MILLENNIUM WATER ALLIANCE Strategic Plan 2014-2024

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The Millennium Water Alliance is a consortium of leading development organizations helping to bring safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene education to the world's poorest people. MWA works with governments, corporations, foundations, individuals, and other non-governmental organizations to advance best practices, share knowledge, build collaborations, and advocate for greater commitment to this global goal. MWA's members (February 2015) are Aguayuda, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Food for the Hungry, Global Water, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, IRC (formerly International Water and Sanitation Center), Lifewater International, Living Water International, Pure Water for the World, WaterAid in America, Water For People, The Water4 Foundation, Water Missions International, Water.org, and World Vision. All members must share in the mission and standards adopted by MWA, and demonstrate their commitment to water and sanitation programs that embody the values of transparency, accountability, and cultural sensitivity in all their work.

Vision and Mission

The Millennium Water Alliance transforms people's lives through improving access to safe water, improved sanitation, and good hygiene practices.

Our mission is to model and implement collaborative pathways to universal, sustained services in water, sanitation, and hygiene for people in developing countries.

Introduction

This plan reflects an ambitious vision for greatly expanding MWA's contribution to the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector, and also providing more value to our members, our donors, and poor people in rural areas of developing countries.

MWA was founded in 2002 to offer sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) solutions through advocacy, sharing knowledge, and collaborative programming. The Memorandum of Understanding describes the following joint activities: creating a baseline, identifying needs, sharing knowledge, establishing best practices, coordinating efforts, and sustaining development.

MWA seeks collective impact¹, which is a long-term commitment by a group of important actors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. In this case the common agenda is contributing to universal access to water services, sanitation services, and hygiene practices, and enabling sustainable systems to ensure ongoing service delivery.

¹ http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

The most important condition of collective impact is a backbone structure that provides strategic coherence around the common agenda, establishes shared measurement and learning systems, supports the mutually reinforcing activities of the different partners, and facilitates continuous communication. The MWA secretariat is just such a backbone organization, and provides strong leadership for the alliance, enabling each participating organization to bring their particular strengths to the joint effort.

MWA is now poised **push with greater strength for universal, sustained services** by building on members' experience from collaborative programs, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation for learning, and further leveraging the wide geographic reach of its members.

MWA's Achievements under 2010-2013 Strategic Plan

The 2010-2013 strategic plan adopted by the MWA Board of Directors laid out four main objectives. By mid-2013, MWA had reached nearly all of these objectives. Highlights of achievements for each of the objectives are described below:

1. Recognition for MWA internally (among members) and externally (outside the membership) for its work as a coalition in programs and advocacy

The 2010-2013 period was one of significant growth for MWA on many fronts: increase in full-time professional staff from one to six, and increases in awareness and presence of the organization's mission and programs in the US and globally. Recognition by members of the added value of working in coalition (access to new donors, improved chances of winning USAID awards, program learning and peer review, advocacy) was evidenced by the decision in Kenya for four members to join under the MWA umbrella to respond to the KALDRR-WASH opportunity (won by MWA in 2012) and subsequently to join in seeking the upcoming KiWASH USAID contract. There are a number of reasons for this shift: 1) MWA has increased its capacity to support proposal development on behalf of members; 2) MWA programs are considered innovative technologically and in terms of monitoring, evaluation, and learning which provides a competitive edge; 3) MWA has significantly reduced its indirect/overhead costs (to around less than 10%) making MWA more competitive; and 4) MWA has been able to attract additional leverage to core proposals (Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and The Coca-Cola Africa Foundation, USAID and Aqua for All, USAID and Vitol Foundation).

The success of the advocacy coalition in DC is in significant measure due to MWA's role – clearly the work has been done in partnership, but it has operationally and thematically been redefined by MWA's heightened and intensified role in nearly every aspect of public policy development. MWA worked primarily with WaterAid, CARE, World Vision, InterAction, and WASH Advocates to seek new advocacy partners, to obtain information from government and other sources, to instigate and channel the energies of other WASH organizations and many, often larger, non-WASH organizations for support of our policy goals, and to improve the dialogue between the sector and the US government. MWA has tended to be a facilitator or convener, even as it asserts its unique role which was not as highly effective at this level before. The above five most active advocacy organizations and other helpful actors worked much more in concert than in previous years. On most matters, there was little question of sharing information and responsibility for policy development and execution. We doubt this degree of coordination and initiative would have been achieved without the specific strategic contributions, philosophy, and resource investment of MWA from 2010 through 2014.

Externally, the profile of MWA has also been raised and its value recognized by actors outside the WASH coalition. Inquiries from non-members to join increased dramatically over the period. Since 2010, six new members have joined: WaterAid, IRC, Pure Water for the World, Aguayuda, HELVETAS Swiss Inter-Cooperation, and the Water4 Foundation. Other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors, corporations, and academic institutions have expressed interest in membership.

Donors also increasingly recognize the MWA value proposition. For example, one of the major donors for the *Lazos de Agua* program – the FEMSA Foundation – is committed to the alliance model for the results it brings in learning and the ability to act in multiple countries under a common and unified programmatic strategy.

2. Set the foundations for collective impact and develop effective partnerships

The recent collective impact study in Ethiopia demonstrated progress in terms of major areas of value added and progress in terms of creating collective impact through partnership – from both the perspective of field staff involved in MWA program and US-based staff. Areas of strength include: the institution of common monitoring, evaluation and learning systems across all MWA programs and the extensive analysis of that data to improve program outcomes and develop field-based evidence that can be used for local and global advocacy, and the connections made with sector experts to infuse MWA programs with innovative practices including multiple use water services (MUS), retention, recharge, and reuse (3R), self-supply, and Everyone Forever.

MWA programs are seen as platforms to incorporate innovation and document results, for example: Acacia Water on 3R, IRC on MUS, Aqua for All on business development, WASTE on sanitation, IRC on self-supply, Emory on equity and access, and the Water 4 Foundation on low-cost drilling.

MWA put together a strong partnership of MWA members and non-members to respond to USAID opportunities in South Sudan and in Kenya. In Kenya, MWA members FH and CARE and non-members WASTE, Aqua for All, AMREF, Ecodit, and Vestergaard Frandsen have formed a coalition to respond to the KiWASH request for proposal. The relative ease with which MWA was able to assemble these coalitions, despite other NGO and non-NGO competitors inviting our members to alternative partnerships, is a reflection of the growth in MWA's ability to develop effective partnerships.

3. Establish stable relationships with key non-traditional donors

MWA has maintained and/or grown its funding relationships with a number of donors including USAID, IDB, Coca-Cola Latin America, and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. While these were MWA donors pre-2010, each provided additional funding over the next three years. MWA has also attracted significant funding from new donors including the FEMSA Foundation in Mexico, The Coca-Cola Africa Foundation, the Vitol Foundation in the UK, and Aqua for All in the Netherlands, among others.

4. Achieve financial stability and increased revenue with a target of \$10 million a year

Although the target was not fully met, revenue levels increased from \$1.7 million in fiscal year 2010 to \$8.6 million in 2014 –more than a five-fold increase. This increase in grant revenue has made it possible for MWA to support its own overhead costs without additional financial support from members, which have had no increase in MWA dues since 2003. Therefore, the administrative management assessment fee (AMA) for consortium program participants was phased out by 2012.

Another major financial target for the organization under the current strategic plan was to increase net assets in cash sufficient to cover operating costs for at least nine months. Currently, MWA unrestricted net assets and cash can cover support costs for seven to eight months.

The Strategic Planning Process

MWA assembled a strategic planning committee with internal (board members) and external stakeholders. Senior staff (John Sparks, Susan Dundon, Peter Gichuru) also participated in the process. The Strategic Plan is a living document, designed to provide overall guidance and direction for our staff, Board, and partners. We will revisit the plan annually to make sure our direction is aligned with the challenges and opportunities of the dynamic global environment. The process was:

- Establish Strategic Planning Committee. Members were: Peter Lochery, CARE; Vanessa Tobin, CRS; Carolyn Meub, Pure Water for the World; Patrick Moriarty, IRC; Carlos Hurtado, FEMSA Foundation; John Oldfield, WASH Advocates; Rafael Callejas, MWA
- Obtain input from stakeholders
- Meeting 1: Understand and validate sector context; analyze MWA's accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses
- Meeting 2: Validate theory of change
- Meeting 3: Agree on key strategic areas and goals
- Draft plan
- Strategic Planning Committee and staff review
- Present to full board
- Staff prepares operational plan
- Staff review strategic plan each year

In this process, members considered the following topics:

- External donors contribute only 7% of funding for sanitation and drinking water compared to central, regional, and local governments and commercial lending²
- Maintaining MWA's identity but scaling up its influence beyond the collaborative country programs by establishing guiding principles for all members
- Elevating MEL and advocacy to equal importance with programs
- Supporting the sector and supporting the members
- Providing value to members, donors, and beneficiaries

² 2011 GLAAS report

MWA Collaborative Programs

MWA's collaborative programs operate in Ethiopia, Kenya, and five countries in Latin America:

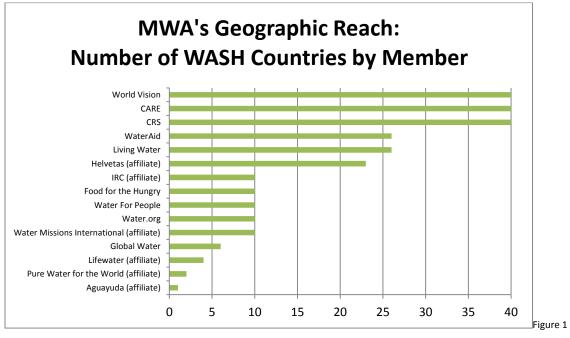
Country	Program Dates	Donors	Partners (MWA Members & Local)
Kenya	2005-present	USAID, Aqua For All	Acacia Water, CRS, CARE, Food for the Hungry, IRC, Water.org (until 2010), World Vision
Ethiopia	2004-2017	Coca-Cola Africa Foundation, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation plus matching funds	CARE, CRS, Ethiopian Evangelical Church- Mekane Yesus, Food for the Hungry, Kalehewot Church, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, Hope2020, IRC, Lifewater International, Living Water International, Relief Society of Tigray (REST), Water Action, WaterAid, WaterPartners International (now water.org), World Vision
Colombia	2013-2015	FEMSA Foundation, Coca- Cola Latin America	Aguayuda
El Salvador	2010-2011	IDB, Coca-Cola Foundation	CARE, CRS, Living Water
Guatemala		IDB, Coca-Cola Foundation, FEMSA Foundation, Coca- Cola Latin America	CARE, CRS, Water For People
			CARE, CRS, Water For People
Honduras	2010-2015	IDB, Coca-Cola Foundation, FEMSA Foundation, Coca- Cola Latin America	CARE, CRS, Water For People, IRC
Mexico	2012-2015	FEMSA Foundation, Coca- Cola Latin America	Living Water International, World Vision
Nicaragua	2010-2015	IDB, Coca-Cola Foundation, FEMSA Foundation, Coca- Cola Latin America	Pana Pana, WaterAid

MWA's Value Added

Collective impact partnerships take time and money to sustain, but if they are strong, they can achieve more than any of the members could individually. It is important to articulate the value added to those involved with MWA: members, donors, and beneficiaries. Below are some of the ways MWA adds value to its stakeholders:

- Inter-organizational learning has been scaled up not only by other partners within programs but also in the other global WASH programs of MWA members.
- Performance on key indicators can be compared across and between partners allowing for a depth of analysis and problem-solving not possible with discrete data from a single NGO.
- MWA is a permanent coalition that is maturing.

- MWA members agree to set of guiding principles for quality work in MWA programs.
- Cost data are available through MWA programs, providing the basis for MWA to challenge members to be cost-efficient, utilizing the best practices from the group.
- As shown in Figure 1, MWA has extensive geographic reach through the presence of its members. The work by individual members in these countries can inform the thinking of all MWA members.
- MWA can bring evidence from its programs to inform sector-wide best practices.
- MWA can combine the voices of its members create a louder voice with government ministries and policy-makers to improve the longer-term enabling environment for WASH.



Strategic Areas, Goals and Strategies

MWA's role is to **discover and innovate approaches to universal, sustained services** by leveraging the strengths of our members. Below we describe our theory of change and how the strategic areas support MWA's role. Over the next ten years, MWA has goals in three interdependent strategic areas: **1**) **campaigning for universal, sustained services; 2**) **monitoring, evaluation and learning to improve delivery;** and **3**) **evidence-based advocacy.**

Our guiding principles include:

- Focusing on full WASH coverage in specific geographic areas (e.g., districts, municipalities, counties)
- Placing governments at the center
- Supporting the relevant service authority (e.g., district, municipality, county) in advocacy at regional and national level for an enabling environment
- Focusing on supporting ongoing service delivery vs. simply first-time access
- Understanding life cycle costs and developing agreements with responsible entities
- Using rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and learning to improve our work

MWA's Theory of Change

We will discover and innovate approaches to universal, sustained services.

By focusing on a district approach and engaging multiple stakeholders, MWA will contribute to achievement of universal, sustained service delivery access. MWA programs have already moved from focusing on community systems to district systems. This plan is codifying that approach.

MWA will use lessons learned to develop guiding principles (based on those described above) and encourage the MWA network to adopt the principles in their global WASH programs as appropriate based on their approaches.

What we will achieve:

- Strengthened government capacity to deliver sustainable WASH services
- Increased scale of our programs to contribute to universal WASH services by supporting national and local governments to adopt successful approaches
- Expansion to additional countries, building on lessons from existing MWA programs, seeking national and local government commitment to public financing

Below we describe goals for each of the three strategic areas, globally and for MWA focus countries.

GLOBALLY

1. Campaign for universal, sustained services

Goal: Establish guiding principles to support or promote campaigns to achieve full and sustainable WASH coverage in rural districts that members and partners seek to incorporate in their WASH programming globally.

As shown in Figure 1 above, the MWA network has an extensive geographic reach beyond the joint MWA programs. With this goal, MWA can scale up its learning and influence to significantly impact the sector. To address the ongoing challenges to the WASH sector of failed services and lack of coordination, MWA will develop guiding principles based on best practices and taking into account the strengths of its members. MWA will seek for all members to agree to use these guiding principles in their WASH programs globally. To give these guiding principles credibility, MWA will institute a method of monitoring and reporting (part of Strategic Area 2) on the members' adherence to the guiding principles.

This will make MWA unique in the WASH sector. It also has the potential to provide tremendous added value to local stakeholders and donors, who can be sure that MWA members are supporting WASH using strong evidence of what works. MWA has laid the groundwork for such a guiding principles in the Ethiopia Program, where in 2011 partners adopted a common policies and strategy document with operational guidelines for programs (e.g., to seek full WASH coverage in specific geographical areas).

After developing global guiding principles, MWA will need regularly to confirm them against new evidence from its joint programs and research available from the broader sector. As the evidence base builds from MWA's

collaborative programs and those of its members, MWA will be well positioned to advocate to the broader sector and to national governments for changes to investments and policies (Strategic Area 3).

To achieve this goal, MWA will:

- Establish guiding programming principles and modify them as further evidence of what works is compiled
- Demonstrate replicable WASH models through partnerships and strategic alliances
- Build capacity of national and local governments to deliver WASH services
- Learn and adopt best experiences from MWA members

2. Monitoring, evaluating, learning to improve our work

Goal: Establish a common global MWA MEL platform to contribute to the evidence base

Standardized indicators and collection platforms enable MWA to robustly document evidence and lessons learned in real time to improve programs, develop best practices (Strategic Area 1) and inform advocacy messages (Strategic Area 3).

To achieve this goal, MWA will rigorously document effectiveness, impact, innovation, and learning and regularly publish results (feeding Strategic Areas 1 and 3).

3. Evidence-based advocacy

Goal: Develop and implement strategy for international and US advocacy to discover and innovate approaches to universal, sustained services

The World Bank estimates that more than US\$180 billion are needed for new water and sanitation coverage,³ and more than US\$538 billion are needed for operations and maintenance. External donors contribute only 7% of funding for sanitation and drinking water access compared to central, regional, and local governments and commercial lenders. These facts indicate a need for MWA to find ways to contribute to the achievement of universal sustained services beyond the limited influence of NGOs and external donors. Therefore the third key area of MWA's strategy is to use evidence-based advocacy to influence positive behavior change in stakeholders at the US, international, national, and local levels.

Based on evidence collected and lessons learned (Strategic Area 2) in past MWA programs, the MWA network and from the broader sector, MWA will develop a new overall advocacy agenda, considering Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) and other WASH advocacy initiatives. MWA's commitment to campaigning for universal, sustained services across its network (Strategic Area 1) will strengthen its voice with various stakeholders.

Advocacy and communications are a direct and essential component of overall program strategy and delivery. While the critical role of MWA US advocacy must continue, more emphasis will be placed on country advocacy that is aligned with MWA member objectives. MWA will invest resources to assess the landscape of country advocacy, including multi-country/regional networks and in countries where MWA members have particular

³ Source: http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water/brief/working-with-public-private-sectors-to-increase-water-sanitation-access

focus, and act upon that assessment to support improved advocacy and communications processes and products by and for the members.

To achieve this goal, MWA will:

- Coordinate and strategize with major sector actors
- Build the capacity of MWA to provide a trusted platform for MWA members with varying levels of individual advocacy experience and capacity, to learn from each other, and to draw from MWA's experience in US advocacy as appropriate
- Leverage our position as a major channel in US advocacy for our members, and our increasing contact with USAID and other major institutions and networks (US State Department, IDB, World Bank, InterAction, and the United States Water Partnership) to bring the evidence and insights gained in our stronger country advocacy to bear in productive ways on advocacy in the US as well
- Have a representative active in SWA (international) and influence them to advocate for universal, sustained services
- Advocate to US government and to other donors to increase funds to successful approaches to universal, sustained WASH services
- Assess landscapes of international and national advocacy efforts
- Continue current leading role in partnership with others to secure increased funding by the US government for WASH programming

MWA FOCUS COUNTRIES

1. Campaign for universal, sustained services

Goal: In selected countries MWA and its members will support or promote campaigns to achieve universal WASH coverage in rural districts.

To achieve this goal, MWA will:

- Promote water for peace and prosperity, including multiple uses of water for social and economic transformation
- Place national and local governments at the center; help them to identify and fill capacity gaps in WASH service delivery and financing for sustainability
- Serve as a hub to convene voluntary and coordinated efforts to reach full WASH coverage in target countries by 2030
- Promote acceptance of a low-cost effective fee-based approach for communities to develop and sustain integrated water and sanitation systems at the district-level over the whole life-cycle of the service
- Enhance the capacity of countries to reach universal WASH coverage through assessing current WASH status, development of a community-led model policy for planning, financing, training, tracking, infrastructure development, and to achieve integrated water and sanitation systems by 2030, promoting improved levels of public finance for delivery, planning, and monitoring
- Develop 'Pace Setters' in government and the private sector to champion and track each community to universal WASH coverage
- Ensure post-completion monitoring is part of implementation by members

2. Monitoring, evaluating, learning to improve our work

Goal: Establish a common MWA MEL platform and use it to improve our work

When MWA collaborative programs began, it was difficult to assess how successfully the partnership had achieved effective impacts and sustainable outcomes because its end of implementation and ex-post evaluations did not use the same indicators or the same locations. This is a challenge that plagues the WASH sector overall. While MWA has been monitoring its programs since its beginning, in recent years, all MWA programs have begun to use a common monitoring platform that will facilitate quantitative and qualitative analysis of impact and comparison of results across programs. Furthermore, MWA is also using evaluation as a tool for strategic learning, which can inform best practices and potential policy changes.⁴

As of July 2014, all three MWA programs will utilize a MEL framework built on the Akvo FLOW platform that measures outcomes, not outputs. This framework includes indicators common to all programs (e.g., access to WASH services, WASH committee governance) as well as some indicators specific to each program. The data collected within MWA program represents a treasure trove of information that is not available in any other place: A data set of indicators collected in the same way, at the same time by multiple NGOs across multiple countries. Monitoring data will be used to compare outcomes of individual partners within a country program, across country programs, and eventually at the regional level.

MWA will expand the usefulness of data available collected through its programs to the sector level by supporting or helping to develop national and local monitoring systems. This will result in sharing best practices and lessons learned using systematic, verifiable, and longitudinal evidence from the field, which the sector currently lacks.

To achieve this goal, MWA will:

- Integrate a common MEL platform within and across MWA programs
- Align with and support local/national monitoring and management information systems
- Ensure that MWA programs are monitored for 10 years (the duration of this plan)
- Share MEL data with relevant government agencies and support development of country level monitoring systems
- Adopt MEL experiences from members in programs

3. Evidence-based advocacy

Goal: Develop and implement a local advocacy agenda to promote, adopt, and generate commitment to approaches to universal, sustained services

Based on evidence collected and lessons learned in past MWA programs (Strategic Area 2), the MWA network and from the broader sector, MWA will develop an advocacy agenda for each MWA focus country.

To achieve this goal, MWA will:

• Coordinate and strategize with major sector actors

⁴ Preskill H. and Mack K., 2014. Building a Strategic Learning and Evaluation System for Your Organization. FSG

- Assess landscapes of national advocacy efforts
- Build the capacity of MWA to provide a trusted platform for MWA members with varying levels of individual experience and capacity, to improve country advocacy and related communications work, to learn from each other, and to draw from MWA's experience in US advocacy as appropriate
- Draw lessons from the work of MWA programs in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Central America, where our current and potential funders and partners are also interested in exploring new ways to stimulate better communications and advocacy

Operational Plan: Aligning our Structure and Processes with the Strategy

Once the strategic plan is approved, MWA will develop an operational plan to achieve these strategic goals in the next 10 years. In this plan, more detailed indicators and targets will be developed to measure progress towards the overarching strategic goals.

Strategic Element	Potential Indicators		
Campaign for	- Percent of coverage in a district AND number of people using services five		
Universal, Sustained	years later		
Services	 Number of MWA innovations or practices adopted by government 		
	- Percent of MWA municipalities/districts with focus on 100% WASH		
	sustainable services		
Monitoring,	MWA member performance		
Evaluating, Learning to	- Status of MWA members adopting elements of MEL platform in non-MWA		
Improve Our Work	programs		
	- Papers, articles, or conference presentations by MWA & members		
	Program performance		
	- Examples of innovations tested		
	- Examples of innovations applied in MWA and non-MWA WASH programs		
	- Examples of instances of knowledge transfer between MWA partners		
	- Examples of instances of use of MEL data analysis to improve program		
	performance and/or relative performance of individual partners		
Evidence-based International ⁵			
Advocacy	- Assess country progress toward SWA commitments in Ethiopia and Kenya		
	In MWA Program Countries		
	- Number of advocacy events and other outreach, and policy outcomes, with		
	sector stakeholders		
	US Government		
	 Contextual budget increase in annual allocation to sector 		
	 Assess progress under Water for World Act 		
	- Assess positive actions by Congress/Administration on funding and		
	implementation of USAID water strategy		
	- Assess US government support for SWA		

Table 1 – Potential Indicators for the Operational Plan

⁵ Countries where MWA works and overlaps with SWA countries with commitments, currently Kenya and Ethiopia.

Strategic Element	Potential Indicators
Collaborative	- Number of successful proposals
Programs	- Achieve program goals on time
	 Keep MWA overhead related to its value added acceptable to members and donors

As part of the operational plan, MWA will assess its structural issues and make changes if needed to align with best practices. Specific areas of attention are described below.

Priority Countries

We will continue to build our collaborative programs in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Latin America, and we will facilitate full district coverage in additional countries that meet our criteria. In line with the strategy, the Program Committee of the MWA Board will develop criteria for selecting countries to work in. These criteria should consider:

- The ability of the country to support sustainable universal coverage
- The need for WASH services
- Whether the country has a WASH policy
- Donor and member interest in the country

Board Governance

In keeping with best practices for non-profit board governance, the Board Executive Committee will:

- Develop criteria for executive committee membership and terms
- Develop and implement a process for self-evaluation
- Performance reviews of board members
- Job descriptions for board members
- Board members will sign a commitment to ensure accountability
- Seek for each member organization to include MWA in its strategic plan

Program Management Models

Currently, MWA has varied models of program management.

- Local registration: Kenya Trust and Guatemala
- MWA secretariat hosted at member: Honduras, Latin American Program (Lazos de Agua), Ethiopia
- Country programs led by members (e.g., Everyone Forever in Honduras)

The current secretariat model has some challenges related to management, human resources, and flexibility. Furthermore, some countries are requiring local registration. MWA's Executive Committee will develop decisionmaking criteria for determining which management structure to use for new or evolving programs. This will involve studying how the current program management models are working to determine how MWA can best support the strategy.