

# THE PHASES OF ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT



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## INTRODUCTION

This framework has emerged from a collaboration between **Frontiers, IMB, Joshua Project, Engage Network, Vision 5:9, and Accelerate**, with input from practitioners and researchers from various parts of the world. It builds on the familiar “Engaged/Unengaged” language but aims to offer **greater precision, usability, and strategic alignment** for field teams, mobilizers, and researchers alike.

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# New Meaningful Metrics for Data

## WHY SOMETHING NEW?

For years, our shared language was mostly two data points: Engaged or Unengaged and Christian/Evangelical %. Helpful, but too flat for today's realities. Two people groups can look the same on those metrics yet be in radically different places—one with multiplying churches and robust discipleship, another with little ongoing engagement. This booklet adds clarity by combining:

### Phases of Engagement (8 phases)

A simple descriptive frame from Waiting (Phase 0) to Sustained Gospel Presence (Phase 7).

### Engagement Strength

An indicator tool (development in process) based on field surveys or activity apps that helps show how vigorous current efforts are within a phase.

### Engagement Accelerators

A self assessment tool suggesting practices teams can use to identify gaps, choose next steps, and catalyze movement to the next phase.

Our aim is a shared, globally usable language that honors diverse contexts, helps teams see the next faithful step, and gives mobilizers a clearer picture of gospel progress in a given people—without adding heavy reporting burdens.

## A NEW UNENGAGED PEOPLES DEFINITION

The development of these new scales began with a fresh look at the definition of **"unengaged peoples"**. Multiple ministries and networks are now focused on these peoples. The realities of engaging them, however, are quite different from decades ago when earlier definitions were created. A revised definition was needed for broader acceptance. The updated binary definition is below, and this definition served as the foundation for conversations that ultimately shaped the more textured phases of engagement that followed.

An **unengaged people group** is one where there are no known efforts focused on establishing self-sustaining churches consistent with evangelical faith and practice.

### A people group becomes engaged when:

- There is sustained activity to share Christ and make disciples.
- There are efforts to establish self-sustaining churches.
- The work occurs in culturally appropriate and locally relevant ways.

# Three Dimensional People Group Progress

WITH ACCELERATORS



## Percentage Christian/ Evangelical

A numerical value or scale based on the people group's Christian-Adherent percentage and Evangelical percentage. It shows at a glance how much of the population identifies with Christianity or the Evangelical movement. This metric is purely quantitative.



## Phases of Engagement

An eight-step continuum that tracks the church planting phase among a people group, which is not always reflected by the Christian or evangelical percentage. Each phase describes a milestone in gospel progress.



## Strength of Engagement

A five-level scale that captures how robust or deep that engagement actually is, based both on quantitative events and qualitative reports, surveys, and feedback from field contacts. It shows how active and pervasive gospel activity is relative to the size of the group.



## Engagement Accelerators

Engagement Accelerators are tools for the field. The self-assessment tool serves as a diagnostic and prayerful planning aid, helping teams identify momentum factors—such as research, prayer, multi-node engagement or Scripture access—that can move a people group toward the next phase of engagement.

# Why a Three-Dimensional View?

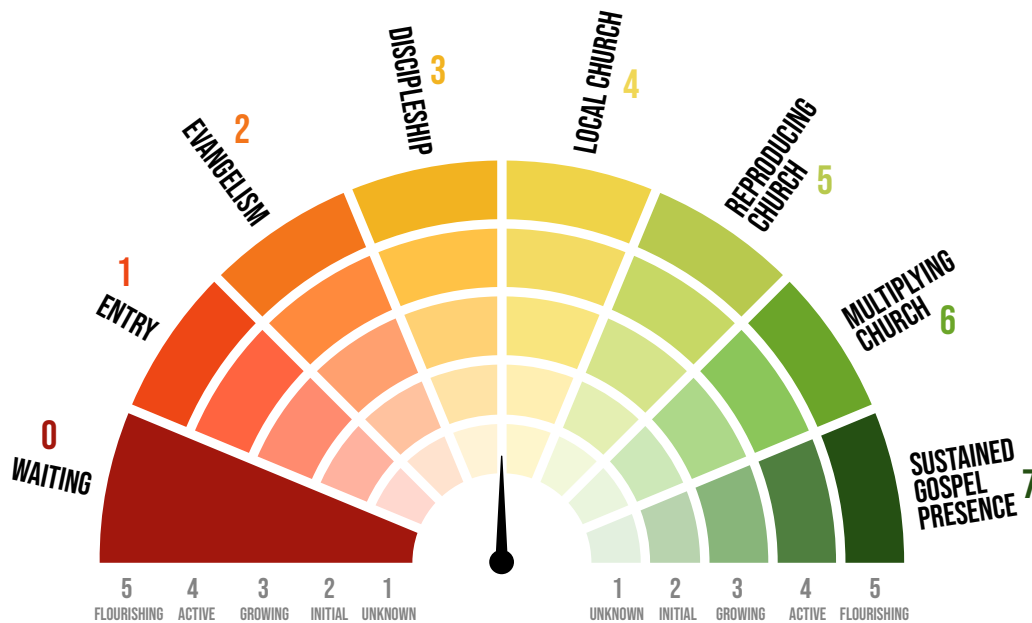
A group can be “engaged” yet weak and stagnant, or have a low evangelical percentage yet be vibrant and multiply churches. **This three-dimensional view adds depth, allowing us to see where a group is, how strong the work is, and how saturated the gospel is.**

## MOBILIZATION CLARITY

This clarity also helps mobilizers **match the right work and workers to each phase**. Early phases often require pioneers who are focused on access, language, research, and gospel entry. As progress advances, the center of gravity shifts toward leadership development, local sending, and systems that sustain healthy churches. The model makes these shifts explicit, allowing recruitment, training, and funding to align with actual field needs.

EXAMPLE	GROUP A	GROUP B
<b>Evangelical % (Saturation)</b>	0.2%	0.2%
<b>Phase of Engagement</b>	<b>5</b> – Churches Reproducing	<b>2</b> – Evangelism
<b>Engagement Strength</b>	Active	Growing
<b>On-the-ground signs</b>	2nd-gen groups forming; local lay leaders active; regular baptisms; simple gatherings multiplying	Sporadic gospel conversations; a few interested households; limited Scripture access in heart language
<b>What this means</b>	Momentum exists; protect health and push toward 3rd–4th generation streams	Early traction; risk of stall without focused presence and resourcing
<b>Priority focus (next 6–12 months)</b>	Leadership development; empowerment and release of authority; sending to new segments	Same/near-culture evangelists; Scripture/Gospel access; consistent follow-up in multiple nodes
<b>Accelerators to emphasize</b>	Training & Equipping; Reproducing; Collaborative Engagement	Prayer; Scripture/Gospel Resource Access; Mobilization/Sending; Multi-node Engagement

# Phases of Engagement



**Tool Flexibility:** While these phases are written with people groups in view, they can also be used for geographic strategies by replacing “people group” with the appropriate geographic area (district, state, or country).

## PHASE 0: WAITING

There is no known reported engagement to establish self-sustaining churches, or; “0-R” - Previous efforts have not resulted in ongoing activity or have not been updated in three years. Sub-indicator “0-R” marks that a restart is needed.

## PHASE 1: ENTRY

Workers or near-culture believers gain access to the people group and begin laying relational foundations to share Christ and plant churches. The focus is on connecting, learning, and building bridges.

## PHASE 2: EVANGELISM

Regular, culturally relevant gospel engagement is taking place, with the intention of planting self-sustaining churches.

## PHASE 3: DISCIPLESHIP

Individuals or small clusters respond in repentance and faith. Early discipleship stresses obedience to Scripture, laying foundations for self-sustaining churches consistent with evangelical faith and practice.

## PHASE 4: LOCAL CHURCH

Believers from the people group gather regularly, functioning as a local church that is consistent with evangelical faith and practice. Leaders from the people group are emerging among these churches.

## PHASE 5: REPRODUCING CHURCH

Churches from the people group are sending out evangelists or church planters to plant new churches among their own people. Second-generation groups and churches are forming.

## PHASE 6: MULTIPLYING CHURCH

Generational church streams spread across the people group, reaching 4th generation or beyond of both churches and leaders. Church network structures empower local oversight.

## PHASE 7: SUSTAINED GOSPEL PRESENCE

The people group has either: (1) 10% or more following Christ and worshipping in churches, or (2) several multiplying church planting networks led by believers from the people group, who are sending workers to other people groups while continuing to mature at home.

# Quick Start Guide

## HOW TO ASSIGN A PHASE?

Answer sequentially and stop at the first “**NO**”. The highest phase “**YES**” determines the current phase.

Is there any known current effort with intention toward self-sustaining churches that is culturally appropriate and locally relevant?

▶ If No → **Phase 0: Waiting**. If prior work ceased or data is >3 years old → **tag 0-R**. If **Yes**, continue.

**ENTRY:** Are workers or near-culture believers gaining access and laying relational foundations to share Christ and plant churches?

▶ **Yes** → at least **Phase 1**. Continue.



**EVANGELISM:** Is regular, culturally relevant gospel engagement taking place with the intention of planting self-sustaining churches?

▶ **Yes** → at least **Phase 2**. Continue.



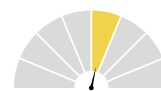
**DISCIPLESHIP:** Have individuals or small clusters responded in repentance and faith, with early discipleship emphasizing obedience to Scripture and laying foundations for self-sustaining churches?

▶ **Yes** → at least **Phase 3**. Continue.



**LOCAL CHURCH:** Are believers from the people group gathering regularly as local churches consistent with evangelical faith and practice, with leaders from the people group emerging?

▶ **Yes** → at least **Phase 4**. Continue.



**REPRODUCING CHURCHES:** Are churches sending evangelists/planters, and do you see second-generation groups or churches forming?

▶ **Yes** → at least **Phase 5**. Continue.



**MULTIPLYING CHURCHES:** Are churches and leaders multiplying to the fourth generation?

▶ **Yes** → at least **Phase 6**. Continue.



**SUSTAINED GOSPEL PRESENCE:** Are there multiple streams of churches reaching fourth generation with evangelical doctrine and practice sustained locally.

▶ **Yes** → at least **Phase 7**. Continue.



## WHEN IS RESTART NEEDED?

A restart may be needed when past efforts among a people group **have not resulted in a lasting gospel presence and no viable witness remains**. This could occur if a team withdraws, believers disperse without continued outreach, or external pressures disrupt ministry. In such cases, the group **returns to Phase 0-R**. Additionally, if **no new incoming data is received for a period of three years**, the group will be **designated as Phase 0-R**, signaling the need to reassess and potentially reinstate engagement.

# Engagement Strength

Knowing a people group's engagement phase is only part of the picture. It is also important to understand the **Strength of Engagement** within that phase, including how much engagement activity is taking place relative to population size, how diverse the engagement streams are, and how Engagement Accelerators are contributing. We currently use two methods to assess this:

1

## Secure Activity Tracking Apps

- Allows for real-time updates and long-term visibility of progress.
- Requires internet access and willingness to record data digitally.

2

## Field Survey Tool

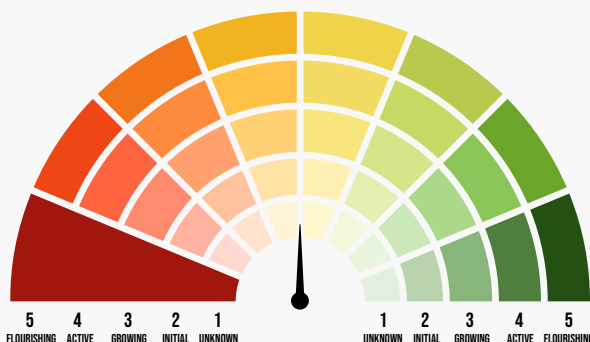
- Designed for teams who operate in limited-access areas or choose not to record data online.
- A quantitative and qualitative questionnaire that captures a snapshot of engagement strength for the phase the people group is in.
- Easy to use, even in remote settings.

## Why Both?

When both methods are coordinated, it allows both survey sources to inform and populate engagement strength.

## ENGAGEMENT STRENGTH LEVELS

Engagement strength levels are general descriptions. Each phase has its own metrics that are calculated and weighted to determine strength. Strength is not a measurement of a team's quality or impact, but an indicator of gospel-oriented activity relative to the population.



- 1. UNKNOWN:** No activity data is available, or existing data is insufficient to assess engagement strength.
- 2. INITIAL:** Minimal gospel-oriented activity is occurring relative to the population, with limited scope or consistency.
- 3. GROWING:** Gospel activity is increasing in frequency, diversity, or cultural proximity, but remains limited relative to the population.
- 4. ACTIVE:** Consistent, culturally connected gospel activity is taking place across multiple dimensions, proportionate to the population.
- 5. FLOURISHING:** Robust, culturally rooted gospel activity is widespread and sustained relative to the population, reflecting depth across multiple indicators.

# Engagement Accelerators

FOR YOUR OWN STRATEGIC PLANNING, NOT FOR REPORTING OR RESEARCH

## WHAT THEY ARE

**Engagement Accelerators** highlight key factors that can move a people group toward a stronger, more sustainable gospel presence. They represent 12 strategic domains (e.g., prayer, Scripture access, training, collaboration) that apply across all phases but require different approaches at each phase. Accelerators are not a scorecard, prescription, or rigid method. They are not sequential or listed in order of importance. Instead, Accelerators should be seen as catalytic and practical: they spark ideas, sharpen focus, and support strategic thinking.

## HOW TO USE THEM (SIMPLE TEAM WORKFLOW)



**Use this for planning, not reporting.** Engagement Accelerators are designed to help you prayerfully reflect on priorities, gaps, and next steps. They are for your own strategic planning, not for research, reporting, or outside assessment.

1	<b>Identify your phase.</b> Confirm the current Phase of Engagement for the people group.	5	<b>Plan and act.</b> Use the Accelerator planning worksheet (in the appendix) to assign the next step, identify partners, and set goals. Keep it small, specific, and culturally appropriate.
2	<b>Find the Accelerator Diagnostic Questions.</b> Locate the questions that correspond to your phase.	6	<b>Learn and update.</b> Note what happened, what you learned, and any phase-shift signals (e.g., new baptisms, new groups, leaders emerging).
3	<b>Pray and diagnose.</b> Review the Diagnostic Questions with field reality in view. Answer honestly.		
4	<b>Discern and choose.</b> Think beyond the questions to the wider ministry domain. Ask God what 1–2 items from the 12 domains (or your own ideas) would most strengthen engagement and help you move toward the next phase.		

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Context first:** Adapt ideas to language, culture, security, and local wisdom.

**Sequence matters:** Choose actions that advance the phase rather than entrenching the current one.

**Build on strength:** Look for where God is already at work and join in. Build on existing strengths (people,

relationships, approaches) and avoid replicating what's already succeeding.

**Partner widely:** Involve local believers, proximate cultures, diaspora, and specialty ministries.

**Keep it light:** This is a guide for prayerful creativity. Use it to focus, not to add burden.

# Engagement Accelerators



## PRAYER

Sustained intercession focused on the people group's specific realities. Seeks God's guidance, protection, and breakthrough. Includes personal prayer, households, and networks of churches praying together.



## SCRIPTURE/RESOURCE ACCESS

Heart-language access to Scripture and gospel content in usable formats (print, audio, app, oral). Focuses on translation, product development, distribution pathways, local ownership, and feedback on translation quality.



## VISION CASTING

A clear, compelling picture of gospel advance for the people group that aligns teams, churches, and partners. Uses stories and simple data to set direction and sustain momentum.



## MULTI-NODE ENGAGEMENT

Gospel activity across multiple geographic, demographic, or digital spaces. A node is a strategic point of influence within a people group, such as a city, town, diaspora community, or digital platform, where gospel engagement can occur. Engaging multiple nodes broadens impact and reduces vulnerability to disruption in any single stream.



## MOBILIZATION/SENDING

Identifying, preparing, deploying, and caring for workers (local, near-culture, cross-culture). Includes simple pipelines, coaching, and member care.



## COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Shared prayer, learning, data, and mutual care among churches, agencies, and local believers. Clarifies roles through simple agreements and works together on crises and opportunities.



## MEETING NEEDS/COMPASSION

Tangible expressions of love that dignify communities and open relational doors. Designed to "do no harm," be locally led, and connect naturally to long-term discipleship.



## CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

Community-led application of Scripture that is biblically faithful and culturally meaningful. Regularly reviews forms and practices with diverse voices to guard against drift and syncretism.



## RESEARCH/ CULTURAL INSIGHTS

An ongoing learning posture to understand insights from language, worldview, social networks, migration, and pressure points that impact fruitful strategy and practice.



## MULTIPLYING EFFORTS

Habits and systems that drive the reproduction of what the current phase requires. The emphasis is on reproducibility and wise release of authority.



## TRAINING/EQUIPPING

Reproducible formation for people in the skills and biblical knowledge needed to strengthen their current phase and catalyze movement to the next. Delivered by practitioners and designed to be passed on.



## MARKETPLACE INVOLVEMENT

Leveraging positions in business that provide access, witness, and tangible blessing. Operates ethically, favors local ownership, and integrates workplace discipleship where appropriate.

Use the diagnostic questions on the next page to identify opportunities.

# Accelerator Diagnostic Questions

**HOW TO USE:** Review all 12 questions. Identify 1-2 that expose your biggest gap or opportunity for *moving toward the next phase*. Brainstorm specific next steps. For additional ideas, consult the phase-specific questions in the [appendix](#).



## PRAYER

- Who specifically needs sustained prayer to break through into the next phase, and who could join you in praying for this breakthrough?



## SCRIPTURE/RESOURCE ACCESS

- What barriers keep people from engaging with Scripture in their heart language and preferred format? How could removing those barriers accelerate progress toward the next phase?



## VISION CASTING

- What compelling picture of gospel breakthrough could unite, mobilize, and inspire people toward the next phase?



## MULTI-NODE ENGAGEMENT

- Which geographic, demographic, or digital spaces remain untouched or show the most receptivity?
- Could engaging them unlock movement toward the next phase?



## MOBILIZATION/SENDING

- What type of worker does your current phase require?
- Who needs to be identified, prepared, or sent to drive progress toward the next phase?



## COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

- What would you gain by partnering more intentionally with other workers, local believers, or nearby churches to strengthen your capacity for moving to the next phase?



## MEETING NEEDS/COMPASSION

- How can tangible acts of love open relational doors and build trust for deeper gospel engagement into the next phase, without creating dependency or power imbalances?



## CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

- Where might your current forms or practices feel disconnected from local culture or Scripture?
- Could addressing these unlock movement toward the next phase?



## RESEARCH/ CULTURAL INSIGHTS

- What don't you yet know about people's spiritual hunger, barriers, social networks, or receptive subgroups?
- Would learning this remove key obstacles to the next phase?



## MULTIPLYING EFFORTS

- What's currently reproducing on its own versus requiring your constant involvement?
- What would need to multiply to sustain movement into the next phase?



## TRAINING/EQUIPPING

- Who needs to be trained or equipped in specific skills or biblical knowledge to catalyze the breakthrough needed for the next phase?
- Who needs to lead that training?



## MARKETPLACE INVOLVEMENT

- How can the work lives and business connections of believers create natural spaces for witness and sustainable presence that advance progress toward the next phase?

# Appendix

# Accelerator Planning Worksheet

People group \_\_\_\_\_

Current Phase 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

## Step A Select Accelerator Ministry Domains (choose up to 3)

Check the domains most likely to move this group toward phase \_\_\_\_.  
Use the phase-specific diagnostic questions to surface gaps and opportunities.

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Prayer                    | <input type="radio"/> Mobilization/Sending       | <input type="radio"/> Research/Cultural Insights |
| <input type="radio"/> Scripture/Resource Access | <input type="radio"/> Collaborative Engagement   | <input type="radio"/> Multiplying Efforts        |
| <input type="radio"/> Vision Casting            | <input type="radio"/> Meeting Needs/Compassion   | <input type="radio"/> Training/Equipping         |
| <input type="radio"/> Multi-node Engagement     | <input type="radio"/> Critical Contextualization | <input type="radio"/> Marketplace Involvement    |

## Step B From Domain → Field Reality

For each checked domain, answer:  
(1) What field reality makes this a gap or opportunity?  
(2) What could be unlocked if we addressed this?

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## Step C Action Ideas (brainstorm, then pick 1–3)

List concrete ideas for the domains above. Identify your top 1–3 to develop into plans.

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## Step D Action Plans (create 1–3 mini-plans)

Action Item	Objective	Success Indicator	Owner	Due Date

# ENTRY

## Phase 1 Accelerators



### PRAYER

- Are you praying by name for persons of peace and households?
- Has the initial area been spiritually mapped and spiritual strongholds identified?
- Have you had in-depth prayer through short-term teams or prayer journeys?



### SCRIPTURE/RESOURCE ACCESS

- How is truth most frequently communicated in this context (print, oral, radio, digital/web)?
- What are the key resources needed for development at this phase?
- Has feedback been given on existing translations?



### VISION CASTING

- Are others vision-casting for this people group?
- Are the needs of the community being shared?



### MULTI-NODE ENGAGEMENT

- Can you continue in this node long-term?
- Are nodes prioritized by gospel access potential?
- What is the next node of engagement?
- Will sharing freely in this context affect your ability to stay here?



### MOBILIZATION/SENDING

- Which specific clusters of Christ followers (based on linguistic, cultural, or geographic proximity) are naturally best positioned for fruitfulness, and how can they be prioritized for mobilization?
- Are you mobilizing people to work through media?
- Are diaspora believers from this people group engaged as bridge people?



### COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Are there any near-culture Christians who can be mobilized?
- Does the people group aspire to connect with or identify with a nearby community?
- Can you help direct any local ministries to serve this people group?



### MEETING NEEDS/COMPASSION

- Are compassion activities requested by locals and legally allowed?



### CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

- Are outside workers aware that their actions could be perceived as offensive?
- Is there a growing understanding of how to interact with the different power structures in the community?
- Are entry strategies leveraging the resources already in the community?



### RESEARCH/ CULTURAL INSIGHTS

- Have you confirmed the key access points for Christians?
- Have you completed in-depth ethnographic research?
- What are the key religious or cultural centers of the people?



### MULTIPLYING EFFORTS

- How are the following multiplying?
- Prayer
  - Access Nodes
  - Felt-needs projects



### TRAINING/EQUIPPING

- Do you know how to learn basic worldview?
- Do you know how to learn language?
- Is there understanding of helping without hurting?



### MARKETPLACE INVOLVEMENT

- Are you prototyping 1–2 credible roles (teacher, health worker, trader, tech) to sustain presence?



# EVANGELISM

## Phase 2 Accelerators



### PRAYER

- Are you offering prayer to people you meet?
- Are prayer networks praying specifically for and during times of evangelism?
- Are you praying for those who have shown interest by name?
- Is intercession focused on specific households or segments, followed by intentional contact?



### SCRIPTURE/RESOURCE ACCESS

- Are Scripture and gospel resources available through multiple modes?
- Are the religious terms a barrier to understanding?
- Are you hearing of felt needs that Scripture stories can address?



### VISION CASTING

- Are near-culture or proximate believers aware of the need for gospel witness?
- Are stories of interest and response being anonymized and shared to sustain prayer?



### MULTI-NODE ENGAGEMENT

- Is the digital space being engaged?
- How many geographic nodes are hearing the gospel?
- How many population segments are being engaged?
- Are we measuring engagement by node (rural/urban/online/diaspora) to learn where God is opening doors?



### MOBILIZATION/SENDING

- Are you recruiting to a variety of modes and nodes of evangelism?
- Do you have on-ramps for short-term evangelism trips?
- Are proximate believers active and mentored?



### COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Are you freely sharing gospel resources you have discovered or developed?
- Are you allowing others to learn from what you are learning?
- Is there a people group focused coalition of ministries to facilitate collaboration?



### MEETING NEEDS/COMPASSION

- Do compassionate works lead to group conversations, not just individual ones?



### CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

- How do people explore spiritual truths, individually or communally?
- Where do meaningful conversations take place?
- What is their religious starting point?



### RESEARCH/ CULTURAL INSIGHTS

- Have you identified cultural bridges for the gospel or redemptive analogies?
- Are you tracking gospel conversations and their responses?
- Are you learning of additional needs of the community?



### MULTIPLYING EFFORTS

- How are the following multiplying?
- Evangelists
  - Access points for gospel materials
  - Distribution of resources and Scripture



### TRAINING/EQUIPPING

- Is there understanding in how to bridge spiritual conversations?
- Is the team equipped to use cultural bridges and illustrations in sharing the gospel?
- Is there knowledge in overcoming objections to the gospel?
- Does the team naturally include Bible stories in conversations?



### MARKETPLACE INVOLVEMENT

- Are there workplaces where natural relationships lead to spiritual conversations?

# DISCIPLESHIP

## Phase 3 Accelerators



### PRAYER

- Are new believers praying for their friends and family to come to faith?
- Are they praying for new believers?
- Are they praying for leaders to emerge?
- Are they praying for families to journey in discipleship together?



### SCRIPTURE/RESOURCE ACCESS

- What are new believers saying about the current Scripture and resources?
- Do new believers see a need for more localized resources to be created?
- Are there dialects among the primary language that need specific resources?



### VISION CASTING

- Do new believers see the importance of sharing with their friends and family?
- Do new believers see the principle of spiritual reproduction?
- Do new believers sense discipleship is surrender to the Lordship of Jesus?



### MULTI-NODE ENGAGEMENT

- Are new disciples providing insight into influential nodes?
- Are new believers sharing the gospel with their friends' and family's networks?



### MOBILIZATION/SENDING

- Do you have sufficient workers to disciple new believers?
- Are you mobilizing new believers to share with their family and friends?
- Are proximate believers discipling alongside cross-cultural workers to transfer ownership early?



### COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Are you sharing testimony of God's work with others for mutual encouragement?
- Are you sharing best practices you are learning with other workers?
- Are there overlooked potential partners (diaspora believers, near-culture churches, local NGOs) who could contribute to reaching this group?



### MEETING NEEDS/COMPASSION

- Do compassionate activities support ongoing discipleship?



### CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

- Do initial discipleship lessons align with the culture's overarching worldview (honor/shame, power/fear, guilt/innocence)?
- Is baptism communicated and performed in a manner that is sensitive to cultural realities?
- Do discipleship methods feel foreign to the community?



### RESEARCH/ CULTURAL INSIGHTS

- Have common worldview obstacles that new believers face been identified?
- Is there a Scripture set for new believers that addresses cultural issues?
- Have local believers identified the most effective methods for Scripture engagement?



### MULTIPLYING EFFORTS

How are the following multiplying?

- Disciples sharing their story and God's Story
- Confidence to facilitate discipleship gatherings
- Baptisms



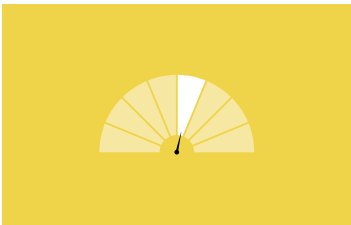
### TRAINING/EQUIPPING

- Are new disciples sharing their story with their friends and family?
- Can new disciples lead others in discipleship?
- Is baptism freely given and taken by those who follow Jesus?
- Are disciples equipped to face persecution or spiritual opposition?



### MARKETPLACE INVOLVEMENT

- What is the new disciple's sphere of influence in the workplace?



# LOCAL CHURCH

## Phase 4 Accelerators



### PRAYER

- Are local churches meeting for corporate prayer and fasting?
- Is there prayer for the community to recognize and affirm emerging leaders?
- Is there prayer for the community to remain bold and faithful in persecution, suffering, or challenges?
- Is there prayer for God to send out new church planters?



### SCRIPTURE/RESOURCE ACCESS

- Does the church feel more comfortable using their local language or a trade language in their gatherings?
- Do further leadership development materials need to be translated into the local language?
- What language-specific resources are needed for scriptural faithfulness?



### VISION CASTING

- Do your gathering rhythms emphasize obedience to Scripture?
- Does the church have a vision to send?
- Does the church have a health diagnostic tool?



### MULTI-NODE ENGAGEMENT

- Are local churches seeing other nodes and taking responsibility to engage them?
- Are churches forming primarily in one type of node (e.g., urban, young, professional) while neglecting others?



### MOBILIZATION/SENDING

- Are you identifying communities that need new churches?
- Do you communicate that the church has a call to go and make disciples?



### COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Are churches beginning to network and partner to identify and expand into new locations or types of ministry engagement?
- If multiple churches exist among the people, to what extent are they actively seeking to collaborate?
- How is leadership shared between emerging local leaders and outside leaders?



### MEETING NEEDS/COMPASSION

- Who is leading in ministry through meeting needs?



### CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

- Are churches using local forms for worship and gathering?
- Have redeemed cultural practices been used in church gatherings?
- Do church gathering times or locations bring shame to their community or family?



### RESEARCH/ CULTURAL INSIGHTS

- Have churches identified other places where business, compassion ministries, or church planting is needed?
- Does the mode and method of gathering feel accessible or inviting to those not yet in the kingdom?
- Are churches tracking qualitative and quantitative health metrics?



### MULTIPLYING EFFORTS

- How are the following multiplying?
- Church leaders
  - Church planters
  - Church-based ministries
  - Release of authority



### TRAINING/EQUIPPING

- Are leaders emerging?
- Is the church growing in faithfulness to the New Testament in practice?
- Is the church reaching its friends and family?
- Is the priesthood of the believer being applied to all levels in the church?



### MARKETPLACE INVOLVEMENT

- How is the church equipping those in the workforce to grow in their trade and be faithful witnesses?

# REPRODUCING CHURCHES

## Phase 5 Accelerators



### PRAYER

- Is prayer happening for ongoing humility among leaders?
- How are the churches communicating prayer needs to the global body of Christ?
- Are churches praying for 4th generation church starts?



### SCRIPTURE/RESOURCE ACCESS

- Are Scriptures available in print or on audio devices locally?
- Does each church have a physical copy of the Scripture?
- Is all the training needed for church planters available in the heart language?



### VISION CASTING

- Is there regular vision casting for planting more churches through developing and releasing more leaders?
- Have leaders been exposed to more fruitful fields to grow their vision?
- Do the majority of people see the call and promise of God to reach all peoples?



### MULTI-NODE ENGAGEMENT

- Are some nodes currently more receptive to the gospel?
- Is there cultural baggage in some nodes that is becoming a barrier to releasing authority to emerging leaders?



### MOBILIZATION/SENDING

- Is there a pathway for equipping and mobilization?
- How are church planters being supported?
- Are there people in the church who see it their role to help send?
- Are sending structures and pathways needed at this point?



### COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Are there clear channels of communication between churches for encouragement, accountability, and equipping?
- Are churches collaborating to accomplish more together than they could separately?



### MEETING NEEDS/COMPASSION

- Are the current felt needs ministries dependent on external funding?
- What is the sustainability plan?



### CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

- Who decided on the church's meeting pattern?
- Are some segments of the people group not yet responsive to the gospel?
- What cultural problems are arising that are causing strife or division?



### RESEARCH/ CULTURAL INSIGHTS

- Have common barriers to multiplication been identified?
- Are there culturally similar people groups at phase 6 or beyond to learn from?
- Has qualitative tracking revealed deficiencies in church health metrics?



### MULTIPLYING EFFORTS

- How are the following multiplying?
- Leaders of leaders
  - Trainers
  - A burden for unreached peoples/places



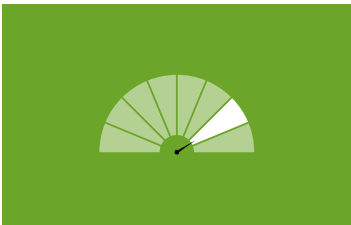
### TRAINING/EQUIPPING

- How are emerging leaders chosen and equipped?
- How is training multiplying so that the whole community is being lifted together?
- Are trainers in the ministry of church planting?
- Does the training emphasize information or action?



### MARKETPLACE INVOLVEMENT

- Are you equipping new believers to see their spheres of influence as church planting opportunities?



# MULTIPLYING CHURCHES

## Phase 6 Accelerators



### PRAYER

- Are churches praying for cross-cultural church planting teams to be sent out?
- Is there a prayer for the growth of biblical faithfulness?
- Is there prayer for the sustainability of the church multiplication?



### SCRIPTURE/RESOURCE ACCESS

- Is the New Testament complete and accepted by local speakers?
- Does the network of churches need to work collaboratively to start a church-based translation project?
- Is there a need for an additional translation for a different dialect or religious background that is being reached?



### VISION CASTING

- Is God continuing to grow the network's vision?
- What are local leaders saying is next?
- Is vision casting coming primarily from the inside or still the outside?



### MULTI-NODE ENGAGEMENT

- Are there strategic nodes that have not yet seen a breakthrough?
- How are different nodes connecting for collaboration and encouragement?



### MOBILIZATION/SENDING

- Are geographic and societal gaps identified for sending new workers?
- Are more experienced church planters contributing a small portion of their time to model for new workers?
- Is sending including pathways for a variety of giftings and callings to participate in God's mission?



### COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Are churches pooling financial resources to be able to respond to needs rapidly?
- Do church leaders gather for a regular rhythm of problem-solving and vision casting toward ongoing gaps?
- Are evangelists/church planters seeking to collaborate with others in addressing existing geographic or segment gaps?
- How are you communicating with the global mission information networks of progress?



### MEETING NEEDS/COMPASSION

- How are churches launching felt-need initiatives that reproduce without external subsidy?



### CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

- Have churches produced their own worship songs?
- Is there diversity in the ways that churches are gathering that reflects the segments of the people group who have been reached?
- Is leadership development happening in the context of culturally appropriate communities of practice?



### RESEARCH/ CULTURAL INSIGHTS

- Have case studies of fruitful streams been documented?
- Are outside financial offers arriving with conditions or agendas that could compromise local leadership or direction?
- How are the churches growing in maturity?



### MULTIPLYING EFFORTS

How are the following multiplying?

- Church networks
- Cross-cultural sending
- Problem-solving
- Pastoral development
- New church streams



### TRAINING/EQUIPPING

- Has the network captured best practices and compiled a training pathway or package?
- When is a shepherding training pathway needed?
- How frequently do leaders of multiple generations of churches need to have peer learning and problem-solving?



### MARKETPLACE INVOLVEMENT

- How are the churches spanning and impacting new socioeconomic and societal segments that need the gospel and new churches?

# SUSTAINED GOSPEL PRESENCE

## Phase 7 Accelerators



### PRAYER

- Is the church actively praying for unreached areas and urgent justice issues as part of its regular prayer life?
- Has prayer become a mere formality instead of heartfelt intercession?



### SCRIPTURE/RESOURCE ACCESS

- Is Scripture access expanding in print, audio, and digital channels, or plateauing?
- Is there local stewardship for updates, distribution, and new formats?



### VISION CASTING

- Is the shared vision still stretching us beyond maintenance toward new peoples and places?
- Are stories and visuals celebrating fresh breakthroughs rather than only institutional activity?



### MULTI-NODE ENGAGEMENT

- Are rural, urban, diaspora, and media nodes all active, or are some drifting?
- Do we track node health indicators such as new groups, baptisms, leaders, and generations?



### MOBILIZATION/SENDING

- Is our pipeline producing new near-culture and cross-culture workers, or has it stalled?
- Do sent workers receive consistent coaching, care, and re-entry debriefs that prevent burnout?



### COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Do regional gatherings still pray, share, and learn together, or have meetings become perfunctory?
- Are there living agreements for data sharing, benevolence, persecution response, and crisis care?



### MEETING NEEDS/COMPASSION

- Have compassion initiatives become routine or dependency-creating rather than catalytic?
- Are initiatives opening doors into new nodes and households, or keeping us in safe spaces?



### CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

- Are practices reviewed for biblical faithfulness and cultural fit, or have forms become rigid?
- Do diverse voices, including women and younger leaders, help surface drift or blind spots?



### RESEARCH/ CULTURAL INSIGHTS

- Are we still listening for shifts in worldview, migration, youth culture, and pressure points?
- Do new insights translate into strategy adjustments, or are we coasting on old assumptions?



### MULTIPLYING EFFORTS

- How are the following multiplying?
- Sending structures
  - Engagement of spiritual gifts
  - Renewal movements



### TRAINING/EQUIPPING

- Are leaders multiplying, or has leadership concentration created bottlenecks?
- Do leaders receive ongoing formation in reconciliation, peacemaking, and healthy correction?
- Is theological education and training harming or expediting progress?



### MARKETPLACE INVOLVEMENT

- Are marketplace platforms still opening credible witness and new geography, or mainly sustaining jobs?
- How is the church championing Christian ethics in business to reshape trade, city, or regional business practices?

# Glossary of Terms

**Activity tracking apps:** Digital tools that allow real-time updates and long-term visibility of ministry activities, events, and progress, providing quantitative data to assess engagement strength.

**Church multiplication (vs. reproduction):** Reproduction refers to churches planting other churches (1st to 2nd generation). Multiplication occurs when multiple generational streams spread across a people group, with churches and leaders reaching 4th generation and beyond, indicating self-sustaining momentum.

**Church planting network:** A connected group of churches that share vision, practices, and relationships, working together to plant additional churches while maintaining lightweight, locally-led structures.

**Christian-Adherent percentage:** The percentage of a people group's population that identifies with Christianity in any form, including cultural Christianity, nominal believers, and those who call themselves Christian regardless of their actual beliefs or practices. May also include those who self-identify as followers of Jesus but do not use the label Christian.

**Communities of practice:** Groups of practitioners who share a common concern or passion and learn together through regular interaction, shared problem-solving, and collaborative work—applied here to leadership development happening in culturally appropriate, real-ministry contexts.

**Cross-cultural workers:** Missionaries or workers from significantly different cultural, linguistic, or geographic backgrounds who cross major cultural boundaries to share the gospel and plant churches.

**Critical contextualization:** A community-discerned process of applying Scripture that is both biblically faithful and culturally meaningful. It involves regularly reviewing forms and practices with diverse voices to guard against both foreign imposition and syncretism, allowing the local body to evaluate cultural practices in light of Scripture.

**Cultural bridges:** Points of connection between the gospel message and a people's existing culture, worldview, values, or religious understanding that can help the gospel make sense in local categories.

**Culturally appropriate:** Ministry approaches that respect and work within the cultural forms, communication patterns, and social structures of the people group rather than imposing foreign or Western patterns.

**Diaspora:** Members of a people group who have migrated away from their homeland and live in other countries or regions, often in concentrated communities. Diaspora believers can serve as bridge people to their home culture.

**Disciple-making/Church-planting movements:** Rapidly multiplying disciples and churches characterized by simple, reproducible methods, obedience-based discipleship, and ordinary believers immediately sharing their faith and making disciples within their natural social networks.

**Discipleship:** The process of helping believers grow in obedience to Christ and maturity in faith through teaching Scripture, modeling Christian life, and fostering spiritual practices that lead to Christlikeness and reproduction.

**Discovery groups:** Small groups that study the Bible together inductively, discovering truth for themselves through Scripture rather than relying primarily on outside teaching.

# Glossary of Terms

Participants commit to obeying what they discover and sharing with others.

**Do no harm (principle):** An ethical commitment in compassion ministry to ensure that meeting needs actually helps communities rather than creating dependency, undermining local initiative, distorting local economies, or causing unintended negative consequences.

**Emerging leaders:** Believers from the people group who are beginning to take initiative in evangelism, discipleship, teaching, and shepherding, moving toward recognized leadership roles in their local churches.

**Engagement Accelerators:** Strategic domains (such as prayer, Scripture access, training, collaboration) that can be leveraged to help move a people group toward stronger and more sustainable gospel presence. They are diagnostic and catalytic tools rather than prescriptive checklists.

**Engagement Strength:** A five-level scale (Unknown, Initial, Growing, Active, Flourishing) that captures how robust or deep engagement actually is, based on both quantitative events and qualitative reports from field contacts.

**Entry strategy/access points:** Credible, sustainable ways for workers to gain and maintain presence among a people group—such as education, business, healthcare, development work, or friendship networks—particularly in contexts where direct religious work is restricted.

**Evangelical faith and practice:** Churches and movements that emphasize the authority of Scripture, the necessity of personal conversion through faith in Christ, the centrality of Christ's atoning death and resurrection, and active evangelism and discipleship.

**Evangelical percentage:** The percentage of a people group's population who are evangelical Christians—generally defined as those who emphasize biblical authority, personal conversion, Christ's atonement, and active witness.

**Evangelism:** The proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ through word and deed, calling people to repentance and faith. Includes both initial gospel witness and ongoing efforts to bring people to saving knowledge of Christ.

**Felt needs:** The practical, tangible needs that a community recognizes and experiences—such as clean water, healthcare, education, or economic opportunity—which can open relational doors for the gospel when addressed with dignity and wisdom.

**Field survey:** A questionnaire completed by field workers to assess engagement strength through narrative descriptions and observations, designed for teams in limited-access areas or those who prefer not to record data digitally.

## **Frontier People Group:**

A Frontier People Group is:

- an Unreached People Group (UPG)
- with virtually no followers of Jesus and
- no known movements to Jesus,
- still needing pioneer cross-cultural workers.

Joshua Project approximates Frontier People Groups as:

- 0.1% or fewer Christian Adherents and
- no confirmed, sustained movement.

**Generational church streams:** Successive generations of churches that plant other churches. Second-generation refers to churches planted by first-generation churches; fourth-generation refers to churches that are four "generations" removed from the original planted church.

# Glossary of Terms

**Gospel presence:** The active witness of Christ through believers, gospel proclamation, discipleship, and church life within a people group.

**Gospel saturation:** The degree to which the gospel has spread throughout a people group, considering both the percentage of believers and the extent to which churches exist across all geographic and demographic segments.

**Heart language:** The language a person learns first and feels most comfortable using, especially for matters of emotion, family, and faith. The language in which a person most naturally thinks and processes spiritual truth.

**Leaders of leaders:** Mature believers who not only lead churches or ministries themselves but are actively identifying, mentoring, and releasing other leaders who will in turn develop additional leaders—creating leadership multiplication.

**Lightweight structures:** Simple, organic relational networks among churches that facilitate communication, mutual care, and collaborative work without creating heavy bureaucracy or centralized control that could stifle local initiative.

**Localized oversight:** Church leadership and decision-making authority resting with believers from the people group themselves rather than with outside workers or distant denominational structures.

**Member care:** The ongoing support, encouragement, spiritual nurture, conflict resolution, crisis intervention, and practical help provided to missionaries and church planters to sustain their health and effectiveness over time.

**Mission Information Community:** Networks of researchers, mission agencies, and field practitioners who gather, share, and analyze

data about people groups and gospel progress to inform strategy and mobilization.

**Mobilization pipeline:** The intentional pathway for identifying, recruiting, preparing, deploying, and caring for workers—both local and cross-cultural—ensuring a sustainable flow of laborers for gospel work.

**Multi-node engagement:** Coordinated gospel presence across multiple channels and geographies simultaneously—such as rural/urban hubs, strategic cities, diaspora communities, media, and online platforms—to reach more of a people group and prevent dependency on a single access point.

**Multiplying church planting networks:** Connected groups of churches that have moved beyond second generation reproduction to fourth generation and beyond, with established patterns of planting churches that plant churches across multiple streams.

**Near-culture believers/workers:** Christians from a geographically or culturally proximate people group who share similar language, customs, worldview, or religious background with the focus people group, making them naturally positioned to build bridges more easily than distant cross-cultural workers.

**Node:** A strategic point of influence within a people group, such as a city, large town, diaspora community, or digital platform, where gospel engagement can occur and spread through relational networks.

**Obedience-based discipleship:** A discipleship approach that emphasizes immediate application and obedience to Scripture as the path to spiritual growth, rather than focusing primarily on accumulating knowledge before action.

# Glossary of Terms

**People Group:** A significantly large group of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, class or caste, situation, etc., or combinations of these. For evangelization purposes, a people group is the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.

**People group or people affinity coalition:** A coordinated network of ministries, churches, and workers focused on reaching a specific people group, facilitating collaboration, shared learning, and strategic alignment.

**Persons of peace:** Individuals or households within a people group who show unusual openness to the gospel, extend hospitality to gospel workers, and have natural influence within their social networks. They become key relational bridges for the spread of the gospel.

**Phase 0-R (Restart indicator):** A designation indicating that previous efforts among a people group have not resulted in ongoing activity, have ceased, or data has not been updated in three years, signaling the need to reassess and potentially reinstate engagement.

**Phases of Engagement:** An eight-step continuum (Phase 0–7) that tracks where a people group stands in terms of gospel progress, from Waiting to Sustained Gospel Presence. Each phase describes a milestone that is not always reflected well by Christian or Evangelical percentage alone.

**Priesthood of the believer:** The biblical principle that every believer has direct access to God through Christ and shares responsibility for ministry, worship, prayer, and witness—not just designated clergy or outside workers.

**Proximate cultures/believers:** People groups that are culturally, linguistically, or geographically close to the target unreached group, often sharing historical connections, similar worldviews, or overlapping social networks.

**Qualitative/quantitative metrics:** Quantitative metrics are numerical measurements (number of baptisms, churches, workers, resources). Qualitative metrics capture narrative descriptions, field assessments, and relational dynamics that numbers alone cannot measure.

**Redeemed cultural practices:** Existing cultural forms, rituals, celebrations, or customs that, once examined biblically and cleansed of unbiblical elements, can be filled with Christian meaning and used appropriately in worship and church life.

**Redemptive analogies:** Cultural practices, stories, or concepts within a people group's existing worldview that can serve as bridges to communicate gospel truth, showing how Christ fulfills or completes what their culture has been reaching toward.

**Reproductive/reproducible:** Ministry methods, discipleship patterns, and church practices simple enough and culturally natural enough that new believers can immediately pass them on to others without extensive training or outside resources.

**Self-sustaining churches:** Local churches that can continue to function, grow, and multiply without ongoing external leadership or resources. These churches have indigenous leadership, local decision-making, and the capacity to reach their own people.

**Spiritual mapping/strongholds:** The practice of identifying spiritual forces, cultural bondages, religious systems, and worldview barriers that resist the gospel in a particular

# Glossary of Terms

people group or geographic area, in order to pray and work strategically.

**Sustained Gospel Presence (Phase 7):** A people group that has either: (1) 10% or more following Christ and worshipping in churches, or (2) several multiplying church planting networks led by believers from the group who are sending workers to other people groups while continuing to mature at home.

**Syncretism:** The blending of biblical Christianity with incompatible beliefs or practices from other religions or worldviews in ways that compromise essential gospel truth, resulting in a distorted expression of faith.

**Trade language:** A common language used for commerce and communication between different language groups in a region. While not the heart language, it may be widely understood by many in a people group.

**Unengaged People Group:** An unengaged people group is one where there are no known efforts focused on establishing self-sustaining churches consistent with evangelical faith and practice.

A people group becomes engaged when:

- There is sustained activity to share Christ and make disciples
- There are efforts to establish self-sustaining churches
- The work occurs in culturally appropriate and locally relevant ways

**Unreached People Group (UPG):** Less than or equal to 5% Christian Adherent AND less than or equal to 2% Evangelical.

An unreached or least-reached people is a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside assistance.

**Worldview:** The fundamental assumptions, values, and beliefs through which a people group interprets reality. Common frameworks include honor/shame cultures (focus on reputation and group harmony), power/fear cultures (focus on spiritual forces and authority), and guilt/innocence cultures (focus on laws and individual conscience).



THE  
PHASES OF  
ENGAGEMENT  
TOOLKIT