



Dan and Phillipa Munday  
Lamjung, Nepal

Dear Friends

Greetings from Nepal. We are truly out of the monsoon now, by about two weeks, but it makes all the difference. We have had clear mountain views on several mornings and the oppressive, very humid heat is now over for the next six months. It is also the period before it starts getting cold for winter, so it is very pleasant and we hope this weather will last into early December, by which time our winter woollies will be out of the drawers and in use again. Meanwhile, the last few weeks have seen some adventures.....

**Trip out west:** The monsoon this year has caused lots of damage with landslides. We have been experiencing this with the journey home to Besisahar, as a result of the landslide we reported in our last letter, taking about 30 minutes longer. To bypass the landslide which destroyed the road, a temporary track winds down the mountain to the river and crosses the landslide at that level and then back up the hill again.



Three weeks ago we visited hospitals in Surkhet and Rukum Districts as we plan the next stages of our rural palliative care project. This necessitated an approximate 1000-mile round trip, a lot of it on quite poor roads. It was made worse this year by a last flourish of heavy monsoon rain. We arrived at Nepalganj on the plain near the Indian border late in the evening on the first day of our journey, to find that our hotel had flooded. They said they were still open but wading through knee-high water to get to our rooms did not strike us as a good idea, especially as they had no electricity so we would not be able to see any snakes in the flood waters or have any power in our rooms. We therefore had to search for a new hotel and thankfully found one which wasn't affected by the flood.



Travelling back into the hills the next day (fortunately the rain had stopped), we were stuck for 6 hours by a very large landslide before reaching Surkhet. In the end, as it looked as if it would not be cleared that evening, we retraced our route and found a 'hotel' for the night. The next day, the Surkhet road was still blocked so we diverted to Rukum. The river was very full and we crossed several quite significant landslides. In places sections of the road too had fallen into the river, in the last couple of days, narrowing it significantly. In that situation you always have the thought in the back of your mind that the vehicle you are in could destabilise it further and slip you into the river too. So we prayed lots on that journey. In the end we managed to have fruitful visits with both the hospitals as planned and get safely back to Pokhara at the end of the week. We were so thankful for our very steady driver, Ganesh and so pleased that he is part of our project team.

**All change:** Our trip became particularly important as we are facing unforeseen challenges for the Sunita Project. District Hospital Lamjung (DHL), which was run by our partner organisation HDCS, has rather suddenly been returned to government management. This was in the middle of the five-year agreement which would have seen HDCS management at least up until the end of the project (they have run it for 21 years). It does mean that the hospital will go through a period of reorganisation and will be focusing on keeping their essential services going. So it's not really the time to be introducing a new service like palliative care. We hope to still work with DHL in the future, but it is going to look very different; we are entering a time of uncertainty as we think of what 'Plan B' might be.



**Surprise trip to Kathmandu:** This wasn't the only unforeseen challenge we have had in the three months since our time in the UK. We had been back in Besisahar a week or so at the beginning of September, when Phillipa slipped on the path outside the kitchen (everything is very slippery in the monsoon), and banged her head on the concrete step, hard enough to lose consciousness and be quite concussed. Dan had been in Pokhara the week before, so was very pleased it had not happened then. To cut a long story short, later that afternoon we had our first

ever helicopter trip to Kathmandu. We were so thankful that it worked out as an 8-9 hour bumpy road trip in the back of an 'ambulance' (think Mark 1 Landrover not modern-day ICU on wheels) would not have been good. Fortunately, the scans were all fine and Phillipa was discharged the next day. It took several weeks for her to fully recover and we remained in Kathmandu a couple of weeks for the initial recuperation.

**Dyslexia Awareness and KISC EQUIP training:** Unfortunately, the event planned for Dyslexia Awareness month at a university in Kathmandu was postponed, not actually due to Phillipa's accident (although it would have been a bit tricky that week!), but a sudden change in the exam schedule at the campus, meaning the students would not be free to attend. We are still hoping it will take place, maybe at the very end of November.

Meanwhile the KISC EQUIP team will be in Lamjung this week and next. As well as visiting lots of schools and doing some follow-up with students on a previous Adolescent and Reproductive Health session, Phillipa will deliver a full-day training with 15 teachers on differentiation and inclusive teaching.

**Sunita Project news:** Work on Sunita Project progresses despite the upheavals at DHL. Over the next two weeks our teams will be in Lamjung developing training for Female Community Health Volunteers and a schools awareness-building programme. We carry on training health workers; we have two training weekends for Gurkha Welfare Trust staff before Christmas. Dan will also attend a conference in Indonesia to give a presentation about the work in Nepal and deliver a workshop with co-members of the Asia Pacific Primary Palliative Care Special Interest Group.

As ever, we are so grateful for your prayerful support.

*Dan and Phillipa*



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**Prayer points:**

- Give thanks for God's faithfulness, safety in travel and Phillipa's full recovery.
- Sunita Project: how to proceed with the changing situation at the local hospital.
- Pray for all the hospital staff and the Besisahar community, dealing with big changes.
- Pall. Care training with FCHVs. Nov.2-3.
- Differentiation training for local teachers, Nov.6.