



**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
KATHMANDU**

AMBASSADOR

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Nepal “Heartquake” Project

Since the Nepal earthquakes of 25 April and 12 May 2015 I’ve noted many media stories, officials and politicians praising the Nepal people for their resilience in the face of such devastation. This is a country where people lost almost 9,000 loved ones, friends, and neighbours to the quakes, and injuries to tens of thousands more. Even one year later Nepalis in the affected areas have, and continue to endure much hardship.

Mother nature is often not only unkind, she is also unfair when devastating events like these happen. And perhaps the victims affected most unfairly of all are those least prepared and deserving of these losses and deprivations - the children.

Personal injury, parents killed, homes and schools destroyed or severely damaged, friends gone - it’s not surprising that thousands of children have experienced mental and physical trauma similar to a war zone in many areas of Nepal. Yet they display the same outward resilience as their parents and a willingness to continue on if given half a chance.

Resilience is one thing, but children having gone through these experiences also need to be listened to and nurtured back to a state of security and stability about their individual and collective futures.

I was therefore impressed to learn of the Heartquake initiative and its objective of allowing Nepali children to reach out to others to talk about how they have coped with harrowing situations. I expect Heartquake will demonstrate courage is not the sole preserve of adults, and will shine light where it’s most needed: to help children adjust and find their way forward after the tragic events of 2015.

I compliment Libby Hathorn, Bec Ordish, and Heartquake’s supporters for their humanity and innovation in helping Nepal’s children in need.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Glenn White', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Glenn White