
Nepal

**Total area:**

147,181 km²

Population:

28,825,709 (2017)

Literacy:

40%

Official languages:

Nepali

GDP (PPP) per capita:

\$2,573 (2016 est.)

Life expectancy:

69 years

Religions:

80% Hindu, 11% Buddhist, 4% Muslim, 4% Mundhum, 0.5% Christian, 0.5% other religions

Prayer points

Sustainable agriculture in harsh climate

Kalikot is a very isolated area where most people depend on agriculture. The harsh climate and inadequate farming techniques mean that food can be grown for only three to six months of the year, at best. Volatile weather such as unexpected rainfall or hail storms can lead to a sudden and acute food crisis. Most families rely on their men going to India for seasonal work in order to survive. Farmers are now learning how to grow more diverse crops and produce food throughout the year. They are learning about climate change and creating tree and bamboo plantations on hillsides to protect villages and crops from landslides. Pray that life for the people of Kalikot will become more sustainable. (International Nepal Fellowship - August 2019)

Daughter anti-trafficking awareness programme

Nuwakot district has one of the highest rates of trafficking in Nepal. The risk increases when a family does not have even the basic needs for life. Parents are easily convinced to entrust their children, especially daughters, to brokers who promise high-paying jobs in the cities so they can send money back to their families. In response to this problem, CarNet Nepal, Viva's partner network in this district, has been training and mobilising a new group of volunteers to conduct the 'Daughter' awareness-raising programme in their communities. This initiative is used to engage families in discussion about how to keep their children safe from trafficking recruiters. Please pray for the impact of this 'Daughter' programme - that many more children would be effectively protected from being at

risk of trafficking, in the long-term, and that families would feel empowered to say 'no' to recruiters. (Viva - August 2019)

The illegal practice of chhaupadi

Imagine, being a woman in Nepal and once a month, turned out of the family home and sent to live in a dilapidated shed for five days. In the summer it is ferociously hot and you risk heat stroke, while in the winter it is desperately cold. You cannot wash yourself or your clothes, you cannot get clean drinking water, and what food you have is far from nutritious: no meat, fruit, or dairy products. This is chhaupadi, a traditional practice which continues in some rural parts of Nepal, despite being illegal. Women have died as a result of smoke inhalation after lighting a fire to keep warm. Others have been killed by snakes or wild animals. Pray for an end to this practice which persists because of both poverty and superstition. (International Nepal Fellowship - April 2019)

Persecution from anti-evangelism laws

Intensifying pressure from Hindu locals recently led to the forced closure of a church in Nepal. For two months, a group of Hindus disrupted services being held in the church. Members of the church abandoned their building and resorted to meeting in their own homes. However, the group of Hindus publicly threatened any Christian found meeting anywhere. Since the persecution began, the pastor of the church reported dwindling attendance due to fear. At the beginning of November, the church disbanded entirely. Opposition to Christianity in Nepal has been growing over recent years, accelerated by the recent passing of anti-evangelism laws. Please continue to pray with us for our partner and others in Nepal as they proclaim the gospel, plant churches and bring aid to needy people across the country. (AsiaLink - February 2019)

Prevention of ear diseases

Ear diseases and hearing problems are often a hidden disability yet have an enormous effect on day-to-day life. For children it means they fall behind in school and cannot develop language skills. Left untreated, a sense of isolation continues into adulthood, where ear problems and deafness hinder not only their ability to communicate but also their ability to work. According to the World Health Organisation over 360 million people worldwide suffer from disabling hearing loss, with the greatest proportion living in southern Asia. In remote parts of Nepal simple ear infections can become complex conditions because of lack of access to appropriate health care. Please pray that the stigma associated with ear disease and hearing loss will not prevent people from seeking early help. (International Nepal Fellowship - February 2019)

New homes for the Chepang

The Chepang, one of Nepal's indigenous peoples, rank lower in society even than the "Untouchables", Nepal's lowest caste. In recent years the Chepang have begun to change from a semi-nomadic lifestyle to a more settled way of life. Historically they foraged for food, collecting wild plants and catching fish, bats and birds. Because of their lifestyle they are disliked and have hardly any access to basic services. Some are still living in temporary shelter after their homes were destroyed in the 2015 earthquakes. Churches in Nepal are now helping to build new homes for the Chepang. Please pray that people will not have to spend a fourth winter in temporary shelter. (International Nepal Fellowship - December 2018)

Mobile medical clinics provide counselling

Mobile medical clinics were recently carried out in two villages within an unreached area of Central Asia. Over 450 people were seen in the four days the clinic ran and individuals were able to share their health and life concerns. Many who came to see the psychologist had problems which caused ill health and depression. The team remarked how many of these individuals had sad eyes. But, once they had the opportunity to share their stories away from others in the community, they could see ways to solve their problems. At the clinic, miracles were happening: sad eyes became bright! Counselling gave them hope for the future. Pray for these people to begin a journey with Christ as a

result of the medical help they received from believers. (Reach Beyond - December 2018)

Protection during festivals

Dashain (pronounced Dossai) will be celebrated from 9th to 23rd October this year. It is the longest of several autumn festivals in Nepal and is celebrated by both Hindus and Buddhists. It commemorates a great victory by the gods over the demons. Dashain is a family celebration with people travelling home to spend time with relatives. Activities such as kite flying and swinging on huge homemade swings are traditional parts of the celebrations. Worship includes frequent visits to the temples and thousands of animal sacrifices. Please pray for Christians in Nepal who can feel quite isolated during this time, especially if they are the only Christian in their family. Pray too that other Nepalis will discover that Jesus is the true victor over evil. (International Nepal Fellowship - September 2018)

Freedom for Basanti

Basanti is a Dalit woman, the lowest caste in Nepali society. She faced terrible discrimination and thought nothing would ever get better. Motivated by the love and example of Jesus, some of INF's Nepali staff went and lived alongside Basanti and her community. They helped the local people form a self-help group. Sharing their problems with one another, the group began to find solutions. Now Basanti is sending her children to school, and has a better understanding of hygiene and sanitation. She has started her own tailoring business and has even been elected to local government. Pray that others will be inspired by Basanti's success, and that more low-caste people will discover that poverty is not inevitable. (International Nepal Fellowship - July 2018)

Leprosy eradicated

Leprosy has officially been declared as eradicated in Nepal, but there are still hundreds of new cases detected every year. In fact the prevalence of the disease is two-and-a-half times the global average. Please pray for early detection and treatment of people with leprosy and for the total eradication of the disease in Nepal. Leprosy is a mildly infectious disease associated with poverty. It damages nerves resulting in loss of sensation. This means that injuries can go unnoticed and become infected, making them difficult to heal. It often leads to the shortening of fingers and toes or even loss of part of a limb. (International Nepal Fellowship - May 2018)

Few Modern Wheelchairs

Very few modern wheelchairs are produced in Nepal – most have to be imported. Poverty, more than ten years of armed conflict, an increasing number of traffic accidents and the devastating earthquake in 2015, are just some of the factors that are resulting in a high number of people living with a disability in Nepal. Although the Nepalese Government has set up five centres to distribute assistive devices, the majority of people are being helped by charities. Consequently, the number of people who could be helped but being left out, is huge. Many will be hidden away at home or left to crawl on the ground. Please pray that more wheelchairs can be imported and that those people who need them most will be given one. (International Nepal Fellowship - March 2018)

A Fresh Vision to Develop Mission

There is a strong sense of unity between the churches in Pokhara. They have worked together on community projects and provided relief to people affected by disasters and emergencies, such as the 2015 earthquakes. Now they have a fresh vision to develop their mission, reaching out to others, both within Nepal and beyond. Nepali mission personnel will be recruited to reach out to other communities and to support small churches. Please pray for skilled Nepali professionals, such as teachers and agriculturalists, willing to work as missionaries in remote areas of their country. Pray that God will prepare the hearts of Nepalis who will hear the gospel for the very first time. (International Nepal Fellowship - January 2018)

See Me Not My Disability

Subina is 11 years old. She loves to sing Nepali folk songs and is just like any other child except that

she has cerebral palsy, affecting her vision and her ability to walk. She is keen to go to school. 'I want to become a doctor,' she says. Her father, Min, is a school teacher and knows the importance of education. But he has witnessed staff using derogatory language about disabled people and fears that the children would do the same. So Min doesn't let Subina go. Subina's dream is put on hold because others don't see her. Her school don't even see the condition she has, they just see disability. Please pray for changing attitudes towards disability in Nepal. (International Nepal Fellowship - November 2017)

Mental Health in Nepal

Mental health is a significant issue in Nepal. The country ranks 7th in the world for highest suicide rates. According to police records, 7,000 people take their own lives each year. But the stark reality is that many more go unreported. The earthquake in 2015, which left thousands of people homeless and traumatised, has made the situation worse. The number of suicides has increased dramatically since the disaster struck. Yet there is still very little understanding of the need for counselling and its positive impact. The Elijah Counselling and Training Centre is a Christian organisation in Nepal raising awareness about the need for counselling. Please pray for the more than 2,000 counsellors and carers it has trained and for those being given psychological relief in their suffering. (International Nepal Fellowship - September 2017)

Chhaupadi

In rural parts of Nepal, women are often malnourished, small in stature, and tend to be married very young. They also face the practice of chhaupadi - the banishing of women from the home to a small hut during menstruation or childbirth. Chhaupadi was made illegal in 2005, but change is slow-paced in areas where the way of life has remained unchanged for centuries making childbirth more dangerous. One complication of a difficult labour can be obstetric fistula, a tear in the bladder or bowel which results in continual leakage of urine or faeces and women are ostracised from their communities. Please pray for an end to chhaupadi and for more opportunities for surgery for women with obstetric fistula. (International Nepal Fellowship - July 2017)

Daughter Toolkit

Each year, up to 20,000 young girls from the poorest parts of Nepal are sold into trafficking. 2015 saw a 500% rise in trafficking from Nepal to India compared with 2014. Viva's partner network, CarNet Nepal, is responding to the issue of exploitation and trafficking by mobilising thousands of church volunteers to keep children safe, establish income generation projects for women and spread the message through education and advocacy. Please pray particularly for the widespread use of the Daughter Toolkit - a simple, picture-based resource that teaches people how to prevent trafficking in their own communities and how to intervene once they recognise that abuse or exploitation is taking place. (Viva - July 2017)

A Radio Lifeline

In January, a new 100-watt FM radio station was built in the mid-western part of the country where people face a daily challenge to access clean drinking water and a sustainable electricity supply. The new radio station is run by a Nepali Christian organisation that cover the cost of healthcare for those who can't afford to pay. The station has also begun providing programmes on education, health and agriculture. Pray for this fledgling station as they are poised to be a spiritual and social lifeline for the community. (Reach Beyond - May 2017)

A Nation on its Knees

Two years ago devastating earthquakes in Nepal took nearly 9,000 lives and damaged or destroyed more than 800,000 homes [source USAID]. It is taking time for the nation to get back on its feet and many families are still without a permanent place to live. Christian organisations, both local and international, are doing what they can, not just to restore the situation to how it was, but to improve the lives of people affected. Homes and public buildings are being made accessible for wheelchair

users. Health posts are being rebuilt with better facilities such as a place for women to give birth safely. Please pray that reconstruction work will be done efficiently and safely. Pray too that those who receive the help of local Christians will recognise the love of Christ through their actions. (International Nepal Fellowship - April 2017)

A Prayer for Religious Minorities

With its new laws that clamp down on religious freedom, Nepal is a very strong example of how restrictive legislation can affect the lives of ordinary people. In December eight Christians were on trial for giving out comic books about the life of Jesus in Charikot, Nepal. We thank God that they were acquitted and pray that no more Christians or other religious minorities will go through the same ordeal. Christians aren't the only religious minority under threat in Nepal. Please pray for Buddhists and Muslims in Nepal who are also facing increasing pressure. We pray that its restrictive laws will be changed soon, and that one day, Nepal would be a country where everyone can talk about their faith openly and in peace. (Christian Solidarity Worldwide - February 2017)

Renu is a very happy girl now

Renu fell from a tree a few months back while collecting firewood. She was taken first to a nearby health-post and later referred to a private hospital in Pokhara then to another private hospital where spinal fixation was carried out. By then, the family had exhausted their savings. Finally, she came to Green Pastures Hospital [GPH] with no money but full of hopes. In addition to other medical treatment, Renu received physio and occupational therapy for two months at GPH. She is now able to walk with aid of a stick. Renu is a very happy girl. Please pray that INF's clinical and community work would increasingly be directed by and demonstrate God's Spirit, leading to lasting transformation in people's lives and communities. (International Nepal Fellowship - November 2016)

Tolerance and Persecution.

Nepal is officially a secular state, but the majority of the population is Hindu. Christians have experienced periods of both tolerance and persecution. After last year's earthquake, churches were not recognised as religious buildings. This meant that, unlike Hindu and Buddhist temples, they were unable to get official compensation for rebuilding. Recently there have been a number of people arrested for distributing Christian literature. Please pray that Christians will have the courage to remain faithful in difficult circumstances. There are also challenges from other religious groups. One of these is Sachai [meaning truth]. In Sachai Jesus is accepted as one of many gods, making it attractive to Hindus. Please pray that those seeking truth will find Jesus as the one true God. (International Nepal Fellowship - September 2016)

Nama's Story

Nama's story is typical of survivors of the 2015 Nepal Earthquakes. He lost his parents, sister and home as a landslide buried the community of Langtang under a huge grey mass of rubble 100 feet deep. More than 150 people were buried—about one-third of the population of the Langtang Valley. Nama no longer guides trekkers venturing into his picturesque valley because tourism in Nepal has stopped almost completely. A year on from the earthquakes Nama's community are slowly rebuilding their homes, and their lives. Pray that the people of Nepal aren't forgotten as relief efforts end. Pray also that God would open doors so the most isolated can receive the essential services they need. Pray that God would minister his peace into lives of those suffering the long-term effects of grief and trauma. (MAF International - July 2016)

Unshakeable God

The earth is shaking, the building swaying, doors slamming, a roaring noise. All this is happening as 40 terrified children sit huddled together in a Nepali church. They cling to their teacher and she knows that she has to find a way to be the calm in the midst of this storm. A week after the earthquake as part of the healing process, the children were asked to draw a picture of where they thought God was during the earthquakes. "All of the children drew God standing next to them or holding them with his

arms around them," says Helen. "They all recognised God's presence even in the midst of something very frightening." Praise God that His love was encountered in disaster, and pray that these children will cling to Him all their days. (BMS World Mission - July 2016)

Shattered communities

25th April marked the first anniversary of the devastating earthquake in Nepal. Give thanks for the work of our partner Good Friends of Nepal to assist shattered communities; for families who have been provided with new homes both temporary and longer-term; and for the recent lifting of fuel blockades which exacerbated the already difficult conditions in the country. (WorldShare - May 2016)

Monsoon in Nepal

Many people are still living in temporary shelters or unsafe buildings, as their homes were damaged or destroyed during the earthquakes of 2015. People are making do with their situation, children are returning to school and crops are being planted again. Praise God for the strength and resourcefulness he has given Nepali people to endure so far, and that buildings such as health posts are being rebuilt bringing opportunities for improved health care locally. Please pray that houses would start to be rebuilt soon once the Government has finalised the plans for earthquake-resistant designs, and that vulnerable people would be protected during the monsoon season which starts around the end of May. This season often sees more landslides occur due to heavy rains which unsettle the land. (International Nepal Fellowship - May 2016)

Earthquake anniversary

April 25th is the anniversary of the devastating earthquake which hit Nepal last year. People living in remote villages near the epicentre are still coping with its consequences. Many are living in temporary shelter under corrugated sheeting or in cowsheds made of wood. Despite this, Nepali people are continuing to do the best they can, looking after their animals, growing crops, and planting vegetables. The government of Nepal has approved a design for earthquake resilient houses and rebuilding is now possible. Please pray that the new homes needed will be well-built and constructed quickly. Pray too for the rebuilding of public schools and health posts. Give thanks for Nepali Christians from nearby towns who are volunteering to help people in the villages. (International Nepal Fellowship - March 2016)

Psychological care

According to the Nepali Police, the suicide rate has shot up by more than 40% the earthquake in April. People who have lost loved ones, homes and livelihoods are still traumatised and need specialist psychological and spiritual care. Very often these people are the poorest of the poor, living in remote village locations. People involved in the rescue efforts have also had troubling experiences and need help to come to terms with them. Organisations like the Elijah Counselling and Training Centre in Kathmandu, are stepping up their work. Initially they focused on spreading knowledge to alleviate anxiety, but they are also training more counsellors to provide support, enabling people to cope over the long-term. Please pray that those who need psychological help will get the care they need. (International Nepal Fellowship - November 2015)

Radio lifelines

The political situation in Nepal is currently very unpredictable in the wake of the country's new constitution and the threat of religious extremist action is on the increase. The new constitution has sparked protests in the country's southern plains bordering India and this instability is making things difficult for agencies wanting to work with local partners in reconstruction following the earthquakes. Pray for peace in Nepal. Radio continues to be a lifeline in remote Nepali communities and the ninth Christian community radio station is in the process of being planted; please pray that people will be connected to each other and to the Lord through the broadcasts. (Reach Beyond - November 2015)

Landslides in Pokhara

Mountains and hillsides unsettled by the earthquakes have become more vulnerable than usual to landslides in the monsoon rains. A large landslide devastated villages in the western region of Nepal, 30 km north of Pokhara. Members of the Pokhara Christian community set out to help as soon as they heard the news. They found half of the homes in the area had been swept away and at least 30 people had died. The team was able to search for survivors amongst the debris. We praise God for the servant hearts of members of the Christian community in Pokhara. Please pray that those who have lost loved ones, homes, and livelihoods will be able to rebuild their lives, and that the practical demonstration of Christian love will draw them to Christ. (International Nepal Fellowship - September 2015)

Earthquake aftermath

Lift up before God the people of Nepal after the devastating earthquakes, particularly the staff and patients of The Leprosy Mission's Anandaban Leprosy Hospital who have selflessly helped to alleviate the pain and suffering of so many. Give thanks that 3,600 people have been provided with urgent medical help and other emergency treatment. Please pray for the staff at the hospital who have been personally affected by the earthquakes and who are still tired and traumatised. Pray for leprosy-affected and other marginalised groups as TLM-Nepal help people to move from temporary shelters to permanent, earthquake-resistant homes. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - September 2015)

Devastating earthquakes

The earthquakes on 25th April and 12th May have had a devastating effect on Nepal. About 8,800 people died in collapsed buildings, landslides and avalanches. Nearly 22,000 people have been injured. It is estimated that over 800,000 people have been affected and 130,000 homes destroyed, with some villages in remote areas being completely flattened. Behind each of these statistics are individuals and families whose lives have been shattered. Please pray for comfort for those who are grieving. Pray for those who have been injured and lost mobility - they may now find it hard to support their families. Pray that the relief supplies will reach the remotest areas, where they are still needed. Pray too for the provision of supplies to rebuild homes. (International Nepal Fellowship - July 2015)

A communication lifeline

Radio is more important than ever in remote Nepali communities since the recent earthquakes. A radio is a communication lifeline for a host of things people need to know - when and where supplies are arriving, medical clinics, weather forecasts, road information, health and water safety updates plus news from other districts. Radio also provides important human connections to help people deal with stress, loss, and depression in the wake of the disaster. Pray as local Christian radio stations are rebuilt and continue to serve their local communities. (Reach Beyond - July 2015)

Palliative care in Nepal

Palliative care is the relief and prevention of suffering for people with serious life threatening or terminal illness. It is relatively new to Nepal. Provision is almost entirely confined to the Kathmandu Valley. Four of the five geographical regions of Nepal have almost no palliative care arrangements at all. This includes most of the remote and disadvantaged communities in the country. At the moment, there are very limited numbers of trained Nepalis to extend the availability of palliative care but training is now taking place. Please pray that the need for palliative care will be more widely recognised. Pray that people facing the end of their lives will be able to do so in peace with their loved ones around them. (International Nepal Fellowship - May 2015)

Steeped in Hindu values

Communities in the mountainous region of Bajura are deeply steeped in traditional Hindu values and the hierarchies of the caste system, which has the power to keep people locked in long established roles. The gospel is seen as a threat to the existing social order and there is resistance to change. There is also opposition to baptisms in local streams as it is believed to spiritually pollute the water.

Give thanks that in the harsh, barren region of Bajura the spiritual soil can be made fertile for the gospel. Pray that fear of Christianity would be transformed into freedom through the gospel. (International Nepal Fellowship - March 2015)

Remote communities

People in rural Nepal often live in remote communities with little access to clean water, health services and education. In some areas the land only yields enough crops to feed families for a few months each year. In such places very few people have heard the good news of Jesus Christ. International Nepal Fellowship is bringing the gospel to these people and helping the locals plan and work together to change their own lives. They may decide to dig a well, learn about different crops and farming techniques, or ensure that all families know more about safe child birth. Give thanks that thousands of lives are being transformed and pray for the fledgling church as it begins to grow. (International Nepal Fellowship - January 2015)

Hindu fundamentalists

Hindu fundamentalists recently took notice of the baptism of 24 people in Kathmandu and reportedly made false accusations to the police. Twelve Christians were taken into police custody for varying lengths of time. Thankfully, all have now been released. Hold up our brothers and sisters in Kathmandu in your prayers, that they may be bold in the Lord and not be anxious about any situation. Pray for continued peace and religious freedom in Nepal. (International Nepal Fellowship - September 2014)

Making a difference

Almost 2% of the population of Nepal has some form of disability. Green Pastures Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre (GPHRC) in Pokhara is helping people affected by leprosy by providing protective shoes and mobility aids. The centre also has skilled technicians for making prostheses and training patients in their use; they have also developed expertise in the fitting, modifying and repairing of wheelchairs. Give thanks that last year the centre was able to help 1,600 people through these services, making a considerable difference to the quality of life of each patient. Pray that each person who comes into contact with GPHRC experiences the love of Christ and has an opportunity to hear the gospel. (International Nepal Fellowship - July 2014)

New restrictions for NGOs

There is a strong anti-foreign NGO (Non-Government Organisation) sentiment in Nepal at the moment, both in the media and amongst some politicians. New government guidelines regulating the hiring of foreigners have been published. These have been particularly aimed at the international NGO sector. Pray for wisdom for the leaders of Christian organisations working in Nepal as they seek to discern the implications for their ministries, both now and in the future. Pray too that the good relationship INF has with the Nepalese government will be able to continue. (International Nepal Fellowship - May 2014)

Spreading HIV

A Nepali government report published in 2012 highlights the role of male migrant workers in spreading HIV infection in Nepal. Initial infection most commonly happens during contact with an infected sex worker while the migrant is away from home. The worker himself then risks spreading the infection among the generally low-risk population when he returns to Nepal. There were estimated to be close to 12,000 new infections among migrant workers during 2011. INF staff in Nepal help people with HIV to develop skills so that they can support themselves. Pray for people who feel that their life has been made hopeless by HIV to experience the living hope of Christ. (International Nepal Fellowship - January 2014)

Anandaban hospital

3,200 new cases of leprosy are detected annually in Nepal. Give thanks for the high quality,

comprehensive medical care given to 5,500 people affected by leprosy at Anandaban hospital. Pray for success in training the leprosy-affected in self-care and use of mobility aids. Pray also for effective health education awareness activities which will educate people through local radio broadcast, posters and street drama. This will help to reduce stigma and prevent exclusion from families and communities, and encourage people to come forward early for treatment. Pray for a change to government health services, that treatment of leprosy related complications, such as ulceration and leprosy reaction, will be available at government hospitals and for active follow up of new cases of leprosy to ensure completion of the multidrug therapy. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - July 2013)

Community radio

One Nepali radio station manager writes: "We have a cell group that has formed in our town in central Nepal, which is the outcome of our radio broadcasts. One brother from this town became a strong Christian through the programme 'Message of Hope' from our radio station. There are now 12 people ready for baptism, and I am preparing to go for the baptisms in that place. We are planning to build a church in that town." Pray for community radio in Nepal, that listeners will have changed lives as they listen, and in turn share their newfound faith with their neighbours. (Reach Beyond - March 2013)

Alone and helpless

Chinimaya's husband went to India to earn money a month after they married. She hasn't heard from him in eight years. "I know he visited brothels and he sent no money home. I was alone and helpless" she said. However, thanks to the ministry of *Grace Community Services (GCS)* in Kathmandu, Chinimaya now has a new life, new friends and has found faith in Jesus. She has even been helped to open a small cosmetics shop in the village. Give thanks for the ministry of *GCS* which also includes raising awareness amongst church leaders of HIV and sex trafficking, providing scholarships for HIV-affected children to attend school and distributing clothing to marginalised and homeless people. (Church Mission Society - January 2013)

Christian schools

Education is highly prized in Nepal and many families make big sacrifices to enable their children to learn. Small children walk for miles over mountainous terrain in order to attend school. Boys are prioritised over girls who are considered a less worthwhile investment for the family. Teaching standards and morale in national schools are in need of development. Many local churches have opened Christian schools as part of their contribution to the community. Pray that these schools would be well run and a good example in society. (BMS World Mission - November 2012)

Serving the community

In the mid-west of Nepal, many people are Hindu farmers of Tharu ethnicity. A lot of the Tharu people live in poverty, having suffered from longstanding practices that, for some, included a form of bonded slavery to wealthier landowners. Until recently, the unwillingness of Tharu Christians to be involved in traditional Hindu rituals and other activities has been a barrier between churches and local communities. However, churches are now finding new ways to serve the people around them and, as a result, the rest of the community became much more positive towards the church and the Christian faith. Pray that Christian and Hindu communities may work together for a peaceful future and that the practical demonstration of God's love will continue to flourish, transforming lives in Jesus' name. (Tearfund - July 2012)

Nowhere to go

In Kathmandu, 13-year-old Niru wandered the streets with nowhere to stay, no one to look after her. Her alcoholic father beat her mother so severely that she fled and married another man, leaving Niru to either stay with her abusive father or try living with her grandmother. At her grandmother's, however, a visiting uncle began to molest Niru, and she fled. Niru had nowhere to stay, and nowhere to go. Then she met Pastor Surya, who had completed a Viva course that trained him in giving proper

support to children. He was able to connect Niru to a project in the Kathmandu network and take her to the appropriate transit shelter where she was given a bed to sleep in, good meals and plenty of loving care. Pray for the work of Pastor Surya, others like him, and those training them to support children properly. (Viva - March 2012)

Malnutrition

In Nepal, 30,000 children die every year as a result of malnutrition. Many of these are children that are forced to live on the street, scraping a living by begging or doing badly-paid, dangerous manual labour. In a culture that places great importance on family and tradition, bringing a child from the streets into your own home is not something people do lightly. However, Viva's training programmes in the country seek to equip and move people to do just that. Pray that more people would step up and care for these children, whether in their own homes or within childcare projects. (Viva - May 2011)

Cleaning the streets

Taalchowk, in the western hills of the Himalayan country, is a staging post for tourists on their way to visit the beauty spot of Beganas Lake. Until recently, the town's roads were so badly littered that they were actually making people ill, and the grim stench from the rotting rubbish led to a decline in visitor numbers. However, the Nepal Christian Taalchok Church has risen to the challenge and enlisted the support of two other local organisations, mobilising three dozen volunteers to clean the streets. More than 600 people are estimated to have directly or indirectly benefited from the clear-up and the operation has helped improve people's perceptions of the church and Christianity in the predominantly Hindu community. Give thanks that churches in Nepal are stepping out of their comfort zones and engaging with their communities in new ways. (Tearfund - March 2011)

Building bridges

Consider bridge building in a church context and you'd probably think of efforts to promote peace and harmony. In Nepal the Church thinks more literally. When seven local churches came together to ask their respective communities what were their most pressing problems, the answer that came back was: "We can't get across our river." Negotiating the Patharaiya River is essential for locals who need to travel to a nearby town to buy provisions, but without a bridge they had to rely on a boatman who ended up exploiting the villagers by overcharging. As a result of a joint effort between the villages, a 175ft long bamboo and wood construction was erected, which the community named, Shanti Patharaiya, 'the peace bridge'. Thank the Lord for churches in Nepal that are acting out the Christian faith in their communities, bringing improvements to people's lives, materially and spiritually, as a result. (Tearfund - May 2010)

Burden of disability

Nepal is one of the world's poorest countries and one of the hardest places to live if you have a disability. A recent survey showed that 42 percent of families of people with disabilities were living below the poverty line. The predominant religious beliefs and culture often lead to people adopting a fatalistic view of disability. Disabled people are commonly considered a burden to their families and wider society and have even been denied access to basic education and health services. Pray for a shift in attitudes within Nepalese society that may lead to greater compassion for those with disabilities. (Tearfund - January 2010)