

THE PAST PARTY MONTHS

The good thing about hard work, is that there is always a moment that you can harvest the fruits. Over the course of time, the process of San Martin de Amacayacu has produced quite a few, but many none as visible and easy to describe as those of the past months of April and May 2009. Enjoy!

BN/DE STEM DEVELOPMENT PRIZE



San Martin de Amacayacu is the winner of the BN/DeStem Development Prize 2009!!!! Fantastic! The community was chosen from amongst 58 nominees. The prize (5.000 euro) will be used for the fish pond project, which has been written over a year ago with the 12 families involved (picture on the right). The directive board of the Small World Foundation received the prize on Sunday the 31st by Derk Bolt, host of the Dutch TV show "Sporloos" ("Missing"). Around half May, San Martin proudly received BN/De Stem journalist Wim van den Broek (picture below) for almost a week. On his first day in the community and as an introduction, we took him immediately to a *minga*, so he could see for himself how hard work and pleasures can go hand in hand. Of course, this is a crucial ingredient for the success of any project! Thanks, Wim, for carrying fire wood! After this occasion, the ice (as far as there was



any) was melted, so he could enjoy all the good things the jungle and the community have to offer, and all existing fish ponds were visited. When this newsletter reached you, Wim's report and pictures of his stay and of the Prize ceremony may already have been published in the newspaper 'BN/De Stem' (www.bndestem.nl/ontwikkelingsprijis), in 'Ons Weekblad' or on www.smallworldfoundation.org. Take a look! The Small World Foundation thanks the jury of the Development Prize for their recognition. We are very proud!

INCODER POSTPONES RESULTS

On the 20th of May, we were supposed to hear about the results of this same fish pond project, which was handed in at the beginning of March this year for the call for proposals of the governmental INCODER (*Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural* or the Colombian Institute of Rural Development). With this result, the planning of the 5.000 euro of the BN/De Stem Development Prize would be a lot easier. If the subsidy would have been granted, the project could be extended. If not, the original project proposal would be followed. However, we need to be patient, as this date has been postponed until the 24th of July 2009. Only small strategic expenses can be done before that 24th.



JAVIER'S WINNING PICTURE!!

As some of you have noticed in their email, Javier Díaz (the Colombian representative of the Small World Foundation in Canada) participated in a prestigious photo competition

(<http://pgis.cta.int/photocompetition-awards>) about participative geographic information systems (PGIS) with one of the pictures of his stay in San Martin (below). The term



participative means that the local population is actively involved in the development of the map of a certain area. In the case of San Martin, the local people are not only involved, but also have taken the first initiative in the mapping process. The picture will appear in an instructive book about PGIS published by CTA. Apparently, there is also some prize money, but this is rather vague so far (that's the way it goes). In any way, to celebrate the occasion, a new photcamera (Nikon Coolpix) has been purchased for San Martin so they can take their own pictures too. Thanks for voting!



START OF DIALOGUE!!

On April the 12th, the first dialogue was started between San Martin and the neighbouring Palmeras. This small community

would almost remain with only a small territory if San Martin would obtain the recognition of their ancestral lands. Considering family bonds, a comparative situation concerning their position in the big



Tikuna Cocama Yagua Reserve, and just solidarity, San Martin proposed that Palmeras should be added to the area for which San Martin is working so hard. The maps, which have developed with the assistance of Edixson Daza of Tropenbos (check: Newsletter 19 and 20 – Dutch versions), and which have been printed on plastic, were very much of use (picture above). Despite many positive words, final decisions have not yet been made. Only the first practical steps have been taken to assure that the government subsidy, which is assigned to each community, will be received in Leticia, to avoid the impressive corruption in Puerto-Nariño. This should be like this, because legally San Martin and Palmeras belong to the municipality of Leticia en and not to the municipality of Puerto-Nariño, like all other 20 communities in the big Tikuna Cocama Yagua Reserve. At the end of May, there was be a big meeting with all 22 communities in San Martin. At this occasion, the plans of San Martin and Palmeras will be presented officially.



MISS BOARDING SCHOOL PUERTO-NARIÑO

At the beginning of May, Dayana Ledesma (15), inhabitant of San Martin, participated in the elections for Miss boarding school in Puerto-Nariño, which is the school for (mostly) indigenous people in the region. She presented herself magnificently in the election. Her parents had clearly done their very best to make original clothing for the three rounds "typical clothing", "sports clothing" and "evening dress". Of course, the people from San Martin present took care of an enthusiastic and noisy support, which undoubtedly contributed to her winning the maximum score.



RAIN AND FISH IN ABUNDANCE

After having mentioned the extended period of drought in the last Newsletter, it has started to rain basically continuously! For days on end, and often with buckets. San Martin changed into a mud pool. The rivers have kept on rising. At this moment of writing, water levels are as they were in the year 2000. In Leticia, part of the streets towards the harbour are inundated. A curious sight! Because of these enormously high water levels, all great Amazon lakes which normally are closed off from the Amazon River, now come into contact again by the water covering



the floodplains. Without mentioning the details of why and what for, the result is a migration of millions of fish of several species upstream. This phenomenon is called *mijana*. Of course, everyone takes advantage of this fishing with nets extended across the river. Whether this is ethical or not, is not the question, but yes, fish in abundance for months! Yummy!!



GOVERNOR IN JAIL

Really, it is quite a dramatic situation, that many would have preferred differently. But secretly, reason for a small party. Finally, one of the most prominent regional politicians has been sent to jail for corruption. Mr. Felix Acosta (check: Newsletter 15 – Dutch version), who was elected governor of the Colombian Departement Amazonas at the end of 2007, has been given 6 years in jail by the Colombian Supreme Court. Immediately, he was transferred to a so-called "white collar prison" in Bogotá (La Picota, where they put only people of his kind, as it were). Almost right away, another governor is appointed by Mr. President himself and everybody hopes that this small interruption does not take away the promises to and plans for the inhabitants of the Colombian Amazon. New candidates have already started their campaigns. The governor is dead, long live the governor!

SOLAR POWER

This part we still owed you: the pictures of the solar installation which was supported by oneMen (www.onemen.org) and some anonymous people a year and a half ago. This installation was finally installed six months ago (pictures below). Apart from the battery, which arrived damaged and was not refunded (buh!), and had to be bought again (200 euro), it all works properly. Many, many hours have been illuminated brightly, many cell phones have been charged, and many hours of laptop

work assured! The boat and motor, also sponsored by oneMen, are still doing duty loyally. The boat has been repaired and painted, the motor receives regular maintenance. Both have travelled thousands of kilometres already, as they are almost in use on a daily basis by many different people from San Martin to go to Leticia, Puerto-Nariño or other communities, or to get to far away fishing or hunting grounds. Also, the mapping teams are taken as far as possible with this equipment, etc.



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 either on of the following bank accounts:

For the **Netherlands**:

Bank name: **Rabobank**

Bank Address: Singel 4

5111CD

Baarle-Nassau

The Netherlands

SWIFT/BIC Code: RABONL2U

Account number: 13 27 26 203.

Account name:

Stichting SMALL WORLD FOUNDATION

IBAN code: NL28 RABO 0132 7262 03.

For **Canada**:

Bank name: **CAISSE CENTRALE DESJARDINS**

Montréal, Canada

SWIFT/BIC Code: CCDQCAMM

Branch ID: CC081520439

Account Number : 0815 2043 9090 9150

Account Name:

THE SMALL WORLD FOUNDATION

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

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

(heike_van_gils@hotmail.com for The Netherlands or chaquenalt@hotmail.com for Canada) !

The contributions will be spent exclusively on the development and realisation 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.