

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: Inception Year Projects

Inception phase program to address child exploitation in Karamoja, Uganda

Application submission deadline: 15th July 2024

A. Background

The Freedom Fund (freedomfund.org) is a global non-profit organization dedicated to eradicating human trafficking and exploitation by supporting the most effective frontline efforts. Our long-term "hotspot" programs focus on areas with a high incidence of modern slavery, where clusters of community-based organizations collaborate to address the root causes of exploitation. These programs aim to achieve a sustained and measurable reduction in modern slavery through systemic change led by affected communities, workers, and survivors.

Following a scoping study and consultations with local organizations and government bodies in Uganda, the Freedom Fund is initiating an inception year, with a view to a possible longer-term hotspot, and will start supporting organisations in two districts of the Karamoja region. The purpose of this year is to learn from existing practices among organisations in the region and develop a possible longer-term strategy to address child exploitation.

Among Karamoja's population of approximately 1.4 million, government statistics indicate a child marriage rate of 50% and a child labour rate of 55%. The region also has the highest rate of children trafficked into urban areas of Uganda, Kenya, and Somalia. Previous studies indicate that the main forms of child exploitation prevalent in the region include child marriage, child labor, trafficking, and the recruitment of children as child warriors. Guided by intervention research that we shall commission, we shall determine which specific form of child exploitation to focus on. Additionally, we seek to understand the intersection between climate adaptation and child exploitation, exploring how best to address these challenges while contributing to better food security for the participating communities. The inception year will focus on two of the nine districts in the Karamoja sub-region: **Moroto** and **Napak**.

B. Overview of the inception phase

The inception grants aim to support existing work related to child exploitation while gathering learnings to co-develop a program strategy for potential implementation post-2024-2025.

The Freedom Fund is therefore inviting your organisation to submit a proposal to implement an inception project to address the different types of child exploitation in one of the two following districts: **Moroto** and **Napak**. The inception grant should allow you to continue, expand or refine the work you already do on child exploitation in Karamoja region. Eligible organisations for this grant are those already working in Karamoja. Please note that International NGOs will not be considered.

Eligible organisations can propose projects that:

- 1) **Top-up a current project on child exploitation.** Applicants selecting this option should have an ongoing project that is making progress in addressing child exploitation. This additional funding can help to expand, deepen, or enhance their existing efforts.
- 2) **A new/innovative programmatic component to an existing project, informed by lessons collected from previous projects or contextual needs regarding child exploitation.** This option encourages applicants to propose new/innovative set of activities alongside existing work, leveraging insights gained from past experiences or adapting to evolving challenges.
- 3) **Continuation of a recently ended or about to end project that tackles child exploitation.** Applicants choosing this option should consider projects that have already been implemented and are recently concluded or about to conclude. They can use this opportunity to build upon the successes and lessons learned from their previous efforts.
- 4) **Collaborate with the existing work of another organisation, to add in new components specifically against child exploitation.** Applicants choosing this option should identify and agree with another organisation that is already providing climate adaptation, livelihoods, education support, humanitarian aid or other activities in a geographic area, so that the applicant then adds in components that enable local residents to prevent child exploitation and protect survivors in the same locations. Both organisations should be able to work compatibly within the same communities to multiply outcomes.

Projects that model and enable transformative approaches to gender roles, while identifying ways that the program can shift harmful gender norms that generate violence and exploitation, will be prioritised. Meaningful engagement of people with lived experience should be at the centre of the projects.

Inception grants are intended to be no more than USD25,000 for a period of 9 to 12 months with a possible start date by or before 1 September 2024.

C. Overview of Program Strategy

In May 2023, the Freedom Fund contracted a child marriage expert working with a Ugandan consultant to develop initial ideas for a hotspot strategy. This involved desk research and interviews with local stakeholders, communities, and affected groups, and conversations between the consultants and the Freedom Fund team to clarify geographic scope, project approaches, and key points of strategic analysis. This was followed by a consultation workshop in January 2024 to gain additional insights from community-based NGOs and local government officials.

This initial scoping study identified multiple components for systemic community-level work. We recommend that organisations should select those components that are most relevant to their existing work and align with the eligibility criteria (above) of the inception grant.

1. Collectivising adolescent girls and boys for social empowerment, protective peer support, as well as building negotiation skills and representation within community and regional decision making.

2. Economic empowerment as well as climate adaptation in food production for at risk households and young women.
3. Working with adult women and men to enable listening and dialogue within families: positive parenting and husband/wife power sharing.
4. Engaging the larger community, especially clan leaders and elders, to identify and stand up for protective cultural values, rejecting practices that lead to harm.
5. Creating demand for improvements in schools and access to educational materials and support, so girls and boys are able and willing to continue their education.
6. Enabling knowledge, negotiating power and access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Selected projects will be implemented alongside **intervention development research** using participatory methods commissioned from a research organisation by the Freedom Fund. This research will enable affected communities, local organisations and the Freedom Fund to i) prioritise which forms of exploitation and modern slavery should be the main focus of the program in these districts (one or all of the ones mentioned above); ii) which interventions and program components should be prioritised, bearing in mind the major intersecting issues driving vulnerability such as gender discrimination, food security and climate change; iii) what are the traditions, narratives and cultural beliefs that could be mobilised as assets to the program; and iv) which of the key actors and influencers we should invest most attention in.

Each of the inception partners will support young women and girls in the communities alongside their own field staff to lead in the participatory action research, with training, supervision, and field-level guidance from the commissioned research agency. This will require about 60 days of at least 2 staff time of your project team during the inception year, so please take this into account when planning how much your team can undertake. There will be some other small costs for this research work that we will help you to build into your overall budget, if your application is successful.

The inception year will allow the Freedom Fund to work closely with local communities and the government to refine a strategy that accurately reflects the needs of the local communities and addresses the challenges leading to child exploitation (especially child marriage, child labour and trafficking, as well as children as warriors), within the wider humanitarian situation. The inception phase will create space for grantees to co-design a programming framework for a potential implementation phase.

D. Process & Guidelines

Organisations are invited to submit a proposal for the inception phase following the templates provided in the annexes below. The inception projects should:

- Start in September 2024, and end on or before end of August 2025.
- Build on the unique expertise and experience of the inception partner.
- Be implemented either in Moroto and Napak, in communities where the inception partner is currently implementing or has implemented in the past.
- Inception grants should not be for entirely new types of work for the organisation (though strategies can be adapted in new ways).

- Be designed in a way that allows quick start-up to ensure the 9 - 12 months period is used for implementation, not preparation.
- Projects should model transformative approaches, emphasizing the meaningful participation of girls and young women who are in early or forced marriages, and children who have been in exploitative situations such as trafficking or forced labour. Additionally, projects should identify referral channels and leverage partners' skills to assist these individuals.

Invited organisations need to be able to successfully pass the standard due diligence process. **We encourage you to check the questionnaire in Annex 3 before you work on an application, to make sure you will meet these standards.** The questionnaire will need to be submitted with your inception proposal.

For successful applicants, organizations need to be able to commit to the following in addition to implementing their inception project:

- Participate in the **action research** described above.
- Participate in a series of **co-creation workshops** (*Once per quarter*).
- Share learnings throughout the inception phase.

Recognising the resources each inception partner will be committing during this process, the Freedom Fund will cover the expenses of the organisation and individuals participating in the co-creation workshops as well as the costs needed to participate in the action research, within the overall funding provided through the inception grant.

E. Forms to be submitted for the inception grant.

We strongly recommend reviewing the Due Diligence form - Annex 3, to make sure your organisation meets these standards, before you start planning your project. Please check with **Ruth Kimani** (rkimani@freedomfund.org) if you have any queries on this form and your eligibility.

The following forms must be completed and submitted by **15th July 2024**:

1. Annex 1 - Project Narrative
2. Annex 2 - Project budget
3. Annex 3 - Due Diligence form
4. Annex 4 - Learning Questions (*For Reference only*)
5. Annex 5 - Organisational Information form

Further information on Annex 1 - Project Narrative

Please fill the project narrative as per the instructions provided. Make sure that your project narrative document does not exceed 9 pages maximum.

Further information on Annex 2- Project Budget

We have provided a Project Budget template in an Excel file (Annex 2). When creating your budget please take the following into consideration:

- Do not change the exchange rate that we have inserted in the budget.
- Refer to the budget instructions in the first tab before creating your budget.

- Please make sure that the costed activities match the activities described in your project narrative.
- Please complete the budget by quarter; this allows budget amounts to be shown in the relevant period when activities are planned to take place.
- The Budget Summary tab will then automatically be created.
- Use the budget narrative tab to provide an explanatory note on each budget category.
- Please only fill in yellow-shaded cells, as the remaining cells have formulas which will automatically calculate conversions or totals.
- Please include a line item for the cost for the **4 co-creation workshops** that will take place within Karamoja (travel cost for at least 2 staff, accommodation for 2 nights for each workshop & per diems as per organisational travel policy).

Further information on Annex 3 - Due Diligence (DD) form

Please fill the DD questionnaire and provide the supporting documents as required.

F. Available Support

Please be sure to reach out to Ruth Kimani, the Senior Program Manager for East Africa for any questions or guidance using this email address - rkimani@freedomfund.org.

In addition to this, we will be holding an induction session where we will answer all your inquiries. Therefore, please send any inquiries or questions before **1st July 2024**, and we shall respond to these questions during the induction session. This Q&A session on applying for the grant will take place on **4th July 2024, at 9.00 -11.00AM EAT**, on the following Zoom [link](#): Meeting ID: 929 2181 1643: Passcode: 807006

G. Submission Guidelines

Please send your proposal packages as word and excel files (not pdf) to rkimani@freedomfund.org by **Monday, 15th July 2024**. Late submissions will not be considered.

Please use the following subject line format **"(ORGANIZATION NAME) Inception phase program to address child exploitation in Karamoja"**.