

Number 1, July 1991

UMN News

United Mission to Nepal



THERE'S POWER !

**Andhi Khola turbines spin
after ten years construction**

UMN GOES WEST

New project in Jajarkot !

HOSPITALS SERVE MORE

Will they survive economically ?



ED's column

Stability and Change

Some things stay the same. Some things change.

Recently a Nepali government official who had observed Christian agencies at work in development and disaster relief in various parts of the world asked me, "Where do these people get the sense of duty to do such social service?"

I replied that it was not a sense of duty at all, but a sense of gratitude. They had experienced the love and grace of God and thus their sharing through service was an offering of thanksgiving.

Other government officials have been first puzzled, then skeptical, and finally, when convinced that it was true, appreciative of the fact that UMN professional development experts are all volunteers, with only a subsistence allowance provided by the sponsoring body in their home country.

Why do they do this work? For many reasons, but a basic value of UMN is service, following the example of Jesus. The motivation is a sense of gratitude. That is basic, one of the things that stay the same, that provides stability when there is change all around.

Some things do change.

The environment in which we serve with the people of Nepal has changed in many ways in the past year. We have been privileged to live through a revolution that produced a new constitution and a newly elected parliament.

There will be more changes as the new government attempts to fulfill the promises of democracy. New laws must be passed to implement the new constitution. Many will be watching especially the legislation that will spell out the practical meaning of the human rights guaranteed in the constitution, including increased religious liberty.

UMN is responding to this challenge of change. Last November the Board of Directors stated how they believe UMN should work in Nepal in the future. The statement affirms the long-standing intention to train Nepalis for the management of our work.

We will support existing and new Nepali organizations that effectively enhance Nepali capacity for development, particularly in the non-government sector. In the future this could include church groups, according to the clause in the new constitution allowing religious groups to organize to carry out their work.

We believe that the constant of UMN, the motivation for service, will provide the basis for creative and productive change.

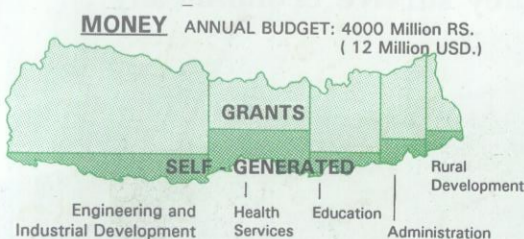
Edgar Metzler
Executive Director

**U
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A co-operation between 39 Christian Organisations from 18 countries

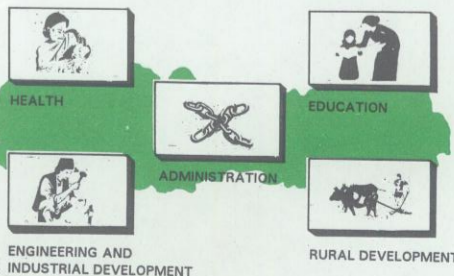


This publication is intended for a general public to provide news and views about UMN. It will be published twice a year. Those on the mailing list for the former "News and Prayer Letter" will receive an abbreviated version of that along with this new item. Please send your comments to the Editor,
Olof Konneback,
UMN Information Officer.



(UMN budgets include only direct project expenses. Expatriate personnel-support costs are the responsibility of each sending organisation.)

PEOPLE



300 expatriate expert volunteers are working together with **2000 Nepalis** in more than **35 UMN-related projects**

UMNNews,
Number 1, July 1991

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Published by the
UNITED MISSION to NEPAL
P.O. Box 126, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 977-1-212131, Fax: 225559

Training Role emphasised by Government

In a new political situation in Nepal, what will be the role of UMN and other International Non-Government Organisations ?

Government officials, invited to UMN headquarters, assure that contribution from these organisations will be welcomed also in the future.



Mr Y K Silwal, Additional Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, was the signer of the UMN five-year agreement last November. In an informal discussion 6 March, he reaffirmed that Nepal will continue to need and welcome development assistance from foreign organisations, provided that assistance includes a strong emphasis on training Nepalis to carry on the development work.

On 23 May, Dr Shambhu Simkhada, head of the Social Service National Co-ordinating Committee (SSNCC), was invited to UMN headquarters along with 40 representatives from various International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs). At that meeting, Dr Simkhada explained that it is not yet clear how the new Government will want to co-ordinate NGO activity, but it is expected that there will be a larger scope for NGOs in the future.

UMN is monitoring and investigating the possibility that church groups might be able to register as NGOs in the future and work together with UMN in development projects.



UMN moves into New Area

Another geographical location has been added to the UMN map as a new non-formal education programme started in Jajarkot district in West Nepal.

The agreement for the first three and a half years was signed on 12 April, enabling UMN to start literacy classes in an area with a literacy rate as low as fourteen percent. (The national average is about 35 percent.)

No other overseas-funded aid organizations are working in the area. Apart from helping adults between 15 and 45 years to learn to read, write and calculate, the aim of the programme is to develop social awareness and the skills necessary for positive community development.

The project director, Dr. Bob Gsellman and Krishna Neupane, senior consultant in Non-Formal Education, are currently establishing the project headquarters in Khalanga Bazaar. The staff will consist of 5 expatriates and 18 Nepalis. The budget for the first phase is calculated to 4.7 million rupees.

Democracy brings New Demands

Labour unrest has characterized the first year of democratic government in Nepal. In Butwal all work in two of the UMN-related industries was stopped for two months. Shorter disputes have occurred in some other UMN projects.

In a new sense of freedom, various demands have been raised in places of work all over the country. Through sit-down actions, newly formed unions of civil servants and other groups of employees have demonstrated their desires.

The April-May strike in Butwal Engineering Works (BEW) and Nepal Hydro and Electric (NHE) delayed construction schedules in Jhimruk and rural electrification in Andhi Khola. The Butwal Technical Institute had to close and the trainees were sent home.

The interim Government has tried to convince workers on all levels that big immediate raises of salaries are not possible.

The general policy in UMN-related projects and companies is to offer wages and benefits in level with the national average for similar jobs.

Changes for Butwal Factories



Because of changed market conditions, the Butwal Wood Industries (BWI) closed in April.

BWI produced high quality furniture and other wood products. A number of similar industries have started in Nepal during recent years and it was not advisable to invest the money required to make BWI commercially viable.

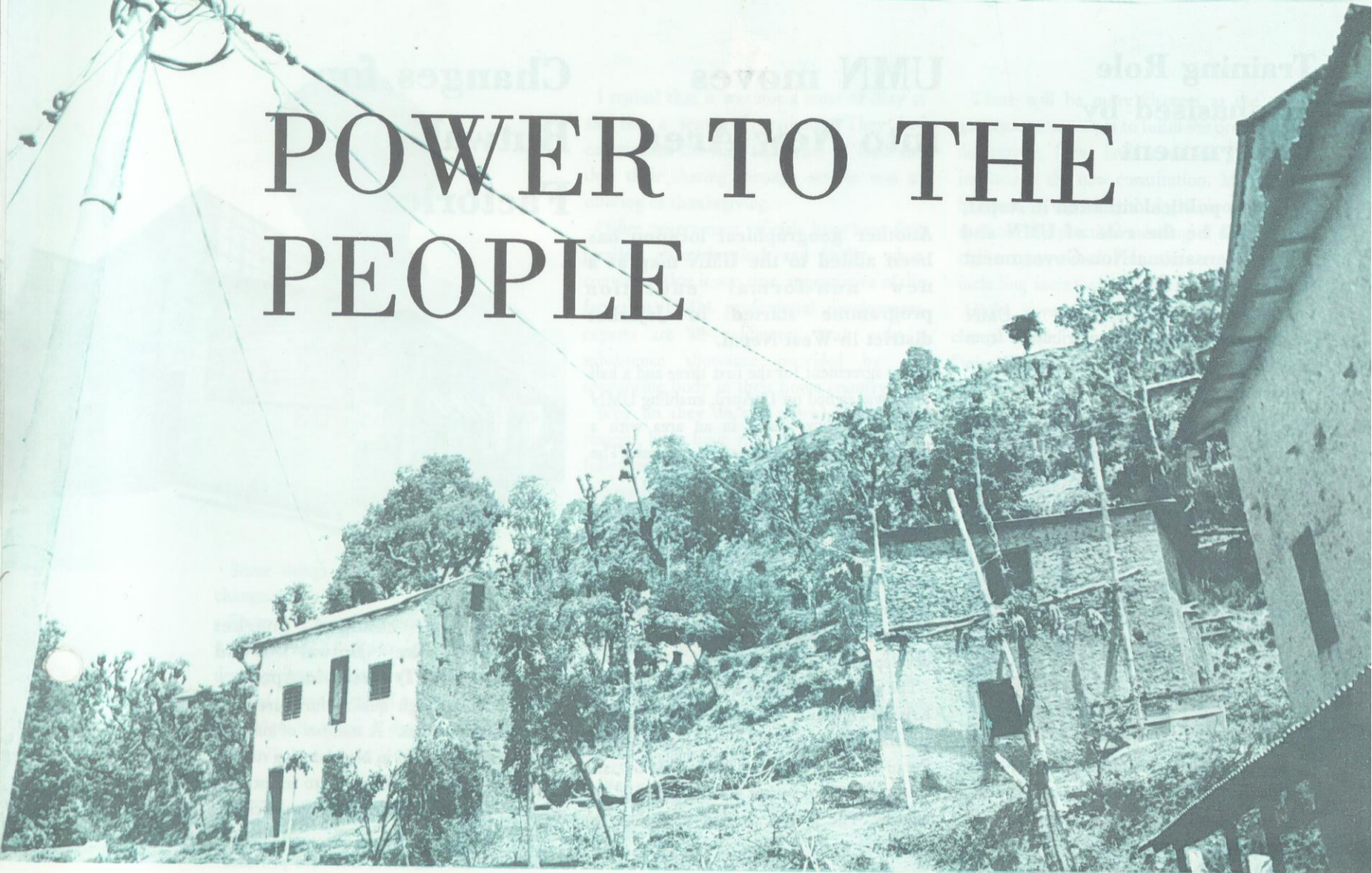
Since the start in 1978, BWI has provided on-the-job training to students at Butwal Technical Institute. The emphasis on training limited productivity.

Half of the 20 employees have found work in other UMN-related companies. The rest are seeking alternative employment.

Another UMN-related industry, the nearby-located Butwal Plywood Factory, is being leased out for five years to a local plywood manufacturer, due to difficulties in obtaining raw materials. The forestry programme linked to the plywood factory is not affected by the change.



POWER TO THE PEOPLE



Andhi Khola is now producing electricity. After ten years of construction work, the 5 MW hydro power station has begun to provide energy for lights, cooking etc. A significant phase of the work in Andhi Khola is completed.

On 10 April, following six months of testing and trimming the generators, the nearby villages of Galyang and Aserdi were able to use "locally produced" power for the first time.

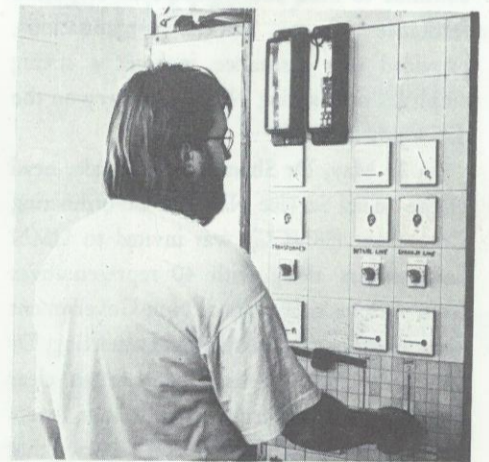
Soon afterwards, the lines already built to the district centers Syangja (50 km North) and Tansen (50 km South) were joined, also enabling the power house in Andhi Khola to feed the national grid.

Turbines, generators and switch gear are all second hand, representing a simple but reliable technology, appropriate for Nepal. They have been donated or bought cheap and brought all the way from Norway.

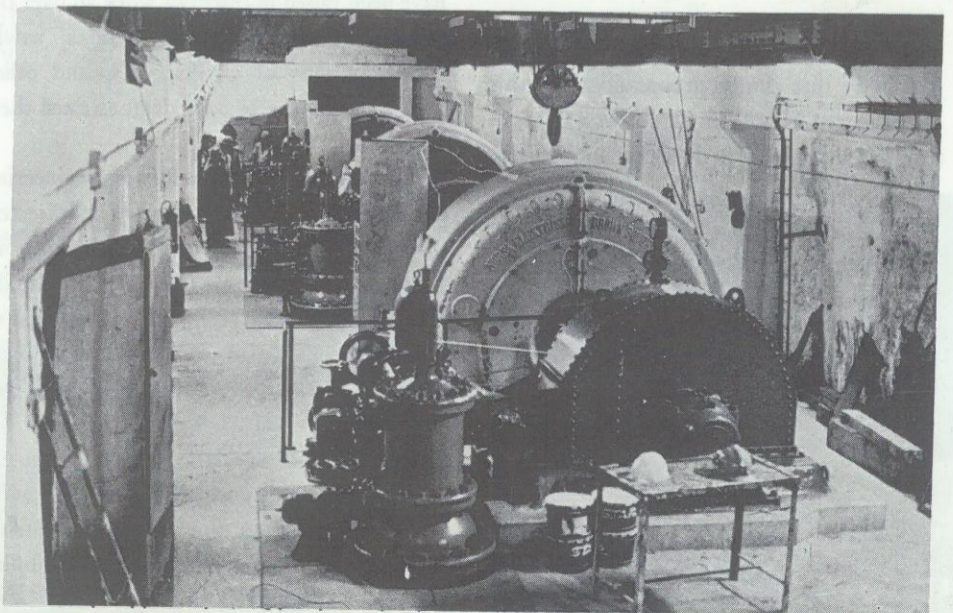
"The installation work may have been four or five months delayed, due to some problems with the machinery", says Egil Hagen of Butwal Power Company (BPC). "The turbines were overhauled in Butwal, but there were some minor problems with the generators, which we had to fix here. The oldest is seventy years old!"

From the middle of July, the

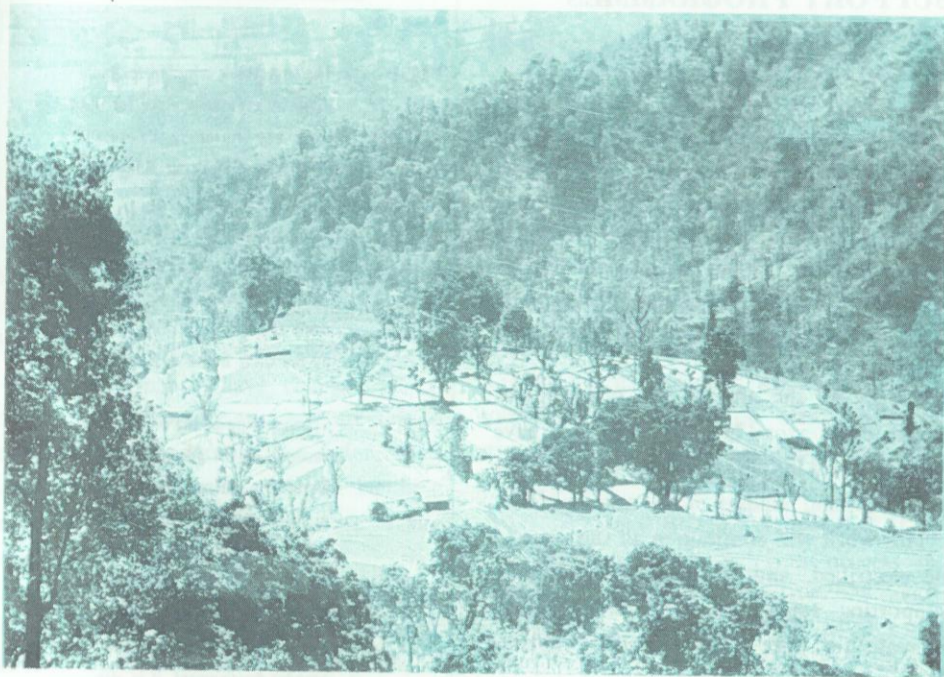
commissioning of the Andhi Khola power plant has come to an end. Thereafter it is expected to be an economically independent unit, run by BPC Nepali staff and financed by selling its own electricity.



Egil Hagen connecting the Syangja line



The power house



Fields in Galyang, irrigated for the first time

EXCESS WATER USED FOR IRRIGATION

A unique use of excess water from the power plant, has dramatically changed the prospects of farming in the area.

The irrigation programme, with nine kilometers of irrigation canals, a water distribution co-operative and a land redistribution scheme, tries to meet a major need of the Nepali farmers - and to do it in a fair way.

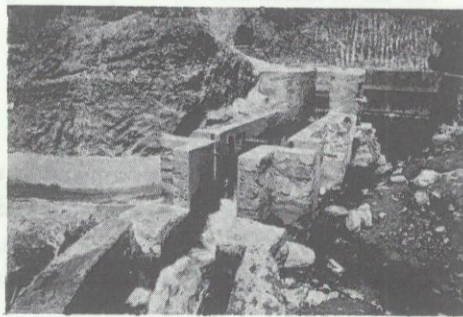
"The idea was to find ways to distribute the benefits of the irrigation system more widely than to only those farmers who have substantial amounts of land", says Steve Erickson, who has been in charge of the programme.

A crucial part has been the forming of AKWUA, Andhi Khola Water User's Association. All 1,300 households in the area, whether they have land or not, have been invited to be members of the association and to earn water shares by contributing labour into the canal building. Five days of work, or 165 rupees, earns one of 25 000 shares.

Distribution of the water will be according to each family's number of shares - and each family can purchase only a limited number.

"This means that people with little land, or even without land, will receive more benefits from this irrigation programme than from traditional systems. The shares a person does not need on his own land can be sold, rented out or used by him on someone else's land", Steve Erickson explains.

Another important part of the programme is the land redistribution condition. A certain amount of land has been defined as necessary for self sufficiency. Those who have more than that have to sell 10 % of their "extra" land at a fixed price to AKWUA, which will then resell it to those who have less.



Irrigation secondary canal off-take

Altogether, the irrigation programme will give many of the marginal farmers a new chance. Their small plots of land will be much more productive. Many of them have already started to grow rice for the first time.

"In the beginning it was hard to convince people to take part in such a new approach", says Steve Erickson. "But now that some water distribution has begun, everybody is committed to follow the benefit distribution strategy."

Devi Prasad Paudyal, the present co-ordinator, agrees with this analysis: "Although landowners complain about selling land, the organisation is one that they themselves have developed", he says.

So far only a tenth of the total system has been opened. But digging continues, and by September 1993 - after about 125 000 man-days of work - all should be completed, giving water to 282 hectares of small plots of land on the hillsides of Nepal and giving hope for the future to the villagers of a previously food-deficit area.

HOW TO USE ELECTRICITY IN THE VILLAGE ?

UMN-related Butwal Power Company (BPC) does not only want to sell electricity. Another aim is to help villagers take advantage of the electricity in a safe, productive and environment-friendly way.

So far, a rural electrification pilot project, with 450 installations in two villages, has been completed. Seven motivators have been engaged to help and educate the new consumers. In one of the villages, a users association has taken great responsibility in helping to build and run the system.

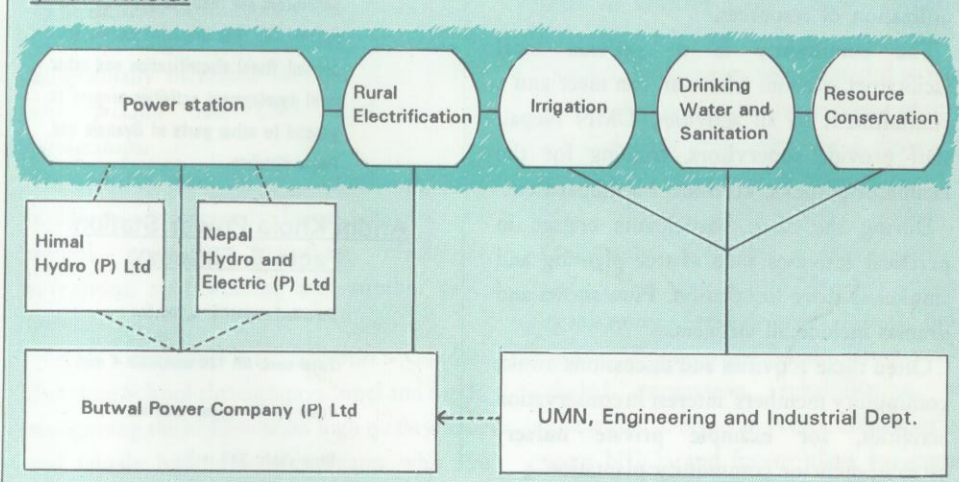
The electricity is mainly used for lights. About a hundred households have invested in the special low-wattage electrical cookers. Industrial applications have not been realized yet.

"The charging system is simple and cheap. In order to keep the costs low - both for producers and consumers - it tries to spread out the use of electricity more evenly around the clock", says Ravindra Bhandari, BPC Distribution Supervisor.

Most of the households subscribe to a certain load, which means that access to a maximum of e.g. 250 Watts costs 70 rupees per month - regardless of how many hours a day the power is used. No meter is needed, but a cut-out system prohibits exceeding the subscribed watts.

Almost all materials needed are manufactured by UMN-related organizations ▶

Andhi Khola:



in Nepal, thereby facilitating future maintenance.

Another important feature is promoting electrical cooking. The set of three differently sized cookers has been developed by UMN workers in the Development and Consulting Service in Butwal. The hope is that electrical cooking will help to preserve the Nepali forests, as well as people's health.

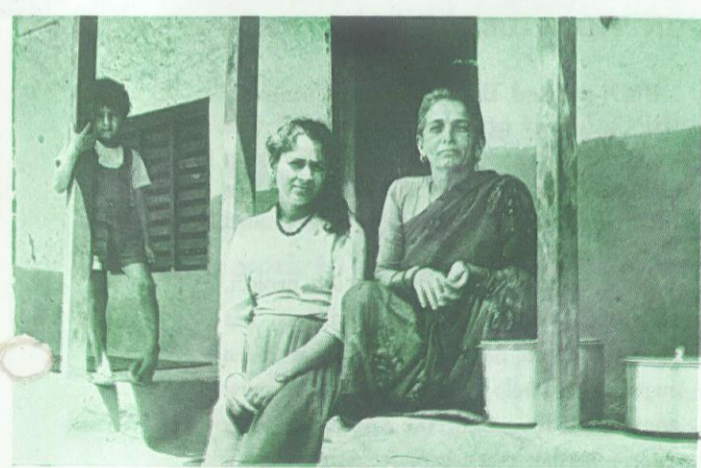
ELECTRIC COOKERS MAKE LIFE EASIER

Rada Bhattarai had to walk for miles, up and down the hills every day, in search of firewood. When her health broke down, she could not continue and the family only survived with great difficulty.

Now, with electricity in the village, most of the food is prepared in low-wattage electrical cookers, which has made life much easier for Rada and her daughter Sita.

"We have been using the cookers a year and I think it is working alright", says Rada Bhattarai, mother of ten children.

"At night, we heat up water in the largest cooker. Then it doesn't take long to cook rice and lentils in the morning."



Mrs Bhattarai appreciates simpler cooking

But the Bhattarai family cannot completely avoid using firewood:

"I have tried to fry vegetables for 'tarkari', but it took a long time to heat the oil and the smell was not good."

Apart from simpler and cleaner cooking, the house has electric light, which means that the children are not afraid at night any longer.

However, the cost is a strain for the family, which has to live on the husband's earnings as a tailor in the bazaar.

Some of the Bhattarai's neighbours have decided they cannot afford to use more than 25 Watts, or one bulb. But even 16 rupees a month may be expensive - if you don't have any money.

"Many of those who can still get firewood have not invested in electrical cookers yet", explains Mrs Bhattarai.

SUPPORT PROGRAMMES DEVELOP LOCAL RESOURCES

"The drinking water and resource conservation programmes are important means to support rural electrification", says project director Nancy Molin. "These programmes help communities to develop their own resources and improve their quality of life."

Already in the area of the power plant construction, a total of 2,000 households have been involved in literacy classes, tree planting campaigns and building of safe water systems.

"This work will continue in all the areas to be electrified, and we will start work in supporting small-scale rural industries to increase the area's productivity", explains Nancy Molin.

Drinking Water and Sanitation

In this programme, communities are encouraged to plan, build and maintain their own drinking water and sanitation systems.

The village committee is responsible for all local materials, labour and maintenance. UMN provides pipes and pumps, and gives maintenance training to two community members.

Before the construction starts, each household has to build a simple latrine. A new arch concrete toilet slab has been tested and found appropriate and extremely popular.

The use of drama and microscope viewing makes the sanitation education very effective.

Resource Conservation

"Literacy classes for women are the best way to involve local people in soil, water and forest conservation", says Umesh Lama, Programme co-ordinator, a native of East Nepal.

Through these classes, the Resource Conservation Programme involves communities in education about wise utilization of resources.

The community is to provide local facilitators, a room where all can meet and a commitment to all activities. UMN Nepali staff provide supervisors, training for the facilitators, books, kerosine, blackboard etc.

During the class, participants engage in practical activities such as tree planting and smokeless stove installation. Film shows and dramas include all villagers.

Often these activities and discussions awake community members' interest in conservation activities, for example private nursery establishment or community plantation.

The HISTORY

- 1961 The first paper referring to Andhi Khola as a possible place for UMN work was written by the present BPC General Manager, Odd Hoftun.
- 1978 The suggestion to build a hydro power station, at the place where the Andhi Khola and Kali Gandaki rivers come close to each other, is approved by the UMN Board of Directors.
- 1981 The financing of the project is secured, as the governmental Norwegian aid association, NORAD, promises to support the project.
- 1982 An agreement with the government of Nepal is signed. The building period begins. In order to try to achieve a broader development, it is also decided to include rural development programmes based on community needs identified by the local people.
- 1986 Building of dam and intake starts.
- 1987 A water system for Galyang Bazaar and the power station construction site is completed. Rural development programmes are consolidated into three: Drinking water and sanitation, Irrigation, Resource conservation. Under the latter, a programme of functional adult literacy classes is launched.
- 1989 Installations for the rural electrification pilot project are made. The villages are connected to the national grid through the line to Tansen.
- 1990 UMN-related Himal Hydro (P) Ltd., which has been the contractor for all tunnel excavation and civil constructions, finishes its work and many of the expatriate personnel leave. Mechanical/electrical installations in the power house are begun by another UMN-related company, Nepal Hydro and Electric.
- 1991 After half a year of testing, the generators are ready to produce power. The first irrigation canals are opened. Rural electrification and other rural development activities prepare to expand to other parts of Syangja and Palpa districts.

Andhi Khola Power Station Facts & Figures:

- Installed capacity: 5,100 kw
- Total cost: NR 120 mill./USD 4 mill.
- Total tunnel length: 2.36 km
- Drop shaft: 245 m

How to Benefit from Cash Flow ?

The rebuilding of the Okhaldhunga hospital after the big earthquake three years ago has given income possibilities to a lot of people. But it has also caused a major change in the local workers cash economy...

Consuming habits have changed. Local teashops are prospering as people are able to spend much more money than before. But, since people are not used to handling excessive cash, only a few are really benefiting from the cash flow.

For some families the situation has become very difficult. The wife is left alone to do all the farm work - while the husband spends his money, often on alcohol and gambling.

Moreover, building activities will not last forever. Many may then find themselves thrown back into circumstances more difficult than ever before.

In order to limit the negative consequences of the social-economic changes brought from 'outside', a four-afternoon seminar has been offered to the workers. Through discussions, games and role-plays, the workers were provided with basic information on money and its use. They were also encouraged to reflect upon the changes in their lives and to make plans for the future.

"From the attentive and sometimes excited participation, we take it that the seminars dealt with real life issues", says Thomas Doehne and Badri Bastakoti, who has been leading the seminars in Okhaldhunga.

Silver Jubilee at Gandaki School

For the first time, seven post-SLC students have started working for the international "Cambridge O-Level" exam at Gandaki Boarding School, which celebrates its Silver Jubilee this year.

The number of students at Nepal's first, and still only, English Medium Regional School has gradually increased over the years and is now around 500. One third are on scholarships.

In order to meet the expansion needs, new buildings are presently being added to the school grounds, including classroom extensions, staff housing and another girls' hostel.

UMN continues to support Gandaki Boarding School through personnel and funds, recognising the need to train high quality male and female high school graduates who can compete nationally and internationally.

Strategy for Women's Development

How to raise the awareness about women's situation in Nepal ?

Thirty seven women and men from various aid agencies shared their experiences in an intense five-day workshop, organised by UMN's Advisory Group on Nepali Women.

Women's development is a process of changing structures, institutions and ideologies at all levels. The strategy of empowerment, worked out at the workshop, suggest the formation of women's groups as the main vehicles of change.

Lack of access to information on legal rights, negative social and religious customs and women's heavy work load are some of the areas that need to be challenged.

As a first result of the workshop, a survey on the number of women employees, compared with the total workforce at each level, will be conducted within UMN. ▶

International Drug Abuse Meeting

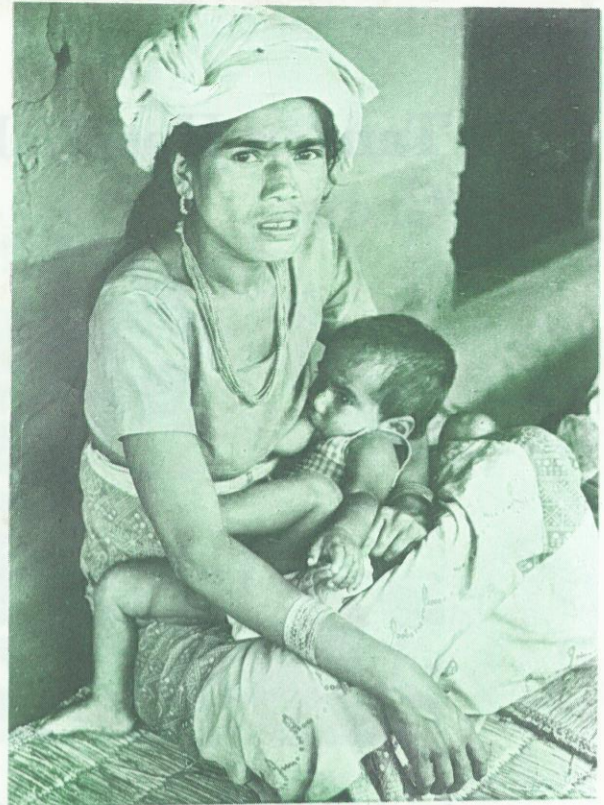
Drug abusers must be treated with dignity and respect. Optimism and hope should be the core of all communication to clients, families and the community.

These are two of the consensus statements worked out at a week-long meeting for NGOs with grassroot involvement in drug abuse prevention and rehabilitation work.

"We did not want the FORUM, as it was called, to be a conference in which learned experts spoke of esoteric intricacies and academic fine points", says the initiator and co-ordinator, Uli Kohler, who has been in charge of UMN's Drug Abuse Prevention Programme:

"Rather the meetings were intended to draw together and to address the problems of those who deal with drug users on a day-to-day basis."

The thirty participants from 24 organisations, who met in Kathmandu 28 April - 3 May, represented Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) from Nepal, India, Pakistan, S Lanka and Britain. Issues tackled included prevention, rehabilitation, the implications of being an NGO, collaborations among NGOs and future plans for mutual support among FORUM members.



The workshop, held in Dhulikhel 29 April - 3 May, was greatly appreciated by the participants, who were inspired by the skillful leadership of Kamala Bhasin from FAO, New Delhi.

Technical School enters New Era

The opening of the new Assembly Hall by Prime Minister, K.P. Bhattarai on 24 April marked the completion of the physical building programme at Karnali Technical School in Jumla.



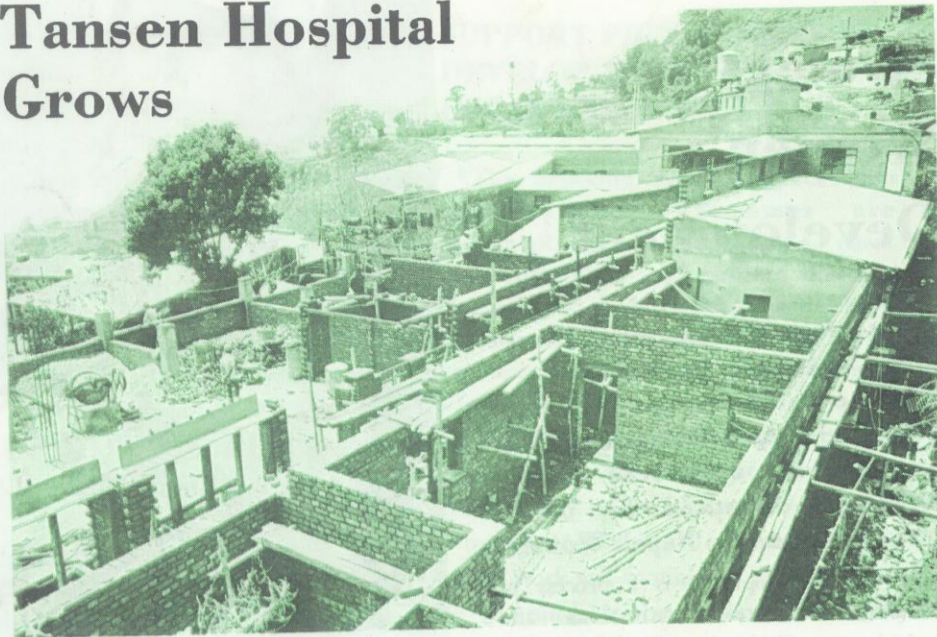
Two weeks later, UMN's education secretary, David McConkey signed a new four-year agreement with the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training.

The ten year old school provides training in health, agriculture and construction to 160 boys and girls from all regions of Karnali Zone. Ninety-five percent of the former graduates have found jobs and are working.

The cost of the building programme is approximately 28 million rupees. Over the next four years, a total of 13 million rupees will be spent to assist primarily in Curriculum and Materials Development, Forestry work, and Scholarship assistance for training of KTS staff. In addition, UMN continues to provide expatriate training personnel.

front page
Page 2

Tansen Hospital Grows



An extensive building programme at the heavily used Tansen Hospital will, among other things, improve the inpatient's service through 25 new beds.

"The outpatient department was rebuilt six years ago, which enabled us to see up to 100,000 outpatients a year, where we have had to put a limit", says the Hospital Director, Dr Risto Gobius.

"Because surgical patients have been occupying most of the beds, the most urgent need now is to expand the medical ward. Then we will have a total of 127 beds, in which more than 5,000 inpatients can be treated yearly", Dr Gobius explains.

The administrative department has also moved to a larger and more appropriate locality. At the same time it has been possible to make other improvements such as a new operation theatre, enlargement of the maternity ward and better premises for the sterile supply department, the laundry and the hospital canteen.

"Hopefully, this will be finished at the end of the year", says Risto Gobius, and he adds: "These changes give room for some other changes, which we hope to have completed by the middle of next year, for example moving the pharmacy and the tuberculosis clinic, which will give room for an enlargement of the emergency department with 24-hour staffing."

Hospital Funds need Strengthening

Through four hospitals, UMN provides medical care to 17,000 inpatients and 300,000 outpatients every year - most of them unable to pay the full cost themselves.

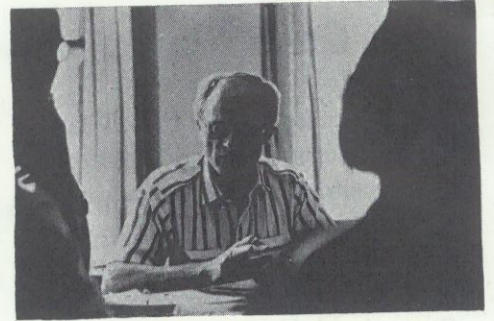
"The need is enormous and, unfortunately, we find it difficult to raise enough funds for this ministry carried out by our hospital staff", says UMN treasurer Lynn Miller.

A "Medical Assistance Fund" has been established to ensure that the hospitals are able to provide care for patients who cannot afford to pay for their treatment. Personnel in the hospital's social services office help to ensure that those most needy are served.

Lynn Miller strongly urges UMN member organisations and individual supporters of UMN to contribute to the "Medical Assistance Fund":

"Our hospitals are needed. The expanding preventive health work on the village community level requires the referral services our hospitals provide."

A few questions to...



Jorgen Norgaard Pedersen,
UMN's president since November 1990:

Age: 51

Family: Norwegian wife, three children: 22, 20, 18 years old.

Job: General Secretary of the Danish Santal Mission. Earlier missionary in the Middle East for 10 years.

Other interests: Sports, particularly football.

Why is UMN needed in Nepal?

Because we are working for the development of the whole human being, including his/hers spiritual needs. We are also representing the world-wide church, which needs to maintain channels for mutual inspiration with Nepal and its people.

What are UMN's weak points?

In a large organisation, there's always a risk that a gap occurs between the administrative leadership and those who do the work in the projects. This is an area we continuously need to pay attention to.

Names in the News

In this years Nursing Examinations, the best result in the country was produced by Nilam Devi Bhandari of Lalitpur Nursing Campus. The third position was also taken by the UMN-started campus, through Sapana Sakya.

Kevin Gill, UMN teacher in Gandak. Boarding School, Pokhara, has been awarded a prize by Nepal Ministry of Education and Culture for publishing a text book entitled "Physics Secondary Level".

Dr Helen Huston, Amp Pipal, has received an award for her "extraordinary contribution in the Medical and Health sector". At the same occasion UMN nutritionist **Miriam Krantz** was awarded a prize for authoring the book "Child Nutrition and Health". These awards are granted by the Nepal Medical Association Medical Trust.



Ms
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