

Number 15, August 2003

UMIN^{ews}



United Mission to Nepal

May the land enjoy prosperity; may it experience righteousness.

Psalm 72:3

Dear UMN Friends,

Greetings to you all! Thank you for your ongoing support of and interest in UMN. It is an exciting time for those of us in UMN at the moment as we see the different parts of the work that we have been involved in over the past two years begin to come together as a whole for the future. It is exciting to imagine and plan for where we will work, whom we will work with and what those partners will be doing as they seek to serve the people of Nepal.

We are grateful for the Lord's hand in guiding the various cluster exploration teams during their visits, and we thank you all for your constant support and prayers. The needs of Nepal are many, but seeking God's discernment and guidance has led us to the right decisions regarding the cluster locations. The cluster locations (geographic areas where UMN will be based) for the next five years have been decided and are presented in this edition of the UMN News. In line with the decentralisation legislation, Local Government Act (1999), the implementation of the Foreign Aid Policy of Nepal and the partial implementation of the Social Development Organisation Act (SDOA – as yet not finalised), these "clusters" will be carrying out the majority of the actual outworking of the UMN Strategic Directions. Relationships with UMN partners will occur through these clusters.

As you are all aware, UMN is currently going through a Strategic Change Process and all parts of the organisation are looking at how their work will continue in the future. UMN's current work includes Project and Programmes, Institutions, Hospitals and Partnerships.

UMN has a rich history of involvement in a wide variety of work. Building on this, and with input from our various

stakeholders, UMN will be involved in fewer types of work. These will reflect the current needs in Nepal and His Majesty's Government of Nepal's Tenth Five Year Plan. Concentration in fewer areas of work will help UMN to become more focused, disciplined and realistic in its planning and resource allocation. The different areas of work that UMN will be involved in with partners are also outlined in this issue.



Using UMN's 49 years of experience and the ideas of many other individuals and groups, we are now in the process of formulating what will be the guiding principles for UMN's partnerships in the future. Maybe this does not sound as exciting to you as it is to many of us who are involved daily in these activities. However, the most exciting thing is how aware we have been of God's leading, guiding and timing. At each point in the process we have been amazed how so many times things have come together, often in spite of ourselves, and how the right people have been available at just the right time. All of this is such an encouragement as we involve ourselves in His work. Some months ago I quoted Psalm 127:1 "Unless The Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain".

We are seeing the hand of the Master Builder at work. Please join us in rejoicing.

Jennie Collins
Jennie Collins
Executive Director

UMN's New Logo



यूनाइटेड मिसन टु नेपाल
UNITED MISSION TO NEPAL

Why do we need a new logo?

As you may have noticed, UMN has started a new transformation! So, it was felt that the time was right to introduce a new logo, which would reflect the new UMN. Also, with plans for the 50th anniversary celebrations of UMN already underway, the time was right to introduce the new logo into the publicity for this. The Communications Office team which developed the new logo felt that, although some aspects of the old logo were good, it could certainly be improved upon, notably the heavy blackness of the design and the illegibility of the text.

What's good about the new logo?

Well, it's based on the old one but builds on that, just as the new UMN builds on the strengths and experiences of the past. The symbol of the rising sun is positive and conveys hope for the future. It's also a Christian symbol, standing for the Resurrection and the glory of God the Father, but neither is

it exclusively Christian. We have aimed to show our respect for Nepal and its people so that the Nepali script is above the English, and is bigger and bolder. We have also added colour to the logo and made the lettering easier to read.

What messages do we want the logo to convey?

Our desire is that the logo conveys the new style and focus of UMN: modern, flexible, dynamic; concerned with justice and compassion for the people of Nepal; facilitating in a unique and distinctive way the development of Nepal; motivated by Christian values of service and care but the symbolism of the logo reflects UMN's desire to be gentle and respectful in its Christian witness.

We hope that you will like the new logo and that it will remind you of the new direction in which UMN is going – towards the hope and anticipation of the new dawn.

UMN's New Area of work: What UMN will be doing in the future

With the selection of the "Clusters" or "WHERE UMN is going to work in the future?" now done, Dr. Beverley Booth – Director for Strategy and Policy Development explains in the article given below WHAT UMN will be doing in the future.



UMN is in the process of transitioning its current programmes, projects and institutions, which means transition from direct ownership, governance and management of programmes, projects and institutions so that UMN will no longer be directly implementing them after 25th November 2005. NGOs, companies, institutions and cooperatives will continue most of the existing work thereafter. With the beginning of UMN's Strategic Plan 2003-2008, the new areas of work consistent with its Strategic Directions have been identified as: Food Security, Education (especially Primary), Women and Children, Peace and Conflict Transformation, Relief, HIV/AIDS and Enterprise Support.

Imagine a cluster area for UMN. What will it be doing? UMN staff will be working with different types of partners that are involved in different types of work. One staff member might be seconded to an NGO that is involved in training individuals and organisations in providing home-based care to people with HIV/AIDS. Another staff member might be involved in capacity building local NGOs that are involved in non-formal education. Some staff member might be skilled in community organisation and capacity building NGOs. He or she might be working with several of our NGO partners strengthening their management skills. Others might be providing technical expertise to a company that is involved in developing renewable energy sources for communities in remote areas. Another staff member might be working with the local school management committees to organise teacher training and also to bring about improvements in school facilities.

As part of its Strategic Directions, UMN is committed to become more focused, and involved in fewer areas of work. In order to keep to this commitment, it has been necessary to decide on which areas of work we will be involved in. The process of selecting the areas of work was a careful one, and had a lot of input from the various stakeholders of UMN: Nepali staff, expatriate staff, Project Unit Directors (PUDs), Coordinating Committee (CC), and the UMN Board. In addition, the felt needs of Nepal's poor, the current situation of Nepal and His Majesty's Government of Nepal Tenth Five Year Plan also influenced the choice of areas of work, as did the areas being addressed by the Millennium Development Goals, which are goals in key areas of development that have been accepted by most

countries around the world. In addition to our stakeholders, the other major factor in choosing the areas of work was to ensure that by working in these areas, UMN could fulfill its Strategic Directions, and therefore further its Mission and Vision.

How will UMN work in these areas of work? UMN will work through partnership with Nepali organisations. UMN's partners will be organisations that: are working in these areas of work, are working in ways that will help to outwork UMN's Strategic Directions and are located in cluster areas.

Right now UMN is in the process of developing concept papers in each area of work. These papers give a background of the particular area of work. They also give a number of recommendations for particular types of activities that UMN partners might be engaged in, that would help UMN outwork its Strategic Directions. For example, UMN might seek out partners that are involved in working in one of the following areas of HIV/AIDS: those involved in community and home-based care; those teaching sex education and reducing the stigma of the disease; income generation for unaffected household members; and advocacy against inequity at the local and national level. Each of these activities addresses at least one of the first four Strategic Directions (Root Causes of Poverty, Injustice, Peace and Reconciliation and Relief).

Now that the location of the clusters has been decided, UMN is moving forward to identify the necessary financial and personnel resources. The establishment of the clusters will no doubt be a gradual process. The process of identifying and developing working relationships with organisations in the cluster area will take time. UMN will be seeking to work with partners that are working in the areas of work listed above and also seeking partnerships that will be mutually beneficial; with the goal being to do a better job than either of us could have done on our own. In this way, not only will UMN be helping its partners to fulfill their goals and objectives, but they will also be helping UMN to fulfill its goals too.

Beverley Booth

Director - Strategy and Policy Development Team

The Land of Lake Rara - Mugu

“So, we’re not going today? I asked. “No, not today”, came the reply. Thank goodness I had pulled my wash bag and toothbrush out of my rucksack the evening before it disappeared into the helicopter, not to be seen by me for another three days!

We, a small team of three ‘sent out’ by UMN to ‘scout the land of Mugu’ (well part of the district) had arrived in Nepalgunj ninety percent confident that we would be flying by helicopter the fifty minute journey to Gamgadhi, Mugu’s district centre, the next day. We had tickets, boarding passes and our luggage on board, but we had to wait a few more days before we climbed into the helicopter.

With a whoosh and a flash of fire the engine started and the blades began to turn. I felt a surge of excitement as I stuffed cotton wool into my ears. We’re off! The helicopter lifted and before I knew it, I was entertained with the most wonderful scenes of life in the Terai and the hills of Nepal. All too soon I caught my first glimpse of Gamgadhi with its row of houses pitched on the ridge of a mountain and the school playground we were about to land on. What an arrival! A flurry of activity as the school children ran out of the class rooms, and the porters and villagers moved forward to unload the cargo of rice and other supplies that had been our seats on the journey. “This is an amazing place” was my first impression.

We were met by United Mission to Nepal’s Mugu Non Formal Education Project (MEP) team members. They were happy to see us but, I suspect, a little more excited to see the two huge mailbags that had journeyed



KIRSTI KIRJAVAINEN

with us from Nepalgunj! We gathered up our belongings and walked the short distance to the UMN office where we were formally welcomed by the team and joined them in drinking tea, always a good start! We explained the purpose of our visit and with their insightful help finalized our ‘scouting’ plan.

We began early the next morning and spent the next few days meeting all the government officials based in Gamgadhi, including the District Superintendent of Police who kindly granted us permission to visit Rara Lake (the highest fresh water lake with fish in Nepal). According to official Government records, there are 59 Non-Government Organisations (NGO) registered in the Mugu district; two of them are active. We met with representatives from both of these organisations and compared experiences and ideas about working in this part of high Nepal.

During the time we were in Gamgadhi MEP was conducting a ‘graduation’ class for three groups of villagers with whom they had been working for the last two and a half months. It was a privilege to see these men and women read out loud the questions written on pieces of paper which they pulled out of a bag and have their team or group shout out the answer. Big smiles and clear ‘namaste’ salutes followed the receiving of the small gifts given by the



HELEN JOHNSTON

NEPAL

Area : 3,535 Sq.Km.
 Population : 22,250 (Male)
 21,687 (Female)
 Literate Rate : 45.13 (Male)
 9.19 (Female)
 Life Expectancy : 36 (Male)
 34.5 (Female)

Mugu

Source : ISRSC 2001-2002

UMN staff for each right answer. The special guest, who was from the Government District Education Office, presented each group of villagers with packs of soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste for completing the training. In his closing speech the special guest said, "We taught people to read and write, but it was not useful – UMN teaches them to write using practical issues which are useful and which they can then use. I would encourage you who are graduating to use your new skills."

The following few days were spent 'away' from the district centre Gamgadhi visiting villages, walking the high and low paths and chatting with folk on the way. The first village we stopped at was one where MEP is assisting the village school to erect a new building of three rooms and repair the training room roof with more durable material. We watched as the children were being taught outside, sitting on rocks reading their lessons to the teacher.

We then walked for another ten minutes up the hill to a village where each house had built a toilet. I was invited to inspect them and I can confirm they were clean, very clean in fact. The villagers told us that up until last year no one would walk through their village because it was so dirty but since UMN came all that had changed. UMN had also helped them secure water and one proud farmer stood in the middle of his kitchen garden and punched the air in appreciation. I didn't even know him and I felt proud of his achievement.

The villagers then informed us that at our ultimate destination, 80 Maoists were conducting an "awareness raising" programme. Our team decided that it would be best to split and I along with Kirsti Kirjavainen, MEP staff member, decided to continue. The others returned to Gamgadhi. We then hiked up to another village where the community showed us

part of the 900-metre road they had built without assistance from anyone.

Walking up and down through fields of barley, rye and wheat at different stages of ripeness (the colours were wonderful!) we arrived at a village where we were welcomed with the sound of beating drums and were presented with flowers! I felt like a queen who needed a lady-in-waiting to collect all the flowers! We met the village men and some women. Most of the women were in the fields so unfortunately we were unable to meet them. Each house here also has a toilet. They said that they have less flies (not very evident to me!) and less sickness because of the toilets. They took us down the hill (1/2 hour down, so longer up!) to the river to see the two rice mills they had repaired. The villages had completed this work themselves without any outside help. They had put on new tin roofs, built a wall and a higher bridge that would withstand the increased volume of water during monsoon. That night the village was holding a festival to worship the gods so they could commence the barley harvest. We did not stay for that festival but continued on to our final destination.

All that day on the path we kept meeting young men and some young women who were walking towards Gamgadhi and then on to the north to pick herbs and medicinal plants that will be exported to China and Japan via Tibet. The Maoists were also heading that way because they levy a 'tax' on all plants picked by the people before they are allowed to 'export' them.

We hoped the Maoists had moved on from our final destination by this time. When we arrived we discovered they had not; four of them had decided to stay in the house we were due to sleep in! Needless to say we felt this would not be an ideal place to stay, so the village men got together and offered us alternative accommodation in a house 'out of sight' of our jungle friends. We were happy to accept this kind offer and slept well that night.

The next morning we headed for Rara Lake. Sitting at the high point lookout, admiring God's wonderful creation, the beautiful blue water, the peace, the birds, the flowers and the clean air, in my mind I saw the images of the faces of the people I had the privilege of meeting, who had made us so welcome, protected us and given us much from the little that they had. I thanked God that He cared for the people of Mugu and hoped that He would want UMN to set up a cluster here.

Helen Johnston



Dharan - The growing Municipality

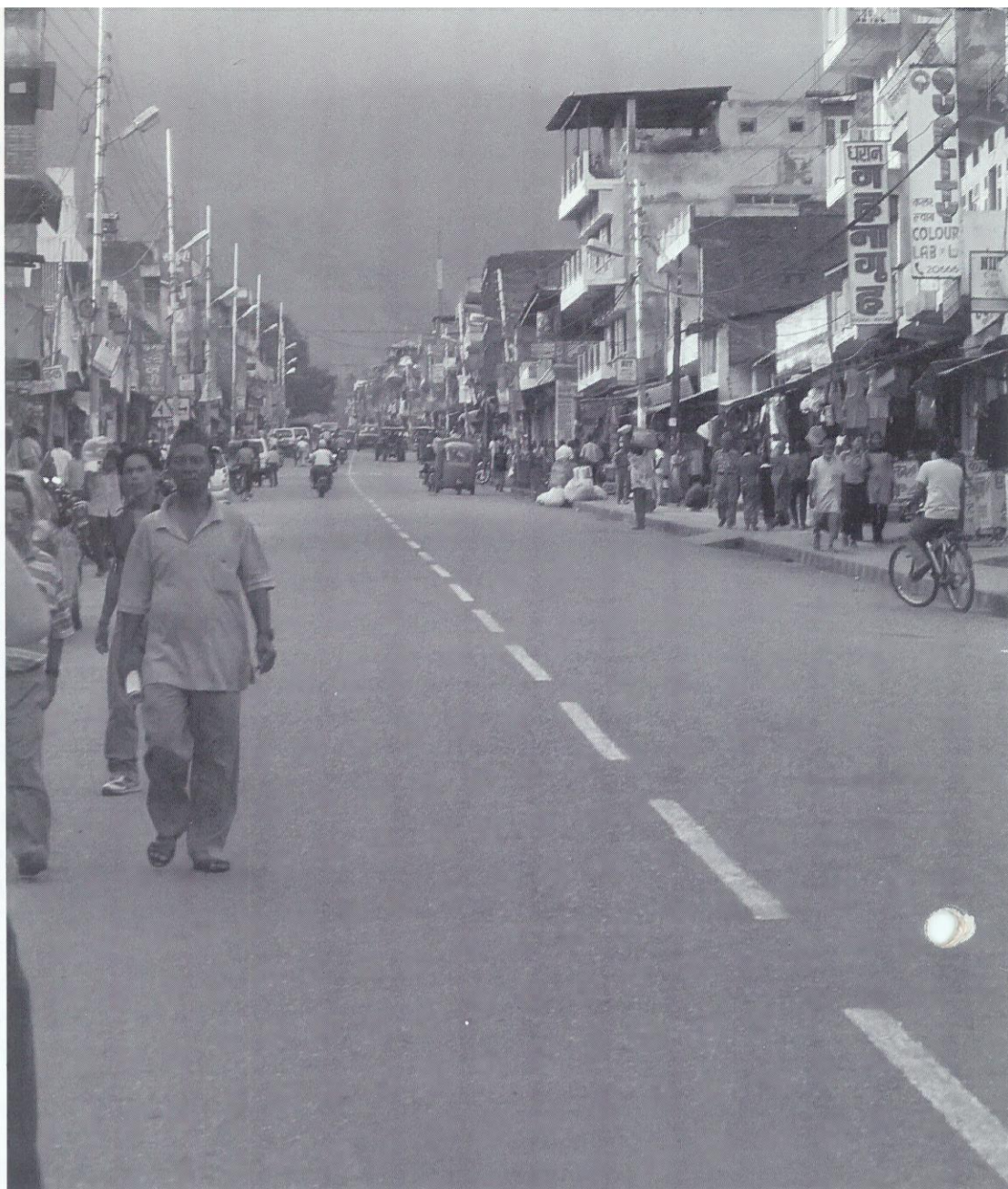
The crazy thing about our journey from Kathmandu to Dharan in the far east of Nepal was that we had to travel 100km to the west first of all! That's the way the buses go - via Mugling. However, we discovered that when the road from Banepa to Bardibas on the Terai is completed, it will cut about 130 Km off the journey. Something to look forward to! It took us about 12 hours in the Community Development & Health Project (CDHP) landcruiser to reach Dharan/Sunsari, though you can also fly to Biratnagar in fifty minutes and then get a taxi/jeep up to Dharan which takes another forty five minutes.

The roads are so much better and quicker to travel on than many other parts of Nepal. Dharan itself is a bustling bazaar town with its main street on a long sloping hill going north to south. One friend who lives just outside the north end of the town told us it takes him five minutes to get to work on his bicycle, but forty minutes to get home!

There are lots of household goods and foodstuffs available in Dharan and it gave me the impression of a smaller version of Pokhara. It was warmer than Kathmandu and we were glad of fans in the hotels we stayed in. Although Inaruwa is the District headquarters, there is nothing much there except for government offices. I wondered why Dharan is not the headquarters. There is much more happening there. We had a warm welcome from Owen & Mary Lewis and Bruce Burk who were keen to show us their friends and contacts in Dharan. B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS) was an impressive set-up. They do look after their staff. It must be one of the few urban-based establishments in Nepal where you can safely drink the tap water!

Most people we spoke with told us that although there were many NGOs registered in Sunsari district, only a minority were active. Also, in the western Village Development Committees (VDC) and those along the Indian border, there were communities that were not touched at all by development activities.

There are many opportunities to work with a variety of partners in Sunsari. The District Development Committee (DDC) and Local Development Office (LDO) were positive towards the possibility of UMN working there. There are around thirty five active NGOs with a wide variety of activities, many of which align closely to UMN's areas of work. Several churches are already involved in their communities



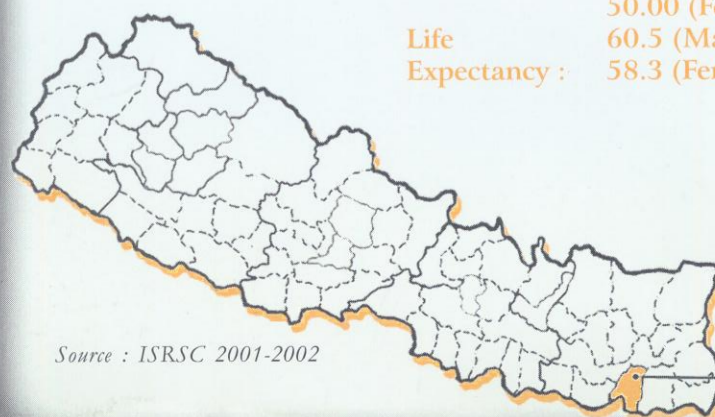
BETSY OSBORNE

and have registered NGOs. BPKIHS is keen to develop our existing relationship further. We already have links with some of the disabled community in Dharan and this could be expanded further. HIV/AIDS is a significant problem along with the drug issue among young people. There is also a real need and opportunity for encouraging enterprise in different areas.

We now know that Dharan has been chosen by UMN as one of the first cluster locations. This is an exciting new venture for us. We have never worked extensively in that part of Nepal before. One Christian leader there told us, "UMN came here to assess this area 20 years ago and nothing happened." Now we will be able to go with a positive answer and, with God's help, find ways to develop partnerships that will bring holistic changes to Sunsari District.

David McConkey

NEPAL



Area :	1,257 Sq.Km.
Population :	315,530 (Male) 310,103 (Female)
Literate Rate :	70.64 (Male) 50.00 (Female)
Life Expectancy :	60.5 (Male) 58.3 (Female)

Sunsari/
Dharan

Source : ISRSC 2001-2002

Kathmandu - the heart of the Nation

NEPAL

Area : 395 Sq.Km.
Population : 576,010 (Male)
505,835 (Female)
Literate Rate : 86.35 (Male)
66.44 (Female)
Life Expectancy : 67 (Male)
53.8 (Female)



Source : ISRSC 2001-2002

From the inception of the selection process concept, Kathmandu has been the one confirmed cluster site – but where is Kathmandu? After eight years living in Patan, a trip to Kathmandu is always an occasion! By ‘trip’ I do not mean just slipping over the Bagmati River to the Maternity Hospital or UMN headquarters but to Kathmandu ‘proper’ – Asan Tole, Chhetrapati, Indra Chowk and of course Thamel with its Aladdin’s cave quality which is so attractive to tourists.

Kantipur, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Kirtipur; names all associated with mystique and history. The cities, surrounded by hills, are set in a bowl loosely referred to as the Kathmandu Valley. Contrasting in size, richness and preservation, together they house the spiritual, political and intellectual centres of the nation. Since its earliest days, UMN has used its strategically situated headquarters to provide input and work with His Majesty’s Government and other key stakeholders in the development of national policies and plans in many areas including health, education and technical training. This has enabled strong working relationships with the different ministries to grow over the years.

Health Care Service provision, Medical (in its broadest sense), Education of Excellence and Health behaviour change programmes have been some of a broad range of Valley based initiatives. Responding to emerging health challenges has always been a key UMN strategy. School curriculum development, writing textbooks, training of trainers for teachers, implementation of primary enrichment programmes are all one end of a spectrum, whilst at the other end is graduate and post-graduate education in the government, semi-government and private campuses of the Valley where UMN has shared the challenges, encouragements and frustrations of generations of faculties and students. Several private limited companies, which grew out of UMN’s Engineering and Industrial Development strategies, continue to have a working relationship with UMN. At this moment it is impossible to predict what the Kathmandu cluster will look like but there are opportunities within the Valley for all the Strategic Directions to be outworked through a wide variety of partners, especially in: conflict resolution, addressing injustice and root

causes of poverty, working with the often ignored 50% of the population—women, HIV/AIDS, mentoring, coaching, capacity building, advocacy, National Policy Development, displaced persons and urban squatters and renters.

Christine Preston



GRACE FINNEY

Hopeful Rukum

Along with Rolpa, Rukum district in the mid-Western part of Nepal is considered the birthplace of the Maoist insurgency and one of the areas most affected by the conflict. Already the most remote district in its zone, it has seen development nearly grind to a halt during the last seven years. Its population is about 60% Bahun-Chhetri and 25% Kham Magar. The Magar population is centered in the eastern part of the district, near Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve, and contains the largest Christian community. The district center of Rukum is at the ridge-top town of Musikot, with a population of about 5000. It has been connected just this year by a road to Salyan. Rukum as a UMN cluster location presents some daunting challenges, but also some exciting opportunities. UMN has not worked in Rukum before except for a brief nutrition-related program in the 1990's, connected to an education project in neighboring Jajarkot district. Rukum represents a place where UMN can make a clean start in helping to meet a wide range of needs.

A UMN team made up of Christine Stone, Martin Butterworth, Bal Krishna Baniya, and Tim Ruohoniemi visited Rukum from 8-12 May 2003. Taking off from Kathmandu in a trusty Twin Otter, we headed west for about an hour and landed at the sloping hillside airstrip at Musikot. We immediately noticed the large army presence, though only in the district center. We expected tensions to be high in the town, but surprisingly they were not. The ceasefire with Maoists had given people new hope, and the bazaar was bustling with activity. There were no outside development agencies in evidence, but it seemed that the people of Rukum have not been waiting around for someone to help them recover from the years of war.

We found a number of local initiatives that were encouraging: small industries involved in wool,

NEPAL



Area :	2,877 Sq.Km.
Population :	95,432 (Male) 93,006 (Female)
Literate Rate :	50.45 (Male) 28.60 (Female)
Life Expectancy :	51 (Male) 49.1 (Female)

paper, and wood products; seed production; a human rights NGO focusing on training, advocacy, and awareness building; a functional small hydropower plant; and schools involved in primary teacher training. Christine was encouraged to find the school in Musikot using materials that she had developed, and it made her something of a celebrity during her visit. There is a church in Musikot, reaching out throughout the district and highly committed despite adversity. The leader has a vision for social outreach to the community and has already registered an NGO for that purpose.

The survey team walked up the broad Sanu Bheri valley to the village of Rukumkot to get an impression of some of the rural parts of the district. Some land is under irrigation by the river, but much more could be done to help the poor people scattered in small farms and villages along the way. As in other areas of western Nepal, the main dry season crop appeared to be marijuana. A young lad in Rukumkot was proud to show us a school building that had been built by his youth club with money raised by Tihar festival dancing. It was encouraging to sense considerable local initiative.

Our only Maoist encounter in Rukum came in the Sanu Bheri valley, with a tense inquiry into our destination and purpose. It relaxed, however, on discussing the needs of the village and possibility of drinking water development there. The issue of who is in control of the outlying areas of the district is something definitely to be taken into account in planning UMN's work. UMN will need to be careful to make its intentions clear as it establishes itself in Rukum and get off to a good start with all elements of local control. It could clearly become quite a difficult location without a ceasefire and peace process in place. This is a matter for much intercession and divine wisdom.

The entire survey team was enthusiastic about the possibility of living and working in a place like Musikot. The location seems workable for a new cluster of expatriates and Nepalis, including families, given current transportation facilities and the availability of reasonable housing and supplies in the bazaar, also the pleasant climate. The scope for UMN involvement is very wide, meaning that there would be opportunities for people with a wide variety of capacity building skills. Some needs of the district are directly the result of the conflict in the area: displaced persons needing help to get established, mental illness exacerbated by the stress of civil war, numerous children orphaned by the conflict or forced into hard labor by the loss of family members. Some work with women and children could be based at the district hospital just outside Musikot town.

As we stood on the ridge overlooking Musikot, we prayed that God would bring peace and hope to Rukum. It is exciting that UMN will be able to be His instrument in helping to transform lives and communities torn apart by years of conflict in the area.

Tim Ruohoniemi



NEPAL

Area : 1,926 Sq.Km.
 Population : 165,864 (Male)
 172,794 (Female)
 Literate Rate : 53.69 (Male)
 33.81 (Female)
 Life Expectancy : 49 (Male)
 39.3 (Female)



Source : ISRSC 2001-2002

Exploration Dhading - A Breathtaking Experience

When you look at a map of Nepal, Dhading district appears not that far away from Kathmandu – just a few miles as the “crow flies” to the west. However, getting there proved to be a “breath-taking” experience which made me realise that the remote, little-known area of north Dhading, nestling at the foot of the Himalayas, near the Tibetan border, is a truly challenging place where UMN will have great opportunities for its work in the future.

From Kathmandu, after a lot of prayer and careful planning, we headed north towards Rashuwa district, near to the well-known Langtang National Park and trekking area. As we journeyed north in the vehicle, the scenery became more and more amazing - deep river valleys, high snowy Himalayan Peaks, lush jungle and small villages perched on the steep sides of the valleys.

Then began the long arduous climb over a mountain pass, up to an elevation of 3830 metres or 12,562 feet. It was exhausting! I kept wondering to myself, “Why am I here?” I was a little apprehensive, but never stopped being enthusiastic and eager to learn more about this district especially the remote northern part, in order to explore the opportunities and challenges there for UMN. During those long days of trekking I was distressed but not overcome with despair, sometimes uncertain, but did not lose hope, as I knew that there was a purpose to fulfill.

As we moved from one village to another, following our local guide, we met many different people: children, community leaders, traditional spiritual leaders, Ward Members, Village Development Committee Chairmen, Maternal Child Health Workers, other Health Workers, Youth Groups, Teachers, Church Leaders and Community Development



RON STOUFER

Workers. We listened to their aspirations, their achievements and their priorities. Their problems are many: food security, basic and higher education for the children, good teacher training, school furniture, basic health needs, relief activities, marketing assistance, micro-enterprise development, peace and reconciliation, pastoral training and capacity building. The list is seemingly endless.

For the people of north Dhading, life is hard; the communities of subsistence farmers and shepherds live on the fringes of society, often deprived of the basic necessities of life. They are marginalized by their inaccessibility, poverty and lack of opportunities. They have faith in the God of miracles, but there is room for UMN's assistance also. They need help to improve the quality of their lives, to benefit from the opportunities and expertise that UMN can bring to them. Their

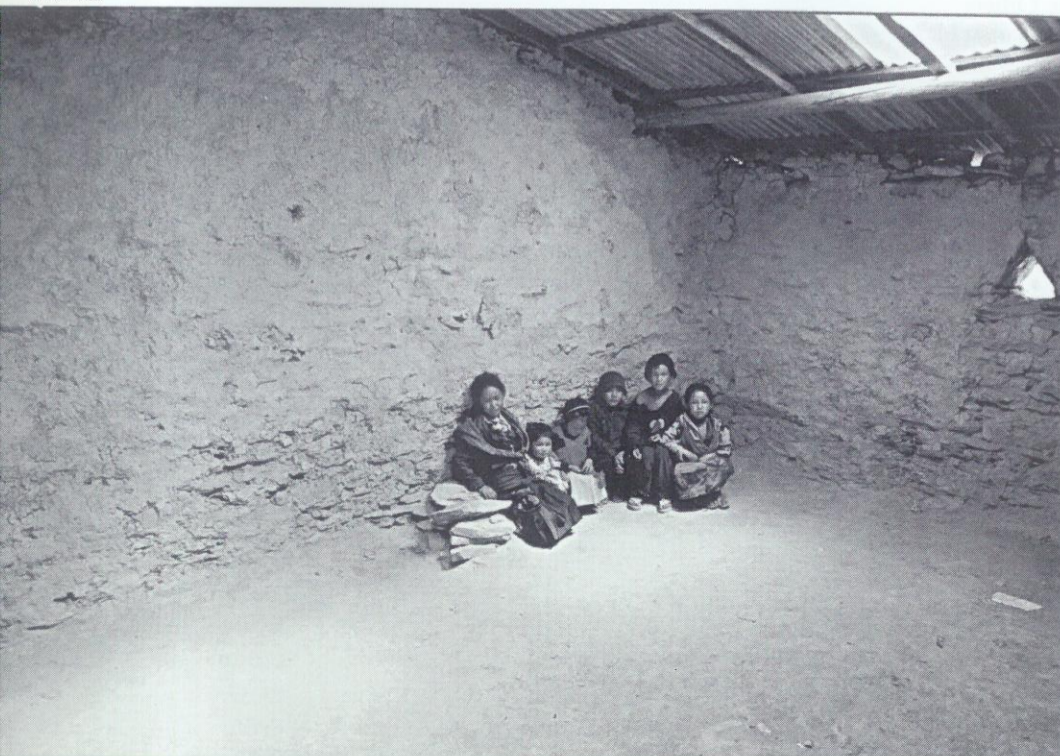
lives can be made abundant with the help and encouragement that UMN can give. We have been blessed, and our prayers have been answered. We have heard the encouraging news that the government is asking UMN to work in north Dhading. It is really exciting to know that the task we carried out faithfully during our trip is finally rewarded. The experience from the cluster exploration has given me the insight, that yes, with the help of UMN, fruit may be borne from the seeds that God plant in Dhading.

Shanti Sara Lepcha

School children in their classroom

UMNews/15/2003

ROWAN BUTLER



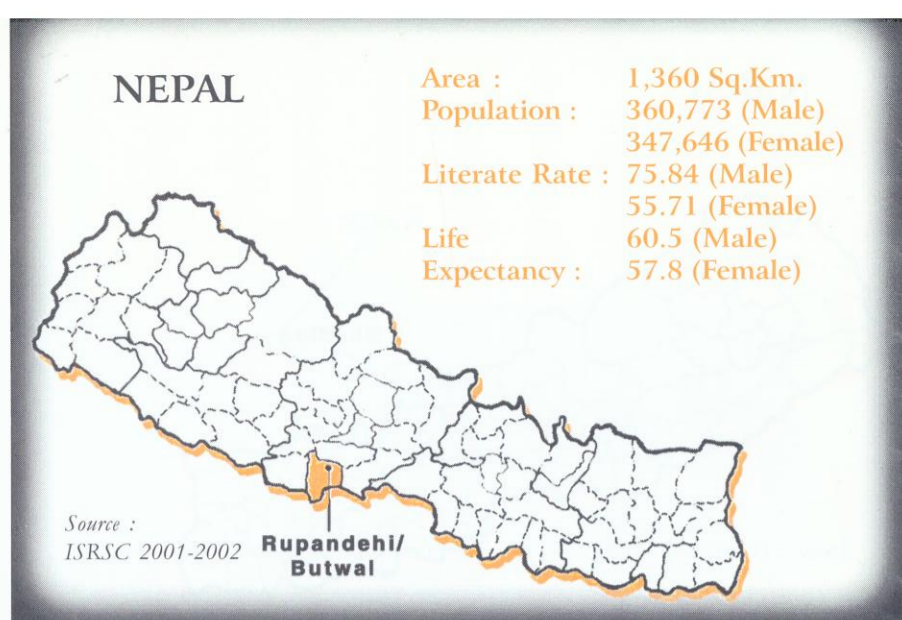
Booming Industrial Town - Butwal

For many who have connections with UMN the name is synonymous with engineering. For 40 years UMN has been established in this busy market town, sitting in the lap of the Palpa district hills, on the edge of the Terai. Engineering training and industrial work of all kinds have been introduced over the years since Butwal Technical Institute first started. However, for those on the Cluster Investigation teams our brief was not to judge the past or even the present, UMN work, but to look to the future and see the potential for new partners and new ways to take forward the mission and vision of the organisation.

So we set off to carry out our task. Uncertain about where to start. Feeling inadequate for the job. Relying on God's guidance. We had obtained many statistics about Rupandehi and Nawalparasi districts, and Butwal. It seemed like too much information actually! With all these facts available, and the number of organisations already working in those areas, what else could we discover in five/six days that was not already known? These were some of the thoughts and feelings that we mulled over as we travelled the well-trodden route from Kathmandu to Butwal in the UMN vehicle.

We had deliberately kept a fairly clear diary, until we arrived, to allow for flexibility if we had 'chance' meetings with interesting people or groups. This proved to have been a good plan as from the very first day we entered into a whirlwind of meetings where one person introduced us to another and to another and so on. We had the opportunity to meet industrialists, businessmen and government officers. We were able to visit schools, a hospital, health and women and children related NGOs, and income generation projects. We met with church groups, disabled people and local Christians who want to make a difference. Through all these meetings it became clear that there is a lot going on in Butwal and the surrounding districts but the opportunity for UMN to partner with many organisations is also very exciting. Among the concerns that were expressed in our meetings were the rise in HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, poverty alleviation and the poor quality of education in the remoter parts of the district. Another issue that came up very regularly from a number of different sources was the need for capacity building in the area of marketing. Others spoke of the need for work among the poor Muslim population in the southern areas along the Indian border.

One 'chance' meeting that left a lasting impression on the members of the team (even though not all were present at the time) occurred about half an hour's walk from the main highway and approximately two hours drive north of Butwal. Two of the team members were on the way back from visiting an income generation project (chicken raising) when they stopped to visit a family that their guide knew. Inside the family home lay a boy of about eight or nine years of age, who couldn't walk due to injuries he had sustained as a baby. He had rolled into the fire that was lit for cooking in the middle of the floor and badly burned his legs. Since that day as he grew up he had hardly left the family yard being unable to walk because of



complications following the burns. He had never seen a doctor or other medical professional.

How could this family be overlooked? They don't even live in a particularly remote area. Through this encounter we felt that God was saying that despite all that is going on there is still much more work to do in the Butwal area that UMN can be involved in. The opportunities are there and UMN has the resources, skills and people to help make a difference to individuals' lives.

We started out to Butwal unsure of what to do or how to go about the task but came back certain in the knowledge that God had very clearly led and guided us through the whole experience, and has shown us that there is work for UMN to do there!

Alan Barker



ELIZABETH BARKER



United Mission to Nepal

"50 years in God's hand"

UMN's 50th Anniversary Celebration

United Mission to Nepal (UMN) has a impressive history of serving the people of Nepal, faithful to its Mission Statement: "To minister to the needs of the people of Nepal in the Name and Spirit of Christ, and to make Christ known by word and life, thereby strengthening the universal Church in its total ministry". UMN is celebrating its 50th birthday in 2004 and preparations are underway for this. UMN has been serving the people of Nepal in different sectors from primary to university education, in health services, in engineering and industrial development, and in rural development. UMN has also contributed to National Policy Development especially in the health and education sector.

The 50th Anniversary Celebration of UMN is not only a special occasion for UMN but is, special for the Nepalese people, especially for those who have benefited directly or indirectly from the contribution made by UMN. "I couldn't even survive today if there was no UMN," says Tek Bhandari, who comes from a village of Gorkha District, in the west of Nepal. "I fell off a tree back in 1973 and there was almost no hope that I would survive. But by the grace of God, there happened to be Amppipal Hospital in the district, run by UMN. I was immediately taken there and I got the best treatment I could get. I became handicapped but despite my physical disability UMN offered me a job and today I am still here. I am so thankful to UMN that I can't express it in words." True. UMN has transformed the lives of many individuals and communities. In order to celebrate UMN's 50th anniversary, events in Nepal and worldwide are being planned. The key dates for celebration of the various events are:

Launching of the Celebration :	November, 2003 (Board Meeting)
Project Events, Worldwide Events :	5 March, 2004 (Official start of UMN)
Official Reception & Exhibition in Kathmandu :	20, 21 May, 2004
Anniversary Festival in Kathmandu :	22 - 26 May, 2004

Rishi Ram Paudyal

Mary Martin Gets International Health Award

The Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) has awarded Mary Martin the International Health Award (2003) in recognition of her significant contributions to the Association and the physiotherapy profession. The CPA Awards Programme plays an important role in the development of leaders through recognition of individuals' valuable contributions to the on-going growth and development of the profession and the Association.

The International Health Award is based on the philosophy that physiotherapy values internationalism and those individuals involved in activities such as partnerships in education and research that further the profession internationally, as well as those involved in the planning and delivery of physiotherapy services. This newly established award was presented for the first time in 2002. It includes complimentary full membership at national level for one year and presentation of a framed Certificate of Appreciation.

Greatest success in the history of Lalitpur Nursing Campus

Once again, students at Lalitpur Nursing Campus (LNC) achieved excellent examination results. With a 100 percent success rate, the Campus also secured first, second and third positions in the Proficiency Certificate Level Nursing Exams (PCLN) conducted by Tribhuvan University this year. Smita Upadhaya, Beena Kharel and Beena Khatiwada stood first, second and third respectively in the overall PCLN exam.

GBS achieves outstanding results

Gandaki Boarding School (GBS), Pokhara a UMN partner, continues to produce graduates with excellent results. This year once again, the school achieved a 100 percent pass rate in the School Leaving Certificate Examination (SLC) with 100 percent in the First Division. Of the 170,389 students who took the SLC examination across Nepal this year, only 20,969 (12%) secured first division.

Similarly, the Higher Secondary students of GBS (Science faculty) have had 100% pass rate 35 securing first division and 1 securing second division.

Kirsti Kirjavainen Awarded



For her selfless and commendable contribution to improve the living standards of women in Rowa and Pina Village Development Committees (VDC) of Mugu District, the District Development Committee (DDC), Mugu, honoured Kirsti Kirjavainen, Mugu Education Project Consultant. On 1st May 2003, DDC Mugu presented Kirsti with a letter of recognition for her contribution in various community development programmes such as promotion of agriculture, gender equity, access to schooling and women's health and awareness programmes.

UMN Transition News

UMN is currently implementing a Strategic Change Process. Whilst continuing to work under its General Agreement with His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N), UMN is introducing a new governance and organisational structure in order to implement a new strategy in line with UMN's 1996 Vision for Nepal. The key objective of the Transition Team is *to creatively shape, develop or divest the current work of UMN to fit within the framework of the Strategic Plan by 25 November 2005.*

A number of new NGOs have been set up to carry on the work of some UMN programmes. They are: *Centre for Community Development* (Makwanpur), *Sakriya Samaj* (HIV/AIDS), the *Centre for Mental Health and Counselling*, the *Nucleus for Empowerment Through Skill Transfer* (Pokhara), and *Nutrition Promotion and Consulting Services*. All of these have gained registration with the Chief District Office and the first three also have Social Welfare Council registration. UMN is very excited to be involved in the birth and development of these pioneering Nepali-led development organisations.

Following the completion of their plans, Ramechhap Community Development Project (RCDP) was closed and Ashrang Health Post was handed over to the District Health Office and the local Health Committee. Sadly, Dailekh Non-Formal Education Project and Dullu School Partnership Programme have come to a premature end after many months of trying, unsuccessfully, to work within the deteriorating security situation in the district.

The Expatriate Children's Education Transition Team and Support Services Transition Team have a challenging year ahead of them as they continue to try to work out what the needs of the smaller, more disparate new structure will be. There are a lot of unknowns here, and the Teams will need creativity and imagination, and realism, to find appropriate solutions. One of the biggest tasks for the Institutions Transition Team is to communicate effectively with our existing partner institutions about what is happening here at UMN, and to work with them on how that will impact their functioning and future relationship with UMN.

There is much hard work being done to ensure the future viability of our Hospitals beyond 2005. UMN is discussing a joint agreement with HMG/Nepal – Ministry of Health, whereby all three hospitals will be governed by one Nepali organisation, working cooperatively together to improve services and reduce costs. Because of their intimate connection with the hospitals, this also includes the Medical Supplies Department and Tansen Nursing School.

Paul Wright

Acting Director - Transition Team



United Mission to Nepal is a co-operative effort between the people of Nepal and 27 Christian organisations from 13 countries. Its main areas of work are Food Security, Education, Women and Children, Peace and Conflict Transformation, Relief, HIV/AIDS and Enterprise Support.

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