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ENGLISH

WHAT'S NEW ...

IN CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS EDUCATION



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Copy for the next edition should be sent in before October 10th 2014.

WANTED: EDITORS!

We are still looking for enthusiastic editors, to complete our team. Are you interested? Please contact Elaine Marchena, via tel. (+599) 318 4509 or elaine.marchena@rijksdienstcn.com

COLOPHON

Picture:
Marika Ringnald

Dear reader,

This is already the second edition of "What's New ... ". So far, we have been privileged to receive mostly positive reactions to the first issue, which appeared in January of this year. The editors have worked hard to once again offer you information of interest about education initiatives and developments on all three islands of the Caribbean Netherlands.

In this issue, we will concentrate on two ongoing language initiatives: the research on the instruction language on St. Eustatius and a training course on language developing education for PO-teachers on Bonaire. As most of you will have noticed, the Maestro Kompas training programmes are well under way: a good opportunity to highlight the Maestro Kompas programme and the people behind it. Last time, there was a great article on Fundashon FORMA that, among others, organises social projects for youngsters in Bonaire. In this issue we present the Saban counterpart: the Saba Reach Foundation.

Hans Kuilder
RCN/OCW head of department.



PREFACE

Furthermore, we pay attention to various initiatives of the Scholengemeenschap Bonaire (SGB) and to the team of RGD (Rijksgebouwendienst or Government Buildings Agency) that works, especially behind the scenes, on improving the school accommodations. In this edition, we present the first episode of "A day with ...", in which we follow Tracy Zagers for a whole working day. And last but not least, you can read about the Mega D Foundation which offers after school care in St. Eustatius, in combination with all kinds of valuable and creative initiatives for young people.

This time, the articles were written by a small editorial team, consisting of Elisabeth George (ROA CN), Eric Westerveld (freelance journalist) and Elaine Marchena (Communications Advisor RCN/OCW), besides the regular column written by Nienke Deelstra. The editors welcome any other new, enthusiastic writers and are open to all your suggestions for the coming editions.

Once again, I wish you a lot of reading pleasure!

MAESTRO KOMPAS: WHO, WHAT AND HOW

Photography:
Rens van der Hammen

MAESTRO KOMPAS IS A CONCEPT THAT MOST OF YOU HAVE HEARD OF. SOME OF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED MAESTRO KOMPAS UP CLOSE DURING TRAINING COURSES; TO OTHERS, IT MAY STILL BE UNFAMILIAR. WHAT DOES MAESTRO KOMPAS EXACTLY STAND FOR, WHO ARE THE PEOPLE BEHIND IT AND EXACTLY WHAT ARE THEY DOING IN THE EDUCATION FIELD OF THE CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS?



Radha Gangaram Panday
Project leader of training at Maestro Kompas

Maestro Kompas is a collaboration between the Open University and the Faculty of Education of the University of Utrecht. The team behind Maestro Kompas was commissioned by the Board of Teachers of the Ministry of Education to work on the following two projects:

1. Educating and qualifying un- or insufficiently qualified teachers in the islands of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba (Caribbean Netherlands)
2. Working with the training institutions for higher education in Curaçao, Aruba and St. Maarten to achieve a sustainable training infrastructure in the Caribbean region.



www.uitzendinggemist.nl

MO Doc *The Maastricht dream:
from cleaner to professor*
(sat. 12 apr 2014, 12:25)

The Islamic PO school El Habib in Maastricht was acclaimed an excellent school. The pupils come from socially weak backgrounds, many with a language backlog but on leaving the school they make a head start in their secondary education.

MOVIE TIP ...

OUTLINE PLANS MAESTRO KOMPAS PROGRAMME FOR UN(DER) QUALIFIED TEACHERS

UNIVERSITY OF CURAÇAO

PABO-course for candidates in Bonaire

Course Teaching Certificate (Bonaire)

Bachelor's teacher training Dutch and English (Bonaire)

Master's teacher training Papiamentu and Spanish (Bonaire)

INSTITUTO PEDAGÓGICO ARUBANO (IPA)

PABO-course in Dutch on St. Eustatius

UNIVERSITY OF SINT MAARTEN

PABO-course for English-speaking candidates

in St. Eustatius

HOGESCHOOL UTRECHT, UNIVERSITY OF CURAÇAO, UNIVERSITY OF SINT MAARTEN AND UNIVERSITY OF ARUBA

Teacher training courses in Mathematics, Technology,
Biology, Health care and wellbeing (Bonaire and St. Eustatius)

NCOI

Teacher training course in physical education (Saba)

HOGESCHOOL UTRECHT

Teacher training course of biology in English (Saba)

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Teacher training ICT, Teacher's certificate

The goal is to give a hefty boost to the quality of education in the Caribbean Netherlands by ensuring that all teachers are competent by 2016, and to offer teachers in the Caribbean Netherlands local opportunities for training and retraining after 2016 as well.

Radha Gangaram Panday, project leader of training at Maestro Kompas, explains: "As we know, the political transition of Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius in October 2010 brought new quality requirements for education in these islands. Some of the teachers working at the schools in the Caribbean Netherlands were trained in Suriname or in other countries with teacher training institutions that have not been fully recognized by the Netherlands. Those teachers went through recognised assessments to map out the competences (knowledge, skills and professional attitude) they had and which still had to be supplemented so they would comply with the full professional profile."

Where are the gaps of the so-called "under qualified teachers"? Radha: "An inventory of the schools showed that a large group in the teaching assistants employed in St. Eustatius and Bonaire should achieve a PO-qualification (ed.: PO stands for primary education) in order to actually be able to teach. Therefore, in 2012 a group of teachers in Bonaire started following a training course at the University of Curaçao, and in March 2013 teachers in St. Eustatius embarked on a training course provided by the IPA (ed.: Instituto Pedagógico Arubano). The VO showed that some teachers should be trained in part or in whole in various fields: Dutch, English, Spanish (1st degree), Papiamentu (1st degree), Mathematics, Engineering, Biology, Personal interaction, Health care and well-being, Physical education and ICT. Besides that, there was a number of candidates who still had to receive their teaching certificate. Furthermore, a number of English speaking persons in St. Eustatius and Saba had to be trained in English.

For more extensive information about Maestro Kompas visit the website

www.maestrokompas.org

THIS IS WHAT MAESTRO KOMPAS LOOKS LIKE

“WE WERE FACED WITH A COMPLEX PUZZLE TRYING TO FIND THE RELEVANT TRAINING COURSES FOR EVERYONE, BUT WE MANAGED TO FIND THE ‘SOLUTION’, BECAUSE ALL MK-CANDIDATES ARE NOW BEING TRAINED.”

Between April 2013 and February 2014, Maestro Kompas started in Bonaire and St. Eustatius with subjects under the minor, so many candidates were able to start their training courses. They dealt with the subjects of Language, Arithmetic and Behaviour.

“Blended” form of learning

In 2013, the first modules of Arithmetic, Language and Behaviour were organised in all three islands. Just like some other courses from MK, these modules are also offered in “blended” form. Blended means that all course material is offered in a digital environment and in different ways. For example by means of instructional films, presentations, reading texts, links to websites, etc. The moments of physical contact between teachers and students are organised differently than in traditional education. There are two rounds of “face-to-face” classes, where the teachers are physically present: at the start and at the conclusion of a subject. In between, there are weekly sessions via Skype and email. This form of training offers many opportunities for students to follow longer training courses in the Caribbean Netherlands without having to leave their island.

In early 2014, the first minor modules for Arithmetic, Language and Behavior were completed in St. Eustatius and Bonaire. Radha looks back on successful modules: “For some candidates, it was really quite hard to combine this training course with family and work. But everyone was excited and most have really worked hard to successfully complete the training.” ■

STEERING COMMITTEE

The partnership Maestro Kompas is led by a steering committee consisting of Dick de Wolff, director of the Faculty of Education of the Hogeschool Utrecht and René van Hezewijk, Dean of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the Open University.

PROJECT LEADERS

- The building block of Training is coordinated by project leader Training Radha Gangaram Panday of Hogeschool Utrecht.
- Wim Dideren of the Open University works as a project leader with institutes from Curaçao, Aruba and St. Maarten on the development of a sustainable Caribbean training structure in the form of a virtual campus.

The project leaders are jointly responsible for the realisation of the total Maestro Kompas project.

TEACHERS

The teaching, both locally and remotely, is done by teachers from the various relevant regional and Dutch training institutes (further information can be found in the box “Outline plans Maestro Kompas programme”).

Wim Dideren

Project leader at Maestro Kompas

assigned with the development of a sustainable Caribbean training structure in the form of a virtual campus



SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN SCAFFOLDINGS

ON ALL FRONTS WORK IS UNDER WAY FOR IMPROVING PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ON BONAIRE, ST. EUSTATIUS AND SABA. THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS ARE ALSO TAKEN CARE OF. A TEAM OF PROJECT MANAGERS OF THE GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AGENCY (RGD) IS WORKING DAILY TO KEEP THE ALTERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE BUILDINGS ON THE RIGHT TRACK. ALL CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION ACTIVITIES ARE OUTLINED IN THE SO-CALLED "EDUCATION HOUSING PLANS" FOR THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS ON BONAIRE, ST. EUSTATIUS AND SABA. WHAT DO THESE PLANS EXACTLY ENTAIL AND WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO IMPLEMENT THEM?

Hans Kuilder, head of department at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in the Caribbean Netherlands, explains: "The fact that together the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Public Bodies made about 75 million dollars available for the refurbishment of the school buildings demonstrated that they were serious about tackling the housing problems in education. In general, existing school buildings are being renovated; in some cases, whole new buildings shoot up. It is major surgery, which should lead to better working and learning conditions in schools."

Big job

The Government Buildings Agency (RGD) coordinates the detailing and implementation of the plans on behalf of the public entities and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Fleur Lagcher, head of RGD in the Caribbean Netherlands, leads a team that now consists of five project managers of the Government Buildings Agency in the Caribbean Netherlands. She tells about the project: "In all, four employees of the Government Building Agency in the Caribbean Netherlands are now participating in the guidance of building projects. Two project managers are stationed on Bonaire and two on the Windward Islands to guide projects in St. Eustatius and Saba. In May 2014, a Programme Manager will be added on Bonaire. There is still a lot of work to be done. Although much of it is already under way, and the first new constructions and renovations have been realised, there are still many projects to be started. And the schools are realised in a hurry, of course; they urgently need better and more modern buildings."

The school buildings on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba are generally obsolete. Leone Vrieling: "Initially, not a single school building complied with the requirements we now have for education housing. There are, however, differences in the state of the buildings. Most school buildings will be preserved and thoroughly renovated. In some cases, new construction is necessary. All in all, it is a big job for all parties

involved. Therefore, the work is being carried out gradually. One by one, the plans are further detailed along with the school boards. We determined the order of action based on the quality of the present buildings. At some schools, the work is already completed, while at other schools, the work has yet to begin. "

Metamorphosis

On Bonaire, the work was started in 2011, at Liseo Boneriano (ed.: the havo-vwo unit of Scholengemeenschap Bonaire). When the temporary barracks burnt down in March 2010, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science decided to free resources for a new and modern accommodation for the pupils, at about the same location. The work was finished in eight months, and in August 2011, they started using the new building. Today, more than two hundred pupils of havo and vwo attend classes in a new building that meets all requirements, a huge step forward for both students and teaching staff.

Currently, Colegio San Bernardo, also situated on Bonaire, is being thoroughly renovated. The first phase is as good as done. Leone: "The school went through a visible metamorphosis. The roofs were renewed; the buildings now have a new, fresh colour and are equipped with new windows and doors. In addition, the existing toilets were renovated and new toilets were added. The renovated buildings were equipped with new air conditioning installations with fresh air supply and CO₂ meters. Every school in the Caribbean Netherlands will be equipped with these. Of course, besides the refurbishment of the buildings, the school grounds will also be tackled."

"On St. Eustatius and Saba, we have made progress as well," says Tomiwa Safe-Adewumi. "The Gwendoline van Putten School, the only school for secondary education and mbo in St. Eustatius, has had a covered patio since 2012. It is used extensively in both rain and bright sunshine and is a great step forward for the school. And the students and teachers of



If you have any questions about the housing plans, please contact Fleur Lagcher:
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Demolition phase of the main building and the gym of the Golden Rock School.

the Governor de Graaff now have a modern school building at their disposal. All rooms now have an air conditioning system. This is pleasant for the indoor climate, but also contributes to peace and quiet in classrooms because the windows can remain closed. As Leone said, the installation of air conditioning is a standard procedure at all school buildings on the three islands. This is laid down in all three education housing plans. On Saba, the Peter L. Granger Auditorium had a facelift, to guarantee the safety of the users. The Auditorium is in need of still more refurbishment, but we are now working on a new building in St. Johns for de Laura Linzey Day Care Center and groups 1 and 2 of the Sacred Heart School. That is a priority.”

While the work is carried out, of course, the schools should remain open. This is easy to do when dealing with new construction projects: the students just continue following lessons in the old building until the new building is finished. In cases of renovation of existing school buildings, a temporary solution is called for. The safety of the children and staff is our number one priority during construction. Where groups of pupils are taught near the building site, the building site is trimmed with fences, activities causing much noise are performed outside school hours and the construction traffic remains strictly separated from the normal school traffic.”

Local involvement

The construction or renovation activities on the schools, wherever possible, are performed by local contractors. Tomiwa: “An invitation to tender gives them the opportunity to compete for the contract. For smaller contractors, this is a new way to obtain assignments.” Leone adds: “The same goes for the necessary reading and writing work required for the procurement and accountability.”

Fleur explains that the national government and the Government Buildings Agency both aim for the buildings in the Caribbean Netherlands to have the same quality and safety as buildings in the European part of the Netherlands. Where specific legislation is in effect for the Caribbean Netherlands, that legislation is applied. If there are no laws and regulations, the laws and regulations in force in the

OVERVIEW PROJECTS EDUCATION HOUSING PROGRAMME

COMPLETED PROJECTS

- Bonaire**
 - St. Eustatius**
 - Saba**
- New construction Liseo Boneriano
 - New construction: covered patio
 - Gwendoline van Putten School
 - New construction Governor de Graaff School
 - Temporary accommodation schools
 - Renovation roof P.L. Granger Auditorium

CURRENT PROJECTS (IN PREPARATION, DESIGN OR CONSTRUCTION PHASE)

- Bonaire**
 - St. Eustatius**
 - Saba**
- Renovation Kolegio San Bernardo
 - New construction Watapana School
 - New construction Kolegio Papa Cornes
 - New construction and renovation Scholengem.Bonaire
 - Repairs floor Block C, Bethel Methodist School
 - Renovation Golden Rock School
 - Renovation Gwendoline van Putten School
 - New construction Kindergarten/ Day Care
 - Renovation P.L. Granger Auditorium

FUTURE PROJECTS

- Bonaire**
 - St. Eustatius**
 - Saba**
- Renovation Kolegio Reina Beatrix
 - Renovation Kolegio San Luis Bertran
 - Renovation Kristu Bon Wardador
 - Renovation Pelikaan School
 - Renovation/extension Seventh Day Adventist School
 - Renovation Bethel Methodist School
 - Renovation Sacred Heart School
 - Renovation Saba Comprehensive School

European Netherlands are used. These laws and regulations are not always as well applicable or enforceable in the Caribbean Netherlands.

Sometimes the procedures are more of an architectural nature, as was the case with the Bethel Methodist School on St. Eustatius. Tomiwa: “The intermediate floor of the school block was not well designed and implemented. The support structure does not meet the requirements and is therefore potentially dangerous. At the moment, contractors are working on solving that problem. The Golden Rock School is also thoroughly renovated, down to the architectural skeleton, resulting in a better and safer school building, with safe play facilities, air-conditioned classrooms and offices, insulated roofs, improved flow at the pick-up and return of the pupils and the like.”

If all goes well, the Government Buildings Agency will be working until 2016/2017 on the education housing. When all activities will have been completed, an important condition will have been met for taking education in Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba to a higher level. ■



Photography:
Staysly Goilo

AN INTRODUCTION

“... The aim is to give the students a solid basis, so that they can complete their training successfully and are able to function in society in a responsible and respectful way ...”

Patricia Angela Principal of Colegio Papa Cornes, Bonaire

PATRICIA ANGELA HAS BEEN THE PRINCIPAL OF THE CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL KOLEGIO PAPA CORNES SINCE AUGUST 2011. THE SCHOOL HAS 426 STUDENTS SPREAD OVER 17 GROUPS, AND IS THE SECOND LARGEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BONAIRE.

Patricia started her career as a teacher at this school in 1991, after completing her training in Curaçao. After five years, she departed to Aruba. She had worked there for fifteen years in education when she decided to respond to a vacancy for the post of director at Colegio Papa Cornes. Patricia: “I had in the meantime gained so much experience in education and felt called for this job! I was chosen from a number of candidates, both from the Netherlands and other islands of the Netherlands Antilles. “

Applying a good structure was Patricia’s first concern. “The school had at the time just finished making the transition to the foundational educational system. The many changes in a relatively short period of time asked very much of the teachers, so I had to set priorities. The organisational structure had to be modified: there was a staff shortage and there were many pupils who required extra care.” The transition to the new state structure of Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius also brought the need to meet the quality requirements of the Dutch education system. Patricia relates how they picked up the challenge: “Together with the school coach, we drew up an improvement plan for our school for the year 2011 – 2012: in 2016 we should have achieved the prescribed quality targets. Each school year, this plan is evaluated and revised. The teachers have followed various further training courses, such as a course in Arithmetic and a course in Language development. We are still working on the introduction of new methods for Dutch, Reading, Arithmetic, and Papiamentu. There is a remedial teacher for Arithmetic for pupils from groups of five to eight and in the meantime we have the PRISMA project, for improving pupils from Group 6 who

have lagged behind for the subject of Dutch in terms of vocabulary and in the areas of speaking and listening. “

Patricia enjoys her work. “It gives enormous satisfaction to be able to realise improvements. But above all, I focus on the pupils. The aim is to give the students a solid basis, to enable them to complete their training successfully and function in society in a responsible and respectful way. And that basis consists not only of knowledge but is also an attitude: How do you treat each other and what is your stand in life? The lessons on ‘general human formation’ also play a role in this. Some children have a hard time at home and really depend on these lessons. The tutors of the school play an important role by testing and monitoring the children.

Through the Act plans, we are trying, in collaboration with the ambulatory educational counsellors and social workers of the EOZ (ed.: expertise centre education care), to help each child in his or her development. “ Patricia is positive about the progress of the improvement processes: “I am confident that we will achieve most of the targets for 2016. There is a good cooperation between the PO-schools on the island and we also exchange knowledge and experience at board level. The lump-sum funding also helps us to purchase the resources needed to succeed in order to achieve the necessary quality improvements. A very important development, which hopefully should be realised in a year or two, is the development of a new building for Colegio Papa Cornes.

In short, our school is on the move. We work ceaselessly on our quality, but also on our own expertise and skills. “ ■

TWO BRONZE MEDALS FOR BONAIRIAN MBO-PUPILS!



NOT LESS THAN TWO BONAIRIAN MBO-PUPILS OF SCHOLENGEMEENSCHAP BONAIRE (SGB) WON A BRONZE MEDAL DURING THE VOCATIONAL WORLDSKILLS COMPETITIONS, HELD BETWEEN APRIL 2 AND 5 IN BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA. THE 186 PARTICIPANTS TO THESE COMPETITIONS FOR NORTH- MIDDLE AND SOUTH-AMERICA CAME FROM 16 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. THE BRONZE MEDALS WERE WON BY JEANDINO HART (INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR) AND JULIO MERCEDES (TILING). THIS IS A FANTASTIC ACHIEVEMENT, CONSIDERING THAT IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT CONTESTANTS FROM BONAIRE PARTICIPATED.

In total there were five contestants from Bonaire. Jason Albertus. Ook Jason Albertus (plaster boarding), Gedeon Luijando (Welding) en J-son Carter (web design) participated. Gedeon also won a medal, as the Skills Netherlands Caribbean team member with the highest score.

The pupils formed part of the Skills Netherlands Caribbean delegation, named after the foundation that financed the participation of the Caribbean Netherlands team. The Skills Netherlands Caribbean delegation consisted of in total of 15 persons. The participants were accompanied by five teachers, as the experts and two media students, who reported the event.

During four consecutive days, the candidates carried out heavy assignments, watched by 129.000 visitors. Mbo-teacher Rob van der Vechte, expert at the Web design assignment, accompanied the contestant and acted as a member of the selection panel during the contest: : “the WorldSkills Americas event was heavy but especially very motivating. It is a marvellous experience for the candidates as well as their teachers.” Martijn Baptiste, tiling and plaster board expert: “The level is high and among the assignments were a couple that our students had never yet done. But it was great to see that our candidates did not give up; they saw that they still have a long road ahead of them but were determined to use their participation to these skills contests to improve themselves. They were inspired by the passion of all the participants for their skill.”

Experiences

The candidates certainly gained a lot of experience through their participation. Gideon: “I improved my welding skills. I learned a lot about the safety rules and how to work with the materials. My opponents were very good at it and that energised me to improve myself and to keep on practising, on Bonaire.” Jason Carter was not disappointed by not having won a medal: “Winning is not the main thing to me, it is the experience that will take me further. I want to share this experience with my fellow-pupils.”

Teacher Rob: “Our participation in these vocational contests can help reduce the backlog in education on our islands. I got many new ideas for improving my lessons and I met many well-qualified teachers. We even arranged exchange programmes: a team of experienced pupils and teachers from Colombia will shortly visit Bonaire to give workshops and train our students.”

Skills Netherlands Caribbean (SNC) is a sister organisation of the foundation Skills Netherlands and was founded in 2013 to enable the participation of Netherlands Caribbean pupils in these international vocational contests. Skills Netherlands supports SNC in the organisation of the vocational contests.

For more information, see www.skillsnetherlands.nl/over-ons/skills-netherlands-caribbean/over-skills-netherlands-caribbean

SABA REACH FOUNDATION

HIGH UP IN WINDWARDSIDE, SABA, YOU WILL FIND A NEAT TERRACE-STRUCTURED GARDEN, WHERE A GREAT VARIETY OF VEGETABLES, FRUITS AND HERBS ARE GROWN IN AN ORGANIC WAY. THIS IS THE SOCIAL WORKPLACE ORGANOPONICS¹. GARDEN OF THE SABA REACH FOUNDATION. THE ORGANIC GARDEN IS ONE OF THE THREE PILLARS OF THE SABA REACH FOUNDATION, AS EXPLAINED BY THE FOUNDATION'S DIRECTOR LA-TOYA CHARLES.

“Statutorily, the foundation is registered as Foundation Social Workplace Saba. However, when I became director of the foundation, in January 2013, it was clear that the foundation had outgrown its name and its initial mission statement which referred almost exclusively to the operations of the Social Workplace. Since its foundation, in 2007, the activities had expanded to include two additional departments. Currently the foundation consists of three departments or projects, all carrying equal weight: the Youth Opportunity Path or SKJ (Sociale Kanstrajecten Jongeren), which offers second chance social opportunity trajectories for youths (ed.: the former ‘SVJ’ or Sociale vormingsplicht jongeren), the department Adult Continuing Education (ACE) and the Social workplace.”

In January 2013, as most of the former board members had withdrawn, a new board was formed. The new board and management formulated a new mission statement which

1. Organoponics (originally Organopónicos) are a system of urban organic gardens in Cuba. They often consist of low-level concrete walls filled with organic matter and soil, with lines of drip irrigation laid on the surface of the growing media.

MISSION SABA REACH FOUNDATION

Reach Foundation seeks to create and provide alternative social and educational opportunities which enhance the personal and professional development and employability of individuals forming part of the Saban community.



more accurately reflects the activities of the foundation as a whole. In consultation with Jumbie Design Consultancy, the new name Saba Reach Foundation and corresponding logo were introduced.

Youth Opportunity Path

The Youth Opportunity Path department provides the so-called Social Opportunity Programmes, in accordance with the Law SKJ (Sociale Kanstrajecten voor Jongeren or social opportunity programmes for youth). This programme is designed to offer young Sabans between the ages of 18 and 24 who did not complete their high school education with a diploma or start qualification a renewed opportunity to further develop their social skills and obtain a diploma or start qualification. In this way they can more successfully enter the labour market or continue their education. The programme is funded entirely by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sciences (OCW). Participants also receive a small stipend, based on their attendance.

The foundation is currently in the process of finalising the programme curricula and pathways (the so-called 'uitstroomprofielen') for the participants who enrolled in August 2013. Early in 2013, representatives of the Ministry of Education Caribbean Netherlands branch and Project Bureau Manager Carl Buncamper advised Saba Reach to peer up with Foundation FORMA, who recently had attained the basic quality standard for their SKJ programme from the OCW Inspection, to assist the Saba Reach SKJ team with the development of their action plan. Saba Reach followed this advice and the result was an action plan that included attracting a full-time teacher in addition to the already active part-time Care Coordinator Connie Adkins. La-Toya: "we used to work with a group of separate teachers per subject but the advantage of having hired our new full-time teacher, Vincent Stroom, is that he can develop a deeper bond with the participants. We also launched an intensive campaign to attract participants. This resulted in twelve participants; unfortunately, however, five of them requested to be released from the programme after having completed the initial four month Social Development pre-trajectory. The combination of working at internship sites during the day time and doing courses in the evening proved to be an unresolvable challenge, especially for participants with children. But for those who opted to remain in the programme, this combined study and work trajectory offers the advantage of making theory and practice go hand in hand. The practical trainings that take up to at least 18 weeks in total are an essential part of the programme."

The main trajectory, consisting of a the vocational course, is being realized through a cooperation with the Gwendoline van Putten School on Sint Eustatius.



The team of the Foundation Saba Reach. Upper row, f.l.t.r.: Vincent Stroom (SKJ teacher), Otto Anderez (agronomic engineer) and Franklin Wilson (English teacher). Second row, f.l.t.r.: Connie Adkins (care coordinator) La-Toya Charles (director), Amanda Aguirre (Spanish teacher) and Margo Dubois (Dutch teacher).

STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS OF THE YOUTH OPPORTUNITY PATH PROGRAMME

The basic programme or pre-trajectory lasting four months focuses on the development of social skills competences through workshops and helping the participants to (re)gain confidence in themselves. Participants also receive classes in the modules English, Arithmetic, and Computer Skills.

The main trajectory consists of a vocational programme equivalent to an mbo 1 level. The programme includes a minimum 18 week internship and the courses Career & Citizenship, Arithmetic, English, and Dutch, and a series of Workshops, Actions, and Coaches. Students who finish their vocational programme successfully will receive a will give them access to mbo 2 programmes within the Dutch Kingdom.

Adult Education

The Adult Education department seeks to provide professional educational courses to enhance the working capacity of people who are already active in the regular labor market on the island. As of March 2014, the foundation offers accredited language courses from the University of the Dutch Caribbean in English as a Second Language (ESL), Spanish, and Dutch. The Saba Reach team hopes to continue professionalizing this department through further cooperation with foreign regional institutions to offer accredited computer and management courses through the University of the Dutch Caribbean, hospitality courses through the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute and online degree courses from the University of the West Indies.

The Social Workplace

The purpose of the organoponic garden is to function as the foundation's Social Workplace and provide a meaningful occupation to the workers who do not meet all conditions for obtaining a job in the regular labour market. La-Toya: "the Social Workplace offers its workers, or apprentices, the opportunity to earn a salary while also engaging in a valuable socially oriented activity and as such contributing to the Saban community through their production of locally and organically grown crops. With sufficient training, apprentices also have the option to consider entering the regular labour market."

The daily management of the production at the garden is in the hands of the Cuban Engineer Otto Anderez, whose predecessors introduced the Cuban Organoponics agriculture method to the garden and thus to Saba. Part-time Job Coach Michel Jansen takes care of the individual guidance and coaching of the apprentices in the execution of their tasks. In the morning the apprentices engage in production activities on the field and in the afternoon they engage in either social skills sessions from Job Coach and Counselor Connie Adkins or agriculture classes from Otto Anderez. Every Friday the staff and apprentices have a reflection moment during which they look back on the past week to determine what went well and what should be improved and to make plans for the next week. According to La-Toya, the garden provides an ample variety of crops: "depending on the season, we are able to offer particular crops such as season peppers, carrots, bush onions, papaya, cauliflower, cucumber, tomatoes, lettuce and various herbs among others."



An SKJ lesson with, f.l.t.r.: Alejandro Benders, Domianna Leverock and Ange Leonie Cetoute.

The foundation recently offered an agricultural trajectory to four participants from the PRO-department of Saba Comprehensive School. By working in the garden, they have created a transitional path from school to work. Although a lot of focus is placed on the production of the garden, La-Toya emphasizes that: "the main purpose of the Organoponics initiative is to function as a Social Workplace and offer a sheltered working environment for the apprentices." The salaries of the staff and apprentices are subsidised by the local government while the return from the field is used to cover the costs of running the garden, e.g. for purchasing manure, fertilisers, water etc.

Future

What are the foundation's plans for the future? La-Toya: "one of our main concerns for the coming year is to obtain a positive report from the Education Inspection for our Youth Opportunity Path programme. This means that much effort will be placed in the further development of the main trajectories. For the Adult Continuing Education department the focus will be on the expansion of the courses offered to working adults. As for the Social Workplace Organoponics Garden: it certainly is a remarkable initiative that attracts a lot of positive attention. In 2013 the initiative placed in the top twenty foundations that were in the running to receive the first time Oranje Fonds Kroonappels Awards in the Neighborhood - Social Cohesion category. (red.: Oranje Fonds Kroonappels Awards).¹ Agriculture, however, is a very specific field and to be able to cater to more low opportunity individuals, we hope to expand the activities of our social workplace to include other, non-agricultural activities."

1. The "Oranje Fonds Kroonappels" (Orange fund Crown Apples) are yearly awarded by the Dutch Oranje Fonds (Orange Fund) to the best social initiatives within the Kingdom. For more information, visit the website www.kroonappels.nl.



“SHOULD ENGLISH BE THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION IN ST. EUSTATIUS?” THIS IS A TOPIC OF MUCH DISCUSSION ON THE ISLAND. THERE WERE STRONG INDICATIONS THAT AN INSUFFICIENT COMMAND OF DUTCH CURRENTLY HINDERS MANY CHILDREN AT ST. EUSTATIUS FROM OBTAINING GOOD SCHOOL RESULTS. BUT HOW CAN YOU BE SURE THAT A SWITCH TO ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION REALLY IS A GOOD CHOICE, WHICH WILL ACTUALLY BENEFIT THE CHILDREN? AND HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT MAKING SUCH A BIG CHANGE IN EDUCATION?

Ellen Petra Kester, Eric Mijts and Nick Faraclas

Presentation of the results of the research into the instruction language during a town-hall meeting on St. Eustatius.



RESEARCH ON THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION IN ST. EUSTATIUS

For that reason, former Commissioner Glenville Schmidt of Education in 2012 took a first step by asking the then Minister of Education, Marja van Bijsterveldt, permission to conduct an investigation into the most desirable instruction language in St. Eustatius. The Minister agreed to this research because she thought that all children should be given a fair chance to be able to develop their talents to the full. Following that the “St. Eustatius Language of instruction research” was conducted in 2013.

Prior to the constitutional changes of 10-10-'10, Dutch was already the main language in education. In elementary schools, instruction is in English at first, with Dutch as a subject. In most PO-schools, Dutch is the official language of instruction starting in group five, and in secondary education, Dutch is the official language of instruction.

The research on the language of instruction was carried out by three internationally renowned linguists in 2013 and consisted of the following components:

1. **A literature review**, in which scientists made comparisons between countries where the language of instruction, like in St. Eustatius, is not the mother language, but is called a “foreign language” that is hardly or not at all spoken in everyday life.

2. **Field research**, consisting of the following components:

- Research, carried out through interviews and questionnaires, to the respondents’ points of view on the languages of Dutch and English respectively and to the situations in which they use these two languages.
- An investigation (through a so-called “narrative proficiency test”) of the extent to which school children can tell a story in English and in Dutch. The test consisted of a comic strip where the children had to tell the story, in both languages.
- Visits of classrooms and interviews with the various stakeholders in education of St. Eustatius: from students to parents, teachers, school principals, school boards and other so-called education professionals and interested citizens.

3. **The formulation of conclusions and recommendations.**

Conclusions and recommendations

The following are some of the main conclusions and recommendations arising from the research are:

Everyone agrees on the following points:

- Education in the island should aim at having a maximal command of both English and Dutch;
- In St. Eustatius, Dutch can be considered a “foreign language”;

Monica van Leeuwen-Laan (OCW), researchers Tineke Drenthe and Rose Mary Allen

Members of the Feasibility Study team during a painting lesson
at the Bethel Methodist School on St. Eustatius.



- The current school system, which makes a transition from English to Dutch halfway, does not work;

The “narrative proficiency test” revealed that school children in St. Eustatius have an insufficient command of both English and Dutch.*1

The research team emphatically states that the language policy is not a magic wand that will solve all the problems in education and the community of St. Eustatius. But the language policy is something one can control, that can be implemented in a relatively short period of time and that can contribute to solving other problems.

*1. You will find a complete list of conclusions and recommendations of the language research in the research report “Language of instruction in St. Eustatius”. You can order it from Maritsa Silberie (maritsa.silberie@rijksdienstcn.com) or Elaine Marchena (elaine.marchena@rijksdienstcn.com).

THE RESEARCHERS CAME UP WITH TWO POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE LANGUAGE POLICY OF ST. EUSTATIUS:

SCENARIO 1

- All schools use English as their language of instruction
- Starting as early as nursery, the children get intensive and systematic lesson in Dutch (according to the concept of “playing education”)
- Only when the children are able to read and write well in English, will they also learn to write and read in Dutch.
- All words, concepts and terminology in education will be taught in English first, and then in Dutch

SCENARIO 2

- Just like scenario 1, but with the following addition:
- At the end of the second year in high school, students can choose between:
 - 1) An academic education, vocational education or practice education with English as instruction language and Dutch as a foreign language, or:
 - 2) Switch to a havo or vmbo student trajectory with Dutch as instruction language. This course is for students who choose to continue their studies in the Netherlands or the Leeward Islands (in the latter case, they will also receive a few extra hours of instruction in Papiamentu as a foreign language.

Feasibility study

In February 2014, a feasibility study was launched, which should show what language policy best suits the local context and the possibilities in St. Eustatius. To this end, the above two research models or language scenarios mentioned in the research report will be examined. In addition, the feasibility of the following scenarios that were also presented in the research report will also be examined:

- 3) A continuation of the current system with adjustments (for example in number of contact hours and course material).

- 4) English as the sole language of instruction, combined with Dutch as a foreign language.

The Caribbean Examination Council-exam is used (like in Saba). The State Secretary for education, culture and science and the Executive Council of St. Eustatius will present the results of the feasibility study during the Caribbean Netherlands week in June. If this will entail changes in the policy of language instruction, legislation will also be adjusted. The new language policy will then apply to all schools in St. Eustatius.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPING EDUCATION

IN BONAIRE, THE TEAMS OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND PRIMARY SCHOOL DE PELIKAAN ARE CURRENTLY BEING TRAINED IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPING EDUCATION. THIS IS AN INTERVIEW WITH JUANA KIBBELAAR, A LINGUISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT SPECIALISING IN PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR PUPILS WITH DUTCH AS A SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE. TAAALONTWIKKELEND ONDERWIJS OP DE ABC EILANDEN (LANGUAGE DEVELOPING EDUCATION ON THE ABC ISLANDS), A METHOD FOR PROFESSIONALISATION DESIGNED BY JUANA, AIMS TO RAISE AWARENESS AND PUT SOLUTIONS IN MOTION TO SOLVE THE PREVAILING LANGUAGE DEFICIENCY.

“It is impossible to receive an education without a good command of the language in which teaching is provided.” The kids in Bonaire, starting from Group 5, are typically taught in Dutch. That is why, according to Juana, Dutch language skills are a requisite for their access to higher education. “So far, Dutch is approached as one of the subjects that the children are taught in school. This ignores the fact that, on the one hand, a good command of Dutch is needed to understand the remaining subjects and, on the other hand, it is in those other subjects that the pupils learn Dutch. We need to give more attention to language developing education, the type of education that works on both professional knowledge and language development at the same time.”

The language skills you need at school, first of all require a comprehensive vocabulary to understand all the different subjects. In addition, to communicate you must have sufficient language skills to be able to use your vocabulary both orally and in writing, according to Juana Kibbelaar. “The broader your vocabulary, the more you will know and understand. Children with a large vocabulary will be much better able to understand and study school language. This brings us to the way children learn these language skills in school. They need three things: a wide and varied range of language resources (teaching methods, books to read, books that are read to them, magazines, internet texts etc.), a lot of practice with the language (so, a lot of speaking and writing), and feedback in these practice situations, in particular from their teacher. In order to learn a language so well that you can be taught in it, these factors in education (language resources, sufficient exercise, and feedback) must all three be present in sufficient amounts and of should be of sufficient quality.”

Children who grow up in the Caribbean Netherlands hear and see very little Dutch, except at school. Juana: “On all the islands of the Netherlands Antilles, Dutch language contact is too limited to offer the children the rich reading and listening environment that they so badly need to master the Dutch language well. It is therefore important to pay more attention to increasing the range of Dutch language resources. This should be done in school, but it is also helpful to make books, movies, games, TV shows, etc. widely accessible for all school children.”

“... Dutch language contact is too limited to offer the children the rich reading and listening environment that they so badly need to master the Dutch language well ...”

Language developing teaching

Extending the language contact is however not enough. According to Juana, the method of instruction is essential for the language development of the child. Teachers are often insufficiently prepared for teaching within the special language situation of the Caribbean Islands. In her method for professionalisation, teachers in Bonaire develop specific skills to stimulate the language development of their students, both in Papiamentu and Dutch. In addition, it looks at the total range of educational resources of the schools so that pupils can build up sufficient language skills in eight years' time and can have a better starting position in high school. This also involves a reflection on the functional difference between Papiamentu and Dutch. Both languages

are important for a balanced development of the children; but the reality of the functional difference and the social imbalance in required language contacts calls for a different interpretation of the two languages in education.

How does all this relate to the islands Saba and St. Eustatius?

Juana explains: "For Sint Eustatius, Saba and St. Maarten, where the children speak English or a dialect of English as their mother tongue, the issue is different. Contrary to Papiamentu, English is a language, spoken worldwide with a limitless offering of language expressions (ed.: books, tv/radio programmes etc.). Contrary to the Papiamentu speaking islands, Saba and St. Eustatius do have the possibility of choosing whether they want to use Dutch as their main instruction language or English, with Dutch as a strong, second language. However, the concept of language developing education can be used for instruction in Dutch as well as in English." ■

Juana Kibbelaar As an education consultant, trainer, coach, and teacher trainer in the Netherlands, Juana Kibbelaar has for many years been involved in the improvement of language and reading results in primary education and early childhood education. Her experience as a teacher in Curaçao taught her about teaching in the Caribbean reality. In her master's thesis (University of Amsterdam,) she explores the opportunities and bottlenecks of the role of language in Curaçao education. For this research and due to her proposed new vision of language teaching on the ABC Islands, she was awarded the Peter Smits Dissertation Award 2013. This vision does not make a choice between Dutch or Papiamentu, but shows how the two languages complement each other. The opening quote offers an appropriate starting point to bilingual young people:

"There are two things we should give our children: one is roots and the other is wings."

SÛKERBÔLE

The year 2014 started well. It is January 1st when the first teachers from St. Eustatius arrive at Schiphol Airport for another round of twinning. During twinning talks, education professionals from the Netherlands and the Caribbean Netherlands exchange education experience. First, it was the directors' and the Internal Counsellors', and now it's the teachers' turn. The Sacred Heart school of Saba already visited the twinning school in Heerenveen in October. The schools of St. Eustatius are doing so now.

The teachers were well informed by their predecessors. They heard that the hotel was "stunning good", the schools "incredible" and Friesland "amazing". So, expectations are high. And we hadn't even started yet. Also, a certain school principal urged his teachers not to forget the sùkerbôle. For those who do not know, a sùkerbôle is a Friesian specialty made of dough, generously supplemented with sugar, cinnamon and ginger. Back to the twinning, because that is what this week is about, after all.

Through the exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise, the teachers and the schools get insights and advice to help improve the quality of their own education. Using lesson indicators, the team visited many lessons and classrooms, examined the pupils' care, and attended meetings. A look behind the scenes of a colleague is instructive. Which again goes to prove it's better to observe education improvements first-hand than to attend a workshop!

The "vibes" are there this week. In addition to the formal programme, there is also room for evaluating the day and sharing a meal together. After all, the team needs time to deal with all these impressions (and with the cold), as well. Twinning also involves bonding. Bonding involves talking to each other and thereby learning to understand each other's situation. After all, we live in one and the same Kingdom. This week went well. With a suitcase full of impressions and educational experiences, the six Caribbean ladies returned home. With sùkerbôle, of course. ■

SGB-PUPILS IN WORK-STUDY PROGRAMME RCN

Photo: Scholengemeenschap Bonaire/SGB



The four departing mbo-pupils with practical training coach Faysel (left) and Arno van Dongen (right).

WITH HEARTS FULL OF ANTICIPATION, MBO-PUPILS ANWARTHIELMAN, RUBERT SINT JAGO, ALVINSON SOLIANA AND LEX SIMONIS OF THE BONAIRE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (SGB) BOARDED THE PLANE IN FEBRUARY 2014. THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED BY ARNO VAN DONGEN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF RCN AND PRACTICAL TRAINING COACH FAYSSEL FRANCISCO, AND WERE ON THEIR WAY TO THE NETHERLANDS FOR A FOUR-MONTH INTERNSHIP. THIS INTERNSHIP AIMS TO TRAIN THEM FOR THE POST OF SERVICE DESK AGENT AT THE RIJKSDIENST CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS (RCN). THEY ARE THE FIRST CANDIDATES IN A UNIQUE WORK-STUDY PROGRAMME WHICH AIMS TO TRAIN YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS FOR A POSITION AT THE RCN.

“It all started with a need that we have here, at the Shared Service Centre (SSC) of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (Home Affairs) in the Hague,” explains ICT Director Perry van der Weyden. “There is an increasing demand for helpdesk support within our organisation outside office hours. It is particularly difficult to find suitable personnel to man the help desk at those times. Moreover, it is also very expensive because labour costs are much higher outside the normal office hours.” Arno van Dongen adds: “When I was visiting Internal affairs at the Hague for equipping the RCN work environment last year, we discussed this topic. That’s how the idea of staffing the helpdesk in The Hague with Caribbean Dutch personnel was born. After all, you can staff a help desk perfectly well with people who are in a very different place, geographically. And because of the time difference, the evening hours in the Netherlands are still within normal office hours, here.”

“ THIS IS PURE WIN-WIN: THE RCN AND THE INTERIOR AND KINGDOM RELATIONS-HELP DESK WILL HAVE A STRONGER OCCUPANCY AND THESE MBO-PUPILS GET A GOOD TRAINING, WITH A JOB GUARANTEE...”

Job guarantee

However, good ICT staff is not easy to find, and the two directors did not want to move any members of their personnel away from existing local ICT environments. Perry van der Weyden: “We immediately thought it would be a good idea to train local students.” At first, Arno van Dongen tried not to get too excited: “I was wondering if the requirements in the Netherlands were not too high and if the Netherlands were not technologically a lot further than Bonaire with regard to the software and hardware used in government offices. But things turned out to be better than expected: the national government in the Netherlands uses the same programmes as the RCN. In addition, we get the more specific, complex questions mostly within office hours.” Then it was a matter of getting the right parties together at the table to

launch this initiative; the mbo training of the SGB and Jong Bonaire took upon themselves to recruit the candidates, and the Helpdesk of the Rijkdienst Caribbean Netherlands was open to adding this service centre facility to their service.

Learning pathway

Through Jong Bonaire, interested young people were called upon to write a personal motivation letter in which they explained why they would like to follow this route. In the end, mbo-pupils Anwar, Rubert, Alvinson and Lex were selected. Their training period started on January 16, at the help desk of RCN on Bonaire. The internship period on Bonaire lasted until February 1, after which the group left for the Netherlands to continue their internship there. The programme in the Netherlands began with a habituation period of two weeks, with some fun trips, the opportunity to buy warm clothes, etc. Then, the pupils started their three month internship at the Shared Service Centre ICT of the Interior and Kingdom relations. When the students come back, they’re going to enter a BBL-training path trajectory, with four days of work and one day at school. The boys are housed together in a house in the Netherlands, under the guidance of RCN ICT employee Faysel Francisco.

Ambassadors of RCN

Arno van Dongen is excited about the initiative: “This is pure win-win: the RCN and the Interior and Kingdom Relations-help desk will have a stronger occupancy and these mbo-pupils get a good training, with a job guarantee. This is going to be an exciting time, both for the students concerned and for RCN. These four guys are going to have to prove themselves. They are the ambassadors of Bonaire and of RCN. If they do well, this may open other opportunities for work-study projects. We now started with Bonaire, but we explicitly intend to start offering these work-study pathways in the future to multiple disciplines, in St. Eustatius and Saba as well.” ■

ADVOCATES OF AFTER SCHOOL CARE

A GOOD EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMME IS AN IMPORTANT INCENTIVE FOR MANY YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN TO GET MORE OUT OF THEMSELVES. SPORTS, GAMES, GUIDANCE WITH HOMEWORK AND OTHER ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO A HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT. SOMETIMES THE EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND GUIDANCE ARE EVEN A NECESSITY, FOR INSTANCE IF THE HOME SITUATION IS NOT OPTIMAL OR IF THERE ARE OTHER PROBLEMS.

In the middle of the city center of Kralendijk, Jeugdhuis Jong Bonaire has been organising many activities since 1999. Every year, hundreds of young people of twelve and older participate. Inspired by Jeugdhuis Bonaire, rapper Mega D has been developing a similar facility in his beloved St. Eustatius for about three years. "Many children and young people on Statia need extra attention. For example, because both their parents work or because they grow up in broken families," he says.

Ilona Burgers has been the general manager of Jeugdhuis Jong Bonaire for four years now. She explains how the youth house functions. "Young people become a member, so they also have to pay a membership fee. The amount depends on the income of their parents. Although the collection of dues is sometimes laborious, we maintain it because it increases the connectedness. Each quarter, members choose from a programme that consists of sports, water sports and cultural activities, complemented

by activities aimed at overall development. Think of first aid, sex education, cooking or ICT. We organise sports competitions but also a poetry contest. There is an exchange with youth work in Aruba, Curaçao and Suriname. Our young people are required to get involved with tutoring provided by qualified teachers and other employees. These and other regulations are in our rules of procedure, which all young people and their parents must adhere to. "

Staff back to school

Jeugdhuis Jong Bonaire is well organised and works professionally. Ilona explains that this has developed over the years. "A few years ago, all employees were sent back to school, to a relevant training, such as social-educational worker. With the cooperation of Scholengemeenschap Bonaire (SGB) we set up the mbo course sports and movement, so that we can offer competent sports mentors. In addition, we brought our house in order financially, a prerequisite for the Government and other institutions to consider you a reliable partner. "

Jeugdhuis Jong Bonaire comprises several buildings and it's impossible to overlook the complex, as it was painted bright orange. Ilona: "The young people chose the color themselves and helped with painting. We have got our property 50 years in long lease and it is one and a half

Left picture: Volunteer worker **Rob Helminck** (left) playing a game of chess with a young participant, watched by **Mega D**

Dancing lessons under the guidance of **Mega D**



hectares in size. We have access to a gym, a theater, a music studio, a few offices, a volleyball court, a basketball court, a roller hockey field, a skating rink and a private car park. We are very lucky to have this housing. It enables us to organize a variety of activities. I dare say that our working methods, activities and housing are unique in the Netherlands. “

Youth World in Statia

Over the years, Jeugdhuis Jong Bonaire nestled in the local society. The Mega D Youth Foundation still has to find its way in St. Eustatius, but is definitely on the right track. The Mega D Youth Foundation, abbreviated as MYF, also called Youth World by its initiator Mega D, in a short period of time developed into a much appreciated institution. In September 2013, the new location in the center of Oranjestad was first used. The complex is not too large, but clean, colorful and friendly. “The rent is paid for a period of three years by the company Nu Star,” explains Mega D. Mega D had been away from the island for eighteen years when he returned in 2009. After wandering about and building a credible career as a rapper, he returned to his beloved Statia. Mega D: “It felt good to come back, but a lot of things had changed, as well. I was unpleasantly surprised by the behaviour of the youth. Young people get a lot more freedom and often grow up in broken families, creating a greater risk to derail. With my Mega D Youth Foundation, I want to offer young people an alternative. “

Confidence in the future

Visitors of the Mega D Youth Foundation are struck by the calm and positive atmosphere. Some of the young people are busy doing their homework; others participate in sports or games, a few are just chilling in the media room. Mega D: “We have simple rules: no profanity, no drugs, and the music can’t be too loud.” There are several buildings; the complex is not big, but offers plenty of opportunities for organising a variety of activities. Homework guidance is an important pillar of the extracurricular activities offered. Mega D: “Almost from the start, Iris Sporken, a qualified teacher, has been involved in setting up tutoring. She has several volunteers to assist her.”

On the principle of “Two foundations, one goal”, Mega D started collaborating with the project Daughters of the King, an initiative of Elaine Cuvulay-Jeffrey. Elaine: “We focus specifically on girls between about ten and fifteen years old. They participate in all kinds of activities with the aim to increase their sense of self-worth. We want to teach them to look to the future with positivism and confidence, so they can shape it themselves. Daughters of the King has been around for only a year, but already more than 25 girls participate. “



Support and appreciation

Just like Ilona Burgers with Jeugdhuis Jong Bonaire, Mega D and Elaine are advocates of a new generation of boys and girls in St. Eustatius. Mega D, Elaine and Iris are enthusiastic and ambitious, but setting up a professional provision for young people is no small matter. They have the support of the society of Statia and the appreciation of the local administration. Mega D: “Our next step is a structural grant and healthy financing for our initiative. We still have a long way to go, but we are proud of what we have achieved so far. Some of the young people that come here now without problems and participate in our activities, used to hang out on the street. They now realise it doesn’t have to be that way. Helping young people to get the best out of themselves is what matters to us. “ ■

Mega D: The rapper dedicated to young people

Mega D, originally called Dion Humpreys, was born in St. Maarten, in 1981. His Antiguan father and Statian mother raised him with Caribbean ‘vibes’ and identity. Mega D grew up in Statia and showed a pronounced feeling for music and poetry from a young age. He started to act, and soon Statia was too small for his talent. After performances on other Caribbean islands, he tried his luck in Europe. As a solo artist and as a member of RMXCRW or the Remix Crew, he was quite successful, both in the studio and on small and large venues, including the famous Dunya Festival in Rotterdam. RMXCRW signed a record deal with Universal Music Record in 2004; in 2005, Mega D got a contract with EMI Records. Mega D has worked together with and stood on the stage with countless great artists, such as Destiny’s Child and Kanye West.

In 2009, he decided to return to Statia, where he has devoted himself to the youth ever since. In 2010, he founded the Mega D Youth Foundation. He is inspiring and enthusiastic, and shares his musical talents with young people in Statia, where he recently produced a cd in his own music studio.

PUPILS LISEO BONERIANO ON STUDY TRIP TO THE NETHERLANDS AND NEW YORK

‘DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU’RE GOING TO STUDY? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO STUDY?’ THESE ARE THE TWO QUESTIONS MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED AMONG PUPILS IN THE FINAL GRADES OF HAVO AND VWO: PUPILS IN THE NETHERLANDS ORIENT THEMSELVES ON THEIR CONTINUING EDUCATION BY OCCASIONALLY VISITING OPEN DAYS. BUT PUPILS IN BONAIRE, ST. EUSTATIUS AND SABA CAN’T JUST VISIT A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY IN THE AFTERNOON TO SEE WHAT IT IS LIKE. THEREFORE, THE LISEO BONERIANO (ED.: PART OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY BONAIRE OR SGB) IN APRIL ORGANISED A STUDY TRIP TO THE NETHERLANDS AND NEW YORK FOR THE PUPILS OF HAVO 4 AND VWO 5.

Photo: Scholengemeenschap Bonaire/SGB



The pupils in action during a food sale, one of the many fundraising activities they organised to fund their trip.

Marcel Peijs, Economics teacher at the Liseo Boneriano, is closely involved with the organisation. He explains: “For pupils in Bonaire, as in all Caribbean Islands, it is not easy to make a good study selection. They can often not imagine what it is like to study abroad or in the Netherlands. That is why it is very important for them to leave the island. Not only to visit educational institutions, but also to experience the feeling of being far away from familiar Bonaire. The students find that life in the Netherlands or the United States cannot be compared with life in Bonaire. These study trips increase the likelihood of a good study selection and thus reduce the chances of dropping out.”

Broadway and Bungalow Park

Liseo Boneriano has been organising these study trips for seven years, now. Marcel: “Initially, the trip targeted students of pre-university education (vwo) 5. This year for the first time, the students from havo 4 can go, too. All students can choose between a trip to New York and the Netherlands. In New York, the students will stay in apartments; there are some not-to-be-missed items on the program, such as visits

to Ground Zero, a baseball game and a musical on Broadway. In the Netherlands, the pupils stay in a bungalow park, where they have to take care of themselves independently and can get a taste of student life. They will visit several schools and universities. No matter which destination they choose, New York or the Netherlands, the trip will be hugely educational for them and will broaden their horizon. Previous study trips have proved this to be true.”

“... These study trips increase the likelihood a good choice of study and thus reduce the chances of dropping out...”

Fundraising and sponsorship

The school and the pupils have made every effort to make the trip as cheap as possible. Marcel: “Originally, costs for the trip were 1900 dollars per pupil. Then, KLM gave us a 25% discount, and the amount dropped to 1600 dollars. This amount is paid by parents and students. The pupils organised all kinds of activities, such as a car wash, a food sale, a movie night and a barbecue. On February 14th, they had a large lottery, with the participation of numerous entrepreneurs and shopkeepers of Bonaire. They made prizes available, including a free night in a hotel, dinner vouchers, a tablet, a sailing trip, a package of hair products, a surf lesson by the youth world champion, and many more. The lottery raised a whopping 7325 dollars. A large group of pupils raised so many funds that they are even getting a refund. Others only have to pay between 100 and 500 dollars. The success of the fundraising shows how highly motivated the students are.” ■



IN EVERY EDITION OF “WHAT’S NEW” WE FOLLOW A DUTCH CARIBBEAN EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL DURING ONE DAY. IN THIS FIRST EDITION IT IS TRACY ZAGERS-JOHNSON. SHE WORKS AT THE SABA COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL, AS A SPANISH TEACHER. AS THE VOCATIONAL DEPARTMENT LEADER, SHE IS ALSO PART OF THE SCHOOL’S MANAGEMENT TEAM. TRACEY LOVES HER JOB. “WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE KEEPS ME YOUNG”, IS HER MOTTO. WE FOLLOWED HER ON A WEDNESDAY, SO THIS IS WHAT A TYPICAL WEDNESDAY LOOKS LIKE FOR TRACY.

MORNING

Preparations

“We usually wake up at 05:30 in the morning. I say my morning prayers, after which I get my daughter Kristin (4) and myself ready for the day. My husband, Bruce, and I divide the different tasks. While I help Kristin to prepare for school, Bruce prepares her breakfast and her snack for school. Depending on how things go, we sometimes swap tasks. When Kristin is ready for school, either Bruce or I say prayers with her, after which she is picked up by the school bus. When my daughter leaves, I drive to the Saba Comprehensive School, where I often arrive around 07:45. This year I don’t have any lessons during the first hour.”

At school

Tracy’s first class is Form 3 Academic. Following that is Form 5 Academic, the exam class. Tracy explains: “This exam class is currently preparing for their mock-exam in November, so I do a lot of examination practice with them. This includes reading and listening comprehension, oral exam practice and written assignments.”



From 09:30 to 10:00 is the first break. On the day we followed Tracy, island Governor Jonathan Johnson visited the school to present the Dream Book (ed.: a book, compiled at the occasion of King Willem Alexander’s coronation in May of this year, containing dreams and wishes from Dutch citizens, including a number from the Dutch Caribbean). The rest of Tracy’s morning is filled up with teaching the Form 2 and Form 1 classes. In between there is a free period. Tracy uses this time either to catch up on her preparations or for correcting her students’ work. Tracy: “But sometimes students will approach me during this time. Sometimes it is just for a chat, sometimes for some counseling. The same holds for the second break, which is from 12:15 to 12:30. That’s fine with me: I always hope that I can mean something to my students.”

Management Team meeting

AFTERNOON

From 12:30 to 14:00 Tracy takes part in the Management Team meeting, with principal Hemmie van Xanten, Nadine Granger (Lower Forms Department Leader), and Constance Clement (Academic Department Leader) After Kristin’s



A DAY WITH

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AFTERNOON

school finishes, at 12:30 the school bus driver takes her to Tracy's parents' home, where Kristin has time to relax, eat her lunch and play before Tracy picks her up.



Shopping

"On Wednesday afternoon, the first thing I usually do is go shopping at "Big Rock Supermarket" and "D & A Supermarket" in Windwardside, because Wednesday is when we receive fresh supplies on the island. I especially buy fruits and vegetables. Before or after shopping, I sometimes pop in at "Bizzy B" for a cup of coffee or tea, with one of the delicious pastries they sell there."

Quality time

"When I finish shopping, around 4:30, I drive to my parents' home in Hell's Gate, to pick up Kristin. I mostly stay there for a short while, to chat with my parents and eat something. When Kristin and I arrive home, we do some games, painting or coloring. We will also practice some reading, writing and mathematics."

Then it is time to start preparations for dinner and for the next day. While Tracy prepares the family's clothes for the next day, her husband will usually make dinner. "He is an excellent cook and always manages to make a tasty, healthy meal with the available ingredients. Dinner is a real family affair: no matter how busy we are, we will always take time to have dinner together. During dinner, we engage in meaningful conversation where Kristin loves to relate her activities at school. After dinner my husband will usually wash the dishes while I do other chores. I then give Kristin her bath and we end the day with a bedtime story and her devotion. After Kristin has gone to bed, I sometimes watch t.v., read or go on Facebook to interact with family and friends. And then it's time to go to bed, to be fresh for the new day. When in the evenings I reflect on things, it often occurs to me how much I like my job and that I am proud to be able to contribute on a daily basis to the Saban community through my work." ■

EVENING



DATES NEXT INSPECTION VISITS:

- 12 and 13 may 2014 > Saba
- 14 till 16 may 2014 > St. Eustatius
- 18 till 23 may 2014 > Bonaire

IN THE NEXT EDITION OF 'WHAT'S NEW':

- > Interview with Inspectie
- > New item: Innovations in education
- > New additional Dutch language modules for Saba and St. Eustatius