

NIKESH BALAMI

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Professional Work Experience

Open Knowledge Nepal (<https://oknp.org/>)

2017 - Present

Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer

- Develop and implement the overall strategic plan to advance Open Knowledge Nepal's mission and objectives.
- Design, develop, and oversee programs and projects promoting open data, open knowledge, and transparency.
- Build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector.
- Identify and secure funding and resources for organizational operations and programmatic activities.
- Oversee financial management, including budgeting, accounting, compliance, and financial reporting.
- Monitor, assess, and report on program progress, outcomes, and impact.
- Provide mentorship, guidance, and professional development opportunities to staff and fellows.
- Conceptualize and curate national-scale open data initiatives to ensure long-term public access to Nepal's data.
- Led the publication of key national datasets across health, education, public policy, elections, infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, and environmental sectors.

Open Government Data Team Lead

2014 - 2017

- Organized national and regional events and hackathons, including Open Data Day, Software Freedom Day, and Document Freedom Day.
- Facilitated capacity-building workshops and technical trainings on data and technology for government and non-government institutions.

Nepal-US Alumni Network (<https://nusan.org/>)

2026 - Present

General Secretary

- Provide executive leadership support to the President and Executive Committee in implementing NUSAN's strategic priorities.
- Lead institutional coordination, documentation, and internal governance processes.
- Oversee official correspondence, meeting minutes, resolutions, and organizational records.
- Strengthen alumni engagement strategies and partnerships with the U.S. Embassy, alumni groups, and external stakeholders.
- Represent NUSAN in national and international forums as required.

Secretary

2023 - 2025

- Developed and implemented alumni engagement and outreach strategies.
- Maintained comprehensive documentation of meetings, decisions, and institutional activities.
- Represented NUSAN at formal events and stakeholder consultations.

Open Internet Nepal (<https://openinternet.org.np/>)

2024 - Present

Chapter Lead and Treasurer

- Design and oversee programs aligned with the mission of the Internet Society Nepal Chapter.

- Manage chapter finances, including budgeting, accounting, and donor reporting.
- Oversee grant administration, expenditure tracking, and compliance reporting.
- Maintain strategic relationships with government, civil society, and private sector stakeholders.

Youth IGF Nepal (<https://yigf.org.np/>)

2025 - Present

Vice Chair

- Represent the organization at national and international Internet governance forums.
- Lead program design and implementation for youth capacity-building initiatives.
- Drive resource mobilization and institutional partnerships.

Founding Member

2022 - 2025

- Spearheaded the establishment of Youth IGF Nepal in alignment with global IGF principles.
- Designed and organized national programs, workshops, and consultations.
- Advocated for youth participation in Internet governance processes.

Open Data Charter (<https://opendatacharter.org/>)

2022 - Present

Advisory Board Member

- Provide strategic advice to the leadership on the direction and priorities of the Open Data Charter.
- Assist in developing and refining policies and frameworks for open data implementation.
- Monitor the progress and impact of the Open Data Charter's initiatives.
- Assist in identifying and securing funding opportunities and partnerships.

OpenAQ (<https://openaq.org/>)

2025 - Present

Advisory Board Member

- Collaborates with board members to provide strategic expertise on the OpenAQ Platform, open data, and community engagement.
- Contributes to shaping organizational goals and strengthening OpenAQ's global impact.
- Advocates for OpenAQ's mission to promote open air quality data for cleaner, healthier environments.
- Engages local and professional communities to advance awareness and adoption of open environmental data.

Consultancy Work Experience

Open Knowledge Foundation (<https://okfn.org/>)

2022 - 2023

International Open Data Lead

- Reorganized the Open Data Day 2023 for it to become a truly grassroots-driven, sustainable event, with distributed governance and task allocation.
- Coordinated the administrative tasks of the small grants program, including the formation of an international jury to score and grant the mini-grants.
- Mapped regional actors worldwide and reached out to them through mailing lists and other forms of social media.
- Followed up with beneficiaries reporting and promoted their stories both on the ODD website, on OKFN networks, and on the OKFN social media channel.

Regional Community Coordinator

October - December, 2016

- Provided ongoing support for community members interested in contributing to the Global Open Data Index 2016.
- Worked with the OKFN team to complete partial Index submissions.

- Helped promote the Global Open Data Index in local language(s) whenever possible.

East-West Management Institute (<https://ewmi.org/>)

July - September, 2021

Research Associate for the Global Data Barometer Project

- Carried out primary desk research for Nepal to locate evidence about each question in the Expert Survey.
- Participated in an online researcher-training session conducted by the Regional Hub and the Global Data Barometer project team.
- Conducted peer review for an assigned country.
- Used the guidance from the research handbook to assess the evidence and respond to scoring scales and assessment questions.

Human Rights Organization of Nepal (<https://huronnepal.org/>)

Dec 2017 - Jan 2018

Observers Coordinator

- Coordinated and supported the deployment and logistics of election observers during Nepal's 2017 general elections.
- Assisted in planning observer assignments, transportation, and field coordination to ensure effective election monitoring.
- Liaised with observers and relevant authorities, including the Election Commission, to facilitate access to polling locations and ensure compliance with electoral procedures.
- Supported communication and reporting processes between field observers and the central coordination team.

Areas of Expertise

Data Munging & Scraping, Strategic Management, Civic Engagement, Project Design, Research & Reporting, Technical Writing & Documentation, Data Analysis & Visualization

Education

Diploma in Computer Engineering

Acme Engineering College - CTEVT

2010 - 2014

Bachelor in Social Work

Tri-Chandra Multiple Campus - Tribhuvan University (TU)

2019 - 2025

Key Projects

Integrated Data Management System | <https://idms.oknp.org/>

IDMS is a comprehensive and interoperable digital platform meticulously designed to facilitate seamless inter-governmental data sharing and the efficient dissemination of valuable data in the public domain, adhering to the FAIR principles.

Open Data Nepal | <http://opendatanepal.com/>

Open Data Nepal is a civil society initiative to make Nepal's data accessible online perpetually. The portal allows users to publish, explore, download, and use data to make their visualizations, apps, and services without any restriction.

Open Data Awareness Program | <http://odap.oknp.org/>

Open Data Awareness Program aims to raise awareness about the concept and usage of open data to Nepal's digital natives, who are potential future decision-makers in government, civil society, and the private sector.

AskNepal | <https://asknepal.info/>

AskNepal helps access information about local government, central government, parliament, state-funded schools, universities, hospitals, and other public authorities.

Local Government (LG) Data Fellowship | <https://fellowship.oknp.org/>

The LG Data Fellowship aims to assist municipal bodies in digitizing their data for improved decision-making. It offers the opportunity to work closely with various personnel in municipalities and other stakeholders.

NepalMap | <https://nepalmap.org/>

NepalMap is a web app that puts data about Nepal at your fingertips. NepalMap helps users to find and understand data on Nepal easily and will be useful to anyone who seeks to learn more about Nepal via data.

Talks

Topic: How to make it easier to work with data: practical tips with Open Data Editor
Global Voices Summit 2024 organized by Global Voices in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Topic: Working with Open Data

KU HackFest 2021 organized by the team of Kathmandu University and Kathmandu University Computer Club.

Topic: Grassroots awareness and the impact of Civic Tech in Nepal

2019 Creative Commons Global Summit organized by Creative Commons in Lisbon, Portugal.

Topic: Grassroots awareness and the impact of Civic Tech in Nepal

FOSSASIA Summit 2019 organized by FOSS ASIA at Lifelong Learning Institute, Singapore.

Topic: Connecting Openness

State of the Map Asia 2017 hosted by Kathmandu Living Labs and OSM Community of Nepal in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Topic: Choose Open, Choose Freedom: Open Knowledge Network

Software Freedom Day 2017 organized by Kathmandu University in Dhulikhel, Nepal.

Topic: Open Data and AI

Artificial Intelligence and Its Ecosystem meetup organized by Artificial Intelligence for Development in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Topic: Open Data & AI

Yantra Learning organized by the Robotics Association of Nepal in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Publications

- "Bridging Data And System Silos", published by Open Knowledge Nepal.
- "Connecting Local Data Ecosystems", co-authored with Sam Wozniak, published by Data for Development (D4D) Nepal.
- "Burn Violence Survivors Nepal (BVS-Nepal) Data Management Manual", co-authored with Shukadev Amgain & Sagar Ghimire, published by Open Knowledge Nepal.
- "Nepal Open Data Index 2015 - White Paper", published by Open Knowledge Foundation.
- "Open Data Handbook Nepali Version - Handbook", published by Open Knowledge Nepal.
- "Open Data Manual", published by Open Knowledge Nepal.
- Op-ed on "Data Can Help Tackle Air Pollution", co-authored with Sijal Pokharel, published by The Rising Nepal.
- Op-ed on "Reinvestment in digital literacy", published by The Kathmandu Post
- Op-ed on "Lockdown: A Pause To Think About Air Pollution", co-authored with Sijal Pokharel, published by The Rising Nepal.

Key Work Coverage

- "Youth in Nepal use data to respond to COVID-19" by the World Bank.
- "The future is open by default" by Open Source For You.
- "Championing open data movement in Nepal" by Nepal Institute of Research and Communications (NIRC).

Certification and Training

- "Data Stewards Academy Executive Education Course" by Open Data Policy Lab at The GovLab.
- "Collaborating for Open and Accountable Budgets" by International Budget Partnership and Freedom Forum.
- "Gender Data 101 Edition 2.0" by TechChange.
- "Gender, Equality, Diversity, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Training" by Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN).
- "TechCamp Kathmandu", by the U.S. Department of State and Kathmandu Living Labs.
- "Capacity Development Workshop Open Government Data Sensitization, Gap Assessment and Strategic Planning" by UNPAN and National Information Commission, Nepal.
- "National Substantive Training on Open Government Data for Sustainable Development" by UN DESA and National Information Commission, Nepal.
- "3-day training for improving research impact" by Data for Development in Nepal.
- "Youth Leadership, Open Mapping, and Sustainable Community Development", a days summer course by Kathmandu Living Labs and the University of California, Davis.
- "The Active Citizen in a Digital Age" course by Stanford Online.

- "First National Intellectual Property Law & Development Essay Competition - Nepal 2016" by Uprety & Associates.
- "CISCO International Conference on Cyber Security and Cyber Law 2015" by ITSERT-NP.
- "Open Aid Data Bootcamp 2014" by The World Bank and Young Innovation.

Award

October 2023, Datasphere Fellow

The Datasphere Initiative Fellowship Program provides an opportunity for graduate students and young professionals to work on novel research and dialogue related to data governance.

August 2022, Climate Action Champions Network Cohort Member

The network aims to harness the potential of the youth in the region by bringing together 100 individuals from the countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, over 30 months, to discuss and deliberate about creating a climate action vision for South Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

June 2022, OpenMRS Community Management Fellow

Received a fellowship to expand current skills and experience by providing program and operational support to a variety of OpenMRS community initiatives.

July 2019, TechCamp Kathmandu Alumni Member

TechCamp is a U.S. Department of State initiative to connect those who have demonstrated expertise and knowledge working to combat air pollution and promote government transparency in South Asia.

November 2016, Shuttleworth Flash Grant 2016

Given to the social change agents, nominated by Rufus Pollock, Founder and President of the Open Knowledge Foundation.

2017 AD, Nominated as a U.S. Embassy Youth Council Nepal

Received a grant to run a community engagement project - I Know My Government from the U.S. Embassy Kathmandu.

Past Involvements

Code for Nepal (<https://codefornepal.org/>)
Project Coordinator

2017 - 2021

FOSS Nepal Community (<https://wiki.fossnepal.org/>)
Executive Member

2018 - 2023

Artificial Intelligence for Development (<http://ainepal.org/>)
Co-founder and Team Lead

2018- 2022

Mozilla Foundation (<https://foundation.mozilla.org/>)
Firefox Student Ambassador & Mozilla Open Leaders

2015 - 2018

Social Footprints

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nikeshbalami/>

Twitter/X: <https://x.com/nikeshbalami>

GitHub: <https://github.com/nikeshbalami>

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