

# Communiversy Summer Program 2023

## Report



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## Introduction

We proudly collaborated with **Panchkhal Municipality** and **Sarbamangala Multiple Campus**, our community partner, along with our industry partners **F1Soft Group, Foodmandu, Kathmandu Organics, Karkhana, and Rastriya Banijya Bank**. Together, we co-designed this project with our community and industry partners to ensure its relevance and impact. We believe such collaboration between industry, academia, and the community is at the heart of our program's success.

The program offered courses in Data Science, Entrepreneurship, Sociology, and project class. While each class was taught independently, they seamlessly integrated when students applied their learnings from the classroom to the project class. This created a meaningful intersection between all subjects, allowing students to explore the practical application of their knowledge in the real-world. This academic program allowed students to earn credits from renowned educational institutions such as **Kajaani University of Applied Sciences, Finland and King's College, Nepal**.

## Problem Analysis

It is not uncommon for us to see news headlines and op-eds that focus on the need to redesign our higher-education. Whether about the political influence and interference in large universities, bureaucratic delays in curriculum and exams, or the rampant commercialization of education by private institutions, we read and discuss these often. Despite much discourse on the problems in higher-education, attempts in redesigning or innovating higher education have been very few. As a result, we still see hundreds of thousands of youth fleeing the country in search of better education abroad or to seek employment opportunities elsewhere. In a way, our higher-education has neither been able to offer high quality education alternatives in Nepal, nor have we catered to



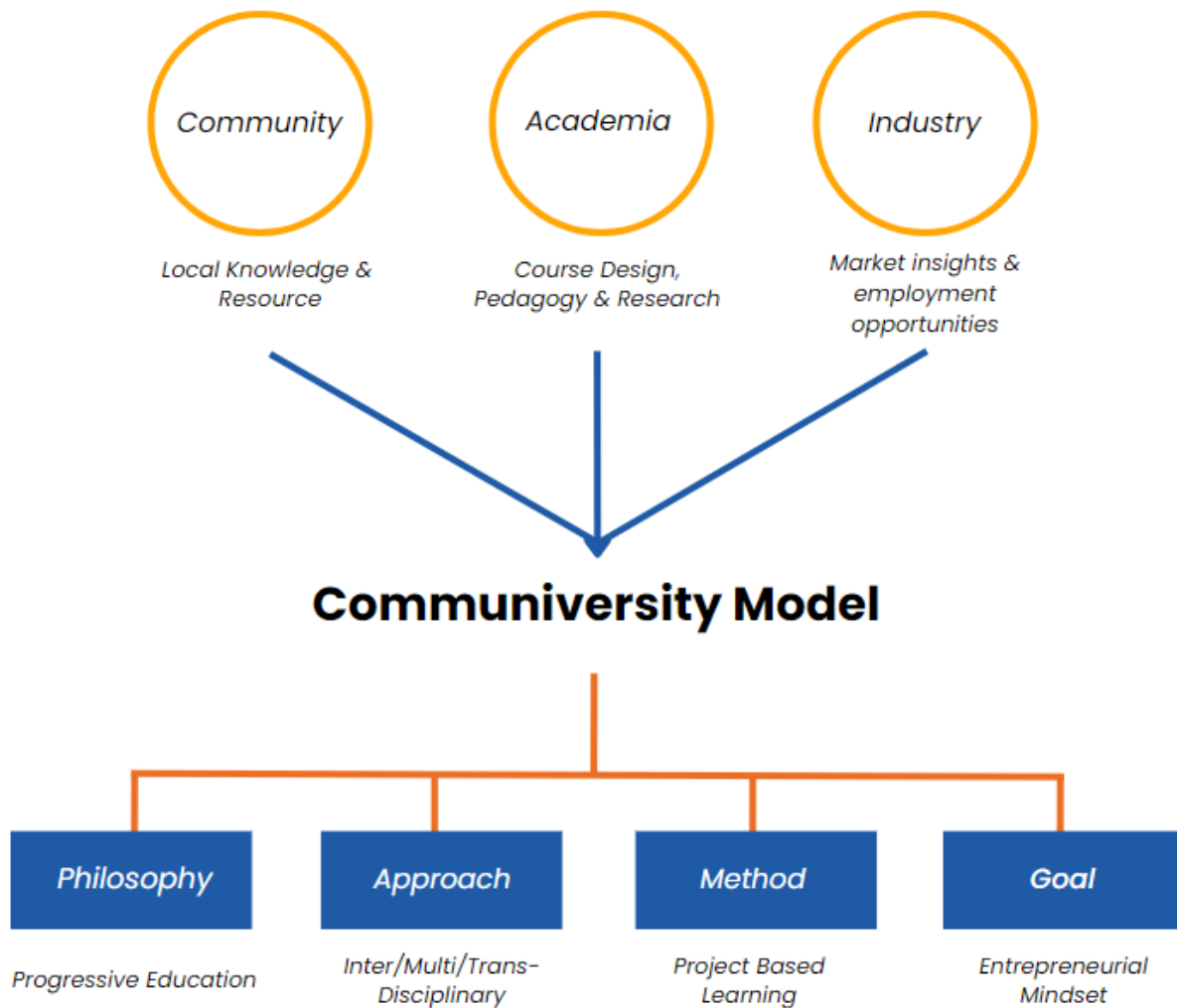
the large mass who have to desperately go to the Gulf countries to make ends meet, despite being aware of the extreme working conditions.

Even today, the curriculum is designed by a central body, the teacher—who is disconnected in the design process—is responsible for disseminating the curriculum content to the students, and the students—who are evaluated just on the basis of exams—are then laser focused on mugging up the content to pass the exam. And finally, the industries, who then have to employ the graduates are unhappy because the students only have theoretical knowledge, but not the ability to practically apply it in real world context. In a 2015 study conducted by ADB to analyze Nepal's higher education system, they quoted that “there is a major disconnect between the academic program offered by the universities and what society and the economy require”

Thus, lack of innovation in curriculum design, teaching-learning pedagogies, and evaluation of student learning has resulted in many youths being dissatisfied with the existing educational offerings, industry stakeholders not getting the quality graduates they need, and the larger problems of our community are unaddressed.



## Communiversy Summer Program Model



In our humble attempt to present an alternative to existing offerings, we have been working on an innovative model called The Communiversy Model. The model is inspired by the Triple Helix of Innovation model, where academia, industry, and local government (that represents the local community) come together to co-create a curriculum that is suitable for that context.

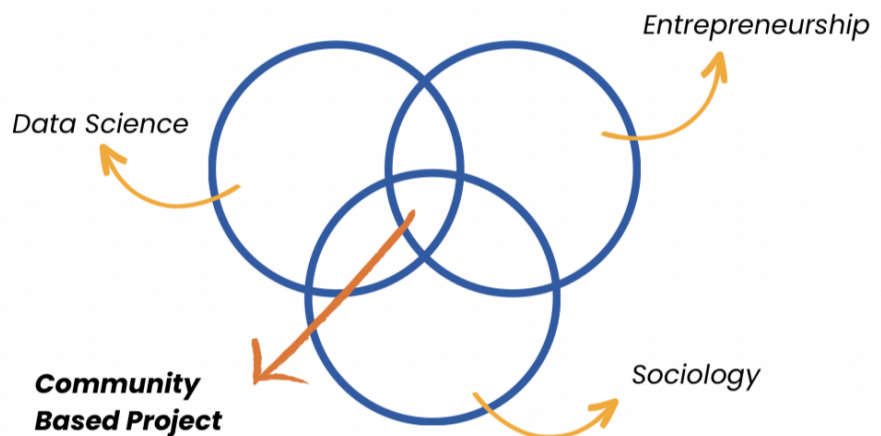
Communities have vast amounts of local knowledge and resources that could be leveraged,

industry stakeholders have real-time access to market insights and also offer employment and research opportunities for students, and academic institutions have expertise in curriculum design, pedagogy, and research methods. Thus a program co-created by the partnership of three stakeholders shall present a curriculum that suits the community's contexts, enhances student learnings, and caters to the needs of the market demands.

The program philosophy is based on progressive education that prioritizes experiential learning where the focus is on helping students learn how to think rather

than what to think. Curriculum courses are always of interdisciplinary nature where subjects from social sciences, science & tech, and business & entrepreneurship are offered together in an integrated format. Project is at the heart of the program, students are evaluated on the basis of how they used their course learnings to apply in a real-life cases to solve problems, and lastly the goal is to develop an entrepreneurial mindset among students, which means not necessary make everyone an entrepreneur but rather to equip them with entrepreneurial mindset so whether they become researchers, teachers, bureaucrats, or business-person, they possess problem-solving skills to innovate and improvise in their daily work.

For this summer program, the following three courses were offered, and like mentioned above, a community-based project was at the heart of it.



Similarly, the following were the partners from three stakeholder groups who contributed in summer program co-creation:

## Academics Partners

(Credit Accepted By)

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## Industry Partners

(Co-created with)

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## Community Partners

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# Student Pool of Communiversity Summer Program 2023



**19** Students



**7** from  
Kathmandu



**12** from  
Panchkhal



**9** Different  
Schools



**6** men  
**13** women



**13** Ethnic  
groups



**3** Religion

# Achievements and Impacts



**120** hours  
of class



**5** Community  
Partners



**6** Community  
Members



**4** International  
Faculty



**20** Passionate  
Educators

## Meet Our Communiversity Students



*Amrittam  
Bhattarai*



*Anuka  
Bishwokarma*



*Anushree  
Maharjan*



*Arpana  
Danuwar*



*Kabita Khadka*



*Khusi Mainali*



*Mamata  
Chaulagain*



*Manish Ojha*



*Monika Lama*



*Nima Sangay  
Sherpa*



*Pradip Bidari*



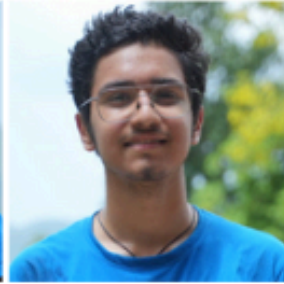
*Priya Lama*



*Redeena Neupane*



*Ritu Rokka*



*Saurav Kafle*



*Sujita Khatri*



*Sumitra Danuwar*



*Sunita Tamang*



*Suyog Gaire*

## Meet Our Faculty Team



Alok Khatri



Ashween Lama



Smriti Karanjit



Sujit Pandey



Prina Bajracharya



## Meet Our Core Team



Amigo Khadka



Bhawana Shrestha



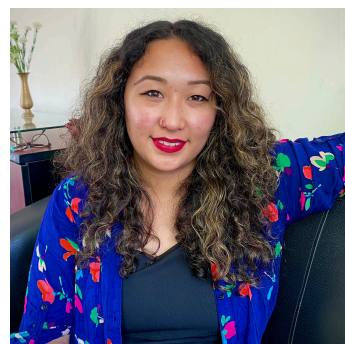
Bikram Prajapati



Narottam Aryal



Prashanna Thapa



Swechhya Rajbhandary



Udgum Khadka



## Communiversality Summer Program Detail


### Week Zero at Communiversality

On 19 June 2023, the Communiversality team, along with 12 students from Panchkhal and seven students from Kathmandu, embarked on a two-month immersive journey of the Communiversality Summer Program. The seven students from Kathmandu resided at Deep Jyoti Hotel for two months alongside [Bhawana Shrestha](#), Asst. Prof King's College, Co-Founder- [My Emotions Matter](#)

The initial week was carefully designed to foster understanding, empathy, and the development of a collective mindset to work together throughout the program. This week marked the transition from 'म' to 'हामी', symbolizing our shift towards a collaborative and community-driven approach.



Moreover, students learned about themselves, their peers, the Communiversity team, and the community around them. Throughout this week, students embarked on a journey of self-discovery, forging connections with their peers, the dedicated Communiversity team, and the vibrant community that surrounds them. It was a week filled with enriching experiences, not only for the students but also for our team. As we delved into the diverse locations within Panchkhal, we gained valuable insights into the various industrial and agricultural endeavors that drive this community forward. This shared learning experience fostered a deeper understanding of t

 *"I come from a family of farmers. We have the motto of Panchkhal as "Panchkhal Nagar, Krishi Sahar", but despite giving so much importance to agriculture, why hasn't the economic condition of my family improved?" - Student from Panchkhal*

he unique challenges and aspirations within Panchkhal, inspiring us to collectively work towards meaningful solutions. Together, we are building bridges of knowledge and cultivating a strong sense of community within Communiversity.

## Week 1 at Communiversity

During the first week at Communiversity, our students were warmly introduced to their respective courses by dedicated facilitators who traveled all the way from Kathmandu. It was an exciting time as students embarked on their educational journey, discovering the subjects of Data science, Entrepreneurship, Sociology, and project class. Not only did the facilitators provide valuable insights and knowledge, but they also took the time to understand the dynamics of the class and the unique needs of our diverse class. This week played a pivotal role in bringing the class together, fostering a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose.





The week concluded with an exciting visit to Hanumansthan, where students had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of the area. The visit provided a unique insight into the local traditions and beliefs that shape the community.



*"I can't believe that I had creativity in me to create something like this (physical prototype)."* - Student

## Week 2 at Communiversity

Week 2 at Communiversity witnessed the continued progress of our classes, as the subjects seamlessly aligned with community knowledge. The students, divided into four groups, have taken the initiative to work on themes centered around eco-tourism, agriculture, natural and manmade disasters, and responsible farming. It is inspiring to see the students choose their own projects, fostering a sense of ownership and passion.

Throughout the week, our students actively engaged with different stakeholders in the community, immersing themselves in meaningful interactions. They diligently gathered valuable insights and

findings, which were then shared with the class. It was remarkable to witness the emerging connection between the courses and the project class, as students began to apply their learnings in practical, real-world scenarios.



As the weekend approached, students from Kathmandu returned home after three weeks in Panchkhal for a short break, taking with them the experiences and knowledge gained thus far. Meanwhile, the remaining students embarked on a visit to FarmGro, further deepening their understanding of responsible farming practices and sustainable agriculture.



*"I have been born and brought up in Panchkhal, but I realized that I had never explored the places, challenges and opportunities within Panchkhal like I am doing now in this program"*

## Week 3 at Communiversity

Week 3 at Communiversity seamlessly continued the momentum from Week 2. As a team, we have grown more confident in our ability to provide a transformative learning experience for our students.

In addition to the regular classes, we were honored to have a guest session with Brigadier General Bhola Thapa from Panchkhal UN Peacekeeping Training Center, located just 3 kilometers away from Sarbamangala Multiple Campus. The insightful session provided valuable perspectives on peacekeeping efforts and offered students a unique



opportunity to learn from an esteemed expert in the field. The students were also visited by Karkhana, one of our industry partners.

The journey of Week 3 unfolded with exciting discoveries and enriching experiences. We were inspired by the dedication and enthusiasm of our students, who continued to push boundaries, embrace new knowledge, and contribute to the betterment of our community.

Moving forward, we remained committed to fostering an environment of growth, collaboration, and meaningful learning. So that students continue to explore, innovate, and make a positive impact through their collective efforts.

## **Week 4 at Communiversity**

Week 4 at Communiversity opened with an engaging entrepreneurship class, setting the stage for a week of insightful learning. The subsequent project class explored the intricacies of the double diamond in design thinking, underlining the significance of the 'Why' question – a pivotal thread in problem-solving. In the data science class, Microsoft Excel transformed into a powerful tool as students learned about data crystallization. And a plethora of sharing emerged as King's College faculty visited, allowing students to share their ongoing journey.





The highlight of the week for students was the interaction with the visionary Mr. Subash Sharma, CEO of F1soft International and our esteemed industry partner. The session was a tapestry of insight and inspiration, interwoven with his years of experience, struggles, and victories. The session resonated deeply, reminding students to believe in their ideas and understand the journey of innovation. As discussions flowed, intriguing reflections emerged. Students probed why certain areas, like Panchkhal, had not yet embraced digitization. The conversation crystallized the significance of their work and the potential of innovative solutions. It was a moment of revelation, illustrating how asking "Why?" can steer transformative change.

As students were struggling a lot with the problem space, given their limited prior experience in grasping its significance, this week was the right time for us to introduce mentors. Each team

was paired with a mentor, facilitating interaction with individuals they had previously engaged with. This week progressed at a slower pace, and the weekend brought some much-needed rest.



*"I am eager to do well in the project here because for the first time I am trying to do something on my own, otherwise my entire identity is derived from my father's and I just did things because he wanted me to do."*

*- Student*

## Week 5 at Communiversity

Week 5 was a whirlwind of sessions and activities. The journey kicked off with an insightful



entrepreneurship class led by Shreya Upadhyay, the co-founder of Sweet Fix Nepal. Her presence set an inspiring example for students, shedding light on women in entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, the project class transitioned from the problem space to the ideation phase, as students delved into the heart of their respective challenges. This dynamic class took place at the Panchkhal Municipality office, where students engaged in a fruitful interaction and were warmly hosted for lunch at the Mayor's Quarter.

A special highlight was the opportunity to share their journey with Mr. Mahesh Kharel, the Mayor of Panchkhal. In Data science class, they had a session with Shreyasha Paudel, a Ph.D. student at the University of Toronto whose expertise spans technology studies, feminist approaches in digital technology, data and automation, and responsible AI. The session was an enlightening exploration of these crucial aspects in today's tech landscape.'

This week also brought the engaging sociology class, sparking heavy discussions on pertinent issues and societal inequalities. It was a platform for students to share their lived experiences and explore the intricate tapestry of identities. Amidst these dynamic classes, Week 5 offered a rich blend of knowledge and a profound space for students to learn, empathize, and engage with the realities of diverse individuals.

Looking back, these interactions and exposures have significantly aided the students in raising critical questions and comprehending nuances that extend beyond their personal realities. The learning journey carries on, marked by days of high energy and moments of the ordinary, yet we persist with determination.

## **Week 6 at Communiversity**

Week 6 commenced with a truly captivating experience as our students embarked on a special visit to various industries in Kathmandu. This visit was not only a unique learning opportunity but also an integral part of their week. The day was meticulously planned, offering them insights into the operations of our esteemed industry partners.


Their journey began at F1soft International, where they were immersed in an enlightening presentation about the company and given the chance to explore its impressive infrastructure. Next on the agenda was Hoiste Hainse, where the students witnessed the dedication behind building and operating community schools, leaving them deeply inspired by the positive impact of such efforts. They also had the privilege of observing carpet manufacturing in real-time, gaining valuable insights into this industry.



After a delightful lunch at King's College, their adventure continued at Rastriya Banijya Bank Limited. Here, they interacted with Mr. Kiran Shrestha, the CEO of the bank, and had the opportunity to explore various departments. The day was a testament to the program's commitment to providing students with a well-rounded and immersive learning experience.



With this inspiring industry visit setting the tone for the week, the students delved into various activities, including presentations in their data science class. Additionally, a special visit by Charles Obore, from Uganda who works for Teach for All added another layer of enrichment to their learning journey. As week 6 unfolded, the classes maintained their momentum, and ideas began to take full shape. With every passing day, the students continued to raise critical questions, deepen their understanding, and explore new dimensions of learning.

 *“While working in a team, I’ve realized that I’m usually the one who listens to my team members. But now I want to come forward and start speaking up for myself. I will start by being the one to do presentation in front of the class” - Student*

## Week 7 at Communiversy

As we neared week 7, we witnessed the remarkable evolution of our students. They blossomed and evolved, aligning their comprehension with the nuances of the community and their own personal development.

As students saw their solution idea taking a concrete shape in form of a refined prototype, they further worked towards turning their projects and learning journey into a story. They also learned to weave the gathered data through data based storytelling, which all came together to support in their presentation.



This week marked the end of our academic courses with facilitators wrapping up the classes, so students could focus on preparing for their presentation and showcasing their work in the graduation event. Amidst the rising pressure of the program coming towards an end, we faced a literal road bump along the way, when the incessant rain caused multiple landslides around Panchkhal. While facilitators were unable to travel from Kathmandu to Panchkhal, few students also had difficulties reaching the campus from within Panchkhal. Despite the fluctuating electricity and network issues, we all managed to improvise classes through a mix of virtual and in-person learning – our learning continued.



*“Before communiversity I used to question others a lot. Now I have learned to question myself as well.” – Student*

## **Week 8 at Communiversity**

With the graduation event around the corner, week 8 marked the climax of this incredible journey. This concluding week was devoted to preparing for a showcase and graduation event – a platform to mirror the collective commitment and tireless effort invested by both our students and our dedicated team throughout these past 8 weeks. Excitement and anxieties were soaring high while students were mentally, physically and emotionally preparing for their final presentation, incorporating feedback from the facilitators, practicing their pitch and all the while supporting each other and boosting each other’s confidence. Students could be seen everywhere, from running around refining their projects and prototypes, completing their class assignments, voluntarily signing and stepping up for a dance performance and choreographing steps – we witnessed a beautifully bustling chaos in the grounds of Sarbamangala Campus.

On the backend of preparing for the graduation event, the Communiversity team were also immersed in their own chaos at the logistical front, of inviting external guests, setting up and decorating the stage, coordinating with community stakeholders and planning to bring approximately 70 guests from Kathmandu to Panchkhal.





Despite all the chaos and anxieties, there was a strong undercurrent of reassurance knowing that everyone around was giving their best, wanting to showcase their 2 months of hard work and learnings and putting their best self forward.

# Our Learnings, Reflections & Way Forward

As we take a moment to reflect on this remarkable journey, it becomes evident that it has been a time of settling in, embracing our vision, and bringing it to life. In this journey we gathered immense learnings, challenges and had our own shares of highs and lows. Before we start our next batch of Communiversity Program, we would like to internalize and work on our realizations in order to improve and make changes to the program. Here are a few things we still need to improve on. Some are in form of realizations and some in form of questions:

Community immersion:

- More participation and involvement of community stakeholders during the 2-month program in the form of guest speakers, faculty, experts etc.
- While designing the curriculum, faculty and core team members need to be more immersed in the community, especially to connect the course with the context of the community
- How might we strengthen the engagement with our industry partner to ensure a meaningful collaboration?

Faculty members and guest speakers

- We realized the importance of having passionate faculty members, who are willing to commit their time and energy for the program, and understand the students and the diverse contexts of the students. For our future programs, how might we streamline and strengthen the process of faculty selection and training?
- As students come from diverse social, economic, educational and geographical backgrounds, there is a need for an inclusive pool of faculty members and guest speakers. We have realized that being able to connect with diverse faculty and guest speakers, as well as hearing different perspectives from their expertise and lived-experiences played a pivotal role for students to see a sense of possibility and aspire for a better future.



## Student well-being

- Along with the learnings of the students, we have realized that we need to pay more attention to the health and safety of our students – both physical and emotional health and wellbeing of our students. We also felt the need to have a nurse regularly available, especially if we want to continue the program as a residential program.
- We also reflected on the need to have two staff members to stay in the community for 2 months, and a staff who has the emotional strength and capacity to be present for the students. This also means we need to focus on the well-being and safety of the staff who stay. Along with the two staff members, we also need to have a staff who looks after the on-ground logistics.

## Academic Courses

- What interdisciplinary courses would be meaningful and relevant to the students and how can we seamlessly integrate the course in a better way?
- For a two month program, offering two courses with project classes at the center would be better than having three courses, given the work-load and space to explore the community.

## Further Questions

- How might Communiversality look like if we extended the 2 months into a 6-month or a 1-year or a 4-year program?
- What would the format of Communiversality look like in the future?

With these reflections, as we move towards planning our way forward, we would like to extend our immense gratitude and unwavering support and collaboration towards Panchkhal Municipality, community committee, industry partners, faculty, guest lecturers, supporting staff and most importantly our students, whose contributions have been and will be instrumental in shaping this program and future programs.



It is through these collective efforts, collaboration, and active engagement that we unlock the true potential of our program. The rich experiences, insights, and wisdom shared by the community members will undoubtedly inspire our students and foster a sense of shared ownership in their journey of learning and growth. Together, we hope to continue embracing the spirit of community and forging new paths that create lasting impact and strengthening the bond between education and community.

## Testimonial of Students

“भगवानले नै जुराईदियो, कहाँको मान्छे हामीलाई। रमाइलो गर्दै नया कुरा सिक्यौ, धन्यवाद *Communiversy* लाई। आगामी दिनहरुमा पनि यस्तै कार्यक्रमहरु आएरहोस। २ महिनाको हाम्रो यो मित्रता, यसरी नै संधै रहिरहोस।

२०८० असार ४ गतेबाट सुरु भएको २ महिनाको *Communiversy Summer Program* मेरो जीवनको महत्वपूर्ण सिकाई हो। सर, म्यामहरुसँगको सम्बन्ध र साथीहरुसंगै सम्बन्ध र सथिहरुसंगैको असल मित्रताको परिभाषा मलाई यस *program* ले सिकायो। धेरै पढेर राम्रो *marksheet* मात्र प्राप्त गरे हुन्छ भन्ने मेरो सोचलाई परिवर्तन गरिदियो। सकेका कुरालाई व्यवहारमा उतार्नुपर्ने र त्यो सिकाई अरुलाई पनि सिकाउन सक्नु नै पढेको अर्थ लाग्दो रहेछ। *Group* मा काम गर्दा बेला बेलामा भएको त्यो नोकझोक संगै बढेको माया र मित्रता सधै गरेको प्रयोगात्मक कार्यबाट प्राप्त भएको ज्ञान नै जीवनको सबैभन्दा ठुलो धन रहेछ। जीवनमा केहि गर्नलाई आत्मविश्वास नभएको म मा मेरो गुणहरु केलाउदै अगाडी बढ्ने मार्गदर्शन गर्नुभएको मेरो गुरुहरु, साथीहरु र दाईदिदीहरु प्रति कृतज्ञ छु। “ -

*Monica Lama, Communiversy Summer Program 2023 Student (from Panchkhal)*



*“Looking back I realized that there is always an opportunity cost for every act you perform and you can't be everywhere and do everything. I missed a lot of things on one hand but still I gained a lot of experience on the other hand.*

*Gone with lots of doubt and uncertainty but came back with a lot of ideas and clarity. Never knew the time flies by, in just a snap of a moment. The potential in Agricultural Tourism that I have experienced in the last 2 months compared to the last 6 months is vastly different. The experience taught me a lot of things.*



*Will forever be grateful for the amazing opportunity that I have got. Thankful for each and every one that I have met and had a wonderful conversation during this long time but a short journey. One thing I can assure you is that it was worth it and if I have to do it again knowing this outcome, I would have done it again.*

*As Mark Cuban Said "You just have to try different things and even if 99% fail, you just have to be right one time" and I was doing the same.” - Nima Sangey Sherpa,  
**Communiversy Summer Program Student 2023 (from Kathmandu)***

“यस २ महिनाको कार्यक्रममा सहभागि हुन पाउँदा आफूलाई भाग्यशाली ठानेको छु। यो प्रोग्रामलाई पाँचखालमा नै सञ्चालन गर्नुपर्छ, पाँचखालमा नै भएको समस्यालाई मध्यनजर गरेर कार्यक्रम अगाडि बढाउनुपर्छ भनेर साथ, सल्लाह र हौसला दिने पाँचखाल नगरपालिकाको मेयर महेश खरेल, दुई महिनाको लागि सञ्चालन गर्न कक्षाकोठाको व्यवस्थापनको लागि सर्वमङ्गला बहुमुखी क्याम्पसको प्रधानाध्यापक जयराम अधिकारी र अन्य अग्रजहरूप्रति पनि म निकै नै आभारी छु।

वास्तवमा भन्ने हो भने यो प्रोग्रामले छोटो समयमै मेरो जीवनमा आमूल परिवर्तन ल्याएको मैले महसुस गरेको छु। घर छाडेर बाहिरतिर निस्कदा कसैको वास्ता नगर्ने म आजभोली साथीभाईसँग खुलेर बोल्न थालेको छु। केही कार्य गर्नुअघि मिल्दैन कि भनेर आनाकानी गर्ने र तत्काल सुरु गरेको कामलाई पछि गर्छु भनेर छाड्ने म दृढ अटोट लिएर निडर, निष्पक्ष र इमानदारिताका साथ निरन्तरता दिन थालेको छु।

शिक्षा नै सर्वस्व हो भनेर अड्क बढाउन सैद्धान्तिक ज्ञानतर्फ लम्केको मेरो विचारलाई वास्तविक शिक्षा भनेको पढेको कुरालाई व्यवहारिकतामा उतार्नु रहेछ भन्ने कुरा बुझेको छु। यहाँ आएर शिक्षा र सीपको सहसम्बन्धबारे अझ नजिकदेखि जान्ने अवसर पाएको छु। समूहमा काम गर्दा साथीहरूको विचारलाई अवलम्बन गरि आफूमा भएको कमीकमजोरीलाई पनि गहिरिएर बुझि सुधारिनु पर्ने विचारको टिपोट गर्न थालेको छु। साथै साथीहरूको उत्साह, गुरुहरूको माया, सद्भाव, हौसला र अतिथिहरूको त्याग, लगनशीलता र अनुभव बटुलिएर भावी जीवनमा आउन सक्ने चुनौतीपूर्ण अवस्थाको सामना गर्नसक्ने प्रेरणा पाएको छु।” -

*Pradip Bidari, Communiversity Summer Program 2023 Student (from Panchkhal)*



*“During my time in the Communiversity Summer Program, I had the incredible opportunity to forge meaningful bonds that will undoubtedly last a lifetime. Late night memories of laughter and camaraderie became a cherished part of my experience, bringing us closer together as a tight-knit community.*



*The program also welcomed a diverse range of remarkable guests, offering us the privilege of learning from their wisdom and experiences. Central to my journey were the invaluable mentors who guided me through both the academically rigorous aspects of the program and the moments of pure fun, leaving me with a treasure trove of memories that I will forever hold dear.” -Saurav Kafle, Communiversity Summer Program Student 2023 (from Kathmandu)*

