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UMN News

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Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello Friends,

I present to you the new face of our magazine, 'UMNews', which will be published bi-annually from now on, but with many more features and stories. This issue will focus on **Conflict Sensitivity** and **Climate Change**, two of the cross-cutting issues of UMN's work.

Since 2006, UMN leadership has embraced the 'Do No Harm' (DNH) approach and applied it in various changing contexts. **Conflict Sensitivity** has now become another one of UMN's cross-cutting issues. Initially, some UMN staff were trained in the DNH approach through the Peace in South Asia Network, now known as Local Capacity for Peace South Asia Network. The trainers then build awareness within UMN and its partners of how to be conflict sensitive in programming and how to avoid new conflict arising, while working in conflict affected areas.

Initially, functional guidelines with DNH approach were developed, and programmes were reviewed using different tools developed by the peacebuilding team. Later, a policy was developed to ensure conflict sensitivity in our institutional and programming capacities. It has also been introduced at the community level, building understanding and working on local group capacities. Importantly, this is not only a tool or approach but also a process to be applied while making decisions at all levels, ranging from community group to the UMN leadership team.

Environment and Climate Change: Studies show that Nepal is highly vulnerable to climate change impact as changes in temperature and precipitation patterns are being experienced at a faster rate than the global average. The impact of climate change is mostly evident in reduced agricultural production, food insecurity, strain on water sources and loss of forests and biodiversity as well as damaged



DHANA LAMA
Executive Director, UMN

infrastructure. The impact of these changes is more visible in recent years with water-related hazards such as floods, landslides and drought. Nepal typically experiences a warm spring between March and May, monsoons that last from June to September, and largely dry winters. Droughts are however becoming more frequent. Rice yields are particularly sensitive to climatic conditions and may decline in this region, threatening food security and triggering migration. Sadly, the poorest are the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change and are bearing the brunt of it, despite having done the least to cause it.

UMN is sensitive to these changes and identifies particularly vulnerable communities in its working areas. Based on these vulnerability assessments, UMN has been making efforts to build absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacity, working with local governments, partners and the communities. For example, UMN is supporting local government departments to develop and implement Local Disaster and Climate Resilient Plans, restoring and managing ponds, forests and pasturelands, to initiate nature-based solutions. In this way we are building the coping capacity of these vulnerable communities.

I hope you enjoy reading more about our efforts in Conflict Sensitivity and Climate Change in this issue. Once again, we are grateful to our supporters for continuous prayers and generous support to make this happen, to make a positive difference.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dhana'.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE FOR CREATION?

Summary of presentation made at the UMN General Assembly in May 2023

Caring for the environment is an issue that has been talked about a lot in recent times. Climate change and environmental degradation have led to extreme weather events, resulting in large-scale disasters affecting millions of people, particularly the poor.

So why should we care? There are various reasons for this which can be summarised in four imperatives¹:

1. For our own sake - the selfish imperative. If nature is not healthy, we will die.
2. For the sake of the poor - the moral imperative. The poor suffer first from nature's depletion. This is often the major driving force for many organisations that work with the poor.
3. For the sake of the earth - the ecological imperative. Ecosystems are being put at risk.
4. For God's sake - the theological imperative. We care because God has given us that responsibility.

Christians often fail to address the issue of creation care because we feel that it has nothing to do with us; only souls matter and hence we may see it as a waste of time. Or perhaps we are involved because it is a hobby, maybe refreshing for some of us, or it could be that we are paid to do it! However, the challenge for Christians is to understand that creation care is integral to our faith and so we care for creation for God's sake!

The creation narrative in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 is clear that God is the Creator and



LALBIAKHLUI ROKHUM (KUKI)
Board Member, UMN



God's redemption plan includes the rest of His creation as well.

that He delights in His creation, to the point that He said it was good and very good! Humanity is called apart, called to imitate God in caring for this 'very good' creation. God also desired humans to have an intrinsic relationship with the rest of creation when He asked Adam to name the creatures (Genesis 2:18). The first 'mission' or 'calling' in the Bible is God asking humanity to be stewards of His creation. Even after the fall.

God's redemption plan includes the rest of His creation as well. The story of the great flood makes it clear that God was interested not only in saving Noah and his family but the rest of creation too; God makes a covenant not only with Noah and future human generations but also with the rest of the living creatures. (Gen 9:9)

In the New Testament: Jesus is not just the Saviour of human beings but of the whole cosmos. (John 3.16)

¹ The 4 Imperatives are taken from a presentation made by Rev. Dr. Dave Bookless, Director of Theology, A Rocha International.

All things are reconciled to God through the cross and creation itself is waiting to be set free. (Colossians 1:19-20)

The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. (Romans 8:21)

Creation is waiting for us to act: "For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed." (Romans 8:19, NIVUK)

So, why should we care?

- Because God cares for this world.
- Because it's our first calling.
- Because the earth is waiting for the church.

“

However, the challenge for Christians is to understand that creation care is integral to our faith and so we care for creation for God's sake!

The UNDP report, "Climate Change and the Rise of Poverty" (2018), states:

"Today over 2 billion people - one third of the global population - are poor or near-poor and face persistent threats to their livelihoods, including from climate change. Estimates indicate that by 2030

more than 100 million people could fall back into extreme poverty due to climate change, while over 200 million people could be displaced due to more frequent and severe climatic disasters."

Caring for God's earth is also a matter of justice and hence we need to be at the forefront of it.

Caring for creation is not an optional extra that should be left to specialist environmental organisations alone. The Lausanne Cape Town Commitment of 2010 declares:

*"The earth is the property of the God we claim to love and obey. We care for the earth, most simply, because it belongs to the one whom we call Lord... If Jesus is Lord of all the earth, we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to the earth. For to proclaim the gospel that says 'Jesus is Lord' is to proclaim the gospel that includes the earth, since Christ's Lordship is over all creation. **Creation care is thus a gospel issue within the Lordship of Christ.**"*

Hence, we care for creation not instead of the Gospel but because of the Gospel! We should care not because it is fashionable and not only because of the devastating impact of not caring for creation. We should care because we are commanded by Jesus to love our neighbours and simply because we love God and honour Him in all we do.

"Christians care for creation, not because they necessarily believe they are going to save the world or because they believe that this is the flavour of the times, but simply out of their response to a loving Creator." (R.J. Sam Berry and Laura Yoder. "John Stott on Creation Care." IVP, 2021)



UMN Board Chair, Dr David Rodgers thanking Kuki for serving at the UMN board for 8 years. Photo taken at the UMN General Assembly, May 2023.

THREE BURNING CLIMATE CHANGE RELATED ISSUES IN NEPAL

STRAINED ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

Population growth in Nepal has significantly impacted the quality of ecosystem-based services such as clean drinking water, clean air and irrigation for food production. It has also caused an increase in the degradation of forest and loss of biodiversity. These already strained ecosystems are now additionally impacted by the changing climate. For example, rising temperatures contribute to species extinction, as many depend on favourable temperatures for reproduction and survival. This results in biodiversity loss and ecosystem imbalances. Also, increasingly unpredictable rainfall patterns and rising temperatures contribute to drought, whilst short periods of intense rain reduces ground water recharge by accelerating run-off, increasing the risk of flooding.

1

IMPACTS ON AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS AND MIGRATION:

Changes in climatic conditions are adversely affecting agriculture with prolonged drought, greater water stress and scarcity that in turn poses a real threat to food security for vulnerable communities. Some potential future effects include more frequent forest fires, longer dry seasons in some regions and an increase in wind intensity and rainfall.

Vulnerable communities living in poverty rely heavily on agricultural and natural resources to survive. The effects of climate change limit their access to natural resources and the increased competition creates conflict.

When their income generation options run out, people are often forced to leave their home in search of work to support their families. In this way, climate change is causing displacement and forced migration at an alarming level.

2

RISING TEMPERATURES AND ALTERED RAINFALL:

Human health is and will continue to be severely impacted by rising temperatures and altered rainfall patterns, as these changes create favourable conditions for disease spreading vectors. A number of diseases have become much more prevalent in Nepal in recent years, such as dengue, yellow fever and many water-borne diseases.

Strained ecosystem services and disrupted agriculture systems along with the associated health impacts leave already vulnerable populations, especially women, children, people with disabilities and elderly people, at increased risk.

3



NIKI MASKEY

Thematic Lead - Resilient Livelihoods



TURNING PLASTIC WASTE INTO USEFUL PRODUCTS

In rural areas of Nepal, inorganic solid waste is mainly generated from the packaging of junk foods, single-use polybags and water bottles. A build up of such waste may affect the health of the community; unmanaged plastic waste pollutes the environment and potentially the freshwater supply in rural villages; it also affects livestock, when they consume plastics which may be toxic to them.

Putha Uttarganga, a remote rural municipality in Rukum East, has been facing these issues with unmanaged plastic. As a result, the beauty of its villages is deteriorating rapidly. In response, UMN's Sustainable Environment and Economic Development (SEED) project has carried out many awareness-raising programmes to teach people how to minimise plastic waste.

Recently the project has explored and initiated some new ideas to repurpose plastic packaging generated mainly from snack food, like noodles and biscuits. Three days of training was provided to make useful items including baskets, hats, measuring bowls (*mana pathi*) and boxes. It was a joy that the training was facilitated by a 65-year-old woman Dhan Raji Budha who was trained many decades ago when she stayed in India. Twenty-six people from 24 community groups (24 women and 2 men) participated. This training gives the community people hope to improve the sanitation of their villages and they have an action plan to teach their skills to their own group members, just like Dhan Raji passed her skills on to them after so many years.

ASSESSING WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECOMMENDING PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS



One of the major problems identified by UMN's CLIMATES project in Bajhang and Doti is waste production and its management at the local level. To explore the issues, the team carried out an assessment in Bungal Municipality of Bajhang and Bogtan-Phudsil Rural Municipality of Doti, to specifically understand the dynamics of waste production and identify possible local management solutions. The findings and insights of this assessment will inform our interventions to locally manage these wastes within the CLIMATES project for the coming years. Learning to manage waste at the local level has become a matter of urgency, to create a clean and healthy environment, promote resource recovery, educate communities and boost tourism.



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We learned about beneficial insects and pests and were able to identify them.

PROMOTING *ECO-FRIENDLY* FARMING

UMN's ReLive project has created Farmers Groups in Nawalparasi West. The focus was on the landless, seasonal wage labourers, marginal farmers, single women, people with disabilities, unemployed youth through the COVID pandemic and people with low incomes, who earn less than NPR 6000 (approx. USD 45) monthly.

UMN and local partner INDRENI formed *Didi Bahini* (sisters) Farmers Groups as most of the members were female from the Tharu community. With the aim of minimising the use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers, an Integrated Pest Management Farmers Field School (IPM FFS) was set up and a study on paddy cultivation was carried out.

Tekendra Kumari Chaudhary, a group member shared, "Through this training, we were able to identify the dos and don'ts that we need to apply during the paddy cultivation. We learned about beneficial insects and pests and were able to identify them. I received some vegetable seeds too."

The classes ran during the day, every week for 16 weeks and the members' curiosity and active participation made the learning even more interesting. "As we all depend on agriculture for our livelihood, FFS has taught us to adopt the cultivation method in an environment-friendly way which was very effective for us," shared the group chairperson, Chandrika Chaudhary.

She further mentioned that after completing the training, they have refrained from using the hazardous chemical fertilisers and have been controlling initial pest infestation through the manual picking method, without using pesticides. "The production from the rice field where we experimented with the IPM techniques was double than that of the field where we cultivated in our own way," she explained. The enthusiasm demonstrated by the participants made this training a success as they were glad to learn a new environment-friendly way of cultivation. All the participants have committed to adopting the practices learned from the IPM.

DID YOU KNOW?

Praying Mantises are called 'witch insects'?

Sita Bantha Magar shares: "It was shocking to know that people here in Bajhang think that praying mantis insects are bad luck or harmful to humans and livestock. Some people even call them 'boksi kira' or 'witch insect'. In fact, these insects are beneficial to agriculture as they are natural enemies to most agricultural pests including aphids and they do not attack people or livestock."

What we did to bring change:

1. We broadcast a radio jingle from local FM radio in Bajhang, twice a day for two months, to make people aware that they did not need to kill them.
2. 1.1K shares on Facebook! Sita shared a post including the radio jingle on Facebook, meaning that people right across Nepal also heard the message.

Sita is UMN's Resilient Livelihoods Project Manager in Bajhang.



Don't kill the 'witch insects'!

Want to listen for yourself?
You can hear the radio jingle here at
fb.com/watch/?v=476702614044112
or scan here. ▶



Storing Grain in Nepal

In Rukum District, West Nepal, maize is an important staple food, but its production is seasonal, so farmers need to store it safely and effectively to make it last all year. Stored grain must be protected from rain, insects and other pests, so dried maize is traditionally dehusked and stored in a *dhokro* - a large bamboo basket with a straw roof. Each *dhokro* can store up to 200 kg of maize. Another option is to scrape the maize kernels off the cob and store them in large copper pots for better protection. But not everyone can afford to buy the pots. Stored grains should be inspected every few weeks for signs of rodents, insects, pests or moulds.

For more detailed version of how grain is stored and protected in Rukum, visit learn.tearfund.org and search for 'grain storage' or scan below. ▼



NEWSROOM

Trained masons!

JAN

Forty-four local stonemasons were recently trained in earthquake-resistant building construction technology in Bajhang. Under UMN's Disaster Risk Management Project, the one-week training for masons was conducted in collaboration with Thalara Rural Municipality and UMN's local partner, Progressive Youth Society, in two locations.

The masons have committed to use the knowledge and skills they have learned and further encourage others, making local communities aware of the importance of such building practices. Nepal is prone to earthquakes and therefore such training is not only useful to enhance masonry skills but also helpful resilience building for vulnerable local communities.



UMN turned 69 on March 5th

MAR

Serving the neediest communities of Nepal for the last sixty-nine years.

Happy Birthday UMN!



An extraordinary Life: Odd Hoftun, home with the Lord!

We thank God for Odd Hoftun and his extraordinary life. We celebrate his invaluable and courageous contribution, which gave electricity and water to thousands of families in Nepal.

Odd Hoftun was a UMN hero. He was a passionate Norwegian missionary who came to Nepal in 1956 and helped build Tansen Hospital. Following that, he invested his time and remarkable skills in hydropower development. He was a pioneer in the early development of hydropower in Nepal. He led the projects at Tinau Hydropower Plant (the first river plant in Nepal), Andhi Khola Hydropower Station, Jhimruk Khola Hydropower Station and Khimti Hydropower Plant. He was also a key player in the establishment of Butwal Technical Institute. He received several awards from the then King of Nepal during those years and was decorated Knight, First Class of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit in 1990.

Odd's story, his life and the history of hydropower development in Nepal can be read and enjoyed in a book released in 2015 called Power for Nepal, by Peter Svalhem. Available at UMN website or contact communications@umn.org.np.



◀ Scan to read current news.

Celebrating Dr Mark Zimmerman's 35 years of service in Nepal

United Mission to Nepal felicitated Dr Zimmerman and his wife Deirdre on 14 June, honouring their 35 years of service in Nepal.

Dr Mark Zimmerman is a well known UMN missionary name in the health sector. A medical doctor from America, Mark has been working in Nepal since 1986. He initially began as a clinical practitioner and later became Medical Director of Patan Hospital (1998-2005). Mark was also the Founding Director of the Nick Simons Institute (2006-2016). He and his wife who were both latterly serving at Patan Hospital are now finishing up their time in Nepal, and going to live in the USA.

UMN wants to say a big thank you to Mark and Deirdre for their unwavering service, their kind hearts and the love they have shown for the people of Nepal.



Mental health camps



For the first time ever in the districts of Bajhang and Rukum East, mental health camps were organised through UMN's Mental Health project in February and April respectively. Over 200 people suffering from mental health problems in Bajhang attended camps in their local area with the opportunity to meet psychiatrists from Kathmandu, while over 450 people benefitted in Rukum East.

Many older people, especially women, came with problems of insomnia. Cases of anxiety, depression, psychosis, epilepsy and conversion disorder were also identified. Meanwhile, many health workers increased their skills and knowledge in diagnosing, prescribing and counselling to better support their mental health patients in future. Referrals for specialist treatment, psycho-social counselling and medication were provided to the patients according to their diagnoses.



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SO, CONFLICT IS A PART OF LIFE.

MOHAN CHANDRA BHANDARI
Conflict Sensitivity Advisor

Constructive or positive conflict is essential for growth. But destructive conflict destroys our unity, trust, spirit of togetherness, bonding and even hope. UMN's mission statement directs us to pursue peace and justice for all and make Christ known by word and life. If conflict and bitterness remain unresolved, it is very hard to tie up our work with our vision, mission and values. In this context, Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity approach must be considered in our individual life, organisation, our teams, programmes and communities.

Romans 12:9-21 highlights that we can prevent potential conflict by positive attitudes, behaviour and action. Similarly, we can transform negative conflict through our own constructive initiation and efforts. Even when we are victims, we can prepare the foundation of reconciliation through the spirit of love, care and compassion by avoiding the sense of ego and revenge.

Conflict Sensitivity is an approach of development which helps to strengthen opportunities for peace and inclusion by minimising unintended conflicts and harms, while conducting development interventions. UMN uses the 'Do No Harm' approach to integrate conflict sensitivity wherever it is relevant. It is a leading tool for the application of conflict sensitivity which UMN has been using in its programmes for the last 15 years. I personally feel blessed to be working and helping people understand and grow in such a sensitive and an important area as conflict.

“

Even when we are victims,
we can prepare the foundation of
reconciliation through the spirit of
love, care and compassion
by avoiding ego and revenge.

RESOLVING COMMUNITY CONFLICTS

MADHURI B.K.
Project Manager - Bajhang

When I joined UMN four years ago in Bajhang as the Project Manager of EVE project, I was also assigned as the focal person for Conflict Sensitivity (CS) in Bajhang Cluster. I had the opportunity to participate in training sessions and workshops on Conflict Sensitivity and Do No Harm (DNH) principles. This has enabled me to sensitise others in the community in these matters. I found this knowledge to be very useful in project activities, to assess and minimise possible conflict and in doing so, identify connectors and dividers. I have seen that DNH principles, if understood and used well, can really make a difference and are a relevant approach to community development and empowerment. There are many good examples of how CS and DNH approaches have worked out in the community, achieving relationship-building, minimising possible disputes and conflict and encouraging peacekeeping and harmony, based on the sharing and reflection

meetings and workshops.

As I work in gender projects, I see many challenges and disputes in families arising because the communities have socially and culturally accepted harmful traditional practices. In such a context, working to address relationship difficulties is a highly sensitive task. That is why these training sessions are really important, giving us a strong foundation of conflict sensitivity and equipping us to provide technical support to our local partner staff.

We have conducted a session on CS with every group in the EVE project and we encourage frequent sharing and interaction among group members. This not only minimises conflict but also helps towards positive bonding and deeper learning and growth.



SURAJ SONAR
Project Manager, Rukum East

Being a conflict sensitivity focal person in Rukum East Cluster, I've encountered several disagreements in communities, with members of our partner organisations and also within my office team. Wearing the 'conflict sensitivity lens' and responding at an early stage is very important to avert the risks of severe or violent conflict. Among the different stages of conflict, latent conflict is more dangerous and is widespread. We tend to focus on conflict among our project and partner staff, but we ignore the conflicts within our team. When there are disappointments, open discussions should be practiced within a team regularly. If we don't address the conflict properly, on time, it bounces back negatively; in the aftermath, resources are wasted while time is taken to resolve the issue.

We can't completely stop conflict in communities because it arises directly from individual behaviours and attitudes. But applying the Do No Harm approach in each intervention is crucial. Otherwise, our programme could act as a divider and contribute to breaking relationships or creating new conflict. I have had some diverse experiences and found that not all

conflict is harmful. But if someone raises a question, it means there is a problem, and we must be ready to rethink and revisit the issue.

In one of UMN's programmes, the SEED project, an individual was selected to receive business-startup support. Later, during a meeting, another group member claimed to be more needy and eligible to receive the project's support, but she had been absent during selection. The incident led the two members into an argument that was on the verge of becoming physically violent. To resolve the situation, an immediate meeting was called. The UMN-trained social mobiliser systematically assessed the issue, and finally, based on the selection criteria, the accused individual received their support, and the other member was in agreement. In this way the broken relationship between two members of the group was resolved and reconciled by the group members. This was possible because the community group members had received training on conflict sensitivity.

I feel great satisfaction when conflicts get resolved using the positive initiative of the community and their skills in Conflict Sensitivity Analysis and Do No Harm. But there's still a lot to do in the days to come.



MEDIATING COMMUNITY CONFLICTS

Whenever conflict occurs in her village, Leelawati Devi Harijan, 43, uses her mediation skills to help resolve the situation. Within two years she has successfully resolved six cases of community conflict. Leelawati is a Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV); she has also served as a ward member and then a rural municipality working committee member in Nawalparasi, with the support and encouragement of her group members.

Leelawati's journey into mediation started when she joined the Laxmi Women's Group, which became a safe place for her to learn to speak out and present herself properly. After joining the group, she learned about domestic violence and other issues that concerned the women in her village. She was determined to help solve them and her inner calling led her into mediation.

Leelawati with one of the ladies she helped in her village



“

I like resolving disputes as I feel happy doing it and I believe I will earn a good name for my cause. It's good for my village and the community and I believe my goodwill will support me till my old age.



LEELAWATI DEVI HARIJAN
Nawalparasi West

From solving conflict between a daughter and mother-in-law to helping children get their birth certificates, she has helped women fight for their rights. "A woman became her husband's second wife, after he remarried. When she wanted to register her citizenship, her husband and mother-in-law were not in favour as they thought she would leave after acquiring it. Her children also didn't have their birth certificates. But later, I was able to solve this case and help her get the citizenship and birth certificates," she said.

Leelawati is always busy, as women in her village look up to her to solve issues; there's no stopping her as she knows there is much more to be done in the community.

She reflected, "I like resolving disputes as I feel happy doing it and I believe I will earn a good name for my cause. It's good for my village and the community and I believe my goodwill will support me till my old age."

RESOLVING *CONFLICTS REFLECTIVELY*

UMN's Food Security project in Bajhang organised different activities including training, support for business plans and income generation. But with the project's limited resources, it was impossible to include everyone in such activities. This created a conflict between the recipients and non-recipients of the benefits. The group members lacked unity which made it difficult to reach a consensus while taking a decision during meetings.

The project team then selected 30 community groups and conducted the Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity sessions monthly, through the Participatory Action Reflection process. After receiving five days of facilitation

training, the social mobilisers and group facilitators conducted the sessions in their groups. These sessions were helpful to identify and resolve individual, group and family conflicts by reflection and accepting mistakes and weaknesses. Unity, cooperation and trust among the group members improved, helping to resolve conflict within the group in a positive way. Moreover, the community group members were also better able to resolve family and group conflicts in the wider community.

A conflict had occurred at Masta Women's Agricultural Group due to a political disagreement and the group was on the verge of breaking up. To address this, a group facilitator and her

team from another women's agricultural group named Pragatisil visited the group and discussed the conflict and its impact on the individual group members, families and the project. Kunti and her team organised dialogue at different levels. Finally, the group united and now it is functioning well. To help avoid future conflict, all members have made a commitment to keep the group neutral. Now group members have regained faith, unity and cooperation.

The Participatory Action Reflection process is a very helpful tool to resolve conflict reflectively; it gives time for self-reflection of one's own attitude, behaviour and actions.



FROM *OUR HOSPITALS*

United Mission Hospital Tansen (UMHT)

The hospital has been very busy the last few months. Tansen recently hosted the review meeting for the mental health project, and it was good to welcome colleagues from Okhaldhunga Community Hospital, Kapilvastu and Bajhang clusters. We shared our experiences of working in hospitals and communities to improve understanding of mental health problems and provide care. In the rural municipality we work in, we were pleased to discover that the suicide rate had dropped from 12 last year to five this year, and none of these were in the wards we are concentrating on.

Back in February, at our annual staff 'bhoj' (celebrations with food), eight people were awarded their 25 years' service medal.

The hospital has welcomed our 54th batch of Skilled Birth Attendant course trainees and 36th batch of Mid-Level Practicum trainees, a skills training for health-post paramedics.

We have also welcomed some very premature babies into the world. The hospital opened a neonatal high dependency unit one year ago and this week (end of May) we have three very small babies admitted (including one set of twins). The twins weighed in at just over 1000g each and were delivered 13 weeks early, the other small baby girl was nine weeks early at 2000g. Babies born as premature as the twins only have a survival rate of 50% in the best hospitals in high resource settings. Our paediatric doctors and neonatal high dependency nurses have been helping these babies survive the first few stormy days of their lives. If they do well, it will be a first for the hospital for babies this premature to survive.



Okhaldhunga Community Hospital (OCH)

Since the last UMNews we have seen a dental and medical camp in Khijidemba in December 2022 (see www.umn.org.np/news/1129) and a mental health camp in January 2023 with 65 attending on the first day and helpful discussions with local leaders around mental health on the second day.

These past few months have been a blessed time for our OCH staff to be involved in vision and strategic discussions for the hospital. Some of the senior staff were involved in activities such as wording the Vision, Mission and Values of the hospital. Then with other staff also, we had team building experiences during the discussion for the five-year strategy plan.

We continue to have challenges in retaining senior doctors in Okhaldhunga. Our paediatrician and pharmacist stayed for less than a year and a surgeon resigned after only one month. Getting supplies from Kathmandu can also be challenging at times.

Our new oxygen plant needed repair. It was purchased less than 15 months ago. We hope to have our sponsored biomedical engineer and a technician in the next few months and hope that these staff will periodically carry out preventive maintenance that will help our equipment to last longer.

Through all these challenges, God has been faithful to us and sustaining us.





We do not want patients to go back untreated because of financial burden on the family.

UMN hospitals provide free care to patients who need help financially.

Do you want to help? There is always need for free care in both our hospitals.

To give towards the **Medical Assistance Fund** go to www.umn.org.np/give

Free care given during 2021-2022
USD 350,940 (Okhaldhunga)
USD 118,230 (Tansen)



Keshar Bahadur and his family

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A RURAL PHYSIOTHERAPIST!

How's this for an adventurous, joyful and exhausting working day? Last week, a 10 km jeep ride then 17 km of hiking up and down through jungle, across suspension bridges, past maize and wheat fields and a total climb of over 1,000 metres to see five clients aged six to 63 in their remote homes was the 12-hour working day experience of a rural physiotherapist and her colleagues in Molung, Okhaldhunga! It was a joy for Clare and her colleague Sheshan and later Khila from the Community-Based Rehabilitation Project to meet the clients in their homes with their families, see their progress, give advice or plan further assistance through

Okhaldhunga Community Hospital. It was so late by the end of the day that they were relieved to find local accommodation, but then had to get up at 5 am the next day for a three-hour hike to the next clients!

They met their second client, Keshar Bahadur, after over an hour of hiking and a steep climb. Clare shares, "He lives in a two-roomed house with his wife and two young daughters. Three years ago, his left leg was crushed by a falling stone while digging a water drain, leaving him initially severely disabled. Despite a chronic deep vein thrombosis and mental health challenges, he can now walk

with crutches down to the health post and back. I need to order him a new deep vein thrombosis stocking and Sheshan will follow up to make sure he is using the function he has to help on the farm. His wife served us a very welcome spicy potato snack and tea."

Their other clients included a six-year-old girl who has fully recovered from a major skin graft on her leg, a 17-year-old lady who suffered brain damage at five and needs help with all activities of daily living, a bright smiley nine-year-old who has progressed to supported walking and was invited for a week of intensive physio at the hospital, and an older man who suffered infection nearly 50 years ago and had three operations at OCH but has persevered with joy to live his life and tend his six buffalo and five cows.

Clare and Sheshan



WANT TO JOIN US?

We have many expatriate visa posts available, including in teaching, fundraising and IT as well as medical roles. Key expatriate vacancies are listed here: www.umn.org.np/join-us while opportunities for Nepali applicants are here: umn.org.np/vacancy



Featured Expatriate Vacancy Medical Coordinator

Location:

Okhaldhunga Community Hospital (OCH)

Start:

Early 2024, but an earlier arrival for language and culture training is preferable

The current Medical Coordinator is retiring in early 2024 and succession planning for this post has begun. Potential candidates for this position are experienced medical doctors in rural general practice / family medicine, preferably with some procedural skills.

If you would like to explore this or other opportunities further, please contact expat.recruitment@umn.org.np to learn more. Please send your CV or resume with your email.

Responsibilities include:

1. Oversight of all clinical aspects of care of the hospital, working in partnership with the Nursing Superintendent.
2. Working closely with the team of doctors at OCH in a consultant capacity, enabling them to do their work as well as possible. There is a strong emphasis on teaching and learning within OCH.
3. Membership of the Hospital's Internal Management Committee participating in decision-making processes of executive, administrative and strategic direction, and planning for the hospital.

Scan for
more. ▼



PRAY FOR UMN

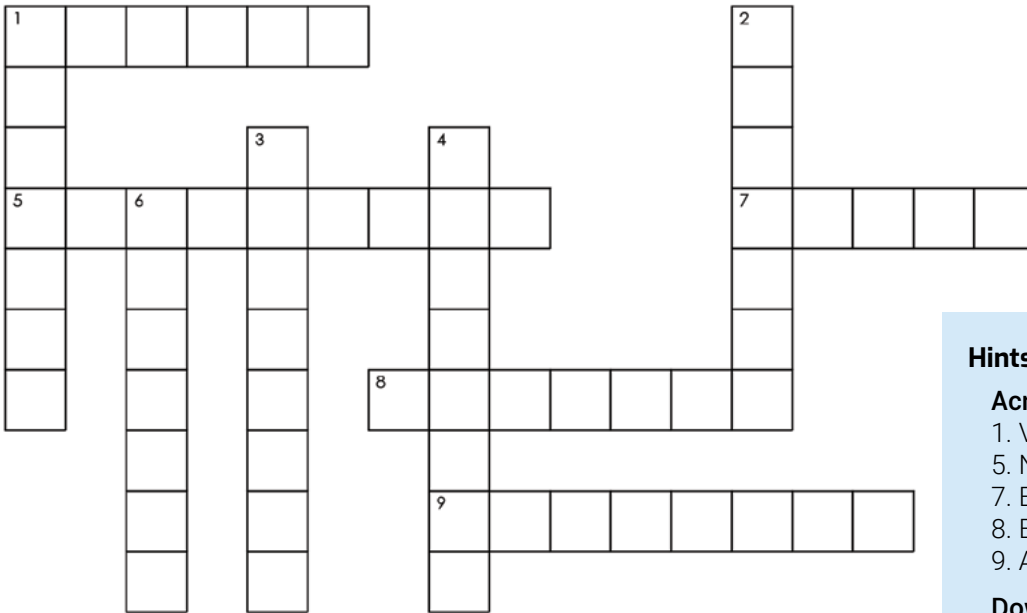


- We have experienced several changes in national government in recent years owing to transient reasons. Please pray for the stability of the government and for the smooth cooperation, collaboration and coordination among political parties and all three levels of government - federal, provincial and local in Nepal.
- Nepal is one of the countries that has high risks of adverse impacts of climate change and the poorest of the poor are affected the worst, particularly the small farmers. Pray for their needs and resilience to cope with these adverse impacts. Pray for the organisations who are working to address the root causes, mitigate its effects and foster sustainable practices.

Scan to read
new prayer priorities. ▶



RAMAILO!



Wanna take a break and try this cross-word puzzle? The ten words used here are related to the theme presented in this issue. If you can, send us a picture of you and the solved puzzle when you've finished it on UMN's FB page or communications@umn.org.np.

We'd love to see you. :) Enjoy!

P.S. *Ramailo* means fun in Nepali.

Hints

Across:

1. Vast green expanse
5. Negotiation
7. End to violence
8. Earth warming
9. A new life

Down:

1. Food for survival
2. Quarrel
3. Monsoon
4. Chaos & disturbance
6. Shortage of water

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

We hope you have enjoyed reading our newsletter so far.

Our next issue which will be out before Christmas, will be packed with stories and news on our work in **Gender Equality** and **Disability Inclusion** and other updates.



Embracing Disability

Born with cerebral palsy, Amit was more or less bed ridden for the first two years of his life. Read Amit's story and his incredible journey of transformation through regular therapy, love and support from his family.



Banished for Bleeding

Are women really impure during menstruation? Do gods get angry if menstruating women stay in the house or work in the kitchen? Find out how UMN is working to combat this harmful traditional practice of discriminating women during menstruation in West Nepal.

“

We are not the owners
of creation; rather, “the earth is
the Lord's, and everything in it”.

Psalm 24:1

Tansen, Bijesh Shrestha



/umnepal



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