

IMPACT REPORT

2025-2026

THE
FREEDOM
FUND



We invest in frontline organisations and movements to drive a measurable reduction of modern slavery in high-prevalence countries and industries.

LETTER FROM THE CEO



Nick Grono
CEO

This year marks the centenary of the Slavery Convention, when the international community committed to end slavery in all its forms. Yet, 100 years on, exploitation thrives around the world. The purpose of the Freedom Fund is to change that.

This year also marks my last as CEO. I will be leaving in December with enormous gratitude for my colleagues, our frontline partners and our supporters. Difficult though it is to leave, I will do so knowing the organisation is in peak health, with a powerful new strategy in place, robust finances and an outstanding team.

Since 2014 we have directly reached nearly 1.8 million people across 12 countries and strengthened the resilience of 12 million more against exploitation. Those numbers matter. But it is the deeper, systems-level change of which I am most proud: more than 300 organisations made more sustainable, connected and effective — nearly half led by survivors; a growing commitment to evidence-based research and interventions; laws that better protect vulnerable workers and deliver justice; and new donors funding the fight against modern slavery.

With a big second gift from MacKenzie Scott in November 2025, we are primed to deliver even greater impact. Against a backdrop of shrinking funding and rising threats to human rights work, Scott's generosity is both an endorsement of the collaborative funding model and a powerful vote of confidence in our results.

It also carries enormous responsibility. We believe the best way to honour her gift, and those of our other generous funders, is to put these resources into the hands of frontline leaders too often overlooked by philanthropy. That means deepening support for survivor-led organisations and giving our partners more flexibility and autonomy in how they use funding. It allows us to continue to grow key programs in Brazil, Nigeria, Bangladesh and elsewhere, launch a new child marriage-focused hotspot in Uganda and recommit to advocacy and legal strategies addressing forced labour in supply chains — even as other funders have withdrawn from the corporate accountability space.

The Freedom Fund rests on a conviction that modern slavery is not intractable — that with the right resources, knowledge and leadership, communities exploited for generations can experience freedom. Our partners demonstrate this every day, dismantling systems of exploitation that many assumed were permanent. That work continues. I'm honoured to have played a part in it and will be cheering the Freedom Fund and its partners on as they drive ever greater change in the years ahead.

PARTNER STORIES

Brazil

Forced labour

23,713 lives impacted

Salomão Rodrigues Feitosa, a survivor of forced labour in the Amazon, spent his life as an undocumented itinerant farmworker, leaving him excluded from healthcare, social protection and citizenship rights well into old age. After residents found him living in precarious conditions, they referred him to partner Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT), which mobilised a network of local institutions to secure his documentation, healthcare and social benefits. Once a court authorised his birth certificate, CPT helped him access income support and reunite with family. His health has since improved significantly.

Salomão's case demonstrates how coordinated civil society action can overcome bureaucratic barriers that often trap vulnerable workers in situations of exploitation.



Commercial sexual exploitation of children

34,025 lives impacted

At 16, Ilana was a survivor of sexual exploitation living in institutional care with limited prospects for education or employment. Her life trajectory changed when she was referred to Instituto Aliança, where she began a specialised training program. Ilana then entered the labour market as an administrative assistant through Brazil's Apprenticeship Law program, allowing her to earn a salary while finishing her formal education.

Three years later, Ilana has achieved remarkable stability. As a young mother, she has secured independent housing and a steady income, transforming her life from one of vulnerability to one of autonomy. Her journey highlights how institutional support and skills development can empower survivors to overcome adversity and build a dignified future.

Nigeria

Child domestic work

3,231 lives impacted

"Before the sensitisation [training], I believed sending my children to work in other people's houses was the only way we could survive. I did not know how much danger they would be exposed to." -Ojo (pseudonym), business-woman, advocate and mother of three

Faced with severe economic hardship following the collapse of her business selling purified drinking water, Ojo considered sending her children into exploitative domestic work as a survival tactic. Before making the decision, she attended an information session by the Center for the Advancement and Protection of the Rights of Vulnerable People where she learned the grave risks of child abuse and exploitation associated with the practice.

Equipped with the opportunity to choose her children's safety and education over short-term relief, Ojo transitioned into a skills training program. She now earns a sustainable income in makeup and gele (headscarf) tying, providing for her family and paying her children's school fees. Ojo has also become an advocate, engaging parents in her community about the exploitation risk to child domestic workers.

Uganda

Child marriage

3,627 lives impacted

"Ever since GARD introduced vegetable growing, the garden has become our daily bank account that keeps the family together." -Martin Loli, Local Council Chairperson, Lotuttuwa

In Uganda's Napak district, drought and food insecurity have long driven desperate families to send children to beg in Kampala or work in unregulated mines. Only 37% of children attend school regularly, leaving the rest more vulnerable to traffickers.

The Grassroots Alliance for Rural Development (GARD) is working to break the cycle at its source by building economic resilience through climate-smart vegetable farming, farming business education and village savings and loan associations across 700 households. When families can grow food and save money through lean seasons, the pressure to send children away diminishes. In villages where GARD is active, the pull of the city is weakening and more children are staying home and in school.





Ethiopia

Child domestic work

17,774 lives impacted

"Through my challenges I learned a lot, became a role model, and now I want to become a lawyer to stand up for and support other child domestic workers like me."

-Akrim, trafficking survivor

After tragically losing her parents, 16-year-old Akrim found work as a child domestic worker in Addis Adaba. Facing an uncertain future, she joined the Mission for Community Development Program's Safe Space, where she accessed skills training, psychosocial support and advocacy education. When child domestic workers were invited to participate in the Addis Ababa Child Parliament elections, Akrim delivered a powerful presentation on their rights and challenges. In a historic first, Akrim and two other child domestic workers were elected to the Parliament. She was chosen by peers to lead a volunteer committee, where she now supports vulnerable groups including children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. From survivor to changemaker, Akrim shows what is possible when young people receive proper support.

Safer migration

205,011 lives impacted

"For the first time, I felt someone believed my story and stood beside me. I learned that what happened to me was wrong, and that I have rights." -Marta (pseudonym), trafficking survivor

Marta was trapped in domestic servitude in the Middle East after migrating through informal channels under the false promise of fair wages. She faced excessive hours, restricted movement and non-payment. Upon returning to Ethiopia, she was referred to Agar Ethiopia, where she received immediate shelter, medical care and specialised psycho-social support.

Following counselling and legal guidance, Marta was formally identified as a trafficking survivor. Agar supported her in pursuing an administrative claim for her stolen wages. Her case also contributed to stronger coordination between service providers and government institutions. Marta now actively mentors other returnees, using her story to highlight the dangers of irregular recruitment and the importance of survivor rights.





Kenya

Child domestic work

13,774 lives impacted

"Baridi Kwa Baridi was a lone voice when it came to pushing for the covering of child domestic workers and our efforts have borne fruit."

-Maureen Ayudi, Executive Director, Baridi Kwa Baridi

In Busia County, child domestic workers have long been invisible to policy and justice alike. With poverty rates at 83% and the county a major transit point for child trafficking, there was a profound need for a dedicated child protection policy, yet none existed. Baridi Kwa Baridi Women (BKB), a community-based organisation working with vulnerable children in Busia County, made changing that central to their mission.

BKB helped convene a coalition to develop Busia County's first ever child protection policy, pushing for the explicit inclusion of child domestic workers through working groups, radio appearances and community forums. Their persistence paid off. The policy, launched on the Day of the African Child in June 2025, includes a dedicated clause protecting children in domestic work from all forms of abuse.

Nepal

Bonded labour

91,583 lives impacted

Phul Kumara Sada received a small loan and livelihoods training from ActionAid. She invested in pig rearing, gradually building a reliable income stream. In time, she was able to repay the original loan. This contributed towards a revolving fund that enables others also to receive loans.

She used her remaining income to keep her children in school, meet household needs and begin saving.

Her experience demonstrates how small livelihood inputs, when paired with strong group accountability, can reduce reliance on exploitative labour relationships and strengthen economic security.



Bangladesh

Commercial sexual exploitation of children

7,709 lives impacted

"When I was living on the streets, I never imagined I could return to my mother or stand on my own. Today, I see my mother every day, I have a respectable job, and I am treated with dignity." -Halima (pseudonym), 18-year-old survivor now working as an industrial sewing machine operator

After losing her father, Halima moved to Dhaka to support her family, where she was forced into sex work for three years. In 2023, INCIDIN identified her as a trafficking survivor and began planning her reintegration.

A key barrier to her recovery was the lack of a birth certificate, which blocked access to education, healthcare and social protection. INCIDIN fast-tracked the process, enabling Halima to enrol in a skills training program. *"When I saw my (birth certificate) and signed the forms, I realised I could finally escape this cycle of abuse,"* she recalled.

Following her training, Halima secured factory employment and was reunified with her family. She has since obtained a better-paying job and now volunteers in her community helping at-risk children access government services.



Indonesia

Forced labour

18,506 lives impacted

When Ali Mustofa returned from nine months of exploitation at sea — unpaid, injured and stripped of his documents — he turned to Serikat Buruh Migran Indonesia (SBMI) for support. Through direct negotiation with the recruitment agency, SBMI secured the return of his documents, cancelled fraudulent fines levied against him and won restitution.

But Ali's story does not end with his own recovery, it begins there. Rather than returning to his village in silence, he joined SBMI as a peer advocate warning other prospective fishers about recruitment fraud and forced labour risks. Now back at sea, he conducts outreach directly on deck.

GLOBAL IMPACT

**1.78
million**

Lives impacted



8,397



Legal cases
assisted

More than
241,000



At-risk children
now attending school

Total invested

**US
\$121
million**



37,026

Individuals liberated

371

Policies
enacted



See our full impact



More than

**1.2
million**

Individuals accessing
social & legal services

12 million



Individuals with improved resistance to exploitation

47%

of frontline partners are survivor-led

57%

of frontline partners are women-led

LOOKING AHEAD

In the coming year, we will expand our efforts against exploitation and modern slavery by:

- Launching a full hotspot program in Uganda to prevent child marriage and other forms of child exploitation.
- Developing refreshed three-year strategies for our Bangladesh, Indonesia and Nigeria hotspots alongside partners, stakeholders and community members.
- Updating our Responsible Supply Chains program in response to a challenging funding environment for labour rights organisations.
- Providing follow-up grants for the first time to select Survivor Leadership Fund grantees to strengthen survivor-led anti-trafficking work.
- Measuring the longitudinal influence of the Freedom Fund support for movement building in Kenya.
- Increasing the proportion of our financial support to partners toward organisation capacity building.
- Launching a follow-up child domestic work prevalence study in Ethiopia, funded by our grant from the Trafficking in Persons Office of the U.S. government, to observe change over time and identify explanatory evidence.

EVIDENCE & RESEARCH

In 2021, the Freedom Fund launched the Survivor Leadership Fund to provide unrestricted grants to survivor-led organisations to build their capacity and grow their impact. An external evaluation of the program demonstrated that the approach is highly effective in cultivating a diverse ecosystem of anti-slavery organisations. In response to feedback emphasising the importance of mentorship and networking, the program now focuses on hotspot countries, second-round funding and enhanced technical support.



Two new Freedom Fund reports offer a roadmap for sustainable impact: *Systems Change in Practice* outlines a strategic approach to tackling core issues driving exploitation, while *Measuring Systems Change* identifies the importance of developing effective approaches for measuring our systems change efforts.

RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY CHAINS

In 2025, the Responsible Supply Chain Initiative launched the second phase of its Corporate Accountability Seed Fund, providing grants to 14 frontline civil society organisations across Southeast Asia and Taiwan to combat forced labour in global supply chains. Operating in countries including Cambodia, Indonesia and Malaysia, the fund empowers civil society organisations to hold corporations accountable through strategic litigation, community-led monitoring and advocacy.

We supported legal cases in more than ten countries worldwide, both launching new cases as well as providing continued support to ongoing cases. Six successful legal outcomes were achieved in 2025, which included providing direct remedies for affected workers and communities and/or setting new legal precedents. Partners also influenced positive steps towards strengthening of forced labour and human rights due diligence legislation across the UK, Australia, Canada and South Korea.

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW



Havovi Wadia
Managing Director
of Programs

The year 2025 was one of significant change for our organisation. None of our progress would be possible without our team, and it was a year in which we asked a great deal of them. We undertook a comprehensive review of our internal operations and structure, and made several decisions to ensure we could continue to deliver on our mission with clarity and discipline.

Those decisions were built on a year-long consultation in 2024 with partners, donors and staff, which shaped our strategy through 2030. The strategy reaffirmed our commitment to being flexible frontline funders, elevating our partners' work and mobilising resources to end modern slavery. It also brought to light that some programs and processes needed streamlining because of the demands on staff and the additional complexity for grantees. In order to direct a greater proportion of our resources to frontline organisations and truly enable their autonomy, we needed to make some deliberate shifts.

In response, we stepped back from programs where our role had become more implementation-oriented. We introduced a more straightforward grantmaking system, reviewed our due diligence processes and adjusted the data that we requested from partners. We scrutinised all non-grant programmatic costs. And we restructured our talented and deeply committed team to better serve these changes.

As a result we are now better positioned to support our partners through a challenging season. When the U.S. government froze foreign aid funding in early 2025, we had already begun this process. Throughout this period, colleagues carried an extraordinary load: managing nuanced donor conversations, supporting partners to sustain or scale efforts where possible, and modelling listening and humility across all our programs.

When we got the announcement that we had received a second transformative gift from MacKenzie Scott, we felt both grateful and ready. During a time of dramatic cuts to human rights funding, the gift was not just a relief, it was a recognition of the power of our partners' work and a vote of confidence in our long-term vision. The changes we made have equipped us to pass on the trust and generosity of Scott's gift to our partners. With this gift, we can continue to be a stable, dedicated funder for the long haul.

SUPPORTERS

We are grateful for the generous backing of all our investors and donors whose support allows us to strengthen frontline efforts to end modern slavery and build a more inclusive movement.

Founders



Key investors

Key Investors include those who have donated over \$300,000 in 2025.

First Light Fund

Laudes Foundation

MacKenzie Scott

The Millby Foundation

The Moondance Foundation

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