



# NAN FUTURO, NOS DEBER

PROJECT REPORT

2014 - 2018

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Heart-Centered Leadership  
FOUNDATION



# INTRODUCTION

From 2014 to 2019, Heart-Centered Leadership Foundation (HCLF) were honored to be a part of the program 'Kansen Voor Jongeren Cariben' which was an initiative of Samenwerkende Fondsen of The Netherlands. Different foundations from Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten worked on offering at-risk young people intensive and structured guidance.

The target group was divided into:

1. Young people who dropped out of school
2. Young people who are at-risk of dropping out of school


Each participating organization could choose which specific target group they wanted to work on. HCLF focused on the latter, with our project 'Nan Futuro, Nos Deber' working on school dropout prevention at a MAVO school by providing individual and group guidance, after school programs, training and coaching for students and teachers, and the 3-day ACE (Achievement and Commitment to Excellence) Program (in collaboration with EduCare Foundation of Los Angeles, California).


# THE PROJECT


From 2014 to 2018, we worked collaboratively with three MAVO schools on Aruba to prevent school dropout among their students. While students registered in the project received individual and group counseling, we worked with the entire school as well by offering workshops for students and teachers, coaching for mentors, and guidance on curriculum to use during the 45-minute lesson they have reserved for time with their mentor teacher 'MSL'.

We worked with three codes when it came to registration of participants:

- **Code Red:** students who are at a high risk of dropping out because of multiple factors.
- **Code Orange:** medium risk, student needs motivation
- **Code Green:** students who can serve as role models and inspiration for other students, in particular those described as code red and orange.

**Goal**  Work preventively with students in the AVO-education level who are at risk of dropping out because of social and/or psycho social challenges

<b>Project Schools</b> 	Middag Mavo	2014-2015
	Maria College Mavo	2015-2017
	Filomena College Mavo	2017-2018

**Method**  Individual & Group Guidance  
Afterschool Programs  
'The Power Within Me' workshops (for students and teachers)  
ACE Program



# PARTICIPATION

The following criteria were required to be in the project:

- Participant needed to be between 12-21 years old
- A student at an AVO-school
- At risk of dropping out of school because of social or psycho-social aspects.

The project school's 'zorgteam' (care team) together with class mentors would draw up a list of students who met the criteria. HCLF would assess after under which risk factors these students fall: individual, family, school, or pull out factors.

Parents were informed about the student being chosen to participate and consent was asked for the student to participate. Once written consent was given, the student would be enrolled in the project, pending an intake conversation to assess if student met criteria.

	<b>Registered</b>	155		51.1%
	<b>Completed</b>	71		
	<b>Withdrew</b>	59		48.9%
	<b>Declined</b>	11		
	<b>In Project</b>	1*		

 **Ages** 12-21

**79% of participants** between 14-18 years old.

## Country of Birth

<b>Aruba</b>	78.5%	<b>Colombia</b>	4.5%	<b>Venezuela</b>	3.5%
<b>The Netherlands</b>	4.9%	<b>Haiti</b>	2.8%	<b>Dominican Republic</b>	2.1%

## Participants who did not complete the project

A participant who was registered in the project followed a trajectory that included either individual or group counseling. This trajectory usually ran for a year (not necessarily tied to a school year). One of the challenges we faced during this project was working with youngsters who were already held back the year prior to being registered in the project. Despite seeing progress in their behavior, progress in achievement of competencies, and improvement in how the participant related to factors in their environment - by the end of the school year, their grades did not improve enough to help them pass the year successfully.

One contributing factor here is that we started the individual counseling sessions in January.

In the case of many participants who did not complete the project, as this was their second time in that grade level (or because they were already held back in the prior grade level), most had to leave the current MAVO school. Another reason for not completing the project is that students received a binding study advice for EPB at the end of the school year. As students had to leave the school, their trajectory was cut short.

# ASSESSMENT TOOLS

During a participant's trajectory, the foundation (either social worker or psychologist) worked with the participant on achieving one or more goals.

The trajectory had three assessment moments: at the beginning of the guidance sessions, in the middle, and the end. Three tools were used to assess the participant's progress: an ecological map, a competency form, and a competency and goal-setting card.

The ecological map assessment form (11 pages long) is filled based on information obtained from the school, and conversations with the participant (and eventually conversations with parents/caregivers).

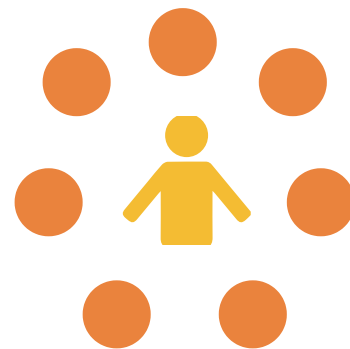
The competency form is filled by the participant's mentor following classroom observations of the participant.

And finally, the competency and goal-setting card is a tool used during sessions: the participant would choose what he/she would like to work on and together would draw up goals he/she would want to achieve. The sessions would start with small, achievable goals to stimulate the participant, and then would eventually move onto bigger goals.

## Intake Form

- ✓ General Participant Information
- ✓ Brief overview of participant's relationship with
  - family,
  - friends,
  - school,
  - physical and mental health, substance (ab)use.

## Ecological Map



## Competency Form

- ✓ Participant can stand up for him/herself
- ✓ Participant can set and evaluate goals
- ✓ Participant keeps to agreements
- ✓ Participant works well with others
- ✓ Participant is assertive

## Competency and Goal-Setting Card

- ✓ I can communicate concerns
- ✓ I think before I (re)act
- ✓ I am responsible for my actions
- ✓ I can speak up for myself

# RISK FACTORS

The literature mentions numerous risk factors that can lead to a young person not completing their formal education.

With this project, we worked with four:

1. Individual Factors  
(Persoonsgebonden factoren)
1. Family Factors (Gezinsfactoren)
2. School Climate - push out factors  
(School Klimaat, push out factoren)
3. Pull Out Factors

These risk factors served as indicators to help in selection of participants. During and after the project, we identified further indicators that were prevalent among participants.

## Individual Factors

Motivation  
School / Academic Performance  
Friends  
Defiant behavior

## Family Factors

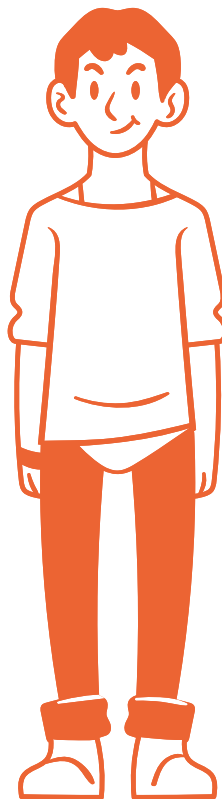
Social Economic Status parents  
Involvement parents  
Educational level parents

Social climate  
Learning environment  
School organization

## Push Out (School Climate)

Family responsibility  
Working as alternative

## Pull Out



# PREVALENT RISK FACTORS

During the project, the four risk factors were reflected in participant cases. Below includes the most prevalent risk factors and indicators.

In the case of individual factors, low self-esteem was one of the most present indicators among participants, followed by participants who struggled with emotional self-regulation and anger management.

## Family Factors

- Turbulent relationship with (step) parents
- Divorce/Relationship with parents
- Financial challenges/SES
- Involvement parents in school
- Education parents
- Sexual assault/violence, rape
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse



## Individual Factors

- Low self-esteem
- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Suicidal thoughts
- Self-mutilation
- Eating disorder(s)
- Anger issues
- Sexual relationships (adult-teens)
- Identity
- High absenteeism

In terms of family factors, strained relationships with parents were often a common cause. Negligence and the financial situation the family was in put a strain on the atmosphere at home, resulting in stressors for the participant. Responsibilities at home as well, were points of concern for participants: participants had to help take care of younger siblings or help out with the household chores, meaning their school work were often the last thing on their minds. There were cases of participants who were dealing with the trauma of past events (abuse) - in these cases, participants were referred to private or social services (DAS) for another type of guidance.

# PREVALENT RISK FACTORS

In the case of Push Out factors, the school climate can play a role in a student's feeling of belonging and can have an effect on the student's motivation to remain in school.

Participants faced challenges with the language of instruction: they would study for a test, but had difficulty applying the knowledge of the material in a test or understanding a question correctly.

Another challenge for participants was bullying at school - not only by their fellow classmates but by teachers as well. This negatively affected the participant's perception of school, leading to demotivation and for example, lack of interest in certain subjects because that same teacher was bullying the participant.



## Pull Out Factors

SES at home  
(Teen) Pregnancy  
Working as an alternative



## School Climate

High absenteeism  
Class environment  
Language of instruction (Dutch)  
Behavior in class/Instigator  
Bullying (by fellow classmates)  
Demotivating environment / lack of support at school

One of the least prevalent risk factors among participants was Pull Out Factors, however there were extreme cases involving participants working:

1. Participant needed to work after school until the late hours to financially support his family.
2. Participant choosing to work full-time instead of going to school. Participant came from a financially stable home but chose to work, and ultimately decided to work full time instead of finishing his schooling.

In these cases, the system does not help our youngsters: the Compulsory Education Law (Leerplicht) states that a young person is lawfully required to be in school until the age of 17, however there are (as of yet) no legal consequences for parents/and or youngsters who do drop out and the age limit of 17 is too low: there are youngsters that at 17 are just about to enter their final year of school.





# ECOLOGICAL MAP














One of the assessment tools used during a participant's trajectory in the project is an ecological map ('leefgebied').

The Ecological Map includes 13 areas that can have an influence on the participant's well-being: from family, to neighborhood, to school, to physical and mental health. The 13 areas each included a set of questions, which included a rating of 1 to 5.

An example below:

- How is your relationship with your mother?

1 indicates very bad while 5 indicates very good. Additionally, participants have the option of indicating that they have no opinion on this question (this option is sometimes used because participants found it as sensitive topic) or that it is not relevant.

	Positive	Negative	Other
 Housing Situation	69.9%	23.3%	6.8%
 Home Situation	42.8%	38.6%	18.6%
 Social network	64%	30.9%	5.1%
 Education	46.2%	41.9%	11.9%
 Work	13.1%	2.5%	84.7%
 Finances	60.2%	28%	11.8%
 Physical health	64%	19.9%	16.1%
 Sexuality	41%	18%	41%
 Mental Health	43.8%	40%	16.2%
 Substance (ab)use	39.2%	17.6%	43.2%
 Police and Justice	36.6%	12.5%	50.9%
 Leisure Activities	54.7%	28.4%	16.9%
 Digital Awareness	70.2%	18.8%	11%

# THE ACE PROGRAM

While the primary goal of the project was to provide individual and group counseling to participants, we believed in the power of ACE Programs and made sure that all project schools were able to experience one.

ACE Program is EduCare Foundation's flagship program for young people. It is a 3-Day program for students that aims to build character and promote personal, social and academic achievements.

These programs were possible thanks to the support of the then-Minister of Education, Mrs. Michelle Hooijboer-Winklaar

Besides the 3-Day program for students, teachers and the school management also receive a 1-Day Professional Development workshop.

 Middag Mavo 2014, 2015    Maria College 2015    Filomena College Mavo 2017

## 95% of students would like to experience another ACE Program

### Most valuable about ACE - TOP 3

1. Communication
2. Trust
3. New Friendships

### Using learned skills at home, work, school - TOP 3

1. Better Communication
2. Trusting
3. Teaching Others what I learned

### Learned during ACE Program - TOP 3

1. Be more open and confident
2. Trust others
3. Communication

### New Knowledge On

Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem	91%
Cooperation	91%
Friendship	94%
School/Work Habits	85%

## TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

The Nan Futuro, Nos Deber project targeted more than a micro-level approach to school dropout prevention. By providing the rest of the student body and the teachers with trainings and seminar, we worked on helping cultivate heart-centered education school-wide.

Our The Power Within Me sessions are at average 3 hours long and focus on creating supportive and affirming environments that promotes respect, inclusion, teamwork, and effective communication. Sessions can have topics such as self-esteem, respect and appreciation, visualization, goal-setting, and time management.

<b>2014</b>		
Middag Mavo	ACE Program* in collaboration with EduCare Foundation	100 students
	Professional Development Workshop*	45 teachers
	The Power Within Me	150 students
<b>2015</b>		
Middag Mavo	The Power Within Me	200 students
	ACE Program*	100 students
	Professional Development Workshop*	31 teachers
	1-Day ACE Program*	50 students
Maria College Mavo	ACE Program*	100 students
	Professional Development Workshop*	15 teachers
<b>2016</b>		
	Mentor Training	24 teachers
Maria College Mavo	The Power Within Me	70 students
	After School Programs	15 students
<b>2017</b>		
	The Power Within Me	246 students
Maria College Mavo	Mentor Training	22 teachers
	After School Programs	20 students
Filomena College Mavo	ACE Program*	75 students
	Professional Development Workshop*	25 teachers
<b>2018</b>		
Filomena College Mavo	After School Program in collaboration with RYG Foundation	9 students

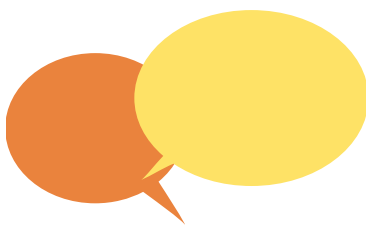


# AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

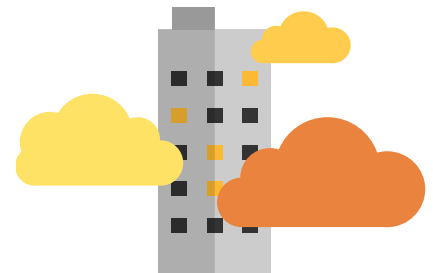
After School Programs were another service we provided during this project. The benefits of afterschool programs include development of skills, build confidence, improve academic performance, and reduction of risky behavior.

Our After School Programs aimed to offer all students of the project school a stimulating, interactive activity where they can develop a new skill. We offered After School Programs at two of our project schools, and worked collaboratively with Reach Your Goal Foundation with our last group.

Sessions that provide a holistic approach towards the promotion of positive self-esteem and the development of life skills.



**TAKE A STAND**  
debate training



**THE SKY IS THE LIMIT**

Goal setting and visualization training



**LET IT OUT,**

**XPRESS YOURSELF**

Talk groups on peer pressure, friendship, social media, and gangs



**THE POWER WITHIN ME**



Collaboration with  
**Reach Your Goal Foundation**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The four year trajectory of this project brought with it insight into the social impact in schools, particularly among students. To promote a holistic and more developmental approach to education and the assistance offered to students in the school setting to address social-emotional needs, we recommend the following be considered:

1. Offer training and coaching on 'signaleering deviant gedrag' for teachers
2. Heart-Centered Education
3. Curriculum 'Making The Best of Me'
4. A social worker in each secondary school
5. After School Programs / Personal and formal leadership programs
6. Student council in each schools
7. 'Medezeggenschapsraad'
8. School leadership
9. Personal development workshops for teachers.
10. Code of Ethics for teachers and school management.
11. Competency-based learning

