

Peter and Jayne Fleming

Location: **Kathmandu, NEPAL**

Mission: **Integral development and teaching**



We arrived safely on 30 December! We left Belfast City airport and in just over 16 hours were in Nepal. It was lovely to be welcomed back by our landlord and his family. Friends had left us food in advance while we spent the first seven days self-quarantining. It has been wonderful to catch up with people and it felt as if we had never been away. But time stops for no one, and there are many changes. Colleagues we had worked with are no longer here and there are new people in both Kathmandu Study Centre (KISC) and United Mission to Nepal (UMN).

Walking about the streets covid restrictions here are not really evident. Interestingly because of pollution Nepali people wear their masks outdoors and then take them off indoors! Not everyone rushes to get tested as they don't want to isolate, but it is obvious that there is a very rapid spread throughout the country. Along with many of our colleagues we have been infected and have had to isolate for ten days at the end of January. Government restrictions currently prohibit any gathering of more than 25, so churches for example, are unable to meet.

On the first day back to school at KISC the government announced that all schools were to close for four weeks! So now it is back to online teaching. Staff can choose to teach from home or on-site. Staff children are supervised on school premises so that staff are free to teach without distractions. Jayne is now part of the student support team helping children in primary and lower secondary. She is supporting children with reading, spelling, and writing. She has also been helping supervise the staff children with their learning.

Peter is working online from our flat, which is easier now being in the same time zone as colleagues. The major issue



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is that a work visa has not yet been granted. Practically this means he cannot spend much time at UMN headquarters, although he enjoyed a brief visit to meet up with friends again. He continues to help prepare projects for funding and has been engaged in discussions about how work will develop in UMN in the foreseeable future. The wheels of government bureaucracy continue to move slowly and project agreements with UMN remain unsigned.

Dhana Lama, UMN's new Executive Director, is wrestling with huge strategic decisions. There are many potential opportunities for Peter to engage in teaching future leaders in some colleges, and further develop ongoing relationships with influential Nepali leaders. For now, these are not yet happening due in part to the pandemic and more importantly to uncertainties about working visas.



Photo: Dhana Lama, Executive Director, UMN

Prayer points

- Praise God for the warm welcome on return, and the sense of being in the right place for now.
- Give thanks that regardless of Covid-19 infection, we are aware of God's protection and provision.
- Pray that there will be no drawn out after effects of Covid-19 and our general health will be protected.
- Pray that Dhana Lama and her leadership team will be guided wisely.
- Pray that the work of UMN and KISC will be enlarged.
- Pray that guidance will come clearly about future opportunities and work.