" either at home or in schools. Even the basic concept of emotions is considered taboo. In the FEEL fellowship journey, she has learned to effectively understand and precisely name her emotions,



breaking through the simple labels like ‘angry,’ ‘sad,’ and ‘happy.’ This change has enabled her to manage and express her feelings more effectively.

Similarly, she now concentrates on understanding the situation's reality instead of relying on her own narratives. As a result, these insights have given her the ability to become stress-free, promoting her well-being and strengthening her relationships with herself as well as with others. This journey has not only equipped Kriti with valuable tools for personal growth but also reinforced her commitment to becoming an empathetic leader.

Utsav:

Utsav, who has a background in computer science, was first introduced to MEM in March 2020. He loves learning about physical and mental health, technology, self-growth, finance, and spirituality. After attending a session from the FEEL 2023 action project, invited by his friend Srajesh (2023 FEEL alumnus), Utsav was inspired to join the program—and successfully became a part of it the following year.

For Utsav, the fellowship has taught him to decipher one's needs from thoughts (stories), and feelings. In close relation to this lesson, he has learned to take responsibility for his actions, feelings, and needs, and avoid blaming. Additionally, the fellowship has helped him communicate more clearly and precisely, and become more empathic and understanding when interacting with others. He believes that this change in perspective brought about by the EI sessions has brought a positive shift in how he wants to live his life moving forward.



1.4 Objectives for Joining the Fellowship

Kriti:

- To engage with mentors and experts to gain insights into emotional intelligence and empathic leadership.
- To challenge presumed societal taboos, including emotional literacy, by fostering open conversations about emotional well-being.
- To design and implement an action project that connects emotional literacy with education.

Utsav:

- To explore what it means to be an empathic leader and develop skills to lead with emotional intelligence.
- To learn how to apply emotional intelligence in leadership, personal relationships, and professional growth.
- To design and execute an action project that creates meaningful change in education

Chapter 2: Reflections on the FEEL Journey

2.1 Reflections on the EI Self-Assessment Test

Kriti:

The EI self-assessment tool helped me reflect on the growth I experienced during these four months. The before and after results show that I had worked on myself significantly to improve drastically in self-awareness and self-management. The social awareness score reflected a smaller but still significant improvement, and lastly, the relationship management score showed the smallest change.



Figure 1: EI Self-Assessment Scores of Kriti

This self-assessment highlighted that while I made notable progress in recognizing and managing my own emotions, there is still room to grow in understanding others and navigating relationships more effectively. I realized that improving relationship management isn't just about understanding my needs but also learning to communicate them clearly while empathizing with others'

perspectives. It's a continuous journey, and I now have the tools and awareness to work on this aspect moving forward.

Utsav:

When I took the self-assessment for the first time, I realised that I rarely paused to reflect on my emotional state before making judgments or taking action. This lack of reflection likely contributed to my low score in self-awareness, followed closely by a low score in self-management. However, I scored relatively higher in social awareness and performed best in relationship management.

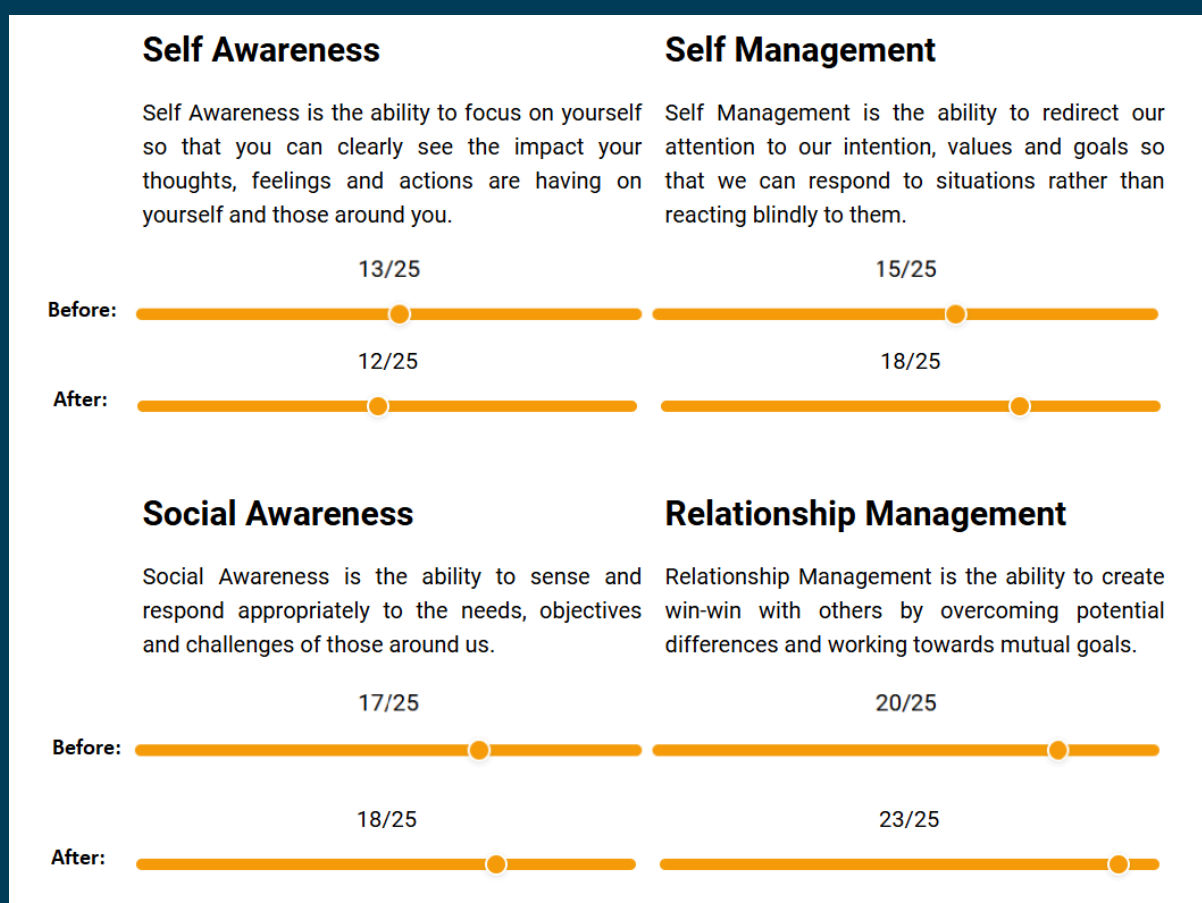



Figure 2: EI Self-Assessment Scores of Utsav

At the end of the fellowship, I retook the self-assessment and noticed significant improvements in both self-management and relationship management. Interestingly, my social awareness improved by only one point, while my self-awareness score declined by one point.

Reflecting on this, I realized that throughout the fellowship, I became much better at identifying my feelings in the moment, thanks to the daily check-ins and



regular exposure to the feelings vocabulary. I've also learned to communicate my emotions honestly without upsetting others, as I no longer place blame but take self-responsibility for my feelings and connect them more clearly to my needs. Nevertheless, I have much space to grow and I am positive that with time I will get better at practicing Emotional Intelligence in real life.


2.2 Application of FEEL Fellowship

Kriti:

As a teenager exploring myself and emotions, the fellowship has been a transformative experience. It all began when a college friend opened up to me, saying, 'I don't know what I'm feeling—can you please understand me?' This conversation opened my eyes to the gap in how we express and understand emotions, motivating me to apply for the fellowship and deepen my understanding of myself and others.

During my interview at My Emotions Matter, I proudly shared that articulation was my strength. However, as I dived deeper into the real point of articulation, I was missing a whole aspect of articulation: what I felt, what's important for me, and the actionable request, which is the main part. At the beginning of the session on EI, I realised what I considered my strength was my incomplete understanding. Slowly, I began to better understand myself, identifying my feelings, needs, and requests. Over time, this understanding transformed articulation into my true strength.

Similarly, another key learning is my response to receiving “No.” Previously I could not accept “No,” thus making me incapable of making requests because of my fear of receiving “No.” Now, I have developed a new concept where if they are saying “No” to me, then they are saying yes to their needs. This has made me feel at ease to receive “No” rather than focusing on the word and overthinking it. Now, I try to understand their needs and make an alternative request or action. Likewise, the vocabulary to express my feelings and needs has expanded, making my communication more effective and clear. As I got more self-aware, I realised I was moving in a circle of assumption and blaming, leading me to not communicate and demand, making me have a reactive mindset, which was hampering relationships with myself and others. These sessions at MEM have



helped me break this cycle, shifting me toward a responsive and understanding approach.

Previously, I used to blame myself or blame others, which was my way to handle or face any incidents. Now, I could see changes in where instead of blaming I try to understand my needs and others' needs helping me not to overthink the situation. Reflecting back, I could see a profound shift in how I perceive and navigate emotions, relationships, and communication. This fellowship program has helped me to grow as an individual and also empowered me to build stronger, more meaningful relationships with myself and those around me.


Utsav:

In a world of information overload, the EI course we received wasn't just knowledge—it was deeply personal and self-reflective. It wasn't about learning something new but about gaining a realization and shifting my perspective to see the same things differently. This makes me confident that these lessons will stay with me for the rest of my life.

It feels like a secret ingredient that is missing in all of our lives, leading to stress, misunderstandings, and relationship issues. For me, it significantly helped with overthinking and anxiety. I used to create endless stories in my head and get tangled in them, without even realizing I was doing so. Now, when I feel overwhelmed, I pause and reflect on what I'm feeling and what I need.

This brings me to the most important change: recognizing my needs when I sense blame or judgment. I've realized that all my actions stem from my own choices and needs, and all my feelings are also caused by my needs. This shift has helped me stop associating my emotions and actions with others.

Another key personal outcome of this journey was learning to communicate more clearly. Whether in everyday conversations or during difficult discussions, I've learned to express myself using stimulus, feelings, needs, and clear action requests. Similarly, when others are unclear, I now focus on understanding their needs and the requests behind their words.



While I am far from perfect at being emotionally intelligent and empathetic, this journey has given me the tools to continue working on myself. It aligns with the person I aspire to become, and I am committed to this lifelong process of growth.

2.3 Understanding of Empathic Leadership

Kriti:

Previously, I believed that empathy meant always agreeing with others, which has made me prioritise others' needs and not acknowledge my own needs. However, now I have understood that empathy is about understanding other people's feelings and perspectives, not necessarily agreeing with them. I came to understand that leaders with empathy are capable of making difficult choices or respectfully disagreeing without causing harm, all while appreciating the contributions of others.


I have come to see that empathic leaders can have a perfect balance between their understanding and actions, fostering an inclusive, supportive, and high-performing environment. Additionally, I have learnt that empathy is something that is beyond kindness, and it involves connecting with people at an emotional level which could be a crucial and powerful tool for making decisions, solving problems, and managing crises.

Now that I am capable of distinguishing between the myths and the realities of empathy, I feel confident in prioritising my needs and core values, focusing on the true meaning of it to grow as a leader.

Utsav:

Before the fellowship, empathy simply meant putting myself in someone else's shoes to feel what they felt. However, after the fellowship, I realised empathy is much deeper than that.

Every action—mine or others'—is driven by the desire to fulfil one's needs. Understanding this helped me see that when I judge someone's actions, it's often because they affect my needs, making me feel unpleasant or leading me to judge. However, what feels unreasonable to me might make perfect sense to them as they're meeting their own needs.



Now, I try to pause, give space, and understand their needs calmly instead of reacting harshly. This approach is especially crucial in leadership roles, where the judgment of subordinates is easy. By bringing empathy into decision-making and communication, we can foster trust, reduce conflict, and create safe spaces for open dialogue.

This shift in perspective has deepened my understanding of empathic leadership through the FEEL fellowship.

2.4 Understanding of Emotional Literacy in Education

Kriti:

After the fellowship, I've come to deeply appreciate the transformative power of understanding and expressing emotions. One of the profound realisations is the role of EI in creating safe spaces for an individual. During my first interaction with the My Emotions Matter (MEM) team, their check-in question, "What are you feeling?" gave me a sense of being heard. For the first time, I felt secure in expressing my emotions, knowing they would be understood rather than dismissed as irrelevant, irrational, or illogical. This experience has reinforced my belief that emotional intelligence is more than just an individual skill; rather, it fosters inclusiveness and a supportive environment where acknowledgement becomes a key to articulating feelings.

Through this journey, I've also realized that unacknowledged or misunderstood emotions can act as a barrier to effective learning as well as healthy relationships. Similarly, facilitating the emotional literacy sessions has deepened my own emotional awareness by helping me have constant self-reflection, making me authentic, empathetic, and self-responsible for my own interactions. This journey has given me valuable insights, considering that emotional literacy is not just an add-on to education; rather, it's the foundation. When students gain an understanding of the relationship between actions, judgement, emotions, and needs, they unlock their potential personally as well as academically. Ultimately, helping them to become self-aware, build relationships, and promote self-wellbeing which I wished to have known when I was of their age.



Utsav:

My personal journey with EI showed me the power of recognizing emotions and understanding needs—a skill I wish I had learned during my school years. I often found myself thinking, “I wish I was taught this sooner,” because, as the saying goes, “Old habits die hard.” We are so habituated to assuming, blaming, non-communicating, and demanding that breaking these patterns feels like an uphill battle. This realization underscored the importance of introducing Emotional Literacy in Education early, starting from school.

Although EI requires consistent practice and reflection, it should be introduced to students at a young age. Even the ability to identify their feelings precisely and understand the role of emotions would make a significant difference. If students can learn to recognize that, while they may not like someone’s behaviour, staying stuck in blame won’t help—they could instead focus on understanding their own needs and the needs of others. Such individuals would grow up to be empathic, self-aware, and emotionally resilient.

On our journey to find and approach schools, we noticed that even teachers and principals were largely unaware of EI. This required us to simplify the concepts and explain them in a way that resonated with their context. Without targeted initiatives to educate educators, it will be difficult to establish emotional literacy as a standard part of education.

Although we were able to reach only three schools during this fellowship, it’s inspiring to imagine how this theme could be expanded in future fellowships. Emotional literacy must be woven into the fabric of education, and with consistent efforts, it has the potential to transform schools and communities across Nepal.

Chapter 3: Action Project

3.1 Background and Rationale

Emotional intelligence is one of the critical skills at present, especially for young students who are still coming to terms with who they are and navigating through academic, societal, and personal challenges. EI provides the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and express emotions effectively and efficiently, helping an individual to become self-aware of one's emotional state, communicate clearly, foster well-being, and build stronger relationships. EI plays a growing role in modern educational settings. Its importance is amplified by the increasing focus on collaboration, non-cognitive skills (empathy, self-regulation, adaptability etc), and the unique demands of online learning environments (MacCann et al., 2020). Despite its importance, the concept of emotional intelligence is often overlooked in traditional education systems, which prioritizes academic achievements and success over emotional growth and well-being.

In the context of Nepal, the education system has undergone a huge transformation over the years from a traditional way of learning to a holistic teaching and learning system. Currently, the education system is moving toward progressive education to equip students to be prepared for future challenges not just in the academic field but also socially and emotionally (Khadka, 2020). In Nepali schools, where academics are the primary focus, emotional literacy is frequently overlooked. Children who lack emotional intelligence consequently have difficulties with mental health, social interactions, and self-esteem (Khatriwada, 2023). The study highlights that using effective emotional literacy strategies in early childhood development shows that fostering emotional regulation could be helpful in managing temper tantrums and fostering social-emotional well-being among children (Eva et al., 2024).

The article titled "Emotional Intelligence as Indicator for Effective Academic Achievement within the School Setting: A Comprehensive Conceptual Analysis" provides an in-depth analysis in finding how EI affects student performance where it shows that relationships between EI and academic achievement are significantly positive. Evidence shows that there is a strong positive relationship between social-emotional learning (SEL) and academic achievement (Shrestha et

al., 2021). The students with higher EI show that they can better manage test anxiety allowing them to be focused during the exams because EI supports cognitive engagement, improving problem-solving and critical thinking abilities for the tests, resulting in having better scores on the standardized tests compared to peers with lower levels of EI (Gintoni & Dimakos, 2023). Thus, integrating EI into the academic curricula could directly boost the academic performances of the students with the overall emotional well-being.

3.2 Objectives of the Project

The primary objectives of the FEEL Project are mentioned below:

- 1) To equip students to understand their emotions
- 2) To help them name multiple feelings/needs and identify them effectively
- 3) To help students recognize that their actions, judgments, and feelings stem from underlying needs.
- 4) To help them empathize with both their own and others' choices and decisions

3.3 Methodology

The methodology for the project involved a well-structured approach that focused on reducing the gap in recognizing, expressing, and managing emotions among the teenagers in the school. The sessions were tailored for grades 8 or 9 students, fostering open dialogue and a comfortable learning environment.

The planning for the Action Project kicked off soon after the completion of the EI Level 1 course by the fellows. To assist the fellows with the planning of the Action Project from scratch, the project coordinator provided them with certain tools and frameworks as well. The step-by-step process of the action project is further discussed below:

3.3.1 Using the Golden Circle to Define the Project

As EI teaches us to understand our intention before taking action, the fellows began the Action Project by defining the 'Why?'—the purpose and intention behind the project.

To guide this process, the fellows used the **Golden Circle**, a framework developed by Simon Sinek, a renowned leadership expert, motivational speaker, and author of the influential book *'Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action.'*

The Golden Circle helps individuals and organizations articulate their purpose and inspire action by focusing on four key layers, moving outward from the core:

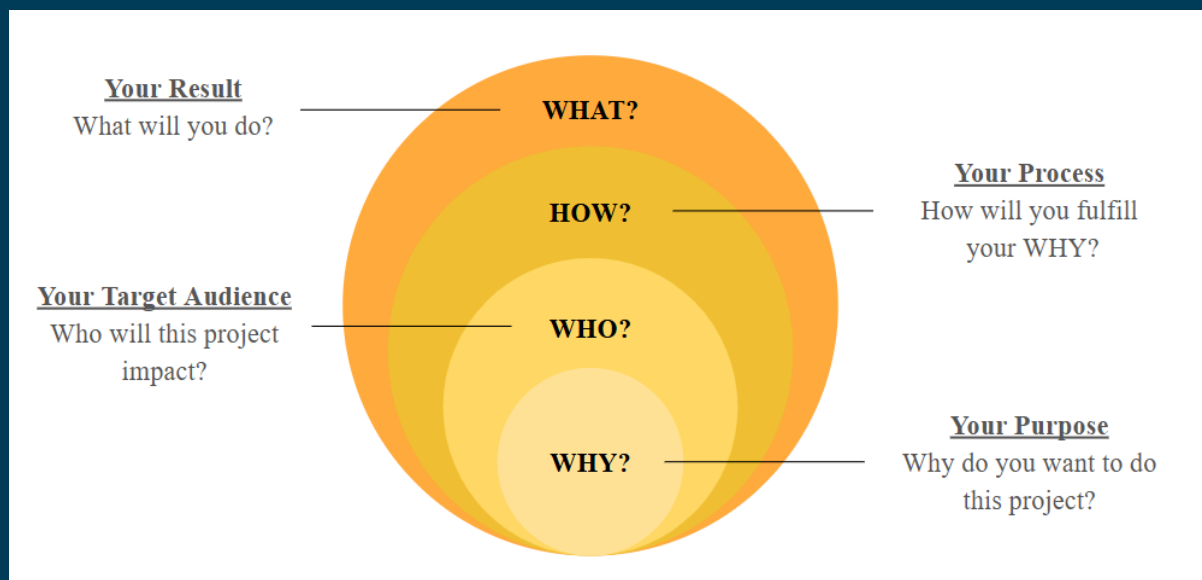


Figure 3: Components of the Golden Circle

Following this framework laid the foundation for the Action Project, and the outcomes of the first step were as follows:

- 1) **Why:** To help students develop self-awareness and empathy by learning to connect their own and others' actions, judgments, and feelings to underlying needs.
- 2) **Who:** Disadvantaged school students from Grades 8 and 9, aged 14–16.
- 3) **How:** By delivering interactive sessions using real-life examples, group activities, and guided discussions that encourage students to explore the relationship between actions, judgments, feelings, and needs.
- 4) **What:** A 2-hour session designed for the target age group, focused on fostering self-awareness and empathy through practical exercises and relatable discussions.

3.3.2 Setting the Learning Objectives

The next step after finalising the golden circle was to decide on clear, concrete, and concise learning objectives. The learning objectives define what the students are expected to learn after the delivery of the session. Below are the 4 main learning objectives of the session/action project:

- 1) Understand how actions, judgments, and feelings are connected to underlying needs.
- 2) Develop emotional awareness by recognizing and naming their emotions.
- 3) Build empathy by appreciating others' needs and perspectives.
- 4) Learn to communicate feelings and needs effectively.

3.3.3 Planning the Session Agenda

The fellows then proceeded to learn how to design the session agendas. The session agenda included a table with given topics:

- 1) **Content/Topic:** These were the main topics or sections the session was divided into for ease of connecting different topics beginning with introduction to space and ending with closing of the session.
- 2) **Description:** The description contained the objectives of the given content and a summary of the sub-topics to cover.
- 3) **Detailed Activity:** This dived deeper into the multiple activities included within the topic and how they were to to be conducted.
- 4) **Ways of Delivery:** Each activity would fall under one of the following modes of interaction: *one-to-many, one-to-one, team spaces and self-reflection.*
- 5) **Time Allocated:** The estimated time for each activity was also pre-determined to help keep the session on track.
- 6) **Materials/Resources Required:** As the name suggests required materials and resources such as a needs list, scenario list, paper, and pen for each activity was also written.

While the prior steps laid the foundation for developing the action project, this step involved a more hands-on discussion on the actual session-making.

3.3.4 Designing the Slides and Content

The next step in the action project's planning and design involved creating the slides and content based on the session plan. The fellows worked on designing minimalistic slides to visually support students' learning while complementing the verbal explanations. These slides included a variety of elements such as key discussion topics, diagrams, relatable examples, and scenarios.

This phase required multiple revisions to refine both the content and design of the slides. To ensure relevance and engagement, the fellows also communicated with a few students from the target age group, gathering examples that resonated with their experiences. The final content was tailored to be age-appropriate, with a primary focus on interactive sessions that emphasized connecting actions, feelings, and judgments to underlying needs.

3.3.5 Post-Session Feedback and Survey

After the session plan was finalized, the fellows developed the post-session survey and feedback form. This form was created with a few objectives in mind:

- For the students to reflect on their learnings
- For the fellows to evaluate the effectiveness of the session
- To gather feedback to enhance the session for future schools

Keeping in mind the target audience, the form was primarily designed in Nepali for easier understanding, with a few commonly used English terms (similar to the slides). For documentation purposes, this report includes the English translation, while the annex contains the original Nepali version alongside its translation.

The form collected two major demographic variables: age and gender. It comprised a total of seven questions, including:

- 1) Three close-ended feedback questions:
 - a) *How helpful was this 2-day session?*
 - b) *How easy was it for you to understand this session?*
 - c) *Are you interested in learning and understanding more about this topic?*
- 2) Four reflective questions, including one open-ended question:

- a) *Can you now look at your actions, judgments, and emotions differently?*
- b) *Will you now try to understand your and others' needs when judging?*
- c) *Will you now try to understand and express your feelings and needs?*
- d) *What part of this session will you apply in your life? (open-ended)*

3.3.6 Implementation of the Project

Finally, the action project was implemented in selected schools across the Kathmandu Valley. Two-day sessions, each lasting one hour, were conducted in three schools. The three selected schools were chosen based on alignment with their schedules and logistical feasibility.

Table 1: Overview of Session Implementation in Schools

Beneficiary	Date	Number of participants
Lalit Kalyan Kendra Basic School	November 29 & 30, 2024	6
Jana Uddhar Secondary School	December 2 & 3, 2024	21
Bhaktapur English Secondary School	December 5 & 6, 2024	38

The sessions were highly interactive, incorporating activities such as roleplay, group discussions, games, and individual tasks. After each session, the fellows reflected on its execution, focusing on what went well, the challenges faced, and areas for improvement in subsequent sessions. Feedback was also collected through in-session observations and reflection exercises to evaluate the sessions' effectiveness.

Students were given an opportunity to provide additional feedback on the back of the forms distributed during the sessions. Many responses were positive and encouraging, emphasizing the impact of the sessions on the participants.

Ethical Considerations

Facilitators were trained to handle sensitive topics with care and empathy, ensuring that no participant felt pressured to share beyond their comfort level. Additionally, informed consent was obtained from every participant for the photos and video during the sessions.

3.4 Challenges Faced and Solutions Implemented

From the design and planning phase of the action project down to the implementation i.e. session taking, there were many expected and unexpected challenges. The following section of the report discusses some of the core challenges and how the fellows tackled these challenges:

3.4.1 Content Design and Delivery Challenges and Solutions

- **Challenges:**

- Emotional intelligence was a new and broad topic, which made it difficult for the fellows to simplify concepts and decide on the most relevant content for students.
- Creating age-appropriate slides and relatable examples that resonated with students' daily experiences was challenging.
- Time constraints imposed by schools required fellows to fit essential content into a limited timeframe.

- **Solutions:**

- Fellows sought guidance from mentors to identify and prioritize key elements, focusing on core EI concepts like self-awareness, empathy, and expressing emotions.
- Examples were gathered from students of similar age groups, and the session plan was tested on them before implementation.
- Sessions were structured into manageable fragments, incorporating quick and engaging methods like roleplay, games, and discussions.
- Specific outcomes were outlined for each session, enabling efficient time allocation.

3.4.2 School Selection Challenges and Solutions

- **Challenges:**

- Out of nine schools approached, several could not participate:
 - One school cited concerns about potential government intervention.
 - One rejected the proposal outright.
 - Two had student populations too large for effective sessions.
 - Two requested dates beyond the project timeframe.
- Convincing schools to accept the project was difficult due to the lack of awareness about Emotional Intelligence (EI) among teachers and principals, with some expressing little interest in the topic.

- **Solutions:**

- Fellows approached schools with empathy and patience, addressing concerns about EI and highlighting its relevance and importance.
- Schools with prior exposure to EI concepts, through teachers or staff, were prioritized for ease of acceptance.

3.4.3 Session-Specific Challenges and Solutions

a. Lalit Kalyan Kendra Basic School

- **Challenges:**

- It was the first school, and fellows were uncertain about how students would respond to the sessions.
- Students struggled to differentiate between needs and choices related to "person, location, action, time, and object."
- Unclear judgments during the exercise made it difficult to identify students' needs.

- **Solutions:**

- Conducted a quick icebreaker to help students open up and assessed their understanding through interactive discussions.
- Used real-life examples to clarify the distinction between needs and choices.
- Provided step-by-step guides for the judgment exercise to link judgments with needs effectively.

b. Jana Uddhar Secondary School

- **Challenges:**

- The large classroom size with 38 participants made projecting voices challenging.
- Managing noise and maintaining attention was particularly difficult.

- **Solutions:**

- Facilitators positioned themselves strategically, with one at the front and another at the back of the classroom to assist students.
- A call-and-response strategy (e.g., saying “Hi” and having students reply “Bye”) ensured engagement and attentiveness.

c. Bhaktapur English Secondary School

- **Challenges:**

- Some students bunked the class, reducing participation and affecting the session’s effectiveness.

- **Solutions:**

- Coordinated with school staff to ensure student attendance.
- Used engaging activities like discussions and games to motivate participation.

3.5 Results and Long-Term Outcomes

3.5.1 Results of Action Project

The data from the presurvey shows that students ranging from age 14 to 18 were the participants among which 34 females and 31 males were participating. The post survey consisted of some objective questions and analysing them, we reflected on the impact of the responses from each question to find the impact of the sessions.

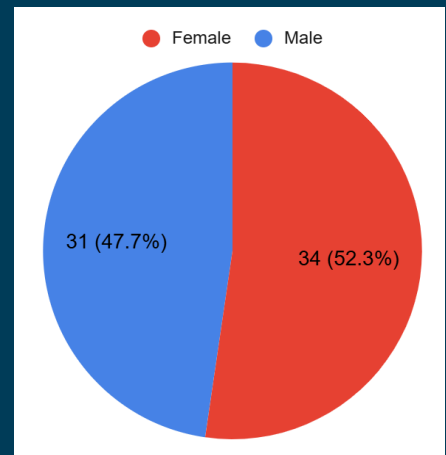


Figure 4: Gender Ratio of Sessions Participants

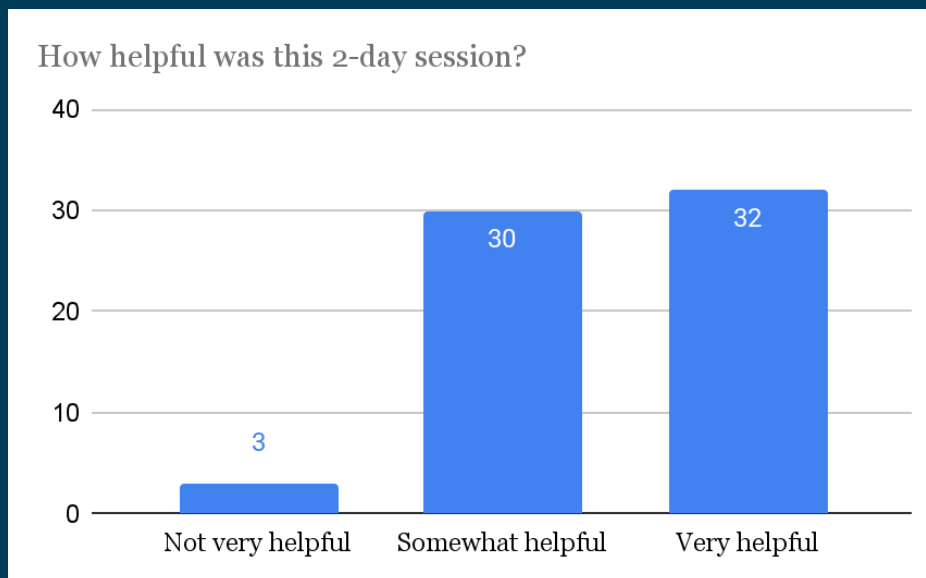


Figure 5: Participant's feedback on the helpfulness of the 2-day session

Measurement of effectiveness and helpfulness show that 30 students found the session to be somewhat helpful, 32 found it very helpful, and only 3 did not find it helpful. This shows that the content and delivery resonated well with the majority.

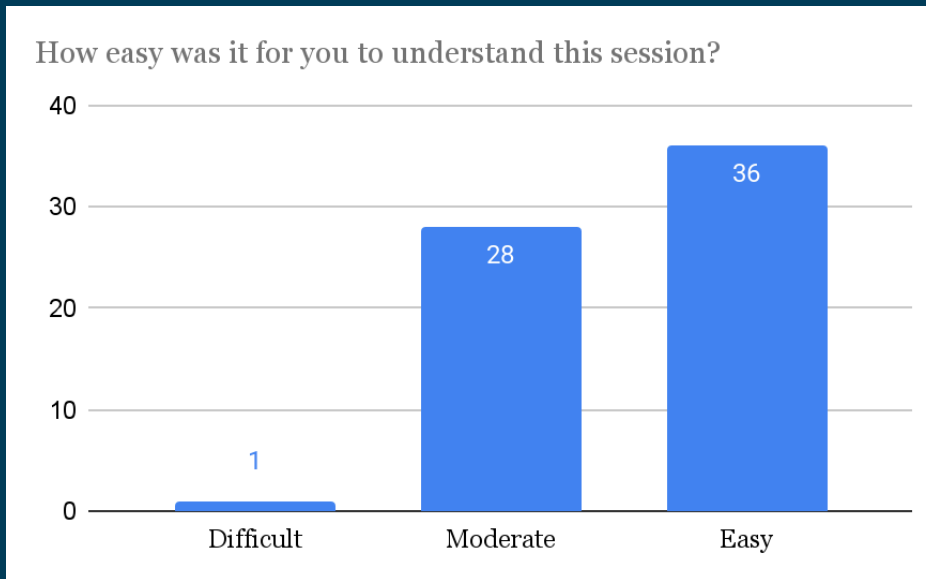


Figure 6: Participant's ease of understanding the session

Similarly, while analysing the easiness of the sessions, the above bar chart shows that 28 students found sessions to be moderate, 36 students found the sessions to be easy to understand, and only 1 found them difficult.

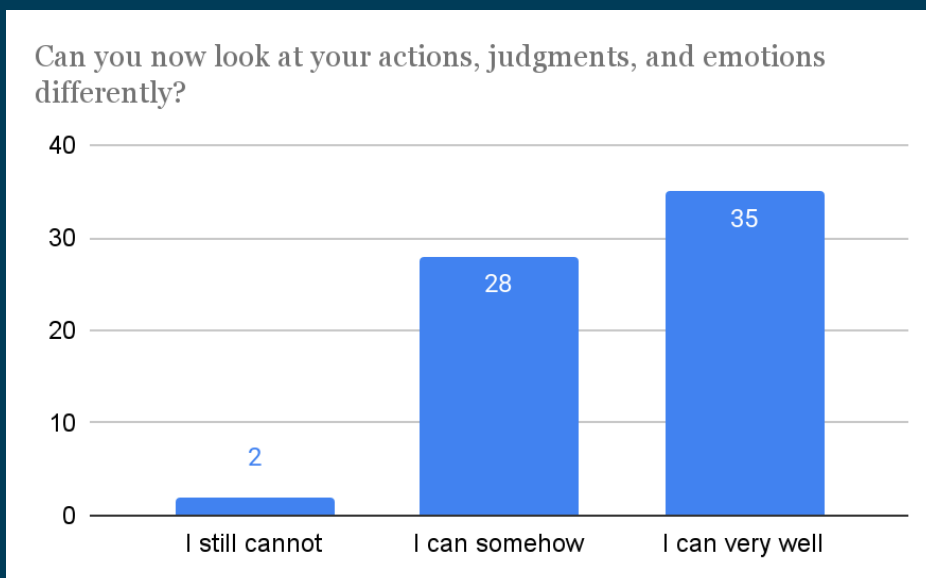


Figure 7: Participant's perception in viewing actions, judgement, and emotions differently

Likewise, checking the capability and confidence among them, 28 shared they are somewhat capable and 35 shared that they have perceived to look at their actions, judgement, and emotions differently, showing engagement with the sessions.

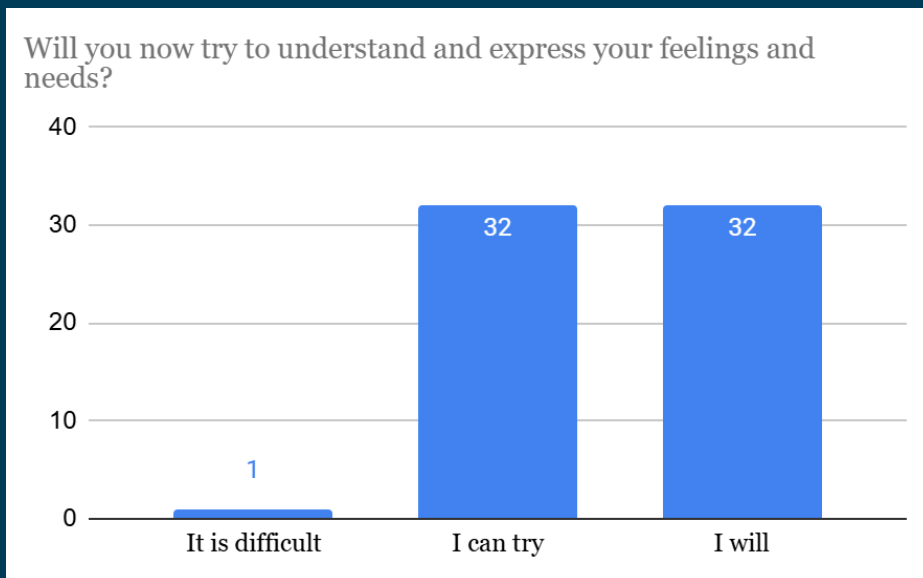


Figure 8: Participant's willingness to try to understand and express their feeling and needs

Similarly, for the level of effort and commitment they can make to understand and express their feelings, 32 shared they will and 32 shared they can try.

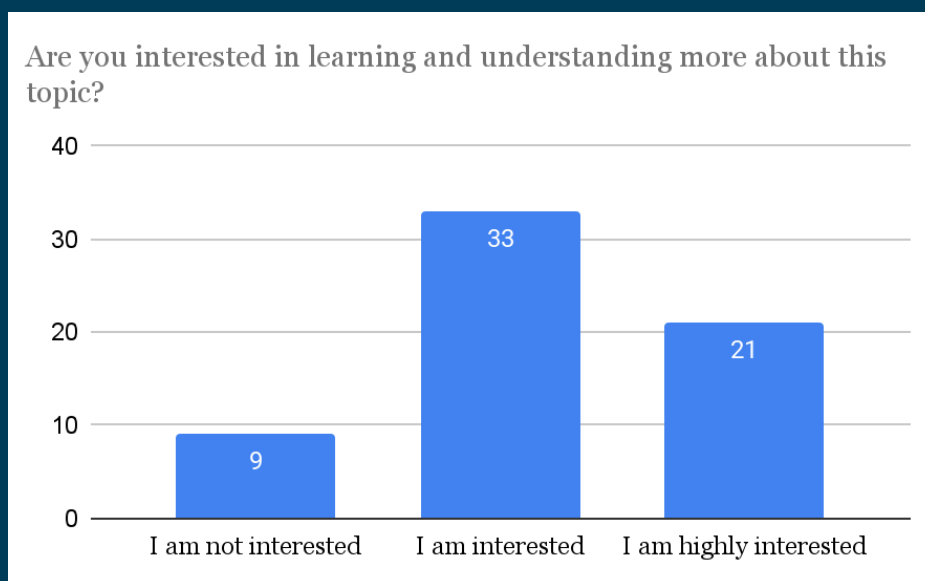


Figure 9: Participant's interest in learning more about EI

Lastly, learning about their interest in learning and understanding more about EI, 33 students in total responded with their interest in learning and understanding more about the topic, 22 were highly interested, while 9 were not interested.

It seems the project has brought significant positive changes, reflecting on the post-survey that was done at the end of the sessions in each school. We can

conclude the sessions were highly effective and impactful for the majority of the participants along with gaining strong engagement and actionable outcomes.

3.5.2 Long-Term Outcome of the Project


The long-term outcomes of this project have been mentioned below:

1. **Fostering Emotional Literacy:** Students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to recognise, understand, and express their emotions effectively which fosters the generations that prioritise mental and emotional well-being.
2. **Empowering empathetic leaders:** Students are more likely to grow into leaders who value empathy and collaboration through their understanding of emotional intelligence that will bring a positive impact on their communities.
3. **Breaking the presumed societal taboos:** Normalizing discussion around EI will serve as a significant tool to break societal taboos and encourage openness in addressing emotional and mental health.
4. **Creating a Safe and Inclusive Environment:** The EI will influence not only participants in the school environment but also at the personal level, creating a lasting change with safer and more inclusive spaces fostering mutuality and effective communication.

3.6 Discussion

The FEEL Fellowship 2024 emphasized the importance of emotional literacy in education, focusing on helping students connect their actions, judgments, and feelings to underlying needs. The implementation of the action project in three community schools provided valuable insights into the impact of EI on students and highlighted areas for improvement in similar initiatives.

One key observation was the students' initial difficulty in understanding abstract concepts like needs and judgments. However, through interactive sessions and relatable examples, many students showed progress in identifying their emotions and recognizing the connection between feelings and unmet needs. This



demonstrates the potential of EI to enhance self-awareness and empathy among young learners when introduced in an age-appropriate manner.

The fellows also noted a gap in emotional literacy awareness among teachers and school administrators. This gap posed challenges during project implementation but also underscored the critical need to involve educators in EI training. By equipping teachers with the tools to understand and teach emotional literacy, schools can create an environment where emotional intelligence becomes a shared value.

While the fellowship achieved significant milestones, such as engaging students and fostering empathy, the limited scope of the project highlighted the need for longer sessions and more follow-up opportunities. The fellows recognized that emotional literacy is not a one-time learning process but an ongoing journey that requires consistent reinforcement.

Chapter 4: Recommendations

4.1 Recommendation for MEM

While we couldn't come up with major recommendations for MEM regarding the FEEL program, here are a few suggestions:

1. **Encourage Alumni Networking:**

Organize alumni events or establish a dedicated platform where past fellows can connect, share experiences, and collaborate on new initiatives. This will strengthen the fellowship community and encourage knowledge-sharing across cohorts.

2. **Provide Long-Term Mentorship:**

Create a structured space where fellows can seek guidance and support from mentors for applying emotional intelligence in their personal or professional lives. This could include regular check-ins, skill-building workshops, or an open mentorship network.

4.2 Recommendation for Schools

Emotional Intelligence (EI) can be a relatively new and unfamiliar concept for schools in Nepal. For teachers and schools that recognize its significance for students' personal development, here are some suggestions to help implement and sustain EI skill development:

1. **Incorporate Emotional Literacy in the Curriculum:**

Schools that recognize the importance of Emotional Intelligence should consider integrating regular classes and workshops into their curriculum. These sessions can help students revisit and deepen their understanding of EI concepts over time.

2. **Practice Emotional Check-Ins in Classes:**

A simple yet impactful way to foster emotional awareness is by incorporating daily emotional check-ins. Teachers can begin the day or their sessions by encouraging students to share how they are feeling, helping to normalize discussions about emotions and fostering a supportive environment.

3. **Create a Safe Space for Sharing Personal Difficulties and Achievements:**
Establish dedicated spaces where students feel comfortable discussing their feelings or personal challenges and achievements. Schools could involve trained counselors or peer mentors to ensure that students receive the necessary guidance and support.
4. **Collaborate with MEM for other EI Programs:**
Schools can partner with MEM to access customized Emotional Intelligence programs. These range from short 10-hour modules to year-long initiatives, with 1-hour weekly sessions, offering flexibility and consistent learning opportunities for students.

4.3 Recommendation for Future Fellows

To enhance their experiences and maximize their contributions to the FEEL fellowship, future fellows could consider the following recommendations:

1. **Actively engage in learning and reflection:** Immerse yourself in the sessions as well as dedicate time for your personal reflection to better understand how EI could be applied in your own life.
2. **Advocate for EI in your community:** Sharing your learning to introduce emotional intelligence to your school, workplace, or local community. Either involving hosting small workshops, creating awareness, or sharing your personal journey.
3. **Build strong connections with peers and mentors:** Having a meaningful relationship with the peer fellow and mentors could create a support system for sharing experiences, challenges, and success during and after the program. Similarly, take initiative to reach out for feedback and advice from them, fostering a learning environment.
4. **Stay committed beyond the fellowship period:** Developing and learning EI is a continuous process so practicing and having commitment to implement the skills is really important.


Chapter 5: Conclusion and Closure

5.1 Conclusion

The FEEL Fellowship 2024 has been a transformative journey in promoting emotional literacy in education and fostering empathic leadership. Through self-reflective learning, interactive sessions, and hands-on implementation, the fellows not only learnt but also enhanced their own emotional intelligence (EI), through which they were also able to deliver clear concepts of EI to students in selected schools for the project. By focusing on one of the key concepts of connecting actions, judgements, and feelings to underlying needs, the initiative helped students build self-awareness and empathy, ultimately helping them to understand and express their feelings and needs, which will foster communication and enhance relationships.

The fellowship demonstrated the potential of integrating emotional literacy into Nepal's education system to enhance both emotional and academic development. The positive response from students demonstrates the potential to enhance self-awareness and empathy among them, along with the personal growth of the fellows, underscoring the importance of continuing such initiatives. The response of the students shows a high rate of helpfulness through the sessions, and their interest in learning about the topic has simultaneously increased. Similarly, they have shared the implementation of the concept in life, where they share really impressive situations that show that this concept would help them navigate in the future with ease.

Despite the challenges faced during the implementation of the action project, solutions were found immediately, which were implemented throughout the project. However, challenges were comparatively high at the first school, which simultaneously decreased at the last school as the fellows got an idea of how the student would perceive the topic and concept of EI. The response from the students somehow aligns with the long-term outcome of fostering emotional literacy, empowering empathic leaders, breaking the presumed societal taboo, and creating a safe and inclusive environment.



Similarly, we would like to recommend MEM to encourage alumni networking, as it would be a great platform to share their experiences, ideas, and perceptions, creating a room for collaboration and learning. Likewise, providing a long-term mentorship for the fellows to seek guidance and support for future endeavours. For the schools, we would like to recommend incorporating emotional literacy in the curriculum with constant practice of emotional check-in to foster the conversation on emotions, thus creating a space for sharing personal difficulties and achievements where their feelings are heard, seen, and respected. Additionally, collaborating with an organisation such as MEM to conduct EI sessions as EI could be considered as a foundation for both personal and academic growth.

All in all, the project was successful in addressing the gap in emotional literacy among the teachers and school administration by pitching the proposal for the sessions. Also, on analysing the post-surveys, it showed that the sessions became helpful and impactful to students where we shared emotions as a strong medium for articulation, making it a powerful skill one should possess so that they could understand and help others know the importance of the EI rather than ignore it like most of the people, presuming it as a taboo topic. This project lays a strong foundation for future efforts to expand emotional literacy, ensuring its lasting impact on schools, communities, and the leaders of tomorrow.

5.2 Closure of the Fellowship



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Annexes

Annex 1: Reflections of the Project Co-ordinator


When I first heard that I would be leading a team of two fellows for the FEEL Fellowship at My Emotions Matter (MEM), I was beyond excited. As someone who naturally enjoys working in teams, I was confident about supporting the fellows in their development while ensuring a meaningful experience throughout the fellowship.

However, as I started preparing for the role, I questioned whether I would be able to equip the fellows with the necessary skills and knowledge. Would I be able to guide them effectively? Would I meet their expectations? Despite these doubts, I was determined to enhance my own learning while leveraging my expertise in project planning, team management, and facilitation to create a space where the fellows could grow into empathetic leaders.

Throughout the fellowship, I wore multiple hats— I was actively involved in guiding the fellows, assisting in session design, coordinating with stakeholders, and ensuring that the fellowship experience was engaging and impactful. Looking back, I realize that the process was not just about mentoring them but also about learning and evolving alongside them.

Annex 2: Reflection on Personal Growth as a Mentor

One of the biggest takeaways from this experience was realizing that mentorship is not about having all the answers—it's about creating a space where people feel seen, heard, and supported. I initially assumed that my role was to provide solutions, but I soon understood that a mentor's role is to facilitate learning by asking the right questions, encouraging reflection, and providing gentle guidance. Throughout the fellowship, I became more intentional about my communication. I practiced active listening, learned to ask open-ended questions, and adapted my mentoring style to the unique needs of each fellow. The experience also taught me the importance of emotional regulation—not letting my own stress or biases affect my interactions. Moreover, this journey helped me strengthen my own emotional intelligence. As I guided the fellows through concepts like recognizing patterns in emotions, understanding needs behind



actions, and making requests instead of demands, I found myself applying these principles in my own life more consciously.

Annex 3: Reflection on Fellows


It was inspiring to see how the fellows grew throughout the fellowship. At the beginning, they were enthusiastic but uncertain about how to translate emotional literacy into action. Over time, I saw them becoming more confident in articulating their emotions, engaging in difficult conversations, and designing meaningful projects that aligned with their values.

One of the most rewarding aspects of mentoring them was seeing how well they complemented each other. Their dynamic made it easier for me to facilitate discussions, as they balanced each other's perspectives and worked together seamlessly. They also made it incredibly easy for me to give feedback because they always received it with an open mind. I saw them actively listening, reflecting, and integrating suggestions without hesitation—an attitude that truly set them apart.

This open-mindedness and willingness to grow made me perceive them as individuals who valued their personal development just as much as we valued this fellowship. They took self-responsibility for their learning and their projects, never waiting for direction but instead taking initiative to improve and execute their ideas. This level of ownership made the mentoring process smoother and more fulfilling for me, as I wasn't just guiding them—I was working alongside individuals who genuinely cared about their own growth and impact.

Annex 4: Reflection on this cycle and Feedback for upcoming cycle of FEEL

Unlike previous fellowship cycles, this phase of FEEL required fellows to design their action projects specifically within the theme of emotional literacy, aligning their efforts with MEM's ongoing Emotional Literacy for Teachers project. The fellows chose to work with students from grades 7, 8, and 9—targeting the 14-16 age group. This decision held significant value, as adolescence is a crucial stage for developing emotional awareness and regulation. Personally, I strongly believe that equipping students with the foundational knowledge of understanding and



managing their emotions at this stage is essential. Emotional literacy at this age not only supports their personal growth but also enhances their relationships and decision-making skills, ultimately shaping their future interactions in healthier ways. This meaningful alignment between the fellows' projects and MEM's mission ensured that their work had a direct impact on young individuals who could greatly benefit from such learning. Furthermore, the fellows extended their reach to students from marginalized communities, ensuring that those in need had access to this experience, making this cycle even more impactful.

Feedback for Future Cycles:

Aligning the fellowship theme with *emotional literacy* made the journey meaningful for the fellows, MEM, and the community. This structure provided clear direction for the fellows while also strengthening MEM's core impact. In future cycles, this approach should continue, potentially expanding the scope to new areas. To maximize impact, future cycles should consider diversifying the reach—either by increasing the number of fellows or expanding the target audience. While working with school students was a great approach, reaching out to other groups, such as youth organizations, or even parents, could enhance the program's overall effectiveness. This would ensure that emotional literacy is not just limited to students but also influences the ecosystems they grow in.

One area for growth is ensuring that the impact of the fellows' work extends beyond the duration of the fellowship. This could be achieved by encouraging follow-up sessions, building a group of FEEL Alumni so that future cycles can reach out to previous generations if needed and aligning the future models of fellowship to current models can be beneficial for the sustainability of these projects.

Annex 5: Final words on FEEL 2024

Leading the FEEL Fellowship as a project coordinator has been one of the most enriching experiences of my journey with MEM. It reinforced my belief that emotional intelligence is not just a concept—it's a way of being, communicating, and leading.

While I stepped into this role with uncertainties, I walk away with immense gratitude—for the learnings, for the connections, and for the opportunity to contribute to a space that fosters growth and empathy. This journey has deepened my understanding of what it means to be an empathetic leader, and I hope to continue carrying these insights forward in all aspects of my life. I hope to see the upcoming cycles of FEEL Fellowship grow and flourish in the days to come.

Annex 2: Survey and Feedback Form

Full Name:

Age:

Gender:

School Name:

1. तपाईंलाई यो २ दिनको session कतिको helpful लग्यो??

(How helpful was this 2-day session?)

- खासै helpful लागेन *(Not very helpful)*
- ठिकै helpful लाग्यो *(Somewhat helpful)*
- धेरै नै helpful लाग्यो *(Very helpful)*

2. यो Session बुझ्न तपाईंलाई कतिको सजिलो लाग्यो?

(How easy was it for you to understand this session?)

- गाह्रो लाग्यो *(Difficult)*
- ठीकै लाग्यो *(Moderate)*
- सजिलै लाग्यो *(Easy)*

3. के तपाईंले अबदेखि आफ्ना actions, judgments र emotions लाई नयाँ तरिकाले हेर्न सक्नुहुन्छ? *(Can you now look at your actions, judgments, and emotions differently?)*

- अझै सकिदैन *(I still cannot)*
- ठिकै सक्छु *(I can somewhat)*
- राम्ररी सक्छु *(I can very well)*

4. के तपाईंले अबदेखि judge गर्दा, आफ्नो र अरूको आवश्यकता बुझ्ने प्रयास गर्नुहुन्छ त?

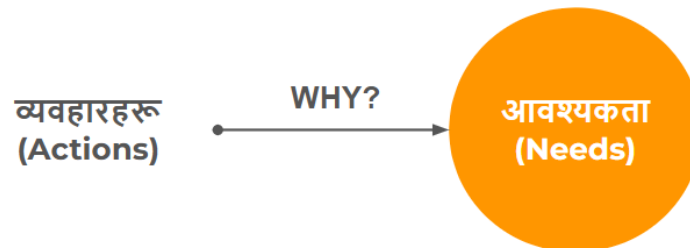
(Will you now try to understand your and others' needs when judging?)

- याद नहोला कि *(Might not remember)*

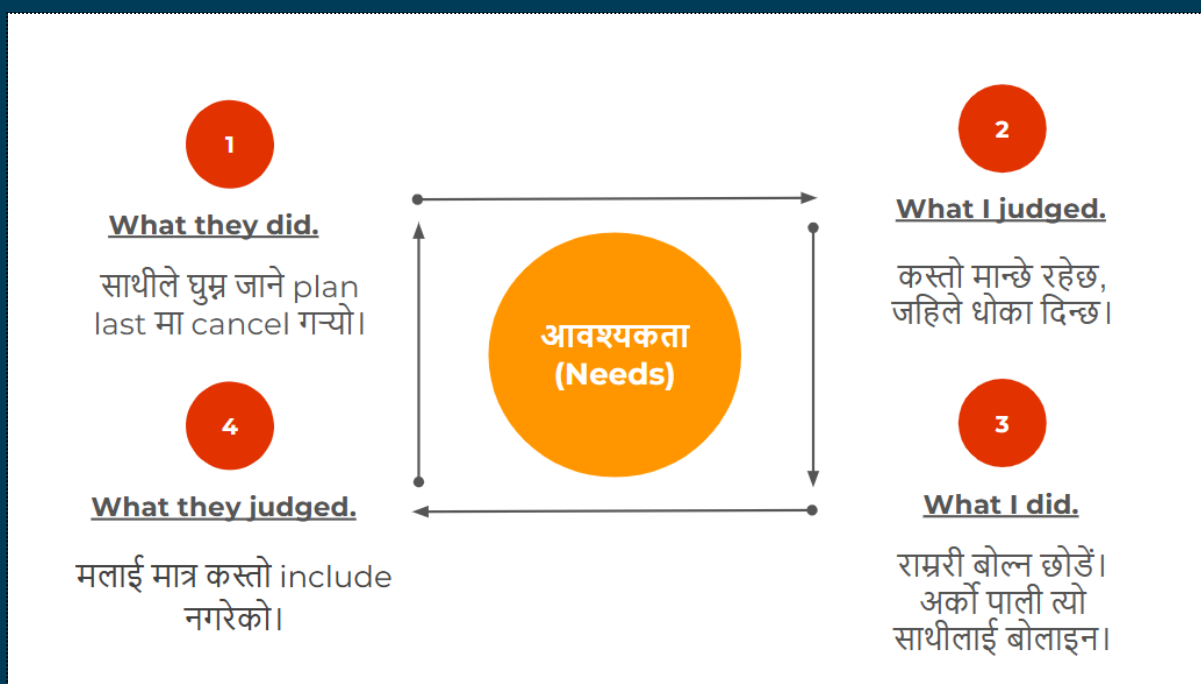
- सम्झिन्छु (I will remember)
 - सकेसम्म प्रयास गर्नेछु (I will try my best)
5. के तपाईंले अबदेखि आफ्नो भावना र आवश्यकता बुझ्न अनि बुझाउन प्रयास गर्नुहुन्छ त?
(Will you now try to understand and express your feelings and needs?)
- गाह्रो रहेछ (It is difficult)
 - प्रयास गर्नेछु (I can try)
 - गर्छु (I will)
6. के तपाईं यो विषयमा अझै बढी जान्न र बुझ्न इच्छुक हुनुहुन्छ?
(Are you interested in learning and understanding more about this topic?)
- खासै छैन (I am not interested)
 - इच्छुक छु (I am interested)
 - धेरै नै इच्छुक छु (I am highly interested)
7. यो Session मा सिक्नुभएको कुन कुरा आफ्नो जीवनमा लागू गर्नुहुन्छ?
(What part of this session will you apply in your life?)

Annex 3: Samples Slides from the Action Project

मैले _____ गरें किनभने मलाई _____ **important** छ।



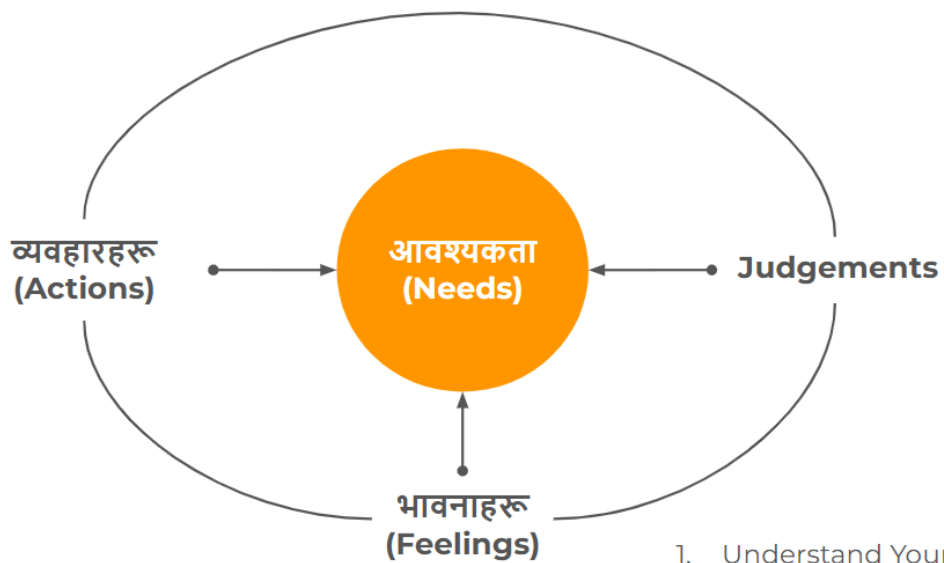
"कहिले **Action same** तर आवश्यकता **फरक** हुन सक्छ,
र
कहिले आवश्यकता **same** तर **Action फरक** पनि हुन सक्छ।"



Understanding each other's Needs

What they did?	What I judged.	My Needs	Their Needs
साथीलाई homework माग्दा, मलाई homework दिएन।	कस्तो selfish रहेछ।	Support	Honesty
Teacher ले Tihar Vacation मा पनि homework दिनुभयो।	कस्तो नराम्रो teacher रहेछ।	Fun	Learnings
Maths Teacher ले २ पटक बुझाउँदा पनि मैले बुझिनँ।	म कस्तो dumb रहेछु।	Clarity Understanding	-

सबै **feelings** को पछाडि, **needs** लुकेको हुन्छ।



1. Understand Yourself
2. Understand Others
3. Help Others understand you

Annex 4: Detailed Session Plan

Table 2: Detailed Session Plan

	Content	Description	Detailed Activity	Ways of Delivery	Time (mins)
1	Introduction to the Space	Make the participants feel open, comfortable and familiar with us and the session that we are about to deliver.	Introduction: Introduce ourselves and MEM. Call-and-response strategy. Consent for picture/video.	One-Many	3
			Ice-breaker: Discuss what superpower would they like to have. End with our mission to give you one.	One-Many	4
2	"Why We Do What We Do" (Actions → Needs)	Set the foundation by making participants aware that all our actions stem from needs. Explain what needs are. Practice on guessing needs.	List out 2 actions: Start simple. Ask participants to list 2 actions they did today or yesterday. The purpose is to later connect their actions with needs.	Self-reflection	3
			Showing our actions are our choice: Start by stating and proving that we do everything because there is something important to us whether or not the action is something we like. Discuss their actions.	One-Many	5
			Reframing the important thing as needs: Discuss what needs are. Provide a needs list and some time to go through it. Explain some of those needs.	One-Many	2
			Practice & Discussion: Discuss the needs in various actions and scenarios. Also, discuss the statement that the same action might have different needs. Emphasize that the same needs can be fulfilled with different actions and so we must sometimes find alternatives to fulfil our needs	One-Many	7
			Reflection, Review and Question Time: As the activity name suggests, we ask for reflections first, then review the topics covered so far, and open the floor to queries	Self-reflection	5
3	"Judging Others and Ourselves" (Judgments → Needs)	Make participants aware of the judgements they make. Make them realize that all judgments stem from their needs. Show them the difficulties when we cannot connect to our needs.	Introduction to Judgment: Discuss what judgements are. When, why and how we judge. Present scenarios and ask how participants would judge.	One-Many	2
			Connect Judgement to Needs: Now connect that judgment about others actually tells us about ourselves, what we value and need. Share some examples.	One-Many	2

		Discuss and practice finding needs from judgments. Also, teach them to empathize with others by guessing their needs.	Judgment Cycle: Show them a scenario where one is disconnected from needs, a cycle of judgment and actions, and the consequence: frustration, misunderstanding, and conflicts.	One-Many	2
			Understanding my needs and their needs (empathy): Show the same scenario but after one learnt to understand each other's needs avoiding all the consequences	One-Many	2
			Discussion: Give scenarios and ask them how they might judge, what they need, and what might be the needs of the other person.	One-Many	4
			Practice: Participants in groups will now practice guessing each other's needs with scenarios given to their group.	Team Spaces	8
			Reflection, Review and Question Time: As the activity name suggests, we ask for reflections first, then review the topics covered so far, and open the floor to queries. Also a brief intro on the session the next day.	Self-reflection	6
End of Day 1					
4	"Feelings -- the Notification to our Needs" (Feelings → Needs)	Introduce participants to feelings/emotions. Make them aware that emotions are neither good nor bad but simply a notification of the fulfilment of our needs. Practice and discuss the skill of naming feelings and guessing the needs underneath.	Day 1 Revision: Revise the previous day's topics and open space for new queries	One-Many	5
			Introducing Feelings: There is one more way to connect to our needs and that is emotions. Make participants take a guess.	One-Many	2
			Connect Feelings to Needs: Explain the importance of all feelings. Why do my emotions matter? Connect how feelings notify us about our needs.	One-Many	5
			Feelings Bingo: Participants are encouraged to go through the feelings list and make a bingo card while we explain any emotions that they are confused with. Play Bingo.	One-Many	5
			Discussion: Discuss why it is important to build feelings/needs vocabulary. Also why it is essential to connect feelings with our needs and not with others. Also discuss different scenarios, possible feelings, and needs.	One-Many	5
			Practice: Give different scenarios. Guess the needs in that scenario via feelings	Team Spaces	5

			participants might feel.		
5	Closing of the Session	The final wrap-up was followed by an evaluation of participants as well as helping them to reflect on their learnings.	Wrap up: Connecting all the dots (Actions, Judgments, Feelings, and Needs). Also, focus on the real-life impact of learning these.	One-Many	5
			Final Reflection: Participants will come up with examples and share what they've learned about the connection between actions, judgments, feelings, and needs. This is a group activity.	Team Spaces	10
			Final Thoughts and Question Time	One-Many	5
			Post-Session Survey and Feedback: Forms to help us evaluate the effectiveness of the session	Self-reflection	5
				Total time:	107

Annex 3: Photo Gallery

Annex 3.1 Session for Schools



Figure 10: Session Implementation at Lalit Kalyan Kendra Basic School



Figure 11: Session Implementation at Jana Uddhar Secondary School



Figure 12: Session Implementation at Bhaktapur English Secondary School