

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Research service: Conduct a three-country evaluation of the effectiveness of the “Freedom Rising” program

April 2024

Summary

The Freedom Fund is a global fund with the sole aim of helping end modern slavery. Through our investments and support, we aim to shift power, so that frontline organisations and communities can shape and drive the change required to bring modern slavery to an end. By partnering with survivors and those at risk of slavery as well as visionary investors, governments and anti-slavery organisations, we bring together the knowledge, capital and will needed to dismantle the systems that allow slavery to exist and thrive.

We fundamentally believe in the power of local and lived experience leadership, as we have seen how leaders who are deeply connected with their communities are able to drive the change that is needed to end exploitation in these communities. However, we have also noticed limited opportunities and support available for frontline leaders to develop their leadership skills. Individuals from marginalised groups, including women and survivors, face additional barriers. The Freedom Fund believes that this lack of investment in diverse and lived experience leadership is preventing the anti-slavery movement from reaching its full potential. **The Freedom Rising program emerged to address these gaps and support the growth of a diverse movement that can drive systemic change required to end slavery.** The program was launched in 2021, completing two pilot cohorts in India and is now currently underway in Brazil and Nepal.

The Freedom Rising program is a transformative leadership program that aims to provide space for leaders to reflect, analyse, experience, practice, and action change to achieve their mission. It brings together leadership pairs from grassroots NGOs for a year-long journey, including four week-long residencies, during which participants build their leadership capacity and relationships. The main objective of Freedom Rising is to grow and strengthen anti-slavery movements that are shaped and led by women, survivors, and individuals from marginalised groups. It does this by supporting change at **three levels - namely on individual participants, their organisations, as well as the broader anti-slavery movement**, within the program’s implementing areas.

The program evaluation described in this Request for Proposals aims to **assess the effectiveness of the program** against the outcomes that have been drafted by the Freedom Fund to measure progress across the three dimensions of impact mentioned above.

The Freedom Fund anticipates this to be a combined seven-month project, with planning commencing in May 2024 and final reports due in November 2024.

Eligibility

Individual researchers, organisations and consortia are invited to submit proposals for this research. Given that this evaluation spans multiple countries, the Freedom Fund is prepared to assist the chosen research team or researcher in identifying appropriate data collectors in each country. Nevertheless, we are keen to learn if you currently have any existing connections in India, Nepal, or Brazil that could potentially facilitate this process. Priority will be given to researchers or teams that have connections in either of the three implementing countries.

Budget

A fee of roughly USD 55,000 has been made available for this evaluation, although budgets that are higher or lower would still be considered if the costs are well justified. Budgets will be reviewed with respect to the strength of the proposal in meeting the project objectives in a cost-effective manner - we do not simply prioritise the lowest budget.

Proposal deadline

Proposals should be submitted via email to Matilde Chora (mchora@freedomfund.org) no later than Thursday 25th April 2024 at 10am UK time. Proposals should be no more than 6 pages, plus cover page, CVs and annexes if applicable.

Background to the Freedom Rising program

The Freedom Rising program has been designed to support grassroots leaders, especially women and survivors, as well as collaborations between organisations in slavery-affected communities to achieve greater impact. The goal of Freedom Rising is to promote the creation of anti-slavery movements across the globe that:

- Are led by diverse, transformative, and inclusive leaders, and particularly by those who are most affected by slavery.
- +
- Consist of strategic and sustainable organisations that collaborate and innovate.
- +
- Drive systemic change that challenges the power structures and social norms that enable exploitation.

The Freedom Rising program is designed to support leaders through a personal learning journey over the course of 12 months, that provides the skills and space for participants to experience, analyse and apply their learning.

Over a series of four residential training modules (5 days each), participants engage in experiential learning activities covering the program's key themes of gender, survivor leadership, power, and resilience. Each residential focuses on a different level of leadership:

Residential 1	Residential 2	Residential 3	Residential 4
<p>Leading the Self 5 days</p> <p><i>Leaders engage in self-reflection, share the value of lived experience and begin to explore collective action</i></p>	<p>Leading Others 5 days</p> <p><i>Leaders build interpersonal skills and apply power analysis and trauma- informed leadership to their work</i></p>	<p>Leading Organisations 5 days</p> <p><i>Leaders analyse their organisations, identify shared purpose and design organisational change projects</i></p>	<p>Leading Movements 5 days</p> <p><i>Leaders plan how to best collaborate with other stakeholders in the sector and in their communities for collective action</i></p>

Each cohort is generally comprised of 50 participants, typically consisting of 2 participants x 25 organisations working on issues of human trafficking, forced and bonded labour, or sexual exploitation (2 participants per organisation). Usually, one participant from each organisation must be in a decision-making role (CEO or Director level) and the other an emerging leader. Priority is given to women and survivors with lived experience of exploitation.

The program was piloted in India in 2021 and 2022, with one cohort conducted in Tamil Nadu and one cohort conducted in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. In 2023, Freedom Fund launched and scaled up the Freedom Rising program to both Nepal and Brazil. The below table describes the previous, current and anticipated future roll-out dates:

Freedom Rising program schedule per location		
Country	Cohort	Date
India	Cohort 1, Tamil Nadu	September 2021 to September 2022
	Cohort 2, North India (UP & Bihar)	February 2022 to December 2022
Nepal	Cohort 1, Kathmandu	November 2023 – August 2024
	Cohort 2, location to be determined	September 2024 – June 2025
Brazil	Cohort 1, Recife	March 2023 – November 2023
	Cohort 2, São Paulo	February 2024 – September 2024

In 2023, the Freedom Fund embarked on a journey to redesign the Freedom Rising monitoring & evaluation framework, including its Theory of Change, program indicators, and data collection instruments (the latest Theory of Change can be seen in Annex I of this Request for Proposals). As a result, the selected researcher or research team will be assessing the program’s impact against its main six outcomes, which address change across three main “areas” or “dimensions”: **(1) at the individual level, (2) organisational level, (3) and movement level.**



Picture 1 - Freedom Rising program outcomes

Moreover, a consultancy team was engaged to develop program indicators that aligned with the **rubrics developed by Laudes Foundation for evaluating systems change** (please consult Annex II for access to the indicators used by Laudes Foundation), which the Freedom Rising team needs to report against on an annual basis. Throughout the process of redesigning the program's Theory of Change, the resulting outcomes were matched with rubrics B4 and B6 (which were the ones found to better match the Freedom Rising program objectives) for consistency.

Evaluation objectives

The Freedom Fund is seeking to understand the impact of the approach implemented by the Freedom Rising program across India, Nepal and Brazil on its participants, their organisations, and broader anti-slavery movement within the program's implementation areas. The researcher(s) selected to conduct this evaluation will be assessing the effectiveness of the program against the outcomes that were developed during its latest monitoring & evaluation framework review, which serve as guidelines for implementation. A core element of this evaluation will be the assessment of the curriculum's success in achieving these pre-established outcomes.

To ensure an in-depth analysis of the implementation of the program and intended outcomes, the evaluation will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the underlying context of "the movements" across the three countries and six cohorts? What are the similarities and differences?
2. What have been the observed progress towards the outcomes? For each outcome:
 - a. What concrete changes were observed – at the individual, organisational and movement level? (*that is, when we say participants are "equipped with the confidence and capability to individually and collectively lead" what does that actually look like?*)
 - b. How much progress has been made, and what are the sources of evidence for this?
 - c. Does progress differ by subgroup (e.g. by region, by gender, by survivor status, by leadership status, size of org)?

Please note that the FR team has already collected a considerable amount of information regarding its impact at the individual and organisational level. That being said, we are particularly interested in assessing movement-level change, and therefore the program's progress towards indicators 5 and 6 outlined in the section above. This evaluation will be the main source of information that will be used by the FR team to assess movement-level impact.

3. What have been the contributions of the FR program towards the above outcomes – are there program components that are strongly linked to the progress observed, and conversely, are there component that are less so?
4. Is the FR program on a likely trajectory to achieve its stated outcomes?
 - a. What should it continue to do / what shifts are needed over the next 2-3 years (if any)?
 - b. What are the external barriers or opportunities that it should be mindful of?

Evaluation methodology

The Freedom Fund invites applicants to propose a suitable methodology for achieving the objectives of the evaluation outlined in the section above.

Proposals should **take into consideration the data that has already been collected during program implementation** as part of its monitoring & evaluation framework, which includes data collected through pre- and post-intervention surveys, interviews with program participants, and follow up interviews conducted with alumni group members. However, the data collected in Brazil is the only one that matches the outcomes outlined in the Theory of Change attached to Annex I of this document. Additionally, the Freedom Fund recently commissioned a consultancy team to use Social Network Analysis (SNA) to assess the impact of the Freedom Rising program on the interconnectivity of leaders, with a focus on Brazil and Nepal cohorts. This exercise is currently underway and will allow us to gather meaningful data on the impact of Freedom Rising on the connections between anti-slavery leaders, organisations, and other peripheral stakeholders.

The selected researcher or research team should utilise the data already gathered from the aforementioned sources to avoid duplication of information and focus on exploring aspects that have not yet been thoroughly examined.

Preferably, the selected researcher/research team would choose to deploy a **predominantly qualitative methodology**. Our proposed approach is to interview three individuals from a sample of organisations that have taken part in the Freedom Rising program, roughly equating to 3 interviewees x 40 organisations (spread across Brazil, India and Nepal), totalling 120 interviews overall. The three interviewees could include two program participants and one colleague from the same organisation who has not been directly involved in the Freedom Rising program. Interviews with program participants could be shorter since we already have other monitoring data from their involvement, whereas interviews with

their colleagues are anticipated to be more comprehensive. Interviews are expected to be conducted in the local languages (Nepali, Hindi, Tamil and Portuguese) and could likely all be done remotely (mainly online or phone calls where the respondent does not have a stable internet connection). However, we will take the advice of the selected evaluation team to take a different approach, including adjusting the sample size and doing a mix of in-person and remote data collection if deemed necessary and feasible.

We would also consider a **mixed-methods strategy**. If deemed appropriate, the evaluation team may also propose brief surveys to collect demographic or categorical data as a preliminary step, and the findings could then be examined in more detail through interviews. Additionally, we expect the evaluation team to methodically analyse and categorise responses from these interviews to identify recurring themes.

Additionally, and regardless of the chosen methodology, the selected researcher or research team is expected to also conduct **stakeholder interviews with influential individuals within the anti-slavery movement from the three implementing countries**. This may entail conducting roughly a total of 15 interviews, spread across three countries.

The FR team would also value the inclusion of **a few case studies (no more than six)** included in the final report, which would demonstrate the impact of the program in individual cases and be used for further program dissemination and donor reporting purposes.

Considering that this is a multi-country evaluation and with the purpose of facilitating data collection, the Freedom Fund is prepared to assist the chosen research team or researcher in identifying appropriate data collectors in each country. Nevertheless, we are keen to learn if you currently have any existing connections in India, Nepal, or Brazil that could potentially facilitate this process.

In summary, the chosen applicants will be responsible for:

- 1) Developing a suitable methodology to answer the evaluation objectives outlined above the evaluation. This should be presented as a detailed evaluation protocol which includes a sampling strategy, all relevant data collection tools translated into the local languages, and a detailed overview of ethical considerations.
- 2) Hiring and training all data collection staff;
- 3) Piloting all data collection tools, amending them as required;
- 4) Undertaking all data collection, including monitoring the quality of data and data collection;
- 5) Undertaking data analysis of all collected data and data previously collected by the Freedom Fund using appropriate methods of analysis;
- 6) Producing a written report as per a structure pre-agreed with the Freedom Fund. This should include clear findings and recommendations for the Freedom Rising program.
- 7) Facilitating a validation workshop with the Freedom Rising team and implementing partners.
- 8) Facilitating an online workshop with program participants.

Main deliverables and high-level timeline

The proposed schedule outlines the main deliverables:

Main deliverables	Proposed timeline
Kick off meeting with the Freedom Fund to agree on methodological strategy and essential elements to be included in the protocol Desk review of program documents and discussions with the FF team. Evaluation questions drafted and finalised	May/June 2024
Draft evaluation/research protocol outlining the methodological strategies for the evaluation (including data collection instruments and ethical considerations).	June 2024
Finalised evaluation/research protocol outlining the methodological strategies for the evaluation (including data collection instruments and ethical considerations), incorporating feedback from the Freedom Fund	June 2024
Memo confirming completion of data collection	October 2024
Meeting with the Freedom Fund to share preliminary findings from the evaluation	October 2024
Validation workshop with the Freedom Rising team and implementing partners to validate the evaluation findings.	November 2024
Draft of report outlining the key findings and recommendations for the Freedom Rising program, based on a structure pre-agreed with the Freedom Fund	November 2024
Final Report outlining the key findings and recommendations for the Freedom Rising program, based on a structure pre-agreed with the Freedom Fund, incorporating Freedom Fund and other reviewers' comments	End of November 2024
Online workshop with program participants	End of November 2024

In addition to the main deliverables listed above, the evaluation team is also expected to discuss with the Freedom Fund any proposed design changes and share regular updates on the progress of field activities.

The evaluation team will be contracted by the Freedom Fund US and supervised by the Freedom Fund's Head of Research & Evaluation based in London. The Freedom Fund and other funders of the program anticipate working closely with the evaluation team through all stages of the project.

Budget

A fee of roughly USD 55,000 has been made available for this evaluation, although budgets that are higher or lower would still be considered if the costs are well justified. Budgets will be reviewed with respect to the strength of the proposal in meeting the project objectives in a cost-effective manner - we do not simply prioritise the lowest budget.

As part of the proposal, please prepare a brief budget with the following breakdown:

- Personnel costs
- Other direct costs (e.g. translation, training workshops, refreshments, reimbursements of participant costs, computers & tablets, telecommunications, interpreters)
- Overheads
- All applicable taxes related to provision of services (e.g. VAT or GST)

Proposal format

Interested parties should prepare a proposal of no more than 6 pages, plus cover page, CVs and annexes if applicable. Proposals should contain the following sections:

1. **Short biography of project lead(s) and key team members**, outlining relevant subject matter expertise and prior experience leading similar research projects. CV(s) of the project lead(s) should be included in the annex. Past report(s) from similar projects could be included as a link or in a separate annex.
2. **Methodology**, addressing the topics listed in the 'Evaluation methodology' section of this document.
3. **Team structure**, defining the role and time commitment of key project team members.
4. **High-level work plan** with timing of key project deliverables and proposed format of final report.
5. **Proposed budget** in USD.

The proposal must be written in English or Portuguese and sent electronically in Microsoft Office or PDF format.

Criteria for assessing proposals

In reviewing proposals, the Freedom Fund will use the following criteria:

Technical criteria	Weighting
a. Technical capacity of the research team, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience with program evaluations across different countries/international contexts, especially involving participants from marginalised communities. - Proven experience undertaking evaluations on leadership or movement building programs within the social justice sector. - Proven experience producing detailed research reports in English, with a strong focus on clearly representing qualitative findings. 	50%
b. Team structure, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate staffing levels to deliver quality outputs within the desired timeframe. - Diversity amongst team members, for example gender, race, LGBTQI+. 	40%

- English language skills. Portuguese, Hindi, Tamil and/or Nepali skills would be an advantage.
- Preferably having collaborators in the three implementing countries (Brazil, India and Nepal).

Financial criteria

c. Consideration of all potential expenses.	10%
Total	100%

Proposal timeline and submission instructions

<p>By Thursday 25th April 2024 10am UK time</p>	<p>Final proposals due.</p> <p>Please submit all documents to Matilde Chora at mchora@freedomfund.org with "Proposal for Freedom Rising Evaluation" as the email subject line.</p>
<p>Wednesday 8th May 2024</p>	<p>All shortlisted research teams will be notified.</p>

ANNEX I

Freedom Rising Theory of Change

Major root causes

Social, economic and political marginalisation lead to women and other vulnerable groups facing greater risk of exploitation and being under-represented in leadership positions. .

Frontline anti-slavery leaders have limited opportunities to learn, share, build relationships and collaborate with each other.

Organisational culture and practices can replicate problematic power structures and social norms, and can prevent organisations functioning effectively, equitably or sustainably.

Movements that target different forms of slavery are fragmented, poorly resourced, and often lack the leadership of people with lived experience of exploitation.

Main outputs

Individual-level change

1. Leaders share knowledge, strengthen abilities and develop relationships to drive social change through personal, organisational and collective actions.

2. Leaders critically analyse issues of power and oppression—such as those based on gender, race and social hierarchies—as root causes of exploitation.

Organisational-level change

3. Leaders use systems change framework to analyse their organisational resources, power, structure and culture, collaboratively vision their ideal organisation and implement action plans to support their vision.

4. Leaders develop and share policies, practices and resources to build more inclusive and sustainable organisations.

Movement-level change

5. Leaders build relationships with diverse other leaders that are based on mutual trust and shared vision and values.

6. Leaders analyse power within movements, how movements create systemic change, and identify resources and strategies for collaboration.

Main outcomes

1. Diverse leaders strengthen their awareness, skills and capacity to practice transformative leadership.
2. Leaders have deeper relationships within and outside their organisations, and address power in their work.

3. Organisations are shaped and led in ways that allow them to grow and sustain their work consistent with their vision and values.
4. Organisations practise inclusive leadership and decision-making that includes people who are most affected by exploitation.

5. Anti-slavery leaders grow and diversify their connections and collaboration at the local, national, & international levels.
6. Anti-slavery movements shift power towards lived experience leadership and use their collective power to tackle the root causes of slavery.

Impact

Movements to end modern slavery...

... are led by diverse, transformative and inclusive leaders, and particularly by those who are most affected by slavery.

... consist of inclusive and sustainable organisations that collaborate to grow their collective impact

... drive systemic change that challenges the power structures and social norms that enable exploitation.

ANNEX II

Laudes Foundation rubrics

Outcomes	<p>B4. Workers, producers and/or communities in the relevant sector(s) and region(s) that have historically had less power or voice are having their expertise and insights genuinely valued and used to influence the decisions and policies that affect them.</p>	Survivors and individuals from other marginalised groups are equipped with the confidence and capability to individually and collectively lead both within their organisations and the wider anti-slavery movement.
		Anti-slavery organisations that are informed and led by marginalised groups and survivors are now an important voice and force for change within the area/region of FR's influence.
	<p>B6. Unstoppable multi-stakeholder movements are highly influential, creating intense pressure and political support for policymakers, the financial sector, business and industry to do the right thing with respect to climate, equity and inclusion.</p>	Frontline anti-slavery leaders (including individuals from marginalised groups and survivors) are well connected at the local, national, and international levels, and increasingly collaborate to strengthen their individual and collective actions to end slavery.
		Frontline anti-slavery leaders and organisations, particularly those led by individuals from marginalised groups and survivors, use their collective power to advocate for systems change that addresses the root causes of slavery.