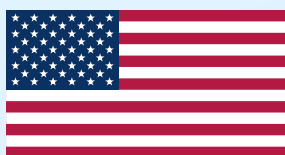




STOP EXPLOITATIVE CHILD DOMESTIC WORK

2025 PROJECT REPORT

Funded By:



THE FREEDOM FUND



1. OVERVIEW

Child domestic work remains a pervasive yet largely hidden form of child labour across many communities in Lagos State. Driven by poverty, cultural norms, limited access to education, and weak enforcement of child protection laws, many children – particularly girls– are placed in domestic settings where they are expected to work long hours under conditions that often expose them to neglect, exploitation, and abuse.

These children frequently lack access to education, are isolated from their peers, and have limited knowledge of their rights. In many cases, they are subjected to physical, emotional, and sometimes sexual abuse, with few or no opportunity to report such violations. The private nature of household environments further complicates monitoring and accountability, making child domestic workers one of the most vulnerable and least protected groups.

Additionally, there is a significant gap in awareness among community members, employers, and even the children themselves regarding what constitutes maltreatment and the rights of children. Reporting mechanisms are either unknown, underutilized, or mistrusted, while community-level structures to respond to abuse remain weak or non-existent.

Without deliberate and coordinated interventions, the cycle of exploitation and silence continues– undermining the dignity, safety, and future prospects of these children. It is against this backdrop that DEVATOP Center for Africa Development, with funding from the Freedom Fund, implemented the “Protect Child Domestic Workers from Maltreatment” project to address these systemic challenges through awareness, empowerment, stakeholder engagement, policy dialogue and advocacy, and strengthened community-based protection systems.

2. STRATEGIC APPROACH

The project adopted a multi-level intervention model, targeting children, households, communities, institutions, and policy actors. Core strategies included:

- Capacity building of community influencers
- Empowerment and mentorship of child domestic workers (CDWs)
- Community sensitization and dialogue
- School-based awareness and protection strengthening
- Stakeholder engagement and advocacy
- Media and public awareness campaigns
- Survivor-centered learning and evidence generation



3. ACTIVITIES

Below are some activities designed and implemented by DEVATOP in 2025, to achieve the goals of the project:

1. COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS (INFLUENCERS) TRAINING MEETINGS:

These trainings were organised to build the capacity of key community influencers (religious leaders, community leaders, employers' representatives, youth leaders, and media actors) to understand child rights, child domestic work issues, and forms of maltreatment. They also equipped influencers with practical advocacy, communication and referral skills to prevent abuse, identify at-risk child domestic workers, and promote child-friendly practices within households and communities.

Additionally, they strengthened community-level ownership and coordinated action against maltreatment of child domestic workers across Lagos communities.



Community Influencers for Child Rights Forum May 2025

2. CHILD MENTORSHIP CLINIC:

The mentorship clinic series was designed to support, empower, and build the capacities of Child Domestic Workers. It focused on equipping CDWs with life skills like improved self-confidence, self-esteem, and emotional resilience so they can better navigate challenges in their daily lives. It also provided guidance and mentorship, helping children understand their rights, improve their self-worth, and develop practical skills that contribute to their well-being and future opportunities.



Child Mentorship Clinic Ijegan-Egba & Iyana Isashi

3. CDWs & GUARDIAN FORUM (Community Sensitization):

This activity served as a platform to bring child domestic workers and guardians together to discuss child rights, safe-care practices, and the harmful effects of child domestic work. With a total of one hundred (100) CDWs and one hundred (80) guardians attending across four (4) communities, the forum promoted dialogue, awareness, and shared responsibility for protecting children from abuse and exploitation.



CDWs & Guardian Forum Adesoba & Okoko

4. COMMUNITY DIALOGUE:

This activity was conceptualised to deepen participants' understanding of Child Domestic Work, including what it entails, and the myths and facts surrounding the practice. It also aimed to identify gaps and challenges within the communities that result in maltreatment of CDWs, promoted collective community action geared at eliminating exploitative practices CDWs face, and improved their protection and well-being. Conclusively, it explored the causes and consequences of exploitative child domestic work such as poverty, cultural norms, and limited knowledge of the law. It also discussed practical steps for households and communities to support safer and more supportive environments for children.



Community Dialogue Iyana Isasi & Ijegin Egba

5. SCHOOL SENSITISATION:

School sensitisations were organised to raise awareness among students, teachers, and school authorities about child domestic work, children's rights, and the risks of maltreatment, while promoting safe reporting, positive attitudes, and protective behaviors.

It also aimed to empower children with knowledge of their rights, encourage school-based protection mechanisms, and strengthen the role of schools as safe spaces for the prevention and early detection of abuse against child domestic workers.





School Sensitization Ado Soba & Isashi

6. WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR (WDACL):

The World Day Against Child Labour, was commemorated with a view to raise awareness about the persistence of child labour, particularly the exploitation of child domestic workers, while reaffirming children's rights to protection, education, dignity etc. With over ninety (90) participants drawn from government stakeholders, community leaders, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders, it sought to strengthen collective responsibility, promote enforcement of child protection laws, and advance collaborative actions to prevent child exploitation and safeguard children's wellbeing.



World Day Against Child Labour 2025

7. STAKEHOLDERS' ADVOCACY DISCUSSION:

The stakeholders' advocacy discussion was organised to raise awareness about the prevalence and risks of child domestic work and its impact on children's rights and well-being. It engaged government stakeholders, community leaders, CSOs, and other relevant stakeholders to deepen their understanding of the issue and its root causes.

The discussion also aimed to promote collaboration and advocacy for stronger child protection measures by identifying policy and enforcement gaps and encouraging coordinated action. Through this engagement, DEVATOP worked to secure stakeholder commitment to improved laws, accountability, and practical solutions to prevent abuse and protect child domestic workers.



Stakeholders Advocacy Discussion

8. PROJECT PRESS BRIEFING:

The world press conference was designed to raise awareness about abuses and forms of exploitation child domestic workers face. It sought to engage the media, policy-makers, and the public in highlighting the urgent need for legal protections, community accountability, and reporting mechanisms to safeguard these children.

The event also reinforced the project's goals of promoting child rights, preventing maltreatment, and encouraging positive interventions by stakeholders. Through the conference, DEVATOP emphasised the shared responsibility of families, communities, and authorities to ensure the safety, well-being, and fair treatment of child domestic workers.



Project Press Briefing 2025

9. RADIO PROGRAM:

This audience-participatory radio program was organised to raise public awareness about the implications and harms of exploitative child domestic work, and advocate for better protection and rights for child domestic workers. The program informed listeners about how exploitative domestic work affects children's wellbeing, education, and rights, stimulated community dialogue on ending such exploitation, and encouraged reporting and collective action to protect children from abuse and maltreatment in domestic settings.



Radio Program

10. ADVOCACY VISITS:

Certain advocacy visits were conducted by the Lagos Office to engage key stakeholders, including government officials, traditional leaders, and relevant CSOs, to raise awareness about the rights and protection of child domestic workers, influence policy and practices that safeguard children from maltreatment, and strengthen collaborative efforts to prevent exploitation and improve the welfare of vulnerable children.



Advocacy Visits to Government Offices and CSOs

11. MONITORING:

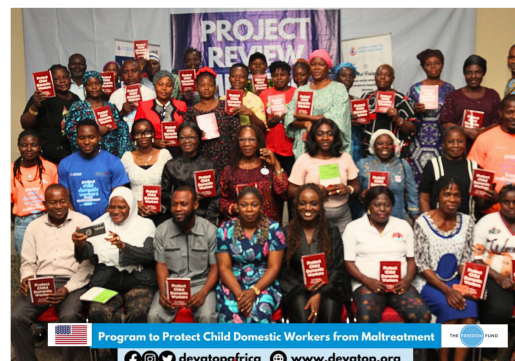
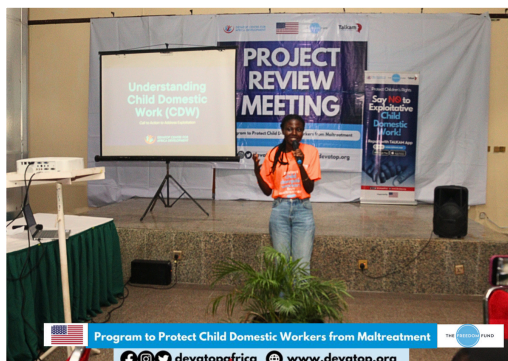
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)- led visits were arranged to assess how effectively the community sensitization, awareness campaigns, and messaging had reached and influenced local residents. The visits aimed to determine whether community members had understood the key messages and whether these efforts had raised awareness about child protection and the rights of child domestic workers. Additionally, the monitoring sought to identify gaps or challenges in the campaigns and gather insights to improve future interventions. The findings were intended to guide DEVATOP in refining its strategies to ensure greater impact, promote positive behavioral change, and strengthen child protection practices within the communities. A key feature of the monitoring was the emphasis on survivors. About 12 survivors participated in the monitoring and the feedback received from them would go a long way to enriching the project, going forward.

12. INTERACTION WITH SURVIVORS:

This activity was conducted to better understand the lived experiences of survivors of child domestic labor, catalyze survivor-led interventions, identify key drivers of child domestic work, assess their living and working conditions, explore viable exit pathways, and generate practical insights to strengthen protection strategies and advocacy efforts. A total of 18 survivors (14 females and 4 males) participated in the engagement sessions across the four (4) communities. The interactions were carried out in safe, supportive environments that encouraged openness and trust. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the process. Confidentiality was prioritized- participants' identities were anonymized, informed consent was obtained, and no personally identifiable information was disclosed in documentation or reporting. Safeguarding protocols were also followed to ensure that no harm or re-traumatization occurred during the sessions. In essence, the interactions aimed to document survivors' stories, learn directly from their experiences, and use these insights to inform policy recommendations, community-level interventions, and advocacy actions geared toward preventing child domestic labor and supporting survivors effectively.

13. REVIEW MEETING:

The review meeting was organised to assess and evaluate the progress, outcomes, and impact of the organisation's projects over the year, identify successes and challenges, extract lessons learned, and develop recommendations to improve project implementation and effectiveness in 2026. It also aimed to align staff, stakeholders, and partners on future priorities and ensure that ongoing and upcoming initiatives continue to uphold the organisation's mission, particularly in protecting and empowering vulnerable children.



PROJECT OUTPUT

3000



IEC materials distributed to promote child rights and reporting

50



50 community influencers trained and mobilized for advocacy and action

350+



350+ community members reached through dialogues and sensitization

653



Six hundred and fifty-three (653) students reached through four (4) school sensitizations.

115 CDWs

115 CDWs engaged through 6 mentorship clinics and sensitization.

35



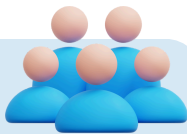
35 stakeholders engaged across government, CSOs, and community leadership

2



2 functional community CDW forums established

80



80 guardians reached through joint forums

3



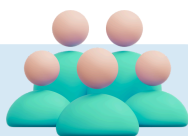
Radio programs and press engagement that expanded Audience-reach



115 CDWs

115 child domestic workers sensitized on child rights, safeguarding, and protection during CDW/Guardian Forums.

30



30 survivors reached through monitoring and interaction sessions.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Improved access to and retention in education among child domestic workers, supported by targeted mentorship and reintegration efforts



Strengthened community-led child protection responses, with local influencers actively driving prevention and response actions

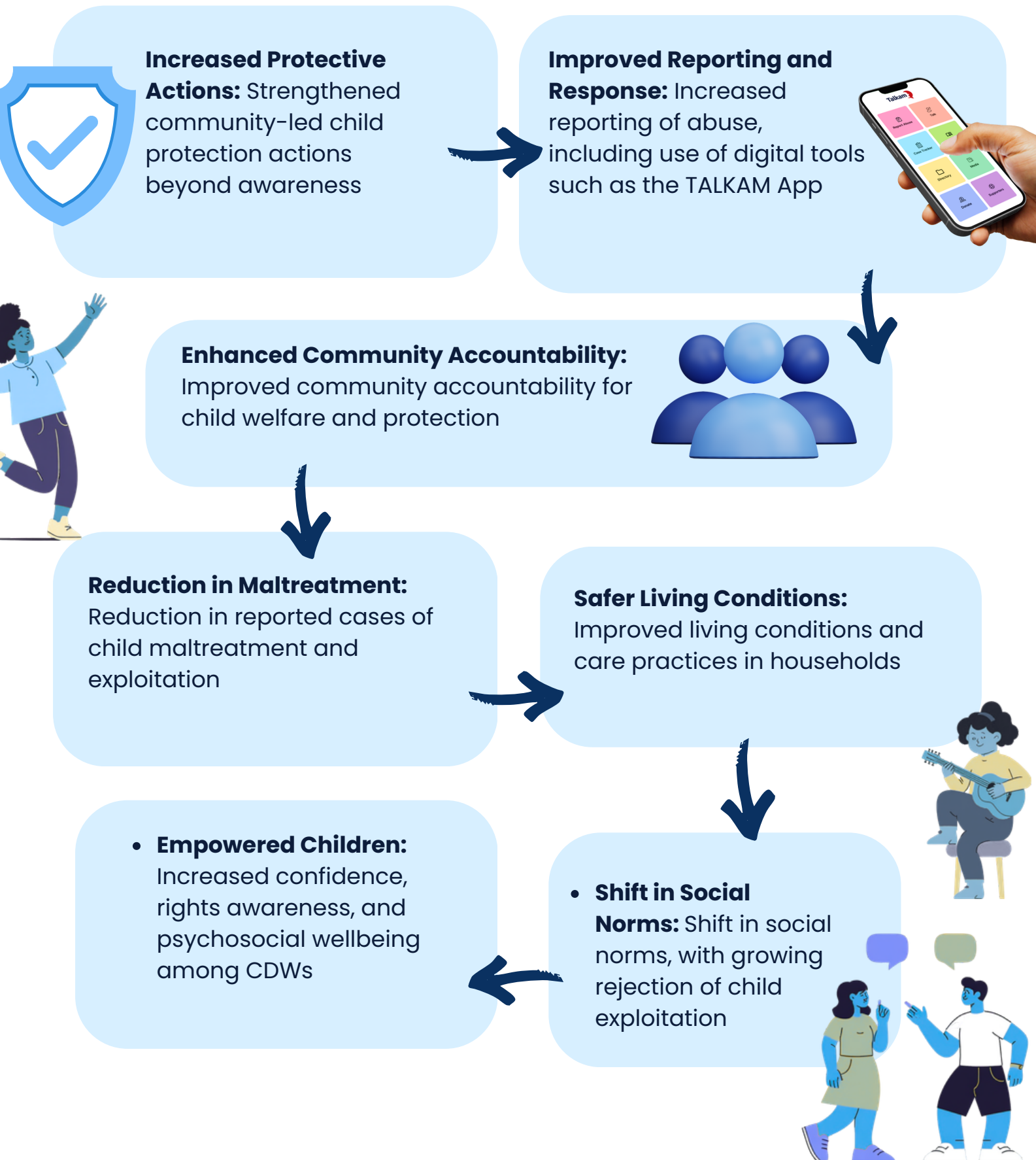
Positive shifts in caregiving practices, with guardians demonstrating increased willingness to prioritise the best interests of children

Increased transition of vulnerable children into safer and more supportive living and learning environment



Enhanced awareness and internalisation of child rights and protection norms among children, caregivers, and community members

PROJECT IMPACT



PROJECT IMPACT cont'd

- **Strengthened Protection Systems:**

Strengthened and more sustainable community protection structures



- **Improved Relationships:**

Improved relationships between CDWs and guardians/employers, reducing conflict and risk



SURVIVOR CENTRED INSIGHTS

Survivor Engagement:

- 30 survivor stories documented
- Insights gathered through monitoring and interaction sessions
- Evidence used to inform programming and advocacy

Key Drivers of Child Domestic Work

- Poverty
- Family pressure
- Limited access to education
- Cultural acceptance of child domestic work

Common Experiences Reported by Survivors

- Social isolation
- Excessive workload
- Abuse and exploitation
- Lack of safe reporting channels
- Weak or absent regulation, supervision, and oversight

LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

Monitoring and evaluation processes revealed:

- Increased awareness does not automatically translate to reporting; trust-building remains essential.
- Community influencers are critical to sustaining change beyond project cycles.
- Safe spaces for children significantly improve disclosure and participation.
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration strengthens both prevention and response mechanisms.

These lessons are informing program refinement and scale-up strategies.

SUSTAINABILITY AND WAY FORWARD

To sustain and expand impact, the project has:

1. Established community-based structures (CDW forums, influencer networks).
2. Strengthened stakeholder collaboration frameworks.
3. Promoted ownership of child protection at the community level.

Future efforts will focus on:

- Scaling interventions to additional communities.
- Strengthening enforcement of child protection laws.
- Expanding survivor support and reintegration pathways.
- Deepening engagement with schools and digital reporting systems.

CONCLUSION

The project recorded significant progress in strengthening the protection and wellbeing of child domestic workers across the target communities. Moving beyond awareness creation, it contributed to improved access to education, positive behavioural change, and increased community accountability for child protection. These gains reflect emerging shifts toward safer and more protective environments for vulnerable children. Sustaining and expanding this progress will require continued collaboration with stakeholders and ongoing investment in strengthening community and system-level responses.



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