

# KNOWLEDGE BRIDGE

*Connecting Diaspora Minds for Nepal*



Nepal Policy Institute



[www.nepalpolicyinstitute.com](http://www.nepalpolicyinstitute.com)

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Nepal Policy Leadership Program 2024 Nears Completion
- What's Included and Missed in the FY 2081/82 Budget?
- NPI Introduces Critical Thinking in Policy Making in China
- Nepali Diaspora's Potential for Nepal Development
- NPI Researcher Explores Kathmandu Street Business
- NPI Collaborates with the Election Commission of Nepal on Policy Research
- NPI Attends Global Think-Tank Conference by OTT
- Millet: A Potential Solution for Food Security in Nepal
- Knowledge Transfer: Interviews with 3 Nepali Diaspora Experts
- Talent Connect: Views from 3 Global Nepali Youth

## **What is Knowledge Bridge?**

*Knowledge Bridge is the newsletter by Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), an international, independent, and non-partisan think tank. Knowledge Bridge is a platform dedicated to the people-centered and sustainable development of Nepal and its diaspora. As a forum of Nepali-origin public policy scholars, researchers, practitioners, experts, and consultants worldwide, NPI collaborates with individuals and institutions globally, working in the interest of Nepal and its people, including the diaspora. This newsletter is an effort to connect people across various platforms—whether in the cloud, on land, or in the spaces in between.*

*Our mission is to promote knowledge and public discourse on public policy, focusing on sustainable development of Nepal and its people, wherever they are. Knowledge Bridge is a platform to share brief opinion pieces, short interviews with diaspora experts, and perspectives from global Nepali youth, along with updates from NPI. The NPI Global Community currently comprises over 1,200 scholars and practitioners from the diaspora across all continents, representing more than 54 countries. Knowledge Bridge is a preliminary channel through which these individuals can connect with Nepal through their ideas, experiences, and knowledge.*

*NPI is registered as a non-profit foundation (Stichting) in The Hague. It is also registered as a non-profit organization in Nepal.*

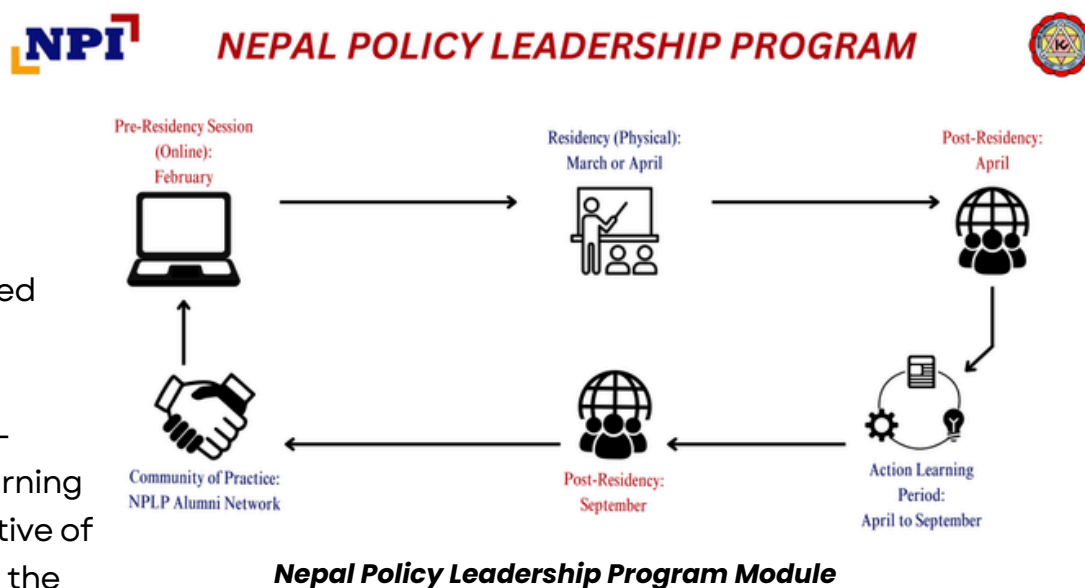
## Nepal Policy Leadership Program 2024 Nears Completion

The Nepal Policy Leadership Program (NPLP) is a learning initiative designed to equip participants with critical thinking skills, deep time learning mindsets, and policy analysis tools, fostering a new generation of policy leaders across public, private, and non-profit sectors dedicated to Nepal’s prosperous future through people-centered policy work. As a flagship annual program of the Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), the inaugural cohort of the NPLP was offered in collaboration with the Kathmandu University School of Management Policy Lab (KUSOM Policy Lab).

The first batch of the NPLP, an eight-month program, began in February 2024 with a pre-residency component, followed by a three-day residency in Panauti, Kavre, in March. This inaugural batch was exclusively offered to government officials, with 25 participants ranging from section officers to joint secretaries representing 13 ministries and 3 constitutional commissions of the Nepal government. The nomination process for participants was conducted in collaboration with the Prime Minister’s Office, as the program was prioritized for government officers.

After the residency segment, participants engaged in a post-residency session in April before moving on to the Action Learning Sessions, which run from April to September. The core objective of the post-residency phase is to assist participants in applying the learnings from the NPLP in their daily work. Currently, the Action Learning period is underway, during which participants are implementing their NPLP learnings with mentorship support provided by NPI based on their needs. The first batch of NPLP will conclude with a final post-residency session on Impact Evaluation in September 2024.

The technical team for NPLP was led by Dr. Gambhir Bhatta, former Governance Thematic Chief at ADB and former Executive Director of NPI, with support from a team of international and local resource persons. International expert Ms. Sally Washington, Executive Director of Aotearoa New Zealand at the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG), delivered a special session during the pre-residency phase of the NPLP. For more details about NPLP, please visit [here](#)



*A few glimpses of the residency session of Nepal Policy Leadership Program*

## NPI Executive Board Member Actively Participates in the Exclusive OTT Conference in Barcelona, Spain

NPI Executive Board member Mr. Kedar Neupane attended the OTT conference in Barcelona from May 21 to 23, 2024. At this invite-only event, Mr. Neupane actively engaged in discussions on emerging topics such as think tank sustainability and governance. Mr. Neupane mentioned “It was an interesting meet in Barcelona with several other think-tankers around the globe. The OTT [On Think Tanks] Conference 2024, held on 22-23 May at the Social Hub Centre of Fundacio Bofill in Barcelona, Spain, concluded gracefully on Thursday. Over 100 delegates from 41 countries participated representing all continents. Asia's representatives were from Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Kazakhstan, Iran, Philippines and India. I was the only one from Nepal at the convention.”

The conference conversations under the broad subject of 'think tanks and their communities' were (1) inclusive digitalization and the role of think tanks, (2) changing roles - why and how do think tanks evolve?, (3) beyond policy research - how think tanks are driving evidence use, (4) future orientating think tanks, (5) how can think tanks maintain their integrity in a flawed democratic landscape?, (6) building bridges across communities, (7) jumpstarting AI for think tanks, (8) new digital media - think tanks partners, competitors or role models?, (9) think tanks and their role in tackling corruption and state capture, (10) do think tanks need to start rebuilding trust? (11) 2024 a year of elections - the role of think tanks, (12) new challenges, new models, (13) membership for the benefit of all, (14) "unconference" what's missing from the conversation?, (15) a conversation with think tank funders, (16) think tanks and youth - developing active and responsible citizens, (17) global minds, local hearts - the role of think tanks in advocacy, (18) are we facing a leadership crisis?, (19) how does an evidence community strive and sustain.



**Mr. Neupane speaking during a table discussion with other participants at the OTT Conference 2024**

While BIMSTEC has prioritized seven sectors each led by a particular member country, as mentioned by the Secretary General, regardless of which country is the lead for a particular sector, it is vital to understand the perspectives of each country and to understand that every country has a role to play in it.

## A Visionary Youth Joins Management Team

We are proud to announce that Mr. Abhinav Joshi, a graduate with a Masters in Development Studies from Kathmandu University School of Arts (KUSoA). He is a young development professional with experience in various fields ranging from human rights education and development to research methodology having worked in various local NGOs such as the Youth for Human Rights Nepal. Involved in various youth organizations, including the Leo Club of Kathmandu Kohinoor, the Leo District council 325 H and Nepal Scouts, he has had a great deal of experience in organizational and event management. He has also been part of UN Habitat Nepal as a documentation- research intern working on a paper recording the process of reconstruction of the Rato Machhindranath Temple at Bungamati.

## Nepal Policy Leadership Program Hosts Virtual Post-Residency Session

On 27th of April 2024, the Nepal Policy Leadership program held its first ever post-residency session virtually via Zoom. The session was attended by participants from various ministries and government bodies, the NPI board members and management team. It focused on the review of learnings from the residency session on both sides of the organizing team as well as the participants, followed by a detailed discussion of risk analysis and a group work with each group focusing on a case study of the related issue.

The session concluded with a brief discussion about the way forward and focus of the next post residency session.

## Forging Connections: NPI Engages with BIMSTEC Leadership at Development Summit

On the 20th of May, 2024 the NPI Engagement Manager Mr. Abhinav Joshi, on behalf of the institute, attended a program entitled "Harnessing Regional Synergies for Development and Prosperity in BIMSTEC Region" at Smriti Bhawan, TU, Kirtipur which was organized by CEDA. The program was attended by H.E. Mr. Indra Mani Pandey, the secretary general of BIMSTEC as well as by the Vice-Chancellor of TU.

The program, in addition to introducing “BIMSTEC”, also had a panel discussion on the significance of the organization to the member states with regards to regional cooperation, finance/trade and media. The program also acted as a platform for not only learning of such a vital regional organization but also for connecting various think tanks together.

## Empowering Through Engagement: NPI Joins Private Sector Program Hosted by LMC

The NPI Engagement Manager Mr. Abhinav Joshi attended, on behalf of the institute, the “Private Sector Engagement Program” with the theme “Empowerment through Employment” organized by Lalitpur Metropolitan City at Hotel Himalaya, Pulchowk on the 24th of May, 2024 (Friday). The program chaired by the Mayor Mr. Chiri Babu Maharjan was attended by a number of HR leaders, employment advocates, government representatives, and NGO / policy institute representatives.

The event was focused on engaging the representatives of the private sector in the process of policy making by initiating an interaction session where various issues were represented. The private sector as well as various other participants were encouraged to share their ideas to help in the policies designed by the local government. Further, various issues in regards to labor migration were also presented by Mr. Rabindra Singh, the team leaders for the ENSSURE project by Helvetas Nepal. He noted that while a significant number of Indians are employed in Nepal, there is a much larger Nepali workforce working in India. The earnings of the Nepali workers in India are notably high, but the cost for Nepal to employ Indian workers is substantially greater. He further highlighted that the present scenario is that of the educated unemployed with lack of workforce in labor centered jobs.

Events such as these, if properly managed can be beneficial in the policy making process by incorporating the diverse perspectives of the related groups.



The initiation of Engagement Through Employment Program at Hotel Himalaya

The discussions concluded with a commitment from both sides to continue their collaborative efforts towards achieving these shared goals, fostering an environment conducive to democratic growth and civic engagement in Nepal.

We hope that our contribution can lead to a better and more positive growth in the days to come.



NPI representatives in a discussion with Chief Election Commissioner

## Strengthening Democratic Processes: NPI Delegation Meets with the Nepal Election Commissioners

In a significant stride towards enhancing democratic processes in Nepal, a delegation from NPI, comprising NPI Executive Board members including Ms. Sharu Joshi and Dr. Nalini Subba Chhetri, along with Engagement Manager Mr. Abhinav Joshi, convened with Nepal’s Chief Election Commissioner Hon. Mr. Dinesh Kumar Thapaliya and Election Commissioner Hon. Dr. Janaki Kumari Tuladhar on June 14, 2024. This crucial meeting served as a follow-up to address various pivotal agendas previously agreed upon between the NPI and the Nepal Election Commission.

Central to the discussions were pressing issues such as expanding i-voting rights for Nepali citizens residing abroad, reforming election funding mechanisms, promoting female candidacy, and refining the electoral quota system, among others. The deliberations were aimed at devising actionable plans to advance these critical reforms in the near future.

Mr. Thapaliya underscored the necessity for evidence-based research to inform and enhance the nation’s electoral policies. This call for rigorous research is seen as pivotal in shaping a more inclusive and efficient electoral framework for Nepal. The engagement between NPI and the Election Commissioners reflects a shared commitment to fostering transparent and fair electoral practices, crucial for upholding the principles of democracy in the country.

The outcomes of this meeting are poised to pave the way for substantial advancements in Nepal’s electoral landscape, setting a precedent for effective public-private partnerships in governance and democratic stewardship. As Nepal prepares for future electoral cycles, the partnership between NPI and the Election Commission promises to play a pivotal role in shaping a more inclusive and representative democracy.

## NPI Young Researcher Shares Insights on Kathmandu Street Business Study

Sudhir Shrestha, a recipient of the NPI Young Researcher Award from the 2022 cohort, recently presented his paper titled “Street Businesses in Kathmandu: Crushed by the Pandemic, Evicted by the State” at the Martin Chautari Annual Conference 2023. Mr. Shrestha is conducting the study with the support from NPI. Shrestha’s paper received feedback from reviewers and moderators and saw encouraging participation from the audience. Below is the excerpt from his paper.

### Summary of the Paper

Street vending is a crucial source of self-employment in cities with limited job opportunities. The study employs a mixed-method approach to examine how the COVID-19 pandemic affected street businesses in Kathmandu, Nepal. It explores the interactions between the state, street vendors, and capital, especially during the crisis, and identifies survival strategies used by these businesses. The research reveals that the pandemic had a significant impact on the street vending sector in Kathmandu, causing many vendors to return to their home districts, engage in agriculture, or seek alternative employment. The effect on sales and profits varied depending on the type of business and goods or services offered. The state’s pandemic response, which prioritized control measures, favored formal businesses set in permanent structures over street vendors. Despite this, street businesses in Kathmandu demonstrated resilience, surviving with minimal external support. Vendors coped with such adverse situations using measures including migration, reduced consumption, depleted savings, and borrowing, in their efforts to restore their livelihoods. Based on these findings, the study recommends formalizing the informal sector and providing support to street vendors.

This approach calls for redefining the social contract, providing a sustainable solution for revitalizing street businesses post-pandemic, protecting informal enterprises from future crises, and managing street vending operations rather than banning them following the traditional repressive approach.



**NPI Young Researcher Awardee Mr. Shrestha at the Martin Chautari Annual Conference 2023**

*Photo Source: Martin Chautari*

Further, on 30 January 2024, Sudhir Shrestha also participated as a speaker in the first Asia Regional Meeting of StreetNet International, an international alliance of street vendors. He shared his research findings during the meeting and outlined the necessity to link advocacy campaigns in Nepal, primarily targeted at recognition of street vendors, with evidence generated through research.



**NPI Young Researcher Awardee Mr. Shrestha in the first Asia Regional Meeting of StreetNet International, an international alliance of street vendors**

*Photo Source: Martin Chautari*

## NPI Chair Engages with China's Think Tank Community at Nanjing University



**A few glimpses of Dr. Dhakal's visit to CCTREC at Nanjing University, China**

In a significant step towards exchange of knowledge and ideas, Dr. Khagendra Dhakal, Chairperson of the Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), visited the China Think Tank Research and Evaluation Center (CTTREC) at Nanjing University on June 18, 2024, at the invitation of CTTREC. The visit, which featured a guest lecture by Dr. Dhakal, underscored the growing partnership between NPI and CTTREC, aimed at fostering collaborative efforts in policy research and evaluation.

During his visit, Dr. Dhakal delivered a lecture emphasizing the importance of a critical thinking approach for policymaking, drawing from his research on critical thinking and his experience in implementing it in the Policy Leadership Program for Nepal Government officers. His insights resonated with faculty and students alike, who eagerly engaged in discussions on integrating robust analytical frameworks into policy formulation. In turn, the hosts at CTTREC showcased their ongoing efforts in developing a comprehensive think-tank index and shared insights into the growth trajectory of Chinese think tanks. The exchange not only deepened mutual understanding but also paved the way for future joint initiatives aimed at addressing regional and global challenges through informed policy interventions.

As the NPI and CTTREC look ahead, their shared commitment to advancing evidence-based policymaking stands as a testament to the transformative power of collaborative research and dialogue. Prof. Gang Li, the Director of CTTREC, moderated and summarized Dr. Dhakal's lecture, thanked him for visiting the Center, and proposed future collaborations between the two organizations.



**Dr. Dhakal delivering his lecture on importance of critical think approaches in policy making**

### Analysis of Nepal's Fiscal Year Policies 2081/82

On May 14, 2024, Nepal's President Ramchandra Paudel presented the government's policies and programs for the upcoming fiscal year. The agenda emphasized economic improvement, investment attraction, and infrastructure development. Key highlights included the promotion of economic progress, an investment-friendly environment, advancements in the energy sector, a strong commitment to implementing the constitution, combating corruption, and driving socio-economic transformation. Additionally, the agenda prioritized employment generation, good governance, public service enhancement, and IT sector development. Despite some opposition, these policies, alongside the Sixteenth Five-Year Plan, were approved, paving the way for the fiscal budget presentation.

*Source: Kathmandu Post- 14th May, 2024 (Tuesday)*

In response, NPI Executive Board Member Mr. Gopi Mainali wrote an article titled "कस्तो छ सो योजना?" (Naya Patrika Daily, May 21), expressing concerns that without aggressive pursuit, the ambitious targets of the Sixteenth Plan could become meaningless. He highlighted significant challenges, including the declining capacity for public sector investment, the need for cooperative reforms, and the private sector's apparent lack of interest in contributing to the plan's success.



*(Source: The full commentary by Mr. Mainali can be read in the Kathmandu Post, dated May 14, 2024.)*

## NPI Board Member Participates in ANA Annual Conference in San Francisco



**A few glimpses of NPI executive board member Mr. Kedar Neupane at the ANA Annual Convention 2024**

NPI Executive Board Member Mr. Kedar Neupane attended the Association of Nepalis in America (ANA) Annual Conference in San Francisco from July 19-21, 2024. The event attracted members of the Nepali diaspora from across the Americas and beyond. Established in 1983, ANA is the oldest and most influential Nepali community organization in North America. NPI's participation aligns with its mission to collaborate with diaspora organizations and integrate their knowledge into policy recommendations for Nepal.

During the conference, Mr. Neupane provided an update on NPI's activities in Nepal, including the ongoing Nepal Policy Leadership Program (NPLP) for government officers, and efforts to introduce a critical thinking approach to policy work, both in Nepal and at the global think-tank conference in Barcelona earlier this year.

NPI has been working closely with ANA, reflecting a shared commitment to fostering unity and harmony within the Nepali diaspora in the Americas. While ANA focuses on community activities, NPI collaborates with them to leverage knowledge resources for public policy development in Nepal. In his address, Mr. Neupane offered a comprehensive overview of NPI's recent activities and future initiatives. The convention's objectives were multifaceted, emphasizing unity and harmony among the Nepali diaspora. It also highlighted the shared commitment of both organizations to preserving and promoting Nepali identity, culture, heritage, literature, and knowledge. Over the three days, the convention featured a series of enlightening sessions, engaging forums, and dynamic networking opportunities, designed to explore new frontiers and foster meaningful connections among attendees.

The ANA Annual Conference in San Francisco was a success, underscoring the importance of collaboration and community building within the Nepali diaspora in the Americas. ANA President Mr. Khagendra Adhikari and his team expressed their appreciation for NPI's participation and Mr. Neupane's contributions to the conference.

## NPI Briefing to the Diaspora Community in Virginia

Mr. Kedar Neupane, an Executive Board Member of the Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), recently presented NPI's vision and mission during a Meet and Greet Program organized by the America Nepal Society in Fairfax, Virginia, on August 10, 2024. NPI, recognized as the only diaspora-powered think tank in the global Nepali community, is uniquely positioned to leverage the expertise and knowledge of the Nepali diaspora to support the sustainable development of Nepal.

During the event, Mr. Neupane highlighted NPI's flagship initiative, the Nepal Policy Leadership Program (NPLP), which is designed to empower policymakers in Nepal. He emphasized the critical role of incorporating critical thinking into decision-making processes, particularly in the realm of public policy. Through NPLP, participants are equipped with tools to effectively navigate complex policy challenges, leading to improved governance and impactful policy outcomes. Mr. Neupane stressed that in today's fast-changing environment, the ability to critically assess information and various perspectives is crucial for leaders striving for Nepal's sustainable development.



**NPI executive board member Mr. Neupane with American Nepal Society at Virginia**

The session reinforced NPI's ongoing commitment to engaging the global Nepali diaspora, facilitating intellectual contributions, and building capacity to support more effective decision-making processes in Nepal.



## बजेटमा के समेटियो, के छुट्यो ?

A Perspective by NPI Executive Board Member Mr. Gopi Nath Mainali



आगामी आर्थिक वर्ष २०८१/८२ को बजेट संघीय संसद्मा प्रस्तुत भयो। कार्यकारीले प्रस्ताव गर्ने र संसदले अनुमोदन गर्ने कार्यकारी ढाँचाको बजेट भएकाले त्यहाँ उल्लेखित सबै कुरा पारित भएर कार्यान्वयनको चरणमा पुग्छन्। बजेट एक वर्षको नीति कार्यक्रम भएकाले नतिजा नदिए यसको सार्थकता रहँदैन। स-साना नतिजाले पनि जनतामा आशा जगाउन सकिन्छ। तर त्यसलाई कार्यान्वयन सामर्थ्यले समर्थन गर्नुपर्छ। बजेटले चार उद्देश्य राखेको छ, उत्पादन र रोजगारी वृद्धि, आर्थिक गतिशीलता वृद्धि, मानव साधन विकास र गरिबी न्यूनीकरण। तर, उद्देश्य कार्यान्वयन गर्ने प्राथमिकता धेरै छन्, (क) आर्थिक सुधार र निजी क्षेत्र विकास, (ख) कृषि, ऊर्जा, सूचना प्रविधि, पर्यटन, उद्योग र पूर्वाधार, (ग) शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य र सामाजिक सेवा, (घ) समावेशिता र सामाजिक सुरक्षा र (ङ) सुशासन र सेवा प्रवाह। यसले सरकार धेरै स्थानमा हात हाल्न चाहन्छ भन्ने देखिन्छ, जसबाट स्रोत जताततै छरिने अवस्था त रहन्छ नै। बजेट कार्यान्वयनको रणनीतिमा भने नयाँ चरणको आर्थिक सुधार कार्यक्रम, व्यावसायिक वातावरण, सार्वजनिक वित्त प्रणाली, वित्तीय क्षेत्र र सार्वजनिक प्रशासन सुधारलाई उल्लेख गरिएको छ।

प्रजातन्त्र पुनस्थापना पछिको पहिलो निर्वाचित सरकारले आर्थिक उदारीकरणको दर्शन अवलम्बन गरेपछि दोस्रो चरणको आर्थिक सुधारको कार्यक्रम ल्याउन ढिला भएको अवस्थामा यो आशालाग्दो देखिएको छ। बजेटले पहिलोपटक पाँच रूपान्तरणकारी क्षेत्र घोषणा गरेको छ। नेपालको बजेट इतिहासमा पहिलोपटक उल्लेख गरिएका रूपान्तरणकारी क्षेत्र नै बजेटका वास्तविक प्राथमिकता हुन्। छुट्टै प्राथमिकता नभनेको भए पनि हुने थियो। यसले बजेट तर्जुमामा रहेको अर्थराजनीतिक असजिलोलाई संकेत गर्छ। जे होस्, रूपान्तरणकारी क्षेत्रमा समेटिएका कृषिको रूपान्तरण, ऊर्जा क्षेत्रको विकास, पर्यटन प्रबर्द्धन, सूचना प्रविधि विकास र औद्योगिकीकरण अहिलेका आवश्यकता हुन्। ती एकदमै सान्दर्भिक छन्।

तर, जसरी रूपान्तरणकारी क्षेत्र महत्वका साथ घोषणा गरियो, त्यसलाई समर्थन गर्ने कार्यक्रममा भने शास्त्रीय सोचअनुरूप छन्। कृषिको रूपान्तरणका लागि कृषि लगानी दशक, सय बिघाभन्दा ठूला धानखेतीका सात नमूना परियोजनाबाहेक अन्य नीति कार्यक्रम विगतकै निरन्तरतामा छन्। कृषि पेसाको मर्यादास्तर उठाउने र व्यावसायिक बनाउने कार्यक्रमहरू छैनन्। ऊर्जा क्षेत्रको रूपान्तरणका लागि बूढीगण्डकीसहित चार आयोजना सञ्चालन र शून्य उत्सर्जनका आधार बनाउन नवीकरणीय र स्वच्छ ऊर्जा कार्यक्रमबाहेक अन्य कार्यक्रम रूपान्तरण गर्ने खालका नभै सामान्य छन्। 'नेटमेटरिड' जस्ता कार्यक्रम आएको भए हुने थियो।

सूचना प्रविधि रूपान्तरणको आधार हुन सक्छ तर सूचना-प्रविधि दशक, सार्वजनिक-निजी साझेदारी मोडेलको सूचना हवले मात्र यस क्षेत्रले निर्वाह गर्नुपर्ने रूपान्तरणको कति सम्भव होला भन्ने प्रश्न छ। ३० खर्बको निर्यात र पाँच लाखलाई प्रत्यक्ष र १० लाखलाई अप्रत्यक्ष रोजगारी दिन विदेशमा रहेका नेपाली शिल्पी र उद्यमीलाई उपयोग गर्ने कुरा उल्लेख गरेको भए हुने थियो। पर्यटन प्रबर्द्धनले रूपान्तरणको सोच राख्ने कार्यक्रम दिएको छैन। जनकपुरलाई 'वेडिङ हब' र लुम्बिनीलाई 'बर्थिङ हब' बनाउने कार्यक्रमले पर्यटनलाई सोचअनुरूपको उचाइमा पुऱ्याउन सक्दैन। विश्वभरि फैलिएका नेपाली डायस्पोरा परिचालन, नेपाली पर्यटनको ब्रान्डिङ, लोन्ली प्लानेटलगायत पर्यटन प्रबर्द्धक सञ्चारको उपयोग, योगदर्शन, अनुसन्धान, मेला, छायांकनजस्ता कार्यलाई भुलिएको छ। पर्यटनको परम्परागत ढाँचा धार्मिक टुराक र पूर्वाधारमा अल्झिएको छ। निर्माण संरचनाको सौन्दर्यीकरण कम खर्चमा धेरै पर्यटक तान्न सक्ने, आन्तरिक पर्यटनको विस्तार हुने क्षेत्र हो। यसतर्फ ध्यान गएको छैन। विदेशमा रहेका नेपालीलाई पुर्ख्यौली थलोमा भ्रमण गर्न गरिएको अनुरोध प्रशंसनीय छ। उद्यमशीलता विकास र औद्योगिकीकरणमा 'मेक इन नेपाल र मेड इन नेपाल' अभियानलाई समर्थन गर्ने कार्यक्रमहरू खासै छैन। केवल गण्डकी आर्थिक त्रिभुज, केही ग्रोथ कोरिडोर र घरेलु मदिरा लगायतका घरेलु उत्पादनको ब्रान्डिङ गर्ने अवधारणा छ। पुँजी, प्रविधिको लगानीमा उद्यमीहरूलाई उत्साहित हुने कार्यक्रमहरू अपेक्षित थिए।

केही नयाँ कार्यक्रम अघि सारिएका छन्, केही अभियानकारी अभिव्यक्ति पनि छन्। 'ग्रामीण विकास अभियान', 'एक पालिका: एक डाउनटाउन', 'एक वडा, एक पार्क' आफैमा राम्रा छन्, तर घरपरिवार तहदेखि उद्यमशीलता विकास गरी आर्थिक संरचनाको स्थानीय जग मजबुत बनाउने अपेक्षा पूरा गर्न सकिएको भए यी अभियान सार्थक हुने थिए। 'विदेशको आम्दानी स्वदेशको लगानी'ले आर्थिक विप्रेषणको महत्व र नेपाली अर्थतन्त्रका चाहनालाई समेटेको छ। यसका साथै सामाजिक विप्रेषण, नेपाली डायस्पोरा उपयोग गर्ने कार्यक्रम आएको भए नेपाली मनको माया मातृभूमिमा समेटिने थियो। विदेशमा सिकेको सीप, जानेको कुरा, रहेको सम्बन्ध र सञ्जाललाई उपयोग गर्ने नीति कार्यक्रमले नेपाली समृद्धिलाई परिपूरण गर्ने थियो। त्यस्तै 'घटेको कार्बन उत्सर्जन बढेको कार्बन सञ्चिती'लाई अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय तहमा बिक्री गर्ने कुराले कार्बन वित्तको नयाँ पाटो उघार्न खोजेको छ तर कार्बन एकाउन्टिङ, क्षमता विकास र जलवायु संवादको सामर्थ्यले समर्थन गरेपछि मात्र जलवायु वित्तमा पहुँच बढाउन सकिन्छ। शिक्षा बिग्रेर सबै बिग्रन्छ, शिक्षा बिग्रेर सबै बिग्रिएको हो। यसलाई सम्बोधन गर्न ठूलै शल्यक्रिया आवश्यक छ।

व्यक्तिलाई जीवन निर्वाहको सीप, समाजलाई असल संस्कार, राष्ट्रलाई मानव पुँजी र त्यसपछि विश्वस्तरमा प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक बढाउने शिक्षाको आवश्यकता छ। 'जीवनोपयोगी शिक्षा' भने पनि यसको जग प्रारम्भिक बाल विकास कार्यक्रमलाई सवल बनाउने, विद्यालय शिक्षालाई सीपमुखी बनाउने र उच्च शिक्षालाई प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक बनाउने दृष्टिकोण दिएको भए हुने थियो। साथैबाट 'सिकौ साथीलाई सिकाऔं', 'विद्यालय नक्सांकन', छात्रवृत्ति र अनुदानमूलक सामान्य कार्यक्रमहरूमा जोड दिइएको छ। विश्वविद्यालय विस्तार होइन, स्तरीकरण चाहिन्छ। विद्यालय शिक्षा ऐन, एउटैमात्र उच्च शिक्षा ऐन, एउटै सेवा आयोगका साथ व्यापक शिक्षक तयारी, सान्दर्भिक पाठ्यक्रम र प्राध्यापन विधिमा सुधार आवश्यक छ। प्राज्ञिक सिद्धान्त र मूल्यका लागि पनि मन्त्रालयपिच्छे विश्वविद्यालय खोल्नु ठीक होइन, तर बजेटमा बोलिएन। भरपर्दो स्वास्थ्य प्रणालीको सख्त आवश्यकता रहेको कुरा कोभिड विपद्का समयमा मुलुकले अनुभव गर्‍यो। स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा, खानेपानी, सरसफाइजस्ता सामाजिक वस्तुमा राष्ट्रिय मानक घोषणा सहितको कार्यक्रम अहिलेको आवश्यकता थियो। 'सामाजिक बैकिङ'को नवीन अवधारणा आएको छ। तर, सहकारी पनि यही अवधारणामा चलेको अभियान थियो, मूल्यसिद्धान्तबाट विषयान्तर हुँदा वित्तीय उच्छृंखलता आएको छ। 'सामाजिक बैकिङ' त्यसो हुन नदिन निर्भिक नियमन चाहिन्छ।

बजेटमा धेरै कुरा क्रमागत निरन्तरता छ, केही महत्वाकांक्षी र लोकप्रियताका कुरा छन्, केही नयाँ अवधारणा पनि छ। जे भए पनि बजेटको सफलता कार्यान्वयन तत्परता, प्रशासकीय प्रणालीको जागरूक समर्थन र सबल राष्ट्रिय अनुगमनको सापेक्षमा रहन्छ। आर्थिक वर्षको शुरु दिनदेखि नै कार्यान्वयन सक्रियता चाहिन्छ।

Source: Annapurna Post- 2nd June, 2024 (Sunday).



**Dr. Anil Anal**

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*Dr. Anil Kumar Anal holds the esteemed position of Professor and Chair of the Food Innovation, Nutrition, and Health, as well as the Food Engineering and Bioprocess Technology program at the Department of Food Agriculture and Bioresources within the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Thailand. Dr. Anil has earned recognition as a top 0.1% Scientist globally in the field of Food Science. His expertise lies in Indigenous Food Systems, with a focus on Traditional and Underutilized local food products, as well as the green valorization of agro-aquatic residues for high value purposes. Additionally, he specializes in biomolecular interactions and their applications in food systems, designer diets for enhanced health benefits, and food safety. With a notable portfolio, Dr. Anil has authored 7 patents across multiple jurisdictions including the US, World Patents, EU, Canada, and India.*

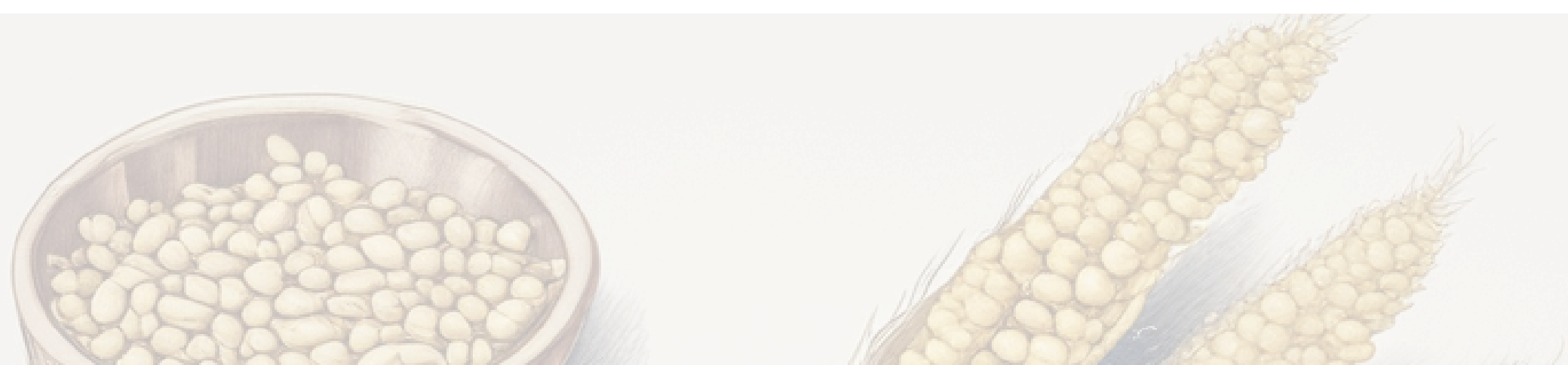
### **Millet as a Potential Source for Food Security in Nepal**

Critical global challenges, including climate change, depletion of natural resources, and hunger, are exacerbated by the rapid population growth anticipated to reach approximately 10 billion by 2050. The food chain is at the forefront of addressing these sustainability issues, as the rising demand for food must be met without further harming the environment or exacerbating climate change. Projections suggest that food production will need to increase by 60% to 100% by 2050 to keep up with demand, which is already strained by current inadequacies. The Global Report on Food Crises reveals a 34% increase in food insecurity, with 65 million more people currently facing acute food shortages. This underscores the severe pressure that a growing population places on an already strained food system, especially in developing and least-developed countries, including Nepal. Nepal, a nation characterized by its diverse geography and rich cultural heritage, faces significant challenges in achieving food security. The country's varied climatic conditions, ranging from the high Himalayas to the Terai plains, offer a unique opportunity for the cultivation of a wide array of crops. Among these, millet stands out as a promising yet underutilized crop with the potential to enhance food security in Nepal.

Millet, a group of small-seeded grasses, has been cultivated for thousands of years in various parts of the world. In Nepal, its potential to contribute to food security is increasingly recognized due to its resilience to climatic stress, nutritional benefits, and adaptability to different agro-ecological zones. Millet production in Nepal has been relatively stable, with minor fluctuations due to climatic conditions and agricultural practices. As of recent estimates, Nepal produces around 45,000 to 50,000 metric tons of millet annually. This accounts for a small percentage of the total cereal production in the country, where rice and wheat dominate. Millet cultivation covers approximately 40,000 to 45,000 hectares in Nepal. This area is subject to variations based on climatic conditions, market demand, and government policies.

### **Nutritional Benefits of Millet**

Environmental sustainability alone is not sufficient to address the broader challenges of food security and health. Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 and 3, which focus on food security and overall health, necessitates the production and availability of more nutrient-dense foods. One of the primary reasons millet is considered a valuable option for enhancing food security is its exceptional nutritional profile. Millets are abundant in essential nutrients, including proteins, fiber, vitamins, and



minerals such as iron, calcium, and magnesium. When compared to major cereal crops like rice and wheat, millets provide a higher concentration of these nutrients, making them an important dietary addition, particularly in regions facing malnutrition. Millets are rich in proteins with the majority of essential amino acids, healthy fatty acids, and dietary fiber, and they provide key vitamins, minerals, and polyphenols. For instance, millets generally have higher dietary fiber content compared to rice or wheat, with barnyard millets containing approximately 14.7 grams of dietary fiber per 100 grams. Integrating millets into diets can help address hidden hunger and improve nutritional outcomes. For example, finger millet (ragi) is renowned for its high calcium content, which is crucial for bone health and preventing osteoporosis. Millets contribute to health in several ways. Their carbohydrates are digested gradually, avoiding the rapid blood glucose spikes associated with other grains, particularly white rice.

### **Climatic Resilience and Adaptability**

Millets can withstand a range of adverse conditions, including high temperatures, low rainfall, and poor soil quality. They can grow in alkaline soils with a pH as high as 11 and at altitudes up to 2,500 meters above sea level. They are also capable of coping with variable rainfall ranging from 800 to 1,200 millimeters. Their resilience extends to drought, diseases, and pests, making them suitable for diverse climates and ecosystems. Their drought resistance and capacity to grow in poor soil with minimal water make them particularly suited for Nepal's diverse and often harsh climate. In the Terai plains, where water availability can be unpredictable, and in the hilly regions with less fertile soil, millets offer a reliable cropping option. This adaptability is increasingly crucial given the impacts of climate change, which is expected to lead to more frequent and severe weather events.

Compared to other cereal crops like rice and wheat, millets have a smaller environmental impact. They generally require fewer inputs, such as water, pesticides, and fertilizers. Research indicates that millet cultivation has a relatively low carbon footprint and water footprint compared to rice and wheat production, primarily because millets need less artificial fertilizer and irrigation. Additionally, the shorter maturity period of various millet varieties helps them avoid prolonged drought conditions, further enhancing their suitability for areas with inconsistent water availability. Promoting millet cultivation can contribute to sustainable agricultural practices and soil conservation, as millets help maintain soil health by requiring fewer chemical inputs and providing good ground cover.

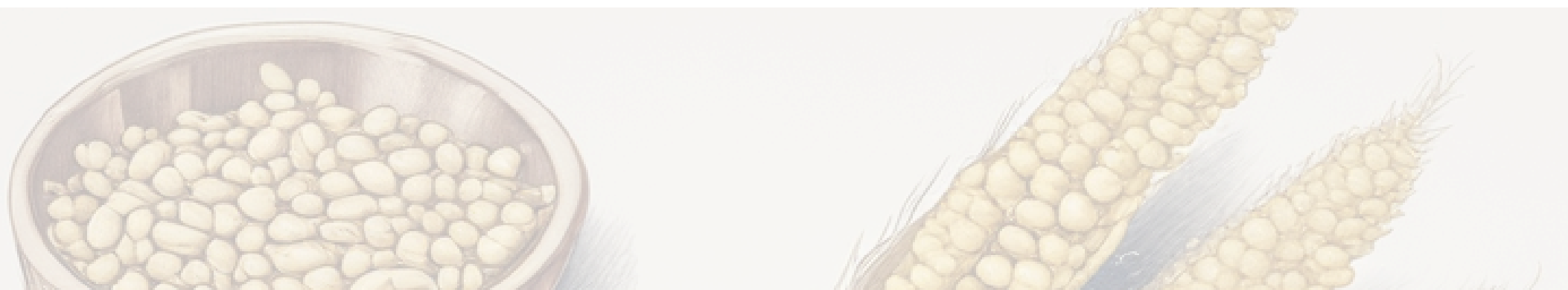
### **Current Status and Challenges**

Despite their potential, millets have not yet been fully embraced in Nepal. Traditional crops such as rice and wheat continue to dominate the agricultural landscape due to historical preferences and established farming practices. Furthermore, there is a general lack of awareness about the benefits of millets among both farmers and consumers. The market infrastructure for processing and selling millet products is also underdeveloped, which limits their commercial viability. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach. Government policies and agricultural programs should aim to promote millet cultivation through subsidies, training, and research. Increasing awareness among farmers about the benefits of millets, along with providing support for market access, can help foster greater adoption. Investing in research and development to improve millet varieties and processing technologies can also enhance their appeal and nutritional value.

As a "supergrain," millets present a complex solution with broad benefits, including economic efficiency, climate resilience, and alignment with key SDGs. Future prospects include exploring novel uses for millet hulls to improve the nutritional profile of millet-based products and reduce waste. Further investigation into refining processing methods and their effects on millet digestibility may optimize the nutritional benefits of millets. To fully harness the potential of millets as a key component of future food systems, interdisciplinary collaboration between agriculture, nutrition, and food technology is essential. By addressing digestibility issues and optimizing millet by-product applications, we can build a more robust, resilient, and sustainable global food system.

### **Conclusion**

Millets contribute to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Their low input requirements and environmentally favorable qualities support SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). Additionally, by reducing the demand for synthetic fertilizers, millets align with SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Their resilience to climate change and contribution to rural income also support SDG 1 (No Poverty). Millet holds significant promise as a source of food security for Nepal. Its nutritional benefits, adaptability to diverse climatic conditions, and economic and environmental advantages make it a valuable crop for the country's agricultural landscape. To realize its potential, concerted efforts are needed to overcome existing challenges and promote millet cultivation and consumption. By embracing millet as part of a diversified agricultural strategy, Nepal can make strides toward achieving food security, improving nutritional outcomes, and fostering sustainable agricultural production.



**A Brief on the State of the Nepali Diaspora, and its Role in Development**

**By Dr. Ambika P. Adhikari, NPI Executive Board Member**



A total of 281 million people, accounting for 3.6 percent of the global population, resided outside their countries of origin in 2020 (UN DESA, 2020), signifying the substantial presence of diaspora groups worldwide. In 2022, the global diasporas remitted over US \$630 billion to low- and middle-income countries, as reported by the World Bank (2023).

Specifically, the Nepali diaspora sent a remarkable sum of US \$8.95 billion to Nepal in 2022, equivalent to 22.8% of the country's annual GDP, according to the World Bank (2023). The data further revealed that remittances to South Asia reached \$157 billion in 2021. These figures strongly indicate a continued upward trend in the future remittances. Diaspora communities have the potential to contribute to the development of their countries of origin in various ways. The extent of their contributions largely depends on

STAGE OF DIASPORA FORMATION	CAPACITIES
Matured	Institution building
Advanced	Knowledge & Technology Transfer
Established	Investments
Establishing	Philanthropic Activities
Forming	Remittances

the maturity level of the diaspora, as some groups may be more established while others are relatively new. The diagram (Figure 1) provides a conceptual image of the capacities of diaspora in assisting their countries of origin, based on their stage of diaspora formation.

While there is no official and precise data available on the number of Nepali diaspora members worldwide, the author has made estimates based on multiple sources, including census data and research studies. The table below presents the author's estimated figures for the global Nepali diaspora population. It is important to note that these estimates are approximate and may be conservative.

Figure 1. A ladder of diaspora's contribution  
Source: Adhikari (2022)

Country/Region	Est. Pop. of Permanent Nepali Diaspora Members (2023)	Remarks
North America (US and Canada)	350,000	A rapidly increasing population fueled by student arrivals, diversity visa (DV) lottery recipients, family-related beneficiary immigration, and other groups
Oceania (Mainly Australia, New Zealand, Fiji)	200,000	Another quickly growing group which mostly begins as students while most end up settling permanently
Europe including the UK	300,000	A group consisting mainly of ex-Gurkhas in the UK, and professionals, and other emigrants Europe-wise
East Asia (mainly Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore)	150,000	Mainly consisting of individuals who began through work visa, as former British Gurkha members, and students who enter the job market and then settle.
<b>Total (2023 est.)</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>The total number is approximate, and speculative</b>

Table 1. An estimate of global Nepali diaspora population permanently settled abroad  
Author's estimates

Chinese, Indian, Korean, Armenian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Filipino, Mexican, and other older groups, is experiencing rapid growth. As a percentage of the population of the country of origin, the population of Nepali diaspora in North America may be higher than that of many other origin countries.

The Nepali diaspora has been making excellent efforts to organize themselves socially and professionally. However, their capacity is still limited, and their influence can be diluted due to a lack of organization, limited resource mobilization, and occasional disunity among various groups. Nevertheless, the Nepali diaspora is actively working towards enhancing its capacity by establishing professional, business, and social platforms to foster unity and collaboration. It regularly convenes meetings, seminars,, conferences, webinars, and forum such as the one in Denver in 2023, to discuss and create strategies for advancing the diaspora capacity. The government of Nepal also has a crucial role to play in strengthening its engagement with the diaspora to support its development programs. It has introduced several favorable policies, laws, and programs to facilitate investment and employment opportunities for diaspora members in Nepal. The recent (2023) enactment of the law granting Non-Resident Nepali (NRN) citizenship to eligible diaspora members serves as an excellent example in attracting diaspora talents in Nepal. Similarly, the NRN/PIO (Non-resident Nepali/Person of Nepali Origin) Identity Card introduced in 2009 is another good example to facilitate diaspora entry and stay in Nepal.

However, there are still numerous barriers that impede the active participation of Nepali diaspora members in Nepal's developmental efforts. One significant challenge lies in the perception and attitudes between resident Nepalis and non-resident Nepalis towards each other. While residents in Nepal often welcome charitable and philanthropic support from diaspora groups, there can sometimes be a lack of trust in the diaspora's commitment to Nepal's welfare. Similarly, diaspora Nepalis, particularly those living in more developed countries, may become frustrated by the inefficiencies and occasional corruption within Nepal's bureaucracy when they attempt to contribute to meaningful collaboration in the country. Conducting further research on this topic and formulating appropriate policies and programs will be instrumental in facilitating diaspora involvement in Nepal's development efforts.

*Note: This brief is based on the talk provided by the author at the 2023 Annual Convention of the Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA) in Denver, USA.*

**Reference:** Ambika P. Adhikari (2023), *The Nepali diaspora's role in national development, Policy Design and Practice*, 6:3, 357-380, DOI: 10.1080/25741292.2022.2139951

## NPI ASKS YOU

We would like to publish your views in the next issue of Knowledge Bridge.

### For Nepali Diaspora Experts

- Can you share your latest research projects and innovations that you believe could benefit Nepal?
- In your opinion, how can the knowledge and resources of the Nepali diaspora contribute to Nepal's sustainable development? Are there any specific policy gaps or challenges from the government side that need to be addressed?
- How can the Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), as a diaspora-powered international knowledge platform, best leverage the expertise of Global Nepali Experts for the sustainable development of Nepal?

### For Global Nepali Youths

- What are you currently pursuing (study or professionally)? How has your international exposure influenced your perspectives on your field and its potential applications in Nepal?
- How do you envision contributing to Nepal's development through the knowledge and skills you've gained during your time abroad?
- What kinds of support or initiatives from the government or diaspora-powered global knowledge platforms like NPI would help you engage more effectively and contribute your talents to Nepal's progress?

**Send your responses to the three questions in the relevant category to [npi.engagement.manager@gmail.com](mailto:npi.engagement.manager@gmail.com)  
Upon favorable review, we will consider it for publication in our upcoming issue(s) of Knowledge Bridge.**

## Call to Join Thematic NPI Community of Practice

NPI will soon be reframing its *Community of Practice (CoP)* in the following 5 areas:

- **Improved Educational Outcomes**
- **Good Governance & Development**
- **Environment, Sustainability & Climate Change**
- **Inclusiveness in Development**
- **Migration & Nepali Diaspora**

If you're interested, please express your interest along with your CV to [info@nepalpolicyinstitute.org](mailto:info@nepalpolicyinstitute.org)



**Dr. Punam Yadav**

Associate Professor of Humanitarian Studies & co-director of the IRDR Centre for Gender and Disaster, University College London.

*Dr. Punam Yadav is an Associate Professor of Humanitarian Studies and co-director of the IRDR Centre for Gender and Disaster at the University College London. Dr Yadav is also the chair of the ISA-UNAI Coordination Committee (International Studies Association – UN Academic Impact). She served as a co-chair of the Feminist and Gender Studies Section (FTGS) of the ISA between 2020-2023. Dr Yadav has been serving as an advisory board member for several NGOs. As a scholar of Feminist Peace Research, Dr Yadav has made outstanding contributions to scholarship by theorizing the process of social change through a gender lens. Please see her profile for more details: <https://profiles.ucl.ac.uk/66634>*

### **1. Can you share your latest research projects and innovations that you believe could benefit Nepal?**

*Ans.: Almost all my research focusses on Nepal. My research interests include Gender and Disaster, Feminist Peace Research, Women, Peace and Security, Gender Quotas and Women's Political Participation; Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV); Transitional Justice and Conflict-induced Internal Displacement and Refugee. One of my recent articles examines the impacts of political quota on women in Nepal: Yadav, Punam (2024). Do political quotas work? Gender quotas and women's political participation in Nepal, *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, 7(2): 143-161. <https://doi.org/10.1332/251510821X16746560835644>. Another article which has received a significant attention from the scholarly community is "can women benefit from war? Women's agency in conflict and post-conflict societies", *Journal of Peace Studies*, 2020, 58(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234332090561> I have also published a book looking at the (transformative) impacts of civil war on women, which has also been translated into Chinese: Yadav, Punam (2016). Social Transformation in Post-conflict Nepal: A gender perspective, New York, London, New Delhi: Routledge. Here is the link to my profile, where all my publications are listed: <https://profiles.ucl.ac.uk/66634-punam-yadav/about>*

### **2. In your opinion, how can the knowledge and resources of the Nepali diaspora contribute to Nepal's sustainable development? Are there any specific policy gaps or challenges from the government side that need to be addressed?**

*Ans.: There are many ways Nepali diaspora can contribute to the sustainable development of Nepal. Being an academic, I would outline some of the key areas where academics and researchers can contribute:*

- *Improving the quality of education in Nepal, at all levels, by sharing the knowledge and experiences from different countries.*
- *Conducting research and sharing findings with the government, which will help Nepal government make research informed policy.*
- *Serving as members of advisory group for specialist committees and providing technical support.*
- *Organising specialist training*
- *Giving feedback to draft policy documents.*

*In terms of policy gaps, I would encourage everyone to think beyond western knowledge and frameworks and develop organic approach for better understanding and useful solutions.*

### **3. How can the Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), as a diaspora-powered international knowledge platform, best leverage the expertise of the Global Nepali Experts for the sustainable development of Nepal?**

*Ans.: There are many ways Nepal Policy Institution can contribute to the sustainable development of Nepal. I will outline some here:*

- *Knowledge sharing: help organise knowledge-based, research-led seminars and talks to encourage critical thinking.*
- *Making connections between Nepali scholars and scholars abroad for a high quality research and writing.*
- *Facilitating the creation of advisory groups for Nepal government where Nepali diaspora can contribute.*
- *Identifying funding opportunities for Nepali scholars and putting them in contact with Nepali diaspora (scholars) abroad.*
- *Bringing innovative projects to bridge the gaps.*



**Dr. Khushbu Mishra**  
Associate Professor and Chair  
Department of Economics, Stetson University, USA

*Khushbu Mishra is an Associate Professor and Chair at the Department of Economics, Stetson University, USA. Her research work broadly focuses on Gender and Development Economics, Agricultural Economics, and Impact Evaluation. Born in a rural, agricultural society in Nepal, Dr. Mishra is passionate to formulate innovative, evidence-based solutions to ending social inequalities in developing, agrarian economies. She also consults for international development organizations such as the World Bank Group, the UNDP, and UNICEF.*

**1. Can you share your latest research projects and innovations that you believe could benefit Nepal?**

Ans.: I have a few research projects that will be relevant to Nepal. I am working on the impact of mother's education and early marriage. Since Nepal has a high rate of child marriage, the findings can have implications for Nepal as well since we find that increasing mother's education reduces child marriage. I also have another project where I am looking at the impact of forest management membership on women's empowerment. This research project is in Nepal so certainly relevant and we find that women's engagement in forestry management also increases their empowerment at home to some extent. I have another set of research projects on drought insurance and farmers' access to credit. These studies are certainly applicable to Nepal since Nepali farmers are already experiencing impacts of climate change on farming.

**2. In your opinion, how can the knowledge and resources of the Nepali diaspora contribute to Nepal's sustainable development? Are there any specific policy gaps or challenges from the government side that need to be addressed?**

Ans.: This is a very broad question so it is a bit difficult to answer. But generally, the Nepali government has certainly been unable to tap into Nepali diaspora's skills for Nepal's sustainable development. The biggest thing I can think of is for allowance of a more streamlined NRN process. This would encourage those Nepalis staying outside of the US to engage with more ease, less red tape. Then, Nepali government could provide more scholarships for technical education which is an area very much needed in Nepal. Lastly, the government needs to have more accountability at the local level so we can curtail corruption and utilize development funds for real development.

**3. How can the Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), as a diaspora-powered international knowledge platform, best leverage the expertise of the Global Nepali Experts for the sustainable development of Nepal?**

Ans.: One way would be to foster formal partnerships with the local think tanks, research organizations, and ministries in Nepal to form formal collaborations for research and policy work.



**Mr. Dinesh Thapa**

*M.Sc. in Development Economics  
CERDI, France*

*Dinesh recently joined the Nepal Policy Institute (NPI) as a Fellow. He holds an M.Sc. in Development Economics from CERDI, France. He has worked with public international organizations, including the Global Development Network (GDN) at its European office in France, the World Bank, and various UN agencies. His work focuses on sustainable development, strategic partnerships, and research & policy analysis.*

The 35th President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, once said, "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country." This quote has guided my sense of civic duty and responsibility toward my country.

To equip myself for meaningful contributions, I completed my undergraduate studies in Development Finance at Kathmandu University. After gaining valuable research experience with international organizations, I pursued a Master's in Development Economics at the Centre for Studies and Research for International Development (CERDI) in France. While in the class – It was often painful to see Nepal ranked low in global poverty chart, and it made me think about when we could turn that curve upwards. The study broadened my understanding of economics, poverty, and development. Further, it challenged me to explore various development models and search for locally generated knowledge for development.

After completing my Master's, I joined the World Bank, where I worked on sustainable mobility and road safety projects in South Asia, including Nepal. I was privileged to contribute to policymaking for safer transport infrastructure in a region with 10% of the world's vehicle fleet but accounts for 25% of its crash fatalities. My role involved facilitating policy dialogues for political commitment to road safety and contributing to research and knowledge products to advocate for safer, cleaner, and better mobility.

Currently, I work at the Global Development Network (GDN) in France, focusing on research capacity building in the Global South. I support young researchers from developing countries to showcase their research work and create a platform for global interaction. These experiences have deepened my understanding of development challenges and inspired innovative solutions while empowering the younger generation.

The French phrase 'sans frontière' resonates well with the current globalized world in which there are no borders for exchange and collaboration. I aim to support Nepal through knowledge-based work, public policy discourse, economic research, and evidence-based policymaking. Platforms like the Nepal Policy Institute (NPI) are crucial in amplifying youth voices and connecting them to their roots. The government can also leverage diaspora knowledge and expertise in policymaking, creating incentives and opportunities for those who wish to return and contribute to nation-building. Such initiatives would bridge the knowledge gap and foster collaboration and innovation, driving Nepal toward sustainable and inclusive growth.







**Ms. Melissa Shrestha**

Post Diploma in Healthcare Leadership  
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology

Ms. Shrestha is a final-semester Healthcare Leadership student at SAIT, graduating in August 2024 who has volunteered with CIWA, the City of Calgary, SAIT, and the Canadian Red Cross. Currently, she leads a capstone project on Type II diabetes in Manitoba and also has prior experience with UNICEF in Nepal, which focused on research and analysis. With degrees in Bachelors of Science in Public Health from Bangladesh and Masters of Science in Regional and Rural Development Planning from Thailand, Ms. Shrestha specializes in healthcare project management, public health research, data analysis, and emergency preparedness.

**1. What are you studying currently? How has your international exposure influenced your perspectives on your field of study and its potential applications in Nepal?**

Ans.: I am currently studying Post Diploma in Healthcare Leadership at Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Alberta in Canada. I recently completed a Post Diploma in Public Relations Corporate Communication from Fanshawe College, Ontario, Canada & a Master of Science in Regional and Rural Development Planning from AIT, Thailand. I strongly believe international exposure has influenced me in examining many policy level challenges in Nepal. Most of my studies abroad have alarmed me about the importance of balancing top-down and bottom-up level approaches in social development and welfare of the country. Besides my studies, even when I see upgraded government systems, it fascinates me to bring similar changes in Nepal once I return. However, as a youth in Nepal one big challenge I faced was to get an opportunity to work in such national level projects where I could share my knowledge.

**2. How do you envision contributing to Nepal's development through the knowledge and skills you've gained during your studies abroad?**

Ans.: By the time I return back to Nepal, I have a plan to connect with important stakeholders like you both. By connecting and through future meetings, we could plan something together. What I vision to do is not only talk with people in the top-level of policy planning but to talk with people at grass-root level too and to bring some alignment with how things are working at both levels. I aim to establish an enterprise where farmers can export vegetables from rural areas directly to countries such as Canada without middle-men. This is because while I conducted my Masters Thesis in Panchkhal, most of the research findings showcased that the farmers are falling under poverty trap because they do not have stable income. In order to have a stable income, they should get connected with real international trade players so that they face less challenges and more sustainable income. I have already established a company and I am connected with some trade experts in Bangladesh, however to actually implement this plan in 3 vegetable export hotspot areas of Nepal, I would need government level support in making this success.

**3. What kinds of support or initiatives from the government or diaspora-powered global knowledge platforms like NPI would help you engage more effectively and contribute your talents to Nepal's progress?**

Ans.: I believe various government funding for youth who are studying abroad and who want to return back and implement successful ideas would be a great support.

With that, more transparent connections with some associations in Terai would help me implement my goal, which is to help Nepalese rural farmers come out of the poverty trap for their social well-being.



**Mr. Nobel Rimal**

*Economics*

*New York University (NYU) Abu Dhabi*

*Mr. Nobel Rimal studies at NYU Abu Dhabi, is passionate about fashion, rock climbing, and Nepali rap. A former youth climate negotiator and environmentalist, Nobel explores social media's intersection with politics and culture, with published work on Balen's election, RONB's media model, and the role of memes in caste-based discrimination.*

**1. What are you studying currently? How has your international exposure influenced your perspectives on your field of study and its potential applications in Nepal?**

*Ans.: As a student of economics with a focus on data science, I explore the intersection of the digital and real worlds, focusing on how social media influences fashion, the stock market, and even elections. Living in five countries—the UK, USA, Ghana, UAE, and Greece—has broadened my perspective. I've realized that Nepal's challenges are global, often intersecting with my experiences abroad. Conversations with fellow Nepalis abroad, whether while seeking out familiar faces or learning more about economics, have shown me the importance of high-quality data in decision-making—a critical need in Nepal.*

**2. How do you envision contributing to Nepal's development through the knowledge and skills you've gained during your studies abroad?**

*Ans.: I envision advising Nepal's digital policy in the future, whether it be in terms of AI, regulating social media misinformation, and looking out for third party threats in the form of digital propaganda and social media manipulation.*

**3. What kinds of support or initiatives from the government or diaspora-powered global knowledge platforms like NPI would help you engage more effectively and contribute your talents to Nepal's progress?**

*Ans.: One initiative that stands out is Sumana Shrestha's 2023 internship program, where I gained firsthand experience in Nepali policymaking. Working alongside peers from top global universities, I realized the challenge of applying Western development models to Nepal's less institutionalized context. Structured internships like this can bridge that gap, enabling diaspora students to engage directly with Nepal's policy sector. Such programs are a realistic and effective way for the government and platforms like NPI to leverage global resources and contribute to Nepal's progress through the talents of Nepali youth.*

# Chair's Message: About Nepal Policy Institute

**Dr. Khagendra Dhakal**

Founding Chairperson, Nepal Policy Institute

As you know, the Nepal Policy Institute (NPI) is a global think tank and knowledge platform powered by the Nepali diaspora. Our mission is to contribute to Nepal's sustainable development through informed policy analysis and leadership development. With a network of over 1,200 experts across 46 countries, NPI bridges knowledge from the global Nepali diaspora to offer insights on public policy, economic growth, and social transformation.



We have mainly adopted four approaches to informing and influencing policy makers in Nepal. First, we refine best practices by leveraging our global network of experts to make policy recommendations tailored to Nepal's unique context. Second, we facilitate policy dialogues involving Nepali scholars and practitioners from within the country and the diaspora, enabling discussions on new and ongoing policy issues. Third, we collaborate with Nepal's government agencies, think tanks, universities, and civil society organizations to provide inputs that inform policy decisions. Lastly, we offer policy learning programs to supply and demand sides of policies and equip them with the skills, disposition, and knowledge necessary for evidence-based policymaking, emphasizing a critical thinking approach.

In the current strategic plan cycle (2021-2024), NPI focuses on five thematic areas—labor migration, education, good governance, inclusive development, and sustainability—driven by Communities of Practice (CoP) comprising Nepali and diaspora scholars and practitioners. One CoP has completed a project on conflict-of-interest policies with financial backing from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). We aim to engage even more diaspora experts through these CoPs while other CoPs are slowly advancing their tasks.

NPI has collaborated with the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) to create policies addressing misinformation during national elections. Additionally, we are conducting a study on external voting rights for Nepalis living abroad. We've also worked closely with several government and non-government organizations, including the Office of Prime Ministers and Council of Ministers (OPMCM), National Planning Commissions (NPC), Policy Research Institute (PRI), IIDS, KUSOM Policy Lab, and SDGs National Network Nepal. We deeply appreciate the support of these organizations and our professional and community partners in Nepal and the diaspora.

One of our flagship initiatives, the Nepal Policy Leadership Program (NPLP), equips policymakers with skills such as critical thinking to address complex governance issues. The inaugural NPLP batch, consisting of 25 mid- to senior-level government officials, will complete the program this September in collaboration with the Policy Lab at Kathmandu University, School of Management. NPI also launched the Global Nepali Youth Dialogue to engage and empower Nepali youth, particularly those studying abroad. We initiated the Young Researcher Awards to encourage their contributions to Nepal's development.

These are just some of NPI's initiatives and efforts, which are the result of collective action by the Management Team, Global Network, supportive partners, and the Board, to whom I express my sincere gratitude. Knowledge Bridge is just one more way to strengthen our connection with you. At NPI, we remain committed to linking global expertise and talent with local needs, shaping policies for progress and prosperity. I sincerely invite your continued support and active involvement in this journey towards a brighter future for Nepal.



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