



## JOURNEY TO BOGOTÁ

At the expense of the Small World Foundation a team of seven representatives flew again to Bogotá to attend the next meeting at the Colombian National Land agency (*Agencia Nacional de Tierras – ANT*) about the recognition of the ancestral lands of San Martín de Amacayacu and Palmeras as an indigenous reserve. The question of whether being recognised as an independent reserve or as an extension of the existing TICOYA reserve is of no importance anymore. The priority at the moment is that it definitely becomes recognised, no matter how.

During this meeting they also spoke about the recognition of the lands of the five communities around Puerto Nariño: Valencia, Puerto Esperanza, 20 de Julio, Patrullero and Ticoya (Newsletter 58).

The outcome of the meeting was very simple: the ANT apologised for the delay, everything is going smoothly and the ANT has finished the correct excel format for the population census. In 2019 we already started collecting a lot of data and therefore saved a lot of time and effort. However, in order to fulfil the new criteria of the ANT we need to again collect new information: they now also need the data about education, income and the rates of birth and death.

We secretly asked ourselves why they thought this meeting was so extremely important since they could have informed us about these matters on the phone. It is quite a pity that it has cost us so much money. On the other hand we know that this is simply the way things are

done in Colombia and that it can be very helpful to show your face. It was also a good occasion to let more people be directly involved in the procedures of the application so that they can experience the way these things work. These applications are not always understood by the local community, especially when they have to wait so long for the results.

The ANT suggested that they will give a few workshops in the communities in April, about the new and quite complex excel format for the population census. But then COVID-19 came...



This time the team from San Martin de Amacayacu again made use of the journey to Bogotá to clear up things about the CO<sub>2</sub> negotiations between the TICOYA indigenous reserve and [Southpole](#).

At the ministry of environment our team met the representatives of RENARE (*Registro Nacional de Reducción de Emisiones de Gases Efecto Invernadero* - National register for the reduction of greenhouse gas emission). During this meeting it became clear to us that the trade Southpole had done in the CO<sub>2</sub> amounts of the TICOYA reserve is illegal. Southpole misused the inexperience of the people of the TICOYA reserve and was so smart to make a contract that was full of vague descriptions to be signed. Certain information that, according to the law, must be registered at the ministry of environment did not even seem to be existing.

The ideal solution would be to make the contract be declared invalid but this costs a lot of money. The TICOYA reserve does not have this money, and the Small World Foundation does not wish and cannot finance this. The only way would be to find a new partner who could advance the money till a new CO<sub>2</sub> contract is made that would enable the loan to

be paid back. This case would have been studied in the weeks after the meetings in Bogotá because we are sure that it is possible to find a new partner. But then COVID-19 came....



## COVID-19 IN THE AMAZONE

Also Colombia came in touch with COVID-19 in the middle of March. What first seemed to be a problem in far Europe and Asia suddenly seemed to shut down all the domestic flights in Colombia and therefore the entire economy of the country. The region around Leticia is difficult to control because of all the border-crossings with Peru and Brazil. A lot of products that are consumed in this region of Colombia arrive from these countries and since the prices will probably rise this will have dramatic consequences for people who were already living in poverty. A red flag is hung at the house as a sign of hunger and those families will be given food packages by the government.

The first existing cases in Leticia (Col.) and Tabatinga (Bra.) of COVID-19 are from after the 16<sup>th</sup> of April and it is only after this date that the epidemic became a topic in the Colombian indigenous communities at the Amazon river. For the time being there are no cases of Ticuna people infected in Colombia. Although people are not travelling a lot anymore, people are still working together at the farms and playing soccer at the field. Easter was celebrated in a totally packed church and sometimes meetings still take place.

Tourism has completely stalled since the 18<sup>th</sup> of March and therefore people have no income anymore at the moment.

This brings people back to a life like 10 years ago, when people were still living from farming, hunting and fishing. The people who once swapped the community for a life in the city are now coming back to the communities because unlike in the city there is food to be found. The people in the communities seem not to realise that in this way the communities are in danger of being infected.

## NEW DOCK

At the end of October 2019 the Small World Foundation received an e-mail from a Spanish couple who wanted to raise funding for a floating dock in the community. They had visited the community as tourists earlier last year and noticed that there was no dock where the boats could be tied up to. They decided to create a crowdfunding: [gf.me/u/w732amj](https://gf.me/u/w732amj).

The €1000 that was needed was raised in no time and soon the dock constructor of the community of San Juan de Soco was contacted. With this money, he said, it was possible to build a beautiful dock with even a roof! After the dock was finished it took two more months before it reached the port of San Martin because the level of the river was too low for it to be dragged to the community. It has been here since March and everyone is extremely happy with it (it is also an excellent place to do the laundry!). Aleksandra and Guille, thank you very, very much!



## VISIT BY OPEN DEMOCRACY

At the end of February the community was visited by a team of journalists and photographers from [OpenDemocracy](#). This organisation is making a special series of video and photo portraits of indigenous people in the Amazon who are protecting their ancestral lands. The environmental patrol of San Martin de Amacayacu being of course a very good example of the latest, spent five days with them “on the road” to show them their work. A part of their series was recently published in the [Washington Post](#). We are now waiting for the publication of the story about San Martin de Amacayacu and will keep you updated!



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**Would you like to help the Small World Foundation to support the people of the indigenous community San Martin de Amacayacu and keep updated about the local developments in this far corner of Colombia?**

You can transfer a yearly amount of 15 euros (or more...!) to:

**Rabobank IBAN: NL28RABO0132726203**

**Bankaccount name: Stichting SMALL WORLD FOUNDATION** at Baarle-Nassau,

Under the reference of ‘newsletter’ and Your Name (BIC: RABONL2U)

Or check out the online contribution module on [www.smallworldfoundation.org/?page\\_id=68](http://www.smallworldfoundation.org/?page_id=68)

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