



Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland
OCW

ENGLISH

WHAT'S NEW ...

IN CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS EDUCATION



6

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This magazine is a publication of RCN/OCW and aims:

- to provide background information about education developments for education professionals in the Caribbean Netherlands and
- to offer a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience between the islands.

Editorial team: Elaine Marchena (final)editing, Olga Schats, Cora Knopper

Column: Martin van den Oetelaar

Photography: Staysly Goilo, Adam Watkins, Marika Ringnalda, Tomiwa Safe-Adewumi, Olga Schats, Daniëlle van Oostrum

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Do you want to react to the contents of this magazine or do you have suggestions or contributions for a next edition? Please send an e-mail to: elaine.marchena@rijksdienstcn.com

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IN THE NEXT EDITION OF 'WHAT'S NEW'

- Progress transition on Sint Eustatius: about the CXC education system
- New 'blended' LOFO-course on Bonaire
- Third Education Conference Caribbean Netherlands

And more!

COLOPHON



PREFACE

At the time of writing this foreword, educational institutions in the Caribbean Netherlands (CN), together with the Rijksdienst Caribbean Netherlands (RCN) Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), are busy with preparations for the new Education Agenda. It is well known that the first version, the 2011-2015 Education Agenda for the Caribbean Netherlands (CN), is the basis for the educational improvements that have been made during the past five years in education in the Caribbean Netherlands.

The evaluation, conducted by policy consultant Ecorys, was intended to look back and give insight into the effectiveness of all the activities within the first Education Agenda's framework. But also to look ahead to the future, in order to develop a new education agenda. In March 2016 Ecorys spoke with representatives from all stakeholders in education on the CN islands. In April the evaluation report was also discussed on all three islands. With the input from the educational sector, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) is working on drafting the second Education Agenda for 2017 - 2019.

OCW deliberately chose this approach to ensure that realistic goals are included in the new education agenda, goals that fit in well with what is needed per island and per educational institution, to achieve the optimal quality of education in the Caribbean Netherlands.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your contribution in this process: for the time you freed up to speak with Ecorys' researchers and for actively participating during the meetings regarding both the past five years and the period that lies before us. But also especially for your commitment to educating daily: foremost the teachers, but also all school management and school board members and the other educational institutions on the islands: together we're working to further improve education in the Caribbean Netherlands.

Let's maintain this enthusiasm and this involvement during the process that lies ahead of us, to also be able to achieve the goals in the second Education Agenda: Let's keep on going for it!

Just before this magazine's publishing deadline we received the news that now all primary schools in the Caribbean Netherlands have reached the basic quality level! During the Education Inspectorate's last visit, this designation was also granted to the Governor de Graaff School in St Eustatius, the Brede School Papa Cornes and Kolegio Strea Briante (formerly Kolegio Watapana) on Bonaire. This is an achievement that we are very proud of! On behalf of (RCN) OCW, I hereby heartily congratulate everyone who was involved: the teachers, school managers, school boards, students and their parents.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS 2016-2019

The following was decided regarding school holidays in the Caribbean Netherlands, in accordance with the applicable legal regulation. The schools must adhere to the dates the summer holidays set by the OCW Ministry. The summer holiday begins and ends on the same dates as the European region in the Netherlands where the first summer holiday begins and ends (Article 6 of the Regulation establishing school holidays 2016 - 2019). This results in the following dates for the Caribbean Netherlands:

SCHOOLYEAR	NL REGION UNDER WHICH CN FALLS	SUMMER HOLIDAY DATES
2016 - 2017	Middle Region	July 8 th - August 20 th *1
2017 - 2018	South Region	July 7 th - August 19 th
2018 - 2019	South Region	July 6 th - August 18 th

*1 As a result of the Cambridge English exams, which take place during the week of August 15, 2016, an exception has been made for the Gwendoline van Putten School on St. Eustatius. Because the summer holiday is one week shorter for this school, Christmas break will be extended by one week.

WHO'S GOING TO THE WORLD SKILLS AMERICA IN NOVEMBER '16?

LAST MARCH 8 STUDENTS FROM THE CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES DEPARTMENT OF SCHOLENGEMEENSCHAP BONAIRE (SGB) TRAVELED TO BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA FOR AN EXCHANGE WITH THE COLOMBIAN SENA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL (MBO). BACK ON BONAIRE MARTIJN BAPTISTE AND HEIN VAN SENTEN TALKED ENTHUSIASTICALLY ABOUT THE TRIP.

Martijn has been working for three years at the SGB as a Construction Techniques teacher and Hein was there right from the beginning when the Skills Caribbean Foundation was established in 2012. They recount that a few years ago the construction education program had to be critically reviewed to make sure it complied with the high Dutch standards. There was a lot of hard work to implement changes and one of them is that now work is done more on a project basis. Examples are: the Strea Briante school where students made benches and tables for the yard and making the 8.5-meter-long Papa Hutu fishing boat. The mission is to educate students to become not only tradesmen, but also socially engaged individuals. Martijn: "I myself was still educated the old fashioned way. I stood at the workbench making birdhouses even though I myself didn't think there really was any use for that." If you want to make a difference, then you have to show today's students that learning is fun and that you can actually make a difference with your work. And what's a better motivator than a contest?

"COLOMBIA IS UP-TO-DATE, FRIENDLY AND PROVIDES EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERSHIPS AND LEARNING."

Local challenges

"It is our duty to put skilled young people with the right mindset into society. But working in construction doesn't have such a good reputation. The prevailing view is that it is poorly paid, hard work," says Martijn. Hein: "It's true, an all-around carpenter is not exactly the best paid. However, with the right attitude it is possible to move up."

Martijn Baptiste, Construction Techniques teacher:
"You don't only pass on your trade. It is also about empathy and authenticity. You empathize with society. If you really feel this, then your students are motivated."

In the two teachers' opinion there must be a change in perception. That cannot be achieved only by an experienced and enthusiastic teacher standing in front of the class, but appropriate resources should also be made available. Hein: "The business community on Bonaire should be more active in guiding graduate tradesmen. Also, there should be a difference in salary based on education in order to make it more appealing to work in construction. The changes in the legislation are positive in the sense that workers are now better protected. More safety rules and technical occupational health and safety rules provide for better working conditions." But currently 80% of the people working in construction are of Colombian descent. According to Hein, there is an opportunity for local tradesmen to find work for themselves in construction.

So what's really the added value of such a school trip? Martijn: "It broadens the students' frame of reference. They see a different world and meet foreign students who are at the same level. Participating is important, but networking is actually even more valuable. It's a complete package: in addition to the construction part, they learn about a different culture, see different habits and interesting internships can be arranged through Preciado Gilbert, the man behind the Sena vocational school in Colombia."

Selection criteria

After the trip the focus is now on selecting the students. In addition to being qualified, they must also be ambassadors for the island. Ultimately the vocational school hopes to compete in five disciplines: drywall and plastering, network cabling, restaurant services, cooking and health

Jean-Carlo Thode:

“Thanks to this school trip I feel that I am well on my way to becoming a suitable candidate to participate in the World Skills Americas competition in November! I’m not quite there yet, but I’m going to do my very best to reach my goal.”



Diego Ortiz Zuniga :

“I am so impressed with the facilities at SENA, that I’m thinking about continuing my education here in Bogota.”

Subrina Gibbs en Nakisha Balentin:

“We had a lot of fun; these types of things make school fun! After this school trip, we’re going to try even harder to do our best at school!”

Top row from left to right: Subrina Gibbs, Jean-Carlo Thode, Jean-Neitha Peternella, Sian Moeljoredjo. Bottom row from left to right: Martijn Baptiste, Nakisha Balentin Sjoerd Kalkman, Jarnick Trinidad. Absent in the photo: Diego Ortiz Zuniga and Sandy Pieters.

care. Currently 24 countries worldwide participate with 52 different skills. In September it will be announced who will be allowed to participate in the competitions.

The teachers are in agreement: Colombia is innovative, provides high quality education and their architectural style fits in well with Bonaire’s. Martijn: “to bring our education to the desired level doesn’t mean that we should focus exclusively on the Netherlands. The path towards achieving this does not have to be the standard one.” Hein concludes: “Colombia is up-to-date, friendly and provides excellent opportunities for internships and learning. This exchange program provides so many opportunities.” ■



FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR NICOLAS THANKS TO A UNIQUE COLLABORATION



Nicolas types in a recipe on the laptop using pictures from the Internet.

Nicolas Bautista (21) lives on Saba, with his mother Elizabeth and younger brother Greco. Nicolas dreams of a future in the hospitality industry. But he has a light Autism Spectrum Disorder and has communicative and learning disabilities. A basic qualification (red.: “basiskwalificatie”) is therefore not feasible for Nicolas. After completing his PRO training, it seemed that his opportunities were limited to a job washing cars or as a dish washer. But thanks to a joint project between the Expertise Center Education Care (EC2) and the Saba Reach Foundation (SRF)², he’s now following a development path that should enable him to realise his ambitions.

During the last months of his PRO training at the Saba Comprehensive School, Nicolas worked in the Saba Reach Foundation’s organoponic garden³. La-Toya Charles (SRF’s Director) says: “After completing his training at the Saba Comprehensive School, he joined the Saba Reach Foundation’s social workplace. Because Nicolas had always worked with great pleasure and devotion in the garden, Saba Reach and EC2 decided that he could continue to work there daily, in combination with a care and development program for

two afternoons per week. This is based on the belief that with appropriate therapies and coaching, Nicolas should be able to develop into a (hospitality) employee in a supervised workplace.”

Individual care plan

The relevant agencies, in consultation with Nicolas and with his mother Elizabeth, proposed an individual development plan. The plan is tailored to Nicolas and will be evaluated and adjusted every six months by all those involved, including Nicolas. The EC2 team observes him regularly while he works in the garden and consults with SRF regarding new learning goals. EC2, the garden manager and Nicolas’ colleagues are all also there on Mondays and Fridays. Together they evaluate the progress Nicolas has made. “These group evaluations are also designed to practice Nicolas’ social group skills, including respecting each other, listening to each other and actively and constructively participating in a group discussion,” says La-Toya. His social skills are another key focal point, especially since he is slightly autistic. Jet van Heijnsbergen (EC2’s Director) explains that all the learning objectives in all the different areas are combined together in this plan. She says: “While working in the garden, it became clear that specific motor skills of Nicolas had to be developed. That’s why he’s wor-

His mother Elizabeth: “For Nicolas, until recently it was difficult to accept that his younger brother, Greco, could read and write well and he could not; they often fought. But since Nicolas is in this process, we have a much more harmonious family. My greatest wish for Nicolas is that he can soon earn a living independently and can even start a family.”



While weeding in the garden, Nicolas receives instructions for a good posture from physiotherapist Kim te Riele.

king under the supervision of physiotherapist Kim te Riele, to strengthen the muscles in his torso and abdomen and to develop the motor skills he needs to shovel earth and to weed, for example. A special seven minute workout should improve his physical conditioning.”

With the help of speech therapy from Anne Kox, Nicolas works on his pronunciation and practices making and pronouncing short sentences. Under the guidance of behaviourist Jessie Voermans, Nicolas works on his social-emotional development: he can now talk about his own feelings, recognize facial expressions and look directly at people. And in the meantime he has learned to listen carefully and to follow instructions.

Smoothie and vegetable soup

Part of the process is the development of certain necessary academic skills under the guidance of Jet and Jessie. La-Toya says Nicolas receives lessons in working with a computer once a week at the SRF: “under the guidance of his SRF mentor Vincent Stroom, he learns to work well with a mouse and to use search engines.” Jet: “For example, Nicolas must know the names of plants and herbs for his work in the garden. In addition, to sell vegetables and spices at the weekly market he must be able to do a bit of Math. And to work in the hospitality industry his reading skills need to be developed so that he can read and follow a simple recipe. Also some math skills need to be applied: for example, he must measure ingredients and checkout orders. “Therefore Nicolas is at EC2 every Monday and Wednesday, where together with Jet he makes recipes and then prepares the food. So each visitor to the EC2 on Monday afternoons is offered a delicious fruit smoothie or vegetable soup, made by

Nicolas with ingredients from the organoponic garden. And whoever visits the SRF-garden in the morning gets a cup of coffee, which is prepared by Nicolas. Nicolas takes pleasure in doing this. La-Toya explains that this is a regular task for Nicolas, combined with cleaning the coffee corner.

“NICOLAS HAS MADE TREMENDOUS PROGRESS IN TWO YEARS”

The EC2 team and SRF are pleased with Nicolas’ development: La-Toya: “Nicolas has made tremendous progress in two years.” Nicolas is an example of someone who was at risk of falling between two stools because he did not fit in any of the established paths. “By working together and with the implementation of a good individual plan, we will manage to develop his talents to their maximum and to give him meaningful prospects for the future”, says Jet. ■

1. EC2 is the Expertise Centre Education Care on Saba. Website: www.ec2saba.org
2. The Saba Reach Foundation provides social opportunity paths for young people, adult education and social work, including an organoponic garden. Website: www.sabareach.com
3. An organoponic garden is an urban garden where plants grow using drip irrigation in low concrete troughs filled with soil and organic matter.

PAPA CORNES COMMUNITY SCHOOL ON BONAIRE OPENS



Picture of the new school complex. In the near future they're going to work on putting up a fence and the construction of a covered outdoor area

IT WAS AN ENTIRE PROCESSION THAT WALKED DOWN THE ROAD TO THE NEW PAPA CORNES BUILDING ON MONDAY APRIL 4. STUDENTS FROM THE UPPER GRADES, UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THEIR TEACHERS, PARENTS, MANAGEMENT, LOCAL RESIDENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF RCN (RIJKSDIENST CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS), THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT REAL ESTATE AGENCY AND THE ISLAND GOVERNMENT OF BONAIRE, ALL WALKED FROM THE OLD PAPA CORNES SCHOOL TO THE BRAND NEW HOME OF THE PAPA CORNES COMMUNITY SCHOOL IN THE NORT SALINA NEIGHBORHOOD. THE WALK WAS ALSO INTENDED TO BID FAREWELL TO THE 43-YEAR OLD SCHOOL.

The students from the lower grades, for whom the walk which was too long, followed in brightly painted buses. Each class carried a box with them inscribed with a good character trait, such as “love” and “be positive.” Upon arrival, the students were treated to drinks and ice cream. Headmistress Patricia Angela gave a speech during which she urged pupils, parents and local residents to take good care of the school and the new classrooms were blessed by pastor Baak.

The Catholic school, which was formerly known as the Papa Cornes Catholic Elementary School, has a new name now: ‘Papa Cornes Community School’ (Skol Amplio Papa Cornes) and the new school complex is designed according to the principles of a community school. The school should become an integral part of the neighbourhood, where education and social institutions for families and young people (e.g. day care centers, sports clubs, community centers, doctor’s clinic, etc.) work together and share facilities to enhance the quality of life in the neighbourhood.

The shape of the new complex is based on Bonaire’s “Karko” shell, in other words the Pink Conch or Queen Conch. Together the buildings form the five points of the shell. The three storey buildings house the Papa Cornes primary school

and the Foundation for Professional Childcare Bonaire will start using the two low-rise buildings in May 2016. The connecting, covered outdoor area is for shared use, including a multi-purpose space for organising meetings, exhibitions and the like.

The buildings feature insulated tropical roofs and facades, climate control systems including air conditioning and CO₂ meters for the supply of fresh oxygen, fire protection systems, shady areas and connecting corridors. To be more sustainable the buildings have, among other things, facilities for using rainwater in toilets, the use of awnings for facades on which the sun shines longer, etc.



The new complex was constructed using local contractors and the project was managed by the Central Government Real Estate Agency. The project was funded by the Ministries of OCW (Education, Culture and Science) and SZW (Social Affairs and Employment) and the Island Government of Bonaire.

The realisation of this complex is part of the educational housing plans. These plans were drawn up by the Island Governments, including Bonaire and the Ministry of OCW. They contain the blueprint for improving school buildings in the Caribbean Netherlands between 2012 and 2020. This is based on the fact that a pleasant school environment contributes positively to students’ performance at school. ■



AN INTRODUCTION ...

FEMKE NEUNZIG WAS WORKING AS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER IN FRIESLAND, WHEN SHE SAW THE VACANCY FOR A DUTCH TEACHER AT THE SACRED HEART SCHOOL ON SABA. SHE WAS IMMEDIATELY INTERESTED. BECAUSE SHE HERSELF IS FROM A PRETTY SMALL TOWN, HEERENVEEN, SHE DID NOT DREAD LIVING IN A SMALL COMMUNITY. MOREOVER FEMKE HAS A SPECIALISATION IN MUSIC AND SHE HAD HEARD THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE THAT CARIBBEAN CHILDREN ARE QUITE MUSICAL.

“And that’s true! The children love to learn words by singing them. Occasionally we interrupt the class for a song during which each child may play an instrument. There’s a set of drums, a piano, a guitar and there are drums.” She laughs: “Sometimes I hear the children singing a song softly during a test as they search for a particular word. Isn’t that wonderful? Using music, I have a wonderful connection with the students.”

How do you experience teaching on Saba?

Teaching on Saba took a little bit of getting used to: “While I had my own class in Friesland, now I give Dutch lessons to five different groups. And because we don’t have special education here, the levels can vary quite a bit. You really have to differentiate here. In addition, the children here are very restless. So it was a good challenge for me to learn to deal with this.” By nature Femke loves to improvise and try new things. As a result she now knows really well how to keep the children on track during class. “If I see them moving around restlessly again, then I know it’s time to get them going again so that they can get rid of their energy a bit. Every day I try to make it fun for the students, but in an educational way.”

How do you experience teaching Dutch?

“That took some getting used to because the children are learning a new language that’s foreign to them. In the beginning I mostly used my own material, something that I still enjoy doing, because you can do lots of fun things with it. But it became a lot easier when I received Nederlands onder de zon.” (ed.: new modules for teaching Dutch as a foreign language). According to Femke the material fits in well with the children’s experiences. “And the books are so beautiful with all those colours: it’s a gift every time you receive new material again. I think it’s a great luxury to have my own ‘Dutch as a foreign language’ (NVT) coach, namely Marjan de Visser. She also brings a lot of ideas and suggestions from St. Eustatius and St. Maarten, where they work with these ‘Dutch as a foreign language’ modules. And we get along well together.”

“Using music, I have a wonderful connection with the students”

Femke feels right at home living on Saba. “You meet each other much more often than what I was used to in the Netherlands. As a result, you can build a bond with each other much more. Very soon I was invited to weddings and birthday parties; the people are nice and open and I feel really welcome here. Here I combine my two passions: education and music. And it’s a beautiful island to live on.” ■

TOWARDS A NEW EDUCATION AGENDA

In April on all three islands the policy consultant Ecorys discussed the evaluation report regarding the Caribbean Netherlands (CN) Education Agenda. Contracted by OCW, the consultants conducted the evaluation earlier in March on all three CN islands. The Education Agenda dates back to March 2011 and forms the basis for improving education between 2011 and 2016 on the CN islands. The evaluation was intended to look back and to give insight into the effectiveness of all the activities within the Education Agenda's framework. But also to look ahead to the future and to lay the groundwork for the next Education Agenda.

To achieve this Ecorys held numerous interviews with stakeholders in CN and in the Netherlands. On each of the three islands they concluded the evaluation round with a round table meeting with representatives from all institutions involved. During these meetings, the researchers presented the information they had obtained from the interviews and how it was translated into points for future cooperation. These considerations were discussed with the stakeholders in education.

The main objective of the first Education Agenda is to achieve the basic quality level at a total of 21 educational institutions in CN. The reports of the Education Inspectorate, which visits the local educational institutions twice a year, show that most schools have now achieved the basic quality level. The evaluation by the Ecorys consultants focused on the questions: how have these results been achieved, what has worked well and what tools are less effective. The evaluation also clearly pointed out which results are adequately assured for the future.

Based on the results of these national meetings, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will prepare the (first) draft text of the Education Agenda in April. This text will be discussed again with the educational sector on the islands to finalize the text of the Second Education Agenda.

Merici:

"Good education is essential for our children. I am happy and proud that I can contribute to this doing my work."



MERICI OFFICIALLY AT RCN/OCW

Merici Rojas Boekhoudt had already been working for RCN/OCW since May 2015 as an employee of RCN/Facilities, but she is now officially part of the RCN/OCW team. She is the management assistant for the RCN/OCW department head and his team. Merici worked for Bonaire's Executive Council as the secretary for Commissioner R. Beukenboom, as an administrative assistant at APNA/Bonaire Central Mortgage Bank and at RCN/ZVK (Health Insurance).



NEW BUILDING STREA BRIANTE BONAIRE OFFICIALLY OPENED

In April 2016, the new school complex for Colegio Strea Briante (formerly the Watapana School) was officially inaugurated. The new building is equipped with all the modern amenities, such as air conditioning, CO₂ meters in the classrooms and well-insulated roofs, windows and doors. They began using the building in January 2016. The students are proud of "their" new school and, according to the teachers, they concentrate much more during lessons, thanks to the air conditioning and because they are less distracted by outside noises. By locating the new building in the Antriol Pariba neighbourhood, the school's big desire to be in a more central location than the previous school, which was in Rincon, was also fulfilled.



RENOVATION OF THE BMS STATIA STARTED

Ellis Woodley, headmaster of the Bethel Methodist School (BMS) in St. Eustatius, starts the excavator, beginning the first demolition work. This action officially starts the renovation of the BMS. This occurred this past February during a festive "kick-off" gathering in the presence of the island government, teachers, students, the OCW Ministry (Education, Culture and Science), the Central Government Real Estate Agency, the construction companies involved and other contacts of the elementary school.

PRIZES FOR GVP PUPILS IN POWTOON CHALLENGE

GvP students Rogers Rosa and Lafayette Jones pose proudly with their teacher Mariëlle Bieleman after having won the first and second prize in the havo category of the Dutch PowToon Challenge. They won a personal prize and a check of € 250 for the school to order English books at Pearson Education.

All the nominated videos can be found on the website:
<http://www.levendetalen-engels.nl/powtoon-challenge/>



The PowToon Challenge is a new project organised by the Dutch Association of Language Teachers (VFLT). It aims to motivate students to read fiction in English. More than 20 schools in the Netherlands signed up for the first edition of the challenge and teacher Mariëlle Bieleman participated with her havo 3 and 4 students. The students had to create a short animated video (a PowToon) to promote an English novel they had read and encourage others to read it as well. Mariëlle explains that Rogers and Lafayette developed the PowToons independently and presented them to a school jury, consisting of fellow-students from other classes: "this initiative proves that the combination of activating didactics and good coaching really makes the students achieve better than they themselves and the teachers expect."

Photography: Rens van der Hammen



TRANSITION TO ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

Marjan de Visser-Lemstra is an NvT language coach and since 2015, on behalf of the Nederlandse Talunie, she has been working on introducing new teaching materials into the schools on St. Eustatius and Saba. For this she's on St. Eustatius and Saba almost monthly, where she visits classrooms during Dutch lessons. She explains: "Because it's a different way of teaching, with different materials than previously, it's important that teachers are supervised when using the new teaching modules. An important part of my work is that I coach the teachers in using activating didactics. So the focus is on the student's activities during the Dutch lessons. Students are challenged to speak Dutch."

They like it

The experiences have been very positive so far. Marjan: "I see that teachers are becoming more and more creative in the use of the various teaching methods. They become aware of the fact that activating the students is the key to the learning process. It's nice to see that the students are getting to like getting Dutch classes." One of the things that

AS IS WELL KNOWN, A DEVELOPMENT TEAM LED BY THE LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION (TAALUNIE) IS CURRENTLY WORKING HARD TO DEVELOP TEACHING MODULES FOR 'NEDERLANDS ONDER DE ZON'. THESE ARE MODULES FOR VOCABULARY AND READING COMPREHENSION. WHAT'S NEW FOR THIS MATERIAL IS THAT DUTCH IS BEING APPROACHED AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (NVT). THIS MEANS THAT THE MATERIAL IS BEING TAILORED TO CHILDREN WHO GROW UP IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE LITTLE OR NO DUTCH IS SPOKEN OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL. SO ON ST. EUSTATIUS AND SABA THE TEACHING MATERIALS FOR DUTCH WILL BE PRESENTED DIFFERENTLY THAN IN EUROPEAN NETHERLANDS, WHERE DUTCH IS THE NATIVE LANGUAGE FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF STUDENTS.

the teachers had to get used to was the fact that they had to use Dutch as the language of instruction during the Dutch lessons. Marjan: "definitely on Saba, but also on St. Eustatius, where this is the first school year that English is the language of instruction. That takes courage from the teachers. It's easier to translate a word or concept than to describe or explain it. A few schools in St. Maarten have also

started using 'Dutch Under the Sun'. There I also support the teachers and I see that a subject that used to be experienced as being difficult and not fun, has changed to one where you learn Dutch in a playful way. Students are encouraged by their teachers for what they can do and are not judged on what they can't do. All at once their Dutch is improving by leaps and bounds."



THE TRANSITION TO ENGLISH: WHAT'S ALL INVOLVED?

On St. Eustatius they've been working hard since September 2014 preparing for the switch to English as the language of instruction in education. To make that transition, the following sub-projects will be completed:

1

Developing new plans for what students should learn (the curriculum), when, from preschool up to the highest grade of secondary education;

2

Assessment, followed by in-service training courses for teachers, to ensure that all teachers speak English at the level required for their work;

3

Introducing an English examination system for secondary education, including vocational education;

4

Developing a curriculum and teaching materials for Dutch as a foreign language;

5

Developing a programme for students who will continue their education in the Netherlands.

Transition Coordinator Angela Dekker works with the Department of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), the local schools and some specialised external institutions to realise the aforementioned projects.

In the next edition we will focus on a different aspect of this transition.



Iguanas and hermit crabs

The teachers and students are happy with the new material, according to Marjan. Marjan: "The materials look nice and colorful, which appeals to kids of course. But what is appreciated above all, is that the texts and illustrations reflect the local context and experiences of children on the Windward Islands. For example, lessons about iguanas and hermit crabs. The main characters in the books go snorkeling in Lower Bay (ed.: the part of Statia where the beaches are). They climb the stairs of "The Ladder" (ed.: stairs carved into the rock) on Saba, they experience what happens when a hurricane threatens to land and they talk to tourists in Philipsburg."

Taking stock

Because part of the material is still currently being developed, feedback to the development team is another important task for Marjan: "There seemed to be much need for additional materials for students, not just for reading and vocabulary, but also for other skills, such as listening, writing, speaking and conversation skills. As such, the modules for primary education have become more comprehensive than originally planned. There's also room for special stories by people from the area. That's what makes these modules a success; the material is familiar."

'Dutch Under the Sun' includes materials for groups 5 through 8 and for the first two years of secondary education. Existing materials are still being used for groups 1 through 4 of primary education and for grades 3 through 5 of secondary education. This is pending the availability of the new materials for Dutch as a foreign language (NvT) that are being developed for groups 1 through 4 on the other islands of the former Netherlands Antilles. Marjan says: "I will soon get started conducting a survey on all the islands of the former Netherlands Antilles, to get an overall picture of exactly what Dutch as a foreign language (NvT) materials are available."

Cooperating

Afterwards specific materials can be developed that fill in the gaps in what's available. According to Marjan, the beauty of this process is that the islands of the former Netherlands Antilles will once again cooperate with one another on this: "Meanwhile in St. Martin there's a pilot project at four English language primary schools using the 'Nederlands onder de Zon' modules. The Leeward Islands are also interested in this material. After all, the islands all have a similar problem with Dutch. By working together, not only we can reduce a lot of costs, but this way the islands can also exchange knowledge and insight on the most effective approach so students can achieve a good command of Dutch." ■

AIRCRAFT MECHANIC PROGRAMME AT SGB

Together with three vocational education (mbo) students from the Aircraft Mechanic programme, teacher Erwin Gosepa stands in front of a 12 volt electrical test bench. The test bench simulates the electrical systems of an aircraft engine. Using the right tools the students practice replacing the spark plugs according to the instructions in the manual. Moments later the group goes out to work on a real airplane, on-site at the SGB (Scholengemeenschap Bonaire): a Beachcraft 19, which was donated to the school by a former pilot, especially for this programme.

“THE MATERIAL IS NOT VERY DIFFICULT, BUT YOU HAVE TO BE A GO-GETTER BECAUSE THERE IS A LOT OF MATERIAL TO LEARN”



Teacher Erwin Gosepa explains the working of the Beachcraft's engine

“It’s a tough course,” says Erwin, the Piston Engine teacher in the Aircraft Mechanic programme. He also works as a pilot for his own charter airline, United Caribbean, and as a flight instructor in Curaçao. “The material is not very difficult, but you have to be a go-getter because there is a lot of material to learn. During the first two years the programme consists of a combination of theory and practice (repairing) and during the last year (mbo 4) the students do an internship at an airline. Most go to Insel Air in Curaçao or Winair in St. Maarten.

Good launching pad

But those who think that they are already allowed to regularly work on an aircraft after the three-year vocational training, must have patience. That is only allowed once you have obtained an EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency) license. Erwin explains: “You only get the license once you have successfully completed a total of 17 compulsory modules. And while you only need a 5.5 to pass the vocational training, you need a score of at least 7.5 to pass each of the 17 EASA modules. Most people take about eight to ten years to complete all the modules. In addition, they also expect students to get at least five years experience in aircraft maintenance. That’s another strict requirement to get the coveted EASA certification.” The Engineering Team Leader at SGB, Elton Johnson: “Actually you could say that this vocational training is a good launching pad to getting EASA certification.”

Enormous growth

The examinations are conducted by ACM (Avia Course and Maintenance N.V.) in collaboration with the ACC (Aviation Competence Center). This institute offers aircraft mechanic training in Maastricht, the Netherlands, in accordance with Dutch and European legislation. The examinations for SGB students are sent by ACC from the Netherlands to Bonaire. It’s like this because since 2010 Bonaire is a part of the Caribbean Netherlands and in accordance with the law, examinations must be conducted by a certified educational institute. Elton Johnson: “This occurs in accordance with a strict procedure. The exams arrive via DHL and I have to prove that the envelopes were put in the safe unopened. Students must sign up online with ACC and the completed exams are immediately sent in a specially sealed return envelope to Maastricht to be graded.”



Jacinto Frans instructs the students at the electrical test bench



Evandr  Chirino:

“After obtaining my Automobile Mechanic diploma from the SGB, I went to Curacao. There I completed the Mechanical Installation Maintenance vocational training (there it’s called MTS), followed by the Assembly Mechanic Engineering programme. After completing that course, I returned to Bonaire. I got a job at TIARA Air as the Ramp Coordinator. That wasn’t quite what I wanted, but in the meantime I had become interested in aviation, also because of my brother’s training as a pilot.

What is so appealing to me about this educational path is that you never stop learning: there is always something new that challenges you. I also want to get the EASA certification, to be able work in Europe. Because after all, it’s a European certification that you’re working towards.”

Raheem Boelbaai:

“As a small boy I was already interested in motorcycles and enjoyed working with my uncle, who has a garage. My plan is to get the EASA certification and then hopefully find a job in the United Emirates.”



Cristefer Obispo:

“I worked as a professional baseball player for the Dallas Texas Rangers, but had to cut my career short because of an ankle injury. Above all, I miss all the traveling. I then started looking for another career where I would also be able to travel a lot. After obtaining EASA certification, I want to specialize in one type of engine. So far I like this course: you always learn something new.”



The training was certified in 2014, as such fully meeting requirements of the Ministry OCW (Education, Culture and Science) for Aircraft Mechanic vocational training. The course is now in its third year and there is one class in each level. The programme is being offered by the company ACM, established on Bonaire since 1999. Classes are taught by five certified aircraft technicians that travel to Bonaire from Cura ao to give the lessons. For some parts of the programme specialists from Puerto Rico and the Netherlands are also brought to Bonaire. Director Jacinto Frans, Winair’s former Head of Maintenance, who’s also been involved in aeronautics since 1977, says that in 2008 ACM began offering private education after a market survey in 2007, conducted in cooperation with DAE and KLM airlines, had shown that there was a local market for Aircraft Mechanic vocational training. In 2013 SGB and ACM signed an agreement that made the Aircraft Mechanic training at the SGB a reality. Currently this is the only Aircraft Mechanic programme at the vocational training level in the region. “So it’s training with a lot of potential,” said Jacinto. “Worldwide there is a big need for aircraft mechanics, fueled by the tremendous growth in aviation in recent decades. Students from our islands and elsewhere in the region don’t need to go all the way to Europe: here we get the exact same training.” ■

ROA CN: “TOGETHER, WE MAKE IT WORK!”

A very visible task of ROA CN is accrediting training companies. Meanwhile the well-known “accredited training company” signs already hang at more than 200 companies on the three islands. In addition, ROA CN guides and advises schools on the education plans for vocational education. For this ROA CN relies on the output from branch meetings that they regularly organise with employers, but also on data from cooperating partners such as CBS (Central Bureau of Statistics) and Social Affairs and Employment (SZW). In summary, ROA CN monitors the affiliation of educational programmes with the working world and advises the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) with regard to vocational education’s relevance in the labour market and its effectiveness. ROA CN also frequently conducts labour market research to characterise the local labour market needs, with its associated needs for training and personnel.

Copy, adapt and paste

ROA CN is set up according to the Dutch version of the Calibris Knowledge Centre where the business community and education work together. “But ...” Elyane says laughing, “it was: copy, adapt and paste. We have adopted rules from the Netherlands because they work at a high level. This is based on the idea that we didn’t want to reinvent the wheel. But we infused the whole thing with “Caribbean style” when we applied it. Because according to Elyane, to be successful in the Caribbean Netherlands you must have good insight into the local way of thinking and living. And a thorough understanding of what type of jobs are needed on the three islands: “There must be an affiliation between the educational method and jobs in our market. Therefore we spend a lot of time building up a good network.” ROA CN wants to continue to build good relationships with companies on the islands. “We need to achieve common goals, from both the educational sector and business community. There must be cohesion.”

Finger on the pulse

The tasks of ROA CN can be summarised as mainly achieving a good alignment between vocational education and

The Caribbean Netherlands Council for Market Labour Education (Raad voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt Caribisch Nederland - ROA CN) has been active for more than four years. In September 2016 they’ll celebrate their first 5-year anniversary. A good time for “What’s New” to take a look back with director Elyane Paul at what has been achieved so far and to look forward into this institution’s future.



Closure of a job trainer course on St. Eustatius

the Caribbean Netherlands’ business community. Elyane explains: “An accredited training company transfers its expertise to students and assists them in their future profession. As such, good training companies are important in preparing students for their job. But training companies can also, better than anyone else, provide vocational education with an understanding of the companies’ requirements for trained personnel. That’s how you achieve a smooth transition from education into the labour market.” ROA CN has worked closely with schools, local businesses, local government and the Netherlands government. Training instructors play an important role in this. But it’s not only about accreditation. Elyane: “Once companies are finally accredited, ROA CN’s advisers keep their fingers on the pulse by continuing to advise and guide them.”

Challenges

Based on input from all three vocational schools in the Caribbean Netherlands and in collaboration with the Foundation for Vocational Education and the Business Community in the Netherlands, ROA CN has developed an OJT (on the job training) monitor, in order to assess the actual quality of internships. This is a challenge according to Elyane. “If the schools would use this monitor a bit more often, then the quality of the internships would certainly increase.” According to Elyane what many people do not realise is that vocational education, as well as the accredited training company and ROA CN are inextricably linked to the development of the economy. “We need to determine together what the

“THE MORE INFORMATION THAT COMES FROM THE LABOR MARKET, THE BETTER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WILL BE ALIGNED WITH THE PROFESSIONAL FIELD”



The ROA team f.l.t.r.: Office manager Arviene Wilson, advisors/trainers Charmaine Alberto and Violet Duggins-Gumbs (St. Eustatius), director Elyane Paul, Policy advisor Elisabeth George, advisors/trainers Cerissa Steel-Johnson (Saba) and Nancy Persad.

Photo: Staysly Gailo

needs are on the three islands and ensure as best possible that these needs are filled. It's not for nothing that our slogan is: Together, we make it work! Cooperation, monitoring and being critical on the points that we can improve. Don't wait, instead actively explore new possibilities. Maybe it's time that we all pay some more attention to this. The economy doesn't stand still and we need to keep up with it.”

Differentiation in salary levels

The wages are another sore point. The salaries of people with a vocational degree (mbo-ers) are close to minimum wage in the local business community. Elyane: “That presents a problem when trying to keep young people motivated to complete their education. Whether you have or don't have a diploma, you earn pretty much the same. Herein lies the challenge. There must be differentiation in salary levels within the professions.”

Elyane; “We advise unbiased, but it's also our job to keep a close eye on quality.” In the future ROA CN hopes to get more information from the companies. The more information that comes from the labour market, the better vocational education will be aligned with the professional field. She concludes: “It's not simple. Here on the islands we don't have any associations which represent the interests per professional branch, as they have in the Netherlands. So we will have to achieve it by ourselves together with the companies. As I stated earlier: Working together, that's what this is all about.” ■

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

It is well known that one secondary education (VO) school and all primary schools in the Caribbean Netherlands have in the meantime achieved the basic quality level. Also two of the three EOZ (Expertise Centre for Education Care) institutions and two of the three Social Opportunity Pathways for Youth (SKJ) institutions have demonstrated that they have the basic quality level. Hereby for the first time the quality of education is predominantly at the level that was being strived for, as it was defined in 2011. All the people in the schools and the islands who contributed to achieving this, deserve a big compliment.

The 2011-2016 Education Agenda, which is the basis for this, expires later this year. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) is currently evaluating the implementation of and the achievements from this agenda. In addition, the educational sector will also be consulted on what should be included in the next Education Agenda.

This new educational agenda will be the guideline for continuing with the quality targets that have been achieved. But also to achieve the next steps in the area of quality. As the term 'basic' suggests, for the majority of institutions a basis exists for the process of improving the quality of education.

There is still a way to go. Let us not forget that we're all in this together, to ensure that the new Education Agenda includes achievable goals to work towards between 2017 and 2020. Looking at the involvement and commitment of the people involved in Caribbean Netherlands education, I am convinced that everything will be alright with Caribbean Netherlands education: keep up the good work! ■

At the invitation of WE CAN Young Netherlands, project managers and implementers of the WE CAN Young Caribbean Netherlands relational resilience campaign travelled to the Netherlands in March 2016. Earlier three Dutch project leaders visited Bonaire in 2015 for the kick-off of WE CAN Young Caribbean Netherlands. The week working in the Netherlands was characterised by the interchange of ideas. The Caribbean delegation from Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba was received enthusiastically by WE CAN Young Tilburg, Delft and Amsterdam. The Hague visited them in the hotel in Noordwijk, where the guests were staying.



Photo: Daniëlle van Oostrum

CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS DELEGATION VISITS THE WE CAN YOUNG NETHERLANDS

The goal of WE CAN Young Caribbean Netherlands is for young people to be able to talk about their relational and sexual empowerment using the WE CAN Young method. It involves various themes regarding sexuality.

Visiting WE CAN Young municipalities

During the exchange week in the Netherlands, the Caribbean partners learned from each other and about the methods that the local WE CAN Young municipalities use. There was a visit to Tilburg where, among other things, the use of experts was discussed in detail. The partners also went to Delft where they discussed, for example, how to convey a message and how to work with schools and other parties. In Amsterdam the campaign 'Beat the Macho' was presented, about various forms of sex education and how you can stimulate young people to promote the campaign themselves. The project leader from The Hague came to Noordwijk to present the approach used in The Hague, how you discuss taboos and how you put that in practice using teaching methods. Finally, the Caribbean partners went into the cities to talk with young people themselves.

Reaching young people

"After this week we want to work hard at cooperating with schools," said Shermantha Frans, who's also the administrator of WE

CAN Young on Bonaire. "We see here in the Netherlands that it works and also that it's possible. It's a good starting point to reach young people." Shermantha was also impressed by Mandy Pijnenburg, an experience expert from Tilburg. "I've seen that experience expertise is a very nice way to cooperate. The question is whether it is feasible on the islands, but I think it's good to get this started."

Respect and equality

With which thoughts do the project managers and administrators now return back to the Caribbean Netherlands? Lorna Soares

Fleming, administrator on St. Eustatius: "The most important thing that I got out of this week, is that we want to encourage young people to be who they are, that they can be open about their feelings and that they learn not to judge other young people." Jacques Heemskerk, youth counselor on Saba: "On Saba what I would really like to achieve is that boys and girls become aware of self-respect and to respect others. My goal is to achieve equality in all areas; everyone is human and everyone is equal." ■

Participants from the Caribbean Netherlands during the WE CAN Young working week

WE CAN Young Saba

Jacques Heemskerk
(Centre for Youth and Family)
Jetty Martens (Public Health Nurse)
Johan Schaeffer (coordinator of WCY)

We CAN Young Bonaire

Alicia Krijgsman (Island Government of Bonaire - OL)
Mimi Dongen
(Centre for Youth and Family)
Shermantha Frans
(Centre for Youth and Family)

WE CAN Young Sint Eustatius

Lorna Soares-Fleming (after school programme Daughters Of The King)

Shanna Mercera-Gibbs (Public Health Department/ St. Eustatius STI/ AIDS Committee)
Dion Humphreys
(Mega D Youth Foundation)

RCN/OCW

Rosa Hoes

OCW

Els Veenis (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science)

WCY Nederland

Charlot Pierik (Movisie)
Wendela Wentzel (Movisie)
Martha Talma (Movisie)



A DAY WITH LENA COURTAR

12:30 uur > Weekly staff meeting

During this meeting the staff discusses what happened the past week and makes plans for the coming week. The activities are discussed, who will do what, if everything has been purchased and if there are any questions. Attention is given to any incidents that may have occurred and if it's still necessary, solutions are sought. This week an Easter egg hunt is planned. A suitable location is agreed upon and the team discusses who will do what.



13.00 uur > Pick up children at Bethel Methodist School

Normally the children walk to MYF, but due to construction work on the school, they are temporarily being picked up by bus.



IN EVERY EDITION OF "WHAT'S NEW" WE FOLLOW A DUTCH CARIBBEAN EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL DURING ONE DAY. FOR THIS ISSUE WE FOLLOWED LENA COURTAR. LENA HAS BEEN WORKING AS THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO DIRECTOR DION HUMPHREYS. SHE COORDINATES THE DAILY AFFAIRS OF THE MEGA D YOUTH FOUNDATION.

Lena has been working for the MegaD foundation on Sint Eustatius since early 2015. As the Executive Assistant to Director Dion Humphreys ("Mega") she coordinates the daily affairs of the Mega D Youth Foundation (MYF). After school MYF takes care of students from both primary and secondary schools.

Lena has various tasks within the organisation: arranging the programmes and activities and liaising with parents and teachers and the Centre for Youth and Family (CJG). She takes care of human resources and does the accounting and reporting. This includes the financial administration: everything from the budget control to payments and payroll management. She also manages the student files and organises training for staff and volunteers. On the day when the "What's new" editor accompanies her, two of her colleagues are sick. And Mega is taking a course, so Lena is very busy.

Afterwards she goes to the bank, she goes to the tax office, arranges for a movie to be shown (ed.: it suddenly starts raining, causing the outdoor activity to be canceled). Because the homework tutor is sick, Lena ensures that the children go sit at a table for homework supervision. You really hear all the children calling her name regularly, either with a question, for a correction or with a comment.

Before the debating club begins, we can sit down together for a moment so that she can give us information about the various programmes at the Mega D foundation. One of them is Sister Talk: an empowerment programme for girls. So far there have been three meetings and a Facebook page has been opened. Topics covered in this programme include self-esteem, knowing one's own body and sexuality. But there's also a sense of their history and identity. A meeting with parents was also held to communicate with the parents about issue that girls have. A brother talk programme ("Big Brother") is in the works.





While we're talking, Lena sees two teenagers walking away from MYF, but it's not five o'clock yet! Immediately she gets up and calls the girls back. She talks to them and asks why they want to leave earlier than the agreed upon time. A brief positive discussion follows and it was revealed that one of their mothers is coming to pick them up. And indeed, a few minutes later the mother pulls up, at which point Lena talks to her for a moment.



15.00 uur > Daily telephone calls to parents

When children have enrolled at MYF, but do not show up, their parents are called. At the moment there is a vacancy for a front desk employee who would normally take care of this (ed.: this vacancy has now been filled again). Now Lena takes this over. Patiently and motivated, she speaks to the parents, even those who do not know where their children are at that moment.

16.00 uur > Debating Club

In the Debating Club, which is held every Monday at 16:00, the children work on their social and communication skills. The Debating Club is for high school students who are preparing to continue their education abroad. It's run by two employees and Lena guides them. The children learn to listen to each other, to talk animatedly about a topic, to give positive feedback and how to present well. They also practice job interviews.

Lena talks passionately about her work at MYF: "I am committed to the participants' successful development and every child matters the same to me."

At the end of the day she is approached by a participant who has a problem. Lena takes the time to sit together with her and discuss what's going on.

Inspirations

In her spare time Lena runs her own business: Inspirations. She has a shop and she also gives workshops and does her clients' payroll administration and tax returns. The store radiates enormous tranquility. Here she sells everything that inspires her, from books to incense and there's also a massage room. She says that everyone is welcome in the shop, even if they don't want to buy anything. "Here I often play beautiful, peaceful music. What I want is to give people a pleasant experience; to offer them the opportunity to slip into a dream for a moment to escape from the daily hassle of Statia!" says Lena.



STAY INFORMED LANGUAGE & EDUCATION

THE BROADCASTS ARE EVERY TUESDAY:

RadioStatia (92.3 FM)	10:00	10:15
CTC Radio (101.9 FM)	18:00	18:15

The programmes can also be listened to via the Internet, at <http://tunein.com>

EVERY TUESDAY ON ST. EUSTATIUS THE RADIO PROGRAMME 'STAY INFORMED LANGUAGE & EDUCATION' IS BROADCAST BY RCN/OCW.

The programme 'Stay Informed Language & Education' was derived from the RCN programme 'Stay Informed' and examines all aspects of the transition to English as the language of instruction. Transition Coordinator Angela Dekker and communication advisor Elaine Marchena have conversations with educational professionals and specialists. They highlight issues such as curriculum development, Dutch as a Foreign Language (NVT), English training for teachers, preparing secondary education students to continue their studies, the introduction of the Caribbean CXC (Caribbean Examination Council) educational and exam structure and more.