

Bonaire: cultural participation and cultural education in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

In 2021, Gregory Richardson mapped out the core data on the cultural infrastructure (arts and heritage) for cultural participation and cultural education in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. His study was commissioned by the National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts (LKCA). In this article, we share the information he compiled about Bonaire. To find out more about Gregory Richardson's research, [please visit our website](#).

Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten and the European part of the Netherlands form the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The islands of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba (collectively abbreviated as BES) are special municipalities within the Kingdom. Together they make up the Caribbean Netherlands. These six islands as a whole form the [Caribbean part of the Kingdom](#).



1 Key population data

Languages: Dutch, Papiamentu

Languages spoken:

- Papiamentu 63.8%
- Dutch 15.4%
- Spanish 15.2%
- English 4.5%
- Other 1.2%

[More information](#)

2 Cultural policy

In the area of culture, agreements have been made between the Caribbean Netherlands and the European Netherlands. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for the relevant legislation. Public entities (special municipalities) shape policies through local legislation (island ordinances) and implement policies.

Cultural policy plan

The Culture Policy Paper takes UNESCO's definition of culture as its starting point:

Culture comprises the complex set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or a social group. This includes not only art and literature, but also lifestyles, ways of living together, basic human rights, value systems, norms, traditions and beliefs.

Policy plan

Vision and mission

- Strengthening the natural synergy between culture and nature, whereby culture should be seen as a celebration of nature.
- The mission underlying Bonaire's cultural policy is based on people and society, social participation and the strength of neighbourhoods. Culture plays an important role in society, connecting people in various ways.

Bonaire's cultural policy helps to strengthen:

- 1 the formation of the identity of the people of Bonaire
- 2 Bonaire's social cohesion
- 3 the participation of the Bonairean in the sustainable economic development of Bonaire.

Policy plan

Rijksdiensten OCW

Contacts

Mr Timoteo Silberie, Interim head of Education and Welfare, Directorate of Society and Care

Mr Felix Thomas, Interim head Sekshon di Kultura, Arte i Lireratura (SKAL), Directorate of Society and Care

Ms Jennifer Pocornie-Martis, culture and youth advisor

More information

3 Education

Primary schools

7 (government subsidised)

2 (fee-paying)

More information

number of pupils: 1,958 <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/cijfers/detail/84732NED>

- 1 De Pelikaan primary school (publicly funded with own school board)
- 2 Kolegio Kristu Bon Wardador (Catholic)
- 3 Skol Amplio Papa Cornès (Catholic)
- 4 Kolegio Rayo di Solo (publicly funded)
- 5 Kolegio San Bernardo (Catholic)
- 6 Kolegio San Luis Bertrán (Catholic)
- 7 Kolegio Strea Briante (publicly funded)
- 8 Aquamarin primary school (fee-paying)
- 9 Het KORAAL (fee-paying)

Secondary schools 1

Bonaire Combined School (SGB)

Various branches: Liseo (senior general secondary HAVO/pre-university VWO), prevocational secondary (VMBO), special education (SLP)

More information

Senior secondary vocational education (MBO): 3 programmes providing courses and/or training at MBO level

Bonaire Combined School (SGB)

- Building and Infrastructure
- Economics and Administration
- Hospitality and Tourism
- IT
- Media
- Technology and Process Engineering
- Safety and Sports
- Healthcare and Welfare

SKJ Forma Bonaire

- Assistant service and care (vocational training track, BOL / apprenticeship training track, BBL)
- Assistant sales and retail (BOL/BBL)
- Assistant catering, food and food industry (BOL/BBL)
- Assistant construction, living and maintenance (BBL)
- Assistant plant, animal or (green) living environment (BBL)

Fundashon Mariadal Academie

- Nursing training programme
- Nursing auxiliary programme

Percentage of school dropouts

There is no proper registration of dropout rates.

More information

4 Cultural sector

Hòfi Kultural

The foundation's main goal is to collaborate with others in organising activities and to increase expertise and exchange with the goal of stimulating the cultural climate on Bonaire.

Sekshon di Kultura, Arte i Literatura, SKAL Dept. of Culture

Directorate of Society & Care

UNESCO United Nations Educational

Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO Working Group on Bonaire

Fundashon Akademia Papiamentu

For the promotion and preservation of Papiamentu language and culture

Fundashon Kultural Historiko Bonaire (FUHIKUBO)

Organisation for research and cultural heritage dedicated to preserving the cultural, historical and natural heritage of the island of Bonaire.

Mangazina di Rei

Cultural and heritage activities and [Facebook Mangazina di Rei](#)

Dance Sensation Dance School (DSD)

Performing arts

Dance and More Dance and sporting activities

Bonaire International Art and Talent Academy

Arte di Palabra Boneiru

Spoken word competition between the ABC islands

ACE Foundation Art Culture Education

Bonaire Youth Outreach Foundation (BYOF)

An organisation that seeks to forge young people into the leaders of tomorrow.

TXN Studios

Libraries

In general, it can be said that library work on the islands of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba is fundamentally different from that in the European Netherlands. Public libraries in the Caribbean Netherlands are mainly focused on the traditional lending function of the library. The layout of the libraries is very outdated, especially on Bonaire and Sint Eustatius. On Bonaire, the library is not centrally located.

The libraries on Sint Eustatius and Bonaire are currently ill-equipped to function as learning and development centres. On Bonaire, an initiative was recently launched to incorporate a fully fledged library branch into the restoration of a listed building complex. In a letter of intent, the Public Entity of Bonaire and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) will establish joint principles, goals and actions for the realisation of this project.

The evaluation of the Public Library Facilities Act (WSOB) has also highlighted a need to strengthen the library system across the European and Caribbean Netherlands. The Act states that the public library system should contribute to personal development and improvement of opportunities in society. That includes the role of library work in lifelong development, as stated in a motion put forward in parliament. Library work in the Caribbean Netherlands is currently ill-equipped to fulfil these tasks. Improving this situation will require financial efforts

(incidental and structural) for which no funds are available at present. The government of the Netherlands can provide temporary incentives, but structural responsibility lies with the public entities. The Royal Library (KB) offers support and guidance to the libraries in the Caribbean Netherlands. In the longer term, the KB will also provide support to the public entities in making structural resources available for library work in the Caribbean Netherlands.

Cultural education activities

- Art & Culture Week – Part of UNESCO Arts Education Week
- Kunstbende (exchange with the Netherlands)

Stakeholders and key contacts in the field of cultural education and participation

- Segni Bernardina (Ace Kids)
- Johnrick Anthony (Arte di Palabra)
- Liliane de Geus (policy advisor on culture, arts, tourism and other sectors)
- Alca Sint Jago (policy advisor building and heritage conservation)
- Emma Sint Jago (Foundation for Art and Culture)
- Danilo Christiaan (Mangazina di Rei)
- Dennis Martinus (BYOF)

5 Funds and funding bodies

No funds or funding bodies known with a specific focus on Bonaire.

6 Other culture and welfare initiatives

INDEBON Instituto di Deporte Boneriano
(Department of Sport, Society & Care Directorate)

FESBO Federashon Sentronan di Bario Boneiru
(Community Federation)

Out-of-school childcare

- Foundation Akohida Profeshonal Pa Mucha
- BES(t) 4 KIDS
- BoksBonaire

Stichting Jong Bonaire
(Foundation for young people)