



Track 3: Serving in Truth

Mark 3: "TEND" – To respond to human need by loving service

Working Group 5

STRENGTHS of the European Evangelical Family?

1. Our **connections, resources & ideas already**. The Lord has already given us all that we need to do His work through the family. We can seek advice or resources or new connections and sometimes funding through EEA and also our denominational connections.

2. The **local Church is key** to caring and bringing about transformational change. In the last few years, it has moved from a pure focus on the pure Gospel & doctrine to the **holistic Gospel, ministering to the whole person. And the authorities see it.**

E.g. There was the Roma Decade where millions of euros were put into trying to aid integration. At the end of the decade, someone from the Soros Foundation telephoned Nina to say that all the money had made no difference, all their work had failed. They had seen that the only change had happened in and around local Church.

In a struggling Muslim neighbourhood in Serbia (violence, poor school attendance), the mayor of the town invited the 2 evangelical churches in the area to help. Opened doors, facilitated creation of after school clubs, gave opportunities for preaching on TV & radio. They did not understand how church makes the difference but they do see it. And they know church is trustworthy.

In the UK, increasingly the government appreciates and knows it needs local church contribution to caring for the needy. There has been suspicion – You'll preach too much or you'll discriminate. But this has lessened. In Albania, the government encourages Evangelical action in every way. Prison work, providing school or medical supplies, emergency housing after the earthquake ETC.

3 The **local Church is key because it is permanent & sustainable**. Any NGO effort or money should involve & empower the local Church so that, when the money is spent and the NGO needs to move on, the local Church can keep serving.

4 The **local Church provides care that the authorities cannot**. Walking alongside someone, relational connection, hope for the future, empowering someone to walk forward into their own future. And, of course, the local Church offers the power of salvation, the Holy Spirit power to transform lives and hearts and hope in Jesus for this life and for eternity

5 We **work at different levels. From Brussels to nations to the grass roots**. The different layers mean we can act effectively and quickly to equip, to resource, to strategize & plan, to provide essential info. Seen in response to the Ukraine crisis or Turkish earthquake. Networks can ask a national EA for advice or personal introductions to help them open up work in a new nation. A national EA being

part of EEA brings recognition nationally, it can open doors. E.g. the EEA gen sec coming led to a meeting with the President of Albania.

6 EEA has authority to bring people together when its needed to work, to sort out disagreement etc. (This is also an opportunity – to do more of this?)

7 EEA is a dance floor. The national EAs and networks are too. People may dance with different styles; they make come late or leave early. That's fine. There is **freedom on the dance floor. We are not controlled robots. Freedom is strength.**

8 The strength of nations especially in the East and Balkans who have been through communism, war and other crises. We know what it means to be in the valley of the shadow of death but to see God being faithful. It is far from easy but we can support those going through crisis now.

OPPORTUNITIES to tend to the needy in loving service

1. **Empowering & equipping** the needy. Avoiding creating dependency, victimhood, passivity.
2. Specifically, more **job creation** to help people step out of poverty and also not relying on money from outside (which is increasingly harder to find). Helping people identify the business relevant for their area & providing the 1st step. E.g., bees to make honey, training in carpentry skills or providing a kindergarten so that women can work. Church based job clubs to encourage and equip re businesses or interview skills etc. and also to mentor people to keep going as they start work / their business.
3. More **regional mtgs** of the EEA family, sometimes **involving relevant networks** to consider caring for the needy. Sharing good practice, opportunities, resources. Together, we could, for example, discover there's a project / resource person just 100 km away that we could connect with, learn from, work with.
4. Making more use of the power & community of **local church.**
5. The **power of the Gospel!** 1 Roma community got loads of EU money to build lovely new houses but their hearts and, therefore, their problems remained. The Church ministers to the whole person. Identity in Christ brings about true change. And hope.
6. Where is God working? In Albania, He is calling good **Christians into politics** with the strength and motivation to withstand corruption & to be salt and light. They can be advocates for the poor. Eventually systems and levels of corruption can change, which will bring about systemic change. There are now evangelical government ministers & deputy ministers.

ASPIRATIONS regarding loving service to the needy

The Church must be visible. Most time is taken on internal projects & problems or providing entertainment for our members. It's time to look outwards in evangelism & in loving service.

Be visible – through working with the non-needy to help the needy. It's not just Christians who have a good heart. And by working with the more comfortable, we have opportunities to share Jesus with them. E.g., work with secular business people re job creation. (Ergest had dinner with owner of hotel & employer of 2000 people. He's losing young people cos of immigration. Ergest is now providing unemployed Christian young people to work in the hotel. Good for him, good for them.

Be visible – to politicians & the authorities. The Danish project of personally inviting MP to come to spend a day at the church, finding out all that it offers. Ergest will try to do this in Albania.

Parliamentary prayer breakfast. The 1st happened in Tirana with 15 MPs, some Christian but many not Christian. Focusing on Jesus.

RESULTS – concrete things to help the needy

1. Church connection for migrants. Too many migrants lose touch with church and with faith when they go abroad. Make it easy for them to find church (not migrant church) in another country.
 - a. All EAs to have a search function on their website. Search via town. Provide address, photo, web address.
 - b. An EEA map linking to these national sites?
2. Job creation network. Sharing of ideas, training etc. re what churches can do to support people into jobs and to set up businesses, plus stories of involving secular business in this. Explore how the Business as Mission community is already and can better equip EAs to help local Church use business to minister to the needy by helping them into training, work or business creation. <https://businessasmission.com/>
3. National EAs continuing to build up the Politician & Church project and to share stories to inspire others. You can read more about it at <https://nehcenter.org> and the upcoming conference 9-10 April 2024 in Vienna, Austria.
4. National EAs, affiliates & networks to remember their connections. We are not alone. Reach out to ask another member for help. Make time to help when asked. All members to meet in regions.