

SAILING IN SALT WATER

ADVANCING THE DUTCH CARIBBEAN REPARATIONS AGENDA
AND ESTABLISHING AN INTER-ISLAND KNOWLEDGE AND
EXPERTISE NETWORK ON THE SLAVERY PAST AND ITS HERITAGE



*Proceedings of the Interinsular Consultation Symposium,
St. Maarten, September 28-30, 2023*

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‘The unequal distribution of knowledge, resources and access to science, debate policy-making within the Kingdom calls for changing perspectives and equal distribution’

Allen, R.M., E. Captain, M. van Rossum & U. Vyent (2023, p. 439) Het koloniale slavernij en doorwerkingen: bevindingen. In: *Staat en Slavernij, Het Nederlandse koloniale slavernijverleden en zijn doorwerkingen*. Amsterdam, Athenaeum-Polak & Van Genneep.

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2021/07/01/ketenen-van-het-verleden>.

Acknowledgement

The Interinsular Consultation Symposium was funded by the Dutch Ministry of Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations and realized with the support of the National Institute for Dutch Slavery History and Legacy (NiNsee). This publication was funded by the University of Aruba.

A Note from the Editor

To maintain the writing and argumentation styles of the individual authors, I have tried not to impose a single editorial format to the presented papers. Unfortunately, the reproduction of all visual materials of the presentations was not possible. Janice James, Heleen Bongers and Rose Mary Allen were kind enough to proof read this publication.



Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en
Koninkrijksrelaties



University of Aruba

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and Establishing an Inter-Island Knowledge and
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Colophon
Editor: Luc Alofs
Cover Artwork: Raimie Richardson
Lay out: ADCTRA.com

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ISBN: 978-94-93289-45-1

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Opening address

Frits Goedgedrag

Chairperson Interinsulair Overleg Slavernijverleden / Interinsular Consultation Slavery Past

Dear friends,

Finally, after three years, we meet in person: not on a computer screen but live, without any internet connection. It has taken a long time. In July 2020, many of you became island coordinators for the working group *Adviescollege Dialooggroep Slavernijverleden*. In my own case, I was its chair until the Covid-19 pandemic forced me to resign; then I handed over the baton to colleague Dagmar Oudshoorn.

Who could have foreseen in 2020 that apologies for their role in transatlantic slavery would be made by the Dutch state, by the Royal Family, by De Nederlandsche Bank, by a still growing number of cities, provinces, universities, et cetera? Our enslaved leaders of resistance to slavery and repression will be rehabilitated. As apologizing party, the Dutch government is willing to work together on ‘herstel’, a word we translate in Papiamentu and Papiamentu as ‘*reparashon*’ and ‘*reparacion*’, in English as ‘*reparations*’; it has made funds available to achieve this.

It has taken decades, lifetimes, and generations to arrive at this historical moment. We are indebted to countless, often anonymous, enslaved Africans and their descendants. They fought in many different manners to regain humanity for those who were stolen, kidnapped, dehumanized, exploited, even murdered. Today, we acknowledge their role in the struggle for justice, reparations, and healing. We are grateful that governments, corporations, and descendants of slave-owning families have shown remorse for their forefathers’ role in the atrocities that were committed to our African Caribbean ancestors under the cruel regime of slavery.

Important developments have been set in motion by the recent apologies. For instance, that this symposium was possible. Let us go back in time. In the fall of 2021, the Interinsular Consultation arose out of the need to follow up upon the recommendations in the report *Chains of the Past*, which had been presented to the Dutch government on July first, 2021. We felt the recommendations did not reflect the thoughts and feelings, the wishes, and agendas of the six Dutch Caribbean islands as they were expressed during the dialogues on our islands to their fullest extent. The report pleaded for Dutch Caribbean input in and ownership of a future reparation’s agenda, but it did not include a clear road map. Also, and perhaps even more worrying, we noticed that the apologies and reparations debate in the Netherlands continued without the participation of our islands. The Transatlantic crime scenes of slavery were neglected and the descendants of the enslaved living there were forgotten.

Therefore, we took the initiative to call together the (by then former) Dutch Caribbean dialogue table coordinators to develop a strategy to actively become participants in the Dutch public apologies debate and involve and inform our communities. Caribbean voices had to be heard to ensure that the public debate would become a Kingdom-wide, instead of an inward-looking European-Dutch discussion.

Starting our meetings in the fall of 2021, the Interinsular Consultation took ample time to get to know each other, to learn about shared and diverse experiences and multiple legacies of slavery; about the different sensibilities and emotions surrounding them on each of our islands; about the different attitudes towards the topic by our island governments, institutions, and communities. About different perspectives, phases, and paces in the recognition (or denial) of the complex, multiple heritages of slavery and the silences surrounding it. Silences and taboos that still exist in our communities and that we cannot and must not deny. It was Covid-19 time, and we spent many hours together behind our computer screens.

In May 2022, we presented our *Pleidooi voor Erkenning, Excuses en Herstel in het Caribisch deel van het Koninkrijk*, ‘Plea for recognition, apologies, and reparations in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom’ to the Dutch minister of the Interior and Kingdom Affairs, the members of the First and Second Chamber and the State Secretary for Kingdom Relations. The Governors, prime-ministers and Island-governors of our islands received a copy of our Plea. Since then, this has been the leading document for our approach towards Dutch and Caribbean stakeholders and our efforts to promote Dutch Caribbean solidarity, both before and after December 2022. Our Plea is added to these proceedings as an appendix.

We have repeated the same message again and again. Our position can be summarized as follows:

1. the Dutch Caribbean is the (but not the only) crime scene of the Dutch involvement with transatlantic slavery, colonialism and their multi-dimensional aftermath;
2. the islands recognize their differences and communalities and will work together where possible and support each other in a partly shared and partly island-specific reparations agenda;
3. the islands demand ownership for their reparation agendas and will be in charge of the execution of these agendas;
4. the islands will work towards an inter-island Dutch Caribbean Knowledge Network for Reparations and Healing as the counterpart of Dutch knowledge institutes for the support of their reparations agenda(s);
5. subsidy procedures must be decentralized and must be accessible to the often less organized Dutch Caribbean communities and their grassroots organizations;
6. the islands will not accept presents or agendas they did not ask for;
7. metropole institutions cannot adequately judge if Dutch Caribbean project proposals are realistic or relevant within our context;
8. fixed ratios in apology budgets should be established to avoid false and unwanted competition between the Kingdom territories and also Surinam.

During the past two years, the Interinsular Consultation has built networks within as well as between the islands, within the Kingdom and towards Surinam. We have had countless conversations with Dutch and Caribbean ministers, state secretaries, members of the Second and First Chamber, heads of departments and civil servants, representatives of De Nederlandsche Bank, de Verwey-Jonker Institute, the quartermasters for the future Slavery Museum in Amsterdam. Many times, we have made clear that metropole debate and discussion does not (necessarily) incorporate or reflect the Dutch Caribbean experiences. *‘The metropole is an island too’*, a political ecosystem with its own internal dynamics and oftentimes Eurocentric undercurrents. Through time, we were able to gain the trust from our own governments, heritage communities and local institutions that are involved with the slavery past.

I mention a number of defining moments:

- October 2021: letter to the Dutch minister of the Interior and Kingdom Affairs announcing our existence;
- December 2021: meeting with Senator Peter Nicolai, initiator by motion of the process of installing the Dialooggroep Slavernijverleden;
- February 2022: meeting with prof. dr. R.M. Allen, member editorial committee ‘Staat en Slavernij’;
- May 2022: meeting with De Nederlandsche Bank;
- May 2022: Pleidooi and positive reaction cabinet Rutte;
- May 2022: meeting with Verwey-Jonker Institute;
- June 2022: round table meeting with Second Chamber;
- November 2022: first meetings to explore possibilities for collaboration with NiNsee, Surinam and the islands;
- November 2022: Catshuis session in Curaçao;
- December 2022: Apologies by prime minister Rutte;
- January 2023: meeting with Quartermasters of the Amsterdam – Dutch Slavery Museum;
- January 2023: island visits Quartermasters of the Amsterdam – Dutch Slavery Museum;
- January – present: numerous visits from Dutch dignitaries;
- January – present: deliberations with DNB;
- June 2023: Catshuis session at Provinciehuis, The Hague;
- July 2023: Apologies by King Willem-Alexander in Amsterdam and locally.

We have been loud, clear, and if necessary outspoken when we encountered neocolonial reflexes and attitudes by metropole partners, whether they were institutions or individuals, irrespective of their political status, positions, or ideological background. Neocolonialism and eurocentrism are not in agreement with the spirit of apologies and the humbleness that should accompany them. I think our approach worked out well and I am convinced that the Interinsular Consultation has contributed positively to the outcome of the apology process, sometimes as lobbyists, sometimes as lubricating oil for the Kingdoms political machinery, always in openness and honesty and to the best of our abilities.

I consider the apologies for the role of the Dutch state and its predecessors in the Transatlantic slavery as expressed by prime minister Mark Rutte on December 19, 2022,

and repeated by our Head of State, King Willem-Alexander, July 1, 2023, as the framework for further discussions. Equally, the responses by our governments on these two dates are leading statements for future collaborations in the process that must lead to reparations and healing the historical wounds of slavery.

This is a week of opportunities. During this symposium, papers of our keynote speakers will function as food for individual reflection, shared thoughts and joint discussion. We will use this opportunity to discuss components of a Dutch Caribbean reparations agenda and the design of a properly funded and sustainable Dutch Caribbean Knowledge Network for Reparations and Healing. We shall also address the topic of governance of the funds made available by the Dutch government. On Sunday and Monday, we will present our proposals in the Caribbean Catshuis sessions, in Sint Maarten after our symposium. There we hope to find support among governments, institutions, and NGOs to bring the reparations process beyond the comma, for the benefit of our communities and our Kingdom.

Our platform consists of independent individuals forming a non-governmental platform. From the very start, the Interinsular Consultation does not pretend to represent descendants, institutions, organizations, governments, or islands. We have tried to connect them. We have done this voluntarily, committed, independent of professional and political affiliations and mostly in our spare time, without compensation. We operated transparently by sharing information with our communities to the best of our abilities. Therefore, we also share the papers presented in our symposium with a wider audience. The University of Aruba volunteered to publish our proceedings.

The organizers thank the Dutch government and the National Institute for Dutch Slavery History and Legacy (NinSee) for making this historical symposium possible. Let me finish by thanking our invited speakers and advisors prof. dr. Rose Mary Allen, drs. Charles do Rego MBA, drs. Raymond Hernandez, Sidney Justiana MBA, Sedney Marten, Amaris Richardson, dr. Gregory Richardson, mr. Suzy Römer LLM, drs. Peter Scholing, drs. Max Scriwanek, note taker Janice James, moderator mr. Jason Rodgers LLM and all others who have made this symposium possible. On behalf of the entire group, I would like to thank Ruben Severina, who with *alma, kurpa i kurason* did his utmost to bring us all together.

Having said this, I open our symposium and pass the word to our moderator Jason Rogers.

Building a Research Agenda on Slavery and Its Impact in the Dutch Caribbean Islands

Rose Mary Allen

University of Curaçao dr. Moises da Costa Gomez

Within the Dutch Kingdom, scholarship on slavery in the Netherlands, has traditionally focused much more on Suriname than the Caribbean islands (Fatah-Black, 2012). Also, within the group of Dutch Caribbean islands, slavery historiography has dealt predominantly with Curaçao, giving relatively little attention to Aruba, Bonaire, Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius and Saba. The historiography of slavery produced locally on the Dutch Caribbean islands is relatively small compared to that produced in The Netherlands.

The surge of interest in reparation on the islands warrants a research agenda that identifies knowledge gaps, outlines topics to be investigated, and develops questions with significant potential for more in-depth research, in order to gain greater insight into the nature, scope and impact of slavery on the six islands, both separately and as a grouping with a shared history.

This paper consists of two parts: first, a research assessment, i.e., an overview of the state of affairs ('balance sheet') of published research with regards to slavery and its impact, and second, some thoughts for a research agenda based on gaps in the existing literature.

For this presentation, a starting point is the 2021 publication called *Ketenen van het verleden: Rapport van bevindingen van het Adviescollege Dialooggroep Slavernijverleden*. This publication is historic as it is the first report based on community consultations on all six islands, dealing with the sensitive topic of slavery and its impact. The consultations also addressed —on some of the islands more than on the others— theoretical aspects regarding slavery research as well as practical issues such as establishing local centers of knowledge and research. In the recently (2023) published Staat en slavernij: *Het Nederlandse koloniale slavernijverleden en zijn doorwerkingen*, the various authors provide research directions as requested by the editors of the volume. The book deals with how slavery and colonialism defined the actions of The Netherlands in Africa, the Americas and Asia, the interconnection between the different geographical regions of the Dutch Empire, and between slavery and other forms of (forced) labor as well as the legal system, religion, family formation, gender relations, language and education. Another important reference work is the overview of themes presented by Jeanne Henriquez, as a representative of Curaçao's Plataforma Sklabitut i Herensha di Sklabitut, to the Dutch minister of the Interior and Kingdom Affairs (BZK) on 27 October 2021.

The landscape of local scholarship on the islands concerning slavery and its impact

Originally, research on slavery was overtly Eurocentric and even racist guided by institutionalized and racialized views of the status ascribed to people based on their race or ethnicity. This trend was somewhat broken in the mid-twentieth century starting with

the writings of Johan Hartog, a historian by profession, who did not limit his topics to administrative affairs, but covered various other themes based on a lot of factual sources that he found in the archives in The Netherlands and on the islands. Hartog is one of the few historians who wrote on the history of all the six islands. However, slavery is underrepresented in his work.

A notable characteristic of the historiography of the islands is the contribution by members of the Roman Catholic Church. Some priests published historical articles and books. They were not academically trained as historians, often approached their work from a missionary perspective. However, when read against the grain, they can provide insight into the social issues faced by the enslaved and freed black people and their descendants in the post-Emancipation period.

A new, more sociological approach to the study of slavery is found in the dissertation of Harmannus 'Harry' Hoetink (1931-2005), called *Het patroon of the oude Curaçaose samenleving: Een sociologische studie*. Hoetink focuses on the hierarchal social structure of Curaçao during the slavery period. This publication formed the basis for the analysis by the Curaçaoan sociologist René A. Römer of how color, race and ethnic origin determined the social position of people in Curaçao even after slavery was abolished. Also Wout van den Bor's translated thesis *Island adrift: The social organization of a small Caribbean community: The case of St. Eustatius*, describes the economic and social structure of Sint Eustatius during slavery.

A new approach focusing on the labor dimension of slavery can be seen in Paula's (second) dissertation about slavery in Sint Maarten, published in 1992 as *'Vrije' slaven: een sociaal-historische studie over de dualistische slavenemancipatie op Nederlands Sint Maarten, 1816-1863*. Paula shows the effect that the abolition of slavery in French Saint-Martin in 1848 had on the enslaved on the Dutch part of the island. Strikes, claims of freedom, and escapes by a large number of enslaved motivated the proclamation of several government measures by way of which the enslaved in Sint Maarten became treated essentially as free workers with employment contracts, or as Paula calls them, "quasi slaves". Indeed, there existed a variety of forced labor relations in the Dutch Empire during slavery, a theme more recently examined by Mathias van Rossum (2019).

Starting from the seventies there has been a growing trend to challenge Eurocentric historiography by centering histories of slavery, colonialism, and especially resistance by the enslaved. An example is the book by Charles do Rego about the 1795 slave uprising in Curaçao (1983), reprinted in 1995 and rewritten in English in 2009. The growing attention for studies of resistance by the enslaved to slavery in the Dutch Caribbean is motivated by the connection between the history of slavery and present forms of social inequality, both within and between the different parts of the Dutch Kingdom. Past resistance gives modern-day communities the assurance that their enslaved ancestors had agency and did not undergo slavery passively. Narratives of creativity and heroism emerging from these studies contribute to the continuing process of emancipation and serve as incentives for nation-building.

The particularity of Aruba with regards to slavery was made clear in the 1996 study by Luc Alofs, *Slaven zonder plantage: Slavernijen emancipatie op Aruba, 1750-1963*. This publication confronted Aruba with its history of slavery —which had been denied or downplayed for a longtime. It was expanded and reprinted in 2003 and will have a third, yet again updated edition in 2024. In addition, the Aruba National Archives published an annotated source edition of its slavery archives (Arends, 2015). Only recently, Antoin and Luckhart (2023) contributed significantly to our knowledge about slavery, slave labor, manumissions, and emancipation on the island of Bonaire.

Neglected social groups: women and children

In the historiography of the slavery past, it can be concluded that certain subgroups among the enslaved have received little attention. The Curaçaoan historian Nolda C. Römer-Kenepa approached the stratification among women intersectionally by indicating the double exploitation of enslaved women in terms of both gender and color in her Master's thesis (1980). Jeanne Henriquez has brought new insights and interpretations of home and family life among the enslaved and free black people and has paid attention to the complications in documenting nonlegal unions of enslaved couples in her 2006 article *'Forsa di un nashon ta dependé di forsa di su famianan'* [The strength of a nation depends on the strength of its families]. In 'The repercussions of rumor: An adultery case from Curaçao' (2016), Jessica Roitman uses the archival data of an eighteenth-century dispute to break with the taboo around intimacy and sexuality, themes that are not easy to research. Ryan Espersen's 2017 dissertation, *'Better than we': Landscapes and materialities of race, class, and gender in pre-Emancipation colonial Saba, Dutch Caribbean*, examines how gender and race intersected in the lives of African-descended Saba women, neglected not only because of their gender but because of the small size of the island.

The history of enslaved children, also a neglected subgroup, receives attention in the 2010 anthology *Kind aan de ketting: Opgroeien in slavernij, in heden en verleden*, which contains articles on Curaçao, Aruba and the Antilles as a whole by amongst others by Dutch Caribbean authors such as Rose Mary Allen, Luc Alofs, Ronald Donk and Wim Rutgers (2010).

Deconstructing colonial historiography through old and new historical sources: Reading written documents "along and against the grain"

Colonial archives are mostly seen as legal repositories of knowledge and official repositories of policy. However, colonial archives are also repositories of "good taste and bad faith" in the sense that selections are made of what is kept and what is discarded. This selectivity matters and it is important to examine how colonial recordkeeping has evolved and what has been silenced, as anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) calls it. A meaningful understanding of the broader context of enslavement on the islands requires critical examination of the archival sources, reading "along and against the grain" as Ana Laura Stoler calls it, and understanding the coloniality of the archives.

Oral history

Scholars searching for new, non-colonial sources are increasingly using oral history (and

also material culture) in order to produce new knowledge and to present new viewpoints. Oral sources are used to see the history of slavery from the point of view of the enslaved. Oral sources include stories, myths, songs, proverbs, and other information passed down orally from generation to generation. In Curaçao, Paul Brenneker (1912-1996) and Elis Juliana (1927-2013) collected a large amount of oral information after 1958, including from people born before the Abolition of slavery in 1863. Most of their data has been stored in the Zikinzá collection. In Sint Eustatius in the 1970s, Vivian Graham, a retired American journalist who settled on the island, interviewed elderly citizens about their life and that of their ancestors. Her research is now part of the collections of the Sint Eustatius Historical Foundation. The anthropologist Julia G. Crane, associated with the Department of Anthropology of the University of North Carolina, published *Statia silhouettes* in 1999, which contains a collection of 22 life histories for which she conducted interviews during the summers of 1985-1987. Crane had also published *Saban silhouettes* (1987), similarly based on life stories.

In Bonaire, Frans Booi and Max Sint Jago collected stories and songs as memories of the past. Their work has been continued by F.D. 'Bòì' Antoin, who has also performed extensive oral-history research among descendants of the enslaved. Comparable to Booi and Sint Jago, in Aruba, Hubert Booi and Gregorio 'Ito' Tromp conducted oral history research in the 1960s. Their collection is kept at the National Library Aruba. As for Sint Maarten, the Dutch sociologist Memno Sypkens Smit collected stories, beliefs, songs, personal reminiscences, proverbs, and oral information passed orally from generation to generation and published them in 1981 in *Rapport ter voorlopige afsluiting van het cultureel antropologisch onderzoek op Sint Maarten (N.A.)*.

Brenneker and Juliana's oral-history data collection has been used by Armando Lampe to substantiate the agency of the enslaved in his study on the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the social life of enslaved people (1988). In *Kiss of a Slave* (1997), Frank Martinus Arion uses Brenneker and Juliana's data to decipher the Guene, a language spoken by enslaved in Curaçao and Bonaire but now extinct. Anthropologist Richenel Ansano looks at the human rights aspects of documenting, preserving, and teaching such endangered language (2014). Rose Mary Allen's 2007 study, *Di ki manera: A Social History of Afro-Curaçaoans, 1863-1917*, covers the social life of Afro-Curaçaoans in the post-Abolition period and makes connections with the oral history of the slavery past based on oral history. René Rosalia's 1997 dissertation, *Tambú: The legal and ecclesiastical repression of Afro-Curaçao popular expression*, also goes back to the period of slavery and is based on interviews that he conducted with people on the subject of tambú, an Afro-Curaçaoan musical genre that was persecuted by the state and the Church during colonial times. The recourse of oral history research has been essential in helping to recover information about Afro-Caribbean spirituality.

Material culture and Archaeology

A specific approach to understanding slavery has been the study of material culture, based on archaeological research. The archaeologist Jay Havisser has done several studies on the different islands in which he reconstructed the lifestyles of the enslaved by analyzing

archaeological artifacts, unearthed from areas surrounding plantations and the architecture of the rural dwellings of the enslaved (1997,1999). In *Vineyard Burial Ground, St. Maarten: Emergency Archaeological Observations Mission Report* (2004), Havisser focuses on four human skeletons rescued from a proposed construction site in Sint Maarten and which sheds light on the burial system and customs of people of African descent during slavery in Sint Maarten.

Archeology can assist in debunking certain concepts such as the claim by Harry Hoetink (1972) that Curaçao had a mild form of slavery. Hoetink wanted to prove that the economic system, rather than the religious denomination of the enslavers, determined the treatment of the enslaved. He introduced the terms mild versus harsh bondage and according to him, slavery in Curaçao was mild because the island did not have a plantation economy like Suriname, where slavery was more brutal in his assessment. Archeological studies, such as that by Felicia. Fricke (2020) countered Hoetink's qualification by showing that the Transatlantic crossing and subsequent heavy physical labor damaged the physical health of the enslaved in Curaçao, as can be evidenced from their excavated bones.

Archaeology without community involvement can result in conflict, as was the case in Sint Eustatius in 2021. An 18th-century burial ground was discovered there when archeologists were excavating an area near the airport that was planning an expansion. Based on a 1781 map of the island, the archaeologists believed that they were excavating the remains of the former Golden Rock Plantation's slave quarters. They uncovered 48 skeletons at the gravesite (Report, 2022). The subsequent public discussion on the island centered around the fact that the local community was kept outside of a matter that was very emotional for them because it concerned their ancestors.

Scientific management of data through digitization

Digitization is seen as an important step in making historical documents available, thereby empowering scholars in (former) colonies to reclaim their own history (Groenewoud, 2023). Recent digital humanities projects on the islands exemplify attempts to expand accessibility to archival materials toward larger and more diverse audiences. In Curaçao, a digital database has been created and the Curaçao Slave registers (1839-1863) and Emancipation registers (1863) have been available since August 17, 2020 via the websites of the National Archives of Curaçao, and that of the Netherlands⁽¹⁾. Recently, searching for information about people who lived in slavery in Aruba and Sint Eustatius has also become easier with the placement online of two indexes and accompanying scans of colonial archives⁽²⁾. These digitized documents can be very helpful, as they enable users to follow a family lineage from slavery times up to a certain point in the past or the present. Such a genealogical approach can bring about a more personal view of the social and economic development of individuals and families in a society.

¹ <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/beleven/nieuws/Curaçao-se-slavenregister-en-emancipatieregisters-onlinen>

² <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/nieuws/indexen-slavernijverleden-aruba-en-sint-eustatius-online>

In Aruba, digitalization has been taken up by various knowledge organizations in the joint and expanding *coleccion.aruba* project³). In their symposium presentation, Hernandez and Scholing will elaborate on this initiative in their contribution to this symposium and its proceedings.

Some final thoughts for an inter-island research agenda

In the search for more in-depth analyses and new scholarly directions and perspectives, local scholarship has made use of the available historical resources in new ways, while also applying new and different methods and resources.

The growing historical awareness of the six Dutch Caribbean societies regarding reparation occurs in a context in which the historical wounds of colonialism and slavery, with their ethnic, racial and other dimensions, have not yet been completely healed. Colonialism has also caused people in the colonies to deny the slavery heritage, while attention for slavery has remained limited to a relatively small group of scholars and activists. Governments over the course of time have not created proper infrastructural facilities and (financial) incentives for the study of the history of slavery and its impact. As a result, Dutch Caribbean historiography has been largely driven by the agenda of Dutch institutions and their willingness to finance certain research and educational projects. In this context, Curaçao, the largest of the Dutch Caribbean islands and traditionally the center of Dutch colonial rule, has had a relatively privileged position when it comes to research-based knowledge production in the Dutch Caribbean.

Recommendations

A balanced research agenda must include new ways of looking at the historical data and the development of new methodological tools to end the invisibility of the enslaved from whom a great part of the present-day population of the islands descends. For this purpose, training and capacity building are very essential on all the six islands.

The research agenda should also bear in mind that the Dutch colonial history in the Caribbean reaches well beyond the geographical boundaries of the present-day Kingdom of The Netherlands. Studies show that the history of the islands relates to countries across the world that have known Dutch colonization, including countries in the Caribbean that are not Dutch speaking at present.

The research agenda should address the historical wounds of colonialism and slavery and their impact on mental health, mostly on self-denial, self-discrimination and self-undervaluation of aspects of culture such as language, traditional medicine, music, and spirituality. This necessitates a more multi- and interdisciplinary approach to the study of slavery and its impact on society.

The research agenda for the Dutch Caribbean should also seek to remedy the relative neglect of subgroups such as women and children, as mentioned in my overview. More

³ <https://coleccion.aw>

attention needs to be paid to how contemporary relationships (man-woman, father-child, and so on) have been affected by the fact that couples and families could not form durable relationships during slavery. Also, attention to the impact of slavery on historically marginalized neighborhoods on the islands will also enable poverty alleviation strategies that are firmly grounded in society.

Regarding a more scientific approach to slavery history and its impact, Luc Alofs' proposal to compare small islands to other small islands instead of to large islands is worthwhile considering for a decolonial inter-island research agenda and methodology. For Alofs, small-island comparative studies on themes such as gender, creolization, urban slavery, manumission, maritime marronage, interisland mobility and post-Emancipation migratory movements will create a deeper understanding of identities, inter-island dependencies and the social, cultural, linguistic, economic, political, legal and mental heritage of slavery and other forms of forced colonial labor on the small islands of the Dutch Caribbean (Alofs, 2023). Small-island comparisons should be placed within a pan-Caribbean and global contextual approach to study slavery's history and impact.

There is much need for educational programs on slavery in schools. The research agenda should also lead to an informed, evidence-based assessment of what policies and strategies the Dutch Caribbean islands should pursue for the educational sector and for greater public engagement in the study of the history and legacy of slavery. Insight into the historical awareness of the people on the islands is essential. The development of teaching materials in the field of slavery and its impact should be a collaborative effort of relevant experts and stakeholders in education and history to improve the quality of history education.

Finally, the lack of research into the history of slavery and its impact for contemporary society is partly due to a lack of finance of the islands. Reparation must include making funds available to conduct in-depth intra and interdisciplinary research on slavery and its impact on all the islands.

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Towards a Dutch Caribbean Knowledge and Expertise Network for Reparations and Healing

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In this position paper, I reflect on the unwavering need for a proper and long-term funded Dutch Caribbean Knowledge and Expertise Network for Reparations and Healing (DCKENRH) as presented in the Interinsular Consultation's 'Plea for recognition, apologies and reparations in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom' in May 2022. Since then, the Dutch State has offered apologies for its role in Atlantic slave trade, first by prime minister Rutte on December 19, 2022, and then by King Willem-Alexander on July 1st, 2023. This paper reiterates and substantiates our claim.

First, I reflect on the need for a DCKENRH in the light of the planned national (Dutch) Slavery Museum/Network in Amsterdam. Then I explore the state of non-governmental and governmental knowledge organizations in the Dutch Caribbean and their challenges for improved public service provision to the island communities. Thirdly I present a preliminary analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses, of Opportunities and Threats for the development of a Dutch Caribbean Knowledge and Expertise Network for Reparations and Healing. And finally, I float some final thoughts on the ownership, governance model and the funding required to create such a network. Along the way, I present three propositions to further capacity building and collaboration in the Dutch Caribbean knowledge arena.

A Dutch Caribbean Knowledge and Expertise Network

In advisory report *Chains of the Past* (p.7-8), the authors recommend creating a national museum or national facility for the commemoration of slavery: *'Provide a national museum center or national facility in which the history of slavery and its repercussions are shown in a comprehensive and accessible manner'. The authors continue: 'Ensure that this past can also be better known and displayed in the Caribbean countries and Suriname.'* This recommendation puts emphasis on the need for a national museum/ knowledge center as well as on the importance of knowledge dissemination in the Caribbean countries and Surinam. From a Caribbean perspective, three questions remain: first, does the 'national' character of the slavery museum include the island-specific perspectives on slavery and its repercussions on the public entities Bonaire, Saba, and St. Eustatius and if so, how can a museum/knowledge center situated in the metropole cater to the needs of the communities. Secondly, what is the intended future relationship with the autonomous countries of Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten and their institutions? Thirdly, how will the museum position itself towards the community(ies) in the sovereign Republic of Surinam? Additionally, and not insignificantly, one may ask which role Dutch Caribbean knowledge institutions themselves will fulfill in *knowledge dissemination and knowledge creation* concerning slavery and its aftermath in their island territories? That is, independently of institutions from the metropole.

To address these questions, the Interinsular Consultation advocated the establishment of a Dutch Caribbean Knowledge Network in its Plea (see appendix) as early as May 2022.

The working group advocates the establishment of an autonomous, contemporary-facilitated, generously, and sustainably budgeted Dutch Caribbean research center and knowledge network Slavery and Colonialism consisting of archives, universities, NGOs, museums, and libraries on the six islands. Its main objective will be to promote the reparations and healing of slavery and colonialism in the Dutch Caribbean countries and public entities through:

1. *conducting independent scientific research into the after-effects of slavery and colonialism on the six islands and in their regional and Kingdom networks, including archival research, oral history research, genealogical research and DNA research;*
2. *promoting social dialogue on slavery, colonialism, mental heritage and racism in the six islands;*
3. *establishing educational materials on the after-effects of slavery and colonialism;*
4. *promoting the safeguarding of tangible and intangible slavery-related heritage by governmental and non-governmental, local and international organizations;*
5. *supporting the annual commemoration of the abolition of slavery on the six Dutch Caribbean islands;*
6. *participating as an independent entity in future Kingdom consultations on the manner of the reparation policy to be developed, including the Kingdom Fund.*

The working group emphasizes that:

- *activities of the research center/knowledge network take place on the basis of needs articulation in and from the six islands;*
- *the costs associated with the establishment and activities of the research center will be financed from the Kingdom Fund in proportionality with those of the envisioned National Dutch Museum and Research Center (page 67);*
- *the research center will cooperate intensively with the National Dutch Slavery Museum and Research Center. Both institutions will be required to sign a cooperation protocol within 12 months after their formal establishment;*
- *the Dutch Caribbean research center/knowledge network operates at a distance from local and Kingdom governments. Researchers, developers, and administrators are bound by the Dutch Code of Conduct on Scientific Integrity (2018).*

The working group calls on Dutch and Caribbean governments to cooperate in the establishment of an independent Dutch Caribbean research institute as described in this plea and to allow the working group to participate in its preparations. (Translation, L.A.)

Since then, no concrete actions have been facilitated for the establishment of the Dutch Caribbean Knowledge Network. On the other hand, important steps towards the realization of the Dutch national museum were undertaken. The city council of Amsterdam, the Dutch Government and The Dutch Bank made a commitment for 20 to 30 million Euros for the National Slavery Museum. A planned 50 to 100 million Euro's will be required to realize the Dutch ambitions.

Three quartermasters were appointed to explore the realization of the national museum. Their visit to the Dutch Caribbean islands and Surinam in January 2023 did not result in concrete agreements or commitments concerning co-creation, co-ownership or shared decision which secured participation of the Dutch Caribbean communities and institutions in the museum. ⁽¹⁾ In their report to city council of Amsterdam, quartermasters Leerdam, Brandon & Brandwagt (2023) state: '... the museum's programming begins throughout the Kingdom and continues until the official opening of the physical building'. It is not clear how voices from the Caribbean Island communities will contribute to the co-creation of the Amsterdam-based museum. The Caribbean questions mentioned above remain unanswered. The quartermasters (p. 4) realize that confidence in the Slavery Museum in initiative in Surinam and the six islands is still vulnerable. We understand that in early 2024 a follow up report will be presented in the Netherlands.

This brings me to a second recommendation. To avoid a 'one-way exchange' as was the case with Stichting Culturele Samenwerking (STICUSA) in the 1950s to 1980s, and in reference to point 3 from our Plea, it is recommendable to start a fundamental, non-Eurocentric dialogue between metropolitan and Caribbean stakeholders. Dialogue must clarify the yet unsolved 'national' character of the museum and the ambitions and the expectations concerning future working relation with the Dutch Caribbean knowledge network and island committees such as the Advisory Committee on Slavery, Atonement, and Reparations (ACSAR, St. Maarten), the Plataforma Sklabitut i Herensha di Sklabitut (Curaçao), the St. Eustatius African Burial Ground Alliance and similar organizations on the other islands and Surinam. From the European part of the Kingdom, the funding partners of the museum should take part in that discussion.

Institutions and operational capacities in Dutch Caribbean, mitigating scale

Metropolitan neglect of knowledge institutions is nothing new under the Caribbean sun. The editors of Staat en Slavernij (2023: 439) acknowledged this. Also, point 4 of Caricom's Ten Point Plan for Reparatory Justice refers to the continued institutional inequality between European institutions and institutions in the Caribbean, 'where the Crimes against Humanity were committed'.

- European nations have invested in the development of community institutions such as museums and research centers in order to prepare their citizens for an understanding of these Crimes against Humanity.
- These facilities serve to reinforce within the consciousness of their citizens an understanding of their role in history as rulers and change agents.
- There are no such institutions in the Caribbean where the Crimes against Humanity were committed. Caribbean schoolteachers and researchers do not have the same opportunities.
- Descendants of these Crimes against Humanity continue to suffer the disdain of having no relevant institutional systems through which their experience may be scientifically told. This crisis must be remedied within the CRJP.

¹ <https://www.amsterdam.nl/diversiteit/nationaal-slavernijmuseum/nieuwsbriefartikelen/buitenlandse-werkreis-hard-zoet/>

The Interinsular Consultation coined this recurring inequality as ‘institutional colonialism’: the continued (financial, ideological) dependency of institutions in the global south of partner institutions in the former metropolises. Processes of policy making, needs articulation, agenda setting, financing and budget control, knowledge production, project management and dissemination are controlled by metropolitan institutions. Structural unequal power inequalities are often legitimized by reference to scale, demographic, economic and financial limitations, academic maturity, accountability to European taxpayers, et cetera. Institutional colonialism is fueled by business models of knowledge institutes and career opportunities for scholars in the increasingly competitive institutional environment in the global north.

Small islandness is not a factor to be denied. The small island context and the notoriously poor state of public finances in Small Island Developing States further add to the competitive disadvantage of Caribbean institutions. Small island institutions lack ‘operational capacities’; the human and non-human resources that governmental and non-governmental institutions have at their disposal in order to provide the public services they are entrusted with (after Moore 1995). This structurally hampers the service delivery of both governmental and non-governmental organizations – government departments, foundations, associations, faith-based organizations, et cetera.

During the interuniversity research and capacity building project *Traveling Caribbean Heritage* (2017-2022), our research team conducted an analysis of governmental and non-governmental cultural heritage institutions in Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao (Franken 2021). The key findings were that limited operational capacities hinder service provision and innovation processes of these institutions. I experienced this as volunteer-curator at the (non-governmental) *Fundacion Museo Aruba* between 2003 and 2013. We lacked funding beyond the point of bare survival. We had no paid academic researchers or museologists at our disposal, no educated educational staff, no trained guides, hardly any technical, administrative or pr staff. We lacked adequate storage facilities and a perspective for the maintenance of the government-owned, deteriorating historical building, Fort Zoutman, in which our museum was housed. Collaboration with local museums and museums on the sister islands were limited to incidental work visits. Projects with tourist organizations and schools were scarce and financially not sustainable. Uncertainty precluded long-term planning, innovation, and professionalization.

The *Traveling Caribbean Heritage* survey pointed out that numerous Dutch Caribbean cultural institutions were in an equally poor shape and to make things worse, the impacts of hurricane Irma in Sint Maarten (2017) and the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2023) paralyzed the cultural heritage sector. Visitors stayed away, subsidies were halted, personnel were laid off, museums were temporarily or permanently closed (Allen, Alofs, De Geus and Smeulders 2021). Although the island economies revived, their heritage sector did not, at least not yet.

Not only NGOs are lacking operational capacities, but also governmental knowledge institutions struggle with underfunding, the lack of trained personnel, adequate housing,

et cetera. Research among the public libraries in Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba and Sint Maarten, demonstrated that available resources hardly permit librarians to carry out core tasks. Means are lacking to invest in innovation. Ambitions are frustrated by the scarcity of operational capacities. Interisland or intra-Kingdom collaboration through networking, twinning and other forms of the sharing resources may contribute to the development of the sector, but this is not yet (sufficiently) taking shape (Alofs, Bant and Franken, 2022). Again, often due to the vicious circle of underfunding.

Because of poor public finances and a lack of priorities, the universities of Aruba, Curaçao and St. Martin, as well as the Aruba Teacher Training Institute (IPA) lack publicly funded research programs and consequently, depend on second and third stream, hence external, funding. However, Dutch, and European research programs are articulated, initiated, managed, and evaluated in Europe ⁽²⁾. By definition, small island universities lack resources and experience to compete with metropolitan institutions in competitive research calls, that, to make things worse, concern their islands’ past, present and future. In practice, the competitive set-up of Dutch funded research calls creates division and mistrust within the small academic arena of the Caribbean. Funding agencies implicitly expect Caribbean universities to operate simultaneously as competitive and collaborative partners.

The strengthening and empowering of Dutch Caribbean academia through the Ducarp-initiative did not result in a process of self-steered strengthening of Dutch Caribbean knowledge institutions ⁽³⁾. Instead, it may likely result in the physical expansion of Dutch state institutions to the Caribbean islands. A sixfold repetition of the ineffective Caribbean Netherlands Science Institute (CNSI, established in St. Eustatius in 2014) is to be feared ⁽⁴⁾. Institutional colonialism in the making.

Therefore, a second proposition is to organize a conference to evaluate Dutch policies concerning institutional enhancement of Caribbean research, dissemination, and public value delivery. And more importantly a decolonial model for collaborative governance for research within the Kingdom.

Strengths and opportunities

The Caribbean Knowledge Network for Reparations and Healing cannot afford failure. The envisioned network stands for Dutch Caribbean self-steered academic research in support of reparatory and healing for the repercussions of transatlantic slavery in our territories. A profound understanding of multiple historical island realities and proper identification of potential for collaboration, must result in a joint research agenda and collaborative strategies

² <https://www.nwo.nl/onderzoeksprogrammas/caribisch-onderzoek-eeen-multidisciplinaire-benadering>

³ <https://open.overheid.nl/repository/ronl-a14244b2-a360-4459-921e-ee2aae49e84d/1/pdf/nld-adviesrapport-dutch-caribbean-research-platform-gecomprimeerd.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.rijksdienstcn.com/onderwijs-cultuur-wetenschap/hoger-onderwijs-en-wetenschap/caribbean-science-institute>

for the support of a Dutch Caribbean reparations and healing agenda. To accomplish this, the strengthening of resilient Caribbean knowledge institutions and the development of a Dutch Caribbean knowledge network of archives, museums, libraries, universities, monuments organizations and cultural organizations is key. These organizations operate in the service of descendants, their communities and grass roots organization.

Intra- and interisland collaborative networks can mitigate the limitations of small islandness. Interisland collaboration in for instance the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance ⁽⁵⁾, the Dutch Caribbean Heritage Platform ⁽⁶⁾, and of course also the Interinsular Consultation has proven to be successful. Similarly, the Kibrahacha project focusses on innovative teacher training programs; it is gaining ground on Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao ⁽⁷⁾. In his contribution to this symposium, Scriwanek elaborates on the interisland archival collaboration since the demise of the Dutch Antilles in 2010. Hernandez and Scholing present a best practice of intersectoral collaboration between Aruban cultural knowledge institutions. Witsenburg (2021), director of the Aruban Monuments Bureau and one of the motors of the Dutch Caribbean Heritage Platform reflected on interisland collaboration in the field of monuments and (tangible and intangible) heritage. In my words: Sharing resources such as technology, knowledge, expertise, and experiences through interisland collaboration enlarges the operational capacities of individual institutions, enhances their professionalism and even add to their legitimacy, impact and acceptance within their island communities. However, the vision, patience and persistence of pioneers as front runners and driving forces are indispensable for long-term success. And so is proper funding.

Interisland collaboration is even more promising because of the already existing networks among professionals and the short communication lines within and between our islands. Smallness is (next to a threat also) a blessing and should be capitalized as such. Additionally, a shared past resulted in similar legal, institutional and policy frameworks and governance models for many of our governmental and nongovernmental organizations. This makes collaboration easier for all (Alofs & Veneman 2010). Creating networks and strengthening island institutions may even contribute to a reversal of the brain drain of young Caribbean professionals (Groot et.al 2014). Once local institutions can offer employment and a future for their families, a new generation of professionals may come back home.

Weaknesses and threats

In the context of the implementation of the 2003 UNESCO convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), initiatives were undertaken to create an Dutch Caribbean platform of National UNESCO Committees. Again, the purpose of this interisland collaboration was to exchange resources and promote mutual support (Ansano & Timmers 2018). However, after government changes on several of our islands, the plans were delayed, postponed and as I understand, after some dormant years, revived. Synchronicity is an issue

⁵ <https://dcnature.org/>

⁶ <https://www.monumentenfondsaruba.com/2842-2/>

⁷ <https://kibrahacha.org/>

in any multi-island context (or a multi-partner jurisdiction such as the Kingdom of the Netherlands). Islands are ecosystems with their own dynamics and speeds. This backfires easily on the continuity of long-term collaboration. The ICH case offers a lesson in dealing with weaknesses and threats.

The lesson learned may be as follows. Small islandness is not a factor to be denied or ridiculed, but one to work and deal with, first and foremost by islanders themselves. Interisland collaborative networks should be organized with a clear distance from local and Kingdom governments to guarantee their independence and sustainability. Insularism and the appeal of short-term gains for individuals and organizations are as threatening as the neocolonial reflexes from the metropole. This symposium offers the environment and the moment to acknowledge, confront and overcome these threats and limitations. Despite the disintegration of the Dutch Antilles, we still have a lot in common. The future, for instance.

Final thoughts: unite, invite, invest

Existing contacts between Dutch Caribbean universities, archives, museums, libraries, monuments organizations and cultural institutions provide the foundation a of innovative, emancipatory, and sustainable knowledge network for reparations and healing. Island committees on slavery, reparations and healing should be facilitated to create bonds beyond the boundaries of islandness and fragmentation. Additionally, partners from the European part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are sympathetic towards scientific emancipation of Dutch Caribbean knowledge institutions and expressed their willingness to form partnerships.

The Interinsular Consultation has laid its claim: *wij willen de regie*, we will be in charge. Small island societies can simultaneously achieve shared goals and realize their individual unique goals by collaboration and mutual respect and support. Investing in a Dutch Caribbean Network for Reparations and Healing, must be ambitious and include at least the following:

- Invest in Dutch Caribbean institutions and their operational capacities;
- Invest in a network, not a center, to avoid centralist reflexes;
- Invest in a shared and diverse, yet inclusive community-driven research agenda for the support of reparations and healing on our islands;
- Define a legal status and governance model that secures academic independence and continuity;
- Invest in long-term funding ‘*in reasonableness and proportionality with those of the envisioned National Dutch Museum and Research Center*’.

The third and final proposition resulting from this paper is to facilitate a Dutch Caribbean working group to explore the possibilities and modalities to arrive at the establishment of such an interisland knowledge network for the support of reparations and healing in our territories. As my Pan- Caribbean friend Mo says, *Corporation knows winners and competition creates losers*.

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Provenance, Sovereignty and Public Access to our Shared Memory

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First, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to bring our vision to the attention of the Interinsular Consultation and I congratulate this group led by Frits Goedgedrag and Ruben Severina for formulating a Caribbean agenda and look forward to the outcomes and policy proposals that arise from this. This paper reflects on the question "What is an inter-island form of cooperation and cooperation agenda to strengthen the archive policy in support of commemoration and the process of healing the slavery past and its impact?"

In the context of the idea of forming a knowledge center, this presentation will argue for:

- 24/7 access to the digitized primary sources of the shared past (e-depot);
- Sovereignty over the digital Caribbean documentary heritage: the case for a data embassy;
- Longitudinal research: linking registrations to provide unprecedented new ways researching slavery-past and its impact.

Foundations for Inter-Island cooperation

The documentary heritage of the enslaved and their descendants in the Dutch Caribbean was declared Memory of the World by UNESCO in May 2023. A joint nomination of the National Archives of Curaçao, Suriname, the Netherlands, the Curaçao bases National Archeological Anthropological Memory Management (NAAM) and the government of St. Maarten. Aruba will join this year. This is a good example of recent inter-island and regional cooperation. There are decades of strong partnerships within the Caribbean region, in particular through CARBICA, the Caribbean Branch of the International Council on Archives, for the introduction of international standards, best practices, capacity building, exchange of sources and, more recently, the cultural ambulance function in the Disaster Management cycle.

It should be noted that there are strong differences within the Caribbean region in the care for and professional management of documentary heritage. These differences are also reflected between the islands that have a shared colonial or a shared (postcolonial) federal past. This is expressed in many ways, especially in regulating the three main domains in documentary information management: public access, open data and data protection. The six islands of the former colony of Curaçao and dependencies and the Netherlands Antilles are no exception.

Public Access

It immediately catches the eye that only one of the six islands has regulated the public accessibility of government information in national legislation (Curaçao), the Caribbean Dutch islands Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius have a transitional law based on former

Dutch Antilles law, Aruba is in a process of enacting such a law. St. Maarten has no Archives Law. All islands do have a more general FoI-Act, that regulates the right to information, but not the fundamental right to access original documents free of charge. Only two islands have a National Archives. And that, as we shall see, matters.

Open Data and Data Protection

The two other domains: 'Open Data' and 'Data Protection' were initiated by the European Parliament. This enforced the member states to regulate these domains in national laws. A uniform data protection law will be introduced within the Kingdom. Open Data, for the time being, regards exclusively those islands connected with European jurisdiction, but will automatically play a role for all of us with further digitization. With an eye on the creation of a knowledge center this will be important. Open Data legislation regulates the free re-use of digital government data and is mainly intended to stimulate a digital knowledge society, but practically intended to feed the digital "application ecosystem", more about this later.

It should also be mentioned that all islands have committed to comply to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) of which SDG 16.10 'Ensure Public Access to Information and Protect Fundamental Freedoms' is relevant for accessing government archives and documentary heritage.

Vienna Convention 1983

Finally, the Vienna Convention of 1983 applies. We live in the special circumstance that the six entities, emerging from the colony of Curaçao and the federal state of the Netherlands Antilles have a shared memory that needs to be accessible for and in all seven jurisdictions. Although *The Vienna Convention on Succession of States in respect of State Property, Archives and Debts* of April 8, 1983, was not ratified, it was used as a guideline in the dismantling of the federal state of the Netherlands Antilles.

In addition, by international law, it has become an obligation for the State of Curaçao, as the former government center of the 'predecessor' state, to make the federal records available to the inhabitants of the successor states. The way in which these agreements came about shaped the foundation of the form of cooperation that already exists between the islands of the former Netherlands Antilles in the fields of care and management of its shared documentary heritage.

The foundations and Principles for Cooperation

After the constitutional referenda held between (1977) 2000 and 2005, the Project Organization Dismantling State Netherlands Antilles (POLNA) was established, with a number of "Expert Groups" in it. One of those Expert Groups was the *Expert Group Archives*, led by the Director of the National Archives Curaçao.

Representatives of all Island Territories have been appointed in the "Archives" expert group (by official appointments of the Executive Councils of the Island Territories). The Expert Group was appointed by law: LB 2007, no. 13. The Expert Group advised on the partition of federal archives of the state of the Netherlands Antilles. To this end, a kick-off conference

was first held on Bonaire in 2007. The most important archival principles were agreed upon, whereby the Principle of Provenance ('Respect du Fonds' / 'herkomst beginsel') was leading. Aruba was invited to this initial conference. The expert group met on each island.

The most fundamental conclusion in the report "*Dismantling and Construction*" is derived from the Principle of Provenance: "all records that were originally formed on one of the islands must be managed and made publicly accessible on that island". This principle has been adopted in the Transition National Ordinance Decentralization Netherlands Antilles PB 2009, no. 75. (*Transitielandsverordening Decentralisatie Nederlandse Antillen*). It is the foundation of the cooperation between the islands.

The Principle of Provenance not only regulates arrangement principles, it also settles matters such as repatriation: it is like gravity in archival science: the restoration of natural order. The practical consequences of this principle were that the new state Curaçao, as the former government center, inherited like 80-90% of the federal records and their predecessors. The federal records of decentralized government agencies on the islands (Inspections, Voogdijraden, Finance, Landslab, Gevangeniswezen, Reclustering - Probation Service, Post NA, Landsradio - UTS etc.) should be professionally managed on those islands.

Provenance determines repatriation to the place of origin, but public accessibility at the current management site is broader than the place of origin, the transfer will be delayed till it is up to par. Public Access is as important as Provenance. As mentioned at the beginning of this presentation, the extent to which public access to government information is regulated in national laws, matters. Let's take the example of Suriname.

Repatriation: the Suriname case

Part of the colonial archives of Suriname and of Curaçao were transferred to the Netherlands between 1917 and 1931. According to the same principles, these archives should also be returned to their country of origin. In Suriname, a major fire broke out in August 1996 in the National Assembly (parliament) of Suriname. As a result, a large part of the oldest (colonial) archives were lost. The Netherlands wanted to help repatriate the Surinamese colonial archives, in accordance with the principles. However, the conditions for public viewing were not at par with the Netherlands. The Dutch government then first started a program to help Suriname design its own archives law, help construct a modern National Archives building with reading rooms and an adequate repository and train a cadre of heritage specialists at the University of Amsterdam. Only after these conditions were met, the colonial archives were repatriated.

The Dutch government has hinted that it also wants to repatriate the Curaçao colonial archives. It has a volume of 242 linear meters. The National Archives Curaçao microfilmed these colonial archives in the 1980s and made them available to our customers in Willemstad. Although it is not an addition to our service, we will cooperate the repatriation, provided it is accompanied by an initial investment to cover the increasing operating costs. Curaçao has designed from its own potential, its own archive law, its new modern archive depot and

established the training of a new cadre of heritage managers. The question arises: How does the Dutch attitude towards repatriation compare to for instance Spain and England. Spain's colonial records remain at Sevilla and England's are at Kew, London. Another interpretation, where public Access is of more importance than the legal title.

Archive (fond)	period	Vol. (in m')	Provenance	Location	Digital	Repro (microfilm/fiche)	Remarks
OAC ABC	1707-1828	126	Curacao	NA NL	80% (Q1 2024 fully digitized and online)	yes	Transferred to The Hague between 1917-1931
NAC ABC	1828-1846	85	Curacao	NA NL			
OAC bvwvd	1828-1846	31	Cur/ bvwvd	NA NL			
Total		242		The Hague			Repatriate with initial investment for exploitation
Col. Archive Curacao	1846-1939	720	Curacao	NA Curacao			
Government Archive	1939-1951	51	Curacao	NA Curacao			
Total	1715-1951	1013	Curacao	NA Curacao			to be digitized 887 m'

Public Access Shared Memory: the case for an e-depot

The obligation for Curaçao to make the documentary sources of the shared past accessible to the population of the other islands can best be realized in digitized form in an e-depot. This is not only a safe storage environment, but also a place from which the public can access the digitized or digital-born records '24/7'. In Curaçao, the implementation of the e-depot has been included in the government program of the current cabinet. The National Archives Curaçao has done its preliminary work with a Terms of Reference and a call for bits after which the "Preservica" e-depot system has been selected. Because this is a complicated system that requires maintenance and updates, it was decided to collaborate with the National Archives of the Netherlands, which works with the same system.

In 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Netherlands and Curaçao about the use of e-depot facilities. The intention is that Curaçao will receive a tenant account in the e-depot of the National Archives of the Netherlands.

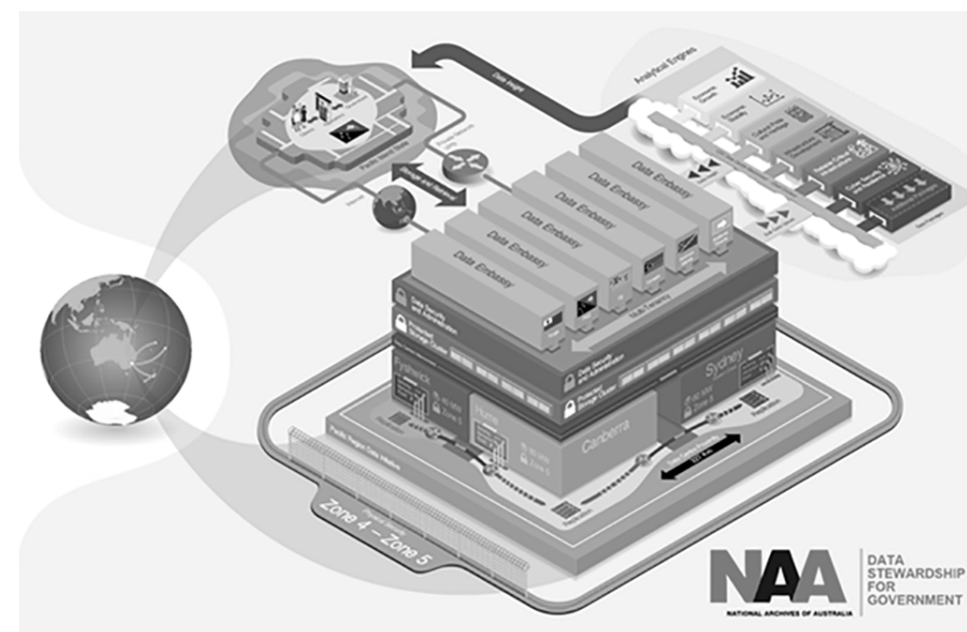
Digital Colonialism?

As we have seen, the Netherlands is willing to repatriate the original colonial records to the place of origin (Suriname and Curaçao), the route of the digitized sources is often the other way around: hosting of, and expertise about digitized services are often in the "Global North", in some cases the term 'digital divide or even digital colonialism' is already being used. The aforementioned domains are also important: Open Data and Data Protection. Protection of Personal Data of European citizens should provide an "adequate level of protection". Good to mention that, as part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, we all have the same passports and already within the current National Data Protection Ordinance, our government data may not be stored outside the territory of the Kingdom. As is known, European Parliament, which felt that the protection of personal data of European citizens was not sufficiently guaranteed in America after the "Patriot Act", came up with the new Data Protection guidelines. A new uniform Data Protection legislation will soon apply to the entire Kingdom and will further underline storage within European or Kingdom-territory. European Union funds for digitization projects also make this conditional. Europe will increasingly become the repository for digitized Caribbean heritage.

Open Data is also a strictly European initiative. It regulates the free re-use of scientific and government data, under a 'fair-use-license', where disputes are settled at the courts of the hosting country, according to the standard fair-use-licenses.

The case for a data Embassy

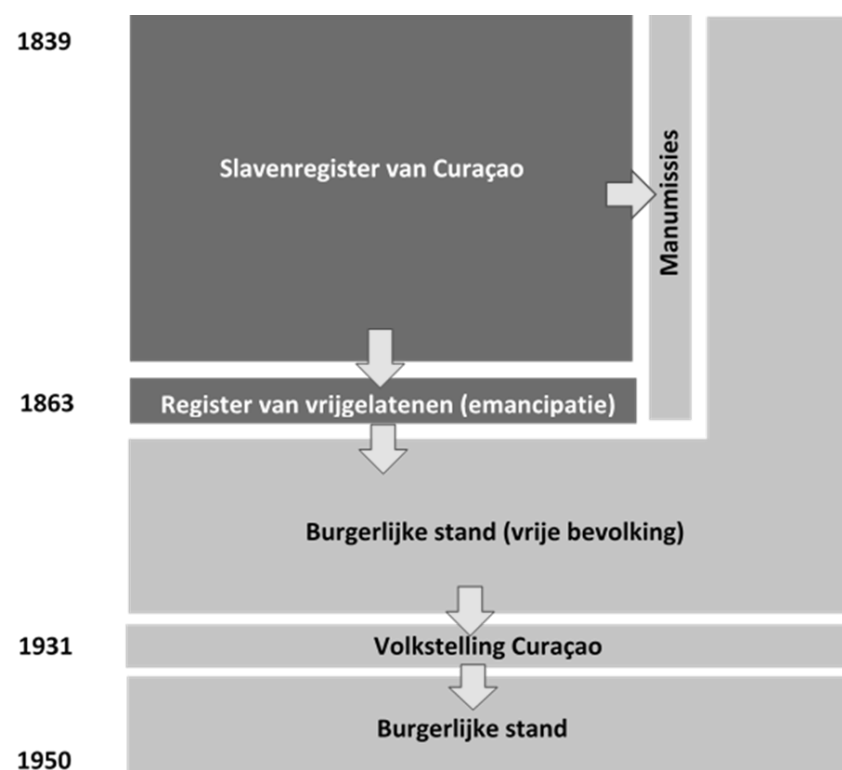
The idea of a data embassy originates in Estonia (2017) as a solution for backing up important government data in another country, over which full control and sovereignty can be maintained. The practical application has been proposed by our colleagues from the Pacific Region (PARBICA) in collaboration with the National Archives of Australia.



The advantage of a data embassy is that it falls under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (UN, 1961). It is true that within the Kingdom, the constituent countries and entities are not represented through embassies, but here the constitutional experts could see whether comparable agreements can be made. Article 24 of the Vienna Convention refers specifically to archives and states that ‘*archives and documents of the mission shall be inviolable at any time and wherever they may be*’. This brings the management of the Caribbean heritage under its own sovereignty and protected by international law principles.

UNESCO has also adopted the Recommendation Concerning the Preservation of and Access to Documentary Heritage, including Digital Form, in 2015, in which Article 5.5 recommends that “Member States are encouraged to engage in international cooperation to safeguard endangered documentary heritage through digitization or other means following a request made by another state”.

Longitudinal Research: new ways to investigate slavery past and its impact



Since 2020, the interactive Dbase of “slave registers” is online available on the website of the National Archives Curaçao. A more sophisticated research tool is being developed in cooperation with Radboud University to link the ‘slave registers’ with other registrations, making so-called longitudinal research possible (following persons and descendants over time). The Foundation Historical Database of Suriname and Curaçao (SHDSC) was established for this purpose, with the Directors of the National Archives of Suriname and

Curaçao in the board. Soon we will change its name to St. Historical Database Suriname and the Caribbean, as other islands will also be involved in this project. The slave register of Aruba is already included in the Dbase and the back-up files from the Civil Registries of Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius will also be added.

After that, the intention is to work in a broader Caribbean context to involve other Caribbean islands in this project; a follow-up on the so-called MIGAN project of CARBICA (MIGAN = Memory of the Islands: Gateway to Archival Networking). That project will also include migration records.

The basis for searching in linked registrations is the Curaçao “slave registers”, unique in the world because of its completeness. Through the links with the Civil Registry, the registration of Emancipation (the abolition of slavery in 1863) and other related records, it is possible to follow individuals through the generations and thus the impact of slavery on the social and economic situation of later generations.

There is a distinction between the public version of the Database that is available on our website and the raw datasets that we have shared with Radboud University. Original and unprecedented scientific research is possible in those data sets by developing specific algorithms and queries to discover patterns; this can be done per individual person or larger historical demographic lines. Information on enslaved people is now more available and widely searchable.

It is the intention that this tool will be available for local researchers as well. Initially, an agreement was drawn up between the National Archives of Curaçao, the Radboud University and the UoC, for Suriname the Anton de Kom University. Objective is to open up these research tools for local PhD-candidates. The infrastructure of a knowledge center is already in place.

List of recommendations to create an accessible knowledge center on Slavery History and its impact, based on primary sources of the shared colonial past.

1. Repatriation

repatriation of Colonial Archives 242 linear meters from the Netherlands to Curaçao, with an initial exploitation investment.

2. Digitization

digitize Colonial Archives (887 linear meters).

3. E-depot (data embassy) and Capacity building digital availability

in accordance with project plan (implementation phase):

- project coordination
- training heritage managers Curaçao (incl. other islands?)
- E-depot functionality on website National Archives Curaçao
- Pilot Digital Acquisition (Ingest Procedure)
- license fees

4. Knowledge center for the impact of the slavery past on Shared Memory

extent cooperation SHDSC for other Islands, extent link civil registry registrations with slave registers: longitudinal research, open up tools for local PhD-candidates in collaboration with Radboud University Nijmegen and availability primary digitized sources in e-depot/ data embassy.

5. MIGAN 2.0

MIGAN = Memory of the Islands: Gateway to Archival Networking. It is a CARBICA initiative that was started in 2015 with the help of the European INTERREG fund. This project has resulted in virtually all National Archives in the Caribbean region adapting to the international standard for archival descriptions. However, the second part has not (yet) gotten off the ground: a Dbase of relevant registrations that can be linked to the member states. For example, the slave and migration registers of all affiliated Caribbean islands, for comparative research. Costs: to be taken up with Radboud University, which has shown interest in taking this up.

6. Cultural Ambulance

More broadly, the islands are connected through the Caribbean Branch of the International Council on Archives (CARBICA). CARBICA established a Caribbean Heritage Emergency Network (CHEN) after the destructive 2017 hurricane season; a network of experts who can help in the Disaster Management cycle. CARBICA/CHEN has received approval of its project proposal at CER (Cultural Emergency Response - Amsterdam) to set up a Caribbean Hub (July 2023). The secretariat is run by CARBICA at the National Archives Curaçao. In principle, this is a 4-year program. Support from the Netherlands for making this initiative more sustainable and professionalizing the secretariat (1 FTE for this challenging position) would be very welcome and supports the cultural ambulance function for the region (including the Dutch islands).

7. Sustainable capacity building

Together with the Suriname National Archives, the Curaçao National Archives has a need to train the documentary heritage managers for the next generation on a more permanent basis. Curaçao recently had a group of approximately 22 civil servants follow a documentary heritage course at the Intercontinental University of the Caribbean (ICUC), Suriname has been able to train a cadre in collaboration with Netherlands from the mid-1990s. We would consider it desirable to establish a more permanent regional training in collaboration with the Netherlands to train the next generation, coping with all the new (digital) challenges they will face.

Giving The Voiceless a Voice: Museums, Connections & Healing

Amaris Richardson

Sint Maarten National Heritage Foundation & Museum

“Learning about the Past
To Understand the Present
To Prepare & Connect in the Future”

“To Understand the Present”

It is said “To take a Place over, destroy their culture and monuments and eventually they will lose pride in their identity”.

Monumental and Historical Landmarks are the foundations on which every country is built. The importance of every historical site to the culture, heritage and connectivity of that nation should never be undermined. Historical Sites hold the essence of that nation, all its history, culture, and heritage. They each tell a story, the stories of the people of that nation, the stories of the victories, triumphs, transformations, love, pains, traumas and so much more. Hence, each Historical Site and Landmark is truly valuable and of the utmost importance to the identity, sustainability, growth and development of that nation and its people.

There are modern day and historical landmarks on Sint Maarten. Modern day landmarks are created by using various forms of arts and crafts to create sculptures, monuments, artwork to depict the ancestral past (Appendix B). Whilst these are relatively new and are in a good state, there are many local Monuments and Historical Sites, which have also been beautifully restored but many which are in ruinous conditions due to lack of financial means, damages caused by natural and manmade disasters, family conflicts, painful remembrances and neglect and abandonment.

On St. Maarten there is a recognized list of Designated Monuments and protected trees. Aside from these, there are many Monuments, Archeological and Historical Sites which are not protected and have not been designated as official Monuments such as Slave & Indigenous Burial Grounds, Rock Slave Walls, Free Slave Villages, Bridges, Wells, Cisterns, Ponds and more.

“St. Maarten – Soualiga – Land of Salt – Sacred”

Salt is the Essence of St. Maarten, which symbolizes Purity and Preservation. The iconic Great Salt Pond of St. Maarten has lost lots of its savor. However, as was announced in August 2023, thanks to cooperation between Dutch Rijksdienst Cultureel Erfgoed (RCE) and Sint Maarten Archeological Center (SIMARC); the Great Salt Pond saltpans, the original Simpson Bay Bridge and Man-O-War Shoal and its associated shipwrecks (such

as Proselyte and Jason) were recently added to the official Dutch Maritime Heritage Sites Registry Mass. A momentous milestone for heritage management in Sint Maarten.

“To Prepare & Connect in the Future”

Museums

Aside from Monumental Sites and Historical Landmarks, museums play a most important role in the preservation, education, and promotion of the Cultural and Historical Heritage of a nation. Kindly find below some quotes which elucidate the vast important roles Museums play in today's societies.

“A visit to a museum is a search for beauty, truth, and meaning in our lives. Go to museums as often as you can.”

– Maira Kalman

“If you don't know history, then you don't know anything. You are a leaf that doesn't know it is part of a tree.”

– Michael Crichton

“A country that has few museums is both materially poor and spiritually poor ... museums, like theatre and libraries, are a means to freedom.”

– Wendy Beckett

“A people without knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture are like a tree without roots.”

– Marcus Garvey

“The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history.”

– George Orwell

Within the Dutch Kingdom there are hundreds of Museums, which capture and showcase the dynamic beauty, power, culture, history and heritage of the Nations. On the six Dutch Caribbean islands, there are almost 60 museums collectively and a total of 631 Museums in the Netherlands. Although these islands all fall within the Dutch Kingdom, most Museums have connections and associations with many other Museums in the Caribbean and the Region and form part of various associations, amongst others, such as the Museums Association of the Caribbean (MAC) and the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

As the important role of museums grows in societies, the connections between the islands and the Kingdom need to grow as well. The Netherlands has an association ‘Museum Vereniging’ of which over 450 of the 631 museums in the Netherlands are members. The islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao each have respective Museum Associations. However, the islands of Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten do not have collective museum associations. In addition, only some of the islands adopted Museums Policies.

It is of the utmost importance for each island to have a Museum/Heritage Association as each island is unique and is at various stages. However, it cannot be denied that there is deep bond and unity that is still shared between the 6 islands of the former Netherlands Antilles in all aspects of life. Therefore, there is now a greater need for a collective Museum association for the six Dutch Caribbean islands, which could facilitate a greater and stronger collaboration between the islands which, in turn, will foster space for exchanges, growth, achievement of collective goals and most of all, UNITY. After establishing this unified Association between the 6 islands, further collaborations and associations can be sought with other relevant associations in the Caribbean, Suriname, the Netherlands, Africa, the Americas and more.

The Sint Maarten National Heritage Foundation & Museum

The Sint Maarten Museum falls under the Sint Maarten National Heritage Foundation and Museum, which was founded in the 90's as a location to house the artifacts found at Fort Amsterdam. It was founded by the Stichting Nationale Parken (Stinapa) and the St. Maarten Museum Foundation, people who were dedicated to save what is left of the island's nature, culture, heritage, and history.

The Museum is located in an alley and is not quite easy to be found. Its existence is unknown and often forgotten. The museum is comprised of two levels. The ground level is the gift shop and the reference library/office. The top level is the actual Museum and display area. Although the goal is to display the history of the island in its entirety and to display larger items artifacts such as rollers and copper pans from the plantations. Due to a lack of space, the displays and possibilities are limited. There is also an adjunct space that is currently being rented and utilized to host classroom visits, presentations and various workshops.

With time, lots of our ‘history’ has been lost, looted, misplaced, and damaged. It is the goal to retrieve and showcase as much of OUR STORIES as possible; “TIS ‘WE’STORY”. As the above-mentioned quotes elucidate, it is impossible for a people to know where they are going without knowing, who they are and where they come from. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to share, educate, engage, enlighten, and bring awareness to the people of its true history, heritage, and culture. By teaching the youths, adapting the curriculums, engaging the people, and honoring the seniors by recording and sharing the Oral Stories and Cultural Heritage, the Museum's role and tasks are vast and not simple. In addition, as times have progressed, modernized, and digitized, the Museum also has to grow and align itself innovatively. However, with the current space, there is very little room for growth and advancement.

Based on a MOU between the Sint Maarten Archeological Center (SIMARC), the Philipsburg Jubilee Library and the Sint Maarten National Heritage Foundation & Museum; a National Heritage Center was to be established which would house all three entities. Unfortunately, these plans did not materialize. However, the Sint Maarten Archeological Center and the Sint Maarten National Heritage Foundation & Museum intend to pursue the collaboration and share the vision and goal to establish a National Heritage Park, which would not only facilitate the National Archeological Center and the National Museum but also potentially create space to facilitate a National Archives, a National Theatre of Arts and a National Park.

All the aforementioned entities play a very significant role in the development and enhancement of St. Maarten as a Nation. Nation building is key! In addition to the growth and expansion of the Museum and the Archeological Center, the Heritage Park could create space for the following, which are currently shortcoming on the island.

- **Establishment of a National Archives:**
To house and host the Archives, Records and Documentation of St. Maarten and make these accessible to the public.
- **Establishment of a National Arts Theatre:**
Importance of Art in its various forms; the ability and freedom to uplift, express, showcase, educate, invoke, and entertain in a new modern, creative and spacious theatre.
- **Creation of a National Park:**
Importance of Green Space in Society; the Social, Environmental, Spiritual and Sustainable benefits and attributes are exponential and boundless. It creates a space for healing and reflection, for movement, for play and for socializing in an atmosphere that has the potential to contribute to the environmental and sustainable goals of the island.

By “Learning about the Past”

Reference will now be made to the ‘Sankofa Spirit’ and ‘Ubuntu’ to further elucidate the importance of utilizing Monuments, Historical Sites & Landmarks, Museums and the Stories of Old to Learn about the Past, to Understand the Present in order to Prepare for the Future;

Sankofa (SAHN-koh-fah) – A Twi word from the Akan Tribe of Ghana that loosely translates to, “Go Back and Get It.”

The teaching of the Sankofa is simply that we cannot move forward into the future, without first going back to our past—understanding it and embodying all of the joy and struggles of the past as seeds of wisdom for the future.



Ubuntu (u: 'bõntu:,õ 'bõntu) – A word from the African Zulu and Xhola languages that loosely translates to, “I am what I am because of who we all are”

Ubuntu is an ancient African word meaning ‘humanity to others’. It is an African philosophy that places emphasis on ‘being self through others’. The key principals are survival, solidarity spirit, compassion, respect, and dignity.



“If We don’t know WHO We are and know WHAT We are healing from; HOW can We heal?”

WHO We are

TOTAL POPULATION INDIGENOUS DESCENT:
OVER 5% OF WORLD POPULATION.

The Indigenous People of St. Maarten/Saint Martin and the Region

St. Maarten affectionately known as ‘Soualuga’ Land of Salt and as Legend has it ‘Oualichi’ Land of Beautiful & Brave Women. For as long as time can tell, in the school curriculums, the teachings are that the Arawaks and Caribs are the names of the indigenous tribes of the Caribbean and Americas. However, Arawakan and Carib are the languages of those indigenous tribes. The Tribes that dwelled on St. Maarten are as follows (Source: J. Havisser – SIMARC):

1. Archaic Age; Unknown Name; semi-nomadic hunter-gatherer groups
2. Igneri; Early Agriculturalists migrating up from Orinoco River spoke Arawakan / subsequent exchange networks Greater Antilles, with primary TAINO group affiliation during Ceramic Age (spoke Arawakan), until European contact
3. Kalinago; Last group at the time of European contacts (spoke Carib)

There is little documentation on the civilizations of the Indigenous Tribes on St. Maarten. However, from archeological findings and research, much can be told to this date. Although many of the existing and known sites on St. Maarten aren’t protected and have been damaged; there are new archeological findings and sites that surface and are yet to research and explore.

African Heritage

The European African enslavement began in the 1500’s where Europeans brutally captured, sold and transported millions of Africans, in horrendous conditions, to the Caribbean, Americas and other Countries in slavery to work on plantations in vigorous and excruciating conditions.

As it is common practice to associate people of African descent with Slavery and Poverty. Africa is the second largest and the most resource abundant continent in the world with a population of over 1.4 billion people of which almost 90% are people of color. In the Caribbean, Americas, Europe and throughout the world, there are additional millions of

persons of colored African descent. Based on these figures, can one's imagination simply fathom the total population of people of African descent worldwide? Knowing that there is 'Strength in Numbers' and that 'United people can Stand,' it is quite important to teach and highlight that people of African descent came from a land that was rich, powerful, highly productive, fruitful, and spiritual. A land that thrived with Empires, Dynasties and Kingdoms far greater and beyond one's imagination. Therefore, it is only logical that the people and tribes that came from this land must have the same DNA, power, wealth, essence, and vibration of that very same land even to this date.

Here follows a list of some of those powerful African Tribes that were sold into Slavery;

- Chamba
- Wolof
- Abbron
- Fulani
- Mande – Mandinkas (Jamaica)
- Fon (Haiti & Trinidad)
- Bakongo – Bantu Tribe
- Igbo
- Yoruba (Pantheon and Orishas are still worshipped)
- Mbundu (Queen Nzinga – Capoeira)
- Bantu– Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana (St. Maarten and the Antilles)
- Tribes from: Senegal, Nigeria, Togo, Congo, Angola, Cameroon, Ghana

More research and the retrieval of information, documentation and artifacts have to be done regarding the origins of the people of African Descent on St. Maarten. However, it is clear that people of African descent are a people of ultimate strength, resilience and power that is still deeply rooted within and this is the narrative that must be instilled, taught and spread throughout the Nations!

WHAT We are healing

The invasion of the Europeans and the atrocity of slavery has had enduring and detrimental impacts on the countries, economies, and the lives of the Descendants. The need for healing is imperative and boundless. However, oftentimes, to heal, one must first identify WHAT one is healing from. It is important to identify the origins, the traits, the traumas, and the cognitive residuals prior to starting the healing process.

Slavery Cause & Effects include:

- **Impeded & Underdeveloped Economies**
Colonized Countries have been utilized for and deprived of their own produce and natural resources for centuries and this has had long-lasting impacts on the economies of these countries to this date. Due to this impact along with inconceivable loans and debts, many countries have been left in almost impoverished states or vastly dependent on colonial territories. This has been one of the leading causes of the economic

imbalance, stagnation, regression, and underdevelopment in many societies today. Majority of the people in these countries live below the poverty levels, even those with decent salaries, as the average cost of living in these countries are above the means.

- **Lost Documentation & Artifacts**
Aside from the resources, most of the properties, findings, artifacts, documentation and more of the formerly enslaved and their descendants have been lost, looted, destroyed, and even hidden. It is of the utmost importance to collectively retrieve such items moving forward.
- **Education System**
Due to colonization, many countries adopted the colonizer's education system. Although these systems have been the corner stones and building blocks for societies today, they have fallen short. These systems don't train towards independence, financial literacy, individuality, and entrepreneurship. These systems lack the historical, biological, and geological context of the people and their own region. Systems that force people to fit into boxes and that allow little space for diversity, self-introspection, self-awareness, self-development, and self-empowerment at an individual's learning pace and learning capability.
- **Social System based on corporal punishment**
As the enslaved were brutally battered and mistreated, this system of corporal (physical and bodily) punishment has been passed on throughout the generations which has resulted in various forms of abuse and misuse of power. This has led to societies filled with unlawful police brutality, rising crimes & violence, youth delinquency, hate crimes, discrimination, racism, high incarceration rates and this 'Crab in the Bucket' mentality where persons of the same background go against and tear down each other simply for namesake, wealth, or power.
- **Rampant Abuse**
As a means of escape from reality and as a form of release, many resort to various forms of abuse such as Mental, Physical, Sexual, Drug and Substance Abuse.
- **Inferiority Complex**
Many of the descendants of enslaved societies remain with an inferiority complex, whether aware or not, which have been passed down by the generations and have led to increasingly rampant mental illnesses, poverty mindsets and high suicide rates. Tending to focus on weaknesses and failures instead of strengths and accomplishments.
- **Poor Dietary habits**
As the enslaved people had to survive from leftovers, remains and subordinate meals this has led to many of the poor eating habits today, which many don't realize. Consequently, these poor dietary habits have led to many illnesses and medical conditions which plague the people to this date.
- **Loss of Natural Healing Methods, Plants and Remedies**
Being stripped away from their natural habitat, overtime, much of the natural methods of healing by means of energy, stones, plants, and natural remedies were lost, forgotten, or forcefully reduced.
- **Enforced Christian Religion and loss of Names & Connection**
Christianity has also been the foundation and guide for many. However, Christianity

was strictly imposed and forced onto the people of Indigenous and African descent. Prior to that, people of Indigenous and African descent were a SPIRITUAL people. Original names were also ripped away and replaced by Christian names. This has resulted in the forgotten/loss of identity, connection with spirituality, nature, ancestors, and selves, which is still deeply rooted within.

- **(Mis-)Use of Powers, Magic, Gifts:**

It is known that spiritual people are a powerful people and this is why this was so strongly undermined during the time of slavery. This has created a 'taboo' surrounding spirituality, magic, and spiritual gifts. This stigma has also diminished the passing on of such gifts, powers, and the knowledge thereof from generation to generation. Whilst many continue to label spirituality as negative, many who are aware of its powers utilize it for negativity, which if one doesn't learn how to identify, it will be impossible to heal from or break out of. Everyone is born with gifts and with purpose. The task is to recognize, know how to handle (especially today), develop, and utilize those gifts for the greater good.

The list of effects can go on and on. And so can the effects as long the causes and cures are not addressed. This brings me to the How.

HOW can We heal?

The question is; 'What is healing and How?'

Can a simple answer be given? No.

Why? Healing is first and foremost individual, and every single individual is different. Everyone has a different approach to life and is at a different stage in their own personal journey. Therefore, it's important to understand this, respect it, limit expectations, and not pass judgement. Many have traits and traumas that run deep and may have been passed on from generation to generation, unknowingly. Those are the cycles that must be broken for future generations or else those cycles continue.

Therefore, it is imperative to start that healing process in the here and now.

The Healing Process includes:

- **Acknowledgement / Identification / Self Awareness**

Healing must start with Self. Not only acknowledging and identifying but openly admitting that 'one might have issues'. It is almost impossible to fix other people, but it is possible to fix how one sees and reacts towards people. In life, no one is perfect, some may know how to handle situations and adapt easier, but everything is a learning process. A process one must be vulnerable and open to. Vulnerability in this case is not a sign a weakness but a sign of letting go of one's defense mechanisms to recognize one's own shortcomings and being willing to look in that mirror and know that healing starts at home first, with Self.

- **Confrontation**

If only healing was 'cum ba ya' and pure love and light. But unfortunately, that is only part of it as light cannot exist without darkness as it is even impossible to see light if it is not captured in or surrounded by darkness. The darkness of daily life that many live in. So aside from having to face 'Self', many also have to face and confront the traumas, pains and the evils that plague them. This is definitely triggering and requires the utmost strength, power and bravery to confront; self, that bully, that abuser (mental, sexual, physical), that murderer, that rapist, that racist, that oppressor, that evil spirit, that infertility, that miscarriage, that parental abandonment, that abortion, that lost loved one, that terminal illness, that generational/ancestral trauma or curse and so the list can go on. This is part of the process that cannot be downplayed and there should be no shame in seeking professional assistance.

- **Release**

It could be due to the generational trauma, but for some reasons societies are keen to holding everything inside. This could be due to fear of confrontation and/or fear of judgement but it is unhealthy. In addition, people holding onto negative attachments and are often scared to let go. Attachments can come in the form of mindsets, items, habits and even people. Because these have become habitual and sometimes addictive, it's often difficult to break away and release these even though they may be disruptive in one's life. Built up hatred, bitterness and resentment can actually result in sicknesses; therefore this must also be released. When one does not release these attachments and traits, it makes it more difficult to receive and be gifted better and greater.

- **Forgiveness**

It is the general perception that forgiveness is for the other person, which yes, one has to forgive another. However, the most important role of forgiveness is for oneself. That release of that pain or resentment is most essential in the forgiveness process. To understand that hurt people, hurt people. That the reason that person probably inflicted pain on anyone is most probably because of the pain that was inflicted upon them, which was never addressed or healed. No, this does not make it right, but it does give some insight.

- **Trust & Re-building**

The ability to build oneself back up, trust and have faith again after one has been broken down is powerful and substantial. Understand that success does not come without failure and that it is safe to break down some of those 'safe' walls that have been erected over time. There should be no shame in leaning on someone and asking for help from a trusted source.

- **Connection**

Connecting. It is possible to be detached from oneself. Hence the importance of grounding and connecting. To connect, one must be open. Connection with self, others, spirit, nature is essential.

- **Listening**

It is common nature to speak and to want to be heard. However, it is also important to be still and to listen. To listen to others, listen to self, listen to the Creators, listen to the Universe, listen to Nature, listen to the Ancestors, listen to everything within and all around. It is in those moments that you will hear, learn, and be enlightened.

- **Music and Dance**

Music is Life. Music gives life. Music heals. The power of Music, Energy, Frequency, Rhythm, and Dance is Universal and moves throughout the World. This has been known for generations. However, its healing attributes have been subdued and must be revitalized.

- **Safe Spaces**

It is highly important to declutter and create physical, spiritual, and mental safe spaces. Safe spaces at home, at work, with family/friends and in relationships. That space where one feels safe to be free, open and trusting. That space to retreat, for self-reflection and introspection, that 'Comfort Zone'. Know that it is 'OK' to kindly set boundaries and require that they be respected.

- **Peace**

'The Peace that passes all Understanding.' This saying rings loud and true. If one is able to attain that inner peace, the storms can rage all around, but one will have the ability to maintain that peace of mind, body and spirit. This not only affects the mental state but also the physical state as it has been proven that stress is the triggering factor for most sicknesses and mental illnesses. This validates the power of 'mind over matter'.

Final thoughts

As Healing is very broad, these are just fragments of it. Although the process of healing can be an enduring strenuous journey, the results are most beautiful and rewarding. It is direly important to remember that it starts with 'Self' and that it is a continuous journey. Once the personal journey towards healing has taken flight, the journey to healing one's family can commence and it is then that those open wounds of the past will begin to heal, as the Ancestral trauma runs deep. Hence the strong call and need for healing, NOW & TOGETHER, in this time in humanity.

Left Behind: Bringing Saba's Monument Preservation Efforts into the Present

Vito Charles

Saba Archaeological Foundation

Many people, when visiting Saba for the first time, are taken aback, not only by the majestic hills rising sharply from the ocean, but also by the quaint little homes perched upon the picturesque slopes. These houses, the oldest which are locally called Saban cottages, some more than 150 years old, are almost all painted white, with green and white shutters and red roofs, and they seem to blend seamlessly into the landscape. With no documentation that pinpoints when this tradition started, it was in the late 1990s that the government decided that it was best to ensure that this tradition would be preserved, and regulations were put in place where it was codified for the first time in a local ordinance in 1999 (Building and Housing Ordinance, 1999).

Boasting several cottages that date back to the late 1800s you could easily be led to believe that the ownership and maintenance of these homes are held to strict standards with rigorous guidelines that ensure these homes will maintain their place in the Saban landscape for generations to come. However, you would be wrong. There have long been advocates of protecting these enduring monuments to Saban determination and transforming them into monuments and up until now attempts would best be described as unsuccessful (Caderius Van Veen, 2014).

To be sure there is a monument ordinance, which was passed in 2010 and prescribes how a landmark or historic home would qualify to be listed as a monument (Island Monument Regulation Saba, 2010). However, the monument registry, which is a requirement established by this legislation counts exactly zero of the potential monuments on this quaint historic island as monuments.

That these houses and their unique facades are still part of the island's tradition even in the face of development is remarkable. Yet, even after the establishment of a monument ordinance more than a decade ago, there is still an empty monument list. In this paper the aim is to provide insight into the challenges that affect monument preservation on Saba but on the other islands of the Dutch Caribbean as well. Improving local and regional cooperation is a key element to ensure that the monument registry is populated and more importantly that monuments, when listed, remain worthy of their designation.

Current Efforts in Monument Preservation within the Dutch Caribbean

The Dutch Caribbean consists of six islands, including Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius, and Sint Maarten, each with its own unique cultural heritage and historic monuments. In recent years the inter-island cooperation between the islands of the Dutch

Caribbean in monument preservation has been ongoing but has faced various challenges. Historically, island-specific initiatives were the norm, leading to fragmented efforts and limited exchange of knowledge and resources. However, recent years have witnessed a growing recognition of the benefits of collaboration.

In 2014, the Dutch Caribbean Heritage Platform was established with the intent to ensure 'cooperation in the conservation of cultural heritage.' At the establishment of the platform, while representatives of heritage organizations from each island of the Dutch Caribbean were present, it was notable that Saba was represented by the Island Governor, Jonathan Johnson, as there was no organization active in cultural heritage from the island present at this initial meeting. Through meetings and conferences, the organization aims to bring together experts, heritage organizations and other stakeholders with interests in this field.

Factors Affecting Interisland Collaboration for Saba.

Expertise

On Saba there is almost no expertise available in the field of monument preservation. There are two organizations active in the field of cultural heritage on the island. The Saba Archaeological Center and The Harry L. Johnson Museum are the most prominent in the field but both organizations have limited staff and with a broad range of activities it is very difficult to focus on one aspect of cultural heritage. Executing successful monument preservation projects is an endeavor which sometimes requires specialized technical knowledge. This lack of expertise was highlighted when Saba submitted a proposal to become a World Heritage Site in 2011, which was missing some critical elements and resulted in the application not being taken into consideration (Oleana, 2016).

Language

Despite being part of the Dutch Caribbean very little Dutch is spoken on Saba, both in daily life and in professional circles. This means that knowledge, legislation, or established procedures on monument preservation, which could be readily adopted on the island and may already be best practices on other islands is limited, because the language used for publication of this pertinent information more than likely is Dutch, creating a barrier to access. This also poses a concern when participating in conferences, or discussions, in the Dutch Caribbean, where the experts in the field may choose to convey the information in their area of expertise in the language in which they are most proficient.

Connectivity

Though not readily apparent geography also affects the status of monument preservation on the islands, with the mostly Dutch and Papiamentu speaking Leeward islands in the southern part of the Caribbean Sea and the English Windward Islands in the Northeastern Caribbean, almost some 900 kilometers between them. Since the end of the Netherland Antilles as an autonomous country, there have been less opportunities to engage in interisland collaboration in areas of mutual interest, including monument preservation, which was a somewhat regular occurrence prior to the dissolution of the island constellation. With Saba being the smallest island, with limited business opportunities and small institutions,

opportunities for knowledge exchange on this small island are restricted, especially when the increased price of inter-island travel is taken into consideration.

Organizations Active in Monument Preservation

By associating with organizations and entities that are active in the field of monument preservation within the Dutch Caribbean, some of whom, like the Curaçao Monument Council, have existed for decades, Saba could leverage the knowledge and resources of these organizations to overcome its current limitations. These institutions and organizations have firsthand knowledge of the unique challenges and opportunities surrounding monument preservation in the Dutch Caribbean and are best positioned to assist Saba in implementing an effective monument preservation model.

Monument Councils

Organizations, such as the Curaçao Monument Council and Aruba Monuments Fund, have expertise and are aware of the local situation and are established on every island, except for Saba. They also have understanding of local regulations and will have experience of the challenges that are regularly faced in preserving historical and cultural monuments. Because of past experiences they will have acquired information on how to go about identifying potential monuments. Additionally, because of the hands-on engagement they will be familiar with historical structures and conservation techniques and could provide a wealth of experience in the preservation and restoration of monuments.

Historical Foundations

There is at least one historical foundation on every island. These organizations, such as the Curaçao Heritage Foundation and the Saba Archaeological Center Foundation, have access to historical archives, educational materials, and as well as research. Because of their proximity to the local community, they can offer educational programs and presentations that can enhance community engagement. They also have access to and are familiar with archaeological data and records. These organizations have community engagement capabilities and advocacy expertise, which can help mobilize public support.

Academic Institutions

On each of the larger islands, there are tertiary education institutions. These academic institutions play a role in facilitating research and have access to faculty with the requisite expertise. Another untapped resource at their disposal are members of their student bodies who may be involved in projects which could have long term benefits for their academic and professional careers.

Local Governments

Government support plays a crucial role in ensuring that legislation and regulations are implemented to support preservation efforts, this increases the probability that the projects will be successful. In addition to this governments can offer to support these programs with financial resources. Government also has a responsibility to ensure that there are policies in place to adequately sustain preservations efforts by providing policy support and infrastructure for preservation projects.

Archives and Libraries

These are local and regional archives like the National Library Aruba or the Curaçao National Archives that have access to historical documents, photographs, and records that could prove useful in establishing monuments. Archival collections are essential for historical research and documentation of heritage sites.

Expertise and Traditional Knowledge

Experts such as architects, civil engineers and local contractors often possess knowledge of traditional building techniques and skills vital for restoration work. Including these practitioners of traditional knowledge and craftsmanship may help contribute to the authenticity and accuracy of preservation efforts.

Funding Sources

There are a limited number of funding agencies, like the Prins Bernhard Cultural funds and the National Restoration Funds. While funding is critical to the success of monument preservation projects, funding agencies are not always accessible because often they are located on a different island. Establishing a local presence is necessary for creating awareness of funding opportunities. Financial resources are critical for executing preservation projects and research.

Platforms that build Public Awareness

Online tools such as websites, social media platforms, museums, and cultural centers, can serve as outreach tools for raising awareness about the importance of heritage preservation. These platforms are essential for engaging the public and building support for preservation projects.

By collaborating and sharing these assets and resources, participants can collectively contribute to the establishment of a strong Dutch Caribbean expertise network in monument preservation. Members involved in this network can use their shared knowledge, experience, and resources to address local issues, implement effective conservation strategies, and ensure the long-term preservation of the Dutch Caribbean's rich cultural heritage.

Building Stronger Organizations: Strategies for Cooperation

There is considerable literature about strategies and governance models that can be used to improve collaboration among organizations that have similar goals but want to retain their autonomy. After some research about what would be the best approach to establishing a Dutch Caribbean expertise network in the field of monument preservation, it is clear that when seeking to cooperate, the joint goals, the preferences of participating organizations, and the specific needs must be taken into consideration. Flexibility, transparency, and effective communication should be the guiding principles in the development and success of the network. The models outlined here were chosen because they are effective and require minimal complexity for implementation:

1. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

MOUs are a tool that can be used to formalize agreements between participating organizations and can be useful in facilitating collaboration. These MOUs can be used as guidance to outline the network's objectives, roles, and responsibilities. A centralized governance model may involve a coordinating body responsible for overseeing the implementation of MOUs, and monitoring progress. Alternatively, a decentralized model may allow each institution to manage its agreements independently, with regular network meetings for coordination.

2. Twinning Agreements

Direct bilateral agreements between different organizations can serve to improve or share knowledge in specific areas. They may seek to collaborate on specific monument preservation projects or initiatives that are in the interest of different islands. Organizations with more institutional knowledge or resources would collaborate with organizations with less expertise.

3. Conferences and Workshops

Conferences and workshops are a proven forum to bring together experts and organizations that share similar interests. Organizing conferences, workshops, or seminars at regular intervals and inviting professionals and experts from various islands to discuss monument preservation challenges and share insights, could possibly encourage a more robust network. To facilitate stakeholder ownership, it is important to establish a rotating host arrangement, where different islands may take turns organizing these events.

4. External Advisory Board

Sometimes external experts can provide valuable insights, guidance and differing perspectives. An external advisory board consisting of experts in monument preservation from outside the Dutch Caribbean could be useful in stimulating ideas on how collaboration may be best implemented. They can provide valuable insights and guidance. These experts may serve on the board for specific terms, ensuring diversity in expertise and representation. The board would hold regular meetings to seek advice and recommendations.

5. Evaluation and Improvement

It is important to determine if a particular approach is effective and this can be done by implementing a system for regular evaluation of the network's activities, and impact on monument preservation. In this method the network would establish an evaluation committee responsible for collecting feedback, conducting assessments, and making recommendations for improvements. The evaluation results can be used to adapt strategies and governance as it is deemed needed.

6. Funding Support

Financial mechanisms are important to sustaining the network's activities and access to grants, donations, or subsidies from larger institutions is crucial. A financial officer could be put in charge and would be responsible for managing the network's finances as transparency in financial matters is crucial to maintaining trust among members.

External partnerships

External partners can offer various resources, like financial support and technical expertise for capacity building and international recognition. Establishing strategic partnerships with these organizations can enhance the Dutch Caribbean expertise network's effectiveness in monument preservation and help address local challenges more systematically.

Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency (Rijksdienst Cultureel Erfgoed, RCE): The Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency in recent years has played a significant role in providing support and expertise for monument preservation in the Dutch Caribbean. They have worked closely with local authorities and heritage organizations to develop preservation strategies and secure funding.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization): UNESCO is a global authority on cultural heritage preservation and can provide guidance on best practices, conservation techniques, and heritage management.

World Monuments Fund (WMF): WMF has experience in conserving historic sites worldwide and can provide technical expertise, including architectural conservation and site management. WMF can assist in training local preservation professionals and building local capacity in monument preservation.

External Academic Institutions: Partnering with universities and research institutions from outside the Dutch Caribbean can bring different perspectives and research opportunities.

Plan of Action

The current collaboration, though it is a significant improvement from the past, does not sufficiently differentiate between the starting positions of the island. Some islands may need less support, while others such as Saba, may need additional support to have any meaningful progress. Therefore, a plan of action is needed to assist with improving the status of the islands and organizations that are at a disadvantage when compared to the others.

It is important to ensure that assistance rendered is based on the needs of the individual island. Islands with deficits should be evaluated regularly to determine if there are gradual improvements. Creating an interisland network in the Dutch Caribbean for monument preservation that specifically assists organizations on the smaller islands like Saba while collaborating with larger related organizations on other island may be challenging but it is a worthwhile endeavor. A short-term plan of action that aims to look at the needs of the islands and build a foundation for future collaboration on the islands of Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten is outlined below. A preliminary estimate is that such a plan could be realized within six month with a budget of approximately \$33.000,-

Phase 1: Planning

- Conduct surveys and interviews with smaller organizations to assess what are their challenges, limitations, and their priorities in order to determine what are their needs. Identify areas where larger organizations can provide support.
- Establish a joint committee comprising of representatives from smaller organizations and those of larger partners to determine shared goals.

Phase 2: Establish Consistent Communication Methods

- Choose an online communication tool for the network, such as a dedicated website, social media group, or communication software. This may be an instant messaging system such as WhatsApp or online platform like, Slack.
- Develop and maintain a platform where documents including preservation guidelines, relevant procedures, and success stories are easily accessible.

Phase 3: Focus on Building Capacity

- Organize regular online meetings and forums for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and consistent engagement between small organizations and larger partners.
- Encourage organizations and experts on the larger islands to share preservation expertise, best practices, and available resources. Larger organizations can provide mentorship.

Phase 4: Training

- Coordinate online sessions and workshops, where larger organizations provide expertise, to build the capacity of Saba's organizations in monument identification and monument preservation and funding applications.

Phase 5: Build Awareness

- Develop a strategy to raise awareness within Saba and the other Dutch Caribbean Islands.
- Promote the network through local and regional media, social media channels, and community events to increase awareness and participation. Larger organizations can help strengthen the message and assist with support from governments and businesses.

Phase 6: Workshop on Saba, St. Eustatius, or St. Maarten

- Organize a conference on one of the Windward Islands where the proposed approach is evaluated and establish a long-term approach to collaboration with the goal of continued development.

Final thoughts

There are institutions within the Dutch Caribbean that are knowledgeable in the identification and establishment of monuments. Also, there are success stories to inspire future preservation initiatives. Furthermore, the existence of a platform for cooperation shows that institutions are willing to assist and that they have the resources to do so. However, it is important to establish a broader framework of how to collaborate with these

institutions and how assistance can be coordinated. With a clear understanding of how collaboration should be envisioned and commitment by the various institutions on the different islands to use different models for cooperation and to share their knowledge and resources. This ultimately can play an important role in improving monument preservation efforts on Saba – and the sister islands -, which can be a great example of collaboration for other cultural and heritage projects in the Dutch Caribbean.

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Forms and Agenda of Cooperation to strengthen Art, Culture and Language.

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1. Art and culture

In the field of art and culture, there are initiatives for cooperation in the region and with the Netherlands (OCW). The public entities Saba, St. Eustatius and Bonaire (PEs), the countries within the Caribbean part of the Kingdom, Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten and the Netherlands have established regional partnerships for joint initiatives. We have a) the Culture covenant 2022-2025 and b) the Ministerial Four-Country Consultation.

Culture covenant 2022-2025, between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and the Public Entities of the Caribbean Netherlands (PEs)

The cultural covenant is a cooperation agreement between OCW and the Public Entities. The covenant forms a basis for developing a cultural agenda for each public body and a cultural policy that can be further developed. In the agendas, the PEs identify priorities in implementation per Island, based on the topics included in this covenant, to continue to work on making cultural life in the PEs more sustainable and promoting. The covenant expresses a mutual commitment to open dialogue to understand and feel the impact of the past. It expresses commitment so that recognition of our shared history, which must come, can work as healing and reconciling as possible. The subjects included in this covenant are:

1. Cultural education, talent development and cultural participation

OCW and the Public Entities bring regional teaching methods for cultural education to each other's attention, in the primary and the secondary education, by cooperating with the countries within the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. In collaboration with the organization responsible for the Canon of the Netherlands, OCW strives to come up with accessible and available Caribbean Regional canons, so that organizations in CN can give substance to this. There is cooperation with the Cultural Participation Fund and the National Knowledge Institute for Cultural Education and Amateur Art (LKCA).

OCW and the Public Entities endorse the value of further development and development of cultural talent, aimed at personal development and the further development of talent in various fields of art, considering local cultural expressions. In collaboration with the Fund for Cultural Participation, the Cultural Participation Program 2021-2024 has also been opened to CN. The implementation agenda of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the value of cultural heritage for society (Faro Convention) also focuses on CN.

2. Cultural heritage

OCW and the Public Entities endorse the importance of a good and careful handling of

cultural heritage, built heritage, archaeology, underwater archaeology, museum collections, intangible cultural heritage, based on The BES Monuments Act and the monuments (Islands) ordinance, with special attention on heritage that contributes to the dialogue about our common history, especially the colonial (slavery) history.

a. *Public collections*

OCW and the Public Entities recognize the importance of conservation, management, and the physical and digital accessibility of public collections. The Public Entities receive support in developing the management and preservation of heritage collections. Museum and other cooperation and knowledge exchange is encouraged.

b. *Built heritage.*

OCW and the Public Entities are trying to preserve the built heritage in the Caribbean Netherlands. Important instruments are: monument register, funding opportunities, financing of privately owned monuments, the Revolving Fund at the National Restoration Fund Foundation and the Monument Funds on the islands. There is cooperation among the countries within the Caribbean part of the Kingdom in the Dutch Caribbean Heritage Platform.

c. *Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)*

OCW and the Public Entities cooperate and support each other in the implementation of the Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO Convention 2003). The collaboration focuses on drawing up implementation frameworks and guidelines for governments, organizations, NGOs, and communities, including ICH in cultural policy and compiling inventories.

d. *Archaeology*

OCW and the Public Entities exchange information on the protection of archaeological heritage, for example through value cards, within the framework of The Monuments Act and the island regulations, as well as in relation to the European Convention on the protection of Archaeological Heritage (Malta Convention).

e. *Underwater Archaeology*

OCW is working in cooperation with the Public Entities to draw up regulations for the ratification and implementation of the convention on the protection of underwater heritage. The Dutch State Service for Cultural Heritage and the heritage authorities of the PEs are working to improve maritime heritage management.

f. *Heritage and spatial development*

OCW and the Public Entities make use of each other's knowledge in the development and revision of spatial plans.

g. *Cultural heritage in times of crisis*

OCW and the Public Entities make every effort to increase attention to the cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, in the event of disasters and calamities, including precautions, to mitigate or limit damage and loss as much as possible. OCW works together with The National Office of the Caribbean Netherlands, Representation of the Netherlands in Willemstad (Curaçao) and Dutch UNESCO Commission to make culture part of the civil mission in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom.

3. Libraries in CN

The Royal Library participates in a working group with the six libraries on the islands and countries to, among other things, increase cooperation and access to schemes. OCW and the Public Entities are making an effort to implement the library programs from the European Netherlands, The Art of Reading program and make them accessible to the Caribbean Netherlands. Also, give the libraries on the islands a role in the lifelong learning process of the Diertens resolution.

4. Digitization

The Digital Heritage Netherlands Foundation offers support in their digital transformation to cultural institutions in Caribbean Netherlands.

5. Archives and archive sites

The Public Entities work together with the National Archives of the Netherlands and the National Archives of Curaçao to come up with a set selection list for the archives, to realize suitable archive sites and to be able to digitize and store paper archives in an e-depot.

Ministerial Four-Country Consultation on Education, Culture and Science (M4LO)

Since 2019, the minister of OCW, also on behalf of the public entities, together with the ministers of the countries Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten, has been conducting an annual M4LO, in which cultural cooperation forms part of the agreements. On April 20 and June 30 of this year, during a digital M4LO, agreements were made about, among other things:

1. Cultural Fund

The Cultural Fund is a new fund to strengthen cultural cooperation between the countries. It is a fund that can support research and documentation projects on the culture and history of the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. Operational target date: 2024.

2. Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

A new nomination procedure for the International ICH lists of UNESCO is being worked on.

3. Slavery Past Memorial Year

In the context of the Slavery Past Memorial Year, the following developments are taking place that are related to the M4LO:

a. *Aruba*

The committee 'Awareness of Aruba's Slavery History' has started an awareness campaign and serves as the main interlocutor in the follow-up of the apologies. The National Archives of Aruba are working on making the Colonial Archives searchable using handwriting recognition software.

b. *Curaçao*

In Curaçao, the 'Plataforma Sklabitut i Herensha di Sklabitut' (Platform Slavery and Slavery Heritage) is involved in the follow-up of the excuses. In addition, in Curaçao, on October 3 of this year, the rehabilitation of Tula will take place.

c. *St. Maarten*

The prime minister of St. Maarten established the Advisory Committee on Slavery, Atonement and Reparations. The committee is tasked with advising the Government of St. Maarten on the follow-up to the apologies, based on a social dialogue.

2. Language

‘Pasado ta prólogo’ – Past is prologue.

1. Language according to Britannica:

“A language is a system of conventional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. The functions of language include communication, the expression of identity and culture, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release.” A language contains the value and richness of the life and culture of a people. A language is a living and dynamic thing: it continues to develop and is constantly changing by borrowing and creating new words.

2. Lingua franca / Pidgin → Mother tongue → Creole language

Lingua franca or Pidgin is a means of communication that can be born and grow between two or more groups that do not have the same mother tongue. It may be the result of a communication for reasons of trade, colonization, and slavery. When descendants of these groups begin to use this language as a language of communication among themselves, this language then becomes their mother tongue → when a Lingua franca or Pidgin becomes the mother tongue of a group, then we speak of a Creole language.

3. Origin, formation, and development of Papiamentu – west coast of Africa

There are several theories about the origin, formation, and development of the Papiamentu language (as a Creole language). The theory that most linguists follow is of an “ORIGINAL AFRO-PORTUGUESE CREOLE” that has developed on the west coast of Africa, from where all Atlantic Creole languages, including Papiamentu, came from.

4. Origin, formation, and development of Papiamentu – in the New World / Caribbean

When the Afro-Portuguese Creole arrives in the New World and the Caribbean, the language is relexified → which means that it is subjected to the influence of the vocabulary of highly prestigious languages (European languages) spoken in the Caribbean.

5. Origin, formation, and development of Papiamentu – Papiamentu

In the case of Papiamentu, the matter developed differently! Unlike the English, French and Spanish islands, where the language of the colonial ruler always dominated, on Curaçao (where it all started) Dutch could never dominate. Here the Afro-Portuguese Creole developed and became the language of use (lingua franca) of the entire population, also of the Dutch and Jewish-Sephardic elites.

6. Part of a written document: letter from a Sephardic Jew, 1775. (De Pool, 1935)

‘Piter may the ora ky boso a biny. *My a topa tio Lau ku Sara. Mama nan taba biny Punta. My Dusie bo pay a manda bo ruman Anonchy ku Tony (i) merca koge rua kaminda di Piter may (...)*’

7. Part of a written document: letter from a Dutch lady, 1783. (Vers geperst, 2012)

‘*Mi papa bieda die mi Courasson, bieni prees toe seeka bo joego doesje (...)*’

8. Colonial era – some statements

The fact that the influence of Papiamentu was bottom-up and that the Dutch and Jewish-Sephardic elites also used it, did not mean that the Dutch (colonial ruler) have accepted or respected Papiamentu. Some statements:

- ‘Because [...] poor words [...] this language pleases people like blacks, who cannot think much or deeply’ (Bosch, 1829, p. 216).
- ‘That barbaric language, which is so commonly used here in Aruba and Bonaire (but nowhere else), so much so that the descendants of Dutch people have almost completely forgotten their mother tongue and can express themselves intelligibly (to each other) only in Papiëmentsch’ (Van Dissel, 1857, p.125).
- ‘A Spanish that had to be so deficient and barbaric that neither the Spaniards nor others could understand it’ (Brada & Smeulders, 1987, p. 28).
- ‘Papiëmentsch is a language for the undeveloped...’ (Jesurun, 1898, p. 80, quoted in Smeulders, 1989, p. 59).

9. Colonial era – ‘civilization policy’ 1.0

Papiamentu

low status
verbal communication
social-cultural/artistic context
informal situation
emotion/identity

Dutch

high status
written communication
governmental/educational context
formal situation
analysis/knowledge

The education system of the ABC islands was set up during colonial times, as part of a ‘civilization policy’ of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which aimed, among other things, to make the population of the colonies as Dutch as possible.

10. Colonial era – effect: ambivalence

Ambivalence is a state of conflicting emotions related to the same object, idea, or person (for example, feelings of love and hatred for something or someone).

Ambivalence about Dutch, Papiamentu, own identity and oneself.

11. The emancipation of Papiamentu

Some say that the emancipation of Papiamentu began in 1795 when Tula, the leader of

the slaves who fought for emancipation, spoke in Papiamentu with Pastor Schinck. Most literature indicates the period around 1915 as the moment that Papiamentu's emancipation began. But it lasted until 1976 when the central government of the Netherlands Antilles allowed the islands of Bonaire, Curaçao and Aruba to experiment with a spelling.

12. A strong Papiamentu

To reinforce the fight for the emancipation of Papiamentu, a program of normalization and total instrumentalization was carried out. As a result, Papiamentu has reached a very high status compared to other Creole languages. Michiel van Kempen (2023) puts it nicely in his contribution 'Languages and literatures of the former Dutch colonies' in the book *State and slavery: "Oppression can backfire"*.

But what about the Creole language we have on our Dutch Caribbean Windward islands? What about the English Creole spoken on Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten?

State of affairs around Papiamentu on Bonaire since 2010: "Surviving Dutch."

1. 'Civilization policy' 2.0

Bonaire becoming part of the Netherlands brought also the "Civilization Policy" 2.0 to the community. It was because of our past knowledge that we were neither surprised nor puzzled when:

- a. In 2008 The Education in the schools of Bonaire were assessed by the Dutch Inspectorate as 'weak' and the knowledge and skills of pupils to implement the required educational programs and the quality of education were lacking.
- b. From 2010 the Antillean education system was replaced by the Law Primary Education BES (WPO-BES) for primary schools, law Secondary Education BES (WVO-BES) for secondary schools and Education and Vocational Education Act BES (WEB-BES) for vocational education. These laws are almost exact copies of the laws that govern the Dutch education system.
- c. In 2015 the Dutch language specialists recommended to keep Dutch as the language of instruction throughout the education system. Their solution was to start with Dutch at a young age, from Grade 1 in primary education and preferably 'even earlier'.

2. Counteraction to protect and strengthen Papiamentu

To counteract political decision-making in The Hague and the large influx of Dutch people to Bonaire, which makes the Dutch language stronger, the following steps are taken on Bonaire to protect and strengthen Papiamentu:

- a. *Island Language Policy Plan*
The public entity Bonaire chose a 4-language policy plan. Work is currently underway on the implementation plan. The public entity of Bonaire has established a 'Büró Papiamentu' that will deal with the articles arising from the administrative agreement and the Island Language Policy Plan.
- b. *Papiamentu Framework and Guidelines*
The Papiamentu Framework and Guidelines were developed on Bonaire, in collaboration

with a working group of teachers from the primary and the secondary education. The aim was to achieve continuous guidelines from primary to secondary education and follow-up instruments for Papiamentu.

- c. *Papiamentu Language Union*
A partnership between the public entity Bonaire, Aruba, Curaçao and the Netherlands, for the protection and further development of Papiamentu.
- d. *Management agreement*
A partnership between the public entity Bonaire and the Netherlands (BZK, OCW), for the protection and further development of Papiamentu. For this, contact is also sought with Aruba and Curaçao, where Papiamentu is also spoken.
- e. *Papiamentu under Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML)*
The Kingdom must make the necessary efforts for Papiamentu to be recognized as an official language by the Netherlands and UNESCO.

Light at the end of the tunnel (?)

Is there finally a light at the end of the tunnel or is it just the light of an incoming Dutch train?

With the CARICOM ten-point plan for reparatory justice in mind, we were pleasantly surprised and very glad when the Dutch prime minister Rutte issued a formal apology on behalf of the Dutch state. And it was no surprise when the Dutch king Willem-Alexander asked for forgiveness for the Netherlands' slavery past. A formal apology is the first step in the healing process, but the Netherlands is expected to add action to these words.

The Akademia Papiamentu Foundation has commissioned a study on the possibility of co-signing the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). The study entitled 'Application Part III for Bonaire and Papiamentu' shows that the spirit of the Charter gives indications that Papiamentu meets all the criteria of the charter because it is both a minority language in a member state of the Charter (the Netherlands) and a regional language within the Caribbean part of the Netherlands (since 10-10-10 Bonaire is Caribbean Netherlands and since 2017 included in the Dutch Constitution). Due to the fact that this is a Creole language, and it concerns both the promotion and protection of the intangible cultural heritage of the peoples of the world, Papiamentu even deserves the maximum protection in accordance with the advice of UNESCO.

Looking back on the origin, development, struggle and resistance of Papiamentu, the efforts that have been taking place on Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao to protect and promote Papiamentu, despite so many attempts (both on and off the islands) to abolish it, to kill it, it is evident that the same protection and promotion should be offered to the mother tongue of the majority of the inhabitants of Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten: English Creole. This Creole language, like Papiamentu concerns both the promotion and protection of the intangible cultural heritage of the peoples of the world. This is food for thought.

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Education in Curaçao, Navigating Historical, Economic, Cultural Realities, and Political Shifts

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Education is a dynamic interplay of historical, economic, cultural, and political factors. In the heart of the Caribbean lies Curaçao, an island with a rich history, vibrant culture, and an education system deeply intertwined with its past and its aspirations for the future. As an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Curaçao faces unique challenges and opportunities in the realm of education. This paper embarks on a journey to explore if the multifaceted educational landscape of Curaçao, considering the historical context, economic disparities, cultural identity, and the influence of Paulo Freire, as well as the impact of political shifts in the Netherlands can become a royal affair in the kingdom of Netherlands.

Historical Context

Curaçao's history is punctuated by Dutch colonialism, a chapter that has profoundly influenced the island's education system. The impact of Dutch colonialism extends beyond historical narratives; it is woven into the very fabric of Curaçao's educational practices and policies. It also symbolizes a horrific era in history, namely Slavery. Our slavery past has a profound mark on the behavior of our citizens.

Curaçao's colonial history is marked by colonial rule and has had a profound and lasting impact on the island's education system. It brought linguistic influences, educational structures, and a historical reliance on Dutch educational standards.

Economic Disparities

Economic disparities are undeniable when comparing Curaçao to the Netherlands. The Netherlands, a European economic powerhouse, stands in stark contrast to Curaçao, which, classified as a developing nation, grapples with economic challenges. These disparities inevitably ripple into the realm of education.

The economic divide between Curaçao and the Netherlands is a subject of ongoing discussion, and scholars like Vijber and Eidsen have shed light on its implications for education. They highlight the pressing need for strategic investments in education infrastructure to address resource disparities.

Educational Infrastructure

Curaçao's educational infrastructure is a work in progress, relentlessly striving for excellence despite resource constraints. The island offers primary and secondary education, and access to tertiary education is facilitated through the University of Curaçao, University of the Dutch Caribbean, and the InterContinental University of the Caribbean. However, these institutions confront the reality of limited resources for expansion and development.

The challenges associated with educational infrastructure development and resource allocation in Curaçao have been extensively examined by Professor R. Severing. His research underscores the significance of sustainable investments in educational facilities, materials, and professional development for educators.

Influence of Paulo Freire

The enduring philosophy of Paulo Freire, with its emphasis on critical pedagogy and equitable access to education, has had a profound influence on Curaçao's approach to teaching and learning. Freirean principles have permeated the island's educational landscape, shaping the educational experience of Curaçao's students.

The influence of Paulo Freire's ideas on education in Curaçao is vividly evident in the work of a lot of educators in Latin America. They emphasize the importance of student-centered learning, participatory teaching methods, and the development of critical consciousness among students.

Cultural Identity and Language

Preserving cultural identity is a paramount goal in Curaçao's educational philosophy. The island's native language, Papiamentu, occupies a central place in cultural preservation and education. Yet, striking a delicate balance between local culture and global educational standards remains a formidable challenge and a vital necessity for cultural identity preservation.

The pivotal role of Papiamentu in education and its significance in fostering a sense of belonging and cultural pride among students have been thoughtfully explored. Its underscores the language's profound influence on identity formation and its potential as a powerful tool for cultural preservation.

Autonomy vs. Dependency

Curaçao's political autonomy within the Kingdom of the Netherlands is both a privilege and a responsibility. This autonomy grants the island authority over its education policies, allowing for tailored approaches that reflect its unique cultural context and aspirations. However, this autonomy does not exist in isolation; it coexists with a historical dependency on the Dutch government, which inevitably influences decision-making in education.

Scholars like Jubert Evertsz, Stanley Lamp, and Henry Vijber offers valuable insights into the dynamics of autonomy and dependency in Curaçao's education system. Their research illuminates the intricacies of decision-making processes, the challenges posed by historical legacies, and the delicate balance between asserting local autonomy and navigating external influences.

Political Shifts in the Netherlands

The political landscape in the Netherlands has witnessed notable shifts in recent years. The rise of conservative and right-wing politicians notably has introduced a more assertive stance on immigration and integration policies. These shifts have consequences that extend beyond Dutch borders. PVV, known for its strong anti-immigration and anti-Islam stance, has shaped the political discourse in the Netherlands. This influence has implications

for the treatment of immigrants and minority communities, including those in Curaçao. CDA, as a prominent political party, played a significant role in shaping policies related to immigration and integration. During his tenure as Prime Minister, VVD -leader Mark Rutte has witnessed debates over multiculturalism and Dutch identity.

Consequences for Education

The political shifts in the Netherlands, characterized by a more conservative and right-wing approach toward immigration and integration, can have implications for education. These policies can impact the educational experiences of immigrant and minority students in the Netherlands and can have repercussions for Curaçao as well.

The consequences of these political shifts include potential changes in immigration policies, which may affect the composition of student populations in Dutch schools, including those from Curaçao. Furthermore, the discourse surrounding multiculturalism and Dutch identity can influence the way diversity is addressed in Dutch education.

Conclusion

Education in Curaçao is an intricate tapestry woven with threads of history, economic realities, cultural identity, and political dynamics. The influence of Paulo Freire's ideas underscores the island's commitment to equitable education. However, the presence of conservative and right-wing politicians in the Netherlands adds another layer of complexity to the educational landscape, with implications for both Curaçao and the Netherlands.

The challenges of replicating the Dutch educational structure in Curaçao persist, compounded by the historical, economic, cultural, and political factors at play. Embracing these complexities and tailoring education to the island's unique context remains a paramount goal for Curaçao's educational journey.

The question of whether to integrate Curaçao's education system into the Dutch system is a complex and multifaceted issue. Considering the educational philosophy of Paulo Freire, as well as the cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic factors, it becomes evident that full integration may not be the most advisable path. Instead, a more nuanced and culturally sensitive approach is recommended.

Replicating the Dutch educational structure in Curaçao persist: Paulo Freire's philosophy underscores the importance of respecting the cultural and contextual backgrounds of students. Curaçao has a unique cultural identity and linguistic heritage. Forcing a shift to Dutch as the medium of instruction might jeopardize the preservation of this identity. A more respectful approach would involve the promotion of bilingual education that values both the Papiamentu and the Dutch languages, while incorporating elements of local culture into the curriculum.

Addressing Local Needs: Freire's philosophy emphasizes the importance of education as a tool for liberation and empowerment. To effectively address Curaçao's socioeconomic disparities, educational policies should be tailored to the local context, ensuring that they

address the specific challenges faced by Curaçaoan students. This might require targeted investments in resources, training of teachers, and curriculum development.

Cultural Sensitivity: Integrating Curaçao into the Dutch system should not mean erasing local culture and identity. Instead, it should promote a diverse and culturally sensitive approach to education that acknowledges and celebrates the unique heritage of Curaçao. This can include incorporating local history, traditions, and perspectives into the curriculum.

Empowering Critical Thinking: Freire's philosophy emphasizes the development of critical consciousness. Educational policies should encourage students in Curaçao to critically engage with local and global issues, including those specific to the region. This can be achieved by allowing for flexibility in the curriculum to address topics relevant to Curaçaoan society.

Collaborative Resource Sharing: Rather than full integration, collaboration between Curaçao and the Netherlands can focus on resource sharing, teacher exchange programs, and joint research initiatives. This approach can benefit both systems without compromising cultural and educational autonomy.

In summary, while there may be benefits to collaboration between Curaçao and the Netherlands in the realm of education, it is essential to approach this collaboration with sensitivity to cultural diversity, respect for local needs and context, and a commitment to promoting critical thinking and empowerment. By doing so, Curaçao can enhance its education system while preserving its cultural and educational identity, and the Netherlands can engage in meaningful cooperation that respects the autonomy and uniqueness of the Curaçaoan's educational experience.

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Creating Awareness on the Transatlantic Slave Trade within the Dutch Caribbean

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The transatlantic slave trade stands as one of the darkest chapters in history of mankind. It involved the forced transportation of millions of African men, women, and children across the Atlantic Ocean to be enslaved. We are aware that the Atlantic form of slavery created completely new societies with almost completely new cultures and societies in which most of the population was enslaved and of which rigid segregation was the basic form. *But is there a need to keep the slavery past alive on our islands?*

In developing a shared Dutch Caribbean reparations agenda that creates awareness we must acknowledge the differences between the islands and their own experience with slavery and its aftermath. Inter-island truth and reconciliation is needed to recognize that each Dutch Caribbean island has its unique history and experience related to history. By allowing each island to explore and acknowledge the various narratives, nuances and impacts that ensure any reparation agenda, is tailored to address the distinct needs and histories of each community. To focus on each specific island, we must include and encourage local historians, researchers, and institutions to uncover and preserve island specific historical records, oral histories, and cultural artifacts related to slavery. We must facilitate community engagement through which individuals and groups can share their stories, perspectives, and concerns related to slavery and its aftermath. We must support initiatives that promote and preserve island specific cultural practices, languages, arts, and traditions rooted in the experiences of the descendants of the enslaved. Dialogues foster understanding, empathy, and solidarity among the different islands. Thus, we will – perhaps gradually – be able to recognize the cultural differences between the islands as the outcome of their distinctive his- and herstories.

Creating awareness for healing and reparations, strategies, and bottlenecks

Let me explore strategies and methods for creating awareness about this tragic historical event within and between our Dutch Caribbean Island communities. What are priorities for healing and reparation when it comes to raising awareness, and what bottle necks may hinder these processes?

1. Acknowledgment and Truth-telling

One of the initial priorities is acknowledging the historical injustices and trauma inflicted by slavery. Truth-telling involves recognizing the systemic nature of slavery, its long-lasting impacts, and the intergenerational trauma it has caused. Storytelling must lead to the acknowledgment of the distinct nature, extent and consequences of slavery on each of the Dutch Caribbean islands.

2. Reparations

Reparations encompass various forms of redress aimed at addressing the historical and ongoing harm caused by slavery. This can include financial compensation, land restitution, educational opportunities, healthcare services, and other measures that help rectify the socio-economic disparities resulting from slavery.

3. Restorative Justice

Promoting restorative justice is crucial to address the social and psychological impacts of slavery. It involves creating spaces for dialogue, truth commissions, community healing programs, and reconciliation processes that allow for the recognition of victims, accountability for perpetrators, and ultimately, the restoration of relationships. Relationships between colonialism-decolonization and the operation of laws. But also highlight outside the kingdom slavery in Africa, other parts of the Caribbean's Indonesia and elsewhere, as indicated in the report chains of the past.

4. Education and Awareness

Prioritizing education about slavery's history, including its legacies and ongoing manifestations, is essential. This includes integrating comprehensive and accurate accounts of slavery into school curricula, promoting public awareness campaigns, and fostering a broader understanding of the historical context.

5. Addressing Systemic Inequalities

Slavery has contributed to the creation and perpetuation of systemic inequalities that persist today. Prioritizing the dismantling of structural racism, discrimination, and poverty is essential to support the healing and reparation processes. This can involve implementing policies that promote equality, social justice, and inclusive economic opportunities.

As for the bottlenecks hindering these reparatory processes, some common challenges include:

1. Lack of Political Will

The absence of political commitment to address historical injustices and implement reparatory measures can impede progress. Resistance from vested interests or reluctance to confront difficult historical truths may hinder the necessary actions.

2. Institutional Barriers

Existing legal and institutional frameworks may not be adequately designed to address the unique challenges of reparations. Inadequate policies, limited resources, and bureaucratic inefficiencies can slow down or obstruct the implementation of reparatory processes.

3. Public Opposition and Polarization

Reparations can be a divisive and contested issue, with opposition from individuals or groups who may deny the historical significance of slavery or view reparations as unnecessary. Public resistance, lack of consensus, and political polarization can hinder progress.

4. Lack of Data and Documentation

The absence of comprehensive data on the extent of slavery's impact and the affected individuals and communities can limit the effectiveness of reparatory efforts. Accurate documentation and research are crucial to inform policy decisions and ensure targeted interventions.

Overcoming these bottlenecks requires sustained advocacy, cross-sector collaboration, grassroots mobilization, and a commitment to engage affected communities and stakeholders in decision-making processes to ensure that the reparatory measures are meaningful, context-specific, and lead to genuine healing and transformation.

When it comes to raising awareness for our Dutch Caribbean islands the following components are essential:

1. Establishing an inter-island working group: the islands can establish a working group focused on promoting awareness of slavery and its effects in education. This working group can consist of representatives of the involved, educational institutions, historical experts and civil society organizations.

2. Education and Curriculum

One of the most powerful ways to raise awareness about the transatlantic slave trade is through comprehensive education and curriculum development. Schools should incorporate this topic into their history and social studies programs. By providing accurate historical information, students can gain a deeper understanding of the causes, impact, and enduring legacy of the slave trade.

2. Museums and Exhibitions

Museums play a vital role in preserving historical artifacts and educating the public. Dedicated exhibitions on the transatlantic slave trade can provide a tangible connection to the past. Museums should collaborate with historians, scholars, and activists to curate exhibits that accurately depict the experiences of enslaved individuals.

3. Public Lectures and Panel Discussions

Organizing public lectures and panel discussions can help engage a wider audience and facilitate meaningful conversations about the transatlantic slave trade. Inviting renowned scholars, historians, activists, and descendants of enslaved Africans as speakers can provide unique perspectives and insights.

4. Literature, Art

Artistic mediums such as films, literature, and visual arts have the power to reach diverse audiences and convey emotional narratives. Encouraging the production and dissemination of movies, documentaries, novels, poetry, and artwork related to the transatlantic slave trade can evoke a deep emotional response and foster a greater understanding of the human suffering endured during this period.

5. Commemorative Events

Commemorative events, such as memorial services, vigils, and anniversaries, can serve as opportunities to remember and honor the victims of the transatlantic slave trade. These events should be designed to promote reflection, remembrance, and healing.

6. Economic aftermath

Working equity of opportunity of enslaved people and their descendants, both locally and globally.

Despite all of the great conversations, we should not miss the following key components when it comes to raising awareness.

1. Trauma and Psychological Impact

Enslaved individuals endured extreme trauma, including capture, separation from families, brutal treatment, and the constant fear of punishment or death. These experiences caused severe psychological distress.

2. Identity and Cultural Disruption

Enslaved individuals were forcibly disconnected from their African cultures, languages, and traditions. Their names, religions, and family structures were often stripped away, resulting in a loss of identity. The erasure of cultural heritage and the imposition of European customs contributed to a profound sense of displacement and confusion.

3. Generational Trauma

The effects of the transatlantic slave trade were not limited to the individuals who directly experienced enslavement but were passed down through generations. The trauma and psychological scars endured by enslaved individuals were often transmitted to their descendants, resulting in a lasting impact on mental health and well-being.

4. Internalized Oppression

Enslaved individuals were subjected to systemic dehumanization and the belief in their inherent inferiority. Over time, some internalized these oppressive beliefs, leading to self-hatred, low self-esteem, and a distorted sense of self-worth that persisted even after emancipation.

5. Resilience and Survival Strategies

Despite the immense challenges and psychological trauma, many enslaved individuals developed coping mechanisms and forms of resistance to maintain their mental well-being and preserve their cultural identities.

6. Racial Prejudice and Discrimination

The legacy of the transatlantic slave trade contributed to the development and perpetuation of racial prejudice and discrimination. The dehumanizing ideologies that justified slavery persisted long after its abolition, resulting in systemic racism and ongoing psychological impacts on individuals and communities of Dutch Antillean decent.

Understanding and addressing the mental aspects of the transatlantic slave trade is crucial for promoting healing, reconciliation, and social justice. It involves acknowledging the historical trauma, supporting mental health initiatives within affected communities.

1. Racial Inequality

The transatlantic slave trade was based on the ideology of racial superiority, with Africans considered as inferior. This ideology has left a lasting legacy of racial inequality and discrimination. Today, communities with a history of slavery often face systemic racism, disparities in socioeconomic status, and unequal access to opportunities.

2. Cultural and Identity Loss

Enslaved Africans were forcibly separated from their cultures, languages, and traditions. As a result, many communities descended from slaves have experienced a loss of cultural heritage and struggle with reclaiming or reconnecting with their ancestral roots. This cultural erasure has had profound effects on personal and communal identities.

3 Economic Disadvantage

Slavery played a crucial role in the accumulation of wealth during the colonial and post-colonial periods. The exploitation of African labor contributed significantly to the economic development of European nations. However, enslaved individuals were denied access to the fruits of their labor and were unable to accumulate wealth themselves. Today our communities with its history of slavery often experience economic disadvantages, including higher poverty rates.

4. Institutionalized Discrimination

The legacy of slavery has perpetuated institutionalized discrimination and disparities in various sectors, such as education, criminal justice, and healthcare. These systems often disproportionately affect communities with African descent, perpetuating cycles of inequality and limiting socioeconomic mobility.

5. Historical Trauma

The transatlantic slave trade caused immeasurable suffering and trauma for millions of individuals and entire communities. This historical trauma has been passed down through generations and continues to impact the mental health and well-being of affected communities today.

Strategies to create Awareness

1. Racial Inequality

The transatlantic slave trade was fundamentally based on racial discrimination, with Africans forcibly enslaved based on their race. This has resulted in enduring racial inequalities in the diaspora, where descendants of enslaved Africans often face systemic discrimination and disparities in areas such as education, employment, criminal justice, and healthcare.

2. Economic Disparities

The slave trade played a significant role in shaping economic systems and patterns of wealth

accumulation. It provided European colonial powers and their colonies with immense economic benefits, while simultaneously devastating economies. Today, many Dutch Caribbean countries continue to face economic challenges stemming from a legacy of exploitation, including limited infrastructure, poverty, and underdevelopment.

3. Cultural Identity

The transatlantic slave trade disrupted African societies and forcibly uprooted millions of people from their homelands. Enslaved Africans were often denied the right to practice their cultural traditions, languages, and religions. However, despite these efforts to erase their cultural heritage, African descendants in the Dutch Caribbean have preserved and developed rich and diverse cultural expressions, including music, dance, cuisine, folklore, and religious practices.

4. Diaspora Communities

The transatlantic slave trade led to the formation of African diaspora communities in the Americas and Europe. These communities developed unique identities, blending African, European, and indigenous influences. They have played a significant role in shaping the cultural, social, and political landscapes of their respective countries, contributing to literature, music, art, sports, and activism. The differences between the six islands must be recognized.

5. Intergenerational Trauma

The trauma inflicted upon enslaved Africans and their descendants has been passed down through generations. The experiences of slavery, including physical and psychological abuse, family separation, and dehumanization, have had long-lasting effects on mental health and well-being. Today, many individuals and communities continue to grapple with its consequences.

To create the awareness needed for an Awareness Agenda

The reparations agenda, specifically in the context of slavery and awareness, generally refers to a set of actions or policies aimed at acknowledging and addressing the historical injustices and lasting consequences of slavery and its related systems of oppression. The agenda seeks to provide some form of redress for the wrongs committed during the era of slavery and to foster awareness and understanding of its impact on individuals, communities, and society.

While the specifics of a reparations agenda can vary depending on the islands and the particular context, some common elements might include:

1. Acknowledgment and Apology

A fundamental aspect of a reparations agenda is the formal recognition and acknowledgment of the historical injustices and human rights violations committed during the era of slavery. This involves issuing an official apology from the state or relevant institutions responsible for slavery, which has been done but dialogue is needed on both ends. As has been done by the prime minister on December 19th, 2022.

2. Compensation and Restitution

Reparations often involve providing some form of compensation or restitution to individuals

or communities affected by slavery. This can take various forms, including financial compensation, land redistribution, educational opportunities, or access to resources and economic development. This should always be in consultation with descendants, organizations, governments of the six islands.

3. Institutional Reforms

A reparations agenda may also include institutional reforms to address systemic inequalities and discrimination resulting from slavery. This can involve changes to legislation, policies, and practices that perpetuate racial disparities and hinder social and economic mobility and with the political climate realization and propped awareness is needed.

4. Education and Awareness

Promoting public education and awareness about the history and legacy of slavery is another important component of a reparations agenda.

Community Development

Reparations may also focus on community development initiatives that aim to empower marginalized communities and address the socio-economic disparities resulting from slavery. These initiatives could include investments in infrastructure, healthcare, housing, and job training programs.

The way forward

Raising awareness about the transatlantic slave trade is an important endeavor. To create an action plan to achieve this goal within a six-month timeframe, we must consider the following steps:

1. Research and Education

Begin by thoroughly researching the history, impact, and legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. Educate yourself on various aspects such as the routes, conditions, and consequences of the trade. This knowledge will form the foundation for your awareness campaign.

2. Define your Objectives

Clearly articulate the objectives of your awareness campaign. Determine what you want to achieve within the six-month period.

3. Collaborate with Organizations

Seek partnerships with and finances, social, or historical education. Collaborating with like-minded groups can enhance your outreach and effectiveness. Work together to plan events; encourage Dutch ministries and institutions to share resources.

4. Events and Exhibitions

Organize events, exhibitions, or panel discussions to provide opportunities for in-person engagement. Collaborate with local museums, universities, or community centers to host these activities. Include speakers, artists, or activists who can contribute to the conversation and generate interest.

5. Engage Schools and Educational Institutions

Work with schools and educational institutions to introduce curricula or workshops about the transatlantic slave trade. Provide resources and training to teachers to incorporate this topic into their lessons. Encourage students to participate in essay contests, art projects, or presentations related to the subject.

6. Evaluation and Impact Assessment

Continuously monitor and evaluate the impact of your awareness campaign. Track metrics such as engagement, event attendance, media coverage, and funds. Use this data to assess the effectiveness of your strategies and make necessary adjustments. We must remember that creating long-lasting awareness requires sustained efforts beyond the initial six-month period. Consider extending your campaign or developing a follow-up plan to continue raising awareness and advocating for justice and equality.

SWOT

Strengths: from the beginning the driving force has always been the same in which each island stand united enter into discussions with us with thin the kingdom the countries Curaçao, Aruba, St. Maarten and the Public entities of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba and when applicable Suriname in consultation about the manner on which the recovery policy to be developed is discussed, and this has been the driven force for the inter-island dialogue committee on slavery Past about us must always include us.

Weakness: It's important to highlight the threats and things that pose as challenges such as lack of awareness among the general population, resistant and denial from individuals or groups, the emotional discomfort discussing horrors and atrocities including guilt, shame, and anger. Polarization and decisiveness the topic of slavery can be politically charged and may lead to polarization where groups may perceive reparations or acknowledgement as treating or unfair. Historical complexity and interpretation multiple interpretations can lead to difficult discussions.

Opportunities: But the opportunities are there to turn a new leaf as seen in our Plea for recognition, apologies, and reparations in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom as a collective community of the six island to define political barriers that have plague the nation building of the Netherlands Antilles together we have given new meaning to the term *steunend op eigen kracht, doch met de wil elkander bij te staan*.

Threats: we must we worry of the 'polder model', also known as polderism though successful in its own right when it comes to the dealing of this horrific part of our shared history we must stare clear, commitment is needed, our adaptation of pondering hinder this commitment and can take significant amount of time, the model only shows the groups that are interested in the topic leading to a lack of diversity and representation. And as we polder we much keep in mind this system is building consensus and compromises which can only lead to resistance and to change the way forward.

Coleccion Aruba, Inter-sectoral Collaboration on Aruba as a Model for the (Dutch) Caribbean: A collaborative approach for preservation and access of collections in Small Island States ⁽¹⁾

Raymond. R. Hernandez

National Archives Aruba

J. Peter. Scholing

National Library Aruba

Instead of separate papers regarding the (theoretical) benefits of inter-island collaboration between organizations in each specific field of expertise, we have chosen to write a joint paper in which we promote intersectoral collaboration, both *intra-insular* (on each island) and *inter-insular* (between the islands) as an alternative to single-focus, *intra*-sectoral collaboration proposed by the working group for the topic of slavery in the Dutch Caribbean and commemoration thereof.

Not only we have made big steps in Aruba to conserve and provide access to documentary and cultural heritage materials, but we also stimulate historical research, cultural education and productions, and at the same time mitigate constraints and challenges present in many small island societies, by making a series of conscious decisions of the actors/institutions to stop acting as "islands within islands" and join forces, not only for the sole topic/occasion of the "year of the commemoration of the abolition of slavery" but in a much wider and more permanent setting, resulting not only in the "Coleccion Aruba" ⁽²⁾ digital cultural heritage portal, but in many cross-sectoral collaborations and spin-off projects, making information about Aruba's history, heritage and culture available in households, schools and (research) institutions in Aruba and beyond.

Coleccion Aruba as a model for collaboration for sustainable access ... and beyond

The idea of providing access to Aruba's documentary and cultural heritage materials by way of digitization and providing digital access started way before the COVID pandemic and well before there was talk of commemorating the abolition of slavery in the Dutch West Indian colonies, 160 years before, in 1863. Both of Aruba's documentary heritage institutions had been digitizing their materials for over a decade before the start of the "Coleccion Aruba" initiative.

¹ This contribution is an abstract of the paper about inter-sectoral collaboration we practice in Aruba. The full version can be found on our Coleccion Aruba page: <https://coleccion.aw/show/?ANA-BNA-DIG-PAPER-HERNANDEZ-SCHOLING-FULL-SEPTEMBER-2023>

² <https://coleccion.aw>

Biblioteca Nacional Aruba (BNA), launched its own digital collection, the “BNA Coleccion Digital”⁽³⁾ in March of 2019, built on the infrastructure of the Internet Archive ⁽⁴⁾, as part of an effort to make the vast wealth of its digitized and born-digital materials available in a centralized and more manageable manner than before, and being less dependent on external parties for the day-to-day management of its digital assets.

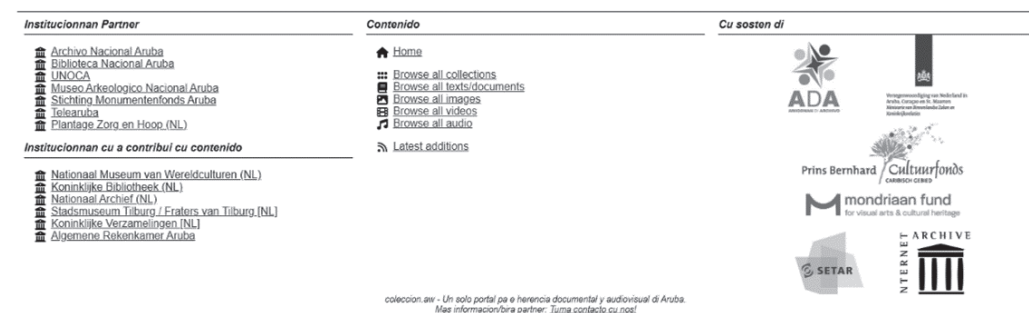
Whereas in the past, the sources could only be physically consulted on Aruba, nowadays these are available online, where even during the pandemic, a “yiu di tera” (“country child”) studying in the Netherlands, could quietly write his thesis in the Netherlands. In March 2022 the Archivo Nacional Aruba (ANA) followed suit by launching portions of its collections as a parallel collection to BNA’s digital collection, also by using the Internet Archive’s infrastructure.

In October of 2022 ANA and BNA, both government institutions, joined forces with a third Aruban institution, the cultural foundation Union di Organisacionnan Cultural Arubano (UNOCA), signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize their collaboration focusing on making their joint collections, available online, without limitations, via a single portal, the “Coleccion Aruba” platform, available at <https://coleccion.aw>. Due to the open and collaborative nature, and “low cost, high impact” aspects it has the potential to become a model for cultural heritage initiatives in Small Island Developing States and (other) remote areas, highlighting the importance of partnerships and community engagement in promoting sustainable development and cultural preservation. The project has also facilitated the development of partnerships with local institutions and communities, who have been actively involved in documenting and preserving their cultural traditions. These partnerships by now are extending beyond the boundaries of the island nation of Aruba to the wider Dutch Kingdom and hopefully to that of the Caribbean region as the next logical step.



³ <https://digital.bna.aw>, now also available within the Coleccion Aruba platform: <https://coleccion.aw/bna>.

⁴ The Internet Archive is an American digital library founded on May 10, 1996, providing free access to collections of digitized materials including websites, software applications, music, audiovisual and print materials. <https://archive.org>.



The limitations of our Caribbean reality: The driving force in the search for viable solutions

Amid all this, we must recognize the reality of small island states, e.g. the Caribbean. We were often told, and we tend to accept this as “our inconvenient truth”, that we as small states don’t have the potential to come up with (sustainable) solutions and have to look out for solutions from “the big guys” or “mother country”.

Our Caribbean reality includes the facts of our colonial past (our history and heritage) and of small-scale economies (our limitation), that we must deal with. While the first one regards our mindset (and the mindset of those at “the center”), the second one has more to do with the consequences of our small scale.

Therefore, it is important to decolonize our minds regarding the way experts, scientists, and high officials, and big institutions in the perceived “center of power” (in our case the Netherlands/The Hague), tell us when or how to implement solutions in the Caribbean, often based on unequal power relations, combined with insufficient knowledge on the existing local state of affairs, and levels of innovation and technological ingenuity. Oftentimes these “solutions” resulted in the creation of skewed and dependent relations, followed by the running out of resources over time or the pullback of support from abroad, leaving just a white elephant the island could not take care of. It’s time for us to seek for ourselves the best sustainable solutions according to the Caribbean reality.

We must believe that we are also capable of proposing solutions that are viable and custom-made to our own Caribbean reality. We must realize we can ensure a breakthrough ourselves, by breaking with “what the past has created for us” and breaking with dependent or one-way relationships within the Kingdom, which the proponents of the dependency theory (amidst our boundaries and abroad) tell us and is present in all aspects of our (professional) life, including our field of work.

The resources become more limited if we consider the recent natural disasters in the area and the ongoing climate changes for which the UN(ESCO) advocates for actions to be taken to safeguard our (in)tangible cultural heritage. The pandemic has shown us how vulnerable small states like ours can be. The implications were all the worse at the micro level, as in the situation of our institutions they are considered as not vital or non-essential. Cuts in resources and, in some cases, staff followed, restricting as a result the provision of services/information to the public.

That's why we must recognize that cooperation and mutual assistance are the driving forces for our survival and progress. In our case constraints breed creativity. We focused on mutual assistance and inter-institutional cooperation, instead of a costly contract with an international commercial services provider, oftentimes financed by (single-source) funding or "aid" exclusively from the "mother country", which we experience as contra-productive and is contrary to the concepts of organizational and digital durability and often leads to stagnation or termination of these problems in the long run when initial funding runs out and projects need to be fully carried out and executed by the island institutions themselves.

The shared vision that we coin the "Aruba Model" is based on a generational policy, according to which the interests of future generations must be considered in our actions in the present (Wetenschappelijke Raad, 1999). We have a duty to ensure that what we produce today (including digitally) is transferred sustainably to future generations. At the time of writing this paper, the joint Coleccion Aruba has reached a total of over 75.000 individual items, totaling nearly a million pages of text, of which over half is in Papiamentu, making *Coleccion.aw* the largest online text corpus for the Papiamentu language.

What started as a collaboration of a digital nature now extends to the physical preservation level of our cultural heritage. Sustainable preservation of our physical cultural and historical heritage is also important. That's why we strongly advocate for the realization of a joint cultural heritage center as well, to safeguard our analog and physical heritage materials and to further centralize and optimize shared (digitization and preservation) resources and efforts. This additional focus on the importance of preserving the original, physical, records as well was also emphasized by the Dutch member of Parliament Renske Leijten in her motion during the debate on slavery in January 2023 ⁽⁵⁾.

Most of the time as institutions we tend to act like islands. That is why we must stop being islands on an island. We must change our way of thinking and our way of doing business, to survive in this rapidly changing world, due to the technological and information development, as well as the climatological challenges we face as island nations. We must set our mindset to a more collaborative one, not only on a national level but also on a regional level.

Coleccion Aruba as a model for thematic and project-based collaboration: the slavery case

As was the case with being "prepared" for the COVID pandemic, other strategic decisions taken in 2019 and the years before made that, when the announcement was made by the Dutch government that there would be a "commemoration year for the abolition of slavery in the Kingdom of the Netherlands" taking place in 2023 and 2024, we in Aruba were in a sense on the right track to provide as much information as possible online about the theme of the past of slavery.

An interesting example of this came in the form of a new technology, which when it was launched publicly had the potential to become the "key" to unlock archival and documentary

⁵ Gewijzigde motie Leijten (31 Januari 2023). <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/moties/detail?id=2023Z01348&did=2023D03168>

heritage around the world. But unlike earlier technologies which were dependent on large investments and only being within the reach of the "big" institutions with deep pockets, mostly in Europe and the United States, this technology also became available to innovation-savvy institutions in small island nations at the same time. In 2019 an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based technology for handwritten text recognition (HTR) called "Transkribus" was released publicly, promising to do what OCR had done for printed texts, and what search engines had done for the Internet: make historical documents and archival collections available on a full-text basis, word for word.

In the fall of 2019, along with the "big" institutions anywhere else in the world, Aruba was (one of) the first in the region to recognize the implications of this new technology, especially for manuscripts and archival holdings. This was a great breakthrough, because this meant that we could transcribe all our handwritten archives via this new HTR technology that was as readily available to small island institutions as it was to the "traditional" first-adopters of technologies elsewhere.

Digitization of Slavery (Re)sources: making the Colonial Archive of Aruba accessible online

During the COVID lockdown, demand for information in a digital format grew. Memory institutions like libraries and archives was expected to continue to keep providing information during their physical closure, information being available in a digital form becoming the norm.

BNA made all of their digital-born newspapers and local books written in Papiamentu available online, for use during the (virtual) final exams while schools were still closed ⁽⁶⁾, while ANA made the first steps to make the colonial archive of Aruba accessible with the new HTR technology, actively seeking funding to make this a reality.

With the support of Foundation Friends of the Archive and other co-funding organizations, the ANA was able to launch a project called "Restaureren, digitaliseren en digitaal toegankelijk maken van het archief van de Arubaanse Commandeurs en Gezaghebber over de periode 1816 – 1939 (1945)".

The 'Aruba Colonial Archives Project' is not only meant to make these handwritten documents from the colonial period digitally accessible and available but also to make them searchable with the main purpose of making new information available and possibly adding a new dimension to our knowledge or understanding of Aruban history, including the slavery past. This archive consists mostly of handwritten documents, which are difficult to read, due to the discoloration of the paper, but also because it requires a certain skill from the reader to read the handwritten texts (dissecting the handwriting).

Through this project, we have been able to bring new light on unenlightened aspects of our history, like slavery history. So, we can talk about rewriting our own history. When we get

⁶ "When An Island Shuts Down: Aruba & the National Emergency Library" (May 2020). <https://blog.archive.org/2020/05/18/when-an-island-shuts-down-aruba-the-national-emergency-library/>

our already digitized colonial archives at the National Archives in the Netherlands, we can, even after applying the HTR application, begin to better describe our (shared) history.

As part of the 160th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the Kingdom, ANA has also planned to complete the archives up to 1875 before the end of 2023 and make them available online. With the generous contribution of the Dutch National Archives, we have begun to receive the “Aruban” sections of the colonial records held in the Hague and will receive the pre-1828 colonial records soon as well, once they have also been digitized.



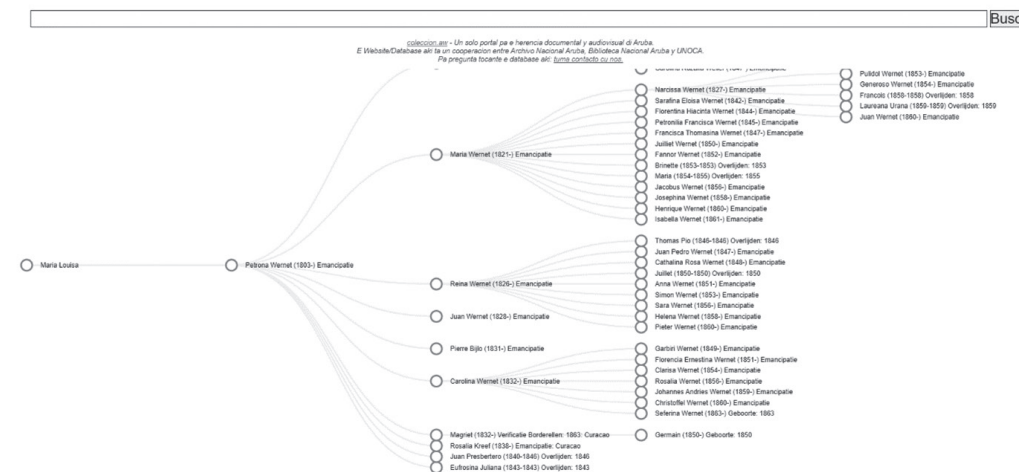
In cooperation with the Internet Archive, the manuscripts on Coleccion Aruba are among the first in the world to become available by means of an integrated full-text search, because of the application of Artificial Intelligence, and as a result of a small island nation’s agility and sense of collaboration.

Most of the memory institutions around the world, even after putting a lot of resources available to implement HTR technology, have still not been able to make the results of this available to their users online. Meanwhile, the documents already uploaded to Coleccion Aruba are also used by Dutch researchers (for example of the Radboud University) in compiling the database of the enslaved people within the Dutch colonies, with the Aruba part being launched June 30, 2023.

Furthermore, a more advanced representation of the “Aruban slaves” not only shows how they appear in the registers but transforms this information in order to display their “life stories” and their family relations (where known) on Aruba and across the islands, based on the same original dataset developed in cooperation with Radboud University, is already being planned and tested.



Coleccion Aruba • Database di Personanan Esclavisa na Aruba 1840-1863 • Stomboom di Matriarca: Maria Louisa



Conclusion

The *Aruba Model* can easily be applied within the Dutch Caribbean, and the whole Kingdom, sharing a common history and thus a common heritage. All of the aforementioned projects are “repeatable” and have proved themselves already. We hope that other projects to digitize other colonial archives within this framework are possible in cooperation with other memory institutions in the Kingdom, linking these important collections to other relevant historical and cultural (re)resources contributed by institutions on each island and connected between islands.

The current state of inter-island collaboration, in the field of archives and libraries is mostly incidental. Using the Aruba Model as a best practice, we suggest that this same kind of action can be taken in the other parts of the Dutch Caribbean to create cooperation, within the island boundaries and beyond. This means that each Dutch Caribbean entity can develop a network to provide each other with the necessary assistance. And in a wider Dutch Caribbean scope, the entities of the Dutch Caribbean can assist each other with their expertise and experience, so we don’t have to reinvent the wheel again and again. Joint projects can be presented taking into account the limited resources that are available for the heritage sector as a whole. We think that the technical platform and model chosen by the joint Aruba partners can serve as a good start for this collaboration, and Aruba is ready to support the other islands and their institutions interested in following this model. This model is not a formally centralized one, but a networking model between institutions built to complement each other’s strengths. Each participating organization is responsible for its own collections and resources, while everyone can access and use the information they need for their research and look to each other for support.

We don't have to waste time theorizing how to cooperate, looking only at a specific field of expertise, sector, or institution. The creation of this collaborative platform is part of the digital culture era (or e-culture) that is evolving. Initiate cooperation right away and/or build upon existing ones. First on your own islands, with other heritage memory and cultural organizations, then between islands.

We want to emphasize that although this model might read as a proposal for a digital platform, there is still the need for the safeguarding of the analog material itself. Aruba does not have a suitable repository in place for archival documents, valuable documentary collections, or other audiovisual items, museum objects, artifacts, and AV-materials. That is why we keep emphasizing the need for a joint depository, which is also highlighted in the "Pleidooi/Plea" document as well as in the January 2023 resolution by Leijten et al. Fifty years from now, researchers will still in need of information, and that is why the need to safeguard our cultural and historical heritage.

Given our experiences, we are willing to share our acquired knowledge and experiences with our Caribbean peers, starting within the former Netherlands Antilles.

Reference

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Towards a Common Reparations Agenda for the Economy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Caribbean

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In this paper, I do not aim to provide definitive recommendations for reparation, but to explore a way forward. I start with my vision on the economic development in our Kingdom. I envision sustainable and resilient economies in all parts of the Kingdom based on the diversity of potentials of each country and island, while at the same time using the opportunities that our transatlantic Kingdom offers. A robust 'Marshall Plan' for economic development of the Caribbean Islands, and a common Solidarity Fund to ensure equitable income and wealth distribution across the Kingdom are crucial. This bottom-up approach requires locally driven research to identify the required repairs.

In this presentation, I will give attention to the following issues.

1. Necessity of research on the consequences of colonialism and slavery in our contemporary economies and the resulting components for reparation;
2. A Kingdom 'Marshall Plan' as an approach to economic reparation within the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
3. Caricom Ten-Point Plan for Reparatory Justice, and Article 73 of the United Nations Charter as approaches to reparation on international level;
4. Identification of elements relevant for collaboration towards a reparation economic agenda;
5. The way forward, including a SWOT-Analyses of inter-island collaboration and a proposal for a common economic reparation agenda;
6. Conclusion.

It is imperative to underscore the need for further research, as also expressed by the editorial team of the Publication 'Staat en Slavernij' (Captain et. al, p. 440-442) and the Interinsular Consultation's Plea (p. 5-6, see Annex), especially pertaining to the local historical economic realities. Our foremost task is to empower our economists to delineate the indispensable conditions essential for fostering the sustainable development of our small island economies. The concept of sustainable development encapsulates a development trajectory that caters to the needs of the present generation without jeopardizing the well-being of future generations, not only within our own shores, but also across the globe (Brundtland Commission, 1987). Research must shed light on how the presence or absence of critical conditions for economic development has shaped the economic development of the descendants of the enslaved within our communities.

1. Necessity of research on the consequences of colonialism and slavery in our contemporary economies and the resulting components for reparation.

Independent local research is needed to establish a process for reparation. I will reflect on three examples. Of course, every production factor should be defined and analyzed by local economists within the framework of small island development states as defined by the United Nations. Research can describe which bottlenecks hinder reparatory processes and show us what we need to do to pave the way forward.

a. Allocation of the production factors capital goods, land, and financial resources

Achieving sustainable economic growth entails leveraging various production factors, including land, natural resources, labor, and capital. Additionally, it hinges upon harnessing human knowledge through innovation, entrepreneurship, and organizational capacity.

The legacy of slavery has left a stark imprint on the distribution of capital, land, and financial resources, primarily favoring the descendants of the slave masters. Vast swathes of land, often strategically positioned, are held by specific families through inheritance, passed down through generations. These lands encompass valuable areas that could contribute to economic development and a more equitable distribution of wealth, encompassing zones suitable for agriculture, harboring activities, tourism development, and more. The intergenerational transfer of these resources consolidates their control within the hands of a few select families. Consequently, the descendants of the many enslaved individuals find themselves at a distinct disadvantage in terms of resource access, significantly impeding their ability to actively participate in the economy as producers.

While the ownership of a large quantity of land by a few families is a disadvantage for the development of post-slavery communities, the use of the land can further hinder economic development. For example, much of the land in Curaçao has been heavily contaminated due to industrial activities, presenting a significant environmental challenge. Additionally, its groundwater reserves have suffered extensive contamination, posing a formidable obstacle to agricultural development. Notably, a significant portion of the region's most fertile land and abundant groundwater was ceded to the Dutch oil refinery as far back as 1914, a colonial legacy our nation continues to grapple with.

On the Dutch Caribbean islands, we have land estates that are legacies of the West Indian Company (WIC) period that form direct bottlenecks for social economic development. Furthermore, land estates known as “undivided estates” are often entangled in legal disputes and settlements. These land issues must be mapped out per island to be able to come up with solutions, for example by creating a fund to buy these lands and allocate them for development for the benefit of the community.

Besides, Land properties can serve as collateral for financing economic initiatives. However, these financial resources are not available to the descendants of enslaved individuals while local financial institutions require huge collateral and claim high interest on loans to cover financial risks.

b. Impact of the education system as a disadvantage for descendants of enslaved people

One of the consequences of colonialism and slavery is illustrated by Ronald Donk (2013), “Curaçao education 1863-1915: the separation of social classes.” Donk states (translation SR):

“(…) Children of the well-to-do bourgeoisie were offered a wider range of subjects (...). Un- or less wealthy parents had few options: free public education from the government or free education from the catholic nuns and friars. This choice existed only in the city, (...) The differences between schools were also partly related to the ethnic groups in society. (...) In the outer districts, all schools were under the management of the Catholic Church and the majority of students were black.”

We must acknowledge that despite the abolition of slavery in 1863, the freed slaves, constituting two-thirds of the community of Curaçao, were not allowed access to a proper education. Upon emancipation, their immediate challenge was sheer survival. As a result, their descendants found themselves thrust into an enduringly disadvantaged position, exacerbated by the imposition of a colonial education system long after the formal abolition of slavery. This severely hindered the cultivation of a high-quality labor force, a vital ingredient for fostering economic development. Even in the present day, the enduring effects of this educational divide persist, perpetuating social stratification on islands and upholding the stark economic and societal divisions that continue to define contemporary society.

Furthermore, due to an educational system that closely mirrors the Dutch model another impediment to the economic progress of our islands emerged. A significant brain drain occurred, with thousands of highly skilled and educated descendants of enslaved individuals opting to remain in the European part of the Kingdom upon completing their studies. Consequently, the islands continue to struggle with a shortage of highly educated labor functioning from our own cultural basis.

c. Impact of racism on the labor market

Prior to the 1970's, a person's skin color was a decisive factor in securing certain job positions, such as flight attendants, bank employees and jobs in the hospitality industry. Consequently, this entrenched the belief among descendants of the enslaved that certain occupations were inaccessible to them. Paradoxically, some individuals concurrently associated service-oriented roles with the legacy of slavery, leading to reluctance in pursuing such jobs. It is undeniable that these historical repercussions continue to influence the dynamics of today's labor market.

Research of topics as the examples given above will identify the components necessary to be addressed for reparation.

2. A Kingdom ‘Marshall Plan’ as an approach to economic reparation within the Kingdom of the Netherlands

We must research and define the conditions for a substantial economic restoration via robust economic recovery programs to address the enduring effects of slavery within our economies. In my perspective, there is no necessity for the Kingdom to await international developments to

formulate our own Kingdom ‘Marshall plan’. Our focus should be on developing well-functioning economies and fostering equitable income and wealth distribution across the Kingdom.

Hence, our collective effort should be directed towards achieving parity in social and economic provisions for all citizens of the Kingdom by ensuring that every individual has access to housing, employment, quality education, healthcare, and social security.

The constitutional law of the Netherlands Antilles stipulated that the other islands should enjoy social provisions on par with Curaçao, funded through a joint solidarity fund ⁽¹⁾. To address the economic consequences of slavery within the Kingdom, a consensus law can be enacted, mandating that a level of provision akin to that of the Netherlands be established in all Caribbean entities and countries within the Kingdom. As Kingdom citizens, we will collectively contribute to this Kingdom Solidarity Fund through a progressive solidarity contribution. One’s birthplace in the Kingdom should not determine the extent of provisions received.

To formulate a Kingdom ‘Marshall plan’ and the Solidarity Fund it is necessary that the government of each island and country in the Caribbean establishes its own independent working group consisting of economists, historians, anthropologists, jurists, psychologists, sociologists etc., to outline the specific conditions required for island-specific economic recovery.

In addition to these individual island-based working groups, a collaborative regional independent working group comprising all six islands should be formed to identify common recovery initiatives. This group can be formed out of individual island groups, varying with the different topics at hand.

Furthermore, a Kingdom-wide working group consisting of the six islands and the Netherlands should be established by the governments, with the objective of devising a comprehensive Kingdom-wide economic recovery program, akin to the ‘Marshall Plan’.

Via this multi-layered approach, we can achieve meaningful economic development across the diverse regions of the Kingdom. A Bureau for Economic Reparation is needed to ensure sustainability of this program.

¹ Compare with the former article 110 paragraph 3 and 111 of the Islands Regulation Netherlands Antilles applicable regime for Bonaire, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten. Article 110(3) reads: The adverse balance shall be approved or amended by national ordinance, on the understanding that it is ensured that the island territory is able to function its administrative apparatus normally and to make such provisions as are reasonable in view of its needs and the facilities in the island territory of Curaçao. If necessary, further rules may be laid down by national ordinance. Article 111 provides: 1. The island territory shall receive from a solidarity fund to be established by mutual arrangement as referred to in Article 38 of the Statute for the Kingdom of the Netherlands an amount equal to the adverse balance of the budget finally adopted. 2. De establishment of the solidarity fund, the contribution to be paid into it by the three countries of the Kingdom and the manner in which the amounts referred to in the first paragraph shall be transferred to each eligible island territory shall be specified by or under the mutual arrangement.

Caricom Ten-Point Plan for Reparatory Justice, and Article 73 of the United Nations Charter as an approach to reparation on the international level

A working group encompassing all former Dutch colonies in the Caribbean, including Suriname, should be established. We can draw guidance from the Interinsular ‘Pleidooi voor Erkenning, Excuses en Herstel in het Caribisch deel van het Koninkrijk’, the Dutch report ‘Ketenen van het Verleden’, the individual island recommendations in that report, the Caricom Ten-Point Plan for Reparatory Justice, and Article 73 of the United Nations Charter, to formulate recommendations for economic recovery in compliance with international standards for reparation.

The Caricom Ten-Point Plan for Reparatory Justice encompasses the following:

1. A formal apology
2. Repatriation initiatives
3. Development programs for Indigenous peoples
4. Support for cultural institutions
5. Addressing public health crises
6. Eradicating illiteracy
7. Promoting African knowledge programs
8. Psychological rehabilitation
9. Technology transfer initiatives
10. Debt cancellation measures

On an international level, the Netherlands should be forced to comply with Article 73 of the United Nations Charter. Consequently, the Dutch Caribbean countries should be included in the list of nations to report on their economic, social, and educational development to the United Nations General Assembly ⁽²⁾.

The United Nations, as an impartial entity, must serve as an unbiased third party and mediator, transcending the unequal distribution of political power that currently shape the relationship between the Dutch Caribbean countries and the Netherlands.

Identification of elements relevant for collaboration towards an economic reparation agenda.

a. Inter-island collaboration

Recently Aruba and Curaçao signed a MOU to foster collaboration and complement each other’s economies and propose to renew an agreement formerly existing between Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles.

² It’s noteworthy to mention that the Dutch Caribbean countries do not possess full autonomy within the United Nations definition as they require the Kingdom’s approval to amend their constitutions on specific matters (Article 44 of the Statute). This provision, along with the Kingdom’s appointment of Governors, has raised concerns at the United Nations. As a result, Resolution 945 (X) releases the Kingdom from the obligation to report to the UN but does not explicitly assert that Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles possess full self-governance. This resolution stands as the sole United Nations General Assembly resolution where a member state is exempted from reporting obligations without unequivocally confirming the establishment of complete self-governance.

Curaçao, St. Maarten and BES island are in discussions to reach a MOU to foster collaboration and complement each other's economies. The intention is to soon hold a four-country consultation regarding Economic Development ⁽³⁾.

It is worth mentioning some institutions and partners with firsthand experiences of local issues fit for Dutch Caribbean inter-island collaboration:

- Ministries of General Affairs: National Reform Committee and Directorate of Foreign Affairs in the area of Visa and Foreign Relations
- Ministries of Economic Development /Foreign Economic Cooperation Division
- Ministries of Health, Nature, and the Environment
- Ministries of Education, Science, Culture and Sports
- Universities
- Civil society organizations on relevant matters.

b. Assets and resources that may contribute to a Dutch Caribbean expertise network.

- Human capital: economists, historians, anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, etc.
- Tangible assets: documentation, historical buildings, artefacts
- Intangible assets: history, culture, and folklore
- Funding

c. Strategies and (governance) models for the implementation and formalization of a Dutch Caribbean expertise network.

- Mutual agreements (article 38 Statuut/Charter)
- Webinars, symposia, etc.

d. Potential external partners outside the Kingdom

- University of the West Indies (UWI)
- United Nations (agencies and commissions)
- Suriname
- Caricom
- USA-entities
- Dr. Melida Harris Barrow (Panama), advocate for the Afro-Latino inclusion the African reparation movement.

3. The way forward, a SWOT-Analyses of inter-island collaboration and a proposal for a common economic reparation agenda

Before moving into our proposed reparation agenda, I want to contribute to an evaluation of both the strengths and weaknesses of inter-island-cooperation to be considered during the formulation and execution of reparation.

³ Between 2014 and (pre-pandemic) 2020 there was a Working Group for Economic Collaboration between Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten and the Netherlands.

Internal	<p>Strengths:</p> <p>Transatlantic Kingdom providing OCT's trade possibilities and EU-Funding</p>	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <p>Insufficient institutional support on island level</p> <p>Insufficient island resources for research</p> <p>Insufficient islands governments commitment for joint development of economic niches.</p> <p>Insufficient local research into the effects of slavery</p>
	<p>External</p> <p>Opportunities:</p> <p>Creating a free market for capital, goods, and citizens between the islands</p> <p>Expanding awareness of inter-island businesses opportunities.</p> <p>International development of models for economic reparation</p>	<p>Threats:</p> <p>Islands considering each other as competitors</p> <p>Sanctions of Western countries on Venezuela, thus excluding a valuable trading partner</p>

Conclusion

The island governments urgently need to establish their independent reparation committee to take the issue of reparation forward. Below, I propose a common reparation agenda.

Action/establishment	Timeline	Actors	Funding
1. Local Independent Research Center to examine consequences of Dutch colonial slavery on the islands' economies.	0-6 months	Governments the islands, the Netherlands, and collaborating universities	The Netherlands, contributions from universities in partner countries and international organizations. A preliminary budget to be prepared during this phase
2. Island working groups to outline the conditions required for island-specific economic recovery initiatives	0 – 6 months	Island governments, experts e.g., economists, historians, sociologists, etc.	Netherlands and International organizations ⁽⁴⁾
3. Collaborative regional working group to outline Common Recovery Initiatives	0 – 6 months	Representatives drawn from the island's working groups	This phase requires minimal financial resources for coordination and data collection. Funding for implementation of initiatives will be determined in later stages.

⁴ Including technical expertise, and capacity building.

Sailing in Salt Water, Imagining a Dutch Caribbean Commission for Reparations and Healing

Solange Ludmilla Duncan
Heritage Consultant

St. Maarten, before being named by Christopher Columbus who sailed passed its shores around 1493 was first called Soualiga; the Land of Salt, by the indigenous Taino tribes who spoke Arawakan and Carib languages. These indigenous communities were subjected to violence, enslavement, and the spread of diseases brought by the Europeans, which decimated their populations. There are no known descendants of the Taino tribes in St. Maarten today.

In 1631 Fort Amsterdam was erected. The island was a battleground for European powers, primarily the Dutch and French, who alternated control until 1648 when the Netherlands and France agreed to peacefully divide the land, signing the Treaty of Concordia, to create what still exists today; two nations, an invisible border, one island; one people – St. Maarten/Saint-Martin – North and South.

From the 17th to the 19th century, enslaved Africans were brought to the shores of St. Maarten to work on plantations and in the salt ponds. For 100 years, the salt that was reaped, was the main source of income for the Dutch settlers and trade companies who exported it and other commodities like sugar and rum to both the Americas and Europe.

1. The Unique History of Slavery and Emancipation on St. Maarten

1.1 Two Emancipations – One People

In 1848, the French government abolished slavery in its colonies. Hearing the jubilant news from the North, enslaved persons working on the Diamond Estate plantation in Cole Bay and other plantations throughout the South, escaped through the hills to freedom. It would take some 15 years for King Willem III to decree the abolishment of slavery in the Dutch colonies.

On July 1, 1863, throughout villages in the south of the island, the sounding of drums echoed through the valleys and the Ponum was danced ⁽¹⁾.

The Ponum Song was created by the enslaved persons of the South to report to their enslaved brothers and sisters that the slave owners had been hiding the news of and even delaying emancipation ⁽²⁾. A sample of the song lyrics:

¹ Mathias Voges, “Cul-De-Sac People” (House of Nehesi Publishers, 2006), 11.

² “Where I See the Sun,” (House of Nehesi Publishers, 2013), 1.

Action/establishment	Timeline	Actors	Funding
4. Kingdom-wide Working Group to outline Common Recovery Initiatives	6 – 12 months	Representatives of the islands derived from the island working groups and relevant government departments; and the Netherlands	Some financial support for coordination and facilitation to be funded by the Netherlands or International Organizations
5. Kingdom Marshall Plan and a Solidarity Fund via a consensus law	12 – 24 months	Representatives from the islands and the Netherlands, experts, and representatives from the Kingdom-wide working group Governments and parliaments throughout the Kingdom	The Kingdom Marshall Plan and Solidarity Fund requires substantial financial resources. Funding from the Netherlands and international donors, and potential investments from private sector partners
6. Recommendations for Economic Recovery in Compliance with International Standards for Reparation	24 – 36 months	Representatives from the islands, the Netherlands, Suriname, and the United Nations as neutral mediator	The Netherlands, with potential support from international organizations and donors interested in promoting reparative justice
7.A Bureau for Economic Reparation to ensure sustainability of this program	0 -36 months	The islands and the Netherlands with support of the UN	Funding from the Netherlands

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Oh po' slabe, oh'ooo slabe,
 Oh po' slabe, a'bi go 'nancipation
 A'bi bin a hear um long toim
 Buh massa bin a hoid um
 A'bi bin a wukin fo' a long long toim
 Right in dis islan'
 A'bi bin a wukin fo' a long long toim,
 De massa bin a hoid um
 Brim! Shoot! Ponum Ponum Ponum Ponum!

Today the Ponum dance and song are taught in schools and can be seen and heard on Emancipation Day and St. Martin Day; official, national holidays.

The people of St. Maarten recognize this unique history as integral to who they are as 'one people'. And so it cannot be overemphasized that one cannot then speak of the emancipation of the enslaved, in the Dutch Caribbean, without recognizing and acknowledging the impact of both 1848 and 1863 on St. Maarten, simultaneously.



Caption: Salt pickers in St. Maarten. 1915-1921. Alfonso Blijden Collection.

2. Contemporary Politics and Decolonization in St. Maarten

Commencing in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the world for at least a generation. In the first quarter of the year, the Government of St. Maarten made its case for liquidity support to the Government of the Netherlands. Through interest-free loans and under several, what politicians deemed as, strict and far-reaching conditions, liquidity support was granted.

2.1 COHO and CCAD

The Dutch Government then proposed the creation of a Caribbean Body for Reform and Development (COHO) to manage structural reforms and disperse funds on Aruba,

Curaçao, and Sint Maarten. Various legal experts around the region echoed sentiments that the COHO would trample on each country's autonomy, democracy, and rights.

In July 2020, the Parliament of St. Maarten unanimously rejected the proposal to establish the COHO. Politicians also condemned the fact that the proposal was used as a condition for the third tranche of liquidity support from the Netherlands. In the same month, the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America, and the Caribbean (COPPPAL), strongly condemned what it called the violation of human rights by the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten. They demanded that the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights send a special mission to document and stop serious alleged abuses against citizens of the three Dutch Caribbean countries by the Hague⁽³⁾. Additionally, civil society organizations took legal action against the Dutch State, petitions to the UN General Fourth Committee, and (joint) letters to the Government of the (Kingdom of) the Netherlands were also sent at that time.

Owing to, what was considered neo-colonialist behavior, in November 2020, Member of Parliament S. Ludmila Duncan supported by Member Grisha Heyliger-Marten submitted a proposal, which was unanimously adopted, for the establishment of a permanent parliamentary committee on Constitutional Affairs and Decolonization (CCAD). The main responsibilities of the CCAD include the creation of a working roadmap for decolonization that involves parliamentary initiatives such as roundtables with experts, public awareness campaigns and debates with Government related to any efforts around decolonization, the Kingdom Charter, and constitutional matters.

2.2 Debt Cancellation

In July 2021, Member of Parliament George Pantophlet's motion calling for considerable relief in the form of debt cancellation was unanimously adopted by the Parliament of St. Maarten. The motion referenced the continued vulnerability with which the country was operating; that the agreed-upon debt eradication with 10-10-10 was never realized and that because of the passing of hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 and the 2020 COVID pandemic, the financial position of St. Maarten continues to deteriorate. The motion called on the Government of St. Maarten in their discussions with the Dutch Government to make it a priority to request debt cancellation as this is the only recourse that would allow the country to effectively execute its social and economic duties.

In September 2022, at the United Nations General Assembly, Prime Minister of Barbados Mia Mottley called on the international finance systems and organizations of the world to relieve and pause the overwhelming national debts of developing countries, especially in the Caribbean and unlock trillions of dollars in financing to help states navigate and overcome multiple overlapping crises. St. Maarten currently owes the Dutch Government over 500 million guilders.

³ <https://www.thedailyherald.sx/islands/coppal-condemns-violation-of-rights-in-dutch-caribbean>

3. Towards a Dutch Caribbean Commission for Reparations and Healing

Now that both the State, via the Prime Minister and the Royal Family, via the King, have apologized for and recognized slavery as a crime against humanity, it is believed that the first page in a new, long, and arduous but significant chapter in our collective history has been written. Although the Dutch Government, it appears, prefers to use the word ‘repair’, St. Maarteners, and the people of the Caribbean, for quite some time, have called for reparations as the most significant way to acknowledge past wrongs, support healing, and effect change, moving towards greater fairness and reconciliation. Reparations must follow the apology as an act of making amends, restitution, and compensation. Although the type of, or way, reparations can be made is debated heavily within the African diaspora, it is agreed that there can be no healing without reparatory justice.

Healing, for the people of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten will involve a process of recovering, restoring, and achieving a state of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being and balance. This must happen through a holistic lens, in all communities and be rooted in understanding, indigenous wisdom patience and harmony. The establishment of a regional body, a Dutch Caribbean Commission for Reparations and Healing (DCCRH) has the potential to be of immense value to the descendants of enslaved persons on the islands and generations to come.

3.1 Honoring the work of the CARICOM Reparations Commission

The CARICOM Reparations Commission (CRC) was established in 2013 and has been advocating for reparations for the historical injustices of slavery and its legacies from the United Kingdom and other European nations. It also continues to conduct research, raise awareness, and engage in diplomatic efforts to address the lasting social, economic, and cultural impacts of slavery on Caribbean nations and their descendants.

The CRC continues to call for redress from former colonial powers and institutions responsible for the transatlantic slave trade and slavery in the Caribbean through its ten-point action plan which includes:

1. A full formal apology from European governments
2. A repatriation program
3. An Indigenous people’s development program
4. Investment in cultural institutions
5. Addressing public health crises related to historical trauma
6. Illiteracy eradication
7. African knowledge program
8. Psychological rehabilitation for descendants of enslaved Africans
9. Technology transfer and access to science
10. Debt cancellation for Caribbean nations

While decolonization efforts on St. Maarten have always been influenced and supported by the surrounding Caribbean islands thanks to familial and cultural networks and connections, the distinct position of the islands of the Dutch Caribbean as well as its cultural uniqueness

present a case for the creation of a comparable yet unique Commission catering to the current context of the Kingdom.

3.2 Can a Dutch Caribbean Commission for Reparations and Healing truly work?

The complexities and challenges surrounding reparation and healing are great. On St. Maarten, the call for independence from the Kingdom of the Netherlands has been reignited by the ONE SXM Association who submitted a petition and draft resolution to the Parliament of St. Maarten in March 2022 requesting that a consultative referendum be held with the sole question of “Independence: Yes, or No?” A subcommittee of the CCAD has conducted research and will be presenting a report to Parliament on their findings in relation to the hosting of the country’s first consultative referendum since 10-10-10.

The lack of structural financing mechanisms, debt, and extreme vulnerability due to climate change however may well see the Governments of the Dutch Caribbean islands working to deepen their relationships with the Netherlands albeit out of necessity. Bottlenecks to the countries’ growth and development include political instability, the lack of institutional capacity and resources. At local levels but also collectively, policy development and development aid will need to go hand and hand to repair the legacies of colonialism and slavery and well as create a transformative process for healing.

It appears that in the Dutch Caribbean, the Governments and Parliaments have, most importantly, realized that in the face of adversity, there is power in uniting. Each island currently either has a platform or advisory committee focused on heritage and the effects of slavery.

There isn’t a more opportune time then for the creation of a Dutch Caribbean Commission for Reparations and Healing. This body can then create space for:

- **Collective Strength:** ensuring that shared concerns are addressed collectively and in unity while amplifying the voice of the islands in Kingdom and international forums.
- **Efficiency:** streamlining processes, avoiding duplication of efforts on the islands, and pooling of resources for effectiveness.
- **Resource Sharing:** fostering mutual support and development through shared expertise and resources.
- **Solidarity:** promoting solidarity, strengthening bonds and fostering a sense of community and shared identity.
- **Cultural Preservation:** jointly preserving and promoting Caribbean culture, history, and heritage.
- **Conflict Resolution:** providing mechanisms for conflict resolution and diplomacy among the countries in the Kingdom.
- **Cultural Exchange:** promoting cultural exchange and tourism within the region, boosting economic and cultural ties.

It is important to note that the success of such a commission would depend on various factors, including the willingness of all parties to engage in meaningful dialogue and

negotiations, the specific terms of the establishment, scope of work of the commission, its legal structure and mandate, funding avenues and the level of public and political support. Collective action and collaboration in a Dutch Caribbean Commission for Reparations and Healing may well be what the people need again to reconnect to each other and create a new, collective history of truth and healing.

4. Designing a Dutch Caribbean Reparations Agenda

A Reparations agenda for the Dutch Caribbean is important because after the apology from the Netherlands, there is a growing call for accountability beyond the creation of awareness. Through a Reparations agenda, the Netherlands can commit to promoting justice and equity while fostering healing and reconciliation and preventing the perpetuation of the harmful effects of slavery and colonialism today. It enables both healing and development of the countries within the Dutch Caribbean and, by default, the future development of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Reparatory justice initiatives will include investments in education, healthcare, housing, and infrastructure in the islands' many communities. Communities that need empowerment and voice. Such initiatives are key to progress.

4.1 The Steps to Create an Agenda

Collaboration is foundational. The first steps in creating a joint reparations agenda will include identifying key stakeholders throughout communities on the islands, including non-profit organizations, community leaders, citizens; young and old, and government bodies that can provide representation. Also important is a comprehensive assessment of each island's needs, challenges, and opportunities in relation to the contemporary impact of slavery.

Engaging stakeholders to develop a shared vision for the region's future will allow for alignment across all islands and the development of ownership. Once the needs have been recognized and priorities selected, expected challenges and potential impact will also be ascertained. The creation of a web of knowledge networks across the islands to ensure that assumptions and decisions are based in evidence is paramount.

There will also be a necessity for broad social and political support of joint efforts across islands. How does each community in each island understand the importance of collaboration on such a wide scale? Traditional and social media marketing avenues and public relations campaigns will play significant roles in informing and consulting the public as well as garnering buy-in and support.

4.2 Six Islands and 8 Points Perhaps?

Inspired by CARICOM's 10-point plan, a Dutch Caribbean Reparations agenda takes into consideration both the collective and unique needs of the people of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten. A true agenda, however, supported by the proposed DCCRH through substantial, regular national dialogues and consultation. An example of such an agenda may include but are not limited to:

1. Education and Language

Prioritizing and funding education ensures the empowerment and upliftment of the affected descendants of the enslaved in the Dutch Caribbean. Funding for schools, scholarships, and educational programs, heritage-based or not, is crucial to the development of the people. Promoting languages fosters cultural pride and self-identity. On Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten, English is the mother-tongue of the people. On Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, Papiamentu is the mother-tongue of the people. The rightful place of these first and creole languages must be recognized and protected.

2. Cultural Heritage

Safeguarding cultural heritage preserves the unique history and identity of the Dutch Caribbean. This can be achieved through the consistent financing of cultural events, the preservation of historic and heritage sites, and support of cultural education programs and intangible heritage. The legacies of One Tete Lohkay and Tula and other freedom fighters must be preserved.

3. Social Minimum

Ensuring a social minimum throughout the Kingdom of the Netherlands, regardless of the exact location, guarantees standards of living for all Dutch citizens. This involves reducing poverty and inequality across communities.

4. Climate Justice

The Dutch Caribbean islands are particularly vulnerable to climate change especially Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten, who lie in the hurricane belt. Investing in climate resilience, renewable energy, and sustainable infrastructure is vital for the long-term well-being and survival of these communities.

5. Holistic Health

Holistic health recognizes the interconnectedness of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. This approach emphasizes preventive care, natural therapies, stress reduction, and mental health support, leading to healthier, more resilient communities.

6. Technology and Digitization

Advancing technology and digitization can bridge gaps in access to information and services. This includes initiatives for digital education and culture, telemedicine, and e-government services, empowering communities throughout the islands that lack infrastructure and access.

7. Institutions & Capacity Development

The current institutional structures on the islands are remnants of earlier colonial times. They do not reflect the realities of Caribbean work and life. Support for transforming local governance, legal frameworks, and structures is essential for sustainable development and self-determination. Investing in human capital will develop the capacity of the islands' communities for generations to come.

8. Debt Cancellation

Debt cancellation will allow each country in the Dutch Caribbean immediate relief from financial burdens as it frees up resources for essential investments in education, healthcare, and capital expenditures. It also has the potential to change debt dependency on the Netherlands and support long-term economic stability.

A Dutch Caribbean Reparations Agenda must be designed to meet the unique and collective needs of the people on all the six islands. Through national dialogues and a concerted effort to collaborate, the creation of a collective agenda and the commission could ignite a synergy across the region that would best support the healing, reconciliation, and development processes across communities.

5. Towards a Renewed Dutch Kingdom and the Caribbean

The Netherlands has made history because of their apologies for their role in the Transatlantic slave trade. The Government has made funds available for education and awareness throughout the metropole, Caribbean, and Suriname. These developments may be seen as the beginning of a more equitable and sustainable future for the citizens of the Kingdom and especially those who are descendants of enslaved Africans.

Reparatory justice is the momentous, next step in this journey because it recognizes and addresses historical injustices including colonization and can significantly redress the harm inflicted on those communities because of slavery. Reparations promote equality, and foster healing and reconciliation. And so, if the Netherlands is serious in its assertion that will work on repairing its legacy, it must commit itself to a reparations agenda that can prevent future injustices, uphold legal and moral obligations, and can contribute to social cohesion, economic empowerment, and improved kingdom relations.

In summary, the establishment of a Dutch Caribbean Reparations and Healing Commission and Agenda will lead to a brighter future for citizens of the Dutch Caribbean and the Kingdom as a whole. Through investments in education, culture, social welfare, climate resilience, and more, peoples of the Dutch Caribbean and the diaspora would be better equipped to address historical injustices, embrace self-determination, and build thriving, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

As colonial structures are transformed and healing begins, the strengthening of bonds and the alignment of efforts across countries, toward justice will ensure a renewed Kingdom – for as long as the Kingdom exists.

Conclusion

The members of the Interinsular Consultation are aware of the historical significance of the small symposium that took place in Sint Maarten at the end of September 2023. For the first time, broad consultations took place between group members and experts from the six islands of Saba, St. Eustatius, Bonaire, St. Maarten, Aruba and Curaçao to debate and formulate proposals for the interpretation of the apology of the Dutch state for its role in the Trans-Atlantic slavery past.

The members of the Interisland Consultation and the invited experts were imbued with the fact that the Dutch State explicitly and unequivocally apologized through Prime Minister Mark Rutte on December 19, 2022 and repeated by King Willem-Alexander on July 1, 2023.

The purpose of the symposium of the Interinsular Consultation was to give substance to the commitments made that the Caribbean part of the Kingdom will actively participate in the process beyond the comma, and therefore make known their wishes and expectations regarding the interpretation of the process of recovery and healing. In other words, to ‘take the lead’ in this and to be financially enabled to do so.

Decisions

On the basis of

- a. the findings of the island coordinators of the Advisory Committee on the Dialogue Group on the History of Slavery as contained in the appendices of the report *Chains of the Past*;
- b. our letter of October 25, 2021 to the Dutch Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations;
- c. our memorandum *Plea for Healing and Recovery* and our letter to the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations dated May 6, 2022 (see annex);
- d. discussion papers prepared and deliberations based thereon recorded during the symposium, the Interinsular Consultation adopts the following four-part statement of intent.

1. Legal Person Foundation Interinsular Consultation on the History of Slavery

In the short term, a foundation will be created whose task it will be to coordinate the initiatives listed below as a legal entity. The foundation will be the commissioner of the initiatives listed below and will be the point of contact for the Dutch and Caribbean governments and the descendants on the Dutch Caribbean islands. The foundation is charged with the dissemination of the developed proposals as described below.

2. Dutch Caribbean Knowledge Network for Restorative Justice

An Interinsular Dutch Caribbean Knowledge Network for Restorative Justice will be established. This knowledge network focuses on networking, research, capacity building, capacity exchange and other desired forms of institutional strengthening in the areas of

Archives, Museums, Universities/Knowledge Centers, Libraries, Monument Preservation and Culture and Heritage (GO and NGO).

The Knowledge Network is committed to supporting the promotion of knowledge and awareness and reparations for the Caribbean islands of the Kingdom and restorative justice for populations of the six islands based on demand articulation in the communities.

The implementation of this network will be commissioned by the foundation to the University of Aruba which will prepare an advice within 4 to 6 months regarding the structure and policy plan for the Network. The organization desired by the Interinsular Consultation from the University of Aruba is that a working group be formed with representatives of the aforementioned institutions. The number of members is six, but can be expanded as needed. The working group shall have an adequate start-up budget.

In its work, the working group will involve at least the following topics:

- needs- and asset-assessment among institutions in the mentioned sectors on the six islands;
- long term: a preliminary ten-year research agenda Slavery History and Impact based on the results of the island dialogue tables, additional research and in time, this to support the preliminary Dutch Caribbean recovery agenda;
- short term a: a draft research agenda for the next 3 years;
- short term b: a draft capacity building program for institutions in the aforementioned areas of work for the next 3 years;
- an exploration of possible partners in the region and the Kingdom to realize this research agenda and capacity agenda;
- a reasoned and multi-year budget both in the short (3 years) and long term (10 years) based on the funds committed by the Netherlands to the islands.

3. Agenda for Awareness, Reparations and Restorative Justice

A (preliminary) integrated, sustainable and generously funded agenda and implementation program will be established to promote awareness, reparations and restorative justice and healing of the repercussions of slavery and colonialism on the six Caribbean islands of the Kingdom.

The foundation will be adequately facilitated for this purpose. For each island, the foundation will enter into partnerships with organizations and individuals who will be tasked with drawing up a provisional reparation agenda within six months using a model agreed upon in advance. In drawing up the provisional recovery agenda, the implementers will involve at least the following aspects:

- the contours of a provisional preliminary, participatory, thematic-holistic Dutch Caribbean recovery agenda in which there is room for commonality and differentiation between and within the islands;
- this agenda is at least based on the outcomes of the dialogue tables that have already been carried out on the six islands and on additional research; if possible to be supplemented

with population or opinion research;

- the preliminary agenda can count on support among governments, civil society, including in particular grassroots organizations and island institutions;
- a robust, justified and multi-year budget based on the funds committed to the islands by the Netherlands.

Under the coordination of the foundation, the knowledge network will then test the preliminary recovery agenda for validity and a general final recovery agenda will be jointly drawn up with room for specific attention per island. Based on this, recovery or reparation programs for healing will be drawn up.

4. Dutch Caribbean Commission for Reparations and Healing

The governance of the Dutch Caribbean Knowledge Network and the Dutch Caribbean Agenda for Reparations and Restorative Justice will eventually be placed in the hands of a Dutch Caribbean Commission for Reparations and Healing (DCCRH) to be established within six months, which will be recognized as the primary interlocutor by all governments in the Caribbean and European part of the Kingdom and will act as an advocate for descendants of slavery (civil society).

The establishment of the DCCRH is being prepared by a working group of 6 members, but may be expanded as needed. The foundation commissions this working group. The working group elects a chairperson and has a secretariat. The working group has an adequate start-up budget including resources to obtain careful legal and administrative advice.

- The working group shall advise at least on the following items concerning DCCRH:
- the legal entity of the DCCRH (possibly the bylaws, which include;)
- the vision and mission of the DCCRH;
- the composition and (policy-making and executive) powers of the DCCRH, including the (rotating) chairmanship and secretariat;
- the responsibilities regarding the implementation of the DCCRH knowledge network and the implementation of the recovery agenda;
- the external organization and communication of the DCCRH with its progeny in civil society, relevant authorities and institutions (NGO, GO);
- the organization of the supervision of the (implementing organization of) DCCRH;
- the ambition of the DCCRH with regard to initiatives and programs concerning the impact of slavery and colonialism originating from actors other than the Dutch state;
- a justified and multi-year budget based on the funds promised to the islands by the Netherlands.

Annex

Pleidooi voor Erkenning, Excuses en Herstel in het Caribisch deel van het Koninkrijk, May 2022

Van: Werkgroep Interinsulair Overleg Doorwerking Slavernij Verleden

Aan:

De Minister van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, mevr. H. Bruins Slot

De leden de Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal

De leden der Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal

De Staatssecretaris van Koninkrijksrelaties en Digitalisering, mevr. A. van Huffelen

c.c. Gouverneurs Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten

c.c. Ministers President Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten

c.c. Gezaghebbers Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, Saba

c.c. Prof. Dr. Rose Mary Allen, Nederlands Caribisch lid Regiegroep

Excellentie, minister van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties,

Hoogedelgestrengede leden der Eerste en Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal,

c.c. Hooggeleerde prof. dr. Allen,

De Nederlands Caribische Werkgroep Interinsulair Overleg Doorwerking Slavernij Verleden vraagt uw aandacht voor het volgende.

Achtergrond

De toenmalig Nederlandse minister van Binnenlandse zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties heeft in een kamerbrief gedateerd 1 juli 2020 de Tweede Kamer geïnformeerd over de instelling van het Adviescollege dialooggroep slavernijverleden en de wijze waarop een koninkrijksbrede dialoog over het slavernijverleden zou worden vorm gegeven als opdracht aan dit adviescollege. (Kamerstuk nr. 2020-0000365177). In deze brief werd reeds aangegeven dat ook op de Caribische landen en openbare lichamen dialoogtafels zouden worden georganiseerd om de nawerking van het slavernijverleden bespreekbaar te maken. Er hebben inderdaad eilandelijke dialogen onder leiding van zes door de Dialooggroep benoemde Caribische coördinatoren plaatsgevonden. De toegezegde ambtelijke ondersteuning vanuit Nederland was echter niet optimaal. Desalniettemin zijn uitkomsten van de dialogen op Curaçao, Bonaire, Sint Maarten, Saba en Sint Eustatius opgenomen in het *Rapport van Bevindingen 'Ketenen van het Verleden' van het Adviescollege Dialooggroep Slavernijverleden* (pagina 208-262). De uitkomsten van de dialoog op Aruba was niet op tijd klaar om opgenomen te worden in dit rapport van bevindingen (zie voor dit dialoograpport bijlage 6).

Na overhandiging van het Rapport van Bevindingen op 1 juli 2021 door het Adviescollege Dialooggroep, hebben de Nederlands Caribische coördinatoren het raadzaam geacht om in gezamenlijkheid als informele werkgroep overleg te blijven voeren over de reacties op het rapport en besluitvorming ten aanzien van de daarin vervatte aanbevelingen in Nederland. Deze werkgroep heeft zich als belangrijke doel gesteld om zorg te dragen dat de eilandelijke zienswijzen en wensen de nodige aandacht zouden krijgen en opgenomen zouden worden in het nog op te stellen kabinetsreactie. We hebben de minister van BZK hiervan op 25 oktober 2021 per brief op de hoogte gesteld en tevens de gedachten van maatregelen rond erkenning, excuses en herstel voor ieder van de eilanden voorgelegd (bijlage 1).

Op 12 januari 2022 reageerde BZK (Kenmerk 2021-0000693183) dat onze suggesties zouden worden meegenomen in de gedachtenvorming in de kabinetsreactie op het Rapport van Bevindingen van het Adviescollege Dialooggroep Slavernij Verleden. We zijn hoopvol dat dit resulteert in een helder en substantieel gebaar in de richting van onze eilanden. Hierop komen we terug in ons pleidooi.

Voor de goede orde: de Nederlands Caribische werkgroep onderschrijft de bevindingen en aanbevelingen van het rapport *Ketenen van het Verleden* (pagina 39-46), maar stelt ook vast dat deze voornamelijk betrekking hebben op ontwikkelingen in Nederland, Suriname en Indonesië. Alleen aanbeveling 7 (onder punt 3, pagina 45,) komt enigszins tegemoet aan de wensen en noden van de Nederlands Caribische landen en openbare lichamen.⁽¹⁾ We sluiten hierop aan en benadrukken dat de aanbevelingen zeker ook betrekking dienen te hebben op die gebieden waar de Nederlandse slavernij daadwerkelijk plaatsvond, te weten in de Nederlandse Cariben, meer in het bijzonder, op onze zes eilanden.

De werkgroep ondersteunt eveneens de door de Tweede Kamer aangenomen gewijzigde motie Ceder met als doel om te komen tot ‘een proces dat de maatschappelijke eenheid binnen het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden versterkt’ (Kamerstuk nr. 30950-272). We zijn verheugd dat prof. dr. Rose Mary Allen van de University of Curaçao is opgenomen in de redactiegroep die het onafhankelijke onderzoek naar het slavernijverleden leidt. We hebben begrepen dat de redactiecommissie inmiddels een onderzoeksontwerp heeft opgesteld en zijn in afwachting van dit ontwerp, en ook van de invulling van de organisatie die het onderzoek moet realiseren.

Echter zijn we teleurgesteld dat bij de door de Tweede Kamer op 13 januari 2022 georganiseerde rondetafelgesprekken over het slavernijverleden geen enkele Antilliaanse organisatie of (ei)

¹ Dit punt luidt: “Treed met de landen binnen het Koninkrijk, Curaçao, Aruba en Sint Maarten, en ook de openbare lichamen Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba en waar toepasselijk Suriname in overleg over de wijze van het te ontwikkelen herstelbeleid, met inbegrip van het hierboven genoemde Koninkrijksfonds. Dit beleid dient op 1 juli 2023 tot resultaat te hebben geleid. Alleen een gezamenlijk gedragen beleid kan leiden tot uitkomsten die voor alle partijen bevredigend zijn. Gelet op de grote onderlinge verschillen zal er ruimte moeten zijn voor eigen opvattingen en maatwerk, zodat neokoloniale reflexen worden voorkomen. Daarbij is van belang dat de samenwerking tussen deze delen van het voormalige Koninkrijk waar gewenst ook in operationele zin wordt bevorderd.”

land was uitgenodigd. Een van de organisatoren van deze rondetafelgesprekken, mevrouw Samira Belhaj (D66), bood tijdens de ronde tafel excuses aan voor het niet uitnodigen van Antillianen en beloofde dat er meer gesprekken over dit onderwerp gehouden worden en dat de Nederlands Caribische landen en openbare lichamen dan zeker zullen worden uitgenodigd. Alhoewel wij ons op 19 februari bij mevrouw Belhaj hebben aangemeld voor een volgende gespreksronde (bijlage 3), hebben we hierop tot op heden geen reactie ontvangen.

Vervolgens hebben wij op 19 februari 2021 het ministerie van OCW benaderd in verband met het verzoek om de voormalige Nederlandse Antillen en Aruba niet te vergeten bij de voorbereiding van de door OCW te organiseren activiteiten ter herdenking van de 160-jarige ⁽²⁾ afschaffing van de slavernij in het Koninkrijk op 1 juli 2023 (bijlage 4). Op dit verzoek heeft OCW welwillend gereageerd en zijn we in afwachting van het vervolgoverleg.

Op 9 februari 2022 verscheen het rapport *Dienstbaar aan de Keten* waarin het aandeel van De Nederlandsche Bank in de slavenhandel en slavernij wordt beschreven. Naar aanleiding hiervan heeft de DNB besloten in gesprek te zullen gaan met medewerkers en vertegenwoordigers van maatschappelijke organisaties. De heer Freek Ossel is belast met de organisatie. Op 19 februari 2022 hebben wij DNB geïnformeerd ons te willen aanmelden voor deze dialoog (bijlage 5). Hierop hebben wij al snel een positieve reactie ontvangen. We zijn in middels uitgenodigd voor ontmoeting met de president van De Nederlands Bank de heer Klaas Knot en de heer Freek Ossel.

Het moge duidelijk zijn dat de Nederlands Caribische landen en openbare lichamen door de minister van Binnenlandse Zaken vanaf de instelling van het Adviescollege Dialooggroep Slavernijverleden zijn uitgenodigd om deel te nemen in het maatschappelijk debat over het slavernijverleden, maar ook dat participatie bepaald niet vanzelfsprekend is geweest. Immers, de werkgroep trof blinde vlekken aan in de conclusies en aanbevelingen in het rapport *Ketenen van het Verleden* voor wat betreft de voormalige Nederlandse Antillen. De eilanden moesten aandringen op vertegenwoordiging bij de uitvoering van de motie-Ceders, werden ‘vergeten’ bij de rondetafelgesprekken van de Tweede Kamer van 13 januari 2022 en – door schade en schande wijs geworden – hebben zelf het initiatief genomen in de richting van OCW (in verband van de herdenking van 160 jaar afschaffing slavernij) en in de richting van De Nederlandsche Bank (in verband met de gesprekken over diens slavernijverleden).

Om deze reden legt de werkgroep een pleidooi voor, voor heling en herstel van de gevolgen van slavernij en kolonialisme in die gebieden waar de slavernij daadwerkelijk plaatsvond.

² Graag wijzen we erop dat in Nederland gesproken wordt over 160 jaar afschaffing van de slavernij en 150 jaar afschaffing van de staatstoezicht, de periode van 10 jaar waarin, ondanks de afschaffing van de slavernij, de ex-slaven verplicht waren op de plantages te wonen en te werken. Dit staatstoezicht gold alleen voor Suriname. Onze eilanden hebben dit fenomeen dus nooit gekend. Curaçao kende het systeem van paga tera (letterlijk: het land betalen), waarbij ex-slaven verplicht waren om enkele dagen per jaar gratis voor hun voormalige eigenaar te werken. Dit paga tera-systeem, dat in feite een systeem van lijfeigenschap was, bleef tot de jaren 1880 bestaan.

Daarbij zal het primair moeten gaan om de bestrijding van – zoals in de Curaçaose dialoog geopperd werd – de syndromatische mentale effecten van de slavernij die belemmerend werken op de emancipatorische ontwikkeling van onze eilanden. Graag wijzen wij in dit verband op het verschil in doorwerking tussen de Nederlandse samenleving en die van onze eilanden. De relaties in de Nederlandse samenleving worden voornamelijk bepaald door ongelijkheid en achterstelling. De relaties op onze eilanden door ongelijkheid en achterstelling, maar ook door een ongelijke status in vergelijking met Nederland.

Deze benadering vindt steun in de essay van prof. dr. Alex van Stipriaan, opgenomen van pagina 163 tot 181 in *Ketenen van het Verleden*. Samenvattend komt het betoog van Van Stipriaan op het volgende neer:

- Door de Atlantische vorm van slavernij zijn compleet nieuwe samenlevingen ontstaan, met vrijwel compleet nieuwe culturen.
- Samenlevingen waarin de meerderheid van de bevolking slaafgemaakt was en waarvan rigide segregatie de basis vormde.
- De trans-Atlantische slavernij heeft een juridisch-wetenschappelijk en religieus onderbouwd systeem geproduceerd, gebaseerd op de fundamentele ongelijkheid van een vermeend superieur Europees/wit “ras” en een vermeend inferieur Afrikaans/zwart “ras”.
- Tot de dag van vandaag werkt dit systeem door in alle betrokken samenlevingen en is de oorzaak van sociale, economische, culturele en politieke ongelijkheid.

Het mag ook gezegd worden dat op de verschillende eilanden al jaren activiteiten worden ontplooid om slavernij en emancipatie te erkennen en te gedenken.

Pleidooi voor Erkenning, Excuses en Herstel in het Caribisch deel van het Koninkrijk

De werkgroep stelt vast dat maatregelen ter herstel en heling van het slavernijverleden op de eilanden tekortschieten. Europese en Caribische overheden nemen tot op heden geen stelling in het maatschappelijk debat over de nawerking van het slavernijverleden. Door het instellen van het *Adviescollege Slavernijverleden* heeft de Nederlandse regering een kentering in de omgang met dit pijnlijke aspect van de gedeelde trans-Atlantische geschiedenis van het Koninkrijk teweeggebracht. Het rapport *Ketenen van het Verleden* biedt handvaten om over te gaan tot heling en herstel van de wonden van het slavernijverleden aan beide zijden van de oceaan. Op enig moment zullen ook onze Caribische overheden in dit proces betrokken moeten worden.

Het nu volgende Pleidooi voor *Erkenning, Excuses en Herstel* in het Caribisch deel van het Koninkrijk is gebaseerd op de opbrengsten van de dialoogtafels met burgers van de eilanden Aruba (bijlage 6), Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius en Sint Maarten. In dit pleidooi zijn de wensen van de individuele eilanden op dusdanige wijze bij elkaar gebracht dat de uitvoering van die individuele wensen daadwerkelijk uitgevoerd kunnen worden.

In aansluiting op aanbevelingen van het *Rapport van Bevindingen* benadrukt de werkgroep nogmaals de noodzaak van het *erkennen* van slavernij in de Nederlandse invloedssfeer als misdaad tegen de menselijkheid; het aanbieden van excuses door het staatshoofd, de

premier en de Staten-Generaal aan alle (nakomelingen van) slachtoffers van slavernij, het bevorderen van *herstel* voor het officialiseren van de jaarlijkse herdenking van de afschaffing van de slavernij op 1 juli, het vieren van de 160-jarige emancipatie in 2023, de rehabilitatie van Tula en de overige aanbevelingen van het Adviescollege.

Verwijzend naar de gewijzigde *motie Ceder* onderschrijft de werkgroep de noodzaak van het verrichten van onderzoek over het slavernijverleden, zowel in de vorm van empirisch onderzoek dat in Nederland en op de eilanden ervaren kennisleemtes moet opvullen als in de vorm van het produceren van publieksuitgaven.

Aanvullend op de aanbevelingen in het *Rapport van Bevindingen* en de *motie Ceder* en gegeven de verbondenheid van het Papiaments met het slavernijverleden en de aanwezigheid van 170.000 overwegend Papiamentssprekende Antillianen in Nederland, dringt de werkgroep er bij de Nederlandse overheid op aan om over te gaan tot de erkenning van het Papiaments als nationale minderheidstaal in Nederland – in het bijzonder op Bonaire – op grond van het *Europees Handvest voor regionale talen of talen van minderheden*.

Erkenning, Excuses en Herstel in het Caribisch deel van het Koninkrijk

De werkgroep bepleit het vaststellen van concrete maatregelen ter herstel en heling van de nawerking van slavernij en kolonialisme in het Caribisch deel van het Koninkrijk op basis van het *Rapport van Bevindingen* en de *motie Ceder*.

De werkgroep bepleit de oprichting van een autonoom, eigentijds gefaciliteerd en ruimhartig, duurzaam gebudgetteerd Nederlands Caribisch onderzoekcentrum c.q. kennisnetwerk *Slavernij en Kolonialisme* bestaande uit archieven, universiteiten, ngo's, musea, en bibliotheken op de zes eilanden.

Deze zal als hoofddoel hebben het bevorderen van herstel en heling van slavernij en kolonialisme in de Nederlands Caribische landen en openbare lichamen door middel van:

- a. het verrichten van onafhankelijk wetenschappelijk onderzoek naar de nawerking van slavernij en kolonialisme op de zes eilanden en hun regionale en koninkrijksnetwerken, inclusief archiefonderzoek, mondeling historisch onderzoek, genealogisch onderzoek en DNA-onderzoek;
- b. het bevorderen van de maatschappelijke dialoog over slavernij, kolonialisme, mentaal erfgoed en racisme op de zes eilanden;
- c. het tot stand brengen van onderwijsmateriaal over de nawerking van slavernij en kolonialisme;
- d. het bevorderen van het veiligstellen ('safeguarding') van materieel en immaterieel slavernij-gerelateerd erfgoed door gouvernementele en niet-gouvernementele, lokale en internationale organisaties;
- e. het ondersteunen van de jaarlijkse herdenking van de afschaffing van de slavernij op de zes Nederlands Caribische eilanden;
- f. het als zelfstandige entiteit participeren in toekomstig koninkrijksoverleg over de wijze van het te ontwikkelen herstelbeleid, met inbegrip van het Koninkrijksfonds.

De werkgroep benadrukt dat:

- a. activiteiten van het onderzoekscentrum/kennisnetwerk plaatsvinden op basis van vraagarticulatie op en vanuit de zes eilanden;
- b. de kosten verbonden aan de oprichting en werkzaamheden van het onderzoekscentrum in redelijkheid en evenredigheid met die van het beoogde Nationale Nederlandse museum en onderzoekscentrum (pagina 67) vanuit het Koninkrijksfonds worden gefinancierd;
- c. het onderzoekscentrum intensief zal samenwerken met het op te richten Nederlandse museum en onderzoekscentrum. Beide instellingen worden verplicht om binnen 12 maanden na ingang van hun instellingsbesluit een samenwerkingsprotocol ondertekenen;
- d. het Nederlands Caribisch onderzoekscentrum/kennisnetwerk op afstand staat van lokale en Koninkrijksoverheden. Onderzoekers, ontwikkelaars en bestuurders zijn gehouden aan de Nederlandse Gedragscode Wetenschappelijke Integriteit (2018).

De werkgroep roept Nederlandse en Caribische overheden op medewerking te verlenen aan de oprichting van een onafhankelijk Nederlands Caribisch onderzoeksinstituut, zoals beschreven in dit pleidooi en de werkgroep een plaats te geven in de voorbereidingen daarvan.

Met vriendelijke groet.

Frits Goedgedrag,	voorzitter
Ruben Severina,	secretaris
Luc Alofs,	Aruba
Ewart Sealy,	Bonaire
Gilbert Bacilio,	Curaçao
Vito Charles,	Saba
Raimie Richardson,	St. Eustatius
Ludmila Duncan,	St. Maarten

Biographies

Rose Mary Allen (Curaçao, 1950) conducted oral history interviews with people of the Dutch speaking Caribbean islands and has published, co-published and edited several books and articles on the cultural and social history of the Dutch Caribbean islands. In 2021, Rose Mary was appointed Extraordinary Professor in the field of Culture, Community and History at the University of Curaçao Dr. Moises da Costa Gomez. She is a member of the steering group of the national investigation into the history of slavery on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (KITLV, NinSee, IISH and the UoC) and co-editor the publication ‘Staat en slavernij: het Nederlandse koloniale slavernijverleden en zijn doorwerkingen’. She is one of the project leaders of the NWO funded research project ‘Church and Slavery in the Dutch Empire Heritage’ (PThU), VU and University of Curaçao; 2023-2027).

Luc Alofs (the Netherlands, 1960) studied Cultural Anthropology at the Radboud University Nijmegen (1988). He obtained a certificate in education at Instituto Pedagógico Arubano (1997) and a Ph.D. in history at Leiden University (2011). Luc has been conducting research in Aruba and the Dutch Caribbean since 1985. He published around 80 books, articles and (policy) reports, developed exhibitions, gave lectures, and read conference papers on a wide variety of topics. He has been president, board member and curator of numerous local non-governmental organizations and governmental advisory boards. He was lecturer at the Aruba Teacher Training College (IPA) and is currently senior lecturer, researcher and manager of Master program Governance and Leadership at the University of Aruba.

Gilbert ‘Gibi’ Bacilio (Curaçao, 1950) is a poet, elocutionist, playwright, and director. He has been active in numerous civil society organizations. member of the Society for the Promotion of Historical Awareness (1986), which since 2009 has been part of the Curaçaoan Platform on Slavery and Legacy of Slavery. On the request of the Dutch cabinet, Gibi was Coordinator of Dialogue Tables on Curaçao about the history of slavery and its repercussions. He co-authored the report ‘We want nothing but our freedom’ which was included in the report of the Advisory Board Dialogue Group on the Slavery Past ‘Chains of the Past’ (2021). He was the representative of Curaçao in the Interinsular Consultation (2021-23). Gibi actively contributed to the rehabilitation of Tula and his allies, by the Dutch government in 2023.

Vito Charles (St. Kitts, 1979) was raised in Saba and grew up involved in cultural events on the island, developing an early appreciation for culture. In 2012, he was asked to become a founding member of the Saba Archaeological Foundation, an NGO that manages the Saba Heritage Center and focuses on engaging with the community to acquire and share information about the island’s past. As a board member of this foundation, Vito believes that Saba’s unique cultural heritage requires dedicated efforts for preservation. He is also active in the island’s political environment as an Island Council Member.

Charles do Rego (Curaçao, 1946) conducts research particularly in the fields of social history, slavery, immigration, and social inclusion. He has taught at the local Universities and the Teachers Training Institute. He studied Human Geography (1971) and Business Administration (1991). He was a member of the Advisory Council of Curaçao, Board Member of the National Archaeological & Anthropological Memory Management (NAAM), Chairman of the Council for Monuments. He was acting chair (from 2016 onwards, Vice Chair) of the Supreme Electoral Council.

Solange Ludmila Duncan (St. Maarten, 1982) is a policy expert who holds a Master of Science in Development Management (Public Administration) from the University of Birmingham. She worked for the Government of St. Maarten within the ministries of Tourism, Education and Justice. She is currently a Member of Parliament on the island. In 2022, she proposed the establishment of the permanent Committee for Constitutional Affairs and Decolonization in Parliament and chaired the first parliamentary Roundtable panel discussion on Decolonization and the Kingdom Charter. She is an advocate for the preservation and promotion of heritage, culture, and the evolution of the creative economy on St. Maarten. Ludmila believes in the power of a decolonial paradigm that includes indigenous knowledge, collaboration and promotes transformation.

Frits Goedgedrag (Aruba, 1951) After graduating as a law student, Frits moved to Curaçao where he worked for 4 years for the Netherlands Antilles government. Afterwards, he left for Bonaire, where he worked for 17 years in various positions for the island territory, including the position of Lieutenant Governor (1992-1998). In 1998 he returned to Curaçao where he served in various positions. Frits became the last Governor of the Netherlands Antilles (2002-2010), and the first of the country of Curaçao (2010-2012). In 2012, he moved back to Aruba. Next to his retirement, he held numerous positions such as president of the board of the Kingdom Council of State and the Aruba Council of Advice. He was the first president of the Dialogue Group Slavery Past of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Raymond Hernandez (Aruba, 1962) completed his studies as a historian at the Dutch University of Groningen in 1989. He was appointed as a scientific researcher at the Aruban Records Management Services. In 1994 he became the first director of the newly instituted department of the Historical Archives of Aruba, which became the National Archives of Aruba in 2004. Under his guidance, this service developed from a very small historical archive to a greater and mature archival institution, where he and his colleagues manage and safeguard the national cultural heritage of Aruba. Together with other Aruban cultural heritage institutions, he is now setting up the structure for a new form of making their Aruban heritage visible and accessible to the whole world community.

Janice James (Curaçao, 1964) along with her siblings spoke English at home, Dutch in the classrooms and Papiamentu among friends. Her formal education was in Curaçao. Janice migrated to Sint Maarten in 1988. In 1978 Janice competed in a story writing competition and her two stories were part of the winning entries. In 2012 Janice published a book,

entitled “Faith”. This book a compilation of stories and poems, written in the languages Dutch, English & Papiamentu. Janice is employed at the Stichting Voortgezet Onderwijs Bovendwindse Eilanden as the Financial and Payroll Administrator.

Sidney Justiana MBA (Curaçao, 1962) is a former primary school teacher. He transitioned into becoming a prominent union leader, advocating for workers’ rights both locally and on the international stage. His expertise extends to politics, where he serves as a local political analyst and an international commentator. Sidney is also a dedicated educator, teaching courses in HRM, Strategic Management, Education Management, and Management and Organization at the Inter-Continental University of the Caribbean. Currently, he holds the esteemed position of Director at Stichting Studiefinanciering Curaçao, contributing significantly to educational advancement and student support locally, in the Netherlands and in the region. His diverse background and leadership make him a prominent figure in various fields.

Sedney Marten (Curaçao, 1963) is a creative spirit that conveys feeling and understanding in the right dose. Already as a teacher of Cultural and Artistic Formation and Papiamentu, he thought out of the box. As a visual artist, illustrator, and poet, it became his way of life. At an early age, Sedney became aware of his cultural identity and the power of excellent knowledge and command of one’s native language. His fine command of the game with words and his love for Papiamentu, are particularly expressed in critical thoughts he publishes in various local newspapers. Marten was Inspector of Education, coordinator of the unit on Bonaire of the Department of Education of the Netherlands Antilles and is currently senior policy advisor at the RCN’s OCW department.

Amaris Richardson (Sint Maarten, 1983) was born, raised and rooted on the Isle of St. Maarten. With a background in Architecture & Civil Engineering and almost two decades of work experience within the Island Government of St. Maarten’s apparatus, she currently functions as the ad interim Manager of the Sint Maarten National Heritage Foundation & Museum with the purpose of promoting, embracing and enhancing the awareness of Culture, History, Heritage & Traditions of St. Maarten and also enhancing connections within the Dutch Kingdom, the Caribbean and its The love for her island, the Caribbean and its Diaspora, is the driving force for her service and purpose.

Gregory Richardson (Aruba, 1980) is a cultural anthropologist and educator with over 14 years of research, organizational and policy development experience in the fields of culture, music, language, history, ethnicity, identity and education. He currently works at the Instituto Pedagógico Arubano teaching training college, the University of Aruba and as a post doc KITLV researcher he is studying climate challenges from a cultural perspective on the SSS and ABC islands in the NWO funded Islanders at the Helm Project. One of his main research approaches is ethnographic research and has longitudinally followed the lives of local artists in the urban calypso and carnival scene carrying out numerous song text analyses and participant observations.

Raimie Richardson (St. Eustatius, 1990) studied history at the Utrecht School of Applied Sciences and Museum & Heritage Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Raimie worked as a history teacher and conservator and worked with various institutions such as the Rijksmuseum and the Amsterdam Museum. He lived in London and Berlin working on the reconstruction of historical buildings such as the Berlin city palace and the permanent exhibition of German colonialism and reparations in Africa. He has served on many committees including the inter-island committee. He returned home after 16 years abroad to become Heritage inspector for the Public entity of St. Eustatius.

Jason Rogers (St. Eustatius, 1978) has a masters' degree in Dutch Law as well as US Comparative Law. He has over 19 years of experience in the legal profession; ranging from academics such teaching at a law school in Amsterdam, and the Police Officers and The National Detectives on Sint Maarten, to the practicing of law on the Dutch islands in the Caribbean. Jason has served as a member on various Committees, as well as a director on various Supervisory Boards on Sint Maarten and other islands. He is one of the founding partners of the prestigious law firm Hoeve & Rogers Attorneys|Consultants established in St. Maarten. In his free time, he enjoys traveling and fine dining.

Suzy Römer (Curaçao, 1959) studied Civil and Criminal Law at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands (1984) and continued as a lecturer (1984). She became a lawyer in Curaçao (1986) and served as a Member of the Island Council of Curaçao, Member of Parliament, Minister of Justice, Minister of Economics Affairs, and Prime Minister of the Netherlands Antilles (1992-2002). During the following years, she held several board positions in the private sector (2002-2015). She was a substitute Judge in the Constitutional Court of St. Martin (2010-2015). Suzy returned to the government of Curaçao as Minister of Transport, Traffic and Infrastructure and continued as Minister of Health, Environment and Nature (2015-2020). She is currently a lecturer at the Faculty of Law of the University of Curaçao.

Ewalt 'Arthur' Sealy (Bonaire, 1950) was born on Bonaire from a father from Barbados and a mother from Rincon, Bonaire. After Arthur turned sixteen, he went to Curacao to attend secondary education. After high school, he studied history in the Netherlands. In addition to teaching, on Bonaire, Arthur did his best to cultivate an interest in politics among young people and he entered politics for a short time. Nowadays Arthur is retired and studying the history of Bonaire's neighborhoods. He was coordinator of the Bonaire dialogue group that focuses on the impact of slavery in society. His ambition is that a name monument with the names of those liberated on the first of July in 1863 will be realized on Bonaire the first of July 2024.

Ruben Severina (Curaçao, 1956) was born and raised in Curaçao. There he became a teacher and worked for 12 years in Education. In Curaçao he was, among others, active in the youth movement (Jonge Wacht), trade union and the Komishon di Koordinashon 17 di Ougùstùs, the platform responsible for the commemoration of the Great Slave Rebellion of

1795 in Curaçao. In 1989 he migrated to the Netherlands. He was again socially active in among other the SPLIKA Foundation (promoting Papiamentu), the MAAPP (promoting political participation of Antilleans) and the Adviescollege Antilliaans Medeburgerschap in Nederland (to diminish crime among Antilleans). He was a member of the Dialooggroep Slavernijverleden and now member of the board of NiNsee. He is also a member of the advisory board of KIEN.

Peter Scholing (the Netherlands, 1978) is an information scientist and researcher at Biblioteca Nacional Aruba, Aruba's National Library, responsible for digitization, digital collections, and research. As curator of the Aruba National Library's digital collections, his current main project is "Coleccion Aruba", the "Aruba Collection", a digital collection platform and information portal that aims to digitally unite and make available all of Aruba's documentary and cultural heritage that is physically scattered across different islands, countries, and continents. Mr. Scholing is a member of the Aruba National Commission for UNESCO and the current President of MoWLAC, the Regional Committee for UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Maximiliaan A. Scriwanek (Curaçao, 1962) is Historian and Archivist. Scriwanek is Director of the National Archives of Curaçao, President of the Caribbean Branch of the International Council on Archives (CARBICA 2023-2027) and co-chair of the Caribbean Heritage Emergency Network (CHEN). He chairs the National Committee of Blue Shield Curaçao. He is elected as Vice President of the Asociación de Historiadores Lationoamericanos y del Caribe (ADHILAC). Max studied History at the Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht in the Netherlands, specialized in the relationship between Curaçao-Venezuela-Netherlands 19th-20th century. He studied Archivistics at the Rijksarchiefschool, The Hague, Netherlands. Scriwanek drafted the Archives Legislation for Curaçao (2008), initiated the new repository (2011), an educational program and appraisal projects to transfer new records for public viewing till 2002.

Elton Villarreal (Curaçao, 1977) studied Medicine and Health Science at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. He is co-founder of the study association SALUS for students of Health Care Sciences and founder of Students Affairs, which currently goes by the name of TRINITY INCorporated (TRININC), to Empower people to Empower others. Elton's aim is to inspire others through training and motivational speeches that will "Empower You to Empower Others!" In this, Elton has certified himself as a trainer for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). As facilitator and keynote speaker Elton developed sessions that empower people throughout the world to Grow. "How Good You Will Be, Is How Good You Choose to Be!"

SAILING IN SALT WATER

This publication contains 12 papers which were presented at the Interinsular Consultation Symposium that took place on the island of St. Maarten, September 28-30, 2023. Eighteen Dutch Caribbean professionals reflected on an agenda for reparations and healing for the Dutch Caribbean islands and the need for a Dutch Caribbean knowledge and awareness network to support this truly historical project.

The day after, we presented our findings to representatives of our islands and the Netherlands during of the Caribbean Catshuis session that was organized by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK). During that same session, BZK declared that the Dutch government decided to earmark the sum of 66 million Euro for reparations and healing in the Caribbean islands. Also during this session, it was repeatedly mentioned that collaboration between the islands in reflection and research for reparations and healing will be beneficial for all.

Through this publication, we share our thoughts with civil society organizations, institutions, governments and descendants of victims of transatlantic slavery and other forms of forced colonial labor in the Dutch Caribbean. This is a Caribbean addition to the Dutch publication *Staat en Slavernij* and a response to its plea for redistribution of knowledge, resources and access to science, debate policy-making within the Kingdom.

The ultimate aim of this book is to support and promote a unified Dutch Caribbean consensus towards Restorative Justice and Healing which encompasses the voices and aspirations of all entities, (grassroots) organizations and the society at large of our islands. Inclusion is a must.