



EDUCATE THE CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

Educate the Children (ETC) was founded in 1990 by Ithaca's Pamela Carson and several of her close friends. Ms. Carson had traveled to Nepal and fallen in love with the country and its people, particularly its children. Nepalese society is highly stratified, with most of the assets belonging to members of the highest castes. Lower-caste, "untouchable" (*dalit*), and non-Hindu ethnic group (*janjati*) people are typically mired in poverty and are very unlikely to be able to educate their children, increase their household incomes, or improve their families' health and nutrition. These disadvantages are transmitted from generation to generation. *ETC breaks that cycle.*

ETC's original purpose was to ensure that underserved children could receive a formal education, as a stepping stone to a better chance at lifting themselves out of the poverty to which they were accustomed. Over time, we came to realize that our efforts would be far more effective if we worked closely with their (usually illiterate) mothers. For many years now, our three interrelated program areas have been:

- **Women's empowerment:** Through their participation in ETC-sponsored women's groups, women become literate, learn basic business skills such as handling money and keeping records, learn to establish their own small businesses to help support their families, and gain a stronger sense of self-worth and empowerment. ETC is presently supporting 42 women's groups with about 850 members. Each member of a women's group also receives a scholarship for one child to attend school. In this way, we reach across generations to ensure that the family will never again be illiterate or unable to earn a living.
- **Education:** ETC covers the costs of tuition, uniforms, and supplies for children who would not otherwise be able to attend school. We also improve schools by training teachers; launching kindergarten programs; providing classroom supplies such as educational games, maps, charts, and musical instruments; and making physical improvements to the buildings, including ensuring the availability of clean drinking water. Currently, 26 schools and many hundreds of children are benefiting from ETC's involvement.
- **Agricultural development:** ETC training and resources improve nutrition and increase families' incomes. Kitchen gardens are relatively inexpensive to start and maintain, can include vegetables rich in vitamins and minerals year-round, and can be grown in very small spaces. Small-scale farming and livestock businesses enhance the nutrition of entire communities and contribute significantly to families' incomes for many years. All women's group participants start kitchen gardens, and many are able eventually to start small agribusinesses.

ETC works intensively in a predefined geographic area for a six-year period, providing training and resources as well as helping local residents develop the leadership skills and confidence that will enable them to manage the activities without external help. After five years, ETC begins to phase out our involvement; by the end of the sixth year, the programs are fully managed and supported locally. We are presently in our fourth year in the remote Dolakha region, working in several contiguous villages that are accessible only by hiking three to six hours from the nearest large towns.

Our website is www.etc-nepal.org. We are also on Facebook – search "Educate the Children International" – and you can follow us on Twitter via [@GrowNepal](https://twitter.com/GrowNepal).

We are a 501(c)3 organization with administrative offices in Ithaca, NY and Kathmandu, Nepal.

Contact: Lisa Lyons, Executive Director, (607) 272-1176 or director@etc-nepal.org