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UMNews

United Mission to Nepal



Disaster Hanagemei



For a Safer Nepal

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble

Psalm 46:1

Dear Friends,

This year's UMN theme, 'The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it', and the focus of this UMNews issue, which is Disaster Management, fit very well together.

Nepal is extremely vulnerable to a large number of natural and man-made disasters. For many communities and individuals, even small-scale disasters can have profound adverse impacts. In many cases, this is because of underlying poverty.



Much of UMN's Disaster Management work is to raise awareness of issues and encourage individuals and communities to take preventive measures to reduce the likelihood and severity of disasters and to enable people to cope with disasters more effectively when they do occur.

The effects of *Climate Change* in Nepal are increasingly evident and some frightening future predictions have also been forecast. For poor and marginalised communities, this is beginning to affect every area of their lives: their health, their sources of water, food, livelihood, and agriculture in particular.

We here at UMN believe there is much we can do to witness to our belief in God as the Creator who has commanded that we care for all His creation. May He help us to be faithful to this Biblical mandate and show love and care to all His creation.

In His Service

Jennie Collins Executive Director



Praise be to our God who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

2 Corinthians 1:4



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The Aftermath of Nature's Fury...

A Survivor's Tale

It takes years to make a house, to fill it with people and goods. And it can all be destroyed in minutes. This is what happened to my family on a rainy July night last year.

I am Sabitri Pasi, 60, and I live in Marchwar, Ward 5, in Rupandehi district (western development region of Nepal) with nine other members in my family, including my husband, children, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren. Like most Nepali village families, our major source of income is agriculture.



Sabitri and Her Husband

I remember those days vividly: it was summer of 2007, time to prepare for our annual harvest. A niggling eye problem meant that I was of no use in the fields so I stayed home to look after my grandchildren. Naturally, the entire village was busy preparing for a good harvest. After last year's insufficient production, we were all pleased when the rains fell early this year. Our sowing and tilling efforts had been going well and surely, the early rain was a good omen! How wrong we were!

The early rain just didn't stop. On the night of July 4, the river outside my house burst its banks and headed towards our houses.

My house, built of hay, which even seemed to shake when we put grain or food items inside, started crumbling down. We ran for our lives and tried to find higher ground. Soon, many had swarmed into the schools, health posts, and police stations. My family and other villagers found

shelter inside the District Administration Office building where we stayed put for almost three days. We were fortunate that we were safe but also felt for the poultry and livestock that were unable to make it. Needless to say, our crops and fields were destroyed.

The early rain just didn't stop. On the night of July 4, the river outside my house burst its banks and headed towards our houses.

Most of us soon started to suffer from a variety of problems; diarrhoea, fever, common colds, itching, and vision difficulties. To make matters worse, we had no clean drinking water and others were starting to have eye problems. My own eye problem was getting worse. Help slowly arrived from the *Nepal Red Cross Society District Chapter* and others. The food and relief materials helped, but my lack of proper vision still persisted.

This is when God sent assistance: a local organisation named *Siddhartha Samudayik Samaj* (SSS) arrived and immediately held a health camp. I, and a few others who had been contemplating traveling to neighbouring Bhairawa for treatment, now did not need to go.

After my eye operation, it felt like I was born again. Though I can see the remnants of nature's fury around me, I am still thankful for SSS for my new sight. And yes, I can see my precious grandchildren again!

(Text narrated by Sabitri herself. About 36 of Nepal's 75 districts were severely affected in the South Asian floods in the summer of 2007. SSS, a UMN-partner organisation, works in the area of disaster relief and risk reduction in Rupandehi district with UMN's assistance.)

The Road to a Disaster-resilient Nepal...

In recent times, Nepal has witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of natural hazardous event such as floods, earthquakes, famine etc. Hundreds of people are killed or injured each year and sustain physical damage worth millions of rupees. Failure to cope with the damage leaves the inhabitants in the state of helplessness, called disaster.

In Nepal, a number of factors for example, environment, conflict driven migration, alarming rate of deforestation, pressure on agricultural land, unplanned urbanisation and weak geological structure are major contributors. Increasing population, chronic level of poverty and inadequate preparedness measures further intensify the associated risk.



After the floods last year in Rupandehi, UMN's partner used part of the money raised through UMN to build a 'high ground' shelter and a boat to rescue people during the next flood.

However, simple yet practical, affordable yet effective activities are promoted through UMN's Disaster Management programme to minimise the effect of hazards to the people and their belongings. Through partnership with various local organisations, UMN is:

- Raising awareness to reduce vulnerability
- Formulating response plans
- Including risk management in the entire development activities.

In place of the pessimistic feeling and fatalistic opinion towards disaster, that is deeply rooted in Nepal, people are starting to have hope. They are increasingly showing interest towards knowing the benefit of risk management and exploring the opportunity to transfer the knowledge to uplift their livelihood. However, it may take a while to see the tangible outcome of our input.

As the Scandinavian saying goes: "There is no bad weather, only bad gear". The meaning reflects our belief that neither natural nor manmade hazards kill people, only poor preparedness measures do. Through such awareness raising and sustainable activities, UMN seeks to make disaster resilient communities capable of stopping hazards from turning into disasters.

Suresh Bhattarai Lead Advisor Disaster Management

Please Pray for Us

1. Pray that our Disaster Management work will have secured funding this year so we can continue to serve vulnerable communities and populations. Please pray also for these communities.



2. Pray that the Disaster Management Act, Disaster Management Policy, and the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction Act acquire governmental ratification and endorsement.



3. Pray for the success of Training of Trainers in Emergency Search and Rescue in our clusters.

In Conversation with Mr. Drona Pokharel, Dhading Chief District Officer

UMN has been active in Dhading's Disaster Management for a number of years during which time its cluster team has worked with government and community members. To discuss Dhading's DM and UMN's role and contribution, the UMN Marketing Team had a short conversation with Mr. Drona Pokharel, Dhading Chief District Officer. Excerpts:

On the state of Dhading district's disaster management:

Governmental agencies, NGOs, INGOs, civil society, and stakeholders have all been involved in Dhading district's DM work for a long time, but sadly, not a lot has been achieved. This is slowly changing through proactive parties such as UMN.

On UMN's contributions: Last December, with the participation of community and government members, we held a major discussion on

Dhading's vulnerable ecological situation. We were able to assess vulnerable areas and communities and recommend key mitigation measures that will be incorporated in the Safety Guidelines for the district. A follow up meeting last June helped us prepare and discuss our preliminary report data and findings from the previous meeting. This was helpful to us in discussing new solutions for our district.

We are indebted to UMN's assistance for the initiation and coordination of such helpful discussions.



Dhading CDO

UMN's proactive initiatives and strategies are an inspiration for our work.

On UMN's role for the future: To be frank, not much had been achieved in Dhading until UMN proactively pursued things by working with community and government partners.

UMN's support for Dhading's DM has been truly commendable and praiseworthy - their tireless effort and persuasion in making more people aware about the dangers of natural disasters is truly inspirational. UMN's proactive initiatives and strategies are an inspiration for our work. Naturally, we are very hopeful of their continued technical assistance and support in future.

UMN Marketing Team

A Fruitful Partnership in Dhading



Students and public during road accident simulations in Dhading highway

UMN's Dhading Cluster Team has made good progress with government and community stakeholders and partners in improving the district's disaster management situation. One of its main partners is Committed Society for Change in Nepal (COSOC).

This partnership has organised many district-level planning workshops and discussions, the last of which was in June 2008 and was attended by over a hundred participants including prominent government and community members. Special focus was given to the high frequency of road accidents in Dhading and to find ways to reduce them.

COSOC General Secretary Bodh Narayan Shrestha facilitated the programme and was assisted by Krishna Kumari Malla (DM Officer, Dhading Cluster Team). A group work discussion on reducing highway accidents was also held. There was a simulation exercise on highway accidents and post-accidental measures which was undertaken by school students and facilitated by UMN and COSOC-Nepal.

Through such endeavours, UMN hopes to raise greater awareness about reducing highway accidents and saving lives. Statistics show an alarming rise in highway accidents in Dhading in the last year:

From July 2007 to May 2008

Number of highway accidents 95

Number of fatal casualties 32

Number of critically injured 102

Number of simple injuries 157

Source: District Police Office, Dhading

Krishna Kumari Malla, Disaster Management Officer



UMN's Initiative and Help for Victims

The *United Nations* called it the "worst floods in living memory". Rightly so.

The 2007 South Asian monsoon floods wreaked havoc on an unprecedented scale with over 4000 deaths in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal. Nepal suffered heavily with over 200 people dead and 25,000 families displaced in 36 of its 75 districts.

Six of UMN's partners and one of UMN's national partner, Nepal Christian Relief Society, submitted proposals to assist their target communities. Over 10 million NPR (about \$ 150,000) was obtained from external agencies with additional funds from individuals, partners, and 1 million NPR from UMN's own Emergency Relief Fund.

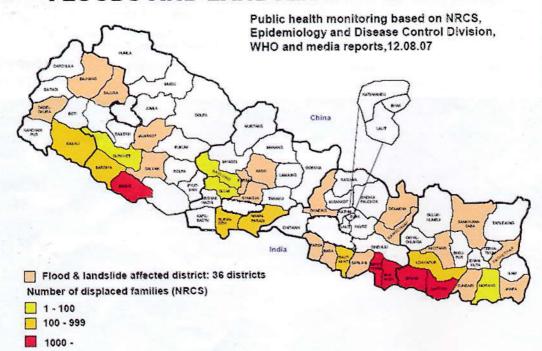
Emergency relief materials such as clothes, utensils, blankets, medicines and tarpaulin sheets were distributed to 2421 families. Other funds were spent on reducing future risks by building shelters, raised houses and tube wells, embankments and river diversions, emergency

kits, and on initiating livelihood-supporting activities.

Families benefited in eight districts: Dhanusha, Banke, Bardiya, Sunsari, Rupandehi, Nawalparasi, Rukum and Mugh (of which the last five are UMN's working districts)

UMN conveys its special thanks to all those who contributed and also a special thank-you to: Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation, BMS World Mission, Mennonite Central Committee, Samaritan's Purse, and Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission.

FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES NEPAL 2008



Source: World Health Organization (WHO), 2007

UMIN Archives

For many years, the UMN documents were archived by the late Ms. Betty Young in Edinburgh, Scotland. They are now part of a wider archive collection, titled the Himalayan Collection, which also includes material from *International Nepal Fellowship*, Central Asian Fellowship, and the Nepali Church.

As the years went by, it became impossible for UMN to continue to keep them in the same lace. So the archives have now been moved to the Yale University School of Divinity Library in New Haven, Connecticut, USA. The archives are now being held and managed by archive management professionals.

For access to these archives, the arrangements are as follows:

- By September 2008, Yale staff will have developed an online guide to the archives. You will then be able to see what is available. This will be accessible at http://www.library.yale.edu/div
- 2. For researchers who are not UMN staff, there will be the normal library charges for searches and also photocopying and postage costs where appropriate. Details are available at http://www.library.yale.edu/div/reproductions.html#photocopy where costs for retrieval in other media formats are also given.
- For the Yale library staff to know that a researcher is a UMN staff member, it will require an official notification from UMN. Please request this from UMN at aed@umn.org.np



Fantasia, Martha Smalley's assistant, arranging the archive boxes

4. Until the online guide is available later in 2008, if anyone knows exactly what information they need from the UMN archives, please write directly to the chief archivist, Martha Smalley, at martha.smalley@yale.edu

David McConkey Liasion Director UMN regularly publishes a full range of opportunities for service in Nepal on its website www.umn.org.np. Exciting opportunities exist for well-qualified and experienced Christian professionals, couples, singles, and/or families for a range of challenging and rewarding roles in rural, regional, and urban areas in Nepal. If you have the required skills, are creative, flexible, and interested in working in teams with Nepali and expatriate staff, we are keen to hear from you. Please contact Anne Penn at anne.penn@umn.org.np for more details.



for Service in Nepal

URGENT NEEDS

All positions involve mentoring, coaching, and training Nepali staff

PRIMARY/ELEMENTARY TEACHER

Based at Tansen Mission Hospital, Palpa

A teacher is needed for a small group of 5 to 8 year old children of UMN expatriate families in Tansen, as soon as possible. There is a small well-equipped school and supportive parents.

Required

Enthusiastic and qualified teacher Experience with teaching children whose first language is not English would be an advantage

MARKETING/ COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Kathmandu-based

To work with the Marketing Team, producing printed and audiovisual materials, to inform, inspire, and encourage continued prayer and financial support for the work of UMN

Required

Marketing or communication-related qualifications and experience, ability to make use of print and electronic media to enthuse and inform

ICT ADVISOR

Kathmandu-based

To plan, coordinate, design, and assist the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Team to implement appropriate ICT solutions that will help accomplish UMN's strategies and plans

Required

Professional qualifications and broad ICT experience State of the art, up-to-date IT knowledge Planning and organisational abilities Able to liaise effectively with both technical and non-technical personnel

REHABILITATION ADVISOR

Kathmandu-based, with travel to areas outside Kathmandu

To assist UMN staff and partners to address rehabilitation and disability issues at local and national level and to assist partners who work in the area of child rehabilitation

Required

Degree in physiotherapy, occupational therapy, rehabilitation, or similar Experience in promoting rehabilitation and disability issues at community level Ability to work closely with Nepali colleagues in a mentoring/coaching relationship

FDUCATION ADVISORS

Kathmandu-based or other locations with extensive travel

To assist UMN staff and partners to eliminate socio-cultural barriers, thereby enabling access to relevant education for all. To help partners promote the value of formal and non-formal education and contribute towards improving the quality of education available

Required

Degree in any discipline, plus postgraduate education training

Experience of working in formal and non-formal education

Teacher training or educational advising experience would be desirable

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY ADVISOR

Based outside Kathmandu with travel to rural areas

To assist UMN staff and partners to ensure that vulnerable people have access to sufficient food through Right to Food Programmes, efficient cultivation methods, and income generation projects

Required

Degree in agriculture, food technology, nutrition, or related discipline

Experience in developing countries would be an advantage

Willingness to live and work in a rural location

HIV/AIDS ADVISOR

Based outside Kathmandu, with travel to rural areas

To help UMN's partners to work in the areas of education, prevention, advocacy, and community and home-based care regarding HIV/AIDS

Required

Degree-level education in a health or social work related field

Experience in the field of HIV/AIDS
Ability to encourage and encourage partners
Cross-cultural experience would be an advantage

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS and SURGEONS

Urgently needed at Tansen Mission Hospital, Palpa

"God Sees our Suffering but Gives us Time to Seek His Help"

Survivors Thank UMN and NRCS for Help

Nabal Singh Khadka, 58, and his family didn't quite know what hit them one rainy day in August 2007.

One amongst a hundred families struck by incessant monsoon floods in *Armakhola* and *Kholagaun* of Rukum district (mid-west Nepal) in summer 2007, Nabal and his family were rendered homeless and desperate for days.

To help support and rebuild families such as Nabal's, the UMN Rukum Cluster Team and the Nepal Red Cross Society Rukum District Chapter then initiated a disaster appeal campaign. A total of 430,000 NPR was received to purchase clothes, utensils, blankets, medicines, and tarpaulin sheets and these were distributed to 100 families in Rukum in December 2007.

Rati Ram Tamata, 50, was also immensely grateful for this support, "we do not need to spend six hours every day collecting firewood to keep ourselves warm at night". He

added, "Now instead of spending hours to collect firewood, we can utilise time for various means to earn wages, our winter nights are warmer than before, and sleep has become dearer under our new, warm blankets!"

Padam Singh Roka, 45, summed up his feelings, "The relief may be late. But we know now that God sees our suffering and gives us time to wait and seek His help."

Ram Nath Ojha Disaster Management Officer

UMN Board of Trustees

UMN approved a new governance model in its General Assembly meeting in May 2007. One of the changes of this new model was that Board Trustees could now be elected from outside of UMN's Supporting Partner representatives. UMN now has 13 Trustees, including its Executive Director, ex officio. The following is a brief description of the 12 Trustees:

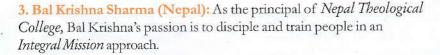
1. Dino Touthang (India): The current Chairperson of the UMN Board, Dino is the Executive Director for Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief. Passionate about Integral Mission, Dino has worked in community development in India for the last 25 years.

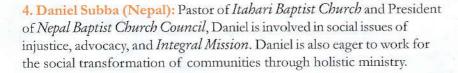
On his role as the Chairperson of the UMN Board of Trustees:

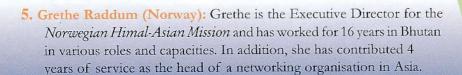
"My role is to oversee the purpose of UMN and its objectives and consult with the UMN Board for the fulfilment of its visions, to push each other to focus on UMN's vision, objectives, and God's greater purpose for Nepal."

"I see UMN as an agent of change because we cannot produce change unless we ourselves change from the inside."





















Network, Jane has a long-standing interest and involvement in international development in Asia. Jane worked as a lawyer in South East Asia for 7 years before taking up her current position.



7. Mahendra Bhattarai (Nepal): A development consultant and pastor, Mahendra's interests lie in agriculture, rural development, socioeconomic development and planning and capacity building.



8. Peter Quesenberry (USA): Currently working and residing in Thailand as an advisor helping to develop the next generation of national Christian leaders in Asia, Peter and his family has served, since 1980, in Nepal, Laos, and Thailand in various roles, from village animal doctor to mission director. Peter's passion is to serve the poor and share the hope of Jesus Christ with them.



9. Roshan Mendis (Sri Lanka): An Executive Director for the Lanka Evangelical Alliance Development Service, Roshan has a keen interest in peace and reconciliation work and is equally passionate about empowering communities to make a difference.



10. Sandy Sneddon (Scotland): Associate Secretary for the *Church of Scotland World Mission Council*, Sandy has previously worked in training and community development in Pakistan.



11. Sareeta Giri Thapa (Nepal): Sareeta's passion is to educate people to help spread awareness for social change and is currently serving as the Principal of Nepal Bible College.



12. Fi McLachlan (England): Previously the Organisational Development Director for *Interserve*, Fi has a background in social care management for both statutory and non-profit sectors. She has worked as an organisational development consultant.

"If we can contribute towards poverty reduction and ensuring truth and justice for all, I would be a happier person. I also hope that UMN is able to respond to and seek new ways of making a credible difference in Nepal."

Expatriate Profile

Paul Wright



Paul and family

For the last ten years, Paul Wright (along with wife Sarah) has contributed to UMN's work in various capacities and locations. Paul and Sarah arrived in Nepal in April 1998 with a vision to empower people to make informed life decisions through education. Their initial projects were in Dailekh (five months) and Jumla (June 1999-March 2001) where they worked alongside Nepali colleagues to develop non-formal education approaches.

Much of Nepal's rural hinterland then lay under insurgency and a state of emergency rule. Paul was asked to handle security matters for UMN in January 2003, a temporary position that lasted nearly two years. UMN was then in the midst of an organisational change and the need for a capable administration to oversee transition of several UMN projects meant that Paul was asked again to contribute, this time as the Transition Director (June 2003-July 2005).

During his previous security role, Paul had observed and analysed the vulnerability of rural districts to natural disasters. Through trainings and workshops with UMN's national and international partners, Paul learnt much about planning and analysing disaster vulnerabilities of communities. This coincided with UMN's strategy to become more involved in relief activities and to develop the work of *Disaster Management*. Following on from his experiences, Paul volunteered to re-train to take on the DM work.

After a period of Master's Level training in the UK, Paul returned to facilitate the development of UMN's strategies and plans in *Disaster Management* (January 2006-January 2008). Once these had begun to be successfully implemented, Paul handed over the reins to his Nepali colleagues. He then began a focussed involvement with UMN's National Partner *Nepal Christian Relief Services* (NCRS) to whom he is presently seconded.



Paul Wright (extreme left) with UMN and NCRS friends

Thanksgiving Event Held for Transition Partners

To mark the end of UMN's association with partner institutions and their official transition, a thanksgiving event was held at UMN Thapathali on July 11, 2008.

The programme commenced with a special thanksgiving song by the UMN Choir, followed by UMN Executive Director Jennie Collins' short summary of the history of the transition process and the soon-to-be-transitioned partners and secondees.

Letters of Appreciation were handed to representatives from Kathmandu University, Butwal Technical Institute, Gandaki College of Engineering Sciences, BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, Patan Hospital, and transition and seconded staff.

departing staff and partner organisation representatives also shared about their partnership experiences. The programme was attended by Thapathali-based staff and UMN secondees.



"UMN's parmership with you all has helped us realise our mutual vision of serving this country for God's glory."

Jennie Collins, UMN Executive Director, to transition partners and staff

Updates

- The UMN Hospitals' Executive Committee (HEC) has been formed for the management of the two UMN mission hospitals in Tansen and Okhaldhunga. A new support office for these hospitals in Kathmandu started functioning independently on 16 July 2008 a consequence of inconclusive negotiations between UMN and the Government of Nepal and the completion of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between UMN and Human Development and Community Service.
- UMN Executive Director Jennie Collins inaugurated the new emergency department building at *Tansen Mission Hospital* on 16 July 2008 in the presence of government and local community members and hospital staff.
- ☐ Mid-July 2008 saw the end of the partnership agreement between UMN and *Patan Hospital* after 26 years of UMN involvement. During this period, the hospital grew at a rapid pace and is now currently setting up a medical school, to be called the *Patan Academy of Health Science*.
- A new Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UMN and the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training on May 12, 2008 in order to continue UMN's cooperation with Tansen Nursing School until July 2009.

UMN Executive Director Jennie Collins and Programme Director Shaha Bahadur Gurung launched UMN's environment-friendly Eco-bag in the presence of nearly 100 staff members

The bag is produced by UMN's Climate Change Coordination Committee and is a UMN initiative to help reduce the environmental dangers of plastic bag consumption.

on June 13, 2008.

For information and support for UMN's Climate Change Work, please write to marketing@umn.org.np



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Donations towards UMN's work can be made by bank transfer or by posting a cheque (payable to United Mission to Nepal) to one of our banks (details below) or directly to Finance Team, UMN, P.O.Box 126, Kathmandu, Nepal. If you remit funds directly to our banks, please notify us by letter or email fin@umn.org.np

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IBAN Code:

GB24 SCBL 6091 99 10078177 (Sterling) GB75 SCBL 6091 99 10615512 (Euro) GB37 SCBL 6091 99 10385142 (US

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Account Name: United Mission to Nepal

Account Numbers: 1010078177 (Sterling) 1010615512 (Euro) 1010385142 (US Dollar)

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Account Number: 010488798-01 (Nepal Rupee) 010488798-51 (US Dollar)

Giving On-Line by Debit or Credit Card

The Charities Aid Foundation has sponsored a web page at www.cafonline.org where you can give using Debit and Credit cards. In the UK, this will also ensure that your gift is tax efficient.