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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**GLOBAL FUND TO END MODERN SLAVERY AWARDS WILLOW INTERNATIONAL
GRANT TO SUPPORT ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING EFFORTS IN AFRICA
Under Cooperative Agreement with U.S. State Department, Willow receives \$758K to scale
aftercare and other services**

ORANGE, CALIF. (February 4, 2021) – Through a competitive funding process, Willow International (Willow), a global anti-human trafficking nonprofit headquartered in Orange, California, has been awarded \$758,416 by the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) under a Cooperative Agreement with the United States Department of State. The award will help ensure trafficking victims and at-risk individuals receive aftercare services and become less likely to be trafficked or re-trafficked in Gulf countries, as well as in China, Southeast Asia, and East Africa. Awarded in late 2020, Willow is already hard at work on the 21-month project: *Rehabilitation and Reintegration for Survivors of Trafficking & At-Risk Populations*.

“For years we’ve worked to keep up with the demand for aftercare services for victims of trafficking in Uganda,” said Willow Executive Director Kelsey Morgan. “In the last 3 months, we’ve received nearly 100 new cases of victims coming from the Gulf. These victims return home with severe mental, emotional, and physical trauma and need specialized care.”

With the funding, Willow will be able to scale its current aftercare program through the expansion of residential and community-based care programming to serve additional survivors. Willow will also expand the provision of educational, vocational, and economic training and opportunities to an estimated 260 survivors and at-risk individuals - empowering them with the skills and resources needed to [become economically stable and reintegrate successfully back into the community and families](#).

“Increasing the reach of rehabilitation and reintegration programs for survivors of labor trafficking and at-risk populations is a key priority area for us. In partnership with Willow, we will support implementing best-in-class standards of trauma-informed care and survivor-led approaches to reintegrating survivors of overseas forced labor in Uganda,” said GFEMS Director of Grant Programs, Rebecca Buchanan, PhD.

In the words of an anonymous survivor served by Willow: “Willow International has empowered and supported me a lot. I was hopeless but Willow gave me hope. I have learned many different skills and I am ready to be a job creator not a job seeker. I had not shared my painful story, but when I came to Willow, I got the courage to share my story and Willow taught me how to overcome my pain. After graduation, I want to be exemplary in my village.”

ABOUT WILLOW INTERNATIONAL

Willow International's mission is to eradicate human trafficking and restore the lives of survivors. Willow's aftercare model specifically addresses the barriers of Ugandan forced labor workers returning home to successfully reintegrate into their communities. Its programs were developed in Uganda, specifically in response to the needs of victims of overseas migrant labor trafficking. Willow has proven results, strong government relationships, and a network of expert partners. For more Information about Willow, visit <https://www.willowinternational.org/>.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL FUND TO END MODERN SLAVERY

The Global Fund to End Modern Slavery is a bold international fund catalyzing a coherent global strategy to end human trafficking by making it economically unprofitable. With leadership from government and the private sector around the world, the Fund is escalating resources, designing public-private partnerships, funding new tools and methods for sustainable solutions, and evaluating effectiveness to better equip our partners to scale and replicate solutions in new geographies. For more information about GFEMS, visit <https://www.gfems.org/>.

ABOUT THE OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP Office) leads the Department's global efforts to combat modern slavery through the prosecution of traffickers, the protection of victims, and the prevention of human trafficking by: objectively analyzing government efforts and identifying global trends, engaging in and supporting strategic bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, targeting foreign assistance to build sustainable capacity of governments and civil society, advancing the coordination of federal anti-trafficking policies across agencies, managing and leveraging operational resources to achieve strategic priorities, and engaging and partnering with civil society, the private sector, and the public to advance the fight against human trafficking.

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