

Ending child slavery

Establishing a hotspot to combat the sexual exploitation of children, **Brazil**

If a child is subjected to repeated sexual violence, even if that child survives their childhood, they don't exit unscathed. Their trauma lasts a lifetime. We can do so much better for children. That's why UBS Optimus Foundation is supporting the Freedom Fund to establish its hotspot model in Recife, Brazil, to reduce the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The problem

The commercial sexual exploitation of children in Brazil is a huge and invisible problem causing immeasurable suffering. Estimates vary between 100,000 and 500,000 children being harmed, but reporting is flawed, and the true scale unknown. Children used for commercial sex are mostly girls from the poorest most vulnerable communities in Brazil. Unfortunately, efforts by government and civil society lack coordination and are not informed by reliable data, and widespread community attitudes regard such child exploitation as 'normal', meaning adult exploiters in Brazil go largely unchallenged.

The partner

The Freedom Fund has a proven record of reducing the most serious harms to children in the world's prevalence hotspots.

The philanthropic solution

The Freedom Fund defines 'hotspot' as a geographic area known to have a high prevalence of modern slavery, and where interventions are likely to result in a measurable reduction in slavery within five years of their engagement in the region. The Freedom Fund's hotspot program invests in networks of front-line organizations to achieve direct impact in communities

affected by child slavery. Freedom Fund are tailoring and developing a full hotspot program for Recife, Brazil, where the commercial sexual exploitation of children is rife.

The evidence

The hotspot model has been honed over seven years of Freedom Fund applying it in high prevalence locations.¹

The impact

This inception phase proposal will lay the foundation for a larger scale program by:

- Strengthening front-line organizations to work together and improve responses to commercial sexual exploitation of children in the hotspot.
- Identifying and scaling anti-commercial sexual exploitation of children practices.
- Providing vulnerable children with support, information and skills to avoid commercial sexual exploitation.
- Disseminating learnings amongst partners locally and globally.

1. Hotspot programs have been run in central Nepal, Ethiopia, Myanmar, northern India, Rajasthan, south-eastern Nepal, southern India, Thailand. The Freedom Fund commissions independent research, and carries out their own research, to explore the efficacy of the hotspot model, its replicability and scale-up potential. The Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex (IDS) have evaluated the northern India, southern India, and south eastern Nepal hotspots, and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, commissioned to evaluate the Ethiopia hotspot. The 2019 IDS evaluation of northern and southern India hotspot programs found that between 2015 and 2018, the prevalence of households in bonded labor in these areas fell steeply, on average, from 56% to 11%. This is equivalent to 125,000 fewer individuals in bonded labor across the two programs. The proportion of households with a child in bonded labor fell from 12% to 3% in northern India. Demonstrating the success of the hotspot model.

All programmatic data provided by Freedom Fund. The UBS Optimus Foundation is a grant-making foundation that offers UBS clients a platform to use their wealth to drive positive social and environmental change. The Foundation selects programs that improve children's health, education and protection, ones that have the potential to be transformative, scalable and sustainable as well as programs tackling environmental and climate issues.

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