

ACTIVITY REPORT

Activity:	Public health workshop on Waterborne and Foodborne diseases
Financed by:	Organization of American States (OAS)
Focal group:	Indigenous communities of South-Eastern Suriname, from the villages of Peleletepu, Kwamamlasamutu, Kawemhakan and Apetina.
Execution:	The Amazon Conservation Team (ACT), Virginia, USA; President: Mark Plotkin; ACT Suriname Program Manager: Neville Gunther. Counterparts: the Wayana and Trio Indigenous communities
Date:	December 10 th 2004

The objective of this workshop was to raise awareness and provide training in basic health issues. The issues that were considered are those related to the prevention and occurrence of waterborne and food borne diseases, including:

- Spread of diseases through drinking water
- Can drinking water be a potential source for food poisoning?
- Mineral water
- Bacteria in meat
- Fruit juices and soft drinks
- Canned products
- Expiration date
- Hygiene of the hands
- Fruit trees as source for medicines.

Activities were coordinated and executed by the ACT Suriname Health Coordinator Mr. Jeetandra Jitan. The total number of participants was 12 of which 1 person from Telelepepu, 2 from Kwamamlasamutu, 4 from Kawemhakan and 5 from Apetina. Most of the participants are well-known and respected citizens of their village, because of their involvement in GPS mapping in their living areas. All participants were males with ages between 30 and 55.

The workshop was observed by the ACT Suriname program coordinator Neville Gunther, the consultant for the Ethno-Ecological Survey Ms. Karin Boven and the cartographic team members Mr. Clemens Roos and Mr. Samoe Schelts.

WORKSHOP REPORT

Mr. Jitan welcomed all participants and explained to them that Health is important for every person and their surrounding environment. He explained that it would take many days to explain everything about the waterborne and food borne diseases. One point he made is that everything is dependent on water.

WATER: He emphasized that water should be clean to have good health. Water is an important part of the body, making up about 60% of a persons weight. He explained the requirements for clean drinking water and explained the sources and levels of contamination. The trainees were informed on measures to prevent contamination of drinking water in their villages, and how to handle issue of contamination in the village, whenever it occurs.

FOOD: The trainer explained that food is also a source of contamination. He emphasized that food infection can be caused by contaminated meat, -tools, etc. The symptoms of food poisoning, such as throwing up, stomach ache, headache, chills, diarrhea and even death are visualized.

FRUIT JUICES AND SOFT DRINKS: First, the definition of fruit juices and soft drinks was given. Second, the nutritional values of the commodities were highlighted. The various vitamins and their purpose was explained and the need for getting these vitamins in the daily diet.

CANNED PRODUCTS: Emphasis was set on the high levels of imported can product in Suriname. Many types of packaging such as cans, paper etc. all have their specific character. In this case, canned products can elicit chemical and microbiological food poisoning, especially when coming in contact with oxygen. Preventive measures were explained to the trainees.

EXPIRATION DATE: The definition for the expiration date was explained, where after the need for keeping track of this date was highlighted. Microbiological deterioration will occur after the product is expired and this may cause several diseases. There was a distinction made between products that do not need an expiration date and others that need to be checked carefully on their expiration date.

HYGIENE OF THE HANDS: Many of the diseases are spread through dirty hands. The trainer explained that the hygiene of the hands is very important in maintaining personal hygiene and hygiene in the home and village. Hands need to be washed regularly and it was explained how the hands should be washed, rinsed and dried.

FRUIT TREES AS SOURCE FOR MEDICINES: The trainer explained that several fruit trees can be used for medicinal purpose in the home and in the village. These fruit trees can serve to treat simple diseases such as fever (cashew), constipation (guava) etc.