



Slamson Ghana, Ltd.
Company Bio
Updated: February 1, 2017

Summary. Slamson Ghana, Ltd. became an incorporated Ghanaian company in February 2012 with the aim to provide low-cost and technically sustainable solutions for the waste management and energy sectors in low- and middle-income countries. From 2012 to the present Slamson has worked on some of the most difficult environmental and social challenges facing Ghana today, including liquid waste management, organic compost and charcoal production, clean water, e-waste, and landfill gas. Slamson's key personnel is a diverse group who have both local and international experience in not-for-profit initiatives, social enterprise, and public-private partnerships. Slamson's team is comprised of a number of leaders from local ethnic groups who have strong skills in organizational management, and who can easily overcome the sociocultural barriers that many foreign and domestic organizations face in attempting to realize a for-profit or not-for-profit venture.

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The Origins of Slamson: Liquid Waste Management

Pilot plant, 2013-2015

The first project that Slamson embarked upon was in partnership with the Accra Municipal Assembly (AMA) to construct a small-scale pilot plant for the treatment of approximately 600 m³ of septic waste per day in Accra's city centre. The aim of this original site was to test the viability and sustainability of an environmentally and socially safe alternative to the dumping of raw septic waste onto the beach at the infamous Lavender Hill site. Lavender Hill sits adjacent to two of the most densely populated communities in Accra, Jamestown and the Old Fadama slum (known as Sodom and Gomorrah). Many high level stakeholders (EPA, AMA, President's Office) have recognized the urgent need to correct the practice of dumping raw waste onto the shores of these communities.

Slamson provided a turn-key solution for the management of faecal sludge, a low-cost solution that could be constructed in a short period of time (3-4 months), and operate with very little technical expertise. The pilot facility, built on the Mudor treatment site at the Korle Lagoon (across from Lavender Hill), was commissioned in March 2013. Overall, this pilot project was a success under the management and leadership of Slamson Ghana, Ltd. Slamson handed over the pilot site to AMA in June 2015 as stipulated in the original contract.



Resource Recovery: Organic Compost & Charcoal

During the time that Slamson managed the site at the Korle Lagoon from 2013 to 2015, the company investigated a number of options so that the resources produced by the plant (reject water and dried solids) could be recovered and recycled into useful products. In addition to sourcing the most effective technologies to recycle and purify reject water in an urbanized setting, Slamson was able to adapt technologies used around the world for the production of organic compost and charcoal. With the necessary adaptations made to accommodate the challenges presented by the local context (unreliable energy supply, lack of funding, unavailability of personnel and parts for specialized technologies), Slamson has produced low-cost and technically simple solutions for the production of both organic compost and charcoal.

The charcoal production has generated considerable interest locally and internationally because of its potential to mitigate the harmful environmental and social effects brought on by massive deforestation in Ghana and in other low- and middle-income countries, where the majority of the population (often >60%) uses firewood and wood-derived charcoal as its main energy source. Further, Slamson's success with providing low-cost and technically sustainable solutions to liquid waste management in a developing context attracted the attention of international agencies. Slamson has received funding from both a Danish development agency (Danida) for a complete faecal sludge treatment facility, and a Dutch development agency (RVO) for the construction and operation of an adjacent compost facility in Accra.

Going Forward: Closing Lavender Hill

Upon understanding the environmental, social and commercial potential for a treatment plant focused on "resource recovery", Slamson and AMA signed a contract in June 2015. Slamson is responsible for constructing and operating an additional site on the existing land at Lavender Hill to treat another 800 m³ of septic waste per day. With a public-private partnership in place (AMA-Slamson-EPA), Danida has guaranteed \$2.3 million of funding for this project.

In addition, Slamson is working with AMA and EPA as the lead partner on the RVO-funded project, called Bola Bondeh. Slamson will use the dried solids from the Lavender Hill treatment plant to produce organic compost that will first be sold to the local market for urban and peri-urban agricultural activities. Slamson's five-year plan is to produce enough compost for both national and international markets, and thus, to have waste treatment in Accra operate on a cost recovery basis.



Key to Slamson's success in Ghana: Personnel

The key to Slamson's success are due to its personnel, who exhibit both visionary leadership and a profound understanding of the local cultural, political, economic and social forces that influence the sustainability or failure of any venture, whether for-profit or not.

Backgrounds of Key Personnel (pre-2012)

First, Slamson's founder and CEO, Fredrik Sunesson, arrived to Ghana in 2007 with over 15 years of not-for-profit experience in developing contexts. He worked in a variety of countries affected by political instability, war and historical underdevelopment, such as Russia, Bosnia, India, Georgia (former USSR), and several countries in Southeast Asia. Over the course of his not-for-profit career, he led projects at the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF, often known as the World Wildlife Fund), and at World Vision International.

It was at World Vision where Fredrik spent most of his not-for-profit career, polishing his skills in community and organizational development. His strength as a non-profit manager laid in his ability to engage people around a cause, and bring together local citizens and leaders with those responsible for development and the allocation of funds at the national and international level. His dynamic personality and confident presence facilitated his ability to work in local communities and assemble effective teams from the local population.

Upon leaving the not-for-profit sector, Fredrik focused his vision on social enterprise. In 2007, he became the director of BonVi Ghana in Tamale, Ghana. In this role, Fredrik shifted his focus from aid to financial independence by working with over 800 women from local communities, many of whom did not have many educational opportunities. Here, Fredrik became highly knowledgeable about the sociocultural realities that make implementing development and commercial projects a challenge in Ghana (e.g. chiefdoms, local politics, health and gender issues). It was also here that Fredrik recruited young, local staff who exhibited leadership skills and a strong work ethic, staff who would follow him to Accra and become central to the development of Slamson Ghana, Ltd.

In Tamale, Fredrik met a young man, Sampson Sayibu, whose name was locally known because of his success as a Davis Cup player (tennis) for Ghana. Fredrik came to know Sampson as a unique individual among other men of his age; someone with basic education, but who had natural problem-solving and leadership abilities. Fredrik first recruited Sampson to manage the BonVi warehouse, and then quickly promoted Sampson to a management position where he was responsible for daily operations and over 800 female micro-entrepreneurs.

In addition to Sampson, Fredrik recruited Paul Thomas, a young man who also had established a local reputation as an amateur boxer. Although Paul did not exhibit the strong



organizational skills of Sampson, Paul had a very strong work ethic, extremely well-developed interpersonal skills, and strong ties to many of the local ethnic communities through his personal charm and ability to speak English and six local languages.

Roles & Responsibilities, Slamson Ghana Ltd. (2012 to present)

The origins of Slamson included Sampson and Paul as key members of the team. Together, Fredrik, Sampson and Paul relocated to Accra to begin Slamson Ghana, Ltd. Since then, additional team members have been added with expertise in communications, project development and operations.

Fredrik Sunesson, CEO: In addition to providing the overall guidance and vision to the company, Fredrik has been responsible for developing more formal relations with the major stakeholders in Accra's sanitation sector, including AMA, EPA, Zoomlion, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the Ministry of Environment, and the President's Office at Flagstaff House. He also has developed business relationships with local companies who could provide materials and service for his treatment plants at lower costs than those involved in importing. With persistence and patience, Fredrik has well-established personal contacts at AMA, EPA and in the federal government who are as committed as he is to both closing down Lavender Hill, and improving the environmental and social impact of poor waste management in Ghana. He also has a broad network of local suppliers and civil works providers who can supply Slamson's needs for future waste management projects.

Sampson Sayibu, Managing Director: Sam immediately showed his leadership skills through becoming a very effective manager of the construction and subsequent daily operations of the pilot site, and was quickly promoted to the Managing Director of Slamson. In addition to his full-time responsibilities at Slamson, and as a new father, Sam began night school in 2013, and in 2015, he received his Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). In September 2015, he began classes at the University of Applied Management (Germany, Ghana campus) towards an MBA.

Paul Thomas, Operations Co-ordinator: In his role at Slamson, Paul developed strong relations with local communities and other local individuals involved in the waste community. He was central in recruiting on-site staff from the local community. This staff has provided an element of local respect and security to the site, an aspect crucial to having local communities buy in to a formal sector solution to a problem that already has a well-established (but often informal) system of management. Paul also has been central in managing septic truck drivers, a group known to be volatile, who often work in Accra's informal sanitation sector. Paul is central for smooth operations of any local project because of his commanding presence (physique), and



his skill to appropriately negotiate and mitigate conflicts with different ethnic groups in a number of local languages.

Danielle Thomas, PhD., Research, Communications, and Project Development: Danielle comes to Slamson with over 10 years of experience in managing laboratory and community-based research programs and teaching language and communications at Canadian and US universities. With Slamson, Danielle provides guidance in the areas of project management and design, communications, documentation and reporting, and quantitative and qualitative analysis for monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Together, Fredrik, Sampson, and the rest of the Slamson team can provide sustainable solutions to some of the most serious environmental and social challenges related to sanitation and energy provision in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Other Projects: Water, E-Waste & Landfill Gas

In addition to Slamson's central focus on providing solutions to liquid waste management at Lavender Hill, the company has been involved in three other main projects focused on providing low-cost and sustainable solutions to the environmental and social challenges associated with clean water, e-waste and landfill gas.

Clean Water

First, in observing various challenges in the Korle Lagoon community where they were setting up their pilot wastewater treatment site in 2013, Slamson became involved in a grassroots clean water project in the Old Fadama slum (Hydraid.org). The aim of this project was to sell a low-cost home water purification system to residents of the slum, who were a high risk for contracting water-borne disease.

One of the biggest challenges in implementing any development initiative in this particular area is overcoming social and cultural barriers that lie between the slum residents and outsiders. The Old Fadama slum is tight-knit community of a number of primarily northern ethnic groups who were displaced as a result of the Konkomba and Nanumba war in 1995. As low income housing options in Accra have become increasingly limited, and the slum has developed its own market opportunities, the size and scope of (informal) commercial activities in the slum have expanded. This has brought with it rivalries among the different ethnic groups vying for a prominent role in residential and commercial activities in the slum. As such, slum residents are not only reluctant to deal with outsiders, but they often find themselves in conflicts with other community members due to the varying interests of competing ethnic and commercial groups.



For the clean water initiative, Slamson was able to gain the acceptance and trust of the slum residents because its key personnel, Sampson and Paul, were from the north, and had the skills (e.g. cultural, linguistic) to deal with many of the challenges related to mediating among the competing ethnic groups of the Old Fadama community. Most specifically, Sampson, Slamson's MD, developed a good relationship with many residents of the slum, who entrusted him with access to the community. With this access, he was able to identify key leaders who could influence the rest of the community, thereby leading to success of the project.

E-Waste

Later in 2013, Slamson was approached by Ericsson, the Swedish telecommunications company, to help conduct a feasibility study for a corporate sustainability program. They were interested in establishing a program that dealt with the challenges of e-waste in Africa. Again, Slamson's key personnel facilitated access to the e-waste stakeholders in the Agbogbloshie market, and assisted in a pre-feasibility exercise. Although Ericsson did not launch their corporate e-waste program in Ghana, they went on to use the information to establish successful e-waste programs in collaboration with MTN in Ivory Coast and Benin. Nevertheless, Slamson has always maintained a strong network with Ericsson, who has indicated that if the opportunity arose, they would be interested in pursuing a similar type of initiative in Accra.

Recently in February 2016, Slamson received a contract from GIZ (German development agency) as the local expert on a 5,000,000 euro e-waste initiative that aims to bring real sustainable change to the e-waste practices in the Agbogbloshie community of Accra, one of the world's largest e-waste dumps. The treatment of e-waste in Accra is predominantly an industry operating in the informal sector. It is a well-organized and dynamic industry that functions to provide quick cash flow to all actors involved. Changing this complex and well-organized industry has proved challenging for all those who have come before.

In a short time, Slamson was able to provide a detailed overview of previous initiatives and studies examining the e-waste practices in the slum, and examine these in relation to what is currently happening inside the community. Focused on the most practical aspects of the industry, Slamson's personnel has compiled information, and continues to compile information that outsiders (even Ghanaians) may not have access to, through a well-developed network in the Old Fadama slum.

Further, Slamson is the first to use gender as an independent indicator in analyzing how the current e-waste practices affect women and girls, and more importantly how a more formalized sector will affect women and girls differently from men and boys. As a "male-dominated" industry, females, who dominate informal sector economic activities in Accra, are not likely to



receive the better working conditions or social benefits that men working in the informal e-waste sector will receive. As such, any initiative to formalize and improve working conditions in e-waste (for men) should incorporate a specific plan to also provide equal opportunities for women to participate in formal sector activities that promise better social conditions for those living and working in the community.

Slamson will continue to work with GIZ as they go forward in their efforts to determine the most appropriate ways to mitigate the severe environmental and social hazards that the e-waste industry present to the local population and the continent overall.

Landfill Gas

Further to Slamson's work in the water and e-waste sectors, the company also began investigating low-cost and simple technologies that could tackle the problem of landfill gas in Ghana. Currently, there are a large number of landfills in Ghana that have no solution in place to treat the build-up of dangerous gases, especially methane, that result from the breakdown of organic waste. As Ghana continues on a course of rapid urbanization, these landfills, which often are situated on or near land sought for development, present serious hazards if the gases are not properly released before any development projects begin.

Slamson has sourced a simple and low-cost technology from a Danish engineer who travelled to Ghana in June 2014 to assist Slamson with baseline work on a local adaptation of the technology. Further, Slamson travelled to Denmark in August 2014 with company representatives (Fredrik and Sam) and a representative from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (Mr. Daniel Kabe) in order to observe the operation and construction of the technology.

Most recently, Slamson was awarded a permit from the Energy Commission of Ghana (ECG) to extract landfill gas and sell it to the national grid. This practice is consistent with Ghana's Renewable Energy Act, which requires that 10% of all consumer energy come from renewable sources. Armed with their license and the technology, Slamson began discussions in 2015 with J. Stanley-Owusu, owners of a number of landfill sites in Ghana, to implement this low-cost and low-tech solution for extracting methane gas from their landfill sites, and selling it to ECG's national grid.

This project, which aims to increase the energy supply and provide for public safety, is consistent with Slamson's vision to be involved not only in waste management, but as a leader in resource recovery.



To see how Slamson can help you with your project, contact Fredrik Sunesson.

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