

Welcome to the 16th **Citizen Insider**! Citizen Helpdesks is a campaign led by local Community Frontline Associates (CFAs) in Nepal with the objective to support open, transparent and accountable local governance. This campaign prioritises participatory activities, peer learning and information sharing to enhance the trust between government and citizens. Alongside collaborating with citizens and local government, the campaign also supports government decision making based on the needs and expectations of citizens.

## Rumors

### NEPALGUNJ, BANKE

"I heard that the ward office will provide shelters, toilets and water taps to those who do not have them."

### NEPALGUNJ, BANKE

"During the election campaigns, we were told that all the households would get their own drinking water pipes but we are still bringing water from our neighbors."

### NEPALGUNJ, BANKE

"I have heard that the government is going to build concrete houses for all those living in mud houses!"

## Facts

Nepalgunj Sub-metropolitan city is aiming to replace the mud houses in its region within 5 years. The government is considering Public Private Partnership as a strategy to do so.

The local government has also been creating plans aimed at some target groups to fulfill their needs at ward level.

The sub-metropolitan city has started building public toilets in five different places in the city. The government is also planning to allocate some mobile toilets in the busy areas of the city.

If any family is able to provide sufficient evidence proving their weak financial status and receive the recommendation from ward stating so, the Sub-Metropolitan office will provide necessary support to the family for drinking water and toilet facilities. For this, one has to go and submit an application to the ward office requesting for support.

### Hari Pyakhurel

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## Concerns

### NEPALGUNJ, BANKE

“How can we participate in the budget planning process in our local area? How is the budget allocated?”

### NEPALGUNJ, BANKE

“After the election, the local representatives have stopped showing up at our doorsteps. The public is completely unaware about the budget and activities of local government.”

### NEPALGUNJ, BANKE

“I couldn't get the information on the current annual fiscal budget from the ward when I requested for it. How can I know about the budget allocated for our locality?”

## Answers

Prior to May 30th every year, the Government of Nepal has to select the community level proposals. While selecting those, they ensure inclusive participation and representation from all different social groups (Women, Dalit, Indigenous, Janajati, Madhesi, Tharu, Muslim, Marginalized, Minorities, Youth, Children, Senior Citizens, LGBT etc) in the community.

Based on everyone's participation, the needs and priority of the community is identified and the proposals are selected. The budget amount is then allocated based on the selected proposals.

The proposals, with value upto Rs 1 crore, are implemented after forming the User Group Committees. For infrastructural development, like roads for example, the implementation is not carried forward without the participation of the citizens whose houses are connected to it.

One can obtain information about the ward budget and its programs in the following ways:

1. In order to inform the local citizen about the ward's budget and programs, the Nepalgunj, Sub-metropolitan city has created a mobile application called “Nepalgunj Upamahanagarpalika”.
2. To cater to the needs of those without access to internet, the city has set up a toll-free number. So, locals can call on 16608152052, to find out about the budget and local government's plans.
3. The city has also published a book with detailed descriptions about the ward budget and plans. This publication is easily available from ward offices.
4. Citizens can also obtain the necessary information based on the Right to Information Act 2064 BS.

### Source

Local Government Operation Act, 2074

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## Questions

### NEPALGUNJ, BANKE

"I have heard that the government is supporting returnee migrants from foreign employment. What kind of support is the government providing in reality?"

### BALEFI, SINDHUPALCHOWK

"I heard that one can get a loan from the government by keeping an educational certificate as collateral. Does the government also provide loans for those opting for foreign employment?"

### PANAUTI, KAVREPALANCHOWK

"I am planning to go abroad for employment by taking a loan from a co-operative. However, I hear that one can obtain a loan from the government by keeping his/her education certificates as collateral. Is it true?"

## Answers

The Government of Nepal has not made any policy to provide financial loan to those going for foreign employment by taking their education certificate as collateral.

The government has however planned to provide loan to unemployed youths who have completed higher education by taking their education certificates as a collateral. The objective of this provision is to encourage them to start businesses right here in Nepal. The government will be publishing the details about the criteria, eligibility and so on to obtain this particular loan soon.

Interestingly, the government has already implemented a policy to provide loans to those who have returned from foreign employment and wish to use the skills they learnt abroad to start their own business in Nepal. This policy is stated in budget plans of the fiscal year 2075/2076 BS.

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# Insights

## Story from the field



### SURENDRA GUPTA

#### NEPALGUNJ, BANKE

There is a general perception that citizens are not receiving the services they expected following the local level elections. However, in ward no. 8 of Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City, there is a different story. This ward office is open 7 days a week for service seekers. The ward chair Surendra Gupta initiated this activity and he himself is present at the office on Saturdays. He listens to the grievances of the locals, and asks the relevant team members to get involved and provide the required services.

It is not mandatory for team members to work on a Saturday, nor are they provided with extra incentives for doing this. Everyone comes willingly to provide services during holidays. The reason for this is to strengthen the relationship between local government and citizens. There is a strong commitment and unity amongst the representatives and the government officials to make ward no.8 of Nepalgunj a model ward. They can set a good example to other wards and stop the belief that local government officials do not listen and are inefficient at providing services.

## Know Before You Go - the latest Government Decisions

- Government decision to run Helpdesks at local level ([Link](#))
- Important information for migrant workers opting for foreign employment ([Link](#))
- Budget allocation of Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City under different headings ([Link](#))

The information, rumors and issues presented here have been collected from CFAs, community meetings, development agencies and face-to-face discussions at local level with over 1,324 people in 5 districts between 17 November 2018 to 15 December 2018. The issues highlighted are chosen on the basis of prevalence and relevance. The information presented here is correct at the time of issue.

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