



Biannual Report

Jan-Jun 2026



EDUCATION •



EMPOWERMENT •



EQUITY •

Celebrating Our Fellows. Paying It Forward.



A new cohort welcomed, two Fellows heading to UWC, and one Fellow's journey comes full circle—inside this season's milestones at Samaanta Foundation.

Samaanta Foundation, founded in 2012, is a not-for-profit organization that promotes equity and empowerment by providing quality higher education opportunities to meritorious public school graduates from underserved communities in Nepal. Our comprehensive Fellowships cover tuition, accommodation, and all related direct and indirect costs, including uniforms, lab and exam fees, and monthly stipend. We also provide English language training, computer courses, leadership and civic engagement workshops, mentorship, and internship and job placements.

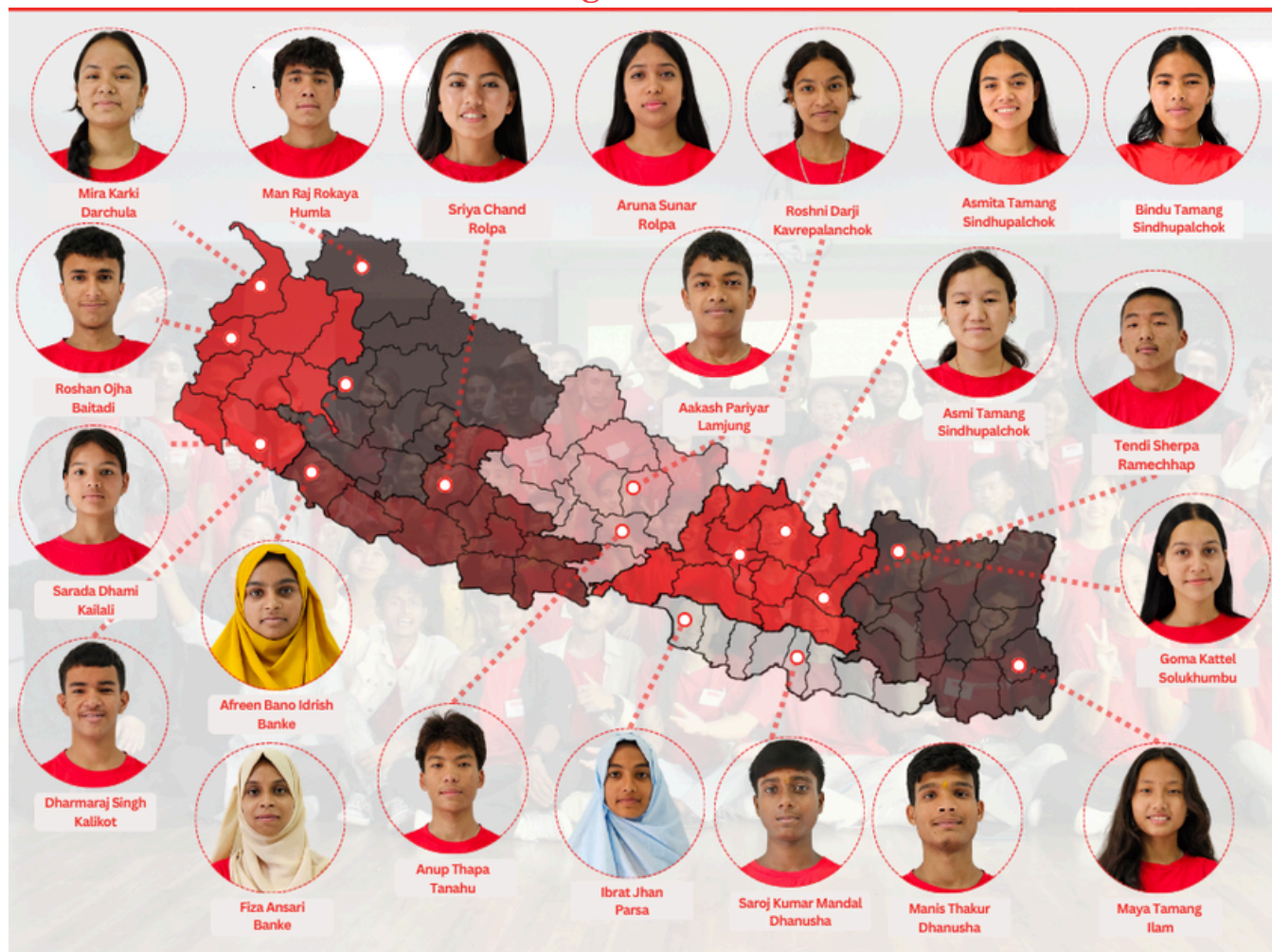
Overview

The first half of 2026 has given us so much to celebrate. We welcomed our largest-ever cohort of Fellows, watched two Fellows earn full scholarships to United World Colleges (UWC), and saw another complete a journey from scholarship recipient to a Public Health Officer. Each story shows what happens when opportunity is provided to those with potential.

We highlight these milestones below, alongside other key activities through which our Fellows, Alumni, staff, and partners have strengthened our community and deepened our impact over the last six months. We share this with you as a trusted partner whose continued trust and generosity makes all of this possible. Thank you for walking this journey with us.

161	94	21	13
Total Fellows since 2012	Active Fellows this year	15th Cohort Fellows	UWC scholarships

Welcoming the 15th Cohort



We welcomed 21 outstanding new Fellows as Samaanta's 15th cohort, our largest yet. The total number of Fellows now stands at 161, with 94 active Fellows this year.

We received 181 nominations from 90 public schools across 38 districts. We conducted a rigorous selection process over five months, which included written exams, review of recommendations, two rounds of interviews, and home visits. Each Fellow was chosen based on their academic excellence, leadership potential, and commitment to service.

This cohort represents the rich diversity of Nepal, and we are proud of our track record on equity, diversity, and inclusion. 5 Fellows come from Sudurpaschim and Karnali Provinces, 6 from Lumbini and Gandaki Provinces, 5 from Bagmati Provinces, and 5 from Madhesh and Koshi provinces. 13 of the 21 Fellows are female, and 15 belong to marginalised communities including Janajati, Madhesi, Dalit, and Muslim.

14 of the 21 Fellows also received a Kathmandu Metropolitan City scholarship with a full tuition fee waiver at renowned Kathmandu schools, and all 21 Fellows are now settled into high school and underway with their classes.

As is true every year, resource constraints meant we could only provide a limited number of Fellowships and could not select many other outstanding candidates who were just as deserving. Their potential is exactly what motivates us to keep growing this Fellowship.

Beyond Borders: Two Fellows, Two Continents

Two of our 14th Cohort Fellows have been selected to attend United World Colleges (UWC) to study the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme in August 2026. Karan Yadav will join UWC Robert Bosch in Germany and Sajid Ansari will attend UWC East Africa in Tanzania. This brings the total number of Samaanta Fellows who have received UWC scholarships to 13.

UWC's global network of schools brings together young people from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds to educate and empower them to lead a more sustainable world. Our UWC Fellows have consistently excelled, going on to earn full scholarships for undergraduate study at institutions such as Whitman College and St. Olaf College in the United States. They continue to pay it forward through active community engagement, fundraising campaigns for Samaanta, and mentoring junior Fellows.

Karan and Sajid come from rural Madhesh, and they have been exceptional so far. Karan hopes to focus on economics and build the skills to become a data scientist, with a desire to contribute to more equitable financial systems. Sajid, already an aspiring and experimenting scientist, hopes to advocate for sustainable scientific innovation while proudly showcasing his Muslim heritage.



Karan Kumar Yadav (left) and Sajid Ansari (right)

MORE MILESTONES

More Reasons to Celebrate: Dr. Pranisha Nemkul

Our First Medical Graduate

One of our 6th Cohort Fellows, Pranisha Nemkul, has successfully completed her Bachelor's in Dental Surgery from the College of Medical Sciences, passed the Nepal Medical Council licensing examination, and is now a licensed doctor. Pranisha is the first Samaanta Fellow to complete a medical degree, with a full tuition scholarship from the Ministry of Education, supplemented by funding and support from Samaanta.



"Samaanta has been my backbone since the very beginning. It has not only supported my studies but also helped me grow and discover myself. I am deeply grateful for everything Samaanta has done throughout this journey, and for shaping me into the person I am today. Looking forward, I aspire to be a successful Dental Surgeon and to give back to my community in every way I can."

- Dr. Pranisha Nemkul

PAYING IT FORWARD as a Public Health Officer



Hishila Danuwar was selected as a Samaanta Fellow in 2018. After completing higher secondary education, she earned a full scholarship to pursue a Bachelor's in Public Health at the Nepalese Army Institute of Health Sciences, graduating this year with a 3.8 GPA. She has since passed the Public Health Licensing Examination and now serves as a Public Health Officer in Sindhupalchowk District.

Beyond her academic and professional achievements, Hishila has remained an active member of the Samaanta community. She has mentored junior Fellows, guided Fellows on the Government's Health Insurance programme, led a Community Health Diagnosis programme in Sindhupalchowk, and served on the board of Hamro Paalo from 2021 to 2024. Her journey demonstrates what is possible through hard work, perseverance, and meaningful support.

"Coming from a family with limited financial resources, studying Public Health would have been very difficult without the Fellowship. Today, I am proud to serve as a Public Health Officer in Sindhupalchowk, working with communities much like the one I grew up in. Looking back, I feel grateful for everyone who believed in me and supported my journey. The Fellowship gave me much more than financial support. It gave me confidence, guidance, and a community that always encouraged me to keep moving forward. Now, through my work, I hope to give back in the same way. Whether it is supporting families through public health services or encouraging young people to pursue their education, I want to use what I have received to make a difference in the lives of others. To me, that is what paying it forward truly means."

- Hishila Danuwar

Asmita Mandal, A First-Generation Trailblazer

7th Cohort Fellow Asmita Mandal, originally from Bhagachaura, Dhanusha, has completed her undergraduate degree at St. Olaf College, Minnesota graduating cum laude with majors in Quantitative Economics and Political Science, and a minor in International Relations. She is currently seeking employment in research and data analysis in the US.

"Growing up in a rural village where girls were expected to marry at a young age, I never dared to dream outside of that box. Honestly, just graduating at all felt like an impossible hurdle. So, looking back at my journey and realizing I've graduated with two majors from St. Olaf College in Minnesota, feels completely surreal. None of this would have been possible without the unconditional support of the Samaanta Foundation. I didn't walk across that stage alone; my village, and the incredible family who backed me up every single day, walked right there with me."

- Asmita Mandal



Asmita Mandal

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

Leading with Purpose

Najrana Nesha, Laxmi Biswokarma, and Karuna Chaudhary, from the 13th Cohort completed WomenLEAD, a prestigious national year-long leadership course, in June 2026. The programme empowers young women through intensive, practical training in leadership, advocacy, mentorship, professional development, and community engagement.

The Fellows applied the skills and tools gained through the course's Leadership Institute to train 60 students from local schools as part of their School Leadership Programme. They helped grow more than 100 young people through skill-development and peer-support initiatives, facilitating discussions on topics ranging from women in entrepreneurship to politics and health.



Najrana Nesha on left, Laxmi Biswokarma in the middle, and Karuna Chaudhary on the right

“Being part of Women LEAD has been a wonderful learning experience. Through the Leadership Institute and School Leadership Programme, I developed my communication, leadership, and teamwork skills while working closely with students, teachers, and parents. One of the most memorable parts was Advocacy Week, where our team organized a panel discussion on 'Women and Politics' for Grade 12 students. It taught me the value of teamwork, planning, and sharing ideas that can create positive change.

- Laxmi B.K.

Strengthening Partnerships: JKCF x Samaanta



Nashra Khan

Samaanta's partnership with the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation (JKCF), the leading scholarship programme in the US, continues this year with a new JKCF Scholar joining us as a summer intern.

Nashra is a rising junior at Emory University, studying Interdisciplinary Studies across linguistics, health, sociology, and ethics. Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, she brings a long history of working with underserved and refugee communities, with a particular passion for social justice and medicine.

At Samaanta, Nashra is leading an English Book Club, tutoring Fellows in Science and Math, and helping prepare students for the IB Curriculum. She has also been supporting Samaanta with our fundraising campaign. She has brought so much energy, passion, and commitment, strengthening the JKCF-Samaanta relationship further.

Buddha Air: Reaching More Communities Together



We are pleased to continue our partnership with Buddha Air for the fiscal year 2026/27. The airline is providing 25 domestic air tickets to support Samaanta's programmes. This generous contribution has helped our team travel with school visits, community outreach, and candidates' home visits during the Fellowship recruitment process, while also supporting Fellows' essential travel when needed. By making travel more accessible, Buddha Air continues to play an important role in helping us reach talented young students from across Nepal and connect them with opportunities.

Equipping Fellows for the Digital Classroom

Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Ltd. and Nepal Infrastructure Bank Limited (NIFRA), through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, generously supported the procurement of 10 laptops for 12th Cohort Fellows who have recently begun their undergraduate studies across different academic fields. This support helps ensure that Fellows have access to the essential digital tools they need for their studies, research, assignments, and online learning. We are grateful to both organizations for investing in the education and future of our Fellows.



12th Cohort Fellows

INVESTING BACK INTO SAMAANTA

From Fellows to Changemakers



Sharmila Tamang
Program Officer



Nabindra Chaurel
Program Associate

Samaanta is proud to welcome two alumni as staff, a reflection of the long-term impact of our investment in young leaders, and our commitment to creating a cycle of opportunity. Sharmila Tamang, a 4th cohort Fellow and a BBA graduate from Thames International College, has joined Samaanta as a Program Officer. Nabindra Chaurel, a 8th cohort Fellow, a soon to be Sociology graduate has joined as a Program Associate.

One More Fellow 2026: Our Fundraising Campaign

The One More Fellow campaign continues to be one of the strongest examples of the Fellowship values in action. Led entirely by the Fellows, the campaign brings together alumni and current Fellows with a shared purpose to support another deserving student to join the Fellowship.

Fellows organized peer-to-peer fundraising, Deusi Bhailo, and a fundraising hike, reaching out to friends, families, colleagues, and well-wishers. Their collective efforts raised USD 7,670, nearly doubling the original target of USD 4,000.

More than the amount raised, the campaign reflects something deeper. It shows how Fellows take ownership of Samaanta's mission and choose to invest their own time, and energy to help ensure that more deserving students can access the same opportunities that shaped their own journeys. The campaign is a powerful reminder that the spirit of paying it forward continues to grow with each new cohort of Fellows.



USD 7670 Raised



Target: USD 4000

Education. Empowerment. Equality

Thank You and Looking Ahead

The success of our Fellows, and the continued strengthening of Samaanta, would not be possible without the donors, partners, mentors, alumni, and well-wishers who continue to believe in our mission.

As we look to the second half of 2026, we remain focused on deepening the support we offer each Fellow, from mentorship and leadership training to academic and emergency assistance. We are also keen to grow our reach to more deserving students across Nepal. We know there is still significant unmet need, across Nepal, and the perseverance and successes of our Fellows and Alumni motivate us to keep going.

We are keen to continue investing in our fundraising ambitions so that we can build a more sustainable base for our Fellowship. We are also looking to leverage and share our learning from the last 15 years to support systemic reform that nudges the education system to be more responsive to students from underserved communities.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Samaanta family, and we look forward to your continued love, support, and guidance in the coming days and years.

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