

**Nepal Australia Friendship Association Qld (NAFA)  
President's Report for 2025  
Submitted to the AGM 12 May 2026**

**The Big Picture:**

With continued support from our network of loyal donors, NAFA had another impactful year in 2025, supporting twelve ongoing programs and several one-off projects covering the important development sectors of **education, childcare, health, disability, water infrastructure** and agricultural development. Collectively, NAFA's funded program and project portfolio continue to make a real difference to disadvantaged individuals, families and communities in Nepal.

**Donations totalling nearly \$170,000** were received from **three** like-minded **philanthropists** and a **network of loyal NAFA supporters**. NAFA donors are undoubtedly attracted by the spread and depth of **NAFA's program/project portfolio**, the **tax deductibility** of donations to NAFA and our **guarantee that 100% of donations go directly to Nepal**. That guarantee can be provided as we have no paid staff or office, spend no money marketing and executive officers visit Nepal, at their own expense, at least once a year (twice a year for many years after the devastating 2015 earthquake) to assess funding applications, monitor program/project implementation and evaluate outcomes achieved.

**NAFA project highlights in 2025**

- **\$34,084** allocated to **five ongoing education and childcare programs** and **four one-off projects**:  
**Ongoing programs** supported include **teacher salary support** in two villages, **extra tuition** in a rural secondary school in the lead up to national Grade 10 exams; **support for a primary school in western Nepal**; and operational **support for childcare creches** for poor families in **Thimi and Pokhara**.  
**One-off projects** include funding for the third year of a **Model Schools Project benefiting eight schools in the hilly region northwest of Kathmandu**, purchase of reusable (durable) educational resource "kits" for those eight schools, construction of a compound wall for a village primary school, construction of a toilet and instalment of a water purifier for a child care creche in Thimi, and provision of additional support to a village secondary school to recruit new senior teachers.
- **\$2,400** allocated to education sponsorship for 5 school children at Vinayak Shiksha Niketan (VSN) school in Thimi.
- **\$2,232** allocated to two students who had completed Grade 10 in Tawal Secondary School and were being supported through the Further Education and Training (FEAT) program for Grades 11 and 12 study.
- **\$13,606** allocated to two ongoing health programs: salaries for **two health workers** in a remote health post; and support for a **primary hearing care program based in Kitipur in the Kathmandu Valley that also conducts outreach hearing clinics outside Kathmandu**.
- **\$17,110** allocated to ongoing operational support for a home providing respite care and vocational training for young women with an intellectual disability and their families, and towards the fit-out of their home, rebuilt after the 2015 earthquake.
- **\$28,786** allocated to the fourth year of the *Pasang Chowk Agricultural Cooperative Growth and Sustainability* project, and a project extending the irrigation system for members (farmers) of the Cooperative.
- **\$5,592** to a Women's empowerment project in the Dailekh District, western Nepal to establish a chicken farm and purchase a mini-tractor.
- **\$2,945** to extend a micro-hydro water intake system benefiting two villages.

**A closer look at NAFA's ongoing (annually funded) programs and one-off projects**

NAFA's program/project portfolio covers the areas of education, childcare, health, disability, women's and agricultural development in both village and urban locations.

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

Teacher training

NAFA continues to recognise that **quality education requires good physical infrastructure**. However, teaching style and educational resources are just as important. In Nepal, the teaching style has traditionally been teacher-directed, with little input from students. Few resources, including early childhood development (ECD) resources are seen in classrooms due to lack of government funding.

Another structural issue has been the city-rural divide in English proficiency amongst both teachers and students. There are many private schools in the city that use English medium instruction (EMI) in the classroom, teaching all subjects, except Nepali and Social Studies, in English. Students from the rural areas are disadvantaged when they come to the city from their village for post-secondary education. This context was the backdrop for NAFA being asked by Tawal area village leaders to partner with a government accredited educational trainer in Kathmandu to develop and implement the *Gangajamuna Model Schools Project*. (MSP)

A generous philanthropic donation from the Goldburg Foundation has made the implementation of MSP **possible**. **The project** benefits **eight (8) village schools** in the Ganga Jamuna Rural Municipality, Dhading district and is managed by NAFA through an MOU with **Rural Education and Environment Development (REED) Centre**.

The Project has two objectives aimed at transforming the quality of education to children attending the eight targeted schools:

1. Improving the quality of education, with an emphasis on encouraging child-friendly classrooms and teaching styles; and
2. Supporting schools through a transition to English Medium Instruction (EMI), beginning with Grade 1 in Year 1 of the Project and progressing to the next Grade in each year thereafter.

In the past year, schools participating in the MSP received a major boost in early childhood development (ECD) resources. NAFA allocated funds to purchase eight “kit boxes” of durable/non-toxic resource materials and consumables from the National Institute of Psychology. The Institute is led by Ms Uma Lama Shrestha, who has completed a master’s degree in education and has 40 years’ experience, as a teacher in government schools, teaching six years in a Hong Kong British school and four years in Japan. She has also taught children with intellectual disabilities and volunteered with the Peace Corp in several countries. NAFA also allocated funds for the REED senior training officer for the MSP, Ms Shraddha Rai, to be trained in the use of the “kit box” resources to ensure successful implementation of their use in the ECD classrooms of participation schools.

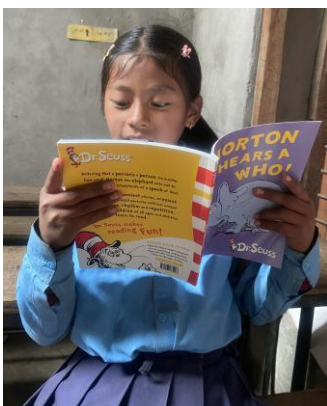
**ECED kit box resources on display on shelves made by a parent**



**Shraddha hands over English dictionaries and a thesaurus to the Principal**



**Student reading another Dr Seuss book**



**Students practicing with English language alphabet letters**



**Happy student with art crayons**



In addition to the introduction of ECED resources to the classrooms, participating teachers also received five days of ECED training that focused on developmental milestones, curriculum expectations, active-learning strategies, daily classroom organisation, and assessment approaches. A central theme of the training was the effective and meaningful use of the teaching and learning materials included in the ECED Kit Boxes.

The senior trainer was also busy implementing other model school initiatives: Activities focused on:

- strengthening coordination with local government at both the Ward and Rural Municipality levels to ensure alignment with local educational policies and fostering effective collaboration
- improving EMI-focused teaching by enhancing teachers' capacity, updating training materials, and providing continuous professional development opportunities to ensure high-quality instruction across subjects
- increasing community involvement by mobilising child clubs, conducting parental education orientations, and offering leadership training for School Management Committees (SMC) to promote active participation in school governance
- ensuring continuous mentoring and monitoring at a school level through regular visits and progress reviews to track the MSP's implementation and impact.

#### Sponsorship of teacher salaries and support for a school in western Nepal

NAFA has gone from sponsoring three teachers to one teacher at Tawal secondary school. NAFA also contributes towards a teacher's salary in the primary school at Latab, after NAFA's like-minded co-funder of education programs in the Tawal area, Smile Back to Me, Spain, withdrew their funding after many years of very much appreciated support. This reduction has occurred after the Nepal government allocated additional teacher quotas to the school, following continued advocacy by local leaders and good student numbers and outcomes.

NAFA also supports a school in the remote village of Gamauli in an area of high disadvantage in western Nepal. The school, with the support of Education Support Centre (ECC) in Kathmandu, has successfully completed its second year of transitioning to become a "model community school". It now has 20 students enrolled in each of Grades 1-8. Many of the families in the area are from the disadvantaged Dalit caste.

Sapana community school in western Nepal

Happy students attending Sapana community school



#### Child sponsorship, further education and training (FEAT)

NAFA has had a **child sponsorship program** at **Vinayak Shiksha Niketan (VSN) School** in Thimi since 1995. This program has been capped since 2018 and 2025 was the final year that allocations were made to support the remaining four students attain Grade 12. It has been a well-received and productive program for the past twenty years, helping so many students, many of whom are members of families who work and live in two nearby carpet factories, attend a school providing high quality education. As an example, in 2015, there were 53 students registered in the Child Sponsorship program with another 14 having graduated to the VSN FEAT program. These students were all selected on the basis that their economic and social circumstances were a barrier to access a quality education

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. The programs at both VSN Thimi and the hub secondary school at Tawal have now both ended.

In a NAFA executive visit to Nepal in February-March 2025, Jo and Rod interviewed 6 former VSN Thimi FEAT sponsored students, who had completed their Bachelor studies in Geomatics Engineering, Business Studies, Computer Engineering, Nursing (2) and Civil Engineering. They all have good jobs in their respective fields. All students expressed gratitude to NAFA generally and their sponsors particularly. They could all identify how life would have been different had they not received a NAFA Sponsorship. One of the respondents makes an annual donation to NAFA in her child's name.

In Tawal, Jo, Pratika and Bijaya interviewed 5 students while in Tawal. Pratika followed up another 17 students from Kathmandu, preparing a spreadsheet of data related to their study and work following the completion of that study. Netra Tamang, who completed a Bachelor of Education, has since secured a teacher quota outside the Tawal area. Like the post-FEAT sponsored students at VSN, Netra and others expressed sincere gratitude to NAFA, saying that without it, he would have had to leave school at the end of Year 10.

#### Completion of previous years education infrastructure projects

In the February 2025 executive officer visit to the Tawal area, we had the opportunity to sight the successful completion of two NAFA projects made possible through a generous donation from the Hare family trust: construction of a four-classroom block in Tawal secondary school and the supply of 200 new school desks for students in Grades 6-10 at that school.

4 classroom block completed at Tawal secondary school, a hub school for Tawal and five nearby villages



New school desks for Grades 6-10 students  
Girls on the left, boys on the right!



#### 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. In 2025, NAFA again allocated operational funds for salaries and child consumables. It also allocated additional funds to construct an additional toilet and install a water purifier for children attending the creche.

Children attending Thimi creche



New toilet for the creche



and hand-washing tub



NAFA also provides operational support to the **Butterfly childcare centre in Pokhara**, which now primarily supports low-caste (Hindu) Dalit families.

#### Health

##### **Tawal health post**

Since co-funding (with AusAid) the construction of the Tawal **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 played an important role in supporting the health care of local villagers following the devastating 2015 Gorkha earthquake and during the COVID pandemic. The health post is now registered as a government centre for pregnant mothers and infant immunisations, as well as for the distribution of Vitamin A and the de-worming for children.

### **Himalayan Health & Hearing and the Nepal Association of Hard of Hearing**

Since 2010, NAFA has been a proud supporter of **Himalayan Health & Hearing (HH&H)**, which continues to be financed, led and supported by a dedicated Australian volunteer team comprising Lew Tuck and Jodie Stewart. The team works in partnership with **Keshab Dangol, an Otologist** with the **Nepalese Association of Hard of Hearing (NAHOH)**. **NAHOH** is also supported separately by NAFA to provide hearing care out of a clinic in Kirtipur, and in outreach camps in the Kathmandu Valley and in remote areas of Nepal. In 2025, NAFA allocated funds towards office rent and a new milling machine used to make moulds, replacing one that has worn out over time.

### Disability

**Sungava Home** supporting young women with an intellectual disability

NAFA began supporting **Sungava** in Kathmandu in 2019, At the time, a Nepal Government engineer had just declared the Home unfit for purpose after large cracks appeared in the walls arising from the 2015 earthquake. The Rural Municipality then allocated 150 lakhs (\$176,500) to demolish the old home and begin construction of a new three-story building in 2024. The new home was officially opened in December 2025.

A three-year **MOU** with Sungava was extended in November 2022 for another three years. After partnering with Canadian Nepalese charities in 2024 to raise funds to purchase an e-van, NAFA allocated funds in 2025 towards the fit-out of the new home (electrical wiring and kitchen appliances) and towards the operational costs associated with employing staff (carers and vocational trainers), repairs and maintenance and other operational expenses.

Sungava has begun to pay three qualified teachers the government-set salaries, enabling them to apply to be licensed as a "special school". The Secretary of Sungava, Mrs Shovana Rai, is hopeful that the registration will be approved by the government in the coming year. Registration would attract at least some government funding via teacher quotas. NAFA is currently Sungava's sole source of annual operational funding, which is not sustainable in the medium and longer term.

**Sungava board members welcome to the rebuilt Sungava Home**



**Sungava board members and young women who are supported through day respite and vocational training**



### Women's Enabling Program (WEP)

In April 2023, NAFA approved a three-year Women's Enabling Program, auspiced by the Education Concern Centre (ECC) in Kathmandu and supporting mainly women from the Dalit caste and Thakuri ethnic group in Satkhamba and Ratamate villages, Dailekh District in western Nepal. Activities in the initial phases of the Program include income generation e.g. sewing, herb/spice production (turmeric powder, garlic, potato) and market gardening; women's awareness about health, sanitation, nutrition, legal provision, citizenship etc; and basic literacy and technology skills.

In the third year of the MOU, NAFA supported the establishment of a small chicken farm for the women and the purchase of a mini-tractor for their market garden.

Mini-tractor set up for use in the Women's Empowerment Group farm



Basic shed being constructed during establishment of a chicken farm



### **Agricultural development**

In 2025, the English Family Foundation (EFF) and NAFA continued to co-fund the *Growth and Sustainability Project* (GSP) for the Pasang Chowk Agricultural Cooperative. The Cooperative was established in 2013 by local farmers in the area around the village of Tawal in Ward 2 of the Gangajamuna Rural Municipality, Dhading district. Since establishing the Cooperative, local farmers began to diversify their crops, with coffee now being their best income-earner.

In 2025, NAFA and EFF funds were allocated to expand the irrigation system by purchasing 60,000 metres of irrigation pipes for farmers wanting to expand their coffee plant production or enter the industry for the first time. Local farmers contributed 50% of the cost of the irrigation pipes as well as in-kind labour costs to lay the pipes. The joint NAFA/EFF allocation included additional support for sixteen of the poorest families (13 Dalit and 3 others e.g. widows) that covered the poorest farmer's 50% share of the cost of the irrigation pipes.

In 2025, a good outcome of an important phase in community development practice – that of capacity building, was achieved. During the year Kanchha Tamang, Business Development Officer for the GSP, was nominated by the Nepalese Government to be on the National Tea and Coffee Development Board. The Board, a policy-making body, comprises the Minister of Agricultural Development, the Department Head for Food Quality Control and other high profile government officers. Kanchha's nomination to the Board was acknowledgement for his leadership in the growth of the coffee industry in the Ganga Jamuna Rural Municipality.

Right from the start, Kanchha has taken his nomination seriously, raising issues with the Board important to the Cooperative he represents. In his first Board meeting, Kanchha raised an issue about the current price for coffee plants propagated in the Cooperative's high-tech nursery. The National Board rate of Rs 30 (\$0.30) is very low and hasn't changed in twenty years. Yet, over that time, the cost of propagating coffee plants e.g. labour wages, plastic bags etc has continued to increase. Kanchha proposed to the Board that the rate of propagated coffee plants be increased to 50 rupees (\$0.50). He hopes that the Board will pass his proposal at a future Board meeting.

During the year, Kanchha was also nominated by the Nepal Government to represent cooperatives involved in the coffee industry to attend a Sustainable Highland Arabic Coffee Industry Development International Workshop in Chiang Mai, organised and funded by the Royal Project Foundation of Thailand. Through the experience, Kanchha made many new coffee business contacts and became friends with coffee roasting masters and barista trainers.

### Irrigation pipes for expansion of irrigation system being unloaded in Duchene



### Kanchha Tamang's Certificate of Completion Coffee Industry International Workshop in Thailand



### Thank you for supporting NAFA

I would like to thank all NAFA supporters, management committee members and funded partners in Nepal who collectively helped NAFA achieve positive, practical outcomes for those individuals, families and communities that benefitted from our program/project portfolio in 2025.

Three philanthropists – the **Hare family trust, Goldberg Foundation and the English Family Foundation** again made generous donations to NAFA in 2025. These donations have provided funding for significant one-off projects such as the **Pasang chowk Agricultural irrigation system**, the **Gangajamuna Model Schools Project** and the **Pasang Chowk Agricultural Cooperative Growth and Sustainability Project**.

The continued, loyal financial support from the NAFA donor network have also ensured continuity of funding for NAFA's **twelve ongoing programs and several one-off projects** that improve the lives of remote and other poor individuals, families and communities in Nepal.

Although NAFA fundraising activities were again restricted as our committee ages, it was still a busy year for the **Treasurer, Secretary and Education Sponsorship** positions. 2025 was the 30<sup>th</sup> and final year of NAFA allocations to the Child Sponsorship program and the 17<sup>th</sup> year (from my calculation) of the FEAT program at Vinayak Shiksha Niketan (VSN) secondary school in Thimi. Jo Bicknell was busy interviewing former FEAT students from VSN and Tawal Secondary School, data to be drawn from in preparing a summative evaluation report on the outcomes of the program.

**Gabe Romaguerra** has been NAFA's **Treasurer** for the past **10 years**, having taken over from Ujjwal Gautam in 2017. His professional approach to the position, active support for NAFA's objectives and an example of someone with strong volunteer ethics has made him a perfect member of the senior executive team. In the past year, he has also taken on the extra duties involved in implementing NAFA need for succession planning by recruiting Ankita Nayyar to the important Assistant Treasurer position. We thank both Gabe and Ankita for agreeing to perform the critical tasks associated with the Treasurer positions.

I would also like to thank **Russ Waller** for his competence and organisational skills in making sure we get through a schedule of meetings needed to do NAFA's business over the year and writing up an accurate record of the agenda and decisions made at those meetings. Russ and Rina, along with **Rick, Jo and Barry**, started attending NAFA meetings after the devastating earthquake in 2015. They have all connected NAFA with substantive sources of funds that were so desperately needed for NAFA's immediate and rebuilding responses to the earthquake. This committee and all those who have benefitted in Nepal are so very grateful for all your collective efforts over the 11 years since the earthquake.

Beyond those three positions is a stable, experienced and united management committee, comprising members who help assess proposals for funding, each of you coming from your own skills and experiences. This includes always wise advice from members of the Brisbane Nepalese community: **Nirmala Pandeya, NAFA's Vice-President, Bijaya Rajbhandari, Mohan Sharma and Mana Ranjit**. Thank you for your advice, encouragement and friendship. NAFA is also grateful to **Mana and Rajani** for connecting NAFA with Sungava Home, which supports young women with intellectual disabilities. Sungava is one of the best led and most deserving support services NAFA has partnered with in our 35-year history.

A special acknowledgment and thanks to **Bijaya** to for joining us on executive officer visits to the Tawal area. Your input on those visits is so important to NAFA's proposal assessment, implementation monitoring and evaluation roles.

I would also like to thank other committee members and regular meeting goers, including **Wendy Eastwell**, for connecting us with the Butterfly Foundation childcare centre in Pokhara and for joining us on three visits to Tawal. Including our visit in January this year with grand-daughter Ashling. **Stewart Jones, Paul Halman, Betty Harris, Peter Brockett and Karlheinz Meng**, your collective professionalism, wisdom, support and good humour keeps the assessment, monitoring and evaluation processes associated with NAFA funded projects ticking over and fine-tuned.

In Nepal, our network of funding partners connect NAFA with their respective communities, identifying needs, developing and negotiating proposals, coordinating implementation and evaluating the impact of NAFA's ongoing programs and one-off projects. NAFA is honoured to work alongside these partners in development:

- **Kanchha Tamang** for programs/projects in the Tawal area
- **Surendra Prajapati** for the child sponsorship, FEAT and a childcare program in Thimi
- **Govinda Pahari** for the childcare centre and now a disadvantaged secondary school in Pokhara.
- **Keshab Dangol** for the hearing assessment and treatment clinic in Kirtipur (Kathmandu Valley) and outreach clinics in Nepal
- **Shovana Rai** for Sungava Home supporting young women with an intellectual disability in Swayambhu (Kathmandu)
- **Min Shahi** and **Janie Kaiser** for the Sapana model school and Women's Enabling Project in Gamauli, a village in the Dailekh district, western Nepal.

I would also like to thank **Pratika Shakya**, who comes to Tawal with the NAFA team most visits, helping Deborah with translation and rural development advice when interviewing or meeting with local women and other members of the community.

It is most important that I again thank **Deborah** for her passionate and enduring support for NAFA and its development projects in Nepal. She is NAFA's **Research and Evaluation Officer**, runs **market stalls** with Wendy, and **collects 10 cent bottles and cans**. She still presents NAFA's case study of a community development partnership with villagers in the Tawal area annually to Social Work students studying community development at the University of Queensland. Deb works alongside me in our makeshift study, cursing at the computer as she works on a range of evaluation and research related reports throughout the year.

In January this year, Deb and I were able to do something we have wanted to do for the past 15 years, hike up with Chandra Tamang to a sacred tree at the top of a hill above Tawal, to what the locals call Pasang Chowk, where Buddhists from surrounding villages and afar gather twice a year for festivals. We started out in 12+ degree temperatures, stopping along the way to call our daughter Angela who had given birth to our first grandson the day before in Brisbane. Later in the day, it started to rain lightly. But we made it to a shelter constructed (with water supply) over ten years ago with NAFA funds for villagers (especially older men and women) who came up to the area to collect firewood and often were forced to stay overnight when the weather deteriorated.

We continued the climb early the next morning to Pasang Chowk, where Sirap Tamang joined us after running up from Tawal, on the auspicious occasion of the birth of our first grand-son, to perform a puja at the entrance to a sacred tree. At the top, it was -5 degrees, showery and windy. But the ceremony warmed our hearts and we made it all the way back down the slippery track to Latab with the help of a few local leaders hovering at our elbows. Memories from the hike, overnight stay at the shelter and puja will remain something we will always treasure.

Deb catches up with daughter of new grandson born in Brisbane



Forest shelter enroute to Pasang Chowk constructed 10 yrs ago with NAFA funding



Sirap performs puja at entrance to sacred tree



Over 300 villagers from Tawal area and distant villages attend festival a few months later



Family members and friends often ask me how long I will continue going to Nepal. I recall those special moments like our hike up to Pasang Chowk and other events, like the opening of the micro-hydro system and the opening of Tawal secondary school, rebuilt after the earthquake. More recently Deb, Wendy, Ashling and I met with board members, teachers and young women attending Sungava Home for young women with intellectual disabilities. During the meeting Shovana spoke about the impact NAFA funding has had on the Home's recovery from the 2015 earthquake and its daily operations. I listened intently to her, looked around the room, seeing those who were benefiting from the service, then said quietly to Deb beside me: "This is why we come to Nepal."

I have had the honor of being President of NAFA for **nineteen years**. I am extremely proud of our collective achievements over that time, as well as the breath and impact of NAFA's ongoing program and one-one project portfolio. **H**aving said that, in recent years, we have allocated more funds than we have received, despite the generosity of philanthropists and donors who support NAFA. Our succession planning efforts to attract new committee members have also not been so successful, with one important exception.

So, in the next few years, I believe we will need to focus on ensuring that our financial position is sustainable and can support, in particular, our annually funded programs, while we focus on the important NAFA objective of working with our funding partners in Nepal to reach a point where they are sustainable and independent of NAFA funding. We have so much to be proud of, and I look forward to adding the sustainability of NAFA's funding partners to that list of achievements.

*Rod Setterlund*

Rod Setterlund OAM  
President