



COVID-19 IN THE AMAZON

In many places all over the world COVID-19 came into view in the month of February. Strongly recommended by the embassy of his homecountry it was on the 18th of March that the last tourist left San Martin de Amacayacu. A few days later, on the 21st of march, the first cases of COVID-19 were reported in the cities of Manaus (Brazil) and Iquitos (Peru).

On the 15th of April it started to come closer when a few cases were reported in Tabatinga (Brazil) and two days later it was Leticia's turn to report the first two cases. In the moment of writing there are around 2000 cases in Leticia and there have been 60 deaths. These numbers are rising but also the number of people recovering is now already more then 1000. Leticia has a population of 50.000 inhabitants. Also in the indigenous communities there have been people infected. In San Martin de Amacayacu there have been



reported 33 cases in the beginning of June. Most people experienced a heavy flew and till now everyone is recovering well. Most people find it difficult to keep distance, but the elderly people have escaped into the forest and are living in simple huts near their agriculture plots.

Due to the epidemic many people here have lost their jobs. From the second half of May slowly the government and a few private individuals started to send help to Leticia, including food, facemasks and disinfectants. In general the people in the indigenous communities like San Martin de Amacayacu might be better off during the quarantine than the people living in Leticia. More people engage into the work on the farming fields and they are enjoying to hunt and fish more. Luckily the water is high now and there is a lot of fish and wild game. The schools are closed but the around 50 children of the secondary school are receiving homework through Whatsapp. The Small World Foundation is helping them by printing out the tasks and sending the finished homework to the schools.



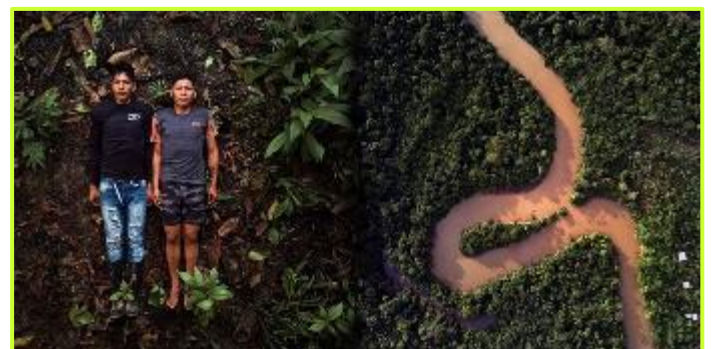


It is through Whatsapp, Facebook and radio that news is communicated in this region. In the beginning of June people started to worry less about and soon all the shops in Tabatinga were opening. In this moment in San Martin de Amacayacu people are spending a lot of time on the fish ponds. The water of the rivers is going to go down which means the fish ponds can be drained and cleaned. At the beginning of the dry season there is a period in which the fish do not have enough oxygen in the rivers and therefore they swim very close to the surface. The small fish of around 10 cm can easily be caught and thrown out into the fish pods.



BEST PHOTOGRAPHER IN THE WORLD

At the end of February we were visited by the photographer [Pablo Albarenga](#) (Newsletter 90, last page, bottom right, plaid shirt. Instagram: pabloa.photo) and the team of OpenDemocracy, who came to make a documentary about the Environmental Patrol of San Martin de Amacayacu. We are really proud to tell you that he has been voted the winner of the Sony World Photography Award with this series "[Seeds of Resistance](#)" made in the Amazon. The pictures in these series were made with a drone and they show the protectors of the rainforest lying on their back next to their lands.





REFORESTATION

Before the COVID-19 outbreak there used to be a very special restaurant in the city of Medellín called "[La Chagra](#)" (Instagram: lachagra / chefjuansa – Facebook: La Chagra Saberes Amazonicos). In the Amazon a chagra means a field. The owner of the restaurant Juan Santiago Gallego, having a big passion for the Amazon, served all kinds of plates with ingredients from the Amazon. What makes this restaurant so special is that clients would be invited to donate for the preservation of the rainforest of the Amazon. For COP 2.000 (€0,60) it was possible to sponsor one tree. Last march he was our guest in San Martin de Amacayacu where he wished to learn more about the gastronomy of this region. He went to the agriculture fields with the local people to harvest the products and afterwards cook the different meals together. During his visit a small group also discussed with him about the reforestation project. Given that the collecting of money for this project at the restaurant had stopped they wanted to find new ways to find sponsors. They decided to make each of the 2000 trees that were already funded traceable

for the donors. Therefore the trees were all given a plastic label made of used plastic items and on each of these labels a number was carved. The numbers were connected to the names of the donors and to keep track of this an excel document was made including all the details about the type of tree, the date of planting, the planter of the tree, etc. The trees that are being planted now are from all sort of types and have different purposes: good quality of wood, leaves for the roofs, fruits and medicine. The plastic used for the numbering of the trees will have to be removed and the numbers must be carved on the trees so that no plastic is left in the forest. Luckily the environmental patrol of San Martin de Amacayacu is, as always, coordinating all these activities with a lot of dedication.

The restaurant has unfortunately gone bankrupt but Juan Santiago is at the moment trying to raise a media campaign that shows all the good initiatives that are being done, even during the quarantine, in order to help the Amazon. We will keep you informed!

ANT PROCEDURE

COVID-19 has, of course, a dramatic effect on the process of the landapplication. The locals are doing an incredible effort to press for the ANT to continue the activities as was agreed in the meetings in March. They accept that in this situation it is not possible to proceed with some activities as, for example, the population census in the communities. Other agreements, though, like the study of the social and economic situation of the communities and the development of the landmaps do not need to be delayed and therefore they are trying to make sure that progress is being made. It was needed to send many messages and maps to the ANT before it was clear for them again which agreements about the recognition of the ancestral lands had already been made in previous years.

Finally we found out that an important part of the information had dissapeard when INCODER changed into ANT in 2015-2016. In

order to clear this up they have now planned a meeting through Whatsapp in the third week of June. Hopefully this will help to make everything proceed again smoothly.



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

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