

# LMN News

ISSUE 56 | SEPTEMBER 2017

VALUES  
*in*  
ACTION



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



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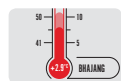
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## Dear friends

As I write, Nepal is suffering nationwide floods and landslides, leaving over 65,000 homes destroyed and hundreds of thousands displaced. At the height of the disaster, a total of 1.7 million people were reported to be affected. It's a grievous reminder that nature can be a source of both life and catastrophe.

At UMN, we recognise that as stewards of God's earth our choices are intimately related to whether we experience nature as blessing or curse. From the road-cutting that destabilises slopes in Nepal to the destabilisation of the global climate through carbon emissions, we see human practices behind many of the worst "natural" disasters. I am sobered by the thought that I will one day be accountable to God for the impact of my choices on the world and people He loves.

Meanwhile, Jesus' words to the storm – "Peace! Be still!" (Mark 4:39) – are also his command to his followers caught up in any storm. From that place of peace, we can reach out to help those whose lives have been thrown into chaos – whether by a sudden, massive disaster, or by the frightening uncertainty of a world where the rains no longer come on time.

Please pray for UMN's staff and partners as we seek to serve the survivors of Nepal's latest major disaster.

Blessings,

  
JOEL HAFVENSTEIN  
Executive Director

P.S. The font we have chosen to use throughout this issue is called **Ryman Eco**. Ryman Stationery worked with world-class font experts, Monotype, in an attempt to create the world's most beautiful sustainable font. The result:

Ryman Eco, which uses 33% less ink than standard fonts. Go to [www.rymaneco.co.uk/about.html](http://www.rymaneco.co.uk/about.html) for more information.

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To help vulnerable families and communities cope with environmental and climate change, there needs to be an institutional policy and working mechanism in place. Some of UMN's NGO partners have formulated environment policy based on local contexts with an annual policy action plan. Also, the community groups in UMN's working villages have discussed the environmental issues of their communities along with other development priorities and have come up with an environmental management plan for action.

Conserving the environment and fighting global warming is the domain of everyone and every development action which should be taken forward with innovation, learning and acceptance at all levels. UMN has embraced this initiative.

Nepal's weather is influenced by the southwest monsoon from the Bay of Bengal and the westerlies. Monsoon season is typically from the middle of June to the end of September. About 80% of the rain falls during the monsoon and the remainder of the year is relatively dry. This region between the Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal is bisected by some of the world's biggest rivers, such as the Brahmaputra and the Ganges, which drain the region, normally taking water safely to the sea.

However meteorologists, both here in Nepal (Meteorological Forecasting Division), international bodies such as the UK Met Office and World Food Programme, are suggesting there is some effect from climate change with regard to the monsoon. In particular, in the time of the monsoon's arrival and departure and total rainfall within the monsoon period. Also, we have been seeing more erratic rainfall and incidences of higher individual rainfall events such as those we saw recently here in Nepal.

The current state of scientific knowledge would state that climate change can be seen to be one of the many factors leading to flooding. There are also infrastructure and human factors, however, which contribute to these risks developing into disaster.

Global flooding indicators show high probabilities of exceptional river flows in the region's major rivers in the future. As a result, Nepal needs to be better prepared to prevent such flooding problems. The issue of poor river capacity, limited ability to keep the rivers cleaned to effectively deal with the anticipated water flow, and poor control of sluice gates directing flow of water away from households are all major factors to prevent further flooding. There is also the cross border dimension to be considered. In this recent case, Nepal was asking India to be more proactive to open the gates of the Koshi Barrage which was blocking water flowing from Nepal to India. Weather forecasters of the Nepal Hydrology and Meteorology Department recommended this in mid-August. If this could have been done earlier, it could have relieved the pressure of flooding and reduced the effects of the disaster.

In conclusion, I think that climate change did contribute to the disaster, but cannot really be seen to be the only reason for the severe effects we have seen. The picture will become clearer over the following months as more data is collected.

ROGER COZENS  
Climate Change Advisor

## NEPAL FLOODS 2017 – climate change?

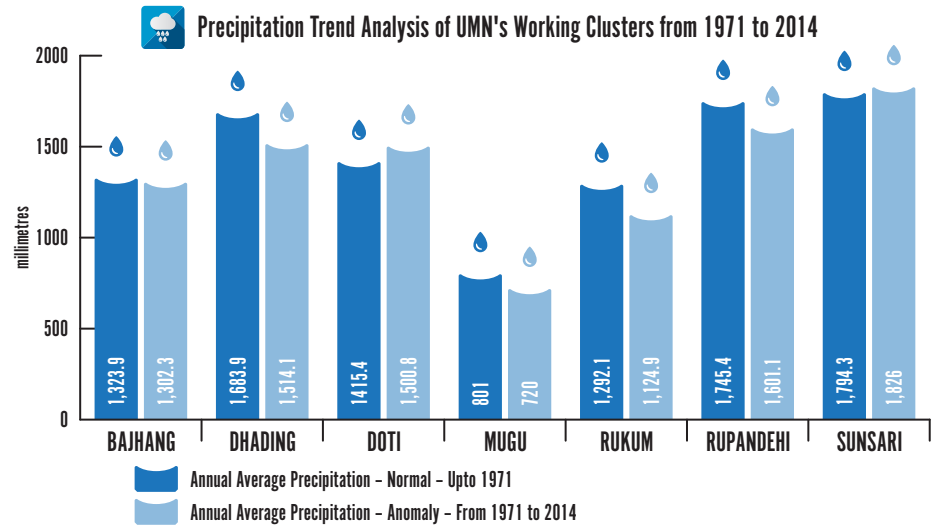


# LOOKING BACK 44 YEARS

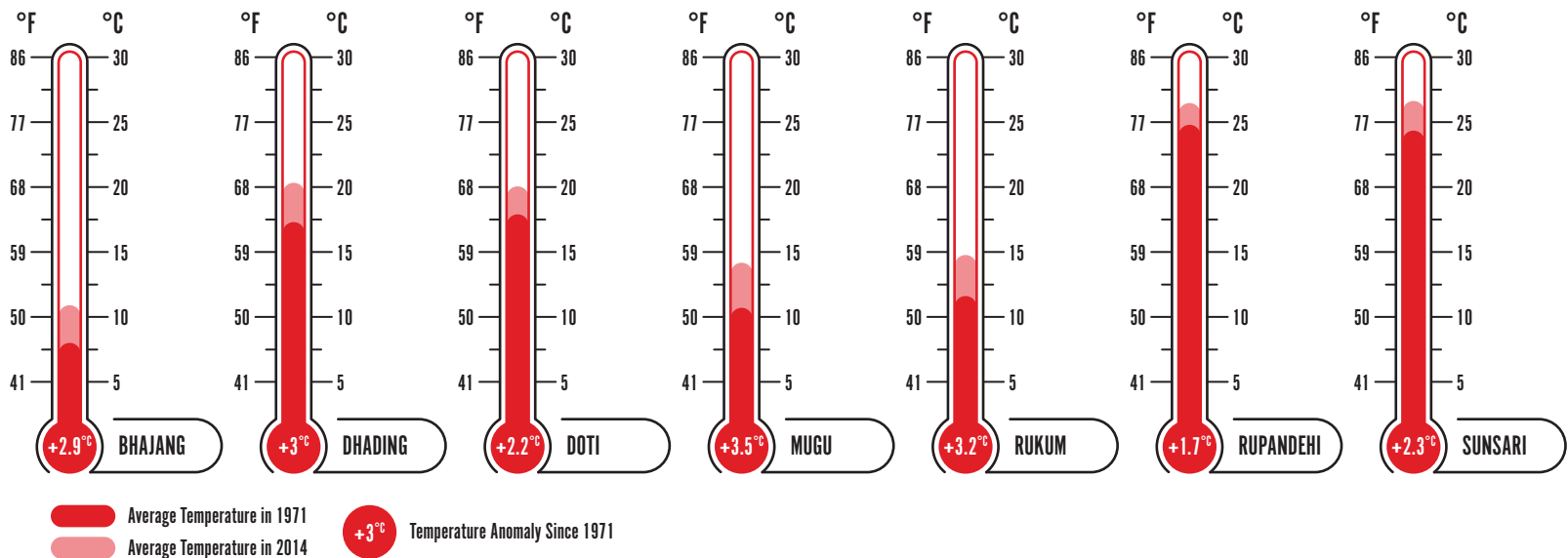


In Nepal, the rise of temperature and changes in rainfall patterns are the important measurable climate change parameters. Scientific studies have revealed that huge changes have been developing in temperature trends along with winter and summer rainfall patterns. These have a long-term negative implication on food production and ecosystem services such as water for drinking and irrigation, forest products, nutrition rich soils, etc.

These graphs show the changing trends of temperature and precipitation in the seven working locations of UMN.



**Temperature Trend Analysis of UMN's Working Clusters from 1971 to 2014**





# what does the rise<sub>of</sub> temperature mean to us?





Monsoon – a lifeline of livelihoods in the entire Indian sub-continent, including Nepal – is air temperature sensitive, and air temperature is extremely vital to agriculture. Rice, potato and wheat plants, among other many important crops, need a very precise temperature range to thrive and flourish (see the table below).

Additional temperature increase slows yield gains – with wheat the hardest hit. Heat stress in rice when the flower is fully open and functional reduces pollination and grain numbers. Temperature, which is the most important mover to sustain life systems on earth, has to be relatively stable within a distinct range for organisms to survive, procreate and grow.

The heat tolerance ranges of some important crops are running out, which means less production. Farmers in Rukum are switching from cultivating red creole onion seeds – one of the most lucrative sources of family income – to the less profitable wheat farming, as the crops are destroyed by pests and diseases due to the rise of temperatures and unprecedented fluctuations. Studies show that rice yield has been significantly affected in Dhading by additional warming and inadequate rains. Similarly, increased hailstorms in Bajhang and Doti have affected major winter crops such as wheat.

Temperature sensitive monsoon rains have been affected with a scale of uncertainty about its onset, distribution, and withdrawal. Monsoon season has become increasingly unreliable with too little rain when it is vitally needed, and too much rain when it is not. Droughts and landslides have been more frequent in Mugu, Rukum, Doti, Bajhang and Dhading in the last 15 years.

Likewise, Nawalparasi, Sunsari and Morang experience flooding as the number of flash floods have increased significantly over the last decade. Dhading has been categorised as a district with “high risk” vulnerability to Glacier Lake Outburst Flooding which was not the case just 25 years ago.







The earth's surface air temperature rose by 1°C between the start of the industrial revolution and the end of the Millennium Development Goals. Global temperature rise is not uniform. When the global temperature went up by 1°C, the temperature in Nepal rose by approximately 2.5°C (see the temperature trend graph on page 5).

With a rise of temperature, the rate of crop failures and disaster risks are increasing, whereas the adaptive capacity of vulnerable families and communities are weakening as they find themselves pulled deeper into poverty.

Against the backdrop of global warming and climate uncertainty and their visible impact at the rural livelihoods level, UMN is mainstreaming climate change issues into its community development projects. The livelihoods transformation projects include climate change adaptation and mitigation interventions such as supporting the multiple use of water systems, solar powered water uplifting, drinking water schemes, integrated pest management, organic farming, fish farming and lake conservation, disaster risk reductions and relief, climate change awareness events, drought resilient crops (rice), biogas plants, improved cooking stoves, tree plantation and cultivation of forage crops, among others.

**DURGA PRASAD UPADHYAY**

Environment and Climate Change Advisor

Crop	RICE	POTATO	WHEAT	ORANGE	APPLE	ONION
						
Temperature Range	16–27°C	18–20°C	21–24°C	19–24°C	700 chilling hours below 7°C	steady temperature

Ur Lama Tamang runs a small tea shop from his house in Dhading. He has been using biogas for his cooking which has been extremely helpful in saving time and money for his business. Biogas produces less health-damaging pollutants such as smoke, fumes and odour unlike firewood. Moreover, he is even saving time which was previously spent collecting firewood. He had been storing the animal dung from his livestock in a nearby shed for compost which he used as farm yard manure.

With an increasing demand for firewood for household energy, especially for cooking, one has to spend double the time that you did 10 years ago to collect and fetch it home in Ur Lama's village. The firewood availability in the community forest has significantly decreased. To replace firewood and encourage animal dung as an alternative energy source, Himalayan Community Salvation Society (HIMS) Nepal, with UMN's support, has developed a biogas promotion plan in his area.

The Government of Nepal has provided earthquake survivors with a subsidy for biogas plants to promote this alternative energy. Along with that and the support of UMN, Ur Lama and 11 other households have constructed biogas plants in their homes. He collected sand and stones to construct the pit and contributed to the expenses in kind, and the rest of the costs were given by UMN and the government. The construction work was completed by a qualified mason trained by HIMS Nepal.

With the biogas, Ur Lama is happy that he doesn't need a separate place to store dung as it can be directly fed into the biogas digester of the plant. The dung is very rich in organic matter which enriches soil nutrients and organic production. He has even added human excreta from the toilet to the biogas digester. After only a few days of dung collection, he is able to produce enough methane gas to cook two meals for a family of five.

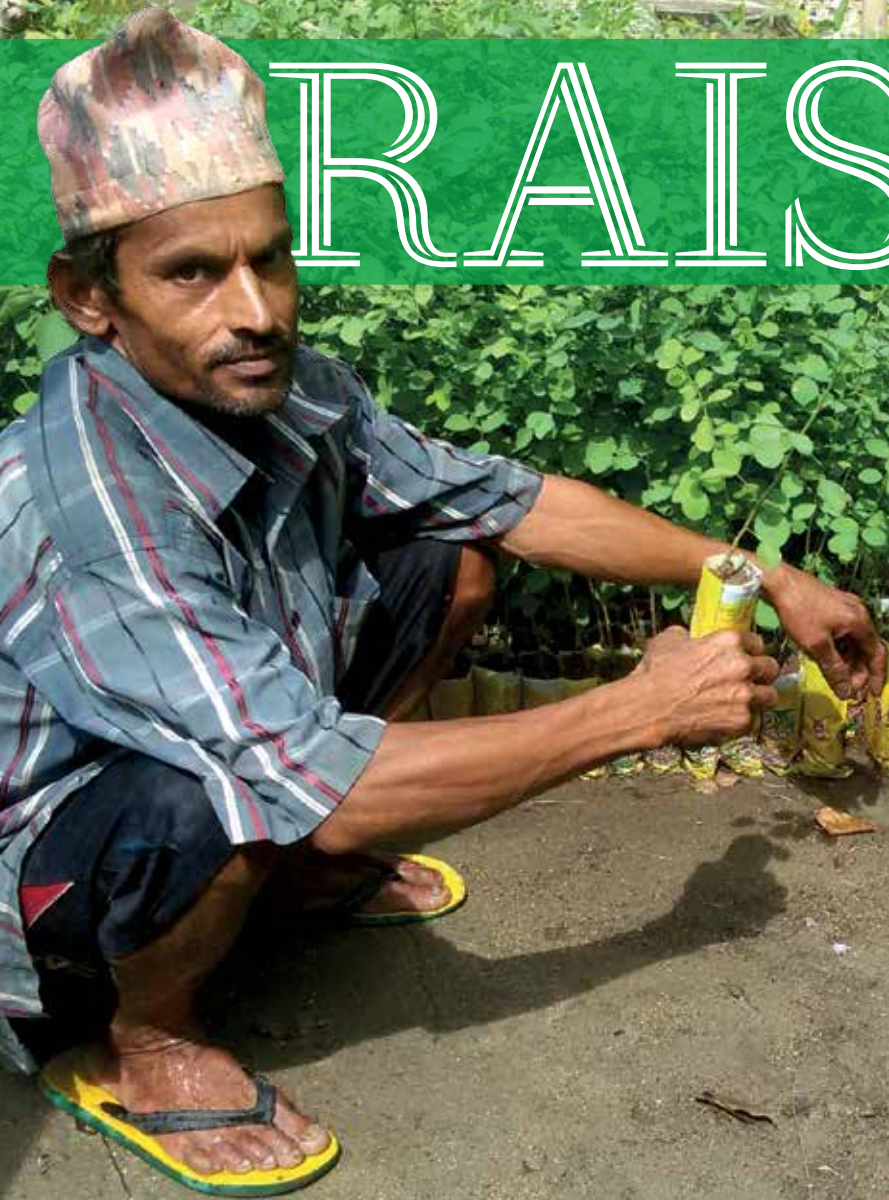


"Biogas plant is a new programme in my area," said Ur Lama. "I will share this idea and its benefits to fellow villagers. I want to thank HIMS and the Government of Nepal for the technical and financial support to promote rural energy."



# RAISING

## young saplings!



Bishnu Prasad Sedai has established the first nursery in his village. He is a member of Siddhakali Community Forest User Group (CFUG) of Aaptar, Dhading. There was no nursery in his village and the people had to travel long distances for tree saplings.

In February, he was able to participate in a five-day Forest Nursery Management training course organised by UMN partner PRAYAS Nepal, in coordination with the District Forest Office. He was joined by participants from the ten community forests of Ree, Lapa, Jharlang, Mahadevsthan and Pida of Dhading. After the training, he discussed with other CFUG members about growing seedlings and distributing them.

To establish this nursery, PRAYAS Nepal joined hands with him and provided seeds of the various trees that he needed. With all the hard work and sweat put into this project, the seedlings have germinated and are now almost ready for transplantation. Now, there are more than 10,000 sapling varieties of fodder and perennial commercial tree crops in his nursery, and other community members have been sending in their orders to plant in their own land and community forests.

Bishnu Sedai believes that the sapling transplantation will not only help forest conservation but will also lead to biodiversity conservation.



# CLIMATE resilient AGRICULTURE

The Climate Resilient Agriculture approach is an integrated approach to rural development that combines economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development with climate change adaptation, resilience, and preparedness for future risks. Worldwide, there has been a 30-40% decrease in agricultural production due to the effects of climate change, and Nepal is rated as one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change. The Economic Impact Assessment in key sectors of Nepal has revealed the negative impact on agriculture productivity which has already reduced output by 0.8% per year compared to the 2014 GDP baseline.

The main issues affecting subsistence agriculture in Nepal are:

- ➡ Erratic rainfall (including some very heavy single events);
- ➡ Higher water loss due to more evaporation because of higher temperatures;
- ➡ Late onset of monsoon leading to delayed planting of rice;
- ➡ More completely dry days within monsoon, and so the need for more irrigation;
- ➡ Amount of light rain in the dry season is reducing or does not happen at all;
- ➡ Pest and disease outbreaks in areas of the country where it has never happened before.



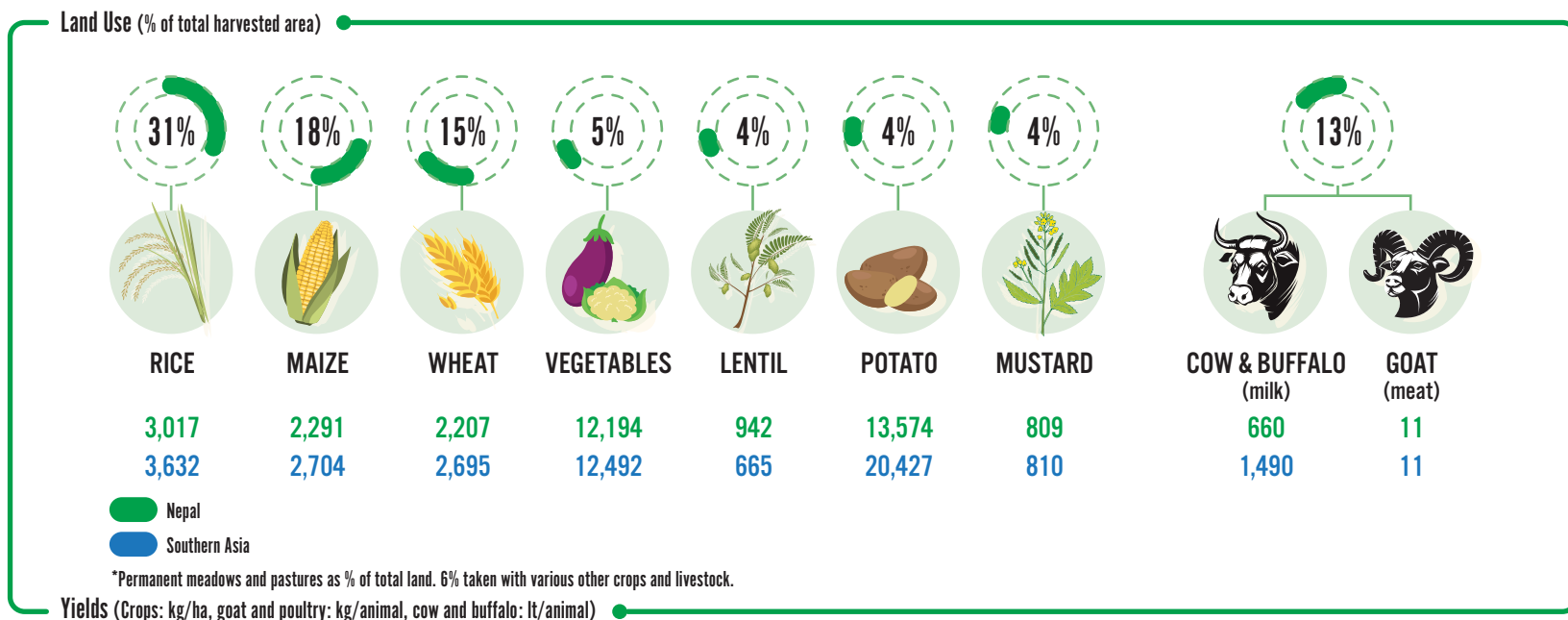


Dhading district is located in the mid-hill agro-ecological region of Nepal and is one of our focus areas for intervention. It receives 1,600 to 2,000 mm rainfall a year. However, the rainfall pattern has been changing over the last 20 years. In particular, the rain is arriving later; often also lower amounts fall, and the rain is late to retreat.

UMN's climate resilient agriculture approach enables sustainable growth through better soil and pest management and by improving cropping patterns to increase yields while saving water and labour, as well as reducing the negative effects of chemical fertilizers and pesticides by the use of composts. Other techniques and practices are promoted, such as home gardening and integrated pest management. In particular, in Baireni of Dhading we have promoted the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) which has led to higher and earlier yields of rice while using less water and labour. Unlike the traditional method of rice seedling transplantation, which is generally done over a period of four weeks,

along with regular flooding until the plants mature, SRI transplants only two-week-old seedlings and at completely different spacing in the field. This requires significantly less water for irrigation and the number of tillers (shoots) on the rice plants more than doubled compared to the traditional practice of rice cropping. The result is an increase in rice yield of over 30%. We also found this technique led to a reduced amount of water consumption (20% less), reduced methane emission, and improved soil health. The SRI technique of reduced flooding of the paddy fields also reduced leaching of the soil nutrients. The farmers in Baireni are convinced about SRI and have applied it to this rice-planting season. UMN is sharing this information by training farmers and helping them further by distributing improved rice varieties.

ROGER COZENS  
Climate Change Advisor





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## A SUCCESSFUL LEAP

Congratulations to Purna Bahadur Rokaya for recently winning the election and for his new appointment as the chairperson of the District Coordination Committee in Mugu. Purna is also the chair of the School Management Committee (SMC) of UMN's partner Buddha Higher Secondary School (BHSS) in Mugu. He says: "UMN has worked hand in hand with us in the overall development of the school which has resulted in the transformation of BHSS. Along with my responsibility at the school, I had been actively involved in local political parties and their activities which helped me to be known among the local people and secure the votes. My leadership at BHSS has also been a strong factor in winning people's trust as they have seen successful management and transparent reporting of the school. People have faith in me and trust that the work that I do will lead to success."

We wish him all the best as he steps into this important role and serves the people of Mugu.



## LEGAL VICTORY

The law in Nepal has now set penalties for forcing a woman to practise "Chau" – Chaupadi is a social tradition in many Hindu villages which prohibits women from normal family activities during her menstruation. Because she is considered impure, she is expected to live separately in a shed for the duration.

Any family member who forces a woman to live in a shed outside can be punished with a jail sentence of three months and/or a fine of NRP 3,000 (USD 30). UMN's Harmful Traditional Practices project has been working to address the issue of Chau in far-western districts like Doti and Bajhang.



Welcome to the new batch of UMN interns

## INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

UMN staff, interns and members of the Interfaith Youth Group went out on the streets of Kathmandu in a rally to celebrate International Youth Day on 12 August. The event was jointly organised by the Ministry of Youth and the Sports and National Youth Council with the collaboration of 50 youth-led organisations, and also organisations working for youth. This year's slogan is 'Youth Building Peace'. Minister for Youth and Sports, Rajendra Kumar KC, inaugurated the rally.

After the rally, a formal programme was conducted at the National Assembly Hall addressed by President Biddhadevi Bhandari, Mr Rajendra KC and Madhav Dhungel, Vice-President of the National Youth Council (NYC).







# JOIN US

When I first came to Nepal in 2011, I quickly fell in love with the country and the people. Nepal is one of the most beautiful places on the planet, but I was disheartened to see places that were not clean. As I walked over the Bagmati Bridge into Thapathali I took the picture below. It made me sad to see the state of the river with all the rubbish that was being dumped. There are staff at UMN who can remember in their lifetime when they could swim in the Bagmati River, but you wouldn't have wanted to go anywhere near the water that I saw. Even the smell would keep you walking faster!

## 2011 - Bagmati River



## 2017 - Bagmati River



By the end of 2011, a "Clean Bagmati River" campaign had been started. Thousands of Nepalis, along with many UMN staff, joined cleaning parties at the weekends. This month I visited the same area to take a comparison picture. The results are amazing, and it hasn't stopped there! In our local area, groups of people have been clearing up land and posting signs urging people not to dump their rubbish. The message is clear: Keep Nepal Tidy! My hope is that more people catch this clean litter bug.

**PHIL RAWLINGS**

International Communications and Technology Advisor

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 us 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

**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.

**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.

**TUTORIAL GROUP TEACHER** – for United Mission Hospital Tansen. Needed for one year from July 2018. To teach a small group of delightful expatriate children ages 5-11 from a variety of countries, and manage the tutorial group.

See the full list of expatriate needs at [www.umn.org.np](http://www.umn.org.np) – click on "JOIN US".



## PRAY



Beginning 11 August, Nepal experienced its worst rains in 15 years which triggered floods in the southern plains and landslides in the mid-hills. Flooding in Nepal has affected 35 out of the country's 75 districts. This has caused extensive damage in infrastructure, livestock losses, farms, livelihoods and food security. It is heartbreaking to hear news of houses being swept away, to see poor farmers watch their rice fields disappear under the water and their livestock not survive the rising water levels. Sunsari and Morang, where UMN serves, are two of the hardest-hit districts.

UMN staff and their families and office buildings remain safe. UMN has distributed two weeks' food supply and a range of non-food necessities to over 6,000 displaced households in Sunsari, Morang, Nawalparasi, and Rupandehi districts. Vulnerable groups such as children, people with disability, people living with HIV and AIDS, and pregnant and lactating mothers were identified to make sure they received the relief packages.

Please uphold UMN's staff, partners and volunteers as we respond to this devastating disaster. We are very thankful to our staff for their dedication in this time of national crisis.



Please pray that the government would take wise steps in tackling the challenge of settling the thousands of families who are displaced. Pray for God's comfort for those who have lost family, loved ones, livestock and means of livelihoods.

As well as people losing their homes and property, the flood has damaged huge areas of farmlands which will have a direct effect in triggering food shortages in the near future.

Pray for the children, especially those who have lost their parents and are in trauma. Many schools have had to close for a prolonged period of time; please pray that the children would be able to continue their school education soon.

Please pray for the safety of UMN staff as they travel to affected areas and for wisdom for the disaster management committee as they support the clusters that are engaged in relief work.

After our initial distributions we will be meeting again with the poorest people in the most heavily affected villages, to assess their most pressing needs going forward and to see what we can do to help. Pray that we will go in the right direction for the next stage of relief.



# 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!

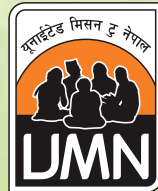


## HOW TO GIVE A ONE-OFF DONATION

- ➔ 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](http://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.

THE EARTH IS THE LORDS  
AND EVERYTHING IN IT.  
THE WORLD AND ALL ITS PEOPLE  
BELONG TO HIM

Psalm 24:1



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

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