



## Session 2 Community Mapping: A Case for Hope and the Prevention Template

Now that you know that there truly is hope to prevent sex trafficking, it's time to start looking around at your own community. Who is already working on this problem? What exactly are they doing? Who do you want to partner or volunteer with or donate to?

This first section will walk you through the discovery process of anti-trafficking groups, networks, or coalitions in your area. Before you get started on your investigation, there are some things to keep in mind about anti-trafficking groups.

There has been a significant rise in the past few years of anti-trafficking organizations. Some of these are doing important work in education, prevention, intervention, and aftercare. Sadly, some just stop at awareness. Awareness is an important first step to fighting sex trafficking, but awareness without involvement breeds apathy. Watch out for groups that are awareness-only without providing services or actively equipping people.

Another challenge is that there are some groups that are "anti-trafficking" but pro-sex work. As you have learned, AIM is against all sex work since it all objectifies women and increases demand for sex trafficking, and most of it – even the adult work – is in fact sex trafficking. It's important to understand the ideology of a group or organization before committing to it. Understand their motivation, goals, and mission and determine whether they align with your own.

Other anti-trafficking groups deliberately leave God out of the equation. They may be run by Christians (or non-Christians), but they partner with people of all faiths and do not offer spiritual healing along with physical and psychological healing. If you agree that Christ through the Church will defeat the evil of sex trafficking, look for an organization that lives it out. Of course, if you feel called to work with a secular organization, it may be that you can be a light in that organization. Seek out God's heart for where He would have you go.

Anti-trafficking groups are filled with flawed human beings. You will never find the perfect one. But there are some things to look for and some things to avoid. Some groups get caught up in definitions, holding onto their funding, and pointing fingers rather than collaborating and coming to a common understanding. This can be hard to spot right away, so it may be wise to approach commitment to a group with caution until you understand their dynamics and the internal politics a bit.

You are probably itching to get into action. When one hears the truth about sex trafficking, the next step is action. Feel free to try things out as you go through this curriculum, but be careful not to burn bridges. If you commit to something, be true to your word. Also be aware that there are all kinds of places to get plugged in that don't look like "anti-trafficking" organizations, but are in reality doing prevention work. Let the Holy Spirit guide you as you work through this and the following community mapping homework. We each have differing gifts, skills, and passions. God may want you to dive right in somewhere, or He may ask you to take it slowly and navigate deliberately.

That being said, let's get started! As a recap, some things to keep in mind:

- Look for an organization that is actively providing services or equipping people, rather than raising awareness only.
- Watch out for organizations that are pro-sex work. Instead, look for ones that are against all forms of commercial sex, no matter what the age or demographic.
- Check that the truth of Christ is actually being proclaimed. A “Christian” organization may not be sharing the Christian message of salvation. On the other hand, it may be that you are being called to partner with a “non-Christian” organization so that you can be the light of Christ to them as well, particularly where a Christian group doesn’t yet exist.
- Look for groups that seem to work well together and have a common vision, rather than in-fighting or blaming.
- Seek God’s direction on the type of involvement He wants you to have in this fight.

The community mapping homework is designed to be adapted for your individual or group’s needs. Each homework assignment is divided into smaller steps that can be done in a day (A), a week (B), or over a longer period of time (C).

This session, find out who is involved in fighting sex trafficking in your area already. Some possible groups include:

- Law enforcement coalitions
- Churches
- Task forces or other networks
- Non-profits/NGOs

**Step A:** Do an Internet search to identify local groups working against sex trafficking. Begin to compile information about these organizations using the [Local Anti-Trafficking Groups Template](#). See the [example](#) for help getting started.

Recommended websites to begin your search. If the following sites do not have information yet for your region, just use a search engine! You might be surprised at what you can find.

- Freedom Collaborative: <http://www.freedomcollaborative.org/>
- The ComTra Project: <http://www.thecomtraproject.org/>
- IJM Freedom Commons: <http://freedomcommons.ijm.org/>
- Shared Hope International: <http://sharedhope.org/what-we-do/prevent/collaboration/>
- National Human Trafficking Resource Center: <http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org/states>

**Step B:** Contact each of the groups found in Step A. If there are many, work together as a group to divide the research. Be gracious yet non-committal when talking to these groups; you’ll want to avoid giving false hopes, since you won’t be able to volunteer with all of them. A suggested introduction is below.

“Hello, my name is {NAME} and I am with {ORGANIZATION OR CHURCH NAME}. We have been learning about sex trafficking prevention, and want to learn more about organizations in our area that are already involved in prevention of sex trafficking, either directly or indirectly. Do you have time to answer a few questions for me?”

Begin answering the following questions:

- What is their mission and vision?

- How is their funding used?
- Is the organization actively providing services or equipping people?
- Is the group against all forms of commercial sex, no matter what the age?
- Does the group allow and encourage the sharing of the gospel? (If not, that may not necessarily mean you don't partner with them, but it may not be your main area of involvement.)
- Do they have regular meetings? If so, when and where?
- Do they have a mailing list to join, or social media to follow? These can be good sources of information and networking whether you end up working directly with this group or not.

Answer the following questions after you have done some research:

- Does the group seem to work well together and have a common vision?
- Is this the organization and area of anti-trafficking work that God is leading me to join? If not, is there someone I am supposed to help in getting connected to it instead?

**Step C:** Start investigating groups. Attend some meetings, network with the people there, and keep your eyes and ears open to discover the answers to any of the questions above that are still unclear.

If no coalition or networking group exists in your area, you might consider starting one, but only if God is leading you in that direction. Work through your church's outreach/local missions ministry or form a community coalition. You can start small with some awareness events like documentary screenings to gather interest, then work together with the people God brings your way and see what God does.

If you think that God is leading you to form your own ministry or coalition, watch out that you don't become just another awareness-raising group. Instead, check out the example of other groups that are seeing God work in radical ways in their communities.

**Before you start your own coalition,** read the [Guide to Starting a Successful Coalition/Network](#), based on the experiences of one active network in Sacramento.