

## Alumni profiles - Jocelyn Habens

BNurs (2002)

Research Nurse- Nepal. The "Oxford Vaccine Group" & Patan Hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal

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### What are your career experiences since graduating from the University of Birmingham?

After graduation I undertook a "Development Programme" based in the hospitals in Birmingham for two years. I then applied for and was accepted to work for Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) as a nurse, however my placement was withdrawn by the country partner in Malawi-Africa and unfortunately that year there were only limited nursing places so I did not work for them. Following this disappointment I undertook a period of agency work in intensive care units in Brighton whilst applying for other things. I was accepted to work as an expedition Nurse in Namibia- Africa. On completion of this I followed my dream to become a nurse in Haematology and moved to London where I started building a career in the largest bone marrow transplant centre in Europe. Here I worked with a great team and started to progress along the career ladder. I was even attended an overseas haematology conference. Who can say that as a ward nurse?!

After 3 years working as a haematology nurse in London I still wanted to give something to those less fortunate than myself. I moved to Nepal where I have worked as a Nurse Tutor in a local nursing campus training Nepali Nurses, worked at a remote hospital on a research study into the nasopharyngeal carriage rates of pneumococcus in rural children of Nepal, in a travel clinic treating climbers with frostbite and high altitude illnesses as well as tourists with diarrhoea. The most rewarding work in Nepal so far has been working in remote health posts for Community Action Nepal (a charity set up by Doug Scott- the mountaineer), training local staff in simple techniques, and educating local communities. However we all need money to survive and the best thing about what I am doing right now is that I am nursing in an equally rewarding environment on a project that has the potential to have long lasting effects on child mortality rates in Nepal. We are trying to introduce this crucial vaccine for Nepalese children. I feel in all my roles in Nepal I am really privileged to have had the opportunity to experience another culture and way of living by having nursing skills in a country like Nepal.

### What was the best thing about your time as a student here?

The best thing about studying in Birmingham was the number and different kinds of people that I met both at University and in the hospitals on placements. Doing my nurse training in Birmingham did not only introduce me to others who wanted to work in the Health care profession but people who studied many different subjects and came from many different backgrounds. I feel this enabled me to become a rounded person and enriched my perspective on life.

### In what way did living and studying in Birmingham live up to your expectations?

As I mentioned before I have had a very varied and fulfilling career with many opportunities and studying at Birmingham contributed to opening my eyes to these possibilities.

### What advice would you give to current students studying on your degree programme?

Stick at it even if the nurses you work with keep moaning about the profession, the pay the number of staff, the patients etc. Nursing is full of opportunities and what you get out of it is relative to what you put in. I wouldn't change being a nurse for anything and two friends that I have met since qualifying from Birmingham have since decided to undertake their nurse training, have qualified and love it.