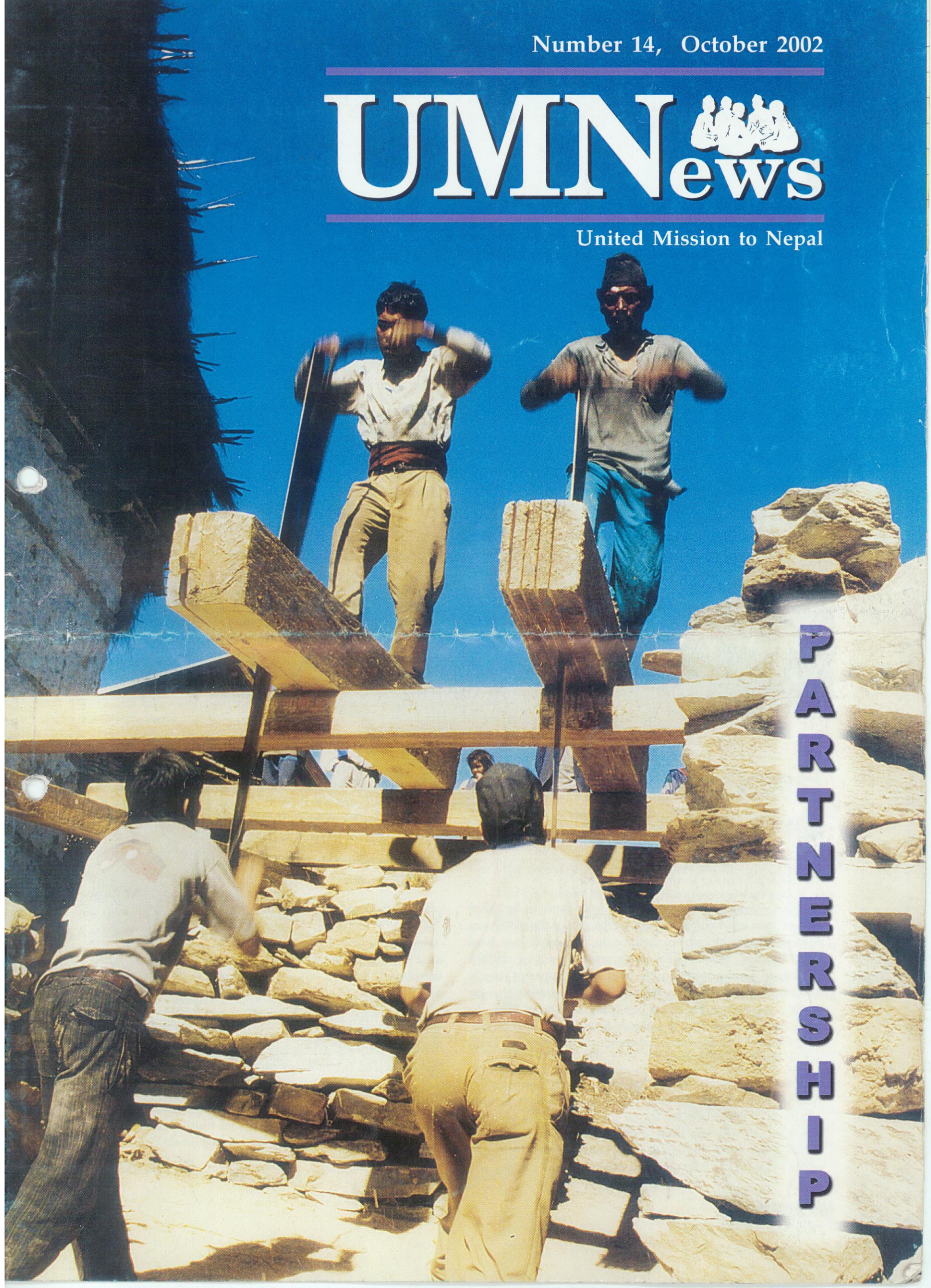


Number 14, October 2002

# UMN News

United Mission to Nepal

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**The idea of partnership** is nothing new to UMN. In fact, UMN itself is the result of eight mission organisations from different countries, denominations and traditions choosing to enter into partnership with each other to commence work in Nepal in 1954, rather than each one starting their own venture. At the time, this was a very innovative approach, a bold experiment. Wise from lessons learned in India and Africa, the pioneers realised the great potential of joining hands and working together. There certainly have been many frustrations and difficulties throughout the years, but the concept proved to be successful. We believe that much more has been accomplished than would have been the case had each member organisation sought to work independently.

From the very beginning, the partnership with His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N) has been fundamental for UMN, enabling us to be and work in Nepal. This has also caused frustrations at times, but we thank God for the positive fruit of this long-lasting relationship and look forward to many more years working together with the government to meet the needs of the people of Nepal.

The concept of partnership will be even more important for UMN in the future. In the early years, UMN implemented most of its work itself. UMN started, developed, owned and managed hospitals, schools, companies, community development projects etc. This was appropriate at the time, but Nepal has changed. Nepali organisations are increasingly becoming capable of managing their own projects and institutions. UMN realised this many years ago, and partnership and secondment solutions have slowly taken over as the main modus operandi of the mission.

The majority of UMN's expatriate visa holders (excluding HQ and expatriate children's education) are today seconded to partner organisations. This is a positive development in

line with the UMN Vision and Strategy adopted by the Board in 1996. This trend will accelerate in the next few years and by 2005 we expect UMN to implement all its work through partner organisations.

"Partnership" is rightfully one of the eleven Strategic Directions identified for the next 5 to 10 years of UMN work (see pages 6 to 7). It will be further explored in the new Strategic Plan to be presented to the Board of Directors in December. Many of the texts in this issue of UMNNews relate to various aspects of how UMN is working in partnership with others. We need to learn more from these experiences when we plan for future ventures.

"Addressing the root causes of poverty" is another of UMN's new Strategic Directions. The interview with Martin Allaby on pages 3 - 4 outlines some of the reasons why this is an important area for UMN to focus on in the future. This, if any, is an area where we need to increase our learning, and where we can benefit from partnerships and networking with other organisations.

The partnership with HMG/N is fundamental, the partnership with Member Bodies and donors is essential, and the partnership with Nepali organisations is crucial for the future. But most important of all is our partnership with God himself. Without His support, His encouragement, His comfort and blessing, our efforts would all be in vain. God chose to partner with us to fulfil His plans. This gives us confidence to partner with others for future ventures in Nepal.

*Jennie Collins*

**Jennie Collins**  
Executive Director

## "UMN gave me a life"

*"Some seed fell in good soil; the plants grew and bore grain, one hundred grains each." Luke 8:8*

Thirty-seven years ago the infant who came to be called "Gyani" was left, wrapped in rags, by the gate of the old Shanta Bhawan Mission Hospital in Kathmandu. She might have been called "Legion" because there are so many abandoned children in lands of great poverty. In her case, out of apparent tragedy a blessing was to take place. Nepalis commonly explain changes of fate by studying the moon and stars. To Rachel Wolf, the missionary who embraced the infant's cause, it was "providence." God wills that each child should somehow be provided for. There are no throw away children.

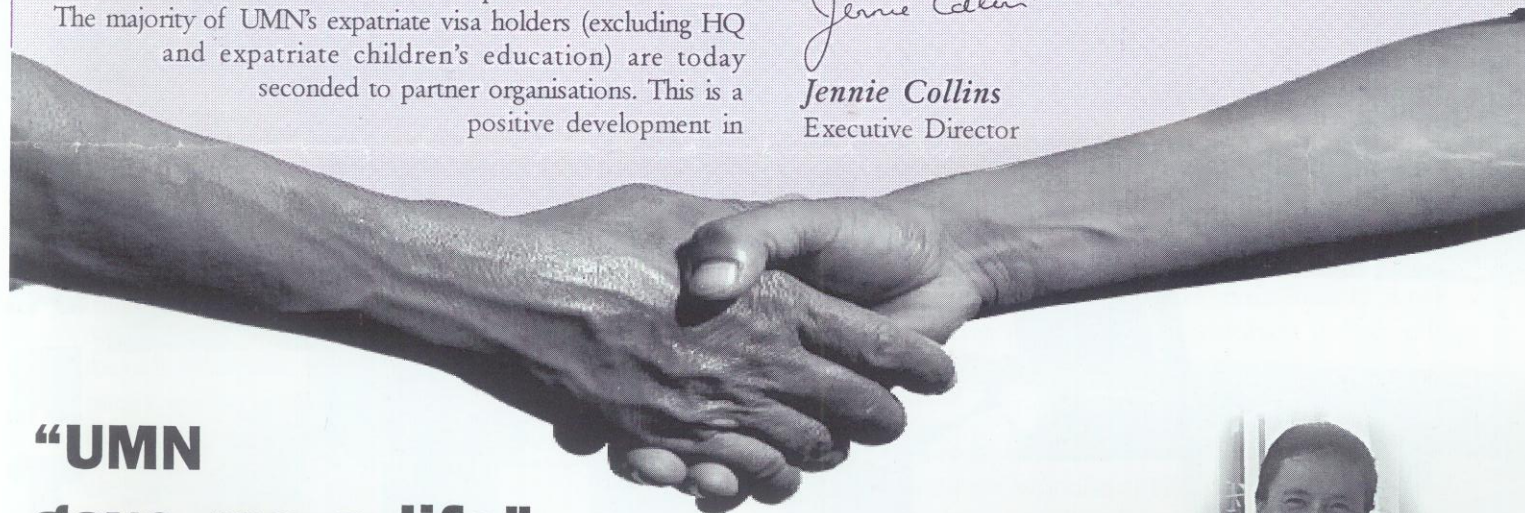
Mission colleagues warned Rachel not to get involved. The child came from unknown circumstances. Some kinds of prenatal and infant damage might not appear for years. Such an adoption was often the first step along a well worn path to heartbreak. Rachel followed her heart and was rewarded. Gyani developed into a bright and healthy child and eventually into a strong and

able young woman. Following her basic schooling Gyani went to a training programme for office management run by the mission.

Recently I met Gyani at a reception. I told her that I worked with the United Mission to Nepal. She smiled and said, "Oh I know the UMN. It gave me a life." She introduced me to her husband, who is a pastor, and to their beautiful daughter, half hidden behind her mother's dress.

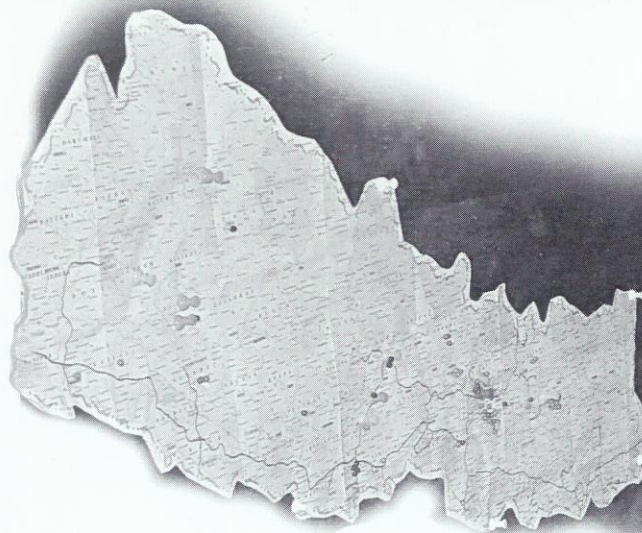
I asked Gyani what she did. She said, "I am the office manager for the regional office of 'Save the Children.'" Thousands of children have benefited from the work of this international agency. In deed, God does provide.

*Farley Maxwell*





# "Poverty in Nepal – a challenge for UMN"



STEFAN ÖSTMAN

**"Nepal is changing - therefore UMN must change," are words that have been repeated many times over the last year. But *how* is Nepal changing? What are the needs of the people of Nepal, *today*?**

**With these questions in mind, and using UMN's Vision for Nepal as a framework, Martin Allaby took on the challenge of compiling a Country Profile. Poverty and Injustice emerged as two key issues for UMN to address in the future.**

**What is your background?**

I am from England – most recently Nottingham, where the Robin Hood legend comes from, the outlaw who stole from the rich to give to the poor...

I trained as a family practitioner and specialised in Public Health Medicine. I came to Nepal three years ago.

**What are your responsibilities in UMN?**

I'm fortunate to work at a lot of different levels. I do a little work seeing patients as a GP at a community clinic in Sanepa, I am involved in community health work in Patan, some strategic public health work in UMN's Health Services Office, and some broader strategic planning for UMN as a whole.

It's a very interesting spectrum of work – from the stethoscope on the individual to looking at the whole of Nepal and trying to see what the situation is.

**You have worked on a Country Profile for UMN. How would you summarise its findings?**

In a nutshell, the areas that traditionally have been UMN's main involvement, such as provision of social services (health and education) and development of infrastructure, are all moving in the right direction. There is still a long way to go, but they are improving, seen over two or three decades. But over that same timescale the evidence shows fairly certainly that poverty outside towns has become worse, and also that hunger has become worse.

**How do you define poverty?**

In national surveys the poverty line is defined as the level at which people can obtain enough food to be physically active, plus the basic necessities, such as fuel and shelter, that are used by people who get that amount of food.

And the number of people living below that line has increased?

Yes. The most likely finding is that in the mid-70s, 33% of Nepalis lived below that poverty line. That percentage increased to 42 % in the mid-90s. It may have fallen in recent years from that level, but that's a tentative guess that is not adequately tested yet.

**Did the conclusions surprise you?**

I was very surprised initially by the conclusion that services and infrastructure were improving but poverty and hunger were getting worse. I was surprised that I didn't know it until I started to do the analysis. I still don't know why that conclusion is not more widely spoken about or known about.

**So what message does the Country Profile give UMN?**

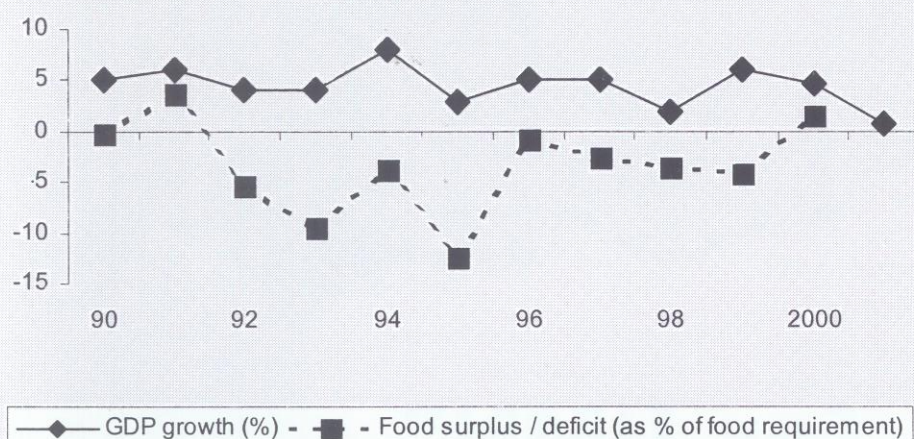
That kind of profile doesn't indicate just one way forward. One could say that our strength has been in infrastructure and social service development and there's still a long way to go with that in Nepal so why not carry on? But I think it was appropriate for UMN to take a slightly different view, as it has, and to focus particularly on the negative trends, poverty and hunger, and recognise that these have not been major emphases for us until now. We should develop expertise and a focus in these areas. The first thing we need to do is learn a lot.

**The first point in the new Strategic Directions talks about addressing the root causes of poverty. Do we know what the root causes of poverty are?**

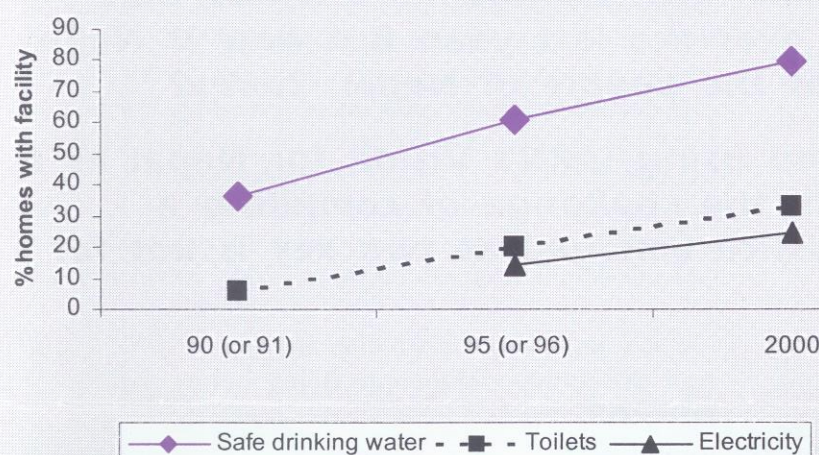
We have started to look at this. The *symptoms* of poverty that people in Nepal describe, broadly relate to three areas: 1) they are unable to meet the basic needs for existence. 2) They have no influence. Nobody listens to them. 3) They are vulnerable to disasters.



## ECONOMY AND FOOD SURPLUS/DEFICIT



## HOUSEHOLD FACILITIES



From our own reflections and from other work done by Christian development agencies we can be clear about the most fundamental cause of poverty: that is sin, spoiling relationships with God and one another. Between the symptoms and that fundamental root lies a complex web of cause and effect. And as a Christian organisation we want to focus on the spiritual root but also to identify some of the factors, which are towards the root end of the spectrum rather than the symptoms end. Six factors have emerged.

1. A lack of land. That emerges as the primary expressed need of poor people; they don't have enough land to grow enough food for themselves.
2. A lack of education.
3. Population growth.
4. Poor governance, people's voice is not heard or their interests are not considered important.
5. A lack of employment opportunities. This relates to the lack of land. The capacity of Nepal to grow enough food for people who survive through subsistence farming is quite limited, so instead they need to earn money to buy food.
6. Low status of women.

These factors all interrelate. The network of relationships is very complex.

The Strategic Directions do not say anything about addressing *symptoms* of poverty. Has that been UMN's focus up till now, and should we stop doing that?

We are only just getting into the process of reviewing our current work and saying to what extent it fits with the strategic directions. I think we can identify a lot of work that UMN has been doing which could be relevant. One of the things that have surprised me as I have started reading around this is how relevant a lot of the work of our Engineering and Industrial Development Department may be to addressing root causes of poverty through development of the economy and creating opportunities of employment. Likewise, some of our input to primary and non-formal education, community empowerment and health work is also relevant.

And what is *not* relevant?

I think that is too early to say.

What about hospitals, one of UMN's major areas of work until now?

I think it is important that we are clear in our understanding about what hospitals can and cannot contribute and I think it is a mistake to try to argue that hospitals can address the root causes of poverty. By and large I do not think they do. That does not necessarily mean they are unimportant to UMN. They have been valued by us as Christians as a way of expressing compassion to people who are suffering. They are valued by the people who use them, and particularly the government has valued our ability to provide hospital care.

How is a Christian approach to poverty different from a non-Christian?

Our Christian understanding of a poor person is that they are especially valued by God and that their poverty may make it easier for them to enter God's kingdom. That is very different from what I understand to be a

commonly held Hindu understanding of a poor person, that their situation is dictated by their karma, they are getting what they deserve. That is certainly a completely opposite viewpoint. However, we cannot say that Christians always have a good perspective on poverty and development. An old English hymn has a verse, which says, "The rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate, God made them high and lowly and ordered their estate." So there Christian worship was being used to reinforce a strong social hierarchy rather than as a source of inspiration for addressing poverty! I also know many Hindus who are very concerned for the poor and who work very hard to improve their situation.

An important area of work for our Strategic Directions is to develop our understanding of the phrase Christian Development. In our relationships with the Nepali Christian community, we and they may have a different understanding of that. Talking together, studying the Bible together, looking at development thinking together is important.

Any other aspect of being a Christian organisation that you want to mention?

One component, which to me is important, is humility about how much we can achieve. From a biblical perspective it is not in our power to bring heaven on earth, only God can bring his kingdom in full. The development work we do at most is a *sign* of God's kingdom, but it is not God's kingdom. There we are different from secular agencies whose perspective is simply, "unless we do, it nothing will ever happen".

Stefan Östman





Mary Lewis demonstrates what to do if bitten by a snake, to a group of school children on a study visit. STEFAN ÖSTMAN

## New Partner in Dharan

The BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS) was established in Dharan in 1993. It has expanded rapidly to become an autonomous university with more than 600 students. The relationship between UMN and BPKIHS was formalised in January 2002, as Drs Mary and Owen Lewis joined the institute. Together, they have established a Department for Family Medicine, and a new MD programme in Family Medicine, which started in July. Owen and Mary also contribute to the running of the hospital through being in charge of the Emergency Room and General Outpatient Department. UMN's Oral Health Programme is involved with BPKIHS's College of Dentistry.

Professor Shekhar Koirala, vice-chancellor of the institute is very positive to the partnership with UMN. "Not only for the teaching, but also for UMN's work culture," he says.

Shekhar Koirala himself worked for a short period at Tansen Hospital in the 1970s. The commitment of the staff and the work ethics made a deep impression on him, and he has kept his high esteem of UMN's involvement in health services.

Read Mary Lewis' personal reflections on partnership, based on her experience in Dharan.



# Committed to partnership

*Jeremiah's Complaint :*

"O Lord, you deceived me, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed."

*Jer. 20:7*

*David's Psalm:*

"If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me; your right hand will hold me fast."

*Ps. 139: 9-10*

**P**artnership is facing the greatest challenge you have ever been offered and not realizing its enormity until you are too committed to leave. It is realizing that nothing is possible without God's ever available presence and strength. It is reading all the passages of hope in the Scriptures with new eyes. It is knowing that you are in the place of God's choosing; that he has prepared you with very carefully laid plans over a lifetime; that he has equipped you with all that is necessary for the task; that his kingdom will be enriched and extended by the work done in this place; that you are privileged to be trusted with such a responsibility of developing the professional lives of keen and astute and warm hearted young Nepalis.

"And yet Lord, this is too hard for me."

Partnership is reading all the passages about hardship in the Scriptures with new eyes. It is finding a soul mate in Jeremiah. It is realizing that assurances of seniority and wisdom and previous experience, also mean older and stiffer and needing siestas. It means leaving your best friends and likeminded colleagues and taking a long time to form new relationships and professional understanding. If God could walk with Israel through the Red Sea on dry land; why does he choose the quicksand for our journey together?

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" (Is. 43:19)

Partnership is part of our new direction. We believe it is God's direction for our work in Nepal. We know that obedience to God's call to discipleship is partnership in bearing his cross and sharing his suffering. Partnership is entering into relationships only poorly understood until you are too committed to leave. It is about trusting God to cover our cross cultural sins with his grace. It is about trusting him to establish his kingdom through his rather unlikely partnership with us.

*Mary Lewis*







## Introduction

During the 48 years that UMN has served in Nepal, there have been many changes, within UMN, within Nepal, and internationally. The purpose of this document is to set out new Strategic Directions for UMN that refocus UMN's work, particularly taking into account UMN's unique and rich heritage, and the current situation in Nepal.

These Strategic Directions are the culmination of a participative one-year long information-gathering and consultative process that included the input of major stakeholders. The process was rigorous, the methodology sound. We feel affirmed that the process was upheld in prayer throughout and was God-led. These Strategic Directions describe how UMN's Vision and Mission can be worked out in UMN's current situation in Nepal. They seek to articulate the unique contribution UMN wants to make in Nepal in the next 5-10 years. The Strategic Directions indicate that UMN will be a transparently Christian organisation, seeking to stay alert to what God is doing around us, in us and through us.

The Strategic Directions outlined below should be read as an interrelated whole, not taken in isolation from each other. Together they paint a picture of where we believe God is calling us to go and how UMN can achieve the greatest impact in the coming years. They are not listed in any order of priority. However, the frame we have chosen for these Strategic Directions is drawn from Micah 6.8:

*"And what does the Lord require of you?  
To do justice and to love compassion  
And to walk humbly with your God."*

## Strategic Directions for UMN's Future Work

The following will shape the future work of UMN (over the next 5-10 years):

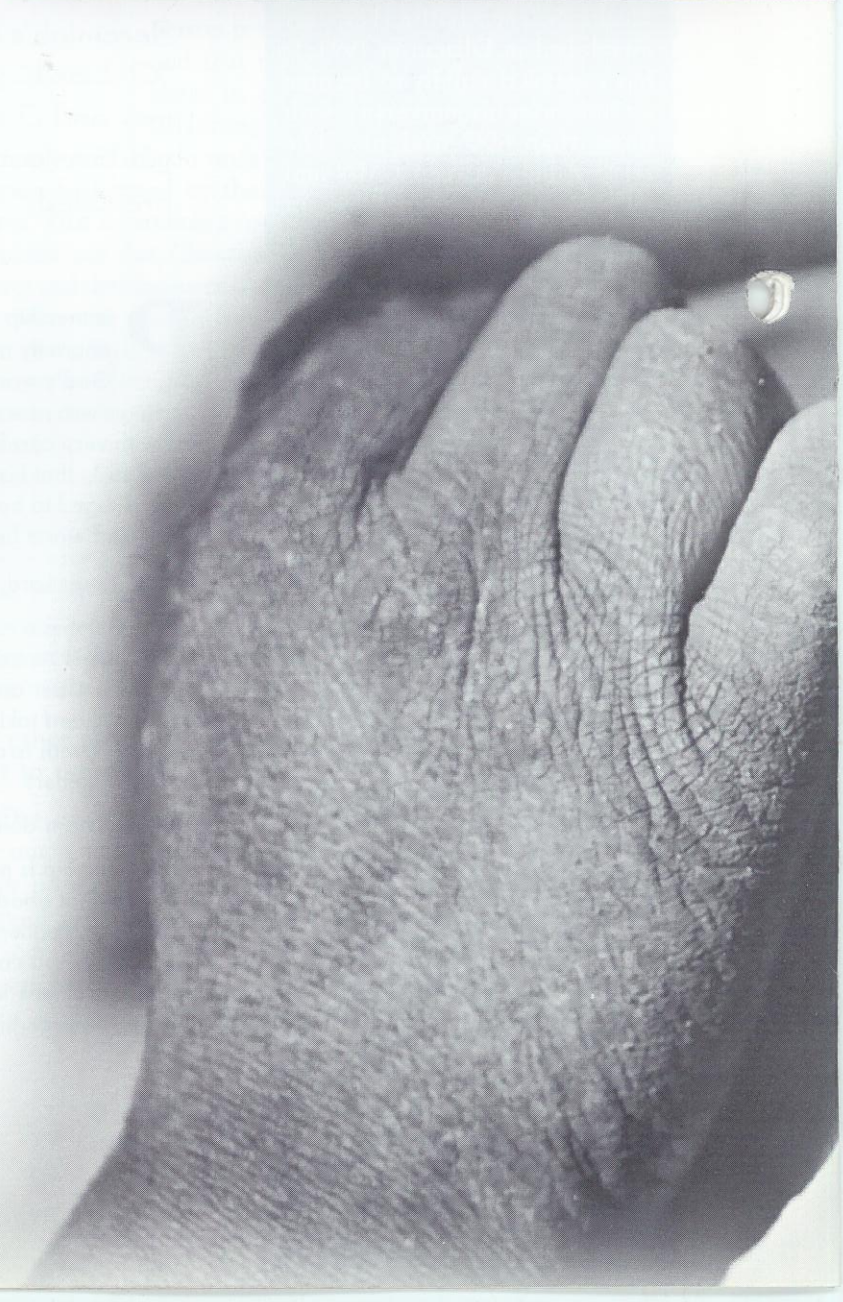
### TO DO JUSTICE

1. **Addressing root causes of poverty** While a greater number and a greater proportion of people have access to sufficient food. As our understanding of the root causes of poverty grows, our efforts to address the root causes of poverty will be more effectively met.
2. **Addressing Injustice** It is clear that the application of law are strategic in addressing injustice. UMN will pursue appropriate involvement in advocacy on behalf of the poor and marginalised.

### TO LOVE COMPASSION

3. **Peace and reconciliation** The socio-political situation is to be unstable and insecure for some time. UMN will make a unique contribution to make to any process of peace and the restoration of hope. UMN will pursue reconciliation and conflict transformation.
4. **Relief** Poverty and food insecurity have been exacerbated by armed conflict. UMN will provide time-limited, geographically focused relief to meet basic needs in ways that encourage interdependent development. This includes being open to work in areas affected by conflict or disaster.

## UMN'S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS





## TO WALK HUMBLY

**5. Partnerships** We will build partnerships with organisations whose values and strategies are consistent with UMN's, including NGOs, companies, institutions, and local government. This is not new for UMN but signals a renewed commitment to partnerships as our primary way of working and recognises that we are moving out of direct implementation. This will include the placement of Christians into partner organisations. We will be innovative and pioneering in working together at the local level to develop and model strategies to address the root causes of poverty.

**6. Relationship with the Christian Community in Nepal** The Nepali Christian community is growing and broadening its expression of the Gospel. UMN wants to contribute in relevant ways. We believe this will be through partnering with, learning from, and building the capacity of the Christian Community to be involved in Christian development.

**7. Capacity Building** We will build the capacity of individual Nepalis and Nepali organisations through training and organisational development. This capacity building will be in areas consistent with UMN's work.

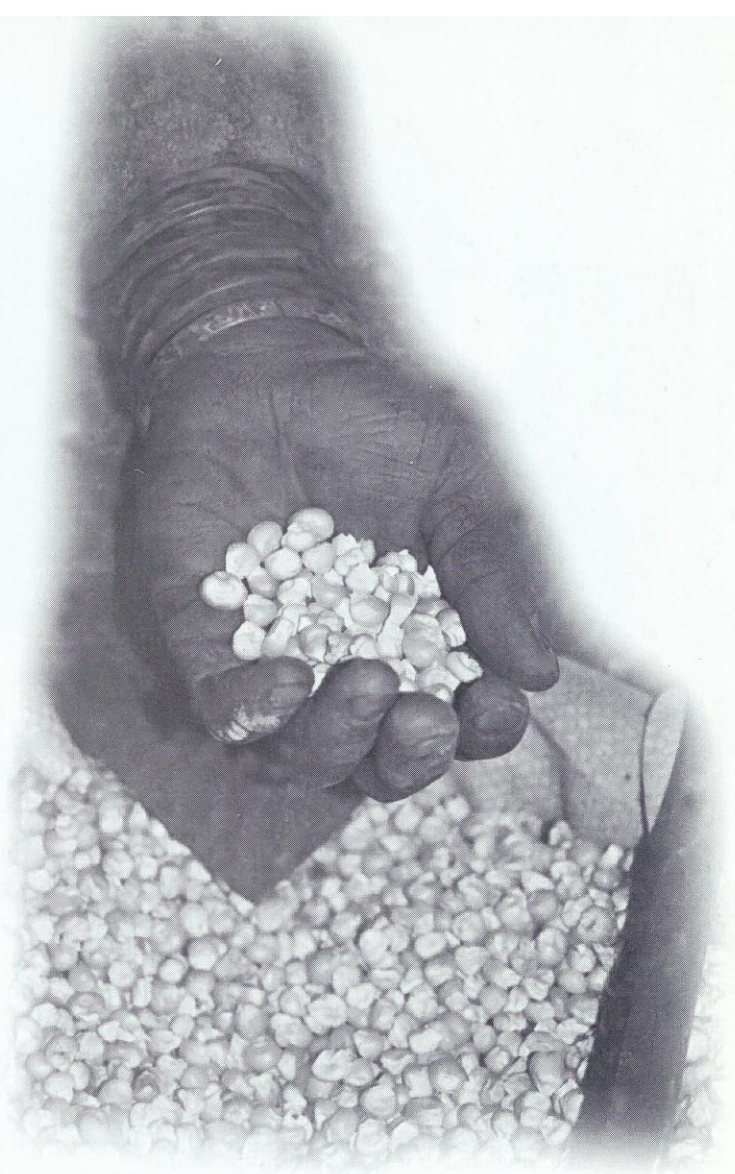
**8. Contributing to National Policy Development** We will contribute to the development of national policies, priorities and strategies in areas relevant to UMN's work.

**9. Transition** UMN will continue to work in some areas of work in which we are currently involved. However, we will phase out of directly implementing and managing programmes, projects and institutions. Appropriate conclusion of directly implemented projects or their transfer of ownership and management will be completed within the time of UMN's current General Agreement (at the latest by November 25, 2005). This will be accomplished in a careful, compassionate and orderly way.

## Strategic Directions for UMN's Future Organisation

**10. UMN's Future Shape** UMN, as an organization, will look different. It will be smaller and more flexible. It will be decentralized: a reduction in the concentration of people in Kathmandu; a clustering of people in a smaller number of underserved locations. In addition to mid-hills rural areas, UMN will work in the Terai and in urban areas.

**11. Focus & Discipline** UMN has a rich history of involvement in a wide variety of work. We have become overstretched, and our commitments continually outstrip available resources. We are committed to become more focused, disciplined, and realistic in our planning and resource allocation. We will be involved in fewer areas of work.



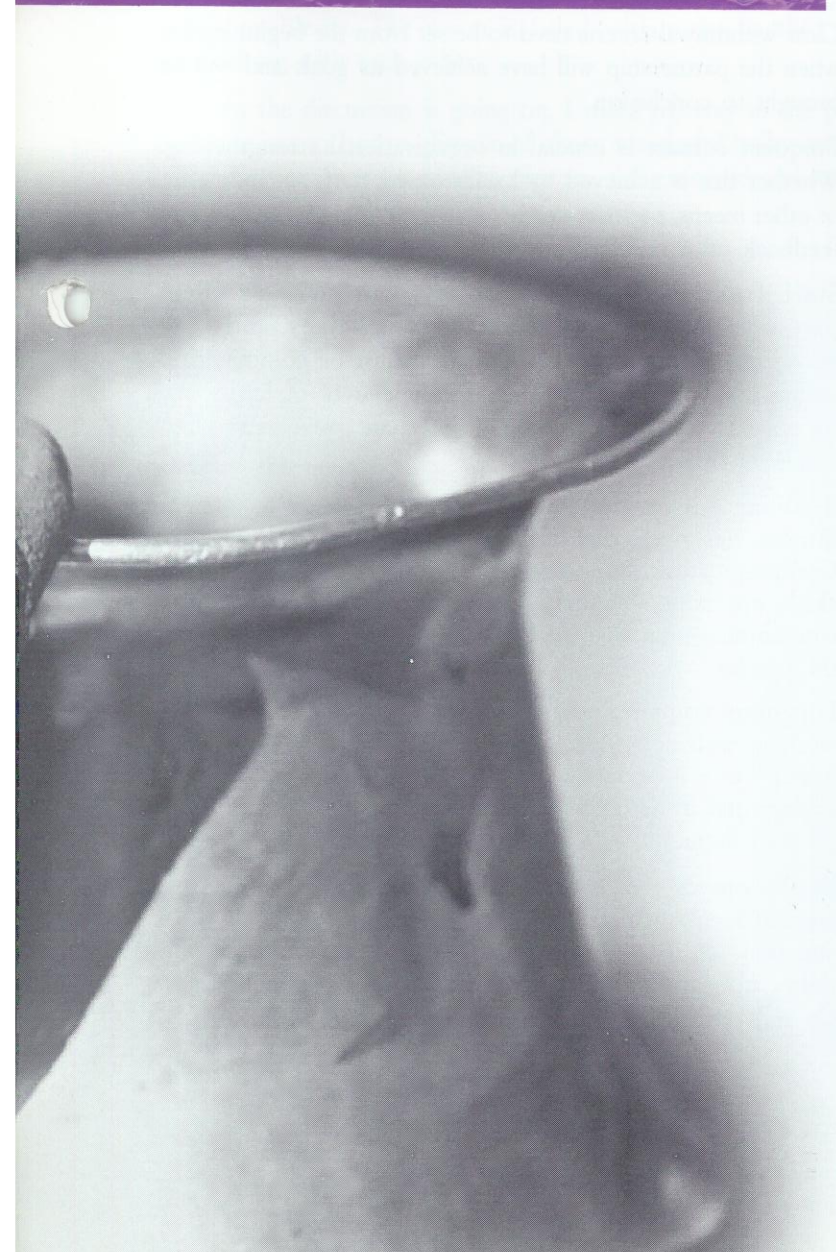
progress has occurred in Nepal's development, a of Nepalis now live in poverty and have poverty continues to develop, we will refocus verty so that the basic needs of the poor are

es of effective public administration and the the root causes of poverty. UMN will actively to promote justice and equity in Nepali society

environment in Nepal will probably continue to come. We believe that the Gospel has a true reconciliation, the healing of relationships ively look for ways to contribute to peace, Nepal.

increased in Nepal. This has been acutely develop a capacity to be involved in specific, ivities. Relief will be directed towards meeting pendent communities and do not undermine rk' with people who are internally displaced

## IC DIRECTIONS







# Lessons learned from working with partners

UMN's Rural Development Department has had almost ten years' experience working with partners. Recently, these experiences

have been documented as a learning tool for UMN and its partners in the future. Ron and Karen Stoufer outline some of these experiences below.

**T**he NGO Support Project began partnering with rural NGOs in 1993 following an in-depth study of NGOs which showed that while fledgling NGOs knew the local needs and could be effective in mobilising local resources, they needed training and coaching in organisational management and development principles. Progress was limited in the early partnerships because Kathmandu-based staff could only visit the remote partners a couple times a year. Later, partners were selected in UMN project areas where project staff provided on-going coaching and lines of communication.

Efforts were also put into developing our own staff. Most had community development or technical training backgrounds. Mentoring and advising others in financial management, proposal writing, and leadership were new skills requiring new ways of working that built upon the previous skills.

Initially, although coaching and training were provided without cost, no direct financial support was provided to any of our partners. In most cases, that is still the rule for our partnerships. However, two other models of partnerships have also been developed. In one model, called RISE, networks of rural community groups can, in addition to the organisational strengthening they receive, request matching funds for local development activities. In the RISE model, at least 50 percent of all costs must be met by the community. This gives them experience in accessing local funds and outside donors, and in mobilizing their communities' labor force. It also trains them in planning, monitoring, and evaluating skills as they move through the process of applying for, implementing, and reporting on the matching grant from UMN.

In the second model, newly established NGOs in whom we have confidence (often the former staff of an ex-UMN project who seek to continue the good work in their area) are assisted in relating to external donors. Gradually, the partner takes more and more of the responsibility for donor relations and UMN's intermediary role in funding is phased out.

Experiences in all these types of partnerships have enriched UMN, and provided valuable lessons for future partnership work. A summary of lessons learned would include the following:

- ♦ The initial organisational assessment process is one of the major strengths of the entire programme. The potential partner is assisted in examining their own organisation, what it is and what it would like to be. UMN helps them to clarify what they would want from a partnership.

- ♦ The emphasis on mobilisation of local resources has contributed not only to sustainability, but also to a strong sense of local ownership for all activities.
- ♦ Many local groups have organised as savings and credit cooperatives, providing local income opportunities, as well as promoting unity.
- ♦ Encouraging local village groups to form network organisations of one hundred or so groups has been a very effective means of sharing resources and lobbying for services.
- ♦ The use of partners to coach and train other partners has effectively multiplied the impact of our efforts and both partners, coach and recipient, have benefited from this arrangement.
- ♦ Clear withdrawal criteria need to be set from the beginning for when the partnership will have achieved its goals and will be brought to conclusion.
- ♦ Frequent contact is crucial in organisational strengthening. Whether this is achieved by locally-based staff, secondments, or other means, partners need coaching, training follow-up, and feedback on a regular basis.
- ♦ Staff from former UMN projects can make excellent partners because of their skills, their values, and their knowledge of the local area, but they must be committed to seeing their organisation flourish independent of UMN and to serving the local people more than preserving their employment.
- ♦ Enabling partners to handle relationships with overseas donors has been one of the most difficult challenges. Communication logistics and English language reporting skills are two of the biggest barriers. Persistence and commitment to independence are essential for both UMN and the partner.
- ♦ Long-term commitment by UMN is needed, especially when working with new, grass-root organisations such as women's groups or churches where there has been little or no background in democratic processes, financial accountability, or even literacy.

Finally, one of the best lessons we have learned in the past year is that local partners have been able to continue to work, serving their own communities, despite tremendous political instability, upheaval and violence that have driven international NGOs and government programmes to suspend or withdraw.

*Karen and Ron Stoufer*



# Tending the grassroots

**K**alpana Basnet, a facilitator with UMN's Partnership Programme had invited us to join her on a field trip to visit a couple of partner organisations. As we approach the village of Tallo Galyang we see a signboard on our left that reads: Pig Producers Cooperatives Limited (PPCL). As we stop, a man with all smiles comes out of the door greetings 'Namaste' to us. He is Padam Bahadur Gaha Magar, the chairman of the cooperative.

The cooperative has a history to tell. About twenty years back, Padam Bahadur bought ten pigs. He took part in livestock fairs and other people were also impressed and began to raise pigs. In 1989, they started a piggery with five members and by 1999 it was registered as Pig Producers Cooperatives Limited. In the meantime they also began to process meat and sell it in the market. In the same year they came in contact with UMN's Non-government Organisation Support Project, which identified the needs of the cooperative and provided counselling and training. Now, Kalpana Basnet and her colleague Laxmeshwor Mahato are visiting to give follow up and training on accounting.

It is almost time to start. People are flooding into the room where the discussion and training is to take place. Kalpana and Laxmeshwor sit on the carpeted floor. Two schoolboys are yet to come. They have already got some knowledge about bookkeeping from school but this training will further help them in keeping the records of the cooperative for the group. The two boys enter the room and take their seats. Now the attention of the whole group is drawn to Kalpana. They want to learn how to fill the ledger and do other accounting. Kalpana tells them to identify their problems and how they want to fill the ledger before she can help them solve their problems. The room is filled with noise as they begin interacting with each other.

As the discussion is going on, I make my way to the pigsties outside just to have a glimpse of those wonderful bulky creatures. The pigsties are clean and the pigs are well groomed and well fed.

I return quite impressed as I get a welcome grunt from a hefty pig.

After some time I get an opportunity to talk to the chairman. In response to the question 'How useful has the partnership programme been to you?' he digs out the past and narrates this story. "Very useful. We started this cooperative three years ago, but we were confused about how to move ahead as we didn't have professional skills. But after getting training, counselling and support from the visiting staff of UMN we are doing better and the organisation is growing bigger."

The cooperative now has 52 members. Yearly they sell between 1200 and 1800 piglets to the adjoining districts in addition to selling processed meat to the local market and hotels.

When the training in Galyang is over we make our way to Tansen to meet another partner organisation, the Women's Craft Association (WCA). Cross-stitching has given this group of women a source of income and a feeling of accomplishment. Initiated by expatriates associated with Tansen Hospital, the WCA is now moving towards independence. But to be independent is not easy. It requires professional training and counselling, which the Partnership Programme is providing. It has already given training courses on proposal writing, accounting, office management, making action plans and training on savings and credit cooperative.

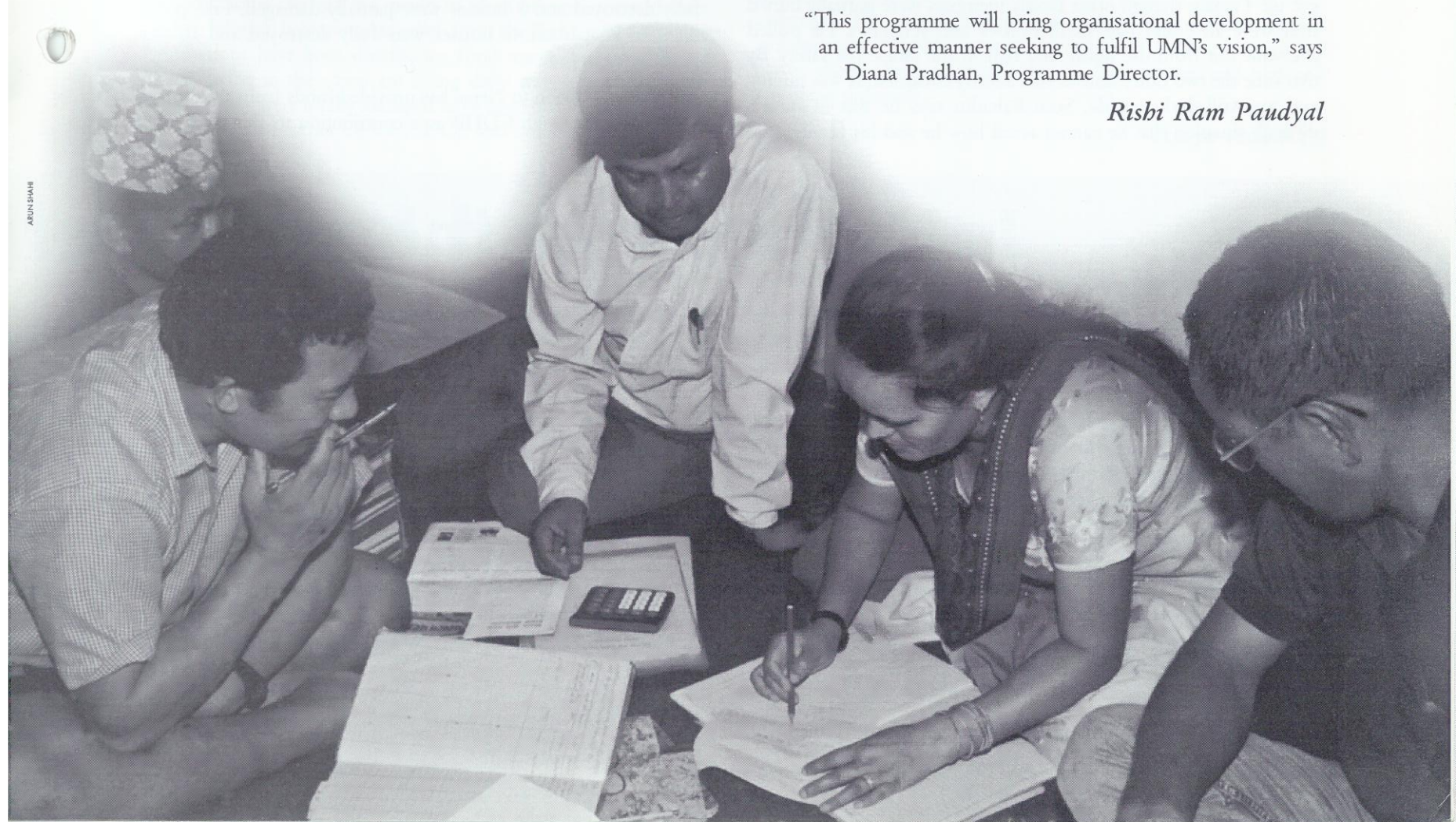
The Partnership Programme is the result of a merger between the former NO Unit and NGO Support Project. PPCL and WCA are two of its thirty-two partners. This is a key programme for the future of UMN, as UMN is moving away from direct project implementation to working through Nepali organisations.

"This programme will bring organisational development in an effective manner seeking to fulfil UMN's vision," says Diana Pradhan, Programme Director.

*Rishi Ram Paudyal*

## UMN's Vision:

"Individuals and communities will be able to secure their basic needs in a sustainable manner through participation in effective and self-reliant Nepali organisations including Nepali Christians organisations."







MAUREEN DARIANG

A tent camp in Manahari  
west of Makwanpur.

A villager in the ruins  
of what used to be his house.

## Disaster struck Makwanpur

**T**his summer's monsoon brought the worst floods and landslides for many years in Nepal. More than 500 people died and thousands lost their homes and arable land. Among the worst affected districts is Makwanpur, where UMN's Community Development and Health Programme operates.

Som Bahadur Moktan is thirty years old. He was living a simple life in Kakada Village Development Committee (VDC), ward nr four, with his wife Buddhimaya and three sons. Since the rain had been very bad for a few days, he thought that something could happen. He suggested to his family that they should leave the house and go to a safer place in the jungle. The family did not listen. The day before the landslide, he asked his niece to come and stay with his family because the niece's husband had gone out to some place and was not going to return that night. The niece with her two children came to stay in his house. Som Bahadur also suggested to his neighbours to come and stay with his family so that if something happened they could be together. But the neighbours did not come. There were two other houses in this location.

On the night of 22 July, Som Bahadur was not able to sleep because of the heavy rain. Around 2:00 am, a part of his house collapsed and hit him on his head. He became unconscious. After some time he was awakened by the cry of his son and immediately got up. Luckily, though other family members were partially buried they were alive and had small bruises and scratches. He pulled everyone out from the house and fled to the jungle for safety. By that time the two other houses had already collapsed. It was raining and was still dark outside. Som Bahadur says he was in such a difficult situation that he cannot recall how he and his family were

able get up to the jungle. When the first morning light broke through, they could see that nothing was left in the place where their houses stood except for a big bank of mud.

Kakada VDC lies in Makwanpur District in Nepal's central region, south of Kathmandu. 75% of the district's land is hilly and 25% is plain. There are four watershed areas and 125 sub watershed areas, which makes Makwanpur District vulnerable to landslide and flood. There are four main rivers which have 41 small rivulets. These rivulets are dry during the winter season but in the monsoon they are flooded.

This year, starting from the third week of July, it rained continuously for several days. This rain caused floods and landslides in many parts of the country and Makwanpur was among the worst affected districts. Most of the flood and landslide disasters in the villages took place on 22 and 23 July in the middle of the night when most people were asleep. Among the total 43 VDCs in Makwanpur District, 15 were severely affected. A total of 112 people died and 37 are still missing. Thirty-four were injured. A total of 1,092 houses were totally destroyed and 805 were partially damaged.

The CDHP working areas of Shikharpur and Phaparbari are two of the severely affected VDCs. In Shikharpur 11 houses were fully destroyed and 8 houses were partially damaged. Five people died. In Phaparbari 47 houses were fully destroyed and 16 were partially damaged.

United Mission to Nepal has provided funds from the Disaster Relief Fund through CDHP as a contribution to the relief work.

## Multiple partnerships for

**T**he UMN Oral Health Programme (OHP) has been involved with overseas partners over the past several decades to improve the oral health of the people in Nepal. Many overseas prayer supporters have also participated with the Oral Health Programme in this process of partnering with God in the redemption of oral health. In the past two years, God has provided many opportunities for OHP to partner also with organisations, institutions, corporations, government and INGOs within Nepal.

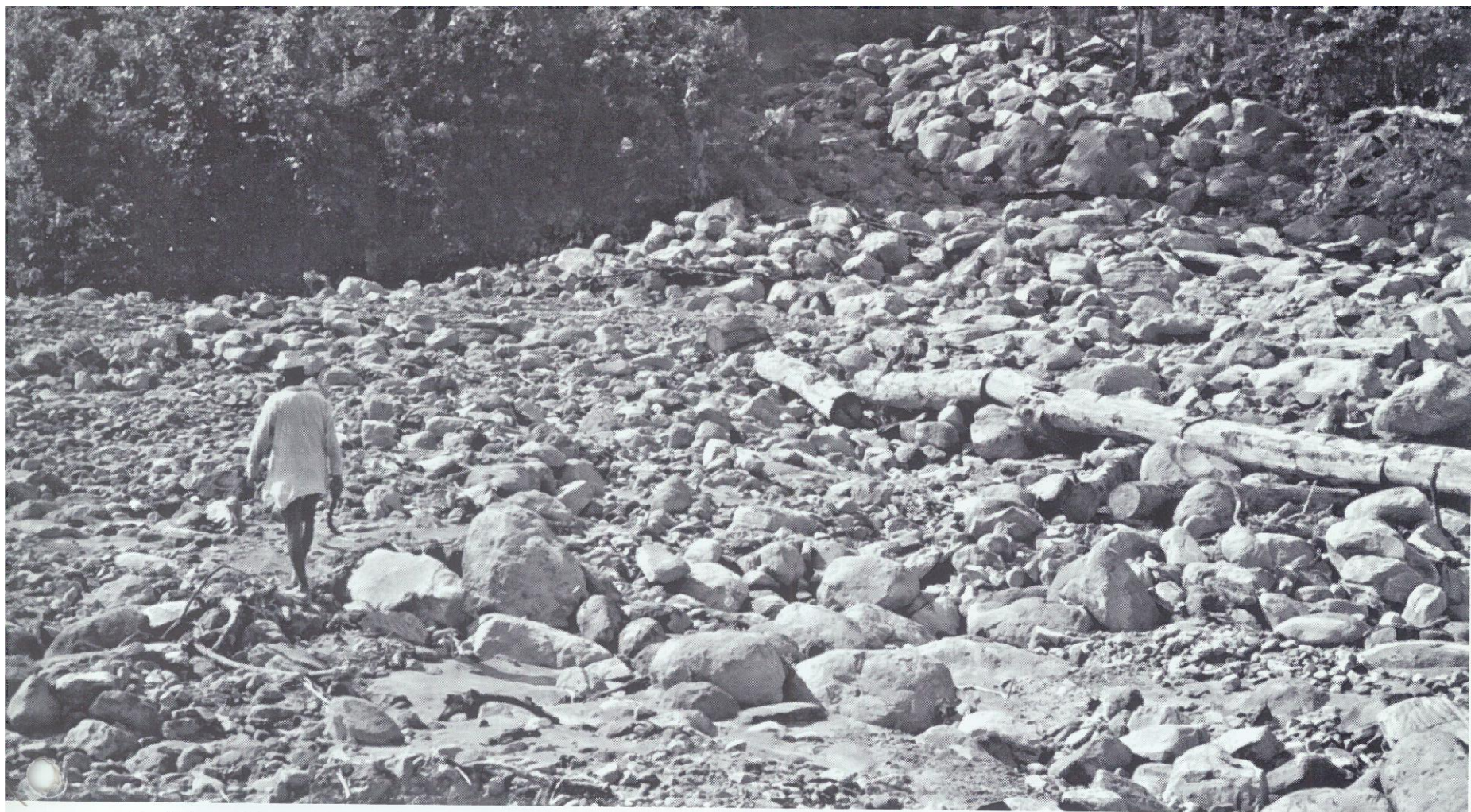
Some OHP partnerships which will have considerable impact on the oral health of the people of Nepal include:

1. Partnering with the World Health Organisation, Ministry of Health and Nepali dentists in the development of a national

strategic plan to promote oral health, prevent oral diseases and provide basic oral health care services to all Nepalis, especially the underserved in the rural areas. OHP has provided leadership, expertise and facilitation in this collaborative process which has taken more than two years to develop. OHP also hopes to partner with the Ministry of Health in the implementation of the strategic plan.

2. Partnering with Nepal Lever Ltd. in promoting oral health in schools. Nepal Lever Ltd., manufacturers of fluoridated Pepsodent and Close Up toothpaste, sponsors an OHP oral health education programme which targets schoolchildren in the provision of oral health promotion and oral hygiene skills. Nepal Lever Ltd. is providing the finances for all promotional





Landslides and floods turned large productive rice fields into waste land.

STEFAN ÖSTMAN

UMN staff members have also contributed and collected cash and clothes for the victims. According to the Local Development Office there is still a need for more food, tins for roofs, jobs for the victims, wires for the protection for landslide, pipes for drinking water. Reconstruction of schools and roads is also an urgent requirement.

Som Bahadur's family is now living in the Manahari Relief Camp, west of the district centre Hetauda. A total of 60 families are presently living in this tent camp. Twenty-three of the families belong to the worst affected areas in the district, having lost everything to the floods and landslides. Many of these families survived because they left their houses before the major damage occurred. Every household has received one blanket, plastic sheet for a tent, some utensils, ten meters of cloth material, some clothes and five kilos of beaten rice as relief from the Red Cross. Different organisations have been distributing food materials. Some of the victims living in the camp are doing daily wages work. Families whose houses were totally damaged have been promised 500 rupees from the Chief District Office (CDO), and families who have lost

family members will receive 10,000 rupees per person, after a detailed assessment is completed. There is, however, a larger number of victims in other areas of the district who are equally suffering and require relief assistance.

Among the most affected is a community belonging to the tribal group called "Chepang". After having lived traditionally in the jungle under poor conditions, they settled in a village some time ago. Now the village has been swept away and they have been forced back to living in the jungle. They have been suffering from diarrhoea and malnutrition.

Christian communities have also been severely affected by the disasters. In Makwanpur nine churches have been damaged. Several churches in Kathmandu have taken firm steps in providing relief assistance. The Valley Churches Relief fund has provided support amounting to 200,000 rupees for the victims. The support included plastic sheets, food, utensils and cash. More money and materials are being collected.

*Vijaya Adhikari*

## better oral health in Nepal

materials and the employment of five oral health promoters in OHP. This programme will reach more than 50,000 children a year who will also take the message of good oral health to their families and friends. The success of this programme has prompted Nepal Lever to consider the commencement of a similar programme through OHP training of primary health workers to provide oral health promotion in villages.

3. Partnering with the College of Dental Surgery, B.P.Koirala Institute of Health Science, Dharan, East Nepal in oral health education to dental, nursing and medical students and the provision of basic oral health care services in the Districts of Sunsari, Dhankuta, and Morang. OHP personnel provide

knowledge and training in community and dental public health, and the use of appropriate technology in community dentistry to students at this health institute. In return the College of Dental Surgery, will help OHP train primary health care workers from the three Districts in oral health promotion and the delivery of basic oral health care services, with the intention that the training programme will be sustained in the future by the College of Dental Surgery.

Partnerships take time to cultivate and develop and the results are not always immediately apparent. However, the fruit of OHP's patience and perseverance will be seen in many healthy smiles in the not too distant future.

*Robert Yee*



# SOUP!

(a memory from UMN Archivist Betty Young)



**M**y good friend Fran Swenson was Business Manager/Project Director in Gorkha in the 1970s, and she developed hepatitis one winter. She was flown into Kathmandu, had a few days treatment in Shanta Bhawan, then came to stay with me for several weeks to recover and get her strength back.

Fran was, of course, on a very strict diet, not allowed anything spicy or greasy, and at that time it was very difficult to make a meal which was not spicy and/or greasy. She said she was longing for soup from home. I looked at the available Indian soup packets, which were the only ones on sale, but not one was suitable. I only had one home soup packet left; Fran had half of that the first evening and the other half the second evening, and I prayed that the Lord would give me inspiration concerning food for the rest of the time!

The next morning I found a slip in my mailbox saying that there was a parcel waiting for me. I collected the parcel and took it to my office. The sender's address was on the outside: someone in Belfast whom I did not know at all. The wrapping came off, and revealed a box containing 36 packets of soup, with no letter, no explanation. Fran ate soup to her heart's content after that, while I sincerely thanked the Lord, and wrote to the lady who had sent the parcel. But who was she? And how did she know my name?

It was only about 18 months later that I heard the story. A friend who had visited me in Nepal was asked to speak at a women's meeting in a church in Belfast, and the ladies there said they would like to send me something in the way of food, hence the soup packets, posted by the Rector's wife. My friend had written to tell me this, but her letter never arrived, so we were left in the dark for a long time. But it was one great lesson in the Lord's care and provision for our needs, at exactly the right time. The parcel had been posted months earlier, had come out by ship, gone through Indian customs in Calcutta, been sent to Kathmandu, and gone through Nepali customs: a hazardous journey, but it came to me the very day I needed it!

*Betty Young*

## New challenges ahead for Himal Hydro

In a mountainous and Himalayan country like Nepal where streams and rivers rush from the gorges and through the lush forests, the potential of hydropower cannot be underestimated. However, a country only being rich in water resources cannot bring about a revolution in development unless it produces skilled manpower and manages tools and equipment to transfer wasted water into electricity.

Understanding the importance and necessity of this, Himal Hydro was set up in 1978 by UMN in partnership with His Majesty's Government of Nepal.

More than two decades of capacity building is now bearing good fruit. After a few years of financial strain following the building of the Khimti I hydropower plant, the company was refinanced and is now back in a strong position. It recently won a contract to build a drainage, sewage, and treatment plant in Hetauda, south of Kathmandu.

Himal Hydro is the only Nepali tunnelling company.

Almost half of the tunnels made in Nepal were possible because of Himal Hydro – the other half were made by other foreign companies. Himal Hydro's main area of work is related to hydropower. It is also involved in tunnelling, construction of transmission lines, ropeways, roads and bridges.

Presently two secondees from UMN, Leiv Bøyum and Rolf-Erling Suhr are working at Himal Hydro in the areas of developing systems, quality assurance and electrical safety.

Mark Gill, who worked in Himal Hydro for fifteen years before becoming director of UMN's Engineering and Industrial Development Department, is encouraged by the recent developments. "UMN recognised the benefit of long-term relationships and helping to build the capacity of its partnering companies. In turn, UMN has been able to grow in its understanding of how it fulfils its mission."

*Rishi Ram Paudyal*

United Mission to Nepal is a co-operative effort between the people of Nepal and 29 Christian organisations from 12 countries. Its main areas of work are Education, Engineering and Industrial Development, Health Services and Rural Development.

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**Production:**  
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