

**Nepal Australia Friendship Association Qld (NAFA)
President's Report for 2022
Submitted to the AGM 4 May 2023**

The Big Picture:

The third and likely final year affected by COVID – though our new normal is not the same as it used to be: again, no annual fundraising dinner and few market stalls but at least Deb and I had visits to Nepal during the year, though in the second visit in late 2022, we contracted COVID, forcing us into seven days of isolation. However, like the previous two years of COVID, NAFA continued to support our **core, annually funded programs** and allocate funds for a range of **one-off projects**. We were able to achieve this through the generosity of our **network of loyal supporters and like-minded philanthropists** and continuing to make good on our guarantee that **100% of donations go directly to Nepal**.

Earmarked donations from NAFA supporters ensured that we continued to meet our **ongoing education, childcare and health program commitments**. Donations from **generous philanthropists, including the English Family Foundation, Goldberg Foundation, and the Hare Family Foundation**, enabled NAFA to fund additional projects to **rebuild or repair community infrastructure** destroyed by the devastating 2015 Gorkha earthquake. NAFA also funded the **installation of water supply pipes, tanks and taps to a rural school, as well as infrastructure projects** aimed at making a local **agricultural cooperative** more sustainable.

NAFA project highlights in 2022

- **\$43,829** allocated to **three ongoing education and childcare programs** and **seven one-off projects**: Ongoing program support included two teacher salaries in a remote village that has enabled that hub school servicing 6 villages to extend to Grade 10; support for a primary school in western Nepal; and operational support for a childcare centre for poor families in Thimi. Allocations for one-off projects included construction of compound walls for two remote primary schools, the installation of wooden window shutters in one of those schools, funds for teacher training for 48 teachers in seven schools, purchase of Taekwondo sports equipment and uniforms, and the installation of a water supply to a rural primary school.
- **\$7,500** allocated to education sponsorship for **15** school children at Vinayak Shiksha Niketan (VSN) school in Thimi.
- **\$3,410** allocated to Further Education and Training (FEAT) sponsorships for a total of **three students**: VSN Thimi (1) and Tawal (2) for college or Bachelor level study.
- **\$28,221** allocated to four ongoing health programs and two one-off projects. Ongoing health programs supported by NAFA include: the salaries for two health workers in a remote health centre; support for a remote eye screening and cataract surgery eye clinic; and support for two primary hearing care programs. The two one-off projects included the final of five dental camps and additional personal protective supplies (PPE) for NAFA partners in Nepal.
- **\$20,186** allocated to support a home providing respite care and vocational training for young women with an intellectual disability and their families. Support included ongoing operational support and one-off support for building repairs and a contribution towards the home's water supply.
- **\$12,762** allocated to an extended three-year remote village agricultural cooperative *Growth and Sustainability* project, and two one-off projects: a wall on two sides of a shelter for marketplace stall holders and a project aimed at increasing cash-income for particularly disadvantaged women living in a remote village.
- **\$11,500** allocated to rebuild a community facility destroyed by the 2015 Gorkha earthquake.
- **\$3,639** allocated to purchase Taekwondo sports equipment and uniforms benefiting children from several villages.

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 was 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 **15 children sponsored in 2022** for education to Grade 12.

This program has been capped for a few years now, with no new students added and a sunset clause in the year 2025 which will end the program. 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. Students from the hub school at Tawal are from poor subsistence farming backgrounds. **Three students** were supported through the **FEAT program in 2022, with this program also affected by the 2025 sunset clause**. A survey of all former VSN and Tawal students supported by FEAT was recently conducted and will be reported on in next year's report.

NAFA now only **sponsors one teacher** at the school in **the remote village of Tawal** that provides secondary school education to Grade 10 for students from 6 local villages. The salary of a second teacher sponsored by NAFA for many years, is now covered by a Nepal Government teacher quota after continuing advocacy by local leaders with the local rural municipality. **NAFA also supports a school and after-school program** in the **remote village of Gamauli** in western Nepal.

In 2022, supported by two generous philanthropic donations from the Goldberg Family Foundation and the Hare Family, NAFA allocated funds to one-off projects in several remote villages. School compound walls were constructed in the villages of Ladap and Kichet and wooden window shutters were installed in school classrooms in Richet. All three of these villages are in the Dhading district northwest of Kathmandu. NAFA also allocated funds to provide a water supply to a school in the village of Kuwapani, in the Nuwakot district west of Kathmandu.

NAFA recognises that quality education requires good physical structures (classrooms) and resources e.g. computers, library and highly motivated, qualified and trained teachers. To improve the quality of teaching in the Ganga Jamuna Rural Municipality, NAFA allocated funds towards the second of a three-phase teacher training program. Government accredited teacher trainers from Rural Education and Environment Development Centre (REED) conducted a 10-day "Child Friendly Learning Environment Development Workshop" in June 2022. A total of 48 teachers from seven (7) schools (Ladap; Duchene; Tawal; Tawal Besi; Kutal; Richet and Kichet) attended the training. A report from REED set out three objectives of the workshop:

1. To discuss the concept of "Child-friendly Learning Environment" and its application in the classrooms.
2. To source or develop the necessary resources to create child-friendly and resource-rich classrooms.
3. To explore the up-to-date teaching and learning approaches and techniques for students of all levels.

Feedback on the training from teachers to Deb and I during our visits to the area was very positive with evidence in the classrooms of a more child-friendly resources and statements by teachers that students seemed to be more motivated by the change to more interactive teaching styles.

Childcare

NAFA continued its financial support to a **childcare crèche for carpet factory and other low income families in Thimi**. Since the 2015 earthquake that crèche was relocated to an abandoned primary school and continues to operate well from that location. NAFA didn't allocate operational funding to the Butterfly childcare centre in Pokhara in 2022 as it was closed throughout the year due to a serious illness affecting the Director and Coordinator of the service. It plans to reopen when the new school year begins in April 2023.

Health

Since its inception, NAFA has supported an annual remote eye screening and cataract surgery clinic conducted by the Tilganga Eye Hospital. In January 2022, NAFA and Joy Foundation Nepal co-funded the three-day Sindhuli Outreach Micro Surgery Eye Clinic, held in Lampantar, Tinpatan Rural Municipality, approximately 100 kms from Kathmandu. Two surgeons, ten paramedics and five volunteers attended the clinic. 1,202 patients were screened, with 143 cataract surgeries performed by the two surgeons. Since co-funding (with AusAid) the construction of the **health post** 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**.

The health post was rebuilt after being destroyed by the earthquake and since then has played an important role in supporting the health care of local villagers during the COVID pandemic and more generally.

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 2022, NAFA also allocated funds for the fifth and final dental camp in the Ganga Jamuna Municipality of the Dhading district. A dental team from the Kantipur Dental Hospital, comprising four dentists and two dental hygienists conducted the dental camp on 3-5 December 2022. Over the three days, they screened 251 patients (60.2% female), including 217 children from schools in four local villages. Forty-seven patients received dental treatment, which included: extractions, fillings, and scaling. All patients received oral hygiene instruction and health education.

Disability

NAFA began supporting **Sungava Home** in Kathmandu in 2019, The home provides day care and vocational training to **20 young women with an intellectual disability**. An **MOU** with Sungava was signed for the **three-year period 2020-2022** and NAFA extended the MOU in November 2022 for another three years. Funds allocated by NAFA contribute towards the costs of staff (carers and vocational trainers) and transportation (two permanently booked taxis to bring clients to and from the home).

In 2022, Sungava had to move their operations after their home, which was showing large cracks in the walls arising from the 2015 earthquake, was declared unsafe by the local government engineer. NAFA allocated funds to help them move to nearby premises where they can stay for up to ten years while a new home is built. The funds were used to repair two buildings and contribute to the home's water supply. Demolition on the old home is almost completed and the local Rural Municipality has allocated funds to begin the construction of a new home.

Community

Two projects were also funded, one with community-wide benefit and the other targeting young people. An allocation was made to contribute to the rebuild of the monastery in the village of Tawal. The monastery has long been used as a community facility, hosting meetings and a range of NAFA-funded workshops, as well as providing accommodation for visiting donors. A second one-off project purchased sports equipment for Taekwondo classes, which were led by an accredited Taekwondo instructor. A small allocation was also made to purchase uniforms for children of Dalit families, who do the metalwork for the area and are recognised as being the most disadvantaged group in the area. Taekwondo proved to be very popular amongst both boys and girls from several local villages in the area. Teachers reported to us during our visit that the early morning classes were having a positive impact on the children's discipline and attitude towards school and study.

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 2022, the English Family Foundation and NAFA co-funded a three-year extension of a *Growth and Sustainability* project aimed at growing the Pasang Chowk Agricultural Cooperative established by local farmers in an area around the village of Tawal. Local farmers have begun to diversify their crops, with coffee now being their best income-earner. Grants have also been used to help them raise higher value animals and improve productivity through initiatives such as the installation of irrigation pipes and a hi-tech nursery.

A local Cooperative Savings Bank was also established and a steady increase in the collective savings of account holders provides evidence of sustained recovery from the devastating earthquake in 2015.

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 2022 possible.

In Australia, funding partners such as the **English Family Foundation**, the **Goldburg Foundation** and the **Hare Family Foundation** and others attending talks on NAFA 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.

2022 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 dinosaur who tries his best to chair meetings with members both physically and virtually present. Although NAFA fundraising activities were again affected by COVID, it was still a busy year for the **Treasurer, Secretary and Education Sponsorship** positions and I would like to thank Gabe Romaguera, Russ Waller and Jo Bicknell again especially for your high degree of competence and ongoing commitment in performing the duties of those three critical positions. Russ has advised that he is planning to retire soon and will be travelling more, so needs help with the Secretarial duties. **Russ has been a fantastic Secretary since 2017** and made a huge contribution to NAFA's fundraising efforts after the devastating earthquake in 2015. We hope someone will come forward and share the position this coming year so that he can enjoy his retirement yet stay involved in NAFA in this important position on the committee.

However, 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, Rick Parkes, Betty Harris, Paul Halman, Bijaya and Binu Rajbhandari and David Brown** for your collective professionalism, wisdom, support and good humour that keeps the management of NAFA activities ticking over and fine-tuned. Thanks also to Karlheinz Meng, who regularly comes to committee meetings and provides ongoing support to NAFA. Again, Peter has indicated he won't be renominating for a position in the coming year. **Peter has been on the committee since 2011**. and has been a great contributor to our fundraising efforts and project assessment. Like Russ, you have been an extremely competent member of the management team since then and I would particularly like to thank you for the support you provided in the challenging times that followed the 2015 earthquake.

In Nepal, our network of change agents and administrators connect NAFA with their respective communities, provide advice, identify needs, propose/negotiate solutions, and coordinate implementation of NAFA's ongoing programs and one-off projects. It has been a difficult time in recent years, with COVID, lost income from tourism, personal and family health concerns affecting their lives. NAFA is honoured to work alongside these partners in development, including **Chandra Tamang, Kanchha Tamang and Beg Tamang** for projects in the Tawal area; **Surendra Prajapati** for the child sponsorship, FEAT and child care programs in Thimi; **Govinda Pahari** for the child care centre in Pokhara; **Keshab Dangol** for the hearing assessment and treatment clinic in Kirtipur, **Shovana Rai** for Sungava Home in Swayambhu (Kathmandu), and **Min Shahi** for the school at Gamauli. Finally, a continuing big thanks to **Sujata Pradhan** for providing administrative support and encouragement to NAFA from the Joy Foundation Nepal office in Kathmandu.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I would like to thank my wife **Deborah** for her passionate support for NAFA and all it does. She is ever so patient watching me sit on the computer preparing for our visits to Nepal and then writing one report after another to our committee, NAFA members and our donors. When she is not providing advice on the design and evaluation of programs and project proposals, Deb is out collecting 10 cent refund cans and bottles and selling propagated plants on the front footpath for NAFA. I admire her persistence just as she does mine.

I have been President of NAFA for **sixteen years (but who is counting?)** and would **hope to wake up one morning knowing that someone has offered to take** the President's baton from me and lead what really is such a wonderful management committee and 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

Rod Setterlund OAM
President