

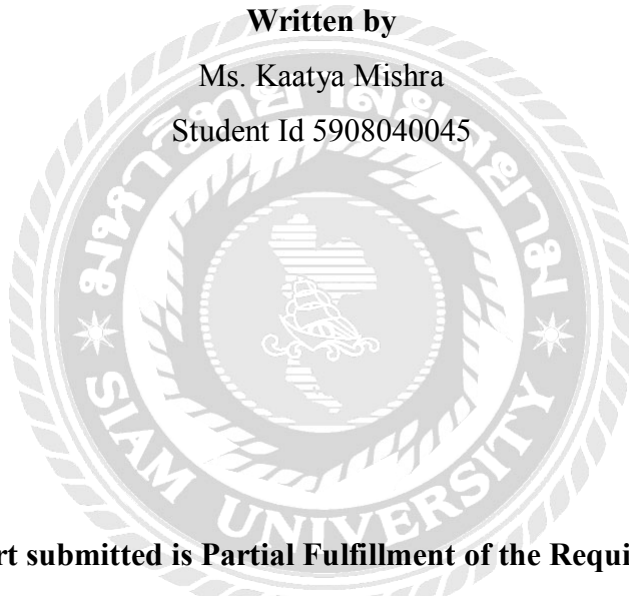


Cooperative Education Report
An Attempt to Build a Better Environment for Business

Written by

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This Report submitted is Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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Title- An Attempt to Build a Better Environment for Business

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We have approved this cooperative report as a partial fulfillment of the Cooperative education program semester 2/2019.

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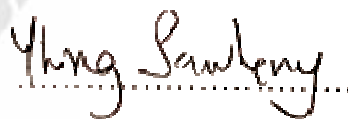
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Thank You!

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Abstract

My three-month internship experience at the Nepal Communitere was a life time achievement professionally and personally. Professionally I gained many skills that will be useful for me in the upcoming stages of my career development. Personally, I gained the best memories and worked with the best people there, which I will forever cherish. Nepal Communitere was established in 2015, after the devastating earthquake in Nepal with a purpose of helping people rebuild their dreams and their lives. Nepal Communitere is a community hub, and open for anyone who is willing to grow their businesses and for someone looking for a working space in a very reasonable price. To date NC has supported over 50 diverse community projects, initiatives and startups over the past 3 years. The core programs emphasize on transfer of knowledge and a co-creation process through design-thinking approaches, rapid prototyping, testing, and iterating and market penetration. There are many programs under Nepal Communitere such as, I cube, Co-working, Makers space, American Arts Incubator and other as well.

Keywords: *Internship, Co-Working, Team, Community, Professionalism, Startups.*

Impact of Covid-19 at Nepal Communitere

None of us ever anticipated that something like Corona virus would come out of the blue and change our lives with the blink of eye. As the whole world is suffering from the global pandemic. It can be anticipated that Nepal being a small as well as a country with under developed health system which falls under almost bottom in the world health ranking could go through it without any Lockdown or Curfew. In Nepal, the lockdown started way ahead before it could harm as badly it did to rest of the world, the lockdown was made into action when only one case was found of Corona virus in Nepal, which was a Chinese who already recovered from it. The lockdown was one of the best decision taken by the government as a controlling measure for the virus.

The virus affected the whole world, and it affected the organization I was interning as well. Before Lockdown, we were stressed about going to office in such stressful condition. Nepal Communitere being a community hub, the organization couldn't stop people coming and socializing, as it would kill its motto by doing that. NC had a workshop on how to protect ourselves from the virus. But soon after the workshop, the lockdown came to action. Then we started to work from home, I was majorly involved in the consulting and contracts so after the lockdown I couldn't do both of the work as other partner organizations were closed. So I was given some research work regarding the curriculum development and the master class. Overall, my organization tried the best to work from home and do the most of the work from home, but as easy it is to stay at home and work, there comes another responsibility as well that's family and ignoring it doing work of office only makes it hard. So because of those issues, my team mates and I was going through a very hard time, from working at home during the pandemic.

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List of Abbreviation

NC- Nepal Communitere

I³- Iterate, Innovate, Incubate

HCD- Human Centric Design

AAI- American Arts Incubator

MMF- Mini Maker Faire



Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Company Profile



Figure 1: Company Logo

Nepal Communitere is a not-for-profit organization providing an open and inclusive community-led innovation hub for bold innovators and creative change-makers. NC is the Nepali branch of Communitere International, an innovative non-profit, pioneering an effective international model for sustainable disaster recovery.

NC offers business incubation, co-working space, a Maker space, cafe, training lab and consulting services to help people turn ideas into reality. It provides a dynamic space, made from 16 donated shipping containers, is a place that values growth, creativity, sustainability, collaboration, human-centered design, iteration and safe failure. Nepal Communitere brings together Nepali and international groups to operate as one community.

To date NC has supported over 50 diverse community projects, initiatives and startups over the past 3 years. The core programs emphasize on transfer of knowledge and a co-creation process through design-thinking approaches, rapid prototyping, testing, and iterating and market penetration.

NC has three main programs i.e. I³ Business Incubation Program, Kathmandu Mini Maker Faire and American Arts Incubator. The I³ Program is Nepal Communities' new holistic business incubation program designed to support Nepali businesses to build a strong foundation for growth and success. The program lasts for a year and it is supported by the

UK Aid. Whereas, Mini Maker faire serves as a forum to celebrate and leverage the Maker and DIY movement, with a unique focus on humanitarian and other needs-based innovation as the Nepali people rebuild their lives. And American Arts Incubators is a creative exchange program that utilizes community-driven digital and new media art projects to instigate dialogue, build communities, bolster local economies, and further social innovation. Each incubator addresses a relevant social or environmental challenge such as economic equity, youth empowerment, gender equality, and environmental sustainability.

1.2 Organization Structure

At Nepal Communitere, there is more of a flat or line hierarchy system. We have a Strategic Advisor, her name is Bahar Kumar, she looks after everything and everybody reports to her. Then we have two deputy Directors, both female so Nepal Communitere is a Women Led Organization. I used to report to the Deputy Director who looks after the programs of the company, Dr. Padmakshi Rana. Under the director there are many other people who report directly to the director or the strategic advisor, they are: Program

Manager, Fablab Manager, Supporting Staffs, Financial Manager and Program Assistant

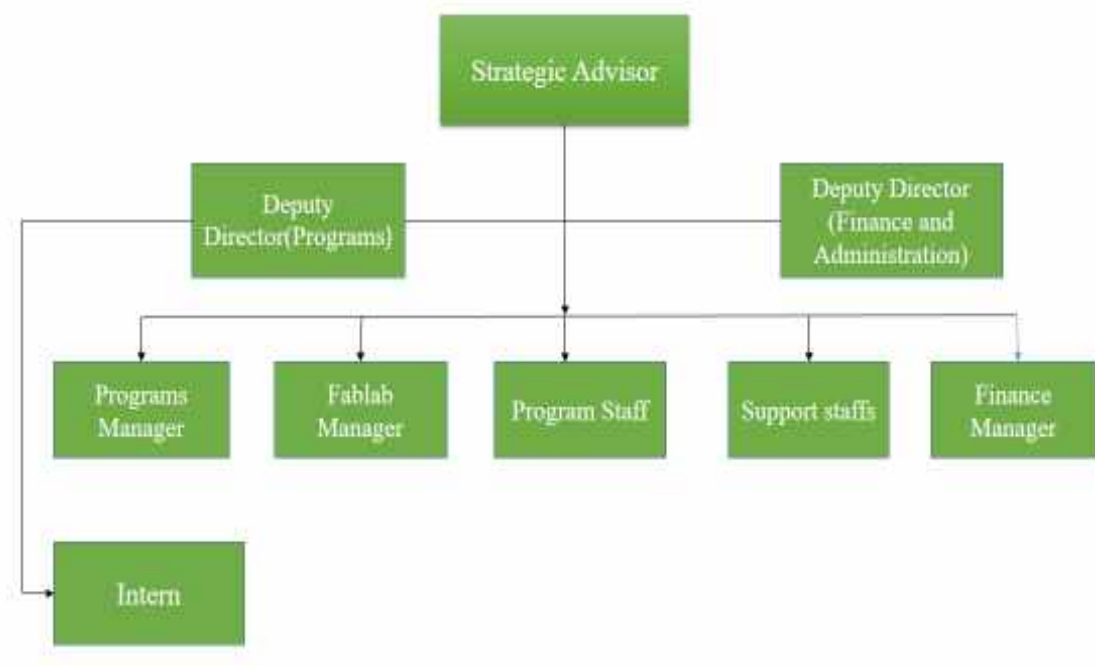


Figure2: *Organization Structure of Nepal Communitere*

1.3 Intentions to join the company

The primary intentions to join the company was learning and professional growth. As Nepal Communitere is an INGO constantly working for making the lives of people better, its approach to connect with people and contribution to the society was something I was eager to learn. And the best part is that this was my very first time I worked in a Women-Led organization, having different backgrounds and different approach solving any matter made it more interesting for me to select this organization.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The Objectives of the study are to apply the theories and knowledge to the real world business, my major objectives are as follows:

- a. To develop proficiency in a particular business field such as Human Resource, Financial Management or Investment so on.
- b. To improve Business Skills and developing interpersonal as well as intrapersonal skills as well.
- c. To gain better Networking skills
- d. To develop technological and communication skills required in professional world.
- e. To learn the processes of how a startup runs
- f. To gain the real time experience of seeing a growth of the startup.
- g. To gain the knowledge which will be useful for a lifetime.
- h. To apply all the theoretical knowledge in the conceptual manner

Chapter 2: Internship Activities

2.1 Job Description and Responsibilities

The internship at Nepal Communitere started from 27th of January,2020 for three-months till the 27th of April,2020. The Job descriptions and responsibilities I was given at Nepal Communitere were:

- i. Documentation& drafting of contracts
- ii. Research based work
- iii. Helping in organizing events
- iv. Assisting in consulting works
- v. Working with Startups

2.2 Contribution of the Student

In my internship period of four months, I was given many tasks which made me enhance my inner potentials as well as develop many newer skills. NC provided me perfect platform for the personal as well as the professional growth. Some of the contributions which I did in the span of time were:

- i. **Documentation& drafting of contracts:** The core part in any organization is documentation, to proceed for any work, it provides a benchmark and an evidence to move ahead with the work. I was responsible to maintain the soft and hard copies of the NC documents for the first few weeks in the organization. I drafted contracts for the co-working space tenants who used to set up their office for a short period of time in the Nepal Communitere co-working space.
- ii. **Research based work:** During the corona pandemic, The office was closed due to the lockdown by the government and as most of the works I did was consulting tand the interaction with the start ups later I had no such work so my supervisor gave me some interesting topics to research and write reports on which will be further used in the opening of Fabrication Laboratory.The reports were mainly on TOT(Training of Trainers), HCD (Human Centric Designs), 3^D printing, Curriculum Development for the Master Class and so on.
- iii. **Organizing Events:** During my timeframe at Nepal Communitere, there were not many events we could organize because of the ongoing global pandemic, but at start for like a month we managed to organize two major events, which was investor meet up for the budding start-ups i.e. Ecorb and Antidote. Apart from these two events, we had few team meetings and some cake and coffee sessions.

- iv. **Consulting Works:** I worked with my Deputy Director, Aarti Joshi in the consulting works. I worked in two big projects of the company which were, Administration Department Review of The Asia Foundation and Board Member Review of the Child Rescue Nepal. During these projects, I was assigned to make presentation for The Asia Foundation's Project whereas for Child Rescue Nepal's project I worked from the start. I prepared questionnaire for interview as per the Board members' work in the organization whereas the interview got postpone due to the pandemic.
- v. **Working together with startups:** This was the most interesting part of my internship, where I got chance to work with the startups under Nepal Communitere. There I had to check on the milestones achieved by the startups and what else is to be achieved and make a timesheet for their milestones according to the budget and the resources they had, which was further approved by the founders as well as the NC directors.

Chapter3:Identification of Problems Encountering during the Internship

3.1 Indicate how you successfully solved the problems

During my internship period at Nepal Communitere, I was under supervision of my supervisor who helped me most of the time getting through any problem or help I needed. The problems I had during my internship period were more due to miscommunication or it was because of the flat hierarchy of the organization in some cases. Sometimes the tasks provided to me were not very clear. Because these tasks were assigned without deadline. So, during those times I had like a plenty of time after completing the work and someday I didn't have work at all in my office still had to stay just complete some of the office hours.

During any miscommunication I directly used to talk to my supervisor regarding it and she always helped with it. And since the organization has a very flat structure, people somehow knows everything about each other works where as in the same time they are confused about their job responsibilities as well. So sometimes when I had problem regarding any subject matter I used to have a hard time solving it. I was given work by every member of the organization as I was an intern so I had to assist everyone in their work so sometimes had a pile of works to do and due to lack of communication, other members wouldn't know I was doing what work I was doing so there was a pile of work to do within a very little time.

3.2 Provide some examples

Some of the problems that I encountered during my internship period are as follows:

- i. During the first few weeks of my internship, I was given the documentation work, which was more of a very monotonous work and apart from knowing what kind of documents are required to an organization there wasn't anything to learn from it. So there was a time where I thought to leave the organization but I went and talked with my supervisor about the subject matter and she helped me deal with the issue and provided me the work related to my interest.
- ii. Since I was assigned duties as other members as well and because of this I had lots of work to accomplish by other members as well of the organization and sometimes has a lots of work to accomplish. Later I made a schedule for each department of the organization as Monday and Friday in Finance, whereas Tuesday and Wednesday in Business Incubation and Thursday in Fablab department which mainly dealt with 3^D and making the first Fantastic Fablab in Nepal itself.

Other than that there weren't any such problems that I had to face in the organization. It is one of the well balanced women led organization and each and every member of the organizations were very supportive and they knew what they were doing and constantly worked to achieve the organizational goals.

Chapter 4: Learning Process

4.1 What are the things you have learned during the internship

The things I learnt from my internship from Nepal Communitere are cited below:

- a. **Self-reliance:** Demonstrating that I can be trusted to take on a task and complete it independently gave me that warm fuzzy feeling of being trusted. It also helped me to understand my strengths and weaknesses, and how I can cultivate them accordingly.
- b. **Interpersonal skills:** In my workplace, I developed my interpersonal skills. I learnt to better communicate with other people and have a better networking skills. I learnt to think and act diplomatically according to the want of the situation.
- c. **Problem solving skills:** During my internship period I was given tasks to complete on my own which sometimes required a lot of brainstorming and problem solving on my own, it helped me develop a sense of self-reliance.
- d. **Commercial Awareness:** During my internship period I interacted with many people from different backgrounds and many of the coworkers as well as the startups, during that I got a lot of knowledge about the current business status of Nepal and lots of information about starting your own business and the economy of Nepal as well.
- e. **Maturity:** I worked in a team where my colleagues vary drastically in terms of age, experience and knowledge and that significantly alter my perceptions and helped me to see things differently. By having a more balanced viewpoint and starting to see the world outside my own educational bubble, and helped my personal development advance rapidly.
- f. **Organizational Skills:** It is as simple as something like going to office every day and working in an ethical code of conduct with a group of people helping each other, meeting the deadlines and working together to achieve a common goal, there with a group of my NC Team I learnt those skills and I believe this is one of the best learning I am taking from the company.
- g. **Critical Brainstorming:** During my period of internship at NC I was given a lot of work which I did myself without any supervision. I had a lot of brainstorming session individually not in a group gained a lot of research skills as well during the process.
- h. **Women-Led:** In my internship experience, this was the first time I worked in a Women-Led organization, and it was very surreal experience for me. Every decision were taken with everyone's consent in the organization.

4.2 Details of the related learning process and new knowledge student has

received

During my internship, I got chance to work with professionals from various fields. It was a great learning for me to be the part of Nepal Communitere and work under specialists of different departments having a different approach to handle the problem or deal with complex situations. Some of the Learning and New knowledge I acquired during my internship at NC are

a. Public Relationship Management: In Nepal Communitere, each day was like a new beginning for me, everyday some new faces and some interesting incidents were happening. But the best part was the relationship NC had with its clients, co-workers or other businesses. It was a great learning experience for me, and to see how and in what ways the team was handling everything with such ease and warmth.

b. Importance of Documentation: At some point in my internship phase I was super frustrated regarding all those documentation works which were assigned to me but after sometimes our company regarding the Fablab issue was struggling with the documentation process with the government body Social Welfare Council and seeing people being so frustrated regarding it and going to SWC everyday made me realize that documentation is the blood of any organization.

c. Human Centric Design (HCD): This term was something which I didn't learn through academic and practical experience but I got to know about it through my research during my work at the program department of the Nepal Communitere. It is an approach to problem solving, commonly used in design and management frameworks that develops solutions to problems by involving the human perspective in all steps of the problem-solving process. Human involvement typically takes place in observing the problem within context, brainstorming, conceptualizing, developing, and implementing the solution.

d. Professionalism: As said by Steven Pressfield, "The essence of professionalism is the focus upon the work and its demand, while we are doing it, to the exclusion of all else." I learnt that professionalism is something that needs to be done in an exact time with a discipline of everything else, it is not all about dressing up and having a group of people working under you but more than that.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Self-assessment as a professional

My internship at Nepal Communitere helped me grow professionally as well as personally in many aspects. It enhanced my communication skills, interpersonal as well as intrapersonal skills. It developed self-reliance in me as well as made me believe that I can myself work to minimize my weakness and strengthen the strengths, if I know myself better. During this period, I learnt, I grew. And someday these knowledge which I acquired from Nepal Communitere will be very useful in my professional life.

We learnt four years about the finance, organization, professionalism, operations and so on but unless you don't get then platform to enhance and apply those skills it doesn't make any sense to anyone studying day and night all those theories. Theories may be are explained better in classrooms but unless the opportunity for exploring isn't provided they remain incomplete. And here at NC, I might not be able to apply it myself but I saw how people do apply it. And the most important thing I learnt during my internship period was, Professionalism is not something you have to learn it is the behavior of a mannered person in their working environment.

5.2 Findings and Discussion

As the topic of the report is “An Attempt to Build a Better Environment for Business”, in the internship period the core work part was consulting and the Incubation Centre related, where I got chance to see the booming startups trend in Nepal and the best part was I was involved in the startups consulting in my internship. It was a thrilling experience for me working in that department, as my own dream is to be an entrepreneur and seeing people struggle to achieve their dream was a very inspirational moment for me. There were so many things I found out about the journey of a seed company to such a large organization someday and what are the things required for that push. Here I have cited some of the points on how NC was working to build a better environment for businesses in Nepal:

- i. Selection Criteria: Firstly, a company with a unique vision and purpose which has a fair chance to boom in the current scenario of Nepal is being selected.
- ii. Master Classes: After the selection of the organization, they are assisted with the master classes. In those classes, they are made aware about the current status and the best way for them to proceed for the business.
- iii. Product Prototype: The third stage is the product prototype and this is made open to the general public and it is more like a pilot testing for the organization, so in that phase they see the actual reaction of the people about their products.
- iv. Investor Meet-ups: After successfully prototyping of their respective products and having a general assumption of what will be the reaction of others, the fourth stage i.e. Investor meet-up i.e. Investor meet up is being carried out where the angel investors, venture capitalist, entrepreneurs are being invited and the startups under the NC explain their vision and what they will do more if they get the fund from the investors.
- v. Administration: After getting the fund from the investors. The fund is being divided according to the milestones to be achieved by the businesses and this process is assisted by the deputy director of the NC.
- vi. Graduation: After successful transition of the start up from the seed to the growth phase they are being graduated and made run on their own.

Being a part of this process, I can say NC works as a backbone for the startups and helps it to grow by every means from providing a better mentor to providing a fantastic working space.

As my topic says, An attempt to build the better environment for business, the finding of the study summarizes it all. Nepal being a developing country has got ample of opportunities for any start up to grow and boom, it only needs some fuel to burn and then there is no stopping for the businesses in Nepal.

ANNEX



Figure 3: Master classes on Entrepreneurship



Figure 4: Environment Day Awareness

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