2 teams of ESP students participated in the recent Tech Connects Competition 2014 organized by the People’s Association and NUS Enterprise. The competition challenges participants to innovate and come up with projects that tap on web, mobile or hardware based technology to benefit the community. One team, SeQRet, consisting of Foo Feng Lin (Yr2) and Goh See Ting (Yr2) had proposed a technological concept to benefit the visually-impaired and the blind community through the unique QR barcode-based system in helping them to protect their confidential information in their mailers, such as Letters from Banks, Central Provident Fund (CPF) etc. The other team, NUS ESPians, with members, Gwee Chia Hong (Yr3), Eugene Phang (Yr4), Chen Lishi (Yr4) and Thor Jia Wei (Yr5) proposed the design of a Letter Reader for non-English speaking and illiterate elderly. The reader uses QR technology to provide audio translations of the English letters into languages that the elderly could understand. Both projects were well received by the judges and the two teams advanced into the finals held on 16th January 2015.

The finals saw many teams from diverse backgrounds, ranging from NUS students to start-up companies. It was an intensive session as the teams took turns to present their project ideas
and the judges fired sharp questions at the presenters during the Q&A session. In the end, SeQRet made it to the top 10 teams while NUS ESPians went one step further to clinch 2nd in the competition. It was a great experience for everyone and both teams were encouraged to work harder and bring their project ideas into reality.

“The contest was really tough as the finalist teams come from all walks of life, each with their own innovative solution to problems that they feel needs to be solved. I have learnt a lot from this experience and I strongly encourage the juniors in ESP to participate in such competitions with more enthusiasm. No matter how small you think your idea might be, be brave to share it with everyone as it might be the brilliant solution that the world needs.” Thor Jia Wei - ESP Year 5