



Weaving Opportunities in Nepal Mid-Term Evaluation Report



Introduction

GoodWeave's Weaving Opportunities program is a vocational training initiative for carpet weaving that began in Nepal in 2013 to provide at-risk and impoverished women with marketable skills and to replenish the workforce with skilled adult weavers. The program is designed to address the labor demand from companies in a country where, despite high nationwide unemployment and poverty levels, the carpet industry is facing a worker shortage due in large part to a lack of trained adult workers. GoodWeave further recognizes the lack of secure incomes for adults and the exploitation of children are interrelated, while fair and decent work for adults enables families to send their children to school. Graduates of the Weaving Opportunities program are placed in GoodWeave licensed and monitored facilities.

Scope

Launched in 2013, the Weaving Opportunities program has provided skills training to over two hundred weavers in Nepal. To evaluate the program's impact, GoodWeave assessed 87 weavers placed in jobs to evaluate their change in income and earning potential. This assessment included weavers trained under the very first cohort of trainees who have now been employed for eight months providing a forecast for what can be anticipated for more recent graduates.

Methods

To measure the training's impact, two surveys were deployed across 87 placed weavers, one to collect income data from the factory manager and the second to gather feedback from placed participants. Baseline data on participants was collected prior to the start of the Weaving Opportunities training, providing insight into each trainee's prior skills, income and financial challenges (i.e. level of debt). Income data from the first cohort of weavers was included to provide a six-month comparison. To collect data, GoodWeave deployed mobile technology allowing for real time reporting and analysis.

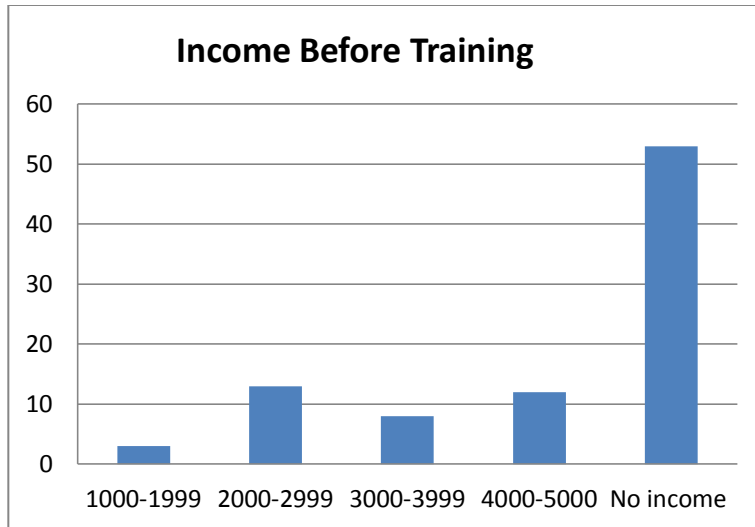
Evaluation Protocol

Reported incomes are based on a calculation of the piece rate and amount woven in a 30-day period. The piece rate that a weaver receives fluctuates based on the market and design of the carpet, while the amount a weaver is able to weave within a month is influenced by the number of working hours and the factory's operation schedule. For instance, a weaver may choose to work fewer hours one month or a festival may reduce working hours. Qualitative data collected from placed participant feedback surveys was coded and aggregated to assess most common responses and compared with the participant's income data.

Findings

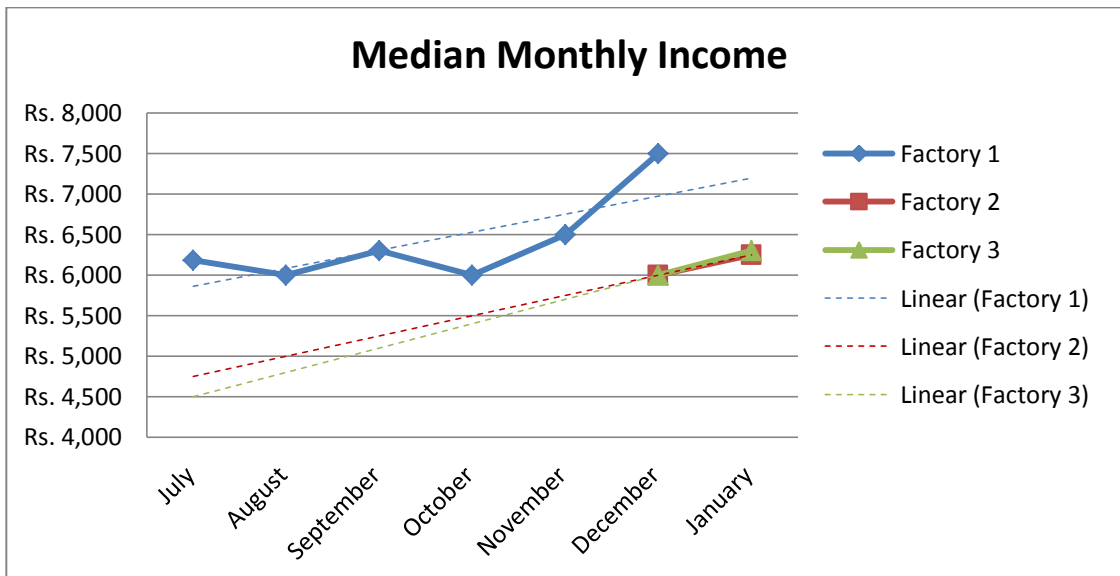
One hundred twenty four trainees are now gainfully employed and earning an increasing income within Nepal's carpet industry. For many of the now-skilled weavers, the impact of Weaving Opportunities goes beyond earning a stable income having presented participants with access to opportunity and a sense of empowerment.

Before entering the program, more than half of the 87 surveyed women disclosed that they had no income source (see figure on page 3). Many categorized themselves as housewives, not by choice but due to lack of a working skill. Within three months of training, more than half of the sampled participants have been given a skill, and for the first time have the choice to be employed.

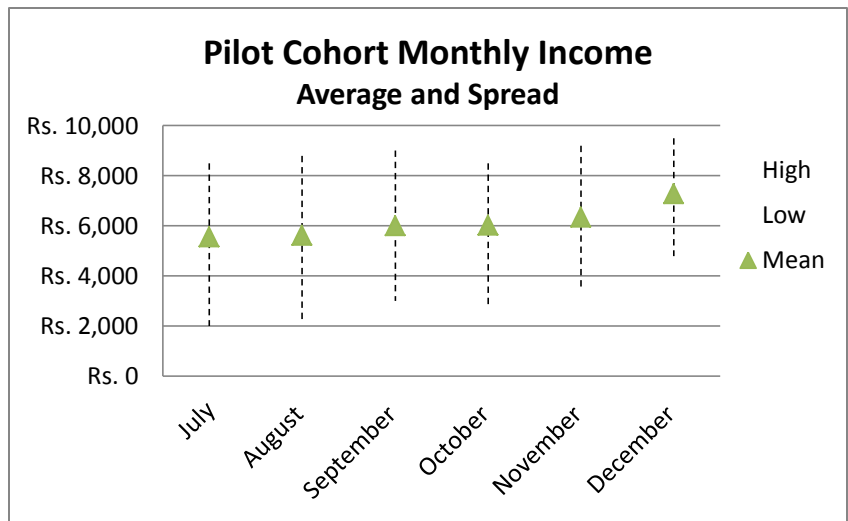


Previously-employed participants had a median monthly income of Rs. 3000 (\$30) prior to joining the training program. Within the first month of employment at a GoodWeave licensed carpet factory, their median income had doubled to Rs. 6000 (\$60). With a strong foundation from the training, weavers have been able to rapidly increase the speed at which they weave enabling them to increase their income monthly.

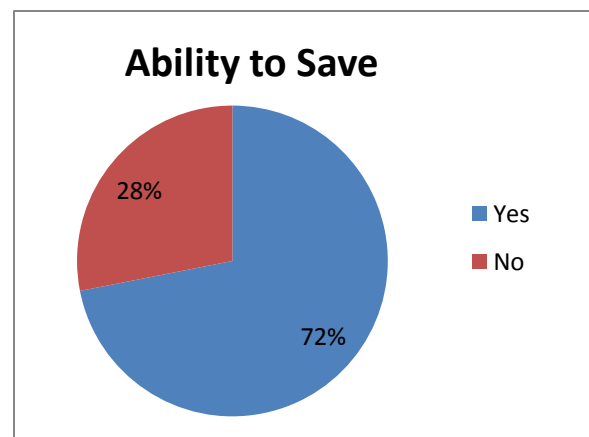
Weavers placed since August 2014 have seen their salaries increase by 27.5% from their first month after placement. Weavers placed at the beginning of 2015 are on the same positive trajectory. Within their first two months of placement they have had a median starting salary of Rs. 6000 (\$60), increasing to Rs. 6300 (\$63) in the second month of placement.



Weavers from the pilot cohort are earning wages as high as Rs. 9600 (\$96) and on average Rs. 7,000 (\$70) monthly in their first six months at placement (as shown in the figure to the right). Fluctuations in the wages are reported to be due to changes in working hours and the factories' operation schedule.



In addition to an increasing income, Weavers have reported additional benefits including have a disposable income to build savings. Seventy-two percent of weavers reported that they are now able to save a portion of their earnings. Savings will enable weavers to begin financial planning and become credited consumers, which will also allow them access to financial markets and services.



Conclusions

- One hundred eighty four trainees are now gainfully employed and earning an increasing income within Nepal's carpet industry.
- With an employable skill, weavers placed for six months on average are receiving Rs. 7,000 (\$70) monthly while recent participants have doubled their income within the first month of placement to a median income of RS. 6000 (\$60).
- Using a sample size that captured 47% of total trained weavers, GoodWeave observed a positive trend and rising income as placed participants skills increased.
- 72% of placed weavers have been able to save additional income allowing participants to financially plan.

Limitations and Recommendations

This evaluation was conducted during the midterm of the second phase of the Weaving Opportunities project, and therefore the full impact remains to be assessed. GoodWeave will conduct a final evaluation to assess income trends, financial stability and continued

employability after a year of employment at a GoodWeave licensed factory. Additionally this study only captures participant data from three participating factories and trends may vary across facilities.

It is too early at this stage to assess the scalability of the program to reach larger numbers of unskilled labor and provide a skilled labor force to an industry experiencing a labor shortage; however, this question will be addressed in the final evaluation.