



**Save My Future (SAMFU) Foundation**

# **Annual Report 2014/15**



Is it a new dawn for reform, as to strengthen Liberia after Ebola, or business as usual?

## Table of Content

Foreword by the Executive Director.....	Page 3
SAMFU – who we are .....	Page 4-5
What we do and what we stand for.....	Page 6-7
The Year 2014/15 in retrospect.....	Page 8
<b>Our programs and partners.....</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>Extractive Industry Program.....</b>	<b>Page 9-10</b>
<b>1. Human Rights and Advocacy.....</b>	<b>Page 10</b>
• Partnership with AJWS Project .....	Page
• Partnership with Misereor.....	Page
• Partnership with Trust Africa.....	Page
• Partnership with Global Witness.....	Page
• Partnership with European Union (EU).....	Page
<b>2. Peace Building and Conflict Prevention.....</b>	<b>Page 16</b>
• Partnership with Kindermissionswerk.....	Page
• Partnership with AGEH-CPS.....	Page
<b>Endangered Marine Species Conservation.....</b>	<b>Page 18</b>
Program (EMSCP).....	Page
Partnership with USFWS.....	Page
Networking and collaboration.....	Page 21
• NGO Coalition for Liberia	
Success stories .....	Page 22
Management and Administration.....	Page 22
Staff.....	Page 23
Financial overview.....	Page 24
Acronyms.....	Page 25

## **Foreword by the Executive Director**

It is good to note, that during the past two years 2014 / 15, Liberia as a nation was greatly challenged by the Ebola outbreak. The resources of the nation were overwhelmed and emotions ran very, very high as a result of the deaths of many loved ones that we could not touch or help.

The experience is something that we must all remember as a people and nation, especially the hardship that followed the period, the drastic decline in the price of Iron ore and rubber, two of Liberia's major export earners. It is as if Liberia is in the belly of the whale, as it was the case of Jonah as in Biblical History.

During such time, it is just better for us as a nation to continue to reflect on our economic practices and prioritize our spending. Also we must remember many natural resources aren't renewable, so the management of what we have is important and urgently needed.

We hope as we approach the campaigning and election seasons, little government moneys aren't pocketed by aspirants and also electorates be mindful of empty speeches. After all Liberia, if we want it develop must be committed to service and not being corrupt.

We like to commend our friends and donors for the support they have provided us during those difficult and challenging times of our history. We look forward to a warmer relationship during the coming years.

Truly Yours

James Makor, Executive Director

## **The Save My Future (SAMFU) Foundation**

### **Who we are:**

Save My Future (SAMFU) Foundation is a local non-governmental conservation and development organization founded in 1987 by a Liberian Catholic Priest and two young conservationists. SAMFU was founded out of love for sustaining our natural resources and the environment, as well as the Liberian cultural heritage, and the desire to preserve them in order to enhance development and promote peace. The staff members of SAMFU comprise of professionals and result-driven men and women who strive to promote the sustainable management of Liberia's natural resources and environment in order to guarantee the needs of the current generations without compromising the needs of our future generations.

The environment in where we are working is constantly changing. Liberia's civil war saw catastrophic mismanagement of Liberia's natural resources under the Taylor administration. Incoming funds from international institutions were directly used to finance conflict. With this legacy in mind the international business community and Government of Liberia have established a structure by which to manage incoming concessions in the extractive industry sector. While the country is politically stable Liberia sees new challenges in the natural resources management and extractive industry sector.

**Our Vision:** SAMFU plays a major role in the sustainable management of Liberia’s natural resources. SAMFU works in a strong network to ensure that the management processes are participatory, transparent, accountable, and peaceful. All our involvements are unique and community driven.

**Mission:** SAMFU promotes partnerships with environmental organizations, the Liberian government and communities to ensure a sustainable management of Liberia’s natural resources.

We educate local people how to use natural resources of Liberia for the economic and social well-being of the whole community. Our charity also monitors the activities of multinational companies in Liberia to ensure that they meet government standards for the care and employment of their workers. Sustainability is at the heart of all our projects.

SAMFU is committed to sustain peace in Liberia. We train staff and target communities to ensure effective participation in promoting peaceful co-existence in Liberia through conflict prevention and transformation in the extractive industry sector.

SAMFU empowers staff and coastal communities to ensure effective participation in promoting the long term survival of endangered marine species and sustained recovery of depleted stock.

## **The Save My Future (SAMFU) Foundation**

### **What we do and what we stand for:**

We are working in two core programs.

1. Extractive Industry Program
  - a. Human Rights and Advocacy
  - b. Peace Building and Conflict Prevention
2. Endangered Marine Species Conservation Program

### **SAMFU's core values are:**

- Respect for human rights
- Engage in activities/acts that are environmentally friendly
- Participatory decision-making and shared leadership
- Transparency and accountability
- Support peaceful co-existence and development

We achieve this by:

**Learning** – Recognize the power of learning in improving human resources and organizational capacity. We are committed to engaging the learning resources of our organization, NGOs' network, donor's support in line with the needs of the target communities and clients.

**Innovation** – We strive to empower individual staff and encourage individual and organizational creativity to advance the mission of our organization.

**Diversity** - We work towards capturing the strength that derives from honouring diverse people, perspectives and programs; we think and act inclusively.

**Collaboration** – We value partnership and teamwork based on thematic issues that advance the achievement of our programming objectives.

**Flexibility** – We are open to change and willing to pursue new knowledge directions to meet changing societal needs in relation to institutional expectations and environmental sustainability.

**Integrity** - We are committed to demonstrate ethical and honest behaviour in everything we do.

**Discipline responses** - we strive to build a culture that is focused and determined and systematically persist in achieving our goals.



*SAMFU present location, 200metres east of the old place.*

## **The Year 2014/15 in Retrospect**

Liberia currently has one of the highest rates of land concessions in Africa. Between 2004 and 2012, the Liberian government either granted or re-negotiated land concessions totalling 4.3 million hectares--40% of the total national land area.

SAMFU had supported local communities in their fight for their land and community rights. At the same time, SAMFU collaborates with a range of other national and international NGOs. SAMFU enjoyed the membership of networks like: NGO Coalition of Liberia, Concession Working Group, WANEP and AGEH. Together we have lobbied for policy change in the forestry sector and land reform processes to ensure equal benefit to all. In those endeavours SAMFU was supported by several donor organisations like, AGEH-CPS, AJWS, FAO, Global Witness, Kindermissionswerk, Misereor and USFWS.

SAMFU's geographical focus was South-eastern Liberia, while new demands and opportunities led to activities in Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount and Bomi Counties. In 2014/5 SAMFU had five field offices established in Fishtown, Zwedru, Greenville, Buchanan and Medina.

In our effort to also protect endangered marine species (*Sea Turtles, Sharks, Manatees and Dolphins*) on the Liberia coastline, SAMFU worked with communities in River Cess County. Also we have raised awareness in Montserado County as well. Through regional networking with other NGOs, a study tour was conducted together with Sierra Leone Reptilians in both Liberia and Sierra Leone.



## Our Programs and partner

### ➤ Extractive Industry Sector

According to the latest developments in the Liberia as well as international political and economic environment, SAMFU sharpened its strategy for the next five years. The two old core programs “Sustainable Resource Management and Human Rights” and “Peace Building and Community Development” were melted to the new core program “Extractive Industry Sector”.

Several aspects and circumstances motivated us for this important step.

Firstly, the political and social situation in Liberia is more and more stabilizing. Wounds and damages from the brutal civil war are starting to heal and peace building efforts are showing results. The second elections after the peace agreements in 2003 were fair, democratic and mainly peaceful. Besides these positive news SAMFU deems it proper that peace building required in resource management. Therefore we decided to concentrate our conflict transformation and peace building skills on our main area of interest (*natural resource sector*).

Secondly, due to the stable political situation, more international companies are coming for business in Liberia. SAMFU has worked more than ten years around issues of advocacy, for rural community people voices to be heard. We truly believe that education and knowledge is the key for development and this is where we put most of our efforts to empower them.

If the people of Liberia shall be the ones to benefit from Liberia's natural resources, they must be the ones to maintain the knowledge about its sustainable management. SAMFU has worked with different partners to reach those goals. We carefully chose our donors and partners according to our mission and core values.

## **1. Human Rights and Advocacy**

Partnership with American Jewish World Service (AJWS).

Sustainable management of Liberia's natural resources and environment- institutional strengthening support was supported by the AJWS in 2014. It was implemented in Grand Gedeh and River Gee Counties and provided complementary support to civil society support to FLEGT/VPA implementation in Liberia.

SAMFU provided training in participatory leadership skills for Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and other community groups in Grand Gedeh and River Gee. The aim was to educate community members to the New Forest Law and Regulations of Liberia. Most of the local communities in these two counties are forest depended. SAMFU enables them to stand up for their forest rights and to negotiate with concessionaires about fair benefits from forest resources.

In 2012 AJWS also contributed very generously to the construction of SAMFU's own office building. In addition, AJWS made it possible for two Program Officers to be part of the Mango Training.

### **Partnership with Misereor**

Misereor is a German church based INGO and is supporting several projects throughout Liberia since many years. Misereor is active in the protection of community rights in the extractive industry.

The objective of the project implemented was to work with communities and build capacity that will enable them to advocate for their procedural rights through engagements with the company, duty bearers and other stakeholders. During the capacity building process, SAMFU implemented the following activities:

- Developed, printed and distributed Toolkit on Sime Darby plantation (SDPL) Concession Agreement. The toolkit made available vital information to community people.
- Supported community meetings in terms of transporting communities together and feeding them as they hosted their meetings.
- Screened documentary videos in communities that served as case studies to learn from.
- Printed and distributed SDPL concession agreement to affected communities, in order to provide them more insight.
- Possible allies were identified for advocacy activities and join network.
- Developed and implemented an advocacy strategy to raise awareness about trainings on the out growers program.

SAMFU had established relationship with some institutions long before the commencement of this project, however SAMFU had maintained a close working link with the Round

Table on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI), GROW Liberia, Rice and Rights Foundation (RRF), FERN of the UK and Zoduah Land Management Committee as allies in this campaign. These collaborations include information sharing and technical advice which is ongoing coupled with communities' support to ensure that all impediments to the Out growers Program are removed to allow its take effect in the new year of 2016.

### **Partnership with Trust Africa**

“Supporting Community Advocacy for Transparent Management of Natural Resources and County Development Funds in Grand Bassa County” was the titled of the project funded by Trust Africa.

The project objective was to improve the condition of local communities and promote Communities natural resources rights in the forest regions of Grand Bassa County.

The project addressed the core issues of exclusion and marginalization, the sharing of information on benefits from natural resource extraction in general and forest in particular, accountability and respect for the rights of individuals and the communities in general, a scheduled monthly meeting was the platform to discuss and share ideas by the stakeholders.

Also Ebola prevention awareness materials and messages using traditional method of information dissemination (town crier in local dialect) and local media were facilitated by SAMFU. The CBOs and CFDCs collected data on all projects funded by the County Social Development Funds (CSDF) and County Development Fund (CDF) in the 4 political districts of

Grand Bassa. The collated document flagged issues relating to transparency, information sharing and fund management. As a result of the document, a position statement was developed and sent to the County's authorities' and national government for action.



*CBOs/CFDCs monthly meeting held in LAC Grand Bassa County.*

### **Partnership with Global Witness.**

While the government of Liberia sees oil palm plantation establishment as a blessing, many Liberians have seen it as a curse and have mobilized to resist the expansion.

In 2010 the government of Liberia signed a 260,000 hectare palm oil concession with Golden Veroleum Liberia, with virtually no consultation with the communities they will affect.

It is important that communities have a thorough understanding of what is contained within agreements between themselves and the company-memoranda of understanding- and are able to hold the company to account to ensure it meets its obligations and provides the community benefits under the terms of the MOU. It is also

important to with communities engaged MOU negotiations to ensure that they fully understand what is contained and are in the position to make an informed decision on whether or not to sign based on their long-term interest. Finally, the need for communities to know about environmental and social impacts of concessions is paramount.

Under the program Sustainable and accountable land use and forest management (SAFM) Program, SAMFU worked with ten affected communities in Sinoe County where Golden Veroleum Liberia has cleared thousands of hectares of farm land for the establishment of oil palm plantation.

The project worked to build the capacity of these individuals to enable them to negotiate with the company on their rights and benefits. The project activities resulted to the follow:

Affected community understanding MOU terms signed with GVL and their rights to hold the company to account in implementing the terms of the MOU.

Communities were helped to make informed decision on signing MOUs, Especially Communities that will negotiate taking into account the long terms benefits or disadvantages of doing so.

More awareness were created in Communities about environmental and social impacts of the palm oil concession.

Also promoted sustainable and accountable forest and land use management which will better protect the ecological and

climate functions of natural forests and improve the livelihoods of forest-dependent people.

### **Partnership with the European Union (EU).**

Civil society support to VPA implementation in Liberia has greatly contributed to popularizing the FLEGT/VPA in forest fringe communities especially those ones where logging activities have taken place over the last five years. The project produced community friendly versions of relevant portions of the VPA documents and forest policies including the NFRL, CRL and regulations, and used them to create awareness about the FLEGT/VPA in five highly forested counties in Liberia targeted by the project including Lofa, Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolu, Grand Gedeh and River Gee Counties. The project also provided training in forest monitoring, technical and logistical support to CFDCs and other community members to enable them engage logging companies, the FDA and other agencies in advocating for the rights and benefits of logging affected communities. These groups are now monitoring illegalities in the forest sector, advocating for community rights and benefits from forestry activities, and representing community interests in local, national, and international fora. The project contributed greatly to civil society advocacies that pressurized the Liberian Government to pay USD 1 Million of USD of 2.1 Million of LRFs owed to logging affected communities across Liberia.

Direct beneficiaries of this project included 8 women CBOs, 1 women network, 90 CFDC members, and 8 community

platforms. The number of indirect beneficiaries is pretty over 50, 000 citizens.

SAMFU led implementation of this project and other partners included VOSIEDA, GA, and FCI and provided complementary support to civil society support to FLEGT/VPA implementation in Liberia.

## **2. Peace Building and Conflict Prevention**

### **Partnership with Kindermissionswerk.**

Kindermissionswerk is a German INGO focussing on youth development. SAMFU's project "Educating young Liberian people in environmental protection and conflict prevention in south-eastern Liberia" was the funded project. At the heart of this project were Nature Clubs at schools in Zwedru and Fishtown. The Nature Clubs were benefitting from monthly educational activities about environmental protection and practical lessons on conflict prevention and transformation and a peace hut project.

The climax of the project was a big sport events organised for the students. The games hosted banner messages about environmental protection, conflict prevention and transformation.



## Partnership with AGEH-CPS



*Hand washing materials to Ebola affected communities.*

AGEH-Civil Peace Service is a traditional partner and donor that have contributed greatly to SAMFU capacity building needs. AGEH have provided a civil peace service worker (Maria Bongard) as a seconded staff that worked three years for SAMFU .During the course of her work, AGEH-CPS provided her a brand new Land Cruiser Jeep and that vehicle did not only facilitate her movement, but serve SAMFU in many useful ways.

The vehicle with license plate SAMFU-1 was inherited by Annette Reimer as the replacer of Maria, but her stay in Liberia was shortened by the Ebola outbreak in 2014. Upon her departure, we were told, since Annette will be replaced. Since then we are expecting another person to come and fill the gap.

During this period we have worked along with the country Coordinator Madam Fettle Seifu and she contributed greatly to many short projects, to include assistance to communities during the Ebola, purchase of a projector, internet and maintained the vehicle SAMFU-1. Also, she regularly sent

reminder emails to partners or called to check on partners regardless of her busy schedule, a passionate person to work with.

➤ **Endangered Marine Species Conservation Program.**

**Liberia Marine turtle program:**

Marine turtles fall under the category of highly endangered animal species listed by CITES. They have survived for hundreds of millions of years and their health indicate the status of the ecosystem in which they live. Beginning from 1999 to 2002, SAMFU conducted the first marine turtle baseline survey along the entire 570 km coastline of Liberia (*Grand Cape to Maryland County*) that established the existence of 5 of the 7 species of Marine Turtles species in Liberia. Those identified include: Olive Ridley, Leather Back, Hawksbill, Green Turtle, and Hawksbill. The survey also collected data on local knowledge and use of the species, level of abundance, population and means of livelihood of coastal community members.

SAMFU has been able to set up sanctuary at Borgor Point in 2005 with support from GOL (*Bureau of Fishery, Ministry of Agriculture*), USFWS, and Borgor Point Community members.

Since 2012 SAMFU remained engaged with Borgor Point and other adjacent communities under the project: Continuation of a community based sea turtle conservation program

Cestos -River Cess County –Liberia. The Project covers 16km stretch of beach taking into account six villages and hamlets which include; Borgor point, Jatsla, Jumbo, Pillar of Fire Mission, Doe Town and Klegbe across the PO River in River Cess County.

The project: Community based marine turtle conservation and Education initiatives in River Cess County, Liberia is a continuation of conservation activities initiated in the region with support from the United States fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). This project is supported annually by the USFWS.

In 2014 /2015 the project was successfully implemented with local and international supports geared towards achieving our objectives. The goal is to promote the long-term survival of the sea turtle population including the rapid sustained recovery of depleted stocks, taking into consideration the integrated wellbeing of coastal communities with which they interact in Liberia.

#### Capacity Building for Coastal Community Inhabitants

The project is community based, and as such local community inhabitants are mainly involved in its implementation.

Veteran sea turtle hunters were hired and trained in various conservation techniques so as provide them the knowledge requires implementing the project activities. They are usually trained how to identify sea turtle species, conduct hatchling success calculation, tagging nesting turtles, beach monitoring activities and scientific data collection and collation.

SAMFU and the project team are involved with other community development activities associated with sea turtle conservation. An education Centre is presently been constructed in Jatsla to provide space for beach monitors and ordinary community people will be able to learn about sea turtle conservation.



Communities Educational Centre built in Borgor Point, River Cess.

Below are summary of data collected between 2014 and 2015.

**Green Turtle:** 12 Nests Recorded, 1209 Hatchling, 46 Dead Hatchling, 56 Unhatch eggs, 1 False crawl, 1 Unidentified Nest

**Hawksbill:** 20 Nests Recorded, 1518 Live Hatchling, 57 Dead Hatchling, 129 Unhatch eggs, 2 False crawl

**Olive ridley:** 58 Nests Recorded, 4219 Live Hatchling, 242 Dead Hatchling, 712 Unhatch eggs, 3 False crawl, 4 Poach nests

**Leatherback:** 22 Nests Recorded, 1529 Live Hatchling, 49 Dead Hatchling, 117 Unhatch eggs, 3 Unidentified.

One of the training sessions in Jatsla, RiverCess County, and the education centre nearing completion.

### **Administration of Robert G. Tikpor Resource Centre.**

The Robert G. Tikpor Resource Centre in Fishtown is giving children and adolescents the opportunity to meet, play table games and make use of various books. It is the only kind of this type of space for young people in Fishtown, River Gee County to spend their free time and to socialise with each other. With the support of Kindermissionswerk, SAMFU was able to provide the resource centre with new books about Liberian history, geography and economy.



### **Networking**

Networking is one of several factors that contributed to SAMFU's achievements over the years. SAMFU engaged in both bilateral and multilateral networking with several partners on different problems and issues.

## **Success stories 2014-2015.**

SAMFU as a part of the Community Awareness Support Team (CAST) network distributed Ebola materials in Bassa and other counties; because of the distance some villages within (District #1, 2 &4) of Grand Bassa weren't reached. Therefore those communities became SAMFU targeted communities. As part of this awareness and distribution initiative; participants were selected from the districts to form part of the Ebola awareness Team.

Youths were taught on the installation of the faucet to the bucket and to mix chloride and powder soap. The participants reached many communities as possible to share the knowledge gained from the training and distributed the hand washing materials.

There were distributions done also in Bomi and Cape Mount Counties.

## **Management and Administration**

SAMFU is a non-membership organization. It is headed by a 5 member advisory Board of Directors and administered by a management team comprised of Executive Director, two Program Managers, Administrator and Finance Manager. SAMFU has a total of 14 staff in the Monrovia office and seven staff members in the field offices in Zwedru, Fishtown, Buchanan, Medina and Greenville.

## **SAMFU partial staff with Protection International Security Trainer Nora Rehmer**



*Left to right: Maday Johnson, James Makor ,Nora Rehmer, Andrew Tokpa , Ciapha Abule , Tom Torkolon , Samuel Kwennah , Robert Vahn, (back) Flomo Suakolor.*

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## Financial Report

SAMFU received in 2014-15 funds from the following donors:

Donor	Project title	Grant amount in USD
AJWS	Sustainable management of Liberia's natural resources and environmental institutional strengthening support	20,000.00
EU	Civil Society Support to the VPA Implementation	300,000.00
Misereor	Advocate for land with local communities to ensure their land and forest rights within the Sime Darby concession in Grand Cape Mount and Bomi Counties	34,527.00
Trust Africa	Supporting Community Advocacy for Transparent Management of Nature Resources and Development Fund in Grand Bassa	25,000.00
Global Witness	Supporting communities in the concession in Sinoe County	24,722.00
Kindermissionswerk	Educating young Liberians in environmental protection and conflict resolution	28,890.00
USFWS	Community based sea turtle conservation	32,000.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>454,902.05</b>

## ACRONYMS

AJWS	American Jewish World Service
BoD	Board of Directors
CA	Community Animator
CI	Conservation International
CITES	Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEN – L	Development Education Network Liberia
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAWUL	Firestone Allied Workers Union of Liberia
FC	Forest Connect
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
ICCO	Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation
IP	Implementing Partner
IRCL	Inter-religious Council of Liberia
NARDA	New African Research and Development Agency
NAWOCOL	National Women’s
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGO Coalition	Non-Governmental Coalition for Liberia
NICOOP	Network of ICCO Partners
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Product
PMC	Peace Mediation Committee
RHRAP	Rural Human Rights Activists Program
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peace building

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