



COLLABORATING AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

CROSS-SECTOR CHALLENGES
AND PRACTICES

KIRSTEN FOOT

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Acronyms

(All government agencies in this list are U.S.)

4Ps	Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership
ATEST	Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking
gBCAT	global Business Coalition Against Trafficking
BJA	Bureau of Justice Assistance
CAST	Coalition Against Slavery and Trafficking
CBP	Customs and Border Patrol
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOT	Department of Transportation
FAAST	Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FBO	faith-based organization
FUSE	Force to End Human Sexual Exploitation
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
LCHT	Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking
LE	Law enforcement
MANGO	mobilization and advocacy nongovernmental organization
MOU	memo of understanding
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NSN	National Survivor Network
OVC	Office for Victims of Crime
PFF	Partnership for Freedom

PITF	President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SIB	social impact bonds
TIP Report	Trafficking in Persons Report
TTAC	Technical Training and Assistance Center
TVPA	Trafficking Victims Protection Act
US	United States of America
USAO	United States Attorney's Office
VSP	victim service provider
WARN	Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network

The Collaboration Dilemma

We must show new energy in fighting back an old evil. Nearly two centuries after the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, and more than a century after slavery was officially ended in its last strongholds, the trade in human beings for any purpose must not be allowed to thrive in our time. . . . The founding documents of the United Nations and the founding documents of America stand in the same tradition. Both assert that human beings should never be reduced to objects of power or commerce, because their dignity is inherent.

—*President George W. Bush, September 23, 2003*¹

[Human trafficking] ought to concern every person, because it's a debasement of our common humanity. It ought to concern every community, because it tears at the social fabric. It ought to concern every business, because it distorts markets. It ought to concern every nation, because it endangers public health and fuels violence and organized crime. I'm talking about the injustice, the outrage, of human trafficking, which must be called by its true name—modern slavery.

—*President Barack Obama, September 25, 2012*²

Slavery may be something we associate with other times and places we consider more primitive than our own. Yet it continues to be a worldwide problem on an almost unimaginable scale, and one that is not confined to less economically developed areas of the globe. Human trafficking is defined by the United States and the United Nations as compelling someone into any form of work or service through force, fraud, or coercion. The essence of hu-

man trafficking is enslavement—that is, the control and exploitation of one person by another. In human trafficking situations, some victims coerce others while under coercion themselves. Money may or may not be exchanged when a person is trafficked, and victims may be commercially exploited or used as a personal slave by the trafficker. In short, human trafficking takes myriad forms. In our contemporary world, human trafficking crimes are sometimes intertwined with human smuggling and sexual exploitation, yet human trafficking crimes are legally distinct from both. They are defined by the fact that victims' agency and other human rights are violated through force, fraud, or coercion.

Human trafficking occurs at all levels of society, within local settings as well as between countries. Often referred to as modern slavery, it is recognized as a widespread “dark side” of globalization and an extreme form of exploitation of the weaker and poorer by the stronger and richer. The possession of a person by another person, the “control over a person by another such as a person might control a thing,” is enslavement, whether that control is exercised through physical, verbal, or psychological forces and whether or not it involves the geographical movement of the controlled person.³ Some victims are enslaved within their own country, while others are forced to work in another country.⁴ Cases of human trafficking have been documented in most countries and in a diverse array of industries. In the United States, such cases have been documented in restaurants, technology companies, domestic services, nail salons, agriculture, carpet installation businesses, construction companies, massage shops, and magazine sales, to name just a few.⁵

Since well before the United Nations' 2000 adoption of the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons,⁶ people working in a variety of sectors in many countries have been striving to stop the trafficking of persons and help those who have been trafficked. Most agree that the complexity of the problem and the many forms of harm to victims require collaboration across sectors. Many are convinced that “the power of a successful anti-human trafficking collaborative effort can transform the limitations of a singular agency or organization into a strong, strategic multidisciplinary team with substantially improved capacity to impact the problem.”⁷ This widespread belief in collaboration was evidenced in the 2012 survey of nearly two hundred US anti-trafficking organizations and government

agencies conducted by the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking, which found that two-thirds were participating in at least one interorganizational alliance against trafficking, and most of those participated in two to four alliances. However, challenges that hinder collaboration against trafficking were also prevalent in the survey findings.⁸

The US federal government has sought to catalyze interagency coordination and cross-sector collaboration since the early 2000s.⁹ To underscore the necessity of collaboration, in 2009 the U.S. Department of State added “Partnership” to the “3P” framework of prevention, prosecution, and protection employed by many governments. The intent of that addition was explained thusly: “The ‘fourth P’—partnership—serves as a pathway to achieve progress on the 3Ps in the effort against modern slavery.”¹⁰ The 2010 *Trafficking in Persons Report*, issued annually by the U.S. State Department since 2000, included partnership as the fourth “P” for the first time. It articulated an expansive conceptualization of multiple forms of partnership. Here is the report’s rationale for that inclusion:

Combating human trafficking requires the expertise, resources, and efforts of many individuals and entities. It is a complex, multifaceted issue requiring a comprehensive response of government and nongovernment entities in such areas as human rights, labor and employment, health and services, and law enforcement. It requires partnerships among all these entities to have a positive impact.

Partnerships augment efforts by bringing together diverse experience, amplifying messages, and leveraging resources, thereby accomplishing more together than any one entity or sector would be able to alone. Examples of existing partnerships governments use to facilitate prevention, protection, and prosecution include:

- Task forces among law enforcement agencies that cooperate to share intelligence, work across jurisdictions, and coordinate across borders;
- Alliances between governments and business associations that seek to craft protocols and establish compliance mechanisms for slavery-free supply chains; and,
- Regional partnerships among nations, such as the anti-human trafficking efforts of the Organization of American States (OAS) or the European Union (EU).

Outside the government, partnerships include coalitions of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) coming together for purposes of advocacy, service provision, information sharing, and networks of survivors, whose experiences inform the broader trafficking movement.

The concluding statement from the overview of partnership in anti-trafficking efforts quoted above is telling. It acknowledges that collaborating against trafficking entails challenges:

While there is broad agreement on the purpose and benefits of a partnership approach to human trafficking, there is less agreement on and documentation of proven, successful strategies,—*something all should endeavor to create and share in the years ahead.*¹¹ (Emphasis added)

What effective collaboration entails, then, is not so easily delineated. We must figure out how to work together well in prevention, protection, and prosecution. This book is my contribution to the State Department's call: an analysis of the dynamics of collaboration designed to illuminate what it takes to build robust partnerships across sectors to counter human trafficking.

During both the Bush and Obama administrations, the US government made many attempts to foster partnerships to counter human trafficking. Under the mandate of the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), passed originally in 2000, multiple federal agencies have funded and facilitated collaboration against human trafficking in many ways. I highlight three very significant ones here. First, the 2000 TVPA's creation of the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking (PITF), a cabinet-level entity chaired by the Secretary of State, has been foundational in coordinating the efforts of federal agencies against human trafficking.¹²

Second is the use of TVPA funds to offer multiyear, renewable grants to support counter-trafficking efforts and services for victims, an effort begun in 2004 by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) through its Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), and Office for Victims of Crime (OVC).¹³ Initially, the BJA grants supported multiagency law enforcement anti-trafficking task forces in selected cities across the country. Correspondingly, between 2003 and 2009, the OVC offered grant funds to qualified victim service provider organizations in some cities that had a multiagency law enforcement task force. The purpose of the OVC funds during those years

was to provide services to foreign nationals whom service providers believed to be victims of trafficking. Beginning in 2010, BJA and OVC began to jointly fund grants via an “enhanced collaborative task force model” that included support for victim service agencies and law enforcement agencies to take a comprehensive approach to investigating all trafficking crimes and providing services to trafficking victims regardless of citizenship or age.¹⁴ The aims of these task forces are “identifying, rescuing and restoring victims . . . investigating and prosecuting trafficking crimes; and building awareness about trafficking in the surrounding community.”¹⁵ Proposals for “Enhanced Collaborative Model to Combat Human Trafficking” grants must be developed collaboratively between at least one law enforcement agency (LE) and one victim service provider organization (VSP) that have “an established working relationship”; grantees are also expected to work “in close collaboration with the local U.S. Attorney’s Office.”¹⁶ At the peak of this grant program, task forces in forty-two US cities received DOJ funding. As of 2014 the number of cities with DOJ-funded multisector task forces had been reduced to thirteen.¹⁷

Third, the US government’s significant investment in collaboration was evidenced in its landmark first five-year federal “Strategic Action Plan” (SAP) on services for people trafficked in the United States, released in early 2014.¹⁸ The development of the eighty-page plan itself required major collaboration between the three entities that cochaired the plan development process (the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security) and the seventeen other federal agencies that contributed to it. In addition, input from other stakeholders including nongovernmental organizations and trafficking survivors was elicited at several points during the process beginning in 2012. Public comments on the draft plan were invited during a 45-day period in mid-2013. The plan ambitiously details many ways that federal agencies will partner with stakeholders in a diverse array of sectors in the future.

The primary catalyst for the development of the SAP was a statement by President Obama to the PITF in March 2012, which broadened the collaboration mandate for federal agencies to include partnership with civil society and the private sector. Obama explained:

The United States is committed to eradicating trafficking in persons, and we will draw on tools ranging from law enforcement and victim service provision,

to public awareness building and diplomatic pressure. Because we know that government efforts are not enough, we are also increasing our partnerships with a broad coalition of local communities, faith-based and non-governmental organizations, schools, and businesses.

To bring all these elements together, and to be sure we are maximizing our efforts, today I am directing my cabinet to find ways to strengthen our current work, and to expand on partnerships with civil society and the private sector, so that we can bring more resources to bear in fighting this horrific injustice.¹⁹

In September 2012, Obama announced his initiative to create “the first-ever federal strategic action plan to strengthen services for trafficking victims,” in the process further elaborating the multiple forms of cross-sector collaboration the federal government was to help catalyze.²⁰ The broadened collaboration mandate—that federal agencies partner with a wide array of civil society organizations and businesses—was significant because previously, the primary federal program for stimulating collaboration against human trafficking was the DOJ’s task force grants. By awarding the task force grants largely to law enforcement and service provider organizations, the government in effect defined those sectors as the primary, if not the sole, sectors necessary for countering human trafficking. Meanwhile, the social movement against human trafficking, which grew immensely since the early 2000s through successful awareness-raising efforts, had been informing people from many other sectors about the complex problem of human trafficking. Leaders in sectors beyond law enforcement and victim services were beginning to see ways their sectors could, and should, contribute to counter-trafficking efforts. However, the DOJ grants’ definition of the primary sectors as law enforcement and victim services left a legacy. Task force leaders in many cities have been overwhelmed by, and unsure of how to respond to, requests to include such other entities as state agency officials, healthcare professionals, educators, leaders of business associations, faith-based organizations, and mobilization and advocacy NGOs (MANGOs).²¹

THE US GOVERNMENT’S GUIDE TO ENHANCING COLLABORATION IN ANTI-TRAFFICKING TASK FORCES

In 2011, the DOJ’s Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center published on its website the “Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide,” coproduced by the BJA and the OVC with input from law enforce-

ment and victim service providers. Updated substantially in 2014, the second edition contained much more material on collaboration. The focus of the updated e-Guide continued to be collaboration between law enforcement and victim service providers. But it also acknowledged additional anti-trafficking activities and framed their importance in relation to their support of the primary functions of the law enforcement and victim services sectors:

This Guide refers to all multidisciplinary, collaborative, anti-human trafficking efforts as “task forces.” Multidisciplinary teams may also be referred to as coalitions or networks. *For the purposes of this Guide, task forces are those which focus on identifying human trafficking, serving victims and investigating and building cases.* These are the primary activities; however, others such as training, technical assistance and community awareness/education are viewed as activities that contribute to a task force’s ability to perform the three core functions. The principles and advantages of the task force model apply to all multidisciplinary teams, regardless of funding sources or government affiliation.²² (Emphasis in the original)

The updated e-Guide also acknowledged a wide array of organizations from diverse sectors that could be sources of referrals and support for law enforcement and service providers:

Increased public awareness of the existence of human trafficking within communities often generates the interest and the benevolence of nontraditional supporters of law enforcement and service provider partnerships. Members can increase human trafficking case referrals from, and improve public awareness within, local faith-based groups, homelessness organizations, migrant farm worker groups, pro bono and immigration attorneys, sexual assault and domestic violence advocates, civic and cultural groups, restaurant and hotel employees, school and medical officials, as well as regulatory inspectors, routine patrol officers, truck drivers, and utility workers, among others. By providing outreach specifically tailored to the needs and circumstances of each group, the stakeholders learn how to contact the task force for help.²³

Elsewhere in the e-Guide, a more detailed list of potential partners includes victim/survivor impact consultants, academics with expertise on human trafficking and low-wage workers’ rights, sex-workers’ rights groups, and immigrant advocacy groups, along with others.²⁴ Despite the anti-trafficking efforts

of some businesses and industry associations (to be discussed further in chapter 3), the private sector was largely missing from this list of potential partners.

The e-Guide suggested expanding partnerships, though not to a degree that would diminish the original sectors' centrality in the task forces. While encouraging law enforcement and victim service provider organizations to consider reaching out to potential partners in other sectors, the e-Guide simultaneously cautioned against wandering from or diluting commitment to the DOJ's aims for task forces:

The primary goals of outreach and awareness-raising should be to increase victim identification, identify new resources, and generate political will and support for the issue.

Within many communities, there are networks, coalitions, and groups that can be approached to share information, create new partnerships, and identify resources, skills, and good practices for enhancing a community response to human trafficking. Task forces can collaborate with such groups to create effective communitywide strategies to combat human trafficking. Participation in a network of supporting partners does not necessitate participation in the primary task force group. Consistent with the necessary vetting of all task force partnerships, these relationships should be evaluated for conformance to the task force's core mission and purpose. For example, ensure that partners are supporting one or more of the core task force functions in a victim-centered manner and are not engaged in practices that may put a victim in harm's way, like underground rescue missions or any rescue missions that are not coordinated with law enforcement.²⁵ (Emphasis in the original)

This shows the particular perspectives of the law enforcement and victim services sectors on the aims of anti-trafficking work. The e-Guide recommends that potential partners from other sectors be assessed in terms of whether and how they can support the "core task force functions," which are defined as identifying and supporting victims and bringing perpetrators to justice. Clearly, these are good and important aims—for law enforcement and victim service providers. But taking a broader view of the multifaceted phenomenon of human trafficking and the many sectors that could be involved in countering it, we can see other goals that are equally worthy and important. Consider, for example, aims such as changing business norms and practices to make monitoring supply chains for forced labor a routine task, or effecting cultural shifts such that the sexual exploitation of others is presented

in popular media as repulsive rather than glorified, or ensuring that every schoolchild in the United States is taught that no human should be bought or sold for any purpose. Such anti-trafficking efforts are equally worthwhile despite the fact that they are far outside the mission of the law enforcement and victim services sectors. So while the forms of collaboration encouraged by the e-Guide are essential, they are not sufficient. I will delve deeper into that. But first, I provide a brief summary of how the e-Guide addresses the processes of collaboration and the advice it provides on how to form and operate a task force, how to support victims, and how to build cases against perpetrators.

The e-Guide makes clear that disagreements between partners are to be expected in the process of collaboration. There are references to conflicts and collaboration difficulties throughout the 2014 version of the e-Guide, with many practical suggestions for addressing them. Within the section on operating task forces, the e-Guide assures readers explicitly that collaboration challenges are normal and manageable:

Operational challenges are very common across multidisciplinary collaborations. Challenges can arise due to agency protocols that inhibit certain forms of collaboration, while others are about communication or sustainability. Some common barriers to collaboration that seem insurmountable at first can be solvable. Effective collaboration is built over time. Regardless of the specific issue causing trouble, other practitioners have been there before and have overcome these barriers successfully.²⁶

The e-Guide also provides the following overview of conflict in collaboration, suggesting that it can develop interpersonally and interorganizationally:

The challenges to collaboration are usually found in the group dynamics. Conflict will arise among agencies and organizations as well as among individuals. It is a predictable interpersonal human dynamic and organizational reality. Multidisciplinary groups can be very susceptible to conflict, with passionate individuals working together in intense, emergency situations.²⁷

The e-Guide acknowledges “common cultural gaps” and some reluctance to share information between investigators and prosecutors, and between federal and local authorities. It also acknowledges historically patterned forms of competition between different law enforcement agencies, between state and federal agencies, and between service provider organizations. Within every

sector funding increases status, and status increases influence. The e-Guide identifies each of these sectors as suffering from anti-collaborative dynamics that must be overcome. Long-standing tensions between the law enforcement and victim services sectors are also acknowledged; these are characterized as impeding collaboration. In naming these internal and cross-sector tensions, the e-Guide is remarkably forthright, and its honesty establishes an authentic foundation. Its recommendations regarding task force leadership and strategies for managing conflicts between law enforcement and victims service providers are well grounded in the experiences of task forces from across the United States, and they are generally consistent with current thinking on interorganizational collaboration. However, the e-Guide's usefulness in handling the challenges of multisector collaboration is limited not only by its primary focus on the law enforcement and victim service sectors, but also by the absence of attention to an array of other systemic tensions in interorganizational anti-trafficking efforts.

CHALLENGES IN COLLABORATING AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

I concur with most of the e-Guide's recommendations on strategies for advancing collaboration. However, this book differs from the e-Guide in three ways. First, I incorporate perspectives from other sectors involved in anti-trafficking efforts, such as businesses, donor foundations, mobilization and advocacy NGOs, faith communities, and survivor-activists. Second, I address a wider range of the systemic tensions that make collaborating challenging, including differences in power, race, gender, beliefs, and values. Third, I explain how interpersonal and interorganizational or multisector tensions are intertwined: Collaboration is a complex interaction between human agency, interpersonal dynamics, and the wider social, political, and economic contexts in which it takes place.²⁸

The e-Guide's section on managing conflict in task forces has many useful elements, but it also includes some statements that are contradictory. For instance, consider this statement:

Success is usually based on personal relationships and personalities and a willingness to communicate openly and overcome obstacles. The best organizations grow from a respectful and purposeful confrontation of differences, not the avoidance of them.²⁹



Then read this:

With a focus on the mission, the core purpose, and how issues will impact the ability of the task force to meet that mission, well-intentioned and respectful input among members of the group can help to resolve the differences and strengthen the group relationship. The common adage “focus on the issue, not on the individual” holds true. In a task force setting, that may need to be expanded to “focus on the issue, not on the agency or organization.”³⁰

The first statement acknowledges the importance of individual-level behavior and interpersonal relations for successful collaboration and recommends discussing differences. The second suggests the opposite, proscribing the discussion of certain kinds of differences. The meaning of “the issue” is ambiguous outside of the assumption that it lies among (not within) an individual, agency, or organization. Of course, avoiding accusation is constructive. But sometimes a focus on “the issue” on which there is disagreement or conflict is a way of avoiding larger or more foundational differences that contribute to the disagreement at hand. Differences in financial resources, status or profession, race, gender, values, or beliefs are individual-level attributes. However, these also often correspond with sector-level patterns. Those who perceive themselves as having less power due to any of these differences can feel disenfranchised by collaboration norms that discourage discussion of them. The e-Guide’s advice to “focus on the issue” is a case in point.

Looking beyond law enforcement and victim service providers, leaders from every type of agency and organization involved in countering human trafficking agree on the importance of multisector collaboration, and they also report that tensions and conflicts constrain their efforts to collaborate.³¹ Tragically, many attempts at collaboration have failed. As I conducted research for this book, I witnessed many interactions that highlighted the necessity of collaboration while illustrating the difficulty of building and sustaining such partnerships. The roots of the challenges included, but went beyond, those addressed by the e-Guide. One such interaction that I observed happened this way:

Today I accompanied two people on a short walk along a barely lit, concrete-tiled hallway. The hallway connected the highly secured entrance of a drug rehabilitation hospital to the wing of the hospital that had been leased by an



underfunded, overworked nongovernmental organization dedicated to helping survivors of domestic minor sex trafficking, directed by an older, very smart, politically savvy survivor. The director, “Joan,” had much expertise, but lacked the formal credentials that would make her an eligible applicant for government grants. A girl in her young teens, “Abby,” was hobbling after the director as the latter walked briskly down the hall on her way to a court hearing for yet another prostituted youth who needed a safe place to heal. Abby, using a crutch to support herself because her foot was in a cast after having been stomped in a scuffle with police, struggled to keep pace with Joan, and made several bids for her attention. “You know, there are only three days left that I can stay here; the court said so. What’s the plan for me after that? What is the plan?” Abby asked repeatedly. Joan, having just confided to me that she had no funds to extend anyone’s stay in the trafficking recovery center/rehab hospital, seemed to be fighting back tears, but she steeled her expression as she kept her gaze focused forward. “I don’t know yet, but I’m going to talk with some folks and see what we can do.” At the end of the hallway, where Abby had to turn around, Joan said goodbye to Abby, then motioned for me to exit the hospital with her. Outside, she exhaled deeply and turned to me to explain, “All these kids think that I can make anything happen, but I need help; I need partners.” (Fieldnote)

On another day, I witnessed the same director, a woman of color with a penchant for street slang, attempting to network with other participants in a meeting of organizations that offer services to victims of human trafficking. Most of the other participants were white women dressed in understated suburban styles, including several in pastel twinsets and pearl necklaces. Joan’s bright outfit and jauntily wrapped scarf contrasted with the sea of pastels around her, as did her gregarious manner. From the participant list I saw that most attendees are licensed social workers; Joan is not.

Joan seemed to know most people’s names. She worked the room, greeting and shaking the hand of everyone she knew, and introducing herself gregariously to a few she didn’t recognize. The meeting agenda included a presentation on the potential for collaboration between the city’s juvenile justice system and advocates for trafficked youth. Joan nodded vigorously, agreed or disagreed audibly with several of the speaker’s points, and raised her hand a few times—but was not acknowledged by the speaker. When the meeting ended, the room buzzed as participants moved in and out of small clusters of conversations, but no one approached Joan and after a few minutes she left without saying goodbye to anyone. (Fieldnote)

Interactions such as these raised questions for me about many aspects of collaboration attempts in counter-trafficking efforts. I began to wonder whether there were patterns of differences in the racial, class, and gender demographics of people who work on human trafficking in each sector and how such differences shape interactions. I noticed that perceptions of differences in power and money between sectors cropped up in conversations about who did what and why. And I became curious about the sometimes conflicting motivations and values that influence how organizations approach counter-trafficking efforts in general and collaborations in particular.

It is well established that the kinds of societal changes that are necessary to counter problems like human trafficking require the engagement of leaders from every part of society, every sector.³² Communication scholars Michael Papa, Arvind Singhal, and Wendy Papa summarize this point well, noting that “organizing for social change is a complex process that requires the coordinated and individual actions of many people—the poor and the privileged, outsiders and insiders, and expertise and local knowledge.”³³ But how can such differently situated people, working within differently oriented and variously structured organizations and sectors, work together against human trafficking? Answering that question is one of the goals of this book.

AIMS

There are plenty of excellent books already written on many aspects of collaboration within and across sectors; I list several in the section on resources.³⁴ In contrast, the overarching purpose of this book is to help change the way leaders in every sector—including policy, business, healthcare, civic organizations, advocacy groups, and faith communities, as well as law enforcement and victim service providers—approach collaboration in counter-trafficking efforts by providing them with insights and tools with which to (re)think about partnering. This is especially important because in some realms, counter-trafficking efforts are evolving rapidly.

I demonstrate how and why certain tensions between sectors involved in anti-trafficking work are not only inevitable, but also necessary in order to foster reflection among leaders of anti-trafficking efforts in every sector on their own organization’s hopes, fears, and contributions to collaboration opportunities, and to point to particular practices for leading, communicating, and organizing that can catalyze collaboration-building within the inescapable tensions of the anti-trafficking movement. Moreover, I aim to encourage

everyone who has struggled with attempts at collaboration around human trafficking, everyone who has wondered whether robust collaboration is possible or worth the effort, and everyone who is considering giving up on multisector collaboration. Based on my research, these three categories include everyone involved in anti-trafficking efforts. Finally, I aim to contribute a well-grounded analysis of multisector collaboration to students and researchers of human trafficking, collaboration, or social change. The need for multisector collaboration against human trafficking is great, and the challenges are many, deep-rooted, large-scale, and systemic. It is true that these challenges, common to all who endeavor in this field, make collaboration difficult and costly. To assume that this makes collaboration impossible, however, would be an even more costly mistake. Collaboration can work well, and this book encourages and supports that process.

APPROACH

Before I began to study collaboration in anti-trafficking efforts, I knew some things about interorganizational and multisector relations and how people negotiate collaboration. I learned much more through the course of this research. Human trafficking is just one of many issues that requires sustained, coordinated efforts from multiple sectors, and multisector collaboration is a growing area of study for some scholars in the fields of organizational studies in general and organizational communication in particular. Because of the complex nature of human trafficking, though, efforts to counter it require engagement by many branches of the public, private, and civil society sectors. This creates a “perfect storm” of challenges for collaboration. In his fascinating book, *Freeing God’s Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights*, Allen Hertzke detailed many of the contestations and collaborations between faith-based organizations, human rights organizations, feminist organizations, and government agencies that sparked and shaped the emergence of the contemporary anti-trafficking movement in the United States from the mid-1990s through some watershed events in 2003.³⁵

To leverage current knowledge about collaboration, I drew on several strands of scholarship as the bases for the analyses I present in this book, and I have woven ideas and insights from this scholarship throughout the book. I used the definition of “interorganizational collaboration” developed by Joann Keyton, Debra Ford, and Faye Smith:

The set of communicative processes in which individuals representing multiple organizations or stakeholders engage when working interdependently to address problems outside the spheres of individuals or organizations working in isolation. The outcomes of these processes have the potential to benefit or harm the parties to the collaboration, as well as others.³⁶

The fact that Keyton, Ford, and Smith worked as a multidisciplinary team (from the fields of communication, nursing, and business) to develop this definition is not why I chose it, but that does make it all the more appropriate for this book. They recognize that collaborations are loosely coupled and nested systems that continually change. Their definition specifies collaboration as communication; it identifies individuals who function as organizational representatives as those through whom interorganizational collaboration takes place, and it acknowledges that collaboration does not necessarily have beneficial outcomes for participants or anyone else. It makes clear that interorganizational collaboration is risky, including for those on whose behalf collaborative efforts are attempted.

Beyond defining interorganizational collaboration, Keyton, Ford, and Smith developed a model for it that “problematizes communication in collaborations, acknowledges that collaborations cross public–private boundaries, and recognizes that collaborations are loosely coupled and nested systems that continually change.”³⁷ Put simply, their model is a useful lens for thinking through the complexities, contingencies, and evolving nature of multisector collaboration. For these reasons it was foundational to my thinking about collaboration against human trafficking.

Because I knew more about collaboration and organizing processes than human trafficking when I began this research, I started by learning everything I could about how each sector was attempting to counter human trafficking around the world. I began by analyzing systematically the websites of over 150 organizations representing nine sectors and operating around the world, for each year from 2008 to 2011. A team of research assistants inventoried the online reports of this panel of organizations to assess the prevalence of eight general kinds of anti-trafficking activities such as prevention, advocacy, and restoration, and the specific types of actions that comprise each category of activity.³⁸ This four-year series of assessments of anti-trafficking activities provided a good sketch of both the diversity of forms of anti-trafficking

efforts and patterns in such efforts to counter human trafficking—that is, which activities are engaged in most frequently and most robustly by which sector. The most relevant findings for this book are that two-thirds of the anti-trafficking organizations claimed to be involved in some effort to build coalitions, and that around one-third reported that they were part of a named, multi-organization coalition, network, or alliance with at least three member organizations. Further, those proportions increased over time. Clearly, a large and growing number of anti-trafficking actors are involved in interorganizational collaboration.³⁹ My fieldwork revealed that many of the interorganizational collaborative efforts against human trafficking are also cross-sector.

In 2009, I started attending the organizing meetings of two start-up grassroots nongovernmental organizations in the area where I live. I began volunteering in anti-trafficking efforts locally, both community-oriented, awareness-raising campaigns and fundraising for national and international efforts. These volunteer efforts led me deeper into multisector interactions around human trafficking and evoked a host of questions about what it takes to build and sustain robust collaborations.

The approach I took to answering those questions is participatory action research. Between 2009 and 2013, I observed hundreds of interactions between people who work on combating human trafficking in one way or another. I participated in over fifty multisector meetings and conferences on human trafficking, ranging from a few hours to three days in length, in five US states, and I made multiple trips to each state over the course of the project in order to observe how meetings in each location evolved over time. In addition, I conducted in-depth interviews with nearly fifty individuals who work against human trafficking in business, law enforcement, victim service provision, prosecution, healthcare, faith communities, and/or civic and advocacy groups. They resided in ten cities in seven US states and in Austria, Cambodia, Denmark, and the Netherlands as well. Five of the ten cities in which my interviewees were based had DOJ-funded task forces during the period of this research; most interviewees in those cities were involved in those task forces.

Of the people I interviewed, six who were participating in counter-trafficking efforts were themselves survivors of human trafficking. With fifteen anti-trafficking leaders, I was able to conduct multiple interviews, which allowed me to learn how their perspectives changed over time. During interviews, I asked people about topics such as their organization's aims, their personal

motives for working against human trafficking in their sector of choice, their perceptions of other sectors, the kinds of organizations with which they had attempted to collaborate, and both positive and negative experiences they'd had in collaborations. I also asked about their ideas of what kinds of things hinder or help advance interorganizational and multisector partnerships. Although most of the fieldwork and interviews on which this book is based were conducted primarily within the United States, interorganizational and multisector collaboration against human trafficking is happening in many countries.⁴⁰ The types of sectors, counter-trafficking organizations, and agencies represented in this study are active in most other countries as well, though they may operate differently. Collaboration dynamics outside the United States are likely to have both similarities and differences in relation to the dynamics analyzed in this book.

Along with observations of interactions and interviews, I continued to gain firsthand experience in the complexities of collaboration by participating in multisector anti-trafficking efforts, as a volunteer with local NGOs, as an advisor to local coalitions and national projects, and eventually as a speaker on interorganizational collaboration at anti-trafficking events. In doing so, I situated myself as a proponent of collaboration. Through these forms of participation in anti-trafficking efforts, I engaged in countless conversations with people from many sectors about the processes of collaboration. These personal experiences provided me with an intimate understanding of the consistently intense but differently oriented passions that those who work on human trafficking bring to their work. I have witnessed tears and complaints as well as congratulations between members of anti-trafficking coalitions, and moments of betrayal as well as expressions of sincere gratitude between professionals in different sectors who have been trained not to trust each other. These experiences, together with the forthrightness with which interviewees talked with me, were enormously helpful. They allow me to present my analysis of large-scale patterns and systemic contradictions in a way that I hope provides windows into the concrete situations—the very moments in which collaborations around human trafficking are strengthened or strangled. A foundational premise of this research is that every sector in society has a role to play for human trafficking to cease. I have sought to represent the perspectives of each actor and each sector respectfully as well as accurately, especially in my critiques.

To develop this book, I examined around one hundred instances of multisector interactions from my fieldnotes and interview reports and from descriptions of such interactions in other publications. In doing so, I identified communicative and organizing actions that contributed either to the advance or breakdown of collaboration, identified by the outcome (what happened next in the interaction), by actors' opinions (shared with me in conversations following the interaction), and by my own observations of subsequent interactions. I noticed that differences in profession and status, race and gender, beliefs and values were negotiated in recurring patterns during these interactions. These differences are evident at the organizational level as well as among individuals.

As other researchers of interorganizational relations have noted, what is possible to observe are groups of people talking. Through that, researchers can infer how organizations collaborate in ways that integrate individual, group, organizational, and sector levels.⁴¹ I structured the book around patterns in these multisector interactions for two reasons. First, I aim to foster cross-sector thought and action; this was important because a sector-based analysis could reinforce sector-based thinking on the part of readers. Second, by focusing on instances of cross-sector communication, I could identify the inherent tensions between differing aims, values, and operating modes; the power dynamics related to profession, gender, and race; and sector structures and economics. In brief, the argument of the book is that these differences and power dynamics are systemic and therefore not readily changeable. Nonetheless, I have seen more robust collaboration across sectors through reflective attention to collective leadership, strategic planning, organizing processes, and communication practices.

SURVIVOR-ACTIVISTS AS A SECTOR

It is very important to note here that in multisector anti-trafficking efforts in the U.S., there are many survivors of human trafficking working alongside those who have never been enslaved. Some publicly identify themselves as survivors, while others choose not to do so. Several leaders in anti-trafficking efforts told me that they are survivors, but that they choose not to publicly disclose that information. In this book, I refer to survivors who contribute to anti-trafficking efforts as "survivor-activists." Three of the six survivor-activists I interviewed at length were among the sixteen survivor-activists

who spoke publicly in multisector meetings about their efforts to counter human trafficking and their perspectives on what needs to be done (both additionally and differently). Other survivors are published authors, and I have cited insights from some of their publications. Most of the survivor-activists I encountered work in nonprofits or NGOs, though a few are employed by government agencies or in the private sector. As I will explain further in chapters 2 and 3, full-time, paid jobs in anti-trafficking nonprofits are rare, so many survivor-activists volunteer their time. Some work in what they term “survivor-led organizations”; others work independently or in other types of organizations. Some have reflected deeply not only on their own personal experiences, but also on the processes other survivors have undergone. Regardless of whether they have degrees or professional credentials, they have cultivated expertise on survivorship. I refer to this subset of survivor-activists as “survivorship experts.”

All of the survivor-activists expressed the need for greater cooperation between survivor-activists and nonsurvivors, and for more survivors to be included in leadership of anti-trafficking efforts that have not been initiated by survivors. Although survivors hold differing views on many aspects of anti-trafficking efforts, they were unanimous that survivors often feel invisible and unheard, excluded from many anti-trafficking efforts and marginalized when they are included. My fieldwork both validated their perspective and complicated it, as I explain in subsequent chapters. Because of the complexity, there is no straightforward, perfect solution, but I want to avoid perpetuating the marginalization of survivors by explicitly including them in this book.

I refer to survivor-activists as comprising a distinct “sector” in this book because when survivors talk about anti-trafficking efforts, they tend to do so first and foremost from their perspective as survivors. Survivor-activists’ perspectives are articulated in each chapter of the book, with attention to the patterns in their interactions with those from other sectors, as well as acknowledgment that there is diversity within the survivor-activist sector, as in every sector. However, referring to survivor-activists as a sector creates two interrelated risks that I hope to mitigate by making them explicit so that readers can avoid them.⁴² One risk is that considering survivor-activists as comprising their own sector could result in a form of tokenism similar to the way that “diversity” initiatives sometimes marginalize “the diverse” rather than integrating them into a larger whole. Survivors could already be present—and should be wel-

comed—in every other profession-based sector. A second risk is that survivor-activists could be perceived solely as survivors, while other types of expertise they offer to anti-trafficking efforts could be disregarded. One way I sought to counter that risk in my fieldwork was to follow the verbal cues of survivors regarding the particular facet of expertise from which they were speaking at any moment. For example, when I witnessed survivors sharing insights or recommendations based on their professional expertise in a field such as social work, counseling, or business, I noted and reported those statements differently than I did the insights based on their trafficking experiences.

Due to the sensitive nature of collaboration interactions, I have taken several steps in this book to avoid damaging interpersonal dynamics in places where I conducted my research. Except when highlighting successes or when geographical information is critical, I do not name the cities in which I observed interactions or in which an interview or interaction took place, and the only statements I attribute to actual, specific individuals or organizations, other than government agencies, are ones that have been made publicly in open meetings or online. All other names I employ in this book are pseudonyms.⁴³

As a participant-observer of the phenomena I studied, the fact that I am a middle-aged Caucasian female university professor certainly shaped the interactions I witnessed and participated in and my perspectives on them. Although I have lived through and recovered from some traumatic circumstances over the course of my life, I have never been enslaved, and thus in the parlance of some anti-trafficking activists I am a “nonsurvivor”—that is, not a survivor of trafficking. In several places in the book I reflect on the ways that various aspects of my identity, academic training, and professional position may have influenced the questions I raised, what was confided to me, and how I interpreted this research. At times I wished for what philosopher Thomas Nagel termed “the view from nowhere,”⁴⁴ but like Nagel, I do not think it exists in pure form. In keeping with the established practices of participatory action research, I establish the validity of this research not by distancing myself from those I have studied, but rather by taking into account the ways my characteristics might have influenced the process, by checking my analyses with leaders of anti-trafficking efforts from several sectors, and through other means.⁴⁵

PARTNERSHIP HOPES AND FEARS

People who work on human trafficking approach potential and actual collaborations with both individual and collective or organizational hopes and fears. Overarchingly, everyone who invests time and energy in countering human trafficking (whether or not they are paid for this labor) wants their efforts to be effective. This is true regardless of what type of human trafficking they focus on, which sector they work in, and whether their primary role is identifying and helping victims, bringing perpetrators to justice, or preventing further trafficking in persons. In all cases, the individuals in the organizations, agencies, and businesses who work on human trafficking want to see it end. This shared aim is the motivation and foundation for nearly all attempts at collaboration. The slogan “In It to End It,” employed by some breast cancer awareness advocates,⁴⁶ has become a rallying cry for many individuals and organizations devoted to stopping human trafficking.⁴⁷

Many attempts at collaborative partnerships on human trafficking emerge organically, typically through the professional contacts and initiative of organizational leaders. Other partnerships begin through the stipulations of funders. For example, in the United States, not only the DOJ but also several private foundations have made structured collaborations a requirement for grant funding and have designated funds to support the coordination of interorganizational, cross-sector, and multisector partnerships.⁴⁸ Differences in the interaction dynamics within organic and funder-mandated partnerships will be explored in subsequent chapters. At this point it is sufficient to note that not all partnerships are initiated and structured by their member organizations.

Whether participation in a particular partnership is mandated or elected, the people representing any organization in an interorganizational partnership bring a bundle of hopes and fears about collaboration into their interactions. This creates a variety of tensions.⁴⁹ Based on my research, some hopes are fairly universal to all collaboration participants, such as advancing the aims and impact of one’s own organization while contributing to the work of the partnership, persuading partners to get behind initiatives in which one’s organization is invested, and being treated respectfully by partners. Other hopes correspond more specifically with an organization’s role and position relative to other partner organizations and to power brokers outside of the partnership. For example, stronger organizations may enter partnerships

with weaker organizations in order to establish themselves as leaders, and weaker organizations may enter partnerships to strengthen their organization's credibility and visibility.

Similarly, some fears are common to most people entering a potentially collaborative partnership, such as the fear of diminishing the autonomy of one's organization or of wasting time and energy on (in the words of several of my interviewees) "meetings that don't accomplish anything." Although common, such fears may be experienced to different degrees and in different ways depending on elements like an actor's status in the partnership, prior negative experiences with collaboration, and what is at stake for that actor. Stronger, well-established organizations tend to fear being "mooched on" by weaker organizations or having a less-reliable organization mar their hard-earned reputations. Smaller, newer, or weaker organizations fear being steamrolled by more powerful organizations. Some also fear having their ideas "stolen" by other organizations, especially those with better resources that have the capacity to implement initiatives more quickly and/or more broadly.

Three brief examples from my fieldwork illustrate how hopes and fears about interorganizational relations create a dialectic that shapes attempts at collaboration on human trafficking. In the first, a small NGO with minimal funding planned a public event that they hoped would help catalyze more coordinated anti-trafficking efforts in their region. They waited until they had drafted the event for the agenda before approaching the larger, better-established NGOs in their area about participating, in part because they hoped to establish their organization as a peer leader, and in part because they feared being dismissed by the better-established NGOs. To their dismay, the better-established NGOs refused to participate: They had not been invited to help shape the agenda and feared that the event plan would reflect poorly on them. So although the small NGO successfully elicited participation from law enforcement and other government agencies and from some businesses, the effect on relations with some other NGOs was more detrimental than constructive.

In my second example, law enforcement agents whose job it is to find and investigate human trafficking cases have been engaging collaboratively with MANGOs with the hope of receiving useful tips on potential cases. Yet they fear being deluged with worthless and time-wasting bogus information.⁵⁰

Conversely, MANGOs collaborating with the law enforcement agents hope to be useful in bringing cases forward, but at the same time they fear being dismissed as unreliable tipsters.

A third example of the dialectic of hopes and fears surfaced between a faith-based NGO that explicitly sought Christian volunteers and a self-described “areligious” NGO—in this case, an NGO that had been founded by Christians but strove to welcome participation by anyone. When the two attempted to collaborate, the leaders of the faith-based NGO hoped for the freedom to talk about human trafficking in spiritual terms and pray for collaborative efforts. The leaders of the areligious NGO, on the other hand, hoped that their religiously diverse volunteer base would feel welcome participating in collaborative efforts. At the same time, the faith-based NGO feared being denigrated for their religious beliefs, while the areligious NGO feared that proclamations of faith-based beliefs would offend those of their membership who did not subscribe to them. Since both hopes and fears are nearly always present within and between organizations attempting to collaborate, partnerships are fraught with tensions that are not resolvable. But better understanding of the kinds of tensions addressed in this book can facilitate better collaborations.

WHAT (NOT) TO EXPECT FROM THIS BOOK

This book does not promise that if an anti-trafficking organization does A, B, and C, the outcomes will be X, Y, and Z. As I explained above, my aim is to demonstrate how and why certain tensions between sectors are not only inevitable, but also necessary; to foster reflection among leaders of anti-trafficking efforts in every sector on their own organization’s hopes, fears, and contributions to collaboration opportunities; and to articulate some general practices for leading, communicating, and organizing that are constructive for collaboration building.⁵¹

Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 each focus on a distinct set of differences that arise from and perpetuate perennial, systemic tensions in counter-trafficking alliances. Starting with two interrelated things that were brought up often in one-on-one interviews (but rarely mentioned in meetings), chapter 2 focuses on how multisector partnerships against human trafficking are shaped by power and money, and forms of power that are based on intangibles (that is, not on money). Perceived or actual differences in funding sources; legal mandates and constraints; and governance norms, protocols, and regulations for

each organization and sector influence how those organizations and sectors function in interactions with others about human trafficking.

Chapter 3 explores the power dynamics of strategically positioning one's organization in relationship to others, positioning or "platforming" other organizations, and coleadership in collaboration. I explain how the kinds of roles in multisector collaborations that organizations either take, assign, or assume is influenced by, and often reproduces, their perceptions of their own and others' political power, funding, and latitude for action. In this chapter I also explore how education and class—meaning the status, as well as the general economic characteristics of various professions and the individuals working within them—shape collaboration. For example, when people who have not gone to college and people who have earned advanced degrees and various professional certifications attempt to collaborate, their perceived status differences affect their understanding of their interactions with each other. This chapter draws primarily on perceptions that were articulated by anti-trafficking leaders about such differences, because such perceptions shape interactions.

Moving from one set of touchy subjects to another, in chapter 4 I explore why race and gender matter in efforts to counter human trafficking. Although patterns in the demographic characteristics of the individuals involved in counter-trafficking efforts were rarely discussed in the interactions I observed, they were consistently apparent in the meetings I attended, and they surfaced in the one-on-one interviews I conducted. In interviews, those who were not Caucasian or male expressed concerns about power differentials between sectors and organizations that are largely populated by Caucasians or by men. In this chapter, I draw on demographic data along with insights from sociology, gender studies, and cultural studies, and on my fieldwork observations and interviews. I offer, based on these sources, exploratory interpretations of the influence of race and gender on interactions across sectors regarding human trafficking. Although I discuss aspects of class in chapters 2 and 3, and highlight facets of the influence of race and gender on collaborations in different sections of chapter 4, I do not seek to disentangle race, class, and gender. Rather, I view these as continually and mutually constituting each other.⁵² In other words, this analysis is not just about the differences between professions of anti-trafficking actors, such as street cops versus federal agents. It is also about how the race and gender of cops or federal agents

may affect their approach to collaboration, and how those same factors are perceived by others in the collaboration.

The focus of chapter 5 is the dynamics caused by aligned and conflicting motives and values in anti-trafficking efforts. Motives and values are held and enacted by both individuals and collectives in every line of work. They are often unconscious, shaped by a person's or an organization's history, culture, and beliefs. Collective attributes like the status of a profession, as well as the individual attributes of gender, race, and religious beliefs, shape the basic values and worldview of all the professions.⁵³ They can be powerful forces in multisector interactions: when actors align on them, they coalesce more easily; when they do not, collaboration may be more turbulent. In this chapter I analyze organizational and coalition texts and interactions I observed for how motives (including fears, hopes, and prejudices) and values (whether based on professional norms, religious beliefs, or other sources) manifest in multiple ways, such as in interorganizational planning processes, in coalition meeting agendas and facilitation, in public messaging about collaborative events, and in the terms by which other organizations and sectors are referred.

Finally, in chapter 6, after summarizing the reasons why multisector collaboration is both especially important and particularly difficult in counter-trafficking efforts, I suggest several ways that multisector collaborations can be started, repaired, and enhanced. Relatedly, I also provide positive examples of practices that catalyze counter-trafficking collaborations. These include the following: (1) acknowledging perceived power differentials, whether due to differences in political economic positions or in the demographics of the people who represent a sector in an particular setting, and agreeing explicitly on how these will be mitigated in collaborative work; (2) openly discussing ways that leadership structures and communication processes can be democratized in multisector coalitions; (3) collectively reflecting on the variety of motives and values that bring actors into counter-trafficking efforts, shape their aims, and influence how they work; and (4) developing shared norms for multisector interactions.

These practices require investments of time and resources to plan and to implement consistently from the beginning of a multisector coalition. However, such practices become even more costly when attempts at collaboration break down. Sustaining a carefully designed and well-led coalition is easier than mending one that has seized up or fallen apart. It is no simple

matter to overcome disillusionment over failed collaborations, to reshape counterproductive patterns such as retreating into intrasector interactions, or to expand functional alliances that were built around “like-minded” organizations across sectors but wind up as exclusionary forces. By the end of the book I hope to have made a persuasive case that multisector collaboration against human trafficking is essential, that it is possible, and that it is worth the investment.

For those wishing to build the collaborations necessary for successful joint anti-trafficking work, the Collaboration Resources section at the end of the book pulls together additional promising approaches. First, I offer a few exercises that might be useful for collaborations against human trafficking in particular. Second, I suggest some tools for building, managing, and sustaining collaborations. Third, I provide pointers to some of the many resources available on interorganizational collaboration in general, and to publications by survivors that include discussions of their experiences with multisector efforts. In sum, those in ant-trafficking efforts have long known that it is necessary to work together to diminish the practices that demean and damage people, but they have lacked recommendations based on what actually happens when such organization try to effect those very collaborations. This book’s goal is to address that need.