

Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Labor and Trafficking Survivors: A Case Study of Nepal GoodWeave Foundation's Transit Home “Hamro Ghar”

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Abstract

This paper focuses on rehabilitation as a crucial aspect of remediation for child labor and trafficking survivors. It explores successful center-based programs for children removed from exploitation and emphasizes how the creation of an enabling environment tailored to survivors' needs can serve the best interest of the child. Drawing from the case study of the Kathmandu-based transit home *Hamro Ghar*, run by Nepal GoodWeave Foundation, this paper describes rehabilitation approaches and activities, including insights from child labor survivors. This analysis highlights effective strategies for the rehabilitation and reintegration of child labor and trafficking survivors into school and society.

Key words: Center-based rehabilitation, child labor, child trafficking, Nepal, remedy, survivor.

“I have supported a lot of children. [...] When I share my real story, they’re motivated. [...] And you know, in addition to that, I always say to them: Please compare your life. How was your life in the past, and how it is now? And how should you make it in the future? For that, you should make your goal of life.” – Hem Moktan¹

¹ GoodWeave International, *Hem Moktan: He Made It*, June 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbqLLo3TQIE>

1. Introduction

Child trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation remains a grave concern in Nepal. As a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking, Nepal's geographic location, poverty, and social vulnerabilities contribute to the high prevalence of child trafficking within its borders.² Trafficked children are forced into hazardous labor, subjected to physical and emotional abuse, and deprived of their fundamental rights to education, health, and a safe childhood. Whilst access to remedy is inconsistent and ad-hoc, some programs have led the way in providing comprehensive assistance, rehabilitation, and reintegration services to children removed from exploitation. This paper emphasizes the rehabilitation aspect of remedy, particularly concerning children trafficked for the purpose of labor exploitation. While acknowledging the significance of other aspects of remediation, such as financial restitution, access to justice and perpetrators' accountability, this paper deliberately narrows its scope to contribute to an understanding of effective center-based rehabilitation interventions that facilitate the healing, well-being, and reintegration of child trafficking survivors into society.

This paper draws from the case study of Nepal GoodWeave Foundation (NGF)³, a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Nepal and country affiliate of GoodWeave International (GWI)⁴, a global nonprofit working to stop child labor in global supply chains. NGF operates rehabilitation programs and provides short and long-term assistance to children removed from labor exploitation, including a transit home in Kathmandu, called *Hamro Ghar* ("our home" in Nepali). By analyzing its specific approach to rehabilitation activities, we seek to identify the key components that contribute to their effectiveness and explore the lessons that can be learned for future initiatives. We first look at the key principles that underpin effective and just remediation for children. We then highlight center-based programming as a rehabilitation pathway for trafficked children, particularly in the context of Nepal. The paper then examines good practices from the case study of NGF's center-based rehabilitation program at *Hamro Ghar*, including how it prioritizes the best interest of the child, perspectives on the involvement of survivors in deploying remediation programs, as well as implementation challenges.

² US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report/Nepal*, accessed June 20, 2023. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/nepal>; World Bank, *Vulnerability To Human Trafficking in Nepal: From Enhanced Regional Connectivity*, December 2021, p. 5. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/981551639049704664/pdf/Vulnerability-to-Human-Trafficking-in-Nepal-from-Enhanced-Regional-Connectivity.pdf>

³ <http://goodweavenepal.org/>

⁴ www.goodweave.org

2. Methodology

Our methodology involved the following approaches:

- 1) Review of relevant literature, as well as internal and public documents developed by GWI (for example, their *Child Protection Policy*)⁵.
- 2) Analysis of case data from child labor survivors, tracked throughout their rehabilitation period by GWI and affiliates at NGF and GoodWeave Certification Nepal (GCN) as part of their quarterly monitoring and evaluation activities.
- 3) Interviews with key informants: Conversations via Microsoft Teams were conducted in English by Sivia Mera with staff at both GWI and GCN in June, July and December 2023. Hem Moktan conducted in-person group discussion in Nepali with 28 children currently residing at *Hamro Ghar*, both male and female, and aged 12 to 15 years old, in June 2023. A few questions were prepared to kick-start the conversation, which lasted about an hour. A few children were also engaged in short, individual follow-up conversations.
- 4) Hem Moktan – one of the authors – contributed his lived experience as a child labor and trafficking survivor, former *Hamro Ghar* student and current Child Development Officer at NGF.
- 5) Using a smaller sample size and interviews with select staff members was intentional, aligning with the specific case study's depth and scope and acknowledging the limitations to the extent in which findings can be extrapolated to wider contexts or populations affected by child labor and trafficking.

3. Safeguarding the Rights of Child Labor and Trafficking Survivors

3.1 Remediation Guiding Principles

In 2021, a total of 3.3 million children were in situations of forced labor – a form of modern-day slavery – on any given day, accounting for about 12% of all individuals in forced labor. Close to 1.3 million (39%) of these children are exploited for labor in various industries linked to domestic and global supply chains, with the remainder trapped in sexual exploitation (51%) and in state-imposed forced labor (10%).⁶ Children account for one in every two detected victims of human trafficking in low-income countries. Most of these children are trafficked for the purpose of labor exploitation.⁷ Trafficked children are separated from their families,

⁵ GoodWeave International, *Child Protection Policy, August 2021*, <https://goodweave.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/GWI-CP-Policy-v.4-Final-Jan-2019.pdf>

⁶ International Labor Organization (ILO), Walk Free, International Organization for Migration, *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labor and Forced Marriage, 2022*, p. 46. [wcms_854733.pdf \(ilo.org\)](https://www.wcms_854733.pdf)

⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2020*, p. 81. [GLOTIP_2020_15jan_web.pdf \(unodc.org\)](https://www.unodc.org/documents/glotip/GLOTIP_2020_15jan_web.pdf).

compelled to work, and exposed to serious hazards and illnesses, often at a very early age.⁸ It is important to note that the issue of "consent" is considered irrelevant in the case of child trafficking: any child (defined as a person under 18) recruited for the purpose of exploitation is considered trafficked, whether or not they have been deceived, coerced, or have consented in any way to being exploited.⁹

The plight of children in modern-day slavery demands immediate attention, concerted efforts, and the implementation of effective strategies that uphold their rights and ensure access to remedy. *Remedy* indicates the process of restoring rights to survivors, including helping to facilitate withdrawal from an exploitative situation and provide near-term medical, psychological, social, legal and educational assistance to ensure freedom as well as financial restitution, satisfaction, and guarantee of non-repetition.¹⁰ However, globally, only a very small share of those subjected to forced labor and human trafficking are provided with some form of remedy. Measures that meet the protection and participation needs of children are applied inconsistently across countries and groups of children (for example, migrant children).¹¹

Trafficked children need special support to access remedy for breaches of their rights.¹² Their path to restitution should be dealt with separately from adult victims in terms of laws, policies, programs, and interventions.¹³ Any child going through a remediation process must be protected and have all rights guaranteed without discrimination. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that states establish effective and child-sensitive procedures to provide child-friendly information, advice, advocacy, including support for self-advocacy, and access to independent complaints procedures and to the courts with necessary legal and other assistance. Where the rights of the child have been violated, remedies should

⁸ ILO, *What is child labor*, accessed June 2023. <https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/facts/lang--en/index.htm>

⁹ Mike Dottridge and Ann Jordan, "Children, Adolescents and Human Trafficking: Making sense of a complex problem"; *Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law - American University Washington College of Law*, Issue Paper 5 (May 2012). <https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/lisidocs/Making%20sense%20of%20a%20complex%20problem.pdf>; United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons>

¹⁰ United Nations, *Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International and Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, 2009*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/basic-principles-and-guidelines-right-remedy-and-reparation>

¹¹ ILO, *Ending forced labor by 2030: a review of policies and programmes* (2018) pp. 89-112 and 122-123. https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_653986/lang--en/index.htm

¹² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Providing Effective Remedies for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, 2016*, p. 7. https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/ICAT/ICAT_Policy_Paper_3_Providing_Effective_Remedies_for_Victims_of_Trafficking_in_Persons_2016.pdf

¹³ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking, 2002*, Principle 10 and Guideline 8.8. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/reference-publications/recommended-principles-and-guidelines-human-rights-and-human>

include appropriate reparation, compensation and, where needed, measures to promote physical and psychological recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration.¹⁴

Remediating forced child labor requires a comprehensive and principled approach that places the rights and well-being of the affected children at the forefront. Under international law, remediation should, at a minimum, be conducted in the best interests of the child, without discrimination, with a focus on empowering the children, keeping those responsible for their redress accountable and addressing short as well as long-term needs.¹⁵

More specifically, fundamental guiding principles include:

a) The principle of the *best interests of the child*, which ensures that all decisions and actions prioritize the child's well-being, protection, and development. It requires holistic and child-centered approaches that consider the child's physical, emotional, social, and educational needs;¹⁶

b) *Non-discrimination*, which upholds the equal rights and opportunities of all children, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, or any other characteristic. It ensures that remediation efforts are inclusive and address the specific vulnerabilities and needs of all children, including those from marginalized groups;¹⁷

c) *Empowerment*, which recognizes the rights of child labor and trafficking survivors to actively participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. It involves providing survivors with information, support, and opportunities to exercise their agency, voice their opinions, and be involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of remediation programs;¹⁸

d) *Accountability*, which holds responsible parties accountable for their actions and ensures justice for child labor and trafficking survivors. It entails effective legal frameworks, robust law enforcement, and access to justice mechanisms that enable the prosecution of

¹⁴ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 5, *General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2003* (arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6), UN Doc. CRC/GC/2003/5. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FGC%2F2003%2F5&Lang=en

¹⁵ The 2014 Forced Labor Recommendation states that protective measures for children subjected to forced labor should take into account the special needs and best interests of the child, and, in addition to the protections provided for in the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (No. 182) should include: (a) access to education for girls and boys; (b) the appointment of a guardian or other representative, where appropriate; (c) when the person's age is uncertain but there are reasons to believe him or her to be less than 18 years of age, a presumption of minor status, pending age verification; and (d) efforts to reunite children with their families, or, when it is in the best interests of the child, provide family-based care. International Labor Organization, R203 - *Forced Labor (Supplementary Measures) Recommendation, 2014* (No. 203).

¹⁶ Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 5, *General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2003*, Article 3(1), UN Doc. CRC/GC/2003/5. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FGC%2F2003%2F5&Lang=en

¹⁷ *Ibid.* Article 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Article 24.

perpetrators. Additionally, accountability extends to ensuring that survivors have access to remedies, including compensation, restitution, and rehabilitation services;¹⁹

e) *Sustainability*, which underscores the long-term impact and durability of remediation efforts. It involves addressing the root causes of child labor and trafficking, promoting prevention measures, and creating sustainable alternatives for affected children and communities. Sustainable remediation programs focus not only on immediate removal from exploitation and rehabilitation but also on ensuring the social reintegration, education, vocational training, and economic empowerment of survivors.²⁰

3.2 Remediation Pathways

The goal of remediation for children withdrawn from exploitation should be to ensure that they can be at home with their family, successfully re-integrate into mainstream schooling, or access vocational training opportunities. Facilitating family reunification is a crucial element of child trafficking remediation. The Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking ask authorities to take all necessary steps to identify and locate children's family members, where this is in the best interests of child.²¹ Furthermore, the 2022 United Nations' Report on the Rights of the child and family reunification states that "Children must be treated as children in all circumstances and guaranteed their rights [...], including the right to be with their families, unless it is not in their best interests". It adds that the term "family" should be interpreted and applied in a broad sense, to include biological, adoptive or foster parents, or, where applicable, members of the extended family or community, as provided for by local custom.²² Kinship, which is family-based care within the child's extended family or with close friends of the family known to the child, is the closest alternative to family reunification.²³ However, when reunification with the immediate or extended family is not the safest option, other solutions, such as foster care or center-based (or "residential") care, must be explored.

¹⁹ For a framework for corporate accountability in relation to child labor and trafficking, see the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs) on Business and Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council by Resolution 17/4 on 16 June 2011. <https://www.undp.org/laopdr/publications/guiding-principles-business-and-human-rights>

²⁰ International Organization for Migration, *Handbook on Direct Assistance for Victims of Trafficking*, 2015, pp. 81, 97, 267. <https://publications.iom.int/books/iom-handbook-direct-assistance-victims-trafficking-0>

²¹ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*, 2002, Guideline 8.8. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/reference-publications/recommended-principles-and-guidelines-human-rights-and-human>

²² United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Report on the Rights of the child and family reunification*, Human Rights Council, Forty-ninth session, 28 February–1 April 2022, Agenda items 2 and 3, p. 15. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G22/274/38/PDF/G2227438.pdf?OpenElement>

²³ Kinship care is described as "family-based care within the child's extended family or with close friends of the family known to the child", United Nations General Assembly, *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*, February 2010, A/RES/64/142. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/673583>

Foster care offers children the opportunity to live in a family setting and receive individualized attention.²⁴ Foster care is typically intended to be temporary, with the goal of reuniting the child with their biological family or finding permanent placement with a family. Whilst it is considered a preferable alternative to residential care, there are documented cases where it can be detrimental, for example when systems fail to provide minimum standards of safety or cause long-term harm to children's development by moving them across multiple temporary homes or let them reach adulthood with no legal family and nowhere to go.²⁵

Center-based rehabilitation refers to providing therapeutic interventions and support within a dedicated facility or setting, aimed at promoting children's physical, cognitive, and emotional development. This rehabilitation usually happens in residential care facilities (the "centers") where multiple children live together under the care of paid staff. These facilities provide a group living environment and typically accommodate a larger number of children who live following a structured routine and share facilities. Transit homes can be considered a form of residential care and are typically intended as facilities where children and young people live while waiting for placement in a suitable alternative care setting or while receiving support with integrating back into the community, and where children can undergo assessments to determine their specific needs.²⁶ Center-based care is viewed as a last resort²⁷, due to serious concerns of abuse and maltreatment, and evidence of an increased risk of developmental delays, as well as high costs compared to home-based care, raised in the past few decades.²⁸ Yet, despite the focused policy push toward the advancement of family-and-community-based care, center-based care remains a relevant and highly utilized setting in many countries, fulfilling functions of care and accommodation as well as education and treatment.²⁹ This care is not always accessible to young people if there is a lack of family support or difficulties at home that remain unresolved upon their return from a trafficking situation, which makes them more vulnerable to re-trafficking.³⁰ When center-based programs provide an enabling environment where young survivors receive the necessary care and support to heal, access education, and stay in school, they may prove a suitable option.

²⁴ Brenda Jones Harden, "Safety and Stability for Foster Children: A Developmental Perspective" *The Future of Children*, Vol. 14, No. 1, (Winter, 2004): pp. 30-47. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1602753>

²⁵ Sarah Font, Elizabeth Gershoff, "Foster Care: How We Can, and Should, Do More for Maltreated Children", *Social Policy Report*, Nov, 33(3): 1-40, (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1002/sop2.10>

²⁶ "Quality care", SOS Children's Village, accessed July 3rd, 2023. <https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/our-work/protection/quality-care>

²⁷ Mary Dozier, Charles H. Zeanah, Allison R. Wallin, and Carole Shauffer. "Institutional Care for Young Children: Review of Literature and Policy Implications.", *Social Issues and Policy Review* 6, no. 1, (2012): 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-2409.2011.01033.x>.

²⁸ Sigrid James, Lucas Wilczek, Juri Kilian, *et al.*, "A Comparative Analysis of Residential Care: A Five-Country Multiple Case-Design Study", *Child Youth Care Forum*, Vol. 51, pp. 1031–1062 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-021-09666-6>

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ International Organization for Migrations. *The Causes and Consequences of Re-Trafficking. Evidence from the IOM Human Trafficking Database*, 2010, p. 39. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/causes_of_retrafficking.pdf

This paper delves into center-based rehabilitation programming through the case study of *Hamro Ghar*, a transit home in Kathmandu, Nepal. In the following sections, we first present a succinct overview of child trafficking and remediation in the local context of Nepal, then examine the interventions offered at *Hamro Ghar* and how these are underpinned by the remediation principles that were outlined in this section.

4. Child Protection in the Context of Nepal

In 1990, Nepal ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and included safeguarding the rights and interest of children in its Constitution.³¹ In addition, Articles 51 and 39 of the 2015 Constitution of Nepal ensure the best interests of children and guarantee their rights, with another 11 articles related to the welfare of children.³² At the national level, Nepal has enacted legislation to combat child labor³³ and trafficking, and provide legal remedies for survivors. The 2007 Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act protects the rights of people who have been trafficked by ensuring the right to confidentiality, social rehabilitation, and reintegration in the family, among other provisions.³⁴ Nepal also participates in regional and international collaborations to address child trafficking, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation which facilitates regional cooperation and exchange of best practices.³⁵ The Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (CLPRA) of 2000 defines the minimum working age, regulates the work of adolescents, and bans hazardous occupations and forced labor³⁶. The Act Relating to Children of 2018 (ARC)³⁷ takes a rights-based approach in protecting children and has a wider scope than the CLPRA, 2000. However, there are still gaps and contradictions on different clauses in laws related to child labor. For example, the legal working age is 14 years, as per the CLPRA, 2000, however, the rights of compulsory and free education are guaranteed for children up to 13 years of age only.³⁸ Recently, Nepal has become a

³¹ OHCHR, *Pledge by Nepal, Celebrating 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child* <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crc/celebrating-30-years-convention-rights-child/pledge-nepal>

³² ILO, *Constitution of Nepal, 2015, (unofficial translation)*. <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/MONOGRAPH/100061/119815/F-1676948026/NPL1000>

³³ ILO, Policy Brief. Child labour and social protection in Nepal, December 2022, p. 5. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-kathmandu/documents/publication/wcms_864661.pdf

³⁴ ILO, *Nepal - Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, 2064, 2007*. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=87492&p_country=NPL&p_count=127&p_classification=03&p_classcount=2

³⁵ UN Women Global Database. *SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution*, accessed December 10, 2023. <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/fr/countries/asia/india/2002/south-asian-association-for-regional-cooperation#:~:text=The%20main%20purpose%20of%20this,the%20countries%20of%20the%20SAARC>

³⁶ Nepal Law Commission. *Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2056 (2000)*. <https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/?cat=367>

³⁷ UNICEF. *Act Relating to Children, 2018 (unofficial translation)*. <https://www.unicef.org/nepal/sites/unicef.org.nepal/files/2018-12/Act%20Relating%20to%20Children%202018%20-%20Eng%20-%20Revised.pdf>

³⁸ ILO, Policy Brief. Child labour and social protection in Nepal, December 2022, p. 5. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-kathmandu/documents/publication/wcms_864661.pdf

pathfinder country under Alliance 8.7, committing to "go further and faster to achieve Target 8.7"³⁹ of the Sustainable Development Goals, namely to eradicate modern slavery, human trafficking and end child labor in all its forms by 2025.⁴⁰

Despite this political and legislative framework, Nepal continues to be a source, transit, and destination country for trafficking in persons, with children being particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Recent studies estimate that 1.1 million children in Nepal are engaged in child labor (accounting for 15% of the population of children aged 5-17 years).⁴¹ 10,000 children were in forced labor over the past five years, especially in agriculture, domestic work, brick kilns, the embroidered textile industry, as well as in carpet factories and stone quarrying. The actual number of cases is likely much higher, as many instances of trafficking go unreported or unnoticed.⁴² Both the government and NGOs have noted an increase in trafficking risk since the earthquakes of 2015.⁴³ Furthermore, years of political instability, slow economic growth and the recent COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated the country's dependencies on foreign remittances, as well as its people's vulnerabilities. Following the pandemic, migrant workers had to return to their home villages, where immediate means of income and job opportunities were lacking. Many households in Nepal lost a source of income, with 27% becoming indebted, putting children at risk of having to enter the workforce to support their families.⁴⁴ One and a half million Nepalis, especially youth, girls, and individuals coming from traditionally marginalized castes were deemed at high risk of trafficking in 2022.⁴⁵

Access to remedy for trafficked children remains a significant challenge despite ongoing efforts by the Nepali government and NGOs. While the government has created some policies to improve service for victims, significant gaps remain. As of 2022, the government lacked formal standard operating procedures for victim identification and referral to services.⁴⁶ Existing remediation frameworks have fallen short in terms of delivering the intended benefits to individuals

³⁹ Alliance 8.7, Pathways to progress (no date), accessed December 10, 2023. <https://www.alliance87.org/pathfinders>

⁴⁰ Target 8.7 mandates to "Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labor in all its forms." – see United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development, accessed December 10, 2023. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report/Nepal, 2023*, accessed June 20, 2023. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/nepal>

⁴³ Manuela Brulisauer, "Human Trafficking in Post-Earthquake Nepal: Impacts of the Disaster on Methods for Victim Recruitment", *MAS ETH Development and Cooperation*, 2016. https://ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/nadel-dam/teaching/mas/mas-essays/MAS%20Cycle%202014%20-%202016/Essay_Manuela%20Brulisauer.pdf

⁴⁴ "COVID-19 child and family tracker: Findings. Tracking the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children and families in Nepal", United Nations Children's Fund, Child and Family Tracker (CFT), Kathmandu, Nepal, April 2022. <https://www.unicef.org/nepal/reports/covid-19-child-and-family-tracker-findings>

⁴⁵ National Human Rights Commission of Nepal, 2019.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

who are removed from trafficking or helping them make their voices heard,⁴⁷ with referrals remaining inconsistent. Victim care is low, mostly in the forms of shelters and children's homes.⁴⁸ Currently, there are 17 transit homes in the Kathmandu area.⁴⁹ Available services are often limited in scope and capacity. Safe houses and transit homes struggle to accommodate all individuals removed from trafficking due to space constraints. Local trafficking remediation efforts lack policies and programs that are integrated within the broader concerns of child protection and children's rights to participate in decision-making.⁵⁰ The quality and sustainability of services provided, including access to education and vocational training, are sometimes compromised due to inadequate funding and resources. In 2021 and 2022, the National Child Rights Council, which monitors childcare homes, removed more than 150 children from unregistered homes.⁵¹ At the end of 2022, the Nepali government finalized a standard operating procedure for operating childcare homes – in consultations with NGF among other local NGOs – and began efforts to reduce the overall number of children's institutions; however, implementation has been slow.⁵²

5. Background on GoodWeave International and Nepal GoodWeave Foundation

GWI is a global non-profit founded by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kailash Satyarthi in 1994.⁵³ Through a market-based, holistic model, GWI leverages private sector partnerships to bring visibility to informal, marginalized workers, identify and remediate child and forced labor, and address root causes of worker exploitation. The GoodWeave® label found on select products assures companies and consumers that no child was involved in the making of their goods. GWI operates in India, Nepal and Bangladesh through its local affiliated organizations and other frontline partners who conduct deep supply chain mapping and due diligence, as well as remediation and prevention programming in alignment with global policies and procedures. Affiliated organizations in Nepal include NGF and GCN.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Shovita Dhakal Adhikari & Pawan Adhikari, "Implementation of the anti-child trafficking framework in Nepal: an impaired diffusion process", *Development in Practice*, 33:2 (2023) 180-189. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2022.2114429>

⁴⁸ US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report/Nepal, 2023*. Accessed June 25, 2023. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/nepal>

⁴⁹ Data shared by NGF in June 2023.

⁵⁰ Shovita Dhakal Adhikari, Jackie Turton "Understanding 'trafficking vulnerabilities' among children: the responses linking to child protection issues in Nepal", *Children's Geographies*, 18:4 (2020), 393-405. DOI: <http://goi.gov/10.1080/14733285.2019.1676398>

⁵¹ US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report/Nepal, 2023*. Accessed June 25, 2023. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/nepal>

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ GoodWeave International, *Kailash Satyarthi on the Founding of GoodWeave*, May 12, 2017. <https://goodweave.org/kailash-satyarthi-on-the-founding-of-goodweave/>

⁵⁴ GoodWeave International, *The GoodWeave System*, <https://goodweave.org/proven-approach/the-goodweave-system/>. Accessed December 12, 2023

NGF is an organization dedicated to combating child labor and trafficking and promoting child rights in the carpet and home textiles industry of Nepal, as well as in the brick kiln sector. Established in 1995, the foundation offers a range of services aimed at protecting and rehabilitating children removed from trafficking and labor exploitation, including the transit home *Hamro Ghar* and community-based programs in the Kathmandu Valley, Sindhupalchok, Makawanpur, Bara, Sarlahi, Rautahat and Chitwan districts of Nepal.⁵⁵ NGF works in concert with GCN, a private company that conducts audits and inspections in carpet and textile worksites in the Kathmandu Valley. GCN specializes in assessing subcontracted worksites, which comprise the majority of production, but are rarely visible to international buyers and where child labor risk is highest.⁵⁶ From 1995 through March 2023, GCN identified and withdrawn almost 1,500 child laborers from carpet worksites.⁵⁷

Since 2018, the Nepali government has classified carpet manufacturing as a hazardous occupation, making it illegal to employ anyone under 18 in this sector.⁵⁸ Despite this, children continue to be involved in carpet manufacturing, albeit in a more concealed manner. Carpet exports are one of Nepal's largest sources of GDP, accounting for \$70 million of products exported to more than 60 countries⁵⁹, however the labor shortage within the industry, the effect of climate change on rural areas of the countries⁶⁰, and widespread poverty have exacerbated child labor within the industry. Carpet-making subcontractors need workers and rely on recruiters and contractors – who charge a commission – to collect work from villages and to bring workers to the factories. Impoverished rural families, pushed by increasing food and land insecurity, agree to send their children along with the contractors to work in factories with promises of good pay. In many cases, these children have never stepped inside a classroom. Others are forced to drop out of school. Children travel from remote areas to take up jobs in Kathmandu, but end up in harsh living and working conditions, earn much less than what was promised to them, and are unable to leave their workplaces. Carpet factories often receive subcontracted work from bigger exporters. Since carpet subcontractors sit a layer below exporting factories in the supply chain, they are not visible to international buyers who typically only have direct relationship with the exporters they buy the

⁵⁵ Nepal GoodWeave Foundation is a nonprofit making, non-government organization established in December 1995 as a result of collaboration among Carpet Entrepreneurs, Child Right NGOs, and International Development Organizations (UNICEF, German Agency for Technical Cooperation, and Asian American Free Labor Institute).

⁵⁶ Oliver Balch, "10,000 children estimated to work in Nepal's carpet industry", *The Guardian*, 20 November 2014, accessed 8 December 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2014/nov/20/10000-children-estimated-to-work-in-nepals-carpet-industry>

⁵⁷ Data provided by GoodWeave International in June 2023.

⁵⁸ Nepal Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act 2056, 2000. <https://leap.unep.org/countries/np/national-legislation/child-labor-prohibition-and-regulation-act-2056-2000#:~:text=This%20Act%2C%20consisting%20of%2032%20sections%20divided%20into,be%20satisfied%20for%20obtaining%20a%20child%20labour%20authorization.>

⁵⁹ Nepal Trade Information Portal, https://nepaltradeportal.gov.np/web/guest/major-commodity?p_p_id=commodityportlet_WAR_tepc&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&refererPlid=20137&_commodityportlet_WAR_tepc_param=getDetail&id=3, accessed December 12, 2023

⁶⁰ Government of Nepal's Ministry of Forests and Environment, *Vulnerability and Risk Assessment and Identifying Adaptation Options*, 2021. <https://www.mofe.gov.np/uploads/documents/vulnerability-repnew1630571413pdf-2940-766-1658827788.pdf>

finished product from, nor are included in their social audit scope. This results in child labor remaining undetected. GWI and its country affiliates' inspection and monitoring protocols use techniques to access all worksites linked to an exporter, including subcontractors, and assess whether children are being employed.

After children are identified and withdrawn from worksites by GNC, they are provided with care and a range of remediation services by NGF on a case-by-case basis. GCN works closely with local ward authorities and child protection officers from the relevant municipalities to get approvals for the removal of the child laborer from the factory. When child laborers are unaccompanied by their parents or guardians, or these cannot be located, children are transported to NGF's transit home *Hamro Ghar*. Upon arrival, the NGF social work team details the physical and psychological conditions of the child. This includes ascertaining their immediate needs, assessing their family, social and economic background, how they started working, and whether it is safe to reunite them with their family through its community-based rehabilitation (CBR) program. This work – from withdrawing to rehabilitating children – is implemented in alignment with GWI's *Child, Forced and Bonded Labor Remediation Policy*, as well as country-level standard operating procedures.⁶¹

According to the *Remediation Policy*, NGF makes all possible efforts to implement CBR, reintegrate the child with their parents or close family members and provide ongoing support, including a food allowance if needed. Remaining at *Hamro Ghar* for longer-term center-based rehabilitation is considered and discussed with the child in cases when they are at-risk of re-trafficking, are orphaned, lack the possibility of reuniting with their families, or belong to families whose whereabouts are unknown or who are unable to meet their basic needs, including education. Activities at *Hamro Ghar* are predominantly funded by GWI, through sub-awards funded by license fees that international buyers pay to be part of GoodWeave's due diligence and certification program, as well as occasional public and private grants. *Hamro Ghar* is periodically evaluated by a monitoring committee of the National Child Rights Council (NCRC) and Kageshwori Manohara Municipality against NCRC's requirements, which are based on the ARC and other relevant laws. In the most recent evaluation, in August 2023, *Hamro Ghar* was rated at the 6th position among all homes in Nepal for compliance with the national standard.

6. Center-Based Remediation Programming: The Case Study of *Hamro Ghar*

"[At my village] there was not a single day where we had enough food. Some days we did not eat at all. So I ran away with my close friend and came to Kathmandu. After joining the factory, I worked there for about two years, but they still have not paid me. I used to have cuts and bruises on my hands while weaving. The blood from the cuts on my hands used to fall on the carpet. I was 10 years old at that time. After a while, a man from GoodWeave found me and took me to [GoodWeave]'s transit home, and I was provided with an education." – Nirmala⁶²

⁶¹ GoodWeave International, "Child, Forced and Bonded Labor Remediation Policy", 17 May 2021. <https://goodweave.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/GWI-Remediation-Policy-v.4-Jan-2016.pdf>

⁶² GoodWeave International, *Nirmala's Story*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkRFO_4hKKY&t=13s

Between 2018 and 2022, *Hamro Ghar* enrolled 62 new children, 38 boys and 24 girls, who were withdrawn from illegal employment in the carpet sector. Most children are between 12 and 15 years old, although they can be as young as 10 and as old as 18. As of June 2023, 28 children, 18 boys and 10 girls, live on the premises, as do four of the seven staff. Boys and girls live on different floors, while classrooms, a dining hall, a courtyard, and a TV room are shared spaces. Children stayed at the transit home for periods that ranged from one month to three years. Some children reside at *Hamro Ghar* for a short period of time then reunite with their families. If the environment back home continues to be an unsuitable option, provisions are made for longer-term support at the transit home. Between January 2021 and March 2023, out of 46 child laborers who were provided remediation support, 14 returned to their communities immediately after being withdrawn from worksites; eight enrolled in Hamro Ghar and later returned to their communities, and 24 chose to remain at Hamro Ghar.⁶³

Three mutually reinforcing principles underpin both short and longer-term support: creating an inclusive, safe space for children to be children; providing access to education and opportunities for continued learning; and taking a child-and-survivor-centered approach to program implementation. The following sections highlight key aspects of each approach and draw from our conversations with the children residing at *Hamro Ghar* as well as with colleagues at GWI, NGF and GCN.

6.1 Creating an inclusive, safe space for children to be children

Establishing an inclusive and secure environment to foster the normal development of children is a key objective of *Hamro Ghar*. This happens by helping children overcome trauma, offering recreational activities, helping non-Nepali-speaking children feel accepted, and fostering a sense of community in the transit home. Robust policies and procedures provide a framework for activity implementation.

Survivors' experiences have lasting impacts and continue to affect their mental health far beyond their rescue or escape. Psychosocial support is a key avenue to address the impact of survivors' trauma on their mental health.⁶⁴ Children enrolled at *Hamro Ghar* have been removed from exploitative situations and often encounter various physical, psychological, emotional, and behavioral challenges. Once they are admitted into the transit home, their mental and physical health is assessed. Children and their guardians are informed about what the process and protocols are once admitted at *Hamro Ghar*, so they know what to expect. This includes filling in an intake form and undergoing a medical visit to check their overall health conditions. Effective counseling during the children's stay at the home also plays a critical role. A dedicated female counselor assumes the responsibility of providing psychosocial counseling, which begins with an initial session for each child and then follow-up sessions based on each child's needs. Whilst it is

⁶³ Data provided by GoodWeave Nepal Foundation in June 2023.

⁶⁴ Sanjeev Dasgupta and Ana Maria Soto, "Psychometric Measures of Empowerment and Disempowerment of Survivors of Human Trafficking: Developing and Piloting Tools to Assess the Positive and Negative Impacts of Post-Trafficking Interventions and Environments on Trafficked Persons", Issara Institute, *Empowerment Incubator* Series Paper 1, 2018, p. 11. ISBN: 978-616-93096-8-0

encouraged that children start seeing the counselor shortly after being admitted at the transit home, children start when they are ready. Besides the counselor, *Hamro Ghar* staff and teachers observe children's behavior with the goal to guide them toward psychosocial support when appropriate. These sessions focus on addressing trauma and anxiety, which are commonly experienced by children, and are informal and play based. Both individual and group counseling sessions assist the children in navigating their difficulties.

Recreational activities are another integral part of the support provided. Children are encouraged to engage in sports, as well as art, music, and dance classes. These activities provide them with new avenues to enhance their confidence, express their emotions, and nurture their creativity, which were previously hindered during their experiences in factories. Team sports may be an important and scalable resilience builder. Being part of a team, working together toward a common goal in a competitive environment, may help give kids the skills to manage or overcome their own issues.⁶⁵ One 15-year-old *Hamro Ghar* student shared that playing football makes her happy, because it is a game, she plays with friends, and it is about teamwork. A 14-year-old shared that karate was her favorite sport, because knowing a martial art provides a sense of security. Some children have discovered their talents and gained a sense of empowerment through participation in singing classes. Daily meditation sessions are conducted in the mornings to promote inner tranquility and self-awareness among the children. According to recent research, through mindfulness practices, children who have experienced trauma are able to better learn about the connection between their minds and their bodies and access different ways to assist their minds and bodies in calming down⁶⁶, as well as enhance attention and reduce chronic harsh self-judgment.⁶⁷ A 14-year-old shared that yoga helps "starting the day with a fresh mind".

Language inclusiveness is also important, since most children at the transit home are *Tamang* (a Tibeto-Burman ethnic group of Nepal) and predominantly speak Tamang. Language barriers have historically isolated the Tamang and other indigenous communities from access to services and job opportunities, and children from mainstream education, since instruction and materials are primarily available in Nepali only. More recently, and a result of advocacy from the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities, the government has started promoting the preservation of multiculturalism and multilingualism.⁶⁸ However, it is still unclear in practice how multilingualism should be implemented in schools, and many schools still opt for utilizing

⁶⁵Bob Cook, "Can Sports Help Kids Overcome Their Childhood Trauma?", *Forbes*, May 30, 2019, accessed December 7, 2023. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bobcook/2019/05/30/can-sports-help-kids-overcome-their-childhood-trauma/>

⁶⁶ David Black, Randima Fernando, "Mindfulness Training and Classroom Behavior Among Lower-Income and Ethnic Minority Elementary School Children", *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 2014 Oct; 23(7), pp. 1242-1246. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-013-9784-4>

⁶⁷ Randy Semple, Jennifer Lee, Dinelia Rosa, *et al.*, "A randomized trial of mindfulness based cognitive therapy for children: Promoting mindful attention to enhance social-emotional resiliency in children", *Journal of Child & Family Studies*, 2010, 19(2), pp. 218-229. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-009-9301y>

⁶⁸ The 2015 Constituent of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal states that Nepal is a "multilingual, multicultural, and multi-ethnic country". See ILO, *Constitution of Nepal, 2015, (unofficial translation)*. <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/MONOGRAPH/100061/119815/F-1676948026/NPL100061%20Eng.pdf>

Nepali, or English, in the case of private school, as the medium of instruction.⁶⁹ Tamang children do not feel at ease speaking Nepali once they arrive at *Hamro Ghar* and need extra language support. Two of the residential staff at *Hamro Ghar* are Tamang, as is Hem Moktan, NGF Child Development Officer. A third staff member understands the language. This has helped children feel understood and supported through the transition to learning fluent Nepali.

Children need time and support to get comfortable with the new rules and limitations that come with living in a residential facility. Many of them did not have any healthy boundaries when they were working in factories, and picked up dangerous habits such as smoking, drinking and endlessly playing on phones. At *Hamro Ghar*, these habits need to be given up. Children usually demonstrate resistance, which occasionally leads to tension and a desire to leave the facility. However, over time, their resistance tends to diminish and fade away. During class time, children are taught the difference between healthy and unhealthy habits and the consequences for the body and mind. Lessons that focus on health and science help support these explanations. In addition, staying busy and focused on a healthy daily routine comprised of morning meditation, physical education, classes, extracurricular activities, and play time helps curb these habits. For cases where it is particularly difficult to quit, for example in the case of smoking, chewing gums or sweets are temporarily offered to help the urge subside.

Establishing a sense of community and routine is important to promote integration and nurture children's self-acceptance and feeling of belonging. *Hamro Ghar* children come from exploitative contexts where they were required to work very long shifts, and there was no time to socialize or make friends. Newcomers often are shy and do not immediately take part in activities, but with time they learn from their peers and get comfortable in their new environment. Children are involved in the commemoration of special days, such as the World Day Against Child Labor (June 12), Children's Day (September 14)⁷⁰, and festivals. During these occasions, children receive new clothing, shoes, and gifts, and partake in visits to monasteries and temples as a family would. Two celebrations have proven to be particularly uplifting. On Foundation Day (December 24), NGF and *Hamro Ghar* organize various programs at different theaters, attended by donors, government agencies, partner organizations, and representatives of the business sector, including carpet manufacturers that partner with GoodWeave. Throughout the year, children who participate in extracurricular activities, such as dance, sport, or singing, can decide to sign up to perform in these events. The second event, the "Common Birthday" program, is celebrated every year on January 1st. Many children living at *Hamro Ghar* do not have accurate knowledge of their date of birth. The common birthday celebration allows everyone to commemorate their birth and aims to instill a sense of the significance of that day.

Children at times miss home and worry about their families. A 13-year-old shared that she was worried about her younger brothers' future. The brothers had recently taken up work as laborers in a brick kiln and there was no school in the proximity of the kiln. Contact with their families is facilitated as much as possible. Children can phone home once a week. Most families

⁶⁹ Prem Phyak, "Language education policy in Nepal and the denial of the right to speak in Indigenous languages", *Melbourne Asia Review*, Ed. 7, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.37839/MAR2652-550X7.7>

⁷⁰ Children's day falls on 14th September, or, in Nepali, 29th Badhra, and commemorates the day the Nepali government signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

can be reached through mobile, although signal in rural areas can be unreliable. As much as feasible, children also travel back to their villages to spend major festivals with their families. These visits are organized following a protocol that ensures appropriate documents and arrangements are in place for the children to travel with their parents or relatives. Parents and relatives are also able to visit children at *Hamro Ghar*. At times, while visiting their home village, children decide not to return to the transit home. When this happens, NGF looks into whether a food allowance is needed and if there are schools the child can enroll in to continue studying, although this is not always sufficient to keep children in school or prevent them from taking up work again.

6.2 Providing access to education and opportunities for continued learning

Education plays a crucial role in the foundation's approach. Most children brought to *Hamro Ghar* are illiterate or have dropped out of school. One of the transit home's main goals is to enable their successful reintegration into formal schools, and to provide opportunities to continue studying in secondary school or access vocational training.

Upon enrolling at *Hamro Ghar*, children's age and educational level is assessed, and they are divided into three grades based on their level: Intro, Basic, and Advanced. From Sunday to Friday, children attend regular classes taught by three teachers who employ child-friendly, Montessori-style teaching methods. Teachers try to engage children actively, instead of using frontal instruction, where there is little opportunity for interaction. Children who speak only Tamang are given extra support to learn Nepali so they can join classes as quickly as possible. Other subjects include English, math, science, and social studies. Unlike traditional schools, the transit home operates on a six-month academic session, allowing academically proficient children to advance to higher grades twice a year. This system, referred to as the *Accelerated Education Program* grants children the opportunity to progress swiftly and catch up with peers their age, even if they have fallen behind. Alongside academic pursuits, extracurricular activities such as competitions, crafts, and games offer opportunities to enhance the children's overall knowledge. Regular assessments, including examinations held every three months, track the children's performance. After each examination date, a small prize distribution ceremony acknowledges the top-performing children. The transit home school calendar aligns with that of formal schools, facilitating a smoother transition for children seeking admission to mainstream education. Children who leave *Hamro Ghar* to be reunited with their families may enter a community-based rehabilitation program. They are enrolled in local schools, and their attendance is tracked by the NGF team. However, the dropout rate has been higher in community-based programs than in *Hamro Ghar*. Often there are no schools in proximity to the children's villages, and public transport is lacking or too costly for their family. This results in children dropping out of school. For example, almost half of the 28 children enrolled in local schools through the community-based rehabilitation program dropped out in the academic year 2022/2023, despite regular follow up by NGF staff.⁷¹

⁷¹ Data provided by Nepal GoodWeave Foundation in June 2023.

Many children graduating from *Hamro Ghar* show little interest in pursuing secondary education and instead prefer to acquire vocational skills for employment purposes. NGF offers vocational training opportunities to these children, aiming to equip them with practical and marketable abilities that can lead to sustainable job prospects. The training options include handicrafts, plumbing, chef training, and more, consisting of a short learning phase followed by a longer practical application phase. NGF collaborates with the Nepal Vocational Academy and the Vocational Training Institute to provide these programs. However, the limited availability of resources has restricted the range and quantity of training options available to the children.

Academically proficient students who graduate from *Hamro Ghar* are given the opportunity to choose continued school-based rehabilitation through a sponsored, residential program at Kathmandu's Laboratory Higher Secondary School (Lab School), with tuition paid by GoodWeave. The Lab School is one of the most elite boarding schools in the country. Under an arrangement made with *Hamro Ghar*, a number of spots at this school are reserved each year for children graduating from *Hamro Ghar*. Candidates must pass tests before admission to the Lab School, for which teachers at *Hamro Ghar* help them prepare. In the past five years, 25 children (11 girls and 14 boys) have enrolled at the Lab School. Students are exposed to international opportunities, including attending college abroad. Graduates from the Lab School often go on to lead successful careers in business, engineering, art and medicine. For example, in 2020, when still studying in the eighth grade at the Lab School, Sumitra, a *Hamro Ghar* graduate, shared:

*"In my future, I want to be a nurse. My role model is Florence Nightingale. I want to be like her. I came from a carpet factory, in transit home. I didn't see any future there [in the carpet factory]. When my father was suffering from TB [tuberculosis], that time I didn't get chance to cure him, so I want to cure many patients and persons who are suffering from different diseases in my future. [...] I want to visit Nepal and other countries to cure patients [...] and this is my hope for my future."*⁷²

In 2023, Sumitra was selected for a prestigious study abroad program in Germany, where she will pursue a course in public health, along with another Lab School student who will study photography.

6.3 Taking a child-and survivor-centered approach to program implementation

Children's safety is paramount, and the transit home follows rigorous procedures, from the time of enrollment to discharge. All the staff is trained on GWI's *Child Protection Policy*⁷³, which includes specific behavior guidelines for *Hamro Ghar* staff and anyone who enters into contact with children through any NGF or GCN programming. This policy must be

⁷² GoodWeave International, *Hem Moktan: He Made It*, June 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbqLLo3TQIE>

⁷³ GoodWeave International, *Child Protection Policy*, August 2021. <http://comments.goodweave.org/wp-content/uploads//GWI-Child-Protection-Policy-Feb-2014-v.3.pdf>

acknowledged and signed by anyone entering the transit home. NGF has appointed a monitoring officer who conducts regular checks of the activities within the transit home and assesses the performance of staff members. The officer also observes the children's behavior, interacts with them, and alerts the counselor if any issues require attention. Protocols and ethical guidelines are in place to ensure sensitive information is handled securely and shared only on a need-to-know basis. The Nepali government also routinely monitors the home's living and food standards. The transit home recently introduced a gender equality and social inclusion policy that builds on the existing *Child Protection Policy*.

Facilitating the growth and strengthening of survivors' decision-making powers is a critical element of rehabilitation, and a direct response of their previous loss of control over basic aspects of their lives.⁷⁴ *Hamro Ghar* involves the children in decision-making processes through various channels and provides orientations on how to use them. One channel is the *Child Advisory Committee*, which is comprised of the children residing at *Hamro Ghar* and gathers on a quarterly basis or more frequently, if needed. The function of the committee is to gather the children's feedback on the overall programs and share it with the staff and NGF's Board. Another is a suggestion box, kept outside of CCTV circuits, and opened once a month. A third channel is the *Child Club*, which meets once a month, to take and discuss feedback from the children about aspects of daily life at the transit home – such as weekly menus, or on the use of the common outdoor space for activities or sports. The psychosocial counselor includes taking feedback from the children as part of her sessions. Finally, the Child Protection Committee, comprised of three members of the NGF board, is responsible for developing and providing oversight for the implementation of policies related to child protection, takes feedback on concerns related to safeguarding. A positive change that spurred from these open feedback channels has been implementing inclusive sports programs. Previously limited to boys, activities like martial arts and football are now open to both genders on dedicated days each week.

Another important aspect of remediation programming at *Hamro Ghar* is the inclusion of survivors in the shaping and implementation of rehabilitation programs. A recent study found that when organizations include people with lived experience as employed colleagues embedded within project teams, program benefits are deepened and outlined with greater precision, due to the unique insight and understanding offered through lived experience expertise.⁷⁵ Since 2016, Hem Moktan, one of the authors of this paper and a child labor survivor, has taken the role of Child Development Officer at NGF and directly oversees programming at the transit home. Two other former child laborers were hired to serve as caretaker and teacher, respectively. The full-time opportunity has proven transformative for both the employees and the children in their care. Studies demonstrate that survivors who have the skills and ability to work gain hope for a bright future, as they feel they had the agency to pursue specific work opportunities they wanted. On the other hand, when survivors feel that they did not have basic skills to help themselves, they

⁷⁴ Sanjeev Dasgupta and Ana Maria Soto, "Psychometric Measures of Empowerment and Disempowerment of Survivors of Human Trafficking: Developing and Piloting Tools to Assess the Positive and Negative Impacts of Post-Trafficking Interventions and Environments on Trafficked Persons", Issara Institute, *Empowerment Incubator Series Paper 1*, 2018, p.2. ISBN: 978-616-93096-8-0 https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5bf36e_7fd24765f0f34f6cacf560915255697a.pdf

⁷⁵ Ibid.

feel inferior and helpless.⁷⁶ Providing job opportunities to survivors also directly challenges tokenistic engagement, where affected individuals' sharing of their trafficking experience is seen as the primary form of work they are equipped to do or should do.⁷⁷ Engagement should always lead towards tangible and meaningful change, for communities or beneficiaries or the organizations and people involved in designing and delivering programs.⁷⁸ Instead, tokenistic engagement carries the high risk of perpetuating trauma, whilst survivors are trying to look at the future. This is key to motivating children at *Hamro Ghar*. Survivors cannot "always think of the past, of the factories, or the abuse. We need to move ahead".⁷⁹

Lived experience helps survivors empathize with the children and understand their challenges, approaching them not as "charity cases" but as individuals with lived experience that they recognize. For example, at times, children wait outside Hem's office to talk to him and get his advice. His personal stories have fostered trust for the children to open and share their feelings, which sometimes are too difficult to communicate, even during professional counseling sessions. Seeing a former child laborer's personal journey from being in a situation of exploitation to becoming key staff at a renown NGO inspires hope among the young transit home residents. "Whilst it feels deeply emotional at times, it also makes me very happy to see that I can talk to the children and in one conversation convince them to stick to school"— Hem shared.⁸⁰ By witnessing the transformation and achievements of people who once experienced the same abuse, the children develop a sense of self-belief, resilience, and determination, which are crucial for their own rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

7. Limitations

This paper has limitations that warrant acknowledgment. Firstly, it is important to note that the scope of this study is limited to the rehabilitation aspect of remediation for children trafficked for the purpose of labor exploitation. This includes qualitative aspects such as psychosocial support, education, and community engagement. Other components of remediation, such as financial restitution, access to justice, and accountability are not addressed. The examination of supply chain actors' involvement, potential contributions, and accountability mechanisms would provide a more comprehensive understanding of what their role should be in the broader remediation ecosystem. Future research could explore these dimensions to shed light

⁷⁶ Sanjeev Dasgupta and Ana Maria Soto, "Psychometric Measures of Empowerment and Disempowerment of Survivors of Human Trafficking: Developing and Piloting Tools to Assess the Positive and Negative Impacts of Post-Trafficking Interventions and Environments on Trafficked Persons", Issara Institute, Empowerment Incubator Series Paper 1, 2018, p. 12. ISBN: 978-616-93096-8-0

⁷⁷ Wendy Asquith, Allen Kiconco and Alex Balch, "*A review of current promising practices in the engagement of people with lived experience to address modern slavery and human trafficking*", Modern Slavery & Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre, October 2022. <https://modernslaverypec.org/assets/downloads/Engagement-lived-experience-full-report.pdf>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Quote from Hem Moktan from a conversation between the authors of this paper.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

on the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in promoting effective rehabilitation practices and ensuring sustainable impact.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that this study primarily examines the role and effectiveness of center-based rehabilitation through the case study of a transit home. While playing an important role in providing immediate support and care to trafficked children, center-based rehabilitation represents only one of several rehabilitation pathways. The article does not provide a comparative analysis with other examples of transit homes or rehabilitation settings in Nepal, and takes the form of a specific case, focusing on NGF's *Hamro Ghar*. The intentional use of a small sample size and targeted interviews with staff aligned with the study's depth and specificity. However, this focused approach limits the possibility to generalize findings beyond the specific context under investigation and caution should be exercised in extending the study findings to other center-based rehabilitation facilities. Future research could consider conducting comparative studies across multiple center-based programs to enhance the breadth of knowledge in this field and provide a more comprehensive understanding of their strengths, limitations, and effectiveness in rehabilitating trafficked children.

8. Conclusions

This paper presented an analysis of how center-based rehabilitation programs can be implemented in the best interests of the children they serve, drawing from the case study of the transit home *Hamro Ghar* in Nepal. The paper underscored the crucial importance of providing children withdrawn from exploitation with support to reintegrate into society and mainstream schooling. While family reunification is the primary goal, center-based rehabilitation is explored as an option that provides therapeutic interventions catering to children's physical, cognitive, and emotional needs when it is unsafe or impossible to reunite them with immediate or extended family members.

The paper provided examples of the *Hamro Ghar* transit home's inclusive, participatory practices that aid children healing, getting back on track with their education, reintegrating into mainstream schools, and pursuing secondary education. While it is crucial to tailor rehabilitation to each child's individual needs and the local context, the case study of *Hamro Ghar* offers insights into a program that provides children with a sense of community, belonging and empowerment, helping them overcome the profound hardships of exploitation, trauma, and isolation during the critical years of childhood that are meant for play and learning. The paper also highlighted the importance of including survivors in developing and deploying remediation programming, and how their involvement can instill confidence, motivation, and a positive outlook on the future in beneficiary children.