

Vision2030 ENGO Impact Profiles

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Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests (LEAF)



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Executive Director



Erin MacDonald
Operations Director



Brian Millward
Community
Programs Manager



Brenna Anstett
Residential Planting
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LEAF - Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests - is an environmental organization that connects people with trees. Since 1995, LEAF has engaged communities in support of a healthy urban forest through programs in Toronto, York Region and Durham Region. The leadership team at LEAF has participated in many of the Sustainability Network's Vision2030 programs. Executive Director, Janet McKay, Operations Director, Erin MacDonald, Community Programs Manager, Brian Millward, and Residential Planting Programs Manager, Brenna Anstett have collectively participated in five distinct Vision2030 workshop series including the *Nonprofit Tech Readiness Program*, the *BIPOC ENGO Inclusive Workplaces Lab*, *Decolonizing ENGO-First Nation Partnerships*, the *Disability Inclusion Lab*, and *JEDI Through the Employment Lifecycle*.

Janet, Erin and Brian participated in the *BIPOC ENGO Inclusive Workplaces Lab* over two separate cohorts. They were interested to learn what other organizations are doing, and to continue developing the skill, the fluency, and capacity of their leadership team in this area. They saw it as an opportunity to build on the work they started five years ago when LEAF initiated an increased focus on reconciliation and anti-Racism, supported by an employee-led resource

group. This has consisted of several strategic goals focused on anti-racism and anti-oppression, such as weaving deeper diversity and inclusion into existing programs, such as the Young Urban Forest Leaders and the Toronto Community Housing Planting and Stewardship Program, developing new opportunities to support equity in the urban forestry sector and building connections with Indigenous and BIPOC groups that are already doing this work. LEAF wants its programs to be welcoming and inviting for all participants and for community partners.

The *Inclusive Workplaces Labs* helped to affirm many of the things they were already doing and gave them confidence in the path they were on. The cohort included organizations at different levels of experience. Erin reflected, “the value was in seeing movement across the sector, organizations learning from one another and growing together in a shared commitment to equity.” It also helped strengthen a partnership LEAF has with another environmental organization, with whom they had previously collaborated on a specific program. Going through the Lab with this partner organization helped improve their shared understanding and alignment around what they are hoping to accomplish together.

Erin’s participation in the session, *JEDI Through the Employment Lifecycle*, was very timely for LEAF as they had started an extensive review of their internal HR practices and she was inspired to have the additional perspective and resources from this workshop series. The sessions covered every stage of employment, from recruitment through to exiting, which has been helpful for LEAF in thinking through the employee life cycle with an equity lens.

Janet is enthused about next steps that will focus on things that are more publicly visible, principally programs. She adds “As an organization we are looking to anchor our reconciliation and anti-Racism work in internal structures and processes, and are contemplating various program changes, which have the potential for profound and durable impact”.

The LEAF management team recently started *Decolonizing ENGO-First Nation Partnerships: Advanced Decolonial Theory and Application*. Brian mentioned that this too is very timely as their entire leadership team is taking it together while they are discussing how to incorporate reconciliation more strongly into their community planting events. He described how they want to take the programming that they are already quite comfortable doing and grow it into something that is far more inclusive and better aligned with the values that they are trying to champion.

LEAF has been an enthusiastic and consistent participant in Vision2030. Their progress is the culmination of many steps over time, of which the Vision2030 programs build upon. They are grateful for the community of individuals and organizations at different stages of the journey who have come together in Vision2030 to work towards changes that reflect some common values and goals, and this gives them a lot of hope and encouragement for LEAF's future, and the future of the ENGO sector.