

## Teaching in Remote Areas

Teachers in rural Nepal, where [Educate the Children](#) works, are disadvantaged in many ways. They are often undereducated themselves. They are usually paid poorly, particularly in public (government) schools. They routinely suffer from lack of adequate classroom furniture and supplies. Most have few or no professional development opportunities, and tend to be isolated from peers other than those at their own schools.

These conditions exist in many other countries worldwide, and can be demotivating and counterproductive for students and teachers alike.

Fortunately, many of these problems can be overcome with a bit of goodwill and creativity, and of course with a (relatively modest!) amount of funding. Here's how [ETC](#) is doing it:

**Problem:** Physical isolation is a common situation for rural teachers. For example, [ETC](#) is presently working at 30 schools with 216 teachers, scattered over many square kilometers of mountainous terrain that has very few roads. Many of these teachers have no realistic chance of meeting, let alone benefiting from an ongoing professional relationship with, the majority of their peers. There is also a lack of communication resources (specifically internet/e-mail) to help overcome the physical isolation.

**Solution:** [ETC](#) offers multi-day, subject-based training workshops for dozens of teachers every year. Teachers not only learn how to present the material to their students in age-appropriate and effective ways, but also benefit from the ability to exchange ideas with their peers and learn from one another. We also launched and continue to support an early childhood education teachers' network, which meets quarterly. Members learn about best practices in classroom management and working with the youngest students, share their successes and challenges with peers from other schools, and brainstorm ideas to help them do their jobs more effectively.

**Problem:** Educational materials for the classroom are hard to come by in the first place, and are difficult to replace when they eventually wear out. This is due to cost considerations as well as the lack of nearby suppliers of ready-made educational materials.

**Solution:** [ETC](#) purchases and delivers useful hands-on learning items such as puzzles and educational games, teacher guidelines books about effective classroom management and pedagogical methods, and some higher-end items such as laptops. We also offer training workshops on classroom materials development, at which participating teachers learn to make useful classroom items out of things that are readily available to them and are free or nearly free: fabric scraps, extra paper, bamboo, dried beans, etc.

**Problem:** Look at the accompanying photo of the kindergarten classroom with a few straw mats and a white board. Who, teacher or student, can do their best in an environment almost completely devoid of useful resources, comfort, and visual appeal?

**Solution:** Relatively inexpensive cosmetic changes such as paint or carpeting can go a long way to improving the classroom environment. Child-sized furniture and storage shelves are also helpful and appreciated. [ETC](#)'s materials development training workshops also include suggestions for attractive and useful wall display items, such as birthday charts, alphabet and number posters, and origami or mosaic designs. Sometimes the need is related to structural considerations, such as wall plastering or roof repair; this work can be accomplished at relatively low cost and using local labor.

Facing all of these challenges and more, rural teachers still want to do their best by their students, and they also want to take pride and pleasure in doing their jobs. [ETC](#) is committed to helping them do both. For more information about our educational work in Nepal, please watch this [short video](#).

[Photos by Rajanee Kunwar and Lisa Lyons, [ETC](#)]

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*[Educate the Children](#)'s mission is to work with women and children in Nepal to improve health, welfare, and self-sufficiency by building skills that families can pass down to later generations. Through our children's education, women's empowerment, and sustainable agriculture programs, we provide training and resources to help thousands of marginalized and impoverished people make better lives for themselves. For more information about [ETC](#)'s work, please [click here](#) to visit our YouTube channel.*