

UMN News

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Fullness of life for all in a transformed Nepali society



Dear friends

JOEL HAFVENSTEIN
Executive Director

The past month has been harrowing for Nepal. After a relatively light first wave and a several-month lull, the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic hit fast and hard.

Before this wave is past, the confirmed death toll from coronavirus will exceed that of the 2015 earthquakes – and COVID-19 has a much bigger hidden death toll, people who die without ever being tested for the virus. We are grateful that no UMN staff have so far passed away, but some have lost parents or parents-in-law to the pandemic. Several friends of UMN and senior leaders in the Nepali Christian community have died from COVID-19. We share in their families' grief.

As I write this, the national wave is beginning to recede, but many rural areas are still going through the worst of it. UMN continues to work through our hospitals (see page 14) and cluster teams (see page 12) to save as many lives as possible.

The pandemic has also affected education systems worldwide. The shift to on-line classes has been extremely difficult for Nepal with limited sources and knowledge. The

school-going children in our project areas have been staying at home for several weeks now with no access to alternative education. Some of UMN's education projects which you will read in this issue, have been 'on hold' currently but we hope and pray to be able to pick up soon and help rebuild the loss in learning. UMN is also a member of the UNICEF and government-led 'Learning Continuity Campaign' which has been trying to tackle the current education challenges. It is also encouraging to know the Self-Learning Books published by UMN during the pandemic last year are still used well in communities.

Please pray for the UMN teams who continue to do outstanding work despite many risks and uncertainties. Pray (and advocate!) for countries around the world to provide vaccines to Nepal – that is our hope for escaping multiple future waves like this one.

God is with us, and we continue to trust in his care and provision through the worst tragedies that the world has to throw at us.

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can be
Learning ^ Fun

BAIHING PROJECT

Project's Name: Activity Based Learning project

Partner's Name: Pragatishil Yuwa Samaj (PYS)

Forty-five schools in Thalara Rural Municipality in Bajhang are motivated and excited about the new teaching techniques they have recently learned. We can see the children in the lower grades of this school enjoy learning language, science and mathematics in a fun and less stressful way.

Since January 2021 this newly implemented UMN project in Bajhang has been providing training to teachers to think differently and teach in a non-traditional manner.

Activity-Based Learning is where students are engaged in activities to ensure better learning rather than learning as passive listeners in classrooms.

The project has focused on Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Grades 1-3. Recently teachers from 26 schools participated in a five-day training programme. Following this training, 18 more teachers of Grade 1 also took part in the training.

Pandav Rasaili, UMN's Project Manager reports, "I feel so happy to see the excitement in the teachers. During the training, they arrived so early in the morning and showed much eagerness to learn. I have already seen changes

COVID second wave update:

All schools in the district were closed since the end of April. They will probably open by June end for the new academic session. To prepare them for that, educational materials and uniforms were provided as help to needy students. During this time of school closure, drinking water facility was constructed in three schools and toilet construction (disability-friendly) in three other schools were completed. Code of conduct for students, parents and teachers were put up on the walls of six schools. Children were encouraged to continue the Self-Learning Books (published by UMN) while at home during this period.

in their teaching techniques. Even the attendance roll call in the morning has become fun for the children. It is also encouraging and interesting to see them use locally available materials to make teaching resources."

Five schools in this area have done their School Self-Assessment and have worked on creating School Improvement Plans and action plans accordingly. UMN has also supported 11 schools with floor mats and cushions and 20 schools with educational materials. The local government of Thalara Rural Municipality are equally supportive of the project initiatives; five ward chairmen have even participated in one of the training programmes.

PANDAV RASAILI
Project Manager - Education

Project's Name: Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB MLE)

Partner's Name: Nepal Magar Society Service & Information Centre (MIC NEPAL)

For many children in Rukum, it has been a challenge to comprehend what was being taught in the classroom. The natives in this region speak in their mother tongue Kham Magar. With the launch of UMN's MTB MLE project, the school textbooks were translated and published into bilingual books- Nepali and Kham Magar. The project also managed and supported the schools with teaching materials and classroom set up and teachers were trained to use a multilingual approach.

The MTB MLE project is running in its second phase and will be implemented until December 2021. The project aims to improve access to quality education for children from ethnic minorities through the provision of multilingual education.

Finally, the students are learning in a language they are most familiar with. There is an increased curiosity, motivation and comprehension among students in their active learning. Parents have also become encouraged and positive and they visit the school to enquire about their children's progress and even show eagerness to support their children at home.

The student dropout rate reduced to 4.5 % (2019) from 15.6% in the baseline report (targeted 5% in the project proposal). The learning achievement also increased to 51.35% (2019) which was at 35.6% (2013) before the MTB MLE intervention (targeted 55% in the project proposal).

This has also helped the children learn the national language- Nepali. The local governing bodies have also approved the continuation of the project. Both the rural municipalities have incorporated it into their master plan and initiated support for child-friendly classroom management and ground management.

KUL BAHADUR CHAUDHARI

Senior Programme Officer - Education

COVID second wave update:

With the schools closed during the pandemic, teachers and volunteers in Rukum East went to villages and taught in very small groups. Also, the local radio was primarily used in rural areas to run the classes. UMN has collaborated with the local government and supported in the printing of books in Kham Magar language. Currently in the process of print, these books will be ready for use in schools after the lockdown is lifted end of June in the new academic session.

Embracing MOTHER-TONGUE LEARNING



RUKUM PROJECT

BETTER SCHOOLS

high in the hills

MUGU PROJECT

Project's Name: Mugu Initiatives for Community Advancement (MICA)

Partner's Name: Karani Community Development Centre (KCDC)

The project aims to improve the status of the people of Mugu Karmarong, help them live a better life and improve their education, health and livelihood conditions.

UMN has provided help to make child-friendly classrooms in many villages of Karmarong. Recently, the project funded a two-roomed classroom school building in two villages- Karti and Kimri where students now are studying in comfort. These schools now also have better tables and fencing. Students are happy and eager to come to school after vacations due to the improved facilities available.

UMN also provided scholarships to 50 financially needy students in Karmarong. They were also given educational materials to encourage them to do better. Such activities and the project have improved the education system of Karmarong and helped many more children to access and benefit from a good education.

However, absenteeism of teachers and staff, the lack of government concern, the neglect of some teachers and parents, continue to hold back the large strides of positive change that could be achieved.

Despite these challenges we remain hopeful and committed. The concept of child-friendly education is in the process of being implemented, with UMN organising child-friendly teacher's training in Karmarong to allow students to learn without fear and amidst fun and creativity.

RANJU KUMARI RAI

Project Officer - Education

COVID second wave update:

All the schools are closed in Mugu, but our local partner volunteers have been visiting four villages (Karti, Dolphu, Mugu and Chita) to guide the children in their studies while they are away from school. Grade 2 children have been using the Self-Learning Books published by UMN during the pandemic last year.

PRIORITISING CHILD protection

Project's Name: Children, Youth, and Community for Change (CYCC-Project)

Partner's Name: Sunshine Social Development Organisation (SSDO)

About the project

The aim of this project is to develop empowered families and enabled communities, where children and young people are protected, free from any type of discrimination and threats and have opportunities to achieve their full potential.

In its second year, this project has seen encouraging outcomes in the communities. The CYCC project mainly runs a child partnership programme which currently includes 1400 children from Mayadevi Rural Municipality (RM).

The communities and families of Mayadevi RM are gradually being empowered through various child-related structures: 8 Ward Child Protection Committees, 13 School Child Protection Committees, 25 Child Partner Management Committees, 27 Child Clubs, 8 Youth Clubs and 1 Youth Network which are functioning well¹.

During the lockdown last year, the project staff worked together with the Curriculum Development Center (CDC), Kathmandu under the Ministry of Education on the production of Self-Learning Books for Grades 3 and 6 and 7. The 1377 books (one for each child) which were developed and printed by UMN in cooperation with Nepal's curriculum board were distributed to 1,377 marginalised children of grades 6 and 7 in 33 government schools of Mayadevi Rural Municipality. This has immensely helped the children continue their studies during lockdown.

Self-Reliance Groups are also a successful part of this project. The project has formed 76 such groups in the project area. All together 1,903 women are currently enjoying learning and sharing in these groups.

1. Functioning well: (1) Regular quarterly meeting conducted,
- (2). Have an annual plan and implemented accordingly, and
- (3). Carry out an annual household survey of child partners along with photos.

COVID second wave update:

Children were home with no alternative education or online classes. The CYCC project's social mobilisers followed the protocols and visited the children in groups of just five. Older students in the village have occasionally met with the younger ones to guide them in their studies.

The programme has also felt the need to allow children to move with time and gain knowledge in computer and related technology. In collaboration with Eduotech-Nepal, a help of 20 computers were given to three secondary schools, which has allowed more than 800 children from Grades 6 to 8 to enhance their skills and knowledge on ITS.

The local government has been very supportive of the programme and its plans. Recently UMN worked together with them to prepare a five-year education plan and a child protection policy. The municipality has also decided to share funds with CYCC to start activity-based-learning programmes in eight schools of this area.

It is encouraging to see 34 schools enthusiastically develop and work on school improvement plans based on the school self-assessment tests they took. The majority have already started implementing these plans accordingly.

NABA RAJ JOSHI

Project Manager - Education



KAPILVASTU PROJECT

6 YEARS AFTER THE NEPAL EARTHQUAKE

UMN'S RECOVERY WORK

April 25, 2015: A devastating earthquake of 7.6 magnitude struck Nepal killing around 9,000 people, injuring 22,000 and destroying over 700,000 homes. Another deadly tremor of 6.8 rattled the country again after 17 days on May 12. This was a dark year for Nepal.

Nepal had the challenging and daunting task of rebuilding a shattered and devastated country. The government of Nepal however wasn't alone; the world showed care and support in numerous ways. Many global campaigns and appeals were immediately launched, volunteers from all over the world flew into Nepal, local and international organisations joined hands to help Nepal - to give back hope.

UMN who has been serving in Nepal for the last 67 years immediately got into action and decided to support the rebuilding work in Dhading. Fourteen districts in Nepal were labelled as 'crisis-hit' and Dhading was one of them. Seven hundred and eighteen people were killed in the epicentre adjoining Dhading District. A UMN project called the Dhading Disaster Response Project was formed under the leadership of Shiv Prasad Adhikari and technical support to the DDRP work in the initial stages of its recovery work given by Peter Lockwood, a UMN project advisor.

In the early stages after the earthquake, UMN and its dedicated staff worked tirelessly round the clock in procuring food and non-food items, managing the warehouse, packing and distributing the relief items in the affected areas.

Mark Galpin, the then Executive Director of UMN (2010 -2016) felt confident about the decision and vision of rebuilding Dhading, considering UMN's good rapport, strong networks and relationship with the local government as UMN had been working in Dhading since 2005.

We find it a blessing to have supported and worked closely with communities in Northern and Southern Dhading when they needed us the most. We greatly appreciate the hard work and dedication of our three local partners HIMs¹, Prayas Nepal² and NRDS³ whose role was key in achieving our vision of rebuilding Dhading.

1. Himalaya Community Salvation Society (HIMS-NEPAL)

2. Prayatnasil Community Development Society (PRAYAS-NEPAL)

3. Namaste Rural Development Society (NRDS)

DHANA LAMA

I am very grateful and humbled to be part of DDRP. I have witnessed and experienced God's presence in resource provision for achieving what we envisioned, His comfort in despair, igniting hope for the future in managing a big team and a complex project.

Organisationally, it has been a remarkable learning experience in responding to a mega disaster for it has strengthened our capacity and boosted our confidence. We have been able to contribute to "Build Back Better."



The destruction report from Dhading showed:

- ➔ More than **180,000** individual houses and **318** schools with **3,094** classrooms, community drinking water schemes and various other structures were damaged.
- ➔ **718** people were killed in the epicentre adjoining Dhading District.

Dhading destruction:

- ➔ More than **180,000** individual houses destroyed.
- ➔ **318** schools with **3,094** classrooms completely and partially destroyed.
- ➔ **45** community drinking water schemes and various other structures were damaged.
- ➔ **15** road and bridge damaged.

UMN's initial relief distribution:

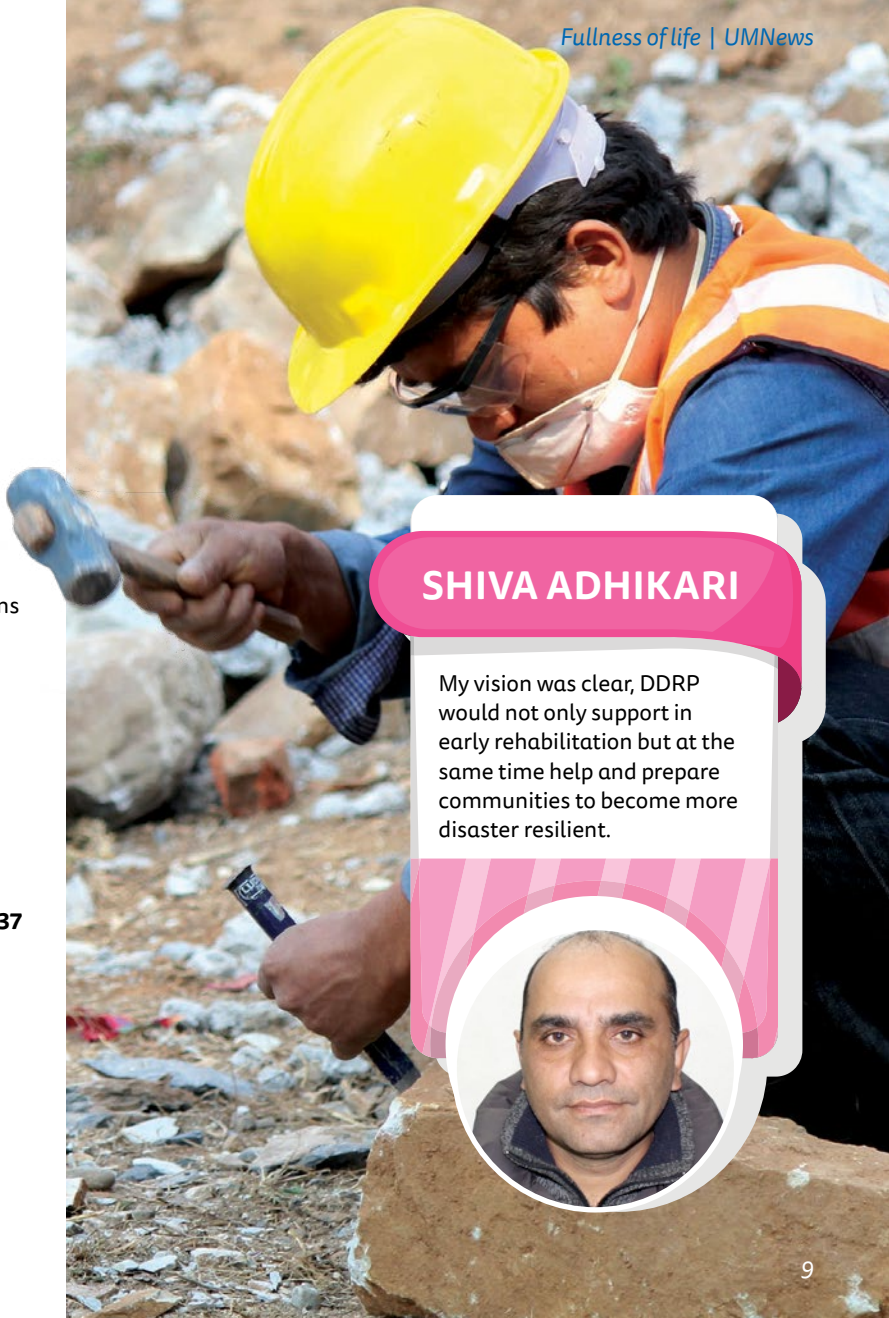
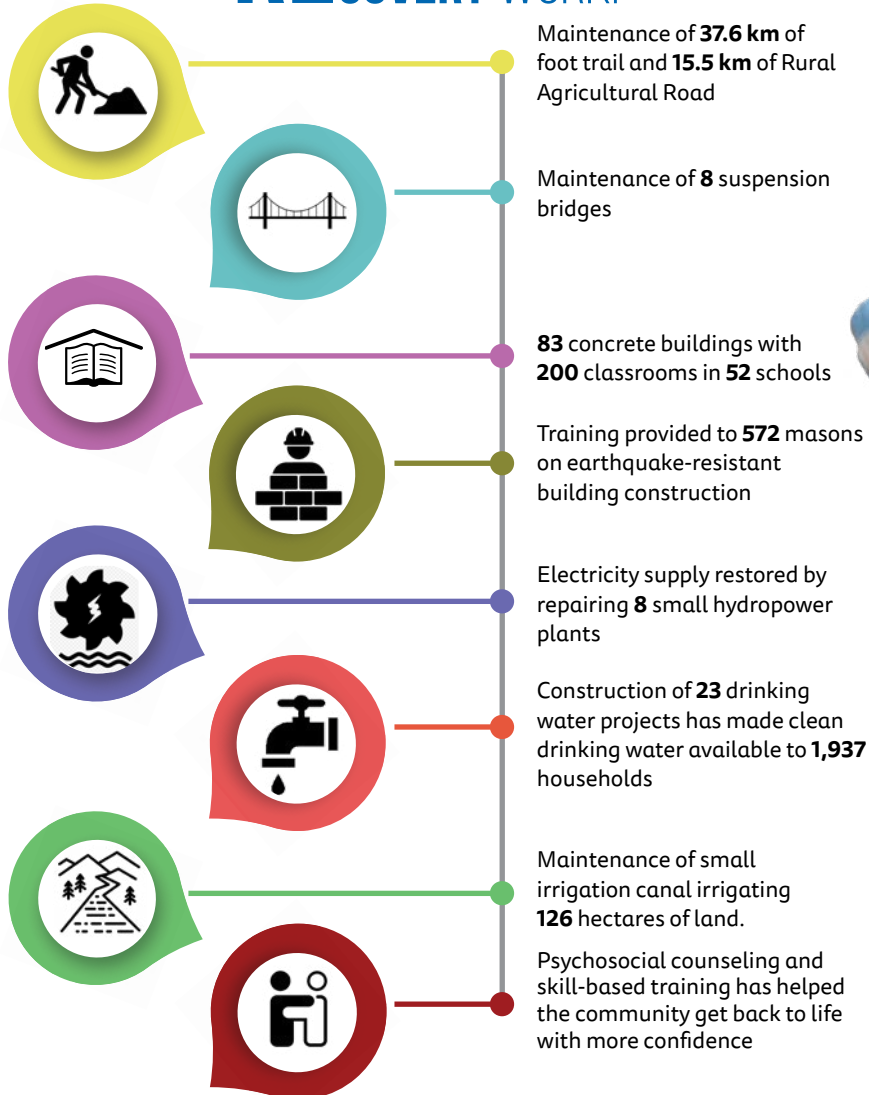
- ➔ UMN in coordination with local District Disaster Management Committee provided food and non-food items and relief items to about **12,000** households in the district.

PETER LOCKWOOD

It has been a privilege to have been involved in this remarkable process of rebuilding from the initial destitution and hopelessness, to seeing communities revived and restored.



REBUILDING AND RECOVERY WORK:



SHIVA ADHIKARI

My vision was clear, DDRP would not only support in early rehabilitation but at the same time help and prepare communities to become more disaster resilient.



Rekha chose EDUCATION, *not* ~~MARRIAGE~~

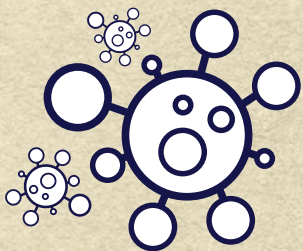
Only 17, but Rekha Raidash, a Grade 10 student from Kapilvastu is already facilitating sessions in her village's Self-Help Group (SHG). But until a year ago, things were entirely different. When her father decided to get her married, she had to give up her dreams to study further. In her community and in a conservative Dalit (so called lower caste) family like hers, a good girl never dares to say 'no' to her parents.

But when UMN's SECURE project was searching for female group-volunteers who could read and write, the project staff heard her story. She was then requested to join a SHG meeting with her mother who is also a SHG member. The session on the drawbacks and risks of child marriage was helpful for Rekha. She learned that child marriage is a crime and one of the major causes of violence and abuse against women. The social mobiliser also convinced her mother to cancel her marriage and let Rekha choose a bright future.

Rekha was finally bold enough to say 'no' to her parents and further shared, "Father, I want to pursue my higher education so that I can do something different than an ordinary woman in our community." But her father was still insisting as he considered it to be a part of the culture and fearing he would be disgraced by his community. Her mother finally convinced him and shared her learnings from SHG on the negative consequences of child marriage. Finally, after a month, Rekha went back to school.

Rekha now not only goes to school but she has also received different capacity-building training on group documentation, group facilitation skills and leadership development from the project. She even supports the SHG to collect savings alongside facilitating sessions.

Rekha, as smart as she is, made the most of the trainings she received from UMN's project and is already providing strong leadership in her group. She plans to continue being a role model, to help eradicate child-marriage from the community. There's no stopping Rekha.



UMN'S SECOND WAVE APPEAL

Most know that the second wave of COVID-19 sadly entered Nepal in late April. With our neighbouring country India battling the second wave earlier this year, it was a matter of time before it impacted Nepal. Much of the country went into lockdown, and the health sector struggled to provide proper care and service to the surging cases overflowing the hospitals. The situation was dire, with people desperate to obtain a cylinder of oxygen to save lives. Everywhere we heard stories of people sick and dying because of lack of oxygen supply.

Nepal saw its worst pandemic phase when it reached its peak during the second week of May. The country faced desperate shortages of oxygen, ventilators, ICU beds and other critical services. By the end of May, there were already over 7500 deaths in the country (4,107 in May alone) and 557,124 positive cases.

UMN quickly got into action supporting the District Hospitals in our six working districts and to those serving in the frontline. Procurement processes were underway right away to get oxygen concentrators and essential health and safety equipment. See page 12 to read more on our cluster response.

We are now seeing a decrease in cases in the capital city Kathmandu, but we see it picking up in other regions. UMN's two hospitals in Tansen and Okhaldhunga each have their oxygen plant, but there is a need for additional oxygen capacity to treat more patients now and in the future. See page 14 for hospital's update.

We are appealing to our supporters around the world to help us cope with this ongoing crisis. Thank you for standing with us in prayer and through generous support during these difficult times.



Help Nepal fight COVID GIVE OXYGEN, GIVE HOPE

You can either give to our hospital equipment need or UMN's general COVID fund. If you want to learn more about UMN's second wave response please go to www.umn.org.np/news/954

See our latest video updates at:



Giving Details:

If you would like to donate to UMN's Second Wave Response, please visit our Donate page at <https://www.umn.org.np/give> and mark it 'COVID response'.



UMN in action

SECOND WAVE RESPONSE

The second wave unfolded a large number of cases in Nepal. In our cluster working areas, many rural health institutions were caught unprepared, having hoped that Nepal's second wave would be more like the first. With hospitals crammed to capacity, the impact created a crisis which needed utmost attention. To quickly address the needs, UMN's Cluster offices coordinated with the District COVID-Crisis Management Centre (DCCMC) in providing oxygen concentrators, cylinders and emergency medical supplies to the local government bodies, district hospitals, Rural Municipality (RM) and the communities. Here is a short report of all the medical supplies and equipment distributed in our clusters until 11 June. Distribution work is ongoing in some clusters.



**Kapilvastu****Doti****Nawalparasi****Mugu****Rukum East**

Nawalparasi Cluster

They provided health and safety materials, beds and 35 oxygen cylinders to a 15-bedded isolation centre in Pratappur RM. Help was also provided to Palhinandan RM to establish a five-bedded isolation centre. Life-saving health and safety materials and equipment such as antigen kits were given to hospitals, local government bodies, health facilities, District Journalist Federation, District Prisoners Office and a temporary COVID hospital.

Rukum East Cluster

This cluster handed over essential health and safety materials and antigen testing kits to the District Hospital. The cluster office also supported the local awareness-raising activities by giving eight sound system sets to police stations to announce COVID prevention messages in the communities.

Kapilvastu Cluster

Essential health and safety materials were provided to the District Hospital, two Primary Health Centres and two Health Posts of Yashodhara and

Mayadevi RM. Six oxygen cylinders were supported to Baidauli Primary Health Centre of Yashodhara RM. Also, health and safety materials (soap, mask, sanitiser) were given to 956 female Self-Help Group members of Yasodhara. Food and relief items were also given to a Safe House in the district headquarter Taulihawa.

Mugu Cluster

They handed over health and safety materials to the District Hospital and two RMs- Mugum Karmarong

and Soru. Along with that, Mugu Cluster office also handed over three oxygen concentrators to the District Hospital and three to Mugum Karmarong. Chhayanath Rara RM was supported with 230 antigen kits.

Bajhang Cluster

Emergency food rations were provided to 274 families including single women, Dalits, people with disabilities and those living in high poverty of five RMs- Bungal, Thalara, Masta, Chhabispathivera, Khaptad and also food for covid patients at the District Hospital. The five RMs and Health Office in Bajhang also received medical emergency and six oxygen concentrators for the local health facilities. Four RMs received 16 hospital beds too.

Doti Cluster

Health and safety materials including antigen testing kits, oxygen concentrators, 10 oxygen cylinders with flow metre/mask with filled gas, 28 hospital bed sets were provided to the District Hospital, DCCMC and three RMs- Badikedar, Jorayal and Bogtan Fudsil.

THE LATEST FROM OUR HOSPITALS

TANSEN AND OKHALDHUNGA

Both our hospitals found themselves facing a rapid rise in COVID cases in their communities.

United Mission Hospital Tansen, being closer to a key border point with India, was in the region which received thousands of returnee migrants, many of whom carried COVID and had not been put into quarantine or isolation. Tansen hospital has been very busy treating COVID-19 patients during this second wave. Cases in the town and surrounding area surged, and the hospital faced constant enquiries for beds and oxygen at the start of May. It was overwhelming and painful to turn people away, knowing that they would be at risk of dying without oxygen. Our capacity is limited, and so, if more patients were added to the system, those currently on oxygen are at risk of failing. The hospital has an oxygen plant that can only produce around 113 litres of oxygen per minute. By calculating the amount of oxygen being used, we have estimated that every patient on the isolation needs 7 litres/ minute average supply. The most critically ill need at least 15 l/min.

For this reason, we have set the safety limit to admitting 20 oxygen-dependent patients. Other areas of the hospital - the wards, Emergency, operating room and maternity - are also using some oxygen. If we exceed the limit, this would be dangerous for patients needing high flow oxygen. There is an urgent need for a new compressor at the hospital, and we are in the process of purchasing it.

68 staff were infected with COVID during this wave, but we are thankful that only one was seriously ill and has now recovered. This relatively low severity was because all the staff received the vaccine when health workers were immunised. Now we have only two active staff cases.

The cases are now flattening in Tansen, but the risks are still high. We had 144 COVID patients admitted with the infection during May, and sadly, 29 died. There are currently 152 cases (update received 28 May).



Okhaldhunga Community Hospital has a good supply of antigen test kit now to confirm infection, and there are currently six COVID patients in the isolation ward. PCR tests are now available in the Okhaldhunga District and other districts of Province-1. Infections seem much higher in the community than in 2020, with many people in surrounding villages exhibiting symptoms, and sadly some staff are becoming infected. During May, 66 COVID cases were admitted to the hospital. Very sadly, the hospital saw six COVID deaths during May. Three nursing staff were infected and have recovered. Also, 54 COVID patients have recovered well and were discharged from the hospital in May. All the hospital staff have been vaccinated.



PRAY

- ➔ The second wave of the pandemic has brought much sorrow to Nepal. It may be that the worst period has passed, but because of a low vaccination rate and the need for people in the community to move around, there is fear about a future third wave. Please pray that vaccine will be made widely available so that the nation will be spared from more suffering and death.
- ➔ Our hospitals have been under tremendous pressure in caring for all who come for help. Full oxygen supply has been very difficult. Pray that a new compressor will be supplied for Tansen. We give praise to those around the world who have responded with generosity so that materials can be provided. These needs continue, and we need your prayers.
- ➔ This edition tells of the provision of vital materials to front line health workers and their posts. These gifts are saving many lives. Pray for each cluster team in its work of planning, procuring and delivery. Pray especially for protection in travel and meeting Health Post and Isolation unit staff.
- ➔ The work of providing a good education for children is one which looks toward a better future. Pray for all our staff who work in education to provide a greater opportunity to children to develop to their full potential and lift themselves out of poverty.



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 Sandra Chinnery at expat.recruitment@umn.org.np to learn more. Send your CV or resume with your email.

PRIORITY NEEDS

EXPATRIATE SUPPORT ADVISOR – KATHMANDU BASED: From July 2022

FUNDING MANAGER for Hospitals.

DOCTOR FOR UNITED MISSION HOSPITAL TANSEN: One Obstetrician/Gynaecologist needed long-term from July 2021.

DOCTORS FOR OKHALDHUNGA COMMUNITY HOSPITAL: One GP with rural experience, one Orthopedic Surgeon and one Obstetrician/Gynaecologist.

For all doctors, flexibility, the ability to work in a resource-limited setting and an interest in teaching and mentoring junior Nepali doctors are required.

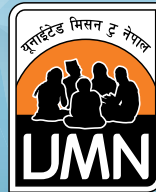


NOT
TO US, O LORD,

NOT TO US BUT TO YOUR NAME BE THE GLORY,

BECAUSE OF YOUR LOVE AND
FAITHFULNESS.

Psalms 115:1



Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

UNITED MISSION to NEPAL

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