

MEETING WITH MOCAGUA

On the 22nd of February, a meeting was held in San Martin de Amacayacu with representatives of the Palmeras and Mocagua communities and the Amacayacu National Park about the enlargement of the Tikuna Cocama Yagua (TICOYA) indigenous reserve on behalf of San Martin and Palmeras. The community of Mocagua was invited because the future limits of the TICOYA reserve will meet with their reserve. The Amacayacu National Park was invited because the area to be included is located within this park (map available in newsletter 46). The people of Mocagua have no objection against the proposal. To the contrary, they were very motivated by the plans of San Martin and Palmeras, and aim to propose an enlargement of their own reserve as well....



JAVIER DIAZ BACK IN SAN MARTIN

I recently arrived back in San Martin de Amacayacu. My first visit to the community was in 2008, and now it's almost impossible for me not to see all the positive changes of which I have been a witness. From the very first moment (making the paper map of the ancestral area) until today, there has been a notable tendency of constant change. I have joined the people of San Martin on their trips to the rainforest, and I got to know the area. During these trips, I have taught people to manage a GPS device. After that, I helped to make the digital maps, which in fact are based on the cultural interpretation of the indigenous people of the area. The whole process is a platform for communication between generations, which also has facilitated the interaction between the community and the Colombian government. This way, San Martin de Amacayacu is currently considered by many as an example to follow concerning the organisation and knowledge of indigenous lands. Thanks to a continuous longterm internal reflection process there are also notable advances in politics. This resulted in the current project for regulations in the Tikuna Cocama Yagua (TICOYA) indigenous reserve, coordinated by José Gregorio Vásquez from San Martin. The support from the Small World Foundation has definitely been able to move knowledge and initiative. This has positive consequences for community wellbeing. Colombia recognises indigenous people's rights, but financial aid is often needed to make them reality.

At the moment I am studying in the French part of Canada (Quebec), with a comparable situation concerning the indigenous people. I can understand the case of the American ancestral cultures better now. Indigenous rights are also recognised in Canada. However, solving local problems is often only possible by initiative of local people with the support of several organisations. For example, in Quebec there is an organisation of a group of architects with support from universities and volunteers, who coordinate a housing programme.



In the cities, there are help centres which provide administrative and logistic support for indigenous people who visit or live in these cities. These centres are autonomous and function thanks to agreements with different entities. This kind of initiatives can be a solution for basic needs. Also, there is a recreative and educative programme “Wapikoni Mobile” which shows movies and documentaries in the indigenous communities. With these examples I would like to emphasize the importance of organisations such as the Small World Foundation. This foundation is an important element in facilitating different projects. I want to finish by saying that I am happy to have spent such a large part of the last years visiting San Martin de Amacayacu. I have lived fantastic moments and I have been a witness of the evolution in wellbeing of the habitantes. For example, the toilet construction and water tank installation has improved sanitary circumstances significantly. The fish pond project has favored economic wellbeing and animal protein availability for the participating families. This kind of projects grow and pose new challenges, but the advantages are obvious in this region dominated by the movements of the mighty Amazon river! Here goes a picture collection of a few memorable moments over the years..



KINDERGARDEN AND ICBF

At the beginning of March, there was a meeting in the San Martin kindergarden. Representatives of the Colombian Institute for Family Wellbeing (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar – ICBF) were present to plan the coming year 2013. During the meeting, the kindergarden reconstruction plans were presented. At once, the ICBF wanted to know more, to put the building activities on the calendar. The kindergarden teacher diplomatically told them that the plans are little defined yet and largely dependent on the fund raising success in the Netherlands this year. As soon as construction starts, she will inform the ICBF so they can support the kindergarden with toys, kitchen supplies, chairs and so on. They can not give financial aid.

This year, San Martin de Amacayacu has destined about 850 euro of the annual government support to the kindergarden. Unfortunately, the process to get this support effectively is very complicated and subject of corruption. We hope for the best, but we are careful with our enthusiasm! Anything can still happen...



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 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

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 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 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.