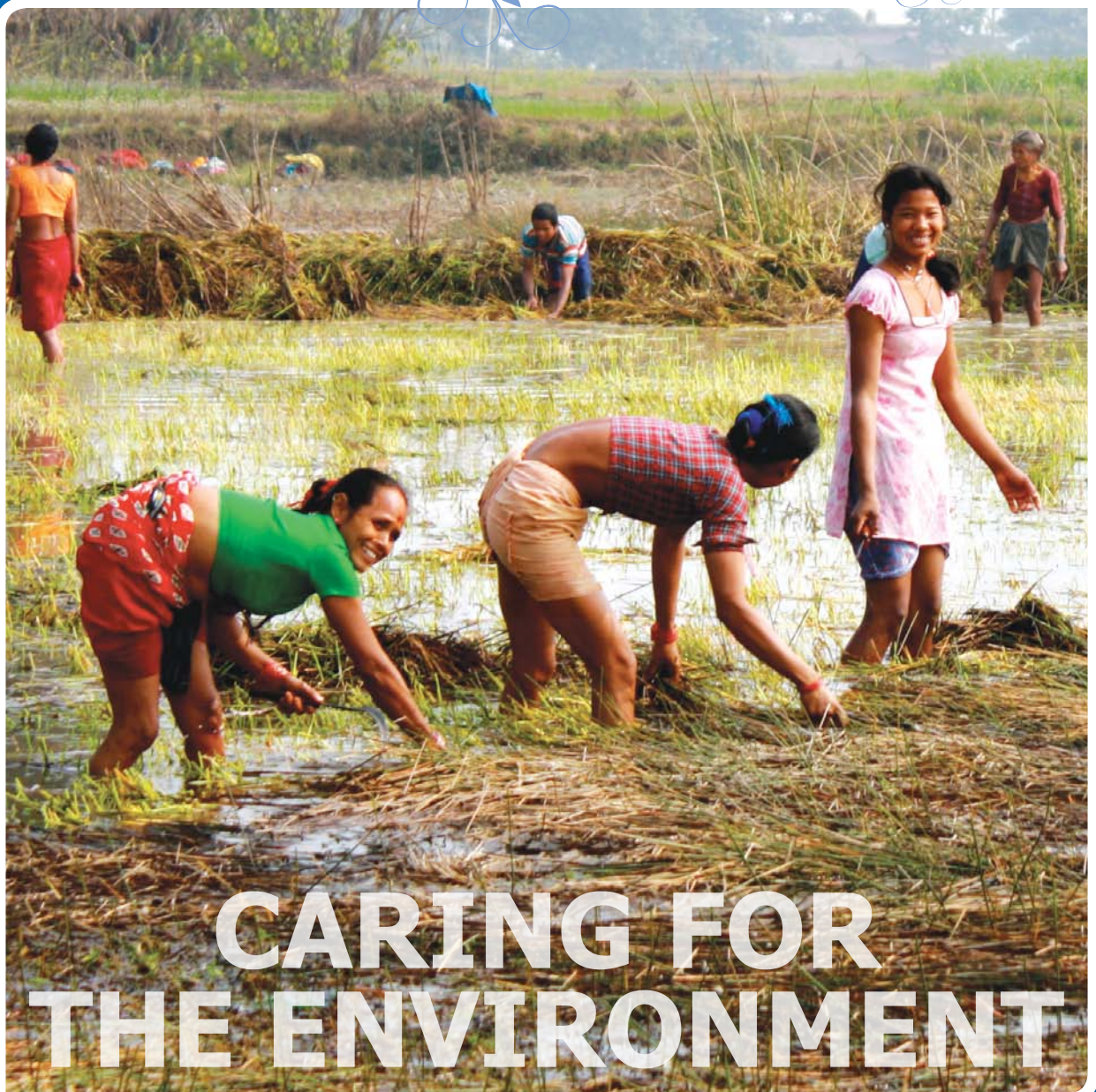




UMN News

Issue 31 | June 2011

Fullness of Life



**CARING FOR
THE ENVIRONMENT**



Dear Friends,

As I cycle to and from the UMN office here in Kathmandu, I cross the holy Bagmati River. Not so long ago, people used to bathe in the clear waters of this river. Now, it is a black sludge, choked with plastic bags, sewage and other domestic waste, which only the desperate venture near. This is what happens when we do not act as stewards of God's creation. The sights and smells of Kathmandu bring home how our lives impact on our immediate environment. However, here in Nepal, we are also all too well aware of the wider impacts of climate change, with increased flooding, melting glaciers, and less predictable rainfall patterns.

Living in a way that degrades the environment not only reduces the quality of our own lives, but also of those around us (locally and further afield), and of future generations. We need to "think globally and act locally". This *UMNews* outlines some of the ways in which we are trying to do this as an organisation, together with our partners and the communities we work with.

I hope that you will be encouraged by what can and is being done in Nepal and be keen to be involved in this. I also trust that you will be challenged to think how your own life impacts directly on those around you, locally and beyond, and how this affects your own and others' experience of the fullness of life God intends for us all.

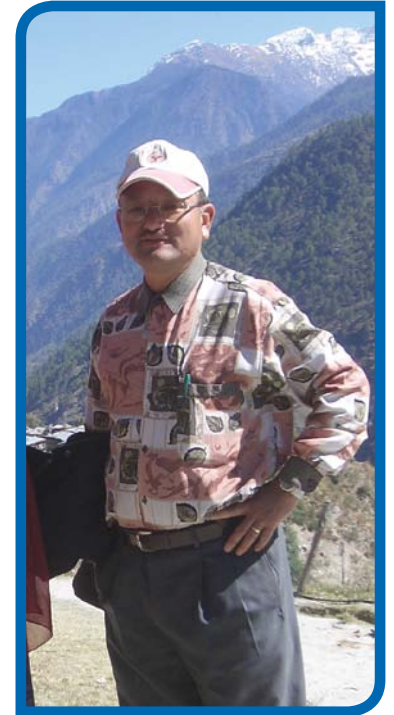
Yours in Him,

Mark Galpin
Executive Director
UMN

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Editorial Team: Vijeta Manaen and Lyn Jackson
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IN MEMORY OF SHAHA...

We mourn the loss of Shaha Bahadur Gurung, UMN Programme Director. Shaha passed away suddenly on Monday 16 May 2011 from a heart attack, while at home with his family in Kathmandu.

Shaha joined UMN in 2003 as Programme Director. Prior to this he served with International Nepal Fellowship (INF) for 27 years in a variety of roles, from Senior Paramedical worker to Community Health and Development Project Director. His working life has been characterised by his commitment to the empowerment and transformation of individuals and communities who live in

poverty, and his passion to see the church as an active agent in this process.

The impact of Shaha's life has been huge. He has not only contributed significantly in UMN and INF, shaping and running programmes and providing overall vision and strategic direction to the organisations, but also in his support and founding of a number of organisations, including Sagoal and Micah Network Nepal (MNN). His influence within the development community and the Christian and mission communities in Nepal and internationally has been widespread.

Shaha's impact has not only been through direct involvement in these organisations, but also through his mentoring, coaching and inspiring of others to join him in fulfilling this vision. He has played a leading role in the integral mission movement in Nepal and beyond, and laid a solid foundation from which we will continue to move forward.

Shaha leaves behind his wife Samjhana and his three sons: Arun, Anup and Asim. We grieve with them the loss of their husband and father, and our loss of a brother, while giving thanks for a life lived to the full for the glory of God.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DEGREE MAKES!



“The monsoon used to come every year at the same time. Now, it is very unpredictable,” said Johar, at 71 the oldest of a group that had come together in Doti to discuss changes in the local environment. “Yes, and the winter rains are unpredictable too – sometimes they don’t come at all. In Budda VDC, I have seen ten drinking water sources disappear in the last ten years,” agreed Sher. “That’s probably due to deforestation – people are cutting down the forests too much,” countered Tej. “But when the winter rains do come, it’s not always a blessing – we now get heavy hailstorms that damage the crops,” added Johar.

When I arrived in Nepal 13 years ago, people would tell me that the monsoon started on 15 June. I was sceptical, but sure enough, it came within a week either side of the middle of June. Now, that has all changed. Last year the monsoon did not start until July, and people were really worried about their rice. Planting is planned to coincide with the start of the monsoon rains, and even if they start late

they might not finish late – so the growing season could be shorter than necessary. In addition, in recent years there have been severe winter droughts, particularly in the western hills, resulting in 60-100% crop failure. For an economy that is 40% dependent on subsistence agriculture,¹ these are worrying developments.

We cannot attribute every climatic anomaly to climate change, but the trends are disturbing. UMN has recently been using a tool developed by Tearfund to look at the potential impact of climate change on the work we and our partners are doing. This helps us analyse climatic and environmental changes, asks how our work is affected, and how we can minimise negative effects.

First of all, we look at the predicted effects of climate change according to established and accepted models, such as those used by the IPCC². For a country that contributes hardly anything to climate change, Nepal certainly receives more than its fair share of predicted effects.

Temperature

- Rising at 0.04-0.06° per year, though not uniformly.
- Mountain areas are warming faster than the plainland.
- More extreme temperatures (very hot and very cold days).

Rainfall

Models predict differently, with regional variations. Generally:

- Pre-monsoon rain decreasing in the mid and far west, but increasing elsewhere.
- Monsoon rain decreasing on the plainland and mid-west, but increasing elsewhere.
- Rainfall will become more erratic, with more intense rainfall on fewer days, resulting in flash floods and landslides.

Water Supply

- Falling winter rains may result in springs and streams failing in the dry season, some permanently.
- Glacier melt will initially increase water in rivers during the dry season, but summer snow and glaciation is predicted to disappear as early as 2070.

Forest and Vegetation

- Warming in hilly and mountain areas will change forests. Products gathered and sold for supplementary income may become scarce or disappear.
- Mosquitoes will extend their range northwards, exposing people in the middle hills to vector-borne diseases (malaria, kala-azar, and Japanese encephalitis).
- Plant diseases and insects will also extend their range, causing crop damage.

Secondly, we asked mature local people what their experience of their environment was – did they perceive any changes over the years? This article began with some of their comments. Here is a summary of what they observed:

- Changed rainfall patterns: monsoon is late; erratic rainfall. Less snow/rainfall in winter.
- Water sources have been slowly disappearing; streams drying up.
- Temperature is higher in monsoon, but lower in winter.
- More very hot and very cold days.
- Various climate-related disaster hazards: flood and landslide; hailstorms; frost; drought.
- Soil erosion – increased use of chemical fertilizer; crop production has decreased by 30-40%.
- More pests and diseases in crops and animals.
- Community forest is reducing.
- The number and variety of birds and animals are declining.
- Snakes and mosquitoes have started appearing in new areas.

Some of these changes, like deforestation and erosion, are caused locally by human activity. But others fit remarkably well with climate change model predictions. These observations are only anecdotal, but the parallels are so

Activity	Potential Environmental or Climate Change Problem	Adaption Options
Citrus fruit growing	Hailstorms damage fruit or blossoms, reducing harvest.	Crop insurance.
Bee-keeping	Flowers appear earlier, or later because of drought, reducing food for bees. Result – reduction in brood and honey.	Plant flowering trees (citrus, lichee, cherry, etc) and crops (mustard, buckwheat) to supplement available food.
Ginger/ turmeric growing	Root ball rot, due to increased pests or disease.	Purchase disease-resistant varieties from reliable suppliers. Treat root ball before planting.
Goat (meat) and cow (milk) rearing	Increased demand for fodder causes deforestation.	Establish community forests, plant and manage trees. Promote agro-forestry. Control grazing.
Irrigation	Water sources dry up due to rainfall fluctuations and/or deforestation.	Establish community forests. Harvest rain water in plastic-lined ponds. Protect/conservate water sources.
Vegetable production	Desertification due to intensive farming.	Use organic and/or minimum tillage approaches. Balanced use of chemical fertilisers. Crop mixing and rotation.
Cow (milk) rearing	Cold-waves cause disease in cows.	Construct insulated sheds. Make jackets for cows from sacking.

close that climate change is clearly a seasonal reality to farmers in Nepal.

Lastly, we consider the potential impacts of these changes on the programmes that UMN, its partners and target communities are using to address poverty. Lost water sources result in more work for women and girls, who bear the brunt of water collection. Unknown pests, unseasonal storms and droughts can all ravage crops and leave farmers and their families struggling for food. Chronic sickness in a main bread-winner, or a valuable animal, can push a whole family below the poverty line within a week or so, and the subsequent debt, or loss of the bread-winner, can keep them there. UMN has a programme that is poised to support and strengthen local livelihoods in Rupandehi, Nawalparasi and Doti.

We asked local stakeholders to participate in a planning workshop, and asked them how the changing environment might hinder or destroy our efforts. In the table above are the most significant problems they recorded, and some ideas for their management.

UMN has found that climate and environmental change is a very real phenomenon for many Nepalese who depend on the environment for their basic needs. It can mean the difference between health and hunger, an improved life or an impoverished one. UMN, together with its donors and partners, must continue to find ways to assist the poor and marginalised of Nepal to analyse these problems, manage them and overcome them.

*Paul Wright
Livelihoods Advisor*

1. Source: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/EXTSAREGTOPAGRI/0,,contentMDK:20273771~menuPK:452766,00.html>

2. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, <http://www.ipcc.ch/>



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION

How can a small village in the remote mountains of Nepal help fight climate change?

It's a cold morning, near the end of winter. In these high mountains, snow still lies thick under the trees. A line of women picks its way towards the cleared area where piles of rough-cut timber are stacked. They fill their dokos (baskets), and trudge back to the village, singing softly in the frosty air.

Thankfully, they only need to make this trip half as often as before, now that smokeless metal stoves have been installed in their houses.

Cutting timber for firewood has ravaged the forests of Nepal, denuding slopes and making the countryside vulnerable to landslides. The smoke from open fires confined in tiny, windowless houses has led to eye infections, chest infections, and burn injuries to small children. Women have used much valuable time fetching wood, walking further and further each year as the forest receded.

UMN's partner in Rukum District, Magar Information Centre (MIC), began installing smokeless stoves two years ago. Now, more than 200 households enjoy a clean, smoke-free environment, and use roughly half the wood they needed before to cook meals and heat their houses in the bitter winter. The stoves are costly, but the villagers happily contribute NRS 2000 (USD 14) towards each stove, to reduce the health problems and free up women's time.

MIC Chairman, Hhiu Man Gharti, says: "I am happy and proud. This is a big accomplishment for us. I am hopeful that the health of women and children will improve from now on."

And in a small way, they are also helping combat climate change.



A GREAT INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

Ramdhar and Dhanilakh Gharti Magar can only grow enough food for six months of the year on their small plot of land. To feed their five children for the rest of the year, they work long hours in other people's fields. Life is tough, but they have high hopes for their children. They want them to learn skills that will help break the bonds of poverty that imprison so many in the mountains of Nepal.

Dhanilakh used to have to spend 3-5 hours every third day walking to the forest to collect wood for burning, and then carrying that heavy burden back to the village. The smoke from the fire made the children's eyes smart, and everything became dirty with soot.

Since her new stove was installed, Dhanilakh reports that the house is much cleaner, and the children can sit close to the warmth and do their homework in the evenings. And the time she has saved can be used in the fields, adding to the family's food supply and income.

Ramdhar says that this is a great investment for his family.

HOPE FOR THE MAGAR COMMUNITY

"An equitable society in which each and every individual rejoices in the best of their culture and prosperity." This is the vision of the Magar Information Centre. Established in 2003, MIC works with the Magar community, a minority ethnic group that has suffered poverty and disadvantage for generations. Apart from the smokeless stove programme, UMN is also working with MIC to:

- build 75 household toilets;
- plant 500 saplings to protect water sources;
- distribute 200 kg of improved maize seeds;
- train 100 farmers in composting;
- provide scholarships for four students from the Magar community.



The new smokeless stoves use much less timber, allowing **regeneration of forests.**

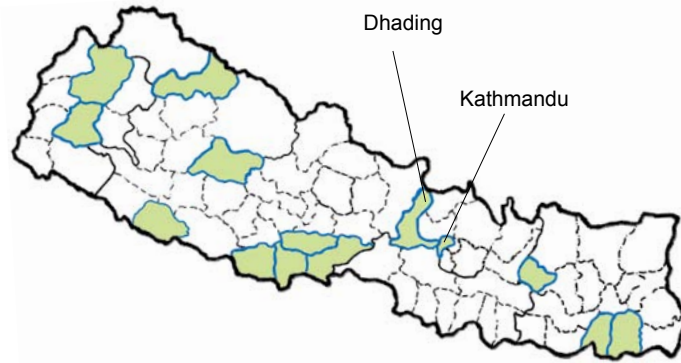


Less smoke means **better health:** fewer eye and chest infections, skin diseases and burns.



Lyn Jackson
Communications Director

CLUSTER CONNECTION



Dhading
Region: Mountain, Central Nepal
Population: 340,000 (according to census 2001 AD)
Life Expectancy: 58.5 years
UMN Team Leader: Shashi Ghalan
Number of staff: 10
Number of partners: 10



Development needs:

- Livelihoods (income generation and agriculture with eco-friendly technologies)
- Child-friendly education and family life education
- Sanitation, personal hygiene, nutrition and HIV and AIDS awareness-raising
- Peaceful and harmonious society



*Shashi Ghalan
Cluster Team Leader
Dhading*

Meet Shashi

I joined UMN in May 2007 as a cluster team leader for one of the UMN clusters located in the far west. There, I got the opportunity to work closely with marginalised communities. This helped me to grow in my knowledge of community development, which is my passion.

Since July 2010, I have been working in Dhading as the cluster team leader. Because this district is closer to Kathmandu, I can be with my family more often.

My current responsibility is to provide leadership and direction to Dhading Cluster in order to implement the current strategy of UMN.

Many of our target communities are able to meet their basic needs through various livelihood improvement projects. The promotion of organic farming and introduction of eco-friendly technologies in the communities have been very successful.

Local peace mediator mobilisation is also playing a vital role in bringing social harmony to the society.

Similarly, participants of post-literacy classes are now aware of environmental issues and are beginning to address these locally.

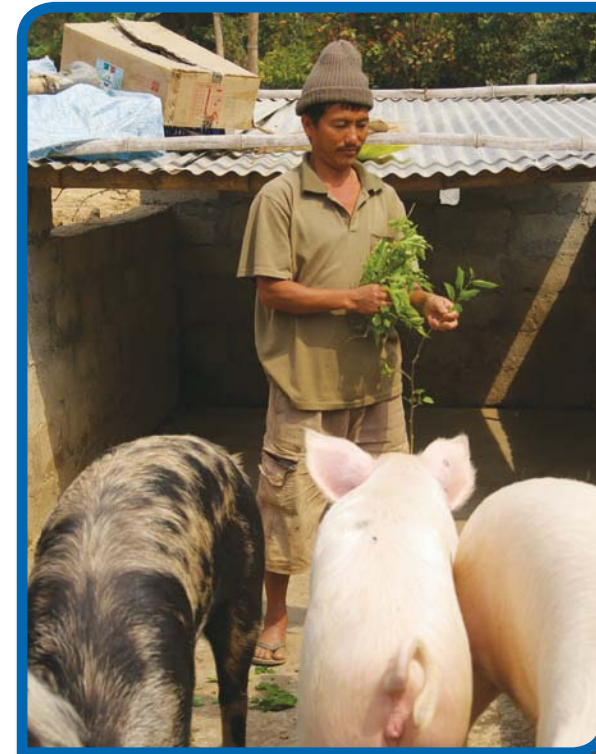
All these changes and success stories satisfy me and motivate me to continue to serve the very poor. All credit goes to our God, as he is guiding and leading us in every step.

A Farm for the Future

Pigs, poultry, fish, asparagus and mushrooms... sound like the ingredients for a gourmet meal! But you can find them all growing harmoniously on an innovative integrated farm in Dhading. On just half a hectare of leased land, UMN's partner Small Farmers' Agriculture Co-operative (SFAC) has built four poultry sheds (total capacity 10,000 birds), two pig sties (for about 10 pigs), three fish ponds (for three varieties of fish, totalling about 13,000), an asparagus farm (1,000 plants) and a mushroom shed. Established in July 2010, the farm is now operating at almost full capacity.

There are three exciting aspects to this farm. Firstly, it is operated by a group of six families, identified by SFAC as being in particular need of assistance. The families have formed a co-operative, called Sanakishan Namuna Bewasaik Samuha (Small Farmers' Model Business Group), and are confident that the farm will provide a good income for them. Three family members are regular employees of the farm, earning around NRS10,000 (USD 140) per month – a good salary for a farm worker. Expansion plans will mean that another nine families will soon be directly involved.

Secondly, this enterprise will soon be economically viable, without further donor support. Although the outlay to set up the farm has been considerable (just over USD 20,000), the first year of operation shows



that earnings will soon recoup those initial costs. After salaries, rent, interest and training costs, the group expects to pay off the loan (USD 16,250, contributed by SFAC) in two years, while still being able to expand the farm.

Finally, the farm provides an excellent model of environmentally-sustainable, integrated production. No chemical fertilizers or pesticides are used. The poultry stool is used for feeding piglets, as well as supplying fertilizer to the asparagus farm. Then the pigs' stool is fed to the fish. Any dead chickens are used for feeding the carnivorous fish. In this way, by-products of each component are used for the production of another.

And it's making a difference in people's lives. Gopal Magar (41) has been working in this farm for a year now. "I am glad to be a part of this farm project. I am very positive that it will do well", he says. Gopal had tried to go abroad to earn some money earlier. But now he says, "I am happy to be together with my wife and two sons and to be able to earn enough for the family."

*Lyn Jackson
Communications Director*

Please pray:

- For God's guidance and wisdom for all cluster team members as they support new projects: Anti-Trafficking and Child Centered Community Development Programmes.
- For success in organic farming and the promotion of environment-friendly technology in Dhading.

General Assembly 2011



The UMN General Assembly, which is organised every two years and has representatives from UMN's supporting partners from all over the world, was held on 11 and 12 May. The theme this year was "Fullness of Life". There were many interactive and informative sessions, as well as productive discussions.

The UMN Board of Trustees also met before and after the General Assembly. Their discussions were very helpful in clarifying UMN's Vision and taking UMN's work forward. Thanks was given to Jane Furniss for her service as Chair of the Board, and Sandy Sneddon was welcomed as the new Chair.

Thank you, passengers!

Yeti Airlines, a popular domestic airline in Nepal, donates 1 rupee per flight ticket to UMN as a part of their corporate social responsibility policy. The UMN logo and a brief explanation about the organisation is printed on the back of each boarding pass. This contract will be valid for one year. Together with Yeti Airlines, UMN would also like to say: "Dear passenger, thank you for flying with Yeti Airlines."

UK Nepal Conference

A three-day UK Nepal Conference (30 September to 2 October 2011) will be jointly organised by INF UK and UMN at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire, UK. This conference is open to Mission workers of INF and UMN, representatives from mission organisations, and anyone interested in mission work in Nepal and among the Nepali diaspora.

Please contact Phil Kearney, Conference Organiser at nepal.conference.admin@inf.org.uk or

Phil Kearney, c/o INF, The Cottage, 22 Weoley Park Road, Selly Oak Birmingham B29 9QU

or visit www.umn.org.np



Baby Face

Nanda Chhetri's new baby boy has had a great start in life. He was born four days before this photo was taken, at Parroha Health Post in Kapilvastu. His mum had the assistance of a Skilled Birth Attendant and the support of a well-equipped 24-hour birthing centre. In Nepal, where around 80% of births still take place at home (or, in some cases, outside in a cow shed), Nanda's experience is unusual.

UMN has helped the Parroha Health Post develop its services to this standard over several years, and it now functions independently. Nanda's son is wrapped in a beautiful baby blanket, provided through a donation from Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church in the UK. Recently, UMN's Dr Suzanne Walton handed over 500 blankets to Health Post staff.



New UMN Vision and Mission Statements

After almost a year of consultation and discussion, UMN's Board of Trustees has approved new Vision and Mission Statements. The Vision Statement is short, sharp and inspiring, while the Mission Statement keeps key elements of the former one, while still being something which all our staff, Christian and of other faiths or none, can embrace. Please visit our website for a more detailed explanation of both statements.

Vision

Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society.

Mission

Inspired by the love and teachings of Jesus Christ, in partnership with the Christian community and others in Nepal and worldwide, we will serve the people of Nepal, particularly those who live in poverty:

- To pursue peace and justice for all;
- To address the root causes of poverty; and
- To make Christ known in word and life.

Freshening up our look

Alert readers will have noticed a somewhat different UMN Logo in this edition of UMNNews. After seven years, a bit of "freshening up" was called for. The former logo, while very attractive, had a few practical problems. Its long shape meant that it took up a lot of space, and when reduced in size, the group of figures became very indistinct. The grey lettering tended to fade out, and the logo didn't copy well in black and white.



Our new version keeps three key elements:

- the group of people sitting together, representing the importance of participation and partnership;
- the Nepali writing, representing our commitment to Nepal and its people, and
- the orange sun. Positive and hopeful, it is also a subtle reference to our spiritual hope in the Risen Christ.

The group of people has been outlined in white to make them clearer. Just using the letters "UMN" reduces the width, and makes the logo bigger, bolder, and more visible in small sizes, and from a distance.

Who's Who?

Sunila Maharjan, Advocacy Intern

My passion for the environment started way back in my childhood. I love to talk about nature and its unique objects and life in the wilds. Forests, rivers and hills have always attracted me. My enthusiasm for the environment led me to study Environmental Science for my higher education. I recently graduated from Tribhuvan University.

I was born into the Hindu religion but became a Christian in 2001. My new exploration into nature began then. The deeper I got into the Bible, the more I understood how uniquely and beautifully God has made everything that exists on this Earth. We are so blessed to have access to all these resources. I began to understand how everything is interconnected. During my studies, I got involved with Nepalese Youth for Climate Action (NYCA), a youth coalition, where we worked on issues regarding climate and environment. We used to do campaigning so that the people who are unaware of our environment can get even a little knowledge about how important this is for all of us, and why we should care for our environment.

My journey here in UMN till now has been very exciting. Being able to work in the area I love is a privilege for me. I am developing my potential and efficiency. I ask God to help me in every step constantly, and give me wisdom to understand my further passage as his will.



Every year, UMN provides a 12-month internship experience for a small group of young Nepali Christians. The year includes formal learning experiences, professional development, and field visits, where appropriate. Interns receive a small stipend from UMN.



JOIN US

Realising UMN's vision of "fullness of life for all" requires committed people. There are many opportunities for folk from all over the world to be involved in this work, here in Nepal. Expatriates work in teams with Nepali staff, providing technical advice and assistance in a range of disciplines.

If you are interested in any of the positions below, or if you would like to ask about other opportunities within UMN, please contact Anne Penn at expat.recruitment@umn.org.np to learn more. Please send your CV or resumé with your email.



Needed Urgently

All Advisor posts involve mentoring, coaching and training Nepali staff and partners.

ADVOCACY ADVISOR

(Kathmandu-based with travel to other areas)

While the rich get richer, the poor lose what little they have. It's not fair, and it can be changed. UMN's Advocacy Team works to empower communities to speak up for justice for themselves, the environment, and the most vulnerable in society. The team needs an advisor with practical advocacy skills, and qualifications and experience in community mobilisation, human rights, legal or public policy work.

ACCOUNTANT/FINANCE TEAM LEADER

(Kathmandu-based)

Sound, effective financial management systems are essential for organisations like UMN. We need someone with high levels of accounting or financial management experience to lead our well-qualified team of Nepali professionals. Experience working with a not-for-profit organisation would be an advantage.

Please visit www.umn.org.np for more information about opportunities to serve in UMN.

PEACEBUILDING ADVISOR

(Kathmandu-based with travel to other areas)

Nepal has undergone more than a decade of armed conflict over political ideologies. In addition, there are deep divisions in society around gender, ethnicity, disability, caste and religion. UMN's Peacebuilding team seeks to help build more peaceful, just, harmonious and secure communities for all. A Peacebuilding Advisor is needed to help people develop new and creative responses, particularly to post-conflict needs. Qualifications and experience are required in peace and reconciliation work and particularly the post-conflict needs such as psycho-social issues and trauma healing, etc.

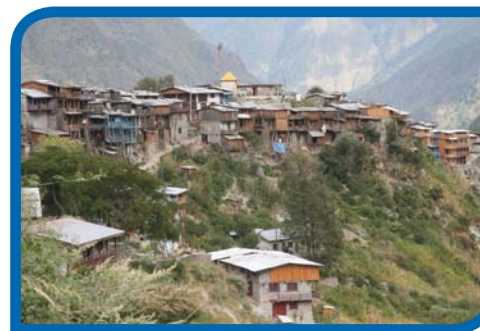
Please note: Expatriate team members do not receive a salary or remuneration of any kind from UMN directly, but are self-supported volunteers or supported by a "sending mission organisation" or church in their home country that provides for all their financial needs during their assignment.



PRAY

While debates rage in the west about climate change and environmental issues, poor communities in Nepal struggle daily with the realities of unpredictable rainfall, deforestation, and the devastating impacts of natural disasters. More than 80% of the people depend on agriculture, and even tiny changes can mean the difference between food sufficiency and famine. Here are two environmental issues that our cluster team leaders have requested prayer for.

MUGU



Deforestation is a growing concern in Mugu, where timber is needed in huge amounts for cooking, heating, and for building houses. While trees are cut down in large numbers, there is very little reforestation done by the community. To address this, UMN has trained its partners in Mugu about various climate change issues. The local people are now beginning to understand the importance of conservation, and take part in environmental protection campaigns held in villages.

- Pray for the people of Mugu, who live a challenging and a difficult life. Health care, sanitation and nutrition are the key development needs in this district.
- Pray that Mugu will experience regular and seasonal rainfall on time, so that farmers will be able to harvest good agricultural crops.
- Also pray that UMN and its partners would be able to effectively run programmes on environmental issues in Mugu to save and replenish forests.

*Paul Chhetri
Team Leader*

SUNSARI



Three years ago, the Koshi floods in Sunsari displaced about 50,000 people. Not only did they lose their houses, but also their cattle, farming land, shops, school buildings, and their hope for the future.

UMN, together with a partner in Sunsari, intervened and started working to help meet their physical needs by providing income generation training, and also sessions on the trauma healing process.

Rainfall patterns in Nepal are becoming increasingly erratic and unpredictable. It's not surprising to hear some locals still say in despair: "The Koshi River may flow over us anytime in the rainy session."

- Please pray for the recovery and the rehabilitation work that UMN and its partner continue to do in these areas.
- Also pray for the health and well-being of these people, as the land they live on is just sand dumped by the river, which allows only limited vegetable farming.

*Bal Kumari Pun Rai
Team Leader*

PRAY FOR NEPAL

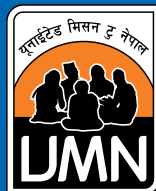
Continue to pray for political stability in Nepal. On 28 May, the Constituent Assembly voted to give itself a three-month continuance, as its term had expired but key constitutional issues had not been resolved. Please pray hard over these next three months, that all political parties will put the needs of all Nepali people before sectarian interests, and work together towards a peaceful, just and compassionate New Nepal.



The Almighty God, the Lord, speaks:
He calls to the whole earth from east to west.

“All the animals in the forest are mine,
and the cattle on a thousand hills.
All the wild birds are mine,
and all living things in the fields...
For the world and everything in it is mine.”

Psalm 50:1, 10-12.



UNITED MISSION TO NEPAL

PO Box 126, Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone: +977 1 4228118, 4268900

Fax: +977 1 4225559

communications@umn.org.np

www.umn.org.np