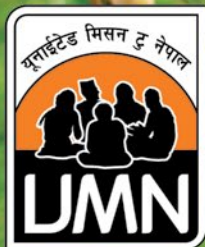


ISSUE 54 | MARCH 2017

# UMN News

## VALUES *in* ACTION



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



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Dear friends

Recently at UMN, we've been reflecting on theories of poverty from evangelical writers like Jayakumar Christian and Bryant Myers. These strongly emphasise the role of beliefs; at the root of poverty, they point out, we will always find a tangle of lies.

The poor are taught to believe lies about themselves: "I am weak and worthless. Other people will always control me. A better life is not for the likes of me." The same is true of powerful and prosperous people: "We are entitled to be dominant. It's better for everyone if we tell these poor folk how to live." Left unchecked, these beliefs become a "god-complex" (in Jayakumar Christian's powerful phrase), justifying the rich "playing God" in the lives of the poor.

Organisations like UMN must also stay aware of the danger of playing God – telling people what is best for them, rather than helping them discover it for themselves. We must never fall into the trap of seeing the people we serve as helpless, or ourselves as their saviours. We must make sure that we keep valuing people – the theme of this month's UMNews.

Much of UMN's work is aimed at helping people value themselves, escaping the lies that used to trap them in shame and powerlessness. A disabled advocate in Doti explained to me: "Before, if two disabled people saw each other on the street, they wouldn't talk to each other – they would both turn and hurry away. Now we have disabled people coming here from fifty villages to learn and discuss their rights."

In Sunsari, a Dalit woman declared: "We women used to be afraid of everyone. But since we began meeting in a self-reliant group, I am not at all afraid to speak out, in my home, with my neighbours – even with the police!" Or with teachers in the nearby school who had been treating the Dalit children as servants rather than students, but aren't any more, after the women's groups protested.

Please pray that our partners' work will continue to demonstrate the truth that every person in Nepal is equally valuable in God's sight.

*Joel*  
JOEL HAFVENSTEIN  
Executive Director

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# VALUES IN ACTION VALUING PEOPLE

It took me a while to put my thoughts into words with particular focus on "Valuing People" for this page of UMNews. I am grateful that this has allowed me to reflect and has also challenged me to think whether we have been doing what we have been saying (walk the talk) – doing justice to people considering their dignity, environment (Creation Care), Do No Harm, and whether people within or in contact with UMN feel valued.

It is a Biblical mandate to value people, for God created all people in His image with equal value and He loves us all the same. Our actions must be in line with this mandate. It is also very important for UMN to follow its mission and vision based on this Biblical mandate, which is foundational to our work. UMN continues to be a people-centred and a values-based organisation investing its resources and efforts for the people - especially women, children, Dalits (so called low-caste group) and people with disability - to unleash the potential they have for a better future. UMN also cares for its staff, for they are a valuable asset.

In this issue of UMNews you will read some stories of UMN's efforts to improve the lives of people who are most at risk of being pushed aside and exploited. I am sure, as I have been, you will be inspired, excited and challenged to see these examples of lives moving towards a Fullness of Life.

DHANA LAMA  
Programme Director





# Building on

**The literacy classes** are more than just literacy classes. For these women these evening classes are what they look forward to with great anticipation. They give them confidence and an identity and act as stepping stones and hope to a new life.

Currently there are 297 women engaged in the Continue Education programme implemented by the partnership between Isai Samaj Nawalparasi (ISN) and UMN. ISN run eight self-reliant groups in northern Nawalparasi.

Through these classes the women not only learn to read and write, but also to build a better life for themselves and their family, learn new skills, earn a living, improve the health of the family and lead a confident, fulfilled life.



## WEAVING HER WAY TO SUCCESS

**Yamuna Magar** (left), a mother of two, was married off at an early age and after that she says she only saw poverty and struggle. Her husband was the only bread winner of the family, and with no skills or education Yamuna couldn't do much to help the situation.

Her opportunity came when UMN's partner Isai Samaj Nawalparasi (ISN) provided literacy training for 16 women like herself in her village. She was eager to learn and looked forward to the classes that ran in the evenings, and was quickly able to learn to read and write. After three months of the functional literacy classes Yamuna was also finally able to join the cooperative group. She had previously been unable to join as the local cooperative did not take women who were illiterate and unable to sign their name. The group used to meet frequently and share common problems and issues of the community. ISN organised bag-weaving and soap-making training for the women in the group. At the workshop, she quickly learnt the skill and started to actually sell the beautiful bags she made.

Yamuna is not only able to read, write, weave and save a little amount every month but, is also able to visit other group members' houses and confidently motivate them.



**A year ago** UMN started the Community Empowerment Centres (CEC) in four of its clusters: Doti, Bajhang, Rukum and Dhading.

Women from the community come together to learn and share on topics which help them to regain their security, dignity and enhance their capacity.

Susan Parajuli, Livelihoods Programme Manager of UMN has been working closely with these CEC groups. He says: "It has been an exciting process, to be part of the setup of these centres and to see the overwhelming participation of their members. It is through their own sharing and discussions that they learn about some important issues. For example, women now understand the importance of a marriage certificate. This equips them to claim any legal compensatory provisions if their husband brings another wife."

Women at the centre learn to speak out, raise questions and voice their opinions. This is such an incredible transformation for these women who would otherwise just be expected to stay indoors and whose opinions and existence are sadly never counted.



# the world of a child

UMN's Child Centred Community Development (CCCD) Programme is in its sixth year, and we can call this a success story. This unique approach equips children in poor communities to implement long-term development plans. Boys and girls together with their families are given opportunities to lead in bringing change and in taking steps to ensure their own rights.

UMN Education Programme Manager Prem Shintan shares with us the four pillars of CCCDP:

**SURVIVAL RIGHTS:** Include the child's right to life and the needs that are most basic to existence, such as nutrition, adequate food, clean water, shelter, an adequate basic living standard, and primary health care or access to medical services.

**DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS:** Include the right to education, play, leisure, cultural activities, access to information, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Specific articles address the needs of child refugees, children with disabilities and children of minority or indigenous groups.

**PROTECTION RIGHTS:** Ensure children are safeguarded against all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including special care for refugee children, safeguard children in the criminal justice system, protection for children in times of war, in employment, protection and rehabilitation for children who have suffered exploitation or abuse of any kind.

**PARTICIPATION RIGHTS:** Children are entitled to the freedom to express opinions and to have a say in matters affecting their social, economic, religious, cultural and political life. Participation rights include the right to express opinions and be heard, the right to information and freedom of association.



**Anjali Chaudhary**, a thirteen-year-old grade eight student, has been an agent of change in both her community and her family. As the vice-president of a child club, she plays an active role in the community programmes and is a motivation to many other children. She is well aware of her rights and confidently shares what she has learnt with others in her village. Anjali's mother is proud of her as it was because of Anjali she was able to take part in the women's group which has led to the training programmes and workshops related to farming. Today, she is able to take her farming to a commercial level and is able to provide well for the family and Anjali's education.



# a life [trapped]

**The Badi community** belong to the lowest strata of Dalits. They are considered untouchable, or more over the “untouchables among the untouchables”.

They usually make their living by begging and performing as dancers and entertainers in social events and festivals. In fact, Badi girls are even known to support their family through prostitution.

A year ago, UMN started work with a landless Badi community living in Radijiula, a village of Aathbishkot VDC in Rukum. UMN, through its partner, has been trying to open doors of hope for these people trapped in a life of degradation and poverty.

A three-year agreement was made with the local landowners which provides facilities of leasehold farming for 18 Badi households. The beneficiaries were first given lessons on kitchen gardening and commercial farming. Six women have also received sewing/tailoring training and have been given a sewing machine each. The very first hurdle to get over is to instill in these people a sense of self-worth.



## TARA IS A STAR

**Tara Badi** didn't want to continue with her life as a beggar. With no earning and no skills or land, she was left trapped in hopelessness. UMN's partner Nepal Magar Society Service & Information Centre (N-PAF) in Rukum selected Tara and two of her neighbours to be a member of Pariwartansil Mahila CEC (Community Empowerment Centre - see page 4) in her village. This is where she got a life-changing opportunity to take part in a training programme on off-seasonal fresh vegetable farming. Along with technical support, she also received vegetable seedlings, a polyhouse and 72<sup>2</sup>m of land on lease. Just in one season she was able to produce a total of 60 kgs of cauliflowers. She was able to earn NPR 6,209 (USD 57) with her sales of 80 kgs of tomatoes and 36 kgs of cauliflowers. Tara (*meaning 'star' in Nepali*), as her name suggests, is clearly a star in her community. She feels happier and stronger with the unexpected change in her life.

Tara is just an example of a life transformed in this village. The people in her community who have been deprived of human dignity and social justice are now seen using sewing machines, involved in goat farming and other livelihood projects.



## WATER OF HOPE

**Chattiwankharka is known as a Dalit basti** – or low-caste community – in Salyang VDC of Dhading. Among the 38 Dalit families that live here, we want to share Sani's story with you. Sani Magarati is a single mother of four children and a member of a farmer's group established by UMN's partner Small Farmer Cooperative Federation (SFCF).

This economically poor and socially neglected community had problems with their water source. They had very little water to drink, and hardly any water to use in their land. The water source had dried up, especially after the earthquake in 2015.

UMN and SFCF restored their water spring source, rebuilt their canal, bought water tanks and managed the water distribution lines.

The water is again flowing in their village bringing with it a glimmer of hope. With the off-season vegetable production training that Sani has received, she is able to sell her vegetable produce in the local market through the collection centre established by UMN's partner in Salyang. Today, many small farmers like Sani have smiles on their faces and can dare to dream a future for their children.



# EQUAL

life CHANCES



**The sad reality** in Nepal for children with disabilities is that they are valued less and are confronted with stigma and discrimination wherever they go, starting from their home. This negative cultural view towards disability leads these children to social isolation and low self-worth. In communities with very low education rates, little or no access to medical care, and in conditions of severe poverty, peoples understanding of disability is minimal.

But in the midst of this gloomy situation we are excited to share the story of Mina and Saguna, of how there can be hope against all odds.

Mina (10) and Saguna (13) are sisters and sadly both are deaf. These girls faced a double or probably a triple disadvantage along with their disability – they were constrained by poverty and were born into a Dalit (so called low-caste) family. The silent world of these little girls became dark as well when their father died and their mother married another man a few months later. They were left alone with their grandfather, who struggled to feed and take care of them.

Five years ago, they were brought to Mahakali Higher Secondary School in Mugu where UMN and its partner Disabled Rehabilitation & Rural Development Organisation (DARRDO) in coordination with the District Education Office run a special education resource class and a hostel for the deaf. The resource teacher of the school, Hansa Devi says: “Their house is a day’s walk away from the district centre. If these girls had not come here they would have a very rough life in their village. I am happy to see them here learning and playing with the other kids.”

Saguna says: “Our lives have changed. We have a school to go to, a clean place to live in and warm clothes to wear. What else do we need?”

There are many children like Mina and Saguna in the remote hills of Nepal who need our help, love and security.



Currently UMN is working closely with eight schools across three districts that run classes and provide accomodation for children with disability. We call them resource schools.

BAJHANG	3 schools	Blind, deaf, intellectually disabled
MUGU	2 schools	Blind, deaf
RUKUM	6 schools	Blind, deaf



**Another school for blind students** started recently in Rukum in December 2016. Ten teachers, six students and one UMN intern have just completed a short training session to read Braille. Damodar Pandit, UMN’s Rehabilitation Coordinator (*see page 13*), who was at the training says: “This project has started off very well. I have challenged the principal of the school to find many more blind children who are not going to school and need a place to stay. Children with disability have the same education rights as other children. Once they have education they will be confident and competent children who will one day be able to give back to society.”





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## FOR BETTER HEALTH AND OPPORTUNITIES

**Nestled on a hilltop** in Nilkantha, Dhading, Swabalambi Basic School for The Deaf is a residential school for students who are hearing impaired. The school had its first ever training on making the Improved Washable Sanitary Pad (IWP) in the second week of December 2016.

UMN, under its DDRP Protection Project in coordination with the Dhading Deaf Association and District Women and Children Office, organised the three days' training on the importance of IWP. The interactive training also focused on teaching about nutrition, menstrual hygiene and reproductive health.

Founder and Principal of the school Ram Prasad Adhikari believes that IWP training can open a plethora of opportunities for deaf girls. "Deaf people are capable of doing much more but they face challenges in their everyday life. IWP training is important as it not only improves their health



but also helps them stand on their own feet as they can also make and sell IWPs in the near future," he explains.

One of the trainees, Mira Lamsal, aged 28 has plans to share what she learned among her peers. "We don't have enough money to buy market sanitary pads. IWP is very useful as it can be reused. It was a helpful training session, especially as it was conducted in sign language and also we got to learn some important health issues.

## THE GANG SHOW

**A big thank-you** and thumbs up to our friends at Otley Methodist Church. During December, the scouts and guides held a "Gang Show" and performed twice at the church to raise funds to support the facilities for birthing centres in remote villages of Nepal. The money they have raised from the performance and their

Christmas offering will be used in supporting the construction of a placenta pit at a birthing centre and in buying necessary equipment for the centre, and wherever the need is to ensure safe deliveries and lower the risk of mother and newborn deaths. Thank you and God bless!

## YOUTH IN HEALTHY ACTION

**A bunch of young** peer educators in Sunwal, Nawalparasi participated in three days of training in January, facilitated by UMN's Health Team Leader Tara Nath Acharya and Health Manager Rakshya Niroula. They were trained on Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH) issues including HIV and AIDS, family planning, sexual health, sexual and reproductive health rights and gender. They are now expected to facilitate group discussion sessions in schools among adolescents using interactive methods. They will also encourage them to use ASRH services from local health facilities.



## TOGETHER FOR A CAUSE



**Young people** from varied backgrounds united at a common platform for a noble cause. Local Capacity for Peace (LCP) South Asian Network Youth Convention began in the third week of January to express solidarity, co-existence and peace among South Asian youths. Participants from Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India represented nine organisations that belong to this network in the three-day event.

UMN's Peace Building Team Leader, Balkumari Gurung, shared: "I am very happy because we are co-hosting this event for the first time. In the next stage of LCP we will be working on youth empowerment, leadership and capacity building. Every participant is working in the area of peace in their respective countries and they will share and learn from each other's experiences. At the end of the programme, they will make a South Asian Youth resolution."

Suresh Satapathy, LCP Secretariat, explained that the nine organisations strive to bring Do No Harm principles and conflict sensitivity to their development programmes and organisation system.



**Working in the field of disability** - prevention, awareness raising, treatment and rehabilitation, I have spent 14 years in UMN with a clear vision and courage. I started my work in 2003 with Mary Martin, a Canadian Physiotherapist in the Health Team.

With Mary's help, I had to gradually lead the Disability Rehabilitation work by myself. In the initial phase I started to handle referral case management in Kathmandu referred by hospitals in Tansen and Okhaldhunga. I also visited the field areas and designed various activities by partnering with disabled people organisations and by being involved with the families. This way I was able to create a special bond which them which I really value and cherish.

Some of the activities that I focused on were raising awareness, running programmes of identifying and empowering people with disabilities. I faced opportunities as well as challenges; I was able to move ahead through

the network of friends, my colleagues at UMN and the cooperation and trust I received from the community people.

I am fully gratified to see the work achieved so far, but the need of lowering barriers for these excluded groups is greater. Disability Rehabilitation work in UMN has now grown as a Community Based Rehabilitation Project that has focused more on holistic development of people with disabilities through their empowerment and increasing access to their basic developmental needs such as health, education and livelihoods.

Being a physiotherapist by profession, I find immense joy and contentment in the work that I do. I am following my true passion to serve children with disability and I know a very small intervention from our side can make a huge difference in the lives of these precious children.

**DAMODAR PANDIT**  
Rehabilitation Coordinator





## PRAY

**Pray for courage and wisdom** for UMN staff and partners as they work in challenging situations in remote areas and bad roads. Political and regional conflicts have been affecting UMN's work in contested districts. Pray for our teams' and partners' safety, and for a peaceful resolution.

Please pray for UMN hospitals in Tansen and Okhaldhunga, that these institutions may continue to provide high quality and holistic health care to those coming for treatment, particularly for those who cannot afford it elsewhere. Pray specially for Okhaldhunga Community Hospital as they prepare for their 55th anniversary celebration on 14 March 2017.

Don't forget the Nepal earthquake in 2015. Pray for UMN's ongoing post-earthquake rehabilitation work in Dhading. Get more updates on the progress made so far in [www.umn.org.np](http://www.umn.org.np)

Give thanks for the flourishing Christian media in Nepal. This gives many people the opportunity to get exposed to Christianity in Nepal, understand the work of the church and get engaged in a healthy network across Nepal.



## JOIN US

**UMN's cross-cultural teams** provide opportunities for suitably skilled expatriates to work with Nepali colleagues, sharing technical skills and demonstrating God's loving concern for all people, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable.

Expatriate team members do not receive a salary or remuneration from UMN directly, but are self-supported volunteers, or supported by a sending mission or church in their home country. If you are interested in any of these (three listed below) positions, or if you would like to ask about other opportunities for service in UMN, please contact Valerie Lockwood at [expat.recruitment@umn.org.np](mailto:expat.recruitment@umn.org.np) to learn more. Send your CV or resumé with your email.

### PRIORITY NEEDS

**GENERAL SURGEONS AND ENT SURGEONS** – for United Mission Hospital Tansen, to deal with both elective and emergency surgery and to teach and mentor junior Nepali doctors. Flexibility, the ability to work in a resource-limited setting and an interest in teaching are required. For visa purposes, applicants must currently be registered with the national regulating body in their own country. Long-term applicants preferred.

**INTEGRAL MISSION ADVISOR** – reporting to the IM Team Leader. Advisor will promote, encourage and facilitate Integral Mission, aiming to build the capacity of UMN partners, staff members and relevant church communities. Significant experience in a leadership position with a relevant organisation and of working with local churches in development required. Spiritually mature candidate with education in social development/theology fields.

**LEARNING POLICY AND STRATEGY ADVISOR** – required to strengthen UMN's small but expanding LPS team. In the upcoming strategic plan (2015-20), UMN will put a significant emphasis on learning throughout the organisation and, along with a passion for learning, we need skills in one or more of: research, technical writing, monitoring, evaluation, learning systems, knowledge management and programme design.



*\*Baby not included...*

## BABY BOX INITIATIVE for safer motherhood

Over the past 25 years, Nepal has made steady progress in improving maternal and child health outcomes. Since 1990, the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has declined from 97/1,000 (9.7%) to 29/1,000 (2.9%), and the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has declined from 901/100,000 (0.9%) to 258/100,000 (0.26%) in 2015. However, improvements have not been equitable throughout the country. There are significant differences in access and utilisation of health care across geographical regions and ethnic groups. In Nepal, the mid and far-western regions fall way behind on most health indicators of mortality, morbidity and access to basic health care services.

Poor care-seeking behaviors among women lead them to not having their antenatal check-ups and delivering at home, which often leads to complications and even the death of mother and/or baby. In Baglekh VDC, Doti (one of the targets for this project), the fourth ANC visit is only attended by 21% of mothers, and institutional delivery by only 36%. There is much need to motivate pregnant women to complete their antenatal visits as well as deliver in a health facility.

The Baby Box will include various essential items for newborns and mothers and will be provided free if the mother-to-be completes at least four antenatal check-ups and delivers in a health facility. The box will include baby clothes, cloth diapers, a set of clothes for the mother, personal care items for the newborn and postpartum mother, a toy, a mattress and mosquito net, among other things. The box itself is made of strong cardboard and can also be used as a crib for the baby which will help if the baby needs to be put down and there is a danger of rolling into an open fire.

For more information and ideas on how you can fund-raise for this project, please visit [www.umn.org.np/babybox](http://www.umn.org.np/babybox)



### HOW TO GIVE...

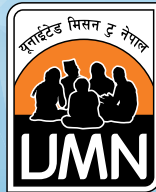
- ➔ Make out a cheque or money order payable to United Mission to Nepal. Post it to: UMN, PO Box 126, Thapathali, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- ➔ Use your credit or debit card and give via PayPal.
  - ① Go to [www.umn.org.np/page/give-paypal](http://www.umn.org.np/page/give-paypal) and follow the instructions and you will be redirected to the PayPal page.
  - ② Use your PayPal information to donate from your PayPal account.
- OR
- ➔ Don't have a PayPal account? No problem, follow the instructions above and click on [Don't have a PayPal account?](#) to make a payment using your Debit/Credit card without having to open an account.

One box costs roughly\*  
NRP 5,000  
GB £35  
US \$45

\*Actual cost of box is not known at this time, but the true value is likely to be more than double the cost



“JUST AS I HAVE LOVED YOU,  
YOU SHOULD LOVE  
EACH OTHER” John 13:34



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

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