



**Not Just Information,
It's About Open Data
and the Power to
Shift Governance**

**Building a New Narrative
on the Use of Right to
Information in Nepal**



RTI Youth Camp

School of Arts for Aspiring Open Governance Activists

RTI Youth Camp is a platform for young changemakers to creatively engage and build their capacity on the use of Right to Information (RTI) and open governance for a just society. The camp provides youths with theoretical and practical resources, networks, trainings, and mentorship to develop their understanding and skills in bringing RTI into practice. Accountability Lab Nepal organized RTI Youth Camp in seven locations across Nepal, and this report summarizes our achievements, approaches, and learnings.

4 modules of RTI Youth Camp



Module I

Understanding the relationship between democracy, governance, rights, and freedom



Module II

Power of RTI: International Best Practices



Module III

RTI in practice- Ground realities



Module IV

RTI implementation, opportunity, and challenges while practicing it

Learning Approach



Presentations



Case Studies



Group
Activities



Ideation



Field Visits



Technical Skills



Webinars



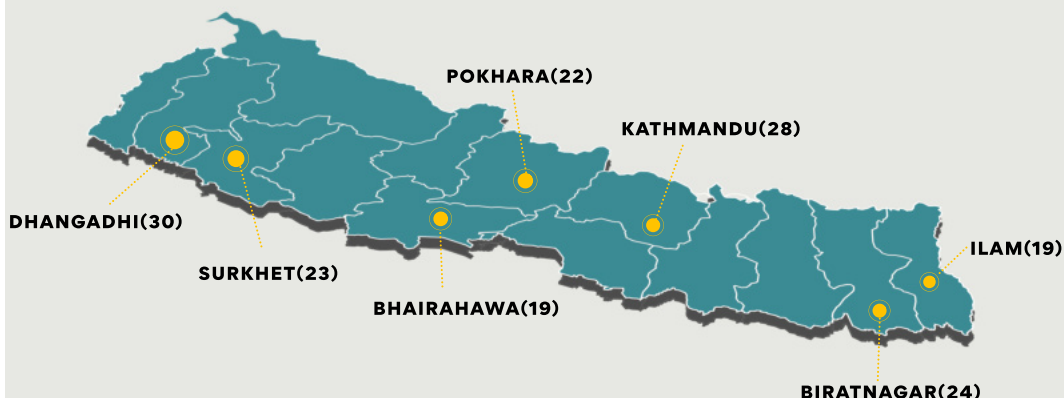
Fun Fair



Participant
Workshop

Engagement & Achievements

Location 7



RTI Activists

165



Gender



89
FEMALE

76
MALE



RTI experts

11



Media, CSO, and private sector

50+

Media coverage

4

Information officer

12

Democracy Friendraiser

7

Virtual events

10+

Campaigns

2



1000+
youth engaged





Post Camp Activities by the Participants - Ideas and Actions

20+ RTI applications filed in multiple locations pushing for government accountability, and demanding information required for their research.

For instance, RTI activists in Biratnagar, under the mentorship of RTI expert Raju Shrestha, filed an RTI at the Quality and Weights Office in Biratnagar requesting an update on the mandatory installation of a weighing machine while selling cooking gas to customers. The office then agreed to make it mandatory for the stores to have weighing machines and inspect them regularly.

5+ Advocacy programs were organized in Kailali, Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Surkhet, which engaged **1000+ youths**.

20+ New Ideas Generated

- ♦ **Mobile team** to raise awareness about RTI in different parts of Nepal
- ♦ **Podcasts** related to RTI and open governance
- ♦ **Blogs and Vlogs** to promote the rights of citizens in Nepal
- ♦ **Formation of RTI activist groups** in schools and colleges to promote RTI



Lessons Learned

01

Youths need platforms to meet like-minded individuals for collaboration and action.

02

Continuous engagement and follow-up are essential for activism and impact.

03

Positive approaches build trust between citizens and the government.

04

Team building is crucial for enhancing interactive and peer-to-peer learning.

05

Hands-on training in theory and practice helps participants to understand the issue better.

06

Informal networks can also help promote knowledge, collaboration, and innovation.

07

Unconventional platforms are important to engage youth in governance.

RTI activists Testimonials

“The entire camp was awesome. What a fun and powerful place to groom oneself. I always thought I could not do anything alone, but after the camp, I feel connected and part of the community. Glad to be a part of it.”

- Prince Shah, RTI activist from Kathmandu



“There are many things that we are aware of but aren’t implementing in real life. We knew of an information officer but did not know their role. That was a major learning for me. The camp made me aware of many things that we ignore as youths. I have realized that if we are unified as youths, we can achieve any goal we desire.”

- Ganga Bhandari RTI activists from Dhangadhi

“The three-day camp was very productive for us as youths. We knew what RTI was, but we did not know how important this right was to us. After the camp, I did not keep the information to myself but shared it with my relatives and younger cousins as well. Further, I also visited four different schools and shared the importance of the Right to Information. I will continue to do this in the future.”

- Safalta Nepali, RTI activists from Surkhet



RTI expert quotes

“I am pleased to express my gratitude for the delightful opportunity afforded to me to engage with young and promising leaders and activists through the Right to Information Camp. It was impressive to observe the participants' adeptness in linking the right to information with the prevailing governance and developmental issues within the local context. I firmly believe that with continuous coaching and mentoring, the participants have the potential to bring improvements in governance in their respective localities.”

- Advocate Santosh Sigdel, Founding Chair, Digital Rights Nepal



“Being with youths and sharing about RTI along with my own personal experience was amazing. The session was an opportunity to empower youths to question the government. The interaction and the feedback of participants were above my expectations. Such campaigns should be organized in remote areas too.”

- Sangita Subedi, Section Officer, Government of Nepal

“The camp was a very good opportunity for youths. They got a chance to be active citizens - to empower themselves and contribute to creating a transparent government. The camp also helped enhance the network further and created a unity to work together.”

- Raju Shrestha, Co-ordinator, RTI National Network, Koshi Province





Success Stories:

Yosha Guragain,
an RTI activist

filed 3 RTI applications. First, she filed an RTI to the District Administration Office of Sunsari asking for contact details of all the Information Officers of the Sunsari District. The purpose was to hold the District Administration Office accountable. Second, she applied for RTI, requesting the documents of the School Management Committee of Janata School at the Education Department of Itahari. This led the committee to agree to make their decisions transparent and involve the community in their decision-making processes. Third, she filed an RTI to the Itahari Municipality demanding the expenses, details, and procedures of making a statue at the “Bagaicha Tol Pokhari” Itahari - 4 after she heard the rumors about the misuse of the budget. She collected the details and informed the media that the procedure was systematic and devoid of corruption. Furthermore, the local representatives decided to process contracts after passing formal meetings. She said that she got positive and negative responses while filing her RTI but realized that it is a powerful tool to bring change in society.

After the RTI Youth Camp, Rakshya Bam, an RTI activist from Kathmandu, conducted various sessions on RTI, sharing the importance of RTI and the process of filing it. She has conducted over five sessions for more than 400 students in different colleges and communities in Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Kailali.

Raskhya Bam has conducted a session on “Strengthening Democracy” in 3 colleges of Pokhara during a workshop on Misinformation, Disinformation, and Fact-checking (engineering students of Prithivi Narayan Campus, Pokhara Engineering College, and Purwanchal College) to educate them about RTI as a significant tool and its drafting process. She organized a program named Junior Speakers’ League from the Ujwal Thapa Foundation for students of different schools. The students received basic knowledge of RTI as a tool for good governance. Recently, she gave an RTI knowledge session to the students of United Academy, Kathmandu, Shree Saraswati Secondary School, Kathmandu, and Patanjali Vidhyasthali Academy, Tikapur, Kailali.

“After participating in the RTI Youth Camp, I realized the importance of information. I wanted to make more people, especially young people, aware of this as they have the right to know the right information because it empowers them. Then, I started to conduct awareness programs on RTI in different parts of Nepal because I believe this program will cultivate knowledge regarding good governance, transparency, and accountability among the young participants.”

Rakshya Bam,
an RTI activist



Quotes from the Government

“RTI Youth Camps should be regularly organized across all districts, ensuring that young people understand the power of RTI and their responsibilities. It is crucial to involve government officers in these camps, as it fosters greater accountability among officials towards the citizens they serve.”

- Basanta Raj Joshi,
High Court Patan, Lalitpur



“The RTI youth camp was very fruitful for youths as this camp has generated more interest in public affairs among the young generation. This has cultivated a habit of seeking information to understand the problem rather than blaming the government.”

- Yadab Raut,
District Administration Office, Ilam