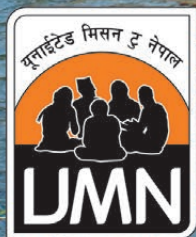


UMN News

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environmental
&
sustainability

well-being
&
security



Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

CONTENTS



2 Joel's Letter



3 Stunned by Drought



4 Climate Change So What's Changing?



6 Living Waters in Baseni Village



8 Going Solar



9 Ending deforestation is our best chance!



10 The Thorsons



12 Water for Climate Justice



13 UMN Change Process



14 Pray & Join Us



15 News



Dear friends

Care for the natural environment is embedded in UMN's values as a Christian organisation. The Genesis vocation of humanity, to use our powers over creation in faithful stewardship rather than destructive exploitation, flows naturally out of our call to love God and neighbour.

All creation is described as God-glorifying throughout Scripture; we honour God by respecting the creation. And part of loving our neighbour is caring for the creation of which our neighbour is part.

This year in Nepal, many southern districts once again faced widespread flooding. One cause was the increasingly erratic Nepali monsoon, a likely consequence of global climate change: weeks without rain followed by sudden massive downpours. But for the most part, floods swallowed villages across the Terai because of environmentally blind development... because of elevated roads acting as dams, wetlands cleared for agriculture, a booming population settling in flood plains.

How do we live out the vocation of neighbour-love to flood-vulnerable populations in the Terai? It can't just be through a narrow focus on increasing their economic wellbeing; we need also to consider the wellbeing of the creation around them. Otherwise the benefits of our work become more and more likely to be lost in the disasters that stem from environmental degradation.

So UMN's values drive us to look for development pathways that respect and strengthen ecosystems, rather than damaging or ignoring them. This issue of UMNNews describes some of the specific work that has resulted from this commitment. Thank you as always for your prayer and support!

JOEL HAFVENSTEIN
Executive Director

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STUNNED BY DROUGHT

What grabbed my attention and drew me to consider working in Nepal with UMN was drought - and UMN's advocacy and response to it. I knew about earthquakes and landslides and I might have imagined a risk of flooding. But for a country which experiences monsoon rains, I had no idea that many communities in Nepal suffer from drought. When I watched UMN's "Climate change is real" video one night in the UK, I was stunned by what I saw: challenges which I had no idea existed in Nepal. I saw severe loss for remote communities in Rukum and Mugu due to droughts in Western Nepal: cattle dying, crops stunted, water-mills halted by lack of water. Less snowfall than normal, which remained for a shorter season, meant their seasonal pattern had mysteriously changed. All this for communities who may never have heard of climate change, and certainly create a negligible output of greenhouse gases from their daily lives.

Through studying Geography at school back in Scotland (a country with abundant rain!) and then at university, I became particularly interested in drought and especially in the possible solutions - techniques for adapting farming practices to make the most of the water available. Adaptation so that communities can be sustained, having dignity and a future of growing enough food, removing the need to migrate with all its associated health and social problems. In my training we had case studies from Africa and the Middle East but never from Nepal. I felt I would love to be involved in promoting this practical adaptation, as part of being engaged to help people living in poverty in other countries, but I had no clarity - what could my role be when I wasn't an agriculturalist or engineer?

In late 2017 my passion for this issue and creating solutions was reignited by UMN's climate video... Still in shock from the video and wondering what can be done for these communities, I was relieved and inspired to read about the projects UMN supports for climate-change adaptation - for example developing drought-resistant crops. In this latest news, drought in another district (Nawalparasi in the South West of Nepal) is highlighted, along with the innovations from UMN and our partners which bring hope and enable families to thrive and remain in their community.

This year, as part of my orientation to UMN, I visited the IT Team who enthusiastically shared about the solar panels which they not only installed at UMN headquarters but also designed themselves! Again, I was really encouraged by the environmental responsibility behind the scenes in UMN's working sites, hidden on the roof.

I am grateful and excited to have my dormant dream realised through this opportunity to work in an organisation which, in seeking fullness of life for all, creatively highlights and addresses the environmental challenges faced in Nepal.

RUTH WEBSTER
Communications Advisor





SO WHAT'S CHANGING?

Durga Prasad Upadhyay, UMN's Environment and Climate Change Advisor, shares with us some climate change scenario concerns that he has observed in some regions of Nepal.

Across the country, unlike the past, the summer monsoon rain has been quite unpredictable. A study on the monsoon pattern of the last 50 years showed 36 delayed monsoons. 10 June should be the monsoon onset day on average, but the trend hasn't been so. Too much rain in just a few hours has caused both flooding and inundation in the flat land in the south of the country while landslides in hills and mountains are another major concern.

Winter rain has been quite weak in far west provinces of the country further affecting winter crops such as wheat and forcing people to opt for unsafe seasonal migration to India for daily wage labour. The results of the overall impact of weak winter rain and unpredictable summer monsoon can be observed in the drying-up of water sources, mostly in the mid-hilly region including in the working villages of UMN.

The first ever recorded tornado in Nepal that occurred on 31 March 2019 destroyed millions of dollars worth of property and killed 29 people in just 30 minutes in Bara and Paras, Province 2.

DROUGHT – A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

What does drought and untimely rain mean to poor farmers in Nepal?

Research shows that drought has been one of the strong causes of the rise in crop-specific diseases, depletion of traditional varieties of crops, dwindling springs' discharge (mostly in the hills) and the rise of social conflicts associated with agriculture and water issues.

With drought, farmers are not able to transplant paddy on time: poor crop yields and crop failures mean a rise of food prices in the market; women's work load increases as they have to walk further up to collect water; household sanitation and hygiene are compromised; children's education is affected. For poor farmers in remote hilly villages, drought also means leaving families behind and going to India to earn.

WHAT IS UMN DOING TO HELP THE SITUATION?

UMN has introduced drought-resilient and tolerant seeds to farmers struggling with dry fields and poor harvest. UMN has also helped with drinking water and irrigation schemes in villages.

WHAT'S NEW?

Moringa farming is a recent project UMN is involved in. Moringa is a plant that is native to the Indian sub-continent in the foot hills of the Himalayas. This plant is not only high in beneficial nutrients but is also a drought and heat-tolerant crop and a best carbon offset option.

UMN is excited to have just introduced this plant to the farmers in Dhading district. 12,000 saplings have been distributed in July. This is also a means to diversify the cash income source for poor farmers.



Changing Climate Scenario in UMN's Working Locations in Nepal

Description		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Remarks
Monsoon rainfall	Before 2005						●	●	●	●	●			Number of monsoon months has decreased but monsoon rainfall amount has increased after 2005.
	After 2005						●	●	●	●				
Winter	Before 2005	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●	There used to be long winters with many cool days overlapping with end week of monsoon and few weeks thereafter, but after 2005 the number of cold days has decreased.
	After 2005	●	●									●	●	
Summer	Before 2005				●	●	●	●	●	●				Incidence of forest fires has increased significantly as the summer has been quite long.
	After 2005		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Frost in hilly districts	Before 2005	●	●	●	●						●	●	●	Winter rain has decreased significantly along with a decline in frost formation after 2005.
	After 2005											●	●	
Snowfall in Bajhang and Rukum East	Before 2005	●	●	●	●							●	●	Ice-free winters have become the new normal for Takashera people in Rukum, particularly after 2010.
	After 2005	●	●	●	●									
Flood and landslide	Before 2005						●	●	●	●				Intensity and frequency of flood and land-slides increased after 2005.
	After 2005						●	●	●	●				
Drought	Before 2005			●	●	●	●							Frequency and duration of drought incidents increased, affecting fodder for cattle and crops for people.
	After 2005	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	
Human disease outbreak	Before 2005						●	●	●					Mostly water-related diseases in the time of drought.
	After 2005			●	●	●	●	●	●					
Pest & disease in crops	Before 2005					●	●	●						Increasing frequency and severity.
	After 2005							●	●	●	●			
Disease in animals and poultry	Before 2005									●	●	●	●	Previously unknown diseases have become quite common throughout the year for the past several years.
	After 2005	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	

LIVING WATERS IN BASENI VILLAGE



312 people now have a 24/7 water supply coming through delivery pipes from a 50,000 litre capacity water tank. A network of earth canals irrigates the 15 hectares of parched land with enough flow of water to grow crops. Many families are thriving with commercial farming employment opportunities and fresh green veggies in meals are plentiful. This is a hilly off-road village called Baseni in Nawalparasi District, which is steadily transforming.

About a year ago, the story wasn't so encouraging. The food security situation had worsened in this village over the last 10 years, with food secure months dropping from 8 to 4 months a year. Many factors such as population growth, limited employment, drought and untimely rain or not enough rain contributed to this situation.

What we see today in Baseni Village started from a vision a year ago to help the Baseni population combat the impacts of climate change. Many farmers like Padam (pg #7) tell us how the water now flowing through their village has changed their lives like never before.

Suraj Sonar, UMN project staff in Nawalparasi says, "Since vegetable farming creates more family employment with instant cash, many Baseni farmers have switched from ginger farming to commercial fresh vegetable farming."

A collaborative action between Bread for the World, UMN, Isai Samaj Nawalparasi UMN's local partner, Himalaya Community Development Forum a local NGO and Hupsikot Rural Municipality.

Padam Thada, a 32-year-old man from the same village says: "I have had a vegetable farm since December 2018 where I cultivate tomatoes, cauliflower, cabbage and carrots. I sell my produce to nearby shops down the hill. In the last five months I have sold 1,500 USD worth of vegetables!"



GOING *Solar*



When massive power cuts affected the country for years (this meant power cuts for offices and homes while electricity was diverted to factories), it was getting crucial to find an alternative source of power. The 'load-shedding' hours would last as long as 18 hours a day during 2014! We had no option but to rely on the diesel-operated generators time and again which was not only costly but would also increase our organisational carbon footprint.

Solar power was the only step forward to unlimited and sustainable energy.

Fully powering UMN's Thapathali office during load-shedding would be very costly, so we started with solar power backup in just the main building of Thapathali and gradually extended it to the other buildings. Because solar technology was very expensive, we learnt how to make and design our own. Our version was four times cheaper than the commercially-available option! Today, we can proudly say that on sunny days we completely run our IT system in UMN headquarters in Kathmandu - computers, server systems and network - on solar power. Another huge achievement for us was to set up solar power backups in all of our clusters.

Shifting to solar power was important to provide a reliable and environmentally-friendly power in UMN offices for efficient, safe and uninterrupted functioning of ICT systems.

SHRAWAN K. SHRESTHA
ITS Manager

Ending deforestation is our best chance!



During our awareness sessions with the communities on the consequences of deforestation we hear amazing stories shared by villagers who now understand the value of saving trees.

Some men said that they used to take a walk to the forest and cut down a tree "just for fun". Others said they would start a forest fire just for the sake of amusement.

Realising that these actions were wrong and bringing an end to such destruction can make big differences in the future to save our forests.

So, what does a single tree do?

- A single tree absorbs around 20 kg of dust annually, and removes 80 kg of toxic metal particles such as lithium, mercury and lead from the air over its lifetime.
- An adult tree purifies around 100,000 m² of polluted air each year and removes 20 tons of carbon dioxide over its lifetime.
- One large tree can provide a day's supply of oxygen for up to four people.
- Even a single tree plays a vital role in creating micro weather pockets with cool air around.
- One tree close to a house works like an acoustic wall – it absorbs and reduces the noise.
- One tree can serve as a home for many birds and insects and as fodder for animals.
- The root system of a mature tree can be a significant resistance factor during an earthquake.
- Adding a single tree to agricultural land across a drought-scarred land creates shade, regenerates soils, fertilizes the ground and fundamentally contributes to food production.

(Source: WRI 2014, USDA 2015 & IMARD, 2019)



It's time to leave our "home". We can't believe it too!

- Steve and Becky Thorson

"What! I have to knead dough for bread, churn butter, culture yoghurt, roll out pasta noodles, and make my own mayonnaise from scratch?" Life was different in Nepal in 1984.

Stephen and Becky Thorson are soon to become the fourth longest workers in the history of the United Mission to Nepal. They were sent by World Mission Prayer League (WMPL), one of the founding missions of UMN. They have continuously worked in UMN for over 35 years, although 39 years ago they first went to Amp Pipal Hospital for 3 months when Steve was a medical student! Steve relates: "When in my third year at university, Dr. Tom Hale (another UMN doctor) was giving a chapel presentation about Nepal (with no pictures). While listening, I received a direct call from God to 'go to Nepal as a physician,' and applied to medical school the following week. Nine years later, after finishing university, medical school and pediatric residency training, we returned to Nepal in January 1984 as members of UMN, now with two children - 2½ year-old Christy and 11-month-old Mark."

Their first 2-year posting was in Tansen Hospital, where Steve managed the pediatric department. In 1986, they were transferred to Kathmandu, where Steve worked as one of only two consultant pediatricians at Patan Hospital for many years. Eventually UMN was able to turn Patan Hospital over to a national board. When the hospital became a medical school a few years later, the new Patan Academy of Health Sciences was able to hire more pediatricians. In 2005 Steve began coordinating pediatric research with the sponsorship of Oxford University, UK and Otago University, NZ. He explains: "We have conducted studies on vaccine-preventable diseases, focusing primarily on pneumococcal disease prevention. Our most important contribution to world health is our study showing that a delay of the 3rd dose of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine for babies increases protection at the end of the first year of life, and that this better immunity lasts up to 4 years of age. Our schedule is now accepted as an alternative by the World Health Organization." Last year, Steve





coordinated a staff of 19 Nepali health professionals in this research. Many papers have been published, contributing to improved health for Nepali children.

Becky, after several years of taking care of their young children, first worked part-time in the microbiology laboratory of Patan Hospital. In 1992, Becky began teaching English to students at UMN's Lalitpur Nursing Campus. Becky states: "In the next few years, I added several social sciences to my teaching schedule. I developed the curriculum for the BN anthropology course, which has been used by other nursing campuses in Nepal as well. In 2003, I moved to UMN Headquarters as part of the personnel department coordinating the Language and Orientation Program (LOP) for new expatriate workers." Since 2013, she has become the Expatriate Support Advisor, coordinating everything from recruitment through LOP, as well as overseeing the management and member care of expatriates in UMN.

Their children, Christy and Mark, grew up in Nepal and both of them still feel that Nepal is their heart country. In fact, both of their Facebook profiles say they are "from Kathmandu, Nepal"! One can imagine how hard it was for them to adjust to life in the USA, and how sad it is to be so far away from "home". Mark has a Computer Science degree and a Master's in Information and Library Science. He came back home to Nepal to be the KISC librarian from 2013-2015, followed by 18 months at Hillcrest school in Nigeria, and now is a school librarian in Florida. Christy's degree is in Intercultural Studies, and she is now a busy homemaker in Tennessee with her husband and 3 children: Maya (12), Jonathan (10) and Roshani (3).

Stephen and Becky add: "We fully expected God to send us to another country at some time, or to return us to the United States after about 10 years in Nepal, but we never felt led by God to do so. Several times, new visa rules threatened our continuing to work in Nepal, but each time another visa or position opened up for us. We now feel God leading us to leave UMN and return to work in the States, probably in the Home Office of our sending mission, WMPL. But we will hopefully come back to Nepal for visits several times in the next few years."



WATER FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE



Pokhari is a hilltop village of 29 families. Over the past 30 years the community has experienced a gradual decrease in water availability. Nearby water sources dried up due to frequent droughts, changing patterns of winter and summer rainfall. In 2011 a solar water pump from a remote stream was installed, but for the last 18 months this was broken beyond local repair capacity, requiring at least one woman from each household to spend 8 to 12 hours daily collecting water for the family. At the most severe, in the dry season girls accompanied their mother, missing school and play.

Pokhari resident Kuni Maya Saru explains their hardship: "During the dry season we had to wake up in the dark or early morning from 2:00am to bring just 10 - 20 litres of water, so we had to compromise on our sleep."

To overcome this problem and to revive the community water justice, UMN Rupandehi cluster in partnership with Isai Samaj Nawalparasi (ISN) and the dwellers of Pokhari village implemented the "Water for Climate Justice Project". Through this project, two 1.4 KW water pumps were installed while existing service tanks and one standing tap were repaired. As a result, now the standing tap delivers 7 litres of water per minute. The happiness and joy in the faces of women and the community is evident as water is sufficient for both household consumption and livestock use.

Kuni Maya Saru notices the change: "After regular water flow at our home, now we don't need to get up early morning and we are having a complete sleep."

Another lady, Haimati Rana, explains: "Regular water in the community not only reduced our workload, it also improved our personnel hygiene as we are now washing our clothes and can take a bath on alternate days." She said coyly that they are also looking beautiful now!

It has revived hope for local business too, like Til Bahadur Rana's homestay which was on the brink of being closed due to water scarcity. With a regular water supply becoming available, Til is able to continue his business.

SURAJ SONAR

Project Manager - Disaster Management



UMN Change PROCESS

You might have noticed that in every quarter you receive an update on the UMN Change Process; it is important for us. We are very grateful to you all for continuously upholding us in your prayers for wisdom and courage to face the challenges.

- ➔ To ensure UMN's financial viability in future, the Leadership Team has decided to let go of six central office-based roles. It has been a difficult decision to bid farewell to some long-serving colleagues. The change process has impacted the organisational structure and staff and managing transition has been a challenge.

- ➔ Some strategic elements, such as *How UMN Learns*, *the Risks We Face*, *Analysis of Urban Poverty*, *Participatory Bottom-up Approach*, etc. are still in progress. We plan to incorporate them in the Strategic Plan for the next five years.
- ➔ The *Participatory Bottom-up Approach Framework* has been prepared and is in a pilot phase.
- ➔ We are grateful that the *Cluster Strategic Planning* process has been completed. Now, the Teams are working on the *Project and General Agreement* preparation with the Government of Nepal, which is a vital, complex and lengthy legal process.
- ➔ Implementation of the *Exit Plan* for Dhading, Sunsari, Rukum West and Rupandehi Clusters and Local Partners is in progress.
- ➔ The *Monitoring System* of UMN is under review by an External Consultant. The outcome will feed into the monitoring system in the future.



PRAY

Nepal is very sensitive to the impacts of Climate Change. With unpredictable weather patterns, poor farmers are already experiencing the effects of it, through floods, droughts and storms.

Please pray for farming families whose livelihoods are already threatened by the changes in climate. Pray for organisations like UMN who are helping them develop resilience and adopt new strategies.

Pray for the poorest people living in poverty who are in disaster-prone areas along the southern tarai belt. Pray for families who are affected by the monsoon flood year after year. Pray for our disaster risk reduction and disaster response programmes and activities that they will have a beneficial impact. We need the government to work more seriously and develop strong plans and strategies to control destructions and massive losses every year from floods.

Pray also for staff leaving, moving and starting through the change process. For wisdom in serving the poor well in this new phase.



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

DOCTORS FOR UNITED MISSION HOSPITAL TANSEN IN ORDER OF NEED: Family Physicians (GPs) most needed. Next priority need is Internal Medicine. Then OB/GYN and Pediatrics. An Anesthetist will be needed in 2020.

TUTORIAL GROUP TEACHER FOR TANSEN: To teach a small group of delightful expatriate children ages 5-11 from a variety of countries, and manage the tutorial group. Needed in summer 2020.

DOCTOR FOR OKHALDUNGA 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 preferred. For OB/GYN and surgeons, both short and long term are welcome to apply.


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ALSO COURSE IN TANSEN

In addition to caring for hundreds of patients each day, doctors at United Mission Hospital Tansen are also constantly involved in training and helping young junior doctors to learn new skills. Right now, there is an ALSO course (Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics) being run for about 10 Nepali resident doctors. Dr Les, who was qualified to be a trainer a couple of years ago, is heading up the team of senior doctors leading the course, and he is so pleased to have Dr Shuvechcha as part of the leadership group. The participants attend various lectures, and then have practical sessions for hands-on practice. Our hospital is working hard to reduce the still high maternal mortality rate in Nepal, and also to ensure that women who come here can, as far as it is possible, have a safe delivery and a healthy baby.



We are thankful to now have Dr Shuvechcha as our qualified Obs/Gyn doctor. We would ask for prayers that doctors with the right skills and hearts to serve outside Kathmandu Valley would continue to be called to come here to Tansen. Daily, we seek to live up to our motto, "We Serve, Jesus Heals".

FAREWELL INTERNS!!



The 12th batch of interns officially graduated in July after completing a fruitful year with UMN. We wish the fresh graduates a bright professional journey ahead.

SIGNING OF UMN'S PROJECT AMENDMENT

UMN's current project agreement (2015-2020) has been amended with the Social Welfare Council (SWC). UMN's Executive Director Joel Hafvenstein and SWC member secretary Rajendra Paudel signed the amendment agreement on 22 July 2019. The amended plan and the budget were mainly for UMN's DDRP programmes in Dhading with focus on school constructions in North Dhading, where 12 new schools were built.

ETHEL METZLER - GONE TO GLORY



We are sad to inform our friends about the passing away of our old friend Ethel Metzler on 27 July at the age of 95. She was the wife of UMN Executive Director, Ed Metzler. From 1989 to 1998, Ethel and Ed were in their beloved Kathmandu, where Ed was Executive Director for UMN. Ethel continued her work in private practice as psychotherapist and consultant, serving a multi-cultural population of expatriate and Nepalese residents with sensitivity grounded in her faith, and an energetic engagement in the diversity and experience of others.

We thank God for her beautiful life. Our love and prayers are with the Metzler family as they grieve Ethel's passing.

THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S

AND ALL THAT IS IN IT, THE WORLD,

AND THOSE WHO LIVE IN IT.

Psalms 24:1



Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

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