



60

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2015

the small world foundation

SLOW START SAN MARTIN

After some computer trouble, a very bad internet connection and a very busy personal life is the 60th Small World Foundation newsletter now ready! Hurray! Before reaching this mile post, we would have loved to confirm the official recognition of the ancestral lands of the Tikuna community San Martin de Amacayacu as an indigenous reserve. But unfortunately, the reality in countries like Colombia and areas like the Amazon is simply very much different and more complicated than you can imagine.

For example, we could not believe last September that the INCODER (www.incoder.gov.co – Colombian Institute for Rural Development) representatives really required a meeting of all 22 communities of the Tikuna Cocama Yagua reserve to ask for permission for San Martin's proposal. After all, had they not said before that this was not legally necessary? Still, in this case everyone understands we had to obey immediately!

Within a few weeks and despite the great stress brought on by such a big event (because everything can still go completely wrong!!) we managed to organise the Wone Congress in the community Doce de Octubre. At such moments, we thank everyone who supports us yearly so much: Thanks to these funds in the Netherlands we could finance and organise the Congress from A to Z, just as expected by INCODER and with a positive result for San Martin. The INCODER is now the one having to take action...

Two attentive readers asked us how we could possibly spend €6.568 on "meetings" (newsletter 59). We agree that such a number in a table says very little. Fortunately, we have this newsletter to get back to it. The Wone Congress was held for 22 communities and other entities involved (indigenous organisations, the INCODER team, Ministry of Justice etc.). With an average about 10 to 15 people per community, it was a total of about 350 people, whose transport (fuel) was paid and

for who there had to be enough food and drink for almost three days. We also hired sound and video equipment. In total, the event cost nearly 4000 euro. No expenses were saved, because it would be "an ultimate step" according to the INCODER. And actually, it was quite efficient, because it ends up representing roughly only 4 euro a person a day!

The rest, about €2.568, was spent on other meetings with the INCODER and Colombian National Parks in Bogotá, with the Amacayacu National Park in San Martin itself, and with other organisations in San Martin or Leticia.

It is now up to the INCODER to take a decision and there is no real argument to wait any longer. However, the INCODER is also a political entity with interests and concerns! An important interest for Colombia at the moment is mining and oil. And it is a fact that many of these resources are located under the ancestral lands of the indigenous peoples. The result is to be guessed. There is not much political will to recognise these areas as indigenous reserves, because it could make access to these resources a whole lot more complicated...

There will be a meeting again with the INCODER team in Bogotá half April, but at the moment of this writing, it is still unsure whether this team has remained the same. Usually, government entities like Colombian National Parks and the INCODER only really get going somewhere half march. Talking about a slow start...

With this writing we would like to emphasize how crucial your contribution has been for the organisation of ad hoc local activities and of course we will keep you posted about the latest developments!

TOURISM SUPPORTS KINDERGARDEN TUÍRUPÜ

With a bit of persistence, we'll get there! Travel agency Kumanday (www.kumanday.com) visited San Martín last year for a day with a Colombian high school class. With a lot of enthusiasm they made their first donation for kindergarden Tuírupü (still under construction at the time): A little backpack with school supplies for each child. The ice quickly melted and this year Kumanday and the high school announced their arrival way beforehand with the desire to make the kindergarden their social project in the long term. And they asked what the immediate needs were.

In newsletter 54 we already mentioned the wish to acquire an efficient gas stove (instead of cooking on fire) and kindergarden teacher Miriam did not succeed in getting one from Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar - ICBF). This entity only agreed on a gas cylinder. So Kumanday and the high school class raised money and donated the gas stove; Thanks everyone!!

And again there was a small backpack for each child. After the kindergarden cultural presentation the kids made a drawing with the high school students.

There is no intention to make the kindergarden a tourist attraction. Even so, incidental contacts such as this one can provide a nice opportunity for the students from Manizales to realize how things are in other parts of their country and for Tuírupü to get a little step ahead. Exactly three days later the ICBF randomly visited the kindergarden. Now, teacher Miriam was holding a stronger position than the ICBF itself, because the gas cylinder is not there yet of course! There was an engaged discussion and eventually it was decided that the ICBF is going to have a serious look at the possibility to add an assistant for the kindergarden. Almost 30 children aged between 2 and 4 is just simply a bit too much for one teacher! And a gas cylinder of course...



SPECIAL PROJECT 2015!

After three meetings in San Martin de Amacayacu with representatives of the Colombian United Nations Human Rights Office it has been decided to launch a special Small World Foundation and Fundación Téchiwa project for 2015. The goal of this project is to protect the Tikuna ancestral lands in Colombia, Brasil and Peru from mining (gold, gravel, oil) and infrastructure (roads and canals in the region). The United Nations representatives emphasize the need to exert the indigenous people's rights in advance and put their position black on white, before the presentation and development of these projects is actually happening. Basically these projects only need permission of the local indigenous population and with a bit of money this is sometimes an easy case. Specifically this project is to organise a trinational meeting of (mostly) Tikuna representatives, from which clear arguments and documents result that can be used in advance and immediately in case any entity arrives in a community for mining or infrastructure. You'll soon hear more!!



Would you like to support the Tikuna indigenous community of San Martin together with the Small World Foundation, and stay in touch about the local developments in this remote corner of Colombia?

Please transfer 15 euro yearly (or more!) to the following bank account in the Netherlands:

Account name: Stichting SMALL WORLD FOUNDATION
SWIFT/BIC Code: RABONL2U
IBAN code: NL28 RABO 0132 7262 03

Or check out the online contribution module on: www.smallworldfoundation.org/?page_id=68

Please DON'T FORGET TO INFORM US ABOUT YOUR NAME AND EMAIL ADDRESS!!
(heike_van_gils@hotmail.com)

The contributions will be spent exclusively on the development and realization of local initiatives in San Martin de Amacayacu in the Colombian Amazon. No wages are being paid to anyone. The expenses will be mentioned as much as possible in the newsletters. For alternative contributions, please contact Heike van Gils at: heike_van_gils@hotmail.com.

For more information about this initiative, please check the website:
www.smallworldfoundation.org.