



## An Update on GoodWeave's Earthquake Relief Efforts in Nepal

Dated May 8, 2015

Dear Friends of GoodWeave:

**Since the April 25 earthquake we have been assessing damages and attending to life-preserving needs of workers and their families. We are grateful to all of you who have donated to the [Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund](#), and ask that you forward this link to others who may wish to help.**



Children of weavers playing  
in a temporary shelter

Our pace is round-the-clock and we are all finding ways to manage feelings of grief in order to preserve our energy to help the people of Nepal. GoodWeave's Kathmandu team has remained at work, despite staff members suffering their own personal losses. Nepal Program Officer Binita Paudel reports, "When I try to talk to weavers, I feel their painful voices filled with tears. Those who were already under the poverty line, had weak house structure and have little to eat. They have been more affected by the natural disaster."

While it is hard to look at, we now have a better picture of what it will take to rebuild, and we find ourselves in an unexpected position to play a key role in both delivering essential victim services and, through our work in the nation's top export sector, averting long-term setbacks to Nepal's economy.

As of Wednesday, the Office of Humanitarian Affairs [reported](#) 7,675 deaths, 284,455 homes destroyed and a further 234,102 damaged. An estimated 37,500 displaced people have been directed to 103 sites, 58 of which are open air, and increased reports of disease and hunger are coming from these camps and outlying communities. Commerce is at a standstill.

With the leadership of our country director, Lubha Raj Neupane, GoodWeave is managing directly its own aid delivery and rebuilding efforts. Lubha has asked me to extend his appreciation to all who have made inquiries and donations, and has promised that when he has a moment that he will send a personal account of this experience.

We have mapped out our work in three phases: immediate needs, infrastructure, and economic stabilization. Right now our focus is on the 15,000+ workers and their families who are part of the GoodWeave network, and the 40 children for whom we are direct guardians. GoodWeave field staff are reaching an average of 14 factories and 400 workers daily to distribute tents, mattresses, food and water, and deliver critical health care through a mobile medical camp that includes two doctors and paramedics. Disease from tainted water is a growing concern.



Weavers and families in line at one of our mobile medical camps

While life-preserving measures take priority, we must also preserve the strides GoodWeave has made to prevent child labor and trafficking. At such times of upheaval, children are even more at risk. An article yesterday in *The Guardian* reported that young women who have survived the earthquake now face the threat of human trafficking, often by perpetrators disguised as aid workers. We know from 20 years of work on the ground that the same communities at risk of sex trafficking are vulnerable to predatory labor brokers for industries like carpets, brick kilns, and domestic servitude.

An estimated 30% of workers have left the Kathmandu Valley to go back to their villages and be with their families. Further scattering of carpet weavers would cause a dearth of adult labor, and: 1) more children could be trafficked to fill empty looms, or 2) the export industry would move its production, leaving a hole in the Nepalese economy. I will be in contact again soon as we develop counter-trafficking and industry support plans.

**Thank you for staying close to GoodWeave during this difficult time.** To see daily updates or to make a gift, please like us on [Facebook](#). I want to close with a moment of optimism: Nepal is GoodWeave's flagship program to combat child labor and slavery, and has served as a learning laboratory for global efforts to address human rights in corporate supply chains. I share with you [this article](#) by Marc Gunther that underscores how, because GoodWeave is a systems-change organization, it is able to work nimbly to deliver some of the most effective services in the face of disasters such as this one.

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nina Smith'.

Nina Smith  
Executive Director  
GoodWeave