

My youth exchange experience in US

Education with outer knowledge is the key to making your dreams possible and a brighter future.

In Nepal many children's and youth live under poverty, its due to literacy families cannot afford their children to go to proper school and have good education.

I am Sushmita Gautam. I come from a very poor family. My mom is a single mother. She have worked so hard for us, struggle a lot for us. My dad left us when I was the age of 7. He was an alcoholic man who use to drink all day and come back home at midnight. Whenever he used to be home he used to be so wild, biting my mom, disturbing neighbors. We were having a very hard time staying with dad so my mom decided to shift the room to different house. But he found us wherever we were we never had peace in our house. We didn't use to go to school. My mom used to go to other houses and earn the living. She used go early in the morning at 4:30am in the for the work. She used to cook lunch for us, put the potty inside the room and locked us inside the room for the whole day. We used to be so bored inside the room that me and my sister used come out through the window and used to play with our friends. In the night when it was time for mom to be back home then we used to go back to room through the window and act like we were watching movies. When mom was back home she used to clean our potty. She would be so tired working in so many houses but never said anything to us. She always had that cute smile on her face as if is ok. We were very small to understand lot of things. Mom used to cook dinner and as we all used to get ready to sleep then there comes dad same routine goes on. My mom moved us somewhere else, where our dad wouldn't be able to find us. My mom looked at us, thought about us and cried a lot. Since then we never saw our dad. As my mom friend knew about the children and youth first she immediately talked with her friend and then finally we were in the home where there were peace, proper place to sit , lot of friends, no more fights, were so excited to go school and we were no more locked inside the room. If I haven't been in CYF then I would also have been having life like my mother. Would have got married in a very young age, would have my children, would have been bitten by husband. My mom didn't wanted us to have the same life as hers. So she decided us to keep in hostel. At the beginning we didn't wanted to stay in the hostel to get far from our mom and now I am very thankful for where I am. So, it's almost been 11 years that I have been in CYF and I feel more comfortable staying here rather than going back home. Now my mom is working abroad in Malaysia. She doesn't get bitten by dad anymore, doesn't need to worry about us and she is also working good there now. I am so happy that now my mom is not scared of anyone. She can fight back for her rights. I have a younger sister and she is studying in grade 8 now. Now I have understood how difficult our lives were.

At first I will like to thank everyone for making my youth exchange year an amazing experience. Never in my life thought I would be in US which was totally dream for me but you guys made my dream come true (children and youth first, Paula mam, Haushala Di). All the Rotary family, CYF family, and all the host families who have helped to make the year unforgettable.

When I heard that I have been chosen to go to America for the whole one year I was so excited and just wanted to go as soon as possible. Since then I got ready I started packing my stuff, went shopping with my mom just couldn't control my happiness, excitement etc. Finally the day came that I had to leave my home I just didn't want to leave at the time. One side my heart was full of happiness and one side my heart was sad. So I went with Haushala di and for the first time in my life saw an airplane and have been traveling. When I got to plane with haushala didi and as the plane started moving I was so scared. Didn't know how to put the belt Di helped me with it. I was feeling so dizzy. I didn't want to eat anything. At first we had 5 hour flight to Abu Dhabi. I slept the whole flight. Then we had our next transition to Chicago the longest flight. Then Di said that we don't have much we are almost there I still remember that day. Till Chicago I slept whole flight then after the longest flight we reached Chicago. Almost to Minnesota two hour flight. I was super excited. I started getting fresh. Then after two hours flight we were there in Minnesota. I was lost in my dream as I went there. Saw there Paula mam and some rotary people welcoming us I was so excited I was just lost.

I went to Minnesota as a scared young girl who had never seen an airplane, never travelled abroad didn't speak much. It was really difficult for me to make friends in the beginning. Language was really different my accent was different. But came back as a confident woman I came back home on my own I have become more open mind, approachable. Made lot of friends, families across border. I got more fluent to English because I didn't find any Nepali friends. I had to speak in English with everyone that made me more easy to learn English. I also had English class and literature class which helped me a lot to learn English. Now I am no more scared to give speech in front of people. I still can't speak much fluently but have made me so confident that I can speak to anyone. Now I feel myself that I have become more like a teenager and I have found hidden me.

Before I went to USA my thoughts and plans were Immature and now yes, a year abroad have changed my thoughts and plans for my future because I was very confused of what I wanted to do well before going abroad. I had lot of thoughts for my career like I wanted to be model, An airhostess, and more and as I was abroad I wanted to be social worker as I wanted to help kids like me. But I also thought It wouldn't be easy. It is very challenging. Now I have changed my thoughts for my career as I am studying Hotel management (Hospitality). I want to be Crew as I really want to travel around the world.

Well in Nepal usually teenagers get marry in a very young age. In my view I don't think it is compulsory that every women have to get married in a such a young age because a girl also has dream, wants to study, fulfill the dream, be a part of the society.

Yes I still keep in contact with some of my other exchange students from around the world only those friends who were really close to me. They have been sharing me about me what was their feelings after being back home and what are their plans for future as I shared them my too. They have been sharing me about their country what's going on there and how's their life has been there.

Literally and Logically it is very important for me to know what's going on the world and yes my views on US has changed because before being there I wasn't that much interested knowing news about their I just wanted to be their travelling .But now I am more connected and interested to the news of what's going on in the US and around the world .

Well In Nepal we Nepali cannot take citizenship from mom side which is really weird in Nepal. We can only take citizenship from dad side. Mom are not given much priority. As in states it is allowed from anyone since they are born. Since Nepal is under developed our government doesn't give much priority to things like this. They take it very easily.

I never thought that I would get the opportunity to travel 20 states in east coast. One of my favorite place to travel was New York I have only seen New York Time square in movies.

Now in 2020 as I am writing this piece I would like to say that I am in a good place, as I am completing my degree in hotel management in junior level from now. Then I would like to work in a ship as a crew since I really love and always had interest in traveling the world. I really want to look after my mom and sister. I don't want the same past to go on and want them to be happy and myself too. I will really work hard to achieve my goals. I will also try to help my brothers and sisters in CYF. Although I can't help in a big way but making difference in a small way will make everyone happy.