



Statistische Trends

Labour force on the Dutch Caribbean islands

Brigitte Hermans
Lian Kösters

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A majority of the population aged 15 to 74 years on the Dutch Caribbean islands are in paid work. The labour participation rate is highest on Bonaire (70 percent) and lowest on Curaçao (53 percent). The group 25 to 54-year-olds has the highest share of working people. Labour participation is much lower among young people and people aged 55 and over: the young are still in education while older people are often retired. Over 80 percent of working people work 35 hours or more per week. Most of them are employees with a permanent contract, but the share of temporary employees is also relatively high, except on Aruba. Tourism-related economic activities such as accommodation and food serving and trade, and to a lesser extent construction, play an important role on the islands. Another important source of employment on all islands of the Dutch Caribbean is public administration.

1. Introduction

On 10 October 2010, the Netherlands Antilles ceased to exist, and with it the CBS Netherlands Antilles. Curaçao and St Maarten became independent countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and set up their own statistical offices. Aruba has had one since obtaining its separate status in 1986. Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba became special municipalities within the Kingdom and Statistics Netherlands took over the statistical tasks for these three islands. Whenever Statistics Netherlands publishes figures on the labour market situation in the Caribbean Netherlands, it concerns the islands of Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba. CBS Aruba, CBS Curaçao and STAT St Maarten publish separate labour force figures on Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten respectively. A comparative overview of the Caribbean islands of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Dutch Caribbean, has been missing, and this report is aimed at filling the gap.

This report presents the labour market situation for the inhabitants of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St Eustatius and St Maarten, in the age group 15 to 74 years. Section 2 deals with labour participation according to sex, age and level of education on the islands. Section 3 zooms in on the employed labour force. In which industries are people mainly working? Do they have a job as an employee or as a self-employed person? And how large is the share of full-time workers? Section 4 focuses on (youth) unemployment according to sex, age and level of education. Section 5 deals with the people not in the labour force, with a special focus on young people who are not in education nor in work: the so-called NEETs (Neither in Employment, nor in Education or Training). The article concludes with a summary. In order to supply context for these figures, they are compared with the average of all OECD countries in many instances (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) or, where this is not available, with the relevant figures for the (European) Netherlands, the United States or the European Union.

The data in this report are based on the Labour Force Surveys (LFS). These surveys vary in the timing and frequency at which they are conducted on the islands (see Table T.1 in the Technical Notes). Therefore, it has been decided to present the most recently available figures for each island in this article. This means that the figures for Aruba, Bonaire, Saba

and St Eustatius relate to 2016 while those for Curaçao and St Maarten concern 2017. With regard to the survey questions, sometimes differences are seen between the surveys. Where this is the case, it is indicated. More detailed information about the surveys can be found in the Technical Notes.

The Dutch Caribbean islands in brief

The islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St Eustatius and St Maarten are also known as the Dutch Caribbean islands. Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao are Leeward islands and lie off the coast of Venezuela. Papiamentu and Dutch are the main languages on these islands. Saba, St Eustatius and St Maarten are Windward islands located near Central America, near Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The main language here is (American) English.

Curaçao is the largest of the six islands in area and population size. It has more than 160 thousand inhabitants on an area of more than 440 km². With a surface area of almost 290 km², Bonaire is the second island in terms of size, but relatively thinly populated with over 19 thousand inhabitants. Aruba with 180 km² is the third island in terms of area and has more than 105 thousand inhabitants.

St Maarten is in surface area the fourth in line, with 34 km². With over 40 thousand inhabitants, the island is the most densely populated of all Caribbean-Dutch islands. Although in this report the island of St Maarten is described, this only concerns the southern part of the island. The northern part of the island, Saint-Martin, is French territory. The figures for St Maarten in this article are from before the time this island was hit hard by hurricane Irma on 6 September 2017. Based on these figures, it is still unclear what the impact of this is on the labour market

St Eustatius and Saba are the two smallest Dutch Caribbean islands. St Eustatius has a surface area of more than 20 km² and a population of more than 3 thousand people. Like St Eustatius, Saba is relatively sparsely populated with more than 2 thousand inhabitants at 13 km².

2. Labour participation

Most 15 to 74-year-olds on the islands in work

On all six islands, the majority of the population aged 15 to 74 years are in paid work. The net labour participation does vary considerably. It is highest on Bonaire with 70 percent, followed by St Maarten and St Eustatius (both 66 percent) and Aruba and Saba (both 62 percent). It is lowest on Curaçao, where just over half (53 percent) of 15- to 74-year-olds work. By way of comparison: in 2017, 67 percent of 15 to 74-year-olds in the Netherlands

had paid work, versus 65 percent in the United States and an average of 60 percent in the 28 countries of the European Union (OECD, 2018-a).

The relatively low employment rate on Curaçao goes together with high unemployment. With 14 percent of the labour force unemployed, this is considerably higher than on the other islands. At the same time, relatively many people are not active on the labour market either: 38 percent are not part of the active labour force.

In comparison with most other islands, the low labour participation rate on Saba can largely be explained by the presence of an American medical university (the Saba University School of Medicine). A relatively large share in the population of this small island therefore consists of (foreign) students (Statistics Netherlands, 2017, 21 July 2018).

Labour force

The labour force consists of:

- employed labour force: people who have paid work (Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten apply a criterion of an average 4 hours or more per week for paid work; Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius do not apply a criterion).
- unemployed labour force: people who do not have paid work but who have recently looked for work and are immediately available for work.

All other persons are not in the labour force and are sometimes also referred to as the (economically) inactive population.

Net labour participation rate

The net labour participation rate is the share of the employed labour force in the total population.

Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate is the share of the unemployed labour force in the total labour force.

Labour force in relation to work and pension

For the demarcation of the total labour force, internationally divergent limits are used, e.g. 15 to 64 years, 15 to 74 years and even 15 years and over. The age limit that is applied is usually related to applicable legislation on work and retirement, which varies from country to country. Until recently, the pensionable age on the Dutch Caribbean islands was 60 years. On Curaçao and St Maarten, this was increased to 65 in 2016. For Aruba, Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius this is currently being gradually increased to 65 years. On Aruba this will be the case in 2024, for St Maarten the aim is 2019 and for the other islands in 2021. Despite an official retirement age, it is quite common for the island residents to continue working at a higher age. A frequently heard statement not based on research is that this has to do with the fact that the retirement income is not enough to live on. In this article, in line with the figures on the European Netherlands – where the retirement age is currently 67 – the choice is made for 15 to 74 years, in order to identify labour participation at a higher age. Since in the

data published by Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten, the over-75s are regularly counted among the working population, table 2.1 also shows the employment rate and the unemployment rate for people aged 15 and older.

2.1 Key figures labour force Dutch Caribbean islands, 2016

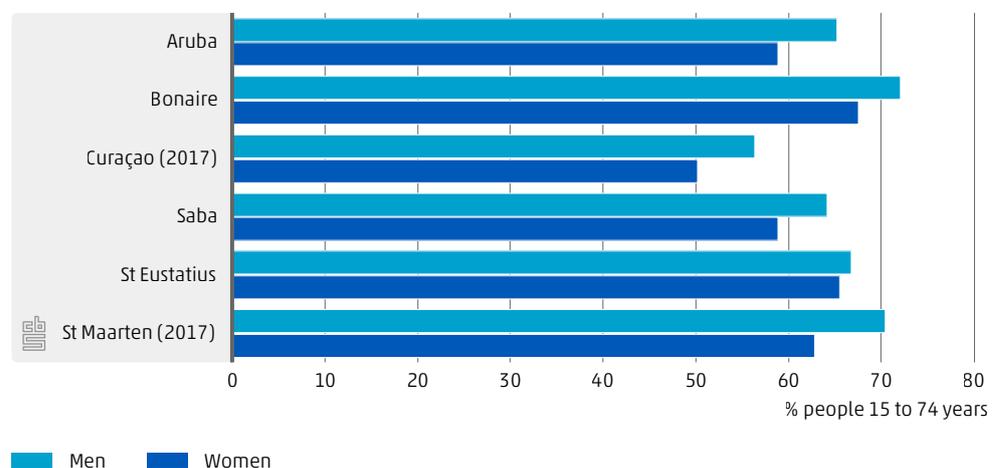
	Unit of measure	Aruba	Bonaire	Curaçao (2017)	Saba	St Eustatius	St Maarten (2017)
Population 15 to 74 years							
Total population	number	84,660	15,300	118,030	1,580	2,430	31,500
Labour force	number	56,780	11,480	72,770	1,010	1,730	22,290
employed labour force	number	52,400	10,700	62,480	970	1,610	20,900
unemployed labour force	number	4,380	770	10,290	30	120	1,390
Not in the labour force	number	33,030	3,830	45,220	580	700	9,210
Net labour participation	% of population	61.9	69.9	52.9	61.6	66.2	66.3
Unemployment	% of labour force	7.7	6.7	14.1	3.3	7.1	6.2
Youth unemployment (15 to 24 years) ¹⁾	% of labour force	17.9	20.2	32.8	.	.	23.8
Population 15 years and over							
Net labour participation	% of population	58.4	66.7	49.1	59.2	63.3	65.1
Unemployment	% of labour force	7.7	6.7	14.1	3.3	7.1	6.2

¹⁾ Due to the small numbers, youth unemployment rates for Saba and St Eustatius are not available.

More men than women with paid work

On all the islands, men are more likely to work than women. The gap is widest on St Maarten, where 71 percent of men and 63 percent of women have paid work, similar to the male-female difference in the Netherlands, the United States and the European Union in 2017 (OECD, 2018-a). On Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao and Saba the difference is 5 to 6 percentage points smaller, while on St Eustatius there is little difference in the labour participation between men and women.

2.2 Labour participation Dutch Caribbean islands, 2016



Highest employment rate among 25- to 54-year-olds

Labour participation is highest on all islands in the age group 25 to 54. On Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao and St Eustatius more than 80 percent of the 25 to 54-year-olds are working, on Saba and St Maarten this is a little lower. What is striking about Saba is that 25 to 34-year-olds are less often in work (63 percent) than on the other islands. Almost one-quarter of the people in this age group say they are unable or unwilling to work because of their education or training. It mainly concerns students from the medical university.

Minority of young people at work

On all the islands, labour participation is relatively low among young people aged 15 to 24 years. Young people on St Eustatius are least likely to work (15 percent), while those on Bonaire are most often in work (39 percent). Around 30 percent of 15 to 24-year-olds on Aruba, Curaçao, Saba and St Maarten are in work. Many young people on the islands pursue studies or training and having a job on the side is very unusual. But there is also high youth unemployment. On Curaçao, one-third of the young people in the labour force are unemployed, on St Maarten this is almost one-quarter and on Aruba and Bonaire approximately one-fifth. For Saba and St Eustatius, a youth unemployment rate is not available due to the small numbers.

Decrease in labour participation after age 55

Although most 55 to 64-year-olds are employed on all islands, labour participation in this age group is considerably lower than among people aged 45 to 54. The difference is particularly pronounced on Curaçao: 84 percent of the 45 to 54-year-olds are still in work, versus 54 percent of the 55 to 64-year-olds. On the other islands, labour participation in the age group 55 to 64 years varies from 59 percent on Aruba to 68 percent on Bonaire.

The labour participation rate is considerably lower among older people aged 65 to 74 years. On Aruba 13 percent are employed, while on Bonaire, Curaçao and Saba this is 17 to 18 percent. An outlier is St Maarten, where 35 percent of 65- to 74-year-olds have paid work. Compared to the European Netherlands, for example, relatively many older people on the islands continue working beyond their retirement age.

2.3 Labour participation Dutch Caribbean islands, by age, 2016

	Aruba	Bonaire	Curaçao (2017)	Saba	St Eustatius	St Maarten (2017)
% people						
15 to 24 years	29.4	39.2	30.2	28.4	15.4	31.4
25 to 34 years	80.1	84.8	86.6	63.0	80.6	73.7
35 to 44 years	82.7	86.1	86.9	93.3	86.5	79.4
45 to 54 years	82.8	85.8	84.0	85.6	82.5	83.4
55 to 64 years	58.9	68.4	53.6	63.7	65.5	66.1
65 to 74 years	13.3	18.1	14.4	18.4	17.2	35.1

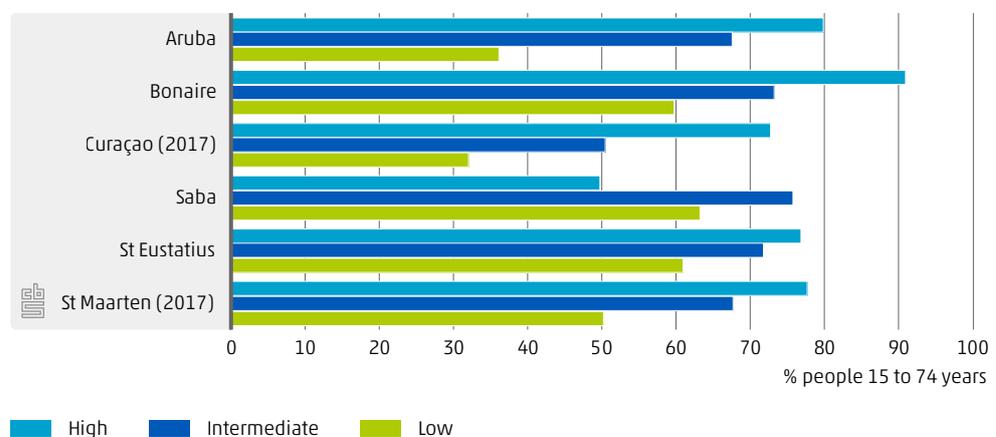
The lowereducated work the least, except on Saba

On all islands, with the exception of Saba, labour participation increases with the level of education. For example, on Curaçao almost one-third of the population with lower levels of education are in work versus 51 percent of those with an intermediate level of education and almost 73 percent of the highly educated. Slightly more than half of the lowereducated population aged 15 to 74 consists of people over 55.

On Saba, labour participation among the highly educated is lower than among people with a low and intermediate level of education. Four out of ten highly educated people are 15 to 34-year-olds who are unable and/or unwilling to work because of studies or training.

On Aruba, lowereducated people are significantly less likely to work than those with an intermediate level of education: 36 versus 68 percent. This can partly be explained by the fact that more than half of the lowereducated on this island are young people aged 15 to 24 and people aged 65 and over. Both groups have a low labour participation rate: the young because they are mostly still in education, the population aged 65 and over because of retirement.

2.4 Labour participation Dutch Caribbean islands by level of education, 2016



Education levels on the Dutch Caribbean islands

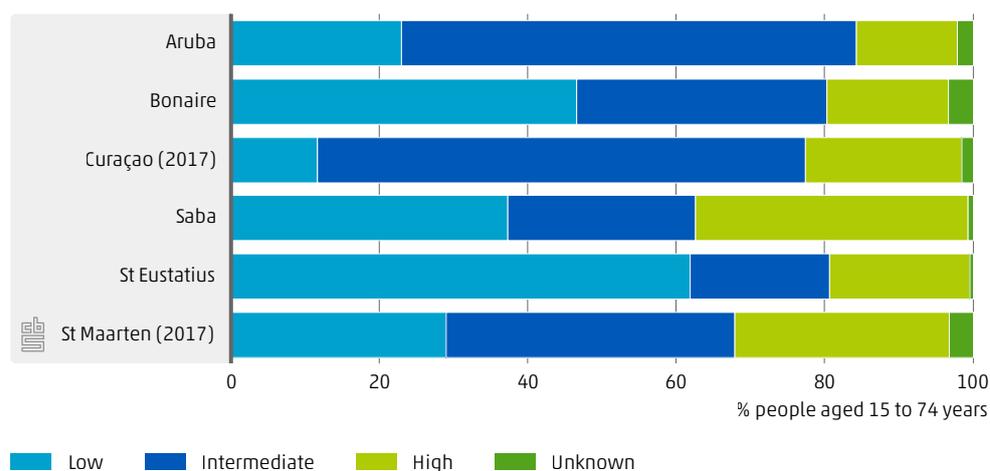
The level of education of the population varies between the islands. On St Eustatius, the majority (62 percent) of 15 to 74-year-olds are lowereducated, 19 percent are educated on an intermediate level and the same proportion is highly educated. The share of lowereducated people is also relatively high on Bonaire, namely 47 percent. More than one-third of the inhabitants have an intermediate level of education.

On Curaçao and Aruba, people with an intermediate education level are in the majority (66 and 62 percent, respectively). In addition, the share of lowereducated people on Curaçao is the lowest of all islands.

Saba has the highest proportion of highly educated people (37 percent), followed by St Maarten (29 percent). On both islands there is an almost equally large group of lowereducated people and highly educated people.

For almost all islands, the percentage of lowereducated people increases with age from the age of 25. Only on St Eustatius is this the other way around: in the age group 25 to 34 years, 62 percent are lowereducated, this is 52 percent for the 65 to 74-year-olds.

Level of education Dutch Caribbean islands, 2016



Lower education

This includes primary education, pre-vocational education, junior general secondary education (first three years of HAVO and VWO) and vocational education up to the entry level, the former assistant level (MBO1)

Intermediate education

This includes senior general secondary education (HAVO, VWO), the basic vocational (MBO2), the vocational professional track (MBO3) and the vocational middle-management and specialist track (MBO4).

Higher education

This includes all education at the tertiary level, i.e. associate degree programmes, professional and academic bachelor and master degrees and programmes leading to the award of an advanced research qualification.

3. Employed labour force

Trade, accommodation and food serving and construction biggest employers

Because all the islands – Aruba and St Maarten first and foremost – are popular holiday destinations, it is not surprising that tourism-related economic activities, trade, accommodation and food serving and, to a lesser extent, construction, play an important role. On average for all islands together these are the activities that provide the most jobs. Each island is, however, characterised by a different structure of economic activities.

On Aruba, accommodation and food serving is the largest economic activity, this is where more than one in five employed Arubans are working. It is followed by trade, where one in

six are working. For Curaçao, trade is the largest sector, but in relative terms comparable to Aruba. Accommodation and food serving is an important economic activity for all islands; it is in the top five on all six islands. On Curaçao, accommodation and food serving is in third place, immediately following health care. For Bonaire, like Aruba, accommodation and food serving is the economic activity where most people work, followed by public administration, the government.

The government is also represented in the top 5 on all six islands. On Saba, this is the most important sector: more than one-quarter of employed Sabans are working for the government. This is followed by education, which , accounts for more than one-fifth of all working people, largely due to the presence of the medical university.

On St Eustatius, manufacturing is the largest economic activity. More than one in six employed Statians are working here. This has to do with the oil storage terminal of the US-based company NuStar near the island, providing a large part of the employment. Manufacturing does not play as big a role on any of the other islands.

On St Maarten, construction has for many years been the most important economic activity where people work. This sector employs almost one in five workers on this island. Construction is also important on the other islands, but not to the same extent. On Curaçao and St Eustatius, construction is just outside the top five. A frequently mentioned explanation for the importance of the construction sector on St Maarten is not the construction for tourism purposes, but of affordable houses and apartments. There is a shortage of affordable housing. Many local young people who have left the island to study elsewhere have difficulty finding an affordable place to live when they return. In the late 1990s, the St Maarten Housing Development Foundation was established, to stimulate the construction of affordable housing (Caribisch Netwerk, 2017).

3.1 Top 5 economic activities employed labour force, 15 to 74 years, Dutch Caribbean islands, 2016

	Aruba	Bonaire	Curaçao (2017)	Saba	St Eustatius	St Maarten (2017)
1	Accommodation and food services (22%)	Accommodation and food services (14%)	Wholesale and retail trade (16%)	Public administration (27%)	Manufacturing (17%)	Construction (19%)
2	Wholesale and retail trade (17%)	Public administration (13%)	Health and social work (10%)	Education (21%)	Public administration (16%)	Accommodation and food services (15%)
3	Public administration (8%)	Construction (11%)	Accommodation and food services (8%)	Health and social work (10%)	Health and social work (11%)	Renting and other business support (7%)
4	Construction (8%)	Education/Wholesale and retail trade/Health and social work (each 10%)	Public administration (8%)	Wholesale and retail trade (9%)	Education (11%)	Education (7%)
5	Renting and other business support (8%)		Financial institutions (8%)	Accommodation and food services/Construction (each 8%)	Accommodation and food services (9%)	Public administration (7%)

Most employed are permanent employees

Most employed people on the islands work on the basis of a permanent contract (see also Technical explanation for the classification by position in the job). The share with permanent contract within the employees is highest on Aruba (92 percent) and lowest on St Maarten and Saba (75 percent). Employees with a temporary contract are therefore most often found on Saba and St Maarten; one-quarter of all employees on these two islands

work on the basis of a temporary contract. On Saba this is mainly related to the medical university on the island. Short-term contracts are used relatively often here. Over 40 percent of all employed in education on Saba work on the basis of a temporary contract. By way of comparison: in Bonairean and Stian education, this is 20 and 10 percent respectively.

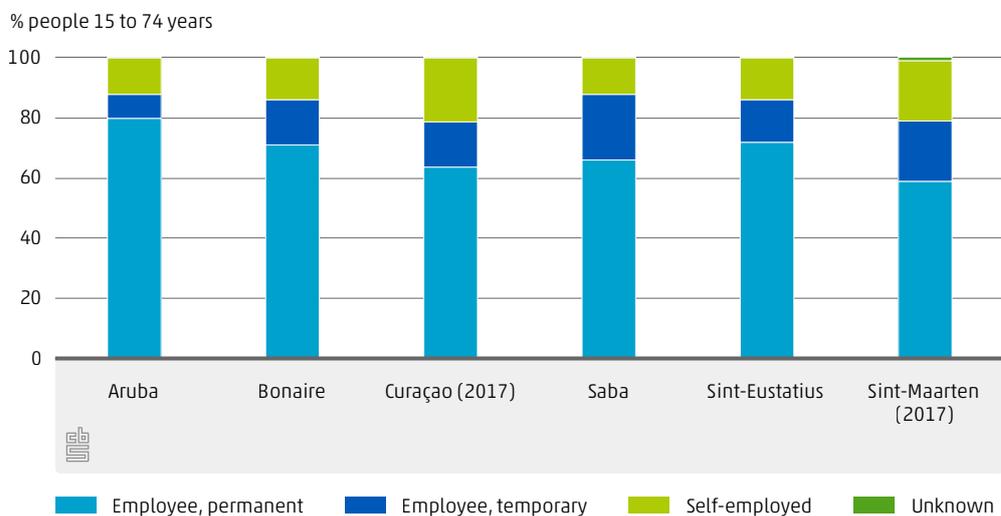
Relatively high share of temporary employees except on Aruba

In 2017, on average for all OECD countries, 11 percent of employees had a temporary contract (OECD, 2018-b). This ranges from relatively low shares (less than 5 percent) in mainly Eastern European countries to high shares (more than 25 percent) in South American and Southern European countries. In the Netherlands, 22 percent of employees had a temporary contract. Saba and St Maarten, with 25 percent temporary employees, belong to the category of countries with high shares of employees working with temporary contracts. This also applies to Bonaire, Curaçao and St Eustatius where this share is around 20 percent. Aruba has the lowest share of temporary employees, with 10 percent this is even slightly below the OECD average.

One in five working people on Curaçao and St Maarten is self-employed

The share of self-employed people in the EU-28 in 2017 was almost 16 percent, in the Netherlands it was 17 percent, in the United States 6 percent (OECD, 2018-c). Curaçao and St Maarten are well above the European and Dutch average (21 and 20 percent respectively), while St Eustatius and Aruba (both 14 percent) and Bonaire and Saba (both 12 percent) are below these averages. Compared to the United States, working people on the islands are relatively often self-employed.

3.2 Employed labour force Dutch Caribbean islands, 2016



Full-time work is the standard

Employed inhabitants of the Dutch Caribbean islands usually work a substantial number of hours per week. For more than 80 percent, an average working week consists of 35 hours or more. This applies to all islands. These data are not known for Aruba¹⁾. To refer to the

¹⁾ Information was collected on the number of hours worked in a normal working week, but not found plausible.

number of hours that people work, terms like full-time or part-time work are often used. Internationally, the hour criterion used for this varies greatly. An average of 30 to 35 hours or more per week is often considered full-time and fewer hours than that as part-time. In the (European) Netherlands, someone who works on average 35 hours or more per week is considered a full-time employee. In the Netherlands, full-time work is much less common than on the islands: in 2017 slightly more than half of the employed worked at least 35 hours per week. For Dutch women in particular, it is very common to work part-time.

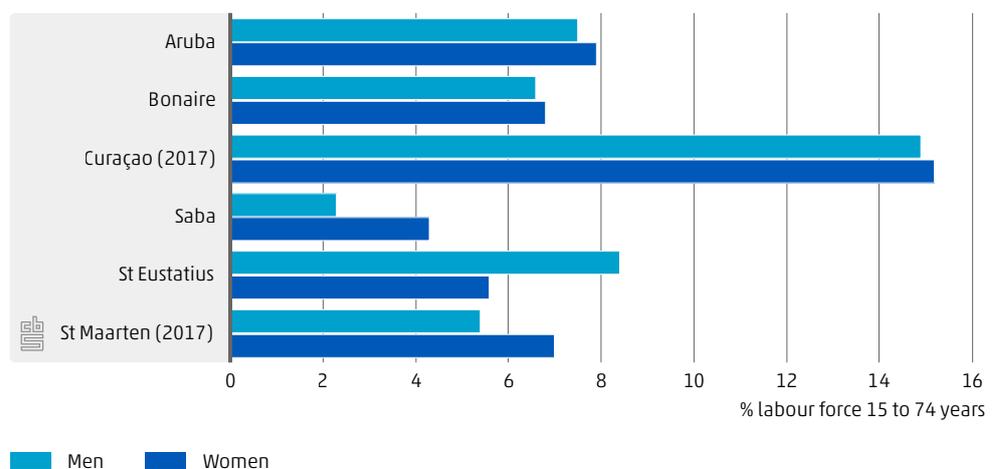
4. Unemployment

Unemployment highest on Curaçao

On average for the OECD countries, 6.3 percent of the labour force was unemployed in 2017 (OECD, 2018-d). Saba, with an unemployment rate of 3.3 percent, is the only one of the six islands that was far below this average. On Aruba, Bonaire, St Eustatius and St Maarten unemployment is around this average, while on Curaçao with 14.1 percent, it is much higher.

On the three Leeward islands, Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, unemployment is more or less the same among the male and female labour force. The three Windward Islands show some differences. On Saba and St Maarten, women are more often unemployed than men. On both islands, unemployment is about 2 percentage points higher for women than for men. On St Eustatius it is precisely the opposite: it is the men who are more often unemployed. More than 8 percent of Stian men are unemployed, a difference of nearly 3 percentage points with Stian women.

4.1 Unemployment Dutch Caribbean islands, 2016



Unemployment lowest in older age groups

In general, for all the islands with the exception of Saba, the unemployment rate is lower in the older than in the younger age groups. For example, unemployment on Aruba, St Eustatius and St Maarten is the least common among 45 to 64-year-olds, while on Bonaire and Curaçao it is lowest among the population of 55 and over. On Saba, unemployment in all age groups between the ages of 25 and 65 is relatively small. On Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius, the labour force among 65- to 74-year-olds is too small to calculate reliable estimates for the unemployment rate. Unemployment on St Eustatius is notably almost exclusively found in the age group 25 to 34 years.

High youth unemployment

Of all age groups, the group aged 15 to 24 years has the highest unemployment rate, ranging from 17.9 percent on Aruba to 32.8 percent on Curaçao. On Saba and St Eustatius, the number of young people in the labour force is too small to calculate a reliable unemployment rate. In 2017, the OECD average of youth unemployment stood at 13 percent; in the Netherlands and in the United States, this was 9 percent (OECD, 2018-e). Youth unemployment on the Dutch Caribbean islands is well above this average. Unemployment declined further in the other age groups. A frequently heard explanation is that young people leave the islands and start working elsewhere. However, it may also be that these older unemployed find a job after all or get discouraged and give up the job search, which causes lower unemployment rates in the slightly older age groups. The exact cause cannot be determined on the basis of these data.

4.2 Unemployment Dutch Caribbean islands by age, 2016

	Aruba	Bonaire	Curaçao (2017)	Saba	St Eustatius	St Maarten (2017)
	% labour force					
15 to 24 years ¹⁾	17.9	20.2	32.8	.	.	23.8
25 to 34 years	8.5	8.2	18.8	3.3	11.7	9.1
35 to 44 years	7.2	4.8	11.5	1.6	2.3	3.6
45 to 54 years	5.1	4.8	11.5	3.3	1.3	2.7
55 to 64 years	6.5	3.0	9.2	1.4	1.8	2.5
65 to 74 years ¹⁾	8.6	.	4.7	.	.	3.5

¹⁾ Due to the small numbers, unemployment rates for Saba and St Eustatius for people aged 15–24 and 65–74 years are not available. The same applies for Bonaire for people aged 65–74 years.

Low-educated people most often unemployed

For all islands, unemployment is highest among the low-educated, followed closely by those with an intermediate level of education. The gap with highly educated people is large. Where unemployment among low-educated people varies between 7 and 21 percent, this is between 2 and 8 percent for highly-educated people. Explanations for this are that highly educated people who do not find work leave the islands to work elsewhere, but also, for example, that highly educated people occupy low-skilled jobs. However, the available data do not offer the possibility to determine the exact cause.

5. Not in the labour force

Curaçao has the largest share of people not in the labour force

People who do not belong to the labour force are people who do not work and are not unemployed, either because they are not looking for work and/or are not immediately available for it. The share of people aged 15 to 74 not in the labour force is highest on Curaçao (38 percent) and Saba (36 percent) and lowest on Bonaire (25 percent). On average for the EU-28 countries, 36 percent is not in the labour force, for the US it is 33 percent on average and 30 percent in the Netherlands (OECD, 2018-f). The level of inactivity on Curaçao, Saba and also Aruba is comparable to these averages. On the other hand, the inactivity on Bonaire, St Eustatius and St Maarten is low.

Especially young people and the elderly are inactive

In general, it is mainly young people and the elderly who are relatively inactive on the labour market. Young people are mostly still in education and have not yet entered the labour market, while the elderly have often quit working and left the labour market. On Curaçao, the age group 55 to 64 stands out in particular. Almost half of the people in this age group on Curaçao are no longer active on the labour market. The fact that until recently the retirement age on Curaçao was still 60 years plays a part here.

On Saba, 36 percent of 15 to 74-year-olds are not active on the labour market. Here the 25 to 34-year-old group stands out. On the other islands labour participation is relatively high in this age group. On Saba, however, 35 percent of island residents in this age group are not in the labour force. The medical university also plays a role here (see paragraph 2).

On St Maarten it is striking that the share of people aged 65 to 74 who are not active on the labour market is low compared to the other islands. That means there are still many older people either working or looking for work here. Whereas on the other islands more than eight out of ten of the people of 65 and over are no longer active, this is almost two-thirds on St Maarten.

5.1 Not included in the labour force Dutch Caribbean islands by age, 2016

	Aruba	Bonaire	Curaçao (2017)	Saba	St Eustatius	St Maarten (2017)
	% people					
Total	32.9	25.0	38.3	36.3	28.8	29.2
15 to 24 years	64.2	50.9	69.6	67.7	68.9	58.8
25 to 34 years	12.4	7.6	13.4	34.9	8.8	18.9
35 to 44 years	10.9	9.6	13.1	5.2	11.5	17.6
45 to 54 years	12.8	9.8	16.0	11.4	16.4	14.3
55 to 64 years	37.0	29.5	46.4	35.4	33.1	32.3
65 to 74 years	85.4	81.1	85.6	81.6	79.9	63.6

NEETs

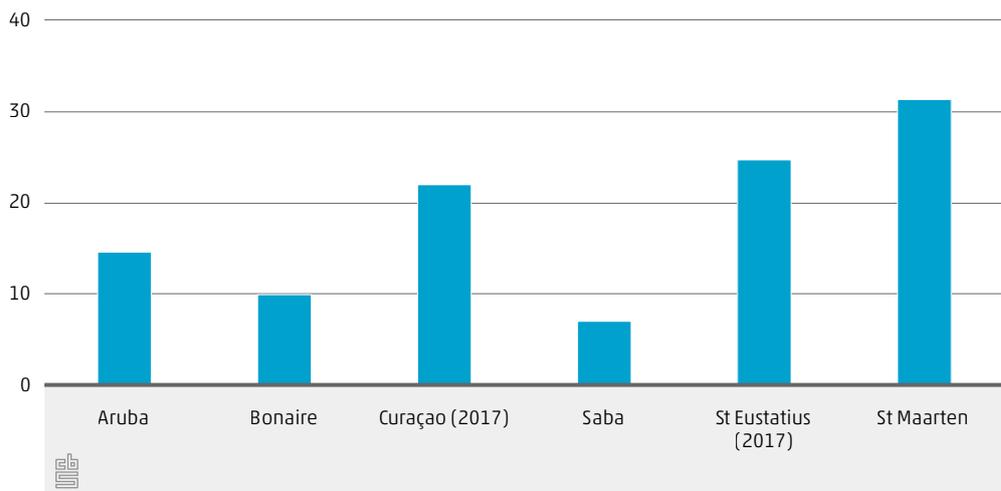
Young people in the age group 15-24 usually attend formal education. Obtaining a basic qualification for the labour market (a completed HAVO or VWO education or basic vocational training (MBO-2)) offers better opportunities to obtain work. In order to say something about the inactivity and vulnerability of young people on the labour market, the so-called NEET indicator is used. This indicator shows the proportion of young people who are not in education or other training and do not have paid work (Neither in Employment, nor in Education or Training). No paid work means both unemployed and not in the labour force. The NEET indicator is one of the many indicators included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the aim of substantially reducing the share of young people not in education and not in employment.

NEETs share highest on St Maarten

Relatively most NEETs can be found on St Maarten. Here, 31 percent of young people are not in any education or training and are also not employed. This share is also relatively high on St Eustatius and Curaçao. On St Eustatius it is about a quarter of the youth, on Curaçao about one in five. In comparison, the OECD also publishes this NEET indicator, but separately for 15- to 19-year olds and 20- to 24-year olds. On average for all OECD countries this indicator is at 6 percent for 15- to 19-year olds and 17 percent for 20- to 24-year olds (OECD, 2018-g).

5.2 NEETs Dutch Caribbean islands, 2016

% people 15 to 24 years



6. Summary

If this research on the labour market situation of the Dutch Caribbean population shows one thing, then it is that it is almost impossible to make statements that apply to all islands. Almost always, there is at least one island where the situation is somewhat different. For example, almost all islands have relatively high employment rates well above the EU average of 60 percent. Only on Curaçao is labour participation much lower, but here too, more than half (53 percent) of 15 to 74-year-olds are employed. The vast majority (over 80 percent) on almost all islands also work full-time; for Aruba there are no figures available. Women work less often than men on most islands, but the difference is small. It is mainly the 25- to 54-year-olds who have a high labour participation. An exception is Saba, where 25 to 34-year-olds relatively often do not work. This mainly concerns (foreign) students from the American medical university on this island. Furthermore, the relatively high employment rate (35 percent) of the people aged 65 and over on St Maarten is striking.

On all islands, tourism-related economic activities, accommodation and food serving, trade and, to a lesser extent, construction, play an important role. On Aruba and Bonaire accommodation and food serving is the largest economic activity, on Curaçao this is trade and on St Maarten it is construction. On Saba, this mainly concerns the construction of houses or apartments for the local population and to a lesser extent for tourism. Public administration is also one of the top five economic activities on the islands where most people work. On Saba, public administration is the main source of employment, followed by education. St Eustatius is the only island where a large share of people work in manufacturing. This is because an oil storage terminal of the US company NuStar is located there.

Most workers on the islands work as employees with a permanent contract. The proportion of employees with a temporary contract is also relatively large. However, this does not apply to Aruba, where this share is relatively low. One in five working people on Curaçao and St Maarten are self-employed; on the other islands this share is smaller.

Unemployment on Aruba, Bonaire, St Eustatius and St Maarten is around the OECD average (6.3 percent). On Curaçao, unemployment is much higher (14.1 percent), while it is much lower on Saba (3.3 percent). In general, for the islands, the proportion of the labour force that is unemployed is greater among the younger age groups than among the older ones. Youth unemployment is particularly high on Aruba, Bonaire, St Maarten and especially Curaçao. No figures on the youth unemployment rate are available for St Eustatius and Saba, due to the small numbers. In addition, people with a low and intermediate level of education are considerably more often unemployed than highly educated people.

Part of the population aged 15 to 74 is inactive on the labour market. These are often older people who are no longer in work due to retirement, or young people who are still in education. Curaçao and Saba have the highest shares of inactive people: 38 and 36 percent respectively. Curaçao has a relatively large number of 55- to 64-year-olds in this group, while on Saba it relatively often concerns 25 to 34-year-olds.

A special group are the so-called NEETs: young people of 15 to 24 years who are not in education nor in work. The share of NEETs is highest on St Maarten (31 percent), followed by St Eustatius (25 percent) and Curaçao (22 percent). The proportion of NEETs on Bonaire and Saba is relatively small: 7 and 10 percent, respectively.

Technical explanation

Labour Force Surveys on the Dutch Caribbean islands

The data in this report come from the different Labour Force Surveys (LFS) that are conducted on each of the six islands. The LFS is a survey that is carried out in a large part of the countries around the world in order to collect data on the position of the inhabitants in relation to the labour market. With this data, a classification of the population in the employed, unemployed and not in the labour force can be made.

Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten, the independent islands within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, each carry out their own LFS. For Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba, as special municipalities within the Kingdom, Statistics Netherlands has the responsibility for statistical tasks and carries out the LFS on these islands.

On all islands, the survey is carried out using a sample and interviewers who visit the respondents with an electronic questionnaire on a tablet. The periods in which this happens are different on all the islands. The survey is held annually on Aruba and Curaçao; on Aruba in November and on Curaçao in September and October. On Bonaire, St Eustatius, Saba and St Maarten, the survey is carried out every two years. On Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba in October-December in the even years, on St Maarten this is in the odd years and the period varies. For each island, the data from the most recent year has been used for this article. For Aruba, Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius this is 2016, for Curaçao and St Maarten 2017.

T.1 Labour Force Surveys Dutch Caribbean islands after 2010

Aruba	Curaçao	St Maarten	Bonaire, Saba, St Eustatius
2011		2011	
2012			2012
2013		2013	
2014	2014		2014
2015	2015	2015	
2016	2016		2016
	2017	2017	

The topics of the various LFSs are comparable as internationally agreed definitions for the labour force of the ILO (International Labour Organization) are used. The specific questions that are used are not identical for the surveys on the different islands. However, the publishing formats used are the same. For example, for the position on the labour market,

a classification of the population into the employed, unemployed and not in the labour force is used. A difference that plays a role here is that an hour criterion is applied to Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten: you have paid work when you work on average 4 hours or more per week. Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius follow the questionnaire used in the European Netherlands, and do not apply this hour criterion. The ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) and the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) are used on all islands to measure the level of education and the economic activity in which people work, with local additions where necessary.

Comparing the share of employees and self-employed for the six different islands is not easy. This is because no comparable publication format is used and the questions to establish this information also differ.

For Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius, the publication format and questions are aligned with what is used in the European Netherlands. People who indicate that they have paid work are asked whether they are employed as an employee (in the main job, or the job in which they work most hours). If not, you are asked whether you are working in your own company, in the company of a partner or family member or something else as a non-employee. Employees receive questions about whether their contract is for a definite or indefinite period of time and in addition it is asked whether they are employed as an on-call worker or temporary agency worker. People with their own company receive questions about whether they employ staff. On the basis of this information, figures are published about employees with a permanent or a temporary contract, self-employed without employees, with employees and contributing family members.

On Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten, employed people who are asked about their economic position (in their main job) get a large number of answer categories. These categories are very similar for the three islands, but not entirely the same. For example, Aruba and Curaçao distinguish between the categories employer and small self-employed or owner of a company. On St Maarten, only the owner of an own company is asked and later on in the questionnaire they are asked about having employees or not. The several contract forms included in the questions are also different. For example, on Curaçao and St Maarten people are asked specifically about being temporary agency workers, but not on Aruba. Furthermore, all three islands use the term 'casual work'. This is a work form based on an often non-formal agreement between a worker and an employer (or client), for a short time or on an occasional basis, sometimes for a specific number of hours, days or weeks. On Aruba these are treated as employees, but on Curaçao and St Maarten it is associated with freelancers and therefore people who work as self-employed. The latter group can be compared with the group on Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius belonging to the group of 'other self-employed', those who state that they are not employees, do not have their own company or do not work as a contributing family member.

In order to compare the distribution of employees and self-employed on the islands, a publication format is applied. A classification has been made in permanent and temporary employees and self-employed persons, this is shown in Figure 3.2. Permanent employees are taken separately for each island. Employees in temporary employment are those with a temporary contract, on-call workers, temporary agency workers and trainees. The self-employed are those with their own company (with or without employees), the contributing family members and also the casual workers. The latter category is actually a group that is

T.2 Data on employees and self-employed for the Dutch Caribbean islands

Aruba	Curaçao	St Maarten	Bonaire, Saba, St Eustatius
Questions asked			
What is economic position (in main job): Employer Owner own company Contributing family worker Employee with permanent contract Employee with temporary contract Employee in casual service Intern/student Unknown/doesn't know Other	What is economic position (in main job): Employer Small self-employed Casual worker/freelancer Contributing family worker Employee with permanent contract Employee with temporary contract: contract for definite time/ on-call worker Temporary agency worker Intern Other, namely... Unknown	What is economic position (in main job): Casual worker/freelancer Contributing family worker Employee with permanent contract Works for employment agency Owner of own company Employee with temporary contract: contract for definite time/ Trainee/intern Unknown Other Works for themselves Owner of own company gets questions on having employees or not	All employed: Do you work as an employee? → employees are asked whether their contract is permanent or fixed-term and whether they work as a temporary agency worker / on-call worker → non-employees are asked whether they have their own company, work in the company of a partner or relative or otherwise (e.g. as an 'other self-employed'/freelancer). Those who own a company are asked whether they have employees or not.
Publication classifications			
Categories as in questionnaire are published	Categories as in questionnaire are published	Categories as in questionnaire are published	Employee permanent employee temporary employee Self-employed self-employed without employees self-employed with employees contributing family worker

between regular employment and self-employed, but probably fits in with the self-employed best as they work on their own account and risk.

Lastly, it is important to note that when data are published for national purposes based on the LFS, the populations that are used by the islands are different. On Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten it is common to use the population of 15 years and over when reporting on labour participation or unemployment. For Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba, which are aligned with the national figures of the European Netherlands, the population from 15 to 74 years is used. Young people up to 15 years of age are usually still in school and those aged 75 and over are often retired.

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Table annex

B.1 Key figures labour force Dutch Caribbean islands by personal characteristics, 2016

	unit of measure	Aruba	Bonaire	Curaçao (2017)	Saba	St Eustatius	St Maarten (2017)
Total							
Population	number	84,660	15,300	118,030	1,580	2,430	31,500
Labour force	number	56,780	11,480	72,770	1,010	1,730	22,290
employed labour force	number	52,400	10,700	62,480	970	1,610	20,900
unemployed labour force	number	4,380	770	10,290	30	120	1,390
Not in the labour force	number	27,880	3,830	45,220	580	700	9,210
Unknown	number	0	0	40	0	0	0
Net labour participation rate	% of population	61.9	69.9	52.9	61.6	66.2	66.3
Unemployment rate	% of labour force	7.7	6.7	14.1	3.3	7.1	6.2
Sex							
<i>Men</i>							
Population	number	39,790	8,050	52,400	790	1,270	14,640
Labour force	number	28,090	6,210	33,930	520	930	10,900
employed labour force	number	25,980	5,800	29,540	510	850	10,310
unemployed labour force	number	2,110	410	4,400	10	80	590
Not in the labour force	number	11,710	1,830	18,470	270	340	3,740
Net labour participation rate	% of population	65.3	72.1	56.4	64.2	66.8	70.5
Unemployment rate	% of labour force	7.5	6.6	13.0	2.3	8.4	5.4
<i>Women</i>							
Population	number	44,860	7,260	65,630	790	1,170	16,860
Labour force	number	28,690	5,260	38,840	490	810	11,390
employed labour force	number	26,420	4,900	32,950	470	760	10,590
unemployed labour force	number	2,270	360	5,890	20	50	800
Not in the labour force	number	16,170	2,000	26,750	310	360	5,480
Net labour participation rate	% of population	58.9	67.6	50.2	58.9	65.5	62.8
Unemployment rate	% of labour force	7.9	6.8	15.2	4.3	5.6	7.0

B.1 Key figures labour force Dutch Caribbean islands by personal characteristics, 2016 (end)

	unit of measure	Aruba	Bonaire	Curaçao (2017)	Saba	St Eustatius	St Maarten (2017)
Age							
<i>15 to 24 years</i>							
Population	number	13,920	2,110	18,810	280	300	4,980
Labour force	number	4,980	1,030	5,670	90	90	2,050
employed labour force	number	4,090	830	3,820	80	50	1,560
unemployed labour force	number	890	210	1,860	10	50	490
Not in the labour force	number	8,940	1,070	13,090	190	210	2,930
Net labour participation rate	% of population	29.4	39.2	20.3	28.4	15.4	31.4
Unemployment rate ¹⁾	% of labour force	17.9	20.2	32.8	.	.	23.8
NEET indicator	% of population	14.6	9.9	22.0	7.0	24.7	31.3
<i>25 to 44 years</i>							
Population	number	28,220	5,810	37,450	650	960	12,650
Labour force	number	24,940	5,310	32,480	500	860	10,340
employed labour force	number	23,000	4,960	27,600	490	800	9,710
unemployed labour force	number	1,940	350	4,880	10	60	630
Not in the labour force	number	3,280	500	4,970	150	100	2,300
Net labour participation rate	% of population	81.5	85.4	73.7	75.6	83.7	76.8
Unemployment rate	% of labour force	7.8	6.6	15.0	2.4	7.0	6.1
<i>45 to 74 years</i>							
Population	number	42,520	7,390	61,780	650	1,180	13,870
Labour force	number	26,860	5,130	34,620	410	780	9,890
employed labour force	number	25,310	4,920	31,070	400	760	9,620
unemployed labour force	number	1,550	210	3,550	10	20	270
Not in the labour force	number	15,660	2,260	27,160	240	400	3,980
Net labour participation rate	% of population	59.5	66.5	50.3	62	64.9	69.4
Unemployment rate	% of labour force	5.8	4.2	10.2	2.4	2.0	2.7
Level of education							
<i>Lower</i>							
Population	number	19,470	7,140	13,840	590	1,510	9,140
Labour force	number	8,060	4,730	5,630	400	1,020	5,090
employed labour force	number	7,040	4,270	4,440	370	920	4,590
unemployed labour force	number	1,020	460	1,190	30	100	510
Not in the labour force	number	11,410	2,410	8,220	190	490	4,050
Net labour participation rate	% of population	36.2	59.8	32.1	63.3	61	50.2
Unemployment rate	% of labour force	12.6	9.7	21.1	6.5	9.9	9.9
<i>Intermediate</i>							
Population	number	51,940	5,170	77,700	400	460	12,250
Labour force	number	38,060	4,020	46,680	300	350	8,950
employed labour force	number	35,100	3,780	39,210	300	330	8,290
unemployed labour force	number	2,950	240	7,470	0	20	660
Not in the labour force	number	13,880	1,140	31,020	100	110	3,310
Net labour participation rate	% of population	67.6	73.2	50.5	75.8	71.8	67.7
Unemployment rate	% of labour force	7.8	5.9	16	0.0	6.3	7.3
<i>High</i>							
Population	number	11,580	2,490	24,770	580	460	9,130
Labour force	number	9,580	2,310	19,500	300	350	7,320
employed labour force	number	9,260	2,270	18,030	290	350	7,090
unemployed labour force	number	320	40	1,470	10	0	230
Not in the labour force	number	2,010	180	5,270	280	110	1,810
Net labour participation rate	% of population	79.9	91.0	72.8	49.8	76.9	77.7
Unemployment rate	% of labour force	3.3	1.7	7.6	2.7	0.0	3.1
<i>Education level unknown</i>							
Population	number	1,670	510	1,720	10	10	980

¹⁾ Due to the small numbers, youth unemployment rates (%) for Saba and St Eustatius are not available.

B.2 Employed labour force, 15 to 74 years, Dutch Caribbean islands by professional status, 2016

	Aruba	Bonaire	Curaçao (2017)	Saba	St Eustatius	St Maarten (2017)
Total	52,400	10,700	62,480	970	1,610	20,900
Employee	45,990	9,240	49,220	850	1,380	16,490
permanent employee	41,530	7,590	39,580	640	1,160	12,360
temporary employee	4,450	1,660	9,640	210	230	4,140
Self-employed	6,300	1,460	12,980	120	230	4,100
Unknown	120	0	290	0	0	300
Temporary employment indicator ¹⁾ (%)	10	18	20	25	17	25
Self-employment indicator ²⁾ (%)	12	14	21	12	14	20

¹⁾ Temporary employment indicator: number of temporary employees as a percentage of all employees.

²⁾ Self-employment indicator: number of self-employed as a percentage of all employed.

B.3 Employed labour force, 15 to 74 years, Dutch Caribbean islands by economic activity, 2016

	Aruba	Bonaire	Curaçao (2017)	Saba	St Eustatius	St Maarten (2017)
Total	52,400	10,700	62,480	970	1,610	20,900
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries/ mining	60	60	260	40	0	90
Manufacturing	1,460	520	4,600	40	280	240
Energy supply	210	0	800	0	0	490
Water supply and waste management	780	0	540	0	10	10
Construction	4,180	1,220	3,630	80	110	4,020
Wholesale and retail trade	8,680	1,080	9,950	90	100	840
Transportation and storage	3,060	600	3,020	20	110	1,330
Accommodation and food services	11,770	1,550	5,240	80	150	3,130
Information and communication	910	270	1,890	20	40	270
Financial institutions	1,840	260	4,730	10	20	660
Renting, buying, selling real estate	410	50	540	10	0	460
Other specialised business services	1,300	240	2,380	0	30	520
Renting and other business support	3,980	450	4,050	0	60	1,530
Public administration and other services	4,260	1,430	4,790	260	250	1,460
Education	2,550	1,080	2,980	200	170	1,480
Health and social work activities	2,670	1,030	5,980	100	180	830
Culture, sports and recreation	1,950	270	2,170	20	20	770
Other service activities	1,010	120	1,470	10	10	370
Activities of households	1,180	130	2,070	10	50	500
Extraterritorial organisations	20	20	200	0	0	70
Economic activity unknown ¹⁾	120	340	1,230	0	20	1,810

¹⁾ The number of unknown on Curaçao also includes the so-called partial non-response, i.e. those who were unwilling to participate in the survey but who answered a short list of questions, from which it was possible to derive whether they are employed or not.

Explanation of symbols

Empty cell	Figure not applicable
.	Figure is unknown, insufficiently reliable or confidential
*	Provisional figure
**	Revised provisional figure
2018–2019	2018 to 2019 inclusive
2018/2019	Average for 2018 to 2019 inclusive
2018/'19	Crop year, financial year, school year, etc., beginning in 2018 and ending in 2019
2016/'17–2018/'19	Crop year, financial year, etc., 2016/'17 to 2018/'19 inclusive

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond to the sum of the separate figures.

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Marion van den Brakel
Moniek Coumans
Annelie Hakkenes-Tuinman
Brigitte Hermans
Suzanne Loozen

Colophon

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Via contact form: www.cbs.nl/information

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