

July 2017

# The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN)

Evaluation Report: 2008-2016

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

Submitted by:

Carlisle Levine, BLE Solutions, LLC

Claire Reinelt

Robin Kane



**BLE SOLUTIONS**



# 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

# Acronyms

---

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>FAA</b>   | Foreign Assistance Act                              |
| <b>FATAA</b> | Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act     |
| <b>GPA</b>   | Global Partnerships Act                             |
| <b>HFAC</b>  | House Foreign Affairs Committee                     |
| <b>IFARA</b> | Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act            |
| <b>MCC</b>   | Millennium Challenge Corporation                    |
| <b>MFAN</b>  | Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network              |
| <b>NGO</b>   | Nongovernmental organization                        |
| <b>NSC</b>   | National Security Council                           |
| <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>USAID</b> | U.S. Agency for International Development           |
| <b>USGLC</b> | U.S. Global Leadership Coalition                    |

## 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>1</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>1</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.

*“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

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>2</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>3</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>4</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>5</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

<sup>2</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>3</sup> This analysis does not examine the degree to which these groups were influential in this endeavor.

<sup>4</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>5</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>6</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>6</sup> MFAN, Summary of H.R. 2139, unpublished.

*“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

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>7</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

<sup>7</sup> MFAN, Summary of S. 1524, unpublished.



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.

*"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

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>8</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>8</sup> Freedman Consulting, LLC, August 19, 2011, “Landscape Analysis: Project for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation: Landscape and Findings,” Freedman Consulting, LLC, unpublished.

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.

*"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

*“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

### *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,

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.









