

LMN News

ISSUE 75 | JUNE 2022



Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

Dear friends



DHANA LAMA
Executive Director

I thank God for each one of you once again for continuously upholding us in prayers and supporting us in many ways to make a positive difference.

Time flies by – this second issue of UMNews of the year is also the 75th issue, a milestone for us and the subscribers. This particular issue aims to highlight Climate Change and Child Rights & Protection related issues and their impacts. These issues are common and serious across the country including all of UMN's working areas. We feature new responses to climate change in Bajhang and give a glimpse of child rights and protection issues and how critical these are in Rukum and Kapilvastu.

Even after the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Nepal continues to face challenges in achieving quality education, health, development and protection of all children. Implementation of policies and laws is still very poor, with high prevalence of child labour (see page 8), child marriage, violence, exploitation, sexual abuse, discrimination, trafficking, etc. continuing across the country. In UMN working areas, early or forced child marriage has been prevalent, with a lack of child rights committees and child protection policies depriving children and adolescents of meaningful participation, protection, survival and development opportunities. I hope this background helps you to understand why it is so important for us to work in child protection.

Similarly, Nepal is highly vulnerable to climate change. There is a significant increase in the intensity of climate-induced disasters, e.g. floods and landslides with loss of lives, physical damage and economic loss (Nepal Disaster Report, 2019). The mean annual temperatures have also been increasing with the rapid melting of glaciers and risk of flood outburst, changes in rainfall patterns, frequent incidence of droughts, floods, and heat waves being major risks for the agriculture sector across the country, including our working areas. People have experienced increased annual precipitation of pre-monsoon but a decrease in winter rainfall, extinction of local varieties of crops, medicinal plants and wildlife, invasion of new/ alien species, drying out of water sources (see page 5), etc. The Nepal Government is conscious of this: national strategic plans for disaster response and mitigation have been developed and we want to contribute to them.

You will also see an appeal for hygiene kits for adolescent schoolgirls. The reason behind this is to create a conducive environment for many girls to come to school regularly, having a dignified and hygienic management of menstruation.

We are very grateful to you all.

Enjoy reading.

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(Kapilvastu)

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CHILD RIGHTS matter!

Issues like child marriage, dowry, poverty, child labour, discrimination, school dropout etc. which highly impact children and adolescents are interconnected– they are extremely complex and need in-depth study, well-thought strategies, long-term commitment and close collaboration with rights holders and duty-bearers. The school dropout of adolescent girls and the emerging child protection issues related to misuse of internet, social networking sites such as Facebook etc. has hugely increased after COVID-19. Research has also revealed that after COVID-19, rates of child marriage, gender-based violence, and child labour in Nepal have increased, as did severe mental and psychosocial health issues among children.

The Constitution of Nepal has prohibited child marriage, with the National Strategy for Ending Child Marriage 2015 aiming to end child marriage by 2030, and the Criminal (Code) Act (2017) formally adopting 20 years as the minimum age for marriage. However, a UNICEF report in 2020 found that Nepal is home to 5 million child brides; of these, 1.3 million married before age 15. Similarly, the National Master Plan (NMP)-II on Child Labour (2018–2028) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets 8.7 and 16.2 aim to end child labour in all its forms, but the Nepal child labour report in 2021 by ILO shows 1.1 million children in labour in Nepal.

UMN at an organisational level has child and vulnerable adult safeguarding policies and prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment policies, including the code of conduct. To strengthen organisational safeguarding practices, UMN has named safeguarding contacts among staff, promotes child-safe recruitment and conducts child protection risk assessments using a project and organisational safeguarding health check. Additionally, UMN supports its partners to develop and practice similar policies and strategies.

In the communities where we work, UMN has strongly supported right holders and duty bearers to strengthen their knowledge, skills and capacity related to child rights. We have also played a key role in supporting local governments to develop child protection policies and to form and strengthen child protection /rights committees at the rural municipality, wards and schools. These encourage children's participation and ensure that children's voices are heard during local decision making. Through such interventions by UMN and our partners, child protection issues such as various forms of early marriage, child labour, discrimination and abuses are reducing.

PREM SINGH SHINTAN
Thematic Lead – Education

CLIMATE CHANGE is real

Hear what **Sita Bantha Magar, UMN's Project Manager-Resilient Livelihoods** has to say about climate change impacts in **Bajhang, Far Western Nepal**.

The CLIMATES project in Bajhang aims to address the negative impacts of climate change by involving whole communities in appropriate adaptation and mitigation. Those affected by the changing climate in Bungal Municipality are farmers, especially those with a small landholding, landless families, unemployed youth, people living in disaster-prone areas, seasonal migrant returnees, persons with disabilities, single women and ethnic minorities*.

Farmers expressed the concerns and hardships they have been facing as a result of the changing climate. They have noticed that both winters and summers were warmer and that the temperature is diverging from the regular patterns. Unpredictable summer and monsoon rains with early or delayed rains or periods of drought have also resulted in lost crops or decreased yields. Apart from issues related to water and precipitation, they were most concerned about the increase in crop pests and disease: with

crops already negatively affected by the changing weather, the increased incidence of pests and disease is exacerbating food security challenges. Communities speculated that the white grub thrives in the absence of rain, as both grub size and population seemed to be increasing.

In addition, erratic rainfall patterns, extinction of crop varieties, deforestation and encroachment of wild animals has also greatly affected their farming system including livelihood options which ultimately lead to a miserable life. Landless people of both municipalities depend on daily wage work in agriculture and other areas for income, so the impact of climate change on agriculture, reduces the income source of landless families. Additionally their income source is not uniform year-round. Lack of technical skills, fewer livelihood options, lack of investment capacity in enterprise development etc. are commonly experienced by landless families. The CLIMATES project started in Bajhang and Doti this year (2022) and will be working closely with the community to address many such impacts of climate change which are affecting the community so severely.

* Dalits – members of the so-called lower caste - and 'Janajatis' – indigenous groups - especially women from these groups.

RECHARGE PITS

to the rescue



Bungal Municipality is facing lowering of groundwater levels as a result of recent changes in the local climate. To address this, 35 water recharge pits were dug in two locations, Wards 4 and 5 of Bungal Municipality, Bajhang. These 35 recharge pits were dug 20 metres above the groundwater sources to trap rainwater which then filters down to recharge underground aquifers. Such intentional recharge will restore groundwater levels and stored water can be used even during dry seasons. Recharging groundwater is one way of sustainably managing groundwater which allows improvement in groundwater levels. This system captures rainwater which would otherwise be lost as runoff, allowing it to percolate

into the ground. A total of 200 households of two wards have now benefitted from the recharge pits as they use the water source for drinking, irrigation and for livestock. Similar pits are planned to be dug in two more locations before the Monsoon season.

We appreciate the initiative and hard work put into this project by our local partner Dalit Help Society and the Bajhang Cluster Team to bring about this local adaptation to climate change, within only a few months of the project's start.



CAMPAIGN TO MAKE EATERIES

Along one of the busiest highways to Kathmandu, the Prithivi Highway, we see many small local eateries at various junctions. These local eateries are locally called 'hotels'. UMN's partner in Dhading CIRDS* formed a task force committee and monitored 23 such hotels along the highway. By the end of the project, they found no cases of child labour in 15 out of the 23 hotels, and shared the results with the relevant local authorities and stakeholders.



In an effort to campaign against the use of child labour in local eateries, during the project period of UMN's Safeguarding Vulnerable Children (SVC) Project, CIRDS started a series of debates and discussions with key stakeholders such as the hotel association of Dhading, hotel owners, civil society organisations, local authority representatives from Thakre Rural Municipality (RM) and five of its wards, and in the presence of the honourable member of parliament, Bhumi Tripathi.

Child labour is illegal in Nepal but still practised. The team discussed with the hotel owners about child labour, including the potential impact on children and associated health hazards. A task force team was then formed comprising of the representatives from the hotel association, RM executive personnel/staff, ward chairs and SVC project staff. This team discussed and worked on the detailed process of declaration of 'Child Labour Free Hotel' based on the Guideline for Child Labour Free Local Government, 2020.

Finally, in the presence of members of the District Coordinating Committee, representatives of District Hotel Association Dhading, ward chairpeople, executive members of CIRDS and SVC Project staff, a Child Labour Free Hotel Declaration event was organised with stickers affixed in those 15 hotels where no children were employed. In the event, Raj Kumar Pyakurel, former President of the District Association of Dhading expressed his commitment to operate hotels in a dignified and decent manner and to run hotels completely without child labour. We hope that thanks to the initial work of our partner and the engagement of the local community, this will become a reality for children and businesses in that area, even after our project phased out at the end of 2021.

* Chandrayoti Integrated Rural Development Society

"Send children to school, not to labour.
NO CHILD LABOUR HERE."



Sharing in SWEDEN

Fullness of life | UMNews

Bal Kumari Gurung and Niki Maskey from UMN had an opportunity to visit Sweden last month (during May). The main purpose was to attend a PMU Thematic Conference, the Interact Noomi Youth Festival and to meet churches supporting UMN's work. PMU Interlife and Interact are UMN's two supporting partners in Sweden, who have been long-standing partners.

Bal Kumari and Niki share:

The first week started with sharing and learning about the development of a PMU toolbox on the environment and climate change, with 11 delegates from six countries. There were interactions using the toolbox with different theological and gender perspectives. Stories were shared on effective mobilisation, dealing with sensitive issues related to the environment, climate change, gender, and peace.

The second week was spent travelling to various cities, sharing UMN stories and experiences on the climate crisis and human trafficking at the Noomi Festival and meeting funding partners at Interact, Mohndal Church and Smyrna Church.

We were privileged to present UMN and Nepal's experiences to a wider audience. It was an enriching experience to listen to powerful and inspiring stories from other countries too. We were touched by the strong volunteering spirit of the churches to generate funds for development work in countries like Nepal through second-hand shops. We were blessed to have fellowship with old and new friends who are passionate to work together with UMN. Sightseeing in the beautiful countryside was amazing and so was the Swedish culture and a trip to an island.

We thank God and all our supporting partners for the heart they have for UMN and the people of Nepal.

Bal Kumari Gurung (front left) is the Programme Support Team Leader of UMN and Niki Maskey (right) is the Thematic Lead of Resilient Livelihoods.





HEMANTA RAI
Project Manager - Protection (Rukum)

Prioritising CHILD PROTECTION in the LOCAL AGENDA

Q What do you enjoy most while working in the community?

Community is a place of diverse cultures, ethnicities, systems, beliefs. Exploring and understanding all these things excites me and make me want to explore more. Working in the community has always been my greatest learning platform. Having started my career as a schoolteacher, I was fortunate to get an opportunity to again work for children in Child Protection from the very beginning of my career in social development sector. Working as a social worker for around eight years in different communities and being a voice for the voiceless is the most satisfying thing for me. Children are considered as the future of the nation, and I believe I am contributing to build a better future. There is always a new space to contribute and learn with children in the community. Being with and surrounded by children is always joyful for me.

Q What are the challenges of working towards child protection in the community?

Children are dependent, vulnerable, and sensitive in comparison to other people in the community. In Rukum East, we are now working against child marriage and harmful social practices. It is hard to change the mindset of the local community. Child marriage rate is extremely high in Rukum East. These

practices and systems which are easily accepted in the community makes children vulnerable and pushes them further away from opportunities for proper growth and development.

Parents' negligence, ignorance and hesitation to change is another important challenge. Children's access to the internet and social media and its harmful impacts even in rural communities is making them more vulnerable to early marriage.

The local government does not prioritise agendas, budgets, plans and policies related to children's issues and problems. Issues around child protection are seen as less efficient use of budget and they are less concerned to intervene when problems occur.

Q What recent work achievements have you been proud of?

Child Rights Protection and Promotion Guideline/Policy was developed in Putha Uttarganga Rural Municipality (RM) of Rukum East. Among three rural municipalities of this district, this is the only RM to have developed and ratified a policy for child rights protection.

In 2021, nine cases of child marriage were stopped which was possible due to activation and advocacy of child clubs and adolescent girls' groups, with the support of police and local government.

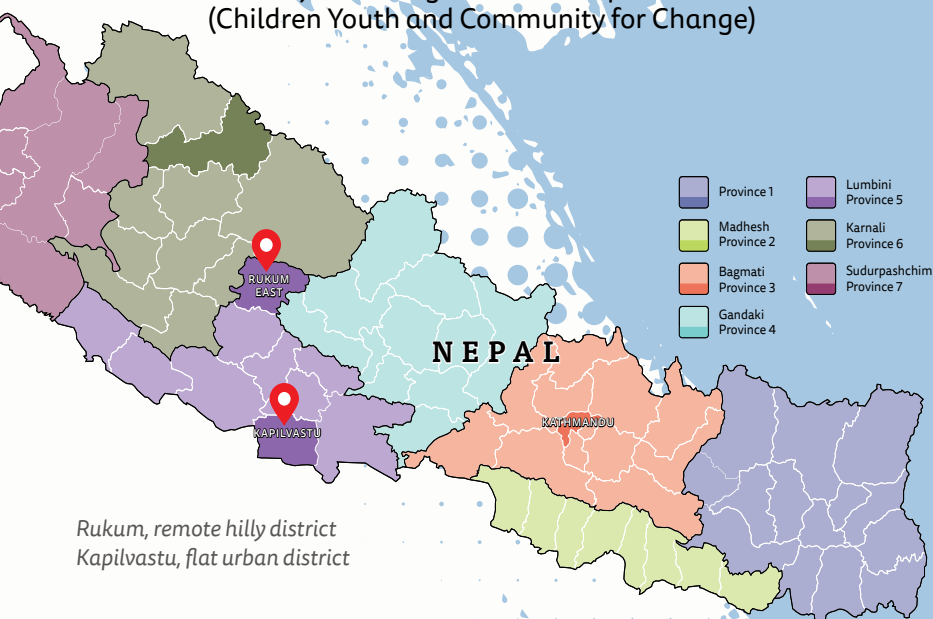
RM-level child club and adolescent girls' group networks were formed and activated in Putha Uttarganga RM of Rukum East*. Such types of networks are also the very first in the entire district. This increased the level of child and girls' participation at the RM level.

** These are in addition to the seven child clubs and seven adolescent girls' groups formed at ward-level through our work.*

**NABA RAJ JOSHI**

Project Manager - CYCC-Kapilvastu
(Children Youth and Community for Change)

CHILDREN as change AGENTS



Q What do you enjoy most while working in the community?

Basically, I enjoy working with children – who are the change agents of the community. The awareness-raising activities run by the child/youth clubs and networks are a very strong part of the project which I get very excited about. I also always try to encourage the good work the school child clubs are doing in the extracurricular activities they organise, which help them to grow in participation, development and quality of education.

Q What are the challenges of working towards child protection in the community?

The main challenges are that until now, the Rural Municipality (RM) hasn't developed Acts, policies, and guidelines related to child protection and child rights as well as a long-term/strategic plan for child protection. Similarly, less priority is given by the RM for this in their annual budgeting, compared to infrastructure.

Q What recent achievements of working in the community made you proud?

We feel proud that the children are growing as change agents, for instance, the formation of child/youth clubs in different schools and joining them in networks. These networks lobby for children's rights and help community awareness-raising to minimise the issues of malpractices and traditional harmful practices like child marriage, dowry, gender discrimination, etc. for example through street drama and other means of communication.

GIFT *A Kit*

What do girls go through during menstruation on school days? Pain, discomfort and shame.

Period poverty is here in Nepal, as well as in the West. Menstrual management is not a priority in most schools in rural Nepal.

Girls' attendance is also affected when they don't have what they need for them to comfortably manage their menstruation. More than one in four (26.7%) adolescent girls miss school due to menstruation.

We can help ease the discomfort and situation for adolescent girls by giving Hygiene Kits to girls who attend schools.

Would you like to gift a girl her personal hygiene kit?

(the kit contains toiletries, personal hygiene items and washable & disposable pads)



USD 12
(GBP 10)

USD 300
(GBP 250)

USD 600
(GBP 500)

USD 1,200
(GBP 1,000)

Help girls regain their dignity, confidence and education.

To know more about this need and UMN's work in the Health Sector and about WASH* activities please see FAQs at:

www.umn.org.np/giftakit



* Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT MATTERS



Will you
gift me a kit?

I won't have
to miss school
if I have this kit.



HOW TO DONATE:



- ➔ To give online, arrange a bank transfer or send a cheque in your own country, please go to www.umn.org.np/give
- ➔ Or, write a cheque or postal order payable to United Mission to Nepal. Make a note indicating how you would like your donation to be used (e.g. Gift a Kit). Post it! (to: UMN, PO Box 126, Kathmandu, Nepal)



It could be the title of a movie, although our time in Nepal doesn't probably have the dramatic events needed for a blockbuster, nor are there any big heroes in our story! But looking back, we have had a marvelous time in Nepal. Not always easy, from the border blockade straight after we came, through multiple health issues and of course corona. We have however experienced God's continuous care over our family, displayed maybe most clearly in the fact that Jaïr, Ezra and Imre came as small kids and now leave as the tallest of our family!

It has been a privilege and joy to live here and work with UMN* and witness the impact of UMN's work in so many lives. A recent visit to Mugu and spending a bit of time with the team there working in tough conditions reminded me again of the comfort we have living in Kathmandu, let alone when we return to the Netherlands! We feel we probably received and learned more than we could ever bring. Nepal has been our home for almost seven years, and will surely remain at least our second home. Thank you all for your precious friendship. We will stay connected with UMN, and keep praying for God's guidance and care!

ARNO & INA, JAÏR, EZRA AND IMRE VAN TURENNOUT

* Arno served as an Operational Services Advisor with HR and Support Services

Hello!



We are the Communications Team

It's such a joy to be working as a team to share our news and stories with you here in this magazine and through other platforms. We are so proud that this is the 75th issue. Thank you for being friends with UMN and taking interest in UMN and Nepal.



THE LATEST FROM OUR HOSPITALS

TANSEN AND OKHALDHUNGA

OKHALDHUNGA COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

The new Mental Health project recently held various events in the municipalities/ rural municipalities where the project is active - Siddhicharan, Molung and Khijidemba. This included the opening ceremony, stakeholders meeting, and an interactive orientation meeting with participation of all the municipal health facilities' health workers, stakeholders and news media people. Near the end of May, the hospital also received a visit from the provincial health minister and health secretary, chief district officer, alongside four newly-elected officials: the mayor and deputy mayor of Siddicharan and chairpersons of Molung and Khijidemba. Meanwhile, an article featuring the hospital was published this month in Siddhicharan Municipality's tourism publication, highlighting that it is the oldest hospital in the district and also serves thousands of patients from surrounding districts.



Greeted with orchid garlands during a visit from Normisjon, Norway.



Provincial visit

UNITED MISSION HOSPITAL TANSEN

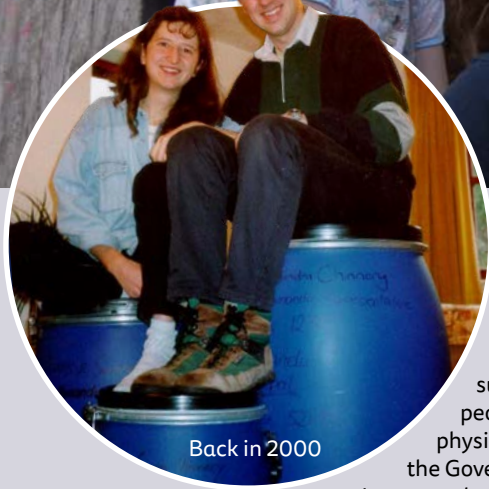
As part of the mental health project we have had two modules of WHO 'GAP'* training: two days of psychosocial training for field workers and counsellors, and then prescribers' training for 16 doctors and paramedics. We are planning an expansion of the maternity ward. A film crew from the Netherlands recently visited to prepare a related TV appeal in Dutch. Look out for more on this later in 2022!

The hospital was a bit quieter over the local election period but we did have one major accident in the run-up to elections when a jeep carrying 22 people crashed in a rural area. Fortunately, only four people had injuries bad enough to need admission and all did well.



Mental health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP)

“What a wonderful
GOD WE SERVE,”



Back in 2000

Just over 22 years ago, Sandra and I arrived in Pokhara to begin working with the International Nepal Fellowship (INF). I supported a team working with people affected by leprosy and other physical disabilities. Sandra nursed in the Government Hospital. Over the years, I managed and led different parts of INF and

then supported the development of Nepali leaders, creating and facilitating many courses. Sandra helped on many remote medical camps as well as the Fistula Clinic in Surkhet. As our children grew, we moved to Kathmandu and switched from INF to UMN where I could help with inter-cultural and leadership development, and Sandra could later support member care and expatriate coordination.

Throughout our time, we have been constantly amazed by the gracious leading of God. For example: Our visa wasn't being processed and time was running out. We felt God had reminded us of the story of Joshua walking around the walls of Jericho... walking, quietly... No certainty of what would happen, except the embarrassing cat-calling from the walls. We felt compelled to continue faithfully walking, trusting. On the day we must make a decision, we were pressured to quit, but didn't feel this was right. As the meeting progressed a noisy wedding band processed down the street outside our meeting. This was already very unusual, but they were playing "Oh when the saints go marching in!" This was clearly a sign for us, and our faith grew. Each time we throw ourselves into His care, He always faithfully catches us and sets our feet on firm ground.

Civil conflicts, earthquakes, blockades, visa crises, nothing surprises God. Our greatest fulfilment is to serve Him and let Him worry about the rest. As we now move to serve Him in Austria, we can be sure He has gone before us.

JAMES AND SANDRA CHINNERY



PRAY

- ➔ That we would be determined to do all we can to reverse climate change through avoiding polluting the atmosphere streets and rivers and committing to live simpler lifestyles.
- ➔ That in the forthcoming monsoon season people would be protected from the extremes of weather which so often bring floods, landslides, damaged crops and danger to life.
- ➔ That the poorest people who have least resources would be protected, and that organisations like UMN will be able to offer support where needed.
- ➔ "Behold children are a gift of the Lord" (Psalm 127v3). Pray protection for our children, and that we do all we can to nurture these gifts and give the best opportunity and encouragement for fullness of life.



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

PRIORITY NEEDS – URGENT

EXPATRIATE SUPPORT ADVISOR – Kathmandu Based

TUTORIAL SCHOOL TEACHER: Okhaldhunga Community Hospital

OTHER NEEDS

FUNDRAISING MANAGER – Kathmandu Based

FOR UNITED MISSION HOSPITAL TANSEN: One Obstetrician/Gynaecologist needed long-term and one Pathologist.

EXPATRIATE COORDINATOR

PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER: Start 2022 Teaching different school levels for tutorial group.

FOR OKHALDHUNGA COMMUNITY HOSPITAL: One GP with rural experience, one Orthopedic Surgeon and one Obstetrician/Gynaecologist. General Practitioner/Pediatrician. General surgeon, Anaesthetist

Diagnostic and imaging specialist

Maintenance advisor

MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT: Starting 2023

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.



Education for all! A school hostel for children with disability

An inclusive hostel facility for students with physical disabilities was recently constructed at Banthpali Secondary School in Bajhang District. UMN's local partner Progressive Youth Society and Chabbispathivara Rural Municipality jointly provided monetary support to build this hostel facility which will improve accessibility and accommodation facilities for 18 children with disabilities across Bajhang and help the students continue their education with ease. Currently 14 children with disabilities are studying in the school and will soon stay in this newly constructed hostel. Seventy-five percent of the construction cost was contributed by UMN.

Congratulations to the Bajhang team for this commendable work to ensure that those with disabilities are not left behind.



Re-starting guesthouse for visitors

Okhaldhunga Community Hospital (OCH) has a new guesthouse after the previous one was repurposed as much-needed accommodation for student nurses. To re-start the guesthouse, they have hired a suite of rooms in a newly built private home in Sobru village, close to the hospital. There are four bedrooms (two double and two twin), two small bathrooms and a kitchen/living area and the balconies give lovely views across the valleys to the south and west. With such new amenities, OCH is happy to be able to welcome visitors again.



Board meeting

We welcomed all our Board of Trustees from around the world at UMN's headquarters in Kathmandu for a two-day meeting which commenced on 9 May. The Board had a retreat on 8 May at Pataleban Vineyard Resort which lies 16 km west of Kathmandu City. We are thankful to all our board members for a productive meeting, their time and for being an important part of Nepal's development and the mission of UMN.



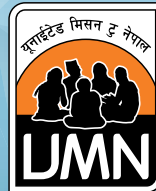
Only One Earth!

Our clusters celebrated the World Environment Day on 5 June focusing on the theme 'Only One Earth' with different activities such as tree plantation, litter-picking and school-level debate programme.



O LORD, MAJESTIC
OUR LORD, HOW
IS YOUR NAME EARTH!
IN ALL THE
YOU HAVE GLORY
SET YOUR
ABOVE THE HEAVENS.

Psalm 8: 1-2



Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

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