

Overview

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in collaboration with Cuso International, successfully completed an environmental club training with the Akawini Wildlife Group on 13th and 14th June, 2018. The training was held in the Ykanipa Community of Akawini Village located in the Lower Pomeroun River.



The goal of the environmental club training was to equip the youths of Akawini Village with the knowledge and skills required to keep their environmental group active and for them to overcome challenges faced by the group. This was achieved via fun and interactive activities facilitated by Deuel Hughes and Saliqa Zaman.

On the first day of the training, there were nineteen (19) participants. However, this number decreased to thirteen (13) on the second day probably due to the lack of interest. Nine (9) of them belonged to the Akawini Wildlife Group while the others showed up because they were interested in joining the group and learning about the environment. Their age ranged from 11-19 years old.

Sessions



The sessions included presentations, ice-breakers, games and group work. These allowed the participants to be involved in the sessions which enabled them to better understand the role of an environmental club in environmental education and protection. The main themes of the sessions were as follows:

- The history, concept and objectives of Environmental Education which developed a context for the workshop
- The history, objectives, steps and challenges in forming an Environmental Club
- Planning activities and projects to keep the club active
- Becoming affiliated with the EPA
- The importance of natural resources and why they should be protected

- Environmental issues such as solid waste management, water sanitation and biodiversity conservation.
- Decision-making and problem solving

After the sessions, elections were held to select individuals to hold the positions of Vice President (as the President was away and was not able to carry out his duties), Secretary and Treasurer in order for the club to function efficiently. Cuso International also presented the group with a cabinet to store inventories.



Evaluation

The response of the participants indicated that they were pleased with how the sessions were executed. Not only did they love the games and the interactive sessions, but many of them also became aware of environmental issues like deforestation and poor waste management techniques. They also became equipped with better understanding on how to manage the Akawini Wildlife Group. However, persons did indicate that the training should have been longer and that more hands-on activities and games should have been included. They all expressed that they felt more connected to nature after the training was completed.



Challenges

The following are some challenges faced by the facilitators and the participants:



- Time - due to unforeseen circumstances, some of the sessions had to be shortened and some interactive sessions were omitted.
- Distance - Since Akawini Village consists of many islands, some of the participants had to travel long distances by boat to get to the training
- Lack of participation - Some of the participants were very shy and it took a while for them to become comfortable to share their thoughts and comments.

Benefits of the Environmental Club Training

Raise awareness and impart knowledge about the environment

Enhance critical thinking and decision making skills

Improved socialisation skills

Empowering youths to take action in order to conserve environmental resources

Foster teamwork
