



EDUCATE THE CHILDREN

Spring 1999

Major Gifts Campaign 1999... **ETC's Emerging Voices**

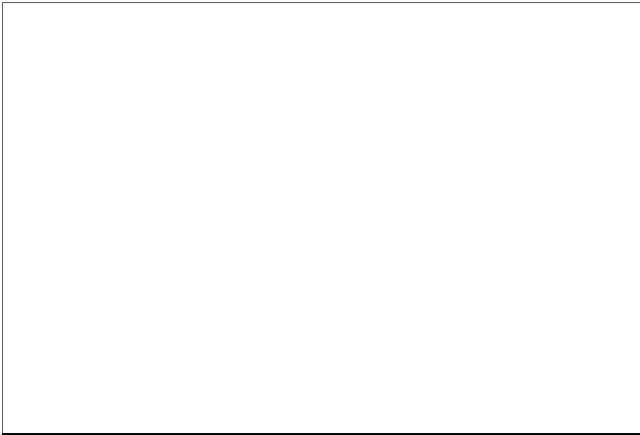
"Emerging Voices", Educate the Children's first ever major gifts campaign, with the ambitious goal of raising \$200,000, has just been launched. The funds are necessary for us to reach the next stage in the quality, scale, and comprehensiveness of our programs.

We now have an effective model for community development which has proven successful in 62 villages in Nepal. However, limited staff has meant that our coverage has not been complete in all of these villages. As well, our success to date has led new groups to form spontaneously and then request our services. We want to complete our commitment in these communities and then begin applying our successful strategies in other ones.

To accomplish this expansion in such a hilly region, where it takes staff several hours to travel on foot between villages, we need a satellite office, another agronomist and field assistants, and more women's program assistants. The number of public schools we work with has also expanded rapidly, meaning we need to invest more in basic infrastructure and teacher training. A planned program will train 150 local teachers as well as develop a model for other parts of Nepal, which sorely lacks primary teacher training.

Finally, the original core of ETC – the sponsorship program – is an increasingly costly and complex endeavor. We have not raised sponsors' fees, despite steady

increases in tuition. As the children get older, their background issues of abuse and neglect surface. Many need extra help in navigating the treacherous shoals of adolescence.



Berneice and Pat Patterson, of Moraga, CA, USA, ETC donors and sponsors of the Mahadev Women's Group, traveled to Nepal in March for the International Women's Day Celebration. They recently provided a lead gift of 10% of our goal for the Major Gifts

We have always relied primarily on individual donations. A breakthrough occurred in 1995 when ETC secured funding from an anonymous donor of \$130,000 over four years. We now turn once again to you, our sponsors and donors. You have made what we have accomplished possible, and we are confident that you will help us achieve even more.

For the Pattersons, their commitment to ETC has proven very satisfying: "We often feel that our charitable donations sort of disappear into a black

hole; that the impact is indiscernible. However, we feel personal involvement with ETC, and know that we are making a difference. We have been to the villages where ETC does its work; we have seen the incredible commitment of the volunteers and of the villagers themselves. These people are hungry for opportunity. They fully understand the importance of a quality education for their children, and are willing to do whatever it takes. Our contribution to ETC is much like a venture capital investment: we provide the financial wherewithal directly to the 'entrepreneurs', and we can see the progress with our own eyes. Our involvement with ETC is most personally rewarding, and that has been the 'return'

In mid-May we will be sending out a packet of information to all donors on the campaign and what it will accomplish. This will be followed up in June by a phone call from a Board member or a campaign volunteer. This is an opportunity to ask questions, make suggestions and be generous in your support of ETC. We look forward to talking with you!

External Evaluation Gives ETC Top Marks

Our confidence in our ability to nurture the seeds we have sown was bolstered in December by an external evaluation conducted by the respected Nepali organization, New ERA. They call ETC "one of the most effective international non-governmental organizations in Nepal." and go on to say, "With a relatively modest budget, the [ETC] program has been able to bring about significant changes in a relatively short period of time. ... ETC has earned tremendous trust and confidence of the people in the project area. They know

ETC does not promise big 'developments' but works in partnership with them in small things which help improve their lives and which they themselves can manage."

This is high praise indeed, and while we are proud of the work to date, we recognize that we have even greater challenges ahead. The enthusiasm of the people we work with and the commitment of our supporters provides inspiration to move ahead!

Women's Development Program

by Kelly Carragee

The Srijana Women's Management Committee, formed from members of eight women's groups last year, is increasingly poised to take over ETC's role in several capacities when our commitment in the area is complete. The Committee has already formed six new women's groups, and



This day care center in Manegaun is one of several cooperative endeavors started by women's group members

is administering nine literacy classes – six with funding from ETC, and three through their District Education Office. Says Asha Maya Tamang, treasurer, “We are now learning how to get resources from District Offices. We used to feel very insecure when we had to deal with any officials, but we don't any longer.”

The women have also built a day care center in Manegaun. Most parents work long hours in the fields each day, and younger children without older siblings to watch them are frequently left home alone. The center, which is open from 9:30 to 3 each day, currently cares for 22 children, aged 3-5. Parents pay only 20 rupies per month (about 30¢!).

The Committee has organized 115 women's group members, who are ready to register with the District Cooperative Office, so that they can get 2% loans to finance cooperative projects. Plans are in hand for a cooperative shop in Manegaun, and for a tourists' shop, and possibly a lodge, in Chapdada. As tourism through the region increases, it makes sense for the women to form enter-

prises which retain much of the control (and revenue) of the trekking traffic through their villages.

Kamala Lamichhane, a member of Samudyak Women's Group of Lahare Pauwa, was elected as a District Development Committee (DDC) representative for Rasuwa. The district encompasses about 40,000 people in 18 Village Development Committees. The DDC has 13 members; Kamala, who is 28, is the only woman who has ever achieved this distinction in the district. Nationwide, only 5 of 823 DDC representatives are women.

Kamala says, “The decision to run for political office was made in the women's group. We decided one of us should run, and I was chosen. The reason we thought it was important is that there is no women's leadership. Men make all the decisions. After literacy and group training, I realized that women were left out. Before, I was afraid to speak in front of people, but not anymore. Because I am there, we can put our problems in front of the DDC, and we can get a women's agenda. I am there fighting for women's rights.

“I feel very alone on the DDC. Sometimes the men will not listen to me. But I don't get discouraged, because I get support from my family and from my women's group. Many women are aware of the discrimination they

*“There are only 7 or 8 women [in Parliament] out of a total of 205. But I won't be discouraged; I plan to run for Member of Parliament.” -
Kamala Lamichhane,*

face, but they face a lot of constraints. They don't have time because of all the work they have to do. They don't have enough education to be able to act.

“The next level is Member of Parliament. There are only 7 or 8 women there out of a total of 205. But I won't be discouraged – I plan to run for MP.”

Women's Day 1999

For the third successive year, International Women's Day was celebrated in ETC's project areas. Twenty-five hundred women and children gathered in Phikuri VDC, Nuwakot District, to speak out about their experience and their commitment to gender equity. Ninety six solidarity and support messages from women around the world were displayed at the event, which was organized by Ambika Bhatta, Secretary of the Srijana Women's Management Committee.

In Rasuwa District, Santi Adhikari led a march of about 80 women's group members, carrying an ETC banner. They converged on the District Headquarters in Dhunche. Santi spoke about how much ETC has done for women, and questioned why the government hasn't done more. She said, “it was good to take a group of women there to show our strength.”

Women and Politics

In addition to Kamala's success (see left), ten women's group members have been elected to their Village Development Committees. This is a significant achievement in Nepal, where there are no female mayors, and less than 5% of high civil service posts are held by women. Increased political participation, in terms of both voting turnout and office-holding, is important in increasing women's status and voice in community decision-making.

From the Executive Director Linda Farthing– News from Nepal

March 8th in Satobato, Nepal had been a long and hot day, filled with stirring speeches on women's rights and international women's solidarity. As it was winding down and the approximately 2500 women participants were thinking about heading home to make supper for their families, a note was thrust into my hand. The carefully written words, signed by four women's groups in Dadagaun, pleaded with ETC to begin working with them. This written request, no mean feat for newly literate women, symbolized for me what I saw in ETC projects in Nepal this year – a deepening interest by more community members in joining our work. Many had adopted a 'wait and see' attitude as they were naturally cautious around outsiders or were simply too poor to risk one of their most precious resources – their time.

Our success, based on small careful steps to improve the conditions of people's lives, has changed that attitude significantly and the demand from the communities in and around the areas we work is growing. This demand takes many forms - from the note from the four newly-formed women's groups, to a man grumbling to me that he didn't understand why ETC focuses most of its work on women, to repeated requests that ETC stay in the area forever. One women's group member, Dahnu Maya Tamang, told me: "If ETC leaves, we will be like we were before. No one cared about us; now you have come and motivated us. It has made a huge difference in our communities. We are the stone and ETC is the cement. If we could have done it alone, we would have done it before."

The numbers back up the anecdotal evidence: last year ETC worked with 40 women's groups in all - now there are 57. Here lies our current challenge: we have awoken, through education and training, the realization in people that they can improve their lives; now the population is taking us up on our offer.

We have to respond to this demand within a timeframe which does not engender dependency. We feel that we should remain in the original five VDCs for an three more years, then largely shift out to new areas, while leaving behind enough support
(Continued on page 4)



Linda Farthing and Nepal Director Mira Rana with program participants and staff at the 1999 Women's Day Celebration in Satobato

Agriculture Program Update

ETC's new sustainable agriculture program, conceived by Board advisor Ursula Ziebarth and Nepal Director, Mira Rana and designed by Dr. Sunil Wagley, was implemented last May, and is proving to be a modest success. The program emphasizes low-tech, low-cost, nature-based agricultural practices, which mesh well with local conditions and farming practices. It helps farmers increase their productivity without relying on chemicals.

According to agronomist Ganga Lamichhane, "The first step was to expose people to different kinds of vegetables – kohlrabi, broccoli, improved tomatoes, lettuce, and zucchini. We provided seeds and seedlings to 15 leader farmers and women's group members. We provided drip irrigation packages and plastic tunneling (for year-round seedling cultivation)."

So far, 150 farmers have participated in seasonal vegetable cultivation training. ETC plans to train 150 more. Follow-up will be done with the leader farmers, who will in turn work with their peers in reinforcing sustainable agriculture practices. One of these leader farmers is Serjung Tamang,

a member of Mahadev Women's Group in Phikuri. She grows vegetables and maize on her small, dry plot of land. "I have learned a lot from the ETC training. What I have learned I will be able to express to my neighbors in my own way, which may be different from the ETC way, but they will understand."

As well as increasing variety and nutrition in local diets, the project intends to increase incomes through small-scale commercial farming. The first priority is vegetable production – broccoli, cauliflower, and tomatoes – for sale in Betrawati and Trisuli Bazar, the regional roadhead and marketplace (which, because of recent road improvements, is now only 3 ½ hours from Kathmandu).

Says Ganga, "It is important to recognize the skills which these farmers already have, and to build on them by providing training in improved, inexpensive, and simple techniques. It is very important to understand what their priorities are in cultivation, for example, in terms of taste or storage qualities. So far the response is very positive. We are making small steps, and they are well received."

Sponsored Children

Director Linda Farthing had a chance to meet with many of the ETC sponsored children while she was in Nepal. She was impressed by their energy and good spirits.

Linda spoke with **Dilip Mandal**, who is 14 and in grade 5 at Zenith School. Despite not having started school until age 10, he is in First Division in Math and Science, and has skipped a grade. He wants to be a pilot, "because I want to travel all over the world." His sponsor, **Desre Buirski** of South Africa, visits him almost every year.

Mingma Sherpa is 19; sponsored by **Mara Winningham** of Iowa since 1995, Mingma is now a college student studying Social Service. She says, "ETC has given me the chance to study. It also helped me when I had to have an operation. Because of my experience with ETC, I feel a commitment to help others, and want to dedicate myself to social work."

Other students have been similarly inspired by their experience with ETC to seek careers in the helping professions; **Dolma Lama**, who is sponsored by **Dr. Theresa Brennan**, is 16 and enrolled at Dorji School. [cont'd on p. 5]

News from Nepal

(Continued from page 3)

to complete outstanding projects, provide backup to women's groups in carrying out their own initiatives, and continue to support local organizations when they falter. We are now seeing the development of the resources needed to accomplish this. "ETC has helped me enormously," Gyatri Lamichhami, a high-school scholarship recipient, told me, "so now I want to help ETC by volunteering my time. I am learning a lot about how to start groups, support them and assist women in benefiting from participation."

This spirit was also evident among many of the sponsored children I spoke with. Tara Giri is a 12 year old girl who sold flowers before she was connected with ETC at a 1993 conference for street children. Now she excels in science and math, and likes to write stories. "I want to be a doctor because I want to help poor people like my family. I have had the opportunity to develop myself because of the help of ETC and my sponsor."

With the newly formed urban women's groups, this kind of commitment is also much in evidence. It is not easy for women

"We are the stone and ETC is the cement. If we could have done it ourselves, we would have done it before."

- ETC program participant

to find two hours a day, six days a week for six months to learn to read and write, but the women in the two groups I visited were determined. Their enthusiasm was contagious. They are so proud of what they have accomplished. Santo Maro, one group's treasurer, told me, "I went to the bank to make a deposit for our group and they told me I had to make a photocopy of something. I didn't really know what a photocopy was, but I saw a sign with a "ph" in it and went in and handed them my paper. The man just took it from me and made the copy. I felt so proud that I had figured this out by myself."

At Gyanodhaya School last year, enthusiasm seemed to be all the teachers and principal had, standing out in sharp contrast to the dismal surroundings. This year, the transformation is startling. The bright and decorated classrooms, filled with educational materials and friendly



Dahnu Maya Tamang, of Thandapani village, belongs to Chisopani Deurali Women's Group. She says, "I learned a lot from my women's group. I took literacy and no one can take that away from

children, and on the outside a beautiful new mural. "The smallest children don't cry anymore when they are left at school", a teacher explained. "They love coming to school because they really enjoy it here."

In many ways, Women's Day is an annual culmination of our work. The inevitable high spirits such an event engenders were particularly special this year because we were lucky to have participants, staff, donors and volunteers all together at the same time. Berneice and Pat Patterson, Diane Mailey from the State of the World Forum (who had been invited by the Pattersons), Gudrun Holstermann and Alexander Wolff of Friends of Germany all made the trip. "It was so interesting to see the program after reading and hearing so much about it," said Alexander Wolff. "I was really impressed with how hard everyone is working – staff, volunteers and participants alike – to make life better for everyone here." Thanks to you all for joining us in Nepal and sharing your perspectives with us!

Kippenberg Project Awarded National Prize

by Linda Farthing

In early March, a national prize for the best school project promoting democratic action was presented to Kippenberg Gymnasium in Bremen, Germany, for the Nepal development education and fundraising project initiated by Dr. Gudrun Holstermann. Gudrun, who was in Nepal visiting the ETC projects Kippenberg supports when the award was announced, was absolutely thrilled. "I can't believe it," she said. "It is such an honor."

The prize is the culmination of the dedication that Gudrun has shown to the task of educating students at her own children's wealthy suburban high school about the realities of life in a low-income country like Nepal. "These children have such a high standard of living that I really felt that they should know something about life in the Third World," Gudrun explained to me in Kathmandu. "I have always been very interested in social issues in poor countries, but before, my exposure has always been as a tourist. As a family, we have travelled to both Africa and Mexico."



Gudrun in a picture taken outside Nilkanta High School during her recent trip to Nepal.

At first, initiative and responsibility for the project in Kippenberg rested almost entirely on Gudrun's shoulders. "Through a friend in Munich, I heard of Ursula Ziebarth (Friends of Germany), and she was very enthusiastic about my idea. I read a lot about Nepal and then started doing presentations in the school using her slides. This awakened interest in ten teachers who wanted to participate. In the lower classes, students learn about life in the villages, and in the higher grades, students discuss the problems involved in rural development."

After she visited Nepal in 1997, the interest at Kippenberg really grew. "For the first time, parents were interested in the project too. There is now a big group which works on the project each year - at least 30 committed students. There is a big bulletin board in the school, which always generates a lot of interest. Next year a teacher will go to Nepal to learn more about the ETC project." Fundraising is carried out through bazaars, concerts and general donations. "My favorite donation came from a sixth grade boy who said that although he didn't get a lot of pocket money compared to his classmates, he knew that it would do far more in Nepal than it would for him, and he wanted the project to have it."

This was Gudrun's second trip to Nepal to see the scholarship recipients and school infrastructure improvements supported by Kippenberg students and their families at Nilkantha and Gyan Jyoti High Schools. "The first time I came, it was both physically and psychologically exhausting because it was so different, and the needs were so great. But I remember that Mira [the program director] told me to take advantage of being here, of not being a tourist, because I had the chance to live as people do here. I realized how true her words were - when I returned home, I was affected in the deepest part of myself by the experience of being involved in this work in Nepal."

Although Gudrun has been asked to help set up a similar project in three other schools, for now she feels that doing the work well at Kippenberg is as much as she can undertake. However, school projects like Kippenberg are very much on the current ETC agenda. We have had a donation from children at Overton School in Hampshire, England; interest from a schoolteacher and supporter in Austria; and in Ithaca, we are currently exploring a project to teach in area schools about development issues and Nepal. Gudrun Holstermann's highly successful initiative, which has benefited children in both Nepal and Germany, has led the way for ETC to expand in this area. For Gudrun, "Education is the key issue, both in Nepal and for children in wealthy countries. For me, the sign outside Aiselu School in the ETC program area says it all: 'Education is the foundation of life.'"

Sponsored Children

[cont'd from p. 4]

Last year, Dolma was suffering from severe depression and headaches. ETC paid for her psychiatric care and medication, and she is in much better spirits now. She says, "I want to be a social worker. Others have helped me, and I want to help others."

*There are currently 12 ETC-sponsored kids at Serene Valley School; they have really thrived there. However, the school is giving up its boarding facilities in July, as they are too expensive to maintain. The younger children will be moved to Maitri Shishu, an excellent Buddhist school at which there are currently 10 ETC-sponsored students. But for the 3 students in grade 9, **Dinesh Bikram Lama, Sunita Chhetri, and Neeta Lama**, it has been arranged that they will complete their studies at SVS. All are topnotch students who are expected to do well on the SLC exam.*

*At Maitri Shishu, the students are busy preparing for Parents' Day. **Enam Gurung** and **Binod Tamang** will act in "Hansel and Gretel," and **Samjhana Karki, Bikash Tamang** and **Tashi Tsomo** will dance and act.*

Giving Notes

To launch our Major Gifts Campaign, we are having parties in Ithaca and Boston. The Boston event was on May 2, and the Ithaca party is May 16, from 4-7 p.m. at the First Congregational Church in Cayuga Heights. Featured are Nepali food and music, and a slideshow of ETC's projects. Nearby supporters all received invitations, but if you live a little farther away, and still want to come to the Ithaca event, let us know! Other events are tentatively planned for New York City, Hyannisport, MA, and the Bay Area in the fall. If you are interested in hosting an ETC fundraiser, please let us know.

Pamela Carson will be speaking at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Wilmington, Delaware on June 20 and at the UU Arlington St. Church in Boston on August 15th.

We have received \$1500 from sales of **Michelle Meno's** sweaters in the Norm Thompson catalog. Norm Thompson had generously agreed to donate \$5 per sweater for ETC literacy programs for the knitters. The catalog may order another sweater from Michelle's fall line; to order a catalog, call (800) 547-1160.

Barbara Cook: ETC's Dynamo

by Linda Farthing

In 1992, Barbara Cook met a woman in Bangkok who was on her way to deal almost singlehandedly with 100 children in Nepal. About 60 of these children had been inherited in one fell swoop from a sponsorship organization that had suddenly found itself in difficulties. That woman was Pamela Carson, founder of ETC, and when Barbara agreed to pitch in, little did she realize what was in store for her. Seven years later, she is still centrally involved in ETC.

"Once I learned what was needed in ETC, I realized that I could make a real contribution to these children's lives. It was a real struggle financially at the beginning, and I did everything that was needed," she explains, seated in her hotel room at the Kathmandu Guest House, where she lives six months a year creating her unusual, beautiful jewellery and working with ETC.



Barbara Cook, surrounded by ETC program participants, at the International Women's Day celebration in 1997

Barbara's path to ETC began in 1989 when she decided that there was more to life than the financial bottom line. She had a comfortable professional position at the University of Miami, which had sent her on trips to both East Africa and Peru. "I would sit in my office and watch the barges coming up the Miami River and wonder where they came from. One day the temptation got too great, and I left. I first went back to Peru and worked in a rural health clinic on an island in Lake Titicaca. By then I was hooked on travel - I went back to the US for a few months and then headed to China, Southeast Asia. Later I spent six months working at Mother Theresa's leprosy center outside of Delhi.

"I realized that I didn't want to go back to a structured job. Earlier in my life, I had worked as a jeweller but had given it up because of the rise in silver prices. I really loved doing it, though, and when I came to Nepal, after trekking everywhere, I began studying with a Nepali jeweller in Patan. Through him, I found kids who weren't going to school and I started sponsoring them and getting friends to help. There were seven in all. Through a mutual Nepali friend, I heard about Pamela and the 100 kids she suddenly had. He encouraged me not to start my own organization but to collaborate with her."

That contact led to the meeting in Bangkok, and if Barbara had not decided to join forces with the fledgling organization it most definitely would not have become the viable organization it is today in such a short time span. Barbara's energy and commitment has always encompassed doing everything for ETC that it needed. Currently she assists with donor visits to the projects, provides backup to international volunteers, promoting ETC through international agencies and businesses in Kathmandu, supports office staff with everything from book distribution to getting a renewal on ETC's contract with the Nepali

Women's Day Banner

"All 96 of your letters and words of encouragement were prominently displayed; some were read aloud. There were messages from the U.S., Canada, Germany, Israel, Romania and Nepal. They were a touching show of solidarity and love, and very much appreciated by these women who normally receive so little recognition. I felt very proud to be able to represent you in person in this remote Nepali village."

-Freema Hillman, in a letter to Banner participants

(Continued from page 6)

government, and fundraises in the U.S. Many of the wonderful photographs we have of ETC's work are Barbara's, and she has spent more time in the rural project area than any other foreigner. In 1997, her contribution received public recognition when she was given a U.S. Embassy award as a "Prominent American in Nepal".

"When I think about how difficult it was, how much Pamela and I scrambled in those early years, and then I look at how much our programs and staff do today and how well they do it, I have a great sense of pride and satisfaction in what we have built," she says.

She is the key mover behind the Teachers Training Program, which she is hoping will become a reality over the next year. "There is virtually no teachers' training in Nepal, and what we have done in this area, spearheaded by Freema Hillman's efforts, promises to make a real contribution to education in this country. ETC can have an impact far beyond its size with this project."

To say Barbara has been indispensable is an understatement. Whenever something "must" be done, she is there and willing to do it. When I go to Nepal, I am impressed by her drive and hard work, refreshingly balanced with good humor and a sense of fun. Early in the morning or late at night, she is always willing to listen and give me good suggestions. This

DHANYABAD – THANK YOU...

- Thanks to Dr. Freda Rebelsky for loaning her Newton Centre home for the Boston fundraising party, to Myrna Balk and Shirley Katz for coordinating it, and to all the Boston area volunteers who helped.
- Thanks to Karen Knudson for all her support and assistance with the Ithaca fundraising party.
- Thanks to Ithaca staff Kelly Carragee and Suzanne Cullen who do so much to keep ETC going day in and day out. Congratulations to Suzanne on her new granddaughter!
- Thanks Cornell graduate students Crissy Guerrero, Nyaneba Nkrumah, Dan Sandoval, Dia Mohan, Caroline Stem and Eduardo Sabio, who through an arrangement made with their professor, Dr. Nancy Grudens-Schuck, carried out research for us last fall.
- Thank you to our landlord, Marc Albanese, who kindly allowed us to store Nepal Crafts inventory free of charge for a year!
- Thank you Tenet Computer, located in the same building as ETC, and have provided us countless hours of computer support and advice.
- Thank you Bryan Marler who helped us enormously with the new laptop for Nepal, and provided a superduper bumpy-road-proof case for it.
- Thank you, Joyce and Larry Tapper, for all your help to ETC when you were in Nepal and since you have returned.
- Thank you Margo Hittleman for useful advice about donor relations.
- Thank you Cassandra George and Dave Dunlop, fundraisers extraordinaire, who provided fundraising training to Board, staff and volunteers.
- Thanks to the volunteers who worked in Nepal from February to April, 1999: Chris Robert, at the Dipendra Police School, Tracey Powers, at Bal Bikash School, and Anton Vahcic, at Maitri Shishu School., and Rachel Rogers for the mural at Gyanodhaya and countless other tasks.
- Thank you to Pamela Carson for all she continues to do for ETC including assisting at the Boston party. Pamela travels to Japan in May where she will be visiting with ETC's Friends in Japan.

Nepal Staff News

Raju Dhamala, Finance Officer in Nepal, and his wife, welcomed a baby daughter in February. Congratulations!

Mira Rana, who has been Women's Program Director since 1994, has been promoted to Nepal Director of ETC. Mira will come to the U.S. in October as Berneice and Pat Patterson have generously offered to sponsor her attendance at the prestigious State of the World Forum in San Francisco. Afterwards, she will come to Ithaca to meet with the ETC Board. We are thrilled she is coming!

We are saddened that **Jamuna Devi Lama**, who was hired as Education Officer in April 1998, has had to resign due to ill health. We send her our warmest get well wishes and will miss her.

ETC welcomes Mr. **Laxmi Baukala** to the Education Director position. He comes to us with a strong background as a teacher, teacher trainer and program administrator.

Jyoti Upreti, Women's Program Field Assistant, has been promoted to Field Coordinator.



P.O. Box 414
Ithaca, NY 14851-0414

Phone: 607-272-1176
Fax: 607-275-0932
Email: info@etc-nepal.org

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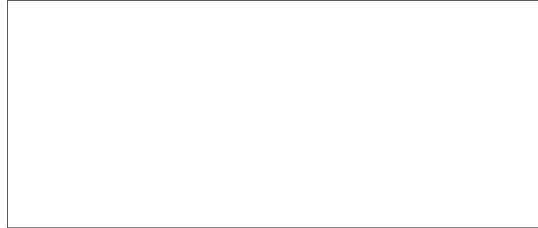
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ETC Volunteer Spearheads Mural Project

by Rachel Rogers

In 1997, I was fortunate to spend two extremely rewarding months working with ETC. Ever since, I had been thinking of how I could return to work with the wonderful ETC staff and students. A year later, I was inspired by photographs of a Chilean educational mural, and proposed to do a similar project for ETC in Kathmandu. With funding for paint supplies from my friend Katie Kitchen, I was once again on my way to Nepal.

Freema Hillman and the Nepal staff helped choose the best spot - Gyanodhaya School, where the mural would complement the new, model shishu (kindergarten) program established there by ETC last year. One goal was to brighten a dreary space. More importantly, we wanted to promote education through art, and to provide a training ground for a local artist or artists, who would then propagate this format in Nepal. We were fortunate to enlist the help of an extremely talented young man, 19-year-old J/K House family member [J/K Houses are orphanages run by the Nepal Youth Opportunity Foundation] and ETC friend Rajendra Aistropé, an art student and art teacher who perfected the final design and implementation.

Two 23-meter walls at Gyanodaya provided secure, off-street wall space for planning maintainable murals. One wall, in the Nursery/KG area, warranted a simple theme of indigenous plants and flowers, butterflies and snails. For the other wall, facing the main courtyard where 1,800 students gather for assembly each morning, we adopted an environmental theme, based on a popular Nepali slogan: "Clean Water, Healthy Life." Rajendra commissioned his students to help design the mural to show ways of eradicating pollution. From the initial sketches, he painted a watercolor rendering that we then transferred (aided by 600 "helpful" little observers between classes!) to the wall. A paint-by-numbers scheme enabled as many students and teachers as possible to participate in the actual painting. A master calligrapher, recruited by Rajendra, labeled the flowers and inscribed the water slogan in perfect Nepali characters.

What was once a dingy school courtyard has been brought to life by images of clean water flowing from high mountains, through hill villages and terraces, past everyday scenes and objects in Nepali life, all the way to Kathmandu. Rajendra said this project was "one of the most gratifying, educational, fun experiences" he has ever had. I could not agree more.



Rajendra in front of his mural creation at Gyanodaya School in Kathmandu