

Children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands Karin Kloosterboer



# **Child on St. Eustatius**Children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands Karin Kloosterboer

#### **Foreword**

You have before you *Child on St. Eustatius. Children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands*: a UNICEF study into the situation of children growing up on the tropical island of St. Eustatius, and one that is innovating and exceptional for several reasons.

This study is the first to shed light on all aspects of the lives of children in the Caribbean Netherlands. *Child on St. Eustatius* outlines the correlations between various factors: family situation, education, health and health care, safety, leisure time, participation, housing conditions, and financial situation. Alongside this report, there are also separate reports about Saba and Bonaire.

This is also a pioneering study in that it actually surveyed the people who are at stake: the children who grow up on the islands. Other than that, the study also drew heavily on input from numerous experts who play a role in children's lives on the islands. The hearts and minds of these – often inspired – professionals contain a huge wealth of information about both children's lives and possibilities for improvement of their lives.

This study paints a detailed picture that the researchers have subsequently assessed based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. After ratifying this convention in 1995, the Netherlands has been bound by its terms. The rights specified in the convention apply to all children living in the Netherlands, and therefore also to those growing up in the Caribbean part of the Netherlands. For the first time ever, we now have a report that maps out which efforts are required to bring the situation of children on the three islands into line with the standards set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

UNICEF is convinced that children will develop better when they can exercise the rights granted to them by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is therefore our deepest wish that the results of this study will contribute to improvements for children on St. Eustatius.

Jan Bouke Wijbrandi, Executive Director of UNICEF Netherlands

# **Acknowledgments**

This study is the result of the efforts and input of a great number of people, without whose help and commitment I could not have written this report.

First of all, I owe a great debt of gratitude to the *children* at the center of this study: children who are growing up on the island of St. Eustatius. They made a tremendous impression on us during the conversations we had with them. Some of them lead lives that are far from easy, despite the fact that they live on a tropical island and have sunshine every day. We were both struck and inspired by how clearly these children are able to describe their personal situations. Without any ado, they manage to penetrate to the core, and subsequently show great creativity in coming up with solutions. We noticed that many of the children we spoke to are not used to expressing their views. As soon as they realized that we were genuinely interested in what they had to say, they wanted to keep talking for hours. I truly hope this study can help achieve real improvement to their situation.

Besides children, many other people have contributed to this study, some extensively so. Among them where several young people on the islands who are (or recently became) of age, who took part in panel sessions that allowed them to express their ideas and opinions. They shared their experiences of growing up on an island and managed to – literally – view their situation from a distance. Their enthusiasm was great and their drive to make a difference for their island was striking.

The experts surveyed also deserve much gratitude. Most took ample time to talk to me, to attend an experts' meeting, to find or supplement information, and to review my texts. They were unanimous in their conviction that the children of St. Eustatius very much deserve to be the central focus of this kind of study. Through their trust and willingness to speak freely, they have contributed significantly to this study. The names of all experts who were consulted are listed in Appendix 2.

Thanks also go out to my *fellow researchers*. These include Bas Tierolf and Jodi Mak at the Verwey-Jonker Institute. In 2011, they conducted an exploratory study that revealed the difficulty of finding information about children on the island.

In 2012, *Stichting Alexander* ran several youth panels in the Netherlands. Having enjoyed a fruitful collaboration with Adimka Uzozie on a previous occasion, she once more helped elaborate the concept of youth participation for me, aided by her colleagues Jody Bauer and Diana Neijboer.

On St. Eustatius, interviews with children were conducted in collaboration with the Governor de Graaff School, the Gwendoline van Putten school and the organization Mega D. Brenda van Putten and Iris Sporken contributed to the interviews with the children.

Special thanks go out to Sabina ter Borg, who grew up on Bonaire and is now studying in the Netherlands. She responded to my call for a Papiamento-speaking child interviewer. Although she would initially only come to Bonaire to help out there, she did such a good job that she joined me as a regular interviewer on all six islands. She put in a huge effort, and I greatly admire her commitment and effort.

Arnout Esser helped us with advice about the set-up and execution of the study. He designed and maintained a database that enabled us to analyze study results.

Alongside all UNICEF staff who were involved in this study, I would like to single out Mark Wijne and Majorie Kaandorp. I enjoyed a close and pleasant working relationship with Mark on the entire *Children of the Kingdom* project. Majorie provided expert commentary on the sections about children's rights. Marlijn Lelieveld took on a large part of the desk research. With great patience and perseverance, she pieced together all the available information on the current situation and legislation, for all of the subjects covered. Sietske Arkenau read the final draft and offered linguistic advice. She had to work under considerable pressure, and I thank her for that.

Performing a study into the situation of children's rights on the six islands that make up the Caribbean part of our Kingdom proved a far more extensive, lengthy, and difficult job than we at UNICEF had anticipated. However, there was never a moment of doubt as to whether we should persevere with this study. I am extremely pleased and grateful to work for an organization that shares my concern for the situation of vulnerable children; children who are sometimes virtually invisible, such as the children on these islands.

Hopefully, this report will help bring the required improvements to the situation in which children on St. Eustatius grow up.

**Karin Kloosterboer** 

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Child on St. Eustatius

# Introduction

*Child on St. Eustatius* contains the results of the study into children who grow up on the island of St. Eustatius, which is one of the three islands in the Caribbean Netherlands that are jointly referred to as the BES islands (Bonaire, St. Eustatius, Saba).

Alongside this present report, there are separate reports on the other two islands: *Child on Saba* and *Child on Bonaire*.

A separately published summary covering all three islands together is also available: Child on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. Children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands. Summary.

The study into the situation of children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands is part of a large UNICEF study entitled *Children of the Kingdom: Children's rights in the Dutch Caribbean*.

This study looks at children's rights on all six Caribbean islands that are part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Besides Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba (Caribbean Netherlands), this study also extensively studied the situation of children on the islands of Aruba, Curaçao, and St. Maarten. Three separate reports have been published on these three independent countries within the Kingdom, which are available from UNICEF.

The views of children and young people themselves are of crucial importance in a study into their situation, which is why this study has focused heavily on hearing their ideas and opinions. A separate publication entitled *Kind op een eiland. Kinderen over opgroeien op Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius en Sint Maarten* provides an impression of life on the islands from the point of view of children, illustrated with photos.

The study ran from 2010 to February 2013.

*Child on St. Eustatius* answers three central questions of the study on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba:

- What is it like for children to grow up on one of these islands?
- How does the situation of these children measure up against the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child?
- How can the situation of children on the islands be improved, where necessary?

On 23 May 2013, the findings of the study were offered to the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Ronald Plasterk, at the Children of the Kingdom symposium. In September 2013, the studies were presented separately on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, and were discussed with stakeholders on the islands.

# Notes for the reader

Child on St. Eustatius. Children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands consists of three parts.

- 1. The **Study in the Caribbean Netherlands** section provides information about the study, the island of St. Eustatius, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This convention constitutes the frame of reference the benchmark for the assessment of the situation of children growing up on the islands.
- 2. The Children's Rights on St. Eustatius section presents the study results for St. Eustatius in eight different areas: family and parenting; education; health; safety; recreation, play, and leisure time; participation; housing conditions; and financial situation. Each of the sections covering the various subjects first outlines the current situation based on the available information, followed by the views of children and young people surveyed on that situation. Next, the focus shifts to the knowledge, experiences and opinions of a large number of experts. Each section also contains an overview of information from the literature on the subject in question: studies, reports and recommendations from, among others, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Each section also indicates what the Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates for each subject. Each section ends with a conclusion that compares the current situation with standards set by the children's rights convention. An overall conclusion ties the various subjects together.
- 3. In the **Appendices** section, you will find a selection of quotes from children, young people, and experts surveyed (Appendix 1). This is also where you will find a list of experts consulted and a bibliography (Appendices 2 and 3). Appendix 4 contains the advice issued by the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Caribbean Netherlands. Appendix 5 contains the full text of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child on St. Eustatius is one of three reports on the situation of children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands. Child on Saba and Child on Bonaire provide specific information about the other two islands. Besides these publications, a separately published 32-page summary is also available: Child on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. Children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands. Summary.

# **STUDY IN THE CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS**

# The study

### 1 Background

Around 5,000 children are currently growing up on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. They spend their childhood on an island that is often considered a holiday paradise. It is unclear, however, how these children fare in all aspects of life.

For quite some time already, UNICEF has been drawing attention to the absence of a clear and comprehensive view of the children's rights situation on the islands. At the same time, there are signals that give cause for concern. On several occasions, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has voiced criticism regarding the situation of children's rights on the islands.

On 10 October 2010, the country of the 'Netherlands Antilles' ceased to exist. Curaçao and St. Maarten became independent countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Aruba had already acquired that status in 1986. Following the break-up of the Netherlands Antilles in 2010, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba became 'public bodies', or special Dutch municipalities, governed from the Netherlands.

This study was prompted by a need to gain insight into the situation of children on the islands, to assess this situation from the perspective of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to improve this situation where necessary. Although information from previous studies was available on parts of some subjects, there was no overall picture. The views of children growing up, and young people who grew up on the islands were also unknown.

Aside from that, experts and chain partners needed a well-founded assessment of the situation of children on the islands. The study assesses this situation based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (see the chapter, Convention on the Rights of the Child). This convention covers all children in the Netherlands, providing clear criteria for the assessment of the various aspects of children's lives on an island.

Child on St. Eustatius. Children's Rights in the Caribbean Netherlands presents the results of the study performed on the island of St. Eustatius. Similar reports have been published for Saba and Bonaire. A separately published summary contains a brief outline of the results: Child on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. Children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands. Summary.

In conducting this study, we worked closely together with other parties such as national and local authorities and organizations, research institutions, care providers, parents and guardians and, of course, the children themselves.

#### 2 Goal

The primary goal of the study is to map out the situation in which children on St. Eustatius and the other islands of the Caribbean part of the Kingdom grow up. Based on this overview, the situation can subsequently be compared with the minimum requirements set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, making it a so-called baseline measurement.

A baseline measurement can be used to assess which measures are needed to make children's situation compliant or to ensure it remains compliant with the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

UNICEF hopes the report will prove helpful to all those who are in a position to make a positive difference for the situation of children's rights. It can furthermore also be used as a source of information by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in monitoring compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Over the course of the study, it emerged that this report might also serve as a starting point or impetus for the (further) formulation of integrated youth policy for the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands. There is a strong call for consistent youth policy coming from the islands. Collaboration between the various sectors is crucial on the small islands. And it is key that the situation on the islands, and not assumptions from the European Netherlands, be taken as the starting point.

Improving the situation of children's rights on the islands will require extensive stamina and continued focus. Numerous individuals and organizations have been working on that for years, with great energy and resolve. This report should never be taken as criticism of their commitment and efforts. It is intended to support developments that are already underway and aimed at bringing the situation of children into line with the requirements specified by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This report has therefore been written in a way that ensures it is readable by anyone with a concern for the situation that children are in.

#### 3 Period covered

Although the study started in 2010, UNICEF had previously also been looking into the situation on the islands to assess whether a formal study would be necessary, useful, and possible. The study into the children's rights situation on St. Eustatius – as well as on the other islands – was a lengthier and more difficult process than estimated beforehand. This was due to several factors, but predominantly to the fact that adequate information about and on the BES islands was largely lacking. To still compile an as comprehensive a picture of the situation in various areas as possible, efforts were made to gather information in all possible manners. Besides extensive desk-based research, anyone who was thought to be able to provide relevant information was contacted. Information gathered in this way was subsequently verified through multiple informers with a view to achieving maximum accuracy in the description of the situation. In some areas, however, we only had outdated information or no information at all. Wherever this was the case, the report states that.

The study will be completed with the presentation of the results on the islands in the Caribbean Netherlands in September 2013.

#### 4 Children of the Kingdom study

The Convention on the Rights of the Child bestows upon UNICEF the (shared) responsibility of monitoring compliance with the convention. As an advocate for children's rights, UNICEF takes this assignment extremely seriously, also with respect to children growing up in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The study into the children's rights situation in the Caribbean Netherlands is part of a large UNICEF study into the situation of children on the six islands: *Children of the Kingdom. Children's rights in the Dutch Caribbean*. For this study, UNICEF Netherlands

works closely with the regional UNICEF Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (TACRO).

Collaboration with UNICEF TACRO was focused on a study into the children's rights situation on Aruba, Curaçao, and St. Maarten. In these three independent countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Observatorio Social del Ecuador research institute mapped out the situation in which children grow up, under auspices of UNICEF TACRO.

The results of these studies are recorded in three reports: UNICEF Report on the situation of children and young people on Aruba, UNICEF Report on the situation of children and young people on Curaçao, UNICEF Report on the situation of children and young people on St. Maarten.<sup>1</sup>

These reports were presented to and reviewed with the authorities of Aruba, Curaçao, and St. Maarten, as well as other stakeholders on the islands. This took place in May 2013, prior to the official presentation of the complete study at the Children of the Kingdom symposium on May 23 2013.

Besides *Child on St. Eustatius*, there are two further reports on the children's rights situation in the Caribbean Netherlands, covering the other two islands: *Child on Saba* and *Child on Bonaire*. There is also an overall summary for all three islands together: *Child on Bonaire*, *St. Eustatius*, and *Saba*. *Children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands*.

In May 2013, UNICEF published a photo book that also lets children voice their opinions on their island and that provides brief information about the islands. This book is intended as an initial introduction to the islands and the children who live there. The book *Kind op een eiland. Kinderen over opgroeien op Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius en Sint Maarten* can be ordered from UNICEF or downloaded from the website.<sup>2</sup>

# 5 Starting point

The starting point for this study is the situation as it actually is for children on St. Eustatius, so not as it should be according to current rules or applicable policy.

The actual situation has been offset against the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This convention specifies rules for the full spectrum of children's lives.

Children's rights play a role in all areas of their lives: with regard to the basic necessities such as food, drink and housing, but also to the areas of school, religion, sports, health, play and friends, and to safety and opportunities for development. It is the responsibility of the Dutch state to ensure all Dutch children can exercise the rights granted to them by the convention – also when they live on an island.

### 6 Research organization

The children's rights situation on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba was first studied by the Netherlands' Verwey-Jonker institute in an exploratory study commissioned by UNICEF Nederland in 2011. The institute looked at which existing (statistical) data was available on the situation on these islands, and a staff member engaged children on the islands in several online chat sessions. However, the information that emerged in this exploratory study turned out to be insufficient to paint a clear picture of the children's rights situation on the three islands.

Supplementing this study, UNICEF launched a study on the BES islands in 2011. This study looked for new information and talked to experts on the islands and in the Netherlands. Multiple researchers worked on this study, under the auspices of an UNICEF study coordinator.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The reports are available on www.unicef.nl/koninkrijkskinderen, under the respective island.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> www.unicef.nl/koninkrijkskinderen.

There were also intensive contacts with children on each of the six islands, for which UNICEF Nederland teamed up with local organizations on the islands.

Researchers also spoke to various young people from the six islands who are now living in the Netherlands. *Stichting Alexander* organized several panel discussions to that end.

#### 7 Methodology

In this report, you will only find information about the methodology used for the study into the children's rights situation in the Caribbean Netherlands, the BES islands. This study is made up of various components that each followed a specific research methodology. To ensure that this study presents as complete a picture as possible of the children's rights situation on the BES islands, the study drew on various sources. A tried-and-tested research method was chosen for this study, which enables the comparison of specific situations to the relevant requirements set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>1</sup>

This study has 'cut up' the Convention on the Rights of the Child into the various areas that make up children's lives. *Child on St. Eustatius* focuses on eight subjects:

- · Family and parenting
- Education
- Health
- Safety
- · Recreation, play, and leisure time
- Participation
- · Housing conditions
- Financial situation

The children's rights situation in each of these areas is assessed by addressing the following in successive order:

- A description of the current situation.
- What is children's and young people's view of the situation?
- What do experts make of the situation?
- What studies and other literature are available on this subject?
- What does the Convention on the Rights of the Child say on this specific subject?
- How does the situation relate to the Convention on the Rights of the Child: the conclusion.

#### 7.1 Three perspectives

As mentioned earlier, this study sourced information from three different perspectives to get the most complete idea possible of children's lives on St. Eustatius:

- Views and experiences of children on the islands and young people who grew up on the islands.
- Views and experiences of experts.
- Knowledge sourced from (literature) studies.

All information gathered and described was subsequently reviewed by experts (see below).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> An earlier study compared the children's rights situation in asylum centers to the applicable demands of the convention. See: Kloosterboer, K. (2009). *Kind in het centrum. Kinderrechten in asielzoekerscentra.* Voorburg: UNICEF Nederland, Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland, Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers.

#### 7.2 Children

"Every child has the right to be free and to believe in whatever he wishes to believe in." (boy, 13 years old, St. Eustatius).

Those who inspired this study were expressly involved in it: the children on the islands. This seemed an obvious choice, considering the study's objective of wanting to paint a complete picture of their situation. However, during the study, it turned out to be far from self-evident that children's views are valued.

UNICEF surveyed a total of 106 children on all six of the islands. On each of the islands, around fifteen children expressed their views, mostly in individual interviews, but also in a few group discussions and chat sessions. We spoke to 'ordinary' children, mainly at schools and after-school programs. Interviews were done by local interviewers and one regular interviewer of UNICEF who was born and raised on one of the islands.

#### Children

This report refers to all zero-to-eighteen-year-olds as 'children,' following terminology used in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In some cases, however, it is important to be more precise. In such cases the term 'young people' may be used to refer to the age bracket of twelve to eighteen (and older).

#### Interviews

UNICEF wanted to hear from children themselves how they feel about their life. What's going well, what isn't going so well, and how could things be improved? In short, we wanted to hear what *they* think. Children are often very capable of clearly explaining what they find important. And sometimes they come up with solutions that never even occurred to grown-ups.

On each of the islands, interviewers spoke to children aged between eight and eighteen. The interviewers were first trained by the UNICEF study coordinator to give them the required knowledge on children's rights and to teach them specific skills for interviewing children. Each of these interviewers had previous experience of working with children. To make sure children would be able express themselves freely, the study used interviewers who speak the language of the children of the island and are familiar with the culture. Interviews were held in Papiamento, English, Dutch – and even in Spanish on one occasion.

The interview method and technique was adapted as well as possible to children's age, level of development, and their life world. Some of the children liked the fact that they could draw as they shared their experiences, others preferred to role-play what they would change if they ruled the island, while others were perfectly able to express their views on certain matters in a 'regular conversation.' The interviewers had lists of questions and subjects at hand, for whenever they felt the need to further structure the conversation. The interviews were semi-structured.

The interviews with the children do not comprise scientific or representative research, but are intended as an (initial) illustration of and to provide information about an as yet unknown perspective on the children's rights situation on the island: How do children themselves feel about growing up on one of the islands?

Most children were very excited to be allowed to take part in the study. Many of them were not used to expressing their views. Adults usually don't ask them for their opinions. Some were even genuinely surprised that we really wanted to know what they think about different kinds of things. In some cases, children were reluctant because they were afraid their words would come out in the island's small community. Many children gave

socially desirable answers, and a remarkably large number of children perceived problems in their friends, but not in themselves. Interviews lasted between twenty minutes and two hours.

Prior to interviewing children, we requested their parents' consent. After all, they are the children's legal representatives. Parents were asked to sign a consent form that was set in their language. We provided them with information about UNICEF, the study, the idea behind the interviews, and the subjects we would be discussing with their children. We also asked the parents for permission to record their children on video or photos and to use that material in due time.

On each of the islands we partnered with a local organization for children. They arranged one or two interviewers who would, together with the UNICEF interviewer, handle the interviews with the children. These organizations also selected the children on their respective islands. In doing so, we asked them to pay attention to the following: voluntariness, a good spread of girls and boys, educational level, background, and age.

We split the children up in groups and explained why we wanted to find out all sorts of things from them. We told them about children's rights, about UNICEF, about the study, and explained what subjects we wanted to talk to them about and why. On a large sticker, they could complete the sentence 'Every child has a right to...' which they all did very creatively.

After that, each child would talk to an interviewer in private. The interviews started with the interviewer making it clear to the child that he or she could at any time say that he or she did not want to talk about something, or wanted to talk about something the interviewer had not addressed. All children were handed a red STOP card that they could hold up whenever they didn't want to continue talking about a certain subject. This card was used only once during all individual interviews.

During the interviews with the children, all subjects that play a pivotal part in children's lives were raised: family and parenting, housing conditions, education, health, safety, recreation, play, and leisure time, financial situation, and participation. Children would share their views and experiences, while interviewers asked open questions. Children were also encouraged to share what they would change if they ruled the island.

#### Collaboration on St. Eustatius

On St. Eustatius, we spoke to a total of 21 children in 17 individual interviews and chat sessions with four children. The individual interviews were held in April 2012. They were prepared and conducted in collaboration with the Governor de Graaff school (elementary school) and the Gwendoline van Putten school (secondary education) en with the organization Mega D (after-school care). They made it possible for us to talk to children from different backgrounds, of different ages, and with different levels of education were approached to take part in the study. We asked them to particularly focus on ensuring a proportional spread of children with care needs and problems and children who do not have those kinds of issues. The schools and Mega D also provided sufficient and suitable (separate) rooms in which we could do the interviews.

Brenda van Putten and Iris Sporken, both teachers at de Governor de Graaff school, collaborated as interviewers as interviewers in the project. Iris is also involved in the Mega D foundation. They conducted the interviews with Sabina ter Borg, the UNICEF interviewer who grew up on Bonaire and spoke to children on all the islands. This was all done under the supervision of the UNICEF study coordinator. UNICEF provided all the materials required for the children's rights and interview training for interviewers, as well as materials used during the interviews with the children: recording equipment, a children's version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children's rights stickers, food and drink, clothes to allow the children to dress up, drawing materials, thank-you certificates, gifts.

The interviews took account of children's specific cultural backgrounds, as these are likely to strongly affect children's behavior. Some children on St. Eustatius grow up in a culture where shame and fear are very prominent. These children are afraid to voice their opinion due to the possible consequences. There are children with low self-esteem, who are ashamed of their background, family, appearance (and skin color), or school performance. This may lead to restraint in communication and them choosing to only say what they consider strictly necessary.

Needless to say, there are major differences in eloquence and openness from one child to the next. However, nearly all children who took part in the interviews were very excited to be asked to tell us about their lives. They took part in this study voluntarily, which can be expected to already constitute a kind of natural selection.

In June and July of 2011, chat sessions were held involving just four children on St. Eustatius, aged sixteen and seventeen. UNICEF commissioned the Verwey-Jonker institute to organize and conduct these online sessions with focus groups (and different sessions). On the island, the St. Eustatius Chapter of Red Cross Youth Wing helped make these sessions possible. These chat sessions are captured in the report entitled *Kinderen in Tel: ook voor de nieuwe (bijzondere) gemeenten; Kinderrechten-nulmeting en jeugdparticipatie op Bonaire, St. Eustatius en* Saba (Counting Children: also for the new (special) municipalities; Children's rights baseline measurement and youth participation on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba) from 2011.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for a selection of quotes from all children surveyed, as referenced in the sections on the various subjects.

On the <u>www.unicef.nl/koninkrijkskinderen</u> website, you can find a selection of quotes from children from all six islands.

#### **Anonymous**

On a (very) small island, everyone knows each other. That has a lot of benefits, but can also lead to difficulties. After all, there are things that you don't want everyone to know about. Although most of the children surveyed didn't mind their names being published alongside their quotes, we still chose not to. The children answered the question 'What do YOU think?' Without them, this report would never have existed.

#### 7.3 Young people

'Kids spend a lot of time with each other without adult supervision.' (boy, St. Eustatius).

This study also spoke to young people aged between 19 and 25 who grew up on the islands and now go to college or work in the Netherlands. They were consulted in extensive panel sessions. In total, 27 young people were involved, ten of whom grew up on the BES islands. They are currently residing in the Netherlands, are (just) of age, and can view their experience of growing up on the island from a different perspective. UNICEF commissioned *Stichting Alexander* to run these panel sessions. *Stichting Alexander* is a national institute for youth participation and participative youth studies. The report entitled *Jongeren in Nederland over de kinderrechtensituatie op Bonaire, St. Eustatius en Saba* (Young people in the Netherlands on the children's rights situation on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba), you will find records of these panel sessions. The outcome of these sessions were used in this report.

1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See also www.verwey-jonker.nl.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> There are also reports on the panel discussions with young people from Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten. These can be found on the website www.unicef.nl/koninkrijkskinderen under the respective island. They are also available on the Stichting Alexander website: www.st-alexander.nl.

#### 7.4 Experts

'We are dealing with issues here that are really serious from a Dutch point of view. Even though the problems are very serious, you have to proceed with respect and restraint. It's very important to use methods that work here, instead of just imposing Dutch methods.' (expert)

Input from experts was gathered in a variety of ways. There were many individual conversations with experts in the area of children on the islands, both locally and in the Netherlands. These were semi-structured conversations that ranged in duration from 30 minutes to several hours. These individual interviews were conducted by the study coordinator in the period from 2011 to February of 2013.

Experts in various fields were also asked for information by email and phone. This was handled by study staff and the study coordinator over the period from 2011 to early 2013.

In 2011 and 2012, expert meetings were organized, where experts from the BES islands expressed their views.

Finally, several experts reviewed and added to copy that focused on their area of expertise.

A total of 107 experts were consulted.

Every effort was made to ensure we spoke to all experts who are active in (one of) the various environments of children's lives and who are familiar with the situation on the islands. Nonetheless, there may be experts missing who should indeed feature on the list of experts surveyed.

Appendix 1 provides a selection of quotes from experts on the various subjects, while Appendix 2 contains a list of experts consulted for this study.

#### 7.5 Literature

This study drew on all existing and known information, research, and other sources of information on the situation of children on the BES islands. All statistical data relating to the situation of children on the islands was incorporated. Information about the actual situation — as available on websites, leaflets, literature, and the like — was also included and processed in the description of the current situation of each subject. Literature also includes reports on conventions and recommendations by the relevant regulatory bodies, such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Please refer to Appendix 3 for the full bibliography. On the <a href="https://www.unicef.nl/koninkrijkskinderen">www.unicef.nl/koninkrijkskinderen</a> website, you will find, under the island of St. Eustatius, a PDF file with brief summaries of all literature used, sorted by subject. This will allow you to quickly find out where to find certain information if you want to find out more about a certain subject.

#### 7.6 **Database**

A total of 293 sources were consulted: children and young people, experts, literature. All information gathered has been recorded in a database. Children, young people, and experts made a total of 2,331 statements on the situation of children on the islands. All information in the database is available to researchers from UNICEF upon request and after consultation.

	Bonaire	St. Eustatius	Saba	Total
Interviews with children	11	17	16	44
Children in chat sessions	8	4	6	18
Total children	19	21	22	62
Young people (18+)				10
Experts				107
Literature				114
Total no. of sources:			293	
Total no. of statements: 2,331			2,331	

Table 1: Number of sources used for the study.

# 8 Website and publicity

During the study, the www.unicef.nl/koninkrijkskinderen website was launched to publish information about the study. This website presents, among other things, information about the islands and the study approach, as well as regular news items. As the study unfolded, interviewers who spoke to children posted updates on their blogs on the website.

In its summer 2012 edition, UNICEF Magazine devoted a large article to the situation on the islands. The study also prompted various other media, both on the islands and in the Netherlands, to report on children's situation. Please refer to the website.

In the summer of 2012, the IKON broadcasting organization's *Spraakmakende Zaken* [Controversial Affairs] series was devoted entirely to children's rights. The series consisted of six episodes, three of which were set in the European Netherlands and three in the Caribbean Netherlands. This series – presented by former politician Paul Rosenmöller – was inspired by UNICEF's activities in the area of children's rights in the Netherlands and the study on children on the islands.

The episode set on St. Eustatius focused on parenting (August 9th, 2012), the one on Saba on education (August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012), and the Bonaire episode dealt with the most important subject, sex (August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012). <sup>1</sup> These programs can still be viewed on ikonrtv.nl.

# 9 Presentation of the study and Children of the Kingdom symposium

The results of the study into the children's rights situation on St. Eustatius will be presented and explained on the islands themselves in September 2013. Several stakeholders will attend that presentation to enable a joint evaluation of how this report can help improve the children's rights situation on St. Eustatius.

On 23 May 2013, a large symposium was held in the Dutch city of Leiden under the title of Children of the Kingdom. The studies into the children's rights situation on each of the six islands of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, including the one on St. Eustatius, were presented at this symposium. The reports were presented to the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Ronald Plasterk, who is the coordinating member of government. Various stakeholders from the islands attended and played an active role at the symposium.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For a more extensive overview see: www.unicef.nl/nieuws/agenda/spraakmakende-zaken-afl-4/.

This symposium set out to do various things:

- To inform people on the situation of children on the six islands.
- To garner support in order to get the position of children on the islands on the agenda and where necessary to improve it.
- To facilitate stakeholders in building and maintaining a network in the area of children's rights on the islands.
- To inspire everyone to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child, also for children on the islands.

# The island

#### 1 Growing up on St. Eustatius

St. Eustatius is an island in the North Caribbean area, about 240 kilometers east of Puerto Rico. Together with Saba and St. Maarten it belongs to the Windward (*Bovenwindse*) Islands and together the three islands are also called the SSS-islands. St. Eustatius is the most southern island of the three, about sixty kilometers south of St. Maarten.

St. Eustatius is located more than 800 kilometers north of Bonaire and more than thirty kilometers south-east of Saba. The distance between St. Eustatius and the European Netherlands is about 7,000 kilometers.

The capital is Oranjestad. The locals call the island Statia.

St. Eustatius is after Saba the second smallest inhabited island of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The island has a surface area of 21 square kilometers.

St. Eustatius has different landscapes with volcanic parts, plains and hills. The 600 meter high extinguished volcano The Quill is located on the south-eastern part of the island. The St. Eustatius coastline consists of cliffs with bays and small sand- and rubble beaches.

The island has a tropical climate. The whole year, a fresh north-eastern trade wind blows on St. Eustatius combined with a low relative humidity. The average year temperature is 27.5°C. St. Eustatius is situated in a zone that is prone to hurricanes. The hurricane season runs from July to November.

On 8 March 2013, St. Eustatius welcomed its 4,000th inhabitant, when the eight-year-old Sheidon Berkel moved to the island to join his father and grandmother. He was born on St. Maarten.<sup>1</sup>

The number of inhabitants on St. Eustatius has strongly increased in recent years. On 1 January 2012, the island had 3,791 inhabitants according to the counts of Statistics Netherlands (abbreviated as CBS in Dutch). In 2010 this was still 2,886.

The official languages on the island are Dutch and English. English has become the most important language of communication for the majority of the population.

Currently, St. Eustatius' main source of income is tourism and the American company NuStar Energy has a large oil-transfer station on the island.

Columbus was the first person to put St. Eustatius on the map in 1493. The Dutch took possession of the island in 1636. St. Eustatius was an important transit port in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

England took over St. Eustatius in 1776, followed by alternating French and English occupations and the country's economy collapsed. As from 1816, St. Eustatius became Dutch property again.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See http://caribischnetwerk.ntr.nl/2013/03/08/statia-verwelkomt-4000ste-inwoner/

St. Eustatius		
Nickname	The Golden Rock	
Capital	Oranjestad	
Surface area	21 km <sup>2</sup>	
Official language	Dutch and English	
Most widely spoken language	English: 83% Spanish: 6% Dutch: 4%	
Religion	Methodist: 27% Roman Catholic: 25% Seventh-day Adventist: 21% Other: 19% None: 8%	
Population	3,791	
Children (0-20 years)	894 (23.6%)	
Source of income	Oil, tourism	
Currency	American Dollar (USD)	
Government	Part of the Netherlands as a 'public body' since 2010	
No. of elementary schools	4	
No. of public high schools	1	
University	University of St. Eustatius School of Medicine	
Hospitals	St. Eustatius Health Care Foundation (Queen Beatrix Medical Center)	
Holiday	16 November, Statia Day	

Table 2: St. Eustatius details 1

St. Eustatius has a fairly even age spread of children (see below).

#### 2 Caribbean Netherlands

Together, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba make up the Caribbean Netherlands, and are also referred to as the BES islands. On October 10 2010, the country of the 'Netherlands Antilles' was broken up. On that date, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba became part of the Netherlands. They are now 'public authorities' and are referred to as 'special municipalities' in day-to-day communications (see below for government situation).

#### 2.1 Brief history

Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten are former colonies of the Netherlands. In 1954, instead of gaining independence, these islands became part of a kind of commonwealth of three countries: Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles, and Suriname (until 1975). These countries worked together on matters affecting the whole kingdom (defense, nationality, foreign policy). For other subjects, each of the three countries had their own legislation and policy.

In 1986, Aruba exited the Netherlands-Antilles governmental unit to become an independent country within the Kingdom. The remaining islands, however, did not become a single unit.

The division of responsibility between the mainland and islands was unclear at the time, and Curaçao was considered too dominant by the other islands. This would produce

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Sources: statline.cbs.nl; beautiful-bonaire.nl; dutchcaribbeanlegalportal.com

tension.

The dismantling of the country of the Netherlands Antilles was kicked off by a referendum on St. Maarten in the year 2000. Just under seventy percent of voters voted in favor of independent status within the Kingdom.

#### 2.2 Children in the Caribbean Netherlands

Over 5,000 children are growing up in the Caribbean Netherlands, which is about a quarter of the BES islands' total population. The chart below shows the number of children on the three islands and the age spread.

	Bonaire	St. Eustatius	Saba	Caribbean Netherlands
Children 0 - 5 years	992	199	79	1,270
Children 5 - 10 years	1,011	238	99	1,348
Children 10 - 15 years	1,059	248	84	1,391
Children 15 - 20 years	998	209	79	1,286
Total no. of children	4,060	894	341	5,295
Total population	16,541	3,791 <sup>1</sup>	1,971	21,585

Table 3: Population – as at 1 January 2012.<sup>2</sup>

#### 2.3 Government situation in a nutshell

On October 10 2010, the country of the Netherlands Antilles was dismantled. Curação and St. Maarten became independent countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which Aruba had already been since 1986.

Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba became 'public authorities' as defined in Section 134 of the Dutch constitution. They were integrated into the Dutch political unit.

The governmental set-up of the public authorities of Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba largely resembles that of municipalities on the mainland. Due to the islands' special position, however, they need to (be able to) apply different legislation and regulations. The islands were therefore designated public authorities<sup>3</sup> and the special position of these public authorities was laid down in the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands<sup>4</sup> (hereinafter: the Charter).

#### 2.4 Constitution and Charter

The Constitution of the Netherlands applies in both parts of the Netherlands: both in the European and the Caribbean part. Section 1 of the Constitution formulates the principle of equality: 'All those who are in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination based on religion, personal beliefs, political affinity, race, sex, or any other grounds is excluded.'

This constitutional provision does not mean that all legislation and regulations in the European and Caribbean Netherlands must be exactly the same. Based on agreements between the Netherlands and the administrative authorities on the islands, deviating rules

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Statia welcomed its 4000th inhabitant on 8 March 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Source: CBS (2012). Statline, Bevolking Caribisch Nederland.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See: Act of 17 May 2010 providing rules with regard to the public entities Bonaire,

St. Eustatius and Saba (Invoeringswet openbare lichamen Bonaire, St. Eustatius en Saba).

 $<sup>^4</sup>$  Act of 28 October 1954, containing Acceptance of a Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

can be implemented. And this is exactly what they have done: much of existing pre-2010 Netherlands-Antillean legislation was preserved after the transition. An agreement was made to take a five-year period to gradually migrate to Dutch law. However, a lot of new Dutch legislation has been passed in the meantime.

The Charter regulates the political relationship between the independent countries in the Kingdom of the Netherlands: The Netherland, Aruba, Curaçao, and St. Maarten. This Charter specifies that these countries look after their own affairs independently. Together, they are responsible for issues that affect the Kingdom as a whole: the kingdom affairs. Aside from that, the Charter provides rules for mutual collaboration, assistance, consultation, and the countries' form of government. The Charter came into force in 1954.

Section 1 of the Charter defines the countries that make up the Kingdom. The second subsection of this section states that Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba come under the government of the Netherlands. It also specifies that the BES islands can be subjected to rules and that other specific measures can be taken with a view to economic and social circumstances, the large distance from the European part of the Netherlands, their insular nature, small surface and population, geographic circumstances, the climate, and other factors that make that these islands are essentially different from the European part of the Netherlands.

This 'differentiation provision' has given rise to some debate, and the government has meanwhile submitted a bill to amend the law by replacing this provision with a section in the Constitution (see below).

Whether and how such a provision will materialize, the assessment framework for specific situations and based on which a decision can be made to implement deviating legislation and regulations continues to be Section 1 of the Constitution.

Legislative and regulatory differences between the European and the Caribbean Netherlands have on various occasions caused discontent among the population and authorities on the islands, who have sometimes felt they were considered less important. It is unclear to many people why and on which points a distinction is made.

In March 2013, the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights issued advice on the application of the equality principle in relation to rights stipulated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. For further details, please refer to the next chapter (The Convention on the Rights of the Child).

#### 2.5 Conventions

The Dutch government has made a reservation to several conventions to which the Netherlands is a party. These conventions then apply only to the European part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The important and well-known human rights conventions are applicable in the Caribbean Netherlands, such as the European Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child applies in full on the BES islands (see below).

#### 2.6 Right to self-determination

The right to self-determination is a nation's right to freely and voluntarily choose their sovereignty. They can choose between independence, 'free association' (with an independent state(s)), or integration into an independent state. The overriding objective of the right to self-determination is to ensure the well-being of the population.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> United Nations Resolutions 1514 and 2625.

Prior to the changes to the political situation of the islands of the former Netherlands Antilles in 2010, the BES islands were polled on what they wanted. In referendums in 2004 and 2005, Bonaire and Saba opted for direct ties with the Netherlands, while St. Eustatius chose preservation of the Netherlands Antilles as a country. St. Eustatius' current status is therefore not based on the will of its people.

Results of negotiations about the BES islands were not presented to the population of Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. It can be assumed that at the time of the referendums many of the islanders did not realize what the consequences were of the various options presented to them. Experts therefore conclude that the status of the three islands does not comply with the requirements of the right to self-determination and is at odds with the international decolonization regulations<sup>1</sup>. They claim that Bonairians, Statians, and Sabans should be consulted again, after having been provided with extensive information.<sup>2</sup>

The BES islands still have a right to self-determination, also after the change to their political status in 2010, according to former State Secretary for Kingdom Relations, Ank Bijleveld<sup>3</sup>.

#### 2.7 Post-2015

On 10 October 2015, a final status will be chosen for Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. That is five years after the political changes. In 2015, or sooner, the current status of public authorities can be evaluated. Until then, the BES islands – according to the former State Secretary of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Ank Bijleveld – can still choose either of two options: 1) maintain the current status, meaning that of public authority (or municipality) within the Netherlands, or 2) independence.

In theory, the BES islands could also choose to separate from the Netherlands. In practice, however, that ship seems to have sailed. A bill to amend the Constitution has been submitted to the States General regulating the islands' constitutional position in the Constitution. Under that bill, the BES islands would only be able to choose whether to continue as a public authority or as a municipality. Independence would then no longer be an option.

The House of Representatives of Dutch Parliament passed the bill, following which the Senate suspended deliberation on the bill. The Dutch Senate wants to await the results of the evaluation of the new political structure within the Kingdom in 2015 and hence comply with the sequentiality of an evaluation of the political structure before laying down a (new) political structure in the Constitution.<sup>5</sup>

#### 2.8 Island government and organization

The St. Eustatius Public Body is organized as follows. Day-to-day administration is handled by the *governing council*. This council is made up of the *gezaghebber* (comparable to the role of mayor of a municipality) and two *deputies* (comparable to aldermen). The *island secretary* offers official support. The governing council is responsible for making and implementing policy.

At the start of 2013, St. Eustatius's gezaghebber was Mr. Gerald Berkel.

The *island council* is the elected parliament of the public authority, comparable to a municipal council in the Netherlands. This council plays a role in policy-making and oversees the execution thereof. St. Eustatius's island council has five members. The members appoint the deputies, who together with the lieutenant governor make up the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Cf. Duijf, Charlotte M.A.M., and Alfred H.A. Soons (2011). *The right to self-determination and the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles*. Wolf Legal Publishers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Duijf, Charlotte, and Fred Soons. *Zelfbeschikkingsrecht Bonairianen, Statianen en Sabanen*. in: *Openbaar Bestuur*. October 2011.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Handelingen (Proceedings) 2009/10, nr. 28, p. 1171.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Kamerstukken II (Parliamentary papers) 2011-2012, nr. 33 131, 2 Constitutionele basis openbare lichamen BES (Grondwetswijziging).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Kamerstukken I (Parliamentary papers) 2012-2013, nr 33131, C.

governing council. In early 2013, the island council consisted for four seats for the Democratische Partij/DP and one seat for the Progressive Labour Party/PLP. <sup>1</sup>

Caribbean Netherlands	Municipality
Island council (councilors)	Municipal council (councilors)
Governing council	Municipal Executive
Lieutenant Governor	Mayor
Deputy	Alderman

Table 4: Comparison of forms of government.

#### 2.9 New rules

The Dutch government and the public authorities have agreed to limit the introduction of legislation over a period over five years following the transition in 2010.<sup>2</sup> The idea was to allow citizens and administrators some time to get settled after the political and administrative changes that already involved a great deal of new regulations.

Whether this 'legislative restraint' was successful in practice is unclear. The intention was to only revise the fiscal and social security system, and to implement changes in education and (health) care, but numerous other new rules were also introduced apart from that. According to the Kingdom Representative (see below), the population and institutions of the three islands – companies, authorities, schools, hospitals – are unable to process so many new rules within such a short time span.

The Netherlands Court of Audit has found it impossible to assess whether the agreement to exercise restraint has been honored, because it is unclear to which legislation and regulations this requirement of restraint was to apply.<sup>3</sup>

The sections about the specific subjects each provide information about relevant legislation and regulations.

#### 2.10 Level of facilities

Like regulations, the level of facilities in the areas of education, health, social security, and safety was also the object of an agreement between the Dutch government and the BES islands. They agreed to set standards for the required level of facilities in each of these policy areas. This was supposed to happen based on a description of the current situation, but there was insufficient information about the current state of affairs. The Netherlands Court of Audit concluded that the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science and the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport have adopted different approaches. Where the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sciences has set out to raise the level of facilities on the BES islands to bring it into line with that in the European Netherlands, the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport wants to define target levels of facilities for each care provider separately.

The sections about the specific subjects each provide information about the level of facilities in the respective areas.

#### 2.11 Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is responsible for the BES islands. He intends to be the coordinating minister for all matters relating to the islands. There are several line ministries that are responsible for policy in individual fields. The Ministry of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See also the website of the St. Eustatius authorities: www.statiagovernment.com.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Various agreements have been made about this. For an overview see: Algemene Rekenkamer, Rijksoverheid en Caribisch Nederland: *naleving van afspraken*, House of Representatives, session year 2012-2013, 33471, no. 2.
<sup>3</sup> Idem.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2008), Decision list BES administrative consultation, 31 January 2008.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Algemene Rekenkamer, Rijksoverheid en Caribisch Nederland: *naleving van afspraken*, House of Representatives, session year 2012-2013, 33471, no. 2.

Education, Culture, and Science, for example, is responsible for education in the Caribbean Netherlands, the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport is responsible for youth policy, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is tasked with fighting poverty on the islands, and the Ministry of Security and Justice is the point of contact for the fight against crime.

However, it is important to have a coordinating government member who ensures there are no 'gaps' between the realization of the various responsibilities. This government member can also see to it that ministries work together and that the BES islands are consulted and kept informed. The current minister of the Interior and Employment, Ronald Plasterk, has expressed his intention to fulfill this role as such and to prevent the Caribbean Netherlands being faced with unnecessary rules. <sup>1</sup>

#### 2.12 Kingdom Representative

There is a Kingdom Representative ('Rijksvertegenwoordiger') for the BES islands who liaises with the public authorities in the Caribbean Netherlands and the national government in the Hague. He is based on Bonaire, but also has an office on St. Eustatius and Saba. In May 2011, Wilbert Stolte was appointed Kingdom Representative for a term of six years.

The Kingdom Representative has several tasks. First of all, he is tasked with ensuring (civil servants of) ministries on the islands have effective working relationships with the island authorities. He must also see to it that the three public authorities govern the island adequately. He reports back to the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations every six months. He also reports on the situation on the islands in an annual report.

In his 2011 report, he indicated that Bonairians, Statians, and Sabans complained about the loss of their identity and culture, the influx of Dutch people from Western Europe, and expressed a fear that they were losing control over their island's affairs. Such sentiments of discontent are still present. This is partly also down to criticism of legislation for euthanasia, abortion, and gay marriage that the islands are obliged to accept.

In his 2012 report, the Kingdom Representative again referred to several bottlenecks, while also expressing optimism for the future. 'That this historic transition did not go smoothly is clear to everyone. It was, in fact, never going to be easy, considering the complexity. Recognition of this given will automatically lead to a willingness to adapt and change.'

#### 2.13 Children's Ombudsman

Since 1 April 2011, the Netherlands has had a Children's Ombudsman, who comes under the office of the National Ombudsman. The Children's Ombudsman focuses on compliance with the rights of children and young people.

The Children's Ombudsman advises children and young people on ways of asserting their rights. Aside from that, the Children's Ombudsman oversees compliance with children's rights by the government in the Netherlands, but also by private organizations in education, child care, youth care, and health care. He advises parliament and organizations, and raises awareness of children's rights among the people. The first Children's Ombudsman is Marc Dullaert. He reports to the House of Representatives of Dutch Parliament on an annual basis.

The Children's Ombudsman has stated in various publications that his mandate extends 'across the entire territory of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and therefore covers the Caribbean Netherlands as well.' Upon further inquiry, however, this turned out to be erroneous. The Children's Ombudsman's mandate stretches across the Netherlands in its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> TK 2013, Letter to the House of Representatives of 30 January 2013 about the minister's trip of 19-27 January 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The legal basis is the Act on the Public Bodies of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba (WolBES).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Kingdom Representative for the Public Bodies of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, *Voortgangsrapportage 2011,* February 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Children's Ombudsman (2011). Wij laten van je horen; Jaarverslag 2011. Den Haag.

entirety, including the Caribbean Netherlands. <sup>1</sup>

In his 2012 Children's Rights Monitor, the Children's Ombudsman attempted to map the situation in the Caribbean Netherlands. The Children's Ombudsman does, however, note in this same publication that little information is available about compliance with children's rights on these islands.<sup>2</sup>

The way in which the Children's Ombudsman will be fulfilling the mandate for children growing up in the Caribbean Netherlands is as yet to be determined. What is clear, however, is that he will be teaming up with the National Ombudsman who is already active on the BES islands.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Information received in an email from Rogier Oet, Children's Ombudsman staff member, 25 April 2013.

 $<sup>^{2}</sup>$  Children's Ombudsman (2012). Kinderrechtenmonitor 2012. The Hague.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See www.nationaleombudsman.nl.

# The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The situation of children on the islands can be assessed in various ways. For this study, a choice was made to use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, hereinafter also referred to as UNCRC or Children's Rights Convention, as the as the basis for assessment.

In this chapter, you will first find information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ensuing responsibilities for the state of the Netherlands. Following that, this chapter will go into how the Netherlands is to account for its compliance with children's rights and to whom. You will also find an explanation of how this convention is used as a measuring tool. This chapter will close with recent recommendations by the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights on implementation of the convention on the islands. For more elaborate details about the convention and other international legislation regarding children's legal position, please refer to the *Handboek Internationaal Jeugdrecht* [International Children's Rights Handbook].<sup>1</sup>

# 1 The Convention on the Rights of the Child at a glance

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a relatively young convention. The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the convention on November 20<sup>th</sup> 1989. Thirty years earlier, on November 20<sup>th</sup> 1959, the United Nations adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. While this declaration was not legally binding, the convention is, imposing 'hard' obligations on member states. The Netherlands has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: it came into force on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1995.

#### 1.1 Universal

The UNCRC is a special human rights convention. It is of a universal nature in a variety of ways, which is what makes this convention so valuable in relation to other instruments. The convention covers all rights of all children. It specifies classical freedoms that force states to exercise restraint in various areas, while also describing fundamental social rights that encourage states to take action.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the world's most ratified human rights convention. Only two countries have only signed the convention, but not (yet) ratified it: the United States and Somalia. 193 countries have ratified it.

#### 1.2 Vision

The convention reflects the vision that children are people who need support en route to adulthood. Like any human being, children have rights. Aside from that, children need to be protected and given opportunities for development.

The convention does not define children based on what they are not (not adults yet, not yet competent, not yet fully developed intellectually). It is about what they are.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Blaak, Mirjam, et al. (2012). *Handboek Internationaal Jeugdrecht.* Leiden: Defence for Children.

#### 1.3 Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to all children, all persons below the age of eighteen.

#### 1.4 Contents

Made up of 54 articles, the UNCRC is intended to improve children's position in society. The rights can be subdivided into four categories: protection rights, special protection rights, facilities, and participation rights.

The convention is organized as follows:

Definition of child.

General implementation methods.

General principles.

Civil rights and liberties.

Family environment and alternative care.

Basic rights in the area of health care, education, leisure time, and cultural activities. Special protection measures.

#### 1.5 Basic principles

The convention has four basic principles (see below for details):

- 1. All rights apply to all children: non-discrimination (Article 2).
- 2. The best interests of the child are the primary consideration in all decisions (Article 3).
- 3. Right to life and development (Article 6).
- 4. Respect for the child's views (Article 12).

#### 1.6 Holistic

The articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are closely interrelated and form one single unit.

#### 1.7 Binding

By ratifying the convention, states commit to implementing it. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is legally binding. Whenever other treaties may be applied, the UNCRC states that the regulation that is most favorable for the child shall prevail. Treaty law prevails over national legislation.

#### 1.8 The Committee on the Rights of the Child

The Geneva-based UN Committee on the Rights of the Child monitors member states' compliance with their obligations under the UNCRC. Member states are required to report on the children's rights situation in their country every five years. The committee issues recommendations and publishes General Comments to provide more elaborate explanation on specific subjects. See below under reporting.

# The Convention on the Rights of the Child in the (Caribbean) Netherlands

For the Netherlands, the Convention on the Rights of the Child came into force on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1995. As of that date, our country is subject to obligations from the convention for all children in Dutch jurisdiction. That means that the convention is also directly and fully applicable to children on the islands of Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was already applicable on these islands when they were still part of the Netherlands Antilles. Since 2010, the Netherlands has been responsible for the full realization of rights specified by the convention in the Caribbean Netherlands.

International treaties are signed and negotiated by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in consultation with the countries of the Kingdom. Following that, each of the countries of the Kingdom is required to individually ratify (implicitly or explicitly) conventions. The Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles, and Aruba ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1995, January 16<sup>th</sup> 1998, and January 17<sup>th</sup> 2001 respectively.

Curaçao and St. Maarten, which became independent countries within the Kingdom in 2010, are still governed by the conventions as these applied to the Netherlands Antilles before then. The governments of Curaçao, St. Maarten, and Aruba are responsible for implementation of the Children's Rights Convention in their country.

Since 2010, the islands of Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba are part of the Netherlands (for more details, please refer to the section entitled The Island). This makes the Dutch government responsible for compliance with children's rights on these three islands.

The Netherlands has made a reservation to three articles of the convention. From March 1995, the Netherlands has been obliged to abide by the agreements. The Dutch government must make sure national legislation and regulations and their policy are aligned with the convention. Wherever this is not the case, national rules must be amended, while the rules of the convention shall apply in the meantime.

# 3 Reporting on the Convention on the Rights of the Child

To monitor whether states are honoring their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, they are required to report on this subject to the Committee on the Rights of the Child every five years.

#### 3.1 The Committee on the Rights of the Child

Every country that is party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child has assumed the obligation to report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva on 'measures they have taken in implementing the rights recognized in the Convention, as well as on progress made in terms of enjoyment of these rights.' This happens by way of country reports, which result in recommendations by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The committee is made up of eighteen independent experts in the area of children's rights. They meet three times a year to assess all reports that were submitted.

NGOs can also submit independent reports on the children's rights situation in their country. These reports are discussed at a separate closed session, three months ahead of the government session. The committee will extrapolate a list of issues from such deliberations, which the committee subsequently wants answered prior to the government session. The session with the government is a public one. The committee will formulate recommendations based on this session: Concluding Observations.

#### 3.2 Reports from the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Netherlands has been a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child since 1995. Two years later, the Dutch government submitted its initial report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Several NGOs, such as the *Kinderrechtencollectief* [Children's Rights Collective] and the Dutch Section of the International Commission of Jurists, submitted their own reports. The committee looked at the government's report in September 1999.

In April 2002, the Dutch government submitted its second report to the committee. Aruba submitted its first report in that same month, and the Children's Rights Collective submitted another report of its own. The committee debated the government report in January 2004, and formulated 57 recommendations.

In 2007, the Dutch government reported to the Committee on the Rights of the Child for the third time. Aruba submitted its second report, and the country of the Netherlands Antilles submitted its first report to the committee.

On January 30<sup>th</sup> 2009, the committee issued the Netherlands, Aruba, and the Netherlands Antilles 86 recommendations on the implementation of children's rights in these three countries.

In 2012, the Dutch government submitted its fourth report. The Children's Rights Collective NGO again produced a report of its own. The most recent government report is yet to be evaluated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

#### 3.3 The committee on children on the BES islands

On January 30<sup>th</sup> 2009, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child published its Concluding Observations on the children's rights situation in the Netherlands. In these observations, the committee expressed concern about the situation on the islands, issuing various recommendations for improvement.

The chapters on the various subjects will specify the committee's concerns in these respective areas.

# 4 The Convention on the Rights of the Child as a measuring tool

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the basis for this study. The study maps the situation of children growing up on one of the three islands of Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. Such an overview was lacking until now. The study paints a comprehensive picture of the situation of children in the Caribbean Netherlands.

The next step was to look at to what extent this situation is in line with the requirements the Children's Rights Convention specifies for our country. The UNCRC is used as the assessment framework or measuring tool. Adequate use of the convention as a touchstone requires a few prior comments.

First of all, the UNCRC provides minimum standards. As a rich country, the Netherlands is able, and encouraged, to do more. Whenever there are provisions that are more favorable for children, these will prevail. The Convention on the Rights of the Child serves three important purposes. Needless to say, it is a legal document. The convention also contains an educational assignment. It is also important that it offers a solid basis for the development of youth policy. This comes to the fore in the wording of many of the convention's provisions: 'The State Parties shall...' This is how the Convention on the Rights of the Child can be used as a measuring tool for the situation of children on the islands.

In their explanatory notes to the convention, the Committee on the Rights of the Child states that the objective of the convention and the wording of Article 4 dictate that states must create legislation that is aligned with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and this legislation must be put into practice. Practical realization of certain rights may require special measures for certain groups of children to get rid of disadvantages. <sup>1</sup>

#### 4.1 Basic principles

As indicated above, the Convention on the Rights of the Child contains four basic principles. These are the starting point in checking children's situation against the UNCRC. These basic principles are formulated in Articles 2, 3, 6, and 12 of the UNCRC.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child (2003). *General Comment no. 5, General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.* CRC/GC/2003/5.

Each of these articles will be outlined below to enable determination of how to translate these basic principles to the situation of children on the islands.

#### Non-discrimination

Article 2

- States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to
  each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the
  child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, color, sex, language, religion, political
  or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth, or other
  status.
- 2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

The rights specified in the convention apply to every child. Discrimination is not allowed, and states are under an obligation to protect children against discrimination. The government must ensure Dutch legislation does not contain provisions and stipulations that are of a discriminatory nature.

This means that all rights apply in full to children on the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands. They have to be treated equally to children in the European Netherlands. Socially accepted standards therefore also apply to children on the islands.

Article 2 stresses that rights apply to all children within a state's jurisdiction. Even when the government decides to delegate obligations under the convention to lower-level governments, such as municipal or public authorities, the central government retains final responsibility for ensuring the rights to all children on its territory. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has confirmed this in explanatory notes to the convention. <sup>1</sup>

#### The child's best interests

#### Article 3

- 1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
- States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary
  for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her
  parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and,
  to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.
- 3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.

The child's best interests must be the primary consideration in all actions concerning children. This article is considered a guiding principle for all other provisions of the convention.

Children must be assured of protection and care, by parents or child protection and youth care services (Paragraph 2).

Facilities must have sufficient and qualified staff (Paragraph 3). The same goes for all facilities for children on the islands, such as youth care, education, and health care.

The UNCRC does not further specify 'the child's best interests.' These also differ per child and per situation. However, there are indeed ideas about a more concrete definition of a child's best interests. As early as in 1989, two psychologists and behavioral therapists, Heiner and Bartels, identified twelve factors for optimum development of a child. In 2006,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child (2003). *General Comment no. 5, General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.* CRC/GC/2003/5.

Kalverboer and Zijlstra translated these factors into fourteen conditions for development that are linked to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Prolonged absence of these conditions will lead to developmental damage in the child. These are the following fourteen conditions, whereby the first seven relate to family, and the second seven to society.

Best interests of the child – conditions for development:

- 1. Adequate care: care for health and physical well-being, such as clothes, food, and accommodation.
- 2. A safe physical direct environment: physical protection of the child in the family, no abuse, no toxic influences, no hazardous housing conditions.
- 3. Affective climate: security with support and understanding from parents, suited to the child
- 4. Supportive parenting structure: regularity, stimulation, control, setting boundaries, room for child's own initiative, neither too much nor too little responsibility for the child.
- 5. Adequate role model behavior by parent: the child can copy parents' behavior, actions, standards, and values.
- 6. Interest: parent shows an interest in the child and its social environment.
- 7. Continuity in parenting and care and future prospects: parents build a secure bond with the child, basic trust is maintained by parents' availability.
- 8. Safe physical, broader environment: safe neighborhood and society. No war.
- 9. Respect: child's environment takes child's needs and feelings seriously.
- 10. Social network: child and family have different available sources of support.
- 11. Education: child is schooled and enjoys an education, and is able to develop its talents.
- 12. Interaction with peers: child interacts with other children in different situations, matching the child's level of development.
- 13. Adequate role model behavior in society: child interacts with others whose behavior, values, and standards it can copy.
- 14. Stability in housing conditions, future prospects: changes in child's life are pre-announced and clear. Identification figures and support sources continue to exist. Society offers the child future prospects.

# Life and development

Article 6

- 1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.
- 2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

This article specifies an obligation to guarantee the development of children on the island 'to the maximum extent possible.' In correlation with the best interests of the child, Article 3, this means that the government must go to every effort to ensure children are able to develop safely and freely. Compliance with other convention provisions – such as the right to health care – contributes to realization of this right.

#### **Participation**

Article 12

- 1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
- For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Kalverboer, M.E. & A.E. Zijlstra (2006). *Het belang van het kind in het Nederlandse recht: Voorwaarden voor ontwikkeling vanuit een pedagogisch perspectief.* Amsterdam: SWP.

Children have a right to express their views freely, in all matters affecting the child. Children who are capable of forming their own views have the right to express them, and these views must be given due weight.

Article 12 of the convention makes it very clear that we should not talk about children (as a legal object) but rather talk to them: children are persons with legal rights. Children can help create insight into matters that concern them. Their best interests should then also be taken as the starting point (Article 3).

This, too, is an important article for children in the Caribbean Netherlands.

#### 4.2 Other provisions and children on the islands

The Convention on the Rights of the Child covers children's entire living environment, which this study has split up into eight subjects:

- Family and parenting
- Education
- Health
- Safety
- · Recreation, play, and leisure time
- Participation
- Housing conditions
- Financial situation

Together, these eight subjects cover children's entire living environment. Every possible issue that affects children comes under one of these eight subjects. Previous UNICEF research used a highly similar set-up in applying the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a yardstick.<sup>1</sup>

The conclusions for each of these subjects will specify what the Convention on the Rights of the Child says about the subject in question and which articles are relevant, while also providing an assessment of the degree of compliance with the minimum requirements stipulated by the convention.

# 5 Netherlands Institute for Human Rights

In March 2013, the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights issued its advice entitled 'Equal treatment in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Caribbean Netherlands.' In their advice, the institution addresses the question of whether – and if so on which conditions – a distinction can be made between the Caribbean Netherlands and the European Netherlands in the implementation of the rights from the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In December 2012<sup>2</sup>, UNICEF asked the institution for advice on the following three questions:

- 1. When can a distinction in the treatment of the people of one country, the Netherlands, be justified; what can be considered 'unequal cases' and how specifically should this be defined?
- 2. What kind of substantiation is required when the government cites unequal cases to justify unequal treatment?
- 3. The UNCRC offers minimum standards for the rights of the child. Is the Dutch government allowed to differentiate between children growing up in the European Netherlands and children growing up in the Caribbean Netherlands, and hence push aside Art. 2 of the UNCRC? If so, in which specific situations will the Dutch

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Kloosterboer, Karin (2009). *Kind in het Centrum, Kinderrechten in Asielzoekerscentra*. Den Haag: UNICEF Nederland, Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland, Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> UNICEF Netherlands, letter of 13 December 2012.

government be relieved of its obligation to ensure circumstances of children on the islands meet the minimum requirements of the UNCRC?

The institution found that the questions formulated by UNICEF are also asked in the Caribbean Netherlands. It addressed all three questions and produced clear advice and a checklist. A summary of their advice is appended to this report as Appendix 4.

The institution states that the essential minimum level of rights from the Convention on the Rights of the Child must be ensured in both the European and the Caribbean Netherlands as soon as possible. Although they do allow the Dutch government to differentiate in regulations, endorsing unequal treatment, they make this conditional on 'objective justification' and compliance with the minimum standards from the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In their advice, the institution explains the assessment framework that is to be used for that.

The advice makes it clear that the Dutch government should work towards the same level of protection of children's rights both in the Caribbean and in the European Netherlands. It may then be necessary – and sometimes even better – to regulate a certain policy area differently in one region than in the other. Realization of children's right at the same level does therefore not automatically mean that this realization is to be shaped identically in both parts of the kingdom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See www.mensenrechten.nl/publicaties.

# **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ON ST. EUSTATIUS**

# Introduction

This part of the report contains the results of the study conducted on the island of St. Eustatius, <sup>1</sup> and will address the following eight subjects:

- · Family and parenting
- Education
- Health
- Safety
- · Recreation, play, and leisure time
- Participation
- · Housing conditions
- Financial situation.

Each section will first outline the current situation, and subsequently assess the situation from three perspectives:

- How do children and adolescents view the situation?
- What do experts say about it?
- What does the literature tell us about it?

The picture this paints of the situation will then be offset against the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which specifies minimum standards for each of the aspects of children's lives.

At the end of this chapter, you will find a general conclusion about the children's rights situation on the island of St. Eustatius.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In the same period UNICEF studied the children's rights situation on both the two other islands making up the Caribbean Netherlands (Bonaire and Saba) and the three other islands in the Caribbean part of the kingdom: the independent countries of Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten. Separate reports have been published on these studies.

# Family and parenting

Parents are generally the most important persons in a child's life. They are the architects of their family's composition and their children's upbringing. Family and parenting therefore form the basis of children's development.

Fortunately, there are a lot of children who grow up safely, happily, and without any major problems. However, there are also many children who find themselves in less fortunate circumstances, such as divorced parents, domestic violence, financial problems, or other issues on which they, being children, have no influence whatsoever. Often, these problems also have repercussions on other aspects of children's lives. The lack of a safe, stable, supportive, and healthy home base will have a negative impact on a child's life, just like the opposite situation will give a child a good start in life. Adverse financial circumstances will have consequences for the family and parenting situation. Poor living conditions will also put a strain on family relationships.

The subject of *Family and parenting* must therefore be seen in conjunction with other subjects addressed in this report.

Following a brief outline of the current family and parenting situation, this chapter will present children's and adolescents' views on this situation, as well as what experts and literature tell us about it. Before ending with a conclusion, this chapter will relate the findings about the current situation to the relevant UNCRC requirements.

## 1 Current situation

# 1.1 Family situation

There have been numerous developments in the area of family and parenting on St. Eustatius. Developments up to early 2013, as well as the current situation, will be outlined in the following.

#### 1.2 Youth and Family Centers

In May 2011, a Youth and Family Center (*Centrum voor Jeugd en Gezin*, CJG) was opened on St. Eustatius. The CJG on St. Eustatius comes under the responsibility of the Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland. Due to the small scale, the center is also responsible for youth work, foster care, community (ambulant) youth care and family guardianship with employees able to carry out several functions at the same time. St. Eustatius has three community care workers and two youth workers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Response to Parliamentary questions by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations following a letter about the visit to the Caribbean Netherlands, on the date of 1 September 2011. House of Representatives. Session year 2010-2011 32 500 IV no. 49. *Vierde rapportage Nederland aan het Comité voor de Rechten van het Kind* (2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Response to Parliamentary questions by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations following a letter about the visit to the Caribbean Netherlands, on the date of 1 September 2011. House of Representatives. Session year 2010-2011 32 500 IV no. 49. *Vierde rapportage Nederland aan het Comité voor de Rechten van het Kind* (2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Vierde rapportage Nederland aan het Comité voor de Rechten van het Kind (2012).

#### 1.3 Parenting support

On St. Eustatius, users and professionals of, for example, child care, leisure organizations, and after-school programs can turn to the CJG with questions about growing up and parenting. A separate facility has been set up for educators and teachers through the *Expertisecentrum Onderwijszorg* (EOZ, Center of Expertise for Education Care). The CJG regularly has internal meetings to discuss issues and determine whether they themselves can offer the help needed through their parenting support services. Cases with a heightened level of difficulty are submitted to the case group (see 1.4, Youth Care Case Group). Parenting support can also be organized in the community (see 1.5, Community care).

The St. Eustatius CJG has a *Temateka* (toy library) that lends out various board games.<sup>1</sup>

Triple P has been implemented as the basic methodology. Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) is a parenting support approach that is used in various countries. This methodology seeks to instill a positive parenting attitude, and can be used both for parenting support and for counseling in the case of more serious problems. Professionals from the realms of education, care, the police, child care, and youth protection on the three islands have meanwhile been trained in this methodology.<sup>2</sup>

At the start of 2013, a positive parenting campaign was launched on St. Eustatius, with a view to raising awareness of the normality of having questions about parenting, showing people where they can turn to with those questions, and teaching parents the basic principles of positive parenting. <sup>3</sup> This campaign draws on the Triple P positive parenting methodology. <sup>4</sup>

Triple P is a system of five consecutive levels with increasing intensity: level 1 is a public campaign about parenting and child development, while level 2 can comprise a presentation or personal advice for parents who have come in with a specific question. The three subsequent levels consist of workshops and training courses aimed at strengthening parenting skills of parents of children with early-stage, serious, or multiple behavioral problems, possibly in combination with other family issues.

#### 1.4 Youth Care Case Group

On St. Eustatius, cases of problem children and adolescents are handled by a case group. Cases are mainly submitted by education/EOZ, the CJG, or judicial authorities. The case group meets weekly and meetings are chaired by *Jeugdzorg en Gezinsvoogdij Caribisch Nederland* (Caribbean Netherlands Youth Care and Family guardianship). Case group members always include the secretary, a behavioral scientist, and a pediatrician (on call).

The case group assesses care options that best suit the care issue at hand. Options can include parenting support, ambulant (community-based) care, foster care, placement in a residential care facility, or a combination of various forms of care. Furthermore, the case group can also decide that assessment by a psychologist or child or adolescent psychiatrist is required. If required on medical grounds, care will be covered by the local health insurance authority (*Zorgverzekeringskantoor*).

The case group can also decide to report a case to the Guardianship Council when they feel the child's safety is at risk. Provisional care can then still be provided as the Guardianship Council assesses the case.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/nieuws/6/centrum-voor-jeugd-en-gezin-sint-eustatius-introduceert-temateka.html and information received from Justine Verschoor, Youth Care and Family Guardianship Caribbean Netherlands in July 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Vierde rapportage Nederland aan het Comité voor de Rechten van het Kind (2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Information received by email from Stan van Haaren, 20 December 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Vierde rapportage Nederland aan het Comité voor de Rechten van het Kind (2012). Also see www.positiefopvoeden.nl.

The case group will assign the family in question a case manager by mutual agreement. This case manager will act as the single point of contact for care provided to the child and the family, staying on top of the situation and coordinating care when there are various providers involved in caring for the family. The basic principle is always 'one family, one plan.' If a child has been assigned a family guardian, this person will by definition also be the case manager.

As soon as a decision has been made that youth care is needed, and a case manager has been appointed, a case file will be generated in the *JeugdlinQ* registration system. Anyone with access to this system can enter the name of a client to see whether or not this person already has a case manager, and if so, who that is. This prevents situations where various care workers start a care program independently from each other.

A case group has also been set up for cases of adolescents who have (or are likely to) come into contact with the criminal justice system. Links have been established between civil law and criminal law chains to cover all bases in youth care.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.5 Community care

Jeugdzorg en Gezinsvoogdij Caribisch Nederland (Caribbean Netherlands Youth Care and Family guardianship) offers care in the community. Provided in people's home situation, this kind of care is targeted on increasing parents' competencies and their network to reenable them to adopt a positive parenting attitude towards their child. Community care workers work according to a care plan, which is generally based on the Triple P system, and they can also rely on the support of a behavioral scientist.<sup>2</sup>

Sixty adolescents (49 families) on St. Eustatius received help over the period April to June 2012. This concerns all forms of help as well as adolescents who attend group training (Aggression Regulation Training (ART), social skills and Girls Talk). Most of the cases on St. Eustatius require intensive and long term help of more than six months.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.6 Supervision order

When there are concerns about a child's safety, the Guardianship Council will launch an investigation, reporting its findings and issuing its advice regarding a child protective order to the court. When the court issues a supervision order for a youth, this youth will be assigned a family supervisor. This family supervisor will share parenting responsibility with the parents and guarantee the child's safety. Together, parents and supervisor will compile an action plan that both parties will adhere to.<sup>4</sup>

In July 2012, four children were placed under supervision and three safety studies were requested.<sup>5</sup>

#### 1.7 Custodial placement

In cases where a child cannot live at home, be it temporarily or for a prolonged period, the youth care authority will first explore options of placing the child in foster care. This can be with a family from the child's own network, or a family from the youth care authority's

 $<sup>^1</sup>$  Letter of the Minister of Security and Justice dated 12 sseptember 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33 000 IV no. 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Youth care and Family Guardianship Caribbean Netherlands (2012). *Wat doet de Jeugdzorg en Gezinsvoogdij Caribisch Nederland*. Information leaflet for professionals.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Information received in an email from Justine Verschoor, Youth care and Family guardianship the Caribbean Netherlands in June and July 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Youth care and Family Guardianship Caribbean Netherlands (2012). *Wat doet de Jeugdzorg en Gezinsvoogdij Caribisch Nederland*. Information leaflet for professionals.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Information received in an email from Justine Verschoor, Youth care and Family guardianship the Caribbean Netherlands in July 2012.

files. Parents, foster parents, and the child will then be counseled by an ambulant care worker.

St. Eustatius has no residential facilities. Children have to go to Bonaire or Curaçao or (if specific specialist treatment is necessary) in the Netherlands. This is considered very restrictive on St. Eustatius as *one family, one plan* becomes difficult to achieve. Outsourcing the daily educational responsibility to a facility on another island and supporting the parents at the same time in their parental responsibility is virtually impossible.

#### 1.8 Teenage mothers

In comparison to the Netherlands, St. Eustatius has a relatively large number of teenage mothers. Recent figures are lacking, however. This generally concerns girls who have neither a job nor qualifications, partly due to the fact that they became mothers at a very young age. One of the causes of teenage pregnancy being a relatively common phenomenon is the lack of sex education, which is also believed to underlie the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases among adolescents on the island. Programs at schools and through organizations have meanwhile been launched to try to educate children about sex. However, in a society where churches have a lot of influence, it remains a sensitive issue.

There are no specific facilities on St. Eustatius for pregnant girls or very young mothers. The children of these teenage mothers are often (also) educated by the grandparents.

#### 1.9 Child abuse and domestic violence

On St. Eustatius, child abuse is reported either to the Guardianship Council, the CJG, the youth care agency, or the police. There is a discussion going on between the Guardianship Council (which is in favor) and the CJG (which is not in favor as yet) about the implementation of an Advice and Reporting Center for Child Abuse and Neglect (abbreviation in Dutch AMK). The discussion was prompted by considerations of benefit as well as necessity, also given the small scale of the island. Another option is that the involved parties collaborate in a more efficient way. <sup>2</sup>

A conscious decision was made to not immediately implement an intensive approach to child abuse – as is in place in the Netherlands – but to instead first build up a solid youth care infrastructure and raise positive parenting awareness among parents.<sup>3</sup>

In June 2012 and January 2013, several conferences focusing on child abuse were held on the BES islands in which all chain partners took part. The Caribbean Netherlands Youth Care and Family guardianship agency had brought in the Netherlands Youth Institute to lead these conferences. The objective was to get the subject of child abuse on the agenda, as a problem that requires urgent attention. The results of the first series of conferences are currently used to make an outline plan that will have to chart a course for subsequent steps toward a comprehensive approach to dealing with child abuse.<sup>4</sup>

The subject of child abuse has turned out to be a sensitive one, because not everyone goes by the same definition of child abuse. Due to the small size of the community,

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$  Information received from Justine Verschoor, Youth care and Family Guardianship Caribbean Netherlands in July 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Information received in an email from Stan van Haaren, Netherlands Youth Institute, 21 December 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Letter of the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations concerning the visit of the Queen and memorandum by Ortega-Martijn. House or Representatives, session year 2011-2012 3300IV No. 37. Appendix 1: Reaction per policy domain.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/nieuws/245/sint-eustatius-is-gastheer-van-de-eerste-conferentie-over-kindermishandeling.html and http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/nieuws/249/kindermishandeling:--niets-doen-is-geen-optie.html. Consulted on 2 November 2012.

virtually everyone knows someone who has been abused or who has perpetrated abuse. This creates a complex interplay of loyalties. On top of that, the islanders tend to employ a relatively rough parenting style. And then there is also the sensitivity of the conference being considered yet another initiative launched from the Netherlands and perhaps even as an implied negative appraisal of the islands.<sup>1</sup>

The Netherlands' fourth report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child states that creation of an infrastructure to tackle child abuse (reporting, referral, and interventions) has been scheduled for the first half of 2012. Information about child abuse for the general public is planned for 2013.

An infrastructure is currently being constructed by means of knowledge transfer and by setting up (collaboration) structures. Committees of representatives from various sectors have been set up on St. Eustatius to further flesh out the priorities that emerged from the conferences.<sup>2</sup>

Two training courses were organized in January 2013 on St. Eustatius: one about reporting child abuse and one train-the-trainer course about reporting child abuse. Moreover, a cooperation convention has been signed between the involved parties and the plan is to assign liaison officers who will probably be trained later in the year.<sup>3</sup>

Fighting domestic violence comes under the responsibility of the island authority (see 1.7, Custodial placement). There are no women's shelters for (adult) victims of domestic violence. <sup>4</sup> It is unclear whether facilities on Curacao are open to the people of St. Eustatius. Starting with a therapeutic foster family on St. Eustatius is being considered with possible emergency care for children. <sup>5</sup>

The 2006 *Communities that Care* survey held among pupils showed that 9% of the participating adolescents on St. Eustatius had been subjected to sexual abuse.<sup>6</sup>

St. Eustatius has a Women's Desk. This organization comes under the Department of Social Affairs and functions more as an ombudsman. Many women who seek help—mostly young mothers – have problems related to upbringing and health.

#### 1.10 Child care

Responsibility for child care lies with the island authority. Unlike their counterparts in the European Netherlands, parents on St. Eustatius do not receive a child care allowance. Child care organizations do however sometimes receive subsidies from public entities.

An overview is offered below of current child care facilities, including after-school programs, for children aged between zero and twelve. For after-school activities, refer to the section on Recreation, play, and leisure time.

A 2010 study looked at the educational quality of child care on the five islands that make up the Netherlands Antilles, offsetting its findings against those from a study conducted in 2007. Drawing information from observations at child care facilities, questionnaires, and interviews, this study concluded that although there was improvement, the educational quality of child care was still below par. This is due to, among other things, the available

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Information received by email from Stan van Haaren, Nederlands Jeugdinstituut, 21 December 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ihid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> IdeeVersa (2012). Reference framework the Caribbean Netherlands. Annex 3: competences. Page 177.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Information received by email from Stan van Haaren, Netherlands Youth Institute, 21 December 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> De Boer, S., Roorda, W., Jonkman, H., Van Aalst, M. (2006). *Scholierenonderzoek Communities that Care*. Nederlandse Antillen: DSP-Groep.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> P. 42. On St. Maarten, the Women's Desk is a central place for the government, NGOs and women and develops guidelines for women and gender policies. There is substantive attention for the themes abuse, HIV and AIDS and the desk has developed a program, together with the Preventive Health Department, on awareness of young teenage mothers.

space and use of that space, lack of material, the kind of activities on offer, group size, interaction between the educational employee and children, and the lack of structural inspections. The conclusion was that although the educational High/Scope program was having a positive impact, it was being implemented inadequately.<sup>1</sup>

The Buzzy Bees Day Care Center and various private persons ensure the child care on St. Eustatius.<sup>2</sup>

The Buzzy Bees Day Care Center provides care for children from zero to twelve years old. The center cares for about 106 children of which eighty between zero and four years old. The parental contribution is \$ 150 per month for children between zero and two, \$ 125 for children between two and four and \$ 100 for children between four and twelve. There is a waiting list but the Master plan Educational Housing forecasts extension. The salaries of the (nursery) assistants and cleaners in Buzzy Bee are paid by the island. The Buzzy Bees Day Care Center works with the VVE-program High/Scope (in the Netherlands known as Kaleidoscoop). Assistants have attended training in High/Scope and Triple P. Since 23 November, Buzzy Bees is officially an apprenticeship-company. This recognition means that Buzzy Bees complies with the criteria of the Center of Competence Calibris with regard to the accompaniment of students during their placements in accordance with their vocational education.

#### 1.11 Legislation

Needless to say, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child applies in full to the children of St. Eustatius.

The Dutch Youth Care Act, on the other hand, does not apply in the Caribbean Netherlands. A decision was made to first further develop youth policy in the Caribbean Netherlands before actually designing legislation for the Caribbean Netherlands. The Youth Care Act leaves open the possibility of introducing specific regulations for youth care in the Caribbean Netherlands (abbreviation in Dutch: AMVB). The developed youth policy approach will then be embedded in law through an AMVB, simultaneously with adjustments to regulations for youth protection. Youth protection is, however, still subject to provisions from the Dutch Civil Code. Two regulations of the country of the Netherlands Antilles under which a guardianship council and family guardianship have been instituted have furthermore been adopted.<sup>7</sup>

The Antillean Civil Code (Section 247) specifies that parental authority encompasses an obligation and right of the parent to take care of and raise their minors. In this context, taking care of and raising also includes a concern and responsibility for the child's mental and physical wellbeing, as well as to foment the development of the child's personality. The Penal Code for Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba contains provisions about abuse and sexual violence. Abuse is defined as intentionally injuring a person's health (Section 313). Even so, physical punishment at schools, at home, and at adolescent institutions is not explicitly prohibited.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Meerdink, M.A., Schonenburg, L. (2010). *Pedagogical quality of daycare centers on the Netherlands Antilles. Current quality and comparison with quality measures of 2007.* Utrecht: Utrecht University.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> IdeeVersa (2012). Reference framework Caribbean Netherlands. Annex 3: competences. Page 174.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Drewes, Marga (2012). *Poverty in the Caribbean Netherlands, an identification.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> IdeeVersa (2012). *Reference framework Caribbean Netherlands*. Annex 3: competences. Page 174.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Information received in an email from Justine Verschoor, Youth care and Family guardianship the Caribbean Netherlands in June 2012.

<sup>6</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/index.php?view=nieuws&id=168&set\_language=NL

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Response to parliamentary questions by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations following a letter about a visit to the Caribbean Netherlands, on the date of 1 September 2011. House of Representatives, session year 2010-2011 32 500 IV no. 49. *Vierde rapportage Nederland aan het Comité voor de Rechten van het Kind* (2012).

As far as domestic violence is concerned, the Domestic Exclusion Act does not (yet) apply in the Caribbean Netherlands. A victim of domestic violence can, nonetheless, petition a civil court to impose a restraining order against the perpetrator.<sup>1</sup>

St. Eustatius has a child care ordinance governing only the island. This ordinance stipulates that the island's administration will set quality requirements for child care. St. Eustatius's child care ordinance specifies requirements for safety, hygiene, food, group sizes, educational work, the teacher-to-child ratio, and the space.

In order to make intra-country adoption provisions as implemented in the Netherlands also applicable in the Caribbean Netherlands, a regulation has been included to add Title 12a to the Civil Code for Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. This addition assigns tasks and responsibilities to the Ministry of Justice. The Placement of Foreign Children for Adoption Act governing the European part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands partially also applies on the island of St. Eustatius.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.12 Policy and activities

The Youth and Family coordinator, professionals, and services on the island and youth care professionals from Dutch youth care have drawn up plans for preventive youth facilities, youth care, and youth protection for each island.

The preventive part consists in setting up a Youth and Family Center that will serve as both a youth health care facility and an information and counseling facility. The preventive aspect of the plan also seeks to create possibilities for positive leisure time use for young people.

The curative part of the plan consists in setting up youth care and further bolstering family guardianship services and the guardianship council. The basic methodology selected for all youth workers is that of Triple P.<sup>3</sup>

The education premises master plan also covers day care facilities. In this plan, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science took on responsibility for overdue maintenance on day care premises.<sup>4</sup>

# Activities

- A Youth and Family Center was opened in 2010.
- Youth workers and behavioral scientists were appointed.
- A youth care case group was set up.
- Youth care workers, as well as teachers and other professionals who deal with young people took Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) training.
- A positive parenting campaign was launched at the start of 2013.
- The JeugdLinQ IT system was implemented at the CJG and youth care, family guardianship, and youth health care facilities.
- A conference about the response to child abuse was held in June 2012.
- In January 2013, a second conference "Child safety" was held dealing with the response to child abuse.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Response of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the request by the Committee to end the discrimination of women, in its concluding comments (CEDAW/C/NLD/CO/5, paragraph 52), to provide information within two years about the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 27 and 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Vierde rapportage Nederland aan het Comité voor de Rechten van het Kind (2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Drewes, Marga (2010). Gezond en veilig opgroeien in Caribisch Nederland (Bonaire, St. Eustatius en Saba). Een schets van de stand van zaken op het gebied van de jeugd: opgroeien en opvoeden in Caribisch Nederland dated 1 January 2011.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> IdeeVersa (2012). Referentiekader Caribisch Nederland. Annex 3: policy domains. Page 175.

#### 1.13 Organizations and responsibilities

#### Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport

The Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport is responsible for policy in the area of youth care.

#### Ministry of Security and Justice

The Ministry of Security and Justice is responsible for policy in the area of youth protection and domestic violence, which also covers family guardianship. Given the small scale of the island, implementation of family guardianship measures has been assigned to the Caribbean Netherlands Youth Care and Family Guardianship/Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport. 1

#### Caribbean Netherlands Youth Care and Family Guardianship

Acting under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport, the Caribbean Netherlands Youth Care and Family Guardianship provides community-based youth care, foster care, residential care, and family guardianship for parents and children with parenting and growing-up problems. St. Eustatius has one unit in the form of a Youth and Family Center that also offers preventive youth care and family guardianship.<sup>2</sup>

#### Island authority

The island authority is responsible for the execution of preventive youth care and youth health care, as well as for fighting domestic violence and providing child care and afterschool programs.<sup>3</sup>

## Youth and Family Center (CJG)

The CJG offers information, counseling, and parenting support for parents and professionals. The CJG on St. Eustatius falls under the responsibility of the Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland. Due to the small scale, the center is also responsible for youth work, foster care, ambulant youth care and family guardianship with employees able to carry out several functions at the same time.<sup>4</sup>

# **Guardianship Council**

The Guardianship Council falls under the Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland, and is in charge of investigations into cases relating to family guardianship and parental authority, adoption, visitation arrangements, disputed parenthood, and (suspicions of) child abuse. The Guardianship Council's remit also includes child maintenance: they collect and pay child support every month, provide assistance with filing child support petitions with the court, and mediate, seize property, or execute court-ordered compulsory measures to ensure child maintenance is paid.<sup>5</sup>

#### Child care organizations

The island's child care organizations take care of child care, which includes after-school programs, for children aged between zero and twelve.

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$  http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/234/jeugdbeleid+in+caribisch+nederland.html. Consulted on 26 June 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Youth care and Family Guardianship Caribbean Netherlands (2012). *Wat doet de Jeugdzorg en Gezinsvoogdij Caribisch Nederland*. Information leaflet for professionals.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> IdeeVersa (2012). *Referentiekader Caribisch Nederland*. Annex 3: policy domains.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Vierde rapportage Nederland aan het Comité voor de Rechten van het Kind (2012) and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom relations. Answer to questions from the House of Representatives regarding the letter about the visit to, amongst others, the Caribbean Netherlands of September 2011.

 $<sup>^{5}\</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/188/voogdijraad.html.\ Consulted\ on\ 6\ November\ 2012.$ 

# 2 Children on family and parenting

Of the children surveyed, most are happy with how they are raised and how their parents are with them. They love their parent(s) and generally do not consider them overly strict or only when they need to be. The children say that they are given sufficient freedom and are happy that they are (in most cases) allowed to socialize with friends of their own choice. Some of the children surveyed indicate that they have little communication with their parents and also eat separately from them, but that they are fine with that.<sup>1</sup>

'The normal rules apply at home. I have to be polite, I'm not allowed to put my feet on the table and I have to leave my shoes outside. There are also rules concerning going out, depending on where I'm going. My parents set the rules, and the parents of my friends do the same sort of thing. My parents are just normal. I agree with the rules and they never cause any problems. I have had discussions with my mother about the rules, but I respect her. I have been brought up to be polite.' (girl, 14 years old, St. Eustatius)

The families in which the children surveyed grow up are characterized by highly diverse family structures. Relatively few children grow up in a 'standard' family with their biological father and mother. The father is often absent, and has in some cases been substituted by a stepfather. This sometimes leads to tension in the family.

Many of the children have brothers and sisters from different parents. These siblings sometimes live, work, or study elsewhere. In the case of some of the children, their grandparents live with them or even raise them. Many of the children say that 'everyone on the island is related.' Many of the families have members that come from various parts of the world.<sup>2</sup>

Contact with their biological father is a point of concern for many children. This is sometimes down to the mother blocking contacts, sometimes to the father being out of the picture (and living elsewhere), or to contact having been lost for unclear reasons.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the children could not live with their mother (during the first years of their lives), as she was still a teenager when they were born and was unable to take care of them. Teenage pregnancy is mentioned as a problem, because it is relatively common, and because children feel too little effort is going into preventing it.<sup>4</sup>

Occasionally, a child has little to no contact with her mother. The mother lives elsewhere or is unable to take care of her child.<sup>5</sup>

There are also children among the respondents who complain about the absence of their parent(s) and a lack of attention from their parent(s).  $^6$ 

There are also children whose parents are absent, physically and/or psychologically, to such a degree that it seems to be a case of neglect. These children report that they are left to their own devices and have to find attention and food themselves. Such situations may be down to the parents being too wrapped up in their own problems, or having to work a lot, or to other causes.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 159, 169, 170, 171, 172, 174, 175, 176, 178, 179, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quotes 158, 159, 160, 180.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See quotes 191, 192, 193.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See quote 180.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See quote 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See quote 58,59. 60.

Violence in the family situation is mentioned by various children, and both between parents and in the relation between parent(s) and child. What stands out is that many children consider smacking to be something that is part of parenting and they must have 'deserved' it.<sup>1</sup>

'The amount of child abuse on the island isn't too bad. I think that yelling at children is just part of the culture on the island. Kids grow up in an atmosphere of physical discipline. If we do something that isn't allowed, we get a slap. In some families it goes beyond physical discipline, but those parents aren't fit to be parents.' (girl, 17 years old, St. Eustatius)

When they have a problem, children tend to turn to their mother, another family member, or a teacher at school. There are, however, also many children who say they do not want to share their problems with anyone, because that would mean 'the whole island finding out about it.'<sup>2</sup>

'I've got enough privacy at home. On Statia you are always surrounded by family. My cousins live next to me so they always know what I'm up to. If you want to do anything without anyone knowing, you have to really think hard about how you're going to get it done. Sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad. If you have serious problems, then they can try to help you. But sometimes there are things you want to keep for yourself, and then you suddenly hear about in on the street. That's never happened to me. As long as it's alright by my mother, I really don't care what anybody else thinks about it. I always ask my mother about everything.' (girl, 16 years old St. Eustatius)

Nearly all of the children surveyed have to do household chores, such as sweeping the floor, clearing up, washing the dishes, and cooking.<sup>3</sup>

Most children speak different languages and sometimes they speak a different language at home than in school or with friends. They speak Dutch, Papiamento, English, Spanish.<sup>4</sup>

# 3 Young people on family and parenting

The young people surveyed indicate that many children receive insufficient attention from their parents. (Single) parents are at work all day, and too tired afterwards to give their children the positive attention they need. Consequently, children spend a lot of time with each other, without parental supervision.

Many children are hardly stimulated at home. Help with school work is lacking and there is no one to help them think about their future.<sup>5</sup>

Young people claim that parents on the island suffer from 'parenting diffidence.' Given the culture of the islands, parents find it hard to have proper talks with their children, especially about sensitive subjects, such as sex. How parents see the world does not connect well with how their children see the world.<sup>6</sup>

'I think that our culture on these islands makes it difficult for parents to educate their children about sex.' (adolescent)

Teen pregnancies occur regularly. The adolescents surveyed attribute this to various causes. One is that parents do not talk to their children about sex and emotions, and do

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 219, 221, 222.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 2, 3, 6, 13, 15, 17, 19, 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quote 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See quote 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See quotes 53, 54, 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See quotes 11, 12.

not teach their children about sex. Another reason they mention is the lack of parental attention many children experience. Girls compensate for that by seeking attention from boys. The third reason they put forward is copycat behavior among girls. If you have a cute baby, you will get attention, and every girl wants attention.

Poverty is also mentioned as a reason behind the proliferation of teen pregnancies. Boyfriends promise to get them things in return for sex.

Finally, religion and spirituality also come into the teen pregnancy issue. Handing out condoms or openly discussing sex are, according to the adolescents, condemned by the  ${\rm church.}^1$ 

'Teenage pregnancies are common on all the islands.' (adolescent)

Adolescents note that violence as part of parenting and between parents is commonplace on the islands. This violence sometimes even involves the use of a belt. The adolescents also note that domestic violence remains hidden behind closed doors.

Some of the young people think that smacking your child is a normal part of parenting. Instead of condemning it, they consider it an 'innocent corrective intervention' and 'part of the culture.' They do see, however, a clear link between the parenting styles of successive generations: children tend to copy their parents' behavior.<sup>2</sup>

The adolescents deplore the fact that there is no central reporting center for abuse or maltreatment, as there is in the Netherlands. They also feel there are still not enough agencies where children can anonymously go for help and which tie in with the specific culture and situation on the island.<sup>3</sup>

'If sexual abuse occurs, it isn't given any publicity, partly because the whole island would become aware of it immediately because there are so few residents. Children are afraid of this and therefore a child who is a victim will avoid making it known.' (adolescent)

# 4 Experts on family and parenting

According to the experts that were consulted, the upbringing of many children on St. Eustatius is under severe strain. Experts have major concerns about the child-rearing environment of children on the island. These concerns are prompted by various issues that are, to varying degrees, making that children do not (or cannot) feel safe at home, are unable to develop fully, or are even impaired in their development.

The experts point out that there is very little data available about the child-rearing environment of children on St. Eustatius. It is, for example, unknown how many children are currently raised by one or both of their parents<sup>4</sup>, how many children have behavioral problems or problems at home. Aside from that, it is also impossible to get a comprehensive idea of the child maltreatment situation. Despite that, the experts are unanimous in their opinion of the child-rearing environment.

Many of the problems identified by the experts are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Despite the many efforts to improve the situation, it is still alarming. The experts indicate that the problems are highly persistent, embedded in the culture, and passed on from generation to generation.

The following describes the main bottlenecks identified by experts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 113, 114, 115, 116.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quotes 118, 242.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> In the interest of readability, the text always refers to parents, but this also includes single parents or other child rearers.

#### 4.1 Violence in parenting

Nearly all experts surveyed agreed that many children on St. Eustatius frequently grow up in a violent environment that is plagued by an authoritarian parenting style. Many children on the island are doing fine, but some are regularly beaten at home, suffer sexual abuse, are shouted at, humiliated. There are also cases where children witness violence between parents, or get caught up in that violence. All these forms of violence can be classed as neglect or child abuse <sup>1</sup>.

There are various circumstances that increase the likelihood of child abuse occurring: poverty, working multiple jobs, common practice of using physical force in parenting, example set by parents, young parents, stagnating identity development, and so on.

The parenting style in many families is harsh (See also 4.4, Parenting style), a corrective smack is part of local custom and some parents even resort to using a belt and buckle to discipline their children.

Maltreatment often goes hand in hand with neglect (see below ). At school, too, children are confronted with violence (see the chapter on Education).

The problems children experience due to violence in parenting vary widely. Experts see direct links between, for example, behavioral problems, criminal behavior, and teen pregnancy and the child-rearing environment.<sup>2</sup>

'After primary school, there are two levels of transition class on Statia. In the 'better' transition class there are 22 pupils. Of these, only three are not routinely insulted, beaten or otherwise humiliated at home.' (expert)

'The pedagogical advice that is given to young people in the home: hitting is OK!' (expert)

'Sometimes I go to the Methodist church. After the service, kids get beaten outside.' (expert)

'Parents are aggressive. They don't know how to talk with a child. Parents use violence, both verbal and physical. It's a disease, and should be diagnosed as a disease.' (expert)

# 4.2 Lack of attention and neglect

'We notice a trend of neglect on the island and with its inhabitants with regard to the children, says an expert. Other experts consider it a major problem that children on St. Eustatius receive too little attention. Children are often left to fend for themselves. They have to amuse themselves, and feed and raise themselves. In some cases, this goes so far that it can be considered physical and/or emotional neglect. Neglect is a form of child maltreatment.

The reasons underlying parent's lack of attention for their children differ widely and it is often down to a combination of factors. It is mostly not a matter of unwillingness, but rather of inability, problems, feeling shame in asking for help, or a lack of time. (Single) parents sometime work multiple jobs and have to work more than full time to keep the family afloat financially. They come home late, with zero time or energy left to dedicate to parenting, while the child has already been on its own until then, especially when there are no other adults around – such as a grandparent or other safety net. Like their parents, children are on their own.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Child abuse: every form of physical, mental or sexual interaction that is threatening or violent for a minor and is actively or passively imposed on the minor by parents or other persons with who the minor has a forced relationship or whom the minor depends on, threatening to seriously damage or seriously damaging the minor physically or mentally.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 120, 121, 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 156, 157.

Given the limited attention parents give their children, many parents have no idea what is going on in their children's lives. Children are not given enough positive structure in their lives, boundaries are largely lacking, and the direction children do receive from their parents is often accompanied by violence and exhibitions of power (see above).

Children who get too little attention or are even neglected altogether get into all sorts of trouble or suffer behavioral problems, sometimes because they are hungry, because they seek attention from other people, or for other reasons. The situation of some children is so harrowing that they would be placed in care, if that were possible. Many children are continuously stuck in 'survival mode', according to one of the experts.<sup>1</sup>

'Some mothers who work away from home don't give their children their full attention when they are actually at home because they are doing other things.' (expert)

'Only a few kids really have a normal environment at home. The other kids go to their houses, but they can't be classified as homes.' (expert)

'Many young people have to bring themselves up.' (expert)

# 4.3 Lack of parental control and social safety net

The experts note that any kind of social structure is lacking on St. Eustatius. Combined with the fact that many parents work and come home late, this leads to many children being out and about late into the night.

After-school facilities and child care are not subsidized, as a result of which there are few after-school programs for children (whose parents generally cannot afford them). Although there are after-school programs, many of the experts class these as subpar, claiming they lack an educational approach and work with unqualified volunteers. In 2013, twenty after-school program workers will take a course to qualify as educational (social) worker.

Day care for children up to the age of four is too expensive for many parents. The quality of child care varies: they employ unqualified staff, there is no regulation, they have to make do with limited resources, and children's safety is not guaranteed. Children at some day care facilities are even believed to be maltreated.

The wider family, such as grandparents or the neighborhood, used to help out in raising children. This has gradually diminished, partly due to the socio-economic situation that forces grandparents to keep working and due to increased individualization of society.

There is a huge need for 'anchor points outside the family' for children, the experts say. They qualify the child-rearing environment at home and at school as very weak, and consider it incumbent on other organizations and persons to support the children. What is needed are safe places for children.<sup>2</sup>

'The family used to help when bonds were tighter. These days, people are more self-centered.' (expert)

'After-school activities are badly needed because there are a lot of youths just hanging around.' (expert)

You have to sympathize with the situation that working parents are in. They and their children should be helped by organizing more activities for young people.' (expert)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 100, 101.

#### 4.4 Parenting style

As described above, the type of parenting that many children on St. Eustatius are faced with is characterized by physical force and an authoritarian style. There are, however, further aspects that are important, according to the experts. It starts with parents' take on their role as educator. They think in terms of parental *power*. Parenting is generally authoritarian and commanding, with a discourse of imperatives, 'do this, don't do that', albeit without clear boundaries. Communication between parents and child is not part of this kind of parenting. Of course, the parents love their children, but they never show them their affection. Children expect punishment every time their parents speak to them. There is a lack of trust between parents and their children. Parenting is in no way geared towards stimulating positive development of the child. Children do not feel safe and become passive.

Parents find it important how their children present themselves to the outside world, such as in their school results and decent behavior, but problems are hardly ever, if at all, discussed. Children have to solve their problems themselves, but are also taught not to share their problems with others.

Many parents are at a loss as to how to raise their children, let alone know how to do it positively. As a mother on St. Eustatius notes:

'There is an instruction book or manual for most things. But not for parenting, you have to figure that out all by yourself.'

This can, especially in dealings with adolescents, lead to major problems. Children see on TV and the internet that smacking or not being listened to is not 'normal,' and rebel against their parents' parenting style. It is not customary on the island for parents to discuss parenting with each other, let alone ask for help.

Experts have identified differences in the way boys and girls are raised, which is partly related to the absence of fathers in children's upbringing in many cases (see below). Boys are believed to be indulged more, set fewer boundaries, and given less household chores than girls, as a result of which boys fail to form a sense of responsibility, which is likely to cause problems for them later in life. Some of the experts see a clear connection between this insufficiently developed sense of responsibility and the role boys, once they themselves have become fathers, play in the raising of their children. It also reverberates in the degree to which boys go down the route of delinquency. Girls, on the other hand, learn that they are responsible and have to take care of their family and secure an income.

The parenting style is typically something that is passed on from generation to generation. The way parents raise their child will largely be duplicated in the way this child raises its own children. CJG is monitoring about sixty families on St. Eustatius, mainly to provide educational support.

A large-scale attempt is furthermore underway to teach parents positive parenting (Triple P: Positive Parenting Program) through parenting support. This will, however, take considerable time.<sup>1</sup>

'Parenting here is very often unbalanced, both at home and at school.' (expert)

'Many adults here are afraid of teenagers and there is a generation gap between them. Teens are treated as if they come from Mars. They are ignored.' (expert)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 292.

'We are at a stage where it is important that parents accept responsibility for their children. They need to realize what their job is.' (expert)

'Young people are often given the message that they aren't doing things well enough.' (expert)

'Parents raise their children with commands. The gap between parents and young people is bridged with yelling. There is a lot of aggressive language. Nothing is asked, everything is ordered.' (expert)

## 4.5 Child-rearing in father-absent families

In many families on St. Eustatius, fathers are conspicuous by their absence. The reasons for that vary widely. It often means that children are raised by only their mother or by their mother and her new partner. In fact, the mothers themselves often keep the fathers away from their children.

If there is contact between child and father, the father often doesn't know how to raise his child. They give their children money, but no (emotional) support. Sometimes the mother doesn't even want the father to take a hand in raising their children.

Especially in the case of boys, it turns out to be hard to grow up without an adequate role model and without direction. Boys become 'the man of the house' and soon start behaving the way they think a man should behave, which often leads to disrespectful behavior that results in problems with the mother.

The absence of males in child-rearing also extends to education, where nearly all teachers are female.

Pregnancy and parenting courses are therefore now increasingly trying to get fathers actively involved in raising their children from the start.<sup>1</sup>

'There are a lot of broken families. There is seldom a father figure present. Fathers are invisible to young people. If there is a father present, he is the disciplinarian.' (expert)

# 4.6 Socio-economic situation and poverty

All experts point to the socio-economic situation that many families find themselves in and poverty as fundamental bottlenecks. Some claim that the situation has worsened since 10/10/10.

The experts identify various reasons why families descend into poverty: low wage, limited assistance, rapidly rising cost of food and maintenance, high energy costs, poor job prospects, only one parent responsible for raising children, alcohol, drug, or gambling addiction. This will be covered in greater detail in the Financial Situation section.

Poverty has a direct effect on the lives of children and is considered a highly significant stress factor in family life. According to the experts, poverty is one of the circumstances that increases the likelihood of child abuse occurring.

Poverty also leads to children coming to school hungry and without a packed lunch. Children who are regularly hungry are stifled in their development, experts say. There are schools and day care centers that provide breakfast for pupils who don't get breakfast at home.

Some mentioned very extreme cases, where mothers prostitute themselves and their daughters to get the money they so desperately need.  $^{2}$ 

'We have a breakfast project here at the school where children can get a healthy breakfast. It's something that can be lacking home at home.' (expert)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 161, 162, 163.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 164, 165, 166, 167, 168.

#### 4.7 Family composition

There are few complete families. Mothers often have to raise their child or children on their own or together with a new partner. An education expert mentions that 80% of the children in his school come from broken homes.

Getting married is not common, but living together is. It is common for men to have children with different women. As a result, children often have several brothers and sisters from different fathers.<sup>1</sup>

'There's a total lack of parenting at home. Until the age of three, kids get spoilt at home. After that, they get yelled at and beaten if they misbehave, and educated by the street. 80% of the kids at school come from broken families.' (expert)

'A large proportion of the parents are divorced or unmarried. There are a lot of brothers and sisters.' (expert)

#### 4.8 Parents' problems

Experts list various problems of parents that are affecting their children's upbringing. These problems are particularly detrimental in combination with other issues, such as neglect and the socio-economic situation. Problems highlighted by the experts include drug and alcohol abuse, as well as gambling addiction. They also mention problems between parents following a divorce/separation.

Several of the experts also make reference to the problem posed by the fact that there are many intellectually disabled parents. These parents generally have multiple children and cannot handle raising them. There is no adequate assistance for these parents.<sup>2</sup>

'There is a big difference between the people of Saba and Statia. The indigenous population of Saba is half white and half black. The white half has traditionally had a higher level of education and development which increases the average level on the island. On Statia, almost the entire population has a low level of education and development.' (expert)

# 4.9 Teenage pregnancies

Teenage pregnancy is a regular occurrence on St. Eustatius. Some years ago this reached a peak, according to the experts. However, they do not have exact figures of the number of teen pregnancies because these are not registered accurately. Experts consider St. Eustatius in that respect as 'a difficult island'. This situation would mainly be the result of the seven religious associations present on the island (see below).

Experts specify that there is question of a 'blurring and decline of moral standards' amongst the youth and they notice that children have an exaggerated interest in sex without receiving any sex education. Even twelve and thirteen year old girls become pregnant on the island. In classes with children of this age, the majority appears to have had sex already while only a small part has already kissed.

The primary reasons underlying the large number of teen pregnancies are, according to the experts, girls seeking the attention and love they are not getting at home and their low self-esteem. Attention from a boy or man and sex gives them – if only temporarily – the attention and love they need. Aside from that, having a baby and being a mother awards them status and gives them a sense of self-respect. Some experts also put it down

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 139, 188.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 189, 190.

to the way these girls were raised, with parents shirking their responsibilities and not realizing what raising a child entails.

Sex education, or rather the lack of it, is another reason that could be leading to young girls getting pregnant. Sex is a taboo subject, also because the church holds sway over the island. Adolescents will not go to a pharmacy or family doctor to get contraceptives, because the church does not allow the use of contraceptives and the whole island would know about it. Sexually transmitted diseases are also common among adolescents on St. Eustatius.

Young adolescents who have a child are mostly not able to adequately raise that child. They also lack the financial resources needed to raise a child. Getting assistance for these girls is often still quite a challenge. Where (grand)parents used to be able to help out, they often have to work as well nowadays to get by. Nevertheless, it is often the grandparents that take over on St. Eustatius. The children then have to permanently switch between the upbringing style of the parents to that of the teenage mother and vice versa.

The experts have seen good results from counseling that focuses on empowerment. Girls are motivated to build their future to be able to give their children a better future.<sup>1</sup>

'Talk about sex is not permitted. Lots of girls are pregnant. Nobody has a steady boyfriend. Everyone does it.' (expert)

'Young people could be given condoms, but they don't need condoms because they don't have sex. That's how taboo it is.' (expert)

#### 4.10 The community

St. Eustatius is a small society of over 16,000 people. Virtually everyone knows each other and family ties are strong. The community may be characterized as 'closed.'

Living on a small island in a confined community creates a difficult child-rearing environment. Everyone watches each other and knows everything about each other, making it hard to keep things private. There is a lot of gossip.

At same time, however, no one is inclined to (personally) expose abuses or discuss tricky subjects, as that will always have consequences, such as feuds, bullying, or exclusion. Experts refer to this as a 'culture of silence.' Children are also drawn into that culture, as their parents tell them what they can and cannot talk about with others.

Experts also see a 'shame culture' on the island: there are various things that are hidden behind shame, causing taboos to endure for years. Child abuse, sex, and teen pregnancies, or parenting assistance are such taboo subjects.

The combination of silence, shame, and gossip makes growing up on the island a real challenge for many children. Especially when there are problems at home and a child needs help or is placed in care.

At the same time, tourism, television, the Internet, and other means of communication have introduced a new world onto the island, one that clashes with the island's culture and is - for that reason alone – highly attractive to children.

Experts have seen this situation lead to the rise of depression among adolescents. A lack of prospects and peer pressure has become too much for some adolescents, who end up retreating, spending a lot of time in bed and in front of the TV or on their computer.<sup>2</sup>

'We are dealing with an incest case in which two girls were abused by their father over a long period of time. It's only later that bystanders speak out. Everything is hidden, and it's difficult to get this sort of thing out into the open.' (expert)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 155, 225, 228, 229, 231, 232, 233, 234, 239, 240.

'All the problems typical of developing countries can be found on the islands. In addition, there are the problems typical of small islands. The people are almost all related to each other or know each other. It's like being under a microscope.' (expert)

St. Eustatius has seven different religious associations. Faith has a major influence on the community. This makes many subjects a taboo, such as sex or contraceptives. Churches are, on the other hand, also meeting places where values are taught, and which can therefore play a role in raising awareness of child abuse, the experts think.<sup>1</sup>

'Sometimes faith can be a source of problems on the island.' (expert)

Experts list various aspects that affect child-rearing and which they relate to 'the culture.'

Islanders sometimes still struggle with the legacy of the past. Some are still sensitive about the island's former rulers, 'the whites.' This sensitivity can reveal itself in various ways, such as through submissiveness or the exact opposite, arrogance, and reverberates in the child-rearing environment.

The role of men is also linked to the island's slavery past, which is thought to have conditioned men to have children with as many women as possible. They never married, and that is still the norm.

Some men's attitude toward girls and women is not based on mutual respect: they assume women – including under-age girls – are available for sex.

Experts consider it the result of cultural conditioning that parents and children on the island have very low self-esteem and fail to develop their own identity, which may be part of the legacy of slavery. Some experts go as far as to say that there is a collective inferiority complex, which is passed on from parent to child.<sup>2</sup>

'The situation regarding children's rights in generally worse on Statia than on Saba. On Saba everything is more organized, more under control and neater. That includes parenting.' (expert)

People on this island are very negative about each other. Families have internal problems. There's a lot of gossip. People are very critical of each other.' (expert)

#### 4.11 Parenting support and help with problems

On St. Eustatius, the question 'Do you like me?', is very important, says an expert. If the answer is positive people don't mind doing something for you, otherwise they won't. That is also the case when it concerns someone's child. Parents on the island don't dare to ask for help when they need it or when they have problems. Children are taught not to wash their dirty linen in public. As a result, when problems finally do come out, a lot will already have gone wrong. Some social workers use a Pandora's Box analogy: opening it will expose great misery.

Several initiatives have been taken on St. Eustatius to help parents raise their children and tackle parenting problems. These are achieving results. Experts point out that offering help is not easy. First of all, trust and the promise to maintain someone's privacy as best as possible are essential. Besides that, social workers need outstanding conversation skills to be able to get people talking who are not used to talking, or unwilling to talk, about taboo subjects, such as child maltreatment. Various ideas on how to tackle child maltreatment have been developed and are currently being implemented.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 230, 237, 238.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 226, 235, 236.

The Youth and Family Center plays a key role in this context, together with the other organizations and professionals, such as the Guardianship Council and schools. Experts indicate that the problem of deficient care and the social process that is needed to better organize care has been seriously underestimated in the Netherlands. According to these experts, far more additional care workers are needed to be able to handle the problems. The capacity is insufficient: in a school with 250 pupils, one hundred are considered a 'problem pupil' and many other pupils have issues that worry the teachers.

The experts stress the importance of performing an accurate needs assessment for the island and not simply copying systems that are used on the mainland. No short-term campaigns, but sustainable solutions based on the beliefs and values of the St. Eustatius inhabitants, along with a preventive approach.

Many children are not aware of the rights they have. Children who are looking for help still often find it hard to figure out where to go for help. When asking for help, they would prefer to ask someone who is not an islander. That is because they experience it as threatening to ask neighbors, family members, or acquaintances for help.

There are ideas for a crisis hotline for children, or another service that children can contact at various times, but nobody knows where to refer the children to after this stage.

Experiments with reggae-artists (and other positive role models) who call upon children to behave, seem to have a positive impact. Radio and TV campaigns also seem to get across to parents and children but can't be produced on a permanent and structural level.

Experts state that it is often very difficult to get parents to change their parenting style. If you were to apply Dutch standards, you would end up having to place many children in care, they say. However, placing children in care is very difficult on St. Eustatius. People are reluctant to offer themselves as foster families, because they are afraid of repercussions from the parents. There is no other care available on the island.

Many of the experts are concerned about the quality of collaboration between persons and official entities. Although collaboration is generally considered necessary in order to be able provide adequate care, getting collaboration right is still a challenge.

The experts agree that recording and documenting everything that is related to child-rearing is highly important. At present, insights into most aspects of child-rearing are lacking, such as family composition, the number of children faced with violence and child maltreatment, teenage pregnancies, etc. A baseline measurement is needed for all these aspects. 

1

'We, the citizens of Statia, must talk more about parenting and cooperation.' (expert)

'There's a great need for care for children and young people. For example, there are many young people who are abused or misused and never helped.' (expert)

'If Dutch standards were applied, a lot of kids would be put into foster care.' (expert)

'If you opened this Pandora's Box, all the bad stuff would come out. Then you'd really need a lot of decent, solid people. People with expertise and respect for the way things are here.' (expert)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 244, 246, 247, 248, 250, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291.

# 5 Literature on family and parenting

There have been several studies that have yielded information about family and parenting on St. Eustatius. Human rights committees have also spoken out on the matter several times. A detailed overview of the contents of these reports and other literature is provided in Appendix 2.

One of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, for example, is to support parents and educators in any way possible to enable children to take advantage of the rights awarded to them by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the  $\mathsf{Child}$ .

In their 2012 report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Dutch government outlines what they are doing or still intend to do to meet the Committee's concerns.<sup>2</sup>

The following will summarize findings on family and parenting from various studies and other literature.

# 5.1 Family composition

Literature on family and parenting shows that although a considerable number of children on St. Eustatius grow up in single-parent families, little over half grow up in a two-parent family. It also emerges from the literature that there are various risk factors for the childrearing environment, such as insufficient authority, neglect, and sexual abuse.<sup>3</sup>

A 2010 study concludes that instead of single mothers, the term to use is fluid family relations. This study also sees insufficient income and poor levels of education, and family composition far less, as the cause of many problems.

Human rights committees have expressed concern about the difficult situation of single-parent families, as well as about the lack of financial support.<sup>4</sup>

A recent Poverty Exploration showed that families often live in homes that are too small for the number of family members, which may lead to unhealthy living conditions where children inadvertently witness adult life. It furthermore indicated that poverty is the underlying reason for the problems of families from which children were placed in care. Single mothers with multiple children are mentioned as a category that is struggling more than others. Fathers often do not contribute toward household expenses, forcing mothers to take full-time jobs and to move in with family. Children are left unsupervised, and a place at a day care center is unattainable financially.<sup>5</sup>

# 5.2 Violence and neglect

The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends taking measures to stop violence and abuse in parenting and implementing a ban on physical punishment. The committee also expressed serious concern about the lack of a central reporting center and data about violence and child abuse at home, at school, at day care, at hospitals, and at other places.<sup>6</sup>

Other human rights organizations have also called for action against domestic violence. <sup>7</sup>

In the 2006 security plan for St. Eustatius, the inadequacy of parental guidance is seen as the main reason behind adolescents derailing and ending up in the world of drugs and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 106.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See literature 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See literature 33, 110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See literature 16, 64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See literature 41, 18, 17, 37.

crime. Inadequate parental supervision is seen as one of the causes. There are no local care or shelter facilities for the young.

Talking about domestic violence is very much taboo. Victims, growing up from generation to generation in the cycle of abuse, often don't know any better and generally have very little information and a low self-esteem. The lack of therapists, proper victim/offender help and local care facilities make it difficult to escape from the violence spiral and results in violent upbringing being transmitted from parents to children.<sup>1</sup>

Several studies highlight the link between anti-social behavior (violence, youth delinquency, alcohol and drug abuse, truancy, sex-related problem behavior, and depression) and problems within the family.<sup>2</sup>

A 2006 survey among high school pupils showed that 9% of pupils on St. Eustatius had suffered sexual abuse, while 20% had been harassed.<sup>3</sup>

Domestic violence records of the police and public prosecutor's office (2012) show that there is no proper overview of domestic violence incidents. The police and public prosecutor suspect the incidents are recorded in other crime categories than domestic violence.<sup>4</sup>

A different study confirmed that violence is still widely used as a parenting tool. There are no laws prohibiting that. The Antillean Civil Code governs the island and does not explicitly prohibit physical punishment at school, at home, and at juvenile institutions.<sup>5</sup>

In a recent report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Dutch government suggests that family as a social institution is crumbling and parents are insufficiently committed to their children. The report links this to the large number of single-parent families and parent(s)' necessity to work long days to earn a living. As a result, parents are not at home when their children come home from school in the afternoon. The report also observes that there is poverty on the island.<sup>6</sup>

# 5.3 Social safety net

The literature makes reference to the absence of a social safety net on St. Eustatius. It also shows that although the educational quality of day care and after-school programs has improved, it is still not good enough. This is attributable to, among other things, the available space and use of that space, lack of material, the kind of activities on offer, group size, interaction between the educational employee and children, and the lack of structural inspections. There turns out to be more demand than supply, while day care opening hours are poorly aligned with the hours parents work.<sup>7</sup>

#### 5.4 Parenting style

The reasons for parenting problems vary widely, as shown by the literature: financial problems, insufficient knowledge of parenting and communicating with children, lack of structure in parenting, time restraints, low level of education, psychological problems, relational problems, addiction, absence of a social network, poor housing (in a bad neighborhood).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 8, 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See literature 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See literature 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See literature 74.

See literature 70, 110, 64, 41, 18.

<sup>8</sup> See literature 64.

The woman's position is also named as a possible cause for problematic situations on St. Eustatius. 1

Good support for parents and children is essential and should be set up.<sup>2</sup>

#### 5.5 **Teenage mothers**

The personal situation and experiences of teenage mothers were the subject of various studies. The majority of teenage mothers surveyed still lived at home or with family. They responded that they would have liked to have had more emotional and moral support from their parents, as well as more information, advice, and counseling.<sup>3</sup>

Yet other literature shows that teenagers do not, inconsistently, or incorrectly use contraceptives when having sex, and that the number of abortions is high. Adequate sex education for teenagers is lacking and the dominance of religion on St. Eustatius stands in the way of the distribution of contraceptives. Human rights committees have pressed for improvements in this area.<sup>4</sup>

A 2011 study shows that the number of teenage mothers on the BES islands is extremely high in comparison to the Netherlands and other European countries. But this figure is still relatively low in comparison to other nations in the Caribbean and the Americas. The number of teenage mothers varies strongly on St. Eustatius. Poverty, insufficient education, and dropping out of school are identified as key causes of teenage pregnancies.<sup>5</sup>

The literature also points out that (teenage) fathers are insufficiently involved in teen pregnancies and ensuing parenthood.<sup>6</sup>

The Dutch government recognizes the sexual behavior between teenagers (and teenagers and adults) as undesirable and problematic.<sup>7</sup>

# The Convention on the Rights of the Child on family and parenting

The child-rearing environment is a decisive factor in children's development. Parents are crucial actors in that environment, which is exactly the assumption from which the drafters of the Convention on the Rights of the Child departed. On many occasions in the convention, parents are mentioned (in)directly. As the persons with primary responsibility for realization of the rights from the convention, as the persons with primary responsibility for raising and caring for their children, for protecting children, etc.

Articles 5 and 18 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child bestows responsibility for children on both parents. Parents are required to provide their child with 'appropriate direction and guidance,' factoring in the child's capabilities as these develop as the child grows up. This means that parents have to respect the rights of the child in a way that is aligned with what a child is able to do at a specific age.

In raising a child, parents must respect the child's human dignity. The Convention on the Rights of the Child does not provide a parenting formula. It works on the assumption that parents, with the support of others, endeavor to make sure their children can develop as best as possible, whereby the child's best interest must always be the starting point.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 16, 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See literature 108, 100, 16, 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See literature 106.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See literature 64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See literature 74.

Parenting responsibility is thus closely intertwined with the best interests of the child (Article 3), the right to safe and undisturbed development (Article 6), and the right to be heard (Article 12). And also, with the right to an adequate standard of living (Article 27).

The role of parents is also addressed in other articles of the convention. Such as in:

- Article 7 (right to a name and to know and be cared for by his or her parents),
- Article 9 (right to live with parents, and conditions for separation of child from parents),
- Article 14 (freedom of thought, conscience, and religion).

On the question whether hitting, an 'educational smack', is condoned as a parenting resource, the convention is crystal clear: it is not! The state must take social and educational measures to protect children against all forms of physical violence (Article 19).

As said, the Convention on the Rights of the Child bestows responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child on the parents. In Article 18, however, the convention adds that the state must guide and help parents in their parenting duties. This can be in form of parenting courses or other kinds of support.

This same article also stipulates that the state is required to (temporarily) take over parents' duties when they fall short in their care for the child or are unable to adequately care for the child.

In the case of children on St. Eustatius, the following aspects are particularly important:

- Parents have primary responsibility for the creation of an environment for their child that serves the child's best interests.
- Parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of their child.
   In order to enable them to adequately do so, the state must take appropriate measures to support parents.
- Family life must be protected.
- Child must not be separated from his or her parents.
- Protection of children against child abuse.

#### 7 Conclusion

The description of the current situation and comments on that situation from children, experts, and literature clearly shows that there are serious bottlenecks in a range of areas relating to family and parenting.

The conclusion that can be drawn is that the situation in terms of family and parenting on St. Eustatius is currently not up to the minimum standard set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Hard work is going into improving the situation, but this is a lengthy and difficult process. First off, parents need to be confident that they have the ability to raise their children to be responsible and respectful citizens. Apart from that, both parents and children need to know that they can rely on support and that there is no shame in asking for help. To actually do so, they first need sufficient trust in the official entities on the island.

Child care will also have to improve to be up to the standard specified in the convention, and that goes for both day care facilities and after-school programs in various forms. This concerns both quality and their availability, also to parents who currently cannot afford it.

Protecting children against violence is already a priority in the current policy, and will have to remain a priority to reach the standards set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Also on several other points, additional efforts are required to catch up and offer children the safe environment envisaged by the convention. Needless to say, many of these kinds of measures will have to tie in with measures in other areas, such as

poverty reduction (see chapter on Financial Situation) and adequate housing (see chapter on Housing).

## **Education**

A good education is an essential prerequisite for children to be able to develop. The right to an education is therefore a fundamental right that every child has. Alongside the family, school is also referred to as the second child-rearing environment. Children spend a significant part of their day at school. The way children are treated and 'brought up' by their teachers determines to a large degree how they feel and are able to develop. Many children also rely on school for interaction with peers, which also plays a crucial role in their lives.

The way their education is organized, and the quality of that education, has a direct effect on children's prospects for the future.

This subject is, of course, closely connected with other subjects covered in this report. Children with problems at home are generally also troubled by these problems at school and vice versa. Health problems can also affect children's learning ability. Children who grow up in a family without the financial means to buy sufficient food often come to school hungry and have to learn on an empty stomach. Living in an overcrowded house without a quiet spot where a child can retreat will make it hard for the child to do his or her homework.

This chapter will first outline the current situation in the area of education, followed by children's and adolescents' views on this situation, as well as what experts and literature tell us about it. Before ending with a conclusion, this chapter will relate the findings about the current situation to the relevant requirements from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## 1 Current situation

The Caribbean Netherlands Education Acts has been in effect on St. Eustatius since 1 August 2011, and an educational model based on the model in place in the European Netherlands has been rolled out.

#### 1.1 Preschool education

Responsibility for child care lies with the island authority. The Buzzy Bees Day Care Centre on St. Eustatius works met the early childhood education program Kaleidoscope. This is an educational methodology for young children between the ages of zero and six that is applied at day care centers and playgroups. Kaleidoscope is an adaptation of the American High/Scope program. Additionally, the child observation system 'KIJK' has been implemented. 2

For more information about child care on the island, see the chapter on Family and Parenting.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.nji.nl/smartsite.dws?id=110145. Consulted on 4 November 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Information received in an email from René Reehuis, 13-3-2013.

## 1.2 Elementary education

Elementary education in the Caribbean Netherlands is subject to quality requirements, including regulations regarding the subjects pupils have to study, the attainment targets, the number of hours of class per year, teachers' qualifications and competency, pupil and parent participation, the school plan, and the annual report.

The attainment targets provide guidelines and minimum requirements for the education offered and the level of knowledge and skills children are expected to attain. Elementary schools can choose their own method to achieve these attainment targets. The attainment targets for subjects such as arithmetic and language are the same as those in the Netherlands. For subjects such as history and geography, attainment targets have been adapted to match the local Caribbean situation.

The following subjects are compulsory for all children in elementary education in the Caribbean Netherlands:

- · Papiamento (for Bonaire)
- English (for all three islands)
- Dutch
- · Arithmetic and mathematics
- Certain knowledge areas (such as classes about geography, history, nature (including biology), social relations (including political science) and religion and spirituality)
- Creative self-expression (for example through arts & crafts, and music classes)
- Promotion of social skills, including behavior in traffic
- Promotion of healthy behavior
- Sensory and physical exercise.

Elementary schools are free to also incorporate non-compulsory subjects into their curriculum, such as Spanish, religious education, or philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Elementary education on each of the islands uses two languages of instruction with equal status. On St. Eustatius this is Dutch and English.<sup>2</sup> On request of the education deputy, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is currently assessing the possibilities and consequences of maintaining the current language of instruction or changing to English as language of instruction for elementary and secondary school and vocational education on St. Eustatius.<sup>3</sup>

There are four elementary schools on St. Eustatius: the Bethel Methodist School, Governor de Graaff school, Golden Rock RC School, Lynch Plantation Seventh Day Adventist Primary School. At the start of 2012, 382 pupils were attending these four schools.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.3 Secondary education

Secondary education on St. Eustatius comprises employment-oriented training (Pro, formerly Ago), pre-vocational secondary education, and senior general secondary education.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland. *03.0 Wet primair onderwijs BES*. Folder.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Caribean Netherlands Department. 03.1 Act elementary education BES. Folder.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Information by email from René Reehuis, 13-3-2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Letter from the Minister of Education, Culture and Science to the House of Representatives about the assessment of the Education program for the Caribbean Netherlands, dated 16 May 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011–2012, 31 568, no. 103. Annex: Report school absence public authority St. Eustatius.

The Pro program takes four years, preparing pupils directly for the job market, and is intended for pupils to whom the learning programs of pre-vocational secondary education are not suited.

In pre-vocational secondary education, pupils receive two-year basic training, followed by a specific curriculum focused on the profession and program of their choice. There are four learning programs:

- The theoretical program: a diploma earned after completing the theoretical program
  entitles the student to enter vocational training (level 3) and middle-management training
  (level 4) in senior secondary vocational education. A student holding a theoretical
  program diploma may also enter senior general secondary education.
- The mixed program: in terms of the level of education, this program closely approximates the theoretical program, preparing pupils for vocational and middle-management training (levels 3 or 4) in senior secondary vocational education. A student holding a mixed program diploma may also enter senior general secondary education.
- The middle-management vocational program: this is a practice-based program that prepares pupils for vocational and middle-management training (level 2 or 3) in intermediate secondary vocational education.
- Basic vocational training program: this program prepares pupils for basic vocational training (level 2) in intermediate secondary vocational education.

Senior general secondary education takes five years to complete and is intended to prepare pupils for higher vocational training at a university of applied sciences. Pupils in senior general secondary and pre-university education can select one of four profiles: nature and technology, nature and health, economy and society, culture and society.

Given the small number of pupils, schools on St. Eustatius are not required to offer all training levels, programs, profession options, and profiles. Schools have to make their own choices to suit their student base.<sup>1</sup>

Op St. Eustatius, the Gwendoline van Putten school offers a practical training program (Pro), pre-vocational secondary education and senior general secondary education. The pre-vocational program provides training in care, hotel and catering and engineering. The practical training program offers the options of hotel and catering, motor mechanic/carpenter. In the beginning of the school year 2011/2012, this school also started a transitional class, in the form of an extra school year for pupils with arrears in Dutch and/or maths.<sup>2</sup>

The Gwendoline van Puttenschool has about 265 pupils. Like on Bonaire, Dutch is the language of instruction on the pre-vocational and senior general level. English is the language of instruction in the practical training program.

### 1.4 Secondary vocational and higher education

In 2011, 391 students from the Caribbean Netherlands received student aid to support them in their further education. Of these students, 87 studied on Bonaire, 173 on the other islands of the Caribbean part of the Kingdom (Curaçao, Aruba, St. Maarten), 21 in the U.S., and 105 in the Netherlands.<sup>3</sup>

Since school year 2012/2013, the Gwendoline van Putten school offers education on intermediate vocational levels 1 and 2. Level 1 is a training to become a qualified assistant in engineering, metal, plastering or landscape gardening. Level 2 provides training to

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 1}$  Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland. 04.0 Wet voortgezet onderwijs BES. Brochure.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://public.gvpschool.com/vital-information/about-gwendoline-van-putten. Consulted on 21 February 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Overview of WSF-BES 2011 grants to pupils leaving the islands for further studies abroad.

become business administration employee, secretary and switchboard operator/receptionist.<sup>1</sup>

St. Eustatius also has the private (and relatively expensive) University of St. Eustatius School of Medicine and a private school for children whose parents work for the oil firm NuStar.

## 1.5 Social Opportunity Pathways for the Young (SKJ)

In 2006, the Netherlands Antilles implemented the 'Sociale Vormingsplicht' (mandatory social training) for young people aged between 16 and 25. Efforts in this area were further reinforced by the act on non-compulsory Social Opportunity Pathways for young people aged between 18 and 25 in January 2011. When young people in the 18-to-25 age bracket have been out of education for over a month without a valid reason, are not enrolled at an educational institution, do not have paid employment, and have not minimally attained a qualification at level 1 of intermediate secondary vocational education, they will be encouraged to take part in an opportunity pathway. The aim is to enable these young people to get a basic qualification or, if that turns out to be impossible, find suitable work.

An opportunity pathway lasts at least six months and no more than two years (with the option of applying for one six-month extension). Participants receive a monthly allowance, as well as a contribution towards the costs of child care if they have children. Whenever a young person enrolled in a pathway fails to live up to his or her end of the deal, the allowance may be suspended. On St. Eustatius, Social Opportunity Pathways are run by EduPartners.

## 1.6 Care and education for pupils with special educational needs

In the Netherlands, the central approach is to keep pupils who need additional support in regular education as much as possible and give them the specific attention they need in that setting. Student aid for these pupils with an accompanying system for needs assessment will not be introduced in the Caribbean Netherlands. Neither do the Caribbean Netherlands have the kind of special education facilities that have been introduced in the European Netherlands under the Expertise Centers Act (WEC) or schools for special elementary education.

To set up internal care structures for pupils at schools, two internal counselors/care coordinators have been trained for each school. Additionally, teachers are given the opportunity to take a course on how to deal with pupils with learning difficulties and behavioral problems.

St. Eustatius has a Center of Expertise for Education Care (EOZ) that has the capacity to help teachers and pupils with specialist support. Besides counseling in the community, the EOZ can also provide pupils with (short-term or long-term) support on its own premises.<sup>3</sup>

Since the 2011-2012 school year, the Gwendoline van Putten school has a transitional class. This is an extra school year for pupils with arrears in Dutch and/or maths.<sup>4</sup>

For children with behavioral problems, or who quit school prematurely, and for children with a handicap, St. Eustatius offers no or few special education options.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://public.gvpschool.com/mbo. Consulted on 21 February 2013. .

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland. 06.0 Sociale Kanstrajecten Jongeren (SKJ) Caribisch Nederland. Brochure.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Determination of the Budget Statement of Kingdom Relations (IV) for the year 2011. List of questions and answers. Established on 2 September 2011. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 32 500 IV no. 49.

<sup>4</sup> http://public.gvpschool.com/vital-information/about-gwendoline-van-putten. Consulted on 21 February 2013.

## 1.7 Children's rights education

Human rights are covered in the attainment targets for secondary education in the Caribbean Netherlands. Schools are free to set (learning) objectives and select their teaching material in working towards these attainment targets. Children's rights are not explicitly mentioned in attainment targets for education.

#### 1.8 School attendance

Under the Compulsory Education Act for Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba, children are of compulsory school age from the age of four up to the age of sixteen. If an adolescent has not yet obtained a basic qualification by the age of sixteen, then he or she will remain obliged to obtain a basic qualification up to the age of 23. A basic qualification is obtained by completing pre-university, senior general secondary, or senior secondary vocational education (level 2).

Attendance officers from public entities monitor and enforce mandatory school attendance. Each island has one attendance officer. Schools must report enrolments and deregistrations, as well as attendance by children of compulsory school age and adolescents who are under an obligation to obtain a basic qualification, to the local attendance officer. Primary responsibility for the child always lies with the school and the parents. In the event of unfounded absence, parents and pupils aged twelve and over will be held liable. The parents of a child of compulsory school age or a child who is subject to an obligation to obtain a basic qualification and/or the child himself or herself will be considered to have committed an offence and will risk being imposed a penalty if the child is not enrolled at a school or training center or fails to attend the school or training center. Children can also be sentenced to community service or receive a learning-based sanction. <sup>1</sup>

In the 2006 survey of pupils entitled *Communities that Care*, the percentage of children and adolescents who skipped school more than once over the four-week period prior to the survey was 46% on St. Eustatius.<sup>2</sup>

In May 2012, the minister for Education, Culture, and Science submitted attendance figures for Bonaire, Saba, St. Eustatius to Dutch parliament. School attendance data was still recorded differently on the islands in that time, making them difficult to compare. Initiatives have meanwhile been taken to improve registration and tackling of truancy. For the period August 2011 to March 2012, the monthly absence percentages on the Gwendoline van Putten school on St. Eustatius were about 35-40% with regard to skipping school for nine hours or less, 3% for skipping school ten to fifteen hours, and 0-1% for skipping school sixteen hours or more.

## 1.9 The Dutch Inspectorate of Education

The Dutch Inspectorate of Education regulates schools for elementary education, secondary education, secondary vocational education, and social opportunity pathways for young people.

Given that education in the Caribbean Netherlands still has to complete an adaptation period to bring it into line with the new situation, the emphasis will initially be on oversight in the area of quality improvement monitoring. Oversight is based on improvement plans drawn up by schools and institutions for the 2011-2016 period. Over this period, the inspectorate shall subject the quality of education to annual assessments, keeping a close eye on schools' efforts to improve.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland. 02.0 Leerplichtwet BES. Brochure.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> De Boer, S., Roorda, W., Jonkman, H., Van Aalst, M. (2006). *Scholierenonderzoek Communities that Care. Nederlandse Antillen*. DSP-Groep.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Letter by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science to the House of Representatives on the evaluation of the education agenda for the Caribbean Netherlands, dated 16 May 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011–2012, 31 568, no. 103. Annex 2.

The Dutch Inspectorate of Education also has a team of confidential educational inspectors, which also covers the Caribbean Netherlands.

Parents, pupils, teachers, school boards, administrations, but also confidential counselors can consult a confidential educational inspector when serious problems in the area of sexual harassment and sexual abuse, physical and psychological violence or discrimination or radicalization have arisen at or around the school. A confidential educational inspector provides information and advice, and can, if required, also guide affected persons through the process of lodging a formal complaint or reporting the matter to the authorities. <sup>1</sup>

#### 1.10 Homework assistance

The Mega D Youth Foundation on St. Eustatius provides after school care for children between four and thirteen years old. Homework help is an important part of the program. About twenty children between four and thirteen years old come to the center after school. The parents pay a monthly contribution of \$30.<sup>2</sup> As from school year 2012-2013, the Mega D Foundation focusses entirely on homework help for pupils in secondary education. The financial contribution has been increased to \$50.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.11 Commuting to and from school

For public transport, see the chapter on Recreation, Play, and Leisure Time.

## 1.12 Cost of education

In exceptional cases, people who are entitled to welfare can rely on special assistance benefits to cover the cost of a school uniform. Whether or not a case can be classed as an exceptional one is determined by the Social Affairs and Employment unit of the civil service for the Caribbean Netherlands.<sup>4</sup>

Adolescents from St. Eustatius who go to school in the Netherlands can, alongside the regular student aid, apply for a once-only start-up allowance. On certain conditions they can also apply for student aid to cover a college education in the U.S. or elsewhere in the Caribbean. The options for the pupils who want to continue studying are considerably broader since the introduction of the new Student finance system. For more information, see the chapter on Finance.

## 1.13 Legislation

Needless to say, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child applies in full to the children of St. Eustatius.

On 1 August 2011, the Compulsory Education Act for the BES islands, the Elementary Education Act for the BES islands, the Act on the expertise centers, the Secondary Education Act for the BES islands, the Adult and Vocational Education Act, and the Adult and Vocational Education Act for the BES islands came into force.

Other education-related legislation stipulates, among other things, that education must comply with attainment targets, as well as the number of required hours of teaching. This legislation does, however, not specify a teaching method: that is left to the school to decide. The Education Inspection Act, as adopted as part of the first BES Islands Amendment Act, bestows oversight responsibility for the quality of education on the Inspectorate of Education.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/onderwijs/Caribisch+Nederland/Toezicht+Caribisch+Nederland. Consulted on 17 March 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Letter from the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment dated 22 June 2012 to the House of Representatives. House of Representatives of the States-General session 2010-2011 33000 IV nr. 76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Information by email from René Reehuis, 13-3-2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland. *Informatiekrant Bonaire, St. Eustatius, Saba*. October 2010, number 8.

#### 1.14 Policy and activities

In 2009, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science launched, in unison with schools, a program for the improvement of education. This initiative has, among other things, already seen schools start regularly assessing their pupils' level. These tests have shown an upward trend in pupils' level.

In March 2011, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science agreed on the 'Education Agenda for the Caribbean Netherlands: working on quality together' with the schools of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. This education agenda outlines and formulates the objectives schools want to attain with their teaching. The overall aim is to get the quality of education at schools in the Caribbean Netherlands to a level that is acceptable by Dutch and Caribbean standards. School boards and management have detailed the agreements in improvement plans, setting out what they will be doing to reach an acceptable level within five years. They can rely on support from the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science throughout, which is, among things, making school coaches available.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Activities**

The main activities in the area of education are:<sup>2</sup>

- School coaches have, in collaboration with the PO Council and the VO Council (sector organizations of elementary schools and secondary schools respectively), been hired to support schools.
- A Center of Expertise for Education Care (EOZ) has been set up on St. Eustatius.
- Internal counselors and care coordinators have been trained by schools internally. School boards and school management will be supported by a process supervisor in creating their education care structure.
- Funds made available by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science have been used to improve conditions at school, such as furniture and teaching materials.
   Workshops on how to use the new teaching materials were organized and taken. The Stichting Leerplanontwikkeling (Curriculum Development Foundation) is assessing methods used on the islands for suitability for achievement of Dutch attainment targets.
- Education housing plans have been drawn up. Public entities and the government on the mainland will together invest 41.5 million dollars. New school buildings have been built on the islands, while several existing ones will be renovated and refurbished.
- The advantages and disadvantages of introducing English as the language of instruction have been assessed on St. Eustatius but maintaining Dutch as language of instruction is also evaluated. The results of this study are expected in 2013.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.15 Organizations and responsibilities

Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science

The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science is responsible for educational policy on the islands. The ministry makes sure enabling conditions are in order and offers support in the execution of policy.

#### Public entities

Public entities are responsible for pre-school education, enforcing compulsory attendance and qualification, school premises, and arranging pupil transportation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Determination of the Budget Statement of Kingdom Relations (IV) for the year 2011. List of questions and answers. Established on 2 September 2011. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 32 500 IV no. 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. *Voorjaarsrapportage 2011.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Letter to the Upper House of the States-General from the Minister of Education, Culture and Science dated 29 August 2012 with regard to the assessment of education in English in the Caribbean Netherlands.

## Schools

The schools are responsible for providing education.

### **Dutch Inspectorate of Schools**

The Dutch Inspectorate of Education monitors the quality of elementary education, secondary education, secondary vocational education, and social opportunity pathways for young people. The inspectorate also employs confidential education inspectors.

#### Center of Expertise for Education Care (EOZ)

The EOZ is responsible for providing specialist support to teachers and pupils. Besides community-based care, pupils can also receive (short-term or long-term) support at EOZ's premises.

Raad voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt (ROA, Education and Job Market Council) for the Caribbean Netherlands

The Education and Job Market Council (ROA) for the Caribbean Netherlands is a foundation that was set up in 2012 to ensure alignment between vocational education and trade and industry in the Caribbean Netherlands. The ROA for the Caribbean Netherlands is based on Bonaire, and also has consultants on Saba and St. Eustatius. Students in vocational education are required to do an internship at one of the accredited work placement companies. Accreditation of these work placement companies is one of the duties of the ROA for the Caribbean Netherlands. Currently, St. Eustatius has 33 firms that are recognized by the ROA as apprenticeship-companies. Other duties include providing guidance and advice to these companies in teaching pupils, helping reflect job market developments in the curriculum, and monitoring alignment of courses with the employment situation. The ROA also nominates courses to the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science for accreditation and funding.<sup>1</sup>

## Mega D Youth Foundation

The Mega D Youth Foundation is a private initiative where after school care and homework help is provided.

## 2 Children on education

The children surveyed highlight a wide range of matters concerning education on St. Eustatius. They refer to the school times and other practical matters, such as transportation to and from school and school supplies. Most children live close to school.<sup>2</sup>

'I go to the Bethel Methodist School. School starts at half past seven and we have lessons until half past twelve, except on Fridays when we finish at noon. My mom takes me to school, and I leave home at seven. If I go to my grandma's house after school, I walk because she lives nearby.' (boy, 12 years old, St. Eustatius)

Other comments by children concern the following subjects.

#### 2.1 Quality

The children's opinion about the quality of the teaching differs. Some are not very positive but think that improvements are trying to be made. They also consider that the pupils' motivation or rather the lack of motivation influences the education quality.<sup>3</sup>

 $<sup>^1</sup>$  http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/nieuws/roa-kantoor-caribisch-nederland-officieel-geopend. Consulted on 22 February 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quotes 320, 321, 322, 338.

'I think that the level of education is very low. All schools on Statia must improve.' (boy, 12 years old, St. Eustatius)

## 2.2 Educational offering

The children don't say much about what's on offer in school or on the island. It is obviously quite difficult for them to assess what is lacking. <sup>1</sup>

'Sometimes I look forward to going to a different school next year, but it's going to be a big change. The other school is much larger and there are lots more students. A lot of them are older than me, so I'm a bit scared. I will be able to make new friends, though. I'm looking forward to finishing school and going to college so I can be what I want to be.' (boy, 13 years old, St. Eustatius)

## 2.3 Language

Until secondary school, English is the language of instruction on St. Eustatius and Dutch is an extra subject. Many children speak English or Spanish at home. The children say that they are taught in Dutch as from middle school and also have to sit exams in the Dutch language. Many say that they struggle with this; they only understand a part of the curriculum and feel that they fall behind because of the language. The language barrier is also an issue for subjects like calculus and maths. Some children feel ashamed when they speak Dutch full of mistakes. One child calls the level of Dutch 'a joke'.<sup>2</sup>

'If I could change anything, I would change the education system. We are taught in high school in Dutch and we have to do exams in Dutch. At nursery school and primary school everything is in English and Dutch is just an extra subject. Anyone who goes to the Netherlands to study after secondary school is going to be at a disadvantage. They always say you should do an IQ test in your own language, so that should count for exams, too. Dutch is a second language for me, but for some it's a third or fourth language.' (girl, 17 years old, St. Eustatius)

#### 2.4 School environment

The children report that teasing is very frequent in school and some also talk about bullying. A few children are afraid of going to middle school as bullying and fighting is more frequent there. There are rules at school, like fighting is forbidden in the school yard. Other children are very happy and wouldn't change anything.

Needless to say, the school environment is highly important in terms of pupils' sense of safety (see the Safety section). Pupils also mention the degree to which they are given a say in the organization of the education as a factor that determines the atmosphere at school (see the Participation section for more about this).<sup>3</sup>

#### 2.5 Pupils

'I'm in the fifth grade. I don't want to go to the big school because there's a lot of fighting and bullying. I'm scared.' (girl, 10 years old, St. Eustatius)

'Sometimes there are fights at school. I usually know when a fight is about to start, so I make sure I'm not around. (girl, 14 years old, St. Eustatius)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 339, 340, 341.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 378, 379.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quotes 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 362.

## 2.6 School attendance and dropout rate

Some children don't attend all the classes. If they do so in consultation with the teacher, there is no problem. If they skip school, then they have to stay in school for an afternoon as punishment. And if they don't show up there, they are eventually suspended. There are also children who never skip school.<sup>1</sup>

'I've skipped school a lot this year. Sometimes I can't be bothered to go to the lessons, so I go home instead. The teacher speaks Dutch for 45 minutes and I don't always feel like listening to it.' (girl, 17 years old, St. Eustatius)

#### 2.7 Homework

The children are satisfied about the amount of homework that they are assigned. However, there are many reasons not to do their homework: they think it is not necessary, they would rather sleep, they don't understand the homework and can't get any help, they have a job or prefer chilling with friends. For help with their homework, children go to their fathers, mothers, aunts, neighbors, sisters, grandmothers or they have extramural class.<sup>2</sup>

'I'm in the fifth grade. My parents can't help with homework because they don't speak Dutch. My sister usually comes by on Saturdays and she is able to help me.' (girl, 12 years old, St. Eustatius)

#### 2.8 Teachers

Most children are positive about their teachers. They are nice, teach well, don't hit and welcome challenges, say the pupils. Some children are critical. They think that teachers should make education more attractive and teaching materials should be improved. Moreover, the level of teaching should be raised so that children are better prepared for their exams. Some feel that there is little communication between teacher and pupil (and parents). Sometimes children don't understand the teacher.<sup>3</sup>

'The teachers don't hit us.' (boy, 13 years old, St. Eustatius)

### 2.9 Future

The children on St. Eustatius dream of various professions: teacher, pilot, policeman, baker, chef, care giver, doctor, lawyer, business woman, pediatrician, inventor, nurse, surgeon, fireman and professional basketball player.

They want to go to Curaçao, the Netherlands, England, the United States or exotic destinations when they leave St. Eustatius. $^4$ 

'I don't think I'll stay here. I think I'll only come here for a vacation. Maybe when I'm old, I'll move back here. Maybe in twenty years. I want to travel and learn about other cultures. I want to go to Egypt, Asia, Italy, Fiji and Hawaii. I want to go to exotic places. The places where I would most like to live are America or London. People tell me that it's nice there. Maybe I should go there on vacation first to check it out.' (girl, 16 years old, St. Eustatius)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 419.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 432.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quotes 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 466, 467, 468.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See quotes 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485.

## 3 Young people on education

The young people surveyed spoke only briefly about education. They mentioned two points: first of all, the language of instruction. They explain that children are used to speaking Spanish and English in their daily lives. In secondary school however, they are taught in Dutch. One adolescent spoke from personal experience. He couldn't get any help with his school work at home as his parents didn't speak Dutch.

The second issue concerns the lack of sex education at elementary school, while children are already sexually active at that age. This is covered in greater detail in the Family and Parenting section.<sup>1</sup>

There should be more sex education. Even at primary school. It is now a major problem in primary schools.' (adolescent)

'Children are used to speaking Spanish or English, but in higher education lessons are given in Dutch.' (adolescent)

## 4 Experts on education

The experts explain that many church communities on St. Eustatius have their own school. The Seventh Day Adventists, the Methodists and the Roman Catholics all have their own school building.

Everyone knows each other. Family members may be member of different churches but everybody is linked to each other. Politics, religion and education are still very much intertwined. The school boards are very influential.

Moreover, the experts specify that there is currently not enough money to maintain the school buildings and that two public school buses exist for the transportation of the pupils to and from school. The Seventh Day Adventist school has its own bus.

The St. Eustatius public authority is only responsible for the public school, according to the experts. They also see that a big change-over is needed with the introduction of the Dutch educational system on the island after 2010.<sup>2</sup>

## 4.1 Quality

All experts are pessimistic about the quality of the education on St. Eustatius. They feel that it doesn't comply with the needs and the situation, children don't get the education they need to pass their exams and the necessary care and counselling are lacking. One of the experts summarizes briefly: 'In short, it is a mess here.'

The experts point to the complex problems on the island, the incompetent school boards, the lack of tests, the wrong language of instruction, insufficient staff and insecurity on schools as the reasons. This situation reduces the chances on a bright future for the children. Everyone hopes improvements will be made.<sup>3</sup>

'In both primary and in secondary education we are massively behind on Statia, even more so than the other BES islands.' (expert)

## 4.2 Educational offering

The experts are likewise not very enthusiastic about the offer on St. Eustatius. They can see that a lot of money and expertise has been put into the current educational structure by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science but they think that the approach has not taken the child sufficiently into consideration. The subjects and the educational system appear not to comply with the needs of the Caribbean child. The Expertise center has to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 317, 317, 318, 319, 319.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quotes 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 337, 350.

start from scratch on St. Eustatius. The center's primary task is to assist the school in setting up a care structure for children.

They are enthusiastic about the after school program that has been launched. It looks after children whose parents work.

Experts observe that three of the four schools for elementary education are religious. Sex education is only provided by the school (elementary and secondary level) if the school is willing to do this or can provide this education.

The experts also explain the advantages and disadvantages of growing up on a small island. It feels safe but offers few challenges. That also applies to the education. 1

'The Expertise Center had to start from scratch here. For example, clearing physical barriers so that support could be given to disabled young people.' (expert)

## 4.3 Language

Experts are also critical about the language of instruction in schools on St. Eustatius. They explain that Dutch has been chosen for secondary education and consider this a political choice that does not take the children's interest into consideration.

Experts are very worried about the language issues. Some even mention child abuse when one teaches children in a language they don't understand. They perform less well, fall behind, they can't get into further education, they get frustrated and their dislike for the Dutch language is increased. Moreover, a formal, not child-friendly form of Dutch is used in school, using difficult words. For children who speak Spanish at home it is very difficult to understand what is said in class.<sup>2</sup>

'Young people in the class don't understand what's going on. You can feel the frustration and powerlessness of the young people and the teachers.' (expert)

'The world has changed. English is the dominant language. Thousands of miles from the tiny Netherlands, young people are forced to learn Dutch anyway.' (expert)

## 4.4 School environment

The experts observe that all children on St. Eustatius eventually end up at the one school for further education. All levels from pre-vocational to senior general secondary level are provided in one school. One expert comments on the school climate, saying that the children lack the sense of security and therefore confidence that is so crucial to the learning process.<sup>3</sup>

### 4.5 Pupils

Experts see different problems in children that affect their academic performance. Inbreeding on the island for example causes learning problems on St. Eustatius. They also observe other problems: that support and encouragement from parents or the environment is often lacking, as a result of which children have an educational disadvantage and become aggressive and rebellious, and that some situations at home are very problematic. The Center for Youth and Family collaborates with the secondary school and offers training in dealing with aggression.

Experts also mention a clear link between the family situation and the children's behavior in school when discussing the subject of Family and Parenting.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 345, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quotes 396, 397, 398.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See quotes 319, 399, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407.

'Because young people have problems at home, they begin to behave badly at school.' (expert)

#### 4.6 School attendance and dropout rate

Experts call the pupils' absence in secondary school on St. Eustatius 'worrying'. It clearly reduces their chances of obtaining a diploma or starting a career. There is no data on how often pupils skip school or how many drop out, the experts say.

The Compulsory Education Act came into a force a few years ago, giving the school attendance officer the authority to impose a fine for truancy. The compulsory school attendance official on St. Eustatius is active and the recording of absenteeism has improved.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.7 Homework

Pupils on St. Eustatius can get help with their homework at the Foundation Mega D. Between fifteen to eighteen children from four to thirteen years old come every day to the center. Another five adolescents between thirteen and eighteen also come to the center, otherwise they would hang around in the street. Pupils from the senior general secondary education help with the homework.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4.8 Teachers

As regards the teachers on St. Eustatius, the experts are remarkably less positive than the pupils. The experts mention that some of them are authoritarian, arrogant, denigrating, incompetent, showing no respect and not involved. They often shout at the children and the argument is that children are used to that at home and won't listen if not shouted at.

The experts do see that teachers are willing to progress. The Triple P should help teachers to learn a different teaching style. 'The system is not totally on the rails yet', says an expert. The solidarity within the teachers' team to improve things must still develop further as well. The same applies to the teachers' confidence in being able to contribute to the children's upbringing. The experts notice a bottleneck related to this issue, as the teachers come from different cultures which makes is difficult to form a homogenous team. If teachers have a vision about the school and home's role in education, this vision various amongst their colleagues.<sup>3</sup>

'The attitude towards young people is characterized by continually telling them to be quiet. If a child asks a question during a discussion, the teacher responds immediately by angrily shouting, "Don't bother me, show respect, I'm talking to this guy!" Even if a child just wants to go to the bathroom.' (expert)

'There's no sense of community among teachers in the schools. There's no sense of "Let's do it as a team"'.' (expert)

## 4.9 **Future**

The experts foresee problems in the future for the children growing up on St. Eustatius. As the education is not of good quality, their chances of a career are poorer. They wonder what citizens these children will become, and some would prefer to raise the children according to their own — Caribbean — culture.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 434, 435.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quotes 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465.

Many boys opt for the short term solution and find work cleaning the oil tankers. Girls do leave the island to pursue their education. For pre-university education, the children need to leave the island. However, the island has to pay the costs for this education as the Dutch student finance system only applies to children as from eighteen years old.

Some argue for lower vocational education whereby children alternate their training between Saba and St. Eustatius to make it less boring.<sup>1</sup>

## 5 Literature on education

#### 5.1 General

A 2011 perception survey of parents and pupils shows that neither group doubts the use and necessity of education. Parents value what the school and books look like, how teachers are with the children, whether their child is bullied, and they find safety in and around the school very important. They are pleased that the education system has been brought into line with the Dutch model, that schools are accredited and inspected from the Netherlands, and that politicians now have less influence on education. They do add, however, that they don't want the teaching to become too Dutch either, and that it should always be consistent with the situation on St. Eustatius.

What pupils find most important is that the school functions properly, with good teachers, classrooms, computers, and teaching methods.

Since October 2010, the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture, and Science is responsible for education policy on St. Eustatius. The Dutch education system is the starting point, but it is focused on the island. The government's report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2012) shows that education is one of the Dutch government's four priorities. This prioritization came after the discovery in 2009 that the quality of education left much to be desired, that learning performance was dropping behind, that there was widespread truancy, that there was a lack of adequate facilities, and that school premises were in a poor state of repair.

Several enabling conditions, such as furniture and teaching material, have been improved and work is currently going into improving the quality of teaching (see further below). Up to 2015, the government and various public entities will also be pouring considerable investment into school buildings. Op St. Eustatius this means the extension of the Bethel Methodist School with four extra class rooms and the renovation of the Golden Rock School.

In a 2012 study, educational scientists were critical of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, condemning their failure to listen to the wishes and needs of islanders. According to these experts, legislation and regulations leave insufficient room for schools on St. Eustatius to design their own curriculum.

These same experts are equally dissatisfied with the performance of public entities, which they criticize for insufficiently fulfilling their duties and responsibilities in the area of school maintenance and pre-school and after-school education. These entities are also reproached with making insufficient resources available.

Other studies have shown that the lack of resources is also an issue when it comes to innovation and coordination in education, manpower and after-school programs.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 336, 346, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 26, 28, 30, 64, 74.

## 5.2 Quality

In 2008, the Dutch Inspectorate of Education qualified the quality of education on St. Eustatius as inadequate and very weak. There is moreover insufficient private education. Additionally, the inspectorate identified risks caused by the absence of a pupil monitoring system and information about dropout rates.

Over the period from 2011 to 2016, the inspectorate will evaluate the quality of education in the Caribbean Netherlands on an annual basis, keeping a close eye on all improvement efforts. In 2011 and 2012, all schools on St. Eustatius were subjected to such inspections.<sup>1</sup>

Of the citizens of St. Eustatius who took part in the 2011 perception survey, 48% feels education has improved since 2010, although a majority (61%) thinks it has yet to get better. One year further, and 62% says that education has improved, while 70% thinks it will get even better. Free books, better premises, higher quality of teaching, and more options to attend (upper) secondary education were all mentioned as improvements.

Another survey from 2012 shows that a lot has changed for the better in education over the past few years. Education professionals are positive about these changes. Investment has gone into schooling, coaching, teaching materials, classrooms, and buildings, and this has brought improvements. Only teachers in secondary education in particular are less enthusiastic (see below).

The objective set by the government's report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2012) is to get the quality of education in the Caribbean Netherlands to an acceptable level by Dutch and Caribbean standards by 2016. In 2011, an education agenda with targets for five years was agreed by schools and public entities. Learning performance has meanwhile showed improvement and hard work is going into improving quality.<sup>2</sup>

#### 5.3 Offering

Children's rights are not a fixture in the curriculum of schools on St. Eustatius.

In 2009, the Committee on the Rights of the Child pressed for measures to improve conditions for disabled children to give them equal opportunities. The committee also calls for sex education at schools to prevent teenage pregnancy, as well as for support for teenage mothers in education.

In 2011, the impact of the transitional class between elementary and secondary education on the Gwendoline van Puttenschool was assessed. This class appears to be efficient.<sup>3</sup>

#### 5.4 Language

A 2010 study of Dutch language skills showed that only a small portion of pupils had the target level of Dutch just before their final exam at that time. Reasons for this poor level of Dutch were found both with the pupil or at home and with the teacher. But only very few pupils who were struggling with the Dutch language had the opportunity to get extra help with that at school. Seeing as it has turned out that many children want to pursue further studies in the Netherlands (30 to 40%), the researchers recommend support for these children in this area.

Another study (2011) shows that parents on St. Eustatius are concerned about the use of Dutch as the language of instruction within a larger English-speaking environment.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Several reports by the education inspectorate on the Caribbean Netherlands in 2011 and 2012 are available on the inspectorate website: http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/onderwijs/Caribisch+Nederland/rapporten#03

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 106, 27, 29, 28, 30, 54, 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 5, 64, 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See literature 26, 6.

#### 5.5 **School environment**

The 2008 NGO report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that the majority of children feel their opinion does not count at school. Also refer to the Participation section.

A 2011 study shows that parents, too, feel insufficiently heard at and informed by the school. This same study also shows that parents on St. Eustatius have a traditional vision on education.

There is no data available on violence and abuse at schools, although we do know that it happens. The Committee on the Rights of the Child expresses concern about this in its closing statement of 2009, recommending inclusion of a ban on physical punishment in the law and enforcement of such a ban. By 2012, physical punishment had not yet been explicitly prohibited at schools. <sup>1</sup>

## 5.6 Pupils

A study that dates back to 2006 shows that a section of children on St. Eustatius is exposed to risk factors at school (such as falling behind in their learning, lack of a bond with the school). Poor school performance, more than half of pupils repeating a grade (49%), violence, truancy, depression and crime were all highlighted as problem behavior.

A 2011 study shows that pupils are indeed aware of the importance and necessity of schooling, and consider school an opportunity to make and meet friends and leave the island. The same research shows that parents on St. Eustatius support their children very little. Their traditional vision of education could partially explain this attitude.

Some pupils come to school hungry. The schools have set up facilities to give children something to eat. It is hard to concentrate on an empty stomach.

Research into why Antillean boys trail behind girls in terms of school results (2010) shows that this pattern starts as early as at elementary school. Reasons for this difference are found in upbringing and in the school culture and the majority of teachers being female.

The government's report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2012) makes reference to the opening of the Center of Expertise for Education Care (EOZ) for each of the three islands in the summer of 2011. Pupils who need it can get additional help there. Internal counselors and care coordinators have been trained to take stock of the extent of the need for this kind of care.<sup>2</sup>

## 5.7 School attendance and dropout rate

The St. Eustatius safety plan from 2006 showed that a growing group of adolescents on the island was heading in the wrong direction because they drop out of school prematurely. They tend to slip into the world of drugs and crime. The drop-out rate was considerable and many adolescents stayed on the island or returned from abroad without a diploma.

Another 2006 study shows that truancy occurs widely. Pupils primarily put that down to the fact that they do not feel a bond with the school. A 2011 analysis shows that pupils who do not feel committed to school are at greater risk to display violent and delinquent behavior in the future.

A 2008 study by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education shows that information about dropout rates is lacking. This study furthermore revealed that education and job market are poorly aligned due to many pupils dropping out.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 26, 46, 64, 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 106, 26, 71, 33, 64, 74.

The 2008 NGO report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child offers the following reasons for the high dropout rate among boys in particular: less interest and perseverance, getting a job at a young age due to social and economic circumstances at home, absence of intrinsic motivation, less support from parents, school too difficult. Girls were believed to receive clearer direction as part of their upbringing, they are required to help out at home, and do their school work while boys play outside. The dropout rate is highest in the 14-to-18 age bracket.

In 2009, the Committee on the Rights of the Child called for efforts to reduce the dropout rate.

Over three quarters of teenage mothers has no qualification, a 2010 study shows. They have dropped out of school because they felt ashamed, because they were unable to stay focused on their education, because of the response they got from the school, or because having to care for their baby meant they simply had no time for school.

#### 5.8 Homework

Research from 2011 shows that many parents find it hard to help their children with their homework. They work full time, are on their own in raising their child, have little education themselves, or there are other priorities in the family.<sup>1</sup>

#### 5.9 Teachers

The 2008 NGO report about the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that teachers need support in navigating through changes in education, claiming that there are not enough qualified and experienced teachers. This is linked to the salary and public image of teachers.

A 2011 study shows that pupils rate teachers who set strict boundaries higher than teachers who do not. Parents, on the other hand, are satisfied with the teachers in elementary education, albeit less so with teachers in secondary education. They feel teachers in secondary education are insufficiently interested and motivated, and shy away from contact with parents.

Another study (2012) shows that education has seen major improvement (see above), but that teachers are still cautious. That could be explained by them receiving insufficient support in assimilating changes in education. This means that they are often on their own when it comes to implementing changes in their class.

The government's report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2012) describes the application of Triple P methodology within the teaching profession.<sup>2</sup>

## 5.10 Future

A 2009 study shows that there is still a lot of ground to make up when it comes to aligning education with St. Eustatius's job market. Employers attach little value to diplomas and often pay only the minimum wage. A lot of jobs are occupied by workers from elsewhere and interns. The education on offer also often does not match labor needs. There is, for example, not enough trained staff available for jobs in engineering, tourism, or hospitality.

A 2011 study shows that students look at two things when deciding whether or not to return to St. Eustatius after they have finished school and higher education: suitable work and salary.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 26, 28, 30, 79, 64, 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 26, 10.

## 6 The Convention on the Rights of the Child on education

The right to education is extensively covered in various articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 28 and 29). These make it clear how important this right is considered to be. The convention stresses there must be equal opportunity for all children. Alongside children's right to education there is children's obligation to attend school: compulsory education.

In Article 29, the convention outlines the focus of education and which objectives it must attain.

For children growing up on St. Eustatius, the following elements in particular are crucial:

- The state shall ensure good quality education and access to education.
- The state shall commit to combating school dropout.
- The school shall incorporate the child's cultural identity and language into the teaching.
- Classroom discipline shall be administered in a manner that is consistent with the child's
  human dignity and in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Verbal or
  physical violence shall not be used at school.
- The education shall enable the child to develop his or her talents to their fullest potential.
- Access to information is crucial.
- Children must be able to retreat at home to do their homework.

Education-related articles are closely connected to other rights awarded in the convention, such as non-discrimination (Article 2), the best interests of the child being a primary consideration (Article 3), the right to development (Article 6), and the right to be heard (Article 12).

## 7 Conclusion

The account of the current situation and what children, experts, and the literature have to say about it, justify the conclusion that education on St. Eustatius currently does not meet all requirements set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

There are several issues that will require extra attention over the coming period, such as the overall quality of education, the fight against school dropout, the focus on the child's cultural identity and language, the manner in which discipline is maintained at school, children's opportunities to develop their talents, access to information, and opportunities of being heard at school.

Major steps are currently being taken to improve the situation and bring it up to the minimum standard set by the convention.

Child on Bonaire

## Health

From the moment a child develops in its mother's womb, its health is crucial. But also after a child has been born and as it grows up, health is essential. Health can never be separated from life and development.

According to the World Health Organization, the concept of health is to be taken broadly to include not only the absence of disease or ailments, and be considered a 'state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being.'

For that reason alone, health is closely linked to other subjects covered in this report, such as families' financial situation and the way they live. Children who grow up in poverty often do not have enough (healthy) food to eat and are confronted with unhygienic living conditions. These circumstances impact on their health.

This chapter will first outline the current situation in the area of health and health care on St. Eustatius, followed by children's and adolescents' views on this situation, as well as what experts and literature tell us about it. Before ending with a conclusion, this chapter will relate the findings about the current situation to the relevant UNCRC requirements.

## 1 Current situation

## 1.1 Health care and health

At this point in time, there is no clear picture of the state of health on St. Eustatius, comparable to that produced by the foresight study on health care (*Volksgezondheid Toekomst Verkenning*, VTV) that is published for the European Netherlands by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*, RIVM).

The intention is for Statistics Netherlands (*Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*, CBS) to conduct a health survey among the population of the Caribbean Netherlands in June 2013. The Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport has also initiated studies as part of infectious disease control. Nevertheless, adequate and recent data in many health-related areas is currently lacking. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has carried out a Youth Health Survey on St. Eustatius. It concerns a study looking at the health situation of children on different Caribbean islands. 240 children on the island were questioned for the survey: all middle school pupils. The provisional results appear to be 'solid' but are not public yet. They can be used for the development of an efficient health policy.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter's description of the current situation has therefore been based on the little information that is available about health on St. Eustatius.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> World Health Organization (WHO) (1978). *Declaration of Alma-Ata, International Conference on Primary Health Care. Alma-Ata, USSR.* 6-12 September 1978.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> EmailEmail from Pieter de Coninck, project secretary Caribbean Netherlands, International Affairs Directorate, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, on 5 February 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Municipal Health Services The Hague (2012). Municipal Health Services The Hague assisted the Executive Council Caribbean Netherlands with the implementation of the GHOR (Emergency and Disaster Medical Aid Services) and public health. Report Field trip Sexual Health & Hygiene, 15 September to 7 October 2012.

Health care on the island is split up into curative health care, youth health care, public health care, care for the disabled, and mental health care. Since the transition of 2010, the Dutch government has been responsible for health care on St. Eustatius.

Islanders have access to health insurance.

Besides the 'usual' health risks, children on St. Eustatius are also exposed to a number of specific health risks. This chapter will briefly focus on sexual health, obesity and diabetes, alcohol and drug abuse, and a number of other health risks.

#### 1.2 Curative health care

Since 1 January 2011, the St. Eustatius Health Care Foundation (SEHCF) is responsible for the health care on St. Eustatius. The St. Eustatius hospital and the Queen Beatrix Medical Center have been merged into this foundation. The foundation provides emergency aid, ambulant aid and hospital care. The nursing unit counts twelve beds. Patients can also consult a number of specialists visiting the island on a regular basis. An orthopedist and cardiologist hold surgery once a month. A neurologist and company doctor every six weeks.<sup>1</sup>

Patients mainly to St. Maarten for other specialist care and operations. Alternatively they can be referred to Guadeloupe and Colombia. The St. Eustatius hospital recently acquired an X-ray and ultrasound device. The St. Maarten airport has a helicopter on stand-by since 2011 to ensure 24/7 medical emergency evacuation to St. Maarten.<sup>2</sup>

St. Eustatius has three family doctors. The hospital hosts a general medical practice. There is also a dentist on the island.

### 1.3 Youth health care and maternity care

St. Eustatius's maternity center has been combined with the Youth and Family Center (CJG). Preventive parenting support is provided and youth care is coordinated from the CJG. Pregnant women and possibly their partners can also take pregnancy classes there.

Access to youth health care for slightly older youths has not yet been properly arranged. Youth care is still underdeveloped on some points. Adolescents looking for help with sexual health issues, psychological problems, and other delicate issues come up against major barriers. There are various reasons why adolescents are hesitant to go to their family physician. Physicians tends to be judgmental about their behavior or actions, parents can find out about visits to a primary care physician through the insurance, the requirement of parental consent for medical treatment is observed more strictly. There is a need for low-threshold and free care or counseling for young people (through school).<sup>3</sup>

Maternity care is available on St. Eustatius.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.4 Public health care

Prior to the transition, public health care was not widely available on the islands. Public health care is the responsibility of the island authorities, in a way that is similar to how Dutch municipal authorities are responsible for public health care services in their municipality. On 1 February 2012, two coordinators from the Municipal Health Service of The Hague started their work in blazing a trail for a broader roll out of public health care on the BES islands. They are helping island authorities raise the quality of public health care and the local medical assistance organization (Medical Assistance in the event of Accidents and Disasters – Dutch acronym GHOR) to the desired level. The National

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Email from Pieter de Coninck, project secretary Caribbean Netherlands, Department for International Affairs, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, 5 February 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Letter from the minister of Health, Welfare and Sport to the House of Representatives concerning health care on the BES islands dated 19 January 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> EmailEmail from Melissa Diaz, GGD Den Haag, 27 March 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Email from Pieter de Coninck, project secretary Caribbean Netherlands, Department for International Affairs, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, 5 February 2013.

Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) is also closely involved in these efforts. 

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### 1.5 Care for the disabled

St. Eustatius has no (special) facilities for mentally handicapped children. There are also no (special) facilities available for children with a physical handicap.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.6 Mental health care

Novadic Kentron was commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport to draft an action plan for an integrated and structural approach to mental health care, including addiction treatment. The health insurance agency will bring in a provider that will execute the plans in consultation with all parties involved.<sup>3</sup>

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Care opened in 2011 and provides day care for addicts on St. Eustatius. This center is part of the *Stichting Verslavingszorg en Psychiatrie Caribisch Nederland [Foundation Care for Addicts and Psychiatrics Caribbean Netherlands]*(Novadic Kentron). Due to the lack of proper support facilities, the center has limited its aid up to now to the most harrowing addiction cases. In 2013, a so-called FACT team (a team consisting of different care specialists such as a psychiatrist, nurse and social workers) will be implemented. This initiative is supposed to properly launch the care for addicts on St. Eustatius.<sup>4</sup>

St. Eustatius lacks mental health care facilities other than those listed above. In some cases, psychiatric care is provided through regular care channels (primary care physician) or referred for admission in the Netherlands. Moreover, St. Eustatius is served by visiting psychologists and a part-time psychiatrist.<sup>5</sup>

#### 1.7 Health insurance

As of 1 January 2011, anyone who lawfully resides or works in the Caribbean Netherlands is automatically covered by the compulsory Caribbean Netherlands Health Insurance. This also goes for people up to the age of thirty who have left the island for educational reasons. This health insurance covers, among other things, primary care, medical specialist care, hospital admission, paramedic care, dental care, medication, medical devices, obstetric care, maternity care, transport of the sick, and long-term care relating to old age, a disease, or a disability, regardless of whether this care is provided at a residential facility or at home. This health insurance also covers the costs of medical referral to doctors outside the Caribbean Netherlands with whom the health insurance has a direct or indirect contract. Insured parties who are on an income that exceeds the personal tax deduction amount will be liable to pay an income-related premium for the health insurance. Employers also pay a premium for their employees' health insurance. These premiums are levied and collected by the Dutch Tax and Customs Administration.

In December 2012, the Minister of Health announced his intention to eliminate coverage for physiotherapy and dental care on the island from 1 January 2013. This move was prompted by the rapid increase in care expenditure in the Caribbean Netherlands and a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Letter from the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport to the House of Representatives about healthcare on the BES islands, dated 19-1-2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Email from Pieter de Coninck, project secretary Caribbean Netherlands, Department for International Affairs, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, 5 February 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Letter from the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport to the House of Representatives about healthcare on the BES islands, dated 19-1-2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Email from Pieter de Coninck, project secretary Caribbean Netherlands, Department for International Affairs, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, 5 February 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> EmailEmail from Pieter de Coninck, project secretary Caribbean Netherlands, International Affairs directorate, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, dated 5 February 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/120/de+zorgverzekering+(algemeen).html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> RCN. Health insurance office. *Informatiebrochure zorgverzekering voor verzekerden van de Zorgverzekering Bonaire, Saba en St. Eustatius*. As from 1 January 2011.

broader need for government spending cuts. After protest – about the quick implementation of this change – a decision was made to push back implementation of this change.

#### 1.8 Sexual health

It is highly important for children and adolescents to live a 'sexually healthy' life and learn how to do that. Efforts are underway on St. Eustatius to tackle worrying trends in this area, such as sexual abuse, unplanned (teenage) pregnancies, abortions, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Sexual health is one of the priorities set by the governing councils of the Caribbean Netherlands and the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport. The Municipal Health Service will be launching various activities between 2012 and 2013 to raise awareness of sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has carried out a Youth Health Survey on St. Eustatius. It concerns a study looking at the health situation of children on different Caribbean islands. The survey also included questions about sexual health, use of contraceptives, sexual pressure and impulses. 240 children on the island were questioned for the survey: all middle school pupils. The provisional results appear to be 'solid' but are not public yet. They can be used for the development of an efficient health policy. 1

After having taken stock of the situation and interpreting signals from the community, the Municipal Health Service concluded that the state of sexual health of the population of St. Eustatius is worrying. The current state of affairs in terms of children's sexual health on St. Eustatius is as follows:

- There is no policy for sexual health other than a work plan with activities to fight against STD and HIV.
- Various stakeholders on St. Eustatius carry out prevention activities for the target group in this area. Different programs are run by, amongst others, the Youth and Family Center and the social workers in the schools. The programs are focused on education, empowerment and discussion.<sup>2</sup> The churches organize activities focused on sexual abstinence.
- The STD and HIV coordinator and the social worker in school provide education (in schools). However, sex education is currently not a fixture in the regular curriculum at schools. The Youth and Family Center is trying to set up a collaboration with the elementary school in order to organize a structural education program. A new education method, including sex education, is being developed for middle school. Professionals say sex education is also required because some young people have a distorted idea of sex.<sup>3</sup>
- The outreach of the existing prevention activities is limited as not all adolescents are structurally educated. The effect cannot really be measured at the beginning of 2013 but it is expected that the results of the PAHO Youth Health Survey (see above) will provide more insight into the sexual behavior and risks of adolescents and their attitude toward safe sex.
- There is no proper system in place to monitor sexually transmitted diseases. A proper system is actively being developed for the monitoring of HIV. Up to now, no children have been infected with HIV on St. Eustatius.<sup>4</sup>
- The number of teenage pregnancies on St. Eustatius is high (12% of the deliveries on the
  island is the result of a teenage pregnancy; every year more than 5% of the teenagers
  between fifteen and nineteen years old gets a baby). More information on this subject is
  offered under the theme of Family and Parenting.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Municipal Health Services The Hague (2012). Municipal Health Services The Hague assisted the Executive Council Caribbean Netherlands with the implementation of the GHOR (Emergency and Disaster Medical Aid Services) and public health. Report Field trip Sexual Health & Hygiene from 15 September to 7 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Examples are 'Girls Talk', 'Girl Power', 'Vibes in the World of Sexuality'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See newspaper Trouw, 2 May 2012, *Liever les in gebruik van de pil.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> EmailEmail from Carol Jack-Roosberg, head of Municipal Health Services, St. Eustatius, on 5 April 2013, referring to St. Eustatius HIV EPi-profile 2013.

- The number of provoked abortions seems high, but an overall view is lacking as come women go to St. Maarten (Dutch and French part) for abortion without a referral from their doctor. Figures in 2010 showed that more than 17% of all pregnancies on the island ended with an abortion. In October 2011, the Termination of Pregnancy Act came into force on the BES islands. This triggered some controversy. Since the summer of 2012, the Fundashon Mariadal on Bonaire has been authorized to perform abortions. Patients from St. Eustatius can also come here for an abortion.
- Since 2012, all forms of contraceptive are covered by the health insurance, making them more easily available, which is hoped to bring down the number of unwanted pregnancies. According to the family doctors on St. Eustatius, this measure has not resulted yet in an increase in the use of contraceptives (among adolescents).
- According to stakeholders, sexual abuse occurs regularly. They principally mention 'incest'
  and 'date-rape' (sex after a date because that's what is expected from you). However, the
  exact scope of this problem is unknown. Especially with regard to incest and sexual abuse
  of children, the specialists feel they are insufficiently 'armed' in order to act adequately.
  Clear guidelines and supporting structures are lacking. The smallness of the island hinders
  intervention. There is a need for extra education about recognizing sexual abuse and how
  to act after signaling a case.
- As far as intolerance and discrimination in relation to sexual inclination are concerned, there is barely any information available. There are signals indicating violence and discrimination but the problems are denied.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.9 Obesity and diabetes

There seem to be many cases of obesity and diabetes on the island. There turns out to be a need for greater awareness and insight in the area of a healthy lifestyle. Beginning 2013, a health show was organized on St Eustatius by and in collaboration with the chain partners in the health care field. The inhabitants of the islands were able to obtain information about the health care on their island and were made aware of the importance of this care.

## 1.10 Alcohol and drug abuse

Formally, the task of preventing problematic alcohol and drugs consumption lies with the island authority itself. There is currently no specific policy in place to prevent problematic alcohol and drugs consumption. There are only a few initiatives taken by the *Stichting Verslavingszorg* (Addiction Services Foundation) and Psychiatry Caribbean Netherlands (Novadic Kentron)

The Licensing and Catering Act that specifies age restrictions for alcohol sales to young people in the European Netherlands, is not (yet) in force in the Caribbean Netherlands. There is, however, legislation in place that restricts liquor advertising on radio and TV: The Liquor Advertising on Television and Radio Decree for the BES islands, which was taken from Netherlands Antillean legislation.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.11 Other health risks

In other areas, too, children on St. Eustatius are at a heightened risk of health problems. Some of these are currently being tackled. There is, for example, greater attention for dental health, which was absent before, while efforts are also going into raising awareness of the importance of a healthy diet.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> GGD Den Haag (2011), Offerte GGD Den Haag 31 March 2011, Ondersteuning Bestuurscolleges Caribisch Nederland bij uitvoering GHOR en Publieke Gezondheid. Report Field trip Sexual Health & Hygiene from 15 September to 7 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> GGD Den Haag (2011), Offerte GGD Den Haag 31 March 2011, *Ondersteuning Bestuurscolleges Caribisch Nederland bij uitvoering Publieke Gezondheid.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Email from Pieter de Coninck, project secretary Caribbean Netherlands, Department for International Affairs, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, 5 February 2013.

### 1.12 Legislation

Needless to say, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child applies in full to the children of St. Eustatius.

The Health Insurance for the Caribbean Netherlands stems from the Healthcare Insurance Decree for the BES islands and the Health Insurance Entitlement Regulations for the BES islands.

The Medical Treatment Contracts Act (WGBO) is regulated through the Civil Code for the BES islands. 1

## 1.13 Policy and activities

The Administrative Agreement of 20 November 2008 sets out the medium-to-long-term plan for health and housing on the BES islands. This plan covers 26% across the full scope of care, health care, and youth. The Administrative Agreement also contains other agreements, such as realization of a 24-hour facility for urgent care and taking stock of what is needed for public entities to be able to adequately perform tasks in the area of public health after the transition (manpower, expertise, and resources).<sup>2</sup>

A choice was made to create a care structure that is comparable to the Dutch situation, where care institutions are private sector parties and (first) responsibility for the care institution lies with the Board of Directors and the Supervisory Board. The St Eustatius hospital that was under the responsibility of the government has therefore been privatized as from 1 January 2011 with the establishment of the *St. Eustatius Health Care Foundation* (SEHCF).<sup>3</sup>

#### **Activities**

- As of 1 January 2011, the compulsory health insurance under public law for the Caribbean Netherlands was introduced for medical and exceptional medical care for the people of the islands.
- The hospitals on St. Eustatius and Saba were privatized as per 1 January 2011 with the establishment of the St. Eustatius Health Care Foundation (SEHCF) and the Saba Health Care Foundation (SHCF).
- Subsidies from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport were invested in medical infrastructure (buildings, equipment, and ambulances) and in staff training.<sup>4</sup>
- As far as highly specialist care is concerned, agreements were made at the end of 2010 and 2011 with hospitals on Curação and Aruba for the Leeward Islands and with the hospitals of St. Maarten and Guadeloupe for the Windward Islands.
- Novadic Kentron was commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport to draft an action plan for an integrated and structural approach to mental health care, including addiction treatment.<sup>5</sup>
- Funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport, the Municipal Health Service of The Hague has started, on 1 February 2012, helping the island authorities in setting up a public health care structure and Medical Assistance in the event of Accidents and Disasters (GHOR).<sup>6</sup>
- A central control room has been set up for the three islands on Bonaire to direct the emergency services of the police, fire department, and ambulance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Agreement regarding medical treatment: Art. 446-468 Burgerlijk Wetboek, boek 7, afdeling 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Decision list BES administrative meeting 20 November 2008 in The Hague.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Letter by the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport to the House of Representatives dated 8 October 2010. House of Representatives session year 2010-2011 31568 No. 81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Kingdom representative for the public bodies of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, *Voorjaarsrapportage 2011*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Letter by the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport to the House of Representatives about healthcare on the BES islands, dated 19-1-2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Letter by the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport to the House of Representatives about healthcare on the BES islands, dated 19-1-2012.

#### 1.14 Organizations and responsibilities

Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport

The Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport is responsible for health care policy.

## Island authority

The island authority is responsible for public health care and Medical Assistance in the event of Accidents and Disasters (GHOR). Funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport, the Municipal Health Service of The Hague has started helping island authorities in setting that up from 1 February 2012.

#### Local health insurance authority (ZVK)

The ZVK is part of the Caribbean Netherlands' civil service, and has offices on each of the three islands. The health insurance authority has been up and running since 1 January 2011 and focuses on executing the health insurance, including the procurement of care, keeping records of insured parties, providing information to insured parties and care providers. But also the support for insured parties when medical care is provided outside the Caribbean Netherlands.<sup>1</sup>

#### St. Eustatius Health Care Foundation (SEHCF)

The St. Eustatius Health Care Foundation, established on 1 January 2011, provides health care on St. Eustatius. The St. Eustatius hospital and the Queen Beatrix Medical Center have been merged into this foundation.

#### Youth and Family Center

Youth health care on St. Eustatius is provided through the Youth and Family Center.

## Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Care

This center provides day care to addicts on St. Eustatius.

## 2 Children on health

Most of the children surveyed have little to say about the subject of health. Like other children and adults, they only stop and think about their health when they or family members are faced with health problems.

One of the children makes a clear link between the lifestyle of the local inhabitants and their health. She tells that nearly 2,000 islanders suffer from diabetes and she links that to their unhealthy lifestyle.

Some children have a damning opinion about the health care on St. Eustatius. 'Don't become sick while you're here because our health care is probably the worst in the world', warns a seventeen year old girl. Others are also critical, particularly about the hospital on the island. Insufficient specialized equipment, care and doctors and a hospital that 'looks terrible', are the most important complaints. However, the children are satisfied about the doctors that are present on the island. They do think though that they are overworked as they have to provide care to too many people. Some children feel their complaints about a chronic illness are not taken seriously.

For all specialized medical help, inhabitants have to go to St. Maarten or Guadeloupe. That means leaving the island when they suffer health problems. This sometimes results in language issues as French is spoken on the other islands. A large number of children

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Kingdom Representative for the public bodies of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, *Voorjaarsrapportage 2011*.

complain about the fact that they even have to take the plane with one of their parents to get an X-ray taken. The children are satisfied about the dentist and the pharmacy.<sup>1</sup>

'Health care is reasonable. I don't go to the hospital very often, so I'm not exactly sure. I went to the hospital a few times when I was suffering from allergies. They helped me well at the time. I think there are only two doctors on the island.' (girl, 15 years old, St. Eustatius)

When asked about their eating habits, some children say they have breakfast at home before going to school and others tell they don't eat in the morning. Some children have their hot meal at lunchtime or at dinnertime but that is not the case for all of them. Bread and sandwiches appears regularly on the menu and so does Chinese take-away and fried chicken. Certain children think they have an unhealthy diet. They have a lot of sweet drinks and mainly eat a 'Statia-diet': a lot of carbohydrates and chicken.<sup>2</sup>

'What I eat in the evening varies. Sometimes I eat a hot meal, sometimes sandwiches and sometimes nothing at all. Often I'm not hungry when I get home because I eat late in the afternoon.' (girl, 17 years old, St. Eustatius)

'My favorite dish is rice, corn, fish, chicken and ribs.' (girl, 10 years old, St. Eustatius)

When questioned about alcohol and drugs use, most children say they never drink or use drugs but they know other children of their age who do drugs or drink secretly. Some children wonder how those children can keep this a secret as people rapidly know what you are doing on such a small island'.

Some individuals say they use drugs, smoke or drink once and a while and like it.<sup>3</sup>

'I don't drink, use drugs or smoke. Someone has to be responsible!' (girl, 16 years old, St. Eustatius)

## 3 Experts on health

The experts that were surveyed for this study have a lot to say about the subject of health and health care on St. Eustatius. Their comments cover several sub-areas.

## 3.1 Sickness

The experts emphasize that depression amongst youngers, in particular girls, is currently a problem on St. Eustatius. One of the experts speaks about five or six girls in middle school who are depressed and of which some carry out self-harm.

Moreover, the experts consider that children on St. Eustatius run a higher risk of getting pregnant or ill. Once a month, a radio program talks about pregnancy, respect for your own body, HIV and AIDS.<sup>4</sup>

## 3.2 Health care

The experts highlight the problem of some medication no longer being covered, causing some parents not to be able to afford them. The fact that undocumented people are not entitled to health insurance is also mentioned as a bottleneck by one of the experts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 493, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 513, 514, 515.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quotes 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See quotes 492, 492, 494, 495, 496.

The experts express their concerns over the teeth of children on St. Eustatius. Dental care exists now (via schools) but it is said that many children have brown patches on their teeth and cavities. Teeth brushing projects or information about the importance of brushing teeth can be a solution. <sup>1</sup>

'On the BES islands, health care insurance exists but is not available to those without documents.' (expert)

#### 3.3 **Food**

Experts are worried about what children on St. Eustatius eat. Widespread poor nutrition, lots of junk food, unhealthy or unbalanced diets, not enough fruit and vegetables.

Many children come to school without having had breakfast, while others don't bring a packed lunch to school. Malnutrition is a problem, as is overnutrition with unhealthy food, which leads to obesity.

'We must be realistic and give young people breakfast at school because they don't get it at home, whatever the reason might be. I know because I grew up on Statia.' (expert)

The experts identify different causes for children's insufficient (and irregular) eating or unhealthy diet. The first reason they flag up is the high cost of healthy food, but add: 'Children have a right to healthy food. To fresh fruit and vegetables, but they get flour and bread and fried snacks.' Fruit and vegetables are available, but very expensive on the island. The experts also mention 'laziness' from the parents as a cause. The breakfast projects carried out in schools are often run for a limited period. The effect is therefore also limited.<sup>2</sup>

## 4 Literature on health

The literature raises various points relating to the health of and health care for children on St. Eustatius.

## 4.1 Sickness

A previous study of youths on St. Eustatius shows that many children are exposed to risk factors (also see below). It concerns, amongst others, depression, sexual abuse and violence.

It is unknown how many disabled children there are on St. Eustatius, and how these children are cared for, and whether there is special care for these children and support for their parents. Public life seems fairly inaccessible for these children, as shown by the NGO report about the Convention on the Rights of the Child from 2008.

In 2009, the Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed its concern about the fact that disabled children still face obstructions, such as access to public buildings and public transport. The committee recommends measures to ensure that disabled children can fully take part in public life.

The abovementioned NGO report also shows that it was unknown at that time how many children are infected with HIV or AIDS on St. Eustatius.

A quick scan from 2009 gives advice on how to promote sports and exercise St. Eustatius.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 516, 517, 518.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 543.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 106, 67, 78, 77, 100, 16.

## 4.2 Health care

A 2011 perception survey shows that the population of St. Eustatius was critical of parts of the medical care available on the island. Their criticism concerned several aspects: medication that is no longer covered following the introduction of the pharmacist's formulary, medical referrals to Colombia and Guadeloupe (instead of to St. Maarten and Curaçao) that are complicated by cultural and language issues, the financial settlement of costs advanced by patients or counseling costs, waiting times for various medical specialists and the dentist.

People were positive, however, about the inclusion of dental care in the health insurance's coverage, and that proof of ID is all that is needed to get the required care.

In 2012, islanders were again asked how they feel about medical care on the island. This time, a more positive view emerged. However, there is still criticism of the shortage of medical specialists on the island, poor information, waiting times, costs, and the language barrier in case of medical referrals.

The NGO report about the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2008) shows that the health care for undocumented children is a focus point. Families without a residence permit are not covered by the health insurance. They can, however, use preventive health care facilities. In emergencies, they will be treated in hospital, but the costs are not covered. Parents can generally not afford the specialist medical care or medication their children need. In 2009, the Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern about undocumented migrant children's access to health care.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009) pressed for enforcement and monitoring of legislation on termination of life. The committee particularly calls for attention for the position of children aged 12 and over, and for newborns with serious congenital disorders.<sup>1</sup>

## 4.3 **Food**

Whether mothers op St. Eustatius are sufficiently aware of the importance of breast feeding for their children is not clear. The NGO report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2008) says nothing specifically about St. Eustatius.

In 2009, the Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern about the low number of mothers that exclusively feed their newborns breast milk.<sup>2</sup>

## 4.4 Alcohol and drugs

A 2003 survey of youths shows that a large number of children on St. Eustatius use marihuana more than once a week (5%).

In 2008, the Trimbos institute has done research on the drug and alcohol use amongst children on St. Eustatius. The conclusion showed that very few children use these substances. The institute does observe an increase in alcohol consumption and to a lesser extent in marihuana use. The lack of a solid family relationship, besides the influence that children exert each other, is mentioned as the main cause. The institute ascertains negative consequences for the children themselves (mental problems) and trouble for society. Children seem to be ill-informed about the negative consequences of drug use or have an indifferent attitude. There are no programs available on St. Eustatius focused on prevention of drug or alcohol use amongst the youth.

The NGO report about the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2008) states that there is little to no data available on the use of drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes and the effect of awareness campaigns.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 27, 29, 100, 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 100, 16.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009) is worried about the amount of narcotics and other substances adolescents on the island are using.<sup>1</sup>

## 5 The Convention on the Rights of the Child on health

The Convention of the Rights of the Child stress the importance of the right to health in several articles. The convention first states that every child has the inherent right to life, and that states must ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child (Article 6).

It also stipulates that the best interests of the child must always be a primary consideration in all decisions concerning children (Article 3).

The convention specifies an obligation to guarantee the development of children on the island to the greatest extent possible. That means that the government must go to every effort to ensure children can develop in safety and undisturbed.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child grants children a right to a healthy life and facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health (Article 24). This also goes for children on St. Eustatius. The following is key in this context:

- Adequate access to health care, from which not a single child may be excluded.
- · Adequate guidance on prevention of health risks.
- Disabled children receive additional care (Article 23)
- Protection against dangers to health, including child abuse, exploitation, drugs (Articles 19, 33, 34, 35, 36).
- Additional help when the child has fallen victim to violence (Article 39).

The right to health and health care is closely linked to the right to adequate nutritious foods (Article 24) and the right to an adequate standard of living and social security, including access to medical facilities and a healthy living environment (Articles 26 and 27).

Article 12 of the convention is also important in the context of health. When it comes to decisions regarding the child's health, such as in case of a medical treatment or examination, both the child (if it is able) and parents must be enabled to express their views on it. Children are informed and have a say in deciding their medical treatment. In legislation, this has been reflected in the medical treatment contract in the Civil Code for the BES islands.

In separate explanatory notes to the convention, the Committee on the Rights of the Child further fleshes out the right to health (care). The committee stress the importance of a safe and healthy living environment for adolescents, their own input, and promotion of a healthy lifestyle.<sup>2</sup>

The committee also formulates what needs to be done for young children up to the age of seven. Children need protection and to grow up in a healthy, hygienic, and safe living environment without stress.<sup>3</sup>

Health care for disabled children needs to be adequate and part of general health care facilities to prevent children being ostracized and stigmatized. They must have access to treatment by a multidisciplinary team. Every effort must be made to prevent disabilities. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 106, 8, 100, 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child (2003). *General Comment no. 4, Adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,* CRC/GC/2003/4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child (2005). *General Comment no. 7, Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood,* CRC/C/GC/7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child (2006). *General Comment no. 9, The rights of children with disabilities,* CRC/C/GC/9.

The committee is of the opinion that – besides the family – public health care must protect children against violence. Primary care physicians and emergency services must prevent, report, and combat child abuse.<sup>1</sup>

The committee is currently working on further guidance on the right to health.<sup>2</sup>

## 6 Conclusion

The current situation and what children, adolescents, and experts have to say about it show that a lot needs to change to reach the minimum standards set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the area of health and health care.

First of all, the huge lack of information about health aspects stands out. This is making it impossible to adequately respond to serious health issues of children and properly align facilities with needs. Hopefully this will change in the near future with the publication of the PAHO Youth Health Survey.

Prevention of health problems is an important focus point, for example when it comes to providing guidance on a healthy lifestyle, including sexually healthy behavior and healthy eating and exercise.

Access to (youth) health care for slightly older children also needs significant improvement to come up to the standard specified by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Youth care will have to be developed further and barriers will have to be broken down to enable children to exercise their right to health care. And alternatives need to be sought for situations where children, due to the small scale of the island, are afraid to seek help.

There are also great challenges in the area of care for disabled children, children who have become victims, and in the area of protection of children against wide-ranging health risks.

In some areas, it will be difficult to offer sufficient adequate health care on a relatively small island. In those cases, other possibilities will need to be sought to guarantee children on St. Eustatius can exercise their 'right to enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment and rehabilitation of health.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child (2011). *General Comment no. 13, The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence,* CRC/C/GC/13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013). *General Comment 15. The right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (Article. 24).* 

# Safety

Various aspects relating to (the sense of) safety are covered in other sections. Domestic violence and abuse, for example, are discussed in the Family and Parenting section, while bullying is covered in the Education section. In the chapter on Recreation, Play, and Leisure Time, both children and experts point to a clear link between boredom and juvenile crime.

This chapter will mainly provide information about safety on the streets, (juvenile) crime, and prevention and fighting of crime. After a description of the current situation, this chapter will go into what children and experts have to say about safety on Saba.

In the area of safety, there is widespread collaboration with the other two islands of the Caribbean Netherlands. Therefore the choice has been made to mention the relevant information in relation to Bonaire and Saba as well.

## 1 Current situation

## 1.1 Safety overview

The description of the current situation covers several different matters. It gives a brief account of general crime and juvenile crime levels, as this partly determines islanders' (sense of) safety. Prevention, combating, and the approach to (juvenile) crime are, of course, also covered. The description of the current situation offers an overview of how the legal system is organized, insofar as relevant to the situation of children. It also offers further information about juvenile criminal law that juvenile delinquents face, about aftercare, and victim support, and about immigration and human trafficking. The description ends with a review of legislation, policy, and a list of organizations and responsibilities.

The most up-to-date figures and data available in this area were used to compile this account.

#### 1.2 General crime picture

The following provides a description of crime figures from the public prosecution service and the Caribbean Netherlands' police force. This information mainly comes from the *Registered crime on Bonaire, Saba, and St. Eustatius 2008-2011* report by the IPOL service of the Netherlands Policy Agency (2012).

As far as St. Eustatius is concerned, this only captures crime registered by the KPCN (police force) and the OM (public prosecution service) in the year 2011.

The report focuses predominantly on (policy) spearheads formulated by the public prosecution service and the police force, which are: offences against property, violent offences, and juvenile crime. In the case of offences against property, the data concerns burglaries of private homes and business premises, robberies, theft, and theft from and of vehicles. Violent offences are murder and manslaughter, acts of violence in public, physical abuse, and threats.

There are several caveats to be aware of when it comes to registration in the Actpol police system. Not all incidents are entered, incidents may have been counted twice, some incidents may have been settled through personal mediation, and not all incidents are reported.<sup>1</sup>

Refer to the Family and Parenting chapter for information about domestic violence and child abuse.

Actpol recorded a total of 266 offences on St. Eustatius in 2011 of which 201 cases were solved (see table 5). 114 incidents were recorded as property crimes, 42.9% of the total number recorded. These incidents mainly concerned burglary and theft.

About half of the property crimes was solved. Just over a quarter of the cases (70) were recorded under crimes of violence. The most recorded crimes of violence were assault and threat. All seventy crimes of violence were solved.

The remaining 82 offences were mainly collisions (41), traffic offences (13) and vandalism (14). Of the 266 cases in 2011, 64 were registered by the public prosecutor's office. More than half (35) of these cases related to violence. About a third concerned a property crime and the remainder came under other offence categories.<sup>2</sup>

Offence	Number	Solved
Property	114	53%
Theft from homes/ yards	58	52%
Theft	45	44%
Theft with violence	2	50%
Misappropriation	9	100%
Violence	70	100%
Manslaughter (attempt)	2	100%
Physical abuse	38	100%
Assault with weapon	10	100%
Threat	20	100%
Other	82	87%
Sexual offence	4	100%
Road traffic offence	13	77%
Collisions	41	100%
Opium law	4	100%
Firearm law	3	100%
Resistance/obstruction	3	100%
Vandalism	14	43%
Total	266	76%

Table 5: Figures and percentages of property crimes, violent crimes, and juvenile crime registered by KPCN St. Eustatius for 2011.<sup>3</sup>

The 2011 perception study for the Caribbean Netherlands<sup>1</sup> shows that inhabitants of St. Eustatius are generally more satisfied about the performance of the police force and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Department of IPOL, Korps Landelijke Politiediensten (2012). *Geregistreerde criminaliteit op Bonaire, Saba en St. Eustatius 2008-2011.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Department of IPOL, Korps Landelijke Politiediensten (2012). *Geregistreerde criminaliteit op Bonaire, Saba en St. Eustatius 2008-2011.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Department of IPOL, Korps Landelijke Politiediensten (2012). *Geregistreerde criminaliteit op Bonaire, Saba en St. Eustatius 2008-2011.* 

improvement of the safety than the inhabitants of Bonaire and Saba. Of the respondents, 55% was of the opinion that the safety on St. Eustatius had increased since the transition and 10% has the impression that safety has declined.

In the follow up-study van 2012, 48% of the respondents still thought that security had increased, with 17% having the feeling that safety had declined.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.3 Juvenile crime situation

In 2011, the police on St Eustatius registered four under age suspects of whom three were involved in property crimes and the fourth one in a crime of violence (see table 5). <sup>3</sup> The study amongst pupils, *Communities that Care*, in 2006 indicated that violence and juvenile delinquency on the five islands of the former Netherlands Antilles occurs most frequently on Saba, followed by St. Eustatius. On St. Eustatius, 45% of the youths declared they had participated in a fight already and 53% declared to have beaten someone up. The percentage of youths that reported to carrying a weapon sometimes to regularly was 27% on St. Eustatius, while 36% said they had threatened someone for money. Further, 11% of youths on St. Eustatius admitted to shoplifting. The percentage of youths that revealed that they had once been apprehended by the police was 14% on St. Eustatius. <sup>4</sup>

The 2006 Plan Veiligheid St. Eustatius (Safety Plan St. Eustatius) observed, based on discussions with administrators and involved citizens, that a growing group of adolescents on St. Eustatius is heading in the wrong direction and is at risk of slipping into the world of drugs and crime. There are few activities for the youth on the island and the community center and the after school care are underused. Youth unemployment and the school dropout rate is quite high. Parental guidance is often insufficient and local care and support facilities for the youth are virtually non-existent.

#### 1.4 Crime prevention

Creating opportunities for positive leisure activities on the islands is part of the Minister of Health, Welfare, and Sport's policy. For information about after-school activities, refer to the chapter on Recreation, Play, and Leisure Time.

In 2010, a Center for Youth and Family (CJG) was opened on St. Eustatius. The CJG provides parenting support, as well as community-based help.

In early 2012, the Positive Parenting campaign was launched under the responsibility of the Minister of Health, Welfare, and Sport, and in collaboration with local authorities, to introduce parents to a different way of parenting.<sup>5</sup>

In case of concern about a child's safety, the Guardianship Council is responsible for conducting an enquiry, reporting its findings and issuing its advice regarding a child protection order to the court.

When the court issues a supervision order for a child, this child will be assigned a family guardian. When a child cannot live at home temporarily or for a prolonged period of time, options of placing the child in foster care will first be explored. For more information about upbringing support, community care and family guardianship, see the chapter on Family and Parenting.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Curconsult (2011). Samen verder bouwen. Belevingsonderzoek Caribisch Nederland. Onderzoek naar de beleving van de veranderingen door de burgers van Caribisch Nederland als gevolg van de gewijzigde staatkundige structuur binnen het Koninkrijk.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Curconsult (2012). Samen verder bouwen. Eénmeting Belevingsonderzoek Caribisch Nederland. Follow-up study naar de beleving van de veranderingen door de burgers van Caribisch Nederland als gevolg van de gewijzigde political structuur binnen het Koninkrijk.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Department of IPOL, Korps Landelijke Politiediensten (2012). *Recorded crime on Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius* 2008-2011.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Boer, S. de, Roorda, W., Jonkman, H., Van Aalst, M. (2006). *Study amongst pupils, Communities that Care.* Netherlands Antilles. DSP-Group.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Letter by the Minister of Security and Justice of 12 September 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33 000 IV no. 80.

Public entities are tasked with enforcing compulsory school attendance. Each island has one attendance officer. The level of school absenteeism is high, and cases are often settled through a HALT settlement, for which adolescents and their parents have to attend a hearing. The CJG, youth care agency, and Center of Expertise for Education Care have joined forces to offer parents and children help through schools at an early stage to prevent children dropping out of education. The Guardianship Council – to which cases can be referred – is also a party to these agreements. For further information about school attendance, refer to the Education chapter.

## 1.5 Combating crime

The Caribbean Netherlands Police Force has an office on St. Eustatius. In tackling frequent crimes and misdemeanors, the islands' public prosecution service, the police, and the island authority have made offences against property, violent offences (including sex offences and street robbery), and juvenile crime the policy spearheads.

The Caribbean Netherlands Police Force is still under development. The force currently has 115 employees, including seven police trainees, of a total intended number of 152 FTEs, comprising both police officers and administrative staff.

The understaffing at KPCN is particularly pressing at a number of operating service such as Investigation, Basic Community Policy (Dutch acronym: BPZ) and Intake, Information and Operational Support, where there are forty vacancies across the three islands.<sup>3</sup>

The Royal Netherlands Military Constabulary is furthermore also responsible for border control at the three islands' airports and sea borders. On top of that, the Royal Netherlands Military Constabulary takes on police duties at the airports and community policing support on St. Eustatius.<sup>4</sup>

#### 1.6 Tackling juvenile crime

In consultation with the public prosecution service, the Guardianship Council developed three intervention models in 2010: the HALT settlement, the public prosecutor model, and the judge model, all as ways of dealing with minor, medium-level, or serious offences. These are used to try to prevent minors ending up in court.

In the first phase of the model, a minor who has committed a minor offence (truancy, common assault, minor theft) can be punished. The public prosecution service has authorized the community support officer to decide on a punishment, which will mostly be a HALT settlement.

In the second phase, a criminal offence will be reported to the police. In that case, the Guardianship Council will guide the public prosecutor on the nature of the settlement. The third phase sees the under-age suspect appear before a judge. These three intervention models are offered on St. Eustatius.

The chain-based intervention model appears to be a success, considering the drop in the number of minors registered with the public prosecution service in 2011: from 14% in 2009 to 8% in 2011. On the other hand, the number of minors involved in incidents, has shown a significant increase compared to 2010. In 2011, 106 of the 150 reported incidents were settled through a HALT session, of which 97 ended in a sentence, order, or reprimand. This approach is also giving authorities greater insight into which adolescents are (co-)offenders or initiators and which are merely followers, as well as into the causes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Department of IPOL, Korps Landelijke Politiediensten (2012). *Geregistreerde criminaliteit op Bonaire, Saba en St. Eustatius 2008-2011.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Letter by the Minister of Security and Justice of 12 September 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33 000 IV no. 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Department of IPOL, Korps Landelijke Politiediensten (2012). *Geregistreerde criminaliteit op Bonaire, Saba en St. Eustatius 2008-2011.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/30/veiligheid+en+justitie.html. Consulted on 28 October 2012.

of juvenile crime. Finally, the approach is also having a positive effect among pupils in terms of school attendance.<sup>1</sup>

Parties within the criminal law chain, namely the Guardianship Council, the public prosecution service, the police, the school attendance officer, and schools, have agreed to tackle school absenteeism and minor offences at school. A case group has also been set up in 2001 for cases of adolescents who have (or are likely to) come into contact with the criminal justice system. The case group involves close collaboration between the various chain partners on the 'front side' of the youth chain. A youth care case group was also set up. Indirect links were established between civil and criminal law chains to close gaps in the youth care chain.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.7 Judiciary

The BES island's public prosecution service is in charge of enforcing criminal law and other tasks specified by law on St. Eustatius. The public prosecution service's primary task can be subdivided into three sub-tasks: investigating criminal offences, prosecution for criminal offences, and supervising the implementation of sentences. The public prosecution service decides whether and for which criminal offences someone will be tried.<sup>3</sup>

Cases coming to trial for the first time are generally handled by the Court of First Instance. These cases are generally heard by one judge. In organizational terms, the court is part of the Common Court of Justice of Aruba, Curaçao, St. Maarten, and Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. It has offices on Bonaire, Curaçao, and St. Maarten, while there are also oncemonthly sessions on Saba and St. Eustatius.<sup>4</sup>

Due to the islands' small scale, there are no dedicated juvenile court judges in the Caribbean Netherlands. Neither are there child-friendly facilities at the public prosecutor's office and courts.<sup>5</sup>

The Common Court handles appeal cases tried and sentenced at first-instance courts. Appeal cases are handled by multiple – three – judges. The court and associated court registry are based on Curaçao. In principle, the Court can have sessions on any of the islands. Several times a year, the Court handles appeals on Bonaire.

The Supreme Court of the Netherlands (hereinafter: Supreme Court) is the court of cassation for the Common Court of Justice of Aruba, Curaçao, St. Maarten, and Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. The Supreme Court is based in The Hague and is the Netherlands' highest court. The Supreme Court is authorized to quash sentences by the Court. Not all sentences by the Court can be appealed before the Supreme Court. Cassation cases brought before the Supreme Court will not see the Court go over the cases again, but only address the so-called questions of law: have the law and procedural rules of law been applied properly by the court? Procedures before the Supreme Court come with mandatory legal representation.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Department of IPOL, Korps Landelijke Politiediensten (2012). *Geregistreerde criminaliteit op Bonaire, Saba en St. Eustatius 2008-2011.* 

 $<sup>^2</sup>$  Letter by the Minister of Security and Justice of 12 September 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33 000 IV no. 80.

http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/30/veiligheid+en+justitie.html. Consulted on 25 October 2012/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> http://www.gemhofvanjustitie.org/, en: http://www.gemhofvanjustitie.org/vestigingen/statia. Consulted on 24 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Information received by email from Leo Tigges, the Ministry of Security and Justice liaison for the Caribbean Netherlands, 6 August 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> http://www.gemhofvanjustitie.org/. Consulted on 24 October 2012. And information received in an email from Justine Beumer-Gonggrijp, public prosecutor, public prosecution office Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, 2 April 2013.emailSt. Eustatius.

 $<sup>^{7}\ \</sup>mathrm{http://www.gemhofvanjustitie.org/vestigingen}.$  Consulted on 24 October 2012.

 $<sup>{}^{8}\;</sup>http://www.gemhofvanjustitie.org/index.php?eid=442.Consulted\;on\;24\;October\;2012.$ 

#### 1.8 Legal aid

Anyone whose annual earnings stay below \$12,500 can request free legal aid from the Caribbean Netherlands Civil Service. In most cases, a personal contribution is not payable. In case of a dispute with an employer, a personal contribution is compulsory.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.9 Juvenile sanctions

Both in the Caribbean Netherlands and the European Netherlands, the age of criminal responsibility is twelve.<sup>2</sup>

The following sanctions are available for adolescents aged between twelve and sixteen:

- HALT settlement
- Reprimand
- · Financial penalty
- Supervision order under criminal law
- Placement in a state educational home (comparable to placement in custodial institution for juvenile offenders, applied in exceptional cases)

The following sanctions are available for sixteen-years-olds and seventeen-year-olds:

- HALT settlement
- Reprimand
- Financial penalty
- Special conditions for a conditional sentence (such as Electronic Monitoring)
- Learning punishment (Anger management training)
- · Community punishment order
- · Counseling process by youth probation service
- Custody
- Electronic Monitoring in the event of Leave or Conditional Release
- Placement in a state educational home (comparable to placement in custodial institution for juvenile offenders, applied in exceptional cases)
- · Supervision order under criminal law

Minors aged sixteen or seventeen who have committed a crime can be tried as a dults both in the Caribbean and the European Netherlands.  $^{\rm 3}$ 

Electronic monitoring has been available as a sanction option in the Caribbean Netherlands since January 2012. This monitoring happens from the Netherlands using GPS tracking.<sup>4</sup>

A work superintendent will be appointed on St. Eustatius, financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, who will supervise the execution of the community service.<sup>5</sup>

#### 1.10 Youth probation

Since June 2010, the Guardianship Council has been authorized to perform youth probation tasks on all three islands of the Caribbean Netherlands. In 2011, the Guardianship Council entered into a partnership with the Caribbean Netherlands Probation Service for coordination of juvenile issues on Saba and St. Eustatius. One of the service's employees has been stationed on Saba. This person coordinates the youth case

 $<sup>^1\,</sup>http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/192/recht+op+kosteloze+rechtsbijstand.html$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Wetboek van Strafvordering BES article 477

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Wetboek van Strafrecht BES, article 41 septies.

 $<sup>^4\</sup> http://www.rijks dienstcn.com/nieuws/181/reclassering stoezicht-ook-met-gps-enkelband-mogelijk.html$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Information received in an email from Leo Tigges, liaison for the BES islands, Department of Security and Justice, 6 August 2012.

group on the two Windward Islands and sentences intended and imposes by the public prosecutor or court. Given the increase in workload, this employee has been focusing on adults since late 2012. Investigators of the Guardianship Council on Saba and St. Eustatius are taking over youth probation duties.

#### 1.11 Juvenile detention

On St. Eustatius, a suspect can be detained in a cell for a maximum of eighteen days. After this period, he or she has to be transferred to the custodial institution on Bonaire. In 2011, nineteen persons in provisional custody on Saba and St. Eustatius, were transferred to Bonaire.<sup>3</sup>

A custodial institution is being built on St. Eustatius. The institution will consist of eighteen cells with room for a total of thirty persons. The institution will be used as 'remand home' and 'jail' for the target groups 'youth', 'women' and 'men'. The institution will also be used for offenders from Saba. There will be a day program available (urine check, cell check, reporting, fresh air time, work, sport, recreation, visits, education, library). The institution will be built on a piece of land in the Man o'War district and is supposed to be put into service at the beginning of 2015.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.12 After care

After care for adolescents who are released from custody on the islands is provided by the probation service, provided it concerns a judicial measure (conditional release). There are barely any possibilities for after care on a voluntary basis. A 'sheltered housing' facility is lacking.<sup>5</sup>

#### 1.13 Victim support

On the three islands, volunteers working for the Victim Support Agency (*Bureau Slachtofferhulp*) provide free support to victims and other parties affected by a criminal offence or a traffic accident, such as witnesses and surviving relatives. The Victim Support Agency offers practical, legal, and emotional counseling. The Victim Support Agency also advises parents and people affected on how best to help children or adolescents who have been through a shocking event. <sup>6</sup>

## 1.14 Immigration

The Netherlands' Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) has an office on St. Eustatius to receive residence permit or naturalization applications.

In 2011, 5,553 applications for a residence permit were submitted to the IND on the three islands (refer to Table 6). Another 51 naturalization applications were submitted, of which forty were granted. The IND on the BES islands did not receive any applications for asylum. 8

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Letter by the Minister of Security and Justice of 12 September 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33 000 IV no. 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Information received in an email from Leo Tigges, liaison for Caribbean Netherlands from the Ministry of Security and Justice, 6th August 2012.email

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Dienst IPOL [International Police collaboration service], National Police Force (2012). *Recorded crime on Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius 2008-2011.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Newsletter Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. Edition 13, June 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Information received in an email from Leo Tigges, liaison for Caribbean Netherlands from the Ministry of Security and Justice, 6th August 2012.email.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Informatiekrant Bonaire, St. Eustatius en Saba. Edition 13, June 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Appendix to letter from the Minister for Immigration, Integration and Asylum, dated 10 February 2012. House of Representatives, Session year 2011-2012 no. 31 568 no. 97

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Information received in an email from Michelle Verplancke, Senior/Deputy unit manager Immigration and Naturalisation Service Caribbean Netherlands, 3 December 2012email.

According to the Royal Military Police data, about 82 people were refused entry at the border in 2011 and 63 people were expelled from the Caribbean Netherlands.<sup>1</sup>

St. Eustatius had 3,643 inhabitants on 31 December 2010. 47% was born in the former Dutch Antilles, 29% was born in South or Central America, 11% was born in the USA or Canada, 4% was born in the Netherlands and 9% in other countries.<sup>2</sup>

Type of application	Number submitted	Number granted
Provisional residence permit application	488	453
Fixed-term residence permit	1,522	1,487
Fixed-term residence permit extension	1,775	1,745
Permanent residence permit	322	297
Admission by law	1,087	1,075
Extension of admission by law	41	40
Statement of non-application	92	88
Visa return	226	226
Total	5,553	5,411

Table 6: Production 2011 IND Caribbean Netherlands.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.15 Human trafficking

In the area of human trafficking – which includes child trafficking – a covenant is currently being fleshed out between the island authority, the public prosecution service, the police, the Military Constabulary, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and Labor Inspectorate. This covenant will enable information sharing between the various parties to make the fight against human trafficking and smuggling more effective. Various other chain partners are also involved in these efforts, such as the special task force, the coast guard, customs, and the fire department.<sup>4</sup>

Every six weeks, the parties come together for a meeting on human trafficking chaired by the human trafficking response coordinator for the BES islands, Bonaire's public prosecutor. These meetings are used to share information and make plans. One of these plans is for the police to set up a human trafficking database, which will allow collection and analysis of information from the various chain partners about possible cases of human trafficking.

The Military Constabulary organizes training sessions for staff of the relevant chain partners, and soon the special task force will too. In 2012, the Center of Expertise for Human Trafficking and Smuggling in the Netherlands organized a two-day course for the public prosecution service and Military Constabulary on Bonaire. Funding for such efforts is often an issue as the Caribbean Netherlands does not have a budget for this, and there is no funding from the central government in the Netherlands either.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Letter from the minister for Immigration, Integration and Refugee Issues dated 1 February 2012. House of Representatives. Session year 2011-2012 no. 31 568 no. 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/bevolking/publicaties/articles/archief/2012/2012-bevolking-cn-uitgesplitst-art.htm. Consulted on 26 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Appendix to the letter by the Minister of Immigration, Integration and Asylum of 10 February 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 no. 31 568 no. 97.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Letter by the Minister of Security and Justice of 18 January 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 31 568 nr. 91.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Information received in an email from Justine Beumer-Gonggrijp, public prosecutor, public prosecution office Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, 2 April 2013.emailSt. Eustatius.

Bonaire's Victim Support Agency has offered to take on the reporting center role for victims of human trafficking on the islands.<sup>1</sup>

CoMensha has been appointed by the European Netherlands' Human Trafficking Task Force to be its buddy for the Caribbean part of the kingdom. In this capacity, CoMensha will maintain contacts with the various chain partners on the islands.<sup>2</sup>

In its buddy role, CoMensha is approached with a request from the islands for help about three times a year.

CoMensha reports that figures on human trafficking on the islands are not available.  $^{
m 3}$ 

#### 1.16 Legislation

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to children on St. Eustatius.

The general principle before the transition was that existing Netherlands Antillean law was to remain effective as much as possible. These laws were, as far as possible, directly converted into Dutch legislation, administrative measures, or a ministerial schemes. This also goes for legislation in the area of safety.

The Code of Criminal Procedure for the BES islands specifies how offences are prosecuted. This code stipulates, among other things, that someone can be tried for an offence committed before he or she had reached the age of twelve.

The Penal Code for the BES islands specifies what is considered a criminal offence and what sentences offences may carry. There is no separate criminal law for youths, but the Penal Code does contain sections that are relevant to trying minors (sections 9, 40, 41, 479 to 498).

The Caribbean Netherlands Police Force is governed by the *Kingdom Act for Police on Curaçao, St. Maarten, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba.* The *Kingdom Act for the Common Court of Justice* organizes the administration of justice on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba, as well as on Curaçao, Aruba, and St. Maarten. The set-up, organization, and management of the public prosecution services on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba is laid down in the *Kingdom Act for Public Prosecution Services on Curaçao, St. Maarten, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba.* Eustatius, and Saba.

The Security Act for the BES islands regulates the organization of the fire department, disaster response, and crisis management for Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. It also specifies which subjects have been left to the countries under the Kingdom Act for Police of Curação, of St. Maarten, and of Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba.<sup>7</sup>

From 1 January 2011, the merger of the three guardianship councils into one single Guardianship Council for the Caribbean Netherlands is regulated by the *Civil Code for the BES islands* (section 238, book 1). The *Guardianship Council Degree for the BES islands* came into force in April 2012.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Kingdom Representative for the public bodies of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, *Voorjaarsrapportage 2011*.

 $<sup>^2~</sup>http://www.mensenhandel.nl/cms/index.php?option=com\_content\&task=view\&id=8\&ltemid=12~Consulted~on~27~October~2012.$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Information received in an email from Judith Keller, CoMensha, 18 March 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Information received in an email from Justine Beumer-Gonggrijp, public prosecutor, public prosecution office Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, 2 April 2013.emailSt. Eustatius.

<sup>5</sup> http://www.eerstekamer.nl/wetsvoorstel/32017\_rijkswet\_gemeenschappelijk

<sup>6</sup> http://www.eerstekamer.nl/wetsvoorstel/32018\_rijkswet\_openbare

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> http://www.eerstekamer.nl/wetsvoorstel/32207\_veiligheidswet\_bes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Information received in an email from Atie de Vrij, Policy adviser, Judicial Youth Policy directorate, Ministry of Security and Justice, 4 April 2013email

Admission and deportation of aliens is regulated by the *Admission and Deportation (BES Islands) Act.* Legislation on foreign nationals was amended as part of the transition. The main amendments were: introduction of an authorization for provisional residence and the re-entry visa; the possibility of submitting a request for protection; charges for residence permit applications for the Caribbean Netherlands; increase in the level of legal protection against immigration law measures that follow the Dutch model.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.17 Policy and activities

- Additional staff has been hired by the police, public prosecution service, and Guardianship Council
- In consultation with the public prosecution service, the Guardianship Council developed three intervention models in 2010: the HALT settlement, the public prosecution service model, and the judge model, all as ways of dealing with minor, medium-level, or serious offences.<sup>2</sup>
- Parties within the criminal law chain, namely the Guardianship Council, the public prosecution service, the police, the school attendance officer, and schools, have agreed to tackle school absenteeism and minor offences at school.<sup>3</sup>
- A case group was set up in 2010 for adolescents who have come (or are in danger of coming) into contact with the criminal justice system to enable intensive collaboration between the various chain partners 'on the front side' of the youth chain. A youth care case group was also set up. Links were established between civil and criminal justice systems to cover the entire youth chain.<sup>4</sup>
- Since June 2010, the Guardianship Council has been handling youth probation tasks on all three islands of the Caribbean Netherlands.
- Bonaire's custodial center was done up and extended in 2008 and 2010.<sup>6</sup> A daytime program was designed for the center, which has also started offering educational services to inmates.<sup>7</sup>
- New multifunctional custodial institutions are currently being built on Bonaire and St. Eustatius. These are expected to open in 2015.<sup>8</sup>
- The capacity of the current custodial institution has been expanded using container cells pending the construction of new buildings.<sup>9</sup>
- A central control room has been set up for the three islands, which is based on Bonaire, and which directs emergency services provided by the police, fire department, and ambulance service.
- The police force is working on a multiple-year training plan with a view to training staff up to the required level and introducing new knowledge into the force.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Letter from the Minister of Immigration, Integration and Asylum, dated 1 February 2012. House of Representatives, Session year 2011-2012 no. 31 568 no. 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Department of IPOL, Korps Landelijke Politiediensten (2012). *Geregistreerde criminaliteit op Bonaire, Saba en St. Eustatius 2008-2011.* 

 $<sup>^3</sup>$  Letter by the Minister of Security and Justice of 12 September 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33 000 IV no. 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Letter by the Minister of Security and Justice of 12 September 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33 000 IV no. 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Letter by the Minister of Security and Justice of 12 September 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33 000 IV no. 80.

<sup>6</sup> Letter by the Minister of Security and Justice of 18 January 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 31 568 nr. 91.

 $<sup>^{7}</sup>$  Letter by the Minister of Security and Justice of 12 September 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33 000 IV no. 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Letter by the Minister of Security and Justice of 18 January 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 31 568 nr. 91. Information leaflet Bonaire, St.Eustatius and Saba. Edition 13, June 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Report General Consultation on 6 February 2012 with Minister Opstelten of Security and Justice and State Secretary Teeven of Security and Justice. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33 000 IV no. 63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Kingdom Representative for the public bodies of Bonaire, St.Eustatius and Saba, *Voorjaarsrapportage 2011*.

#### 1.18 Organizations and responsibilities

#### Ministry of Security and Justice

The Ministry of Security and Justice is responsible for judicial youth policy, including juvenile crime and policy in the area of victim support, probation, disaster response, police, fire department, and immigration.

#### Governors of public entities

Governors of public entities on the three islands are responsible for maintaining law and order, crisis management, and disaster response. The police force comes under the authority of the governor of the relevant public entity as they maintain law and order and execute emergency response duties.

#### Kingdom Representative

The Kingdom Representative can be brought in by the governor as an intermediary in case of a fire, disaster, or a crisis and requests for military assistance. The police and Military Constabulary can also turn to the Kingdom Representative with such requests. In the event of a disaster, crisis, calamity with impact that reaches beyond an island, the Kingdom Representative can direct the actions of governors. He or she can also intervene in the event of a state of emergency. The Kingdom Representative also sees to it that public entities' disaster and crisis plans are in order.

#### Caribbean Netherlands Police Force

The Caribbean Netherlands Police Force has stations on each of the three islands. The police's main duties are to maintain law and order, prevent and investigate offences, and relief work. The police force comes under the authority of the governor of the relevant public entity as they maintain law and order and provide emergency relief services. When investigating criminal offences, the police force comes under the authority of the joint procurator general for Curaçao, St. Maarten, and Caribbean Netherlands. In an organizational sense, the police force is part of the Directorate-General for Police of the Ministry of Security and Justice.

#### Fire service

Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba have one shared fire service made up of three local brigades. The fire service is the implementing entity for basic firefighting, emergency relief services, and disaster response.<sup>4</sup>

#### Royal Netherlands Military Constabulary

The Military Constabulary is responsible for border control, policing airports, and supervising civil aviation security. The Military Constabulary also supports police services on Saba and St. Eustatius. As part of the aforementioned duties, the Military Constabulary is also in charge of fighting migration and drugs crime. <sup>5</sup>

#### Public Prosecution Service for the BES Islands

The BES islands' public prosecution service is in charge of enforcing criminal law and other tasks specified by law on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. The public prosecution service's primary task can be subdivided into three sub-tasks: investigating criminal offences, prosecution for criminal offences, and supervising the implementation of sentences. The public prosecution service decides whether, and if so for which criminal offences, someone will be tried. The public prosecution service for the BES islands does not come

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland, *Informatiekrant Bonaire, St. Eustatius en Saba*. Nummer 10, Sept/Oct. 2011.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland. *Informatiekrant Bonaire, St. Eustatius en Saba.* Nummer 6. September 2010.

<sup>3</sup> http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korps\_Politie\_Caribisch\_Nederland.Consulted on 28 October 2012.

<sup>4</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/177/brandweer.html. Consulted on 28 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ministry of Justice, Letter to the House of Representatives on the status of judicial facilities on the BES islands as per 10 October 2010 dated 4 October 2010.

 $<sup>^6\</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/30/veiligheid+en+justitie.html.\ Consulted\ on\ 25\ October\ 2012/no.$ 

under the Joint Board of Procurators General for Curaçao, St. Maarten, and the Netherlands (the BES islands). 1

#### Supreme Court of the Netherlands

The Supreme Court of the Netherlands is the court of cassation for the Common Court of Justice. The Supreme Court is based in The Hague and is the Netherlands' highest court. It is also the highest court for Aruba, Curaçao, St. Maarten, and the BES islands in terms of civil and criminal law.<sup>2</sup>

Common Court of Justice for Aruba, Curação, St. Maarten and for Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba

The Common Court administers justice in the first instance, as well as handles appeal cases on the islands.<sup>3</sup>

#### Caribbean Netherlands Custodial Institutions Service

The Caribbean Netherlands Custodial Institutions Service implements, on behalf of the Minister of Security and Justice, sentences and custodial measures imposed by a court. At present, the service has only one site on Bonaire with capacity for 76 men, women, and minors. New custodial facilities are currently being built on Bonaire and St. Eustatius.<sup>4</sup>

#### Guardianship Council for the BES islands

The Guardianship Council for the BES islands protects the interests of children whose development and upbringing are under threat. The council conducts independent investigations, plays an advisory role in legal procedures, can propose measures or sanctions, and collects child support. The council also offers pre-trial assistance to adolescents in pre-trial custody.

The Guardianship Council works closely together with other entities such as youth care and family guardianship, the probation service, the police, the public prosecution service, and the judiciary. The council has introduced three intervention models, including the HALT settlement, and is responsible for probation services for minors.<sup>5</sup>

## Victim Support Agency

Volunteers working for the Victim Support Agency provide free support to victims and other parties affected by a criminal offence or a traffic accident, such as witnesses and surviving relatives. There is a Victim Support Agency on each of the three islands. The Bonaire office has expressed a willingness to also serve as a reporting center for victims of human trafficking.

#### Law Enforcement Council

The Law Enforcement Council is an intranational body of Curaçao, St. Maarten, and The Netherlands. This council is in charge of general inspections of the effectiveness and quality of various services and institutions that are part of the judicial chain on Curaçao, St. Maarten, and Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. This council also supervises the effectiveness and quality of judicial collaboration between Curaçao, St. Maarten, and the Netherlands insofar as it concerns the BES islands.<sup>8</sup>

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$  Ministry of Justice, Letter to the House of Representatives on the status of judicial facilities on the BES islands as per 10 October 2010 dated 4 October 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://www.gemhofvanjustitie.org/index.php?eid=442. Consulted on 24 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> http://www.gemhofvanjustitie.org/. Consulted on 25 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/178/justiti%E3%ABle+inrichting+caribisch+nederland%2C+locatie+bonaire.+%28%E2%80%98jicn%E2%80%99+%29.html. Consulted on 25 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/188/voogdijraad.html. Consulted on 27 October 2012. And information received in an email from Atie de Vrij, Policy adviser, Judicial Youth Policy directorate, Ministry of Security and Justice, 4 April 2013email

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Informatiekrant Bonaire, St. Eustatius en Saba. Editie 13, June 2012.

 $<sup>^{7}</sup>$  Kingdom Representative for the public bodies of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, *Voorjaarsrapportage 2011*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/persberichten/2011/04/01/benoeming-leden-raad-voor-de-rechtshandhaving-en-beheerraad.html. Consulted on 25 October 2012.

Caribbean Netherlands Unit of the Immigration and Naturalization Service
The Immigration and Naturalization Service Unit in the Caribbean Netherlands handles residence permit and naturalization applications. Each of the three BES islands has an Immigration and Naturalization Service Desk.

#### Caribbean Netherlands Civil Service

The Civil Service in the Caribbean Netherlands is in charge of assessing requests for free legal aid.

## 2 Children on safety

Most of the interviewed children feel very safe on St. Eustatius. There is virtually no violence and one of the children even says that 'in that respect it is a paradise here'. The small scale of the island contributes to the children's feeling of safety: everyone knows each other. If a car is stolen for example, it is an advantage to live on an island as you can't go anywhere with the car. Only tourists with 'strange faces' have to watched.

'It's too boring here for it to be dangerous.' (girl, 17 years old, St. Eustatius)

Some children feel unsafe on the island and see dangerous situations on the street, for example when drunken adults start fighting. Others mention girl being raped on the island and other problems.

'St. Eustatius is a beautiful place, but some people are bad. Those sort of people fight and smoke and young kids who are only 13 don't attend school. There's a lot of fighting on the island. I think it has to stop. The police should arrest them, but they don't. If the people who fight are acquaintances or relatives of the police officers, they are only warned but don't get arrested.' (boy, 12 years old, St. Eustatius)

Various children mention fights but don't mind those as long as they are not involved. It is remarkable that many children consider free roaming cows on the road a safety threat. They are afraid for their loved ones traveling in cars 'and a cow suddenly appearing in front of them on the road' explains a seventeen year old girl.<sup>1</sup>

'I feel very safe on St. Eustatius. The most dangerous things around at present are the cows. I'm afraid that someone I love will be driving along somewhere and suddenly be confronted with a cow in the middle of the road. A boy was nearly killed because of a cow a while ago.' (girl, 17 years old, St. Eustatius)

## 3 Young people on safety

The young people surveyed say a different approach is needed to prevent (juvenile) crime. In their opinion, what is needed is better alignment of the approach with the local situation on the island, as well as an assessment of what people really need in terms of help, guidance, and facilities.<sup>2</sup>

## 4 Experts on safety

Experts don't venture a strong opinion on the safety on St. Eustatius. They indicate that theft is committed once and a while and that adolescents are then being locked up. They also think that mothers and children should be able to get protection, help and shelter

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 550, 551, 552, 553, 556, 557, 558, 560, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quote 568.

when there is question of domestic violence. For more about this see the chapter on Family and Parenting.  $^1$ .

'Something should be set up to offer mothers and children safety and support: a safe house and counseling.' (expert)

## 5 Literature on safety

The literature devotes ample attention to the subject of safety and the wide-ranging aspects that influence safety and people's sense of safety.

Many of these elements relate to other aspects of children's lives discussed in this report. The subject of (domestic) violence against children at home, for example, is covered in the Family and Parenting section. This section also states that the situation in which children grow up in a family has an effect on whether or not they develop 'problem behavior' in other areas. The lack of attention at home, for example, may affect the way a child behaves at school.

Safety also comes up when children are asked about education. The section on education provides more information about that under the header of school environment. Issues such as bullying, fighting at school, and other safety (or sense of safety) aspects are mentioned in that section.

The subject of safety also plays a role in children's health (see the relevant chapter for more information). After all, unsafe or even dangerous behavior has a direct effect on children's health. Whether it be unsafe sexual behavior or drug and alcohol abuse. The latter can, in turn, have an effect on children's (subconscious) decision to display criminal behavior. This is how both subjects are closely interrelated.

The link between boredom and juvenile crime is also a subject that comes up, in the chapter on recreation, play, and leisure time to be exact.

The same goes for the link between children's actual living situation and safety in and around the home. Refer to the chapter on housing conditions for more information about that.

So what will the following sections address? In the following, you will find the literature that provides information about safety in general, such as street safety, as it affects children's – and their parents' - living situation on the island.

#### 5.1 Safety in general

Adequate and recent data on many aspects regarding children's safety is largely lacking. In its closing remarks of 2009, the Committee on the Rights of the Child calls for the development and implementation of a data collection and evaluation system.

The 2008 NGO report on the Netherlands Antilles also states that adequate data on children's safety is unavailable. There is, for example, no information about child death rates, causes of death, and suicides among youths.<sup>2</sup>

In the Veiligheidsplan voor St. Eustatius (Safety plan for St. Eustatius) from 2006, different bottle necks were pointed out such as degenerating adolescents, loss of social cohesion in the community, less consideration for norms and values and inadequate cooperation. Issues were also observed in relation to the response to crime such as the lack of alternative community services and integration and after care programs. The aid coordination with other islands appeared problematic at times. Domestic violence was rarely reported.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 567, 569.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 81, 100.

The 2012 Poverty Exploration shows that large groups of people having to live together due to poverty also comes with safety risks.<sup>1</sup>

#### 5.2 Crime

Needless to say, crime does not always target children, but it does partially determine the safety of children and the family in which they grow up.

In its closing remarks of 2009, the Committee on the Rights of the Child fears that race discrimination will continue to exist. The committee urges comprehensive protection against discrimination based on race, skin color, sex, language, religion, political or other views, national, ethnic, or social origin, possessions, disability, descent, or other status in any part of the kingdom. The committee also presses authorities to intensify awareness campaigns and other activities aimed at preventing discrimination and, if necessary, step up affirmative action for children from certain vulnerable groups, such as children from minority groups. In the committee's view, the authorities must take all measures required to ensure that cases of discrimination against children from all sections of society are eradicated effectively.

The committee also expresses concern about the fact that manslaughter is among the main causes of death of older children on the islands. Although the committee does not specify which island(s), they do call for an investigation into this problem and elimination of the causes.

Aside from that, the committee recommends making violence against children and corporal punishment at home, school, and day care prohibited by law and enforcing this ban in all situations (see Family and Parenting).<sup>2</sup>

In 2007, the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights condemned the absence of information about (sexual) exploitation of children. This committee also expressed concern about the absence of protection against violence and rape for boys.

The NGO report about the Netherlands Antilles submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2008) also highlights that data about (sexual) exploitation and child labor is lacking.

In its assessment of the Netherlands, a 2011 U.S. Department of State report on human trafficking also focuses on the situation on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. The BES islands are identified as a transit location and final destination for women and children who have fallen victim to human trafficking, as well as for men and women who are victim of unfree labor. Female prostitutes on the islands are highly likely to fall into the hands of human traffickers, as are unsupervised children on the islands.

Local authorities and the Dutch government have not reported any possible victims of human trafficking. During the period covered by this study, there were no prosecutions or convictions for human trafficking on the islands.

The government provides support for human trafficking reporting centers on St. Maarten and Bonaire. There have not been any awareness campaigns specifically targeting potential customers of sex workers on the BES islands.<sup>3</sup>

#### 5.3 Youths

The literature about children's involvement in crime paints the following picture.

A youth survey from 2003 and 2007 shows that a large section of children on St. Eustatius is exposed to risk factors, including threats to their safety and possession of weapons. A relatively large number of children feel unsafe in their neighborhood (18%) and say they

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 33, 111.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 102, 56, 57.

carry a weapon when they go out (8%). On St. Eustatius aberrant behavior such as depression, skipping school and violence is most common, followed by delinquency.

Research carried out in 2008 into problematic alcohol and drugs use on the island shows that alcohol and marihuana are most used on St. Eustatius. It concerns a small group of users among whom very few adolescents. <sup>1</sup>

The now (out)dated 2006 Security plan for St. Eustatius describes how a growing group of adolescents on St. Eustatius is heading in the wrong direction and at risk of slipping into the world of drugs and crime. There are few activities for the youth on the island and the community center and the after school care are underused. Youth unemployment and the school dropout rate is quite high. Parental guidance is often insufficient and local care and support facilities for the youth are virtually non-existent.

In the opinion of many, young offenders become real criminals in jail on other islands and the youth considers them as heroes upon their return. Alternative community services are lacking.

St. Eustatius has virtually no integration and after care programs available and the aid coordination with other islands appears problematic at times. Ex-offenders with a criminal record can rarely find a job.

Organizations that should support youth in need were not adequately equipped with regard to quality and manpower. The police force, the governor and the guardianship board are mentioned. The security plan opens possible avenues for solution and provides an implementation framework.<sup>2</sup>

A large survey among pupils aged between thirteen and eighteen in 2006 shows that violence and juvenile delinquency in this age group occurred mostly on Saba and St. Eustatius, followed by St. Maarten. On St. Eustatius, 45% of the questioned adolescents declared that they had participated in a fight already and 53% declared they had beaten up someone at some point. About 27% of the children admitted to sometimes or regularly carrying a weapon.<sup>3</sup>

11% of children on St. Eustatius said they had threatened someone for money, while 34% admitted to shoplifting. The percentage of youths that revealed that they had been arrested was 14% on St. Eustatius. 9% of the questioned children and adolescents reported to have suffered sexual abuse at some point. The percentage of children who said they had been harassed at some point was 20%.

A 2011 article shows that violent and delinquent behavior is very common among children on the islands. Boys are twice as likely as girls to display this kind of behavior. The strongest risk factor turns out to be whether a child has friends who engage in anti-social behavior. A history of problem behavior in the family and parents' positive attitude toward anti-social behavior also turned out to be risk factors. A lack of connection with the school, family management problems, and a lack of organization on the island also provide a fertile breeding ground for violent and delinquent behavior. On the other hand, possibilities for positive involvement in the family and strengthening of the family bond were shown to help reduce the likelihood of delinquent and violent behavior.

The 2008 NGO report on the Netherlands Antilles shows that the criminal offences most commonly committed by children are robbery, violent theft, and use of weapons. Such offences are often committed while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Juvenile perpetrators were often children who no longer attend school due to bad behavior or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 106, 103.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> An article based on this 2010 research cites other figures on the carrying of weapons. See literature 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See literature 8, 60.

economic circumstances. Juvenile delinquents generally had poor contact with their father and were growing up in a family headed up by their mother.

Adequate (and recent) data is lacking in a range of areas. There was, for example, no information available about children up to the age of twelve who have committed a criminal offence, the number of children prosecuted by the police, the number of children who have been witness to a criminal offence, the number of children arrested (or caught red-handed). Neither is there any information about the lives of juvenile delinquents after they leave prison, recidivism figures are lacking.<sup>1</sup>

Police records for 2008 to 2011 (2012) show crime registered by the public prosecution service and the Caribbean Netherlands Police Force. For an extensive summary on this, see 1.2 'General crime picture' and 1.3 'Juvenile crime situation.'<sup>2</sup>

In its fourth report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2012), the Dutch government makes reference to the situation of youths on the islands in 2009. They have seen that there is ample aggressive and maladjusted behavior among adolescents of high school age and that more adolescents were coming into contact with the police and judicial authorities. At the same time, the island also had insufficient facilities to adequate act in response to these developments. The Dutch government points out that youth care and youth probation was lacking and that the quality and quantity of youth protection left much to be desired. To deal with these issues, a plan was drawn up for each island. These plans place the central focus on several elements, such as prevention, parenting support, youth health care, expansion of positive leisure activity possibilities, youth care, possibilities of (temporarily) removing children from their family, bolstering of youth protection, Guardianship Council, and Family Guardianship.<sup>3</sup>

#### 5.4 Approach and sanction

The following literature in particular provides information about the approach to tackling crime on St. Eustatius.

A 2011 perception survey shows that people are relatively critical of the functioning of the police in the Caribbean Netherlands. People consider the police presence on the streets to be insufficient and have seen crime rates rise and safety fall since 10/10/2010. On St. Eustatius, people are generally positive about the police and the feeling of safety on the island has improved.

A subsequent survey in 2012 shows that people are (even) more positive about the police. Police presence has been stepped up, and police performance has improved. As a result, the sense of safety on the islands has improved since 2011 (43% feel safety on the island has improved since 10/10/10, while 20% feel that the island become less safe). People are generally positive about the fire service, which also improved in comparison to 2011.<sup>4</sup>

The government report on the elimination of discrimination against women (2009) describes a lack of manpower and resources for an effective fight against human trafficking.

In 2009, the Committee on Human Rights expressed its concern about the fact that human trafficking is not a separate criminal offence. The committee on the elimination of discrimination against women expressed the same concern in its final remarks in 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See literature 27, 28.

In response to these concerns, the Dutch government reports in 2012 that it has made all forms of human trafficking punishable in the Criminal Code for Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. It has also taken measures to facilitate a more effective fight against human trafficking.<sup>1</sup>

In 2009, the Committee on the Rights of the Child stated that the minimum age for the most serious forms of child labor on the Netherlands Antilles (fifteen years) was too low and in contravention of international standards. Their recommendation is to review this and to apply the International Labor Organization Convention on the elimination of the worst forms of child labor (No. 182), as well as the International Labor Organization Convention on the minimum age for admission to employment, to all sections of the Convention party.

The committee is also concerned about the absence of a comprehensive national strategy for the prevention of trafficking and sexual exploitation of children.

In its fourth report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2012), the Dutch government states that it will maintain the age limit of fifteen years in its definition of child labor. The 2000 Labor Act for the BES islands makes a distinction between children (persons under the age of fifteen) and young persons (persons aged fifteen and over, but under eighteen). Child labor is prohibited. The regime governing young persons is more lenient, they are not allowed to perform labor before 7am and after 7pm. Youths are also not allowed to perform hazardous labor. Hazardous labor is defined in the Employment of Young Persons Decree for the BES islands.<sup>2</sup>

In 2007, the Council of Europe's European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) visited a prison and police cells on Bonaire.

Their conclusions after the visit were as follows: Inmates complained about the way they were treated by police officers: beating, kicking, verbal violence, long detention in a police cell (sometimes as long as eighteen days), excessive use of violence when arrested at home, and rough physical treatment of family members, little contact allowed with family, lawyer, or doctor.

The committee found the police cells in Rincón to be in a reasonable condition. Ventilation, a bell to call officers, and possibilities for inmates to get some air were, however, lacking. The committee was less pleased with the cells at the Kralendijk police station: dirty, faulty sanitary facilities, dirty mattresses, no bell to call officers, and no possibility of getting some air or exercise. These cells have since been improved.

The committee found the atmosphere at Bonaire's prison complex to be good, and inmates did not complain about anything. At the time of the visit, there were no underage inmates at the prison. The committee considered staffing levels to be too low, and ascertained that there were not enough beds, forcing some inmates to sleep on mattresses on the floor. There were no activities for inmates, other than watching TV, and they could not get exercise every day. Medical care was lacking because the nurse was on long-term leave.<sup>3</sup>

The 2008 NGO report on children's rights in the Netherlands Antilles highlighted several bottlenecks. One such bottleneck was the lack of resources and manpower at the islands' prisons. There were reports of children sharing cells with adult inmates. Education at the prisons was still impossible.

Another bottleneck was that there are no child-friendly hearing rooms on Bonaire, although this was solved creatively in collaboration with other organizations. Neither were there special protection programs for children who had witnessed an offence. A recurring

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 51, 73, 17, 66, 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 16, 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 40.

problem was that of the absence of recent and adequate data in a range of areas (see above).<sup>1</sup>

In a 2009 graduation study, the researcher calls for the current prison system on the BES islands to be expanded with a multifunctional judicial institution with all facilities (except for detention for medical reasons), both on Bonaire and St. Eustatius.

The current Netherlands Antillean prison system has only one supervisory body. A formal right of complaint for forensic patients and detained youths is also lacking. There is no data available about the nature of complaints, there are no consistent internal rules, and communications with inmates is poor.

The Council for the Administration of Criminal Justice and Protection of Juveniles should be given a role and implement improvements. However, this council does not have any duties under legislation that applies to the BES islands.<sup>2</sup>

In 2009, the Committee on Human Rights expresses its concerns about conditions at Bonaire's prison and the treatment of inmates by police in the prison.<sup>3</sup>

In its closing remarks in 2009, the Committee on the Rights of the Child concludes that the Netherlands maintains the reservation on articles 37 and 40 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These reservations allow it to try children aged sixteen and over under adult criminal law under certain circumstances, and consequently make exceptions to the right to legal aid. The committee urges the Dutch government to revoke these reservations.

The committee reiterates its concern about the fact that sixteen-and-seventeen-year-olds on the Netherlands Antilles can be sentenced to life imprisonment. The committee calls for application of juvenile criminal law and abolishment of life sentences for juveniles. Apart from that, the committee urges authorities to ensure that deprivation of liberty for juvenile offenders be used only as a last resort and that sentences be as short as possible.<sup>4</sup>

In their fourth report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2012), the Dutch government indicates that youth probation activities were launched on Bonaire in June 2012. Bonaire's Guardianship Council has recruited an employee specifically for that purpose. This person has, in close consultation with the public prosecution service, developed three intervention models that can be applied on St. Eustatius as from 2011: the HALT settlement, the public prosecution service model, and the judge model, all as ways of dealing with minor, medium-level, or serious offences (see Current Situation for explanation).

On October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010, new BES legislation came into force on the islands. The islands have their own Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, while the Prison System Act for the BES islands was also implemented, although this currently governs only adults.<sup>5</sup>

An inspection report by the Law Enforcement Council (2012) highlights a range of problems regarding the crime reporting process at the Caribbean Netherlands Police Force. The crime reporting process has not been described, general guidelines for reports and/or quality standards for the treatment of people reporting a crime are lacking, reports are not registered consistently and structurally, rooms at Bonaire's Playa police station where people report crime are in poor condition, the quality of (registration of) reports is often inadequate, police only sporadically report back to reporting parties, and reporting parties and victims are not always referred to the required assistance and counseling.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See literature 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See literature 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See literature 81.

## 6 The Convention on the Rights of the Child on safety

Safety is a basic factor in a child's physical and social functioning. If safety is absent, the child will also not be able to exercise his or her other rights. All rights formulated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child relate to a child's safety.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child therefore devotes ample attention to children's safety and protection of children against breaches of their safety. These rights are minimum rights and also apply to children growing up in the Caribbean Netherlands.

The Convention focuses on guaranteeing children's safety and health in the various spheres covered in this report. Needless to say, not all articles are equally applicable to the situation of children on St. Eustatius.

- Every child has the inherent right to life and development (see Family and Parenting):
   Article 6.
- Children must be protected against discrimination: Article 2.
- Children's safety in their family environment must be guaranteed and they must be protected against all forms of violence, including child abuse (also refer to Family and Parenting): Articles 5, 9, 18, 19.
- Children must be protected against abduction: Article 11.
- Children must be protected in terms of safety in their living situation and have a right to privacy (see Living Conditions): Articles 16, 27.
- In situations where parents have handed over the care of their children, children must also be protected, such as in child care or when a child is temporarily placed elsewhere (see Family and Parenting): Articles 18, 20, 25.
- Children's safety at school must be protected (see Education): Articles 28, 29.
- Every child must be protected against harmful influences that form a threat to their health and therewith to their safety, such as alcohol and drugs (see Health): Article 33.
- Children must be protected against child labor, unsafe work, and against human trafficking: Articles 32, 34, 35, 36.
- Children who due to their actions come into contact with criminal law, and are consequently detained, must be treated with humanity: Articles 37, 40.
- Every child who is a victim must be protected, helped, and supported: Article 39.

## 7 Conclusion

It is, at this point in time, impossible to compile a comprehensive picture of the realization of all children's rights in the realm of safety as formulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is down to the absence of many relevant details. A conclusion that can be drawn is that there are various factors in areas that have a negative influence on the safety of children on St. Eustatius and even form a threat to their safety. Some of these factors are related to children's situation at home (see Family and Parenting), while others relate to the situation at school (see Education) or the limited possibilities for constructive leisure activities (see Recreation, Play, and Leisure Time).

On a number of points, legislation governing the island does not comply with the minimum requirements specified by the Convention on the Rights of the Child for adequate protection of children and to offer them the safety they are entitled to. A ban on corporal punishment, for example, is lacking. Trying sixteen-and-seventeen-year-olds under adult criminal law and the possibilities of life imprisonment for young people in that age bracket is also not consistent with the minimum requirements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The new approach on St. Eustatius with a more effective focus on juvenile offenders, however, is well aligned with the philosophy of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: an educational approach for young offenders.

# Recreation, play, and leisure time

The subject of Recreation, play, and leisure time is closely related to many other subjects addressed in this report, such as family and parenting, education, and health.

The degree to which children are able to enjoy their right to recreation, play, and leisure time has a considerable impact on whether they will be able to develop healthily.

Alongside family and school, the domain of leisure time is sometimes referred to as the third child-rearing environment. After all, that is when children learn to interact with peers and organize their free time, their own time. This is an indication of how important this subject is.

## 1 Current situation

#### 1.1 Recreation, play, and leisure time on St. Eustatius

There is only scant information available about the options open to adolescents on the island. The following will present, based on the available information, an overview of what's available in terms after-school programs, sports, cultural activities, playgrounds, libraries, religion, and public transport.

## 1.2 After-school programs (from age 4)

The Buzzy Bees Daycare Center on St. Eustatius provides care for children aged zero to twelve. As from half past twelve, the center provides after school care for children in the age group seven to twelve . About 56 children in this age group use the center. The parental contribution for children aged four to twelve is \$ 100 per month. Buzzy Bees receives a subsidy from the local government.

Furthermore, the Mega D Youth Foundation provides after school care consisting of leisure activities and homework help. A teacher is involved in this program. About twenty children in the age group four to thirteen visit the center after school. The children also get a meal there. The parents pay a contribution of \$ 30 per month. The Mega D Youth Foundation has been set up with donations and volunteers and now also receives subsidies.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.3 Sports

In 2009, DSP-groep was commission by the Netherlands Institute for Sport and Exercise (NISB) to perform a quick scan of the sport and exercise situation on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba, funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport. The scan showed that the offer of sports facilities on St. Eustatius is reasonable but often of insufficient quality.

St. Eustatius has a sports complex with an open air swimming pool, sports hall, a Cruyff-court and a few other fields. This complex is also used by schools. There are some other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Letter from the minister of Social Affairs and Employment dated 22 June 2012 to the House of Representatives concerning promises made during general discussions Caribbean Netherlands 30 January 2012. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33000 IV nr. 76.

sports facilities elsewhere on the island, such as a fitness center, a cricket field, a basketball court with seating (Walton place), a basketball and volleyball court at the community center and a basketball court next to the church.

About ten different sports can be practiced on St. Eustatius of which the main ones are: soccer, softball, basketball, swimming and volleyball. Each of these sports have their own federation on the island that organizes competitions. Small groups of active volunteers keep the sports clubs running. Most members are children and adolescents. Most island inhabitants stop practicing sport when they get to their twenties. Sport and physical exercise are not consciously part of a healthy active lifestyle (see Health). Getting volunteers is a problem in the sports sector and volunteers are not supported and accompanied.

At the time of the DSP-group research (2009), there was a PE teacher teaching physical education at the middle school but he was no qualified teacher. There was no PE teacher working at the elementary school.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.4 Cultural facilities

Over the past few years, over ninety cultural projects on the six islands that make up the Caribbean part of the Kingdom received subsidies under the KulturA scheme. This scheme run by the Mondriaan Fund in collaboration with the Fund for Culture Participation, Performing Arts Fund, and the Dutch Foundation for Literature was intended for single investments in material, knowledge, or networking. It was supposed to strengthen the cultural infrastructure in the Dutch Caribbean islands and boost (international) exchange. The scheme stopped accepting applications in September 2012. Potential applicants can, however, still apply for regular funding from the participating funds.<sup>2</sup>

The following will describe the cultural options children on St. Eustatius have. This is not an exhaustive list, but it does paint an initial picture of the island's cultural offering for children.

The Mega D Youth Foundation organizes cultural activities for children and adolescents. A group of adolescents has recorded an album in 2012 with music and poems.<sup>3</sup>

Plays are organized in the community center on St. Eustatius.<sup>4</sup>

The St. Eustatius Musical Foundation organizes, amongst others, an annual carnival celebration.

The Historical Foundation Museum, the Lynch Plantation Museum and the Miriam C. Schmidt botanical garden are situated on St. Eustatius.<sup>5</sup>

#### 1.5 Other activities for children

The Youth and Family Center (CJG) on St. Eustatius has appointed two youth workers who organize activities for children and adolescents. These are mainly youth nights and activities related to (international) themes and days such as mothers and fathers' day, Valentine's day, black historic week, Children's books week, Christmas activities and Children's Rights awareness week.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Lagendijk, E. (2009). Sport and physical exercise on the BES-islands. Quick scan and advice about policy, infrastructure and organization of sport and physical exercise on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba in 2009. Amsterdam: DSP-group

 $<sup>^2\</sup> http://regelingkultura.wordpress.com$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> http://www.myf4youth.com/. Consulted on 23 December 2012.

 $<sup>^4</sup>$  IdeeVersa (2012). Reference framework Caribbean Netherlands. Page 210.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> http://www.steustatiushistory.org/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Fourth report Netherlands to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2012).

Moreover, the CJG organizes activities that are more focused on aid and assistance such as *Girls Talk* (thirteen to fifteen year olds), *social skills* (six to seven year olds), Aggression Regulation Training (twelve to seventeen year olds) and *Youth Nights* (thirteen to fifteen year olds). The CJG also has a toy and game library.

#### 1.6 Playgrounds

The botanic garden on St. Eustatius has a children's playground.

#### 1.7 Library

There is a library on St. Eustatius.

#### 1.8 Religion

Religion plays an important role in the lives of many inhabitants on St. Eustatius 25% of the inhabitants is Roman Catholic, 27 Methodist, 21% Seventh-day Adventist and 19% practices another religion.<sup>2</sup>

There are many churches on St. Eustatius: Roman Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist, Methodist, Jehovah witness, Bahai Faith, Baptist, Anglican, Apostolic Faith, Pentecostal and World of Faith Ministry.

#### 1.9 Public transport

There is no public transport on the island except for pupil transportation. There are no regular ferry services between St. Eustatius and Saba or St. Maarten either.

#### 1.10 Legislation

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to children on St. Eustatius.

The Dutch Cultural Policy Act applies to the islands. This piece of legislation defines a framework for the provision of government subsidies for cultural purposes through culture funds. This allows artists, foundations, and institutions to apply for grants.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.11 Policy and activities

Creating opportunities for positive leisure activities is part of the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport's action plan in the area of Youth and Family. Responsibility for policy in the areas of youth work and after-school programs lies with the island authorities. They subsidize certain organizations, such as the Buzzy Bees Daycare Center on St. Eustatius.

Unlike their counterparts in the European Netherlands, parents on Saba do not receive a child care allowance.

The education premises master plan also covers child care facilities. The Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science has taken it upon itself to ensure overdue maintenance of child care premises is cleared up.<sup>4</sup>

In 2009, DSP-groep was commission by the Netherlands Institute for Sport and Exercise (NISB) to perform a quick scan of the sport and exercise situation on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba, funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport. Their study showed that none of the three islands had a sports policy plan.<sup>5</sup>

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$  Information received from Justine Verschoor, Youth care and Family guardianship Caribbean Netherlands in July 2012.

 $<sup>^2\</sup> http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sint\_Eustatius.$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> IdeeVersa (2012). *Referentiekader Caribisch Nederland*. Page 210.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> IdeeVersa (2012). *Referentiekader Caribisch Nederland*. Annex 3: *beleidsvelden*. Page 175.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Zuidgeest, M.H.P. en Maarseveen, M.F.A.M. van (2011) *Bonaire gezond en duurzaam: naar een fietsplan voor Bonaire*. Stichting ABC Advies rapport nr. 154, Bonaire en Enschede.

In 2011, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science made an amount of EUR150,000 available per library for modernization and improvement of services to education. To receive this amount, each library was required to submit an action plan.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.12 Organizations and responsibilities

#### Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport

The Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport supports the island authorities in activities in the area of youth work and sports.

#### Island authorities

The island authorities are responsible for policy in the area of youth work, art, culture, museums, sports, public transport, child care, and after-school programs.

#### Youth and Family Center (CJG)

Due to the small scale, youth work services on Saba and St. Eustatius have been accommodated at the CJG. The Saba CJG also organizes activities for children and adolescents.

#### Mega D Youth Foundation

The Mega D Youth Foundation offers after- school care consisting of different types of activities for children aged four to thirteen on St. Eustatius.

#### (Other) child care organizations

The child care organizations are responsible for offering child care, including after-school programs.

## 2 Children on recreation, play, and leisure time

Children surveyed on St. Eustatius do various activities when they are free. They watch television, play (computer) games, read a book or go to the library.

Many children are bored. The island does not propose a lot of activities. This is particularly the case for the older children looking for activities adapted to their age. The children that are bored hang around, sleep, surf on the internet or watch television.<sup>2</sup>

'I've got a BlackBerry, so I can play games on that. Sometimes my mom confiscates it for a few hours, and then I have nothing to do. I have no idea why.' (girl, 17 years old, St. Eustatius)

'I get bored sometimes, and then I watch TV or sleep. I sleep a lot. Sometimes all that sleeping just makes you lazy.' (girl, 16 years old, St. Eustatius)

On a small island like St. Eustatius, the options for children are obviously limited. So some children think the island is boring for young people, there is little entertainment. They would like more activities and facilities for children. Like a place to hang out for adolescents. And after-school care with fun activities that appeal to children of twelve and over.<sup>3</sup>

'St. Eustatius is really quiet. There's not much to do. In St. Maarten, there's a movie theater, a McDonalds and a KFC, which we don't have here. It's really boring. They should organize some activities so that the kids have something to do. Maybe open a movie theater. In any case, something that kids might enjoy.' (girl, 17 old, St. Eustatius)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/nieuws/97/mogelijkheid-voor-extra-geld-bibliotheken-saba,-sint-eustatius-en-bonaire.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 572, 577, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quotes 595, 615, 616.

Sports activities are a good leisure activity for many children. The children are enthusiastic about basketball, baseball, soccer, volleyball, cycling on freestyle bikes, athletics, fitness and swimming. Some children get to travel a bit when they play competitions, for example during soccer matches against St. Maarten or Saint Kitts. Others have different activities; they are member of the drum band, they are scouts and member of Stinapa or the Mega D Foundation or cheerleader in the self-organized club.

'I'm in a drum band and I play basketball.' (boy, 13 years old, St. Eustatius)

'I'm never bored. In fact, I always have something to do. I think there's enough to do for kids my age, such as sports, fitness, healthy eating and swimming. I can swim, I taught myself.' (girl, 10 years old, St. Eustatius)

On St. Eustatius, the children, and mainly the older ones, like to hang out, to 'chill'. Girls like chatting to each other, the guys do activities together. The children watch movies, play sport together, chat, listen to music, dance or go around on the island. Or they do their homework together. 'Just things that you do when you grow up on an island', says a sixteen year old girl. She likes hanging out with the guys as the 'girls are too fussy and I don't like that attitude. I belong more to the boys' group'.<sup>2</sup>

'I have lots of friends. We do our homework, go out or go over to each other's homes where we watch movies, go online, listen to music or dance to Spanish music. What we like best is chatting. I also have a BlackBerry that I can ping people with.' (girl, 15 year old, St. Eustatius)

Children, adolescents, who want to go out on the island, are limited in their choice. St. Eustatius has two clubs for people of eighteen and over. Only on special days such as Statia Day, minors are also accepted.<sup>3</sup>

'I'm not allowed to go out yet. You have to be eighteen or older to go out, unless there are special activities for kids my age such as 'Statia Day' and Easter.' (girl, 15 year old, St. Eustatius)

## 3 Experts on recreation, play, and leisure time

The experts surveyed observe that children and adolescents sometimes have to be stimulated to undertake leisure activities during their free time. Once they see how much fun the activity is, they continue.

The experts also notice that the leisure options for children on St. Eustatius are limited. Some plead for a youth center where children can go after school.  $^4$ 

Yet, experts also see many good examples. The drum band is mentioned, organized by one of the churches, and of which several children are a member. Moreover there are many other positive initiatives that children and parents really appreciate. However, money is often a problem in order to turn it into a long term activity. The organization structure is also sometimes the reason that the initiative doesn't last. One of the experts observes that less organizations than before develop initiatives for children. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 605, 606, 607.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quotes 550, 609.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See quotes 594, 596, 596, 617.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See quotes 579, 580, 581, 582, 596.

'A good example of a positive influence is the drum band at the Roman Catholic Church, in which young people from other churches may also participate. Every Wednesday, about 35 young people aged between 4 to 21 years join in.' (expert)

In the meantime, various activities are organized such as movie nights, cycling, family days with the firemen and police force, summer camps, talent shows. The churches are often a driving force behind the activities on the island.

The foundation Mega D is mentioned on several occasions with regard to activities that suit the children and adolescents' needs.  $^{\rm 1}$ 

The experts think the sports center is pretty good but they consider it should be used more by children and adolescents. This age group could benefit more from the center if sports classes were provided in the afternoon and early evening, not late at night.

According to the experts, sport should be free and the ministry should provide more (financial) support in order to get sports activities on the island properly organized. The island's responsibility to organize after school activities should also be emphasized. <sup>2</sup>

'Sport and music can help children develop and to feel better. It's much better than just hanging around bored.' (expert)

## 4 Literature on recreation, play, and leisure time

The literature provides wide-ranging information about the subject of recreation, play, and leisure time. The following will provide a summary. Again, this subject is closely related to other themes covered in this report, such as education, family and parenting, and safety.

#### 4.1 General

In their last report (2012) to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Dutch government raised a number of concerns regarding youths in 2009. These were related to a 'crumbling' family structure. The report makes mention of parents' lack of commitment to their children, which is also down to the fact that there are many single-parent families and the parent(s) often works long days to earn a living. As a result, parents are not at home when their children come home from school in the afternoon. There is also poverty. And adolescents get bored quickly, while they are also facing a lack of prospects for the future.

The Dutch government has compiled a plan with various elements that focus on recreation, play, and leisure time. They announced that more possibilities for positive leisure activities will be introduced, that extra staff will be hired, and that the focus will be on improving quality. Subsidies have been allocated to existing foundations for leisure activities. These funds will ensure improvement of continuity and quality of programs and facilities. From 2012, the Youth and Family Centers have been working with youth workers who specifically target the age bracket of 12-to-18-year-olds. Activities that are organized can be both recreational and informational, where adolescents themselves can also suggest themes.<sup>3</sup>

## 4.2 Leisure activity options

Research from 2006 and 2009 shows that there are limited options for youths on the island in terms of sports, play, and leisure time facilities. The NGO report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009) also highlights the lack of diversity in afterschool programs for children. Although there are organizations that offer activities, in the committee's opinion these are insufficiently structured and balanced. There are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 583, 584, 585, 586, 587.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 603, 604, 611, 612, 613, 614.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 74.

insufficient resources. For disabled children, access to activities and facilities is a bottleneck.

In the security plan for St. Eustatius (2006) is mentioned that the island does not provide sufficient sports, cultural and social activities for the youth. There is a shortage of volunteers and paid personnel to support these activities. At the time, the community center and the after school care were underused. The adolescents had no own space and the nightlife was not aimed at this target group.

In the 2011 *Woonvisie*, St. Eustatius' residential environment is described as not always clean and safe, with playgrounds/fields lacking in some areas. It is also observed that the youth center does not function and a theater would be much appreciated. The report also states that day care facility Buzzy Bees does not have room for all children. Parents with irregular working hours or parents that work in the evening or at night cannot benefit from this service.

The Poverty Exploration of 2012 shows that activities for adolescents, such as sports, singing, and dance, are generally free on St. Eustatius. Sometimes a small fee is charged. Children are not excluded when their parents cannot afford to pay the fee. 1

#### 4.3 Facilities in the community

Literature from 2011 addresses the link between delinquent or violent behavior among adolescents and certain risk and protecting factors. The main predictor of violent and delinquent behavior turns out to be whether a child has friends who engage in anti-social behavior.

The St. Eustatius security plan (2006) points out that the lack of sufficient useful activities for children and adolescents is one of the reasons why adolescents are heading in the wrong direction.<sup>2</sup>

## 4.4 After-school programs and child care

The Poverty Exploration of 2012 points to single mothers with multiple children as a category that is struggling. Given that mothers work more than full time, they have little time left to look after and supervise their children. And seeing as they cannot afford to put their children in day care, they have to improvise when it comes to child care. Older siblings, or other persons, are roped in to keep an eye on children. Sometimes, older children of fifteen or sixteen years of age have jobs to contribute to the family income.

Subsidized good-quality child care and after-school programs are considered crucial in fighting poverty and ensuring a good upbringing for children. Child care and after-school programs could offer a steady daily structure and upbringing. It would also guarantee children are fed properly and problems are spotted at an early stage. <sup>3</sup>

# The Convention on the Rights of the Child on recreation, play, and leisure time

The time children above the age of five have to spend can be split up into the time they spend at school (see Education) and their free time. In their free time, children can play, do sports, take music or other lessons, dedicate time to their hobbies, and spend time with their friends or parents. Children of up to age of five do not yet have to go to school. An even larger part of their day is spent on playing.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 33, 76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 80, 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 33.

Playing is essential to children's education, both physically and psychologically. Through playing, children learn to work together, solve problems, and express themselves. This makes it the basis for participation in recreational, sport-based, and cultural activities at a later age.

Sport is also very important in children's development. It is important for both children's physical development and in preventing obesity that children exercise responsibly. Aside from that, sport also serves many other purposes, such as building self-confidence, learning to work together and deal with both peers and adults, and learning to take part in society.

Participation in art and culture enables children to develop themselves in their community and gain access to a community outside their own.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31) is very clear. Children, and therefore also children on St. Eustatius:

- Have a right to rest and leisure.
- Have a right to engage in play.
- Have a right to engage in recreational activities appropriate of their age.
- Have a right to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

The convention stresses particularly that the government must do its best to ensure that all children can exercise these rights: it is a basic need of children.

The right to recreation, play, and leisure time must be seen in correlation with Article 6, which lays down children's inherent right to life and development. This article specifies an obligation to guarantee the development of children on the island 'to the greatest extent possible.' In correlation with the best interests of the child, Article 3, this means that the government must go to every effort to ensure children are able to develop safely and freely. Compliance with the right to recreation, play, and leisure time contributes to the realization of this right.

Needless to say, the right to recreation, play, and leisure time is also closely related to other rights and subjects from the convention. Realization of the right to rest, for example, requires that children grow up in an environment where they are able to sleep and relax. For that to be the case, it is essential that they live in an environment without violence and have privacy (see Family and Parenting), as well as that they have an adequate standard of living (see Living Conditions). Children need to be able to be safe everywhere, otherwise it will be hard for them to relax or play (see Safety).

Children have a right to access to information and must be protected from information and material injurious to their well-being, such as on TV and in movies (Article 17). Experts alert to the great amount of time children spend watching TV and on computers. Spending a large part of the day indoors in a passive state is not conducive to children's physical health. Experts also urge caution with respect to children's emotional development, because they are coming into contact with information that is not age appropriate or in line with their level of development. This is certainly an issue on the island, as many children spend a major part of the day without parental supervision (see Family and Parenting).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For a full overview of how Article 31 IVRK relates to other articles of the childrens' rights convention: M. Blaak e.a. (2012). *Handboek Internationaal Jeugdrecht*. Leiden: Defence for Children, p. 467. See also www.kinderrechten.nl

Article 14 specifies children's freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. Parents shall provide direction to their children in the exercise of this right. Children may choose a religion or life principles if they are capable of doing so considering their level of development and age.

It is important for there to be adequate facilities for children, so that they do not get bored and end up in crime (also see Safety). Financial possibilities need to be available for participation in cultural and recreational activities or sports (see Financial Situation).

## 6 Conclusion

The realization of children's right to recreation, play, and leisure time is under pressure on St. Eustatius in various ways.

The description of the current situation and children's and experts' take on that situation highlights several issues standing in the way of children exercising this right. These issues concern a range of aspects, such as lack of resources, facilities, and expertise – at community centers, for example – and other obstructions.

Many of these issues can be solved, insofar as they do not concern physical impossibilities that come with living on a small island. This requires, however, recognition of the great importance of realization of children's right to recreation, play, and leisure time, and with that of a safe 'third child-rearing environment' alongside that of the family and school.

## **Participation**

Participation concerns taking part in society. But it also means being committed and having a say in decisions, especially when these decisions regard a child.<sup>1</sup>

The description of the current situation in this area shows that participation is largely overlooked. There is little to report when it comes to current participation options for children on St. Eustatius; while the right to participation is, in fact, an essential one for children, as it recognizes that children are independent beings with their own needs and rights. Beings, who have to learn to be an active part of the society in which they live. That is a step-by-step learning process, in parallel to a child's development level and age. It is important to adequately guide children through this process, because they will not be able to do it all in one fell swoop when they turn eighteen.

Youth participation is not only important to children, but also to organizations and governments, and to society as a whole.

Participation is about children actively taking part in all areas of their lives: at home, at school, in health care, at sports clubs, in youth care.

There are five key concepts that determine the degree of children's participation: information, consultation, advice, taking part in execution, (taking part in) decision-making. <sup>2</sup>

## 1 Current situation

## 1.1 Taking part

The following presents an overview of the options open to children on St. Eustatius for active participation in various aspects of society. It is a brief overview because both the options and information about them are limited. Participation at school and other areas will be covered first, followed by a review of relevant legislation and policies, and the final section will outline which organizations are active in this area.

#### 1.2 Participation in decision-making in education

The Dutch Participation in School Decision-Making Act does not apply in the Caribbean Netherlands because the Dutch government feels the island's participation structure is still insufficiently equipped for that.<sup>3</sup>

The Primary Education Act and the Secondary Education Act for the BES islands do provide for participation in decision-making at schools. The relevant sections of these laws have, however, not yet taken effect. Participation councils must be allowed to deliberate with the school authority about the general state of affairs at schools at least twice a year. In elementary education, the participation council must be made up of members

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Youth participation concerns young people's involvement with and say in matters that are relevant to them, such as aspects regarding education, afterschool care, leisure time activities (including sports and cultural activities), spatial planning, youth care and government policy (from: Jeugdthesaurus). See also www.nji.nl <sup>2</sup> De Participatieladder van Hart: Hart, R. A. (1992), *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*. Innocenti Essays, UNICEF, Florence, Italy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Changes to (among others) the Secondary Education Act with respect to education quality, school hours and holidays. House of Representatives, session year 2010-2011 32 640 no. 7.

appointed from and by staff and members appointed from and by parents. In secondary education, the participation council must also have members appointed from and by pupils.<sup>1</sup>

A research report published by *Research voor Beleid* says most schools in the Caribbean Netherlands do not have a participation council yet, or are only piloting one made up of members of staff. Preparatory work is meanwhile underway.<sup>2</sup> Pupils and their parents do, however, want to participate in decision-making in education.<sup>3</sup>

It is unknown whether the schools on St. Eustatius have a student council

#### 1.3 Other activities in the area of children's participation

The *Jongeren van het Koninkrijk* (Youths of the Kingdom) foundation, which was set up in 2011, has set out to improve social cohesion between citizens of all parts of the kingdom and to reflect on the future on the Kingdom. This foundation organizes social and substantive activities focused on young people.<sup>4</sup>

#### 1.4 Access to information

Each of the three islands has one or multiple branches of a library. However, these branches do not offer all facilities, such as a connection to the Internet. To most children, the library is not attractive, as a result of which they make little use of it. <sup>5</sup> Many children have the possibility of going online at home or at school to find information about subjects that interest them or they are required to research for school. Most children on St. Eustatius also have access to TV and radio.

#### 1.5 Legislation

Needless to say, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to children growing up on Saba.

Under the Secondary Education Act for the BES islands, schools are required to have participation councils that also include members appointed from and by pupils. The relevant sections of this law have, however, not yet taken effect.

## 1.6 Policy and activities

It is unknown whether there is, and if so which, policy in place to promote children's participation in various aspects of society, such as at home, at school, in health care, or at sports clubs.

#### 1.7 Organizations and responsibilities

The Children's Ombudsman

The Children's Ombudsman, which was introduced in the Netherlands in April 2011, checks whether children's rights are respected by the government and private organizations in education, child care, youth care, and health care in the Netherlands. The Children's Ombudsman makes adults and children aware of children's rights and advises children and adolescents on how to stand up for their rights. Other than that, the Children's Ombudsman also receives complaints and alerts from adults and children. For

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Wet Voortgezet Onderwijs BES, articles 57 and 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Research voor Beleid (2012). *Evaluatie wet Medezeggenschap op Scholen. Eindrapport.* Een onderzoek in opdracht van het Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Information received in an email from Chris Frans, vice-chairman and secretary OCaN, 23 April 2013.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 4}$  www.jongerenvanhetkoninkrijk.org. Consulted on 12 January 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Information received in an email from Chris Frans, vice-chairman and secretary OCaN, 23 April 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> http://www.kinderombudsman.nl/92/veelgestelde-vragen/ombudsman.nl/92/veelgestelde-vragen/. Consulted on 12 January 2013.

the Caribbean Netherlands, the Children's Ombudsman will be working closely together with the National Ombudsman.<sup>1</sup>

## 2 Children on participation

Several of the children surveyed on St. Eustatius tell that their opinion is (sometimes) asked, at home, at school or in other places.

Some children explain that their parents sometimes ask how they feel about some things, or what they would like. It depends on the subject and whether their opinion is valued, according to the children. A seventeen year old girl is very determined: 'Also when my parents don't ask me, I'll still express my opinion.'

At some children's homes their opinion does not count. In those homes a parent or grandmother decides everything. The children confronted with this situation, have various reactions. Some accept the situation, others go against the decision and do what they feel like.<sup>2</sup>

'Now that there are so many problems, my parents do ask me about my opinion, but they didn't use to. They ask what I think, but they also ask me to choose between them.' (girl, 17 year old, St. Eustatius)

'At home nobody ever asks about my opinion. My grandma makes all the decisions. In fact, I always just do what she says.' (girl, 15 year old, St. Eustatius)

'I like to be able to say what I think. I don't mind listening to other people's opinions. If I don't agree, I shrug it off and get on with my life. At home, they take notice of what I think. Sometimes they do what I want.' (girl, 14 year old, St. Eustatius)

Some children feel they are heard in school but many think they aren't. Their opinion is asked in school but very infrequently; the pupils mention 'not really', 'a couple of times a year', 'once and a while' or 'sometimes'. Sometimes they get questionnaires, sometimes they are asked what they think of the school, the teachers or bullying. A few children say that not expressing your opinion is an issue on the island.

The children are unanimous about what is done with their opinion expressed at school: nothing. Some therefore doubt the usefulness of filling in questionnaires.

As a good example of a place where children are taken seriously, children mention Mega D. A girl tells about the 'Youth World' initiative where children can discover their talents. A boy also mentions the sports club as a place where he can express his opinion and where he is taken seriously.<sup>3</sup>

'At school they don't really ask for my opinion. They carry out a survey maybe two or three times a year, or organize a speaker who comes and tells us stuff. We now have to decide what we want to do for our graduation ceremony and what the theme will be. Although we do have freedom of speech here, nobody says what they think. (girl, 17 year old, St. Eustatius)

'At school, my opinion is only asked for once a year. The school asks us what we think of the school and the teachers. I don't know what effect it has, I don't see anything changing in any case.' (girl, 15 year old, St. Eustatius)

## 3 Experts on participation

The experts that were surveyed for this study say that children on St. Eustatius cannot participate, as they are not self-sufficient and independent. Moreover, emotions are not talked about and real discussions with children don't really exist. Children like to talk at

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Dutch government (2012). Vierde rapportage Nederland aan het Comité voor de Rechten van het Kind.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See quotes 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See quotes 618, 619, 620, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646.

home but are often not asked or listened to by their parents. An expert considers the children 'hungry for someone who listens to them and with who they can talk'.

Particularly teenagers are not (sufficiently) involved in the island's issues. There are plans to get them more involved like at the Expertise center for education in collaboration with Mega D. The idea is to get adolescents to talk about positive subjects in talkshows (on the radio). For smaller children there are some more possibilities, according to the experts, like in church, at the (girls) scouting. Children are challenged here to express their opinion.

Experts notice a difference though, compared to the past. Children can formulate better what concerns them. They know very well what they want and are often better at expressing themselves. It is very important that they feel comfortable and trust you. <sup>1</sup>

'Young people are more than willing to open their hearts, but many parents neither listen properly nor ask the right questions.' (expert)

'Teens should be much more involved in what is happening on the island.' (expert)

## 4 Literature on participation

There is not much literature on the subject of participation. Most research on this subject is part of research in other areas where participation is an issue, such as education.

A 2011 perception survey shows that participation in decision-making in education in the Caribbean Netherlands is virtually inexistent. Neither parents, nor children are heard.

Parents of children in high school, in particular, find it annoying that although schools often do listen, they subsequently do not act. Schools do not consult parents on school policy of their own accord. Parent participation in school committees is also a problem, as it has proven difficult to find parents with the right profile in terms of knowledge, experience, time available, and interest. The participation councils that are yet to be set up will face the same challenge.

Another study from 2011 concludes that communications are generally a one-way thing, from school to the parents and pupils. Some school directors and administrators have an idea of how to organize participation, others do not.<sup>2</sup>

In 2007, the then country of the Netherlands Antilles stated in its first report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child that children, parents, and others would be informed about children's rights as part of a three-year campaign. The Youth Development Department would also organize a consultation session with children and adolescents (age 12-24) every two years, and education reform would include greater encouragement to children to express their opinion.

Another conclusion was that access to computers and information was not commonplace for all children. Children from socially and economically weaker families, and children from families of immigrants had less access to books, newspapers, and computers. Language can also be a barrier when it comes to access to information.

The Antillean government found that children were insufficiently protected against harmful TV programs on cable TV stations.

The NGO report (2008) also concludes that children's participation is still a challenge in most areas. Organizations do have great willingness to make policy that puts children's interests first. The NGOs say children need better protection against injurious information and that children should be asked for their opinion more. Schools should also devote more time to children's rights.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 621, 621, 621, 622, 622, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See literature 27, 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See literature 72, 100.

In their closing remarks of 2009, the Committee on the Rights of the Child expresses delight at the planned media campaign for the Netherlands Antilles to raise awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The committee is concerned about the fact that there are no human rights organizations or ombudsmen in the Netherlands Antilles or on Aruba. This was before the political reform and before the remit of the National (Children's) Ombudsman was extended to include the islands.

The 2012 report by the Dutch government therefore states that there is a Children's Ombudsman in the Netherlands who supervises compliance with the rights of the child. For the Caribbean Netherlands, the Children's Ombudsman will be working closely together with the National Ombudsman. Researchers of the National Ombudsman will, on behalf of the Children's Ombudsman, take stock of complaints and signals from children and adults on the island, while the free National Ombudsman hotline will also be made available for cases for the Children's Ombudsman.<sup>1</sup>

## 5 The Convention on the Rights of the Child on participation

As argued in the introduction, children's participation in society is an essential part of their ability to grow into an adult and active citizen.

That is also why the right to participation is one of the mainstays of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The central idea in the Convention on the Rights of the Child is that children must be able to take part in and contribute to society. This must be made possible in a wide variety of ways that are in keeping with children's age and level of development, by:

- Listening to children
- · Informing children
- Involving children in decision-making
- Taking children's opinion seriously
- Protecting children against injurious information

Article 12 of the convention makes it very clear that we should not talk about children (as a juristic object) but rather talk to them: children are persons with legal rights. Children can help create insight into matters that concern them. Their best interests should then also be taken as the starting point (Article 3).

Children have a right to express their views freely, in all matters affecting them. Children who are capable of forming their own views have the right to express them, and these views must be given due weight.

Article 12 cannot be seen separately from other rights awarded by the convention: all articles require respect for children's right to be heard and taken seriously.

This is clearest in Article 3 (best interests of the child). After all, how can the best interests of the child be a primary consideration without having heard children's views.

The link with Article 6 (right to life and development) is also a strong one. According to the convention, children will only be able to develop as best as possible when they are able to express themselves, voice their views, and learn that they are taken seriously.

This article is furthermore also closely related to other rights to participation. Article 13 specifies the right to freedom of speech, Article 14 describes the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and Article 15 regulates the freedom of association.

Article 17 awards children the right to access to information. Children must be informed using material that is consistent with their needs and level of development. They must also be protected from information that is injurious to their well-being.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 16, 74.

In 2009, the Committee on the Rights of the Child issued a comment on Article 12. In this comment, the committee stresses, among other things, that participation is an ongoing process: information must be shared ever more widely to create ongoing dialogue between children and adults. Every child must be enabled to participate.

A child's biological age is not decisive in determining whether a child is capable of expressing his or her views. Other aspects, such as information, experience, and living environment, also contribute to the development of a child's capacities to form a view, and should therefore be factored in when assigning weight to a child's opinion. Even very young children can express an opinion, even non-verbally.

#### 6 Conclusion

The description of the current situation and children's and experts' views on the matter show that when it comes to participation, there is still a lot of ground to be made up on St. Eustatius. Children on the island are not yet (sufficiently) seen as individuals with their own views. Society is not yet set up to listen to children, involve children in decision-making, and take their views seriously. This is related to the way children are raised (see Family and Parenting), the organization of education (see Education), and the way in which children are viewed.

It is also cause for concern that children on the island are very likely to be exposed to harmful information, via TV and internet, due to the absence of parental guidance.

However, various initiatives have been taken to better equip children to exercise their right to participation. These range from parenting support (Triple P) to giving children more say at home, the introduction of the Children's Ombudsman, which will focus more attention on children's rights (education), to initiatives by organizations aimed at involving children and adolescents in activities more intensively. Adequately informing children on their rights can also help enable children to claim a more active role in society.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Committee on the rights of the child (2009). *General Comment no. 12, The right of the child to be heard.* CRC/C/GC/12.

# **Housing conditions**

A safe place to live is one of the basic conditions for children to be able to develop healthily and undisturbed. Children's housing situation and environment determine their daily lives to a large degree. It goes without saying that there is more to housing conditions than the question of whether a child has a roof over its head. It is interconnected with several other issues such as safety, health, education, recreation, play, and leisure options, and finances. It will, for example, be hard for children to do their homework if there is no quiet place at home where they can do so; a child's health can be at risk when the housing environment is unhygienic; and it is important for every child to have sufficient privacy. And, of course, living in decent conditions requires that the parents can afford a decent home.

This chapter will first outline the current situation and then go into what children, experts, and the literature say about it. This chapter will conclude by measuring the current situation against the Convention on the Rights of the Child and formulating a conclusion.

#### 1 Current situation

### 1.1 Housing on St. Eustatius

The following will describe housing conditions on St. Eustatius. The housing that is available, the bottlenecks in getting decent housing, and developments in this area will all be covered. And you will also find an overview of existing legislation and policy and the responsible organizations in this chapter. The information is not elaborate for the simple reason that little data is available.

### 1.2 Housing conditions

On 1 January 2012, St. Eustatius's population was 3,791, of which 894 were under twenty years old. 1

Aside from these population figures for St. Eustatius (and their age and sex), there is no recent statistical data about islanders' housing situation. There are only estimates and figures from *Woonvisie* documents and studies.

There are about 1,300 residences on the island. There is one building cooperative on the island, the St. Eustatius Housing Foundation (SHF) established in 1987. This foundation manages 97 residences. Most of the social rental housing is situated in the Golden Rock district. The other houses are privately owned. There were plans to build new social rental housing, in collaboration with the Dutch building cooperative Woonlinie but the collaboration with Woonlinie has temporarily been suspended.<sup>2</sup>

Most inhabitants prefer building their own house. Woonvisie describes that this dream is often difficult to realize as financing is complicated and interest high.

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$  CBS (2012). The Dutch Caribbean in figures en CBS (2012), Statline, Bevolking Caribisch Nederland.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 2}$  Information received per e-mail from Woonlinie, October 2012.

About eighty housing applicants were registered with the SHF in 2011. Some situations were urgent but others did have accommodation but were looking for something cheaper. The list of applicants consisted of various types of households but principally single women with children. *Woonvisie* considers that the housing allocation system could be improved. There are no objective criteria for example to determine the urgency of the applicant's situation for the purpose of allocation. The rotation of social tenants is very limited. In 2011, only two residences managed by the building cooperative were freed up.<sup>1</sup>

According to Identification of poverty in the Caribbean Netherlands<sup>2</sup>, social housing is partially inhabited by people that do not belong to the target group anymore, based on their income.

According to *Woonvisie*, the SHF has to manage until January 2012 with the collected rent and just over \$ 3,300 from the island authorities. However, the collected rent is insufficient to pay the maintenance of the housing. As from January 2012, the building cooperative will receive a monthly subsidy of \$ 16,839 from the island authorities, improving the financial situation of the SHF.<sup>3</sup>

On St. Eustatius and the other two islands making up Caribbean Netherland, the inhabitants receive no rent subsidies, unlike in the European Netherlands. The rent in the social sector represents a third of the income with a minimum of \$ 56 and a maximum of \$ 280. There are many cases of rent arrears at the SHF but recently more serious action has been taken against this problem. Rent in the private sector is much higher than in the social sector, as from about \$ 400 for a small apartment. The demand for rented accommodation is high due to the presence of the University of St. Eustatius School of Medicine.<sup>4</sup>

The St. Eustatius *Woonvisie* describes how too many people sometimes reside in one house, resulting in all sorts of additional problems. In some cases, the residential environment does not comply with the criteria 'clean, safe and undamaged' and sometimes facilities lack play areas. <sup>5</sup>

## 1.3 Legislation

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child also applies to children on St. Eustatius.

The island authorities are responsible for the creation and implementation of plans for the use of the available space. They do so by making development plans. The requirements these plans have to meet are laid down in the Spatial Development Planning Principles Act for the BES islands.

The Housing, Spatial Planning, and Environmental Management Act for the BES islands stipulates that island authorities can issue housing regulations for the allocation of housing and the structure of the housing stock. St. Eustatius does not yet have a housing regulation (or one that regulates the for housing allocation).<sup>6</sup>

The Antillean rent assessment committee scheme of 1939 was converted into the Rent Assessment Committee Scheme Act for the BES islands after the transition. This scheme comprises provisions regarding regulation of rents and protection of tenants.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Woonlinie (2011). Woonvisie St. Eustatius 2012-2015. Housing and liveability on 'The Golden Rock'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Drewes, Marga (2012). Poverty in Caribbean Netherlands, an identification.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Woonlinie (2011). Woonvisie St. Eustatius 2012-2015. Housing and liveability on 'The Golden Rock'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Woonlinie (2011). Woonvisie St. Eustatius 2012-2015. Housing and liveability on 'The Golden Rock'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Woonlinie (2011). Woonvisie St. Eustatius 2012-2015. Housing and liveability on 'The Golden Rock'.

 $<sup>^{6}</sup>$  IdeeVersa (2012). Referentiekader Caribisch Nederland. Bijlage 3: beleidsvelden. Page 128 and 130.

#### 1.4 Policy and activities

Unlike in the European Netherlands, rental subsidies are not available to the people of the Caribbean Netherlands. However, rents for social housing are income-related: tenants pay a maximum of 30% of their income in rent. The Dutch government cites the different tax system on the islands as the reason behind the absence of rental assistance in the Caribbean Netherlands. The tax system in the European Netherlands uses several tax brackets and allowances (care allowance, child allowance, single-parent allowance, and rental allowance). The tax system that was introduced in the Caribbean Netherlands is simpler, because there are no tax brackets and people pay a flat tax without allowances. <sup>1</sup>

In 2010, the Strategic Development plan St. Eustatius was drafted, expressing the vision on the desired future developments on the island. This has been elaborated in the Development Plan that was defined by the island authorities in April 2011.

The Dutch housing association Woonlinie supported SHF, the housing association on St. Eustatius. In 2011, Woonlinie drafted the St. Eustatius *Woonvisie* 2012-2015 in collaboration with local partners. *Woonvisie* describes the goals in relation to housing and suggests how these goals can be achieved. The goals: a housing stock adapted to the needs, a better housing allocation system, a future-ready residential environment worth living in and an organization capable of providing support. Woonlinie was very much involved in the construction of new social rented accommodation on St. Eustatius.

#### 1.5 Organizations and responsibilities

#### Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is responsible for, among other things, construction legislation. Aside from that, the ministry's role is an incentivizing and supporting one. They promote and support an integrated approach to communities on the BES islands through expertise and project subsidies.

### The island authority

The public authority is responsible for availability of adequate and affordable housing for everyone, including social housing for those groups that, due to their income or other personal circumstances, struggle to provide adequate housing for themselves. The public authority enters into agreements with housing foundations that execute housing services in return for subsidies.

And the island authority is also responsible for providing a livable living environment, both in terms of physical accessibility (infrastructure, facilities) and in terms of social aspects.

#### Statia Housing Foundation (SHF)

This foundation is responsible for social housing on St. Eustatius.

#### Woonlinie

This is the Dutch housing association supported the SHF on St. Eustatius. Woonlinie has now suspended this collaboration.

## 2 Children on housing conditions

On the subject of housing, the interviewed children on St. Eustatius mainly refer to their (lack of) privacy. Most of them share a bedroom with brothers, sisters or other family members. A seventeen-year-old girl concludes that 'I think I don't have enough privacy', after explaining that everyone comes and goes in her home and that her cousin shares her

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Response to questions by Ortega-Martijn about the letter of the Own Your Own Home Foundation by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 no. 3000.

room. Another girl of the same age does not like sleeping in the same bed as her grandmother even though the bed is big.

Others complain about too little own space and rest. Some have come up with a solution, like leaving the bedroom when the other is getting changed. Younger children seem to have no problem with this situation.

Some children are very enthusiastic when talking about their home. 1

'I don't think that I have enough privacy at home. If I leave something somewhere, somebody moves it. I can't do what I want at all. My little brother is really annoying. In the new house, I'll have my own bedroom, so things will improve.' (boy, 12 years old, St. Eustatius)

'I don't have my own bedroom, I have to share with my grandmother. The bed is very big, but it's the principle. I just want my own bedroom. There are three bedrooms. My sister sleeps with my mother and my great aunt has got her own room.' (girl, 17 years old, St. Eustatius)

'I live in a lovely little white cottage. It has two bedrooms, a bathroom and a kitchen. I sleep with my sister who is six. The baby sleeps with my parents. There's a place outside where I can sit under a tree in the wind.' (girl, 14 years old, St. Eustatius, Saba)

## 3 Experts on housing conditions

The experts who were consulted offered some general comments about accommodation and the residential environment on St. Eustatius. They often see a connection with the financial situation families have to deal with, which makes it difficult to obtain adequate housing. Furthermore, they confirm the description as mentioned in *Woonvisie* and the poverty survey (see below).

## 4 Literature on housing conditions

In St. Eustatius Woonvisie 2012- 2015 mentions that houses are sometimes overcrowded. This results in socially undesirable situations that put pressure on the people living there. School-going children have difficulty doing their homework or cannot go to bed in time. The extra residents can cause additional problems and tensions. Teenage mothers sometimes live with their parents. The tenant satisfaction survey, carried out by the SHF, can possibly provide further information.

The social problems that occur are sometimes of such a nature or extent that the people concerned are difficult to accommodate within the community, and should actually be removed from this community for a shorter or longer period. No such options are available, however. The report also describes how the residential environment sometimes does not meet the criteria of 'clean, safe and complete', and that facilities are often lacking. Nuisance is sometimes an issue. The report has its reservations with regard to the quality of the infrastructure (roads, electricity), the community center and the lack of shops in certain areas.

The 2012 Poverty Survey describes how islanders on a low income struggle to find affordable housing. They often end up moving in with family to share the costs of rent and utilities. As a result, there are many cases of too many people sharing a home. Furniture is sometimes lacking, and there are not enough beds. Various respondents point out that this leads to an unhealthy housing situation: children witness all facets of adult life up close, including sex and drugs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653.

The poverty issue also comes to the fore in people being behind on their rent and utility payments. People have to choose which bills to pay, and which to put off.

The experts make several suggestions to improve this. For instance, there should be better control over the hire of private sector apartments on St. Eustatius.

The housing shortage is also highlighted by a study (2010) into the situation of teenage mothers. The majority of teenage mothers on St. Eustatius (65.5%) live with their parent(s). One of the reasons for that is that there is no suitable housing available for them.

The 2008 NGO report showed that various families on St. Eustatius – and single-parent families in particular – live in homes that are too small for them. The report refers to 'bad housing' as one of the reasons why parents are unable to adequately raise their children.

In 2011, the European Committee for Social Rights concluded that the right to adequate housing should be guaranteed. Only then can people's right to family life in a stable environment be realized. Government policy should be targeted at ensuring sufficient housing stock, ensuring families have a home that suits their needs, which is qualitatively adequate, and which has facilities such as water and electricity. <sup>1</sup>

## 5 The Convention on the Rights of the Child on housing conditions

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has a number of provisions that apply to the housing conditions of children on St. Eustatius, leading to the following requirements:

- Undisturbed development.
- Growing up in care of parents.
- Respect for privacy and family life.
- Living situation must be healthy.
- Standard of living must be sufficient to ensure healthy development of the child.
- Living situation must offer space for play, rest, and leisure time.

Article 6 specifies children's fundamental right to life and development. To actually be able to live and develop, certain basic conditions need to be met, such as growing up in peace – in a house.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child attaches great value to children growing up while in the care of their parents, and not being separated from their parents, and in case of divorced parents, children must maintain contact with both parents. This is described in Article 9.

The right to privacy (Article 16) is also a fundamental right. It protects children's private life, family life, and housing against interference or intrusion by either the government or fellow citizens. In order to be able to enjoy privacy from other family members, sufficient space (in the home) is required.

Article 27 specifies the right to an adequate standard of living. This right is linked to the right to life and development (Article 6). An adequate standard of living concerns matters such as nutrition, housing, and clothing, but also other aspects required for the development of a child. Children need peace and quiet, for example, to be able to do their homework, and sleep to be able to concentrate at school. Poverty can lead to children being unable to exercise all their rights.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 111, 44, 33, 11, 43, 105, 100, 41.

Article 24 contains the right to health. This right is formulated in broad terms. The basic idea is that children have a right to "enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health.' In that light, a clean and healthy living environment is indispensable, as is availability of food, clean drinking water, and hygienic sanitary fittings.

The right to leisure, culture, and recreation (Article 31) cannot be put into practice if enabling conditions are absent. Rest and sleep requires a living environment – including a bed – that allows it. To be able to play, children need sufficient, suitable, and safe space in and around the home.

Housing conditions are, of course, also closely related to the way in which children interact and are raised by their parents, with (the sense of) safety, to education, and to the financial situation. For more information about these subjects, please consult the corresponding sections.

## 6 Conclusion

The description of the current situation and children's and experts' opinions show that there are obstacles standing in the way of achieving the convention's housing rights on St. Eustatius. The lack of financial resources and the consequences thereof are described, as well as the shortage of suitable and affordable housing on the island. Quality of life in some neighborhoods is also a cause for concern.

Growing up in poor housing conditions is leading to various bottlenecks for some children. Their right to privacy, for example, is jeopardized when they are unable to retire to a quiet place to be alone and have to live in a house that is too small. Children's right to education is also at risk when they cannot get peace and quiet at home to be able to do their homework and get a good night's sleep. And their right to health is under threat when housing conditions are inadequate, and living together with too many people in a small space potentially obstructs children's development.

Parents are the first responsible parties when it comes to housing conditions and realization of associated rights. The convention is, however, also clear on those cases where parents are unable to assume their responsibility: that's when the convention wants the government to step forward.

## **Financial situation**

Rich and poor are relative notions. After all, it depends on what you compare a situation to. In assessing the situation in which children grow up, it is not particularly interesting to know whether an island and the people that inhabit it are rich or poor. It is far more important to assess whether children are able to exercise their rights. The rights laid down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are minimum requirements. These minimum requirements have to be met to ensure children can develop into healthy citizens. The financial situation is therefore directly linked to other subjects addressed in this report. Without financial resources, children will not have food, diapers, a home, toys, educational material, sports facilities, medication, or health care, transportation, etc.

This chapter will first describe the current situation in terms of everything relating to money and families, as well as go over opinions of children, experts, and the literature on this situation. This current situation will subsequently be offset against the standards laid down in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, after which the chapter will close with a conclusion.

## 1 Current situation

### 1.1 Money and family

The following will describe those aspects that are linked to St. Eustatius families' financial situation: inflation and the cost of living, labor force participation rate, access to the labor market, taxes, social security, child maintenance, and assistance in kind. In some cases, this chapter will include a brief comparison to the situation in the European Netherlands for better understanding. Following that, the chapter will focus on the relevant legislation and policy, and list the organizations that are active and responsible in this area.

## 1.2 Inflation and the cost of living

In 2011, consumer prices in the Caribbean Netherlands were considerably higher than they were in 2010. This is down to, among other things, higher and new import duties for the islands. In 2011 the average inflation on St. Eustatius was 9.9%, the highest of the three islands. As on Saba, especially the prices for transport and in the hotel and catering industry went up. In the first and second quarter of 2012 the inflation on St. Eustatius was respectively 6.6% and 3.9%. The drop in the second quarter was mainly caused by lower electricity rates. The price for petrol and car maintenance also lowered inflation. In comparison: inflation in the European Netherlands was 2.3% in 2011. In the first eight months of 2012, the European Netherlands' monthly inflation figures stayed between 2.1% and 2.5%.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Donner erkent fouten Antillen. In: newspaper Trouw 27 October 2001.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> CBS, Statline, Caribisch Nederland. http://www.cbs.nl/nl-

NL/menu/themas/prijzen/publicaties/artikelen/archief/2012/2012-3560-wm.htm?RefererType=RSSItem http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/prijzen/publicaties/artikelen/archief/2012/2012-infkatie-cn-2012-2.htm

 $<sup>^4\</sup> http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/prijzen/publicaties/artikelen/archief/2012/2012-3560-wm.htm$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> CBS press release of 6 September 2012. *Inflatie ongewijzigd op 2,3%*. Http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/prijzen/publicaties/artikelen/archief/2012/2012-051-pb.htm.

In October 2012, State Secretary Weekers reached an agreement with the Caribbean Netherlands on an economic stimulus. This agreement will be submitted to the lower house of Dutch parliament as a memorandum of amendment to the Other Fiscal Measures 2013 bill, and it includes plans to extend the zero rate for basic necessities of life to cover more goods with a view to increasing people's spending power. Tax on gasoline would be lowered by 10% to compensate for the lack of public transport. And property tax is to be cut from 1% to 0.8%, and cut from 0.8% to 0.4% for hotels on the BES islands.<sup>1</sup>

In 2013, Statistics Netherlands will conduct a budget review on the BES islands to map household spending.<sup>2</sup>

In January 2013, the St. Eustatius community sent an urgent request to the Dutch Senate. They asked attention for the combination of the high prices for the cost of living and the low salaries. This results in problems that (also) affect the children. The letter contains the following detailed overview of the average monthly expenses for an inhabitant of St. Eustatius with an average salary of \$ 900 per month:

Food	\$ 500
Accommodation	\$ 400
Transport	\$ 200
Gas (cooking)	\$ 120
Cable	\$ 55
Internet	\$ 139
Clothing	\$ 80
Telephone	\$ 100

It is clear that this means a deficit every month.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.3 Labor force participation rate

In the European Netherlands, an average of 5.4% of the labor force was unemployed in 2011. That was unchanged from 2010, when unemployment dropped virtually the whole year. This downward trend did not continue in 2011, however. Unemployment among young people aged between 15 and 25 stood at 11.7% in 2010 and 9.8% in 2011.

The net labor force participation rate in the European Netherlands in 2010 and 2011 was 67.1% and 67.2% respectively. The net labor force participation rate reflects the percentage of people from the potential labor force who *have* a job of over twelve hours a week. Net labor force participation among men is higher than among women: 74.2% against 60.2% in 2011.5

There are no reliable figures about the numbers out of work on St. Eustatius, according to a representative for the Social Affairs and Employment unit on the BES islands. In 2005, Ecorys estimated the number of employed people on St. Eustatius at about 1,000, representing about 57% of the total population between 15 and 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See Staatssecretaris Weekers en bestuurders Caribisch Nederland sluiten akkoord over fiscaal pakket, via website rijksoverheid.nl, 11 October 2012. Also see newspaper Trouw, 10 October 2012, Akkoord over lagere belastingen BES-eilanden.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> CBS start met budgetonderzoek BES-eilanden. In: Antilliaans Dagblad. 2 March 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See www.ocan.nl/Koninkrijksberichten/message-to-the-dutch-first-chamber-as-compiled-by-members-of-the-statian-community.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> CBS, Statline. http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=80479NED&D1=13&D2=a&D3=0&-D4=103,116&VW=T.

 $<sup>^5</sup>$  CBS, Statline. http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=71958NED&D1=0,5-6,10&D2=a&D3=0,23-24&D4=0,41,46,51,56&HDR=T&STB=G1,G2,G3&VW=T.

This percentage was more or less the same for 2009. In 2006, the largest part of the active population on St. Eustatius worked for (semi-) governmental institutions, in trade and the hotel and catering industry (30%).<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.4 Income

In 2012, the minimum wage for employees aged 23 and over was €8.35 an hour for a 40-hour working week in the European Netherlands. And the average personal wage in the European Netherlands was approximately €22,100 in the European Netherlands in 2010.

The poverty survey in the Caribbean Netherlands, commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, estimates that roughly half of all wages in the Caribbean Netherlands are above the minimum level.<sup>4</sup>

According to Ecorys and Curconsult, there are no recent figures available about the distribution of income on St. Eustatius. The government is the largest employer on the island. The average gross monthly salary paid by the government is around \$ 2,185. On the basis of discussions conducted on St. Eustatius, a purchasing power survey revealed that, excluding the government, many employees earned just above the minimum wage. <sup>5</sup> In 2012, the minimum wage for an employee on St. Eustatius older than 21 was \$ 4.67 per hour. <sup>6</sup>

#### 1.5 Access to the labor market

The poverty survey in the Caribbean Netherlands and the Caribbean Netherlands Frame of Reference state that public entities used to take care of assistance themselves prior to the transition, sometimes even hiring people who would otherwise not be able to find work. The Social Affairs and Employment Unit is currently in the process of launching employment programs in collaboration with the public entities. According to a representative of the Social Affairs and Employment Unit on the BES islands, it is difficult to find motivated candidates for these programs. In the fall of 2012, the Dutch government decided to stimulate employment by applying the social return concept in building projects on the Caribbean Netherlands. This increases the social impact of these projects. One example is the introduction of apprenticeships on building sites.

Job seekers are registered on St. Eustatius but stimulating the employment rate is very little developed. Edupartners has set up two programs, thanks to an incidental subsidy from the Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment, training people older than 24 in order to obtain an initial qualification. Edupartners also has a few training places for participants in the *Sociale Kanstrajecten Jongeren* program (Juvenile Social Opportunity program). Since the end of 2011, various organizations on St. Eustatius are recognized as apprenticeship-company. <sup>10</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ecorys (2009). Concordance Education Job market BES islands, research carried out commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

 $<sup>^2\</sup> http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/minimumloon/vraag-en-antwoord/hoe-hoog-is-het-minimumloon-per-uur.html.\ Consulted on 18\ June 2012.$ 

 $<sup>^3</sup>$  CBS, Statline. http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/?VW=T&DM=SLNL&PA=70957ned&D1=a&D2=0-1,l&D3=0&D4=a&D5=0&D6=a&HD=080523-1743&HDR=G2,G4,T,G5&STB=G1,G3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Drewes, M. (2012). Armoede in Caribisch Nederland, een verkenning.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ecorys en Curconsult (2012). Purchasing power research Caribbean Netherlands. Investigation into purchasing power effects and social economic conditions in Caribbean Netherlands.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/nieuws/171/indexering-2012-financi%C3%ABle-regelingen-van-het-ministerie-van-sociale-zaken-en-werkgelegenheid-(szw).html. Geraadpleegd op 14th May 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Drewes, M. (2012). *Armoede in Caribisch Nederland, een verkenning*. IdeeVersa (2012). *Referentiekader Caribisch Nederland*. *Bijlage 3*: *beleidsvelden*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Information supplied by email by Huub Bouwen, unit head SZW BES-islands, October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/nieuws/2012/10/11/sociaaleconomische-impuls-eilanden-caribisch-nederland.html. Consulted on 15 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> IdeeVersa (2012). Reference framework Caribbean Netherlands. Annex 3: competences. Page 157.

#### 1.6 Income tax

Up to 2010, there was a so-called bracket rate for income tax in the Caribbean Netherlands. As of 1 January 2011, most people pay tax at a rate of 30.4%. This rate includes social security premiums and the health insurance premium. These premiums are therefore not charged separately. Income over \$250,000 is taxed at a rate of 35.4%.

People are entitled to a personal tax deduction of \$10,813. The following amounts can be added to this personal deduction:

- \$1,386 per child, up to a maximum of two children.
- \$1,222 for persons of sixty years and over.

There are various tax deductions. Mortgage interest and home maintenance expenses, for example, can be deducted, as well as various personal and exceptional expenses. Mortgage interest is deductible only at the 30.4% rate, not at the rate of 35.4%.

Rental income is not taxed through income tax, but instead comes under property tax. Interest and dividend income are subject to an interest exemption of \$5,000 and a dividend exemption of \$5,000.

#### 1.7 Social provisions

The following provides a description of the main social provisions for families with children in the Caribbean Netherlands.

Child allowance: contribution toward the costs of child care and rearing
The Caribbean Netherlands offers its citizens a tax break called **child allowance**. As of
October 1st 2011, families with one child can add \$1,386 to their personal deduction of
\$10,813, while families with two children can add \$2,772.<sup>2</sup> Families are entitled to this
child allowance for children who are seventeen years old or under at the start of the
calendar year and who are part of the family.<sup>3</sup> And there is also a child allowance for a
maximum of three children of people entitled to assistance (Refer to Assistance).

In the European Netherlands, persons who maintain children are, on certain conditions, entitled to child benefits. In 2012, child benefits amounted to €188.57 per quarter for children up to the age of five, €228.89 for children aged between six and twelve, and €269.39 for children aged between twelve and eighteen. Other amounts apply for children born before 1 January 1995. In case of high expenses for children who do not live at home, such as for a disabled child, families may on certain conditions be entitled to double child benefits.

Children aged sixteen and seventeen are only entitled to child benefits if they are in education during the day and working on obtaining an entry-level qualification; if they are exempted from having to obtain an entry-level qualification; if they after having obtained an entry-level qualification are still in full-time education during the daytime; if they are unemployed after having obtained an entry-level qualification; if they after having obtained an entry-level qualification are unable to stay in education due to illness or a disability. The income of sixteen and seventeen-year-olds must furthermore be below a net amount of €1,240 per quarter. Entitlement to child benefits ends as soon as a child enrolls in higher vocational education or college.<sup>4</sup>

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$  Belastingdienst Caribisch Nederland. *Inkomstenbelasting*. Informatiefolder.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Belastingdienst Caribisch Nederland. *Wijzigingen in de Belastingwetgeving BES, een toelichting.* Wijzigingen voor particulieren.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> http://www.belastingdienst-cn.nl/bcn/nl/prive/vanaf-belastingjaar-2011/inkomstenbelasting/tarieven-en-belastingyrije-bedragen. Consulted on 14 May 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/kinderbijslag/voorwaarden-en-hoogte-kinderbijslag. Consulted on 18 June 2012.

Besides child benefits, the European Netherlands also offers a child-related budget. Parents are entitled to this budget if the family income is not too high, they receive child benefits for the child, or if the child is sixteen or seventeen years old and maintained by the parents to a significant degree. The extent of the child-related budget is based on the family income and the number of children under the age of eighteen in the family. In case of a gross family income of up to €28,897 a family is entitled to the maximum child-related budget. If the gross family income is over €28,897, the child-related budget will gradually lower. In 2012, a family with one child receives a maximum of €1,017 per years, while a family with two children is entitled to a maximum of €1,478 per year.¹

## Orphan's pension: welfare for orphans

In the event of the death of one or both of a child's parents, children in the Caribbean Netherlands are entitled to an orphan's pension. Children aged between 15 and 25 are only entitled to the orphan's pension if they are disabled or in education full time or most of the time. In 2012, the orphan's pension ranged between \$186 and \$269 a month, depending on the child's age and on whether the child has lost one or both parents. The amounts also differ per island.<sup>2</sup>

General Widows' and Orphans' Benefits Act: welfare for widows and widowers
Widows and widowers in the Caribbean Netherlands are entitled to welfare under this
legislation up to the moment they become entitled to a state pension. The amount they
receive depends on their age and varies per island. There is a special scheme for disabled
widows or widowers with one or multiple orphans. In 2012, they received a monthly
payment of \$582 on St. Eustatius.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Assistance**

Persons who are older than eighteen years of age and who have been living on the islands for at least five years, while also being unable to generate sufficient income to be able to provide for themselves, can apply for assistance. The amounts paid in assistance differ per island due to the differences in inflation. In 2012, the basic amount for St. Eustatius was \$89 per fortnight.

Aside from that, there are also individual financial allowances: such as the allowance to enable people to live on their own, the child allowance, and an occupational disability allowance. On St. Eustatius, the child allowance for the first child amounts to \$26. For the second and third child, the child allowance is \$14. The child allowance for people entitled to assistance will end as soon as the child turns eighteen, or as soon as the child starts earning money himself/herself. People entitled to assistance do not receive a child allowance for children who do not live on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, or Saba. The occupational disability allowance amounts to \$105 on St. Eustatius. In the fall of 2012, the Dutch government decided to increase the occupational disability allowance by 50%.

Assistance recipients are allowed to earn additional income up to the minimum wage without being cut on their assistance welfare.

Assistance recipients are, under the Assistance Decree for the BES islands, required to look for and accept work that is generally accepted and matches their ability, register for employment mediation at the governing council of the island authority, and use facilities for integration into the workforce made available by or through the governing council.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/kindgebonden-budget/vraag-en-antwoord/hoe-hoog-is-het-kindgebonden-budget.html. Consulted on 18 June 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/154/algemene+weduwen-+en+wezenwet+%28aww%29.html. Consulted on 14 May 2012

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/index.php?view=pagina&id=154&set\_language=NL. Consulted on 14 May 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/152/onderstand+wet+bes.html. Consulted on 14 May 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland. Informatiekrant Bonaire, St. Eustatius, Saba. October 2010, number 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/152/onderstand+wet+bes.html. Consulted on 14 May 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/nieuws/2012/10/11/sociaaleconomische-impuls-eilanden-caribisch-nederland.html. Consulted on 15 October 2012.

They are also required to cooperate in assessments of their possibilities for integration into the workforce.

According to a representative of the Social Affairs and Employment Unit on the BES islands, roughly 250 people on the islands are on assistance welfare, of which 17 live on St. Eustatius.<sup>1</sup>

The poverty survey in the Caribbean Netherlands lists the following figures regarding the number of people receiving this financial assistance: on St. Eustatius, 15 people receive financial assistance, of which 8 receive an occupational disability allowance, and nobody receives a child allowance. For the sake of comparison: figures of Statistics Netherlands show that 319,000 people receive this kind of welfare in the European Netherlands at the end of June 2012.

In exceptional cases, assistance recipients can apply for exceptional welfare. The Assistance Act for the BES islands specifies that people may do so to cover funeral expenses, the cost of filling up a water reservoir, the cost of a school uniform, or the cost of a medically prescribed diet. The Social Affairs and Employment Unit of the Caribbean Netherlands Civil Service determines whether a case can be classed as an exceptional one. According to a representative of the Social Affairs and Employment Unit on the BES islands, around ten people received exceptional welfare in the past year. In the fall of 2012, the Dutch government decided to make more funds available for the exceptional welfare scheme to enable more people to use it, especially to cover the costs of school material.

In the European Netherlands, people with insufficient income or capital to provide for themselves and who are not entitled to other forms of assistance, can apply for basic welfare. This will also factor in the income and capital of a possible partner, provided they share a household. In the case of a single householder, the capital must not exceed €5,685. For married persons and single parents, the capital is capped at €11,370. For a single householder, the welfare payment amounts to 50% of the minimum wage (in 2012 this was €634.80); for single parents it was 70% of the minimum wage (in 2012, €888.72) and for cohabitating couples together 100% of the minimum wage (in 2012, €1,269.60). Municipal authorities can in some cases deviate from these standard amounts for welfare payments. They can, for example, grant single householders and single parents an additional allowance of no more than 20% of the net minimum wage, while they can also give people who have been living on a low wage for a long time an additional allowance. Persons on welfare must comply with certain requirements, including the obligation to look for employment and accept job offers. Single parents with children below the age of five can apply for an exemption from the obligation to actively look for work. Whenever someone has other income, the welfare payment will be lowered accordingly. Persons below the age of 27 have to look for work for four weeks before they can apply for welfare.

Municipal authorities in the European Netherlands can grant individual exceptional welfare to persons over the age of eighteen who have insufficient income or capital to pay

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Information provided by email by Huub Bouwens, unit head SZW on the BES islands, October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Drewes, M. (2012). Armoede in Caribisch Nederland, een verkenning.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/arbeid-sociale-zekerheid/publicaties/artikelen/archief/2012/2012-055-pb.htm. Consulted on 1 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland. *Informatiekrant Bonaire, St. Eustatius, Saba*. October 2010, number 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Information provided by email by Huub Bouwens, unit head SZW on the BES islands, October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/nieuws/2012/10/11/sociaaleconomische-impuls-eilanden-caribisch-nederland.html. Consulted on 15 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/bijstand/algemene-bijstand?ns\_campaign=Themasubsidies uitkeringen en toeslagen&ro adgrp=Bijstand-

Algemene\_bijstand&ns\_mchannel=sea&ns\_source=google&ns\_linkname=%2Bbijstandsuitkering&ns\_fee=0.00&g clid=CI7Q2ICu2rACFY5pfAodECGczg. Consulted on 18 June 2012.

certain necessary expenses. These include medical expenses, living expenses, school expenses, and sports club fees for children.

Municipal authorities can also grant category-based exceptional welfare to certain groups, such as the over-65s, the chronically ill, and the disabled. Conditions that have to be met to be eligible for exceptional welfare differ from one municipality to the next. 1

#### Severance pay: termination benefit

Every employee in the Caribbean Netherlands who, through no fault of their own, is laid off, is entitled to severance pay (known as the 'Cessantia' benefit): a one-off termination benefit payment. An employer who lays off an employee is statutorily required to pay this severance pay. If the employer is bankrupt, or has been granted a moratorium, the Social Affairs and Employment agency will pay the severance pay.

Severance pay is calculated based on the most recent wage and the number of years of service. For the first to the tenth full year of service, severance pay amounts to one weekly wage for each year of service. For the eleventh to the twentieth full year of service, severance pay amounts to one and a quarter times the weekly wage for each year of service. For full years of service beyond twenty years, severance pay amounts to twice a weekly wage for each year of service.<sup>2</sup>

### Sick pay: provisions for sick and pregnant employees

Every employee in the Caribbean Netherlands is entitled to sick pay when they are sick or pregnant. Sick pay is paid for a maximum of two years when someone suffers from the same illness. Minimum sick pay is 80% of the employee's daily wage. Employers are obliged to pay this. Employers can, in turn, apply for loss of income compensation from the Social Affairs and Employment agency, which will reimburse the 80% paid to a sick employee.

In case of pregnancy and maternity leave, employees are entitled to 100% sick pay. An employee is entitled to at least four weeks' and at most six weeks' leave prior to the estimated date of delivery (pregnancy leave) and at least six weeks and at most eight weeks leave after the actual date of delivery (maternity leave).<sup>3</sup>

## Occupational disability

An employee who due to an accident at work is fully or partially incapacitated for work is entitled to accident compensation. This entitlement starts on the day after the accident was reported. In case of full occupational disability, accident compensation amounts to 100% of the employee's daily wage for the first year, and 80% of the employee's daily wage for subsequent years. In case of partial occupational disability, accident compensation will be calculated based on the percentage of occupational disability.

If occupational disability lasts over a year, and the employee's condition is not likely to improve, this employee can apply for a once-only payment. However, when the occupational disability percentage is 30% or more, this payment will only be granted in exceptional cases – at the discretion of the minister. In the event that an employee dies as a result of an accident at work, his or her surviving relatives may be eligible for accident compensation.<sup>4</sup>

#### Health insurance

As of 1 January 2011, anyone who lawfully resides or works in the Caribbean Netherlands is automatically covered by the compulsory Caribbean Netherlands Health Insurance. This

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/bijstand/bijzondere-bijstand. Consulted on 19 June 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/157/cessantiawet+bes.html. Consulted on 14 May 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/156/wet+ziekteverzekering+%28incl.+loonderving%29.html. Consulted on 14 May 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Wet ongevallenverzekering BES.

also goes for people up to the age of thirty who have left the island for educational reasons.<sup>1</sup>

This health insurance covers, among other things, primary care, psychological care, medical specialist care, hospital admission, paramedic care, dental care, medication, medical devices, obstetric care, maternity care, transport of the sick, and long-term care relating to old age, a disease, or a disability, regardless of whether this care is provided at a residential facility or at home. This health insurance also covers the costs of medical referral to physicians outside the Caribbean Netherlands with whom the health insurance provider has a (in)direct contract.

Insured parties with an income that exceeds the personal deduction are required to pay an income-based premium. Employers also pay a premium for their employees' health insurance. These premiums are imposed and collected by the Dutch Tax and Customs Administration.<sup>2</sup>

#### Child care allowance

Unlike their counterparts in the European Netherlands, parents on the BES islands do not receive a child care allowance. Child care organizations do, however, sometimes receive subsidies from public entities. The fees parents are required to pay differ per island and per facility.

#### Social housing and rent assistance

The waiting time for social rentals is very long on the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands. Tenants in social housing pay a maximum of 30% of their income in rent. Please refer to the chapter on Housing Conditions for more details.

## Student support

Students from the Caribbean Netherlands who go to college in the Netherlands can apply for Dutch student support. They can also, on certain conditions, apply for a single start-up allowance from the Caribbean Netherlands Civil Service. This start-up allowance consists in a performance-related scholarship and a loan. The maximum amount for the performance-related scholarship is \$2,289.65 and for the loan is \$4,579.31.

Students from the Caribbean Netherlands who want to go to college in the Caribbean or in the United States, and who meet certain conditions, can apply for student support from the Caribbean Netherlands Civil Service.

Students in level 1 or 2 secondary vocational education (*SBO* or *MBO*) may be entitled to a four-year non-repayable scholarship, while they can also borrow money alongside that. After this four-year non-repayable scholarship, students can continue to borrow money for three further years.

Students in level 3 or 4 secondary vocational education, higher vocational education, or college can apply for a performance-related scholarship and a student loan. After this four-year performance-related scholarship, students can continue to borrow money for three further years. The amount of the student support depends on the type of course and the country in which the student is enrolled.<sup>3</sup>

#### Free legal aid

Anyone whose annual earnings stay below \$12,500 can request free legal aid from the Caribbean Netherlands Civil Service.

In most cases, a personal contribution is not payable. Only in case of a conflict with an employer will someone be required to pay a personal contribution.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland. Zorgverzekeringskantoor. *Informatiebrochure zorgverzekering voor verzekerden van de Zorgverzekering Bonaire, Saba en St. Eustatius.* Per 1 January 2011.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland, Zorgverzekeringskantoor. *Informatiebrochure zorgverzekering voor verzekerden van de Zorgverzekering Bonaire, Saba en St. Eustatius*. Per 1 January 2011.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/148/studiefinanciering.html. Consulted on 14 May 2012.

<sup>4</sup> http://www.rijksdienstcn.com/pagina/192/recht+op+kosteloze+rechtsbijstand.html

#### 1.8 Child maintenance

When parents separate, they have to come to an arrangement for child maintenance. There is the option of asking the court, through the Guardianship Council, to impose a payment obligation. If the Guardianship Council is unable to mediate a child maintenance settlement, the case will go to court. The court will then decide how much the parent must pay. There are no standard amounts for that. The payable monthly amount is mostly around \$125 per child, but when a parent cannot afford that, this amount can be considerably lower.<sup>1</sup>

In the European Netherlands, child maintenance is payable for children up to age of 21. When children aged between 18 and 21 work or receive student aid, this will affect the payable child maintenance amount. Child maintenance will always be reviewed by the court. Parents can, however, agree on an amount and then have this reviewed and ratified by the court. The courts have jointly compiled standards they use in child maintenance rulings: the so-called Trema standards. In assessing how much child maintenance should be paid, courts go by the assumption that children generally live with one of their parents.

The court will first determine what amount the person liable to pay child maintenance can afford to pay (ability to pay). The amount of money this person needs to provide for himself/herself is deducted from his/her net income. The difference between the net income and the income needed to cover fixed cost of living is the margin available for paying child maintenance. This amount can be used for child maintenance.

The court will subsequently assess how much the person entitled to receive child maintenance needs. The court will do so based on special tables. Child maintenance needs are determined based on, among other things, financial resources during the marriage and the income of the person entitled to receive child maintenance.

The income situation as it was just prior to the divorce will be taken as the starting point. The child maintenance need will be divided proportionally to both partners' income. <sup>2</sup>

## 1.9 Assistance in kind

Pupils of the Governor de Graaffschool on St. Eustatius get a school breakfast. Churches on St. Eustatius provide monthly food parcels and free soup and food hampers in December. Moreover, the Red Cross and the Lions Club provide incidental help to families, often consisting of food parcels and meals. The children who go to after-school care at the Mega D Foundation get a meal there. The parents pay a monthly contribution for the care.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.10 Legislation

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to children on St. Eustatius.

The social security facilities outlined above are based on the following legislation: the Income Tax Act for the BES Islands, the Assistance Decree for the BES Islands, the General Widows' and Orphans' Act for the BES Islands, the Health Insurance Act for the BES Islands, the Accident Insurance Act for the BES Islands, the Student Support Act for the BES Islands, and the Severance Pay Act for the BES Islands.

The Elementary Education Act for the BES Islands furthermore stipulates that the public authority is to lay down rules for the provision of food and clothing, as well as transport facilities, for children who would otherwise not be able to regularly attend school.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Drewes, M. (2012). Armoede in Caribisch Nederland, een verkenning.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://www.nibud.nl/nibud-extra/uit-elkaar-geld-goed-geregeld/alimentatie-regelen/kinderalimentatie.html. Consulted on 1 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Drewes, M. (2012). Poverty in Caribbean Netherlands, an identification.

The Employment Office Act for the BES Islands furthermore obliges the authorities of the islands to provide employment-finding services. <sup>1</sup>

#### 1.11 Policy and activities

Antillean legislation regarding social facilities has largely been preserved after the transition. Social facilities in the Caribbean Netherlands therefore differ from those provided in the European part of the Netherlands.

The Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands specifies that the islands can be subjected to rules and that other specific measures can be taken with a view to economic and social circumstances, the large distance from the European part of the Netherlands, their insular nature, small surface and population, geographic circumstances, the climate, and other factors that make that these islands are essentially different from the European part of the Netherlands.

In 2010, the then minister of Social Affairs and Employment, on behalf of the Dutch government, and delegates of the islands agreed that the extent of the minimum wage and welfare payments in the Netherlands shall not serve as a guide in defining a minimum wage and welfare for the Caribbean Netherlands. The development of welfare entitlements on the islands will be linked to the local development of the minimum wage. During these discussions between government bodies, the parties expressed the shared aim of further improving the minimum wage, the state pension, and assistance within the preconditions of economic capacity, balanced social relations, specific circumstances on each of the islands, and budgetary considerations in the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup>

On 10 October 2010, the amounts payable as financial assistance were raised to catch up with price index adjustments that should have been applied in previous years but were not. New welfare amounts were subsequently instituted as of 1 January 2012.<sup>3</sup> Price trends were calculated for each island separately, and the welfare amounts were raised by the resulting percentage.<sup>4</sup>

As far as social and economic development is concerned, the Dutch government pursues an integrated approach. Responsibility for the formulation of social and economic policy lies with the island authorities in the first place. In a letter to the Second Chamber of Dutch Parliament dated 23 January 2012, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment writes that the island authorities' organizational capacity is still insufficient for them to be able to handle policymaking. Changes to the composition of the governments of several islands and the limitation of the civil service are, in his opinion, the underlying reason for that.<sup>5</sup>

In 2012, it was announced that funding for Bonaire, Saba, and St. Eustatius will go up. Funding for the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands is comparable to the funding of Dutch municipalities through municipal funds. This adjustment follows a study by IdeeVersa of the extent of funding in relation to the tasks islands are supposed to execute. Funding for the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands will be increased by over eight million dollar, taking it to nearly USD43 million. <sup>6</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Letter from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment of 22 June 2012 to the House of Representatives about promises made by general consultation Caribbean Netherlands 30 January 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Response to parliamentary questions asked by representative Van Gent (GroenLinks) about children's allowances in the Caribbean Netherlands, 31 May 2011.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Regulation of 21 November 2011, Staatscourant 2011, 21373.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Letter by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment of 23 January 2012 about a comprehensive approach to the socio-economic problems of the islands, the state benefits and the implementation. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33000 IV no. 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Letter by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment of 23 January 2012 about a comprehensive approach to the socio-economic problems of the islands, the state benefits and the implementation. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33000 IV no. 54.

 $<sup>^6\,</sup>http://www.rijks dien stcn.com/nieuws/244/verhoging-vrije-uitkering-eilanden-caribisch-nederland.html$ 

The relevant ministries have furthermore made €1,020,000 available for the three islands together for 2012. This money is intended to be used to finance local projects on the islands that are part of integrated social and economic efforts. Besides local governments, other organizations can also submit project applications, providing these are endorsed by the local government. Proposed projects must target improvement of quality of life, reintegration toward sustainable paid employment, and increasing social participation.<sup>1</sup>

In the spring on 2012, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment commissioned a study into poverty in the Caribbean Netherlands. This study showed that the situation at the bottom of society requires further improvement. In October 2012, the Dutch government and the local authorities of Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba discussed a number of initiatives aimed at improving the social and economic situation on the islands. This has led to the government making the following decisions:

- Entitlement to exceptional assistance will be extended to enable more people to use it, especially to cover the costs of school materials. Welfare for the occupationally impaired will be increased by 50% in comparison to the current level.
- Part of the costs of utilities, which are higher due to the small scale of the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands, will be apportioned to the European Netherlands. An independent regulator will be introduced to limit the burden of increasing costs on citizens and companies in the Caribbean Netherlands. Apportioning of utility costs was already commonplace in the European Netherlands. The aim is to regulate this through law for the Caribbean Netherlands as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2014. During the transitional period of 2013, the Ministries of Economic Affairs and of Infrastructure and the Environment will provide a financial contribution to absorb increases in the costs of utilities.
- Jobs will be created by applying the concept of social return in state building projects in the Caribbean Netherlands. This increases the social impact of these projects. One example is the introduction of apprenticeships in building projects.
- Following surplus tax proceeds for 2011 in the Caribbean Netherlands, totaling around
  USD 5 million, a package of measures was agreed with the Ministry of Finance to, on the
  one hand, boost people's purchasing power and on the other provide an economic
  stimulus on the islands. Measures in this package include a property tax cut, reduction of
  tax on fuel, and an increase in the tax exemption for the basic necessities of life.
- A so-called E team will be set up on each of the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands. This
  is a partnership of the government and entrepreneurs on the islands aimed at further
  stimulating economic growth.<sup>2</sup>

## Activities

- Two employment programs have started on St. Eustatius.
- Ecorys and Curconsult have conducted a study, by order of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, into purchasing power in the Caribbean Netherlands.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment commissioned a poverty survey in the Caribbean Netherlands.
- The national government has made €1,020,000 available for 2012 for projects that focus on tackling social and economic issues.
- There have also been activities in the realm of the economy, such as a study of market forces on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba.<sup>3</sup>
- As of 1 January 2011, the Caribbean Netherlands' compulsory health insurance under public law was introduced to cover medical care and exceptional medical expenses for the islanders.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Letter from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment of 22 June 2012 to the House of Representatives about promises made by general consultation Caribbean Netherlands 30 January 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/nieuws/2012/10/11/sociaaleconomische-impuls-eilanden-caribisch-nederland.html. Consulted on 15 October 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Kingdom Representative for the public bodies of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba (2011). *Voorjaarsrapportage* 2011.

In his progress report of February 2012, the Kingdom representative stated: 'It is key that, as soon as this research [into price movements] has produced results, measures be taken soon in concert with the public authorities to keep prices under control and restore and retain purchasing power. If these measures are not taken quickly enough, and inflation keeps rising, the economically most vulnerable group of islanders will fall into a poverty trap.'

The representative also writes that simultaneous application of conflicting European Netherlands and Antillean standards may lead to inconsistent actions by the national government, and that it is key that the national government be consistent in their application of standards. This will inevitably require political choices: either the old Antillean standards, or the new Dutch ones. The example he provides is that of Antillean civil servants, who are earning salaries, while Dutch standards stipulate that civil servants are not allowed to work second jobs. The national government has thus unintentionally created a group of working poor among its own workforce.

And finally, the representative writes about obstacles that have arisen in the movement of persons and trade after the transition. The triple tax load weighs down heavily on purchasing power. Agreements have meanwhile been made about that with Curaçao. 1

#### 1.12 Organizations and responsibilities

### Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is responsible for setting the amounts to which welfare recipients are entitled, and has overall responsibility for social and economic matters.

#### **Public Authority**

The island authority is responsible for combating poverty in the broadest sense, alongside employment finding and labor force participation.<sup>2</sup> The public authority is, furthermore, under the Elementary Education Act for the BES Islands, tasked with ensuring children of parents with limited financial means can go to school.

## Caribbean Netherlands civil service – Social Affairs Unit

The Social Affairs Unit of the Caribbean Netherlands' social service implements welfare schemes, grants work permits and dismissal permits, and performs inspections in the area of working conditions, minimum wage, illegal labor, and working hours.<sup>3</sup>

#### Local health insurance authority (ZVK)

The health insurance authority is part of the Caribbean Netherlands' civil service and focuses on implementation of the health insurance.

## 2 Children on financial situation

The children surveyed say various things about their or their parents' financial situation. For instance, they say food — and then especially health food — is expensive on the island. A ten-year-old girl says that there are sometimes problems because there is little money, but not all the time. Her parents work hard to ensure the basic needs of the family. Other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Kingdom Representative for the public bodies of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba (2012). *Voorjaarsrapportage februari 2012*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Letter from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment of 22 June 2012 to the House of Representatives about promises made by general consultation Caribbean Netherlands 30 January 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Letter by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment of 23 January 2012 about a comprehensive approach to the socio-economic problems of the islands, the state benefits and the implementation. House of Representatives, session year 2011-2012 33000 IV no. 54.

children also mention money problems at home. And there are children who say there is food at home but no money.

But there are also many children for who money is no issue. They can go on vacation and can eat and buy clothes.

Some children don't take vacation for granted. 'That is only when we can get the money together', says a seventeen year old. Or another seventeen year old who tells that she went on a vacation for the first time last year, a trip paid by the church.

Some children receive pocket money, and some have a job. A girl says that her parents will 'surely ask her for money' now that she earns some because her parents have a low wage. Another child gives part of what she earns to her parents as she considers 'that I have to help if I can'.

The children like to learn how to deal with a budget and how to look after themselves. 1

'In fact I've never actually been on vacation. Last year I went away for the first time, and that was because the church paid for the trip. We went camping in Antigua. It wasn't really a vacation. It was a Christian camp and we did all sorts of stuff. I also did my best to make friends, which didn't always work out, but I did make one good friend there. She's very nice. My neighbor was also with us at camp.' (girl, 17 years old, St. Eustatius)

'There's always enough money at home to buy food and clothes and to go on vacation. My grandma works in the Blue Bead restaurant. She works during the day and in the evening. Grandpa works at an auto parts shop.' (girl, 15 years old, St. Eustatius)

'I don't get pocket money. I did get some money for my birthday, and I'm saving it up. I'm going to use it to buy school supplies to help me learn.' (girl, 10 years old, St. Eustatius)

## 3 Experts on financial situation

The experts who were consulted spoke extensively about the subject of finance. They note that financial difficulties are often the cause of other problems. They also observe that several families on St. Eustatius need to cope with money problems and poverty. 'There are no statistics on poverty but that is not necessary. It is more than clear that poverty is omnipresent', says one expert.

Experts link some of the financial problems to the political changes and developments in recent years. They find that life has become expensive and that it is almost impossible for parents with many children to obtain food. There is hunger on the island. At the same time people feel ashamed, so that nobody talks about hunger and poverty. There is a breakfast program at school.

Some of the experts are surprised by the fact that parents in the Caribbean Netherlands do not receive child benefits, while parents in the European Netherlands do. One expert calls that 'unequal treatment.'

The experts see the lack of money as a cause for many of the family problems on the island. After-school activities that parents cannot afford result in bored children that hang around on the island. Plans meant to help the youth cannot be carried out due a lack of money, playgrounds are dilapidated as there is no budget for maintenance, and so on.

The experts call for structural solutions and a major catch-up effort to get all areas to the required (minimum) level. Some say the islands have been neglected for a long time, and that major efforts are now required to combat poverty. Children need to have the standard of living they are entitled to. This should be based on the actual situation to be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683.

able to assess who need financial support. The high cost of living, housing, energy, and water, as well as taxes on the island, should all be considered. 'The way the island receives funds at the moment is simply not fair. Statia is not given a fair chance,' according to one expert.<sup>1</sup>

'Money is often the problem when it comes to getting things done.' (expert)

'Poverty and hunger are concealed.' (expert)

## 4 Literature on financial situation

Research (2011) shows that poverty is an important issue on the islands. Apart from figures on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), adequate and recent data that could be used to accurately assess the extent of the poverty issue are lacking. And yet, it is clear that the financial situation of families and the islands themselves is often problematic. This is also confirmed by older research.

The Verwey-Jonker Institute bases itself on GDP figures in concluding that St. Eustatius is the poorest of the three islands, but also one of the richer islands in comparison to other Caribbean islands. In 2004, St. Eustatius was the richest of the three islands, and still seemed to be so in 2009. Compared to other Caribbean islands, Bonaire is also among the richer ones. In comparison to the European Netherlands, however, the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands are very poor.

The 2012-2015 *Woonvisie* for St. Eustatius reports a normal salary on St. Eustatius is about \$ 900 to \$ 1,100 per month. A large part of the population however has to get by with the minimum wage of \$ 4.20 per hour which amounts to \$ 600-700 per month for full-time employment. Many people try to earn a decent living by having several jobs or combine different income sources. *Woonvisie* observes that St. Eustatius has virtually no (unemployment) benefits system. The aim is that people have to try and find a job. If they don't succeed, work is provided that pays the minimum wage. A very limited number of people receives benefits as medical or mental health problems make it impossible for them to get a job.

Woonvisie also describes that cost of living has considerably increased as a result of the new administrative system (as from 10-10-10). Many goods on St. Eustatius are imported via St. Maarten. St. Maarten levies a tax of 5% on the export. The *Algemene Bestedingsbelasting* (General Consumption Tax, ABB) is still added to that. The general rate is 6% (goods import) plus 4% (as from 1-10-11 instead of 6%). Every service that is still added to the product, means another 2% extra tax. Many prices have increased considerably due to these taxes.

Various other recent purchasing power surveys in the Caribbean Netherlands show that the increase of fuel costs (additional transport costs) and the increase of other global prices such as food and raw materials, have recently resulted in price increases on the island. In addition, the double indirect taxation – due to the combination of the new fiscal policy for Caribbean Netherland with that of St. Maarten and Curaçao – makes daily life more expensive. A majority of the population has seen its purchasing power decline since 10-10-10.

In its report on the implementation of the European Social Charter, the government of the former country of the Netherlands Antilles describes that a method was used on Curaçao to define the poverty line. There are plans to apply this method to the other islands as well.

Other studies confirm the situation in terms of poverty on the islands. The 2012 poverty survey shows that people on a minimum wage do not earn enough to be able to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See quotes 751, 752, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769.

cover all their expenses. They therefore get additional jobs or seek help from family. Above half of all wages are at or just above minimum wage.

The general picture is that the lives of people on a low wage have become harder after the transition due to the increase in costs. Despite the government having brought welfare payments in line with inflation, people are unable to get by on their wage.

Poverty is causing numerous problems in families' daily lives. They eat unhealthily because fruit and vegetables are expensive. There are children who are hungry. People on a low wage struggle to find affordable housing. Families move in together to be able to share the rent and utility costs, which often leads to too many people sharing a home. There are also people who are behind on their rent and utility payments.

One of the possible causes of financial problems that is mentioned is people's poor money management skills and them setting the wrong priorities. People often get into debt to be able to purchase luxury goods.

Within the small society on the island, people help and support each other, with family, neighbors, and churches all playing a role. However, this social safety net is undermined by increasing individualization.

Single mothers often find themselves in a very difficult situation. Many fathers do not pay towards their children's maintenance. Mothers sometimes feel moving in with family is their only option, living in already cramped conditions. Child care is too expensive for them and older children, fifteen-and-sixteen-year-olds, are forced to work.

A 2010 report states that you cannot actually refer to them as 'single mothers,' but should consider these situations fluid family relationships. The composition of families is in itself not the problem; insufficient income and a low educational level are highlighted as the causes of problems.

An earlier study, such as a 2008 NGO report on children's rights on the islands, confirms the picture painted above, while adding that government support for parents, and young single mothers in particular, falls shorts, and that while child maintenance is often never paid.

The 2012 poverty survey provides various suggestions for improvement, such as: subsidized child care and after-school programs, making it compulsory for fathers to pay child maintenance, affordable social housing, assistance in kind, joint and coordinated care by various organizations (such as specialist residential care or all-round family coaches), debt counseling, options for low-interest loans, monitoring by the bank, back rent rescheduling, effective price monitoring, (population) survey and agreements between the public authority and the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child previously (in 2009) recommended allocating additional resources to the identification and support of vulnerable families and children in the Netherlands. The committee pointed to the lack of resources in the Netherlands Antilles, such as for disabled children and children who need other forms of care. According to the committee, the emphasis should be on fighting poverty and pushing back inequality between the various parts of the Kingdom.

In 2008, the committee for economic, social, and cultural rights also pressed for efforts to push back poverty and provide support for (single) parents. The Council of Europe's European Committee of Social Rights drew a similar conclusion in 2011.

In their most recent report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2012), the Dutch government also ascertains that there is poverty in the Caribbean Netherlands. They place responsibility for fighting poverty primarily with the island authorities.

Poverty has consequences in a number of different areas. In reference to teenage mothers, the study by Verwey-Jonker states that poverty is generally considered to be the main cause of young motherhood.

A 2012 study by the Netherlands Police Agency shows that poverty is considered a main cause of people perpetrating criminal acts. Spokespersons for the public prosecution service and the police point out that houses and companies are more and more often burgled for food. A father figure is often lacking from families, while the mother is forced to work multiple jobs and therefore has no time to dedicate to her children.<sup>1</sup>

## 5 The Convention on the Rights of the Child on financial situation

Without money, you won't get anywhere. Money is needed to pay for the basic necessities of life, such as food, water, and clothes. And financial resources are also essential to be able to realize other rights, such as the right to education, health, and health care.

The right to an adequate standard of living is regulated in Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is linked directly to Article 6, the right to life and development. The convention stipulates that children should grow up with a standard of living that is adequate for the child's physical, mental, intellectual, moral, and social development. An adequate standard of living includes at least a place to live, food, and clothes.

Parents are first responsible for providing these basics. However, when parents are unable to live up to their responsibility for whatever reason, the government is required to help. The convention obliges governments to provide material assistance and support programs (Article 27).

Children must also be enabled to – through their parents – benefit from social security (Article 26). The Dutch government has adopted a reservation to Article 26, under which children do not have an *independent* right to social security.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has on various occasions expressed its views on the risk of poverty to children and on governments' responsibility in fighting poverty. Countries must not only develop strategies to counter poverty, they must also ensure that poverty does not do lasting damage to (the youngest) children.<sup>2</sup>

## 6 Conclusion

On St. Eustatius, numerous children grow up in poverty, research has shown. As a result, children sometimes lack access to the most basic children's rights, such as the right to food or clothing. Children and their rights are also under pressure in other ways due to families' financial situation. Parents have to combine multiple jobs and have no time to properly look after their children, families are forced to live in small houses with too many people, there is no money for child care, resources to enroll children in after-school programs.

These are just a few examples of the consequences poverty can have for children's lives. It is clear that this situation is not in line with the standards set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See literature 106, 33, 39, 27, 29, 11, 109, 105, 32, 100, 16, 74, 19, 47, 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child (2005). *General Comment no. 7, Implementing child rights in early childhood.* CRC/C/GC/7.

## Conclusion

The study into the children's rights situation on St. Eustatius concentrated on eight aspects in children's lives on the islands that jointly determine their life: family and parenting; education; health; safety; recreation, play and leisure time; participation; housing conditions; and financial situation. For each topic, the report first sketches the current situation. This situation is subsequently assessed from three different angles: 1. Children and young people, 2. Experts and 3. Literature. The resulting picture is then tested against the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which formulates minimum standards for each area of life.

This chapter describes the results in brief and the available possibilities to improve the children's situation.

## 1 Children's rights on St. Eustatius

From the descriptions per theme, it emerges that the situation on St. Eustatius does not (yet) meet the applicable demands as formulated by the UNCRC.

### Family and parenting

In some families on St. Eustatius, children are reared in a violent environment where yelling or beating are the order of the day. The parents that treat their children in this way are often repeating what they learned from their parents. Some parents now realize that violence should not be part of childrearing; but for many it is unclear what the alternatives are. As a result of 'childrearing diffidence', some parents instead leave their children unchecked, who therefore begin to develop unrestrained behavior. Many families are doing fine, but there are still many parents who do not communicate with their children. Children are not seen and respected as full family members. Many parents are so busy keeping their household financially afloat that they are hardly ever at home. And when they do come home, they are too exhausted to deal with the children. A social safety net, with care and support provided by third parties, is absent. Nowadays grandfathers and grandmothers also need to work to make ends meet. Some children suffer social-emotional neglect. Many of the interviewed children said they wished that their parents had more time for them.

There are few complete families. Many mothers who raise their children on their own or with a new partner. Fathers are generally absent in childrearing, and in those cases often do not pay any alimony. This means that mothers face the task (financially) alone.

There are many new composite families, with siblings from different parents. Teenage pregnancies also occur frequently. These girls, who are sometimes still very young, are obviously not capable of adequately raising their children. If money and support are lacking, then this creates significant problems.

The small community on the island is generally supportive of individual residents. There is another side to this, however. Nothing can remain private, and there is a lot of gossiping, and a lot of personal shame. Religious faith continues to play a powerful role

here. The 'closed' character of the island community creates a complex childrearing situation. Problems often only become apparent after much has already gone amiss, making it difficult to offer help.

The situation regarding family and childrearing currently does not meet the minimum requirements stipulated by the UNCRC. Many organizations, such as the Youth and Family Centers, are working hard to improve the situation, but this is a long and difficult process. The parents must first of all feel confident that they are capable of raising their children in a positive manner, without violence, to become responsible and respectful citizens.

Additionally, both parents and children need to know that they can rely on support, and that there is no shame in calling on that support. To this end, they must have sufficient confidence in the organizations on the island.

Third-party child care must also improve, and this applies to both day care and after-school care, in their various forms. This is a matter of both quality and availability, also for parents who cannot afford such child care at present.

Protecting children against violence and neglect is already a priority in government policy, and it must remain a priority in order to attain the standards set by the UNCRC. Extra efforts will need to be made in other areas as well to remedy inadequate situations and to offer children the safe childrearing environment that the convention envisions. Many of such measures are linked to measures in other policy domains such as combating poverty and providing adequate housing.

#### **Education**

The opportunities for education are limited on a small island. St. Eustatius has several elementary schools and one public secondary school. There are no special education facilities. For virtually all continued education, the children need to leave the islands.

The quality of education requires improvement, and with the arrival of education expertise centers and inspectorates, improvements seem to be underway. On St. Eustatius the language of instruction poses a significant problem. In elementary school children are taught in English. After that they suddenly need to learn in Dutch and understand what the teachers are teaching them. This does not accord with the language they are accustomed to. For some children, the language problems cause a lag in education which is difficult to remedy.

Many children have behavioral problems that are manifested in school. They often relate directly to the home situation. Schools are generally not equipped to help children with these problems.

Quite a bit of criticism is leveled at the teaching staff, particularly by the experts. They are either too authoritarian and directive or, conversely, do not impose sufficiently clear limits. They use verbal and physical violence, their tenure on the islands is too short, they offer the pupils too little encouragement, and involving the pupils seems unheard of. Of course there are positive exceptions to this picture as well, and these stand out for the positive changes they achieve among children, within a short space of time.

The education at present does not meet all the requirements set out in the UNCRC. There are various aspects that demand extra attention, such as the overall quality of education, special education, reducing school dropout rates, attention for the child's cultural identity and language, how discipline is maintained in school, the opportunities for pupils to develop their talents, access to information, and opportunities to participate in school. Substantial steps are already being taken to improve the situation and bring it more into line with the minimum requirements of the convention.

#### Health

It is currently unclear how the islands' youthful population is doing with regard to most health areas. This makes it very difficult to adequately respond to health problems and to ensure that the health care services meet the needs. For young children, the medical picture is becoming increasingly complete as they are monitored closely by the

consultation center, which resides under the Youth and Family center. This is not the case for the older youth, while this population group does urgently need health-related attention. For example, there are concerns for their sexual health (including sexual violence, teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases), and for obesity and behavioral habits among youths.

Children are reluctant to contact (family) physicians for help, out of fear that it will quickly become public knowledge across the island. This is a very particular bottleneck.

There is very little care, if any at all, for handicapped children and for children with mental health problems. Naturally, a small island cannot provide for all health care disciplines. To ensure that children do get the care they need, attempts are made to provide this care elsewhere. This sometimes leads to language problems, or problems with the costs.

Much still needs to be done to attain the minimum standards set out by the UNCRC regarding health and health care. The lack of information about practically all health aspects makes it difficult to draw up improvement plans, however.

Preventing health problems is one important attention point, for instance through public education with respect to a healthy lifestyle, including healthy sexual behavior, healthy nutrition, and exercise. Access to health care must improve substantially for the older youth, if this is to meet the UNCRC requirements. Youth care needs to be developed further to enable children to exercise their right to health care. Further challenges pertain to the care for handicapped children and for children that have been victimized, and to protecting children against a wide variety of health risks.

#### Safety

Whether a child is able to grow up safely depends on diverse aspects, both in school and out on the street. But safety starts at home, of course. Many children on St. Eustatius are confronted by domestic violence or maltreatment. Violence in schools is also a point of concern, and then especially in the relationship between teachers and pupils.

There does not appear to be much crime in the small community of St. Eustatius. To the extent that juveniles are involved in criminal activities such as burglary, drugs trade, armed robberies and violence, the group appears to be small.

The treatment of youthful delinquents has improved in recent years through the introduction of three penal responses, of increasing severity. The judicial organizations on the islands have also improved, now operating more on the principle that youth criminal law should be of a pedagogical nature.

Children feel that more should be done to tackle youth crime by organizing more leisure time activities for children and adolescents. The assumption is that as long as they are not bored, they won't turn to crime. Experts fully support that idea.

To get a good picture of safety on the islands would require more up-to-date data. Such data are currently not registered, or not fully or inadequately.

On a number of points, legislation on the island does not meet the minimum requirements set by the UNCRC. Thus, there is no ban on corporeal punishment. Also, the application of adult criminal law to 16 and 17-year-olds and the option of lifelong imprisonment do not accord with the UNCRC. However, the approach that is currently applied on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba with a more specific treatment of youthful offenders, does reflect the philosophy underlying the convention.

#### Recreation, play and leisure time

Until the age of around 12, life on St. Eustatius offers children no end of things to do. Some children and experts even qualify growing up on the island until that age as idyllic. That is to say, if the children are fortunate enough to have parents or others who have and who take enough time to play with them, to go chasing lizards or to go swimming in the clear blue tropical sea. Yet from the age of 12 on, most children want to have more entertainment. They want to interact with peers, to undertake exciting activities, to

discover the world. Then the world on an island is small and the range of things to do is limited in all areas.

For many children, sport is a way of venting their energy and a way of leaving the island once in a while, to compete with children on other islands. Children can engage in a limited number of sports. The same applies for musical activities and other forms of culture. The offerings and opportunities are limited.

Children's right to recreation, play and leisure time is under pressure on St. Eustatius, in several ways; for instance due to a lack of facilities, resources and expertise among community centers, and to other hindrances. Many of these constraints can be solved, insofar as they are not imposed by physical or geographical circumstances. This does require acknowledging the importance of ensuring this right to recreation, play and leisure time, however, and this implies a safe 'third childrearing environment', apart from the family and school.

### **Participation**

Children are generally not offered the opportunity to participate as full citizens. Not at home, not in school, not in the island society. The notion does not fit in with the authoritarian approach to childrearing that is often dominant, both in families and in school. This approach does not stimulate children to be self-sufficient and enterprising, but rather cultivates timidity and a lack of initiative. They wait to be instructed to do something, or for a yell or a slap to stop doing something. Yet at the same time, they are often left to take care of themselves when parental supervision is absent, and certainly when they leave the island for work or study. Then they are suddenly expected to be assertive and to take care of themselves.

Participation by children at home, in school and in their leisure time still requires a lot of attention to arrive at an acceptable level. Respect for children and for their special position should be central to this effort. Tailored to their age and level of development, children should gradually learn to participate in all segments of society.

A number of efforts are currently pursued to help children realize their right to participation. These range from childrearing support (the Positive Parenting Program, or Triple P), and the arrival of a Children's Ombudsman to ensure more attention for children's rights (education), to organizational efforts to involve children and adolescents more closely in activities. Properly informing children of their rights can help them find opportunities to participate in society.

### Housing conditions and financial situation

There are not enough suitable and affordable dwellings on St. Eustatius. Many families therefore have trouble finding proper housing, particularly single-parent families. As a solution, family members often share a home. But in small and overcrowded dwellings, children get no rest and have little privacy. They are unable to do their homework properly, and must sometimes share a bed with a family member. In certain neighborhoods, the general living conditions leave much to be desired.

Much of this relates to the difficult financial position that many parents are in. Life on an island is expensive. Almost everything needs to be imported, which inflates the price. Moreover, the lack of public transport makes owning a car almost indispensable. At the same time worker's wages are relatively low, certainly for people with low qualifications.

Parents do not receive child benefit like in the European Netherlands. Fathers that have left the family often do not contribute to the maintenance of their children.

The cost of provisions like day care, after-school care, sports or other activities are prohibitive. In extreme cases, there is not enough money to buy (healthy) food or clothes, and children arrive in school hungry. Clearly, this situation does not meet the requirements of the UNCRC.

#### All in all

The various constraints are closely interconnected, and therefore pose a real risk to the development of children growing up on St. Eustatius.

To bring the children's rights situation on the islands into line with the Convention, these domains will need to tackled simultaneously.

## 2 Children's rights in practice

The chapter on the UNCRC describes how the convention obliges the government to look after the children on St. Eustatius.

This effort should be based on the child's interests.

The same minimum standards apply here as for children in the Netherlands: the principle of *non-discrimination*. The government is moreover obliged to organize additional care for the children of St. Eustatius where is concerns the remedying of any *lag in education or development*.

As said, the current situation on St. Eustatius does not (yet) accord with the UNCRC. In this report, the extensive sections on each theme indicate the rights that are affected. This elaborate overview served to create a precise understanding of the current state of affairs. Subsequently, a number of simpler principles can be applied with a view to practical action, based on the UNCRC.

The UNCRC makes clear that there exist direct and independent relations and obligations between the children parents and organizations on Saba and the national government (see the diagram on the left below). In other words, there is no question of any sort of hierarchy or devolved responsibility, as is sometimes thought (see diagram on the right).

According to the UNCRC, each party that impinges on the child has its own, direct responsibility with regard to that child: the parents, the state, and other parties as well. Article 3 paragraph 1 of the convention is crystal clear on this point.

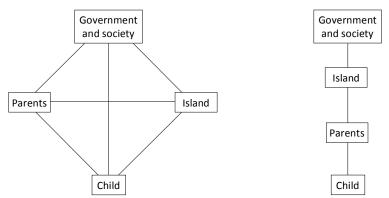


Diagram 1: Mutual relations in terms of responsibility

The government, and each organization involved, must base its actions on the child's own interests, making this its prime consideration.

This implies that the *policy* of the government and of each organization (on St. Eustatius) must be based on *the child's own interests*.

Additionally, the government and each organization must take full account of the *specific convention stipulations* that create obligations in their own field, such as those concerning healthcare, education or recreation.

To determine which standards the government and organizations must apply in their policy, the *socially accepted standards* should serve as guiding principle. After all, the UNCRC applies to each child (non-discrimination). That means that the government and all organizations involved with children on St. Eustatius must assume the minimum standards that apply for all Dutch children. Making any kind of distinction between European and Caribbean Netherlands is completely unacceptable if it means that certain standards are not met.<sup>1</sup>

The government must *remedy any lag* in education or development, or otherwise.

## 3 Together is better

It is always easier to say that things are not going well than it is to ensure that they do work out well. The researchers are fully aware of this, and therefore present their findings with all due modesty. This is all the more proper, given the number of people and organizations on St. Eustatius that have been doing all they can since a long time.

Nevertheless, the fact is that the current situation does not accord with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Just like it is a fact that absolutely everyone who has anything to do with the situation of children on the islands feels that these children deserve better, and that haste is required. The situation calls for everyone's concern and cooperation, from a shared sense of urgency. It calls for solidarity with all children in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, wherever they may be. The UNCRC provides enough guidance and encouragement for this effort.

### Parents, government and organizations

The primary responsibility for children's healthy development lies with the parents. This applies equally on St. Eustatius. But if parents struggle to fulfill their responsibility, then surrounding organizations and the government must accept and exercise their own direct responsibility.

There are several aspects to the Dutch government's responsibility to offer help, support and improvement.

First there is the distance, both geographically and socio-culturally. Everyone on the islands knows all about the well-intentioned civil servants from The Hague, arriving after a nine-hour flight to explain how things should be done, based on policies and experiences that simply have no basis on the islands. All professionals advocate the application of regulations and tools that do connect to the local situation. Although this isn't easy to do, it is certainly not impossible.

Then there is the phenomenon of the discipline-based ministries in The Hague. Education, health care, security, housing and social affairs are well-defined and clearly separated policy domains, which works well in the political context of The Hague. But in the dynamic context of a small community on an island, where all the domains are interconnected, this compartmentalization is hugely counterproductive. Improving the children's rights situation on the BES islands requires a shared sense of responsibility among all the separate ministries, and an integral approach to policy making and implementation. That the minister of Foreign Affairs and Kingdom Relations should have a powerful coordinating responsibility in this effort is so self-evident that it might almost be overlooked. Jointly with the Kingdom Representative and the Children's Ombudsman, they can and must fulfill this role.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See also the recommendation by the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, which is discussed in the chapter on the UNCRC and which is summarized in Annex 4.

And then there is the temporary nature of everything that ensues from The Hague. Many good initiatives have the character of a plan, a project or a pilot. The funding is temporary, the implementation is often temporary, but what bothers the local professionals most of all is that the posted personnel from the European Netherlands are often temporary as well. Just as they are beginning to understand how things work, they go away again or, as they usually say: they go back. Taking with them, all the knowledge and experience they acquired locally. Structural development and improvement is difficult for local organizations when, time after time, they feel like they have to start all over again.

Clearly, it isn't easy. A small, relatively closed community on an island is not always amenable to suggestions and interventions. The Caribbean and European Netherlands share a complex history. In the European Netherlands it is also not uncommon to view the family as the cornerstone of society, which organizations and the government should be very cautious to interfere with. Yet a realistic assessment of the limited ability to engineer society – both in the European and the Caribbean part of the country – does not at all detract from the scope and nature of public responsibility.

#### Different situations, same standards

The situation on the BES islands is evidently unlike that in the European Netherlands. It is tempting, then, to adapt the standards to what is customary, and to what has always been considered acceptable. Of course things are done differently on a tropical island than in cold and rainy Europe. And who are we to impose our western standards on an island community on the other side of the world? Such considerations are extremely pernicious, precisely because they seem so obvious. But it simply isn't right. The standards stipulated in the UNCRC are minimum standards that apply to the whole of the Netherlands. The Dutch government, in both the European and Caribbean domains, carries its own, direct responsibility for the implementation of the convention.

The situation also differs on each of the three islands. That is why the study has resulted in three separate reports, each highlighting the uniqueness of the respective island. These reports provide a basis on which to create or elaborate a coherent youth policy for each island separately. It is necessary in each case to determine what the island needs, how best to work together, and what measures can help improve the situation of the island's children.

### **Guiding principles**

This report does not offer specific recommendations. But it does make clear that there is much that needs to be done, and which parties are responsible for doing so.

Ten guiding principles have been formulated, for all people and parties involved in the effort:

- 1. Respect for the own language and culture of the island inhabitants and respect for the children's rights go hand in hand.
- 2. Build on the strength and commitment of people and organizations on the island that have been dedicated to furthering the children's interests for a long time.
- 3. Stimulate the collaboration between people and organizations on the island and with those from the European Netherlands who are responsible for ensuring children's rights.
- 4. Participation of children and youths at all levels: involve the youth in the further mapping out of bottlenecks and the search for solutions.
- 5. Caution in applying additional rules from the European Netherlands.
- 6. Choose an approach that connects to the specific needs of the island and its children.
- 7. Realize that extra efforts and resources are required to remedy inadequate situations.
- 8. Initiate further research in all those areas where knowledge about children is lacking.

- 9. Organize the registration of data about children in areas for which adequate information is currently lacking.
- 10. Accept that it is a matter of great urgency that the children's rights situation is improved within the foreseeable future, so that it complies with the minimum standards.

The study into the children's rights situation on St. Eustatius has the character of a zero-measurement. This provides a foundation for UNICEF to exercise its mandate: to monitor compliance with the UNCRC. This does not mean that the children's rights organization can now lean back and take it easy. It means instead that the responsible governments and organizations are pressed to roll up their own and their neighbors' sleeves, more than ever. It is in the child's interest.

# **APPENDICES**

# Appendix 1 – Quotes on St. Eustatius

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### Family and parenting

- 1. My parents both have the same rules at home. I'm not allowed to run, jump up and down on the bed or play with knives, even though these are exactly the things that are the most fun. There's another rule about how late I have to be home, but sometimes I'm a bit later. My mom doesn't mind if she's out herself. The parents of some of my friends are much stricter than my parents. For example, if there's a party in the evening, they're not allowed to go, and I am. There are no problems at all at home. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 2. I clean the house. I sweep up, mop the floor and wash the dishes. I also do the dusting and I make the beds. My mom usually cleans the bathroom because I don't like doing that. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 3. I do the shopping sometimes, but only when I want to make cake or pizza. I cook as well. My mom cooks when she gets home from work. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 4. There's no hitting at home. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 5. My father was very strict when I was younger but he isn't anymore. Neither is my mom. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 6. At home I do almost everything. I clean and I do the dishes. The only thing I don't do is the laundry. My parents do that. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 7. It's good to grow up on Statia (*St. Eustatius*). We only speak English and a bit of Dutch. I don't like Dutch. I'd like to be able speak Spanish because there are a lot of people on the island who speak Spanish. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 8. My parents are strict. Sometimes I'm not allowed to watch television. I have to get up early on Saturday to wash clothes and do other chores. There aren't really any problems at home. I sometimes fight with my brother. He hits me sometimes, and I hit him back. If my parents are angry they sometimes confiscate my BlackBerry. They never hit me. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 9. My mom tries to be strict, but I'm too smart to be disciplined. When she tells me that I have to tidy up my clothes, I think to myself that I'll do it later. I don't necessarily have to tidy up my clothes at that precise moment. She tries to make rules. My mom basically takes care of me and my sister. My grandma and her sister just do their own stuff. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)

- 10. At Christmas we all decorate the Christmas tree and play games together. When it's somebody's birthday, presents are given. Last year I wanted a BlackBerry for my birthday but my mom said she wasn't going to buy it. In the end I got it anyway. My mom isn't good at keeping secrets, so I know what my present is going to be before it's my birthday. (girl, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 11. We're not allowed to eat in the bedroom. When we've finished eating, we have to wash our plates and cutlery. We mustn't leave the refrigerator open. We're not allowed to walk around barefoot, and we can't put our feet up on the chairs. We're not allowed to watch too much television. We can't watch movies for adults or violent movies, otherwise my brother copies all the violent behavior. We have to go to bed in good time. There isn't a TV in the bedroom, so when we go to bed it's really just to sleep. We're not allowed to sleep on the couch, otherwise my mom wakes us up and sends us to bed. (girl, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 12. My mother and my stepfather can be strict when necessary, for instance when it comes to things that I'm absolutely not allowed to do. In general, they do understand if I really want to do certain things, and allow me to do them. I'm forbidden to touch drugs, alcohol or anything else that could give me a bad reputation. It's pretty easy to get a bad reputation on the island. I haven't counted them, but there are a number of girls with bad reputations. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 13. Everyone has chores to do at home. I do the laundry, mop the floor and do the washing up. Sometimes I don't feel like it, but usually I don't mind. It's better than cooking, in any case. I haven't cooked much recently. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 14. My grandparents aren't strict at all. I can do what I want. I go out and I stay up late, normal things that teenagers do. I like living with my grandparents. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 15. I have to keep the garden tidy, do the dusting, mop the floor, cleaning the bathroom, do the washing up, clean my room and do the laundry. Sometimes my sister helps, but I often have to do everything alone. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 16. Sometimes my mom's strict, but other times she isn't. I'm allowed to go and see my friends if I want to. I behave well and I'm not disobedient. My stepfather is pretty strict. He always wants me to ask my mom every time I want to do anything so that she knows where I am and nothing happens to me. I sometimes fight with my brother. I only hit him if he misbehaves. He hits me, too. In fact he hits people for no reason. I think that's wrong. My mom never hits me. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 17. I help with the cleaning at home. I do the dishes and I tidy up the house before my mom gets home from work. If it's a mess, I have to make it neat. Sometimes I do it in the morning before I go to school. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 18. My mom decides everything at home. If something happens to us, she's the one who's responsible for us, so she decides what's what. She's my mother, so I do what she tells me to do. I have to respect her. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 19. I have to help with the housework. I have to clean up my room, wash the dishes, water the plants, clean the house and take care of my brother. Sometimes I enjoy it, but other times I don't feel like it. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 20. The normal rules apply at home. I have to be polite, I'm not allowed to put my feet on the table and I have to leave my shoes outside. There are also rules concerning going out, depending on where I'm going. My parents set the rules, and the parents of my friends do the same sort of thing. My parents are just normal. I agree with the rules and they never cause any problems. I have had discussions with my mother about the rules, but I respect her. I have been brought up to be polite. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 21. At lunchtime there's nobody at home. I like being at home by myself. My father finishes work at three and my mom finishes between four and five. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 22. I do the dishes, I sweep up and mop the floors in the house, I tidy up my room, I do the cooking and I wash my clothes. My sister has to tidy up her toys, and sometimes she wants to help me wash the dishes. I don't let her, because if she breaks something I get the blame. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 23. My parents are very strict. I'm not allowed to do all the things I want to do. I'm not allowed to smoke or drink beer, I can't go out on the street by myself and I can't stay out late. I have to be home before it gets dark. I can only stay out later if my mother knows where I am and I get a lift home. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)

- 24. There are never any problems at home. I used to fight with my sister sometimes, but not anymore. We used to fight over the television, but now we have a rota. When I get home from school I first do my chores, then at around half past two I watch an hour or two of TV. Then I turn it off and go do something else. My sister can decide what she wants to watch in the evening. My parents had the idea of a rota. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 25. I live with my mother, my father and my brother. He was studying in Aruba, but he came back because he decided to take a year off and go to work. He'll be back studying next year because he has no choice. My parents won't let him stay longer than a year, so next year he will continue his studies. My parents really push us to do well at school. I'm counting down the days until I can go to the Netherlands. I'm going in 94 days! (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 26. My parents are strict. I think that most people are going to say the same. When are they strict about? Nearly everything. They are slightly less strict than a year ago because I'm older now. We are religious, so they are very strict. My parents are probably twice as strict as religious parents in other families. I'm allowed to go to friends' houses and sports games, but I'm absolutely forbidden to go to parties. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 27. I think that she isn't all that strict because she was a teenage mother. A lot of people wonder about it. But I do think that they wouldn't allow me to have a boyfriend. I have one anyway, but he's not allowed to come to my house. If I ask about it, I never get a proper answer. If I put all the things that she says together, I still can't understand why. It's as if they were pieces from different puzzles. My mom is complicated. I guess they don't like him because he has a different faith, and because he has strong opinions. My father doesn't like him because he is Catholic. He says that he was born a Catholic but that's as far as it goes. However, his mother is very religious. It's a bit weird that he isn't. We go to the same school, and I'm allowed to go to his house. Sometimes I tell my mom when I'm with him. I can't say too much because she doesn't approve. I don't have to say exactly where I go when I leave the house, and if I go straight after school she thinks I'm still at school. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 28. In our family the boys have more freedom than the girls. That means my brother is allowed to go to parties and gigs, and I'm not. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 29. I think that our culture on these islands makes it difficult for parents to educate their children about sex. (boy)
- 30. Mothers don't understand where their kids are talking about. Kids get information that has originated and developed in a very different context. Because of this, the experience of the kids often has no connection to the world and beliefs of their parents. (adolescent)
- 31. Children, boys in particular, are spoilt. (expert)
- 32. Parenting here is very often unbalanced, both at home and at school. (expert)
- 33. Many adults here are afraid of teenagers and there is a generation gap between them. Teens are treated as if they come from Mars. They are ignored. (expert)
- 34. If young people hear their teacher use foul language, they will also use it themselves with each other and adults. (expert)
- 35. Parents do love their children, but they don't show it. (expert)
- 36. We're talking about a new generation of children. The Internet and TV have shown them that harsh parenting isn't normal. (expert)
- 37. Because of the influence of TV and computers, young people are more likely to do things that they shouldn't. (expert)
- 38. We are at a stage where it is important that parents accept responsibility for their children. They need to realize what their job is. (expert)
- 39. Young people are often given the message that they aren't doing things well enough. (expert)
- 40. Young people must be given enough positive signals. (expert)
- 41. There's no trust at all between adults and children. (expert)

- 42. Young people are forced into total passivity. They are used to being punished if they seek attention. They never know when they are going to get attention and they feel unsafe. (expert)
- 43. Young people are routinely pushed aside here. (expert)
- 44. It's all about imitation. Parents have learned to use violence from their parents, and teach the same thing to their children. It's a perpetual vicious circle. (expert)
- 45. We try to encourage parents to be positive role models. (expert)
- 46. If you want to change the behavior of young people, you must first change the behavior of adults. (expert)
- 47. Young people here are not taught to be independent or find things out for themselves. Everything is explained to them. This results in young people being kept stupid and dependent. (expert)
- 48. A lot of young people have too much freedom and no boundaries. That doesn't help young people to develop into responsible adults. (expert)
- 49. We are currently aware of cases of middle-aged women who pick up 12 or 13-year-old boys from school in order to have sex. The parents don't protect their sons because the general attitude is that boys can stand up for themselves, and maybe they want to do it anyway. (expert)
- 50. Parenting here is in line with the Caribbean style: little correction, few limits, excessive violence. (expert)
- 51. Parents raise their children with commands. The gap between parents and young people is bridged with yelling. There is a lot of aggressive language. Nothing is asked, everything is ordered. (expert)
- 52. On the islands formal respect is ingrained, such as greeting somebody politely. The truth is hidden behind, and is not respectful. (expert)
- 53. The concept of bringing up children is unknown here. Funnily enough, programs like The Nanny are popular and people do learn from them. (expert)
- 54. Most of the boys are brought up very one-dimensionally here. Self-development is not part of the upbringing. (expert)
- 55. Young people, and parents for that matter, live from day to day. They're not happy but don't know why or what they can do about it. (expert)
- 56. Nobody listens to what young people think is important in their lives. Parents never give them time or attention. (expert)
- 57. Parents are strict here, but they should also encourage the young people to say what they want. (expert)
- 58. At the moment there are a lot of problems at home and I don't get enough attention. My parents are hardly ever at home. Since the beginning of this year, there have been a lot of problems. I try to distance myself from my parents and concentrate on school. My parents' problems influence me deeply. My sister doesn't live here, but her daughter does. She became a mother at a young age and went to Aruba to study. Her kid lives with us, and if my parents are not around I have to take care of her. I have to look after a child when I should just be concentrating on school. My sister is 24. I hope she comes back soon because she's almost finished her course. Maybe she'll come and get her daughter and they'll go and live in Aruba. She left when her daughter was two. Since that time, we've been looking after her. I'm more like her big sister than her aunt. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 59. My father sometimes works extra hours in the afternoon extra and my mom just goes over to a friend of hers. She comes late back and then goes away again, or she falls asleep. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 60. The last few weeks I have been cooking for myself because there's no one home. Last week, my mother cooked for me. I don't really like cooking. I often ask my mom to get a takeaway for me, but she never does so I end up cooking anyway. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)

- 61. The situation at home is often bad. Addicted mom, no close family ties, moms with two jobs.

  Nobody looks after the children after school. Children roam the streets until someone comes home.

  (expert)
- 62. There are a lot of single mothers here who are rushed off their feet. (expert)
- 63. Young people are simply too important. You have to make time for them. Everyone has to work hard, but you must consciously dedicate your spare time to your child. (expert)
- 64. Some mothers who work away from home don't give their children their full attention when they are actually at home because they are doing other things. (expert)
- 65. There is less time for children. Young people are raised by the TV. (expert)
- 66. Many young people who have committed a criminal offense here do not even know why they did it. They have no motive. I think it is often boredom. The majority of the young people get into trouble because they want to get attention. This applies to 75% of young people. (expert)
- 67. There are too many kids roaming around unsupervised, including after school. (expert)
- 68. Only a few kids really have a normal environment at home. The other kids go to their houses, but they can't be classified as homes. (expert)
- 69. All young people are permanently in survival mode. (expert)
- 70. Many young people have to bring themselves up. (expert)
- 71. Many single mothers have children by different fathers. They have to work a lot which means that their children are left alone. These kids roam the streets. (expert)
- 72. It is obvious which kids come from homes where the mothers are often at home. Their children get enough attention at home so don't have to act weirdly to get attention. (expert)
- 73. Parents often don't know where their children are hanging out, even if they're still very young. They're still wandering around outside after 10 in the evening. (expert)
- 74. Parents are there for their children, but not enough. (expert)
- 75. Many parents work long hours, sometimes they have two or three jobs. As a result, the time they have left over for their children is insufficient. (expert)
- 76. Quality time with the family? None at all! (expert)
- 77. Parenting is inadequate. There is no sense of family. (expert)
- 78. Both parents and single mothers work a lot. Their children are often home alone. They develop their own lifestyle. (expert)
- 79. Many young people are independent and mature quickly, but miss out on childhood. As a result, they are not really mature. (expert)
- 80. Young people hang out late on the street. Their parents get home from work late. (expert)
- 81. Small children aren't safe at home. Parental supervision is inadequate. (expert)
- 82. Young people crave for any kind of positive attention from adults. (expert)
- 83. Even young children are willing to do anything as long as they get attention. (expert)
- 84. Parents here often have multiple jobs and are never at home. (expert)
- 85. Parents here do anything to get away from their kids. Kids are dropped off all over the place and picked up too late. (expert)
- 86. Kids were even dropped off at the library by parents. Now there's a sign limiting the age of unsupervised kids. Those little children caused a lot of damage when their parents weren't around. (expert)

- 87. The island and its residents have a strong tendency to neglect young people. (expert)
- 88. Parents should be there more for their children. (expert)
- 89. Now children try to get attention from others. They do this in a negative way because they don't get any attention at home when they ask for it. (expert)
- 90. Often they don't have any father at home, and mom is working all day of course. When she gets home, she's tired. (boy)
- 91. Kids spend a lot of time with each other without adult supervision. (boy)
- 92. The islands need a social structure. At the moment, there isn't one. (expert)
- 93. Since many children have difficult circumstances at home, with lots of parents constantly working and nobody to look after the children, it is important that children feel safe at school, at after-school care, at sports associations, in playgrounds, and so on. Creating safe places requires extra attention. (expert)
- 94. It is difficult to raise your kids properly if you have to work so hard. People become frustrated quickly. (expert)
- 95. The family used to help when bonds were tighter. These days, people are more self-centered. (expert)
- 96. After-school activities are badly needed because there are a lot of youths just hanging around. (expert)
- 97. You have to sympathize with the situation that working parents are in. They and their children should be helped by organizing more activities for young people. (expert)
- 98. A lot of problems are caused by the economic situation. Parents have three jobs. There is no supervision. There are no grandfathers and grandmothers to look after the kids, and even the school provides no support. (expert)
- 99. Other building blocks are needed besides the nuclear family because it is unable to offer anything much for children. (expert)
- 100. The general view on the islands is that control at home often fails and that there are little or no after-school activities for children and young people. (expert)
- 101. Many parents have two or three jobs and are not at home. Children grow up in front of the TV. If something was organized outside school, they'd all rush there. This used to be done by the community center, but it didn't work out because the people that worked in after-school care were the same people that gave lessons. (expert)
- 102. I work shifts and I am very tired when I get home. (mother, St. Eustatius)
- 103. After work you need to offer a sympathetic ear or help with homework, all this at the end of a long working day. (mother, St. Eustatius)
- 104. We've often talked about the problems at home. I've told them that I don't want to know about their problems and that they should let me concentrate on school. I'm repeating senior general secondary education grade 11 this year, and I can't afford to fail again. Things went well for a couple of hours but then they started fighting again, with me stuck in the middle. They always want me to take sides. If I don't pick a side, I get to hear that they're not going to do anything else for me. My mom wants a divorce. She's always talking about things that happened in the past and says that she can't cope anymore. Then my dad confronts my mom with all the things he has heard on the street, because my mom tells stuff on the street and he gets to hear it. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 105. You don't hear about kids being beaten, but it does happen. Last year a case came to light involving two girls who were mistreated for a time by their father. One of the girls said something through which people found out what was happening. Their father is now in jail. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)

- 106. There amount of child abuse on the island isn't too bad. I think that yelling at children is just part of the culture on the island. Kids grow up in an atmosphere of physical discipline. If we do something that isn't allowed, we get a slap. In some families it goes beyond physical discipline, but those parents aren't fit to be parents. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 107. I grew up with physical discipline. I'm not going to do the same with my children. I often said to my mom that people used to live in caves a long time ago. They used to communicate by hitting each other. Since we can communicate with each other and I'm an intelligent being, I would have thought it reasonable to assume that we could talk to each other. She tried to carry on doing the same, but I'm bigger so she can't always get away with it. Usually she gives me a shove to make me do what she wants, but if I do eventually do it, I just complain the whole time. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 108. I sometimes see parents hitting their children. I think it's wrong. When I was little I got hit from time to time, but not anymore. I'd never hit my children. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 109. I don't live with other people so I don't know what goes on in their homes. My friends don't get hit. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 110. If my mom is mad at me, I get a slap. I don't know what I think about it or if I deserve it. Sometimes I think that I don't deserve it. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 111. I was hit at home when I was little. I thank her for that now. I see lots of parents who don't care about their children and then the children go off the rails. I wasn't hit very often. I didn't like being hurt, so if I got hit for doing something I stopped doing it. My mother hit me. My father has never hit me. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 112. It depends on your family. If you come from a respectable family, you go to church. The children in these families are often hit if they misbehave. If they don't cry, they just keep getting hit until they cry. If they cry, they carry on getting hit and then people say, "I'll give you a reason to cry." That is the way they treat the children how to behave. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 113. It is not always abuse or maltreatment if parents hit their kids. I've often experienced it myself and see it more as innocent corrective action. (adolescent)
- 114. Correcting children by beating them is part of the culture, except when hitting takes extreme forms and the child has visible injuries to the face, for example. (adolescent)
- 115. Kids don't get much attention from their parents. They see their father beating their mom and copy that sort of behavior. (adolescent)
- 116. The father beats the mom. If you see that as a boy, you think that it is the right thing to do because your father does it. (adolescent)
- 117. If sexual abuse occurs, it isn't given any publicity, partly because the whole island would become aware of it immediately because there are so few residents. Children are afraid of this and therefore a child who is a victim will avoid making it known. (adolescent)
- 118. There isn't a helpline for reporting abuse like there is in the Netherlands. (adolescent)
- 119. If someone is the victim of abuse or maltreatment, a lot will be done to keep it hidden. (boy)
- 120. The biggest problems on the islands are poverty, sexual abuse, incest, child abuse, teenage pregnancies and single-parent families. If you ask for help, the whole island finds out about it immediately. Everyone knows that abuse is taking place, but nobody does anything about it. (expert)
- 121. Child abuse is now being reported, which is a step in the right direction. (expert)
- 122. It is difficult to raise awareness of child abuse. Parents become angry. It is taboo. (expert)
- 123. Child abuse, both verbal and physical, is a major problem. You are going to open a can of worms! (expert)
- 124. You can't just assume that the situation on St. Eustatius or Saba is the same as on Bonaire. I would like to see their caseloads and find out about the issues they are confronted with. Is it also related to poverty? We need to make policy in the field of child protection, so we need to know about it. I

- really hope that in the years that I can still do this, people will listen. Then there will be hope that children really do get protection. (expert)
- 125. As mentioned in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is important that child abuse is defined and that everyone is made aware of it. Public awareness about parenting without violence and what is meant by child abuse is crucially important. The fact that parents are models is therefore a central issue. It focuses on the importance of making people sensitive to personal values, which is applicable to both parents and children. An essential part of this is that children possess social skills and learn to set their own limits, especially in situations outside of their comfort zone. In a wider perspective this involves identity, development, integrity and values. It requires a paradigm shift, with the focus not on failure but on strengths. (expert)
- 126. In order to properly respond to the issues surrounding the tackling of child abuse, it is important that a baseline measurement is carried out on the source and scope. Subsequently, targets and performance indicators can be formulated and the impact of policy and implementation can be measured. This gives feedback on the impact of all the interventions and allows us to understand if the right things are being done. (expert)
- 127. Two issues are explicitly mentioned:
  - \* The parent support and parenting courses for prospective parents and parents who have just had a child. Parents learn how to deal with children in the context of positive parenting.
  - \* Help to offenders. Teach offenders to deal with their children in a different way. (expert)
- 128. The national government and the island government should formulate core objectives in the context of addressing child abuse. These could then serve as frameworks for addressing child abuse and would also reflect the social and guiding responsibility of the government. (expert)
- 129. In cases dealing with child abuse, a larger number of professionals will always be involved. These cases must always be handled by more than one person. This means not only that responsibility should be shared, but that working agreements must be made to make this possible. In the context of improving quality, feedback plays a central role. This means feedback on both your own and others' performance. Learning together is central to all this, because every case dealing with child abuse presents new challenges, not only on an individual level, but also in terms of joint cooperation. (expert)
- 130. Designation of an official in each organization or institution helps maintain child abuse on the radar within the institution or organization, and also helps to keep understanding of treatment methods up to date. The designated person can provide advice, coaching and expertise, even in cases of child abuse where they are not directly involved. (expert)
- 131. Awareness in all areas related to parenting, as well as child abuse and what to do about it, is an important prerequisite in reducing the number of cases of child abuse. To achieve these ends, here are a number of suggestions:
  - \* Initiate campaigns about positive parenting, parenting without violence and child abuse;
  - \* Promote theatre performances (in Papiamento) in local neighborhoods in order to address issues such as parenting and child abuse;
  - \* Use the media: radio, television, leaflets, posters and internet to provide information on parenting:
  - \* Provide structured information about abuse and criminal liability;
  - \* Provide information about helping offenders. (expert)
- 132. There's a lot of domestic violence on Statia, but it generally concerns only the parents. In the event of domestic violence, we as police determine whether children are involved. (expert)
- 133. Child abuse is rarely reported to the police, as far as I know. (expert)
- 134. After primary school, there are two levels of transition class on Statia. In the 'better' transition class there are 22 pupils. Of these, only three are not routinely insulted, beaten or otherwise humiliated at home. (expert)
- 135. The pedagogical advice that is given to young people in the home: hitting is OK! (expert)
- 136. Hitting is a habit on this island. (expert)
- 137. Sometimes I go to the Methodist church. After the service, kids get beaten outside. (expert)

- 138. Curiosity gets beaten out of everybody, both young people and adults. (expert)
- 139. There's a total lack of parenting at home. Until the age of three, kids get spoilt at home. After that, they get yelled at and beaten if they misbehave, and educated by the street. 80% of the kids at school come from broken families. (expert)
- 140. Many young people are violent and aggressive. This is a direct consequence of the way they are corrected at home. Young people are encouraged to hit out and hit back. (expert)
- 141. A lot of violence is used in bringing up children. (expert)
- 142. Children here are already aggressive at a young age. Four-year-old boys. It's in the culture. (expert)
- 143. Parents are aggressive. They don't know how to talk with a child. Parents use violence, both verbal and physical. It's a disease, and should be diagnosed as a disease. (expert)
- 144. We try to inform people via the radio and TV that they should bring up their children without violence. (expert)
- 145. Teenagers should be given parenting advice to break this cycle of violence. (expert)
- 146. I now work as a teacher at school, and it took me a year to reduce the levels of shouting. Parents shout at their kids on the street. (expert)
- 147. Parenting on this island is a tricky subject. Disciplining children here is seen as hitting and using aggression. This promotes aggressiveness in children, both physical and verbal. (expert)
- 148. There is not only a lot of domestic violence, there are no safe houses for mothers and children. (expert)
- 149. There used to be an anonymous hotline for Statia and Bonaire which young people could use to report mistreatment, abused or other violence, but it no longer exists. (expert)
- 150. There should be something to offer safety and support to mothers and young people: a safe house and counseling. (expert)
- 151. How children grow up at home can be a great cause for concern. There is a lot of physical violence in the home. (expert)
- 152. Using violence to bring children up has been going on for so many generations that it is considered normal. The situation with teen pregnancies is the same. (expert)
- 153. The way parents deal with their children here is unusual to say the least. They have very short fuses. There's a lot of physical and verbal violence. (expert)
- 154. We are carrying out projects with sixty families at the moment, dealing mainly with parenting support. There are lots of young people with behavioral problems, and there's a very clear link between these problems and child abuse. It's like the Netherlands in the 1950s in terms of bringing up children. There's a lot of shouting, and after a child misbehaves just once, a beating is dealt out. (expert)
- 155. We are dealing with an incest case in which two girls were abused by their father over a long period of time. It's only later that bystanders speak out. Everything is hidden, and it's difficult to get this sort of thing out into the open. (expert)
- 156. There are many young people with aggression problems. (expert)
- 157. There are many circumstances on the islands that increase the risk of child maltreatment, such as poverty, multiple jobs, strict parenting habits, model behavior of parents and young parents. These circumstances do not legitimize child abuse, but do make it clear that the risk of child abuse is higher. (expert)
- 158. My grandma lives near to Mega D and she looks after my little brother. I see my father now and then, usually at weekends. I like seeing him. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 159. I live with my mother, my stepfather and my two brothers. I have two brothers, but they are both studying in Florida. One is 20 and the other was 19 today. My little brother is 4 and my other

- brother, who still lives here, is 18. My 18-year-old brother might go to America this year as well, if he passes his exams. My real father lives in Santo Domingo. Sometimes I go and see him during school holidays. He likes seeing me during holidays. In December, during the school holidays, I'm going with my mother. She has a lot of family there and will be able to see them. My stepfather is sweet. I think he was born in Saint Kitts. He knows a lot about Statia. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 160. I've got two brothers and seven sisters. I live with one of my brothers, he's three. He likes to fight. I live alone with my mom. My father lives on the island, and we have some contact. I was born here. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 161. My mother was a mother and a father. (expert)
- 162. There are a lot of broken families. There is seldom a father figure present. Fathers are invisible to young people. If there is a father present, he is the disciplinarian. (expert)
- 163. Mothers are forced to fulfill the role of the father, which isn't good at all. Young people only come into contact with mothers, whether it be at home, at school or on the street. (expert)
- 164. I don't know what children's right are, but I do know that there are laws to protect kids against abuse. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 165. Major concerns in the context of addressing child abuse are the poverty that exists in different areas on the islands and the lack of affordable rental housing. Both factors have a direct impact on well-being and simultaneously cause a lot of stress within families. It is necessary from a policy perspective to look at this seriously, especially since it has a direct impact on how children are treated in a negative way. We need to establish some concrete facts: we can only understand what is happening by measuring things, and we must ensure through assessment that the implementation of policy can be followed. (expert)
- 166. We have a breakfast project here at the school where children can get a healthy breakfast. It's something that can be lacking home at home. (expert)
- 167. There's now a semi-sponsored school feeding program. It's for children who are sent to school without food or proper clothes. (expert)
- 168. What if the mother says that she approves of her 13-year-old daughter having sex with a 26-year-old man who supports the mother financially? (expert)
- 169. There are seven of us. There are five girls and my parents. I'm the only boy. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 170. I live with my mother. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 171. I've got a younger brother and a younger sister. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 172. The house is nice. There are two bedrooms, one bathroom, a living room and a kitchen. I sleep alone with my brother. My sister doesn't live here, she lives in Santo Domingo where she was born. She lives with her mother. I've never been there. With luck, I'll be going there this summer. She's two years old. I've seen a few pictures of her. I like sleeping with my brother because we stay up late at night. Then we play games like volleyball. He never cries at night. He gets up at 5 and my mom makes tea for him. Then he goes back to sleep until about 6, after which my mom helps him to take a shower. I often help him to get dressed and give him food. My brother makes me happy so I don't need to be alone. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 173. I'm not always alone with my niece. I've got a job now, so my niece stays with my mom in the evening. Sometimes she goes with my mom to see my mom's friend. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 174. My mother is from Statia, so almost everyone is related to me. My father was born in Curacao, but he has got family here. I don't even realize that some people are related to me, in fact everybody is related to each other. As a result, there's quite a lot of incest here. It's voluntary. They do have a choice, but they choose someone who's in the family. I think it's dirty, but the people here just accept it. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 175. I live with my father and my mother. I've got a 21-year-old sister who is currently in the Netherlands studying. I've also got three brothers, one is 16, one was 5 today and the other will be six at the end of April. Two of my brothers live with us, the other lives with my grandma. That is the son of my

- father. He also lives with us, but sometimes he stays with my grandma. Every day after school, I go to see my grandma. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 176. My parents are divorced. There are three of us, me, my sister and my brother. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 177. I live with my mother, my grandma, my grandma's sister and my younger sister. My father lives in Curacao and I'm going to go and live with him in 94 days. I don't really get on that well with him. I don't need a relationship with him. All I need is a room, food and the opportunity to go to school. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 178. I've got five brothers and one sister. I live alone with my little brother. My sister is very smart and my brothers love to tease me. My brothers live with their father. I often see them all. My father died when I was five years old. I have a stepfather. My mom is not married to him. My mom is very sweet and helpful. (girl, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 179. I live with my mother, my stepfather and my sister. My sister returned from the Netherlands. I've got some other brothers and sisters, but they live in Aruba where they are studying. They are studying at the university because they have completed secondary school here. They are 19, 20 and 24. My real father lives here on the island with my stepmother. I see him a lot because I often go to see my grandparents on my father's side. I also see him on the street. He works with young people in my neighborhood. The relationship with my stepfather is actually pretty good. There are no problems. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 180. I live with my grandparents. My mother lives in Santo Domingo, and my father lives in Italy. I hardly ever see my father, and see my mom maybe once or twice a year. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 181. I've got one sister and two brothers. Only my sister lives with us. She's fourteen. My brothers live in Santo Domingo with my mother. I get on well with my sister. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 182. My mother works in the late afternoon because they deliver bread, and in the evening she transports people backwards and forwards. I see my mother and my stepfather in the afternoon. He works until 4, so when he gets home my mom has to leave. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 183. I haven't got any sisters, but I have got a little brother. He's 5 years old, nearly 6. He goes to a different school. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 184. I live with my mother, my father and my two sisters. There are no other relatives living in the house. My relatives live on the island, but not in the same house. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 185. I've lived on Statia most of my life. I was born in Guyana and we moved here when I was four years old. I've still got family there. We never go back, but I'd like to. My grandparents all live in Guyana. My aunt moved here to work. She liked it here, and then my mom moved here with us. I don't regret that we moved here. I'm learning Dutch here. I sometimes think that it's a nuisance that my parents don't speak Dutch. I talk Dutch every now and then with my mom because she works for a Dutch employer. She does understand some things. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 186. I live with my mother, my father and my sister. My brother is studying in the Netherlands. He is 24. My sister is 15. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 187. My mother comes from Aruba. My father was born on Nevis, but he has lived here a long time. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 188. A large proportion of the parents are divorced or unmarried. There are a lot of brothers and sisters. (expert)
- 189. There is a big difference between the people of Saba and Statia. The indigenous population of Saba is half white and half black. The white half has traditionally had a higher level of education and development which increases the average level on the island. On Statia, almost the entire population has a low level of education and development. (expert)
- 190. There are currently many factors that put pressure on parenting:
  - \* Low income and neglect because parents have to work to generate income. Sometimes they need two or three jobs to earn enough money. Parents are tired and feel guilty because they are not there enough for their children and have little patience when they are.
  - \* Income support is low while food prices are high.
  - \* Many people have a low level of education and therefore limited employment opportunities.

- \* Parents and children with low IQs and learning problems are easily negatively influenced by those around them
- \* There are many single-parent families where the parenting responsibility lies with just one parent, as well as the responsibility for income. (expert)
- 191. There are a lot of young mothers, but in my opinion some 16 year olds are better able to be a mother than some 26-year-olds. If a 16 year old is able to look after herself and her baby and go to school, then she will be perfectly fine as a mother. There are 26-year-old girls who still live at home with their child, earn very little money every month and always want to go out. I think that they make worse mothers. I don't think most young mothers are irresponsible. Their mothers or someone else takes care of the children, and they can go out. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 192. I think that if there were more positive things to do, the number of teenage mothers would decrease. I think people have sex because they are bored. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 193. My mom was 16 when my sister was born, and 18 when my brother was born. They both have a different father, while my other brother and I have the same father. My sister was 12 when I was born. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 194. Teenage pregnancies are common on all the islands. (adolescent)
- 195. It's not rare for girls who are around 16 years old to already have a child. (adolescent)
- 196. Girls are tempted to sleep with boys that offer them beautiful things and promises of a rosy future. When the girl gets pregnant as a result, it is usually her mom who cares for the baby. (adolescent)
- 197. It can happen that when a young girl becomes pregnant, she is beaten by her parents because they don't know how to handle it. (adolescent)
- 198. Girls copy each other's behavior. They see lots of other pregnant girls at school and the 'cute' babies. (adolescent)
- 199. Poverty is another reason for girls to get pregnant. "We haven't got any money, they won't give me the money I need for new shoes or clothes. Then the guy says he can buy it for me, so I sleep with him." That's what happens. (adolescent)
- 200. St. Eustatius is a difficult island with seven churches, including the Seventh-day Adventists. As a result, there's nothing to do on Saturdays. The teenage pregnancy rate is highest here. There's a lot of incest. (expert)
- 201. There's a blurring of moral standards and moral decay among the youth. The young people are excessively obsessed with sex, while at the same time absolutely nothing is done to increase awareness, not even at home. There are too many teenage pregnancies on the island, including two current cases of a 12-year-old and a 13-year-old. Even the churches fail to get a grip on these young people and educate them with a few simple ethics. (expert)
- 202. Young people are very sexually precocious. They don't bother with kissing, they go straight to intercourse. (expert)
- 203. A class of 12 and 13 year olds was asked about who had already kissed somebody and who had already had sex. Three children had already kissed. The whole class, except for three pupils, had already gone to bed with someone. (expert)
- Talk about sex is not permitted. Lots of girls are pregnant. Nobody has a steady boyfriend. Everyone does it. (expert)
- 205. The children who have had sex are still very much children. (expert)
- 206. Even when young girls become pregnant and have a baby, they remain very childish. They are irresponsible, and not independent. If they get pregnant at 16 or 17 they continue to attend school and go out in the evening. Grandmothers and grandfathers look after the kids. (expert)
- 207. There's not enough sex education. (expert)
- 208. Young people could be given condoms, but they don't need condoms because they don't have sex. That's how taboo it is. (expert)

- 209. Better information needs to be provided. Preferably no sex at all when you're young as you need to focus on school. But if you going to have sex anyway, be safe. (expert)
- 210. This island is much too small to buy condoms. Everyone would know about it immediately. (expert)
- 211. Condom vending machines should be put in restrooms at restaurants, or condoms should be directly handed out to young people. However, there is a lot of resistance because of religious beliefs. The churches are absolutely against it. (expert)
- 212. There are a lot of teenage pregnancies. One of the reasons is that many parents were themselves teenage parents. It's a vicious circle. (expert)
- 213. Society, on the island, is focused on sex. (expert)
- 214. The grandparents are often the ones who look after a teenage mother's baby. The mother has to go to school to learn or has to work. It's not a good educational situation when a baby has to grow up with older people with old-fashioned ideas on parenting. (expert)
- 215. Teenage mothers are a big problem here. Grandparents take over, and a lot of young children grow up with their grandparents. It's very difficult for children to continually switch from mother to grandparents with different parenting styles. There is a noticeable generation gap with older grandparents. (expert)
- 216. About two years ago there was a spike in teen pregnancies here. (expert)
- 217. Currently there are fewer teenage pregnancies, but young people still have unprotected sex. (expert)
- 218. There are a lot of teenage pregnancies. (child, St. Eustatius)
- 219. There are only one or two people with whom I can talk about my problems. But the whole island actually knows what's going on, so people keep coming to me to tell me that they know how I feel and that I'll survive. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 220. The concept of faith is very important on the island, but faith itself isn't. To truly believe in something you have to learn about the faith and live in accordance with the faith. The concept as they know it here is that you must believe in something and you have to pray to God. Most people do this once a year, when they need Him. They don't spend any time on it during the rest of the year. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 221. I've got enough privacy at home. On Statia you are always surrounded by family. My cousins live next to me so they always know what I'm up to. If you want to do anything without anyone knowing, you have to really think hard about how you're going to get it done. Sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad. If you have serious problems, then they can try to help you. But sometimes there are things you want to keep for yourself, and then you suddenly hear about in on the street. That's never happened to me. As long as it's alright by my mother, I really don't care what anybody else thinks about it. I always ask my mother about everything. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 222. I would certainly go to my mother for help if anyone threatened me or if I felt threatened. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 223. I only go to church on Sunday when there's Mass for young people. We learn about God and why Jesus died for us. I go every Sunday and I don't want to be late. It's from 10 to 11. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 224. I think there is a big gap between those who have made it and stay away from this place, and the kids who stay behind. (adolescent)
- 225. All the problems typical of developing countries can be found on the islands. In addition, there are the problems typical of small islands. The people are almost all related to each other or know each other. It's like being under a microscope. (expert)
- 226. People have a huge inferiority complex compared to white people. This manifests itself in various ways, such as submissiveness or arrogance. (expert)

- 227. There is a collective sense of inferiority, which begins with education and school. Low self-esteem is passed on. (expert)
- 228. In addition, you always have to carry out your work professionally. This is because you're on an island and it's a relatively small community. You're never anonymous. This aggravates matters, especially if your work as a professional is in the field of child abuse. Work supervision, peer review and supervision in terms of feedback on your performance and non-anonymity when handling child abuse are prerequisites for the well-being of professionals. (expert)
- 229. There's embarrassment. People are not inclined to seek out help with bringing up children. (expert)
- 230. Some churches do try to help with bringing up children. (expert)
- 231. It's a small island. Children watch a lot of TV. There's not much to do. The TV sometimes influences people negatively and there's nothing to counteract it. (expert)
- 232. Young people cannot clear distinguish between right and wrong here. They sometimes let themselves be negatively influenced without anybody noticing. (expert)
- 233. Sometimes people are afraid of interfering with somebody else's child. It doesn't just affect me, but everyone on the island. We all know each other. (expert)
- 234. A lot of young people think that what happens in other countries is very appealing. They want what they see on TV, whether it's good or bad. (expert)
- 235. The situation regarding children's rights in generally worse on Statia than on Saba. On Saba everything is more organized, more under control and neater. That includes parenting. (expert)
- 236. People on this island are very negative about each other. Families have internal problems. There's a lot of gossip. (expert)
- 237. Sometimes faith can be a source of problems on the island. (expert)
- 238. Faith on Statia is the source of highly compartmentalized thinking. We work well together when we have to, but in other areas we fail. (expert)
- 239. Many teenagers suffer from depression. 90 % of young people lie in bed watching TV in the summer. There's nothing to do here, and young people have no perspective. It's a small community, and young people quickly conform to the group mentality. They'll do anything to be part of the group, even if it's at the expense of others, as long as they don't become the victims of harassment themselves. Sudden exclusion from the group is always a threat. Children are often raised by their grandparents, typically because the parents have left the island to find work. Grandparents often follow old fashioned methods of bringing up children and have to work as well. (expert)
- 240. Some things remain hidden. It should be brought out into the open if young people are hungry or abused. (expert)
- 241. More attention should be given to parents for carrying out certain things. (adolescent)
- 242. People don't really like going into the Youth and Family Center (CJG) because there's a possibility that somebody might see them there and gossip about it with others. (adolescent)
- 243. Professionals are expected to be reliable and to guard privacy. Building trust among the population is essential in order to provide good care and to respond to the needs of parents and children. In this, good conversation skills are also helpful, especially in cases of child abuse. Training and employment guidance play an important role. In addition, reporting and reporting obligations, especially in cases of child abuse, are crucial. (expert)
- 244. Many professionals have tough job responsibilities. A lot has to happen and a lot has to be done. It is important when dealing with child abuse to realize that the most important thing is not always doing more (more work, more reporting, more consultation), but doing things differently (organize it better). Keep it simple: no bureaucracy. (expert)
- 245. Make a difference by working together, getting together, respecting the methods of working you have agreed with each other, and securing this method (plan, do, check, act). This is also true at the institutional and organizational level: make agreements and write them down. However, you can

- also exploit the small scale: you can contact people directly and you can literally take the client by the hand and walk to the other organization. (expert)
- 246. A safety plan must always be made in situations where the safety of children is at stake. These plans include arrangements with parents and children, and possibly other adults in the family who play a play a role in ensuring and monitoring safety. (expert)
- 247. Every report about child abuse must be taken seriously, wherever it is made. Making sure that the message is well received and handled appropriately, quickly and professionally is a prerequisite in tackling child abuse promptly. (expert)
- 248. Rouvoet's program 'All opportunities for all children' (Alle kansen voor alle kinderen) intended to place prevention and guidance in a framework. We wanted this program with common indicators to focus on the practice, the outcome and the welfare of children in practice. There were also other objectives, such as how to establish a Youth and Family Center. Such a center is a means to an end. It is also the model, to a certain extent, which I was hoping to implement when I came here. At that time I made a plan for all the islands. (expert)
- 249. Prevention is important. Parents are primarily responsible. Parents need to be helped and a child should not be taken away from its home hastily. (expert)
- 250. As far as Youth Care is concerned, we didn't start by setting up a shelter but by deploying social workers to help families. We recruited five outpatient care workers and a behavioral scientist. We also did this on the Windward Islands, where we recruited three and two care workers, as well as a behavioral scientist and a child and adolescent psychiatrist. In fact, the structure in the three islands was the same. We also wanted a Youth and Family Center on all three islands, an easily accessible center where everyone could go and where both parenting support and health care is provided. (expert)
- 251. We had a four block model. Two preventive blocks and two curative blocks. The establishment of the Youth and Family Center and more positive opportunities for leisure activities are the two preventive blocks. The establishment of Youth Care and strengthening the protection of children through the Family Guardianship and the Guardianship Board are the two curative blocks. There wasn't really any youth care on the islands. There was a dilapidated shelter but it was subject to a lot of criticism, so we wanted to do things differently. The overall framework for this four block model was collaboration with education, justice and social affairs. We also wanted to introduce a methodology, a common language, which has become the Triple P method. That is what the three islands wanted, and they had already heard about it. (expert)
- 252. Triple P is now starting to take effect. (expert)
- 253. As a parent, you must accept that you have to do things differently if you want to help young people. (expert)
- 254. We, the citizens of Statia, must talk more about parenting and cooperation. (expert)
- 255. Young people need role models. (expert)
- 256. We need more good role models to motivate young people. Athletes or teachers who can positively influence young people. (expert)
- 257. The appeals made by reggae artists to young people are very effective. 'Behave yourself!' It reaches young people and it works. (expert)
- 258. Ismael Berkel, the motivating force behind the Seventh-day Adventist School, thinks that it's the fault of the United Nations that things aren't going well for children. He thinks that the problems have been caused by giving the children rights. Young people can now come into conflict with their parents because of that Convention on the Rights of the Child and no longer respect them. (expert)
- 259. Here on Statia, systems are not integrated. Not only is there no cooperation, they are incapable of cooperation. People are passive. (expert)
- 260. There isn't much money for initiatives. We can carry out radio and TV campaigns, but nothing structural. (expert)
- 261. If you organize something fun for children, the parents will come. Sometimes it's impossible to get parents to cooperate. (expert)

- 262. There are a lot of parents who don't like going to the CJG. It's partly because of the name, Youth and Family Center, and the rationality behind it, and partly because it's something from the 'Dutch people'. (expert)
- 263. There's a great need for care for children and young people. For example, there are many young people who are abused or misused and never helped. (expert)
- 264. Many young people don't know they have rights. (expert)
- 265. If a child urgently needs help, and the parent is an obstacle or no help is available, then the child will cause problems at school. (expert)
- 266. What if a child needs help and the mother prohibits it, or denies that it is necessary? (expert)
- 267. The problem of inadequate care and the social structure that is necessary to organize good care is heavily underestimated in the Netherlands. (expert)
- 268. Social services and an IB student handle the care, but if it is beyond their scope a student from the Center of Excellence (ECE) is involved. If the problems are associated with the family situation, then the Youth and Family Center is also involved. (expert)
- 269. Schools have been allocated 'active parenting' courses and must now implement them by themselves. That is still not running smoothly. (expert)
- 270. There is no organization you can turn to for support if you want to do about something child abuse on the island. Not only because of a lack of expertise, but also because of the fact that it is a whole process. Staff must act professionally and detach themselves from their own beliefs and experiences within this small community. (expert)
- 271. We are dealing with issues here that are really serious from a Dutch point of view. Even though the problems are very serious, you have to proceed with respect and restraint. (expert)
- 272. It's important to take things one step at a time and not to react to every incident, otherwise you lose all support. You have to respect what people on the island are used to. (expert)
- 273. If Dutch standards were applied, a lot of kids would be put into foster care. (expert)
- 274. Young people here don't realize what they are missing, and how different things could be. The same applies to the parents. (expert)
- 275. When the Youth and Family Center provides assistance, the cooperation with parents and young people is often very difficult. (expert)
- 276. It is very difficult to get things done. For example, there is a girl who has just been made the subject of an OTS (supervision order) because things were going very badly at home. We have managed to make some progress with the girl, but the situation at home hasn't changed. We have had discussions with the parents, but it would be best to put the girl into foster care. (expert)
- 277. It is very important to use methods that work here, and not just impose Dutch methods. (expert)
- 278. The quality of the communication with social carers is critical. More important than the method that is used. (expert)
- 279. Strengthening young people's identities has a high priority here. (expert)
- 280. We provide guidance to a very high number of pupils of the Gwendoline van Putten School. There are two hundred and fifty students at the school, and at least one hundred students are classified as pupils in need of extra support. In addition, there are concerns over many of the other pupils. (expert)
- 281. Young people would rather request help from people from the Netherlands than from people from St. Eustatius. (expert)
- 282. Young people have a need to make their requests for assistance to people from outside the island. Those on the island are family, neighbors or acquaintances, which can be threatening. (expert)

- 283. The Netherlands is currently giving a lot of priority to the subject of child abuse. We were supposed to carry out a campaign the Dutch way, but it is first necessary to look at how that should be implemented here. We are going to hold a conference on this issue. (expert)
- 284. If you want to address child abuse, you have to support the organizations on the island. That is what we at the Youth and Family Center are doing. We provide feedback to the school social worker at the Gwendoline van Putten school. (expert)
- 285. Many people work here without consulting others, and in these cases coaching can be positive, such as in tackling child abuse. (expert)
- 286. Everyone on Statia works on a relational level. Are you nice? If you are, everything's fine and I'm prepared to help you, but if you aren't, I won't help you, not even if it concerns your child. (expert)
- 287. We at the Youth and Family Center aren't trying to determine truths. 'Have no opinions' is what I teach my staff. (expert)
- 288. If you opened this Pandora's Box, all the bad stuff would come out. Then you'd really need a lot of decent, solid people. People with expertise and respect for the way things are here. (expert)
- 289. Begin on the islands with extra care staff. Get it up and running and then try to reduce the misery. Don't cry out first that things must change, without extra manpower. It is pointless flying people in for a short period and then leaving stuff to its fate once again. (expert)
- 290. Children's rights are often seen here as a threat and a one-way street. The prevailing idea is that young people are even more annoying when you give them rights. (expert)
- 291. There's a need for a place that is accessible for young people. In other words, centrally located but offering privacy. (expert)
- 292. There is an instruction book or manual for most things. But not for parenting, you have to figure that out all by yourself. (mother, St. Eustatius)
- 293. Single mothers should not be ashamed to ask for help. (mother, St. Eustatius)

### Education

- 294. I go to school at ten minutes to seven. That gives me time to prepare for any tests or play with friends who also arrive early. I go early because my mother has to leave at that time. It takes about five minutes to get to school. Usually I get a lift in the car, but sometimes I walk. My mother has got her own car. Usually she gives me a lift because she works near to the school. School starts at half past seven. We finish at half past twelve, except on Mondays and Wednesdays, when we have school in the afternoon and don't finish until three. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 295. We have to bring stuff for school from home. If you've got your own pens and pencils, you don't have to continually ask if you can borrow them from other people (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 296. We are given textbooks by the school, but we have to buy any other things ourselves. I buy them myself with the money my mom gives me, or she gets them in St. Maarten. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 297. I go to the Bethel Methodist School. School starts at half past seven and we have lessons until half past twelve, except on Fridays when we finish at noon. My mom takes me to school, and I leave home at seven. If I go to my grandma's house after school, I walk because she lives nearby. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 298. We have to buy school supplies ourselves. My mom buys the stuff for me. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 299. I go to the Gwendoline van Putten School. I walk there or go with my neighbor. If I want to stand in the bus, that's another option. I walk very quickly, so it takes about ten minutes. School starts at twenty five minutes past seven. The first bell rings at twenty five minutes past seven, and lessons actually begin at half past seven. I leave home at different times. Sometimes I go to my godmother's house nearby, in which case I walk to school at around seven. If I go with my neighbor, we leave at a quarter past seven. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)

- 300. Sometimes I get to school a bit late. I used to take the bus but my mom bought a car, so now I get a lift. School is going well. I have a couple of problems, but everything else is fine. I have trouble with math, but I am good in Dutch. I want to study in the Netherlands. (girl, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 301. I go to the Gwendoline van Putten School. It's two or three minutes by car. The classes end at very different times. The latest we finish is three, but sometimes there are free periods and then we finish earlier. Today I have to stay until three o'clock, but yesterday I finished at ten past two. In the free periods we just sit around or go and sit in a classroom. Sometimes I go home. My grandma lives nearby, so I can easily go over to her house. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 302. We get textbooks and workbooks from school. We have to buy exercise books, pencils and pens ourselves. If we have to fill in questionnaires, we get given special pens. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 303. I walk to school or take the bus. It's about a five-minute walk. It's very hot in the sun. After school I go home. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 304. We get textbooks from school, but if you damage a book you have to pay for it. We have to buy pencils, pens and exercise books ourselves. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 305. I leave home to go to school at seven o'clock. My mom gives us a lift to school in the car. I live a long way from school because my house is right near the airport. There's no bus in my neighborhood. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 306. We have to buy stuff for school ourselves. My stepfather buys it. My mom usually doesn't have time because she has to work and after work she goes walking. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 307. Usually someone gives me a lift to school or I walk to school. About twice a week I arrive late because I don't like getting up in the morning, or because I have to wait to use the bathroom. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 308. My parents give me a lift to school. After school I take the bus to my grandma's house. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 309. It takes five minutes to get from my house to school. Sometimes I walk and sometimes my parents give me a lift. On Monday I have lessons until a quarter to twelve, on Tuesdays until twenty past twelve, on Wednesday until ten past two, on Thursday until twenty past twelve and on Friday until half past twelve. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 310. We have to buy stuff for school ourselves. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 311. If I don't have a pen I can borrow one from the teacher, but we should really buy them ourselves. We always get books from the school. When we go on vacation in the summer, we always buy all the exercise books and pens because they are cheaper in other countries. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 312. The school board had a lot of influence. The school board on Saba was not compassionate. As on St. Eustatius, there was a lot of resistance from the school board that was affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventists. (expert)
- 313. That lot at the Catholic school board are a right bunch. They are unbelievable. You can't show any condoms or anything like that. Politics has been taken out of school. It used to be completely interwoven into the school. That was a disaster. The ones in power, the reds, they decided everything, and they decided school policy. That isn't the case in Bonaire anymore, unlike in Saba and Statia. A politician can go there and tell them what to do. If that happened here, they would be kicked out. (expert)
- 314. On Statia every faith has its own school. Everyone knows each other. Members of the same family go to different churches, but they are bound to one another. (expert)
- 315. There's no money for the maintenance of school buildings. (expert)
- 316. There are two school buses on the island for transportation to and from school. (expert)
- 317. The government is only responsible for the public school. (expert)

- 318. On Saba the people are more powerful than on Statia, and that is why the people there have indicated that they don't want to adopt the entire Dutch system. There is less need for change now. (expert)
- 319. We at the Youth and Family Center work together with the high school. For example, we give anger management training. (expert)
- 320. When I first came here this was a good school, but now the quality has really gone downhill. Kids who are just starting don't take it seriously. They often have detention in the afternoon or get suspended. Sometimes it's like a zoo. The mentality of the kids has changed, it has really deteriorated compared to when I started here. I think they should think something up to motivate kids to do their schoolwork and get a diploma. The level of the school has also gone down, but they are trying to keep it up. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 321. The school isn't bad, but I think they should make more effort to motivate the students. The subjects are often boring and academic, and there aren't enough books. Many kids don't take the lessons seriously, and they need more motivation. The lessons should start a little later and the school should be refurbished. The subject matter should be made more interesting, they should be more creative with it. Maybe they could make a rap song using the subject matter or something like that. They could then also ask us to make something special out of the subject matter. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 322. I'm in grade 5 at the Bethel Methodist School. School starts at half past seven. I usually get there ten to fifteen minutes before the school bell rings. I think that the teaching is good and that they are strict. We can also play lots of sports during breaks and during gym class. I think the teachers are good. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 323. It is positive that schools have started to take a different approach. The will to provide good education certainly exists, but a lot of the lessons are centered on teachers' own values and norms. Making the leap to development-oriented education was too great. (expert)
- 324. As a result of the educational situation in secondary education, young people lose their motivation. They want to do well, but they can't manage. Then they become frustrated and difficult and things start going downhill. (expert)
- 325. We are limiting the opportunities for kids instead of broadening them. (expert)
- 326. The current educational system does not permit a child to work his or her way out of a disadvantaged position without help from others. (expert)
- 327. Because of faith, children in church schools are more accustomed to reading and reciting than those from the secular schools. But the differences are minimal. (expert)
- 328. The school boards of Statia have no understanding of education. They're not aware of how much they don't know. They determine the policy of the school and the teaching language. There's no long-term vision on school policy. They only respond to incidents. (expert)
- 329. Basically, it's a mess here. (expert)
- 330. Schools are not assessed. (expert)
- 331. The problems on Statia are complex. The education system is inadequate. It does not reflect either the needs or the situation. (expert)
- 332. The primary and secondary school education systems have never reflected the real situation here. (expert)
- 333. In my opinion, the right to education means the right to a good education. Education that leads to a diploma and includes appropriate guidance, all within a safe learning environment. That is not what is present here. (expert)
- 334. In both primary and in secondary education we are massively behind on Statia, even more so than the other BES islands. (expert)
- 335. The results that we have to achieve in terms of education are impossible with the current manpower. Everything is present at a minimum level, but much more is needed. (expert)

- 336. Because young people don't get a good education here, they have few career opportunities. (expert)
- 337. The quality of education is abominable. Teaching methods are uninspiring and young people are not involved. (expert)
- 338. I think that the level of education is very low. All schools on Statia must improve. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 339. I'm in a transition class. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 340. Sometimes I look forward to going to a different school next year, but it's going to be a big change. The other school is much larger and there are lots more students. A lot of them are older than me, so I'm a bit scared. I will be able to make new friends, though. I'm looking forward to finishing school and going to college so I can be what I want to be. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 341. I'm studying Culture and Society. We have three different options, namely, Culture and Society, Economy and Society or Science and Health. I study math level A. Math level B would be much too difficult. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 342. There should be more sex education. Even at primary school. It is now a major problem in primary schools. (adolescent)
- 343. I think that a specialist should teach children about their bodies. Not just about sex, but also about HIV, AIDS and other STDs. (adolescent)
- 344. Information is provided, but only in high school, even though children are already sexually active at a young age. (adolescent)
- 345. On the one hand, a small island is very safe, but on the other hand, little is expected of you, and it is not challenging. (expert)
- 346. A lower professional education course should really be created in which students spend one year on one island and one year on another. Then students wouldn't become bored. (expert)
- 347. The point of view of the Caribbean child is not taken into consideration. The curriculum and the way it is presented is based on the lives of young people in the Netherlands. It is not relevant to the lives of young people here. (expert)
- 348. A lot of money and expertise has been put into the current educational structure by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, but young people haven't been looked at in an honest, realistic way. Things haven't been viewed from the perspective of a adolescent. (expert)
- 349. The Expertise Center had to start from scratch here. For example, clearing physical barriers so that support could be given to disabled young people. (expert)
- 350. On Statia the Expertise Center had to start from a lower baseline than on Saba and much lower than on Bonaire. The concept is the same on all the BES islands, although the needs of the three islands are different. (expert)
- 351. Schools have recently started after-school activities, which is good news. Because parents are working, they can't help their children. (expert)
- 352. Sex education is certainly a key objective in education, but the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science Education has decided to wait before the implementation because of the workload in the schools. Schools are permitted to use their own initiative and provide information to children, which is sometimes what happens. (expert)
- 353. Three of the four primary schools are faith schools. (expert)
- 354. During the caring and biology courses, some sex education is given. (expert)
- 355. I like to learn about new subjects such as Dutch, but it's hard to speak three languages. I speak English and Spanish, of course. I think it's right that we have to learn Dutch because it makes it easier if we want to go to the Netherlands. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)

- 356. I like school because I can play with my friends and the teachers are nice. They teach well. I get good grades, except in Dutch. I don't understand some things in Dutch. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 357. If I could change anything, I would change the education system. We are taught in high school in Dutch and we have to do exams in Dutch. At nursery school and primary school everything is in English and Dutch is just an extra subject. Anyone who goes to the Netherlands to study after secondary school is going to be at a disadvantage. They always say you should do an IQ test in your own language, so that should count for exams, too. Dutch is a second language for me, but for some it's a third or fourth language. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 358. Most of the time at school, we speak English. Every now and then we try to speak a little Dutch or French. Most classes are in Dutch. Often, teachers ask us a question and we answer in English, which a lot of teachers think is problematic. They think that we don't try hard enough to speak Dutch. They always tell us that the examinations are in Dutch, and that it will be a problem for us. I want to speak Dutch, but only if I can speak it correctly. I don't want to be embarrassed in public. I don't want to make any mistakes. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 359. All classes at school are in Dutch, except English and Spanish. I don't like Dutch. That makes things tough. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 360. Sometimes school is tough. I think Dutch and math are tough, but the other subjects are easy. When I came here I only spoke Spanish. When I went to school I learned English and now I speak English virtually the whole time. I speak Spanish with my mother and English with my stepfather. At school, and sometimes at home, I speak Dutch. Sometimes I count or learn new words. Even my little brother can talk Dutch. He can count and he knows a few words. The lessons are in Dutch. The teachers think that we should learn Dutch. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 361. Children are used to speaking Spanish or English, but in higher education lessons are given in Dutch. (boy)
- 362. The biggest concern I have about teaching is the language problem. (expert)
- 363. The choice of Dutch as the teaching language in higher education was a political decision made by adults. No thought was given to the needs of young people. (expert)
- 364. It is child abuse if young people are taught in a language that they don't understand, as is happening at the moment. Young people are taught in secondary education in Dutch after being taught at primary school in Dutch and English and speaking English at home and on the street. Their grades are very low. (expert)
- 365. Young people in the class don't understand what's going on. You can feel the frustration and powerlessness of the young people and the teachers. (expert)
- 366. Teaching in Dutch would be an option if it was done in a child-friendly manner, but that's not the case. It's formal Dutch. (expert)
- 367. From the moment a child is born here, it hears English, even if it is sometimes broken English. And then, when the child reaches the age of 12, everything suddenly has to be done in Dutch. (expert)
- 368. A child's talents are now judged much too much on language skills and pleasantries. A child may have a high IQ, but if they don't understand anything because everything is in Dutch, they will be put in a low-level class. (expert)
- 369. If we have passed the stage where it is no longer possible to teach in English, which I'm afraid is the case, then education must be much better tailored to the child. (expert)
- 370. A lot of difficult words are used at school. That coupled with the language barrier is disastrous, especially for adolescents who already have a short attention span. (expert)
- 371. As young people get older on Statia you notice that their aversion to Dutch increases, which makes it ever more difficult to reach them. (expert)
- 372. The world has changed. English is the dominant language. Thousands of miles from the tiny Netherlands, young people are forced to learn Dutch anyway. (expert)
- 373. At the Governor de Graff School (GDG), there are more Hispanic young people than at the other schools. These young people need more care. (expert)

- 374. We have also been offering after-school care since December 2011. At the moment there are about thirty children, and the cost is five dollars per child. The after-school care is from one o'clock to three o'clock, and kids are helped with math and language. Teachers are paid to do this. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science should really pay for it because it deals with the rectification of educational disadvantages. (expert)
- 375. The islands have suffered from an identity crisis. The identity issue was fudged, and ever since there has been a weird split between Dutch and English on Statia. (expert)
- 376. About 20% of the young people on Statia speak Spanish at home. It's quite difficult for them to keep up. (expert)
- 377. The problem is that the language issue has been fudged. Young people are taught at primary school in Dutch and English and then in secondary education in Dutch. What is wrong with teaching in English at secondary school? Because then we get Jamaicans here and God knows what else, and it will be like Sodom and Gomorrah. What is best for the children is not taken into consideration. (expert)
- 378. We don't learn much at primary school. It's said that we learn English, but that can't be true because our English is bad and our Dutch is a total joke. (child, St. Eustatius)
- 379. At secondary school we fall into a hole because we don't have basic levels of Dutch and math. (child, St. Eustatius)
- 380. There's a lot of meanness. If someone falls over, then others just make fun of them. They don't really say anything to each other. If it happens to me, I get a bit scared but I don't do anything. I just let them talk and never mention it to anyone. It doesn't bother me. I'm mean to others too sometimes, but I don't swear at people. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 381. There's no real bullying at school. There's only teasing when we're playing games. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 382. Stupid people always bully. I used to be bullied. I was always bigger than the others and I was very heavy. They thought I was a nerd because I always did my best. When I was in grade 7 at secondary school, I noticed that all the bullies were just plain stupid, so I stopped worrying about it. I think bullying is pathetic. They just do weird things that they think are funny. Some guys get bored, and then they go and bully somebody. The people who they pick on usually have low self-esteem or are just having a bad day. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 383. At school you have to put trash in a trash can. If you go to the bathroom you have to flush. We're not allowed to fight in the playground. (girl, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 384. There's not a lot of bullying. It depends a bit on what you call bullying. Usually, students are teased and not bullied. It happens sometimes but not that often. When I was young, I used to get bullied. I think it was because I was smaller than the person who bullied me. If they tried it out now, they wouldn't get very far. I'd just walk away if they tried to say anything. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 385. As far as I know there's no bullying at school. When I was little I did get bullied. The other kids thought I was ugly. I didn't react. I'm not a bully. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 386. I think there should be more security at school. I think that different sorts of food should be available in the cafeteria, because it's always the same. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 387. On Mondays and Wednesdays I go to school in the afternoon, which I enjoy. We study Dutch and math. Actually, I like everything about school in the afternoons. Sometimes we even play math games. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 388. If you fall over the other kids are mean. It's happened to me, too. They started to laugh and I didn't like it. If they fall over I don't laugh, I go and help them. I only laugh if it's really funny, but not if people hurt themselves. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 389. I'm in the fifth grade. I don't want to go to the big school because there's a lot of fighting and bullying. I'm scared. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 390. There's nothing I would change about the school. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)

- 391. I get bullied and teased. They say my father sells drugs and sometimes they fight with me. I fight back, and then we both get punished. I don't always tell the teacher if I get bullied. I don't know what my parents think about it. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 392. I don't really have a lot of friends. Some kids aren't very nice. I talk with them, but I don't like them. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 393. I think the school is friendly. I know everybody, which is cool. There are groups that hate each other. There are always some people that others don't like. I think the staff are friendly. The teachers are good. They understand you. They speak Dutch. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 394. I never get afternoon detention. But I do think that if people don't behave that they should be punished. I don't think it works. I don't want to be punished, but if a kid does something wrong, then something must be done to make sure that they learn from it. In afternoon detention the kids just sit all together and write stuff down. It looks like normal classes. There are a lot of kids who get afternoon detention. It's less than it used to be, because at the beginning of the year there were between 50 and 100. I can't say if it works because I've never had afternoon detention. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 395. Sometimes there are fights at school. I usually know when a fight is about to start, so I make sure I'm not around. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 396. Eventually kids all end up at the same secondary school. The levels vary between pre-vocational training (VMBO) and senior general secondary education (HAVO). They get on well together. (expert)
- 397. I'm proud that young people on Statia do not discriminate against each in terms in levels of education. (expert)
- 398. Young people do not feel safe, which is reflected in a lack of trust. And trust is exactly what is needed in the educational system. (expert)
- 399. Inbreeding has resulted in a relatively high incidence of learning problems on the islands. (expert)
- 400. The problem is also very different. Children are not motivated to learn on Statia. I don't know if you've seen coverage on the TV? Young people are also listless. This is partly because the family is the focal point of everything. If you come from a good family, you'll get a good job anyway, so there's no point in studying. That's the attitude there. (expert)
- 401. If, as a child, you don't have a parent that can help you and encourage you, then things won't work out. (expert)
- 402. For years there was a lack of expertise on the island, such as in the education system. The effects are visible, with some young people lagging behind. (expert)
- 403. In the lower social levels on Statia young people are in a state of constant rebellion. (expert)
- 404. There are plans for a rebound, and together with the Youth and Family Center we are tackling teacher training and aggression training on Statia. (expert)
- 405. The grades of the children are really low, even in English. (expert)
- 406. Because young people have problems at home, they begin to behave badly at school. (expert)
- 407. Young people are not supported by those around them. (expert)
- 408. I go to the Gwendoline van Putten School where I am studying culture and society. Things are going fairly well, I only have problems with math. I had to repeat the school year because of my math grades. I had two fives, and in the exam I got a three. I had to get the three up to six, but I couldn't manage it, I only got a four. I didn't have much time to study because I had to go to St. Maarten two days before the exam to see the doctor. The exam was on Wednesday and I only got back on Tuesday. I can't even remember why I went. I couldn't reschedule the doctor's appointment, and I couldn't delay the exam. I think that I've learned a lot this year. I hope and pray that I succeed at the first attempt. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)

- 409. I've skipped school a lot this year. Sometimes I can't be bothered to go to the lessons, so I go home instead. The teacher speaks Dutch for 45 minutes and I don't always feel like listening to it. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 410. I think I skipped school twice during the first three years at this school. When I started with senior general secondary education level 4, I started to skip school a lot. Well, actually, I wouldn't call it skipping school. I make a deal with the teacher that I don't need to go to the class if I study a particular chapter for the next lesson. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 411. I never play hooky. I always go to all the classes. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 412. If someone plays truant then they get afternoon detention. If you're not in class, it is written down and you get afternoon detention. If you don't go to afternoon detention you get internal suspension and you are put in a separate room at school. That has happened to someone I know. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 413. There are a lot of premature school leavers, with results in young people with no basic qualifications and few opportunities. (expert)
- 414. Failure is silent. The school generally makes no mention of truancy, because they are paid per student. (expert)
- 415. In 2008 the Compulsory Education Act came into force. The school attendance officer can now levy fines for truancy. (expert)
- 416. Since a short time ago the islands have had attendance officers, one on each island. Unlike the one on Statia, the one on Saba is inactive. (expert)
- 417. The rate of non-attendance in secondary education is worrying. As a result, young people are less likely to be awarded a diploma and they can forget about a career. (expert)
- 418. Registering non-attendance happens now because it is obligatory. There's also a part-time attendance officer. (expert)
- 419. A lot is being done to prevent kids playing truant. If you are absent twice in one week, you get afternoon detention. (child, St. Eustatius)
- 420. We get homework from school. I do it at my grandma's or my aunt's house. If I do it at my grandma's house, I'll go and find a quiet spot. My aunt helps me out with my homework. If I don't understand a sum, she helps me. Sometimes she gets the answer right and other times she doesn't. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 421. I don't get homework anymore. We only do mock exams. I'm going to work really hard in the holidays so that I will pass. I only have four subjects this year: Dutch, English, Spanish and Math. I'm also going to have a closer look at where I went wrong in the exam last year, and make sure that I understand everything this time. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 422. I get enough homework, but not too much. I usually do it myself, but if I don't understand anything I get help from my aunt, my mother or my step-grandfather. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 423. They do give us homework but I don't do it. A teacher once told me that homework is given for two reasons, namely practicing the subject matter and because certain things have to be completed within the school year. As long as I understand what is explained during the lesson, I don't see why I should do homework. I use the time that I would need to do homework to sleep. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 424. I'm in the fifth grade. My parents can't help with homework because they don't speak Dutch. My sister usually comes by on Saturdays and she is able to help me. (girl, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 425. I sometimes get a lot of homework. It depends on how far you get in the class. If you work hard in class, you don't get much homework. I do it at home or with a tutor. Tutoring is from five to six. My mother arranged it for me. I need tutoring for math because I'm really bad at it. I hate it. I'm just bad with numbers. Now it's going a bit better, but it depends on whether I can really concentrate on the subject, and some things I just don't understand. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)

- 426. Sometimes we get a lot of homework. I do it at home. If I don't understand something, I can ask the neighbor. She speaks Dutch, so she helps me with homework. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 427. I go to the Governor de Graaff School. I'm in the fourth grade. I don't know if I'll progress to the fifth grade. I like being with my friends and I enjoy doing my schoolwork. If I don't have any homework, I do exercises at home by myself. The teacher is friendly and professional. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 428. I do my homework alone. I always understand the subject matter. I'm very good at reciting lists of things. Sometimes I get maximum marks in tests. I don't really get much homework, but sometimes we get given Dutch, math and English homework. Every now and then we get subject matter to learn for a test. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 429. I like going to school and I'm doing well. I understand everything. Math is hard, sometimes I only get a four. I understand it, but there are some things that I can't calculate. It's explained well, but it's just too hard. My mom can't help me because she's always working. My grandma doesn't have the time, although she does help me in the evening sometimes. I get tutoring twice a week at school. My parents don't have to pay, it is provided by the school. Sometimes other kids help me. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 430. Sometimes I have trouble with certain subjects. In the beginning I had problems with spelling, but I'm better now. I've only been at this school since January. I used to go to the Seventh-day Adventist School. I don't get any homework tutoring, my father helps me. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 431. We get homework but not an irritating amount. I do my homework by myself because my parents don't speak Dutch. If I don't understand something, I just ask the teacher. My mentor can help with almost anything. He sometimes looks things up on his BlackBerry to explain something. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 432. I don't always get a lot of homework. Sometimes I do it at the place where my mom works, but if I'm at home I do it there. My mom always checks my homework. My father, my sister or my mom can help me if there's anything I don't understand. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 433. If I had Dutch homework, my mom couldn't help me. If it had been in English she might have been able to help, which would have made things easier for me. (adolescent)
- 434. Sometimes we work with students from the medical school. They do voluntary work and help the kids with sports and math. (expert)
- 435. Fifteen to eighteen children of the thirty five registered come here every day. They are between four and thirteen years old, and receive homework tutoring. There are also five young people who are older than thirteen. If they don't come here, they just hang around on the island. Children up to eight years pay fifty dollars a month, and older children thirty dollars a month. They arrive between one and two o'clock and are given a meal three times a week. After about half past two they do homework, and after that they play. Two senior general secondary education (HAVO) students help out with the homework. (expert)
- 436. I enjoy the lessons in the afternoon because we learn a lot. I like the school. The lady teacher is nice and she's good at helping us. She's open to challenges. She wants us to pass the year! (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 437. The teachers don't hit us. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 438. I like my classmates and my teacher is friendly. Sometimes there are problems with the teacher, but things are improving. I don't understand her sometimes, whereas she thinks I sometimes talk too loudly. Sometimes I think that she isn't fair. If someone does something wrong, she blames the person who didn't do anything. (girl, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 439. I go to the Gwendoline van Putten School. I'm in grade 9 of the TKL course. I like the school. The teachers definitely teach well. Sometimes it's easy, but other times it's difficult. We do biology, mathematics, Spanish, English and caring. I'm going to do a senior general secondary education course with specialization in Science and Health. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 440. I get on well with the teacher. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 441. I like the school. We are given a lot of work to do, but I like that. The teachers are fun and sympathetic. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)

- 442. There is a big turnover of teachers. Teachers' salaries were higher in the islands than in the Netherlands, and the classes are smaller (sixteen students per class), and there are working fewer hours (from half past seven to half past one). (expert)
- 443. There were headmasters on Saba and St. Eustatius who were successful in ending corporal punishment. (expert)
- 444. Teaching methods are directive. (expert)
- 445. The Dutch teachers who have come here after 10/10/10 are often arrogant. They speak very disparagingly about the island. (expert)
- 446. You would think that people would adapt if they go to a different place, but a lot Dutch teachers don't. (expert)
- 447. It's important that teachers who come here to teach are screened. It should be assessed whether they are capable of teaching the kids here. (expert)
- 448. A lot of Dutch teachers use swear words when they are teaching, like 'fuck' and 'shit'. Statia is a Christian island where that sort of thing is completely out of order, but it still happens. It demonstrates little respect for the children. The governors and school boards should do something about it. (expert)
- 449. Teachers should work more as a team. They are now literally on an island, and have switched to survival mode. It's very difficult to change that. (expert)
- 450. On Statia, we work with Dutch teachers in secondary education because that's the language the lessons are given in. (expert)
- 451. The attitude towards young people is characterized by continually telling them to be quiet. If a child asks a question during a discussion, the teacher responds immediately by angrily shouting, "Don't bother me, show respect, I'm talking to this guy!" Even if a child just wants to go to the bathroom. (expert)
- 452. Young people here are not taught to be independent or find things out for themselves. Everything is explained to them. This results in young people being kept stupid and dependent. (expert)
- 453. The wrong treatment of young people is reflected at school, where the passion of teachers is also absent. At primary schools in particular, there is a lack of involvement of teachers. (expert)
- 454. At secondary schools the respect of teachers for the young people is saddening. They really don't approach the students in the right way. (expert)
- 455. School teachers aren't a team. They have no mission. There should be a mission and they should remain true to it. (expert)
- 456. Bringing different cultures together is very difficult. It is noticeable in the teachers. Everybody's position on the role of the home and the school is different. Often it's not even clear what that position is. (expert)
- 457. A lot of teachers don't have confidence in their roles as educators of children. Many teachers suffer from low self-confidence. (expert)
- 458. On the islands, it is not customary to address people about their methods. People find it very difficult when someone tells them that they could tackle something in a better way. Teachers are no exception. (expert)
- 459. There's no sense of community among teachers in the schools. There's no sense of 'Let's do it as a team.' (expert)
- 460. I haven't seen any physical violence in schools yet, but I have certainly seen a lot of verbal aggression. (expert)
- 461. Teachers' communication methods assume that all children are troublemakers. There is no respect for pupils. (expert)

- 462. Teachers often yell. They justify this by saying that children would otherwise misbehave because they are used to being yelled at in their homes. (expert)
- 463. To stop physical and verbal aggression, you have to work together in different areas. The Youth and Family Center, police and schools all have to pull together. (expert)
- 464. What is very positive here is the will to make the best of things. Most people, including teachers, are very motivated to improve things for children. (expert)
- 465. Schools have been allocated 'active parenting' courses and must now implement them by themselves. That is still not running smoothly. (expert)
- 466. Teachers need to make it fun to work at school. They need to improve the education system. And there should be better teaching materials. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 467. Teachers give us a lessons where the level is too low and that is why we aren't well prepared for the exams. The examination requirements are lowered every year, and everyone blames it on the kids. (child, St. Eustatius)
- 468. There's little communication between students, parents, teachers and the community. (child, St. Eustatius)
- 469. Teacher, pilot or police officer. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 470. I want to be a baker. I watch 'The Cooking Channel' a lot. After secondary school, I'm going to America to study bakery and I want to train to be a chef. I want to go to America, because there are lots of good cooking courses. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 471. I'm not really upset that I can't go to the Netherlands, but I am a little. I don't really have to go to the Netherlands because I'm now so used to living on an island. It's for the best that I first go to Curacao, because then I can take things step by step. First to a bigger island, and then perhaps to the Netherlands. In any case, I wouldn't want to live in the Netherlands again. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 472. I'm going to train to be a social worker. I've already registered, but I'm still waiting for a response.

  Once I receive a response I have to submit my diploma and list of grades and then everything will be sorted out. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 473. I really want to leave. I was going to go to the Netherlands, but now I'm going to Curacao. There were some problems with finding a place to stay in the Netherlands. I'm going to the university in Curacao, and I'm initially going to stay on campus. Maybe after a while I can go and live by myself in my mom's house. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 474. I want to go to the Netherlands to study. I want to be a doctor. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 475. I want to be a lawyer or teacher. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 476. I like to meet new people, listen to music that doesn't get played here and I love animals. But there isn't a zoo or anything like it here. Everything life has to offer appeals to me, apart from nature and silence. In 94 days I'm going to Curacao, and I've been counting down the days since the second year of the senior general secondary education course. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 477. I want to study something that is related to business. I want to have my own business so that no one can tell me what I can do and can't do. If I want to give people a discount, I will. I want to run restaurants. I help my mother with the cooking. I love oxtail and spaghetti. I can cook rice and eggs. I also like porridge. I'd love to have a beautiful home. When I finish college I want a baby, and I want to be able to give my child everything I never had. (girl, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 478. I don't think I'll stay here. I think I'll only come here for a vacation. Maybe when I'm old, I'll move back here. Maybe in twenty years. I want to travel and learn about other cultures. I want to go to Egypt, Asia, Italy, Fiji and Hawaii. I want to go to exotic places. The places where I would most like to live are America or London. People tell me that it's nice there. Maybe I should go there on vacation first to check it out. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 479. I think I'll stay here to do the third and fourth years of the senior general secondary education course. Afterwards, I want to go to America to study pediatrics. I like kids, kids are funny. I couldn't

- go to the Netherlands because I don't speak Dutch very well. In America, I can understand everything and I've got family there. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 480. I want to study English and chemistry. I also want to invent new things and carry out research. I actually want to study Dutch as well, in case I want to live in the Netherlands. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 481. I want to leave in order to study. I want to go and stay with my brothers. I want to be a teacher when I grow up, on St. Eustatius or on one of the other islands. I want to teach the kids everything. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 482. I want to be a police officer. I like the uniforms. Nursing seems like fun, too. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 483. I want to be a surgeon. I want to study in the United States. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 484. There are three things that I want to be, and I want to be them all. I don't know how I'm going to manage it. I want to be a psychologist, a lawyer, and I want to start a children's hospital. It's neck and neck between psychology and law. I want to go to England. I like it there and I like the way the people talk. The schools are better and there are more opportunities. I wouldn't mind returning here and opening a practice. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 485. I want to be a fireman or police officer, but only if things don't work out with the basketball. Maybe I'd like to enlist in the army. Then you can fight for the things you need. They bully me at the moment, but then I'd be able to defend myself. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 486. Every year, about three hundred and fifty to four hundred young people go to the Netherlands to study. The failure rate of these young people is similar to that of Dutch young people. 20% come back, 80% of which are girls. (expert)
- 487. Due to this situation, some come into contact with the legal system. They are bored and haven't learned to channel their anger. Generally, issues are resolved as much as possible outside the legal system. That's the advantage of a small island, but sometimes things are too serious. In extreme cases, adolescents end up in the jail on Bonaire. For less serious cases, community service on Saba is another option. (expert)
- 488. In the short-term, boys can make a lot of money in the oil industry, by cleaning tankers for instance. Girls go to college, while boys stay behind. It's now recognized as a 'boy's problem'. (expert)
- 489. What sort of citizens are we training our young people to be? Dutch or Caribbean? Not a lot of thought has been given to this, resulting in young people between left in limbo. Let young people develop in their own culture, and give them opportunities to spread their wings. (expert)
- 490. Young people thrive better in their own culture. (expert)
- 491. The calls within Statia to continue independently are getting stronger. This is partly due to the rigid application of laws and Dutch laws, such as student funding from the age of eighteen. Young people who want to do pre-university education have no options on Statia and have to go to St. Maarten. But the island has to pay for that itself because nothing has been regulated in the Netherlands. (expert)

#### Health

- 492. Once a month the local radio station on Statia and Saba broadcasts a program in which topics such as pregnancy, respect yourself, HIV and AIDS are discussed. (expert)
- 493. Nearly 2000 residents of the island have diabetes as a result of their unhealthy lifestyles. I think they need to promote a healthier lifestyle, because that would save a lot of people from diabetes. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 494. He have received five or six reports from the secondary education authorities about girls who are severely depressed. Some also carry out self-mutilation. We must be careful that it doesn't develop into a trend. (expert)
- 495. Young people here are exposed to high risks of pregnancy and disease. (expert)

- 496. To my knowledge there are no young people on Statia infected with HIV. However, it's very difficult to get precise information from the family physician, so I can't be sure. (expert)
- 497. I've never been to St. Maarten for medical help. My brother was born on St. Maarten during the day. My mom decided to go St. Maarten just as she was about to give birth to my brother. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 498. I think health care on the island is poor. The problem is that the hospital doesn't have all the materials it needs to help the patients. If you are seriously ill, you have to go to St. Maarten, and if they can't help you have to go somewhere else. They can't take X-rays here, for example, so if you need an X-ray, you have to go to St. Maarten. A lot of money is spent on referring people when they could do it here. I think the doctors are good here, although they did once give my mom the wrong medication which caused skin rashes. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 499. I think that there should be more specialists and there should be more resources to help patients. The hospital also needs to be expanded because it's too small. The doctors are overworked. There's only one doctor present, and that one doctor is responsible for all the patients. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 500. I've been to the hospital a few times, but I've never been admitted. I often had to go to the hospital because of pain from sickle-cell disease. I had a lot of problems with my back, but the doctor kept sending me home with painkillers. I don't think the care at the hospital is very good. They almost always send you to St. Maarten. I should just be able to go to the hospital when I'm sick. Some doctors are good, but others aren't. Some doctors don't know what they're doing. If you say you're in pain, they give you painkillers, but they don't make any effort to diagnose the problem. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 501. Health care on the island is stupid! I fell over and badly hurt my ankle. The doctor didn't know if it was broken or just bruised, so they had to send me to St. Maarten to have an X-ray taken. Because I'm a minor, my mom had to go with me. That costs the government a lot of money when they could simply do it here. The nursing staff are very nice and do their best. My grandma's a nurse at the hospital. Apart from that, the hospital looks awful, but I do think that it's clean and hygienic. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 502. They can't do much for us in the hospital. We always have to go to St. Maarten or Guadeloupe. But then you have to speak French, otherwise you might as well drop dead. I can speak French, I got an 8.5 at school. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 503. My mother is ill, so she doesn't work. We've no idea what is wrong with her, maybe we'd have a better idea if the health care system was better. She's got various different symptoms, so nobody knows what's wrong with her. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 504. There's a hospital on the island. It takes a long time for them to get the materials they need. I think they should have more resources and be better prepared. It's so small that they usually send people somewhere else if they are seriously ill. You can simply go to see a doctor in the hospital if you're sick. I've only been a few times. Usually my mom goes with me, but she lets me do all the talking. She thinks it's important that we can do everything ourselves. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 505. Health care is reasonable. I don't go to the hospital very often, so I'm not exactly sure. I went to the hospital a few times when I was suffering from allergies. They helped me well at the time. I think there are only two doctors on the island. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 506. I had the flu earlier this year and I had to go to the hospital. I got cough syrup, and within a week I was better. I don't always have to go to the hospital when I'm sick. You can solve it yourself. In Guyana, people use a lot natural products if they are sick, so we don't always need a doctor. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 507. My cousin has also been admitted to the hospital a few times. She has diabetes and she ate too many mangoes, so she had to be hospitalized. They transferred her to St. Maarten. I don't think people should have to go to St. Maarten, because it takes a while before the ambulance arrives and then they have to wait again for the plane. It takes a quite a while, more than an hour. There should be better health care, better doctors and more resources. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 508. As far as I know, you just have to get up early and go to the hospital if you want to see a doctor. Although the reception desk isn't open, the hospital isn't actually closed and there are nurses present. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)

- 509. There's a nurse who visits the school. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 510. The dentists work well, you just need to make an appointment with them. It's covered by the insurance, but the insurance doesn't cover everything. Sometimes things are not reimbursed, and you have to pay for them yourself. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 511. I understand that we can only pick up medication at the pharmacy at certain times, because the people working there have a life too. It doesn't bother me. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 512. I take food to school with me. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 513. I've been to the hospital a few times, but I've never been admitted. I went to St. Maarten for surgery on my foot because a bone grew incorrectly and they had to cut a piece of bone off. I think they should have their own X-ray machine, and that they should be able to do stitches here. Then they could help more people. At the moment, if you break anything you get sent to St. Maarten. It would be easier to help people here instead of sending everybody to St. Maarten (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 514. Health care is abysmal. It's probably worse here on this island than anywhere else on the planet. Don't get sick while you're staying here! At the moment, the electricity supply is so badly regulated that a lot of equipment can't be used. For an X-ray or dialysis, people have to go to St. Maarten. That costs the local government and the Dutch government a lot of money, money that wouldn't be wasted if they ensured that the equipment here could be used. As for Winair, they're laughing all the way to the bank. There is also have an ultrasound device that only worked for one month. The doctors are bad, but the nursing staff do their best. The nursing staff work overtime. They should start with the things that cost a lot of money, in this case the patients who need dialysis and the people who need weekly therapy. If the government could ensure that dialysis could be carried out here, they'd save enough money to renovate the whole hospital. There are three doctors, one of whom only works part-time. These three doctors are constantly working. If there is an emergency in the night, they get called out, and then they have to be back at work at eight. Everyone complains about the doctors, but they certainly do their best. But because it's completely open, there's a lot of dust. You would think that I was used to dust, since I grew up here. That's not the case, and I began to suffer from asthma. The doctor knew at once what the matter was with me. I suffered for six months before I went to the doctor, but when I was there, he knew immediately what the problem was. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 515. Everything is completely open at school so there's a lot of dust. You would think that I was used to dust, since I grew up here. That's not the case, and I began to suffer from asthma. The doctor knew at once what the matter was with me. I suffered for six months before I went to the doctor, but when I was there, he knew immediately what the problem was. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 516. On the BES islands, certain medications are no longer reimbursed since the system changed. Poor parents can't afford it anymore. (expert)
- 517. On the BES islands, health care insurance exists but is not available to those without documents. (expert)
- 518. There are many young people with holes in their teeth and brown spots. There is dental care available via the schools, but no teeth cleaning project or awareness about the importance of brushing your teeth. (expert)
- 519. We eat together. We usually eat sandwiches or buy something from the Chinese. I also know how to make fried chicken. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 520. I don't eat breakfast before going to school. I only drink tea. I don't like eating in the morning. I take sandwiches and fruit to school. In the evening we sometimes all eat together at home. Other times I go to my grandma's house. It depends on what time my mom comes to pick me up after she finishes working. Sometimes we eat a hot meal and sometimes we eat just sandwiches. I eat every day at my grandma's house except Saturday. On Sunday she cooks for the whole family. My grandma can cook better than my mom. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 521. I eat breakfast before going to school. I have no choice. My mom makes life difficult if I don't eat anything. She makes me breakfast in the morning. Usually she makes tea for me, which I don't like, and a sandwich. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)

- 522. What I eat in the evening varies. Sometimes I eat a hot meal, sometimes sandwiches and sometimes nothing at all. Often I'm not hungry when I get home because I eat late in the afternoon. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 523. My lifestyle isn't healthy at all. I never drink water, I always drink juice. I hate tea as well! I eat what we have at home, which is a sort of Statia diet. We eat a lot of rice, potato salad and lots of chicken. I think that most people eat the same sort of thing at home. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 524. At lunchtime I have a hot meal, cooked by my grandma. In the evening we eat sandwiches. My grandma works all day so she doesn't have time in the evening to cook for us. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 525. At school we get breakfast at around half past nine. At lunchtime I eat at home unless there is school in the afternoon. In that case, we always get given something to eat, so I don't eat at home. Sometimes I eat fruit in the evening. Sometimes we eat together, and sometimes we don't. My stepfather sometimes has to work in the evenings, and then he can't eat with us. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 526. My favorite dish is rice, corn, fish, chicken and ribs. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 527. Children should be healthy. Sometimes I eat lunch with my grandmother and sometimes I eat lunch at home. I have breakfast before going to school. I don't want to, but my mom makes me. Usually I take sandwiches to school, but if I don't feel like it I just eat the pudding. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 528. I always have breakfast before I go to school, and I always take something to school with me to eat. I often walk to the place where my mom works after school and eat it there. If she cooks in the morning, she takes food with her for me, or she gets something from my grandma on the way. And sometimes she buys something to eat for me, such as Chinese. I always eat a hot meal at lunchtime. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 529. On many islands, the kids get poor-quality nutrition. There's a lot of junk food. (expert)
- 530. Whether it is a result of poverty or laziness, the fact is that many young people go to school without eating breakfast first. (expert)
- 531. There's a breakfast project at the public school. (expert)
- 532. There are a few separate breakfast projects. They last nine months and don't cover all the schools, and when they finish that's the end of it. (expert)
- 533. We must be realistic and give young people breakfast at school because they don't get it at home, whatever the reason might be. I know because I grew up on Statia. (expert)
- 534. Young people often don't get healthy food. (expert)
- 535. Healthy food is expensive here. But young people have a right to healthy food, which means fresh fruit and vegetables. Instead they get flour, bread and fried snacks. (expert)
- 536. I never drink alcohol, smoke or use drugs, and I don't know any people who do. My mom doesn't really drink and she doesn't smoke. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 537. A lot of people get involved with drugs, and stop going to school. I think it's because they don't get the love they need at home, so they look for attention elsewhere. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 538. A lot of people use drugs, but it's not that noticeable. I really don't know how they keep it hidden. On such a small island people get to know very quickly what you're up to. People show a different version of themselves to the outside world. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 539. I don't drink, use drugs or smoke. Someone has to be responsible! (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 540. I have drunk alcohol and used drugs. In fact I quite enjoyed it. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius))
- 541. I don't drink alcohol. I'm a minor. People like you have talked to me about it. People who come to the schools and give presentations about it. I don't smoke, I have asthma. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)

- 542. I don't use drugs and neither do my friends. If they did, they wouldn't be my friends. I don't know what happens to people at home behind closed doors, but my friends don't use drugs. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 543. Chronic drug users must be given specific support, which falls outside the scope of the social training project. They end up in youth shelters, juvenile detention or drugs rehabilitation. (expert)

### Safety

- 544. St. Eustatius is a safe place to live. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 545. The roads are safe. There are few accidents on the island and people don't often crash their cars. There are a lot of cows though, and sometimes people collide with a cow. People should just be careful and drive safely. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 546. I think that St. Eustatius is very safe. You can leave the keys in your car safe in the knowledge that nobody will steal it. It has happened that a car has been stolen, but there's nowhere to go in it. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 547. At Zeelandia there are a lot of bushes that shouldn't be there. There are also a lot of cows walking carefree on the road and damaging people's cars. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 548. I don't feel safe on the island, except at school and at home. I'm scared that people will want to fight me when they're drunk. People drink a lot of alcohol, but they don't use a lot of drugs. Nothing has actually ever happened to me. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 549. It's too boring here for it to be dangerous. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 550. I think it's very safe here. You can walk down the street without being afraid. You don't have to worry about being raped or something else bad happening to you. (girl, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 551. I actually feel safe everywhere on the island. I know how to avoid problems. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 552. It's safe on the island. I can walk around in the evening without any problems. Everyone knows everyone. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 553. I feel safe everywhere on the island. There's a lot of fighting, but they don't fight with me, so it doesn't scare me. There isn't any theft. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 554. I think safety on the island could be improved, although it's safer than other islands. Sometimes people are attacked on the streets and sometimes there are car accidents. At school, I'm scared. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 555. At school it's safe, but on the street parents let their children hang out all over the place. That's not safe. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 556. It's a safe island. We do get a lot of tourists, and with so many strange faces people do have to keep their doors locked shut. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 557. I'm not scared to walk on the street by myself in the evening. Nothing has never happened and there's hardly any violence. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 558. I feel safe everywhere on St. Eustatius. The amount of violence on the island is very low. It happens maybe once a year. Every now and then there are fights, but not very often. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 559. It's safe on the island, and at the same time it isn't. Safe, because no one actually does anything. Every now and then there's a fight or a stabbing, but you get that everywhere. There are almost never any burglaries. If that happened, your neighbors would immediately tell you who did what and when they did it. And I say that it is unsafe because little is done by the government to protect us. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 560. I feel very safe on St. Eustatius. The most dangerous things around at present are the cows. I'm afraid that someone I love will be driving along somewhere and suddenly be confronted with a cow

- in the middle of the road. A boy was nearly killed because of a cow a while ago. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 561. There's no counseling for young people who witness violence. (expert)
- 562. There's virtually no violence here. In that respect it's a paradise. (child, St. Eustatius)
- 563. I feel safe everywhere on the island, both at school and on the street. I know everybody. There's hardly any crime on St. Eustatius, so it's safe. I can walk the streets alone at night. There's not much violence on the island. At school there are sometimes fights, but nothing serious. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 564. Our house has never been broken into. Nothing has ever been stolen from me, and I've never stolen anything from anybody else. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 565. Sometimes there are rapes on the island. I think men who look at young girls are evil. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 566. It's very peaceful to grow on Statia, because there are no robberies or murders or stuff like that. I feel very safe here. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 567. Sometimes youths are detained because they have committed theft, for example. (expert)
- 568. Not much prior consideration is given to what would really connect to local habits on the islands, what people really need when it comes to counseling, guidance and services. (adolescent)
- 569. Something should be set up to offer mothers and children safety and support: a safe house and counseling. (expert)
- 570. St. Eustatius is a beautiful place, but some people are bad. Those sort of people fight and smoke and young kids who are only 13 don't attend school. There's a lot of fighting on the island. I think it has to stop. The police should arrest them, but they don't. If the people who fight are acquaintances or relatives of the police officers, they are only warned but don't get arrested. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)

## Recreation, play and leisure time

- 571. I like to go swimming, play sports or do homework. In the school holidays, I forget all about school for a while. I love swimming, volleyball, baseball and soccer. I'm in the swimming team and the track team. We train in quiet places where there's not much traffic. We do everything. We don't really participate in competitions. My favorite is volleyball. I'd like to play with my mom because she's really good at volleyball. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 572. I usually go to the library after school, and then I help with the homework tutoring at Mega D. I finish at 5 o'clock and go home at half past. I eat lunch at the library. My godmother works there and she brings my lunch with her. I eat a hot meal at lunchtime. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 573. My hobbies are dancing and reading. I used to read more than I do now. I also used to be in a dance group on the island. There is still a group, but they only give shows when there's something to celebrate. There used to be a dance group that did traditional dances, but they are not really active anymore. At home I usually do 'Zumba' or dance to Latin music. I just try to keep myself occupied. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 574. There should be activities for young people every week. Soccer and other sports, or games like hide and seek. They should advertise it on television and on the radio, and organize activities one day a week. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 575. My hobbies are cycling, volleyball and basketball. That's how I usually spend my time. I go running with my brother, I ride my bike and I play with my cousins. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 576. I think that there should be more things for kids to do such as volleyball, baseball and soccer. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 577. In fact, I'm never bored. If I am, I watch television, play games, play basketball in the garage or play my trumpet. I can also ask my mother to give me a lift somewhere so that I have something to do. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)

- 578. There's a group for young people in the church. (expert)
- 579. Sometimes, young people have to be encouraged to do something fun. Afterwards, things gain momentum by themselves. (expert)
- 580. We currently have a project to set up a drum band for kids from four to eleven years, but funding is a problem. (expert)
- 581. A good example of a positive influence is the drum band at the Roman Catholic Church, in which young people from other churches may also participate. Every Wednesday, about 35 young people aged between 4 to 21 years join in. (expert)
- 582. In the past there were more organizations that promoted activities for young people. These days there are fewer initiatives. (expert)
- 583. The Save our Children Foundation organizes movie nights, bike rides, family days and days with the fire service and the police, but it's too focused on competition. However, these days Mega D does organize good stuff. (expert)
- 584. There's also a drum band on Statia. (expert)
- 585. We try to organize activities for young people such as basketball, summer camps and talent shows. (expert)
- 586. Sports and music can help young people to develop and feel better about themselves, and are a vast improvement on hanging out and getting bored. (expert)
- 587. The churches organize a lot of activities for young people. (expert)
- 588. There's not much to do on Statia. I play baseball and basketball and go snorkeling at Stinapa. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 589. Sometimes I get bored when there's nothing to do. If that happens, I go and play a game or do something else to keep myself busy. I don't watch much television, except in the afternoon sometimes. I usually play games on my laptop. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 590. I get bored sometimes. Sometimes I don't even feel like leaving the house. When that happens I just sleep, go on the internet or watch television. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 591. I get bored sometimes. Then I just go and sit outside. That's what I like. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 592. I've got a BlackBerry, so I can play games on that. Sometimes my mom confiscates it for a few hours, and then I have nothing to do. I have no idea why. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 593. I get bored sometimes, and then I watch TV or sleep. I sleep a lot. Sometimes all that sleeping just makes you lazy. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 594. The children and young people hang around here an awful lot. (expert)
- 595. St. Eustatius is really quiet. There's not much to do. In St. Maarten, there's a movie theater, a McDonalds and a KFC, which we don't have here. It's really boring. They should organize some activities so that the kids have something to do. Maybe open a movie theater. In any case, something that kids might enjoy. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 596. On the BES islands there are few opportunities for children in terms of relaxation. There are, however, a lot of volunteer organizations. (expert)
- 597. I'm in a drum band and I play basketball. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 598. I have a lot of friends. Sometimes they come over to play with me. We ride around on the small freestyle bikes, but we are not allowed to take them onto the road. I also play basketball, baseball and soccer. I went with the island soccer team to St. Maarten and Saint Kitts to play. We train a lot. These days I also take part in athletics. I can run really fast! My grandma has a small basketball court. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)

- 599. My main hobby is sports. When I get bored, which is quite often, I read a book or go on the internet. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 600. I'm never bored. In fact, I always have something to do. I think there's enough to do for kids my age, such as sports, fitness, healthy eating and swimming. I can swim, I taught myself. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 601. I read, I play volleyball, I do gymnastics and we do cheerleading. We don't have a coach, we do it ourselves. Everyone can contribute something. There's a sort of leader, but it's neutral. You can play soccer, softball and basketball here or go swimming. There is a Scouts group, the Stinapa Club and the Mega D Foundation. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 602. After school I play basketball with my friends, and during school I play soccer. Last year we played soccer every week during gym class. My hobbies are basketball, collecting model cars and playing the drums. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 603. There's a pretty good sports center now where young people can swim and play basketball and stuff. That should be used more. (expert)
- 604. Young people aged sixteen and older can play basketball and volleyball from eight to eleven o'clock in the evening, too late for many young people. (expert)
- 605. If I'm with friends we go home and chill out together, watch movies or go to volleyball. At the moment there is volleyball, except this weekend. Sometimes we drive around. There aren't many places to go to, so we sometimes go to the same place twice. Sometimes we go out to dinner when someone invites us. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 606. I've got enough friends. I usually hang out with boys. The girls make too much drama and I can't be bothered with it. I can actually talk about anything with the boys. We just do the things you do when you grow up on an island. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 607. I have lots of friends. We do our homework, go out or go over to each other's homes where we watch movies, go online, listen to music or dance to Spanish music. What we like best is chatting. I also have a BlackBerry that I can ping people with. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 608. I'm not interested in going out, so I don't go there, but there are two clubs where people can go. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 609. I'm not allowed to go out yet. You have to be eighteen or older to go out, unless there are special activities for kids my age such as 'Statia Day' and Easter. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 610. As far as cultural policy for children goes, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science says they can't do anything because it is a municipal responsibility. However, every municipality has a need for national support. The BES islands are in danger of falling through the cracks. (expert)
- 611. Sporting activities should be free. (expert)
- 612. The island is responsible for after-school activities. (expert)
- 613. As far as sports go, the ministry does nothing. There's a consultant with no money who is supposed to help. There's a lady on Bonaire who occasionally comes to Statia but has no financial resources. (expert)
- 614. We ensured that a sports hall was built here on Statia. (expert)
- 615. I wish there were more activities such as a place for kids to hang out. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 616. I wish there was a kind of gaming room at after-school care. Then the big kids could come, instead of just the little kids. (girl, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 617. What this place needs is a Youth Center where kids can go after school. (expert)

## **Participation**

- 618. At the sport club I can say what I think and they listen to me, too. At school I can also say what I think. Sometimes they ask me about my opinion at home. If I want to eat meat and chips, then my grandma makes it for me. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 619. My boss at Mega D is trying to set up a 'Youth World' where people can discover their talents. I don't know if it will work, but it's worth a try. I don't know what the young people on the island want. They're all a bit weird. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 620. Every now and then they ask us at school about what we think. They ask us what it's like to live here and if we like it here or not. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 621. Emotions are not discussed on the islands. Young people are not asked about things that actually trouble them. (expert)
- 622. Children cannot participate. They are not self-reliant or independent. (expert)
- 623. Some young people know what they want and can often express themselves well. If they feel comfortable and secure they can articulate their opinions well. (expert)
- 624. A lot of young people long to talk with someone who would listen to them. (expert)
- 625. These days young people are often much better able to formulate their ideas. (expert)
- 626. Young people are more than willing to open their hearts, but many parents neither listen properly nor ask the right questions. (expert)
- 627. At the church, Scouts and Girl guides, young children are challenged to say what they think. (expert)
- 628. Teenagers are not involved enough. (expert)
- 629. Teens should be much more involved in what is happening on the island. (expert)
- 630. The St. Eustatius Expertise Centre for Education and Care (ECE) and Mega D would like to organize talk shows, in cooperation with other organizations, about positive topics. Mega D is drawing up a plan on this. (expert)
- 631. Now that there are so many problems, my parents do ask me about my opinion, but they didn't use to. They ask what I think, but they also ask me to choose between them. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 632. My parents sometimes ask me what I think. If we are in a store, they ask what I want and they ask me about what I want in the new house. I can decide what I want to be and the school I'm going to attend when I'm older. I can also choose my own clothes now, which is new. I do have to wear a school uniform, though. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 633. My mother never actually asks me about my opinion on things. We don't really talk about it. I do talk to her, but she doesn't listen properly. If I don't agree with something, I usually shout at her and refuse to do what she wants. If she really insists, then I'll do it and think at the same time that I'll be leaving soon. I've been waiting to leave since the second year of the senior general secondary education course. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 634. My mom sometimes asks me what I think about things, but mostly she just listens to the opinion of my older sister. I could say what I think, but she'd just carry on doing what she's already decided anyway. If I say something that she agrees with, then she'll change her opinion. Sometimes she looks for a compromise that keeps us both happy. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 635. At home nobody ever asks about my opinion. My grandma makes all the decisions. In fact, I always just do what she says. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 636. My mom sometimes asks me what I think. I can decide what I wear. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 637. I like to be able to say what I think. I don't mind listening to other people's opinions. If I don't agree, I shrug it off and get on with my life. At home, they take notice of what I think. Sometimes they do what I want. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)

- 638. My parents sometimes ask me what I think, but it depends on what it's about. They asked me if I wanted to go to St. Maarten for Carnival. I can't really decide anything at home. My mom asked me recently if I wanted to play in a basketball team. My mom decides most things at home. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 639. My parents certainly do ask me for my opinion! We are always considering the opinions of everyone. Even if my parents didn't ask me for my opinion, I'd give it anyway. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 640. At school they don't really ask for my opinion. They carry out a survey maybe two or three times a year, or organize a speaker who comes and tells us stuff. We now have to decide what we want to do for our graduation ceremony and what the theme will be. Although we do have freedom of speech here, nobody says what they think. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 641. At school, they sometimes ask us what we think about things. They asked us what we thought of the school master. I like him. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 642. At school they do try to teach us to formulate an opinion and defend it. I do give my opinion, but it doesn't really change anything. Some people don't say what they think because that's not the way they are. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 643. Sometimes surveys are conducted at our school. If there is an organization that wants to know something, they conduct a survey. We sometimes take part in surveys carried out by the AIDS Committee. Recently, we had to fill out a questionnaire about bullying. They asked what we think about the protection of kids who are bullied. The protection they get is OK, usually there's nothing wrong. Sometimes people have problems with each other, and you can feel the tension in the air because they want to beat each other up. Then again, that doesn't happen often. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 644. The school isn't really interested in our opinions. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 645. At school, my opinion is only asked for once a year. The school asks us what we think of the school and the teachers. I don't know what effect it has, I don't see anything changing in any case. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 646. Every now and then they ask me for my opinion at school. They ask what we want to do for our graduation ceremony. We have to fill out loads of surveys, but when it comes to the crunch they decide everything anyway. I can't see the point of answering all those questions if it doesn't make any difference. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)

## Housing conditions

- 647. I don't have enough privacy at home. When I'm at school, my parents look after my little niece. All her stuff is in my room so they go in and out of it the whole time. Sometimes I have to sleep with the door open because she sleeps in my room. I don't think I have enough privacy. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 648. I don't think that I have enough privacy at home. If I leave something somewhere, somebody moves it. I can't do what I want at all. My little brother is really annoying. In the new house, I'll have my own bedroom, so things will improve. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 649. I don't have my own bedroom, I have to share with my grandmother. The bed is very big, but it's the principle. I just want my own bedroom. There are three bedrooms. My sister sleeps with my mother and my great aunt has got her own room. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 650. I'm almost never at home, but I don't have enough privacy there. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 651. I think that I have enough privacy at home. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 652. I live with my mother and father. I have my own bedroom. My parents are often out when I get home. Then I go to my grandma's house, and when they get back I go home. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 653. I live in a lovely little white cottage. It has two bedrooms, a bathroom and a kitchen. I sleep with my sister who is six. The baby sleeps with my parents. There's a place outside where I can sit under a tree in the wind. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)

654. I live in a big house. The house has four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room and a kitchen. I sleep with my sister in one bedroom. The top floor of our house is still under construction, which is why I have to share the bedroom. I like sharing a room with her. If I have to get undressed, she leaves the bedroom, and if she has to get undressed, I leave the bedroom. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)

## Financial situation

- 655. We can buy our uniforms at school or on St. Maarten. We buy the other clothes when we go on vacation. I can choose my clothes myself. There's enough money to buy clothes. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 656. I get pocket money. If I do my chores at the weekend, I get money from my mother. I use the money to buy something on the beach or spend it somewhere else. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 657. Every other year we go on vacation. Usually we just take a vacation in the Caribbean, but last year we went to Boston in America. (boy, 13 years, St. Eustatius)
- 658. People on the island aren't poor. Everyone has a roof over their head, even though it doesn't always seem so on the street. Most people also have enough food to eat. I can do what I want with the money I'm going to get, but I haven't been paid yet. I only started working this month. If my parents ask me for money, I can give them some. They will definitely ask for some money! They're going to ask if I can give them money to buy gasoline or groceries. My dad works as a security guard nearby, and my mother works as the chief cashier in the finance department. They've got good jobs, but they aren't well paid. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 659. I do actually go on vacation. At Easter I went to St. Maarten. We never go on vacation as a family. The last time we went together was in 2005 when my uncle was in hospital. We're going to try to go to Aruba together in July for my sister's graduation ceremony, but it will only be possible if we can arrange enough money. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 660. Sometimes there are problems at home because there's not enough money. At the moment, there are serious problems. They want to sell the house because they need the money. I don't see why they have to sell the house because we've only been living there for four years. They were so happy that we finally had a home of our own, and now they want to sell it. Money is definitely a problem at the moment because they also have to transfer some money to my sister. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 661. I really want to be able to look after myself before I go to Curacao. Then I'll have a bit of money and know how to deal with it. That's actually the reason I wanted a job. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 662. There's always enough money to buy food. There's food at home every day, and there's enough money to buy clothes. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 663. I can't get everything I want, but I do get everything I need. I don't get pocket money. My parents give me some money from time to time. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 664. My parents have the same job. They work in the office at the terminal where they have set up a company. My dad works at night and my mom works during the day. During the day, my father is at home, working on the new house. (boy, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 665. My grandma works at the hospital. My great-aunt gets a pension and my mom is on benefits.

  Basically my mother takes care of us, and my grandma and great aunt look after themselves. There's always food at home. There isn't any money, but there's always food. There aren't any problems at home because there's hardly any money. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 666. In fact I've never actually been on vacation. Last year I went away for the first time, and that was because the church paid for the trip. We went camping in Antigua. It wasn't really a vacation. It was a Christian camp and we did all sorts of stuff. I also did my best to make friends, which didn't always work out, but I did make one good friend there. She's very nice. My neighbor was also with us at camp. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 667. I don't get pocket money, but I get given a bit by Mega D. My boss wouldn't be happy if I said it wasn't enough. We go there for the kids, not for the money. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)

- 668. I get pocket money. I get \$ 5 or \$ 10. When it's mom's birthday or Valentine's Day, I get something for my mom. Otherwise I buy things for myself, like sweets or shoes. (girl, 12 years, St. Eustatius)
- 669. There's always money for food. We always have stocks of food at home. When there's money, we do a lot of shopping and make sure there's always plenty of food at home. My mother works for a construction company and my stepfather is head of an organization that arranges housing. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 670. I wouldn't really say that I get pocket money. Usually I just get money when I need something. I don't ask for a fixed amount every month because if I need any money I get it, as long as my mom can spare it. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 671. During the holidays I work at the construction company where my mom works. I buy school supplies or shoes with the money. I usually give my mother some money. I don't have to, because she earns her own money, but I usually do so anyway. I think I should help her if I can. (girl, 16 years, St. Eustatius)
- 672. There's always enough money at home to buy food and clothes and to go on vacation. My grandma works in the Blue Bead restaurant. She works during the day and in the evening. Grandpa works at an auto parts shop. (girl, 15 years, St. Eustatius)
- 673. There's always enough money to buy food. We have food to eat at home every day. We buy clothes when we go on vacation. There are clothing stores here, though. I went shopping once with my mom and my brother. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 674. I don't get pocket money. I did get some money for my birthday, and I'm saving it up. I'm going to use it to buy school supplies to help me learn. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 675. Sometimes there are problems because there's not enough money, but not always. My mom and my stepfather work hard to make sure that we have everything we need. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 676. Sometimes I get pocket money. Sometimes I get it from my grandma. My dad sometimes gives me \$ 10 and my mother buys phone cards for me. Sometimes my grandmother also gives me money to buy groceries. (girl, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 677. I usually only get money if I want to go somewhere. My mom says that I'll get \$ 30 or \$ 35 if I do my best at school. I'm going to save the money so I can buy something nice for myself when we go on vacation. If I any money left over, I'll buy something for my grandma. (girl, 11 years, St. Eustatius)
- 678. I get money from my mother, but I'd rather go shopping with her. That's fun! My mom says I know how to dress, but I don't know how to shop. Now that I'm older, my father no longer allows me to wear anything I want. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 679. Both my parents work. I don't have a job, and I don't really want one. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 680. Sometimes we go on vacation, to Curaçao, St. Maarten, Antigua, Saba or Saint Kitts. How often we go depends on whether we have school and whether there's enough money. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 681. I get pocket money. Sometimes I get \$ 30 every fortnight and sometimes I get \$ 50 a month. There are never any problems about money at home. (girl, 14 years, St. Eustatius)
- 682. My mom works from seven to half past two and my dad works from nine to five. We've got enough money for food. We don't really need a lot of clothes because we already have quite a lot. We usually buy new clothes if we go on vacation. (boy, 10 years, St. Eustatius)
- 683. There's never enough money as far as I'm concerned, but we have a good life. We've got enough to buy everything we need. (girl, 17 years, St. Eustatius)
- 684. There is no child benefit In the Antilles. This leads to inequality relative to the Netherlands. (expert)
- 685. What also really bothers me is that the real situation here hasn't been used as a basis for determining benefits, the minimum wage or disability insurance. In the Netherlands, the minimum income level has been established. Other provisions are determined on the basis of this minimum income level: old-age pension, minimum wage and benefits. Benefits are then calculated as a percentage of the minimum wage, and there is something to work with. This has not happened

here. Here they increased the amount that existed by a certain percentage. People cannot survive on the money. In addition, it doesn't take into account the shift from direct to indirect taxation. This means that purchasing power is declining. What's the point in first giving an increase and then taking it back again? It's not fair. Bonaire doesn't get a fair chance, and neither do Saba or St. Eustatius. (expert)

- 686. People on minimum benefits can only survive if they can earn some money or if their families help them out. People on benefits can earn up to the minimum wage. (expert)
- 687. There are some groups who are unable to earn any money and who receive no support from their families, including many single moms. Sometimes the father doesn't pay any alimony, either. (expert)
- 688. People on minimum benefits often go and stay with family, which results in lots of people living in a confined space. (expert)
- 689. There are relatively few people on benefits on the islands. People prefer not to ask for benefits and survive through earning money, or depend on help from family and friends. In that respect, there is a positive attitude. (expert)
- 690. The core of the problem is actually the low minimum wage. Many people in work struggle to make ends meet. They often have multiple jobs. (expert)
- 691. No poverty line has been established for the Caribbean Netherlands. In the European Netherlands, Statistics Netherlands (CBS) has defined a low income threshold. (expert)
- 692. There is no housing benefit system on the islands. Although there is social housing, there is a shortage of low-rent housing. On Bonaire and St. Eustatius, social housing tenants pay up to a third of their income on rent. (expert)
- 693. Participation in sports and recreational activities is often free, and doesn't really constitute a barrier for people with low incomes. (expert)
- 694. Public bodies are responsible for combating poverty, but so far they have done little.

  The social services and public bodies should improve mutual coordination. (expert)
- 695. There is a new subsidy system for public bodies for integrating policies. (expert)
- 696. People do not talk about financial problems, out of pride and shame. As a result, poverty remains almost invisible. (expert)
- 697. The State Representative, Wilbert Stolte, recently sounded the alarm. He estimated that half of the population has financial problems. (expert)
- 698. It is ridiculous that the inhabitants of the BES islands don't get child benefit. I think that it's really unfair. (expert)
- 699. There are after-school activities, but they cost money and many parents cannot afford them, even if it is only thirty dollars per month. (expert)
- 700. The island has funded 50% of the breakfast project itself. (expert)
- 701. Money is often the problem when it comes to getting things done. (expert)
- 702. There's a lot of poverty on the island. (expert)
- 703. Often it's simply a question of money. There are few clear statistics on poverty, but that doesn't make any difference. It is obvious that there is a lot of poverty. (expert)
- 704. The Youth and Family Center present a lot of excellent projects, but there's no money for their implementation. (expert)
- 705. There is no money to upgrade play areas. (expert)
- 706. Finances are always a problem when organizing things. (expert)

- 707. Lately there have been many changes. Life has become expensive with the adoption of the dollar and the abandonment of the Dutch guilder. Parents with many children find it almost impossible to buy food. There is hunger. (expert)
- 708. Poverty and hunger are concealed. (expert)

## Appendix 2 – Consulted experts

The experts listed below were consulted in the period from early 2010 to early 2013. Lengthy conversations were held with many of these experts, while others were consulted intensively via email, and yet others offered their contributions at an expert meeting, or read and commented on texts. With a few individuals the written or oral contact was brief.

The experts are listed here in alphabetical order without (academic) title, indicating the position they held at the time of the consultation.

Despite making every effort to compile a full and complete list, we cannot rule out any accidental omissions. We offer our sincere apologies to anyone omitted.

Marnix Arendshorst – acting director, Stichting Overlegorgaan Caribische Nederlanders (OCaN).

Marom Ayoubi – director, Stichting Overlegorgaan Caribische Nederlanders (OCaN).

Inge **Berben** – director, Fundashon FORMA - Bonaire.

Jarmila Berkel - teacher supervisor, Sacred Heart School - Saba.

Camelia Berkel-Dembrook - director, Expertisecentrum Onderwijs Zorg (EOZ) - St. Eustatius.

Justine Beumer-Gonggrijp – public prosecution officer - Bonaire.

Joka Blaauboer - director, Saba Health Care Foundation - Saba.

Michiel Boeken - director, Saba Comprehensive School - Saba.

Wilma Böhm - director, Basisschool De Pelikaan - Bonaire.

Juliëtte Bonneur – legal policy adviser, Netherlands Institute for Human Rights.

Huub Bouwen - head of unit SZW BES-islands.

Maryse Broek - education expert, Sardes.

Irene Broekhuijse – chairperson, Jongeren van het Koninkrijk.

Jos de **Bruijn** – co-worker, National ombudsman.

Ilona Burgers – manager, Stichting Jeugdwerk Jong Bonaire - Bonaire.

Carl Burncamper - health expert - Saba.

Elka **Charles-Simmons** – elementary school teacher, Sacred Heart School - Saba.

Pieter de **Coninck** – project secretary, Caribbean Netherlands directorate International Affairs, Ministry of VWS.

Denise Crestian-Coffie – manager, Woondiensten Fundashon Cas Boneriano (FCB).

Nienke **Deelstra** – school coach PO-council - St. Eustatius.

Angela **Dekker** - managing adviser USONA - St. Maarten.

Hans **Derks** – project leader, supporting Publich healthcare /GHOR Caribbean Netherlands.

Melissa Diaz - consultant MUNDIAZ Health Support and GGD Den Haag.

Liënne **Domacassé** – co-worker, Stichting Project - Bonaire.

Marga **Drewes** – quartermaster Youth Care, Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland - Bonaire.

Chelendra Elizabeth – family counsellor, Stichting Project - Bonaire.

Celia Fernandez Pedra – chairperson, Ban Boneiru Bèk - Bonaire.

Alida Francis – communication adviser and acting head of Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland - Saba.

Yazir Francisca – board member MAAPP, movement to promote Antillean and Aruban participation.

 $\label{lem:chairperson} \textbf{Chris Frans} - \textbf{vice-chairperson and secretary, OCaN}.$ 

Jovani **Franscado** – co-worker Bonaire police force - Bonaire.

Tanja **Gellweiler-Woeltjes** – co-worker Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.

Curvin **George** – researcher, Voogdijraad BES - Bonaire.

Suzy Guido - assistant project leader Child Focus Foundation - Saba.

Stan van **Haaren** - senior advisor, Nederlands Jeugdinstituut (NJI).

Mystica Hassell - social worker, EduPartners - St. Eustatius.

Jet van Heijnsbergen – director, Expertisecentrum Onderwijs Zorg (EOZ) - Saba.

Gene **Herbert** - social worker, EduPartners - St. Eustatius.

Rosa Hoes - director, Samenleving en Zorg Openbaar Lichaam Bonaire (OLB) - Bonaire.

John van 't Hoff – director, Scholen Gemeenschap Bonaire (SGB) - Bonaire.

Dion Humphreys – founder, MegaD Youth Foundation - St. Eustatius.

Carol Jack-Roosberg – head of public health service (GGD) - St. Eustatius.

Leen de Jong – director, Gwendolyne van Puttenschool - St. Eustatius.

Judith Keller - consultant, CoMensha.

Helga Kessels – deputy director, Woningstichting Aert Swaens.

Marieke Knol – director, Mobiliteit in Muziek.

Suzanne Koelega – journalist, The Daily Herald.

Lidy **Kooij** – school coach secondary education - Bonaire.

Gijs **Koot** – head of Public Health, A.M. Edwards Medical Center - Saba.

Sabine Kroon – policy officer, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.

Kees-Jan de Kruijf – coordinator, Werkervaring & Resocialisatie Stichting Krusada - Bonaire.

Raymond Labad - chairperson MAAPP, movement to promote Antillean and Aruban participation.

Jiehua He **Labad** – youth member MAAPP, movement to promote Antillean and Aruban participation.

Fleur Lagcher - OCW/RCN, Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland.

Vivian de **Lanoy** – researcher, youth healthcare on BES islands.

Sophie **Leenders** – co-worker Ministry of Security and Justice.

Ton **Liefaard** – professor of children's rights, faculty of law, Leiden University (UNICEF endowed chair).

Dwayne **Lindo** – brigadier, St. Eustatius police force - St. Eustatius.

Martijn Linnartz – member of the legal committee Stichting Overlegorgaan Caribische Nederlanders (OCaN).

Jodi **Mak** – co-worker Verwey-Jonker Institute.

Freek Mekking – project advisor Oranjefonds.

Shanna Mercera-Gibbs - nurse, aids-coordinator Public Health Department - St. Eustatius.

Myra ter **Meulen** – advisor youth policy.

Quintin van Mildert - co-worker, Ministry of OC&W, International Affairs.

Ambrosio **Molina** – project leader Improvement program PO OCW/RCN, Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland.

Jonneke Naber – policy advisor Netherlands Institute for Human Rights.

Ron Oei – founder tenants' association St. Eustatius Housing Fund (SHF) - St. Eustatius.

Rogier Oet – co-worker, Children's Ombudsman.

Cynthia **Ortega-Martijn** – member of House of Representatives, Christen Unie party.

Martha Padmos – co-worker, Ministry of Security and Justice.

Esmeralda Pietersz – head of Fundashon Jiwiri, learning and play school - Bonaire.

Geert van der Plas – education expert - Bonaire.

Esther Pourier-Thodé – director, Guardianship Council BES - Bonaire.

Brenda van Putten – teacher and education expert, Governor de Graafschool - St. Eustatius.

Solange **Quandus** – policy officer, Stichting Overlegorgaan Caribische Nederlanders (OCaN).

René Reehuis – head of education, EduPartners - St. Eustatius.

Kim te **Riele** – physiotherapist and secretary Saba United Sports Federation - Saba.

José **Rosales** – acting head of Bonaire police force - Bonaire.

Chaya Sampatsing - coordinator BES-affairs for public health, Ministry of VWS.

Mick Schmit – director, chairperson Stichting Project and FORSA; FAJ-circle Bonaire - Bonaire.

Herman **Schnitzler** - orthopedagogist - Bonaire.

Wim **Schutten** – project leader Child Focus Foundation - Saba.

Riet **Seally-Clappers** – director, Center for Youth and Family - Bonaire.

Brenda **Simmons** – coordinator, family guardianship Bonaire - Bonaire.

Anastacia **Simmons** – researcher, Guardianship Council Saba - Saba.

Tessa **Smets** – co-worker, Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland.

Glenville **Smith** - commissioner Statia – Portfolio Youth Government - St. Eustatius.

Aaron **Soares** - assistant project leader, Child Focus Foundation - Saba.

Derek **Spence** – physical education teacher, Saba Comprehensive School - Saba.

Iris **Sporken** – teacher, homework supervisor, Governor de Graaf School; Mega D Foundation - St. Eustatius.

Izalina Tavares – policy officer children's rights, Ministry of VWS.

Bas Tierolf - senior researcher, Verwey-Jonker Instituut.

Leo **Tigges** - liaison for Caribbean Netherlands, Ministry of Security and Justice.

Mariette van der Tol – student, Utrecht University.

Anneke van **Toll** – lawyer, legal office Van Toll N.V. - Bonaire.

Françoise **Vermunt** – policy advisor, Directorate of Relations Management, Development and Implementation Management, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

Michelle **Verplanke** – acting unit manager, Immigration and Naturalisation Service, Caribbean Netherlands.

Justine Verschoor – director, youth care and family guardianship, Caribbean Netherlands - Bonaire.

Elton **Villarreal** – board member MAAPP, movement to promote Antillean and Aruban participation.

Thijs **Voncken** – team leader real estate, Woonlinie.

Sandra **Voorneman** – coordinator, youth care and family guardianship, Centre for Youth and Family (CJG) - St. Eustatius.

Atie Vrij – policy advisor, youth justic policy department, Ministry of Security and Justice.

Gilbert **Wawoe** – chairperson, Begeleidingscommissie Onderwijs en Jongeren Samenwerkingsprogramma.

Henk Weekers - coordinator, Center for Youth and Family (CJG) - Saba.

Diana **Wilson** – director, Sacred Heart School - Saba.

Floyd **Woodley** – director, Governor de Graafschool - St. Eustatius.

Hemmie van Xanten – head of education department - Saba.

## Appendix 3 – Consulted literature

The consulted literature is listed below. After each title, the letter 'B', 'E', and/or 'S' indicates to which island the title applies. After the letter, an asterisk \* indicates whether a summary of that title is available.

The literature summaries are only available as a PDF file on the website of UNICEF Netherlands, www.unicef.nl/koninkrijkskinderen.

- 1. Belastingdienst Caribisch Nederland. Inkomstenbelasting. Informatiefolder. BES
- 2. Belastingdienst Caribisch Nederland. Wijzigingen in de Belastingwetgeving BES, een toelichting. Wijzigingen voor particulieren. BES
- 3. Beleidsnota Cultuur Bonaire. 'Sin Kosecha no tin Simadan' (2010). B
- 4. Bennekom, T. van (2010). Rapport openbaar vervoer Bonaire. B \*
- 5. Berben, M. en Bouwman, A. (2011). Aanbevelingen ten behoeve van het Schakelprogramma op St. Eustatius. E\*
- 6. Berben, M. en Visscher, A.J. (2010). Het Nederlands op de BES-eilanden: een "vreemde" taal?!. Het taalniveau Nederlands van (pre)eindexamenleerlingen op Bonaire, Saba en St. Eustatius in relatie tot de Taalgebruiker, het Taalbeleid en het Taalaanbod. Enschede: Universiteit Twente. BES \*
- 7. Blaak, M. e.a. (2012). Handboek Internationaal Jeugdrecht. Leiden: Defence for Children. BES \*
- 8. Boer, S. de, Roorda, W., Jonkman, H., Aalst, M. van (2006). *Scholierenonderzoek Communities that Care*. Nederlandse Antillen: DSP-Groep. BES \*
- 9. Bonaire Youth Outreach Foundation. *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Project document. HIV/AIDS Awareness Youth Movie.* B \*
- 10. Boom, E. van der, Donker van Heel, P., Vlasakker, S. van de & Verton, P. (2009). *Aansluiting Onderwijs Arbeidsmarkt BES-eilanden: Handreikingen voor de toekomst.* Rotterdam: ECORYS Nederland. BES \*
- Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek Nederlandse Antillen (2005). Huishoudens met zorgbehoevende kinderen. Een vergelijking tussen één- en tweeoudergezinnen, Bonaire, Curaçao, St. Maarten. Publicatiereeks Census 2001. Curaçao: CBS. B \*
- 12. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (2012). Statline, Bevolking Caribisch Nederland. BES
- 13. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (2012). The Dutch Caribbean in figures. BES
- 14. Central Bureau of Statistics Netherlands Antilles (2010). Statistical Yearbook Netherlands Antilles 2009. Curação: CBS. B \*
- 15. Child abuse workshop first step towards policy. The Daily Herald, 25 juni 2012. S
- 16. Comité voor de Rechten van het Kind (2009). Slotcommentaar voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden.

  RES \*
- 17. Comité voor de uitbanning van discriminatie van vrouwen (CEDAW) (2010). Slotcommentaar Nederland. BES \*
- 18. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights zitting 2007 (2008). *Concluding observations*. The Netherlands Antilles. BES \*
- 19. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2007). Slotcommentaar. Netherlands Antilles.

  RES \*
- 20. Committee on the Rights of the Child (2003). General Comment no. 4, Adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. CRC/GC/2003/4. BES
- 21. Committee on the Rights of the Child (2005). *General Comment no. 7, Implementing child rights in early childhood.* CRC/C/GC/7. BES
- 22. Committee on the Rights of the Child (2006). *General Comment no. 9, The rights of children with disabilities.* CRC/C/GC/9. BES
- 23. Committee on the rights of the Child (2009). General Comment no. 12, The right of the child to be heard. CRC/C/GC/12. BES

- 24. Committee on the Rights of the Child (2011). General Comment no. 13, The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence. CRC/C/GC/13. BES
- 25. Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013). *General Comment 15. The right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (Article. 24).* BES
- 26. Curconsult (2011). Belevingsonderzoek ouders en leerlingen in Caribisch Nederland. BES \*
- 27. Curconsult (2011). Samen verder bouwen. Belevingsonderzoek Caribisch Nederland. Onderzoek naar de beleving van de veranderingen door de burgers van Caribisch Nederland als gevolg van de gewijzigde staatkundige structuur binnen het Koninkrijk. BES \*
- 28. Curconsult (2011). Tracking onderzoek onder professionele onderwijsdoelgroepen in Caribisch Nederland, de nulmeting. BES \*
- 29. Curconsult (2012). Samen verder bouwen. Eénmeting Belevingsonderzoek Caribisch Nederland.

  Vervolgonderzoek naar de beleving van de veranderingen door de burgers van Caribisch

  Nederland als gevolg van de gewijzigde staatkundige structuur binnen het Koninkrijk. BES \*
- 30. Curconsult (2012). Tracking onderzoek onder professionele onderwijsdoelgroepen in Caribisch Nederland, de éénmeting. BES \*
- 31. Daantje-Celia, M., van der Linden, F. (2011). Bevolkingssamenstelling in wijken op Bonaire, toen en nu. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. B
- 32. Dienst IPOL, Korps Landelijke Politiediensten (2012). Geregistreerde criminaliteit op Bonaire, Saba en St. Eustatius 2008-2011. BES \*
- 33. Drewes, M. (2012). Armoede in Caribisch Nederland, een verkenning. BES \*
- 34. Drewes, Marga (2010). Gezond en veilig opgroeien in Caribisch Nederland (Bonaire, St. Eustatius en Saba). Een schets van de stand van zaken op het gebied van de jeugd: opgroeien en opvoeden in Caribisch Nederland. BES
- 35. Duijf, Charlotte M.A.M., en Alfred H.A. Soons (2011). *The right to self-determination and the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles*. Wolf Legal Publishers. BES
- 36. Duijf, Charlotte, en Fred Soons (2011). Zelfbeschikkingsrecht Bonairianen, Statianen en Sabanen. in: Openbaar Bestuur. Oktober 2011. BES
- 37. Dutch NGOs (2012). Shadow report on the response of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the request of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in its Concluding Observations (CEDAW/C/NLD/CO/5, para 52) to provide, within two years, information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations in paragraphs 27 and 29. BES \*
- 38. Ecorys (2009). Aansluiting Onderwijs-Arbeidsmarkt BES-eilanden, onderzoek in opdracht van het Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap. BES
- Ecorys en Curconsult (2012). Koopkrachtonderzoek Caribisch Nederland. Onderzoek naar koopkrachteffecten en sociaal economische omstandigheden op Caribisch Nederland. BES
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# Appendix 4 – Advice of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights

## 1 Introduction

In 2013, the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights published its advice, *Gelijke behandeling bij de toepassing van het Kinderrechtenverdrag in Caribisch Nederland* (Equal treatment in applying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Caribbean Netherlands). The summary included in the publication is reproduced below. The full advice is available on the institute's website. <sup>1</sup>

## 2 Summary

In this advice, the Institute for Human Rights addresses the question whether, regarding the application of the rights stipulated in the United Nations children's rights convention, is it permissible to make any form of distinction between the Caribbean Netherlands (Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba) and the European part of the Netherlands; and if so, under what conditions. To this end, the Institute examines the legal framework and the meaning of both the equivalence principle and the UNCRC. We specifically address two rights: the right to protection against child abuse and the right to education.

This advice was drawn up at the request of UNICEF Netherlands. UNICEF has extensively studied the situation of children on the six Caribbean islands of the Kingdom, publishing its final report in May 2013. There is, more generally, some ignorance and a lack of understanding regarding the equivalence principle. The Institute for Human Rights is pleased to contribute to a clarification of these issues. That is why it has chosen to publicly offer its advice with regard to the questions raised by UNICEF.

It is important that the essential minimum level of the rights stipulated in the UN children's rights convention is assured in both the Caribbean and European Netherlands. It is not permissible to make any kind of distinction regarding the level of realization of certain children's rights between the Caribbean Netherlands and the European Netherlands. Such a distinction may only be made if it does not pertain to equivalent cases, or if an objective justification can be given for the distinction. In this advice, the Institute explains the assessment framework that must be used in such a case. If the rules deviate in the two kingdom parts, then the Dutch government must justify this difference with reference to the assessment framework. In doing so and if called for, it is important that the Dutch government examines the effects on inhabitants by means of an impact assessment.

The assessment framework must take into account the nature of the UNCRC obligation concerned. The obligation sometimes compels an immediate and direct compliance with the children's right concerned, while other rights leave more scope for a gradual realization. The essential minimum level of the children's right must however be assured as quickly as possible. The UNCRC furthermore emphasizes the urgency of creating specific regulations and policy for certain citizen groups, in order to overcome their arrears in the realization of children's rights.

The assessment framework to determine whether it is permissible or not to apply a distinction in the realization of children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands and the European Netherlands consists of two steps.

First, there is the comparability test. This pertains to comparability in terms of relevant main issues in the light of the goal that the measure concerned aims to accomplish. Comparability thus does not require that the situations in the two kingdom parts are fully comparable in all respects. The Institute feels that it is not appropriate to hastily conclude that the situation in the Caribbean Netherlands is not comparable to that in the European part of the kingdom.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.mensenrechten.nl/publicaties/detail/18047.

Second, making a distinction in the realization of children's rights between the two kingdom parts is only permitted if this distinction is objective and justifiable on reasonable grounds:

- 1. the distinction must serve a legitimate purpose, in the sense of a non-discriminating goal, that satisfies a significant interest and/or a real need;
- 2. the measure must be adequate to achieve the intended goal (sufficiently precise and fitting);
- 3. the demand must be met that there is no alternative, less divergent measure to achieve the intended goal, and
- 4. the goal of the measure must be proportionate to the affected interests.

When assessing the adequacy of the measure to achieve the intended goal, the practical effects of the measure on individual citizens must also be taken into account, for instance by means of an impact assessment. The above indicates that a divergent approach to realizing children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands, compared to the European part of the kingdom, can be objective and reasonably justifiable. Significantly distinctive factors can play a role here. Nevertheless, both kingdom parts must work towards an equivalent level of protection of children's rights.

If there are any divergent rules or regulations between the two kingdom parts, then the Dutch government must motivate these differences with reference to the assessment framework. This reinforces the legal concept and the acceptance thereof. It is important to embed this consideration in a publicly accessible, specifically designated location in the legislative documents.

# Appendix 5 – The Convention on the Right of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child is also referred to by its acronym, UNCRC. An abbreviated form of the convention is given below.

#### Article 1 - Definition of the child

The Convention defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger.

#### Article 2 - Non-discrimination

The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

## Article 3 - Best interests of the child

The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers.

## Article 4 – Protection of rights

Governments have a responsibility to take all available measures to make sure children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. When countries ratify the Convention, they agree to review their laws relating to children. This involves assessing their social services, legal, health and educational systems, as well as levels of funding for these services. Governments are then obliged to take all necessary steps to ensure that the minimum standards set by the Convention in these areas are being met. They must help families protect children's rights and create an environment where they can grow and reach their potential.

## Article 5 - Parental guidance

Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly. Helping children to understand their rights does not mean pushing them to make choices with consequences that they are too young to handle. Article 5 encourages parents to deal with rights issues 'in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child'.

## Article 6 – Survival and development

Children have the right to live. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

## Article 7 - Registration, name, nationality, care

All children have the right to a legally registered name, officially recognised by the government. Children have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country). Children also have the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.

## Article 8 - Preservation of identity

Children have the right to an identity – an official record of who they are. Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

## Article 9 - Separation from parents

Children have the right to live with their parent(s), unless it is bad for them. Children whose parents do not live together have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

## Article 10 - Family reunification

Families whose members live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family.

## Article 11 - Kidnapping

Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally. This article is particularly concerned with parental abductions.

## Article 12 – Respect for the views of the child

When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account. The Convention encourages adults to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making – not give children authority over adults.

## Article 13 - Freedom of expression

Children have the right to get and share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others. In exercising the right to freedom of expression, children have the responsibility to also respect the rights, freedoms and reputations of others.

The freedom of expression includes the right to share information in any way they choose, including by talking, drawing or writing.

## Article 14 – Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should help guide their children in these matters.

## Article 15 - Freedom of association

Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as it does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

## Article 16 - Right to privacy

Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.

## Article 17 – Access to information

Children have the right to get information that is important to their health and well- being. Governments should encourage mass media – radio, television, newspapers and Internet content sources – to provide information that children can understand and to not promote materials that could harm children.

## Article 18 - Parental responsibilities

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments must respect the responsibility of parents for providing appropriate guidance to their children. The Convention places a responsibility on governments to provide support services to parents, especially if both parents work outside the home.

## Article 19 – Protection from all forms of violence

Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.

## Article 20 - Children deprived of family environment

Children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to special care and must be looked after properly, by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture and language.

## Article 21 – Adoption

Children have the right to care and protection if they are adopted or in foster care. The first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether they are adopted in the country where they were born, or if they are taken to live in another country.

## Article 22 – Refugee children

Children have the right to special protection and help if they are refugees (if they have been forced to leave their home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

## Article 23 - Children with disabilities

Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support, as well as all the rights in the Convention, so that they can live full and independent lives.

## Article 24 - Health and health services

Children have the right to good quality health care – the best health care possible – to safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

#### Article 25 - Treatment in care

Children who are looked after by their local authorities, rather than their parents, have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate. Their care and treatment should always be based on 'the best interests of the child'.

## Article 26 - Social security

Children – either through their guardians or directly – have the right to help from the government if they are poor or in need. The Dutch government made a reservation on this article: children have no independent right to social security, but only through their parents.

## Article 27 - Adequate standard of living

Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. Governments should help families and guardians who cannot afford to provide this, particularly with regard to food, clothing and housing.

## Article 28 - Right to education

All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this right. Discipline in schools should respect children's dignity. For children to benefit from education, schools must be run in an orderly way – without the use of violence. Any form of school discipline should take into account the child's human dignity. Therefore, governments must ensure that school administrators review their discipline policies and eliminate any discipline practices involving physical or mental violence, abuse or neglect.

## Article 29 - Goals of education

Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people. Children have a particular responsibility to respect the rights of their parents, and education should aim to develop respect for the values and culture of their parents.

## Article 30 - Children of minorities

Minority or indigenous children have the right to learn about and practice their own culture, language and religion. The right to practice one's own culture, language and religion applies to everyone; the Convention here highlights this right in instances where the practices are not shared by the majority of people in the country.

## Article 31 – Leisure, play and culture

Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.

## Article 32 - Child labour

The government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education. Children's work should not jeopardize any of their other rights, including the right to education, or the right to relaxation and play.

## Article 33 - Drug abuse

Governments should use all means possible to protect children from the use of harmful drugs and from being used in the drug trade.

## Article 34 - Sexual exploitation

Governments should protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. This provision in the Convention is augmented by the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

## Article 35 - Abduction, sale and trafficking

The government should take all measures possible to make sure that children are not abducted, sold or trafficked. This provision in the Convention is augmented by the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

## Article 36 - Other forms of exploitation

Children should be protected from any activity that takes advantage of them or could harm their welfare and development.

## Article 37 – Detention and punishment

No one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way. Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults, should be able to keep in contact with their families, and should not be sentenced to death or life imprisonment without possibility of release.

## Article 38 - War and armed conflicts

Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war. Children under 15 should not be forced or recruited to take part in a war or join the armed forces. The Convention's Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict further develops this right, raising the age for direct participation in armed conflict to 18 and establishing a ban on compulsory recruitment for children under 18.

## Article 39 - Rehabilitation of child victims

Children who have been neglected, abused or exploited should receive special help to physically and psychologically recover and reintegrate into society. Particular attention should be paid to restoring the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

## Article 40 - Juvenile justice

Children who are accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment in a justice system that respects their rights. Governments are required to set a minimum age below which children cannot be held criminally responsible and to provide minimum guarantees for the fairness and quick resolution of judicial or alternative proceedings.

# Colophon

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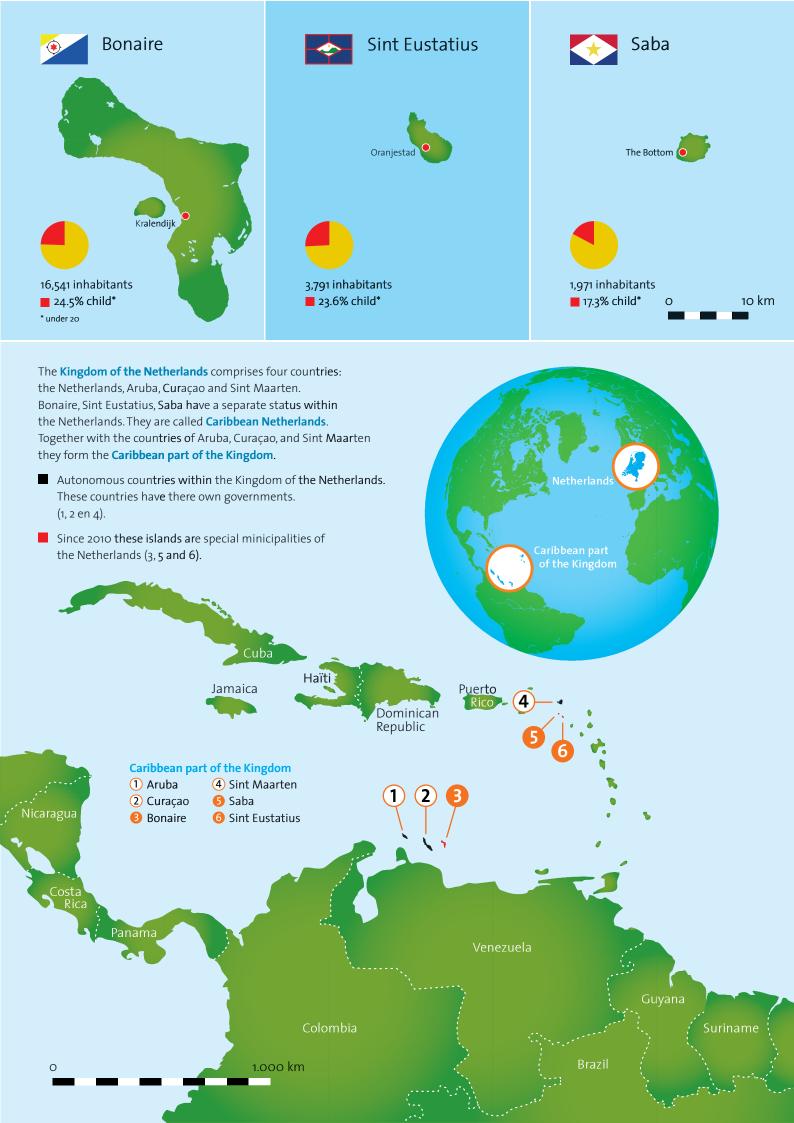
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More than 5000 children grow up on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. These islands became part of the Netherlands in 2010. Together they form what is now called Caribbean Netherlands.

What is it like for children to grow up in Caribbean Netherlands?

How does this situation relate to the requirements of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child?

*Child on St. Eustatius* answers these questions. It describes the results of a study into the situation of children on the island.

UNICEF did this survey to get a complete picture of the situation of the children. The survey was conducted between early 2010 and the beginning of 2013. It maps all the aspects of children's life on St. Eustatius. To this effect children and young people themselves were interviewed, experts were consulted and literature was reviewed. The situation of children is checked against the standards of the UN Child Rights Convention. The minimum requirements of this convention apply to all children in the Netherlands, including the children in Caribbean Netherlands.

There are separate reports on Bonaire and Saba and a summary of the three reports.



**UNICEF** Nederland