



ETC

Phase-out planned for current areas

"We are so pleased that ETC has started working with us," says Kaanchi Ramtel of Godavari. "We look forward to better times for ourselves and our children with ETC's help."

ETC recently started work in a new program area in Godavari Village Development Committee (VDC), in the Kathmandu Valley just southeast of Kathmandu. The program in Godavari is continuing ETC's practice of working through women's groups and schools to enable communities to pursue their own goals and achieve lasting change.

The population of Godavari VDC is mixed, with some relatively well off neighborhoods not far from communities of extremely poor Tamang immigrants and low-caste Hindus. ETC is working with the poorest people in the



"If you want to improve your status, you must unite and stick together like iron and a magnet." ETC's Nepal Director, Mira Rana, speaks with women about what they and ETC can accomplish together at an initial community meeting in the new program area.

area, who are often landless, and typically work in the local marble factory or beer factory. There the women earn Rs. 50 a day (US 68 cents), the men Rs. 100 a day (US \$1.36). The majority of the people in the neighborhoods where ETC is working are of the social groups sometimes referred to as "untouchable." (The preferred term for people of this caste is 'sanno jat' or small caste; the word 'small' refers to their lack of power.) People in this caste group face great discrimination and disadvantage. ETC's work with this community includes raising awareness about human rights and the injustices of the

caste system.

ETC's work in Rasuwa and Nuwakot Districts contin-

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Looking Back, Moving Forward

By Linda Farthing, Executive Director

Early one morning I climbed up to Syambunath, the Buddhist/Hindu temple on the outskirts of Kathmandu, to the Tibetan monastery where Pamela had spent many mornings meditating during the early years of ETC. I sat on the cushion where she had sat, and tried to clear my mind (I am admittedly a meditation amateur!). It was a special moment as I reflected on how much Pamela had woven me into her mission and commitment to Nepal and to ETC, and how much she and what she created have become an important part of my life. She may no longer be with us in body, but I certainly felt her that morning and appreciated anew the simple, mindful, open heart she strove for.

What ties me and so many others to ETC is the opportunity that Pamela has given us: to participate in the connection between people engaged in a common goal for the benefit of us all. This spirit runs through all of ETC and everything it does. The overlapping web of relationships we have woven through ETC extends to

schools, groups of women, and entire villages and communities in Nepal, all working to make their lives better. These relationships also involve all of you, the supporters of ETC all over the world.



Linda at a Women's Day celebration in Nepal.

This year on my trip to Nepal I once again saw evidence of growth and change. The effects of empowerment, one of ETC's central goals, were clear to me among the staff of ETC Nepal itself: they have grown enormously in the years I have had the privilege of working with them. That growth is evident not just in their skills and knowledge, but in something equally important: self-confidence. They are now ready to stand on their own in ways that made them nervous just three years ago. This change is enormously satisfying to see.

ETC is maturing as an organization. As we begin the first stage of our gradual phase-out from the original five Village Development Committees (VDCs) where we started our work in 1994, we want to ensure that

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International Women's Day 2001

For the fifth year in a row, International Women's Day was celebrated in ETC's rural project areas on March 8th. This year, nearly 4,000 rural women, men, students, teachers and representatives from seven Village Development Committees gathered to take part in events held in four communities — Laharepauwa, Dandagaun, Kaule and Manakamana. Members of ETC women's groups marched with placards and chanted slogans about the plight of women in Nepal. Women spoke about the contributions that Pamela Carson made to their villages, and the messages and cards of congratulation sent by women around the world were shared.



"Our hearts rend, sisters, when we recall our childhood when we couldn't go to school . . . Now we feel happy to be in literacy classes. The light of education is glimmering . . . Let's stand up, we women folks, and march ahead."

Newly literate women read poems composed for the occasion, including the following example by Meena Kumari Bhatta of Manakamana:

*If I were a flower, I could bloom like a rose,
but instead I am as a thorn and couldn't bloom.*

*Forgotten were the days of my
past as a girl,
but on Women's Day I couldn't
forget it.*

*Men and women, equal they
are,
Let's move together, equals as
we are,
to celebrate Women's Day to-
gether,
let us climb the height of the
mountain.*

*Even if a rose cannot bloom,
it still spreads its odor every-
where,
Even if you cannot speak,
smile in favor of women's
rights.*

*The flower's role is not only to
give its sweet odor;
it also helps to beautify the gar-
den,*

*why must only women look after household chores,
why can we not flower too.*

Funding Notes

Endowment Fund

A Founder's Memorial Endowment Fund has been set up by ETC to honor ETC Founder Pamela Carson and to assist in securing a more stable future for the organization. The bequest left to ETC by Pamela will provide the cornerstone for this fund. To date, other donors have contributed over \$25,000. To contribute, please indicate 'Endowment Fund' on your donation.

Major Gifts

We are very pleased to announce that we have raised \$173,946 of our Major Gifts Campaign goal of \$200,000. This is good news towards the end of the second year of the campaign, and we are hopeful that we will be able to raise the additional funds needed by Spring 2002, when the three-year campaign will come to a close. The funds have supported ETC's expansion into new areas and the hiring of new staff needed to carry out the expanded programs. Thanks to everyone who has contributed. If you haven't yet contributed, please consider a donation to

Grants

ETC has received grants in the past several months from several foundations, including the Three Guineas Fund (for income generation with women), The American Himalayan Foundation (for rural kindergartens), Operation Day's Work (for schools), an anonymous foundation (for kindergartens), and The International Foundation (for health education). We are very pleased that our work is receiving increasing recognition from donor agencies and foundations as being of high quality and worthy of support.

Volunteers in Nepal

Each year, ETC provides a small number of teachers with the opportunity to volunteer in schools in Nepal. The volunteer teachers broaden their world view and learn more about ETC's work, the Nepali teachers are able to observe a very different style of teaching, and the children enjoy the contact with native English speakers. The following stories are from the spring 2001 volunteers.

One morning, we were studying the letter "T" and a few words starting with it. We made some dough of salt and flour, with the children helping me to measure the ingredients. First the children just touched and played with the dough, then started to make trains, tigers and trees with great concentration. For about an hour, they worked hard on their project and the result was just amazing. How proud they all were to show me their work! This was one of the best times I had with the children, because it was the first time I had seen them creating something by themselves, without any example. They enjoyed it, and so did I!

--Stephanie Paratte, Bal Byabasayee School

Some days I took over the class and taught and other days I observed the Nepali teacher and helped the students sitting near me. One day I was sitting in the second row from the back on the boys' side.

The student next to me quietly slid his copy book along the bench until it was in front of me. I checked his work. It was correct. When the teacher again asked for volunteers, I whispered to him, "You have the right answer. Go on. You go." In a voice barely audible he replied, "No sir, I am frightened." "C'mon, be brave!" He dropped his head and shook it. The class continued with the teacher providing instruction and corrections as boys and girls wrote sentences on the board. With the class almost over, the teacher called for volunteers for the last sentence. Two rows ahead of me a boy stood and was saying the correct sentence. The student next to me had stood and was ready to go to the board. I got the attention of the teacher and told her that this student wanted to write the answer. She gave him a piece of chalk and he carefully copied his work onto the board. As he returned to his seat he whispered, "I am not frightened now."

My work here has been both frustrating and exhilarating. While I am still trying to make sense of it

all, I know that on one day in one class, I helped one boy be confident enough with his English to go to the front of the room.

--Tim Dewar, Gyandaya School



From left to right, volunteer teachers Rene Wocks, Stephanie Paratte, Sherri Bryan, Tim Dewar, and Emma O'Neill-Kohl.

In my last few months working with grade 5 kids, I have had students pretending to be everything from goats and leopards to crowded buses and planets. I have found that acting out passages tends to give ESL students a much deeper understanding of material. It is also a barrel of laughs for everyone! One particular day my period 5 class was acting out a version of The Boy Who Called Wolf. Two very enthusiastic boys played Surya, the main character, and the leopard, who by the end of the story has eaten the little boy. All the actors and actresses did a superb job, and we were all laughing so hard by the end of the story that we hardly noticed the boy playing the leopard

really was biting "Surya's" leg and wouldn't let go! In the end, no one was hurt, and even our two stars retained their good humor.

--Sherri Bryan, Gyanodaya School

At the beginning of my volunteer placement I was a little nervous about teaching. But after the first couple of days of being asked so many questions by the kids — What is Canada like? Can you sing your national anthem? (which most of the school now knows) What caste are you from? (it took the kids awhile to understand that we do not have castes) How many people in your family?, etc, etc, — the nervousness just flew away. One of the first experiences that I had at school that brought a huge smile to my face was in the senior kindergarten class. I was covering for the regular teacher who was away for the day, it was last period (play time), and the kids wanted to learn a new song. So for the rest of the class I taught them the words and actions to 'The Itsy Bitsy Spider,' which they loved. The next week, I was with my regular Class 4 students, it was last period, they had finished their work so they wanted to sing some songs for the rest of the period. I told them to choose a song and we would all sing together and they started singing The Itsy Bitsy Spider - they didn't know all the words but wanted me to teach them. I couldn't help but laugh at thinking how the senior kindergarten kids must have been telling many of the other students about the new song I taught them!

Voices from the Field . . .



Ram Chandra Nepal, kindergarten teacher

I have been teaching kindergarten class in Sri Gyanjyoti school for two years, and I come from the same local area. I have twelve years of education myself. In my school there are many problems, for example students come from different communities, castes and are different ages. They also speak different languages, so their performance differs significantly from each other. This means I have to attend to them personally one by one, which is difficult in a large class. The most significant problems are lack of trained teachers, insufficient books and writing materials.

If the child's parents are literate and educated, the child tends to learn things very quickly, and the parents care about their children's study, their health and welfare and dress. But if the parent is not literate he or she does not know how to fulfill the responsibility to the child's education.

We think it is important to educate the parents in order to improve children's learning and we are working with ETC on this. We would also like to request ETC's assistance for more teacher training. The work of ETC in our community is wonderful.

We hope that the benefits will be long term and sustainable.

Sharda Dhungel, Community Medical Assistant trainee

I am 20 Years and married but have no children. ETC gave me a scholarship for a 15 month Community Medical Assistant course. I want to open a dispensary in order to help the community in the future. I am so inspired by ETC's work that I want to be a social worker through health service.



"To the teller, a garland of flowers."

Dhansing Tamang, ETC leader farmer

I have 8 children - 5 sons and 3 daughters. Only 1 daughter and 2 sons go to school. In the leader farmer training, I shared ideas with other farmers about new techniques of farming and learnt about new technologies of farming and the importance of crops, horticulture and livestock. I have been able to use new techniques of vegetable production, using organic pesticides, and I understand the importance of kitchen gardens and the use of improved seeds. Now our challenge is to plant more cash crops to improve incomes.



Suryamaya Thapa Magar, ETC scholarship recipient

I am 19 years old and I am from Laharepauwa, Rasuwa. I went to Chandeswori Higher Secondary School. All together I have 4 sisters and 2 brothers. I am the first in my family to have studied at this level. After I finish my studies, I will serve illiterate people being a good teacher and social worker. I want to do something in the health field. If I had not gotten the scholarship from ETC, it would be very difficult to continue. My family background is very poor. Any student who is an ETC scholarship student has to work hard. They should not miss the opportunity provided by ETC.



Min Maya Tamang, ETC women's group member and Samyukata Management Committee member

I am 29 years old and have two sons and a daughter. I married when I was 15 years old. Five years ago I joined an ETC women's group to learn how to work in this type of group, to become literate, to know about income generation and to work independently. I have achieved all these goals. In the past year, our management committee has formed 15 groups, conducted 12 basic literacy classes, supported seed money for 15 groups, and provided group orientation programs for all the members of the 15 groups. All the programs are running smoothly.

Now we need to register our Management Committee with the District Cooperative Office, and we have to mobilize the saved money for our income generation program. We want to form a Savings and Loan Cooperative in order to make our women economically independent by carrying out income generation work on a larger scale.



To the listener, a garland of gold."

- Nepali saying

ETC Board News

New Board Members, President

Donovan Russell, former Director of the Peace Corps in Nepal and current Team Leader for an Asian Development Bank education project in Bangladesh, will assume the ETC Presidency in July. Current President **Dan Sisler**, Professor Emeritus of Agriculture Economics at Cornell University and President of Helen Keller International, will retire as President but continue to serve on the ETC Board of Directors.

Katherine Rankin is returning to the Board after a two year break. She is an Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Toronto and has extensive experience in Nepal. Kathy will soon be conducting research on micro-credit programs for women in Nepal and Vietnam.

Richard Branca, a close friend of Founder Pamela Carson, will also be joining the Board. He worked with Habitat for Humanity in Papua New Guinea for three years, and continues to lead Habitat groups abroad. He has visited Nepal twice and visited sev-

Trips to Nepal

ETC Nepal has hosted many Board members this year. In Fall 2000, **Phyllis Wynn** visited Nepal for several days, spending time with her sponsored child, Bimala Lama, and meeting with office staff. In December and January, **Freema Hillman** was in Nepal, assisting with teacher training. **Barbara Cook** and **Laurie Vassily** were there as well. **Karen Knudson** made her first ever trip to Nepal, and, with Board Advisor **Ursula Ziebarth** and new Board member **Richard Branca**, visited women's groups, schools, the Teachers Training Centre, and participated in an educational tour for the leader farmers. At the end of March, **Berniece Patterson** and **Freema Hillman** were in Nepal and took 13 members of their World Wildlife Fund group to visit the ETC office.

Fundraisers Extraordinaire

Board member **Karen Knudson** made a presentation about ETC to her community at the First Congregational Church in January. Despite the fact that the special donation envelopes were not where they were supposed to be, generous parishioners donated \$1952 for ETC programs! Thanks so much to Karen and church members. If you are interested in making a presentation to your religious community, please let us know!

ETC Volunteer **Sandra Clifford**, who works in Marketing with General Mills in Minneapolis, raised \$950 for ETC by promoting the kitchen garden cards as Valentine's Day gifts. She is planning to continue using these cards for fundraising, and will attend the ETC May Board meeting to work with the Fundraising Committee on marketing. Sandra visited ETC programs in Nepal in March, met Dinesh Tamang, whom she and some friends sponsor through ETC, and helped out in a kindergarten at Bal Bayasayee School. Thanks to Sandra for all her help! If you are interested in using the wonderful kitchen garden card to celebrate a holiday with friends and family, do get

Looking Back, Moving Forward (continued from page 1)

we are leaving no commitments unfulfilled. We need to be confident that we have sufficiently strengthened the local organizations and groups we work with so that they can continue to thrive once we are gone. Phasing out is not easy - the communities have expressed over and over again that they don't want us to leave, and we know it means that we will see old friends less frequently, and that we may not be there to help with problems. But it is necessary if our true goal is to avoid creating dependency and to provide the impetus and spark for positive change in the communities. We plan to carry out an impact evaluation two to three years after our phase-out is complete. This is the real test of any project: what impact remains after the formal intervention is over?

I was also very impressed by my visit to ETC's newest project, the Teachers Training Centre. The first training - for teachers from 18 Kathmandu schools - took place in January under the direction of the Centre's able Director, Kishor Shrestha, with the support of ETC Board member Freema Hillman. I joined a group of ETC supporters and Board members who accompanied Kishor to one of the schools to see how the teachers were doing a month after the two-week training was over. Overwhelmingly they said that the training had been useful, far more useful than others they had received in the past, because it was much more practical and applied. "Now we feel that we really are teachers," one of them told us. "We learned how to use materials in the classroom, but we also learned how to bring a joy of learning and enthusiasm to the children."

As ETC moves into new areas, I am also moving into a new role. After over three years at the helm, I am stepping aside to let others take over. But I am not leaving. I am rather moving from staff to volunteer and will likely serve on the Board of Directors. I am extremely pleased that the Board has decided to hire two women who are both highly committed to ETC to serve as co-Directors, Colleen Flynn Thapalia and Susanna Pearce. Both have served on the ETC Board, and Susanna has been Associate Director for nearly two years. Colleen has also served on the Nepal Advisory Board, and Susanna was one of ETC's first volunteers in Nepal. They will be introduced in the Fall 2001 newsletter. As our roles shift, I look forward to working closely with them. The challenge is to grow ETC while maintaining our grassroots commitment and high program quality. I hope you will all continue with us on this



Dhanyabhad — Thank You . . .

Thank yous to:

- ◆ **Aaron Pines** and **Leslie Eliet**, our longtime Ithaca volunteers, for their always-dependable help in the office.
- ◆ **Steve Harper**, who spent innumerable hours developing a database for our sponsorship programs, as well as helping us with our ever-present computer problems and questions. We all wish him the very best in his move to Minnesota.
- ◆ **Deepa Oja**, a student from Immaculate Conception School, who helps in our Ithaca office and also decorates it! We will greatly miss her when she returns to Nepal in May.
- ◆ **Bonnie Chollet** who has made major strides in bringing the curriculum project to fruition.
- ◆ **Zack Nelson**, a former Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal, who helps out in our U.S. office.
- ◆ **Almira Hoogesteyn**, for translating the International Women's Day banner letter into Spanish for distribution in Latin America.
- ◆ **Diane Sacks**, **Cathy Davis** and the **Seattle 'didis'** for hosting Linda Farthing's presentation of the ETC slide show in Seattle on January 30th. These women, who went on a trek in Nepal together, continue their longstanding, loyal support of ETC.
- ◆ **Katy Pearce**, for making the connection with a foundation that led to a \$10,000 grant.
- ◆ **Rebecca McDuff**, responsible for US Embassy libraries all over South Asia, who gave Internet training to our Nepal staff.
- ◆ **Sandra Clifford** and **Emma O'Neill-Kohl**, for helping out in our kindergarten programs at Bal Bayabasayee and Gyandaya Schools.
- ◆ **Leslie Eliet**, **Heritage Painters of Ithaca** and **Karen Knudson**, who got ETC's sign up on our building in Ithaca. Leslie designed and painted it, Heritage hung it on the building, and Karen coordinated the project.
- ◆ **Elizabeth Sholtys** and **Hannah Kohut**, students from Ithaca High School, who help in our U.S. office.
- ◆ **Michael Marsello**, who has helped us with Internet research.
- ◆ **Stephanie Bussman**, a student at Ithaca College, who helped for several weeks in our U.S. office.
- ◆ **Jill Wason** and **Young Chi-Yeung**, for redesigning and rebuilding our website.
- ◆ **Shambhu Oja**, Professor of Nepali Language at Cornell, for almost-instant help with translation and other Nepal-related questions.
- ◆ Teachers **Sherri Bryan**, **Tim Dewar**, **Stephanie Paratte** and intern **Renee Wocks**, all of whom worked as volunteers in our schools in Nepal this Spring. A fifth volunteer, teacher **Virginia Lordy**, begins her stint in May.

Nepal Staff News

Congratulations to **Prabha Jyoti Upreti**, ETC Field Coordinator, on her December 6, 2000 wedding to **Khajendra Kumar Nepal**. Khajendra has worked as a trainer of English teachers for ETC, which is how the two met. We wish them every happiness, and appreciate all the help Khajendra has given ETC in preparing the interviews found in this issue.

Congratulations also to **Bishu Karki**, Women's Development Assistant, who married **Ram Chandra Adhikari** on January 19, 2001. Shubha kaamanaa!

Welcome to **Chandi Shrestha**, who has joined the staff as Junior Technician.

Welcome also to **Indu KC**, Urban Women's Motivator. After first working with ETC as a literacy group facilitator, Indu has proven herself so capable and committed that we invited her to join the staff.

Thank you and good luck to **Radha Rai**, who has resigned her position as Office Secretary, and welcome to **Jyoti Bhattarai**, who has assumed Radha's former duties.

We send our best wishes to **Bimal Tamang**, who has resigned his position as Office Assistant. Welcome to **Shiv Bastakoti**, who is the new Office Assistant.



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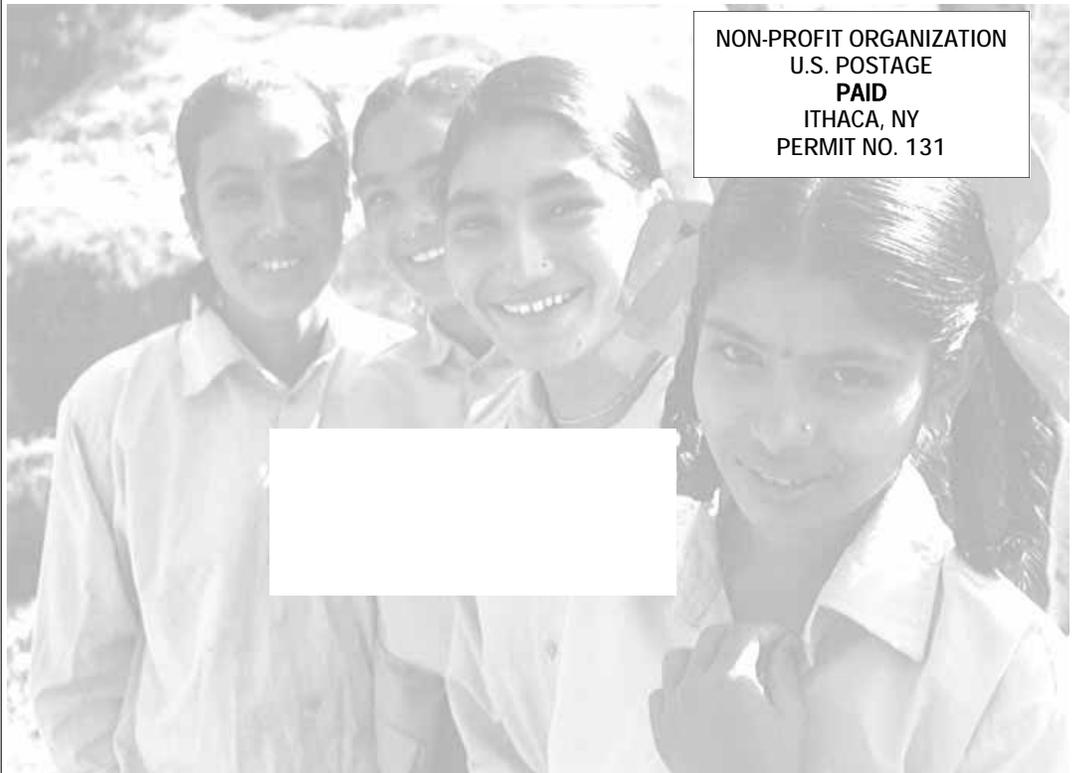
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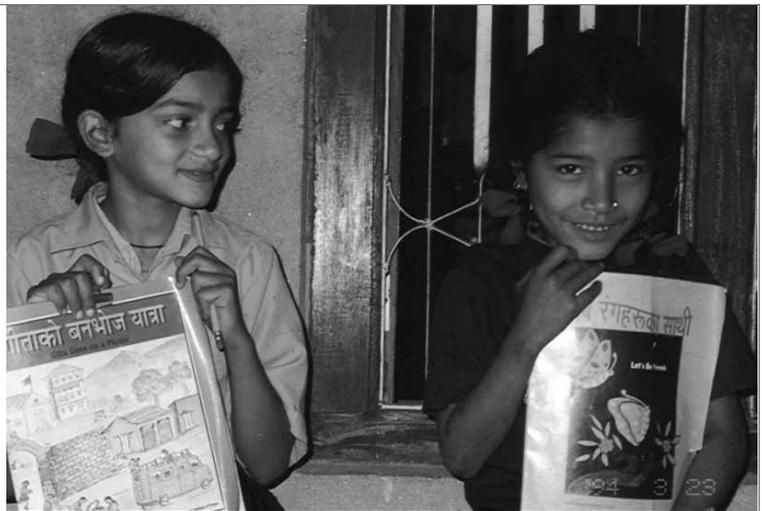
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Two girls in Lamjung District with their ETC story books. All 15,000 of ETC's Nepali language children's books for early readers have now been distributed through schools and organizations to children in rural and urban Nepal. Very few children's story books are available in Nepali.



New Program Area (continued from page 1)

ues, but, as has been the plan since we started work in 1994, our role there will be phased out gradually over the next five years. The goal is to leave the women's groups and communities able to manage their programs themselves. Toward this end, several of these groups united to form two management committees over the past couple of years. Now these management committees are registering with

the government as Savings and Loan Cooperatives, making them eligible to receive loans and other government resources, and giving them official status within their district. As one women's group member described it, "We were like a tiny baby chick inside an egg, and now we're starting to hatch out of the egg. We'll learn to walk on our own, to find our own food and rice to eat. But right now we still need ETC to give us advice, guide us, and watch our pro-