



**IJM**

**INTERNATIONAL  
JUSTICE MISSION**

# **COMMUNITY JUSTICE ASSESSMENT**

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**DISCOVERING ISSUES OF  
INJUSTICE AND OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR JUSTICE MINISTRY IN  
YOUR COMMUNITY**





## ABOUT INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION

International Justice Mission is a global organization that protects the poor from violence in the developing world. Our global team includes hundreds of lawyers, investigators, social workers, community activists and other professionals at work in 17 communities. International Justice Mission Canada shares in this mission.

IJM answers the Bible's call to seek justice by confronting common, criminal, everyday violence—violence that steals dignity and health from children trafficked into the commercial sex trade, strips widows and orphans of their homes and hope, and denies freedom and security to families trapped in slavery. Today, four billion of the world's poorest people are not effectively protected by their own countries' laws against abuse—but IJM sees daily that violence can be stopped when vulnerable people are served by their public justice systems.

To learn more about IJM's work, visit [IJM.ca](https://ijm.ca) or consider exploring our resources by visiting [IJM.ca/Churches-Explore](https://ijm.ca/Churches-Explore)

### PURPOSE

As you walk with IJM in the work of justice, you may also sense God calling your church into new areas of ministry locally. Sensing this call, many church partners have asked IJM what they can do to confront injustice in their own communities. Rather than prescribe a set approach for addressing injustice in every community, this guide is designed to help you become students of your community, build expertise on specific issues of injustice and existing resources, and develop relationships with key stakeholders so you can creatively design the most appropriate and effective response for your church body.

## TIPS FOR USING THE TOOL

- **Allow God to lead you** by staying connected with Him through prayer and His Word
- **Become humble students** of your community by putting aside pre-conceived opinions and stereotypes and allow experts and community residents to share their perspective, knowledge and experiences with you
- **Look for strengths, resources and partnership possibilities** as you explore your community
- **Don't become overwhelmed;** scale your assessment to fit your situation
- **Stay organized and strategic**
- **Ensure that your church is a safe place** for victims of injustice

## STEP 1

# BUILD AN EFFECTIVE TEAM

Members of your team should have a growing Christian faith, a foundation of prayer, knowledge and passion about God's call to seek justice, a respectful and humble spirit when working with team members and community members and a commitment to uphold confidentiality.

**SUPPORT:** Your team should have the support of church leadership. Not only will they provide guidance, wisdom and helpful resources, but buy-in from leadership will ensure that your ministry is a sustainable and integral part of the church.

### BIBLICAL FOUNDATION:

Your team should have a strong biblical and social foundation; that is an understanding of God's love for the oppressed and his call to the church to seek justice. To help build this foundation, you may want to consider exploring an [IJM resource](#) as a team or individually.

**SELF CARE:** Create safeguards for participation to ensure the health of your team and the protection of those you will serve and interact with during your research. Step 3 will provide you with some practical ideas for establishing individual and group self-care practices.

**COMMITMENT:** Ensure that team members understand the time and

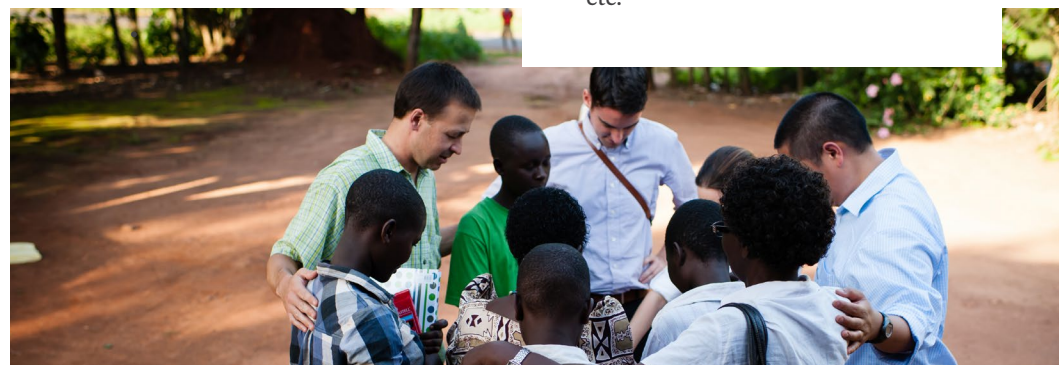
energy required and are committed to the team and task.

**DIVERSITY:** Invite people of different ages, gender, ethnicity, economic background, professional fields and life experience. The more limited your assessment team, the more limited your network and perspective will be.

## STEP 2

# COMMUNICATION & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- **Establish a timeline.** This will depend on the depth of research you want to conduct and how much time you can commit as a team.
- **Plan regular team meetings.**
- **Determine a communication method** such as Facebook, phone, e-mail etc.
- **Decide on a method for data collection:**
  - *How will you record, organize and save the information you collect?*
  - *Will information be written, videotaped or managed another way?*
  - *Who will collect the information?*
- **Gather resources** such as office supplies, contacts, transportation etc.



### STEP 3

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## ESTABLISH SELF & TEAM CARE GUIDELINES

There is an emotional, spiritual and possibly even physical risk to entering into the reality of injustice, especially for the untrained and unprepared. While uncovering new information about injustice in your community during this process, team members may experience new or uncomfortable reactions. While these reactions are healthy and part of the process of discovering the reality of injustice, they can become unhealthy if they are ignored or dismissed. Below are some suggestions to ensure the mental, emotional, and spiritual safety of those on your team.

- **Designate specific meetings just for team care, de-briefing, sharing/reflection and prayer** or start each meeting with a time of de-briefing, encouragement and prayer *(on large teams, it may be more helpful to assign pairs or accountability partners for this purpose).*
- **Maintain healthy boundaries** by limiting reading about disturbing forms of injustice, choosing not to read such material right before bed and participating in team de-briefing discussions about your reaction to the research. It's important for each team member to understand their own personal history with violence, abuse, power, control, fear, and anxiety to best know how to protect themselves.
- **Pursue protection** through prayer and biblical truth by praying regularly as a team, individually, and by maintaining a consistent devotional life that reminds you of key truths about the character and goodness of our God of Justice.



### STEP 4

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## DETERMINE ROLES OF TEAM MEMBERS

- **Consider the various gifts, skills and interests** of each person on the team. *team care leader, resource gatherer/manager, online researcher, meeting researcher, data collection organizer).*
- **Consider the networks and professional backgrounds of some members** that may be useful to the assessment.
- **Establish roles** *(may include: team leader, devotional/prayer/*
- **Determine if there are any key skills or backgrounds missing from the team** and recruit someone to fill that role.

## STEP 5

# NARROW YOUR FOCUS

If you set out to deeply study every type of injustice in your community, you will likely never finish the research process and move on to serving your community. However, if you begin with a very narrow preconceived idea of the specific issue you want to address, you may miss what God is calling you to. It's important to conduct a time of brainstorming and to seek input from pastors or other church leaders who may not be on your team. Don't forget to cover this process in prayer!

**Think about and discuss the priorities and goals of your church and how that influences the goal of your Community Justice Assessment:**

- What do you hope to accomplish by conducting this CJA?
- What do you hope will be your end result after completing the CJA?
- What key questions do you want answered in order to feel satisfied with the result of the CJA, understand the issues of injustice in your community; and determine next steps for your church?

**Some questions to consider:**

- Who is your church currently serving?
- Do you want to deepen an existing ministry or start a new ministry?
- Do you already have an idea of key issues of injustice in your community?
- Are you aware of a specific population in your community that is victimized by a certain type of injustice?

## STEP 6

# GATHER A LIST OF DATA SOURCES

- **Collect information** on what and whom you already know.
- **Create a list of questions** you still want answered based on the information that you don't know.
- **Create a list of all agencies, individuals and websites** with whom you want to meet or from which you want to gather information.

See the [Appendix](#) for suggested questions to help your brainstorming process.



## STEP 7

# CONDUCT RESEARCH AND INTERVIEWS

There are many different methods of collecting information. Take a look at the list of contacts and agencies that your group came up with and decide which information-gathering method best fits each situation.

**INTERNET-BASED RESEARCH**—helpful for gathering background information and data regarding your focus issue(s) or injustice and geographic focus area(s). Ensure that the website you're visiting is a reliable source.

**INFORMATION INTERVIEWS**—helpful for gathering information from an expert in your community.

**FIELD VISITS OR "WALKABOUTS"**—helpful for learning about the community, its geography, resources and residents. This will help your team build direct relationships with those in the community and establish a sense of comfort, familiarity and compassion within the team for the community and its residents.

**SURVEYS**—helpful to reach a large group of people you may not have individual access to in order to gain information that's not available through other means or information that you believe is best delivered confidentially by respondents.

**FOCUS GROUPS**—helpful for bringing together key stakeholders in a community to learn about their opinions, history, assessment, experiences, assets or strengths, and ideas for solutions around your focus issue. Focus groups allow for more nuanced, personal, complex opinion- and experience-based responses and debate.



With each interaction, ensure that you communicate the following:

- **The mission of your church** and its interest in issues of injustice/violence.
- **The purpose** of the Community Justice Assessment.
- **The goals** or objectives that you hope to achieve by meeting.
- **How the information will be recorded, saved and shared** and whether the interviewee has any restrictions regarding what is shared and their confidentiality.
- **A recognition of the importance of abiding by confidentiality guidelines.**

- **Remember to represent your church well!** This means coming to interviews prepared, conducting professional and respectful interviews, behaving humbly and in a bridge-building manner and thanking those with who you meet.

Once you've recorded and compiled all of your data, analyze and think critically about the responses that you've received. Don't assume that everyone's information, opinions or analysis is correct and always follow up important but vague information with clarifying questions.



## STEP 8

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# COMPILE YOUR DATA

Now that you've completed your research, it's time to compile the data in an organized way that will make it useful for making decisions about how your church can engage in your community. You may want to write a report or create a PowerPoint presentation in order to present your information. Below are some elements that you may want to include in your report.

- Purpose, goals and objectives of your group.
- Summary of the CJA team's structure (optional), assessment process and methods of data collection.
- A problem statement; the issue(s) of injustice
- Brief description and/or history of your geographic focus area.
- Asset inventory: known community assets and resources/services.
- Known needs and gaps in services.
- Your church's assets for ministry.
- Possible areas of engagement/ ministry.
- Possible partners with whom you could collaborate.
- Concerns/barriers/challenges/ requirements of church engagement.

## STEP 9

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# DETERMINE WHERE GOD'S LEADING YOU

**PRAY FOR GUIDANCE:** As a team, continue to pray for God's guidance in understanding the results, determining next steps and designing an effective plan.

**PRESENT YOUR FINDINGS:** If you conducted this assessment on behalf of your church, you should provide a formal presentation of your findings to the leadership team. You may also want to consider sharing your findings with other interested churches, ministry groups, social service or government agencies.

**MAINTAIN A SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION & HUMILITY:** As you move towards designing a ministry response, remember to maintain a spirit of humility, creativity and faith. Continue to collaborate with agencies, leaders and others you connected with during the assessment process.

**DESIGN A MINISTRY RESPONSE:** Work with experienced church leaders to design and implement a needed and effective justice ministry based on the results of your assessment.

**COLLABORATE WITH IJM:** IJM is honoured to support and walk alongside churches throughout their justice journey. Please utilize our staff and resources to equip your team, church leadership and congregation to grow more deeply in study, prayer and ministry around biblical justice.

# APPENDIX

## BRAINSTORM: WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW

### What do you already know about the issue(s) you are focusing on or considering?

#### The Basics:

- How does your team define this issue?
- Does it exist in your community?
- How prevalent is it in your community?
- Where does it exist in your community?
- Who does it affect in your community?
- Why does it affect this area and these people?
- Who are the perpetrators of violence in your community?
- What global, national and local research has been done on this issue?
- What does the research say and how does it apply to your community?

#### Strengths and Resources:

- What local, provincial and national laws address this issue?
- Which of these laws are understood and applied locally?
- What has been law enforcement's response to the issue in your community?
- What agencies, coalitions or leaders are already taking action against this issue?
- How is the faith community aware of or responding to this issue?
- Who are the power actors who could influence positive change?
- What positive movement or action exists in regards to this issue?
- What efforts to combat this issue have been unsuccessful and/or successful?
- What services or ministries are currently available to provide direct

services to victims/survivors? What are these services? How do victims/survivors connect with these services? What are the barriers to victims/survivors receiving services?

#### Victims/Survivors:

- Who are the victims of this issue of injustice?
- Are they reporting the crimes? Why or why not?
- Are they accessing or receiving services? Why or why not?
- Are they visible in the community, either as ones who suffer or as ones speaking out against the issue?
- How do victims/survivors respond to existing social services offered to them? What has been effective or ineffective?
- What strengths or resources do victims/survivors of this issue have that could be maximized or utilized for healing and advocacy?

#### Foundational Issues:

- What are the barriers to eradicating this issue of injustice?
- Why has this issue of injustice been allowed to exist/flourish? Why has it not been confronted by leadership or the public?
- Why do people care or not care about this issue?

#### Perspectives and Stereotypes:

- What stereotypes and judgments come to mind when I think about this issue?
- How might these stereotypes and judgments be harmful to or interfere with this process?

#### What we know about the information:

- How did you become aware of the information gathered during this brainstorm? How do you know it's true?

- From what/whose perspective does it come?
- Was it based on fact, or on assumption; stereotypes or rumours?

#### Next Steps:

- Does this exercise raise new questions for you? What are those questions?
- After conducting this exercise, what do you not know or understand about the issue(s)?
- Who or what agencies or individuals would be able to answer these questions or fill in gaps in information for you?

### What do you know about the geographic area(s) you are focusing on or considering?

#### The Basics:

- What do you know about the: history, geographic boundaries, people, leaders, faith communities, social services, demographics, economic realities, education levels and offerings, languages, struggles or concerns, social and mental health services, legal services, law enforcement structure and response, violence types and rates, community participation, cultural participation, businesses, cultural associations, community development agencies, etc.?

#### Perspectives and Stereotypes:

- What stereotypes and judgments come to mind when you think about this area?
- How is this geographic area viewed by the larger community?
- How might these stereotypes and judgments be harmful to or interfere with the CJA process?

#### Strengths and Resources:

- What is the power structure in this geographic area—who are the power actors (people who control the resources, decision-makers, informal or formal leaders, influencers in the community) and what type of power do they hold in this area?
- When positive change has occurred in this geographic area, who instigated it and how did it happen?

#### What we know about the information/next steps

- Same as section above

### What do you know about your church or group's resources for any barriers to justice ministry?

#### Your Sphere of Influence and Engagement:

- In what local ministries is your church already engaged?
- In what neighbourhoods is your church already engaged?
- In what international ministries and countries is your church already engaged?
- With what local agencies or groups does your church already partner?
- With what international agencies or groups does your church already partner? Do any of those international agencies have a local office to do local work?
- What is your church's reputation within the community? Within your geographic focus area?
- How does your church interact in your focus geographic area(s)?
- What connections does your church have within the community that would be helpful to starting or carrying out a justice ministry?

### **Your Experience, Skills and Resources:**

- Is your church known for any specific areas of expertise or experience?
- Has your church engaged in any ministry related or similar to the issues of injustice focused on within this assessment? How has the church been involved?
- What professional or creative skills exist within the church body that would be helpful to justice ministry?
- What physical, financial, spiritual and/or academic resources exist at your church or within your church body that would be helpful to justice ministry?

### **Your Biblical Foundation and Justice Journey**

- What key experiences led your church to consider God's call to seek justice and address issues of injustice?
- What key populations within the church are most engaged in and aware of biblical justice?
- Does every leader and aspect of discipleship within the church have or include a strong biblical foundation and understanding of injustice, justice and God's call to the church to seek justice? If not, why? If not, how could your justice team help incorporate this biblical foundation into the discipleship life of the church?

- When the church starts a new ministry, how involved is the whole congregation in prayer, volunteering, support and awareness? What factors stimulate this participation and what factors deter this participation? How long does investment in the new ministry last? If only briefly, why does investment of leadership or congregation in the new ministry fade?
- What stereotypes, judgments, fears or prejudices would keep the congregation from supporting, praying for and volunteering with a new justice ministry (keeping in mind the issues and geographic area on which you are focusing)? How could your team and leadership begin to address these barriers?
- What is the understanding or knowledge level in the church about the issue of injustice, the geographic focus area, or the concepts of trauma and recovery in response to violent abuse?
- How could you increase the understanding and knowledge level with the church body of these areas so people will feel equipped and prepared to engage in justice ministry? What resources or agencies could assist with this preparation?

### **BRAINSTORM: WHO YOU ALREADY KNOW**

Gather a list of contacts, agencies and resources you already know will be helpful in your data collection. Members of your team will likely have a wide range of contacts and connections that will help you obtain appointments and gather information quickly. This list will help you begin to identify assets or resources within your community and will also help you determine any key gaps in your network.

#### **Here are some key individuals or groups you may want to consider:**

- National government agencies
- National non-profit agencies or human rights agencies
- Local government agencies
- Local non-profit social service agencies
- Local community development or coalition groups
- Local churches or faith-based ministries
- Local key leaders (faith community, government, human rights community, social service community, media, etc.)
- People in your geographic issue focus area (leaders, community members, contacts, etc.)
- Websites

**Additional suggestions for possible agencies or contacts can be found below.**

*Some people, agencies and websites that may have helpful insight, information or research for your assessment are listed below. This is not a comprehensive list and inclusion on this list does not imply the official endorsement of International Justice Mission.*

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada:

[www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca)

Amnesty International:

[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

Assembly of First Nations:

[www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca)

Beyond Borders:

[www.beyondborders.org](http://www.beyondborders.org)

Canadian Centre for Victims of

Torture: <http://ccvt.org>

Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse:

[www.csicainfo.com](http://www.csicainfo.com)

Catholic Charities:

[www.catholiccharitiestor.org](http://www.catholiccharitiestor.org)

Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC):

[www.cwlc.ca](http://www.cwlc.ca)

Child Wise: [www.childwise.net](http://www.childwise.net)

End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT):

[www.ecpat.net](http://www.ecpat.net)

Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking:

[www.faastinternational.org](http://www.faastinternational.org)

Free the Slaves: [www.freetheslaves.net](http://www.freetheslaves.net)

The Future Group:

[www.thefuturegroup.org/index.html](http://www.thefuturegroup.org/index.html)

Human Rights Watch: [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

Humantrafficking.org:

[www.humantrafficking.org](http://www.humantrafficking.org)

Innocence Project:

[www.innocenceproject.org](http://www.innocenceproject.org)

Library and Archives Canada:

[www.bac-lac.gc.ca](http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca)

Native Women's Association  
of Canada: [www.nwac.ca](http://www.nwac.ca)

PACT-Ottawa: [www.pact-ottawa.org](http://www.pact-ottawa.org)

Project 417: [www.project417.com](http://www.project417.com)

The Protection Project:

[www.protectionproject.org](http://www.protectionproject.org)

Prostitution Research and Education:

[www.prostitutionresearch.com](http://www.prostitutionresearch.com)

Public Safety Canada:

[www.publicsafety.gc.ca](http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca)

RESOLVE Alberta:

[www.ucalgary.ca/resolve](http://www.ucalgary.ca/resolve)

Salvation Army Canada:

[www.salvationarmy.ca](http://www.salvationarmy.ca)

Shared Hope International:

[www.sharedhope.org](http://www.sharedhope.org)

Statistics Canada: [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)

Truckers Against Trafficking:

[www.truckersagainstrafficking.org](http://www.truckersagainstrafficking.org)

Unicef Canada: [www.unicef.ca](http://www.unicef.ca)

University of Minnesota Human  
Rights Library:

[www.umn.edu/humanrts](http://www.umn.edu/humanrts)

World Relief Canada:

[www.worldrelief.ca](http://www.worldrelief.ca)

World Vision Canada:

[www.worldvision.ca](http://www.worldvision.ca)





# IJM

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**INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION** is a global organization protecting the poor from violence throughout the developing world. IJM partners with local authorities to rescue victims of violence, bring criminals to justice, restore survivors, and strengthen justice systems. International Justice Mission Canada shares in this mission.

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