

A Symposium on Connecting Research and Policy: Key Lessons from the Chitwan Valley Family Study



November 10, 2025 Hotel CMT, Hakim Chowk, Bharatpur



The symposium was held on November 10, 2025, at Hotel CMT, Hakim Chowk, Bharatpur. This event was specifically organized to share the findings of the Chitwan Family Study with district- level policymakers, representatives from government offices, local governments, national and international non-governmental organizations, research institutions, and academicians. The symposium aimed to foster intellectual discussion on maximizing the policy impact of research and to share best practices for translating research findings into effective local and district-level policies that improve human lives.

Featured Presentations

Distinguished speakers shared insights from three decades of groundbreaking research



Stephanie Chardoul, Director of Survey Research Operations at the University of Michigan, delivered a highly engaging presentation on advanced data collection methods, demonstrating how tools like life history calendars and computer-assisted interviewing enhance accuracy and capture real-life experiences with precision.



Dr. Harry Wijnhoven from Statistics Netherlands and part of the Blaise development team, presented an insightful session on the Blaise survey system, showcasing its global capabilities and highlighting its successful implementation within the CVFS framework in Nepal.



Prof. Dr. Axinn discussed how CVFS data reveals major shifts in fertility, marriage, and family life in Nepal, showing how education, community institutions, and changing social contexts shape these transitions. He also shared key insights on mental health, noting strong gender differences and the significant impacts of marriage, parenthood, and conflict exposure on depression, anxiety, and alcohol use.



Prof. Dr. Ghimire highlighted how three decades of the Chitwan Valley Family Study have advanced global understanding of social and environmental change, while also emphasizing that migration today is driven by economic opportunity, social networks, conflict, and environmental pressures. He noted that these forces shape who migrates, why they move, and how migration reshapes families, gender roles, and community well-being.



Prof. Dr. Emily Treleaven from the University of Michigan shared key insights into children's nutrition, healthcare, and well-being, showing how families and communities influence child outcomes using long-term CVFS data.



A representative from the National Planning Commission of Nepal, the policy-making agency of the government, conveyed significant enthusiasm and commitment to future collaborative endeavors. They also requested that similar programs be organized specifically for government officials in the National Planning Commission.

Keynote Addresses & Engagement



Following the presentations, Prof. Dr. Shiva Raj Adhikari, Former Chairperson of the National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal, delivered a keynote address highlighting the importance of community-based longitudinal studies in generating evidence required to answer high-priority policy questions. His inspiring keynote speech also highlighted the need to foster intellectual debate on maximizing the policy impact of research projects.



This was complemented by an inspiring speech from Joseph C. Kolars, Director of Strategic Development for Global Collaboration and Professor of Medicine and Learning Health Sciences at the University of Michigan. Dr. Kolars spoke on the exciting opportunities for future collaboration in public health research between the University of Michigan and Nepali research scholars and policymakers.



An interactive discussion session followed these speeches. During this session, participants posed many thought-provoking questions relating to the presentations, offered constructive suggestions, and expressed strong interest and enthusiasm for future collaboration.



Attendance was diverse, with participants including policymakers, planners, practitioners, representatives of advocacy groups, representatives from various national and international non- governmental organizations, development partners, academicians from universities and colleges, and research organizations.

Transforming Research into Policy Impact

Three decades of the Chitwan Valley Family Study continue to inform evidence-based policymaking and advance our understanding of social and environmental change in Nepal and beyond.