

Bi-annual Report

Jul-Dec 2024

SAMAANTA
FOUNDATION



Education.

Equity.

Empowerment.

Introduction

Samaanta Foundation is a Nepal-based not-for-profit organization that promotes equity and empowerment by providing quality higher education opportunities to meritorious public school graduates from underserved communities. The Foundation provides comprehensive Fellowships which cover tuition, accommodation, and all direct and indirect costs. We also provide English language support; computer skills; workshops in leadership, community engagement, and mentorship; networking for jobs; and other extra-curricular support.

Overview



Picture: The Samaanta Family at Champadevi during the annual hiking event.

The last six months at Samaanta have been full of growth and improvement. The 13th Cohort has settled in well, and we are now gearing up for the recruitment of our 14th cohort, set to begin in late January. Our senior Fellows and alumni continue to inspire by paying it forward. They have set examples as role models for the juniors through their academic achievements, active participation in organizing workshops and events, and other volunteering efforts at Samaanta and beyond.

We are excited to share that two Fellows from the 11th Cohort are pursuing Bachelor of Arts Bachelor of Laws (BALLB), and a third Fellow is pursuing a degree in B.Sc. Nursing. They are our first Fellows to pursue law and nursing.

Our Fellows Abroad are doing exceptionally well in both their academics and extracurricular activities, demonstrating their ability to thrive when provided with the right support and opportunities.

13th Cohort Update

Our newest cohort has enrolled in colleges in Kathmandu and is settling in well. Of the 17 Fellows, 12 are pursuing Management degrees and 5 are pursuing Science degrees across three colleges: V.S. Niketan College, Nepal Mega College and Prime College. They are actively participating in Samaanta workshops and training along with their academics. They are committed to building strong relationships with their peers and seniors.



Updates from Fellows Abroad

- We are extremely proud to share that Sheerjana Praja, a 13th Cohort Fellow, is our 10th Fellow to receive a **full scholarship** to pursue her **IB Diploma**. She will join **UWC Atlantic College** in the UK in September 2025.
- Our three Fellows at Whitman College have been doing exceptionally well academically, scoring between **3.5 and 3.8 GPA** in their first semester in 2024.
- Gyanmaya Tamang will be completing her IB Diploma from UWC-USA this year, and she has already been offered a full scholarship to attend a prestigious college in the USA for her undergraduate degree. She is waiting to hear from other colleges before making her decision.



Picture: Shrijana Tamang, SitaMaya Tamang and Sunita Nepali at Whitman College

11th Cohort College Placements

The 11th Cohort Fellows completed their 12th-grade examinations and have started their Bachelor's journey in different streams. We have renewed the Fellowship for 9 of the 14 Fellows to pursue their undergraduate studies in Nepal and abroad. Three fellows have received **full scholarships at the Asian University for Women (AUW)** in Bangladesh, and two of them have been selected to attend different United World Colleges **UWCs** in the last two years. Two Fellows, our first, are pursuing Bachelor of Arts Bachelor of Laws (**BALLB**) at **Chakrabarti HaBi Education Academy College of Law** and **Kathmandu School of Law**. We also have our first Fellow pursuing a **B. Sc in Nursing** with a **full scholarship at Far Western University, Nepal**.



Picture: Prashan, Dhiraj, Dipisha and Purnima after receiving their laptops

Mentorship Updates

One of the core areas of focus at Samaanta is our mentorship program. We have divided the mentorship program into three stages during the Fellowship journey.

Stage 1: During the first year at Samaanta, Fellows are paired with a Bachelor's Fellow to support their transition to Kathmandu, help with academics, and prepare for other activities.

Stage 2: In the second year, Fellows enrol in a mentorship program with Aakar Nepal. Aakar's initial three-month-long summer program is now extended to a full year for Samaanta Fellows from this year.

Stage 3: At the Bachelor's level, the Fellows are paired with professionals from diverse backgrounds based on their interests. In the last 6 months, we have paired 10 Fellows with Mentors from Nepal and abroad, and we are looking for more mentors to extend our offering to all Fellows.

The Mentorship Program and the tailored guidance to the Fellows at various stages of the Fellowship have significantly enhanced their confidence and also helped them thrive academically and socially.

Achievements of our Senior Fellows



Picture: top left: Community work in Lamjung; bottom left: Nabindra receiving the Director's Merit Award; top centre: Rajesh after the completion of his Learnship; bottom centre: Ranjita during her volunteering at Nepal Art Council; top right: Fellows at a community work presentation; bottom right: Deepa's Director's Merit Award

Over the past months, our Senior fellows have achieved remarkable milestones in their academic, professional, and community pursuits. Rajan Shrestha, Dipak Kumar Kurmi, Shobha Adhikari, Rajesh Sunar, Dawa Lamu Tamang, and Ankit Giri have secured **valuable internships** at different organizations that have helped them gain practical experience in their respective fields. Similarly, Deepa Amgai, Yubraj Ale Magar, Prerana Tamang, and Nabindra Chauriel have earned the **Director's Merit Award** at Thames International College for securing over 70% in their board exams.

Other Fellows have been engaged in volunteering, meaningful discussions, clubs, university events and research efforts in several events and organizations. These accomplishments highlight the growth, determination, and impact of our Fellows in different fields. These also demonstrate the transformational impact of our Fellowship program and show that it is the lack of opportunities, not ability, that limits the potential of students from underserved communities.

Extracurricular Activities

At Samaanta, we are committed to the overall development of our Fellows. We present some highlights of their extracurricular activities below:

Community Engagements: 17 teams of Fellows conducted community projects in different parts of the country this year. Each team recently presented their innovative projects at the Foundation. The projects included awareness sessions on various topics such as career opportunities after Secondary Education Examination (SEE), mental health awareness, and transition from adolescence to adulthood and cleaning campaigns, 'best from waste' workshops. These impactful projects showcased their dedication and commitment to community service.



Picture: Fellows after the Writing Workshop conducted by Intersectional Insights

Workshops, Sessions, and Events: We have conducted several impactful sessions at Samaanta over the past six months to support the personal and professional development of our Fellows. These include workshops on Leadership and Management conducted by Life Project for Youth (LP4Y), Sexual and Reproductive Rights conducted by YUWA, Digital Literacy and Rights by Digital Rights Nepal, and Critical thinking and Reflection and Writing conducted by Intersectional Insights. These activities helped with the holistic development of the Fellows.

Alumni and staff have also led sessions on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Exploring the Self; and Goal Setting to enhance the Fellows' sense of identity, purpose, and awareness of themselves and their surroundings.

In addition, senior Fellows led an interactive workshop on Design Thinking. Fellows at Whitman College conducted a session to share their experiences, focused on enhancing problem-solving skills. These activities have helped strengthen alumni and Fellow engagement and have helped deepen the sense of community and bonding among the Fellows.

Finances

Summary Financial Report for the period July 2024 - January 2025 (first six months of the Nepali fiscal year)

Expenditure: ~ USD 66,679.28

In the second half of the year, we will have:

- Relocated to a larger office, with a rental contract signed in January
- Hired additional staff; we are recruiting for a Program Director and a Program Associate
- Shifted some Fellows to a better Hostel

Table 1: Expenditures

Items	Expenditure (16 July 2024 - 13 Jan 2025)
Fellowship - Direct costs	49,181.39
Other program costs	3,611.53
Admin	7,914.9
Staff Salaries	5,938.46
Total	66,679.28

This year we have received funding from The Phoenix Foundation, Alaya (formerly Home Loan Experts), Foundation Care for All, Sharing a Smile, World Bank CCC, Samaanta US, Peter Creeks Fund and Elizabeth Ring Mather and Gwinn Mather Fund, Individual Contributions, Bildungsfoerderung, HELP, and Pestalozzi International.

Thanks to these generous contributions, our finances are looking healthy for this year. We still have a shortfall of about \$100K over the three-year period from 2024-25 to 2027-28. We are hoping to reach out to partners and wider networks to fill this gap so we can continue to grow and deepen the Fellowship.

Thank You!

Samaanta Foundation and our Fellows have continued to grow and evolve in incredible ways this past year. With your unwavering love, support, and guidance we have been able to reach new milestones, from expanding our outreach and strengthening our Mentorship Program to recruiting Fellows from diverse and underserved minority communities. Our Fellowship is expanding and thriving as a result! Thank you so much for believing in us and supporting our mission to level the playing field for deserving students in Nepal.