



OVERFLOW 25

momentum to power the mission

Strategic Plan Narrative



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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Context	2
3. The Change We Seek	4
4. Guiding Positions & Objectives	5
5. What We Do	7
6. Strategy Roadmap & Financials	9

Dear friends,

I could not be more thrilled to welcome you to *Overflow 25*—an exciting strategic plan that is building momentum to power our mission of holistic kingdom transformation into the next generation.

This is an important next step in a thirty-year story of biblical proportions, as we continue to partner with God, the Master Strategist.

Since 1990, we have helped 6.6 million people experience improved water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and the gospel of Jesus Christ—accelerating their journey toward physical, spiritual, and social flourishing. And we're just getting started!

With *Overflow 25*, we are deepening our commitment to co-labor with the global Church. We share the Church's calling to activate mission-minded Christians to minister to their overlooked and excluded neighbors around the globe. Today, there are still 771 million people that lack basic water access. We believe the Church can end this global water crisis, and in doing so will see amazing kingdom transformation as people come to know Jesus.

To make this possible, we must grow mission-aligned funding to innovate—reshaping ourselves and our work as we emerge into a post-pandemic reality. With this strategy in front of us, and sound financial decisions made up to this point, we have the opportunity now to invest in building a financial engine that will create an overflow of impact for years to come.

The stakes have never been higher. But in the face of seemingly existential threats and compounding human need, we are more inspired than ever by the story of redemption God is weaving in our world. If we do nothing different, we miss the opportunity to serve hundreds of thousands of people who will miss their chance to flourish. We believe he is calling us to step out in faith—to make a gutsy move by putting everything on the table, even (perhaps especially) in our volatile world. Will you join us?

For the sake of his kingdom,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Mantel".

Michael J. Mantel, Ph.D.

President & CEO

1. Introduction

Over the past two years, there are many things we have learned to do without, but the world needs some things now more than ever. Those things include the hope of the gospel, safe water, and meaningful connections to our global neighbors.

Reflecting on the challenges and needs in our world, Living Water's global community has spent almost a year asking God to reveal himself to us—to uncover insights through analysis, excite our imagination through new visions, and inspire us through the power of his Spirit. He has done exactly that. As we look ahead to the next three years, we believe God is calling us into a story with three plot points.

First, we must **align**. We are aligning around a clear set of guiding positions and strategic objectives that will create a “virtuous cycle” and build momentum to power the mission. Alignment includes solidifying the programmatic gains we have made over the past decade by consolidating our work in geographically focused holistic WASH programs in every context. We believe this must come with an increased focus on inclusion, environmental sustainability, and co-laboring with the Church to work for the physical, spiritual, and social flourishing of all. It also means aligning the organization—across Programs and Engagement—to tell the story from the field to the supporter and create meaningful experiences that connect neighbors across cultures.

Next, we **sharpen**. In a volatile world and with limited resources, we know that we must say a clear “no” to some ideas and opportunities in order to say a stronger “yes” to the things at the heart of our mission. We say “not yet” to things that limit our capacity to do the most important things well today. We sharpen our program implementation by becoming more focused on outcomes than methods and spending our limited time cultivating relationships with the partners and funders most aligned with our mission. We sharpen our messaging by offering a short list of the most transformative engagement and investment opportunities to our supporters. And we support ongoing sharpening by adopting disciplined processes for listening to our neighbors, managing projects with agility, and using design thinking to innovate.

Finally, we **invite** others into the story. Mission-minded Christians are motivated to reflect God's love through generosity to the overlooked and excluded. In partnership with the Church, we believe we are called to serve as empathetic, expert guides—inviting them to fuel the Kingdom transformation of their global neighbors and to be transformed in the process. We believe that as we invite people to join this movement of God, he will unleash an Overflow of relationships and resources to fuel this mission into the next generation.

“Something that has stood strong during these days is the glory we see ahead; growth, expansion, and relevance both in the Christian arena and the secular...”

-Leader from Ghana

2. Context

Looking Back

Over the last 30 years, we have become a truly global organization while navigating an increasingly turbulent world. Since 2016, we faced natural disasters everywhere we work: from floods in Haiti and India to droughts in Kenya and to hurricanes in Central America and Houston. Then in 2020, the whole world changed.

When COVID-19 struck, we were perfectly positioned to serve victims of the global pandemic with desperately needed WASH services and the hope of the gospel. It was also a time of incredible challenge as we were forced to suspend trips, realign revenue and expenses, and make sacrifices so we could endure to serve. We adjusted how we provide access to life-saving water, sanitation, and hygiene to prevent the spread of the virus, and re-structured how our global staff connect and work together. At the same time, political divisions in the US and around the world created new problems, and global anti-racism movements inspired us to increase our commitment to diversity and inclusion that better reflects the kingdom of God.

Throughout this challenging time, Living Water witnessed God's provision and the dedication of our 300 global staff. We not only survived—we matured as an organization and exceeded expectations for how many people we could serve in 18 countries. Our holistic, geographically focused WASH Program Area model expanded from 7 countries in 2016 to 11 today. We took a major step forward with our WASH programs in 2018 when we developed a Theory of Change and Flourish,¹ a toolkit for WASH-focused church and community mobilization that we now use to envision and equip churches around the world. Together, these efforts elevated holistic mission (misión integral) as the core commitment of our program. This commitment holds that our proclamation of the gospel has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life and that the demonstration of the gospel has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ.



“It has been quite a challenging year for individuals, families, and ministries, so we want to share our story with the hope that it will help build their faith and trust in God’s goodness.”

-Leader from Sierra Leone

¹ Living Water (2017) Flourish Program Guide & Facilitator's Guide: <http://flourish.guide/>

Looking Ahead

We can't fully predict what tomorrow will bring, but we anticipate a world of increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. While developing this strategy, we paid special attention to:

- **COVID-19.** The world is still learning what it means to live with COVID-19, and some of the ways we have learned to interact and connect will be permanently changed. This will affect decisions around program interventions, supporter experiences, travel, and our workforce.
- **Changing WASH Trends.** The world is making great strides in reducing the number of people lacking WASH services. Yet to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of basic water service for all by 2030, we must quadruple the current rate of progress, focusing on sustainable service delivery and systems strengthening approaches.
- **Climate Change.** As we see the increasing effects of a warming climate on those we serve, we are better understanding how to adapt and help communities become more resilient to droughts and floods to ensure people have long-term access to safe water.
- **The Church.** The global Church is in a state of continuous change. In the US, congregation sizes and church budgets have been shrinking as churchgoers are less committed to a single church body. However, in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, churches are growing. There is a great opportunity for organizations like Living Water to be a unifying force for the Church within and across geographies and generations.
- **Global Missions.** Christians are wrestling with how missions have been done in the past and how technological advancements create alternatives to traditional mission models. The Christian community is also in the middle of the conversation about the relationship between evangelism and justice in the context of global missions. As the pandemic halted international travel, it's time to work on reimagining the way we engage and experience cross-cultural, global missions.

Looking at Today

During the strategy design process, we worked to clearly define who God is calling us to serve (both our supporters and program participants). More than that, we have committed to building a culture and systems that allow us to continuously listen and learn so that we deeply understand our neighbors' wants, needs, and motivations. Below are some insights that have informed our strategic choices.

“The global HR leadership team met and one reflection we noted is how through the events of the last 18 months, God has prepared all of us uniquely for this strategy design process.”

-Leader from the U.S.

People lacking basic WASH services. Of the 771 million people currently lacking access to basic water services, 80% live in rural areas, predominantly within low-income countries. In some of these contexts, traditional approaches of providing access to water through a borehole with a hand pump might be considered the best technological choice. However, there is increasing demand for water to be piped to households. We are also seeing the increasing desire and need for all local institutions in a community (e.g. schools, health care facilities) to have reliable WASH services.

Mission-minded Christians. Our supporters and advocates desire deep connections to one another and the people impacted by our WASH programs. Technology has made digital connections more accessible and powerful than ever before. As we come alongside the Church in its holistic mission, we know that our supporters expect high-quality experiences, impactful storytelling, and first-class service.

3. The Change We Seek

Our Mission

Living Water International exists to demonstrate the love of God by helping communities acquire desperately needed clean water, and to experience “living water”—the gospel of Jesus Christ—which alone satisfies the deepest thirst.

Our Aspiration



For the global Christian community to pursue the physical, spiritual, and social flourishing of all people who lack basic WASH services. We will fuel this into the next generation by innovating holistic, sustainable WASH programs and high-quality relational experiences.

Partnership



The power of this strategy comes through co-laboring with the Church in a shared mission—to see our neighbors around the world have transformed relationships with God, themselves, others, and the rest of creation.

Neighbor Focus



Overflow 25 sharpens our focus on our neighbors (Matthew 22:39; Galatians 5:13). We must clearly understand which specific groups of neighbors we are called to serve and develop the mindsets and capabilities to know these groups deeply—listening and learning in order to serve them better.

There are two primary groups that we are called to serve through our mission.

Programs: People lacking basic WASH services, with a growing emphasis on the overlooked and excluded.

Engagement: Mission-minded Christians motivated to reflect God’s love through generosity to the overlooked and excluded.

To expand our service to people lacking basic WASH services, we will also engage:

Institutional Funders: Institutions whose funding goals align with ours and that value our approach to holistic WASH programs.

For each of these neighbors, we are developing personas and journey maps to help us better understand their motivations and the ways in which offerings and services can effectively engage them in our shared mission. These personas and journey maps provide a framework for ongoing listening, learning, and improving our strategy as we move forward, and will help us build a more demographically and generationally diverse community of supporters united to serve our global neighbors.

4. Guiding Positions & Objectives

These four Guiding Positions form the heart of the strategy, making up a “virtuous cycle” of activities that reinforce one another—a “flywheel” that builds speed and momentum over time. These are the four areas for deep focus over the next three years. If an idea or opportunity doesn’t help us in one of these areas, the answer is probably “no.”

This is what we’re about. Each position is distinctive for Living Water—a unique strength—and the basis for measurement and accountability. We believe that by investing our time, energy, and funding into these four areas we will get the flywheel spinning, generating significant kingdom transformation.



1. Co-labor with the global Church

Walking with the Church as our primary partner to demonstrate & proclaim the gospel

Living Water’s commitment to the Church as our primary partner throughout the WASH program life cycle is unique in our sector. This approach brings together supporting churches from the US and local partner churches in our program areas with a powerful shared goal: to help our overlooked and excluded neighbors by proclaiming the gospel and demonstrating Christ’s love through WASH services. In the US, we are furthering this relationship by activating the connected potential of the Christian community through a new ‘advocates network.’ Around the world, we are multiplying our efforts and fueling the mission with wider and deeper relationships, greater brand recognition, and a broader, more sustainable partner base.

Objective 1: “1,700 Churches by 25” - We will broaden church partnerships from 800 to co-laboring with 1,700 churches by FYE25 to increase the people we serve through holistic WASH programs.



2. Implement holistic WASH programs for all

Reaching overlooked and excluded people with sustainable solutions

Living Water pursues excellent WASH programming through proven practices that are holistic—working toward the physical, spiritual, and social flourishing of people in our program areas. The WASH Program Area (WPA) gives our programs geographic and relational focus for the long-term. We are scaling this approach across our countries, deepening our commitment to the local church, increasing technical agility, and improving our ability to respond to emergencies. Inspired by Christ’s call to serve “the least of these” and the international community’s goal of “water and sanitation for all” (Sustainable Development Goal 6), Living Water is increasingly focused on serving overlooked and excluded people within our WASH programs. Driven by the biblical mandate to care for creation, we ensure that the work we do is environmentally sustainable today and for generations to come.

Objective 2: “1MM People by 25” - We will grow from serving [500,000] today to [1 million] people annually through WPAs and other holistic WASH programs in FY25.



3. Deepen the engagement between supporters and communities

Bringing people together through relational experiences

Around the world, Living Water lives out our faith in word and deed and shares the gospel through the power of storytelling. We believe these stories have the power to create mutual transformation for everyone involved and build a more globally connected body of Christ. Our organization is integrated in a way that enables these stories to be told between supporters and communities. We will build on this strength and apply relational, digital technologies to bring supporters closer to communities experiencing life-changing access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene. This will help us build a stronger community of demographically and geographically diverse supporters who are aware of the water crisis and motivated through relational connections to take action.

Objective 3: “Every Supporter by 25” - We will connect every supporter to a WASH community through timely stories and relational experiences by FYE25.



4. Grow mission-aligned private funding to innovate

Emerging from the pandemic stronger

The core of Living Water’s funding is from private sources (individuals, churches, and institutions) that are aligned with our integral mission. This gives us great flexibility to experiment and innovate holistic, neighbor-centric WASH programs for physical, spiritual, and social flourishing. Emerging from the financial impacts of the pandemic, a greater number of high-impact investors will strengthen our financial position to further innovate—reshaping us and our work as we emerge into a post-pandemic reality.

Objective 4: “\$85MM Revenue by 25” - We will create a sustainable revenue engine to grow our organization from \$22M today to \$32MM by FYE25, raising \$85MM cumulatively during the three-year strategy.



5. What We Do

At the launch of our Overflow 25 strategy, Living Water works in 17 countries across Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and South Asia. In each country, we are increasingly focused on holistic WASH programs that aim for physical, spiritual, and social transformation by staying rooted in particular areas for multiple years. To be considered holistic, a program must offer:

- **Safe and sustainable water close to home;**
- **Improved WASH facilities at community and institutions (schools, health care facilities);**
- **Equipping...**
 - Churches to engage communities for holistic WASH;
 - People for Bible storying to share their faith with their neighbors;
 - Households for healthy hygiene and sanitation practices; and
 - Communities to improve watershed management practices.
- **WASH-related relief during emergencies.**

We prioritize rural districts with lower-than-average WASH service coverage in low- and middle-income countries. Within these districts, we place special emphasis on serving those who are overlooked or excluded from WASH services because they are members of a particular group (e.g., people with disabilities, women and girls, religious and ethnic minorities).

As we discern where to work, we consider how the Holy Spirit calls us to seek people's spiritual flourishing alongside their physical and social well-being. This often requires us to focus on 1) reaching people who have little exposure to the gospel, 2) calling Christians to a fuller expression of integral mission, and/or 3) reaching groups excluded from WASH services for religious reasons.



In the United States, we invite people into this transformational story, focusing on urban and suburban areas. We have a relational presence in Tier 1 and Tier 2 metropolitan areas and are increasing investment in digital channels to span across demographic and geographic bounds. Partner churches are strong champions in these contexts—relationships we continue to strengthen.

We use a multi-channel ecosystem to reach a variety of supporter segments driven by data-informed personas. Major gift fundraising is enhanced and supported through digital and inbound marketing to reach new donors. We are growing our fundraising team to improve relationship-building and to recruit a new generation of volunteer advocates. This network of advocates will support activities throughout the US, including regional events to engage supporters, pastors, and their networks.

In the United States, we are sharpening our focus on a short list of engagement and investment offerings, inviting our support neighbors to:

- **Engage through**
 - **Digital WASH education and discipleship experiences (NEW)**
 - **Advocacy Network (NEW)**
 - **Living Water Trips**
- **Invest in**
 - **WASH project sponsorships**
 - **Community sponsorships (NEW)**
 - **WASH Program Area sponsorships**
 - **Where most needed / general (capital campaign)**
 - **Where most needed / recurring (monthly giving program)**



6. Strategy Roadmap & Financials

Overflow 25 consists of a design and a set of coordinated actions; a roadmap aligned with the four guiding positions. These actions directly support the strategy and are designed to achieve our strategic objectives. While many actions have been envisioned, we are purposefully leaving room to adapt and remain agile in the volatile environments in which we operate. Therefore, the strategy roadmap focuses attention on the next 18 months of activity, leaving room to re-assess and plan additional actions to help us succeed during years two and three of the strategy.

The roadmap focuses on actions that are new and promote the change needed to achieve our strategic objectives while maintaining our standards and levels of service. The strategy roadmap does not include our routine operations but focuses on our change efforts. To organize the roadmap, actions are grouped into four “action levels” based on complexity and level of effort (Fig 1). Level 4 “Strategic Actions” and Level 3 “Department Projects” are sequenced on the roadmap while Levels 1 and 2 will be tracked at departmental levels.

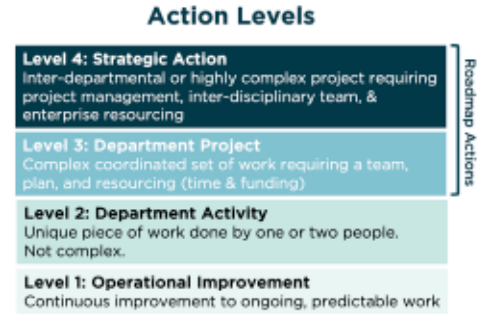


Figure 1: Strategy Roadmap Action Levels

Successful completion of the roadmap will require clear focus and execution discipline, without which most strategies fail. By applying a sharpened focus, Living Water will choose activities that contribute to the strategic objectives and make everyday decisions that create momentum in the same direction. Living Water is incorporating execution disciplines to make Overflow 25 a successful strategy for the neighbors we serve based on these principles:

- a. Focus on strategic objectives and track them through a compelling scorecard**
- b. Practice agile project management, setting clear project scope, roles, and measures**
- c. Practice quarterly and monthly rhythms, learning from tracking objectives, executing actions, monitoring issues, and celebrating progress**

We plan to invest heavily in Engagement capacity in year one while aligning Programs for the greatest impact (Fig 2). Additional investment in Programs will follow in subsequent years. We are excited to begin the Overflow 25 journey and invite you into this story of momentum to power the mission!

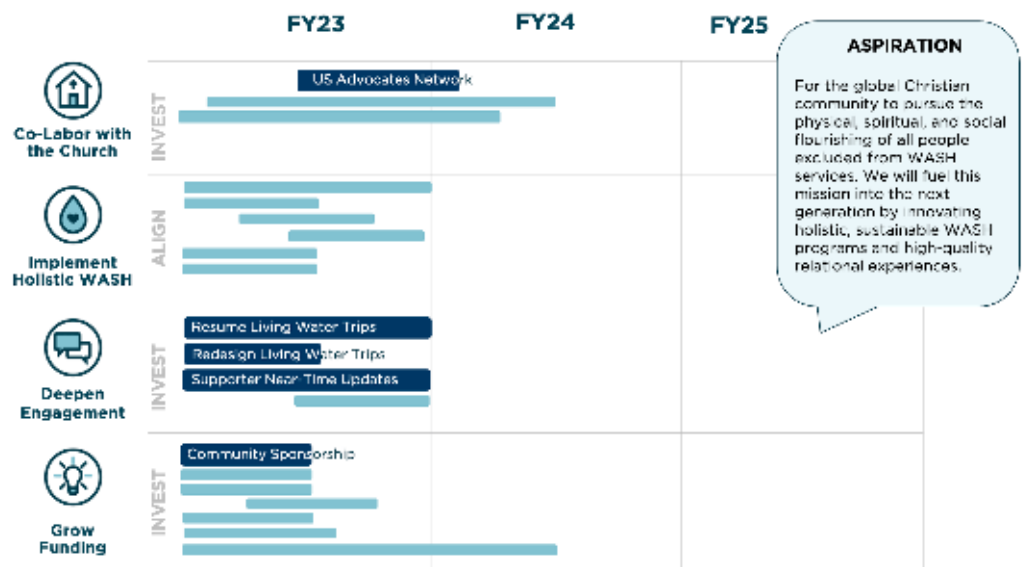


Figure 2: Strategy Roadmap