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UMIN  **News**

United Mission to Nepal



"Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise"

lead, empower and deliver

Dear friends of UMN,

Happy New Year!

Thank you for praying and supporting us over the past year. We look forward to walking with God this year as He leads us in our service among poor and marginalised communities in Nepal.

This issue of UMNNews focuses on HIV and AIDS in Nepal. It features personal stories and discusses UMN's activities and the growing role of the Nepali church in responding to HIV and AIDS.

The spread of HIV and AIDS in Nepal continues. A major contributing factor is lack of knowledge or responsible behaviour on the part of men who leave Nepal as migrant workers, have unprotected sex outside the country, and then return and infect their families. Social stigmas and discrimination often keep people from being tested or from sharing their status with others. Secrecy has been the rule, rather than the exception.

UMN is combating HIV and AIDS by partnering with local organisations and churches and we are excited to share some of our success stories with you. Our partners are actively combating HIV and AIDS in their communities. Teenagers and housewives are speaking out about awareness, prevention, and discrimination. Many church leaders are recognising their opportunity to demonstrate Christ's love, restore relationships with people and with God, and bring hope to the many individuals and families who are affected by this disease.

Radhika Pun's story of courage and hope in the face of HIV (page 6) is one of many we hope you will find encouraging in this issue of UMNNews. We are privileged and proud to be part of transformations such as Radhika's. There are many challenges, but with God by our side, we continue our work with enthusiasm and hope.

Join us in stopping the spread of HIV and in bringing hope to those living with HIV and AIDS by contributing your prayer and financial support.
See pages 14-15 for more details.

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*Shaba Babadur Gurung
Programme Director*



The emerging role of UMN...

As HIV and AIDS sweeps across the globe leaving a trail of unimaginable destruction, the only foreseeable solution is a radical change of values and behaviour.

Dealing with the challenges and reality of HIV and AIDS and the acceptance of people living with HIV in Nepal is not only a moral requirement but also an integral part of HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support.

UMN provides HIV and AIDS education to communities to tackle misconceptions people have about the spread of HIV and care for people living with HIV.

UMN is also contributing to the development of the government's national strategy for combating HIV and AIDS, including the provision of life skills' training that enables youth to make healthy and informed life choices.

UMN has helped the government of Nepal develop a national level community home-based care policy guideline document. As part of that, we are continuing to develop the skills of district-level line agencies to coordinate HIV and AIDS activities.

Now is the time to speak out, confront the issues head on and walk in solidarity with people living with HIV.

In light of this growing threat to humanity, we have been given a unique opportunity to preserve and enrich the lives of people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

This battle is difficult and huge, but victory through the guidance of God's Word and the Holy Spirit is possible. Inspired by this, UMN will continue to press on its work in HIV and AIDS.

Joel Gitinji
HIV and AIDS Lead Advisor

Stories from the clusters...

UMN WORKS WITH LOCAL PARTNERS IN SEVERAL DISTRICTS OF NEPAL, WHICH WE CALL CLUSTERS.

SUNSARI – radio programme combats misperceptions

In Sunsari and Morang districts, the spread of HIV is on the rise. It is estimated that more than 1,500 people are infected with HIV. Because of the fear of discrimination, many do not get tested. When people do find out they are HIV positive, they often keep it a secret.

The ongoing spread of HIV is largely caused by the denial that HIV exists or is a threat to lives. Commercial sex workers and injecting drug users are often perceived as the sole

risk groups, thus the spread continues unchecked in homes and families where women have no power to negotiate safe sex with husbands among the growing force of migrant labourers that return home infected with HIV.

National Community Development Centre is a UMN partner using radio as a way of communicating to the masses about HIV and AIDS, how it is spread and its treatment. Thousands of people in villages

and neighbouring districts are now able to listen to personal stories of people living with HIV, hear from medical experts and get information about treatment facilities.

The success and popularity of the radio programmes has inspired future plans to replicate the same programme in two other locations where UMN is working.

*Durga Babadur Adbikari,
HIV and AIDS Officer*

DHADING – community outreach creating change

Hiking up the Himalayan range in the northern part of Dhading, I was struck by two things - the beauty of the mountains and the melodic sounds that were coming from the churches nearby. As I listened to the music, I couldn't help but wonder how many sermons that day would be preached on or even slightly address the subject of HIV and AIDS, a growing problem in this part of northern Dhading. Because of unemployment, men have had to leave their

families behind and travel to cities, mostly in India, in search of employment. When they return home, many of them are infected with the HIV virus as a result of unprotected sex.

One of UMN's faith based partners in Dhading, the Himalayan Community Salvation Programme, has already conducted HIV and AIDS awareness sessions in six villages. Along with this, they have also equipped two

people to do further HIV and AIDS related trainings and encouraged churches to get involved.

As a result of the growing role of churches in the AIDS campaign, wives of migrant labourers have started to write to their husbands working abroad encouraging them to be faithful and be on guard against HIV infection.

*Khada Nanda Dhakal
HIV and AIDS Officer*

Girish left his home in Rupandehi and travelled to Mumbai in India to find employment. In Mumbai, he frequently went to brothels and engaged in unsafe sex. He made a quick return to Nepal to get married, after which he came back to India. A few months later, he fell seriously ill and tested HIV positive. When his employer found out, Girish was fired from his job and forced to return to Nepal.

Afraid that he would be further stigmatised, Girish kept his status a secret, telling no one, including his wife. Some years later, following constant sickness and a severe bout of tuberculosis, Girish and his wife sought help from of the Nepal Red Cross Society where it was confirmed that they were both HIV positive.

Girish was later referred to Sakar Samuha Nepal (an AIDS crisis care facility), where he received counselling and treatment. Although he continues to face discrimination, Girish and his family are happy with the significant improvement in his health. “Without the help of Sakar Samuha Nepal, I would be dead,” says Girish.

Stigma and discrimination of people living with AIDS is still a huge challenge in Nepal. For Girish and many others, the struggle to break myths and attitudes surrounding HIV and AIDS is a daily one. UMN and Sakar Samuha Nepal are working to address such challenges and are also providing care and support to more than 60 people living with HIV.

Mamata is an extraordinary girl. She lives in the town of Itahari in Sunsari district and although only 21, she has been able to break cultural barriers and openly speak about the spread of HIV and AIDS through risky sexual behaviour. In Nepal, where the subject of sex is largely taboo and hardly mentioned in public, young people like Mamata are making a difference in their communities.

Mamata confesses that at the beginning it was difficult to talk about sex and AIDS, but after receiving HIV and AIDS training from Naba Jiwan Samaj Sewa, a faith-based UMN partner in Itahari, she gained the confidence to speak to her friends and others about the spread of HIV. She is now an active peer educator and has spoken to more than 150 students and also addressed church leaders in Itahari on the importance of speaking out and taking action.

“Because of the understanding that I now have about HIV and AIDS and how it is spread, I know how to protect myself from getting infected, but many of my relatives and friends do not. It is because of this that I need to speak out,” says Mamata.

POINTS FOR PRAYER:

1. Pray for UMN, the Government of Nepal and other stakeholders as they strive to improve responses to HIV and AIDS in urban and rural areas.
2. Pray that UMN's HIV and AIDS partners secure funding to implement their programmes.
3. Pray that local communities continue to take initiatives to provide care and support services for people living with HIV and AIDS.



Courage and Hope

RADHIKA SPEAKS ABOUT THE TRANSFORMATION IN HER LIFE AND WORK THROUGH UMN

In mid-1998, when I was studying community medical assistance in Bhairahawa, under family and social pressure I married an Indian seasonal migrant worker. My husband seemed like a good man to me and our lovely daughter and we were delighted when he received an offer to work in Dubai. However, he was sent back home abruptly, after less than three months, and wouldn't tell me why. He consoled himself by drinking and coming home late. Soon he started having regular health problems. Eventually he told me that he had frequently had unsafe sex and knew nothing about the deadly HIV virus until he became ill during his time in Dubai.

Initially, I reacted as many do when hearing news of this magnitude - with denial. Then I shared my predicament with my family who immediately took us for a check up. My daughter was the only uninfected one.

I lost my job and was shunned, neglected, persecuted, and depressed; I gave up all hope in life. Then one day, at a social event, I noticed everyone behaving differently

towards a group of people. These people were HIV-infected. I immediately felt pity for them and started talking to them. Eventually in 2005 we formed Sakar Samuha Nepal (SSN), a self-support group.

During an HIV and AIDS workshop we came into contact with UMN, who took an avid interest in our group. Through our partnership since mid-2007, UMN has not only supported us but also inspired us to realise that being HIV-positive does not denote the end of life but the beginning of a new one.

Without doubt, UMN's partnership has resulted in SSN being well respected in our community. We are highly involved in district and national-level activities and regularly counsel people living with HIV and AIDS who come to us for help. I currently serve as the organisation's chairperson and with my husband's support, help the many people who come to us. My husband and I have promised to devote our lives to serving people living with HIV and AIDS until our last breaths.

*Radhika Pun
Sakar Samuha Nepal
(SSN is a UMN Partner in Rupandehi Cluster)*

HIV and AIDS estimates

Adults and children estimated to be living with HIV, 2007



Global summary of the AIDS epidemic

Number of people living with HIV

Total	33 million
Adults	30.8 million
Women	15.5 million
Children under 15 years	2.0 million

People newly infected with HIV

Total	2.7 million
Adults	2.3 million
Children under 15 years	370,000

AIDS deaths

Total	2.0 million
Adults	1.8 million
Children under 15 years	270,000

Nepal summary of the AIDS epidemic

Number of people living with HIV	70,000
Adults aged 15 to 49 prevalence rate	0.5%
Adults aged 15 and up living with HIV	68,000
Women aged 15 and up living with HIV	17,000
Deaths due to AIDS	4,900

- The first HIV positive case was identified in 1988
- Currently, there are over 70,000 people estimated to be living with the HIV virus
- HIV prevalence of the general population is 0.5%
- The main modes of transmission are unprotected sex and intravenous drug use
- Major factors are seasonal labour migrants and unregulated commercial sex work
- Almost 92% of HIV-infected fall in the 15 to 49-year age group

Source: Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV and AIDS, 2008

“HIV and AIDS must be the product of adultery,” Amosh Khadka, a pastor of Sitalnagar Abhinas Church in Rupandehi, said at the start of an HIV and AIDS training programme.

Amosh had known a few HIV-positive people before and had always avoided them for fear of social stigma. Being associated or seen with people living with HIV while part of a growing ministry was not an option he was willing to consider.

However, following a two-day orientation training on HIV and AIDS organised by UMN, his view changed as he learned how HIV was spread. He discovered that HIV and AIDS knew no boundaries and was not confined to race, sex, gender or questionable behavior.

Consequently, Amosh has since facilitated talks with special target groups to improve the general population’s understanding of HIV and AIDS. Nepal Abhinas Social Service Organisation (NASSO), where he serves as the secretary, has helped form three

support groups to counsel and talk to people living with HIV and AIDS.

Amosh has since shared his vision for the work in the area of HIV and AIDS with other Christian leaders but admits that most have not been supportive.

In the future, NASSO and UMN plan to run peer education training programmes for Christian youth and to organise workshops to address specific issues such as mother-to-child HIV transmission and care for orphans.

Working primarily in the community of Devdaha in Rupandehi, Amosh believes that the fight against HIV and AIDS should be a fight to love and pray for those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

“Our role is not just to cultivate and grow our ministry,” says Amosh, “but also, to love our neighbours whether they are sick or healthy.”

*Bhawani Prasad Dabal
HIV and AIDS Officer*

the church and AIDS in nepal

At UMN, our approach is to live, inspire, and encourage holistic transformation – material, social and spiritual transformation in individual lives and in communities. We call this approach ‘Integral Mission.’ As an organisation, we want to be agents of such change not merely by talking about it, but by living and working as holistically transformed people ourselves. As we do so, calling people to love and repentance in all areas of life, societies are transformed on all levels. Integral Mission is a mindset underlying all that we do, and it is this mindset that helps us achieve our mission and vision.

Our vision in the area of HIV and AIDS is to see restoration of lives spiritually and physically for those living with and affected by HIV and AIDS.

The church, as the body of Christ, is called to comfort people, and take care of orphans, the sick and the needy. We are called to be a voice for those who are unable to speak out and also help to restore dignity and status to the marginalised. It is not enough for the church to educate people about HIV and AIDS. Practical support such as counselling, home based

care and acceptance and affirmation of people living with HIV are ways that the church can show care and be an example to others in the fight against stigma and discrimination.

UMN regularly holds interaction programmes with churches to discuss a variety of social issues and the topic of HIV and AIDS is always a prominent subject. Many churches have expressed commitment to take action and already the impact of this commitment is being seen.

In Bhairawa (Rupandehi district), members of Nepal Abhinish Social Service Organisation, a non-governmental organisation that belongs to the fellowship of Nepal Abhinish Church, have inspired their fellow church members to accept and love people living with HIV. In a community that has long treated them as outcasts, this was a tremendous achievement. We are hopeful that such change will inspire and change others.

*Ratno Dharani
Integral Mission Lead Advisor*

UMN in 2008



UMN Turns 54!



Bidding farewell to our transition partners



Treatment at Okhaldhunga Hospital



UMN staff at a climate change rally



Candle vigil on World Peace Day



Tansen Hospital's new emergency block



Bajhang, here we come!



Celebrating Christmas, UMN-style!

Opportunities for Service in Nepal

United Mission to Nepal (UMN) publishes a full range of opportunities for service in Nepal on its website www.umn.org.np. Exciting opportunities exist for qualified and experienced Christian professionals - couples, singles and families – in a range of challenging, rewarding roles in rural and urban areas of Nepal. If you have the required skills, are creative, flexible and interested in working in teams with Nepali and expatriate staff, UMN is keen to hear from you.

Please contact Anne Penn at anne.penn@umn.org.np for details.

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

We are actively seeking individuals for the following positions. All positions involve mentoring, coaching, and training Nepali partners.

PRIMARY/ELEMENTARY TEACHER

Based at Tansen Hospital

Needed for a small group of 5 to 8 year old children of UMN expatriate families in Tansen as soon as possible. There is a small well equipped school and supportive parents.

Requirements

- Enthusiastic and qualified teacher
- Experience with teaching children whose first language is not English would be an advantage

FINANCE DIRECTOR

Based in Kathmandu

To provide leadership for all financial work within UMN, including internal systems, planning, budgeting, reporting, controls and policies.

Requirements

- Relevant financial or accounting qualifications and experience
- Experience in not-for-profit or fund accounting preferred

HIV & AIDS ADVISOR

Based outside Kathmandu with travel to rural areas

To help our partners with HIV and AIDS education, prevention, advocacy and community and home based care.

Requirements

- Degree level education in a health or social work related field
- Experience in the field of HIV and AIDS
- Ability to encourage and enthuse our partners in this work
- Cross cultural experience would be an advantage

MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Based in Kathmandu

To work with our team producing printed and audio visual materials that are informative and inspiring and encourage prayer and financial support for UMN.

Requirements

- Marketing or communications related qualifications and experience
- Ability to make use of print and electronic media to enthuse and inform

ICT ADVISOR

Based in Kathmandu

To plan, coordinate, design and assist the ICT team with implementing appropriate ICT solutions that help UMN accomplish its strategies and plans.

Requirements

- Professional qualifications and broad ICT experience
- Up to date technical knowledge
- Planning and organisational abilities
- Ability to liaise effectively with both technical and non-technical personnel

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY ADVISOR

Based outside Kathmandu with travel to rural areas

To help UMN staff and partners ensure that vulnerable people have access to sufficient food through right to food programmes, efficient cultivation methods and income generation projects.

Requirements

- Degree in agriculture, food technology, nutrition or related discipline
- Willingness to live and work in a rural location
- Experience in developing countries would be an advantage

EXPATRIATE PROFILE

Jonathan and Nicola White

As our aeroplane landed at the airport on a cold January day, we knew this was for real.

We had been reading about Nepal, and had received lots of emails from UMN and now, finally, we had arrived. It was dark, so we could not see Nepal's famous mountains. That was ok, we thought; we'll see them in the morning. (In fact it was several months before the smog cleared and we saw the Himalayas, but it was worth the wait!) We were met by some friendly faces and the UMN vehicle, and headed off towards Patan, through the dark, our first load-shedding (power cut) experience.

A year ago Nepal seemed unfamiliar and strange, but now we feel at home here. We have experienced kindness from many people at UMN and have been made to feel very welcome.



After three months in UMN's Language and Orientation Programme, Nic started her work with the Finance Team alongside Michael Hawksworth before the end of his term in July. She then took on the role of Finance Director and is a member of UMN's Leadership Team. Jon has joined the Women and Children Team as a Children at Risk Advisor. We have learned many things from our patient colleagues and teachers, and look forward to continuing our work with UMN in this fascinating and beautiful country.

UMN's New Value Statements

We in UMN, being motivated by and dependent on God, believe these values to be foundational to our work. They influence our behaviour, our choice of partners, the way we work with our partners and the selection and development of staff.

Integrity:

- We are committed to be honest and truthful.
- We work responsibly and transparently without undue personal gain.
- We have integrity both corporately and personally whether others are looking or not.

Love and service:

- We follow God's desire that we seek to be humble, forgiving and compassionate as demonstrated in the life of Jesus.
- We seek to identify with people in their needs and aspirations.
- We do not consider any task too menial or belittling.

Equity and social justice:

- We value and respect each person as we are all created equal by God.
- We work alongside people enabling them to speak and act for themselves.
- We pro-actively address injustice and imbalance in society to bring impact at local, national and international levels.

Innovation and creativity:

- We seek new and improved ways to do our work.
- We desire to excel in our work respecting local knowledge, practices and culture.
- We seek to develop in ourselves and others the creative ability that God has given to each of us.

Special concern for poor and marginalised people:

- We seek to address root causes of poverty to change lives in practical ways.
- We give special priority to vulnerable and oppressed people.

Care for the environment:

- We are looking for ways to minimise our negative effect on the environment.
- We are working towards better resource management by reducing consumption, recycling and reusing materials.
- We seek to address the issues of climate change at local, national and international levels.



Forgiveness & Reconciliation--- New DVD available

How is this relevant for Nepal?
What role can the church play?

View this production on our website www.umn.org.np

To get your own high resolution copy of the DVD
(13 minutes running time),
please contact marketing@umn.org.np

[We would appreciate a contribution toward the postage.]

United Mission to Nepal Hospitals' Endowment Trust

Update



In 1995, there was a far-sighted realisation that as UMN's hospitals moved to a more independent status they would need extra funding, particularly for charity care. It was an accepted fact that as ex-patriate doctors were replaced by Nepali doctors, support from overseas would diminish. Where could new support come from?

The UMN Board agreed to set up an endowment fund for each hospital and gave an initial grant towards the capital fund. The interest raised from these funds was annually given to the hospitals to assist their own fund-raising for charitable care. These designated funds still exist.

In 2000, two former UMN Directors now living in the UK and with a heart for supporting the four UMN hospitals set up the UMN Hospitals' Endowment Trust (UMNHET) with the agreement of UMN. The main focus of the Trust was to support charity care in the hospitals. UMNHET was registered as a UK Charity and so gains tax-efficient benefits. For the first five years all funds were used to build up a workable capital.

In December 2004, the UMN Board authorised the merging of the existing hospital endowment fund with the UMNHET. UMN's Trustees now manage all these funds.

Since 2006 annual grants of the following amounts have been given to the four hospitals out of the interest earned.

In 2006 - £25,000

In 2007 – almost £ 29,000

In 2008 - £ 28,000

Fund raising continues and is absolutely vital, especially in the present global financial downturn.

Trustees: Bill and Margaret Gould, Cleve Chevassut, Jen and Roger Marston, John Butterworth, Michael Hawksworth, Gary Parkes, Prem Maharjan and Olak Jirel.

Treasurer:

Roger Marston "Goose Mead"*
3 Church Road
Ickford, Bucks
HP18 9HZ
UK

**Contact Marston for more information or to make donations to the trust.*

MOVING AHEAD IN FAITH

In the recent *Cluster Connection* I talked about how satisfying and rewarding I find the job of fund-raising for UMN.

I also stressed that we are a team. UMN can do nothing without God's enabling and provision, without our large and small donors, and those who support UMN with their prayers.

And

- We must not forget our UMN staff who support our partner organisations as they benefit the poor and marginalised communities that we serve.
- Now, more than ever, we all need to be working together.

Why?

- The credit crunch has caused some to reconsider their spending priorities.
- Until our major donors fully understand the effect on their incomes, they cannot commit to increase support or take on new programmes.

So, what to do?

- We are reviewing all internal and grassroots expenditures.
- We continue to look for new major donors.
- We will do all we can to avoid cutting back on our essential programmes, most of which are expanding as our partners grow in number and capability.

And this is how you can help...

- **Pray fervently that large funding shortfalls for 2009-10 are filled.**
- **Contribute financially, either via one-time or monthly gifts.**

We do not believe that God has run out of money. Please consider if He is calling you to play a part in this work.

Whether your gift is small or large, is a one-off gift or a regular monthly commitment, each gift is precious and will be used wisely.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Alan Penn
Funding Management Coordinator



TO GIVE

"For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have."

- 2 Corinthians 8:12



DONATE ONLINE

www.umn.org.np

Give via credit or debit card from anywhere in the world. *For U.K. donors, this site offers tax efficient giving.*

INTERNET BANKING & MONEY TRANSFERS

Set up a payment or monthly standing order to transfer funds.

UK & EUROPEAN CURRENCIES

Pay to: **United Mission to Nepal**

Sort Code: **60-91-99**

Account Number: 10078177 (Sterling account)
10615512 (Euro account)

US & NEPAL CURRENCIES

Transfer or wire to:

Standard Chartered Bank Nepal Ltd.

Kathmandu

Account Number:

Swift Code: SCBLNPKA

01-0488798-51 (US\$ account)

01-0488798-01 (Nepali Rs account)

** All undesignated gifts will be used as needed.*

MAIL DONATIONS

Post directly to Nepal

Make cheque to *United Mission to Nepal* in USD, Euros, or Sterling.

Mail To:
Finance Team (HV), UMN
P.O. Box 126
Kathmandu, Nepal

For tax-deductible donations in the U.S.

Make checks payable to
*"Hospitals Revitalization Program
UMCOR #982168"*
with a note that it is **FOR UMN.**

Mail To:
Cherian Thomas, MD
Executive Secretary, Health and Welfare
Global Ministries U.M.C.
475 Riverside Drive, Room 330
New York, NY 10115

OTHER OPTIONS

Contact fin@umn.org.np

- For advice on leaving a bequest to UMN
- For instructions for UK tax efficient giving by post
- To designate your gift for a certain cluster or area of work*



HIV | AIDS

lead, empower and deliver

“YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF.”

LUKE 10:27



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