

ACTIVITY REPORT

Activity: Meeting on Trio Handicraft Development Plan
Financed by: Organization of American States
Focal Group: Indigenous Communities of Southern Suriname, from the village of Kwamalasamutu
Execution: The Amazon Conservation Team (ACT), USA; President: Mark Plotkin; ACT Suriname Program Director: Gwendolyn Emanuels-Smith
Counterparts: the Trio indigenous communities
Date: February 11- 15, 2006; March 18-21, 2006.

OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this activity were to identify a pilot group of 5-10 craftswomen and to compile a listing of marketable NTFP handicrafts of the Trio region of southern Suriname.

COORDINATION

Activities were coordinated by the ACT NTFP consultant Ciefranie Menig, the ACT Biodiversity Program Coordinator Angela Monorath, and the ACT land management consultant Rachele Bong A Jan Bong A Jan.

ACTIVITY REPORT

February 11

Participants: Ms. Monorath, Ms. Menig, Ms. Bong A Jan, Kenneth Wongsonadi, Granman Asongo, Bruce Hoffman, James (translator), Lokaski, Nuta, Amesina, Wuta, Yalreefah and Menjo.

Meeting with Granman Asongo 16.00h

- Ms. Monorath announced the meeting and the reasons for the visit, and introduced the subject matter.
- Ms. Menig explained the objective of the handicraft development plan, and asked Granman Asongo to send a message to all craftswomen to meet with them the following afternoon. (Photos below.)
- The purpose of the visit was stated by Ms. Menig: to identify at least 10 craftswomen who are willing to produce marketable handicrafts and to produce an inventory of marketable handicrafts.
- The Granman expressed his happiness with the visit, because the local craftswomen wish to produce better quality crafts and to solve several technical problems.



Meeting with Granman Asongo and other Trios

February 12

Meeting with ACT staff: 12.00-14.00h (Nuta, Shokonoro, Korotai, Motife, Willem, Amesina, Iseke, Jainan, Wuta, Faari, Lookaski, Iko, Ms. Monorath, Ms. Bong A Jan and Ms. Menig)

- An introduction was made by Ms. Monorath, through which Ms. Menig explained the purpose of her visit.
- The materials needed by the craftswomen as well as technical problems were discussed.



Meeting with ACT staff and women handicrafts producers

Meeting with women: 17.00-18.30h (Ms. Bong A Jan, Ms. Menig, Reoma, Faari, Renate, Sameri, Johanna, Ruti, Suisike, Samediana, Ester, Jolanda, Annie, Suzan, Ripina, Sweze and Lucia)

- Introduction by Ms. Menig.
- The purpose of this visit was explained: to identify at least 10 craftswomen who are willing to be trained as handicraft entrepreneurs. The different technical problems the craftswomen face during handicraft production as well as the possibility of the using better quality materials was discussed.
- The importance of working together as a team was explained. Discussion topics were the importance of a quality product; the generation of a listing of high quality seeds; possible color combinations; and negotiations with buyers.
- Visits were arranged with individual handicrafts entrepreneurs for the following days.



Photos: Meeting with women of Kwamalasamutu

February 13-14

Visit to each woman separately at their homes: 10.00- 14.00h

- The women were interviewed using a short questionnaire covering personal questions, economic status, membership in a women's group, and specialties in handicrafts. The purpose of the interview was to become better acquainted with the group and their work situation; to compile a list of the handicrafts they are producing; and to better understand their economic situation and outlook.
- The women displayed their working materials and handicrafts (photos below).
- Individual technical problems were discussed.
- Style trends in Paramaribo and other countries were discussed.
- A meeting was arranged with the women for the next afternoon.



Photos: Meeting with individual women handicraft producers

February 14

Meeting with women handicraft entrepreneurs: 17.00 – 19.00h

- Common problems of women when producing handicrafts were discussed, such as piercing holes in the seeds and other materials. The women stated that they also want to work with better quality cotton, and requested elastics.

- The importance of seed quality when producing handicrafts was discussed.
- Price-setting and color combinations were discussed.
- The women were taught the importance of recording the time needed for handicraft production for proper price-setting.
- The group discussed planning a highly visible exhibition of handicrafts with prices in Kwamalasamutu for both the local and tourist market.
- An inventory was conducted of marketable handicrafts: bags, bells, necklaces, bracelets and skirts. Since the women are accustomed to the production of these types of handicrafts, the project will focus on these handicrafts.
- A list was generated of plant seeds used in handicraft production, with emphasis on sustainable harvesting.
- The follow-up training sessions were described: on the next visit, the selected handicraft-producing women would receive training in basic administration and business skills.
- The group stated the need to begin collecting seeds for the production of handicrafts at the next visit.



Photos: Meeting with women handicrafts producers

February 15

Meeting with Granman Asongo: 9.00-9.45h

- The results of Ms. Menig's visit were explained.
- Granman Asongo was provided with a list of selected handicraft entrepreneurs.
- A follow-up handicraft project was discussed.

Challenges:

- The harvesting of NTFPs must be incorporated in land use planning and forest management.

Follow-up:

- Discussion of planning with the ACT Biodiversity Coordinator & Program Director.
- Contacting representatives of local markets.
- Preparation of budget for requested materials to commence handicraft project.
- Planning of administration and business skills training.
- Planning of next field visit.

Inventory of marketable NFTP's

English Name	Trio Name
Bags	Wapa
Bells	Kaji
Bracelets	Emena
Necklaces	Panti
Trio Skirts	Keweju



Necklaces



Marketable handicrafts: bags and belt

Kwamalasamutu handicrafts entrepreneurs:

- Ester Toeroenmang
- Riman Inkapidoe
- Suikese Oedeppe
- Panasiruku Karamithe
- Jolante Sinkara
- Salomi Koediman
- Annie Oekimuwg
- Sameri Fawadi
- Midi Tapoerani
- Inate Sinkara

Plant seeds needed to produce NTFPs:

- Mara mara
- Maripa
- Pakira enu
- Pakira asuwi
- Wetew
- Parakaru
- Enurunpe
- Wanapan
- Sipatae eperu
- Makuipana
- anperai

Materials needed to commence handicraft production:

- Fine needles

- Beads
- Elastics
- Fish thread
- Hook
- Drill
- Threads
- Sharpeners

March 18

Participants: Granman Asongo, Ms. Menig, and Noeta

Meeting with Granman Asongo 11.50

- Noeta announced the meeting.
- Ms. Menig explained the purpose of the visit to Kwamalasamutu.
- Ms. Menig asked Granman Asongo to send a message to the 10 women handicraft producers to meet with them in the afternoon. A meeting was scheduled for 14.00h.

Meeting with women handicraft producers: 14.00-18.00h

- The purpose of the visit was explained.
- Materials and tools needed to produce handicrafts were distributed (photos below).
- Arrangements were made for the following days: finances and marketing on Sunday and Monday; commencement of handicraft production to be used as samples on Sunday.



March 19

Meeting with women handicraft producers: 13.30-18.00h (All 10 women attended the training; Noeta served as translator)

- The financial management first training session commenced (Photo 1 below). T session focused on administration (basics and purpose of administration; basics and purpose of bookkeeping).
- Production of handicraft samples commenced (Photo 2 below).



Women at first training session



Commencement of handicrafts production

March 20

Meeting with 10 women: 8.00-18.30h

- A second session of financial and marketing training was conducted. This session covered expense versus profit analyses; cost price; product quality; price competition; product promotion; and business means balance.
- The follow up to the handicrafts project was explained: the handicrafts that the women prepared will be used as samples during a search for potential markets. Also, a development plan would be prepared within a month so that the women will know exactly what the next steps will be as well as all recommendations. The project team also plan to conduct an internet search for tools such as drills and polishers so that the women can produce better quality handicrafts.
- Photos of an ACT handicrafts display at the Kinderboeken Festival (Children’s Book Festival) held in Paramaribo were displayed to stimulate cultural pride and to convince them that there is a market for their products. It was agreed that participating in different local exhibitions and working to open their own gallery would help them fulfill the objectives of their development plan.



Photos: Marketing training



ACT handicrafts display at the Children's Book Festival in Paramaribo

Handicrafts produced and brought to town:

NTFP Necklaces: 17	Necklaces (beads): 19
NTFP Bracelet: 3	Bracelets (beads): 13
NTFP Earrings: 1	Earrings (beads): 10
NTFP Bags: 2	
NTFP Mixed Bead Necklaces: 2	

All bead products were prepared in only two days.

Because of a lack of seeds, it was not possible to produce a large quantity of NTFP handicrafts. Before Ms. Menig arrived in Kwamalasamutu, some of the women produced NTFP handicrafts and gave her the handicrafts for future sale and marketing.

Necklaces will retail between SRD 10, - and SRD 20,-; the bags will retail at SRD 25,-.



Merchandise of women handicraft producers

Other activities:

- Visit to ACT booth at the Kinderboeken Festival.
- Meeting with Agnes Pinas, a handicrafts producer who has a booth within a souvenir store along the “Waterkant”; she is willing to sell the handicrafts of these women. Her booth is located in an area frequented by many tourists who purchase souvenirs from her store.

- Meeting with two handicrafts stores on the Dominee straat: they stated that they like the idea of marketing the womens' products, but have a lot of such products that are not selling well. The products come from women from Kwamalasamutu living in Paramaribo.
- The project visited an African dress store (Big and Beautiful/ Fred Derby straat); the manager expressed great interest and asked Ms. Menig to give her a week to consider. She likes the handicrafts created from mara mara and other seeds, but can't buy products now.
- An unsuccessful internet search was conducted for handicrafts tools, the located tools were electrically powered.
- An arrangement was established with the owner of the Nasks Souvenir Store.