

# today *in* nepal

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## Communities of Hope

Transforming lives across Nepal



INTERNATIONAL NEPAL  
FELLOWSHIP AUSTRALIA



When I was finally able to return to Nepal after more than two years of lockdowns and travel restrictions, I wasn't sure what to expect. COVID-19 has left its mark. Too many people experienced grief and loss as the original outbreak and then the Delta wave broke over Nepal during 2020 and 2021. Lockdowns and the forced return of migrant Nepali workers from India have pushed many families further into poverty and food insecurity.

Yet I was also inspired by the determination, resilience and hope that I experienced. INF Nepal and our other partners continue to bring passion and persistence as they work to support and improve people's lives in often difficult circumstances.

Facing great challenges over the last few years, Green Pastures Hospital has been able not only to continue its core work of holistic care for people with disabilities, but to expand and develop new ways to serve patients and their families and communities. This is happening through telehealth, palliative care, and new approaches to rehabilitation. In remote Kalikot district, INF Nepal is beginning a new work to tackle early and child marriage; they're also working with local people and government to improve access to water and sanitation among poor and vulnerable communities.

INF is celebrating its 70th year in 2022. Our history in that time, like a river, has had its share of rapids and lulls, of twists and falls. COVID-19, I'm sure, will mark a very turbulent and rocky stretch in INF's journey. However, the spring from which that river flows is one of faith, love and service. And it is continually refreshed by God to bring life-giving hope and transformation to so many of Nepal's poorest people along with joy and the opportunity to serve to all those of us who have been caught up in its flow.

**Ben Thurley**  
CEO, INF Australia

Green Pastures Hospital	<b>1</b>
Healing and Hope	<b>6</b>
Biblical Reflection	<b>8</b>
A Leader in the Making	<b>10</b>
Fun Stuff	<b>13</b>
Growing New Opportunities in Bajura	<b>15</b>
Exciting New Appointments	<b>16</b>
Ongoing COVID-19 support	<b>18</b>
Strategic Plan	<b>20</b>
Communities of Hope	<b>21</b>



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a Christian mission  
serving the physical  
and spiritual needs  
of Nepali people

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#### INF Australia's Vision

Life in all its fullness for Nepal's poor and marginalised people and communities

#### todayinnepal

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#### Cover

Men from Jukot village of Bajura district welcoming the photographer

**Photo:** Rowan Butler



**“Even though our  
body is hurt or  
broken, our brain  
and spirit are not.  
God shows us a  
way. You have to  
have courage and  
never give up”**

**Seeta Gurung**



Pokhara valley with GPH in the foreground Photo: Phil Morris

# Green and Growing **PASTURES** The Past, Present & Future of GPH

By Ben Thurley

**W**hen it was founded in 1957, Green Pastures Hospital [GPH] helped pioneer treatment, care and rehabilitation for people with leprosy. Since that time, it has continued to expand the frontiers of care it provides, always focusing on people in poverty who might otherwise miss out on medical care altogether. As a centre of excellence for the holistic prevention and treatment of disability, the hospital continues to be a beacon in Nepal's impoverished western region. Hospital Director, Dr Arun Budha, points out that the need for the hospital is

as important as ever. "Hundreds of thousands of people still live with leprosy and disability and there aren't many hospitals like Green Pastures Hospital for these people."

Looking to its future, he has a vision for Green Pastures Hospital to become a 500 bed Christian teaching hospital, modelling and providing the best available care – physical, emotional and spiritual – to all patients regardless of income, caste or creed. The snapshots on the right from Green Pastures Hospital give encouraging signs of this vision being brought to life.



Green Pastures Hospital site, 1950s

## NEW PATHS TO NEW PASTURES

The history of Green Pastures Hospital reveals a pioneering spirit and commitment to serving people afflicted by diseases and disabilities that are often neglected. That spirit was evident in the origins of INF's leprosy work, and again in the decision to build the Ear Centre seven years ago. Often hidden and neglected, ear disease is treated at Green Pastures Hospital through the provision of state-of-the-art treatment, surgery and support. Green Pasture's pioneering spirit was revealed once again when it became the first to offer Occupational Therapy services anywhere in Nepal, currently employing three of Nepal's ten qualified Occupational Therapists. They provide support to patients and families with a variety of disabilities, including through an innovative outreach to

people with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their carers and families.

This commitment to innovation remains true today. Even during the disruption of COVID-19, Green Pastures Hospital was able to establish new services and community initiative in the area of Palliative Care and Chronic Disease treatment. A relatively new field of medicine in Nepal, the Palliative Care Service provides a 14-bed inpatient unit along with specialised therapy and support for those affected by chronic diseases. A new community initiative, the SUNITA Project, has recently been launched to research and develop rural models that support communities to better care for frail or elderly people locally. The project is

taking particular care to encourage and enable young girls to continue their education and receive support from others in the community. This is essential because it is often the girls and young women of families who miss out on education and other life opportunities owing to their position as carers for vulnerable family members.

We give thanks for the profound legacy of Green Pastures Hospital's work over the past six decades. We celebrate its ability to respond effectively to new and emerging needs in the present, and we hope and pray that its future will continue to be one of profound and impactful service to the people of Nepal.

## HOLISTIC HEALING

On a bright, clear morning, patients and their families gather before the front entrance of INF's Green Pastures Hospital in Pokhara. A volunteer Peer Counsellor, Seeta Gurung, greets people under the shelter of the waiting area as they arrive and helps them register and find their way through the hospital. She has already walked through the wards, greeting and praying for patients. The missing fingers on Seeta's hands mark her out as one of the many people afflicted with leprosy that GPH has cared for many years.

Retired now, although not sure of her actual age, Seeta had been a patient at Green Pastures Hospital as a very young child. Diagnosed with leprosy, and coming from a family trapped in poverty, she found it hard to see any hope

before her, even at the age of only eight. Yet the care and treatment and the love she experienced when she was brought to Green Pastures Hospital transformed her life. She was cured of the bacteria, supported to manage the effects of the disease and find new hope for her life.

In a continuing cycle of service and love, Seeta shows that Green Pastures' commitment to "holistic care" is deep and real. She says, "At Green Pastures Hospital, I received treatment and love from everyone. I got an opportunity to heal both physically and spiritually." She now provides that same love and care for patients who are often vulnerable, depressed and afraid.

**"Because of my experience, I have so much compassion for all the patients who come to Green Pastures Hospital. I say to the people I meet, 'Even though our body is hurt or broken, our brain and spirit are not. God always shows us a way. You have to have courage and never give up.'**

**I am so grateful for the opportunity to console them in this way."**



Mohan Roka lost both of his legs in an accident. With the provision of artificial limbs and the support of Green Pastures Hospital, he is able to walk again. Photo: Sagar Malla

## RESPONDING TO COVID-19

As COVID-19 began to break around the world in March 2020, INF Nepal and staff at Green Pastures Hospital responded. Working closely with Federal and Provincial authorities, they implemented urgent safety measures to reduce the spread and support public health measures. At GPH, a 'fever clinic', along with hand-washing stations, and an isolation unit were set up. Hospital staff worked to support local public health measures and provide advice and support for efforts to inform the public about health and hygiene.

Green Pastures Hospital also reached out to patients now suddenly cut off from medical care due to lockdowns through new telehealth services. These

calls to current and former patients often provided critical medical care, referrals or other forms of support at just the right time for patients. The power of this service clearly seen in Kamala's story [pages 6 to 7 of this issue of *Today in Nepal*].

The hospital continues to support the people of Nepal through COVID-19. Just this month, a new oxygen plant was inaugurated at a launch attended by the Australian Ambassador to Nepal. This plant, funded by the Australian Government will provide much needed oxygen to wards across the hospital, improving people's recovery and saving lives in the most urgent cases.



Colin Smith, aka Putali Baaje (Butterfly Grandfather) contracted COVID-19. Unable to afford treatment, he was provided with free care by Green Pastures Hospital. Photo: Anil Rai

A woman wearing a red headscarf and a red jacket stands next to a wheelchair. She is in a room with many posters and notices on the wall. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent dark box.

**The Tele-health and Tele-rehab Program was developed by Green Pastures Hospital with support from the World Health Organisation. Working alongside doctors, Green Pastures' nurses and peer counsellors are able to provide support and advice to people with disabilities who are former patients. This outreach provides not only practical care but also a much-needed experience of love and support for people who are extremely vulnerable. This approach, pioneered by Green Pastures Hospital in Gandaki Province, is now being replicated by hospitals across all of Nepal's seven provinces.**

# Healing and Hope

By Sharon Joshua Tiwari

**K**amala\* was born and raised in India. She migrated to her native place in Nepal, Syangja district, a few decades ago. Due to financial problems, Kamala could not pursue her studies beyond grade seven. Her parents married her to a man in a nearby district, and at a very young age Kamala became the mother of two sons and two daughters.

In 2002, Kamala fell from a tree while collecting fodder for her animals. She injured her spine in the accident and was unable to walk or take part in daily activities. Bedridden, her mental health deteriorated further when her husband abandoned the family to remarry.

At the suggestion of a relative, Kamala went to Kathmandu for further treatment. Here she was given the news that an amputation below the hip would be required. While she had never heard of Green Pastures Hospital [GPH], she was referred there for physical rehabilitation and participated in INF Nepal's Partnership for Rehabilitation, receiving frequent follow up to manage pressure sores and other issues.

During the May 2020 lockdown caused by COVID-19, Kamala's 22-year-old son committed suicide. This loss brought Kamala great distress. Accompanying her agony, Kamala developed a large pressure sore and she thought of committing

suicide herself. Devastated and depressed, the pandemic made her life even more difficult.

One day, Kamala got a call from Green Pastures' tele-rehab service, a project that is part of the hospital's Social Service Department. Kamala explained about her pressure sore and the issue was immediately identified as requiring urgent treatment; INF's ambulance took Kamala to Green Pastures Hospital. For a month she stayed at the hospital to receive treatment and counselling from the Social Service Department. As her wound healed, Kamala also began to process her loss and sorrow, telling staff that thanks to their support, she was learning to smile again.



Kamala and her son at Green Pastures Hospital. Photo: Anil Rai

*The Deep Things  
on God's Heart*

**MATTHEW 23:23**

A man in Bajura is happy to receive a smokeless stove provided by INF's Climate Change Project. Photo: Anil Rai

**Jesus had plenty of run-ins with the religious authorities of his day. The scribes and Pharisees attempt to silence Jesus and his disciples time after time. They challenge and test Jesus about his interpretation of Scripture. They accuse him and his disciples of blasphemy. They even conspire with powerful political forces (the Herodians) to have Jesus arrested and executed.**

**M**atthew Chapter 23 includes a fierce sermon Jesus gave, denouncing the scribes and the Pharisees. He calls them hypocrites who do not practice what they preach. He says they impose religious burdens on people that are impossible to fulfill. He criticises them for desiring public recognition and exaltation more than humble service.

In the middle of this passage, a single verse – Matthew 23:23 – gets to the heart of the matter.

Despite his fierce criticisms of the Pharisees, Jesus acknowledges that they are careful readers of Scripture who want to live their lives according to God's word. They were so thoughtful about God's commandments that they tithed even the smallest of herbs and spices. Yet

despite all this attention to the details of God's law, Jesus said that they had somehow missed "the weightier matters": justice, mercy and faith.

The weightier matters of the law (the Scriptures) are the deep things on God's heart. Jesus contrasts the lightest things imaginable – a sprig of mint, a handful of dill, or a pinch of cumin – with the most significant and weighty matters in Scripture. Like the Prophet Micah before him, Jesus summarised the whole of Scripture's commands in just three words: justice, mercy and faith.

Faith: a humble trust in a faithful God. Mercy: practical acts of love and care. Justice: action to protect and promote the rights and dignity of all – particularly the poorest and most vulnerable people.

Even for us today, it is still possible to lose sight of and neglect these weighty things. As individuals and even in our churches, we can become so focused or even obsessed on a relatively minor issue in Scripture that we begin to neglect the deep things on God's heart. It's even possible for us or our churches to get so focused on one of the three – perhaps we act as if evangelism and the call to faith is the only thing that matters, or we become exclusively caught up in campaigning for justice – that we lose sight of or neglect the other two.

Yet, Jesus reminds us that even without neglecting the details, we must never lose sight of the things that are deep in God's heart: a humble trust in Him, an abundant outpouring of practical love, and determined action to protect and promote the rights of vulnerable people.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### FAITH

- Reflecting on 70 years of INF's history, how has God been faithful during that time to the Church and the people of Nepal?
- In what ways are people responding in faith, and inviting others to faith, through the work that INF does?
- How has God been faithful in your life? What opportunities do you have to share your faith?

### MERCY

- Reflecting on INF's work, in what ways are mercy and compassion at the heart?
- Who are the people in your own life who demonstrate mercy and compassion in the way they live, speak and share?
- What opportunities do you have to be merciful and compassionate to those around you, in your community, and in the wider world?

### JUSTICE

- How has INF helped identify and overcome injustice in its work? In what ways has it helped protect and promote the God-given dignity and rights of people in poverty?
- What issues of injustice are you aware of in your own community or country? Who is working to address them? How could you get involved to help overcome any of these injustices?

सुनघहरी गाउँपालिका  
कार्यपालिकाको कार्यालय



Nankala in front of her Municipal Office in Rolpa

# A Leader in the Making

By Salina Budha Magar

**Nankala Magar's journey from a young widow and former Maoist combatant to a rural municipality's Vice-Chairperson has been long and difficult.**

**N**ankala is 37 years old and from Sunchhahari Rural Municipality in Rolpa. She lives with her mother-in-law and son. In her family home, Nankala grew up with five siblings; two sisters and three brothers. The family were poor, and none of her brothers and sisters were able to attend school. There was often not enough food for the family or warm clothes for the children.

By the age of sixteen, Nankala had enlisted in the People's War with the People's Liberation Army [PLA].

"I was too young and ignorant to understand about politics and the revolution that was going on," Nankala recalls. "I joined the PLA not by my choice but because I could not stay at my home during those times."

During her stay in the PLA's camps, Nankala noticed that most of the people she met knew how to read and write. But Nankala had never been to school. She worked very hard to improve her literacy, teaching herself to read and write. During the war she also found love, and at the age of eighteen, married a man inside the rebel camp.

"Even after the marriage, we did not get to sit together," Nankala says. "We were only able to meet occasionally, and I accepted my fate as a combatant."

A year later a son was born to Nankala and her husband.

"We had exchanged our vows, accepting the fact that our life was uncertain," Nankala remembers. "We promised whoever among us survived would raise our child."

Less than a year after the birth of her son, Nankala's husband died in the war. The sky, Nankala says, fell

down on her. Still, she courageously raised her only child, honouring the vow she had made to her husband.

She couldn't, however, foresee the discrimination she was to face at the hands of her own family.

"My in-laws cursed me, they looked at me with disgust and I was treated as an untouchable," Nankala says.

"They thought I was responsible for the death of their only son so I didn't get any help from them. I was asked to stay away from home. I took shelter in the cowshed. There was no light or food in the barn. There were no clothes to wear. I spent many days and nights in the forest, crying with frustration. Negative thoughts held me back, but for the sake of my son I tried my very best to make ends meet. Even though I was scolded, I still cared for my in-laws and looked after them. I took them to the health post whenever they felt ill."

It was only when her son was studying in grade seven that they were invited to live inside the home. As time went by, slowly things started changing. Nankala had waited patiently for years for the moment when her in-laws would accept her. She bore all kinds of pain in her heart, yet never left their side through thick and thin.

Then, in 2017, there was a local election. Nankala was asked to contest the position of Ward Member. She agreed, but her mother-in-law was not happy about her decision. She made her feelings known and again blamed Nankala for the death of her son. However, this time Nankala's father-in-law spoke up to support her.

Nankala went on to win the election as a Ward Member but soon things started to unravel. She felt that,

even though she had a position, she had no voice to create change.

"I was part of the local structure but could not meaningfully participate. I didn't know much," Nankala says. "I didn't know how to speak well, so speaking on the issues was difficult. Even when I had the courage to speak out sometimes, they would silence me. I often wondered how I would learn all this, how I could empower myself and how I was supposed to bring change."

In 2018, INF Nepal implemented the EDUCATE project in Sunchhahari Rural Municipality, in Rolpa District. The project created groups of single women, families of people with disabilities, low income families and disadvantaged groups in order to help empower them within the community.

**"We were facilitated to identify our own problems and find solutions by ourselves. We discussed various issues such as sanitation, waste management, gender-based violence and were also provided training in livelihood related activities. In the meeting itself, every member had to take turns as Chair. It was a struggle at the beginning but eventually all of the members started to speak out, to lead. We were learning the art of speaking and voicing our issues."**

Nankala became a member of one of the Self Help Groups, taking active part in the life of the group.

Nankala took advantage of the unique opportunity through the project's regular Self Help Group meetings and training. Interacting with group members and the wider community, she developed her leadership skills and took part in discussion of issues that could improve her social presence.

“There was no discrimination. Everyone treated me with respect,” Nankala remembers. “During group activities they encouraged me to speak up and give presentations. For the first time in my life, I felt valued and heard.”

Nankala was also selected as the Gender Focal Person in her Self Help Group. She took the lead in identifying and monitoring women's issues and cases of domestic violence against women in her group. As a part of livelihood support, Nankala also received training and was provided with NPR 20,000 [around AUD 250] from the project for poultry farming.

Nankala's quest for empowerment started with the training provided by INF Nepal on Sexual and Gender

Based Violence, which imprinted upon her the valuable lesson that “empowerment begins with me.” She had a strong desire not only to strengthen herself, but to be the voice of many other women like her.

Reflecting back on the abuse and social stigma that she had experienced, Nankala says, “My journey has been lonely and full of struggle, but things have now changed for me. I realised that to keep quiet was not an option. We need to exercise our voice and share our thoughts to demand positive change. I want to stand for all those women like me through my involvement in groups and as a representative of the ward.”

The training and exposure not only built Nankala's confidence but encouraged her to make a positive change. Just as Nankala's tenure as a Ward Member was about to end, she had a deep sense that she still had much more to do, and that this was just the beginning.

Nankala made a proposal to her party to be nominated for the post of Vice-Chairperson of Sunchhahari Rural Municipality in the local election of 2022. In the beginning, it was a struggle for her as no one believed

in her, but she did not give up.

“I did not hesitate to put forward my proposal.” Nankala says. “The more they said I couldn't, the stronger I became.”

Nankala contested the position, and won! She is now the newly elected Vice-Chairperson of Sunchhahari Rural Municipality. In this role, she will be leading the local Judicial Committee. This is an important and challenging role which seeks to ensure that justice is delivered for everyone in the community. More than simply a legal body, the committee has the right to settle disputes through mediation.

Nankala now lives with her mother-in-law and eighteen-year-old son, who is studying in twelfth grade.

“The support provided by INF Nepal for my capacity building has been immense and invaluable to me,” the new leader says with a smile. “I am always grateful to INF Nepal and Bachhapo Self Help Group for bringing positive change in my life. The seed of women's leadership has been planted in me, and I will ensure our voices are heard at all levels and that people like me are treated with respect and dignity.”



Nankala in her office

# Did you know that Nepal has six seasons?



**How many seasons are there where you live? Perhaps you have two (Wet Season and Dry Season) or four (Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter).**

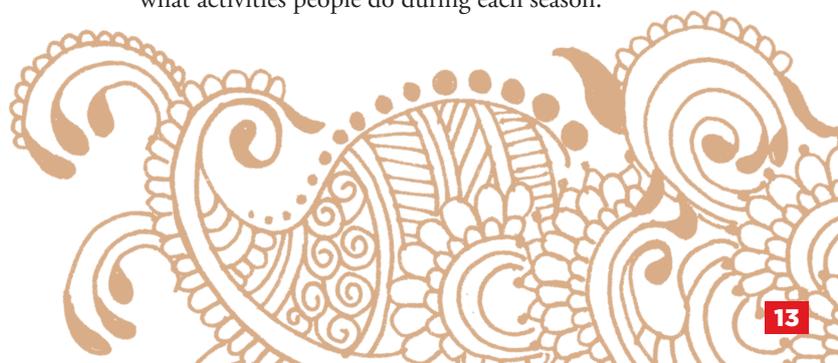
**Create two seasons posters to compare the seasons in Nepal with the seasons where you live.**

- 1 Take two sheets of large blank paper.
- 2 Rule lines to divide one sheet into six segments and label each segment with the name of one of the Nepali seasons. Do a search on the internet to find out what the weather is like during that season and what kinds of things people in the village areas of Nepal do during that season. For example, do they plant or harvest crops, stay inside by the fire, or celebrate a festival?

Print pictures from the internet and glue them on the poster as a collage or use the information to draw your own pictures on the poster to illustrate each of Nepal's seasons.

- 3 Rule lines to divide the other sheet into the same number of segments as the seasons in your area and label each section with the names of the seasons.

Collect pictures for a collage or draw your own to illustrate what the weather is like and what activities people do during each season.





Women from Bajura reaping the wheat. Photo: Rowan Butler

# Growing New Opportunities in Bajura

By Cath Taylor

**In the rugged valleys of Bajura, western Nepal lives a woman nurturing a quiet joy. Her name is Maheshwori.**

**F**or years, she has laboured over her family's small vegetable plot, coaxing life from soil that is parched one month and inundated with water the next. A generation ago, the rains came in predictable patterns during the monsoon and Maheshwori's family knew how to plan and prepare their crops according to the seasons. These days, the rain is erratic and intense, sweeping away family plots, roads and houses. It's followed by months and months of drought.

Nothing grows.

Maheshwori has despaired. For her entire lifetime, Bajura has been considered 'food insecure' and people have been forced to leave their homes to find work to support their families in other regions, even across the border in India.

Now, COVID-19 has stripped the country of tourists and savaged the economy; lockdowns have brought family members back home to villages they once supported with income generated in hotels and as Sherpas. They too are searching for food, and with the price of all essentials sky-rocketing, many are hungry.

Maheshwori and her children reveal the very human face of our changing climate. They live in a part of the world more vulnerable to the impact of climate variability than almost anywhere else on the planet.

Visitors flock to this landlocked, mountainous country to marvel at the natural beauty. But as they share their trekking photos online, families like Maheshwori's grow increasingly anxious. They've seen a rapid increase

in both rainfall and drought; in landslides, floods and forest fires.

Almost 70% of Nepalis grow their own food. But the land they depend upon to survive has become unpredictable and inhospitable. And when there are extra stresses like a pandemic or economic upheaval, their underlying vulnerability to their changing environment is laid bare.

## CHICKENS - AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

INF Nepal has come to Maheshwori's municipality with a vision.

At its heart is the creation of a community with the resilience and skills to anticipate the impact of changing climate, and the knowledge to start up new businesses that can reliably provide food and income.

INF Nepal offered Maheshwori training in the raising of poultry, and this has proved to be life-changing for the family. Beginning with fifteen chickens, Maheshwori has not only expanded her flock but decided to begin a small fish farm, building on the principles she learnt in the project. This means the family can now meet their needs without having to leave the area to find employment. The children can stay in school and hunger is held at bay.

**"I am very positive and thankful to INF Nepal for the training and support."**

Her quiet joy will grow with further support from our partners, who oversee the Bajura Climate Change Adaptation for Sustainable Livelihood project.

## THE PROJECT AIMS TO:

- Provide food, shelter and medicine in the aftermath of disasters
- Offer training in livelihood projects like poultry, fish and other livestock breeding
- Equip a Climate Change Adaptation office to work with communities, churches and governing authorities to build community resilience and resources
- Plan for climate and disaster risk mitigation across the whole community

**Please pray for the leaders of this project as well as those who are benefiting from new skills. If you'd like to know more, or to make a gift to enable this work to continue, please visit:**

**<https://inf.org.au/disasters-climate/>**





# Exciting Appointments

**“Just as Jesus called Bartimaeus and treated him – a beggar – with respect and honour, so I know that Jesus calls me to follow him and walk alongside poor and vulnerable people.”**

**T**hese are the words of Sean Sokhi, who was recently appointed to the role of Community Programs Director with INF Nepal. Sean is excited to join INF Nepal’s community team, working alongside them and walking with the people and communities they serve.

Sean and his wife, Nikita, have two children – an adult daughter, Anushka, and an infant son, Bryan – who bring joy into their lives. The whole family has recently settled in Pokhara, relocating from their home in India.

For Sean and Nikita, this move comes in response to prayerful discernment of God’s calling in their lives. Both Sean and Nikita have rich experience in community work. Nikita has Masters degrees – in Social Work, and Counselling & Psychotherapy.

Sean has a Masters in Medical and Psychiatric Social Work and over 25 years of experience in program management, design and evaluation in international development agencies. In his career he has focused on HIV/AIDS work and anti-human trafficking, serving with organisations such as International Justice Mission, World Vision International and Justice Ventures International (JVI).

In his last assignment, Sean was South Asia Programs Director at JVI. He led the national and international programs on anti-human trafficking interventions, advocacy, and holistic casework in India and Nepal.

With his experience in designing, implementing, managing and evaluating projects and teams, as well as organisational development, we are

excited for the work Sean will do to develop the capacity and quality of INF Nepal’s Community Health and Development programs.

As Sean begins his role, he is eager to quickly develop relationships of love and trust.

“It is only when we have relationships of trust that we can do anything for the community,” he says.

# New rents



INF Australia welcomes Dr Arun Budha as the Hospital Director at Green Pastures Hospital [GPH]. With his wife, Smriti, their two daughters and infant son, Arun has moved to Pokhara to take up the role. He shared with us some of his story and his hopes for the role.

“I was born into a leprosy affected family. My parents found healing and hope at TEAM Hospital in Dadeldhura and both ended up working at the mission hospital. My father was also the pastor of the local church.

I completed training in China, and also began working at TEAM Hospital Dadeldhura as a Medical Doctor and later as Medical Director. While there, I really understood the huge need for

quality healthcare in poor and rural communities in Nepal and I wanted to continue to make a difference. As a Christian, I believe that the love of God can bring transformation in peoples’ physical, mental, and spiritual lives.

After further training as a surgeon, I worked at United Mission Hospital Tansen, Palpa, as a General Surgeon and the Chief of the Department of General Surgery. This very much fits with my values and my sense of calling. As a surgeon, the whole world is an opportunity but Nepal – and especially the hilly regions of Nepal’s west and far west – was always on my heart. I went to Tansen as a single man, and now am married with three children.

During my time in Tansen, I also joined the INF Nepal Board, which was a very exciting opportunity. INF Nepal is one of the most important missions that God has ordained in Nepal for seventy years now.

Joining now as Director of INF Nepal’s Green Pastures Hospital is an extension of this call. Leprosy care has always been an integral part of INF’s work and it has extended this care into other areas of disability. This combination, as well as INF’s commitment to serving the poor and witnessing to God’s redemptive love really connected with my personal and professional background and drew me to the role after much prayer and discernment.”





Food relief packages were distributed to families impacted by lockdown and COVID-19 in Goruchaur and Jumla (top) and Rolpa (left).



INF provided medical equipment, supplies and two nurses on secondment to the Infectious and Communicable Disease Hospital in Gandaki Province.

# INF Australia's Strategic Plan 2022-24

The global environment over the last three years in particular has been extremely challenging for organisations such as INF Australia. The COVID-19 pandemic, international conflicts, and increasing impacts of extreme weather and disasters have dramatically increased burdens for our partners and communities in Nepal.

Lockdowns, travel restrictions and precautions around events and gatherings have also disrupted much of our face-to-face engagement with churches and groups in Australia, limiting our ability to raise funds in support of the work, just as the need is becoming even greater.

In light of our changed context, the INF Australia Board and staff have

undergone a thoughtful review of our strategies and approaches, developing a new strategic plan to guide us over the coming few years. The strategic plan aims to ensure that we are focused, strategic and appropriately flexible in a complex environment. It affirms and guides our commitment to build strong connections between the Australian community and communities in Nepal.

## OUR VISION

Life in all its fullness for Nepal's poor and marginalised people and communities.

## OUR MISSION

Compelled by God's love, INF Australia aims to be a pioneering organisation serving poor and marginalised people in Nepal. We collaborate with organisations, churches, groups and individuals in Australia and Nepal to support and sustain holistic health and community development.

## OUR VALUES

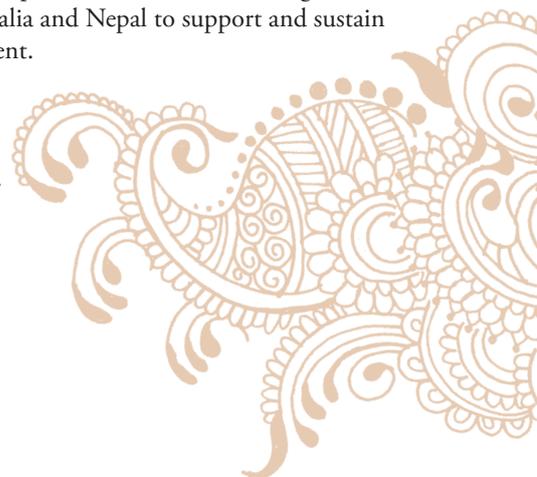
We are an organisation of *faith*. We work in *humility*. We are committed to *justice*.

Because of this, we value:

- Our Christian faith expressed in action
- A priority for people experiencing poverty and marginalisation
- Teamwork, collaboration and partnership
- Integrity and accountability
- Learning and innovation

## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Engaging deeply with the Australian community to build relationships with communities of Nepal	Partnering respectfully in Nepal for empowerment and transformation	Ensuring accountability and effectiveness in organisational learning and stewardship
Engaging with Australian Nepalese churches and community for advocacy and fundraising	Nurturing relationships of trust with partners in Nepal	Ensuring a sustainable funding base
Engaging with Australian churches and groups for advocacy, learning, faith formation, volunteering and holistic responses to mission, poverty and climate change	Supporting partners in Nepal to build their capacity, and enhance the impact and sustainability of their programs	Developing a culture of learning and innovation
Nurturing church, school and community connections and experiential engagement with communities in Nepal	Focusing on rights, community health, livelihoods and resilience to ensure inclusion and lasting change for poor and marginalised people and groups in Nepal	Prioritising targeted recruitment and networking for short- and medium-term support in mission for partners in Nepal



## Taking the Next Step with INF Australia

# Communities of Hope

**“INF is a family. It’s one way I carry out the words of Christ to love God and to love our neighbours as ourselves.”**

**T**revor McLaren, who works as a physiotherapist in Bundaberg Queensland, loves Nepal. He first encountered stories of God’s mission to this resilient landlocked nation through a book given to him as a gift by his daughter, *My Seventh Monsoon*. It told the story of Australian physiotherapists Naomi and Darren Reed, who served in Nepal through International Nepal Fellowship. The experience changed their lives and their story changed Trevor’s.

“Not long after I read the book, I was fortunate to attend a conference in Sydney where I met Ben from INF Australia and heard more about the work,” Trevor says.

Trevor and his wife Andrea are now regular givers and belong to INF Australia’s Communities of Hope program. As regular givers, Communities of Hope helps shape their understanding of the challenges

facing Nepal, the nature of long-term development work, and the Christian mandate to reach out to meet physical and spiritual needs. Members of the community receive detailed bi-annual updates on the projects they support as well as theological reflection and encouragement.

**“I was impressed with INF’s work and the history of the organisation – Christians have been successfully making an impact for Nepal’s most poor and disadvantaged people since 1952. I thought that was really something I could get behind!”**

“As members of Christ’s family, I believe we’re all called to be

missionaries and INF Australia is the vehicle through which we can fulfil that call internationally,” Trevor says. “We give regularly, both through our business and personally, because we believe that as Christians we’re called to ‘give til it hurts’. INF Australia is a great way to do that. It will never cease to amaze me how much Nepali people go through – earthquakes, floods and droughts. When I worked for a brief time in Saudi Arabia as a physiotherapist, I saw so many Nepali, Indian and Pakistani people working hard to send money home so their families could eat. I want to be part of a community that is creating change for people in the poorest part of our neighbourhood.”

Interested to know more? Your regular gift is the most effective way to provide support to INF Australia. It creates reliable income that allows our partners to plan responsibly for their projects. Visit [www.inf.org.au/communitiesofhope](http://www.inf.org.au/communitiesofhope) to learn more and sign up to be part of the family.



A doctor at Green Pastures examines a patient. Photo: Sagar Malla



## Do you like what you've read in this magazine?

If so, please consider giving to support INF Australia. Our work is dependent on the generosity of people like you. Your financial gift enables us to bring life in all its fullness to Nepal's poorest and most marginalised people.

[www.inf.org.au/donate](http://www.inf.org.au/donate)

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