



A GREAT GATHERING

On the 12th of October Heike van Gils and José Gregorio Vásquez gave their yearly presentation at *t Ghil* in Baarle-Nassau about the activities in the Tikuna community of San Martín de Amacayacu that are being supported by the Small World Foundation. It was amazing that around 90 people were present. Some people keep coming every year and some of them have been there since the very first presentation in the library of Baarle-Nassau in 2008 (Newsletter 20). Other people came for the first time, which was really nice. It was, though, also quite a challenge to make the presentation accessible for everyone. The political process of the recognition of the ancestral lands has had so many turns since the first application in 2012, so if you hear it for the first time it can be quite a complex story. However, it was very good to summarize the process again and give everyone a good update about where we are standing now.

Beside this important process, they also talked about the work of the environmental patrol, the project for land management and the building of the new maloka.



ENVIRONMENTAL PATROL AND WASTE

In October the environmental patrol organized a day with the children of the community around the topic of waste. A lot of children are not always aware yet of the consequences of throwing out plastic, although it is a topic that many parents talk about with their children. It is an important topic within the community and the most important question is what has to be done with the all plastic once it has been collected. This is not very easy here in the Amazon..

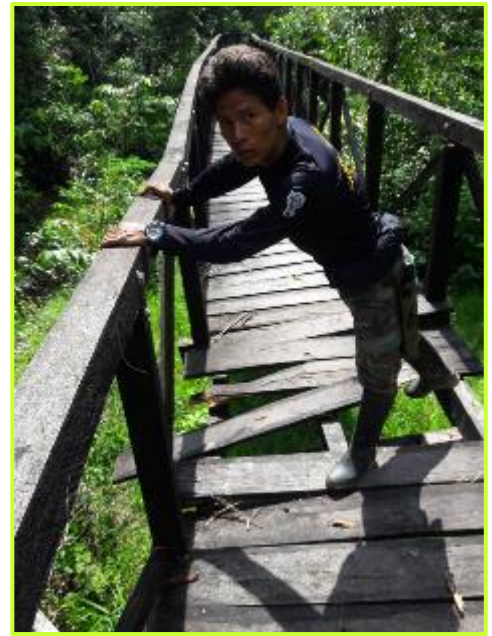
Glass can be used in concrete when broken into pieces and organic waste can be used as compost. Though, for all types of plastic it is very hard to find a solution. The arrival of a little shop in the community on one hand and the improvement of the economic situation of the families on the other hand has caused the purchase of more products made of plastic, both packages and electric devices.

In the past the very small amounts of plastic would have been burned in the gardens or on the wood fire where people cook, but nowadays the amount of plastic is too big. In Letícia there is a recycle depot (Fundación Amazonas sin Límites) and many people give their bags full of plastic to tourists so that they can deliver it there. This is of course not a very good solution and the quantity of plastic is still too big for the amount of people going to Letícia.

Recently the environmental patrol of San Martín collected plastic in the community and on the river and delivered it at the garbage dump in Puerto Nariño. It is very nice that it is being collected there but unfortunately nothing is being done with it. It would be really great if there would be a facility in the region for the processing of plastic waste. Yet, there is still much to be done on this topic, both politically (laws) and in a practical sense (solutions).







ENVIRONMENTAL PATROL AND THE ECOVÍA

In previous editions of the newsletter we have mentioned about the *Ecovía* (Newsletter 69, 71, 76), the elevated touristic path between Puerto Nariño and San Martín. The good news is that it has been finished. However, before this project started off, no one at the municipality thought about the maintenance the *ecovía* would need once finished and about who would be responsible for it. Not even a year later it is clear that taking good care of the path is crucial for it to continue being used in the future. The high temperatures and humidity of the Amazon are a problem for the wooden structure and trees can fall down and block the pathway. Planks of wood can become rotten and become a risk for locals and tourists.

The environmental patrol of San Martín decided to take action. They walked through the whole path and put aside the rotten planks so that no one would step on it. Also one big tree had to be removed and there was also some rubbish to be collected. Since this is actually not the responsibility of the environmental patrol this issue will have to be brought up at the municipality. Maybe the hotels and touristic accommodations in the region could also contribute? Who is going to replace the wooden planks and who is going to collect the waste?



Would you like to help the Small World Foundation to support the people of the indigenous community San Martín 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:

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