



OVERFLOW

moving together for deeper impact

Strategic Plan Narrative

BOARD APPROVED MAY 22, 2025



Acknowledgements

This strategy is the result of God’s inspiration and teamwork. We launched the “Overflow 25” strategy in 2022 as we emerged from the global pandemic. This newly updated and extended strategy, simply called “Overflow”, builds momentum in the same direction for an additional three years.

We are deeply grateful to our colleagues around the world for praying, envisioning, brainstorming, testing, and planning; and we extend our thanks to the hundreds of others who gave of their time to participate in surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions.

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The **Extension Team (X Team)** facilitated the extension process through five phases from September 2024 through May 2025: 1) Remember and Give Thanks 2) Assess and Sharpen 3) Set Goals 4) Plan Action 5) Launch and Manage. We would like to thank this talented cross-disciplinary group of staff: Michelle Boudet-French, Dana Dearmon, Russ Debenport, Kevin Hearne, Kathryn Lauritsen, Lilian Mabonga, Tonya Morehouse, John Morgan, Austin Nyaplue, Stephen Okiror, Collins Sebuwuufu, Valentina Smith, Darcy Webb, Jonathan Wiles, and Gabriela Zuniga.

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Primary contact: Russ Debenport (rdebenport@water.cc)

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Dear friends,

I could not be more thrilled to welcome you to Overflow—the next chapter in Living Water International’s shared mission to pursue the flourishing of all people through safe water and the hope of the gospel. As we launch this extended strategy in our 35th year of ministry, we do so with hearts full of gratitude and eyes fixed on the future—trusting in God, the Master Strategist.

By the year ending 2028, we envision that we will be annually co-laboring with 2,100 global church partners, serving 1.2 million formerly thirsty people in our WASH Program Areas, deepening the supporter – community relationship with 85% of our active supporters engaged, and growing our engaged donor base to \$32 million in revenue.

To accomplish these visionary goals, we are continuing to align our people, plans, and partnerships in new ways to advance our mission. Over the next three years, we will pursue three strategic moves that sharpen our focus and unify our efforts: strengthening sustainable WASH program delivery, redesigning donor journeys for greater engagement, and investing in operational systems that support excellence and agility. These moves are not just technical adjustments—they are Spirit-led steps forward that require coordination across the global Body of Christ. By linking arms with churches, staff, and supporters, we are moving as one toward God’s calling for Living Water in this generation.

Our neighbors are at the heart of this vision—both those with whom we serve through water and Word, and those who join us in generosity and prayer. As we act on what we’ve learned, focus our capabilities, and listen well the Lord’s Spirit and to our neighbors, we believe God will multiply the eternal impact of our mission.

Thank you for being a part of this journey. Let’s move forward—together—for deeper impact.

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

During the first three years of Overflow, we grew our church partnerships around the world, we reached even more overlooked and excluded communities with WASH and the good news of Jesus, and found new ways to share impact stories by listening to our neighbors. We also welcomed new supporters into the mission.

Now, as we extend the Overflow strategy for another three years, we're building on this momentum. We're applying what we've learned to make an even greater mission impact.

This next phase launches during a time of global uncertainty. Global aid is fundamentally changing, the development sector is being disrupted, regional conflicts continue, and the global economy is shifting in response to new trade policies. Amid these challenges, one truth remains steady: God's faithfulness.

To prepare, we began by remembering God's goodness and celebrating what he has done through Living Water. Together, we reflected on this verse:

"I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds." – Psalm 77:11-12

Drawing on faith, creativity, and evidence, our staff worked together to extend the strategy—retaining our core direction while setting fresh goals and plans. Over the next three years, we believe God is calling us to three strategic moves:

- **Sustainable Program Delivery:** We will demonstrate what's possible when deep investment meets focused strategy. Through a streamlined footprint, each core country will operate 2-3 Wash Program Areas (WPAs) that serve as platforms for innovating climate-resilient WASH solutions and serving overlooked and excluded neighbors - strengthening Living Water's position as a global leader in sustainable WASH.
- **Coordinated Donor Journeys:** We are aligning our work across departments, optimizing systems, and prioritizing donor needs and interests through our communications. This will help us grow the number of donors, improve retention, and increase revenue.
- **Optimized Support Systems:** We are investing in a stronger operational foundation. By integrating our financial and people systems, we'll gain timely access to data—making us more efficient and better able to make informed decisions.

To support these strategic moves, we are aligning our financial model to strengthen both our mission impact and organizational health. We're doing this by first identifying strategic savings that allow us to build up to 60 days of working capital, ensuring we can sustain operations and respond with agility. At the same time, we are growing revenue by increasing our donor base and expanding our portfolio of private grants, broadening our support while deepening alignment with mission-aligned funders. Finally, we are investing directly in impact by increasing the number of WPAs in each country—a focused approach that enables us to serve more people with safe water and the living water of Jesus Christ. These changes position us to move forward with greater excellence, resilience, and hope.

"This has been a very ambitious God-sized undertaking, and as we put our faith to work, we have indeed seen God move things in very amazing ways."

- Programs Staff Member, Uganda

2. Context

Looking Back

In 2010 we developed the *Watershed Strategy (2011-2015)*, Living Water's first organization-wide strategic plan. This put us on a path toward becoming a truly global organization, implementing WASH programs through demonstration and proclamation of the gospel. In 2015, we launched the *Watershed 2040* strategy—elevating our hearts with a long-term vision and embracing a more deeply integral mission that focused on our neighbors' relationships with God, themselves, others, and the rest of creation (Matthew 25, 28).

When the pandemic hit in 2020, we were well-positioned to respond with desperately needed WASH services and the hope of the gospel. But it was also a time of real hardship. We had to suspend trips, rebalance our budget, and make tough decisions so we could endure to serve.

Even in those difficult days, we saw God's faithfulness and the commitment of our 300 global staff. Together, we created a new strategy for FYE23–25 called *Overflow 25*, focused on listening to and learning from our global neighbors. We prioritized agility, innovation, and collaboration.

As a result, we grew our church partnerships by 68%, reached over 850,000 people each year with holistic WASH programs, and increased our annual revenue by 14%—from \$23.6 million in FYE22 to \$26.9 million in FYE24. With God's help, we've come through the pandemic stronger than before. However, we fell short of our ambitious \$32 million annual revenue goal, which would have allowed us to fully fund our organizational potential. In response, we launched the "Position for Deeper Impact" effort to a) Increase our investment in our proven WPA model in a reduced number of core countries b) Optimize our staffing and structure and c) Improve our financial position by \$2.1MM at the start of this strategy.

Current Insights

In 2025, the Extension Team conducted a focused 45-day assessment to review progress midway through the *Overflow 25* strategy and inform plans for the extension. Key insights included:

- **Foundation grants are growing:** Grant revenue rose from 24% (\$5.8M) of total income in FYE22 to 36% (\$9.8M) in FYE24.
- **Donor loyalty remains strong:** 61% of FYE24 revenue came from donors engaged for over 10 years. Overall donor retention was 49% compared to the US average of 43%.



"I have really enjoyed looking back at these foundations of our strategy and seeing how much we've done but it's also been a good reminder of good practices that we identified and still need to work toward."

-HR Staff Member, US

- **Donor base is shrinking:** Despite loyal long-term donors, total donor count fell 15% from FYE23 to FYE24—more than the national average drop of 3.4%.
- **WASH reach is expanding:** The number of people reached through holistic WASH efforts grew from 500,000 in FYE22 to 850,000 in FYE24.
- **Church partnerships are increasing:** Global church partnerships grew from 800 to 1,200, with an 86% satisfaction rate among US support churches.
- **Staff capabilities need sharper focus:** While 40 capabilities were identified to support the strategy in FYE22, the list proved too ambitious. A more focused set of capabilities is outlined in the “What it Will Take” section.

Looking Forward

While the future remains uncertain, we expect continued global volatility, complexity, and change. As we shaped this strategy, we examined six key trends:

- **Shifting Global Aid Landscape:** While Living Water’s private funding is not directly affected, recent changes in government-funded relief and development could have long-term impacts. ¹ We are experiencing indirect impacts on local economies and rural health clinics, where we often install water systems (we’ve partnered with over 128 clinics from 2021 to 2025, impacting 34,000 people). We must also be diligent to discern if these public sector policy changes could influence private donor sentiments.
- **Evolving Donor Behavior:** Donor patterns continue to shift. Younger philanthropists, especially those leading small and mid-size family foundations, are embracing “new philanthropy” and social impact investing. ² Though overall donor counts in the U.S. are declining (down 3.4% annually), total giving is increasing. ³
- **WASH Trends:** Global access to WASH is improving, but meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG6) requires quadrupling the current pace – especially to reach overlooked and excluded populations experiencing water access inequalities. The sector is moving toward service delivery models and system strengthening approaches.
- **Climate Impacts:** Climate-related challenges are growing. We are strengthening community resilience by designing WASH programs that ensure long-term access, even in the face of climate disruptions.
- **The Changing Church:** The Church is evolving. In the U.S., churches are seeing smaller congregations and tighter budgets. In contrast, churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are growing. We’re responding by launching the Voice of the Supporter program to better understand and strengthen our church partnerships.
- **Emergence of Artificial Intelligence:** The rise of accessible AI is transforming industries, governance, and economies at unprecedented speed. For the WASH sector, agentic AI could enable optimized water access. However, without safeguards, it could also amplify disparities in underserved regions and negatively impact vulnerable communities. Within the organization, new efficiencies and leverage could be achieved through automation and analytics

¹ Oxfam America April 2, 2025: <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/issues/making-foreign-aid-work/what-do-trumps-proposed-foreign-aid-cuts-mean/>

² University of Chicago 2013: <https://crownschool.uchicago.edu/news-events/magazine/new-philanthropy>

³ World Economic Forum May 6, 2024: <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/05/4-trends-private-market-impact-funds-app/>

3. Strategic Foundation

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 Vision



For the global Christian community to pursue the physical, spiritual, and social flourishing of all people who lack basic WASH services—into the next generation.

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 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.

Program Neighbors: We serve people who lack basic WASH services, with a growing focus on those who are overlooked or excluded. Of the 703 million people currently lacking access to basic water services, 80% live in rural areas, predominantly within low-income countries. In many of these places, a simple borehole with a hand pump may still be the most practical solution. However, there is increasing demand for piped water to homes and a growing expectation that all local institutions—such as schools and health clinics—have reliable WASH services.

Support Neighbors: Our supporters are mission-minded Christians motivated to reflect God’s love through generosity to their overlooked and excluded global neighbors. They value meaningful connections—with each other and with the communities we serve. Thanks to advances in technology, digital engagement is more powerful and accessible than ever. As we partner with the Church in its holistic mission, our supporters expect high-quality experiences, compelling stories of impact, and excellent service.

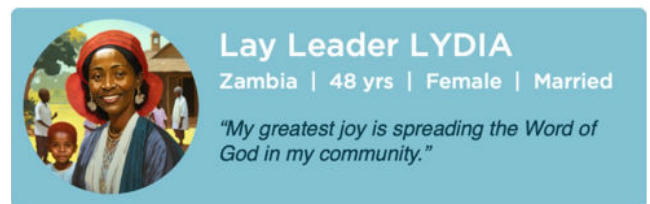


Figure 2: Example Program Neighbor Persona

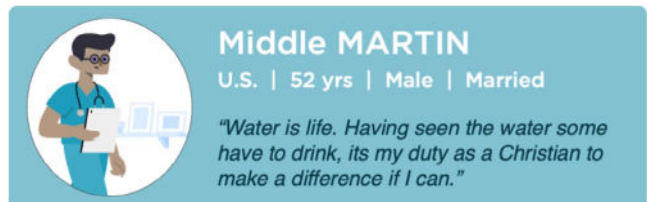


Figure 3: Example Support Neighbor Persona

4. Guiding Positions & Objectives

These 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 as our primary partner

FYE28 OBJECTIVE:
1,855 global church partners

From 1,356 to 1,855 church partners by FYE28

The Church is Living Water’s primary partner for mission. By linking arms with churches near and far we serve communities through safe water, empowered by the love of Jesus. This approach brings together support church partners and program church partners with a powerful shared goal: to help our overlooked and excluded neighbors by proclaiming the gospel and demonstrating Christ’s love through WASH. Our commitment to church partnership for holistic WASH is unique in our sector and one of our greatest strengths.



2. Implement holistic WASH programs for overlooked and excluded neighbors

FYE28 OBJECTIVE:
1.1MM people served annually

From 785,000 to 1.1MM people served by FYE28

Living Water pursues excellent WASH programming through proven holistic approaches—leading to the physical, spiritual, and social flourishing of our program neighbors. We implement our unique Flourish church and community mobilization approach within WASH Program Areas (WPAs), where geographic and relational focus create lasting impact. We are scaling and deepening this integrated approach in three ways: a) we are pursuing deeper ways to serve overlooked and excluded people in our programs b) ensuring our work is environmentally sustainable, as stewards of God’s creation, and c) strengthening community resilience for today and tomorrow.



3. Deepen the engagement between supporters and communities

FYE28 OBJECTIVE:
85% two-year active supporters connected

85% of two-year active supporters connected

Living Water shares the gospel through word, deed, and the power of storytelling. We believe these stories create mutual transformation and create global connections across the Body of Christ. Our integrated approach enables the sharing of stories between supporters and communities. We will build on this strength through extraordinary in-person experiences and digital interactions that bring supporters closer to communities experiencing life-changing access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene. Through shared experiences, we become part of each other's stories, building up the community of faith and expanding our awareness of God's ongoing work through these transformative relationships.



4. Growing an engaged donor base for the future

FYE28 OBJECTIVE:
\$32MM annual revenue

From \$26.9MM to \$32MM annually by FYE28

Living Water is funded by private sources--individuals, churches, and foundations--who align with our integral mission. Our donor community has remained loyal to our mission through years of consistent relationships and private foundations are emerging as strong partners for holistic WASH. These private funding sources provide the flexibility to innovate holistic, neighbor-centric WASH programs and new supporter engagement channels. Private funding that fuels innovation is a powerful force to grow our donor base of diverse supporters who are aware of the water crisis and motivated through relational connections to take action.



5. What it Will Take

Capabilities

These are capabilities we will invest heavily in and perform with excellence because it is critical to make our vision a reality and to achieve our strategic objectives. In this extension, we are refining the capabilities needed to successfully execute the strategy and sustain the ministry. We will prioritize investment in the people, processes, technology, and mindsets that help us:

3 Themes + 10 Capabilities	
IMPLEMENT HIGH QUALITY HOLISTIC WASH: Creating sustainable programs requires deepening technical capacity in WASH, and our singular focus on holistic WASH programs that pursue physical, spiritual, and social flourishing requires a deepening understanding and practice of our integral mission.	CAPABILITIES: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• WASH Technical Expertise• WASH Climate Resilience & Environmental Stewardship
DEEPLY UNDERSTAND OUR NEIGHBORS: We will continue our focus on loving our neighbors well—particularly those identified as central to our program implementation and engagement efforts. We will develop the habit of listening to and learning from these customers on an ongoing basis to gain insights.	CAPABILITIES: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Storytelling for Mutual Transformation• Innovating with Human Centered Design
MOBILIZE PEOPLE TO ACTION: This strategy hinges on moving our neighbors from interest to action, building on insights to invite them into God’s work and our mission in a variety of ways. It is critical that we develop mindsets, processes, and tools to mobilize people effectively and consistently.	CAPABILITIES: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grant Fundraising & Management• Church Mobilization• Marketing Lead Generation• Refined Moves Management
ALL THEMES: Some capabilities will enable all other areas to succeed.	CAPABILITIES: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change Management• Data Intelligence & Analytics

Data for Agility

To achieve our Overflow goals, we are launching a faith-driven and data-informed Data Intelligence Strategy to transform how the ministry uses data for greater impact. We will deliver the right data to the right people at the right time—for better, faster decision-making. The strategy establishes a Data Intelligence Practice that will unify people, process, technology, and neighbor-centric mindsets to support key ministry functions—from field program design to donor engagement to operational excellence. At its core, the strategy marks a shift from a reactive report-centric mindset to a proactive data-centric architecture. The Data Intelligence Strategy also recognizes the emergence of accessible AI as a powerful accelerant. Used responsibly, AI can enhance automation, streamline analysis, and amplify insight - empowering staff with faster, more informed decisions while safeguarding equity and neighbor impact. Finally, the strategy prioritizes strong data governance, trusted definitions, and localized analysis to foster a culture of transparency and agility. As Living Water enters the next phase of Overflow, data will become a ministry asset—empowering leaders to act with clarity, speed, and shared understanding.

***The right data...
IN the right hands
AT the right time
FOR better decisions***



6. Strategy Roadmap: Moves & Actions

Overflow consists of a design and a set of coordinated actions; a roadmap organized around our three strategic moves. 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. *(Additional roadmap detail is available in the attachments).*

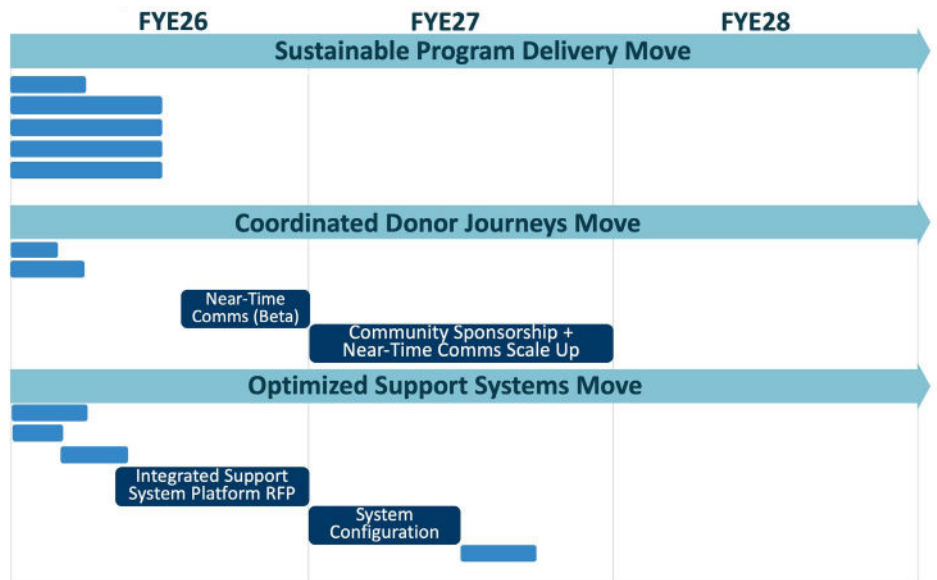
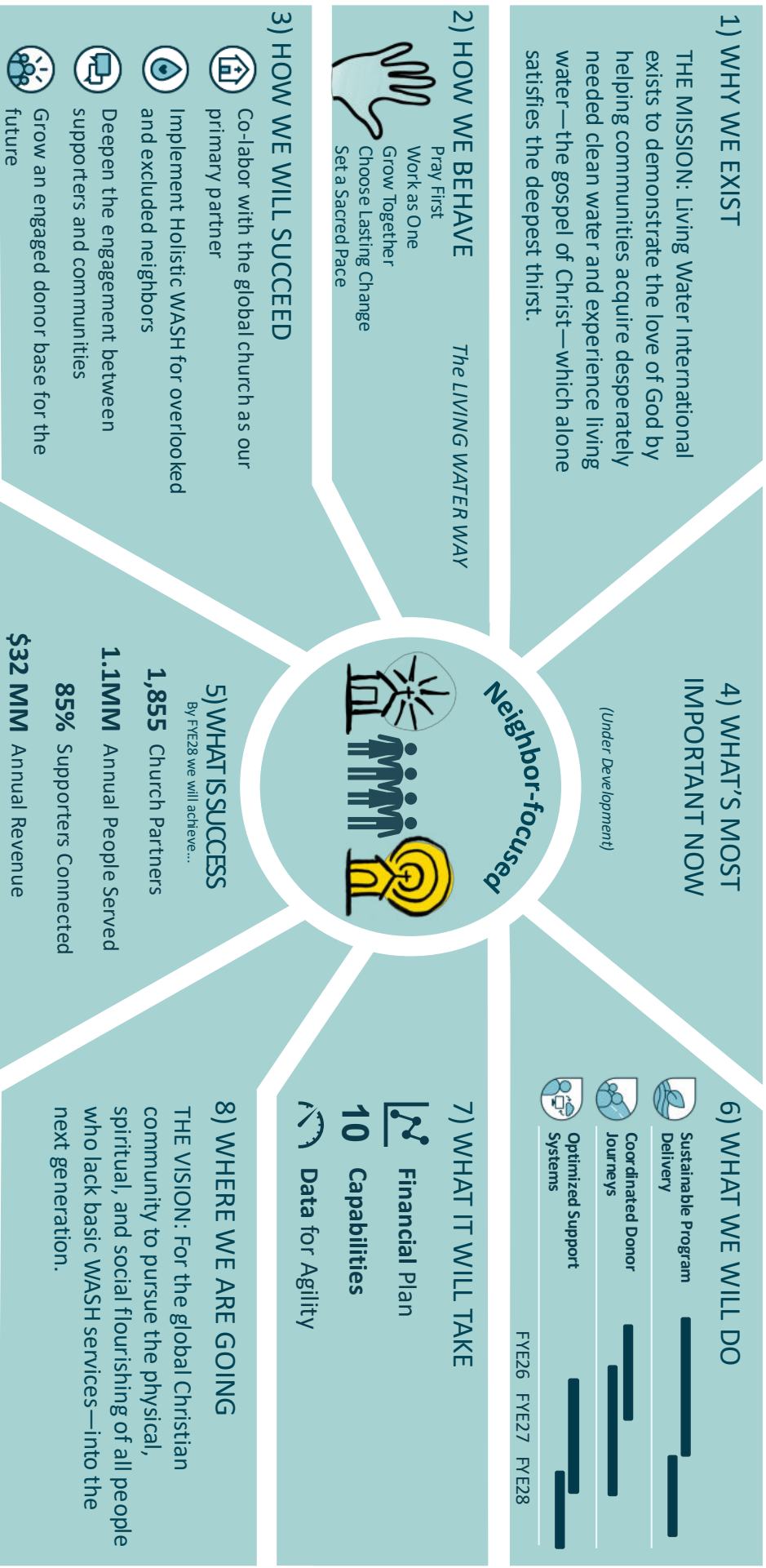
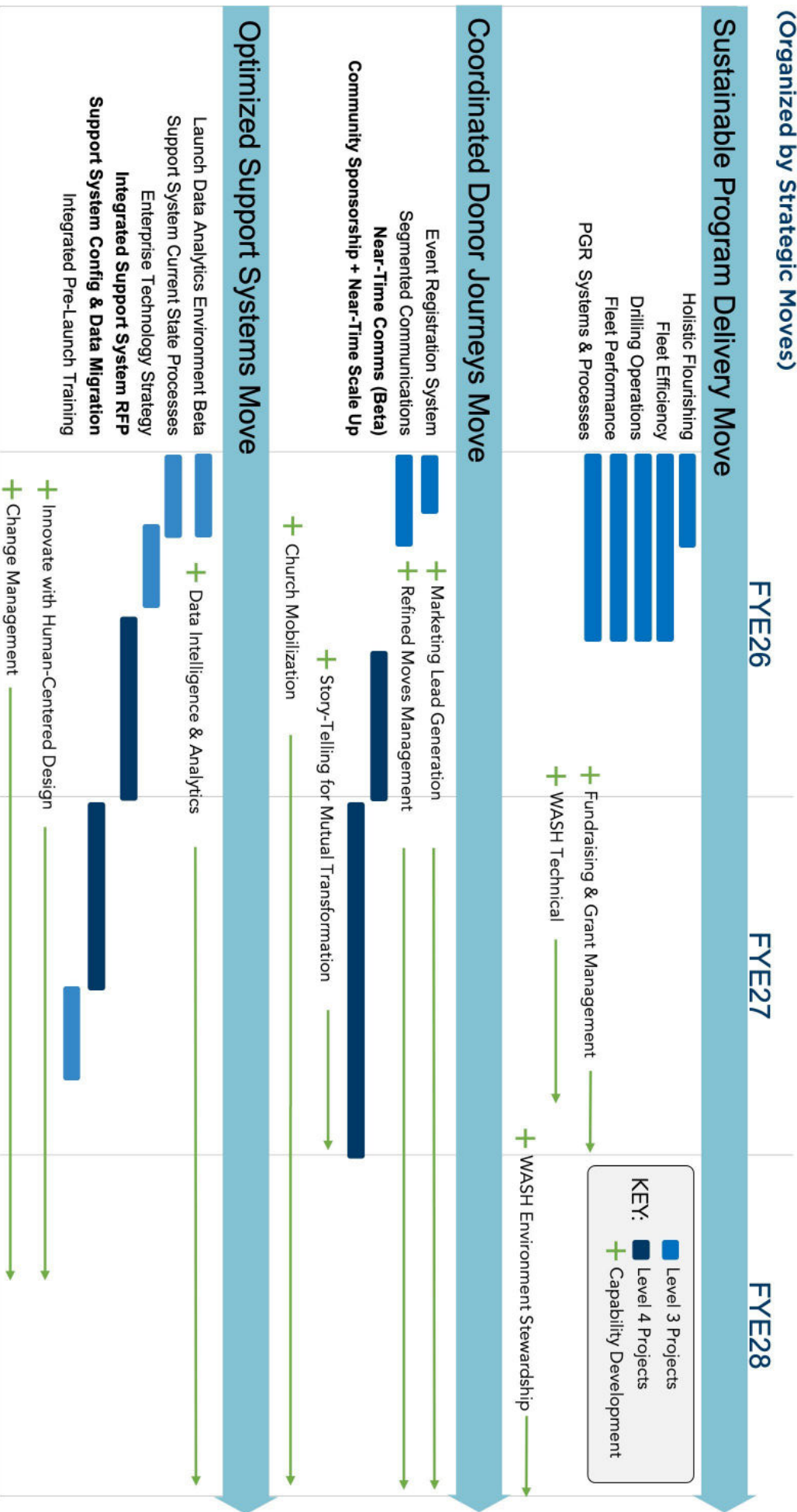


Figure 4: Overflow Strategy Action Roadmap





Strategy Action & Capability Roadmap
(Organized by Strategic Moves)



Attachment 4: Strategy Glossary

Capability: Intangible assets that describe an organization’s ability to utilize its talent and other resources to achieve results.

Church: Local churches are sustainable faith communities made up of followers of Jesus Christ that are accessible to all, and where worship, nurture, and mission take place. The local church is called to be a servant and encourager—applying the biblical story to the concrete circumstances of its time, place, and culture.

Co-labor(ing): Working with someone toward a common goal.

Data Intelligence: Data intelligence refers to all the analytical tools and methods companies employ to form a better understanding of the information they collect to improve their services or investments. Data intelligence focuses on analysis and interaction with information in a meaningful way to promote better decision-making in the future.

Donor Journey: The stages through which a supporter or donor deepens their engagement with Living Water’s mission. These stages include: 1) Learning about our Mission 2) Connecting deeper to Living Water 3) Giving financially to support our program and 4) Advocating for our mission as a loyal supporter.

Guiding Position: An element of our strategy that identifies the strengths we use to succeed at our mission, focused on knowing and serving our neighbors. Each position is unique to Living Water and creates leverage for greater impact. While distinct, each one contributes to the other and creates a “fly wheel” effect of impact.

Human Centered Design (HCD): A creative design method that starts with the people we’re designing for—the people God has called us to serve, our neighbors—and ends with new solutions that are tailor-made to address their needs. HCD is builds deep empathy with the people we’re designing for, generating a lot of ideas, building prototypes, sharing what we’ve made with the people we’re designing for, and then putting an innovative new solution out in the world.

Innovation: A process of applying God-given creativity in new ways to solve challenges experienced by our neighbors.

Moves Management: Guiding newly converted leads from marketing and philanthropy efforts onto the donor journey, engaging them as both supporters and financial contributors. [adapted from capability doc] - (also another way of describing the donor journey – they all are describing the same thing in different ways).

Neighbor: A broad group of external stakeholders that God has called us to know and serve both through holistic WASH programs and donor engagement.

Neighbor Persona: A semi-fictional ideal representation of a specific segment of people.

Overlooked and excluded groups: Within each context, there are groups of people who suffer material deprivation because they are excluded from information, services, programs, and policies due to being part of a particular group (e.g. race, tribe, religion, ethnicity, gender, age, physical/mental ability, language, or immigration status). In the context of a WASH program, these are the people most likely to be overlooked (or intentionally excluded) without an intentional process to identify and reach them.

Program generated revenue (PGR): Revenue that is generated through Living Water Programs—generally solicited and managed by Program Development, a regional service team, or a country office. Sources of revenue may be institutional supporters located in the US or in a region of operation, or multinational institutions with a presence in the region or country.

Strategic Action: A new time-bound project or initiative aligned to one of our three strategic moves that drives organizational transformation and advances strategic objectives. Actions are scaled by scope and complexity, with major efforts tracked on the Strategy Roadmap and managed using agile practices and tools like charters, project boards, and performance measures.

Strategic Move: Strategic moves are major shifts in how we accomplish our mission through a focused change, often coordinated through multiple projects that impact the operating model of the organization. While usually led by one department, a strategic move impacts every department and requires full enterprise collaboration.

Strategy: A design for coordinated action. Good strategy is about making choices, increasing the likelihood of mission success, and integrating faith, creativity, and evidence.

Strategy Management: An ongoing process of collaboration for assessment, learning, agility and coordinated action based on three principles: 1. Rhythms: Practice monthly and quarterly rhythms of learning from taking action, tracking results and celebrating progress; 2. Reporting: maintaining a focus on our strategic objectives through the Strategy Compass; 3. Roadmap: Take action through project management, setting project scope, roles and measures.

Supporter: A person or entity who contributes to the Living Water mission through financial resources (donor), volunteerism, or using their influence through advocacy or other promotional effort, including joining a Living Water Trip.

Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6): Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.0 is one of the 17 goals established by the United Nations in 2015 to replace the Millennium Development Goals. It is the “Water and Sanitation Goal,” summarized as “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.”