Noted Nepali educationist and our Adviser, Mr Narayan Prasad Upredy sadly passed away on 23 May 2021 due to COVID-19 infection. Mr Upredy was an ardent advocate of English Language Teaching (ELT) and curriculum development at secondary and higher-secondary level. Mr Upredy was one of the very first course developers of Social Studies and Civics subjects in English medium in Nepal. Textbooks authored by Mr Upredy on Social Studies, Civics, History published during the 1990s and early 2000s are still widely popular across the country. A short summary of his life is published by Education Khabar here.

NIRC dedicates this edition of Evidence Yatra for his immense contribution to the education sector in Nepal.
COVID-19 Information Management Platforms

The COVID-19 pandemic also brought young innovators together to support various individuals who were desperately seeking information and help for themselves and others in need of urgent treatment. Realizing this desperate need, helping hands came together to launch COVID-19 related information management platforms in Nepal. Some of the popular ones are listed below:

- PLASMA CONNECT
- COVID CONNECT NEPAL
- NEPAL COVID SUPPORT
- COVID ALLIANCE FOR NEPAL

Likewise, the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) also recently launched a platform for regular updates regarding availability of hospital beds, ICU, ventilator, contact information, among others.

NEPAL RISK OUTLOOK

The “Nepal Risk Outlook” portal is a collaborative effort of Nepal Institute for Policy Research (NIPoRe) and Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS). Major recommendations of the third edition of its Policy Brief (which focuses on COVID-19 and education) include:

- The government must redouble efforts to meet its targets in digitizing the education sector by making ICT usage compulsory in schools, strengthening ICT infrastructure at schools and universities and providing the required trainings to the teaching and non-teaching staff members.
- The Ministry of Education should provide No Objection Certificates it issued for students travelling abroad to the missions, the Ministry of Home (Immigration Department), and the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security issued to migrant workers.
- Department of Immigration should keep track of and publish monthly and annual data of students travelling abroad segregated by destination countries and the city there, and put the data on its website.
- Upon their arrival, Nepalis staying long term in the destination countries should be required to make online registration at the mission offering their contact details – their name, university and college, or companies of affiliation, and their address.
- Academic institutions should invest in developing learning environments and tools for the current and future emergency situations.
- Tech firms should work in close collaboration with the key GoN stakeholders in the education sector to develop feasible technology-driven tools and techniques in facilitating teaching.
World Report on Vision

This WHO report provides evidence on the magnitude of eye conditions and vision impairment globally, draws attention to effective strategies to address eye care, and offers recommendations for action to improve eye care services worldwide. The key proposal of the report is for all countries to provide integrated people-centered eye care services which will ensure that people receive a continuum of eye care based on their individual needs throughout their lives. Key stats include:

- 2.6 billion people of all ages with myopia in 2020
- 312 million aged under 19 years with myopia in 2015
- 76 million people (40 to 80 years of age) with glaucoma in 2020
- 2.5 million people of all ages with trachomatous trichiasis in 2019
- 1.8 billion people of all ages with presbyopia in 2015
- 146 million adults with diabetic retinopathy was calculated by applying the global prevalence of any diabetic retinopathy (34.6%) reported by Yau et al. [2012] to the estimated global number of adults aged over 18 years of age with diabetes in 2014 (422 million) that was reported in the WHO Global Report on Diabetes, 2016.
- 195.6 million people aged 30 to 97 years with age-related macular degeneration in 2020

More details about the report available here.

Understanding and mitigating social risks to sustainable development in China's BRI: evidence from Nepal and Zambia

Based on a 2019 fact-finding mission to Nepal and Zambia, this report published by Overseas Development Institute (ODI) identifies the more salient social risks associated with Chinese commercial activity in those countries and provides recommendations on how Chinese and host country stakeholders can better address them. The findings are based on an extensive review of the literature on social risks associated with the BRI, and semi-structured interviews with a wide range of stakeholders in Nepal and Zambia.

More details about the report available here.
What has motivated you to conducting research in the public health sector?
They say public health is both an ‘art’ and a ‘science’. I am in for the ‘science’, that is what I find fascinating since childhood. I am passionate about research, data, and evidence generation. Throughout my public health career, I have provided strategic technical leadership in different development organizations and projects to advance research, monitoring and evaluation and learning agendas. I have managed multiple research projects ensuring technical/ethical excellence and results uptake, provided insights to improve programs/policies and contributed significantly to business development and innovations. It helps me become a thought leader in my field, which I believe is necessary to influence and bring science into practice. Aspirational it may seem, but the joy of being able to generate new knowledge and contribute to improving lives is satisfying.

What are the specific areas you are interested in writing/publishing?
The studies that we implement in the development sector largely fall in the realm of implementation research aimed at improving programs and influencing policies. I love epidemiology and am increasingly interested in application of econometrics to public health. Broadly I have worked in areas of HIV, health systems and sexual and reproductive health. My current research priorities are focused on client centered reproductive health care services, removing inequities by bringing care closer to clients, better understanding their experience of care, and leveraging digital solutions to explore new pathways to care. Additionally, I am engaged in executing mostly evaluation studies which is yet another area of my interest.

You have been conducting and publishing research in public health consistently. What have been your major lessons and achievements?
Research is more than just data analysis; it is not only about being an evidence producer but also a knowledge broker. Unless research in public health leads to institutionalized solutions that work at scale, we cannot achieve impact, and studies become mere academic exercises. Research is a self-indulgent process for its practitioners, but broader engagement is critical for adoption and impact. At times advocacy is far more essential than evidence. Not all evidence producers are enterprising enough to become good knowledge brokers. Conducting and publishing research is just the first step which is innate to most science lovers. The difficult battle for evidence-use starts thereafter.

Any recommendations or tips you would like to share to those who are interested to conduct and publish research in public health.
We should question ourselves whether we are influencing. In my humble opinion, it provides context to the ideas expressed thereafter. That should underpin our research motives. Expertise is all about recognition and recognition comes from communicating effectively. One way to do that is by publishing. It helps you become better at articulating your thoughts and takes you a step closer to defining your evidence-based position that sets you apart. It is a labor of love that will also help you learn in the process. But as I alluded earlier, publication is the beginning and not the end. We should push to become the champions for catalyzing change.