

ACTIVITY REPORT

Activity: Women's NTFP Focus Group
Financed by: OAS
Focal group: Indigenous communities of South-Eastern 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: Tuesday June 8, 2004

OBJECTIVE:

This focus group follows the two Women's NTFP workshops held in May 2004. One of the ideas that resulted from the workshops was to make hammocks of a smaller size. The benefits of smaller hammocks are numerous. They are less time-consuming than the regular size, light-weight for transportation and can be produced using only local materials. The objective of the focus-group was to create a test hammock to see how much time investment is needed. The final product could then be used in town to look into marketing possibilities.

COORDINATION:

The focus group was arranged and facilitated by Beverly de Vries, Culture & Education Coordinator for ACT Suriname.

PARTICIPANTS:

The participants were 3 women in Kwamalasamutu. One woman was responsible for spinning and processing the cotton into yarn and the other two for weaving the yarn into a hammock. (see annex for complete list of participants with name, age, sex, function).

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The women began by gathering materials necessary and setting up their work area. Keiti had already spun the cotton into yarn, processed it and brought it to the focus group. Faari set up two poles as the weaving base. She then taught Shokonono the style of weave she wanted to use and the two set to work. Within a few hours the hammock was finished. During that time we discussed the growing of cotton, spinning and processing of yarn, weaving hammocks and other products as well as the possibility of selling small hammocks. The final touch on the hammock was provided by one of the Shamans who added dyed twine to the ends to make them sturdy. This twine is made only by men according to the clearly defined division between men's and women's crafts.

CHALLENGES:

The only problem was finding enough cotton as it is in short supply in the village. Many of the women have stopped growing and harvesting cotton because they can get synthetic yarns from town. Women that do have cotton realize the scarcity and are therefore not willing to part from it. This is an indication that more cotton will have to be grown if hammocks are to be developed as a viable NTFP. Ensuring that a full shipment of the product can be delivered in a timely manner is one of the most important considerations a store will have. Enough cotton would have to be planted, processed and then made into hammocks or other products in order to guarantee the store enough stock.

FOLLOW UP:

1. A Women's NTFP Report will be written based on all of the information gathered in the three workshops and in this focus group.
2. Recommendations listed in the report will be followed up on, pending approval from ACT.

Annex: List of Participants

Name	Function	Age	Sex
Shokonono	Apprentice	38	Female
Faari	Apprentice	35	Female
Keiti	Apprentice	41	Female