

Small scale mining study – Sabajo



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Introduction

This study describes small-scale gold mining in and around the Sabajo project. It's a snapshot; Gold areas change continuously because new people come and just pull others away, and they are always looking for new gold prey.

Sabajo is located in the River Commewijne River in the triangle between the Bigi Anu Creek and the Little Commewijne River. From interviews it appears that the Commewijne River river basin was previously used by the Kawina for logging, hunting and fishing.

Method

- Presentation of Kawina's Process and Consent in Paramaribo (June 18, 2017)
- Presentation of process and consent of gold seekers in the Sabajo area (24-25 June 2017)
- Mapping of camps
- Census of residents of camps
- Interviews with machine holders
- Conversations with service providers such as cabaret holders.
- Interviews with key figures
- Observation in the Sabajo area
- Literature study (incl. Maps National archive)

Results

History

- Since the late 19th century gold mining in Sabajo area by gold seekers from St. Lucia and Martinique. They worked mainly with a longtom.



Ancestors (afó) of a number of Kawina who now work in the gold sector were already employed as boatmen and provided other services to gold seekers in the area of Small Commewijne Creek and the Bigi Anu Creek, including Mana Sang, a gold boss from St. Lucia.

In 1992, a group of Kawina van Pennenica / Moismoiskondre joined the Small Commewijne with six sets of pumps. They worked with a longtom, and called their place of residence Combé.

In 1995, this Kawina left the area because it was too difficult to reach. Soon after (~ 1996) groups of garimpeiros started working at Casador. Towards the end of the nineties, accessibility increased due to the fact that wood companies built MUSA roads. In 2002, the current country began to work in the area.

In 2008/2009, Kawina returned machine owners who had previously worked in Santa Barbara back to the area. To get a legal concession, they founded the Kawina Pikin Foundation. Eventually, there were no concessions available for this area.

In 2009, Newmont Suriname gets exploration rights for the Sabajo gold project. At that time, there were > 1000 gold seekers; especially Brazilians. In 2010 OGS removes most of the gold seekers, and in 2014 also the Casador gold seekers. From 2014, the Security Department will chart who works in the Sabajo area. The Social Responsibility team has been used more recently for more involvement with the gold seekers.

Demography

- Total 230 persons employed / living in Sabajo area. (Number of Kawina in brackets).

Area	Machine holders	Workers	Landowners	Others	Total amount
Santa Barbara	11 (5)	135 (10)	2 (2)	12 (0)	160 (16)
Margo	3 (1)	33 (3)	0	0	36 (4)
KM 34	1 (0)	6 (0)	0	0	7 (0)
Polaco	1 (0)	6 (0)	0	0	7 (0)
Weg naar basiskamp	0	0	0	9	9 (0)
Total	15 (6)	180 (13)	2 (2)	21 (0)	219 (19)

The largest group of gold seekers consists of Marrons (84), followed by Brazilians (62). In the service sector, especially Dominicans (9) and Brazilians (8).

The majority of people in the Sabajo area (93.7%) are in Paramaribo when they are not in the area.

For about nine out of ten gold seekers, the GLO school is the highest education. More than a third, the GLO school did not finish.

Cultural Study– Brokopondo area



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Results (continued)

Most people who work in the small-scale gold sector in the Sabajo area are men. There are 17 women-win counted in the gold camps, mostly as cooks, family of gold seekers and in one case machine keeper. Of the 17 women in the service sector there are 13 sex workers and 4 cabaret holders. None of all was Kawina.

The majority of the men worked as gowtuman (105), machine holder (18), pockline operator (11), cook (7), or had another job like foreman or clerkman.

The process

There are two farms known in the Sabajo area. The landowners receive 10% of the proceeds from certain Brazilian machine holders at Santa Barbara.

Kawina captains indicated that gold seekers should have their permission to work in the area. In practice, only 2 Kawina machine holders have requested the captain for permission.

In 2009 there was iniquity between Kawina gold seekers and traditional authorities about the spending of landowners' proceeds. Part of the money that was obtained from Brazilian machine holders at that time was used to build a holiday home in Java.

Question: Is there a community fund?

At the time of this investigation, of the 18 camps, 6 machine holders paid a percentage to a landlord; two machine holders paid to one landlord, and four to another. Brazilians pay 10%, A Surinamese machine holder pays 6-8%, but is exempted when yield is low. In areas outside of Santa Barbara, no percentages are paid.

Material

Of the 16 operations, 15 worked with a pockline, 11 had a pockline; 4 rented one when needed. One person worked bakasanti with a sumajé.

The value of the operations without pockline is estimated at US 9,600; and on US 249,000 with pockline. On average, US operations have 108,000 machines.

Interviewed operations burned between 15-40 barrels of diesel per week. For work with a sumajé 10L per day is used. Diesel and parts are regularly purchased on payment. There is also a lot of use of informal lenders because it is difficult to get a loan from the bank

SSM material in Sabajo, material not used eg because it has to be repaired in brackets.

Area	Operations	Pocklines	Cruisers	Spoit soigi	Sumajé
Santa Barbara	11**	10	8 (5)	9 (7)	1
Margo	3	4	5	2	0
Km 34	1*	1 (1)	0	1	0
Polaco	1	1	0	1	0
Total	16	16 (1)	13 (5)	13 (7)	1

* An operation not interviewed i.v.m. moving from area.

** An operation not interviewed because machine and workers were in Paramaribo.

All machine holders have debts. Of the machine owners who wanted to give this information, the average debt was US \$ 70,000.

Of the gold found, the machine holder takes 80%; Workers divide 20%. Excavator operators usually get 100-120 grams per month in the Sabajo area. Payments by the cook differ by camp. Some camps pay for security. In the month prior to the survey, workers earned an average of 17.8 grams per month. Possibly they may earn half because of the loss of broken machines etc.

Relationship with Newmont

The Newmont Fish-A-Fish Gold Quest strategy has changed. Department of Social Responsibility has been given a more important role in contact with the small-scale gold seekers in the Sabajo area.

Four Brazilians and two Kawina machine holders gave regular contact with Newmont and were generally positive about this. However, the machine owners asked for more clarity about Newmont's plans and their own position in the area. Machine owners indicated that if they should move, they definitely want to know this 1-2 months in advance.

Thanks to

Machineholders, workers, people active in the service sector and other key figures with interests in the Sabajo area.