

LMN News

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*Journeys
together*



Wellness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

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Dear friends

The witness of Scripture is consistent: God's people are meant to work for justice and against every kind of poverty and oppression. Churches should not focus solely on the activities we tend to label "religious" or "spiritual", and our work against poverty should not only benefit fellow Christians. As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "If you love only those who love you, what reward can you expect? Don't even tax collectors and non-believers do the same?"

When the church has lived up to its calling to serve the poor and marginalised, it has had a transformative impact on society. In the Roman Empire, Christianity thrived because it offered an unprecedented dignity to women and slaves, as well as an impressive record of self-sacrificing service. Campaigns for the abolition of slavery, the U.S. civil rights movement, and the South African anti-apartheid movement were all shaped and driven by Christians. These remain monuments of faithful witness.

Many Nepali churches also are abundantly living up to the calling to serve. For some, however, their ability to imagine "*journeying together*" with their community has been hampered by the social stigma around Christianity. As one pastor incredulously said: "When we became believers, our old community expelled us, and that was painful and costly. We created a new community, and that was difficult and costly. Now you're telling us the Bible says we need to go back into the community that cast us out and serve them out of our own resources?"

Later, when the pastor came to believe that the Bible did indeed say that, he led his church to build both literal and metaphorical bridges, transforming their relationships with the village. UMN will continue to work with churches and communities to restore harmony, restore relationships, and remove the barriers to "*journeying together*".



JOEL HAFVENSTEIN
Executive Director

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Journeying Together

United Mission to Nepal (UMN) has completed six decades of its community development journey in Nepal. In all these years, UMN has had the privilege of the "journeying together" with many people and their communities – first and foremost with the Nepalese people and many others from different countries as partners and companions. And, we know how thankful we are to the Lord for enabling us to find and accompany these caring people in our development journey. We count it a blessing to be able to journey together with them in our pursuit of serving the poorest of the poor in Nepal.

UMN's journey of love and service to the people of Nepal has taken us to places and people whom we have had the privilege of knowing and working with. These people come from a range of backgrounds with a vast amount of differences in their world views and life experiences. Encountering these people and their experiences has enriched our own journey in helping us find better ways to serve them better. These connections and friendships developed over the many years in our journey have helped us learn the meaning of life that is full in all its aspects.

The Nepalese Christian community is one such sojourner UMN has found in its sixty years' journey. There were hardly any Christian churches in the country when UMN started its service in Nepal. But, with time, the Nepalese Church grew on a massive scale in its numbers as well as in its services to the people of Nepal. In UMN, we count it our privilege to be able to join hands with the church in Nepal in our journey of service.

UMN considers the Christian church as an integral part of civil society and works to build their capacity. UMN partners with the church in Nepal to empower them to be effective in their social ministries, especially in serving



the communities around them. In this process, UMN works to empower churches so that they can identify those in poverty and engage in advocacy processes that empower the poor. In doing so, UMN encourages the church to be the *salt and light* in society and reach out to those in need. This empowering happens when churches gain a deeper level of understanding of the biblical mandate for love and service to the people, especially those in need.

UMN's journey together with the Nepalese Church has been a blessing in many ways. We thank the Nepalese Church leadership who happily accepted to join us in our journey of travelling many places to serve the poor and needy so that they could experience the *fullness of life*. And, we look forward to walking numerous other paths in the future so that we all continue to touch and transform many more lives in Nepal.

DIVYA P KHANAL

Integral Development Team leader



UMN

& the NEPALI CHURCH



From the early days of UMN in Nepal, it was a regularly discussed topic. How should UMN be involved with the small but growing local church? What should their relationship be? I believe it was a good and wise decision when leaders agreed that UMN would not be organisationally linked with the Nepali Church, but rather partner with them as and when it was possible and beneficial.

That has been the pattern over the last 64 years. No UMN expatriate has been involved in leadership in the Nepali Church and it has been exciting to see how local leadership has grown and developed over the past decades. We have avoided the sad and harmful legacy seen in some other countries when inherited dependencies have led to difficult and acrimonious situations. Yes, there have been those in Nepal who felt differently. Some think that UMN should have been more directly involved. But I believe time has shown the wisdom of those early decisions.

In many ways UMN and the Nepali Church have similar goals – to promote life in all its fullness for Nepali people; to see an all-round transformation of individuals and communities. This is at the heart of the teaching of Jesus Christ and what we long for, pray for and work for.

There are Christian churches in all districts of Nepal and this provides a great network for involvement in local communities. A means for demonstrating God's love and compassion for everyone – no matter what their background or status is. It is exciting to witness Church leaders who

are committed to working together with their friends and neighbours in their own localities to address issues that are common concerns.

An example of this is CCBNN (Christian Commitment for Building New Nepal) which is an initiative begun a number of years ago. Church leaders from right across the country identified issues of concern in their own communities such as health, lack of education, discrimination and violence against women, and together made a commitment that they would work with others, including government, to help vulnerable and disadvantaged Nepali people.

In a number of locations across Nepal, churches have come together to form organisations that are committed to work for the good of their neighbours. Where they are formally registered, it has often been possible for UMN to officially partner with them to facilitate, train and encourage them to be more effective in what they do. These have proved to be good and positive partnerships.

This UMN/Nepali Church relationship is an ongoing journey and one which it is a privilege to be part of. Let's all look to God for his wisdom and guidance in the years ahead.

DAVID McCONKEY

(David McConkey served in UMN for 27 years and returned to Northern Ireland in 2013.)



UMN Interns

UMN's internship programme is a 12-month long capacity building approach and is aimed at the Christian young people in the country, offering them the opportunity to engage with transformational development by helping them identify and develop their professional skills.

The programme also provides an environment for them to grow in maturity by equipping them with an in-depth understanding of the church's, "integral" calling and widening their biblical world-view on

contemporary issues that affect the lives of people, especially people in living in poverty.

This programme has continued to impact the lives of young Christians since 2006. The programme so far has trained 99 Christian youth from over 32 districts in Nepal, including the youth from Dalit (so called lower-caste), marginalised and backward communities. More than 50 % of interns are female. The Internship Survey 2017 shows that 84% of graduates share the "integral" vision they've learned with colleagues and community people, and 80% get the opportunity to uphold and practice integral service in their local churches. The internship programme has enabled over 94% of the graduates to be employed in different organisations in the country.

"INTEGRAL MISSION" AS A CURRICULUM



UMN, as a capacity builder, works together with theological educators in Nepal. Over the years UMN, in partnership with Micah Nepal organised a series of workshops for the theological educators working in and around Kathmandu-based Bible Colleges. This was done with the view of building their understanding of various ways the church can live out love of neighbour, like peace-building, HIV and AIDS, poverty, church and advocacy and disaster.

The participants of these workshops felt the need of developing a curriculum for their theological institutions to equip and inspire students for these kinds of service. They took a collaborative approach in developing teaching materials through a team of theologians called the Integral Mission Curriculum Development Team. The team with the coordination of UMN - Micah finalised the curriculum.

The Integral Mission course is the first of its kind in Nepal and probably in Asia. It is so exciting that 14 theological institutions have started implementing this course and 5 more are waiting for the new academic year to integrate it. It is so strategic to mould the mindset of the theological students by equipping them with an in-depth understanding of Integral Mission. So far, around 300 students have undertaken the Integral Mission course and around 250 students will graduate this year.



Fourteen years ago in 2004, when UMN was functioning in just two clusters, Sunsari and Mugu, I joined UMN's Sunsari Cluster as an Office Assistant.

At that time, UMN shifted its working approaches which led it to work with many new local partners and to provided training programmes on Capacity Building. Sunsari Cluster had eighteen local NGO partners. I was fresh in the field of development but gradually I was able to understand the problems in the community and the significance of UMN's involvement. From 2004 to 2012, I learnt organisational Capacity Building and was involved in Integral Mission and financial management. I enjoyed my responsibilities and performed my best in the team.

Since 2013, I have been involved in Integral Development in Dhading. Since July 2015, UMN has been promoting the *Sangsangai* Process (SSP) in Dhading through its local partner, Dhading Christian Society. Its main objective is for the people in the church to hear and understand what God is saying about their individual and common needs and how to solve them practically by using local resources. This way the families and communities are strengthened, and they become the salt and light in their community for positive transformation. Ten *Sangsangai* groups are promoting SSP in Dhading.

One of the memories of work that is very special to me is UMN's relief work after the earthquake in 2015. As a team, we managed to distribute relief items to a large number of people.

Thank you UMN for allowing me to be a part of this incredible journey of serving the poorest people living in poverty.

JIWAN RAI

Integral Development Officer, Dhading

Sangsangai



Sangsangai is the Nepali term for the Church and Community Mobilisation Process. It is an international resource to educate, equip and mobilise churches and communities in their own development. It helps church leaders and their congregations to work together with local communities to bring about positive changes by helping them to build on the resources and skills they already have. It is a process that inspires and equips local people with a vision for determining their own future with their own resources. Sangsangai is a social mobilisation approach to development; and it takes the faith communities on a long journey of much learning and growth through reading, understanding and applying the biblical teachings in relation to their wider community and its welfare.

LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOUR



UMN and its partner NASSO conducted an orientation on community work to local churches of Devdaha Municipality in Rupandehi, where participants from seven local churches took part. It was NASSO's first-ever orientation meeting organized just for churches. It was also for the first time that most of the churches of that area participated in a workshop of this kind.

The pastors who participated in the workshop shared that they were hesitant to work in the community and were confused and had no biblical guidance for community development work. They used to preach to their believers to refrain from getting involved in worldly things, and that teachings from the Bible, spiritual activities like fasting, fellowship, evangelising are what they should be focusing on.

After the workshop, pastors and church leaders had a different opinion. They were clear and had no doubts about their social responsibility. The church, they believe, has a unique role to play to bring hope and healing in the community.

Nar Bahadur Gurung, one of the local pastors, shared his experience: "I was challenged by many of my co-workers and church leaders from other churches who said we should not waste our time and resources for activities outside the church. But now I am very much clear and understand the biblical mandate of why I should love my neighbour."

SANGSANGAI WITH THE COMMUNITY



The Neupane Church is located in Gajuri Rural Municipality in Dhading with more than 300 members; most of them come from poor and Dalit (so-called low caste) communities.

Two years ago, UMN's local partner, Dhading Christian Society (DCS), joined hands with this church to implement the Church Community Mobilisation Process (*Sangsangai*) programme. The church selected two facilitators, Sunita Mujakoti and Dhurba Koirala, to train and lead the process in the church. One of the teaching sessions was about identifying problems in the community and solving them with locally available resources.

From their early assessment in the community, they saw problems in schools. Many children were dropping out from schools – most of them from Dalit and Hindu families. The church decided to put aside five percent of their total income to support eight children who had dropped out from school with education materials, food and clothes.

The local school and the community very much appreciated the work done by the church. *Sangsangai* facilitator Dhurba says that it is because of the teachings and vision of *Sangsangai*, as prior to this they never thought of helping out with the issues facing the community.

"After engaging in the *Sangsangai* process, our church has become the real light and salt for the community. Thank you very much, DCS, for selecting our congregation to implement it. We continue and carry it as a part of the church mission," says Dhurba.

An aerial photograph of a village nestled in a mountainous region. The village consists of numerous small, closely packed houses with dark roofs, some of which have bright blue or red roofs. The houses are built on a steep, dry, brownish hillside. In the background, there are more mountains and a valley. The sky is not visible.

a village called RANGSI

Situated at 762m above sea level, the people of Rangsi village use mules, horses or walk on narrow footpaths to cut through the high hills. This is a village with a population of around 2000 (2011) in Rukum, West Nepal. Church Leaders have been actively involved in updating community disaster management plans. Here are a few examples of how the local churches of Rangsi together with UMN's DMCCAM project have made lives happier and safer.

Disaster Management and Local Churches: A Helpful Synergy

The Disaster Risk Management Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (DMCCAM) program has been implemented in two of UMN's working districts, Rupandehi and Rukum, since July 2015. The programme is being implemented through UMN's faith-based partners, i.e. Isai Samaj Nepal in Rupandehi and Nepal Magar Society Service and Information Centre (MIC) in Rukum. The project, at both locations, is being designed to benefit communities by increasing resilience to disaster and abating climatic shocks. The undertaking includes various risk reduction measures: prevention, reduction, adaptation, mitigation, and response through mobilisation of local skills with external support.



Pig sheds

Almost all the households in Rangsi raise pigs. But the pigs didn't have proper sheds. They were kept in the ground floor of the house and were allowed to go around the village scavenging on whatever they could find, leaving pig waste too. This poses serious health problems with the possibility of passing on infectious diseases. The village-level local disaster risk management committee formed by the DMCCAM project of UMN made action plans to construct pig sheds to reduce the negative impact of pig farming on the environment and human health. The Rangsi community has built 50 pig sheds so far.



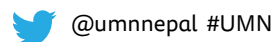
Wooden bridge

The villagers kept wooden planks across the streams to allow people to cross, but this wasn't safe enough, especially during monsoon. To make stream crossing safe, UMN has built two sturdier and stronger wooden bridges, which has significantly reduced the risk of accidents.



Water source conservation

The unmanaged water sources used by the people and the cattle were not safe. The water shortage during the hot months became a threat to livelihoods. The six water points around Rangsi with a conservation tank has solved this problem. Thanks to UMN, and our partner MIC, clean water is now available throughout the year.



FIRE IN A VILLAGE

In March, a fire broke out in a house located in the Baraha Municipality of Sunsari due to an electricity surge when a gas cylinder exploded. The flames ripped through forty-nine houses of ward no. 11. Fortunately, there were no deaths reported. In this crisis situation, UMN and its local partner Sundar Samaj Nirman Samuha provided support to the fire survivors (all the 49 houses plus a few extra households) with emergency relief items like dry food, noodles, tarpaulins, mattresses and mosquito nets. Our prayers are with the families.



CELEBRATING CHRISTINE'S LIFE

UMN together with KISC held a memorial service for Christine Stone on 6 May, in the UMN garden. Her friends from Nepal who knew her and had worked with her were present for this small gathering. Christine, who was a passionate, energetic, one-of-a kind and amazing educator, had served in Nepal since 1982 with UMN and KISC.

As per Christine's wishes, the memorial service was brief with no sermons or eulogy, and similar to the service held in Fort William in Scotland. It was wonderful to hear friends who introduced the hymn, scripture reading and the poem (chosen by her) share encouraging, funny and unique stories about Christine.

The highlight of the programme was an amazing drama featuring Tommy Tempo, the main character from a series of children's books authored by Christine. The drama was performed by the students of Rato Bangla school. The collection taken at the service in her memory was donated to Room to Read. Christine's involvement with Room to Read in its earliest days included authoring the Tommy Tempo books.

Christine was insistent that the memorial service should be a joyful occasion. We can well say that it was a joyous and a beautiful afternoon to celebrate her life and faith. We give thanks to God for a life of service and dedication which touched so many people in so many places.



PARTNERSHIP RENEWAL

On March 28 at UMN, we celebrated the signing of yet another agreement between FELM and UMN. We are privileged to share a friendship of 40 years with FELM.





Like a PHOENIX from the ashes

Standing on top of a hill above Neupane Gaun village in south Dhading, I marvel at the valley below and distant mountains with a sense of awe and wonder. The majestic beauty before me is unique, breathtaking and, for a moment, almost stills my heart.

From my vantage point, all is calm and peaceful. But below, there is a flurry of activity and sense of purpose as locals go about their daily business.

Women collect fodder for their livestock on their backs and draw water from the community tap as barefoot children run and laugh as they play. I imagine this scene of tranquillity was much the same on 25 April, 2015 when a devastating earthquake rocked this beautiful country, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake.

Neupane Gaun is one of the many communities in the Dhading region where the United Mission to Nepal and their partner agencies are working hard to help people rebuild their communities.

I meet Dhana Maya, a shy, young mother whose home was destroyed on that fateful day just over three years ago. She tells me that she feared she would have to move away from the village with her family because she was forced to walk for hours a day to collect fresh water.

But happily, this will not come to pass because UMN has installed a community water tap opposite her temporary home.

It is one of 29 in the area. Dhana is very pleased, not least because work is underway to build her a brand new house next to the tap. The work UMN is engaged in is as important as it is impressive.

I am extremely proud that Church of Scotland members have been able to make a difference to the lives of so many people through the Let Us Build a House campaign. It is imperative that people in my country continue to pledge international aid in wake of such disasters. It would be a very sad day if cynicism, sparked by the unacceptable behaviour of a minority of people who work for British charities, took hold.

Money raised by Kirk members is being used to transform lives in ways few Scots will contemplate. The parents of children in Edinburgh never have to worry about them being trapped in schools flattened by an earthquake.

Happily, that fear has also been diminished in Dhading thanks to earthquake resistant schools that have been built by UMN and their partners.

Nepal and Scotland are worlds apart in many ways. We take so many things for granted in our cities and towns - fresh air, street lighting, stable electricity and Wi-Fi, clean streets and smooth tarmac roads.

But in many respects, the Nepali are far richer than the British. They are incredibly resilient, dignified and place great value on faith, family and community. Heartbreaking as it is, destruction in Dhading has led to construction and progress. With a little help, great things in this beautiful country are clearly possible.

CAMERON BROOKS
Communications Officer
Church of Scotland



PRAY

Pray that the churches in Nepal would find strength and wisdom to grow in their faith and services to people. The rapid growth of the churches (most of them self-reliant), the growing Christian youth population and the education on love of neighbour have helped churches think and work towards holistic ministry. Please pray for the Nepali churches, especially in remote parts of the country, as they move out to the communities and take part in different forms of development work.

Pray for the church leaders so that they can have a meaningful and a respectful conversation with the policy makers and implementers to find ways to resolve issues that have been affecting the church communities.

Pray for the internship programme of UMN. We praise God that we have been able to engage Nepali young people in transformational development for the last 11 years with the internship programme. Please pray for the provision of funds to sustain this programme which will allow us to continue to equip and produce professional young people who will play effective roles in the church and the community.

Pray for Divya Khanal, UMN's Integral Development Team Leader, as he leads the team, builds relationships with local bodies, promotes integral service by churches and implements the *Sangsangai* work in various villages in 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 to learn more. Send your CV or resumé with your email.

PRIORITY NEEDS

EXPATRIATE SUPPORT ADVISOR (Kathmandu based) – 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 coordinate the Language & Orientation Programme. The background may be in Human Resources, Management, Intercultural Studies, Member Care, Language Teaching, or other related fields. Prior cross-cultural experience is preferred, but not required.

GRANT WRITING ADVISORS (Cluster based) – To support the writing of proposals and reports and build team capacities in this area.

DOCTORS OF ALL KINDS (Cluster based) – United Mission Hospital Tansen: General Practitioners, Surgeons, OB/GYN, Paediatrician, Internal Medicine, ENT and Urology. Okhaldunga Community Hospital: GP with Public Health experience & Surgeon. 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.



UMN Change PROCESS

The Leadership Team of UMN continues to work on the change process allowing questions, feedback and suggestions from UMN staff.

The Cluster Teams have identified the twelve target municipalities where we plan to continue working after 2020. We're now in the process of confirming that these twelve municipalities are politically receptive to social development work—that their planned municipal laws and policies

on NGOs will be helpful and not too restrictive. Very soon, we will also identify the future location of UMN's Cluster offices, in the best locations to engage with the target municipalities.

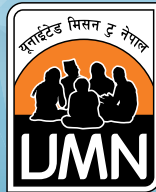
The teams in Sunsari, Dhading, Rupandehi, and Rukum West are working on exit plans, with support from visiting LT members. Cluster Exit Strategies are now largely complete, and exit/sustainability planning with individual partners is underway. We plan to stay engaged with UMN partners even after we exit, through sector-based learning groups on Facebook and periodic gatherings to share learning on NGO sustainability.



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 (e.g. UMN's internship programme on page 6). 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.

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Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

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