

LMN NEWS

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VALUES



Fullness of life for all in a transformed Nepali society

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Dear friends

The Christmas story takes place against a backdrop of injustice—of power used to oppress and exclude rather than to bless. A Roman emperor callously displaces people for the sake of imperial power; a pair of homeless strangers is denied shelter up to the very point of childbirth; a jealous king massacres children to protect his crown.

The kinds of injustice that Jesus encountered throughout his life had been described over seven centuries earlier by the prophet Amos, in a passage that resonates no less strongly today:

“There are those who turn justice into bitterness, and cast righteousness to the ground... There are those who hate the one who upholds justice, and detest the one who tells the truth... There are those who oppress the innocent and take bribes and deprive the poor of justice in the courts. Therefore the prudent keep quiet in such times, for the times are evil.” (Amos 5:7, 10, 12-13)

The prudent keep quiet—but Jesus did not, and nor should those who follow God in Christ. One of UMN's key values is pursuing justice, both by speaking out and by helping those affected by injustice to speak out for themselves.

In our Sangsangai work, we seek to inspire local churches to address poverty issues with their own resources—and this includes naming and addressing injustices. It can be easier to address issues of economic wellbeing than justice, especially as a minority group; it would be easy for the Nepali church to “keep quiet in such times”. But Amos's challenge to care about injustice as much as God cares about it should still provoke us to action today.

Our prayer remains the one the prophet gave us almost 2,800 years ago: “Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (Amos 5:24)

JOEL HAFVENSTEIN
Executive Director

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Women start off early in life receiving unequal treatment and believing they are worthless. They are the ones who slog in the house and give birth and are ashamed if they bear a girl. However, here we have Kamala (page 6), a strong



During challenging times in our work in the communities, we remind ourselves that Jesus was also often taunted for introducing social justice. While on this earth, Jesus made His mission statement – dignity, respect and justice for every human being. It was not easy then, and it will not be easy now. When has it been easy to stand up against the unchallenged monopoly of the powerful against the powerless? That is why we keep doing it.

VIJETA SHRESTHA
Communications Manager





The *children* of Khadi

Many have heard of Malala's education campaign or watched the TEDtalk by Memory Banda on her work to combat child marriage.

Behind these headlines are countless other children learning to speak out in their own communities.

UMN with its local partner Christian Society Development Campaign (CSDC) is supporting children to be advocates for change. UMN works to raise awareness that children have the right to express their opinions and to have those opinions heard and acted upon when appropriate.

In September, I traveled to the village of Khadi, a six-hour walk from the end of the motorable road in Rukum district, to celebrate International Children's Day. Slogans like "come to school with clean hair" highlighted the child-led parade through the ripening corn fields around the village. Games and competitions were a welcome break on this sunny day at the end of the monsoon.

As parents and teachers gathered around, students in Grades 9 and 10 presented essays on child marriage and poems on self-identity. Ranjana Boraha, a 16-year-old whose mother had died, won the poetry competition with a moving piece about her struggles to continue her education when her father neglected his parental responsibilities.

Legal protections for children are being developed in Nepal to address early marriage and to encourage children's participation in local government, but it takes articulate youth like Ranjana in every community to step into leadership roles. Through child-led initiatives on sanitation and peer-to-peer education on normally taboo topics like sexual-reproductive health and rights, students are finding their voices to advocate for justice and equity.

Recently, Ranjana and other child-club members at Sisne Himal Secondary School in Khadi village were successful in obtaining local-government funding to build a new school water tap. Such successes also have an observable effect on the youth's self-esteem.

In Nepal, children's opinions are not frequently sought out in the family, the school or in the political arena, which makes the accomplishment of the children in Khadi doubly impressive. The Khadi children's effective citizen engagement is an example of problem-solving skills that will continue to help them participate in family decision-making and make productive choices about their own education, health and job opportunities.

You may never hear Ranjana Boraha talk on TV, but she has claimed a place as a community leader in Khadi. Being part of the development of young leaders like Ranjana reflects UMN's commitment to the value of Equity and Social Justice for children.

KATHERINE PARKER
Health Advisor



बालबालिकाको शिक्षा
पाउनु मौलिक
अधिकार हो ॥

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Living the value

equity
and
social
justice



It was around this time last year I visited Sunsari to meet some People Living with HIV (PLHIV) who are part of UMN's care and support programme. This was when I got an opportunity to closely observe the results of the services that we have been providing. It gave me joy to be able to see the UMN value 'Equity and Social Justice' reflected in what I observed.

Seventy-five PLHIV from various social and economic backgrounds are benefitting from this programme in Sunsari. Some of them are more affected than the others as they are female, widows or have children with HIV. They are all associated in a self-help group and I had the opportunity to attend one of their monthly meetings. It was nice to see their unity and how they discussed their issues in the meeting. In these meetings, which were facilitated by the staff of UMN's partner organisation NJSS, they themselves took the lead in taking decisions about which member receives the vocational training, livelihood or seed money support provided by the organisation. All of them, however, receive the basic home-based care, hospital and follow-up services based on their economic, health and social status. NJSS has also categorised the care recipients into three groups based on their financial condition.

I was also glad that I had the opportunity to visit the homes of a few of the beneficiaries; it was gratifying to witness the most in need receiving our care and support. I particularly remember Kamala who is a widow and has two sons, and one of them is infected with HIV. She shared with me the story of how she dealt with depression after her husband's death and how she gathered strength later to stand strong and overcome the difficulties with the help of NJSS. With two healthy children and a small house built with the help of NJSS, and goats and chickens keeping her busy, she had a smile on her face throughout our visit that one wouldn't forget.

This visit made me realise that UMN's value of Equity and Social Justice along with other values is truly reflected in the service we provide to the poorest people living in poverty.

KANCHAN SHRESTHA

Programme Manager – HIV and AIDS



A WOMAN'S *walk*



When curious people ask me where my concern for gender justice came from, certain scenes always come to my mind. These encounters raised in me a deep sense of empathy and duty with those who are afflicted.

Recently I had one of these encounters.

To explore what and how the gender system affects locals during gender equality awareness-raising workshops, I usually include one learning exercise of “walking”. One woman and one man participant will demonstrate what they know about how a woman and man walk respectively. After observing, all the participants will model their walking. We will then compare these two types of walking and the meaning that is being communicated. Usually this is what is being portrayed: a man walks with head up and his eyes looking around ready to take in everything. His back is straight and his chest is up and his shoulders and arms swaying. It is as if he is free to command the world. In contrast, a woman walks with her head low and eyes down. Her shoulders and back are positioned in such a way as if to hide her chest. Her walk occupies as little space as possible and to cause as little attention as possible. Participants usually also share about the mockery and disapproval if a woman should walk like a man or a man like a woman. Thus the dominant gender views, expectations, norms, rewards and punishments, the gender relationship between women and men and the unequal consequences of wellbeing are revealed.

I was rather surprised not long ago when I saw a different kind of walking demonstrated. The woman participant walked with a heavy load on her back. I was surprised as I had been expecting the usual. I was stunned because her walk was so real. Scenes of women and girls carrying loads on their back that I have seen so many times kept coming back. This is the everyday walking of many Nepali women and girls. They must lower their head and bend their back in a fixed position in order to carry the heaviest load. The heaviness of the load is more than physical. It carries the life stories of dreams denied. It is the burden of being impure and a threat to polluting others, especially to boys and men who are her gods whenever she has her menstruation. It is about the sinfulness of being a woman that each year she needs to cleanse her sin 365 times during the Women Festival. It is about being the one to be subjugated, sacrificed and who has little voice. At that moment during the workshop, I felt the bending of these girls and women.

As I looked back, there have been certain scenes during my life that touched me profoundly. This is one of them.

HAZEL WONG

UMN Gender Advisor

Initiatives on disABILITY issues



People living with disabilities in ward number 1 Ghanteswar, of Joroyal Rural Municipality, have something to be proud of. To ensure the rights and wellbeing of people living with disability in Ghanteswar, the Disabled Service Organisation (DSO), a local UMN partner in Doti have implemented the Community Based Rehabilitation project since the beginning of this year and this has led to encouraging results.

Disability is looked down upon in this area. There was no other organisation or group supporting the disability work and the people with disability did not know anything at all about their rights. Political parties and other officials had used the government budget allocated for the disability work in other sectors. From our recent baseline survey we found 91 people with disability which represents 3.33% out of the whole population of the VDC.

With the support from UMN's partner DSO, the people living with disability gradually started becoming aware of issues related with disability and eventually formed a ward-level disability committee and named it the Disabled Rights Promotion Committee (DRPC). The regular meetings of DRPC were helpful in discussing important issues and getting educated about their rights. They also participated in workshops and trainings which helped in preparing action plans. They formed three more community level

groups. Those who were not able to join the DRPC were in the community-level groups. There were helpful interactions between the groups which resulted in strong unity.

After successful advocacy the Joroyal Rural Municipality ward number one allocated NPR 70,000 (USD 680) for disability work which includes budget awareness programmes and for livelihoods support to people living with disability. The Rural Municipality ward office also invited a representative from DRPC to participate in the planning process of the government. The committee and the groups are encouraged and feel valued with this achievement.

SHARING LIVES AND LAND



UMN's successful Joint Land Ownership Certificate campaign supports and contributes to the government's goal to promote women's rights by ensuring rights on land ownership. Women's engagement in the agriculture sector stands at a staggering 72.8 % in Nepal with ownership of land at only 19.70%. Eighteen couples in Bajhang and Rukum have received Joint Land Ownership certificates.

For the first time in the history of Rukum, a couple has received a joint land ownership. Bimala Kami and her husband Lalbir Kami have been officially handed a certificate of joint ownership of 800 m² of land which was previously only in Lalbir's name.

Bimala is a member of a Community Empowerment Centre (CEC) which identified gender-based discrimination and violence as a major issue in their community. Lack of women's access to and control over resources has been identified as the main cause for this. The situation is even worse in Rukum where only 5.8 % of women own land.

CEC made action plans to get joint land ownership certificates for all the CEC members to disseminate the message of equality among men and women. The wives spoke with their spouses and other family members to make them understand and approve this step. As a result, Bimala was able to transfer the land property under her ownership as well.

Since the case was the first of its kind, the road was not easy, especially at the land office. Despite some complications, the certificate was finally issued.

With joy Bimala shares: "This is our first step towards community transformation. I am not only happy and confident but also excited to encourage other couples to do the same."

This has opened doors for greater empowerment, opportunities and the much needed security for women.



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8.4k



youtube.com/umnnepal

ELECTIONS

As Nepal held parliamentary and provincial elections in the months of November and December, the citizens are once again hopeful of choosing competent political leaders for the next five years. Nepalese had voted earlier this year in the first two phases of local-level elections. The recent elections will mark the creation of new Provinces and reinforcing democracy.



PET CARTS

A new Disability Rights Act was passed in August 2017 ensuring access for persons with disabilities to basic services and human rights. A basic provision for equal access to public infrastructure is included. UMN also contributed with the distribution of personal-energy transportation (PET) carts to persons with mobility disabilities. These rugged, three-wheeled carts are designed to enable mobility in community environments without fully developed infrastructure.

In Sunsari, 20 carts were distributed on the 18th of December; 25 carts were distributed in Kapilvastu and Doti will be planning this in 2018. With an aim of ensuring that the carts are used correctly, a training on basic cart orientation and cart assembling was provided to those partners that run the disability projects, including UMN officers and mechanics from the districts.

In 2019, partners will also provide monitoring support to the cart users by visiting their families and houses in their communities.



FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH



The health team members from UMN Thapathali, and the cluster offices participated in a six-day long Training of Trainers on "Barefoot Counseling", in Kathmandu.

The objective of the training was to cover the psycho-social aspects of common mental illness. The course was designed for mental health programme managers by SANGATH, Goha, India which is a renowned mental health and research institute working in the mental health sector in India and worldwide, and also associated with international universities, particularly in mental health research.

Dr Abhijit Nadkarni, Co-Director for Mental Health Research and Psychologist, and Ms Urbita Bharati from SANGATH facilitated the training. This course will be very beneficial to UMN's Health Team to manage their mental health project and to develop new approaches and understanding in the subject.



CALENDAR 2018

The UMN Calendar features 12 lovely photos of UMN's work.

This year we have a special offer: Buy **TWO** calendars, get a third **FREE!** Now you can give a friend the gift of a UMN Calendar!



*Postage extra



I grew up as a third culture kid – first in the Philippines, then Nepal, and then my passport country of Norway. This has shaped much of how I look at the world – that there is usually more than one way to do things, and different ways to understand what is happening. Different places have different beauties. But I have also seen the inequality. I have seen people who don't have a safe place to rest and kids who have no one to look after or care for them, while others have so much stuff there is not enough room for all of it. Social justice then – or the lack of it – became what would almost demand me to contribute my part to make the world a more just and friendly place to live in. The opportunity to join UMN has been a privilege for me, and my time here has definitely been one of my biggest learning chapters. Nepal has undergone great change

since I was a child, as have I. Still, it is a place I feel at home in and a country I care deeply about. The project I am involved in is focused on combating traditional practices that are harmful to women and girls. Hefty social justice and injustice issues. The big question is how to challenge systemic injustice and how to catalyse a process that can change the status quo. The surprising thing is how quickly change can come when the communities are ready for it. It is time. You can almost see it in people's faces. There is determination and hope in them. How incredible to get to walk alongside these women and men. I pray our joint effort will be a part of bringing fullness of life to the communities in Bajhang.

LIV WENDEL

Peacebuilding Advisor –
Harmful Traditional Practices



PRAY

The new constitution has made changes in the map of Nepal. The districts have been grouped under seven provinces and the old Village Development Committee has been replaced by Municipalities and Rural Municipalities.

Pray for a good relationship between UMN and the local bodies in the new structure. UMN clusters will now have to establish relationships with new government offices and their cooperation is vital in taking our projects to our target areas.

The growing mobility of migrant workers across the open border to India has resulted in a high HIV prevalence among male labour migrants and their spouses. Please pray for the home-based care programme that UMN runs (*see page 7*) that it would not only provide the AIDS-care, good health and nutrition support, but also help the people living with discrimination experience love and acceptance.

The Board of UMN in their last meeting in November decided that the United Mission Hospital Tansen and Okhaldhunga Community Hospital will remain with UMN. For the last 15 years or so, the UMN Leadership Team has been trying unsuccessfully to hand over Tansen and Okhaldhunga Hospitals to a Nepali institution. The hospitals will now officially remain under UMN governance. Please pray for these hospitals as they provide excellent health care services and also subsidised treatment for patients who cannot afford to pay. Pray for our pastoral care staff as they deal with distressed patients with traumatic backgrounds.



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 to learn more. Send your CV or resumé with your email.

PRIORITY NEEDS

EXPATRIATE SUPPORT ADVISOR – to be responsible for supporting all expatriates in their roles, to liaise with Sending Agencies, to oversee expatriate recruitment, to advise on HR matters for all UMN expatriates, and to co-ordinate the Language and Orientation Programme. Background may be HR, Intercultural Studies, Member Care, Language teaching, or other related fields. Prior cross-cultural experience is required; in Nepal preferred.

PATHOLOGIST – for United Mission Hospital Tansen. A lab is being set up for histopathology services. At present the hospital does 10-15 biopsies in a week and it may go up once the services are established. The pathologist would train the local personnel as well as working as a pathologist. Needed as soon as possible.

COMMUNITY MEDICAL OFFICER/GENERAL PRACTITIONER – for Okhaldunga Community Hospital (OCH). Medical Doctor with experience in public health to work with the hospital and community health section in regards to the vision and strategy of OCH as a whole, taking responsibility for overall development and continuation of the referral system, TB DOTS programme, HIV and AIDS programmes, health education programme, nutrition rehabilitation center and maternal and child health clinic.

UMN Christmas APPEAL 2017 Happy Learners



There is an old saying, "It takes a village to bring up a child."

YOU can partner with UMN to be a part of the community committed to raising healthy and engaged children in Nepal.

This is what a village school in North Nawalparasi of Nepal looks like: bare walls, dusty floors, rows of benches and tables, chalk-talk and zero motivation. We want to change this to bright, comfortable, safe, inclusive and child-friendly classrooms where every child feels loved and respected – a place that they will look forward to going to every morning.

As we train teachers to use child-friendly methods, will you help us equip their classrooms with the supplies to succeed?

A CHILD-FRIENDLY CLASSROOM WILL NEED:

- ➔ Paint
- ➔ Carpets
- ➔ Cushions
- ➔ Low Round Tables
- ➔ Book Shelves
- ➔ Story Books
- ➔ Educative Toys and Materials
- ➔ Water Filter

TO OUTFIT ONE CLASSROOM
WILL COST ROUGHLY

GB £ 225

USD \$ 300



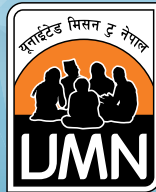
HAPPY CLASSROOMS = HAPPY CHILDREN!



HOW TO GIVE A ONE-OFF DONATION

- ➔ Make out a cheque or money order payable to United Mission to Nepal. Make a note indicating how you would like your donation to be used (i.e. Happy Learners Appeal). Post it! (to: UMN, PO Box 126, Thapathali, Kathmandu, Nepal)
- ➔ Use your credit or debit card and give via PayPal.
 - ➔ Go to www.umn.org.np/page/give-paypal and follow the instructions and you will be redirected to the PayPal page.
 - ➔ Use your PayPal information to donate from your PayPal account.
- OR
- ➔ Don't have a PayPal account? Follow the instructions above and click on [Don't have a PayPal account?](#) to make a payment using your debit/credit card.

FOR THE **LORD** IS A **GOD**
OF **JUSTICE.**
BLESSED ARE ALL
WHO
WAIT **HIM!** Isaiah 30:18



Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

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