

Scope Of Work- Freelance Academy.

Document Type:	Call for Applications: Freelance Training in Digital Work.
Project Title:	Freelance Academy- Freelancing Training.
Program Name:	FORSA- Fostering Resilience by Strengthening Abilities.
Donor:	Ministry of foreign affairs of the Netherlands.
Project Location(s):	Lebanon- BML.

1. Background:

Mercy Corps exists to alleviate suffering, poverty, and oppression by helping people build secure, productive, and just communities. The agency pursues its mission through emergency relief services, sustainable community development, civil society, and economic development initiatives. Mercy Corps has been present in the Middle East since the 1980s and currently has offices in Yemen, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Libya. Working in Lebanon since 1993, Mercy Corps has implemented community development programs focused on promoting economic development and increased opportunity for disadvantaged communities, while responding to emergencies as they emerged in the country. In 2012, the program portfolio shifted in response to the massive refugee influx from Syria and Mercy Corps in Lebanon has solidified its emergency response programming while integrating longer-term development programming by focusing on key sectors: Protection, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Governance and Conflict, and Livelihoods.

2. Project Description:

With funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mercy Corps (MC) is implementing the FORSA (Fostering Resilience by Strengthening Abilities) program in Lebanon to increase access to education and employment for vulnerable youth from the host and refugee communities, with a particular focus on young women. The program will be implemented from June 2023 to December 2024 in Lebanon.

Under this program, the Freelance Academy (FA) was implemented as a comprehensive training and coaching program that equips the youth having a digital skills background (graphic designers, web developers, web design, videographers, translation, 3D animation...) with the necessary tools to become successful freelancers and obtain gig work in their sector.

The FA is composed of three complementary tracks: a) The professional track tailored for experienced professionals having relevant portfolios, b) The apprenticeship/junior track tailored for juniors having digital skills but lacking enough professional experience/portfolio, and c) the

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trainers track, tailored to prepare local trainers to provide more and better quality services and share their experience and expertise in the digital freelancing.

Also, FORSA is aiming to support entrepreneurs, and provide internship opportunities so that freelancers can enrich their portfolio and gain more experience in the job market. Alongside the training, the academy is growing to encompass more complementary activities to support the freelancers community in Lebanon.

So far, around 400 participants have graduated from the Freelance Academy (FA). The FA showed excellent results and proved to be a successful model for hard currency generation via remote work. As of May 2023, 90% of FA alumni have found job opportunities whether full/part-time or gig work on international/regional platforms and generated more than 340 K USD in hard currency.

3. Purpose of the Call | Objectives:

Mercy Corps will contract a service provider over one and a half years to coordinate and implement the professional track on the Freelance Academy.

The service provider is expected to train and build the capacity of up to 220 graduates with digital skills for the purpose of increasing their access to freelance jobs in the digital sector. More specifically, the service provider is expected to empower and equip the youth with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed as freelancers in the digital marketplace and help them overcome challenges they might face by delivering training sessions on freelancing topics, freelancing skills, and technical skills, and to conduct coaching sessions for all trainees.

It is to be noted that some sessions will be covered by the Freelance Academy trainers that will be referred and paid by Mercy Corps. The service provider is expected to coordinate those sessions in a comprehensive way and ensure training coherence.

4. The Way Forward:

a. Training Program Overview:

Duration: The training will be held offline (on site) and each training can last up to 2 months taking into consideration holidays and projects hunting break. From best practice, training sessions can be delivered 2- 3 days per week, with a maximum of 5 hours per session.

In case the training had to switch to online format only if deemed necessary and after the approval of the FA team, the online sessions should not exceed 2 hours per session. The mitigation plan should show the flow and methodology of the alternative sessions.

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Target Audience: The training will target youth aged between 21-34 years, from Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian nationalities, living in Lebanon, who already have digital skills, a professional portfolio and English proficiency. They need to have access to electricity, good internet connection, and electronic equipment (laptop).

Training Content: The service provider is expected to base on the existing curricula that proved success, and refine/ optimize it with final approval of the FA team. Currently, the professional track is tailored for experienced professionals having relevant portfolios and work experience in the digital sector. The training leverages the competitive profile of participants and where they learn how to create a winning profile, how to draft a proposal, how to price their services and how to negotiate with clients. The training consists of 14 sessions on online platforms, freelancers-tailored skills, and 2-3 coaching sessions.

The service provider is entitled to deliver the training to **UP** to 10 offline batches/ conducted on site with each batch hosting **UP** to 22 participants, with topics about mastering freelance online platforms, freelancing skills (client management, project cycle- from proposal writing to cash withdrawal), sales strategies (upselling, cross-selling, ..) and at least 2 group coaching sessions with the possibility to add an extra 3rd session if necessary, to accompany participants in their journey and troubleshoot. All sessions should be highly practical and participative with a hands-on approach.

Below you will find a sample of the training topics. Service providers are free to iterate and refine any of the suggested topics below, under the supervision of the skills development team. Moreover, as stated above service providers will be responsible to only deliver **the 6 sessions marked in red**, and where it is specifically defined that the trainers will be provided by the SP (refer to Delivered by: Trainers will be provided by SP); as well as the coaching sessions . **The other 4 sessions will be delivered by pre-identified trainers from Mercy Corps side**, who will be as well responsible for their payments (refer to Delivered by: Trainers will be provided by FA.). Hence, the FORSA team will be providing the service provider with the pool of trainers that will provide the session content, and give the technical training. The service provider will be the focal point between the FORSA team and the trainers, and will be responsible for coordinating logistics, submitting reports, and solving any on-site issues when needed.

Session	Description	Delivered by
Mastering Arabic Freelance Platforms	Create a compelling profile on Mostaq, Khamasat and/or other platforms	Trainers will be provided by FA +

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(estimated duration of the session 2 hours)	Understand the type of clients, services and payment methods used on these platforms	content+ paid by MC
Getting jobs through Social media (estimated duration of the session 2 hours)	How to use social media to apply for freelance projects Use LinkedIn to market your freelance work How to negotiate and reserve your rights to get paid	Trainers will be provided by FA + content+ paid by MC
Mastering Upwork.com ((estimated duration of the session 4 hours)	Overview of the platform Signing up and develop a profile that can be approved from Upwork.com Searching for jobs using advanced search and filters Understand the type of clients, services and payment methods used on these platforms	Trainers will be provided by FA + content+ paid by MC
Searching and applying for jobs on Freelancer.com and PPH.com (estimated duration of the session 2 hours)	Overview of the platform Signing up and develop a profile that can be approved from Freelancer.com and PPH.com Searching for jobs using advanced search and filters Understand the type of clients, services and payment methods used on these platforms.	Trainers will be provided by FA + content+ paid by MC
Introduction to freelancing (estimated duration of the session 2 hours)	Intro to freelance world Benefits of freelance work Main freelancing platforms Freelance work requirements	Trainers will be provided by SP + content+ paid by SP
Pricing and Profile Building (estimated duration of the session 2 hours)	Set competitive and profitable rates Create a compelling and professional brand	Trainers will be provided by SP + content+ paid by SP
Manage time and tasks with the right tools (6 hours)	Manage your time as a freelancer Understand the main time management tools and how to use them in the freelance work How to estimate the time required for each activity	Trainers will be provided by SP + content+ paid by SP

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<p>Sales Strategies (6 hours)</p>	<p>Use up-selling techniques Use cross-selling techniques How to use sales funnel tool How to draft your sales pitch</p>	<p>Trainers will be provided by SP + content+ paid by SP</p>
<p>Communication Skills (6 hours)</p>	<p>Proposals writing and bidding techniques How to negotiate with clients</p>	<p>Trainers will be provided by SP + content+ paid by SP</p>
<p>Identify your Value proposition (6 hours)</p>	<p>What added value you can deliver Build on confidence activity to shape the value proposition Who are your customers? Customer segments and persona.</p>	<p>Trainers will be provided by SP + content+ paid by SP</p>

Note that all sessions are to be held offline at a venue chosen and set up by the service provider. In case of a major issue or risk, sessions can be held online if approved by the skills development team and after presenting valid reasons for doing so. The service provider is expected to have the content ready for both formats (online/ offline) and propose an adequate timeline for each of them.

Moreover, the service provider is responsible to conduct **a minimum of 2 and up to 3 group coaching sessions / practical sessions per batch will also take place**. The group coaching sessions will be divided over the course of the training in order to cover the needs of the participants and help them with any challenges faced while working on each of the platforms mentioned above in the outline.

Lastly, coaches will be asked to share their insights and feedback (during the training and coaching sessions) to assist the FORSA team in identifying the participants who will be receiving a certified certificate.

b. Service Provider Eligibility Criteria: Applying entities must be operating in Lebanon, already established and have proven experience in developing and delivering “Freelance” training for both male and female youth, and must be registered at the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Interior or any related governance body.

Applicants must use Mercy Corps’ proposal template (the template is attached in Annex 1 below).

c. Deliverables and Responsibilities:

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The platforms' related topics of the freelance training (mastering Upwork-PPH-Freelancer, social media-linkedIn, mostaqI and khamasat) will be given by the pool of trainers provided by the FA team. The FA team will also provide the session content for this part and pay the trainers fees. **The Freelancing skills training and the coaching sessions will be the responsibility of the service provider.** The content of the session should be agreed with the FA team and the SP must provide a detailed timeline and budget of the training. Also, the SP will be in charge of coordinating the whole training process, should assign a focal point to regularly update the FA team with the progress of the training, coordinate between trainers, and will be in charge of reporting, follow ups and all logistical aspects. It is essential that the SP provides a clear plan outlining their approach to coordination and delivery, including milestones, communication channels and reporting mechanisms. This will ensure effective collaboration between the SP and the FA team throughout the entire training program.

5. Selection Criteria:

Criteria	Scoring (%)
1- Profile of the service provider	5
2- Clear articulation of the training <u>content</u> and <u>methodology</u> . This includes a completely filled Proposal Form (attached).	10
3- Experience implementing similar projects related to training on freelance work.	10
4- Profile of the trainers (with relevant experience and roles in delivering training or working in the freelance sector)	25
5- Include a mitigation plan for any possible delays or changes to the country's situation (possibility of online training) with previous experience delivering on site and online training sessions	10

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6- Detailed methodology for conducting coaching sessions (Records of previous coaching sessions experience) including coaching methodology and techniques.	10
7- Clear articulation of budget per participant including consideration of other costs (venue, management fees, etc..) (VAT should be included separately) *	20
8- Detailed time frame of the training (timeline), with a proper training outline	10
Total	100

**Prices must include the registration/stamp fees in the Ministry of Finance in case of contract award.*

Mercy Corps may at any time during the evaluation of the proposals request the service provider to provide additional information or clarifications regarding their applications.

7. Required Tasks from the Service Provider

Outreach:

- Contribute to the selection process of candidates by conducting a technical assessment that should include digital skills and English proficiency or engaging in an interview process.
- The service provider shall utilize multiple outreach channels to reach potential candidates. These channels may include social media platforms, professional networking sites, and partnerships with relevant organizations in the digital sector and education institutions.

Training Delivery:

- Deliver UP to 10 offline batches/ conducted on site with each batch hosting UP to 22 participants, with topics about mastering freelance online platforms, freelancing skills (client management, project cycle- from proposal writing to cash withdrawal), sales strategies (upselling, cross-selling, ..) and 2-3 group coaching sessions to accompany participants in their journey and troubleshoot. All sessions should be highly practical and participative with a hands-on approach.

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- Prepare exhaustive pre and post-tests for each training (to be approved by the FA team) in order to track the progression of the trainees at the end
- Deliver a minimum of 2 group coaching and practical sessions with possibility to add a third session if needed, to help individuals sharpen their skills upon finishing the training sessions
- Deliver training to batches for up to 2 months, each consisting of up to 22 participants noting that offline sessions should not exceed 5 hours/ day, and in case of shifting to online sessions, it will be 2 hours/ day and to be conducted at least 3 times per week. Participants must maintain an attendance rate of at least 80% of the total sessions
- Prepare/develop the training outline, sessions materials and training schedule and share with MC for approval based on the existing curriculum material.

Reporting and Follow-up:

- Assign focal points to streamline the communication and deliverables between the selected service provider and Mercy Corps.
- Trainers to share insights and feedback about the participant's needs that will help in scoring the grant selection criteria
- Submit periodic reports to FORSA team - and final report per batch
- Ensure that each session is being monitored and documented (interviews, attendance sheet, pre, and post-test, dropouts, etc..)
- Facilitate the follow-up and supervision process that will be conducted by FORSA III team including the MEL team during all program phases
- Responsible for logistics and coordination between the trainers and the participants. Responsible to gather reports and attendance from all the sessions even if not delivered directly by the Service provider
- Responsible for paying the participants a **daily transportation fee of 10\$/participant/day** for offline sessions, and providing a data bundle/participant in case the training were shifted to online. This needs to be stated in the budget as separate budget lines.
- Facilitate the follow-up and supervision process that will be conducted by FA team including the MEL team during all implementation phases
- The service provider will be responsible for all administrative and logistics activities- offline sessions (venue in Beirut/Mount Lebanon, certificates, stationary, coffee breaks, meal, transportation of 10\$/ day, etc..) in case of online sessions (online meeting platform, data bundle per participant). All listed activities, specifications & quality are to be approved by the Freelance Academy team.
- MC team will grant the final approval on the venue location to ensure adherence to safeguarding standards and welfare requirements. If the location fails to meet these requirements, the service provider will be obligated to make the necessary changes.
- Prepare and share a timeline and schedule of the implementation in addition to the training agenda to be approved by the FA team.

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- Prepare and share a Log sheet with detailed working deliverables to be submitted along with the invoice.
- All concerned staff must participate in Mercy Corps training (Gender, Protection, Safeguarding, etc...) when requested

How to apply

Timeline

The service provider is responsible for defining clear and measurable milestones for the training program. They are expected to provide a detailed timeline that includes realistic timeframes for each milestone. Additionally, each milestone will have specific deliverables, such as training materials, progress reports, and/or assessments which will be outlined by the service provider. Regular evaluation points should be incorporated into the timeline to allow feedback and adjustments throughout the training program. A template timeline is provided below (Annex 1 - Section 9). The service provider is encouraged to customize the requirements and timeframe to better highlight the training course.

The finalized timeline will be mutually agreed upon by both parties to ensure transparency, accountability, and successful program delivery.

Budget

The service provider should provide a detailed budget breakdown for the training program. The budget will include the necessary resources, materials, and any applicable fees associated with each milestone. The service provider should also consider all budget related clauses mentioned in the SOW. The overall budget should reflect the financial allocation required to deliver the training program effectively.

The service provider is required to pay all expenses (trainers, transportation fees, mobile bundles...) in USD and corresponding to the exact amount that is outlined in the budget. If the payment cannot be made in USD, the service provider is required to pay this amount at the parallel market rate that corresponds to the payment day. In both cases, service providers are required to keep invoices and receipts of all cash transactions and provide necessary documentation and proof of payment throughout the implementation.

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The budget shall not include the pricing of the 5 technical sessions (online platforms), as those will be directly covered by MC. A template of the budget allocation is provided below(Annex 1 - Section 8)

Evaluation and Selection

To be filled by Procurement.

A mandatory “Q&A” session will be conducted online two weeks after closing the tender process.. Applicants can attend the Q&A session on Zoom by accessing a link that will be provided later. A failure to attend the Q&A session will result in automatic disqualification.

The Consultant will work closely with FORSA Program Manager, Skills Development Coordinator, and Skills Development Officer.

Payment: Wire transfer in USD to a “fresh money” bank account, after the successful delivery of the service based on agreed milestones, including an approved consultant deliverable report.

Please note that the payment for the freelancers chosen by the FA team(the freelancers providing the technical training part) will be done directly (MC will directly pay the trainers).

Selection Process

After ensuring that the applications meet the eligibility requirements and attending the Q&A session, a technical committee will score each proposal submitted.

Mercy Corps may solicit feedback from external experts and may follow up with additional questions. At any stage, Mercy Corps reserves the right to pose clarifying questions and conduct discussions with some, all, or none of the applicants. Other applicants do not need to contact Mercy Corps.

Mercy Corps reserves the right to fund any or none of the proposals submitted. Mercy Corps may choose to incrementally fund selected proposals.

Good Luck!

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Annex 1:

A “freelance training on digital work” proposal

Questions	Response
Organization’s name	
Organization’s contact number	
Organization's address <i>(floor, building name, street, city, governorate)</i>	
Type of the organization <i>(local NGO, community organization, a private company, etc....)</i>	
Number of employees within the organization	
The application date of submission	

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Representative's name	
Representative's title	
Representative's email address	
Is the organization registered in the MoF and MoIn or any governance body ?	
In which area are you planning to deliver the training? (Beirut, Mount Lebanon, both?)	

1. Profile of the organization (S.C.1)

Please provide an overview and profile of the organization, as well as a copy of registered documents in the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Interior.

In addition to that, please confirm that training and coaching sessions can be held at the organization's premises during working hours, or at a venue that fits Mercy Corps guidelines (safe and easily accessible location, can be reached with public transportation, BML area).

2. Training outline and methodology (S.C.2)

Please provide a detailed plan of conducting the training based on the topics proposed in the application: topics overview, outline of each topic, and methodology.

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3. Relevant Projects (S.C.3)

Previous relevant projects conducted by the organization related to training on freelance skills and conducting 2-3 coaching sessions for youth

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4. Trainers Profile (S.C.4)

*Share the trainers' profiles (attach CV(s) who are available to work at the organization (age, gender, area of residence, the field of expertise, **relevant past experience** etc...)*

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5. Mitigation plan (S.C.5)

A mitigation plan for delivering the training session in case any delays happen due to several issues in the country. And a clear methodology of switching to online training sessions.

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6. Coaching Sessions (S.C.7)

Please explain the methodology and techniques for conducting coaching sessions (at least 2 to max 3 sessions) for all participants. And provide details on former experience in conducting coaching sessions

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7. Budget allocation (in US dollars) (S.C.8)

(Please fill the table below with relevant costs like; participant transportation 10\$/participant/day, trainer fees, refreshments, printing material, stationary, etc..)

Item	Number of units	Cost per Unit	Total cost per item	Notes
<i>Transportation / participant</i>				
<i>Refreshment/participant (coffee breaks, meal/lunch)</i>				
<i>Printing material and stationary</i>				
<i>Venue rental</i>				
<i>Trainer fees/session</i>				
<i>Coaching fees/Session</i>				
<i>Coordination and operational fees</i>				
<i>Certificates / participant</i>				
<i>Others</i>				
Total cost			\$	

8. Training Timeline (S.C.)

(Please fill the table below with relevant dates/milestones,assignment schedule, etc..)

Training Phase	Duration	Description
<i>Phase 1: Kickoff meeting</i>		<i>To be commenced after signing of the contract</i>
<i>Phase 2: Training</i>		<i>Provide detailed description of key training milestones, job hunting breaks, schedule, and assignment deadlines</i>
<i>Phase 3: Evaluation</i>		
<i>Phase 4: Wrap-up</i>		
<i>Others</i>		