

PARTNERPLAN

Joel Hafvenstein - Nepal May 2022

United Mission to Nepal
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Dear friends,

Thank you so much for accompanying us in prayer through six and a half years of service with United Mission to Nepal (UMN). At the end of our time as UMN and Church of Scotland mission partners, these are our continuing priorities for prayer:

- 1. For UMN's ongoing relationship with the Government of Nepal.**
- 2. For Dhana Lama, Joel's successor as head of UMN.**
- 3. For Fiona's MSc/PhD research into medicinal plants, which will bring us back to Nepal.**
- 4. For Caleb and Isaac to find good friends during our time in the UK.**

Throughout March and April, first Joel and then the whole family were on the road, visiting all of UMN's working areas—two hospitals and the six "Cluster offices" where our village-level anti-poverty work is coordinated. It was wonderful to be able to visit the frontline work in person, after the pandemic and our visa interruption in 2021 had kept us away from the Clusters for a long time.



We were consistently delighted and impressed by the work we visited. The restoration of village ponds, with the fishery income and irrigation benefits they provide; the small backpack factory founded with grant assistance from UMN to help people who had lost their jobs because of the pandemic. People with disability and their families supported to make a living, get medical help, and connect with each other to provide mutual support and oppose traditional stigmas. Health posts and local hospitals in all our working areas equipped to respond to COVID-19. Schools supported to bring students back and help them resume education after the long lockdown.

When Joel last visited Mugu district in late 2016, he was struck by the deep-rooted injustices that had emptied most schools in the upper Mugu Karnali valley. Most teachers were drawing their salaries without actually going to the remote villages, and the ethnic minority Karmarong population was too politically isolated to assert its rights. Today, thanks in significant part to the long

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advocacy efforts of UMN's local partner NGO, the schools have teachers and we're working with a receptive local government to strengthen education there. UMN has consistently strong positive relationships with the local governments that see our work close-up; please pray that this will extend more consistently to the central level where our agreements are signed!

We returned to Kathmandu and a wonderful official farewell at UMN, where we celebrated the last few years and looked forward to the achievements to come under Dhana Lama, UMN's first Nepali executive director. We feel we've had a wonderful ending to our time at UMN.

We do not expect that will be the end of our time in Nepal, however. As we mentioned in our February newsletter, Fiona will be starting MSc/PhD research on medicinal plants at the University of Kent. Her primary focus will be on *Artemisia annua*, a plant that has long been used around the world against falciparum malaria and is now in clinical trials as a COVID-19 treatment. It is indigenous to Nepal but little-studied there, and Fiona has had enthusiastic support for her proposed research not only from Kent but from the Royal Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh and Nepal's own National Herbarium (which is assessing some samples she brought back from our April travels).



We hope that from spring or summer 2023 we will be able to return to Nepal on Fiona's research visa. After the many ups and downs of the last few years, Joel is looking forward to a quieter season as house-dad, primary child-carer, and writer.

Meanwhile we would be grateful for prayer for this year in the UK as a family—especially for Caleb and Isaac, who we hope find good friends at school and church in Canterbury.

We hope you will continue to pray for the United Mission to Nepal and its faithful service to Nepal. Please consider signing up for their weekly prayer updates at <https://www.umn.org.np/pray>. We would also be grateful for anyone who wants to keep receiving our family's regular prayer updates; although we will no longer be official mission partners, we will continue to work to serve the people of Nepal and will be in need of prayer support. Please email [jhaven98@gmail](mailto:jhaven98@gmail.com) if you would like to be on that list.

Thank you, again, for all your support and prayer during our time with UMN.

Joel and Fiona
Caleb and Isaac
United Mission to Nepal