

## Building a Movement of Frontline Leaders in Anti-Slavery Work Creating the Freedom Leadership Program - Concept Note

### Introduction

This note outlines the concept for a new initiative to build a movement of frontline leaders in anti-slavery work, and to equip them for their work.

The Freedom Fund is a leader in the global movement to end modern slavery. We identify and invest in the most effective frontline efforts to eradicate modern slavery in the countries and sectors where it is most prevalent. Furthermore, partnering with visionary investors, governments, anti-slavery organisations and those at risk of exploitation, we also tackle the systems that allow slavery to persist and thrive.

Our aim is to eradicate slavery, and part of our approach to doing that is by helping to build and empower the global anti-slavery movement, providing the platforms, tools and knowledge for organisations to connect and work together more effectively.

We are committed to frontline, community-level work to tackle slavery, and to supporting those who carry out this work. We also see the need to network these people together at a local and national level, as well as to connect them to the global anti-slavery movement.

The aim of this new initiative is to build on our existing work by nurturing and facilitating the development of a new generation of anti-slavery frontline practitioners, especially women, through an impactful leadership and networking program for emerging and current leaders of anti-slavery organisations.

### The Gap

Many frontline organisations and their leaders are making significant advances in tackling various forms of slavery in their localities. Freedom Fund is already working to channel more funds and support to these groups; collaborating with others who do the same; and advocating for this approach. However, the program staff, managers, and leaders in these organisations are often caught up in the day-to-day work of their organisations and at times can lack the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, knowledge of best practice, and networks.

If we are to end slavery, much more support needs to be given to the people leading these organisations, and those who will lead them in the future. Women are also under-represented in the leadership of these groups, and that needs to change. The global anti-slavery movement also needs to be informed and led by these leaders.

Therefore we want to build a movement of frontline anti-slavery leaders with the leadership, technical skills, network and knowledge, to push forward further and faster the eradication of slavery.

## Overall Vision

The vision for the Freedom Leadership Program is still in development, however it is already clear that to have maximum impact it would involve at least two core components:

- A leadership development program - blending leadership development with locally relevant technical skills & knowledge.
- A network or movement formed by some or all of the alumni from the leadership development program.

The overall goal of this initiative is to nurture and facilitate the development of a new generation of anti-slavery frontline practitioners, especially women, through an impactful leadership and networking/movement-building program for current and emerging leaders of anti-slavery organisations. We believe that strengthening the leadership and technical capacity of these professionals will contribute to innovation and change within themselves, their organisations, and the communities in which they work. The leadership skills will be similar in each geography and will include: delivering results, managing complexity & change, partnerships, negotiation skills etc. The technical skills will be tailored to the needs identified in each context, but could include: training on service delivery for survivors; counselling skills; and effectively advocating for policy change.

We want to build national and global networks of dedicated individuals in high slavery prevalence countries who can share and advocate for best practices within the anti-slavery sector on behalf of their organisations. This movement-building element of the Freedom Leadership Program is not yet developed, and we recognize that in many ways this is the harder part to get right.

## Outcome

A thriving, empowered, and sustainable network of frontline anti-slavery leaders, especially women, in high prevalence countries, supported by an ecosystem of committed partners and alumni leading the charge to bring an end to slavery globally.

## Target Audience

**Primary:** Mid-level staff with leadership interest and potential, especially women, as well as current leaders, working in frontline anti-slavery organisations, or other organisations committed to tackling extreme exploitation and human rights violations.

**Secondary:** Wider anti-slavery (& related) community: governments, academic institutions, civil society, issue experts, trainers, and researchers.

## Geographic Scope

Ultimately, the vision of the initiative is global, and the model chosen will need to be able to be adapted and contextualised to any country. However, the plan is for the Freedom Leadership Program to be developed and launched first in India, followed by (in no particular order): Ethiopia, Nepal, and Thailand - with the possibility of expanding to additional countries later.

## Why is this program unique?

1. **An anti-slavery focus:** Unlike other leadership programs that specifically seek out participants from a diverse range of occupations, this program is exclusively for those working in the anti-slavery sector or with populations vulnerable to slavery, or other egregious human rights violations.
2. **A bottom-up approach:** While many other leadership programs recruit those who have already attained positions of leadership, this program will have a focus on nurturing the leadership and technical capacity of frontline anti-slavery advocates and emerging leaders, to contribute to a groundswell of leaders across high prevalence areas.
3. **Global best practices through a local lens:** The program will draw from global learning on anti-slavery best practices to build the technical capacity of the participants but contextualise it for each location to ensure relevancy and accessibility.

## Main benefits for leaders and potential leaders of anti-slavery organisations:

- The field leadership – especially women – will be empowered and equipped with the skills and knowledge to assume key leadership positions in the fight against modern slavery.
- They will be more confident ground-level representatives of anti-slavery work – able to bring their experiences to the attention of the media and policymakers in effective ways.
- They will be provided with diverse learning and growth opportunities that will enhance their professional and personal skills to manage complex projects.
- They will be part of an active and dedicated network/movement of anti-slavery leaders working for the same purpose and with other professionals who can help them advance their goals.

Both the leadership development program, and the plan for a network of the alumni from the program should build on best practice.

### For the leadership development program this includes:

- Being rooted in the local context
- Being embedded in the work and reality of the participants
- Tackling mind-sets that underpin leadership behaviour
- Including a process of assessment in order to build interest and reputation
- Measuring its impact
- Having the right balance between technical skills & knowledge, and management/leadership skills

### For the network or movement, at a national and, potentially, global level, this will include:

- The need for shared vision and values
- The need for trust to be built between members
- The need for members to be open to change

- The need for human and financial resources to support the networking
- Balancing organisational and network goals and priorities

## The role of the Freedom Fund

The Freedom Fund is committed to the development of the Freedom Leadership Program as a key part of its strategic vision to eradicate slavery. As the catalyst for its creation, the Freedom Fund will provide the funds for the design and development of this initiative. The Freedom Fund is open to partnerships at both a local and global level to implement the Freedom Leadership Program.

It's important to note that the Freedom Leadership Program is intended as a resource for, and service to, the wider anti-slavery movement in each country where it will operate as well as globally, and as such it will not be reserved just for those working for the 100+ frontline partners that Freedom Fund is already working with.

## Next steps

Further design work is needed to take the plan for the Freedom Leadership Program to the next stage of its development. This will include more research to:

- Assess the need and potential for the program
- Determine what kind of program would have the most impact
- Shape the design of the courses and curricula
- Find possible delivery partners
- Scope the costs for the initial phase of the Freedom Leadership Program in India
- Suggest possible funders for implementation and a long-term financial model

To this end, Freedom Fund is launching a call for proposals to find a key partner to lead this design and development work, in close collaboration with the Freedom Fund.