



THREE – YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (2025 – 2028)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Learning, Environment, Agriculture and Forestry (LEAF) Organization is a South Sudanese youth-led non-governmental organization for environmental protection, sustainable agriculture, and climate resilience. LEAF was founded in response to the increasing impacts of climate change through community education, forest restoration activities, and inclusive climate action. Headquartered in Juba, LEAF aims to expand its scope of operations to all ten states plus three administrative areas in South Sudan. Its goal is to build greener, more resilient communities, guided by the motto: "For Greener Lives."

This Strategic Plan (SP) 2025-2028 therefore, provides a roadmap that will lead institutional growth, program expansion, and partnership development to provide an alignment of LEAF's mission with both national and global climate goals. South Sudan continues to be faced with catastrophic climate change and environmental challenges, which arise from recurring droughts, floods, heatwaves, land degradation, and deforestation—all of which severely threaten food security and livelihoods. However, with increasing youth engagement, governmental policies, and partnerships with development actors, there are great possibilities and opportunities for positive change across South Sudan. Empowering local communities, especially youth and women, is how LEAF would maximize all these opportunities to involve them in environmental protection and sustainable development.

The people should have told the mission of LEAF in this way: creating communities that are resilient to climate change impacts through education, climate-smart agriculture, environmental stewardship, and forest conservation. In short, empowering youth, women, and local communities through education, climate-smart agriculture, environmental stewardship, and forests restoration for greener lives is our mission. Inclusion, integrity, resilience, collaboration, sustainability, and innovation are core guiding values under which all decision-making actions and are performed.

Our five strategic priorities comprise the plan that focuses on: promoting environmental education and climate change awareness; conserving ecosystems through sustainable practices; improving food security through climate-smart agriculture; restoring degraded forests; and strengthening community-based climate action and renewable energy initiatives. Implementation will be by mutual community-based participatory approach emphasizing local ownership, gender inclusion, and sustainability with private-public partnership with line ministries, NGOs, private sector actors, and local communities enhancing coordination and consequent impact.

By 2028, LEAF aims to reach 20,000 individuals with environmental education and climate change awareness and action, plant 15,000 trees, train 3,000 farmers on climate-smart agriculture, establish 5 community forests, and create 30 school climate clubs. The plan emphasizes community-based approaches, gender inclusion, and partnerships with government, NGOs, and private sectors, including potential ventures into sustainable detergent production to support livelihoods. LEAF's commitment to transparency, accountability, and sustainability will drive its mission to foster greener, resilient communities in South Sudan.

1. Background and Context

Environmental and climatic challenges facing South Sudan are increasing, thus posing threats to both people and ecosystems. Climate change-induced extreme weather conditions such as prolonged drought, recurrent floods, and extreme heat are interfering with livelihoods and food systems.

Following the massive civil strife that accompanied the birth of South Sudan 2011, a major drought set the stage for famine in the then northwestern Unity State in 2017. From 2019 to 2023, flooding brought distress to thousands, destroying farmland and infrastructure. In 2024, around 1.4 million people were affected by flooding that displaced more than 400,000 as reported by the UN. A more recent heat wave that went beyond 42° Celsius closed down schools, emphasizing the urgency for intervention into climate adaptation and resilience.

Land degradation, deforestation, and low environmental awareness add to the above-mentioned challenges, resulting in reduced agricultural productivity, increasing poverty and vulnerability, for instance about 7.7 million people are in acute poverty in the country. Nevertheless, there are still opportunities for:

- Increased participation and innovations by youth in environmental activism.
- An increasing number of government policies supporting climate resilience.
- Several NGOs, UN agencies, and private sectors creating more opportunities for partnerships.

It is against this backdrop that LEAF was formed to mobilize young people in the protection of the environment and sustain livelihoods for the present and future generations.

2. Vision, Mission, and Core Values

Vision:

Creating climate-resilient communities through education, climate-smart agriculture, environmental protection, and forest conservation.

Mission:

Empower youth, women, and communities through education, sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship, and forest restoration for greener lives.

Motto:

"For Greener Lives"

CORE VALUES:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Gender equity and inclusion | 2 Resilience |
| 3 Empowering youth and women | 4 Collaboration & Partnership |
| 5 Integrity and Accountability | 6 Sustainability and innovation |

3. Strategic Objectives (2025–2028)

1. Ensure quality education through expanded access to environmental and vocational training especially among unserved areas.
2. Enhance sustainable farming and food security through climate-smart agricultural practices and smallholder farmer support.
3. Preserve and restore forests through community-directed tree planting, agroforestry, and restoration programs.
4. Advocate for environmental protection through advocacy, awareness raising, and inclusive selection policies.
5. Foster inclusive climate action by mobilizing the youth, women, and local communities to engage in mitigation and adaptation activities.

4. Theory of change

LEAF's Theory of Change outlines a transformative pathway to empower South Sudanese communities, particularly youth and women, to address climate change, environmental degradation, and food insecurity. By leveraging education, sustainable practices, and community engagement, LEAF aims to foster resilient ecosystems and livelihoods in a nation grappling with recurrent floods, droughts, and deforestation. The theory posits that strategic interventions will catalyze informed decision-making, resilient food systems, and adaptive capacities, ultimately advancing South Sudan toward a greener, climate-resilient future.

If LEAF:

- **Delivers comprehensive environmental education and sustainability training** to 20,000 individuals, including 10,000 youth, through school-based climate clubs and community workshops, equipping them with knowledge to protect natural resources;
- **Promotes climate-smart agriculture** by training 3,000 smallholder farmers in drought-resistant crops, organic farming, and water-efficient irrigation, while introducing sustainable livelihood initiatives like eco-friendly detergent production to diversify income;

- **Advocates for environmental protection and equitable land use** through nationwide campaigns and policy dialogues with government and local leaders, promoting sustainable land management and waste reduction;
- **Restores and conserves forests** by planting and sustaining 15,000 trees and establishing five community-managed forests to enhance biodiversity, sequester carbon, and combat 30% land degradation in South Sudan; and
- **Engages communities in grassroots climate action** by establishing 30 school climate clubs, promoting renewable energy (e.g., solar solutions in communities), and fostering inclusive participation of women and marginalized groups,

Then:

- **Communities will make informed, sustainable decisions** about their environment, adopting practices that preserve ecosystems and reduce degradation;
- **Food systems will withstand climate shocks and variability**, ensuring food security for approximately 15,000 people through increased agricultural productivity and diversified income sources, such as eco-friendly detergent production; and
- **Communities will build robust capacity** to adapt to and mitigate climate impacts, empowered by skills, resources, and collective action to address floods, droughts, and heatwaves.

Ultimately: South Sudan will embark on a transformative journey toward a greener, climate-resilient future, where communities thrive in harmonious coexistence with nature, supported by sustainable livelihoods, restored ecosystems, and empowered youth and women, contributing to a legacy of environmental stewardship and socio-economic resilience.

5. Strategic Pillars and Goals

Pillar 1: Education and Environmental Awareness

Goal: Develop knowledge and empower communities for sustainable development.

Objectives:

- Bring environmental education into schools and communities.
- Train youth ambassadors to become environmental champions.
- Campaign nationwide to raise awareness about climate change and sustainability.

Pillar 2: Environmental Conservation

Goal: Protect and restore ecosystems for biodiversity and resilience.

Objectives:

- Promote sustainable land use and waste management.
- Support community-led conservation and clean-up initiatives.
- Advocate for stronger environmental governance and policies.

Pillar 3: Agriculture, Food Security, and Livelihoods

Goal: Promote sustainable agriculture and strengthen food security.

Objectives:

- ❖ Train farmers on climate-smart agricultural practices.
- ❖ Facilitate access to agricultural inputs, markets, and financial literacy.
- ❖ Promote organic farming and sustainable water management.

Pillar 4: Forestry Restoration

Goal: Restore degraded forests and promote sustainable forest management.

Objectives:

- Establish community tree nurseries, planting over 15,000 trees by 2028.
- Implement agroforestry as an alternative livelihood model.
- Work in collaboration with government forestry departments and local authorities.

Pillar 5: Climate Action

Goal: Strengthening climate resilience and mitigation in a community-based manner.

Objectives:

- Advocate renewable energy solutions for rural areas.
- Establish climate action clubs in at least 30 schools.
- Mainstream climate adaptation across all LEAF programs.

6. Strengthening Institutions and Governance

LEAF would push for strong internal systems coupled with transparent governance. The organization will build staff capacity, ensure gender balance, foster participatory decision-making, and develop accountability and innovative culture. Some Key focus areas include:

- Defining and delineating governance and reporting structures
- Improving communication and coordination mechanisms
- Investment in leadership and staff development

7. Implementation Approach

The work of LEAF will be founded on the community-based participatory approach with local ownership and sustainability integration on all implementation. More particularly, on specific implementation:

- Community involvement in project design and delivery
- Collaboration with government agencies and NGOs and private sector players
- Mainstreaming gender, youth, and disability into all programs

8. Resource Mobilization and Partnerships

In resource mobilization, LEAF intends to capture diverse funding sources to achieve its strategic goals. These sources will include, but not limited to ones listed below.

1. International and national donor support
2. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs
3. Partnerships with research institutions and private sector actors
4. Community contributions and local resource mobilization

Strong partnerships will be cultivated with key stakeholders, including UN agencies, government departments, and civil society organizations to enhance impact and sustainability.

9. Risk Management

In ensuring the successful execution of LEAF's strategic plan, effective mitigation of risks (both internal and external) is a decisive factor. The complex operational environment of South Sudan characterized by political instability, climate extremes, and limited resources puts LEAF in a position to see the need for anticipating challenges that could arise in program implementation and create means of addressing them. This section outlines the major risks that can interfere with the delivery of programs and the strategies that the organization intends to put in place to mitigate their effects and ensure operations continue.

| S/NO. | RISK | POTENTIAL IMPACT | MITIGATION STRATEGY |
|-------|-----------------------|--|---|
| 1. | Funding shortfalls | Project delays or limited reach | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Diversify funding sources○ strengthen fundraising and partnerships |
| 2. | Political instability | Disruption of operations, sometimes death of humanitarian workers by rebels | Decentralize operations – work through local networks |
| 3. | Natural disasters | Damage to project areas | Integrate disaster risk reduction measures |
| 4. | Low public awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low participation• Limited climate action | Strengthen outreach and communication campaigns |
| 5. | Capacity gaps | Reduced program effectiveness | Continuous staff and volunteer training |

10. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

MEL would be robust with the introduction of the systematic MEL framework to track progress while ensuring accountability. Key components are:

- Indicators development for measuring achievement in line with the strategic objectives
- Frequent monitoring and field assessments
- Annual performance review and learning workshops
- Continuously documenting best practices for scaling and replication

11. Expected Outcomes by 2028

By the end of that strategic period, LEAF is supposed to achieve:

- ❖ More than 20,000 individuals reached by environmental education and climate change awareness programs.
- ❖ At least 15,000 trees planted and maintained by the targeted areas.
- ❖ More than 3,000 farmers trained on climate-smart agriculture practices.
- ❖ At least 5 community forests established and sustainably managed.
- ❖ At least 30 youth-operated climate clubs in 30 schools.
- ❖ Completely functional institutional systems ensure transparency and accountability.

Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The successful execution of LEAF's Strategic Plan (2025–2028) and the realization of its specified outcomes will significantly contribute to several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By addressing environmental, agricultural, and socio-economic challenges through education, climate-smart agriculture, forestry restoration, and community-based climate action, LEAF's initiatives align with global priorities for sustainable development. Specifically, our work will support the following SDGs and targets:

- **SDG 2: Zero Hunger (Target 2.4)** By training over 3,000 farmers in climate-smart agriculture, LEAF will promote sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity, strengthen adaptation to climate change, and enhance food security in South Sudan.
- **SDG 4: Quality Education (Target 4.7)** By reaching over 20,000 individuals through environmental education and climate change awareness programs and establishing 30 youth-operated climate clubs in schools, LEAF will build knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development, environmental stewardship, and sustainable lifestyles.
- **SDG 5: Gender Equality (Target 5.5)** LEAF ensures equal opportunities for women and girls in participation and leadership across environmental education, community forestry, and climate action initiatives, fostering their full and effective involvement in decision-making processes.
- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth (Target 8.3)** Through initiatives like the pilot program for eco-friendly detergent production, LEAF will train 1,000 individuals (particularly youth and women) in sustainable income-generating activities by 2028. This promotes job creation, entrepreneurship, and innovation, contributing to sustainable economic growth and decent work opportunities in underserved communities.

- **SDG 13: Climate Action (Targets 13.1, 13.3)** LEAF's efforts to raise climate change awareness and build community capacity through tree planting, community forest management, and renewable energy initiatives (e.g., solar solutions) will strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards while improving education and awareness on climate mitigation and adaptation.
- **SDG 15: Life on Land (Targets 15.1, 15.2)** By planting and sustaining at least 15,000 trees and establishing five community forests under sustainable management, LEAF will contribute to ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable forest management, combating land degradation and deforestation.
- **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals (Target 17.17)** LEAF will foster effective public, private, and civil society partnerships by collaborating with government ministries, NGOs, UN agencies (e.g., FAO, UNEP), and private sector actors (e.g., local manufacturers for sustainable detergent production). These partnerships will enhance resource mobilization, knowledge sharing, and the scalability of LEAF's programs, ensuring sustainable impact.

Conclusion

The Strategic Plan 2025-2028 maps out LEAF's ambitious purpose to become a recognized national organisation for environmental protection, sustainable agriculture, and climate resilience in South Sudan. The plan shall be used as a guiding document for three years to ensure that the implementation of programs, initiatives, partnerships, and advocacy pursued by LEAF contributes in a meaningful way to a greener, healthier, and sustainable future.

Appendices

Annex 1: Our Impact



More than 20 volunteers trained on climate change awareness



20 seedlings planted

Annex 2: Legal document

