

ACTIVITY REPORT

Activity: Hygiene workshop in Kwamalasamutu
Financed by: Organization of American States (OAS)
Focal group: Indigenous communities of southeastern Suriname from the village of Kwamalasamutu
Execution: The Amazon Conservation Team (ACT), Virginia, USA; President: Mark Plotkin; ACT Suriname Program Manager: Gwendolyn Emanuels
Counterparts: the Trio indigenous communities
Date: March 11 – 14, 2005

OBJECTIVE:

The main activities in this reporting period were a series of hygiene workshops held with the community of Kwamalasamutu. In addition, efforts were made to reorganize the traditional medicine clinic.

COORDINATION:

Activities were coordinated in the field by the ACT Suriname Health Program Coordinator Melvin Uiterloo. In field assistance was given by Culture Coordinator Beverly de Vries and Field Assistant Kenneth Wongsonadi.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants were the local staff of Kwamalasamutu (17); students from the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grades of the public school of Kwamalasamutu (approximately 100); and the remainder of Kwamalasamutu community (approximately 200).

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Monday April 11th, 2005

The team departed at 10:00 h from the Zorg & Hoop airstrip, arriving at Kwamalasamutu at 12.00 h. The team was welcomed at the airfield by the local ACT staff. At 15:00 h, a meeting was held with Granman Asongo, where the team discussed the planned activities and proposed a strategy to ensure the effectiveness of the workshops.

Tuesday April 12th, 2005

From 8:30-10:00 h, a meeting was conducted with the personnel of the traditional medicine clinic. In this meeting, the team discussed the planned activities for the coming days and requested their assistance where needed. In addition, several issues regarding the clinic operations were discussed such as basic hygiene in the clinic and its surroundings. In collaboration with the teacher of the 3rd grade of the public school of Kwamalasamutu, a hygiene workshop was held for students of the 3rd and the 4th grade. The issues that were dealt with were 1) everyday hygiene (the difference between dirty and clean; microorganisms and the role they play in causing disease; where microorganisms that cause illness are found and what we can do to avoid them); 2) food hygiene (water, clean kitchen, safe storage of food); and 3) personal hygiene (hand washing, mouth hygiene, hair washing, bathing, hand hygiene). At 17:00 h, students and the teacher from the 6th grade began to practice a play about hygiene.

Wednesday April 13th, 2005

From 8:30 to 10:00 h, Mr. Uiterloo conducted a general workshop with the local staff of the clinic and field. The most prevalent sicknesses seen in the village were discussed, possible paths of contamination were described, and general hygiene skills were explained. This workshop was immediately followed by a workshop for students of the 5th and 6th grades. The 1st grade teacher of the public school of

Kwamalasamutu served as the translator. The same issues were discussed as with the 3rd and 4th graders on the previous day. The day ended with practicing of the play about hygiene in collaboration with the students and the teacher of the 6th grade of the public school of Kwamalasamutu.

Thursday April 14th, 2005

The first activity was a clinical hygiene workshop for the local staff of the clinic. The focus was on operating the clinic for the benefit of the local population. Hygiene and general rules in the clinic were highlighted. The staff and Mr. Uiterloo also began to reconstruct the interior of the clinic, inventoried the clinic supplies, and translated the inventory list into Trio. On that evening, the students of the 6th grade of the public school of Kwamalasamutu presented the play to the community, with about 200 people present. This activity was an introduction to the general workshop that was held for the whole village. Using a short PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Uiterloo focused on the hygiene situation in the village, how to be hygienic, contamination paths, food hygiene and personal hygiene. The workshop was held with practice in hand washing by the community members. The participants' consensus was that the workshop was useful and can be repeated in the future.

Friday April 15th, 2005

The day commenced with a collaborative inspection of the clinic. The clinic was rearranged, and self-adhesive paper was placed in the preparation room. A brief meeting was conducted with Nuta (the clinic foreman) to discuss the clinic operations. At 11:15 h, the team departed from Kwamalasamutu.

CHALLENGES

In the meeting of April 12, the staff of the Kwamalasamutu clinic was asked to use the following set of rules and principles as their guide for clinic operations:

1. Cleaning and disinfection of examination room
2. Disinfection of non-disposable tools used during examination
3. Keeping the clinic free of dust by cleaning daily
4. Daily removal of garbage
5. Assembly and utilization of closed storage cases
6. Keeping the clinic surroundings free of garbage and water
7. Daily work schedule (preparation of medicine, administrative work, or patient examination)
8. Thoroughly cleaning bottles in which medicine are stored, before use and re-use
9. Separate rooms for different clinic activities (preparation of medicine, examination of patients etc.)

In advance of the final workshop, some of the villagers were asked to fill out a translated questionnaire, so that the team's work concerning health and health status could be evaluated. Wuta, Susali and Saimon assisted with interviewing the villagers and filling in the forms. The forms were used to get an idea of the personal hygiene in the village.

There was little motivation on the first day to practice of play about hygiene. This situation improved during the afternoon of April 13th. The workshop with the community of Kwamalasamutu was delayed due to the absence of almost all the students from the play (they were shy and embarrassed). We had to use the megaphone to call them up, and after 30 minutes they were all present.

FOLLOW UP:

1. Evaluation of the hygiene and health situation in the village and especially in the clinic.
2. Evaluation of the shamans and apprentices program.
3. Organizing a shaman's apprentice evening at which 10 different subjects will be covered.