

Selected FoS Activities 2001-2019

FoS has been active on Socotra since 2001, and has realised many activities on Socotra since. Below are a few examples.

Samha Boat Repair

After two devastating **cyclones** Chapala and Megha affected livelihoods and ecosystems in the Socotra Archipelago in 2015, a direct result of climate change, FoS initiated an immediate **Cyclone Relief** fundraising event for which the funds were all sent to the island for help. In one of the outer islands of the archipelago, cyclones had destroyed fishermen's boats, which provide for livelihoods and food of their families. Samha, being away from the main island, receives very little support overall and living conditions are harsh. In **November 2015**, directly after the worst hit, **Ismael Mohammed** went as a **volunteer** for FoS to Samha with a local skilled boat engineer from Socotra, to organise **boat repair workshops** with the local communities, recycling broken pieces of boats and repair others. In total, **15 damaged boats** were repaired in a community effort while the skills were transferred, two engines were brought back to life, and one family had the loss of their boat compensated. In addition, one family received help for rebuilding a house. For every boat repair, an entire family was helped, therefore in total more than 70 people had a direct benefit from this activity. **The entire activity was implemented by local people from Socotra.** Ismael stated *"Heads of families cried tears of joy when receiving help, as no one had been there to provide any support since the cyclone had hit"*. Total of the Cyclone Relief funds allocated by FoS to the Samha boat repair activity: **1,000 USD**. All Images by Ismael Mohammed for FoS, Samha Island, Socotra Archipelago, Yemen, November 2015.







Ismael Mohamed
FoS



Ismael Mohamed FoS



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FoS

Homhil Soil Restoration Project.

In 2010, FoS supported a **soil restoration project** in **Homhil Nature Sanctuary** where there is severe soil erosion due to overgrazing and loss of vegetation. Walls were built using local rocks in a **traditional Socotran way** together with **local communities** to prevent sediment being washed away during rainfall. Seedlings of one of the endemic frankincense trees, ***Boswellia elongata***, collected from the local area, were planted so their roots would help retain the soil. The seedlings were fenced to protect them from grazing and were watered by the local community. The project was implemented voluntarily by Dana Pietsch and Lisa Banfield from FoS, together with local Socotra plant expert Ahmed Adeeb and the local communities in Homhil. Total FoS budget allocated to the activity: **500 USD**. Photos by Lisa Banfield, Homhil Nature Sanctuary, Socotra Island, Yemen, 2010.



Momi Regeneration Plot.

After two devastating cyclones Chapala and Megh affected livelihoods and ecosystems in the Socotra Archipelago in 2015, a direct result of climate change, FoS initiated an immediate **Cyclone Relief** fundraising event for which the funds were all sent to the island for help. The cyclones heavily affected the **vegetation** of Socotra, by causing direct uprooting of trees, and **erosion** of entire areas where the regeneration is affected by grazing. Joining forces with ARC-WH, FoS funded a vegetation **restoration plot** of 360m² in the **Momi** area on Socotra Island in 2017. The area was chosen because it was structurally damaged and therefore nearly no vegetation was present. In a local community effort, **Ismael Mohamed** (ARC-WH) and **Mohammed Thani** from the local village, established a fenced area to allow natural regeneration by keeping goats out. After just a few months, as soon as the monsoons started, the entire area formed a green patch with no less than **19** different plant species that appeared naturally from seed banks, besides *Aloe* plants that are used by the local community. The entire activity was based on a local initiative and implemented by people from Socotra. The plot is still there, still green and requires some maintenance of the fence. Budget allocated by FoS to the activity from the Cyclone Relief fund: **3,000 USD**. Photos by Ismael Mohamed (ARC-WH), Momi area, Socotra Island, Yemen, February-July 2017.





West Socotra Water Reservoir Repair.

After two devastating cyclones Chapala and Megh affected livelihoods and ecosystems in the Socotra Archipelago in 2015, a direct result of climate change, FoS initiated an immediate **Cyclone Relief** fundraising event for which the funds were all sent to the island for help. In the centre west part of Socotra island, in the **Riyed d-il-Kishin area**, the cyclones had caused enormous structural damage to houses and artificial water reservoirs (kareefs), leaving people homeless (temporarily living in tents) for a while and short of **drinking water**. In April-MAY 2016, FoS joined forces with the Arab Regional Centre (ARC-WH) to realise the funds to carry out hands-on kareef repair workshops with **local communities** and a local **Socotran builder** in the village of Ereh. The entire activity was proposed and carried out by local people from Socotra, under the local coordination by the Ismael Mohamed (ARC-WH) from Socotra. In total, about 100 people in the area benefit from the repair of the reservoirs, of which 60% women and children. The repairs were successful, and the rainwater reservoirs were functional immediately after. Total budget of the water reservoir repair activity and rebuilding a house in Haggeher affected by the cyclones: **3,000 USD**. Photos by Ismael Mohamed (ARC-WH), Riyed d-il-Kishin Area, Socotra Island, Yemen, April 2016.





Tayf Newsletter.

In Socotri, the unique language of the Socotra Archipelago, *tayf* means aloe, a locally much used plant since antiquity. This is also the name of the FoS **Newsletter**, which appears yearly in **English and Arabic** and is distributed on the island as well. In the past, Tayf was a joint publication by FoS and SCF (the Socotra Conservation Fund). The Tayf newsletter is compiled, proofread and translated by members of FoS. It contains general updates on activities on Socotra, and other activities by local and international researchers which carry out research or projects on the islands. The newsletter is open to local people from Socotra to write about initiatives related to nature and culture, and is a great **awareness** tool. Tayf has been published since the beginning of FoS, when it was still named Dioscorida. A digital version will also be distributed through whatsapp on Socotra in the coming years. All editing, compilation, writing and lay-out is done voluntarily by FoS members. Since 2018, design and lay-out were done by Alan Forrest (RBGE), before that by Sue Christie, and Arabic translation by Isam Thabet, proofreading Miranda Morris. All issues are available online at the FoS website. Total recurrent cost of Tayf, including translation, printing, shipment and distribution each year is approximately **1,000 USD**.



Socotra is not a Souvenir

Socotra is frequented by visitors that either bring in animals and plants, or that export animals and plants without a permit. In 2010, FoS joined forces with SGBP (UNDP) and EPA Socotra to develop a poster in English/Arabic to remind visitors that export of plants and animals is not allowed on Socotra according to Yemeni law, as stated in the Socotra Conservation Zoning Plan of 2000. Posters and stickers were brought to the island voluntarily by FoS members (traveling at own cost) and distributed by UNDP and EPA among ecotourism guides, in airport and other places, and facilitated local conservationists on Socotra to politely point out local laws by pointing at the image. Total contribution to the activity by FoS was **500 USD** for printing. Design by Bohdana Rambouskova (former communication officer at SGBP) and FoS, 2010.



سقطري ليست هدية تذكارية

أعزائي السواح :
مرحباً بكم في جزيرة سقطري، ومن أجل استمتاعكم بإقامة سعيدة يرجى منكم
الأخذ بعين الاعتبار أنه لايسمح بإخراج أي مواد طبيعية معكم خارج الجزيرة.

SOCOTRA IS NOT A SOUVENIR

DEAR TOURISTS,
WELCOME TO SOCOTRA ISLAND.
IN ORDER TO FULLY ENJOY YOUR STAY PLEASE
KEEP IN MIND THAT YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED
TO TAKE ANY NATURAL MATERIALS
BACK HOME.

لا تلمس، وخذ صورة فقط

لا تقوم بجمع الشعاب المرجانية، صدف البحر، عظام الأسماك ورمال الشواطئ. فتصديرها ممنوع
بحسب اتفاقية سايتس الدولية.

محاولة تجميع الكائنات النباتية أو الحيوانية حية أو ميتة بما في ذلك بذور النباتات غير مسموح به وتصديرها
يعتبر محاولة تهريب. كما أن الاصطياد غير مسموح به في سقطري.

فضلاً: عليك مراعاة الحياة البرية وبيئاتها والمصادر الطبيعية وتذكر دائماً الاهتمام بها وعدم تدميرها.

أهلاً بك في سقطري ويمكنك ان تحصل على منتجات محلية مثل قصوص دم الاخوين، اللبان، المر، الصبر،
التمور السقطرية، الدواء التقليدي والعسل السقطري. حيث يسمح لك باصطحابها إلى بلدك.

Don't touch, just take a photo

Do not collect **corals, sea shells, fish bones or beach sand**. Their export is prohibited by the international convention CITES.

Any attempt to collect or export **animals or plants (including seeds), living or dead, is illegal** and will be considered smuggling. Hunting is illegal on Socotra.

Please respect wildlife, natural features and habitats and take care not to disturb them.

You are welcome to buy local products such as **dragon blood resin, myrrh, frankincense, aloe sap, traditional medicinal products, and Socotri honey**. It is legal to take these to your home country.

  

The poster was created by Socotra Governance & Biodiversity Project and Friends of Socotra with authorization of the Environment Protection Authority.
تم عمل الملصق من قبل مشروع دعم المؤسسات والتمتع الحيوي وأصدقاء سقطري بترخيص
من الهيئة العامة لحماية البيئة

Socotra Folk Museum in Riqeleh

In Riqeleh on Socotra Island, there is a small local initiative, a small Socotra folklore museum. On the way from the airport to Hadiboh, there is a sign pointing to Riqeleh before entering the capital. In 2009, FoS supported the Riqeleh museum financially. Also, a laminated book with old photos from Socotra was prepared and donated to the museum on Socotra, voluntarily. The museum is still there, worth a visit. Photo by Kay Van Damme, Riqeleh, Socotra Island, March 2010.



Mangrove Regeneration Plot

After two devastating cyclones Chapala and Megh affected livelihoods and ecosystems in the Socotra Archipelago in 2015, a direct result of climate change, FoS initiated an immediate **Cyclone Relief** fundraising event for which the funds were all sent to the island for help. In the north coast of the main island, natural mangrove stands have disappeared for decades, and these have been heavily affected by the cyclones in the West of Socotra. However, mangroves can reduce impacts from cyclones by reducing coastal erosion, form productive nurseries for young fish, and function as important carbon sinks. In 2018, FoS joined forces with ARC-WH and EPA Socotra to support a local association from Ghubbah that focuses on mangrove restoration, the Al Tamek Association for the Protection of the Mangrove Tree, a purely Socotran NGO and initiative. Mangrove seedlings from the West of Socotra were used to start small mangrove nurseries in several areas in Ghubbah. A 70x70m fenced plot was established to grow and protect young trees from grazing, with buckets to protect against foraging by crabs. The sustainable activity is ongoing, and in April 2019 over 80 small trees were growing healthy in the newly planted mangrove stand. Total contribution by FoS from the Cyclone Relief fund in 2018: **2,400 USD**. In 2019, FoS handed another 800 USD to the Al Tamek Association for establishing more trees, increasing the mangrove stand and further maintenance of the plots. Photos by Kay Van Damme, Ghubbah, Socotra Island, Yemen, April 2019.





Environmental Awareness Ayhaft and Omak

A recently growing environmental and development issue on Socotra is the lack of a functional structured waste management, resulting in ever expanding plastic waste belts on the beaches and along roads and towns. The issue is larger in the north than in the south. In April 2019, FoS joined forces with a local Socotra organisation called the Yemen Foundation for Renaissance and Development in Socotra (YFRDS) during an environmental awareness activity in local villages in Wadi Ayhaft and in a school near Omak in the Noked Area. In Wadi Ayhaft, rubbish was collected from the Wadi and transported back to Hadiboh to the dump site. In Noked's largest school a total of 43 pupils age 14-16, of which 40% girls, gathered in a classroom to discuss the impacts of waste, recycling, and how clean environment is linked with good health on Socotra. The entire activity was carried out by local people from Socotra, in presence of FoS. Contribution by FoS to the activity **400 USD**. Photos by Kay Van Damme, Wadi Ayhaft and Omak school, Socotra Island, Yemen, April 2019.





FoS AGM and Socotra Conference

Since 2001, FoS has organised an annual meeting for members, linked to a small conference on Socotra. It is the only annual meeting about Socotra taking place outside the Archipelago, and in 2018 this meeting was organised for the first time in the Arab World, hosted by ARC-WH in Bahrain. The meeting in 2019 is in Palermo, Sicily. Each year, these meetings bring together people from Socotra and other areas in Yemen, meeting with the FoS volunteers and members, to exchange the latest news on nature and culture conservation, and updates on projects and scientific developments. Last year, ca. 75 attendants joined the FoS meeting, of which 13 women and men from Socotra, all local champions in nature and culture conservation issues.



