



## Teacher Training Center: A Reality

After many years, many dreams and much hard work, ETC is very proud to announce that, together with the Center for Educational Research, Innovation and Development (CERID), we are opening one of the first primary and pre-primary Teachers Training Centers in Nepal. CERID, affiliated with Tribhuvan University, has many years of experience in the educational field and will draw on their research to form an excellent training package for both practicing teachers and those who have not yet begun teaching.

Getting this project up and running is the fulfillment of a dream for Barbara Cook and Freema Hillman, who have both worked tirelessly to make sure the project reflects our values and approach to

educational innovation and success. Board member Dan Sisler has also been instrumental in assisting with the project.

Freema, who has been conducting pre-primary teachers' training in Nepal with ETC since 1994, explains that the endeavor is a logical extension of ETC's work. "Hardly a day goes by that someone doesn't ask me for training," she says. "The establishment of this Center will allow our work to expand to reach a larger audience, both in terms of more areas of the country and also in training private as well as public sector teachers."

In Nepal, primary education is not yet universal, nor is it compulsory. Most of the population does not complete the first five grades. Two of the major obstacles to

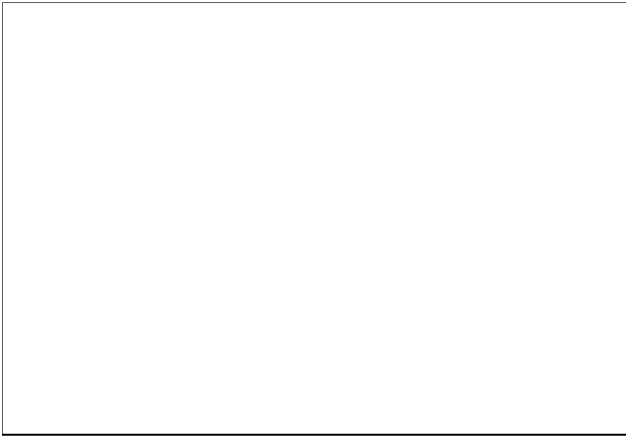
improving primary education are the very low quality and number of teachers. Primary schools typically only have four teachers to teach five grades, with an average student/teacher ratio of 39/1. At present training capacity, a total of about 2000 teachers a year receive in-service training in Nepal — a country with a total of 91,500 public school teachers. Approximately 57.5% of all teachers have never received any training at all.

Kishor Shrestha of CERID, who will coordinate the project, says. "I am very excited about the possibilities this project brings. For pre-primary education in Nepal, there is presently no training at all. We estimate that 20% of all government schools have begun pre-primary programs as a way to

reduce the number of underage children in the classroom. CERID studies have shown how positively pre-primary classes impact on children's school performance; now we need to get some training to these teachers. This CERID-ETC collaboration will enable us to begin doing that, as well as improve teacher training for primary school teachers."

In the first year, the project will form an Advisory Board of experts on primary and pre-primary education. This Board will study existing facilities and training packages to ensure that there is no duplication of services and that the best materials possible can be used in the proposed Center. An in-service training package will be developed and piloted in the Kath-

*(continued on page 8)*



From left to right, Freema Hillman, Kishwor Shrestha, Linda Farthing, H.R. Bajracharya, and Barbara Cook finalize the Teacher Training Center agreement

### Did You Know . . .

**We've grown!** ETC now works with 63 rural villages and with several communities in Kathmandu! Our work is estimated to reach 30,000 people in Nepal. There are now:

- 79 ETC women's groups (more than 1,300 members)
- 21 ETC kindergarten and nursery classes
- 132 sponsored children (65 in our community sponsorship program, and 67 privately sponsored)
- 207 high school scholarship students
- and much more!

### Surf-and-Give!

Support ETC while you are online — at no cost to you! ETC is now a member of onGiving.com — which means that by just downloading their banner onto your computer you can earn money for ETC whenever you are connected to the internet! If enough ETC supporters do this, together we can earn even more money (free!) to further support ETC's work. Tell your families and friends as well — the banner is small, and there is no requirement to ever click on it!

Visit [www.onGiving.com](http://www.onGiving.com).

# Women's Development Program: "Untouchable Women Breaking the Chains"

By Prakash Dahal

*Edited and reprinted from the Rising Nepal, March 13, 2000 with the author's permission*

Ram Maya Biswakarma, 32, a woman from the untouchable caste, never had an opportunity to sit in a classroom in her life. In early March, however, she spoke at a national conference of the Feminist *Dalit* Organization held in Kathmandu's City Hall and attended by *dalit* (untouchable) women from all over the Kingdom. She spoke confidently and eloquently. She's a woman with a solemn look, and her craving for learning knows no bounds. Though she has never set foot in school as a student, she can logically drive her points home, and now, thanks to ETC's literacy classes and other programs, she can read, write, and discuss the legal rights of *dalits* (untouchables) in Nepal as well.



Thalang Women's Group, one of ETC's low-caste 'Poorest of the Poor' groups.

their legal rights and equal status as human beings. She can do this because as part of her ETC women's group training she had three months of legal literacy training, educating her about the country's laws.

**Interested in supporting a low-caste women's group? Contact our office!**

Ram Maya's three children all attend school. Some of them are supported by ETC sponsors. "I will leave no stone unturned to have my children well educated," says Ram Maya, "I'd rather sacrifice myself than see them ruining their future by not getting an education." Ram Maya earns money to keep her children in school by weaving bags and selling them.

At twelve, Ram Maya was married off by her parents. As a child she had been unable to persuade her parents to send her to school. But as an adult, she was obsessed with learning to read.

When she learned about ETC's literacy classes, she was determined to participate. And now, putting to use the skills she learned as a member of an ETC women's group, she comes to champion the cause of her fellow *dalits*. Ram Maya can present an informed analysis of Nepal's law, and puts forth powerful arguments demonstrating that the *dalits* have been discriminated against and citing

Ram Maya is not alone in waging the battle against social discrimination and prejudice against *dalits*. Kali Bishwa-Karma, 45, another *dalit* woman who attended ETC's literacy classes and is part of a women's group, has no complaints against her parents for depriving her of education, however, she is filled with remorse for not having sent her daughters to school. "Having gone to the adult literacy classes, I have come to learn how it feels to be educated. I regret having sent my daughters to gather firewood and fodder when I should have been sending them to school. I am determined that my grandchildren, regardless of their sex, go to school."

## High Praise for ETC

In November 1999, a study team from German Technical Cooperation [G.T.Z.-official development assistance from the German government] visited the ETC rural project area to look at our work and see what they could learn from it to apply to their work in Nepal. The Team Leader, Charlotte Addy, wrote to ETC after the trip:

"It is our pleasure to thank you for your time during the study visit in Nuwakot district. The activities you have initiated are wonderful. The community has

internalized its role. They are real social leaders because they have been successful in bringing about positive social change to improve their lives. The school support program, leader farmer training, and activities for the Poorest of the Poor have mobilized community people. We have learned many things from this study tour. Some of the activities we may introduce in our own project area."

## Women's Day

ETC's Women's Day celebrations this year took the form of several smaller gatherings, involving about 3,000 people, rather than the usual large celebration. The women this year took the organization of the celebrations into their own hands, making arrangements independently of ETC. As they have in the past, women sang and shared words of encouragement.

Thanks to those of you who sent in messages for the banner message book. The book is now housed in a community

library, and is treasured as a reminder of your support.

Some samples of messages sent by supporters:

*"You are powerful, beautiful, and deserve to be respected and heard. Grano a grano, se Llena el buche la gallina. (Grain by grain the chicken fills its crop.) Best wishes."*

*"An educated woman honors herself, her family, and the world. Good luck to you all!"*

*"Women can make a big difference in their families and communities. Keep up your good work!"*

## From the Executive Director Linda Farthing- News from Nepal

Every time I go to Nepal, a few incidents or people stand out for me as representing ETC's work and the impact it has. This trip it was those delightful nursery and kindergarten children at Gayandaya School who greeted me with a sweet 'namaste' and flowers. These four and five year olds, who have the chance to go to a stimulating and attractive pre-school program because of the untiring dedication of their headmaster (principal) working in coordination with ETC, demonstrated for me how crucial strong partnerships and local contribution are to our success.

"We can't do a school project without three elements," Freema Hillman told me in the midst of a two week teacher training. "We must have the headmaster, the teachers and the School Management Committee all committed. Otherwise it just won't work." Nepal Director Mira Rana absolutely agrees, and before ETC undertakes any work in a school, a careful assessment is made of how much those in the school community are willing to give to improve their school. And they have to give a lot: local materials to help with building, their time to carry out the improvements, and for teachers, their time to attend training during school holidays.



ETC's Executive Director, Linda Farthing, is welcomed to Gyandaya school in Kathmandu

I was so impressed by Gyandaya School, which has 1550 students, that I spent over an hour interviewing the headmaster, Dhanjuya Sharma, with the able assistance of ETC's new Education Director, Laxmi Bashukala. Mr. Sharma attributes the school's success in part to the pre-primary program ETC supports. "We began a small pre-primary program 12 years ago in order to reduce the number of children of different ages in Class 1," he says. "Once the ETC supported program began 3 years ago, parent interest grew and led us to expand the number of classrooms to 7. Twelve years ago, only 20% of our students passed the SLC, now the children who participated in the first pre-primary program are beginning to take the SLC. Our pass rate climbed last year to 95% and this year to 98%." This rate is unheard of in government schools in Nepal.

Saraswoti Shubha (whose name refers to the Hindu goddess of learning), works as a nursery school teacher at Gyanadaya, and has received training through ETC. "Before ETC," she says, "I didn't know how to teach. I just taught the children numbers and letters. A lot of the time, children were crying because they were away from their families. That doesn't happen any more. Now I know how to teach the children through play. I have learned how to draw the shyer children out as well, which I couldn't do before. The children are much happier and I am enjoying teaching much more now."

At our new, urban school project in Bal Bewasahi school, the commitment of staff and parents is clear. ETC is assisting in building classrooms so that each class has its own space. The amount ETC donated for construction costs has been matched by a community contribution - from the parents, teachers and local people. Twenty percent of the children at this school work, mostly in local carpet factories.

Another person who caught my attention was Usha Baniya, known by ETC staff as 'the spice lady'. She is part of the Pragya Women's Group which is now doing Advanced Literacy. Usha took a loan from her women's group to start her own business. She told me, "I am very pleased with income generation through spices. It didn't need a lot of investment and I can work at home, which is much easier for me. I sell everywhere but mostly within my women's group and to my neighbors. These past two years with ETC have brought a lot of changes in my life. Now I can read and write. Before I didn't have any idea how to do business but I got training and can run a small business now.

*(continued on page 4)*

### ETC's Children Grow Up!

Of our 67 privately sponsored children, seven have this year completed class ten and taken the SLC (School Leaving Certificate) exam. They are now working with Chitra Gurung, our new Education Coordinator (see page 7 "Nepal Staff News), to design appropriate plans for their futures. Other ETC-sponsored young people have trained to become chefs, nurses, Buddhist nuns, teachers, policemen, and to work in the tourism industry. ETC sponsors continue to support the young people during their training. Eleven of the 64 sponsored children are currently attending post-SLC training, and others have already 'graduated' from ETC's support and are now successfully supporting themselves.

Uma is training to be a teacher

Kabindra is studying to become an Engineer

#### News from Nepal (continued from page 3)

The courses I took through ETC gave me confidence. Now I want more literacy classes - focused on business skills. I could become even more confident and do my business better."

ETC's staff has grown from 11 to 19 since my visit last spring. I am very pleased with the dedication, ability and enthusiasm of the new staff. Under Mira Rana's capable leadership, the program is going from strength to strength. An example is found in the new health education program - something we have wanted to do for years but lacked the necessary trained staff. Ishwori Thakuri, one of our higher study scholarship students who became a nurse, provided health education training to two Community Medical Assistants, whose education was also paid through ETC. They have conducted health training during the past year with 41 rural women's groups and 22 rural schools. Next year we plan to carry out the program with the remaining 31 groups and 21 schools.

Usha Baniya, 'the spice lady', whose loan from her women's group enabled her to start a small spice-selling business

We are also gradually and steadily working ourselves out of a job in our current rural area. While women's groups continue to spring up like mushrooms after rain, with 79 groups currently in

operation, the new groups are all under the direction of the local Women's Management Committees. The Committees are forming themselves into cooperatives, so that they can continue their work in the area long after ETC has gone. We are also working hard to strengthen local non-governmental organizations to fill our shoes. A sign for me that this process is well underway was walking into Mira's office one day to find a rural secondary school teacher, whom I interviewed last year, sitting in her office with a document in his hand. "This is a project the teachers at my school have written to strengthen our school," he explained. "It was our own idea, but ETC is helping us write it properly so that it has a good chance of getting funding from one of

#### Communicating with the child you sponsor . . .

Sending letters, photos, and gifts to Nepal is becoming increasingly popular among ETC sponsors. Please remember to send all such items through our US office, and do not include your address on any letters. (Direct communication often leads to sponsors being solicited by the children, and can lead to misunderstandings.)

*Private Sponsors:* Feel free to send letters and photos. Small inexpensive gifts are also fine, but packages should be no larger than half a shoebox in size.

*Community Sponsors:* Any gifts sent should be of use to the entire class — magic markers, world maps, or stickers, for example. Photos and simple letters in easy English can be sent to the sponsored child, but it is unlikely that you will receive a response. As is the case for private sponsors, any packages should be not larger than half a shoebox in size.

# A Sponsor's Story . . .

## Phillip and Yvonne's Story:

When we were in Nepal for the first time in 1992, we met Pamela Carson (ETC's founder) by chance in a restaurant in Kathmandu. She told us about ETC and that same day, we became sponsors and have never regretted it! We have received many letters from Chanda during the last 7 years and we can see the excellent progress she has made.

When we decided that we would come to Nepal again, we got really nervous about seeing Chanda. We met her the first day we were here; she came to the airport to pick us up with a string of flowers! We saw her frequently during our stay. As it turned out, we shouldn't have been nervous at all. Chanda and her whole family welcomed us very warmly. They invited us several times for dinner; her sister even knitted a pullover for each of us! Tomorrow is a big festival here in Nepal where the whole family gathers together. We are invited. That makes us really happy. In a way, it feels like having our own family in Nepal!

We want to thank ETC and also Sajani for all the effort for Chanda. We really hope, no, we are sure, that Chanda will do well in the following years! And of course, we'll continue sponsoring her until she is a Chartered Accountant or whatever she wants to become!!

Philip Senn &



Yvonne and Chanda in Nepal

## Chanda's Story:

Hello everybody,

I am one of the lucky E.T.C. children, Chanda. I am getting ETC support from grade 4. Before that, I was living in Narayanghad and studying in a local school. But after my father death, we had lots of problems. Since there were no one to help us, we came to Kathmandu and my family decided to stay here. But still we had problems and one of my far relative grandmother took me to her brother home to help, doing housework. I was very young about 8-9 years. Through her, after few days, I came to meet her brother Rajendra Shrestha who works in Barja hotel. He is a very kind man, seeing our problem, he brought me to the Barja hotel. There I met Pamela Mama and Kiran Uncle (*note: Kiran Tewari was ETC's Nepal Director at the time*). I still remember that Pamela Mama took my photograph and Kiran Uncle took me shopping. Then after certain days, Rajendra Uncle took me to a restaurant. There I met my sponsors Phillip and Yvonne.

The next day Kiran Uncle took me to Holy Garden School. I was admitted in grade four. Since I was studying in a local school, I didn't know any English. That year was very difficult for me. I still remember that I worked very hard. I was carrying books all the time. Still I failed three subjects on my preliminary exam. But on final exam, I passed in all subject. All the teachers were very happy. They encouraged me, and I secured 2nd position in class. Now I feel if we work hard and sincere to our work, we can have success.

I was shifted to Serene Valley school in grade eight. When I was in Holy Garden, I always concentrated on my

(Continued on page 6)

***Tell Us Your Story!***  
We'd love to hear how being a sponsor has affected your life, and what it means to you. Write to us and let us know!

## Major Gifts Campaign

ETC's first ever Major Gift Campaign is approaching the end of its first of three years — and, thanks to a generous gift from **Elaine Epstein** and **Jim Krachey** (representing 12% of our total goal), is now well over the halfway mark. This is the third gift of this size to the campaign. "Our gift is in honor of Pamela Carson (ETC's founder) and the terrific work that she's accomplished in Nepal since we were with her in Nepal in the beginning, over a decade ago", says Elaine. She adds that "this gift is made with the utmost confidence about ETC's future growth and expansion". A big thanks to Elaine and Jim. The campaign goal is \$200,000, and is in support of ETC's expansion and further professionalization.

## ETC Board Expands

To better integrate the organization, the Educate the Children Board of Directors decided, at a January retreat, to expand to incorporate ETC advisors and long term supporters. The new Board will meet twice a year. In between, it will keep in contact

by email, phone and FAX. The Executive Committee will meet at least four times a year and will ensure that all ETC Board members have the opportunity to comment on decisions facing the organization. The new expanded Board will add the following people: **Barbara Cook**, **Freema Hillman** (both long term advisors, volunteers and supporters of ETC); **Pamela Carson** (ETC founder and former Executive Director); **Phyllis Wynn** (supporter and volunteer from Wilmington, Delaware); and **Berniece Patterson** (supporter and volunteer from Moraga, California). Welcome to everyone!

New Board members (clockwise from upper left): Phyllis Wynn, Barbara Cook, Freema Hillman, Pamela Carson, and Berniece Patterson.

## ETC Goes on the Road! You Can Too!

In January 2000, **Lin Appleton** did a presentation at the library in Cos Cob, Connecticut, about Nepal and ETC's work, using pictures from ETC's travelling picture display board. The display board, which has laminated pictures and text about ETC's work, can be easily set up on a table in a church hall or club social space and does a good job of telling ETC's story. As the pictures are attached with velcro, we can easily tailor it to meet your group's interests - children or women - or to provide an overall picture of ETC.

**Berniece Patterson** recently showed the ETC slide show to the Orinda Women's Club. The slide show is available for loan and can easily be sent to you with a full script, as well as instructions and suggestions on how to give it. Please let us know if you are interested in either of these as well as the usual brochures, newsletters, annual reports and so on. Many congregations provide opportunities for members to do presentations on interesting organizations and work. We have had considerable success and interest in doing these in Ithaca and Boston; why not consider approaching your Church/Synagogue about doing a presentation? Just call the ETC office. If you are located somewhere close to us or somewhere we are going, we will try to arrange to help out! Just let us know!

### *Chanda's Story* (continued from page 5)

study. I didn't play very much. But in Serene Valley I took part in different activities and sports. I got many medals, certificates and a cup in different games and activities. I gave S.L.C. exam in 1999 and passed in 1st division but still I didn't get the marks that I was hoping. After S.L.C. result, I was very confused about what should I study. I was thinking of studying medicine but suddenly my mind changed and now I am taking Management. I am working hard on my study.

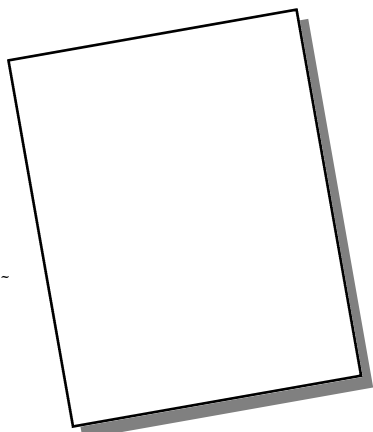
I am also very lucky to have sponsors like Philip, Yvonne and Kazu. (note: Kazu is Chanda's affectionate name for her other sponsor, Kazuyoshi Noguchi). Oh! This year, after such a long gap, i.e. seven years, my sponsors Philip and Yvonne came to visit me and two years before I met my other sponsor, Kazu. I was very excited to meet them. I was very happy that I could talk and explain them in English. Meeting with Uncle Kazu was just an hour but I spent nearly a month with Uncle Philip and Aunt Yvonne. I am very thankful because they are giving me such a nice opportunity. I have no words to thank them and say how wonderful they are.

I am also very happy with E.T.C. I am getting good education and other facilities. I still need E.T.C. help for few years more to complete my study. Then I will help E.T.C. I always want to help E.T.C. and others. I am really thankful and grateful towards E.T.C. because E.T.C. has provided me such a nice opportunity and has change my life completely. At last, I wish the progress of E.T.C. and pray with God to help E.T.C.

## The Gift of a Garden . . .

*Share a kitchen garden gift  
with someone for their birthday,  
anniversary, or graduation!*

The gift (\$25) includes a greeting card with a packet of Nepali saag (spinach) seeds, complete with planting instructions and a recipe for Nepal-style cooking preparation. The garden gift supports our kitchen gardening program in rural Nepal, improving the nutritional status of families.



## DHANYABHAD – THANK YOU...

Thank yous to:

- (belatedly) **Kelly Carragee**, former Program Coordinator, who left ETC to take a job in Rochester with Garth Fagan Dance Company. Kelly made a substantial contribution to ETC in many areas. We wish her every success in her new job!
- **John Paul**, departing board member, for his many years of insightful service
- **Sarah Pines**, who won the “Women of Excellence” award from the Tompkins County Foundation and donated the prize money to ETC for the sponsorship of a low-caste women’s group through our POP Program.
- **Richard Debrah**, computer programmer from the UK and Ghana, who has been helping us with various problematic machines!
- **Sandra Clifford**, who is completing her M.S. degree in Marketing Research from the University of Wisconsin, for her help in Nepal on developing community-based tourism through the rural women’s groups.
- **Leslie Eliet**, who helps out in our office for many hours every week, and is, in effect, another staff person! She’s invaluable and most recently has designed and painted a new ETC sign which will go on the outside of our building.
- **Aaron Pines**, another loyal weekly helper in the ETC office.
- **Aviva Wertkin**, an Ithaca College student, who has been volunteering with ETC.
- **Dick Gaulten** and the **Cornell Abroad** program for the donation of a computer monitor.
- Cornell students **Jill Wason** and **Young Chi-Yeung Fan**, who have been working on strengthening ETC’s web page.
- **Elizabeth Pearce**, who did research for ETC on bio gas.
- **Tika Gurung**, **Lydia Mikafui Mensah-Dartey**, **Ami Sengupta**, and **Jonathan Thompson**, Cornell grad students, who are working on a grant for the Teacher Training Center.
- **Les Goehner** of the Tompkins County Probation Department’s Community Service program, whose work crew has transformed our Ithaca office into a much more pleasant place. **Perfect Painters/Heritage Builders**, **Karen Knudson**, **Suzanne Cullen**, **Linda Farthing**, **Marc Albanese** all donated materials. None of it would have been possible without **Karen Knudson’s** coordination and **Ruth Dilger-Williams’** connections!
- **Lesley Finneran**, Cornell graduate student, who is coordinating the Curriculum project.
- **Joyce and Larry Tapper** for organizing a party in support of ETC at their Kathmandu hotel.
- Ithacan **David Booker**, who is conducting computer training for our Kathmandu staff.
- **Craig Gottlieb** and **Cystern’s Gorkha House** for their donations and pledge to give ETC one dollar for every Nepali knife sold. For high-quality genuine Gorkha knives, visit [www.cystern.com](http://www.cystern.com).

## Nepal Staff News

Welcome to **Chitra Gurung**, ETC’s new Education Coordinator. Chitra comes to us having taught at the primary and secondary levels for five years. She spent three years in a non-profit organization working with disabled children. Chitra has a Bachelors degree in Education and a Master’s degree in English. She will be working with the children in the Private Sponsorship Program.

Goodbye and many thanks to **Sajani Amatya**, former ETC Education Coordinator. Sajani was with ETC for seven years, and became a familiar friend and name to many of you. Sajani has moved on to start her own organization which will run a volunteer program in Nepal. She continues to be extremely active in social work circles . Good luck in your new endeavors, Sajani!

Goodbye to **Ganga Lamichhane**, former ETC Agricultural Officer, who has found a job closer to his home.



Executive Director: Linda Farthing  
Associate Director: Susanna Pearce  
Office Manager: Suzanne Cullen

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**Barbara Cook**, project administrator/  
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**Duane Diviney**, ESL teacher, Belle  
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**Tika Gurung, MA**, City and Regional  
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**Laurie Vasily, Ph.D.** candidate in  
Education, Cornell University

**Phyllis Wynn**, teacher and volunteer



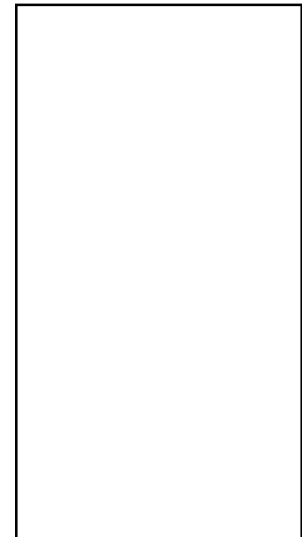
**Advisor to the Board**

**Ursula Ziebarth**, Professor, University  
of Bremen (retired); coordinator,  
Friends of ETC in Germany

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**A letter from Santi Maya Tamang, class 5,  
who studies in the rural project area through ETC's com-  
munity sponsorship program . . .**

*Dear Sponsor,  
I am fine here and wish you are  
also fine there. There is jungle and  
stream in my village. Thank you for  
helping us. How is your village? In  
my village there are mountains.  
Do your village have mountains?  
Today we had a picnic and  
played the drum and danced.  
- Santi Maya Tamang*



**Teacher Training Center** (continued from page 1)  
mandu valley. In the second year, the  
plan is to continue with in-service train-  
ing but also to develop long-term pre-  
service training programs for new teach-  
ers as well as the physical infrastructure  
for the Center.

ETC Board member, Barbara Cook, is en-  
thusiastic about this new partnership for

ETC. "So many Nepali educators were  
instrumental in the conception and devel-  
opmental stages of this project. None of  
this could have happened without them.  
We applaud all those who have worked  
so hard to make this contribution to im-  
proving education in Nepal."