

LMN News

ISSUE 61 | DECEMBER 2018

sharing
together



Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

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Dear friends

The journey out of poverty involves costs and risks that cannot be borne alone but must be shared. People cannot move toward fullness of life without help from families, neighbours, government, faith networks, and other local institutions like UMN's partner NGOs.

As UMN encourages people on this journey, however, we must avoid creating an unhealthy dependency on just one or two other institutions. That would be the wrong kind of "**sharing together**". We especially don't want people to expect that NGOs will solve their problems for them.

I was encouraged recently by a visit from Karani Community Development Centre (KCDC), one of our partner NGOs in Mugu. For the last few years they've been pioneering a "Mugu Community Transformation Project", which brings villagers together to discuss their most pressing challenges and find solutions. The UMN/KCDC contribution to any solution is very small, and we don't follow the typical NGO approach of giving people money or snacks for coming to meetings. Instead, over time KCDC helps a village discover and organise its own shared solution, using local resources.

KCDC came to Kathmandu to urge UMN to stick with this approach. They didn't want more typical NGO projects with bigger budgets for "service delivery", or to compensate people for attending meetings. Despite working in a remote and impoverished region with a history of NGO dependency, KCDC and the villagers of Mugu had come to value the Community Transformation approach. They found that it really created lasting changes which people owned for themselves.

This issue of *UMNews* describes emerging changes in Mugu and elsewhere, strategies against poverty that are "shared together" with partners and the community. I hope you're encouraged by these stories—and that you have a blessed Christmas, as we celebrate God coming to share in our burdens and our journey.


JOEL HAFVENSTEIN
Executive Director

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Design: Phil Rawlings and Ramesh Man Maharjan

Cover Photo: Ramesh Man Maharjan

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sharing together

The Nepali people come from a culture of sharing, which comes naturally to us. This is not only a helpful teaching tool in the community, but also strongly binds the community through shared stories, beliefs and lessons learnt. For people who are less literate, a lot of learning is done through sharing and listening. I am amazed at the fact that Nepalese share their food, life stories and instantly become friends with a stranger, travelling together. However, because of modernisation, individualism and the nation recovering from the ten years of conflict, this culture is slowly dying.

Serving in UMN for over 25 years, I have had the opportunity to share in many forums – in the community with groups, youth or women's fellowships, South Asian platforms, or wider international settings and my own team. As a woman leader from a minority faith, ethnicity and as a peace practitioner, I feel I have a huge obligation to share my experiences. Through the sharing,

learning and growing-together space provided, I have seen my colleagues grow in their capacity, take on greater responsibilities and reach greater heights. I feel blessed to hear people express how I have influenced them in their lives and work.

From the many sharing tools and techniques we've used, one of the methods that I like is the circle process we have introduced in the communities, especially with structured groups for healing and reconciliation. The circle process provides a safe space to come together and share each other's life stories. It opens and closes with some form of ceremony and participants engage in an intentional conversation and share how they would like to be together. Everyone is equal in this circle – it strengthens relationships, boosts their confidence and helps to tackle important and difficult challenges together. This process has helped to heal the people affected by conflict, discriminatory social practices and helped people cope with post-disaster crisis. God calls us to share with those in need and live a generous life. Sharing not only blesses those who we give to, but us as well.

Sharing knowledge is a gift that empowers others. Mother Teresa put it beautifully: "There is tremendous strength that is growing in the world through sharing together, praying together, suffering together and working together."

BAL KUMARI GURUNG
Peacebuilding Team Leader



WATER

for
ALL



After the earthquakes in 2015, many water sources were damaged and dried up in Dhading District and other parts of Nepal. Together with the local government, UMN constructed seven water schemes, which have provided safe drinking water for 238 households.

The locals of Pida in Dhading also faced scarcity of water as the water source nearby dried out after the earthquakes. They had to travel far to fetch water, with the nearest source being 9 to 10 kilometres away. This increased the work load, especially for women. But things changed for better when the community joined hands.

UMN provided support by giving the people materials to construct a water reservoir tank. The community took charge of the pipeline excavation work, which connected the water source to the nearby areas. The locals also contributed by leaving aside certain private land for the reservoir tank construction. As a result, a 16m³ reservoir tank and 31 tap stands were constructed. Now 31 households receive safe drinking water. Today, the community has easy access to water and the workload of women has been reduced.



BY THE COMMUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY

One of the grave issues that Daura community in Mugu faced was problems from damaged canals. Out of 50 households, 32 raised the issue as they were facing irrigation problems. This left them with no option but to depend on the rainwater for farming. During sharing and reflection, this common problem was addressed and an action plan was formed.

UMN's partner, Karani Community Development Centre (KCDC), contributed NPR 200,000 (USD 1,722) which paid for cement and transport. The community also got involved, by offering labour work worth 1,200,000 (USD 10,332) and providing funds for stone, sand and equipment. Under the community's ownership, effort and commitment, the canal was repaired last year, bringing new hope to the locals. Now they can produce crops twice a year. The decisions made at the community level by the community for the community have been incredible. It's produced a result that is sustainable and it has given people a sense of ownership.





Meet

HANSA DEVI

You can find Hansa Devi spending her day with a bunch of bright students at the deaf school in Mugu District – teaching and sharing love. She is a determined lady who has amazing life stories to share. She has shown great courage in taking the challenges life has thrown at her and in witnessing God's faithfulness.

Hansa Devi BK is from Luma village in Mugu. She belonged to an extremely poor Dalit (so-called lower caste) family. When she was four, she developed a wound on her right foot. The severe infection spread fast, which resulted in having to amputate her right leg when she was 12 years old. "I thought my life was over when this decision was made by the doctors," Hansa says. She remembers the nightmare of having to lose a limb, which she had to emotionally fight and overcome.

Hansa has seen her father struggle to take care of the family and pay for her school expenses. Even during the time when it wasn't seen as important to send girls to school, Hansa's father was ready to do all he could to make sure she completed her education. When she enrolled in Mahakali Higher Secondary School (MHSS) in Grade 9, her father approached the UMN office to see if she could get a scholarship. Immediately they asked that she fill out a form. She was selected for the Dalit Girls Scholarship Programme and became the first Dalit and a person with a disability from Mugu to finish Grade 10, then called the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exams in 2006. When she finished her higher secondary level education, UMN staff encouraged her to learn to teach special education class at MHSS. This is when she found a purpose in life – giving hope to the deaf children of Mugu who are not considered important. To help children who have abilities that are underestimated and who are often mistreated. Hansa also moved on to do her bachelor's degree in Education.

"I have received so much love, support and encouragement from UMN during my treatment. Kirsti Kirjavainen, the late Mary Martin and Damodar Pandit from UMN have been like angels in my life," says Hansa. "They helped me to walk strong through some of my terrible times and instilled the courage and perseverance in me, which I still hold strong today."

For the last eight years Hansa Devi has been working as a sign language teacher, changing lives and spreading hope. Currently, there are 24 deaf children living at the hostel. For these children "Miss Hansa" is not just a teacher, she means the world to them.

She shares one story: "My family, who live in a remote village in Mugu, were getting ready for my brother's wedding. They came to get me for the wedding at the deaf hostel, as I have to be carried when I walk long distances. I got ready, and as I was walking out of the school compound some of the children came running to me with tears in their eyes. They held my hand and begged me not to leave them. It was at that point I realised what I meant to these children. My heart melted and I decided not to go to the wedding."

Hansa has a very supportive husband and a five-year-old daughter. She visits Kathmandu city once a year for her prosthetic follow-up treatment. Strong in her faith, she lives her life believing and encouraging other people living with disabilities to believe in their abilities.





What does it look like when hope seems to wash away? People from Nawalparasi District know this feeling all too well. People in this district witnessed the heaviest rainfall recorded in 60 years on 10-13 August 2017, triggering massive flooding. It affected many poor people living in flood-damaged and vulnerable houses. We've come alongside the families most in need during the 2017 Terai flood to share resources and love.

We made it a priority to help the most vulnerable people – single women, people with disabilities and the elderly. Many of these people now feel safe and secure with roofs over their heads. With the support of our partner, Tearfund UK, we have been able to build elevated homes (with two rooms)

for 17 of the poorest families in Nawalparasi. A safe evacuation centre was also constructed, which serves as a shelter house. These 17 families also received Land Entitlement Certificates from the government, as they were landless people earlier. Encouraged by UMN's initiative, the Rural Municipality of this locality also contributed NPR 1,337,356 (USD 11,515) to fill the deficit budget for the construction.

Discarding the open defecation practice, each of the 17 families also built toilets with their own finances. Today they all adhere to good sanitation practice.



Chulahi's emergency shelter



Chulahi's new house



Bishwanath's makeshift house



Bishwanath's new house

SMART SHARING

Having a smartphone is like having a computer in your pocket! You can keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues at the swipe of a finger. You can find your choice of book, have easy access to your collection of music and other entertainment, travel the world without getting lost, and much more.

The Asia-Pacific region accounts for 55% of the world's five billion smartphone users, with China and India having the highest number of users in the region.

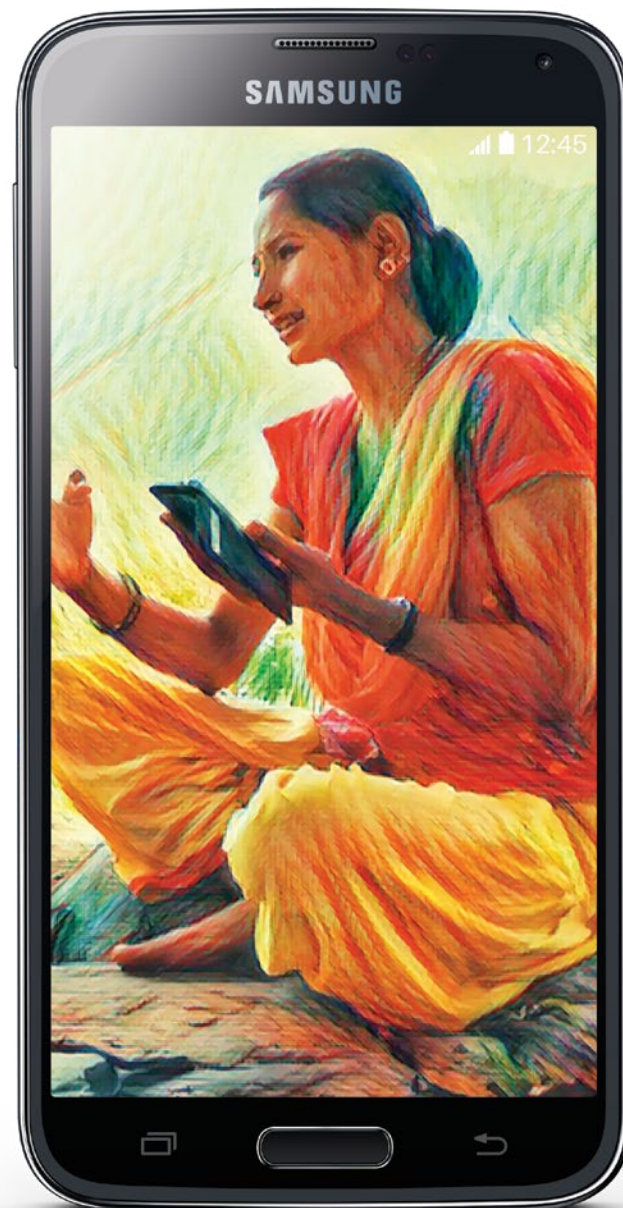
For the past four years, UMN, keeping up with the wonders of modern technology and greatly benefitting from it, has been using a mobile-based data collection system for surveys. UMN's Learning, Policy and Strategy (LPS) Team has trained hundreds of young people from our working areas on the mobile app, the questionnaire, survey ethics, making sense and using the gathered information. In the last year alone, I have spent a considerable amount of time training over 50 young people from UMN working areas.

While data shows that over half of the population of Nepal owns a smartphone, some girls I met last month had never used one, let alone owned one! These young girls, also the local community facilitators for one of our women empowerment projects in Kapilbastu along the Terai, sat before me, nervous about this new mobile-based data collection training.

Knowing that my fancy PowerPoint slides and preparation needed contextualisation, I changed the training method and content, starting with an introduction to the basics of a mobile phone and practising different apps before moving to the previously planned content. This changed the training atmosphere and we could sense a meaningful and relaxed learning environment. The girls were excited about the information they would be collecting from their community and understanding and using the mobile phones to raise awareness and advocate for their rights.

The LPS team is not only helping by sharing the technical skills and expertise on surveys and studies. This training is also helping the participants understand, make sense of and act on the information they gather from their community. Many of the people, like the girls from the Madhesi community in Kapilbastu, are even gaining respect from their leaders and other members in their village.

PRATIKSHA KHANAL
Learning & Data Management Officer



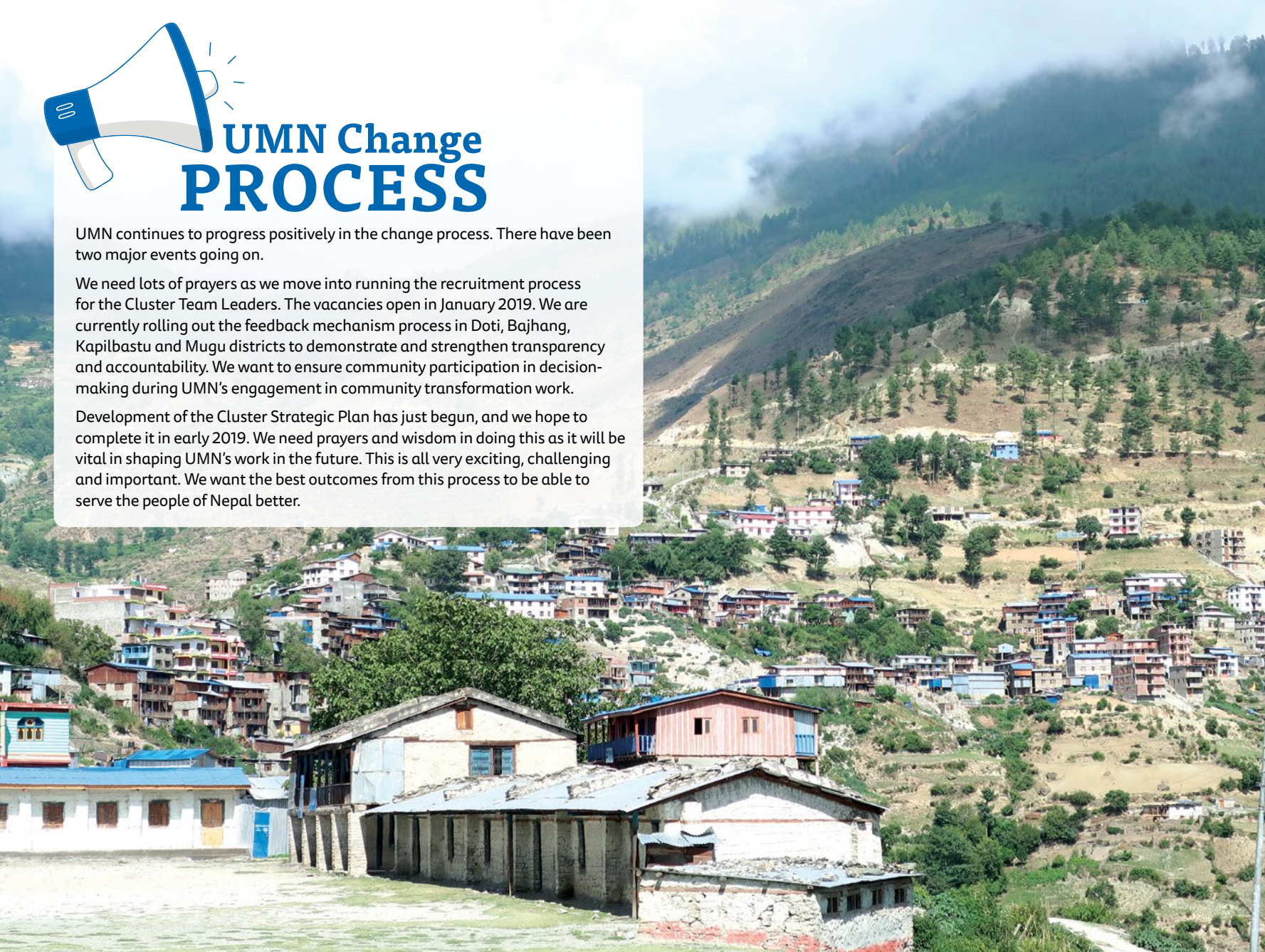


UMN Change PROCESS

UMN continues to progress positively in the change process. There have been two major events going on.

We need lots of prayers as we move into running the recruitment process for the Cluster Team Leaders. The vacancies open in January 2019. We are currently rolling out the feedback mechanism process in Doti, Bajhang, Kapilbastu and Mugu districts to demonstrate and strengthen transparency and accountability. We want to ensure community participation in decision-making during UMN's engagement in community transformation work.

Development of the Cluster Strategic Plan has just begun, and we hope to complete it in early 2019. We need prayers and wisdom in doing this as it will be vital in shaping UMN's work in the future. This is all very exciting, challenging and important. We want the best outcomes from this process to be able to serve the people of Nepal better.





UMN'S CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2018

Did you know, one in every 100 children in Nepal are born with clubfoot every year? Clubfoot is a deformity in which the infant's foot is turned inward. There are many reasons for this – genetics, environmental factors, early pregnancy – and in most cases, we don't know the reason. We may not know the cause or how to prevent this, but we know how to treat it!

With early detection and proper treatment, children with clubfoot will eventually be able to enjoy an active life – walking, running and doing other normal physical activities. Some deformities (especially late detection) need surgical procedures.

“I feel very sad when I see some families in remote villages of Nepal discriminate against their child who is born with clubfoot,” says Bir, UMN's Disability Programme Manager. “They are treated as inferior and given fewer opportunities and attention. Parents and families need to be educated and reassured that clubfoot can be treated.”

Children born with clubfoot in low-income families and in remote regions of Nepal have limited or no access to proper treatment. For many families, travel costs to the city for initial assessment and treatment are not affordable.

Currently at UMN, we have the funds to treat about 60 children, but the need is so great. Would you help us to treat more children?

- ➔ Fit a child with a pair of clubfoot boots at **\$10 (£7)**.
- ➔ Fund the travel expenses which cost roughly **\$100 (£70)**.
- ➔ Help pay for an operation. Surgeries start at **\$600 (£400)**.



A gift of new life

The remote district of Bajang in the far west of Nepal is a difficult place for anyone, let alone a young girl with a disability. UMN has been working with communities here to confront superstitions and hold conversations to overcome harmful traditional practices.

Saraswati Joshi is the third child in her family. Her birth didn't bring much happiness and celebration when she was born with a club foot. Her parents had never seen anything like it. They were heartbroken and ashamed in front of their neighbours and the community, thinking that the disability was a punishment on the family. It was hard for them to accept this condition. Girl children are already treated as second class in many families and Saraswati had a disability on top of this. The family, who was struggling to make ends meet, couldn't see any options for their daughter.

As a toddler, like all children this age, Saraswati too wished to play, run and jump around. But she was a loner, who would just watch. Additionally, because she always needed someone to take care of her, the family's already low income was feeling the strain.

Recently, new hope came to the family when her father met with UMN's partner in Bajhang and he learned about treatment options. The family would have never dreamed of taking her on the three-day journey to the capital city, Kathmandu, for treatment. But, through this contact, it was all becoming possible. After a series of treatments and surgery, Saraswati is showing good signs.

Today, eleven-year-old Saraswati, a third grader, is surprising people by not only walking, but also with her good grades. She scored the second highest marks in Grade 2. To encourage her to keep shining, UMN has also been providing her with some educational materials needed for school.

It was a great day for Saraswati and her family when she walked for the first time after the treatment. Victorious, she has raised the shamed heads in the family. Her father proudly says, "My daughter is living a prestigious life now."



HOW TO DONATE:

- ➔ 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 Feet 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.



PRAY

Children living with disabilities are in the most marginalised and excluded groups in remote communities of Nepal. They are more likely to miss out on school and be mistreated. Pray for children like Saraswati (Pg 13) who are going through treatment and for their families who take care of them. Pray for UMN's partners and projects who work with children with disabilities and support advocating for their rights. Hansa Devi (Pg 6) says there are many more deaf children in Mugu District who are not going to school and receiving the right care from their families. Pray that more families would come in contact with UMN staff, which will mean that these children will get enrolled in schools and receive better care. Also pray for an end to harmful beliefs about children born with disabilities.

Please remember in your prayers UMN and its partner staff who live and work in districts outside of Kathmandu. Some of our projects are in remote regions and our staff live in extremely difficult circumstances in order to serve there. This often requires very long hours of walking to reach the communities where we work. Please pray for safety and good health of our staff.

UMN's Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) Programme is running in 12 schools in Rukum, West Nepal. These programmes allow children to start their formal schooling in their own language. Grades 1-3 in these schools have been using textbooks in Kham Magar language (an ethnic dialect dominant in West Nepal), which UMN produced. Rukum Cluster is promoting MLE and encouraging other schools to use these books as well. Please pray for the success of this so that more children will be able to enjoy school in their mother tongue.



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 positions, or if you would like to ask about other opportunities for service in UMN, please contact Becky Thorson at expat.recruitment@umn.org.np to learn more. Send your CV or resumé with your email.

PRIORITY NEEDS

TUTORIAL GROUP TEACHER – for United Mission Hospital Tansen. Needed from July 2019. To teach a small group of delightful expatriate children ages 5-11 from a variety of countries, and manage the tutorial group.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT ADVISOR - KATHMANDU BASED – to support the preparedness of UMN staff and partners for disasters; advise on organisational systems and structures for disaster preparedness and response; support the effective implementation of disaster response, especially after a large-scale disaster.

DOCTORS OF ALL KINDS ARE NEEDED – Tansen and Okhaldhunga.

For **United Mission Hospital Tansen**: OB/GYN, Surgeons, General Practitioners, Paediatrician, Internal Medicine, ENT and Urology. For **Okhaldhunga Community Hospital**: GP with Public Health experience. Flexibility, the ability to work in a resource-limited setting and an interest in teaching and mentoring junior Nepali doctors are required for all doctors. Long-term applicants preferred. For OB/GYN & Surgeons, short-term or long-term.



MENTAL WELL-BEING

This year, the theme of World Mental Health Day (on 10 Oct) is "Young people and mental health in a changing world".

The Ministry of Health observed the day on 9 October and the UMN Health Team participated. In the event, the State Minister for Health and Population, Honourable Dr Surendra Yadav, highlighted the need to integrate mental health at the policy level and make psychotropic drugs available at health facilities.

Also, on 8 October, UMN's Mental Health Project Manager, Prasansa Subba, was one of the speakers at an interaction programme comprising of public health students, youth political leaders and journalists. Prasansa presented facts on the global and national context of mental health, highlighting the need for investment in youth and adolescent mental health.



ART LITERACY WORKSHOP

Five members from UMN's Education Team along with staff from a partner participated in an Art Literacy workshop at Payap University, Chiang Mai, Thailand. The three-week workshop (29 October to 17 November) had 23 participants from Nepal, Myanmar, Thailand, South Korea, Czech Republic and India.

The workshop's objective was to provide knowledge on curriculum discovered, decided and developed by the communities using various materials so that children can learn more easily,

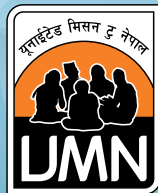
quickly and develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, creativity and critical thinking.

The team shared that material development is very important, so they have brought back with them ideas on using cultural and language aspects in teaching learning. The learning will be used to train teachers and community leaders to develop teaching materials for the mother tongue-based Multi-lingual Education Project in Rukum (Kham language) and Mugu (Karmarong) in 2019.



" DO **GOOD** AND
SHARE WITH
OTHERS,
FOR **SACRIFICES**
WITH SUCH **GOD** IS
PLEASED. "

Hebrews 13:16



Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

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