



Request for Proposals:

Consultancy to carry out a normative change campaign in traditional, social media and in communities to increase public awareness of the scale and harm caused by sexual exploitation of children in Bangladesh

Introduction

The Freedom Fund is a global fund with the sole aim of helping end human trafficking. We are a catalyst in the global effort to end human trafficking, working in the countries and sectors where it is most prevalent. 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 human trafficking to an end. By partnering with survivors and those at risk of exploitation as well as visionary investors, governments and anti-trafficking organisations, we bring together the knowledge, capital and will need to dismantle the systems that allow human trafficking to exist and thrive.

The Freedom Fund started working in Bangladesh in 2021, and in 2023, it received a US Government JTIP grant titled “Enhancing Protection of Survivors of Child Sex Trafficking” that aims to eradicate child sex trafficking (CST) in Bangladesh by enabling systemic actors to respond positively to the needs of CST survivors. At present, the Freedom Fund is partnering with four organisations in the Dhaka division and aims to partner with up to four additional organisations in other parts of Bangladesh that have registered brothels.

As part of the JTIP program, the Freedom Fund will select a qualified technical agency to create and run a normative change campaign in order to increase public awareness of the scale and harm caused by sexual exploitation of children, with a specific focus on reducing both the demand for and the social acceptance of child sexual exploitation in Bangladesh. One of the important components of the campaign will be to target the perpetrators¹ of commercial sexual exploitation CSEC.

The Freedom Fund anticipates this consultancy to be a 12-month project, with the design phase commencing in October 2024. A fee of up to USD 60,000 has been made available for this campaign.

Project Summary

Despite being illegal, CSEC is understood to be widespread in Bangladesh in a range of settings including legally registered brothels, hotels and private residence as well as on the streets. It is thought to be driven by multiple factors including poverty, cultural norms – including patriarchal norms that support violence against women and girls – child marriage, exclusion from education, rural-urban migration, criminal enterprises and the effects of climate change.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines CSEC as “the exploitation by an adult with respect to a child or an adolescent – female or male – under 18 years old; accompanied by a payment in money or in kind to the child or adolescent (male or female) or to one or more third parties.” It includes the use of children in sexual activities in return for cash or kind, trafficking for sex trade, child sex tourism,

¹ ECPAT recommends using the term “perpetrators” instead of “clients” in the context of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. According to ECPAT’s definition, the term “perpetrator” refers to a person “who carries out a harmful, illegal, or immoral act”, as well as someone who has been convicted of committing such a crime or act.

the production, promotion and distribution of pornography involving children, and the use of children in sex shows (public or private).

In Dhaka, the nation's capital and largest city, and in its vicinity, CSEC is concentrated in brothels and red-light zones, hotels, private residences, slums and streets, with children subject to high levels of violence and coercion (Dalberg Advisors, 2020). It's not uncommon for the children of brothel workers to find themselves entering the same trade and repeating a cycle of exploitation (ECPAT International, 2011; BSAF, 2013). Child survivors of commercial sexual exploitation can face ongoing hardships, living on the streets through trafficking or poverty, or wanting to escape from abusive family members (Shoji and Tsubota, 2022). It is estimated that there are more than 1.5 million street children in Bangladesh, three-quarters of them living in Dhaka (Reza and Bromfield, 2019). Many of these children have left their rural homes and migrated to cities in search of a livelihood. Their work might be in street vending, rag picking, metal work and transport work, or dealing in drugs. Deprived of their basic rights to health, food and education, street children are particularly susceptible to manipulation, drug addiction, abuse and exploitation, including commercial sexual exploitation (BBS, 2022).

In 2021-2023, the Freedom Fund commissioned a large scale study to gain a deeper understanding of the manifestations and scale of commercial sexual exploitation of girls in Dhaka. Led by Population Council, the main phase of this study was conducted with 1,245 young female sex workers (FSWs). Consisting of 853 street-based workers across 20 hotspots in Dhaka district, plus 392 brothel-based workers from three brothels in Dhaka division. In the main findings of the study, almost three-quarters (74.9 percent) of FSWs reported being commercially sexually exploited as a minor. 59.1% of survivors experienced some form of control, 46.8% were forced to work in conditions they had not agreed to, and 31.8% were prohibited from contacting family and friends. CSEC survivors recalled their perpetrators typically being between 19 and 45 years old. These perpetrators came from a wide range of professions, most commonly businessmen, bus or truck drivers, transport workers and salaried individuals. Unique to brothel-based CSEC, a large proportion (71.9%) of the perpetrators were reportedly students. Additionally, a recent survey of 147 anti-trafficking organisations indicated that only 27% of organisations had programs that addressed the motivations and drivers of perpetrators. While recognising the challenges of engaging with perpetrators, the Freedom Fund considers this target group to be vital in bringing an end to commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Scope of work

The scope of this consultancy is to design and implement a normative change campaign to increase public awareness of the scale and harm caused by sexual exploitation of children, with a specific focus on reducing both the demand for and the social acceptance of child sexual exploitation in Bangladesh.

The campaign will be designed with the following objectives:

1. To raise public awareness about the scale and impact of child sexual exploitation in Bangladesh
2. To have direct reach to more than 1 million people
3. To ensure onward actions based on social and traditional media campaigns by people reached including clicks, reactions, comments and shares of campaign content and signing petitions.

The design phase will set out to develop messages which resonate with the target audiences and will be informed by an understanding of the social norms which both drive and enable CSEC to exist, while appropriately being framed to align with the cultural sensitivities and local contexts. Through insightful formative research, design and testing, a campaign will be designed to convey salient and targeted messages about harmful behaviours towards children exploited for sex, making use of the most appropriate media and communications channels, instruments and strategies for reaching the relevant target groups.

Methodology

The Freedom Fund invites organisations to detail how they would address the stages below. If there are any other stages considered to be crucial to a successful campaign, please include these in your proposal. Please be clear about how the roles and responsibilities would be distributed.

We encourage potential applicants to propose innovative methods for approaching the norms change campaign. We are particularly interested in creative and novel approaches that can effectively shift social norms and drive meaningful change amongst the target audiences. This could include, but is not limited to, leveraging new technologies, employing unique community engagement strategies, integrating multimedia storytelling, or utilizing data-driven insights to tailor interventions.

Formative research to better understand the target audiences – formative research should be conducted to better understand the target groups the campaign will aim at influencing. The formative research will provide a better understanding of the views held by the general public regarding their knowledge/acceptance of CSEC and the views of perpetrators. The formative research should explore the type of media and medium most appropriate to engage the target groups and the types of messages and cultural levers most likely to resonate with them. This background research should be conducted by the applicant prior to the campaign being designed and should be done in coordination with the Freedom Fund's implementing partner organisations. Key findings generated by the Freedom Fund's study in Dhaka, Bangladesh will provide an important input into the campaign design.

Message testing and campaign design - messages and communications strategies will be developed and tested and refined for different audiences using market research techniques. This stage will further tailor the specific messages and confirm which social and emotional levers should be employed for an impactful campaign. Messages will be crafted to make use of factors that will improve salience and recall of information at the appropriate moments. This stage will involve development of the campaign itself, including determining the most effective messages, messengers, format, communications channels, timing and frequency for reaching the target audience, all of which will be tested with the target audience to inform the final design.

Campaign implementation and monitoring - will be carried out by the applicant, or they can choose to work alongside a communications/media agency (if the latter this should be included within the specified budget and the agency included in the proposal). The applicant/contracted agency will lead on the implementation of the campaign over a 9-month period, coordinating closely with Freedom Fund's NGO partners. Key Performance Indicators will be agreed, and the applicant should monitor the campaign reach and effectiveness throughout. A brief outline in the proposal of frameworks to assess and monitor the impact and effectiveness of the campaign is encouraged.

Coordination with implementing partners - FF NGO partners will be conducting direct outreach activities to communities as part of their project delivery, and this will be done in complementarity with the media campaign. The consultancy will therefore be able to coordinate and collaborate with FF's NGO partners and relevant government departments such as the Department of Social Services in order to reinforce its messaging through targeted outreach and to build upon the same messaging.

The selected team will be contracted by, and report to, the Freedom Fund's Program Manager. The consultancy team will also be expected to work closely with the FF colleagues in Bangladesh and the Freedom Fund UK team through all stages of the campaign design, implementation, and measurement.

Expected Deliverables & Timeline

Deliverable	Date
Formative research	November 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formative research is to build an understanding of the target audience and provide evidence as to the type of medium and strategy that would work best for the target groups in Bangladesh. The formative phase will include consultation with the Freedom Fund's implementing partners who will provide insights onto the cultural triggers/layers that will resonate with the target groups and the type of message delivery. A formative research plan should be shared with the FF by the end of November 2024 	
Detailed campaign design proposal	December 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested campaign design including sub-target audiences, norms/actions aimed at influencing, messages, framing, medium, frequency etc. Incorporates initial insights on norms developed through the formative phase Includes full results of the first testing phase and how these have informed the design Specifies the goals of the different elements of the campaign Clarifies behavioural theory to be adhered to and rationale Findings from context specific external analysis - opportunities and threats to implementing the campaign, and assessment of who are the barriers and enablers are and how campaign will respond Detailed plans for coordinating with and/or supporting implementing partners with the delivery of norm change activities to maximise the impact of the campaign. 	
Detailed campaign strategy and implementation plan	January 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised campaign design after testing and consultations (with NGO partners) complete Details of activities/steps at each stage, and how these adhere to behavioral change theory Includes campaign KPIs built around selected behavior change theory Includes M&E frameworks to assess and monitor the impact and effectiveness of the campaign 	
Successful implementation of campaign and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) monitored and on target	February 2025 to October 2025
<p>KPIs to be agreed with FF beforehand and should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of campaign material/content developed (television broadcast, radio broadcast, newspaper article/magazine, billboards/posters, social medial posts, print material, performances) Number of unique awareness materials designed or adapted for this project Number of times the campaign materials will be broadcasted or published Number of people reached of the campaign by individual views Number of onward action/engagement with the campaign content including measures such as measures such as clicks, reactions, comments and shares of campaign content, signing petitions. 	

Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

Technical Criteria	Weightage
Technical capacity of the team (including local partner and subcontractors if relevant), including:	40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated ability to design and implement large-scale public awareness and social change campaigns; • Proven experience in applying social norms framework to design and implement social change campaigns; • Expertise in developing and executing strategic communications plans, including traditional media relations, social media, and digital marketing. Knowledge in market research methods • Strong project management skills, including planning, budgeting, and resource allocation; • Strong skills in designing and implementing M&E frameworks to assess and monitor the impact and effectiveness of the campaign; and • Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to engage appropriately with implementing partners' staff • Prior experience working in Bangladesh • Fluency in both Bangla and English, and a willingness to work closely with the Freedom Fund. 	
Contextual knowledge of the research team, including:	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with issues relevant to modern slavery • Prior experience working on issues related to commercial sexual exploitation of children, bonded labour, forced labour or human trafficking; experience working with survivors of violence, gender discrimination and marginalised populations; and • Knowledge of Bangladeshi culture, societal norms, and the specific context of child sexual exploitation. 	
Team structure, including:	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate staffing levels to deliver quality project outputs within the desired timeframe • Team members with fluency in English and Bangla 	
Financial criteria	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs are proportionate to the scale of work being proposed, and consideration of all potential expenses 	10%

Travel

The successful candidate will be required to travel to project implementation areas to support partner organisations and local communities in our project locations.

Proposal Format

Interested parties should prepare a proposal of no more than 10 pages plus annexes. Proposals should contain the following sections:

- **Profile of organisation(s) and key person (s)**, outlining prior experience leading similar campaigns. CVs of key personnel should be included in the annex.
- **Team structure**, defining the role and time commitment of key project team members.
- **High-level workplan and deliverables**
- **Proposed budget** in USD.

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

Eligibility & Budget

The Freedom Fund will give preference to organisations either locally based in Bangladesh or with substantive experience of working within Bangladesh.

Proposed budgets will be reviewed with respect to the suitability of the proposed methodology and activities in meeting the project objectives in a cost-effective manner.

A maximum of 60,000 USD is available for the design and implementation of the normative change campaign as described in this consultancy. Proposed budgets will be reviewed with respect to the suitability of the proposed methodology and activities in meeting the research objectives in a cost-effective manner.

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

- Personnel cost
- Logistics costs (including all forms of transport, accommodation and subsistence as applicable)
- Campaign implementation costs
- Overheads
- Any other costs associated with conducting the work
- VAT and other taxes, if applicable

Note: Proposal and budgets should include all costs expected to conduct the work.

Deadline & submission

1. **Deadline:** Proposals should be submitted by **23 September 2024**. Applicants should be ready to begin undertaking the work from November 2024. Please submit all proposal materials to the Freedom Fund using the following email address michellemendonca@freedomfundconsultants.org and the title *CSEC normative change campaign*.
2. **Review:** Following submission of the proposal, Freedom Fund will review and request additional information as needed.

Commissioning Timeline

- 2 September 2024 – circulation of consultancy opportunity
- 23 September 2024 – proposals submitted by EOD Bangladesh time
- 10 October 2024 – consultant commissioned / notified by FF
- 31 October 2024 – contract with selected consultant signed after obtaining government approvals, if necessary
- 31 October 2025 – all deliverables completed

Payment and Jurisdiction

Applicants should observe that the Freedom Fund is a United States 501(c)(3) public charity. The awarded contract will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York, United States of America, without regard to principles relating to conflicts of law. All payments to the consultant under the awarded contract shall be agreed upon therein, in compensation for the services provided, and directly related to the approved costs of the required services when/if applicable. Contracts will always be drafted in United States Dollars.

Confidentiality

This TOR and associated documents are the property of Freedom Fund and confidential. Apart from using FF documents to respond to the request, you shall not disclose any details, to any other person or organisation, and shall treat this ToR/RFP and your response with complete confidentiality.