**Supporting Weaving Families in Post-Earthquake Nepal**

**A GlobalGiving-Funded Project**

**Submitted by GoodWeave International**

**I. The Context**

When the devastating earthquakes decimated entire regions of Nepal on April 25 and May 12, 2015, the fabric of Nepali society was fundamentally altered and already troubling trends quickly intensified. Overall, nine thousand people lost their lives, hundreds of thousands were left homeless, 36,000 classrooms were destroyed, and over one million children remain unable to begin the new academic year. Damage to business infrastructure in the 14 affected districts is estimated at USD$156 million, which means that many companies are struggling to simply reopen their doors and thus employment opportunities for workers desperate to rebuild their lives are few and far between. Without good choices, families are increasingly forced to take dangerous risks that could lead to exploitation or worse. According to international relief agencies, nearly 250 children were rescued from human trafficking in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, and traffickers continue to target affected areas in the absence of government services and social cohesion.

The disaster had a particularly profound effect on the carpet industry. GoodWeave estimates that infrastructural damage in its supply chain totals approximately USD $3.5 million. Currently, 150 factories are either in only partial production or are not functioning at all due to damage to facilities, worker housing, equipment, and raw materials. Moreover, many factory owners themselves have lost their homes and family members.

Meanwhile, the Tamang ethnic group that comprises the majority of weavers in Nepal are originally from villages located in the hardest hit districts, including Makwanpur, Dolakha, Ramechhap, Nuwakot, Sindupalchok and Kavrepalanchok. While the workers and their immediate families migrated to live and work in the Kathmandu Valley, their relatives and homes remained in these earthquake-affected districts. Many villages in these districts were decimated by the earthquakes and have received little or no relief due to road damage caused by recent landslides. Most villagers in those areas are still residing in temporary structures built from metal sheeting, tarps, or bamboo. In the wake of the disaster, approximately 30% of the weavers from GoodWeave factories left the Valley to be with family and rebuild their village homes, and many have not yet returned.

Thus in the post-quake context, the carpet industry, weavers and their families now face multiple roadblocks on the path to stability. For families whose village homes have been completely destroyed, government assistance of 15,000 NPR (USD $150) per family is not nearly enough to cover the costs of rebuilding and the risk of going into debt is acute. Until they are able to rebuild their homes, these weavers cannot return to work in Kathmandu and earn an income – and once they return, any lag in job placement will create an even greater financial burden on their families. At the same time, the carpet industry, which was experiencing a severe worker shortage prior to the earthquake, now struggles with an even greater dearth of skilled weavers as producers attempt to restart their operations.

**II. Project Activities**

GoodWeave has developed a holistic, one-year project to hasten a return to greater stability for weavers, their families, and businesses. The project features three mutually-reinforcing components: stabilizing families in their communities; facilitating job placement; and providing training for earthquake-affected workers. The entire project will help GoodWeave “build back better” to ensure the industry protects children, empowers workers, and supports Nepal’s economy more sustainably than it did before the disaster.

The first phase of the project will focus on rebuilding homes so weavers can return to work. From there, the project team will help place experienced weavers with GoodWeave partner companies seeking skilled workers. Finally, given the overwhelming unmet demand for weavers, GoodWeave will extend its highly successful *Weaving Opportunities* training program to target communities in need of employment opportunities, and place graduates in secure jobs with GoodWeave partner companies that have demonstrated a commitment to ethical business practices. Ultimately, the project aims to create an enabling environment for companies to adopt sustainable and human rights-centered practices by rewarding such efforts with access to a pool of highly skilled and motivated workers who will be able to rebuild their lives with a stable income earned in safe working conditions.

**GoodWeave seeks GlobalGiving support for the first component of this project, *Stabilizing Families in their Communities*.** Summaries of the second and third components of this project, involving job placement and weaver trainings, are also included here to provide a bigger picture of the GoodWeave’s holistic approach to post-earthquake recovery for vulnerable weaving families.

1. **Stabilizing Families in their Communities**

GoodWeave estimates that the homes of a total of 800 workers, or 15% of all weavers from GoodWeave inspected factories, were either damaged or destroyed in the earthquake. Many of these villages are located in Sindhupalchowk district, which is largely rural and suffered the highest number of casualties. In most cases, one parent has returned to their home village, leaving their weaving job, spouse, and children behind in Kathmandu in order to rebuild the family home.

With support from a coalition of donors, GoodWeave will offer the most vulnerable families an integrated package of support that will enable them to rebuild their homes, educate their children, and receive psychological counseling. Currently, GoodWeave has received commitments from multiple foundations that will fund housing support for a portion of these 800 families. GlobalGiving’s generous support will supplement this rebuilding effort, enabling an additional 40 vulnerable families to rebuild safe, permanent houses in their home villages. Another funder will then cover the cost of school fees and counseling services for participating families to help them overcome post-disaster trauma and return to their classrooms and workplaces.

GoodWeave field staff will travel to the target villages of Hagam VDC, Fulpingkot VDC, and Dupachour VDC in Sindhupalchowk District to develop a case-by-case inventory of each family’s priority needs and arrange for a contractor to build homes using blueprints designed by an architect who specializes in structures for this region. Not only will the homes be earthquake-proof, they will also be made with high-quality materials that will last for decades. With support from GlobalGiving, each family will be provided with a pre-fabricated home at the cost of $2,100 each. All 40 homes will be rebuilt within a six-to-eight-month timeline.

When offered together with education support and counseling, the housing will enable at least 40 households (more than 175 individuals) to regain economic stability and avoid falling into severe poverty. Not only will they have access to stable housing in their home communities, but they will also be able to avert exploitation – including debt-bondage and child labor infactories or brick kilns - while over-coming post-disaster trauma. This near-term support will enable weavers get back to work sooner, restore their previous income, and shore up their ability to cover both short- and long-term family needs. At the same time, children will be protected during this period of vulnerability as they continue their educations. Field staff will track these 40 families from the beginning to the end of the project, capturing key data points in a project database that will facilitate analysis of the support received by each family, as well as the resulting economic progress and educational achievement over the course of the project.

*GoodWeave will leverage generous support through GlobalGiving with grants from other donors to ensure the delivery of services to all 800 affected families in GoodWeave supply chains.*

*Anticipated timeline: Project set-up and family needs inventory (Month 1); hiring contractors and procuring material (Month 2-3); home construction (Month 4-8); evaluation (Month 9-10).*

*Outcomes: Homes rebuilt for 40 weaving families, reaching at least 175 individuals.*

1. **Facilitating Job Placement**

The path to stability doesn’t end when weavers return to Kathmandu. In order for families to return to their previous levels of income, they need to avoid persistent unemployment upon their return. By coordinating with ethical owners of GoodWeave partner factories seeking workers, GoodWeave will provide job placement services to returning weavers to ensure that they are quickly back on the job. Any weaver who seeks placement services will receive access to a comprehensive listing of the best jobs in GoodWeave-licensed factories, and GoodWeave will facilitate placement with these employers. Weavers will also be provided with follow-up to ensure that they are satisfied with their employment and earning at a level comparable to pre-earthquake incomes.

1. **Expanding the *Weaving Opportunities* training program**

In order to address the persistent shortage of workers in the carpet industry and the large population of earthquake survivors in need of sustainable livelihoods, GoodWeave has tailored the successful *Weaving Opportunities* program to better meet the needs of workers in the post-earthquake context. GoodWeave will simultaneously facilitate weaving trainings in six venues both within the Kathmandu Valley and out of valley, selected based on the location of participating factories and communities with the greatest need. In total, 300 weavers will be trained, along with 40 finishing specialists, and 20 designers. With continued support, GoodWeave envisions expanding this initiative, reaching up to 1,800 beneficiaries over the next three years.

**III. The GoodWeave Model**

Situated at the nexus of business and social venture, GoodWeave helps companies provide ethical employment opportunities and sustainable engines for economic growth in India, Nepal, and Afghanistan. GoodWeave was founded in India in 1994 by Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi who envisioned a solution to child labor that harnessed the economic forces of supply and demand. While most programs operate outside of the private sector, GoodWeave collaborates with industry: demonstrating financial and brand value from its label, aligning the interests of employers with their workers, and establishing permanence in the marketplace to achieve cumulative gains and maintain a deterrent effect. Importantly, GoodWeave is the only program of its kind that specifically reaches the informal working class — generally the “poorest of the poor.”

GoodWeave’s post-earthquakeinitiatives build on the organization’s pioneering model that includes targeted interventions throughout the supply chain: expanding demand for ethical products among consumers; implementing a best-in-class supply chain monitoring and certification system; stabilizing the workforce through training and prevention activities; and providing critical rehabilitation and education services to child labor survivors.

GoodWeave’s international secretariat is headquartered in Washington, D.C. with independent affiliate offices in Europe, India, Nepal and Afghanistan. GoodWeave has certified near 12 million rugs, signed 140 licensed importers, and invested over $1.2 million of industry licensing fees in programs serving South Asian weaving communities. GoodWeave’s market-based model has been recognized by Ashoka, Skoll Foundation, Google.org, Humanity United, and the Clinton Global Initiative.

**IV. Budget**

This project requires $97,696 in order to support housing reconstruction for 40 weaving families.