



seed **madagascar**
sustainable environment, education & development

SEED Organisational Strategy

2023-2033



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Our Vision

A thriving, healthy, and sustainable Madagascar

Mission

Working together to build community and environmental resilience in southeast Madagascar



Our Values



GROUNDING

We listen to, and are led by, the communities we work with



PASSIONATE

We are devoted to our work - what we do and how we do it



RESPECTFUL

We respect the views, knowledge and culture of those with whom we work, refraining from imposing our ideas and seeking equal relationships



COLLABORATIVE

We work with others who share our values and bring their skills and knowledge in order to increase our impact and learning



RESPONSIVE

We respond in a dynamic and holistic way to complex and changing needs



COMMITTED

We work at the pace of individuals and communities in long term engagement to achieve sustainable impacts



HONEST

We are courageous when assessing our work, seeking to learn and contribute to local and international best practice



INDEPENDENT

We maintain autonomy to act in accordance with our mission and values



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Introduction



Introduction

In Madagascar over 80% of flora and fauna are estimated to be endemic. The island nation has one of the highest poverty rates globally, with 81% of the country's estimated 29 million people living on less than US\$ 2.15 per day.ⁱ

Intrinsically linked, the natural environment underpins the livelihoods, food security, and health of the Malagasy people. In one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change,ⁱⁱ five million people are currently affected by recurring natural disasters, putting an additional 2.3 million Malagasy people at risk of poverty.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Covid-19 pandemic placed additional pressure on an already vulnerable economy, causing it to contract by 7.8 per cent, reversing nearly a decade of income per capita gains. Whilst conditions are expected to stabilise, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic will adversely affect poverty rates and extend needs across Madagascar for years to come.^{iv}

The impact of these natural disasters and economic decline has been amplified in Madagascar's southern regions where, between 2018 and 2022, the most severe drought in four decades left over one million people critically food insecure and in need of humanitarian support.^v

In these regions, 90% live below the poverty line.^{vi} In the isolated southeast region of Anosy, where most of SEED's programmes are located, poor health, sanitation, and education infrastructure, combined with a chronic lack of water, limited livelihood opportunities, and harsh climatic events, renders the region particularly vulnerable. With over 20 years of experience and learning, and strong community links in southeast Madagascar, SEED is uniquely positioned to address the challenges facing the region. We understand the needs of com-

munities and have successfully delivered health, WASH, education, rural livelihoods and conservation interventions to alleviate poverty and build long-term resilience. This leads to lasting change for some of the world's most vulnerable people in threatened and irreplaceable environments. Our work has been shaped by and contributed to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



With over 20 years of experience and learning, and strong community links in southeast Madagascar, SEED is uniquely positioned to address the challenges facing the region.

This strategy provides the direction for SEED's work for the next decade. It maps out how we will build community capacity, mitigate the impacts of climate change, improve human development outcomes, and conserve the fragile ecosystems and biodiversity, with the ultimate goal to increase resilience to future shocks in southeast Madagascar. We strive to share our learning nationally and internationally, and engage in advocacy across the country. Our work will be located within national priorities and the global development agenda of the SDGs.



80%

OF FLORA
AND FAUNA
ENDEMIC ⁱ



of
173
191

ON THE HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT
INDEX ^{vii}

In the Deep South



90%

LIVE BELOW THE
POVERTY LINE ^{vi}



2

Vulnerability, Risk & Resilience



An Overview

Vulnerability is linked to restricted social development and ecological exploitation and decline. The severity of the effects of disasters on individuals and communities are shaped by social, political and economic factors that drive vulnerability.^{viii}

Poor communities living in marginal areas, reliant on subsistence agriculture or natural resources for their livelihoods, and with limited access to social safety nets, are more at risk to shocks and longer term challenges that have negative impacts on their lives. Amongst the poor, some of the most vulnerable are women, children, the landless, men competing for limited and seasonal work, the disabled and older people.^{ix}

The aggressive and disproportionate impact of climate change leading to severe droughts, with accompanying famine, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic have exacerbated the underlying poverty and exposed the increasing vulnerability of the people of southeast Madagascar. It is expected that the number of people living in poverty in Madagascar will rise, as a result of this increased vulnerability. The goal of eliminating extreme poverty cannot be achieved without addressing the effects of disasters and climate change.^x

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To foster resilient communities, SEED will support individuals, governments, and organisations to share skills and come together to build the capacity of communities and ecological systems

Resilience is recognised as central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).^{xi} Resilient communities are communities that can resist, respond, and recover from political, environmental, social, and economic shocks and disasters. They actively develop and strengthen community capacity to manage and adapt to risk.^{xii} Increasingly the risks faced by communities and the environment, on which they depend, are considered inter-related.^{xiii}

To foster resilient communities, SEED will support individuals, governments, and organisations to share skills and come together to build the capacity of communities and ecological systems to mitigate risk, recover quickly after shocks, and deliver long-term solutions.^{xiv}



Major factors driving vulnerability in Madagascar

Climate Change

Madagascar is vulnerable to cyclones and natural disasters as a result of high exposure associated with its geographic position, and its low adaptive capacity, driven by high rates of poverty and unsustainable land and natural resource usage.^{xv} The Global Climate Change Risk Index for 2021 shows Madagascar as one of the 20 countries most affected by climate change for the period 2000-2019. This ranking is likely to worsen. In 2021, an extreme food shortage and famine in southern Madagascar following several years of severe drought^{xvi} between 2018 and 2021 placed approximately 1.42 million people in the region at risk of extreme hunger in 2021 left 1.14 million people food insecure with 14,000 people in catastrophic conditions, known as IPC Phase 5.^{xvii}

A rapidly increasing population

Between 1970 and 2020, Madagascar's population increased from 6.6 million to 27.6 million and is currently growing at a rate of 2.68% per year.^{xviii} This is driven by poor information and access to family planning services, along with under-resourced health systems and frequent stock outs of supplies. Madagascar's rapid population growth is putting the country under immense stress. The economy has stalled, provision of health care and education is impacted, and food security is endangered – all at least in part due to this growth.^{xix}

Structural constraints

Growth in Madagascar remains structurally constrained by inadequate infrastructure including schools and health centres. There is a high presence of informal work and subsistence agriculture, as well as governance and institutional weaknesses.

Geographical isolation, with large areas inaccessible and without state presence, is also an important constraint.^{xx}

Structural inequalities

In Madagascar gender, ethnic discrimination, exploitation and corruption, and domestic violence restrict access to public services that could help people overcome poverty.^{xxi} Traditional, cultural, social and economic constraints still prevent women from having overall equal opportunities. Girls are less likely to progress to secondary and tertiary education, and in rural areas women's labour opportunities are limited and market earnings are lower than those of men.^{xxii}

Governance

Madagascar's history of political instability has hindered good governance and socio-economic development.^{xxiii} The current government's Plan Emergence Madagascar (2019-2023, PEM) emphasises governance as a cross-cutting priority yet in 2021 it was ranked 147/180 countries on the Corruption Perception Index,^{xxiv} and in the same year fell from 57/180 to 98/180 in press freedom indices.^{xxv} Recent governance improvement efforts and gains in the fight against poverty have been hampered by the slowdown in economic activity due to Covid-19.^{xxvi}

Through a community-first, multi-disciplinary approach, SEED's five programmatic areas aim to reduce vulnerability and build resilience. SEED will continue to monitor the above and will focus on those that are priorities in our area of operation and within our capacity to influence.

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Consequences

Food insecurity, hunger, malnutrition & stunting

The food security situation in southern Madagascar has continued to deteriorate over recent years due to several factors including poor weather conditions, drought, dwindling harvests, stocks, and food price inflation. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) continues to declare a significant percentage of the regional population to be in need of urgent food assistance, without any current prospects for meaningful recovery of the situation.^{xxvii} Food insecurity can have disproportionate and lifelong impacts on children as they grow and develop, and result in stunting, increase risk of ill health and disease, and increased risk of death from simple infections.^{xxviii}

Income insecurity, lack of jobs or means of livelihoods, lack of reserves

In Madagascar, ever-reducing productive land, an increasing population, and the overexploitation of natural resources is combined with limited opportunities for earning income.^{xxix} The poorest peo-

ple in Madagascar have few reserves and the government has only a nascent social protection system. Without any reserves or safety nets people are at risk of sinking deeper into poverty from which they can't escape.^{xxx}

Poor health & health care systems

Poverty and poor health go hand in hand. Over 60% of people live more than 5kms from a health centre, often in very remote and difficult to reach areas without roads or communications. Many centres are without a doctor and are not permanently staffed. Drug and medical supplies are prone to stock outs and are unavailable in some areas.^{xxxi} The resulting effects of poor health include absence from school, work or farming with subsequent impact on learning, earning and securing a livelihood. Administration of the public health system is weak and is undermined by high rates of illiteracy, gender inequity and economic disparity. For many women, pregnancy and childbirth can be a death sentence when access to quality maternal healthcare is poor.^{xxxii}



Little or no access to clean water, sanitation & hygiene

Madagascar has the third worst WASH conditions globally.^{xxxiii} Just one third of people have access to clean drinking water;^{xxxiv} only 12.31% of the population has access to at least basic sanitation services;^{xxxv} and 81% of schools have no water services.^{xxxvi} Diseases are common and diarrhoea, the country's second leading cause of under-5 mortality,^{xxxvii} contributes the loss of 3.5 million school days.^{xxxviii} In Madagascar's southeast Anosy region, 97% of the population lacks access to basic sanitation^{xxxix}, and more than 6,500 children under five die each year from diarrhoea caused by dirty water and poor toilets.^{xl}

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With 24% of children not enrolled in primary school, and falling investment in school infrastructure, Madagascar's education system is facing a crisis.

Lack of education & poor quality education

With 24% of children not enrolled in primary school,^{xli} and falling investment in school infrastructure, Madagascar's education system is facing a crisis. Illnesses stemming from poor WASH facilities in schools further prevent school attendance and impact negatively on learning outcomes. Primary schools are staffed in large part by volunteer community teachers who face many constraints in undertaking their role. These challenges are amplified in Anosy. In this isolated and impoverished region, half of 6-10 year-olds have never attended school and schools are severely under resourced compromising children's right to high-quality education.^{xlii}



Declining natural resources due to overexploitation & environmental degradation

In southeast Madagascar subsistence communities rely on harvesting natural resources such as timber and other forest products and marine products as part of their survival mechanism. Environmental degradation through natural disasters,^{xliii} over-exploitation for subsistence and commercial mining within the ilmenite mining zone is reducing future natural resource availability and is a threat to Madagascar's biodiversity. Within the period of this strategy, the expansion of the mining zone will bring new risks.

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Declining natural resources due to overexploitation and environmental degradation

Poor public works & infrastructure

Madagascar's poor infrastructure including roads, bridges and communications hardware isolates rural communities and negatively affects its economy. Of the more than 30,000 miles of roads in the country, only about 11% are paved, many of which are impassable during the rainy season.^{xliv} A lack of schools, and limited water and sanitation infrastructure and health facilities means people travel long distances to access basic services. This severely impacts children's access to education and has knock on effects on health and productivity. These challenges are familiar to SEED and addressing them has been the focus of our work. Our successes are evident in the impact of our programmes and the recognition of communities. However the challenges for the people of southeast Madagascar are becoming more severe as the impact of climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic have exacerbated poverty and vulnerability. Community and environmental needs are growing. This requires us to step up our efforts, consider new approaches and deliver different solutions.





3

A Response, Recovery and Resilience Framework



The Framework

As a result of the compounding socioeconomic, political, and environmental challenges outlined above, the critical human and environmental development needs of underserved communities, and fragile environments they rely on, are growing.

In recent years, the impact of cyclones, drought and famine in southeast Madagascar have impeded our ability to conduct our core work. Safeguarding the communities with which we work and responding to these needs is critical to ensure the effectiveness of our long term resilience building work.

This has informed the Response, Recovery, and Resilience framework, within which our strategy is centred.

1 RESPONSE

Our **RESPONSE** initiatives will address immediate emergency needs of communities in the face of natural disasters, climate change impacts, pandemics and localised crises.

2 RECOVERY

Our **RECOVERY** initiatives will support communities transition to more stable periods where the priority returns to increasing access to water, health services, education, food and livelihood opportunities.

3 RESILIENCE

Our **RESILIENCE** initiatives will ensure communities can withstand future shocks and sustain improved social and environmental outcomes. The focus is on strengthening water, health, and education services, increasing access to services, and improving food and livelihood security.



Strategic Aims and Objectives within this new framework

Our Strategic Aim

To build community and environmental resilience through community-driven social development and conservation initiatives, ensuring improved outcomes are sustained and communities can withstand future shocks.

Response & Recovery Work

This work will be concentrated in our core programme areas to address the emerging needs of communities to ensure their security and survival, and the continuation of our core resilience building work.

We will however remain flexible to address critical emergency needs in other areas where support is urgently required and not likely to be provided by another organisation.

The time frames to prepare for such work are inevitably short and our engagement is dependent on our ability to quickly secure necessary financial and human resources.

Core Resilience Building Work

Strategic Objectives

Two key strategic objectives set out our intention to build community and environmental resilience. Whilst outlined separately, SEED recognises that the risks faced by communities and the environment and the efforts to build capacity for resilience are interrelated and our work will reflect this.

Strategic Objective 1

We will build community resilience through strengthening health, WASH, education, and livelihoods in southeast Madagascar.

Our programmes, which are underpinned by comprehensive strategies, will include:

- Sexual and reproductive health & rights
- Maternal and child health
- WASH
- Education
- Rural livelihoods

Strategic Objective 2

We will build ecological resilience through biodiversity conservation and community-led natural resource management.

Our conservation work will include:

- Conservation research
- Conservation actions
- Sustainable Natural Resource Management



Sexual and reproductive health & rights (SRHR)

Promoting SRHR knowledge, improved SRHR behaviours, and greater access to services

Population growth and the consequences of poor sexual and reproductive health and rights are significant drivers of poverty. Empowering women and young people to take control over their SRHR, and improving awareness and educating men on SRHR, will therefore be critical outputs of all SEED's work.

Malagasy women are rarely in control of their fertility due to a lack of access to information and services. Ensuring access to family planning services and promoting the sexual health of girls, women and young people are key to addressing the structural inequalities that exist and marginalise these groups.

These are the core priorities for our SRHR work and each programme will integrate this work into programme delivery, adopting a rights based approach to promote greater SRHR knowledge and access to services.

We will continue to advocate at a national level with the Ministry of Education to develop SRHR curricula, build and support a network of SRHR stakeholders across Madagascar, and work with health facility staff in rural areas to increase access to sexual health information and services. During this strategy we will improve our situational understanding and capacity to address the growing incidence of HIV.





Maternal & child health

Promoting maternal and child health knowledge, health seeking behaviours and greater access to improved services

Madagascar continues to experience high maternal and new born mortality and morbidity rates and high incidences of preventable childhood illnesses. SEED will work alongside government and communities to improve maternal, new born, child health and SRHR services and access through a mix of research, resource-provision, skill sharing and advocacy.

Although SEED prioritises women, children and youth, the programme will take a family centred approach and include education on nutrition, care during pregnancy, newborn care, SRHR and identification and treatment of common childhood illnesses. We will work with caregivers, their families and health workers to improve knowledge and service delivery, and encourage health-promoting behaviours.



WASH

Promoting safe water, improved sanitation and improved hygiene practices for rural and urban communities

Safe, reliable, and sustainable drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene are key to good health. All contribute to more sustainable livelihoods, food security and ultimately developing more resilient communities. Our WASH programme will work closely with our Schools and Community Health Programmes to build WASH infrastructure, support healthy WASH practices and work with stakeholders on making WASH services sustainable.

We will work with rural communities to provide infrastructure, develop good WASH practices through a behaviour change approach, and build capacity for communities to safely and sustainably manage their own WASH services. Provision of WASH services in rural schools and clinics (CSBs)

will continue to be a core component of our rural work.

Empowering women and girls through our WASH work will continue to be an important cross-cutting theme in the new strategy. We will work with students, teachers, mothers, health workers, patients, and other female stakeholders, to continue developing our approach to menstrual health management (MHM).

Urban sanitation is a critical component of the new strategy. We will explore ways to address appropriate latrine provision, sustainable solutions for Faecal Sludge Management, and a Community Led Total Sanitation approach to reduce open defecation in Fort Dauphin.





Education

Promoting improved school infrastructure, teacher motivation, healthy living practices and the value of education with students and communities

Our infrastructure programme aims to address the barriers school age children face when accessing safe, quality education. We are committed to facilitating parent, teacher, and community engagement in this effort.

There is a continued demand for the construction of school infrastructure to reduce the distances children walk to school, and to create a more conducive learning environment for those communities most in need. SEED's school selection criteria will be guided by community requests and the Ministry of Education in the prioritisation of construction projects. We will provide WASH facilities and promote safe WASH practices as part of a wider and more sustainable school construction process.

There is an urgent need to address teacher retention and absenteeism through the provision of reliable onsite teacher hous-

ing, providing an alternative to living in villages far from school and where housing may be substandard. In an environment where teachers go months without pay, therefore needing to seek alternative income sources, we will work with teachers to support their livelihoods.

Our programme will recognise the gaps in students' awareness and knowledge in key 'life skill' areas. We will train community workers and teachers to introduce an informal curriculum of healthy living topics in schools including nutrition and cooking, and SRHR.

We recognise the barriers which female students face in having equal access to education. Our programme commits to reducing these challenges through assessing female student needs and providing menstrual health management facilities.





Rural livelihoods

Improving livelihoods of rural households through improving income generation, enhancing market access, building financial resilience, and securing natural resources for future use

In recent years southern Madagascar has experienced a devastating drought and subsequent famine after successive years of poor rainfall. Food and income security for many households in southern Madagascar has deteriorated and requires major investment to change the direction of this decline.

The rural livelihoods programme will support rural households with tailored initiatives that improve their ability to generate income. Given SEED's experience of successful female-led entrepreneurial activities the programme will particularly explore initiatives that engage women, suit their strengths and circumstances, and give them opportunities to contribute to household income.

As part of enhancing household income we will work to ensure households have access to stable and profitable markets, build household capacity in financial management and provide access to financial services.

Given the reliance on natural resources, including forest products and the ocean, we will work with communities to ensure they maintain access to and sustainably manage the natural resources on which their livelihoods depend.

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The rural livelihoods programme will support rural households with tailored initiatives that improve their ability to generate income.





Conservation research

Producing internationally recognised research that informs SEED's conservation work

SEED's conservation research will bring together locally-held priorities and expertise with international conservation agendas to inform practical conservation action. We will maintain a high standard of research through building local, regional and organisational capacity, and implementing approaches that adhere to international best practice. We will collaborate with national and international partners, facilitating externally-led research and sharing of data.

SEED will disseminate research learnings to communities and to local, regional and

international stakeholders to build understanding of biodiversity in this internationally recognised hotspot. We will seek to produce a comprehensive, internationally recognised body of peer reviewed work to inform and guide conservation action.

When appropriate, SEED will take on an advocacy role, around a specific issue, or to amplify the voices of community members. During the strategy period we will develop a biodiversity conservation advocacy approach appropriate to our work.



Conservation actions

Implementing key actions to promote ecosystem health and respond to threats

We will employ an evidence-based approach, utilising locally-held and expert knowledge, learnings from the Conservation Programme, and wider peer reviewed literature, to ensure conservation actions are efficient and effective. All actions will promote community engagement, empowerment, and ownership. Conservation actions can be difficult to predict with new threats emerging all the time. Our actions

will therefore be responsive and seek to address key environmental pressures in order to ensure long-term sustainability. Based on our experience we anticipate the need for reforestation work, including corridor development, and ecological monitoring; and the possibility of invasive species and disease management.





Sustainable natural resource management

Promoting use of natural resources that fulfils communities needs whilst maintaining viable ecosystems

SEED's Conservation Programme works in areas where local communities depend heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods and are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of biodiversity loss and exclusionary conservation practices.

Through strengthening local governance we will empower communities to participate and lead effective conservation and long-term sustainable management.

We will provide information and engage community members in a way that empowers them to sustainably use natural resources, fulfilling their needs whilst maintaining viable ecosystems. This will include promoting community based management structures, setting up management measures such as no-take zones and community usage forests, and promoting behaviour change to reduce unsustainable practices, including the use of fuel efficient stoves.





Our Approach & Delivery



Key Approaches

To deliver change and sustained results our work will be guided by key approaches.

Integrated service provision

To effectively achieve our aims within the Response, Recovery and Resilience Framework SEED will seek to deliver an integrated programme approach in its operational areas. Providing linked service support gives households and communities the best opportunity to address their needs in a holistic and comprehensive way leading to sustained resilience building. The provision of integrated services will be resource dependent and the roll out driven by individual community priorities. The expansion of our work will be guided by opportunities for integrated service provision as well as evidence of strong community motivation.



Community-centred development

Our work is led by community priorities and motivations, and builds on community knowledge. We believe strengthening local governance is integral to communities being empowered to participate and lead in all aspects of their development. Through open discussion, ongoing communication, sharing responsibility for project implementation, and building capacity in communities to manage change we will remain community centred and flexible to changing local needs.



Partnership & networking

Through partnership we will expand the reach of our work and our impact, and utilise opportunities for sharing learning and advocacy. Partnering with local and national government bodies and networks will ensure our work is well informed, and keeps national level priorities paramount in our planning and decision making. Although civil society in Madagascar is underdeveloped we will seek out and partner with organisations working in the same geographical and technical areas to carry out joint work and improve programme planning and delivery.



Skill sharing & capacity building

To fulfil our individual and joint potential to drive locally appropriate development, we recognise the need to share skills and build capacity within our broad community. SEED will learn from communities and seek specific training from local government to enhance our capacity. In turn we will build the capacity of communities and our partners in a number of innovative ways including specific training, mentoring, exchange visits, and promoting learning opportunities. Through this reciprocal skill sharing and capacity building we will enhance the impact and long term sustainability of our joint work.



Evidence-based practice

Through monitoring and evaluation of our work we will learn lessons that shape and improve our practice. Our work is guided by a process of research, piloting ideas and scaling based on successes. Throughout the project cycle we will seek feedback from communities and provide them, and other stakeholders, with information based on our learning. We will learn from the research and work of others. We will strive to use best practices in our work to achieve maximum impact, and will seek to influence the practice of our partners and wider stakeholders.



Advocacy & communication

We recognise our responsibility to champion the collective voices of the communities we serve locally, nationally and internationally. We will raise awareness of the challenges faced by these communities and the potential that exists to bring change. Our views will be shaped by our programme aims, outputs and learning. We will disseminate our research and programme results to communities, government and partner organisations. We will also seek opportunities to broker understanding between key stakeholders. With 20 years of working with communities we are a legitimate voice and will actively document our views and share them in advocacy fora.



A Diverse Team

To maximise the success of our work, SEED combines local expertise with international development agendas through its team of national and international staff. We develop contextual and best practise understanding, using the complementary strengths of all to create a cohesive, diverse and insightful team, able to navigate successfully the unique challenges in southeast Madagascar.



Delivering Our Strategy

To take on the challenges outlined in this strategy, and successfully achieve our aim, we are committed to building greater organisational capacity in SEED. We will diversify our fund raising and increase our income streams, whilst maintaining robust financial management systems. We will invest in our staff to ensure people thrive and drive our success. And we will enhance our communication channels to effectively market and position ourselves for growth.

This strategy is underpinned by a Business Plan that outlines our priorities for organisational development and growth. Progress in the delivery of the strategy will be measured against an Impact Framework.



7

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