



## NEPAL ANNUAL REPORT 2021

With the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nepal saw devastating effects in all socio-economic sectors in 2021. Along with the overwhelmed health care system, there was political turmoil with party splits and changes in government at the federal and provincial levels. Accountability Lab Nepal [ALN] quickly pivoted and had to assess how to continue its community advocacy work while bearing in mind new safety regulations. The lessons from the past and the presence of a strong network built across Nepal helped us navigate an effective response.

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## INTEGRITY ICON

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we successfully celebrated five Integrity Icons each for the year 2020 and 2021 in January and October respectively through a rigorous selection process. Most of the icons now have been assigned in the position where they bring reform in policy like Manamaya Bhattarai Pangenhi ha been assigned as Secretary in Office of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers, Gandaki Province; Shesh Narayan Paudel as a Director-General of Department of Foreign Employment and Dr. Bishma Kumar Bhusal as a Policy, Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Division of Ministry of Home Affairs. In addition to highlighting the Integrity Icons, to name and fame good-doers during the pandemic, we also recognized three COVID Heroes who were working in the frontline risking their lives during the COVID 19 pandemic.

### NUMBERS OF INTEGRITY ICON

2021

**338**

nominations

**77**

districts covered

**22**

volunteers

**105**

Online/Offline Media Reach

2020

**1503**

nominations

**77**

districts covered

**37**

volunteers

## OUR WINNERS

The Icons for 2020 include Arati Tharu, Public Health Inspector at the Nepalgunj Health Post; Dipak Jnawali, Division Head of the Ministry of Tourism, Industry, Forest and Environment in Lumbini Province, Butwal; Hem Bahadur Ale Magar, Crop Protection Officer at the Agriculture Resource Centre in Okhaldhunga; Manju Mahat, a 6th Level Officer at the Women, Children and Senior Citizen Section of the Mangalsen Municipality in Achham; Dr Nawin Bandhu Pahadi, a teacher at the Neelakantha School in Dhading.

Similarly, the Icons for 2021 include Shila Sharma, Nursing Officer, Bheri Hospital, Nepalgunj, Banke; Manamaya Bhattari Pangenhi, Chief District Officer, District Administration Office, Nawalpur; Chandrakant Chaudhary,



Agriculture Officer, Makwanpurgadhi Rural Municipality, Makwanpur; Dr. Sumitra Gautam, Medical Superintendent, Bhaktapur Hospital, Bhaktapur; and Dr. Lok Bahadur Lopchan, Undersecretary, Language Commission, Kathmandu.



ALN also ran a COVID Heroes campaign. Winners include Chandika Adhikari, Staff Nurse, Jaleswar Hospital, Mahottari; Naresh Babu Shrestha, Public Health Inspector/COVID focal person, Health Office Bardiya; and Laxmi Raj Upadhaya Public Health Inspector/COVID focal person, Dhangadhi sub-metropolitan city office. Read about our COVID Heroes campaign here.

This year, we also marched together with more than 100 individuals from diverse sectors with us in “Nagarik March-Citizen’s March” to promote the message on importance of integrity, accountability, and transparency, and raise awareness against corruption on the occasion of Anti-corruption 2021. The March included flashmob, forum theater that generated important conversations.

## CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

- Punye Prabha Devkota (Integrity Icon 2019) was listed in the annual list of 100 people to watch by Business 360 magazine.
- Formation and kick-off of Integrity Icon Alumni Committee in the leadership of Pradip Raj Kanel and five other Icons for the first half of 2022.
- Pradip Raj Kanel (Integrity Icon 2015) and Naresh Babu Shrestha (COVID Hero) got awarded by the government with the Prabal Janasewa Shree 3rd and 4th award for their exemplary work and contribution to the betterment of citizens of Nepal.

Integrity Icons have brought various reforms in their own working areas. For instance, Chandrakant Choudhary [Integrity Icon 2021] proved his effective leadership in implementing the farmer listing program in Makwanpurgadhi Rural Municipality, which makes it the first rural municipality in Makwanpur district to implement this program which is a step for government’s accountability towards the farmers.



## COVID HEROES

**139**

Integrity Icons identified, celebrated and supported

**37**

districts covered



### Bulletins

29 Bulletins [Issue 94-122] were published debunking the rumors and concerns collected from all over Nepal.

### Accountability Lives

20+ Accountability Lives [Facebook Lives sharing the facts] at centre and locally.

### Budget Tracking

We tracked NRS. 13.37 billions of national allocation and expenditure on COVID-19 response at provincial, national and local level during the pandemic.

### Radio Programs

56 Local Radio Programs generating accountability dialogues locally across seven provinces were broadcasted.

### Voices Out Loud

20 Voices Out Loud Series bringing unheard voices out from the communities.

## CIVIC ACTION TEAMS

The Civic Action Teams continued to close the feedback loop between leaders and communities to ensure an effective pandemic response. This was achieved by managing the infodemic with collaborations fighting back against misinformation through our Coronavirus CivActs Campaign. Further, we continued our Open Migration Initiative enhancing migration accountability. We also launched Public Private Dialogues at a sub-national level to engage the private sector. Lastly, we launched Gov-her-Nance, an initiative to build a gender-friendly and inclusive local government unit.

## STORIES

### Accountability Lab as a resource organization during the pandemic

As we have constantly been monitoring government decisions and facts around COVID-19, we have become a resource organization for local government, CSOs, media and public.

### Support to local government units

We collaborated with 10 local government units to share their budgets and build trust with communities during the pandemic.

### Building the culture of appreciation

After sharing voices from frontliners through our bulletins, the individuals said they were recognized in their community for their efforts and felt appreciated. This motivated them to make extra efforts. Similarly, we could see local media also sharing stories and encouraging a culture of appreciation in their respective communities.



## GOV - HER - NANCE

ALN, in collaboration with the Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City, started a new initiative called “Gov-Her-Nance” with a shared vision of establishing Dhangadhi as a gender-friendly and socially inclusive local unit. ALN closely worked with 9 local youths, “Inclusion fellows” [from LGBTQI+ and other marginalized communities] improving their collection of community feedback through consultations and visual story-telling. We also worked closely with the deputy mayor along with 39 other female elected leaders of the Sub-Metropolitan City through consultations and workshops, reflecting on their existing practices while strengthening their capacity on understanding gender and inclusion. Read more about the learnings from the Gov-Her-Nance here.

### IMPACT BY NUMBERS

**9**

fellows trained

**239**

women who directly  
involved in our program

**51**

men who directly  
involved in our program

**9**

gender diverse individuals  
who were directly involved  
in the campaign



## OUR IMPACT

As a part of our Gov-Her-Nance initiative our team also worked with the Inclusion Fellows to create a safe space for women and LGBTIQ+ communities to share their unheard stories during the pandemic. Further, the team also collaborated with a series of influencers to generate dialogues on gender and accountability amidst the pandemic.

During the 16 days of Activism against gender-based violence in 2021, our team was also successful in engaging more than 40 youth leaders in Accountability Artivism where they shared various forms of art.

- Inclusion Fellows developed their leadership in collecting feedback from the communities and discussing it with the concerned authorities. One of the fellows mentioned that their confidence level has increased immensely, and now they are more comfortable speaking with people, asking about concerns, and bridging gaps with local government.
- Inclusion fellows have created safe spaces in their communities to discuss challenges related to gender based violence.
- Local government now works closely with the Inclusion Fellows to collect ongoing feedback from their communities.
- Local government made commitments to support the survivors of gender based violence through the local unit.
- Film Fellows Yajaswi Rai and Bhima Thapa won the United Nations PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival award for their short film Pahichan.

“ Before being a fellow I never knew or had met the ward representative. Now I frequently go to the ward office and delegate about the problems of my community. The ward representatives too recognize me and consider me to disseminate information in my community. I have gained new confidence and zest through this fellowship.”

**Rewati SK, Inclusion Fellow**



## PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

This year Accountability Lab continued to work closely with the private sector through its “Supporting Public Private Partnership Development” initiative bringing together key leaders from the private sector, local and provincial governments, and civil society to strengthen mechanisms for strong Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP) in Nepal. Through this, we leveraged our network, relationships, and resources at subnational level to create feedback loops to foster an enabling environment for the private sector to integrate their voices into policies, programs, and budgets.

### IMPACT BY NUMBERS

**2**

provincial coordinators

**1581**

people reached directly through daily interactions, mini-meetings and PPDs

**24**

mini-meetings

**4**

Public-Private Dialogues

**2**

provinces covered

**3**

news/ articles published

**5**

radio shows

**4**

surveys



## OPEN MIGRATION INITIATIVE

We continued our Open Migration Initiative in Nepal aligning with our Coronavirus CivActs Campaign. With the pandemic, there was a rise in migrant workers returning to Nepal from labour destinations. Similarly, many migrants also faced challenges in the destination countries with the changing government decisions and policies. Through our CivActs Campaign, we regularly collected feedback from them and shared the facts supporting migrant workers to navigate the pandemic. One of the key highlights is the collaboration with Shramik Sanjal (migrant workers' network) who regularly provided insights on the changing government decisions at the destination countries through our CivActs bulletin.

### IMPACT BY NUMBERS

**5**

CFAs

**7**

local units

**500**

open migration  
champions

## IMPACT STORIES

- The open migration champions have now started to actively collaborate with their local government units providing feedback and accessing support. For instance, the deputy mayor of Khajura rural municipality requested to formalize the migrant's network in the communities. The network is now providing direct feedback and getting financial/training support from the local unit to support their enterprises. Read a migrant workers' story [here](#).
- The government is recognizing the network of open government champions. The Social Development Committee members of the Karnali Province Parliament requested our team to help them connect with returnee migrants to collect real-time feedback in an effort to design and implement employment programs at the provincial level. The committee assured that the feedback will be utilized as a key resource to make recommendations for the Chief Minister Employment program.
- Our CFAs and open migration champion in Birendranagar municipality collaborated with the local unit to collect data of migrant workers and their skills. The roster is now available online on the official website of Birendranagar Municipality.

# ACCOUNTABILITY INCUBATOR

The five Accountpreneurs for the year 2021 were Gauri Shankar Shah whose idea to support government in transparency and citizens actions; Neetu Sen with the idea to create a platform to inform people about their rights and raise their voices; Sanju Dhakal with her idea to expand informal education among underprivileged children; Sandhya Acharya with the idea to hold government accountable towards women school; and Laxmi Prasad Paudel with the idea to document and track the activities of MPs and provincial assembly of Karnali province through an online platform.

Being an Accountpreneur, I get access to a network of youth not only from Nepal but globally who are working on their ideas and there is so much to learn from each other. Furthermore, we get information and access to opportunities from around the globe, which adds significant value towards pursuing and developing our ideas.

**Sandhya Acharya, Accountpreneur 2021**

## IMPACT BY NUMBERS

**5**

participants

**3**

trainings

## IMPACT

**101**

researchers

Based on the findings, we are now working closely with the sub-national stakeholders in 2022 to increase awareness and support government to collect citizens feedback.

## RESEARCH ON POLITICAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS IN NEPAL

The aim of the study was to identify the political and economic factors that limit the effectiveness of decentralization in Nepal. The findings aim to provide information and nuance around the members of subnational governments, civil society actors, academics, and donors to create a better understanding of the political economy factors that hinder the effective implementation of decentralization in Nepal.



## LAUNCH OF ACCOUNTABILITEA PODCAST NEPAL

Our team introduced Accountabilitea podcasts this year. Through podcasts, we raise contemporary accountability issues and provide a bigger platform for discussion and setting dialogue and conversation. The podcasts provide opportunities for guests to share their personal stories and their initiatives helping to create a positive change in their community and the solutions to some of the major governance challenges that Nepal faces today. This year we have discussed various pertinent topics in the podcasts including the issues of gender, migration, digital security, government regulations during the pandemic.



### IMPACT BY NUMBERS

**5**

podcasts  
produced

**5000+**

reached

# POLICY PARK

Policy Park is an open platform for intellectual debate and enlightening conversations with leaders, change makers, opinion builders, and social entrepreneurs. It serves as a space for like-minded individuals to identify problems and discuss possibilities to make Nepal a better place to live. Through Policy Park, we bring the power of unlikely networks for collective action on social change, we cover accountability issues that are often neglected in mainstream media, and we foster constructive dialogue to search for new ways of living with democracy. Policy Park started as Accountability Collectives to connect like-minded individuals during the pandemic, and now has turned into a platform to encourage co-learning, co-sharing and collaboration between people from diverse backgrounds to develop compelling narratives around accountability, democracy and economic prosperity in Nepal. We have discussed various accountability issues including climate change, gender, and the economy.

## IMPACT BY NUMBERS

# 17

events

# 500+

participants

## IMPACT

# 20+

virtual members

# 3

physical members  
Digital Rights Nepal  
(DRN), Nepal  
Agribusiness  
Innovation  
Centre(NABIC), and  
Unity for Change

## OPEN GOV HUB NEPAL

Open Gov Hub Nepal, is a member of the global Open Gov Hub, a vibrant and engaging co-working space that brings together like minded organizations, ideas, and resources to open up government and empower citizens in Nepal. This space provides opportunities for effective collaboration between different organizations and youth to create a larger impact in the society through diverse knowledge and innovations.

Accountability Lab Nepal in collaboration with another Hub Member Digital Rights Nepal [DRN] have started collaboration on strengthening tech driven democracy through robust and digitally secured civic space in Nepal.



## LOOKING TOWARDS 2022

- Strengthening the relationship and network built over the years through Alumni Groups [Icon, Accountpreneurs, Scholars etc]
- Designing programs and activities based on the experience and learning over the years
- Building a resource for top accountability and governance updates in Nepal by launching Governance Weekly
- Continuing convening through Policy Park- bringing more changemakers from diverse background for constructive dialogues and collaborations to promote accountability across different sectors
- Continuing Accountability dialogues through Accountabilitea podcasts

### STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

**22**

volunteers

**14**

core staff

**11**

community frontline  
activitsts

**3**

consultants

**2**

province coordinators

**2**

province interns

**10**

inclusion fellows

**1**

international fellow