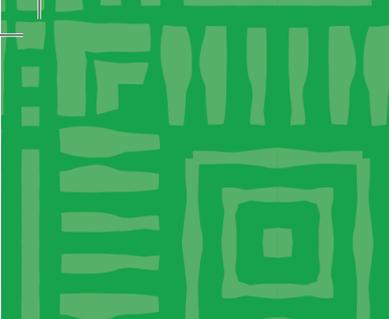# Strategic Plan for South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network

Strategic Plan for South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network

October 2024
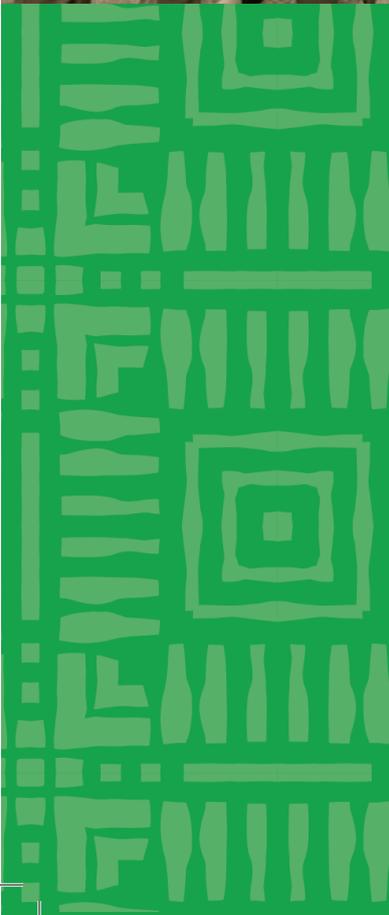
**South Sudan
Human Rights Defenders
Network (SSHRDN)**

Contents

Foreward

The South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network (SSHRDN) has stood resilient in the face of complex challenges, serving as an indispensable platform for promoting and defending human rights in South Sudan. This strategic plan represents not just a roadmap but a reflection of our shared bond to safeguarding the dignity, freedoms, and rights of all citizens, especially in the context of the country's ongoing political transitions and socio-economic challenges.

Human rights defenders (HRDs) operate under increasing pressure, traversing shrinking civic space, threats, and restrictions. These challenges reinforce the need for structured, coordinated, and sustainable efforts to protect defenders and strengthen the human rights movement in the Republic of South Sudan. This strategic plan seeks to address these realities by setting out clear goals, priorities, and actions that situates with SSHRDN's mission of ensuring a safe and enabling environment for HRDs to thrive.

The strategic priorities outlined in this document were shaped through a consultative process involving member organizations, partners, and stakeholders. The plan focuses on four key pillars:

1. Protection and Security – Strengthening the safety and well-being of HRDs through capacity building, legal aid, rapid response mechanisms, and secure networks.
2. Advocacy and Engagement – Amplifying the voices of HRDs by influencing policy, engaging with regional and international mechanisms, and promoting accountability in governance.
3. Institutional Growth and Sustainability – Enhancing SSHRDN's organizational capacities, governance structures, and resource mobilization to remain agile and effective.
4. Collaboration and Solidarity – Building alliances with local, regional, and international actors to foster shared efforts in advancing human rights.

This strategic plan is more than a guiding document—it is a call to action for our members, allies, and supporters. The struggle for human rights is collective, and success depends on sustained partnerships, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to our core values.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed to this plan and reaffirm our commitment to working with all stakeholders to realize the vision of a South Sudan where human rights are respected, protected, and promoted. As we implement this plan, we look forward to overcoming challenges and building on our successes to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future for all.

In solidarity,
James Bidal,
Head of Secretariat
South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network

1

INTRODUCTION

This strategic plan aims to provide a roadmap to the South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network (SSHRDN) for the next five years (2025-2029). The needs of human rights defenders are paramount. The capacities of the members have to be strengthened; human rights defenders and the SSHRDN have to improve strategies to boost their security, to enhance physical and digital security of the human rights community in South Sudan and to become more effective advocates and public educators on human rights. (John, 2021)

To date, human rights defenders have been working under very unpleasant circumstances with very little support in a very hostile human rights environment. In the creation of any strategic plan, it is important to understand the context in which an organization is situated. This strategic plan provides a general analysis of the nature and needs of its members. It defines the nature of the SSHRDN membership, its mission, strategic goals, and objectives.

1.1   Background of South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network

The South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network (SSHRDN) is a recognized non-profit and non-political civil society network registered under the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) with registration number 2284. Established in 2012 as a local chapter of the Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network (PAHRDN), in collaboration with DefendDefenders based in Uganda, SSHRDN has been instrumental in promoting and protecting human rights across South Sudan.

> Despite facing several challenges, including the complex process of mapping member organisations, SSHRDN has achieved significant milestones in advancing human rights in South Sudan.

Formally registered as an NGO on May 31, 2019, and launched on June 6, 2019, SSHRDN operates with a fully functional secretariat in Juba, South Sudan. It works closely with regional secretariats to coordinate initiatives aimed at safeguarding the rights of human rights defenders (HRDs). The network's membership spans over 80 organizations and individuals across all 10 states and the 3 administrative, with more organisations eager to join. Despite facing several challenges, including the complex process of mapping member organisations, SSHRDN has achieved significant milestones in advancing human rights in South Sudan.

As a local chapter, SSHRDN is dedicated to providing protection and creating operational space for human rights defenders in South Sudan. Through capacity-building efforts, it aims to strengthen the role of HRDs in promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. The network seeks to empower human rights-based civil society organisations to research, analyze, and pursue strategic interventions. Advocacy and campaigning remain core strategies for advancing the protection of HRDs and promoting human rights throughout South Sudan.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of the Strategic Plan

This strategic plan focuses on the work of South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network (SSHRDN), the first established human rights defenders' network in South Sudan which brings together both individual human rights defenders (HRDs) as well as human rights organizations (HROs). The organisational members are representatives from South Sudan's different states who address a wide range of thematic human rights issues. Supporting HRDs operating in a challenging human rights environment requires significant networking, advocacy, security, capacity building, and coordination. Many human rights defenders are known and targeted precisely because of their leadership and networks, sometimes an essential part of their safety and effectiveness.

This strategic plan aims to help SSHRDN and human rights defenders in South Sudan shift their focus from relying solely on cooperation with the UN, donors, or states, towards building diverse partnerships with non-state actors, including public bodies and the private sector.

Members of SSHRDN are exposed to a range of risks associated with their human rights work, often facing intimidation, threats, and violence because of their work. Sometimes the organisations are compromised or threatened and their work discredited; other times legal structures limit their work. These various human rights dangers therefore require equally diverse measures to be put in place to protect those working for HRDs. Long and short-term support needs to be combined as demand and risk may vary and change, which must also take into account the restricted space faced by some HRDs due to their activism. Providing both shaped amounts suitable to the various activities of the different human rights defenders across all theme areas, building on their needs and demands already expressed.

> This strategic plan aims to help SSHRDN and human rights defenders in South Sudan shift their focus from relying solely on cooperation with the UN, donors, or states, towards building diverse partnerships with non-state actors, including public bodies and the private sector.

As part of its work, SSHRDN has provided capacity-building activities for its members, solidarity missions for HRDs at risk and whistleblowers, and coverage for legal and medical costs. This strategic plan aims to provide a long-term plan to strategically and better manage financial and political costs, thereby minimizing and containing the human rights approach risks, keeping the costs of such support as low as possible.

1.3 Vision, Mission, and Values

1.3.1 Vision:

To have all human rights defenders in South Sudan recognized as essential actors in the struggle for the spread of human rights and enjoy freedom and security to undertake their legitimate activities.

1.3.2   Mission:

To protect, defend and support human rights defenders whose lives and health are at risk because of their peaceful and legitimate activities.

1.3.3   Values:

The South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network is dedicated to fostering a more robust enabling environment in South Sudan that strengthens its mission to protect and advance human rights. The Network will uphold its **neutrality** and **independence** from any specific human rights organization, while maintaining its **integrity** and moral uprightness in all interactions. Working within the framework of the Government of South Sudan, the Network will ensure **accountability** by providing oversight and holding the government responsible for upholding the human rights laws and standards to which it has committed, in alignment with South Sudan's treaty obligations. The Network is guided by its core values of **accountability**, **neutrality**, **independence**, **solidarity**, **inclusion**, **confidentiality**, **respect**, and **integrity**, ensuring that all actions and collaborations reflect these principles in the promotion of human rights for all.

1.4   Vision Statement

SSHRDN envisions a peaceful and just society in which all human rights defenders are well-informed, highly skilled, and equipped with the necessary tools and resources to remain fully dedicated to defending and protecting their peers. Additionally, they aim to educate communities about their fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as how to fully access them. The capacity building and support of HRDs are key to the resilience and success of nonviolent movements for democratic change and transitional justice, which is the core mission of SSHRDN and the focus of this strategic plan..

This vision is a reality in which HRDs are both effectively resourced and well connected at local, national, regional, and international levels such that they enjoy and have access to a supporting ecosystem that enables HRDs to work safely and comfortably, efficiently and in a safe and secure environment. Various like-minded actors and individuals, as well as institutions, will support HRDs in their just and highly desired endeavors. They will be socially included, recognized, and protected by their communities as non-violent activists who educate, advocate, and call out governments on their shortcomings. Indeed, this will be a society involved in the protection of human rights defenders as though protecting human rights defenders is protecting society, nation, and the international community at large.

1.5   Mission Statement

South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network seeks to provide a forum for cooperation, information sharing, awareness raising, and capacity building to enable them to more effectively fulfill their mandate in the specific area of human rights. But it is committed to promoting, protecting, and advocating for the promotion and respect of human rights in South Sudan. In pursuance of the objectives of the network, it is a politically non-partisan body. The network is established on the basis of full respect for principles of

legality. In accordance with the United Nations (UN) declaration and international human rights practice, states should promote and protect the rights of all individuals and groups, including those segments of the population that are particularly vulnerable to violence, threats, coercion, and harassment or that have been subject to previous violations.

The network will seek to protect and support - both at national and in the international arena - human rights defenders, other concerned persons making a rational and truthful contribution through peaceful means to the defense of human rights, to an end to violence or infringement of their freedom, integrity, dignity, or security. All human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated. The international community must treat all human rights in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, respect concerns for each, and support their ongoing advancement. As led by these premises, it will also be a core function of the network, within the constraints of people and financial resources available to it, to promote the broadest adherence to the network within South Sudan, building upon a spirit of partnership with reference CSOs/partners such as DefendDefenders and Nonviolent Peaceforce, providing knowledge necessary to understand the subject of human rights, and conducting training programs on human rights for professional people working under them. The broadest adherence to the network will permit the promotion of gender integration in the country.

1.6   Core Values

SSHRDN believes that its organizational and personal conduct should be guided by eight core values. SSHRDN will encourage its members to commit themselves to these values and offer moral and practical support to those who are challenged because of their adherence to these values. These core values espoused by SSHRDN are: accountability, neutrality, independence, solidarity, inclusion, confidentiality, respect, and integrity, Accountability in SSHRDN is understood to mean being responsible for one's own actions through clearly defined relationships between executor of responsibility and the beneficiaries of such responsibilities. It will further entail SSHRDN members living up to the commitments and the responsibilities that they have agreed and consented to perform.

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This value is important for maintaining assistance and protection delivery is done in reliable, consistent, accountable, transparent and participatory manner. SSHRDN members' capacity will be continually developed and strengthened so that they can discharge their responsibilities in a competent and effective manner. Responsibility for responses will be shared at all levels including the decision-making that affects them, they will be proactive in finding peaceful and just solutions to their own problems and they will be leaders in advocating for their protection and assistance rights and needs.

2

# GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network (SSHRDN) has positioned itself as a strategy-driven organization, with its structure, key positions, competencies, and delivery models closely aligned with its 2025-2029 strategic plan. At the helm of SSHRDN is the **General Assembly**, the highest decision-making body, which is supported by the **Board of Trustees** (BoT). The BoT provides **strategic oversight** and leadership to the **Senior Executive Team**.

The **Senior Executive Team** consists of the **Executive Director**, the **Program Manager**, the **Finance and Administration Manager**, and an **Internal Auditor.** These individuals are responsible for ensuring that SSHRDN stays on course with its mission and strategic goals, while also managing the overall operations of the organization.

Below the **Senior Executive Team**, there is the **Extended Management Team** (EMT), which includes other key managers such as the **Protection Manager, Capacity Building Manager**, and the **Research**, **Advocacy**, and **Communications Manager**. The EMT plays a crucial role in implementing the organization's programs and initiatives by translating strategy into actionable outcomes.

At the operational level, SSHRDN's structure is supported by the program and administrative staff, including officers responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation, Quality Assurance, and ICT. This implementing core works closely with the management teams to deliver on SSHRDN's goals and ensure the organization's values of **accountability**, **neutrality**, **independence**, **solidarity**, **inclusion**, **confidentiality**, **respect**, and **integrity**, are upheld in all activities.

This structure ensures that SSHRDN remains agile, responsive, and effective in promoting and protecting human rights across South Sudan.
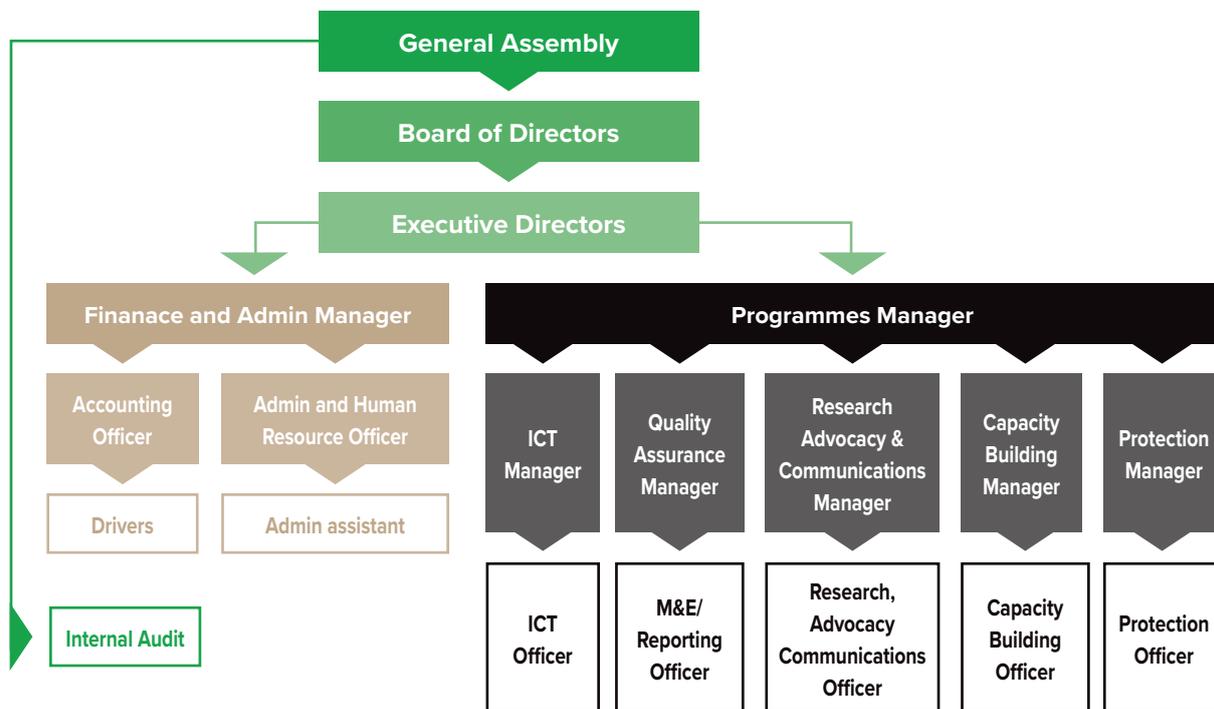
3 ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

The mission of the South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network (SSHRDN) is **to protect, defend and support human rights defenders whose lives and health are at risk because of their peaceful and legitimate activities**. Since 2019, the Network has been building partnerships between local and international organizations like DefendDefenders, AfricanDefenders, Nonviolent-Peaceforce, Front Line Defenders, Civil Rights Defenders among others to encourage their participation in promoting and advocating for human rights in South Sudan. The United Nations Principles on Human Rights for Defenders of Human Rights describe a consistent human rights worker, be they individuals or independent of any governmental, commercial, and non-commercial organization, whose objective is to promote and protect internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. (Van Wessel et al., 2021)

The Network is determined to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its 70+ members reportedly active in all South Sudan's then 10 states through developing mechanisms for improving information sharing and mutual support. At the time of fieldwork in September 2024, the South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network had 70 confirmed members. It has an elected Board composed of 9 persons and 7 Cluster Committees with 33 members developing plans and activities. Due to increasing media focus on the human rights situation, the potential of other human rights activities, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GoSS) has been forced to consider the relevance of these entities operating in its territory. The Network has already, in its short life, shown the potential to become an emergency support organization for human rights workers involved in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. However, human rights activities are constrained by a series of challenges, not unique to South Sudan, but certainly similar in many. (Thom, 2021)

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3.1 SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the Network)

Strengths:

- Clear focus on promoting and protecting human rights in South Sudan, with a coalition of over 70 member organizations.

- Partnerships with key international and regional bodies like Amnesty International, Frontline Defenders, and DefendDefenders.

- A youthful, qualified, and well-connected staff with diverse expertise in law, communication, community development, and management.

- Good working relationship with the South Sudan Human Rights Commission and a committed leadership team.

- Strong advocacy and research capabilities, with presence in all 10 states and 3 administrative areas.

Weaknesses:

- Insufficient diverse funding sources.

- Inadequate use of ICT tools in program development, limiting efficiency and innovation.

- Insufficient utilization of legal, medical, and psychosocial professionals within the network.

- Lack of visibility and profiling of the organization and its members.

Opportunities:

- The formation of the National Unity Government provides a platform for human rights advocacy.

- The international community's support for South Sudan's transition to democracy offers opportunities for SSHRDN's growth and influence.

- Forthcoming elections create opportunities for expanded partnerships, advocacy, and engagement.

- Technological advancements and increased regional contacts offer potential for improved operations and outreach.

- Potential to strengthen collaboration with DefendDefenders and other regional networks.

Threats:

- Shrinking civic space and hostile environment for human rights defenders, including threats, intimidation, and legal restrictions.

- Hostile legal frameworks, particularly the National Security Act of 2014, limit the freedom to operate openly.

- Potential electoral disputes and violence may disrupt operations.

- Excessive monitoring and profiling of human rights defenders

- Circle of electoral malpractices and violence

- Decreasing international development funding and increased surveillance of HRDs pose significant risks.

- HRDs face targeted harassment, physical attacks, and criminalization due to their work.

3.2 PESTEL Analysis of South Sudan

The PESTEL analysis of South Sudan examines the complex interplay of Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal factors shaping the country's development and governance. South Sudan, the world's youngest nation, has faced profound challenges since its independence in 2011, including ongoing civil conflict, political instability, and humanitarian crises. These factors render South Sudan notable in international discourse, highlighting its precarious socio-political environment and the urgent need for effective governance and international engagement[1][2].

> South Sudan, the world's youngest nation, has faced profound challenges since its independence in 2011, including ongoing civil conflict, political instability, and humanitarian crises.

Politically, South Sudan's landscape is dominated by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which has enacted restrictive measures limiting political pluralism and dissent. The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) has allowed for some legislative representation of non-SPLM parties, but these groups often lack resources and support[3]. Human rights violations and governance challenges further complicate the political climate, with both government and opposition forces accused of abuses during the civil war, leading to widespread displacement and suffering among the populace[1][2].

Economically, South Sudan's reliance on oil exports has created vulnerabilities exacerbated by endemic corruption and mismanagement of resources, contributing to extreme poverty and food insecurity. Economic indicators paint a bleak picture, with high inflation rates and significant portions of the population living below the poverty line, necessitating urgent economic reforms and infrastructure development[4][5].

The socio-economic landscape is compounded by deep-seated ethnic tensions, which influence employment opportunities and educational access, particularly for women and girls[1][2].

Technologically, the country remains underdeveloped, with minimal access to essential services exacerbated by ongoing conflict and infrastructural deficits. Environmental challenges, including the effects of climate change and poor resource management, pose significant threats to agriculture and stability. The absence of a comprehensive Environmental Management Authority further illustrates the government's neglect of sustainable development practices[6][7]. Understanding these multifaceted factors is crucial for stakeholders aiming to foster peace, stability, and development in South Sudan.

3.2.1   Political Factors

Political Landscape

The political landscape of South Sudan is heavily dominated by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which has created significant challenges for the emergence of a multiparty system. Although non-SPLM parties have some legislative representation due to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), they lack the necessary resources and experience to operate

effectively or to develop coherent party platforms. Legislative amendments to the Political Parties Act in May 2022 established stricter requirements for party formation, mandating that parties must have at least 500 members across two-thirds of the states and administrative areas[2].

Restrictions on Political Activity

Since gaining independence, the South Sudanese government has enacted several controversial bills that have restricted the political space for new parties, including the National Security Bill of March 2015, which limits freedoms of assembly and expression without prior consent from the Ministry of National Security[1]. This has created an environment where the SPLM maintains a near-monopoly on political power, contributing to a political climate that is often hostile to dissent and opposition.

Civil Rights and Governance

Despite the constitutional guarantees of civil rights and democratic principles, actual respect for these rights has been severely lacking, particularly following the onset of the civil war in 2013. Both the government and opposition forces have been accused of numerous human rights violations, including killings and ethnic targeting, leading to the displacement of approximately 3.81 million individuals[1]. The constitution's provisions have often been sidelined, with the executive branch wielding significant power over both the judiciary and the legislature. The president has the authority to dismiss elected officials and dissolve the National Legislative Assembly, further undermining democratic governance[1].

Socioeconomic Development and Corruption

The protracted conflict has severely hindered South Sudan's socioeconomic development. Corruption remains a pervasive issue, with senior officials often acting with a sense of entitlement and little accountability for their actions. Billions of dollars in oil revenues and aid were reportedly mismanaged or stolen, exacerbating the country's economic crisis[1]. The lack of transparency and ongoing patronage politics complicate efforts to establish effective governance and rebuild civil society, which has also been fractured by ethnic divisions and political tensions[1].

3.2.2 Economic Factors

South Sudan's economy is characterized as a low-income, oil-based Sahelian economy that faces extreme poverty and food insecurity. These issues are exac- erbated by ongoing violence, the COVID-19 pandemic, and environmental fragility, which collectively threaten the country's socioeconomic potential.[3][4].

Challenges and Opportunities

The South Sudanese economy faces numerous challenges, including the need for infrastructure development, the management of natural resource wealth, and the establishment of a conducive environment for private investment. The current structure is hampered by corruption and a lack of clarity in business operations, which discourages foreign investment[1][4][8]. To foster economic recovery, experts emphasize the importance of job creation, agricultural sector development, and vocational training for youth to bridge critical skills gaps[6][7].

3.2.3 Social Factors

Equal Opportunity and Employment

In South Sudan, the notion of "equal opportunity" is heavily influenced by historical factors, including high levels of patronage and clientelism, often linked to the north-south civil war. Employment opportunities tend to favor individuals with ties to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) or those who participated in the civil conflict. This has created a perception, particularly affecting communities in Equatoria region, which have historically faced unequal access to education and formal employment since the 1930s[1].

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Education and Literacy

The educational landscape in South Sudan is fraught with challenges, particularly for women and girls. As of 2018, the overall literacy rate was estimated at 34.5%, with women representing only 28.8% of that figure[1]. School enrollment rates reveal significant gender disparities, with fewer girls attending school compared to boys. Factors such as early marriage are cited as primary obstacles to girls' education, with only 28.9% of women over 15 being literate, compared to 40.3% of men[1]. Despite efforts by international NGOs to improve educational access, the quality of education remains low, with about 63% of teachers lacking formal training[1].

Empowerment Initiatives for Women

Efforts to promote gender equality and empower women in South Sudan are gaining traction. Organizations such as Amref Health Africa have initiated programs aimed at addressing the health, education, and leadership needs of women and girls through platforms like Health Facilities Management Committees (HFMC). These forums provide women with safe spaces to discuss critical issues such as gender-based violence (GBV), family planning, and entrepreneurship, ultimately fostering a sense of agency and community involvement[9].

3.2.4 Technological Factors

South Sudan's technological landscape is significantly underdeveloped, primarily due to ongoing conflicts and limited infrastructure. The country's telecommunications sector faces numerous challenges, which hinder access to essential services. With a reported internet penetration rate of only 7.98% in 2019, South Sudan has one of the least developed telecom systems globally, compounded by low mobile penetration rates in Africa[10][1]. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues, leading to declines in mobile device production and delayed upgrades to existing infrastructure[5].

Investment in energy infrastructure, particularly renewable sources, is critical for technological advancement and economic growth. The government acknowledges the positive impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on development and has introduced investment incentives to attract foreign and domestic investors-[10]. However, structural reforms are necessary to facilitate effective investment, as the relationships between foreign investors and the government are often fraught with challenges and risks[1].

he rural-urban divide further complicates the technological landscape, with urban areas enjoying relatively better access to services compared to remote regions. The lack of reliable infrastructure not only affects telecom services but also impacts healthcare, education, and sanitation efforts. Consequently, many international NGOs and aid organizations play a crucial role in providing basic services, although their reach is limited during adverse weather conditions[1].

3.2.5 Environmental Factors

South Sudan's environmental landscape is marked by a complex interplay of natural resource management, climate change, and socio-political challenges. The country's rich natural resources, including forests, oil, water, and minerals, present significant economic opportunities if sustainably managed. However, the exploitation of these resources has often been marred by conflicts and environmental degradation. Land disputes, exacerbated by frequent environmental disasters such as flooding and drought, have become catalysts for local conflicts, displacing populations and straining resources like safe land and water[1][11].

Despite the urgent need for environmental management, as of January 2023, the Environmental Management Authority (EMA) had yet to be established under the new government formed in February 2020. This absence of governance is critical, especially in the face of increasing natural disasters that highlight the low priority given to environmental protection on the national agenda. The limited funding for environmental programs has resulted in negligible progress towards implementing new regulations aimed at protecting South Sudan's fragile ecosystems, even as discussions regarding potential interventions, like the Jonglei canal scheme, have occurred[1][12].

Climate change poses a significant threat to South Sudan's agriculture, which relies heavily on rainfall for over 90% of food production. The unpredictability of climate and weather patterns necessitates the development of early warning systems to enhance food security and agricultural productivity[13]. The potential impacts of climate change, including reduced rainfall and higher temperatures, are projected to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, particularly in communities dependent on natural resources[12].

Addressing these challenges through integrated environmental peacebuilding mea- sures is essential. Recommendations have been made to incorporate environmental considerations into peace negotiations, recognizing that sustainable resource man- agement can play a pivotal role in fostering long-term stability in South Sudan[12][14].

4 STRATEGIC APPROACH

The SSHRDN, aware of these realities, recognizes that without a strong foundation for security, HRDs cannot carry out their work effectively. Therefore, **enhancing the security and safety of HRDs** is a priority, particularly in a nation where arbitrary arrests, intimidation, and extrajudicial killings are common responses to dissent.

4.1 Strengthening the Capacities of Human Rights Defenders

In such an adverse environment, the SSHRDN is committed to **building the capacity of its members** to better equip them for the challenges ahead. This involves not only **providing training and resources** for HRDs to become more effective advocates but also focusing on their **physical and psychological well-being**. The immense stress of working in a hostile environment requires both mental and emotional resilience, and the SSHRDN will support HRDs through comprehensive programs that address these needs.

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Furthermore, the strategic plan emphasizes the importance of **improving advocacy strategies**. To make meaningful progress, HRDs must be equipped with tools to engage in public education, leveraging international platforms to amplify their voices while maintaining safety in their home country. The underdeveloped technological infrastructure in South Sudan poses significant challenges to effective communication. The SSHRDN must innovate to overcome these constraints, employing both traditional and digital platforms where feasible to enhance their reach and influence.

4.2 Economic and Legal Challenges

The strategic plan acknowledges the **economic hardships** faced by South Sudan, particularly the country's reliance on oil exports, which makes the economy highly susceptible to global market fluctuations. The resultant economic instability worsens human rights conditions, leaving the population vulnerable to exploitation. In response, the SSHRDN must advocate for broader economic reforms that address **social inequalities** and promote **economic justice** as integral components of human rights advocacy.

Moreover, the **legal environment** in South Sudan offers little protection for HRDs. The SSHRDN will focus on **strengthening legal frameworks** and pushing for reforms that prioritize the protection of HRDs, ensure the independence of the judiciary, and promote accountability for human rights violations. A robust legal system is essential to combat impunity, and the SSHRDN will engage in **partnerships with international bodies** to amplify calls for legal reforms.

4.3 Environmental and Technological Challenges

South Sudan's environmental challenges, particularly **climate change and recurrent flooding**, exacerbate the country's humanitarian crisis. These environmental disasters displace communities, heighten resource scarcity, and increase the vulnerability of marginalized populations to violence and exploitation. The SSHRDN will integrate environmental advocacy into its strategic plan, emphasizing the connection between **environmental degradation and human rights**.

Technological barriers further impede the work of HRDs, limiting access to information and hindering communication efforts. The SSHRDN must explore **alternative technologies** and foster partnerships to improve connectivity, which is crucial for disseminating information and engaging with global human rights networks. Addressing these technological constraints will empower HRDs to utilize digital tools for advocacy, monitoring, and reporting on human rights violations.

4.4 Roadmap for Progress

The next five years are pivotal for the SSHRDN as it seeks to **enhance the protection, capacities, and resilience** of South Sudan's human rights defenders. By focusing on the **protection and well-being** of HRDs, strengthening **advocacy strategies**, addressing **economic and legal challenges**, and promoting **gender justice and environmental protection**, the SSHRDN aims to foster a more just, peaceful, and equitable South Sudan.

This strategic plan outlines a clear roadmap that is both **responsive to the current challenges** and **forward-looking** in its approach to building resilience within the human rights community. **International solidarity and support** will be essential to the success of this strategy, as the SSHRDN continues to play a crucial role in navigating South Sudan's complex human rights landscape.

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5

MAINSTREAM THEMES AND HRD CATEGORIES

5.1 Journalists and Media Workers

Journalists and media workers in South Sudan play a crucial role in gathering, reporting, and disseminating news and information to the public. Their work often involves covering sensitive issues such as human rights abuses, corruption, and conflict, which exposes them to significant risks. The National Security Service (NSS) and other state actors have imposed severe restrictions on the media, including censorship, arbitrary arrests, and even extrajudicial killings. A report by the United Nations Human Rights Council highlights that journalists in South Sudan face a pervasive and unlawful censorship regime that severely limits their ability to report independently. The NSS often targets journalists who publish stories critical of the government, subjecting them to intimidation, torture, and even attempted murder (UNHRC, 2023).

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The risks faced by journalists are compounded by the government's deep intolerance of public scrutiny and dissent. As documented by Human Rights Watch, the media landscape in South Sudan is tightly controlled, with journalists and media outlets routinely subjected to harassment and threats. These actions create a climate of fear that stifles freedom of expression, making it increasingly dangerous for journalists to carry out their work. The ongoing repression not only undermines the role of the media in society but also puts the lives of journalists and media workers in constant jeopardy (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

5.2 Civil Society Activists

Civil society activists in South Sudan are individuals and organizations advocating for political reforms, democracy, and accountability. Their work is vital in promoting human rights, but it often places them in direct conflict with the government. According to Amnesty International, civil society activists frequently face harassment, arbitrary detention, and violence as a result of their advocacy efforts. The South Sudanese government has been known to impose widespread restrictions on civil society activities, including surveillance and unlawful interference, making it extremely challenging for activists to operate safely (Amnesty International, 2022).

The dangers faced by civil society activists are further highlighted by the UN Human Rights Council, which reports that many activists have been subjected to violent reprisals for speaking out against human rights violations. This repression is part of a broader strategy to silence dissent and maintain the government's grip on power. As a result, civil society space in South Sudan has been severely curtailed, leaving activists vulnerable to attacks and making it increasingly difficult for them to carry out their work (UNHRC, 2023).

5.3 Legal Professionals

Legal professionals in South Sudan, including lawyers and legal advocates, play a critical role in defending human rights and providing legal representation to victims of state violence. However, their work often puts them at odds with the government, exposing them to significant risks. A report by the American Bar Association highlights that legal professionals who take on cases related to human rights violations are frequently subjected to intimidation, harassment, and even physical attacks. The lack of an independent judiciary further exacerbates these risks, as legal professionals have limited recourse to protect themselves from government retaliation (ABA, 2021).

The threats faced by legal professionals are part of a broader pattern of repression in South Sudan, where the government actively seeks to undermine the rule of law. The UN Human Rights Council notes that legal professionals are often targeted because of their efforts to hold the government accountable for human rights abuses. This targeting not only endangers the lives of legal professionals but also weakens the overall legal system, making it increasingly difficult for citizens to seek justice and for human rights to be upheld (UNHRC, 2023).

5.4 Women's Rights Activists

Women's rights activists in South Sudan advocate for gender equality, women's empowerment, and the fight against gender-based violence. Their work often challenges deep-seated cultural norms and addresses issues that are highly sensitive in South Sudanese society. This activism puts them at significant risk of harassment, violence, and social ostracism. According to Amnesty International, women's rights activists face numerous threats, including intimidation and physical violence, as a result of their efforts to promote gender equality and combat discrimination (Amnesty International, 2022).

> Their work often challenges deep-seated cultural norms and addresses issues that are highly sensitive in South Sudanese society. This activism puts them at significant risk of harassment, violence, and social ostracism.

The risks are further compounded by the government's failure to protect these activists, and in some cases, state actors are directly involved in perpetrating violence against them. A report by the United Nations Human Rights Council highlights that women's rights activists are often targeted for speaking out against gender-based violence and advocating for women's rights, making their work exceedingly dangerous. The lack of legal protections and societal support only exacerbates the risks they face, leaving them vulnerable to ongoing threats and attacks (UNHRC, 2023).

5.5 Environmental and Land Rights Defenders

Environmental and land rights defenders in South Sudan focus on issues such as land ownership, natural resource management, and environmental conservation. Their work often involves challenging powerful interests, including government officials and private companies, making them prime targets for threats and violence. According to Global Witness, these defenders are at high risk of being harassed, threatened, or even killed due to their efforts to protect land rights and the environment in a country where land disputes are common and often violent (Global Witness, 2021).

The United Nations Human Rights Council also notes that environmental and land rights defenders are frequently subjected to intimidation and violence by both state and non-state actors. These defenders are often seen as obstacles to development projects that benefit powerful elites, leading to targeted attacks against them. The lack of legal protections and the pervasive culture of impunity in South Sudan further increase the dangers they face, making their work increasingly perilous (UNHRC, 2023).

Youth Activists

Youth activists in South Sudan are increasingly taking on roles as advocates for social change, peacebuilding, and human rights. Their involvement in these areas often puts them in direct opposition to the government and other powerful entities. According to Amnesty International, youth activists face significant risks, including harassment, detention, and violence, as a result of their efforts to promote peace and social justice in a highly volatile environment (Amnesty International, 2022).

The dangers these young activists face are also highlighted by the United Nations Human Rights Council, which reports that many youth activists have been subjected to violent reprisals for their involvement in peacebuilding and advocacy work. This repression reflects the government's broader strategy to suppress dissent and maintain control, making it increasingly dangerous for young people to engage in activism in South Sudan (UNHRC, 2023).

Minority Rights Advocates

Minority rights advocates in South Sudan work to protect and promote the rights of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities. Their work is critical in a country with a history of intercommunal violence and discrimination. However, advocating for minority rights often places these individuals at risk of persecution and violence.

The United Nations Human Rights Council also notes that minority rights advocates are frequently targeted by both state and non-state actors, making their work particularly hazardous. The ongoing violence and instability in South Sudan, coupled with the lack of legal protections for minority rights, exacerbate the risks faced by these advocates, leaving them vulnerable to ongoing threats and attacks (UNHRC, 2023).

6 THEORY OF CHANGE

This Theory of Change serves as a foundational guide for the South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network (SSHURDN) over the next five years (2025-2029). The pressing challenges faced by human rights defenders in South Sudan require a comprehensive and strategic response. As civic space continues to shrink due to restrictive laws, government bureaucracy, and physical and online attacks, there is an urgent need to enhance the capacities, protection, and resilience of those at the forefront of defending human rights.

6.1 Contextual Overview

The environment in which human rights defenders operate in South Sudan is increasingly hostile. The advanced technology of the National Security Services (NSS), combined with the lack of political will to implement good governance policies, exacerbates the risks faced by defenders. Climate change and its effects further compound the vulnerabilities within the human rights community. To effectively navigate this challenging landscape, it is critical to strengthen the capacity of HRDs, bolster their security, and enhance their ability to advocate and educate the public on human rights issues.

> The advanced technology of the National Security Services (NSS), combined with the lack of political will to implement good governance policies, exacerbates the risks faced by defenders.

6.2 Strategic Response

In response to these challenges, SSHRDN will implement a series of targeted strategies designed to empower human rights defenders. IF the network focuses on **Capacity Building, THEN** there will be improved awareness of harmful laws and better working conditions for HRDs. By enhancing their knowledge and skills, defenders will be better equipped to navigate the legal and operational challenges they face.

IF the network engages in **Advocacy, Research, THEN** it will increase collaboration and enhance public engagement, fostering a more supportive environment for human rights advocacy. Through research-driven advocacy, SSHRDN can amplify the voices of HRDs and build stronger alliances with national and international partners.

Protection and Emergency Response is another critical component of this strategy. **IF** SSHRDN strengthens protection mechanisms and improves coping strategies, **THEN** human rights defenders will be better protected from immediate threats and more resilient in the face of ongoing challenges. This approach ensures that defenders are not only shielded from harm but are also supported in their long-term efforts to promote human rights.

Finally, **Resource Mobilization** plays a vital role in sustaining these efforts. **IF** the network enhances fundraising opportunities, **THEN** it will secure the necessary resources to implement these strategies effectively, ensuring that SSHRDN can continue to support and protect HRDs in the years to come.

6.3 Conclusion

This Theory of Change outlines a strategic and actionable path forward for SSHRDN, aiming to enhance the protection, capacities, and resilience of Human Rights Defenders in South Sudan by 2029. By focusing on capacity building, advocacy research, protection, emergency response, and resource mobilization, SSHURDN is committed to creating a safer, more supportive environment for those who risk their lives to defend human rights in one of the world's most challenging contexts.
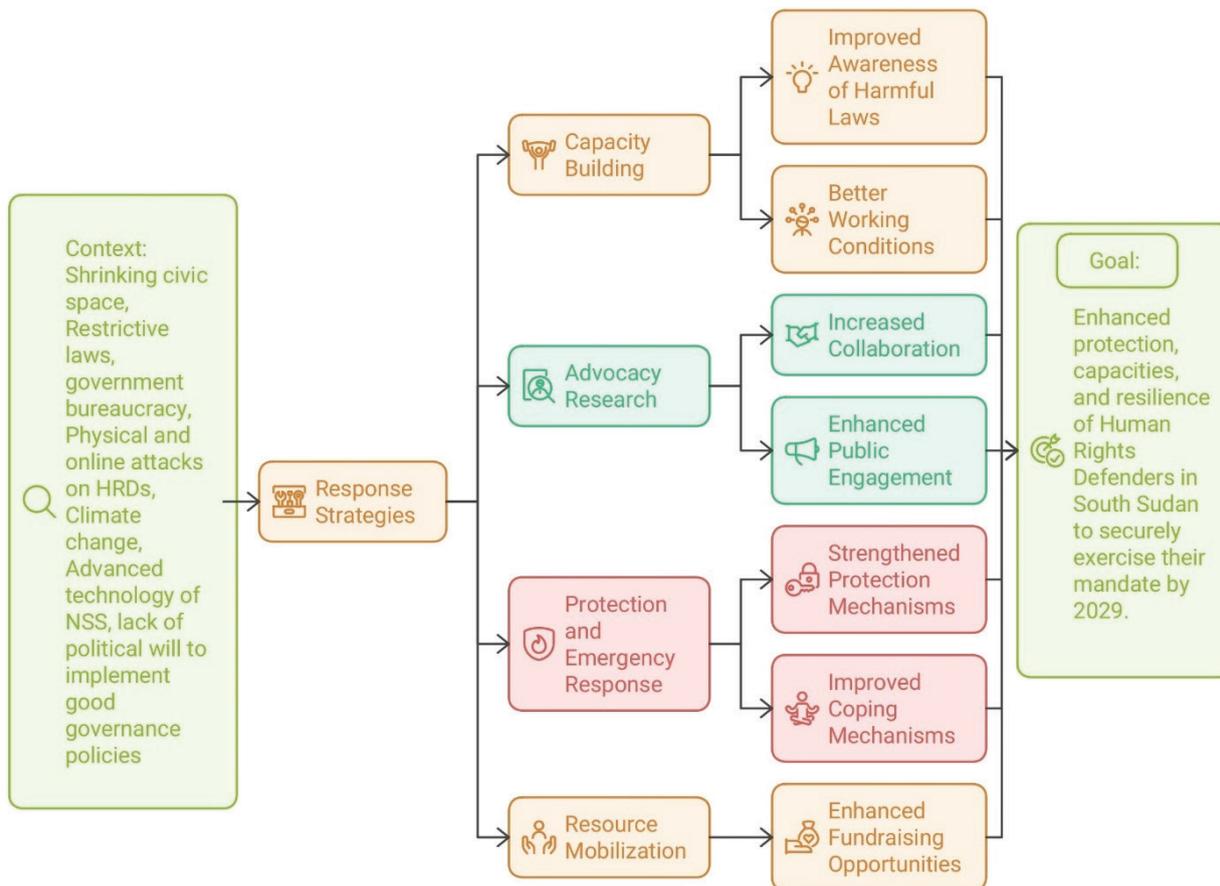
7
PROGRAMME AREAS

7.1   Capacity Building

This focuses on enhancing the capacities of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) across South Sudan. It aims to equip HRDs with the knowledge and skills needed to address harmful laws, navigate challenging environments, and advocate effectively for human rights promotion and protection. The programme will provide training, legal education, and resources on digital and physical security. Special attention will be given to Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) and marginalized groups.

Strategic Objective	Outcome	Key strategic initiatives
Enhance the capacity of HRDs through training and resources to better address harmful laws and strengthen collaboration by 2029 in South Sudan.	Increased percentage of HRDs with enhanced awareness of harmful laws affecting their work by 2029	• Conduct regular training workshops on harmful laws affecting HRDs. • Develop and distribute educational materials on legal issues. • Establish a legal support network for HRDs.

7.2   Advocacy and Policy Engagement

This aims to influence policy reforms and ensure that HRDs are actively involved in shaping a conducive human rights environment. SSHRDN will provide platforms for engagement between HRDs, policymakers and other stakeholders, while also producing research and reports on human rights violations. This will increase collaboration and amplify the voices of HRDs at national and international levels.

Strategic Objective	Outcome	Key strategic initiatives
Strengthen advocacy efforts through research and policy reform, aiming to influence legislation and protect human rights by 2029 in South Sudan.	Improved working environment for HRDs, including enhanced safety, support systems, and access to resources by 2029	• Develop safety protocols and response plans for HRDs. • Provide HRDs with safety gear and resources. • Organize regular networking events and meetings. • Facilitate joint advocacy campaigns with stakeholders. • Implement a coordination platform.
	Increased collaboration and networking between HRDs and stakeholders by 2029	
	Increased public engagement and participation in human rights advocacy and decision-making processes by 2029	

7.3 Protection and Emergency Response

The protection programme ensures HRDs have timely access to safety and emergency support. This includes developing robust mechanisms for emergency response, offering psychosocial support, and addressing the unique protection needs of vulnerable groups such as WHRDs, environmental HRDs, and those working on minority rights. SSHRDN will prioritize the resilience and well-being of HRDs, ensuring they can continue their work safely.

| Strategic Objective	Outcome	Key strategic initiatives
Enhance protection and emergency response mechanisms to provide timely and effective support for HRDs facing threats and crises by 2029 in South Sudan.	Strengthened protection mechanisms for HRDs, ensuring more timely and effective responses to threats and risks by 2029 Enhanced coping mechanisms for HRDs to manage work-related stress and prevent burn-out by 202	• Develop an emergency response plan. • Set up a rapid response team. • Conduct regular drills and simulations. • Establish partnerships with security organisations. • Provide access to mental health services. • Offer resilience and stress management workshops.

7.4 Resource Mobilisation and Sustainability

This programme aims to ensure the long-term sustainability of SSHRDN by diversifying its funding sources and building strategic partnerships. SSHRDN will strengthen its institutional capacity by improving governance, financial management, and staff capacity to ensure effective programme delivery.

Strategic Objective	Outcome	Key strategic initiatives
Develop and implement resource mobilisation and sustainability strategies to secure long-term funding and ensure the ongoing viability of the network by 2029.	Strengthened institutional capacity of SSHRDN to effectively respond to organizational needs and support its members by 2029 Enhanced fundraising opportunities for SSHRDN, through diversified funding streams, strategic partnerships, and capacity building by 2029	• Implement governance reforms. • Develop and execute a resource management plan. • Develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy. • Build strategic partnerships with donors.

8
MONITORING AND EVALUATION
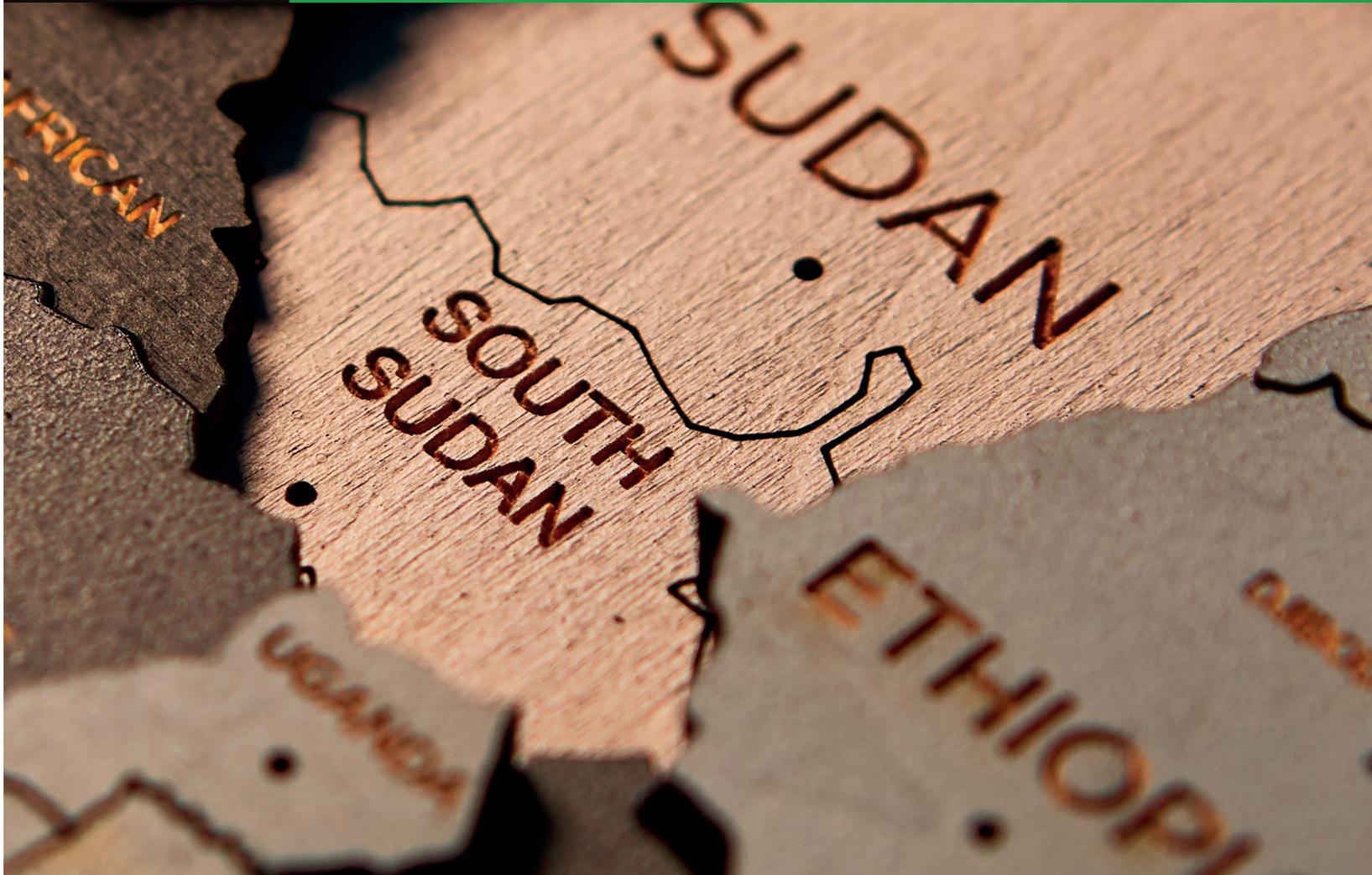
The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework for the South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network (SSHRDN) is a critical component of the strategic plan, designed to ensure accountability, track progress, and assess the impact of programme interventions. The M&E system will be integrated into all four programme areas, providing a structured approach to collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data to guide decision-making and improve the effectiveness of the organization's efforts.

8.1   M&E Approach and Methodology

SSHRDN's M&E system will adopt a results-based approach, ensuring that all programmes are aligned with the strategic objectives and outcomes. The methodology will include both quantitative and qualitative data collection to capture a comprehensive picture of the programmatic impact. Specific tools such as surveys, assessments, and case studies will be used to monitor progress, while routine data collection will be supported by field visits, stakeholder interviews, and focus group discussions.

- **Baseline Assessments:** A baseline assessment will be conducted at the start of the strategic plan implementation (Year 1). This will establish benchmarks against which future performance and impact can be measured. The baseline data will be critical for comparing progress against the desired targets for each outcome.

- **Outcome Indicators:** The M&E framework will focus on monitoring specific outcome indicators for each programme area. These indicators will be linked to key activities and will provide evidence on how well SSHRDN is progressing towards achieving its objectives.

    For example:

    – For the **Capacity Building Programme**, indicators such as the number of HRDs trained and the percentage increase in awareness of harmful laws will be tracked.

    - The **Protection and Emergency Response Programme** will monitor the number of HRDs receiving emergency protection services and the reduction in response time to threats.

- **Data Collection and Reporting:** Data collection will occur at regular intervals, with annual reports summarizing the findings from each year. Both primary and secondary data sources will be utilized:

    – **Primary data** will be collected directly from HRDs, staff, stakeholders, and partners through surveys, interviews, and observational fieldwork.

    – **Secondary data** will include reports, policy documents, CIVICUS monitor and media analysis to supplement findings.

Data will be disaggregated by gender, age, region, and the type of HRD (e.g., Women HRDs, disabled HRDs) to ensure inclusivity and responsiveness to the unique needs of different groups.

- **Mid-term and Final Evaluations:** A mid-term evaluation will be conducted at the end of Year 3 to assess progress, identify challenges, and allow for any necessary adjustments to programme strategies. The final evaluation, at the end of Year 5, will measure the overall impact of the strategic plan against the baseline and initial targets. These evaluations will assess both the effectiveness (achievement of results) and efficiency (cost-effectiveness) of the programme interventions.

- **Learning and Adaptation:** SSHRDN's M&E system will emphasize continuous learning and adaptation. Data collected through the M&E process will be used not only for accountability but also for improving programme implementation. Regular feedback loops will be established, where findings from M&E reports are shared with programme teams, management, and stakeholders to inform decision-making and improve programme delivery.

Key M&E Roles and Responsibilities

- **M&E Officer and Quality Assurance Manager:** Will be responsible for overseeing all M&E activities, ensuring data accuracy, consistency, and timeliness. These roles will also involve leading the baseline assessments, mid-term, and final evaluations.

- **Programme Managers:** Each programme area will have dedicated Programme Managers responsible for implementing the M&E framework within their respective areas. They will work closely with the M&E team to track indicators, collect data, and ensure adherence to M&E protocols.

- **Programme Officers:** Will be responsible for collecting data from HRDs and partners at the grassroots level, conducting interviews, and submitting reports based on standardized tools.

8.2 M&E Outputs

- **Annual Reports:** These will summarize progress against the strategic objectives and outcomes for each year, providing insights into programme achievements and challenges.

- **Mid-term Review:** A comprehensive review at the halfway point will highlight lessons learned, areas requiring adjustments, and mid-term progress toward goals.

- **Final Evaluation Report:** This report will assess the overall impact of the strategic plan, measuring the achievement of outcomes and providing recommendations for future planning.

8.3 M&E Budget Allocation

Sufficient resources will be allocated to support the M&E framework, including personnel, tools, and training. A portion of the overall strategic plan budget will be set aside for baseline assessments, routine data collection, evaluations, and reporting.

9 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

With great challenges come great opportunities. It is proposed that a growing SSHRD network be inclusive and act vigorously in all parts of South Sudan without exception. It is furthermore proposed that every state needs to have its own effective and transparent broad-based human rights monitor at central and state level. The network will be bound primarily by voluntary cooperation between independent groups of moral people, but basic terms of reference and a code of conduct will need to be drawn up for both the defender and the secretariat. Members will have to follow the network by their CSO's terms of reference and mechanism. Defenders also only have the network as a last choice of support and must first work through their own CSO systems. The continuing action plan must also follow a subsequent round of consultation with human rights defenders in and outside their different states. With support from DefendDefenders M&E team, an action plan should be drawn at the earliest convenience to implement this strategic plan.

9.1   Summary of the Strategic Plan

Political space, or the enabling environment, is an essential component of human rights work and an important measure of a democratic society. A number of interlocking conditions determine the degree of tranquility, freedom of speech and press, respect for political and human rights, safety and well-being of its citizens in general.

In ill-governed states, hostile, suspicious and extremely repressive, the enabling environment is used as an instrument of government policy to suppress, obstruct, and silence perceived adversaries. In South Sudan, despite the environment having improved progressively since the signing of the CPA, the citizen of the fledgling new State is still denied the opportunity and the mechanisms necessary for the exercise of their rights and freedoms, both political and human. But security for all citizens should be the common goal. The common approach now adopted by the Network should work to promote and secure the culture of dialogue and negotiation, build and maintain trust, ensure an adequate sharing of responsibilities and resources; thereby preventing it as a source of confrontation. With the elections extended to 2026, the need for all parties to engage substantially was never so pressing.

> Political space, or the enabling environment, is an essential component of human rights work and an important measure of a democratic society. A number of interlocking conditions determine the degree of tranquility, freedom of speech and press, respect for political and human rights, safety and well-being of its citizens in general.

10 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Given the broad scope of the challenges that the South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network is trying to confront, the full implementation of this strategic plan will be a difficult, but essential, endeavor. Realizing the successes of this strategic plan to improve the coordination and sustainability of human rights work in South Sudan depends, in large part, on the collective efforts of the whole range of human rights groups. And at a minimum, the South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network is committed to work to ground the operational activities identifying and implementing strategies that can make the strategic objectives contained in this document a reality. This is just the beginning of the work involved.

> Defenders Network is committed to work to ground the operational activities identifying and implementing strategies that can make the strategic objectives contained in this document a reality.

The South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network may not undertake all the activities outlined, notably in the strategic objectives stated in this document. This will depend on urgent needs, staffing and technical capacity, time, and potential partnerships. It should be noted then that this strategic plan is a general guideline whose translation into a more specific operational action plan is deemed essential for ground human rights work in South Sudan. In finality, let us recognize the urgent work at hand, and let us undertake the work that is now upon us so that we, as we develop through practical and effective works in the area of human rights in South Sudan, can also realize the impact of our work on behalf of the South Sudanese people and other human rights defenders hosted in South Sudan.

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11 ANNEXES/APPENDICES

11.1   Programme Results Matrix

Goal: By 2029, enhance the protection, capacities and resilience of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in South Sudan to ensure they can safely and effectively carry out their mandate.

Strategic Objective 1: Enhance the capacity of HRDs through training and resources to better address harmful laws and strengthen collaboration by 2029 in South Sudan.

Outcomes	Key Initiatives/ Activities	Indicators	Means of Verification (MOV)	Risks/ Assumptions
Increased percentage of HRDs with enhanced awareness of harmful laws affecting their work by 2029	1. Conduct regular training workshops on harmful laws affecting HRDs. 2. Develop and distribute educational materials on legal issues. 3. Establish a legal support network for HRDs. 4. Organize awareness campaigns. 5. Create an online resource portal for legal information.	1. Percentage increase in HRDs who correctly identify harmful laws. 2. Number of HRDs trained. 3. Number of educational materials distributed.	1. Pre- and post-training assessments. 2. Training reports. 3. Distribution records.	Limited access to training venues or materials due to security concerns. **Assumption:** HRDs are able and willing to attend training sessions.

Strategic Objective 2: Strengthen advocacy efforts through research and policy reform, aiming to influence legislation and protect human rights by 2029 in South Sudan.				
Outcomes	**Key Initiatives/ Activities**	**Indicators**	**Means of Verification (MOV)**	**Risks/ Assumptions**
Improved working environment for HRDs, including enhanced safety, support systems, and access to resources by 2029	1. Develop safety protocols and response plans for HRDs. 2. Provide HRDs with safety gear and resources. 3. Establish a support hotline for emergency assistance. 4. Conduct safety audits. 5. Build partnerships with local organizations for support.	1. Number of HRDs with access to safety resources. 2. Frequency of emergency support requests. 3. Improvement in safety audit scores.	1. Resource distribution logs. 2. Hotline records. 3. Safety audit reports.	Limited availability of safety resources. **Assumption:** Effective collaboration with local partners.
Increased collaboration and networking between HRDs and stakeholders by 2029	1. Organize regular networking events and meetings. 2. Facilitate joint advocacy campaigns with stakeholders. 3. Develop a stakeholder database. 4. Implement a coordination platform. 5. Promote collaborative projects.	1. Number of networking events held. 2. Number of joint campaigns executed. 3. Stakeholder engagement levels.	1. Event records. 2. Campaign reports. 3. Coordination platform usage data.	Risk of low stakeholder engagement. **Assumption:** Stakeholders are willing to collaborate.

Outcomes	Key Initiatives/ Activities	Indicators	Means of Verification (MOV)	Risks/ Assumptions
Increased public engagement and participation in human rights advocacy and decision-making processes by 2029	1. Launch public awareness campaigns. 2. Organize community forums and discussions. 3. Develop and distribute advocacy materials. 4. Use social media to engage with the public. 5. Create community-based advocacy groups.	1. Number of public events held. 2. Engagement metrics on social media. 3. ncrease in community-based advocacy groups.	1. Event attendance records. 2. Social media analytics. 3. Advocacy group formation reports.	Public apathy or resistance to human rights issues. **Assumption:** Effective use of media and community engagement strategies.

Strategic Objective 3: Enhance protection and emergency response mechanisms to provide timely and effective support for HRDs facing threats and crises by 2029 in South Sudan.

Outcomes	Key Initiatives/ Activities	Indicators	Means of Verification (MOV)	Risks/ Assumptions
Strengthened protection mechanisms for HRDs, ensuring more timely and effective responses to threats and risks by 2029	1. Develop an emergency response plan. 2. Set up a rapid response team. 3. Conduct regular drills and simulations. 4. Establish partnerships with security organizations. 5. Monitor and evaluate response effectiveness.	1. Response time to threats. 2. Effectiveness of emergency drills. 3. Number of partnerships with security organizations.	1. Response logs. 2. Drill reports. 3. Partnership agreements.	Limited resources for emergency response. **Assumption:** Effective coordination with security partners.
Outcomes	**Key Initiatives/ Activities**	**Indicators**	**Means of Verification (MOV)**	**Risks/ Assumptions**
Enhanced coping mechanisms for HRDs to manage work-related stress and prevent burn-out by 2029	1. Provide access to mental health services. 2. Offer resilience and stress management workshops. 3. Develop wellness resource kits. 4. Establish peer support groups. 5. Create an online mental health resource center.	1. Number of HRDs accessing mental health services. 2. Participation in workshops. 3. Utilization of wellness resources.	1. Service access records. 2. Workshop attendance. 3. Resource usage data.	Mental health services may be limited. **Assumption:** HRDs are open to utilizing support resources.

Strategic Objective 4: Develop and implement resource mobilisation and sustainability strategies to secure long-term funding and ensure the ongoing viability of the network by 2029.

Outcomes	Key Initiatives/ Activities	Indicators	Means of Verification (MOV)	Risks/ Assumptions
Strengthened institutional capacity of SSHRDN to effectively respond to organizational needs and support its members by 2029	1. Implement governance reforms. 2. Develop and execute a resource management plan. 3. Conduct capacity-building workshops for staff. 4. Enhance internal communication systems. 5. Review and improve service delivery protocols.	1. Governance reform implementation. 2. Staff capacity-building attendance. 3. Improvement in service delivery metrics.	1. Reform records. 2. Workshop reports. 3. Service delivery evaluations.	Resistance to governance changes. **Assumption:** Effective implementation of management and communication improvements.
Outcomes	**Key Initiatives/ Activities**	**Indicators**	**Means of Verification (MOV)**	**Risks/ Assumptions**
Enhanced fundraising opportunities for SSHRDN, through diversified funding streams, strategic partnerships, and capacity building by 2029	1. Develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy. 2. Build strategic partnerships with donors. 3. Organize fundraising events. 4. Train staff in resource mobilization. 5. Explore new funding opportunities.	1. Amount of funds raised. 2. Number of new funding streams. 3. Number of successful partnerships and events.	1. Financial reports. 2. Partnership agreements. 3. Event reports. 4. Training records.	Risk of insufficient donor interest. **Assumption:** Effective implementation of fundraising strategies and staff training.

11.2 Budget summary

Budget Summary by Objective and Year

Specific Objective	Outcome	Key Activities	2025 (USD)	2026 (USD)	2027 (USD)	2028 (USD)	2029 (USD)	Total (USD)
Enhance the capacity of HRDs through training and resources	Increased percentage of HRDs with enhanced awareness of harmful laws	- Develop and deliver training programs - Create and distribute educational materials - Conduct surveys to assess awareness	$150 000	$100 000	$100 000	$80 000	$70 000	$500 000
		- Implement online and offline educational campaigns - Organize workshops and seminars	$80 000	$60 000	$60 000	$50 000	$50 000	$300 000
		Sub total	**$230 000**	**$160 000**	**$160 000**	**$130 000**	**$120 000**	**$800 000**
Strengthen advocacy efforts through research and policy reform	Improved working environment for HRDs	- Conduct safety audits - Establish support systems - Partner with security organizations	$100 000	$80 000	$70 000	$70 000	$80 000	$400 000
		- Develop and implement emergency response protocols - Provide safety resources to HRDs	$50 000	$60 000	$70 000	$40 000	$30 000	$250 000
	Increased collaboration and networking between HRDs and stakeholders	- Organize networking events - Facilitate joint campaigns - Enhance stakeholder engagement"	$60 000	$60 000	$60 000	$40 000	$40 000	$260 000
		- Build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders	$40 000	30000	$30 000	$20 000	$20 000	$140 000
	Increased public engagement and participation in human rights advocacy	- Host public awareness events - Implement social media campaigns - Form community-based advocacy groups"	$80 000	$60 000	$60 000	$40 000	$40 000	$280 000
		Sub total	**$330 000**	**$290 000**	**$290 000**	**$210 000**	**$210 000**	**$1 330 000**

Budget Summary by Objective and Year

Specific Objective	Outcome	Key Activities	2025 (USD)	2026 (USD)	2027 (USD)	2028 (USD)	2029 (USD)	Total (USD)
Enhance protection and emergency response mechanisms	Strengthened protection mechanisms for HRDs	- Improve response times to threats - Conduct emergency drills - Form partnerships with security organizations"	$70 000	$60 000	$60 000	$50 000	$50 000	$290 000
		- Develop and implement emergency response protocols - Provide safety resources to HRDs"	$40 000	$40 000	$40 000	$30 000	$30 000	$180 000
	Enhanced coping mechanisms for HRDs	- Provide mental health services - Organize resilience training - Distribute wellness resources"	$60 000	$50 000	$50 000	$40 000	$40 000	$240 000
		Sub total	**$170 000**	**$150 000**	**$150 000**	**$120 000**	**$120 000**	**$710 000**
Develop and implement resource mobilization and sustainability strategies	Strengthened institutional capacity of SSHRDN	- Implement governance reforms - Conduct staff capacity-building activities - Improve service delivery"	$70 000	$60 000	$60 000	$50 000	$50 000	$290 000
		- Develop and execute resource mobilization strategies - Establish strategic partnerships"	$60 000	$50 000	$50 000	$40 000	$40 000	$240 000
	Enhanced fundraising opportunities for SSHRDN	- Diversify funding sources - Build capacity in fundraising"	$80 000	$70 000	$60 000	$50 000	$50 000	$310 000
		Sub total	**$210 000**	**$180 000**	**$170 000**	**$140 000**	**$140 000**	**$840 000**

Budget Summary by Objective and Year

Specific Objective	Outcome	Key Activities	2025 (USD)	2026 (USD)	2027 (USD)	2028 (USD)	2029 (USD)	Total (USD)
Human resource		Executive Director	$42 000	$42 840	$43 697	$44 571	$45 462	$218 570
		Finance & Administration Manager	$36 000	$36 720	$37 454	$38 203	$38 968	$187 345
		Program Manager	$36 000	$36 720	$37 454	$38 203	$38 968	$187 345
		Protection Manager	$24 000	$24 480	$24 490	$24 979	$25 479	$123 428
		Research Advocacy & Communications Manager	$24 000	$24 480	$24 490	$24 979	$25 479	$123 428
		Quality Assurance Manager	$24 000	$24 480	$24 490	$24 979	$25 479	$123 428
		ICT Manager	$24 000	$24 480	$24 490	$24 979	$25 479	$123 428
		Capacity building Manager	$24 000	$24 480	$24 490	$24 979	$25 479	$123 428
		Protection officer	$18 000	$18 360	$18 727	$19 102	$19 484	$93 673
		Capacity building officer	$18 000	$18 360	$18 727	$19 102	$19 484	$93 673
		Research, Advocacy, Communication officer	$18 000	$18 360	$18 727	$19 102	$19 484	$93 673
		Finance officer	$18 000	$18 360	$18 727	$19 102	$19 484	$93 673
		M&E /Reporting officer	$18 000	$18 360	$18 727	$19 102	$19 484	$93 673
		ICT Officer	$18 000	$18 360	$18 727	$19 102	$19 484	$93 673
		Account officer	$18 000	$18 360	$18 727	$19 102	$19 484	$93 673
		Admin Assistant	$14 400	$14 688	$14 982	$15 281	$15 587	$74 938
		Security officer	$6 000	$6 120	$6 414	$6 542	$6 673	$31 749
		Officer Cleaner	$6 000	$6 120	$6 242	$6 367	$6 495	$31 224
		Driver	$10 800	$11 016	$11 236	$11 461	$11 690	$56 204
		Sub total	**$397 200**	**$405 144**	**$411 018**	**$419 239**	**$427 624**	**$2 060 225**
Vehicle costs		Fuel (Diesel) cost	$12 000	$12 000	$12 000	$12 000	$12 000	$60 000
		Vehicle Maintenance & Spares parts	$10 000	$10 000	$10 000	$10 000	$10 000	$50 000
		- Vehicle insurance/ registration - Vehicle rental"	$15 000	$15 000	$15 000	$15 000	$15 000	$75 000
		Sub total	**$37 000**	**$37 000**	**$37 000**	**$37 000**	**$37 000**	**$185 000**
Office Costs		- Stationery & Printing - Office supplies (Cleaning, Tea items etc."	$5 000	$5 000	$5 000	$5 000	$5 000	$25 000
		Office rental	$48 000	$48 000	$48 000	$48 000	$48 000	$240 000
		- Office furniture and equipment	$8 000	$6 000	$6 000	$6 000	$6 000	$32 000
		Sub total	**$61 000**	**$59 000**	**$59 000**	**$59 000**	**$59 000**	**$297 000**

Budget Summary by Objective and Year

Specific Objective	Outcome	Key Activities	2025 (USD)	2026 (USD)	2027 (USD)	2028 (USD)	2029 (USD)	Total (USD)
Other services (tel/fax, electricity/heating, maintenance)		- NGO Registration - Communication costs (airtime and internet)	$13 000	$13 000	$13 000	$13 000	$13 000	$65 000
		- Water supply	$2 500	$2 500	$2 500	$2 500	$2 500	$12 500
		- Security service for office (physical and digital).	$3 000	$3 000	$3 000	$3 000	$3 000	$15 000
		Sub total	**$18 500**	**$18 500**	**$18 500**	**$18 500**	**$18 500**	**$92 500**
Travel		- Travel (Air & Road)	$7 000	$7 000	$7 000	$7 000	$7 000	$35 000
		- Visa Cost	$1 200	$1 200	$1 200	$1 200	$1 200	$6 000
		- Accommodation	$14 000	$14 000	$14 000	$14 000	$14 000	$70 000
		- Perdiem	$6 000	$6 000	$6 000	$6 000	$6 000	$30 000
		Sub total	**$28 200**	**$28 200**	**$28 200**	**$28 200**	**$28 200**	**$141 000**
Equipment and supplies		- Laptop computers	$8 000	$8 000	$8 000	$6 000	$6 000	$36 000
		- Printers	$6 000	$6 000	$6 000	$6 000	$6 000	$30 000
		- Equipment repair and spare parts	$3 000	$3 000	$3 000	$3 000	$3 000	$15 000
		- Desktop computers	$3 000	$3 000	$3 000	$3 000	$3 000	$15 000
		Sub total	**$20 000**	**$20 000**	**$20 000**	**$18 000**	**$18 000**	**$96 000**
Other cost/overheads		- Bank chargers	$3 000	$3 000	$3 000	$3 000	$3 000	$15 000
		- Audit fee	$7 500	$7 500	$7 500	$7 500	$7 500	$37 500
		- Indirect Costs	$30 248	$27 166	$27 166	$27 166	$27 166	$138 912
		- Provision for contingency reserve	$20 000	$20 000	$20 000	$20 000	$20 000	$100 000
		Sub total	**$60 748**	**$57 666**	**$57 666**	**$57 666**	**$57 666**	**$291 412**
		Overall total	**$1 562 648**	**$1 405 510**	**$1 401 384**	**$1 237 605**	**$1 235 990**	**$6 843 137**

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