

GalliGalli's Progressive Report (2015-2016)



GalliGalli

Gyaneshwor-33, Kathmandu

Tel: 977-01-4422804

Email address: info@galligalli.org

Website: www.galligalli.org

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 15th 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.

To date, GalliGalli has submitted two narrative reports detailing our achievements and challenges in relation to what we set out to do. Those reports have focused on activities completed, achievements, challenges, and way forward by cluster. In this report, we will take a somewhat different approach. The cluster-wise reporting of activities in this quarter remains. However, as we are just two-months away from project completion, we also look to provide a more reflective and analytical review of our work.

The next, review, section will assess both the internal health of GalliGalli as well as the external environment in which we worked. Subsequent sections, divided into the clusters identified above, will summarize activities for the past two months but focus on reflecting on and evaluating our performance overall. The report concludes with a final section containing some nascent thoughts on how we intend to move forward after July 2016. Please note that this report

is an expanded version of the interim report included in GalliGalli's proposal for grant renewal submitted on 01 April 2016.

II. Reviewing the Year

In reviewing GalliGalli's overall health in the past year, we must begin by looking at our team. As we have noted in the past, the majority of our team comprises of young women with a deep passion and commitment to learning and making a difference. This has been a critical year for shaping the core team, with two key realizations. First, we realized towards the middle of the project that we were overstaffed. When we started out, we did so with almost no resources and two staff (Surabhi Pudasaini and Ambika Osti). Thus, when we were able to secure resources, we hired rapidly, breaking down roles into too-small units. Therefore, over the course of this year, we have helped three colleagues to forge different paths and leave us. The current team, pushing forward the NED-supported project, consists of five core staff. Second, and subsequent to trimming down the team, we reached the conclusion that as a flat-hierarchy we wanted each member of the core team to drive decisions, shape their programs, and innovate. A small team has meant that we have been able to focus on the needs of each of the five members, so that we have a vibrant and collaborative team. We are proud of the work we have done on this front in the past year. As a last note on staffing, as of June 2016, our former legal advisor Rajib Timalsina is taking on a more challenging role within the team as leader of our imminent expansion to 5 urban centers during 2016-2017 and five more during 2017-2018.

While stabilizing internally has been a key achievement of this year, we have also been deeply affected by external factors. The months following the earthquakes of 25 April and 12 May have been difficult and uncertain times in Nepal. Indeed, we were able to work smoothly as per conditions anticipated when applying for this grant for only three months from July to September. From September to mid-February, a combination of the raging political and economic crisis essentially brought the country to a standstill; mobility was severely curtailed with massive petrol shortages, power outages combined with the lack of diesel meant that we could not power our office generator, government offices were often closed or unmanned, and the general mood in the city was one aimed at either resolving the crises or surviving it. This difficult situation, of course, slowed down our work significantly. All three clusters were affected. Nonetheless, GalliGalli was able to continue, even if in curtailed and delayed form, all of the activities as set out in the original grant proposal.

Of our three clusters, we would rate both nalibeli.org and Sukul Bahas as successes by the four following criteria.

- Both platforms have become established, recognized, and accepted as a part of the longer term landscape of civic work in Nepal.
- Both platforms have key and core advocates who believe in them, and network for them.

- Our team as well as our supporters envision the ways in which both platforms can play valuable roles in Nepali society at large.
- Our team has identified key ways in which we can tweak the modalities of both platforms to scale them up.

The sections below provide greater reflections on both these clusters, including new ways of moving forward. Meanwhile, with regard to the relationship building at the local level cluster, our analysis of the success of that work is more subdued. Undoubtedly, work to build relationships with local players and to disentangle the manner in which power flows at the ground level for the general public is important work. It, however, seems to be work more suited for either a journalistic organization or for a grass-roots, membership-based organization rather than a small NGO like us. Why the input-outcome ratio does not work for us has been expanded on later in the report.

Overall, through this one-year project, we have been able to clearly articulate the key space we can and seek to occupy as a civil society organization. As elaborated in the proposal we submitted for grant renewal, the space we look to exist in is expanding the public sphere. Specifically, public forums via which citizens-state representatives can have dialogue is very poor in Nepal. Our two platforms – Sukul Bahas and nalibeli.org – have much space to grow as spaces and facilitators of dialogue. Such dialogue is a key part of any vibrant democracy. Growing these platforms will be a clear pathway to building towards our larger goal of strengthening the citizen-state relationship.

III. Cluster 1: To create a dedicated base of users and contributors for the nalibeli.org platform

In the project proposal, we had highlighted four key activity areas for nalibeli.org: Redesign, Content, Outreach and Launch. All of these activities were completed successfully, as is reflected in the growing numbers of users and activity on the platform.

Since the unofficial launch (see photos below for some glimpses of our official launch event in February 2016) of the redesign in September 2015, we have gone from having some 16 user accounts (mostly staff and friends) to 250 accounts. In that same period, we have had over 2500 page views and 711 unique users. The one area where we continue to see problems, is a relatively high bounce rate. Fixing this problem will be a key goal in the next project cycle.



The redesign was completed on time as has been detailed in previous reports. With regard to content, both the quantity and quality of our pages have increased since last year. In this quarter, since the last report, we have focused on translating pages from Nepali to English. Here are a few samples of the kind of detailed work we have done:

[http://en.nalibeli.org/index.php/Passport If Lost: Department of Passport/CDO Office](http://en.nalibeli.org/index.php/Passport_If_Lost:_Department_of_Passport/CDO_Office)

[http://en.nalibeli.org/index.php/Citizenship by Virtue of Nepali Descent or blood: CDO](http://en.nalibeli.org/index.php/Citizenship_by_Virtue_of_Nepali_Descent_or_blood:_CDO)

[http://en.nalibeli.org/index.php/Licence Renewal \(If lost\): Ministry of Physical Infrastruc ture and Transport](http://en.nalibeli.org/index.php/Licence_Renewal_(If_lost):_Ministry_of_Physical_Infrastruc_ture_and_Transport)

[http://en.nalibeli.org/index.php/If Your Sim Card is Lost: Nepal Telecom](http://en.nalibeli.org/index.php/If_Your_Sim_Card_is_Lost:_Nepal_Telecom)

[http://en.nalibeli.org/index.php/Police Clearance Report for Nepalese Living in Abroad: Police Headquarter](http://en.nalibeli.org/index.php/Police_Clearance_Report_for_Nepalese_Living_in_Abroad:_Police_Headquarter)

With regard to outreach, this has been a regular and continuous activity with individual meetings with a diversity of people around media, civic society, and business; occasional wiki-a-thon events, and social media. A combination of these activities is what has increased our account and comments section so significantly.

As of 15 April, the testing/help desk has begun from Ward 9. Bimala Koirala, the ward administrative head, has asked the GalliGalli team to focus on helping people for vital registration (Birth, Death, Migration, Marriage, and Divorce), as these processes have also been recently digitized by the KMC. In this first week, our help desk staff sit at the ward office, in the

same room as the administrative head from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm every day. While it is early yet to make concrete statements, some initial findings and observations are as follows:

- About 20-30 people come in every day during the three hours we have the help desk. Most are there for vital registrations, to access scholarships, and to get recommendations required by other offices.
- We are getting a sense of what kinds of people make up the bulk of visitors to the ward. For instance, we have seen in just the last few days that people never come alone. Usually, there are at least two people, or they come in a group. This seems to be in part because many of those seeking to access services need help writing the request letters required by the ward for many activities. We are especially getting a sense of the writing and digital literacy levels of service seekers. We are also gathering data on if and how service seekers have access to information on processes before they arrive at the ward office.
- In just one week, we have been able to gather very minute legal and practical information about accessing a range of services. It is evident that lack of this minute information, which can be huge obstacles in a bureaucracy, is a significant weakness of nalibeli.org; we have adequate information on the overall flow of the processes but lack some key details on points of conflict. A help desk, so far, appears to be a good way to fill this gap.
- Through our practice of consistent review of the help desk with the ward staff, we have come to feel the need for a small survey to gather information from service seekers. The ward administrative head feels that such a survey would help her provide better service as well. While we have not yet started to develop the survey, which will be a joint Ward 9-GalliGalli effort, there is a broad understanding on the kind of information we seek to gather. Some questions include:
 - Do you have internet at home?
 - Did you already have prior information on how to access this service you are seeing? If yes, how did you access this information?
 - Did you know that you can now complete vital registration processes online? If yes, why did you not do so?
 - Some questions on the usability and problems with nalibeli.org.

IV. Cluster 2: To identify, build relationships with, and promote local-level actors

Among the different measures mentioned in the proposal to evaluate the success of this cluster, the first criteria was to evaluate the extent to which we were able to compile a comprehensive list of key actors across the 35 wards. We were able to conduct interviews with the ward level stakeholders of 15 wards which includes TSS representatives, WCF members, member of pressure groups, female volunteers, and ward administrative heads. Due to the political constraints, we were able to look at only 5 wards in depth; these have given us a sense of the different dynamics that come into play in each locality around budget formation, especially

communication with residents, public participation, and the role of political actors.

Understanding the ward level dynamics will be helpful for us to map the findings as pictures and infographics which can be useful in understanding the areas that need further intervention.

The second criteria of evaluation was the measurement of the quality of our interactions with these actors: The interactions were fruitful in that they help us to get sense of the internal workings of the ward level mechanisms. Yet, looking at it from another point of view, we were not able to have an open and trust-based two way interaction. Relation building and interaction is a process which requires much time and investment. Though our initial proposal stated that we would be doing this work for all of the 35 wards of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, we in the due course of time realize that it was not possible. There are a couple of reasons for that. First, there are a wide variety of key stakeholders in each of the wards. They include the members of different formal and informal organizations and political actors of the wards. Building fruitful relationships with these actors, we realized, is a continuous job. If we remained out of touch for even just a few weeks, the relationship suffered.

In doing our relationship building work, local level politicians and bureaucrats have been broadly generous with their time, and willing to engage with us. But two years of experience has raised the question: what sort of change can we usher in by working only with those who are already entrenched in the existing structures of local government? We have learnt that these structures are powerful and relatively closed to outside influence; in two years of work, we have barely been able to make a dent in their existing frameworks as well as modes of operation. Therefore, though we have been able to fulfill all of the proposed activities in this cluster, when considering the resource to impact ratio, we do not deem this a suitable working area for a small organization like GalliGalli. We are therefore concluding this project area, and focusing entirely on our strengths: platform building, facilitating public debates, and privileging the voices of the marginalized.

This is not to say that this work was a waste of time and resources. Indeed, this is crucial work that we have to continue to do in the areas where we wish to work. It is just that we do not want to keep it as a separate cluster of activities. We also have some concrete outputs in the form of mapping from this cluster. This stakeholders mapping undertaken by GalliGalli is a way of presenting the process, groups, and individual involved in local level decision making. At present, there is limited information about the channels and mechanisms that link citizen to state. In our effort to trace these channels with an eye to intervening in strengthening these systems, the mapping revolves around five key components: 1. Communication Process 2. Participatory Politics 3. Budget formation Process and 4. Individual membership in different interest groups 5. Key infrastructure projects being undertaken in each ward. The central purpose of this mapping is to make the existing dynamics transparent so that the power blocs are evident. It is only when we understand the strengths and faultlines of the existing system that we can begin to intervene effectively. The initial ideas around the mapping is carried out with special reference to the local budgetary process.

The mapping effort will be set up in the form of a multimedia story on the www.galligalli.org website. The mapping will begin with a concise introduction, laying out the scope of the work and why it is important. Subsequently, each of the five sections will have one or more graphics, a number of blog posts, excerpts from interviews, and audio/video where possible. (Note that our previous report had a sketched mapping of what the story layout would look like. That sketch has now gone into production by a professional designer).

To get a sense of what such mapping will look like, please visit our mapping effort from a previous survey project (please note that this mapping is in the final polishing stages, and not yet live to a wider audience): <http://galligalli.org/survey-page/>. Such mapping is important because it allows people to get quick and easy snapshots of some of the core issues at hand. We anticipate that both print and online media as well as social media users will engage with the mapping.

Because such visual snapshots of issues will be powerful, we expect to continue building these stories via the information we collect through nalibeli.org as well as our discussion programs.

V. Cluster 3: To build platform that connects citizens, local activists/groups, and bureaucrats

We have held three discussion events since we submitted our last report at the end of January. The first event was the official launch of the redesigned and upgraded nalibeli.org platform by chief guest Mr. Ram Sapkota, Information and Technology Department Head of Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC). Over 50 people attended the launch. We also received media coverage, including in the largest Nepali-language daily *Kantipur*. Through a combination of these activities, in the three months since our official launch, we have acquired 150 new user accounts on the wiki. Additionally, Sapkota was very excited about nalibeli.org, and has committed to helping us forge a formal relationship with the KMC. The other chief guest at the event was Arun Baral, editor of the popular digital news site *OnlineKhabar*. Baral has been a strong supporter of GalliGalli for some time now. As his site is most popular among migrant workers, we intend to work collaboratively with the site in the next phase of nalibeli.org outreach targeting migrant workers. As organizing this event required a great deal of time and resources, we cancelled our Sukul Bahas for this month.

On 11 March 2016, we held a Sukul Bahas discussion on the topic titled: ‘Presence and effort of local bodies in providing basic services to the squatter settlement’. The speakers at the program were as follows:

- Ishwori Devi Laudari, Assistant Administrative Head, Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Ward No 16
- Bimala Tamang, Head, Nepal Mahila Ekta Samaj

The key discussions during the program revolved around the following issues:

- The public land occupied by squatter settlement: Participants in the program expressed their conflicting views on the ownership over the land occupied by the squatter settlement. Some participants emphasized that many squatter settlements are made up by those who contributing to building Kathmandu as labourers. By that standard, they have every right to occupy the land. While the people who view themselves as permanent residence of Kathmandu argued saying that there would be no rent culture if state will give land to the squatter settlement.
- The basic services: As paying taxes to local government bodies is a pre-requisite for accessing services, some argued that squatters, who do not pay taxes, should not be demanding services.
- Problem of open space: The major issues raised were about how there was lack of open space at the time of the earthquake due to public land being occupied by the squatter settlements. The issue lead to heated debate, and devolved more in blaming and finger pointing rather than discussion.
- Identification of ‘real’ squatters: Most of the participants agreed that it has been hard to recognize the ‘real’ squatters. The identification process which exists now (getting recommendation from some of the squatter organization) is very problematic. New systems need to be put in place for this process.

While the arguments did get heated, most participants came to a common ground by making some proposals for how these issues could be addressed:

- Role of WCF: WCF members, most of whom have access to political parties and the government offices can get data of the total public space and protect them from the land mafias.
- Categorizing wards: There needs to be specific category for identification of the squatters which can be done with the clear guideline build by the presence of squatter association and WCF members and other people from the ward.

This Sukul Bahas was a first step towards exploring the issues of squatter communities, public space, and the rebuilding of Kathmandu by engaging with the stakeholders and building common ground for discussions.

Continuing with our theme, the next Sukul Bahas on 22 April will focus on the topic ‘Utilization of Public Space: Role of Government and Public’. The speakers at the program will be as follows:

- Suresh Sahu Shrestha, Administrative Head, Ward 33
- Rudra Singh Tamang, Chief Executive Officer, Kathmandu Metropolitan City.

At the program, we expect an audience of approximately 30 people from different political parties, local bureaucrats, local residents, and youths from different colleges.

Looking beyond these specific activities, it is important to assess the Sukul Bahas program as a whole throughout the course of the past year. According to the evaluation criteria listed in the proposal, the first criteria is the ability to bring key local players to participate in the discussion. We were very successful with this at the ward level, where we were able to maintain close relationship. On the whole, participants at the discussion hovered between 20-30 people, which is within the expected range. We covered diverse range of issues, from participation of women in local governance to the issue of urban squatters. The discussion ranged from attempts to understand the issues to measures for solving them. There were, however, issues of ownership, with the majority of participants thinking of the discussion as NGO-owned. There was also feedback about the small scale (in terms of participants) of the discussions when the issues are so universally relevant.

The second criteria involves the continuity of these groups' relationship beyond the discussion to solve problems. In the discussions, after the blame games and sharing related to the issue, participants do come to a middle way to address the issue. The best examples of this was seen at the two discussions about women's participation and squatters. Both of the opposing participants tried to reach common ground and agreed that they would have follow-up meetings to solve the issues.

Overall, all the evidence from our one year of hosting the Sukul Bahas discussion series demonstrates that there is an interest in and value to a dialogue platform of this sort. However, due to the limitations of the in-office discussion format as outlined above, we are looking to evolve into a public hearing format. Some key differences in this new model, based on our learnings from this last year, will be as follows:

- Take the discussion to the community rather than expect people to come to the GalliGalli office.
- Don't use a speech followed by question and answer format. Instead, let the community speak, and compel decision-makers to sit throughout the session and listen. They should speak only if they have some specific points or commitments to make.
- Consciously and deliberately create space for residents who are not regularly involved in public life, and therefore apprehensive of public speaking, to air their opinions.
- Consistently work to foster relationships between community groups across geographic areas and issues.

Besides format, we have also realized that the discussions will be more fruitful if they stretch across months, rather than switch from month to month. This allows us to understand the issues, time to take the issues to the national level through media, and propose concrete solutions and interventions. For the first six months of the new project cycle, we seek to examine and document the dynamic nature of urban humanitarian responses in Kathmandu in the wake of the spring 2015 earthquakes, and intervene in the ongoing urban rebuilding operations. Overall, the project is intended to inform urban humanitarian interventions to consider post-disaster needs in

Kathmandu, help reframe planning and policy fields linked to housing and land tenure in particular, and provide examples for cities in low-income countries undergoing post-disaster rebuilding.

On the community level, we seek to provide innovative strategies for collaboration among households, civil society groups, and researchers in technology innovation and policy advocacy. Sukumbasi or squatter activists and researchers affiliated with this project can continue to work collaboratively in other squatter settlements (and private settlements) in Kathmandu and across the country to mobilize research as a critical component of advocacy for shelter rights as well as for institutionalizing policy responses.

VI. The Next Two Years: Beyond Kathmandu

Building upon the strong base we have in Kathmandu is imperative for GalliGalli. The renewal proposal submitted to NED is intended to take lessons learnt from this current project to strengthen our platforms, and take another step towards our goal of expanding public space as a key component of a successful democracy.

Nonetheless, after over three years of work in Kathmandu, we believe that we are now ready to expand beyond the valley to other urban centers. Such an expansion will be invaluable for two reasons. First, it will provide us with comparative data on the successes and challenges of the links between urbanization, public space, and democratic practices across the country. Second, it will bring greater diversity to the conversation, an important concern as the country attempts to implement a still-contested federal system.

Our plan for the next two years is therefore two-fold. On the one hand, we need to establish proven models for and scale-up both our platforms within the Kathmandu Valley. On the other hand, we must expand to at least 10 urban centers across the country by the end of 2018. The plan is to expand to 5 urban centers by the end of 2017, and add another 5 in 2018. The expansion will be built on a model whereby we either collaborate with an organization or individual in the city in question. We have identified and applied for some sources of funding for this expansion effort. We are also exploring ways to make nalibeli.org self-sustaining in terms of resources.

