



Freedom Rising

Building an anti-slavery movement led by women and survivors

We believe that a powerful frontline movement led by women and survivors is key to advancing the fight against slavery. Through the Freedom Rising program, we aim to equip and connect a new generation of frontline leaders to drive a stronger, more diverse and representative movement to end slavery.



Why Freedom Rising?

Over 40 million people are trapped in modern slavery around the world today, forced to work in dangerous and exploitative conditions. 70% of those enslaved are women and girls. Discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, caste and other status is a key driver of exploitation. Yet very few women or survivors are supported to become leaders in the anti-slavery movement. Among Freedom Fund partners in India, for example, less than a quarter of organisations are led by women.

The Freedom Fund recognises that a lack of investment in diverse frontline leadership is preventing the anti-slavery movement from reaching its full potential. Anti-slavery actions are often not adequately informed by women and survivors' experience and do not fully address the power dynamics and discrimination that enable exploitation. Frontline leaders also lack the support necessary to build and maintain powerful coalitions for change or to sustain collective action. Freedom Rising directly provides that support.

Our strategy

Freedom Rising is unique and transformative due to its:



Explicit focus on elevating women and survivor leaders, who have traditionally been excluded from positions of leadership



Grounding in the local context, given that the program will take place in the leaders' own countries and languages



Emphasis not only on developing skilled and strategic frontline leaders but on strengthening and diversifying organisations



Ultimate goal of building a stronger and more inclusive movement, through an emphasis on collaboration and the development of an alumni network.

The ultimate goal of this program is to create the conditions in which a powerful women and survivor-led anti-slavery movement can take root and grow. To do this, transformative change is required at three levels - the leader, the organisation, and the movement.

With the skills and relationships developed through the program, we expect to see frontline woman and survivor leaders taking up opportunities to **shape and drive the anti-slavery movement**. We also expect leaders and their organisations to increasingly unify their efforts around shared goals, and **strategically use their collective and grassroots power** to drive the systemic change needed to end slavery. At the same time, we believe that supporting an anti-slavery movement that is led by women and survivors will have knock on effects in the communities in which they operate, **challenging the very social norms and power dynamics that place women and girls at risk of slavery**.

The Movement - Leaders will identify their shared vision and values, building a sense of solidarity and laying the foundations for collective action.



The Organisation - Leaders will build resilient and representative organisations that are well-connected, resourced and able to successfully manage change.



The Leader - Freedom Rising will equip and empower women and survivors to be effective leaders and to challenge the bias that undermines their leadership.



Supporting and promoting women and survivors

For the anti-slavery movement to truly understand and address the ways that bias and discrimination drive slavery, the voices of women and survivors must be heard. Freedom Rising builds understanding of the value of women and survivor's lived experience, and how this experience can shape and drive the anti-slavery movement. Women and survivors' leadership and lived experiences will be central to the program's design, facilitation and implementation.

The recruitment process will prioritise female and survivor candidates and focus on reducing barriers to their participation. Course content will cover issues such as bias, discrimination, challenging social norms, and the value of lived experience. All participants will be equipped to identify and understand power structures and become advocates for gender justice and survivor leadership both within and beyond their organisations.

Program structure

The program is designed to support leaders through a personal learning journey, that provides the skills and space for participants to experience, analyse and apply their learning. Each cohort of 50 leaders will receive a minimum of 12 months of mentorship, leadership and technical skills training, before graduating to join the Freedom Rising alumni network. Due to covid-19, the program has been adapted to provide online learning until the in-person training can be safely delivered.

Online program

The aim of the online program is to lay the conceptual foundations for the program, and to start to **build relationships** and provide peer support at a time of isolation. Participants will engage in weekly online training and small group discussion sessions, using a range of online tools. Through these sessions, participants will be introduced to key concepts, and will start to build relationships and practice communication skills that will be further developed during the in-person program.

In-person program

Over a series of four residential training modules, participants will engage in experiential learning activities covering the program's key themes of **gender, survivor leadership, power, and resilience**. Within these themes, participants will engage with questions of identity, conduct power analysis, recognise the value of lived experience, and develop practices for personal and organisational well-being. Participants will also be supported to identify their personal and organisational vision and to develop and implement action plans to move toward their goals.

Each residential will focus on a different layer of leadership:

Residential 1	Residential 2	Residential 3	Residential 4
			
Leading the Self	Leading Others	Leading Organisations	Leading Movements

Collaboration

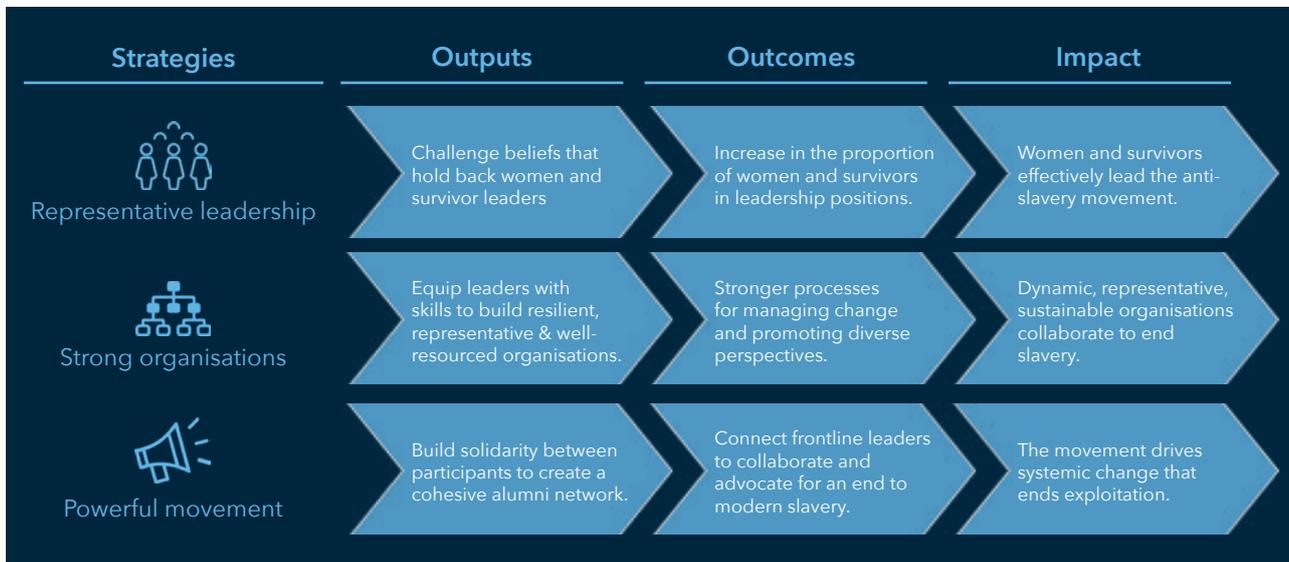
There will be multiple opportunities for collaboration, informally within, and formally between, residentials. Participants will support each other through a buddy system and receive mentoring support from senior leaders in the anti-slavery or related fields. Group projects will provide participants with an opportunity to practice their skills together as they work toward shared goals.

Participant profile

Program cohorts will include 25 established frontline leaders, at least half of whom will be women, and 25 emerging leaders, all of whom will be women. Participants will primarily be drawn from the Freedom Fund's current partner organisations but will also include other organisations from the anti-slavery field.

Building the movement

Theory of change



Freedom Rising differs from many other leadership programs in its explicit focus on building a stronger, more strategic, and more representative anti-slavery movement. After completing the year-long leadership training, participants will be formally introduced to the program's alumni network, enabling them to engage with fellow leaders and continue to build and strengthen connections at the local, regional and international levels. The Freedom Fund will actively support this network and offer opportunities for continued mentorship, action-based learning and in-person convenings. The network will support leaders to collaborate as ambassadors for the anti-slavery movement through opportunities for information-sharing, delivery of joint projects, shared advocacy efforts and participation in international fora.

Launching a global program

The Freedom Rising program will be developed and launched in 2020. A 'global' curriculum will first be developed in partnership with experts on survivor empowerment, gender, and leadership development.

The program will be piloted in Tamil Nadu in Southern India throughout 2021. Learnings from the pilot will be used to adapt and improve the program before its roll out. The curriculum will then be tailored to the specific needs and context of each training location, and delivered in local language. Future cohorts will be launched in other parts of India, Nepal, Ethiopia, Thailand and beyond.

Leader profiles



Chandra,
Program Manager,
Vizhuthugal

Chandra has faced discrimination throughout her life. In 2001 she started working for Vizhuthugal, an organisation dedicated to the empowerment of the Dalit community and their freedom from debt bondage.

There she found a place where she felt truly comfortable and where she could do something to fight the oppression of her community.

Since then, her responsibility within the organisation has grown, and she now manages 25 field workers and three field coordinators.

She still faces discrimination, as both a woman and a Dalit, but she is motivated by her vision to develop and grow Vizhuthugal, and take their work to the next level.



Vasantha,
Board Secretary, ODAM

Vasantha grew up in a rural family in southern India and was only one of two girls in her village to complete high school.

She started working for the Organisation of Development Action and Maintenance (ODAM) in 1999 as a self-help group organiser, working to economically empower rural women through small loans and micro-enterprise training.

Since then, she has established approximately 1,000 self-help groups in her District, reaching almost 10,000 rural women and providing 3.5 million rupees in loans. In 2010 Vasantha joined the Board of ODAM, and in 2014 became the Board Secretary. She has expanded the organisation in new and exciting directions, including developing a new climate change and clean energy program.

In the next five years she plans to “leap forward” as an organisation and reach ten times more women and girls, expanding their opportunities and creating a cleaner, safer and more equal future for all.



Lohambal,
Field Coordinator, CARE

Lohambal’s father died when she was ten years old, and she was raised by her mother.

As a teenager, Lohambal worked in garment factories for three years, being paid only \$2 per day due to her lower caste. In the factory she was traumatised by the exploitation and abuse she witnessed, including girls suffering degrading treatment and serious injuries. She says she lost all emotion.

When she started working at CARE she started bonding with people and feeling emotion and compassion for others again - all the feelings that had been lost in the factory.

Now as Field Coordinator at CARE she feels immense pride in her work and strives to help girls working in garment factories just like her.



Join Freedom Rising

A thriving network of diverse frontline activists is emerging, and through Freedom Rising, we have the opportunity to reach a critical mass. An investment in leadership among women and survivors is an investment in their collective power to end modern slavery. The Freedom Fund is actively seeking support for this initiative. Please join us in ensuring that freedom rises around the world.

For more information, please contact:

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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. Partnering with visionary investors, governments, anti-slavery organisations and those at risk of exploitation, we tackle the systems that allow slavery to persist and thrive. Working together, we protect vulnerable populations, liberate and reintegrate those enslaved and prosecute those responsible.

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