



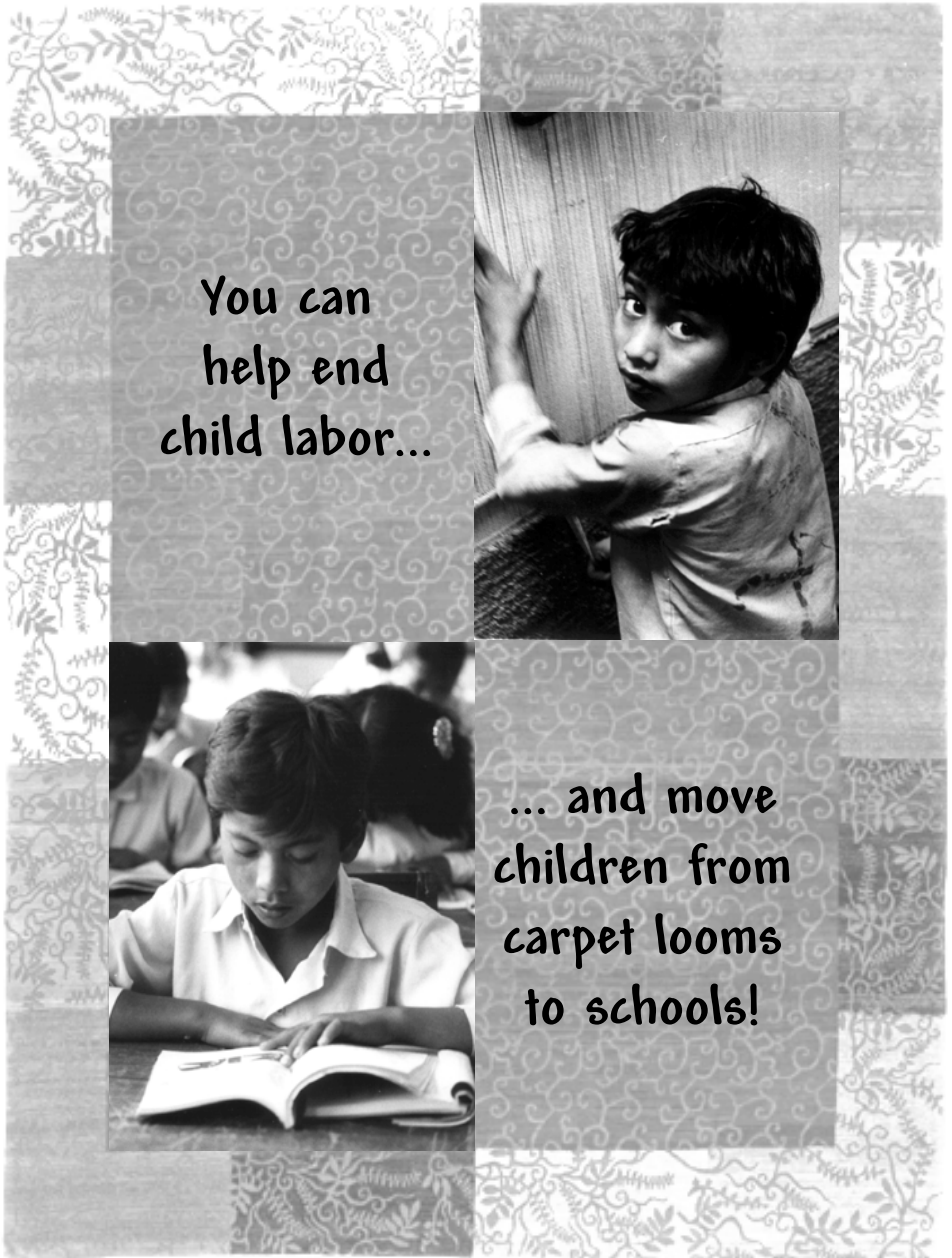
RUGMARK GRASSROOTS ACTION KIT

More than 250 million children are working illegally in the world today. The hand-knotted carpet industry has been exposed as a major perpetrator of child labor abuse. Child welfare organizations estimate that at least 500,000 children in South Asia, often working as indentured laborers, produce the hand-knotted carpets that lie on the floors of American homes and businesses.

RUGMARK is working to end child labor in the South Asian carpet industry through loom and factory monitoring, consumer labeling, and educating former child workers. The RUGMARK Foundation recruits carpet exporters and importers to produce carpets that are free of child labor. By agreeing to adhere to RUGMARK's strict no child labor guidelines, and by permitting random RUGMARK inspections of carpet looms, producers receive the right to attach the RUGMARK label to their carpets. The RUGMARK label offers the best assurance that a carpet is not produced by children. The label also verifies that a percentage of the carpet price is contributed to the rehabilitation and education of former child weavers.

The RUGMARK campaign offers a positive alternative - working with the industry to help move children from carpet looms to schools.

The RUGMARK GRASSROOTS ACTION KIT suggests a variety of ways that you can participate in the effort to end child labor!



*You can
help end
child labor...*

*... and move
children from
carpet looms
to schools!*

INSIDE: 10 WAYS YOU CAN HELP END CHILD LABOR!

10 WAYS THAT YOU CAN HELP END CHILD LABOR IN THE CARPET INDUSTRY

◆ EDUCATE

1. *Yourself:* Become familiar with the use of illegal child labor in the carpet industry and how RUGMARK helps to end child labor. See pages 3-4, and visit www.rugmark.org and our links!
2. *Friends:* Organize an educational presentation at a local school, church, or community group about the problem of child labor and the important alternative of the RUGMARK program. RUGMARK will try to provide a guest speaker and additional materials. Be sure to invite all those concerned including interested consumers, human rights activists, as well as store managers, local designers and architects.
3. *The General Public:* Write an op-ed for your local newspaper. Show your concern for illegal child weavers and express your commitment to seeing more RUGMARK carpets in national and local stores. Use our *sample article* on page 6 to build on!

◆ ADVOCATE

4. Ask for the RUGMARK label where you shop. Talk with or write to the manager, see our *sample letter* on page 5.
5. Show your appreciation to RUGMARK distributors by buying their RUGMARK carpets. For a list of stores that carry RUGMARK carpets visit our website at www.rugmark.org, or call 1-866-RUGMARK.
6. Urge the U.S. to enforce its laws that prohibit the importation of illegally child made products by writing to the U.S. Customs Agency at 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20229.

◆ ORGANIZE

7. JOIN RUGMARK USA's list serve to keep updated! Contact RUGMARK at info@rugmark.org to receive our monthly e-News.
8. Start a campaign in your community or on your campus! Refer to the "How To Guide" on this page. Use the postcard template on page 7 to encourage retailers to carry RUGMARK carpets.
9. Contact info@rugmark.org; let us know that you are organizing a campaign and how we can help!

◆ DONATE

10. Join the RUGMARK campaign. Your donation can help to create a greater demand for child labor-free carpets and expand RUGMARK's schools and rehabilitation centers. Please fill out and mail in the donation card on the back of this action kit!

HOW TO START A RUGMARK CAMPAIGN

Preliminary Research: Locate the major hand-knotted carpet retailers in your area. For initial research, use the yellow pages and the Internet. (Perhaps there is one local retailer who already offers RUGMARK carpets!) Make a list of relevant retail stores, and target those that would be most interested first.

Mobilize a Diverse Coalition To Educate Your Community: First focus on economic and social justice organizations, then on schools, religious and youth organizations and trade unions. Your coalition may include organizations that focus on South Asia, child labor, human rights and fair trade.

Activate your Coalition: Promote RUGMARK carpets among your coalition's members and constituents. Work with campuses, local churches and labor unions. Ask these organizations to publish an article in their newsletter about RUGMARK carpets.

Be Creative: Organize events with your coalition and use the media to inform local carpet retailers that you are serious about getting your town to support the RUGMARK label. Consider raffling off a RUGMARK carpet to raise money for your campaign work or to donate to RUGMARK!

Approach Local Carpet Retailers and Department Stores: The enclosed *sample letter* to a retail store or a local manager is a good place to start (see page 5). Encourage these stores to change suppliers or convince their supplier to become RUGMARK certified. Remind them that this is a **positive campaign** and that your goal is also to promote the retail outlets that sell RUGMARK carpets!



HOW RUGMARK CERTIFICATION WORKS

To be certified by RUGMARK, carpet makers must sign a legally binding contract to:

- produce carpets without illegal child labor;
- register all looms with the RUGMARK Foundation;
- allow access to looms for unannounced inspections;

Carpet looms and factories are monitored regularly. Inspectors are trained and supervised by RUGMARK. Each label is individually numbered, enabling its origin to be traced back to the loom on which it was produced. This protects against counterfeit labels. Nonprofit child welfare organizations, not affiliated with RUGMARK, also have access to RUGMARK certified factories to ensure that no children are employed.

Only licensed RUGMARK importers are legally permitted to sell carpets carrying the RUGMARK label.

RUGMARK FACTS AND FIGURES

- RUGMARK inspectors rescue on average three child carpet weavers per week. (RUGMARK International, November 2002)
- Since 1995, more than 2,000 children have been rescued from carpet looms by RUGMARK. (RUGMARK International, November 2002)
- RUGMARK affiliated schools currently provide education to more than 2,400 former child weavers in India, Nepal & Pakistan. (RUGMARK International, November 2002)
- Approximately 15 percent of all manufacturers in India and 67 percent in Nepal are certified by RUGMARK. (RUGMARK India, 2002; RUGMARK Nepal, 2002)
- RUGMARK Pakistan has established three RUGMARK schools and is affiliated with eight additional schools that together provide education to more than 800 students. (RUGMARK Pakistan, November 2002)
- The U.S. constitutes the largest market for hand-knotted carpets, importing \$422,549,000 in 1998. (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1999)
- More than 3 million carpets carrying the RUGMARK label have been sold since 1995. (RUGMARK International, November 2002)
- RUGMARK carpets are sold in approximately 300 stores throughout the U.S. (RUGMARK USA, December 2002)
- 94 percent of interior designers and consumers surveyed are more inclined to buy a hand-knotted carpet with a RUGMARK label. (*Lindley, Beth "The South Asian Hand-Knotted Carpet Industry and Illegal Child Labor", American University, 2001*)

- Please visit the RUGMARK website for additional facts and figures -

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Isn't it true that children in poor countries must work to feed themselves and their families? Children wouldn't have to work if employers paid their parents a living wage and if governments made affordable education for all children a priority.

If children are forced to leave carpet weaving, won't they turn to crime or prostitution? The children rescued by RUGMARK are given the opportunity to go to school.

Won't the weaver's craft disappear if children don't learn it? The weaver's craft will disappear if weavers aren't paid a living wage. When apprentices are physically and intellectually mature enough to do complex work – and are well rewarded for their efforts – creativity will flourish.

Why does the carpet industry need RUGMARK when importers and exporters can inspect their own looms? Inspections are costly and time-consuming. RUGMARK lowers the cost of inspections for the entire industry by employing a full-time staff of traveling inspectors at a fraction of what it would cost each employer to get the job done in-house. Consumers have more faith in the credibility of independent inspections. Opening carpet looms to impartial inspectors tells the world, "We don't allow children to weave our carpets, and here's proof." That kind of integrity builds customer loyalty.

Is RUGMARK imposing Western standards on non-Western cultures? RUGMARK was founded in India by a coalition of non-governmental organizations, carpet industry representatives, and certain government representatives. In addition, the governments of India, Nepal, and Pakistan have enacted national child labor laws and made legally binding commitments to internationally recognized human rights principles. RUGMARK's job is to help these countries enforce the standards they established.

LAWS PROHIBITING CHILD LABOR

◆ INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Minimum Age Convention 138 (C138), 1973

Adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1973, C138 binds ratifying countries to pursue a national policy for the abolition of child labor and to progressively raise the minimum age for employment or work to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons. This minimum age should be 15 years, or the age reached by the completion of compulsory schooling. According to the convention, the minimum age for work that is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons is 18. As of November 2002, 120 countries ratified C138, including Nepal in 1997. India and Pakistan are yet to ratify the Convention.

Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 182 (C182), 1999

On June 17, 1999 the ILO adopted Convention 182, which calls for immediate and effective measures to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labor. "Child" applies to all persons under the age of 18. "The worst forms of child labor" refers to child slavery, forced labor, trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom, prostitution, pornography, and forms of work which harm the health, safety or morals of children. In less than three years, 132 countries ratified ILO Convention 182 including Pakistan in 2001 and Nepal in 2002. India is yet to ratify the Convention.

◆ U.S. LAWS PROHIBITING THE IMPORTATION OF GOODS MADE WITH WITH CHILD LABOR

The Sanders Amendment to the Trade Act of 1930

The Tariff Act of 1930 prohibits the importation of products made with "forced or indentured labor" into the U.S. In 1997 the Sanders Amendment clarified that this applies to products made with "forced or indentured child labor".

The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)

Enacted in 1974, the GSP program authorizes approximately 4,284 products from 140 developing countries, including India, Nepal and Pakistan, to enter the U.S. market duty-free. In 1984 new provisions took away U.S. trade preferences from countries that systematically deny internationally recognized workers' rights. These rights include: freedom of association; the right to organize and bargain collectively; a prohibition of any form of forced or compulsory labor; and acceptable conditions of work with respect to minimum wages, hours of work, and occupational safety and health.

Trade and Development Act of 2000

This Act, signed into law in May 2000, affords special trade benefits to Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean Basin Countries. Section 411 clarifies that the ban on articles made with forced and/or indentured labor under the Trade Act of 1930 now includes goods made with forced and/or indentured child labor. Section 412, *worst forms of child labor*, denies U.S. trade preferences to countries that fail to meet and effectively enforce the standards established by ILO C182.

RUGMARK is currently the only certification program established to assure that carpets were not made with illegal child labor in India, Nepal, or Pakistan.

◆ RUGMARK U.S.A. CERTIFIED IMPORTERS ◆ (as of February 2003)

A list of RUGMARK certified importers in North America may be found on our website at
http://www.rugmark.org/list_of_importers.htm

SAMPLE LETTER TO RETAIL STORE OR LOCAL MANAGER

A good way to influence the management of a retail store or privately owned oriental carpet distributor is to send a letter to them personally. Be brief and precise. Give a clear definition of who you are, what you are asking, and the exact reason for your action. Tell the management how this action will benefit their company by keeping you as a customer. Attach information about RUGMARK and how they can contact RUGMARK importers. It is critical that RUGMARK maintains positive links within the carpet industry, so be sure to write your letter in a friendly and encouraging manner!

You may wish to send a letter to the store's national contact (some suggested national retail stores to target are listed to the right) as well as to the manager of the store nearest you!

(Manager's Name)
(Name of Retail Store)
(Address of Retail Store)

Dear (Store Manager's Name),

I am a customer who is concerned about the social impact of my purchasing decisions. Therefore, I would like to know that the carpets I purchase at your store carry the RUGMARK label. The RUGMARK label is the best way for me to know that no child labor was used during the production process.

I am representative of the more than 50 percent of American consumers concerned with the use of illegal child labor in the hand-knotted carpet industry in South Asia. We know that hundreds of thousands of children in South Asia's carpet industry, sometimes working in slave-like conditions, are losing their childhood while loom owners profit. Because the United States is the largest importer of hand-knotted carpets, I believe that Americans can, and should, help eradicate this use of illegal child labor. In fact, consumers are willing to do their part. A recent study revealed that 94 percent of consumers surveyed prefer to buy RUGMARK carpets.

I have made a commitment to support RUGMARK- - a program that promotes child labor-free carpets and educates former carpet children. As an important retailer of hand-knotted carpets (and as an advocate of social responsibility) you too can help address the problem of child labor by carrying RUGMARK labeled carpets in your store. Please inquire how to purchase RUGMARK carpets (Enclosed is a list of RUGMARK importers) or become RUGMARK certified by contacting RUGMARK Foundation USA, 733 15th Street N.W. Suite 912 Washington, DC 20005, 202-347-4205 (phone), 202-347-4885 (fax), www.rugmark.org (web).

Start selling RUGMARK certified carpets and help move children from carpet looms to schools!

Sincerely,

(Your Name)

ABC Carpets
Graham Head, President
888 Broadway at 19th St.
New York, NY 10003

Ethan Allen Inc.
Chairman and President
Farook Kathwari
P.O. Box 1966
Danbury, CT 06813

Federated Department Stores
Leonard Marcus
1440 Broadway, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10018

Home Depot
Bob Nardell, CEO
2455 Paces Ferry Road
Atlanta, GA 30339

IKEA U.S. East
Lori Kane
496 West Germantown Pike
Plymouth Common
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462

The May Department Stores Co.
Jerome T. Loeb, Chairman
611 Olive Street
St. Louis, MO 63101-1799

Sears Roebuck & Co.
Alan J. Lacy
Chairman and President
3333 Beverly Road
Hoffman Estates, IL 60179

Target Corporation
Bob Ulrich, Chairman and CEO
777 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Williams-Sonoma, Inc.
Laura J. Alber, Exec. Vice President
Pottery Barn Brands
3250 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94109

SAMPLE ARTICLE

"Carpet Sales Move Children from Work to School"

Conscious consumers who want to purchase child labor-free products can now look for the RUGMARK label. Created to address the illegal use of children in the production of carpets, RUGMARK is a groundbreaking initiative that certifies that hand-knotted carpets are not made with illegal child labor. Independent inspectors perform on-site investigations of overseas carpet factories, in Nepal, India and Pakistan, prior to issuing a RUGMARK certification. Producers that pass inspection are issued RUGMARK labels that are attached to the carpets, making it easy for consumers to identify child labor-free carpets.

"U.S. consumers can play a powerful role in helping to eradicate child labor in the carpet industry. They comprise the largest market for hand-knotted carpets in the world, and they have a right to demand high-quality carpets that were not knotted by the fingers of children," says Stephanie Odegard, president and creative director of Odegard, Inc. Odegard was the first U.S. importer to carry the RUGMARK label. Its one-of-a-kind Tibetan carpets are woven by fairly paid adults in Kathmandu and sold through Odegard showrooms in New York, Washington, Chicago, and Zurich, as well as carpet showrooms around the world. Odegard says that her customer base increasingly looks for the RUGMARK label—the only carpet label that ensures that independent inspections have taken place.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the use of child labor in the carpet industry is widely documented in India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Children work in confined, dimly-lit workshops, and many develop respiratory illnesses, spinal deformities, and cuts and wounds from sharp tools. RUGMARK, endorsed by child welfare organizations worldwide such as UNICEF, attempts to reverse these illegal and abusive labor practices by removing children from factories and sending them to school.

Bechu Rishi is a third grader in a RUGMARK school in Uttar Pradesh, India. He was destined for bondage when he was born to a poor caste of agricultural workers. Bechu's parents, lured by the promise of money sent their son away with a loom owner to weave carpets. Bechu worked on the loom for 14 hours a day and was paid the equivalent of \$1.50 per month. In 1997, he was released from the clutches of the loom owner by RUGMARK. After attending a RUGMARK school, he can now read, write and dream of a brighter future. Since 1996, two thousand children like Bechu have passed through RUGMARK's eighteen affiliated schools in India, Nepal and Pakistan.

"I'm interested in going further and educating children at the village level before they end up working," emphasizes Odegard. "Money we give now as RUGMARK members goes to educating and rehabilitating children from the labor force, which is the most important thing for the time being." Odegard is referring to the fixed percentage of each carpet's purchase price that is paid by RUGMARK exporters and importers and helps to educate and rehabilitate former carpet children.

Terry Collingsworth, General Counsel at the International Labor Rights Fund, agrees that RUGMARK's schools are as important as its monitoring program. "Poverty perpetuates child labor and child labor perpetuates poverty...education is the best way to end this cycle and to ensure that former carpet children will have greater economic opportunity as adults," says Collingsworth.

Consumers who would like to know where to purchase RUGMARK carpets or how to get involved in the RUGMARK Campaign can visit the RUGMARK website at www.rugmark.org or call the RUGMARK office toll free at 1-866-RUGMARK to receive a free listing of RUGMARK retailers.

RUGMARK POSTCARD TEMPLATE

The most powerful incentive for carpet retailers and importers to sell RUGMARK is consumer demand. Help RUGMARK by urging consumers to add their name to the list of people who support child labor-free carpets! Cards that are returned to RUGMARK will be shared with carpet dealers.

How to make postcards with the postcard template: Get a thick 8 1/2" x 11" card stock in white or a light color. Put the stock in the letter tray of a copier, and copy the template onto one side of the stock. Put the copied stock back into the letter tray in order to copy the template onto the other side. Finally, cut the copies into quarters.

RUGMARK Carpets from India, Nepal and Pakistan are now available in the United States!

The RUGMARK label is the best assurance that a child did not illegally weave the carpets that you sell. Producers of RUGMARK carpets agree to no child labor guidelines and to open their doors to random independent inspections. Additionally, a portion of the price of each carpet helps to educate former carpet children.

As a concerned consumer, I ask you to consider carrying RUGMARK carpets in your store. Please inquire how to purchase RUGMARK carpets or become RUGMARK certified by contacting RUGMARK Foundation USA toll-free at 1-866-RUGMARK or www.rugmark.org

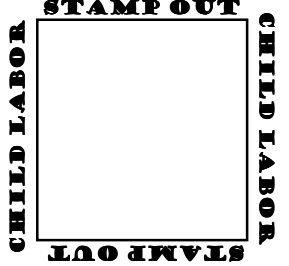
Name

Address

Phone

E-mail Address

RUGMARK Foundation U.S.A.
733 15th Street, NW Suite 912
Washington, DC 20005



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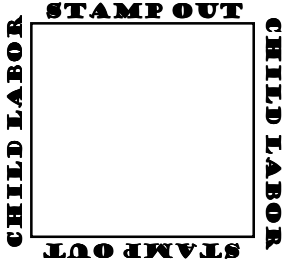
Name

Address

Phone

E-mail Address

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733 15th Street, NW Suite 912
Washington, DC 20005



LAXMI: STORY OF A RUGMARK CHILD

Laxmi Shresta is a RUGMARK student. At the age of six, she was rescued from a Nepalese carpet factory by a RUGMARK inspector who found her balling wool on the factory floor. RUGMARK now pays for her education. Laxmi attends the Gyanpunja Secondary Boarding School in Kathmandu, Nepal. She studies English, Nepalese, math and science. She loves drawing and, at the age of ten, dreams of being an artist. You can help Laxmi and others like her fulfill their dreams by purchasing RUGMARK carpets or by making a donation today.



RUGMARK Foundation U.S.A
733 15th Street, NW Suite 912
Washington, DC 20005

All information from this Action Kit can be downloaded from our website at www.rugmark.org

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I would like to become a Friend of RUGMARK and help move children from carpet looms to schools!

Enclosed is my check for:

\$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 other _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address2: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

All donors receive RUGMARK campaign updates, and invitations to special events
Send to: RUGMARK Foundation, 733 15th Street, NW, Suite 912, Washington, DC 20005
202-347-4205 (phone) 202-347-4885 (fax) www.rugmark.org
RUGMARK is a 501(c)3 organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by U.S. law.