

# Case Study Empathy Week 2021

**Name: Bhawana Shrestha**

**Country: Nepal**

**Teacher Ambassador Profile**



## **Introduction**

**Bhawana Shrestha** is a Ph.D. candidate of Educational Leadership at Kathmandu University School of Education. She is exploring the answer to her research question, 'How do I improve my practices as the founder of an education initiative that works on the field of Emotional Intelligence?' and is trying to generate her living theory on educational leadership that will contribute to the 'flourishing of humanity'. Currently one of the faculty at King's College, she had started her career as a journalist which she later switched, in 2013, to serve as a Teach for Nepal Fellow in a rural area of Nepal for three years. Her academic research as well as her work experiences made her realize the importance of emotional intelligence in Nepal which led her to start My Emotions Matter, a purpose-driven enterprise that works around emotional intelligence. Shrestha is also working as one of the educational consultants at UNICEF

*to provide additional support on technical content development of the interpersonal relationship and problem-solving module for the 'Helping Adolescents Thrive' (HAT) project. She is an alumna of 'Living Through Lived Experience' fellow as well as a TED fellow of Teach for All. A redemptive storyteller, Bhawana believes in living a meaningful life and is fond of plants, poetry, and paintings. Bhawana, and her colleagues, recently published their first book on emotional intelligence - My Emotions Matter: A guide to managing and expressing emotions positively.*

## **Reasons why I wanted to be a part of Empathy Week**

Driven by a noble mission of contributing to a self-aware and empathetic world, I started My Emotions Matter as a values-based education initiative after my Teach for Nepal fellowship, committed to help people become more aware of their thoughts and feelings, make intentional choices, and live a purposeful life that benefits both themselves and others. We work with different schools here in Nepal and help them improve their school climate by engaging with all stakeholder; parents, teachers, students and administrators. We do this through designing and facilitating training and courses, consulting teachers, research, as well as providing coaching services to cultivate positive school climate. My interest to be involved in Empathy Week grew stronger because of one of the tragic incident that happened during the global pandemic.

A young girl committed suicide on Facebook live in Nepal. Since the pandemic, the teasing, bullying, harassment, and domination has increased in the virtual platforms. With no other options for the children at that moment to receive education and learn from other than the medium of online as all the schools are closed for a year, I realized the adverse effects on them more than ever. The emotional and psychological breakdown that they are going through is huge. With no any discussions on emotions in a very conservative society like ours, our school children are in need of a platform that gives them the right information, tools and actions that are related to social-emotional learning and emotional intelligence. I firmly believe that more than the definition of empathy, not just the children of Nepal but the children all around the world need to understand empathy in action for them to grow up as an individual who can contribute to a better world tomorrow.

## **My Expectations from Empathy Week**

I was expecting to share my experience of working in the field of social emotional learning in a developing country for last five years. I had hoped that the knowledge I had gained would become helpful for the team while at the same time, I was also eager to learn from the experts and other empathetic individuals how they are working on this so that I could use it here in my country that is going through a big emotional crisis along with the pandemic right now.

The Empathy Week team as well as all the international teacher ambassadors are great team to share your authentic self with. I used to look forward to our monthly meetings where we used to not just share our problems that we were dealing with at our schools and organizations and find solutions mutually, but we also were joined by inspiring experts who are working rigorously in the field.

## **Meaningful Moments for me**

I really felt connected to Ed, the founder of the Empathy Week during our one on one session. It was meaningful for me for two reasons;

- (i) I have seen him working hard and putting all his energy into creating the resources for the Empathy week and for him to make time and have conversation with each of us was very generous of him.
- (ii) It was after a long time, someone had actually sat down to listen to my personal story and asked how had I been and how far I had come and tried to understand what do I look forward to.
- (iii) The action projects from the students were so brilliant. For all the students it was a new experience for them where they were learning about empathy and working on a project as such. To see them grow into it was such a beautiful experience.

## **Schools**

### **School 1 – Panchakanya Basic School**

#### **Brief Overview of the Session:**

Panchakanya Basic School is one of the public schools of Nepal. As a part of the Empathy week program, 18 students from Panchakanya School were provided five lessons on the week from February 15<sup>th</sup> to February 26<sup>th</sup>.

In the five-day program of empathy week, students listened to stories of five different people from various parts of the world. The theme of the stories mostly revolved around Resilience and Diversity. The stories were shared with students with the objective of exposing them to problems like social discrimination and exclusion. The objective was to also show them how problems come in the life of every person but it is through resilience that one can tackle such problems well.

After listening to the five stories, students shall now prepare Empathy Action Projects whereby they shall be choosing to acknowledge a problem which exists in their community and then move towards solving the problem.

#### **Student Impact:**

##### **What did most students learn? (Generalized Learnings)**

The major impact that has been observed in students after participating in Empathy Week program has been their exposure to resilience and stories of resilience. When asked about the major lesson students took from the classes of Empathy week, most of the students shared that one of the major lessons they learnt from Empathy week was that problems will occur in life but it is important to not lose hope and give up when problems do occur.

In terms of the other theme 'Diversity', students shared that they learned that diversity can ignite feelings of exclusion within oneself. Most of the students realized that diversity might not always be well accepted by others around us and there is a chance that people might even try to subjugate and undermine other people when they come from a diverse background. The major student learning in terms of diversity was that even when people try to subjugate you or consider you different, it is important not to take such things into heart and it is important to move on when that happens.

### **What did some students learn?**

A few students from Panchakanya School shared that they learned the importance of giving space to others to express their emotions. They shared that it is important to allow other people tell us how they feel and for us to acknowledge and understand their emotions.

### **Overall Impact in Student's Life:**

Upon having a conversation with the teacher of Panchakanya School, it was found that the students from Panchakanya School usually came from underprivileged backgrounds and these are the students that have been working at other people's houses as a means of living.

Thus, there is a chance that the students from Panchakanya themselves have gone through situations which were challenging and hopefully the stories gave them a chance to rejoice on the fact that they aren't alone. When explaining the stories, anecdotes and sharing of personal experiences of the students were also encouraged and some students also felt comfortable being vulnerable in the class.

For instance, when explaining the story of Shu, which mostly revolved around feeling excluded, one of the students from Panchakanya shared that he too felt excluded when he had gone to his neighboring country.

Likewise, when explaining Habib's story which was also closely related to acceptance of diversity, one of the students shared how other students earlier used to tease her by her name because the name was very different.

In Natasha's story as well, which explains about diversity in terms of skin color, students were keen on sharing their personal experiences with feeling different due to the color of their skin. Some students also acknowledged and accepted that a few other of their classmates and batchmates might have felt excluded or even made fun of because of how others treated them due to their skin color.

Hence, to look at it from an overall perspective, the sessions from Empathy Week did give an opportunity for students to share their personal experiences and find someone to relate to. Whilst all of this, one major lesson that the students took with themselves after the classes got over was that resilience is an important skill and even when life's problems knock us down, it is important for us to get back up.

After the five sessions got over too, students seemed pretty excited about making Empathy Action Projects with the hope that making the project would help them develop skills.

A few students shared how making the Empathy Action Project was their first hand chance at taking part in an extracurricular activity and they were looking forward to it.

To summarize it shortly, the stories of Empathy week gave students a ray of hope and a sense of encouragement that they can solve the problems that come their way through courage. The students are also hopeful that designing an empathy action project would also help them develop some important practical skills.

#### **Student Quotations:**

*One of the students from Panchakanya School stated that, "The major learning that I derived from all of the stories is that you should not give up when life throws problems at your way. You deal with those problems and move on. The stories of all the five people we listened to in the Empathy week were really inspiring. Now, I really look forward to doing the project and learn something new from there as well."*

*Another student from Panchakanya School stated that, "We should not be discriminating against people. We should love everyone around us and be inclusive. Even if problems come up, we should look for solutions. If we work in unity, we will definitely find solutions."*

#### **Teacher Impact:**

The teacher from Panchakanya School noted that the classes on Empathy week were quite different from the regular classes. The teacher from Panchakanya School was so glad and fascinated from the sessions of Empathy week that she even shared it with other teachers from her school and asked them to join the classes if available.

While the class was initially designed to teach students about empathy and resilience, the trickle-down effect of the classes was seen in the teacher as well. The teacher from Panchakanya School did share that even she learned the importance of resilience after listening to the five stories of Empathy Week. She learned that no matter how difficult our life's challenges seem, we need to find a way to get out of it and find solutions for the problems at hand. Also, the five stories shared in the Empathy week program, made the teacher acknowledge the fact that her problems are relatively small and there are people who are experiencing problems much worse than her around the world. This gives her the ray of hope that if others can deal with such difficult life challenges then she too can do the same if she continues to believe in herself.

#### **Teacher Quotations:**

*She shared, "The classes gave students a lesson on dealing with life's challenges and problems. Even I felt joyful when attending the class. On the days that we had sessions, we would be excited to even prepare ourselves for the class. I could see my students being curious about the stories they listened to in Empathy week. Right now, I can see my students being curious about Empathy Action Projects and as I see that my students are feeling curious about something, it makes me feel joyful too."*

*The teacher also further shared, "I learnt that importance of encouraging students. If we can encourage our students, then that is a big gift we are providing them. The stories from Empathy week encouraged the students to look at everyone around them equally. I have even kept a record of the stories that were shared in the five days of Empathy week. When my students feel demotivated and*

## Students From Panchakanya School

### Student Projects:

Students from Panchakanya School developed five projects as a part of their Empathy Action Project out of which the project titled 'A New Addiction of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Era: Mobile Phones' was considered as the winning project.

### Project 1: Gender inequality at homes (Short Story)

#### Student Names:

Bhumika

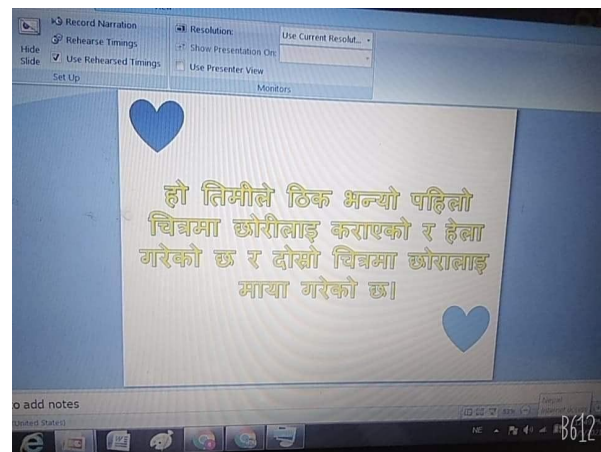
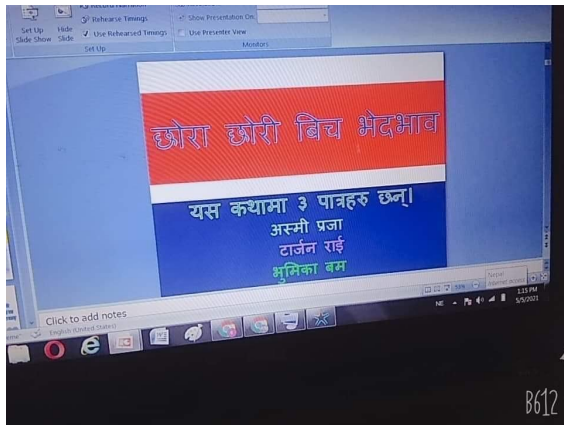
Asmi Praja

Tarjan Rai

#### Project Description:

In this project, the students developed a short story on the theme of gender discrimination done at households where the male child is given more preference than the female child. The story later took a twist where the female child later helped the parents undergo their difficult times. The moral of the short story developed by the students was to not indulge into gender discrimination and to prioritize both the male and female children in the family.

#### Pictures:



### Project 2: Ignorance of Parents by Children (Short Story)

#### Student Names:

Sushma Thami

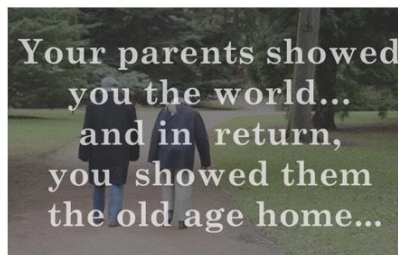
Sabina Praja

Suraj Raidas

**Project Description:**

In this project, students developed a short story on how parents were ignored by children once the parents grew old. The moral of the short story developed by the students was that once parents grow old, their children can consider the parents to be a burden and hence ignore them, which is morally wrong. It is important for children to respect their parents as much when they grow old.

**Pictures:**



**Project 3: Poverty in Nepal (Case Study Presentation)**

**Student Names:**

Devika Shrestha

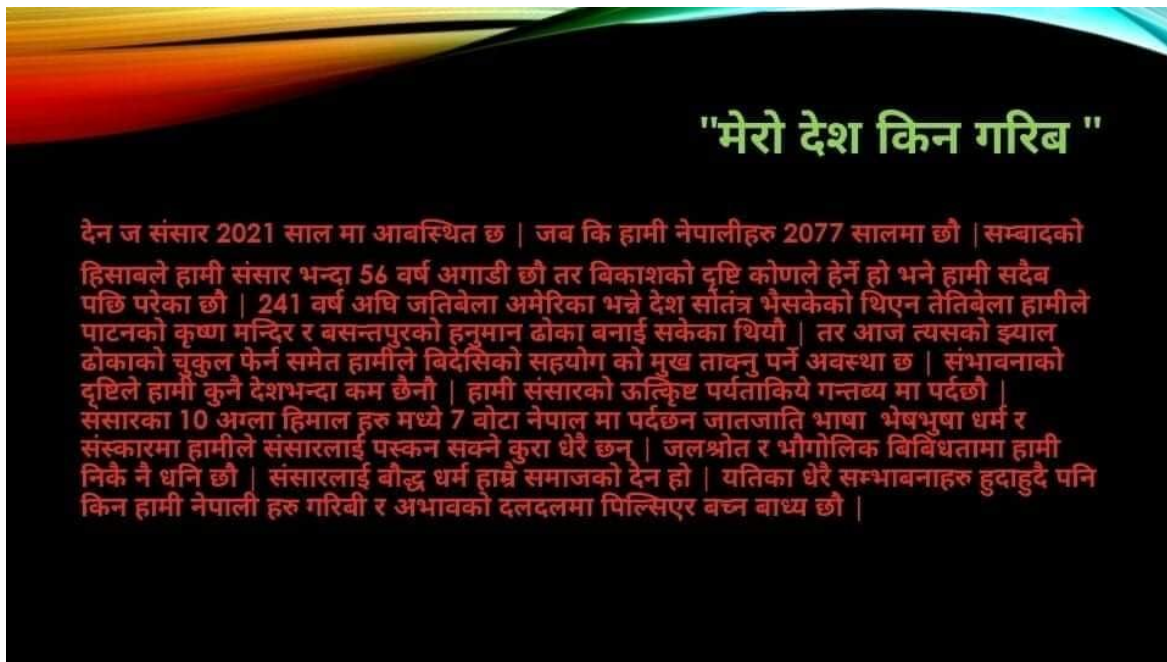
Jibuti Sherpa

Suman Raidas

**Project Description:**

In this project, the students discussed about the economic problem of poverty in Nepal. Nepal is a country which falls in the category of underdeveloped nations. Thus, this problem of poverty and Nepal being an underdeveloped nation was highlighted in the project.

#### **Pictures:**



#### **Project 4: Racial Discrimination Among Students (Short Drama)**

##### **Student Names:**

Anita Baram

Kajal Kumari

Sumina Magar

##### **Project Description:**

In this project, the students talked about racial discrimination that happens among people. The students made a short video drama talking about racial discrimination where people who are dark skinned are considered to be inferior and are not treated well.

**Link to Video:**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rlZYH7xMgUI-JjM0hmWxEop2mtXDKdgM/view?usp=sharing>

**Project 5: A New Addiction of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Era – Mobile Phones (Short Drama)****Student Names:**

Ankita Magar

Binita Giri

Subash Dahal

**Project Description:**

In this project, the students developed a short video drama explaining about the problem of social media addiction among adolescents today. The video highlighted on how social media addiction and trusting strangers on social media has now increased crimes like cyberbullying and invited various problems in people's lives.

**Link to Video:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYJIBX5fmUg&feature=share>

**School 2 – Nandi Secondary School****Basic Overview of the Session:**

Nandi Secondary School is one of the public schools of Nepal. 13 students from Nandi Secondary school became a part of Empathy week from February 22<sup>nd</sup> to March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

As a part of the Empathy week program, the students were made to listen to five stories of different people from around the world. The stories revolved around the theme of 'Resilience and Diversity'.

The students who became a part of the Empathy week program are now eligible to make Empathy Action Projects and will participate in an intra-school competition. One of the teams shall be selected from the intra school competition who will then compete on the international level and move towards the Global Empathy Awards

Apart from taking part in the competition and getting an exposure, the lessons from Empathy week themselves seemed to be very impactful in teaching students' important life lessons.

**Student Impact****What did most students learn? (Generalized learnings)**

In general, it has been observed that most of the students who took part in Empathy Week understood the importance of empathy and the importance of understanding other people's

emotions. Many students could relate the concept of diversity and empathy together. For instance, the students believed that even if they find someone who is different to them, they should not be discriminated. Rather, the students shared that they should empathize with people who are different or who are new in a society because that will make them comfortable and easy going.

### **What did some students learn?**

It was seen that some of the students who took part in Empathy week also learned the importance of self-love. One of the students could relate to Habib's story (Day 5 Lesson Plan of Empathy week) deeply and shared how that story taught her that it is important for people to not forget themselves when helping others. The student shared that sometimes when helping others, people ignore themselves and think as though they need to self-sacrifice in order to help others. However, after listening to the stories, the belief that you don't need to ignore yourself when helping others was reinforced among the student.

Likewise, another student shared how even when someone discriminates us or considers us to be lower than them, it is important to take care of ourselves. The student shared that any form of discrimination against us should not keep us from exploring our strengths and talents. When we take our strengths and talents into consideration and do something worthwhile out of it, it is more than likely that other people around us will develop an affinity towards us too.

### **What did a few students learn?**

A few students from Nandi School also resonated with the theme of mental illness and sadness on a deeper level. When collecting data after the classes were over, one of the students shared that she became aware of the fact that when there are negative thoughts or negativity disturbing oneself for elongated periods of time, it becomes important to visit a psychiatrist.

Likewise, when sharing Pete's story which was related around grief, suicide and depression, one of the students became vulnerable and shared how she could also relate to the portions of grief since she too had experienced grief in her life when her mother passed away due to cancer.

Thus, a few students from Nandi Secondary School could also learn and resonate with experiences of grief and mental illness after listening to the story of Pete (Day 3 Lesson Plan of Empathy Week.)

### **Overall Impact in Student's Life:**

The overall impact of Empathy week in student's life is in providing the students a safe space to voice out their emotions. The students from Nandi Secondary School shared their emotional experiences vulnerably in Empathy week. Thus, the sessions of Empathy week were seen as successful in providing a safe space to students to share their emotional experiences and such a safe space to express is usually considered as beneficial by teenagers.

Apart from that, the students from Nandi seemed to have gotten better in their understanding of the term 'empathy' after taking the classes. Their understanding got better not only in the literal sense but also in terms of its importance in the use of daily life.

Similarly, the other theme that really resonated with students from Nandi secondary was that of diversity. Classes from empathy week gave students a wider exposure to the discrimination which exists in the society. The classes helped students acknowledge that problem of discrimination still exists in the society and this problem can only be solved by applying empathy in interpersonal relationships.

Overall, the classes on Empathy week provided the students a chance to learn from other people's stories. The storytelling format used in Empathy week helped students learn in a fun way while also helping them take some valuable life lessons.

#### **Student Quotations:**

*A student from Nandi shared, "After taking the classes, I learned a lot of things. For example, we should not discriminate other people around us based on their body shapes and sizes or based on their language and roots. When we discriminate others, it can hurt them. This hurt in other people can diminish the talents they have within themselves and they can find it difficult to face others."*

*The same student further shared, "If something is bothering us a lot, we should try to share it with others and we should try not to keep it within ourselves. And also if we observe ourselves struggling a lot with negative thoughts and emotions, then we should not hesitate to visit a psychiatrist or even share it with our family members."*

*Another student shared, "I felt very joyful. We could freely express ourselves in Empathy week sessions....By listening to the different stories, I could learn different things. For example, rather than bothering about how others think of us, we should first look at ourselves and how we see ourselves. We can only change others by first beginning the change from ourselves. We can only save others if we save ourselves first. Many a times, in the process of helping others, we try to ignore ourselves but that should not be done."*

#### **Teacher Impact:**

Upon having a conversation with the principal of Nandi Secondary School who became a part of the session as the session observant, she said that a good aspect of the session of Empathy week was that it gave a safe space to students to express themselves freely. She stated that while students might not be able to talk with such openness in front of all the teachers and in all the classes, the classes on Empathy week definitely did provide that platform for openness to the students.

Likewise, a separate project coordinator was designated from Nandi Secondary School to co-ordinate and manage the classes of Empathy week. In a conversation with him, he shared that he is hopeful that designing Empathy Action Projects shall help students unleash their creativity levels.

*He shared, "Every student has a hidden talent within them. When students will work in team, their talents will complement each other and they will create something new. This process will definitely help them unleash their creative potential and take back a lot of practical skills."*

## **Student Projects from Nandi Secondary School**

### **Student Projects:**

Students from Nandi Secondary School made three student projects as part of their Empathy Action Project out of which the project which made a short drama video on the topic of 'Caste Discrimination' was sent for Global Empathy Awards.

### **Project 1: Environmental Conservation (Effort done at School)**

#### **Student Names:**

Goma Bhandari

Preeti Shah

Ranbir Yadav

#### **Project Description:**

In this project, the students made an effort to conserve the environment by doing plantation programs in their school. They did plantation programs around their school and took efforts to conserve the plants. They also made a video on the same and also requested everyone who watched the video to also take care of the environment by doing plantation programs in their school.

#### **Pictures:**



## **Project 2: Conservation of Child Rights (Short Drama)**

### **Student Names:**

Pramod Karki

Saru Khadka

Nima Sherpa

### **Project Description:**

In this project, students made a short video on conservation of child rights. They made a short drama on how in some houses young children are made to work as domestic helpers and in the process of making these children work as domestic helpers their child rights are not conserved. They are made to work while their right for education, their right to play etc. are not protected.

## **Project 3: Caste Discrimination (Short Drama)**

### **Student Names:**

Sangam Adhikari

Sundarmala Baitha

### **Project Description:**

In this project, students made a short movie on the topic of caste discrimination. The short movie revolved around how castes are still categorized as high and lower castes in case of Nepal and this caste discrimination has affected people from the lower caste and hurt their sentiments. Other than hurting sentiments, other aspects of life from people of lower caste is affected too including their quality of life, their education, and the employment opportunities for them.

### **Pictures:**



### **School 3 – Tilingatar School**

#### **Basic Overview of the Session:**

Tilingatar School is one of the public schools of Nepal. 14 students from Tilingatar School became a part of the Empathy Week program from the week of February 23<sup>rd</sup> to March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

In the five day program of Empathy week, students listened to five different stories of five different people from around the world. The theme of the stories that students listened to revolved around ‘Resilience and Diversity’.

The students who took part in the classes and listened to all the five stories, shall be eligible to create Empathy Action Project. In the project, the students shall have to look at problems around them, and find solutions for those problems and document the solutions in a presentation format.

The students will initially take part in an internal competition within school members. The best project in the intra-school competition will then become eligible to take part in the International Global Empathy Awards.

#### **Student Impact:**

##### **What did most students learn? (Generalized Learnings)**

Most of the students from the Empathy week learned the meaning of empathy and the value of being different.

One of the key learnings that students from Empathy week took away would be the value of being different and unique. The students who had participated in Empathy week talked about how the program taught them that being different isn’t necessarily being bad. The program taught students that every being is unique in their own ways and has different talents and this difference isn’t something to be ashamed of.

##### **What did some students learn?**

Some of the students who were a part of Empathy week program could resonate with theme of self-love. On Day 4 of Empathy week, when students were exposed to the story of Natasha, students shared their issues with loving themselves and some students even revealed how they didn’t like themselves as much.

However, the story of Natasha, who herself faced discrimination because of skin color and struggled with loving herself, taught students the importance of self-love and a few students could resonate with the theme of self-love.

#### **Overall Impact in Student’s Life:**

The overall impact of the Empathy Week classes in the life of students has been their increased understanding of self-love. As teenagers, it is natural to struggle with self-esteem issues or want to feel belonged in a social group. However, the stories from Empathy week touched student’s hearts and helped them understand that it is okay to be different and every individual has their own unique hidden talent.

Alongside the five stories of Empathy week, the development of Empathy Action Project is also expected to build practical skillset among students which is quite important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world. Thus, empathy week has provided exposure to students in two folds – i. it has helped them acknowledge the problems that exist in the world and ii. it shall help them develop practical skills when designing the project.

**Student Quotations:**

One of the students from Tilingatar School shared, *“When someone is in pain, there are different ways in which you can support them. Every person has their own talents. Every human being is different but being different is not being bad. Difference can also mean everyone has their own uniqueness. Everybody has their own unique talent.”*

Another student from Tilingatar School stated, *“Empathy is the ability to understand other people’s emotions.”*

**Teacher Impact:**

Even though the teacher from Tilingatar School could not be a part of the Empathy week sessions fully, he did share his opinions saying that the students have become more independent in their approach after taking the sessions. Even in the process of building the Empathy Action Projects, the students have become more proactive in the approach.

Apart from that, the teacher from Tilingatar School also said that the students have now started believing that emotional and social support is also one of the greatest helps they could provide to people around them. Even though they might not be able to support their near and dear ones with materialistic stuffs, they can still provide them emotional support.

The teacher from Tilingatar School stated, *“We would like to extend our gratitude for conducting this program and giving our students an opportunity to learn something new. We are hopeful that we can further continue this program in the future as well and as we continue this program in the future, our students will hopefully get to learn and come to know about newer things.”*

**Student Projects from Tilingtar School:****Student Projects:**

Students from Tilingtar School had made three projects altogether as their Empathy Action Projects and the project titled ‘Conclusion on Poverty’ was sent to be held eligible in Global Empathy Awards.

**Project 1: Conclusion on Poverty (Documentary on Poverty)****Student Names:**

Bigya Poudel

Prashamsa Dahal

Archana Dhungana

Subodh Gorathoki

**Project Description:**

In this project, the students made a documentary on poverty. The student group seemed inclined to do more research on the livelihood conditions of people living in the slum areas and the challenges they face. Hence, they went to one of the slum areas in the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu and conducted a short research on the livelihood conditions of people residing in that area. They also generated some funds from their school and did a donation program to help the people in slum areas uplift their living conditions.

After doing their primary research, they conducted a secondary research to further analyze what drives poverty and found that lack of education and lack of educational opportunities is the major cause which keeps people circling in the vicious cycle of poverty. Keeping this in mind, they wanted to educate others around them and generate awareness on the living conditions of the people living in slum areas and they designed a documentary in order to do that.

**Pictures students clicked from slum areas when doing the project:**



## **Project 2: Compassion for Strangers (Project on Child Labour – Short Drama)**

**Student Names:**

Aakriti Mishra

Nirmal Bista

Aeson Gurung

Aashutosh Pandey

### **Project Description:**

In this project, the students made a small drama on 'Child Labour' and the impact that child labour has on young children. The video made it clear as to how the students who come from underprivileged backgrounds are often made to work instead of them being involved in the process of education. The video also encouraged its viewers to empathize with such children who come from underprivileged backgrounds and find ways to help them get access to education.

### **Pictures:**



### **Project 3: Drug Addiction (Short Drama)**

**Student Names:**

Dikshya Shrestha

Durga Neupane

Menuka Thapa

Pratikshya Majhi

Samikshya Shahi

Sandhya Shrestha

**Project Description:**

In this project, the students made a short video drama on the topic of drug addiction among young population. The objective of the video drama was to help people know that drug addiction is not an option to solve any of our problems. The video also provided encouragement to parents/guardians/teachers to deal with adolescents who have fallen into the trap of drug addiction by showing how empathy and compassion is the best way to help people who have fallen into the addiction of drugs.

**School 4 – Dwarpaleshwor School****Basic Overview of the Session:**

12 students from Dwarpaleshwor School participated in the Empathy Week program conducted by My Emotions Matter. The students who came from a rural village of Nepal had their first-hand exposure to talking about things like emotions and empathy in their classroom as they became a part of the Empathy Week program.

The students listened to stories of five people from around the world. The major theme of all the five stories was of 'Resilience and Diversity'. After going through the five stories on Resilience and Diversity, it was hoped that students could resonate with those themes, reflect on their life experiences and take steps towards becoming more empathetic in their journey in life.

The students who became a part of Empathy Week Program and listened to those five stories shall now be participating in an intra-school competition whereby they will develop Empathy Action projects. In Empathy Action Projects, the students need to take a problem in their community and need to propose ideas to solve it keeping in mind their capacity and resources. The team that performs exceptionally well in Empathy Action Project shall then be eligible to participate in Global Empathy Awards.

**Student Impact:**

### **What did most students learn? (Generalized learnings)**

On an overall basis, the classes on Empathy week were a nice exposure to talking about emotions for the students. All kinds of human beings, irrespective of where they come from, what life experiences they have or what age they are in feel and experience different sorts of emotions. However, in rural areas of Nepal, students and people are not accustomed to opening about their emotions that frequently as they are unaware of concepts like emotional intelligence and empathy. However, taking the sessions on Empathy week provided the students an opportunity to talk about their emotions. And this was a needed exposure to the students especially keeping in mind the fact that the students who became a part of the sessions were in their teens where students face a lot of emotional highs and lows.

Thus, most of the students from Dwarpaleshwor School learnt that emotions are natural and developed in them the comfort to talk about emotions freely and openly.

### **What did some students learn?**

The female participants in the session were seen sharing that one of the problems they see in the society around them is of discrimination between male and female. Given that the students came from a rural background where such gender discrimination is even more commonly visible, the classes might have provided an experience to the female students to relate with their experiences of gender inequality.

### **What did a few students learn?**

One of the students who was a part of the Empathy week program was seen sharing the importance of accepting oneself despite being different from others. Thus, the theme of self-acceptance was the theme that a few students resonated well with during the session.

Likewise, one of the students shared that she learned the importance of Resilience after listening to the five stories. Thus, the theme of learning to not give up during hard circumstances in life was also something a few students learned after becoming a part of the session.

### **Overall Impact in Student's Life:**

The overall impact of Empathy week in the life of students was giving them a platform to understand and talk about emotions during their teen years. When a person is in their teen years, getting space to understand more about emotions can be quite helpful and that space was provided to the students via sessions of Empathy week.

However, the overall impact in the life of students was not seen as very high in case of students from Dwarpaleshwor School. The reason behind the limited impact being the lack of accessibility of devices among the students and their background. The students of Dwarpaleshwor School had just one laptop from which all the students would sign up and they would look at the educator as though she were a lecturer. This limited the opportunity of engagement for students in the class and hence impeded the impact of the classes on students.

Likewise, the other reason why the classes also had limited impact in the student's life was the placement of the classes. The sessions for Empathy week were placed exactly during the lunch hours of the students and hence the students had to skip their lunch to become a part of the classes and their lunch happened 40 minutes late because of the classes. Having to empathize with the students, having to postpone lunch hours for classes might have been something which reduced the engagement of students in the class thus limiting the class impact.

**Student Quotations:**

A student from Dwarpaleshwor School stated, *"I understood that you should never give up."*

Another student from Dwarpaleshwor School stated, *"It is important to accept ourselves even when we feel we are different from others. It is important not to discriminate one another."*

**Teacher Impact:**

Upon having a conversation with the teacher from Dwarpaleshwor School, the teacher stated that one of the major impacts that classes of Empathy week had on students was developing in them the ability to analyze. There are a few social problems that already exist in the rural areas like gender discrimination. While students saw it and even experienced it sometimes, they lacked the ability to analyze it. The classes on Empathy week have enabled the students with this ability of analysis.

Also, the teacher from Dwarpaleshwor School highlighted the importance of empathy. He stated that as a teacher it is important for him to step on to his student's shoes and look at things from their perspective. Likewise, it is also important for the students to empathize with the teacher and look at things from the teacher's perspective. And after taking sessions on Empathy week, he has observed a change in his students where his students now seem to be more empathetic with him and also try to consider looking at things from his perspective.

**Teacher Quotations:**

The teacher from Dwarpaleshwor School stated, *"Empathy week has surely impacted the students. I see them being inquisitive about the classes and coming to me with questions on the classes. When they don't complete the tasks assigned to them during the Empathy week classes, it does bother them and this in itself shows that the students were interested in the class and the classes made them think. Had the classes not left them thinking, I don't think they would be bothered about the classes or what they learnt in the class at all."*

The teacher from Dwarpaleshwor School also stated that the program on Empathy week would be extremely helpful for students of class 8, 9 and 10 since the students are in their teens. The teacher stated *"Programs like empathy week can help in propagation of newer teaching methodologies in a better way. In the traditional teaching system, the focus is on making the students learn by using negative reinforcements like punishing them or scolding them. However, this is not the most appropriate way to teach students and with classes like empathy week, we can move from the traditional methods of teaching and learning to a more empathetic way of teaching and learning which is critical for 21<sup>st</sup> century students."*

## **Student Project Details of Dwarpaleshwor School**

### **Student Projects:**

Students from Shree Dwarpaleshwor Secondary School developed a total of two projects as a part of their Empathy Action Project. Out of the two projects, the project which worked on making a song related to discrimination was sent for participation in Global Empathy Awards.

### **Project 1: Discrimination on the basis of Sex (Drama)**

#### **Student Names:**

Laxman Gurung

Rashmi Gurung

Rajani Tamang

Amulya Dhungana

#### **Project Description:**

In this project, the students made a short drama showing how gender discrimination is still evident in the rural areas of Nepal. In the rural areas of Nepal, it can be seen that families prioritize male child over the female child. It is still seen that male children are given better opportunities and access to quality education, whereas it is believed that since female child will be leaving the families and going to another home, quality education is not that important for them.

The short drama was intended to raise awareness among families as to how gender discrimination should not be continued and how both the male and female child should be given equal opportunities.

#### **Pictures:**





## Project 2: Social Discrimination (Song)

### Student Names:

Bipana Dhakal

Bipana Tamang

Krishma Tamang

Rojina Tamang

### Project Description:

In this project, students made a song talking about social discrimination. They made a small music video covering the issue of social discrimination. The music video ended with a short story of how even young people of rural areas are seen discriminating each other on the basis of gender and how that needs to change.

### Pictures:





Let's seat together