

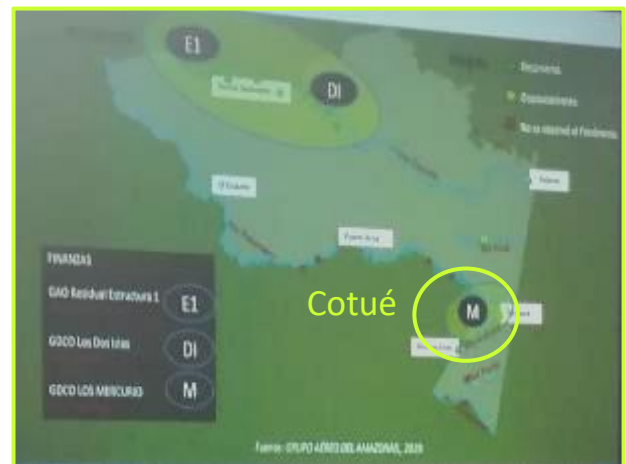
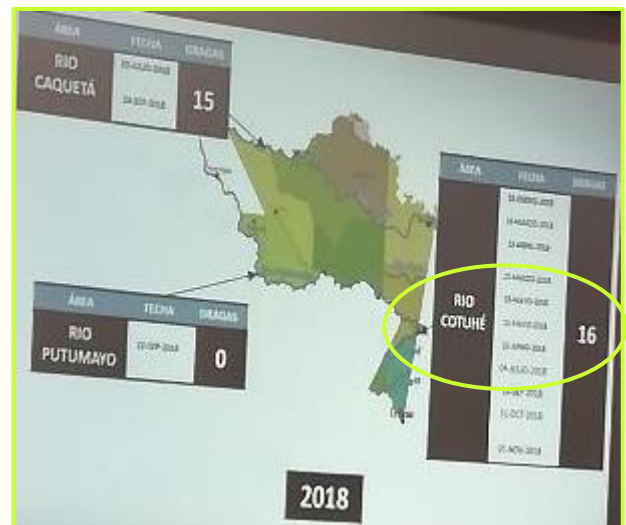


# the small world foundation

## MINING EVENT

On the 27th and the 28th of June there was an event at the library of Leticia about the extraction of minerals in the Amazon, namely gold, gravel and sand. Present in this event where all the representatives of the ministry of mining and environment, the army and air forces, the National Parks, the indigenous communities, the police and the authorities specialised in mining.

A PowerPoint slide: *“The illegal mining is mainly existed in five regions of the Amazon, and the most important extraction is Gold. The locations La Chorrera, Puerto Santader, Puerto Arica and Cotué are the one’s which environment has suffered the biggest consequences of these activities, in which criminal and armed groups are involved which should not be underestimated.”*



Previously, in the newsletters 56, 59 and 61, we mentioned the situation of the goldmines in the Cotué area (an indigenous reserve!). Despite the improvement of the detecting mechanisms (now it is also possible to detect through the jungle vegetation!) and despite the practical steps that finally can be undertaken by the national army, the air forces and the police against illegal mining since 2016 (when the new law was introduced), the Colombian government still has serious obstacles to take concrete action. In 2018 there were still at least 16 *dragas* (floating goldmining platforms – have a look on google!) on the Cotué river. The presence of these platforms has forced the people in San Martin to be constantly alert. The gold is being transported by foot by (familiar and/or indigenous) people to the south, right through the community. It causes a lot of agitation in the community, mainly because of the presence of unknown suspicious individuals. ... might it be due to corruption at a very high level that this situation has not changed in at least the last ten years...?

The event about illegal mining will be followed up in October this year and this time the indigenous communities will play a bigger role. They are the ones that suffer the most consequences and they are the first to observe the activities around illegal mining. We hope that the communities will be more active in informing the authorities and that the government will intervene more effectively.

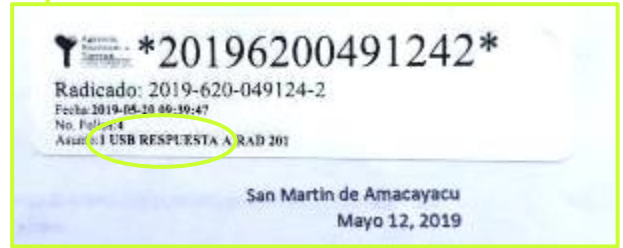
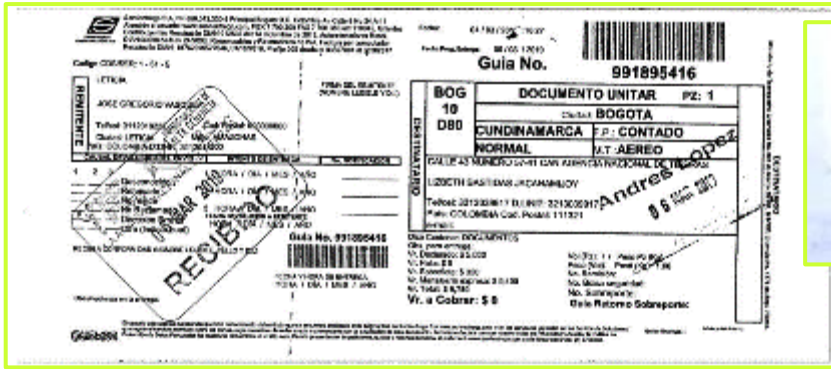
It is impossible and very dangerous, for example, for a fisherman to personally address the people of a *draga*. There are always criminal organisations connected to these illegal groups of miners.



## REGIONAL ROUND TABLE

From the 28th to the 31st of June the 32nd *Mesa Regional Amazónica* was held in Leticia (see newsletter 70). In this event the five departments of the Colombian Amazon were represented (Amazonas, Vaupés, Guaviare, Caqueta and Guainía) to meet with the government and achieve different agreements. José Gregorio Vásquez was present together with the representative of the community of San Martin and three members of the environmental patrol. The main themes of this gathering were infrastructure, healthcare, education and also the organisation of the *Mesa* (table) itself.





## CHANGE OF STAFF AT ANT

In Newsletter 83 we mentioned that the third version of the land application was sent to Bogotá. After a few days we could see that the document had arrived on the 6th of March at the *Agencia Nacional de Tierras* (National agency for territory) – ANT. We waited very patiently because, after contact with the ANT by WhatsApp, it seemed that there was no new staff working at the Indigenous Affairs on the ANT.



In April we started to write them again. On the 7th of may we found out that the ANT had send an e-mail on the 22nd of march to an old email address of the community of San Martin, despite the fact that this e-mail was not used in the communication with ANT since 2012. The representative of San Martin (the *curaca*) had opened the e-mailbox just out of curiosity to see if anything interesting had been send or received.

In the e-mail of the ANT it said that the USB with the attachments was not found in the envelop and that if the USB was not sent soon the land application would be archived within 30 days. That deadline was of course already expired! After a few very stressful days we succeeded to deliver the USB at the ANT thanks to the help of Javier Diaz (newsletter 64 and 79).

On the 23rd of may we received the news that Mrs. Jacanemejoy (newsletter 78) was on maternity leave. She was the associate director of the Indigenous Affairs of the ANT and the person with the biggest knowledge on this field. She had informed us before that our application was already in the hands of a lawyer. Her substitute, however, Mrs. Sánchez, has not yet given us the contact of this person.

Anyhow, we will never quit this fight!



### **MALOKA IS READY!**

Despite that it was not possible to organize a festivity or ceremony (business.. as usual), we can tell you with proud that the maloka of San Martin de Amacayacu is officially finished! Finally the community can enjoy again the traditional space where people can gather and meet, and do this with a nice cool temperature even on a very sunny day. The construction of the maloka finally cost around €2.850. Half of this amount was financed by the Small World Foundation and the other half by the tourists of [Casa Gregorio Lodge](#): all tourists pay a kind of entrance to the community of €1,50. The building of a maloka is very important for the inhabitants of the community because it reminds them of the way the community used to live in the ancestral lands. More than 200 people lived together under this big roof.

One leader had the daily challenge of speaking to all the members of the maloka and to make everyone live peacefully together according to the traditional rules. He had to decide: who is allowed to be in which part of the maloka? What and where are we going to hunt tomorrow? Which role those each person have within the community? How should people be educated according to their role and what kind of diet suites each role the best? With which malokas do we have contact and which ones do we keep at a distance? With the arrival of missionaries in the 40's this way of living disappeared very quickly. They thought that the fact that all these people lived all together under one roof was a sign of the lack of education. With the foundation of the communities in their actual locations the community was taught to live according to the western model.



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

Do not forget to e-mail your e-mailaddress to Heike van Gils ([heike\\_van\\_gils@hotmail.com](mailto:heike_van_gils@hotmail.com)). For alternative (forms of) contributions you can also write to Heike. As mentioned before, all contributions will be exclusively spent on the development and implementation of local initiatives. We will inform you about these projects as much as possible via the newsletter.

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