

QUALITY OF LIFE OF ARUBAN YOUTH



A pilot study of different pathways to health and well-being and risky behavior of schoolchildren ages 10-13 years within the context of school

"The most powerful interventions with children and youth are those that seek to build a supportive ecology around a child. Certainly, it is valid to concern oneself with broader social policies, but the most direct impact is on the children and their immediate sphere of influence. Discouragement from destructive forces in the broader society cannot take such priority that it hides the powerful influence one can wield in the life of a child"
(Bronfenbrenner in Brendtro, 2006).

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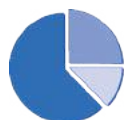
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QUALITY OF LIFE OF ARUBAN YOUTH: A PILOT STUDY OF DIFFERENT PATHWAYS TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AND RISKY BEHAVIOR OF SCHOOLCHILDREN AGES 10-13 WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SCHOOL

ENGLISH

This pilot study examined the factors that contribute to risky behavior as well as factors that (despite a risky background) contribute to a healthy development of Aruban children in the final classes of primary education. This research pilot is framed and aimed to contribute to the National Integrated Strategic Plan (NISP) Nos Aruba 2025, the CaFT report, the coalition agreement (MEP, POR, RED), PEN and the Aruban implementation or version of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 3, number 4 and number 5 and lastly the 'Sociaal Crisis Plan' (SCP).

One of the main aims of this research was the development of a self-report instrument that can be used as a long-term youth monitor in primary and secondary schools. The youth monitor can then be used for development of youth policies that promote health and well-being and prevent risky behaviors.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Human Development (1977) was utilized as a theoretical model for this study in analyzing the results and formulating recommendations that fit in the National Education Plan and Sociaal Crisis Plan of Aruba. This model situates the child at the center, and it considers the child as an active participant in his/her learning and development.

Two studies were conducted in order to gather data and information on Aruban schoolchildren, namely a qualitative study with school professionals and a quantitative study with children ages 10-13 in eleven primary schools in Aruba.

The qualitative study aimed to answer the research question "What is the perspective of school

staff on factors related to the development of primary school children in Aruba?". The quantitative study examined the perspective of children through the research question "Which factors are related to well-being and problem behavior of schoolchildren in grades 5 and 6 in Aruba?". Data collection for the pilot study took place in May 2019.

For the qualitative study, eleven schools participated, representing the various school organizations spread across different neighborhoods on the island. Interviews were conducted with the teachers (grades 5 and 6), the management of the schools and other stakeholders.

For the quantitative study, the developed self-report instrument was administered to children of eleven schools representing the various school organizations spread across different neighborhoods on the island. Permission was obtained from school boards and parents to approach children in grades 5 and 6 to complete the questionnaire. The sample was made up of a total 848 children (Mean age: $M = 11.66$, $SD = 1.15$). The items of the questionnaire were categorized into wellbeing in general, wellbeing at school, problem behavior and individual factors, parental factors, school factors, peer factors, and neighborhood factors.

For the qualitative study, results can be summarized as follows, reflecting both strong points and difficulties as seen by the schools. Schools struggle with the externalizing problems of the children but at the same time report that children show trust in their schoolteachers, which is an important condition for learning intellectually, but also socially, emotionally and morally.

Schools are also aware of the necessity to stimulate health related behavior, which in return can improve well-being. Parents are often seen by the schools as overloaded and stressed due to too much work, struggling with poverty, and often seen as lacking parental skills, resulting in neglect and/or hardly no involvement in the school and schoolwork of their children. However, parents are also seen as resilient and in particular single mothers are sometimes seen as role models for their children in reaching their goals and taking care of the children. Also, the larger family network (including grandparents), that takes care of the children, can be seen as an important factor in creating positive relationships with the children. Three school-related topics were categorized that are important and pose a possible threat for a positive development of the pupils, namely: lack of financial support for the schools, the struggle with differences between pupils' native language and the language of instruction, and a lack of involvement of parents due to poverty, lack of parenting skills and lack of time. However, schools not only emphasize possible risks, but they also emphasize strengths, in particular the heterogenic, multi-cultural diverse population in their schools. Furthermore, the communities or neighborhoods have an impact on the schools, but the influence depends also on the specific barrio or neighborhood.

From the results of the quantitative study, some general conclusions can be formulated: 1) many Aruban children seem to do reasonably well, most children reported seeing themselves as happy children, who do not worry very often and most children did not report problem behavior such as

fighting and bullying, 2) however, a considerable percentage showed signs of low well-being (14,3%) and problem behavior (13,8%) at a relatively young age (pre-adolescent years), and 3) the factors associated with well-being (healthy coping, positive self-image, parental warmth, attachment to friends and not being victimized on the streets) and problem behavior (lack of self-control, lack of parental monitoring, problem behavior of friends, being victimized on the streets) are slightly different, suggesting that promoting well-being and reducing problem behavior may need separate approaches. Finally, some (small) differences in the predictors of well-being (a positive relation with parents and peers is more important for girls) and problem behavior (for boys a lack of self-control and for girls relational factors predict problem behavior) of boys and girls were found.

Both studies show that schools and children seem to relate problem behavior of the children to parenting behavior, concentration problems and problems in the neighborhood. However, in general schools have a somewhat more negative (maybe more realistic) perspective while children have a positive perspective. Schools more explicitly

emphasize difficulties with individual children, parents and the neighborhood, while children in general show a positive view of themselves and their parents.

The results of this study fit within Bronfenbrenners's ecological theory of human development (1977) and the Positive Youth Development model of Catalano et al. (2004). It is shown that the negative interactions between the child and his micro-environment can result in developmental problems, which, if not addressed, may continue into adolescence and beyond. However, protective factors on the other hand can help build resilience in children and adolescents. Therefore, recommendations are formulated that are not only in-

tended to reduce risks but also intended to emphasize strengths that may improve resiliency.

The recommendations of this study are as follow. In order to have an overview of how children in Aruba are developing, the following steps for monitoring are important: 1. Monitor all children on child, family, school, friend and neighborhood characteristics related to well-being. 2. Monitor all children on child, family, school, friend and neighborhood characteristics related to antisocial and possibly delinquent behavior. 3. Specifically monitor children starting in grade 5 by using the newly developed survey and repeating this every two years until they finish secondary school.

To improve wellbeing and reduce problem behavior (the following recommendations are given that fit into the micro, meso and exosystem as formulated by Bronfenbrenner (1977). Microsystem: 4. Develop tools to improve self-control in children. Many children do experience problems with concentration and paying attention. 5. Improve healthy family relationships, which is especially important for girls. 6. Improve the possibilities for teachers to pay attention to individual children (by recruiting more teaching assistants etc.), especially those who are at risk for developing antisocial behavior and/or developing mood problems. 7. Continue focusing on the relationship between native language and language of instruction. 8. Improve health-related behavior. Mesosystem: 9. Offer approachable parenting support. 10. Stimulate parent participation at school. Exosystem: 11. Increase neighborhood safety to increase well-being and possibilities especially for girls to expand their social environment safely. Lastly, in view of the expected negative effects of the COVID-19, it is even more important to closely monitor the development of children in Aruba.

KWALITEIT VAN LEVEN VAN ARUBAANSE JONGEREN: EEN PILOTSTUDIE VAN VERSCHILLENDE WEGEN NAAR GEZONDHEID EN WELZIJN EN RISKANT GEDRAG VAN SCHOOLKINDEREN VAN 10-13 JAAR BINNEN DE CONTEXT VAN SCHOOL

DUTCH

In deze pilotstudie is gekeken naar de factoren die bijdragen aan risicovol gedrag en factoren die (ondanks een risicovolle achtergrond) bijdragen aan een gezonde ontwikkeling van Arubaanse kinderen in de laatste klassen van het basisonderwijs. Deze onderzoekspilot is omkaderd en heeft als doel bij te dragen aan het Nationaal Geïntegreerd Strategisch Plan (NISP) nrs. Aruba 2025, het CaFT-rapport, het regeerakkoord (MEP, POR, RED), PEN en de Arubaanse implementatie of versie van de Duurzame Ontwikkelingsdoelen (SDG's) nummer 3, nummer 4 en nummer 5 en tenslotte het Sociaal Crisisplan (SCP).

Dit onderzoek heeft een zelfrapportage-instrument opgeleverd dat kan worden ingezet als jeugdmonitor op basisscholen en middelbare scholen, waarbij kinderen en jongeren over een aantal jaren gevolgd kunnen worden. De jeugdmonitor kan vervolgens worden gebruikt voor het ontwikkelen van jeugdbeleid dat gezondheid en welzijn van kinderen en jongeren bevordert en risicovol gedrag voorkomt. Bronfenbrenners Ecological Theory of Human Development (1977) werd gebruikt als theoretisch model voor deze studie bij het analyseren van de resultaten en het formuleren van aanbevelingen die passen in het Nationaal Onderwijsplan en Sociaal Crisisplan van Aruba. Dit model plaatst het kind in het centrum van zijn of haar beleavingswereld en beschouwt het kind als een actieve deelnemer in zijn / haar leren en ontwikkeling. Er zijn twee onderzoeken uitgevoerd om gegevens en informatie voor dit onderzoek te verzamelen, namelijk een kwalitatief onderzoek met schoolprofessionals en schoolteams

en een kwantitatief onderzoek waarbij het ontwikkelde zelfrapportage-instrument werd afgenomen bij kinderen van 10-13 jaar (5de en 6de klassers) op elf basisscholen op Aruba.

In het kwalitatieve onderzoek stond de volgende onderzoeksvraag centraal: "Wat is het perspectief van schoolpersoneel op factoren die verband houden met de ontwikkeling van basisschoolkinderen op Aruba?". In de kwantitatieve studie is het perspectief van kinderen onderzocht aan de hand van de onderzoeksvraag "Welke factoren zijn gerelateerd aan welzijn en probleemgedrag van schoolkinderen in groep 5 en 6 op Aruba?". De gegevensverzameling voor de pilotstudie vond plaats in mei 2019.

Aan het kwalitatieve onderzoek namen elf scholen deel, die de verschillende schoolorganisaties vertegenwoordigden verspreid over verschillende wijken op het eiland. Er zijn interviews afgenomen met de leerkrachten (groep 5 en 6), het management van de scholen en andere belanghebbenden.

Voor het kwantitatieve onderzoek zijn vragenlijsten afgenomen op elf scholen die de verschillende schoolorganisaties vertegenwoordigen, verspreid over verschillende wijken op het eiland. Er is toestemming verkregen van schoolbesturen en ouders om kinderen in groep 5 en 6 te benaderen om de vragenlijst in te vullen. De steekproef bestond uit in totaal 848 kinderen (gemiddelde leeftijd: $M = 11,66$, $SD = 1,15$). Met de vragenlijst werden, naast welbevinden en probleemgedrag de volgende risico- en beschermende factoren gemeten: kind-

factoren, ouderfactoren, schoolfactoren, leeftijdsfactoren en buurtfactoren.

Voor het kwalitatieve onderzoek kunnen de resultaten als volgt worden samengevat, waarbij zowel sterke punten als moeilijkheden worden benoemd door de scholen. Scholen vinden het lastig om met de externaliserende problemen van de kinderen om te gaan, maar melden tegelijkertijd dat kinderen vertrouwen tonen in hun leerkrachten. Scholen zijn zich ook bewust van de noodzaak om gezondheidsgerelateerd gedrag te stimuleren, wat op zijn beurt het welzijn kan verbeteren. Ouders worden door de scholen vaak gezien als overbelast en gestrest door te veel werk, en worstelend met armoede. Ook zien scholen gebrekkige opvoedingsvaardigheden, wat kan resulteren in verwaarlozing en weinig betrokkenheid bij het schoolwerk van hun kinderen. Ouders worden echter ook als veerkrachtig gezien en met name alleenstaande moeders worden soms gezien als rolmodellen voor hun kinderen bij het bereiken van hun doelen en het zorgen voor de kinderen. Ook kan het grotere familienetwerk (inclusief grootouders), dat voor de kinderen zorgt, gezien worden als een belangrijke factor bij het creëren van positieve relaties met de kinderen. Er werden

drie school gerelateerde onderwerpen genoemd die belangrijk zijn en een mogelijke bedreiging vormen voor een positieve ontwikkeling van de leerlingen, namelijk: gebrek aan financiële steun voor de scholen, de worsteling met verschillen tussen moedertaal en instructietaal van leerlingen, en een gebrek aan betrokkenheid van ouders door armoede, gebrek aan opvoedingsvaardigheden en gebrek aan tijd. Scholen benadrukken echter niet alleen mogelijke risico's, maar benadrukken ook sterke punten, met name de heterogene, multi cultureel diverse populatie op hun scholen. Verder hebben de buurten een impact op de scholen, maar de invloed hangt ook af van de specifieke barrio of buurt waar de kinderen vandaan komen.

Uit de resultaten van het kwantitatieve onderzoek kunnen enkele algemene conclusies worden getrokken: 1) veel Arubaanse kinderen lijken het redelijk goed te doen, de meeste kinderen gaven aan zichzelf als gelukkige kinderen te zien, die zich niet vaak zorgen maken en de meeste kinderen rapporteerden geen probleemgedrag zoals als vechten en pesten, 2) Een deel van de kinderen rapporteerde verminderd welbevinden (14,3%) en probleemgedrag (13,8%) op relatief jonge leeftijd (pre-adolescente jaren), en 3) de factoren die samenhangen met welzijn (gezonde coping, positief zelfbeeld, binding met vrienden, geen slachtofferschap op straat) en probleemgedrag (gebrek aan zelfcontrole, gebrek aan ouderlijk toezicht, probleemgedrag van vrienden, slachtofferschap op straat) zijn enigszins verschillend wat suggereert dat het bevorderen van welzijn en het verminderen van probleemgedrag verschillende benaderingen nodig hebben. Ten slotte worden enkele (kleine)

verschillen gevonden tussen jongens en meisjes in de voorspellers van welzijn (een positieve relatie met ouders en vrienden is belangrijker voor meisjes dan voor jongens) en probleemgedrag (gebrek aan zelfcontrole voorspelt probleemgedrag van jongens terwijl relationele factoren probleemgedrag van meisjes voorspellen).

Samenvattend kunnen we concluderen dat zowel de scholen als de kinderen het probleemgedrag van de kinderen lijken te relateren aan opvoedgedrag, concentratieproblemen en problemen in de buurt. Daarnaast verschilt het perspectief van de scholen en de leerlingen enigszins. Scholen leggen meer de nadruk op moeilijkheden met individuele kinderen, ouders en de buurt, terwijl kinderen over het algemeen een positieve kijk op zichzelf en hun ouders hadden.

De resultaten van deze studie passen binnen Bronfenbrenners ecologische theorie van menselijke ontwikkeling (1977) en het Positive Youth Development-model van Catalano et al. (2004). Het is aangetoond dat de negatieve interacties tussen het kind en zijn micro-omgeving kunnen leiden tot ontwikkelingsproblemen, die, als ze niet worden aangepakt, kunnen voortduren tot in de adolescentie en daarna. Aan de andere kant kunnen beschermende factoren echter helpen bij het opbouwen van veerkracht bij kinderen en adolescenten. Daarom worden aanbevelingen geformuleerd die niet alleen bedoeld zijn om risico's te verminderen, maar ook bedoeld zijn om sterke punten te benadrukken die de veerkracht kunnen verbeteren.

De aanbevelingen van deze studie zijn als volgt. Om een overzicht te hebben van hoe kinderen op Aruba zich ontwikkelen, zijn de volgende stappen voor monitoring belangrijk: 1. Monitor

alle kinderen op kind-, familie-, school-, vrienden- en buurtkenmerken met betrekking tot welzijn. 2. Monitor alle kinderen op kind-, familie-, school-, vriend- en buurtkenmerken die verband houden met antisociaal en mogelijk delinquent gedrag. 3. Monitor de kinderen vanaf klas 5 van de basisschool met behulp van het nieuw ontwikkelde zelf-rapportage instrument en herhaal dit elke twee jaar totdat ze de middelbare school hebben afgerond.

Om het welzijn te verbeteren en probleemgedrag te verminderen worden de volgende aanbevelingen gedaan die passen in het micro-, meso- en exosysteem zoals geformuleerd door Bronfenbrenner (1977). Microsysteem: 4. Ontwikkel hulpmiddelen om de zelfbeheersing bij kinderen te verbeteren. Veel kinderen hebben problemen met concentratie en opletten. 5. Verbeter gezonde gezinsrelaties, dit is met name ook belangrijk voor meisjes. 6. Verbeter de mogelijkheden voor leerkrachten om aandacht te schenken aan individuele kinderen (door meer onderwijsassistenten te werven enz.), Vooral degenen die het risico lopen antisociaal gedrag te ontwikkelen en / of internaliserende problemen (zoals een depressieve stemming) te ontwikkelen. 7. Blijf focussen op de relatie tussen moedertaal en de instructietaal. 8. Verbeter gezondheidsgedrag. Mesosysteem: 9. Bied laagdrempelige opvoedingsondersteuning. 10. Stimuleer ouderparticipatie op school. Exosysteem: 11. Verhoog de veiligheid in de buurt om het welzijn en de mogelijkheden te vergroten, vooral voor meisjes om hun sociale omgeving veilig te kunnen ontdekken. Ten slotte is het gezien de verwachte negatieve effecten van COVID-19 nog belangrijker om de ontwikkeling van kinderen op Aruba nauwlettend te volgen.

"De resultaten van deze studie passen binnen Bronfenbrenners ecologische theorie van menselijke ontwikkeling (1977) en het Positive Youth Development-model van Catalano et al."

CALIDAD DI BIDA DI HUBENTUD DI ARUBA: UN ESTUDIO PILOTO TOCANTE DIFERENTE CAMINDA PA SALUD, BIENESTAR Y COMPORTACION RIESGOSO DI MUCHA DI 10 PA 13 AÑA DEN E CONTEXTO ESCOLAR

PAPIAMENTO

E estudio piloto aki a studia e factornan cu ta contribui na comportacion di riesgo, y e factornan cu (a pesar di un background riesgoso) ta contribui na un desaroyo saludabel di e mucha Arubiano den e ultimo klasnan di educacion primario. E investigacion piloto aki ta ehecuta den un marco y tin como obhetivo contribui na e Plan Strategico Nacional Integra (NISP) Nos Aruba 2025, e raport di CaFT, e acuerdo di coalicion (MEP, POR, RED), PEN y implementacion of version di Aruba di Nacion Uni. Obhetivo di Desaroyo Sostenibel (ODS) number 3, number 4 y number 5 y por ultimo e ‘Plan di Crisis Social’ (CPS).

E investigacion aki a trata na desaroya un instrumento di autoinforme cu por uza como youth monitor pa tempo largo den scol primario y secundario. Por uza e youth monitor aki pa desaroyo di strategia pa hubentud pa promove salud y bienestar y evita comportacion riesgoso.

A haci uzo di Teoria Ecologico di Desaroyo Humano di Bronfenbrenner (1977) como modelo teorico pa e estudio aki pa analisa e resultadonan y formula recomendacion cu ta encaha den e Plan Nacional di Educacion y e Plan di Crisis Social di Aruba. E modelo aki ta pone e mucha den center y ta considera e mucha como un participante activo den su educacion y desaroyo.

A haci dos estudio cu e fin di recopilando dato y informacion pa e investigacion aki, esta, un estudio cualitativo cu profesional riba tereno escolar y un estudio cuantitativo cu mucha di 10 pa 13 aña na diesun scol primario di Aruba.

E estudio cualitativo tabata tin como obhetivo contesta e pregunta di investigacion “Cua ta e

perspectiva di personal escolar tocante e factornan relaciona cu desaroyo di alumno di scol primario na Aruba?” E estudio cuantitativo a studia perspectiva di e alumnonan mediante e pregunta di investigacion “Ki factor ta relaciona cu bienestar y conducta problematico di alumno di klas cinco y klas seis na Aruba?”. E recopilacion di dato pa e estudio piloto a tuma lugá den luna di mei 2019.

Pa e estudio cualitativo a participa diesun scol, representando tur organisacion escolar reparti den e diferente barionan di e isla. A realiza entrevista cu e maestronan (klas cinco y seis), management di e scolnan y otro partido di interes.

Pa e estudio cuantitativo, a realiza encuesta autoadministra na diesun scol representando e diferente organisacionnan escolar reparti den e diferente barionan di e isla. A ricibi permiso di e directivanan di scol y mayor pa acerca e muchanan di klas 5 y 6 pa completa e cuestionario. E muestra tabata consisti di un total di 848 mucha (edad media: $M = 11,66$, $DI = 1,15$). A clasifica e variabelfnan dependiente den factor individual, factor mayor, factor scol, factor compaña / peers y factor barío.

Pa e estudio cualitativo, por resumi e siguiente resultadonan. A categorisa tres tema relaciona cu scol cu ta importante y ta representa un posibel menasa pa e desaroyo positivo di e alumnonan, esta: falta di apoyo financiero pa scol, lucha cu diferencia entre idioma materno di e alumnonan y idioma di instruccion, y un falta di participacion di e mayornan debi na pobreza, falta di habilidad como mayor y falta di tempo. Ademas, e comunidadnan of barío tin un impacto riba scol, pero e influencia ta depende tambe di e barío específicamente.

Saliendo di e resultadonan di e estudio cuantitativo, por formula algun conclusion general: 1) tin indicacion cu hopi mucha na Aruba ta funciona razonabelmente bon, mayoria di e muchanan a informa cu nan ta mira nan mes como mucha feliz, cu no ta preocupa cu hopi frecuencia y mayoria di e muchanan no a informa di comportacion problematico como pelea y termento/bullying, 2) sinembargo, un porcentahe considerabel a duna señal di un nivel abou di bienestar (14,3%) y comportacion problematico (13,8%) na un edad relativamente hoben (pre-adolescencia), y 3) factor asocia cu bienestar y conducta problematico ta tiki diferente, loke ta sugeri cu promocion di bienestar y reduccion di conducta problematico kisas mester di enfoke separa. Finalmente, ta contra algun diferencia (chikito) den e factornan cu por pronostica bienestar y comportacion problematico di mucha homber y mucha muhe.

Si mira mas den profundidad, por mira cu un porcentahe halto (30%) di mucha cu ta den e ultimo añanan di scol primario a tuma un caminda den scol primario mas largo cu ta previsto. Reduccion di cantidad di keda sinta tin atencion caba di Minister di Educacion, y e resultadonan aki ta confirma cu continuacion di esfuerço pa reduci e cantidad aki ta importante.

Na nivel di factor individual di mucha, mita di e muchanan a raporta un nivel abou di autocontrol, un cantidad considerabel di mucha a raporta un estilo di bida poco saludabel (40%) y mayoria di e muchanan a raporta un autoimagen positivo (74%). Na nivel familiar, ta muestra cu mayoria di e muchanan tin un perspectiva positivo di comportacion di nan mayornan (85%) y e relacion cu nan mayornan (77%). Na nivel escolar, mayoria di e muchanan (72%) a indica di ta satisfecho cu nan resultadonan di scol y nan relacion cu maestro. Tambe nan a informa di tin un vision positivo di comportacion di nan amigonan y e relacion cu nan. Un cantidad preocupante di mucha (66%) a informa cu nan ta sinti inseguro den nan barío.

Aunke mayoria mucha den e estudio aki a

señala un nivel halto di bienestar, nivel abou di comportacion problematico y informacion positivo tocante mayor, amigo y scol, un cantidad di mucha cu no por negligish (1 of 2 di cada 10) a menciona un nivel abou di bienestar y/of frecuencia halto di comportacion problematico. Mas específicamente, falta di control interno y externo por aumenta riesgo di problema di comportacion. Ademas, un estilo menos saludabel di handle, autoimagen menos positivo y problema den relacion cu mayor, amigo y scol por aumenta e riesgo di un nivel abou bienestar. E respondentenan di e dos estudionan tin bi-aha tabata diferente den nan perspectiva tocante mucha y nan contexto social. Sinembargo, ta ex-

isti algun similaridad entre e dos estudionan. Tanto scol como alumno aparentemente ta relaciona comportacion problematico di mucha cu comportacion di nan mayornan, e problemanan di concentracion y problema di bario. Scol a enfatisa mas explicitamente e dificultadnan cu mucha, mayornan y bario, mientras cu e muchanan, generalmente, a mostra un vision positivo di nan mes y di nan mayornan.

E resultadonan di e estudio aki ta fit den e teoria ecologico di desaroyo humano di Bronfenbrenner (1977) y e modelo di Desaroyo Hubenil Positivo di Catalano et al. (2004). Ta mostra cu interaccion negativo entre e mucha y su micro-ambiente por resulta den problema di desaroyo cu, si no ta atendi, por continua den adolescencia y mas despues. Sinembargo, e factornan pronosticando, di otro banda, por yuda desaroya e resistencia den mucha y adolescente. Por lo tanto, ta formula recomendacion cu no solamente tin intencion di reduci riesgo, sino cu tambe tin e intencion di enfatisa e puntonan fuerte cu por mehora e resistencia.

E recomendacionnan di e estudio aki ta como lo siguiente. Pa tin un vision general di con e muchanan ta desaroya na Aruba, e siguiente pasonan pa monitoreo ta importante: 1. Monitoreo tur mucha pa loke ta trata característica di mucha, famia, scol, amigo y bario den relacion cu bienestar. 2. Monitoreo característica di tur mucha, familia, scol, amigo y bario den relacion cu comportacion antisocial y posibelmente di delincuencia. 3. Monitoreo específicamente e muchanan cu ta cominsa klas 5 uzando e encuesta recientemente desaroya y repitíe cada dos aña te cu nan caba scol secundario.

Pa mehora bienestar y reduci conducta problematico (e informacion tocante característica

y comportacion di mucha ta deriva di youth monitor) ta duna e siguiente recomendacionnan cu ta fit den e exosistema micro, meso formula pa Bronfenbrenner (1977). Microsistema: 4. Desaroya hement pa mehora e autocontrol den e muchanan. Hopi mucha ta experiencia problema di concentracion y atencion. 5. Mehora relacion familiar saludabel, lo cual ta especialmente importante pa mucha muhe. 6. Mehora posibilidad pa e maestronan presta atencion na e alumnonan di forma individual (door di recrutar asistente di klas, etc.), especialmente esnan cu ta den riesgo di desaroya un comportacion antisocial y/of desaroya problema di humor. 7. Continua cu enfoke riba e relacion entre idioma materno y idioma di instruccion. 8. Mehora comportacion relaciona cu salud. Mesosistema: 9. Ofrece apoyo accesibel pa e mayornan. 10. Stimula participacion di mayor na scol. Exosistema: 11. Incrementa seguridad di bario pa aumenta bienestar y posibilidad, especialmente pa tur mucha muhe por expande nan ambiente social di manera segur. Por ultimo, den bista di e efectonan negativo spera di COVID-19, monitoreo di cerca e desaroyo di e muchanan na Aruba ta mas importante ainda.

"...falta di apoyo financiero pa scol, lucha cu diferencia entre idioma materno di e alumnonan y idioma di instruccion, y un falta di participacion di e mayornan debi na pobreza, falta di habilidad como mayor y falta di tempo."



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We patiently moved forward and finally succeeded in conducting this pilot study, but not without the help of many people. We thank Prof. Dr. Catrien Bijleveld for initiating the collaboration with IPA (Teachers' Academy of Aruba). In addition, our gratitude is extended to the management of IPA, i.e., the first General Manager, Ms. Drs. Ava Thode and later on her successor, Ms. Drs. Marilyn Richardson. Our appreciation is also extended to the Minister of Education, Mr. Drs. Arthur Dowers for his initial support, and later on his successors, Ms. Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar and Dr. Rudy Lampe, the current Minister of Education. Their unwavering support was crucial in the development of our research team formation and proposal. It was Dr. Rudy Lampe who truly took the initiative to engage the Department of Education in this project and for

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Finally, we want to mention that while finishing

this report in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and was declared by the World Health Organizationⁱ a public health emergency of international concern. Aruba, where hundreds of people have been infected, is among the countries most affected globally. This is because more than 80% of the Aruban economy is dependent on tourism, a sector which in April 2020 completely shut downⁱⁱ. The ongoing pandemic has caused many Aruban people to lose their jobs, which may result in many children growing up in more difficult financial situations than during the data collection of this study in 2019. The results in this report describe how children were doing before the Corona virus outbreak. The youth monitor may be even more important now to understand the current impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the development of Aruban children and to intervene appropriately and where necessary.

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ⁱ WHO World Health Organization is a UN agency to promote and protect global health challenges

ⁱⁱ WHO (2020) <https://covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/aw>.

1. INTRODUCTION

Young people in Aruba and other islands in the Caribbean run a relatively high risk of problem outcomes such as school dropout, abuse, neglect, poverty and crime (Joosen & Baily, 2017; Lacey, Jeremiah & West, 2019). This pilot study examines the factors that contribute to such risky behavior, but even more importantly, examines factors that contribute to a healthy development of Aruban children in the final classes of primary education.

1.2. The Social and Educational Developments of Aruba

According to the National Integrated Strategic Plan Nos Aruba 2025 (NISP), which was formulated in 2010, the Aruban community is becoming increasingly aware of the need for a balance between education, public health care, economic development, the environment and its general well-being. For this reason, the Aruban community formulated twelve development priorities, with at least three of these priorities being related to the outcomes of this pilot study, namely, lifelong learning and personal development, building the community from the inside-out, and stimulating and promoting a healthy living. These priorities are also linked to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that Aruba committed to implementing at the local level (Aruba Sustainable Development Goals Baseline Measurement, 2018). With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Aruba has identified monitoring and evaluation as an important tool to foster sustainable development. This study contributes to both the National Integrated Strategic Plan (NISP) Nos Aruba 2025 and implementation of the SDGs.

Two strategic plans emphasize the need for monitoring and evaluation of the behavior of children in the school context, namely the Plan Educacion Nacional (PEN) 2030ⁱⁱⁱ and the 'Sociaal Crisis

Plan'(SCP)^{iv}. The social and educational development plans of Aruba will be further discussed in Chapter 2. This pilot is framed within the SDG's, meaning that the core foundation of sustainable inclusive development is based on the QoL approach of Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011). QoL means Quality of Life which can only be understood or achieved according to Sen when at least four basic conditions are in place (Sen, 1999). Nussbaum (2011) elaborates on these conditions and principles and follow ups with more conditions. In order for Aruban youth to attain or achieve quality of life, the core definitions of sustainable inclusive development should be the departure point. (Finally, the current coalition agreement of Aruba has emphasized the importance of social affairs, quality of education and culture, and health care and sport, with an explicit focus on young people and education. This pilot study therefore fits seamlessly within the current coalition agreement (coalition agreement MEP, POR & RED; November 2017).

The current Aruban government has reserved a considerable amount of money for vulnerable groups. After the shocking finding of two abused and murdered children, the focus is now on the social field and the problems that led to the horrific deaths of the two little brothers in 2017. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other children's organizations then also organized symposia to pay attention to the lack of adequate care for young people (UoC children's rights symposia 5-7 March 2018 and IPKS Jan 2018). Youth have the full attention of the Aruban Government and this research also aligns with this strategy for healthy and resilient development of children and young people in Aruba^v.

ⁱⁱⁱ *plan-educacion-nacional-2030-pdf*
Nationaal Onderwijsbeleid Aruba, Actieplan, the vision document for the national education polity for Aruba

^{iv} SCP means Social Crisis Plan and is a comprehensive plan of the Aruba government to tackle the grave social ills on the island, and involves four ministries: Education, Justice, Public Health and Social Affairs. No fewer than 31 projects are currently being executed as part of this plan.

^v SDG roadmap Aruba 2019 has stated as one of the main

1.3. Objectives of This Study

Schools play an important role in creating a safe and positive culture and climate for Aruban youth. To gain a better understanding of the factors that influence a positive development in children and reduce the possibility of risky, unsafe and or problematic or socially challenging behavior, it is therefore important to understand how schools perceive the broader social context of their students' life. Schools are the institutions with professionally trained staff who play a very important part in the development of children. They also contribute in creating the societal foundation and impact. These institutions help children to be prepared to learn, live and work on the island of Aruba, which is a community that, besides having the more general characteristics of an island in the Caribbean, has its own unique characteristics, such as a large influx of immigrants, a large number of tourists, multiculturalism and multilingualism. In this pilot study, we focus on children in the final classes of primary schools and the perceptions of schools about these children. However, it is not only important to include the perspective of the school, but also to include the voices of children themselves reporting about their life experiences, how they see themselves, their school, their parents, friends and neighborhood. In order to be able to create opportunities for healthy, prosperous living conditions for all children, we also need to take into account an intersectional framing in which gender, ethnic-cultural and socio-economic perspectives are included, by listening to boys and girls and looking at possible differences in their stories.

Therefore, the objective of this pilot study is two-fold:

- An exploration of themes, perceived by primary schools in Aruba that influence the development of children; and
- A first exploration of the paths to healthy, safe and/or risky development of Aruban boys and girls.

propellers for a sustainable Aruba will be youth empowerment (SDG Roadmap for Aruba 2018)

1.4. Youth Monitor

In order to further prevent antisocial behavior and delinquency and promote well-being and a positive development of youth, it is important to focus on both risk and protective factors. Ultimately, we want to develop a self-report instrument that can be used as a youth monitor in primary and secondary schools. With such an instrument, the development of children and adolescents could be monitored for a longer period. This youth monitor can then be used to develop youth policies in promoting health and well-being and help prevent risky behaviors such as crime, drugs and alcohol use, school dropout and teenage pregnancies.

During the development of such an instrument it was important for us to keep in mind four important aspects: 1) the instrument should be a valid instrument in measuring important factors that contribute to well-being and problem behavior of Aruban children (taking into account aspects that are important for children and adolescents living in Aruba, 2) the instrument should be cost effective, 3) the instrument should be easy to use (short instructions, relatively short time to fill out, little burden for student and staff) and, 4) it must be possible to use the information on an individual level to be able to follow individual development of children and provide information on class and/or school level.

The results of this pilot study can be a first step in monitoring children and adolescents, which may provide not only IPA, but also primary and secondary schools and other professionals working with youth, with knowledge about the development and upbringing of young people. Inclusiveness and diversity are essential key concepts in this approach. An important question therefore is: How can you ensure that ALL children are educated - thereby minimizing the risks and strengthening the positive factors in individual development - in today's and future Aruban society?

This report is based on a qualitative study with school professionals and a quantitative study with children age 10-13 of primary schools in Aruba. In chapter two we delineate the theoretical background

ⁱⁱⁱ PEN or Plan Educacion Nacional 2030 is www.ea.aw › pages

of this study and the research questions. In chapter three the methods of the two studies are described and in chapter four the results of the separate studies are described. Finally, in chapters five and six conclusions are drawn and discussed and recommendations for research and policy development are outlined.



2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. General Framework

2.1.1. The SDGs related to well-being and problem behavior

This study is framed within the context of the SDGs and especially those SDGs that are selected as important for Aruba. Aruba is committed to implementing the United Nations' SDGs at the local level (Aruba Sustainable Development Goals Baseline Measurement, 2018). It is crucial to understand and acknowledge therefore that working within the framework of the SDGs, we conceptualize development from the definition of Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011). Both scholars conceptualize development from a human capability approach instead of an economic perspective in which at least the four basic conditions for agency, which are housing, electricity/water, clothing and other living necessities, education and future possibilities are essential in creating the conditions to develop (Sen, 1999). The human capability developmental framework therefore should be seen as the frame for the implementation of the SDG's that will put children's well-being at the center of human development thinking, thereby addressing their behavioral challenges in order to guarantee their agency.

Focusing on the implementation of the SDGs, the Aruban social, educational and economic agenda has to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and therefore monitoring, and evaluation are important tools to foster sustainable development. This pilot study on the quality of life of Aruban youth contributes more specifically to three SDGs: 1) Global Goal #3 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages', 2) Global Goal #4, 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and 3) Global Goal #5, 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'. By examining factors related to well-being and problem behavior of boys and girls, from both the perspectives of the schools and the children, we intend to increase knowledge and provide recommendations

for the implementation of the three aforementioned SDG's.

The current coalition agreement, along with the CAft^{vi} recommendations for innovating and reforming the current financial and economic problems of Aruba due to the COVID-19 pandemic through the signing and/or implementation of the 'Rijkswet'^{vii}, presents further developmental challenges as some of the conditions remain controversial. In order to solve the economic challenges of the Aruban economy, the current administration has assigned several committees to oversee the socio-economic recovery after COVID-19. The Steering Committee or Cie for the development of a gender policy for Aruba established by the Office of the Prime Minister has reported its findings on the feminization of COVID-19^{viii}. The report revealed that the COVID-19 has deepened the economic and social stresses of women as well as migrant women who carry a disproportionate burden of childcare due to cultural expectations,^{ix} which has direct implications for the ability of women and households in general to provide optimum care for the well-being and human development of children.

vi CAft is the Board of financial supervision Aruba (CAft) has a monitoring and advisory role. The functions of the Board are focused on the adoption and execution of budgets that are balanced within the agreed limits, and on the control of the totality of all loans.

vii Rijkswet stands for the Law or the set of regulations that protects the all sovereign islands within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and specifically after COVID is a law that will include CAft or laws or regulations that involves governmental reform and financial support after COVID.

viii Framing of the Feminization of COVID-19 in Aruba, prepared by the Steering Committee for the Development of a Gender Policy in Aruba. Office of the Prime Minister Aruba, June 2020.

ix Framing of the Feminization of COVID-19 in Aruba, prepared by the Steering Committee for the Development of a Gender Policy in Aruba. Office of the Prime Minister Aruba, June 2020.

2.1.2. Educational and Social developments in Aruba

The SDGs ‘promote well-being’, ‘quality education’ and gender equality can also be found in the National Education Plan of the Ministry of Education and the report about the ‘Sociaal Crisis Plan’ of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Youth and Labor^x. The purpose of the Aruba National Education Plan formulated by the people of the island (the Ministry of Education, NGOs, teachers, students, professionals from other disciplines) is to develop a vision and formulate directions for sustainable quality education. In doing so, they emphasize, amongst a number of other points, that it is important to empower youth in schools, focus more on the strengths of students and emphasize the importance of communication and mutual respect. It is also important to develop a safety net for students who are at risk of dropping out. Also, the child should be at the center, with an emphasis on strengthening the authentic and Aruban identity, not only on paper but also in practice. With this pilot study, we hope to provide the National Education Plan of Aruba with information about the factors that contribute to healthy children and youth development which facilitate the learning process throughout the school years.

From the Ministry of Social Affairs, two important papers appeared, one about the social development of Aruba (A situational analysis of Aruba Case -2017), describing the current state of affairs in different social and socio-economic domains (mainly based on CBS statistics and surveys) and one paper about the ‘Sociaal Crisis Plan’ (SCP) that appeared in 2018. The SCP prescribes different approaches to ensure a safe environment for all children and adolescents in Aruba and to solve social disadvantages that are affecting children and adolescents. The situational analysis of the social development of Aruba was carried out to ascertain the state of and progress in the economic condition and social development of Aruba. Some highlights from these reports are worth mentioning in the context of this pilot study^{xi}.

^x The ministry of Social Affairs, Youth and Labor is implementing the ‘Sociaal Crisis Plan’ through the collaboration of all the main government departments (a chain collaboration) in order to fight poverty and family crisis.

^{xi} SCP (2018), PEN (2019), (NISP(2015)

Aruba is an island with a diverse population, which is apparent in the 2010 Census data. One out of every three residents in Aruba was born abroad. In 2010, less than half of the marriages (43%) were between Aruba-born partners. Also, the family structure has been undergoing notable changes in the last few decades. The average size of both the nuclear and extended family is becoming smaller, and Aruba has one of the highest divorce rates in the world of 3.5 per 100 marriages (CBS and Population Registry Office, 2018). Data related to equity and poverty show that circa 18% of adults age 18 and over (surveyed in 2009) reported feeling often unhappy or depressed, and women are twice as likely as their male counterparts to report these feelings. More than four out of ten adults (44%) stated they often feel lonely. However, 77% of the Aruban population reported being happy in the 2009 AWS (Aruban Welfare Survey, 2009) and similar results were attained in 2016 by the Aruba Happiness 360 degree project. Crime rates statistics of 2013 and 2014 (arrest data from CBS data reported by the police) show an increase in the number of violent crimes between 2012 and 2014 and a slight decrease in the number of property crimes such as burglary and auto theft. These statistics, reported in the situational analysis report 2017, do not give information however about characteristics of the suspects (age, gender). With respect to inequity of the educational system, it is noticeable that the repetition rate in primary schools in Aruba is high, especially in the first three years (in 2013-2014 on average 12.3% of boys and 7.3% of girls) (CBS Aruba (2015) – 2014 Statistical Yearbook). No discernable evidence was found that this could be linked to the migrant students, particularly from non-Dutch speaking nations. However, the possible impact of immigrant students on repetition rates requires further research. Another important and sensitive topic is the apparent relationship between the primary language spoken at home and educational performance. Children with Dutch speaking parents perform better than children whose parents’ primary language is Papiamentu, Spanish or English (CBS, 2014), which is troublesome because it can promote structural inequity between groups in the society (available data indicates that from 2013-2014 academic year, a mere 6.2% of the total number of students in the primary school system had Dutch as their native language)

(Departamento di Enseñansa Aruba, 2016). Finally, information about vulnerable groups is reported, referring to teenage mothers, single parents and females participating in the labor market. Teenage motherhood (15-19-year-old mothers) was reported in circa one in nine registered live births in 2013. Almost four in ten (38.6%) mothers born in Aruba were single-parents in 2010 (CBS Aruba, 2012) and although more Aruban born women than men have a bachelor degree (for master and PhD degrees it is almost equal), women on average earned 30% less than their male counterparts (CBS Aruba, 2012).

The results of the Social Development Report (A situational analysis of Aruba Case -2017) mainly refer to social and socio-economic conditions concerning adult life domains (family structure and income, crime statistics, motherhood and position on the labor market) and somewhat less to domains of childhood (education, teenage pregnancies). The ‘Sociaal Crisis Plan’ (SCP, 2018) however, explicitly focuses on children and adolescents. The vision of the SCP is to limit the risks that children and adolescents may encounter in different phases of their life and to maximize the protective factors that may enhance the chances for youth to grow up in a safe environment and develop to their full potential (SCP, 2018).The SCP intends to realize these goals by focusing on 1) prevention and early intervention,

2) (crisis)intervention and 3) specific target groups such as e.g., disabled children and vulnerable adolescents. This pilot study intends to generate results that may be relevant for the prevention and early intervention policies of the SCP.

2.1.3. A theoretical model with the child as the center of the world

A theoretical model that may be important to indicate for the results of this pilot study and to suggest recommendations that fit in the above-mentioned National Education Plan and SCP (that are also connected to the SDGs ‘promote well-being’, ‘quality education’ and gender equality) is the ecological model of Uri Bronfenbrenner. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory of human development (1977) is one of the most widely known theoretical frameworks across a variety of disciplines and fields of practice in the social sciences (Velez-Agosto et al., 2017). Bronfenbrenner’s theory is rooted in the belief that a child develops interactively, in response to various levels of environmental relationships and influences. This model situates the child at the center, and it considers the child as an active participant in his/her learning and development. The various human and institutional relationships available to the child are a series of systems layered concentrically around the child (see Figure 2.1).

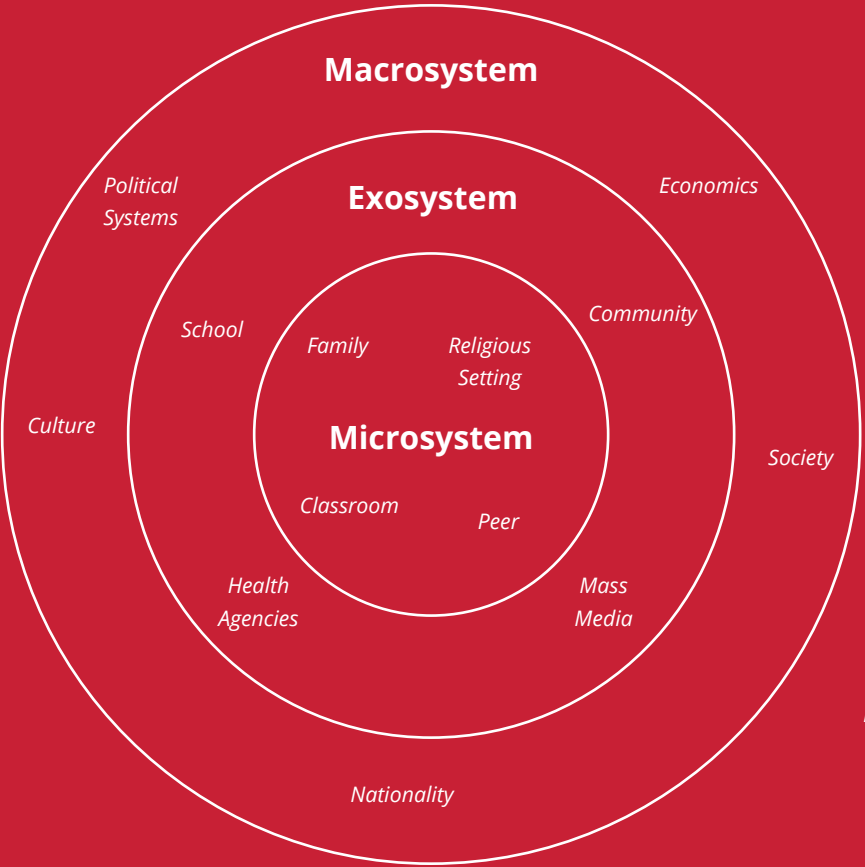


Figure 2.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theory (1977)

First, the microsystem is the system that influences the child directly and includes family, peers, schools and communities. The interaction between components of the microsystem is referred to as the mesosystem. An example of the mesosystem is the interrelations between the family and school (e.g., parental involvement in the school of their child). The exosystem is the social context with which the child does not have direct contact, but which affects him or her indirectly through the microsystem. Examples in the context of school would be teacher or staff perceptions of the school environment or the development of the professional care system with trained staff. Other examples are the social networks of parents, their work, or the ethnic community they live in. The macro system consists of policies, economics, values, that are accepted by a majority of society and that may determine the social structures and activities in various levels. Examples are the educational system, the judicial system, or culturally accepted ideas about parenting. The final level of the ecological framework, the chronosystem level, includes consistency or change (e.g., historical or life events) of the individual and the environment over the life course (e.g., changes in family structure through divorce, displacement, or death) (e.g. Brendtro, 2006; Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Espalage, 2014).

One of Bronfenbrenner’s most basic beliefs is that trusting bonds with children are the most powerful force in positive youth development. In order to develop “intellectually emotionally, socially and morally, a child requires participation in progressively more complex reciprocal activity on a regular basis over an extended period in the child’s life, with one or more persons with whom the child develops a strong, mutual, emotional attachment and who is committed to the child’s well-being and development, preferably for life” (Bronfenbrenner, 1991, p. 2). According to Brendtro (2006), Bronfenbrenner translated this principle in simple powerful terms: “Every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her. To help meet a child’s needs, the primary caregiver should also have the support of another adult, such as a spouse or grandparent. But in modern society, this three-way alliance has been disrupted by solo parenting and the loss of extended families.” However, the child is

not a passive recipient, but there is continuous interaction between the child and the different actors in the systems, where both the environment and the child are responsible actors. Over the years, Bronfenbrenner and colleagues offered several reformulations of the ecology model, including the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) and numerous scholars in the field of psychology and education used his model, recognizing that youth are situated in systems that have direct, indirect, and dynamic influences on development and behavior (Espalage, 2014). In this pilot study, we intend to gather information from the micro system that interacts with the child (parents, school, peers, neighborhood), the meso-system (interactions between parents and schools from the perspective of the schools) and the exosystem (e.g., school-organization, care system of school).

2.1.4. School context

To promote healthy development and to address risks and vulnerabilities, schools can offer important and accessible information for policy and interventions. There are three ways in which schools are relevant: as an individual risk or protective factor (microsystem), as a collective context that can lead to positive or negative outcomes for their students (exosystem) and as a location where interventions take place. School is an important factor in mitigating the effects of risk factors related to problem development, meaning that schools can offer important preventive factors for children and young people in adverse conditions (Kim et al., 2015; Sklad et al., 2012; Wissink et al., 2014). This study considered the perspectives of the schools on the broader social context of the children, including perceptions about behavioral problems^{xii} of the children, the role of languages spoken, the school’s care system, the cultural background of the children, their families and neighborhoods.

^{xii} In using the terminology of behavioral problems, or problem behavior we would like to elaborate on our definition of problem. We would like to use the word unsafe, risky or unhealthy In order to avoid the discussion or association that some of the challenges or unsafe practices are stigmatized.

2.2. Individual Framework

2.2.1. Growing up in Aruba

Although Aruba has its own unique socio-cultural context, such as post-colonial heritage, the Status Aparte of the island and the influence of tourism and migration of English-speaking Caribbean and Spanish-speaking immigrants from Venezuela and Colombia, young people face similar problems and challenges as in other countries. To illustrate the main risks for children in Aruba, some statistics are given below: Rijkswet aanname, COVID-19 en CAFT adviezen (gendercie AUA).

In 2010, children aged 0 through 17 represented 25% of the population of Aruba, totaling 25,634 children. According to the 2010 Census, 64.3% of the children lived with both parents (CBS Aruba, 2010). One in three children in Aruba grows up in a single-parent family, usually headed by the mother (CBS, 2013). About a quarter of female-headed families live below the poverty line (CBS, 2013). The dropout rate among high school students is around 10% (Unicef, 2013) and the education level of most children is relatively low (Relato Estadístico Enseñansa after Aruba 2013-2014). Guda (2008) estimated that 1 in 15 children between the ages of 0-17 experienced abuse at some point (physical neglect more experienced by boys, physical and sexual abuse more experienced by girls). The Sociaal Crisis Plan (2018) reported 24 cases each month of serious child abuse and neglect based on data from the Horacio Oduber Hospital. Health problems are concentrated around food, physical condition and sexuality. Many children are overweight: 27% of boys and 28% of girls in fifth grade were overweight, 16% of boys and 15% of girls were obese (CBS, 2013). Teenage pregnancy occurred in 42 per 1,000 young girls (CBS, 2013). According to the organization Wit Gele Kruis, 10% of mothers were under the age of 18 (Boer et al., 2015).

Aruban crime statistics show that unlike globally decreasing crime trends, official crime increased between 2008 and 2012 (Statistical yearbook of Aruba 2012). Although statistics on juvenile crime are not reported, public authorities have indications that juvenile crime is increasing. Between 2005 and

2007, the International Self Report Delinquency Study (ISRD) was conducted in 30 different countries, including Aruba. Compared with Curacao, St. Maarten and Bonaire, the Aruban youth scored highest in group fights in the past year, as well as pickpocketing and shoplifting (Van Solinge et al., 2010). One in twenty reported being a member of a deviant youth group, which is the highest percentage compared to Latin American countries such as the Netherlands Antilles, Venezuela and Suriname (Gatti et al., 2011). Van der Wal (2011) studied a representative sample of Aruban youth between the ages of 10 and 17, investigating problems related to delinquency in the individual, parenting, school, peers and neighborhood domains. She concluded that Aruban youth do not differ significantly from Dutch youth in terms of delinquency, but that they report much more (psycho) social problems and problem behavior than their Dutch peers (Van der Wal, 2011). For further details about Youth in Aruba, their context and delinquent behavior we refer to Van der Wal (2011, 2012).

An interesting study was conducted on the self-concept of pre-adolescent children of 4th, 5th and 6th grade in Aruba (CBS, 2013). According to the study, the notion of self-concept is an important indicator to mental health and overall well-being. The study revealed that overall children in Aruba have a relatively high self-concept, particularly where the non-academic aspects of self-concept are concerned. The study further found that in academic areas of self-concept, there was a relatively larger decline between grades 4 and 6 than in non-academic areas of self-concept. The study explained this decline whereby in school children are constantly judged on their skills and abilities and not in other areas of functioning. Another significant finding was that 7.2% of all children perceived themselves as ‘ugly’ and 9.0% perceived themselves as ‘no good’. In this study, students were asked questions about their perceptions of their skills, abilities and enjoyment of different academic and non-academic

activities. The results showed that 14% of children reported hating reading, 18.5% hated mathematics and 7.8% of the children reported hating all school subjects. These findings do not augur well for the self-efficacy nor the future mental health and well-being of our children in a manner that will stimulate learning, cultivate personal agency in pursuit of a meaningful career path, and human and national development. In this regard, this current study is timely and finds its relevance.

2.2.2. Positive Youth Development, well-being and risky behavior

Although this pilot study focuses on various risk factors that increase the chance of a problem or unhealthy or risky development, attention is also paid to factors that (despite a risky background) contribute to healthy development. Over the last decades, several large-scale longitudinal studies on the development of children have been conducted on a wide area of important developmental domains in Western countries like the United States of America, United Kingdom and the Netherlands (Farrington, 1995; Hawkins et al., 2001; Loeber et al., 1998; Resnick et al., 1997; Weerman et al., 2007; Eichelsheim et al., 2010; Keijsers et al., 2012; Thornberry & Krohn, 2006). These studies have given us many insights in the most important risk factors related to healthy or unhealthy development of young people. One of the overarching conclusions is that there is not one factor responsible for negative outcomes like delinquency, drug abuse, and gang participation. Individual factors such as intelligence, social cognitions, temperament and biological factors are intertwined with family factors such as parent-child relationships and school factors (school connectedness, motivation, school performance), peer factors (delinquent peers, unstructured socializing, group processes, and gang membership) and neighborhood and community factors (social disorganization, low social cohesion) (Lösel & Farrington, 2012; Thornberry & Krohn, 2006).

In addition to the above-mentioned risk factors that interfere with healthy child development, child maltreatment is one risk factor that has implica-

tions for behavioral outcomes for children. Studies have shown that children who are victims of child maltreatment are more likely to have cognitive and language delays, poor problem solving skills, poor social skills and behavioral difficulties (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Jones & Jemmott, 2016; Roopnarine & Jin, 2016). Studies conducted by Roopnarine and Jin (2016) on family socialization practices and childhood development in Caribbean communities describe parenting practices as complex, characterized by a combination of the use of warmth and harsh socialization practices. Evidence of harsh socialization practices can be seen in Aruba given the deaths of the two little brothers mentioned earlier, in addition to reported cases of child abuse and neglect in Aruba. The experiences of children in Aruba with abuse and neglect is a cause of concern and it remains obvious that parents need support in their conception of parenting styles and how these can adversely affect the social and cognitive development of their children.

While there are various risk factors for unhealthy development, less attention has been paid to children who do not end up delinquent, unemployed, addicted and/or having health problems despite a high-risk background. Recently, awareness is growing that there are also protective factors that can prevent young people from adverse outcomes. These protective factors can also help building resiliency among these youngsters. Resiliency suggests a shift in perspective from researchers to focus on elements of positive development that also occur despite a high-risk status (Jain et al., 2012). Resilience also refers to phenomena such as maintaining competence under specific stressors (e.g., coping with parental divorce) or recovering from severe trauma (e.g., child abuse and neglect) (Lösel & Farrington, 2012). It is thus important to focus not only on risk domains but also on protective factors. The Positive Youth Development (PYD) model, developed by Catalano and colleagues (Catalano et al., 2004), focuses on psychological and social strengths of developing young persons experienced and shaped in different contexts such as the family, school, peers and neighborhoods.

This approach strongly emphasizes the strengthening of protective factors in young people, thereby

also emphasizing that strengthening relations with family, peers, teachers, etc. leads to enhancement over the course of young people's lives (Lerner, 2017). Enhancement may refer to life satisfaction, well-being but also to the reduction of antisocial and delinquent behavior. Although well-being and antisocial behavior may be seen as different constructs, according to the Good Lives Model (GLM) (Ward & Fortune, 2013; Ward & Maruna, 2007) – a rehabilitation model of (youth) offenders derived from positive psychology – a reduced well-being may lead to increased risk for antisocial delinquent behavior. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development, discussed above, has been instrumental in shaping the theory, research, and practice of positive youth development (Benson et al., 2007). An example of this positive welfare approach is the Aruban social housing company Fundacion Cas pa Comunidad Arubano (FCCA), which has been actively involved in social housing projects and neighborhoods where social workers, police and caregivers pay attention to vulnerable young people in problem families (FCCA housing documents 2010-2012).

With the development of a short self-report instrument measuring risk and protective factors of well-being and antisocial behavior of Aruban children, we used the PYD model as a theoretical perspective to study both risks and strengths of developing Aruban youth. We further complement the PYD approach by studying male and female differences in development. The research literature offers evidence for both gendered and more general pathways to negative life outcomes such as risky and antisocial behavior (Jones et al., 2014; Moffitt et al., 2001; Wong et al., 2010). Some risk factors are more strongly related to female disruptive and delinquent behaviors such as physical and sexual abuse, family conflicts, running away from home and diagnoses with mental health issues (Slotboom, Hoeve, Ezinga & Van der Helm, 2012; Van Vugt

et al., 2014). Other risk factors for disruptive and delinquent behaviors are found to be more gender neutral, like criminal attitudes, impulsivity, school suspensions and peer influences (Weerman & Hoeve, 2012; Wong, 2012). We are aware that specific factors and explanatory models may not always apply to the pathways followed by males and females in the Caribbean context. For Caribbean adolescent females, specific contextual factors may matter more, such as growing up without a father, teenage pregnancies, lack of support networks of family and friends, and the changing roles of mothers (De Boom, 2012; UNA & MinBZK et al., 2011; Kibbelaar, 2005; Kibbelaar, 2010).

2.3. Research Questions

For the development of policies that stimulate a healthy development of Aruban youth, it is important, as was shown in the above paragraphs, to increase knowledge about both the school context and the perceptions of schools on their children, and the perspectives of the children themselves. This pilot study accomplished this by means of a qualitative and a quantitative study. The question that is answered with the qualitative study is the following:

- What is the perspective of school staff on factors related to the development of primary school children in Aruba?

The question that is answered with the quantitative study examines the perspective of children is the following:

- Which factors are related to well-being and problem behavior of schoolchildren in grades 5 and 6 in Aruba?

3. METHOD

3.1. Study 1 – The Perspective of Primary Schools of Their Pupils

3.1.1. Participants (school management, social workers, school boards and classroom assistants)

Eleven schools participated in this pilot study, representing the various school organizations (Catholic, Protestant and Public) spread across different neighborhoods on the island. Interviews were conducted with the teachers (grades 5 and 6), the management of the schools and other stakeholders^{xiii}. To get a better insight in the behavior and social environment of the youngsters, interviews were held with 3 to 4 persons at each school (director/adjunct director, social worker and/or class assistant and teacher). We also approached Aruban school boards and from the four existing school boards, three participated, namely, the Catholic School Board (SKOA), the Public-School Board (DPS) and the Protestant School Board (SPCOA). Directors, staff members and policy makers or social workers of these school boards were interviewed. Most of the respondents

^{xiii} SPO is a public school for special secondary education that was also included in this pilot.

were experienced educational specialists in their field (they worked or had worked for other school boards, other schools and or other functions within the Aruban educational field).

Aruba is divided into eight districts and schools from four different districts participated in this study (See Table 3.1 and Appendix 3.1 for detailed information of the interviewees). For this pilot study we selected, based on the recommendations of the school boards, the following districts: San Nicolaas, St. Cruz, Oranjestad/Dakota and Noord. The districts Savenata and Paradera were not included in this pilot. San Nicolaas is often associated with migrants from British Caribbean islands and in more recent years has had a rise of poverty and social problems due to the unemployment of many of its inhabitants. Dakota is perceived as a multi-cultural area of the island but the relatively high occurrence of gangs has given the district a relatively high crime rate. St. Cruz is seen as the heart of Aruban folklore and culture and is therefore seen as ‘crioyo’ or creole. The district of Oranjestad is often considered as elite and upscale and the inhabitants of Noord in the past were perceived as not upscale (this has changed drastically due to the hotel sector that is located in that area). These perceptions still persist although these have also changed because of the gentrification of some neighborhoods and the inclusion of new migrants.

Table 3.1. Overview of the districts, schools and school boards

San Nicolaas	Noord	Oranjestad	Dakota-neighborhood Oranjestad	Santa Cruz	School boards
Paulusschool	SP Kudawecha	Mon Plaisir College	Fatima College	Laura Wernet-Paskel	School board SKOA
Colegio Hilario Angela	Washington	Prinses Amalia		Special education SPO Santa Cruz	School board SPCOA
Colegio Santa Filomena		Dominicus College			DPS

3.1.2. Interviews

To study the perspectives of the schools regarding the healthy or risky development of children, the following broad topics were formulated: Neighborhood, School, Family and Individual Child. These broad topics were further specified, and based on that, detailed questions were asked about poverty, socioeconomic status (SES), neighborhood, school structure and financial conditions, cultural diversity of school population, language, parental involvement, parental SES, parenting styles, abuse, child problem behavior and health. These topics were deemed relevant in relation to the school experiences of the children and the questions formulated in the screening instrument which were answered by the children themselves.

3.1.3. Procedure

The interviews were conducted by one of the senior researchers, two student assistants who were recruited via the University of Aruba (UA) from the Social Work and Development Department of the Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) and four employees of the Aruban Department of Education, namely the Director and four of her colleagues. The student assistants were trained to conduct the interviews during a workshop that was organized at the UA in order for them to be fully prepared to conduct all the interviews in Papiamentu, Dutch or English. They were Aruban born students, which facilitated the interview process very well because they knew the schools and or barios or districts where the schools were located. They were flexible to change dates when necessary and were able to approach the respondents quickly and knowledgeable about certain topics. The employees of the Aruban Department of Education were also part of the team of interviewers. They were knowledgeable on most of the topics and were enthusiastic to collaborate and to engage in the conversation with their colleagues in the field. The collaboration was professional and went smoothly. The qualitative approach used for this research mainly consisted of interviews with various stakeholders, supplemented with participatory observations (ethnographic observations), notes that highlighted issues, questions and or comments on the interview questions and the selected topics.

3.1.4. Qualitative data analysis

The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed by two IPA staff members and facilitated by the Aruban Department of Education. They transcribed 44 interviews, which were then analyzed by a team of IPA staff members. The method of the analysis of the transcribed interviews was as follows. Two IPA staff members transcribed all the interviews. We decided to analyze responses of the 44 respondents via Excel sheets and chose to be guided by content analysis. All the responses were linked to the functions of the respondents to see if there were systematic differences in the answers of the respondents on the questions/topics. We concluded that overall, the impressions, opinions, views and experiences of the respondents were comparable, and no systematic differences were found between respondents with different positions although differences were visible between the districts and the changes in demographic developments of the past 25 years in these districts. Sometimes the answers of the respondents that worked for the school boards differed markedly from the answers of other respondents working in other districts. The differences became apparent when they discussed or informed the interviewers about policies or certain incidents at schools that they could highlight and/or compare. They also had a good overview of the several districts/schools and issues and challenges, but they often did not know specific situations, internal school policies and/ or bario-related incidents of certain schools. Finally, the responses of the interviewed school staff belonging to the same district were summarized (the answers for all the school boards were summarized separately). In chapter 4, these qualitative findings are highlighted. When necessary we refer to the results found in different districts or use citations to emphasize the findings.

3.2. Study 2: Pathways to Healthy or Risky Development

3.2.1. Participants

Eleven schools participated in this pilot study, representing the various school organizations (Catholic, Protestant and Public) spread across different

neighborhoods on the island. The various school boards and schools that were approached for this pilot study all gave permission to participate. In addition, parents filled out an informed consent form for their children. Ten primary schools participated with grades 5 and 6 as well as one special education school (first year of secondary school). More than 90% of all children in the participating classes filled out the questionnaire. Only a small percentage of all children in grades 5 and 6 did not participate, mainly due to illness or other reasons (not known) for absence. Children were surveyed in the classroom by trained IPA students. The sample was made up of a total 848 children (Mean age: $M = 11.66$, $SD = 1.15$) from 11 schools. Data collection for the pilot study took place in May 2019. Table 4.1 in the results section (Chapter 4) shows the sample population included in this study.

3.2.2. Measures

For this pilot study, a new instrument was developed in which the items were based on existing scales and discussions with professionals in Aruba about aspects that are important in the lives of Aruban children. In developing the items, an etic-emic approach was used (Burtăverde & De Raad, 2019; Ho & Cheung, 2007; Hui & Triandis, 1985) as a starting point, using existing concepts related to well-being and problem behavior but adapted to the Aruban context and supplemented with items relevant for Aruban school children. The KLAS (Kwaliteit van Leven Arubaanse Scholieren [Quality of Life Aruban pupils]: Slotboom, Hendriks, Dapper-Nederhoed, & Kibbelaar, 2019) consisted of 62 items with a 4-point Likert scale (Almost never – Sometimes – Often – Very Often). The key dependent variables of the study were both the self-reported well-being of children (in general and in the school context) and self-reported problem behavior (see Appendix 3.2). The dependent vari-

ables and related risk and protective factors were derived from the literature on subjective well-being in children (e.g. Lee & Yoo, 2015; Newland, 2015) and problem behavior and delinquency of children and adolescents (Eichelsheim et al., 2010; Loeber et al., 1998; Resnick et al., 1997; Weerman et al., 2007). An important research network concerning the health and well-being of school-aged children is HBSC (Health Behaviour in School-aged Children). The HBSC collects data every four years on 11-, 13- and 15-year-old boys' and girls' health and well-being, social environments and health behaviors in 49 countries. However, the HBSC only includes data on the US and European countries and only concentrates on health behavior. Nevertheless, some variables were deemed very useful to include in the screening instrument (e.g. parents and peer relationships, school characteristics and health behavior). Factors related to problem behavior are frequently examined and described throughout the risk factor literature on crime and delinquency. To formulate items about risk factors for problem behavior the researchers relied on the literature, the school project of Weerman et al. (2007) and on the study of Van der Wal (2011) and the instrument she used: the Youth Lifestyle Survey Aruba (YLS). This questionnaire is largely based on the WODC Monitor Self-reported Juvenile Crime 2005 (Van der Laan & Blom, 2006).

Dependent variables:

Well-being

Well-being was measured by five items, partly derived from the well-being literature (e.g. Rees & Bradshaw, 2018; Rees, Goswami & Bradshaw, 2010; Lee & Yoo, 2015) and partly derived from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Van Widenfelt et al., 2003; Vugteveen et al., 2019). The scale measured feelings of happiness, worry and anxiety. The five items were: "I feel happy", "I worry about things", "I am easily anxious", "I experience nice things" and "I am happy with myself".

Well-being at school

Well-being at school was measured by two items: "I like being at school" and "I feel safe at school".

Problem behavior

Problem behavior was measured by five items derived and adapted from the behavior problem scale of the SDQ (Van Widenfelt et al., 2003; Vugteveen et al., 2019). The scale measured for example anger, fighting and bullying behavior. The five items were: "I can get angry suddenly", "I listen to the teacher", "I fight with other children", "I bully other children" and "I skip school".

Independent variables: Individual factors Coping

Coping was measured using five items from the Utrechtse Coping Lijst UCL coping questionnaire (Bijstra, Jackson, & Bosma, 1994). Items were derived from the subscales social support, and expressiveness and measured strategies of problem solving, namely support seeking from family and/or friends, and expressing anger and or quietness. The items were: "If I have problems, I get angry", "If I have problems, I talk to my mother or father", "If I have problems, I talk to my friends", "If I have problems I stay calm", and "If I have problems, I ask someone for help".

Self-control

Self-control was measured by three items derived from the school questionnaire developed in the NSCR (Nederlands Studiecentrum Criminaliteit en Rechtshandhaving) school project (Weerman et al., 2007). These items were: "I often do things without thinking first", "I often do what I feel like immediately", "I like to do exciting and adventurous things".

Victimization on the streets

Victimization on the streets was measured by three items: "I am being bullied on the streets", "I am being beaten on the streets", and "I am being threatened on the streets".

Healthy lifestyle

Health related items were derived from the HBSC and the Pittsburgh girls study (Keenan et al., 2010;

Loeber et al., 2002). A healthy lifestyle was measured by two items: "I do healthy things such as eating healthy and doing sports" and "At home we have enough food".

Positive self-image

Positive self-image was measured by "I think I am smart".

Parental factors

Parenting was measured by three different scales. The scales were derived from a school project (Weerman et al., 2007) and the Youth Lifestyle Survey Aruba (YLS) (Van der Wal, 2011).

Parental warmth

The parental warmth index consisted of five items. The items were: "If I am sad, my mother takes care of me", "If I am sad, my father takes care of me", "If I do something good, they tell me at home", "My mother shows that she loves me", "My father shows that he loves me".

Parental monitoring

The parental monitoring index was created with three items. The items were: "I am alone at home after school", "At home they know where I am after school", and "I have dinner together with others".

Harsh parenting/Disciplining

Harsh parenting was measured by two items: "I sometimes get a blow at home" and "At home they punish me when I have done nothing wrong".

School factors

School related factors were measured by two items: "My school grades are good" and "Teachers pay attention to me".

Peer factors

Peer influence was measured by two different scales. The scales were derived from a school project (Weerman et al., 2007) and the Youth Lifestyle Survey Aruba (YLS) (Van der Wal, 2011).

Attachment to friends

Attachment to friends was measured by three items:

“I would like to have other friends”, “I feel good with my friends” and “My friends set a good example”.

Problem behavior of friends

Problem behavior of friends was measured by five items: “My friends steal”, “My friends fight”, “My friends smoke”, “My friends drink alcohol”, “My friends use soft drugs”.

Neighborhood factors

Neighborhood factors were measured by two different scales.

Unsafe Neighborhood is measured by two items: “In my neighborhood people do things that are not allowed” and “I feel safe when I am walking on the street”.

Physical decay neighborhood is measured by two items: “In my neighborhood, there is waste on the streets” and “There are empty houses in my neighborhood”.

3.2.3. Procedure

The questionnaire was administered by students from IPA and UA. The students were trained by IPA staff to administer the questionnaires. Sample questions, such as “I am going for a swim in the sea” [Almost never – Sometimes – Often – Very Often] were practiced in class with the children before the questionnaire was completed. The completion took approximately 20 minutes. The entire administration of the questionnaire took approximately one hour. Students worked in groups of two in different

schools where the questionnaire was administered in all of the grade 5 and 6 classes of the cooperating schools. The questionnaire was formulated both in Dutch and Papiamento in such a way that the questions were printed in both languages, with the question first appearing in Dutch and underneath that in Papiamento. Around 90% of the parents delivered an active informed consent for participation of their children in the study.

3.2.4. Analysis

Most items were not normally distributed, and scales had very low alphas (which means that the questions that were supposed to represent a specific construct such as e.g. parenting, or self-control did not form a reliable scale)^{xiv}. This might have been caused by the four-point scale that was used, but also by the tendency of the children not to use all the four different answer opportunities. Therefore, all items were dichotomized resulting in present or not present of the specific item. By adding up the dichotomized items, measures for the different independent and dependent variables were created. Because the variables were not normally distributed, these variables were dichotomized as well. In the Appendix, Table A3.2, the variables and their codings are described. The data was entered anonymously in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). Both descriptive analyses and chi-square analyses, t-tests and regression analyses were used to answer the research question.

^{xiv} More attention for a follow up study in order to compare the results and reformulate the questionnaire.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Study 1 – The Perspective of Primary Schools of Their Pupils

In order to answer the main research question of study 1: What is the perspective of school staff on factors related to the development of primary school children in Aruba? the school(-related) staff was interviewed on the following broad topics: Neighborhood, School, Family and the Individual Children. The results of the interviews are summarized below.

4.1.1. Neighborhood

Neighborhood Characteristics

Respondents elaborated during the interviews on the strong and weak points of their communities by mentioning the social network of their inhabitants (strong), the number of social and or sporting events and celebrations that are organized (strong). Most communities collaborate according to most of the respondents, with several societal organizations or known NGOs, like Traimerdias (After School Programs), Community Centers (Centro di bario), FAVI^{xv} and FADA^{xvi}, MBC, Centro di barrios of MFA^{xvii} now, YMCA^{xviii} and other relevant NGOs or organizations in the area. On the issue of poverty within the bario or district, the responses varied depending on which bario or neighborhood the schools were located in. The respondents working in the districts of San Nicolaas and Dakota referred often to poverty, violence and crime within their communities. The respondents stated that in Dakota they often saw their pupils with expensive smartphones or fashion items while they knew that their financial situation at home was challenging at best. To illustrate characteristics of these two districts

^{xv} FAVI stands for Stichting Blindenzorg Aruba or Fundacion Arubano pa esnan Visualmente Incapacita (FAVI), Aruban Foundation for the blind or visually impaired.

^{xvi} FADA means Fundacion AntiDroga Aruba or Aruban Foundation Anti-Drugs

^{xvii} MFA's are Multifunctional Auditoriums located in Aruban districts or barrios where the several services are offered or available and meetings can be organized.

^{xviii} YMCA also known as Y a worldwide Youth organization

(four of the participant schools are located in these districts) some observations of the school staff are cited below.

“In Dakota, everything happens on the street. People see and hear everything. We (at school) do not have air conditioning so when cars or motorcycles pass by, they all look outside. No, there are no gangs around. There used to be, but now we have it all under control via the bario watch. It is now much safer. Grandmas and babysitters call the police when something strange happens in the neighborhood ...”

“... It is a risky neighborhood, we try to keep our school safe, but it is a problem neighborhood. Weg Fontein is a difficult neighborhood right in front of us and just across the street is a drug dealer street. We often find objects on the ground in front of the school and it can become unsafe for the children and we must always take this into account. Some live in the neighborhood themselves or in The Village...”

“There are many latch-key children, they already have the keys to their house so that they can stay alone at home after school. There is a low absence rate because they are respectful of the school and us teachers...”

Other districts had other challenges as the respondents working in Oranjestad remarked that most of their pupils came from all over the island; the district is also seen as elite.

“... The students come from everywhere, some children live in very good neighborhoods and other children live in neighborhoods where things are going very badly. For example, I know of a family that has alcohol and violence problems and was assigned a house in Bushiri and the girl changed in 3-4 weeks into a completely different child in a negative sense. The parents themselves indicated how their daughter had changed. She always wants to go on the street with a group of friends and because of problems the family had to leave and live somewhere else...”

“... It is a quiet and safe neighborhood, it's a family



neighborhood here... it is a neighborhood where families are quite close to each other and there is a kind of concern for each other. It is not a dangerous neighborhood and the children grow up a lot with the Aruban culture and the parties such as, Dera Gai, San Juan, Dande...". "... The children come from different neighborhoods and live well and safely. Some children may sleep in the living room if the house is too small, but most sleep in a room... It is a good neighborhood. There is no disorder, there are no addicts walking around, problem people. It is quiet. It is a family neighborhood and most children are from the neighborhood. Washington and Boegoeroei have grown. It's a safe neighborhood".

Inhabitants from Noord were in the past stereotypically stereotypically as 'slower' and Santa Cruz as 'crioyo' or 'pueblo'. However, in some of these barrios new infrastructure and (social) housing is being planned and built. Some of the respondents explained that in particular in San Nicolaas the unemployment was the cause of the problem of poverty and stress, conflicts and/ or (lack) socioeconomic mobility within certain barrios.

Crime or Gang Formation

Linked with the districts or the neighborhoods was the issue of crime or gang formation. Most of the respondents were not that well informed about the level of crime within their barrio or neighborhoods, although some of the respondents were informed about gangs (both girls and boys), drug trafficking, alcohol addiction or other aspects of crime. Paradoxically, the respondents mentioned how in some barrios the neighbors and police or barrio-watch really cleaned up the streets and the atmosphere within the barrios and the living standards of these neighborhoods had improved drastically. Grandparents or pensioners were often members of the barrio watch or knew or observed when gangsters or unknown persons wandered in their streets. This sentiment was captured in the following narrative from a respondent working in a school in Dakota below:

"... There are almost no gangs now. It is now safer.

Grandmas and babysitters are already calling the police when something strange happens...." (respondent working in Dakota)

All the respondents reported that often the barrio or neighborhood had improved during the past years. Often that meant that gang formation was not a problem anymore and very often a better social control was gained through police officers and or grandparents or neighbors watching the streets or the barrio. However, in other districts respondents informed the interviewers that some barrios socio-economically declined (San Nicolaas for example due to the closing of the oil refinery) and too much poverty or lack of attention or care for children was noticed. The criticism that was expressed was that in some barrios children often were seen outside playing too late in the evening or running around and not doing their homework. Social control has generally improved but has a downside, namely that it does lead to bullying in some cases, because social control means that more is known about people's private lives. This was articulated by one of the respondents who said "At school, we have projects about bullying. It is getting worse. Especially since people start bullying with mobile phones". Meanwhile, in some of the barrios it was highlighted that drug trafficking and violence do occur regularly.

4.1.2. School

Financial situation and conditions for a healthy school climate

Almost all the respondents said that the financial support for the school was insufficient. Having sufficient financial support means being able to do the work necessary for the school and being able to truly educate (there are not sufficient teachers (assistants), or facilitating the pupils with support, as a social worker). Some respondents working at schools that are situated in the district of Oranjestad were more positive and answered that only certain events or special projects needed to be funded by fundraising activities, while most of the other respondents from all the other schools, in particular schools situated in San Nicolaas and Dakota, emphasized the need for more funding in order to purchase air condition units and to renovate the

buildings, school yards, classrooms, including the funding of materials for social and emotional well-being programs. They also reported a lack of internal communication and too few remedial teachers to support the at-risk children.

The Cultural Background of the Children

The diversity of cultural background that the pupils represented according to the respondents was seldom a problem, but notable. Almost all the respondents emphasized the cultural diversity in the schools. Generally speaking, they did not express experiencing problems due to this cultural diversity caused by the migration as influenced by the tourism sector, but they noticed different cultural habits regarding upbringing. For example, almost all the respondents stressed the fact that within the Haitian culture, parents discipline their children very harshly, which was frowned upon by the respondents who mentioned this practice. The respondents indicated that known cases are reported immediately, referring these situations to Voogdijraad^{xix} or Bureau Sostenemi^{xx} when they noticed this kind of behavior from the parents.

The non-Aruban children in the studied schools were generally from Venezuelan, Colombian, Jamaican, Chinese, Philippine, Haitian or Dominican Republic backgrounds. The respondents noticed at their schools that this cultural diversity was something to be proud of and that sometimes discrimination or exclusion was an issue. However, overall, they characterized the cultural diversity as positive and constructive and that the children in the classrooms or on the school yard dealt with this diversity constructively. Most of the time this did not lead to conflicts or stressful situations. The following narratives capture the above-mentioned findings.

"You can clearly see in which cultures the children are well educated. There are children from different cultures. And there are different cultures at school. There are no problems between the children..."

^{xix} Directie Voogdijraad is de kinderbescherming instantie en valt onder het Ministerie van Justitie. Primaire taak is bescherming van minderjarigen.

^{xx} Sostenemi is meldpunt of adviespunt kindermishandeling op Aruba.

"There are children of different nationalities, but during the break outside we don't notice it and all children accept each other. There are children from China, Colombia, Venezuela and from everywhere.... It is a mix but does not cause any problems. We do not notice it in the classroom or outside. The children respect each other..."

"We have differences but not very many. The great thing is that it is a melting pot. ... There is multiculturalism but not noticeable because we are very focused on inclusion and togetherness..."

Of all the schools that participated in the study, a few had more Aruban born pupils than students from other countries. However, especially within the districts of San Nicolaas, Oranjestad and Noord, schools had a diverse population of pupils. According to the respondents, in the districts of St. Cruz and Dakota, the Aruban student population was bigger than the foreign students. The problems that arose from these highly culturally diverse schools were related to language problems or family conflicts, strict house rules, hitting children (strict discipline) or busy and loud communication. In particular, Haitian students were experienced by almost all the respondents as having problems adapting due to their specific socio-cultural context and upbringing. Although most of the respondents embraced cultural diversity or multiculturalism, they also emphasized the differences (not of all the foreign children) in upbringing (regarding disciplining practices, respect and authority, hierarchy, importance of schooling), cultural-economic background and language competency. The observations made about the children of Haitian origin are best described in the following narrative from one of the respondents.

"In Oranjestad, for example, we have many Haitian students and with Haitian backgrounds, other types of values and norms are introduced. For example, they punish in a very different way if you compare that to most Aruban families. The children are beat very hard and

have very little to say and then you have the problem of involving the parents in the school and persuading them to talk about this. Some will come to school, you should be happy with that, and the others that you do not get persuaded to come to school, unfortunately you have to refer them to Bureau Sostenemi ... or we refer them to Tienda di Educacion, which offers guidance with parenting”.

The Role of Language

All the respondents were very clear about how they perceived the role of language in their school. Papiamento is the most commonly spoken language within the schools and on the school playground. At some schools in Oranjestad, there is more occurrence of multiple languages being spoken among the children. It was also observed that Dutch was the preferred language spoken in the schools in Oranjestad, especially among students with college-educated parents, Surinamese parents or parents who had studied or lived abroad. In other districts, the instruction language is either Dutch, Papiamento Spanish or American English. In San Nicolaas, English and Papiamento were the most spoken languages with a clear preference for San Nicolaas English. Dutch was clearly not the most spoken language overall. Papiamento was and is the preferred language at most of the schools that participated in this pilot. The main instruction language is still Dutch but in most of the schools, Papiamento or English is the language that is most used by the pupils but also by the teachers, according to the respondents. Dutch as the instruction language is practically a dead language in certain barios and is also for the teachers often too complex to apply or use. Some of the schools that participated were also selected to participate in the SAM^{xxi} or PSLM school project but it appeared that not all the school leaders were positive about these plans. Most of the respondents acknowledged the complexity of the language issue and emphasized that Papiamento and English were the most spoken languages. They were willing to participate in the language project, but they also mentioned that they were not prop-

^{xxi} SAM (SAM refers to SamSam; work together and help each other) or the PSML (Proyecto Scol Multilingual) is a multilingual program that started as a pilot in 2009, has started in 2012 and will be introduced for the 2018-2019 school year in all classes of the primary and secondary education of the pilot schools.

erly informed about the process and planning of the project which they experienced as frustrating. Due to lack of information, some of the respondents were hesitant or not sufficiently knowledgeable on the possible outcome of this pilot, but they all were in favor of the pilot, as aptly described by one respondent:

“We have a school, which is part of Proyecto Scol Multilingual (PSML). There, Papiamento is used as an instruction language and Dutch, English and Spanish are seen as foreign languages. It is not quite like the SAM model, but as said before, the concept of PSML. The problem with SAM is the learning resources, because then one must have teaching materials in Papiamento... the children grow up with Papiamento...”.

School Level After Primary School

On the question which school type recommendation most of the 6th graders received, in general the respondents answered that most children were advised to attend MAVO. HAVO/VWO had the lowest percentage of recommendation. According to some respondents, parents find it difficult to stimulate their children to do their homework. Despite the fact that parents do not always stimulate homework, EPB^{xxii} was not popular among parents, who tend to prefer MAVO over EPB for their children.

Parental Involvement in School

Neglect, demotivation, learning disabilities, conflict between parents, divorced parents, other problems within the family/household or no money, no food or breakfast at home; these are some of the problems that have are faced by the teachers (assistants), management and social workers at schools. Lack of attention, love, security and safety are believed to be the causes for the problem behavior of some children. This is due to the fact that parents often juggle two or more jobs and/or do not have the focus on their children. Most of the respondents complained that parents are not sufficiently interested in the academic performances of their children. They often lack a basic interest in attending informational sessions that are organized by their schools. There are parents that do not participate and do not know the names of the teachers of their children. The

^{xxii} EPB means Education Profesional Basico or Basic Professional Education in Dutch ‘Voortgezet Speciaal Onderwijs’ or ‘lager beroepsonderwijs’.

overall complaint was and is that parent participation is low. The interest of parent participation tends to decline over the course of the school years when parents witness their children being successful at school. WhatsApp or chat groups via WhatsApp for parents indicate a possible involvement of parents but parents often do not sign off on homework and a lot of parents send their children off to Traimerdia (after school care). However, in some schools, parents are supportive, informed and participate actively. Below are some narratives that best describe the parental involvement as experienced by the respondents.

“There are parents who help their children with presentations and book reviews. They help, but do not come to school. And the children are so proud and want to show off to their parents when they’ve made things, for example for flag day...”.

“Many parents work in hotels, are police officers and don’t have time to join activities at the school ...”.

“Parents are very busy, but teachers also have group chats with the parents, and they react well when they are called. They participate in fundraisings and they participate very well in education...”.

“Reading mothers,... there used to be a parent committee but not anymore. However, they help with transport to football, athletics ... The children feel good when their parents pay attention to them and then they do their best to give it back to their parents ...”.^{xxiii}

4.1.3. Families

Family Background

The respondents informed the researchers that many households are single parent households, consisting most of the time of single mothers, although there are also single father households. Most of the time, the communication with the mothers is good, but in some of the barrios and districts where there is a

^{xxiii} Reading mothers are not active anymore at this particular school but were also involved as parents.

high percentage of divorced families or single parent families, there is limited communication with the schools. Some of the respondents said that they often do not know the fathers and that the mental health of some single mothers can be highly problematic and that some of the mothers appear to have addiction issues and/or struggle with other social problems.

Extended family households are mainstream and common in all the districts that were involved in this research. The respondents emphasized the financial stress within many households. The households where both parents are present almost always consist of two working parents and often the single parent work at least two or three jobs in order to survive financially. One consequence of parents who work multiple jobs is that children are often left unattended at home, or that grandparents, extended family or neighbors watch them when the mother or parents are at work. Most of the respondents reported that the socioeconomic or financial problems cause a lot of stress, conflicts and tensions within the households. It is important to mention that some of the respondents expressed that most of their own parents are well-educated and that socioeconomic or emotional conflicts were not that common.

Abuse

Abuse, in the form of severe neglect and harassment by parents or family members is common, according to the respondents. The social workers emphasized neglect as the most common type of abuse observed amongst the children. Abuse is often defined and known as hitting a child, they said, but neglect also means not having enough to eat, not ensuring a child is on time for school, leaving children alone at home and travelling or leaving the island, dressing a child in dirty clothing and or not paying proper attention to hygiene. Some of the respondents also expressed their suspicion of some children experiencing sexual abuse. Below are some case studies

shared by respondents during the interviews:

“We have many families in which only the mother raises the children, but when I look at the large group that is separated, they still manage to raise their child together. There are also major conflicts, I also had fights at school between parents, but those are really excesses...”

“... I know alcohol addiction clearly from one case. Regarding gambling addiction we have some suspicions, whereby children may be neglected, they do not come to school, do not eat enough or do not have clean clothes, etc. ...”

Social Economic Circumstances and Poverty

Regarding the topic of poverty or the socioeconomic circumstances or strata described by the respondents, most of the respondents were clear about the socioeconomic circumstances of their pupils in certain barrios where they live and grow up. The respondents stated that most households were of low middle class or working class. Only in Oranjestad and Noord did school management staff actually emphasize that the socioeconomic background of the parents was generally middle class (characterized by having a minimum of a college/bachelor or university or tertiary level of education). Other school managers who were interviewed, particularly those situated in San Nicolas and Dakota, mentioned that the socio financial background is a problem and often the parents had the same secondary educational level as their children. Very often, the parents of the SPO students in St Cruz also went to the SPO school, which indicated the vicious cycle of intergenerational low educational attainment and low paying jobs, resulting in poverty and socio emotional problem lives. The respondents from the schools in San Nicolaas, Dakota and a few from St Cruz emphasized the hopelessness of these circumstances and the impact of these social-emotional and financial strain on the learning and behavioral outcomes of the pupils. Often the poverty could be noticed by the lack of personal hygiene, children

coming to school without having had breakfast, consumption of unhealthy foods, wearing the same unkempt clothes for school, or by the way child-care appears to be organized at home. Other behavioral indicators mentioned were children exhibiting loud and aggressive social communication, having a lack of concentration and focus, being shy, and having silent or withdrawn behavior within the classroom with the teacher as well as with their peers.

Some respondents also expressed the view that gang formation in the barrios and financial stress of some of the parents compounds with the lack of care and attention to the children, might be responsible for the aggressive behavior of some of the children in the classroom. Most of the respondents mentioned that in San Nicolaas they see that the poor households consist of parents who have temporary jobs as domestic helpers or who work in the hotel sector as gardeners or as security guards. These jobs do not guarantee steady income or regular working hours in order for their families to not experience financial stress or problems. Parents need to combine more jobs at the same time to be able to pay all the bills. Most of the parents work in the hotel sector, the construction industry or in housekeeping, and as car mechanics. It was also mentioned that some of the parents have a low level of education and are struggling financially, emotionally, and were overwhelmed. Regarding the household composition, the respondents remarked that single parenthood, in particular single motherhood, was common and often the cause for poverty. The following narratives describe the socioeconomic circumstances and poverty of the parents and their children.

“Most parents have social and also economic problems. Many receive benefits and or work for a minimum salary. The money is not enough... at school the children are given clean uniforms and gym clothes. ... There are also single mothers, and parents who have a relationship with parents of other children in the same school. Some get help from relatives and some families have a small booth on the mother’s property... parents are often low-skilled and economically on the lower side... and

mostly they are single mothers but occasionally a father and sometimes a grandmother shows up....”

“They are often middle-class families, hard working parents, and many single mothers who manage with the help of grandmothers etc. Many have two or three jobs ...”

“We all have working parents. I think all parents work in Aruba. As far as I can tell, there is no unemployment among the parents in our schools. It is actually not unemployment, but if they do not have official work, they still work somewhere. Because they need the money.

“...You have many illegal immigrants who cannot officially take a job, but they do have a source of income because they have children to raise ...”

4.1.4. Children

Perceptions About the Behavior of the Children

Regarding behavioral problems, most of the respondents stated that bullying, along with loud and uncontrollable yelling during the lessons were problems that often presented themselves. Fighting in the schoolyard was also mentioned by some respondents. Schools often have a protocol in place regarding bullying, fighting, loud behavior, threats and (sexually) unaccepted behavior. Parents are notified when children are not following the rules and regulations of the school. Truancy is generally not seen very often. When problems do arise at home, very often children first inform the teacher or teacher’s assistant. It is the pupil her or himself that will often first notify the teacher’s assistant and/or the school social worker about problems or conflicts they encounter at home. The following narratives demonstrate the experiences reported by the interviewed teachers regarding the perceived behavior of children in class:

“Problems we encounter in the classroom: not following the rules, hyperactive children, not sitting still, disturbing the lesson...”. Today’s children are very hyper. They cannot behave themselves. There are children who know no boundaries. You are more concerned with social education than education. Education must start at home and as a teacher you also have that task ..”

“... If things go wrong during the break, fights can start... some of them pose threats but fortunately not many...”

“Lack of verbal respect for teachers ... breaking class rules, when someone else has done something, imitating them. Behavioral problems arise because of unstable upbringing: rudeness and not following the instructions of the school”

Health or Well-being

All the respondents responded in a similar way to questions that were linked to health and well-being. Regarding health, most of the respondents stated that a school doctor regularly visits their school. Children often visit the dentist and/or doctor. The school doctor examines the ears, teeth, eyes and the rest of the body of the pupils. Some of the schools are intent on being healthy schools and therefore only sell healthy food items in their canteen. One school in Oranjestad forbids unhealthy snacks entirely and instructs parents to purchase only healthy food items for their children to bring to school. A few schools are clients of certain foundations (HOH)^{xxiv} that feed children who do not get breakfast daily at home. They cater to their needs and every morning orange juice, fruit and bread is delivered at schools that request their help in order to feed the children from poor families.

Sexual education is seen as an essential part of health and well-being through the program Biba Amor (a sex education program) that was introduced in the 5th or 6th grades. Respondents acknowledged the existence of lover boys or sugar daddies in the lives of some of their female pupils, so sexual education is considered a necessity. The results from the interviews revealed that parents appear to not educate their children on issues of sexual health and responsible sexual behavior. The respondents further indicated that issues around sex and sexuality are still considered as a taboo in a lot of families. Moreover, the respondents mentioned that they themselves did not receive adequate sexual education growing up as a child, so in order to break the cycle, it is necessary to implement programs such as Biba Amor in elementary schools. The narratives below capture the sentiments of the respondents on their perspectives on the topic of health and well-being.

xxiv Horacio Oduber Hospital (HOH)



"... It is a quiet and safe neighborhood, it's a family neighborhood here... it is a neighborhood where families are quite close to each other and there is a kind of concern for each other. It is not a dangerous neighborhood and the children grow up a lot with the Aruban culture and the parties such as, Dera Gai, San Juan, Dande..."

"There are children of different nationalities, but during the break outside we don't notice it and all children accept each other. There are children from China, Colombia, Venezuela and from everywhere.... It is a mix but does not cause any problems. We do not notice it in the classroom or outside. The children respect each other..."

"We have many families in which only the mother raises the children, but when I look at the large group that is separated, they still manage to raise their child together. There are also major conflicts, I also had fights at school between parents, but those are really excesses..."

“... DVG (Department of Public Health) employs school doctors who visit the schools... the school performance of children is important and depends on their health. Unfortunately, there is no protocol yet that the schools receive the results of those medical studies”.

“We are a healthy school and we encourage them to eat healthily and hand out healthy treats when it’s their birthday. So, no pastechi and croquettes, but fruit or juice...”.

“... We are a healthy school where we focus on health (food, sports), no donuts etc. They have a good breakfast before coming to school, we received a printout of our children, and only 2 children in the whole school had obesity....”.

4.1.5. Summary of study 1: The perspective of primary schools on their children

We interviewed a relatively large number of school employees from ten different schools and four different school boards. They all had their own experiences with the children growing up in their schools, but throughout all their stories a more or less coherent picture emerged which is summarized below.

Barrio or Neighborhood

Depending on the specific barrio or neighborhood, respondents informed the interviewers about the livability of the barrio, security and safety, social cohesion, gangs, violence and or drugs traffic or dealing. Barrios were categorized by the respondents as safe or unsafe for the students or youth. Sometimes the pupils live in unsafe neighborhoods, for example at Weg Fontein near Colegio Hilario Angela. However, they are often too young to be active in a gang. Although the teachers did not report experiencing unsafety, gang related incidents do happen. Respondents from all the schools mentioned that their barrios improved because of the renovation of the infrastructure and through activities that have been organized by several societal organizations. Barrio

watch and police watch have helped improve some neighborhoods. In some schools (district Oranjestad and SN) pupils are recruited from all over the island and they do not have a direct link with the barrio of the school they attend. In Oranjestad (Mon Plaisir and Amalia) and in San Nicolaas (Filomena, Paulus) schools recruit students from outside the barrio because of the denomination of the school or because of the fact that San Nicolaas, for example, does not have a lot of inhabitants anymore due to the high rate of unemployment and closure of the oil refinery.

Poverty, unemployment and transformation of the barrios are important factors that do influence the lives of the pupils. Often NGOs assist with food or other necessities. Single mothers and divorced parents often struggle financially. Noord has a lot of poverty, Dakota and St. Cruz as well, although the mentality has changed partly because infrastructure gardens are made to make the barrio look more beautiful. Unemployment is higher in San Nicolaas and often parents do not work, and young parents and single mothers collect social welfare.

School

Although multicultural challenges do exist due to the diversity of cultures within the student populations at all the schools, the interviewed school staff mentioned that tensions or conflicts hardly arise as a result of this diversity. Parental involvement varies over the years and depends on several factors, such a lack of time because of work overload of the parents, or a lack of interest in the school performance of their children. MAVO is the most often occurring recommendation for secondary education (high school/middle school), and parents preferred MAVO over EPB. A serious problem mentioned was the lack of financial resources (causing problems related to the school buildings, teaching, remedial teaching and social workers) which forces the schools to organize fundraising events or sponsorship events to cover the cost of basic necessities. Finally, all interviewees mentioned the important, urgent and complex language issue. Papiamentu is

the most commonly spoken language on the island and pupils are raised speaking Papiamentu, while the instruction language is still Dutch. Also, a lot of people are Spanish speaking or English speaking. In some barrios, Dutch is practically a dead language and some teachers find it complex to apply or use. Most interviewees were in favor of the multilingual pilot program that was introduced in some pilot schools. In this program, Papiamentu is first used as an instruction language, and is then gradually replaced by Dutch.

Family

A lot of the households are run by (single) mothers or parents (and a few single fathers) and most of the family households consist of two working parents but also of extended family living in one house. There are also a lot of blended families^{xxv}. Most of the households are of lower middle class or working class. Only at some schools (Oranjestad or Noord) the respondents mentioned that parents of the children are highly educated but this group was considered very small. Depending on the location of the schools or the barrios, unemployment is a problem but most of the parents do work although that does not automatically mean that they are well off. Most of the parents have jobs but no careers and often hop from one job to another (domestic cleaning, gardening, security, tourist sector etc.). The respondents indicated that addiction does occur, and some examples were mentioned. Some of the respondents mentioned that children of single mothers who worked hard are proud kids because they have seen their moms persevere, contrary to children from more affluent households who tend to take certain things for granted. Although sexual abuse is regarded as a taboo, it is commonly acknowledged that it does occur. However, it is difficult for schools to get an idea of the scale of the problem. The biggest problem according to most of the respondents is neglect. Neglect, they explain, means no breakfast, unhygienic appearances, not being picked up or dropped off on time at school, being left alone at home and giving the children too much responsibility. Abuse manifests itself not only

^{xxv} Blended families are combined families or households consisting of children from previous marriages or relationships and or other forms of parents, caregivers (grandparents living in etc).

as neglect but also as violence (verbally and physically). In San Nicolaas, for example, respondents said that parents are very protective of their children, but also hit their children as a form of disciplining. However, the form of abuse most noticed by the school employees is neglect.

Child

Behavioral problems, such as bullying, fighting or sexually unaccepted behavior incidents were mentioned. According to the interviewees, most of the time these behavioral problems arise from unstable home situations or family situations with often single parent (single mother in most cases) households. Communication with pupils to discuss problems or issues is seen as going relatively well most of the time. The children first approach their teachers (or teacher’s assistants) or the social worker to talk about their problems (at home). Pupils get checked by a school doctor and or dentist. Some respondents mentioned that they worked at a school salubable or healthy school and they also emphasized how they teach parents to buy or eat healthy food items. Sexual education is still a taboo in families while at some schools, programs and projects have been initiated (Biba Amor) to teach and inform pupils starting in the 4th grade about their body and intimacy. Famia Planea organizes prevention campaigns but a lot of the work has still to be done at home and in the schools.

In this chapter the results of the interviews with school staff were described. Interviews were held with professionals who work in the school context in different functions, varying from school teacher to head of the school board. They told us about their experiences and views on the social context of the children and their experiences with the children themselves. They described how different neighborhoods function and the influence of parents on their children, they described their own school system and the role of parents, and gave us some insight in the behavior of the children.

In the next chapter the results of the children themselves will be presented. How do they experience their parents, school, neighborhood, and how do these interrelated social contexts influence their own behavior?

4.2. Study 2 – Pathways to Healthy or Risky Development

To answer the research question of study 2: ‘Which factors are related to well-being and problem behavior of schoolchildren grade 5 and 6 in Aruba?’ different analyses were conducted. First, background characteristics of the sample are described.

Second, prevalence of the outcome variables, (general) well-being, well-being at school and problem behavior are reported, for boys and girls separately and for the total sample. Third, prevalence of factors associated with well-being and problem behavior are described, and finally, results of the regression analyses of well-being and problem behavior are reported.

4.2.1. Background characteristics of the sample

In Table 4.1. the number of boys and girls in each class and the average age of the pupils is shown.

Table 4.1. School characteristics

School	N Boys class 5	N Girls class 5	N Boys class 6	N Girls class 6	N boys class 1**	N girls class 1	Total N pupils	Mean Age
Laura Wernet-Paskel	15	20	17	9			61	11.55
Dominicuscollege	31	18	27	28			105	11.53
Prinses Amalia	22	27	26	22			97	11.43
Mon Plaisir College	21	27	27	18			97	11.34
Fatima College	14	14	14	5			47	11.74
Scol Primario Kudawecha	25	28	27	27			109	11.48
Washington	37	38	38	36			154	11.40
Paulusschool	16	19	15	17			65	11.48
Colegio Santa Filomena	6	17	16	21			63	12.03
Colegio Hilario Angela			7	2			10	12.80
SPO Santa Cruz					29	10	40	14.53
Total*	187	208	214	185	29	10	848	

* due to missing variables for gender, the numbers don't always add up to total number of pupils
** class 1 is first class of secondary school SPO

4.2.2. Prevalence of well-being, well-being at school and problem behavior

In Figure 4.1 (see also Appendix 4, Table A4.1), the background characteristics of the sample are shown. Almost a third of the children have repeated a grade, and significantly more boys than girls did so, both in grades 5 and 6. Around 60% is a member of a sports or hobby club while in grade 6 girls are significantly less (54.1%) a member of a sports or hobby club than boys (65.6%). Around 10 percent of the children report being on the streets (very) often after school, while around three quarter of the children report being on the internet (very)

often and around 65% play computer games (very) often. The living situation is quite similar for boys and girls (see Figure 4.2 and Appendix 4.1). Almost two third of the children live with both their biological parents and more than 90% of the children live with their mother in the same house while only two third live with their father in the same house. Almost a quarter of the children have a grandmother living in the house and almost 13% has a grandfather living in their house. Children also reported their country of birth. Most children were born in Aruba (82.7%). The other main countries of birth were the Netherlands, 5.5%, Venezuela, 2.6% and Colombia, 2.8%.

Grade repeating and leisure activities Aruban schoolchildren ages 10-13

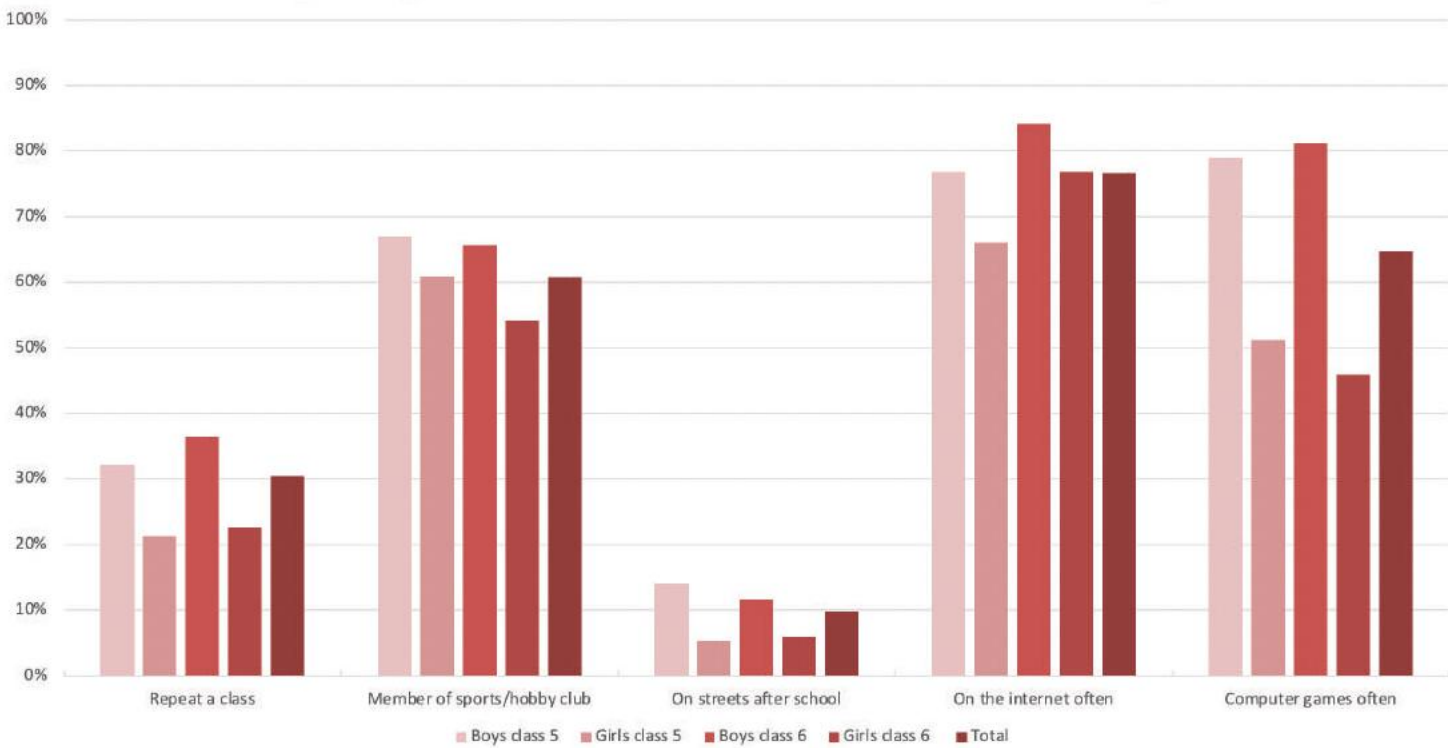


Figure 4.1. Grade repeating and leisure activities Aruban schoolchildren ages 10-13 in percentages

Living situation Aruban schoolchildren ages 10-13

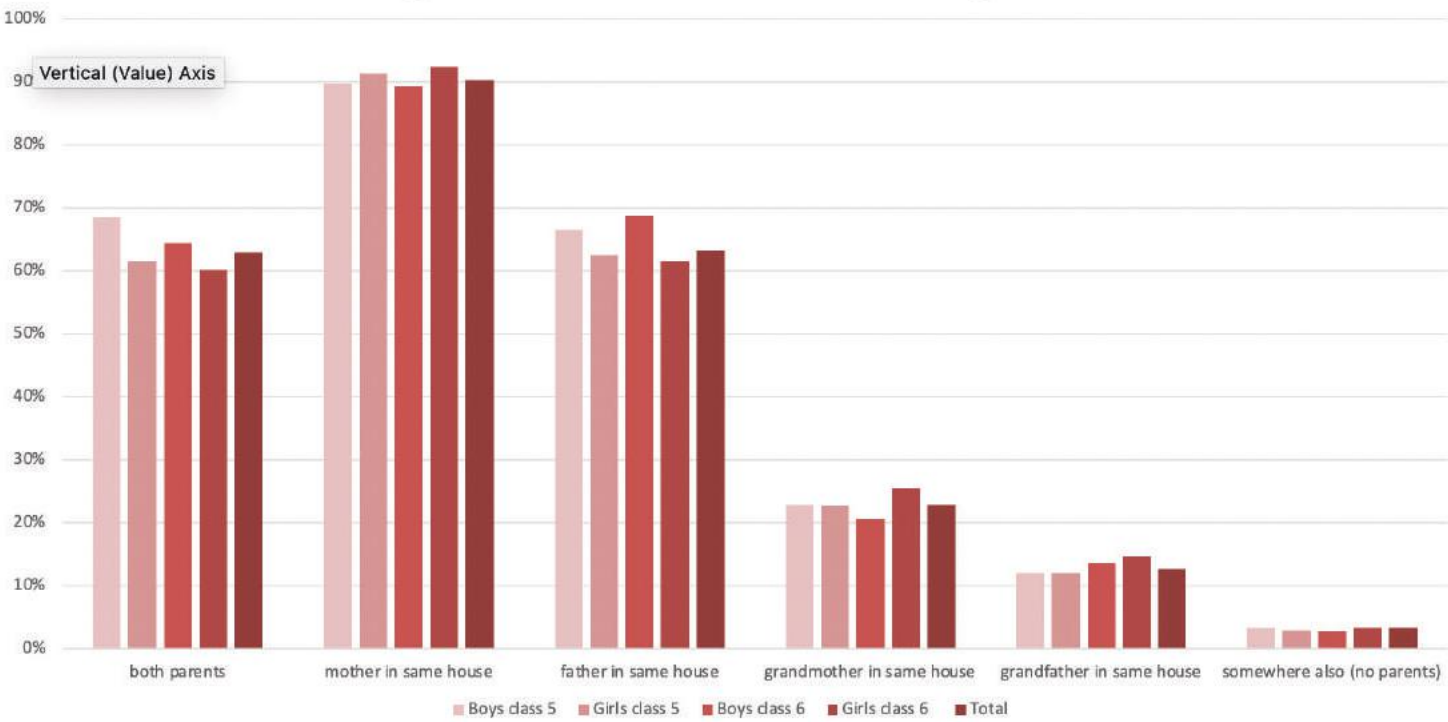


Figure 4.2. Living situation Aruban schoolchildren ages 10-13 in percentages

When asked about their well-being, most children reported feeling happy, not worrying, and being happy with themselves (very) often (86.7%). Well-being at school is reported by somewhat less children than well-being in general but still most children report they like school and feel safe at

school (82.2%). problem behavior (being angry suddenly, not listening to school teacher, fighting and bullying other children) is reported by a minority of the children (13.8%) (see Figure 4.3 and Appendix 4, Table A4.2)

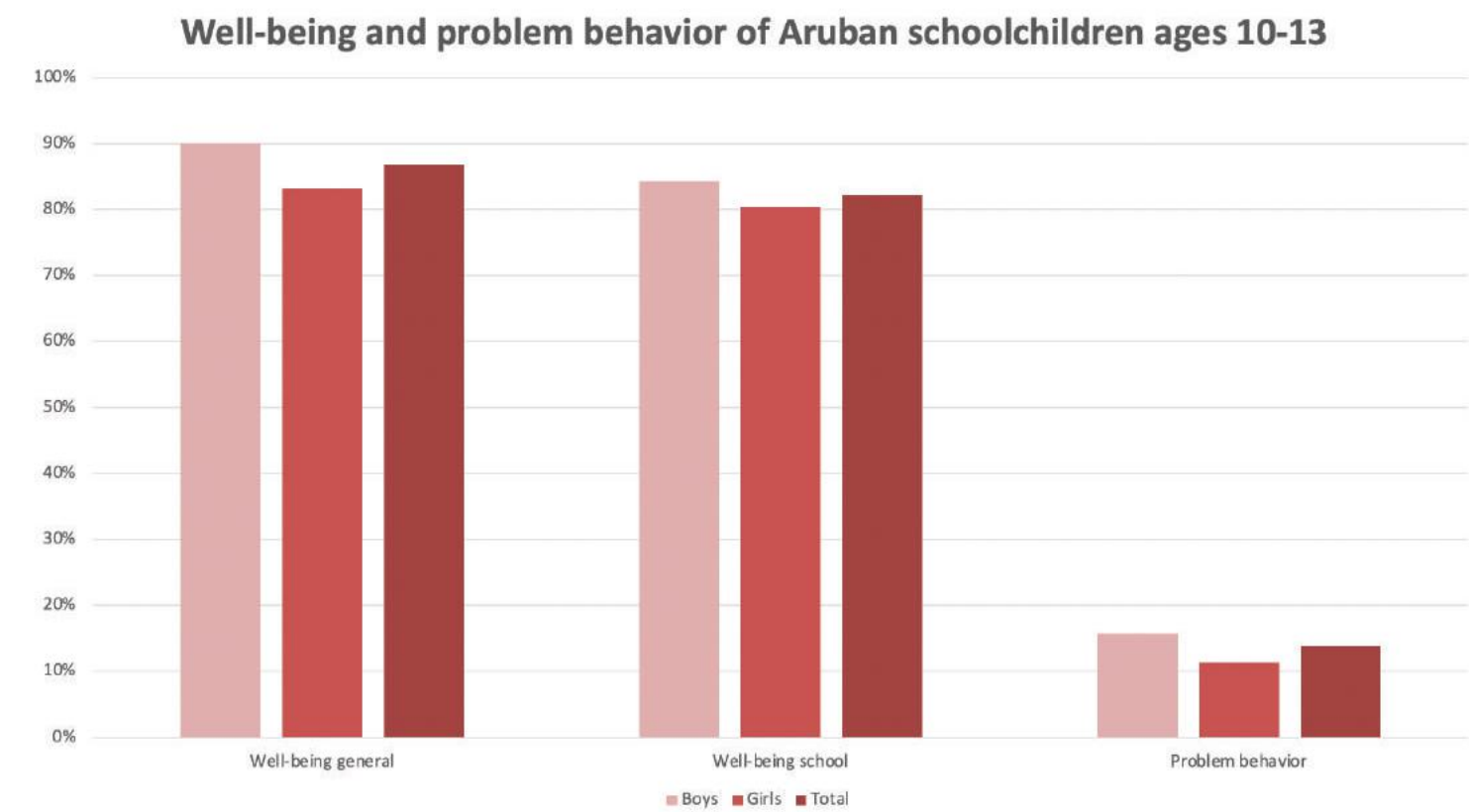


Figure 4.3. Prevalence of well-being and problem behavior of Aruban schoolchildren ages 10-13

4.2.3. Prevalence of factors associated with well-being and problem behavior

The prevalence of factors associated with well-being and problem behavior are reported in Figure 4.4 (and Appendix 4, Table A4.3). Looking at the individual characteristics of the children, it is shown that almost 50% reported a lack of self-control in certain situations, around 60 percent reported a healthy lifestyle and most children have a positive self-image (73.7%). Most children reported having parents that show warmth and affection (77%) and having parents that monitor their behavior (e.g. parents know where their child is after school, the child is not alone at home after school) (85.7%). Harsh parenting (e.g. “at home they punish me when I have done nothing wrong”) was reported by a minority of the children (14.5%). Good school grades

were reported by 71.8% of the children while 59.1% reported that the teacher does pay attention to them (very) often. Most children are attached to their friends (78.3%) and only a minority of the children said they have friends that show problem behavior (9.5%). With respect to their neighborhoods, two third of the children reported feeling unsafe in their neighborhood (very) often (66.3%), a quarter reported physical decay in their neighborhood (22.3%) and 6% of the children said that they have been victimized on the streets. Boys and girls are very similar in the prevalence of risk and protective factors. Girls only differ from boys in self-control, school grades and feelings of unsafety. Girls reported more often having self-control, and good school grades than boys. They also indicated feeling unsafe more often in their neighborhood.

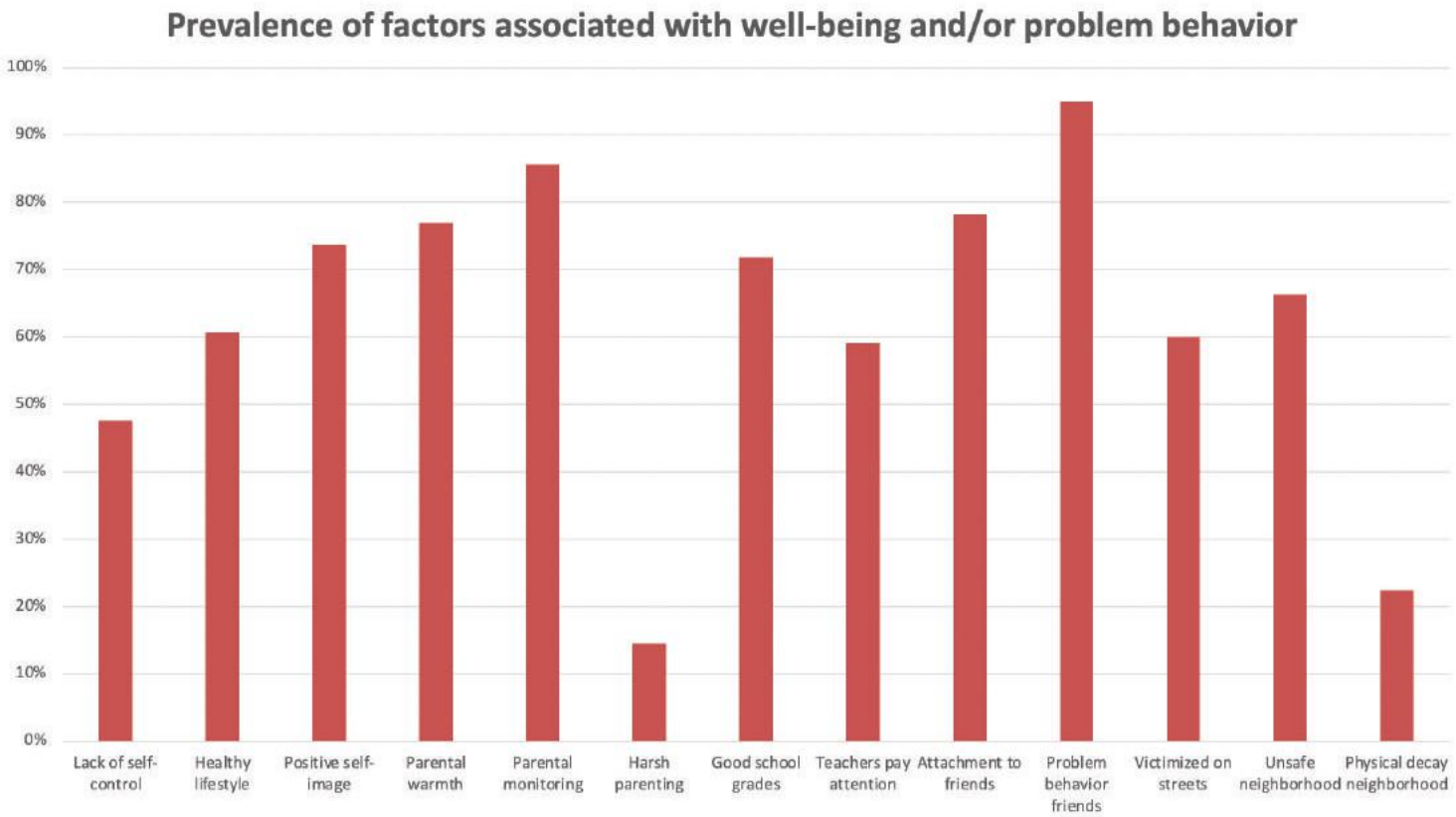


Figure 4.4. Prevalence of factors associated with well-being and/or problem behavior

4.2.4. Regression analyses of well-being and problem behavior

Although well-being and problem behavior are related concepts ($r = .24$), they are different enough to see them as two separate concepts, meaning that some children that reported problem behavior, also reported that they hardly ever feel happy, worry often and are very often scared, but that there are also children that show problem behavior and reported being happy. Also, part of the children who reported not being happy did not report problem behavior. Therefore, we decided to conduct different analyses for both well-being and problem behavior. The results of the different regression analyses for well-being, well-being at school and problem behavior show that each concept has different predictors (see Table 4.2).

(General) Well-being is predicted by healthy coping, a positive self-image, parental warmth, attachment

to friends and not being victimized on the streets. Children that reported a healthy coping style (dealing with problems in a positive constructive way), having a positive self-image, having parents that show warmth and affection, reported attachment to friends and who stated that they are not being victimized on the streets have a higher chance of well-being than children who do not have a healthy copying style, a positive self-image, do not experience parental warmth, did not report attachment to friends and said they are victimized on the streets.

Well-being at school is predicted by a healthy coping style, a positive self-image, parental warmth, teachers paying attention and attachment to friends. Children that reported a healthy coping style and a positive self-image, having parents that show warmth and affection (very) often,

"We have a school, which is part of Proyecto Scol Multilingual (PSML). There, Papiamentu is used as an instruction language and Dutch, English and Spanish are seen as foreign languages. It is not quite like the SAM model, but as said before, the concept of PSML. The problem with SAM is the learning resources, because then one must have teaching materials in Papiamentu... the children grow up with Papiamentu..."

"We are a healthy school and we encourage them to eat healthily and hand out healthy treats when it's their birthday. So, no pastechi and croquettes, but fruit or juice..."

"... DVG (Department of Public Health) employs school doctors who visit the schools... the school performance of children is important and depends on their health. Unfortunately, there is no protocol yet that the schools receive the results of those medical studies"



teachers that pay attention to the child (very) often and attachment to friends have a higher chance of well-being at school than children who do not have a healthy coping style, who do not have a positive self-image, who did not report parental warmth and indicated that they do not have teachers that pay attention to the child (very) often and did not report attachment to friends.

Finally, problem behavior is predicted by a lack of self-control, lack of parental monitoring, prob-

lem behavior of friends and being victimized on the streets. Children that reported low self-control, having parents that do not monitor their behavior (very) often, having friends that show problem behavior and being victimized on the streets have a higher chance of showing problem behavior than children who report high self-control, having parents that monitor their behavior, not having friends with problem behavior and not being victimized on the streets (see Appendix 4 for the regression analyses).

Table 4.2. Predictors of Well-being and Problem behavior

Predictors	(General) well-being	Well-being at school	Problem behavior
Lack of self-control			++
Healthy Coping	++	+	
Positive self-image	++	+++	
Healthy lifestyle			
Parental warmth	+	++	
Parental monitoring			--
Harsh parenting			
Good school grades			
Teachers pay attention		++	
Attachment to friends	++	++	
Problem behavior friends			++
Victimized on streets	-		+
Unsafe neighborhood			
Physical decay neighborhood			

+ = significant at $p < .05$, ++, significant at $p < .01$, +++, significant at $p < .001$
- = negatively significant at $p < .05$.

The separate analyses for well-being and problem behavior show that two forms of control (internal and external control) are associated with problem behavior while positive relationships (with parents, peers and teachers) combined with individual factors, solving difficulties in a constructive way and having a positive self-image, are associated with well-being (in general and at school).

For boys and girls, slight differences were found in the predictors for well-being in general and at school (see Appendix 4, Tables A4.6a, A4.6b, A4.7a and A4.7b). Coping and a positive self-image are both associated with well-being of girls, combined with positive relationships with parents and friends. For boys, coping is also associated with well-being but

a positive-self-image is not, and only a positive relationship with friends predicted well-being. Well-being of girls in school is predicted by coping and positive relationships with parents, teachers and peers. For boys, only a positive self-image and a positive relationship with the teachers predicted well-being in school. Problem behavior also shows a slightly different picture for boys and girls. Problem behavior of boys is predicted by low-self-control and victimization on the streets. Problem behavior of girls, on the contrary, is predicted by relational factors. If girls have parents that are not very affectionate, do not monitor often and if attachment to friends is low and problem behavior of friends is reported frequently, girls have an increased chance of showing problem behavior.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Conclusion and Discussion study 1: The Perspective of Primary Schools

The results of the qualitative study, in which school staff outlined the social context of the children attending their schools, can be framed within Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory of human development, which states that children develop interactively in response to their environment. Here we discuss various levels of environmental relationships and influences on Aruban schoolchildren, namely, the role of parents, school and neighborhood, all seen from the perspective of school staff and school boards. The results are discussed while emphasizing both strengths and risks of these environmental influences, for the development of children. First, the school staff’s views on the behavior of the children is described along with suggestions they formulated to encourage certain behavior through specific school projects.

When health, well-being and problem behavior are described from the perspective of the schools, some difficulties are seen but also some strong points are emphasized. Externalizing behavioral problems are emphasized such as (cyber) bullying, concentration problems and lack of respect for teachers. Schools often see themselves as a substitute for parents and guide the children through social emotional development and growth, thereby relating the behavioral problems of the children to their home situation and parenting problems. Many children open up to teachers and ask for help when they are having troubles at home, which means that the teachers are trusted by the children. We can also conclude that most of the respondents are aware of the importance of the physical well-being of their pupils, because they emphasized different health related projects such as healthy schools, school doctors and having NGOs check in. Finally, sexual education is seen as an important tool in reducing teenage pregnancies, although it is still a very difficult subject to discuss both within the schools and with the parents. It can be concluded that schools struggle with the externalizing problems of the children but at the same

time report that children show trust in their school teachers, which is an important condition for learning intellectually, but also socially, emotionally and morally (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Schools are also aware of the necessity of stimulating health related behavior, which in return can improve well-being (Madsen, Hicks, & Thompson, 2011; Pollard & Lee, 2003).

Schools often observe the parents as being overburdened and stressed due to too much work, struggling with poverty. They also and often lack parental skills, resulting in neglect and/or hardly any involvement in the school and school work of their children. These family related problems can be a serious threat for the healthy development of the children and are known as risk factors for problem behavior and delinquency (Farrington, 1995; Hawkins et al., 2001; Loeber et al., 1998; Resnick et al., 1997; Eichelsheim et al., 2010) and at the same time can reduce quality of life and well-being of children (Lee & Yoo, 2015; Newland, 2015). However, parents are also seen as being resilient, and in particular single mothers are sometimes seen as role models for their children in reaching their goals and taking care of the children. Also, the larger family network (including grandparents) that takes care of the children can be seen as an important factor in creating positive relationships with the children. It is known from the literature that warm, positive relationships and positive attachment are very important for a healthy development (Bretherton, 1992; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Three school-related topics are mentioned that are important and a possible threat for a positive development of the pupils, namely: lack of financial support, the struggle with differences between pupils’ native language and the language of instruction, and a lack of involvement of parents. First, lack of financial support may result in too few teachers, teaching assistants, remedial teach-

ers and social emotional support. Both cognitive and social emotional development may be affected by this lack of resources with a higher risk of decreased well-being and increased unsafe or unhealthy problem behavior. School is an important factor in mitigating the effects of risk factors related to problem development, meaning that schools can offer important preventive factors for children and young people in adverse conditions (e.g. Kim et al., 2015; Sklad et al., 2012; Wissink et al., 2014). It is therefore important for schools to be equipped so that they can offer this protective environment. Second, the perceptions of the schools about the language struggles of their pupils fits within the ongoing debate about the role of Papiamentu and Dutch in the context of school. Pereira (2018) and other Aruban Papiamentu experts (Todd Dandere, (2014); Croes, Mc William, 2017) have analyzed the (negative) impact of the legacy of Dutch being forced as the language of instruction in schools on a vast majority of children. The expert's plea for the introduction of Papiamentu as the main language of instruction at least in primary education in the first years based on the results of the UN findings on the impact of the importance and acknowledgement of mother language as the basis for learning a second language. This discussion has been one of the most important educational issues and challenges of the past decades within the Aruban educational system and field. The multilingual projects conducted in a few pilot schools reflect this struggle of how they can create the best opportunities for children and at the same time effectively deal with differences in mother language and language of instruction. This is contrary to the findings of Kibbelaar (2019), who argued that if children and adults are dependent on Papiamentu only, they have significantly less development opportunities than peers who have a language in which information is available without restrictions. The question is whether it is better to organize Papiamentu or Dutch language education so that children are given the opportunity to expand

their knowledge and develop themselves. Although the discussion around multilingualism and education continues, due to globalization and the postcolonial context of SIDS in the Caribbean, multilingualism is and will probably continue to be a part of the complex postmodern reality of the Aruban school system. Finally, schools reported noticing a lack of parental involvement, due to different factors such as stress related to poverty, lack of parenting skills and lack of time due too many working hours. The model of Bronfenbrenner shows that interaction between components of the microsystem (in this case relations between parents and school), also influence the child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Espalage, 2014). A positive relationship between school and parents can influence the aspects of well-being and problem behavior of the child.

Schools not only emphasized possible risks, but also strengths, in particular the heterogeneous, multicultural diverse population in their schools. Although it can be a challenge when using Dutch as the language of instruction and having to deal with different upbringing norms and values and or cultural habits of the parents, it is not seen as a problem but more as an enrichment for all children. If schools succeed in creating a school and classroom climate that emphasizes equality and inclusion of children with different cultural backgrounds, it can promote assimilation at the classroom level and stimulate psychological adjustment.

Finally, the communities or neighborhoods have an impact on the schools, but the influence depends also on the specific barrio or neighborhood. When there is poverty, social housing (no family impact or social control, no children playing in the barrios) and/or drug traffic, it has an impact on the reputation of the school, and also on the behavior of the children. One of the strong points mentioned by the schools was the increased social cohesion in different neighborhoods. Neighbors look out for one another and support each other and warn or call the

police when something suspicious happens. Also, positive activities such as sports activities or parties bond the neighborhood and positively affect the school and the learning and behavior outcomes of the pupils. Last but not least, it can be stated that a lot of barrios have been renovated and or demographically changed in the last 10-25 years, which has a positive effect on schools, parents and their children.

5.2. Conclusion and Discussion Study 2: Pathways to Healthy or Risky Development

Study 1 outlined the strengths and weaknesses of the environmental factors influencing primary school children in Aruba, as seen by their school staff. The same 11 primary schools, representing various school organizations, and spread across different neighborhoods, participated in study 2. In this study, the children themselves expressed their feelings and opinions. They judged themselves, their parents, schools, and neighborhoods. From the results of this quantitative study, some general conclusions can be formulated: 1) many Aruban children seem to do reasonably well, most children reported seeing themselves as happy children, who do not worry very often and most children did not report problem behavior such as fighting and bullying, 2) however, a considerable percentage showed signs of low well-being (14,3%) and problem behavior (13,8%) at a relatively young age (pre-adolescent years), and 3) the factors associated with well-being and problem behavior are slightly different, suggesting that promoting well-being and reducing problem behavior may need separate approaches. Finally, some (small) differences in the predictors of well-being and problem behavior of boys and girls were found.

Looking more in-depth, it can be seen that a seriously high percentage (30%) of children who are in their final years primary school have taken a longer route in primary school than is intended. These results confirm earlier statistics from the Social Development Report (2017) that the repetition rate is

high, especially in the first three grades of primary school. Explanations were suggested in the direction of quality of instruction, relevance and quality of the content of education and cultural appropriateness, possibly linked to the language of instruction, Dutch, which is spoken at home by only a small percentage of families (Social Development Report, 2017). Reducing repetition rates already has the attention of the Minister of Education, and these results confirm that it is important to continue with efforts to reduce these rates.

About two-third of the children in grades 5 and 6 grow up with both parents, and report having structured activities after school, although a large number of children also report being on the internet and playing computer games very often. Combined with a relatively high number of children that report an unhealthy lifestyle, this may increase the risk of health problems related to weight and physical condition. In 2013, the CBS Health Monitor Aruba already reported that around a third of the children in grade 5 were overweight and more than 10% were obese. Almost ten years later, indicators can still be found that show that the risks of health problems are still increasing instead of decreasing.

At the level of the individual child factors, half of the children reported low self-control, a considerable number of children reported an unhealthy lifestyle (40%) and most children reported a positive self-image (74%). At the family level, most children seemed to have a positive perspective of their parent's behavior (85%) and the relationship with their parents (77%). At the school level, most children (72%) indicated that they are satisfied with their school grades and the relationship with their teachers. They also reported having a positive view of the behavior of and relationship with their friends. However, a worrying number of children (66%) reported feeling unsafe in their neighborhood. We can conclude that most children have a positive perspective on the most important actors in their lives, namely parents, schools and friends. However, factors such as low self-control, health related behavior, and neighborhood characteristics warrant specific attention.

Although most children in this study reported high well-being (which is in line with similar re-

sults from the Aruban Welfare survey in 2009), low problem behavior and report positively about parents, friends and school, a non-negligible number of children (1 or 2 out of 10) reported low well-being or/and high frequency of problem behavior. More specifically, a lack of internal and external control may increase the risk of problem behavior. Also, a less healthy coping style, a less positive self-image and problems in relationships with parents, friends and school may increase the risk of low well-being. It can be concluded that these findings correspond well with what is known from the international literature about the predictors of well-being (e.g. Lee & Yoo, 2015; Newland, 2015), antisocial behavior and delinquency (e.g. Farrington, Ttofi, & Piquero, 2016; Hoeve et al., 2011; Meldrum, Young, & Weerman (2009), which gives an indication of the ecological validity of the instrument. Although the results are generally in line with international studies, the results also reflect the unique experiences of Aruban children.

This study not only intended to report on characteristics related to the SDGs well-being and quality of education but also to report on factors related to gender equality. Separate analyses of data of boys and girls showed minor differences in background characteristics where boys only outnumber girls in grade repeating and in being a member of a sports or hobby club. Within the domain of risk and protective factors, girls showed a higher self-control and reported more often good school grades. However, they more often feel unsafe in their neighborhood. It can be concluded that girls on average seem to do better than boys in primary school, but when looking at the possibilities for further exploration of their social environment, they may have less opportunities to do so.

Also, problem behavior of girls is predicted by different factors than problems behavior of boys. For boys, internal control and the social environment outside the family seem more influential while for girls, relationships seem to be more influential. For boys, well-being is predicted by individual and peer factors while well-being for girls is predicted by individual factors and relational factors with family and friends. Again, relational factors seem to be more prominent for girls than for boys. These

findings are not unique for Aruban children but are also found in other countries and cultures (Hoeve et al., 2012; Worthen, 2012). We know from various studies that the relational network plays an important role in the well-being and antisocial behavior of girls, more so than in boys. These findings suggest that differences between boys and girls need to be considered while developing policies to improve well-being and reduce problem behavior for all children.

Upon finalization of this study it became apparent that the instrument used is easy to administer and that the burden on teachers and students is minimal. A repeated administration of the survey, for example every two years, is certainly feasible and can be used to gather information within a pupil tracking system and to observe trends within class and school context. Monitoring of the Aruban youth also can also offer information for policy guidelines.

5.3. The Child and Different Social Contexts Seen by School Staff and the Children

Finally, we noticed that the respondents from the two studies sometimes differed in their perspective on the children and their social context. The data sources are different, with school staff giving an overall impression of the children attending their schools, and children describing their own specific behavior and social context. Nevertheless, there are some similarities between the two studies. Both schools and children seemed to relate problem behavior of the children to parenting behavior, concentration problems and problems in the neighborhood. Schools more explicitly emphasized difficulties (we also asked them explicitly about strengths and weaknesses) with individual children, parents and the neighborhood, while children in general showed a positive view of themselves and their parents. They are somewhat more critical about school and the neighborhood. In the next chapter, both perspectives from schools and children are combined in formulating recommendations.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was framed within the context of three important SDGs, as formulated by the United Nations and which were selected as important for Aruba. The conclusions of this pilot study revealed that monitoring children and adolescents on individual, family, school, friends and neighborhood factors and regularly measuring schools’ perceptions of the social environment of their pupils may provide tools for developing policies that promote well-being and reduce unhealthy problem behavior.

The results of this study fit within Bronfenbrenners’ ecological theory of human development (1977) and the Positive Youth Development model of Catalano et al. (2004). It is shown that the negative interactions between the child and his micro-environment can result in developmental problems, which, if not addressed, may continue into adolescence and be-

yond. However, protective factors on the other hand can help build resilience in children and adolescents (Jain et al., 2012). Therefore, recommendations are formulated that are not only intended to reduce risks but also intended to emphasize strengths that may improve resiliency.

To develop policies that assure a safe environment for all children and adolescents in Aruba, as formulated by the ‘Sociaal Crisis Plan’, several recommendations are given. These recommendations were derived from both the qualitative and quantitative studies. General recommendations are formulated first and where possible more detailed suggestions are given.



MONITORING

- To have an overview of how children in Aruba are developing, the following steps are important:
1. Monitor all children on child, family, school, friend and neighborhood characteristics related to well-being.
 2. Monitor all children on child, family, school, friend and neighborhood characteristics related to antisocial and possibly delinquent behavior.
 3. Specifically monitor children starting in grade 5 by using the newly developed survey and repeating this every two years until they finish secondary school.
- To improve wellbeing and reduce problem behavior (information about the children’s characteristics and behavior is derived from the youth monitor) the following recommendations are given that fit into the micro, meso and exosystem as formulated by Bronfenbrenner (1977).

MICROSYSTEM (child, family, classroom, peers)

- 4. Develop tools to improve self-control in children. Many children do experience problems with concentration and paying attention.
- 5. Improve healthy family relationships, which is especially important for girls.^{xxvi}
- 6. Improve the possibilities for teachers to pay attention to individual children, especially those who are at risk for developing antisocial behavior and/or developing mood problems.
 - Create more resources to recruit more teaching assistants and/or remedial teachers in classrooms.
 - Place more emphasis on the availability and recruitment of social workers and offer a social work related specialization at IPA/UA in the curriculum.
- 7. Continue focusing on the relationship between native language and language of instruction.
 - It is crucial to embed a multilingual approach in the curriculum. The multicultural projects (e.g. SAM, PSML) should be made accessible and supported by the several school teams and school boards and other relevant parties and partners.
 - More courses, workshops, lectures etc. should be offered on multiculturalism, cultural differences in upbringing, multilingualism and or the impact of globalization and migration and diversity/identity in Aruba.
- 8. Improve health-related behavior.
 - (Continue to) Develop accessible prevention programs in schools and neighborhoods (Wit Gele Kruis, DVG, school teams, IPA, School Boards) for teenage or young motherhood programs and addictions.
 - Increase access to regular healthcare services (e.g., dentist, doctor).

MESOSYSTEM (e.g. relations between family and school)

- 9. Approachable parenting support
 - Aim for better understanding of the impact of the socioeconomic background of households and the composition of the families (for example, few fathers are involved in upbringing, many single mothers).
 - Gain more insight into support received from extended family/parents/neighbors.
 - Offer information and prevention sessions at schools, IPA, DE and school boards (social work) about parenting.
 - Gather more knowledge and data on neglect and child/sexual abuse (especially important after or during the COVID-19 crisis).
- 10. Stimulate parent participation at school
 - Try to stimulate active involvement of parents in Traimerdia’s and other after school programs.
 - Present a strict policy of expectation (credits given to students’ evaluation) management for all parents to be involved one way or the other in schools every year.
 - Organize mandatory workshops from Bureau Sostenemi on raising children (cultural difference on disciplining (regarding Haitian practices), offer general policy and information sessions on hygiene and healthy food guidelines for all schools and families.

EXOSYSTEM (social context which influences child through microsystem, e.g. neighborhoods/barrios, health agencies)

- 11. Increase neighborhood safety to increase well-being and possibilities especially for girls to expand their social environment safely.
 - Stimulate barrio watches, (and when necessary police watches) to combat gangs and criminal activities in specific districts (San Nicolaas, Dakota, St. Cruz:or Macuarima Angochi, Cadushi Largo, Madiki, Sero Patrishi, Semeleerstraat en Noord).
 - Increase/stimulate social activities (sport and or festivities/events, workshops) for social bonding and control.
 - Organize a carrousel or festival or market for the inhabitants of communities, districts and neighborhoods of all the community partners or stakeholders; NGOs, MFAs and clubs for youth and children to highlight their activities and effort for their communitarian projects and events (Cede Aruba; Aruba Doet, Trai Merdia, YMCA, KPA, FCCA, Fundacion pa nos comunidad, Rode Kruis, etc.)

AND FINALLY

- 12. In view of the expected negative effects of the COVID-19, it is even more important to closely monitor the development of children in Aruba.

Limitations and Strengths of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research

A limitation of the qualitative method used in this study is that the results reflect the priorities and concerns of the interviewed school staff and might therefore reflect individual views and opinions that may not always be representative of the general ideas of the schools. However, interviewees were from a wide variety of schools and therefore faced very different working situations and challenges, yet what was striking was the similarity of their views regarding difficulties and strengths of the social context of the pupils. This pilot study was conducted in 11 schools, but it would be useful to conduct further qualitative work with a wider range of schools to explore the views further.

The quantitative study has several limitations that should be taken into consideration. First, the study population included children aged 10-13 from 11 schools but may not represent the total school population of Aruba. Future research should continue to include all primary schools in screening the children for risk and protective factors of well-being and unhealthy or unsafe problem behavior. In addition, this study relied on self-report questionnaires completed by children themselves, and their answers may be influenced by social desirability. However, studies on self-reported well-being show that correlation with social desirability is relatively low, suggesting that children report their actual feelings of well-being (Caputo, 2017; Riley, 2004). We also acknowledge the value of using a longitudinal study design in the future, which would allow us to monitor the development of well-being and unhealthy or unsafe problem behavior of the children during their school years.

In this pilot study the perspectives of school and children were studied. We did not include the perspective of parents yet, but we recommend that in further improvement of the youth monitor, the development of a (short) questionnaire for parents is included.

Finally, we especially recommend that an integrated policy is pursued, because this pilot has also shown that well-being and problem behavior are multifactorial determined and that social contexts are interconnected.

xxvi Important note of the Gender Committee Aruba on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on females

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Abbreviations

IPA	: Instituto Pedagógico Arubano
NSCR	: Nederlands Studiecentrum voor Criminaliteit en Rechtshandhaving
NWO	: Dutch Research Council
VU	: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
SCP	: Sociaal Crisis Plan
CBS	: Centraal Bureau van Statistiek
SDG	: Sustainable Development Goals
PYD	: The Positive Youth Development (PYD) model
FCCA	: Fundacion Cas Comunidad Arubano
HBSC	: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children

Appendix Chapter 3 – Methods of the study

Table A3.1. Scheme of the districts, schools, school boards and the respondents of the school/school boards that participated

District San Nicolaas	Noord	Dakota	Oranjestad	Sta. Cruz
Paulusschool Director Vice or adjunct. Director Intern Supervisor	SP Kudawecha Director Vice Director Interne begeleider Social worker	Fatima Col. Director adjunct director Interne bege- leider”) Read supervisor	Mon Plaisir Col Director Adjunct underlevel Adjunct upperlevel	Col LWPaskel Director Adjunct Director Interne Supervisor
Colegio Hilario Angela Intern assistant or supervisor Social worker	Washington Basis Director Vice Director Intern Begeleider Social worker	School Board SKOA 2 staff members Social workers Policy worker	Prinses Amalia Director Vice Director Social worker	Special education SPO Sta. Cruz Director Coordinator. Classroom Intern assistant Social Worker
DPS 2 staff members Policy Social worker	Schoolboard SP- COA Director Social worker	Prinses Amalia Intern Supervisor	Dominicus Col. Director Interne Supervisors	Col. Santa Filomena Director Adjunct Director Intern assistant or supervisor
	Col Hilario Angela Director			

Table A3.2. Description of Variables in Analyses

Variable	Description	Coding
Dependent Variables		
Problem behavior	Three or more items (out of five) present and total score dichotomized	0 = hardly ever problem behavior 1 = (very) often problem behavior
Well-being	Three or more items (out of five) present and total score dichotomized	0 = well-being low 1 = well-being high
Well-being school	One or two (out of two) present and total score dichotomized	0 = well-being school low 1 = well-being school high
Independent variables		
Lack of self-control		0 = no – hardly ever 1=yes – (very) often
Healthy lifestyle		0 = no – hardly ever 1=yes – (very) often
Coping (5 items)		Mean
Positive self-image		0 = hardly ever 1 = (very) often
Parental Warmth		0=no - hardly ever 1=yes - (very) often
Parental monitoring		0 = no - hardly ever 1 = yes - (very) often
Harsh parenting		0=no - hardly ever 1=yes - (very) often
Attachment to friends		0 = no - hardly ever 1 = yes - (very) often
Problem behavior of friends		0 = no - hardly ever 1 = yes - (very) often
Good school grades		0=no - hardly ever 1=yes - (very) often
Teachers pay attention		0=no - hardly ever 1=yes - (very) often
Victimized on the street		0 = no - hardly ever 1 = yes - (very) often
Unsafe neighborhood		0=no - hardly ever 1=yes - (very) often
Physical decay neighborhood		0=no - hardly ever 1=yes - (very) often
Gender	Being male or female	0=male 1=female

Appendix Chapter 4 – results of the quantitative study

Table A4.1. Background characteristics of the sample

Background variables	boys class 5 N=187	Girls class 5 N = 208	Boys class 6 N =214	Girls class 6 N =185	Boys class 1 N =29	Girls class 1 N =10	Total N = 848
Repeat a class	32.2%	21.3%*	36.4%	22.7%**	62.1%	90.0%	30.4%
Member of sports/hobby club	66.9%	60.9%	65.6%	54.1%*	35.7%	20.0%	60.8%
On streets after school	14.1%	5.3%	11.7%	6.0%	25.9%	20.0%	9.8%
On the internet often	76.8%	66.0%	84.1%	76.8%	82.1%	90.0%	76.6%
Computer games often	78.9%	51.2%	81.2%	45.9%	69.9%	40.0%	64.8%
Living with both parents	68.5%	61.5%	64.4%	60.1%	51.7%	70.%	62.9%
Living with mother in same house	89.7%	91.3%	89.3%	92.4%	79.3%	90.0%	90.2%
Living with father in same house	66.5%	62.5%	68.7%	61.6%	37.9%	50.0%	63.1%
Living with grandmother in same house	22.7%	22.6%	20.6%	25.4%	37.9%	10.0%	22.8%
Living with grandfather in same house	11.9%	12.0%	13.6%	14.6%	6.9%	10.0%	12.6%
Living somewhere also (not with parents)	3.3%	2.9%	2.8%	3.3%	6.9%	10.0%	3.3%

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table A4.2. Prevalence dependent and independent variables by gender

	Males (N= 428) %	Females (N=403) %	Total (N=848) %
Dependent variables			
Well-being general	90.0	83.2	86.7
Well-being school	84.3	80.4	82.2
Problem behavior	15.8	11.3	13.8
Independent variables			
Individual factors			
Lack of self-control	52.7	41.9*	47.6
Healthy lifestyle	63.1	58.6	60.9
Positive self-image	75.3	72.1	73.7
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Coping	11.98 (2.69)	12.53** (2.81)	12.24 (2.77)
Parental factors			
Parental warmth	78.9	74.5	77.0
Parental monitoring	85.2	87.0	85.7
Harsh parenting	15.8	13.1	14.5
School factors			
Good school grades	69.2	75.4*	71.8
Teachers pay attention	59.5	59.3	59.1
Peer factors			
Attachment to friends	78.6	77.4	78.3
Problem behavior friends	10.5	12.5	9.5
Neighborhood factors			
Victimized on the streets	5.8	6.1	6.0
Unsafe feeling neighborhood	61.9	70.7**	66.3
Physical decay neighborhood	23.1	21.6	22.3

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table A4.3. Prevalence of Predictors of Problem behavior, Well-being and Well-being in school

	No problem behavior	Problem behavior	Well-being	No Well-be- ing	Well-being school	No well-be- ing school
	(N = 699) %	(N = 111) %	(N = 703) %	(N=108) %	(N=676) %	(N=145) %
Individual factors						
Lack of self-control	44.2	69.7***	53.3	46.7	47.2	50.0
Healthy lifestyle	62.9	47.3***	64.4	40.7***	64.5	43.1***
Positive self-image	64.0	75.5**	78.1	47.7***	78.3	46.5***
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)
Coping	2.4(1.2)	1.7(1.1)***	2.4(1.2)	1.5(1.1)***	2.5(1.2)	1.8(1.0)***
Parental factors						
Parental warmth	80.2	57.4***	81.1	49.9***	82.7	50.4***
Parental monitoring	88.6	69.7***	87.6	73.8***	87.6	76.6**
Harsh parenting	12.2	30.9***	13.7	22.6*	13.7	17.5
School factors						
Good school grades	75.5	48.2***	74.9	55.0***	76.6	49.7***
Teachers pay atten- tion	61.4	43.2**	61.2	46.3**	64.1	36.7***
Peer factors						
Attachment to friends	79.2	69.2***	81.3	54.8***	81.6	62.2***
Problem behavior friends	6.5	27.5***	8.1	18.9**	8.4	15.2*
Neighborhood factors						
Victimized on streets	4.4***	16.4***	4.5	15.9***	5.2	8.4
Unsafe neighbor- hood	64.9	72.9	63.7	81.1***	63.0	82.1***
Physical decay neighborhood	19.5	37.6***	20.5	33.3**	20.6	29.7*

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table A4.4. Logistic Regression Coefficients for Well-being

	Well-being		
Independent variables	β	SE	Exp(β)
Coping	.48	.13	1.61***
Healthy lifestyle	.34	.27	1.41
Positive self-image	.90	.29	2.45**
Parental warmth	.71	.28	2.03*
Parental monitoring	.38	.31	1.47
Harsh parenting	-.08	.32	.93
Good school grades	-.32	.31	.73
Teachers pay attention	-.00	.26	1.00
Attachment to friends	.85	.26	2.35**
Problem behavior friends	-.12	.37	.89
Victimized on streets	-.95	.42	.39*
Unsafe neighborhood	-.21	.30	.81
Physical decay neighborhood	-.48	.28	.62

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Model: $R^2 = .26$ $\chi^2(13, N = 696) = 107.51$ $p < .001$; 87.1% correctly classified.

Table A4.4a. Logistic Regression Coefficients for Well-being of males

Independent variables	Well-being		
	β	SE	Exp(β)
Coping	.47	.20	1.61*
Healthy lifestyle	.87	.46	2.39
Positive self-image	.46	.49	1.58
Parental warmth	.17	.46	1.19
Parental monitoring	-.35	.54	.70
Harsh parenting	-.22	.50	.81
Good school grades	.19	.48	1.21
Teachers pay attention	-.08	.42	.92
Attachment to friends	1.01	.43	2.75*
Problem behavior friends	-.08	.61	.92
Victimized on streets	-2.32	.67	.10**
Unsafe neighborhood	-.82	.50	.44
Physical decay neighborhood	.84	.55	2.32

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Model: $R^2 = .25$ $\chi^2(13, N = 347) = 44.10$ $p < .001$; 90.2% correctly classified.

Table A4.4b. Logistic Regression Coefficients for Well-being of females

Independent variables	Well-being		
	β	SE	Exp(β)
Coping	.55	.18	1.73**
Healthy lifestyle	.03	.38	1.03
Positive self-image	1.29	.41	3.63**
Parental Warmth	1.23	.40	3.43**
Parental monitoring	.63	.45	1.88
Harsh parenting	.07	.47	1.07
Good school grades	-.55	.45	.58
Teachers pay attention	-.21	.38	.82
Attachment to friends	.98	.38	2.67**
Problem behavior friends	-.28	.53	.76
Victimized on streets	-.03	.61	.97
Unsafe neighborhood	.36	.42	1.43
Physical decay neighborhood	-1.11	.70	.33**

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Model: $R^2 = .37$ $\chi^2(13, N = 337) = 84.99$ $p < .001$; 85.8% correctly classified.

Table A4.5. Logistic Regression Coefficients for Well-being at school

Independent variables	Well-being		
	β	SE	Exp(β)
Coping	.26	.11	1.30*
Healthy lifestyle	.19	.24	1.20
Positive self-image	.90	.26	2.45***
Parental warmth	.75	.25	2.12**
Parental monitoring	.13	.28	1.13
Good school grades	.26	.26	1.29
Teachers pay attention	.71	.23	2.03**
Attachment to friends	.66	.24	1.93**
Problem behavior of friends	-.12	.35	.89
Unsafe neighborhood	-.31	.27	.73
Physical decay neighborhood	-.40	.25	.67

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Model: $R^2 = .27$, $\chi^2(11, N = 725) = 126.52$, $p < .001$; 84.7% correctly classified.

Table A4.5a. Logistic Regression Coefficients for Well-being at school for males

Independent variables	Well-being		
	β	SE	Exp(β)
Coping	.14	.16	1.15
Healthy lifestyle	.20	.36	1.23
Positive self-image	1.07	.38	2.92**
Parental Warmth	.54	.38	1.71
Parental monitoring	-.04	.44	.96
Good school grades	.45	.38	1.56
Teachers pay attention	.78	.34	2.17*
Attachment to friends	.61	.36	1.83
Problem behavior of friends	.37	.54	1.45
Unsafe neighborhood	-.25	.38	.78
Physical decay neighborhood	-.43	.37	.65

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Model: $R^2 = .22$, $\chi^2(10, N = 360) = 47.83$ $p < .001$; 85.8% correctly classified.

Table A4.6. Logistic Regression Coefficients for Problem behavior

Independent variables	Problem Behavior		
	β	SE	Exp(β)
Lack of self-control	.84	.26	2.32
Coping	-.22	.12	.80
Healthy lifestyle	-.26	.26	.77
Parental warmth	-.37	.29	.69
Parental monitoring	-.83	.29	.44**
Harsh parenting	.51	.30	1.67
Teachers pay attention	-.47	.26	.63
Attachment to friends	-.18	.28	.83
Problem behavior of friends	.89	.33	2.42**
Victimized on streets	.92	.41	2.51*
Physical decay neighborhood	.52	.27	1.67

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Model: $R^2 = .22$, $\chi^2(11, N = 691) = 87.44$ $p < .001$; 86.7% correctly classified.

Table A4.5b. Logistic Regression Coefficients for Well-being at school for females

Independent variables	Well-being		
	β	SE	Exp(β)
Coping	.32	.16	1.38*
Healthy lifestyle	.35	.34	1.42
Positive self-image	.51	.37	1.67
Parental warmth	.95	.35	2.59**
Parental monitoring	.17	.42	1.19
Good school grades	.22	.39	1.25
Teachers pay attention	.76	.33	2.14*
Attachment to friends	.82	.34	2.27*
Problem behavior of friends	-.52	.49	.59
Unsafe neighborhood	-.35	.41	.71
Physical decay neighborhood	-.40	.36	.67

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Model: $R^2 = .33$, $\chi^2(11, N = 353) = 80.17$ $p < .001$; 85.0% correctly classified.

Table A4.6a. Logistic Regression Coefficients for Problem behavior of males

Independent variables	Problem Behavior		
	β	SE	Exp(β)
Lack of self-control	1.04	.38	2.85**
Coping	-.25	.15	.78
Healthy lifestyle	-.54	.38	.58
Parental warmth	-.17	.24	.84
Parental monitoring	-.36	.44	.70
Harsh parenting	.43	.41	1.54
Teachers pay attention	-.23	.35	.79
Attachment to friends	.54	.45	1.72
Problem behavior of friends	.58	.47	1.80
Victimized on streets	1.21	.61	3.35*
Physical decay neighborhood	.64	.37	1.90

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Model: $R^2 = .17$, $\chi^2 (11, N = 345) = 39.36$ $p < .001$; 87.00% correctly classified.

Table A4.6b. Logistic Regression Coefficients for Problem behavior of females

Independent variables	Problem Behavior		
	β	SE	Exp(β)
Lack of self-control	.48	.41	1.62
Coping	-.10	.20	.91
Healthy lifestyle	.04	.41	1.04
Parental warmth	-1.04	.47	.35*
Parental monitoring	-.97	.47	.38*
Harsh parenting	.59	.50	1.80
Teachers pay attention	-.72	.43	.49
Attachment to friends	-1.22	.41	.30**
Problem behavior of friends	1.27	.56	3.55*
Victimized on streets	.40	.62	1.49
Physical decay neighborhood	.45	.44	1.56

Note * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Model: $R^2 = .33$, $\chi^2 (11, N = 335) = 62.35$, $p < .001$; 88.4% correctly classified.

About the authors:

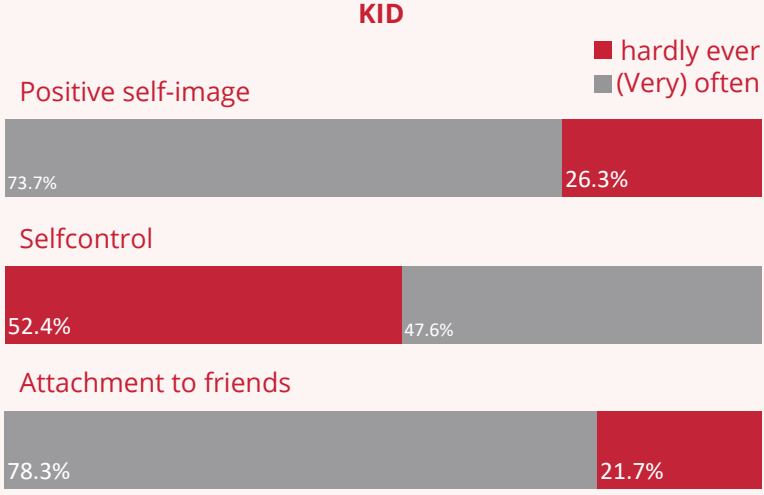
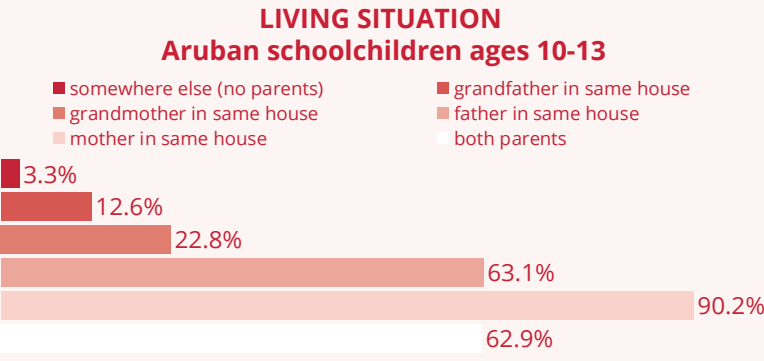
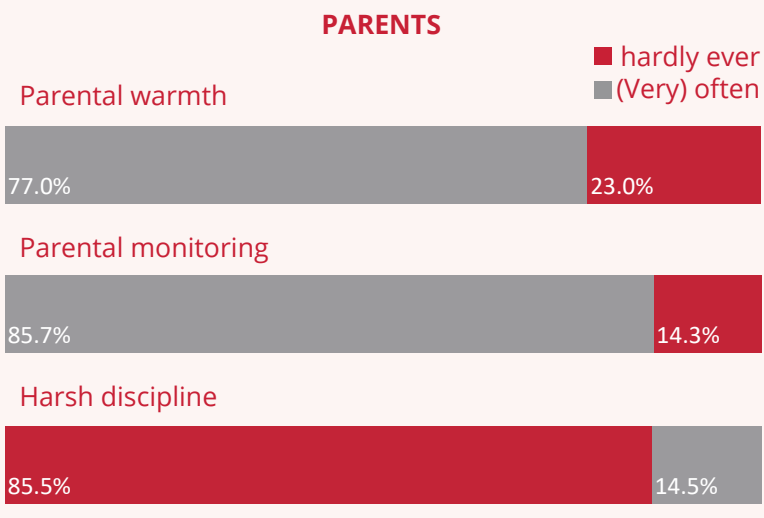
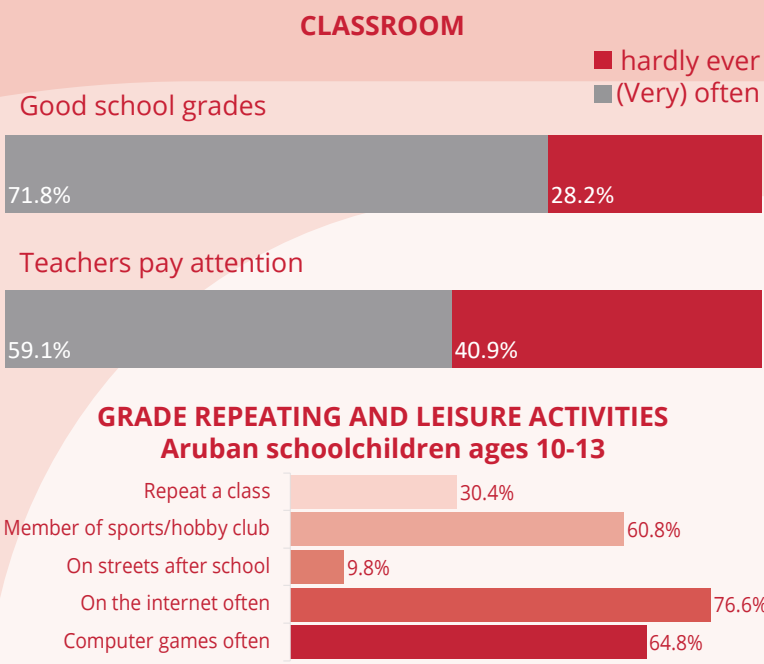
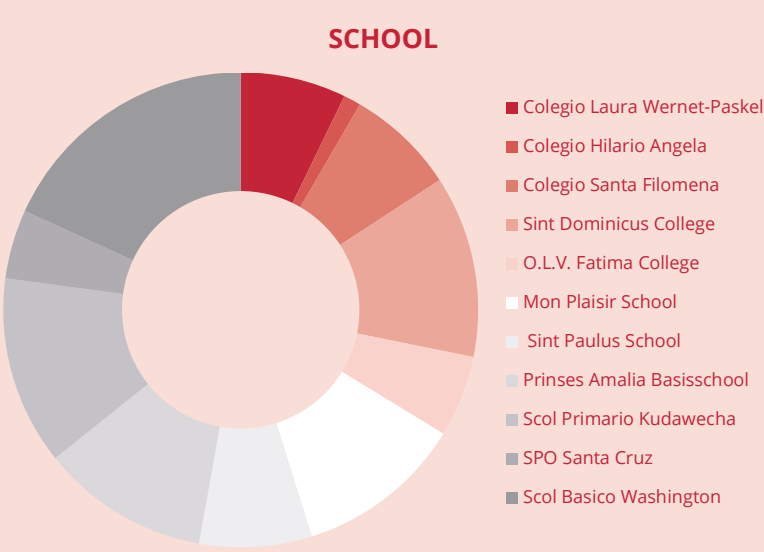
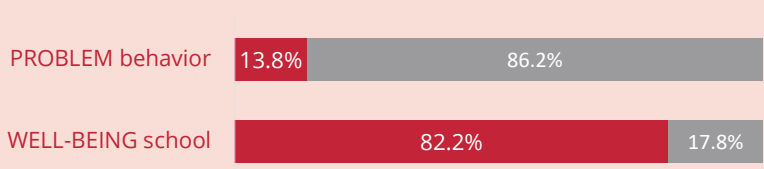
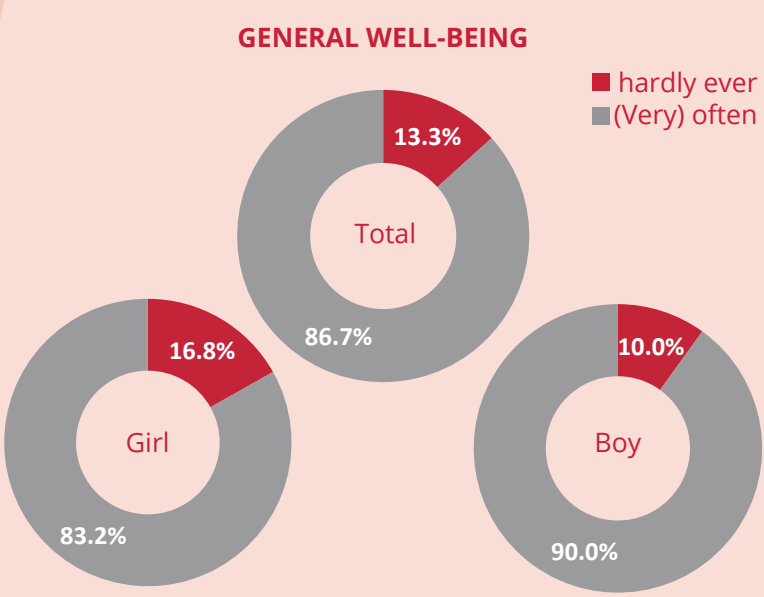
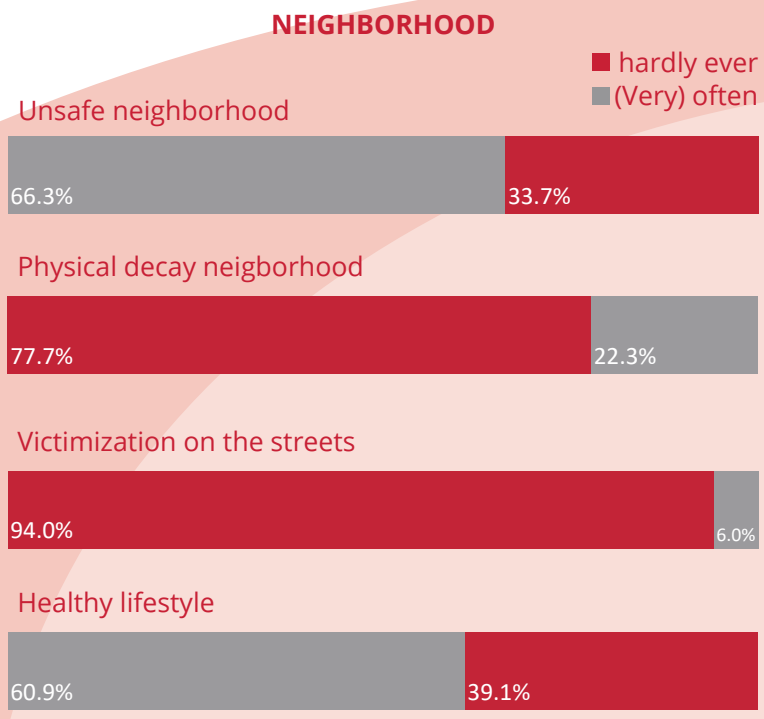
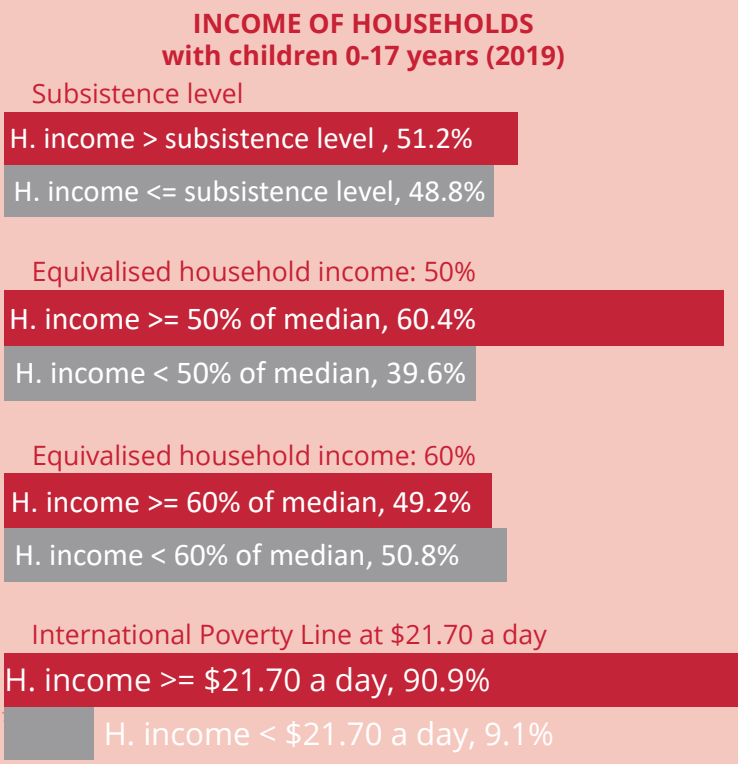
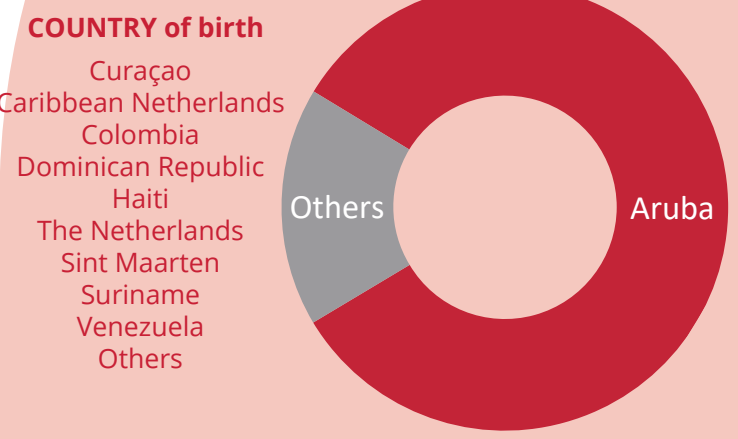
Dr. Paula Kibbelaar was founding dean, associate professor and teacher at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) of the University of Aruba (2009-2013). She is currently working as a Lecturer / researcher for the IPA, the Aruban Academy for Teacher Training, where she wrote the policy document on the social service and the social profile of the institute. She is also the coordinator of the institute’s social services mission, to develop modules on sustainability (SDG’s/UN), social inequality, gender, diversity and globalization and supervises (IPA & UA) PhD research. She was also the coordinator of the People & Society of Hende & Comunidad section, which is responsible for the history, geography, social sciences and governance studies courses and where sustainable inclusive development (SID and EDIO) has been introduced into the curriculum via the SDG’s. She obtained her PhD in social sciences in 2005 at the University of Utrecht at the Utrecht School for Governance (REBO). Her dissertation is entitled; Cracks in the glass ceiling. Opportunities, barriers and strategies. Tertiary educated women on the Curacao labor market. She worked as a researcher and policy worker for Dutch Ministries and researchprojects for the Baak-VNO/NCW, NiNsee and consultancies in the Netherlands and Curacao. She is an interdisciplinary social scientific researcher with a specialization in Latin American and Caribbean studies, women’s and ethnic studies (gender diversity) and development studies (at the University of Amsterdam / AISSR and the Institute of Social Studies (Erasmus/I.S.S) in The Hague).

Dr. Anne-Marie Slotboom graduated in developmental psychology at Leiden University in 1990. In 1997 she obtained her PhD on a large-scale international study into the personality development of children. She worked as a researcher at the NSCR between 2001 and 2004, where she did research on interventions with chronic offenders and interventions in secondary schools, aimed at preventing problem behavior among young people. Since 2004 she has been affiliated with the Criminal Law and Criminology Department of the VU University in Amsterdam, first as an Assistant Professor, now as an Associate Professor. Her research interests focus on the development of risky and criminal behavior among girls and women. She studies the backgrounds, risk factors and treatment of young people and young adults in a forensic setting, the life course of women in detention, with special attention to Dutch Caribbean women and the desistance process in women, where attention is paid to factors to promote a healthy development. She is also involved in research into the identity development of young adolescents, radicalization and the relationship with the school context.

Prof. Dr. Jan Hendriks is a forensic and clinical psychologist and works at forensic psychiatric outpatient clinic De Waag, The Hague. Hendriks is also professor of forensic psychiatry and psychology at the VU University Amsterdam and professor of forensic orthopedagogical diagnostics and treatment at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). He is currently a core member of the De Winter committee, which investigates violence against children who have been placed in institutions or foster homes by the government.

QUALITY OF LIFE OF ARUBAN YOUTH

A pilot study of different pathways to health and well-being and risky behavior of schoolchildren ages 10-13 years within the context of school



MACROSYSTEM

EXOSYSTEM

MICROSYSTEM

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theory (1977)

MONITORING

1. Monitor all children on child, family, school, friend and neighborhood characteristics related to well-being.
2. Monitor all children on child, family, school, friend and neighborhood characteristics related to antisocial and possibly delinquent behavior.
3. Specifically monitor children starting in grade 5 by using the newly developed survey and repeating this every two years until they finish secondary school.

MICROSYSTEM (child, family, classroom, peers)

4. Develop tools to improve self-control in children. Many children do experience problems with concentration and paying attention.
5. Improve healthy family relationships, which is especially important for girls.
6. Improve the possibilities for teachers to pay attention to individual children, especially those who are at risk for developing antisocial behavior and/or developing mood problems.
7. Continue focusing on the relationship between native language and language of instruction.
8. Improve health-related behavior.

MESOSYSTEM (e.g. relations between family and school)

9. Approachable parenting support.
10. Stimulate parent participation at school.

EXOSYSTEM (social context which influences child through microsystem, e.g. neighborhoods/barios, health agencies)

11. Increase neighborhood safety to increase well-being and possibilities especially for girls to expand their social environment safely.

AND FINALLY

12. In view of the expected negative effects of the COVID-19, it is even more important to closely monitor the development of children in Aruba.



