

## FIRST COVID VACCINE

On April 5th a Covid-19 vaccination team from the Colombian Amazon department of health arrived in San Martin de Amacayacu for the first round of vaccinations with Sinovac vaccines. Everyone above 18 years old had the change to be vaccinated at the community's maloca, which was available for this occasion thanks to the renovation made possible by SWF last year. Everything went smoothly although not everyone in the community decided to get the vaccine. This can be explained by the fact that since the virus appeared in San Martin last year there has not been any case of serious illness. There are also hardly any people in the community who travel and who would possibly need a vaccination certificate to be able to travel in the future. At the beginning of May the vaccination team will return for the second vaccination. Since tourism stopped, communities such as San Martin de Amacayacu have been really affected by this lack of income. Currently, the region is even experiencing an extra difficult time since the closure of the airport of Leticia since last

January, as a result of the Brazilian variant. Only a few humanitarian flights took place between Bogotá and Leticia at the beginning of April for people that could not get back home on time. There is still no clarity about a possible reopening of the airport and, until then, the region's economy remains, unfortunately, in complete stillness.



## FISH IN THE PONDS

In 2009, San Martin won the BN/De Stem Development Prize of 5000 euro for the fishpond project (Newsletter 25). Due to the budget, the type of soil and the shape of the landscape, it was unthinkable to dig fish ponds with heavy machinery. If they were to be dug out by hand this work would only advance when many hands would come to help. Therefore, the prize money was spent on a big amount of food for the large number of people from the community who would come to help voluntarily. These occasions where many people of the community gather to work is called a minga (Newsletter 41 – have a look!). Like in any other minga, the families who owned, in this case, the fish ponds, prepared a big barrel of masato, the alcoholic beverage made of the cassava root, for everyone to enjoy. Between 2009 and 2012 this bunch of people worked 55 days under the burning tropical sun in order to achieve the 11 ponds, not counting the extra days that the owners of the ponds spent working by themselves. In 2011 and 2012, all materials (shovels, tubes, wheelbarrows etc.) were financed by the Colombian government (Newsletter 35), as well as the little fish, their transport and food (Newsletter 44). Back then, the Small World



Foundation paid for a project insurance and for the transport of the materials and the fish food. By now, the fish ponds are about 10 years old and at least 8 are still functioning. Instead of certified little fish from the Colombian interior (a requirement of the government project), the families obtained their little fish from the surrounding lakes and rivers to let them grow in the ponds. These fish were fed and caught again on strategic or necessary moments to be sold or eaten. In the meantime, other families also started digging and building dikes for their own ponds. These families have now also been included in the group which means that officially there are 11 active ponds at the moment. Since the end of 2020, there is another government project happening in the region in which San Martin is involved, which aims to promote more fish ponds in indigenous communities. This time it is the SINCHI research institute who is coordinating the project ([www.sinchi.gov.co](http://www.sinchi.gov.co)) and who financed the materials: Tubes, shovels, disinfecting lime and water fertilizer for the local families to be able to give their ponds a little makeover before the arrival of new certified little fish (this time *paco* or *Piaractus brachypomus*). The arrival of these fish at the beginning of April was certainly a positive experience which we are very proud of!





To release the little fish, they first need to get used to the local water quality and temperature.

Then they go into a net so they can get used to the fish food and be monitored.

Murky water of this color is good. It has enough micro flora and fauna to create the foundation of the food chain in the pond.



## ENVIRONMENTAL GUARD VISIT

The Tarapoto lake is located about 15km from San Martin de Amacayacu. It is one of the many lakes in the lowlands between the Loretoyacu and Amazon rivers, in the south of the TICOYA indigenous reserve. Here, during the rainy season, the rainforest floods almost completely, causing all lakes to become connected. It is a very important ecosystem where many rare animals live such as the manatee, the pirarucú fish (the biggest fish with scales in the world), a few different types of turtles and the black caiman, to mention just a few. This area has been given RAMSAR status, just like another eight areas in Colombia and thanks to this, the Tarapoto environmental guard is fund by the Omacha Foundation and WWF-Colombia. In order to exchange experience and knowledge, the San Martin guard decided to spend a day on the control dock on the Tarapoto lake. The biggest threat to this area is overfishing and the capture of threatened animals for consumption and live animal trade. Now that tourism has disappeared in the region, the Tapapoto environmental guard has the difficult task to make sure this threat does not become bigger and to ask people to think about the future of the ecosystem. Good job!



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**Would you like to support the Tikuna indigenous community of San Martin together with the Small World Foundation, and stay informed about 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](http://www.smallworldfoundation.org/?page_id=68)

Please DON'T FORGET TO INFORM US ABOUT YOUR NAME AND EMAIL ADDRESS!!

([smallworldfoundation@hotmail.com](mailto:smallworldfoundation@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 more information about this initiative, please check the website:

**[www.smallworldfoundation.org](http://www.smallworldfoundation.org).**