



Open Aid and Budget Data in Nepal: Experiences, perspectives and intentionalities.

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Introduction

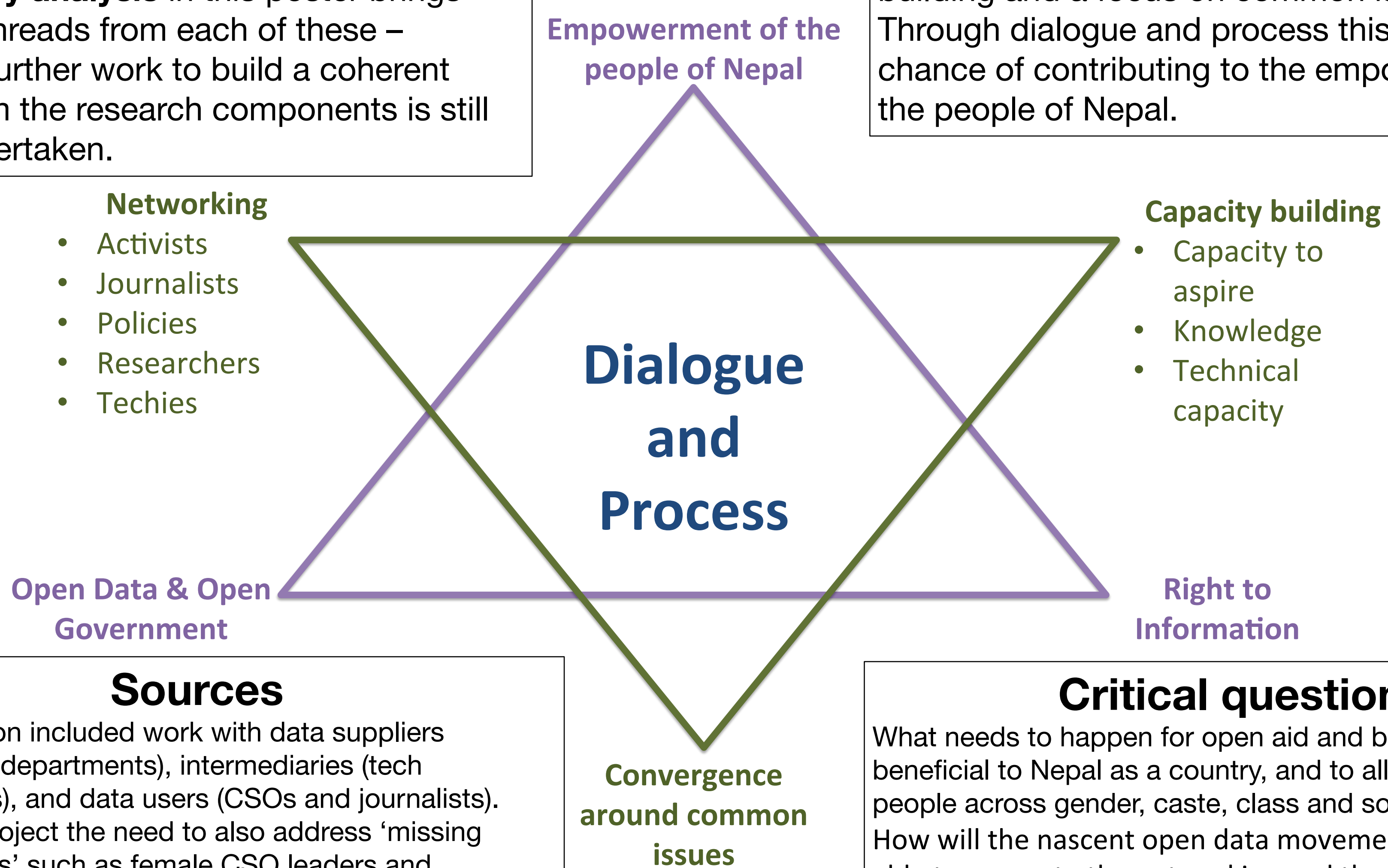
After more than a decade of civil unrest and governance breakdown, Nepal is experiencing a period of constitution building. The nascent open data / open development movement has been spurred on by government release of aid data, and sharing of budget information, and by activities by a small core of CSOs developing the Open Nepal project and platform. Through parallel exploration of the demand for and use of data and information on budget and aid, this case explored whether or not open data could make a relevant contribution to governance and inclusive citizen empowerment in Nepal today.

Methods

The project was designed around a **mixed-method approach**, combining literature review, stakeholder mapping workshops, interviews (semi structured, open ended, informal), participant observation (including during 'open data days' and training events), survey work and media monitoring. The **preliminary analysis** in this poster brings together threads from each of these – although further work to build a coherent whole from the research components is still being undertaken.

Findings

There is a gap between open data efforts, and the information needs and practices of civil society and journalists in Nepal. The six-point star below draws on the data collected and presents a **model for future action-oriented research** to integrate open data and the Right to Information with networking, capacity building and a focus on common issues. Through dialogue and process this has a greater chance of contributing to the empowerment of the people of Nepal.



Sources

Data collection included work with data suppliers (government departments), intermediaries (tech organisations), and data users (CSOs and journalists). During the project the need to also address 'missing intermediaries' such as female CSO leaders and journalists.

Critical questions

What needs to happen for open aid and budget data to be beneficial to Nepal as a country, and to all the Nepalese people across gender, caste, class and social background? How will the nascent open data movement in Nepal be able to generate the networking and the capacity building that will make this possible?

Reflections & recommendations

Effective open aid and budget data should contribute to the empowerment of the common people of Nepal. A number of interview respondents were wary of open data potentially increasing internal inequality in Nepal.

It is important to underscore the relationship between, and alignment of, open data initiatives for aid and budget, and established Right to Information (RTI) activism in securing empowerment. A strong relationship between Open Data and RTI can create further momentum.

Both RTI models and proactive-publication of open aid and budget data needs to be driven and shaped by citizen demand. Many networking and capacity building initiatives around open data are currently being undertaken in Nepal but in a more or less ad-hoc way. Up to now, they are not linked to a clear 'demand' or a 'shared issue'. This is a key area for future work.

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