

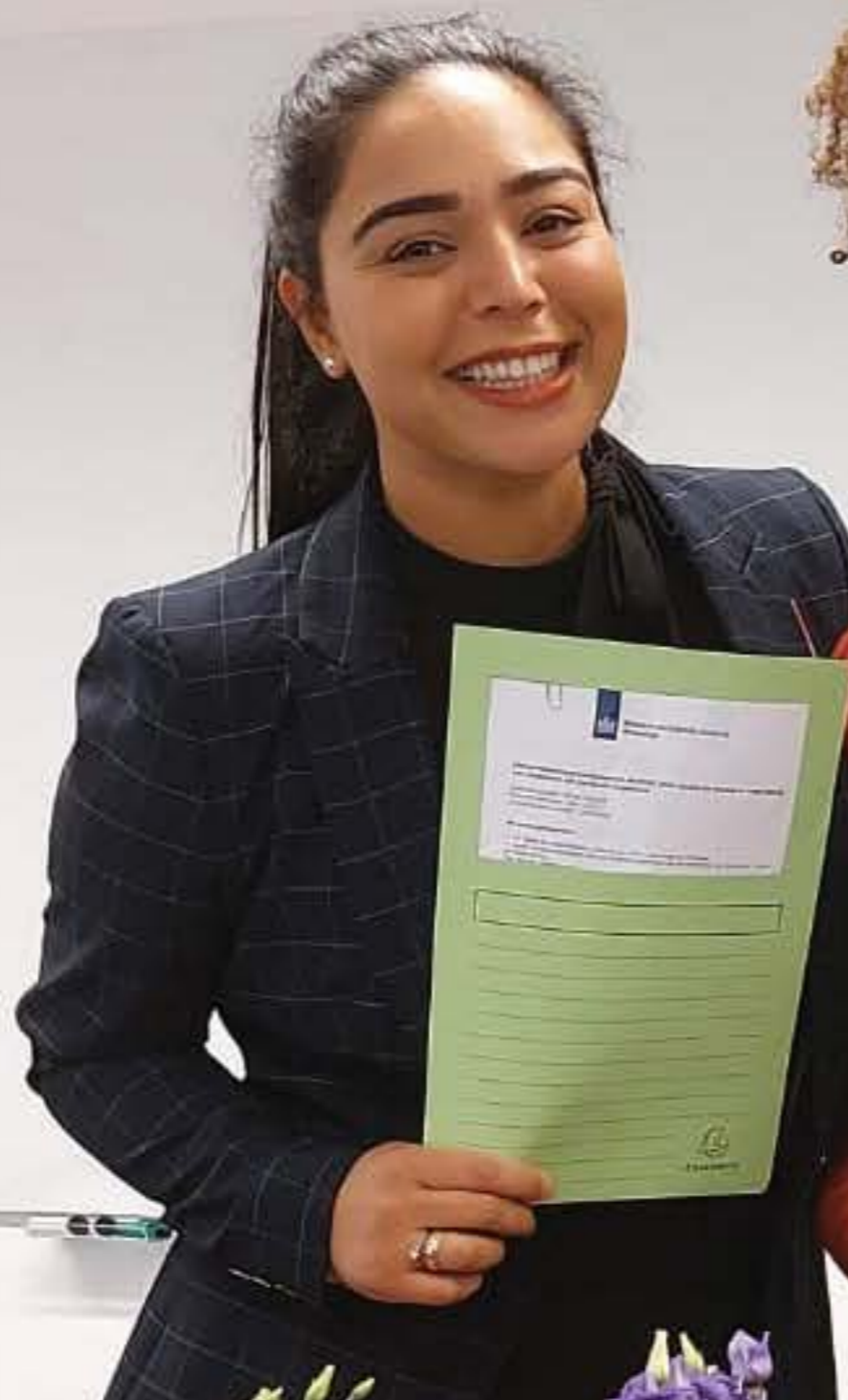


Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland  
OCW

ENGLISH

# WHAT'S NEW ...

IN CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS EDUCATION



17

March / April 2022  
Number 17



Nolly Oleana  
 Department Head of  
 Education, Culture and  
 Science CN



# PREFACE

In the first part of this year, just when everyone thought that we were getting 'back to normal' after two years of Covid, the number of infections in the Caribbean Netherlands rose substantially. As a result, some schools had to close for a short period.

Looking back over the last two years of 'on-again-off-again', we can draw the following conclusions:

- Our future teaching practices must be structured in a manner that facilitates efficient and effective switches between classroom teaching and remote teaching.
- Under any and all circumstances, it is our duty to continue providing the education that our pupils need in order to get the best out of themselves.
- We have a very long way to go to ensure that the schools in the Caribbean Netherlands can quickly and smoothly switch to high-quality remote teaching whenever it becomes necessary.

Fortunately, thanks to the **National Education Programme** (NPO), the Caribbean Netherlands currently has a great deal of resources available in terms of materials, measures and knowledge development for the purpose of high-quality remote teaching. As a result, we are in a somewhat privileged position compared to large parts of the world.

For this reason, I would like to call on everyone in the Caribbean Netherlands education sector to make optimum use of the resources and opportunities available to us in order to provide our students with the best possible education.

*“Against the background of the last two years ‘on-again-off-again’, it is important that future teaching practices are structured in a manner that facilitates efficient and effective switches between classroom teaching and remote teaching”*



# CONTENTS

3

Colophon

# COLOPHON

**This digital newsletter is a publication of OCW in the Caribbean Netherlands and it aims to:**

- provide education professionals and other interested parties with information about the relevant developments in education in the Caribbean Netherlands;
- stimulate the exchange of education-related knowledge and best practices between the islands.

*Editing:* Elaine Marchena and Minke visser

*Design and layout:* I-Design, Ivonne Zegveld

*Do you want to be on the mailing list for this digital newsletter or do you want to contribute to it?  
Then contact Elaine Marchena: [elaine.marchena@rijksdienstcn.com](mailto:elaine.marchena@rijksdienstcn.com)*

*Deadline for the next edition:* June 15, 2022

© Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW)



**THEME**



# New Bachelor of Education starts this August

**In August 2022, the new Bachelor of Education primary-school teacher training programme will be launched on St. Eustatius and Saba. This programme is also intended for teaching assistants and lateral-entry teachers.**

This decision was taken in mid-February following a consultation round held by the University of St. Martin, the University of the Virgin Islands and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science with headteachers and school boards in St. Eustatius and Saba, which provided a great deal of valuable input.

The primary-school teacher training programme will be a blended learning programme, i.e. partly online and partly in-person. It will be organised via a collaboration between these two universities, who will work out all of the practical aspects relating to the programme over the coming period.

More information on this matter will be provided in the months to come.

## KIBRAHACHA CONTINUES TO GROW STEADILY

**Kibrahacha**, the partnership for Collaborative Training in the Caribbean, has been expanded again for this academic year.

Six new training centres on the ABC isles have been added, including **Het Koraal Primary School**, a private special education school in Bonaire. These training centres focus on workplace training for students and in collaboration with the teacher training programmes, they ensure an optimal learning and working environment. "We have joined Kibrahacha as it is important to us that new teachers have a broad range of expertise and excellent knowledge of the various education systems," explains Het Koraal headteacher Vera Dohmen. "We see that working together with other schools, institutions and trainers makes a valuable contribution to the school and to education in general."

In Bonaire, the Amplio Papa Cornes School, Kristu Bon Wardador College and De Pelikaan Primary School are already part of the Kibrahacha programme. [Click for more information.](#)





## Education news

# Development of Third Educational Agenda for Caribbean Netherlands under way

In 2020, the validity period of the Second Educational Agenda expired. The evaluation of the execution of this educational agenda showed that not all priorities and objectives were achieved, although this is understandable due to the continual and highly ambitious nature of the process.

Thankfully, there has been a great deal of enthusiasm and input from all parties involved, nearly all of whom have voiced their support for a follow-up agenda, preferably one that is customised for each island.

The Educational Agenda for the Caribbean Netherlands is being formulated in collaboration with the schools, ROA, the EOZs, the SKJ and the public entities. The goal is to improve education results by better equipping schools in the Caribbean Netherlands to carry out tasks independently and giving pupils education that meets the quality standards for the European Netherlands at the very least.

### State of affairs

All parties involved have been asked to indicate their priorities for the years to come, which tasks they can carry out on their own, which tasks would be better suited to the National Education Programme and what support they are expecting from the third educational agenda for each island. This information has been collected and compared with the vision of the policy departments within the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The findings reported by Pesant (the organisation that supports a large proportion of the schools) following the formulation of plans for the National Education Programme to remedy study delays/arrears, have also been incorporated into the analysis for each island.

**The intention is to formulate the Third Educational Agenda for the start of the new academic year, applicable during the period 2022-2026.**



**New support structure for school boards:**

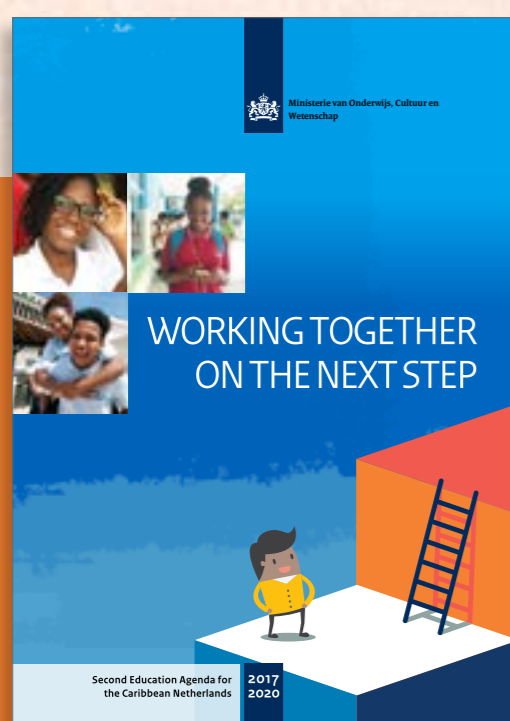
## What's the current state of play?

**As you may know, coordinator Theo Telting is currently working together with schools to develop their new support structure. Following an energetic start, this process has suffered several delays due to the Covid crisis (among other factors).**

The school boards are currently resuming talks to reconfirm -and if necessary readjust- the proposal for their support structure which was agreed upon in 2019. The dialogue between the participating schools takes place via 'consensus workshops' held on the separate islands, beginning with Saba.

The output of the consensus workshops will thereafter form the basis for a detailed blueprint with a realistic time frame for the set-up of the support structure. The coordinator will subsequently guide the implementation.

Furthermore, upon special request by the school boards from the windward Islands, the coordinator recently organised a workshop on educational funding together with financial expert Mark Volmerink from the Bonaire Comprehensive School (Scholengemeenschap Bonaire).



**The previous educational agenda focused on the following priority areas:** promoting governance capacity, sound financial management, more effective language education, compatibility of education with the job market, improving the structure of special educational needs provision, and improved preconditions such as accommodation.







## More information about the National Education Programme (NPO)

As most of you will know, the purpose of the National Education Programme (NPO, Nationaal Programma Onderwijs) is to facilitate the recovery and development of education during and after the Covid crisis. For the 2021/22 and 2022/23 academic years, funding of around €8.5 billion has been made available for primary and secondary schools and for municipalities. These funds will be used to help pupils to overcome any learning deficits or other problems stemming from Covid.

The 'school scan' (an analysis of problems and needs) will allow schools in the European and Caribbean Netherlands to identify what pupils and schools need in order to compensate for learning deficits. Based on the analysis from the school scan, a course can be established by conducting specific interventions within the schools' programmes.

Various types of intervention are possible:

- More teaching (either during or outside regular school hours) for groups of pupils to boost or supplement their knowledge and skills (e.g. before/after-hours classes and spring/summer schools).
- More effective use of education to sharpen knowledge and skills (such as individual training and outcome-oriented learning).
- Socio-emotional and physical development of pupils (such as sporting activities and cultural education).
- Development of pupils' executive functions (independent and collaborative learning).
- Deployment of (extra) staff and support (via smaller classroom sizes or teaching assistants).
- Facilities and preconditions (e.g. parental involvement and digital technology).

The website [www.nponderwijs.nl](http://www.nponderwijs.nl) provides a great deal of practical information and types of substantive support. This includes a helpdesk, an advice hotline, webinars, brochures and handbooks as well as a variety of centres of expertise for schools and municipalities who want to work together on a recovery and development plan both during and after the Covid crisis.

## Increased attention for digitisation

The digitisation of the education sector has been greatly accelerated by the Covid crisis. In many cases, the use of technology for distance education was the only way to continue teaching due to school closures. However, even if Covid had never materialised, ICT would still be a powerful tool in making education better, easier and more fun.

As insufficient insight has so far been gained into the use of ICT in the education sector, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in both the European Netherlands and the Caribbean Netherlands decided to conduct a baseline measurement on the islands. This study will paint a picture of the existing preconditions for ICT and ambitions for the future. It is conducted by the local researcher Rianda Sacré (a public administration expert and experienced researcher from Bonaire), **Kennisnet** (an organisation devoted to education and ICT) and **Oberon** (an independent research and consultancy firm focusing on the education sector).

The study consists of interviews with school boards and head teachers as well as a questionnaire distributed to teachers. The results will create the building blocks for a development process in which schools formulate a vision and strategy with regard to digitisation.

In order to boost the use of digital technology, you can apply for funding from the national education programme NPO (see previous article - ed.). Digitisation will also be included in the new education agenda.



## Education news



# Updating of learning tracks

**In order to further develop the range of education available in St. Eustatius and Saba and to facilitate the transition of the language of instruction from Dutch to English, the National Expertise Centre for Curriculum Development (SLO) has developed learning tracks for Dutch as a Foreign Language (DFL), English and Math. In St. Eustatius, teaching staff have already been working with these learning tracks for six years, while in Saba they were implemented last year.**



Mariëtte Hoogeveen



Marion Snetselaar



Stanja Oldengarm

In 2021, Mariëtte Hoogeveen and Stanja Oldengarm of SLO, together with Marion Snetselaar of Taalconsult, initiated an evaluation of these learning tracks to ensure they remain suitable for the educational context on the islands.

A learning track is a specific distribution of subject matter and teaching activities determined for a period of one or more academic years. Learning tracks provide support to teaching staff and help to raise the quality of education. They also facilitate greater compatibility of curricula upon the students' transition to the subsequent academic year or to secondary education. For this reason, they are often referred to as continuous learning tracks.

In 2021, task forces were set up on both islands for DFL, English and Math. Via a survey and a series of meetings in October, SLO examined how teaching staff are working with these learning tracks and what their experiences have been.

In 2022, the teaching staff will indicate in which areas they would like major changes to be made. Based on this info, SLO will propose revisions to the learning tracks which will subsequently be discussed with teaching staff via meetings. The final step will be the implementation of the revised learning tracks.

# Implementation of specialist education in the Caribbean

**In 2021, upon request of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the three Special Educational Needs Expertise Centres (EOZs) examined which pupils on their island could not be accommodated within the existing facilities.**

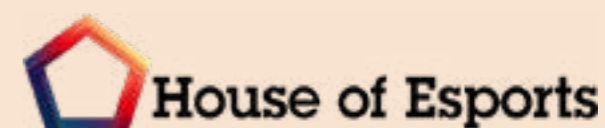
Each of the expertise centres established a plan of action to set up specialist educational facilities for these students. The plans for Saba and Statia were approved in autumn 2021 and the implementation process is currently in full flow. Work to establish these facilities in Bonaire started in 2022.

For the set-up and execution of these facilities during the first academic year (2021/22), the

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has allocated funding of €2.7 million for the Caribbean Netherlands as a whole. This amount was determined based on rough estimates of pupil numbers.

Over the course of 2022, an interim evaluation of the facility will be conducted on each island, based on which the ministry will make agreements with the EOZs regarding structural funding as of 2023.





## BECKY'S HOUSE OF ESPORTS IN SABA

Computer games are a popular pastime amongst the current generation of young people who have grown up with access to tablets, smartphones and the internet. However, they also like to play together in person. To cater to this demand, Saba Comprehensive School has set up Becky's House of Esports. Playing games and esports is about much more than just enjoying yourself. It's competitive, it builds social skills, it uncovers hidden talents, it helps blow off steam and it's educational.



The range of available games is immense: you can play **FIFA** on brand-new consoles, climb a wall in the GameGym to collect points projected on it, or practise virtual archery while boosting your topographical knowledge by firing an arrow at the correct country. The activities in Becky's House of Esports tie in perfectly with young people's digital experience and boosts their health and social development.

Under the supervision of coaches trained by the **House of Esports in Rotterdam**, children play computer games to learn about topics such as respect, working together, coaching each other, learning to handle victory or defeat, and keeping promises. Health, sports and education professionals are involved in the programme at all times and parental involvement is also catered for.

Another nice feature is that the complex also rents out an Airbnb section for visitors, which has a beautiful view of the St. John's district. This will allow them to experience the project from up close while simultaneously contributing to the training of the hospitality students who manage the Airbnb facilities. Becky's House of Esports - named after the first resident Rebecca Levenstone over 100 years ago - was made possible via a collaboration between Saba Lions Club, Samenwerkende Fondsen C.N., Satel N.V., SabaElectric N.V., Child Focus and EC2.







## PROGRESS OF THE LVS-BES PROJECT

The LVS-BES project which is executed by Bureau ICE to create a pupil monitoring system for the Caribbean Netherlands is making good progress. Currently, they are working hard on the development of tests for the subjects of Dutch as a Foreign Language and English. These tests are expected to be ready by the end of the summer.

In the summer, development of the *Papiamentu* tests will commence, for which we were waiting for the reference framework and the *Papiamentu* learning tracks.

The programme manager and project managers travelled to Bonaire in September to familiarise themselves with the schools and meet the teachers and principals. Similar visits to Saba and St. Eustatius was unable to proceed due to Covid, although these visits will still be conducted in the future. In addition to in-person meetings and business trips to the Caribbean Netherlands, the head teachers also attended an online meeting of the administrative meeting group and teachers could provide input via the BES Task Force.

At the beginning of autumn, the testing phase for trialling the newly developed English and DFL tests will begin. At this point, **Rolf groep** will also start to implement the tests on the islands.



## Improving collaboration between youth care partners in Bonaire

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is investigating ways to optimise collaboration between partners in the youth care chain. For this purpose, they worked together with local partners from June to October 2021 in order to identify problem areas in the care, security and education sectors.

Subsequently, the chain partners collaborated in task forces from November 2021 until January 2022 and under the supervision of policy officers from the ministry, they worked on a concrete proposal to improve collaboration in the chain.

Key factors in the proposal included:

### Sharing of information concerning family support

- Facilitating the application of privacy legislation
- Boosting trust among citizens

### Ensuring that assistance is no longer hindered by problems with parental consent

- Support in communicating with parents/carers
- Simpler consent procedure

### Setting up a collaboration structure for the youth care chain

- Organising and optimising strategic chain consultations between central government, local government and chain partners
- Organising and optimising strategic chain consultations between chain partners and providing extra support

As of 1 February 2022, the Public Entity of Bonaire and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has been working to implement the proposal.





# Expand your international network with eTwinning

Are you a teacher working for an educational institution in the Caribbean Netherlands who wants to set up a European project? **If so, then you should explore the possibility of eTwinning!**



eTwinning is an online community that allows teachers, pupils and students to work together across borders completely free of charge! It is intended for primary, secondary and MBO (senior secondary vocational education) schools that would like to internationalise their classrooms.

Teachers can use the platform to find international colleagues who would like to work together with their pupils. During international projects, the pupils can contact each other via the TwinSpace.

**With eTwinning, you and your pupils can embark on international partnerships without the need to travel!**

**[Klick here](#) and learn more about eTwinning**

You can sign up for a free eTwinning webinar. View the schedule for the latest info on the webinars: [actuele Webinar data](#).





## Interview with TuranGoeloe

# Well begun is half done

Last month, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science agreed to a second contract with TuranGoeloe for the provision of information and guidance to students from the Caribbean Netherlands who are continuing their academic careers in the Netherlands. This firm has been providing these services for a couple of years and it once again submitted the winning tender following the ministry's second tendering process in autumn 2021. Following this success, it seemed like a perfect moment for What's New to chat with Halima and Lushena, the two driving forces behind TuranGoeloe.

TuranGoeloe's services are based on the principle that "everyone can make their dreams come true with the right mind set and guidance," (taken from the TuranGoeloe website - ed.). The key factor is awareness. Lushena explains that when students leave the islands, they have to undergo a mental journey as well as just a physical one. "Students from the islands come from a caring environment in which everything is organised for you in a very personal manner."

However, Halima explains that once they arrive in the Netherlands, they find themselves immersed in a 'business partner' culture, they have to adapt to the rules and must take action themselves in order to achieve their personal, academic and professional goals. "This awareness is vital in order to make the adjustments to your attitude and behaviour that you need in order to survive in Dutch society. All Caribbean students have to negotiate this mental transition," explains Lushena. Twice a year, TuranGoeloe organise an interactive master class entitled 'The journey to your success in the Netherlands', in which the students formulate a step-by-step plan for all of the phases required to ensure a successful study period in the Netherlands.

### Goals and driving factors

Another important factor is that students must be honest with themselves about their goals and the reasons behind their decisions to study in the Netherlands. In principle, all of these students want to go to the Netherlands to complete their studies and get their degree. However, they often have other reasons for their decision, such as the desire for independence or to see the world. It's vital that every student has a clear picture of his or her goals and driving factors. The website explains this by saying "If you're not honest with yourself, then this will become painfully apparent in the Netherlands. You'll end

up going about things the wrong way and this can cause all kinds of problems." The purpose of the master class is to help students formulate a plan of action to raise their awareness of all relevant issues and help them properly prepare for their time in the Netherlands.

According to TuranGoeloe, some students hear a few success stories, assume everything will go well and subsequently fail to prepare properly for their move to the Netherlands. By taking part in the master class, some students realise that studying in the Netherlands is not the best option for them and/or that they haven't done enough preparation.

**"IF YOU'RE NOT HONEST WITH YOURSELF, THEN THIS WILL BECOME PAINFULLY APPARENT IN THE NETHERLANDS. YOU'LL END UP GOING ABOUT THINGS THE WRONG WAY AND THIS CAN CAUSE ALL KINDS OF PROBLEMS."**



HALIMA TURAN

LUSHENA GOELOE

**Halima Turan** grew up in the Netherlands. With a Turkish mother and a Surinamese father, she has extensive personal knowledge and experience of dealing with cultural differences. After graduating in Social Work and Social Services, she specialised in coaching, student thinking patterns and encouraging parental involvement.

**Lushena Goeloe** is from the Caribbean islands. She travelled to the Netherlands at the age of 21 to successfully complete a degree programme in Cultural Social Development at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. Her specialist fields include intercultural craftsmanship and giving guidance to students from migrant backgrounds. She also worked as a student ambassador for the university, among other activities.





## Transition to next level of education



### More information

For more information about the services offered by TuranGoeloe, [visit their website](#). If you have any further questions, feel free to contact TuranGoeloe via the contact form on their website.



“In such cases, it’s vital that you recognise this as soon as possible, as otherwise you could end up coming back to your island with no degree and a mountain of debt,” says Halima.

### Practical matters

Besides the mental side of the preparations, the master classes also address the myriad practical arrangements that need to be made. “If you don’t do this, then you can end up scrambling to make up lost ground as soon as you arrive, like starting a football match from 1-0 down. In our experience, this makes it difficult for students to successfully complete their first year,” according to TuranGoeloe’s website.

Students can hire TuranGoeloe to make a variety of practical arrangements for them, such as finding suitable accommodation or booking flights to the Netherlands. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is providing funds for this guidance service, so the students need only cover their own costs, e.g. for flights, rent and the security deposit for their student accommodation.

### What are the benefits of TuranGoeloe’s assistance?

According to TuranGoeloe, many prospective students think they’ll be able to arrange everything with the aid of a family member. However, in practice, these family members are often unfamiliar with all of the things students have to arrange. “Family members don’t deal with these issues on a daily basis and don’t always know how things work or what’s changed,” explains Lushena. “Not only that,” adds Halima, “but the students miss out on a whole range of free support that will help them understand their specific personal needs that are so vital to helping them function effectively and develop optimally in their new living and study environment. It’s no fluke that our website emphasises just how important it is to invest in yourself. Well begun is half done, although half done is not well begun.”

## What does TuranGoeloe offer students?

**All students from the Caribbean Netherlands can make use of TuranGoeloe’s services free of charge. This includes MBO level 1 and 2 students as well as ‘free movers’ (students who go to the Netherlands on their own initiative).**

### Overview of the free services for all future students coming from the Caribbean Netherlands:

- Provision of information about the available guidance in Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba.
- Firstly, take the online test entitled ‘[What the heck, let’s do the check](#)’. This test allows students to gauge whether they’re truly ready to go and study in the Netherlands.
- Subsequently, the online master class ‘[Journey to your success in the Netherlands](#)’ will help students get a clear picture of their true goals and driving factors.
- Students who request assistance with finding housing will have accommodation arranged for them for a minimum of one year.
- If desired, flights to the Netherlands can also be booked for students.
- Students will be helped with the timely arrangement (i.e. before the date on which the insurance must be valid) of all mandatory and desired insurance policies for a period of one calendar year at least.
- Central welcome programme, including an introductory programme to familiarise students with the Netherlands and the public transport system.
- Students will receive orientation upon arrival in the city in which they will be studying. They will be familiarised with issues such as how to find the educational institution; opening a bank account; registration in the Key Register of Persons (Basisregistratie Personen or BRP); registration with a GP, dentist and pharmacy; how public transport works; where to find shops; etc.
- Allocation of a companion during the first academic year. The companion will:
  - facilitate a successful start to the student’s integration process within the educational institution in consultation with the student’s mentor within the institution;
  - inform the student of his/her rights and responsibilities as a student;
  - work on the student’s study skills (if necessary);
  - work with the student on integration into his/her neighbourhood and into Dutch and European society.



## THEME

## Transition to next level of education

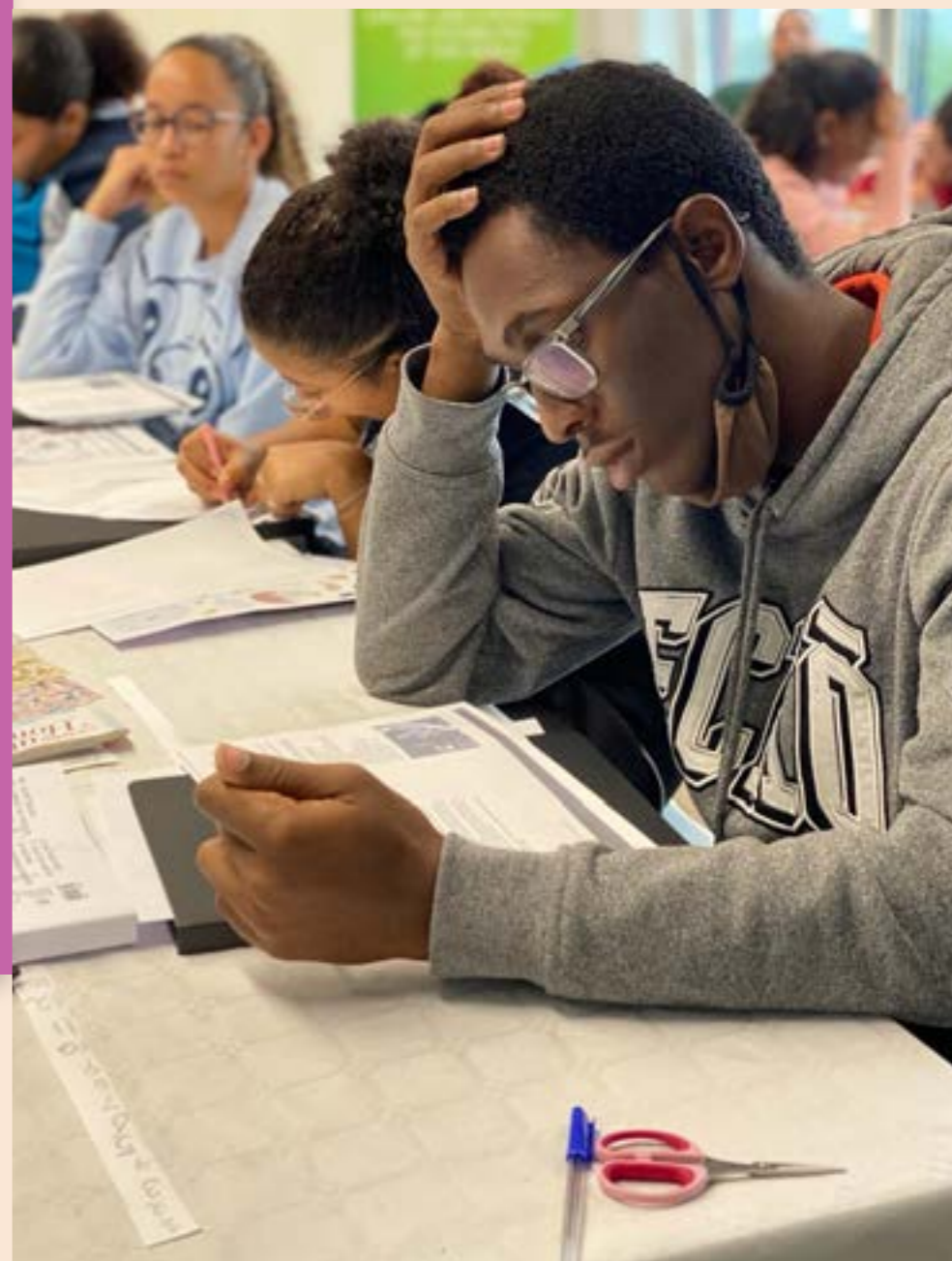


## New brochure explaining the Student Finance Act for the Caribbean Netherlands (Wet Studiefinanciering BES) to students

The new e-publication 'Explaining the Student Finance Act for the Caribbean Netherlands' clarifies everything that prospective and current students in the Caribbean Netherlands need to know about student finance. It is an interactive brochure that can also be easily read via smartphones and tablets.

The brochure can be found under the heading 'Brochures' on the [RCN Student Finance website](#). It is available in three languages: Dutch, English and Papiamentu.

Ricardo from St. Eustatius (in foreground) is working on a summary during a masterclass by Bureau TuranGoeloe about study skills.



## More info about the agreement between TuranGoeloe and the ministry

On 10-10-2020, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science agreed to a fixed-term contract with a market party to welcome and guide students from the Caribbean Netherlands (Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba) prior to and during their first year of study.

This market party was selected via a public tendering process. In autumn 2021, the ministry opened another tendering process and TuranGoeloe was once again selected. The contract became effective on the 1st March 2022 and will run until the 31st of August 2026. Once this period elapses, the contract can be extended three times for a period of one year.

### Funding and costs

The student guidance firm is funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and **the service is free for students from the Caribbean Netherlands**. The only costs that students have to pay are their own expenses, such as their flight to the Netherlands, rent, furnishing their accommodation, etc. Students who have been granted a start-up allowance via RCN Student Finance can cover these costs with this allowance. Students who have not received this grant must pay these costs themselves.



Students, working together to build a tower during a training on team work at Bureau TuranGoeloe.



# Three projects aimed at better preparing future students

**A task force set up by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is currently working on three projects to help pupils in the Caribbean Netherlands to prepare for their studies outside their home island.**

## Informative webinars for each island of the Caribbean Netherlands

This spring, pupils in Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba can gain information, experience and tips via informative webinars held by first and second-year students originating from their home island. The students giving the webinars are currently studying in the Netherlands, the United States or elsewhere in the Caribbean. Via short interviews, these selected students will talk about their study experiences and give advice relating to the following topics: preparations on the home island, the importance of establishing a social network, dealing with cultural differences, how to study effectively, independence, and living on a student grant. A number of parents will also be interviewed. The three live webinars (one per island) will be recorded to enable them to be viewed later, possibly within a classroom setting.

## 'Be prepared' poster campaign

To promote the aforementioned webinars, a poster campaign will be conducted on each island. These posters will give advice relating to the six aforementioned focus areas, including concrete references to important sources of information for future students.

## Resumption of the VOBESS preparatory course for Caribbean Netherlands students

Until a few years ago, the schools used to organise a preparatory course for departing students in collaboration with the RCN Student Finance Department. This course mainly focused on aspects relating to independent living. For a variety of reasons, this course has not been organised since 2019. However, as of this spring a new, updated version of this initiative will be set up focusing on students in both the exam classes and the pre-exam classes.

The projects described above are based on three recent research reports\* into factors that are hindering the study success of Caribbean students. To ensure that the projects are optimally compatible with the target group, the project group sought advice from a student focus group and the career guidance counselors of the local secondary schools.

\* *Studiesucces en -ervaringen van studenten uit de Caribische delen van het Koninkrijk* ('Study success and experiences of students from the Caribbean Netherlands', commissioned of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and conducted by Researchned), *Kopzorgen van Caribische studenten* ('Concerns of Caribbean students', commissioned by the Ombudsman) and *Het studiesucces van studenten uit de ABC-eilanden* ('Study success of students from the ABC islands', commissioned by Levende Talen Papiaments).





## Education news - continued

# INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS WITH ERASMUS+

Erasmus+ provides all kinds of opportunities for pupils, students, lecturers, youth workers and educational professionals/ institutions in the Netherlands to get in contact with European organisations and institutions, share knowledge and ideas, and work together with national and international organisations and policymakers. Organisations in the Caribbean Netherlands are also eligible to apply for these grants. We have provided four eye-catching examples of what this scheme can offer!



Aruban primary schools go job shadowing in Spain

The primary schools Pius X, St. Franciscus and St. Dominicus College submitted a consortium application for the project Habilidadnan Digital di siglo 21 pa Aruba (21st century digital skills in Aruba). Project coordinator Monique Laing-Breinburg, who works as a remedial teacher at Pius X School, will be part of a group of eight teachers travelling to Spain for a job shadowing programme. "We'd like to see how the Spanish education system works and what it truly means to learn 21st century skills," says Monique. "For me, it's a dream come true. It's also been great for my personal development, as being a project manager teaches you a lot about what type of leader you want to be. Making clear agreements, discussing difficulties and irritations, it's all part of the job. To any other teachers who may be considering something like this, my advice would be to go for it! It really is worth the effort many times over."



International internships for students from the University of Curaçao (UoC)



One can participate in Erasmus+ to spend a semester at a European partner institution to complete a study programme or an international work placement. "An Erasmus+ experience makes an extremely positive contribution to our students' development", says Elica Ras-Fullinck, Manager of Student Affairs & The International Office at UoC. "You see how much students grow from a six-month study programme or work placement abroad as they come back full of stories and new experiences: a whole new world opens up to them! We often focus heavily on the Netherlands, but Erasmus+ encourages our students to broaden their view of Europe. The focus is on student mobility, although we have also had staff visit European partner institutions as part of job shadowing programmes."

Nilda Pinto teaches the only special primary education programme in Curaçao to over 1,700 pupils. "Being on an island puts us in an isolated position," explains deputy head Micheline Marti-Nicolaas. "European collaborations give teachers the chance to share and exchange experiences abroad, which helps boost the quality of their education and sharpen their teaching skills. I was delighted when I heard our grant application had been approved. Writing the application was an intensive process, but we can look back with the satisfaction of a job well done. And I'm really looking forward to our school visit to Finland!"

SPE teacher Nilda Pinto goes to Finland





“YOU SEE HOW MUCH STUDENTS GROW FROM A SIX-MONTH STUDY PROGRAMME OR WORK PLACEMENT ABROAD.”



Summer course  
language  
didactics  
in Gent for  
Caribbean teachers

**Over the summer holidays, a group of seven primary school teachers from St. Eustatius and Saba travelled to the Belgian town of Gent for an intensive course in teaching Dutch as a Foreign Language (DFL).**

“The small scale of teaching activities in St. Eustatius and Saba means there are very few opportunities to observe how your colleagues do things,” explains coordinator and initiator Adriaan D’Haens. “Job shadowing allows us to observe best practices in European educational institutions, such as in the Flanders region.

During this summer course, I wanted to work together with other teachers to further investigate ways to optimise our lessons. We did this via workshops, classroom observations and by preparing lessons together.” Adriaan hopes this represents the first steps in the internationalisation process and that other schools and islands such as Sint Maarten will also take part. “That would be a fantastic next step!”, he adds.

## NEW FACES



### RUUD NAUTS

In January 2022, I started work as the new BES(t) 4 Kids programme manager on behalf of the affiliated public bodies and ministries (Social Affairs and Employment; Education, Culture and Science; Health, Welfare and Sport; and Interior and Kingdom Relations). I consider it my duty to work together with all stakeholders to obtain our ambitious goal with due regard for the context in the Caribbean Netherlands and the differences between Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba.

I was involved in the set-up and development of this programme in my work for the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. In the past, I have worked as a teacher in both primary education and the secondary practical training sector. During my time at the ministry of Education, Culture and Science, I also focused on preschool education in the European Netherlands.

The objective of BES(t) 4 Kids is to provide high-quality, safe and accessible childcare and after-school care for all children between the ages of 0 and 12 in the Caribbean Netherlands. After all, every child deserves the chance to maximise their development.

In recent years, we’ve taken many steps forward within the programme.

- We’ve invested in training and education of child care staff as well as in collaboration with the European Netherlands in order to learn both from and with each other.
- The cost of child care on all islands has been reduced for most parents.
- On every island, educational networks have been set up and pilots are being conducted to gain greater insight into the needs and opportunities in relation to childcare for children who require extra care or supervision.

Feel free to contact us for more information via our [website](#) or our [Programme secretary](#).





## MIRELLA THIJM

Since October last year I've been a policy officer at RCN/OCW in St. Eustatius. In this role, I predominantly focus on primary and secondary education, second-chance education, social opportunity programmes and educational care in Statia and Saba. It's a fascinating job in which every day is different and you can make a real difference in the education and development of children and young people.

Prior to this, I spent over eight years working in tertiary education in Suriname. My final role in Suriname was as *Dean of College of Agriculture and Health* at the Polytechnic College, where I also gave lectures. I will do absolutely everything I can to make a valuable contribution to education on these beautiful islands and I look forward to a fulfilling and fruitful collaboration with all of my colleagues and other stakeholders.

“I WILL DO ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING I CAN TO MAKE A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION ON THESE BEAUTIFUL ISLANDS.”

## Applications for Teachers' grant 2022-2023

> As of April 1, 2022 <

Teachers who wish to enroll in a course programme at an institute for higher professional education (hogeschool) or university, can apply for a Teachers' grant between April 1, 12:00 hrs. up and including May 15, 2022 at 17:59 hrs.

### For who?

The Teachers' grant is meant for teachers, working in primary, secondary (special), vocational or higher professional education (hbo). It is also meant for care co-ordinators and remedial teachers.

### You can apply for the teacher's scholarship for:

- a bachelor's or master's training
- a post-initial master's training
- a pre-master's or switching programme that precedes a university master's training

### Attention:

You do **not** qualify for a teacher's scholarship for a post-HBO (higher professional education) training.

### How to apply for the Teacher's Grant?

If you live in the Caribbean Netherlands and you do not have a civil service number (*burger service nummer*) then you should apply for the digital form. To this end you can send an email to [lerarenbeurs@duo.nl](mailto:lerarenbeurs@duo.nl). In the subject line you mention 'application form Teacher's Gant'.

**Klick here** For more information about the Teachers' grant







## Simplifying the law

Exploring opportunities to integrate separate acts governing vocational education and SKJ programmes



Currently, vocational education and SKJ (Social Opportunities for the Young) programmes in the Caribbean Netherlands are governed by separate legislation. In the European Netherlands, the *Adult and Vocational Education Act* (hereinafter referred to by its Dutch acronym *Web*) applies, while the *Web BES* applies in the Caribbean Netherlands.

Together with VO/MBO schools, SKJ organisations, public bodies and ROA CN, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science would like to investigate the likelihood of, opportunities of, and problems that would arise from developing a single unified act. They will also focus on what exceptions may have to be added to such an act in view of the many areas in which circumstances in the Caribbean Netherlands education sector differ greatly.

The *Web BES* was originally formulated based on the *Web* for the European Netherlands, although not all of the subsequent legislative amendments were also implemented into the *Web BES*. It has also transpired that the MBO (senior secondary vocational education) sector in the Caribbean Netherlands cannot always participate in experiments or benefit from certain grant schemes as they have no legal basis in the *Web BES*.

The separate acts have effectively grown apart over time. However, is it really necessary to have two separate acts?

### MBO education

MBO education and MBO diplomas in both the Caribbean Netherlands and the European Netherlands are effectively the same, so why should different standards apply with regard to minimum instruction hours? Should elective components be offered in the Caribbean Netherlands or not? And in what respect does the SBB's accreditation of training companies in the European Netherlands differ from the ROA CN's accreditation of learning companies in the Caribbean Netherlands?

### SKJ programmes

With regard to the situation surrounding school drop-out rates and Social Opportunities for the Young (SKJ) programmes, the SKJ legislation in the Caribbean Netherlands only applies to young people without a diploma who have already left formal education. Conversely, in the European Netherlands, policy and legislation in this area largely focuses on preventing students from dropping out of school, e.g. by monitoring absenteeism and establishing effective collaboration between chain partners. Could this preventive approach also be implemented in the Caribbean Netherlands? And if so, what effect would this have on collaborations and the organisational structure? These and other issues concerning simplifying legislation will be explored in the period ahead.

## More hospitality programmes for Saba and Sint Eustatius

**The hospitality sector in Saba and St. Eustatius is growing and demand for highly trained staff is increasing accordingly.**

For this reason, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is making extra funding available for the training of current and future hospitality professionals. The Saba Comprehensive School and the Gwendoline van Putten School on St. Eustatius have already been offering Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs) in Hospitality up to levels 1 and 2 (comparable to MBO levels 1 and 2), although there is also demand for higher level staff. For this reason, opportunities for a collaboration with the National Institute for Professional Advancement (**NIPA**) in St. Maarten are being explored. The ministry has appointed ms. Angela Dekker as temporary project manager to further investigate and shape the collaboration between educational institutions. The goal is to begin offering training for both young people and adults (lateral entry) by the new academic year (2022/23).



## Education news

# High Quality Cultural Education in the CN

The subsidy scheme High Quality Cultural Education in the Caribbean Netherlands 2021-2024 (Cultuureducatie met Kwaliteit, hereinafter CmK) set up by the Cultural Participation Fund (FCP) is intended to boost the increasingly lively range of cultural education in the islands, from a cultural canon to the celebration of Black History Month to training of cultural coordinators. This will be done on both a curricular and extracurricular basis. The following is an overview of initiatives that are currently being run on Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius.

## Communities of Practice in Bonaire

One of the conclusions following the LKCA cultural coordinator training programme in March 2020 is that this kind of collaborative learning on the job is vitally important to the sustainable development of cultural education. In Bonaire, subsidy scheme administrator Fundashon Plataforma Kultural has established the set-up of Communities of Practice as the central focus of their HQCE plan. This happens during the so-called Co-creation Café sessions for teachers and cultural partners. The administrator will serve as an intermediary and facilitate/initiate collaboration between primary schools, the public authorities and the cultural sector. HQCE collaboration requires a great deal of flexibility, creativity and patience from all parties involved. As CMK project worker Ghislaine Monte says: "We are pioneers who are creating tailor-made cultural education for Bonaire. We can only do this by working together with our ultimate goal in mind at all times. We're doing it for the children of Bonaire."

## Saba Cultural Canon

The collaboration between Sacred Heart School, the cultural partners and Saba Comprehensive School (administrator) has created a comprehensive HQCE plan with cultural education as the central focus. The partners facilitate connection between the primary and secondary school curricula in Saba, resulting in better compatibility of cultural education with the new Saba Cultural Canon and hence also with the entire island. Based on their collaboration, the Saba public authorities and Saba Comprehensive School have created opportunities for a variety of cultural activities such as acting, dance and music lessons. An HQCE steering group has been set up with the task of boosting quality, developing cultural education in Saba, establishing a plan for a variety of activities and drawing up an events calendar. The goal is to achieve greater collaboration and share resources and expertise between the parties involved.



## Stepping Back, Moving Forward in St. Eustatius

Subsidy administrator Foundation Gateway to Success has set itself the mission of boosting cultural development among children in St. Eustatius. Their plan will ensure that the island's rich cultural history is firmly incorporated into the schools' curricula. In order to achieve this, the partners involved will work together to make connections between past and present. Stepping Back, Moving Forward also takes a cultural canon approach. The scheme allows primary school pupils to take part in dance and music lessons.

WE CAN ONLY DO THIS BY WORKING TOGETHER WITH OUR ULTIMATE GOAL IN MIND AT ALL TIMES. WE'RE DOING IT FOR THE CHILDREN OF BONAIRE.



Saba's CMK steering group



## Special help desk for applications for national funding

In 2020, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science resolved to devote greater attention to the cultural sector on the islands in the Caribbean Netherlands. However, a survey has found that applicants sometimes encounter problems finding the right funds. For this reason, a special help desk was set up on the 19th of January 2022 in collaboration with the [Prince Bernhard Cultural Fund for the Caribbean Netherlands](#) (PBCCG) to help applicants obtain grants for cultural projects.

Any interested parties can arrange a telephone appointment via the desk's [Facebook page](#) to discuss any ideas for projects they may have. The help desk will then find a suitable national culture fund and put the applicant in contact with the fund in question.

The PBCCG website contains a great deal of information on how to qualify for a grant. For example, the project plans must have a high level of quality, be sustainable in nature, target a wide audience and relate to one of the following focus areas: history & the arts, visual arts, performing arts (theatre, dance, music, circus and storytelling), cultural education, nature conservation and conservation of listed buildings.

Of course, applicants are free to directly contact national cultural funds themselves, such as the Performance Arts Fund (Fonds Podiumkunsten), the Cultural Participation Fund (Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie), the Mondriaan Fund (Mondriaan Fonds), the Creative Industry Stimulus Fund (Stimuleringsfonds Creatieve Industrie), the Netherlands Performing Arts Fund (Netherlands Letterenfonds) and the Film Fund (Filmfonds). On the RCN website, you can find a page listing the [contact details of each fund](#).

The help desk is a pilot that will run for nine months. This initiative was launched by a task force in order to boost the accessibility and visibility of national cultural funds in the Caribbean Netherlands and reinforce communication from the various parties involved.

## THEME

### Culture and education



# CJP Culture Card, also for pupils in the Caribbean Netherlands



The CJP Culture Card is a subsidy scheme funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for the subject cultural and artistic development, CKV (culturele en kunstzinnige vorming). The scheme is run by the [CJP Foundation](#) in Amsterdam. A budget has now been allocated for pupils in the Caribbean Netherlands to participate in cultural activities on the islands.

### Primary education

For primary school children, this scheme will provide funding for cultural education in the form of museum visits, workshops, etc.

### Secondary education

For secondary schools, the scheme is a little different. Schools are eligible to receive grants for scheduled cultural activities. In 2022 it will be a total of €10.50 per pupil. This cultural budget is made available to the CKV teacher (and pupils), enabling him/her to choose which activities are best suited to the pupils and with which cultural providers they would like to organise the activities. Of course, the idea is that cultural parties from outside the school should be engaged. For this purpose, CJP is asking CKV teachers to write a simple plan describing which cultural activities they will organise in 2022 and how they wish to spend the available funds.

### Rules

- Each school must formulate a brief plan with an overview of cultural activities that it will arrange in 2022 with the available funding and send this plan to [directie@cjp.nl](mailto:directie@cjp.nl) before the 1st of May 2022.
- The application must be accompanied by a statement from the school's bank account to which CJP can transfer the funds, as well as an overview of the official number of secondary school pupils in each class and level.
- The funds must be spent in accordance with the plan as they are specifically intended to facilitate cultural education and implementation of the plan.
- **CJP** kindly requests that the CKV department or teacher(s) send a report of the activities conducted following their completion.
- As part of the scheme, 5% of the funds made available to all participating schools and cultural institutions will be withheld by CJP to cover the costs stemming from the Culture Card scheme. You will therefore receive €10,50 minus 5% per student. The funds will be transferred in dollars at the exchange rate applicable at the time.





## ROA CN revises organisation and work processes

The tenth anniversary of ROA CN at the end of last year was the ideal moment to examine the past while also looking to the future. What has been achieved thus far and which course does ROA CN want to follow?



Top row, f.l.t.r.: Jochem Batstra (advisor), Nancy Persad (advisor), Elyane Nicolaas (director), Judette Frederiks (manager labour market), Violet Duggins Gumbs (advisor), Amy Flores-Van Grieken (office manager) Squatted, f.l.t.r.: advisors Janine Pietersen, Fernon Estanista, Fleurtje Veldkamp and Robert Westra.

Together we make it work

The first 10 years primarily focussed on shaping the organisation, offering advice about the effectiveness and (labour-related) relevance of new training, and providing training to Trainers. The tenth anniversary was celebrated by visiting and rewarding partners within the chain. During these visits, ROA CN requested feedback about what should be retained and which aspects could do with additional focus. In addition, various platforms and gatherings were organised about harmonising the education system with the labour market.

The management team and advisers used this feedback to map out an organisation development process called "Together to The Next Level", which features specific goals that must be realised each year. The common objective throughout this process is to offer added value to chain partners by adopting a unifying, proactive and specialised approach. ROA CN wants to take its services to the next level and wants to effectively offer quality to all its collaboration partners. An Education Task Force has been set up and each labour sector has its own annual schedule for collecting knowledge and trends.



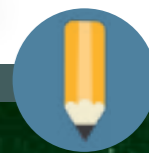
### Recent developments within ROA CN

- Since recently, ROA CN has been run by a two-person management team: Elyane Nicolaas (director, responsible for education) and Judette Frederiks (manager labour market);
- Two new advisers/trainers started work on 1 February:
  - Jochem Batstra on Saba
  - TOP trainee Robert Wester on Bonaire
- A contract was established with **TVET Barbados** for acquiring external verifier (EV) services (ed.: the EV possesses specific expertise and experience in the sector, and evaluates whether assessments meet the required quality).
- The procedure for work-based learning (BPV) is being modified, in consultation with schools, to bring it more in line with the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ vocational education) of **CXC** on Saba and St. Eustatius.
- An education task force has been set up on Bonaire to focus on the quality of work-based learning.
- A labour market platform has been set up on St. Eustatius, which aims to promote effective harmonisation between demand and supply in the local labour market.
- ROA CN is investing in the quality of its team by offering courses about advice and training.



THEME

News about employment terms and conditions



# New Personnel Manual for Teaching Staff

In 2022, a new version of the Personnel Manual for Teaching Staff will be released in the Caribbean Netherlands. This manual specifies the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees as well as other terms and conditions of employment.

It is a useful tool that provides all kinds of information, such as what must be done when employees are sick, the conditions applicable to requesting leave, how performance reviews are conducted and what pension arrangements have been made. The new manual will be more extensive than the current version, which was published in 2018. The personnel manual will be available via the website this year and we will provide more information on this matter over the course of the year as it becomes available.



[Klick here](#) for the current personnel manual in English and Dutch.

## What you can expect of ROA CN in 2022:

- ROA CN will be performing a baseline measurement in order to gauge the level of satisfaction among chain partners.
- A Labour market and education Baseline measurement will be carried out in order to identify the satisfaction of companies when it comes to harmony between the education system and the labour market.
- In order to have a consultation structure on each island, ROA CN is now also trying to install a student council for St. Eustatius and Saba, to supplement the existing student council for Bonaire.
- ROA CN is working on a newsletter that will be published 4 times a year.
- In order to intensify cooperation with the various stakeholders, ROA is working on an upgrade for the dialogue framework (network meetings, sector meetings and a labour market platform on all three islands).
- Procedures are being modified, which includes simplifying and digitalising the enrolment process.
- Training for trainers is being upgraded: student mentors are working even more interactively during their training, so they can effectively use their skills in practice.
- Account-holders have been appointed for the various training domains. Each advisor has his/her own area of attention, which helps to create a trusted relationship and makes it possible to respond faster to the needs of the sector.

## How is the terms and conditions of employment agreement formulated?

**The rights and responsibilities of employers and employees are established in the law and in various sets of regulations. For example, salaries are regulated in the Teaching Staff Pay Decree (*Bezoldigingsbesluit Onderwijspersoneel*). These rights and responsibilities are referred to as the legal status of teaching staff. Important legal status-related aspects that often change are also referred to as 'terms and conditions of employment'.**

Within the education sector, only the salaries and bonuses are subject to negotiation. This has been established in Article 37 of the Primary Education Act for the Caribbean Netherlands (*Wet op het primair onderwijs BES*) and Article 90 of the Secondary Education Act for the Caribbean Netherlands (*Wet op het voortgezet onderwijs BES*). For other issues, the terms and conditions of employment for the National Office for the Caribbean Netherlands (RCN) are applicable. Negotiations on these terms and conditions of employment between employers and employees are conducted via the Consensus-Oriented Consultations (*Op Overeenstemming Gericht Overleg* or OOGO).

In Bonaire, the school boards, the unions Simabo and ABVO, and the commissioner from the island administration participate in these consultation. No teachers' unions exist in Saba and St. Eustatius. Instead, a representative of the teaching staff participates in the OOGO together with the school boards and the commissioners from each island. The OOGOs for 2022 took place in February.

The agreed arrangements are specified in the terms and conditions of employment agreement, which is signed by every OOGO participant. Subsequently, the agreements will be recorded in the aforementioned Teaching Staff Pay Decree and in the Regulations on Teaching Staff Pay and Bonuses (*Regeling bezoldiging en toelagen onderwijspersoneel*) for each island.

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science has made funds available for all schools to improve their terms and conditions of employment. The amount of the funds for improvement of terms and conditions of employment will be determined based on an objective calculation model.



THEME

Education news



THEME

News about employment terms and conditions



## INSPECTORATE REPORTS PUBLISHED



The reports of the Inspectorate of Education on basis of their visit to the Caribbean Netherlands in November 2021 have been published.

## Amendment to maternity leave regulations for teaching staff

Employees will continue to be entitled to a total of 16 weeks of maternity leave. However, employees will no longer be allowed to determine the start date of this period of leave at a point between two and six weeks prior to the due date of the birth. This amendment establishes that in any event, the period of leave must commence no more than four weeks prior to the due date of the birth and must continue until at least six weeks after the birth. These amendments -including for teaching staff- already came into force on the 1st of January 2021.



## Nursing leave for teaching staff

Employees have the right to feed or breastfeed their newborn child during working hours for the first nine months following birth. For this purpose, they are entitled to take a break from their duties. The employer will facilitate the employee in doing so, and if necessary, will provide a suitable and enclosed area/room.

The time used to feed the child is classified as regular working hours and the employee is therefore entitled to full salary payment during these breaks. The breaks are intended for feeding/breastfeeding as often and for as long as is necessary, although the total time taken must not exceed a quarter of the employee's daily working hours. The employer and employee will determine the time and the duration of the breaks in consultation.

These amendments -including for teaching staff- already came into force on the 1st of January 2021. Have any employees had to take leave in order to feed/breastfeed their child in the period between the 1st of January 2021 and the present day? If so, then this leave must be reimbursed by the employer, e.g. by increasing the employee's holiday pay by an amount equivalent to the leave required for feeding/breastfeeding.





# New employment conditions agreement for educational staff in Caribbean Netherlands

**Representatives of the Public Entities, school boards, trade unions and the educational staff of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba recently signed a new employment conditions agreement.**



*Representatives of the schools on St. Eustatius, signing the new agreement.*

The new agreement lays a salary raise of 4.2% down. This pay rise will come into effect retroactively on 1 September 2021. In addition, educational staff will receive a single gross lump-sum grant of \$500 pro rata for anyone who was in employment on 1 September 2021 and is still or was in employment on 1 March 2022. For St. Eustatius and Saba this grant will also be supplemented with the Windward Allowance (in Dutch: Bovenwindtoelage) or Equalisation Contribution (in Dutch: Vereveningsbijdrage).

The new agreement applies to both educational staff and support staff, and covers the period 1 January 2021 up to and including 31 December 2023.

Between the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023 it will be determined whether there is leeway for further wage development. In addition, a decision will be made in 2022 on the use of funds from the National Education Programme (NEP; in Dutch: Nationaal Programma Onderwijs (NPO) for the recovery and further development of education during and after corona.

In 2022 and 2023 it will also be agreed how the funds for the labour market-related allowance will be distributed. These funds have been made available from the NEP for education and development which is/has become necessary due to corona. With regard to the pension plan and the disability pension, the previously agreed arrangements for civil servants will also apply to educational staff.

For the duration of this new agreement, the parties will also work on further professionalisation of participation. There is an intention to expand the Dutch Schools Participation Act (in Dutch: Wet medezeggenschap scholen) to the schools of the Caribbean Netherlands. As part of the intended further professionalisation, the participation councils of the schools in the Caribbean Netherlands will also be given consent and advisory powers.

And in conclusion, employment conditions consultation will also undergo further professionalisation during the duration of the new agreement.