

# Better Brick Nepal

## A market strategy for the elimination of bonded and child labor from brick production in Nepal

### WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THIS PROGRAM?

The goal of Better Brick Nepal (BBN) is to address labor challenges, as well as environmental and quality issues in the brick kiln industry, which employs approximately 175,000 people and provides critical inputs to a construction industry that is among the largest sectors of the economy. Many of the workers, however, are children or adults bonded by debt. They are subjected to extremely harsh living and working conditions. While previous programs have raised awareness of these issues, BBN aims to change the incentives within the industry. BBN seeks to create a market preference for a “better brick” such that buyers of these bricks—including international agencies, construction firms and end-consumers—are assured of more ethical and high quality production. At the same time, the kilns benefit from technical assistance and access to new high value markets.



### HOW WILL THIS PROGRAM WORK?

BBN was launched in early 2014 by establishing relationships with five pilot kilns that are interested in furthering the aims of the project, creating a certifiable BBN Standard on child labor, bonded labor and decent working conditions and developing plans for kilns to comply with the Standard. Participating kilns will receive technical assistance to improve working conditions, boost production efficiency and raise product quality, as well as make linkages to potential markets. Over time, the goal is for kilns that meet the BBN Standard to achieve business benefits, and to foster needed changes in the brick industry as a whole.

### WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE DRIVING THIS INITIATIVE?

Three experienced organizations are partnering to implement BBN: the BrickClean Group Nepal,

Global Fairness Initiative and GoodWeave International. Each organization brings a unique set of experiences and will be collaborating under the Better Brick Nepal banner.

**BrickClean Group Nepal:** The BrickClean Group Nepal is a coalition of Nepali and international organizations with a shared mission to improve conditions in Nepal’s brick kilns and increase awareness about the conditions in the brick kilns. Their overall objective has been to promote a socially responsible brick industry in Nepal and their leadership is the central driver behind the development of BBN. The program is rooted in BrickClean Group Nepal’s ongoing efforts to establish improved practices in all aspects of brick production and to enable the long-term success of the BBN initiative.

**Global Fairness Initiative:** The Global Fairness Initiative (GFI) was founded in 2002 to promote an equitable, sustainable approach to economic development for the world's working poor. GFI's role in the BBN initiative will be to engage directly with kiln owners and workers to develop strategies to improve the efficiency and quality of their production as well as environmental conditions in the kilns. GFI will also build market opportunities for BBN-compliant kilns and advocate for government support of the initiative.

**GoodWeave International:** GoodWeave was founded in 1994 to end child labor in the carpet industry and to replicate its market-driven model in other manufacturing sectors. Its work includes standard-setting and certification, supply chain monitoring, rescue and remediation, and offering social programs in worker communities. Using this expertise, GoodWeave will develop and monitor against the BBN Standard in participating brick kilns and provide technical support to comply. GoodWeave will also provide educational and rehabilitation services for child laborers.

This work is supported by Humanity United, an organization dedicated to building peace and advancing freedom in the world.



**WHY NEPAL?**

Nepal is the first country in the region where this initiative has been launched. Nepal serves as an ideal pilot country because of the sizable number of brick workers and large role for the construction sector in the economy. The BrickClean Group Nepal has been operating in the country for five years, developing an understanding of how to effect change in the industry. Their foundational work allows international partners to bring funding, expertise and credibility that can move the process forward.

**WHY FOCUS ON THE BRICK SECTOR?**

Given the informal nature of the labor force and the harsh working conditions that characterize the brick industry, workers are highly vulnerable and prone to exploitation. It is estimated that children comprise around one-third of the brick sector workforce in Nepal. The situation of adult workers bonded by debt is also prevalent. This initiative attempts to address the underlying factors that drive this situation, dealing with the challenges that brick workers and brick kiln owners face in the broader economic environment. It also aims to establish full credibility in the "Better Brick" certification, so that it is meaningful and trusted by both domestic and foreign buyers.



To provide feedback on the BBN Standard, visit [GoodWeave.org/brick](http://GoodWeave.org/brick)

