

**Nepal Australia Friendship Association Qld (NAFA)  
President's Report for 2021  
Submitted to the AGM 12 April 2022**

**The Big Picture:**

A second year affected by Covid – we had hoped for a return to normality but again: no annual fundraising dinner - only a couple of market stalls and no visits to Nepal by NAFA executive officers. However, like 2020, we were still able to continue to support our Nepali funded partners through Covid, fund our core projects in Nepal and allocate funds to complete the rebuild of classrooms of another village primary school impacted by the 2015 earthquake.

Our priorities in 2021 included further provision of **personal protective equipment and supplies**, as well as additional allocations to Surendra in Thimi and Govinda in Pokhara to support their efforts to provide **additional Covid-19 related assistance** to the most disadvantaged in their respective communities. Another priority was to ensure we met our **ongoing education, childcare and health program commitments**. We were able to achieve both these priorities through the continued generosity of NAFA supporters and our guarantee that **100% of donations go directly to Nepal**.

In addition, **donations from generous philanthropists, including the English Family Foundation, Goldberg Foundation and the Hare Family Foundation**, enabled NAFA to fund the rebuild of three classrooms in the remote village of Kichet in the Dhading district, and provide support to agricultural development and one-off initiatives for farmers living in several remote villages still recovering from the devastating 2015 Gorkha earthquake.

**NAFA project highlights in 2021:**

- **\$7,879** allocated to purchase Covid-19 personal protective equipment, supplies and provide other support e.g. food packages for 5 NAFA funded partners, a school and local community in Thimi, people with a disability in Pokhara and an organisation supporting front-line health workers.
- **\$42,195** allocated to rebuild three classrooms in the remote village of Kichet and completing the rebuild of a classroom in the remote village of Ricket, bringing the total of NAFA's allocations to the rebuild response to the 2015 earthquakes to approximately \$875,000, after \$96,000 was allocated in 2015 as an initial response e.g. roofing tin and rice. Funding support from the Hare Family Foundation and the Goldberg Foundation.
- **\$15,400** allocated to education sponsorship for **28** school children at VSN Thimi.
- **\$12,269** allocated to Further Education and Training (FEAT) sponsorships for a total of 13 students: VSN Thimi (8), Tawal (4) and PA Nepal (1) students for college or Bachelor level study.
- **\$20,362** allocated to 5 ongoing education and childcare programs and 1 one-off project, including: two teacher salaries in a remote village that has enabled that hub school to go to Grade 10; support for another school in western Nepal; operational support for three childcare centres for poor families; and an allocation for fit-out of a newly built childcare centre in Pokhara, funded by Partners in International Collaborative Community Aid (PiCCA).
- **\$13,027** allocated to 3 ongoing health projects, including salaries for two health workers in a remote health centre and support for two primary hearing care programs.
- **\$7,419** allocated to support the operation of a home providing respite care and vocational training for young women with an intellectual disability and their families.
- **\$7,000** allocated to the third year of a three-year remote village agricultural cooperative *Growth and Sustainability* project in partnership with the English Family Foundation.
- **\$3,140** allocated to a pilot farming project supporting younger farmers in a remote village.

**A closer look at NAFA's ongoing (annually funded) programs**

I continue to be proud of the spread and depth of NAFA's ongoing programs. They cover the areas of education, childcare and health in both remote village and urban locations. This has been particularly important in the two Covid affected years of 2020 and 2021, with NAFA executive officers not being able to travel to Nepal to assess new one-off project proposals.

Education: child sponsorship, further education and training (FEAT) and teacher salaries

NAFA has had a child sponsorship program at **Vinayak Shiksha Niketan (VSN) School** in Thimi since 1995, with **28 children sponsored in 2021** for education to Grade 12. This program has been capped for a few years now, with no further students to be added and a sunset clause in the year 2025 to continue

sponsorship of currently sponsored students to Grade 12. This sunset clause was introduced due to the administrative load, the multi-year impact on NAFA's financial commitments and ageing of NAFA committee members.

NAFA's **Further Education and Training (FEAT)** program, which has been operating successfully since 2008, aims to partner with child sponsors and families to provide opportunities for disadvantaged young people to undertake vocational training, post Grade 10 (college years 11 and 12) education and Bachelor level study to improve their employment chances. Sponsored children from VSN Thimi are from poor families in this pottery/farming town, or from families working and living in a local carpet factory. Sponsored students from Prisoners Assistance (PA) Nepal have parents who have been in prison. Finally, students from the area school at Tawal are from poor subsistence farming backgrounds. A total of **13 students** were supported through the **FEAT program in 2021, studying medicine, nursing, education, commerce, chartered accountancy and hotel management.**

NAFA continues to sponsor two teachers at the school in **the remote village of Tawal** that provides secondary school education to Grade 10 for students from 6 local villages. **NAFA also supports a school and after-school program in the remote village of Gamauli** in western Nepal and in 2021 personal protective supplies and equipment was also provided to services around Gamauli.

#### Childcare

NAFA continued its financial support to **two childcare centres** operated by the **Butterfly Foundation in Pokhara**. These centres support families who have moved from villages in search of casual day labour work, as well as other poor families in Pokhara. In both 2020 and 2021, Butterfly Foundation provided support, including food aid packages, PPE, sanitizer and masks to people with a disability who were being adversely affected by Covid. A new centre has been built after Butterfly were told they could no longer rent a centre they had operated from since the Maoist insurgency. NAFA, through funding from Partners in International Collaborative Community Aid (PICCA) helped with the fit-out of the new centre.

NAFA also continues to support the operation of a **childcare crèche for carpet factory families in Thimi**. Since the 2015 earthquake that crèche was relocated to an abandoned primary school and continues to operate well from that location.

#### Health

Since co-funding (with AusAid) the construction of the **health centre** in 2000, NAFA continues to subsidise the salaries of **two health workers**, providing primary health care to over 3,000 people living in **Tawal and 4 other nearby villages**. Unfortunately, the health post at Tawal was destroyed by the earthquake. It took five years to secure suitable land and then rebuild the health centre, during which the health centre had to operate first out of a tent and then out of emergency accommodation rooms built by the Nepal army in case of future natural disasters. The rebuild was completed in 2020 and played an important role in supporting local villagers who caught Covid in 2021.

Since 2010, NAFA has been a proud supporter of **Himalayan Health & Hearing (HH&H)**, which continues to be managed by the dedicated volunteer work and financial generosity of **Lew Tuck**. Lew works in partnership with **Keshab Dangol, an Otologist** with the **Nepalese Association of Hard of Hearing (NAHOH)**. **NAHOH** is also supported by NAFA to provide hearing care out of an office in Kirtipur, and in outreach camps in the Kathmandu Valley and in remote areas of Nepal.

In 2021, although Covid again restricted the activities that NAHOH could provide to the community, Keshab continued to play an invaluable support role to NAFA sourcing and arranging the delivery of Covid-related personal protective equipment and supplies to NAHOH and other NAFA funded partners in Kathmandu, Thimi, Pokhara and the remote village of Tawal.

#### Disability

NAFA began supporting **Sungava Home** in Kathmandu in 2019, The home provides day care and vocational training to **22 young women with an intellectual disability**. An **MOU** with Sungava was signed for the **three-year period 2020-2022** and NAFA funds allocated in 2021 contributed towards the costs of staff (two carers and one cleaner/helper), transportation (two permanently booked taxis to bring clients to and from the home) and communication (internet and telephone). In Covid 2021 the home continued to support the young women by providing online classes and risking personal safety by visiting and providing support to the young women either at Sungava Home or in their family homes.

### **One-off projects focus on rural agricultural and economic development**

The literature on community recovery after natural disasters emphasise the importance of local economic recovery. In 2021, the English Family Foundation and NAFA partnered for the third of a three-year Growth and Sustainability project aimed at growing the Pasang Chowk Agricultural Cooperative established by local farmers in an area around the village of Tawal. There have been several income-earning initiatives that have spun off this project, including a pilot farming project supporting young farmers that includes a fish farming initiative, coffee and banana-growing.

### **Thank you for supporting NAFA**

I would like to thank all NAFA supporters here in Australia as well as our funded beneficiaries in Nepal who have made NAFA achievements in 2021 possible.

In Australia, funding partners such as the **English Family Foundation**, the **Goldburg Foundation** and the **Hare Family Foundation** have made generous donations to NAFA that have enabled important initiatives to be approved and implemented. The loyal financial support from the NAFA network have also ensured continuity of funding for NAFA's **ten ongoing programs** and those **one-off projects** that make a big difference to remote and other disadvantaged families and communities in Nepal.

2021 was the second year that NAFA committee meetings had to largely be conducted by Zoom. I would like to thank all committee members and regular meeting attendees for their patience with the Zoom technology and the constraints of not having face to face monthly meetings. Although NAFA activities were affected by Covid it was still a busy year for the **Treasurer, Secretary** and **Education Sponsorship** positions and I would like to especially thank **Gabe Romaguera, Russ Waller and Jo Bicknell** for their high degree of competence and ongoing commitment in performing their duties so wonderfully during that time.

But everyone plays a role on the committee, providing advice and raising funds, so thank you to **Nirmala Pandeya, Mohan Sharma, Mana Ranjit, Peter Brockett, Wendy Eastwell, Stewart Jones, Barry Bicknell, Debbie Leigh, Rick Parkes, Betty Harris, Annette Blackwell, Paul Halman, Bijaya and Binu Rajbhandari, David Brown and Karlheinz Meng** for their collective professionalism, support and good humour that keeps the management of NAFA activities ticking over and fine-tuned.

In Nepal, our Project Coordinators volunteer their time to help their communities. It was an exceedingly difficult year for them, with rising infection rates, lost income from tourism, lockdowns that have affected the operation of services they provide to the community and personal loss and health concerns in their families. **Chandra Tamang and Kanchha Tamang** for NAFA supported villages in the Dhading district; **Surendra Prajapati** in Thimi; and **Govinda Pahari** in Pokhara. I would like to **again particularly thank Keshab Dangol** from the Nepalese Association of Hard of Hearing (NAHOH) for the invaluable role he played in sourcing and arranging the delivery of Covid-related personal protective equipment and supplies for NAFA's funded partners in Nepal. Finally, in Nepal, a big thanks to **Sujata Pradhan** for providing administrative support to NAFA from the Joy Foundation Nepal office in Kathmandu.

Finally, a big thank you to my wife **Deborah** for her passionate support for NAFA and particularly the women and local Tamang community in the Tawal area. I so admire her persistence in rising early on certain days of the week to collect cans and bottles with the aim of partnering with the Nepal Government, local Buddhist families and like-minded friends to rebuild the local monastery/community centre at Tawal irreparably damaged by the 2015 Gorkha earthquake. That dream of local villagers retaining their culture and well used community facility will be realised in 2022.

I have been President of NAFA for **fifteen years** and would love to pass the baton on to someone else who could lead such a wonderful development aid organisation. In the meantime, I will continue to contribute as best I can to an Association that continues to make a real difference to the lives of so many women, children, families and communities in Nepal.

*Rod Setterlund*

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President