

UNICEF Youth Advice

St. Eustatius, Caribbean Netherlands

#MYNEWWORLD





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UNICEF thanks the young people who participated in the focus group discussions on St. Eustatius: Chanel (17), Elizabeth (17), Dawin (15), Deshanee (15), Noah (15), Ishn (14), Habiba (12) and Syesha (12).

UNICEF also thanks the 20 young people who participated in the survey on St. Eustatius. Special thanks also to the Gwendoline van Putten School and Rosabel and Urisha Blake for their contribution to and coordination of the #MyNewWorld activities on St. Eustatius. And another special thank you to Stichting WeConnect for the organizational support of #MyNewWorld in the Caribbean Netherlands.

The #MyNewWorld campaign in the Caribbean Netherlands forms a part of the UNICEF Caribbean Netherlands Children's Rights Program, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations. With this campaign, UNICEF emphasizes the importance of enabling young people to exercise their right participate.

The views of the young people participating in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of UNICEF.

Preface

Suzanne Laszlo, director UNICEF Netherlands

“The year 2020 has turned the world upside down. In the global Corona crisis, UNICEF is working extra hard, for every child. The Corona crisis presents the necessary challenges, but also offers opportunities to improve the world. The voice of young people is essential in this. The choices that politicians make today influence their lives now and in the future. That is why we asked young people between the ages of 13 and 18 in the European and Caribbean Netherlands to share their ideas for the new world they would like to see. The right to participate is one of the most important principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

UNICEF Netherlands is pleased to see that at this time, politicians are increasingly emphasizing the importance of listening to children and young people. We therefore hope that you will read this Youth Advice with interest and take the convictions of the young people to heart.”

Ishn (14) participant #MyNewWorld in St. Eustatius

“I think participating in this project was a good experience because it happens too often that people forget about our (children’s) opinions. It’s like if you can’t vote you don’t have a say. But now we do have a say and I hope we keep having one.”



Participants #MyNewWorld, St. Eustatius

About the UNICEF Youth Advice #MyNewWorld, Caribbean Netherlands

The Corona crisis has disrupted the world and this raises many questions, also for youth in the Caribbean Netherlands. That is why UNICEF asked us how the ideal world should look. Through the youth participation campaign #MyNewWorld, UNICEF is supporting adolescents in the Netherlands and Caribbean Netherlands with making our opinions loud and clear.

On St. Eustatius we started with focus group discussions where we first discussed all kinds of topics and then chose the most important themes for which we formulated advice for the government on St. Eustatius and in the Netherlands. The advice from our focus groups was presented in the form of a survey to more students within our school so that they could indicate what they agreed or disagreed with and whether they had any additional ideas. 20 students responded to the survey.

Our advice has been compiled in this report. We are sharing our advice with Government Commissioner Mr. Marnix van Rij on St. Eustatius, State Secretary Raymond Knops (Dutch Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations) and Member of Parliament Stieneke van der Graaf and will also discuss our advice with them. We hope that we can convince them to adopt some of our ideas.



Participants #MyNewWorld, St. Eustatius

PRIORITY SUBJECTS

Virtual learning without necessary resources

MAKE TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THOSE IN NEED IN A SUFFICIENT AND TIMELY MANNER AND KEEP THE SCHOOL OPEN FOR EXAM STUDENTS UNLESS THE SITUATION IS EXTREMELY DIRE

When the schools on Statia closed many young people were unable to properly follow virtual classes because they did not immediately have the materials necessary. Many children on Statia do not have access to the internet, computers and tablets. Teachers were also inadequately prepared for virtual teaching. Students felt somewhat abandoned and exam students wanted the school to reopen.

Health care facilities and services

UPGRADE THE MEDICAL CENTER

Statia is incapable of dealing with minor medical issues and completely unprepared for a COVID-19 outbreak. During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sint Eustatius Medical Center closed its doors and was only open for emergencies. This meant that no one could go for regular consultations and all referrals were put on hold. Without a dialysis center on the island, dialysis patients had little choice but to relocate to Sint Maarten and are now based on Curaçao to receive their treatment there for the time being.

Travel

ARRANGE BETTER TRAVEL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN STATIA AND OTHER CARIBBEAN ISLANDS, ESPECIALLY SABA AND BONAIRE

Statians are experiencing severe flight restrictions to other Caribbean islands and out of the region because we have no choice but to travel via Sint Maarten. This is very concerning especially during the Corona crisis. This not only hinders social travel but also medical travel. Many people are unable to readily leave or return to Statia because of having to transit through Sint Maarten.

OTHER SUBJECTS

Tourism

- Allow cafes, bars, and restaurants to remain open seeing that the economy on our island has already taken a hit from the lack of tourism.

Social gatherings

Although Statia only had very isolated cases of COVID-19 patients there were still many restrictions.

- Avoid restricting family gatherings.
- Allow parties as long as proper hygiene is practiced.
- Allow churches to remain open at all times and funerals to take place as long as there is adequate social distancing.

Preparation

- Ensure that the island is well prepared for a full lockdown.
- Support schools with setting up virtual learning properly.
- Have child protection services teams in place to care for children and young people who are vulnerable and at risk.
- Encourage employers to have better understanding for parents; working from home with children and young people makes it almost impossible to finish tasks in the regular time frame.
- Make sure that the hurricane shelters are ready for a lockdown and hurricane.
- Stores need to consider their ability to supply enough and request support from the Netherlands if necessary.

Infrastructure

- Fix the roads on the island.
- Make sure that building codes take social distancing into consideration.
- Provide schools with more space for children and youth to play in smaller groups.
- Supply the island with constant access to clean water.

Transparency: the government needs to listen to the public

- Issue government surveys to see what the general public thinks. Young people should also have a say.
- Put a new advisory committee in place.

‘My colleagues in the cabinet and I find it important that young people provide ideas and input for this new world, because this is about your future. Your ideas and your creativity are essential. That is why I want to challenge you: share your ideas.’

Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Netherlands - May 19th, 2020

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