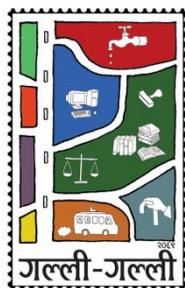


GalliGalli's Progressive Report

(2015-2016)



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As agreed with NED, the current work is divided into three separate clusters, each intervening in the citizen-state relationship via a different medium/angle. The clusters, as noted in GalliGalli's original proposal to NED, are as follows:

“To create a dedicated base of users and contributors for the nalibeli.org platform

The nalibeli.org wiki (www.nalibeli.org) is a crowdsourced platform with thousands of pages detailing step-by-step processes for a range of services. Through the platform, citizens can access hidden information as well as hold discussions and organize.

To identify, build relationships with, and promote local-level actors

The ongoing Nalibeli Citizenship Grievance Mapping effort has three key goals: understand citizen perceptions on delivery of six basic infrastructure services; map local-level stakeholders; and engage and build relationships with local-level stakeholders. Should NED support us, we will be able to expand this work from two pilot wards to all 35 wards in the Kathmandu Valley.

To build a platform that connects citizens, local activists/groups, and bureaucrats.

‘Sukul Bahas’, a monthly discussion series now in its 8th month, is GalliGalli's on-the-ground platform. Discussions center on issues such as public transportation, road maintenance, sewage, and other issues of concern to urban residents.”

i. Activities and Achievements in Brief:

- a. As planned, we completed the aesthetic and functional redesign of the nalibeli.org wiki, and launched the beta version. While the redesign was underway, we also completed our outreach strategy for the wiki, which focuses on reaching out to emerging online media outlets; youth groups interested in mobilizing volunteers for the wiki; and social media marketing. Despite the festival season and political crisis, in the two weeks since we launched the beta version and the concurrent marketing strategy, we have had 28 new accounts opened. This is a positive sign, and we are continuing aggressively with outreach.
- b. The relationship building and knowledge generation work is underway at 10 of the 35 wards. A round of introductions, interactions, and interviews has been undertaken with staff, active civil society, and political representatives. For each of these wards, we have compiled information about the major infrastructural projects being undertaken, the key players in the locality, and issues surrounding public participation and state-citizen communication. This mapping and relationship building is the foundation of active interventions that we intend to stage.
- c. Sukul Bahas has been consistently ongoing (except for the last month, when fuel crisis compelled us to cancel), with 13 now complete. Increasingly important city and ministry

level officials agree to speak at the events. Consequently, key local activists are interested in attending.

ii. Challenges

- a. The driving challenge this quarter has been continued uncertainty and crisis. Even as we were still reeling from the earthquake, the political process began to deteriorate in mid-August. All of September was uncertain, with general strikes, protests, and people (citizens and civil servants alike) distracted from their work. Subsequently, the ongoing fuel crisis has severely curtailed mobility. This has made it difficult for staff who live in the suburbs to get to office, to host events (we had to cancel the last Sukul Bhasa as well as postpone a number of smaller wiki outreach events), and generally take meetings or visit government offices. This has slowed down the work considerably for all clusters. With the situation as yet uncertain, we are now replanning our work schedule with the assumption that the situation will not normalize for a few months.

iii. Future Direction

- a. With the groundwork laid in this first quarter, we will focus on achieving clear-cut goals in the second quarter even as the more intangible work of relationship building continues.
- b. With regard to the nalibeli.org wiki, some glitches remain, key among the issues is the search function and inputting text in the Devnagari script. Working with the design company to fix these glitches to ensure accessibility will be our first focus. Subsequently, we intend to achieve the following:
 - Get 20 new accounts opened every month
 - Create a core group of 20-40 active and regular contributors.
 - Build between 60-150 new pages every month.
 - Set clear guidelines for quality control of the pages as the number of contributors increase.
 - Work to make the wiki a space for free-ranging discussions about the role of the bureaucracy in a democracy.
- c. With regard to the ward level, we will continue the relationship building and knowledge generation work by working in all 35 wards. The goal this quarter is to produce mapping of key players, major projects, and issues around public participation for at least 10 wards. Alongside, we will focus more explicitly on using this data to prepare clear interventions in the coming months, and especially in preparation for upcoming local

elections. We will also begin to reach out to key players to get them to buy into our planned interventions.

- d. With regard to Sukul Bahas, we have noticed the need for a slight change of direction as will be elaborated on below. The change is intended to create a closer link between the ward-based work and the Sukul Bahas, especially keeping the upcoming local elections in mind.

II. Nalibeli Wiki

The nalibeli.org wiki is a dynamic crowdsourced platform that assists citizens to navigate and hold discussions around the bureaucracy. In this quarter, as planned, we redesigned the wiki and launched the beta version. The focus of this, and the third quarter, will be on fixing glitches and conducting outreach. In the final quarter, we will test the wiki on the ground as part of our ongoing effort to find a model to bridge the digital divide.

i. Activities and Achievements

- a. nalibeli.org Redesign: The wiki redesign has been completed, with the beta version simple and easily accessible. The information is clearly categorized on the first page so that users can easily access the information they need. The new version is also more interactive, with a comments section, discussion forum, and embedded multimedia. Alongside, we are in the last stages of developing detailed multi-language guides to harnessing the full potential of the wiki.
- b. Pages: Subsequent to the redesign, we have transferred all the pages from the old wiki to the new. Additionally, despite all the turmoil in the last few months, we have added 60 new pages to the wiki on topics ranging from tourism to district administration to land-related work. In terms of information on local service delivery, our focus area, we have 73 pages covering all the major functions of the wards. We have held many internal discussions and gathered feedback on the content of the pages as well as on quality control. This will be a major focus area in the upcoming quarter.
- c. Outreach, Marketing and Community Building: The above three activities have been a core part of the new redesign. Our outreach strategy has three aspects to it. First, social media is a core area of focus, with daily updates and media on the wiki. Social

media users who demonstrate an interest in the wiki are then personally contacted by our marketing manager to encourage them to become more active.

Second, we have been taking meetings with editors of the emerging online media outlets, including Setopati, Ratopai, Online Khabar, and Ujjyalo Online. All of these outlets have demonstrated interest in collaborating with GalliGalli to cross-promote online channels as a means of engaging with Nepal's democracy. Online Khabar has offered to share our content with small local papers across the country, which use content from their online portal. Ujjyalo has expressed interest in developing a radio show around the bureaucracy together. We are working on developing suitable modalities and ideas to pursue both these concrete offers of collaboration.

Third, and very importantly, we have been in close conversation with a number of youth groups and key youth leaders to assist with in putting together a core community group with ownership of the wiki. The continuing crises has prevented us from bringing this group together in one place to kick start the community work. If the situation continues to prevent such a gathering after mid-November, when we have a break for the Diwali festival, we will start to build this community group individually via phone and email and social media communications.

ii. Challenges

- a. As noted above, the key challenge has been with regard to the political and petrol situation which has curtailed mobility, prevented face-to-face gatherings which are crucial at this early stage, and forced us to rely on the more blunt and impersonal tools of social media. Additionally, we are facing some delays from our redesign company in fixing the glitches around searching and inputting. Despite these delays, which are in part due to the staffing problems caused by the current crisis, we have moved ahead with the marketing as a result of which some first time users may be dissatisfied with the glitches they encounter in accessing nalibeli.org

iii. Looking Forward

- a. As noted in the overview section, our goals for this quarter are on building up an active community around the wiki, tracking viewership, ensuring quality control, and beginning to focus on fostering discussions around the citizen-bureaucrat and bureaucrat-politician relationship in a democracy.

- b. Outreach, especially regular gatherings and events as well as utilizing the link (as stated by the Online Khabar editor) between online media and regional/local print papers, is a core focus of the second quarter.

III. Relationship Building and Knowledge Generation

The goals in this cluster are two-fold. First, and primarily, we want to map players on the ground at the local level and build relationships with them with an eye to intervening in the citizen-state relationship. Second, we want to generate and disseminate knowledge about the role of the bureaucracy in the state so as we create a much needed public discourse on the topic. This key aspect of a democracy is often lost in the constant political turmoil that plagues Nepal. In the first quarter, we have pursued both these goals. In both these areas, our work has become focused on people's participation in decision-making and communication between state and citizens at the local level. Our work on the ground has highlighted public participation and communication as an area where much improvement is necessary, and importantly also possible through practical interventions. Therefore, our interviews and conversation with all the key players are focused on how each unit of local governance communication with other units as well as the manner in which residents are involved in decision-making processes. An important part of our questionnaire focuses on the local response system (especially communication) during the earthquake, to gauge how the system fared in a crisis situation.

i. Activities and Achievements

- a. Conducted interviews and built relationships with key players in 10 wards. Among these, wards 6, 29 and 14 are categorized as big wards, wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 10 and 33 as medium wards, and ward 23 as a small ward. This was an effort to gauge whether the size of the locality and consequently the budget impacted the nature of the functioning. Interviews have been our first and foremost technique of gathering information. We have conducted interviews with three types of stakeholders: ward administrative staff, members of the ward citizen forums, and other political and civil society actors such as individual belonging to local clubs, Female Health Care Volunteers, and local religious community organizations. We are now well placed to begin to put together a good mapping of the local-level networks, with an eye to staging interventions intended at strengthening communication between citizens, mediating institutions, and state officials.
- b. In the area of knowledge creation and dissemination, we have been writing actively in the media, mostly in Nepal. We have also produced two academic papers (first drafts which are not ready for publication), attached with this report, written on local governance and

decentralization by team members. One of the papers has been presented at a conference on peace while the other will appear in a journal as well as an adapted version in media soon. This work is important for GalliGalli to be part of the broader discussion on governance, so that the intervention work we attempt to undertake is taken seriously by scholars, practitioners, and senior government officials.

ii. Challenges

- a. Political turmoil and curtailed mobility have meant that we were not able to go to 20 wards as planned. Even when we were able to get to the wards, it is evident that a sort of stagnation has set in. The current systems are known to be impermanent – the power structures will change after the long awaited local elections are held. Consequently, in this political limbo, it is difficult to find leaders who take either ownership or risks in pushing through changes. Consequently, until local elections are held, the best we can do is build relationships and understand how the system works currently. Significant changes are only possible during and after local elections, which we are starting to prepare for as detailed below

iii. Looking forward

- a. In this second quarter, we will produce a mapping of the key players, projects, and agendas of at least 10 wards. (We will cover 25 wards, but the final mapping might be for fewer). A mapping model is being developed as we speak.
- b. The key focus of this quarter will be laying the groundwork for interventions to take place in the run up to local elections. We expect to work with all the wards to encourage candidates to put together clear manifestos, hold public meetings where issues (which will be included in the mapping) are discussed openly, and make clear and concrete promises around both specific projects and particular operating styles based on feedback. To this end, we will need to both create formats for the candidates as well as work to persuade them to undertake these activities.
- c. In terms of knowledge generation, we intend to continue to work on newspaper articles, scholarly papers, and policy briefs on issues surrounding the citizen-state relationship as well as the role of the bureaucracy in a democratic system. Surprisingly little work has been done on these areas in Nepal. The intention here is not simply to produce work that a small group of scholars and policy makers access. Rather, the goal is to use this rigorous, historical and scholarly work to create a much-needed public conversation about the role of the bureaucracy in a democracy.

IV. Sukul Bahas

Sukul Bahas is GalliGalli's monthly discussion program where we bring citizens, bureaucrats, activists, and journalists on a single platform to discuss issues relevant to local level governance. The intention is to bridge the gap between the range of hierarchical and horizontal institutions involved in local-level decision making. The two-hour event takes place on the second Friday of every Nepali month. After the discussion, we put the video on YouTube and share blogs about the discussions so as to get the conversations to a broader audience. We also follow up on the contacts created at the discussions, with an eye to forging stronger connections between the often isolated actors and institutions.

i. Activities and Achievements

- a. In this quarter, we have held two Sukul Bahas programs, with the third cancelled due to the fuel crisis when the speakers were unwilling to travel to the location. The details of the two discussions are as follows:

- Budget Making/Implementation Process

Date: July 31st 2015

Speakers: Rudra Singh Tamang, Head of Kathmandu Metropolitan City Office; Chandramani Adhikari, Member, National Planning Commission; Babu Krishna Pathak, Administrative Head, Ward no 33, Kathmandu Metropolitan City

This discussion was an attempt to tease out all the factors that go into creating the national budget, with a focus on practical issues around the budgetary process as faced by Kathmandu city overall, and a specific locality (ward 33). The NPC member, unfortunately, chose to focus on his own personal achievements in the process as opposed to the overall systemic dynamics. Despite multiple interruptions and pointed questions, we were unable to get him to get on track. On the flip side, the then newly appointed head of the KMC was articulate and informative. He outlined the budgetary process, as well as focused on the issue of fragmentation and lack of coordination in the allocation of the budget itself, thus leading to fragmentation in implementation.

- Problems in Management of Drinking Water Supply in Kathmandu Valley

Date: 28th August 2015

Speakers: Bishnu Dahal, President, Valley Drinking Water Source and Tanker Entrepreneurs Association, Kathmandu; Dol Prasad Chapagain, Assistant Manager, Kathmandu Valley Drinking Water Limited; Bikash Thapa, Journalist/Columnist, Water Concern; Kabindra Karki, Assistant Spokesperson, Ministry of Urban Development

This discussion was an attempt to look at the range of drinking water sources from the government grid to private water suppliers, including the voices of both policy makers such as the Ministry of Urban Development as well as a critical journalist with a focus on water. The discussion was a success, and there were many questions from the floor. Each of the actors talked about their own roles, but focused – as most speakers do – on blaming other institutions for not creating the correct environment for them to operate.

- b. The Sukul Bahas discussion program not only creates a platform but also intend to pressurize respective sectors/individuals to address the concern of citizens. With the problems so complex and entrenched, the audience is aware that the systemic level problems will continue. However, we have been successful in connecting local level organizers and neighbourhood activists to city- and ministry-level officials whom they would otherwise be unable to access. In some cases, these relationships have continued or the officials have connected the activists to other relevant officials. As a result, there has been space for local activists to get their voices into the ministry- and city-level offices. This is a key part of the platform that we intend to put emphasis on in this second quarter.

ii. Challenges

- a. The political crisis compelled us to cancel the last Sukul Bahas.
- b. A consistent problem around all 13 Sukul Bahas programs has been the limited number of participants, ranging from about 15-30 people. While we have been able to get policy makers, bureaucrats, activists, and local leaders to engage, we have been unable to get a mass of local residents to engage. Having repeatedly discussed this problem with the team, we have identified a number of issues (saturation with events, timing of event during the work day, cynicism about change etc) that lead to this limited participation. Rather than expend the considerable resources required to reach a broader live audience, we intend instead to focus on getting the program gist out through tie-ups with radio and online outlets. The relationships we have built while doing outreach for the wiki can be used to push this agenda forward.

iii. Looking forward

- a. Collaboration with other stakeholders: From past experience, we have realized that collaborative discussion programs are more effective in every way. The collaborations can be made with different parties such as neighbourhood associations, clubs, ward offices or any other departments (like water supply or road departments). These collaborations will be helpful not only in increasing the number of participants, but also in creating broad ownership of the program. It is imperative that the program not be seen as a proprietary GalliGalli undertaking if it is to have the intended outcome.

- b. Engaging for local elections: As discussed earlier, in this second quarter, we intend to make Sukul Bahas a platform to discuss issues relevant to the upcoming local elections. Continuing with the theme of building broad ownership, we intend to hold a discussion program in each of the wards so that there is broader participation. This can help, on the one hand, to make leaders' accountable to the people. On the flip side, it can perhaps encourage more local engagement by citizens.

- c. Tie-ups with mass media: As discussed earlier, tie ups with radio and online outlets is essential to get the discussions to a broader audience. This is something the marketing team is already working on.