



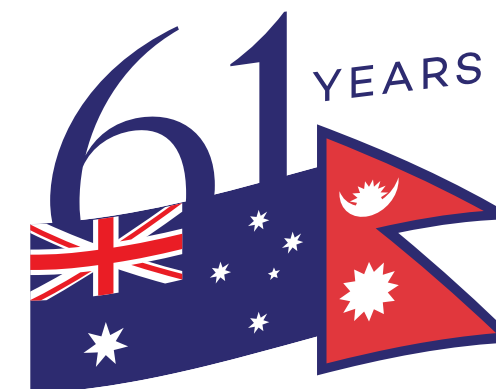
Australian Government



Association of Nepalese
Alumni from Australia

61 Years Together

Nepal & Australia



February 15, 1960

The Commencement of Diplomatic
Relations between Nepal & Australia

About the Book



This book aims to celebrate a glorious milestone of 61 years of friendship between Nepal and Australia. It intends to present the readers with perspectives and stories of people whose actions have played a role in bringing the two countries together, and have sown the seeds of success for the future. It is an attempt to highlight different industries and sectors that have been touched and advanced by the cross-pollination of ideas, and professionals who are associated with Nepal-Australia. We hope that this book will give our readers a flavor of the achievements that the two countries should take pride in celebrating.

Editor
Ananta Poudyal
Association of Nepalese Alumni from Australia

Acknowledgement

This book would not be possible without the people, institutions, associations that shared their views, perspectives and stories to exhibit how far we have come with this friendship between Australia and Nepal. I would like to convey my special gratitude to the following who helped shape this book in many ways.

Australian Government – Public Diplomacy Fund
H.E Felicity Volk – Australian Ambassador to Nepal
Peter Budd – Australia Ambassador to Nepal 2017–2020
Mahesh Dahal – Nepalese Ambassador to Australia 2019–2021
Ram Hari Aryal – ANAA Chairperson
Neelam Sharma –Writer
Yuki Poudyal – Writer

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Foreword

Australian Ambassador to Nepal

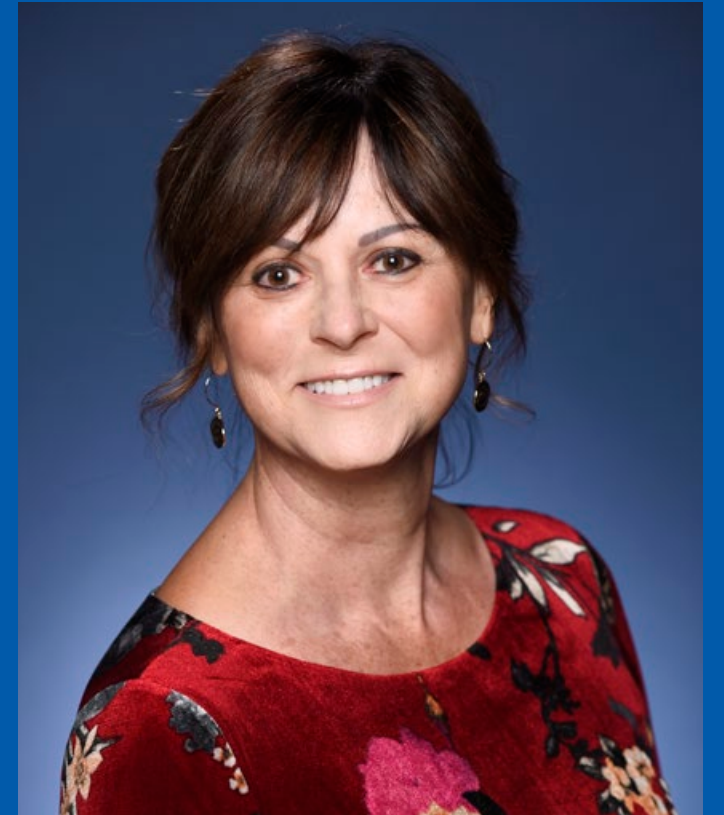
2020 marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Australia and Nepal. Like many endeavours planned for 2020, the production of this remarkable record of a deep friendship spanning sixty years was delayed due to COVID-19. But in 2021, we continue to celebrate the milestone of over six decades of Nepal and Australia's strong community links, shared values, a commitment to sustainable and inclusive development, joint concern to manage the impacts of climate change and support during times of disaster.

One of the earliest development projects in which Australia partnered with Nepal was the Nepal-Australia Forestry Project. Like the trees planted in the 1960s to support largescale reforestation, the friendship between our countries has grown from seeds to flourishing forest. Our relationship is strong, enduring and multi-dimensional. And among the greatest contributions to that friendship are our Nepalese alumni – students, researchers, leaders in their fields – who have studied at institutions across Australia, developed close connections with local communities and who are deeply valued for the richness and warmth they have brought to Australian society. They have inspired tens of thousands of Australians to travel to Nepal each year.

Our people-to-people links are central to our evolving partnership and the alumni community is at the heart of close relations between Australia and Nepal.

I congratulate and thank the Association of Nepalese Alumni from Australia for its active promotion of the friendship between our countries and for its initiative in marking an important milestone in our bilateral relationship with the publication of this handbook. It is a wonderful representation of a thriving alumni community which is using educational experiences in Australia as a springboard to diverse careers that demonstrate a commitment to service and a drive to effect positive change. I look forward to another sixty years of close friendship between Australia and Nepal and I commend the ever-expanding network of alumni who are the cornerstone of that friendship.

Felicity Volk
Australian Ambassador to Nepal
25 February 2021



Felicity Volk

Foreword

ANAA Chairperson

It gives me immense pleasure to be associated with this book and would like to thank all those who have contributed for the successful completion of it. This book isn't just a compilation of success stories of a handful of Australian Graduates. Rather this book is an emotion, as it is authentic description of some of the most amazing people I have encountered with through our organization, Association of Nepalese Alumni from Australia (ANAA).

These are the stories of struggle and success that our alumni's have faced in different stages and the positive changes they have been able to bring about in the lives of the masses. It is also a proud moment for us as this book is one of the activities of the year marks the 61st year of Nepal's bilateral relationship with Australia. During which our country has been able to benefit a lot through extrinsic as well as intrinsic support from the Australian government as well as individuals, in different sectors like education, health, environment and many more. Some of which has been penned in this book as well.

The number of Nepalese students going to Australia for higher studies is increasing every year. Accordingly, the prominent objective of ANAA is to encourage students to come back home after the completion of their course and to use their knowledge and expertise in the development of Nepal. It is an honor to be the chair of an organization that has always worked for the betterment of the country, be it through organizing, encouraging, associating, uplifting, participating or being directly involved in the works of different development stakeholders. I am positive that we shall strive to do more in future with the support of Government of Nepal, Australian Government, Australian Embassy and other likeminded organizations.

I really hope this book will be as much enjoyed by the audience as we have, in the process of creating it and will also provide some meaningful insights for future reference.

Thank you.



Dr. Ram Hari Aryal
Chairman



**Dr. Ram
Hari Aryal**

Association of Nepalese Alumni from Australia (ANAA)



In 1998, a group of like-minded enthusiasts who graduated from various Australian education providers came together to establish Association of Nepalese Alumni from Australia (ANAA); a non-government, non-political and non-profit organization of professionals. It has been more than two decades since ANAA dedicated itself towards achieving its objective of creating a community of people to exchange theoretical and practical know-how, skill and experience to uplift like-minded individuals, institutions and organizations.

The vision has been clear from the very beginning; fostering and strengthening cordial and mutually beneficial relationships to provide professional and social service to the community. By doing so, we hope that this would directly or indirectly assist in achieving a sustainable development of the nation in the long run. The contributions of each member in their respective

industry have added to the contributions of ANAA as each individual adds to the strong foundation of our association. We are proud to have members who are experts from diverse sectors like demography, forestry, economics, banking, environment, health, engineers, business professionals and many more. Below is a brief summary of activities of ANAA over the years.

1998–2005

ANAA was established and registered as a professional organization (NGO) with nine members initially in 1998. Meetings were conducted at the member's office as the association did not have its own.

Sustainability was a challenge so the Australian Scholarship Office at Bangladesh for Australian Award was approached by the ANAA members to support the organization financially.

2006–2010

The scholarship office at the High Commission of Bangladesh expressed an interest to support ANAA and its activities followed by a team visit to Nepal and the association members. At that time ANAA was the first national level Alumni Association in South Asia. Finally, the Office of Australia Awards for Nepal was established at the premises of Australian Embassy in Kathmandu, and the Alumni activities were given a priority. A Strategic Plan of ANAA was drafted and the ANAA constitution was reviewed and amended with support from the Embassy. Administrative and Financial Guidelines and operation modalities were finalized. Towards the end of 2010 a five-year strategic Plan was developed for ANAA. The major components are listed as below:

1. Sector and Priority Areas: Should be in line with AusAID's development objective i.e. Health, Agriculture, Forestry, Environment, Natural Resources, Education, Trade, Tourism and Hospitality.
2. Operation, Effectiveness and Sustainability: Concrete Activities like, Australia Day, International Volunteer day, Women's Day, Health Camps,

Water Sanitation and Hygiene camps, Conservation Camps, etc

3. Partnership, collaboration and Networking: With like-minded individuals and institution

4. Resource Acquisition and Mobilization: Fundraising activities like dinner, movies, concerts etc

5. Inclusive Development: Gender and Social Issues, Humanitarian assistance

ANAA's first functional secretariat was established at New Baneshwor area in a rented apartment, logistics were furnished and two-part time staff members hired. The culture of celebrating ANAA day was started and given a continuation every year. ANAA also increased its participation in Australia's Big Day Out and other similar activities. ANAA actively organized a Pre-Departure Briefing and Re-entry action plan along with a Christmas Barbeque Night which was organized as a fund-raising event so as to generate revenue for ANAA.

2011–2015

An office premise was finalized and established at Bagbazar, Kathmandu with all functional amenities like office furniture, computers and other basic furnishing.

Health Camps were organized on the occasion of World Kidney Day at Teaching Hospital and Patan Durbar Square that was led by Dr. Dibya Singh

International Women’s Day was celebrated every year in and out of the valley. Talk programs of esteemed women alumni were organized at Tribhuvan University, Padma Kanya College, Russian Cultural Center and two high schools from Dhading and Banke

A successful “Team Building” workshop for the local community was organized and led by 20 ANAA members including Dr. Ramhari Lamichhane at Chitlang, Makwanpur

Australian Alumni Excellence Award was awarded to Dr. Ram Hari Aryal, Dr. Kushum Shakya and Mrs. Niti Aryal by the Australian Embassy

Pre-Departure, Welcome Back Home and Visa Mobilization sessions were conducted by ANAA in support of Australian Embassy. Apart from that, a Job Hunting and Interview preparation program for fresh alumni were also organized

- As a tribute to Australian cricketer, Phillip Hughes, ANAA supported a friendly cricket match between visiting Australian cricketers and Nepalese National team
- In coordination with Australian Embassy, ANAA's contribution in Nepal's development and Welfare were discussed and feasible plans were formulated
- Organized a cleaning campaign at Gahana Pokhari, Tangal, on the occasion of “Clean up the world” weekend. This was done in collaboration with Kathmandu Metropolitan and Clean up Nepal
- Participated in the “Save Bagmati River” Campaign
- Launched the “Endeavor of Excellence” Book jointly with AusAwards

Advocacy on the National Policy and Plan of Action for the welfare and wellbeing of senior citizens was conducted in Pokhara under a Direct Aid program funded by the Australian Embassy. During the program ANAA members also visited the senior citizen’s home in Pokhara and distributed hygiene kits

- Participated in the Clean Up Day Campaign at Bhaktapur supported by Australian Embassy
- Participated in the Veteran’s Tennis Tournament organized by Nepalese Encounters in Pokhara along with 60/70 veterans from Australia and Nepal
- Organized a Health Camp at Udaipur- 15, Nepal with a team of 18 doctors consulting over 250 locals
- Collaborated with NAAER to organize a pre-departure session in Pokhara along with Australia's Big Day Out. The project was inaugurated by the H.E the Ambassador Mr. Peter Budd and was visited by more than 500 visitors
- Led a panel discussion to highlight the theme of “more powerful together” that call attention to gender equality in the workplace on the occasion of women’s day 2019 with support of the Australia Awards Women in Leadership Network
- Visited Perth and Sydney on a Familiarization Tour (University Network) in collaboration with NAAER
- In Sydney, we organized a program “Come Back Home” which was honored by the presence of Nepalese Ambassador to Australia Mr. Mahesh Dahal. The NRN members discussed and presented a few

- functional approaches that would attract Nepalese back to their home country.
- During the AGM of December 2019, a new enhanced website was launched - www.nepalanaa.org. – With its own job search portal as a prominent feature making it convenient for job seekers as well as employers.
 - Over the years ANNA has also established relations and understanding with different organizations of similar nature to cater to a wider area, and increase the reach to support functionally as well as financially. Here are some few organizations-
 - Aussie Med Foundation
 - ABAN Association of British Alumni in Nepal
 - JICA Alumni Association of Nepal
 - KOICA Korean International Cooperation Association
 - NAAN The Netherlands Alumni Association of Nepal
 - NEGAAS Nepal German Academic Association
 - NAAER - Nepalese Association of Australian Education Representative
 - Australian Education Information Center
 - The Association of Australian Representative in Nepal

2016–2020

Organized a project of promoting welfare and well-being of senior citizens of Nepal under the Direct Aid funding. Intensive case study, survey, panel discussion, interviews and workshops were conducted by a team of experts in three project areas, i.e. Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Kaski. The program identified problems and feasible recommendations on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health and well-being, education and the elderly population of Nepal. The program helped to identify the gaps in existing government policies and explore opportunities that were in line with the goals set by the government of

Nepal. As a major outcome some National level policies were formulated by the Ministry of Women, Child and Social Welfare. In addition to these, the follow activities were also a part of AANA-

- Conducted a workshop on Securing Employment for the fresh alumni
- Mini Nepal Food Fest was organized together with Sneha Travel Media Group at Premises of Nepal Tourism Board to promote tourism

Moving forward we seek to welcome more members in our alumni family and collaborate with organizations and institutions of various sectors to create more positive impact in the community.





ANAA family celebrating International Women's Day 2019

A Summary of the Sixty-One Years of Diplomatic Relations

Nepal and Australia have been enjoying excellent bilateral relations based on friendship, mutual understanding, and cooperation ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations on 15 February 1960. Mutual understanding, goodwill, and cooperation have been the defining features of our bilateral relationship.

Both countries are working together at bilateral, regional and multilateral forums. High-level interactions between the leaders of both countries have helped to strengthen the bilateral relations.

To further enhance the bilateral relations, Australia opened its residential Embassy in Kathmandu at the level of Charge' d' affairs in 1984 which was upgraded to the Ambassadorial level in 1986. Similarly, Nepal also opened its Embassy in Canberra in March 2007. Nepal's Honorary consulates in different cities of Australia have been contributing to strengthening Nepal-Australia relations.

Both countries have unflinching faith in the principle of the Charter of the United Nations. Both countries are working at

the UN Human Rights Commission. At the regional level, Nepal and Australia have been working together in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) that Australia has observer status on SAARC.

Over Six decades of cooperation between Nepal and Australia have remained fruitful and productive in the economic development of Nepal. We have a multifaceted relationship. Over the years, the Australian Government and private sector have contributed to the economic and social development of Nepal through various projects in the fields of health, civil aviation, administration, education, agriculture, service delivery, tourism, peace-building etc. The community forest program is a remarkable contribution of Australia for Nepal's development.

Australia is one of the main source countries for foreign direct investment in Nepal. Nepal-Australia bilateral trade is not very big but it is growing gradually. Australia has provided preferential market access to the least developed countries including Nepal. Nepal exports tea, coffee, essential oils, leather products, clothing to Australia and imports refined petroleum, dairy products, beverages, spirits, etc.

Australia has been generously providing official development assistance to Nepal in its priority areas. The Australian support is basically concentrated to expand economic opportunities for the poor, to improve governance and policy implementation, and to promote human development through education. Besides bilateral cooperation, Australia also provides supports to Nepal through multilateral organizations. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes in 2015, Australia has provided assistance, extending from emergency and humanitarian to the recovery and reconstruction. Under the 'Building Back Safer Schools for All' program, 167 temporary learning centers and 12 schools were built through Australian assistance.

Tourism is another important area for bilateral engagements. Nepal and Australia have signed a bilateral air service agreement

on 30 September 2019 opening avenue for bilateral connectivity. Last year 39 thousand Australian nationals visited Nepal. We hope the number of Australian tourists will grow significantly in future days to come.

People-to-people contacts have further strengthened ties between our two countries. The Nepali Diaspora in Australia is playing an important role in bringing the people of the two countries closer. Australia has remained a preferred destination for Nepali students for higher study. Around 50 thousand Nepali students are currently studying in Australia. Nepali students accounted to be the third-largest foreign students' group in Australia. Besides the privately funded students, more than one thousand Nepali have benefitted from the Government of Australia's Australia Awards Scholarships program over the last six decades. Many of these awardees have been working in Nepal at respective areas of expertise contributing to the national development.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia has established a Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on 14 July 2017 to further promote the bilateral relations. The First meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Kathmandu in August 2018 where both sides discussed the matters of bilateral importance.

To foster the bilateral relations, the Nepal-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group was formed in September 2018. The group in Nepal has the responsibility to strengthen friendship and cooperation between the two parliaments and support each other's democratic processes. A similar parliamentary friendship group is also working from the Australian side.

Australia has shouldered the resettlement program for Bhutanese refugees. More than 6610 Bhutanese refugees have resettled in Australia.

Currently, Nepal is at the historical juncture. After a decade-long

peace process, a stable Government with a strong mandate is at the helm. The Government has the responsibility to uplift the socio-economic status of Nepali people and fulfill the people's aspirations. The Government is working with a motto of "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali". Nepal has a vision of advancing from the LDCs at an early date and become a middle-income country by achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

In this background, Nepal is expanding its international engagements with friendly countries. The last sixty-one years of formal relations with Australia have been fruitful to the level of mutual satisfaction. And we want to renew our commitment towards the next 61 years and beyond. We believe the friendly ties existing between our two nations and people would further strengthen in the days ahead.



Tapas Adhikari

Then Joint secretary : South East Asia & Pacific Division
Current Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan

Celebrating 61 Years of Diplomatic Relations between Nepal and Australia

Nepal and Australia are celebrating 61 years of diplomatic relations in 2020, though Australia's relationship with Nepal predates the establishment of diplomatic links in 1960. Since then, Nepal's relationship with Australia has strengthened on several grounds including education, hydroelectricity, sustainable forest management, agriculture, tourism, civil aviation, and livestock management.

In Oct 2019, Australia's Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack announced new air service arrangements to take Australia-Nepal relations to new heights. This will strengthen people-to-people links and fuel growth in trade and education partnerships. In 2017, Australia was home to over 50,000 people born in Nepal were residing in Australia. Additionally, Nepal is a popular short-term destination for Australian tourists, with over 31,000 Australian residents visited Nepal in 2018.

Though trade with Nepal is small, a significant growth was witnessed in the two way merchandise trade which crossed \$57 million (2016-17), with exports to Nepal valued at \$50 million. As per World Bank's WITS data, since 2000 Australia's exports to Nepal have grown sharply in vegetables followed by intermediate goods (refined petroleum) and raw materials; while Nepal's exports to Australia have seen significant growth in consumer goods followed by textiles. Australian Trade and Investment



Australian Government

Australian Trade and Investment Commission

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Education is one of the most successful aspects of the Australia-Nepal relationship and provides a strong base to grow engagements. Nepal is one of the fastest growing and is currently third largest source of international students for Australia.

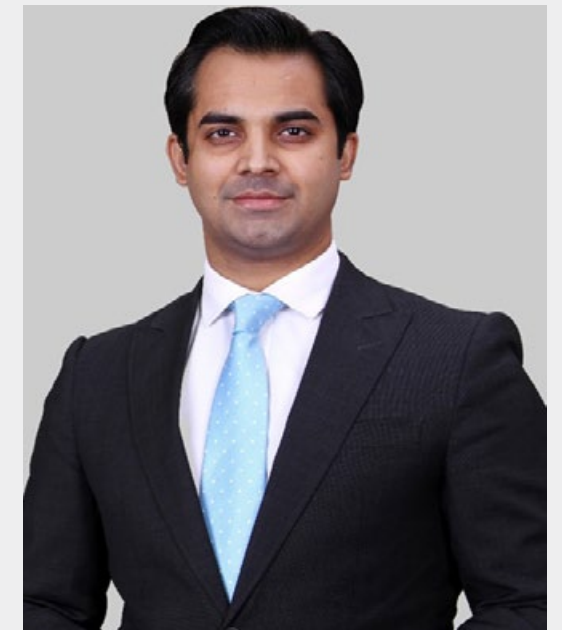
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Commission see huge growth potential in developing trade in education, infrastructure development and F&B sector; and is constantly engaging Nepal's governments and organizations with Australian organizations.

The two nations continue to reinforce people-to-people linkages, strengthen partnerships and understanding mainly through tourism and education. Nepal is part of a larger pattern in South Asia where tertiary-age populations have grown well beyond the capacity of local education systems. As South Asian countries forge a path towards growth of their industry and services sectors, the role of the higher education sector in facilitating a skilled, knowledgeable workforce has become critical – to the point of competitive advantage for many countries seeking investment.

Education is one of the most successful aspects of the Australia-Nepal relationship and provides a strong base to grow engagements. Nepal is one of the fastest growing and is currently 3rd largest source of international students for Australia. In June 2020, there were 45,084 Nepalese students studying in Australia with 69% in higher education and 30% in vocational education. Top fields of education which Nepalese students choose in Australia includes Management & Commerce, Health, Information technology, Society & Culture, Engineering & Related technologies, Food Hospitality & personal Services, Natural & Physical Sciences and Education.

Australia with its safe, inclusive, supportive environment for international students is one of the most inspiring places in the world to study. The overall proportion of Nepalese students in Australian international students mix is bound to grow strongly and we look forward to supporting this relationship.



Ashish Sharma

Director Trade and Investment

Australian Trade and Investment Commission

A Conversation with the Australian Ambassador

What excites you about being appointed as the Ambassador to Nepal?

In 1986, I travelled to Nepal as a twenty-year-old university student, having a gap year to learn more about Asia. The year I spent travelling and volunteering gave me new understanding of the region and a deeper sense of the way human beings are fundamentally very similar even though we come from different cultures and countries.

My time in Nepal inspired in me a love of the country and its people, so I came back on three other occasions as a tourist, most recently in 1999.

Returning in February this year as Australia's Ambassador to Nepal is a great honour, and it feels like a homecoming, though both Nepal and I have changed in the past two decades. I am excited to rediscover Nepal and to experience it as a resident rather than as a tourist. And I feel privileged to contribute to the close relations between our countries, especially in forging stronger people-to-people links. This is a particular challenge, but also an imperative, as we navigate the dislocations of COVID-19 and find new ways to bring people together in friendship and mutual support.

Have you noticed the increasing role of Nepalese community in Australia?

It was a great pleasure to meet members of the 100,000-strong Nepalese community in Australia before I moved to Kathmandu. Individuals and families who have settled in Australia are making a valued contribution to their new home in all sectors – in business, government, academia, health and community services and many

others. They are also highly regarded members of Australia's diverse, multicultural society. For example, a wonderful story was published in the media in November last year about the Launceston Nepali Cricket Club and the way the growing Nepalese community in Tasmania is shaping local towns in positive ways.

Our shared interests in sport, good food, hiking and mountaineering, our appreciation of community and care for the environment are just some of the qualities that underpin our similar approach to life.

I'm impressed, too, by the important support that the Non-Resident Nepali Association of Australia offers to the Nepalese community. Particularly during the challenges of the past year, the NRNAA has played a vital role in coordinating assistance to Nepali students and families.

What are your thoughts on the 61 years of bilateral relations between Nepal and Australia?

Arriving in Nepal as Australia's 11th resident ambassador and our fourth female ambassador, I'm very conscious of – and grateful for – the strong foundations on which I will be building as I work to expand our bilateral relationship. Nepal and Australia's partnership over many decades has been characterised by trust, mutual respect, genuine warmth and a solid understanding of each other because of our extensive people-to-people links.

This was most obvious in 2020 when we worked together to ensure each other's citizens could return home safely on repatriation flights as the pandemic began extending across the world. This significant and complex logistical exercise, involving over 1,000 people, was made possible because of the cooperation and friendship built over sixty years.

Can you give us some ideas on the Australian government's upcoming foreign policy's/ plans towards Nepal?

The Australian Government is committed to continuing its partnership with Nepal to support economic and social development. Australia will work side-by-side with Nepal towards a thriving, inclusive society,

including through our Australia Awards scholarships program, our support for strong governance, and our humanitarian support during times of disaster. To support these efforts, our development program in 2020-21 was AUD\$21 million.

We also share interests in regional and international efforts to promote stability, security and peace and a global order where international norms, human rights and the rule of law prevail. Beside education, what do you think are the potential areas that should be prioritized in order to promote trade between Nepal and Australia?

Education is a thriving area of our bilateral relationship and it is important for long-term capacity building. I also consider there is scope to develop linkages in sectors such as agriculture, horticulture and renewable energy, where Australia has particular expertise to contribute to Nepal's development. Where I see a key, somewhat untapped advantage that Nepal has over other countries seeking to expand two-way trade with Australia, is the large, active, entrepreneurial and well-established Nepali community in Australia. It represents great potential to expand merchandise trade, which totalled \$45 million in 2020 and harness new investment opportunities. Australia is one of the most popular destinations for Nepalese students. What advice would you give to the young enthusiastic students planning to choose Australia as their next study destination.

Australia offers world class, internationally recognised qualifications. While COVID-19 has temporarily disrupted study plans for many across the world, Australia remains a welcoming community that is looking forward to seeing the return of international students. Our visa regime permits students to work while studying and provides an opportunity for students to seek employment in Australia after graduation, for periods of between two to four years. This work experience helps to make Nepali graduates more attractive to future employers. And, importantly, student welfare is a priority. Australia's international student support schemes are among the strongest in the world.

Would you like to give any message to Australian Alumni Family in Nepal?

To the Australian Alumni Family, I offer my congratulations to you

for being such great ambassadors for Nepal in Australia, and now, ambassadors for Australia. The positive impressions you made in Australia will be felt for many years, increasing the regard and respect that Australians have for Nepal and its people.

You have come home as talented leaders who are making a difference to your communities. I'm excited by your ongoing contribution to Nepal's progress and prosperity.

I encourage you to stay connected with Australia and the Australian Embassy in Nepal through our alumni events and with AANA. I hope this active alumni association will be like an Australian home to you, a place where the alumni network can support each other and celebrate your successes. It's also a place where the Australian Embassy shares your achievements with admiration and pride.



Felicity Volk

Australian Ambassador to Nepal

Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA)



Non Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) Australia was established in the year 2005 in Sydney, with a vision to unite all Non-Resident Nepali people and Nepalese organizations throughout Australia under one umbrella to form a unified and institutional movement to achieve mutual benefits. The main purpose shall always remain to provide economic and social support towards the development of Nepal along with the promotion of Nepalese culture in Australia. Furthermore, it also aims at expanding bilateral trade between the two nations by exploring possibilities. NRNA - Australia also aims to promote and protect the rights and interest of people of Nepali origin residing in Australia politically as well as socially.

NRNA Australia is leading and one of the 82 National Coordination Councils of NRNA Global. It is registered with Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) as a non-profit organization. ASIC is a federal body while NRNA Australia was registered with the NSW Government Office of Fair Trading previously. It has State Co-ordination Councils in six states and two territories, National Women (Nari Nikunja Australia) and Youth Forums.

It's a privilege that we were invited to write about our organization in the book that is to be published by ANAA in support of Australian Embassy to mark the 61st Year of Bilateral relations between Nepal and Australia. ANAA and NRNA Australia have a common objective when it comes to providing support and guidance to Nepalese Students who are pursuing their higher degrees in Australia and for the same purpose NRNA Australia has a Student Support (SS) Committee that is mainly focused to look after the student's basic rights and requirements.

The majority of our community members are international students who are also the future NRNA leaders. Students coming for the first time are quite naïve and need whatever form of support that can be provided to them. The SS Committee is formed so that there are awareness seminars held in every State to warn students of potential dangers they can face in life in Australia. NRNA Australia must look after, motivate and encourage students to use their full potential without any unexpected mishaps.



The committee has been assisting students where possible to adapt with the life of Australia. Liaise among students, agents, Department of immigration, colleges and universities Australian authority and Nepali authority so that they do not become victims. It has been running an awareness campaign for students of the potential dangers in Australia and at the same time the benefits of Australian community. Over the years the committee has also liaised with the Embassy of Nepal and Consulates in all over Australia, with the education providers in Australia and Education Consultancies in Nepal to look for proper plan and policy to help students before as well as after arrival to Australia.

Apart from supporting the Nepalese students in Australia, some of the major works of NRNA over the years has been:

- For cultural exchange purposes we organize multiple Nepalese festivals in Australian cities and invite the different communities to participate. This has greatly helped us to achieve cultural integration and develop harmony in the community.
- Provide networking platforms which enriches the connectivity of the Nepalese diaspora.
- The association supported with \$1.2million and medical supplies to victims of earthquakes in Nepal in the year 2015. Along with a \$55000 financial contribution to Terai Flood Victims.
- The pandemic hit hard even on the Nepalese community of Australia during which NRNA assisted 600 passengers to fly back to Nepal during international border closure with Repatriation flights. We also delivered more than 3000 food and groceries packages to Nepali Students during the lock down across Australia,
- In Nepal, NRNA has helped establish 13 libraries in various parts of the country. Moreover there are “Akshay Kosh” which has funds to be used for social causes, established in nine schools of Nepal.
- Even in Australia, more than 100 individuals have been helped with cash assistance from the NRNA Australia Social Welfare Fund. Along with the provision of skill based training to hundreds of Nepalese international students such as barista training, bar attendant training and resume writing sessions across Australia that shall help them to secure better jobs.

We at NRNA have strategic plans for the future as well. Few of our immediate work shall be in the below mentioned areas:

- ▶ Increasing the Social welfare fund so that we can help more people in need. We have also felt the need of having a physical office and staff that shall increase the efficiency of our work and can be at an easy reach for all.
- ▶ NRNA shall continue to lobby for the establishment of a Student Welfare Fund to be funded by Nepal Government, Australian Government, Education providers and Education Agencies.
- ▶ We also plan to lobby with the Nepal government to run Orientation sessions for students who wants to go to Australia, to be attended by dependents (if any), the parents and sponsors. The orientation sessions shall essentially brief them about Australian life styles, gambling, mental health, traffic rules, employment prospects, water safety, marriage breakdown, domestic violence and likewise. This session must be made compulsory and must be attended before issuing no objection letter.
- ▶ Another major task would be to establish a Grant and Resources Task Force to assist us conduct research and apply for grants as we have not been able to receive much support for the same, from local, state and federal government.

- ▶ Furthermore, we would be developing mechanisms to involve more women, youths, second generation and academics to work closely with the Nepal government, Nepal based NGOs and INGOs.

Our vision, in the long run shall be to connect Nepali businesses and communities under one umbrella for the matter of common interest. We shall always work towards promoting Nepali culture and tourism in Australia, and to create and connect investment opportunities in Nepal from interested NRNs and other potential investors. We strive to build good relationships with Australian government at all levels, Nepalese government, the Embassy of Nepal, Consulates all over Australia, migrants' organizations, Australian organizations and all Nepalese organizations.



The NRNA believes that we need to be an inclusive community in Australia, abiding and respecting the law of Australia. NRNA Australia needs to work in the interest of people of Nepali origin as the numbers have significantly increased and we shall be making the association more efficient and strong with an increased membership in the years to come.

”

Nepal-Australia Relations Growing Stronger and Stronger

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Australia on February 15, 1960, Nepal Australia friendship is growing stronger and stronger every year. Nepal's relation with Australia is based on cordiality, cooperation, friendship and mutual understanding. There are many factors which have contributed a lot to strengthening and deepening Nepal Australia relations. One of the basic factors to cement Nepal's relation with Australia is the exchange of visits between the leaders, high government dignitaries, teachers and businessmen at different levels.

The state visit of King Mahendra to Australia in 1971 is a landmark event in relation to the strengthening of the bond of friendship between these two countries. The state visit of King Birendra to Australia in 1985 is one of the important milestones in the strengthening of existing relations between Nepal and Australia. There are several other visits undertaken by Nepal's ministers, parliamentarians, businessmen, government officials, etc. to Australia which contribute expanding and consolidating people to people relations between these two countries. The visit of John Kate, then Governor General of Australia to Nepal in 1975

during King Birendra's coronation is another landmark in the consolidation of Nepal Australia relations.

Tourism is one of the basic factors contributing to deepen people- to- people relations between the people of these two countries. It is heartening to note that the number of tourists coming to Nepal from Australia is increasing every year and holds a brighter prospect for future. Trade and business between these two countries serves as another important means which contribute to consolidating Nepal Australia economic relations. The commercial interactions between Nepal and Australia are growing and expanding these days. Nepal Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ANAA, Nepal Australia Friendship Society and NRNA Australia chapter are playing significant role in promoting trade and business between Nepal and Australia. Some items of Australian goods are found in the market of Nepal. Carpet, Pashmina, Handicraft and many more are the major items which Nepal exports to Australia. Electronic goods, cooking oil, wools etc. are the major items which Nepalese businessmen import from Australia.

Australia is one of the leading partners in development of Nepal. It is in 1979 that Australia included Nepal in its development co-operation programs and started providing more and more economic assistance to Nepal mostly in the area of forestry, livestock, training, health, education, good governance, human rights etc. Many Nepalese students have benefitted from the scholarship provided to them by Australia to receive higher education at different Australian Universities. The cooperation which Australia extended to Nepal during the time of earthquake is also worth appreciating.

Mohan Bir Thapa

President

Nepal Australia Friendship Society



Nepal Australia Chamber of Commerce

Nepal-Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry congratulates all the members of Association of Nepalese Alumni from Australia (ANAA) for making remarkable contributions to the Nepalese communities through the joint effort of the alumni's members.

Nepal-Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NACCI) is a non-profitable Bi-National Chamber of Commerce and Industry established with an aim to develop economic and social relationship between countries; exchange delegation tours to promote products & service between countries.

An aspect to review, our diplomatic relationship with Australia was established in 1960. Since then, the relations between the two countries have always been marked by friendship and mutual understanding resulting in the steady growth in bilateral contacts; economic and technical cooperation.

Nepal is in the top five largest providers of International students to Australia. With over 15,000 plus Nepalese students enrolling

to study in Australia every year. According to a recent Australian government report, there are approximately 36,490 people of Nepalese ancestry living in Australia and comprise approximately 35% of the Nepalese-Australian community.

Moreover, our bilateral trade relationship with Australia is valued above 800 Million in fiscal year 2015-16. Economic statistics between countries shows that Nepal's export is lower than Nepali's import from Australia. Australia's trade with Nepal is small, but there is potential for growth in hydro power, tourism and infrastructure development. There is potential for the development of commercial links through the involvement of Australian companies in development project works, funded through international financial institutions.

This exhibits that we have a great potential to make profit from it. Nepalese students are getting good education, learning skills and gaining experiences. We must now focus on utilizing their knowledge towards making an economic and social gain. Obviously, we are lacking in terms of replacement, opportunities, feasible policies and many hidden factors. Both organizations, ANAA and NACCI will try the level best to create possibilities and feasible environments for Nepalese Students to get education from abroad, then after return to make valuable contributions in the local communities.

Nepal- Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NACCI) will always stand strong to support ANAA, and praise the Alumni Association for their contribution towards our society and for maintaining a strong close knit alumni community.

Akhil Chapagain

President

Nepal Australia Chamber of Commerce



The health industry of both countries have greatly benefited from this 61 year partnership. Today Nepal has excellent doctors whose training & experience in Australia have made them pioneers in the medical field of Nepal.

Likewise, a large number Nepalese students who have turned into nurses and care professionals have greatly contributed to the Australian health care system. The partnership has developed real life heroes whose actions have saved millions of lives.

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Health

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Dr. Sanduk Ruit

Connection that Saved Millions of Eyes

I would like to greet and pay my regards for the historical 61 years of Nepal-Australia relationship. I have always found this relationship to be a true connection between the people of Nepal and Australia with no political agenda.

In 1985, Dr. Fred Hollows was invited to Nepal as a short term WHO consultant to look at the problems of trachoma in Nepal, he had tremendous experience of studying trachoma in the Australian outback. I was a young, just passed out ophthalmologist working in the Nepal Eye Hospital. Just by chance, I happen to give company to my dear friend Dr.BD Chatuat who was designated to pick Fred up from the airport. So it was purely destiny that brought Fred and I together. Some interesting chats in the vehicle as he asked me, "What's your interest?" and I turned to him and said, "to bring modern cataract

Name:
Dr. Sanduk Ruit

University of Study in Australia:
University of New South Wales

Batch / Year of Education:
1987-1988

Current / Retired Organization Name:
Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology

Organization Position:
Ophthalmologist (Eye Surgeon)



surgery to the community in Nepal.” He looked back at me,” Isn’t that a bit too much to ask?” I said, “No”. I could sense his interest in me.

I was already doing modern cataract surgery both in Kathmandu and rural Nepal and I continued to stay in touch with Fred. In 1987, Fred and his wife Gabi Hollows invited my wife Nanda and I over to Australia to spend a year with Fred at the University of New South Wales. We discussed, logistics, delivery, and technique of cataract surgery. We had unanswered problems of provision of low cost Intraocular Len(IOL)s. The time I spent in Australia and Thursday Islands gave me a lot of ideas to deliver outreach services. I was thinking about translating these in Nepal and other places in the world. Towards the end of our visit, we decided to establish Nepal Eye Program Australia (NEPA) headed by Tim Macartney Snape and senior Nepalese, Narayan Pradhan and Indra Ban were instrumental along with Christine Gee. The whole exercise could not have been possible without the passion and grit of Gabi Hollows. We were barely able to raise a few hundred dollars and get a hundred IOLs donated. These hundred IOLs along with some surgical instruments purchased, became our treasured luggage back to Nepal.

With Fred’s reputation increasing, Mike Lynskey advised the establishment of the Fred Hollows Foundation (FHF). The NEPA was given a new identity as the Fred Hollows Foundation, which has gone on to become one of the leading charities in Australia and the world doing wonderful work.

The surgical technique, standard operating procedure for cataract surgery developed in Nepal became very popular worldwide especially in Africa and Vietnam. Fred and I started the first Modern Cataract Surgical training program in Hanoi and Saigon. This was the foundation of the FHF. In Nepal, with the enthusiastic support of the then Australian Ambassador, Les Douglas, we were able to conceptualize the IOL manufacturing facility and Modern Cataract Surgical training facility. In 1994, 7th of June, in the presence of Gabi Hollows, the then King of



“

We were barely able to raise a few hundred dollars and get a hundred IOLs donated. These hundred IOLs along with some surgical instruments purchased, became our treasured luggage back to Nepal.

”



Nepal, HM Birendra inaugurated our facility. This started to become a hub for Modern Eye Care, surgical training facility and manufacturer of IOLs. These lenses by 1999, were produced for less than \$4 against the market price of \$200. Both the advent of sustainable, simple high quality cataract surgery and availability of low cost high quality, IOLs made it possible for millions of target population to avail from this high quality cataract surgery.

We still consider the whole process of support through the Hollows to Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology as an exemplary process of modern aid projects. It strengthened and empowered the local community in addition to spread it worldwide. At present, we see about 2000 patients in Nepal and provide them high quality sustainable eye care. We also manufacture low cost IOLs and we have thus far about six million people to have availed from this facility around the world. As a lovely and unique gesture from Nepalese community during the tragic bushfire in Australia the 500 + staffs of Tilganga contributed from their salaries for the victims of bush fire: A sincere response from the heart to signify the essence and the power of support that the Australian people and government have given to Nepal. Long live Nepal-Australia Friendship!

Dr. Damodar Prasad Pokhrel

Pioneering Open Heart Surgery in Nepal

After I completed my education from India and started working as a government appointed doctor at the Bir Hospital, I was fortunate to be granted an opportunity to go to Australia, in 1989, I joined a Fellowship in Cardio Thoracic & Vascular Surgery at the Westmead Hospital, Sydney. I was stationed in Westmead for three years and then after I worked as a senior registrar at the John Hunter Hospital, New Castle, Australia for two years. My five years of experience in Australia gave me the knowledge and confidence to return and implement new techniques and methods to benefit Nepalese community, I re-joined Bir Hospital after returning. I wanted to introduce open heart surgery to Nepal, because I was passionate about it.

Nepal, however, during those times, was struggling with diarrhea and dysentery as major health issues. The government didn't even have enough budget to supply basic medicines like paracetamol to the remote districts where people were suffering from seasonal flu and dying due to lack of access to basic medicine. At times like those, people thought that aiming for an open heart surgery was an overambitious goal because it was supposed to be an expensive treatment.



Name:
Prof Dr Damodar Prasad Pokhrel

University of Study in Australia:
The West Mead Hospital, Sydney

Degree in Australia:
Fellowship in Cardio Thoracic & Vascular Surgery

Batch / Year of Education:
1989

Current / Retired Organization Name:
National Academy of Medical Sciences

Organization Position:
Former Vice Chancellor

“With the right determination and labor, I toiled hard to contribute my share to the health sector of Nepal.”

Amidst such circumstances, a cardiac unit was established at Bir Hospital with support from Dr Alain Gale, a renowned doctor from Australia, who occasionally visited Bir Hospital with his team between 1985 and 1995, and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). That was perhaps the only available logistic we have had and an open heart surgery was way out of league. But we did not give up there, after about five years of continuous effort and convincing the authorities, my team and I were successful at conducting the very first open heart surgery in Bir Hospital, Nepal, in the year 1992. It was a big milestone in our health sector. After the first surgery, we never looked back. Another big achievement was the establishment of Sahid Gangalal National Heart Center, in 1995, of which I was a part of the founding team. I am happy that like I did, young doctors no longer need to go abroad for Cardio Vascular training or surgery. I'm glad that we have paved a path for the new generation of doctors to acquire the skills necessary to treat all kinds of Coronary Artery Disease and rheumatic heart disease and I'm proud to say that some of those highly skilled doctors are trained under my supervision and my peers.

I have witnessed giant leaps in this field in the past 20 years. Before I had been to Australia, it was difficult to imagine a fully functional cardiac unit in Nepal, and now even the most complex heart related surgeries are possible at an affordable cost. With the right determination and labor, I toiled hard to contribute my share to the health sector of Nepal. Later I was also appointed as the Vice Chancellor of National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS). Side by side, I was involved closely during the establishment of the cancer unit at the Chitwan National Hospital. I have also been involved in numerous health related projects. I also have had the opportunity to represent my country in different international forums, which I'm grateful for.

Apart from my professional life, I am also an active member of ANAA and have been appointed the President of ANAA three times earlier in the years. Through ANAA, I have always promoted the idea of giving back to the homeland after getting quality education from Australia. I feel that we should create a favorable environment to return for the young Nepalese students who are currently getting an education abroad as they have a lot of potential to bring positive change in our country.

When I look back, although I mostly focused on my education and practice during my time in Australia, there was always something new to learn. One of the greatest lessons that I can claim I learned in Australia, was the value of human life. It was a big eye opening moment to me, as Nepali society was not used to treating everyone in the same dignified manner, but Australian education taught me that all humans deserve a certain quality of life, and it should not be compromised.

As we celebrate the 61st year of Nepal Australia relations, I hope we continue to foster these deeper humanistic values in both societies and that we are able to harness our energy to lead both countries to progress. Australia has supported many development efforts in Nepal. I am very thankful personally as well as institutionally towards Australian contribution and wish that both nations have a long term cordial relation in the future.

Dr. Dibya Singh Shah

Advancing Ambitious Dream of Kidney Transplant in Nepal

I went to Australia in 2006 with a dream of establishing a sophisticated kidney transplant center in Nepal as we didn't have such advanced technology and training back then. So, to pursue my dream, I applied for a Fellowship in Nephrology and Transplantation Medicine in Monash University. I was fortunate to join the program and be granted a scholarship from the International Society of Nephrology for my studies in Australia.

I thought I'd simply focus on my studies while I was there, but my educational experience challenged and changed my perspective in multiple ways- professionally and personally. One of the most significant lessons I learnt from my time in Australia was to treat everyone equally and with dignity. I was humbled by how Australians paid respect to people of all backgrounds. This culture influenced the relations we shared with our patients. Our treatment wasn't just limited to clinical diagnosis, we also provided counselling regarding the patients' general circumstances, a small change that directly impacted the quality of health care that we provided to the patients. It was also quite refreshing to me when native patients accepted and appreciated me as their doctor, and did not question my credentials based on my gender, race, or nationality.



Name:
Dr. Dibya Singh Shah

University of Study in Australia:
Monash University (Monash Medical Center)

Degree in Australia:
Fellowship of Nephrology and Transplantation

Batch / Year of Education:
2004 to 2006

Current / Retired Organization Name:
Institute of Medicine(IOM), T.U

Organization Position:
Dean

Professionally, I was drinking from a firehose during my fellowship. My professors used to tell us that we shouldn't just take back our skills, but if possible we should also bring back the working technology in order to support the system. And that is exactly what I did. As an eager young professional, I visited different labs and spent endless hours trying to understand all the necessary details required to set up a successful kidney transplant center.

Two years after my fellowship, I returned to Nepal and pushed the envelope of the nephrology department in TU Teaching Hospital, which is the first hospital of Nepal. There, we faced various technical challenges like unavailability of proper pathology labs, expensive medicines, and lack of trained human resources. Due to lack of funding, we had to negotiate with institutions from Canada, India, Germany and Australia for proper equipment and other necessary items. The Germans aided us with six new dialysis machines, which helped us breathe sighs of relief.

Apart from these issues, the most challenging part was to obtain a license from the Ministry of Health to conduct the organ transplant. Due to unstable government and many other factors, the process kept delaying. Some people even advised me to give up because they felt the timing wasn't ripe. But I couldn't stop there because it wasn't just about my dream anymore, there were patients who had relied on me by putting their faith in me and I couldn't give up on them.

After many days and months of wait, we obtained the license from the Ministry, and within a week we were able to perform the very first ever kidney transplant in Nepal. Before returning to Nepal I had convinced a surgeon from the Royal Melbourne Hospital to visit us during our first procedure. We were grateful that he visited us and provided us his guidance and training. However, even after the center was established, there was still much work that needed to be done. I worked very hard during those days, almost 24/7 to ensure that the transplant center was a success. It had almost come to a point where my health was starting to deteriorate.

The first transplant was done in 2008, and today my department boasts more than 610 successful kidney transplants. It gives me an

immense sense of satisfaction and pride that we were able to organize and develop a center which helped save lives without breaking their arms and limbs financially. 2020 was particularly eventful for us as we successfully performed a complicated kidney transplant on our present Prime Minister, Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli. His case received a lot of press releases in national and international media. I can now proudly assure that we can provide treatment for even the most complicated cases related to kidney failure, something that people had to go abroad a few years back. This has not only boosted our confidence but also our morale as we are able to provide quality service to our patients.

When I look back, I feel proud that I lived up to my dream and I did justice to the faith that people had placed in me. Perhaps after one fulfills one dream, another dream starts to take shape. After successful completion of the kidney transplant center, my next project is to set up an organ center for deceased donors. We are working as a sister concern partnering with Monash Medical Center. Besides the kidney and liver donation so far, we plan to add a heart and lungs donation center in the near future. I hope with sheer determination and hard work, we will be able to conquer this new dream as well because in the end all we are striving for is to provide necessary healthcare to save the lives of people.



Dr. Kush Raj Shrestha

A Nepalese Doctor in Australia

I am an Orthopaedic Surgeon specializing in the hip and knee, residing in Adelaide, Australia. Currently, I am the Deputy Head of Orthopedics Department, Royal Darwin Hospital. I have had a rewarding 20 years of professional experience where I have been able to lay a strong foundation for patient approaches, support and care in establishing Adelaide Arthroplasty Clinic. I have also been the visiting medical specialist at Darwin Private Hospital and Ashford Private Hospital, senior clinical lecturer at Flinders University, clinical lecturer at Adelaide University and Director of Training for the Australian Orthopaedic Association.

My academic journey began in 1992, having come as a student to study Bachelor of Science at the University of Adelaide. Although this was my beginning, my dream had always been to serve others by being a doctor. My dedication to this goal was fulfilled as I succeeded in transferring to Medicine and qualifying as a doctor in 1999. I now have the honor of being Director of Training for the Australian Orthopaedic Association. My career pathway was not an easy one, with my biggest challenge being the process of transferring from science to medicine. Furthermore, my career led me to work and travel in various locations including England, Canada, Darwin and Adelaide all of which had their own particular challenges that come from having to relocate and adapting to new staff and systems.

My accomplishments include my involvement in various research projects as well as helping disadvantaged and rural communities including in the Northern Territory, Whyalla and Nepal. My role in Royal Darwin Hospital has resulted in not only raising its status to a teaching hospital, but also in forming links with Nepal through exchanges in medical staff.

My dedication as promoter of the Nepalese community has been my inspiration in my role in establishing cultural programs, being a spokesperson and my general involvement in societies such as Nepal Australia Friendship Association, Guthi SA and Non-Resident Nepalese Association (NRNA).

The terrible consequences of the Nepalese earthquake also had a profound effect on me, spurring my involvement in disaster management. I have helped initiate the Global COVID 19 NRN (Non-resident Nepalese) Repatriation Program and have been heavily involved in educating Nepalese diaspora about protective measures against COVID 19 in Australia and setting up educational sessions during this unprecedented time through Australasian Nepalese Medical and Dental Association- ANMDA.

My passion for helping the Nepalese community was also my inspiration for establishing AussieMed Foundation: a not-for-profit organization dedicated towards supporting health care projects internationally, as well as conducting humanitarian medical missions to help communities in need. We have already managed to take two multidisciplinary medical teams including doctors, nurses and physiotherapists to Nepal and have conducted educational programs including workshops, conferences, surgical demonstrations and medical assessment camps aimed at upskilling the local medical workforce.

Name:
Dr. Kush Raj Shrestha

University of Study in Australia:
University of Adelaide

Degree in Australia: **MBBS**

Batch / Year of Education:
Completed in 1999

Organization Position:
1. Deputy Head Department of Orthopaedic and Trauma Royal Darwin Hospital
2. Vice President : Royal Australasian College of Surgeons - NT



Dr. Sameer M Dixit

A Public Health Entrepreneur

Dr. Sameer Mani Dixit is an influential figure in the public health space of Nepal. Currently, he and his team are collaborating with the government's advisory team to formulate COVID related national policies. An alumnus of the University of Wollongong, Dr. Dixit was in Australia as a student and a professional, two decades ago, ramping up his skills that prepared him to be in this position to contribute. He feels extremely fortunate that he is at the right place and the right time to offer his support to his country at this time of dire need.

Dr. Dixit recalls his days, in Australia, were formidable as he pursued his PhD. He spent long days and nights in the laboratory, not getting expected results for months. These testing times almost made him give up on his higher degree ambitions.

However, with the right push from supervisors, friends and family, he achieved his degree. But he congratulated himself more for the mindset he built for rising from the ground up to cement his positive approach to life problems.

After he came back to Nepal, he first joined Kathmandu University, one of the most prestigious universities, as an instructor. However, he felt academia was limiting as he wasn't able to contribute to the field of sciences and research fully- he was a do-er, not just a teacher. So, he started a research lab- Centre for Molecular Dynamics Nepal (CMDN), along with four other partners that kick started a new kind of scientific movement in Nepal.

Most of the work related to research up until early 2000s had to be outsourced to foreign countries due to lack of capable professionals. Sameer and his colleagues demonstrated that the advancement of

Name:
Dr. Sameer M Dixit

University of Study in Australia:
University of Wollongong (Masters/Hons) and Western Sydney University (PhD)

Degree in Australia: **MSc, MSc Hons, PhD**

Batch / Year of Education:
1997- 2004

Current Organization:
Center for Molecular Dynamics Nepal Vice Chair, Director of Research



science and technology with international standards was possible within their own home ground. They revolutionized the R&D industry by investing in human resources, equipment and machineries, and started producing top-notch work, collaborating with universities, and organizations nationally and internationally.

What Dr. Dixit had started fourteen years ago is still standing and going strong, which speaks volume about the credibility he has built over the years and the scope of this field. Through his dedicated team, he has researched and published scientific articles on various topics, like- generating evidence to bring government's attention to mitigation of Hepatitis C; Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) a phenomenon that has caused crisis in the medical field where antibiotics are losing their efficacy due to bacterial resistance; COVID- 19 related genomics studies, ensuring that the government's equipped with evidence based decisions to create health policies.

His success did not come over-night, like with anyone who decides to walk the path less travelled. But Dr. Dixit and his team worked hard knowing that the path they are paving will bring results for the next generation. "Our work has changed the paradigm for the new generation of scientists and researchers and have proven that there are enough opportunities in this country". He, however, asserts- "Don't be forced to come back for the sake of coming back. Come back if you have a plan, however simple it is. Come for with an aim or a wish that you want to pursue, not just for idealistic reasons."

Dr. Kunta Devi Pun

Progressing the Nursing Department



Dr. Kunta Devi Pun joined Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences (KUSMS) Nursing Program as a lecturer in 2004, and then became an Assistant Professor in 2007, an Associate Professor in 2011 and a Professor in 2019. The steady climb in her career is only a reflection of her dedication to the field of nursing. From the year 2019 she heads the Nursing program as the Director of Midwifery and Nursing program.

Dr. Kunta has come a long way since her days in Australia where she journeyed to complete her graduate diploma or Masters in Midwifery. She takes pride in the fact that she was the first person from Nepal to get into the program. The process, however, wasn't easy for her considering how she had to also leave her family behind for the first time in her life, in particular her two-year-old daughter. She struggled to cope up with the new system and the culture shocks. She only heaved sighs of relief, three months later, when her husband and her daughter joined her, which gave her much needed strength and support.

University of Study in Australia:
Victoria University, Melbourne

Degree in Australia: **Graduate diploma in Midwifery leading to Master of Midwifery**

Batch / Year of Education:
2001 - 2004

Current Organization: **Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences**

Organization Position:
Professor and Director, Nursing and Midwifery Program

She fondly recalls her days at Victoria University where she was impressed by the level of compassion, respect, and ability for women to make decisions on care, practice of alternative therapy and continuity of care that patients and practitioners displayed. It was then that she was inspired to bring back home some of the good practices she witnessed during her time in Australia.

After returning from Australia, she proactively became involved in launching academic programs for Nursing in Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences (KUSMS) to pave a path for the future nurses and midwives. First, she helped launch B.Sc in Nursing in 2004, then, Bachelor in Nursing Science in 2011, and finally Bachelor in Midwifery and M.Sc in Nursing and Midwifery programs in 2016. It is to be noted that the latter two were the first programs ever offered in midwifery education

throughout Nepal. She humbly claims that these achievements were only possible because of her education in Australia.

Having successfully helped the nation build an army of health workers, and improve the professionalism in industry, Dr. Kunta embarked on her new journey of pursuing her PhD from Norwegian University of Science and technology (NTNU) in collaboration with Dhulikhel hospital and NTNU, in April 2018. Currently, she is engaged in leading projects like HERA (Health care response to domestic violence and abuse) in collaboration with University of Bristol and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and ADVANCE 2 (Addressing Domestic Violence in an Antenatal Environment), which is the continuation of her PhD project.





Australia has always been in the forefront to support Nepal at all times of crisis. In June 2021 to combat Covid-19 the Australian Ambassador to Nepal Her Excellency Felicity Volk handed over humanitarian aid supplies to Lieutenant General Prabhu Ram Sharma and his team from the Nepal Army at Tribhuvan International Airport Nepal. The supplies were brought in from Australia carried by the team of the Royal Australian Air force.

Photo Credit : CPL Robert Whitmore



When it comes to the environment, both Nepal and Australia are naturally gifted. From the highest peak of the world Mount Everest to the magnificent Great Barrier Reef which is even visible from space, both countries enjoy their unique aspects of nature. Both countries are also home to some of the most rare and unique wildlife; the kangaroos, koala and the tasmanian devil are found only in Australia, likewise the Asiatic Elephant, one horned rhinoceros, the spotted deer call Nepal their home.

With great natural treasures to preserve, both nations face common global challenges like climate change, mismanagement of resources, mass urbanization and other threats which can have ill-effects for the future generation. Luckily we have eminent leaders and communities who inspire us and guide us through the process to play our part to respect the environment and wildlife around us.

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Environment

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Meen B. Poudyal Chhetri, PhD

Disaster Governance in Nepal

1. Introduction

Nepal is one of the disaster prone countries of the world. Geophysical and socio-economic condition of the country have made her vulnerable to various types of natural disasters such as flood, landslide, fire, earthquake, windstorm, hailstorm, lightning, glacier lake outburst flood, drought, epidemic, pandemic, avalanche, heat wave, cold wave etc. Climate change due to global warming has become 'extreme' and in the climate change vulnerability index Nepal is ranked as the 4th most climate vulnerable country in the world (World Bank 2011). Fire is another disaster which occurs on a regular basis and wildfires are damaging to already severely depleted forests and biodiversity of Nepal which results in economic loss, land degradation and environmental pollution. The government data show that since 2000, annually, an average of 329 people lost their lives due to various disasters and property loss of more than 1 billion rupees. Hence, Nepal is considered as the 'hot spot' of disasters.

2. Disaster Scenario

Nepal is facing the fury of natural and human induced disasters with greater frequency and intensity. People in Nepal live with hazards, accepting them as the way of life. Disasters are so penetrative in every Nepalese geographic and societal framework that the people are

constantly under the threat of a multitude of natural disasters. The earthquake of 1934, 1980, 1988, 2015 CE and the flood of 1993, 2008, 2013, 2014 and 2017 CE are the most devastating disasters which not only caused heavy losses to human lives and physical properties but also adversely affected the development process of the country as a whole. At the moment, COVID-19 has impacted the daily life and economy of Nepal as well as the other countries of the world. The lessons of the recurrent flood and landslide, 2015 earthquake and COVID-19 have brought about a shift of attitude on the part of planners, government, donor agencies, NGOs and INGOs of Nepal towards the need for a coordinated emergency preparedness and response mechanism.

3. Problems of Disaster Management in Nepal

It is an unpleasant fact that the vulnerability of human settlements to natural disasters is continuously rising because of misappropriation of natural resources by deforestation, encroachment of the flood plains, environmental degradation, haphazardly planned development projects and heavy influx of population to the urban areas in search of employment and livelihood. However, we have learnt from the past disasters (e.g. 2015 Gorkha Earthquake and the recurrent floods and landslide of consecutive years) that we can significantly reduce the impact of natural disasters through disaster mitigation efforts (e.g. by building earthquake resistant infrastructures). Such efforts must be integrated into development projects in order to build a culture of preparedness and prevention. They have cautioned us to be aware of the multiple hazards and the need for heavy investment and multi-actor commitment in disaster resilience.

In addition to efforts to rebuild infrastructure damaged in the earthquake, there is a major drive to improve performance against Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) (2015-2030) targets including increasing school enrolment, safety measures and education in schools against potential disasters. Although there is significant investment in building new schools and health posts, infrastructure safety from the view point of earthquake resistance is a big issue. Due to the poor knowledge of, or adherence to, National Building Codes and limited provision of quality materials and technical oversight, this brings obvious dangers of multiple new infrastructures being constructed that are not disaster resilient due to these pressures.



The poor and the most vulnerable people (women, persons with disabilities and other socially excluded groups) are typically the worst affected by the disasters as they tend to live in vulnerable areas, have less capacity to deal with loss of income and assets, and limited access to risk sharing mechanisms. Occurrences of disasters are random and unpredictable but not entirely uncontrollable events. Factors such as demographic pressure, poor urban planning, settlements in high-risk areas and reduced livelihood options entail a high vulnerability to more frequent, more intense and more unpredictable disasters. Urban communities are increasingly at risk.

The country lacks a strong mechanism to widely share the knowledge and the information to the poor and vulnerable communities. More importantly, the vulnerable communities have not been able to reduce the impact of disasters for want of resilience of poor and vulnerable people, particularly women, to mitigate, prepare for, effectively respond and overcome the impact of multiple hazards in various parts of the country. Though the capacity of Nepal to prepare and respond to disasters has improved but requires further strengthening and sustained efforts to build a disaster resilient Nepal through the promotion of inclusive community based DRR and health sector preparedness plan in both rural and urban contexts.

4. Way Forward

Nepal faces an enormous challenge from major disasters and pandemics like the devastating earthquake of 25 April 2015 and COVID-19. Therefore, long-term and sustainable efforts are required to address the problems of natural disasters and other emergencies in Nepal. Although disaster management and risk reduction may be considered as additional burden in the light of competing demands for resources in a developing country like Nepal, this is highly desirable to respond to familiar and unexpected emergencies and disasters before the human and economic consequences of inaction are extensive, unmanageable and more expensive.

As the impacts will forever affect landscape, people, society, and livelihoods in Nepal – there is no choice but to adapt to hazards and emergencies. Living with various types of hazards and unseen and unexpected emergencies in daily life is the destiny of Nepalese people. Yet, the Nepalese and their neighbours and friends all over the



globe, have to reconcile themselves to the fact that tens of kilometres beneath where they live, the Indian and Eurasian plates will continue their tussle again and again. Likewise, pandemics such as the COVID-19 may appear again in another form. Therefore, in that journey, they must build on the fundamental strengths they possess—social capital and community resilience. Despite limited resources, the presence of community-based institutions at sub-national levels they have maintained a social cohesion and played a constructive role in managing services like drinking water, electricity, forest and even developing infrastructure such as trail bridges. As the Nepalese move forward, they must allow competing visions, strategies, institutional cultures, resources, and perspectives to be expressed and articulated as democratic deliberation. To rebuild Nepal and for good governance, the government should call on experts particularly the academia inside and outside the country to engage in interdisciplinary collaboration. Non-governmental organizations, the private sector, experts, intellectuals and the media can contribute in the rebuilding and disaster-preparation efforts and working collaboratively and effectively.

About the Author

Meen B. Poudyal Chhetri, PhD

I was affiliated with the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane, Australia for a three months training program in 2008, a one-month training program in 2017 under the Australian Awards Fellowship program, and Postdoctoral Research Study in 2011 under the Endeavor Awards Research Fellowship. I did my Postdoctoral Research study on “Disaster Risk Reduction: Policy Implications for Nepal, Australia and Beyond” which helped me to formulate and advocate for the endorsement of disaster management legislation in Nepal.

Each of my affiliations was rewarding despite some challenges. I had ample opportunities to learn from professors, mentors, and colleagues. The conducive teaching-learning environment and friendly behavior was always inspiring. Besides formal education, I have learned much through the visit to educational and professional government and non-government organizations, informal conversations, and sometimes just observations. My learning in Australia has enabled me to discharge my duties and responsibilities more efficiently and effectively through my enriched theoretical and practical knowledge, and skills which are an asset for me as well as the country of Nepal.

Australian Universities are great academic institutes that impart academic competence, research aptitude, abilities in thinking out of the box, leadership quality, teamwork skills, taking initiatives, and work with ethics and/or integrity. On the other hand, there isn't any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, indigenous or social origin, property, birth, age or other status.



Moreover, it is a safe country from the point of view of personal security as well. Hence, I highly recommend potential students to pursue their studies in Australia for uninterrupted high-quality education.

I was appointed as the Adjunct Professor at the QUT from March 1, 2009. I initiated exchange visits and training programs between the QUT and Nepal Center for Disaster Management (NCDM) in 2010, 2013, and 2017. I was awarded AEI Australia Alumni Excellence Awards in 2014 by the Government of Australia and the QUT Impact Stories Award in 2017 & 2018 from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). I was appointed as the Endeavor Ambassador from the Australian High Commission, New Delhi in February 2018. I was awarded “DPNet-Nepal Award 2014” by the Government of Nepal in 2014 for my significant contribution in the field of DRR.

I have been accorded with various prestigious National Medals like Janpad Sewa Padak 1991, Mahendra Vidhya Bhusan Padak 1996, Prabal Gorkha Dakshin Bahu 1998, Gaddi Arohan Rajat Padak 2001, Daibi Prakopoddhar Padak in 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001. I have authored two books and published a number of research articles in national and international journals.

Bijaya Raj Poudyal

Australia’s Contribution to the Nepalese Community Forests

BSc Forestry was introduced in Nepal in 1981 at Pokhara under Tribhuvan University. I joined BSc Forestry as the first batch in Nepal. After completing the course, I joined Kavre Palanchok District Forest Office as Assistant Forest Officer through the Public Service Commission in early 1985. I served for five years and was promoted to District Forest Officer. After working for three years I received a scholarship from AUSAID to study for a Master Degree in Forestry (1995-1996) at Canberra, Australia.

During my work in Nepal and study in Australia, I met many Australian experts, academia, and local people from whom I learnt a lot about the principle and practices of global perspectives of community forestry, environmental management and economically-ecologically sustainable development. I retired from the job in 2017 from the Director General for the Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management. Prior to that I was DDG (Chief of Community Forestry Division)



Degree in Australia:
Master of Environmental Management

Retired Org. Name:
Department of Soil & Water Conservation

Organization Position
Director General

University of Study in Australia:
Australian National University

Batch / Year of Education:
1995-1996

at Department of Forests, Regional Forest Directorate, Regional Forestry Training Officer (Dhangadhi, Far West, Nepal and Pokhara, Western Nepal), Chief of Publicity and Extension Section of DoF, District Forest Officer in Kabhre palanchok, Dhading, Ilam, Nuwakot and Nawalparasi districts.

Due to better diplomatic relations between Nepal and Australia many Nepalese have been supported to graduate in Forestry Science from Australian Government and almost all have contributed to develop national policies, acts, and implementation of community forestry.

Australian assistance can be seen in other sectors as well. Currently, Australia is assisting in enriching local governance, education and micro-enterprise development. Australia’s support in forestry, capacity building, and peace building have remained important since 1961, the year that marks Nepal’s diplomatic relationship with Australia. In 1984 Australia opened its residential Embassy in Kathmandu which was upgraded to the Ambassadorial level in 1986. It has been 61 glorious years of working together.

I am very proud to have worked in the community forestry journey with visionary leaders. Nepal initiated the concept of Community Forestry in 1973 and ground-breaking achievements are globally recognized. The government declared the first site-Thokarpa- from where the concept of community forestry originated.



Further, the declaration was made by the government through a cabinet meeting on May 31, 2016, solving the long existing debate at both national and international levels over community forestry's place of origin. Three of us were even invited and felicitated in the Community Forestry Day 2017 at Thokarpa.

Community forestry has become an appropriate way of managing various forest landscapes. The decentralized policy and participatory approach for protection, promotion and silviculture based utilization of the forests and generating funds and spending the budget as per the decision of the user groups are major social binding and blending with technical aspects to make it successful and popular for community forestry in Nepal.

In the national level, of the total area, 44.74 percent (66,00,000 ha) lands are covered by forests and shrubs based on Forest Resource Assessment between 2010-2014. Nepal allocated its 23.39 percent land (out of 1,47,18100 ha) for Protected Area System. Community based forestry (Community Forestry, Collaborative Forestry, Pro-poor Leasehold Forestry, Religious Forestry, Buffer Zone Community Forestry and Protection Forestry) covers 42 per cent of national forests. Nepal is leading the world community through community forestry. Community Forestry, having more than 22,415 groups covering 22,72, 356 ha in Nepal, is the mother of other Community based Forestry (Collaborative Forestry, Pro-poor Leasehold Forestry, Religious Forestry, Buffer Zone and Forest Protection Area).

Nepal has received a wide range of international development support for forest management. Since 1966, the Australian Government has supported Nepal's forest sector; initially as development assistance from Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB), then from AusAID. The Project Site prior to 1978 was for the whole Nepal for research and trial of tree species and seed center establishment at Kathmandu. Between 1978 to 2013 it was confined in two districts Sindhu Palchok and Kabre Palanchok district. After 2013 Kavre and Lamjung.

“Further, time has come to conserve biodiversity, maintain environmental balance, better governance, and gender equality and social inclusion, contributions of community forestry in gross domestic product (GDP).”

I have highlighted the project phases as below:

- Late 1961 to late 1970: Research/Trial – Tree Species suitability, rehabilitation of degraded land, establishment of Forest Seed Center at Hattisar, Kathmandu
- 1978-1995: NAFP -Nepal-Australia Forestry Project- 1, NAFP 2, NA Community Forestry Project):
- 1995-2002: Nepal-Australia Community Forestry Project (NACFP), Nepal- Australia Community Resource Management Project (NACRMP)
- 2002-2006: Nepal- Australia Community Resource Management and Livelihood Project (NACRMLP)

- 2006-2013: Forestry Enterprising : Micro Enterprise Development Program (MEDEP)
- 2014-2018: Enhancing Livelihood from Improved Forest Management in Nepal-EnLiFT-I: Research (Kabhre palanchok and Lamjung Districts)

Project Partners

Government of Nepal -Ministry of Forest and Environment (MoFE), University of Adelaide (UA), University of New South Wales (UNSW), ForestAction Nepal (FAN), Nepal Agro-forestry Foundation (NAF) and The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC)

- 2019-2023: Enhancing Livelihood from Improved Forest Management in Nepal - EnLiFT-II (Kavre and Sindhu Districts)

Project Partners

University of Adelaide, University of New South Wales, ForestAction Nepal, Nepal Agroforestry Foundation, Department of Forests, Forestry Research and Training Center and RECOFTC

The major contributions of these projects in brief has been, Support in Policy and Legal Framework Development (till 2006), Human Resources Development; Support to Infrastructure development; Development of outreach and educational materials; Natural capital – where more than 26 thousand hectares of plantations have been established since late seventies in Sindhupalchok and Kavrepalanchok districts and are handed over to communities as community forests; and Economic capital and Opportunities.

The primary goal of community forestry is to supply basic forestry products, without damaging the forest. Due to changing socio-economic conditions and supply of other energy sources (LPG and electricity), the usage of forest is changing. Further, time has

come to conserve biodiversity, maintain environmental balance, better governance, and gender equality and social inclusion, contributions of community forestry in gross domestic products (GDP).

Nepal is facing a crisis due to the 2015 earthquake, recent landslides and occasional forest fires. Still both Sindhu palchok and Kabhre Palanchok districts are green on the surface. A large number of new plantations are created in support of Australian government. Hundreds of forest users are formed for the management of community forests and we are heading towards sustainable growth.

The Nepal government has decided to establish a National Community Forestry Learning Center in Thokarpa, Sindhupalchok. The Center will be operated to conduct orientation, re-orientation, training program to the executive committee member and local government on community silviculture based on socio-ecological production model in each sub basin of Koshi Basin of Nepal. And also to enhance knowledge for federal and provincial law and policy makers on climate change, disaster risk reduction, adaptation, community forest management, watershed management. To achieve such tasks, the role of Australian government will be vital again. Community Forestry Users Groups are seeking re-entry of Australian assistance who have a great impression for the forest creation and enhancement of community forestry in the district and Nepal. In addition, the CF journey definitely contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals at National and global level.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Local Community, Rangers and Foresters who worked in Sindhupalchok and Kabhre Palanchok districts and Australian experts and project staff who changed the degraded landscaped to greenery, uplifting livelihoods of people. Most importantly, I would like to heartily thank Mr Shambhu P. Dangal and Devi Chandra Pokharel, DFO, Kabhre Palanchok for providing valuable information on the subject matter.

Nawraj Pradhan

Understanding Natural Research Management & Policies



Degree in Australia:
Master of Environmental Management

University of Study in Australia:
University of New South Wales

Batch / Year of Education:
2007-2008

Current Org. Name:
ICIMOD

Organization Position
Natural Resource Management & Policy Specialist

Biodiversity conservation and science of landscape ecology emerged during the 1980s. In the early 1990s the conservation initiatives gradually started to use the approach of protection and strict monitoring. These initiatives were limited in that these did not fully strike balance between conservation and development and include local customary institutions as ‘People’ and ‘Society’ from protected areas (PA) management, something that was only seen during the 2000s. Consequently, the transboundary nature of ecosystems and the flow of services beyond administrative boundaries evolved.

Several organisations like ICIMOD and WWF have been active proponents of transboundary initiatives that promote regional cooperation to manage conservation and development programs across borders. Few significant highlights of such contributions are regional cooperation and dialogues on river basin



management, monitoring of key flagship species and wildlife, addressing illegal wildlife trade across borders, collaborative research, sharing knowledge and data on best practices to achieve SDG’s, nominating joint UNESCO World Heritage Natural Sites in the landscape, ABS (Access and Benefit Sharing) of local communities linking to global actions (Nagoya Protocol), and finally linking science to policy needs across regional countries.

Currently, working for ICIMOD, Nawraj Pradhan is the Natural Resource Management; Policy Specialist providing strategic inputs and programme implementation support in Transboundary

Landscape Programmes; Kailash Sacred Landscape (China, India and Nepal); Far Eastern Himalaya Landscapes (China, India and Myanmar) and Kanchenjunga Landscape (Bhutan, India and Nepal). He is also working on a new effort, Himalaya Calling, which is an initiative to bridge the science – policy – practice divide in the Indian Himalayan Region. Nawraj is best known for his work in ICIMOD’s Transboundary Landscapes Regional Program. The program advocates the use of the

landscape approach, which delineates areas based on shared ecosystems, for sustaining ecosystem services, managing biodiversity and protecting unique cultural and natural attributes. His team received the Global Award: Renewable Natural Resources Foundation’s (RNRF) Outstanding Achievement Award for 2018 for their regional transboundary work.

Nawraj went to the University of New South Wales, Sydney to study Environmental Management in 2007 for his master’s degree. Following his education in Australia, Nawraj has worked in various capacities in countries like Australia, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, and now Nepal, coordinating national and regional collaborative research in multilateral, inter-governmental organizations. Passionate about the mountains, he has spent most of his career contributing towards understanding, ecosystems and flow of its services including the hydrogeology and groundwater dynamics in the mountain context, and springshed management to conserve future water security for the Himalayas.

Nawraj emphasizes “the importance of going beyond borders and the universal solidarity to build more regional cooperation and knowledge sharing to engage humankind of all ages and nationalities.”

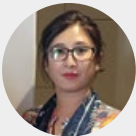
He is grateful that the Australian Government has been supporting transboundary river basins and water resource management programs through ICIMOD and other organizations. He believes that there is a huge opportunity to promote the transboundary landscape and river basin management as a tool for regional cooperation, stability and peace. According to Nawraj, “nature-based solutions across borders are ideal to manage a mosaic of complex and integrated social-ecological systems beyond borders. A new paradigm shift through regional programs that takes into account impacts of climate change and its relation to landscapes, anthropogenic changes, and movement of water and species that range across country borders is thus required in South Asia and globally.”

Transboundary landscapes using nature-based solutions are ideal to manage a mosaic of complex and integrated social-ecological systems beyond borders



Anusuya Joshi

Turning Challenges into Opportunities



Degree in Australia:
Masters in Science – Environmental Management & PhD in Environment Science

Current Org. Name:
Alternative Energy Promotion Center

Organization Position
Senior Environmental & Social Safeguard Expert

University of Study in Australia:
Victoria University

Batch / Year of Education:
2005 (Masters), 2015 (PhD)

The best thing about living in a developing country is we can find plenty of opportunities only if we take a small initiation to explore it. I found mine, in the sector of environment and energy.

I left the tourism sector and joined for my Masters in Environment Management at Victoria University in the year 2004. After my Masters I returned to Nepal; worked for few years and then pursued my PhD from the same university. For both the programs, I had received a fully funded scholarship from the Australian Government and this completely changed the purpose of my life.

When I returned with a Master’s degree from Australia, the very first challenge was to land a job for myself. However, this wasn’t easy. Even after multiple efforts I was still unemployed. This initial failure motivated me towards a new direction. Rather than



seeking to work for some organization, I established my own NGO with the help of a few school friends, with an objective to deal with solid waste management. We started with a small target community, and our main concern had been segregating the household waste as biodegradable and non-biodegradable. We ran a campaign for it “Towards Zero Waste” and also received support from the local government bodies.

We introduced Japanese technology based ‘Takakura Composting’ in the community. We taught how compost could be made from kitchen waste and utilized in the rooftop vegetable farming. Not only was waste being reduced, people were eating healthy green vegetables grown in their own rooftop.

Moreover, we ran yet another program “Campaign against the use of polybags” as an extension of the same advocacy campaign, in which we promoted reusable cloth bags and discouraged the use of even a single plastic bags. In department stores of Lalitpur such as Namaste, Gemini, Saleways etc, incentives were provided to people who brought their own cloth bags. The campaign stimulated the GoN to formulate policies such as Plastic Bags Reduction and Regulation Directive

2011. It had been a tough job for our team to collaborate with the government bodies, to convince the local community and sometimes we were actually investing from our pockets. We had also earned some opposition from those who were working in the same sector but were charging the households for the same task. However, as I believe that “more the challenges more the opportunities”, we never turned our back.

In addition, we ran another campaign “Combating Noise Pollution” in coordination with Traffic Police and Department of Transport Management. As a response to our effort the Government of Nepal published notice on “Ban on Pressure Horn” in National Newspaper on November 27, 2009. The areas in Thamel and Asan were made Vehicle Free Zone and even in other areas very loud horns were restricted. The major achievement was when Traffic Police and the Government of Nepal supported our cause and implemented laws accordingly. Hence, it was a proud moment for our entire team

After working in community for five years I went for my PhD which I completed in the year 2015. On my return, I found a lot had changed in the sector of waste management. At present I have been working in the sector of Alternative Energy as a Senior Environmental and Social Safeguard Expert. The projects are supported by The World Bank, Asian Development Bank and UNDP Nepal. The main objective of these programs is to promote the use of alternative energy technology, especially in the rural off-grid areas of Nepal where still the electricity (national grid) hasn’t reached. We give them alternative options like the Solar, Wind and Hydro Energy. This not just helps in raising the quality of life of people but it also protects our environment and supports to mitigate/adapt climate change. Though as of now our target area is remote areas of Nepal but we plan on making it an alternative source of fuel in a commercial scale as well. And, I ensure that all these projects are carried out complying with safety measures and benefits are reached to women and vulnerable people of the community.

My PhD research had been about “Community based waste management strategies in a targeted Nepalese communities”. Though my professional sector shifted from waste management to energy, still I am connected with waste management sector - volunteering as facilitator and working as a Faculty at Patan Multiple Campus and Institute of Engineering.

Our country has a lot of opportunities, the only thing is to find the best fit for you. Australian education gave me the exposure towards critical thinking and research based learning. This, I utilized in uplifting few areas of concern in my country. The main essence is we should own and enjoy whatever we are doing.

On this occasion of 60th year of Australia and Nepal’s bilateral relation I would like to thank the Australian Embassy in Nepal for their contribution in the development of our country. The scholarship opportunity isn’t only limited to monetary value, as the return is immense, one academically sound citizen can in-turn develop and motivate many others. It’s a chain and the value added is immeasurable. We hope to receive such cooperation in future as well.



Avishek Malla

Harnessing a New Generation of Renewable Energy in Nepal



Degree in Australia:
Master of Renewal and Sustainable Energy

Current Org. Name:
Sun Farmer

University of Study in Australia:
Murdoch University

Organization Position
Chief Executive Officer

We established Sunfarmer in 2014, with a mission to create meaningful impact in the lives and livelihoods of customers through our services and innovation. We believe that electricity is not just the flow of electrons but it harnesses the power to improve lives and livelihoods of people. This has been our core focus on developing any product and service. Since the establishment, we have implemented over 1,610 solar energy projects and impacted over 1.2 million Nepalese by powering health & education, irrigating farms, providing clean drinking water and greening businesses. We have pioneered an innovative business model for rural and urban solar services and recently were awarded as the most innovative Solar Company by the Government of Nepal.

Before Sunfarm when I look back, my journey started in 2008, after I was awarded Australia Award Endeavour Scholarship to study Renewable and Sustainable Energy at Murdoch University for my Masters. It was a great opportunity to get exposure to international education, culture and learn about renewable energy applications from experienced professors and lecturers. The most important lesson my professors taught me at Murdoch was we have to adopt a holistic development approach by



integrating the five pillars – technical, social, environmental, political and economic aspects towards implementing any project. This has been my main mantra and approach to any work or project I am involved with.

After graduating from Murdoch, I returned to Nepal with the hope of implementing my acquired knowledge. I faced many challenges during that time. One of my biggest early career challenges was to build the network of professionals and businesses within the sector, which was quite frustrating. But there were also challenges with policy, regulations, finance, human resources, and technical issues to name a few. But somehow, I converted most of my challenges as opportunities, and stride forward with determination to make things work for us.

In 2016, I was honored by the Australian High Commission with the Alumni Excellence Award recognizing my work in Nepal for Sunfarm. I was also privileged to represent as Australian Endeavour Awards Ambassador to Nepal to raise awareness about the program and Australian education in 2018.

Although Nepal is where I work, my Australian education and experience was pivotal in my career to help me gain the confidence to propel my passion. Today, I am an advocate for renewable energy to provide means to improve thousands of lives in remote and rural areas, and it was only possible because of the opportunities I received because of these two countries. I wish the very best for both countries to have another 61 years of amicable relations, so that more people like me with passion and vision can pursue their goals.

Sanjeev Bikram Rana, PhD

Solving the Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Challenge



Course:
MBA and Master of International Business

Current Org. Name:
Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Management Board

University of Study in Australia:
University of Wollongong

Organization Position
Executive Director

Kathmandu has experienced an exponential increase in population growth over the years, which has caused multiple development issues including high demand for water supply. With limited water supply access, the city had not been able to fully meet the growing demand of the residents. Thus, three autonomous entities including Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Management Board (KVWSMB) was established to confront the challenge of meeting the water supply as per the demand, under Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation by splitting the previous institution Nepal Water Supply Corporation (NWSC). After the split, KVWSMB was responsible for all assets associated with water supply and sewage systems in the capital, including development of water and sewage related policies along with the release and monitoring of licenses for service providers to ensure the operation and management of water supply and sanitation.

Before KVWSMB, Dr Rana was simply working as a government officer in NWSC, longing to do more. He had been a brilliant, and outstanding student all of his life, who had received multiple scholarships on merit basis. Dr Rana holds a MSc in Civil Engineering from Russia,



a second Masters from Australia (an MBA and MIB at the University of Wollongong), and later completed his PhD from Rajasthan, India. However, in his early career, he had to endure 14 years of service without a promotion. While most people would have switched their jobs, he used his frustration to pursue opportunities through an open to public competition for another government job. As a result, in 2012, Dr Rana was appointed the Executive Director, who spearheaded the KVWSMB and brought positive changes in the water sector of the capital city.

After his appointment, Kathmandu witnessed a series of positive impacts brought by good governance, set up of effective systems, and organized operations. Water shortages became more manageable, which enriched the quality of lives of the residents. Because of the policies that KVWSMB set by Dr Rana and his team, the residents were not only able to access clean drinking water more frequently, but also more reliably, which promoted better sanitation and hygiene. Some of his other accomplishments include licensing of ground-water, innovative water ATMs, research study, and publication on ground water and stone sprouts, are some among others. Under Dr Rana's leadership, new milestones on research, policies, and awareness, were achieved. His leadership is a true reflection of his sincerity towards his work and commitment.

IA go-getter, and a do-er, Dr Rana could have retired from the workforce sooner, but he shares that he wanted the second term because of the long awaited Melamchi Water Supply that would change the way water is being distributed in the city. It requires capable hands to set up the new system and organize the supply in a way that is efficient and effective. For a man who has tackled the water shortage issue for decades, this is a perfect challenge. With a passionate and diligent problem solver like Dr. Rana, Kathmandu residents can rest assured that they are in good hands when it comes to water supply.



Number of Australian Friends visiting Nepal for tourism purpose

2017	2018	2019	2020
33371	38429	38972	6793



Did you know that Nepal’s population is around 10 % greater than that of our Australian friends. However, Australia’s economy is larger with nominal GDP approximately US \$1.61 trillion and Nepal’s \$36 billion. Regardless of the difference, both nations have been able to support one another in their endeavors. While Nepal has benefited from direct aid, scholarship opportunities, bilateral consultations and technical cooperations, Australia has benefited from Nepalese workforce and Nepalese students’ contribution in the international education industry. As a part of such exchange, some of our capable policy makers and leaders who have been in high level government positions are also recipients of prestigious Australian scholarships that have enabled them to learn from the best global practices and excel in their leadership role.

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Economics & Governance

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Mahesh Dahal

Nepalese Ambassador to Australia

Ambassadorship Tenure: Oct 2019 – May 2021



Contributions of the Nepalese Embassy in Australia

Australia: A Brief Introduction

Situated in the Southern Hemisphere, between the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean, Australia is the smallest continent. After it was discovered by Captain James Cook in the year 1770, it came under the jurisdiction of Britain. Since then Australia has been a cultural amalgamation of Aborigines, Europeans and Asians. While Australia is 48 times larger than Nepal in terms of area, it has a population of almost 25 million, which is less than Nepal's. Though Australia gained autonomous independence on the 1st of January 1901, the head of the constitution is still The Queen of England. The Governor General appointed by the Queen is the

official representative of the British Monarchy and all embassies fall under his/her authority.

The diplomatic relations between Nepal and Australia were established on 15 February 1960. The year 2020 marked the 60th year of diplomatic relation between the two countries and The Embassy of Nepal in Australia hosted a reception to celebrate this occasion at the Australian Federal Parliament House in Canberra. Members of the Parliament, senior officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, heads of diplomatic missions based in Canberra and members of the diplomatic corps, former ambassadors of Australia to Nepal,

representatives of the Australian Non-Government Organizations and members of the Nepali diaspora were present in the program.

This article will try to cover some diplomatic issues that are successfully undertaken by the embassy on behalf of the Government of Nepal in the last two years as well as those issues that are currently in the pipeline.

Diplomacy During the Global Pandemic

Australia is currently home to more than 150,000 Nepalese amongst which there are 63,000 students and the number tends to grow each year. China is said to be first when it comes to the number of students coming to Australia every year for higher studies. However, if we analyze it population wise, perhaps it won't be wrong to say that Nepal has outgrown China.

The pandemic hit hard on these 63,000 students and the Embassy played the role of a guardian, a mediator, a facilitator, a provider and many more during the difficult times. About 1800 Nepalese students had filled forms, seeking help of different nature. Every complaint was registered and categorized. Fundraising activities were conducted. There was a call for social entrepreneurship to the NRN and other Nepalese communities for relief fund collection. Bicycles were bought and distributed free of cost during the lockdown to reach every Nepali student with the basic supply of grocery. We negotiated with the education providers to defer courses as well as to postpone the payment of tuition fee. We negotiated with Australian Government in developing policy to safeguard the rights of tenants, who were unable to pay timely rent. The parents, back home, were kept in loop and constantly updated regarding the conditions of their children. The service continued until things were normalized to a certain extent.

Moreover, chartered flights of Nepal Airlines were arranged for those Nepalese who were stranded in Australia, from three major cities - Sydney, Canberra and Brisbane.

The issue of unemployed Nepalese during the crisis were also addressed. We requested the well to do Nepalese Community to provide employment to at least one Nepali student. Fortunately now the situation is back to normal.

Public Diplomacy

For any nation to progress, the change has to come from the level of policy making. The Embassy has taken few such initiations. In the 60th year of bilateral relations representatives of both the Labor and Liberal parties in Australia, Hon Peter Khalil, MP and Senator Andrew Bragg co-chaired and announced the reformulation of the Australia Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group in the new Parliament.

Besides, significant contribution has been made by the people and the Government of Australia in sectors like community forestry, education, health, micro enterprises development, livelihood support and human resources development of Nepal.

Moreover, for the first time after the Panchayat System, a Nepalese Embassy is being built at O'Malley Heights; the affluent suburb of Canberra. There has been some delay because of COVID, however, we are determined to complete the construction within two years.

We are also negotiating with the Australian Government and the Australian Embassy in Nepal in addressing issues related to the issuance of visas for Nepalese directly from Kathmandu rather than Delhi. It would also be appreciated if the Nepalese would be granted a Working Holiday Visa and the Backpacking visa. Australia has scope for immense agriculture related jobs but lacks enough manpower while in Nepal we have well experienced, traditional agriculturists who are unemployed. By introducing such visa categories, it could be a win-win situation for both the countries.

Bilateral talks have also finalized the direct flight connecting Nepal and Australia. We are experiencing certain delays only

because of the pandemic. We are positive to have this in the near future.

We are trying to approach Ministerial level officials of Australian Government to visit Nepal with some concrete agenda in the near future. This will open doors of trade and commerce between the two countries. The program had to be postponed due to COVID in the recent past. However, we expect it to happen as soon as possible.

Though, we are trying our best to bring some changes but considering the vast Nepalese population in Australia, it would be a big help if some of the youngsters initiate towards getting in the domain of Australian parliament as well. We shall be able to make much better changes by being a leader rather than a follower.

Social Diplomacy

It is the social responsibility of each member to ensure the well-being of the society we live in. Considering the fact that Nepalese students come from a landlocked country and are not used to ocean safety, a lot of accidents occur in the beaches, we have been running campaigns related to the “Beach Safety Program” in association with the Vision of Motivation (VOM).

The consultancies and colleges of Nepalese are being approached for imparting a collective Orientation program for Nepalese students. They should be made aware of the labor cost, labor rights and other civil rights of the country; along with issues like finding part time jobs, or learning some skills that shall make them job-ready.

Another major factor that we can benefit from is by establishing franchise hospitals in Nepal like the Ramsay Health Care which has branches in around 22 different countries. The hospitals are equipped with best technological practices, patients can even get diagnosed and treated by a panel of best doctors from around the world via the internet.

There is also a sincere request to the educational consultancies in Nepal, to act with honesty and integrity when it comes to recruiting students for their higher studies. Service should be provided impartially and ethically as it concerns the future of the individuals as well as the nation on the whole.

Cultural Diplomacy

Both the countries practice multiculturalism, which makes it easy for Nepalese to adjust and blend in the new environment. However, we should not forget our roots. The Embassy has always supported programs concerning promoting national language, festivals, and customs.

Even from a historical perspective the Australians have had a lot of respect for the Nepalese. It is said that the Nepalese soldiers had fought for the Australians in the war for independence.

In Tasmania, Nepali language has been declared as the official second language and even in other states, many schools are introducing Nepali Language in their curriculum. Hence, in order to preserve our language and culture, initiations are being taken.

Economic Diplomacy

In order to develop a country, it is important to account for economic growth. Accordingly, to bring about some economic changes in Nepal, the Embassy has prioritized tourism and agribusiness.

To promote tourism, we shall be conducting fairs in collaboration with few airlines and travel agencies. We also plan on inviting a few Australian travel journalists and celebrities for a familiarization trip to Nepal. Furthermore, the second major religion followed in Australia is Buddhism. We are planning to have Buddhist art and photo exhibitions with the goal of promoting tourism in and around Lumbini.

We are also lobbying with the Australian Government to establish

trade agreements, especially to export agricultural products like tea, coffee, ginger, and broom grass. We plan on promoting cotton garments and handicrafts of Nepal. If feasible we even have plans of organizing a “Farm” trip of traditional farmers from different provinces of Nepal, to show them and groom them towards modernized farming.

Trade Investment proposal has also been submitted to the Government of Nepal in the past and we are expecting positive changes soon enough.

It is quite commendable that most Nepalese communities in Australia are inclined towards establishing their own business, this means more job opportunities for the Nepalese students, not to mention that these Nepalese businesses are directly contributing to the Australian workforce and economy. We have strongly urged the business community in Australia to aim towards quality products and to develop themselves as a brand in future.

Another major lobbying that we are currently involved in is with the banking sector so as to bring some changes in the industry. Rather than using a third party for the transferring of funds, if the funds could be directly sent to the homeland, the remittance collection would be high as well as there will be a downfall in the illegal system of money laundering. Hence, mitigating the risk of losing the hard-earned money of Nepalese in Australia. Nepal SBI Bank has already agreed to the mechanism and we are currently in the process of negotiating the same with other Banks as well.

On October 2020 representatives of Mr Andrew Forrest an Australian billionaire visited Nepal with a proposal to invest in the Hydropower projects of the country. This will could ensure technologic changes, increase employment and contribute to the economic development of Nepal.

Collective Diplomacy

Ultimately, the whole goal of diplomacy is to be collective.

Be it the embassy, the NRN community or common citizens; we all want sustainable development, which in turn required a collective effort from all. We have approached the NRN community and interested citizens of Australia to negotiate towards a collective fund that can be invested in transferring technological knowledge borrowed from Australia in the different sectors of Nepal like horticulture, distillery, education and many more.

We are also trying to connect related industries, related cities and related social clubs of both the countries to attract technological transfer and investment in our home country.

Collective lobbying with the Ambassadors of other countries is also done time and again according to the need of the situation, thus making the voices louder and stronger.

ANAA

ANAA has been playing an effective role in bringing the Australian Alumni together to bring about effective change in the society. The “Come Back Home” Campaign is one powerful motivational factor that shall help in attracting many youth back to their homeland. The young generation has a lot of will power along with the academic knowledge that they have gained from Australia. All these positive attributes should lead us towards proper direction, and this is where ANAA has a major role to play. The members of ANAA can utilize their experience and knowledge to show as well as give a slight push to the new generation towards the path of collective development. The Embassy is proud to be associated with such visionary bodies and we assure to provide our support to ANAA in its future endeavors as well. Finally, we should all change ourselves according to the time or else time will force its change upon us.

Ram Hari Aryal, PhD

Australian Education for National Development



University of Study in Australia:
The Australian National University, Canberra : M.A (Demography)
The University of Adelaide, SA, Adelaide : PhD (Demography)

Year of Education:
1983, 1988-1989, 1991-1994

Current/Past Organization:
Former Secretary of the Government of Nepal
Former board director of the Nepal Rastra Bank (Central Bank)
Chairman of the IME Life Insurance Company.

In the year 1983, while working as a Section Officer at the Rastriya Panchayat Secretariat, I was granted a scholarship for English Language training at the Canberra College of Advanced Education in Australia. It was my first experience abroad, which meant cultural shock was quite prominent. During that time, I visited Australian National University, and was so impressed with the quality and educational standard that I made it my aim to earn a Master's Degree from ANU. I met the Department Head of the Demography Program and requested for admission. As the course was quite expensive he suggested that I get a government scholarship.

After my training, I returned to Nepal and started corresponding with the University for admission. I used aerogramme and registered letters as there was no internet back then. Though I did get an admission but, I had to struggle for the Government Scholarship. Being a member of the Rastriya Panchayat (Parliament) enabled me to use my networks to secure a scholarship through the National Planning Commission

I went for my Masters in Australia in 1988. Although I struggled to cope with Australian education system initially, I was nominated as the class representative. My extra responsibility was to coordinate with

faculty members. I completed my Master in 1989 with distinction and got enrolled in PhD at the same university. Since the Scholarship was based on government nomination, Australian Government requested the Nepal Government for the same. However, the Government of Nepal declined and it was quite unfortunate that I had to come back. It was a disappointment for the university as well.

But as they say, hard work always pays off. My previous supervisor informed me that the World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program was open for worldwide competition. I applied and was selected. The PhD was a four years' degree and my scholarship was only for two years with no provision for extension. Hence, my supervisor helped me obtain the remaining two years' scholarship from the Australian Government.

I returned after completing my PhD in January, 1995 and joined my job in Parliamentary Secretariat. The Ministry of Population and Environment was established in 1995 and decided to take me in deputation from the Parliament Secretariat. I got an opportunity to use my knowledge at the appropriate sector of the Ministry.

Since the coordination mechanism at the governmental level was weak, I suggested forming a high level Population Committee chaired by the Prime Minister. The Committee was formed where I proposed developing a Long Term Population Perspective Plan (LTPPP) so that every stakeholder could take part. Population is multi sectoral in nature, and stakeholders had a very important part to play in the development process of the country. Hence I tried in all ways to include all stakeholders.

The LTPPP Task Force was formed under the leadership of Dr Harka Gurung and I was the responsible authority from the Ministry. Later the Ministry of Population and Environment was dissolved and transformed as the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP). I was also transferred where I established the Population Division.

As a head of the Population Division, I completed the LTPPP and implemented programs at the grass root level. Moreover, I was involved as an expert and one of the writers of the Demographic and Health Survey from 1996 to 2011. I also headed the DHS survey of 2006.

The knowledge and expertise that I acquired from the Australian Educational Institutions have been used in the development process of Nepal.



I presented population and development related papers in many countries and also in professional organizations such as the Population Association of America, Australian Population Association, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, Participated at the Population Seminar in Hawaii and many more.

I also addressed the Population and Development Commission of the 29th Session of the United Nations Organizations. I have many articles and research work in many national and international journals. As a Population Expert, I contributed a lot to the Policy of the Government as well as presented demographic and development facts of Nepal abroad.

I am the founder president of the Association of Nepalese Alumni from Australia (ANAA), established in 1998. I served as president till 2014 continuously and currently I am re-elected as President in 2018. I felt honored to receive Australia Alumni Excellence Awards 2014, which was presented by HE Glenn White, Australian Ambassador to Nepal on 20 January, 2014.

In 2007, I was the first Secretary of the Office of the first President of the Republic of Nepal. I established all presidential systems at the Office of the President which was very challenging at the time when King was replaced by the President. I worked with the government of Nepal for 34 years and contributed in many sectors of the government along with population and development sectors. I must give credit to Australian Education for my achievements.

Ram Hari Aryal, PhD

Population Age Distribution: Nepal and Australia

Age distribution, also called age composition/age structure in population studies is an important factor in population dynamics. Age structure is the proportion of a population in different age classes.

Age structure differs among countries mainly because of differences in the levels and trends of fertility. A population with persistently high fertility, for instance, has a large proportion of children and a small proportion of aged persons. To understand the importance of age structure, age structure of developed country and developing country is compared such as Nepal and Australia. A population, such as that of Australia in which fertility has been low for a long time, has a smaller proportion of children and a larger proportion of aged persons. A population, such as that of Nepal that has experienced a recent decline in fertility tends to have relatively small numbers both of children and of aged persons and a large proportion of adults in the middle ages.

Moreover, age structure is an important factor behind variations in the rate of economic growth of the country. The radical changes in age structure accompanying this demographic transition can affect output per capita for several reasons. It is more common in demography to split the population into three broad groups to identify its effects on socio economic situation of the country.

Table 1: Broad Age Distribution of Nepal (2015-2018)

Years	0-14	15-64	65+
2015	33.35	61.11	5.54
2016	32.32	62.08	5.61
2017	31.34	63.00	5.66
2018	30.41	63.86	5.73

Table 2: Broad Age Distribution of Australia (2015-2018)

Years	0-14	15-64	65+
2015	18.89	66.26	14.85
2016	18.95	65.91	15.14
2017	19.07	65.53	15.40
2018	19.19	65.15	15.66

There are large differences in the age composition of the two countries. Nepal has a much younger population in 2018, just above 30 percent of Nepalese were under 15 years old. Australian share only accounted for 19 percent. Australia has a much older population in 2018 more than 15 percent were 65 years and older. Less than 6 percent of Nepalese fell into this age bracket. Data show that Nepal’s under15 population is decreasing over time whereas working age group 15-64 and 65 plus age group population is increasing indicating the declining fertility trend in Nepal. The case is different in Australia. The under15 years old population is almost stable whereas working age 15-64 population is slowly decreasing and 65 plus age group population is slowly increasing indicating almost stable fertility at low level.

The age structure of a population affects a nation's key socioeconomic issues. Countries with young populations (high percentage under age 15) need to invest more in schools, while countries with older populations (high percentage ages 65 and over) need to invest more in the health sector.

	Nepal (2018)	Australia (2018)
Total population:	28,095,714	23,470,145
Median Age	22.7 (yrs)	38.8 (yrs)

Median age is the age that divides a population into two numerically equal groups - that is, half the people are younger than this age and half are older. It is a single index that summarizes the age distribution of a population. Currently, the median age ranges from a low of about 15 in Niger to 40 or more in several European countries.

The median age gives a slightly better picture of what the age distribution looks like. This variable is an important indicator of population status. Growing populations generally have larger proportions of individuals in younger age-classes, whereas declining

populations usually have smaller proportions of individuals in these age classes. Stable populations usually have relatively more individuals in reproductive age-classes. However, populations with larger proportions of individuals in younger age-classes also may reflect low survivorship in these age classes, whereas populations with smaller proportions of individuals in younger age-classes may reflect high survivorship

Total Fertility Rate (TFR)

TFR gives a figure for the average number of children that would be born per woman if all women lived to the end of their childbearing years and bore children according to a given fertility rate at each age.

	Nepal (2018)	Australia (2018)
TFR	2.24	1.77

TFR is one of the main indicators of the age distribution of the population. The changes in the population age distribution resulting from declining fertility are, for a period, beneficial for economic growth. Higher the fertility higher will be the share of young population in the country. As fertility declines, the proportion of children in the population falls and the proportion of population of working age increases, resulting in a lower dependency ratio. In this situation youth population will swell up or called youth bulge. This youth bulge is called demographic bonus for development. The demographic bonus can thus contribute significantly to economic growth and poverty reduction.

Nepal has now the demographic bonus, however, Nepal has not been able to use demographic bonus since more youth are outside the country for work. The demographic bonus means the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population’s age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (UNFPA).

Dipendra Bahadur Chhetri, PhD

From an Agriculture Student to an Inspiring Leader



University of Study in Australia:
University of New England

Batch/Year of Education:
2003-2004

Degree in Australia:
Master of Economics

Retired Org. Name:
Nepal Rastra Bank

Organization Position
Governor

In the early 80s there was a push from the government to encourage agriculture related projects in the country as we were in the cusp of agro-development movement. The Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) also felt a need to bring agriculture professionals in their team to understand the conditions of contemporary agricultural practices. Under these arrangements Mr Chhetri was nominated to complete a Diploma program in Agriculture in Australia. After the Diploma, he joined the Master of Economics in Agriculture in the University of New England. Upon returning back from Australia, Mr Chhetri commenced his position in the NRB, and worked for the direct credit department with prioritized lending.

Two decades later, after gaining much recognition for his progressive work Mr Chhetri became the Governor of Nepal, the head of the Central Bank. Dashing and strong-willed Chhetri spent his duration as a governor stabilizing the volatile climate of the banking sector at that time. During his tenure as a Governor he helped resolve contentious issues related to major banks, which required an unprecedented takeover by the Central Bank. Such a bold decision, at that time was groundbreaking, which sent

a strong message of the new style of leadership in the market. Mr. Chhetri was also responsible for revoking the license of a Development Bank that was established for the first time, which had to be shut down because they were not following regulations criteria. Mr. Chhetri gives credit to his time in Australia for enabling an objective way of thinking, and critical analysis that shaped him to be who he was at that time.

After his role as the Governor, Mr Chhetri was appointed as the Vice-Chairman of National Planning Commission, the second highest-ranking position in the government institution that design, monitor and evaluate national policies, which includes determining and allocating annual budget for the country where under



Sure, the convenience of advanced infrastructures and systems can be alluring, but how can one give up on their homeland for not having things in place?

Mr Chhetri feels working in a complex environment like Nepal is not easy, as he feels that he did not accomplish as much as he'd wish even after working for so many years in the government. But what he stands by is how he fulfilled his duties and responsibilities with all sincerity and honesty. From a student of agriculture to a leader holding some of the most powerful positions in the country, Chhetri feels the first form of duty that Nepalese abroad need to fulfill is returning to their homeland. "Sure, the convenience of advanced infrastructures and systems can be alluring, but how can one give up on their homeland for not having things in place. It is our duty to build the foundations to take the country in that direction."

Prakash Kumar Shrestha, PhD

Contributing to Strengthen the Nepalese Economy



University of Study in Australia:
Curtin University of Technology

Course:
MCom. (Economics & Finance)

Batch/Year of Education:
2003-2004

Current Org. Name:
Nepal Rastra Bank

Organization Position
Executive Director

I got an opportunity to pursue a Master's degree in Australia under AusAid scholarship. This was my first experience of studying in foreign university. The opportunity provided me to know not only the subject matters of my interest, but also the teaching style and environment of university. I found teaching of updated course materials with more practical examples there. Because of hard work, I finally completed the course with distinction and even succeeded in getting Western Australia Treasury Prize.

I went to Australia on study leave from my office, Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB). After completion of the study, I came back and rejoined my office; no need to explore a new job. Rather I used my knowledge and experience to enhance and increase my productivity at office. More importantly, Australian academic degree paved my path to complete my PhD from the US in 2012. Along with getting a scholarship, transfer of academic credit gained in Australia shortened my journey to a PhD degree.

With higher education, I have been carrying out my responsibilities at NRB, the Central Bank of Nepal, efficiently and effectively by involving



in macroeconomic research, formulation of monetary policy and office management. Within one and half decade of returning from Australia, I have succeeded competitively in obtaining three levels of promotions. As a result, I have now been leading one of the departments of NRB, being a part of higher management since 2019.

Further, through my knowledge and experience, I have continuously been contributing to the academic field by publishing several research articles in journals and to the general society by writing opinion articles on various economic development issues. Through occasional teachings, I have also been inculcating theoretical knowledge and practical experience to students and other audiences.

In 2018, on deputation from my regular job at NRB, I was appointed as Vice Chairman of the Province Planning Commission by the Provincial Government of Lumbini Province to formulate provincial development plans in the context of new federal structure. I accomplished the task and produced a provincial statistical profile and five-year development plan of the province through intensive consultations with stakeholders within a year. Recognizing my contribution, I was awarded the State Public Service Medal by the Provincial Government. Further, since October 2020, I have also been discharging the role of Economic Advisor to the Ministry of Finance.

Successful completion of study and efficient performance through taking responsibilities seriously at various capacities has set an example for others. I meet many people who appreciate the positive influence of my ideas expressed in my articles. I believe that disseminating ideas have broadened the people's thinking and understanding on various economic issues.

Niva Shrestha

Rising Ahead as a Central Banker

I always had a dream of pursuing higher education from a world-class university. Achieving the prestigious Australian Leadership Award Scholarship (ALAS) to study Master of Applied Finance at Monash University was a turning point in my life which paved the way to fulfill my dream.

My academic journey in Australia has been very stimulating, challenging, rewarding and fulfilling. The first semester was very demanding and challenging for me. There were so many new things to learn and adapt in a different set of environments. Nevertheless, inspired by Monash's motto Ancora Imparo ("I am still learning") and my hard work, I managed to pick it up by second semester and successfully completed my study. In recognition of my outstanding academic achievement, I have been placed on the Dean's Commendation List for 2009 in the faculty of Business and Economics and also been awarded membership of Golden Key International Honors Society.



Degree in Australia:
Master of Applied Finance

Current Org. Name:
**Nepal Rastra Bank
(Central Bank of Nepal)**

Batch / Year of Education:
2008 to 2009

Organization Position:
Director

Group works, assignments, research projects imparted me with team work, leadership, communication, problem solving skills etc. At Monash, I actively participated in various activities like volunteering, peer mentoring, social events, workshops and seminars which enriched my learning experience from different dimensions. I also got an opportunity for an internship in the Consumer Action Law Center which provided me with the Australian workplace experience. The leadership development program attached to the academic program was an additional benefit of ALAS. The wonderful learning experience and the diverse intellectual and social network have broadened the horizon of my understanding and thinking. Attending leadership development conferences/workshops, dinner at parliament house are some of the privileged memorable events in Australia. I am indeed fortunate that I have been able to experience living in one of the world's most livable city, Melbourne.

Before going to Australia, I was working with the Central Bank of Nepal in the capacity of Assistant Director. Financial sector is a very dynamic and demanding career where one needs to update with recent development, trends and practices across the world. The subject matter of my study equipped me with knowledge

of international financial trends, management skill and best industry practices. After completion of my study, I continued my job in the Central Bank with enhanced knowledge and exposure. The academic degree complemented with the leadership development program in Australia boosted my skills and self-confidence which contributed to my career advancement. I have earned two promotions through competitive exams and now working as Director of the central bank of Nepal. It is challenging to climb the career ladder as a female in a competitive and male dominated workplace. Striking a balance between motherhood/ family and career, coping/adapting gender biased organization culture and coming out of comfort zone are few significant challenges among many. However, through hard work, time management and family support, I overcome those challenges. Furthermore, my mother herself being a working mom always encouraged us to come out of the comfort zone and accept



“
The learning experience that I obtained through Australian Leadership Award Scholarship equipped me with skills, knowledge and confidence to grow academically and professionally.

challenges. I have led various teams while working in different departments discharging the regulatory and supervisory role of the central bank and proved myself through my performance. I am determined to continue working in the Central Bank and contribute to the country by making a positive difference in the financial sector.

Though the history of Nepalese formal banking sector is not very long, it has been one of the fastest growing and regulated sectors of the economy. The banking sector evolved from traditional paper based payment and settlement systems to electronic payment systems. Financial inclusion, consolidation, digitalization, fin-tech etc. are the recent trends noted in the financial sector. There are rewarding and fulfilling career opportunities in the financial sector but it is very competitive and challenging as well. So I would like to advise a new generation to equip oneself with required skills, come out of the comfort zone and embrace challenges to be competitive and progress in career path.

Nibha Shrestha

Putting Human Rights and Social Inclusion First



Degree in Australia:
Masters of Human Rights

University of Study in Australia:
University of Sydney

Batch/Year of Education:
2010

Current Org. Name:
OXFAM

Organization Position
Head of Programs

I have always had a strong passion to serve the community. Even as a child, I used to think of different ways to help people in need. With the same in mind, I completed a Masters of Psychology in 2003 and started my career as a counselor at the National Institute of Psychology.

I felt that, my service as a counsellor was only limited to a small group of people, hence, I decided to work for a larger mass as a human rights and development specialist and was engaged in different organizations like the National Human Rights Commission, CARE Nepal and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

After working for a few years, I felt the need to improve my knowledge and skills which led me to earn a Master of Human Rights from the University of Sydney. It was a one-year program, funded by the Australian Awards. Today I am working at OXFAM in Nepal as the Head of program and partnership. The main focus of my area is to provide humanitarian assistance, long term development and to influence the stakeholders regarding citizens’ rights on equality and on economic, social and

cultural rights.

Nepal, a country that went through 10 years of Maoist insurgency has suffered a lot of abuse and degradation of human rights. Compared to the past, things have improved but we still have a long way to go. Especially in the areas where people can enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights to the fullest. Since my return in 2011, I have been arduously working towards uplifting the condition of civil rights, political rights, right to education, right to good health, right to livelihood and many more for the citizens of Nepal.



The knowledge, skills and exposure I have received has always been useful in the area of human rights and social inclusion.

Serving the people has always been on the forefront for me. During the major earthquake of 2015, I was out to help the victims, immediately on the second day of the disaster. Amidst the aftershocks I, along with my team, provided physical, psychological as well as financial support to the people affected by disaster.

Moreover, I have closely worked against child and women trafficking in Nepal and contributed to the promotion of human rights. Sometimes the concerned bodies are quite skeptical when there is a new proposal related to human rights, as in few instances our claim might pose a direct challenge to the existing system. Conclusively, though the job is rewarding but at times we might have to face opposition and delays. Nevertheless, my expertise and experience shall always be used in the field of Human Rights, humanitarian assistance and rights based approach development. It was also an honor to receive the Australian Alumni Excellence Awards in 2016 as a recognition for my hard work.

I would also like to thank Australian Awards for the scholarship programs that has enabled many deserving Nepalese citizens to gain and utilize knowledge for the betterment of our country.

Nirmal Kafle

Applying Diplomacy for Nation Development



Degree in Australia:
Master of Public Policy & Management

University of Study in Australia:
University of Melbourne

Batch/Year of Education:
2000-2004

Current Org. Name:
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Organization Position
Joint Secretary

Passionate about contributing to the diplomatic service of Nepal, the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nirmal Kafle oversees the Europe and the Americas Division, responsible for relations with 83 countries. Prior to the appointment, Mr. Kafle served as Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations in New York from 2016, where he chaired the Committee on Conferences, a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, for the year 2018. He was also elected Vice-Chair of the Executive Board of UNICEF in the same year.

His impressive career path is not surprising, considering his merit, his drive and his humility to serve his nation. He started off as a curious student at the University of Melbourne, which he claims was the turning point to advance his career as a diplomat with skills like research, problem solving, critical thinking and working in groups. He shares that it was the elective classes on diplomacy and the exposure he received in Australia that helped him understand the frameworks and language of diplomacy that boosted his confidence in this field.

“Nepal’s standing in the international arena has evolved many folds. We have been playing a constructive role in regional corporations through



It is not necessary that smaller nations should have a limited stake in global politics. There are now multiple avenues for us to play a larger-than-life-size role.

organizations, such as SAARC and BIMSTEC. In multilateral forums too, Nepal has made significant contributions—be it in UN’s peace initiatives, disarmament or climate action,” he asserts. He believes that Nepal has achieved phenomenal milestones in causes like women empowerment and climate change, but we haven’t been able to showcase them in the international arena with the justice that they deserve. It is important for us to learn from the best practices to take ownership of our achievements and our failures. He shares that we can learn lessons from fellow smaller countries that are using diplomacy effectively to represent their countries and influence their positions in the international sphere.

“Today we are confronted by a myriad of challenges. We live in an extremely complex world. But there is no such a knot that cannot be untied. It is through skills in negotiation, sincerity and learning from mistakes that we can deliver in diplomacy. The Foreign Ministry, assisted by the 40 diplomatic missions abroad, is responsible for conducting Nepal’s diplomacy internally.”

Mr. Kafle encourages newcomers to enter this field. “Nepal’s civil service law allows exceptional candidates even from outside of the Service to join at mid-career or senior levels.” He stresses that more talented people should join the Ministry of Foreign affairs and help build a solid foundation of the nation within and outside.

“Diplomatic career provides opportunities for international exposure and, importantly, serving the nation. Today the Foreign Ministry employs a 300-strong workforce, representing diverse cultures, geographic regions and academic disciplines. Women participation has improved phenomenally. “



The Peace Pagoda in South Bank Brisbane is a beautiful piece of Nepal in Australia which was constructed for the World Expo 88. Representing a very Nepalese themed architecture the pagoda is made up of 80 tonnes of hand carved Nepalese timber and took two years to complete.

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Australia has become a popular education destination for the Nepalese student community and as a result, Nepal has become the third biggest source country for international students after China and India. Approximately 50000+ Nepalese students are undertaking a course in Australia today and this is only possible because of the strong foundation that Nepal-Australia relations have set. It is for this reason that Nepalese are confident in investing their hard earned money for the world class education that Australia has to offer. Fortunately, there are also graduates who come back and vouch to upgrade the Nepali education system so that people who cannot afford to go to Australia can benefit from a better standard of education in Nepal itself.

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Education

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Kushum Shakya, PhD

Promoting Women’s Empowerment through Education

Gaining and imparting knowledge has always been on the forefront for me. I began my teaching career in 1987. For seven years, I taught at Padma Kanya College, Kathmandu and thereafter I was transferred to graduate level teaching at the Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University (TU). Regarding the journey related to my higher studies, I did a Post-graduate Diploma in Population and Development at the Institute of Social Studies, The Netherlands in 1992/93. Following that, I got the opportunity to study Master in Demography in 1997/98 from the Australian National University with “AusAid” Scholarship. Applying the experience of ANU’s guidance and my self-confidence, I completed my PhD from TU in 2008. I was selected as a Director for three years (2008-2011) in the Quality Assurance and Accreditation, University Grants Commission and I was the first lady director.

Until 2011, I continued my teaching career at the Central Department of Economics as an Associate Professor; and was also nominated as a member of the Research Committee at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Dean’s Office, TU for three years. By 2018, I was nominated as the Head of Central Department of Economics, TU for four years.

A person, irrespective of their gender, should have the passion to follow their goals. There is nothing one cannot achieve unless there is lack of effort and lack of confidence. Life is not about experimenting whether one thing works or the other. If we try to grab on too many things at one time, we might not catch hold of



Current Org. Name:
Tribhuvan University

Organization Position
The Dean of Humanities & Social Science

University of Study in Australia:
Australian National University

Degree in Australia:
Master of Demography

a single thing. It is about having faith in one thing that you firmly believe in and never leaving any stone unturned to achieve it. For me that thing was education. Even before marriage I had been given few opportunities to pursue my higher education abroad. However, my family did not allow me as I was a girl. But I never gave up on my dream and again after marriage and becoming a mother of two, I had the opportunity provided to me by the Australia Awards for my Master’s Degree.

I am glad that Nepal has valued, invested and progressed when it comes to education, especially for the women. Compared to the times when I was a student, to now when I am the Dean of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, I can see girls becoming more educated, independent, and confident. The family are spending equally for the girl child in comparison to the boys irrespective of whether it is a technical education or going abroad for higher studies, which I believe will bring in remarkable change in our society.

I have presented papers in Japan, Malaysia and Korea and other countries published recently in international journals like: International Association of Lowland Technology (IALT), Saga University, Japan, on June 6th, 2020; International Conference on Asian Political Parties (ICAPP)-Women’s Wing on February 2021. Further, I have participated in dozens of panelists and

talk program as the resource person in different institutes, along with various channels in television, radio and FM. Recently, I am involved in National Population Policy team, based on my knowledge of demography from the ANU.

In non-academic sector, I was the former vice-chairperson of the Nepalese Alumni Association of Australia (ANAA) in 2010-2012. In addition, I have been volunteering in various organizations with the hope to contribute towards social and community welfare. The earthquakes on April 25th and May 12th, 2015, caused severe damage and devastation in Nepal. We provided voluntary services on earthquake damaged areas, for example two-day art program for children, our team renovated 47 Gajurs of small temples (Chiba Dyaa) at Swayambhu, and established two shelters for displaced residents at Swayambhu with collaborations.

I felt honored to receive “AusAID Australian Alumni Award” Australian Alumni Excellence Awards 2012, which was provided by HE Ms. Susan Grace, Australian Ambassador to Nepal on 5 December 2012. Similarly, on 24 June, 2016. I felt extremely honored, privileged and appreciated for receiving “Australian Alumni Award for Community Service 2016” by Australian



It is about having faith in the one thing that you firmly believe in and never leaving any stone unturned to achieve it.



Ambassador, HE Mr. Glenn White on behalf of Ms. Nicola Watkinson, the Minister of Commercial and Senior Trade & Investment Commissioner, South Asia, Australian Trade and Investment Commission, Australia.

Moreover, I have to acknowledge that Australia Awards understands the value of home and family. Not only was the scholarship provided to me but the expense was extended to my entire family. This made it much easier for me to pursue my higher education as I was supported emotionally by my family alongside. I have always been grateful for the support of Australian Government in promoting the education sector of Nepal and expect the same continues in future as well.



Ram Hari Lamichhane, PhD

Improving Technical Education and Vocational Training



Batch/Year of Education:
1995-1996

Current Organization:
Colombo Plan Staff College
Philippines

University of Study in Australia:
Regency Hotel School, TAFE
South Australia

Organization Position
Director General

Degree in Australia:
Advanced Diploma in
Hospitality Management
(AQF Level IV)

Dr. Ramhari Lamichhane is well known as a TEVT Leader in the Asia Pacific Region. He is the first Nepali Director General of the Colombo Plan Staff College (CPSC) based in Manilla, Philippines. He has served as the Member Secretary/Chief Executive Officer of the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) in Kathmandu, Nepal (2013-2016) prior to his appointment as CPSC Director General. He was involved in the development of a National TVET Policy in Nepal, as well as the development and implementation of TVET programs.

Dr. Lamichhane was studious from the very beginning as he understood the value of education early on. He obtained his Master in Business Management (MBA) (1989-1990)

and his Bachelor in Commerce degrees from (1987-1988) from Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu Nepal. He received a scholarship from an ADB supported project and studied Advanced Diploma in Hospitality Management (AQF Level IV) in Regency Hotel School, TAFE South Australia (1995-1996). He earned a Doctor of Philosophy on Education Leadership from Kathmandu University in Nepal (2000-2006). He has a degree in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy as a Humphrey/Fullbright Professional from Peabody College/ Vanderbilt University, Tennessee, USA (2010-2011).

Prior to studying in Australia, he worked as a Finance Officer in Jiri Technical School, CTEVT. The Australian qualification allowed him to change his career from an administrative job to an academic profession. After returning from Australia, he was appointed as an instructor of Hospitality Management in Dhaulagiri Technical School, Mustang. Then, he was the Principal of Pokhara Tourism Training Center in the academy. He brought innovation in hotel management education in Mustang and Pokhara based on his experiences in Australia. As a result, he transformed tourism education and skills training by implementing strong industry linkages. His work was so impressive that both technical schools were inaugurated by Late King Birendra and he has been awarded Gorkha Dakchinbahu,



one of the most prestigious awards to civilians, for the noble contribution in the sector.

After the assignment in Pokhara, Dr. Lamichhane was promoted to the Director of the Technical Division of CTEVT. Later, in life, he also worked as a Project Manager and Coordinator for various TVET projects, such as the Training for Employment (TfE) Project by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), the Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (EVENT) project by the World Bank, and the ADB-Funded Skills for Employment Project (SEP) providing his invaluable leadership to national and international institution.

Dr. Lamichhane believes that his leadership qualities were strengthened through his experience in Australia. He cherishes his time in Australia, in particular, him serving as a President of the International Students Association of Regency Hotel School.

Dr. Lamichhane believes in working towards equipping youth with skills to make them assets for the nation.



Similarly, he has been involved as an active member of ANAA since 1997 and has served as Vice President in 2012-2014. He has also authored and co-authored journal papers and books on various areas of TVET, such as accessibility, financing, gender and equality, and marketing. Dr. Lamichhane believes in working towards equipping youth with skills to make them assets for the nation.



Rajuna Singh

Creating Difference in the Lives of People with Special Needs



University of Study in Australia:
Flinders University

Batch / Year of Education:
2017-2018

Degree in Australia:
Masters of Education (Special Education)

Current Org. Name:
Self-help group for Cerebral Palsy, Nepal (SGCP)

Organization Position
Special Education Teacher

I was a computer teacher in a special school when I was made aware of the Australian Award Scholarships that was provided even to people with special needs in South and West Asia for higher education. I had never even dreamt of getting a foreign education and my English wasn't also very good. However, the support I received from my friends and the team of Australian Awards made it possible for me to acquire a Master's degree in Special Education from Flinders University, Australia.

Initially, the academic journey was a bit tough for me as I had to adapt in a completely different environment where I faced language barrier and a bit of culture shock. The whole mode of learning was different from what we have in Nepal. Australian education introduced me to independent research. Regardless of gender or nationality, I was given immense support by the academic staff and the faculties. In fact, I was quite touched, when I found that the need of students with disability not only addressed but placed in high priority.



When I returned to my homeland, I was faced with reverse culture shock as I immediately felt that the basic survival for people with special need is very challenging here. Lack of inclusion being the main issue. From minor things like wheelchair friendly footpaths to major issues of cooperation in workplaces, I found that policy makers had no proper planning to include such people. All these things did make my life slightly tough in the first few months of my return.

Though I have not been able to do much due to the COVID. I am happy that I have been able to set an example in my society. A society where a girl child, with disability, who have had problems even getting admitted for school education, today proudly teaches a class of children with special needs. Even during the pandemic, I have been taking virtual classes and trying to reach out to people who need me. As I am associated with the education sector, my dream project is to create a comfortable learning environment for children with disabilities.

Apart from that I have a dream to see all the roads of Nepal accessible to wheelchair users. There shall be no barriers or limitations to wheelchair users to keep them segregated from social inclusion. As a first step we have successfully launched a vehicle with ramp so that its easily accessible to wheelchair users.

Exposure to Australia showed me how technology can help in the inclusion of people with disabilities in the society and can truly bring a change in their lives.

Kashi Raj Pandey, PhD

Transformative Approaches of Teaching English in Nepal

The traditional mode of teaching English in Nepal follows an authoritative, instrumental, and vertical banking concept as termed by Paulo Freire (2000), and the examination culture is embedded to measure students' worth through marks he or she receives during the formal, end of the year testing. In such situation of pouring of the knowledge from one vessel to another (Freire, 1970), the students are considered to know nothing. They are bound to passively receive, memorise, and repeat existing ideas from authoritative sources in the various topics and reproduce the rote-memorised knowledge or material in examinations. Thus, the education as a whole, is more focused on filling the students' heads with facts rather than developing a sense of humanity, enthusiasm, and creativity. Freire (1970) challenged what he described as the banking analogy where knowledge is seen as a gift bestowed by the teachers (the depositors) who consider themselves more knowledgeable than the students (the depositories). In this regard, I also felt a need to develop a pedagogy of authentic Nepalese context that provides a pathway for an effective culturally-imbued transformative learning framework in the teaching of English in Nepal.

Transformative learning seeks to promote learners' pro-active improvement in a creative form with their willingness to carry on an informed discussion of the learning material in my class. Acknowledging the insights from their self-reflection of life and learning activities, such engagement enhances the sense of belonging with learners' sociocultural perspectives. Thus, the Transformative learning pedagogy proposes for interactive classroom activities to promote students' critical awareness by facilitating their inner understanding through an in-depth, self-analytical understanding of educational practices.



Degree in Australia:
PhD in Education (English)

Current Org. Name:
Kathmandu University

Organization Position
Associate Professor

University of Study in Australia:
Murdoch University

Batch / Year of Education:
2014-2018

My recently published book, Theorising Transformative Learning: The Power of Autoethnographic Narratives in Education, presents a first-person, narrative vignettes of my experience as a transformative educator cum researcher for enhancing contextual student engagement. I have set out my ideas as I explain the importance of my birthplace, home environment, early school days, and working life, including university teaching. Focusing on my narratives about life and learning, I have recollected reflections of significant events that have played a prime role in creating who I am today and whom I seek to become. I brought my childhood experiences into account to see things more clearly with creative imagination and less inhibition. When I started to write about my experiences of, and connections to early life, I have tried to conceive of other worlds and others' worlds by comparing ideas and feelings with a kind of childlike vision on my part of free-ranging curiosity and imagination. I have sought to employ this naive, open, child-mindedness as the foundation of my writing and find the freedom to imagine the world and the environment around me in all its immediacy and wonders.

With an aim to make my stories accessible to the readers to highlight the power of real life events and ideas as the window of imagination, each reflective experience included in the book – be it in the form of a story or poems – it has opened new doors for me which also brought a deeper understanding of my academic life. In the role of a teacher/ researcher and myself as a transformative learner, I have drawn on an engaging, meaningful, autoethnographic inquiry, as a connection to our lived experiences in a social context, which supports the notion of transformative learning. For the transformative learning to take place, an

educator's role is to focus on equity, mutuality, inclusion, social justice and excellence that is directly related with value-based critical theory, and takes into account the lived experiences of the learners. Using this

context, following are some lines I have composed about an imagined transformative classroom (Pandey, 2021, p. 112-113):

A Transformative Touch I Often Imagine

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I imagine a classroom where teachers are not only standing in front of a board hung on the wall and lecturing; but, approaching students and helping them explore new meanings of the world.
I imagine a classroom where teachers aim to provide a safe, happy, and stimulating environment.
I imagine a classroom where students pro-actively help one another.

I imagine a classroom where students’ curiosity, questions, and soft humming greets their teachers’ ears.
I imagine a classroom where students are genuinely noisy, and working together in groups.
I imagine a classroom where teachers are energetic and always moving amongst the students.
I imagine a classroom where praise and encouragement can be heard and seen; support being offered from all around.

I imagine moments when teachers are passionate about making a positive difference to each student’s life.
I imagine teachers who walk into classrooms, and notice that students are absorbed with their tasks.
I imagine an education where teachers are not shouting at their students.
Indeed, I imagine a classroom where teachers offer students many avenues of change, with a transformative touch.



When a unity in mutual understanding prevails in the classroom, students are active in sharing their ideas with each other, and the class discussions play an important part in the students’ level of engagement in all class activities. In similar regards, and with new understandings and insights within eight key conditions of transformative learning (Pandey, 2021), the theory explains how the traditional ways of thinking about education and research have changed. These conditions range from connecting learning to students’ and teachers’ real life situations to encouraging critical reflection, and developing analytic skills for students to ask questions and participate in discussions. Although the research was focused on the educational development of teachers who are teaching English in Nepal, the transformative pedagogy will be equally useful to teachers of other subjects from any country in the world, and students of any age making them more aware, reflective, creative, and critically conscious of their understanding of the personal,

social, cultural, and educational issues. I am sure, the transformative education reassures its readers to see the development of constant socio-cultural understanding in their well engaged, learning process.

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Dhiraj Pradhananga

Linking Science & Technology with People and Nature

I have always felt that human society needs to progress towards sustainable lifestyles; whether in the field of technology or adapting to climate change. Though I had already completed my Master’s degree from Tribhuvan University in meteorology, I felt that this knowledge was not enough. I wanted to learn new skills; I wanted to explore and hence in the year 2002, went to Australia through a fully funded scholarship provided by the Australian Government to study in the Master in Environment program at the prestigious University of Melbourne. Today I hold a PhD in glacier hydrology from University of Saskatchewan, Canada, the foundation of which was earned from the Australian Master’s degree.

The University of Melbourne provided me the privilege of customizing my course. I could select subjects of my interest from different faculties and integrate them into a cohesive program. This tailor-made program was a totally new and exciting realm of education. Additionally, the students are taught right from the beginning to work independently. For almost 20 years, the Australians have conducted open book examinations which still haven’t been implemented in Nepal. I also appreciated the concept of mentorship where a senior student would provide a certain orientation to the new students which made the seniors more responsible and the newly admitted ones more comfortable.

My first priority when I was back in my home country was to introduce an education system that would create independent,



Batch / Year of Education:
2002 - 2003

Current Organization Name:
**Tribhuvan University (TU),
CREEW and SEN**

Organization Position:
**Assistant Professor at TU
and President in the other
two NGO's**

University of Study in Australia:
University of Melbourne

Degree in Australia:
Master in Environment

resourceful citizens for the future. Though the education system in Nepal is quite rigid, I have always tried to introduce new concepts in my Department of Meteorology, where I am an assistant professor, by introducing the practice of inviting guest lecturers and by hiring retired government officials as part time teachers. Knowledge, I believe, should be handed over to the new generation rather than pensioned off.

I am also president of two NGO’s. One of these is The Small Earth Nepal (SEN), the mission of which is to promote sustainable lifestyles through education and research aims to motivate youth. Specially aimed at helping students to work independently by the time they graduate, we organize programs where we connect the students with researchers, scientists, and the community and from the initial stage itself we encourage them to plan, promote, coordinate, and even implement projects. We have named it the ‘STS model’ that is, Students – Teachers – Scientists. All three work together as a team. The programs are divided into four categories: research, publication, capacity building, and awareness. Thus, we are not only encouraging innovative ideas but also producing promising human resources that are essential for the nation’s development. For example, I was a team member for officially declaring and studying the first officially recorded tornado in Nepal. The team from SEN, the Department of Hydrology and

Meteorology, the Government of Nepal and ICIMOD worked together to document this phenomenon, including giving it a Nepali name, “घुम्रपात” (Ghumrapaat).

Another involvement of mine is as President of the Centre of Research for Environment, Energy and Water (CREEW). It is also a non-governmental, not-for-profit scientific research-based and development organization established in 2008 that works within the domains of environment, energy and water. SEN and CREEW have been co-organizing the national groundwater symposium annually since 2008.

Recently, when there was an outbreak of pandemic, I along with my team connected with the concerned authorities from various nations, and much before the official announcement of lockdown in Nepal, we had implemented the concept of working from home. The credit goes to my exposure and confidence that I gained during my education in Australia.

Apart from that, I find it quite a refreshing coincidence that before the outbreak of COVID 19, I had started teaching my students through “Slack”, an online communication medium. All my power-points, lectures, group assignments etc. were stored



there and access had been provided to the students. They could also get connected with their classmates through it and we didn’t actually have to meet in person. Later with the lockdown of all academic institutions, this practice became a great help and the students highly appreciated it.

Finally, in the occasion of 61 years of bilateral relation between Australia and Nepal, I would like to extend a huge gratitude towards the Australian Embassy in Nepal as they are not only helping in the development of our community through relevant projects, but they have also maintained a regular connection with the alumni of Australian Awards and have time and again involved us in different programs as well. There is regular access even from the University. This has further motivated me to be in the executive committee of the recently formed alumni associations of my department and Tribhuvan University in Nepal and contribute to the development of these institutes. I shall always appreciate how the Embassy of Australia in Nepal has helped us, alumni, in building our network and bringing us together for an overall development of the Nation.



Ananta Poudyal

Growing Demand of Australian Education in Nepal

Australia has developed a solid reputation as a top tier education destination to welcome one of the highest numbers of international students every year. There are over forty three universities, and thousands of colleges and institutions, offering a wide range of courses for all levels, catering to millions of domestic and international students. Hence, it has become a popular study destination, alluring students from different countries like China, India, Nepal, Brazil, Vietnam, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and others.

Surprisingly, Nepal ranks third as the top country to contribute international students to Australia in recent years. Before the pandemic, an average of 16,000 Nepalese students visited Australia for their higher education every year. Back in 2013, when I visited Australia to pursue my postgraduate from Monash University, the number of Nepalese students in Australia was not as high as it is today. The experience I received at the time was amazing as it exposed me to a global society, which enabled me to boost my self-confidence and broaden my



University of Study in Australia:
Monash University

Degree in Australia:
Masters of International Relations

Batch / Year of Education:
2012-2013

Current Organization Name:
Nepal Education Consultancy

Organization Position:
Director

horizon. It inspired me to strongly believe that all Nepalese should be able to spend some time abroad as it pushes a person to become more independent, purposeful and willful to follow their passion. So after I came back to Nepal, I tied up with one of the leading education consultancy in Nepal and started counselling hundreds of students every year to help them attain their educational goal. I'd like to share some of my experience counseling the students and the trends I have noticed in the study abroad Australia industry over the years.

Some factors to attract Nepalese to Australia are— internationally recognized high ranked universities, opportunities to work while studying (average of 20hr per week), Post Study Work (PSW) visa (which requires an average of two years stay), ability to bring spouse along through a dependent visa and the possibility to attain a Permanent Residency (PR). With these attractive factors, it is fair to say that a good number of Nepalese students have invested in the Australian education and have greatly benefited from it. According to the Department of Home Affairs Australia, at the end of June 2018, a total of 94470 Nepalese born people were living in Australia. This number includes Nepal born Australian citizens, PR holders and the students all of whom will have a pull effect on their siblings / relatives to visit Australia, thus developing a tendency to greatly increase the number of Nepalese students visiting Australia every year.

One catalyst for the tremendous increase of students interested in Australia is the mushrooming of agents/consultancies over the years. Students, these days, from all parts of Nepal, have access to agents who promote Australian education for all levels from Diploma to PhD. While the growth in agents has proved beneficial for most students, there are also some downsides, something students need to be careful of. Not all agents are as well trained and knowledgeable about the courses. This creates room for misinformed counselling, which leads to decisions that hamper the students' career. There have been a few cases of malpractice where some agents are more focused on increasing their business rather than focusing on high quality counselling services meant for students. For instance, students are allured with lofty promises of visa guarantees by the agents, which

later turns to visa rejection in reality. So, it is very important that students check the credibility of agents and authorized channels to pursue their goals. Authorized agents are better trained and more knowledgeable about the courses, visa application requirements and be able to provide a much better service as according to the student's needs.

One of the perks of being a counsellor is when the student and their parents thank you for guiding them towards the right path of success. It is even more rewarding when some students share that they have been able to land their dream job, something unfortunately not all graduates get to experience. While luck and timing also plays a small part in it, lack of proper planning has become a major concern today for students not being able





to launch their careers in their choice of industry. Unfortunately, we see a trend of how more and more students are applying to courses not out of their core interest but rather opting to the courses which can lead them to a Permanent Residency in their study destination. This seriously hampers the student's ability to perform well academically and poses challenges in finding a job related to their studies or makes them lose interest and settle for a low pay job having very less space for growth. This in the long term can bring catastrophic results, not just to the lives of professionals stuck in an unfulfilling career, but also to the country's economy as well. This can create scarcity of skilled human resources that could have made great contributions to advance the diverse fields in their homeland. Therefore, students have to be cautious about what course is beneficial for them and move ahead diligently.

While the trend of attaining a foreign degree grows rapidly, it comes with challenges pertaining to finances. I have come across many students and parents who go in with a short-sighted mindset and expect the tuition fees to be covered by the students themselves once they get to Australia. This puts the students under immense pressure to engage in extra unauthorized work hours- risking their visa terms and losing valuable time instead of focusing on academia. This is one of the

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Inadequate planning can seriously hamper the student's ability to perform well academically and pose challenges in finding a job related to their studies or makes them lose interest and settle for a low pay job having very less space for growth.



main reasons why students fail or just pass with minimal grades which eventually impacts their chances of getting better job opportunities. Thus, it is highly recommended that the sponsors never place the financial burden on students and rather take on an education loan if they cannot afford expensive tuition fees and living expenses. A student with less additional financial burden will be in a much better mental condition to focus on their academics and land a good job post their graduation and earn back their investment in the post study work visa stage.

Another area that the students can explore to reduce the financial burden is to pursue the possibility of scholarships and bursary. Majority of universities offer 10 – 20 percent bursary/ discounts on admission, which includes merit based scholarships for high performing students. Nepal is also privileged to have Australian Awards Scholarships provided by the Australian Government that are highly competitive awards meant to be given to the cream of the crop professionals and scholars. The scholarship covers most of the costs including tuition fees, living fees, health cover and the flight tickets, making it the most sought-after scholarship. This is an excellent

platform to make the best of Australian education and be connected to a network of people who have made big contributions to their respected industries.

In a nutshell, education in Australia is highly rewarding, as students get an amazing overall experience filled with exposure to the best of quality education, and multiculturalism which broadens their horizon on an international level. Many leaders and personalities who currently reside in Nepal have greatly benefited from their Australian experience and have contributed their share in the national economy. The members of ANAA can also be taken as a prime example of how graduates are able to shape and develop their respective industry and bring positive impact in the lives of millions. Australia has also provided many opportunities for Nepalese who settle there and in return play their role in enriching the cultural diversity and adding value to the great nation. I highly recommend students to pursue this opportunity, but do so with caution and proper planning to secure a sound future for themselves. Because as they progress as individuals and professionals, they will ultimately utilize their knowledge and experience to contribute for the development of both Nepal & Australia.



Australian Education Information Centre

Over the years, Australia as a study destination for Nepalese students has become quite popular. As per the recent update Nepal is the third highest source country for international students in Australia. Likewise Australia boasts of providing quality education along with security with the government policies like the AQF, TPS and PSW. In addition, the lifestyle is exceptional and with promotional schemes like “Study Perth”, international students can also get a lot of facilities and exposure apart from the bookish knowledge. Moreover, scholarships and grants provided by the government as well as the institutions makes quality education much more affordable.

In spite of Australia being a very popular destination for higher education, it was surprising to see the lack of an independent, reliable and unbiased body which the student could reach out to. An urgent need for such a center was felt by the stakeholders, which could be a common platform for students, universities, financial institutions, embassies, and also education consultants. Anyone could have unlimited access to use the center, specially the students who could do their own research (free of cost) before making a final choice regarding their long term career.



Before the lockdown was announced because of the pandemic, few events were successfully launched at the center. The major ones being:

- ▶ Opportunities to Study, Work & live in Perth – Western Australia
Event By: Government of Western Australia, Perth
- ▶ Information provided by the financial institutions regarding easy student loan process
- ▶ Information session and pre-departure session provided by Curtin University, Australia

On the 16th of January 2020, AEIC was officially inaugurated by Australian Ambassador H.E. Peter Budd in the presence and support of other stakeholders like ANAA, educational associations like the ECAN and IERIN, representatives of Australian Universities and Banking Partners. Though the initiative was taken by NAAER (Nepalese Association of Australian Education Representatives) yet it is established as an independent body that shall provide unbiased information regarding Australian Education, culture, lifestyle, and many more to the students who are planning to invest in Australia for their further studies.

The main objective of this center will be to provide unbiased and reliable information to Nepalese students regarding Australian Education and lifestyle. There is a library in the premises where student can do their own research. Apart from that it's about making the best choice so that students can get value for their money. In addition, this center will serve as a common platform for the Australian universities and colleges where they can have their seminars, social networking events, one to one sessions at affordable cost. Students can also get pre-departure sessions. All these, we believe will help build a positive image of Australian

education in Nepal and finally will help to promote Australian education business in Nepal.

While establishing the center, a lot of things were kept in mind. From its location and accessibility to the available space, everything was prioritized. Hence, it is centrally located in Hattisar, which is easily accessible to all. There is free parking space in the venue for those coming in their own vehicle. The premises also has a multimedia seminar hall that can accommodate around 75 people. A meeting hall with projector, a library, smaller rooms for interview or one to one session are also within the venue.

The objective of AEIC is also closely supported by ANAA and the Australian Embassy in Nepal. Nepal and Australia have established 61 years of cordial relationship this year and till date Nepal has received a lot of support from Australian Government as well as individuals through development projects, scholarships, non-profitable organizations and many more. We hope that the establishment of AEIC shall also support the purpose of providing selfless service purely with the intention to help Nepalese students and promote Australian Education.





University of Melbourne

Melbourne, Australia

Founded in 1853, the University of Melbourne has a rich and fascinating past spanning 160 years. Beginning as a cluster of buildings set in a large park on the fringe of the city, with four professors and 16 students, the University now sits at the heart of a thriving international city and is Australia's leading University.

Since the introduction of the Colombo Plan in the early 1950's, international students have been making crucial contributions, academically, culturally and socially, to the life and vibrancy of the University and the City of Melbourne. We are immensely proud of and enriched by our community of global graduates, many of whom left home for the first time to study at Melbourne, and in doing so brought with them their local knowledge, cultures, ways of thinking and approaches to learning.

In recognition of the University's relationship with Nepal, in 2008, the University hosted the then Ambassador of Nepal to Australia, HE Mr Yogendra Dhakal at our Parkville Campus. The Faculty of



Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences also has a student placement agreement with the Volunteer Society Nepal established in 2019. Through partnerships such as these, we hope to strengthen the connections between the University and its student and alumni communities in Nepal.

The first Nepalese student commenced at Melbourne in 1995 and we saw an increase in enrolments from Nepal through the mid to late 2000s. Today, students from Nepal make up a small but passionate cohort with approximately 40 students of Nepalese citizenship currently enrolled in courses at the University of Melbourne and over 200 alumni living around the world.

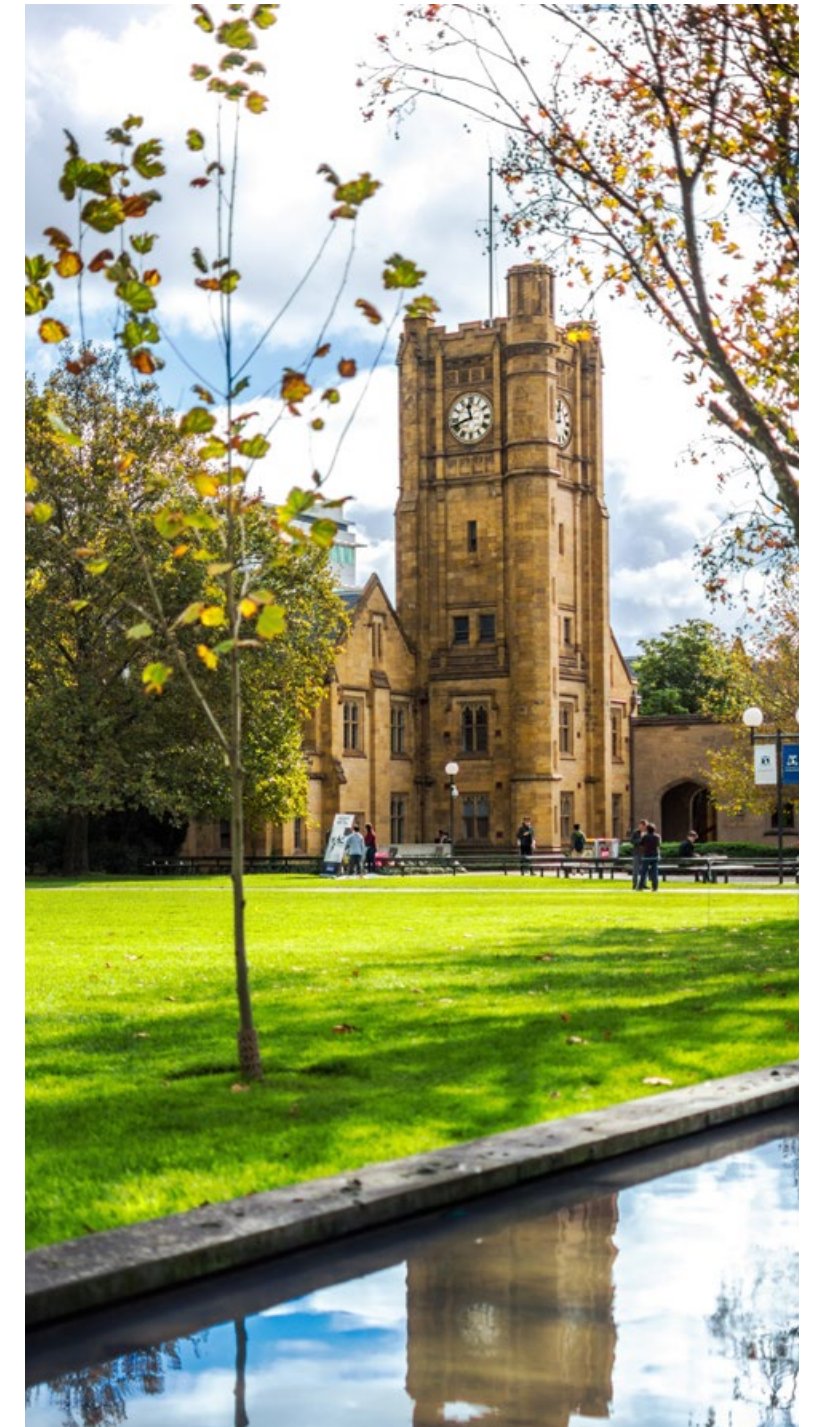
The most popular faculties of study for Nepalese students are the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, the Melbourne School of Engineering and the Faculty of Arts, with a number of students completing PhDs.

Several students come to Melbourne each year on an Australia Awards scholarship, supported by the Australian Government to develop new skills and knowledge which are then used to make a positive impact to their local community upon returning home. A prime example of this is Australia Awards alumni Dr Krishna Paudel, who completed a Master of Public Health at the University of Melbourne. Dr Paudel returned from Australia in December 2019, and in February 2020 was appointed to his current role as Director of Kanti Children's Hospital, Nepal's only government-run paediatric hospital. He is among the frontline health workers in Nepal fighting the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic and has been leading a team of more than 600 staff in efforts to control the virus.

Dr. Paudel is one of many graduates from Nepal making a difference to local communities. We are proud of our community of Nepalese alumni and the efforts and dedication they have to stay connected to one another and the University.

As Professor Duncan Maskell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, wrote in an article earlier this year, "a key feature of all great universities is their international student body. Let us celebrate and enjoy the presence among us of life-enhancing young people, who want to learn, and be part, for a while at least, of one of the best countries and cultures on earth. Brave youngsters who will grow as people to become the leaders of the future, and ambassadors for Australia and all it stands for".

Congratulations to both nations, Australia and Nepal on entering this amazing milestone of 61 years of diplomatic relations. Also, congratulations to ANAA on publishing this book. May you continue to be proud ambassadors of Australia and your respective alma maters.





University of Sydney

Sydney, Australia

The University of Sydney is delighted to celebrate the 61st year of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Australia. Nepal is one of the University's treasured nations as the Nepalese students bring diversity, culture and friendship to the campus. The success of our alumni from Nepal is a testament to their spirit and commitment to learning. In my capacity as an Australia Awards Manager, I have welcomed 26 Australia Awards and Endeavour scholars to the University and walked alongside them on their Australian journey. Whether they are conducting research on the latest pharmaceutical discovery, or improving the lives of people with a disability, our Nepalese alumni have truly left a mark in Australia.

Much more than 61 years ago, the University of Sydney was founded as Australia's first university in 1850. We are a member of the 'Group of Eight', a coalition of Australia's premier research-intensive universities and ranked 1st in Australia and 4th in the world for graduate employability by the QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2020. Our founding principle as Australia's first university was to be a modern and progressive institution and we have a history of forward thinking and shaping change to improve lives. The best and brightest minds live here, and we have taught 7 prime ministers, 23 Justices of the High Court of Australia, 110 Rhodes scholars, and 140 Olympians. The University of Sydney is also one of the first universities in the world to admit female students in 1881. Nepalese is one of over 130 nationalities and 73,000 students enrolled at the University which has a global network of over 280,000 alumni. The University of Sydney is consistently ranked in the top 50 universities in the world, and are known internationally as leaders in education, research, student experience and graduate

employability. Sydney is more than just a classroom and when students are on campus they have access to over 200 clubs and societies, opportunities to build their network and skillset and to connect with students from all backgrounds through Australia's largest mobility program allowing students to make the most of their university experience.

The University of Sydney has been welcoming students from Nepal for many years as both private and scholarship recipients. Australian students have a number of opportunities to participate in learning and exchange opportunities in Nepal through community placement programs, offshore study programs with the Sydney Law School and placement for pharmacy in a Nepalese hospital.

Amy Wan
International Scholarships





April 2019, Participants from Bhutan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan & Sri Lanka taking part in the Australia Awards South and west Asia workshop on Strengthening Communities of Practice and Alumni Associations In Kathmandu Nepal.

Photo Credit : Australia Awards Nepal



One can argue that businesses are the lifeblood of any healthy economy. While Australia is a living example of a flourishing business economy, Nepal is slowly catching up with the rest of the world. Some of the biggest industries in Australia are mining, agriculture, education, manufacturing, services etc. While in Nepal- remittance, hydro energy, tourism, food & beverage etc are the major economic sources. It is because of the entrepreneurs who capitalize on the gap and grasp opportunities that these industries are strengthened and employment is created. We want to celebrate and encourage such a spirit of entrepreneurship that solves problems in our communities, and allows us to exercise our freedom, especially in countries like Nepal where there are many opportunities to grow in nascent markets.

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Entrepreneurs

**Bringing the Best of Australia to Nepal:
TAFE program in GATE College**

Khem Lakai

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Putting Nepali Coffee on the Map

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Khem Lakai

Bringing the Best of Australia to Nepal: TAFE program in GATE College



Current Organization Name:
Global Academy of Tourism & Hospitality

Organization Position
Founder & Chairman

Khem Lakai, the Founder and the Chairman of Global Academy of Tourism & Hospitality, best known as GATE College, built a pioneering academy of Hospitality Management School with the mission to enhance professionalism in hospitality and tourism education in Nepal. GATE became the first college in Nepal to hone students to attain meaningful employment in some of the most prestigious workplace in the hospitality industry in Nepal, and outside of Nepal. The graduates can be found from being premium chefs in high profile hotels, and private kitchens to entrepreneurs who have started their own restaurants.

Passionate about helping his students, Khem once sponsored a chef to an Australian institution for trainers training, hoping he would come back and support him as a qualified trainer in GATE. To his dismay, the chef pursued other opportunities and returned back to Australia. He didn't let this one incident dishearten him; the second time's a charm. He decided to give another chance to another chef who had promised that he would return upon the

training. As intended, he did return back, only two years later he too left. The pattern was vicious. Khem was frustrated by how every time he sent his students or trainers for further education with a certain vision, he would lose them to opportunities abroad.

Then, one day, it dawned upon him that if he couldn't always send trainers to Australia, he could bring Australian trainers to Nepal to empower the hospitality workforce here. That's when he decided to pursue the ambitious goal of bringing the famous Australian Vocational (Training and Further Education -TAFE) TAFE to Nepal which would train a cohort of Nepalese trainers, rather than merely sending one chef at time and being worried that they may not return or leave. Everyone helped him, including TAFE NSW HQ, the Australian Embassy in Nepal and Australian Awards. Consequently, just like 4 years of hard work- searching, approaching and pursuing, Khem was finally able to add the TAFE NSW Certificate III in Commercial cookery to GATE's curriculum, he could also bring home one of the most visionary programs in Nepal and thanks the TAFE and Australian Government for this opportunity which is yet to be completed due to ongoing global pandemic at the moment.

The TAFE NSW is one the leading vocational education providers and training institutes in Australia. The Australian government has a proud history of 130 years bringing professionals from different backgrounds to set the curriculum and the standardized courses and training program as TAFE.

GATE College is not new to cultivating international culture with its curriculum and diverse student body in their classrooms. Under Khem's leadership, GATE' boats a Swiss affiliation with École hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL), the first in Asia to win the World Hospitality Award in Paris. It is also important to mention that along with a TAFE course GATE also provides a Bachelor's degree in international Hospitality. It has hosted students from 19 different countries including Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, China, Denmark, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Switzerland and many more.

Khem takes a great sense of pride and personal achievement for introducing the TAFE program. In Australia, he decided to educate himself as a student and travelled from Twin town to Sydney covering North Coast TAFE Centers. What truly struck him the most is Australian values for sustainability, inclusivity, and truly going out of the thick wall to support students with learning difficulties. Besides, flexibility of learning in the true sense of permeability and power of skills that allows them to move on in any stage of life for further education is exceptional.

A deep advocate of vocational training, Khem believes that vocational training is a means to a more competency based practical approach to learning. Not only does vocational training expedite the learning of the industry, it also gives the students the confidence to pursue a path to progress, saving them much time. It's clear that if Nepal wants to bring its people to eye level in the world and maintain its ever-growing aspiration of economic growth, the primary focus and vision for the 21st century should be world-class skills and employment to its sizable young population which can then be turned into a demographic dividend.



Khem tells us that the TAFE is also close to his heart because he had to go through extensive training in Australia, himself, in order to understand the core structure of the TAFE and be able to bring it here. It allowed him to learn from the hospitality world and at the same time foster deep friendships.

We can sense his love for Australia and Australian people runs deep as Khem shares with us an extraordinary story of inviting a group of indigenous Aborigines students and teachers (12) to Nepal for a cross cultural crash course program. Some of the indigenous people who made it to his college claim that they did not even have a passport before they were selected to jump on a flight from Australia. They were thrilled not just to get out of the country but also to learn from Nepalese culture and needless to say, be smitten by Khem's cordiality. Khem holds a Didgeridoo - a gift from the indigenous team - close in his office as a sweet reminder of this amiable exchange. But in the larger picture perhaps it has become a symbol of how far Nepalese Australian collaboration have flourished to be able to get a taste of Australia while in Nepal through programs like the TAFE.



Gagan Pradhan

Putting Nepali Coffee on the Map



Degree in Australia:
Bachelor of Hospitality
Management

Current Org. Name:
Himalayan Java

University of Study in Australia:
William Blue International
Hotel Management School

Organization Position
Owner

A man is seated in an open space table in a cozy coffee shop planning his day. That table is in one of the 36 coffee shops that he established in Nepal and abroad. Dressed casually like any regular person minding his own business, it is from that table he coordinates with his Baristas on store operations, checks on execution of plans on the opening of one store per month, keeps tab on the sales of imported quality coffee machines from Italy for local coffee shops, oversees campaigns for twelve of his Barista schools, makes phone calls to check on his commercial coffee farms that is supposed yield harvest this year, strategizes on introducing a new tea product to the market, the list goes on. That man who has camouflaged himself in what seems like an ordinary setting is Gagan Pradhan who is not so ordinary with his vision of transforming the coffee industry of Nepal. And has reached a position where he introduces Nepali coffee internationally, creating franchise outlets outside of Nepal.



What started as a small coffee shop venture twenty-one years ago as an attempt to pursue his passion for coffee and chocolate, has turned into a full-fledged coffee empire he built. He claims he acquired this passion as a student in Australia. He now employs about 400+ individuals – a good percentage of who are baristas, bakers, administrators. Most of them didn't have prior experience working in the industry, as he prefers to hire untrained fresh people. He is working with about 150 farmers in his coffee farm that he started five years ago, to meet the demand of quality coffee to ensure sustainability of their standards. He has directly and indirectly prepared thousands of students who have graduated from his Barista schools and have chartered their way to get employed in other coffee shops, or have started their own in and out of the country. When you think of sphere of influence, Mr. Pradhan's diameter is quite large in the coffee industry of Nepal.

In our conversation, he reveals that he didn't quite see himself as a coffee mogul in 1999, when he returned from Sydney, after 6 years of being there. On his flight back home, he had his mind occupied with ideas that would make him stay in Nepal. He started off by getting an employment offer in one of the biggest 5-star hotel in Nepal at that time. But one week in the job, and he knew it wasn't for him. He wanted to do something of his own, start a culture that fit him, where he could bring a bit of his professional experience learnt in Australia back to Nepal. Hence Java kick started Gagan's journey in coffee realm. Although initially he had to defend his dad's raised eyebrow for choosing to open a "chiya pasal" (small tea shop) after getting

the kind of exposure and experience in Australia, quick at making his decisions, Gagan felt that there was more that Australia had taught him - dignity of labor, so he felt ready. Since hierarchy and status didn't bother him as much, he'd get his hands dirty to do whatever he needed- from cupping, brewing, serving to even mopping the floor.

Himalayan Java became a coffee sensation in the early 2000s. It must have been the first cafe to introduce world-class espresso based coffee to Nepal and rightfully it gained much popularity. Not surprisingly initially the customers who understood the value of quality coffee were mostly tourists and foreigners as most Nepalese were only used to the taste of instant coffee. However, the market slowly evolved over the years, and more local faces are seen enjoying their cappuccinos and lattes in cafes of Nepal these days. Within a span of two decades, Nepal has over 4000 coffee shops all over the country.

Having established one of the most notable brands of coffee shops in the country, Gagan Pradhan is seen as one of the key figures who has played a significant role in transforming the culture to cater to the growing demand of coffee lovers. He



is a true entrepreneur when it comes to connecting the dots when he sees a gap and solving problems to convert them into opportunities. For example, the idea of starting a barista school came to him when he met unemployed Nepalese students in Sydney, struggling to find jobs. He then created a crash course not just for students aiming to go abroad, but also for families who were migrating and wanted to start a small business of their own. Similarly, a strong proponent of promoting Nepalese local products, when the smallholder farmers could not fulfill the coffee demand, he went into coffee production. He expects yield this coming year.

Besides coffee, Gagan is an avid advocate of creating an enabling environment for people to return back home to Nepal. He stresses that Nepal can provide immense opportunities for people who can approach life here with creative ideas in any industry. He believes that all returnees' journey, however, start from their home. Since most people live with their parents here, parents play a pivotal role in creating a space for their children to readjust back. Only after the returnees feel content and at peace at home, can they take full charge of being the catalyst of change outside.



Narayan Pahari

Connecting the Dots to Success

If one can think of an advocate of Australia in Nepal, who has successfully changed the scene of whatever he has touched, Narayan Pahari would be one of those individuals. Versatile and multidisciplinary Pahari has left a mark in the hospitality industry, the educational consulting industry, not to mention brought in a bit of Australia in Nepal through his endeavors like the Footy Club and the “Australia’s big day out”.

Born and raised in a business family with a tourism background, Pahari claims he wasn’t quite sure what he wanted to do early in his life. He thought he wanted to be a civil engineer, but it was only later that he realized his real passion was in the hospitality sector. Consequently, he decided to pursue an advanced Diploma of Tourism Management in Australia from Clarendon Business College in 2001. He was impressed by the hands-on knowledge and practical skill he gained - more than the classrooms, he learned from the exposure of being in Australia.

He returned to Nepal inspired and read to apply his learning. He was elected as the General Secretary of Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents (NATTA), Gandaki. He realized there were many gaps in the tourism sector in Nepal that can be bridged. Hence, he took on the challenge of advancing the industry by bringing back what he saw in Australia. Back then he recalls, he counted his small wins in things like creating a user friendly website and emails to connect the clients, and now recently he has changed the face of hotels by establishing Sarangkot Mountain Lodge, a boutique hotel that oversees the chain of



University of Study in Australia:
Clarendon Business College

Degree in Australia:
Advanced Diploma of Tourism
Management

Batch / Year of Education:
2001

Current / Retired
Organization Name:
Nepalese Encounters Pvt
Ltd/Hotel Mandala

Organization Position:
Owner/Chairman

Himalayas in Pokhara, with a unique fusion of modern and traditional architecture, and amenities. This contemporary piece is the top destination for high-end tourists. Before this he had also founded hotel Mandala by the lakeside in Pokhara, which he shares was also inspired by his travels. Simultaneously, Narayan also started an education consultancy business, which reached its height of success quickly with his vision and determination. He became the first Nepalese to get a QEAC (Qualified Education Agent Counsellors) certificate in the year 2006, which was a big deal at that time. During his involvement in the educational industry, he became a founding member of Nepalese Association



“

He was impressed by the hands-on knowledge and practical skill he gained - more than the classrooms, he learnt from the exposure of being in Australia.

of Australian Education Representatives pledging to create and foster a community of credible agents with integrity who recruited students on behalf of Australian Education Institutions. He is still an active member of this community.

Besides this, a sports enthusiast, Narayan also became the founding member of “The Himalayan Leopards”, the first Footy Club in Nepal. He says that he missed playing footy with his Australian friends, so he just thought of introducing the game to Nepalese youth. The club is now a registered member of AFL Asia. In the year 2018, he and his team organized “Australia’s Big Day Out” which promoted Australian cuisine and music and he hopes to organize more, with the intention of promoting Australian culture in Nepal.

Mr Pahari believes all that he is today is because of the things that he learned through his Australian experiences. He is a big believer of practical education and has high regards for the TAFE education system of Australia and hopes that the Nepalese education system too can develop a more practical based learning approach.





The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade DFAT has been a key donor for the Micro Enterprise Development programme (MEDEP). Initiated in 1998 the program was jointly implemented by the UNDP and the Nepal Government which aims to cater the needs of socially excluded groups living below the poverty lines by promoting off-farm employments.

The photo showcases 108 successful entrepreneurs out of many others who were supported by the DFAT through the MEDEP.

For more info: www.np.endp.org/medep



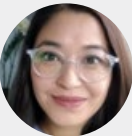
Every year thousands of young Nepalese visit Australia to attain their higher education. This journey becomes an experience of a lifetime for many and as they get introduced with life changing opportunities which help to kickstart their amazing career from an early age. Here are some stories of some young inspirations whose hard work and dedication have allowed them to navigate lives on their own terms. These stories should also be taken as motivation boosters for those who are planning to visit Australia for their further education and plan ahead to strive for their future.

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Young Inspiration

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Samridhi Rana



Batch / Year of Education:
2014 – 2015

Current Organization:
International Committee of
the Red Cross (ICRC)

Organization Position:
Disability Inclusion Adviser

University of Study in Australia:
The University of Sydney

Degree in Australia:
Master of Rehabilitation
Counselling

The Master of Rehab Counselling at the University of Sydney equipped me with the knowledge and skillset to identify and address barriers faced by people with disabilities and become their advocate to ensure their social participation. Prior to receiving the Australia Awards scholarship to pursue this Master's degree, I worked as a physiotherapist at Norvic International Hospital where I rehabilitated people with physical disabilities. The Rehab Counselling degree instilled high level analytical scientific based skills to foster social inclusion of people with all types of disabilities. This is why I moved beyond limiting myself to work with people with physical disability and the clinical setting, to improve the lives of a larger population of people with disability through targeted project and programme based approaches in Nepal.

I enjoyed every bit of my academic journey at the University of Sydney because of the comprehensive course design which included disability laws and policy analysis, counselling, disability employment support, among others. As a part of my Master's degree, I had gained theoretical skills from class as



Australia is a wonderful study destination with so much to see and make memories from. Choose a course of your interest and gain the skills to create meaningful impact in people's lives!

well as real work experiences in the field of Australian disability support services! I was placed as an Employment Consultant for Disability Employment Services (DES) at a nonprofit called BreakThru. DES is a great strategy by Australian Government Department of Social Services to support people with disabilities on the benefit scheme to find and stay in the job. My other university placement was more of a corporate setting where I gained work experience as a Rehabilitation Consultant with the Interact Group supporting people who sustain disability, injury or illness while at work, to recover and return to work.



I have found great satisfaction in engaging as a dynamic rehabilitation counselling professional applying what I know in diverse global settings. In 2019, when I was selected for the 'Disability Rights- Equal Access for All' South Asian delegation visit to the US by the US Government Department of State's under the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), I found that the rehab counselling practices were very much similar to Australia in regards to employment, job training support services for people with disabilities.

Over the years, various grants or donor support such as the Direct Aid Program (DAP) fund by Australian Embassy in Nepal has enabled disability actors to reduce the stigma of disability and improve visibility or participation of people with disability. There has been formulation of disability related laws, policies and guidelines. Also, these days you see children with and without disability playing together in school uniforms in Sunsari, for instance, which was not the case a few years ago.

While I thought Nepal was slowly moving towards disabilities friendly progression. However, on my return right after successfully completing my postgraduate study, it took me some time to find the right workplace in Nepal where I could contribute what I had learned in Australia. When I was appointed as a Senior Community Based Rehabilitation Officer by the Karuna Foundation Nepal and later by Bihani Social Venture, as a Disability & Ageing Specialist, I was able to implement my rehabilitation counselling skills with the disability and the ageing population.

It has been a rewarding career graph since then. As a Disability Inclusion Adviser with the ICRC, I continue to ensure incorporation of keeping the person with disability and family's needs and interest in the center of planning to foster impactful social inclusion, among others. I believe it is highly important to ask/ know what is most needed rather than saying this is what you need, when working with a targeted population whose needs we are trying to address.

While in Australia, I established lasting connections. In 2019, I received 'the Young Alumni Award 2019' at the University of Sydney. A proud moment because the University of Sydney has been in the top three university of Australia. I was pleasantly surprised to be informed that the Head of Rehab Counseling Discipline, Associate Prof. Lynda Matthews had nominated me. I travelled to Sydney to receive the award in person and reconnect with my faculty and friends over meeting appointments and social catch ups.

The contribution that Australian DFAT has made to facilitate disability inclusive development in Nepal is praiseworthy. My heartfelt gratitude to the Australian DFAT and big congratulations on completing 61 years of bilateral ties between Australia and Nepal.

My message to those who are thinking of choosing Australia for their study destination would be- Australia is a wonderful study destination with so much to see and make memories from. Choose a course of your interest and gain the skills to create meaningful impact in people's lives!



Nibhes Man Shrestha



Degree in Australia:
Bachelor of Commerce, Majors in Accounting, Finance and Financial Planning

Current Organization Name:
Siddhartha Business Enterprises Pvt.Ltd

Organization Position:
Managing Director

University of Study in Australia:
Deakin University, Melbourne

Batch / Year of Education:
2012

I went to Australia in 2009 as a student to pursue my Undergraduate degree in Bachelor of Commerce Degree in Deakin University, Melbourne. I majored in Accounting, Finance & Financial Planning. Upon completing my Bachelors Degree in 2012, I attained the Australian Permanent Residency status as I worked as a Sales Executive at a Multinational Company based in Melbourne.

With a well paying job to provide security, I was living a comfortable life in Australia. But there was always a part of me that wanted to do something back home where my friends and family were. My decision to come back was escalated after the 2015 Earthquake. I wanted to return back to be with my family and share my knowledge and experience in a pragmatic way within our community, simultaneously.

Transitioning to Nepal was not easy in all honesty; given the fact that most of my professional experience was in Australia. For almost six months to a year, I found myself exploring the Nepalese market to identify the gaps that I can bridge, and convert them into my new ventures.

Initially, I decided to start an agro-business considering how Nepal is an agricultural country, but more so for the feasible financing packages and subsidies that the government provided. I started cultivation of horticulture and floriculture in a small city where farmlands were affordable. Slowly gaining the momentum I have realised that the opportunity in the agro sector is immense and one can attain amazing business advantages by starting early in this industry.

Once the Agro-Business took off, I explored the options of importing Australian consumer products to expand my portfolio. Being a consumer myself for years, I highly admire the quality of Australian made Health Supplements and the benefits they have and knew that such products could contribute to improve people’s health in Nepal. And I also noticed a gap in that area which could be tapped. Hence to fulfill the growing demand of consumers, my company imports and distributes various Australian Health Supplements and products in Nepal. I believe there are still many unexplored opportunities to position oneself if the market is studied and executed well.

In my experience, comparing the two ventures, trading was more challenging to initiate. The process of understanding the ecosystem of import/export was demanding and exciting at the same time.

It is true that once you've settled down in Australia with a certain lifestyle, it is difficult to make the decision of going back home. The challenge is more pronounced if people have attained their permanent residency status. Yet, many Nepalese with similar status wish to return and do something for their nation. I'd like to urge such people to view this as a golden opportunity to cross-pollinate between the two countries and utilize your position, your exposure, and your skills to uplift a much-needed community and country. We are at the cusp of creating a movement of returnees who come back to pursue opportunities to elevate themselves and on the larger scale the community and their nation, and I'd urge you to be a part of that movement.



Sakar Pant



Degree in Australia:
Cert III in screening and Bachelor of IT

Current Organization Name:
Pant Film Production

Organization Position:
Director

University of Study in Australia:
Charles Darwin University

Batch / Year of Education:
2012

Multi-talented Sakar Pant, returned to Kathmandu from Australia in 2012, and currently runs a production house, a travel agency, an adventure sports company, a newly opened pub, but he identifies himself as a filmmaker.

Why would he? Because film-making runs in his blood. He grew up around light and cameras, and film crews were always in his backyard performing. He is the son of the famous actor Santosh Pant- the star of a popular Nepali television show- “Hijo Aja ka Kura”.

With the goal of acquiring more knowledge and exposure on showbiz industry, Sakar went to Australia in 2008 for his education. There he completed his Certificate level in film making – Screen, and an undergraduate in Information Technology.

During his film making course, he gained experience in big budget movies where he was mesmerized by massive Australian sets- the lights, the cameras, the equipment, and was captivated by the level of detail each personnel paid for their assigned task. The gap between film production in Nepal and movie making in Australia was incomparable. However, the joy of learning new techniques, and bringing applicable knowledge to add new flavor to Nepali space gave him the drive to step out of his comfort zone.He takes pride in his journey as he says- “this is what makes me who I am today”.



After coming back to Nepal, he jumped at his first production-a social talk show called “ThauThaukakura” which aired in Himalyan TV. Then, Sakar experimented with a hospital series, which was a TV drama on medical professionals and their daily grind. After that he moved on to create his own production house, and started working for private clients that need content creation. Currently Sakar is working with INGOs and developing documentaries that help promote social causes.

Sakar stresses that Nepali Film Industry is evolving at a good pace; however, there is still much room for growth. Although Nepali productions are usually still small budgeted compared to foreign films which confines big possibilities, he believes good content is always in high demand. While most people focus on technical aspect of the films, and good work is being done using fancy techniques, Sakar feels that contents with “stories of regular and real people” should get more focus. He urges more people in this profession to take this challenge and create quality content and at the same time recommends more youths to enter the industry as he sees a lot of talents engaging in the social media sphere.

Sakar recently finished his latest movie production, “Hijo Aja ka Kura”- a spin off of his father's television show, which brings forth contemporary issues of regular Nepalese. It was supposed to release the movie last year but it couldn’t because of the COVID lockdown. He looks forward to releasing it this year, and hopes to exhibit it globally, including Australia.

Pjay Shrestha



Degree in Australia:
**Bachelors of Commerce
(Marketing)**

Current Organization Name:
Liberal Party of Australia

Organization Position:
**Federal Liberal Candidate for
Barton**

University of Study in Australia:
Australian Catholic University

Batch / Year of Education:
2015

Australia, the land of opportunities. It was back in 1999 when my parents Prabha Shrestha and Megh Raj Shrestha had decided to migrate to Australia to seek a better life. I was only four years old at that time, and it was both an exciting and sad moment for our family as we left Nepal to embark on a new life in Australia.

When I first arrived in Australia, it was way more beautiful than I could have ever imagined. Clean streets, fresh air, and the most astonishing part - no cars were beeping at each other. This was a new world for me, and I believe an instrumental experience in developing me to become who I am today.

Growing up in Australia was very different from growing up in Nepal. For starters, schooling was about having fun and learning, which was very distinct to the Nepal system. Additionally, one of the unique parts of studying in Australia was that we got to meet classmates and teachers with diverse cultural backgrounds and beliefs. I found this experience to really open my mind that multiple perspectives can all be valid, and there was no single way to look at things.

From an academic perspective, my focus on hanging out with friends often outweighed my focus on learning which meant I had lots of friends, but my grades suffered terribly. This was a source of frustration to both my parents and teachers, and it did not help that I would skip classes, particularly for my mum, who did everything she could do to provide me with the best future.



I found this experience to really open my mind that multiple perspectives can all be valid, and there was no single way to look at things.

Fortunately, and I'm sure to everyone's relief, my life transformed when I travelled to Nepal in year 12. What I realised during my travels was that there were so many talented people in Nepal, and if they had the same opportunities I experienced studying in Australia, they would be able to contribute to society so much more. This humble realisation fueled my desire to do something that would contribute to society.

With an aim in mind when I returned to Australia, I started contemplating what I could do to make my dream a reality. During this phase, there were many harsh realities I needed to face, such as the fact my marks were not high enough for me to apply for certain degrees. I, however, continued to dream that with continued dedication, I will one day achieve this dream of mine. The sailing was not smooth, but through determination and a dream, my marks improved. By putting myself out there and willing to risk failure, I've been able to make my little impact on the world so far. Some of my memorable moments include winning Mr Nepal Oceania in 2016 to raise funds for kids in Nepal and be a voice for Nepali youths, leading a delegation of Australian Youths to Nepal to meet Ministers and Business Leaders, and recently being nominated to join the Australian Prime Minister's team as the Federal Liberal Candidate where I got to voice what matters to the diverse electorate in Barton during the 2019 election at the age of 26 to name a few.

As I reflect on my journey thus far, I believe, like many who have migrated to Australia and now enjoy the Australian dream, we are the product of the strong diplomatic relationship between Australia and Nepal. I look forward to the relationship only strengthening and have great optimism as the relationship continues to strengthens.

Ayush Karki



Batch / Year of Education:
2013-2014

Current Organization Name:
UNICEF

Organization Position:
Communication Consultant

University of Study in Australia:
Monash University

Degree in Australia:
**Master of Communication and
Media Studies**

I have been studying and working in the field of communications and media for over nine years now. Initially I worked as a journalist for two years before pursuing my masters in Australia. I always found the media industry fascinating and wanted to dive deeper into this field. Hence, I applied for the Masters of communication and media studies at Monash.

After completing my Master's program, I first worked as an intern in the United Nations Economic and Social Commission of Asia Pacific (UNESCAP) in Thailand. During which, I got an opportunity to work in its Communication department, where I learnt how the United Nations communicates with various audiences such as the public, development partners, staff, etc. It was a great learning experience, as I learnt to use communication tools such as social media, traditional media, websites, event management, etc. In the final month of the internship, there was a massive earthquake in my country, Nepal. Following the earthquake, most of the development agencies expanded their work to respond to the disaster. I was fortunate enough to serve as a UN volunteer in my country during the most significant disaster suffered in 80 years. The United Volunteers

program (UNV) deploys skilled volunteers in coordination with various UN agencies. My role in UNV was to support the management and deployment of volunteers and communications of my agency. In my 18-month tenure as a UNV, I photographed, documented and promoted the work done by over 200 UN volunteers who worked as first responders. The work done by them was truly inspiring, and it was an honor to disseminate UNV's work through various platforms.

Then, I joined UNICEF Nepal and in 2020 I moved to UNICEF's office in Lao PDR. UNICEF has been working around the world on children's issues such as child rights, health, education, etc. My role as a communication consultant requires me to manage the digital platform of UNICEF's communication department.

Shortly after moving to Lao PDR the world was hit by the global pandemic, COVID-19. Since then, I have been supporting the Government in campaigns responding to the pandemic. Initially, I worked on the drive to raise awareness on preventive measures. As Lao PDR did a tremendous job at containing the outbreak with just 49 cases (Until 5 April 2021), we worked with the Ministry of Education to resume schools. Currently, I am swamped with the roll out of COVID-19 vaccination through the COVAX facility.

In Nepal, the development sector looks lucrative among the fresh graduates because of various reasons such as remuneration, field visits, etc. But it also comes with a price. One of the highest prices you pay is with your personal life. Travelling most of the time and living abroad has its perks, but living away from family is always hard. On top of that, you may have to move countries every few years, which will not help you build a community around you.

For those trying to get into the sector, I would say don't get intimidated by the big organization's names. Work on yourself and start collecting experience, even if it's through internships or volunteering. This will make your resume shine, among others.

Kaustuv Dahal

From a Chef to a Government Employee in Australia: An Unconventional Path

When I landed in Sydney in 2008, I was barely eighteen and I thought I wanted to be a chef. I started off with a diploma in hospitality management as training as a chef was also an easy and the most affordable way to establish myself here in Australia, with the possibility of a residency sponsorship. Since I also had interest in travelling, being a chef would mean that I could live and travel wherever I wished, so I joined the bandwagon.

However, after a few years of hustling around commercial kitchens in Sydney, I realised my life was too stressful because of job instability, and challenges of working with difficult personalities in the kitchen. The best option for me to switch careers was to enroll myself for a Bachelor degree in Science. Consequently, I joined Australia National University in Canberra for Water Science. I was excited to be learning in one of the world class institutions, where people from around the world came to study.

What I wanted to do as a teenager in terms of seeing the world, and seeking bigger opportunities by moving to Australia came full circle when I felt like there was a deeper void in me. I felt that I missed my homeland, and I lacked a sense of belonging in



Batch / Year of Education:
2014 & 2015

Current Organization:
**Department of Environment,
Land Water & Planning**

Organization Position:
**Bushfire Biodiversity
Recovery Team**

University of Study in Australia:
ANU & RMIT

Degree in Australia:
**Bachelor of Science & Grad
Diploma in Geospatial Science**

Australia. I thought this could only be mitigated by giving Nepal a shot. I felt privileged that by then I already secured a permanent residency, which gave me the flexibility to come back if things didn't work out. So, I moved to Nepal to test the waters.

The months that followed were difficult- after going to Nepal, I had a hard time finding a job. I realized that neither me or my family had any network to secure the right employment in Nepal. It had been years since we had been living out of Nepal.

Culturally, too, I found that it was challenging to fit into the stereotypical Nepali societal expectations. I was used to being an independent person, and not generally used to societal scrutiny. Close relatives had constant questions like "why did you come back when everyone is trying to go abroad?", "when are you getting married?". I wasn't comfortable answering as people always had a stern opinion about what is best for me, something I didn't agree with. I was just trying to figure out myself.

Somehow I managed to land a temporary position in Makwanpur in a Water and Sanitation project. After 5 months of working in the job, I had more time at hand. So, I travelled in Nepal more, I

travelled from the far western region of Dolpa to Eastern most regions- Illam and Panchthar. After more travel, I started looking for a job again, but unfortunately due to lack of experience, I landed none.

I wanted to try something different yet again. Therefore I moved to Montreal, Canada. But the lack of French language made it difficult for me to adjust to the workplace. My options were getting slim, so I decided to return to Australia again, after a year to try my luck.

My struggles were not over even in Australia. I had a hard time finding a job in the Sciences, even with a good university degree. Furthermore, I had burned most of my savings. Graduate school seemed like the only viable option now since I could get some government loans to help me with my education.

I moved to Melbourne to enroll in a Masters of Geospatial Science. Within a year, I got into the Science and Planning Graduate Program with DELWP. I finally heaved some sighs of relief after a year when I found a job with the state government, which has provided some stability in my life.

Currently, I work with spatial data, and support policy makers to make evidence based decisions. Some of the projects I have done are related to forest fire, climate change and biodiversity. I gain immense sense of work satisfaction being able to apply my skills in an industry and be surrounded by people who see me as a value add in this society. I am very content with my job and also my department that celebrates diversity and encourages people of different cultural backgrounds.

From a nomadic chef to a state government employee that policy makers seek recommendations of, my journey has not been straightforward, but I feel grounded that I was able to pursue my path authentically and my failures always taught me something. I'm glad that I was in the position to at least learn from my own choices rather than choosing a safe and comfortable path that

From a nomadic chef to a state government employee that policy makers seek for recommendations.

society deemed right. I feel grateful that I was able to fulfill my dreams of travels, and achieve my highest potential with a premium education and have a fulfilling career and Australia gave me that. However, my true sense of belonging still lies in Nepal. Although my first attempt didn't work out, one day I know I will return back to Nepal again. That time I will come as more prepared as a professional and an individual who can give back.



Pritha Dahal



Batch / Year of Education:
2018-2019

Current Organization Name:
St. Xavier's College, Maitighar

University of Study in Australia:
Monash University

Degree in Australia:
Master of Education (By Research)

Current Organization Name:
Faculty staff formation and Development Coordinator/ General Paper Teacher

The Nepali education system has undergone a lot of reforms to try and better itself. Yet even after 20 years of reforms, we are still struggling to address the same issues of quality and structural inequality that these reforms were geared to overcome. As a teacher, I experimented with my teaching techniques and was fortunate enough to find approaches that my students connected with. But all my teaching practices stemmed from my cultural experiences and beliefs and worldview.

For reforms to work, teachers need to believe in them. Over my teaching career, teachers that I interacted with always saw reforms as threats or unneeded complications. Yet the system was not getting better. I strongly felt that we must be able to find solutions within the classrooms. To be able to do this, I needed research skills to conduct studies that explored existing teaching practices. Therefore, I went to do a master's at Monash in education by research where my course primarily focused on exploring how teachers' perceived implementing learner/ student centred education. The course was highly challenging because I only had to take two course units and the rest of the time, I was to closely work with my supervisors on my thesis. I was forced to step out of the comfort zone and look at the issue

from a variety of perspective. But this research further reinforced the importance to spend more time in understanding teacher practices if we are to truly reform the education system.

Currently I teach grade 11 (A-levels) students General Paper and work as a faculty formation and development coordinator at St. Xavier's Maitighar. When I teach, my lessons are based on what students want to learn. I shape my lessons through their interests. I closely work with teachers to help them better their existing teaching practices and work towards strengthening areas identified by students and colleagues. My idea is to understand what works for teachers and create training programs based on the practices that are culturally and contextually relevant. I am looking to do a PhD where I want to investigate teaching learning practices deemed as being effective both by teachers and students. I hope that this will be a stepping stone where I work towards developing teachers' training programs where they learn skills that allow them to experiment with their teaching and engage learners. I also feel that this will help me further gather knowledge to one day maybe develop low cost education models that suit the Nepali context.



Kanchan Kharel



Batch / Year of Education:
2018-2019

Current / Retired Organization Name:
Mecwacare

University of Study in Australia:
Monash University

Degree in Australia:
Master of Social Work

Organization Position:
Care Advisor, Home Care Package Program

I came to Australia in January 2018 to pursue a Master of Social Work degree from Monash University. Before that, I was leading 'YUWA' a youth-led non-governmental organization in Nepal. Through YUWA, I got involved in various community-led projects. In this process, I got an opportunity to work with people from different backgrounds, age, culture and social conditions. Listening to people's stories was something I found always interesting because such stories would contain life lessons on problem solving and resilience. My ambition to become a professional social worker grew, and therefore, I decided to undertake a professional degree in Social Work for which I decided to come to Monash.

After arriving in Australia, I realized that I can make my student life more meaningful and productive. I was doing a full-time postgraduate study; however, I was not expected to go to college every single day. My classes used to be only three days a week, and I could still have some spare time for myself. Generally, international students lookout for casual jobs in the hospitality and retail industry as these jobs have comparatively fewer industry requirements for recruitment. However, I had a different plan. I started looking for volunteering opportunities relevant to my studies and career goals. I emailed different community-based organizations and NGOs asking if they have some openings. A couple of them responded but said there was nothing available at the time of my application. However, I did not get discouraged.

In Nepal, every day we see public gatherings to voice their issues. Australia is no exception. In Melbourne, I could see different advocacy organizations on the streets to demonstrate and make their voices for the

rights of refugees and asylum seekers. I used to look at them from a close distance. This helped me to understand some of the ongoing issues in the country. I started following these organizations' activities and attended some capacity building events. Such events helped me expand my social networks and opened new opportunities. Three months after arriving in Australia, I managed to get my first part-time job as a Client Support Worker for the Humanitarian Settlement Program at AMES Australia. Having worked for Ames Australia as a Case Manager for about a year right after my graduation, I decided to move on to a different program. Currently, I am working as a Care Advisor for the Home Care Package Program at Mecwacare. I am responsible to support seniors from diverse backgrounds in Melbourne and regional Victoria to safely live in their own home.

My social work experience in Australia has been very rewarding. It is very different compared to working in Nepal. In Australia, the social work profession is highly regarded. It is valued and considered as a significant industry to improve the lives of Australians. Universities have developed a strong course structure in line with the degree requirement proposed by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). Although the Australian government has not yet accredited Social Work like other allied health professions such as psychology, occupational therapy, the health care and community service industries have well placed social workers into their workforce as solving the health care crisis and responding to social barriers in Australia. Social Workers in Australia are very competent as they have been well trained both academically and in practice. This is something Nepal can learn. Nepal has so many colleges and universities offering Social Work education, however, the curriculum is not yet structured and is not aligned to meet the needs of the workforce industry. Therefore, Nepali social work graduates have not been able to fully use and advance their knowledge and skills to address social barriers. Consequently, the development of the social work profession in Nepal is still in a nascent phase.

In such a scenario, I believe my Australian Social Work education and experience can be very helpful to fill the current gaps in the social work industry in Nepal. Nepal is experiencing diverse social, economic, cultural, political and environmental issues at present. There are so many barriers to access basic needs and quality of life. One of the key roles of Social Workers is to help people remove their barriers by linking them to resources. This requires a Social Work education that can produce competent social workers who can perform such actions. Therefore, I am looking forward to moving back and applying my learnings to Social Work education in Nepal.

Jayanta Vaidya

Things you Need to Know about Working in Australia

I would like to begin my write up with a strong advice to the Nepalese students coming to Australia for further studies – “Do your Homework!”

The area where most Nepalese students including myself lack is, doing some basic research when we opt for our higher studies. After the completion of my Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from Kathmandu College of Management, all I wanted to do was study Master’s level then get some decent job, earn a few years of experience and return to the homeland.

My academic journey in Australia started off with a Masters of Commerce in University of New South Wales, and I topped it off with a Masters of Professional Accounting from Kaplan Business School. The second masters enabled me to apply for a Permanent Residency (PR) status, which I thought was essential for me to open up better opportunities. The academic degree, however, was still not enough to land a job as I did not have the relevant work experience, which most employers asked for. I, then, applied for an unpaid internship of three months in an



University of Study in Australia:
University of New South
Wales (UNSW) and Kaplan
Business School (KBS)

Degree in Australia:
Masters Commerce-Finance
(UNSW) and Masters of
Professional Accounting (KBS)

Batch / Year of Education:
2012 - 2014

Current Organization Name:
Commonwealth Bank of
Australia

Organization Position:
Risk and Control Enablement
Manager (Credit Cards)

accounting firm. Upon completion of the internship I was offered a job in the same firm, which later helped me land a job in the bank.

The transition from an accounting firm to a bank wasn’t as challenging as I had started to work in the department of Self-Managed Super Funds (SMSF) at that time. I was fortunate that I was able to connect with a SMSF specialist on LinkedIn, who had posted a vacancy post for Commonwealth Bank of Australia. Because the concept was fairly new during those days and there weren’t many people experienced in SMSF, so, I was called within a week of my application.

Today, I am working at the Commonwealth Bank of Australia as a Risk and Control Enablement Manager (Credit Cards). Some of my core responsibilities are to support businesses to design and implement control to enable better risk and compliance outcomes, ensure risks are profiled and update triggers when events occur, and manage root cause analysis of issues and incidents.

Eventually I do have plans of returning to Nepal. Had there been similar opportunities in Nepal, I would have returned sooner, but since it is not possible, I am still trying to figure out the best possible options I might have on my return.

As of now, some of the Nepalese diaspora here are making efforts to provide some form of support to the Nepalese students in Australia. We make differences collectively through Nepalese Alumni Associations, which is found in most of the Australian Universities. We help them find internships and part time jobs in the related field of their study to help them be job ready upon graduation.

I believe that some educational institutes in Nepal should take proactive measures towards transferring knowledge and skills through different technological mediums so that the education system can improve. Also, if the government of Nepal would make few reachable and flexible approaches in the related sector, the Nepalese diaspora in Australia can think of coming back, and providing a strong support towards the development of Nepal on the whole.



Finally, if there is any lesson you can draw from my life, here are a few suggestion to the young enthusiastic students who are planning to visit Australia for their higher education:

- Research your area of study depending on what career path you want and more importantly where do you want to work.
- While you are studying don't burnout yourself with extra work, your primary focus should be on your study and attaining good grades.
- Involve yourself with extra career oriented workshops/ activities provided by your university and be in regular contact with your professors, make sure you use your career counselors in your colleges
- Education is simply one criterion to land a job; your exposure towards your work experiences will count a lot.
- If you don't have work experience, be prepared to go through an internship program which may be unpaid but will be important.
- Make sure you network to let people know that you are looking for opportunities. Use online portals like LinkedIn to tap to your network.
- Once you land the job, give back to your communities by linking them up with internships or/and part time jobs

Peter Budd – Australian Ambassador to Nepal

Ambassadorship Tenure: 2017 – 2020

We, the Australian alumni family, want to thank the former Ambassador Peter Budd for his deep love and support towards the Nepalese people. His valuable contributions to strengthen the Nepal- Australia relations is highly appreciated.





Remembering
Prabal Thapa

1975–2020

Prabal Thapa was a beloved life member of the ANAA family. Though his passing came in a very untimely manner, his love towards the association and the alumni members will always be cherished. Honest, compassionate and impartiality are qualities that makes Prabal a loved one to all.

We the alumni family will always think of Prabal as someone who made valuable contribution towards our alumni family and will always smile in his remembrance.





**Association of Nepalese Alumni
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