**WM Sur Pics Stiwewa Cellebration “School kids of Talentens, Suriname South America)**

**Enrollment of pupils**

The OS Winti Wai is the first school stiwewa contacted. We asked for the graduation data of the last three years. Based on these data we could see that it fluctuated around the 52%. In the starting phase, most children were from this school. Once the project became known at the other primary schools more and more children from these other schools joined the project.

With a start of approximately 60 children, the number of registered children increased at an alarming rate within a few weeks to 120. So it doubled!!!

Once again, a mixture of students from several primary schools in the neighborhood.

**The selection of counselors**

There were two categories of counselors within the project who gave their (paid) contribution namely the counselors and assistants

In the first group were teachers whom were solely responsible for the higher classes of the primary school (classes 4, 5 and 6).

In the second group you had the assistant supervisor and those were people with an educational background of more than final secondary school level (HAVO, AMS, university students etc)

The number of workers in this project grew steadily with the number of pupils. There has never been a situation in more than 1 or max 2 weeks, where there were more children than the required number of supervisors.

**The structure of the counseling**

There couldn’t be any stressful situation (from the side of the supervisors), the children had to get sufficient attention, and the main point was their requirement and specific learning situation. To be able to accomplish all these aspects an ideal norm of a maximum of 10 children per 3 supervisors was set. The setting in which they worked was therefore one qualified teacher with 2 assistants in a group with up to 10 children. The children were also grouped by educational level example fourth graders together up to a maximum of 10 and the same with 5th and 6th graders.

**Terms for starting**

All persons who were interested to help in this project, unique intent for Suriname, were obliged to attend the teach-in first. You just had to come listen to what we expect from you in terms of optimal supervision (when are you doing exactly what stiwewa wants?) Then you also had to meet the training requirements. Finally, being available for a minimum of three (3) months and for the full working hours (16 - 18h). There were people who just wanted to start at 17h or at 16h, but then work until 17 or 17.30. Also there were some people who suddenly and without any prior notice (sometimes not even afterwards) stayed away. There was a previous warning about this, during the teach-in. If you were (unauthorized) absence twice , you would be removed from the project immediately.

Stiwewa started a teach-in, because we did not immediately have the required number of counselors we needed, we held this instruction meeting on 3 separate occasions. It was obligatory to participate in this teach in, in order to be selected as a homework supervisor in this unique and as proved very successful project. During this training meeting we, briefly summarized, dealt with the following topics.

Improvement, learning motivation and school performance

**Motivation** influencing factors;

The teacher, the classroom and the school

After sufficient insight was given concerning this topic, we finished with the question how we think Stiwewa should deal with these factors to positively influence the learning motivation of children. After all it is a project and not a structural intervention and so an indication was given on how, according to the Stiwewa project, they need to tackle the homework project in order to improve the school performance.

**The guidance itself**

Mid November 2011, a start was made with the, unique for Suriname, homework project. Stiwewa started with Varosieau as the only sponsor. The number of students grew rapidly from 90 to 120. Then it kept growing (as from February 2012) to even 160 children. As the number of children grew, the number of counselors was adapted too. For 160 children we had according to our own formula, **16** competent teachers for the higher classes and **32** assistant supervisors (especially university students). The agreement was that the first two months, at least the period until February 1, 2012 would be used for the detection of the pupil (the diagnostic phase, in which category do you belong, what are your specific problems, what can you do).

Stiwewa had four (4) categories made ​​namely; children who simply need help, children who have fallen back on their studies (who need to be tutor, so extra help), children with learning difficulties and attitude problem, children with disabilities (visual or mental handicap). Because of the required expertise (which we did not have) the children of the two last categories needed, we had to exclude them from participating. Counseling was given to children of the upper classes namely the 4th, 5th and 6th graders and is mainly in the subjects arithmetic and language. We say “mainly " because if a child indicated that he needed support with another subject, which occurred frequently, at the tests, it was also given. We also got special request from the teachers to give extra help in the subject reading. There was even a case with a child from the 5th grade who had the reading level of a 3rd grader.

The homework project was held twice a week and on Tuesday and Thursday from 16-18h

**How was the need for homework assistance of each student determined:**

We all know that almost all children just lie about their schoolwork sometimes.

Taking this fact into account, you cannot assume that the homework or the full amount of it will be normally (and even unasked) mentioned. Therefore they were asked to show their homework notebook. In case of doubt it was investigated. To complete the investigation in some cases the relating teacher and / or parent / caretaker were contacted. Because of this approach, lying to the workers was minimized to the utmost.

This matter was an extra expense within the project, because the counselors were provided weekly of calling cards.

**Uncalculated problems and the final race**

Stiwewa has some principles which are applied on any setting situation within the organization such as: our non bondage (not linked to any particular political or religious organization) no discrimination (in any way) collaboration, optimal communication, transparency and integrity.

On the level of the coordinator they messed with the last three (3) basic principles of Stiwewa and because of this the board was forced to let her choose for either getting fired, or to take the honor and leave on her own. She chose the second option. However, she totally surprised us with a vindictive step by wrongly announcing to the parents that the homework project was stopped, so suddenly less children came. Stiwewa is a strong and stable organization so together with the new coordinator we tackled the created gab. With a specially designed brief survey (see Appendix), we quickly trained the homework counselors and sent them off, door to door. This was a real unexpected expense, but with excellent results. Because after that, our homework club was back on its normal strength (max. 160 children). After this the second problem announced itself, also on coordinator level (the 2nd new coordinator). This time it was about limited commitment, insufficient coordination knowledge and therefore poor quality, inadequate cooperation with both the Board and the school. Behind the scenes Stiwewa conducted a fierce battle to manage the occurred risk and thus still reach the desired project result (a score of at least 80%). During a really good and well attended member meeting, critical questions about leading or coordinating the project were asked. The member clearly showed her concern. After the meeting there was a conversation between her and the chairman of stiwewa. A couple of days afterwards, (the end of April 2012) she announced her departure due to health reasons. Fortunately stiwewa quickly succeeded again in finding a coordinator and this time from the project itself (3rd coordinator) it was now the final stage, the period of May, June, July.

**With all the unforeseen problems and additional costs, we were far above the calculated budget of SRD seven and a half thousand (SRD 7500 -, per month)**

Towards the end of the final stage in the month July, we noticed that the absence of the students was suddenly increasing. We also noticed through internal tests (or control surveys) ​​that, particularly the 6th graders were not quite "ready" for the national GLO final exam.

Extra tutoring was urgently needed and immediately too. An optimal cooperation between stiwewa, the school and the parents was needed like never before. The homework project for the 6th graders was then, based on this ring constantly (knowledge not suffice) extended to almost every day. Also this was a real unexpected expense, but also with outstanding good results. Because of this quick and early intervention, all sixth graders from the different schools within the project graduated. So a 100% score. The board, after consulting with the third new coordinator and held a meeting with all supervisors, gave instruction to end the homework project, by the end of July 2012 so 2 to 3 weeks earlier.

The only reason for this was the once again very high absence of the pupils. The reason for this absence as the principle pointed out, was the free time, the so called ‘*’kom kommer week*”, the student had at school because they were done with everything. No more tests and no more homework. So the student did not see the purpose of coming to the homework project anymore. They were clearly supported by both their parents and some teachers with this point of view. We knew our counselors did their best, but still after ending the program, there was a very scary silence within the organization. It seemed like everyone who was involved in supporting the children were suddenly very anxious. Everyone awaited the result of the GLO- final exam in fear and when the news came trough by phone everyone was delighted. Everyone was calling each other up. The joy broke loose. Suddenly ​​the deep uncertainty made place for pride and self-confidence. We have done an outstanding job, and the result does not lie. 89% for the OS wintiwai and 100% for the project itself, because all participants on this, unique for Suriname, either passed or graduated. After that all relevant external stakeholders were informed such as the sponsors, **Varossiau** and **under directorate youth Affairs**

**Read development issues**

* At first there must be good and clear commitment from all stakeholders. Because with better cooperation and therefore close involvement between parents, school and project manager (so Stiwewa), you control problems like absence at an early stage so you can ensure better results, without pressuring one of the parties too much.
* in a project with so many staff (nearly 50 people) we prefer a coordinator with leadership experience which also means that the person is willing to have unpleasant conversation about changes, bring bad news, in short, he / she knows and wants to intervene in any way when that prove necessary

On behalf of

the Stiwewa board

Mr. R R Berghout, MBA