accountabilitylab
NEPAL

Annual Report 2024

NEPAL

Contents

Overview

The year 2024 was marked by significant events in Nepal, from devastating monsoon floods that caused huge human and economic loss to high-level corruption cases and numerous leadership changes in the government. For the first time, the country's chief secretary was accused of corruption and subsequently suspended. In addition, past cases of political elites misusing their authority to embezzle government property resurfaced. On a positive note, there were extensive discussions around strengthening anti-corruption laws and expanding the jurisdiction of oversight agencies within the parliament. Nepal also made significant strides in digital governance through introducing new policy frameworks and service integration.

Accountability Lab Nepal (ALN), through its multi-faceted approach, integrates accountability across diverse sectors. Our Civic Action Teams (CivActs) act as a bridge between communities and government, fostering transparent and inclusive policymaking in areas like education, youth democratic participation, and public-private partnerships.

To strengthen the accountability ecosystem, we create both conventional and unconventional platforms for discourse, networking, and capacity development. We also equip young leaders and changemakers to drive systemic change. Collaboration with government entities and federations has further aided shared ownership, ensuring long-term sustainability. By combining bottom-up mobilization, engagement, and innovation, we embed accountability within governance systems for lasting impact.

Reach

7 Provinces

101 Palikas

Districts 31

320,000+
People online

Shifting norms and behaviours through value-based campaigns

A) INTEGRITY ICON 2024: THE WINNERS OF THE 11TH EDITION

Integrity Icon Nepal (IIN) identifies, celebrates and creates a strong network of honest government officials. ALN continued its decade-long citizen-led campaign to promote the culture of integrity within the public administration. This year, we had a total of 349 nominations from across the country.

INTEGRITY ICON 2024 WINNERS
- Sarmila Subedi, Public Health Inspector, Basic Health Services Centre, Nepalgunj
- Bodha Raj Pathak, Education Officer, Benighat Rorang Rural Municipality, Dhading
- Manpuran Chaudhary, Section Officer at the Elephant Breeding and Training Centre under Chitwan National Park, Chitwan
- Meera Kumari Yadav, Public Health Nursing Officer, District Health Office, Parsa
- Manahar Kadariya, Senior Agriculture Development Officer, Pokhara Metropolitan City Kaski

JURY UPDATE AND SUB-JURY COMMITTEE FORMATION FOR STRONGER PROCESS
- Pradip Raj Kanel (Integrity Icon 2015), former Joint Secretary of Nepal Government, was added as a new member to the panel of Jury, making a total of 6 jury members.
- ALN formed the Integrity Icon Sub-Jury Committee, which would oversee the screening process and provide strategic guidance and feedback to improve the effectiveness of the Integrity Icon campaign. The Sub-Jury Committee consists of the Integrity Icon Alumni, namely Mahendra Paudyal (Integrity Icon 2018), Dipak Gnawali (Integrity Icon 2020) and Manamaya Pangeni (Integrity Icon 2021). The Sub-Jury Committee has been helpful in ensuring an unbiased and transparent selection process by cross-verifying the information and refining selection criteria.

B) UPHOLDING INTEGRITY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION THROUGH INTEGRITY SUMMIT

ALN conducted an Integrity Summit in collaboration with the office of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority, Bardibas. It convened more than 70 participants in Bardibas, including the Secretary of the Provincial Government, Chief District Officers, Mayor and Deputy Mayors, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), anti-corruption activists, and other stakeholders. The summit emphasized the importance of integrity in public administration, highlighted how individual and institutional integrity can serve as a powerful mechanism in combating corruption and showcased ALN's Integrity Icon as a tool in championing integrity. Participants pledged to uphold integrity through leading by example, raising public awareness, discouraging misconduct, supporting good governance initiatives, adhering to the law, and most importantly, promoting the Right to Information and advocating for strong anti-corruption policies.

INTEGRITY ICON NETWORK (TOTAL)	INTEGRITY ICON NOMINATIONS 2024
Total Nominations in 11 years - 8050 5000+ government officials engaged **54 Icons** Female - 22, Male - 32 **Sectors:** General Administration - 10 Agriculture - 6 Education - 13 Engineering- 1 Forestry, Wildlife Conservation - 5 Health - 10 Nepal Police - 1 Women - 6 Food Technology - 2 **65 Integrity Scholars** **39 Integrity Fellows**	Total Nomination: 349 Districts Covered: 64 Province Covered: 7 Male: 264 (75%) Female: 85 (25%) **Sectors:** General Administration - 129 Agriculture - 14 Account - 3 Education - 60 Engineering - 16 Forest -13 Health - 59 Law - 13 Other sectors- 42

C) LOCALIZATION AND OWNERSHIP OF INTEGRITY SCHOOL

ALN organized a localized version of Integrity School in a joint collaboration with the Benighat Rorang Rural Municipality, Dhading. Narbada Ghimire, Chief Administrative Officer of Benighat Rorang Rural Municipality, Dhading, also an Integrity Scholar (2019), took the lead in this initiative to inspire the young generation of government officials to engage in discussions on integrity, ethics, and the challenges in building accountability. The school also aimed to promote the culture of peer learning and collective growth, encouraging the participants to design innovative solutions in building an approachable and resilient service system. A total of 29 participants belonging to different sectors, such as administration, education, health, finance, etc, had participated in the school.

'Integrity School has inspired me to focus on positive aspects, to stay attentive and use time wisely. I aim to ensure work is timely and be as transparent as I can. I want to contribute to bringing a change where every citizen gets services on time, where there is harmony between service providers and seekers, and youth can find opportunities in their own country.'

SUDIP BHANDARI, EMPLOYMENT COORDINATOR, BENIGHAT RORANG RURAL MUNICIPALITY

Equipping the young leaders in building and contributing to the ecosystem of accountability

A) ACCOUNTABILITY INCUBATOR SUPPORTING THE YOUNG REFORMER

This year, we had 8 Accountapreneurs with a diverse range of ideas (read more about them here).

The Accountapreneuers received hands-on mentorship and training on different aspects that supported the growth of their idea or initiatives, such as vision setting, organizational building, assessing impacts and evaluation, incorporating feedback, and more.

Many of them have refined their ideas, made significant growth, fostered a supportive community, and built a strong network.

ACCOUNTAPRENEUR HIGHLIGHTS

• Speak Up Nepal, an online petition platform led by Subin Shrestha and Prince Shah has rapidly grown to just under 21,000 followers. SpeakUp Nepal has been able to connect citizen voices to the authorities to drive change and accountability on issues like aviation safety, air pollution, and education reform. Their impactful advocacy has led to tangible solutions, including justice for a rape victim and resolving transport issues. Their contribution to civic engagement has earned them the **Rising Star Innovation ICT Award 2024**, honoring tech-driven efforts toward the SDGs.

• Samundra Gurung envisions an inclusive healthcare system where the queer health is no more a marginal issue. To achieve this, he conducts sensitization training for healthcare professionals to provide non-discriminatory healthcare services to the queer individuals. Additionally, he has created a **zine** called Queeriosity, a visually engaging, artistic infographic highlighting key health issues faced by the queer community, fostering awareness and advocacy for inclusive healthcare.

• Susil Khanal has been able to successfully register his company 'ACT for Sustainability'. Further complying with his commitment at the beginning of the incubator, he has drafted a training manual for the farmers for on climate-resilient agriculture which is for review.

• Sadichchha Silwal envisioned incorporating digital rights and safety into the school curriculum, believing that young people are particularly the ones who are vulnerable in digital spaces. Committed to this cause, she has conducted workshops, reaching over 1,200 students from public and private schools in Kathmandu.

• Aakriti Dote recently attended COP-29 in Baku and participated in and represented youth voices at the conference. She is more than determined to advocate for strong and consolidated youth voices in climate action through policy reforms.

THEMES
• Climate Action
• Civic Engagement
• Gender and Inclusion
• E-governance
• Education
• Labor Migration
• Financial Literacy

TOOLS
• Films
• Theatre
• Advocacy tools such as RTI
• Civic tech (petition platform, website, applications, etc)
• Civic Engagement
• Media

Total Number of Accountapreneurs 58

B) SUPPORTING THE YOUTH-LED ORGANIZATION VIA THE INNOVATION GRANT

ALN, through its Innovation Grant, is providing tailored support and mentorship to Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to enhance their organizational capacity, networking, and outreach. These CBOs are implementing community-driven advocacy projects in themes such as access to information, youth participation, inclusion, education, right to information, open data, and government accountability. They are closely working with local communities and stakeholders to push for change on different issues facing their communities. ALN serves as a mentor, guiding them to expand their outcomes and impacts and make their efforts more effective and sustainable.

23 Total number of organizations supported	**7** Number of provinces covered

C) CURATED FELLOWSHIPS AND ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE YOUTH

ALN has designed and launched a different kind of fellowship that provides meaningful avenues for youths to learn, network, and create influence in advocacy spaces.

For instance, the Youth Engagement in Democracy (YD) fellowship focuses on deepening youth's knowledge and understanding of democracy and human rights. 19 fellows were selected for the second cohort YD fellowship. The fellowship offered expert-led knowledge-building sessions to deepen fellows' understanding of democracy, inclusion, and human rights, space for peer learning, and enhanced their skills in media content creation, specifically podcasts.

The Youth Leadership in Action Fellowship, on the other hand, provided youths of Pokhara Metropolitan City, Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City, and Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City with an opportunity to deepen their understanding of Nepal's democracy and engage with the municipal governments to advocate for a more youth-friendly decision-making process. For six months, the 15 selected fellows gained hands-on experience in leading community-based advocacy, organized 15 stakeholder consultations, and facilitated 3 provincial dialogues. Alongside connecting the youth concerns with municipal governments, the fellows also translated their insights into impactful blogs, reflecting their learning and experiences.

D) RTI YOUTH CAMP

ALN hosted the Right to Information (RTI) Youth Camp in collaboration with the National Information Commission (NIC) across 3 provinces in Nepal. These camps directly equipped 75 young people as advocates of open democracy, who are now actively seeking information from government bodies using RTI, raising questions on irregularities and holding the government bodies accountable. 39 out of 75 participants have filed 75 RTI cases on issues ranging from fair distribution of scholarships and youth engagement on budget planning to youth-focused programs and local government budget expenditure. These youths are also now part of the RTI Youth Network hosted by ALN, a growing community of over 300+ RTI activists who exchange ideas, share challenges and celebrate the success of their RTI campaigns.

Number of RTI Camps	3	Participants	75	Location: 3 Provinces

Number of RTI filed after the camp 75

CivActs Team

A) CIVACTS MODEL IS NOW IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR THE FIRST TIME:

As one of four consortium partners of the 'ACCESS project', ALN is implementing its CivActs Model to engage, empower and strengthen accountability of local communities and the local government around inclusive and accessible education in Madhesh, Karnali, and Sudurpaschim provinces of Nepal. Having been successful in other cross-cutting community issues such as health, disaster, foreign labour migration, and inclusive policy, CivActs is now for the first time being tested to improve accountability in the education sector.

B) YOUTH-LED DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION A YEAR OF IMPACT

Accountability Lab Nepal drove significant progress in youth-led democratic participation this year with meaningful intervention in policies at different levels.

Our Community Frontline Activists (CFAs) and the youth volunteers had engaged communities and generated evidence through dialogues, town halls and surveys at the community level. Equipped with these insights from the community engagements, the CFAs along with the government representatives, participated in a design-thinking-based policy boot camp, where they worked to address the challenges of young people's participation through policy changes.

IMPACTS:
- Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City and Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City have mandated youth participation in the formation of *Tole Bikash Samstha* Working Committees. In Butwal, at least 30% of members must be youth aged 16-40, while in Dhangadhi, the requirement is set at 40%.
- The CFAs played a crucial role in the formation and localization of Youth Policy in Jaleshwor Municipality and Banepa Municipality.
- Similarly, together with the Municipal Youth Council of Pokhara Metropolitan City (PMC), they drafted a 'Five Year Strategic Action Plan' that included both the short and long-term objectives of the council for youth participation.

28 consultations	**10** town halls	**2500** people engaged
8 local policy interventions		**1** policy boot camps

C) PUBLIC-PRIVATE DIALOGUE

ALN launched its Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) initiatives four years ago to foster open, inclusive, and evidence-driven dialogues between the public and private sectors Gandaki and Lumbini province. In 2024, this process was further institutionalized with the establishment of the Public-Private Dialogue Forum (PPDF) in Pokhara, an entity now hosted by the metropolis to facilitate efficient public-private collaboration. The metropolis itself has also allocated funds to conduct Public-Private Dialogues in its annual budget. In addition, the year was also about connecting with and capacitating newer networks to improve the entire ecosystem of Public-Private Partnerships. In Gandaki province, we conducted a capacity-building workshop for women entrepreneurs to improve their financial management skills, while in Lumbini, we provided workshops to the municipal chapter of the Chamber of Commerce to advocate for effective policy demands with the government. The growing impact of our work at the municipal level is also reflected in the commitment from the Mayor of Pokhara Metropolitan City, Dhana Raj Acharya, in enhancing public-private partnerships.

Provinces	2	Local Government Unit	10	PPDs	14
Consultations	28	Capacity-building workshops	4		
Position papers	2	Policy Paper	2		

Advocacy and Policy

A) RESEARCH

i) ROADMAP TO REFORM: YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN NEPAL

ALN applied the [INSPIRED method](#) of policy dialogue to conduct a study on youth political participation in Nepal and develop actionable recommendations to promote it. As part of the process, it convened 15 CSOs in a working group to conduct a **"Participatory Policy Analysis"**, which outlined the policy gaps and challenges hindering youth's political participation in Nepal. It conducted a review of youth policies, political parties' statutes and manifestos, and other relevant policies. Moving forward, ALN is developing a comprehensive **'Roadmap to Reform'**, a document outlining policy priorities and reforms necessary to foster an enabling environment to promote youth participation and leadership in politics. For this, ALN is also building consensus and securing the buy-in of the relevant agencies such as the National Youth Council, mainstream political parties, and youth-led organizations to implement these reforms. It conducted 10+ consultations with the youth wings, student unions, and political leaders, and youth-led organizations as part of the process.

ii) GENERATING EVIDENCE TO FOSTER YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN GANDAKI PROVINCE

The team conducted a research *"Fostering Youth Entrepreneurship in Gandaki Province"* with the objective of exploring the landscape of entrepreneurship in Gandaki through the assessment of challenges faced by young entrepreneurs, including those involved in social entrepreneurship, and evaluating existing policy frameworks to pinpoint any gaps. The research included 18 KII with a diverse group of identified stakeholders, including young entrepreneurs, SME owners, startup founders, traders, hospitality sector professionals, provincial government officials, and CSO leaders and validating workshops. The research highlights both the potential for entrepreneurship in the region and the existing gaps in operational ventures. These challenges primarily stem from factors such as limited knowledge of policies, inadequate policies supporting entrepreneurship, low levels of participation, financial constraints, lack of mentorship, and more. The research findings were further communicated with local and provincial stakeholders.

iii) PRELIMINARY SURVEYS TO UNDERSTAND THE COMMUNITY PULSE

ALN has conducted two preliminary surveys at the community level to understand the community perspectives, especially on the e-governance sector. We have collected 1588 responses from across 5 provinces to assess their access to information. The survey has revealed that although the local government seems to have integrated social media and digital platforms alongside traditional ways of sharing communication, these remain insufficient due to a lack of regular updates and timely information dissemination.

Likewise, we have collected responses from 622 respondents on the perception of people on examining public perceptions of digitized government services. The results indicated a positive attitude toward e-services, with 63% of respondents expressing their preference for online services over in-person visits for their convenience, speed, faster processes, and being relatively transparent. However, both surveys suggest that either the access to information or the service delivery remain largely non-inclusive, particularly for marginalized groups such as people with disabilities, the elderly, and rural populations. These insights highlight the need for targeted interventions to ensure digital governance systems are accessible, equitable, and responsive to the diverse needs of the community.

B) MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACHES FOR EXPANDING THE HORIZON OF POLICY ADVOCACY

We have continued creating spaces for community building across diverse networks for collective advocacy through unconventional platforms.

i) Nepal Governance Weekly: Nepal Governance Weekly is a weekly update on the current governance issues in Nepal through media mining. In the year 2024, we had published 50 issues by the end of 2024. These weeklies are churned out of the media sources and also provide analytical updates. Governance Weekly is disseminated via our email networks and through our social media. reaching 10,000+ direct subscribers. Sign up here!

ii) Podcasts: The ALN's AccountabiliTea podcast discusses current issues through the lens of diversity, inclusion, accountability, and open government. The podcast is joined by the experts and they simplify the contemporary governance issues in the conversation. In 2024, eight podcasts were produced that focused on youth voices in the areas of queer advocacy, artivism, and entrepreneurship. Overall, 31 podcasts have been produced with over 26,000+ views to date.

iii) Artivism: ALN integrates different forms of creative expressions such as filmmaking, music, poems, painting, satire, and more to the advocacy efforts. ALN worked closely with 6 artists to create 13 art-based advocacy products that spotlight urgent issues, including the climate crisis, youth participation, and the systemic barriers Indigenous communities face in identification and recognition. These art forms not only serve as compelling conversation-starters but also resonate with a wider audience, strengthening advocacy efforts when showcased across multiple platforms and events by integrating art screenings with networking and open discussions. It fosters deeper engagement and amplifies critical social issues.

13 Art products | **6** Artivism fellows | **1** Film produced

C) COLLABORATIVE ACTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM

i) COLLABORATION AT LOCAL FRONTS WITH THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Throughout the year, ALN has fostered meaningful collaboration and strengthened relations with diverse stakeholders,s including government bodies, federations, like-minded institutions, and more on various thematic areas such as youth, media, and right to information. These collaborations have been instrumental in securing the buy-in of the key players in ensuring sustained commitment to the concerned advocacy.

Collaboration with government (6)
- National Information Centre (NIC)
- National Youth Council (NYC)
- Central for Education and Human Resource Department (CHERD)
- CIAA Bardibas Office
- Municipal Youth Councils
- Ministry of Youth and Sports
- Provincial and local government units

Federations and Networks (6)
- RTI Federation
- Federation of Nepali Journalists
- Sancharika Samuha Nepal
- National Disabled Women's Association
- National Campaign for Education
- Open Nepal Initiatives
- Blind Youth Association Nepal

Knowledge and learning partners
Western Sydney University
SOAS University of London
London School of Economics (LSE)
University of Manchester
Tarleton State University
Columbia University
Kathmandu University
17 colleges in Nepal

ii) REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Regional collaboration for youth engagement in Bangladesh
Accountability Lab Nepal (ALN) and the Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) have been working together to strengthen youth engagement in democracy across Nepal and Bangladesh. Their collaboration aims to build and amplify pluralistic networks of youth and youth leaders to become catalysts of change. In Bangladesh, ALN and MJF support 17 youth-led organizations working across diverse sectors such as climate action, women and youth development, digital rights and safety, and volunteerism. These organizations receive hands-on mentorship, training & workshops, learning exchange opportunities, and outreach support to enhance their advocacy efforts and amplify their impact.

As a part of this, ALN conducted a Regional Youth Summit to facilitate knowledge exchange and networking among youth from Bangladesh and Nepal. The summit brought together 36 participants (19 from Bangladesh and 17 from Nepal) who engaged in meaningful discussions on regional challenges, shared their innovative approaches to promoting democracy and human rights, and explored the potential for collaboration. The summit emphasized leadership development, equipping young leaders with the skills and connections needed to advance their work in their respective communities.

Regional Dialogues and learning sharing platforms
Leveraging the regional network, ALN has extended its *'Policy Park'* initiative from addressing the local issues to the platform for policy discussion to address and voice out the regional issues. ALN conducted two webinars featuring experts from across the regions, including India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. These webinars covered the issues of youth political participation in the South Asian Region and reflected on the challenges in regional democracy in relation to the rise of electoral populism. These platforms can also be portrayed as the portal to spike the conversation for stronger regionalism.

STAFF CORNER

- **OSHIN MAHARJAN** participated in the 3rd Summit for Democracy conducted in South Korea, representing the Youth Democracy Cohort (YDC).
- **PREKKSHYA BIMALI** participated in a Youth anti-corruption workshop conducted by the UNODC's GRACE initiative in Austria.
- **NARAYAN ADHIKARI'S** stewardship in climate action was more visible with his mentorship to young climate activists in designing and driving climate advocacy through local efforts and through his regional influence at the Bay of Bengal Conference 2024.
- **SUVECHCHHA CHAPAGAIN** was selected for Generation Democracy, a network of 300 young leaders from 88 countries that safeguards democracy, hosted by IRI.
- **SWASTIKA BASNET** leads efforts to integrate eco-friendly practices within ALN, developing key indicators to ensure sustainability in both office operations and events.

OPEN CO HUB

Open Co Hub has built a community of changemakers, community leaders, and changemakers, who are willing to create a positive impact in the community and contribute to creating a just society. It is a safe space to hold dialogues and discourses and as a convening platform for likely and unlikely networks. Open Co Hub has provided the space for conducting dynamic programs, art exhibitions, 16 days of activism against Gender-Based Violence, Queer collective 'Heart to Haat', Film Screening (Indigenous Rights); hosting podcasts on several issues (environment, young people's voices, women issues and more). Currently, we share our space with Digital Rights Nepal.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Total annual budget **$387,724**

Total number of grants 9	**Total number of core staff** 17	**Provincial Coordinator** 2
International Fellows 2	**CFAs** 9	**Total number of volunteers** 75

Total number of fellows 86

Total number of program participants 11,000+

PREVAILING THEMES OF THE YEAR

Youth and Democracy	**Gender and Inclusion**
Media Accountability	**E-governance**
Youth Political Participation	**Public Private Partnership**
Youth Entrepreneurship	**Climate Action**
Artivism	**Governance Accountability**
Education	**Migration**

LEARN MORE