NIRC, in its advent to promote and showcase effective evidence generation and uptake in Nepal, is starting this initiative - EVIDENCE YATRA.

We are beginning this yatra or journey with a monthly newsletter, where will be featuring new evidence generated across various sectors. We will also be featuring an Evidence Champion - every month, bringing the stories of champions who inspire research and evidence enthusiasts and are more than willing to expand the network by sharing their experiences and insights.

Nepal is at a unique juncture of aspiring for prosperity, in federal democratic republic set-up, with bundle of opportunities for sustainable development. Evidence based development and policy-making can thus be a catalyst for this prosperity, we are seeking for.

Someone, somewhere has to start. So, we are starting. Hope your support continues in this Yatra.
Evidence from the Girls’ Access to Education (GATE) programme

This research brief by UNICEF Innocenti provides a snapshot of Girls’ Access To Education (GATE) programme. The analysis draws on GATE monitoring data for 2018/19, covering 7,394 GATE beneficiaries in five districts of Nepal, and is combined with qualitative evidence including case studies and focus group discussions with former GATE participants conducted in 2019. The study reveals GATE programme has been highly effective, with 95% completion of the programme by enrolled girls and 89% of girls making the successful transition to formal school.

Qualitative evidence reveals that poverty, caring responsibilities and parents’ traditional views may be important factors in explaining why GATE girls had never previously attended school. Major study recommendation is to explore the feasibility of expanding GATE approaches to target out-of-school children in other contexts too, as GATE demonstrated a cost-effective solution. Access the brief in this link.

Assessment of Child Wellbeing during Covid-19

This research was carried out by World Vision International Nepal and Consortium of Organizations Working for Child Participation-CONSORTIUM-Nepal. Major study highlights include:
- Over 88% children are upset due to school closure.
- Less than 20% of government representative believe that alternative education run by some schools are effective.
- 72% of the children have access to electronic gadgets like mobile, laptops and tablets for online classes.
- 23% parents claim most of information in online platforms is fake or not accurate.
- 71% of parents are using soap & water, mask and hand sanitizer to remain protected against COVID-19. Read more in this link.
Two contributors Nikesh Balami and Sagar Giri have recently compiled and open-sourced the translated Covid-19 related technical terms, glossary, and few articles with hospital, health & research institutions data. This rich resource is readily available for open data and evidence enthusiasts for reuse and further analysis. The link to the resource is available here.

The disruption strategies show an increasing impact in the number of deaths averted, with the medium and high disruption strategies reducing the disease burden by 5,000 and 16,300 deaths, respectively, relative to the low disruption strategy, which is the current strategy. It is anticipated that medium and high disruption strategies would present increasing orders of disruption to people’s lives, potentially having significant social, economic repercussions. There will be significant demand for ICU beds and ventilators to treat severe COVID-19 cases. However, over-utilisation of hospital equipment will be eased if the high disruption strategy is implemented. To access the full report, follow this link.

Modelling of Covid-19 Strategies in Nepal: DFID commissioned Oxford Policy Management (OPM) and the University of Oxford to carry out a rapid modelling of the possible spread of COVID-19 in Nepal. The study developed SEIR (Susceptible (S), Exposed (E), Infectious (I), Recovered (R)) compartmental model. The model uses series of age-stratified deterministic ordinary differential equations, implemented in the statistical software R. Key findings include:

- The disruption strategies show an increasing impact in the number of deaths averted, with the medium and high disruption strategies reducing the disease burden by 5,000 and 16,300 deaths, respectively, relative to the low disruption strategy, which is the current strategy.
- It is anticipated that medium and high disruption strategies would present increasing orders of disruption to people’s lives, potentially having significant social, economic repercussions.
- There will be significant demand for ICU beds and ventilators to treat severe COVID-19 cases. However, over-utilisation of hospital equipment will be eased if the high disruption strategy is implemented. To access the full report, follow this link.
Championing open data movement in Nepal: Nikesh Balami

Nikesh Balami, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Open Knowledge Nepal has been championing the Open Data movement in Nepal. NIRC talked to him on his journey of promoting open data initiatives in Nepal.

What excites you about Open Data?
I strongly believe the openness of knowledge will help empower everyone and helps create a sustainable society. With my technological background, I am more attached with open data and personally everything about open data excites me. I love it when I can simply collaborate with anyone and use any types of open datasets to develop something creative.

How did you start your journey with Open Knowledge Nepal?
My journey with OKN starts as a volunteer. I started with open source; by starting an open source college community from where we used to run Linux, hacking and other workshops for college juniors. In that journey of establishing a college club, I met Prakash Neupane, who then used to lead various activities through Open Knowledge Nepal and FOSS Nepal Community. I started being in touch with him, attending events related to open data. Gradually, I started leading the projects. Later looking at my contribution, I got the responsibility of leading the organization. In that sense, I didn't start Open Knowledge Nepal. I just led Open Knowledge Nepal under the guidance of my mentor Prakash Neupane with the help of my wonderful colleagues.

What are your major accomplishments till date regarding Open Data initiatives in Nepal?
Until now, the path of open data has been very smooth for Nepal although there is still a long way to go. If we look back, the drastic growth in the momentum can be clearly seen. The growth of the community and organization working to promote open data in Nepal is one of the major accomplishments because a bigger community means a bigger impact with shared responsibility. Going beyond Kathmandu and city areas is another major accomplishment, with lots of activities, projects and events happening outside cities has helped decentralize open data.

What are the major challenges you have come across?
Digital literacy is one of the major challenges in Nepal’s context because open data is somehow related with technology and because of the low digital literacy, the use of open data hasn’t been that effective. If we really want people and the government to use data for decision making, we need to shift a vast amount of our focus on data and digital literacy. I personally have been developing the concept of reinvestment to overcome this challenge. Another major challenge is consistency. Until now the open data in Nepal is not self financially sustainable. Therefore lots of individuals and organizations are contributing voluntarily; which doesn’t guarantee long term stability. Managing the sustainability of the project and contributors is quite challenge.

What do your next plans to take forward open data movement in Nepal?
My immediate plan is to develop and implement the concept of reinvestment in data and digital literacy. Therefore, I might go with the flow and try making the literacy program effective and reach larger audiences. Continuously building interdisciplinary projects is always in my to-do list. So you might see a new project launched soon, which will promote the access and use of data.

Follow Nikesh on Twitter, @NikeshBalami