



the small world foundation

27 - oktober 2009

## SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION IN BAARLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

It is good to be able to mention that also this year the attention for the SWF presentation in the public library of Baarle-Nassau-Hertog was overwhelming. Several people had come because they have been involved with the foundation for years. Others had only recently started to follow the news, especially since the BN/DeStem Development Prize 2009 in May, and saw images from the Tikuna indigenous community of San Martin de Amacayacu for the first time.

Whereas the presentation last year largely focused on the political position of this community and their drive to work hard for the recognition of their ancestral lands, this year it was more about daily life in the community. On the pictures in the powerpoint presentation everyone could see how the people in San Martin cook, wash, hunt, fish, play, work on the agricultural field and relax together. Because of the professional background of many visitors in the library, more explanation was asked about education, and about the role of the younger generation in the community after graduating from high school. After the break a video was shown for an impression of the real mapping fieldwork carried out by young and old. To get from site to site, they have to walk hardcore through the impressive rainforest with its many secrets, of which it was possible to see some with the help of the local experts: bright blue-green eggs in a little nest on the forest floor, a curious and very hairy monkey, squashed plants on a spot where only just a jaguar had been sleeping...

This year, a larger space was occupied in the library for a better exposition of the handicraft collection. Before and after the presentation and during the break, everyone could check out the beautiful pieces made from seeds and fibers from the Amazon. The library had

catered for coffee, tea, lemonade, wine and beer. Wim van den Broek, BN/DeStem journalist for the Development Prize, was present too and shared with the audience the amazing experiences of his seven day stay in San Martin de Amacayacu in May this year.

The library occasion lasted until about 11pm, when the last visitors went home. Profits of the evening were 260 euro; a nice budget which is destined directly for the support of the different activities necessary for the conservation and recognition of the ancestral lands of San Martin de Amacayacu. Baarle public library: thanks a lot and see you next year!!



## BAARLE ROCKS (AT DASSEPOP)!



Despite the cold, on September 13<sup>th</sup> Baarle showed once again that Dassepop ([www.dassepop.nl](http://www.dassepop.nl)) lets the town rock! The Small World Foundation was the special guest this year, and was present with the jewellery collection and tubs full of beads of all colors of the rainbow, so that the beautifully painted girls could make themselves a matching set of necklace and bracelet. Mothers and older sisters were busy selecting their own piece from the collection from the Amazon and dads... were drinking beer! There was music until about 7pm from Inflexion, Sweat Sweat Sweat and others. A day to remember! By the way, the winning color plate (below) out of many was from Tim Peeters. Congratulations!



## BACK IN DE AMAZONE

Accompanied by the highly recommended *Amazonas Trilogy* written by Athony van Kampen (including *The land that God had forgotten*, *The damaged Eldorado* and *The last frontier*) the travel from the Netherlands to Colombia through the US was a lot more digestible. The touching and special stories in this book show how life in the Amazon is far more easy today for the local inhabitants (indigenous or colonist) when compared to the seventies, in which the books have been written. At this moment, there is no mass starvation or old school slavery, but from a political and social point of view there is still so much that needs improving, especially concerning the position of the indigenous people. This is illustrated by the first stories I hear a few hours after landing. The dominant attitude of the president of the large TICOYA reserve, who was replaced last May, still succeeds to influence business in the reserve. He can do so because apparently many individuals, mostly from outside the organization, are very motivated to keep things the way they are to keep gaining. I won't go into any detail. The new board members have presented themselves before the Office of Ethnis Issues of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and have obtained recognition here. It just seems that the interests around the reserve at the local level are deeply rooted. This is shown by the fact that there are still people going up the Amacayacu river to cut trees or get sand with permits signed by the representatives of the old board. The new board does not dispose of any financial means for transport, communication or for a daily meal. The 2009 funds were frozen after all, and destined for specific projects in any case. The quest continues to receive all files and documents. Fortunately, decisions have been made about the administration and destination of the governmental subsidies for 2010. The coordinator of territorial management (from San Martin) has been allocated the sum of about 3.000 euro; a ridiculous amount if you consider that this does not include any wages for the coordinator and that the problems of 22 communities have to be attended. Once again it is clear why the temptation to corruption is so present....

## NEW GOVERNOR



In May this year, the governor of the Amazon department, Mr Felix Acosta, would go to jail for six years because of corruption. Now, not even half a year later, this man has already been given just house arrest. Over the last months and from the comfort of his home, he orchestrated the campaign of his son Octavio for the same post during 2010 and 2011. Fortunately, the healthy mind of the Amazon people spoke, and he lost big time. Only for now though, because he is already preparing of course for next year's campaign for congress. In two years, it is battle again for the governor's post. It's almost a circus. The governor in charge for the coming two years is, Olbar Andrade, born and raised in Leticia. Hopes are up. How much he can really achieve in two years we will see in time!

### FISH POND PROGRESS??

Have we made another step? We have still not been able to get all necessary papers, declarations and permits to the office of INCODER (Colombian Institute for Rural Development), which has destined a budget for San Martin!

A specific government entity which has so provide one of the permits had not even heard about the subsidy round, and started the cat and mouse game...

The head of San Martin has traveled to and from Leticia on a weekly basis over the last months, which means: fuel, safekeeping the boat, food, stay, and his wife and four children home alone without the husband taking care of fish and meat. Costs that we have paid from the BN/DeStem budget: about 270 euro! Imagine how difficult things become without this backup.. Despite the delays, it still looks good for San Martin. We hope the permits will be taken care of soon. In the meantime, some of the families involved in the project have already started removing plants and trunks on the spot where the pond will be constructed. Others have already started digging.



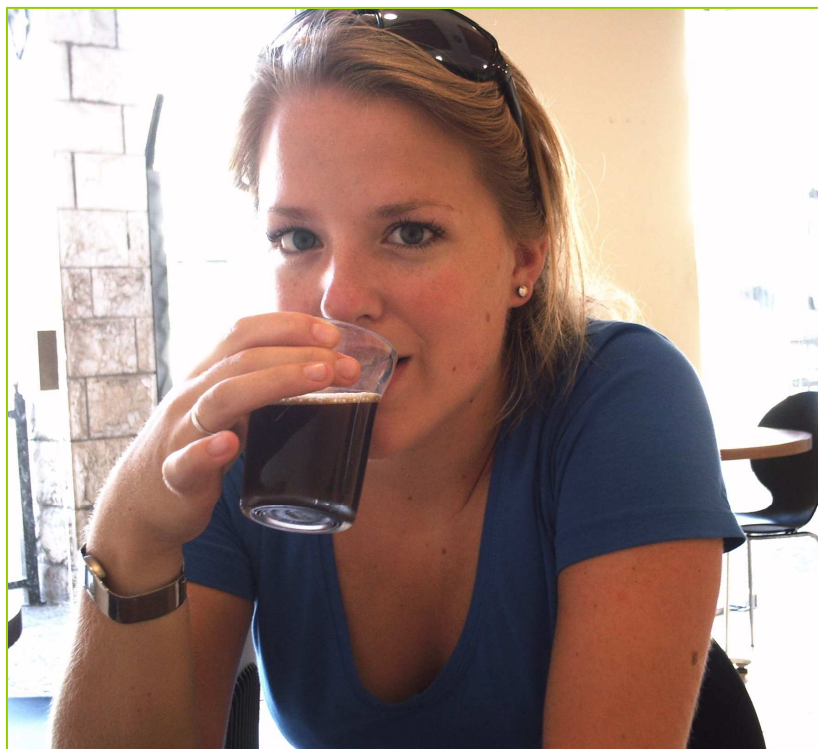
### NEW PRACTICAL STUDENT IN SAN MARTIN DE AMACAYACU

*By Mirte Gosker*

Heike has given me the opportunity to write something for this newsletter. I gladly accepted to be able to introduce myself. My name is Mirte Gosker, I am 23 years old, and currently enrolled in the last year of the MSc called International Development Studies, which follows up on the BSc Cultural Anthropology. I arrived in Leticia yesterday and still getting used to this warm town in the

south of Colombia. The reason of my visit is the practical study as part of my MSc. From the beginning of November onwards, I will be staying in San Martin for about two and a half months. I will be working with Reinaldo DaSilva on the digitalization of the list of important sites located in the ancestral lands of San Martin. Think of: salt licks where animals gather, malokas where the ancestors lived, and sacred sites. The importance of my practical study lies in the possibility of being able to present all these data neatly in a for the government comprehensive form, as it is this entity that will have to decide about the recognition of these lands. If there is any time left, I will start writing a chapter of the report which will represent the introduction of the land recognition application.

I am very curious after the many new insights that I will experience during my time in San Martin. I expect that my view on the world will be turned upside down! I really hope that by



working in an indigenous community, I will get a clear image of local processes of thinking and acting, and of which obstacles are encountered by a community like San Martin. In the future I hope to work with human rights on a different level. I am sure this practical study will shine a valuable light on things, so I will understand why things do or do not work out on a local level.

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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 Nether lands  
SWIFT/BIC Code: RABONL2U  
Account number: 13 27 26 203.  
Account name: Stichting SMALL WORLD FOUNDATION  
IBAN code: NL28 RABO 0132 7262 03.

Or check out the online contribution possibility on: [http://smallworldfoundation.org/?page\\_id=68](http://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 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](mailto:heike_van_gils@hotmail.com).

For more information about this initiative, please check the website: [www.smallworldfoundation.org](http://www.smallworldfoundation.org).