

PARTNERPLAN

Joel Hafvenstein - Nepal September 2021

United Mission to Nepal
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KATHMANDU
Nepal

Dear friends,

Along with several key answers to prayer, we are also facing major disruptions and would be grateful for your prayer support in the following priority areas:

- 1. For our family as we have been required to leave Nepal and not return until January 2022.**
- 2. For the rapid approval of UMN's Project Agreements.**
- 3. For Nepal to promptly receive enough vaccines to stop future COVID waves.**
- 4. For the nation of Afghanistan and our friends living there.**

First, the answers to prayer. In our May letter we highlighted the urgent need for the Mission's General Agreement (GA) and other agreements to make it past various challenges and get renewed. Our GA renewal finally took place in mid-June, securing UMN's right to work in Nepal for the next five years. The Ministry of Health also recently signed an agreement with our hospitals which will make it much easier to bring expatriate volunteers (medical staff and others) to support the mission hospitals. Hallelujah!

Sadly, the renewal of the GA came too late for our family's visas for the year. Because of lockdowns, we could not leave the country in May while we still had some of our yearly allocation of non-work visa days remaining. The Immigration Department recently informed us that even with a now-approved work visa, our family is not allowed to stay in Nepal any longer in 2021, beyond a short grace period to arrange our departure.

Accordingly, on 5 September we will leave Nepal and return to the UK (following a 10-day quarantine stay in a European country). For the remainder of 2021, Joel will continue to work remotely for UMN, across a significant time zone gap; the boys will continue to do the same for online school in Nepal, at least initially. Please pray for us as we cope with the logistical challenges, disappointments, and lost opportunities we had planned for September-December in Nepal.

We will probably be absent from the country during Nepal's next COVID wave. While the devastating April-July Delta variant wave seems to have left Nepal with at least 50% of the population exposed to the virus, and around 13% of Nepali adults are now vaccinated, we can see from other countries' experience that it is still possible (and probably likely) to have another wave under these circumstances.

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Thanks to a generous response from UMN's partners and supporters around the world, both of our hospitals (and many other rural health facilities in our working areas) are now better supplied to provide oxygen to COVID patients than we were before. Nepal has also received vaccine support from other countries, including enough doses from the UK for 65,000 people; but almost 25 million Nepalis remain unvaccinated, keeping Nepal dangerously exposed to new waves and a possible source of new variants. Please pray for countries like the UK to share vaccines with poorer countries to stop new surges and variants of COVID-19.

Our family will also be out of Nepal during the process of approving UMN's Project Agreements (PAs), the detailed agreements by which the government oversees all our non-hospital work. Many other international organisations have been struggling to get their PAs approved. There is a possibility that government officials could demand that UMN make radical changes to our work as a condition of agreement approval – for example, that we exit abruptly from several of the geographic areas where we plan to work. Please pray for rapid and smooth approval of these agreements.



In general, please do continue to pray for the United Mission to Nepal during this challenging time. If you want to sign up for prayer updates from UMN, you can do so [here](#). We plan to return to Nepal in January 2022 and to stay through April to support the new UMN Executive Director Dhana Lama, Joel's successor.

Finally, we would also be grateful for your prayer for Afghanistan, where we served for some years before Caleb and Isaac were born. Many good friends and former

colleagues there are now trying to flee the country since the Taliban resumed power. Their lives are now in danger because of their service with Western-funded humanitarian projects. Pray that they will find visa opportunities in Western countries, and for strength for Joel and Fiona as we try to support them through this terrifying time.

Thank you as always for standing with us in prayer.

Joel and Fiona
Caleb and Isaac
United Mission to Nepal