

Open Nepal

Project Completion Report (Sept 2013-Jan 2014)



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1. Introduction

Access to information is the global issue and Nepal can't remain aloof from this global discourse as it is preparing to address people's several aspirations through democratic and inclusive constitution through Constituent Assembly. In the wake of ongoing efforts to consolidate democracy; rights and access to information and transparency have become pressing issues in the country. The issue of access to information has been connected to the different dimensions of social and national life such as education, citizen awareness, development, poverty reduction and so on.

Under such circumstances, access to information becomes key factor to enable people to participate, interact and make decision on the issues coming into public domain. Though Nepal has already incorporated rights to information in Interim Constitution 2006 and has also enacted Rights to Information Act along with setting up different mechanisms to disclose public information, there is still no platform that integrates all information at one place. On the other, the NGOs that have been playing very crucial role to empower people have been facing problem in accessing public information and are yet to be familiar with technicalities to ensure that they have been transparent through several open data platforms.

On this backdrop, NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) was assigned to execute a few activities under Open Nepal initiative jointly implemented by NGO Federation of Nepal, Young Innovation Pvt. Ltd and Freedom Forum Nepal with the financial assistance from UK-based Development Initiatives.

2. Objectives of the Project

The objective of the initiative was to promote increased access to better data and to provide tools, skills and support to analyze and use data to explore and understand the role of data in supporting development efforts.

3. Executive Activities

NFN executed different activities under its responsibilities throughout the year to help meet the overall objectives of the project. The major activities assigned to NFN through work plan agreed by the partners of the project have been summarized below.

3.1 Open Data Platform

Encouraging public sector as well as the non-government sector to make public their data through several open data platform was one of the key targets of Open Nepal initiative. NFN has held series of formal and informal discussions with the NGOs about their possible presence in such platforms. In this initiation Young Innovation has provided technical support while NFN has organized district and national level capacity development workshop to make concerned stakeholders conceptually and technically clear about the ways to access and operate open data platforms. Similarly, Open Data Portal developed by Young Innovation has added further encouragement for NGOs to bring the concept of open data in practice.

3.2 Scoping workshop and Case studies

Before organizing workshop and conducting case study, scoping was made for the both as followings.

3.2.1 Scoping workshop

Before workshop was conducted, preparatory meeting was held on 17 September 2013, to identify key area of contents to be discussed, possible participants in the workshop and make the workshop more participative, interactive and effective.

Prior to conducting different kinds of activities of Open Nepal, a scoping workshop was conducted in Kathmandu on 25 September 2013 where 32 individuals participated. In the workshop Open Nepal Coordinator Pavitra Rana presented an overview of Open Development and Open Nepal, and Hum Bhandari updated and informed them of the engagement of NFN for transparency and openness of information and data. Through the process the participants were made familiar about open data: use, access, benefits. They were introduced about Open Nepal's open data platform, AMP and Aidstream and what activities and campaigns are going on towards increasing transparency and accessibility of information data. They were asked to get familiar of the initiatives, particularly Open Nepal, and provide feedback, demand for and use the data from the online platform. The group discussions were also conducted in the workshop where participants identified some key areas where the problems related to the access of data should be addressed.



3.2.2 Case Study

A Case study was conducted by NFN to check the status of demand and availability of information about aid as a pilot study in Sindhupalchok district. The major objectives of the study were to deepen understanding of the demand for better information, and the ways information is used, identify an effective approach for providing access to better information about district-level aid flows, assess potential mechanisms and approaches for increased level of transparency among NGOs and publication of open data about the activities of district level NGOs and to explore the potential for traceability.

3.2.3 Study of district level NGO engagement

Developing criteria for district selection

NFN developed various criteria for district selection for case study taking under consideration to the feasibility in terms of budget limitation, human resource and NGOs' engagement in the district, possible cooperation of the participating NGOs and other stakeholders. Based on such criteria Sindhupalchok district which is about 78 km far away from capital city Kathmandu was selected for piloting.

Survey design and produce questionnaire

A questionnaire was drafted by NFN, which was discussed among NFN members, ON representative and YI representative on 6 December 2013. Based on the inputs and feedback, the questionnaire was further improved, which was also shared with NFN District Chapters seeking their comments. Incorporating their comments, the questionnaire was finalized.

Introduction meeting

Open Nepal in coordination with NFN District Chapter Sindhupalchok organised an Introduction Meeting on 18 December 2013 at district headquarters Chautara. The purpose of the meeting was to let know the local NGOs about the Open Nepal initiative and to develop the strategies to ensure their participation in the case study.



Conducting Survey

Survey method was used for the purpose of data collection. 11 NGOs were selected for the purpose of survey as sample, which were purposefully selected on the basis of diversity in terms resource mobilisation and their working areas. 3 survey teams were formed and they met with responsible officials of sample NGOs and their offices were visited one by one according to timeline agreed with them during Introduction Meeting. They were interviewed by using the set of questionnaires. During the interview, other relevant information were also collected. In order to collect more information and verify available information, a focus group discussion was undertaken with participation of representatives of sample NGOs.



NFN was responsible for conducting survey. As mentioned above, 11 NGOs were selected for the purpose of survey as sample, which were purposefully selected on the basis of diversity in terms resource mobilisation and their working areas. 3 different survey teams facilitated the

process of survey.

Consultation/Sharing workshop

NFN organized a sharing meeting focusing the key findings of survey on NGO engagement in data management, accessibility, availability and transparency conducted under Open Nepal Initiative in Sindhupalchok. The sharing meeting was held at Chautara, Sindhupalchok on 28 December 2013.

The finding of the survey on data management, availability, accessibility and transparency were shared by Mr. Daya Sagar Shrestha, NFN-Executive Director. Based on the questionnaires of the survey, the findings were presented very clearly. 31 participants from different NGOs took part in the sharing meeting. The participants put forward their quarries on the findings of the survey presented in the meeting. The participants of the meeting also demanded capacity development trainings focusing on the problems and issues that



were found by the survey.

Analysis and report

The data were analyzed by a team of experts at NFN. The findings of the study have already been shared with the partners of the Open Nepal initiative. Among the major findings, it was found that NGOs are facing various problems and challenges in accessing data and information as they are not able to get updated data and even if information is available, they are not much reliable and available completely. For some NGOs, language barrier was one of the problems to bar them from accessing to the data as most of the information are available in English language. Similarly, even the data available to them are sometimes inadequate.

The study also identified the type of data the local NGO need for. According to their response, they need census data and programme and budgets of national and international organisations. Mostly, they also need sectoral data related to development status of local level.

These are only a few examples that demonstrate the need of open data culture in Nepal, especially for non government organizations that have played very important role for the socio-economic development, transparency, good governance and even for democratization in the country.

3.2.4 Briefing paper

A Briefing Paper was produced by NFN which has already been shared to Open Nepal. The briefing paper mainly dealt with why open data was important for NGO along with explaining the relevance of open data in Nepal, mechanisms set by the state for public disclosure of information, and existing problems in sharing of the information. Additionally the briefing paper also included the lessons and reflections that came out of case study of Sindhupalchok and proposed web-based NGO database and role of NGOs to drive open data initiative.

3.2.5 Open Nepal Report

NFN has given input on number of occasions to prepare final report of Open Nepal by providing subsidiary information such as the detailed report of the workshops, final report of the case study and sharing of required information.

3.3 Capacity development materials and workshops

3.3.1 Capacity development materials

Capacity development materials were developed by NFN. Various stationery materials and visibility materials including PowerPoint presentations and handouts on different themes of the workshop were managed and made available to the participants by NFN. Several meetings were taken place for this process.

3.3.2 Capacity development workshops

NFN held two capacity development workshops-one district level and another national level. The main objective of the both of the workshops was to enable participants representing various NGOs to know what the Open Nepal Initiative is and also making them conceptually clear about open data movement and open data portal along with making them feel how important is the issue of access to information and public disclosure of information.

Capacity development workshop in the district

As part of implementing its assignment, NGO Federation of Nepal organized two-day capacity development workshop for NGOs in Sindhupalchok district on 27-28 Dec 2013. The major objective of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of NGOs in term of data management, accessibility, availability and transparency. The workshop contents were designed on the basis of NGO engagement survey on data management, accessibility, availability and transparency conducted in the same district.



The first day of the workshop was facilitated by a team of Young Innovations (YI) to conduct different sessions. The major contents of the first day were general overview of data management, data literacy, International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and enabling NGOs to publish into IATI, data driven development, methods to access to data and use it, data audit, data story and data analysis. Mr. Bibhusan Bista, Anjesh Tuladhar and Rinu Maharjan facilitated all the sessions of the first day.

The Second day of the workshop was focused on Right to Information, Institutional Good Governance and Role of NGOs and Civil society organizations on data management and use. Mr. Gopal Lamsal, Jitram Lama and Bishnu Pokhrel facilitated the sessions. The programme was conducted in participative and interactive way.

Altogether 29 participants participated in the workshop representing different NGOs working in Sindhupalchok district. The workshop was able to aware the participants and transfer knowledge to them regarding data literacy, data management, IATI, aid stream, use of data, institutional governance, right to information and so on.

Capacity development workshop at centre

NGO Federation of Nepal organised a national level Capacity Development Workshop on Open Data under Open Nepal initiative at central level. The workshop was held on 27 January 2014 in Dhulikhel of Kavrepalanchok district. The main objective of the workshop was to enable participants



representing various NGOs across the nation to know what the Open Nepal Initiative is and also making them conceptually clear about open data movement and open data portal along with making them feel how important is the issue of access to information and public disclosure of information.

The first session of the workshop began with presentation on Aid Transparency. While delivering his presentation, NFN Executive Director Daya Sagar Shrestha focused on the national and international trend of aid flow, its effectiveness along with highlighting why transparency was very crucial for

governmental and non-public sector.

Second session of the workshop was conducted by Open Nepal Coordinator Pavitra Rana. She introduced Open Nepal initiative, an open data campaign jointly conducted by NFN, Young Innovations and Freedom Forum in the financial support of UK-based Development Initiatives. She informed that Open Nepal was the open data movement launched by SCO organisations in Nepal to help increase access to data and maintain good governance in the country. She also briefed the technicalities of open data portal enabling participants to access open data portals.

In another session Information Officer at NFN Bigyan Sharma delivered presentation about global trend of launching open data portal along with highlighting rights to information. He also oriented the participants how mobile technology can be useful to explore data required to them.

Next session was about International Aid Transparency Initiation (IATI) which was facilitated by NFN Executive Director Daya Sagar Shrestha. He delivered presentation about what IATI is and how it was working for transparency through its open data portal. He also oriented the participants on how they could be part of it. He also informed the participants that NFN was developing web-based NGO data base to integrate the data of NFN-member NGOs functioning throughout the country.

Under this session Young Innovation's Prashanta Shrestha trained the participants about the technical aspects of the IATI portal and NFN's proposed web-based NGO data base while Jitram Lama, NFN board member presented the findings of Sindhpalchok case study on the demand and use of data.

In the last session of the workshop, Shaurava Subedi, Project Officer at NFN briefed the participants about NGO Excellence Certification which NFN has been awarding to the NGOs with the best performance.

A total of 55 participants actively participated in the programme. Representatives of various NGOs working in multiple sectors such as good governance, human rights, women, Dalit, and environment among other, from different parts of the country attended the workshop. The Workshop was participatory, interactive and effective.

3.4 Awareness raising and buy-in from stakeholders

Along with conducting the planned activities, NFN formally and informally raised awareness to the concerned stakeholders in different platforms where NFN was represented during the project implementation period. NFN along with other ON partners met with officials of AIN on 16 December and shared about the activities of ON.

3.4.1 Engaging Government

In Nepal the government has adopted constitutional, legal and institutional mechanisms to increase access to information. However neither it has any mechanism to integrate scattered data nor has extensively applied legal provisions regarding the public disclosure of the information. In such situation there is no any option other than to engage government sector in open data movement. For the same, NFN has advocated that government should launch open data portal to facilitate easy access to information in several platforms.

NFN led a team of Open Nepal and visited Social Welfare Council (SWC) office on 12 December. Visiting this organization was felt very important because it is an apex government body, which is mandated to regulate NGOs and INGOs in the country. The main purpose of the visit was to discussion with officials of SWC about its database management system. The meeting was started with brief introduction of Open Nepal including its background, aim, modality and process. Also, the

team had briefed about the Open Data Portal launched by Open Nepal. In addition the team tried to let know the SWC officials about the importance of Open Data.

3.4.2 Supporting Open Nepal

NFN has supported Open Nepal by ensuring exchange of information, participating in meetings, providing necessary information and submitting the detailed report of each activity.

3.5 Proposal for Open Nepal 2014 onwards

NFN has reached conclusion that Open Nepal Initiative should get continuation as it has laid significant impacts as per the target. NFN has also forwarded a few suggestions as to how to go ahead 2014 onwards.

3.5.1 Open Nepal review meeting

A review meeting was held on 28 Jan 2014 in Dhulikhel of Kavrepalanchok district to assess the effectiveness of all the activities conducted by NFN under Open Nepal Initiative. The meeting which was participated by the executive committee members of NFN and NFN central office staffs came up with a conclusion that the workshops were very fruitful for NGO activists to make them realize the importance of open data along with transferring theoretical and practical knowledge about open data to them. The meeting also concluded that such workshop should be conducted nationwide to make Open Nepal Initiative successful. Similarly the meeting also discussed possibility of creating web-based database of the NGOs active in the country to promote transparency and access to information thereby contributing for open data culture in Nepal. Similarly, the lessons learnt from the case study of Sindhupalchok were also shared in the meeting.



3.5.2 Open Nepal Governance draft

NGO Federation also provided feedback as to what should be the modality of Open Nepal Initiative for next year. About Open Nepal's future governance structure NFN suggested that Open Nepal should remain as campaign or loose network and a common platform, which is at present. Considering that there might be problem to bring the initiation under particular NGO due to the question of credibility or recognition, the NFN suggested Development Initiatives to establish contact office in Nepal as INGO, with nominal investment and appoint contact person in Nepal for better coordination if it is economically feasible to help gear up the initiations in a better way.

Similarly the NFN also apprised that to channelize the financial support especially from donor, approval from Social Welfare Council is mandatory and officially NFN advocates for the same thing. So, NFN suggested the Development Initiatives to go ahead in the similar way to accelerate the campaign.

NFN has also proposed to establish Web-based Database of Nepal's NGOs to be part of Open Nepal activities since transparency and institutional governance has become burning issue in Nepal. The NFN has expected that this will help disclosure of public information simultaneously giving people access to the database of NGOs.

4. Lessons and experiences

Each activities conducted by NFN during the implementation of Open Nepal Campaign have remained fruitful particularly to make concerned stakeholders realize the importance of open data. They have become able to know about many aspects of open data including an urgency of disclosure of public information and increased need of access to information. Moreover, the NFN itself has learnt many things about the current status of availability, use and demand of data by NGOs working across the country from the pilot study in Sindhupalchok district. Understanding of NFN itself about the availability, demand and use of data has been strengthened through case study. Potential mechanisms and approaches for increased level of transparency among NGOs and publication of open data about the activities of district level NGOs have been assessed. NGOs have realized the need of open data in Nepal and have learnt how to access the data related to aid and expressed commitment to disclose their information in public platforms. The capacity of the NGOs has been enhanced regarding data management, accessibility, availability and transparency. However it was realized that the efforts were not sufficient and such capacity building programmes should be expanded to other districts as well. NFN itself also realized that lack of internet literacy was impeding the access of data in the district despite the availability of the resources.

Annex-I
Pre-Workshop on Open Data
Attendance Sheet
17 September 2013, Kathmandu

S.N.	Name	Organization	Phone	Email
1.	Daya Sagar Shrestha	NFN	9841100432	dayasagar@ngofederation.org
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Annex-II
**Scoping Workshop
 Schedule**

25 September 2013, Kathmandu

Time	Activities
9.30 am to 9.40 am	Overview of Open Development and Open Nepal
9.40 am to 9.45 am	Updates from NGO Federation of Nepal
9.45 am to 10.00 am	Presenting examples of success stories around the world on how Open Data has helped journalists make better, evidence based reports.
Group Breakout	
10.00 am to 10.15 am	Each group to identify an example of their past or ongoing work relating to Open Data.
10.15 am to 10.45 am	Each group to present their individual case and discuss how Open Data and Open Nepal would help their work.
10.45 am to 11.45 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define a series of problem statements based on these descriptions • Develop ideas on how (open) data could be applied to these problem statements • Identify key data sets required • Discuss a way forward, i.e. leading to advocacy for data release; prototyping • Discussion to identify challenges & type of support Open Nepal could provide
11.45 am to 12.00 pm	Conclusion and way forward. What is the time frame?

Annex-III
Scoping Workshop
Attendance Sheet on Open Data for CSOs/NGOs
25 September 2013, Kathmandu

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Annex-IV
Introduction Meeting
Tentative Schedule
Chautara, Sindhupalchowk

18 December 2013		
Time	Activities	Facilitation
11:00-11:30	Arrival and registration of participants	NFN District Chapter
11:30-11:35	Taking chair	NFN District Chapter
11:35-11:45	Welcome	NFN District Chapter
11:45-12:00	Introduction of participants	NFN District Chapter
12:00-12:15	Highlight on NGO Federation and objective of meeting	Jitaram Lama/Daya Sagar Shrestha
12:15-12:35	Introduction of Open Nepal Project	Pavitra Rana
12:35-13:00	Introduction of Open Data Portal	Bibhusan Bishta
13:00-14:30	Survey on NGO transparency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria • Methodology • Identify sample NGOs • Questionnaire • Survey 	Bishnu Pokhrel/Hum Bhandari
14:00-14:30	Closing	NFN District Chapter
14:30-15:30	Refreshment	NFN District Chapter
15:30-18:00	Interview with selected NGOs at Chautara	Central Team
19 December		
8:00-10:30	Interview with selected NGOs	Central Team
10:30-12:00	Focus Group Discussion at Chautara	Central Team
12:00-13:00	Lunch	
13:00	Return to Kathmandu	

Annex-V
Introduction Meeting
Attendance Sheet
18 December 2013, Sindhupalchok

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Annex-VI
**Focus Group Discussion
Attendance Sheet**

19 December 2013, Sindhupalchok

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Annex-VII
Sharing Workshop
Capacity Development Workshop
Tentative Programme Schedule
Sindhupalchowk, 28 December 2013

Time	Activity	Facilitation	Materials Required
Sharing Workshop			
8:00-9:00	Arrival and Breakfast	District Branch	
9:00-10:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of survey findings • Open Discussion • Wrap-up 	Daya Sagar Shrestha	PowerPoint Slides Handouts
10:15-10:30	Break		
Capacity Development Workshop			
10:30-12:00	Civil Society, expected roles of NGOs and challenges	Gopal Lamsal	PowerPoint slides Handouts
12:00-13:00	Lunch		
13:00-14:15	Institutional Good Governance and practice of transparency	Jitaram Lama	PowerPoint slides Handouts Copies of Code of Conduct
14:15-15:30	Right to Information Act (RTI) and Obligation of NGOs	Bishnu Pokharel	PowerPoint slides Brochures Handouts
15:30-16:00	Closing	District Branch	

Annex-VIII
Sharing Meeting
Attendance Sheet

28 December 2013, Sindhupalchok

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Annex-IX
Capacity Development Workshop for District NGOs
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Annex-X
Capacity Development Workshop/Review Meeting
Tentative Schedule

27-28 January 2014, Dhulikhel, Kavre

26 January 2014 (Sunday)

4:30 pm	Get together at NFN Office
5:00 pm	Departure to Dhulikhel
6:30 pm	Check-in in Hotel
7:00 pm	Dinner

27 January 2014 (Monday)

8:00-9:00 am	Breakfast
9:00-9:15 am	Welcome and highlights on objective and schedule (SK)
9:15-9:30 am	Background Information-Aid transparency (DSS)
9:30-10:00 am	Introduction of Open Nepal Project (PR)
10:00-11:00 am	Introduction of Open Data Portal (PR/BS)
11:00-12:00 am	International Aid Transparency Initiative (DSS)
12:00-13:00 pm	Lunch
13:00-14:00 pm	Web-based NGO database system (DSS)
14:00-15:00 pm	Sharing of case study of Sindhuplachok (JRL)
15:00-16:00 pm	Certification of NGOs' Excellency (SS)

Review Meeting

28 January 2014 (Tuesday)

7:30-8:30 am	Breakfast
8:30 am-12:00 pm	Review Meeting
12:00-13:00 pm	Lunch
13:00-13:30	Hotel check-out
13:30	Departure to Kathmandu

Annex-XI
Preparatory Meeting on Capacity Development Workshop
Attendance Sheet

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Annex-XII
Capacity Development Workshop
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Annex-XIII
Review Meeting
Attendance Sheet

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