



IMPACT REPORT

2022-2023

LETTER FROM OUR CEO



Over the past three years, the world has faced an unprecedented global pandemic, devastating natural disasters brought on by the climate crisis, and ongoing conflicts in Ethiopia, Myanmar, Ukraine and West Africa. With so much uncertainty, it comes as no surprise that the number of people worldwide living under conditions of modern slavery increased to 50 million according to the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery* –10 million more than in 2017.

Against this challenging backdrop, the Freedom Fund and our partners continue to work to end modern slavery by shifting power to the most vulnerable people and elevating their voices, needs and leadership. Since our founding nine years ago, Freedom Fund partners have directly helped over 1.5 million people living in slavery or at high risk of exploitation. Millions more have been impacted by our efforts to shift government policy, corporate behaviour and social norms.

To make meaningful progress against such a severe and widespread violation of human rights, we must understand the problem as the product of a complex set of actors, norms, power dynamics and incentives—and then focus on the levers that can shift this system. At the Freedom Fund, collaboration is built into our DNA. We bring together survivors, frontline partners, affected communities and donors to mobilise the collective force needed to challenge power-holders and dismantle the underlying, interconnected systems that make extreme exploitation possible.

Our partners are leading the way, backed by a group of visionary funders committed to transformative impact. Donor support has enabled the Freedom Fund to invest in over 128 frontline organisations working tirelessly to protect marginalised people and communities, liberate and support survivors of modern slavery, and prosecute those responsible. By building the resilience of our partners and fostering the leadership of survivors, women and communities most affected by exploitation, we aim to cultivate a more powerful, diverse and sustainable anti-slavery movement.

While this approach can be slow and difficult, we have seen first-hand how it can lead to sweeping changes for entire communities. This was evident in July 2022 when the Government of Nepal announced the liberation of the Harawa-Charawa, a community of approximately 120,000 adults and children living in a form of bonded labour that is often passed down through generations. This milestone affirmed the importance of the Freedom Fund's six-year investment in the frontline groups leading this advocacy, including supporting the growth of the survivor-led Harawa-Charawa Network.

There are more reasons for optimism. Today there is much greater awareness of modern slavery resulting in more research, investigations and legislation. We are beginning to see real progress in efforts to ensure companies eliminate forced labour from their supply chains.

Real lasting change is going to take bold action by frontline leaders, donors, governments and a whole host of collaborators. We believe that a world free of slavery is possible, and we hope you'll join us in making this vision a reality.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nick Grono". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Nick Grono
CEO, The Freedom Fund

*Published by the International Labour Organization, Walk Free and the International Organization for Migration.

GLOBAL IMPACT

January 2014 - December 2022

Lives impacted

 **1,512,042**

Individuals accessing social and legal services

 **854,408**

At-risk children in school

 **192,318**

Micro-enterprises started

 **34,220**

Individuals liberated

 **31,078**

Community-level freedom groups supported

 **12,075**

Legal cases assisted

 **6,724**

Cost per person

 **US \$40**

Total invested

 **US \$78M**



Vicky is a participant with our partner Instituto Aliança that advocates for the rights of women and young people to prevent child labour and sexual violence in rural Brazil. *Photo credit: Natália Corrêa / The Freedom Fund*

WE ARE A PARTNER

in the global effort to end modern slavery

We invest in and partner with frontline organisations, particularly those led by survivors and women, so that those most at risk of slavery can drive the change needed to end it.

Women's and survivor leadership

In 2022, our leadership program for women and survivors, Freedom Rising, supported 90 frontline leaders in south Asia to build skills and connections to transform their organisations and communities. We also laid the groundwork for expanding Freedom Rising to Brazil. In early 2023, the first group of local leaders in Brazil began leadership and network training. The program will support 52 frontline leaders from 36 organisations throughout the year.


We strengthened our commitment to survivor leadership by providing unrestricted grants to 37 survivor-led organisations in Bolivia, Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Peru, Thailand and Uganda through our ground-breaking Survivor Leadership Fund.

We also committed to providing, by 2030, a total of \$10 million in funding to at least 300 survivor-led organisations. Presenting our commitment at the Clinton Global Initiative in New York in September 2022, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton said: "Through this commitment, the Freedom Fund is sending a bold message about the urgency of ending modern slavery and about the importance of trust-based philanthropy... and [making clear] that survivor-led organisations are worthy of our investment and our trust."



I have always had the attitude of a warrior. I know that, without a struggle, big things can't be achieved.

Freedom Rising participant

A circular portrait of Talisha, a woman with short dark hair, wearing a bright yellow top. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark with green palm fronds. The portrait is partially overlaid by a large blue curved shape on the right side of the page.

Talisha from Women Promotion Centre, Kenya, which was awarded a US \$15K grant from the Freedom Fund through the Survivor Leadership Fund. Photo credit: Sarah Waiswa / The Freedom Fund



Staying true to our DNA: Demonstrating accountability to our partners

From the onset, the Freedom Fund aimed to be the funder that best knew how to support grassroots organisations fighting slavery, the funder they would all want to partner with. We would be demanding, but also flexible, supportive, light on bureaucracy, and accountable.

Thanks to Keystone Accountability, an independent not-for-profit that specialises in improving accountability in international aid and philanthropy, we were able to hear directly from our partners if we are living up to our aspirations. In 2022, Keystone carried out a [survey](#) with the Freedom Fund's grassroots partners to find out how well they think we are supporting them and their work.

Overall, our partners rated the Freedom Fund significantly above the global benchmark average on nearly all questions. In some cases, Keystone reported that we had received the highest score ever recorded on several questions regarding flexibility in letting our partners adjust their spending plans and our funding transparency and accountability.

We are especially proud that many of our partners said they feel comfortable questioning our approach when they disagree with us, and they feel that we listen and respond appropriately to concerns. According to Keystone, "mutuality in relationships is an area of evident strength in which the Freedom Fund scores significantly higher than the average in all areas."

Participants at a Freedom Rising residential in Brazil.
Photo credit: Nando Chiappetta /The Freedom Fund



There is no joy without freedom.

Dashan Mandal, Chairperson
Harawa-Charawa Network



Top right: Dashan Mandal, chairperson of Nepal's Harawa-Charawa Network, speaking about the emancipation of the bonded labourer community in July 2022. Lower right: Rajvati Mandal, Central Chairman of National Network of Harawa-Charawa. Photo credit: Niranjana Shrestha / The Freedom Fund

Centre: To spread the message of the declaration of emancipation of the Harawa-Charawa, the Rastriya Dalit Network, Forced Labour Elimination Advocacy Group and the Harawa-Charawa Network organised a four-day march across eight districts in Madesh Province in April 2023. Photo credit: Filmatory Nepal / The Freedom Fund



The liberation of the Harawa-Charawa

The Freedom Fund has been working for many years to support the Harawa-Charawa—a Dalit community in Nepal who live in a form of bonded labour that is often passed down through generations. Alongside our local partners, we have supported survivors to build a democratically elected movement, the Harawa-Charawa Network, and invested in their capacity to advocate for their rights and influence power-holders.

In July 2022, years of hard work paid off when the government officially announced the Harawa-Charawa's liberation. Dashan Mandal, Chairperson of the Harawa-Charawa Network, said: "There is no joy without freedom, and this announcement will bring much relief and happiness to more than 100,000 Harawa-Charawa people." However, he warned that "without rehabilitation it will not work." Our network partners are now consulting with the government to address issues such as access to land, housing, education, health services and fair employment.

This is a historic success for and by the Harawa-Charawa community, and was achieved because of their determined organising and activism, and their belief that a different future is possible. We are proud to have played a role in supporting this step towards real freedom.

The Harawa-Charawa also increased their influence in government decision-making when 52 leaders from partner communities were elected in municipal elections held in May 2022. Our partners are now working to build the capacity of these individuals so that they can leverage their political positions to support the community.



WE ARE A CATALYST

of action to end modern slavery

We work with partners to achieve transformative change in sectors where people are at high risk of exploitation and trafficking.

Exploitative child domestic work

In Ethiopia, our partner Population Council carried out a [study](#) in 2022 of the prevalence of trafficking and other forms of exploitation experienced by child domestic workers. The study found that over 85 percent of the girls engaged in domestic work were in harmful conditions, equivalent to the worst forms of child labour. The Freedom Fund is using the findings to call for clear actions by government, civil society and community leaders to protect young children from harmful forms of labour.

We also work to challenge the social norms that allow exploitation to continue. In 2022, eight TV spots were released on the main Ethiopian TV channel, EBS, aimed at improving the treatment of child domestic workers by encouraging employers to reduce working hours and enable access to education.

There has been an increase in legal action taken against perpetrators in Ethiopia during 2022, due in part to training that our partners have provided to law enforcement. Seven individuals were jailed for abuse of child domestic workers, and a further 64 legal cases relating to child domestic work are underway. Our partners also worked with community action groups to identify 82 children who were domestic workers that required protective support. These children are now in the process of being reintegrated with their families.

The Government of Kenya has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing child labour through policy and legislative changes. Nonetheless, many children still find themselves in exploitative work that curtails their basic rights and constitutes modern slavery. Following a survey of child domestic workers in Nairobi, we set up a new hotspot program in Kenya to address exploitative child domestic work and engage the Kenyan government in efforts to build on child protection policies. An initial six Kenyan partners received funding in 2022.

We also launched a global peer learning group on child domestic work to share lessons and build connections among individuals and organisations that are taking action on the issue.



Ruth Kimani (left), Senior Program Manager for the Freedom Fund and Mary Mbuga, Deputy Director, CTIP Secretariat, Directorate of Children Services at the launch event of our new hotspot in Kenya, December 2022. Photo credit: Sara Mitaru / The Freedom Fund



Forced labour and migration

To address a large domestic and migrant workforce in exploitative labour conditions in the Indonesian fishing industry, we launched a new hotspot in 2022 by partnering with five local civil society and worker organisations, including a newly formed survivor-led trade union. During the year, partners in Indonesia led a rapid impact assessment of working conditions and trained migrant workers bound for overseas employment on forced labour risks.

In September 2022, we published the Meneshachin ('Our Departure') [study](#) of the experience of migrant workers in Ethiopia, drawing on 156 interviews with migrants, formal recruiters, informal brokers and other stakeholders. The study found that many prospective women migrants remain at risk from unscrupulous recruiters, exposing them to exploitation, including long hours, poor living conditions and violence.

In 2022, we launched the Thrive employment program, which trains and connects returnee women survivors to jobs in the formal sector in Ethiopia. By March 2023, Thrive had enrolled its first 90 participants.

Our partners in Ethiopia made advancements towards improving oversight of migration recruitment agencies, with enforcement actions taken against recruiters for illegal and unethical practices. In 2022, 30 traffickers received prison terms and 94 cases were under investigation for sending women to the Middle East for domestic work. Additionally, 65 recruiters had their licenses revoked.

Violence and insecurity have persisted in Myanmar, leading to internal population movement as people search for security and livelihood opportunities. Our partners have continued engaging communities to ensure their protection against exploitation in high-risk industries and to promote informed decision-making for those considering migration. They have also provided survivors of trafficking and exploitation with emergency support, including shelter, food and medical services.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children

In Bangladesh, we worked with our partner Population Council to conduct a survey into the prevalence and practice of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). The research confirmed a significant presence of underage girls in Dhaka's brothels and high levels of CSEC among street children. During 2022, we began supporting two new partners in Bangladesh that work with street children and survivors.

In Brazil, a similar study in the Recife metropolitan area underpinned our decision to launch a new CSEC hotspot program there. During the year, we selected nine new partners and signed an agreement with the Pernambuco state government and Recife City Hall to develop joint actions to tackle CSEC.



Top: Fishing industry in Samut Sakhon, Thailand.
Photo credit: Jittrapon Kaicome / The Freedom Fund

Right: Still from an Ethiopian TV spot developed by the Freedom Fund and Girl Effect. The girl pictured is an actor.

WE WORK FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

to tackle the causes and drivers of modern slavery

We advocate globally for changes in policy and practice, and support our partners to take legal action to shine a light on exploitation and hold abusers to account.

In 2022, we provided a second round of funding under the Tariff Act Legal Fund. These grants aim to address slavery in supply chains through the enforcement of the US Tariff Act import ban on goods produced with forced labour. In partnership with Human Trafficking Legal Center, we work closely with our partners to support them in conducting forced labour investigations, with the goal of filing petitions with US Customs and Border Protection. We are currently supporting 11 investigations under the Fund.

Additionally, we launched the new Tariff Act Advocacy Grants in early 2023, supporting follow-up advocacy after a Tariff Act petition has been submitted. With Laudes Foundation, we commissioned research on remediation of forced labour under the Tariff Act, which includes robust case studies on access to remedy for workers.

In 2022, the European Commission (EC) announced its intention to introduce a law banning products made with forced labour across EU markets. We coordinated with partners on advocacy around strengthening the details of the proposed law, and in November we filed a submission to the EC focused on the importance of trade data transparency, mandatory supply chain mapping and disclosure requirements, as well as the need for meaningful participation of civil society.

Our corporate accountability and Brazil teams began strategising for a new hotspot in the Brazilian Amazon aimed at reducing forced labour and strengthening environmental protections of the rainforest. The hotspot will bring together a range of organisations focused on environmental protection, Indigenous peoples' rights and anti-slavery initiatives to promote sustainable development and address human rights and environmental violations.

We also commissioned a research project to look at the impact of strategic litigation on corporate behaviour. The research, which will take place in 2023, will inform our litigation grant-making strategy and fill the evidence gap around the effectiveness of strategic litigation.



Fishing industry in Samut Sakhon, Thailand. Photo credit: Jittrapon Kaicome / The Freedom Fund



Our work in India draws to a close after eight years

Since 2014, our three hotspot programs in India have achieved remarkable successes. Working alongside frontline organisations and communities, we have seen 125,000 fewer individuals in bonded labour, over six million people connected to government services, and an end to impunity for traffickers of children in Jaipur. Having supported our partners to build their capacity to confront and end exploitation, we worked alongside them during 2022 to close our hotspot programs in India.

In our final year working in the country, our partners played a leading role in the Tamil Nadu Alliance—a network dedicated to improving working conditions in the textile industry—to set up four resource centres. The centres will advise and assist migrants facing difficulties and reach out to settlements and workplaces to enable workers to sign on for social protection entitlements. Our Child Labour Free Jaipur (CLFJ) partners were instrumental in securing 12 convictions against child traffickers during the year. One of these convictions was the first in which children testified in the trial using video-conferencing from their home district—something that our partners had been working towards since 2020.

An external evaluation of the CLFJ program found a significant improvement in government enforcement, including the number of workshop inspections, child labourers liberated, and police charge sheets filed against offenders.

During the year, we also compiled a toolkit documenting the CLFJ model that includes core components and key lessons illustrated by video animations. This toolkit provides an essential resource for organisations worldwide interested in strengthening their efforts against child labour.

HOTSPOT IMPACT

Since our inception, we have supported 128 frontline partners and worked in 13 hotspots—geographic areas with a high incidence of modern slavery. This map highlights the work and impact of our frontline hotspot partners from January 2014 to December 2022.

Program focus



Bonded labour: Ending the exploitation of those forced to work to repay deceptive loans under unlawful and denigrating conditions, sometimes over generations.



Child labour: Ending the exploitation of children in work that is harmful to their development, education and health.



Commercial sexual exploitation of children: Ending the exploitation of children in the commercial sex industry.



Domestic servitude: Ending the exploitation of women and children employed in private homes as domestic workers.



Forced labour: Ending the practice of forcing people to work against their will under the threat of penalty or violence, whether by government authorities, private businesses or individuals.



Forced marriage: Ending the trafficking of women and girls for the purposes of forced marriage and childbearing.



WEST AFRICA

Researching and piloting interventions to address exploitative child domestic work in Liberia and Nigeria



KENYA

Launched a hotspot in December 2022 to reduce exploitative child domestic work



BRAZIL

Lives impacted	9,013
Individuals liberated	71
Individuals accessing social and legal services	1,589
Changes in public policy	5
Cost per person	\$143
Partners	9



RAJASTHAN

Lives impacted	58,272
Individuals liberated	2,233
At-risk children in school	7,217
Individuals with new access to government services	20,518
Cost per person	\$84
Partners	16



NEPAL

Lives impacted	70,665
Individuals liberated	1,964
At-risk children in school	22,655
Individuals accessing social and legal services	20,332
Micro-enterprises started	6,645
Cost per person	\$101
Partners	16



NORTHERN INDIA

Lives impacted	654,444
At-risk children in school	153,158
Individuals with new access to government services	801,872
Cost per person	\$20
Partners	18



SOUTHERN INDIA

Lives impacted	315,982
Community freedom groups supported	3,626
Individuals with new access to government services	193,615
Cost per person	\$29
Partners	19



MYANMAR

Lives impacted	37,099
Individuals accessing social and legal services	1,576
Legal cases assisted	51
Cost per person	\$33
Partners	3



THAILAND

Lives impacted	85,728
Individuals accessing social and legal services	55,949
Legal cases assisted	1,409
Cost per person	\$52
Partners	7



BANGLADESH

Lives impacted	566
At-risk children in school	362



ETHIOPIA

Lives impacted	173,328
Individuals accessing social and legal services	50,751
Survivors accessing social and legal services	10,318
Cost per person	\$74
Partners	19



INDONESIA

Lives impacted	6,136
Individuals accessing social and legal services	660
Legal cases assisted	140
Changes to public policy	4
Partners	3

WE BUILD EVIDENCE

and share knowledge about what works

Our research—which is rooted in the realities of frontline organisations, survivors and community members—seeks to identify what is needed to tackle modern slavery at national, regional and global levels.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine resulted in the biggest movement of people in Europe since the Second World War. It quickly became apparent that refugees from Ukraine, mainly women and children, were extremely vulnerable to sexual and labour exploitation as organised criminal groups and individual profiteers sought to take advantage of the turmoil. We commissioned a [rapid assessment](#) from La Strada International, a European anti-trafficking NGO platform, to determine what is required by governments, organisations and donors for a comprehensive counter-trafficking response.

In 2022, we also published a [report](#) on the links between modern slavery and the inequalities and discrimination faced by women and girls. The report identifies key areas that increase the risks of exploitation, trafficking and abuse: lack of access to decent work; vulnerability to unsafe migration; exposure to violence and abuse; and lack of access to education and training. The report argues that anti-slavery interventions should incorporate specific strategies to support women and girls, and calls for systemic change to tackle the underlying causes of gender inequality in order to break the cycle and see an end to both gender injustice and modern slavery.

Faith (left) and Margaret (right) from Azadi Kenya, which was awarded a US \$15K grant from the Freedom Fund in the first round of our Survivor Leadership Fund. Photo credit: Sarah Waiswa / The Freedom Fund



Publications supported

March 2022, [Gender inequality and modern slavery: How to break the cycle of women and girls' exploitation](#), The Freedom Fund

May 2022, [Preventing human trafficking of refugees from Ukraine: A rapid assessment of risks and gaps in the anti-trafficking response](#), La Strada International

May 2022, [Towards safer recruitment of Ethiopian women into domestic work abroad](#), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

June 2022, [Built on repression: PVC building materials' reliance on labor and environmental abuses in the Uyghur Region](#), Sheffield Hallam University

July 2022, [Lived realities of sustained liberation for survivors of trafficking in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia](#), University of Nottingham

September 2022, [Fake my catch: The unreliable traceability in our tuna cans](#), Greenpeace

September 2022, [The role of agents and brokers in facilitating Ethiopian women into domestic work in the Middle East](#), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

October 2022, [Migrant women's health and safety: Why do Ethiopian women choose irregular migration to the Middle East for domestic work?](#) London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

October 2022, [The prevalence of domestic servitude among child domestic workers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia](#), Population Council

LOOKING AHEAD

In the coming years, we will multiply our efforts to bring an end to modern slavery by delivering the change that is truly needed to break cycles of exploitation once and for all.

We see the Freedom Fund's role as threefold: identifying and scaling effective community-based interventions; fostering a stronger and more inclusive anti-slavery movement; and ensuring that powerholders—including governments and businesses—fulfil their responsibilities to combat exploitation. In the upcoming year we will continue our journey of growth.



Make our first-ever grants in the Amazon region of Brazil to address forced labour in supply chains, particularly focused on the livestock and timber industries.



Launch an Ecosystem Building program in Southeast Asia to strengthen the role of frontline civil society organisations to engage in corporate accountability strategies.



Provide US \$800,000 in grants to 40 survivor-led organisations in East Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia through the Survivor Leadership Fund.



Explore options to launch a program to combat child exploitation among the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon.



Conduct leadership training to three cohorts in Brazil as part of the Freedom Rising program, and expand the program into Nepal and Indonesia over two years.



Host a research conference with the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery and Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre that will bring together over 80 experts from academia, civil society, community groups, governmental and multilateral agencies, private donors, and survivor leaders.



Publish research on the impact of strategic human rights litigation on corporate behaviour.

Brazilian timber industry. Photo credit: *Kevin Bales / The Freedom Fund*



SUPPORTERS

The Freedom Fund is grateful for the generous backing of all our investors and donors. With their support, we are strengthening frontline efforts to end modern slavery and building a more inclusive anti-slavery movement.

Founders



Key investors

Laudes Foundation
MacKenzie Scott and Dan Jewett
The Millby Foundation
The Moondance Foundation
Norwegian Agency for Development
Cooperation

Oak Foundation
Ray and Dagmar Dolby Family Fund
Stardust Foundation
UBS Optimus Foundation
United States Department of State

Key Investors include those who contributed \$300k or more in 2022.

Directors

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Vice President,
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Andrew Doust
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Grace Forrest
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Mahendra Pandey
Senior Manager,
Forced Labour and
Human Trafficking,
Humanity United

Philippe Sion
Managing Director,
Forced Labour and
Human Trafficking,
Humanity United

Council of Advocates

Our Council of Advocates is a group of passionate advocates, activists and philanthropists dedicated to supporting the Freedom Fund's mission. Members play a key role in helping shape the Freedom Fund's work and community, including engaging with the Board, leadership and staff.

Natasha Dolby
Freedom Forward

Molly Gochman
Stardust Foundation

Ken Goody
Dorothea Haus Ross
Foundation

Debbie Salkind
Bright Horizon Fund

Lisa Wolverton
Wolverton Foundation

Michelle Yue (Chair)
The Millby Foundation

Catherine Zennström
Zennström Philanthropies



Freedom Rising participant Maria from Centro de Defesa da Vida e dos Direitos Humanos Carmen Bascarán. Photo credit: Nando Chiappetta / The Freedom Fund



VISION

Our vision is a world free of slavery.

MISSION

Our mission is to mobilise the knowledge, capital and will needed to end slavery.

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