

July 2017

# The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN)

Evaluation Report: 2008-2016

Submitted by:

Carlisle Levine, BLE Solutions, LLC

Claire Reinelt

Robin Kane





# Table of Contents

---

Acknowledgements.....	4
List of Tables and Figures.....	5
Acronyms.....	6
Executive Summary.....	7
<b>About the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN).....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Evaluation Overview.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Context of the Evaluation Process.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Results.....	26
Adaptability.....	36
Coalition Effectiveness.....	39
Membership and Engagement.....	46
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Recommendations.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>61</b>
Appendix 1. Contribution Analysis Stories.....	62
The Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD– 6) and MFAN’s Influence.....	63
Rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) and MFAN’s Influence.....	72
The Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) and MFAN’s Influence.....	84
USAID’s Work on Local Solutions and MFAN’s Influence.....	96
Appendix 2. Literature Review.....	107
Appendix 3. Twitter Network Analysis.....	119
Appendix 4. Charts.....	130
Appendix 5. Evaluation Team.....	139
Appendix 6. Evaluation Questions.....	140
Appendix 7. Methods.....	142
Appendix 8. Data Collection Instruments.....	143

# Acknowledgements

---

BLE Solutions would like to thank The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) for the guidance they provided to facilitate this evaluation. Their effort ensured that the data collected would meet their information needs, without compromising the evaluation's independence. BLE Solutions would like to thank Ann Emery, Bruce Hoppe of Connective Associates, LLC, Marc Smith of Connected Action, LLC, and Kathy Ward for their contributions to the report. BLE Solutions would also like to thank all who participated in this evaluation. The time and thought they invested in this process was very much appreciated and will be of great value to MFAN as it enters its next phase.

Layout by Chad Brobst Design

# List of Tables and Figures

---

<b>Table 1.</b>	MFAN structure, membership, and governance 2008–2016 .....	16
<b>Figure 1.</b>	Survey respondents consistently believed in MFAN’s value .....	26
<b>Figure 2.</b>	FATAA and PPD-6 ranked highest among MFAN’s policy contributions .....	28
<b>Figure 3.</b>	MFAN’s challenges led to missed opportunities .....	33
<b>Figure 4.</b>	MFAN experienced some unintended impacts – positive and negative .....	34
<b>Figure 5.</b>	Survey respondents were most actively engaged in advocating for the outcomes to which they believed MFAN made the greatest contribution .....	35
<b>Figure 6.</b>	MFAN used policy environment information effectively .....	38
<b>Figure 7.</b>	MFAN’s purpose and goals were clear, although this diminished over time .....	40
<b>Figure 8.</b>	The clarity of rules, procedures, and the decision-making process diminished over time .....	45
<b>Figure 9.</b>	The efficiency and effectiveness of the decision-making process diminished over time .....	45
<b>Figure 10.</b>	Together coalition members had the right access to policymakers to help achieve coalition goals .....	46
<b>Figure 11.</b>	MFAN members were most involved in MFAN’s early policy goals .....	48
<b>Figure 12.</b>	Those who were most active working on MFAN-related goals were funded to do so .....	50

# Acronyms

---

<b>AWG</b>	Accountability Working Group (MFAN)
<b>CAP</b>	Center for American Progress
<b>CBO</b>	Congressional Budget Office
<b>CDR</b>	Consensus for Development Reform
<b>CGD</b>	Center for Global Development
<b>COWG</b>	Country Ownership Working Group (MFAN)
<b>FAA</b>	Foreign Assistance Act
<b>FATAA</b>	Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act
<b>GPA</b>	Global Partnerships Act
<b>GPG</b>	Glover Park Group
<b>HFAC</b>	House Foreign Affairs Committee
<b>IATI</b>	International Aid Transparency Initiative
<b>IFARA</b>	Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act
<b>IPR</b>	Implementation and Procurement Reform
<b>KHG</b>	Kyle House Group
<b>LER</b>	Office of Learning, Accountability, and Research
<b>MCC</b>	Millennium Challenge Corporation
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal
<b>MFAN</b>	Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network
<b>NGO</b>	Nongovernmental organization
<b>NSC</b>	National Security Council
<b>NSS</b>	National Security Strategy
<b>OMB</b>	Office of Management and Budget
<b>PEPFAR</b>	United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
<b>PPD-6</b>	Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development
<b>PSD</b>	Presidential Study Directive
<b>QDDR</b>	Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review
<b>SFRC</b>	Senate Foreign Affairs Committee
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>USAID</b>	U.S. Agency for International Development
<b>USGLC</b>	U.S. Global Leadership Coalition
<b>USTR</b>	Office of the United States Trade Representative

# Executive Summary

---

## About the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network

The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN)<sup>1</sup> is dedicated to bolstering the leadership role of the United States in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty and suffering around the world by improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency of U.S. foreign assistance. MFAN is a bipartisan coalition of international development and foreign policy practitioners and experts representing think tanks, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector organizations, and also includes former government officials. Since its launch in 2008, MFAN has worked closely with the U.S. Congress, the executive branch, and the broader development community to advance a reform agenda to increase the impact of U.S. development assistance.<sup>2</sup>

## About the Evaluation

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation commissioned this evaluation, working in close collaboration with MFAN, to learn from MFAN's past: its relevance and effectiveness, and the sustainability of its impact. This evaluation studied MFAN's activities and results from just before its launch in mid-2008 through mid-2016. It was planned for a key moment: as the Hewlett Foundation completed its funding for MFAN, and MFAN prepared for its next phase. It also occurred during the 2016 U.S. elections and the early months of the Trump presidency, giving its findings greater importance, as MFAN positioned itself in a new and challenging political environment.

The evaluation used a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods including document and literature reviews, interviews, a survey, workshops, and a facilitated learning discussion. The evaluation team and evaluation advisory committee<sup>3</sup> also met several times throughout the process.

The evaluation included four phases and was built around four areas of questioning: results, adaptability, coalition effectiveness, and member engagement. The team also assessed these questions as they related to four outcomes to which MFAN felt the network had made significant contributions: the Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development, the rewriting of the Foreign Assistance Act, the passage and enactment of the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act, and progress the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) made on its Local Solutions initiative.<sup>4</sup> The resulting findings in this report are organized around the four areas of questioning and provide useful insights both for efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of MFAN and efforts to create and strengthen networks in other key public policy areas. [Appendix 1](#) then provides a detailed narrative story for each of four contribution areas mentioned above. More details on the evaluation process are provided below and in the appendices.

---

<sup>1</sup> References to MFAN in this report include its fiscal sponsor, New Venture Fund. New Venture Fund serves as the official legal and fiscal entity for MFAN and exercises management oversight over the project.

<sup>2</sup> See Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, About MFAN. Available at: <http://modernizeaid.net/about-us/>.

<sup>3</sup> To guide this evaluation, Hewlett and MFAN created an evaluation advisory committee with two representatives from the Hewlett Foundation, two MFAN co-chairs, the executive director of the Hub (MFAN's secretariat), and a deputy. A few other MFAN members with leadership roles in MFAN or who represent key MFAN member organizations joined the committee for some meetings with the evaluation team.

<sup>4</sup> These four outcomes were selected from among a list of outcomes that MFAN member interviewees and survey respondents identified as having been influenced by MFAN. MFAN members believed that these were among the most important outcomes on the list and had benefited the most from MFAN's involvement. They also represent changes in both legislation and executive branch policy, as well as changes that took place over the period covered by the evaluation (2008-2016). [Appendix 1](#) provides a detailed narrative account of the efforts that led to each of the four outcomes.

## Key Findings

**MFAN members have achieved more together as a network than they could have achieved individually.** This is evident in increased support for foreign assistance reform within the development community and Congress, as well as policy changes.

**MFAN raised global development on the policy agenda, and made foreign assistance reform principles mainstream.** MFAN's focus on reform principles strongly contributed to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) looking beyond their silos to reach agreement on broader aid approaches.

**MFAN has helped build a bipartisan constituency in Congress that supports foreign assistance reform.** In July 2016, the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act, on which MFAN was a key external partner, passed the Senate and the House with broad bipartisan support. In 2010, MFAN was also instrumental in the creation of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Effective Foreign Assistance, which started in the House and has since expanded to the Senate.

**MFAN played a critical role in advancing legislative and policy changes that reflect key foreign assistance reform principles.**

- ***The Global Partnerships Act (GPA), a bill aimed at modernizing the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA), was written and introduced.*** Congressman Howard Berman (D-CA), chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and the committee rewrote the FAA, and Congressman Berman introduced the new bill in December 2012 largely because of MFAN's support, according to a key policymaker and his staff. It was at MFAN's urging that Congressman Berman decided to pursue rewriting the FAA. MFAN then played a critical role bringing together the development community to support this effort, and helping bridge sectoral divides. It continually encouraged the Obama administration to partner with Congress on legislation. It also kept pressing Congressman Berman's office to draft the new bill. Given the effort involved in the task, absent MFAN, Congressman Berman and his staff would not have attempted to rewrite the FAA, and the development community might not have found a similar opportunity to come together around a common reform agenda.
- ***The Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) was enacted into law.*** FATAA "require[d] that detailed foreign assistance information be regularly updated on the ForeignAssistance.gov website, and that development and economic assistance be rigorously monitored and evaluated."<sup>5</sup> FATAA's enactment in 2016 resulted from the long-term, concerted effort of many stakeholders, among whom MFAN played the most critical role, according to congressional staff members. MFAN provided much of FATAA's content. MFAN was in the most regular contact with congressional offices on the bill, and did most of the outsider legwork to keep the bill moving. Absent MFAN, the quality or focus of the bill might have changed; some congressional offices may have focused on competing priorities instead; or broad-based political support might not have coalesced.
- ***USAID advanced its reforms related to country ownership<sup>6</sup> and accountability.*** MFAN members worked together to help USAID adjust its agency-wide program cycle<sup>7</sup> guidance to support greater

<sup>5</sup> George Ingram, Carolyn Miles, and Connie Veillette, July 6, 2016, "Foreign Aid Accountability Bill Unanimously Approved by Congress, Heads to the President for Signature," MFAN, <http://modernizeaid.net/2016/07/foreign-aid-accountability-bill-unanimously-approved-congress-heads-president-signature/>.

<sup>6</sup> MFAN and the development community generally use the term "country ownership." The term "local ownership" is most favored by USAID reformers. USAID uses "local ownership" to refer not only to partner governments, but also civil society and the private sector.

<sup>7</sup> USAID's "Program Cycle, codified in the *Automated Directive Systems (ADS) 201*, is USAID's operational model for planning, delivering, assessing, and adapting development programming." See <https://usaidlearninglab.org/program-cycle-overview-page>.

country ownership and improve evaluations, according to USAID staff members. MFAN was a strong voice for country ownership within the executive branch and the development community, as well as on the Hill. During the contentious roll out of USAID's Implementation and Procurement Reform initiative (IPR) in 2011. MFAN successfully neutralized most opposition from international NGOs and private contractors. MFAN was an invaluable sounding board for USAID staff, helping them figure out how to implement the agency's Local Solutions initiative, through which USAID sought to increase its direct investment in partner governments and local organizations. MFAN also helped USAID staff overcome internal obstacles on measurement reforms related to Local Solutions goals. Absent MFAN, there would not have been such a strong external voice supporting country ownership and USAID's reforms, and USAID would have been hard pressed to overcome internal obstacles.

- ***The first-ever Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6) was issued in September 2010.*** MFAN's work among its members to agree on shared aid reform principles, and its advocacy prior to the 2008 elections and during the Obama transition appear to have provided content and political momentum for PPD-6. An MFAN founder entered the Obama administration, and was a key drafter of PPD-6. However, most interviewees agree that MFAN was not a key player in influencing the drafting of the directive. Absent MFAN, PPD-6 would likely still have been issued, given the administration's support for these concepts. Nonetheless, the global recession might have knocked the topic off the list of presidential priorities without the visible network of thought leaders advocating for the emerging consensus on how to reform foreign assistance.

**A number of MFAN's characteristics contributed to its gains, including MFAN's membership, focus, strategy, tactics, and operations.** MFAN serves as a platform where diverse groups – think tanks, NGOs, former policymakers, and other thought leaders – connect, build trust among themselves, and share information, with a concentrated focus on U.S. foreign assistance reform. Members offer complementary experience and expertise. To bring in a diverse membership and to appeal to a broad spectrum of policymakers, MFAN remains principles-focused and nonpartisan in its agenda. Its members, because of their seniority in the field, have many valuable relationships that facilitate sharing ideas with Congress and the administration. Over time, they have deepened those relationships and developed new ones, all of which have helped MFAN identify and address obstacles to policy change. MFAN's secretariat, referred to as the Hub, and select MFAN members have provided policymakers and their staff with constant engagement supporting their reform efforts. Finally, through its membership, publications, and advocacy, MFAN has developed a reputation as the go-to resource on aid reform for target audiences, such as congressional staff and other members of the development community.

**Yet, MFAN has also missed some opportunities.** According to some MFAN leaders and members, a prime area is related to earmarks and presidential initiatives, which are significant obstacles to increased aid effectiveness. In their view, MFAN did not make strong enough statements or take effective action about these, in deference to its members.

*“There was no support in the administration for getting rid of earmarks. We should have publicized more about the effects of earmarks, exposed the absurdity of them. This would potentially have teed it up for the next administration, and given more strength to people inside the agencies.”*

Former MFAN member

In addition, many interviewees said MFAN has had difficulty navigating relationships with friends in the administration, and knowing when to push or critique. Some believe MFAN could have been more engaged on sectoral legislation and strategies, although there is evidence of MFAN exerting its influence in both areas. Others believe MFAN could have been more influential if it had stronger relationships with more agencies.

Finally, many MFAN members noted that MFAN lost momentum and effectiveness, while it underwent internal transitions in 2013 and 2014. For example, most members felt MFAN missed opportunities to weigh in on legislation and policy decisions related to country ownership during that period.

#### **MFAN’s missed opportunities have been attributed to a number of causes.**

Many interviewees noted MFAN’s efforts to balance its membership size with its strength of message. More weight on the former at times led to watered-down messaging, while emphasizing the latter at times led to less reach. When working to enhance its political strength – achieved through a combination of strong messages and membership size, MFAN has faced challenges getting some members on board with its agenda. This was true in its early days, when some members feared a message focused on aid effectiveness might undermine calls for greater aid funding. When emphasizing strength of message, having sufficient bandwidth to access the full range of key actors has been challenging. Members have also hesitated to critique the administration in power for fear of losing access to certain circles and conversations.

Internally, MFAN undertook too many simultaneous changes during its 2013-2014 transition (details below), leading to decreased network effectiveness for six to twelve months. For a time, MFAN lacked clarity about its governance and decision-making processes for the new structure, and some MFAN members also felt that their roles were unclear.

## Conclusion

Based on this evaluation’s findings, MFAN plays an essential role in advancing U.S. foreign assistance reform, due to its singular focus on the topic, its nonpartisan approach, and the quality and engagement of its membership.

## Recommendations

To increase its influence even further, the evaluation team identified the following recommendations, based on the findings. Recommendations specific to the 2017 presidential transition are presented in a separate policy memo.

MFAN and its members should:

- **Focus** | Maintain focus on the importance of U.S. foreign assistance and making it more effective. MFAN's singular focus on and nonpartisan framing of this issue appeal to a broad spectrum of policymakers.
- **Strategic priorities** | Continue to regularly and systematically assess the policy landscape (including Congress, the administration, and the development community), and adjust priorities accordingly.
- **Membership** | Continue to identify and work closely with members who share MFAN's priorities, have committed to work on foreign aid reform through MFAN – even with uncertain funding, and have convening power, access, influence, knowledge, and expertise about congressional and administration policymaking and technical content. Also identify additional actors to bring in, depending on MFAN's agenda and the gaps it needs to fill. Maintaining a membership that includes think tanks, NGOs, and former policymakers gives MFAN the breadth of perspectives, experience, and expertise needed to generate innovative ideas and grounded policy proposals.
- **Dedicated resources** | Encourage MFAN funders to require that grantees focused on sectors, such as health or education, also adhere to aid reform principles. Also, encourage MFAN funders to coordinate with each other to maximize the impact of their investments. Members need to identify funding sources or other mechanisms that can support their aid reform work and participation in MFAN.
- **Structure** | Establish a streamlined structure that: represents the minimum required for MFAN to advance its agenda, in order to facilitate decision making; reflects members' skills and resources; and ensures the easy flow of information among members. When MFAN's agenda is broad and focused on agenda setting, a core group of highly committed principals and deputies meeting regularly can achieve that purpose. Thematic working groups are effective at addressing narrower issues focused on policy adoption and implementation.
- **Decision-making process** | Develop more explicit guidelines for how decisions are made in order to increase coalition effectiveness within a larger and more diverse MFAN that has a more complex structure than in its earlier years. For example, MFAN should clarify the authority working groups have to make decisions, and when they need to consult with the Executive Committee and co-chairs. The near-consensus decision-making model and absence of clear governance rules worked best when MFAN was a smaller, more homogenous group.
- **Fostering relationships with allies** | Foster relationships with allies to expand MFAN's political heft without losing its policy sharpness. This can be done through participating in ad hoc efforts, such as the campaign on the budget led by the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition; bringing others into MFAN's working groups, such as allies dedicated to MFAN's priorities; or participating in others' working groups, such as those at InterAction. In these relationships, connecting and building awareness among members, in addition to top leaders, will help maximize the influence and results that MFAN and its allies can achieve.
- **External relationships with policymakers** | Undertake a formal landscape analysis to understand key leverage points, and regularly update this analysis. Create a process to allow MFAN to prioritize its relationship-building efforts, so MFAN can increase its influence and avoid missed opportunities. MFAN needs to continue to reach out to members of the Freedom Caucus, either directly, through MFAN members, or via the Kyle House Group and the Consensus for Development Reform. MFAN also needs to foster stronger relationships with appropriators and other committees in Congress, such as Armed Services. Additionally, MFAN must build relationships with strategically positioned members of the administration who value foreign assistance and want to increase its effectiveness.



# The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN)

Evaluation Report: 2008-2016

About the Modernizing  
Foreign Assistance Network  
(MFAN)

The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN)<sup>8</sup> is dedicated to bolstering the leadership role of the United States in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty and suffering around the world by improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency of U.S. foreign assistance. MFAN is a bipartisan coalition of international development and foreign policy practitioners and experts representing think tanks, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector organizations, and also includes former government officials. Since its launch in 2008, MFAN has worked closely with the U.S. Congress, the executive branch, and the broader development community to advance a reform agenda to increase the impact of U.S. development assistance.<sup>9</sup>

Building on national and global momentum pushing for greater aid effectiveness<sup>10</sup>, in 2007, the Hewlett Foundation began a series of conversations with development experts at several think tanks to “discuss the possibility of a coherent and coordinated approach to their independent, but related, work on foreign aid reform.”<sup>11</sup> These included experts from the Center for Global Development (CGD), the Brookings Institution, and the Center for American Progress (CAP), all of whom received funding from the Hewlett Foundation. A consensus emerged that, as one interviewee described it, the “foreign aid apparatus was broken,” and had not adapted well to the challenges of the 21st century. Too much aid money was earmarked for sector-specific programs.

Early on, Hewlett program officers concluded that having primarily think tanks in the conversation was creating an “echo chamber.” The conversation was then broadened to involve more nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), even though some at Hewlett doubted that NGOs would want to join, since some benefitted from earmarked funding from U.S. development agencies. Nevertheless, Hewlett program officers knew NGOs needed to be on board “if USAID was going to have a coherent strategy that was more driven by local needs and priorities,” as one officer explained.

The unofficial launch of MFAN as a coalition began during a two-day Wye River retreat in Maryland in January 2008, which gathered together global development experts from think tanks, NGOs, and individuals who had worked on U.S. foreign assistance for much of their careers to develop a consensus on how to reform and restructure the U.S. foreign aid system. At the conclusion of the retreat, the group agreed on key principles and a set of potential action items.

The coalition formally launched in 2008. Gayle Smith from CAP and Steve Radelet from CGD served as its first co-chairs. Representatives from think tanks, NGOs, and former policy officials became decision-making members of the coalition. As one Hewlett program officer remembered, “It was exciting bringing together these ... sets of actors who hadn’t interacted in a coalition way ever before. It was groundbreaking. What was really heartening was to see the trust that emerged and the relationships that were built that didn’t exist before.”

Each member organization appointed a principal and a “plus one” to participate in MFAN. This ensured high visibility and “boots on the ground” to produce research and policy papers. A core group was

<sup>8</sup> References to MFAN in this report include its fiscal sponsor, New Venture Fund. New Venture Fund serves as the official legal and fiscal entity for MFAN and exercises management oversight over the project.

<sup>9</sup> See Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, About MFAN. Available at: <http://modernizeaid.net/about-us/>.

<sup>10</sup> At the Second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2005, governments, multilateral and bilateral development institutions, and civil society organizations agreed to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which set out five principles aimed at making aid more effective. See <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm>. In 2006, the U.S. Congress created the Helping to Enhance the Livelihood of People around the Globe (HELP) Commission to review U.S. foreign assistance programs and recommend ways to improve them. The commission published its report in 2007. See <http://helpcommission.info/>.

<sup>11</sup> Freedman Consulting, LLC, April 29, 2010, Strategic Review: An Evaluation of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network & Options for Moving Forward, Summary Draft, Freedman Consulting, LLC, p. 2, unpublished.

charged with drafting MFAN's foundational document, *New Day, New Way*. The document, published in June 2008, made the following policy recommendations: (1) develop a national strategy for global development; (2) reach a "Grand Bargain" between Congress and the executive branch and enact a new Foreign Assistance Act; (3) streamline organizational structures, create a Cabinet-level Department for Global Development, rebuild human resource capacity, and strengthen monitoring and evaluation; and (4) increase funding for and accountability of foreign aid.

In late 2008, Hewlett contracted with the Glover Park Group (GPG) to handle messaging for MFAN. Two member organizations offered themselves as potential hosts for MFAN's secretariat (or Hub), and MFAN leadership selected Bread for the World. The formation of the Hub moved slowly, so Hewlett and the co-chairs decided to expand GPG's role to manage MFAN, while MFAN Hub staff, who reported to GPG, remained housed at Bread for the World. Bread for the World was MFAN's fiscal sponsor and the Hub's host until 2013, when the New Venture Fund became MFAN's fiscal sponsor, and the Hub established its own office independent of MFAN members.

During MFAN's first years, several key MFAN members, including its first two co-chairs and several plus ones, entered the Obama administration. This potentially gave MFAN access to high-level policymakers. By 2009, it was clear the administration was not enthusiastic about working with Congress on aid reform legislation. Because some of those who entered the Obama administration were from think tanks, MFAN membership from that sector waned. MFAN recruited more NGOs and sector-focused organizations to become members to strengthen its advocacy capacity. MFAN appointed two new co-chairs, both from NGOs: David Beckmann (Bread for the World) and George Ingram (then with Academy for Educational Development). They worked closely with the MFAN Hub staff and GPG to develop a legislative strategy. A legislative working group was formed to lead on advocacy around several aid effectiveness bills.

After Republicans won the majority in the House of Representatives in the 2010 midterm election, MFAN appointed a former Republican policymaker and MFAN principal, Jim Kolbe, as a third MFAN co-chair. In 2009, MFAN had hired a Republican consulting group – first Capitol Management Initiatives and then the Kyle House Group – to conduct additional outreach to congressional Republicans, and formed a small group within its Advocacy Subcommittee to support the consulting group's work.

Advancing comprehensive reform legislation proved difficult after 2010, so MFAN began focusing on enacting parts of its reform package (e.g., the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA)), and doing more outreach to embed aid reform principles in sector-focused legislation, including the Education for All Act and the Water for the World Act. While MFAN had some success with these strategies, it lost momentum and focus in 2012 and 2013. One contributing factor was that the diversity of the coalition had made it difficult to reach consensus on sharp policy positions.

In 2013, recognizing MFAN's lost momentum, Hewlett felt that MFAN needed to refresh its strategy. It also made clear to MFAN that it sought to invest in organizations aligned with its priorities. Through their conversations, Hewlett and the MFAN co-chairs agreed that MFAN would refocus MFAN's agenda to concentrate efforts in two areas: (1) transparency, accountability, and learning; and (2) developing country ownership, including the alignment of aid with recipient countries' national priorities and support for processes that foster citizen participation in decisions. In addition, MFAN appointed two new co-chairs: Carolyn Miles from Save the Children and Connie Veillette from the Lugar Center. George Ingram, now with the Brookings Institution, stayed on as a third co-chair. The MFAN co-chairs reduced the size of its membership, and asked members to commit to greater involvement in the coalition. They invited some principals to join the newly formed Executive Committee, thus streamlining the decision-making process.

In the final years of the Obama administration, MFAN continued to achieve important outcomes and make meaningful progress. FATAA passed, and USAID reformed its operating procedures to embed local ownership principles in its manuals for its Missions and implementing partners. MFAN was a major force in these victories, and demonstrated that a bipartisan coalition can engage and connect key leaders committed to aid effectiveness, align its members' policy assets and resources, and take joint action to successfully advance an aid reform agenda. These stories and two more from MFAN's earlier years are captured more fully in [Appendix 1](#).

Table 1. MFAN structure, membership, and governance 2008–2016.

	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2016
<b>Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presidential campaign and election</li> <li>• Global economic crisis</li> <li>• Obama administration begins</li> <li>• Democratic-controlled House and Senate</li> <li>• Global consensus emerging on development reform</li> <li>• New leadership at USAID</li> <li>• Midterm congressional campaigns and election</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Republican-controlled House</li> <li>• Partisan conflict</li> <li>• Looming budget deficit</li> <li>• Slow economic recovery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Republican-controlled Senate and House</li> <li>• End of the Obama presidency</li> <li>• Presidential campaign and election</li> </ul>
<b>MFAN Policy Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><i>New Day, New Way</i></u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><i>From Policy to Practice</i></u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><i>The Way Forward</i></u></li> <li>• <u><i>ACCOUNTDown to 2017</i></u></li> </ul>
<b>MFAN Top Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPD-6</li> <li>• Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) 2010</li> <li>• ForeignAssistance.gov</li> <li>• Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act (Rep. Berman)</li> <li>• Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act (Sens. Kerry and Lugar)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPD-6 implementation</li> <li>• ForeignAssistance.gov</li> <li>• Global Partnerships Act (GPA) (Rep. Berman)</li> <li>• Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) (Rep. Poe, Sens. Lugar and Rubio)</li> <li>• USAID Bureau for Policy Planning and Learning (PPL) and Office of Budget and Resource Management (BRM)</li> <li>• USAID evaluation policy</li> <li>• USAID transparency</li> <li>• 3.0 transparency and accountability for the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FATAA (Reps. Poe and Connolly, Sens. Rubio and Cardin)</li> <li>• USAID Local Solutions initiative</li> <li>• ForeignAssistance.gov</li> <li>• QDDR 2015</li> <li>• Department of State evaluation policy</li> <li>• USAID transparency</li> <li>• USAID ADS 201</li> <li>• PEPFAR 3.0 transparency and accountability</li> <li>• PEPFAR 3.0 Sustainability Framework</li> <li>• Millennium Challenge Corporation NEXT strategy</li> </ul>

	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2016
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Addis Tax Initiative and Domestic Resource Mobilization</li> <li>• Food for Peace Reform Act (Sens. Corker and Coons)</li> </ul>
<b>MFAN Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 co-chairs</li> <li>• 16 principals</li> <li>• Plus ones</li> <li>• GPG communications/management consultant</li> <li>• Working groups (communications)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 co-chairs</li> <li>• 25 principals</li> <li>• Deputies</li> <li>• Advocacy Subcommittee</li> <li>• Working groups (legislative, communications, and Republican outreach)</li> <li>• Managing consultant and the Hub (MFAN secretariat)</li> <li>• Republican outreach consultant – Capitol Management Initiatives and then Kyle House Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 co-chairs</li> <li>• Executive Committee</li> <li>• 18 principals</li> <li>• Deputies</li> <li>• Working groups (Country Ownership, Accountability, Emerging Issues)</li> <li>• Hill sub-group of deputies</li> <li>• Independent Hub</li> <li>• Republican outreach consultant - Kyle House Group</li> </ul>
<b>MFAN Membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 think tanks</li> <li>• 6 NGOs</li> <li>• Individuals with careers working on foreign assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 36 organizations and individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 organizations</li> <li>• 5 independent consultants</li> </ul>
<b>MFAN Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly meetings of principals under direction of co-chairs</li> <li>• Small plus one group met weekly</li> <li>• Co-chairs met weekly with Hub, GPG, and Hewlett advisor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-chairs met weekly with Hub, GPG, and Hewlett advisor</li> <li>• Quarterly in-person meetings of principals under direction of co-chairs, with monthly calls in between</li> <li>• Plus one group met biweekly under direction of Hub and GPG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-chairs met weekly with Hub and Hewlett advisor</li> <li>• Executive Committee met quarterly, with phone calls in between</li> <li>• Executive Committee members participated in at least one working group</li> <li>• Deputies met biweekly</li> </ul>

	2008-2010	2011-2013	2014-2016
<b>MFAN Secretariat/ Hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-person team managed by MFAN’s fiscal sponsor and overseen by GPG management consultant (de facto network coordinator)</li> <li>• MFAN Senior Policy and Government Relations Associate</li> <li>• MFAN Outreach Associate</li> </ul>	2012: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GPG consultant coordinating MFAN</li> <li>• MFAN Deputy Director</li> <li>• MFAN Outreach Coordinator</li> <li>• MFAN Program Associate</li> </ul>	2014: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MFAN Executive Director</li> <li>• MFAN Communications and Policy Manager</li> <li>• MFAN Program Associate</li> </ul> 2016: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MFAN Executive Director</li> <li>• MFAN Deputy Director and Senior Policy Advisor</li> <li>• MFAN Senior Communications and Policy Manager</li> <li>• MFAN Program and Membership Coordinator</li> <li>• MFAN Program Associate</li> </ul>

This report presents findings from an evaluation of MFAN’s work over its first eight years: 2008–2016, as summarized above. Today, MFAN continues to engage the administration, Congress, and the development community to advance more effective U.S. foreign assistance. As it begins to work with a new administration and the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, MFAN is considering how to position itself to be most effective. In the near term, MFAN is focused on defending the foreign aid budget and finding allies in the administration to protect the independence of the foreign aid structure. Over the longer term, MFAN plans to engage the private sector, think tanks, NGOs, and former policymakers to focus more attention on development finance and humanitarian aid.

# The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN)

Evaluation Report: 2008-2016

## Evaluation Overview

*“Experience shows that three things matter especially to networks, making each an important focus for evaluation [...] ... network connectivity, ... network health, ... and network results.”*

Network Impact and Center for Evaluation Innovation (July 2014) [Framing Paper: The State of Network Evaluation](#), Guide to Network Evaluation, Part 1, pp. 5-6.

## Purpose

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation commissioned this evaluation, working in close collaboration with MFAN, to learn from MFAN’s past: its relevance and effectiveness, and the sustainability of its impact. The evaluation studied MFAN’s activities and results from just before its launch in mid-2008 through mid-2016. It was planned for a key moment: as the Hewlett Foundation completed its funding for MFAN, and MFAN prepared itself for its next phase. The evaluation process also occurred during the 2016 U.S. elections and the early months of the Trump presidency, giving its findings greater importance, as MFAN positioned itself in a new and challenging political environment.

To determine what a coalition and its advocacy have achieved, it is useful to examine its contributions to policy changes, while examining its capacity helps predict its ability to achieve results in the future. Capacity is seen in the coalition’s effectiveness (leadership models, management structures), member engagement, and adaptability to changes in the external environment. The evaluation was, therefore, designed to answer these key questions about MFAN’s results, adaptability, coalition effectiveness, and member engagement:

- **Results:** To what extent has MFAN achieved its intermediate and ultimate goals? What has been MFAN’s contribution to those achievements?
- **Adaptability:** How effectively did MFAN adapt its agenda and approach to respond to changes in the political environment and optimize opportunities to make progress on MFAN goals? What lessons about agenda setting and approach can MFAN use to prepare for a shift in presidential leadership?
- **Coalition Effectiveness:** How did changes in MFAN leadership models and management structure influence or interfere with the progress MFAN was able to make towards its goals during each of the three phases of its work?
- **Membership and Engagement:** How effectively has MFAN recruited and engaged members and allies to collaborate and align their individual and collective efforts to advance MFAN’s agenda?

The full list of evaluation questions, as addressed in the evaluation, appears in [Appendix 6](#).

## Methods

The evaluation used a variety of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods: document and literature reviews, 44 interviews with MFAN members and external actors, a survey with MFAN members and active members of the MFAN Advocacy Subcommittee that garnered 61 responses (a 33 percent response rate), four workshops with 26 MFAN members, and a facilitated learning discussion with the evaluation advisory

committee<sup>12</sup> and several other MFAN members with leadership roles in the network. The evaluation team and evaluation advisory committee also met regularly during the process to discuss findings to date, explore emergent learning, and review potential recommendations.

The evaluation included four phases: Inception, Breadth, Depth, and Synthesis. During the Breadth phase, the evaluation team gathered feedback broadly on the evaluation's four areas of questioning: results, adaptability, coalition effectiveness, and member engagement. Building on those insights, the evaluation team then used the Depth phase to conduct contribution analysis to examine these questions as they related to four outcomes to which MFAN felt the network had made significant contributions: the Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6), the rewriting of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA), the passage and enactment of the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA), and USAID's progress on its efforts to promote local ownership. These four outcomes were selected from among a list of outcomes that MFAN member interviewees and survey respondents identified as having been influenced by MFAN. MFAN members believed these were among the most important outcomes on the list and had benefited the most from MFAN's involvement. They also represent changes in both legislation and administration policy, as well as changes that took place over the period covered by the evaluation (2008-2016).

More information about the evaluation methods can be found in Appendices [7](#) and [8](#).

## Limitations and Quality Assurance

The evaluation took place while MFAN was making strategic decisions regarding its composition, structure, governance rules, and agenda. Many of the evaluation deliverables had to be completed after strategic decisions needed to be made. To compensate, BLE Solutions and MFAN remained in close communication. Whenever MFAN needed information, BLE Solutions quickly passed along findings informally.

The evaluation was designed to fit within time and budgetary constraints, which limited the number of interviews with external actors in the Breadth phase. To compensate, BLE Solutions, in determining its purposive samples for these interviews, favored interviewees who had been involved with MFAN in multiple ways: as MFAN members, external actors, and/or policymakers.

The survey was designed to gather input from approximately 170 MFAN members and active members of the Advocacy Subcommittee who had been involved in MFAN over the past eight years. Some were difficult to locate. Additionally, the survey was administered at the height of summer vacation, which may have limited the response. Nonetheless, with assistance from MFAN, BLE Solutions achieved an adequate response rate (33 percent).

The retrospective nature of this evaluation presented limitations regarding possible time effects and accidental misrepresentation by interviewees and those who participated in workshops. Data collection primarily took place during the contentious 2016 presidential election, which may have influenced how respondents considered the future and reflected on the past. And, as is often the case in similar social science research, there were potential limitations regarding general selection effects, social desirability, and evaluation apprehension. To overcome these limitations, BLE Solutions designed multiple data collection efforts and systems to triangulate data in all phases.

<sup>12</sup> To guide this evaluation, Hewlett and MFAN created an evaluation advisory committee with two representatives from the Hewlett Foundation, two MFAN co-chairs, the executive director of the Hub (MFAN's secretariat), and a deputy. A few other MFAN members with leadership roles in MFAN or who represent key MFAN member organizations joined the committee for some meetings with the evaluation team.



# The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN)

Evaluation Report: 2008-2016

## Context of the Evaluation Process

This evaluation studied MFAN’s activities and results from 2008 through 2016.<sup>13</sup> The evaluation process took place from May 2016 through May 2017, during the 2016 U.S. elections. Midway through, Donald Trump was elected president, and on January 20, 2017, he took office. In its first months, the new administration proposed cutting the State Department’s budget by one-third. The administration’s lack of support for foreign assistance was also illustrated by the lack of visibility of the Secretary of State and lack of senior staff at State; a delay nominating a USAID Administrator; and an executive order to reorganize executive branch agencies, including the State Department and all agencies involved in U.S. foreign assistance, potentially eliminating the leadership role of USAID.

In foreign assistance’s favor, the new administration retained a seat for USAID as a permanent member of the National Security Council (NSC) Deputies Committee, which had not been done before. Additionally, MFAN and its members identified a few potentially sympathetic voices within the administration whom they planned to approach. By May 2017, the administration had nominated someone to lead USAID who was very positively viewed within the development community.

The 115<sup>th</sup> Congress is not significantly different from the 114<sup>th</sup>. However, the divisions between the parties, highlighted during the presidential campaign, have continued, as evidenced by contentious cabinet nomination hearings and other partisan battles. Divisions within each party also remain.

MFAN benefits from still having many global development champions – both Republicans and Democrats – in Congress and in key committee and leadership roles. Therefore, Congress will likely offer more opportunities for MFAN over the next few years, and MFAN’s priorities may shift to defending existing budgets and legislation, rather than promoting new initiatives.

---

<sup>13</sup> All findings in this report refer to the timeframe studied: mid-2008 through mid-2016. Recommendations are offered in the context of the new political environment of early 2017, but do not reflect specific and evolving policies of the new administration.

# The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN)

Evaluation Report: 2008-2016

Findings

**MFAN's ultimate goal:**

- U.S. foreign assistance reformed to be more effective, efficient, and transparent.

**MFAN's intermediate goals:**

- Congress, the administration, and the development community working across parties, sectors, and cultural divides to reform U.S. foreign assistance.
- MFAN success in raising the administration's, Congress', the development community's, and the public's interest in, knowledge about, and willingness to modernize U.S. foreign assistance.

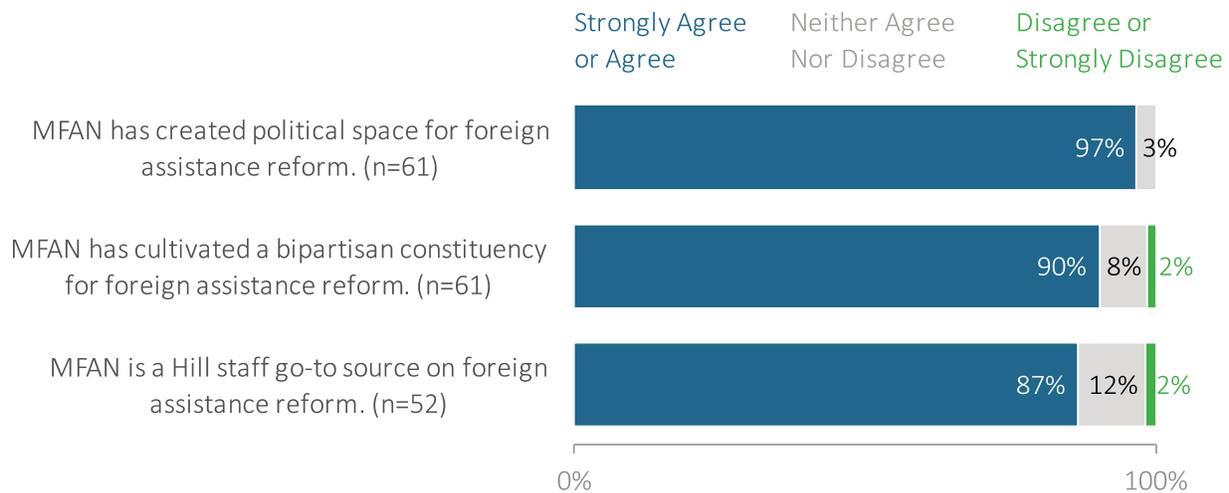
## Results

MFAN's results reflected changes in congressional legislation and administration policy. In many cases, the changes advanced development effectiveness. In a few cases, they protected gains already made, or avoided potentially more negative outcomes. The following section discusses these gains and the challenges MFAN faced, missed opportunities, and unintended impacts.

### Ultimate and Intermediate Goals

During the timeframe studied (mid-2008 through mid-2016), MFAN made progress advancing toward its ultimate goal: U.S. foreign assistance reformed to be more effective, efficient, and transparent. The first Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6) was issued. The Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) passed, enacting into law many of the Obama administration's aid reforms, which reflected MFAN's principles.<sup>14</sup> Respondents also shared similar views, noting that MFAN put foreign assistance on the reform agenda and kept it there by creating political space, cultivating a bipartisan constituency, and serving as the go-to source for Hill staff (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Survey respondents consistently believed in MFAN's value.<sup>15</sup>



**MFAN was part of a broader group that effectively encouraged the Obama administration to adopt more transparent and accountable practices in its foreign assistance.** As recounted by interviewees inside and outside MFAN, MFAN's influence can be seen in the ForeignAssistance.gov website, USAID's evaluation policy, the U.S. government's commitment to the International Aid Transparency Initiative, the revitalization of USAID (as seen in the creation of the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning and the budget office), and

<sup>14</sup> MFAN's contributions to these policy changes are described below and in Appendix 1.

<sup>15</sup> Percentages may add up to more than 100 percent, as a result of rounding numbers. The n's are all survey respondents who responded to these questions.

in other advances in the USAID Forward reform agenda, including progress toward implementing the Local Solutions initiative, through which USAID sought to increase its direct investment in partner governments and local organizations.

**However, achieving MFAN’s ultimate goal remains a work in progress.** A global development strategy that is regularly refreshed does not yet exist. A proposed re-write of the FAA, although introduced, has not yet been passed. Some Obama administration practices that were not enacted into law may not be sustained.

**MFAN has led and supported efforts that successfully helped the administration, Congress, and the development community work across parties, sectors, and cultural divides to reform U.S. foreign assistance.** One of MFAN’s most notable accomplishments has been its success bringing the development community together around a reform agenda. This was manifest in MFAN’s work supporting Congressman Howard Berman’s (D-CA) effort to rewrite the FAA. MFAN also fostered bipartisan congressional support for reform, notably evident in its instrumental role creating the bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Effective Foreign Assistance in 2010, and in its work on FATAA. In July 2016, FATAA, on which MFAN was a key external partner, passed the Senate and the House with strong bipartisan support.

**MFAN has successfully raised the Obama administration’s, Congress’, and the development community’s interest in, knowledge about, and willingness to modernize U.S. foreign assistance.** Prior to 2009, presidential initiatives, earmarks, and assigning “czars” to lead sector efforts were prominent ways to advance sectoral development interests. While presidential initiatives and earmarks remain, the development community is now more cautious about elevating one sector at the expense of others. Language about aid effectiveness has become mainstream.

**MFAN has been less successful at raising the public’s interest in modernizing U.S. foreign assistance.** MFAN has not strategically included the public among its target audiences. In its early years, MFAN conducted some public outreach through focus groups and a grassroots petition. However, it quickly decided other levers were more effective for attaining the desired results, and that it was better to focus its energies elsewhere.

## Gains

### ➤ Nature of gains

**MFAN has achieved quite a number of gains beyond those described above.** It has raised foreign assistance reform on the policy agenda, made its principles mainstream, brought together the development community on the issue, and built a bipartisan congressional constituency for reform. MFAN has also become a go-to source for congressional staff interested in advancing foreign assistance reform. Since many congressional MFAN allies

*“When we first started six years ago, committee staff weren’t convinced this was a problem or that our solution was the right solution. Now they understand it and have made it a priority. Now it is not an issue of ‘Is this a problem?’ Now they love effectiveness conversations, want to have more conversations. Awareness levels have increased a lot among committee staff. [This is e]ven more important on the Senate staff where there was staff turnover.”*

Congressional staffer

*“If [MFAN] hadn’t been pushing, we wouldn’t have done it. MFAN was unique in proactively pushing for an FAA rewrite and in its constant contact on the issue. For other actors, this was not a top priority issue.”*

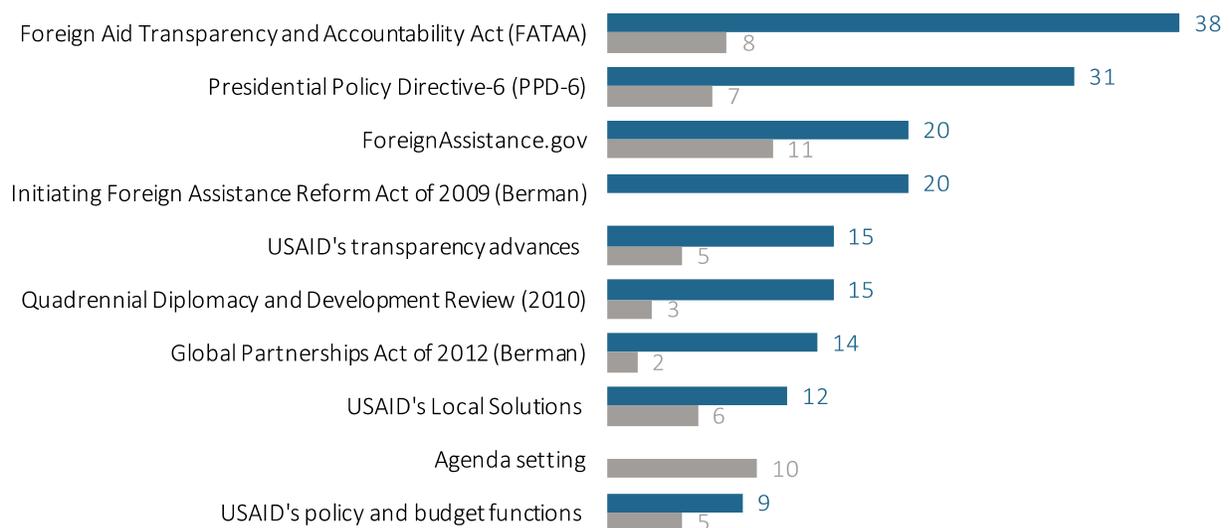
Congressional staffer

remain in their leadership positions in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, MFAN can maintain that role going forward.

**MFAN played a critical role in advancing legislative and policy changes that reflect key foreign assistance reform principles.** These have included, among other important changes, writing and introducing the Global Partnerships Act (GPA) to replace the FAA, passing and enacting FATAA, and advancing the local ownership agenda in USAID. To a far lesser extent, MFAN contributed to the issuance of the first Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6). As discussed below, each of these was the focus of deeper analysis in the evaluation.

Survey respondents and interviewees were relatively consistent in their rankings of MFAN’s policy contributions (Figure 2). They felt strongly about including “agenda setting” on the list and also mentioned the Local Solutions initiative relatively frequently.

Figure 2. FATAA and PPD-6 ranked highest among MFAN’s policy contributions.<sup>16</sup>



***The Global Partnerships Act (GPA), a bill aimed at replacing the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA), was written and introduced.*** Congressman Howard Berman (D-CA), chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC), introduced the GPA (a rewrite of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961) in December 2012 largely because of MFAN’s support, according to a key policymaker and his staff. It was at the urging of an MFAN co-chair that Congressman Berman decided to pursue rewriting the FAA. Although he recognized the need to rewrite the FAA, it was a heavy lift, and he had many other priorities. Therefore, according to a key policymaker, “It took someone to raise it.” MFAN’s leadership and Hub and a few influential members then played a critical role bringing together the development community and bridging sectoral divisions to support this effort and foreign assistance reform more generally. MFAN also kept pressing Congressman Berman’s office to draft the new legislation. Absent MFAN, Congressman Berman and his

<sup>16</sup> The numbers in the chart are the number of survey or interview respondents who listed each policy contribution. The survey question was “Please select the four policy areas to which you believe MFAN made the greatest contribution.” The interview question was similar, but open-ended.

staff would not have pursued an FAA rewrite, and the development community might not have found a similar opportunity to come together around a common reform agenda.

While the GPA did not advance out of committee, the drafting process also benefitted reform efforts by generating ideas and bill language that both congressional staffers and advocates continue to reference in advancing narrower reform legislation.

***The Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) was enacted into law.*** FATAA “require[d] that detailed foreign assistance information be regularly updated on the ForeignAssistance.gov website, and that development and economic assistance be rigorously monitored and evaluated.”<sup>17</sup> FATAA’s passage and enactment in July 2016 resulted from the long-term, concerted effort of Congressmen Ted Poe (R-TX) and Gerry Connolly (D-VA), Senators Richard Lugar (R-IN), Marco Rubio (R-FL), and Ben Cardin (D-MD) and their offices, along with support from MFAN (particularly the Hub and co-chairs), Oxfam, the Consensus for Development Reform, the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC), and InterAction, with each playing a critical role. According to congressional staffers, MFAN played the most vital role: MFAN presented the bill idea to Congressman Poe’s office, engaged in the most regular contact with his and other congressional offices on the bill, and conducted most of the outsider legwork to keep the bill moving. Absent MFAN, the quality or focus of the bill might have changed, some congressional offices might have focused on competing priorities instead, or broad-based political support might not have emerged.

FATAA’s passage strengthened Obama administration reforms by enshrining them in statute, although the congressional offices involved in leading its passage, MFAN, and its allies need to keep a close eye on its implementation.

***USAID advanced its reforms related to local ownership<sup>18</sup> and accountability.*** MFAN members worked together to help USAID adjust its agency-wide program cycle guidance<sup>19</sup> to support greater country ownership and improve evaluations, according to USAID staff members. MFAN was a strong voice for country ownership within the Obama administration, the development community, and on the Hill, clarifying what ownership meant, and amplifying the ownership message. MFAN’s focus on country ownership and the publication of *The Way Forward: A Reform Agenda for 2014 and Beyond* were instrumental in helping USAID staff work through what it means for problems and priorities to be owned and resolved locally, and how USAID can support, rather than supplant, local systems to produce and sustain results.

During the contentious roll out of USAID’s Implementation and Procurement Reform (IPR) initiative in 2012, the MFAN Hub, along with members such as Oxfam, successfully waged a campaign that helped neutralize opposition from international NGOs and counterbalance the voice of private contractors, both of whom argued for recognition of the important roles their institutions played helping local organizations strengthen their capacities. MFAN and its members also helped USAID rebrand the initiative as Local Solutions to emphasize that, more than a procurement reform effort, it was an effort to support locally-driven and owned development approaches.

<sup>17</sup> George Ingram, Carolyn Miles, and Connie Veillette, July 6, 2016, “Foreign Aid Accountability Bill Unanimously Approved by Congress, Heads to the President for Signature,” MFAN, <http://modernizeaid.net/2016/07/foreign-aid-accountability-bill-unanimously-approved-congress-heads-president-signature/>.

<sup>18</sup> MFAN and the development community generally use the term “country ownership.” The term “local ownership” is most favored by USAID reformers. USAID uses “local ownership” to refer not only to partner governments, but also civil society and the private sector.

<sup>19</sup> USAID’s “Program Cycle, codified in the *Automated Directive Systems (ADS) 201*, is USAID’s operational model for planning, delivering, assessing, and adapting development programming.” See <https://usaideallearninglab.org/program-cycle-overview-page>.

*“On IPR/Local Solutions there was a lot of pushback from the partner community, and I know MFAN tried to play a broker, mediator role, bringing the different groups together and explaining the different positions.”*

USAID senior staff

*“The local ownership piece consistently stayed in there, not only because people worked hard in this building, but I really believe the consistent MFAN voice was absolutely instrumental. I’ve watched a lot of different stakeholder groups over the years, and what I saw with MFAN on this issue, they stuck with it, and they had something to bring to the table to help us figure out how do you really integrate [local ownership] into project design and evaluation.”*

USAID senior staffer

MFAN’s Country Ownership Working Group was an invaluable sounding board for USAID staff, helping them figure out how to implement the Local Solutions initiative and overcome internal obstacles. MFAN’s efforts also pushed USAID to stay focused on institutionalizing local ownership to achieve improved development impact. Absent MFAN, there would not have been such a strong external voice supporting ownership and USAID’s reforms, and USAID would have been unlikely to overcome the internal obstacles on the issue.

**The first-ever Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6) was issued in September 2010.** MFAN’s internal work on shared principles and its external advocacy prior to the 2008 elections and during the subsequent Obama transition appear to have provided content and political momentum for PPD-6. An MFAN founder entered the Obama administration, and was a primary drafter of PPD-6. However, most interviewees agree that MFAN was not a key player in influencing the drafting of the directive. An exception is in the area of country ownership: some interviewees believe MFAN members may have contributed to the directive’s commitment to this concept. Absent MFAN, PPD-6 would likely still have been issued, given the Obama administration’s support for these concepts. However, responding to the global recession might have lowered the topic on the list of presidential priorities without the visible network of thought leaders advocating for the emerging consensus on how to reform foreign assistance.

All of these gains are explored in greater detail in [Appendix 1](#).

### ➤ Sustained accomplishments

**Among its many accomplishments, a number stand out as unlikely to be undone in the near future.** MFAN has changed the way the development community talks about development. As noted above, MFAN’s principles, which have also been promoted by others, are now ingrained in the development community: transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and country ownership (to a lesser degree). In advocating for these principles, MFAN has also helped build a bipartisan constituency in Congress in support of foreign assistance reform. As a reflection of this, FATAA was enacted, the bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Effective Foreign Assistance continues to operate, and in March 2017, with MFAN’s help, the caucus expanded to include the Senate. Finally, MFAN has influenced how USAID conducts development by working with USAID staff to incorporate aid reform principles into USAID’s operational policy for programming, as captured in ADS 201,<sup>20</sup> USAID’s program cycle operational policy that provides guidelines for planning, delivering, assessing, and adapting development programming at the country level.

<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/201.pdf>.

## ➤ Factors contributing to gains

A number of MFAN's characteristics contributed to its gains, including MFAN's membership, focus, strategy, tactics, and operations.

- **Members' stature:** MFAN members are notable for their stature, which has translated into convening power, access, and influence with key decision makers in Congress and the previous administration. MFAN members' stature was at its height in MFAN's earliest years (2008-2009), before members entered the Obama administration. From 2010 through 2013, the remaining plus ones who replaced those who had entered the administration had comparatively less influence. In part as a result of this, while MFAN's membership broadened during this time, its decision-making authority narrowed to MFAN's co-chairs and the Hub. In its most recent phase (2014-2016), MFAN worked to enhance the stature of its Executive Committee and deputies. Its plans going forward continue in that direction. (See Membership and Engagement section below.)
- **Knowledge and expertise about policymaking and technical content:** Among its membership, MFAN gathered former congressional staffers, former administration officials, and technical experts. This mix gave MFAN expertise in congressional processes, administration policymaking, and global development effectiveness. (See Membership and Engagement section below.)
- **Singular, nonpartisan focus:** MFAN's singular focus on foreign assistance reform, framed as a nonpartisan issue, has given it a unique ability to work with both Democratic and Republican policymakers to provide constant engagement on the topic. Other organizations, although interested in the issue, had other priorities that also demanded their attention and potentially competed with reform messages. (See Membership and Engagement section below.)
- **Multi-pronged strategy:** To advance its priorities, MFAN targeted Congress, the administration, and the broader development community. In that way, it built a broad constituency for its issues, and increased pressure on all to advance reforms.
- **Tactics:** In its advocacy, MFAN successfully used a number of tactics. These included:
  - Coordinating the development community's engagement, which its stature allowed it to do;
  - Providing an external voice supporting policymakers' efforts, thus providing welcome cover to policymaker allies;
  - Offering policymakers constant engagement, which helped them stay focused on MFAN's priority issues in spite of competing priorities, and gave them additional support in advancing their efforts;
  - Supplying policymakers with content to include in draft policies and legislation;
  - Calling on policymakers to make change, and seeking to influence them by publishing papers, statements, and blogs, holding public meetings, and occasionally leading petitions from the development community or the public more broadly;
  - Educating members of Congress and their staff;
  - Using informal relationships with policymakers to gain access and have influence through behind-the-scenes campaigns;
  - Meeting with policymakers to build support and overcome opposition; and
  - Holding policymakers publicly accountable for their positions and actions.

- **Internal alignment and collaboration:** In recent years (2013-2016), MFAN adopted a thematically-focused working group model, which it has used to coordinate and align member organizations to undertake and share research, build relationships with key policymakers, and spread and amplify similar messages. (See Coalition Effectiveness section below.)

## Challenges

**MFAN has faced a few challenges, mostly related to its size.** Some interviewees noted that MFAN's effectiveness would increase if it had relationships with more congressional offices, especially Freedom Caucus members, and with more U.S. government agencies. However, internal and external actors note that MFAN is a small network with limited bandwidth, so it must carefully prioritize how it spends its energy.

**MFAN needed to balance policy sharpness with political heft.** The first comes with a small membership and a controlled message, while the second results from both policy sharpness and working with a larger group with more policymaker connections. In its earliest years, MFAN benefited from being a small group of like-minded organizations capable of producing an initial policy document with clear policy stances: *New Day, New Way*. However, MFAN recognized that to get its messages broadly shared with Congress and beyond, it needed to include advocacy organizations. Even from the beginning, MFAN faced challenges getting some of its advocacy organization and NGO members on board with its agenda. Some worried a reform message could negatively affect advocacy for increased foreign assistance funding, while others relied on earmarks to get funding for prioritized sectors. While MFAN overcame the former concern, the latter, according to some MFAN members, caused MFAN to water down its messages and take an insufficiently strong stance on presidential initiatives and earmarks, which are imperative to address in order to promote aid effectiveness.

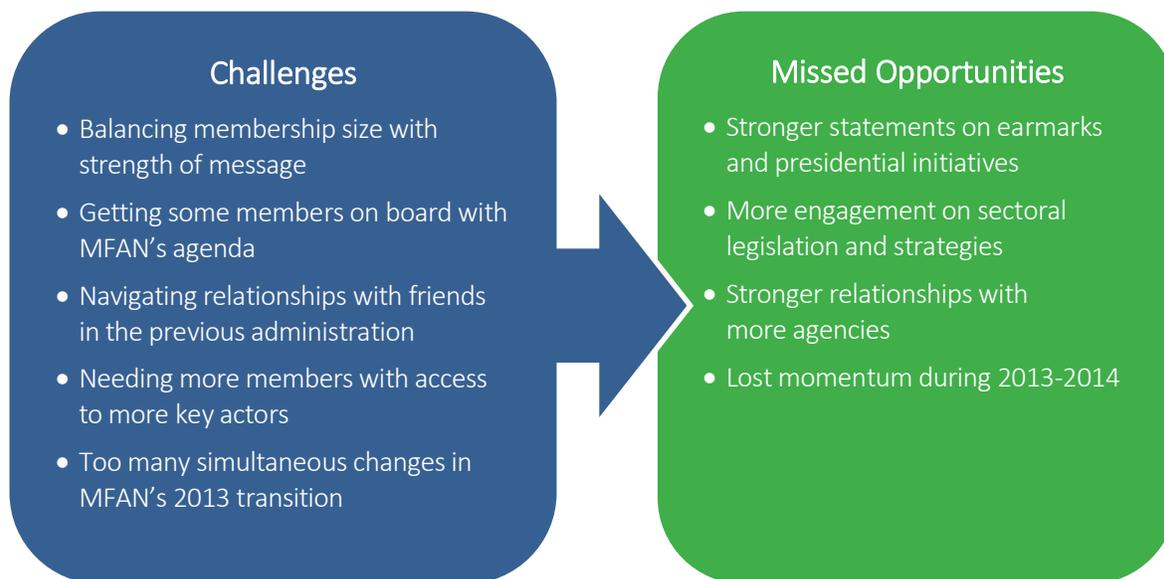
**MFAN had to work hard to maintain the stature of its members,** as key members have left MFAN to enter the administration, or move to other jobs. In response to political shifts in Congress, MFAN has had to reach out to new individuals and organizations to ensure its on-going, high-level access to key decision makers. After the 2010 congressional elections, MFAN intentionally invited more Republicans to take leadership roles within it.

**In its relationships with the Obama administration, two challenges may have negatively affected MFAN effectiveness.** First, MFAN was perceived both internally and externally as unwilling to critique its friends in the administration, or according to some, unwilling to critique the administration in general. Some MFAN members saw this as a desire to not lose access to certain decision-making circles. Others described difficulty determining whether Obama administration friends wanted external pressure. Still others stated that, with limited bandwidth, MFAN could not push all of its friends, and had to strategically choose where it placed its energies. Relatedly, some felt MFAN members did not understand the difficulty of reform in a large bureaucracy. While MFAN members had deep knowledge of congressional processes, their knowledge of USAID processes was more limited.

## Missed Opportunities

Some of MFAN's challenges led to missed opportunities, according to those internal and external to MFAN. Some were discussed above, but a few nuances merit mention here.

Figure 3. MFAN's challenges led to missed opportunities.



*The elimination of presidential initiatives and earmarks is critical to increased aid effectiveness*, so development strategies and investments can be decided based on country needs. Yet, MFAN was unable to make strong statements on this topic, because some of its members feared that losing earmarks without increased support for country ownership would result in less funding for aid.

MFAN had a positive influence *integrating reform principles into sectoral legislation*, such as the Global Food Security Act, the Water for the World Act, and the Education for All Act. However, some external stakeholders thought MFAN could have done more. Some also thought MFAN could have done more to *influence USAID's sectoral strategies*. At first, these processes were less consultative, but their openness increased over time, possibly at least in part because MFAN explicitly raised the issue of more open policymaking in its second paper, *From Policy to Practice*.

While MFAN had very strong relationships with some people in some agencies, had it developed *stronger relationships with more people in more agencies*, it could have addressed reform issues more broadly, rather than at an agency level. Yet, a smaller membership for MFAN, as well as the loss of members to the Obama administration and other job changes, meant limited bandwidth and sometimes gaps in expertise, experience, and access to key decision makers.

There is broad internal agreement that *MFAN lost momentum during its 2013-2014 transition*. In 2013, MFAN undertook too many changes simultaneously. Some were MFAN's choice. It brought on new co-chairs, established a new fiscal sponsor, and created a newly independent Hub with a new executive director. However, some changes seemed beyond MFAN's control. MFAN's primary funder wanted to support organizations aligned with its strategy. In response, MFAN chose to shift its agenda, with varied responses among its members.

To support its new agenda, MFAN established a new structure with thematically-focused working groups, and appointed new working group co-chairs. MFAN’s new leaders at various levels, most of whom had other full-time jobs and limited time allocated for MFAN, needed time to clarify roles and relationships in MFAN’s new structure, as well as how they would work on MFAN’s new agenda. Many felt frustrated when this led to several missed opportunities to advance policy change. For example, one MFAN member said MFAN delayed its action on an appropriations bill and an inspector general report. Fortunately, while this was felt within MFAN, it was not mentioned by external actors when asked about MFAN’s areas for improvement.

## Unintended Impacts

MFAN’s work has produced some unintended impacts – positive and negative. Most have been previously discussed. The third, related to MFAN’s agenda and structure, merits mention.

Figure 4. MFAN experienced some unintended impacts – positive and negative.

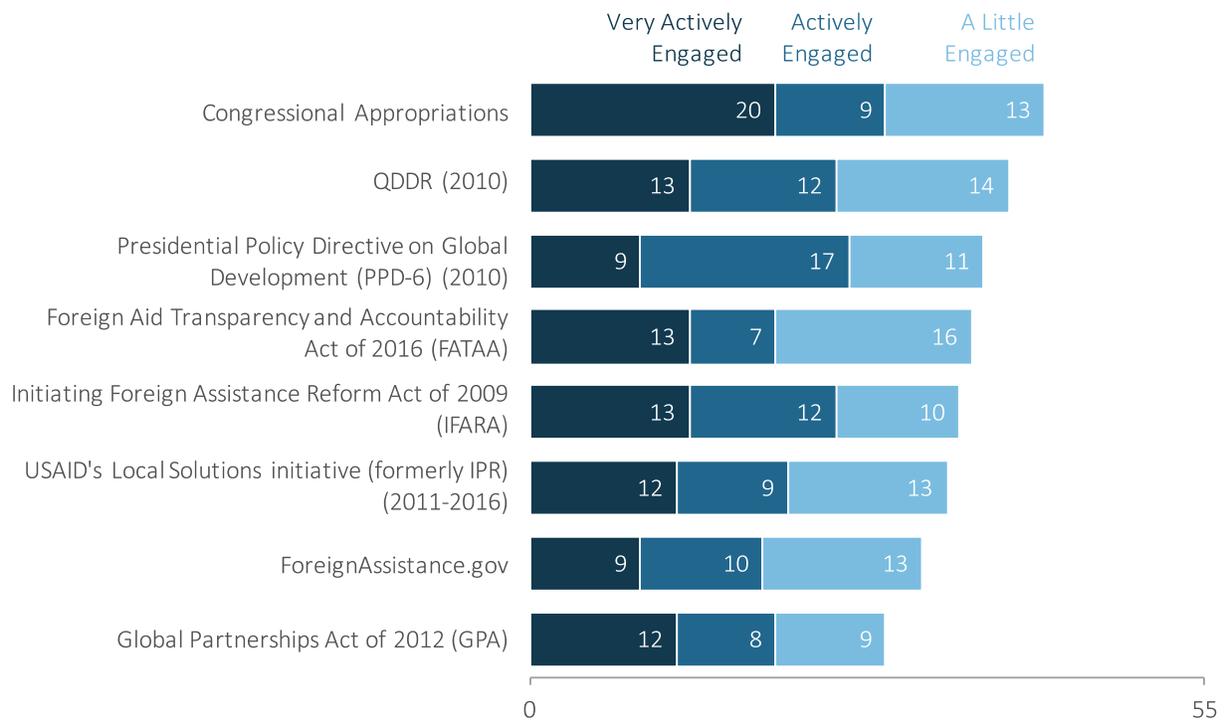
Positive	Negative
Some of MFAN’s early members joined the Obama administration, taking MFAN’s principles and agenda with them.	 When early members joined the Obama administration, MFAN lost some clout, and hesitated to push too hard on administration allies.
MFAN has built a bipartisan congressional constituency in favor of foreign assistance reform (although more needs to be done).	 When MFAN broadened its coalition to have more political heft, it lost its ability to make some sharp statements.
Easy flow of information in MFAN’s early days led to unplanned partnerships and activities among members.	 When MFAN shifted to focus on country ownership and transparency and accountability, it lost the interest of some previously highly engaged members.

**One positive, unintended impact of MFAN’s structure prior to 2013 was an easy flow of information among members.** At regular principals’ and plus ones’ meetings, members could share intelligence and concerns. For example, two members who did not know each other well before recognized a mutual interest and co-authored a report on budget priorities. Unintentionally, when MFAN shifted in the 2013-2014 transition to a structure based on thematically-focused working groups, that easy flow of information, which according to some was one of MFAN’s greatest assets, diminished.

**On the negative side, the 2013-2014 shift to a narrower agenda and a thematically-focused working group structure unintentionally decreased engagement by some members who were more interested in an agenda with goals with potentially broader impact.** While MFAN determined near the end of the Obama administration that it was time to institutionalize the gains already being made via narrower legislation and policy, some members still wanted space to discuss principles and bigger reform efforts. This mismatch of interests caused some previously prominent MFAN members to become less engaged in MFAN’s activities. Those who remained engaged contributed to notable changes, such as the enactment of FATAA and USAID’s advances promoting its Local Solutions initiative. However, had more members

remained more engaged, MFAN would have had additional bandwidth to address other issues as they arose and to build or strengthen more relationships with more policymakers.

Figure 5. Survey respondents were most actively engaged in advocating for the outcomes to which they believed MFAN made the greatest contribution.<sup>21</sup>



<sup>21</sup> The n's are the number of survey respondents who provided each response.



## Adaptability

**Because policy environments change quickly, adaptability is a critical skill for advocates to hone.** Advocates must constantly monitor their environment, assess the continued relevance of their strategy and tactics, and make adjustments to ensure their efforts remain on track to influence targeted policies in intended ways. The characteristics outlined in the box below can help an organization or network do this. See also [Appendix 2. Literature Review](#).

### Organizational characteristics critical to adaptive capacity, by Tanya Beer (unpublished)

- Conduct regular assessments of needs, resources, the environment, risks, opportunities, and stakeholders, reflect on their implications for strategy, and adjust accordingly;
- Seek diverse perspectives;
- Build connections and collaborate with strategic allies with complementary assets;
- Put processes in place for collecting and reflecting on metrics for progress;
- Create decision-making structures that promote flexibility and nimbleness;
- Have access to significant amounts of unrestricted funds;
- Encourage risk-taking, experimentation, and creative thinking;
- Balance emergent strategies and planned strategies; and
- Act proactively, not just reactively.

The following section discusses how MFAN’s agenda evolved in response to its changing environment, what MFAN had in place to enable its adaptability, and how its adaptability could be strengthened.

## Evolution of MFAN’s Agenda

**Between 2008 and 2016, MFAN’s agenda evolved through three phases.** In each iteration of MFAN’s agenda, MFAN has contributed to some progress and also faced limits on what it could realistically achieve, given the environment and its resources available.

**In 2008 and 2009, with the promise of a new administration and Congress friendly to foreign assistance, MFAN focused on agenda setting and broad goals** to raise U.S. foreign assistance reform on the policy agenda. MFAN released *New Day, New Way*, which reflected and promoted consensus views on reform. It began to work with members of Congress on reform legislation. MFAN pressed the White House to develop a global development strategy. In 2010, the Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6) – the first of its kind – was announced. However, according to external and internal actors, MFAN had a limited role in influencing its content once the drafting process began. Other criticism at this time stated that MFAN did not put enough pressure on the State Department to make its first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) a more open and consultative process.

**When the 2010 congressional elections ushered in a much more conservative House leadership, MFAN shifted to advocating for policy adoption and implementation related to narrower goals.** MFAN valued the creation of the Consensus for Development Reform comprised of conservative thought leaders, policy experts, and private sector leaders who were well positioned to bring a U.S. foreign assistance reform

message to congressional conservatives. FATAA progressed, and reforms with the administration advanced, although both encountered more hurdles than were expected. As discussed above, external actors felt MFAN could have done more during this period, including working to institutionalize reforms throughout the executive branch, rather than focusing most heavily on USAID, and also serving as a more consistent watchdog on PPD-6 implementation.

**In 2014, at the beginning of the final years of the Obama administration, MFAN continued its advocacy for policy adoption and implementation with even narrower goals aimed at consolidating the reforms that the administration had put forward.** FATAA passed and was enacted, while reforms advanced within the administration, although they still faced hurdles. Again, external actors thought MFAN might have been overly focused on USAID, and could have done more to support reform at other government agencies to have a greater impact at the administration level.

**Agendas with broader and narrower goals each have their places within a political and policy environment,** as MFAN has demonstrated. At the beginning of an administration and Congress that both stated an openness to foreign assistance reform principles, it made sense for MFAN to focus on policy agenda setting, more visible action, and goals with potentially broader impact. Once an administration and Congress are advancing reforms, it is often time to promote policy adoption and implementation. At some points, both might be required.

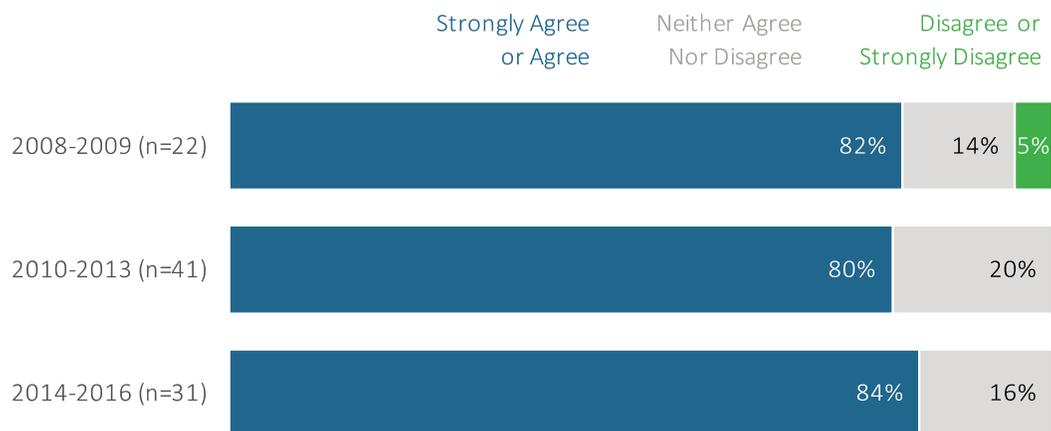
MFAN currently faces a new administration less supportive of foreign assistance, as evident in its call for steep cuts to the foreign assistance budgets, while Congress continues to be interested in foreign assistance reform principles. Opportunities exist to continue working with members of Congress who are advancing foreign assistance legislation and appear willing to oppose administration policies that undermine it. At the same time, MFAN can take more of a visible, agenda-setting approach to help defend foreign assistance funding and support.

## MFAN's Adaptability to External Factors

**MFAN effectively used policy environment monitoring information to make strategic decisions about timing and activities,** according to survey respondents. They found MFAN good at adapting to external political changes, although there may have been some missed opportunities. Internally, MFAN's near-consensus decision-making process<sup>22</sup> and leadership transitions slowed MFAN's adaptability at various times, especially during MFAN's 2013-2014 transition.

<sup>22</sup> From the beginning, MFAN used a near-consensus model of decision making (i.e., discussing issues and making decisions that the vast majority of members consent to without formal voting).

Figure 6. MFAN used policy environment information effectively.<sup>23</sup>



*"We had to go back and resolve people's concerns regarding language. MFAN gave us educated input on this. They could propose alternative language that would appeal to the Members without gutting the bill."*

Congressional staffer

MFAN's success in helping advance policy change and adapting to external factors has been linked to:

- Constant and ongoing engagement by the Hub and select MFAN members with policymakers, through which MFAN offers critical support;
- Development and maintenance of relationships and trust with members of Congress, their staff, and members of the administration, which provide MFAN with insights for identifying and responding to hurdles; and
- Agility in responding to those hurdles by offering constructive input and also setting up meetings, listening to concerns, and identifying satisfactory responses to those concerns that did not undermine the ultimate goal of the target policy.

**MFAN is viewed as vigilant and adaptive. However, at times, some observers believe that MFAN may have over-corrected in the face of changes in the political environment.** For example, after the 2010 congressional elections, according to many MFAN leaders, MFAN saw fewer legislative opportunities, and therefore pivoted to work more with the administration, while others believe the opportunities still existed but were simply different.

**Some also believe that MFAN has not always had the knowledge, connections, and access required to influence some key stakeholders in Congress and the administration.** In one case, one working group member commented on the time it took to develop trust with an agency staff member. Once trust finally existed, the staff member told MFAN where some of its challenges lay, which enabled MFAN to open a new channel for influence.

<sup>23</sup> Percentages may add up to more than 100 percent, due to rounding numbers. The n's reflect the number of survey respondents who were active in MFAN during each period listed and who responded to the question.

## Capitalizing on Change

While MFAN to a great degree responded well to the opportunities created by the new administration in 2009 and the new Congress following the 2010 elections, it also learned some lessons regarding how to capitalize on change. When the new administration took office in 2009, both MFAN and Congress anticipated a positive relationship supportive of foreign assistance legislation. Absent this anticipated support and, in the face of the administration's unexpected opposition to it in its early years (see [Appendix 1](#)), broad legislative change became much more difficult to achieve, if not impossible. Nonetheless, the legislative initiatives under way still played important roles raising U.S. foreign assistance reform on the policy agenda, and supporting some of the administration's own policy reforms.

In the wake of the 2010 congressional elections, MFAN learned to look for unlikely allies and ways to share MFAN's message with them, as well as more ways to include foreign assistance reform principles in related legislation already advancing in Congress.

## Strengthening MFAN's Adaptive Capacity

MFAN, in many regards, has strong adaptive capacity. However, there is always room to strengthen it further. Of the characteristics identified by Tanya Beer of the Center for Evaluation Innovation (see box above and [Appendix 2. Literature Review](#)), MFAN has a good track record of conducting assessments, seeking diverse perspectives, building connections and collaborations, and creating decision-making structures that promote flexibility. It has also been lucky to have access to unrestricted funds. Continuing to hone these characteristics will be especially important as MFAN seeks ways to work in the current political environment.



### Coalition Effectiveness

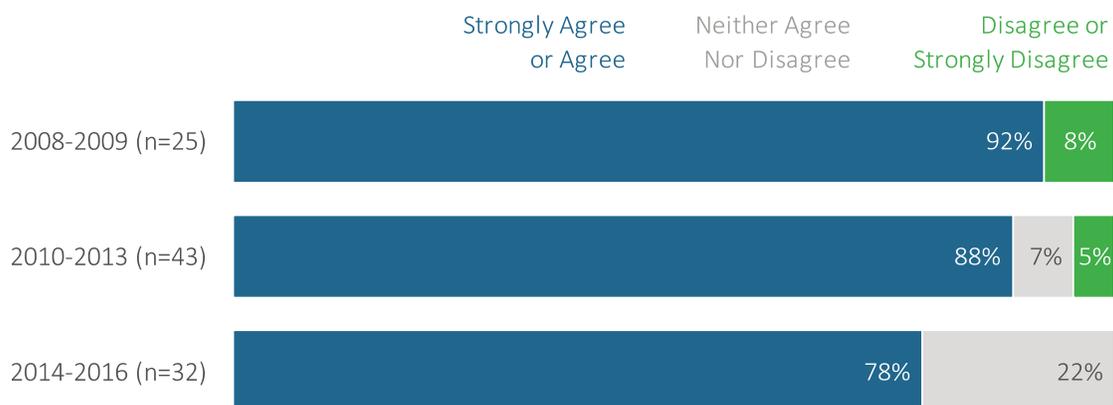
A coalition's effectiveness is determined by the ability of members to focus collectively on a common purpose and shared goals; align their assets to create opportunities they would not have alone; and take joint action together.<sup>24</sup> This section explores the effectiveness of MFAN's coalition during each of its phases, with a focus on MFAN's purpose, its structure and leadership, and its decision-making process.

## Common Purpose

The purpose and goals of the MFAN coalition were clearly stated and agreed to by the vast majority of members throughout MFAN's history (Figure 7). With the publication of *New Day, New Way* in 2008, MFAN laid out a bold, shared agenda for reform. This was followed in 2011 with the publication of *From Policy to Practice*, which specified a set of common principles for redesigning U.S. policies to have maximum impact and "achieve broad-based, sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty in developing countries." Members were asked to agree to these goals, agenda, and principles before they joined MFAN.

<sup>24</sup> Jared Raynor, March 2011, What Makes an Effective Coalition? TCC Group, [http://www.tccgrp.com/pdfs/What\\_Makes\\_an\\_Effective\\_Coalition.pdf](http://www.tccgrp.com/pdfs/What_Makes_an_Effective_Coalition.pdf).

Figure 7. MFAN’s purpose and goals were clear, although this diminished over time.<sup>25</sup>



Agreement was strongest during 2008 and 2009, when MFAN’s agenda was being formulated, and there was a high degree of alignment among a small group of like-minded people who were optimistic that enacting comprehensive foreign aid reform was possible. In MFAN’s middle years, purpose and goals remained clear, even with more members participating, which made reaching near-consensus decisions more challenging. In the 2014–2016 period, an increased percentage of members were neutral on whether MFAN’s purpose and goals were clear. Several MFAN members had difficulty reconciling MFAN’s previous focus on agenda setting and broad policy goals with the decision in 2014 to focus on two “narrower” issues, country ownership and accountability.

## MFAN Structure

Several elements of MFAN’s structure have been consistent since its inception, including the positions of co-chairs, principals, and plus ones/deputies. MFAN has been supported throughout its existence by a secretariat (the Hub) and consultants. In earlier years, MFAN included functional working groups: communications, advocacy, and a legislative group (which became the Hill sub-working group). The Hill group continued, while the others did not. In 2014, MFAN added thematic working groups.

**Co-chairs:** Co-chairs are the public face of MFAN and their stature demonstrates MFAN’s credentials to lead bi-partisan aid reform. MFAN’s original co-chairs both worked at think tanks. They volunteered to co-chair MFAN during its initial formation in 2008, and were highly motivated to shape and guide MFAN’s agenda. It was a time of great optimism about reform that was signaled by Obama’s election, and some MFAN members from CGD and CAP were interested in joining the new administration. After the election, both co-chairs indeed left MFAN to enter the administration. Two new co-chairs were appointed, both from NGOs. They reoriented MFAN to focus on advocacy in Congress. After the 2010 election, a third co-chair was appointed to increase MFAN’s ability to reach out to Republican leaders. In 2014, two of the three co-chairs stepped down, and two new co-chairs came in. The third remained for continuity.

In general, the co-chair model has worked well. Since 2010, it has ensured that the leadership of the coalition represents a diverse cross-section of members; and it distributes leadership responsibilities among co-chairs who have busy roles within their own organizations. However, MFAN has no clear process in place to appoint and transition co-chair leadership. The co-chair transition in 2014 was

<sup>25</sup> The n’s reflect the number of survey respondents who were active in MFAN during each period listed and who responded to the question.

especially challenging, when MFAN was also setting up an independent Hub, re-organizing its leadership structure, and establishing two new working groups.

**Principals:** Principals are the key group that MFAN co-chairs consult to make decisions for MFAN. Principals most often lead MFAN member organizations or key programs within those organizations, or they are influential individuals because of their past policymaking roles. In MFAN's first phase, there was a small group of principals who were senior leaders from think tanks and NGOs, as well as former policy officials. Many already had pre-existing working relationships with each other, so there was a high degree of trust and like-mindedness.

The number of principals expanded during MFAN's middle years (2011-2013) with more NGOs, sector-focused organizations and others invited to join MFAN. Expanding the number of principals to 36 and increasing MFAN members' diversity made the process of reaching near consensus more difficult, which at times was frustrating for members and Hewlett staff. At the same time, the prospects for broad reform had diminished.

With the decline in principal participation, a structural change in the role of the principals was needed. Therefore, in 2014, MFAN leadership created the Executive Committee and made it open to principals who were willing to attend regular MFAN meetings, act on behalf of MFAN, and also bring along a deputy who could commit time to MFAN's efforts. Eighteen principals joined the committee, while other principals remained members of MFAN, but had no role in decision-making. This creation of an executive committee with a smaller number of principals, along with adopting a more focused agenda, made decision-making more efficient.

A smaller principals group aligned around a clear set of priorities was more successful at reaching near consensus on pointed policy positions, such as those that existed in MFAN's early years and in the 2014-2016 time period.

**Plus ones/deputies:** Plus ones/deputies represent principals, produce policy papers, and drive the agenda of working groups. In MFAN's earliest years, plus ones were senior leaders in their organizations, and they met weekly to develop MFAN's foundational document, *New Day, New Way*. Several key plus ones left MFAN in 2009 to join the Obama administration. The remaining plus ones, who were in some cases more junior, did not always have the same level of experience or expertise to contribute at the same level.

In MFAN's middle years, plus ones began meeting every other week instead of weekly, and focused their agenda around activity updates rather than substantive discussion and debate, as had occurred in the early years. Communication between principals and plus ones ebbed, as plus ones' roles became less clear (see Figures 8 and 9).

In MFAN's internal restructuring from 2013 to 2014, plus ones – now called deputies – began leading and taking more active roles in MFAN's three thematic working groups. They continued to meet as deputies to coordinate and align efforts across the working groups, but had a less clear role in MFAN agenda setting and decision making for the coalition as a whole. Several MFAN members complained that principals and deputies were not communicating with each other about their organizational positions, which made decision making more challenging.

Plus ones/deputies are most effective when they have strong ties to principals who are committed to using their organization's ideas, assets, and resources to advance of MFAN's priorities. When the agenda is not aligned with member organization priorities, or when a member organization's capacity to invest staff resources is limited, then the quality of plus one/deputy participation declines. Committed member

organizations and strong principals with good communication skills, and a secretariat with good organizing skills are essential elements for plus one/deputy effectiveness.

**Working groups:** MFAN has experimented with working groups throughout its history. Its first working groups focused on function, such as communications or legislation. They operated on an as-needed basis and followed MFAN's overarching policy agenda. MFAN also established an advocacy subcommittee comprised of broader community organizations that were not all full-fledged MFAN members, but were interested in reform and willing to advocate on it. They met biweekly, but had no decision-making authority. The contribution of these working groups was inconsistent, because they did not have a clear policy purpose, and, in some cases, did not meet regularly.

In the 2013-2014 reorganization, MFAN formed two thematic-focused working groups on accountability and country ownership. Both had a policy focus, met regularly, and had decision-making authority. An Emerging Issues Working Group was also formed, but did not create a clear policy focus.

- The Accountability Working Group got off to a strong start. Its co-chairs were high-level deputies with time available to dedicate to working group tasks. They were well-positioned to help advance FATAA legislation, since they had both recently left the Hill and deeply understood the legislative process. Thus, they were successfully able to align member contributions and make effective strategic decisions.
- The Country Ownership Working Group (COWG) faced early challenges. There was disagreement between its co-chairs and some members on strategy. The working group co-chairs wanted to produce a metrics policy paper, while some working group members were pushing the group to engage more on the Hill with the appropriations process. These differences led to frustration among some members, which was exacerbated, because the metrics policy paper was taking a long time to be completed.

In retrospect, it is difficult to say whether there were missed opportunities. The metrics policy paper was issued in July 2015, and according to one MFAN member who had been a skeptic of the paper's value, "it was immediately embraced by the [USAID] Local Solutions team. It got them moving in the right direction. They had asked us for help, and this paper landed at USAID and made a positive impact quickly." In fact, the metrics paper might not have been published without the focus it received from the first COWG co-chairs, and USAID staff have repeatedly indicated how valuable that paper was to their thinking about how to develop metrics for sustainable local ownership.

- An Emerging Issues Working Group was also formed in 2014, but it never had a clear agenda. It was designed to be opportunistic and push reforms not covered by the two pillars. There was a series of four conversations on emerging issues during the first year, but after that, the group did not meet regularly. With limited bandwidth on the part of both working group co-chairs and an unclear process for deciding in which policy projects to invest time and resources, the group floundered. One co-chair reflected that for the group to have been really helpful, "they [would] have [had] to be ahead of the curve on ascending issues."

Working groups are most effective when they have a clear policy purpose and target for coordinated member activity. They function best when they have co-chairs who are well-positioned to engage and facilitate a collaborative process to align member efforts, as well as a committed membership with shared goals and shared accountability.

**Consultants:** Consultants were instrumental in developing MFAN’s brand and message, and conducting outreach to Republicans. In 2008, MFAN hired the *Glover Park Group (GPG)* to do messaging work for the coalition. Within the first year, GPG’s work expanded to also provide leadership for the Hub. Through 2013, GPG coordinated the Hub, liaised with the principals and co-chairs, and acted as primary convener of the plus ones. GPG also provided communications counsel to the coalition, assisting with media outreach and materials development, as well messaging and website content.

In 2009, MFAN hired *Capitol Management Initiatives* and later the *Kyle House Group (KHG)* to conduct outreach to Republican policymakers and thought leaders. KHG continues to serve as chief strategist and executor of outreach to Republicans for MFAN, meeting weekly with the MFAN Hub to discuss strategy.

Consultant arrangements have varied over time. In MFAN’s early years, GPG was instrumental in the formation and management of MFAN. MFAN benefitted from having a skilled, well-connected consultant in establishing its brand. In 2012 and 2013, when MFAN lost some focus and momentum, Hewlett program officers questioned the cost of having a consultant assume so many responsibilities. MFAN leadership, in consultation with Hewlett, decided to create an independent hub and bring all communication and management functions in house.

The use of consultants is often warranted when the coalition and its member organizations do not have the capability to provide the access or services the coalition needs to advance its agenda. The challenges are the cost of paying consultants over time, which is high, and the outsourcing of relationships to consultants, with the danger that those relationships are lost if the consulting relationship is ended.

## Secretariat (Hub) Structure

**The Hub’s role was to coordinate MFAN’s outreach, education, and communications work.** It was housed in an MFAN member, Bread for the World, and managed by a consultant, Glover Park Group, from 2008 through 2013. This arrangement was awkward for MFAN Hub staff, since at times they were taking direction from both Bread for the World and GPG. Tensions also emerged between GPG and Bread for the World about who was responsible for coordinating with the co-chairs. The process became even more complicated when Bread for the World’s executive director also became an MFAN co-chair, although the process also had the benefit of granting the Hub easy access to an MFAN co-chair and senior staff. Nonetheless, these challenges and the expense of funding two entities led to a decision to create an independent hub in 2014.

When MFAN created an independent hub, its staff included an executive director, a communications and policy manager, and a program associate. In 2015, MFAN promoted the program associate to program and membership coordinator, and hired a deputy director and senior policy advisor. Creating this position significantly increased the Hub’s capacity to engage with Congress and coordinate policy activities among member organizations.

**The existence of a dedicated and independent secretariat or Hub has been critical to the overall functionality of the coalition.** The secretariat or Hub has been best able to serve MFAN when its reporting lines, role, and authorities have been clear. This happened when the Hub was made independent and its role clarified after the 2013-2014 transition. Adequately staffing the secretariat has ensured MFAN’s ability to coordinate and align member contributions, making sure that the infrastructure and process for an effective coalition are well-functioning, and messages are communicated.

## Decision-Making Process

**Overall, MFAN’s decision-making process has worked well and contributed to significant policy outcomes throughout its history, although at times its near-consensus model has been cumbersome and missed opportunities.** From the beginning MFAN used a near-consensus model of decision making (i.e., discussing issues and making decisions that the vast majority of members consent to without formal voting). This model worked smoothly when the coalition was smaller and less diverse, during MFAN’s early years. Figures 8 and 9 below indicate high levels of agreement among principals and plus ones that the rules, procedures, and decision-making process were clear, efficient, and effective in these years. However, some members said MFAN’s near-consensus decision-making process may have impaired its ability to respond nimbly to the quickly changing environment in the summer of 2010, just before the release of PPD-6. Interviews indicate MFAN may have missed opportunities to press its agenda due to slow decision making, although whether this had a negative impact on the directive is uncertain.

**Using the near-consensus decision-making process became more cumbersome in MFAN’s middle years when principal and plus one membership expanded, and MFAN’s membership became more diverse.** Near consensus was harder to reach; according to one co-chair that meant MFAN had to “mitigate, water down, and take the edge and boldness off of its proposals.” This led to some friction between think tank members and NGOs about the trade-offs between bold and innovative on the one hand, and what was doable to deliver a win on the other. As a result, the co-chairs and the Hub took more control of the decision-making process. This made the process more nimble, but it also reduced members’ engagement.

In Figures 8 and 9 below, only about half of MFAN members agreed that MFAN’s decision-making process was clear, efficient, and effective in these middle years. Members were still engaged as needed by the co-chairs and the Hub to take actions in support of GPA, FATAA, and USAID Forward, and to counter anti-reform stakeholders in Congress and the development community, but they were not as fully engaged in proposal and strategy development as the early principals and plus ones.

**After MFAN’s restructuring in 2013 and 2014, MFAN decision-making was more distributed, with working groups having more autonomy to decide how to implement their agendas.** With deputies in working groups doing much of the week-to-week decision making, there was a less clear need for deputies to meet separately as a group. They also did not communicate as frequently with their principals, and did not partner as closely with them on developing their policy positions.

**In the later years, MFAN had a multi-layered decision-making structure.** The MFAN co-chairs, the Hub, and the Executive Committee decided on MFAN’s overarching agenda. Working group co-chairs had the authority to propose their own agendas and decide as a group the issues on which they wanted to work. According to one MFAN co-chair, the process for coordinating MFAN’s agenda and the working group agenda was a give-and-take process, with working groups sometimes not taking up an issue, because it did not fit into the overarching MFAN agenda. At other times, the lack of clarity about who had authority to make which types of decisions led to some confusion and miscommunication between the working group co-chairs and the MFAN co-chairs. More clarity regarding the relationship between the two roles was required.

Figure 8. The clarity of rules, procedures, and the decision-making process diminished over time.<sup>26</sup>

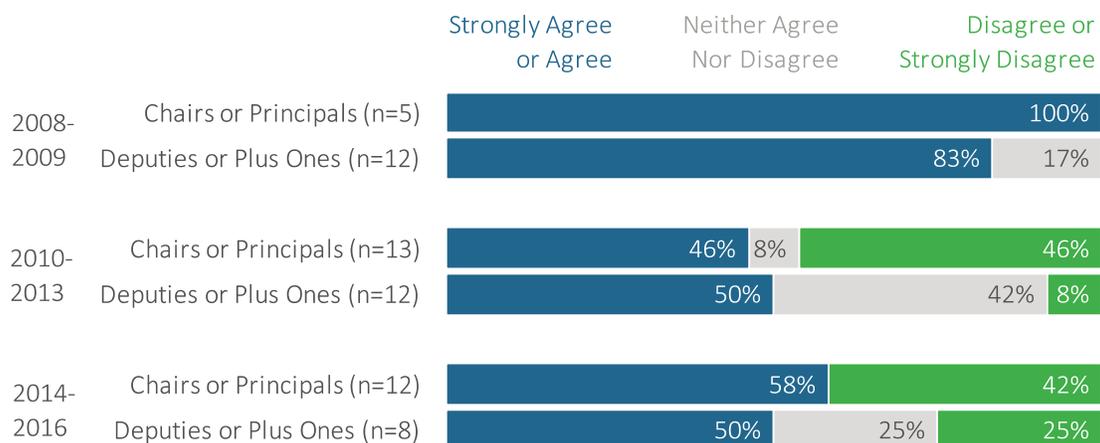
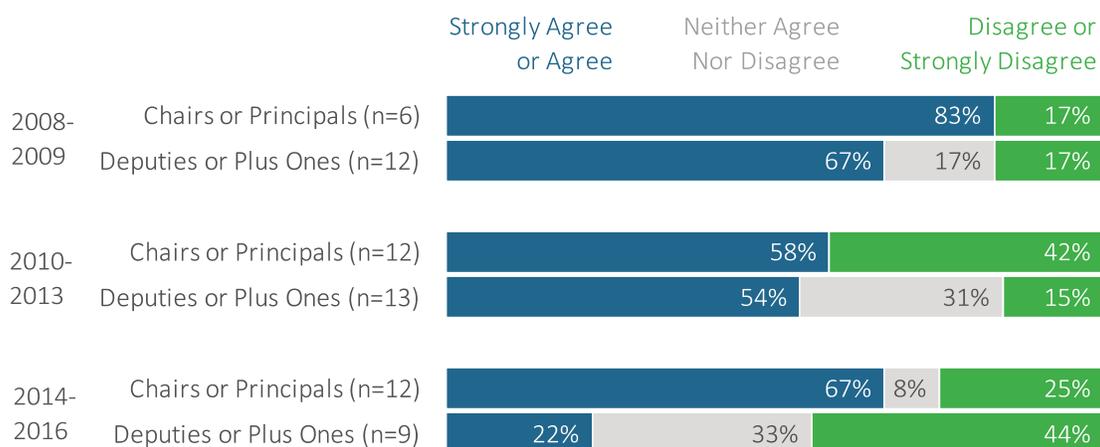


Figure 9. The efficiency and effectiveness of the decision-making process diminished over time.<sup>27</sup>



<sup>26</sup> Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding numbers. The n's reflect chairs and principals and deputies/plus ones active in each period listed and who responded to each question.

<sup>27</sup> Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding numbers. The n's reflect chairs and principals and deputies/plus ones active in each period listed and who responded to each question.



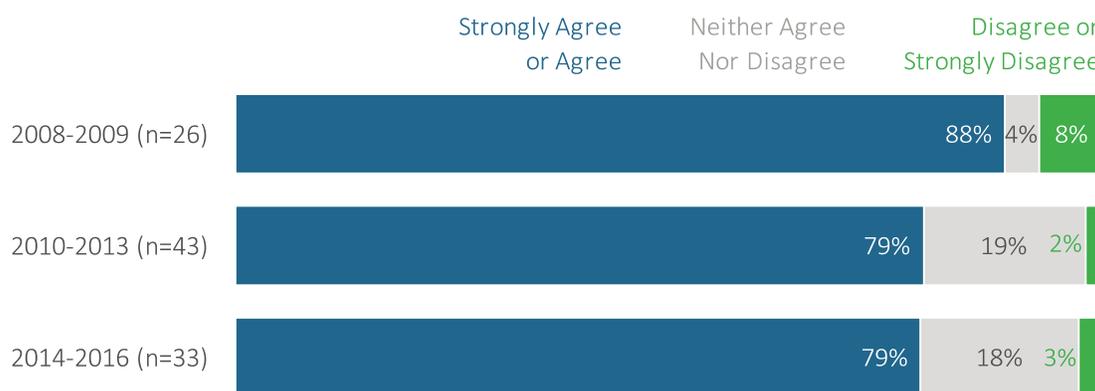
## Membership and Engagement

The composition, size, and level of participation by MFAN members has varied over MFAN’s history, as the coalition has adapted to internal and external opportunities and challenges. Throughout, MFAN members have had the stature, expertise, and commitment to make progress on MFAN’s priorities. While sustaining high levels of member engagement in MFAN’s activities has been challenging at times, the outcomes have been significant.

### Membership Composition

The composition of MFAN membership has had both strengths and weaknesses over time, resulting in a mixed assessment of MFAN’s ability to influence policy outcomes. The vast majority of members agreed that “together coalition members had the right access to policymakers to help achieve coalition goals” (Figure 10). This has remained quite consistent over MFAN’s eight-year history.

Figure 10. Together coalition members had the right access to policymakers to help achieve coalition goals.<sup>28</sup>



From 2008 to 2010, MFAN had sixteen principals representing think tanks, NGOs, and individual experts (primarily former policy officials). Some members thought that MFAN’s membership in its early years created “too much of an echo chamber,” and MFAN needed the reach of more organizations with larger advocacy capacities, such as NGOs, that had more influence with Congress, if it was going to effectively push its policy agenda. “We needed them in here, even if it meant softening our agenda some,” said one co-chair. MFAN expanded its membership significantly after 2011 to include more sector-focused organizations and NGOs. In addition to making consensus harder to reach, the larger coalition also made it difficult to keep members engaged.

Many of the external actors interviewed describe MFAN as a bipartisan organization. After the Republicans won the majority in House in 2010, MFAN actively recruited more Republican members and appointed a former Republican policymaker as an MFAN co-chair. MFAN also benefited from the creation of the Consensus for Development Reform (CDR), consisting of conservative and private sector leaders committed to fostering dialogue among a group of pro-development Republicans with an agenda that complemented and helped advance MFAN’s core priorities. CDR has encouraged greater interest in U.S. foreign assistance

<sup>28</sup> The n’s reflect MFAN members active in each period listed and who responded to the question.

reform among Republican members of Congress, and they played a critical role in helping the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) advance in the House.

**However, while the MFAN and CDR leaderships benefit from an overlap in membership, how the two entities communicate and coordinate between their members is less clear.** Although there is some membership overlap between MFAN and CDR, which improves alignment, a few MFAN members questioned the wisdom of having two separate structures. CDR is recognized for its conservative membership, which makes it more difficult for MFAN to be perceived as truly bipartisan.

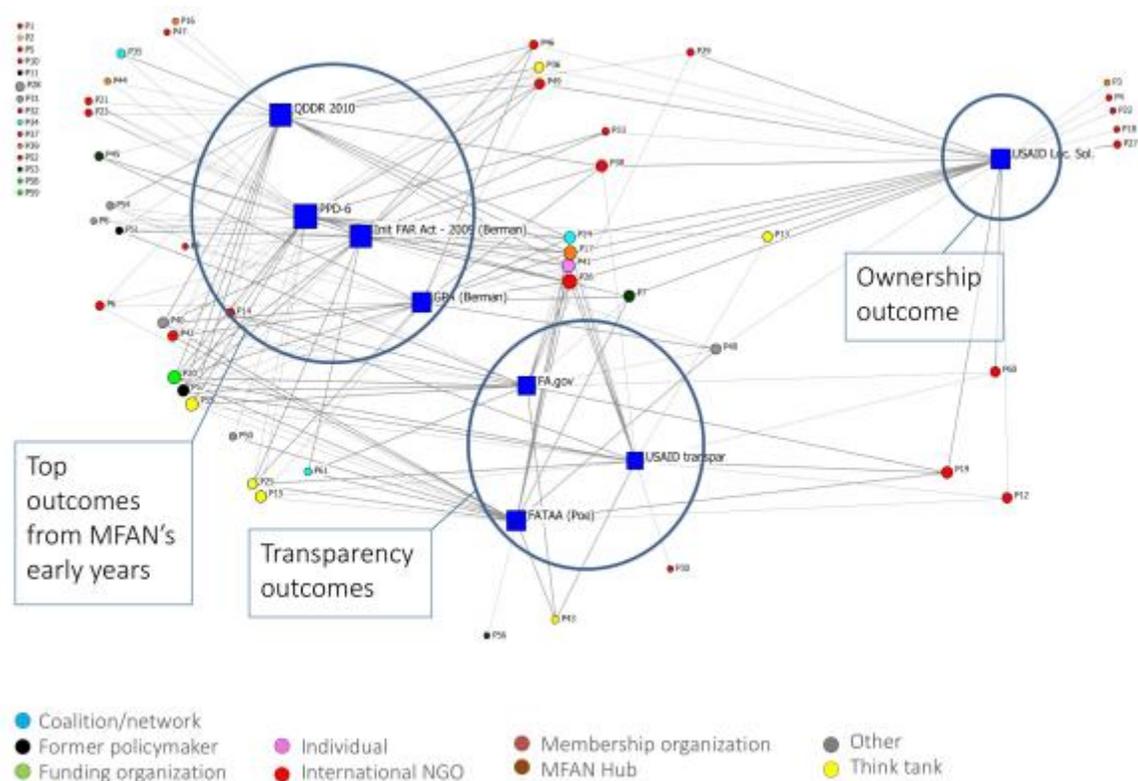
**Beginning in 2014, a few members became less active in MFAN because they wanted to address advocacy issues beyond what MFAN had prioritized.** NGOs continued to dominate the MFAN membership, with fewer think tank members participating as full members. This once again has opened MFAN to the criticism of being an echo chamber.

## Membership Engagement

**Engagement levels in MFAN have been uneven over the years, with MFAN co-chairs and the Hub often struggling to fully leverage the talents and contacts of principals and member organizations.** Think tanks were more engaged in the early years. With the election of President Obama, think tank members saw an opportunity to set a bold reform agenda, and several members had personal ambitions to enter the administration, which in part drove their engagement and commitment. In MFAN's middle years, senior-level engagement in MFAN – particularly by think tank members – ebbed. There was less urgency around the reform agenda, since the administration had adopted many of its parts, and opportunities for major reforms after the elections of 2010 diminished. The coalition considered disbanding in 2013, but MFAN and Hewlett reached an agreement on a more focused two-pillar agenda, and recruited members to work on these issues through an executive committee and working groups. This structure increased the engagement of some members, but others who were interested in a broader reform agenda became more disengaged.

**Half of MFAN member survey respondents indicated they were active or very actively engaged in working on outcomes in MFAN's early years,** including PPD-6 (51 percent), QDDR 2010 (49 percent), and the Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009 (48 percent). In the network map below (Figure 11), the concentration of nodes on the left side indicates high levels of activity in the early years. The levels then drop some and remain lower when ownership and transparency outcomes were a main focus.

Figure 11. MFAN members were most involved in MFAN’s early policy goals.<sup>29</sup>



## Relationships with Key External Actors

MFAN members had multiple relationships with key external actors, including policymakers, allies, and opponents, although the frequency and quality of these relationships varied. Nearly all MFAN member survey respondents indicated having a relationship with USAID leaders and staff. USAID has been a primary policy target throughout MFAN’s history. MFAN was an effective external advocate for pushing USAID to make progress on embedding and institutionalizing local ownership across the agency, helping to neutralize some internal opposition. One USAID staff member said, “MFAN advocated for a very new way of doing business. It was very helpful to have an external advocate that could help. When you are trying to make change, the forces are often quite strong.” MFAN was also a valued source of research and new thinking. One USAID senior staff member commented, “The research that has come out has helped us clarify our thinking around local ownership and Local Solutions. We are not always able to do that research, so it’s very helpful to have external stakeholders who can inform how we respond to implementing this.” USAID staff also relied on MFAN to share information about what was going on behind the scenes in Congress, and to neutralize opposition to local ownership among congressional appropriators who were being lobbied by private contractors.

<sup>29</sup> The squares represent the top eight outcomes in which MFAN was engaged, as identified by MFAN members. The circles represent MFAN member survey respondents who report being actively engaged in influencing each outcome, color-coded based on how they categorized themselves. Some survey respondents did not list themselves as actively engaged in influencing these outcomes. This network map was produced by Connective Associates, <http://connectiveassociates.com/>.

**MFAN members had far fewer relationships with Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) staff, and considerably less with the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) staff, even though these agencies were also potential targets for advancing country ownership.** In 2008, MFAN recommended a “triple-hat authority” for USAID over MCC and PEPFAR, but the plan was never realized. Only later did MFAN develop relationships with the Department of Defense and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Some members felt that MFAN missed an opportunity to more closely coordinate aid reform efforts among all of these entities, so that they collectively could have tackled the aid system more broadly, advocating for more standardized approaches and procedures.

**MFAN reported having strong bipartisan relationships with Democratic and Republican congressional leaders and staff, including leadership and members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC).** In the early years, when Democrats controlled Congress, MFAN worked more closely with Democrats. However, after the 2010 elections, MFAN successfully cultivated relationships with many moderate and some conservative Republican leaders, including Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX) and Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), who were the lead sponsors of FATAA, HFAC Chairman Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA), and SFRC chairman Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN). It guided the creation of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Effective Foreign Assistance, with which it continued to work closely on educational events. MFAN worked over a six-year period to educate congressional leaders on both sides of the aisle to pass FATAA. However, there is also a sense that MFAN could do more to reach more Freedom Caucus members. In addition, while MFAN has built strong relationships with authorizers, until recently, it has invested less effort building relationships with appropriators.

**Responding to criticisms about why MFAN had not pursued relationships with more policymakers in the administration and Congress, two MFAN members offered three explanations.** First, building relationships takes time, and because of limited bandwidth, MFAN has been selective in the relationships it has built and maintained. Second, MFAN did not do a landscape analysis of the U.S. government, but was rather, in cases, doing “what we were used to doing.” Third, while sometimes MFAN recognized the need to connect with certain entities, it has not always known the specific people to connect with, and it has taken time to identify those individuals.

MFAN has sought to resolve these concerns in three ways: hiring consultants (such as the Kyle House Group), and partnering with like-minded entities (such as the Consensus for Development Reform) to build relationships with Republican members of Congress; hiring a deputy director/senior policy adviser for the Hub, which greatly increased the Hub’s bandwidth; and adding new members.

In its early years, when it was focused on agenda setting and raising foreign assistance reform as a policy issue, it cultivated relationships with the private sector and foreign policy community, since these groups could add heft to its efforts. During its middle and recent years, MFAN members established strong relationships with sector coalitions like those focused on food aid reform, and advocated that principles like country ownership be embedded in sectoral legislation.

## Dedicated Resources and Funding

**Having dedicated resources to fund the MFAN Hub and key members and member organizations has made MFAN a go-to source on aid reform, and allowed members to invest significant staff time to advance MFAN’s agenda.** Hewlett has been the primary funder of MFAN. Between 2010 and 2013, Hewlett invested over \$12 million dollars in nine organizations (both think tanks and NGOs) to reform U.S. development aid.



**MFAN member survey respondents were eight times more likely to have received funding to work on MFAN from Hewlett than from other sources.** Hewlett’s program officers recognized the challenge of funding most organizations to participate in MFAN. Especially during the middle years, they wondered if the primary reason organizations were participating was because they were receiving funding. Hewlett was concerned that the Hub and members were becoming complacent, and were disappointed about the “value add” of their investment.

**Having one primary funder created several complications. First, it meant that Hewlett could drive the agenda by deciding whom to fund.** One of MFAN’s co-chairs believes that in the early years, Hewlett was “one of equals around the table in setting the agenda.” However, another member stated that the “coalition was built around Hewlett funding, not around co-equals coming around the table. Yes, they came around the table, but Hewlett was playing [its role] as a donor with an agenda.” Hewlett’s role in directing the agenda was more explicit in the 2013 transition year, when Hewlett defined the two pillars it was willing to fund. Some members felt Hewlett acted with a heavy hand, and worried MFAN would miss opportunities to work on other issues. This led to the establishment of the Emerging Issues Working Group. Another MFAN member supported the decision to focus on ownership and transparency, as “on balance, the right one” because it led to a clearer sense of direction that helped MFAN positively contribute to accountability initiatives, such as the ForeignAssistance.gov website, and USAID’s success in embedding local ownership in its operating procedures for its Missions and implementing partners.

**Second, several very active MFAN members who had received funding in the past for their participation in MFAN, expressed concern that, absent funding, they and/or their organizations would not be able to dedicate as much time and energy to MFAN’s work.** Organizations often do not have access to unrestricted funds for this purpose. While funders aim to fund those good at what they do, the risk remains that the higher profile organizations and better fundraisers will get the funds, which could mean that some who could add value to MFAN’s work cannot afford to participate.

**Interviewees and, more generally, experts on the roles of funders in coalitions disagree about the appropriate role of funders in a coalition.** They agree that funders can have undue influence, because they bring money to the table, but their presence and commitment can also be critical for convening and launching new efforts, and for getting coalitions back on track when momentum has been lost. On the other hand, with one primary funder, the coalition’s sustainability is at risk if the funder pulls out. In Hewlett’s case, there was strong alignment between their global development portfolio and MFAN as a vehicle for advancing their goals. The Gates Foundation took a different approach to funding MFAN. They provided unrestricted funding to support MFAN’s aid reform agenda.

**Gates and Hewlett needed to coordinate more on what they were funding, and how their portfolio of grantees could work together effectively,** according to one MFAN member. Another member said that both foundations also funded groups that focused on sectoral issues, such as health, without requiring those grantees to adhere to aid reform principles. As a result, they were funding, according to this member, “some organizations that were natural foes of our agenda,” and there needed to be a “more strategic [discussion] about priorities” to mitigate some of the political challenges that were created.

**In 2016, Hewlett announced that, due to its shift in strategy focus, it was winding down its funding of MFAN and member organizations.** This caused MFAN members to rethink their roles and whether they could participate fully without funding. Hewlett has been actively engaged in the transition by funding this evaluation. Nevertheless, MFAN’s future depends on both the Hub and member organizations securing resources. Because MFAN’s success depends on member engagement, absent funding for both, MFAN’s long-term viability is uncertain.

## Constraints of a Coalition Approach

**Eight out of ten survey respondents agreed that being a member of MFAN did not constrain their organization's actions on foreign assistance.** In fact, being part of a coalition gave some members cover to push reforms within their own organizations. One member described how having her organization sign on to MFAN's principles made it easier for her to hold her organization accountable for taking actions that "pass the aid effectiveness test." Being a member of MFAN did constrain some members from advocating openly for earmarks – a constraint that MFAN intended.

**At times, some members felt that MFAN was too slow to act.** One commented, "The amount of energy it took to bring everyone in a coalition up to speed on things versus just running with things, it is such a laborious process. I'd rather do things with one or two other people." This member decided to take a less active role in the coalition, but this was rare. Others were sometimes frustrated by MFAN's lack of nuanced understanding of how the aid procurement process worked, for instance, but continued to work with MFAN on issues of mutual agreement while pursuing other priorities outside MFAN.

## Achieving More Together

### ➤ MFAN characteristics that allowed it to achieve more

**The MFAN platform has allowed members to connect with one another across their diverse organizations, build trust, and share information.** MFAN has brought together a variety of experiences and expertise: congressional policymaking, executive branch policymaking, and development expertise with firsthand experience in a range of countries. From time to time, MFAN has identified gaps in its experience and expertise that it has then worked to fill, such as when it brought on more NGOs to bolster its advocacy capacity. In 2009, MFAN contracted with Capitol Management Initiatives and later the Kyle House Group to lead Republican policymaker outreach efforts.

**MFAN is unique in its concentrated focus on U.S. foreign assistance reform.** For members, aid reform may be on their issue list, but is not usually a top priority. Through engagement with MFAN, they can more effectively contribute to this issue, and align their efforts with others for greater collective impact.

**Many policymakers see MFAN as principles-focused, which helped it appeal to both Democrats and Republicans.** MFAN was not seen as favoring one side or the other. It remained in the middle, based on substance. As a result, MFAN was able to encourage both Democrats and Republicans to co-sponsor and vote repeatedly for legislation, like FATAA, in a highly partisan political environment.

**MFAN members have stature that gave them access, influence, and convening power with the Obama administration.** While that same stature may not open as many doors with the current administration, MFAN members have already identified a few potentially sympathetic voices with whom they do have access.

### ➤ Cost-benefit of working together

**Without MFAN, no individual organization would have had the credibility and reach to place the issue of foreign assistance reform on the policy agenda.** MFAN members working together inspired and supported the effort to rewrite the FAA, and helped enact FATAA among other accomplishments. MFAN has contributed significantly to making foreign assistance reform principles mainstream. For those interested in foreign assistance reform, these accomplishments are worth the cost of managing a network.

**Members strongly agreed that participating in MFAN helped them advance their organization’s goals, and that they had benefited a lot from information shared at MFAN meetings.** One member described how MFAN amplified what their organization was trying to achieve. “As a small shop, having MFAN as a community, source, place to go to compare notes and share information has had enormous value in understanding the landscape, players, and how to make a more effective reform pitch.” Another member noted, “With the size of our platform and resources, going our own way would have been counterproductive.”



# The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN)

Evaluation Report: 2008-2016

Conclusion

Based on this evaluation's findings, MFAN plays an essential role in advancing U.S. foreign assistance reform, due to its singular focus on the topic, its nonpartisan approach, and the quality and engagement of its membership.

**MFAN members achieve more together as a network than they could individually:**

- MFAN raised foreign assistance on the policy agenda and made foreign assistance reform principles mainstream.
- MFAN has helped build a bipartisan constituency in Congress in support of foreign assistance reform.
- MFAN played a critical role in advancing legislative and policy changes that reflect key foreign assistance reform principles (e.g., GPA, FATAA).

**Yet, MFAN has missed some opportunities.** Findings indicate that the reasons included MFAN's small size and limited bandwidth, its tendency to engage with familiar policy targets, the time required to build new relationships, as well as MFAN's occasional unwillingness to push its members, allies, and officials in the administration. During MFAN's 2013-2014 transition, a lack of clear guidance on roles and responsibilities related to MFAN's new structure and leadership meant MFAN lost some momentum.

**Since its inception, MFAN's agenda has evolved, and it has used a variety of structural models to support it.** Findings indicate successes in all phases, regardless of agenda and structural model. This evaluation indicates that other factors, such as members' stature and expertise, members' relationships with key policymakers, dedicated resources, and monitoring the policy environment and adaptability, were more important. Even in challenging political times, the coalition stands ready to find opportunities and advance reforms that no one else will prioritize.

# The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN)

Evaluation Report: 2008-2016

## Recommendations

Based on its findings, the evaluation team for this study identified the following recommendations to help MFAN further strengthen its effectiveness as a coalition and contribute to aid reform in the years to come. Recommendations specific to the 2017 presidential transition are presented in a separate policy memo.

MFAN and its members should:

- **Focus** | Maintain focus on the importance of U.S. foreign assistance and making it more effective. MFAN’s singular focus on and nonpartisan framing of this issue appeal to a broad spectrum of policymakers.
- **Strategic priorities** | Continue to regularly and systematically assess the policy landscape (including Congress, the administration, and the development community), and adjust priorities accordingly.
- **Membership** | Continue to identify and work closely with members who share MFAN’s priorities, have committed to work on foreign aid reform through MFAN – even with uncertain funding, and have convening power, access, influence, knowledge, and expertise about congressional and administration policymaking and technical content. Also, identify additional actors to bring in, depending on MFAN’s agenda and the gaps it needs to fill. Maintaining a membership that includes think tanks, NGOs, and former policymakers gives MFAN the breadth of perspectives, experience, and expertise needed to generate innovative ideas and grounded policy proposals.
  - **Balancing policy sharpness with political heft** | Do not compromise policy sharpness when aiming to increase political heft, since MFAN’s value is in the strength of its message. MFAN’s political heft results from the stature, influence, and involvement of its members, as well as from the number of MFAN members positioned to influence key audiences.
  - **Clear guidance for members** | Clarify the expectations and obligations of coalition members, when members’ organizational agendas differ from MFAN’s. While the broad purpose and principles of MFAN are widely shared, MFAN members do not necessarily have a shared understanding about what it means to model and put these principles into practice. Clarifying this will strengthen MFAN as a coalition.
- **Dedicated resources** | Encourage MFAN funders to require that grantees focused on sectors, such as health or education, also adhere to aid reform principles. Also, encourage MFAN funders to coordinate with each other to maximize the impact of their investments. Members need to identify funding sources or other mechanisms that can support their aid reform work and participation in MFAN.
- **Structure** | Establish a streamlined structure that: represents the minimum required for MFAN to advance its agenda, in order to facilitate decision making; reflects members’ skills and resources; and ensures the easy flow of information among members. When MFAN’s agenda is broad and focused on agenda setting, a core group of highly committed principals and deputies meeting regularly can achieve that purpose. Thematic working groups are effective at addressing narrower issues focused on policy adoption and implementation.
  - **Leadership** | Clarify the process of transitioning co-chair leadership. Appointing co-chairs with credibility with different MFAN constituency groups, and who are able to work together across their different experiences is one of MFAN’s strengths and should be continued. Clarifying the relationship between MFAN co-chairs and working group co-chairs would help prevent unnecessary conflicts. Distributing leadership increases MFAN’s bandwidth to engage on multiple fronts; however, it requires some loosening of control around the outcomes, and cultivating group accountability. MFAN co-chairs must strike a clear balance between the need to increase MFAN’s bandwidth and controlling its message.

- **Secretariat** | Maintain a dedicated, independent secretariat adequately staffed to fulfill its functions to ensure MFAN's overall effectiveness. At a minimum, the secretariat, in addition to its executive director and someone in a support role, should have two senior staff members focused on advocacy and communications. The secretariat or Hub has been best able to serve MFAN when its reporting lines, role, and authorities have been clear.
- **Principals and deputies** | Ensure principals and their deputies work closely together to present a unified organizational voice that clearly contributes to MFAN.
- **Working groups** | Select working group co-chairs who are well-positioned to facilitate a collaborative process to align member efforts. Also, select as working group participants committed members with shared goals and accountability.
- **Consultants** | Continue to use consultants to fill key roles that MFAN members themselves cannot adequately fill. By treating consultants as MFAN members, MFAN can bring the relationships that the consultants build into MFAN.
- **Decision-making process** | Develop more explicit guidelines for how decisions are made in order to increase coalition effectiveness within a larger and more diverse MFAN that has a more complex structure than in its earlier years. For example, MFAN should clarify the authority working groups have to make decisions, and when they need to consult with the Executive Committee and co-chairs. The near-consensus decision-making model and absence of clear governance rules worked best when MFAN was a smaller, more homogenous group.
- **Fostering relationships with allies** | Foster relationships with allies to expand MFAN's political heft without losing its policy sharpness. This can be done through participating in ad hoc efforts, such as the USGLC-led campaign on the budget; bringing others into MFAN's working groups, such as allies dedicated to MFAN's priorities; or participating in others' working groups, such as those at InterAction. In these relationships, connecting and building awareness among members, in addition to top leaders, will help maximize the influence and results that MFAN and its allies can achieve.
  - **Strengthening MFAN's relationship with CDR** | Strengthen MFAN's relationship with the Consensus for Development Reform (CDR) to increase its influence with Republican members of Congress and the current administration. For many in MFAN, its relationship with CDR lacks transparency. Increasing this transparency will help MFAN members better understand the nature of this relationship and how to leverage it to advance aid reform.
- **External relationships with policymakers** | Undertake a formal landscape analysis to understand key leverage points, and regularly update this analysis. Create a process to allow MFAN to prioritize its relationship-building efforts, so MFAN can increase its influence and avoid missed opportunities. MFAN needs to continue to reach out to members of the Freedom Caucus, either directly, through MFAN members, or via the Kyle House Group and the CDR. MFAN also needs to foster stronger relationships with appropriators and other committees within Congress, such as Armed Services. Additionally, MFAN must build relationships with strategically positioned members of the administration who value foreign assistance and want to increase its effectiveness.
  - **Consistent engagement** | Continue to support policymakers with consistent engagement. This will help MFAN build trust and partnerships with policymakers. It will also help busy policymakers prioritize effective aid.
  - **Engagement with the executive branch** | Build stronger relationships with more people in more agencies, so that the change that MFAN influences in the executive branch reaches beyond individual agencies to the system as a whole.

- **Public outreach** | Determine whether strengthening public support for modernizing U.S. foreign assistance is important to achieve MFAN's goals. If it is, create and implement a strategy to engage the public or particular constituencies within the broader U.S. public.

# The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN)

Evaluation Report: 2008-2016

Appendices

## Appendix 1. Contribution Analysis Stories

---

To more deeply explore MFAN's effectiveness, the evaluation team undertook contribution analysis of four policy outcomes to which MFAN believed it had made significant contributions. The evaluation team used contribution analysis to better understand MFAN's influence, while also identifying the influence of others. The stories included in this appendix are as follows:

1. Presidential Policy Directive-6
2. Rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act
3. The Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act
4. USAID's Work on Local Solutions

## The Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6) and MFAN's Influence

As part of a retrospective evaluation of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network's (MFAN's) first eight years (2008-2016), the evaluation team explored in depth four outcomes to which MFAN members believed MFAN contributed significantly. The Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6) was among these four.

### PPD-6: Outcome of Interest

*The content and issuance of PPD-6 in September 2010, and the key changes that flowed from it.*

President Barack Obama issued the Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6) on September 22, 2010 – “The first of its kind by a U.S. [a]dministration,” according to its [fact sheet](#). The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) evaluation advisory committee members and other interviewees pointed to PPD-6 as a key outcome of MFAN's work.<sup>31</sup> One committee member said: “[PPD-6] captured the essence of MFAN's agenda. It was the first print out from the U.S. government on development policy, and it tracked with MFAN's agenda.”

### Consensus View

MFAN's internal work on shared principles and its external advocacy before the 2008 elections and during the Obama transition appear to have provided some content and political momentum for PPD-6. MFAN members influenced each other's thinking during MFAN's formation in early 2008 and the writing of *New Day, New Way* in mid-2008. MFAN's first set of co-chairs included Gayle Smith, who entered the Obama administration and led the PPD-6 process. The priorities and framing in *New Day, New Way* were carried into the administration by influential thought leaders from MFAN and were reflected in PPD-6. MFAN, and its members also played some role in securing bipartisan support for reform principles as expressed in both party platforms in 2008.

Interviews do not support an earlier hypothesis that MFAN influenced PPD-6 by pursuing reform through multiple avenues, including the White House, Congress, the State Department, and multiple networks of MFAN members. Instead, once the new administration was in place, most observers and participants agree that MFAN was not a key player in influencing the specific content of PPD-6. The exception is in country ownership. Some believe MFAN members contributed to the PPD-6 commitment to this concept. External interviews also contradicted an earlier suggestion that MFAN may have influenced PPD-6's issuance as a stand-alone document. They believed MFAN played little or no role in this.

MFAN engaged in efforts to serve as a watchdog of PPD-6 implementation. Some activities appear to have been influential within the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), but MFAN may also have missed opportunities to encourage further action.

Absent MFAN, what would likely have occurred regarding PPD-6?

- PPD-6 would likely have been issued as a stand-alone document with similar if not identical content, assuming the same thought leaders entered the Obama administration.

<sup>31</sup> References to MFAN in this document include its fiscal sponsor, New Venture Fund. New Venture Fund serves as the official legal and fiscal entity for MFAN and exercises management oversight over the project.

- However, the global financial crisis and other priorities might have edged out global development without MFAN’s earlier work to spotlight and promote the consensus view on foreign assistance reform.

## MFAN’s Contribution

### *Most influential action occurred before 2008 election*

In early 2008, grant funding supported a variety of disparate foreign assistance reform efforts. Leaders of those efforts and staff at the Hewlett Foundation agreed they could amplify impact through a more coordinated approach. This developed first into the Wye River Consensus Group, with meetings and discussions on a set of shared principles. This group pursued bipartisan outreach. In particular, the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition and the ONE Campaign engaged in campaigns that pressed the presidential candidates to go on record on aid reform, and other reform leaders participated in high-level events at both party conventions. This effort culminated in key planks in both the Democratic and Republican party platforms in summer 2008. Some observers interviewed for this research said this bipartisan consensus exerted more influence on the eventual issuance of PPD-6 than did MFAN’s advocacy.

MFAN launched officially as a coalition in June 2008, with the release of *New Day, New Way*, which outlined its five core principles and four priority actions.

Outside the United States, several factors put pressure on the U.S. government to pursue aid effectiveness at high levels. These included the Accra Agenda for Action, which emerged from the Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, the rising influence of the U.K. Department for International Development, and the peer reviews of U.S. policy by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee.

Meanwhile, the financial crisis of 2008 was roiling markets and economies worldwide and led to a recession in the U.S. that continued for several years. The incoming administration – regardless of party or stated priorities – would necessarily focus attention on preventing and managing the worst effects of the global crisis. This created a new hurdle for an effort such as a PPD on global development.

### *Early Obama administration and 2009 congressional action*

Importantly, MFAN leaders were recruited to the Obama transition team – including Sheila Herrling, Steve Radelet, Gayle Smith, and Larry Nowels, and some took permanent positions in the administration. In early and mid-2009, MFAN worked closely with the House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Howard Berman (D-CA) on legislation to advance reform: H.R. 2139 (Initiating Foreign Assistance Act) and H.R. 2140 (Foreign Relations Authorization Act). MFAN also worked with Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) and Sen. Richard Lugar (R-IN) on S. 1524 (Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act). At the same time, MFAN held discussions with new senior State Department officials, who expressed little interest in pursuing an aid reform agenda – especially structural reform – or working with Congress to write new legislation.

Some MFAN participants and its internal reports interpreted the maintenance of congressional pressure through legislation as important leverage in advancing PPD-6. However, no stakeholder interviews confirmed that view. Instead, interviewees said that PPD-6 would likely have been issued regardless of congressional action.

Executive action on aid reform became publicly evident in the summer of 2009 through two key actions:

1. In July, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced the first-ever State/USAID Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR). The QDDR process extended through December 2010 – after PPD-6 was released.
2. In August, President Obama signed a Presidential Study Directive (PSD-7), authorizing National Security Advisor James Jones and National Economic Council Director Lawrence Summers to launch a first-ever, cross-government review of U.S. development policy, which led eventually to PPD-6. Gayle Smith, National Security Council (NSC) senior director (and former MFAN co-chair) led the review, with Jeremy Weinstein, the NSC director for democracy. This process was initially set to take 120 days. However, it took one year, and PPD-6 was released September 22, 2010.

From late 2009 through early 2010, MFAN coordinated the development community's response to questions posed by the PSD team, as well as a grassroots petition asking the White House to create a national strategy for global development. Thirty groups participated in this petition effort, and the MFAN website captured over 40,000 signatures for delivery to the White House on December 23, 2009. Through this petition, MFAN hoped to support efforts inside the White House to create an institutionalized global development strategy that would be periodically refreshed. It was also a clear and actionable request on which MFAN could engage grassroots activists.

MFAN mostly relied on its informal relationships with high-level administration officials, especially Gayle Smith and Jeremy Weinstein. One MFAN member said, "It was a closed, insider process ... [with] no formal consultation process." (However, as seen below, some consultations did occur.) At the same time, this member said, "I don't think this would have happened as is without MFAN. MFAN created a shared, articulated agenda spanning different constituencies ... forged consensus, formalized policy positions ... created political momentum. When you have a group of influential individuals calling for the same thing, that carries weight."

Some MFAN members believed the breadth of organizations involved in MFAN – think tanks, former policy officials, and NGOs – contributed to several positive results. They believe it helped convince Rep. Berman to pursue legislation, offered Gayle Smith protection in her work on PPD-6, and served as a caution against State Department officials interested in subsuming USAID. One MFAN member said, "It changed the political equation for all of those actors ... Gayle would have wanted to do PPD-6 regardless, but it's not clear that the White House would have spent so much political capital, absent development community support." Another said, "Much of this might not have happened without the external push." However, key stakeholders interviewed later in the evaluation process either challenged or did not confirm this view.

### ***PPD-6 process delays and competing efforts***

In early 2010, newly-confirmed USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah and senior leaders at USAID were developing a reform agenda: USAID Forward. Portions of USAID Forward began to appear by mid-year; the full document was released later in the year and eventually served as a vehicle to implement aspects of what would be PPD-6. According to MFAN internal reports, USAID Forward "emphasized many of the principles of Hewlett's objectives for change." MFAN offered full support to the new administrator in helping him rebuild the agency, put in place key reforms, and engage Congress to build a stronger political base.

President Obama issued a new National Security Strategy (NSS) in May 2010 which stated, “Development is a strategic, economic, and moral imperative.” That month, *ForeignPolicy.com* published a leaked draft version of the PPD. MFAN issued a statement: “Leaked White House Development Document Has Strong Reform Elements.” At the June 2010 G8 Summit, President Obama outlined a new approach to development, as reflected in the recently-released NSS. He said the PPD would be released in the near future. MFAN issued a statement: “Praise for President Obama’s Development Leadership at the G8 Summit.” In it MFAN strongly supported the administration’s efforts to elevate and institutionalize the idea that fighting global poverty is a moral, strategic, and economic imperative.

As the PPD-6 and QDDR processes both stretched beyond their deadlines – and with some competition and disagreements between the two teams leading these efforts, MFAN viewed the PPD-6 process as the better prospect for alignment with its reform principles. MFAN engaged in a behind-the-scenes campaign to press for the release of the PPD and to frame how it would be received, depending on its contents. MFAN also cautioned against positions that seemed to be emerging in the QDDR that would further subordinate USAID and development to the State Department.

Internal MFAN structures seemed to limit the network’s ability to respond nimbly during this uncertain phase. With the environment constantly shifting, reaching a timely consensus on a congressional letter urging the issuance of the PPD was not deemed possible. In early July, MFAN released a sign-on letter promoting a global development strategy, with a campaign to secure signatures beyond MFAN members. In early August, MFAN released a statement: “More than 200 Endorsers Agree that Aid Reform is Within Reach.”

Some MFAN members remember this as a time when their ability to influence the content and issuance of the PPD was particularly unclear. There was a formal consultation process with the private sector and with foundations, but no formal consultative role for MFAN or for think tanks and the nongovernmental organization (NGO) community. MFAN had coordinated responses from the development community to questions from the PSD-7 teams, but that process had finished months earlier. While some MFAN members did meet regularly with Gayle Smith, they were unsure how best to support her in the PPD-6 process.

In late August, MFAN learned that PPD-6 was finalized and heard that some core MFAN principles were missing from its content. MFAN used a speech in early September by Secretary Clinton as an opportunity to press its reform agenda, issuing a statement: “Secretary Clinton’s CFR Speech Falls Short on Development and Aid Reform.” MFAN leaders were strategizing how to react to a weak PPD-6 that contained few of its reform priorities. While MFAN plus ones vigorously debated how to respond to a weak PPD-6 and QDDR process, all agreed that implementing the PPD would become a major focus of MFAN – especially in the event of a Republican-led House of Representatives after the 2010 elections.

### ***PPD-6 is issued***

On September 22, 2010, President Obama signed PPD-6 and issued a public statement. MFAN issued its own statement: “Visionary New Development Policy Lays the Foundation for More Effective Foreign Aid.” According to MFAN members, the reform movement was “celebrating a major victory” with President Obama’s speech about PPD-6 at the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Summit. MFAN members also noted that the document offered opportunities for progress beyond what had been expected based on the leaked draft and rumored content.

The content of PPD-6 reflects MFAN’s five core principles and most of its priority actions as outlined in *New Day New Way*.

1. Related to MFAN's call to "elevate global development as a national interest priority in actions as well as rhetoric," PPD-6 commits several times to "elevate development as a core pillar of America's power" and have the distinct development, diplomacy, and defense efforts "mutually reinforce and complement" one another. It directs the USAID administrator to be included in NSC meetings – although it also adds "as appropriate." It intended to reestablish the U.S. as the global leader on international development.
2. PPD-6 echoes MFAN's second principle – "align foreign assistance policies, operations, budgets, and statutory authorities" – in its call for a "modern architecture that elevates development as a key pillar ... and harnesses development capabilities spread across Government" and to "identify distinct policy objectives, prioritize among them, and then align resources and attention accordingly." It also commits to "generate greater coherence across the United States Government" and "build and integrate the capabilities that can advance our interests."
3. MFAN's third principle – "rebuild and rationalize organizational structures" – is referenced in several PPD-6 sections. PPD-6 describes "a long-term commitment to rebuilding USAID as our lead development agency – and as the world's premier development agency" through several concrete actions, as well as "enhanced level of interagency cooperation." However, it does not call for the degree of structural reform MFAN had promoted.
4. PPD-6 emphasizes a commitment to "hold all recipients of U.S. assistance accountable for achieving development results" and a new partnership with Congress in which the administration will "seek greater flexibilities, including a reduction in earmarks and ability to reallocate funding from less to more effective programs, while committing departments and agencies to a much higher standard of accountability for results." These passages capture MFAN's fourth principle: "commit sufficient and flexible resources with accountability for results."
5. Lastly, MFAN's principle to "partner with others to produce results" is included in several sections of PPD-6. "We will pursue development through partnership, not patronage," PPD-6 asserts. "To make these programs more effective, we are working closely with recipient nations, other donors, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, UN agencies, and multilateral development banks," and "[t]o reach beyond government and provide greater coherence with our nongovernmental partners, we will create a U.S. Global Development Council."

In December 2010, the first State Department QDDR was issued. Interviewees in an August 2011 internal MFAN report frequently pointed to the QDDR, rather than PPD-6, as an influential executive action. One expert noted that the "QDDR is a real commitment." A policymaker added, "Actual implementation is taking place." Another policymaker said, "The QDDR was a success. We can declare victory." Another expert agreed: "They [USAID] have a functionality that was missing in the past."

### ***Implementation: the true test***

After issuance of PPD-6, MFAN and its members shifted to a focus on implementation of PPD-6 principles. For example, InterAction held an off-the-record discussion in October 2010 with senior government officials on PPD-6, with an emphasis on economic growth, scientific evidence, and other development components beyond aid. In December 2010, MFAN released "From Paper to Product: Key Benchmarks for Effectively Implementing the President's Development Policy" to assess PPD-6.

In 2011, MFAN continued its effort to influence the implementation of PPD-6. One strategy was to publicly identify criteria to assess its implementation, and then monitor progress through consultation with key officials and allies in Congress. Publicly, MFAN would place pressure on policymakers through

media and academic outlets. In June, it activated that strategy by releasing "[Key Benchmarks for Global Development Policy Reform](#)" to assess both PPD-6 and the QDDR. MFAN publicized the benchmarks in Devex and other media.

MFAN released "[The Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development: A First Anniversary Assessment](#)" in September 2011 and hosted a town hall discussion on PPD-6 implementation progress with the State Department, USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the Department of the Treasury, and the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR). MFAN leaders noted that the event highlighted some changes inspired by PPD-6, including a degree of coordination across agencies. However, the event did not explore how PPD-6 improved activities in the field. A dashboard with MCC data was soon to be released, and planning for the Partnership for Growth was advancing. MFAN reports at the time note that MFAN pushed to include all relevant agencies' data in the dashboard as part of PPD-6's implementation.

Also in September, USAID released a new five-year [Policy Framework for 2011-2015](#) that described the agency's vision in support of PPD-6 and the QDDR. USAID began introducing cross-cutting policies and sector-specific strategies, including a new evaluation policy intended to make its programs more measurable, results-oriented, and accountable, as well as a gender policy. MFAN continued to hope for a comprehensive global development strategy, and viewed USAID's renewed emphasis on these cross-cutting policies as a potential foundation for a future global development strategy.

From late 2011 through early 2012, MFAN sent inquiries to 16 U.S. government agencies, asking how they were implementing guidance from PPD-6. MFAN received responses from USAID, MCC, USTR, Peace Corps, Health and Human Services, and Treasury. MFAN published these documents on a microsite it launched in April 2012 to highlight PPD-6 implementation. MFAN intended to update the site with other agency feedback, content from MFAN principals and other stakeholders, perspectives from the field on how the PPD was working in partner countries, and discussion and reaction from the broader development community. The microsite eventually spawned two blog series: one from MFAN principals and other community leaders assessing individual agencies; and another highlighting efforts by MFAN implementing partners. However, the site was not as active as originally planned.

Some administration officials interviewed for this evaluation did not independently identify MFAN as very influential in PPD-6 implementation. Others believed MFAN played an active oversight role on PPD-6 implementation in the area of evidence-based decision making. Still, these interviewees noted that MFAN could have conducted other activities to monitor and highlight the level of implementation across multiple government agencies.

MFAN drafted a scorecard on agency implementation of PPD-6 at the directive's two-year mark in September 2012, but did not release it. MFAN's focus on PPD-6 implementation seemed to decline around this time. After President Obama's re-election in 2012, MFAN hosted several off-the-record consultations with key NSC and MCC officials. These discussions informed the development of MFAN's transition recommendations to the president, which were organized around the three pillars of PPD-6.

## MFAN Capacities

A few of MFAN's capacities related to governance and structure seem to have influenced MFAN's work on PPD-6, either by amplifying MFAN's role or presenting challenges.

- Membership
  - Many interviewees cited the value in the PPD-6 process of having influential leaders among early MFAN members – including several who served on the Obama transition team and/or entered the administration. The actions of this network of powerful players was repeatedly noted as the central factor in setting the context for PPD-6, carrying MFAN’s principles into the administration, and delivering whatever influence was possible in a somewhat closed process.
  - The breadth of the network, with its connections among think tanks, NGOs, former policymakers, and international development experts, was also noted as an influential external force able to exert pressure on the executive branch to prioritize development policy. However, it is unclear whether PPD-6 would have been issued (and with the same content) without that pressure.
- Governance
  - MFAN’s near-consensus decision-making process may have interfered with its ability to respond nimbly to a quickly changing environment in summer 2010, just before the release of PPD-6. Notes and interviews indicate MFAN may have missed opportunities to press its agenda due to slow decision making, although whether this had a negative impact on the directive is uncertain.

## PPD-6 Timeline of Key Events

**Late 2007:** Candidate Barack Obama issued a statement “Strengthening Our Common Security by Investing in Our Common Humanity” that outlined his priorities on foreign assistance reform, including some that aligned with MFAN’s eventual priorities (e.g., the establishment of development as a key pillar in foreign policy; the restructuring and strengthening of USAID).

**Early 2008:** The Wye River Consensus Group<sup>32</sup> began discussions on shared foreign assistance reform principles (supported by the Hewlett Foundation).

**June 2008:** The consensus group was formally launched as the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) with the release of *New Day, New Way*, which outlined five core principles and four priority actions. The MFAN co-chairs were Steve Radelet of the Center for Global Development and Gayle Smith of the Center for American Progress. The stated principles were: (1) elevate global development as a national interest priority in actions as well as rhetoric; (2) align foreign assistance policies, operations, budgets, and statutory authorities; (3) rebuild and rationalize organizational structures; (4) commit sufficient and flexible resources with accountability for results; and (5) partner with others to produce results. The priority actions were: (1) develop a global development strategy; (2) enact a new Foreign Assistance Act; (3) create a Cabinet-level global development department; and (4) increase funding for and accountability of development assistance.

**Summer 2008:** The Democratic and Republican party conventions featured high-profile events on global development; both party platforms reflected a commitment to foreign assistance reform greatly aligned with MFAN’s priorities; and both major party candidates expressed support for some type of foreign assistance reform.

<sup>32</sup> The Wye River Consensus Group grew out of a Hewlett-funded gathering of global development experts from think tanks, NGOs, and individuals who had worked on U.S. foreign assistance for much of their careers to develop a consensus on how to reform and restructure the U.S. foreign aid system, in order to amplify the impact of their disparate foreign assistance reform efforts. This two-day Wye River retreat took place in Maryland in January 2008. At the conclusion of the retreat, the group agreed on key principles and a set of potential action items.

**Late 2008:** Several core MFAN members served on the Obama transition team, guiding foreign assistance reform discussions.

**April 2009:** H.R. 2139 (Initiating Foreign Assistance Act) was introduced by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Berman. It called for drafting a national strategy for global development. MFAN influenced the act's introduction and content, and helped secure 125 co-sponsors.

**May 2009:** H.R. 2140 (Foreign Relations Authorization Act) was introduced by Rep. Berman. It directed the president to develop a national strategy on U.S. diplomacy and development, and to conduct a QDDR.

**July 2009:** S. 1524 (Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act) was introduced by Sens. Kerry and Lugar. MFAN members worked closely with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the content of the legislation and conducted advocacy concerning co-sponsors and support.

**July 2009:** Secretary of State Clinton announced the State/USAID QDDR process, co-led by Policy and Planning chief Anne-Marie Slaughter and Deputy Secretary Jack Lew.

**August 2009:** President Obama signed a PSD authorizing the NSC and National Economic Council to lead a cross-agency review of U.S. development policy. Gayle Smith, NSC senior director (and former MFAN co-chair) led the review, with Jeremy Weinstein, the NSC director for democracy.

**November 2009:** MFAN coordinated the development community's response to questions posed by the PSD team.

**Late 2009:** MFAN secured over 40,000 signatures on a grassroots petition asking the White House to create a national strategy for global development.

**Early 2010:** MFAN conducted outreach to members of the government agency teams involved in the PSD process.

**Early 2010:** New USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah and senior leaders were developing an agenda for action "to make USAID the best development agency in the world." Later, this reform agenda, USAID Forward, also served as a vehicle to implement aspects of PPD-6.

**Early to Mid 2010:** The White House held PPD consultations with the executive agencies, private sector stakeholders, and foundations.

**May 2010:** President Obama issued a new National Security Strategy (NSS) which stated, "Development is a strategic, economic, and moral imperative."

**May 2010:** *ForeignPolicy.com* published a leaked draft version of the PPD. MFAN issued a statement: "[Leaked White House Development Document Has Strong Reform Elements.](#)"

**June 2010:** At the G8 Summit, President Obama outlined a new approach to development, as reflected in the recently-released NSS. He said the PPD would be released in the near future. MFAN issued a statement: "[Praise for President Obama's Development Leadership at the G8 Summit.](#)"

**August 5, 2010:** MFAN secured signatures on an open letter to President Obama calling on him to issue a new development policy. MFAN released a statement: "[More than 200 Endorsers Agree that Aid Reform is Within Reach.](#)"

**September 9, 2010:** MFAN issued a statement: “Secretary Clinton’s CFR Speech Falls Short on Development and Aid Reform.”

**September 22, 2010:** President Obama issued PPD-6. MFAN issued a statement: “Visionary New Development Policy Lays the Foundation for More Effective Foreign Aid,” which said the reform movement was “celebrating a major victory today” with President Obama’s speech at the UN MDG Summit, which outlined the new development approach laid out in PPD-6.

**December 2010:** The first QDDR, a four-year joint strategic plan for the State Department and USAID, was released.

**December 2010:** MFAN released “From Paper to Product: Key Benchmarks for Effectively Implementing the President’s Development Policy” to assess PPD-6.

**June 2011:** MFAN released “Key Benchmarks for Global Development Policy Reform” to assess both PPD-6 & QDDR.

**September 2011:** MFAN released “The Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development: A First Anniversary Assessment” and hosted a town hall discussion on PPD-6 implementation with State, USAID, MCC, Treasury, and USTR.

**November 2011:** USAID Partnership for Growth initiative began. This program – with pilots in the Philippines, El Salvador, Ghana, and Tanzania – embodies PPD-6 principles, using a whole-of-government approach to development. Reports and mid-term evaluations were subsequently made available, and the five-year projects were ongoing.

**Late 2011-Early 2012:** MFAN sent inquiries to 16 U.S. government departments and agencies asking how they were implementing guidance from PPD-6. MFAN subsequently received responses from USAID, MCC, USTR, Peace Corps, Health and Human Services, and Treasury.

**February 2012:** Global Development Council launched. It was enacted under the auspices of PPD-6 to provide advice to the president and U.S. government agencies on creating public-private partnerships to boost global development. It later held its first public meeting in April 2014.

**April 2012:** MFAN launched the “From Policy to Action” microsite on PPD-6 implementation.

**November 2012:** President Obama was re-elected to a second term.

**January 2013:** MFAN submitted recommendations to the administration for second term reform actions.

**February 2013:** MFAN hosted panel discussion with key members of the administration’s development team.

## Rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) and MFAN's Influence

As part of a retrospective evaluation of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network's (MFAN's) first eight years (2008-2016), the evaluation team explored in depth four outcomes to which MFAN members believed MFAN contributed significantly. Rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 was among these four.

### Rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act: Outcome of Interest

#### *The development of the Global Partnerships Act and its influence on other legislation and administration reforms*

A House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) staffer noted that they never believed that a rewritten Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) would pass quickly. However, they did believe that developing a new bill would raise foreign assistance reform on the policy agenda, focus a conversation on it within the development community, encourage administration-led reforms, and contribute to other reform-oriented legislation.

### Consensus View

According to former Congressman Howard Berman (D-CA), as HFAC chair, he decided to pursue rewriting the FAA at the urging of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN).<sup>33</sup> He knew the FAA needed rewriting. However, there were other priorities at the time. Therefore, when it came to prioritizing rewriting the FAA, "It took someone to raise it," – someone whom Rep. Berman trusted. In the 1980s, Rep. Berman had worked closely with a member of MFAN's leadership on foreign assistance and development assistance, when both men were on the Hill. It was based on the trust forged in that relationship that Rep. Berman was willing to respond positively to MFAN's request.

MFAN then played a critical role bringing together the development community in support of this effort and helping bridge sectoral divides. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) at the time primarily advocated for sector funding and legislation. MFAN helped the NGOs come together to focus on more systemic changes.

MFAN also kept pressing Rep. Berman's office to continue drafting the new bill. According to a congressional staffer, MFAN was "in regular contact with ideas, suggestions, ... [and] encouragement. Congress doesn't necessarily do something because someone from the outside was pressing them to do it; but they rarely do something that there is no pressure to do. On occasion, [m]embers care deeply, no one pushes, but they do it anyway, but you're not going to do something that takes a lot of effort." This staffer noted that MFAN was unique in proactively pushing for an FAA rewrite and in its constant contact on the issue. For other actors, this was not a top priority.

<sup>33</sup> References to MFAN in this document include its fiscal sponsor, New Venture Fund. New Venture Fund serves as the official legal and fiscal entity for MFAN and exercises management oversight over the project.

While the Global Partnerships Act (GPA – the rewritten FAA) did not advance out of committee, the rewriting process offered a number of benefits. Most notably, through the collaborative drafting process, HFAC adopted and MFAN’s convening role in it, MFAN brought the development community together, bridging sectoral divisions in support of foreign assistance reform. In addition, both congressional staffers and advocates continue to reference the GPA in advancing narrower reform legislation.

Absent MFAN, Congressman Berman and his staff would not have pursued an FAA rewrite, and the development community might not have found a similar opportunity to unite around a common reform agenda.

## MFAN’s Contribution

### *Prioritizing rewriting the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act*

Since MFAN’s inception, rewriting the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA) has been one of its core recommendations, as articulated in its first publication *New Day, New Way*. MFAN saw rewriting the FAA as critical for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. foreign assistance. A new foreign assistance act would ideally streamline organizational structures that manage U.S. foreign assistance, provide the executive branch with the flexibility required to respond to changing global priorities, and guarantee legislative oversight.<sup>34</sup>

During the 2008 presidential election, the ground was being prepared for U.S. foreign assistance reform. Leaders in both parties recognized the need for effective global engagement, and groups such as the ONE Campaign (ONE), the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC), and MFAN were deeply involved in influencing their platforms to include global development.<sup>35</sup> The Republican party platform committed “to develop a strategy for foreign assistance that includes reviewing the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to align foreign assistance policies, operations, budgets, and statutory authorities.”<sup>36</sup> The Democratic party platform committed to “modernizing U.S. foreign assistance ‘policies, tools, and operations in an elevated, empowered, consolidated, and streamlined U.S. development agency. Development and diplomacy will be reinforced as key pillars of U.S. foreign policy, and our civilian agencies will be staffed, resourced, and equipped to address effectively new global challenges.’”<sup>37</sup>

With the election of President Obama, who demonstrated a commitment to global development, and Democratic majorities in the House and the Senate that were both poised to work with him, the moment seemed ripe

*“People mine the GPA for language and ideas all the time.”*

Former HFAC staffer

*“In the annual appropriations bills and National Defense Authorization Act, I constantly refer to the GPA to see if there are things there that we should try to lift into these pieces of legislation. This upcoming week [January 2017], we will be working on a State Department Authorization bill. We briefed them on needed State Department reforms, and I’ll also reference GPA and things to draw from there. I look at the GPA a few times a year. I just shared it with State Department Political Military Affairs.”*

NGO advocacy staff member

<sup>34</sup> MFAN, June 1, 2008, *New Day, New Way*, MFAN, <http://modernizeaid.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/New-Day-New-Way-U.S-Foreign-Assistance-for-the-21st-Century.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> This analysis does not examine the degree to which these groups were influential in this endeavor.

<sup>36</sup> Nancy Birdsall, September 8, 2008, “Development Shows Up at U.S. Presidential Conventions and in the Party Platforms,” Center for Global Development, <https://www.cgdev.org/article/development-shows-us-presidential-conventions-and-party-platforms>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

to attempt to rewrite the FAA. This had been tried before, but without success, and doing so was recognized as a multi-Congress undertaking. However, the task was compelling, given how much global development had changed over the decades, as well as how complex the law had become after years of amendments. The U.S. government's development apparatus had become unwieldy. To restore its efficiency and effectiveness, legislative action was required. The new administration and Congress working together seemed to present the best possible opportunity to advance this.

At MFAN's urging, Congressman Berman decided to pursue rewriting the FAA. Although he recognized the need to rewrite the FAA, it was a heavy lift, and he had many other priorities. Therefore, according to Congressman Berman, "It took someone to raise it."

However, not long into the new administration and Congress, Congressman Berman and MFAN recognized that the bill would not be passed in the short term. Nonetheless, they saw value in drafting and introducing what would become the Global Partnerships Act (GPA). They hoped that the process of doing so would keep a focus on bigger and broader reform issues, drawing more stakeholders into the conversation and maintaining their engagement on the topic. They also believed it could also potentially influence other congressional and administration reform activities.

On April 28, 2009, Rep. Berman and Rep. Mark Kirk (R-IL) introduced the Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009 (IFARA) (H.R. 2139). The bill called on the administration to draft a national strategy for global development, established new guidelines for monitoring and evaluating U.S. foreign assistance, promoted greater transparency for U.S. foreign assistance, and repealed some outdated provisions of the FAA.<sup>38</sup> According to a former HFAC staffer, with MFAN's strong support, the bill gathered 125 co-sponsors, including some Republicans. However, according to others close to the process, because of weak Republican support and strong opposition from the State Department, Rep. Berman did not proceed with the bill.

Rep. Berman was also working on a State Department reauthorization bill (H.R. 2410). He considered including IFARA within it, although to do so, he would have to compromise on an aspect of IFARA. Rep. Berman and HFAC staffer Diana Ohlbaum wanted to agree to the compromise so that most of IFARA could advance. However, because of an MFAN plus one's opposition to the compromise, Rep. Berman and Dr. Ohlbaum did not pursue it. One MFAN member saw this as a missed opportunity to advance most, if not all, of MFAN's agenda.

<sup>38</sup> MFAN, Summary of H.R. 2139, unpublished.

On July 28, Sens. John Kerry (D-MA) and Richard Lugar (R-IN) introduced the Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009 (S. 1524), which sought to bolster the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), increase accountability and innovation in U.S. foreign assistance, improve development coordination, and increase transparency of U.S. foreign assistance.<sup>39</sup> Former Senate staffers credit MFAN with providing external support for the process and working to help it gain support within the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC). SFRC approved the bill in November.

However, this bill also faced strong opposition from the State Department. According to a number of MFAN members, the State Department did not want to receive congressional mandates to undertake efforts that it planned to undertake independently and on its own terms, nor did it want to help advance structural reforms – such as elevating USAID and increasing its autonomy – that it believed were not in its interest. In addition, the State Department wanted to use its congressional engagement to advance presidential initiatives, rather than spend it on what could be a time-consuming bureaucratic reform.

The White House was also seen as hesitant to spend political capital with Congress on advancing foreign assistance reform. The new administration had to prioritize moving controversial legislation through Congress in order to address the worst U.S. financial crisis since the Great Depression. Further, it was unlikely that the White House would publicly support something strongly opposed by its Secretary of State. In an analysis of the landscape for foreign assistance reform, several interviewees stated that the foreign aid reform agenda did not advance in 2009 and 2010 due to a lack of administration support.

While interviewees considered MFAN proactive and successful in its interactions with Congress, some thought it was less successful with the administration, at least in its early years. Interviewees inside and outside MFAN stated that MFAN, like some in Congress, viewed members of the administration as allies, and were waiting for them to take certain actions. To complicate matters for MFAN, some of these administration officials had been MFAN founders and early members. When the administration did not act or took actions not fully in line with MFAN's aspirations, MFAN did not want to antagonize its allies. Often it prioritized maintaining access to them over pushing for its desired outcomes.

Although neither of these bills advanced further, members of the development community acknowledged that they helped move U.S. foreign assistance reform higher on the agenda. Many interviewed for a strategic review of MFAN's work at the time, as well as for this evaluation, gave MFAN significant credit for helping to place it there. They noted the

*“We put together a concept paper. [We had a] working group with MFAN as a lead organizer. MFAN brought in all the key players. We would run ideas by this group, get feedback, and then draft the concept paper and send it around to MFAN members.”*

Former congressional staffer

<sup>39</sup> MFAN, Summary of S. 1524, unpublished.

*“The notion that our foreign aid system need[ed] reform ha[d] ...become conventional wisdom in foreign policy and global development circles.”*

Interviewee, Strategic Review, Freedman Consulting

*“[There was] broad bipartisan agreement that reform efforts needed to be made. [However, there was] not clear agreement on the right channel. There were different approaches within Congress, the White House was advancing what would become [Presidential Policy Directive]-6, and the State Department had the QDDR. [MFAN’s engagement with Rep. Berman] was a positive reflection of MFAN’s ability to shape the debate. But the inability to bring everybody into a single track meant that the whole was smaller than it could have been.”*

MFAN member

relationships MFAN fostered with members of Congress, key congressional committees, and the development community more broadly.

Development community members also saw clear links between legislative and administration reform efforts. As examples, they pointed to these two bills, the House’s State Department authorization legislation, the Presidential Study Directive on Global Development, the State Department’s first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), the ForeignAssistance.gov website, and reforms incorporated within USAID Forward, including the development of an evaluation policy. While the administration’s reform efforts were done independently from legislative action, interviewees believed that having validation and pressure from the congressional efforts was helpful. However, the fact that these reform efforts took place separately meant that less was accomplished than might have been the case if the efforts had been coordinated.

### ***Drafting the Global Partnerships Act***

By mid-2010, Rep. Berman and his staff had begun rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act. In late May, HFAC staffer Diana Ohlbaum invited MFAN to meet with her to review a partial draft text. The meeting was about identifying big ideas to incorporate in the bill, as well as potential red flags.

Dr. Ohlbaum then reached out to both InterAction and MFAN, indicating an interest in using a consultative process with the development community to inform the drafting of the bill. InterAction and MFAN agreed to work together to help her with these consultations. For Dr. Ohlbaum, it was easier to work through two big coalitions, rather than to try to convene individual organizations, according to MFAN and InterAction members. InterAction and MFAN represented the organizations and individuals most interested in reform, and whose support HFAC needed to advance that reform. According to InterAction members, MFAN’s role was important in this mix because it helped move the process along, encouraging InterAction members to overcome their divisions in order to get things done. InterAction members interviewed believe that without MFAN’s participation, the process would have taken longer, since InterAction members would have had less incentive to come to agreement.

By late June, Rep. Berman’s office released a “Global Partnerships Act of 2010” discussion guide. It shared the guide with both governmental and nongovernmental entities, including relevant committees in the House and Senate, the National Security Council (NSC), the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the Department of State, USAID, InterAction, MFAN, the Global Health Council, the Gender Working Group, the U.S. Coalition for Child Survival, the Professional Services Coalition, and others, asking for comments within a month. InterAction then hosted a community discussion attended by around 50 NGOs, in which participants expressed a strong consensus in favor of the draft. Additional white papers were circulated and posted on the HFAC website throughout the fall.

Other congressional and administration stakeholders either expressed interest in supporting U.S. foreign assistance reform, or were approached by MFAN and its allies to do so. In early June, while speaking at the annual InterAction Forum, Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) called for a new foreign assistance act and a strong USAID, while USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah pledged to work with Congress. MFAN also met again with the State Department, this time with Director of Policy Planning Anne-Marie Slaughter to ask her to engage Congress on legislation. According to MFAN, “She took it in favorably, but took no firm position.”

Recognizing the need to make this a bipartisan endeavor, MFAN launched its Republican outreach strategy, led by Porter DeLaney, who, in the months before the midterm elections, spoke with key House Republican leadership staff about the portions of the new draft Foreign Assistance Act that had been released. According to a few Republican congressional staffers, while some Republican members of Congress already believed that MFAN presented foreign aid reform as a bipartisan issue and presented itself as more neutral than some of its coalition members, this outreach sought to broaden and bolster MFAN’s Republican support.

However, the 2010 midterm congressional elections brought in a Republican majority with strong representation from its conservative Tea Party branch – a group with which MFAN had made a few inroads, as seen in its relationship with Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX), but perhaps not enough. Many Republicans, especially in the House, opposed foreign aid reform, and HFAC’s new chair, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), was among those who did not want to take on a comprehensive reform effort. At the same time, the administration had spent significant time developing and finalizing the Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6) on global development and the QDDR, leaving little time available to advance a new Foreign Assistance Act in Congress.

In April 2011, MFAN published *From Policy to Practice*, which remained true to MFAN’s original goals and called for a new foreign assistance act, although, unlike *New Day, New Way*, it acknowledged that a full rewrite might not be possible. By August, many foreign aid experts believed that a major rewrite of foreign assistance legislation was unlikely in the short to medium term due to increased partisanship in Congress, divisions between the administration and Congress and also between the White House and State Department, budgetary pressures, and a lack of strong administration support.<sup>40</sup>

In September 2011, Rep. Berman discussed the Global Partnerships Act of 2012 at a joint Brookings Institution-American Enterprise Institute event. This bipartisan event was moderated by an MFAN member organization, and introduced by Paul Wolfowitz. Rep. Berman described the bill as shifting decision-making power to the field and strengthening country ownership. He added that it increased the administration’s flexibility to move money among regions or purposes. In exchange for this greater flexibility, it demanded increased executive branch accountability to Congress, emphasizing reporting on outcomes and results, instead of more typically measured and reported on inputs and outputs. While Rep. Berman did not think the legislation would advance quickly, he believed that ultimately legislation was required to make aid reform permanent.

<sup>40</sup> Freedman Consulting, LLC, August 19, 2011, “Landscape Analysis: Project for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation: Landscape and Findings,” Freedman Consulting, LLC, unpublished.

***“The effort kept [foreign assistance reform] on the radar; it was a vehicle to keep talking about reform. It was important to finish the job, to have a placeholder bill to serve as a starting point for larger reform. Now that the community was invested enough to help develop pieces of the bill, why stop there? Have consultations, come up with better concepts for the Foreign Assistance Act, and then park it for [when] the political atmosphere is more tolerant of moving something forward.”***

MFAN member

***“You’ll get more out of reform if you are somewhat ambitious. If you go in with a small ask, there’s nothing less they can give you.”***

MFAN member

***“What MFAN was about before was the big ideas. There is nothing wrong with them. But they were unachievable. Even to those who were sympathetic, it was hard to figure out what to do to get there.”***

MFAN member

HFAC staff, with MFAN’s and InterAction’s assistance, continued to hold high-level consultations with NGOs focused on different sectors, such as health or education, through March 2012. After that, HFAC staff focused on drafting the legislation.

In November, Rep. Berman lost his reelection bid, due to redistricting. Nonetheless, on December 11, 2012, he introduced the Global Partnerships Act of 2012, and in coordination with MFAN, held a press conference on it the following day at which some MFAN principals provided supportive statements.

On April 26, 2013, Rep. Gerry Connolly reintroduced the bill as the Global Partnerships Act of 2013. No one believed it would advance in the short term. Rather, as before, it served as a point of reference in the reform debate, highlighting the need for new legislation, and offering language others legislators could use in either more focused reform bills or in other legislation that could contain reform elements.

Some MFAN members and external actors believed that this purpose justified MFAN’s investment in the GPA. They felt that not only was the bill being used to inform the debate and other legislation, but also that pursuing it raised U.S. foreign assistance reform on the policy agenda. Others disagreed to some extent, and wondered if MFAN might have spent its time more effectively on other efforts. Yet another interviewee wondered what might have happened had MFAN not stepped up to support an ally on foreign assistance reform, and the message that failure to engage might have sent.

Nonetheless, by the time MFAN published *A Way Forward: A Reform Agenda for 2014 and Beyond*, it was no longer pursuing a rewrite of the Foreign Assistance Act. Its focus now was on accountability and ownership. It had shifted most of its legislative energy to Rep. Ted Poe’s (R-TX) Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) and the rest of its energy primarily to USAID, country ownership, and USAID’s Local Solutions strategy. Some MFAN members and external actors felt this shift was in keeping with the shift in political opportunities, and some felt that the scope of this revised agenda made sense given MFAN’s limited size. Others thought MFAN may have missed opportunities to get reform language included in more legislation, and to build relationships with new Republican members of Congress with whom aid reform’s efficiency and effectiveness message would have resonated. A few regretted that MFAN was focusing more on technical issues rather than maintaining momentum for the broader reform agenda.

### ***Increasing engagement on U.S. foreign assistance reform***

The consultative process that Dr. Ohlbaum requested and MFAN and InterAction facilitated created opportunities for sector-focused development workers to engage in foreign assistance reform discussions and to contemplate its relevance to their work. Participants debated, and, for the most part, reached consensus on different issues addressed in the draft Global Partnerships Act. MFAN members and external actors noted a shift in language, stating that, for example, informed by these discussions, NGOs acknowledged that asking for earmarks did not contribute to effective development. These discussions took place over more than a year, reminding the development community frequently about the importance of aid reform and helping it rethink how foreign assistance ought to be conducted, according to current and former MFAN members. They also noted that the discussions helped MFAN raise its own profile.

Some inside and outside MFAN wondered if afterwards MFAN continued to take full advantage of the relationships it developed during the consultations, leveraging them to influence both legislation and policies. They also wondered whether MFAN capitalized sufficiently on its raised profile in its efforts to influence policymakers and the rest of the development community going forward.

MFAN met with State Department and USAID representatives to encourage them to work with Congress on rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act, but got little traction. There was little documented engagement with the White House. It is not clear whether MFAN could have done more to try to influence the executive branch, or whether these openings would never have existed.

### ***Influencing other legislation and administration reform activities***

In early 2011, MFAN noted that comprehensive foreign assistance reform was stalled, but sector-focused foreign assistance legislation continued to move forward. In response, MFAN reinvigorated its sector outreach efforts and began working with groups of NGOs focused on specific sectors to draft a foreign aid reform scorecard the groups could use to ensure that legislation concerning their sectors adhered to foreign aid reform principles. Soon after, MFAN published its "[Standards for Global Development Legislation in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress](#)," explaining the agreed-upon principles for effective development for sector-focused groups to check against any sectoral legislation under discussion in Congress. MFAN's principles not only influenced the legislation for which NGOs advocated, it also gave members of Congress and their staffers cover to push back on sectoral earmarks, according to MFAN members.

By May 2011, a new Education for All bill incorporated language in line with the scorecard principles. Since the standards' publication, they have been incorporated into other sectoral legislation as well. One MFAN member from a multi-sectoral NGO commended MFAN for the standards,

*"After Rep. Berman committed to rewriting the FAA, it reoriented the north star to focus on bigger, broader reform. It forced conversation within the development community, because there was budding legislation affecting all parts of the community. MFAN helped create a safe space for the community to discuss these issues that didn't exist otherwise."*

MFAN member

noting them as an important tool for sharing with sector-focused colleagues and coalitions to ensure that the legislation they promote adheres to effective development principles.

Around the same time, SFRC requested a meeting with MFAN, during which SFRC told MFAN that the State Department authorization it was preparing contained some aid-related provisions, although they were more technical than reform issues. MFAN also engaged with the Appropriations Committees to ask them to align appropriations bills with the Global Partnerships Act's principles.

MFAN also continued to work on reform-focused legislation, albeit more narrowly focused legislation. As the GPA was still being drafted, MFAN was already working with Rep. Ted Poe's office to develop the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA), which contained some of MFAN's core reform principles.

Interviewees believed that developing the GPA, which flowed directly out of Rep. Berman's work on the Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act, also spurred progress on PPD-6 and the QDDR. According to multiple sources, neither the White House nor State Department wanted to let Congress get out ahead of their reform efforts.

## MFAN's Capacities

MFAN was most influential in its work on rewriting the FAA because of the "personalities and experience of MFAN members," according to MFAN members. They appreciated MFAN's value added in its relationships with members of Congress and their staffers, its understanding of congressional committees and legislative processes, its access to intelligence and willingness to share it with its membership and allies, and its ability to influence other development organizations. For these MFAN members, who comprised MFAN's membership was critical.

MFAN's structure and governing processes were far less influential, although the fact that its structure allowed open information sharing was highly valued. Many said MFAN's near-consensus model made it hard for MFAN to say tough things. MFAN's relatively small size allowed for greater nimbleness than larger coalitions, although its perceived exclusiveness, particularly in its early days, may have at times hindered its ability to get buy in from the broader development community.

## Rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act Timeline

**June 2008:** MFAN launched with release of *New Day, New Way*, which among other priorities, called for a new Foreign Assistance Act. Reps. Howard Berman (D-CA) and Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-NE) presented remarks as part of the launch.

**Early 2009:** MFAN met with the State Department regarding an aid reform agenda and working with Congress to write new legislation. State Department was not interested. The White House also didn't seem willing to spend political capital on a new FAA, given the financial crisis, concerns about federal spending, and State Department opposition.

**March 2009:** MFAN published an open letter in *Politico* with over 200 endorsements calling for an FAA rewrite and a global development strategy.

**April 28, 2009:** HFAC Chair Rep. Howard Berman announced the Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act (H.R. 2139). MFAN members had requested that Rep. Berman focus on foreign aid reform. He ensured the bill included the areas of greatest agreement within the development community, as

identified by MFAN. MFAN helped gather 125 co-sponsors, including some Republicans. MFAN members did grassroots campaigning on aid reform, generating more than 200,000 letters to Congress. Given State Department and Republican opposition, Rep. Berman did not pursue the bill.

**May 20, 2009:** HFAC marked up a State Department authorization bill (H.R. 2410, 111<sup>th</sup> Congress) requiring, among other things, a quadrennial review of diplomacy and development (a provision strongly opposed by the State Department). The bill passed the full House on June 10.

**July 10, 2009:** Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced she would conduct the first-ever Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review.

**July 28, 2009:** SFRC Chair Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) and Ranking Member Sen. Richard Lugar (R-IN) introduced the Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009 (S. 1524). MFAN members worked closely with SFRC on the content and gathered co-sponsors, especially advocating with SFRC Republicans. Bread for the World supporters in Massachusetts met with Sen. Kerry's staff to urge his support. State Department opposed the bill.

**August 2009:** President Obama signed a Presidential Study Directive (PSD) calling on the National Security Council and the National Economic Council to lead a whole-of government review of U.S. global development policy.

**November 2009:** SFRC approved S. 1524 on a 9-3 vote, including all of the committee's Republicans except two. MFAN's work on H.R. 2139 and S. 1524 resulted in strong working relationships with key congressional committees and members, and moved foreign aid reform higher on the agenda.

**May 25, 2010:** HFAC staff member Diana Ohlbaum requested a meeting with MFAN to review a partial text of a draft new FAA. InterAction and MFAN agreed to work together to assist Dr. Ohlbaum with consultations with the broader development community.

**June 1-4, 2010:** Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) at the InterAction Forum called for a new FAA and a strong USAID. USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah pledged to work with Congress on reform.

**June 9, 2010:** MFAN asked State Department Director of Policy Planning Anne-Marie Slaughter to engage Congress on reform legislation.

**June 29, 2010:** Rep. Berman's office released a "Global Partnerships Act of 2010" discussion guide, sharing it widely with interested groups, and asked for comments by end of July.

**July 13, 2010:** InterAction hosted a community discussion on the new draft FAA. About 50 NGOs participated and a strong consensus supported the draft.

**September 21, 2010:** Rep. Berman spoke at the Society for International Development, reaffirming his intent to advance an FAA rewrite and introduce it in 2011.

**September 22, 2010:** The White House released PPD-6, the Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development – the result of the whole-of-government review launched a year earlier.

**Mid-October 2010:** MFAN strengthened its Republican outreach strategy, talking with key House Republican leadership staff about the draft FAA preambles.

**November 2010:** Republicans won control of the House. HFAC and its new Republican chair were not interested in comprehensive foreign assistance reform. Rep. Berman continued work on a revised FAA.

**Late 2010:** The administration's reviews leading up to PPD-6 and the QDDR went late into the congressional session, closing the window for a new FAA.

**End February/ Early March 2011:** MFAN re-launched sector outreach efforts to generate buy in to the reform agenda. MFAN met with SFRC staff members Steve Feldstein and Lori Rowley. Bread for the World staff member Monica Mills met with HFAC staff member Mark Gage and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. Bread for the World President David Beckmann then met with Rep. Ros-Lehtinen.

**April 2011:** MFAN published *From Policy to Practice*. It continued to call for a new FAA, but acknowledged that a full rewrite might not be possible.

**Early May 2011:** MFAN completed sector outreach meetings regarding its draft legislative scorecard. A new version of the Education for All bill changed the language concerning a proposed education coordinator by allowing the USAID administrator to name the coordinator, presumably so he could dual hat the assistant administrator of the Bureau for Economic Growth and Trade as also the new education coordinator and thereby use existing structures. This change reflected principles outlined in MFAN's legislative scorecard. MFAN members met with Secretary Clinton's Senior Advisor for Development Steve Radelet to get support for a proposed FAA rewrite. MFAN co-chairs met with NSC Senior Director Gayle Smith to follow up on what legislative priorities the White House might want concerning aid reform.

**Mid-May 2011:** SFRC staffers Steve Feldstein and Lori Rowley met with MFAN organizations to say they were moving ahead with the State Department authorization with some aid-related provisions, although they were more technical than reform issues. They said they might consider a reform bill in the autumn.

**June 2011:** As a result of its sectoral consultations, MFAN produced "Standards for Global Development Legislation the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress," laying out agreed-upon principles for effective development and serving as a cross-sector reform guide for sectoral legislation being proposed in the new Congress. Subsequently, sectoral bills incorporated many of the guide's reform standards, and support for reform increased on Capitol Hill and elsewhere.

**September 8, 2011:** Rep. Howard Berman released a draft of the Global Partnerships Act of 2011 at a joint Brookings Institution-American Enterprise Institute event. The draft reflected three years of consultation with the development community, with MFAN playing a leading role hosting discussion sessions between Dr. Ohlbaum and different interest groups. MFAN also undertook education around the GPA, policymaker outreach, and events. MFAN engaged with the Appropriations Committees to encourage them to align future appropriations bills with the principles, objectives, and account structure articulated in the Global Partnerships Act. The administration was not involved in drafting or review of the GPA.

**October-December 2011:** MFAN convened another round of high-level consultations between Dr. Ohlbaum and sector communities around the individual chapters of the development title in the GPA.

**March 30, 2012:** Dr. Ohlbaum hosted a wrap-up GPA consultation with the lead organization for each of the 12 sectors. Consensus and support were notable. This was evidence of progress in bringing aid reform principles to multiple development sectors, since these groups had not been so positive about the principles at first.

**November 2012:** Rep. Berman lost re-election.

**Late November 2012:** HFAC staff discussed with MFAN a press conference/roll out event. MFAN also planned to get some notable individuals to author an op-ed following introduction of the bill.

**December 12, 2012:** Rep. Berman introduced the GPA at the “Global Partnerships Act Introduction Press Conference” on Capitol Hill. At the press conference, some MFAN principals provided supportive statements. The MFAN co-chairs’ statement applauded Rep. Berman and the introduction of the bill, and encouraged bipartisan cooperation to pass it in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress.

**April 26, 2013:** Rep. Gerry Connolly reintroduced the [GPA \(H.R. 1739\)](#) in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress. MFAN had no illusions that the GPA would be enacted quickly. However, for MFAN, the bill served as an important marker in the reform debate, helping to concretize the need for new legislation.

**April 14, 2014:** MFAN published *[A Way Forward: A Reform Agenda for 2014 and Beyond](#)*. MFAN was no longer pursuing a rewrite of the FAA. Its focus now was on accountability and ownership.

## The Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) and MFAN's Influence

As part of a retrospective evaluation of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network's (MFAN's) first eight years (2008-2016), the evaluation team explored in depth four outcomes to which MFAN members believed MFAN contributed significantly. Passage and enactment of the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) was among these four.

### FATAA: Outcome of interest

*The development and passage of FATAA in July 2016 and the influence it had while being developed.*

In July 2016, the U.S. Congress passed and President Barack Obama signed into law the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA), which “requires that detailed foreign assistance information be regularly updated on the ForeignAssistance.gov website, and that development and economic assistance be rigorously monitored and evaluated.”<sup>41</sup>

### Consensus View

FATAA's passage and enactment resulted from the long-term, concerted effort of the congressional offices involved, along with support from the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN),<sup>42</sup> Oxfam, the Consensus for Development Reform (CDR), the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC), the ONE Campaign (ONE), and InterAction, with each playing an important role. According to congressional staffers, among external stakeholders, MFAN played the most critical role. MFAN presented the bill idea to the office of Congressman Ted Poe (R-TX), was in the most regular contact with his and other congressional offices, and conducted most of the outsider legwork to keep the bill moving. FATAA's passage strengthened Obama administration reforms by enshrining them in a statute, although the congressional offices involved, MFAN, and its allies need to keep a close eye on its implementation.

Absent MFAN, the quality or focus of the bill might have changed. Congressman Poe was interested in advancing legislation related to aid reform, transparency, and accountability, and would have introduced legislation with or without external assistance. In addition, InterAction, Oxfam, Publish What You Fund, and/or ONE might have pushed for legislation. However, in either case, the bill might have focused only on transparency or fiduciary accountability, rather than focusing broadly on development accountability. Alternatively, a member of Congress might have introduced legislation that was more punitive than constructive.

Many stakeholders believe FATAA would not have been enacted absent MFAN's ongoing engagement. Without that support, the congressional offices involved – busy with many issues – might not have been able to continue focusing on FATAA. MFAN offered grounding in development programming and deep knowledge of how Congress works. It either had or was able to develop relationships with key Democrats and Republicans on the Hill and in the administration, although its influence with some parts of the administration could have been stronger. Finally, its members had sufficient clout that enabled them to access and influence leadership within much of the Congress and also parts of the administration. Absent

<sup>41</sup> George Ingram, Carolyn Miles, and Connie Veillette, July 6, 2016, “Foreign Aid Accountability Bill Unanimously Approved by Congress, Heads to the President for Signature,” MFAN, <http://modernizeaid.net/2016/07/foreign-aid-accountability-bill-unanimously-approved-congress-heads-president-signature/>.

<sup>42</sup> References to MFAN in this document include its fiscal sponsor, New Venture Fund. New Venture Fund serves as the official legal and fiscal entity for MFAN and exercises management oversight over the project.

MFAN, some congressional offices might have focused on competing priorities instead, or broad-based political support might have been lacking.

Some felt that the administration would have worked on increasing transparency and accountability absent FATAA, although it would have done less than happened with FATAA and the pressure it created. For example, the administration might have been satisfied with the ForeignAssistance.gov website,<sup>43</sup> and progress toward supplying it with quality information might have been slower.

## MFAN's Contribution

### *Laying the groundwork for FATAA: congressional actions*

From MFAN's inception, rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) and promoting transparency and accountability were among its core recommendations, as articulated in its original 2008 publication *New Day, New Way*. In 2009, the Obama administration and key members of Congress began their work recognizing the importance of global development and the need to maximize the effectiveness of the U.S. government's investments in it.

On April 28, 2009, Rep. Berman and Rep. Mark Kirk (R-IL) introduced the Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009 (H.R. 2139) (IFARA). The bill called on the administration to draft a national strategy for global development, established new guidelines for monitoring and evaluating U.S. foreign assistance, promoted greater transparency for U.S. foreign assistance, and repealed some outdated provisions of the FAA.<sup>44</sup> According to a former House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) staffer, with MFAN's strong support, the bill gathered 125 co-sponsors, including some Republicans. However, according to others close to the process, because of weak Republican support and strong opposition from the State Department, Rep. Berman did not proceed with the bill.

Rep. Berman was also working on a State Department reauthorization bill (H.R. 2410). He considered including the Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act within it, although doing so would have entailed compromise on an aspect of IFARA. Rep. Berman and HFAC staffer Diana Ohlbaum wanted to agree to the compromise so that most of IFARA could advance. However, because of an MFAN plus one's opposition to the compromise, Rep. Berman and Dr. Ohlbaum did not pursue it. One MFAN member saw this as a missed opportunity to advance most, if not all of MFAN's agenda.

On July 28, Sens. John Kerry (D-MA) and Richard Lugar (R-IN) introduced the Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009 (S. 1524), which sought to bolster the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), increase accountability and innovation in U.S. foreign assistance, improve development coordination, and increase transparency of U.S. foreign assistance.<sup>45</sup> Former Senate staffers credit MFAN with providing external support for the process and helping gain support within the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC). SFRC approved the bill in November, but the State Department strongly opposed it.

In 2010, having already worked with Rep. Berman's office and Sens. Lugar and Kerry's offices on early U.S. foreign assistance reform legislation, MFAN continued to work with Rep. Berman's office and HFAC on rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. According to a former HFAC staffer, there was no expectation that this legislation would be enacted in the short or medium term. However, the drafting

<sup>43</sup> By creating the ForeignAssistance.gov website, the U.S. government sought to make its foreign assistance investments transparent.

<sup>44</sup> MFAN, Summary of H.R. 2139, unpublished.

<sup>45</sup> MFAN Summary of S. 1524, unpublished.

process brought the development community together to discuss and reach consensus on overarching development principles, raised the issue of foreign assistance reform on the policy agenda, and influenced other congressional and administration reform efforts.

While Rep. Poe's staff did not draw on these earlier bills when drafting FATAA, the bills helped raise aid reform on the policy agenda, preparing both congressional offices and the development community for additional aid reform efforts. They also gave MFAN and others language to which they could refer when proposing ideas to those working on FATAA.

### ***The Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA)***

In November 2010 in the midterm elections, Republicans won a majority in the House, with a large influx of Tea Party members. Although MFAN continued working with Rep. Berman's office and HFAC on rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act, with this shift, MFAN complemented this effort with others. For example, MFAN wanted to help advance narrower legislation with greater appeal to the House's new majority and with a greater possibility of passage.

Around this time, the Kyle House Group, which was helping MFAN strengthen its relationships with Republican members of Congress, met with HFAC member Rep. Poe's office, and learned about his interest in foreign assistance. MFAN wanted to respond to his concern that the U.S. government be accountable for its foreign assistance investments, and reached out to his office to discuss the possibility of introducing legislation that would provide guidelines for U.S. foreign assistance evaluation and transparency. A close, ongoing collaboration between Rep. Poe's office and MFAN was launched.

The Kyle House Group helped MFAN identify the portions of the new draft Foreign Assistance Act that would have the greatest appeal to House Republicans. MFAN also looked closely at transparency and accountability reforms the administration was already undertaking to make sure the draft legislation codified what already existed, rather than creating new demands. In this way, MFAN sought to suggest bill content that would be uncontroversial.

Nonetheless, some MFAN members, such as InterAction and USGLC, were not early supporters. Some InterAction members were concerned that they lacked the infrastructure and capacities to meet the evaluation requirements and timelines in the draft legislation. These requirements coincided with increasing congressional demands for data from development programs, and program implementers were, in cases, struggling to keep up. Other InterAction members worried that demands for increased transparency could endanger both aid workers and those they serve, particularly in areas such as democracy and governance. MFAN responded by encouraging Rep. Poe's office to draft bill language that took into consideration these members' concerns.

Through much of 2011, Rep. Poe’s office and MFAN worked closely together drafting the legislation. By October, the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2012 (FATAA of 2012) was written. Reps. Poe and Berman issued a Dear Colleague letter inviting original co-sponsors, and then Rep. Poe introduced the bill. During the following months, to call attention to the bill, Rep. Poe and former Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-AZ) published an [op-ed](#) in Roll Call calling for U.S. foreign assistance reform, MFAN co-chairs issued a [statement](#) in favor of the bill, and Rep. Poe was the kick-off speaker at an Oxfam event, the “Politics of Partnerships.” In quieter advocacy, in early December, MFAN met with USAID’s Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs to urge USAID’s support for the bill, and a few days later, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah met with Rep. Poe to discuss FATAA.

Over the course of much of 2012, Rep. Poe’s office, MFAN, and other allies worked to advance the bill in Congress. By August, HFAC Chair Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) agreed to ask the Congressional Budget Office to score FATAA – something that had been pending for most of the year, due to difficulty receiving information from State and USAID, and House leadership agreed to move the bill through a suspension vote in the House. With MFAN’s strong support, the bill gained 56 co-sponsors (28 Democrats and 28 Republicans), and passed the House by a unanimous vote on December 30.

MFAN complemented its private advocacy with statements in [September 2012](#) and [January 2013](#) to call attention to the bill’s progress and urge its passage in the Senate. MFAN also met with State and USAID to encourage their support for the bill and to hear their concerns regarding how expenses related to the bill would be handled, who was setting priorities for the administration, and how implementation deadlines would be met. In response to their concerns, MFAN offered to ask for changes in the bill’s text.

Meanwhile, MFAN members had been meeting with the offices of Sens. Marco Rubio (R-FL), Lugar and Kerry to encourage them to introduce a companion bill in the Senate. Sen. Lugar was the original Senate lead sponsor and then Sen. Rubio joined. The bill gained eight co-sponsors and passed unanimously out of SFRC in December. However, it faced a Senate hold, based on concerns that it might duplicate other legislation and be costly. A call from Rep. Poe and letters from MFAN, CDR, InterAction, and others did not succeed in lifting it. MFAN issued a public [statement](#) applauding the House for its passage of the bill and criticizing the Senate’s inaction.

In early 2013, MFAN met with the White House and the State Department to restart conversations about FATAA. The White House, State Department, USAID, and MCC then briefed a broader MFAN group on the ForeignAssistance.gov website, its progress vis-à-vis the International Aid Transparency Initiative, and evaluations. All felt that the briefing identified

*“I appreciated MFAN’s relationship with other off-the-Hill groups; seeing InterAction, Bread for the World, ONE also supporting FATAA. MFAN was pretty influential in getting them to care about FATAA, building out the base for a broader coalition. Even if none would make FATAA a top priority, saying that they liked the bill helped. I was glad for the broad coalition. MFAN used their coalition effectively. It is one thing for an organization to be a MFAN member, and another that they sent out letters on their own letterhead in support of the bill.”*

Congressional staffer

***“As we were whipping support, MFAN had folks dedicated to making this a top priority. MFAN met with more offices to get support than any other group. They helped build a big co-sponsorship list. MFAN was bipartisan. They were not seen as on one side or the other. They remained in the middle, based on substance. We saw them successfully influence Democrats and Republicans to sign on. With more co-sponsors signed on, we got more support.***

***“MFAN co-chairs working at a high level were able to get the right kind of meetings with House leadership to say why this was important. Then, the leadership was willing to listen to us.***

***“We had to go back and resolve people’s concerns regarding language. MFAN gave us educated input on language. They could craft alternative language that would appeal to the [m]embers, without gutting the bill. MFAN had good political sense. They understood that to get the bill passed they needed to make compromises. They were aware of cost concerns. They were aware of concerns regarding including certain groups. They didn’t insist on language. We appreciated the very realistic take and sound understanding that they had about what we were dealing with on the Hill.”***

HFAC staffer

common ground and made advances. Through the year and into 2014, MFAN continued to meet with representatives from State, USAID, and MCC. In meetings with USAID’s and the State Department’s evaluation offices, MFAN heard about the challenges of implementation capacity and the value of external pressure. Opposition to the bill from parts of State continued.

At the same time, Rep. Poe began circulating a revised FATAA, and asked for MFAN’s assistance educating new HFAC Republicans on the bill. Sen. Rubio agreed to lead again in the Senate. Nonetheless, FATAA did not pass in 2013 or 2014; and after the midterm elections, MFAN began working with the offices of SFRC’s new Chair Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN), Sen. Rubio, and Rep. Poe on a new version of FATAA to introduce in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress.

During this time, MFAN continued its advocacy for greater transparency and accountability. In April 2014, MFAN published *The Way Forward: A Reform Agenda for 2014 and Beyond*, in which it called for the enactment of FATAA. MFAN also met with the Data Transparency Coalition, which was advancing the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act, led by Reps. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) and Darrell Issa (R-CA), in order to educate them on FATAA. MFAN developed a briefing, “Aid Effectiveness: The Role of Transparency,” which it disseminated to key people in the executive branch to build greater buy in on the importance of transparency in foreign assistance. In late 2014, MFAN and its members participated in the launch of ally Publish What You Fund’s Aid Transparency Index, and published a series of blogs to call greater attention to the issue. (See MFAN, Lugar Center, Brookings Institution, InterAction, Oxfam.)

In 2015, Rep. Poe’s office, MFAN, and other allies continued to work together to advance FATAA’s passage. Rep. Poe and Sen. Rubio engaged Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA) and Sen. Corker early in the reintroduction process to ensure their support. Remaining stumbling blocks in the drafting included whether to include security assistance, on which the State Department was divided, and how to reduce cost. State Department’s Legislative Affairs office continued to oppose the bill.

Meanwhile, in July, MFAN released *ACCOUNTdown to 2017: Strengthening a Bipartisan Legacy of Modernizing Foreign Assistance* at a public event, calling again for FATAA’s enactment. Rep. Poe and Sen. Lugar spoke at the event, while representatives from State and USAID attended. When the Aid Transparency Index<sup>46</sup> was published in late 2015, MFAN and its members again published related blogs to call attention to the importance of the issue. (See The Hill, Lugar Center, Oxfam.)

<sup>46</sup> Publish What You Fund publishes the Aid Transparency Index annually to show how donors rank in terms of their aid transparency. See <http://ati.publishwhatyoufund.org/>.

As the bill's leaders started pushing for its reintroduction, MFAN and its members continued to meet with key members of Congress and representatives of USAID and State, as well as the Department of Defense to garner support for the bill. MFAN and InterAction again organized a sign-on letter supporting FATAA. The letter garnered 46 organizational endorsements. MFAN reached out to the White House and State Department, and MFAN co-chairs sent letters to Secretary Kerry and Office of Management and Budget Director Shaun Donovan urging their support. MFAN members took a variety of actions to get more co-sponsors. USGLC sent letters to members of Congress, CARE sent out communications packages, and Bread for the World blogged and did grassroots work. These and other members reached out to House and Senate leadership and appropriators.

FATAA passed out of SFRC in November, less than a month after introduction, and then passed the House in early December. However, in the Senate, a senator imposed a hold. In response, MFAN quickly identified the office with the hold, and set up a meeting with the Senator's staffer to understand the Senator's concerns and to see how to address them. This meeting brought together the bill's lead sponsors, and through it, all involved identified an acceptable path forward. In February, Rep. Poe questioned Secretary Kerry at a hearing on FATAA about the State Department's support. MFAN leadership and key members also reached out to other State Department, White House, USAID, and MCC officials. Soon after, the text was finalized. However, in both the House and the Senate, the bill continued to be used as a political football affected by other concerns.

Finally, in late June 2016, FATAA passed the House again, and in July, it passed the Senate, and was signed into law by President Obama. After FATAA's passage, MFAN remained engaged, meeting with USAID, the State Department and the Office of Management and Budget to discuss its implementation.

### ***Unanticipated benefits of six years of working on FATAA***

Working on FATAA for six years required perseverance by Rep. Poe, Sen. Rubio, the other bill leaders and their offices, and MFAN and its allies. In the beginning, many saw FATAA as low-hanging fruit, and anticipated that it would pass easily. The strength of the opposition and the breadth of concerns voiced by various congressional offices and parts of State, USAID, and the NGO community forced those working on it to redouble their efforts, meeting frequently with a wide range of stakeholders to understand and overcome the hurdles the bill faced.

And yet, those working on the bill saw a benefit to the time and effort they had to spend on it: Over the six years, they were able to educate many members of Congress and their staff, as well as administration officials about the importance of transparency and accountability to ensuring the

***“When we first started six years ago, Committee (HFAC) staff weren’t convinced this was a problem, or that our solution was the right solution. Now they understand it and have made it a priority. Now it is not an issue of ‘is this a problem?’ Now they love effectiveness conversations, and want to have more conversations. Awareness levels have increased a lot among Committee staff. This was even more important on the Senate side, where there was staff turnover. We passed it unanimously out of both Committees in the House and Senate. Whether you support foreign aid or not, you can agree on this: MFAN convinced people.”***

**HFAC staffer**

***“The [a]dministration saw the bill coming down the lane. They were using much of the language in the bill to inform policies related to evaluation and transparency.”***

**HFAC staffer**

effectiveness of U.S. foreign assistance. They felt that the narrower political space and many years required for passage forced FATAA supporters to build more political consensus than they would have otherwise. They believed that the process forged relationships between Republicans and Democrats, the House and Senate, and among NGOs. MFAN believes it can now use that political consensus and those relationships to advance other reform efforts.

HFAC staffers and MFAN also noticed that, even before FATAA was passed, the administration was undertaking reforms in response to it.

## MFAN's Capacities

A number of factors related to MFAN's structure and governance benefitted MFAN's work on FATAA. MFAN members identified the following:

- Co-chairs
  - One MFAN co-chair felt strongly about transparency and accountability. This co-chair prioritized these issues, and was always willing to talk to administration and congressional leaders about them. Other issues did not benefit from similar co-chair ownership.
  - Former Rep. Jim Kolbe had just left Congress and joined MFAN as a co-chair. He served as a helpful bridge between the two.
  - Another co-chair offered moral authority and brought other NGOs on board.
- Hub
  - MFAN's Hub (secretariat) provided ongoing support for the congressional offices involved in advancing the bill. This support encouraged the offices to persevere in their efforts, and gave them the assistance they needed.
  - The Hub was professionally and tactically organized, and well connected to member organizations, as well as to MFAN's co-chairs. This facilitated communication among the co-chairs and member organizations.
  - The Hub created a safe environment in which information was shared openly. It also created solidarity among a core group of people.
- Working groups
  - MFAN working groups (first the MFAN Advocacy Subcommittee and later the Accountability Working Group and the Hill Group), spearheaded by the Hub, championed MFAN's work on FATAA.
  - The Accountability Working Group was led by two members who had recently left the Hill and had a deep understanding of how it worked.
  - The Accountability Working Group could call upon the technical expertise required to advance FATAA.
- Dedicated funding
  - Because the Hub and many MFAN members had dedicated funding from foundations to support this work, they could devote time to FATAA's development and passage. MFAN members believe that MFAN would not have been able to engage on FATAA in such a focused way absent dedicated funding.

- Membership engagement
  - There was always a core group of coalition members willing to work with Rep. Poe and his staff member Luke Murry, ensuring that they received continuous community support.
  - MFAN’s Hub staff and many of its members (principals and plus ones) were not legally barred from lobbying.
- Republican outreach
  - MFAN had the Kyle House Group in place from the beginning of its work on FATAA, advising it on which pieces of the Berman bill would appeal to Republican members of Congress, to whom to reach out, and how to appropriately frame messages.
  - The Consensus for Development Reform (CDR), which was launched in 2011 to allow Republican leaders in the development community to reach out to Republican members of Congress, and which served as an MFAN ally on FATAA, pushed FATAA and its principles with the Hill and others. They were noted for their ability to influence House leadership, which allowed FATAA to move forward in the House.

## FATAA Timeline of Key Events

**2009-2010:** Growing interest in aid reform on the Hill, as seen in H.R. 2139 Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009 (Reps. Howard Berman (D-CA) and Rep. Mark Kirk (R-IL)) and S. 1524 Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009 (Sens. Richard Lugar (R-IN) and John Kerry (D-MA)). MFAN played a significant role in inspiring, drafting, and garnering support for these bills both on and off the Hill.

**2010:** The administration created the aid data website ForeignAssistance.gov.

**2010:** MFAN worked closely with the office of Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX) on guidelines for foreign assistance evaluation and transparency and draft bill language.

**November 2010:** Republicans won the House, dominated by Tea Party. Given this and the administration’s disinterest in supporting authorizing legislation, it seemed a rewrite of the Foreign Assistance Act could not be enacted. MFAN pivoted to more targeted, stand-alone bills, and made outreach to Republicans and Tea Party members a top priority.

**2011:** The bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Effective Foreign Assistance was created, with MFAN’s assistance.

**2011:** The Open Government Partnership, an international platform for those committed to making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens, published its first national action plan.

**2011:** USAID published its evaluation policy.

**2011:** Secretary Clinton committed the U.S. government to joining the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

**October 5, 2011:** Reps. Poe and Berman issued a Dear Colleague letter on the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2012, inviting original cosponsors.

**October 12-13, 2011:** Rep. Poe introduced FATAA (H.R. 3159) in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. MFAN co-chairs issued a statement: “Poe Bill Would Strengthen Foreign Assistance Transparency, Accountability,” applauding Rep. Poe and the introduction of FATAA. MFAN co-chairs urged MFAN principals and plus ones to release statements supporting FATAA.

**October 20, 2011:** Rep. Poe and former Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-AZ) published an op-ed in Roll Call: “Shedding More Light on U.S. Foreign Aid,” issuing a call to modernize and reform U.S. foreign aid system.

**October 28, 2011:** MFAN produced a summary of FATAA of 2012 (H.R. 3159).

**December 2, 2011:** MFAN members urged USAID’s Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs to support FATAA.

**December 6, 2011:** USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah met with Rep. Poe to discuss FATAA.

**Mid-December 2011:** Rep. Poe was the kick-off speaker at an Oxfam event, the “Politics of Partnerships.” He described the problem and called for bipartisan legislation.

**January 2012:** Rep. Poe sought Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen’s (R-FL) support for the bill and willingness to put the bill on the House suspension calendar. Rep. Ros-Lehtinen wanted to wait for the Congressional Budget Office’s (CBO) scoring.

**Mid-March 2012:** CBO had still not received information from USAID and State to score the bill.

**Late May 2012:** MFAN members met with a Sen. Rubio staffer. Sen. Rubio expressed interest in introducing a companion bill to Rep. Poe’s on transparency and evaluation.

**June 20, 2012:** Sen. Lugar introduced a Senate version of FATAA, identical to the bill introduced in the House by Reps. Poe and Berman.

**Early August 2012:** Rep. Ros-Lehtinen agreed to ask CBO for a score of FATAA, and House leadership agreed that it could move through a suspension vote in the House. Sens. Kerry and Rubio were working on a substitute to the Sen. Lugar companion bill.

**Early September 2012:** MFAN co-chairs sent a letter to Sen. Kerry on the Rep. Poe transparency bill.

**September 19, 2012:** MFAN issued a statement by its co-chairs: “Lugar-Rubio Bill Signals Commitment to More Transparent, Accountable Foreign Assistance.” They noted progress in the House (H.R. 3159) – bipartisan legislation, 55 cosponsors – and urged the Senate to approve the bill during the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, promising MFAN would work with the House and Senate on its passage.

**Early October 2012:** MFAN member met with State and USAID about the Poe and Lugar bill to hear their concerns regarding cost and implementation. MFAN offered to ask for changes to the bill’s text.

**January 2, 2013:** MFAN issued statement urging the Senate to pass FATAA before the end of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, and applauded House for their passage of the bill.

**Early January 2013:** FATAA passed the House on Dec. 30 on a 390-0 vote. In the Senate, the bill had eight cosponsors and passed unanimously out of SFRC in December 2012, but faced a hold. Letters from Rep. Poe, MFAN, the Consensus for Development Reform, InterAction and others did not succeed in lifting it.

**January 4, 2013:** MFAN co-chairs issued a statement: "[Senate Does Disservice to Americans, Allies & Foreign Assistance Recipients by Killing Transparency Legislation.](#)"

**January 2013:** MFAN called the White House and the State Department Office of Foreign Assistance (State F), and heard their concern that FATAA went beyond what was required according to an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) bulletin. They agreed to renew conversations. The White House and State F briefed MFAN plus ones on the ForeignAssistance.gov website and IATI.

**Late January/Early Feb 2013:** MFAN met with NSC Senior Director Gayle Smith, who offered to gather White House, State, USAID, and MCC staff to discuss FATAA at an MFAN-hosted, off-the-record breakfast, which happened in March.

**Late March 2013:** Rep. Poe circulated as a draft a revised FATAA with all foreign assistance (including security assistance) included in the mandate for evaluation guidelines. Rep. Poe asked MFAN to help educate the new HFAC Republicans on the bill. Sen. Rubio agreed to lead in Senate.

**Oct 2013:** MFAN-Oxfam-Brookings Institution Roundtable held on why U.S. aid transparency matters.

**2013:** The Open Government Partnership published its second national action plan.

**2013:** The Center for International Policy created the [Security Assistance Monitor](#) to inform U.S. citizens about U.S. security and defense assistance.

**Early November 2013:** Sen. Rubio, State, and the White House compromised on the security assistance evaluation issue exemption, as long as a similar evaluation process was in place, along with a briefing for Congress.

**January 9, 2014:** MFAN co-chairs issued a statement applauding the Senate passage of FATAA of 2013, urging House passage, and stating MFAN's support for the bill.

**April 14, 2014:** MFAN published [The Way Forward: A Reform Agenda for 2014 and Beyond](#), no longer calling for a revised FAA, but instead pressing for accountability and ownership and FATAA's enactment.

**Late July 2014:** MFAN's Accountability Working Group (AWG) met with USAID's Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research (LER) on FATAA to hear that office's concerns, including the issue of USAID monitoring and evaluation capacity needed to implement the bill.

**2014:** MCC was first on the annual Aid Transparency Index produced by the group Publish What You Fund.

**September 1, 2014:** MFAN's AWG published "[Aid Effectiveness: The Role of Transparency.](#)"

**October 2014:** MFAN's AWG drafted an outline for a successor bill to FATAA.

**November 5-7, 2014:** MFAN met with incoming SFRC Chairman Corker's staff to garner input and support for the new FATAA. MFAN met with FATAA lead sponsor Sen. Rubio's staff to discuss next steps. MFAN met with Rep. Poe's staffer Luke Murry on a new version of FATAA for the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress.

**April 2015:** USAID/LER met with Rep. Poe's office.

**May 29, 2015:** Rep. Poe's staffer Luke Murry held a conference call with MFAN deputies. He expressed commitment to getting the bill passed in 2015. Two stumbling blocks remained: security assistance and cost. USAID's evaluation office declared its support. However, the State Department's legislative office remained opposed.

**Early June 2015:** MFAN met with the State Department Office of Foreign Assistance (State F) staff on FATAA, who had come to view MFAN as a real partner.

**June 2015:** Rep. Poe and Sen. Rubio engaged Rep. Royce and Sen. Corker early in the reintroduction process.

**Late July 2015:** Rep. Poe drafted a revised FATAA bill with language requiring security assistance evaluations, and removing some provisions to keep cost down. MFAN reviewed it and offered suggestions.

**July 22, 2015:** MFAN released *ACCOUNTdown to 2017*. Rep. Poe and Sen. Lugar spoke, and Eric Postel (USAID) and Daniella Ballou-Aares (State) attended the launch. The report called for the enactment and implementation of FATAA.

**September 2015:** Latest version of Rep. Poe's bill FATAA developed incorporating some MFAN edits. The bill was sent to CBO for preliminary scoring. Sen. Rubio wanted to introduce the bill soon, so as to have the same version in the House and Senate. Rep. Royce's staff member provided input on Rep. Poe's bill; SFRC had not (awaiting CBO score).

**Late September/Early October 2015:** With Sen. Rubio and Rep. Poe ready to introduce the bill without language requiring security assistance evaluations, all involved in the bill's drafting met with State.

**October 30, 2015:** FATAA scheduled for markup in the Senate and House. MFAN partnered with InterAction on an organizational sign-on letter. MFAN planned to send the White House and OMB MFAN's statements as an FYI, and include FATAA in a letter to OMB. MFAN mobilized members to get more co-sponsors and support for FATAA.

**November 10, 2015:** FATAA passed SFRC by voice vote. MFAN statement thanked SFRC.

**November 13, 2015:** The House hoped to put FATAA on the suspension calendar during the first week of December. The Senate was looking to hotline<sup>47</sup> the bill as soon as possible. MFAN requested meetings with House and Senate leadership and appropriators. The State Department Office of Legislative Affairs remained opposed to the bill. OMB remained unsupportive, but not actively in opposition. MFAN issued a

<sup>47</sup> "The Senate will "hotline" a bill when it is ready to be considered under an unanimous consent agreement. "Under the hotline process, the Senate cloakrooms notify Senators of upcoming bills that may be considered under unanimous consent to provide them with a final opportunity to object." <https://rules.house.gov/sites/republicans.rules.house.gov/files/112-BT-Senate-20110914.pdf>.

letter from its co-chairs to Sec. Kerry urging his endorsement. MFAN members reached out to the White House, State Department, and USAID.

**December 2, 2015:** Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD) hotlined FATAA on the Senate Democrats' side.

**Mid-December 2015:** FATAA passed the House in early December and cleared the Senate GOP hotline, but a Senator imposed a hold. A member of the MFAN Hub planned to meet with the Senator's office in January.

**Early January 2016:** MFAN group met with the Senator's office regarding FATAA. Also invited were staff from the offices of Rep. Poe, Rep. Connolly, Sen. Cardin and Sen. Rubio, as well as HFAC.

**Late February 2016:** Supported by MFAN, Rep. Poe questioned Sec. Kerry at a FATAA hearing. Sec. Kerry did not clearly commit to supporting FATAA.

**March 2016:** House Leadership placed FATAA on the calendar.

**Late April 2016:** In the House and Senate, FATAA treated as a political football, affected by other concerns.

**June 29 -July 19, 2016:** FATAA passed the Senate after holds were lifted. The House passed FATAA. President Obama signed FATAA into law. MFAN issued statements with thanks.

**Late July 2016:** MFAN met with USAID/LER on FATAA implementation.

**Late August/Early September 2016:** Honorary MFAN co-chairs Jim Kolbe and Howard Berman published an op-ed thanking Congress for FATAA's passage and encouraging focus on its implementation.

**Mid to Late September 2016:** MFAN's AWG met with OMB regarding FATAA implementation.

**Early October 2016:** MFAN's AWG met with State/F on QDDR and FATAA implementation.

## USAID's Work on Local Solutions and MFAN's Influence

As part of a retrospective evaluation of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network's (MFAN's) first eight years (2008-2016), the evaluation team explored in depth four outcomes to which MFAN members believed MFAN contributed significantly. The reform of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) policies and procedures to advance local ownership was among these four.

### USAID Local Solutions: Outcome of Interest

#### *The reform of USAID policies and procedures to advance local ownership*<sup>48</sup>

According to a senior staff member at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the agency substantially revised its thinking on the fundamentals of development between 2011 and 2016. During this time, reforming development policies and operational practices to advance local ownership was a major focus for USAID senior leadership. As a key stakeholder, the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN)<sup>49</sup> helped spur this significant organizational change through alliances with reformers within the agency, especially during the roll out of Implementation and Procurement Reform<sup>50</sup> (IPR) in 2011 and 2012, and later with the implementation of USAID's Local Solutions initiative (2013-2016). Throughout both phases, MFAN was a strong voice for the principle of ownership: clarifying what ownership meant, and amplifying the ownership message within the administration and the development community, as well as on the Hill.

During the first phase, when USAID was rolling out its procurement reform policies,<sup>51</sup> which included increasing the amount of direct aid going to local partners to 30 percent by 2015, the MFAN Hub, along with members such as Oxfam, successfully waged a campaign to help neutralize opposition from some international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and to counterbalance the voice of private contractors on the Hill who wanted to restrict USAID's ability to limit bids to local grantees. MFAN, led by Hub staff and Oxfam, educated congressional members and their staff, and took steps to block language being inserted into USAID appropriations bills that would put restrictions on USAID contracting procedures. MFAN co-chairs and the Hub successfully persuaded MFAN members to take a public stand in support of IPR. As a result, one MFAN member said, "the debate on Capitol Hill among the appropriators was reset," and some international NGOs began changing their internal policies to elevate local partners and make them primary contractors. MFAN also called on USAID to move from measuring success simply in terms of dollars transferred to a focus on the development outcomes that result from local ownership.

In 2013, when USAID reframed IPR as the Local Solutions initiative to focus on the ends rather than the means of development aid, USAID reformers began working on how to rewrite the operational procedures that USAID and implementing partners use to design, implement, and evaluate USAID-funded projects. MFAN, and particularly MFAN member PLAN, played a critical role as a sounding board for USAID staff, helping them figure out how to embed local ownership in its operating procedures. Members of MFAN's Country Ownership Working Group (including the Center for Global Development, Save the

<sup>48</sup> MFAN and the development community generally use the term "country ownership." The term "local ownership" is most favored by USAID reformers. USAID uses "local ownership" to refer not only to partner governments, but also civil society and the private sector.

<sup>49</sup> References to MFAN in this document include its fiscal sponsor, New Venture Fund. New Venture Fund serves as the official legal and fiscal entity for MFAN and exercises management oversight over the project.

<sup>50</sup> Implementation and Procurement Reform was part of USAID's broad reform agenda USAID Forward. Through it, USAID sought to reform its procurement processes to increase its ability to fund local organizations directly.

<sup>51</sup> Other procurement reforms included more fixed price contracting aimed at reducing costs, as well as reducing the transaction time and cost of doing business for multilaterals partnering with USAID.

Children, and Oxfam) were also instrumental in helping USAID overcome internal obstacles to moving forward on measurement.

## Consensus View

USAID likely would have taken some steps to reform procurement processes and increase the use of local partners without MFAN. However, the broader focus on local ownership and how to embed and sustain these principles within USAID's operating procedures and measurement systems would not have happened without MFAN as a strong, consistent partner and external voice for ownership. Within the global development community, there had been a growing consensus that development aid agencies needed to work more directly with local partners. There were also USAID Mission directors and senior career leaders who were strong advocates for working more with local partners. This measure became one of the key elements of USAID Forward, a broad agenda adopted to reform the agency and its work. One of the first initiatives under USAID Forward was Implementation and Procurement Reform (IPR). IPR was designed to increase the percentage of USAID funds directed to local partners. However, resistance to it by some international NGOs and private contractors threatened to slow down or derail USAID reformers' efforts. The MFAN Hub and co-chairs played a critical role in coalescing external support among a broad group of individuals and organizations, including some of USAID's implementing partners, to support the reformers' efforts. MFAN successfully neutralized most opposition among international NGOs. MFAN was less successful neutralizing opposition among for-profit contractors, although the MFAN Hub and Oxfam did successfully counterbalance the voice and influence of private contractors on Capitol Hill.

From 2013 to 2016, USAID shifted its strategy from measuring success based on the amount of money transferred to local partners (the means), towards a focus on local ownership and sustainability (the ends). MFAN's focus on country ownership and the publication of *The Way Forward: A Reform Agenda for 2014 and Beyond* was instrumental in helping USAID staff work through the priorities and challenges entailed in realizing local ownership and resourcing, and how USAID can support rather than supplant local systems to produce and sustain results.

Without MFAN, there would not have been a strong, consistent, external voice for ownership supporting the USAID reformers. This voice was especially powerful because MFAN brought together a mix of think tanks (e.g., the Center for Global Development and the Center for American Progress), NGOs (e.g., Oxfam, Women Thrive Worldwide, Save the Children, and PLAN) with a vast field presence. Without this strong external pressure, the development community would have been unlikely to embrace and advocate for local ownership. Additionally, USAID would have been far less likely to overcome internal obstacles to progress on measuring local ownership and its development impact.

*"I'll tell you where I think that MFAN has been the most helpful. It was [these] last three years (2014-2016). We made a huge strategic shift for the agency by really explaining what we do, having a Local Solutions strategy, having teams, and [figuring out] how we measure Local Solutions. This has been a tremendous amount of work. MFAN has been our sounding board. We don't always agree with each other, but it has been the group we depended on because they have understood this at a deeper level than sometimes we can get our colleagues to understand because everyone is just so swamped."*

USAID senior staffer

## MFAN's Contribution

President Obama continued to elevate development as a key pillar of U.S. national security and foreign policy, a priority that began under President Bush. In September 2010, President Obama issued a Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6) which set an agenda for U.S. global development policy that aligned with principles emerging from global High-level Fora on Aid Effectiveness discussions (The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action, and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation). These principles included local ownership, mutual accountability, inclusive partnerships, and delivering on results.

USAID was not well positioned to align its systems with the international development communities' guidelines because it largely relied on a small number of U.S.-based NGOs and private contractors to deliver 90 percent of its assistance. This was a result of budget and staff cuts that took place in previous decades. Some senior career leaders and USAID Mission directors started advocating for working more directly with local partners during meetings in 2009 and 2010.

### ***IPR and MFAN's Contribution (2010-2013)***

In 2010, USAID put forward a comprehensive reform agenda referred to as USAID Forward, calling for:

- Talent management;
- Rebuilding USAID's policy capacity;
- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation;
- Rebuilding budget management;
- Local solutions;
- Science and technology; and
- Innovation.

Early strategies for implementing USAID Forward focused on developing new models of investing in public-private partnerships and increasing the percentage of aid going directly to partner governments and local organizations. The aim was to make development efforts more effective, more enduring, and less costly. USAID proposed these reforms after acknowledging that it was extraordinarily dependent on large U.S. for-profit contractors and international NGOs to carry out its work.<sup>52</sup> USAID set a goal of directing 30 percent of its annual grants and contracts to local partners by the 2015 U.S. government fiscal year, which would triple local procurement compared to the 2009 fiscal year.

In 2011, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah gave a major speech at the Center for Global Development, in which he challenged the current procurement approach saying that he was "no longer satisfied with writing big checks to big contractors and calling it development." According to John Norris of the Center for American Progress, "Shah argued that development firms were more interested in keeping themselves in business than seeing countries graduate from the need for aid."<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> In fiscal year 2010, the first year of procurement-reform implementation, almost 65 percent of USAID's grants and contracts flowed to U.S.-based organizations, while less than 10 percent of USAID's development work was carried out with benefiting country partners in a top-line implementing role. (Casey Dunning, November 2013, "Is Local Spending Better? The Controversy over USAID Procurement Reform," Center for American Progress, <https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/ProcurementReform.pdf>)

<sup>53</sup> John Norris, July 18, 2012, "Hired Gun Fight: Obama's aid chief takes on the development-industrial complex." Foreign Policy, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/07/18/hired-gun-fight/>.

Private contractors were particularly concerned about the 30 percent target, and began advocating against it. Some international NGOs, many represented by InterAction, also greeted the reforms lukewarmly, feeling that USAID's local procurement efforts largely ignored the significant contributions U.S.-based NGOs make to building the capacity of local counterparts to undertake effective development. InterAction, an MFAN member, issued a report in 2012 entitled *More Effective Capacity Building within USAID Forward*. The report enumerated the many contributions of U.S. NGOs around the world, and called on USAID to do more to build the enabling environment for civil society, as well as to more fully integrate and elevate capacity building as a policy priority, objective, and budgeted activity in USAID programs. According to the report, without these supports, failure was more likely, and USAID Missions might not be able to deliver results. InterAction's member organizations were concerned that the timeframe for reaching the 30 percent threshold was unrealistic, and that making it the primary metric for success was short-sighted in terms of building sustainable local ownership. Meanwhile, InterAction was skeptical about endorsing USAID's procurement reform strategy of shifting aid to local partners without also reforming the rules and requirements that govern risk and compliance with USAID policies.

The opposition to IPR was deeply frustrating for USAID, which had expected broader support from the development community. IPR risked losing momentum. MFAN member Oxfam felt that MFAN urgently needed to step up its support of USAID's procurement reform efforts, and was growing impatient with MFAN principals' inability to agree on a formal statement endorsing IPR. In May 2012, Oxfam, acting on its own, released a progress report on IPR, endorsing USAID's approach, and calling on Congress, the foreign aid community, and citizens to support the reforms and hold USAID accountable for meeting ambitious reform targets. The report was posted on MFAN's website. Oxfam also sent an open letter to Congress signed by 16 prominent anti-corruption and human rights activists in strong support of USAID's efforts to reform procurement practices. This letter helped congressional leaders understand that IPR wasn't just a USAID initiative, but also had external stakeholders behind it, including some implementers who endorsed the letter. Oxfam's efforts were also designed to spur the MFAN coalition to become a stronger external voice for procurement reform.

*"On IPR/Local Solutions there was a lot of pushback from the partner community, and I know MFAN tried to play a broker, mediator role, bringing the different groups together and explaining the different positions."*

USAID senior staff

*"MFAN helped us define what we meant by local ownership, and how it looks on the ground, giving clarity to what we are thinking here."*

USAID senior staffer

*"MFAN has provided a forum for us to speak to a broader audience and get our message out more broadly; that's helpful. Sometimes, it is difficult for us to clearly articulate what we are doing and why, and MFAN has always been a big supporter in getting that message out."*

USAID senior staffer

*"The research that has come out has helped us clarify our thinking around local ownership and Local Solutions. We are not always able to do that research, so it's very helpful to have external stakeholders who can inform how we respond to implementing this."*

USAID senior staffer

*"MFAN advocated for a very new way of doing business. It was very helpful to have an external advocate that could help. When you are trying to make change, the forces are often quite strong."*

USAID senior staffer

*"I always felt like they had a good pulse on what was happening out there. It's easy to get isolated and you think everything is fine, but then we would have a meeting with MFAN and they would say no, here's what people are upset about, which groups are talking to whom. So I know they were doing a lot of things behind the scenes."*

USAID senior staff

The MFAN co-chairs and Hub decided the time had come to make a public statement to buoy momentum for reform. In June 2012, MFAN released a policy statement, "Implementation and Procurement Reform: A Gateway to Country Ownership," recommending that "U.S. strategies in developing countries incorporate plans to support the ability of citizens and local civil society to help drive the development process, set development priorities, combat corruption, and hold their own governments accountable." MFAN translated its two-page statement into an open letter to USAID Administrator Shah and asked members to sign it. By having individuals and organizations sign the letter, they would be on record with their support. Several large USAID implementing partners like Save the Children and CARE supported MFAN's position, but others were ambivalent. According to one MFAN member, this open letter process "made it difficult" for NGOs not to support IPR. According to a participant at an MFAN evaluation workshop on IPR, "It made it unpalatable for a humanitarian advocate to come out against USAID working with local organizations." In signing this letter, the vast majority of MFAN member organizations and a number of external allies agreed to play a critical, strategic role in building support for procurement reform and neutralizing opposition.

MFAN explored channels of communication with private contractors to see if they could find common cause to work together. Although representatives from each side regretted that the other had not made more effort to dialogue, each felt that there was not enough common ground to warrant the effort. Instead, MFAN directed its energies toward Congress, advocating for local ownership, and neutralizing opposition from the private contractors. Over time, opposition to procurement reform decreased, as some contractors recognized their resistance was negatively affecting their reputations as development actors, and that the actual threat of the shift entailed by the reform was not as great as they feared.

### **Local Solutions and MFAN's Contribution (2014-2016)**

In 2010, Local Solutions was identified as a core strategy of USAID Forward. The goal was to achieve long-term, sustainable development with support of the local institutions, private sector partners, and civil society organizations that serve as engines of growth and progress in countries that receive U.S. development aid. The narrow framing of the IPR initiative (launched in 2011) limited the scope of reform compared to what had been a broader agenda. In 2013, USAID reformers sought to reclaim the broader framing by going "back to the original focus of working locally, local ownership, the principles of Busan, what we were trying to do from a policy and strategic level as opposed to an operational and tactical level," according to a USAID senior staffer.

One of the first steps, in 2013, was to appoint a Local Solutions coordinator at USAID who could get the agency to work together to implement the Local Solutions initiative. Locating the position in the front office that directly supported the USAID Administrator gave the coordinator "gravitas

to work across the agency.” One of the coordinator’s early efforts was to shift the focus from the amount of funds transferred to local partners to a focus on the sustainability of development outcomes. With the Local Solutions initiative, USAID moved away from focusing on a single metric (30 percent of its grants and contracts transferred to local partners) to a set of metrics for assessing the sustainability of outcomes for all of USAID’s investments. MFAN played a critical role as a thought partner and external advocate for broadening and reframing USAID’s work on Local Solutions.

In April 2014, USAID released *Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development*, a paper which focused on how systems – government, civil society and private sector – produce and sustain results. The framework laid out 10 principles for engaging local systems, identified key changes needed in the agency’s incentive system, and proposed a way forward, including embedding local systems thinking<sup>54</sup> into the program cycle,<sup>55</sup> and developing ways to measure the effectiveness of the local systems approach, as well as its sustainability. At the same time, MFAN released *The Way Forward*, calling for the U.S. government to significantly expand its commitment to developing country ownership in three areas: ownership of priorities, ownership of project implementation, and ownership of local and external financial resources. MFAN’S framework was helpful to USAID staff as they sought ways to embed and institutionalize local ownership into their practices.

Following the release of the Local Systems paper, MFAN promoted USAID’s Local Solutions initiative within USAID and across the development community. In May 2014, MFAN co-chairs met with USAID Mission directors to discuss the Local Solutions initiative. Also in May, the Brookings Institution held an event on local ownership in partnership with MFAN and FHI360. The event discussed USAID’s Local Systems paper and what local ownership means with the broader development community.

MFAN member the Center for American Progress issued a report in late 2013 tracking the results of USAID’s procurement reform, and making recommendations for cementing reform. In late 2014, MFAN member Save the Children published research on how six countries have addressed country ownership over time, using criteria developed by MFAN.

MFAN and especially MFAN’s Country Ownership Working Group was an effective external advocate for pushing USAID to make progress on embedding and institutionalizing local ownership across the agency; this helped to neutralize some internal opposition.

USAID staff also valued MFAN’s input because MFAN had a pulse on what was going on behind the scenes in Congress. USAID staff saw MFAN as a bi-partisan, honest broker with the development community.

Rewriting ADS 201,<sup>56</sup> the program cycle operational policy that provides guidelines for planning, delivering, assessing, and adapting development programming at the country level, took two years of sustained effort by USAID. MFAN, and especially MFAN member PLAN, provided a consistent voice for local ownership throughout the process. According to one senior USAID staff person, they consistently “stuck with it, and had something to bring to the table to help us figure out where to go next with it.” According to a senior USAID staffer, ADS 201 was “like everyone’s Christmas tree, everyone wanted their ornament on the tree. Everyone felt really passionately about what should be in that ADS.” There was

<sup>54</sup> See <https://www.usaid.gov/policy/local-systems-framework>.

<sup>55</sup> USAID’s “Program Cycle, codified in the *Automated Directive Systems (ADS) 201*, is USAID’s operational model for planning, delivering, assessing, and adapting development programming.” See <https://usaidlearninglab.org/program-cycle-overview-page>.

<sup>56</sup> See <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/201>.

*“The local ownership piece consistently stayed in there, not only because people worked hard in this building, but I really believe the consistent MFAN voice was absolutely instrumental. I’ve watched a lot of different stakeholder groups over the years, and what I saw with MFAN on this issue, they stuck with it, and they had something to bring to the table to help us figure out how do you really integrate [local ownership] into project design and evaluation.”*

USAID senior staff

*“I’ll tell you very frankly I don’t think we could have gotten this building to move on [the] measurement side if it weren’t for MFAN. When MFAN put out the model, it really helped us move, and lead the way.”*

USAID senior staff

*“[The white paper] was immediately embraced by the Local Solutions team. It got them moving in the right direction. They had asked us for help, and this paper landed at USAID and made a positive impact quickly.”*

Oxfam representative

pressure to water down the commitment to local ownership. The new ADS 201 guidelines were released in October 2016.

On the measurement issue, MFAN released a white paper, *Metrics for Implementing Country Ownership*, in July 2015. It suggested methods to measure progress towards meeting ownership objectives, and proposed a more practical and enhanced set of guidelines for policymakers trying to advance the country ownership agenda. One USAID senior staff person did not think USAID would have made the progress it did without MFAN.

Initially, Oxfam representatives had been skeptical of the paper’s value, but in hindsight they concluded the paper had been quite useful.

All interviewees agreed that USAID is not where it needs to be on metrics, but it has made considerable progress with MFAN’s help.

The MFAN Country Ownership Working Group held USAID accountable for making progress and worked as partners with USAID to come up with appropriate measures for assessing that progress.

While USAID has made progress on measurement, one senior staff member worries that future progress may stall, if MFAN does not have the resources to stay engaged. Other senior staff are heartened that a USAID Forward coordinator now sits in the agency’s Bureau for Policy Planning and Learning, and that, as one USAID staffer explained, staffers have a menu of indicators of local ownership, “informed heavily with our conversations with MFAN that they are beginning to vet and review, and preparing to field-test.” Measurement is a conversation that continues largely “due to MFAN’s support and pushing, and interest in it.”

## MFAN’s Capacities

**MFAN’s Country Ownership Working Group** – MFAN’s Country Ownership Working Group (COWG) was formed in 2014 to advance the country ownership agenda within USAID and other government agencies, the development community, and the Hill. COWG got off to a slow start. In COWG’s early days, there were differing agendas within it that were difficult to reconcile. COWG leadership prioritized drafting a white paper on metrics, while other MFAN members, like Oxfam, wanted more attention given to meeting and educating congressional staff on the Hill. The process of writing the white paper did not go smoothly – in part because MFAN was undergoing major leadership transitions, and COWG did not have members with sufficient field and contracting expertise to help with the paper. That changed when MFAN brought on new COWG co-chairs in 2015. The new co-chairs brought field-level and technical expertise, as well as a strong advocacy capacity on the Hill. This helped move the country ownership agenda forward with the Appropriations Committee in the Senate, and ensured that research, ideas, and advice were based on a deeper understanding of USAID operations and limitations.

**Member engagement and dedicated funding** – Of evaluation survey respondents who self-identified as “very active” on Local Solutions (13 total), all but one received funding from the Hewlett Foundation to work on aid reform. These organizations included Save the Children, Women Thrive Worldwide, Oxfam, InterAction, Bread for the World, the Glover Park Group, the Center for Global Development (CGD), and the Center for American Progress (CAP). Funding enabled MFAN member organizations to engage in education, research, content development, and public communications efforts that supported and pushed USAID to make progress on reform. Without these grants, MFAN’s influence would have been diminished.

Save the Children, Oxfam, CGD, and PLAN were the core MFAN organizations involved in working closely with USAID on Local Solutions, with Women Thrive Worldwide involved to a lesser degree. This group of organizations had a complementary set of skills, knowledge, expertise, and relationships that gave them access to, and influence with, USAID, Capitol Hill, and the development community.

**MFAN Hub** – The MFAN Hub played a critical role in drafting an open letter to USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah supporting IPR in 2012, and mobilizing over 80 individuals and organizations to sign on. The Hub’s coordinator worked to convince most members who were on the fence to sign onto the letter. This required working through differences of perspective without watering down the result. The Hub also played an important role in helping USAID stay abreast of where the political winds were blowing in Congress, and became a valuable source of information for USAID reformers.

## USAID Local Solutions Timeline of Key Events

**2008:** Release of the Accra Agenda for Action that takes stock of progress and sets the agenda for accelerated efforts to meet the aid reform targets established in the 2005 Paris Declaration, a roadmap to improve the quality of aid and its impact on development (over 100 countries have agreed to adhere to its terms).

**September 2010:** USAID launched USAID Forward, committing the agency to, among other goals, directing 30 percent of its Mission program funds to local entities by the 2015 fiscal year.

**August/November 2011:** InterAction issued its country ownership policy paper and its related report, Country Ownership: Moving from Rhetoric to Action.

**December 2011:** The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation was endorsed by the United States and 160 other countries. The document highlighted a set of common principles to improve aid effectiveness: ownership of development priorities by developing countries, a focus on results, partnerships for development, and transparency and shared responsibility.

*“MFAN put [ideas] out there to help us solve problems and they have stuck with it, and innovated. I’ve seen stakeholder groups who are passionate about their issues, but [what matters] is helping us to get over the hump. This is a new and emerging field, we have not figured this out.”*

USAID senior staffer

*“When we were pushing on the measurement issue, having MFAN come in as a vocal advocate to amplify our voice behind that to others in the agency was very helpful. There are times when we have run into obstacles along the way and MFAN keeps pushing us along and keeping that discussion alive.”*

USAID senior staffer

**January 2012:** Federal guidelines issued on Procurement of Commodities and Services Financed by USAID Federal Program Funds.

**February 2012:** USAID Implementation & Procurement Reform (IPR) brief published sharing stories from the field about how the agency's Missions are implementing IPR around the core objectives.

**March 2012:** MFAN Hub staff met with USAID Bureau for Policy Planning and Learning (PPL) staff about the push back on IPR from contractors and some NGOs and the need for USAID to do a better job framing the issue.

**April 2012:** MFAN hosted event with USAID with Liberia's Foreign Minister Amara Konneh and Secretary Clinton's Senior Advisor for Development Steve Radelet discussing the Fixed Amount Reimbursement Agreement with Liberia.

**May 2012:** Oxfam released progress report on IPR, "New USAID Reforms Put Foreign Aid to Work Fighting Corruption and Waste." Greg Adams authored a blogpost on the Oxfam website on fighting corruption with aid dollars. Oxfam sent an open letter to Capitol Hill signed by prominent anti-corruption and human rights activists in strong support USAID's efforts. MFAN published a blog post: Oxfam Takes on Implementation and Procurement Reform.

**May 2012:** House appropriations bill and committee report critical of IPR; Senate appropriations bill with language supporting IPR and government-to-government programs.

**May 2012:** Women Thrive Worldwide hosted a gender roundtable on the USAID IPR agenda and produced a one page fact sheet on why IPR is central to building capacity and ensuring development solutions are country-led.

**May/June 2012:** MFAN held an educational meeting with the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee staff to discuss IPR.

**June 2012:** MFAN released a position paper on procurement reform entitled "Implementation and Procurement Reform: A Gateway to Country Ownership."

**June 2012:** MFAN members met with USAID staffers on IPR, addressing development community misunderstandings and USAID's plans.

**July 2012:** John Norris from CAP wrote a blogpost in the journal Foreign Policy entitled Hired Gun Fight.

**July 2012:** Oxfam launched a field research project in seven countries on how procurement reform has advanced country ownership.

**September 2012:** MFAN sent an open letter to USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah signed by 80 individuals and organizations endorsing procurement reform; several members required much discussion before agreeing to sign. A few did not sign.

**October 2012:** InterAction paper More Effective Capacity Building within USAID Forward issued.

**November 2012:** USAID hosted a two-day summit on strengthening country systems, which brought together USAID staff and implementing partners to build a baseline body of knowledge around country system strengthening.

**March 2013:** USAID issued its first USAID Forward Progress Report providing detailed resource data on the breakdown of its implementers, and the anchoring their reforms around pillars of aid effectiveness, and why shifts in funding are critical for better development results.

**March 2013:** MFAN blogpost grading the USAID Forward agenda; MFAN high-level meeting with USAID staff to discuss guidelines for USAID Missions on contracting.

**November 2013:** CAP released a report by Casey Dunning, Is Local Spending Better?: The Controversy over USAID Procurement Reform; Oxfam shared the report with House appropriators.

**April 2014:** MFAN released The Way Forward: A Reform Agenda for 2014 and Beyond calling for the U.S. government to significantly expand its commitment to developing country ownership in three areas: ownership of priorities, ownership of implementation, and ownership of resources.

**April 2014:** USAID released Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development.

**May 2014:** MFAN's Country Ownership Working Group (COWG) began meeting to discuss congressional appropriations strategies, partnering with USAID to conduct domestic resource mobilization<sup>57</sup> pilots, and writing a white paper on ownership.

**May 2014:** MFAN met with USAID Mission directors; Local Solutions initiative reportedly widely accepted by Missions.

**June 2014:** In partnership with MFAN and FHI360, the Brookings Institution hosted an event on local ownership discussing USAID Local Systems paper and what local ownership means.

**June 2014:** MFAN members held off-the-record conversations with USAID staff to discuss the Local Systems paper and how to come up with outcome indicators.

**September 2014:** USAID released a work plan on Local Solutions to USAID bureaus; MFAN sent a letter to House and Senate appropriators praising good ownership language and urging its inclusion in the final bill.

**October 2014:** MFAN met with USAID staff to discuss implementation of the agenda for the Local Solutions initiative; MFAN learned USAID had been doing much more than thought to try to institutionalize Local Solutions and move beyond the 30 percent of funds target as the only metric. USAID staff and MFAN agreed that COWG needed to put specifics around the metrics.

**December 2014:** Save the Children published its research report, Tracking USAID's Efforts on the Local Solutions Initiative: A Review of Select Procurements in Six Countries, calling on USAID to report on progress and scale up promising practices and adopt standardized indicators.

**January 2015:** MFAN issued a 2014 scorecard that included six MFAN initiatives related to Local Solutions and the degree of progress made on each.

**January 2015:** MFAN's Hill Strategy Working Group tasked with educating Congress on country ownership and influencing appropriations reporting language related to strengthening use of local solutions.

<sup>57</sup> Domestic resource mobilization (DRM) is "the process through which countries raise and spend their own funds to provide for their people." See <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/economic-growth-and-trade/domestic-resource-mobilization>.

**January 2015:** MFAN co-chairs blog, “State of the Union 2015: What “Smart Development” Means for Reform as the Clock Winds Down,” urging President Obama to institutionalize reforms on country ownership and appoint a USAID Administrator capable of taking the reforms forward.

**March 2015:** MFAN’s Country Ownership Working Group transitioned its leadership.

**March 2015:** PLAN hosted panel discussion on institutionalizing local ownership and sustainability in developing countries with USAID and the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

**April 2015:** The co-chairs of the Country Ownership Working Group urged USAID Acting Administrator Alfonso Lenhardt to publicly endorse USAID’s Local Solutions initiative.

**May 2015:** USAID Forward data demonstrating USAID’s progress on its reforms released.

**May 2015:** MFAN co-chairs meet with USAID Acting Administrator Lenhardt on MFAN priorities and urged him to publicly endorse USAID’s Local Solutions initiative.

**June 2015:** U.S. Government Accountability Office published its report on government-to-government assistance entitled USAID Has Taken Steps to Safeguard Government-to-Government Funding but Could Further Strengthen Accountability.

**June 2015:** Save the Children report, The Local Solutions Initiative in Practice: A Case Study of USAID/Philippines, issued; Brookings Institution Global Economy and Development Program and Save the Children held a release event for the report.

**July 2015:** MFAN white paper Metrics for Implementing Country Ownership released.

**August 2015:** MFAN meeting with USAID Local Solutions staff on measuring ownership.

**December 2015:** Gayle Smith (former MFAN co-chair) confirmed as USAID Administrator. MFAN co-chairs sent a letter to Gayle Smith outlining 2016 priorities, one of which called for establishing public metrics of sustainability and institutionalizing the Local Solutions initiative.

**March 2016:** MFAN Letter to Gayle Smith supporting ADS 201.

**May 2016:** USAID released USAID Forward data.

**May 2016:** Casey Dunning (CGD) blogpost “USAID Didn’t Hit Its 30 Percent Target for Local Solutions – Here’s Why I’m Still Cheering.”

**May 2016:** “MFAN Letter to USAID: Establish Specific Indicators for Country Ownership” by Greg Adams and Nora O’Connell.

**September 2016:** PLAN blog by Justin Fugle, “Sustainability Through Local Ownership: Coming Soon to More USAID Missions.”

**October 2016:** ADS Chapter 201 Program Cycle Operational Policy issued.

**November 2016:** Blog by Diana Ohlbaum, Center for Strategic and International Studies, “From Policy to Practice: Implementing Evaluations at USAID.”

# Appendix 2. Literature Review

---

## A Brief Literature Review<sup>58</sup>

This literature review has two primary purposes. First, it is designed to introduce concepts and strategies to give MFAN and its members a common framework for understanding what it means to be a network, the different functions that networks have, the value of a network mindset, and the core capacities for working successfully in a coalition. Second, it is designed to help the Evaluation Advisory Committee and BLE Solutions have a common language to guide our evaluation.

### Conceptualizing and Distinguishing Networks and Coalitions: Definitions

The terms “network” and “coalition” are often used interchangeably, but we believe that MFAN will benefit from a more defined and nuanced understanding of these terms and how they relate.

#### Networks

In its simplest definition, networks are the relationships that people have with each other through which information, ideas, resources, experiences, interests, and passions are shared.

#### Coalitions

Coalitions are “networks in action mode.”<sup>59</sup> Coalitions are partnerships among distinct actors that coordinate action in pursuit of shared goals. Coalitions often have a more formalized structure, with the members making a long-term commitment to share responsibilities and resources.<sup>60</sup>

#### Considerations for MFAN

- How does value get created and shared in the **network**? What is MFAN’s value proposition?
- Can we think about each MFAN working group as a **coalition** (e.g., partnerships among small groups of people who are committed to taking joint action together)? Are there other coalitions within MFAN?

### Understanding the Relationship between Networks and Coalitions: Functions

Using a framework developed by Madeleine Taylor and Peter Plastrik,<sup>61</sup> we think it is helpful to distinguish three network functions: connectivity, alignment, and action. The graphic below shows the relationships among these functions. Alignment and action are built on a foundation of connectivity.

---

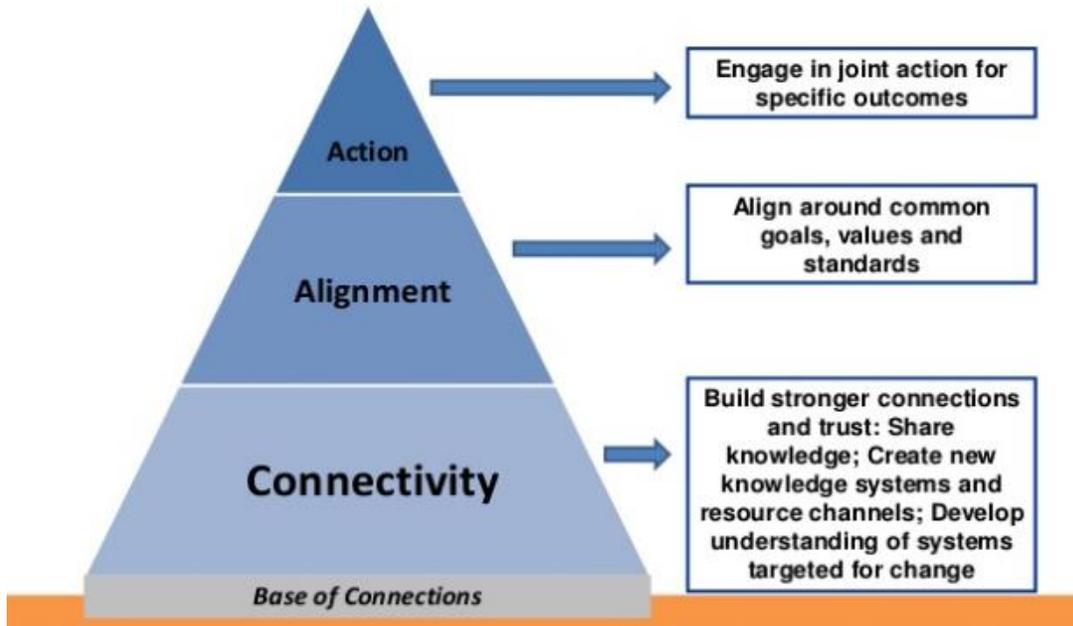
<sup>58</sup> This literature review was created by [Claire Reinelt](#) as part of [BLE Solutions’](#) evaluation of the [Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network \(MFAN\)](#) for the [Hewlett Foundation](#), May 20, 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Fox, J. (2010, January 1). [Coalitions and networks](#). Retrieved May 18, 2016, from eScholarship.

<sup>60</sup> Pact Tanzania. (n.d.). [Building and Maintaining Networks and Coalitions](#) (Publication).

<sup>61</sup> Plastrik, P. and M. Taylor, (2006). [Net Gains: A Handbook for Network Builders Seeking Social Change](#). Retrieved May 19, 2016.

# Evolution of Network Functions



Graphic from Taylor and Watley Webinar Presentation on “Strengthening Network Practice Through Evaluation” adapted from Net Gains Handbook <sup>62</sup>

**Connectivity.** Connectivity happens in networks when social spaces are created (online and offline) for people to “deliberately build, strengthen and maintain ties so that they can be activated again and again.”<sup>63</sup> The primary role in building a connectivity network is weaving the network. June Holley describes network weaving as “the strategic connecting of people where there is a potential for mutual benefit.”<sup>64</sup> Network weavers seek out opportunities to connect people who are likely to find value in their relationship; they value knowing people with different perspectives and from different backgrounds and help others do the same; they help people identify shared beliefs and overlapping interests; they encourage people to share information and resources without expecting anything direct in return; and they encourage and mentor others to become network weavers. When people build trusted relationships across their diversity, communication is easier, ideas and information flow more readily, and people are more likely to combine their resources for greater impact.<sup>65</sup>

**Alignment.** Alignment is when groups of people or organizations intentionally focus their attention outward, discover where they have passions and interests in common, and explore how their collective assets create new opportunities.<sup>66</sup> Alignment can be accelerated with skilled network facilitation in both virtual spaces (like social media, collaboration platforms), and in face-to-face conversations through

<sup>62</sup> Taylor, M., and Whatley, A. (2015, July). Strengthening Network Practice Through Evaluation. Retrieved May 18, 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Holley, J. (2010, April 9). Network Weaving: What is a Network Weaver? Retrieved May 18, 2016.

<sup>65</sup> The characteristics of a network weaver are identified in the Network Weaver Checklist developed by June Holley. A fuller discussion of how to develop a network weaving support system can be found in Chapter 14 of the Network Weaving Handbook.

<sup>66</sup> Ogden, C. (2016, March 10). Network Impact: Different Approaches and Common Ground. Retrieved May 18, 2016.

convenings. Shared platforms for communication and organizing make it easier for people with overlapping interests to find each other and connect. Effective network facilitation creates space for relationships to form and for groups of people to explore their mutual interests, and do small experiments together to try out and test new ideas and approaches. Skilled network facilitators can create a safe space for difficult and productive conversations in which people listen to one another, find common ground amid their different perspectives, and discover new possibilities.<sup>67</sup>

**Action.** The action function of networks describes what is generally meant by the term “coalition.” When coalitions form to take joint action, coordination is a critical function. Coalitions often have more formal structures, with a secretariat and permanent staff, although coalition functions may also be distributed among working groups that are loosely coordinated. Formal coalitions generally require more structure and resources to manage. Effective coordination makes sure that “ground rules, operating protocols, and decision rules” are agreed to and followed. Coordination focuses on making sure there are multiple opportunities for people to lead, and that their roles are well-defined and aligned during each phase of the coalition’s work. When knowledge and resources are shared and integrated effectively, greater success is likely.<sup>68</sup>

### Considerations for MFAN

- Who is included in MFAN’s **connectivity** network? How diverse is the network? Has the network grown more bipartisan, cross-sector, and cross-cultural over time? Who are people and organizations that are in the core of the connectivity network? Who are people and organizations on the periphery? Who is missing from this network?
- Around what priorities is there greatest **alignment** (people and organizations defining issues, cooperating, sharing information) within MFAN?
- What coalitions have formed to take joint **action** on specific policy outcomes?
- Do MFAN leaders, managers, and members have the skills to effectively **weave, facilitate, and coordinate** the network to optimize their resources and increase their collective influence on U.S. development assistance policy?

### Leadership in a Network

One of the leadership challenges in networks is that people bring a command-and-control mindset to their leadership in a network. There are times when command-and-control leadership may be most appropriate; however, for complex adaptive challenges, network leadership is more likely to produce innovation and breakthroughs. Essential characteristics of network leadership are “cultivating shared responsibility and mutual support; growing diverse leadership; encouraging trust to take root; ensuring there are multiple avenues for people to connect and share information; helping to develop the capacity to collectively listen and learn; and rewarding experiments.”<sup>69</sup> Below is a comparison of command-and-control leadership and network leadership characteristics.

<sup>67</sup> Ogden, C. (2016, February 24). *Network Leadership Roles 2.0*. Interaction Institute for Social Change. Retrieved May 18, 2016.

<sup>68</sup> Emerson, K., T. Nabatchi, and S. Balogh. (2012). “An Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance,” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 22:1, 1-29. Retrieved February 16, 2016.

<sup>69</sup> Ogden, C. (2012, May 9). “*Network Leadership*,” Interaction Institute for Social Change. Retrieved May 20, 2016.

Command-and-Control Leadership	Network Leadership
Position and authority	Role and behavior
Few leaders	Everyone is a leader
Broadcast	Engagement
Managers set direction	Many people initiate
Control	Facilitation and support
Small group in the know	Openness and transparency
Directive	Emergent
Top-down	Bottom-up
Make sure tasks are completed	Group accountability
Individual	Small group
Evaluation	Reflection and action learning
Planning	Innovation and experimentation
Provide service	Support self-organization

Table adapted from earlier version that appeared in Leadership and Collective Impact publication.<sup>70</sup>

“Learning to lead with a network mindset is not as simple as acquiring a new skill. Often our deeply held ideas about leadership collide with new ways of leading that are more distributed, relational, and interdependent. Those who lead with a network mindset practice openness and transparency, let go of controlling outcomes, and believe in the leadership potential of everyone.”<sup>71</sup> “With a shift in mindset, comes a shift in language. Rather than speak about *directing* and *managing* the creation of a network, it is more appropriate to speak of fostering, nurturing and facilitating a network.”<sup>72</sup>

### Considerations for MFAN

- To what extent do MFAN leaders, managers, and members operate using a **network leadership** approach? Are intentional efforts being made to cultivate leadership with a network mindset?

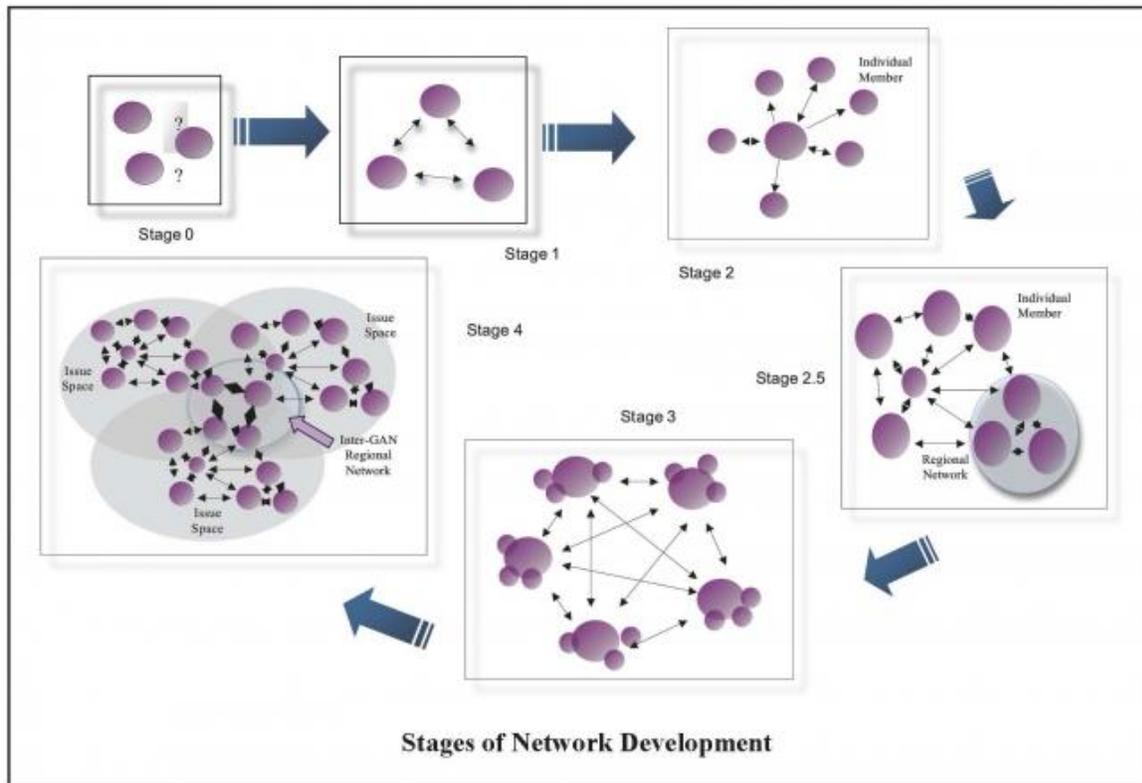
<sup>70</sup> Leadership Learning Community. (n.d.). Leadership and Collective Impact: How to Cultivate and Activate a Network.

<sup>71</sup> Meehan, D., and C. Reinelt. (2012, October). Leadership and Networks. Retrieved May 20, 2016.

<sup>72</sup> Hearne, S., and E. Mendizabal. (2011, May). “Not Everything that Connects is a Network,” Briefing Note, Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved May 20, 2016.

## Network Development

Networks develop, grow and change. Steve Waddell describes four stages in the network development process starting when a small number of people form a connection, to the eventual development of multi-hub, and interconnected networks.



**Stage 1.** Networks typically begin as separate initiatives working on a similar problem. They then decide to combine forces ... often around a particular project, but sometimes to address the challenge in general.

**Stage 2.** As their collective activity grows, they create some common resources and establish a central coordinating function ... often called a 'Secretariat.' With continued growth, some sub-parts of the network start to interact relatively independently to address particular issues.

**Stage 3.** As these sub-divisions become more numerous, dominant network interactions shift from the Secretariat, and the Secretariat itself becomes simply another node in the network with some particular functions such as ensuring robust network communications platforms.

**Stage 4.** At a final stage, these multi-stakeholder networks themselves start to interact more often with other multi-stakeholder networks.<sup>73</sup>

One of the dangers in network development is focusing prematurely on network structure. Mendizabal cautions "there is no ideal governance structure that will guarantee successful networks. ... [T]he

<sup>73</sup>Waddell, S. (2010, February 24). "'Unsticking' a Network," Blog, *Networking Action*. Retrieved May 19, 2016.

network's degree of formality and other governance characteristics ought to be closely linked to its building blocks (members, skills, resources), history and objectives."<sup>74</sup>

### Considerations for MFAN

- What is the stage of development of the MFAN network? How well connected are different stakeholder groups? Are there gaps in the network that need to be bridged?
- Is the current governance structure of MFAN responsive to the current purpose and functions of MFAN? How might the governance structure need to change to prepare for a transition in presidential leadership and what that will mean for MFAN's agenda?

### Capacities of Successful Coalitions

The TCC Group has identified five core capacities that are essential for coalition success.<sup>75</sup> They are:

- I. *Leadership capacity*: the ability of a coalition to create and sustain the vision, inspire, model, prioritize, make decisions, provide direction, and innovate.
- II. *Adaptive capacity*: the ability of a coalition to monitor, assess, and respond to internal and external changes.
- III. *Management capacity*: the ability of a coalition to use its resources effectively and efficiently.
- IV. *Technical capacity*: the ability of coalitions to implement organizational and programmatic functions necessary to complete the work.
- V. *Cultural capacity*: the ability of coalition members to foster trust; demonstrate respect through word and action; engage in respectful dissent; adhere to decisions and speak with a unified voice; and manage effects of power differences.

TCC Group has developed a Coalition Capacity Checklist with specific indicators for each capacity.<sup>76</sup>

Given the political environment in the United States, the importance of adaptive capacity cannot be understated. This is essential both for coalitions and the organizations that comprise them.

Tanya Beer, in an unpublished paper, identified the following characteristics of an organization (or coalition) that practices effective adaptive capacity:

- Conducts regular needs and resources assessment, ongoing environmental/systems assessment, and risk and opportunity assessment;
- Regularly appraises targeted change agents, allies, potential allies, and the opposition;
- Seeks diverse perspectives and perceptions of the system;
- Has processes in place or commits regular time to reflecting on the implications of the external scans for strategy (i.e., dedicates time to learning);
- Adjusts actions in an on-going way, in response to its sense of the environment;

<sup>74</sup> Mandizabal, E. (2006, October). Building Effective Research Policy Networks: Linking Function and Form. Working paper, Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved May 19, 2016.

<sup>75</sup> Raynor, J. (2011, March). What Makes an Effective Coalition?. TCC Group. Retrieved May 19, 2016.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. See Appendix A, page 38.

- Builds connections and collaborates with strategic allies;
- Recognizes the complementarity of assets between partners;
- Puts processes in place for collecting and reflecting on metrics for progress;
- Creates decision-making structures to support the quick redeployment of financial resources and staff time;
- Has access to significant amounts of unrestricted funds;
- Encourages risk-taking, experimentation, and creative thinking;
- Balances emergent strategies and planned strategies; and
- Acts proactively, not just reactively.<sup>77</sup>

### *Considerations for MFAN*

- Do MFAN coalitions demonstrate mastery of core capacities for coalition success?
- How effective are MFAN member organizations in practicing adaptive capacity?

### **Conclusion**

Our hope is that this literature review, the resources that are referenced, and the questions we posed, will support MFAN leaders, managers, and members to establish a well-connected and aligned network that can form and coordinate successful coalitions that are responsive and adaptive to changes in both external and internal conditions. It is also our hope that this review has clarified the terms and concepts we will use in this evaluation.

<sup>77</sup> Beer, Tanya. (2013). *Adaptive Capacity Overview*, unpublished research, Center for Evaluation Innovation.

## Answers to Questions Posed in the Original Literature Review

### How does value get created and shared in MFAN's network? What is MFAN's value proposition?

- Value gets created through shared regular meetings, working groups, educational forums, publications, and to a lesser extent through social media.
- Almost all MFAN members agree that MFAN:
  - has created political space for foreign assistance reform (97% agree).
  - has cultivated a bipartisan constituency for foreign assistance reform (90% agree).
  - is a Hill staff go-to source on foreign assistance reform (87% agree).
- A vast majority of members agree that MFAN has:
  - created opportunities for member organizations to amplify their influence (68%).
  - adapted effectively to shifting political opportunities (68%).
  - cultivated a diverse constituency for foreign assistance reform (65%).
  - the right membership to influence policy direction on foreign assistance reform (64%).
- Only 40 percent agree that MFAN has become a media go-to source on foreign assistance reform.

### What coalitions (e.g., partnerships among small groups of people who are committed to taking joint action together) have formed within MFAN?

- MFAN is a multi-sector coalition that launched in 2008, and has consisted of 187 members through 2016.
- Significant partnerships formed around PPD-6, the QDDR, and Foreign Assistance Reform Act in Phase 1; FATAA and the Global Partnerships Act in Phase 2; and FATAA and the USAID Local Solutions initiative in Phase 3.

### Who is included in your network?

The face-to-face network of MFAN members includes:

- Think tanks,
- International NGOs,
- Coalitions,
- Membership organizations or associations,
- Funding organizations,
- Former policymakers,
- Individual affiliates, and
- MFAN Hub.

The online network includes:

- MFAN members (including the Hub),
- MFAN policy targets,
- MFAN media targets,
- MFAN allies/opponents, and
- MFAN funders.

Has MFAN's network **connectivity** grown more diverse over time? Who are people and organizations that are in the core of the connectivity network?

We did not gather data on network connectivity from our survey; however, we are able to make some observations about the connectivity network by analyzing Twitter data. We cannot say if MFAN's online connectivity network has become more diverse since this is the first time data of this kind has been gathered, but MFAN now has baseline data that could be used to monitor changes in connectivity over time.

The online MFAN twitter network is primarily a hub and spoke network, also characterized as a "broadcast" network.<sup>78</sup> A broadcast network is formed when there is Twitter commentary around breaking news stories, with many people repeating what prominent pundits or media outlets tweet. The members of the broadcast network audience are often connected only to the hub news source, without connecting to one another. For example, all the smaller clusters in the MFAN twitter network map have this hub and spoke shape (see Appendix 3. Twitter Network Report below).

Common to many broadcast networks are small sub-groups of densely connected people who do discuss the news with one another. In the MFAN twitter network, we found two sub-groups of this type: those targeting the administration and global development policy, and those targeting transparency and open government (see Appendix 3. Twitter Network Report below).

- For those targeting the administration and global development policy, the MFAN Hub and MFAN member organizations had close ties with numerous MFAN policy targets in the administration (especially USAID and its senior leaders). There are 14 MFAN members in this cluster. USGLC (the organization account) and Liz Schrayner (USGLC executive director) are the most central MFAN members in this cluster, followed by Jeff Sturchio (Global Health Corps), Lori Rowley (MFAN Hub), and InterAction. MFAN members are widely distributed across the network landscape, which means they have access to different sub-groups. Devex is the most influential media target. The allies/opponents in this network are few with Center for Strategic and International Studies, FHI360, Society for International Development Washington, and Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC) being the most prominent. They are not as closely connected to the policy targets as MFAN and MFAN members. MFAN is a bridge between these allies/opponents and the policy targets. The Gates Foundation is the most prominent funder, and has a particularly influential role in bridging the global health "neighborhood" in the network.

<sup>78</sup> Marc A. Smith, et al. (2014, February 20). [Mapping Twitter Topic Networks: From Polarized Crowds to Community Clusters](#). Pew Research Center.

- For those targeting transparency and open government, the core pattern of connectivity is quite different. In this cluster, MFAN ally/opponent nodes are closely connected with MFAN policy targets. Aid transparency allies of MFAN are the most central nodes in this network. They are closely connected to IATI and the Open Government Partnership, both policy targets. For this cluster, MFAN members most connected to this network are CGD and its affiliates, and Oxfam and its affiliates. The Hewlett Foundation (represented by @Sarahlucas and @sjstaats) is the most prominent funder.

### Who are people and organizations on the periphery of the MFAN network? Who is missing from MFAN's network?

We do not have network data about who is on the periphery of the MFAN network. We mapped the central core of MFAN's online network, but mapping the periphery would require finding people and organizations who actively use Twitter to share content on foreign aid reform, that are not already connected to @modernizeaid. Following those accounts out to one more circle of influence would show whose connected, but on the periphery of the MFAN network. Social media tracking tools (like NodeXL) make it possible to identify who is on the periphery of a network.

Another way to understand the periphery of MFAN's network is to collect and map Twitter hashtag data to see who are the "mayors" of those hashtags, and who is on the periphery for the policy issues MFAN cares about. Through this process, you can find influential accounts that may be missing from your network.

### Around what priorities is there greatest alignment (people and organizations defining issues, cooperating, sharing information) within your network?

The partnership to enact FATAA was the issue that had the greatest action alignment among MFAN members who reported that they had publicly spoken, written, or communicated about this legislation (21 people took this action), engaged decision makers to influence this legislation (24 people), mobilized external allies to support the legislation (18 people), and neutralized opposition (11 people).

Other issues with a high degree of action alignment included PPD-6 (72 actions), QDDR (68 actions), Foreign Assistance Reform Act (67 actions), USAID Local Solutions (61 actions), and Global Partnerships Act (60 actions).

In the online network there was greatest alignment around the administration and Global Development cluster. The average degree of this network is 6.4. That means each node is on average connected to 6 other nodes in the network suggesting a high degree of connectivity and alignment. In the Transparency and Open Government cluster, the average degree is 3.7. The higher the degree of connectivity the more easily information and resources flow in the network.

### What coalitions have formed to take joint action on specific policy outcomes?

Country ownership and accountability/transparency were the two working groups that formed to take joint action on specific policy outcomes in Phase 3. In MFAN's early years, there were no thematic sub-groups, rather MFAN as a whole set the agenda and worked on priorities with both the administration and the Congress.

Does your network have the leadership skills to effectively **weave, facilitate** and **coordinate** the network to optimize resources and increase collective influence and impact?

The Hub and the co-chairs act as MFAN’s network weavers, facilitators and network coordinators in the face-to-face network. The most active network weavers in the online network are:

- USGLC
- NGO Voices
- Lori Rowley
- InterAction
- Jeff Sturchio

To what extent does your network operate using a **network leadership** approach? Are intentional efforts being made to cultivate leadership with a network mindset?

With the evolution of thematic working groups, MFAN has used a network leadership model to cluster together MFAN members with an interest in aligning and coordinating their efforts around a common issue. To our knowledge, there have not been any formal efforts to cultivate leadership with a network mindset. One area where this might be particularly fruitful is in developing a communications strategy in which MFAN members learn to use online tools to grow their influence and spread the message of aid reform.

What is the stage of development of your network? How well connected are different stakeholder groups? Are there gaps in the network that need to be bridged?

According to Steve Waddell’s model, MFAN would be a Stage 2.5 Network. MFAN is the hub of the network, with a central secretariat, and some working group clusters that have some autonomy. To move to Stage 3, the MFAN Hub may want to reconsider its role in the network, and focus more resources on creating a network and communications platform that enables members to self-organize around issues of importance to them which are aligned with MFAN principles and priorities. In this stage the Hub becomes another node in the network, not the primary node through which all MFAN messages and actions pass. Figuring out how to support more self-organizing without having all decisions go through the Hub would increase MFAN’s bandwidth.

Is the current network governance structure responsive to the current purpose and functions of the MFAN network?

One of the dangers in network development is focusing prematurely on network structure. Mendizabal cautions “there is no ideal governance structure that will guarantee successful networks ... [T]he network’s degree of formality and other governance characteristics ought to be closely linked to its building blocks (members, skills, resources), history and objectives.”<sup>79</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Mandizabal, E. (2006, October). Building Effective Research Policy Networks: Linking Function and Form. Working paper, Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved May 19, 2016.

With the election of a new administration, MFAN will have to adapt its priorities and member composition to optimize the network's collective capabilities to respond effectively. This may mean recruiting new members, re-forming working groups, and streamlining decision making.

#### Do coalitions within the network demonstrate mastery of adaptive and cultural capacities for success?

Tanya Beer, in an unpublished paper, identified the following organizational characteristics critical to adaptive capacity (see related discussion in the Original Literature Review above). Some of these characteristics of adaptive capacity are ones that MFAN has done a lot to cultivate:

- its ability to assess the environment, risks, and opportunities, and adjust strategy accordingly;
- engage diverse perspectives; and
- build connections with strategic allies with complementary assets.

MFAN could do more to encourage risk-taking, experimentation, and creative thinking among its members. It is through these activities, that innovative ideas and approaches can be designed and tested to create breakthroughs in aid reform. Balancing emergent strategies with planned strategies is especially important as MFAN seeks to find ways to work in the current political environment.

#### How effective are coalition partner organizations in practicing adaptive and cultural capacity in their own organizations?

Save the Children is perhaps the best example we heard about in that they reconfigured their relationship to local partners and became the sub-prime contractor.

## Appendix 3. Twitter Network Analysis

---

### MFAN Twitter Network

*Social media is increasingly home to civil society, the place where knowledge sharing, public discussions, debates, and disputes are carried out. As the new public square, social media conversations are as important to document as any other large public gathering. Network maps of public social media discussions in services like Twitter can provide insights into the role social media plays in our society.<sup>80</sup>*

MFAN has well-established, face-to-face platforms for aligning and taking joint action together (e.g., Executive Committee meetings, deputies meetings, working group meetings, educational forums). One area where it might strengthen its capacity for reach and influence is in developing a more intentional and robust social media strategy. Some potential outcomes include improved ability to identify and connect to influential people and organizations who care about foreign aid reform and want to improve development practice; broader reach for content and messages; increased numbers of people and organizations who are active participants in conversations on foreign aid reform; and strengthened connections to likely and unlikely allies.

Twitter is an important platform for identifying people and organizations who care about an issue, for understanding the audiences they reach, and for finding out who has influence with those audiences. People and organizations that care about an issue find each other by using hashtags. Hashtags are used by multiple Twitter users to connect people and organizations that share common interests. Hashtags are an effective way to build a media ecosystem so that people can talk about an issue, share information and research, and publicize events and speeches.

Twitter is also valuable for spreading content and messages to wider audiences. For instance, when Twitter is used to share content from live events, like congressional hearings, policy speeches, and educational forums, the number of people that are reached far exceeds those that can attend those events in person. Using these tools more regularly could increase MFAN's visibility in the development and foreign aid reform ecosystem. For instance, using live-tweeting and live-streaming, MFAN can spread messages and influence who hears content about local ownership, transparency, and accountability.

Twitter can also be used to engage people and organizations in conversations (and connect them to resources) that build a broader constituency for those reforms. MFAN can monitor the structure and sentiment of conversations and determine whether interventions and adjustments might be needed. MFAN can also use social media to identify and connect to unlikely allies, (e.g., those on the periphery of the MFAN network).

We collected and analyzed data on how MFAN has used Twitter from 2010-2016. We also collected data from 200 Twitter users that MFAN follows in order to understand the structure of their connections and the social media ecosystem they create (see appendix for a description of our methods). The following are the questions we sought to answer and an overview of our key findings:

---

<sup>80</sup> Marc A. Smith et al. (2014, February 20). [Mapping Twitter Topic Networks: From Polarized Crowds to Community Clusters](#). Pew Research Center.

- **How has MFAN used Twitter during the six-year period from 2010-2016?**

MFAN was most active using Twitter in the early years of its existence (see appendix). MFAN's Twitter strategy has included:

1. Amplifying the reform agenda and messages that were coming from the administration (particularly from the President, the State Department and USAID), and from Congress (especially from HFAC ranking member Berman);
2. Live-tweeting key speeches and events, such as the White House Summit on Global Development, and hearings on the USAID budget before SFRC;
3. Announcing when members released reports and gave speeches;
4. Announcing the launch of MFAN's reform agenda, a blog series on food aid reform, and benchmarks for measuring success of President Obama's global development policy; and
5. Celebrating the passage of FATAA and the Global Food Security Act.

- **What are the notable segments or clusters in the MFAN network? How are they interacting with each other? What are they discussing?**

The MFAN Twitter network segments into numerous clusters, most notably one focused on global health and development and another focused on transparency and open government (see Appendix C). MFAN members and their policy targets are active in both clusters; some MFAN members are especially well positioned to influence these targets. These two clusters are especially notable because they include a well-connected core of Twitter users who are amplifying each other's messages and having conversations with each other on issues they mutually care about.

If we take a look at the core of each cluster, we can see different patterns of interaction. In the global health and development cluster, there is a tight network of MFAN policy targets with a core of MFAN members closely connected and interacting with these policy targets, including the MFAN Hub (Appendix D). The pattern of interaction for the transparency and open government cluster shows that ally organizations and policy targets are interacting closely. MFAN members connected to CGD and Oxfam are interacting closely with these allies and policy targets (Appendix E). (It should be noted that other MFAN members are also connected to this cluster, but do not appear in the map because their nodes are more central elsewhere in the map.)

The most frequently used hashtags in the MFAN twitter network indicate the topics that are being most discussed: #iati, #opendata, #sdgs, #globaldev, #globalgoals, #transparency.

- **Which people or organizations are especially influential?**

The most influential person in the network is Rajiv Shah, former USAID Administrator. Other top influencers also have USAID connections, including Anthony Pipa (Chief Strategy Officer), Eric Postel (Assistant Administrator), and Alex Their (former chief of PPL). USGLC and Liz Schroyer are the most influential MFAN members, followed by Diana Ohlbaum, NGO Voices and the MFAN Hub. DevEx is the most influential media target.

In summary, MFAN has at times actively used Twitter in its advocacy efforts, especially in MFAN's early days. The early use of Twitter corresponds to MFAN's agenda-setting phase, and to the time period when Bread for the World and Glover Park Group were managing communications. Why was Twitter a priority in MFAN's early advocacy work? Why did Twitter use drop off? Was there a missed opportunity in using Twitter more proactively in later years?

If MFAN wants to use social media to identify influencers related to its goals, it first needs to identify relevant hashtags where conversations related to those goals are taking place. With the use of more strategic data collection and analysis tools, MFAN can position itself to spread its messages and influence broader audiences. As part of this project, we experimented with collecting 10 months of data on tweets that used the hashtag #AidTransparency. With the data we collected and the resources we had available, we can identify who the top influencers of #aidtransparency are; what other hashtags they used; and what clusters have formed around various issues (see [#aidtransparency data set](#)). Additional resources would be needed to explore how central MFAN and MFAN members are in this conversation.

Twitter is only one form of social media, and it does have its limitations in terms of the small percentage of the population that uses the medium (~14% of the adult population)<sup>81</sup> Nonetheless, the structure of Twitter conversations does say something meaningful about who cares about these issues, how big the network is, how users are connected, and the reach and influence various participants have.

If MFAN wants to be a more active social media go-to source for content around foreign aid reform, then there are social media monitoring tools that can help with that.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 2

## Data Collection and Data Analyses

### Data Collection

- MFAN Twitter Network
  - Identified top 200 twitter users that MFAN follows who met the following criteria:
    - MFAN member
    - MFAN policy target
    - MFAN funder
    - MFAN media target
    - MFAN allies/opposition
  - Collected tweet histories for each of these users
- Collected @Modernizeaid Tweet History

### Data Analyses

- Mapped a timeline of tweets per month for @modernizeaid from 2010 to present
- Aggregated, mapped, and analyzed all MFAN Twitter Network data available<sup>82</sup>
  - Identified and aggregated all Twitter users with six or more connections among them.
  - Mapped the MFAN network into clusters
  - Analyzed content of tweets for each cluster and identified most frequent hashtags, URLs, and domains mentioned
  - For each cluster, analyzed central influencers and how MFAN members and key players are connected to the cluster.
  - Conducted a more in-depth analysis of the core group of MFAN stakeholders in the clusters where there is the greatest density of connections, and evidence of people and organizations discussing issues and news with each other. We color coded nodes according to the following five categories:
    - MFAN members (including the Hub)
    - MFAN policy targets
    - MFAN media targets
    - MFAN allies/opponents
    - MFAN funders

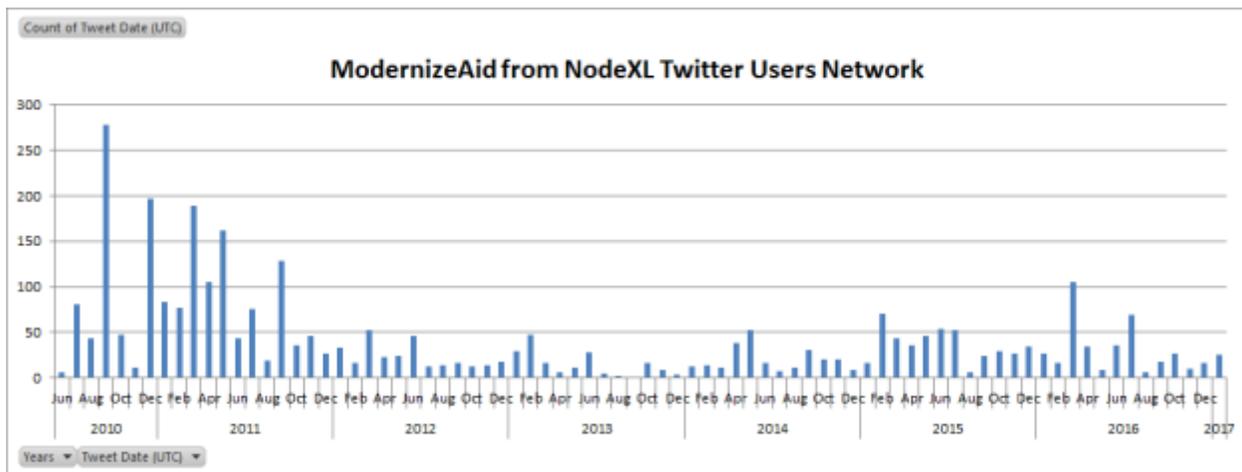
<sup>82</sup> Depending on the frequency with which a person or organization tweets, this data may go back as far as 2010 or it may include only tweets from the past 1-2 months.

## MFAN Twitter History from 2010-2016

During MFAN’s early years (2010-2011), when MFAN was pursuing a broad agenda, Twitter was used to amplify and broadcast messages, reports, and events designed to educate and inspire the development community to become advocates for foreign aid reform.

In the early days of MFAN (2010-2011), Twitter was being used widely by MFAN members to amplify the reform agenda and messages that were coming from the administration (particularly from the president, the State Department, and USAID), and from Congress (especially from HFAC ranking member Berman). MFAN launched a reform agenda, started a Feed The Future/Reform Blog Series, and released benchmarks for measuring the success of President Obama’s global development policy. MFAN member organizations were releasing reports and giving speeches.

During the years 2012-2014, there was limited MFAN Twitter use. Use picks up in 2015 and then spikes twice in 2016. In March of 2016, MFAN covers the hearing on the USAID budget before SFRC, Gayle Smith’s first major policy address, report releases by CGD on country ownership and on how to strengthen Feed the Future, a call for transparency in overseas military aid and funding, and a Brookings event on evaluating foreign aid at USAID. In July, MFAN celebrated the passage of FATAA and the Global Food Security Act, live-tweeted a White House Summit on Global Development, and hosted an event on future on development finance.



- **September 2010** — Secretary Clinton’s foreign policy speech at the Council on Foreign Relations; release of reports by both the Brookings Institution and Oxfam; David Beckman’s speech on World Hunger at the National Press Club, United Nations (UN) summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Rajiv Shah and Helene Gayle speaking at Clinton Global Initiative, President Obama announces new U.S. development strategy at UN MDG summit (live tweeted); Rajiv Shah at the UN Foundation Digital Media Lounge (live tweeted). USGLC Conference (live tweeted).
  - Mentions and retweets of MFAN members: @savethechildren, @oxfamamerica, @cgdev, @womenthrive, @david beckham; @usglc, @interactionorg, @onecampaign; @brookingsglobal.

- **December 2010** — CAP proposes way forward for aid reform in Congress; Save the Children releases policy brief on consultation and participation for local ownership; CGD, the Brookings Institution, and Publish What You Fund talk aid transparency; MFAN releases benchmarks for measuring success of President Obama's global development policy; Secretary Clinton hosts town hall meeting on QDDR (live tweeted); Anne Marie Slaughter and Don Steinberg speaking on QDDR at the U.S. Institute of Peace (live tweeted).
  - Mentions and retweets of MFAN members: @oxfamamerica, @interactionorg, @savethechildren, @cgdev.
- **March 2011** — MFAN launches Feed The Future/Reform Blog Series; international women's day event with Ritu Sharma, Ruth Messinger, and Don Steinberg (live tweeted); #USAID admin Shah, #SecClinton announce a new grand challenge for development; congressional hearings with HFAC Chair Ros-Lehtinen; testimony from Rep. Berman and Administrator Shah on USAID Forward reforms (live tweeted); #USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah testifies before House State Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee on 2012 fiscal year budget request (live tweeted).
  - Mentions and retweets of MFAN members: @womenthrive.
- **May 2011** — Release of new MFAN reform agenda; MFAN co-chairs call on Congress to push ahead with reform; launch of bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Effective Foreign Assistance (live tweeted); 2 MFAN principals list 5 ways to cut \$2 billion from foreign aid programs, dangers of cuts to IA budget, Chicago Council Symposium on Global Agriculture and Food Security (live tweeted); Secretary Clinton's speech on development at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (live tweeted).
  - Mentions and retweets of MFAN members: @cgdev, @usglc, @oxfamamerica, @bread4theworld.
- **September 2011** — Foreign Assistance Act turns 50; HFAC Ranking Member Howard Berman (live tweeted), what's so sexy about USAID operating expenses, we now face another "make or break moment" when it comes to foreign policy and development, town hall on PPD anniversary (live tweeted); MFAN Co-Chair Kolbe and Oxfam's O'Brien to discuss the future of foreign aid on @kojoshow (live tweeted).
  - Mentions and retweets of MFAN members: @noamunger, @gregory\_adams; @bread4theworld; @WomenThrive, @oxfamamerica, @interactionorg.
- **March 2016** — SFRC hearing on USAID budget, Gayle Smith's first major policy address, CGD on country ownership can help reach our development goals; CGD research on how to strengthen @feedthefuture, time for transparency in overseas military aid and funding; a Brookings Institution event on evaluating foreign aid at USAID (live tweeted).
  - Mentions and retweets of MFAN members: @USGLC, @cgdev, @kcdunning, @dohlbaum, @ruthlevine5, @brookingsinst.
- **July 2016** — MFAN hosts event on future of development finance (DRM), passage of FATAA, passage of Global Food Security Act; White House Summit on Global Development (live tweeted).
  - Mentions and retweets of MFAN members: @USGLC, @TheLugarCenter, @cgdev, @kcdunning, @dpaulobrien.



	Top Domains	Top Hashtags
G1  Global health and development	<a href="#">[245] twitter.com</a> <a href="#">[185] devex.com</a> <a href="#">[106] usaid.gov</a> <a href="#">[75] youtube.com</a> <a href="#">[72] huffingtonpost.com</a> <a href="#">[64] usa.gov</a> <a href="#">[47] whitehouse.gov</a> <a href="#">[46] one.org</a> <a href="#">[44] state.gov</a> <a href="#">[42] csis.org</a>	<a href="#">[94] globalgoals</a> <a href="#">[82] hiv</a> <a href="#">[80] globaldev</a> <a href="#">[78] globalhealth</a> <a href="#">[76] endpoverty</a> <a href="#">[75] haiti</a> <a href="#">[66] sdgs</a> <a href="#">[64] globaldevelopment</a> <a href="#">[62] africa</a> <a href="#">[47] climatechange</a>

To understand what each cluster is discussing, we can look at the top URLs. The most frequently shared URLs for G1 were [Foreign Assistance.gov](#) and the White House Live feed.



	<a href="#">[32] internationalbudget.org</a>	<a href="#">[34] cambodia</a>
	<a href="#">[30] washingtonpost.com</a>	<a href="#">[33] data</a>

In G2 the top URLs were the [2015 U.S. Aid Transparency Review](#), CGD's [Is the World Bank Excusing Mugabe's Human Rights Abuses? Read for Yourself](#), and Oxfam's [What types of countries might be "vanguards" of the SDGs?](#)

## Resources

Marc A. Smith et al. [Mapping Twitter Topic Networks: from Polarized Crowds to Community Clusters](#). Pew Research Center.

[MFAN Nodexcel Gallery](#) (contains all the maps and data that were collected for this project).

Pew Research Center and the Social Media Research Foundation. [How we analyzed Twitter social media networks with NodeXL](#).

Claire Reinelt and Natalia Castaneda. [Applying Social Network Analysis to Online Communication Networks. Leadership Learning Community](#).

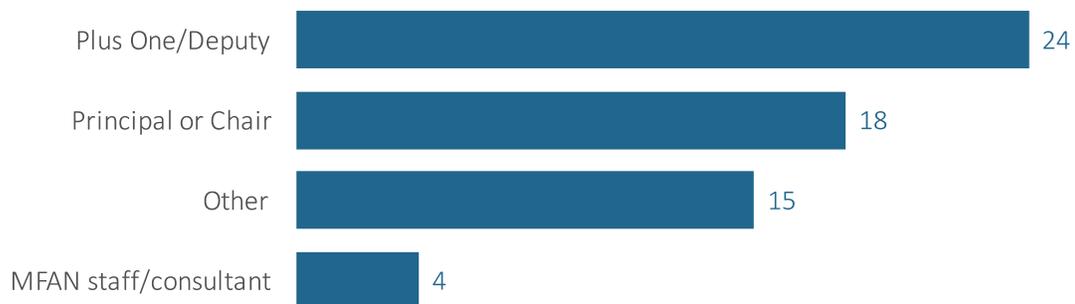
## Appendix 4. Charts

---

These charts summarize findings from a survey undertaken with MFAN members and active members of the Advocacy Subcommittee. Sixty-one people responded, which represented a 33 percent response rate. The first charts describe the respondents, in order to place their responses in context. When a question seemed to raise more questions than it answered or did not provide interesting insights, it was not included in this appendix.

### 1. What have been your role(s) in MFAN?<sup>83</sup>

Please check all that apply.



### 2. During your engagement with MFAN, with what type of group have you been primarily affiliated?<sup>84</sup>

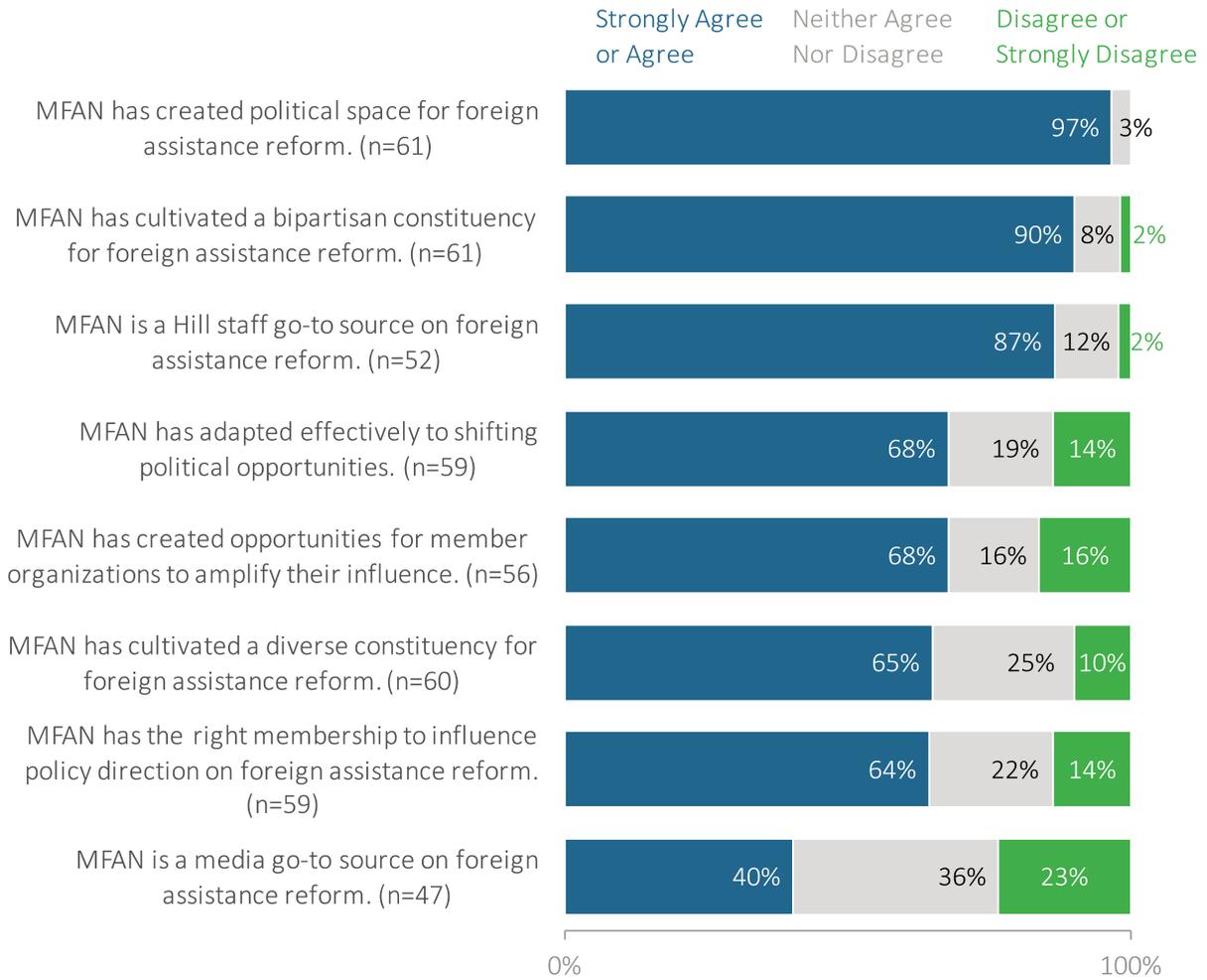
“Other” includes: Co-chair of CDR, consulting firm, global health consulting firm, self, U.S. NGO, university, and U.S. government.



<sup>83</sup> The n's are based on the total number of survey respondents.

<sup>84</sup> The n's are based on the total number of survey respondents.

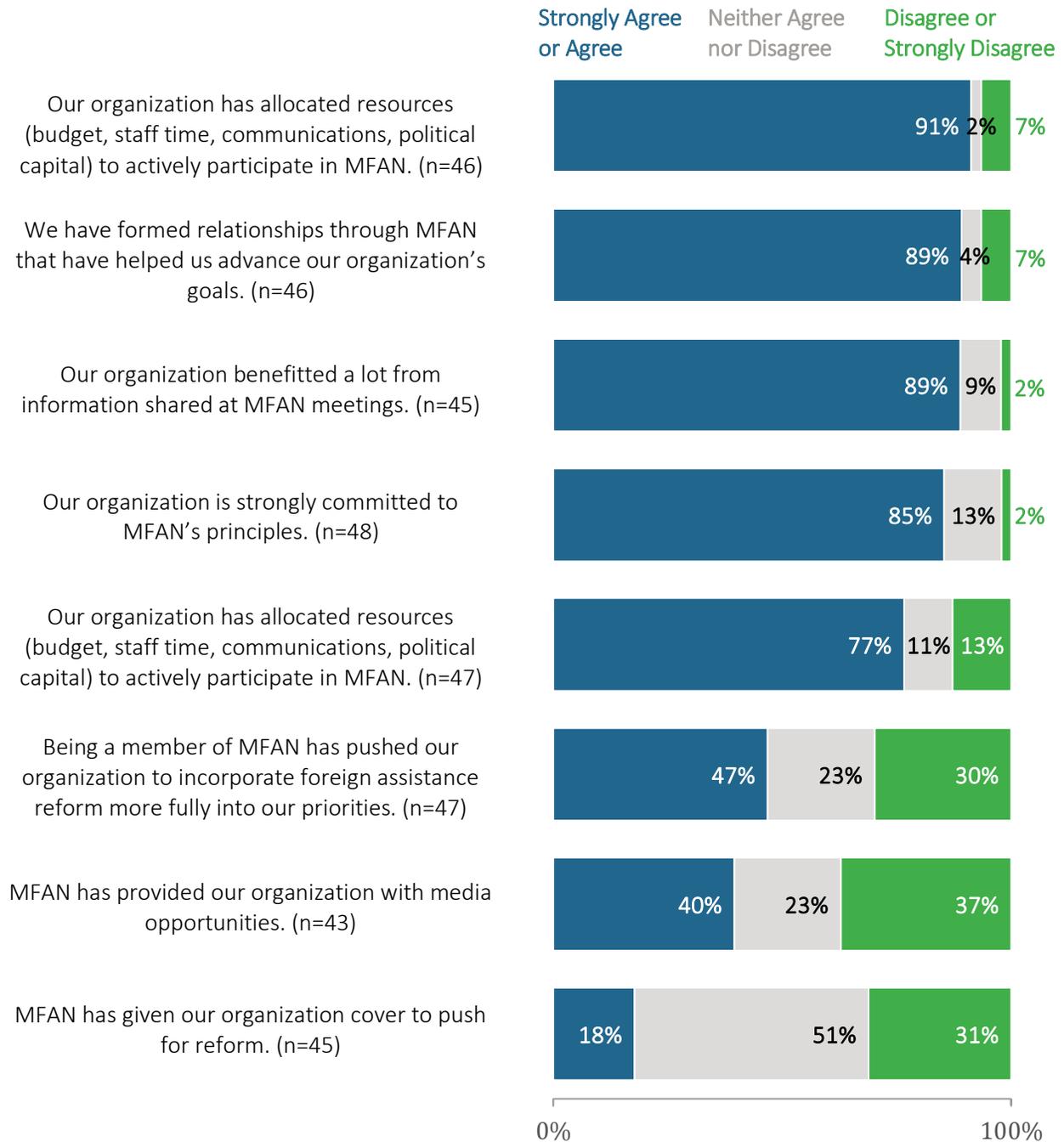
3. Thinking about MFAN and its overall value, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.<sup>85</sup>



<sup>85</sup> The n's are based on the total number of survey respondents. Some percentages do not add up to 100 percent due to number rounding.

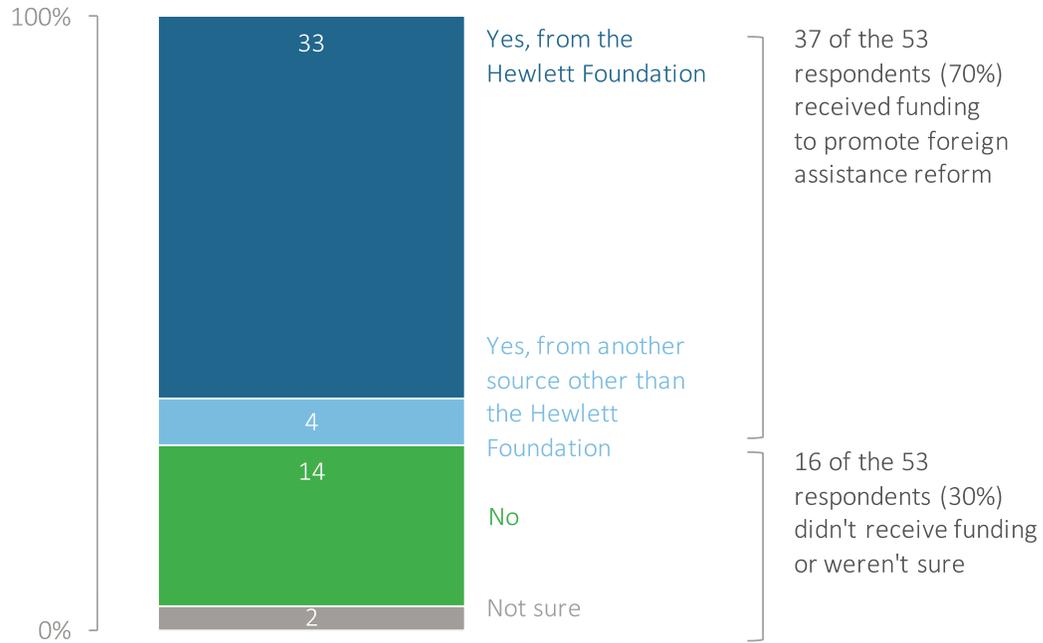
**5. For each statement about your organization, please indicate your level of agreement.<sup>86</sup>**

If you have been affiliated with multiple organizations that have been part of MFAN, please answer with the organization with which you primarily identify or have had the longest tenure between 2008-2016. If you work(ed) at a think tank, please respond about your program or initiative.



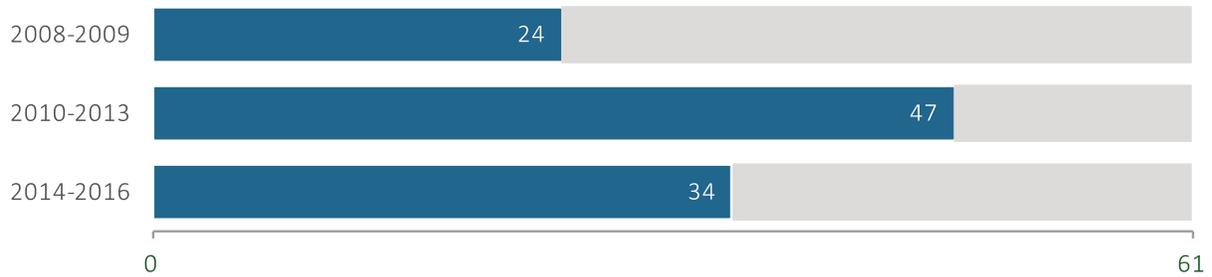
<sup>86</sup> The n's are based on the total number of survey respondents. Some percentages do not add up to 100 percent due to rounding numbers.

6. During the past 8 years, did your organization receive funding to promote foreign assistance reform?<sup>87</sup>



7. During which phase(s) were you an active participant in MFAN activities?<sup>88</sup>

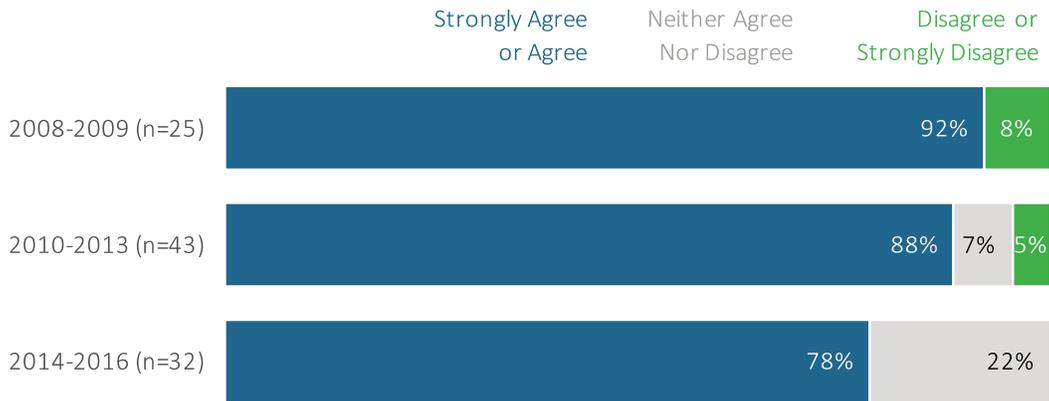
Please check any phase you were involved in for some or all of the time.



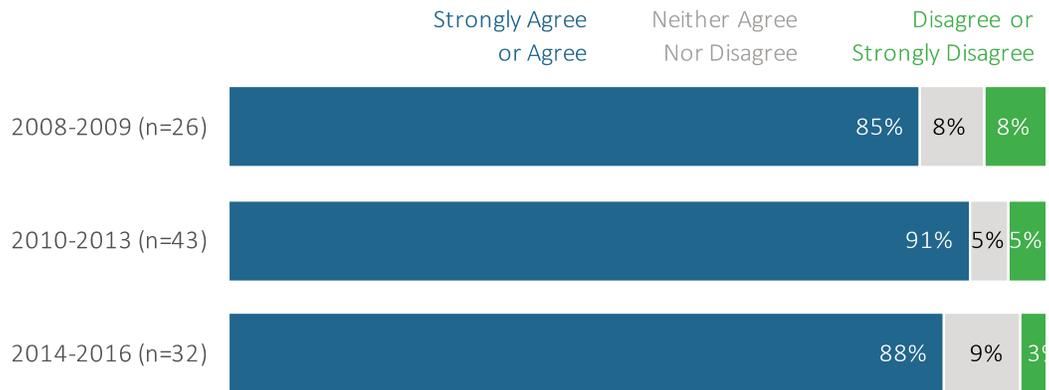
<sup>87</sup> The n's are based on total survey respondents.

<sup>88</sup> The n's are based on total survey respondents.

8a. The purpose and goals of the coalition were clearly stated and agreed to by the vast majority of members.<sup>89</sup>



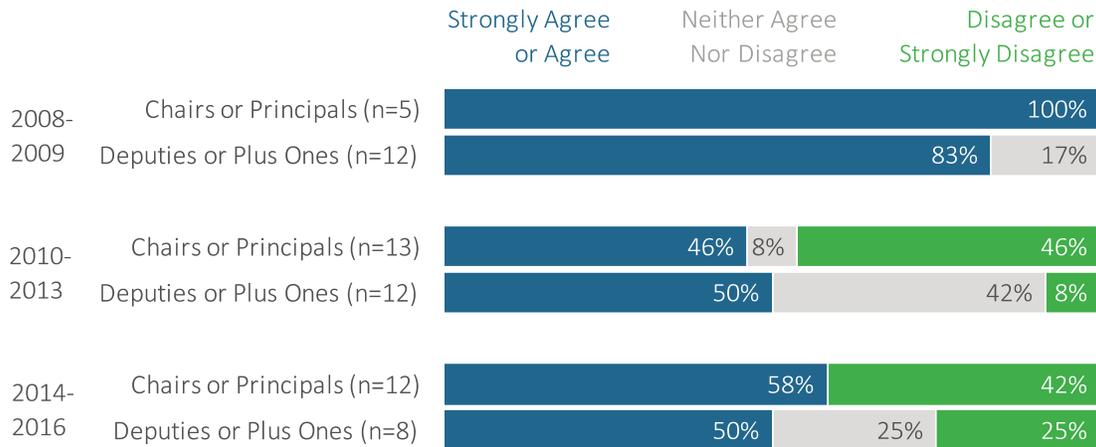
8b. The coalition was able to articulate the value added of MFAN for advancing foreign assistance reform.<sup>90</sup>



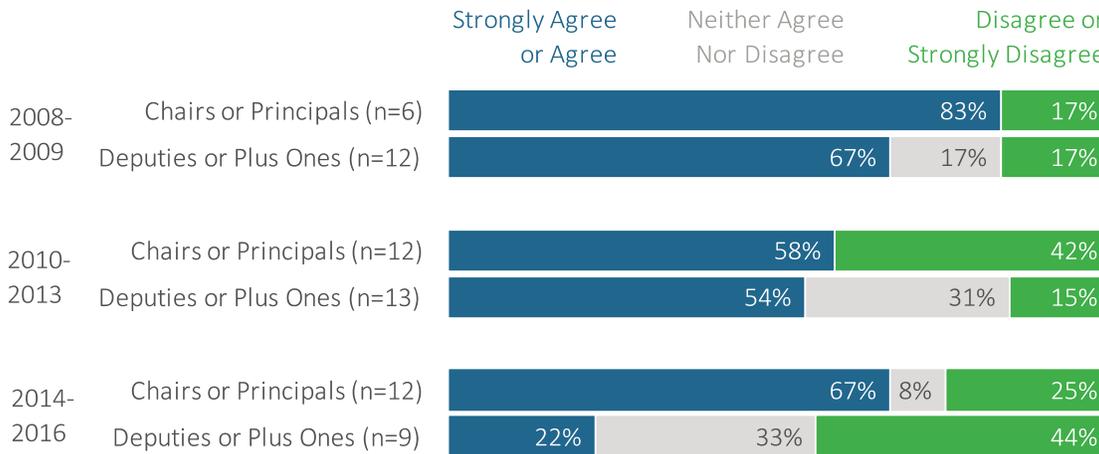
<sup>89</sup> The n's depend on the number of survey respondents active during each time period listed.

<sup>90</sup> The n's depend on the number of survey respondents active during each time period listed. The percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding numbers.

**8c. The coalition clearly articulated rules and procedures that were understood by the vast majority of members, including criteria for membership, member obligations, and decision-making processes.<sup>91</sup>**



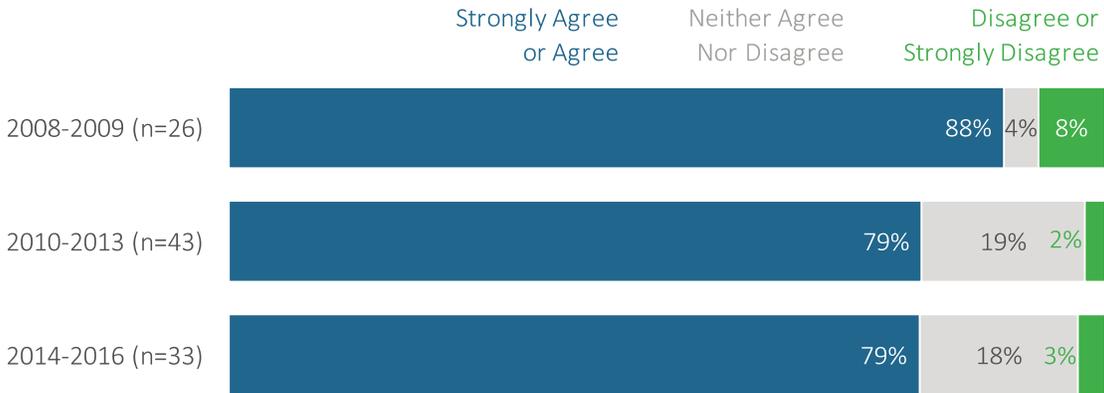
**8d. The coalition had a decision-making process that was considered efficient and effective by the vast majority of members.<sup>92</sup>**



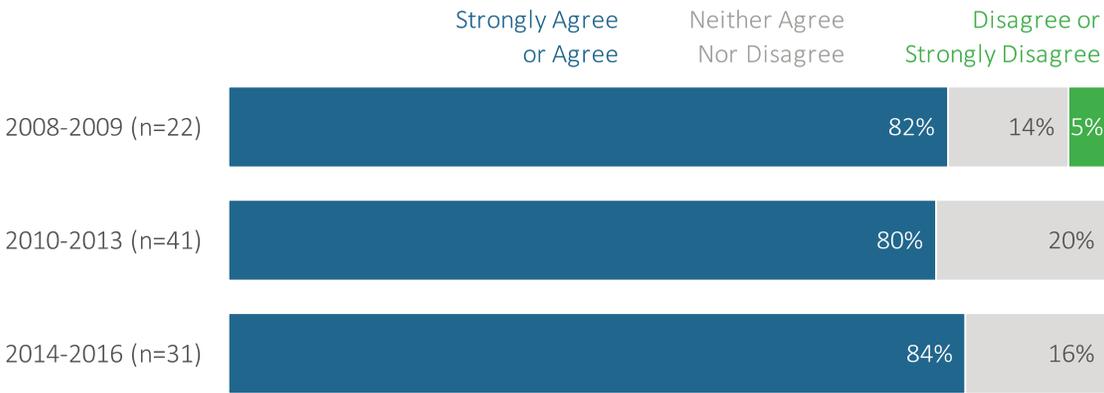
<sup>91</sup> The n's reflect the number of survey respondents who were chairs and principals or deputies/plus ones during each of the time periods listed.

<sup>92</sup> The n's reflect the number of survey respondents who were chairs and principals or deputies/plus ones during each of the time periods listed. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to number rounding.

**8e. Together coalition members had the right access to policymakers to help achieve coalition goals.<sup>93</sup>**



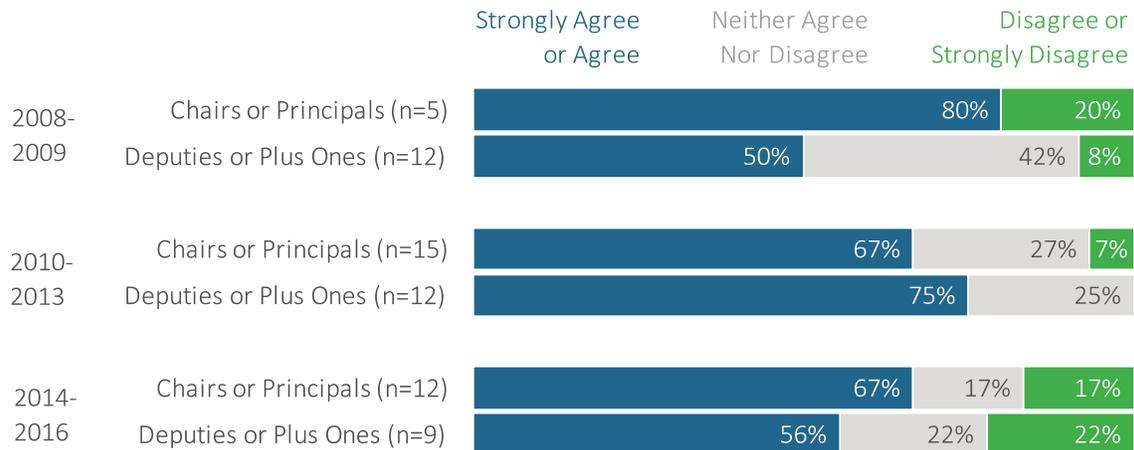
**8f. The coalition effectively used policy environment monitoring information to make strategic decisions about timing and activities.<sup>94</sup>**



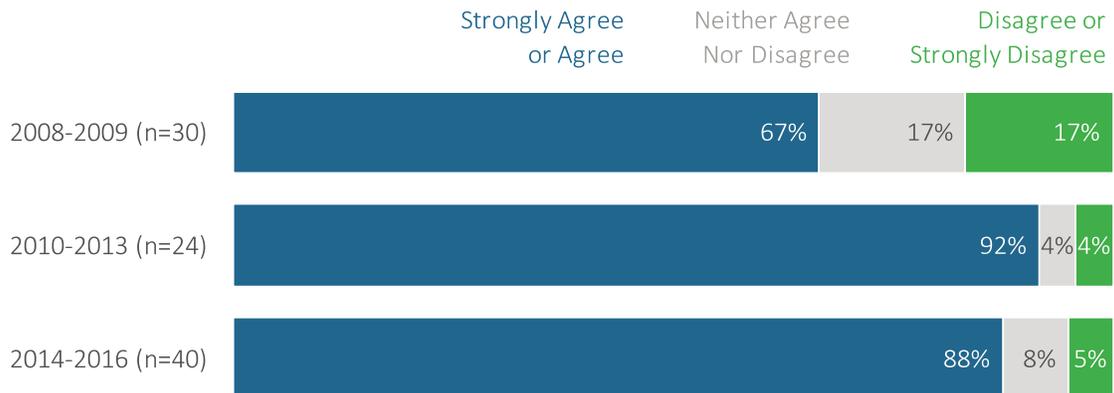
<sup>93</sup> The n's reflect the number of survey respondents active in MFAN during each of the time periods listed.

<sup>94</sup> The n's reflect the number of survey respondents active in MFAN during each of the time periods listed. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to number rounding.

**8g. The coalition successfully engaged all available internal resources.<sup>95</sup>**



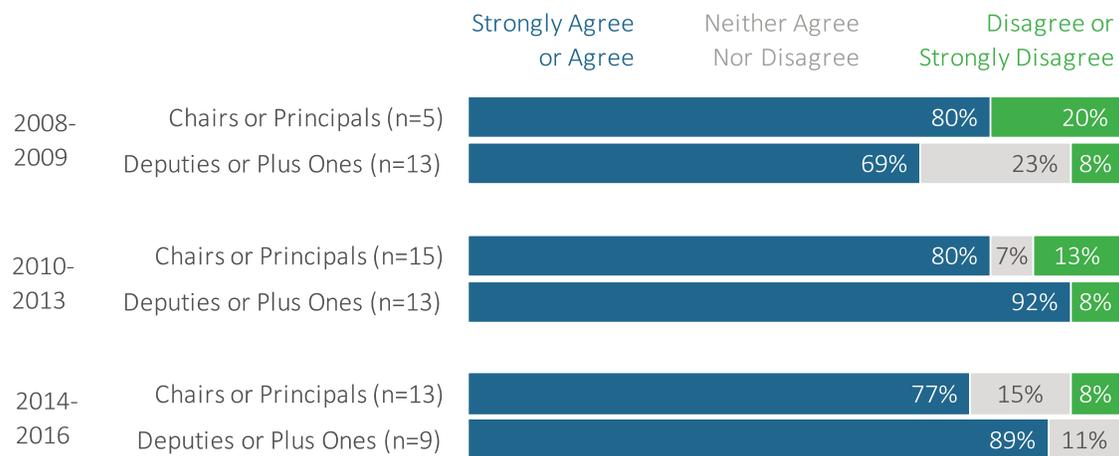
**8h. The coalition leadership had frequent and productive communication with the vast majority of members.<sup>96</sup>**



<sup>95</sup> The n's reflect the number of survey respondents who were chairs and principals or deputies/plus ones during each of the time periods listed. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to number rounding.

<sup>96</sup> The n's reflect the number of survey respondents active in MFAN during each of the time periods listed. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to number rounding.

**8i. Members in the coalition trusted each other.<sup>97</sup>**



<sup>97</sup> The n's reflect the number of survey respondents who were chairs and principals or deputies/plus ones during each of the time periods listed.

## Appendix 5. Evaluation Team

---

**Carlisle Levine, PhD**, team lead, is President and CEO of BLE Solutions, LLC. She is an international development, peacebuilding and advocacy evaluator with 24 years of international development experience and 17 years of evaluation experience. She is a skilled facilitator and trainer with expertise in leading complex evaluations, building staff evaluation capacity, developing M&E systems, fostering collaborative learning processes within dispersed and diverse teams, and developing knowledge sharing systems. Her work has contributed to organizational strategic decision making and more effective practices. Recent clients include InterAction, Bread for the World, The MasterCard Foundation and the Public Health Institute's project Rise Up. Prior to launching her own business, Carlisle worked for CARE USA, Catholic Relief Services, USAID, and the Inter-American Foundation, and with InterAction. In many of these roles, she provided policy analysis on aid effectiveness and U.S. foreign assistance reform issues.

**Claire Reinelt, PhD** is a nationally recognized network leadership evaluation consultant with over 20 years of experience evaluating leadership development, network collaboration, and network impact. Her clients include national and international foundations (e.g., the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The California Endowment, the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Global Fund for Women, and the Barr Foundation) as well as operating programs (e.g., NatureServe). Claire is a co-founder of the Leadership Learning Community (LLC), and served as LLC's Director of Research and Evaluation for eight years. She led research and writing for several Leadership for a New Era Series publications. She has authored and edited many publications on leadership development and leadership networks.

**Robin Kane, MPA** is Principal of RK Evaluation & Strategies, LLC. She has more than 25 years of experience in program planning, evaluation, policy advocacy, and strategic communications in the public service sector. She has been an independent planning and evaluation consultant since 2005. Robin leads comprehensive process and outcome evaluations with nonprofit, foundation, and public agency clients. She has a special interest in planning and evaluation for long-term policy change efforts, working with foundations and advocacy groups to create meaningful ways to measure progress and success. In this work, she often applies the concepts of developmental evaluation, systems thinking and complexity, learning organization structures, and visible thinking. Recent clients include the Democracy Fund, the Union of Concerned Scientists, Physicians for Human Rights, the Commonwealth Fund, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Robin co-taught a graduate course in program evaluation as an adjunct professor in George Washington University's School for Public Policy and Public Administration. For more than a decade, Robin led communications and policy departments at national and regional advocacy organizations, including the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and Consumers Union.

## Appendix 6. Evaluation Questions<sup>98</sup>

---

1. **Results:** To what extent has MFAN achieved its intermediate and ultimate goals? What has been MFAN's contribution to those achievements?
  - a. What have been MFAN's most significant gains and challenges, both substantively and operationally?
  - b. What factors have contributed to these gains and challenges?
  - c. Have accomplishments been sustained?
  - d. What have been missed opportunities?
  - e. Beyond the intended goals, have there been any positive or negative impacts that were unanticipated?
  
2. **Adaptability:** How effectively did MFAN adapt its agenda and approach to respond to changes in the political environment and optimize opportunities to make progress on MFAN goals? What lessons about agenda setting and approach have been learned that MFAN can use to prepare for a shift in presidential leadership?
  - a. As MFAN's agenda has evolved over time, how has MFAN's success in achieving goals related to these agendas varied? Why?
  - b. How well did MFAN capitalize on the opportunity of a new administration in 2009 and political change with the 2010 elections, and how does that relate to a similar moment in 2017?
  - c. Is there any evidence that a broader or narrower agenda better facilitates policy impact? Are easily identifiable changes better (e.g. passing legislation) versus more agenda setting (raising the profile of a set of issues)?
  - d. To what degree have MFAN funders informed the policy agenda at each stage? How has this engagement helped or hindered MFAN's progress towards its objectives?
  
3. **Coalition Effectiveness:** How did changes in MFAN leadership models and management structure influence or interfere with the progress MFAN was able to make towards its goals during each of the three phases of its work?
  - a. Do members share a common purpose? If so, how did they get there? If not, why not?
  - b. As MFAN's agenda has evolved over the last eight years, how have various structural and leadership models helped or hindered connections across the network, and progress toward its goals?
  - c. Which decision-making processes have encouraged most members to contribute and engage?
  - d. How has the absence of formalized governance rules helped or hindered MFAN's progress?
  - e. What secretariat structure has best contributed to MFAN effectiveness and ability to achieve results? How crucial is it to the overall functionality of the network to have a dedicated secretariat? What functions are best suited for a secretariat versus external consultants?
  - f. What have been the pros and cons (including related to cost) of the secretariat being housed in a member organization versus as an independent Hub? Where should the secretariat be located?

<sup>98</sup> During the Inception phase, the evaluation team reorganized these questions, building off of the original organization of questions and sub-questions that appeared in the request for proposal.

4. **Membership and Engagement:** How effectively has MFAN recruited and engaged members and allies to collaborate and align their individual and collective efforts to advance MFAN's agenda?
- a. As MFAN's agenda has evolved over the last eight years, how have various membership compositions helped or hindered connections across the network, and progress toward its goals?
  - b. Have dedicated resources to select MFAN members influenced the degree to which members contributed to reaching MFAN's goals? Are there any apparent downsides of dedicated resources to select network members?
  - c. To what extent has MFAN been able to rely on members to operationalize the MFAN agenda?
  - d. Are there indications that members have been constrained by the coalition approach? How can we tell? What systems/structures/processes most contributed to this?
  - e. Are there indications that members are achieving more together than they could alone? How can we tell? What systems/structures/processes most contributed to this?
  - f. How does the added impact [of working together] compare to the extra effort associated with managing a network?
  - g. Has MFAN developed and maintained necessary relationships with external actors necessary to achieving its goals? Are there any constituencies with which MFAN should have better collaborated (e.g. grassroots advocacy, broader foreign policy community)?

## Appendix 7. Methods

---

The evaluation utilized a variety of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods: document and literature reviews, 44 interviews with MFAN members and external actors, a survey with MFAN members and active members of the Advocacy Subcommittee that garnered a 33 percent response rate, workshops with MFAN members, and a facilitated learning discussion with the Evaluation Advisory Committee and a few more MFAN members with leadership roles in the network.

The evaluation was broken down into four phases: Inception, Breadth, Depth, and Synthesis. In the inception phase (April – June 2016), the evaluation team reviewed documents provided by MFAN, and undertook a literature review.

During the breadth phase (June – October 2016), the evaluation team examined MFAN's results, adaptability, coalition effectiveness, and member engagement broadly. This involved interviews with 25 MFAN members and external actors, with some interviewees filling both roles. Interviewees represented NGOs, think tanks, (former) policymakers and their staff, funders, MFAN staff, contractors, and consultants. The interview responses were complemented by a survey with MFAN members. The 61 survey respondents (a 33 percent response rate) included MFAN members and active members of the Advocacy Subcommittee, and represented NGOs, think tanks, and others.

The evaluation team used the Depth phase (October 2016 – February 2017) to gather information about MFAN's results, adaptability, coalition effectiveness, and member engagement as related to four outcomes that the evaluation team examined in depth, using contribution analysis. These four outcomes – the Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6), the rewriting of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA), the passage and enactment of the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA), and progress USAID made on its Local Solutions initiative – were considered significant advances for MFAN, represented MFAN's work across its lifespan to date, and targeted both Congress and the administration. The evaluation team reviewed documents relevant to the four outcomes, conducted workshops on each outcome with MFAN members, interviewed 19 respondents, including MFAN members and external actors who were closely involved in helping to make progress toward the four outcomes of interest, and then held a facilitated learning discussion with members of the Evaluation Advisory Committee plus a few more MFAN members.

During the Synthesis phase, the evaluation team analyzed all of the data it collected and developed a final report to be made public.

# Appendix 8. Data Collection Instruments

---

## A. BREADTH PHASE

### 1. Co-chair interview protocol

Introduction: Thank you for taking time for this interview. BLE Solutions is conducting this evaluation of MFAN in order to help MFAN learn from its past achievements and challenges and apply that learning to future strategic decision making. We hope the evaluation's findings will also be useful for other networks and funders who want to learn about building effective coalitions to influence policy change.

The evaluation is examining MFAN's work broadly during this phase, and will later dig deeper into a select group of results. During this interview in particular, we would like to learn from your perspective as a current/former MFAN co-chair. We will not attribute your comments. Rather, we will analyze all of the input we receive from MFAN co-chairs, managers, and funders together to present one synthesized set of findings. Those findings will inform our next round of data collection. This interview should take approximately 60 minutes. Does all of this sound okay to you? Do you have any questions?

---

(To be filled out ahead of time)

Name:

Position and Organization:

MFAN Co-Chair Dates:

---

\*Note: An asterisk at the beginning of a question indicates that the question is a top priority.

### Results

1. From your perspective, what has been MFAN's most significant policy change achievement?

Probe:

- a. How did this change come about? What factors – internal and external – were influential?
2. What has been MFAN's greatest challenge in influencing policy change?

Probe:

- a. What has MFAN done to overcome this challenge?
3. \*Please describe any missed opportunities MFAN has had in terms of being able to influence policy change.

Probes:

- a. Why was the opportunity missed? What factors – internal and external – were influential?
  - b. What does MFAN need to do differently to not experience similar missed opportunities in the future?
4. \*To what degree have MFAN funders informed the policy agenda at each stage?

Probe:

- a. How has this engagement helped or hindered MFAN's progress towards its objectives?

### **Adaptability**

5. Since 2008, MFAN has needed to respond to a variety of changes in the external environment. These have included elections in 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014, as well as the global financial crisis and various administration initiatives such as PPD-6 and two QDDRs. During the time you were (are) co-chair, how well did MFAN respond to the challenges and opportunities that resulted from changes such as these?
6. \*As you reflect on how MFAN's agenda changed from broad reform efforts in the early years to implementing core principles within development agencies in later years, which do you think has had the greatest impact on U.S. development policy? Why?
7. Thinking about how MFAN has adapted (or not) to changes in the political environment over time, what advice would you have for MFAN, as it prepares for a shift in presidential leadership and Congress in 2017?

### **Coalition Effectiveness: Institutional and governance arrangements**

8. \*During your tenure as co-chair, what was/has been MFAN's most significant achievement in terms of building an effective coalition to influence policy change?

Probe:

- a. What factors contributed to the coalition's effectiveness?

9. During your tenure as co-chair, what was/has been MFAN's greatest challenge in terms of building an effective coalition?

Probe:

- a. What has MFAN done to overcome this challenge?

10. \*During your tenure as co-chair, how did/do MFAN's structural model(s) help or hinder its ability to leverage its membership and make progress toward its goals?

Probes:

- a. The role of the plus ones and deputies has evolved over time. In what ways have their roles helped MFAN advance its work? In what ways, if any, have their roles hindered MFAN's advancement?
- b. How have working groups helped MFAN advance its work? How, if at all, have they hindered MFAN's advancement?
- c. How did the staffing structure and use of consultants contribute to MFAN's effectiveness and ability to achieve results?

11. \*To what degree have dedicated resources to select MFAN members influenced the degree to which members contributed to reaching MFAN's goals? Are there any apparent downsides of dedicated resources to select coalition members?

### **Network Engagement: Agenda Setting and Collaboration**

12. To what extent have MFAN core members been engaged in setting MFAN's agenda?

Probes:

- a. To what extent does broad participation matter for making sure MFAN has the right agenda?
- b. To what extent does it matter for successfully operationalizing the agenda?

13. To what degree has MFAN developed and maintained relationships with external actors necessary to achieving its goals? Are there any constituencies with which MFAN should have better collaborated (e.g. grassroots advocacy, broader foreign policy community)?

### **General**

14. What else does MFAN need to do to become a more influential network?

Thank you for your time!

## 2. MFAN Manager interview protocol

Introduction: Thank you for taking time for this interview. BLE Solutions is conducting this evaluation of MFAN in order to help MFAN learn from its past achievements and challenges and apply that learning to future strategic decision making. We hope the evaluation's findings will also be useful for other networks and funders who want to learn about building effective coalitions to influence policy change.

The evaluation is examining MFAN's work broadly during this phase, and will later dig deeper into a select group of results. During this interview in particular, we would like to learn from your perspective as a current/former MFAN manager. We will not attribute your comments. Rather, we will analyze all of the input we receive from MFAN co-chairs, managers and funders together to present one synthesized set of findings. Those findings will inform our next round of data collection. This interview should take approximately 60 minutes. Does all of this sound okay to you? Do you have any questions?

---

(To be filled out ahead of time)

Name:

MFAN Executive Director Dates:

---

\*Note: An asterisk at the beginning of a question indicates that the question is a top priority.

### Results

1. \*We are hearing a lot – through document review and conversations – about MFAN's greatest policy successes. From you, we'd like to know what has been MFAN's greatest challenge in influencing policy change?

Probe:

- a. What has MFAN done to overcome this challenge?

2. \*Please describe any missed opportunities MFAN has had in terms of being able to influence policy change.

Probes:

- a. Why was the opportunity missed? What factors – internal and external – were influential?
- b. What does MFAN need to do differently to not experience similar missed opportunities in the future?

3. \*To what degree have MFAN funders informed the policy agenda at each stage?

Probe:

- a. How has this engagement helped or hindered MFAN's progress towards its objectives?

## Coalition Effectiveness: Institutional and governance arrangements

4. From your perspective, what has been MFAN's most significant achievement in terms of building an effective coalition to influence policy change?

Probe:

- a. What factors contributed to the coalition's effectiveness?
5. \*What has been MFAN's greatest challenge in terms of building an effective coalition?

Probe:

- a. What has MFAN done to overcome this challenge?
6. How have MFAN's two different structural models each helped or hindered MFAN's ability to leverage its membership and make progress toward its goals? Does it matter that MFAN's goals were different under each structure?

Probes:

- a. The role of the plus ones and deputies has evolved over time. In what ways have their roles helped MFAN advance its work? In what ways, if any, have their roles hindered MFAN's advancement?
  - b. How have working groups helped MFAN advance its work? How, if at all, have they hindered MFAN's advancement?
  - c. How did the staffing structure and use of consultants contribute to MFAN's effectiveness and ability to achieve results?
7. What staffing structure has best contributed to MFAN's effectiveness and ability to achieve results?

Probes:

- a. What functions are best suited for staff versus external consultants?
- b. What have been the pros and cons (including related to cost) of the staff being housed in a member organization versus as an independent hub?

8. \*To what degree have dedicated resources to select MFAN members influenced the degree to which members contributed to reaching MFAN's goals? To what extent have MFAN reform principles remained embedded in MFAN members' organizations after dedicated funding has ended? Are there any apparent downsides of dedicated resources to select coalition members?

#### **Network Engagement: Agenda Setting and Collaboration**

9. To what extent have MFAN core members been engaged in setting MFAN's agenda?  
Probes:
  - a. To what extent does broad participation matter for making sure MFAN has the right agenda?
  - b. To what extent does it matter for successfully operationalizing the agenda?
10. To what degree has MFAN developed and maintained relationships with external actors necessary to achieving its goals? Are there any constituencies with which MFAN should have better collaborated (e.g., grassroots advocacy, broader foreign policy community)?

#### **General**

11. What else does MFAN need to do to become a more influential network?

Thank you for your time!

### 3. MFAN Funder interview protocol

Introduction: Thank you for taking time for this interview. BLE Solutions is conducting this evaluation of MFAN in order to help MFAN learn from its past achievements and challenges and apply that learning to future strategic decision making. We hope the evaluation's findings will also be useful for other networks and funders who want to learn about building effective coalitions to influence policy change.

The evaluation is examining MFAN's work broadly during this phase, and will later dig deeper into a select group of results. During this interview in particular, we would like to learn from your perspective as a current/former MFAN funder.

We recognize that, over time, you have also been a friend of MFAN and, perhaps, an advocacy target. We welcome you sharing those perspectives, as well.

We will not attribute your comments. Rather, we will analyze all of the input we receive from MFAN co-chairs, managers and funders together to present one synthesized set of findings. Those findings will inform our next round of data collection. This interview should take approximately 60 minutes. Does all of this sound okay to you? Do you have any questions?

---

(To be filled out ahead of time)

Name:

Position and Organization (when an MFAN funder):

Dates when an MFAN funder:

---

\*Note: An asterisk at the beginning of a question indicates that the question is a top priority.

For [X]

- What was it like to help create MFAN? Why was this a priority for The Hewlett Foundation? What did it take to make it happen?

## Results

1. From your perspective, what has been MFAN's most significant policy change achievement?

Probes:

- a. How did this change come about? What factors – external and internal – were important? Who was involved? What did they do?
  - b. What has happened since this change was made? Has it been sustained? Has MFAN been involved?
2. What has been MFAN's greatest challenge in influencing policy change?

Probes:

- a. What has MFAN done to overcome this challenge?
  - b. What else does it need to do?
3. Has MFAN had any unintended impacts – positive or negative?

Probes:

- a. What were these?
  - b. How did they come about? What factors – internal and external – were influential?
4. \*Has MFAN had any missed opportunities in terms of being able to influence policy change?

Probes:

- a. What were these?
  - b. How did they come about? What factors – internal and external – were influential?
  - c. What does MFAN need to do differently to not experience similar missed opportunities in the future?
5. From your perspective, what has been MFAN's most significant achievement in terms of building an influential coalition to influence policy change?

Probe:

- a. What factors contributed to the coalition's effectiveness?
6. What has been MFAN's greatest challenge in terms of building an effective coalition to influence policy change?

Probes:

- a. What has MFAN done to overcome this challenge?
- b. What else does it need to do?

### **Adaptability**

7. Since 2008, MFAN has needed to respond to a variety of changes in the external environment. These have included elections in 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014, as well as the global financial crisis and various administration initiatives such as PPD-6 and two QDDRs. How well did MFAN respond to the challenges and opportunities that resulted from these changes?
8. Thinking about how MFAN has adapted (or not) to changes in the political environment over time, what advice would you have for MFAN, as it prepares for a shift in presidential leadership and Congress in 2017?
9. \*How did you as a funder contribute to informing MFAN's policy agenda? In what ways did that change over time?
10. \*How did participating in MFAN influence your own priorities as a funder and the priorities of the Hewlett/Gates Foundation?

### **General**

11. \*What advice would you give other funders interested in supporting a network like MFAN?
12. Is there anything else about MFAN that you think it's important for us to consider or be aware of at this time?

Thank you for your time!

#### 4. MFAN Members and External interview protocol

\*Indicates top priority questions.

##### Results

1. \*What has been MFAN's most significant policy change achievement?  
Probes:
  - a. What internal factors have contributed to those achievements?
  - b. What external factors, including other actors, have contributed to those achievements?
  - c. Probe: Have the achievements been sustained? Please explain.
2. \*To what degree has the existence of MFAN influenced (or not) receptivity to its reform agenda in the broader community? (\*tailored for the respondent: among partners, non-partners, on the Hill, within USAID, etc.)
3. \*What has been MFAN's greatest challenge in influencing policy change?  
Probe:
  - a. What factors – internal and external – have contributed to those challenges?
4. \*Please describe any missed opportunities MFAN has had in terms of being able to influence policy change.
5. Please describe any unintended impacts – positive or negative – that MFAN has had.

##### Adaptability

6. \*Since 2008, MFAN has needed to respond to a variety of both external and internal changes. How well has MFAN responded to the challenges and opportunities that resulted from these external and internal changes? Please explain.
7. \*Thinking about how MFAN has adapted (or not) to changes in the political environment over time, what advice would you have for MFAN, as it prepares for a shift in presidential leadership and Congress in 2017?
8. As MFAN's agenda has evolved over time, how has MFAN's success in achieving goals related to these agendas varied? Please explain.
9. As you reflect on how MFAN's agenda changed from big and bold reform efforts in the early years to implementing core principles within development agencies in later years, which do you think has had the greatest impact on U.S. development policy? Why?

## Coalition Effectiveness, Including Institutional and Governance Arrangements

10. \*How influential was MFAN in pushing foreign assistance reform?
11. \*How valuable was MFAN in providing cover for foreign assistance reform efforts?
12. \*What has been MFAN's most significant achievement in terms of building an effective coalition to influence policy change?
13. \*What has been MFAN's greatest challenge in terms of building an effective coalition?
14. \*As MFAN's agenda has evolved over the past eight years, how successful has MFAN been at recruiting and engaging the right members? What membership composition and size have helped or hindered making connections and progress toward its goals?
15. \*How has MFAN's structure helped or hindered its ability to engage members and make progress toward its goals?
  - a. Roles of principals/Executive Committee
  - b. Roles of the plus ones/deputies
  - c. Roles of working groups
  - d. Secretariat staffing structure and use of consultants
16. \*To what degree have MFAN reform principles become (further) embedded in your organization, as a result of your participation in MFAN?
17. In what ways did having dedicated resources from Hewlett influence [your organization's] ability to participate in MFAN? In what ways, if any, would your participation have been different absent those dedicated resources? Are there any apparent downsides for MFAN of dedicated resources going to select coalition members to support their participation? (for MFAN members who received dedicated funding)

OR

18. In what ways did not having dedicated resources from Hewlett influence [your organization's] ability to participate in MFAN? Are there any apparent downsides for MFAN of dedicated resources going to select coalition members to support their participation? (for MFAN members who did not receive dedicated funding)

## Network Engagement: Agenda Setting and Collaboration

19. \*To what extent have MFAN's decision-making processes encouraged or hindered your engagement?
20. \*To what degree has MFAN developed and maintained relationships with external actors necessary to achieving its goals? Are there any constituencies with which MFAN should have better collaborated (e.g. grassroots advocacy, broader foreign policy community)?

21. Please describe how participating in MFAN has affected your organization's or your actions on foreign assistance. To what degree has your organization or have you had more influence on foreign assistance-related issues? Or to what degree has participating in the coalition constrained your organization's or your actions on foreign assistance? Please explain.
  
22. MFAN valued the creation of the Consensus for Development Reform (CDR). MFAN's assessment was that to best reach Republican congressional leaders, there needed to be a Republican (and not just a bipartisan) group advocating for foreign assistance reform. However, some say that CDR created a missed opportunity for MFAN to become truly bipartisan, and to strengthen its influence with a broader group in Congress. From your perspective, was MFAN's assessment right? Or would MFAN be more effective if it had focused on attracting Republicans to its membership, rather than supporting the creation of CDR?

## 5. MFAN Member and Advocacy Subcommittee survey protocol

# Survey: Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network Evaluation

## Introduction

Dear Past and Present MFAN Members,

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey.

The purpose of the survey is to generate learning about MFAN's effectiveness as a coalition, and its contributions to foreign assistance reform from June 2008 to April 2016. The findings from this survey will be shared with MFAN's Executive Committee, other Principals, Deputies, Managers, and Funders, and in a final public report. Your individual assessment of MFAN and all other responses to the survey will be confidential.

This survey has 15 questions, and will take approximately 20 minutes. Thank you in advance for your time and insights. As MFAN plans the next phase of its development, learning from the past is vital for making informed decisions about the future. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Carlisle Levine, MFAN Evaluation Lead, at [carlisle.levine@blesolutions.com](mailto:carlisle.levine@blesolutions.com).

With sincere thanks,

BLE Solutions Evaluation Team

## MFAN Member Information

1. What has been your role(s) in MFAN? (Please check all that apply.)
  - a. Chair
  - b. Principal
  - c. Plus one or deputy
  - d. MFAN consultant
  - e. MFAN staff
  - f. Advocacy Subcommittee member (anytime between 2009-2013)
  - g. Communications Working Group member (anytime between 2009-2013)
  - h. Country Ownership Working Group member (anytime from 2014-present)
  - i. Accountability Working Group member (anytime from 2014-present)
  - j. Emerging Issues Working Group member (anytime from 2014-present)
  - k. Hill subgroup (beginning in 2015)
  
2. During your engagement with MFAN, with what type of group have you been primarily affiliated (Choose one.)
  - a. Think tank
  - b. International NGO
  - c. Coalition/network (not MFAN)
  - d. Membership organization or association
  - e. Funding organization

- f. Former policymaker
- g. Individual affiliation
- h. MFAN Hub
- i. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### The Value of MFAN

3. Thinking about MFAN and its overall value, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
MFAN has created political space for foreign assistance reform.						
MFAN has cultivated a bipartisan constituency for foreign assistance reform.						
MFAN has cultivated a diverse constituency for foreign assistance reform.						
MFAN has the right membership to influence policy direction on foreign assistance reform.						
MFAN is a media go-to source on foreign assistance reform.						
MFAN is a Hill staff go-to source on foreign assistance reform.						
MFAN has adapted effectively to shifting political opportunities.						
MFAN has created opportunities for member organizations to amplify their influence.						

### MFAN and Your Organization

4. During the time you were involved with MFAN, were you affiliated with an organization that was a member of the MFAN coalition?
- a. Yes (skip to question #5)
  - b. No (skip to question #7)

5. For each statement about your organization, please indicate your level of agreement. (If you have been affiliated with multiple organizations that have been part of MFAN, please answer with the organization with which you primarily identify or have had the longest tenure between 2008-2016. If you work(ed) at a think tank, please respond about your program or initiative.)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
Our organization is strongly committed to MFAN's <u>principles</u> .						
Our organization has allocated resources (budget, staff time, communications, political capital) to actively participate in MFAN.						
Our organization has had more influence on issues we care(d) about working through MFAN than we would have had alone.						
The MFAN coalition has constrained our organization's actions on foreign assistance.						
We have formed relationships through MFAN that have helped us advance our organization's goals.						
MFAN has provided our organization with media opportunities.						
Being a member of MFAN has pushed our organization to incorporate foreign assistance reform more fully into our priorities.						
MFAN has given our organization cover to push for reform.						
Our organization benefitted a lot from information shared at MFAN meetings.						

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. During the past 8 years, did your organization (the one referred to in the previous question) receive funding to promote foreign assistance reform?

- a. Yes, from the Hewlett Foundation
- b. Yes, from another source other than the Hewlett Foundation
- c. No
- d. Not sure

## MFAN Coalition Capacity

MFAN has had three phases of work during which the membership, leadership, structure, governance, and policy priorities differed. In this section, you will be asked to answer a set of questions for each phase in which you were actively participating in MFAN activities for some or all of the time. The three phases are:

- 2008-2009 (Co-Chairs were Gayle Smith and Steve Radelet. MFAN published *New Day/New Way*. MFAN’s fiscal sponsor was Bread for the World.)
- 2010-2013 (Co-Chairs were David Beckmann, George Ingram, and Jim Kolbe. MFAN published *From Policy to Practice*. MFAN’s fiscal sponsor was Bread for the World.)
- 2014-2016 (Co-Chairs are Connie Veillette, Carolyn Miles, and George Ingram. MFAN published *The Way Forward* and *ACCOUNTdown to 2017*. MFAN’s fiscal sponsor is New Venture Fund.)

7. During which phase(s) were you an active participant in MFAN activities? (please check any phase you were involved in for some or all of the time)
- a. 2008-2009
  - b. 2010-2013
  - c. 2014-2016
8. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement during each phase in which you were actively participating in MFAN activities (i.e., strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, or I don’t know)

	2008-2009	2010-2013	2014-2016
The purpose and goals of the coalition were clearly stated and agreed to by the vast majority of members.			
The coalition was able to articulate the value added of MFAN for advancing foreign assistance reform.			
The coalition clearly articulated rules and procedures that were understood by the vast majority of members, including criteria for membership, member obligations, and decision-making processes.			
The coalition had a decision-making process that was considered efficient and effective by the vast majority of members.			
Together coalition members had the right access to policymakers to help achieve coalition goals.			

The coalition effectively used policy environment monitoring information to make strategic decisions about timing and activities.			
The coalition successfully engaged all available internal resources.			
The coalition leadership had frequent and productive communication with the vast majority of members.			
Members in the coalition trusted each other.			

## MFAN Advocacy Activities

The purpose of this section is to gather information about areas of policy work to which MFAN contributed and who worked on these. We will use these data in the next phase of our evaluation to map MFAN member contributions to areas of policy work.

9. Please select the four policy areas to which you believe MFAN made the greatest contribution.
  - a. Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6)
  - b. QDDR (2010)
  - c. QDDR (2015)
  - d. ForeignAssistance.gov (formerly Foreign Assistance Dashboard)
  - e. State Department evaluation policy
  - f. USAID's Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning and Office of Budget and Resource Management creation
  - g. USAID evaluation policy
  - h. USAID's transparency advances (e.g., FA.gov and IATI compliance)
  - i. USAID's Local Solutions (formerly IPR)
  - j. USAID draft ADS 201 revisions on strategic and project planning
  - k. PEPFAR 3.0 Sustainability Framework
  - l. MCC 5-year NEXT strategy (2016)
  - m. U.S. commitment to Addis Tax Initiative and domestic resource mobilization
  - n. Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009 (first Berman reform bill)
  - o. Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009 (Kerry-Lugar bill)
  - p. Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (Poe bill)
  - q. Global Partnerships Act (Berman FAA rewrite bill)
  - r. Food for Peace Reform Act (Corker-Coons bill)
  - s. Congressional Appropriations

10. Please indicate how actively engaged you (as an individual whether inside or outside MFAN) were trying to inform each of the following policy outcomes.

	Very actively engaged	Actively engaged	A little engaged	Not engaged	Not applicable
Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6)					
QDDR (2010)					
QDDR (2015)					
ForeignAssistance.gov (formerly Foreign Assistance Dashboard)					
State Department evaluation policy					
USAID's Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning and Office of Budget and Resource Management creation					
USAID evaluation policy					
USAID's transparency advances (e.g., FA.gov and IATI compliance)					
USAID's Local Solutions (formerly IPR)					
USAID draft ADS 201 revisions on strategic and project planning					
PEPFAR 3.0 Sustainability Framework					
MCC 5-year NEXT strategy (2016)					
U.S. commitment to Addis Tax Initiative and domestic resource mobilization					
Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009 (first Berman bill)					
Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009 (Kerry-Lugar bill)					
Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (Poe bill)					
Global Partnerships Act (Berman FAA rewrite bill)					
Food for Peace Reform Act (Corker-Coons bill)					
Congressional Appropriations					

11. For each of the following policy outcomes in which you were personally engaged, please indicate if you made any of the following contributions? (Check all that apply. If you were not engaged, please leave the row blank.)

	Publicly spoke, wrote or communicated about legislation or policy	Engaged decision-makers to influence the legislation or policy	Mobilized external allies to support reform	Neutralized opposition to, or provided cover for reform proposals
Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD-6)				
QDDR (2010)				
QDDR (2015)				
ForeignAssistance.gov (formerly Foreign Assistance Dashboard)				
State Department evaluation policy				
USAID's Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning and Office of Budget and Resource Management creation				
USAID evaluation policy				
USAID's transparency advances (e.g., FA.gov and IATI compliance)				
USAID's Local Solutions (formerly IPR)				
USAID draft ADS 201 revisions on strategic and project planning				
PEPFAR 3.0 Sustainability Framework				
MCC 5-year NEXT strategy (2016)				
U.S. commitment to Addis Tax Initiative and domestic resource mobilization				
Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009 (first Berman bill)				
Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009 (Kerry-Lugar bill)				
Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (Poe bill)				

Global Partnerships Act (Berman FAA rewrite bill)				
Food for Peace Reform Act (Corker-Coons bill)				
Congressional Appropriations				

12. Have you personally had contact with one or more people from the following target groups with the intent to inform their work on foreign assistance reform issues on behalf of MFAN? (Please check all that apply.)

- a. Democratic congressional leaders/staff
- b. Republican congressional leaders/staff
- c. USAID leaders/staff
- d. MCC leaders/staff
- e. PEPFAR leaders/staff
- f. State Department leaders/staff
- g. White House/ NSC leaders/staff
- h. Others from the administration

13. Have you personally reached out to one or more people in any of the following groups to build support for, or neutralize opposition to, foreign assistance reform on behalf of MFAN? (Please check all that apply.)

- a. Global health groups
- b. Food aid groups
- c. Education groups
- d. Humanitarian groups
- e. Democracy groups
- f. Private contractors
- g. Foreign policy community
- h. Private sector
- i. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## MFAN and Social Media

We are gathering the following information so that we can map how MFAN members use(d) social media to communicate publicly about MFAN priority outcomes. In our analysis, we will keep this identifying information and your other responses separate.

14. Do you use a personal Twitter account to promote foreign assistance reform?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, what is your Twitter username? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Does your organization use a Twitter account to promote foreign assistance reform?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, what is your organization's Twitter username? \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you so much for participating in the survey!

## B. DEPTH PHASE

### 1. PPD-6 interview protocol

#### Introduction

As the Hewlett Foundation's strategy is shifting and its funding for MFAN is ending, it has commissioned an evaluation with a learning focus aimed at assessing MFAN's effectiveness since its inception. During the first part of this evaluation, BLE Solutions looked broadly at MFAN's network health, activities, and achievements. Now, we are examining four important outcomes in depth to better understand how they came about and MFAN's contribution to them.

These outcomes are PPD-6, the attempt to rewrite the Foreign Assistance Act that resulted in the introduction of the Global Partnerships Act, FATAA, and USAID's work on Local Solutions. While we will do our best to not disclose our information sources, we are only interviewing a small number of people per outcome of interest.

Today we'll be talking about PPD-6, issued by President Obama in September 2010.

#### **First, let's talk briefly about how PPD-6 came about.**

1. From your perspective, please describe the main influences that led to PPD-6. I'd like to hear what you think influenced both the content of that directive, and the fact that the President issued it.
  - Probe: How important would you say MFAN was among those influences, actors, and other forces?
2. To what extent did the principles reflected in *New Day New Way* reflect the views of multiple MFAN members involved in its drafting?
  - Probe: And to what extent did Gayle Smith seem to carry any new/changed ideas (beyond her own) forward into the administration?
3. To what extent did other MFAN leaders who played roles in the transition and in the administration support or otherwise influence Gayle Smith behind the scenes, as PPD-6 was under consideration? Specifically – did these individuals “hold each other accountable,” as described by one stakeholder in an interview?
4. If and how did other pressure points (such as the Berman and Kerry/Lugar bills in Congress, the QDDR process, pressure from individual organizations) influence the content or issuance of PPD-6?
  - What roles – if any – did MFAN play in those? And in your view, did any of those interfere? [Want to learn if these other actions influenced executive action.]
5. To what extent did the existence of MFAN – as a network of influential organizations and individuals demanding reform – spur the White House to issue PPD-6, rather than incorporate development principles into a larger National Security Strategy?
  - Probe: Was there concern that the National Security Strategy issued in May 2010 would be the final word from the President on global development issues, sidestepping a formal PPD? To what extent do you believe PPD-6 might not have happened without an external push from MFAN?
6. In the months before PPD-6 was issued, what else should MFAN have done then to support or press the White House to issue the policy?

- Probe: How else could it have approached its work with allies in the White House? Should it have identified other champions, perhaps at State or within the White House? Did MFAN's structure seem to interfere with nimble action?

**Now let's talk about what results and changes flowed from PPD-6 – directly or indirectly**

1. In your view, what have been the most influential and enduring outcomes from PPD-6?
  - Probe: Which of those outcomes were most important to MFAN, and why? What strategies did MFAN use to advance or support those? How effective were these MFAN watchdog strategies – assessment criteria, publishing agency actions, the microsite, etc.?
2. After PPD-6 was issued, MFAN attempted to serve as a watchdog for implementation. How effective was MFAN in that role?
  - Probe: MFAN identified criteria to assess PPD-6's implementation, monitor progress through consultation with officials & allies in Congress, and then placed public pressure through media and academic outlets – to what extent was that effective?

## 2. GPA interview protocol

### Introduction

As the Hewlett Foundation's strategy is shifting and its funding for MFAN is coming to a close, it has commissioned an evaluation with a learning focus aimed at assessing MFAN's effectiveness since its inception. During the first part of this evaluation, BLE Solutions looked broadly at MFAN's network health, activities and achievements. Now, we are examining four important outcomes in depth to better understand how they came about and MFAN's contribution to them. These outcomes are PPD-6, the attempt to rewrite the Foreign Assistance Act that resulted in the introduction of the Global Partnerships Act, FATAA, and USAID's work on Local Solutions. During this interview, we will focus on recent efforts to rewrite the Foreign Assistance Act, which culminated for now in the introduction of the Global Partnerships Act. While we will do our best to not disclose our information sources, we are only interviewing a small number of people per outcome of interest.

1. Why was Rep. Berman open to rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act? What actors and factors influenced him to lead such an undertaking?

Probes:

- Why did Rep. Berman decide to go forward with rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act after H.R. 2139 didn't gain any traction? When did he pivot from H.R. 2139 to rewriting the FAA?
  - Why did Rep. Berman decide to advance rewriting the FAA without building stronger bipartisan support for it? What would have been the pros and cons of doing so? And of not doing so?
2. Who were the most influential actors – inside and outside of Congress – working to advance a new Foreign Assistance Act? What roles did they play?
    - a. What were they able to achieve?
    - b. What obstacles did they face, and how did they address them?

Probes:

- Who besides MFAN assisted with the initial Berman and Kerry-Lugar foreign assistance reform bills? What were their roles? How did their contributions compare to MFAN's?
- In the very beginning of the FAA rewrite drafting process, why did the primary drafter decide to meet with MFAN? At this point, did the drafter meet with anyone else? If so, why did the drafter select them?
- With which groups was the "Global Partnerships Act of 2010" Discussion Guide shared? Why were these groups selected? What role was envisioned for each to have in the development of the bill? And what roles did they actually play? How important were their roles, as compared to the roles of others?
- When Rep. Berman held a press conference about the Global Partnerships Act of 2012, which organizations beyond MFAN were involved? What were their roles?

- When Rep. Gerry Connolly reintroduced the Global Partnerships Act in 2013, did MFAN support him in any way? Please describe. Did anyone else support his effort? Please describe.
3. Were the benefits of creating the Global Partnerships Act as a statement bill worth the cost involved?
    - a. What were these benefits? For example, what other legislation and policy efforts have benefited from the GPA?
    - b. And what have been the costs?

Probes:

- How did MFAN use the process of developing the GPA to educate members of Congress about foreign assistance and the need for reform? What result did this have?
  - How did MFAN engage with the White House, State, and USAID on rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act?
  - To what degree did MFAN take full advantage of the relationships developed through the GPA development process? Please describe.
4. Did MFAN miss any opportunities to ensure reform language was included in more legislation in Congress, and to build relationships with new Republican members of Congress for whom aid reform's efficiency and effectiveness message would have resonated?

Thank you for your time!

### 3. FATAA interview protocol

#### Introduction

As the Hewlett Foundation's strategy is shifting and its funding for MFAN is coming to a close, it has commissioned an evaluation with a learning focus aimed at assessing MFAN's effectiveness since its inception. During the first part of this evaluation, BLE Solutions looked broadly at MFAN's network health, activities and achievements. Now, we are examining four important outcomes in depth to better understand how they came about and MFAN's contribution to them. These outcomes are PPD-6, the attempt to rewrite the Foreign Assistance Act that resulted in the introduction of the Global Partnerships Act, FATAA, and USAID's work on Local Solutions. During this interview, we will focus on FATAA. While we will do our best to not disclose our information sources, we are only interviewing a small number of people per outcome of interest.

1. It took six years for FATAA to be enacted into law. What were some key junctures in its development (from the inspiration to introduce it to its enactment), and what actors and factors were most influential in its advance?
2. How important would you say MFAN was among those influences? [Probing where they mentioned MFAN and where they did not.]
  - a. What did MFAN uniquely offer to the drafting and advancement of FATAA?
  - b. And what support did other entities provide?
  - c. Absent MFAN, would FATAA have advanced? Or what might have advanced in its place?
3. Some originally thought that FATAA would be enacted quickly, but this was not the case. What caused it to take six years to achieve passage?
  - a. Would it have been possible to move FATAA toward enactment more quickly? What would it have taken to accomplish this?
4. How did Rep. Poe's office and MFAN take advantage of the six years it took to enact FATAA, on the Hill, with the administration, and with the development community more broadly?
  - a. What benefits emerged?
  - b. Were there any drawbacks?
  - c. Any missed opportunities?
5. Was there an opportunity cost associated with working on FATAA for so long, or was the time invested worth the benefits – direct and indirect?

Thank you for your time!

## 4. USAID Local Solutions interview protocol

### MFAN Members

#### Interview 1

##### USAID Focus and Strategy

- Why did USAID choose to focus on IPR to advance its reform efforts?
- What did USAID hope to achieve?
- What were the key steps it took to achieve its goals?

##### MFAN and Oxfam

- Why did MFAN decide to focus on IPR reform?
- What was your/Oxfam's role in moving the MFAN coalition in the direction of supporting IPR?
- Was Oxfam prepared to go it alone on IPR without MFAN?
- Were there costs for Oxfam to partner with MFAN on IPR? What were they? What were the benefits? Did the benefits make the costs worth it?
- What were the major political challenges to reaching consensus on IPR with international NGOs? Who were the key players influencing consensus-building?

##### USAID change agents and their impact

- Who were the key allies inside USAID to advance IPR and Local Solutions, and what were their roles?
- Who were the key players involved from MFAN that took an active role in advancing IPR and Local Solutions, and what did they do? Who else was involved?
- What were the major challenges USAID encountered along the way, and how did it address them? How effective was MFAN's assistance? Did others provide assistance? If so, from whom, and what did they do to help?
- How did MFAN seek to influence congressional leaders on local ownership and procurement reform?
- What were the key legislative opportunities (e.g., appropriations bills?)
  - a. Who was engaged? What was their role? Hill Strategy Working Group?
  - b. Was there an effective bipartisan strategy?
  - c. How did MFAN's congressional work on this topic affect USAID, if at all?
- What progress did USAID make vis-a-vis IPR and Local Solutions?
- Who contributed to that progress and in what ways?
- What was MFAN's key contributions to progress?
- What were its limitations?

## Interview 2

1. How did IPR and Local Solutions become a central focus for advancing MFAN's agenda for USAID reform?
  - a. What factors led to a focus on this priority?
  - b. Who were key actors in developing MFAN's position? What was their role?
  - c. What were the major challenges in reaching a consensus on MFAN's position?
2. Was Oxfam prepared to go it alone without MFAN?
  - a. Probe: What alternatives did Oxfam consider?
  - b. Probe: What were the costs for Oxfam to partner with MFAN on IPR? What were the benefits?
  - c. Probe: Did the benefits make the costs worth it?
3. What was InterAction's position on IPR?
  - a. Did IA consider going it alone without MFAN?
  - b. What were the costs for IA to partner with MFAN on IPR?
  - c. What were the benefits?
  - d. Did the benefits outweigh the costs?
4. What were some key highlights in pulling together MFAN two-page policy brief on IPR?
  - a. Who took the lead in pulling the brief together?
  - b. How did the final draft accommodate MFAN member concerns?
  - c. How was the brief used, (e.g., with Congress, with USAID, with other external actors)?
  - d. What influence did it have?
5. Did MFAN focus too narrowly on one thread of USAID reform? Were there missed opportunities?
  - a. Were there cross-cutting influence points like the Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS), or better coordination and alignment among USAID, MCC, and PEPFAR that MFAN should have focused on for greater cross-cutting impact?
  - b. What factors limited the focus on IPR and Local Solutions?

## Congress

### Interview 3

1. How did MFAN seek to influence congressional leaders on local ownership and procurement reform?
  - a. What were the reform opportunities?
  - b. What relationships were established?
  - c. Were those relationships bipartisan?
  - d. Did MFAN take full advantage of the relationships it had to influence legislation?
  - e. Were the benefits worth the costs involved?
2. Were there missed opportunities?
  - a. What was USAID's role and how did that change over time?
3. What were the most significant legislative achievements on USAID reform and local ownership?
  - a. What was MFAN's contribution to those achievements?
  - b. What actors besides MFAN contributed to these achievements?
4. What was the purpose of establishing a Hill strategy working group?
  - a. Who participated?
  - b. Did the group work on IPR and local ownership?
  - c. What were the outcomes?
  - d. Why did the group disband?

## USAID Questions

### Interview 4

#### USAID Focus and Strategy

1. Why did USAID choose to focus on IPR/Local Solutions to advance its reform efforts?
2. What did USAID hope to achieve?
3. What key steps did USAID take to achieve its goals?
  - a. Why did USAID decide to change the framing from IPR to Local Solutions?
4. What challenges did USAID encounter with its strategy to advance IPR/Local Solutions?
  - a. With the private contractor community
  - b. Inside USAID
  - c. On the Hill
  - d. Other?

#### USAID – MFAN Alliance

5. Why did USAID choose to form a strategic alliance with MFAN?
  - a. What did MFAN offer USAID?
  - b. What were the benefits and challenges working with MFAN?
6. How did the alliance contribute to advancing reform on IPR/ Local Solutions?
  - a. When was MFAN's contribution particularly important?
    - i. Provide research from the field?
    - ii. To help gain traction with senior political officials within the Agency?
    - iii. To make a case for the position of Local Solutions Coordinator?
    - iv. Other?
7. Who were other keys allies of USAID's reform on IPR/Local Solutions? From the nonprofit and private sector? In the Administration? In Congress?
  - a. Did MFAN contribute to developing and/or strengthening any of these alliances?
  - b. Was MFAN effective at neutralizing opposition to reform?
8. Who were critical allies inside USAID in support of procurement reform and local country ownership? Where was the strongest opposition?

#### MFAN Influence and Contribution

9. What were MFAN's most significant contributions to advancing reform on IPR/Local Solutions?
  - a. Clear public policy statement supporting reform
  - b. Open letter to Rajiv Shah
  - c. Advocating for a Local Solutions Coordinator position
  - d. Metrics paper
  - e. Personal relationships and networks
  - f. Modeling the change
10. What influence did MFAN research and framing on country ownership (broadly) and advocacy for procurement reform (specifically) have on USAID?
  - a. Policy direction (e.g., USAID Forward, Local Systems Framework)
  - b. Procedural reforms (e.g., rewriting bidding guidelines, ADS 200/201)

- c. Metrics development
  - i. What progress has been made?
  - ii. Is that still an opportunity?

#### Going Forward

11. As you reflect on the USAID/MFAN alliance and what it accomplished by working together, do you see any missed opportunities? What would those be?
12. Where do you think MFAN's voice could be most helpful to USAID in the coming two years?





