



**Activity:** Administrative and Financial Training for Indigenous Leaders  
**Financed by:** Organization of American States; Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation  
**Focal group:** Indigenous communities of southeastern 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:** June 23–25, 2006  
**Reporter:** Sonja Lisse, Operations Manager  
**ACT Staff:** Hortence de Windt (Financial Administrator), Michael Weidum (Asst. Financial Administrator), Rachelle Bong A Jan (Land Management Coordinator), Marianna Sarmiento (Volunteer)

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### **OBJECTIVE:**

The objective of this activity was to train the participants (particularly Kwamalasamutu's Granman Asongo and the foundations that operate in the village) in the basics of administration and financial management.

### **COORDINATION:**

Activities were coordinated by the ACT Suriname Operations Manager Sonja Lisse. The trainers were Ms. Lisse for the administrative component, and Hortence de Windt, ACT's Financial Administrator, and Michael Weidum, ACT's Assistant Financial Administrator, for the financial component.

### **PARTICIPANTS:**

The participants were two representatives from Stichting Nana, one from Stichting MEU, three from Stichting Talawa, and 18 other villagers.



Participants in the administrative training exercises

## ACTIVITY REPORT:

### Friday June 23rd

**12.15h** Arrival at Kwamalasamutu.

Ms. Lisse held a meeting with the foreman Willem to discuss activities and to arrange the meeting with Granman Asongo.

**16.00h** Meeting with Granman Asongo

The Granman welcomed ACT staff and stated that he was very pleased to see the assembled group. Ms. Lisse introduced Marianne Sarmiento, a Brazil nut researcher (volunteer), and informed the Granman regarding the purpose of the visit.

Ms. Lisse also informed the Granman about the upcoming meetings the following week with the ACT Program Director and the National Institute for Environment and Development (NIMOS) regarding the Environmental and Social Assessment of Billiton/Suralco and about the TALAWA organization.

The Granman informed the staff that he had been invited by the VIDS to attend a meeting in Paramaribo, but since the meetings with ACT had been planned a long time ago, he had decided to stay in Kwamalasamutu and send his representatives, James and Kapitein Wakusha, to the VIDS meeting.

### Saturday June 24th

**9.30h Part 1 of Training (introduction to administration)**

The meeting was planned for 9.00 hrs, but due to heavy rain was postponed to 9.30h.

Ms. Lisse welcomed all participants and expressed her appreciation for their interest in participating.

Ms. Lisse made a brief comparison between a household and an office. The participants were informed that an office must be organized in order to make administrative work easier. The distinction was drawn between office equipment and office supplies. The participants were further trained in the basics of writing a letter.



**Sonja Lisse explaining to trainees (L and M); trainees working on an exercise**

**12.50h Break**

During the break, Kapitein Shedde from Alalapadu informed those present about Brazil nut production activities in his village. He presented some samples of sweet Brazil nut cookies and salted Brazil nuts

produced in Alalapadu. He also offered nuts for sale. He informed the group that their nutcracker was not working properly.

**13.15h Lunch**

**14.15h Training Part 2: Summary of administration training and introduction to financial training**

Ms. Lisse summarized the preceding sessions and checked to see whether the participants had understood the previous discussions. Ms. Lisse closed her session with an assignment to all participants to write a letter and to be handed in the next day. The necessary supplies were distributed.

**14.50h** Mr. Weidum gave a short recap of the day before, after fielding questions from the participants.

Ms.de Windt initiated the financial training. She explained the reasons why it is necessary to perform a cost price calculation: how does one decide a price? She explained that one must take into consideration how much time they need for preparation of their goods, and how much money they will need to invest in it. Ms. De Windt also explained how to write out a receipt and why it is necessary that both the vendor and the client have a copy of this receipt. Mr. Weidum explained what a cash log and inventory are, and why it is necessary to keep those up to date. He also explained the difference between expenditures and income.

**17.30h Conclusion of part 2 of training session.**

After consultation with the Granman and the participants, the decision was made to begin the meeting on Sunday at 14.00 hrs. The participants were asked to bring crafts for a role -playing exercise that was planned for the financial training.

Granman Asongo and Kapitein Shedde were invited for dinner at 8.00 hrs at ACT-Pakoro. ACT staff had received a huge *anjoemara* from the Granman with which Ms. Bong a Jan prepared a *peprewatra*.

**20.00h Dinner.**

**Sunday June 25<sup>th</sup>**

In the morning, the villagers attended a church ceremony.

**14.45h Recap: administration and role-playing exercise.**

Ms. Lisse presented a brief summary of what has been discussed the day before. She received 15 letters. After a quick examination, she was pleased to announce that over 70% of the participants had used the basics to write a good letter. The other 30% had very minor mistakes, which Ms. Lisse discussed with all participants.

A mock office was set up as the Secretariat of the Ministry of Education (as decided by the participants). Ms. Lisse acted as the Secretary (Ms. Sabieso) and stated that she had to receive a letter from the “President” of Kwamalasamutu Mr. Eseke on behalf of the Minister. Bryan served as the messenger and had to deliver this letter at the Secretariat of the Minister. The purpose of this play was to demonstrate what to take into account when delivering a letter, for example that it is important to address the letter properly on the envelope and to have the receiver sign their name and date in order to prevent misunderstandings. After the role play exercise, Ms. Lisse thanked all the participants for their full cooperation and promised that a second training session would soon follow, as she understands that not everything can be discussed in one or two days.

**16.00h** Mr. Weidum and Ms. De Windt prepared a role-playing exercise: three women of Stichting Nana were to sell their products. Ms. De Windt, Ms. Lisse and Mr. Weidum acted as the clients. The women had to provide a receipt to demonstrate their understanding of the previous training. After the exercise, Mr. Weidum conducted a review of the cash log and inventory.



**Michael explaining to the participants (L); Role playing (R)**

After this session, Ms. Lisse presented packages of office supplies to Granman Asongo for his own office, to Granman Asongo for Stichting Talawa, and to Stichting Meu and St. Nana. Ms. Lisse also presented a Dutch dictionary through Granman Asongo to a young villager who has potential to help the elder with the Dutch language.

At the conclusion, the staff was informed that there is another *stichting* in operation that is purchasing crafts and other items from the villagers and selling them on the market. In the next training session, this *stichting* will be incorporated in the training schedule.



**Contribution of office supplies to Granman (L), Stichting Nana (M), Stichting Meu (R)**

### **5.30h Closing**

Ms. Lisse thanked all participants for their interest and promised that it would not be the last training session. The Granman thanked the ACT staff for their effort to educate his people.

Kapitein Shedde from Alalapadu presented a map of the Brazil nut trees in Alalapadu. This handmade map was drawn by Marianna Sarmiento with the assistance of Kapitein Shedde and the researcher Shahieda Joemratie.

## **CHALLENGES:**

It is important that the training be repeated, especially the financial component. It was determined that working with smaller groups would also be advisable.

## **FOLLOW UP:**

In order to make sure that the participants understand the material, it is important to conduct follow-up training exercises in a few months in which the Project can repeat what was presented earlier and determine whether or not we can move forward.



**Participants at training, and the contribution of the Dutch Dictionary by Granman Asongo**