

### EXCITING TIMES ...

For San Martin de Amacayacu, March and April were filled with more meetings. In March, José Gregorio Vásquez flew to Bogotá to join the “INCODER Subcomisión Temática de Territorios Indígenas de la Amazonia” (pictures below on page 3 below). This group led by INCODER people generate the important debate with the indigenous community of the Colombian Amazon about land rights. For two days, José lobbied with the necessary arguments to reach an agreement for an independent reserve for San Martin de Amacayacu and Palmeras. He also represented the five other communities, so they will be included in the Tikuna Cocama Yagua indigenous reserve after all (Newsletter 46).

As a result of this intensive job, the INCODER visited San Martin de Amacayacu personally on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. When such an important group comes to visit the community, it is necessary to speak to the participants beforehand so the aim of the meeting is clear. This way, needless or unfit themes can be avoided. This happened during another meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, when representatives of San Martin, Palmeras and the Amacayacu National Park gathered (picture above right).

On the 21<sup>st</sup> april an agreement was reach quickly, whereas a few heavy discussions on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> almost spoiled the situation. These discussions were the result of the presence of people from other communities and from Puerto Nariño, interested in sand, gravel, timbar and fish in the area. The calm with which San Martin and Palmeras approached the case was crucial. Finally, an agreement was signed by the INCODER, the Amacayacu





National Park and the communities of San Martin and Palmeras, stating the following compromises of each entity:

#### **INODER**

1. Start the process for an independent indigenous reserve (month of May).
2. Study the inclusion proposal of the five other communities.

#### **Amacayacu National Park**

1. In terms of the process for an independent reserve: Contribute information for the social economic study and the digital maps.
2. Acompañar the INCODER technical staff (sociologist & geographer) during their visits for the mentioned study and the maps.

#### **San Martin de Amacayacu and Palmeras**

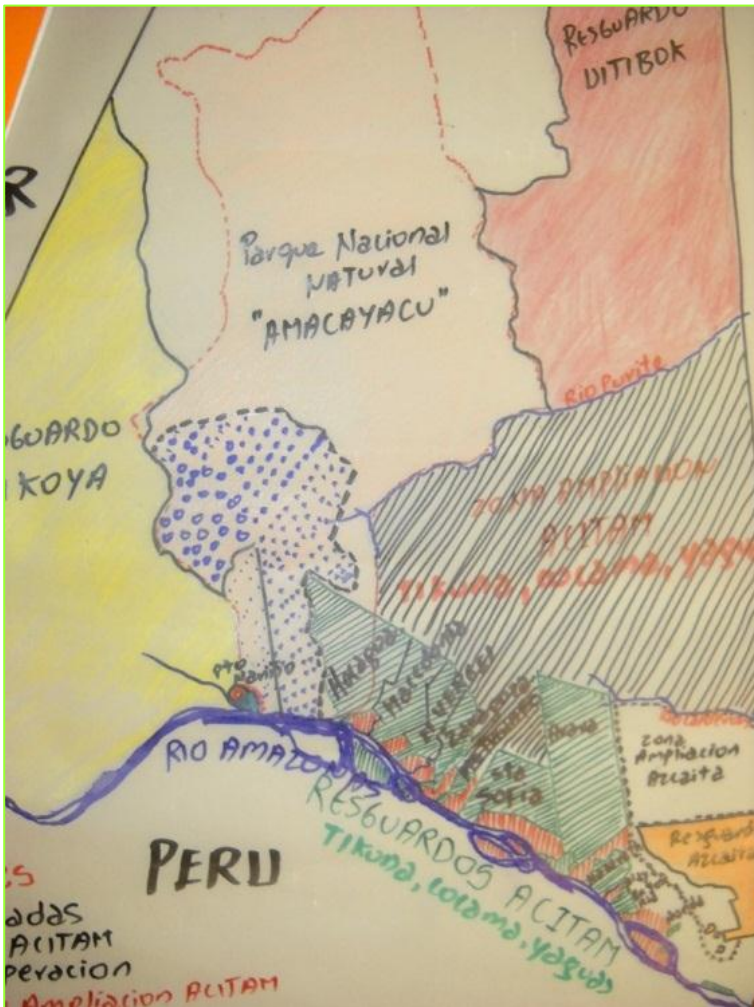
1. File an application for the constitution of and independent reserve.
2. Inform the other communities about the independent reserve in the Amacayacu National Park.
3. Contribute information of the digital land maps.
4. Select a commission with people from both communities Acompañar the INCODER technical staff (sociologist & geographer) during their visits for the mentioned study and the maps.
5. File an application for the enlargement of the Tikuna Cocama Yagua indigenous reserve to include the five other communities.
6. Start an internal dialogue about the use and management of the independent reserve, also with the Amacayacu National Park.

San Martin de Amacayacu, Palmeras and the Small World Foundation are careful not to cheer too early, but a decisive step towards the most important goal seems to have been reached for sure!

On May 12th (and thanks to your contribution to the Small World Foundation!) José Gregorio Vásquez and the community leaders (*curacas*) of San Martin, Palmeras and of one of the five communities can fly to Bogotá again to file the two required applications. More about this in our next newsletter!







## DENGUE AND MALARIA

After the heavy rainfall and high weater levels in rivers, it's now disease time in the Amazon. Boats full of sick people from the indigenous communities arrive at the hospitals in Leticia and Puerto Nariño. The symptoms (fever, chills, headaches) are comparable between the two diseases and malaria can not always be detected immediately in the blood samples. A difficult case, especially when the patient has nowhere to stay in the hospital town. They often have to travel to the hospital several times before a diagnose can be made and pills prescribed. In the meantime, daily life continues and the sick person has to continue working to feed his family. So there also continue to be more and more infected mosquitoes and people... Of the 512 inhabitants of San Martin, more than a 110 were diagnosed with malaria and a few with dengue. After two months of suffering, the health department of the Colombian Amazon started a spraying campaign in the communities! Only, it was not very effective and new cases are still being detected...

## NO INTERNET

Just when you think global technology can only get better, you are wrong! The closest internet option for San Martin was located in Puerto Nariño, at about one hour's boat ride. There even used to be two internet cafés, which functioned more or less ok. Unfortunately, they got trouble with their connection at about the same time and had to close. Javier Díaz brought a mobile 3.5G USB connection from Bogotá, but this one only works properly about midnight and does not allow up- or downloading attachments...

Of course, as a result, our communication with the world has suffered tremendously! Last newsletter was half a month too late, and not to speak of personal messages. We also have hardly been able to update our website [www.smallworldfoundation.org](http://www.smallworldfoundation.org) for a while! We really hope this newsletter will get to you on time! Our apologies for the slowness..

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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 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!!  
([heike\\_van\\_gils@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:heike_van_gils@hotmail.com).

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