



SOCIETY OF NEPALESE ENGINEERS IN UK

SONEUK

NEWSLETTER

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Dear SONEUK Members,

It is my privilege to address you in this edition as we reflect on recent milestones and look ahead to SONEUK's exciting upcoming events.

First and foremost, following Nepal's recent general election, we offer our sincere congratulations to the newly elected government.

In this spirit of new beginnings, we wish the newly elected government a successful tenure in serving the people of Nepal. As we begin this newsletter, I want to reflect on recent events that have shaped our community and beyond.

International Women's Day is a time to celebrate the achievements, strength, and important contributions of women in every field. In this special edition, you'll get to meet some inspiring female engineers from our society. Hearing their story and advice to the younger generation, I would like to thank them for being role models.

Building on these stories, today, the number of women in Nepal's engineering workforce is steadily rising. While this progress is promising, there is more to do. At SONEUK, we are devoted to supporting and promoting women in engineering, knowing they are vital to the future of our field.

In this sixth edition of the newsletter, we also present an interview with senior SONEUK member Er Laxman Ghimire. Alongside this, we highlight stories from two young members of SONEUK who recently secured graduate roles and share their journeys: Ar Britam Rai, now a Graduate Site Engineer at EFSB, and Er Krishna Kandel, now a Graduate Civil Design Engineer at YTL Group.

Looking ahead, we will celebrate the Nepali New Year on 11th April at Buddha Restaurant in Bexleyheath. Make sure to get your tickets and sign up. We wish all our members and their families a Happy New Year filled with health, happiness, and success.

In addition, the upcoming event after the New Year event will be the SONEUK presentation and competition, which will be held on the 16th of May. We had a record number of people sign up for the competition, and SONEUK members are excited to see their hard work pay off! Please remember to get your tickets early.

SONEUK succeeds because of the dedication, teamwork, and shared identity of its members. I encourage everyone to actively participate in our upcoming events, connect with fellow members, support one another, and contribute to achieving the goals of our society. Together, we can continue strengthening both SONEUK and the wider engineering community.

As Chairperson, I also look forward to meeting more engineers from across the United Kingdom throughout the remainder of my tenure. By building new connections and encouraging collaboration, I hope we can continue to grow and enhance the impact of our society.

Thank you for your consistent commitment and support.

With best wishes,

Chairperson of SONEUK
SONEUK

1. **Professional mentorship & Guidance series** : - 10th Nov 2025 - 09th Mar 2026
2. **Interaction Programme** : *Chairperson's tour visit* – 7th February 2026

1. Professional Mentorship & Guidance Series

Society of Nepalese Engineers in the UK (SONEUK) launched a new online mentoring initiative, offering members direct access to professional guidance from SONEUK Chairperson Er. Subodh Timilsina.

This platform designed to support members seeking career development, industry insights, and professional growth within the UK engineering landscape. Participants benefit from Er. Timilsina's extensive expertise and practical advice, making each session a valuable opportunity for learning and advancement.

The first session was held on 8th November 2025 continued on fortnightly basis held its last event yesterday on 9th March 2026 . Over that time period, a total of 7 sessions were held, help which saw more than 30 participants in total. We received over 10 CVs that will be monitored. The session aimed to give young SONEUK engineers a platform to share and navigate their journeys through the employment ladder. The engaging was a success as engineers gained valuable insights and guidance from chairperson.

LOOKING FOR PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE?

If you are a SONEUK Member and looking to shape your Professional Journey,

- Aim to seek Career Advice
- Mentorship Support
- Route to potential Graduate Programme

Feel free to join me on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month, commencing from 10th Nov 2025

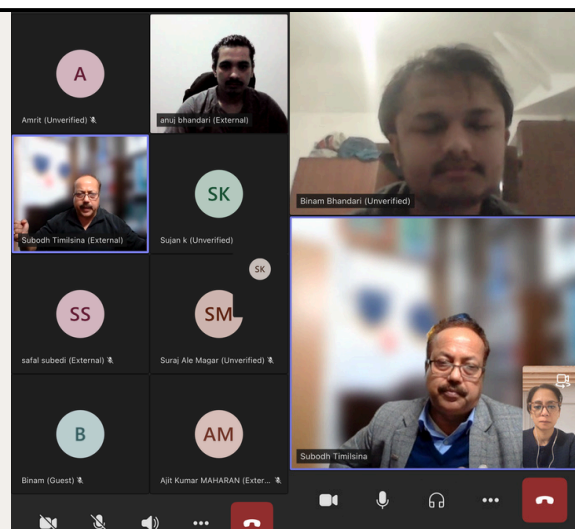


I am available between 7:00 pm to 7:30 pm.

Joining Link will be shared via SONEUK channels on Viber, Facebook and LinkedIn.



Er. Subodh Timilsina
Chairperson, SONEUK
"Uniting Engineers for Change"



2. Interaction Programme – 7th February 2026

Society of Nepalese Engineers (SONEUK) hosted its 65th event alongside a city meet-up in Leicester.

The event brought together 18 engineering professionals, students, and individuals working across construction, project management and the IT sector, creating a valuable platform for intergenerational learning and professional exchange.

The session began with Er. Subodh Timilsina, Chairperson of SONEUK, who introduced SONEUK, outlining the organisation's mission, vision, and its role in supporting Nepali engineers and professionals in the UK.

This was followed by a round of introductions, allowing participants to share their academic journey, professional challenges and difficulties they are facing to get to the employment ladder. The second segment focused on an open discussion led by Er. Subodh Timilsina, where young engineers and professionals were invited to share the challenges they face and the kind of support they seek from SONEUK.

During the discussion, Er. Gopal Neupane emphasised the importance of differentiating oneself in a competitive job market, advising young professionals to focus on consistent hard work and practical experience to strengthen their CVs. Er. Safal Subedi, a young engineering professional, highlighted the value of gaining additional qualifications and undertaking relevant training courses to remain competitive and adaptable.

During discussion, Er Santosh Khadka, Saugat Dhamala, Ajeena Timilsina and others also shared their thoughts.

Chairperson of SONEUK, Er. Subodh Timilsina, concluded by stressing that passion, self-awareness, and the ability to clearly articulate one's skills are essential for long-term career growth. Across the conversation, a recurring theme was the critical importance of communication skills, particularly within engineering and engineering management careers. Overall, the event fostered meaningful dialogue, mentorship, and insight, reinforcing SONEUK's commitment to empowering the next generation of engineers and professionals.



SONEUK, would like to acknowledge and recognise the contributions and support made by our fellow members to the Nepalese engineering community, particularly in the areas of education, skill development, and employment.

In this edition of our newsletter, we are featuring an engineer who has been making remarkable strides in these fields. Their continued dedication and passion serve as an inspiration to us all, and we are proud to highlight their journey and achievements.

Feature interview: Er. Laxman Ghimire

Er. Laxman Ghimire is a Chartered Civil Engineer with the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and a Chartered Surveyor with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Laxman currently works at National Highways, an executive public body of the Department for Transport (DfT). He is actively involved with several professional institutions in the UK, including ICE, RICS, and CICES, serving in various capacities. He was a member of ICE's Exemption and Recognition Panel from 2020 to 2025 and is currently serving on the ICE Audit Panel. In September 2022, he was elected as a Trustee of the Council of Management for 3 years. Laxman has been a Professional Reviewer for ICE since 2016 and also serves as an ICE Supervising Civil Engineer (SCE) and Mentor.



1. What was the first engineering project you worked on in the UK, and how was it different from working in Nepal?

My first role in the UK was with a consultancy delivering highway renewal projects for the Highways Agency. While the technical principles were familiar, the working environment and project deliverables were very different from my experience in Nepal. In remote districts back home, we often worked with limited resources and had to adapt practically to challenging site conditions. Flexibility and improvisation were essential.

In the UK, the level of structure, documentation, and compliance was far higher. Engineering standards, design processes, health and safety regulations, contract procedures, and stakeholder management were all formalised. Every stage required clear documentation and adherence to procedures. The biggest difference was not technical ability, but the system itself understanding UK standards and processes was the real learning curve.

2. What sparked your initial desire to help found SONE UK?

When I first arrived in the UK, I struggled to understand the job market and professional standards. Despite having experience, I applied for more than 100 jobs without success, which was both challenging and discouraging. I realised many capable Nepali engineers faced similar difficulties, often navigating the system alone.

Together with others, we created a platform where engineers could share experiences, support one another, and avoid repeating the same mistakes. What began as an informal network gradually evolved into SONE UK. The motivation came from personal hardship and a desire to make the journey easier and less isolating for others.



3. What is the most common mistake young engineers make in their first five years in the UK?

The most common mistake is applying for jobs without proper preparation. Many candidates send the same CV to every job without tailoring it to the role. Others may secure interviews but fail due to insufficient preparation, such as not reviewing relevant standards or project materials. Some even stop applying after early rejections.

Another common misconception is assuming experience alone will lead to recognition. In reality, young engineers must actively align their work with professional standards and competency frameworks to progress successfully. Persistence, preparation, and strategic planning are key.

4. What habits did your most successful mentees have?

The most successful mentees were proactive and took ownership of their development. They studied UK engineering standards seriously, sought constructive feedback, and strategically refined their CVs. They maintained up-to-date CPD records, volunteered for responsibility early, and prepared thoroughly for interviews rather than relying on luck.

Above all, they were consistent and disciplined, relying on preparation and persistence to achieve their goals.

5. As an ICE and RICS mentor, what applicant habits make them the most successful?

Through mentoring with the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), I have observed that successful applicants take time to understand required competencies and professional standards deeply. They maintain structured, evidence-based records and can clearly demonstrate how their work aligns with institutional expectations.

They reflect critically on their projects, explaining not just what they did, but why, how they managed risks, and the lessons they learned. Successful candidates start early, plan their chartership journey systematically, take mock reviews seriously, and actively seek feedback. Those who view chartership as a professional development journey rather than just a qualification consistently performs better and present themselves with confidence and credibility.

6. What inspired you to help new engineers in the UK?

My early struggles inspired me. Experiencing rejection despite having experience highlighted the challenges of adapting to the UK system. Once I secured a role and achieved Chartered Engineer status, I felt a responsibility to help others avoid unnecessary setbacks. Mentorship, for me, combines professional guidance with emotional support during uncertain times.

7. What skills do UK engineering employers value that are not emphasised at university?

Employers in the UK value skills beyond technical theory. Strong communication and report writing, commercial awareness, risk management, contract understanding, stakeholder engagement, and Health and Safety leadership are highly sought after. Universities focus on technical design, but employers expect engineers to also understand cost, risk, client expectations, and project delivery within a commercial and regulatory context.



8. How vital is continuing professional development (CPD)?

CPD has been essential throughout my career. Engineering standards, procurement models, and commercial pressures are constantly evolving. Structured CPD allowed me to move from technical roles into asset management and commercial leadership, supporting my progression to Chartered Engineer and Chartered Surveyor status. Without CPD, professional growth becomes stagnant.

9. How important is chartership and professional registration in the UK job market?

Chartership strengthens professional credibility, especially for engineers trained abroad. Achieving Chartered Engineer status with Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) in 2014 validated my competence in the UK context, increased confidence, and enhanced my professional standing. Professional registration demonstrates accountability, ethical responsibility, and adherence to recognised standards. It differentiates candidates and supports progression into senior technical, managerial, or commercial roles. Engineers should consider chartership from their first graduate role, aligning experience and CPD early, rather than leaving it for later.

10. Before a job interview, which skills are most important to review?

Both soft and technical skills are essential. Soft skills include clear communication, professionalism, logical explanation of decisions, and examples of teamwork. Technical skills include familiarity with relevant UK standards, understanding the project lifecycle, Health and Safety awareness, and practical examples from site or project experience. Interviewers want to know not just what you did, but why you made decisions, how you managed challenges, and what lessons you learned.

11. Have you observed technical or professional gaps among young engineers with the rise of AI?

Yes. While AI tools are useful, some young engineers rely too heavily on software without fully understanding the underlying engineering principles. AI can improve efficiency, but it cannot replace professional judgement, ethical responsibility, and critical thinking.

12. What distinguishes an average engineer from an excellent engineer?

An average engineer completes assigned tasks effectively. An excellent engineer goes beyond this by anticipating risks, communicating proactively, understanding commercial impacts, supporting team development, and consistently demonstrating integrity. Technical competence alone is not enough; foresight, ethical judgement, communication, and leadership distinguish excellence.



13. What is the biggest gap between theory and real site experience?

The biggest gap is managing uncertainty. At university, problems are clearly defined with predictable outcomes, but on site, conditions change constantly due to weather, ground conditions, supply issues, and stakeholder demands.

Young engineers can bridge this gap by spending time on site early, asking practical “why” questions, and learning from experienced supervisors. Understanding constructability and practical implementation, not just design, develops confidence, judgement, and problem-solving skills that theory alone cannot provide.

14. What would you suggest to young Nepali engineers or students in the UK today?

For engineers new to the UK, securing a job should be the first priority. Graduate membership of a professional institution can help with job search, but chartership is not important for entry-level roles. Young engineers should not lose confidence in the face of rejection. They should study UK engineering standards, build professional networks, and seek mentors.

As their careers progress, maintaining structured CPD and working towards chartership becomes increasingly important. Above all, focus on long-term credibility rather than short-term convenience. Technical ability, professional registration, and ethical conduct form the foundation for sustainable success.

15. Golden Question – What legacy do you hope to leave behind?

After 20 years in the UK, I hope to be remembered not for titles, but for the difference I have made. If more Nepali engineers become chartered, take on leadership roles, contribute confidently to UK projects, and then mentor the next generation, that would be the legacy I care about most. Engineering builds infrastructure, but mentorship builds people, and leaving a culture of support is what I hope endures.

The interview with Er Laxman Ghimire was both insightful and inspiring. SONE UK sincerely appreciates his valuable contribution and continued support to the engineering community. This conversation highlights that perseverance, patience, and a clear understanding of UK standards and professional culture are essential for building a successful engineering career in the UK. Long-term credibility, particularly through structured CPD and chartership, plays a vital role in strengthening professional growth and accelerating career progression. SONE UK encourages its members to remain resilient and focused. While the journey may present challenges, with preparation, persistence, and the right guidance, it is certainly navigable.



On the occasion of, International Women's Day on 8th March 2026, and we would like to take this opportunity to highlight the voices of Women in engineering, with a short piece sharing their experiences, their professional journey and involvement within SONEUK, their perspective

Er. Poonam Pathak

MSc, CEng FCIHT, CMgr MCMI



What does International Women's Day make you reflect on?

As we celebrate International Women's Day, I find myself reflecting on a journey that began thousands of miles away in Nepal and continues today in London, one filled with challenges, learning, and quiet but persistent determination.

How did your journey in engineering begin and what challenges did you face moving to the UK?

After completing my BEng in Civil Engineering from Nepal Engineering College, I moved to the UK in 2001 after marrying my husband, Pradeep Pathak, who was then working in London as a chartered certified accountant. Back then, the landscape was very different. There was no easy access to online job platforms, no LinkedIn networks, and very few engineers I could look up to. I was suddenly navigating a new country, a new culture, and a new professional environment where even the technical, site language of construction felt unfamiliar.

What challenges did you face as a woman in a male-dominated engineering field?

What made it harder was stepping into a field that has long been and often still is male dominated. On construction sites, women engineers were rarely taken seriously. Earning respect and trust required proving myself again and again. But I was determined. With hard work, resilience, and unwavering family support, I slowly found my footing.

What is has been your role and What is your current role today?

Over the years, I have worked across both the private and public sectors, progressing through roles from engineer to senior leadership within local government, and gaining my chartered engineer as well as chartered manager status along the way. Today, I am proud to serve as the Strategic Head of Traffic, Highways and Asset Management at the London Borough of Harrow. In this role, I lead strategic planning and delivery across: Highways and asset management, Road safety improvements, Parking and network coordination, Bridges, street lighting, and public infrastructure, Flood investigation and mitigation, Tree maintenance and park improvement projects, Long-term transport planning, School programmes promoting road safety and active travel.

How does your work today continue my dream of helping people?

Every day, I work to improve the safety, sustainability and quality of life for residents. When I was young, I dreamt of being a doctor so I could help people. Today, even though my profession is different, I know that in my own way, I am still helping people by shaping safer streets, better public spaces, and more resilient communities.

What message do you have for young women considering engineering?

The path for women entering engineering today is easier than it once was, but the journey still needs courage. To every young woman and girl considering this field, I want to say:

Engineering is a wonderful place to be, You belong here, Your voice matters, Your ideas can change communities. With the right determination and support, there is no mountain you cannot climb.

Ar. Urmī Sen Gupta

B.Arch , M.Sc. Urban Planning

How would you describe your journey in engineering so far?

My journey has been shaped by excitement, adventure, challenges, moments of doubt, and moments of triumph. On International Women's Day, I feel both grateful and proud to reflect on the path that has taken me from Biratnagar in Nepal to Belfast in the United Kingdom.

Where did your early curiosity about the built environment begin?

I grew up in Biratnagar, where my curiosity about spaces and the built environment first began. That curiosity led me to pursue a Bachelor of Architecture at the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi. After graduating, I began my career in architectural practice, working on projects and learning the realities of the profession on the ground.

How did your academic journey develop and lead you towards academia?

My academic journey continued when I received an Asian Development Bank Fellowship to pursue an MSc in Urban Planning at the University of Hong Kong. That experience opened new perspectives for me, both intellectually and personally. My dissertation supervisor, who was a woman, saw my future career in Academia and suggested that I must go for further studies. I did my PhD from Newcastle University (UK). What began as a career in architectural practice gradually evolved into a journey in academia.

What is your role today, and how has your career evolved over time?

Today, I work as a Reader at Queen's University Belfast, where I previously served as Director of Postgraduate Studies, overseeing eight master's programmes across the built environment disciplines within the School of Natural and Built Environment. Looking back, the journey from practicing architect to academic was not something I had originally planned, but it has been incredibly rewarding.

What did your early professional experiences reveal about gender dynamics in the field?

When I think about how it all began, I often remember my early years in practice. Those experiences made me aware of how male-dominated the built environment professions can be. When I started working as an architect in Biratnagar, there were moments when women from the local community would visit the construction site simply to see the 'woman engineer.' At the time, it felt unusual enough to attract attention. Those experiences shaped my awareness of gender dynamics in professional spaces. While progress has certainly been made since then, challenges still remain—sometimes openly expressed in conversations about gender, but more often in subtle, unspoken ways that influence day-to-day professional interactions.



Why does a gender gap still exist in the profession despite strong female representation in education?

Interestingly, the picture today looks quite different in the classroom. In the architectural programme where I teach, women often make up nearly two-thirds of the students. Yet when these talented graduates enter the job market, the balance often shifts dramatically in the opposite direction. This contrast highlights a persistent structural challenge: while many women enter the field with great promise, far fewer are able to remain in it long term. One of the key reasons is the disproportionate burden of work-life pressures that women often carry. There have been times when my work commitments, deadlines, or travel meant missing important cultural festivals and family events. Those moments are reminders of the delicate balance many of us navigate between professional ambition and personal life.

How do you stay connected to my heritage while building an international career?

Staying connected to my heritage has therefore always been very important to me. I have maintained that connection partly through my research in South Asia, where I continue to collaborate with former colleagues and mentors. These relationships keep my work grounded and remind me that our professional journeys do not have to disconnect us from our cultural identities. In this respect, SONEUK has been a wonderful platform for building community and maintaining those connections.

What message would you share with fellow women engineers?

Over time, I have come to believe that becoming a better professional begins with becoming a better person. Resilience is not built only through achievements or productivity. It grows through empathy, humility, and self-reflection. To fellow women engineers, my message is simple: invest in both your professional expertise and your personal strength. When we nurture ourselves not only as professionals but also as individuals, we develop the resilience needed to build meaningful careers.





Dr. Jaya Nepal

BSc(Eng) MSc PhD PGCert(Ed) FHEA

Could you briefly introduce yourself and your current role?

I am a Senior Lecturer in Materials & Structures in the University of East London(UEL), UK with experience in higher education & industry with different leadership, teaching, and research roles. I lead Postgraduate course in Civil Engineering and serves an academic link tutor. I have supervised more than 100 undergraduate & postgraduate students and has also supervised no. of PhD students.

Before UEL, I was working as a lecturer in Civil & Structural Engineering at the University of Greenwich. I have also worked as a Research Fellow in research projects funded by ICE (Institution of Civil Engineers) and NERC (Natural Environmental Research Council). I obtained my PhD in Structural Engineering from the University of Greenwich, fully funded by RAE (Royal Academy of Engineers). Before joining the University of Greenwich, I worked as a lecturer and design engineer responsible for the analysis and design of civil engineering structures.

What professional affiliations and research interests shape your work?

I am a professional member of various professional bodies such as Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining (IOM3), American Society of Civil Engineers and Fellow of Higher Education Academy. I also serve as a SAT member of Athena SWAN and EDI committees in UEL. My main areas of research are on durability & reliability of structures and sustainable construction materials. I am currently leading a project in sustainable concrete funded by the University of East London. I am author/co-author of several peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers. And frequently serves as a peer reviewer for international conferences and journals, some of them are: RILEM, DAMAS; Construction and Building Materials; Journal of Engineering Mechanics- ASCE; Cement and Concrete Research; Journal of American Concrete Institute.

What inspired you to pursue a career in civil engineering?

My journey into civil engineering began during my college, when I became deeply interested in how infrastructure shapes everyday life. I was fascinated by how concepts from structural analysis, geotechnical engineering, and transportation planning directly impact the safety and functionality of communities. Today, I remain focused on advancing my academic knowledge while contributing meaningfully to the field through continuous learning and research and motivating future generations.

What challenges have you encountered along your career journey?

One of the biggest challenges I have faced as a female academic in engineering is overcoming stereotypes in a male-dominated environment. At times, I have to prove my technical abilities more assertively and these experiences strengthened my confidence and resilience. They also motivated me to consistently deliver excellence and support greater inclusion in academia.

What advice would you offer to the next generation of engineers?

My advice to young women aspiring to engineering is to stay confident and curious. Build strong skills, embrace challenges, and don't let stereotypes limit you. Seek mentors, collaborate, and approach every work with purpose and impact.



Er. Bandana Shrestha

M.Phil. Geo Tech



Could you briefly introduce yourself and your current role?

After completing my MPhil at the University of Hong Kong, I moved to the UK in November 2003 to join my husband, Shailendra Shrestha, who was pursuing his master's degree at the University of Surrey. Shortly after arriving, I began applying for jobs to a number of companies and received a couple of job offers.

In April 2004, I started my professional career in the UK as a Graduate Engineer with WYG Group. I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to work alongside chartered engineers from the very beginning, receiving continuous guidance and support that significantly enhanced my knowledge and professional development. Within five years, I successfully passed my professional review with ICE and became a full member in 2009.

Could you share some highlights from your career development?

I continued working at WYG in the field of drainage design, carrying out flood risk assessments and developing sustainable drainage solutions to meet the planning requirements of Lead Local Flood Authorities and the Environment Agency. I was involved in projects from the planning stage through to detailed design, contributing to the successful delivery of a wide range of schemes. In April 2016, I relocated to Maidstone, Kent, and joined Amey. I later moved to Jacobs, where I have primarily worked on highway drainage schemes.

What is your current role and area of responsibility?

I am currently an Associate Director of Drainage at Jacobs, working within the National Highways Scheme Delivery Framework (SDF) portfolio. As the Design Team Lead, I am responsible for the successful delivery of drainage schemes and for coordinating multidisciplinary teams to ensure effective and integrated project outcomes.

My role is client-focused and includes overseeing design deliverables, cost estimation, resource planning, budget forecasting, and programme management to ensure schemes are delivered on time and within budget.

What challenges have you encountered along your career journey?

My biggest challenge as a woman was balancing the demands of my job with childcare responsibilities. Living in a foreign country, I also deeply felt the absence of the family support network I would have had back home, which made managing both professional and personal responsibilities more demanding.

What advice would you offer to the next generation of engineers?

For young and aspiring engineers, my advice would be to be sincere and committed in your work, stay enthusiastic about learning, and consistently strive to strengthen and expand your knowledge through dedication and hard work.

Er. Rashmi Rana

M.Sc. Environmental Engineering



Could you share with us how your engineering journey began?

My engineering journey began in Saint Petersburg, where I completed my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Environmental Engineering at Saint Petersburg State Technological University of Plant Polymers. My early training in environmental management and sustainability, including international exposure at UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, shaped my technical foundation and global outlook.

Since moving to the United Kingdom, what have you been involved in as someone with an engineering background?

I later moved to London to pursue my MBA at Coventry University. Starting out in the UK was challenging, especially since I did not have an engineering network here at first. After reconnecting with someone I knew from Kathmandu, I joined the Society of Nepalese Engineers in the UK (SONEUK). Becoming a member and serving four years as a Board Member was a proud milestone that gave me leadership experience and a strong sense of community. Professionally, I have worked in quality assurance at Kolak Snack Food and now serve as a Team Coordinator at Ocado Group.

What was the biggest challenge you faced since moving to the UK as an engineer?

One of the biggest challenges I faced was building confidence in new and unfamiliar environments. Through resilience and continuous learning, I have grown both professionally and personally.

What would your advice be for the next generation of Engineers?

My advice to aspiring engineers: believe in yourself, embrace change, and remember that engineering is not just a degree. It is a way of thinking that opens many doors.



Er Sangita Pokhrel

M.Sc Computer Science, Doctoral Researcher

How did your engineering journey begin?

My journey into engineering began with curiosity about how technology can solve real-world problems and improve people's lives. Coming from Nepal, pursuing engineering was both an exciting opportunity and a responsibility. It required determination, resilience, and a strong belief that women can contribute meaningfully to technical fields that have traditionally been male-dominated.

Looking back, how has your career trajectory evolved over the years?

Over the years, my path has taken me through different roles in academia and research. I am currently a Lecturer in Computer Science and Data Science in the UK and also pursuing a PhD focusing on Artificial Intelligence, particularly the application of Large Language Models and Generative AI in digital marketing and decision-making. Teaching and research have allowed me to explore not only the technical aspects of engineering and computing, but also the broader impact of technology on society.

Working in academia has been particularly rewarding because it allows me to inspire the next generation of engineers and data scientists. Through my teaching, research collaborations, and involvement in professional communities such as the Society of Nepalese Engineers in the UK (SONEUK), I aim to contribute to building a supportive network where knowledge, opportunities, and experiences can be shared.

What has your experience been like being part of SONEUK?

Being part of SONEUK has been a meaningful experience, as it brings together professionals from diverse engineering backgrounds and creates a platform for collaboration, mentorship, and community engagement. It is inspiring to see how engineers from different disciplines support each other while also giving back to the community.

What advice do you have for the next generation of aspiring engineers?

One piece of advice I would give to young or aspiring engineers is to stay curious and persistent. Engineering and technology fields evolve rapidly, and continuous learning is essential. Do not be discouraged by challenges or setbacks, they are often part of the learning process. Believe in your abilities, seek mentors who support your growth, and remain open to exploring new opportunities.

Most importantly, remember that diversity strengthens innovation. The more perspectives we bring into engineering and technology, the better solutions we can create for the future.



Er Sadikshya Poudel

BEng Civil Engineering, M.Sc Engineering Management

Can you share your background and how you first became interested in engineering?

I've always been happiest on site, boots in the dirt, turning plans into buildings, bridges, and roads. I'm Sadikshya Poudel from Kathmandu, and this hands-on love for engineering started early. In 2015, a devastating earthquake destroyed our family home, and for an entire year, I was involved in rebuilding it, including planning, design, legal paperwork, and construction. That experience shaped my path and showed me the power of turning ideas into reality.

I started my career at a construction firm in Kathmandu, overseeing projects from residential homes to commercial buildings. Later, as a civil servant in Nepal, I ensured construction projects complied with regulations and standards. Working in rural districts, I saw how even small infrastructural improvements could transform communities by hiring local workers, creating a sense of ownership, and making sustainable changes. These experiences taught me that technical knowledge, practical problem-solving, and stakeholder engagement combine to make projects successful.

What was your journey like after moving abroad in the UK?

Moving abroad in early 2023 brought a new challenge. Leaving a stable career behind, I had to learn a whole new system, adapt to a different culture, and rebuild my professional life from scratch. It wasn't easy. I had to network constantly, relearn processes, and stay persistent. But eventually, I landed a role I had always dreamed of, moving closer to my goal of leading large scale town centre regeneration projects. Right now, I work as a Lead Engineer for a Local Authority, focusing on highways and major projects. My ultimate goal is to use my experience to make a lasting impact on communities and give back to the society through infrastructure development.

Reflecting on your journey, what lessons have you learned and what advice would you share with the next generation of engineers?

Through all of this, I've come to realise that life has its wins and failures, and no single moment defines me. Ask for the big, unreasonable thing; the universe meets you at the level of your audacity. My advice for aspiring engineers is to focus on learning, gain hands-on experience, mentor others, and make yourself replaceable, because it creates room to grow.

And don't forget to live the dream! For me, that includes motorbike rides to the hills in Nepal, being a pretty decent home cook, enjoying date nights with my partner, and finding joy in bright, noisy construction sites rather than quiet offices. Engineering isn't just about designing structures or systems, for me it's about improving lives, shaping communities and creating spaces where people thrive. I hope my story inspires the next generation of engineers, especially young women, to get their hands dirty, tackle challenges head-on, and keep learning every step of the way.



Ar Raksha Poudel

M.Sc. Architecture

How did your journey take you from campus to a career in architecture?

My journey into architecture began long before I fully understood what architecture really was. Stepping out of academia with curiosity and ambition, the early years were humbling. Moving from academic projects to real-world practice was an eye-opening experience. Suddenly, ideas had to respond to budgets, timelines, and site realities. That shift grounded me in ways I didn't expect.

My journey into architecture began long before I fully understood what architecture really was. Stepping out of academia with curiosity and ambition, the early years were humbling. Moving from academic projects to real-world practice was an eye-opening experience. Suddenly, ideas had to respond to budgets, timelines, and site realities. That shift grounded me in ways I didn't expect.

What academic foundation did you build in the UK?

I completed my Master's in Architecture at Oxford Brookes University. Studying in the UK changed the way I think, encouraging me to be more critical and open to new ideas. I learned about topics like using AI in architecture, advanced design strategies, adaptive reuse, and regeneration. These experiences helped me see how technology and sustainability can come together to create stronger, more adaptable buildings. I find it rewarding to combine my hands on experience from Nepal with the research focused approach I gained in the UK as I move forward in my career.

How did you overcome your obstacles in engineering?

One of the biggest challenges I faced in engineering and architecture was adapting to two very different environments and finding ways to connect them. In Nepal, I focused on practical issues such as tight budgets, site constraints, local materials, and the community's needs. When I moved to the UK for my Master's, the work became more research-driven and experimental. At first, it was difficult to balance these two mindsets. I had to shift from hands-on problem-solving to thinking more critically, exploring new ideas, questioning assumptions, justifying my design choices, and incorporating environmental and social strategies into my proposals. Over time, this challenge turned into one of my greatest strengths. I learned to combine practical solutions with new ideas, creating designs that are both imaginative and realistic.

What would your advice be for the next generation of engineers?

If I had to give young engineers one piece of advice, I'd say stay curious and don't limit yourself to just one field. Engineering and architecture are changing fast with new technology, sustainability challenges, and global demands. Build strong technical skills while staying flexible and continuing to learn along the way.

Er Anjalee Ray

M.Sc Project Management



What inspired you to study civil engineering & how did your early career shape your path?

I chose civil engineering because I wanted to embrace challenges and make a meaningful impact. After completing my degree in India, I returned to Kathmandu and worked as a Site Engineer, which strengthened my leadership and practical skills.

Have you faced challenges in your career, particularly when moving abroad?

In 2023, I moved to the UK to pursue an MSc in Project Management and advance my career. Adapting to a new environment was challenging, but by the end of 2025, I secured my first role as a Graduate Civil Engineer. This journey reinforced my belief that competence, perseverance, and dedication are key to success.

What advice would you give to an aspiring engineer?

To all aspiring women engineers: Focus on building your skills, stay consistent, and believe in yourself. Engineering is about talent, commitment, and resilience. There is always room for those determined to make a difference.

SUCCESS STORIES OF SONEUK MEMBERS

Throughout the past year, members have engaged in a variety of activities aimed at fostering both professional development and personal confidence. These activities included participation in the CPD competition, attendance at social and networking events, and presentations within the talk program. Through these experiences, members enhanced their technical skills, improved their communication abilities, and forged valuable connections. The two examples below illustrate how these experiences contributed to their success in securing graduate positions.





Ar. Britam Rai

BArch, MSc.Construction Project

Second innings of my life: Struggle to break through

My full name is Britam Rai. I was born in Goldhap Bazar, Hadibari Gaupalika, Jhapa, Nepal, and started school at a government institution due to my family's working-class background. From 2015 to 2021, I studied Architecture (BArch) on a full scholarship at the Purwanchal Campus of Tribhuvan University, IOE. While my academic scores were average, my teachers described me as sincere and hardworking. Over time, my growing passion for education convinced me it could transform my life.

Like many Nepali citizens who dream of pursuing higher education in Europe, I was not immune to this perspective. I convinced my family, and they trusted me. Obviously, the United Kingdom was my target. I landed in the UK with a big dream on 18 September 2023 to pursue my postgraduate course, MSc Construction Project Management at Birmingham City University. Since the first day, it has been a wonderful opportunity for me to witness and experience the British education system, connect with professors, international friends, and a few Nepali colleagues.

My dedication earned me a distinction in my postgraduate course. On 13 September 2024, I received my academic certificates. Confident that my work experience as a project architect and site engineer in Nepal would help me find a job easily, I expected to find a job quickly. The real test was just beginning.

With high hopes, I began my PSW visa period by applying to multiple companies. Despite repeated failures, I persisted. My dream was a site engineer role in UK construction, but I would have accepted roles such as draftsman or architectural technician.

The more randomly I applied to jobs, the more unsuccessful I became, and each rejection felt frustrating. In the first three months, I felt real pressure over how tough it was to land a job in the UK. Meanwhile, I worked in hotels, hospitality, and care homes just to survive, but I was not happy in those roles.

One day, I saw a post on Facebook by Bikram Khatre listing the key factors to consider before landing a job in the UK. He clearly outlined fundamental factors, including an ATS-friendly CV, portfolio, cover letter, CSCS card, SMSTS certification, interview preparation, LinkedIn updates, recruiter outreach, driving licence, and targeting specific job positions. This post shocked me because I realised that everything I was doing was in the wrong direction.

Immediately, I contacted him. Luckily, Bikram was a helpful and brilliant person who had already landed a Graduate Structural Engineer position at UKAEA. He not only guided me to review my CV in the standard UK format but also motivated me by explaining that there were many important things I still needed to prepare if I truly wanted a breakthrough in the job market. When I calculated the time required to meet those fundamental requirements, it would take at least 5 to 8 months, meaning I would lose nearly 1 year of my PSW visa and a significant amount of money. That meant the remaining one-year visa period would make it almost impossible for me to land a job.

At that point, I was mentally exhausted and hopeless. But I kept believing in myself. I promised to work harder than ever before. I managed my time and planned ahead, taking one step at a time. I changed my shift from daytime work to night care assistant shifts, sleeping only six hours a day, while continuously motivating myself to prepare. I prepared for the CSCS card, failed once, but passed on my second attempt. I paid around £550 for the five-day SMSTS course and luckily passed on the first attempt. Despite the tough times, I felt proud of myself for achieving these small milestones, which gradually strengthened my CV, cover letter, and portfolio.

I researched the different stages of job selection in the UK market. Many Nepali students may not be familiar with concepts such as psychometric tests and online assessments that companies use before interviews and assessment centres. These are among the toughest stages used by top companies to evaluate the knowledge, abilities, and skills of potential candidates. I bought preparation books and studied them day and night. My strategy was to remain active on LinkedIn and reach out to as many recruiters and construction companies as possible. Although I received a few calls from construction recruiters, unfortunately, I still failed on multiple occasions.

I remember participating in the SONEUK CV preparation program, led by seniors Sangita Pokharel, Sagar Thapa, and Darpan Gautam for young graduates, followed by later sessions from Sudip KC and Tara Lamsal. I actively raised concerns about strategies to overcome job-market barriers and sought CV feedback directly from Darpan, Sudip, and Tara, whose guidance was invaluable.

On one occasion, I reached the interview stage at Birmingham City University for a Level 4 Apprenticeship Skills Coach position. Our Chairperson, Subodh Timilsina, guided me, but I was not selected again, leaving me disappointed and broken. There were several moments when I felt very close to success, but luck was not on my side. My mother always encouraged me, saying that God has different plans and everything happens for a good reason. What pushed me forward was that I was never in the mood to give up.

I worked as a freelance architect with Ar. Kalpana Rai in Folkestone, focusing on residential and commercial projects in South East Kent. This improved my drafting, design, and local architectural knowledge. My driving licence journey was also challenging; after setbacks and expenses, I finally passed and bought a car. Each milestone drew me closer to my goal.

Mentally prepared, I had invested a year and all my savings. Failure meant returning to Nepal with only certificates. This time, I applied for jobs strategically, selecting specific positions and tailoring my CVs, cover letters, and portfolios. As I kept pushing myself, I reached different stages of interviews with several construction companies. Still, I knew that a little luck was needed to finally change my life.

On 28 November 2025, while working at a care home in Folkestone, I received a call from EKFB: I had been selected as a Graduate Site Engineer. For a moment, I couldn't believe it.

I remembered Tom Hanks' line from Forrest Gump: "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get."



Ar Britam Rai's story shows that persistence is essential for finding a job. He took part in the Research Competition in May 2025 and attended several SONEUK networking sessions. His eagerness, hard work, and resilience were crucial in securing a job in the UK.

There are important lessons young engineers can learn from his experience:

- 1) Working hard without a clear plan can waste valuable time.
- 2) When applying for jobs, it's vital to be selective and to make sure your CV, portfolio, skills and certifications align with the specific job role that is being advertised.
- 3) Having mentors can make a big difference. For Ar Britam Rai, one helpful Facebook post led to better CV advice, a clearer understanding of UK hiring, and realistic expectations. The right guidance saved him years of effort.
- 4) UK employers look for job-ready candidates with LinkedIn profiles, a professional presence, recruiter connections, a driver's license, a portfolio of relevant work, and a CSCS card not just a degree.
- 5) Finally, he stressed how much SONEUK seniors helped by reviewing his CV, giving feedback, running a preparation program, and supporting his career growth.

Overall, Ar Britam Rai's story shows that persistence, careful planning, and support from networks like SONEUK are crucial for young engineers who want to build successful careers in the UK.



Er Krishna Kandel

M.Sc Civil Engineering,
BEng Civil Engineering



From Graduation to Graduate Civil Design Engineer:

Graduating as an engineer is an exciting milestone, but it can also be a challenging transition into the professional world. Like many engineering graduates in the UK, I found myself navigating the gap between academic knowledge and the practical skills required in the industry. While university gave me a strong technical foundation, I soon realised that succeeding in the engineering profession requires more than technical knowledge alone. Communication, confidence, networking, and the ability to present ideas clearly are equally important. During this period of transition, becoming part of the SONEUK community played an important role in shaping my journey. SONEUK provided a supportive platform where young engineers can learn, connect, and grow together. Through its programmes and events, I was able to interact with professionals and fellow graduates who were on similar paths.

The SONEUK Research Competition

One of the most significant milestones in my journey was participating in the SONEUK Engineering Research Competition. This competition gave me the opportunity to present my research and share my ideas with a wider audience beyond the university environment. Preparing for the competition helped me improve how I communicate technical concepts clearly and effectively. Engineering solutions often need to be explained to different audiences, so developing strong presentation skills is essential. Winning the very first SONEUK Engineering Research Competition was a proud moment for me. It boosted my confidence and reinforced my belief in my abilities as a young engineer. More importantly, the experience helped me develop the communication and presentation skills that later proved valuable during interviews and professional discussions.

Learning Through the Talk Programme

The SONEUK Talk Programme was another valuable experience that contributed to my development. Through these sessions, industry professionals shared their career journeys, experiences, and advice for young engineers. Listening to these talks gave me a clearer understanding of the engineering industry in the UK and the expectations employers have for graduates. It also helped bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world engineering practice. These insights motivated me to keep improving my skills and stay focused on my career goals.

Guidance from the Mentorship Programme

The SONEUK Mentorship Programme also played an important role during my job search journey. Having mentors who had already experienced the same career path provided valuable guidance and encouragement. Their advice helped me understand how to approach job applications, improve my professional profile, and prepare for opportunities in the engineering industry. During what can often be a challenging process for graduates, mentorship provided both direction and confidence.



Securing My Role in the Engineering Industry. Through the experiences and skills I developed along the way, I was eventually able to secure a position as a Graduate Civil Design Engineer at YTL. Looking back, I can clearly see how the opportunities provided by SONEUK helped prepare me for this step in my career. The research competition strengthened my presentation skills, the talk programmes expanded my industry knowledge, and mentorship provided valuable guidance during my job search. Together, these experiences helped me grow not only as an engineer but also as a confident professional.

A Message to Aspiring Engineers

The SONEUK Mentorship Programme also played an important role during my job search journey. Having mentors who had already experienced the same career path provided valuable guidance and encouragement. Their advice helped me understand how to approach job applications, improve my professional profile, and prepare for opportunities in the engineering industry. During what can often be a challenging process for graduates, mentorship provided both direction and confidence. Securing My Role in the Engineering Industry. Through the experiences and skills I developed along the way, I was eventually able to secure a position as a Graduate Civil Design Engineer at YTL. Looking back, I can clearly see how the opportunities provided by SONEUK helped prepare me for this step in my career. The research competition strengthened my presentation skills, the talk programmes expanded my industry knowledge, and mentorship provided valuable guidance during my job search. Together, these experiences helped me grow not only as an engineer but also as a confident professional.

Looking Ahead

My journey with SONEUK has been more than just participation in programmes, it has been a stepping stone that helped me move from graduation to my first professional role in the engineering industry. As I continue my career as a Graduate Civil Design Engineer, I hope to remain connected with the community and contribute by supporting and encouraging future engineers who are pursuing their careers in the UK. I am proud to be part of this journey and grateful for the support and inspiration that the SONEUK community continues to provide.

Er Krishna Kandel's journey highlights that the transition from university to the engineering industry is not only about technical knowledge but also about developing communication, confidence, and professional connections.

Participating in research competitions, industry seminars, and mentorship initiatives fosters both personal and professional growth. These experiences help aspiring engineers articulate ideas, understand employer expectations, and approach the job search with assurance.

For graduates actively seeking opportunities, the key message is to stay tenacious and engaged. Join professional organisations, pursue mentorship, and continually cultivate both technical expertise and interpersonal skills.

Every experience, like presenting research, going to industry talks, or meeting mentors, adds value to your path. With dedication, ongoing learning, and support from your professional network, moving from graduation to a successful engineering career becomes much more possible.



1. Submission deadline for 11th SONEUK Conference on - Full paper submission - 15th March 2026

The Society of Nepalese Engineers in UK (SONEUK) has announced its 11th annual Conference on Science, Engineering & Technology, taking place on Saturday, 4th July 2026 in London.

This interdisciplinary event brings together researchers, engineers, and technologists to share novel work through papers, posters, and presentations.



**SATURDAY
4TH JULY 2026**

11TH SONEUK CONFERENCE
ON SCIENCE, ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
SAFETY FIRST CONSERVATION NET ZERO

Call for Abstracts
Paper/Poster/Presentation

The 11th SONEUK (Society of Nepalese Engineers in UK) Conference on Science, Engineering & Technology is an interdisciplinary annual conference that brings together researchers, engineers, and technology worldwide. We invite abstract submissions of novels and original work in paper, presentation, or poster format. The topics include but are not limited to the following:

- Application of advanced technologies (e.g. aeronautical, architecture, chemical, civil, computer, electrical, electronics, environmental, mechanical)
- Artificial intelligence
- Archaeology and conservation
- Climate change and environmental solutions
- Construction in project management
- Disaster Management and resilience
- Digital transformation, Smart Cities
- Entrepreneurship, innovation and IT based startup
- Health and safety management
- Manufacturing, production and construction processes
- Material science and bio-materials
- Mathematical modeling and simulation
- Quality assurance and reliability
- Renewable energy
- Sustainability, circular and bioeconomy
- Transportation, infrastructure and megaprojects

Key Dates

- Abstract Submission → Mon 15th Dec 2025
- Abstract Acceptance → Fri 2nd Jan 2026
- Full Paper Submission → Mon 16th Mar 2026
- Review Feedback → Wed 15th Apr 2026
- Final Submission → Fri 05th May 2026
- Conference Date → Sat 4th July 2026

Venue: Hotel Sheraton, Heathrow, London (TBC)

Please submit your abstract with no more than 250 words to: conference@soneuk.org

Sign up for 2024-26: "Uniting Engineers for Change"

For more information email us at chairperson@soneuk.org or visit our website www.soneuk.org

Organizer: SONEUK CPD, Sub-committee
Co-ordinator: Dr.Suryanath Ghimire

2. SONEUK Social Event



**Nepali New Year
2083 Celebration**
• Social Event 2026 •

Date: Saturday, 11 April 2026
Time: 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Venue: Buddha Nepalese & Indian Restaurant
Bexleyheath, London, DA6 7BD

Event Highlights

- Dancing & Singing
- Poetry Cultural Performances
- Fun Games & Bingo

Organised by: Social Sub Committee
Coordinator: Er Sangita Pokhrel
Email: secretary@soneuk.org

Let's Welcome the Nepali New Year Together!
Join us for a joyful afternoon of culture, celebration & community spirit.

Date: 11 -April-2026
Venue: Buddha Nepalese & Indian Restaurant, Bexleyheath, London, DA6 7BD

Organizer: SONEUK Social Sub Committee
Co-ordinator: Er. Sangita Pokhrel

The conference focuses on key themes such as sustainable innovation, digital transformation, safety, conservation, and achieving net-zero goals. Participants are invited to submit abstracts of original research across a wide range of topics—including advanced engineering technologies, AI, climate solutions, disaster management, smart cities, renewable energy, materials science, and more.

Key deadlines begin with abstract submissions due on 15th December 2025, leading up to the final submission on 15th May 2026. Full details and submission guidelines are available via conference@soneuk.org and the SONEUK website.

3. SONEUK Presentation and Competition 2026 - 16th May 2026

The Society of Nepalese Engineers in UK (SONEUK) is proud to announce, Series 02 of the "SONEUK Presentation & Competition 2026" to be held.

Key deadlines begin with abstract submissions due on 28th February 2026, leading up to the final submission on 16th May 2026. Full details and submission guidelines are available via cpd@soneuk.org and the SONEUK website.



4.Embassy of Nepal & SONEUK Event: Celebrating Women in Engineering Day

The Embassy of Nepal in the United Kingdom, in collaboration with the Society of Nepali Engineers in the UK (SONEUK), will host an event celebrating International Women in Engineering Day on 23 June at the Embassy of Nepal in London. The event will recognise the contribution of women in engineering and encourage greater participation of women in the engineering diaspora!





Celebrating WOMEN IN ENGINEERING DAY

- Tuesday, 23rd June 2026 -

Jointly organised by:
Embassy of Nepal in UK and Society of Nepalese Engineers in UK (SONEUK)



Engineering Intelligence - Technology & Collaboration for Excellence

Join us to celebrate the achievements of Women in Engineering and explore the future of Engineering Intelligence

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- ✦ Celebration of the achievements of women in engineering
- ✦ 1 Keynote Speech & 3 Presentations from industry leaders / academicians
- ✦ Explore Engineering Intelligence
- ✦ Interactive Panel Discussion

PROGRAMME OUTLINE (5:00 PM - 8:15 PM)

Opening Session (5:00 pm - 6:00 pm)

4:30-5:00 pm - Registration
(Tea & Coffee)

5:15 pm - Session Start by Anchor

5:25 pm - Welcome Note by SONEUK General Secretary

5:30 pm - Ceremony Highlights by SONEUK Chairperson

5:40 pm - Remarks by HE Ambassador
(Comfort Break)

Technical Session (6:00 pm - 7:05 pm)

6:05-6:20 pm - Keynote Speech

6:25-6:35 pm - Presentation 1

6:40-6:50 pm - Presentation 2

6:55-7:05 pm - Presentation 3
(Comfort Break)

Closing Session (7:15 pm - 8:15 pm)

7:15-8:00 pm - Panel Discussion (All 4 Speakers / Q&As)

8:00-8:15 pm - Closing Speech

8:15 pm Onwards - Networking / Dinner

For more information email us at events@soneuk.org or visit our website www.soneuk.org

ANNOUNCEMENT //

The SONEUK Newsletter Editorial Committee would like to bring to your attention that we have introduced a section, ***Voices of women in engineering***, to amplify women's voices, highlight their journeys, challenges, and messages to young and aspiring women.

The editorial committee reached out to SONEUK members via email and collected their responses, which are featured in this newsletter.

We warmly invite members who are interested in contributing to this section to come forward and share their thoughts, experiences, personal journeys, and messages at the email address below.

Email- srijana.khadka@soneuk.org



MEMBERSHIP APPEAL

The SONEUK Membership Committee would like to bring to your attention that we are actively working on membership renewals. Our volunteers will be reaching out to you shortly to assist with the process.

We kindly urge all members to renew their membership at the earliest to ensure uninterrupted participation in SONEUK activities. Your timely action will help us continue our initiatives and strengthen our community.

SEASONS GREETINGS //



SONEUK WOULD LIKE TO WISH

Happy New Year 2083

May the new year bring you health, happiness, and hope!

Publication Credits

- ***Er. Subodh Timilsina***
- ***Er. Manoj Pun***
- ***Er. Srijana Khadka***
- ***Er. Ajeena Timilsina***

