



Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland
OCW

ENGLISH

WHAT'S NEW ...

IN CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS EDUCATION

8

June / July 2017
Number 8

CONTENTS

2	Colophon	6	How teacher Dani got her students passionate about reading	12	Second education agenda Caribbean Netherlands
3	Preface Nolly Oleana	8	Building your own school	14	Impressions of the Papa Cornes in the new accommodation
3	Workshop Dutch as a foreign language on St. Eustatius and Saba	9	An introduction Marc Vermeeren	16	The kids council makes organisations take a look in the mirror
4	Interview Education orientation trip to Netherlands very fruitful	10	Short News -Procedure for hiring new teachers from the region -News about education accommodation	17	A day with ... Violet Duggins-Gumbs
5	Column The Leader in me	11	Short News -More news about education accommodation - mbo students SGB in Colombia for training		

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 promote the exchange of knowledge and experience between the islands.

Editorial team: Gijs van den Heuvel and Elaine Marchena (final editing)

Column: Martin van den Oetelaar

Photography: Malachi Malagee, Staysly Gilo, Gijs van den Heuvel/ Bonned Haafkes, Shurandy Thode, Dwayne Lindo, SGB and Elaine Marchena

Design: I-Design, Ivonne Zegveld

Printing: Print 2000, Sint Maarten

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

Copy for the next edition should be sent in before before October 13th 2017.

IN THE NEXT EDITION OF 'WHAT'S NEW'

- New initiatives at Saba Reach Foundation
- Proceedings Kids Councils Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius

And more!

COLOPHON



When you read this edition, most of you will have just finished completing the school year. Another school year that you can look back on with pride. As usual, in this edition we present you with a selection of initiatives that we have been working on in education in the Caribbean Netherlands (CN) in recent months.

For example, in the area of education housing, especially on Bonaire, quite a lot has been achieved - see "Brief News" - . With the arrival of the new RVB (ed.: Rijks Vastgoed Bedrijf) project manager, Marc Vermeeren, on the windward islands, we expect that in upcoming editions new milestones can be reached once again on the other two CN islands. On behalf of the Rijksdienst Caribbean Netherlands/ Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (RCN/ OCW), I warmly welcome Marc and wish him much success in his new work environment.

In addition, I would like to focus on the articles about two inspirational initiatives: the successful education orientation trip that the Liseo Bonerian students made (pages 2-3) and teacher Dani's reading project on Saba (pages 8-9).

As always, this magazine offers just a small selection of everything that's happening on the islands in the field of education. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in education in the CN during the past period.

"I wish you all a very pleasant summer vacation."

Dutch as a foreign language workshops on St. Eustatius and Saba

Recently the Dutch Taalunie organised a Dutch as a Foreign Language [Nederlands als Vreemde Taal, hereafter referred to as nvt] workshop on St. Eustatius and subsequently on Saba. The participants were all teachers - primary and secondary education - who teach Dutch. The objective of the workshop was to identify questions and needs regarding nvt education.

The workshop was followed by class visits. Based on the findings from these visits and the input of the teachers during the workshops, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, OCW) and the Taalunie will consider what is required for successful nvt education on St. Eustatius and Saba.

As part of the transition to English as instruction language in education, proper consideration is given to the Dutch language, which has the status of 'strong foreign language'. After all, the islands are part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and annually a group of pupils set off to the European Netherlands for further education. The guiding principle of English as instruction language is that this transition should not be detrimental to a good command of the Dutch language. Nvt material has been developed for the forms 5 through 8 of primary education and for the classes 1 and 2 of secondary education in the past three years in collaboration with the Taalunie, by order of the OCW.

On St. Eustatius a local work group is currently working on the creation of nvt material for the youngest pupils.



A selection of 'Nederlands onder de Zon' [Dutch Under The Sun] nvt material which was developed in collaboration with the Taalunie.

“DURING THE EDUCATION ORIENTATION TRIP, THE CONTRAST BETWEEN BONAIRE AND THE NETHERLANDS WAS EXPERIENCED FIRST-HAND.”

EDUCATION ORIENTATION TRIP TO NETHERLANDS VERY FRUITFUL

SGB has been organising these education orientation trips since 2008. The aspiring students went to university cities throughout the Netherlands: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Leiden and Utrecht in the Randstad. But also Enschede, Wageningen, Eindhoven and Groningen. “Every year there are students who have never been to the Netherlands; for them it’s a first impression of the place where they will spend four to six years of their lives,” says coordinator Marcel Peijs.

Enlightening

The trip doesn’t just happen by itself. The students organise all kinds of fundraising activities, which pays for half. This means washing cars, organising a scavenger hunt and a lottery, among others. The school only pays for the chaperons; the parents pay for the rest. The reactions confirm that this type of trip is useful, Peijs concludes based on the evaluations: “85 percent felt the trip was enlightening and 75 percent said the education orientation trip gave them different ideas.” Some students are now doubting if they want to study in the Netherlands.

They missed carnival on Bonaire: 37 students from HAVO-4 (higher general secondary education) and VWO-5 (preparatory university education) from the Liseo Boneriano school (Bonaire School Board - SGB) took a flight to the Netherlands on February 17th. There they were able to familiarize themselves with the country for two weeks and especially to see and experience what it’s like to study in the Netherlands. The trip was in preparation for next school year when they have to choose their area of study.

“THE NETHERLANDS: BUSY, BIG AND COLD.”

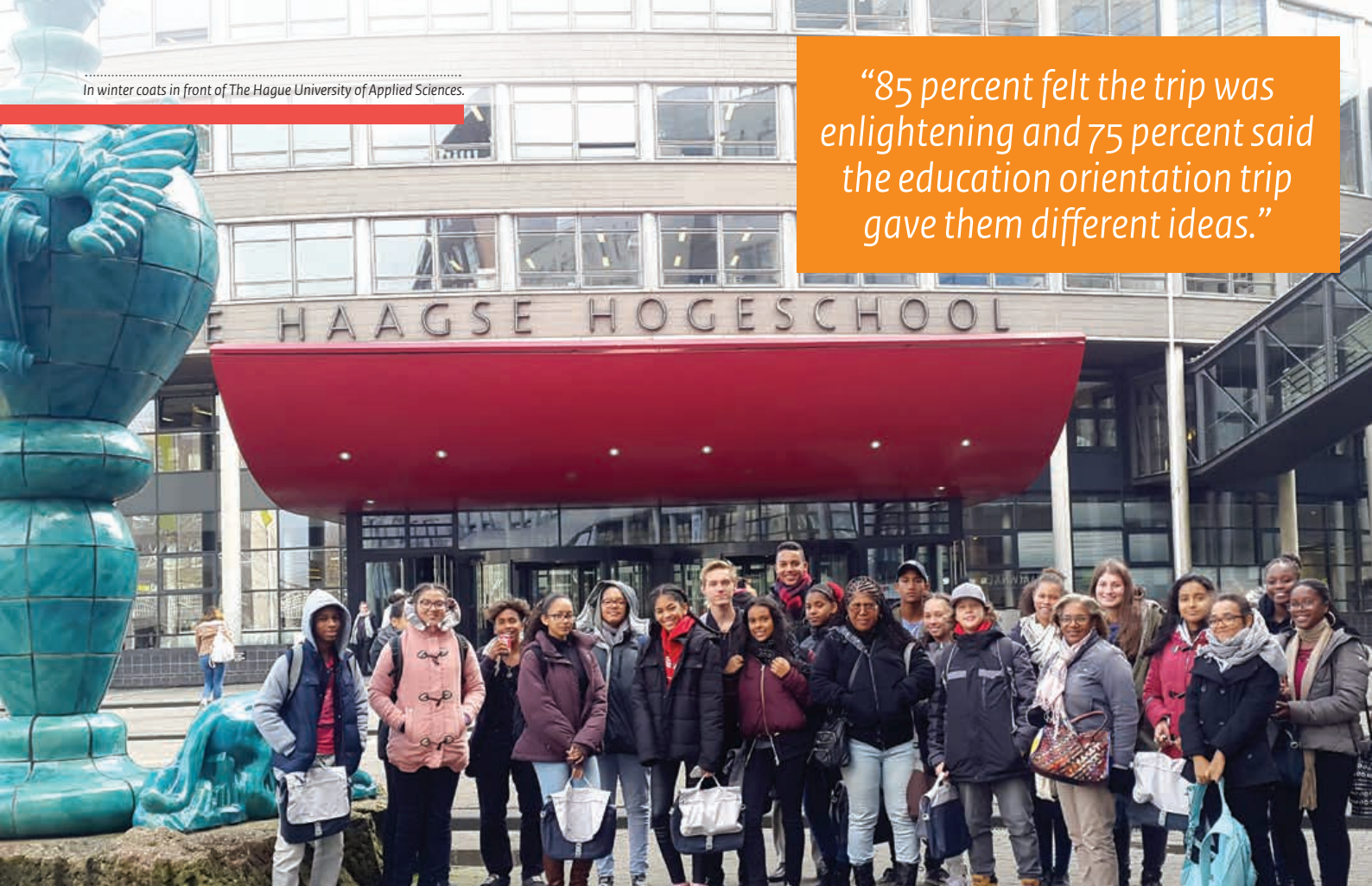
Student life

During their stay in the Netherlands, they also experienced a bit of the student life. The students had to go shopping, cook, clean and learn to travel by public transport themselves. Regardless, Peijs thinks it’s useful for the students to see the large lecture halls with their own eyes, the huge cafeterias and sports complexes. “During the education orientation trip, the contrast between Bonaire and the Netherlands, and between going to school at Liseo Boneriano with 250 students or studying at a college/ university with thousands of students, was experienced first-hand.”

Every year the trip once again requires a lot of organisation, also financially. That’s why Peijs is already busy with next year’s trip. He also hopes to receive a bit of sponsorship: “We would like to approach the Education Implementation Service (DUO) to donate Public Transportation (OV) passes for the whole group so that we can travel to the schools and universities free of charge during the education orientation trip. If someone with connections at DUO is reading this, he/she can definitely contact us!!” ■

In winter coats in front of The Hague University of Applied Sciences.

“85 percent felt the trip was enlightening and 75 percent said the education orientation trip gave them different ideas.”



THE LEADER IN ME

Tear off calendars are full of them: sayings from famous people. Oriental philosophers, such as Confucius for example, do this very well: “We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.” Also, people who we think are genius and extremely intelligent, such as Einstein, are popular: “Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you have to keep moving.” Among athletes, Johan Crujff is in a class all his own: “There’s only one moment when you can be on time. If you’re not there then, you’re either early or late.” And let’s not forget Forrest Gump (played by Tom Hanks): “My mom always said life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna get.” Well, I would almost say there’s a quote for everyone, so I’d like to have one more.

Personally, I don’t do so well remembering this kind of wisdom. But there is one that I find very useful. It comes from Stephen Covey, the author of ‘The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People’, from 1989 (!) so long ago already. On the one hand, Covey differentiates proactive people who focus mainly on matters that they are responsible for, which are within the circle of their influence. Reactive people, on the other hand, focus on their circle of involvement, such as on others’ weaknesses or on the problems in their environment. For example, in our environment, there might be a discussion about the



COLUMN

ministry, politics or colleagues, as well as parents. Covey taught me to pay attention to how I use my voice and my use of language: “When you talk loudly and agitatedly or if you blame others, then you’re probably in your circle of involvement.” Issues which you have an opinion on, but which you have little influence on, they take up a lot of energy, but don’t yield much.

In a team context, it’s good to use this model to assess internal conversations once again. And if it’s necessary, to change your own behaviour and responsibilities.

By the way, did you know that more than 3,000 schools in 50 countries apply Covey’s philosophies for their students? It’s called the “The leader in me” and it’s based on the idea that every child can be a leader. The programme teaches leadership and life skills to students and creates a culture of collective responsibility (www.theleaderinme.org). ■

MARTIN VAN DEN OETELMAR
BESTUURSCOACH PO

HOW TEACHER DANI GOT HER STUDENTS PASSIONATE ABOUT READING ...



While we all agree that reading is the key to successful education, one of the main challenges faced by teachers is how to get students to read more. Group four teacher Danielle Sykes (teacher Dani) of Saba's Sacred Heart School succeeded in making her class passionate about reading. In this interview she explains how she achieved this.

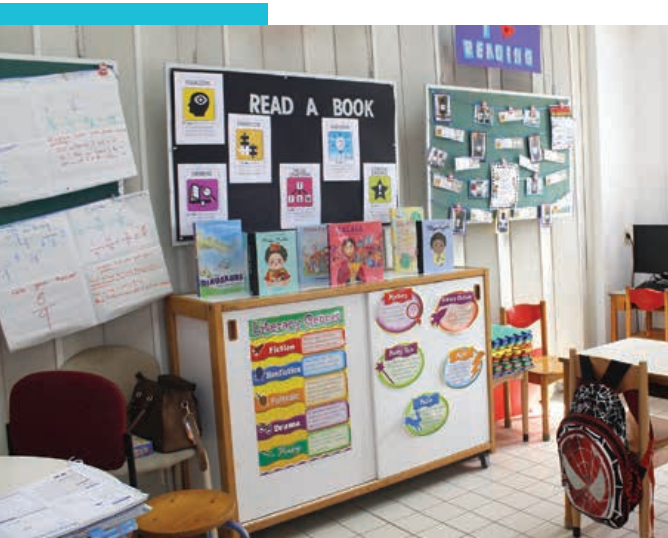
"Motivating students to read and increasing reading comprehension were indeed my main goals" says teacher Dani, who is originally from Canada and has completed her masters' degree in Early Language and Literacy, "so I had to find ways to make reading more fun and exciting." Because there were not a lot of books in her classroom when she first came to the Sacred Heart School, she purchased her own books, at different levels of reading. Books that she expected the kids to be excited about: non-fiction, chapter book series, and fun paperback reading books. "It is amazing how many children's books you can purchase in Canada for a very low price", she remarks as we go through an ample assortment of attractive looking pocket books.

"We started out with me reading aloud to the kids", she relates. "But I would stop at some point, leaving the kids curious to know 'what happened next'. I would then invite them to read the rest of the story for themselves..." Teacher Dani set up enticing book displays in her class, rotating in new books on a monthly basis. She does this so students can see the covers. "Children do judge books by their cover and by displaying books it tends to inspire curiosity in the students."

Anchor cards, reading logs and punch cards

Important teaching aids that helped Dani in reaching her mission are the anchor charts¹ on the walls of her classroom, each about different subjects but especially about various aspects of reading. Two additional strategies implemented by Dani were the reading logs and punch cards that she designed for each individual student. For the reading logs, students are required to select their own reading materials to take home and read from each and every night, for at least 15 to 20 minutes. In these reading logs, the students themselves are responsible for keeping track of what they have read. They are then required to have these logs signed by their parents at the end of each week, "and I can tell you that kids who don't do their reading assignment need a good explanation to avoid trouble", says teacher Dani jokingly. She keeps track of

¹ Anchor charts are posters, produced by teachers, to involve students, providing them with visual reminders about set goals and strategies or to review concepts dealt with in class.



the reading done by each student on individualized punch cards. “After 20 weeks, a full punch card results in a reading certificate and completed punch cards gets hung up on the board”, she explains, pointing to one of the anchor charts. It says “The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you will go (Dr. Seuss). The chart includes pictures of proud, smiling students with their reading certificates.

Teacher Dani initially found it hard to get the children to read in class. That is why she introduced the ‘reading buddies’ programme in 2016, organised together with the Kindergarten class. The students were each linked to a reading buddy from Kindergarten. They were then assigned to pick a book and look for a quiet spot for reading to their small buddy. The results surpassed Dani’s expectations. “It is stunning to see how the kids were taking their responsibility and how caring and empathic they went about their task of making their little buddies enjoy the stories in the books”, she says with a big smile.

The main ‘tricks’

“Kids are passionate about many things”, says Dani. “It is all about making good use of their enthusiasm and making the lessons as fun and exciting as possible.” She sums up what she considers ‘the main tricks’: “make it visual, include an incentive, use the power of repetition in your activities and invest in the right materials: boys tend to be more interested in non-fiction, for instance about dinosaurs (showing a beautifully illustrated bound book) and the so-called “scary books” like Goose bumps², are an absolute hit with all kids.” Dani found that the kids do feel very strongly about social topics like Childrens’ Rights and Equality. The class was

recently treated to the story of Dr. Martin Luther King. They also read a book about Malala³, showing how important it is that everyone has access to education. Dani concludes: “We were all struck by the power that one person can have to help change the world. Education and especially reading makes children realise that each of them can make a difference.” ■

2 A Goose bumps is a popular American series of comedy horror books for children.
3 Malala is a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest person ever to win a Nobel Prize for peace.



“It is all about making good use of the students’ enthusiasm and making the lessons as fun and exciting as possible.”

BUILDING YOUR OWN SCHOOL

In December, the old gyms of the Bonaire School Board (SGB) were demolished. They urgently needed replacement. The demolition was celebrated as the start of new construction at SGB.

The first day of the internship. Right: teacher Martijn Baptiste.

“ACTING AS AN EMPLOYEE IS DIFFERENT THAN GOING TO SCHOOL.”

With this construction, the school is killing two birds with one stone. Not only will there be new, modern gyms, it will also create internships. Four mbo (middle-level vocational education) students have internships at the Bonned-Haafkes construction consortium that is doing the work. This way students in the Carpentry department will themselves build the gyms as part of their studies.

For three students it's their first three-month (introductory) internship, the fourth is doing his second internship. "He's getting a few more responsibilities."

For the SGB's mbo, it's difficult to find internships at training companies in Bonaire that are recognised by ROA CN (The Caribbean Netherlands Council for Market Labour Education). There's not enough of them. "For the Level 2 and Level 3 Carpentry trainings, it's quite complex here. They include things which many contractors cannot do here. It's very difficult to find suitable companies." Companies and the government should also demonstrate more social responsibility, says Baptiste.

Acting as an employee

The students, including one girl, think it's special that they can work at their own school. But they are especially excited about their internship. They can now do things such as pour concrete, which they could never simulate in class, says Baptiste. It's also important for them to learn to have a good attitude at work, to be on time and to take their breaks on time. "Acting as an employee is different than going to school."

They started their first day by making the formwork for the foundation. They are ambitious, it seems. Diego, who's doing his second internship, and Raviënne would both really like to become architects. Rui also wants to continue his studies. Only Benjamin wants to work immediately after finishing this schooling and he hopes to be able to do something important for Bonaire. ■



Two trainees (wearing white helmets), pouring concrete for the foundation.

Social responsibility

Supervising teacher of construction, Martijn Baptiste: "Simone van Hengstum of the Central Government Real Estate Agency included in the construction specifications that a number of students had to get internships at the construction site. That was a condition in the tender. It is, of course, very nice that students help build their own school."



AN INTRODUCTION ...

“Cool!” That was my first reaction when asked if I was available to manage school construction projects in the Caribbean Netherlands for the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), on behalf of the Central Government Real Estate Agency (Rijksvastgoedbedrijf). The projects that are currently being carried out on St. Eustatius and Saba are perfectly suited to my personal drive to contribute to people’s development. Good education is an important basis for this.

“I’m really looking forward to working together with all those involved: let’s set for ourselves a goal of building the best schools for St. Eustatius and Saba!”

For good education, good educational facilities are also needed, of course. Buildings that inspire and challenge the students, where necessary, but at the same time contribute to being able to concentrate well when needed. Colour and the use of materials can contribute significantly to this, but also things such as lighting, acoustics and air conditioning. Buildings that are not only beautiful and pleasant when finished, but which can also be maintained affordably in the future by local companies. This calls for smart choices regarding the technology and materials to be used. I see it as a challenge to make the aforementioned issues go hand-in-hand in “my” projects.

The school building projects which I am responsible for include the Seventh Day Adventist School and the Gwendoline van Putten School on St. Eustatius and the Sacred Heart School and the Saba Comprehensive School on Saba. On Saba, the new building for the Day care and Kindergarten is also being constructed. I am convinced that with the various teams of advisors working on the projects, we will be able to deliver buildings which are as beautiful as the recently completed schools in St. Eustatius and Bonaire.

Briefly about my background: after completing secondary education, I studied construction economics; a programme in which (financial) project management and design creativity come together. Since then, for about the past 20 years, I have been working as a project manager for several engineering firms and for the government. For the last 10 years, I have only been involved in socially oriented real estate. During those years, I gained experience that will help me complete the projects on St. Eustatius and Saba. I am really looking forward to working together with the users of the schools, the public entities and the relevant advisors and building contractors: let’s set ourselves a goal of building the best schools for St. Eustatius and Saba!”

PROCEDURE FOR APPOINTING NEW TEACHERS FROM THE REGION

In recent years, it appears that for applicants from the region who want to become teachers in the Caribbean Netherlands, it's not always clear whether the person in question is also competent according to Dutch competency requirements.

This is the reason why for job applicants who have not obtained competency from the Netherlands or from a NVAO¹ recognised educational institution, (RCN) OCW (Rijksdienst Caribbean Netherlands) Ministry Education, Culture and Science] is requesting that the school boards have their diplomas evaluated. This must be done before completing the application process.

The agreement is that the school boards will send the diplomas of the relevant applicant to RCN/OCW to be reviewed by Nuffic². Based on Nuffic's evaluation, the school board may decide to employ the person in question or not.

In the event an applicant receives a positive evaluation, the process is started to obtain a declaration of competency for the applicant concerned. School boards that still want to employ applicants who received a negative evaluation, should apply for an exemption from the education inspectorate.

- 1 Dutch Flemish Accreditation Organization
- 2 Nuffic is the internationalization organization in education, which also evaluates international education and diplomas.

NOW STUDYING IN CANADA IS ALSO POSSIBLE WITH BES STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

As of the 2017-2018 school year, students can also apply for BES student financial aid for continuing their education in Canada. The same monthly amounts apply for this as for studying in the US. Students in the Caribbean Netherlands (CN) can now apply for student financial aid for continuing their education in the Netherlands, the Caribbean region (including the former Netherlands

Kijk voor meer informatie over de voorwaarden en aanvraagprocedure op de website:

www.rijksdienstcn.com/studiefinanciering

Photography: Shurandy Thode



HIGHEST POINT REACHED AT THE SAN LUIS BERTRAN SCHOOL

On April 25, teachers Jane Lo-A-Njoe and Tica Koecks placed a flag on the highest point of the San Luis Bertran School in Rincon, Bonaire. The school complex consists of five buildings, which are being thoroughly renovated.



LISEO BONERIANO EXPANSION STARTED

On April 26, the start of the "Liseo Boneriano expansion" construction project in the Bonairean district of Hato was officially launched. The existing school complex on Kaya Amsterdam, Bonaire, now consists of two buildings with a schoolyard. This is now being expanded by an additional two buildings and a covered indoor area. As of the 2018-2019 school year, all grades of mavo, havo and vwo are expected to be housed at this location. The vmbo, mbo and PrO sections of the SGB will continue to be housed on Kaya Korona.

REBUILDING OF THE SGB GYMNASIUMS REACHES ITS HIGHEST POINT



On April 28, the highest point of the rebuilding of the gymnasiums of the SGB on Kaya Frater Odulfinus was reached.

SGB MBO STUDENTS GO FOR TRAINING IN COLOMBIA



In May, 6 SGB students from mid-level vocational education (mbo) Carpentry travelled to Sena, Colombia. There they took a drywall and plastering training course (to install light gypsum partition walls in different ways). It was an intensive programme that included a mix of theory and practice, and social activities with fellow students from Colombia.

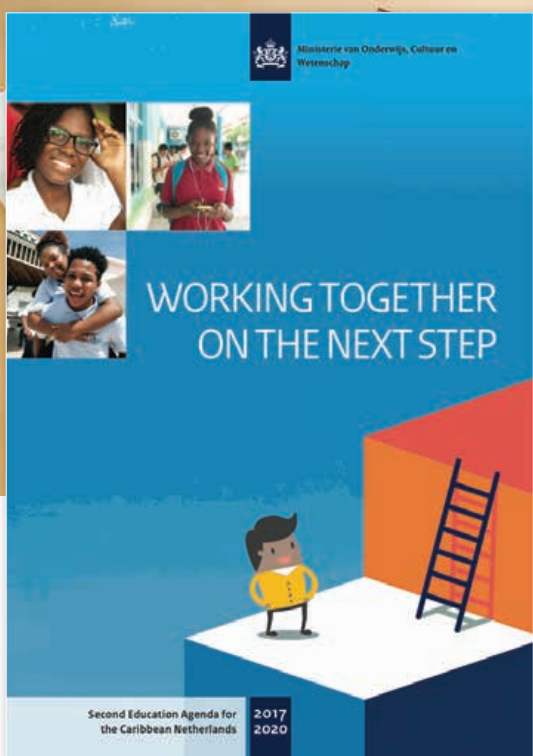
The participants organised the trip activities themselves for the most part. In their own time and during practice at school, they made and installed outdoor furniture at a primary school. During the trip, the students were accompanied by Martijn Baptiste, the SGB construction technique teacher, and Isandro Wanga, a foreman from BonNed contractors/Bonaire Construction Management.

The training was organised by Skills Netherlands Caribbean (SNC)³, Skills Colombia and its Sena training institute. The purpose of the SNC foundation is to support students in developing their professional skills and to stimulate pride in their profession.

³ The Skills Netherlands Caribbean foundation encourages the participation of mbo students from the Caribbean Netherlands to participate in local, regional and international competitions for the trades.



SECOND CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS EDUCATION AGENDA



The second Caribbean Netherlands Education Agenda was signed in November 2016. The purpose of this education agenda is to further improve the quality of education in the Caribbean Netherlands in the interest of the pupils. What does the second Education Agenda contain? How was this agenda realised? Who contributed to it? And what does the agenda mean for the pupils in the Caribbean Netherlands? We answer these questions in this article.

Why a second Caribbean Netherlands Education Agenda?

In 2011 the schools of Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius jointly established a first education agenda 'Working Together on Quality' 2011 - 2016 in collaboration with the Minister of Education, Culture and Science [Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, OCW]. In this agenda they made agreements on better education. Since then, education has developed positively in various segments. Nearly all schools have achieved basic quality. The knowledge and skills of the school boards and school leaders have been enhanced. The

teaching materials at schools have improved and considerable attention has been paid to language education. Many school buildings have been renovated or renewed. Furthermore, each island now has an expertise centre for education care which helps schools to guide pupils who need guidance. Social opportunity pathways have also been introduced to offer youngsters aged 18-24 education or training so that they can get a job or follow an advanced training programme. Vocational education was introduced on St. Eustatius and Saba (level 1 and 2 MBO [intermediate vocational education]). Additionally, the Raad Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt

[Council for Education and Labour] was founded to facilitate a smoother transition of education into the labour market on the islands in the Caribbean region.

So a great deal has happened but in order to realise that education in 2020 at least meets the quality of European Netherlands standards, all parties involved should continue working on improving education. The second Education Agenda 'Working Together On The Next Step' 2017 - 2020 is the guiding principle for this process.

How was the second Education Agenda realised?

The OCW department of Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland has organised several meetings on the islands. There have been talks with the schools and other institutions which are involved in education on how they themselves can further improve education. So in this context the focus lies on the ownership of the parties involved. Therefore the Ministry of OCW is taking a step back. Of course the situation is not the same on each island, therefore it has been investigated which activities can be performed in order to further improve education. These activities have been recorded in the island-specific segments of the second Education Agenda.

What does the second Education Agenda contain? And what exactly does the agenda mean for the pupils in the Caribbean Netherlands?

The purpose of the second Education Agenda is to increase the quality of education even further by continuing to work on the priorities which were also set in the first education agenda:

- school board members, school leaders and teachers continue to educate themselves in order to continue to perform their duties properly.
- pupils receive education at a school whose board is increasingly better capable of managing finances. This means that the school boards are able to make proper choices on how, for what and when monies should be used.
- pupils have a good command of the languages used in class. As a result, they are better prepared for an advanced training programme or a job.
- pupils who require it, will receive the support and guidance in education which suits them.
- pupils will acquire sufficient knowledge and skills to be properly prepared for an advanced training programme or a job.

- pupils will receive successful education and this is only possible if the preconditions are further improved. This means:
 - that the school buildings are made even more suitable;
 - better registration of and approach to school absenteeism and dropping out of school (enforcement of compulsory education);
 - clear agreements on (the implementation of the) employment conditions for educational staff;
 - more and close collaboration of schools with institutions in the area of care, youth, child day care and the labour market.

Of course the situation is not the same on each island. Therefore it was investigated per island which activities should be performed in order to further improve education





IMPRESSIONS OF THE PAPA CORNES COMMUNITY SCHOOL IN ITS NEW BUILDING



The Papa Cornes Community School has been housed for more than a year in the new school complex in Bonaire's Nort di Saliña neighborhood. It's a good moment to reflect with the principle, Patricia Angela, regarding the experiences in the new building.

"The move to the new building meant a huge step forward for our school," says Patricia. "We are here in a beautiful setting, in the middle of nature, overlooking the mountains, the city and arriving ships." But the biggest plus of the new building is air conditioning in all the classrooms: "Because we didn't have any air conditioning in the previous building, all the windows were open. As a result, there were many disruptive sounds from outside, because we were on a busy road. The classrooms now are not only very cool, they are also an oasis of calm compared to the old situation and we are now also free from all the dust that blew into the classrooms."

Technical gadgets

The new school building has a positive effect on the students: they can concentrate better and there's a positive ambiance. During the breaks, the younger children enjoy the new playground facilities, such as the climbing frame in the shape of a ship and the new bikes. The library is being used extensively.

A highly-appreciated addition is the sound system, with built-in speakers in all rooms. "For important announcements or for announcing school-wide activities, we only need to use the microphone to reach everyone directly."

There are now digibords in all classrooms. “With this kind of new technical gadget, so much more is possible,” says Patricia and she talks about a movie night that it was possible to organize recently using the Digibords. “This is motivating and inspiring for everyone.”

Step-by-step

Most of the school’s facilities are now ready and are being used. The next step is putting the finishing touches on the buildings, which they are still in the middle of doing. For example, curtains are needed because the sun shines in, the landscaping needs to be done and the playgrounds must be paved for the children’s safety. “Due to the costs, we’re doing these finishing touches step-by-step”, says Patricia. The school recently organized a fundraising campaign to purchase a large playground for groups 3, 4 and 5 and more fundraising activities are in the pipeline.

Plans and wishes

What plans and wishes does the school still have? Patricia tells us that the school is now going to work towards the actually implementing the community school concept. “Currently, we’re seeing if we can strengthen our cooperation with the Universo Foundation. In addition, there are several other opportunities for collaboration with neighbourhood-related organization that we’re currently exploring.”

Another big wish is to have the access roads and parking lot paved. “From a recent satisfaction survey conducted among parents, these issues emerged as the only points of concern.” We hope that the responsible party, the Public Entity of Bonaire, can address this quickly. We would also really like to have our own gymnasium. Currently, the students are being taught in the sports centre on Kaya Amsterdam, which means that sometimes the facilities have to be shared. So, we still have a way to go, but we’re on track to giving the children the education they’re entitled to. From the students’ achievements, you can see that they like it here and that they’re committed. And in the end, that’s what everybody is doing it for.” ■



“From the students’ achievements you can see that they like it here ...”



“We still have a way to go, but we’re on track to giving the children the education they’re entitled to. From the students’ achievements, you can see that they like it here and that they’re committed. And in the end, that’s what everybody is doing it for.”



THE KIDS COUNCIL MAKES ORGANISATIONS TAKE A LOOK IN THE MIRROR

Since April 2015, the Kids Council (Raad van Kinderen) is also active on Curaçao (2015), Aruba (2015), Bonaire (2017), Saba (2017) and now on St. Eustatius. A kids Council consists of a group of children ages 8 to 12 - grades 5 through the first year of high school - that is linked to an organisation (or a company). They help the company with a social issue, do research, present their advice to the organisation and enter into a dialogue with the organisation. Working with a Kids Council¹ is not without obligation. Organisations take the children's advice seriously and start to work on it. The Kids Council is an initiative of the Missing Chapter Foundation (MCF) and UNICEF Netherlands.

"Kids Councils often come up with surprising insights for problems that can be complex sometimes," said Tamara Salsbach during her recent visit to Sint Eustatius. "Due to their fresh, out-of-the-box way of looking at a problem, they persist until they reach the core of the problem. Kids Councils often make organisations take a look in the mirror." As project manager of the Kids Council on Curaçao, Tamara is on St. Eustatius to train teachers from local schools to guide the local Kids Councils. Their task is to assist the students in shaping a vision about the issues they are presented with, then to come up with ideas that can contribute to solutions. Cherida Creebsburg is the project manager of the Kids Council on St. Eustatius. In the meantime, four Kids Councils have been established on St. Eustatius at: the St. Eustatius Health Care Foundation, the NuStar oil terminal company, the Stenapa nature management foundation and the CNSI (Caribbean Netherlands Science Institute) knowledge centre.

¹ In the Caribbean Netherlands, the Kids Council is part of a wider approach to children's rights. At the request of the Public Entities and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, UNICEF Netherlands works to improve the status of children's rights. The Netherlands does this together with partner organisations in the Caribbean Netherlands. The Kids Council is very important in mapping out the status of children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands. Children have the right to have a say in the decisions that affect their future.



Administration Manager Del Pointdexter and Vice President Operations Terence Keogh of Nustar during the presentation at the Governor de Graaff School, in the presence of Project Manager Kids Council St. Eustatius Cherida Creebsburg

How does the Kids Council work?

An organisation or company establishes a Kids Council, which will investigate strategic dilemmas. The children provide ideas or opinions about possible solutions, which the organisations use to get started. The project manager guides the entire process based on the following six steps:

- 1. Dilemma:** The organisation formulates a strategic dilemma.
- 2. Presentation:** The organisation presents the dilemma in the classroom.
- 3. Research:** The Kids Council examines the dilemma in the classroom, under the teacher's guidance.
- 4. Dialogue:** The Kids Council presents its findings to the organisation.
- 5. Response:** The organisation responds to the recommendations.
- 6. Progress:** The organisation and the school evaluate the process and see how they should proceed.

During step 3, the research phase, the Kids Council may define the research itself. Usually they will talk to the organisation's employees, experts and people from the neighbourhood. The subjects the children research are really varied: from sustainability to innovation and safety. The topics always have something to do with the core of the organisation and therefore affect the entire organisation and its strategy, communication, marketing, human resources and corporate social responsibility (CSR) departments. Following their research, the children present their findings and get into a dialogue with the organisation. The organisation then looks at what it will do with the children's ideas and feeds this back to the children. Organisations that collaborate with a Kids Council commit themselves to this for several years. These pioneers make sure that children's voices are given a lasting place in society. ■

The Missing Chapter Foundation and the Kids Council

The Missing Chapter Foundation (MCF) was founded in 2010 by Princess Laurentien with the aim of contributing to sustainable solutions for social issues. MCF takes children’s voices seriously and establishes a dialogue between decision makers and children about current dilemmas and issues. This is done via the “Kids Council” initiative, among others, in collaboration with UNICEF Netherlands (i.e. UNICEF is the international organisation that defends children’s rights).

Since June 2016, UNICEF Netherlands has supported the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Public Entities of Bonaire, Saint Eustatius and Saba in improving the status of children’s rights within the Kingdom. UNICEF Netherlands does this via children’s education and dialogue on the theme of education, among others. UNICEF Netherlands also works with the Missing Chapter Foundation regarding the Kids Council initiative. Via this initiative, children in the Caribbean Netherlands have a say in the decisions made on the islands that also affect their future.

For more information visit the websites of: **Missing Chapter** and **Unicef**:

<http://www.missingchapter.org/>
<https://www.unicef.nl>

The students taking notes during the tour at NuStar.



A DAY WITH VIOLET DUGGINS-GUMBS

IN EVERY EDITION OF “WHAT’S NEW” WE FOLLOW A DUTCH CARIBBEAN EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL DURING ONE DAY. FOR THIS ISSUE WE FOLLOWED VIOLET DUGGINS-GUMBS. VIOLET HAS BEEN WORKING AS AN ADVISOR TO THE ROA CN (CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS) FOUNDATION FOR ST. EUSTATIUS AND SABA.

“Let’s begin with attaching the signs,” says Violet, and she presses two magnetic signs with the ROA CN logo against the sides of her pickup. Her cool pickup suddenly looks completely “ROA” pimped out. We get in and start a very full morning programme, which covers various aspects of Violet’s role as advisor to the ROA CN (Caribbean Netherlands) foundation for St. Eustatius and Saba. ROA stands for the Council for Labour Market and Education and the foundation’s mission is to coordinate between education and business in the CN in order to make a positive contribution to public entities and to the quality of education.

09:00 am > Rules & Regulations

We start at the “Forever Young Sports Bar”, diagonally opposite to the airport. The purpose of this visit is to see if this relatively new company qualifies for certification as a recognised training company. Does it meet the conditions for providing MBO (middle-level vocational education) interns in the Hospitality field with an internship?



Also visit the website www.roacn.com

Does it provide sufficient quality and are the basic requirements in place, such as a good and clean working environment and an office space to do the paperwork?

The owner, Granville Hassell, welcomes us and leads us around. Through an outdoor terrace with lounging areas, we enter the restaurant. Violet is satisfied with what she sees and hears. After the tour, Violet goes over ROA's rules & regulations with Granville. She explains what happens when a company wants to hire an intern. One of the requirements is to follow ROA's course to become a recognised mentor. Together with Granville, she completes the application for certification.

10:15 am > Stage visit

The next appointment is at the Queen Beatrix Medical Centre. Mbo participant Gerson Herrera is doing an internship there, under the guidance of assistant head nurse Suylaika Suarez. This visit is intended as a check with the internship supervisor and with the intern to see if the internship is going well.

Gerson is enthusiastic: "I really feel at home here". Internship supervisor Suylaika joins us and discusses her findings: until now she is happy with Gerson's performance. It seems that Gerson received the BPV Guide (i.e.: Guide to Practical Training) very late and as a result, he has just started doing the assignments. Violet will check with

the school why this happened because it's important that interns receive the book in time. Once again, she emphasises to Suylaika the importance of having Gerson be very involved in nursing activities in particular so that he can acquire as much field-specific knowledge as possible. Violet explains: "As the ROA, we are working on creating a good connection between practical work and education. As such, it's important that during his internship Gerson gets a good idea what his future job as a nurse will be like."

11.00 am > Visit learning company

We visit the office of the department Cultuur en Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning of the Island Government of Saint Eustatius. This department has obtained the "Recognised Training Company" designation. Staff members Nasha Radjouki and Magumbo Gibbs successfully completed the competency based training and are now both certified job trainers. It was previously agreed that a "Recognised Training Company" sign would be put up. The idea was to take a picture to promote the company's recognition status. But Nasha is not there



because she's sick. Violet leaves the sign behind and promises to contact them again in a few days.

11.15 am > Appointment progress BBL-course

The next appointment is with the interim mbo coordinator, Jos Slotema from the Gwendoline van Putten School, to discuss the progress for Level 2 of the first BBL programme on Sint Eustatius for Helpende Zorg en Welzijn. Violet has the internship agreements for the participants currently working at the Queen Beatrix Medical Centre, the Auxiliary Home and the Community Care Centre. Jos expresses his concern about the students' absence during the only weekly school day. It's taken into account that the participants usually also have a family, with all the associated obligations. Violet and Jos discuss the possibilities for reaching a compromise with the participants.

12.00 pm > Back to office ROA

The morning ends at the ROA office. Violet writes down all the action points and findings from that morning. Afterwards, she has a conversation on Skype with her Bonaire-based colleague Nancy. They discuss ongoing affairs in Saba in preparation for the working visit that Violet will take to Saba this week.

Violet is enthusiastic about her role at ROA. "We have a nice and strong team, together with our colleagues on Bonaire. And this job takes you everywhere on the islands." ROA's field of work is wide: apart from all the work to certify companies and the internships, she regularly organises meetings with local business sectors to gauge the needs of local businesses. And she enjoys building up the quality of the local labour market, on behalf of both employers and future employees, as part of the ROA team. "In 2012, we started with 6 recognised training companies and 8 certified mentors, and now there are more than 61 recognised training companies and 147 certified mentors in St. Eustatius," she says proudly. "Together we make it work!"

