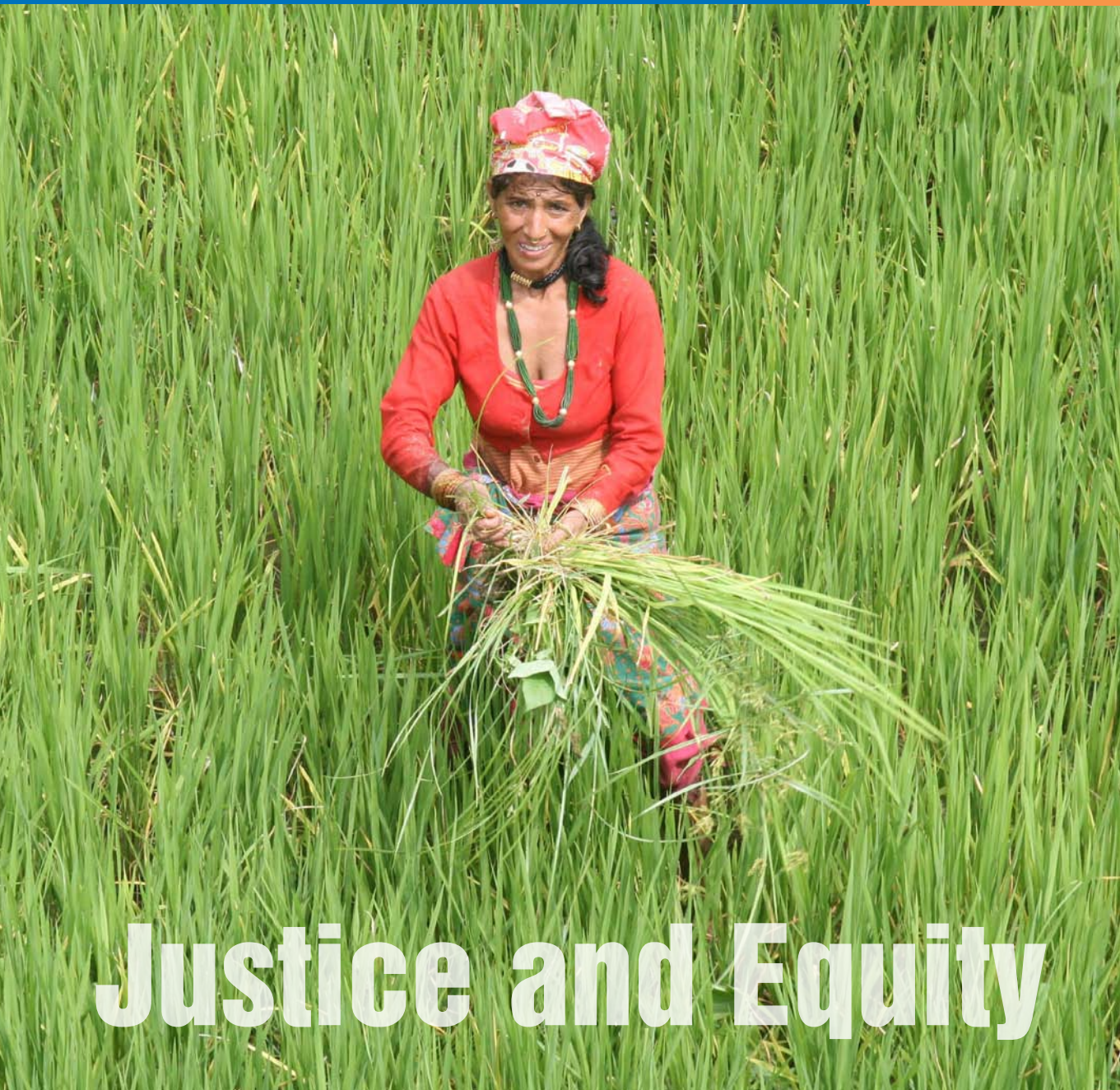


Number 30, February 2011

UMNNews 

United Mission to Nepal

Fullness of Life 



Justice and Equity



Dear Friends,

Injustice and inequity are key issues in our world, and have led not only to bloodshed in the past here in Nepal, but also to on-going poverty and conflict today. This edition of UMN News gives an insight into UMN's work in advocating and encouraging justice and equity, with and for those who live in poverty. This is one aspect of our understanding of fullness of life which is explained on page 4.

Desmond Tutu described injustice as "spitting in the face of God". The foundation of the idea of rights and justice for all is the biblical understanding that all are equal and made in the image of God. We therefore all have both rights that must be upheld, and responsibilities to uphold the rights of others.

My prayer is that these articles not only encourage you to get involved and support UMN's work in this area, but also challenge each of us to examine the impact our own lives have on those who live in poverty.

Mark Galpin
Executive Director
UMN

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"A fruitful vine"

What spiritual picture is God giving us for UMN, at this stage in our history? I've been praying about this for the last few months, and a verse which has spoken to me is Genesis 49:22. Here, Jacob is blessing his favourite son, Joseph. He says: "Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches reach over a wall."

The fruitful vine is doing what it is meant to do – producing good fruit, nourishing and sweet to the taste. The fruit also contains seeds that will produce more fruit in due course. The vine is fruitful because it is close to the spring, a source of clean fresh water that never dries up. The vine is vigorous and therefore not only produces fruit within the vineyard wall for the owner, but reaches over the wall, producing fruit for others.

What does this mean for UMN? I believe it promises that UMN will continue to be fruitful. A key to this fruitfulness is a close relationship with those who provide us with prayer and resources, but even more fundamentally, a close and dependent relationship with God.

The branches reaching over the wall indicate that the impact of what we do is not only confined to those we work with directly, but also spreads to others. This happens in a variety of ways: through influencing national policy; producing materials that others use; through our partners and the "seedling organisations" that have come out of UMN; and through the wider impact of UMNers.

What is the fruit that UMN produces? I believe that there are 4 key related "fruits":

- transformed communities where everyone has the opportunity to experience fullness of life;
- effective and accountable local partners, who contribute positively to this transformation;
- local churches acting as salt and light in their own communities and at all levels in society; and
- servant leaders nurtured and influenced by UMN, who live out biblical values as they lead in different contexts across the country and beyond.

I hope that this picture will encourage you in the part you are playing in UMN and beyond.

Mark Galpin
Executive Director



Living Life to the Full

During the summer, on my daily walk down to UMN, I passed a tall house with a small front vegetable garden. A gourd vine had been planted in the spring and, as vines do, this one gradually took over the plot. But it didn't stop there. It wound around an old trellis up three storeys to the roof. Before long, it found the electricity cables, and soon that gourd was growing in all directions, snarling the tangle of wires in its tendrils, and providing a leafy canopy across the lane. The big yellow flowers changed into fruit, and the wires supporting it began to droop alarmingly. I trembled for unwary motorcyclists who might find themselves with a face full of fruit!

Coming from the tropics, I'm no stranger to this kind of exuberant growth. And I'm sure this is what Jesus had in mind when he talked about life in all its fullness. Life filled with all that's good, in every way. Life that strains at the leash, that cascades over the weir, that bursts through the boundaries. Life the way God meant it to be.

Too often in development work, we look at life in terms of limitation. We see lack, deficit, poverty. Since 2005, we have

expressed UMN's focus as "tackling the root causes of poverty". When we started our strategic planning process in 2009, we asked the question: How can we better understand the root causes of poverty?

Chambers and Christian's model of poverty as a complex web of disempowerment¹ was a useful starting point, as it showed so clearly that different aspects of poverty, including spiritual oppression, are entwined with each other. We applied that to what we saw around us in Nepal, and noted six inter-related ways in which we felt poverty enmeshed people in Nepal:

- Ill-health and vulnerability, or material poverty;
- Shame and disrespect, or interpersonal and psycho-social poverty;
- Injustice and inequity, or political and economic poverty;
- Conflict, or social and communal poverty;
- Environmental degradation, or ecological poverty; all culminating in
- Despair and oppression, or religious and cultural poverty.

All very depressing, and not how God intended people made in His image to live. But our challenge, as we saw it, was to determine what it was God did intend for people. How could we envisage life for Nepali people that did reflect God's love and concern, and that gave us something clear and explicit to strive for? What would happen if we turned the "Life of Poverty" model on its head, and tried to describe its opposite?

That's how UMN's "Fullness of Life" model was born. This led us to re-express our main focus as "tackling the root causes of poverty, leading to fullness of life".

For us, fullness of life is "living healthy, dignified and hope-filled lives in community, working towards restored relationships with God, self, others and Creation." It's not limited to just one or two aspects of life, but sees human beings as whole people, and acknowledges that people need wholeness in every way to live as God intended.

¹ Chambers, *Poverty as Entanglement*, and Christian, *Poverty as Disempowerment*, discussed in Myers. B.L. (1999) *Walking with the Poor*

As you read the descriptions that follow, just imagine how life in Nepal, or in your own context, would be transformed if this could happen.

- **Well-being and security.** People are able to access and develop the knowledge, skills and resources they need to exercise their full physical and mental potential, including having a secure livelihood and good, productive work.
- **Dignity and respect.** People are empowered to make choices, and live with respect for themselves and for others, acknowledging that everyone is made in the image of God, and has something valuable to contribute.
- **Justice and equity.** People work within and build just and responsive local, national and international political and economic systems which respect the rights of others and specifically address the rights and needs of those trapped in poverty.
- **Peace and reconciliation.** People experience just and peaceful relationships at the household, community and national level that respect and celebrate diversity, and build peace in times of conflict.
- **Environmental sustainability.** People live within and nurture a healthy and resilient environment, ensuring that resources are used fairly in the present and are maintained for the future.
- **Hope and freedom.** People live without fear, and experience cultural and spiritual life as a gift that gives freedom and hope for the future.

How abundant life would be if these could be achieved! We're not naïve enough to think that all this is fully possible now, in a world marred by greed, injustice, oppression and evil. But what a glimpse of the heart of God for the world He has made, and what a vision for us, as His people, to work towards!

Isaiah expresses it beautifully:

Babies will no longer die in infancy, and all people will live out their life span... People will build houses and live in them themselves – they will not be used by someone else. They will plant vineyards and enjoy the wine – it will not be

drunk by others. Like trees, my people will live long lives. They will enjoy fully the things they have worked for. The work they do will be successful, and their children will not meet with disaster. I will bless them and their descendants for all time to come. Even before they finish praying to me, I will answer their prayers. (Isaiah 65:20-24, Good News Bible.)

We long to see people living full, healthy lives, enjoying the results of their work, creating harmonious communities, and above all, experiencing an intimate relationship with God, made possible through Christ. For, of course, it was Jesus himself who said:

“I have come that you might have life – and have it to the full!”
(John 10:10)



Lyn Jackson
Communications Director



Justice and Equity in action

Why, even in the rainy season, is the irrigation channel running through the village dry and dusty?

This question in community meetings led to a long struggle for a low-caste group to claim their right to water.

Thirty-five years ago, an irrigation channel was built to bring water to the fields of a Kumal community in Dhading District. Five years later, another channel was built, which diverted the water to a nearby high-caste community – a community with higher social status, better education, and better political connections. This was not legal.

The Kumals have had no access to water for irrigation for 30 years. This has meant lower food security, poor nutrition, and poor sanitation standards.

UMN's partner, JCDS¹, began working with the Kumals at Pipal Tha by mobilising the community and allowing them to share their own concerns and priorities. High on the list of priorities was food security, and sanitation and hygiene, both dependent on access to water.

For two years, UMN has been facilitating resources and support for families to establish kitchen gardens, and then toilets, in this community. People have experienced huge improvements in nutrition and health as a result.

But the Kumal people have also been empowered to stand up for their rights. Repeated requests to the Water Ministry have paid off, and now life-giving water again flows through their irrigation channel.



1 Jagatjyoti Community Development Centre

I have a toilet!

Fulmaya Kumal has been a Female Community Health Volunteer for six years in the Kumal community, but she had a problem – her house had no toilet.

Just four households in her community of 85 families had toilets. Being a community worker, she obviously had many people visit her during the day.

“When guests came to my house, I used to be so embarrassed because I had no toilet. I had to sometimes send them to the fields or somewhere in the corners outside,” she explains.

In the meantime, JCDS, a UMN partner in Dhading, came to work with this Kumal community. From the many problems that were identified, one was sanitation and hygiene. JCDS trained and mobilised two community people in toilet construction. Now, all 85 households in this community have a toilet.

Fulmaya says: “Now our village is renewed, sickness has been reduced. I am not worried any more about guests coming to my house. I am proud to have a toilet!”



JUSTICE & EQUITY
(Political / Economic)

After almost 2 years of struggle, the Kumals now have their water **rights restored**.

WELL-BEING & SECURITY
(Material)

Chintaman and his family eat better, have better health and his children can now go to school. They have a **secure livelihood**.

DIGNITY & RESPECT
(Interpersonal / Psycho-social)

Fulmaya is no longer embarrassed by not having a toilet. She and her neighbours can now **live with dignity**.

Productive fields

Chintaman Kumal, a member of the Kumal community, used to cultivate cereal crops in his field, but his production was not enough to feed his family. All they ate was a little rice with salt and capsicum. Given his situation, sending his children to school was an impossibility.

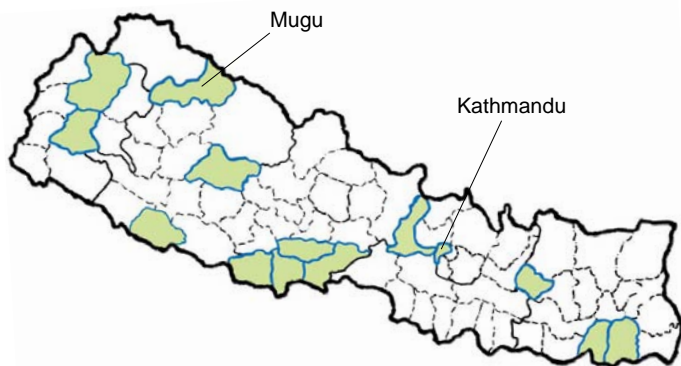
Last year, Chintaman received training from JCDS, a UMN partner, about kitchen gardening and farmyard manure management. In the beginning, he was provided with seeds and saplings for vegetables and cash crops.

Chintaman is now a successful commercial vegetable grower. He is earning almost NRS 28,000 a year (USD 383). He is also encouraging his neighbours to grow and sell vegetables.



*compiled by
Vijeta Manaen Shrestha
Communications Advisor*

Cluster Connection



MUGU

Region: Mountain region, Mid-West Nepal

Population: 44, 507

Life Expectancy: 36 years

Team Leader: Paul Chhetri

Number of staff: 9

Number of partners: 7

Development needs:

- Health care, sanitation and nutrition
- Practical quality education
- Food security
- Nondiscriminatory violence free environment



Meet Paul

I joined UMN in September 2008 as a cluster team leader for Mugu Cluster. I was very excited and challenged to get this opportunity to work in Mugu, the least developed district in all of Nepal.

My wife Reema and six-year-old son Pratik live in Kathmandu. I have sort of got used to staying away from my family, but it does get a little lonely sometimes, especially when I am sick or when I hear of someone in my family being unwell.

My current job responsibility is to provide leadership and direction to all cluster activities, and to give spiritual leadership, coaching and mentoring to the team.

Through UMN's work, many marginalised communities in Mugu are now able to meet their basic needs through livelihood improvement

projects. Many Dalits (low-caste people) are now pursuing school education; women and children are able to access timely and better health treatment from government health facilities; women, children, Dalits and people with disabilities are now more aware of their rights and are able to access various services provided by the government.

The grace and love of God, prayer and encouragement from friends and family, and being able to see positive transformation in the community keeps me going in Mugu.

*Paul Chhetri
Cluster Team Leader
Mugu*

I have a dream...



Mugu, the village where I was born, could be called the poorest place on the globe. My parents barely managed to feed the family by working hard in the fields of other landowners in the village. Poverty was not the only reality in our lives that made us so helpless. I was born deaf.

Like all children, I wanted to go to school. But for a poor boy like me, that would be out of the question. From the beginning of my childhood, life was slowly shutting off all options for me to live a full and happy life.

At six, I lost my father due to illness and my mother remarried after three years. Surprisingly, this turned out to be an escape from my situation. My step-father told me that there was a newly-opened special class for the deaf and dumb students.

I was overjoyed, and felt that maybe my life doesn't always have to be bad news for me. My step-father enrolled me in Mahakali Higher Secondary School (MHSS), a UMN partner school in Gamgadhi, where the special class for the deaf and dumb had just begun. They took me immediately and told me that the school was meant for people just like me.

It was puzzling at first. Why would people open a school for someone like me? We are burdens to society, always taunted and pushed aside.

Eventually, I realised I was not disabled, but just differently-abled. I began to enjoy my classes and make friends.

But there was a little problem. The school was three hours' walk from my home.

A year later, a hostel for disabled children like me was opened inside the MHSS premises through UMN's initiation. It was an answer to prayer!

Soon all the things I dreamt of as luxury were there for me. UMN provided a scholarship – I didn't have to be born rich. Beds and blankets – I was warm. Books – I was worthy of them.

We are 12 of us in this hostel, learning and playing happily. I feel villagers now look at us differently, respect us, communicate with us. I proudly tell people that I am in Grade 4. I can write, I can read, and above all, I can dream. One day, I want to be a sign language teacher for many children like me in my village.

*Bhanu Bhakta Rokaya, (16)
Grade 4, Mugu,*

Please pray for:

1. A stable and favorable political environment and smooth functioning of the government offices in Mugu, so that our work and development plans would effectively reach the poor and marginalised communities.
2. Reduction in the gender discrimination, injustice and domestic violence in communities.
3. For Paul, with his many responsibilities, and the added pressure of being away from his home and family for many weeks at a time.
4. For safe travel for all the cluster team. Walking is the only way of getting around Mugu, and the district is very mountainous, with steep, narrow paths. Flights in and out are uncertain.

The fish harvest

Bhrikuti Community Learning Centre (BCLC), a UMN partner in Rupandehi, has been working closely with a poor community in starting a fish farm for a year now. This community-based fishery project belongs to 276 households that live around the lake and is managed by a committee in the village.

The first harvest from this lake took place on 24 January, 2011. The fish were plentiful and healthy and were sold to many fish buyers from the markets nearby. The sale was close to NPR 17,000 (US\$ 232) on the first day of the harvest.

Fifty percent of the total income will be put back into cleaning the lake, buying new fingerlings, and managing the fish nursery



for the harvest next year. They plan to add more money to this from next year's income, to start a fund for the community to access for loans and other village development projects.

The first harvest, which went on for three days, was a success. The villagers are very happy and encouraged, and hope to work harder for a bigger sale next year.

Inter-faith Health Camp

Lumbini Christian Society (LCS), a UMN partner in Rupandehi, organised a health camp in Kapilvastu on 28 December. LCS had formed an inter-faith and multicultural peace group and is working on various peacebuilding projects. This health camp was also a way to show care and concern and to bring people together to rebuild relationships in the community. Women and marginalised people get less access to medical care in these areas, but as the word got around the villages that there were female doctors, more women came for medical care. About 800 people received treatment.



Digging into the past

Do you have questions about UMN's history that you'd love answers to? The UMN Archives are now housed at Yale University in the Divinity school. The archives are available for research, but publishing any material requires the permission of UMN. Find out what's there by going to <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.212> and accessing the Finding Aid. Copies or scans can be made for researchers. Contact the very helpful Martha Smalley on martha.smalley@yale.edu for more information.



Jen and Roger Marston and Helen Parsons collect material for the archives.

Post cards

UMN has been receiving many beautiful post cards lately from churches and individuals around the UK encouraging UMN's work in climate change. We want to express our appreciation and say thank-you for your continued support.



Who's Who?

Tim Ruohoniemi

Working in a place like Bajhang was Tim Ruohoniemi's dream. Born in Kathmandu and raised in a UMN family, he saw many good things accomplished over the years. But he was always conscious of the many areas of Nepal that continue to be relatively untouched by development. It seemed like a basic issue of inequity and injustice that so many resources had been poured into Kathmandu Valley, with so little impact in remote areas.

Moving to Bajhang with his wife Lisa and two children, Emma (12) and Ian (10), was a big step, but God has sustained them there, as they daily seek to shine his light in a dark place. Tim's formal role is as a Sustainable Livelihoods Advisor, but he supports the entire UMN cluster team in a variety of ways. Lisa uses her skills as a pediatrician in part-time involvement in the district hospital, but home-schooling the children is her main focus.

"We have found that Bajhang is a challenging place with deeply ingrained attitudes, but we are thankful for signs of hope that these can gradually change," says Tim.



Join us

God's call to "see that justice is done" is an exciting challenge for Christians, wherever we live. Here in Nepal, there are many opportunities for people with skills and experience to work with in teams with Nepalis and other expatriates, leading people towards fullness of life.

If you are interested in any of the positions below, or if you would like to ask about other opportunities for expatriates within UMN, please contact Anne Penn at expat.recruitment@umn.org.np to learn more. Please send your CV or resumé with your email.



Needed Urgently January 2011

All Advisor posts involve mentoring, coaching and training Nepali staff and partners.

ADVOCACY ADVISOR (Kathmandu-based with travel to other areas)

While the rich get richer, the poor lose what little they have. It's not fair, and it can be changed. UMN's Advocacy Team works to empower communities to speak up for justice for themselves, and the most vulnerable in society. The team needs an advisor with practical advocacy skills, and qualifications and experience in community mobilisation, human rights, legal or public policy work.

ACCOUNTANT/FINANCE TEAM LEADER (Kathmandu-based)

Sound, effective financial management systems are essential for organisations like UMN. We need someone with high levels of accounting or financial management experience to lead our well-qualified team of Nepali professionals. Experience working with a not-for-profit organisation would be an advantage.

EDUCATION ADVISOR (Kathmandu-based with travel to other areas)

Education is one of the key ways in which the barriers of poverty and disadvantage can be broken down. UMN's Education Team needs a senior advisor with creativity and vision, as well as experience with formal and non-formal education, preferably in a cross-cultural setting. Involvement with practical and alternative education would also be helpful.

PEACEBUILDING ADVISOR (Kathmandu-based with travel to other areas)

Addressing post conflict needs and promoting harmony in Nepali society are high priorities for UMN. We need an advisor to help us ensure that our peacebuilding work continues to be embedded within the whole organisation. Experience and qualifications in peace and reconciliation work, particularly in a post-conflict situation, are essential. Skills in psycho-social support and trauma healing would also be helpful.

Please visit www.umn.org.np for more information about opportunities to serve in UMN.

Pray

*"Speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves...
Protect the rights of the poor and needy."*

Proverbs 31:8-9

UMN uses advocacy to work diligently towards achieving justice for poor and marginalised communities in Nepal. UMN wants to see the oppressed, the weak and the exploited rise up, speak up and live life to the full. Here are two justice issues our cluster team leaders from Rukum and Bajhang wish to share, and request your prayerful support for.

bajhang



Equity and social justice are still out of reach for the women of Bajhang district. Wife battering, polygamy and discrimination between sons and daughters are still a common practice. Recently, a woman in Bajhang committed suicide by jumping off a bridge, along with her two children. According to the villagers, she did this because all her life she was abused by her husband. Just recently, he took off to marry another woman, abandoning her and the children. She felt she had no option but to kill herself and end the suffering of her children as well. This woman's despair represents that of many of the women of Bajhang. We are concerned and are working to change this situation, but we need your prayers too.

- Pray for God's intervention against spiritual oppression which is behind this despair and hopelessness.
- Also pray for our staff, especially the female staff. They need courage, motivation and safety when they visit and work with the community people. Women are not seen as capable, and are not accepted everywhere with respect.

*Madhu Kumar Thapa
Team Leader*

rukum



Maila Damai, a Dalit (low-caste) man in a remote hilly settlement in Rukum, sews all day. He has been doing this all his life, as did his father when he was alive. When his father died, the responsibility of stitching clothes for the 24 households in that village passed to Maila. A small proportion of the crop is collected from these 24 houses twice a year during harvest time, and given to Maila to feed his family of seven. This is Maila's earning for all the stitching work he does for the whole year.

Maila has to carefully ration that crop to be able to feed his family for a year. This old practice compels Dalit families to live trapped in a cycle of poverty. About 20% of the people in Rukum have no option but to live this way.

- Please pray for the situation of the Dalits in Rukum.
- Pray for our staff and partners as they advocate for Dalit rights and work closely with the community in dealing with such difficult, traditional practices.

*Durga Upadhyay
Team Leader*

Pray for Nepal

A group of Christian development NGOs has begun working with leaders from Nepal Christian Society and National Christian Fellowship Nepal to support local churches and national Christian leaders as they speak out on issues of justice. We aim to involve all church networks and hundreds of local churches to draft and publicise a *Christian Commitment in Building the New Nepal*, which will commit Christians to working for justice and peace, and call on leaders to do the same.

Please pray for unity of vision among Christian leaders and churches, the movement of the Spirit among Christians to share God's concern for justice, and a powerful Christian witness to Nepal's social and political leaders.

Give

Help UMN and its partners work for justice and equity in Nepal. You can donate to our Advocacy work (for an example, see pages 6-7), to one of our clusters (like Mugu, pages 8-9) or to our general fund.

Please indicate your preference when you donate. All undesignated gifts will be used as needed.

DONATE ONLINE

www.umn.org.np

Give via credit or debit card from anywhere in the world. For UK donors, this site offers tax-efficient giving.

INTERNET BANKING & MONEY TRANSFER

Set up a payment or monthly standing order to transfer funds.

UK & EUROPEAN CURRENCIES

Pay to: **United Mission to Nepal**

Sort Code: **60-91-99**

Account Number: 10078177 (Sterling account)
10615512 (Euro account)

US & NEPAL CURRENCIES

Transfer or wire to:

Standard Chartered Bank Nepal Ltd.
PO Box 3990, Nayabaneswar, Kathmandu, Nepal

Account Number:

Swift Code: SCBLNPKA
01-0488798-51 (USD account)
01-0488798-01 (NRS account)

MAIL DONATIONS

Post directly to Nepal

Make cheque to *United Mission to Nepal* in Euros, Sterling, Australian, Canadian or USD

Mail to:

Finance Team (30), UMN
PO Box 126
Kathmandu, Nepal

TAX - EFFICIENT GIVING

United States

Make cheque payable to
*"Hospitals Revitalisation Programme
UMCOR #982168"*
with a note that it is for UMN.

Mail to:

Cherian Thomas, MD
Executive Secretary, Health and Welfare
Global Ministries U.M.C.
475 Riverside Drive, Room 330
New York, NY 10115

Australia

Mail to:

Mrs. Marlene Stewart
Finance Officer, Interserve
PO Box 231, Bayswater VIC 3153
17/653 Mountain Hwy Bayswater, Australia

Make cheque payable to

"Interserve" with a note that it is for UMN.

OTHER OPTIONS

Contact fin@umn.org.np

- For advice on leaving a bequest to UMN
- For instructions for UK tax-efficient giving by post
- To designate your gift for a certain cluster or area of work*

Interested in supporting UMN's scholarship scheme?

Use the response slip on the enclosed brochure, or contact fin@umn.org.np for details.

Scholarships

Readdressing injustice and fighting inequality



While children in many Western countries groan as they face another year of study, many Nepali children are desperate to get into school. They know that a good education is one of the only ways they can break free from the cycle of poverty and disadvantage, and start creating new opportunities for themselves and their families.

Although primary education in Nepal is technically free, many children face blockages – the cost of uniforms and books, long distances to walk over rough mountainous pathways, discrimination against ethnic minorities, low-caste children and those with disabilities, poorly-trained teachers, overcrowded classrooms and few resources.

It's no wonder the drop-out rate is so high. One in every four students doesn't show up for the important "end of year test". Less than half the students who start school complete Grade 5. An average girl in rural Nepal spends between one and two

years in school. Children with disabilities rarely get a chance to learn, and low-caste children, particularly girls, clearly receive the message that education is not for the likes of them. It just isn't fair!

That's why UMN has, for many years, provided scholarships to keep children from disadvantaged groups in school. Mostly, children attend local government schools, though some children with disabilities are placed in schools with special facilities, including sometimes boarding hostels. Right now, more than 440 children are being supported by UMN scholarships, through UMN's local partners, who select students and follow their progress. Other activities aim to improve children's learning experience – providing resources, training teachers, and supporting management committees. And UMN's education officers monitor the whole programme, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Scholarships: one way in which you can "See that justice is done!" (Isaiah 1:17)

We need your help

All this costs money, of course, but it's surprisingly cheap. The enclosed brochure outlines the average costs. Please consider how you can help – with a longer-term commitment or a one-off donation. Or perhaps your church, Sunday school or youth group could take up the challenge. Use the form on the brochure, write to us, or email fin@umn.org.np



Seeda Sarki scholarship holder, Class 8, Mugu



Jesus said: "I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full."

John 10:10



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