



**WEA - Leadership Institute**

World Evangelical Alliance

*Strengthening National Alliances – developing effective leaders*

**Imagine**

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## What Questions Do You Ask?

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Our varied experiences in ministry serve to teach us how dangerous assumptions can be. How many of us lead networks or alliances without asking, “What is the best structure or model to use? How should our alliances be organized? Is there a more effective way to run our association?” It is our hope that this edition of *Imagine* might pique your interest in anticipation of the WEA-LI module on *Organizing Alliances for Effectiveness*. John Pearson brings many years of experience initiating and leading associations. He is the author of the book, [Mastering the Management Buckets](#), and is taking the lead in developing this very important module for the Leadership Institute.

## Best Practices for Building an Effective WEA National Alliance

By John Pearson

There is a weathered sign on a dusty, dirt road in Texas (USA) that reads, “Choose your ruts carefully because you’ll be in them for a long, long time!” That’s true when traveling back roads and it is also true as you provide leadership for your WEA National Alliance.

**Did You Know?**

## European National Alliance Felt Training Needs

According to the WEA Leadership Institute Research Project of 18 National Alliances in Europe:

- The research identified three distinct affinity groups amongst the 18 European National Alliances which responded to the survey. These were: North-West Europe (Protestant), West-SW Europe (Roman-Catholic), and Eastern Europe (ex-Communist)
- Lack of funding was the greatest obstacle to establishing a Leadership Institute (The pan-Europe response was 68%) yet in the question indicating felt needs, training in the area of funding was the least valued.
- The greatest felt need for training in West-SW Europe (Roman-Catholic) was in the area of providing services to members.
- In North-West Europe (Protestant) and Eastern Europe (ex-Communist) the greatest felt need for training was in uniting their constituencies.
- Representing Evangelicals in the Public Square was highly valued in all three regions of Europe.

For more information and benchmarks, download the survey results at [www.weali.org](http://www.weali.org) ([click here to read more about this research and how to download the results](#)).

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For example, if you're facing an important fork-in-the-road decision at your National Alliance, but you turn down the wrong road (maybe because you don't know what you don't know), that's an instant guarantee that you will be ineffective.

To help you avoid wrong roads and dead ends, WEA has launched the new WEA Leadership Institute. This Alliance Development institute will equip National Alliance leaders, board members, staff members, and key volunteers with the best practices for taking the right road to effectiveness.



John Pearson author of *Mastering the Management Buckets*.

This year, WEA is developing 10 courses in the curriculum and one course, *Organizing for Effectiveness*, will provide the road map of best practices for your WEA National Alliance. This is an introductory course on “association leadership and management” and the course will present five unique operating models of associations—and help you select the one that fits your country and culture most effectively.

The course presents the six key building blocks for developing a dynamic WEA National Alliance. For example, you may have just been appointed to serve as the general secretary of your National Alliance. If your past leadership experience has been more local than national, or focused more on one church or denomination versus a diversity of denominations that you now serve in WEA, this course will help you understand how associations and alliances differ from church and denominational leadership. The differences are dramatic. Without knowing the nature and functions of associations, you might take the wrong fork-in-the-road.

This course will help you apply the six building blocks to your own National Alliance. They focus on key association leadership core competencies, such as: aligning your programs with your mission and vision; building a three-year rolling plan of services, programs and products (and how to review the “menu of benefits” used by other WEA National Alliances); how to evaluate programs and measure results—and when to eliminate sacred cows and worn-out programs, or as one association leader described it, “When you're on a dead horse, it's time to dismount!”

The course will also describe effective membership structures and how to price member dues, based on the needs of your members—not the needs of your budget. Participants will also review best practices for structuring your National Alliance governing body—and the four steps for creating a roadmap for board and volunteer relationships: 1) cultivation, 2) recruitment, 3) orientation and 4) engagement. (You may be strong in one step, but weak in three steps. You need all four.) The course will also

cover the dramatic differences between how local church boards operate and how effective National Alliance boards organize for effectiveness.

Other course material will focus on best practices for growing the membership and why you must decide which one membership category will receive most of your time and resources. After all, you can't be all things to all people. You'll review case studies of what happens when a National Alliance tries to serve everyone and ends up serving no one. You'll see how those critical fork-in-the-road decisions can either lead to expensive program disasters or be an incredible blessing to your members.

The course will also introduce you to ways that National Alliances ask their member what they value—and then how they develop services, programs and products that thoughtfully meet the needs of their members, at an affordable price. (And—good news—one of the other WEA courses will explore even more thoroughly how to use research to build an effective alliance.)

*Organizing for Effectiveness*, most importantly, will help National Alliance leaders develop their competencies in strategic planning—and how they can lead their boards, staff and volunteers in hearing from God about the future. It's all about knowing which road to take when you hit that fork-in-the-road. And participants will be reminded, as Solomon wrote, "Put God in charge of your work, then what you've planned will take place" (Proverb 16:3).

For more information on this course or how to certify leaders in your National Alliance for teaching this course, please [contact Rob Brynjolfsen](#) at [WEALI.com](http://WEALI.com).

**John Pearson** is the author of *Mastering the Management Buckets: 20 Critical Competencies for Leading Your Business or Nonprofit*. He served 25 years as the CEO of three associations: Christian Camping International/USA, Willow Creek Association and Christian Management Association (recently re-named Christian Leadership Alliance). Visit his website at <http://www.JohnPearsonAssociates.com>.

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## The WEA LI Finishes Initial Stage on Track

By Jonathan Lewis

The World Evangelical Alliance Leadership Institute is determined to help all our

alliances and their constituencies achieve new levels of effectiveness. We are convinced we can accomplish this by equipping our alliances through association leadership and management skills training. As with any training, there is a delicate balance between meeting “felt needs” and utilizing the wisdom of subject matter experts who know in large part what is needed. But as one friend puts it, the first step in training is to know what we don’t know. During the past year, we have dedicated a great amount of effort and resources to consulting subject matter experts and researching the felt needs of our alliances. This “consensus building” process culminated in meetings with the WEA Regional Secretaries, April 17-21 near Barcelona, Spain.



*Regional General Secretaries Round Table gathering in Barcelona 2009.*

The curriculum research began in April 2008 with stakeholders’ meetings in San Francisco that gave us a *Functional Definition of an Alliance* and identified six key areas in terms of qualities and competencies needed in alliance leadership. Then during the next twelve months, work was accomplished in the following areas of the curriculum development process: Needs Assessment Research, Stakeholder Validation and Consensus Building, Course Delivery Strategies, and Course Outline Development. Efforts in these four interrelated areas generated the initial drafts of ten course outlines. These were further developed by Drs. Brynjolfson and Lewis into ten outlines designed with modular delivery in mind. During the recent three-day meetings, the WEA General Secretaries reviewed all ten of these course outlines for completeness, and to discuss their adequacy in addressing the needs of the national alliances in their regions. Nine of the ten outlines passed their evaluations with minor corrections. A tenth area will need modification with the significant input provided by the Regional Secretaries.

The WEA LI envisions developing students’ and instructors’ process manuals to accompany each course. Association management expert John Pearson presented the work he’s done developing a prototype of the lesson plans he will use for his initial module on “Organizing for



*Regional General Secretaries of the WEA working on the curriculum for the WEA-LI in Barcelona 2009. Clockwise from the top are Latin America, South Pacific, Asia, Europe, the International Director, North America, Africa, and the Caribbean .*

Effectiveness.” Once perfected, this template will allow for uniform module development on the part of dozens of subject matter experts who will participate in the development of each course in different languages of instruction. In terms of course delivery, each module is designed to be introduced during a nine-hour, face to face seminar, with the bulk of the work being done through pre and post seminar readings and study. The WEA LI will depend heavily on support from the institute’s web site: [www.WEALI.com](http://www.WEALI.com) in this regard. Course accreditation was also discussed and plans are being made to develop relationships with regional schools to provide academic oversight for those who wish to work towards a degree.

The Barcelona meetings culminated with the appointment of the seven Regional Secretaries as the new Regents of the WEA Leadership Institute. Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe, International Director of the World Evangelical Alliance, was present to confer the appointments. It is clear that each region will “own” its own part of the Leadership Institute and play a key role in the development of delivery of the training in its region. We are very pleased that the process so far has led to the development of a solid foundation for the institute to build on. The primary challenges for this next stage in the development of the institute will be the generation of the ten modules and their initial offerings.

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## **WEA-LI *Imagine* Monthly**

News, Resources and Best Practices for WEA National Alliance Leaders, Members and Volunteers  
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