

## **AMERINDIAN PEOPLES ASSOCIATION (APA)**

Refer to NGO Profiles section for basic organizational and contact information.

**1. Briefly describe the member groups or branches/cells of your organization, including any rules for membership.**

The APA has membership in groups called community units. A unit is made up of not less than ten members and sometimes a unit can be over 100. There are 55 APA units existing. The APA does not have individual membership but operates on a group membership basis. Members must come from within a community and individuals can become members of a unit which is registered with the organisation or can form a unit with ten members or more.

**2. Is your organizational structure more formal or informal?**

The APA has a formal structure. The organisation is led by an Executive Committee which is headed by a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, thirteen regional committee members and a youth and women's representative. The Executive committee meets four times per year and the organisation holds its General Assembly (meeting of its members) every three years. The APA is registered under the Friendly Societies Act and is governed by a constitution.

**3. List at least two significant benefits that the organization provides for its branches.**

The APA provides technical capacity building programmes for the communities that seek such assistance. This comes mainly in the form of training and educational awareness in with regards to indigenous rights education.

The APA also works with communities to map the natural resources of their land in order to verify their area of occupation and use and to examine possibilities of natural resources development.

**4. What special challenges have faced you as a national organization with multiple branches or units, and how were they overcome (or not)?**

The APA faces a number of challenges in working with its members throughout the country since most of them are in the far interior. Such challenges include transportation and communication difficulties, dealing with illness of its field workers especially by malaria, lack of financial and human resources and political pressures.

**5. What advice would you give to others on forming or operating a national network or organization?**

It is important that there is strong and capable leadership in individual organizations and or in networks. It is also very important to have transparency in the planning, implementation and general management of the business of the organisation. There is also the need for a funded and functioning secretariat or office.

**6. Is there anything else that you would like to say about networking within the context of a national organization?**

In the past, the opportunities for the APA to network on the national level have been minimal as there are not many organizations that work on the same issues. The APA has however collaborated extensively with community councils and village leaders in carrying out its activities, and more recently have networked with organizations dealing with domestic violence and community empowerment. Networking however is very important as it can lead to moral and technical support in many areas of work.