



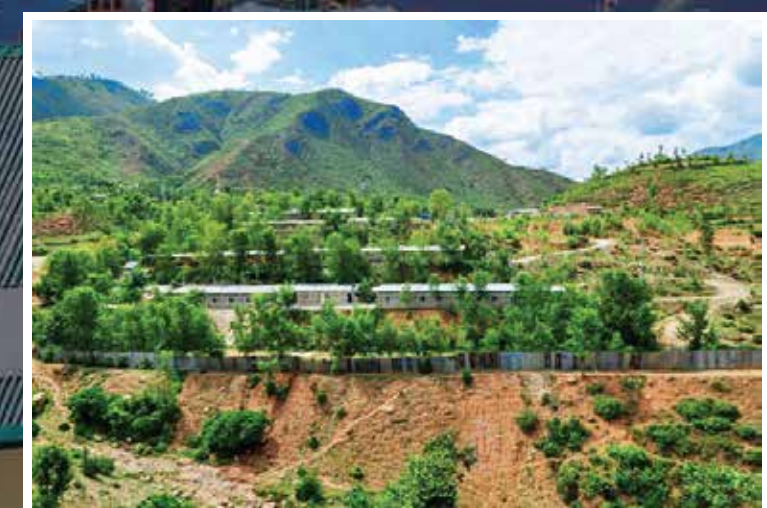
MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

New York physician Christopher Barley at the inauguration of a new hospital in Sindhuli that bears his name. The facility has been converted from a former housing complex for Japanese engineers working on the BP Highway. All photos: Sean Shoemaker

SEAN SHOEMAKER IN SINDHULI

Two years after rallying to provide medical care to those wounded in the 2015 earthquakes, a New York doctor and an American medical charity have established a permanent presence in Nepal, inaugurating the Christopher Barley Hospital in Sindhuli this week.

Four-hours along the B P Highway from Kathmandu, the Aatmiya Community Hospital has 20 beds and will serve up to 100,000 people in the village of Khalte in this under-served district of the Inner Tarai in east-Central Nepal.



“We will be able to provide everything short of major trauma or open heart surgery,” said Christopher Barley at the opening. He was joined by Michael Daube, founder of the US-based non-profit CITTA which is dedicated to providing healthcare and educational opportunities to excluded communities in under-privileged and remote regions of India and Nepal.

Both men rushed to Nepal after the April 2015 earthquake and were involved in search and rescue for a few weeks but realised there was a much more urgent need for long-term health care in districts not affected by the earthquake. The two selected a former housing complex in Khalte used by Japanese engineers while building the highway from Dhulikhel to Bardibas.

“The location was chosen on purpose, we wanted to have access to roads and to take medical care to a community that wasn’t being served,” explained Barley, adding that they were convinced they made the right choice after 300 people attended a free health camp one week prior to the hospital’s opening. Many had serious health issues that needed surgery and treatment.

“It was an indication that this kind of facility is needed here,” said Daube of CITTA. “Our aim is to maintain the treatment of the poor. We aren’t just extending healthcare, we are also providing it for a rural community that is deprived of it.”



Although Daube and Barley have teamed up together before, this project in particular is significant to both of them. Barley has a respected internal medicine practice in New York City, and has been involved with Daube in raising funds to extend much-needed medical care and education to Humla and Sindhuli in Nepal and Rajasthan and Odisha in India under the slogan: ‘Making a difference against indifference.’



“This is the first time we have had a project that’s so easily accessible,” said Daube. “It can be a safety net for all the villages in Sindhuli.”