



Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland
OCW

ENGLISH

WHAT'S NEW ...

IN CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS EDUCATION



9

December 2017
Number 9

HURRICANES AND EDUCATION

IN SEPTEMBER 2017, SINT MAARTEN, SABA AND SINT EUSTATIUS WERE HIT BY HURRICANES IRMA AND MARIA WITHIN A PERIOD OF TWO WEEKS. SINT MAARTEN, OVER WHICH IRMA'S EYE CROSSED, WAS HIT THE HARDEST. BUT THE DAMAGE WAS ALSO CONSIDERABLE ON SABA AND SINT EUSTATIUS. 'WHAT'S NEW' SPOKE TO VARIOUS PRINCIPALS ON ST. EUSTATIUS AND SABA ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES FOR EDUCATION FROM THESE POWERFUL HURRICANES.

Despite being well prepared, damage to the schools on St. Eustatius and Saba could not be prevented. There was flooding, short circuits and broken computers and air conditioners. Even parts of roofs and awnings were blown away by the hurricanes.

Upon arriving at the Governor de Graaff school (GDG) on St. Eustatius, it became evident what the forces of nature had done. A small container, previously used for storage, was in pieces, spread out all over of the area. A water tank had fallen over, also damaging the fence.

The aftermath of the hurricanes led to a hectic period for the schools. Not only because of the damage to the buildings, but mainly because of the impact the natural disaster had on the children and their need for support thereafter.

"WITH THE ARRIVAL OF CLASSMATES FROM SINT MAARTEN, ALL STUDENTS WERE EVEN MORE SUPPORTIVE OF EACH OTHER"

Students from Sint Maarten

All schools on Saba and Sint Eustatius opened their doors to a total of more than 100 students from Sint Maarten. The numbers varied per school, from 3 to 27 students. Many children arrived without their parents and some had brought little or even no clothes with them. Before the students' arrival, the schools had often only received their name, the name of their school, their grade and the student's age. Based on this information, they were placed in a class. "Normally, an educational report is required when a child is transferred," says Evert Meijer, GDG director.

"This document provides the information you need to place the student in the right class. Now we're doing this with the little information we have." With the help of observations and tests, we looked at how each student could receive the appropriate education. Some schools were faced with the fact that the students from Sint Maarten are taught in Dutch at school. Fortunately, this problem was solved, mainly by

using the earlier Dutch teaching materials that many of the schools still had in storage. Schools have also provided school uniforms and school supplies.

Processing

In the period following the hurricanes, the children's intense experiences were discussed, but the schools also tried to continue with their daily routine to provide structure to the children. Some schools held an extra meeting about the hurricane theme, after which the theme was further discussed in the classes.

At the Sacred Heart School on Saba, each student was given the opportunity to tell his or her story and to draw or write about their experience. This helped students to be open about their feelings and to realize that it's normal to be afraid. At the Saba Comprehensive School, the pupils played the 'Over the line' game, using statements such as "I lost my roof". Students who had experienced this were literally allowed to cross the line. By looking around, they saw that they weren't the only ones who had crossed this line, and that they weren't alone in this unpleasant experience.

Positive "vibe"

The Lynch Plantation Seventh Day Adventist School on St. Eustatius decided to organise a Walk-a-thon with their students. The goal was to raise money for schools on other islands which had been hit even harder by the hurricanes. Principal Ellis Woodley and his team from the Bethel Methodist school (BMS) decided, among other things, to organize a "Fun Day" to break the students out of their gloom. They played games in the classroom and a group of students organized a flash mob at a senior citizens home. As such, the schools found a way to end this gloomy time in a positive way and at the same time create a positive "vibe" in the community.

It was clear that for the teachers, principals and students, the hurricanes had a strong impact that had to be handled carefully. Principal Ellis Woodley (BMS) is a good example

As is well known, hurricanes Irma and Maria have had a major impact on the Windward Islands including on local education. Yet the editors of the “What’s New” did not want to let this opportunity pass by to close out the year with you. Due to the aftermath of the hurricanes and the associated transportation problems, we have chosen to issue the magazine in pdf format only.

In this special December edition, we’ll take you along to experience the impacts of the recent natural disasters on the islands’ residents and on education and we’ll look back at what we’ve achieved together in education in the Caribbean Netherlands during the past year.

We hope that you will enjoy this edition and we wish you very happy holidays.



Photo: Saba Comprehensive School



The Saba Comprehensive School immediately after Irma

Maarten regarding the care of the new students. In addition, she shared with the team members her expertise regarding the CXC school system¹.

On Saba, team members at the Saba Comprehensive school (SCS) created solidarity by working together to clean up the school. The Healthy School Breakfast was also kickstarted at the same school. During the first two weeks after the hurricanes, not much fresh food was available. However, this school did have some because of this project. As a result, now there are even more participants in this project.

“AFTER THE HURRICANES THE SCHOOL KICKSTARTED THE HEALTHY SCHOOL BREAKFAST”

of someone who personally sees to it that all children in his school are doing well. He recounted how he recently called in a student. When she arrived at her temporary new school, she was a cheerful girl, but she wasn’t cheerful anymore. After some talking, the truth came out: “I miss my mother”. There were tears in Ellis’ eyes when he told this story.

Positive developments

With the arrival of classmates from Sint Maarten, all students were even more supportive of each other. This situation has taught them to help each other where necessary and to give each other hope again. “You saw children going to school with a smile again”, says Rhea Courtar, vice principal of the Golden Rock School on St. Eustatius. “Students have made new friends.” The students from Sint Maarten also brought other interesting ways of learning with them, which they shared with their new classmates.

At the Gwendoline van Putten School on St. Eustatius, the team leaders received support from a colleague in Sint

Looking towards the future

With the experiences gained during this past period, the schools are looking towards the future in a new way. Prior to the hurricanes, nobody expected them to take care of students from the neighbouring island Sint Maarten. There’s a realisation that similar situations may arise during future hurricane seasons. Where there’s been damage, an evaluation will be conducted on how this can be prevented as much as possible the next time. Before the start of the next hurricane season, teachers want to inform their students even better so that later on the students will know how to prepare for a hurricane and how to act during and after a hurricane.

1. The Caribbean Examination Council’s English language school system, which is currently being introduced on St. Eustatius, among other places.

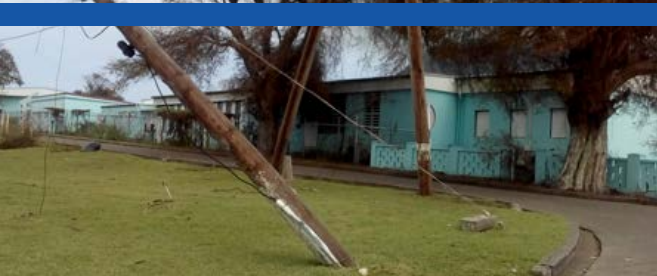


Photo: Stepanie van der Heiden-Derksen

Special care

The Expertise Centre for Education Care (ECE), Youth and Family Centre (CJG) and Mental Health Caribbean (MHC) on St. Eustatius are working together with the schools to help the students that need (extra) care or are traumatised as best they can. They provide individual and group sessions and supervise the families with whom these children live. In this way, they ensure as much as possible that the children can deal with these experiences. The doors of the Centre for Youth and Family, the Mental Health Care Foundation and the Expertise Centre for Education Care (EC2) are also open on Saba to provide guidance when necessary.

Messages of support

Via e-mail, whatsapp and other communication channels, support was given to the schools after the hurricanes. This support came from various stakeholders, including the PO and VO Councils, (ed.: sector organisation for primary and secondary education), RCN/OCW, the education inspectorate and the Education, Culture and Science (OCW) Ministry. Everyone sympathised with their experiences and that was greatly appreciated!

Everyone sympathised with their experiences and that was greatly appreciated!

IRMA

*She laughs, whines, softly passing by the doors.
Then she reaches out from the darkness.
Stronger, ever stronger.
A theatre of sound,
listen attentively without interruption.*

*'Who are you, who do you think you are?'
I can hear her outside,
a wry smile on her lips.
Even her softest whisper is
so much louder than I can bear.*

*She demands surrender.
A timeless existence in this dark cocoon.
Until she finally loses her concentration
and with an indifferent look over her shoulders
she continues on her journey.*

*Slowly we open our eyes,
we open the shutters that protected us.
to behold
her nonchalant havoc
with a weeping heart.*

Anna Lautenbag
September 7, 2017

*This poem achieved the second place (editorial selection)
of the Dutch Writers' Stage Prize.*



*"Dancing butterflies,
the green buds
of brave leaves.
Everything breathes hope"*

HIGHLIGHTS

2017

JANUARY

40 YEARS SABA COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL



The school celebrated its 40th anniversary with various activities throughout the year.



Photo: Saba Comprehensive School

MARCH

FIRST ASSESSORS TRAINING WORKSHOP ON ST. EUSTATIUS AND SABA

During this workshop, teachers were trained in planning and using assessments in accordance with the CBET (Competence Based Education and Training) competency-based assessment methodology. Learning to work with this type of testing is part of the transition to the CVQ (Caribbean Vocational Qualification) vocational education system within the CXC's (Caribbean Examination Council) education system. The second part of this training took place in August.



MAY

CULTUURHANDREIKING COVENANT SIGNED BY OCW AND THE ISLAND GOVERNMENT OF BONAIRE

The Cultuurhandreiking Bonaire is a guide that the Minister of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) wants to use to support Bonaire as an island government by developing tasks in the area of culture. The document distinguishes five policy areas: cultural heritage, culture and literature funds, cultural education, libraries and media.



Photo: Public Entity Bonaire

JUNE

DISCUSSIONS REGARDING THE EMPLOYEE MANUAL (PERSONEELS-HANDBOEK) FOR EDUCATION PERSONNEL IN THE CN

The school boards in the Caribbean Netherlands discussed a draft Employee Manual with staff from the Education, Culture and Science (OCW) Ministry to determine together which adjustments are needed. The employee manual describes the rights and obligations of education personnel in the Caribbean Netherlands.

MAY

HIGHEST POINT REACHED OF THE REBUILT GYMNASIUMS SCHOLENGEMEENSCHAP BONAIRE



2017

Photo: Wouter Tuentjer

AUGUST

INAUGURATION OF THE RENOVATED KOLEGIO SAN LUIS BERTRAN ON BONAIRE

The five buildings that make up this school complex have all been thoroughly renovated.



Photo: Jacobs Architects

AUGUST

ASSIGNMENT FOR THE DUTCH LANGUAGE UNION (TAALUNIE) FOR DUTCH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (NVT)

The Dutch Language Union will be active for the next three years on all six islands of the former Netherlands Antilles, to broaden and entrench expertise in the NVT field. A network will be established to exchange knowledge and materials and the Dutch Language Union will support various planned activities in the NVT field.

DECEMBER

EXPANSION OF LISEO BONERIANO REACHES ITS HIGHEST POINT

The existing complex, on Kaya Amsterdam, Bonaire, is being expanded by adding two new buildings and a covered indoor area. With this expansion, the MAVO, HAVO and VWO sections of the SGB will be housed together in one location in the 2018-2019 school year, if completed as planned.



JULY

INAUGURATION OF THE RENOVATED KOLEGIO RAYO DI SOLO ON BONAIRE

The renovations included the removal of asbestos-containing roofing sheets, adaptation of the load-bearing structure to meet current structural standards and the installation of thermally insulated roofing sheets and frames.



NOVEMBER

BASIC QUALITY FOR SECTIONS OF SGB

During their visit to the SGB in November, the Education Inspectorate stated that Liseo Boneriano (MAVO, HAVO and VWO) and the PRO (practical education) section have achieved the basic quality.



Photo: Wouter Tuentjer



EPILOGUE

Dear reader,

I hereby wish you and your loved ones a merry and peaceful Christmas holiday. Before we all go our separate ways, I sincerely want like to thank you for your contribution to education on the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands.

Together we are making the difference in the life experiences and opportunities of every student. Thanks again for everything you do for these young people, their families and the community we serve.

I hope that you and your beloved ones will enjoy your well-deserved vacation during this special time of the year.

DECEMBER

FIRST BONAIRE EDUCATION DAY WITH THE THEME: 'THE TALENTS AND PASSION OF OUR TEACHERS'



Photo: R.K. School Board Bonaire

As an initiative of the joint school boards of Bonaire, this event was recently organized for the first time ever. The participating teachers were able to choose from a range of subjects, ranging from anti-bullying programs, such as the Rock & Water Training, to the "Conscious Discipline" program (ed.: an educational and social emotional program for managing a class), to using Parnassys (ed.: a student tracking system) for digital reports, to being gifted and more.

On behalf of RCN/OCW,
Nolly Oleana,
Department Head

Merry
Christmas &
a happy
New Year!

Contributors to this special December edition:

Editing: Stephanie van der Heiden-Derksen, Anna Lautenbag and Elaine Marchena (final editing)

Photography: Staysly Gilo

Design and layout: I-Design, Ivonne Zegveld

English translation: John Amarica

Do you wish to react to the contents of this magazine or bring in suggestions for future contributions? Please contact:

elaine.marchena@rijksdienstcn.com

Deadline for the next edition: March 16, 2018.

This magazine is published by RCN/OCW.

COLOPHON