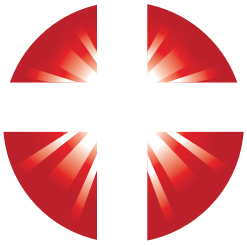

What does a Healthy National Evangelical Alliance look like?

WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

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National Evangelical Alliances (NEAs) are an expression of the Christian unity that Jesus prayed for in John 17. They come in different shapes and sizes, according to their context, the needs of their nation, and the specific leading of the Holy Spirit. While each Alliance is unique as it enables the Church within its nation to advance the Good News of Jesus Christ, there are common measurable qualities that demonstrate an Alliance's health and effectiveness.

In the same way that human beings come in different shapes and sizes, so too healthy Alliances are not stereotypical or necessarily the same. Yet in the field of human medicine, there are common health indicators or characteristics that healthy people tend to display. The same principle applies to organizational health and viability.

The World Evangelical Alliance is committed to serving and resourcing National Evangelical Alliances in such a way that their mission and ministry, under God, achieves its potential. The specifics of what an NEA does may vary from country to country, but the vital signs of health and well-being are measurable.

Over the years, the WEA has identified seven generic indicators of a healthy NEA. They are a bit like an organizational mirror that reflects a picture of health, or possibly areas where special attention might be necessary. As has been wisely said: "the largest room in the world is the room for improvement." As an act of personal and corporate worship, we offer God our best, so perhaps the best indicator of health is a willingness to measure our progress and to see where we can improve.

How does your Evangelical Alliance compare with the following organizational and functional indicators?

National Evangelical Alliance Development Indicators

1. Unity

A healthy Alliance engages a broad spectrum of churches, organizations and individuals who affirm a WEA aligned statement of faith to unite them for missional action. Expressions and celebration of unity across the body of Christ is at the heart of an Evangelical Alliance. Unity, of course, is not the same as "uniformity," nor does it mean organizational "union." An NEA is a vehicle for celebrating the diverse and creative expressions of God's mission/people as a witness to the coming of Jesus into our world, [1] and the establishment of his kingdom amongst us. Collaborative activities demonstrate healthy and inclusive diversity in gender, age, ethnicity, denomination, social sectors, and socioeconomic relationships. NEAs have a unique role in facilitating the Christian church to: "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." [2]

1 John 17:11; 21-23
2 Ephesians 4:3;13

2. Voice

A healthy Alliance represents an evangelical perspective with a proactive, prophetic and peacemaking voice to government, media, and society. It is also a strategic voice to the church on matters of justice, righteousness, hope, and theological reflection. A healthy Alliance amplifies the voice of God on public issues and how the Church may be able to respond. It advocates on behalf of the vulnerable and the marginalized and offers a moral compass as the Church mobilizes a Christian response on issues of social justice. [3] Through its broad representation, individual Christians, churches and organizations a biblical worldview is able to be heard amidst all the other philosophies and voices that clamor for attention.

3. Service

A healthy Alliance serves its constituency with relevant and impactful programs, products and services resulting in their growing member involvement in the life of their Alliance. An NEA is not a governing entity that is served by its members; rather, it is reflects the model of servant-leadership that Jesus displayed and called his followers to practice. [4] The first customer for an Alliance is its constituency — helping and equipping them to excel in their mission purpose. Everything an Alliance does can be measured against whether it "builds up the body of Christ for works of service." [5]

4. Vision

A healthy Alliance provides visionary leadership that motivates its members and national leaders toward common goals that advance the Kingdom of God. Like the "men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do,"[6] an Evangelical Alliance discerns the leading of the Spirit and calls the church to action. They are thought-leaders who discern trends, warn of imminent danger, and prepare the church for the future that beckons.

5. Leadership

A healthy Alliance maintains governance with clear structures, efficient processes and executive staff that hold it accountable to its mission and constituency. The Alliance models healthy organizational leadership and accountability to the church at large, drawing upon the counsel and application of the Scriptures, and a perpetual eye on who will lead in the future. [7] Its leadership develops culture, with succession planning that engages younger leaders at every level of the organization.

6. Sustainable

A healthy Alliance funds activities with diverse streams, including membership dues, sales, contributions in kind and donations. It manages finances with integrity and transparency and sets the standard for ethical entrepreneurship and generosity amongst the Christian community. [8] A healthy Alliance is financially self-sustaining, rather than dependent upon funding benevolence outside of its country.

7. Partnership

A healthy Alliance partners with others and contributes to the initiatives and programs of its regional alliance and the WEA. They take their place in the world-wide community of evangelicals through active (and financial) membership in their regional alliance, participating whenever possible in international initiatives and programs. [9] They encourage gifted leaders within their constituency to serve on international commissions, task forces, working groups and strategic initiatives.

3 Proverbs 31:8-9
4 Matthw 20:25-28; John 13:1-17
5 Ephesians 4:12
6 1 Chronicles 12:32
7 1 Timothy 3:1-10; 2 Timothy 2:2
8 Luke 12:48
9 2 Corinthians 8:4-5

Assessing our Health

The Global Institute for Leadership (GIL), a division of the Alliance Engagement Department is dedicated to working with and resourcing healthy Evangelical Alliances around the world. Training courses and brokering of expertise is offered to help NEAs reach their potential. However, the first step is honest evaluation.

GIL has developed the 7DI Survey as a self-assessment tool alliance leaders can use to assess areas where help and resourcing might be needed. The survey can be completed individually, or it may be something a group of Alliance leaders and staff do as a means of interactive reflection. If done as a group, have each person complete the survey individually and then tabulate the collective scores. Those that score the lowest may indicate areas where strategic planning, training and resourcing is needed.

7DI Survey:

Beside each proposition below place a number between 1 and 10. (1 = not at all; 10 = very much)

1. Unity	
Our NEA has diversity in gender, age, ethnicity, and socio-economic status included in all levels of leadership and members	
Our NEA significantly involves evangelicals called to various spheres of society: church, government, business, education, arts and entertainment, media and family.	
Our NEA provides skilled leadership and serves as a neutral convener for national collaborative action.	

2. Voice	
Our NEA demonstrates relational influence with its national government and other policy influencers.	
Our NEA is the media's 'go-to' place for evangelical perspectives and effectively tells the story of God's mission through evangelicals.	
Our NEA demonstrates proactive listening to its constituents and effective research resulting in being the recognized, trusted voice for evangelicals in society.	

3. Service	
Our NEA provides consistent programs, products and services for its constituency and others resulting in widespread participation.	
Our NEA attains involvement and compensation that demonstrates the value of its services to its constituency.	
Our NEA demonstrates a direct link between services provided and the engagement of others to join in Kingdom of God efforts through the mission of the NEA.	

4. Vision	
Our NEA facilitates shared vision that leaders, staff and members understand, own and align with.	
Our NEA vision is overtly connected to holistic disciple-making, biblical, and Kingdom goals.	
Our NEA vision rallies its members and "people of peace" in society-at-large toward common goals.	

5. Leadership	
Our NEA has a responsible governing board with policy authority that maintains clear and efficient structures that ensures accountability.	
Our NEA has a statement of faith aligned with WEA's Statement of Faith and clear organizational values.	
Our NEA has an executive leader with appropriate staff that establish strategic direction, plans, budgets, measured outcomes and manage finances with integrity and transparency.	
Our NEA has a leadership development culture, with succession planning at every level of the alliance.	

6. Sustainable	
Our NEA has diverse sustainable funding streams (such as membership dues, donations, sales, investments, and contributions-in-kind).	
Our NEA has people responsible for fundraising & income generation.	

7. Partnership	
Our NEA facilitates clearly defined partnerships that contribute to the NEA mission and empowers others.	
Our NEA contributes to the success, programs and activities of its regional Alliance and the WEA.	

How can we help?

The WEA Alliance Engagement Department (AED), through the Global Institute for Leadership (GIL) stands ready to support and resource Alliances that would like to develop and grow. They exist for this purpose and would be delighted to hear from you.