



As a glance through NAFA's 2013 calendar (available in September) demonstrates, there is no shortage of engaging children in Nepal.

One who made a particularly strong impression on me was Pasang, whom we met during our trek through the lower SoluKhumbu in January this year. He lives with his father and older sister in an isolated farmhouse on a ridge overlooking terraced hillsides. He is about nine years old and has Down syndrome.

This was not the first time NAFA members had camped at his farm and he greeted the returnees eagerly. From the time our tents were erected until we left the next day he was part of the action, or during down times, a patient sentinel. The dining tent held particular fascination, with small fingers creeping towards cutlery, crockery and condiments, to be met with a sigh of resignation each time he was reminded "no touching Pasang".

He also knows how easy it is to train adults from Australia to play throw and catch, delighting in the gift of a yellow ball, but perhaps his greatest enthusiasm was for the collection of books Brenda had brought. These were his constant companions, pored over for pictures of familiar Nepali scenes and animals and jealously guarded in their cloth bag.

It is unlikely that Pasang will ever participate in a formal education programme, but his family is teaching him domestic tasks that will facilitate his independence. This will become of increasing importance as his father ages and is less able to care for him.

MEGAN GROESE

TURNING THE LIGHTS ON AT TAWAL

DISCUSSION of Tawal's need for electricity with NAFA started in late 2008. After nearly two years of feasibility studies and further discussion between community members and NAFA executive officers, a proposal evolved for a 20 KW micro-hydro system that would provide electricity to 250 households in two villages (Tawal and Tawal Besi) as well as to two schools and a health clinic.

In November 2010 I joined Ross and Brenda in Nepal to meet with the engineer on the project and travelled to Tawal to meet with local leaders and villagers. Community members were asked to raise some cash within a month and to set up a work register for each household.

Being invited to officially open the micro-hydro system with Ross in Tawal in February this year was a thrilling prospect for me. Opening the valve that let water into the power station to turn the turbines and start up electricity for the day reminded me of my father, who had opened many valves in his power engineer's career. And what made me even more

emotional was seeing the look of pride on the faces of those in the community who had made the project happen....the women who had carried the 45 kg bags of sand up from the river, the men who

have electricity to help the children do their homework and to move safely around their small 2-3 room homes, and a small rural carpentry business has been set up as has a small poultry farm. The school



had carried the 320 kg turbine and generator 3 days from the road-head to the site and the man who had trained in Kathmandu for six months to be one of the operators. 250 households now

will now have electricity to set up a small computer lab to expose rural students to the world of information technology.

ROD SETTERLUND

NEPALESE FAMILY VISITS NEPAL

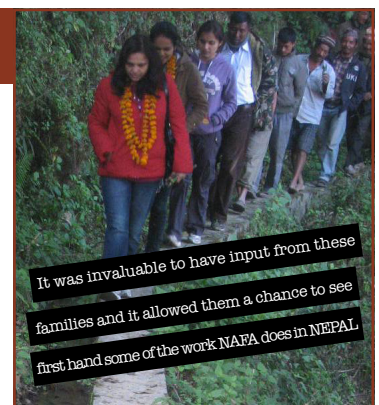
In November / December 2011 two NAFA Nepalese families returned to Nepal to see their relatives. They were able to spend time with NAFA executive members viewing some projects. One member assisted with the evaluation of a VSN FEAT student. The other family assisted in translation and evaluation of an irrigation project in Lapsiphedi which was causing landslides and affecting vegetable farming. We also visited the Thimi health clinic, the Tilganga eye Centre and the children at PA Nepal Sankhu.

"Time is always a constraint when my husband, two daughters and I go to Nepal. This time was no exception.

We started off at Thimi carpet

factory. I realised the importance of this project after learning that most of the workers would not usually leave work to see a doctor because of the financial strain on their families. We also visited the VSN Thimi school and talked to Grade 10 students who were very energetic and interested about life in Australia. My daughter even recognised one of the girls that we had previously sponsored (who we recently found out had topped the school in year 10 board exams).

Since arriving in Australia in '94, we have had the pleasure of participating in numerous fundraisers, our girls have danced at NAFA cultural festivals and my husband and I have helped out behind the scenes.



We were always aware that the money was going towards a great cause, however, witnessing this with our own eyes made us realise how much of a difference these endeavours have made to so many lives."

ROSS HAZELWOOD, NIRMALA AND NEHA PANDEYA

CHILD SPONSORSHIP NEWS

Some very good news!

Five girls at VSN School Thimi passed their School Leaving Certificate (SLC) with either a distinction or first division pass. Alisha, topped the school with 91%. The girls will now study science or management at college level. Talented student Silviya passed her first semester engineering exams with an amazing result of 100% in all her subjects. .

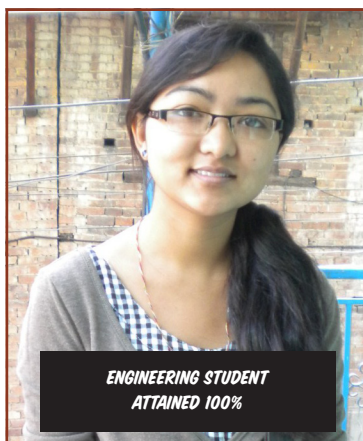
Five students at PA Nepal sat their SLC exam and 4 girls passed. The boy who failed is determined to resit the exam and pass next time.

And in the remote village school in Tawal the first batch of class 10 students sat the SLC exams, and 24 of 27 students passed. Tawal school had the best result of the 128 schools in Dhading district, a great result for a remote government school when the national average of passing SLC was only 47%.

The child sponsorship program in Thimi was evaluated by social work students at UQ supervised by our research officer Dr Deb Setterlund. If you would like to read the full report please contact Helen or Deb.



TOPPED THE SCHOOL WITH 91%



**ENGINEERING STUDENT
ATTAINED 100%**



SILVIYA BEING INTERVIEWED PRIOR TO RECEIVING NAFA SUPPORT

AUSSIE KIDS MEET NEPALESE STUDENTS

Stella, Charlie, Meg and Katie, aged 10 and 9, visited VSN school, Thimi in December 2011 with their parents. They brought with them small photo illustrated diaries of their lives and interests in Australia.

They visited Grade 6 and 7 students, introduced themselves and then invited the Nepalese students to look at their diaries. It was a great success; the Nepalese students overcame their shyness to use their English skills and asked many questions about Australia, such as where do you live? They got their text books out and quickly found the page on Australia with a map. They were overcome with pictures of the beach and the surf. Meg said, "I loved all the little kindy kids and the song they sang for us". Stella is quite tall for a 10 year old and the assembly fell quiet when she spoke and told them her age – the Nepalese kids were amazed! Charlie soon won over the boys with his pictures of playing sport and just a smile and eye contact.. Katie just wanted to play with the kids so we came back in their break.

The Aussie kids were all overawed by the experience and thought it was the best part of their trip to Nepal.

THE GRIFFIN FAMILY



WHAT A DIFFERENCE A LIGHT MAKES!



Seven months of hard work by the Lumsa community resulted in switching on the electricity to 105 homes in November 2011.

Each household now has interior lights and power plugs. After receiving ceremonial tea and silk kartas the NAFA members were treated to Sherpa singing and dancing from the community.

Ang Tendi Sherpa, age 16, Class:-9 says "that before I used to kerosene at night time and it was not good for health. And it was very expensive also and not look clear and some time when the wind blows it disturbed. Now I read and write easily and feeling comfortable."

Diku Sherpa, 50, says "now everything changed when we have get electricity. It made us when we cooking. Like cutting vegetable- now we never feeling dark. I am surprising within short time in Lumsa is changed. My children doing well now they do homework in the night and in the morning they help us in the kitchen or farm"

Ang Lhamu Sherpa, age 21 a student & teacher in Lumsa Primary School advised now she is always use laptop in her room. "Before I needed internet access at that time I had to go Salleri. It is 7 hours far from Lumsa to walk. But now I easily can access internet in my home".



**NAFA AIMS TO IMPROVE THE WELL BEING OF PEOPLE IN NEPAL BY SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE HEALTH, EDUCATION & INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON NAFA & THE CURRENT PROJECTS & APPEALS PLEASE VISIT WWW.NAFA.ORG.AU**