

Number 4, September 1993

UMN ews

United Mission to Nepal



NON-FORMAL EDUCATION


A thousand evening classes will double the literacy rate in Jajarkot

DISASTER RELIEF

UMN involved in relief and rehabilitation for flood and landslide victims

MENTAL HEALTH

The millions of mentally ill are Nepal's forgotten people



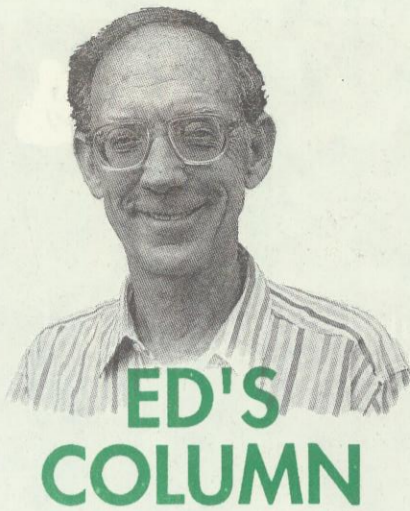
Education for Transformation

A common assumption about development is that education is the foundation needed to build a modern society. But what kind of education? For whom? For what purpose?

If development means only economic advancement, then education should lead to a job and the means to produce goods and services that will enlarge the gross national product.

But what if the goal is something more than "development?" What if the vision is for the total transformation of a society, building on its strengths but introducing new learning, ideas, skills, attitudes and insights that will release the full potential of all members of the society in a context of social justice? That is a vision that calls for educational goals and strategies that encompass all aspects of the human personality and community - physical, intellectual, spiritual, cultural and social.

If we think about education that aims toward the realization of this larger vision, what are the implications for Nepal?



One is that educational goals and methods must grow out of local soil. The failure of foreign models is all too apparent throughout the developing world. The older methods of traditional education imported from the West have been questioned and are being replaced in their countries of origin.

Traditional education in a country like Nepal may also not be of much relevance for development. Few would argue that Sanskrit will improve the life of Nepali peasants.

(Although I did read recently that Sanskrit is the ideal language for computerization because of its consistency!). Rote learning designed to pass examinations to get a piece of paper entitling the owner to a job (hopefully) can hardly be called education.

Education is the way we cope with life, not merely surviving but developing our God-given potential, a process not limited to the time and place of formal schooling, but throughout life. The benefits of nonformal education are much more than learning to read and write. The development of a sense of worth and self-sufficiency may be the basis for new patterns of observing, interacting and learning, which will lead to personal and community growth throughout a lifetime.

Jesus, one of the greatest teachers of all time once said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Wisdom is more than head knowledge. Truth is also the total way we live. The goal of education should be toward that transformation, for individuals and the nation.

Edgar Metzler
Executive Director

United Mission to Nepal

A cooperative effort between the people of Nepal and 39 Christian organisations from 18 countries



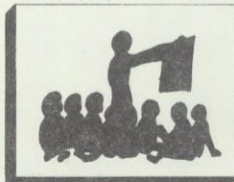
HEALTH SERVICES

Cares for the sick and promotes health through hospitals, community health and education programmes



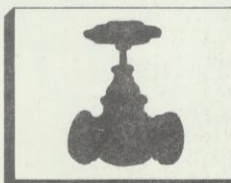
EDUCATION SERVICES

Assists in the development of education at different levels through formal and non-formal methods/training



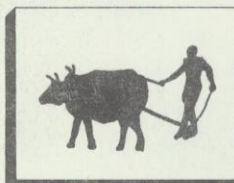
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Facilitates private sector industrial development, appropriate technology dissemination and technical training



RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Assists rural communities in their efforts to improve their quality of life through awareness building, non-formal education/training and technical support



Expatriate volunteer professionals from many countries, working together with more than 2,000 Nepalis in 35 UMN-related projects

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For photos, please contact the UMN Information Office.

Photos : Olof Konneback, except
cover : NFE Support Office
Pg 3 : Heinrich Pedersen
Pg 4 : Michael Brown (top)
David Soderstrom (bottom)
Pg 7 : Mental Health Pgm.

Nepal Hit by Worst Flood Disaster for Many Years



The monsoon rains struck Nepal this year with a disaster not seen for many years. Floods and landslides have left thousands of people without homes and crops, necessary for their survival. UMN is involved in relief work in the worst hit areas along the border to India.

Officials estimate that 15,000 homes are completely destroyed. Well over a thousand dead bodies have been recovered so far. In total, more than half a million people are affected by the floods.

At least 160 bridges and more than 300 kilometers of roads were washed away, cutting off all road transports of basic supplies to Kathmandu and other places for a month. One of the largest hydro power plants was severely damaged, causing further shortage of electricity.

UMN responded to this extraordinary situation by providing 150,000 rupees worth of medicine to the government within two days. Other involvements include distribution of 2,000 family sets of clothes, blankets and cooking utensils and 500 plastic tarpaulins in Rautahat district.

A medical team from Patan Hospital and CDHP worked for two weeks in Sarlahi. Various services have also been given by UMN staff working in affected areas, especially Okhaldhunga and Dhading.

"We are grateful to our supporters from all over the world who have made this assistance possible through prompt and generous donations", says the UMN treasurer, Myles Walburn, pointing out that the relief and rehabilitation fund received 70,000 US dollars in less than two months time.

"But rehabilitation will be a long and arduous task", believes Myles Walburn. "To what extent UMN will be involved is not clear yet, but we will definitely do what we can in our project areas. The cost for minimal

restoration in Okhaldhunga and Dhading only is estimated to USD 45,000, which means all contributions to our rehabilitation fund will be much needed also in the future."

UMN's Heinrich Pedersen has been working in Rautahat district as an international observer:

"It is hard to imagine the power of a flooding river. A three meter high flood in the middle of the night took everything in its way, houses, trees, bridges, roads... In the district capital, the water level was 1.5 meters above normal for two days. When the water was gone, the planted fields were just covered with mud and sand.



Heinrich Pedersen and Dr Jah, from the local Red Cross, overseeing the distribution of relief packages.

The worst affected are those living close to the river. They are poor people who often migrate back and forth over the border to India. But they are not properly registered anywhere, which makes a fair and equal distribution of help very difficult.

Another problem is to make sure that the relief assistance primarily reaches those who are specifically affected by the extraordinary situation this year. We have been working through the local Disaster Relief Committee and the Red Cross and they are trying their best to handle these difficult judgments. But it is important to make the distribution phase as short as possible in order to start a more long-term rehabilitation work."



Mick Langford is the UMN project director in Okhaldhunga. Here is his eyewitness report:

"In the early morning hours people moved from house to house, wondering where they would be safe from the landslides they feared. Eight people went to a recently built house in the village of Lamedada, hoping it would not be in the line of landslide or that it would be more resistant than others.

Before 4 am the landslides began as sudden, destructive torrents of earth and mud. In place after place the soil reached a critical weight, giving it a force greater than the friction holding it to the hillsides. Trees, grasses, all was useless as millions of tons slid down steep slopes at high speed, pushing and destroying everything in its path: forests, house size boulders, fields, sheds, houses, animals and people. One huge tree, well over 100 years old with a massive root system, was uprooted and thrown 300 yards.

Even new houses were no refuge. The eight people huddled in the Lamedada house perished, smothered in a roar of suffocating mud. Some of them would have been safe in their own homes, but died where they sought refuge." ●



AS DUSK FALLS ON THE VILLAGE, WOMEN FIND A NEW DAWN

UMN's largest Non-Formal Education programme is now in full swing. The ten-year programme specially targets poor farmers, women and low-caste people in one of Nepal's least developed districts.

Six nights a week for nine months, a thousand students in 62 classes in three village areas have learned to read, write and do simple calculations.

But not only that: They have constructed 400 toilets and 600 kitchen gardens. They have repaired roads and water taps. They have installed smokeless stoves and learned how to make rehydration solution and super flour weening food, as well as other community development activities.

Jajarkot district has no motorable roads and has had very little development influence. The literacy rate for women is under one (1) percent! Most communities lack, not only adequate schools, but also basic understanding of sanitation, water and health problems.

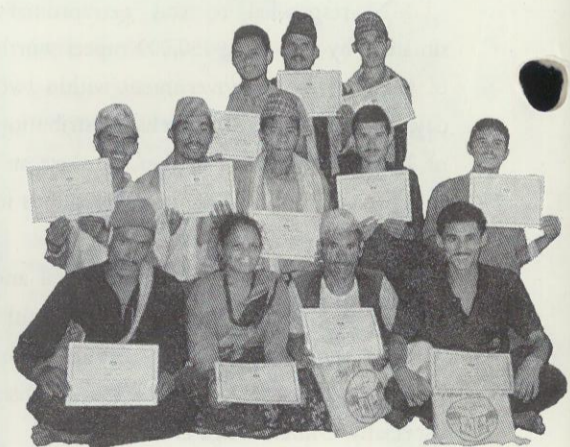
"Our intention is to run 1,000 NFE classes

within the ten-year agreement period, increasing the literacy rate in the district from 14 to 30 percent as a direct result of the project", explains project director Bob Gsellman.

"More than a thousand local people will have received special training as facilitators and supervisors. And they remain as catalysts for change in their communities after the NFE work is finished."

The involvement in each community is limited to three years, the second year including a post-basic course and the third year being focused on community development activities.

Each year there will be twenty classes specially designed for young girls, 6-14 years of age. These girls have to work hard all day



and this will give them a chance to acquire a basic education, which will enable them to enter into grade three of primary school.

"Altogether, this makes the NFE-project in Jajarkot a very important and exciting challenge", says Mark Keller, director of the Education department. "Unfortunately we have not been able to secure the long-time funding yet, but I am sure many donors will want to participate now as the transformation results in Jajarkot are more visible." ●

STEEP AND SLIPPERY BUT
BREATH-TAKINGLY
BEAUTIFUL

Jajarkot is one of several "remote" UMN projects without motorable roads, which makes travelling a demanding task. Kath White of the NFE Support Office describes one of her trips in the Jajarkot area:

"It's an arduous walk, at first steeply uphill through cultivated fields of maize and ripening rice, then along narrow upland paths where the Magar tribespeople camp with their cattle over the monsoon months, then under a thick rainforest canopy where the swollen streams cascade in wonderful waterfalls of power over huge boulders, and finally into the pine forest on the ridge, enshrouded in thick mist.

From then on, it's mostly downhill - steep, slippery, leech-infested, but breath-takingly beautiful. It takes the local people, unladen, six or seven hours to walk the distance; with a full doko, it will take them eight or nine hours; it took me ten and a half.

By mid-afternoon we attained the high ridge point from whence you can look down on Jajarkot township on the left, and on the right, far down in the river valley, you can see Chaurjhari airstrip.

Just at that moment, as we paused to look down, a plane soared up from the airstrip, a tiny point of glinting silver. Within seconds it was over the encircling hills and lost to our sight, on its way to Nepalgunj eighteen minutes away.

I thought of the hours we had walked and the short distance it looked on any map, and then compared it with this apparently effortless soaring that transforms miles into minutes.

The young boy with me gave the commonplace plane scarcely a glance - yet he has never seen a bicycle or a car or a bus. The only wheels in his village are the wheels of the water mill and the tailor's hand-wound sewing machine..." ●

Left: After a three-week training, the local facilitators receive their certificate and are ready to start an NFE class in their home village.

Right: Shree Bhakta Subasi shows the draft of the new NFE methodology handbook.

NEW NFE HANDBOOK TESTED AT TRAINING WORKSHOP

The local facilitators and supervisors are key people in all non-formal education. UMN is developing a training methodology handbook, which will make their training more effective.

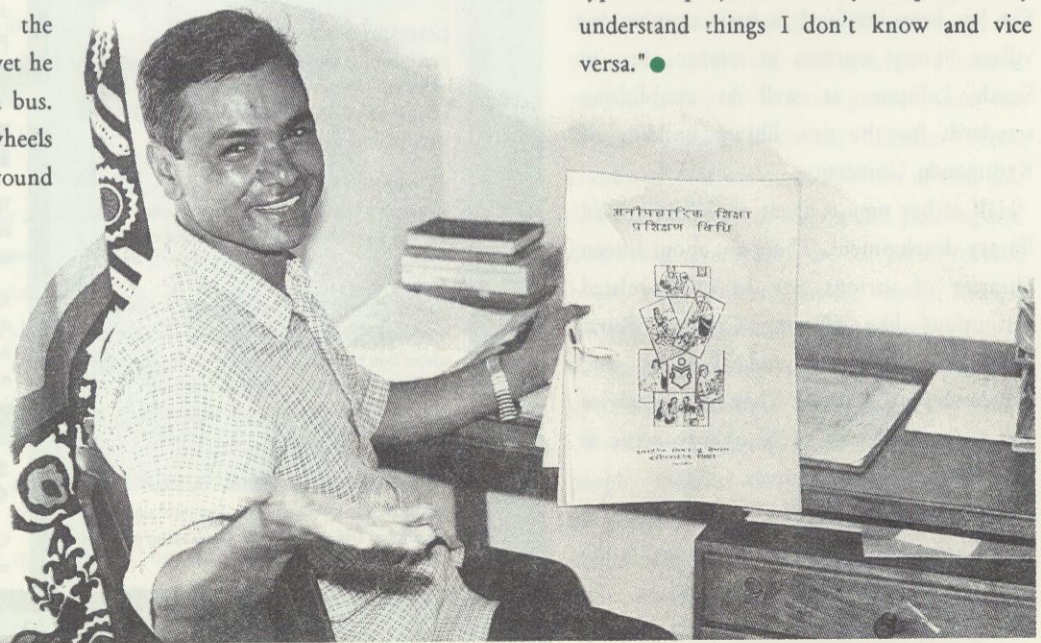
Shree Bhakta Subasi, senior consultant in the NFE support office, has brought together some of the techniques and methods, that have been used in the UMN programmes, but was not available in written form.

"You can't find many books like this in Nepali. We think it will be widely used both within and outside UMN", says Shree Bhakta Subasi.



The handbook was used for the first time - in draft form - at a "Training of Trainers Workshop" in Kathmandu in July. The nine-day workshop was designed for mid-level NFE supervisors and other interested to learn NFE methodology from all of the four UMN departments.

The handbook is now being circulated to NFE trainers in the projects. After receiving their comments, the final version will be properly printed at the end of the year.



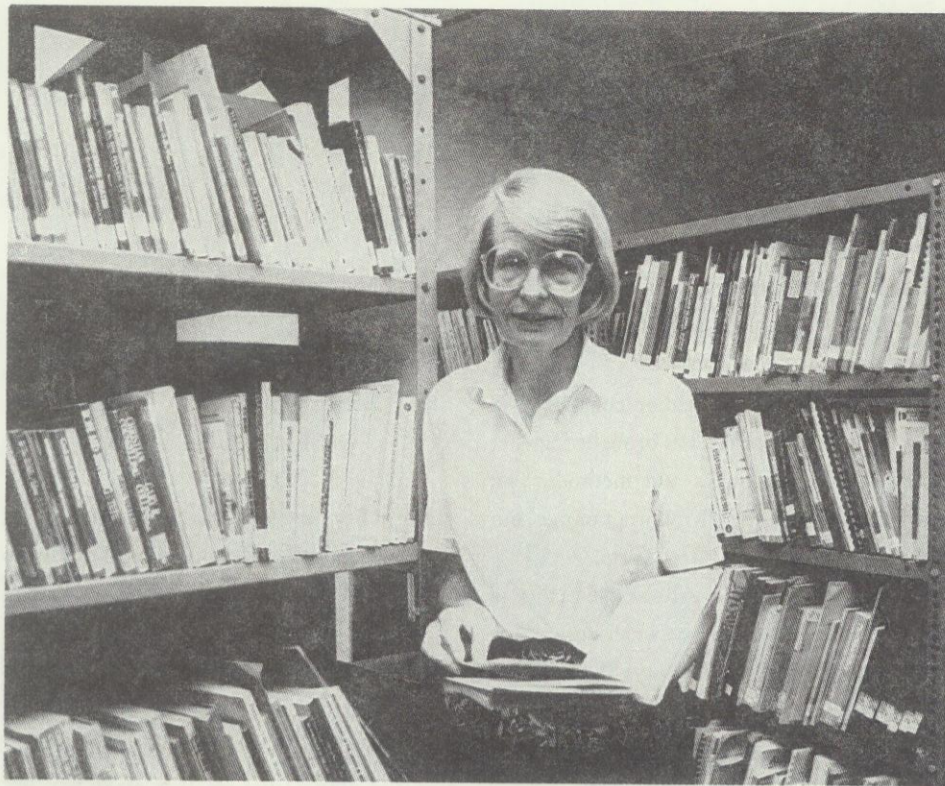
Ramjee Prasad Chaulagain, Lalitpur CDHP, was one of the participants in the Training of Trainers workshop:

"I work under the Health department so this was my first NFE training. The emphasis on participation methods, where the group is very active was new and important for me. I specially appreciated the part about Learner Generated Materials. It has been very good to meet colleagues from other projects and share ideas."



Bimala Shah, NFE supervisor, Jajarkot:

"I have learned some new effective NFE methods, such as puppet show, role play and drama. To meet people from other areas and type of projects is very helpful. They understand things I don't know and vice versa." ●



"A GATEWAY TO THE WIDER WORLD"

Access to reading materials is a key factor in all education work. Thus, development of efficient libraries is important to achieve sustainable literacy results. Helen Parsons has been working since 1984 as a Library Consultant on a wide range of tasks, both within and outside UMN:

"Public library services in Nepal are hardly developed at all. Although there are libraries at Campus level, virtually no primary schools and just a few secondary schools have their own library", says Helen.

"In recent years, a number of small community reading centers have been set up by local initiative, which is encouraging, but due to unsuitable materials and lack of resources, they often fail to meet the community's real needs."

As a Library Consultant, Helen is supporting training of library workers and development of appropriate information services at whatever level opportunities arise. She has been involved in basic training for village library workers in remote areas in South Lalitpur, as well as establishing standards for the new library building of Kathmandu University.

Half of her time is spent on UMN-related library development. There are about fifteen libraries of various size in UMN-related institutions like Nursing Campus, Rural Development Centre and Training and Scholarship programme. They all need advice and training of staff to be able to serve as useful information resources.

One of the libraries, which has received a lot of assistance from Helen Parsons, is the library in Gandaki Boarding School.

"It has been very rewarding to see the

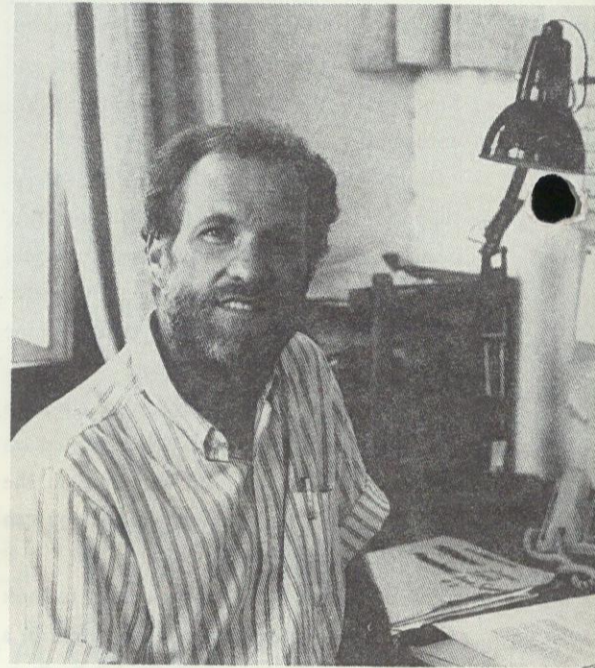
scholarship students - who are not used to any reading facilities - spend all their free time, every spare moment in the library. Without a doubt, the library has a big influence in their lives and serves as a gateway to the wider world." ●

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IN UMN'S EDUCATION WORK?

Mark Keller, director of the Education department:

"Breaking the cycle of poverty is a complex problem, but appropriate education is a key ingredient in enhancing the capability of Nepal's human resources.

"We are in dialogue with three different sections of the Ministry of Education, who have invited us to participate in strengthening rural primary education and skill training. Providing this, especially to women and poor people outside the formal education system, remains our greatest priority." ●



**UMN'S
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

Formal Education

GANDAKI BOARDING SCHOOL
In partnership with HMG, quality secondary education is given to more than 500 boys and girls, of which almost 200 are scholarship students from poor backgrounds.

KATHMANDU UNIVERSITY
Stimulating high quality tertiary education through secondment of personnel and capital funding.

TRAINING AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME
Providing 700 scholarships per year to poor school age children. 125 higher level training scholarships are given to poor men and women to obtain employment skills.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION
Seconding personnel to Karnali Technical School and to the Council for Technical and Vocational Training (CTEVT). Developing and printing teaching material.

NFE Involvement

NFE SUPPORT OFFICE
Providing services to 8 UMN projects, which have 3,000 class participants on a daily basis.

JAJARKOT NFE PROJECT
Literacy and community development in Jajarkot district. Of the population, only 14 percent are literate (women: 1 percent)

Expatriate Children's Education

TUTORIAL GROUPS
In about eight project locations for children aged 4-11 years.

KISC
Kathmandu International Study Centre meets the education needs of about fifty students aged 11-16.

Secondments and Consultants

Curriculum development. Library skill training and services.

Rural Development Staff Encouraged to See Strategy Bearing Fruit

"It has been a fascinating year, as rocky as the hills, but if there have been uphill, then downhill follow", reports NRMP after the first year with the new Rural Development strategy.

NRMP, Nepal Resource Management project is involved in community development, with a primary focus on forestry, in two districts, Dhading and Ramechhap.

"As the awareness phase continued, focused largely on small groups and house-to-house visits, project staff gained confidence in the approach, and were encouraged to see positive results emerging in the awareness, attitudes and expectations of the villagers. What the staff had only been able to give intellectual assent to, they now saw bearing fruit in reality", states the annual progress report.

Ramechhap is the youngest of the two NRMP sites. Work began last July in Namadi Village Development Committee.

Activities includes for example a three-day forestry awareness campaign in collaboration with the Local Development Training Centre and District Forest Office personnel. Three hundred people were made aware of the consequences if they lose their forests, which are very important natural resources.

The drama, by the project team, about how social and cultural factors are affecting our development, was another highlight of the year.

An example of the effect of negative social practices was revealed when a project employee from a lower caste initially had much trouble in being accepted into some people's homes and was treated differently in matters of food. The project made clear that this was not acceptable and now most villagers have come to accept all staff equally, which indicates that change is possible.

In Dhading the number of Forestry User Groups has gone up to eighteen, which reflects a steadily growing trust in the project methods. Three of these groups have taken over full responsibility for their forest from the government. ●

Extremely Difficult for the Mentally Ill

There are millions of people in Nepal with some kind of mental disorder. And more people are suffering from severe mental illness than from Leprosy and TB combined. Despite that, mental health services are almost non-existent.

"Thousands of severely mentally ill people, spend their lives locked-in under extremely difficult situations in their homes. If the family cannot cope with the situation, they are often sent to jail, just because there is no other place to keep them", says Dr Chris Wright, who has been with the UMN Mental Health programme since its start in 1984.

The Mental Health programme works through existing organisational structures with the overall aim to make mental health care accessible and integrated into the general community health system. Last year almost 70 training seminars were conducted for community health workers, health worker tutors, medical students, school-teachers, traditional healers and community leaders.

"A major problem is the general attitude to mental illness", says Chris Wright: "The vast majority think the cause is spiritual and that there is no cure available, except from the 'jhankris', the traditional healers.

"Another difficulty we face has to do with epilepsy. People see epilepsy as a (sometimes infectious) mental illness, which means many



The mental health training for traditional healers often includes realistic drama exercises in proper outfit.

epileptics are suffering a lot, unnecessarily, due to wrong treatment."

The total number of Nepali psychiatrists is eleven (1 per 1.5 million people)! To meet the need for psychiatric manpower, the Mental Health programme, in collaboration with the Institute of Medicine, is setting up a scholarship unit, which, over an eight-year period, will give about 35 health workers a more thorough mental health training outside the country.

So far, the Mental Health programme has been working with the government community health workers in three districts to provide community mental health services. This has improved the situation for eight percent of Nepal's population.

But there is a lot more to be done. Twenty-five percent of all patients coming to the community health posts have a psychological disorder, often in addition to a physical problem. Their chance to be seen by someone with any kind of mental health training is still minimal. ●

Khimti: Model for Hydro Power Development

Preparatory work has now begun on the site of the Khimti power project, which will add another twenty-five percent to Nepal's total hydro electric capacity.

The 60 MW Khimti project is expected to cost approximately 130 million dollars and is probably the largest venture in the private sector in Nepal. It may serve as a model for private sector hydro power development in this part of Asia.

UMN's involvement is only indirect through the managing company, Butwal Power Company Limited, in which UMN is the major shareholder. But a major contribution will be given through the

number of UMN expatriate engineers who will be seconded to the project.

"We believe this project will benefit all Nepalis including the poorest people. They need jobs, which will be more plentiful if electricity for industrial development is available", says Gerry Kent, new director of UMN's Engineering and Industrial Development department.

Financing and final agreements are hoped to be settled by the end of this year. ●

New UMN Logo Launched

To visually represent the corporate identity of UMN, a new "logo" has been developed. When used on stationary, vehicles, publications and so on, the logo will ease identification and strengthen the unity between the many diverse branches of UMN's work.

The old UMN logo had been used for many years, without any evaluation or assessment of its effectiveness. Also, many UMN projects had developed their own logos and stationary, without any coordination or common approach. This was increasingly felt as a confusing weakness.

The task to assess and re-design the corporate identity was given to graphic designer Michael Brown in October 1990. Many hours of research and design work later, the final result was presented at UMN's annual conference in June 1993.

The logo is designed to be effective primarily within three main audiences: Nepali and expatriate staff, Government officials, Overseas sending bodies and donors.

The main messages of the logo are: UMN is facilitating development, UMN works distinctly for Nepal and in no other country, UMN is based upon caring, serving, Christian values. ●



यूनाइटेड मिसन टु नेपाल



United Mission to Nepal

UMN Turns 40!

Preparations have started for the celebration of UMN's 40th anniversary in 1994. For three days, 4-6 March, the remarkable story of UMN will be highlighted in Nepal and many other countries.

It was on 5 March 1954 eight mission organisations founded the United Mission to Nepal in Nagpur in central India. Since then the organisation has grown tremendously. Today it counts 39 member organisations from 15 countries.

The celebrations will be spread over three days with a special focus on member organisations and churches worldwide on the third day (Sunday).

Special information materials available in connection with the 40th anniversary includes an anniversary booklet, a video film, a 40th anniversary UMN News, brochures and displays.

All friends of UMN are invited to participate in the celebrations. ●

NOTICES

Science Building Construction Started

The construction of the UMN-funded Science block at Kathmandu University's new premises in Dhulikhel, outside Kathmandu, is now started. The first buildings will be ready to occupy within a year.

UMN has agreed to provide four lecturers, as well as financial and consultancy resources, to the private, non-profit university, which is expected to meet several important needs in the field of higher education.

One computer teacher is already working. Recruitment of the three other lecturers is under processing. Additional funding to complete the construction of the science building is also being sought for.

Teacher Training Gives Handicapped a Chance

The first two primary school teachers have been trained to teach blind children in a new special education pilot programme.

Handicapped children in rural areas have minimal chances to attend school due to ordinary teachers' lack of specialized teaching skills.

A two-months training will enable teachers and school administrators from rural schools to incorporate handicapped students into their regular classrooms.

The first training was provided by a Nepali training institution on behalf of UMN in Jumla. Next step involves follow-up and training of an additional ten teachers in another UMN working area.

Rural Electrification Goes On

A 1.2 million dollar contribution from USAID means the Andhi Khola Rural Electrification project can fulfill its five-year plan to bring electricity to five thousand houses in the area. Encouraging the development of small scale industries is also part of the project.

Breakthrough in Jhimruk

The main civil work in Jhimruk has been completed within programme and below budget. The breakthrough in the 1200 meters headrace tunnel was achieved in August after three years of excavation. The 12 MW hydro power scheme is expected to start generate electricity in July 1994.

First with Rehydration Solution

Did you know that Nepal probably was the first third world country to commercially produce its own Oral Rehydration Solution ("Jeevan Jal") - and that thanks to San Ruohoniemi of UMN who introduced the recipe to Royal Drugs Ltd in 1972. Production started in July 1973. UMN's Community Health programmes were also first in Nepal to use the home method: how to make the salt-sugar-water solution has been taught since 1972.

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Please make all cheques payable to UMN

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 - Flood and landslide victims
 - UMN's educational work
 - The Medical Assistance Fund, which provides free medical care to poor patients
- Please send me _____ additional copies of UMN News
- Please send me information on UMN's 40th Anniversary Celebrations in 1994

- Please send me the following UMN T-shirts US\$6 each, including package and post:

WHITE: _____ Large, _____ Medium, _____ Child

GREEN: _____ Large, _____ Medium, _____ Child

- Please note that my address has changed

Name: _____

Address: _____

Country: _____