

# Future of Work in Curaçao



REPORT



MINISTERIO DI  
**DESARYO SOCIAL, LABOR I BIENESTAR**  
STAF DI MINISTERIO



Social Economic  
Council Curaçao

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# 1 Introduction

In 2019, the International Labour Organization (ILO) commemorated its 100-year anniversary. To celebrate and reflect on this, the ILO asked all its members to reflect on The Future of Work. This report is the result of those reflections, combined to spark a dialogue on The Future of Work (FoW) in Curaçao.

On September 12, 2018, the Council of Ministers approved the so-called *Startnotitie*, the memorandum prepared by a special committee consisting of representatives of labour unions, employer organizations, and the government. The work of the committee was facilitated on a technical level by the Social Economic Council (SER) and by the Ministry of Social Development, Labour, and Welfare (SOAW) based on the fact that the Minister of SOAW is responsible for all ILO affairs and that the SER is the tripartite advisory body of the executive and legislative branches of government concerning all matters of general socioeconomic interest.

The *Startnotitie* is the result of consultations with different stakeholders, among others non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, and young professionals. The process of consultation took several months.

Initially, the aim was to start an orchestrated national dialogue on the subject and to document the process and its outcome. The objective was to have this report available for submission to the International Labour Office for it be part of the preparations of the 108<sup>th</sup> general assembly of the ILO in June 2019 in Geneva.

However, before the national dialogue could be purposefully instigated, it spontaneously emerged in various segments of society on its own. The committee opted therefore not to intervene in the different initiatives being undertaken on the subject but rather to monitor and register these. This monitoring report is the final product of the dialogue on different levels. The goal is to capture as much as possible the extent and the depth of the dialogue on various levels, without the pretention to be complete; some aspects might have fallen off our radar. Nevertheless, the fragmented dialogue is still going on with increasing intensity. So this report is just a picture of a moving object still in full motion. This report was discussed with all stakeholders during a mini conference held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2019.

One of the basic assumptions of the *Startnotitie* is that Curaçao is a Small Island Development State (SIDS) in a rapidly changing world facing climate change, demographic changes, and technological changes driving the fourth industrial revolution. We are experiencing a change of era and need to raise awareness to prepare to be ready to face challenges and grasp opportunities. A new understanding of work is necessary: It is about creating decent work. What is our philosophy on job protection for employees in this new context? The new reality demands resilience, flexibility, and creativity.

Curaçao faces many challenges:

Curaçao is an island combatting a major issue with increasing immigration from the region, mainly from Venezuela due to the political and humanitarian crisis in this country. At the same time, Curaçao is facing emigration from islanders leaving, mostly for the Netherlands due to the economic recession on the island. Regarding the issue of migration, there are two points of view: One states

the population should double in the next decades and the other one states that de-population should remain constant. These two points of view are two extremes regarding the views on the issue of migration.

There is also the issue of the balance between the roles of the state versus the role of the individual. How will this balance shift in the future? What is the core role or task of the state? An essential question is the one about privacy of the individual in this era of technology and data.

The next generation is coming to the table. What is their future of work? The question becomes even more pressing now that the age to retire has been raised to 65 years.

The distribution of income is becoming more unequal by the day. There is a socio-economic divide in society and the question is: how will this evolve in the future?

In the *Startnotitie*, the group focused on three issues:

- Future of Work and demographic factors;
- Future of Work and climate change;
- Future of Work and innovation (Pollitt, 2019).

These issues were already briefly mentioned above. The population is aging, the next generation is entering the labour market, traditions are eroding, and the composition of families is changing, as are gender roles. These are just a few examples of demographic issues related to work.

As hinted before, the higher age of retirement makes it more difficult for the next generation to enter the workplace. This leads to a high unemployment rate among the youth.

People are living longer, which leads to an increase in the cost of health care. It seems the solidarity between generations is eroding. On the other hand, many new jobs are created in the areas of care, especially care for the elderly. These new jobs will be powered by innovative technologies. This makes it important to pursue a labour policy that keeps the seniors working longer, while at the same time include the next generation in jobs that provide decent work on a sustainable basis. A precondition is that people have the right attitude towards labour and possess the adequate skills and competences. These are primarily obtained by awareness programs, permanent education, and training.

The educational system must be based on the principle of universal access, that everyone should have the opportunity to develop his/her maximum potential and critical thinking skill level and that everybody should be involved. Other important matters are ethical thinking and (cultural) diversity.

The educational system must work in harmony with the future of work and therefore must anticipate developments. This matter requires continuous attention. Given the fact that the future is changing rapidly and in an unpredictable manner, the focus should be on employability. People must acquire the ability to re-educate themselves to meet the future demands of the labour market. To achieve this objective, the collaboration between the educational sector and the labour market (employers) must be institutionalized.

The fact that people are increasingly concentrating themselves in cities should also be mentioned as a demographic change. These cities face new challenges such as transportation, waste management and security. They face rapid technological change, which enables them to become Smart Cities. This development also impacts the future of work.

Climate change has become an undeniable reality and global awareness on this matter is slowly increasing. It is within this context that the future of the refinery must be handled; it is not merely about jobs any longer but also about taking care of the environment. The threats of climate change demand effective responses. It is about minimizing a business's ecological footprint. In this context, implementing the principles of the *circular economy* (re-use of waste) and the *share economy* (the sharing of items and collective consumption) is vital.

Climate change will create new jobs for protecting the environment but also in technology to create clean energy. Climate change should also be incorporated into school curricula to influence the behavior of individuals at an early age and develop their necessary knowledge and skills for the work of the future.

Innovation is associated with progress. This time around, there is a concern that innovation might destroy more jobs than it will create. Innovations are in the area of the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, and robotics.

The educational system must also nurture entrepreneurship to develop innovators. Innovation is already here, showing itself in all sectors. For instance, public sector taxes are now handled via the internet. More and more business with the government is done through the internet. In the private sector, e-banking, e-commerce, traveling, and Air BnB are gaining ground. The education sector is evolving towards the business model of e-learning. The sector of Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery has also innovated.

Innovation is not just a matter of introducing new technology; it is about embracing a new mindset to constantly adapt to the new technology. In this, education fills an important role. It is about continuous, lifelong learning.

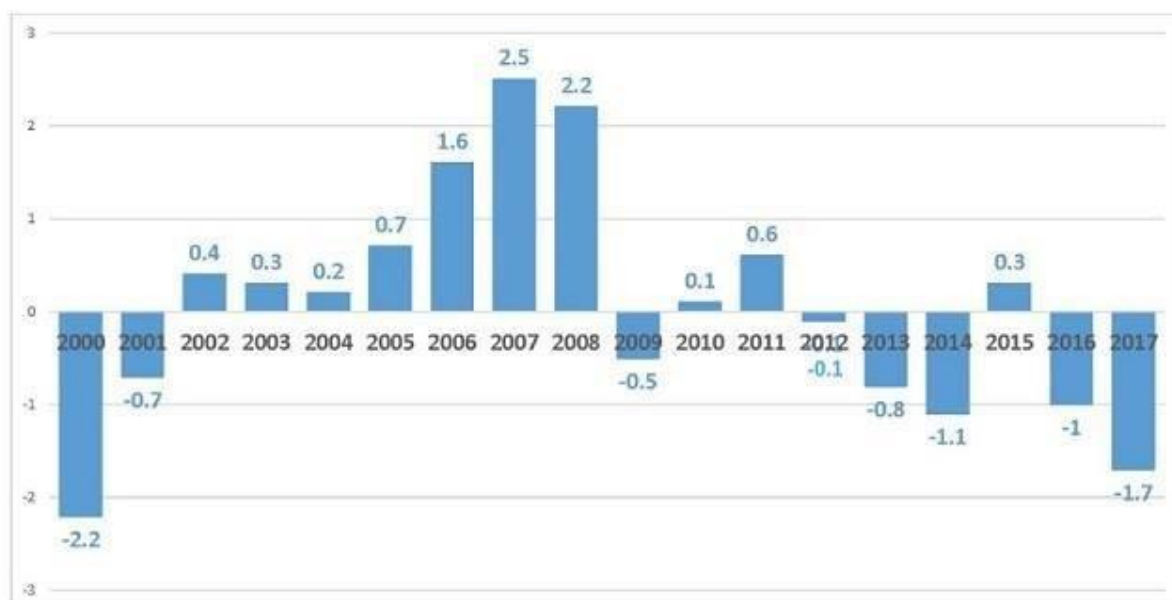
This report consist of six chapters including: 1) This introduction; 2) Work in the present; 3) Future of work; 4) The dialogue; 5) Analysis; and 6) Conclusions and recommendations. The chapters can be read separately and in any order the reader chooses.

## 2 Work in the Present

Before venturing into the future let us have a glance at the present of work in Curaçao.

The economy of Curaçao has not grown significantly since 2009. The economy has been in contraction since 2016 due to unforeseen external shocks and internal developments (graphic 1). In 2018, the growth was -1.9 % and only a small economic growth is projected for 2019 (0.4 %); however, given the events in the first quarter of the year, even this estimate seems unlikely. The effects of the political and economic situation in Venezuela are bigger than expected on Curaçao's economy and society. One of the consequences is that currently the refinery is not functioning and the continuation of refinery activities is uncertain.

Development of the real GDP growth Curaçao, 2000-2017



Source: CBS, National Accounts

© CBS Curaçao

Graphic 1: Development of the real GDP growth Curaçao, 2000 - 2017

To put the economic growth into perspective. In the report “Regional Economic Summary 2018,” prepared by the Caribbean Development Bank, it is stated that the nineteen Caribbean countries included in the study had an average economic growth of 1.9% in 2018. This was an increase of 0.5% compared to 2017 (Linkels, 2019). Only Anguilla (-2.4%) and Barbados (-0.6%) experienced negative growth. Only Anguilla performed worse compared to Curaçao (-1.9%). All nineteen countries are

expected to grow their economy in 2019. At the beginning of the year, the Central Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten was still projecting a minimum growth of 0.4% for Curaçao.

Another perspective is that the tourism sector in Curaçao is growing. The sector is breaking multiple records and is performing above average compared to other destinations in the region (“Forse groei van toerisme,” 2019).

| <b>Labour force of Curaçao, September – October 2014-2018</b> |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|   | Sept. – Oct. 2014 | Sept. – Oct. 2015 | Sept. – Oct. 2016 | Sept. – Oct. 2017 | Sept. – Oct. 2018 |
| Employed population   | 59,295            | 61,823            | 65,118            | 62,834            | 60,729            |
| Unemployed population   | 8,555             | 8,198             | 9,953             | 10,313            | 9,424             |
| Labour force  | 67,850            | 70,021            | 75,071            | 73,147            | 70,153            |
| Economically not active population                            | 55,871            | 55,670            | 52,268            | 54,870            | 54,113            |
|   | 0.364612          | 0.358463          | 0.33351           | 0.350389854       | 0.346367535       |
| Population 0-14 years   | 29,513            | 29,612            | 29,382            | 28,539            | 29,950            |
| Population 15+ years  | 123,721           | 125,690           | 127,339           | 128,058           | 126,280           |
| Total population  | 153,234           | 155,302           | 156,721           | 156,597           | 156,230           |
| Participation rate (%)  | 44.3              | 45.1              | 47.9              | 46.7              | 44.9              |
| Labour force participation rate (%)                           | 54.8              | 55.7              | 59                | 57.1              | 55.6              |
| Unemployment rate (%)   | 12.6              | 11.7              | 13.3              | 14.1              | 13.4              |
| Underemployment rate (%)                                      | 11.9              | 9.5               | 15.5              | 10.7              | 13                |
| Employment/total population (%)                               | 38.7              | 39.8              | 41.6              | 40.1              | 38.9              |
| Employment/population 15+ (%)                                 | 47.9              | 49.2              | 51.1              | 49.1              | 48.1              |
| * Percentage points   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |

**Source: Labour Force Survey 2018**

Table 1: Labour force Curaçao.

Starting in February 2019, the media reported that the labour force was diminishing, not because new jobs have been created, but because the unemployed are leaving the island to seek jobs elsewhere, mainly in the Netherlands. Unemployment has dropped from 14.1% to 13.4% due to emigration, especially to the Netherlands. The labour market (employed and unemployed) is now 70,153 (table 1). The total population is 160,012. This number was 73,147 in 2018. Due to the economic recession, people are seeking employment abroad. Approximately 9,500 persons on the island are still looking for a job (“CBS: Vorig jaar minder werklozen; Door krimp arbeidsmarkt en negatief migratiesaldo,” 2019; Curaçao nu, 2019; CBS, 2019).

Youth unemployment is also high, with one-third of the youth being unemployed. Women’s unemployment is even higher than men (15.4% versus 11.3% in 2018).

In 2011 (census), average personal gross income amounted to 3,023 guilders. Median income was much lower at 1,836 guilders. This discrepancy signifies a skewed distribution of personal incomes in Curaçao (Vierbergen, 2011).

In 2011, the average gross household income was 5,331 guilders. The national median income was much lower than that: 3,500 guilders. As was seen at the personal income level, there is also a skewed distribution of household incomes (Vierbergen, 2011).



Based on data from the Ministry of Social Development, Labour, and Welfare, we see that many companies requested a permit to dismiss employees. This data only reflects those dismissals that were obliged to request a permit. The frequent justification for layoffs is economic reasons. Many expect the number of requests to increase in 2019 (table 2).

| Year                   | Male | Female | Total by Year |
|------------------------|------|--------|---------------|
| <b>2017</b>            | 440  | 262    | 702           |
| <b>2018</b>            | 137  | 115    | 252           |
| <b>2019</b>            | 59   | 39     | 98            |
| <b>Total by Gender</b> | 636  | 416    |               |

Table 2: Permits for dismissing personal (Source: SOAW, April 2019)

Almost half of the economically inactive population are pensioners (48.6%) and 22.5% are still in school. 10.3% of the population is excluded due to physical or mental illness. The groups of disabled are working towards their inclusion in the labour force but there is still much room for improvement (table 3).

| Reasons for not looking for work by economically not active population, Sept |           |          |          |          |          |
|--|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|  | Total (%) |          |          |          |          |
|  | 2014      | 2015     | 2016     | 2017     | 2018     |
|  | N=55,871  | N=55,670 | N=52,267 | N=54,870 | N=54,113 |
| Homemakers   | 8.2       | 8.6      | 6.9      | 6.5      | 5.6      |
| Belief there is no work available  | 5.1       | 4        | 1.5      | 3.4      | 4        |
| Pensioner/age  | 47        | 47.5     | 51.5     | 50.9     | 48.6     |
| Wanting to finish school/study   | 25.2      | 23.8     | 23.7     | 22.8     | 22.5     |
| Family circumstances   | 1.7       | 2.6      | 2.8      | 3.5      | 2.9      |
| Physical/mental illness  | 10.1      | 9.1      | 8.7      | 9.5      | 10.3     |
| Other reason   | 2         | 4        | 3.4      | 2.6      | 5.1      |
| Unknown/not reported   | 0.7       | 0.4      | 1.5      | 0.8      | 1        |

**Source: Labour Force Survey 2018**

Table 3: Reason for not looking for work by economically not active population

Technical work is diminishing. The percentage of technicians has dropped by 6.9% in one year (table 4).

| Occupation of employed population, September – October 2014-2018, by sex |           |          |          |          |          |                      |
|--|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------------|
|  | Total (%) |          |          |          |          | Difference 2017/2018 |
|  | 2014      | 2015     | 2016     | 2017     | 2018     |                      |
|  | N=59,295  | N=61,823 | N=65,117 | N=62,834 | N=61,013 |                      |
| Armed forces   | 0.4       | 0.1      | 0.1      | 0.5      | 0.4      | -0.1                 |
| Managers   | 11.5      | 9.4      | 9.3      | 11.2     | 10.2     | -1                   |
| Professionals  | 10.7      | 10       | 9.8      | 10.5     | 11       | 0.5                  |
| Technicians and associate professionals                                  | 15.3      | 16       | 17.6     | 17.8     | 10.9     | -6.9                 |
| Clerical support workers   | 12.4      | 13.4     | 12.8     | 11.3     | 11.8     | 0.5                  |
| Service and sales workers  | 19.1      | 18.8     | 18.2     | 18.7     | 20.2     | 1.5                  |
| Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers                       | 0.1       | 0.3      | 0.2      | 0.4      | 0.3      | -0.1                 |
| Craft and related trades workers   | 10.6      | 9.4      | 10.8     | 10.2     | 10.5     | 0.3                  |
| Plant and machine operators, and assemblers                              | 5.2       | 5.4      | 4.9      | 4.7      | 4        | -0.7                 |
| Elementary occupations   | 13        | 13.5     | 14.6     | 13.8     | 13.3     | -0.5                 |
| Unknown/not reported   | 1.7       | 3.7      | 1.6      | 1        | 7.1      | 6.1                  |

Table 4: Occupation of employed population

Manufacturing jobs are dropping and jobs in hospitality and food service activities are on the rise (table 5).

| Employed population by Industry, 2017 & 2018  |       |       |
|---|-------|-------|
|   | 2017  | 2018  |
| Accommodation and food service activities   | 8.5%  | 9.1%  |
| Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies   | 0.3%  | 0.2%  |
| Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services- producing activities of households for own use | 3.3%  | 2.7%  |
| Administrative and support service activities   | 6.5%  | 5.9%  |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining and quarrying  | 0.4%  | 0.3%  |
| Arts, entertainment and recreation  | 3.5%  | 2.2%  |
| Construction  | 5.9%  | 6.5%  |
| Education   | 4.8%  | 3.9%  |
| Electricity, gas, steam and air-conditioning supply   | 1.3%  | 0.6%  |
| Financial and insurance activities  | 7.6%  | 5.4%  |
| Human health and social work activities   | 9.7%  | 9.3%  |
| Information and communication   | 3.0%  | 3.0%  |
| Manufacturing   | 7.4%  | 6.0%  |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities   | 3.9%  | 3.2%  |
| Public administration and defence; compulsory social security   | 7.7%  | 5.3%  |
| Real estate activities  | 0.9%  | 1.4%  |
| Transportation and storage  | 4.9%  | 5.0%  |
| Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities   | 0.9%  | 0.8%  |
| Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles  | 16.1% | 15.6% |
| Other service activities  | 2.4%  | 2.1%  |
| Unknown/not reported  | 1.1%  | -     |
| Refused   | 0.3%  | 0.5%  |

Table 5: Employed population by industry

During the period of the dialogue on the future of work, the remuneration of the civil servants was much debated and was even the cause of a strike of this group. Workers in the financial sector are paid the best, followed by the public sector. These facts are interesting because, due to the end of the grandfather clause, jobs in the financial sector are expected to drop. The second reason is that there are many complaints on the functioning of the government apparatus and the fact that civil servants demand regular wage increases (Drayer, 2019). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics this information is inaccurate c.q. that table 6 is not recognized by the CBS. According to the CBS, the Category Public Administration, Defense and Compulsory Assured is the second best-paid category, only topped by the category Free Professions, Science, and Technical Activities. The CBS continues to state that within Category Public Administration, Defense and Compulsory Assured there are subcategories who are very well compensated, driving the average of the group up (Martina, 2019).

### Gemiddeld salaris per beroepsgroep

|                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Wetgevers / managers    | Naf. 6763 |
| Professionals           | Naf. 5628 |
| Assistent professionals | Naf. 3779 |
| Kantoormedewerkers      | Naf. 2583 |
| Dienstverleners         | Naf. 1797 |
| Landbouwkundigen        | Naf. 1316 |
| Trade werknemers        | Naf. 2034 |
| Machine-operators       | Naf. 2283 |
| Lagere beroepen         | Naf. 1227 |

### Gemiddeld salaris van de economische groepen

|                     |           |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Productie           | Naf. 3305 |
| Utilities           | Naf. 4530 |
| Bouw                | Naf. 2430 |
| Handel              | Naf. 2319 |
| Horeca              | Naf. 1800 |
| Transport           | Naf. 3521 |
| Financiële diensten | Naf. 5195 |
| Zakelijke diensten  | Naf. 3341 |
| Overheid            | Naf. 4908 |
| Onderwijs           | Naf. 4284 |
| Gezondheid          | Naf. 3088 |
| Andere diensten     | Naf. 2021 |

Bron: Centraal Bureau Statistiek Curacao

Table 6: Wages per occupation (Drayer, 2019)

Many self-employed workers are not able to make a living wage; the percentage of people who are self-employed dropped by -18.8% in one year. The number of people in permanent service has dropped with -7.7%. On the other hand, casual workers/freelancers increased dramatically (26.4%). The “other” category has increased to 60.5% (table 7).

| Economic position of employed population, September – October 2014 - 2018: Total           |            |      |      |      |      |                                   |
|--|------------|------|------|------|------|-----------------------------------|
|  | Percentage |      |      |      |      | Percentage mutations<br>2017-2018 |
|  | 2014       | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |                                   |
| Employer   | 3.2        | 1.8  | 2.2  | 2.1  | 2.2  | -1.1                              |
| Self-employed  | 7.9        | 8.5  | 8.3  | 9.4  | 7.8  | -18.8                             |
| Employee in permanent service  | 62.5       | 62.1 | 58.9 | 63.1 | 60.0 | -7.7                              |
| Employee in temporary service  | 12.6       | 14.9 | 14.8 | 14.9 | 15.0 | -1.8                              |
| Casual worker/freelancer   | 10.3       | 10.5 | 13.3 | 9.3  | 12.0 | 26.4                              |
| Other 1  | 1.3        | 1.5  | 2.5  | 0.9  | 1.6  | 60.5                              |
| Unknown/not reported   | 2.2        | 0.6  | 0.1  | 0.3  | 0.8  | 183                               |
| 1 Other included e.g. trainee, employee working for an employment agency ('uitzendkracht') |            |      |      |      |      |                                   |
| Source: Labour Force Survey 2018   |            |      |      |      |      |                                   |

Table 7: Economic position of employed population

The informal sector has increased from 33.3% in 2016 to 39.8% in 2017. This is due to the already mentioned factor of economic development (CBS, 2017).

There are several estimates of the number of undocumented people on the island. One estimate of the NGO helping Venezuelan refugees (Stichting Vluchtelingen) is that there are approximately 15,000 Venezuelan refugees on the island (Drayer, 2018). The effect of this group on the labour market is officially unknown. Anecdotal evidence indicates that they are active in the labour market and operate below the minimum wage. There is also evidence that many females get involved in illegal prostitution.

According to Pablo (2019), the social economic situation is characterized by:

- Inequality in society
- Institutionalized discrimination
- Lack of social mobility
- Weak social policy

This situation will get worse if the refinery closes down, with 3,000 to 4,000 jobs being lost. If families of employees are counted, then 16,000 people will be affected ("Impact sluiting Isla is enorm," 2019).

### 3 Future of Work

What do experts say about the future of work? For the purpose of this article, we will not go into much detail in this regard because nobody can predict the future. There are two extreme positions on this matter: Those who believe that technological innovation will destroy jobs (Goede, 2017) and those on the other side of the spectrum who believe new jobs will be created. Of course, there is the third position that states both positions are right. To illustrate this, we cite two articles: BBC News (2019) and Seager (2016):

Up to 800 million global workers will lose their jobs by 2030 and be replaced by robotic automation, a new report from a consultancy has found.

The study of 46 countries and 800 occupations by the McKinsey Global Institute found that up to one-fifth of the global work force will be affected.

It said one-third of the workforce in richer nations like Germany and the US may need to retrain for other jobs.

Machine operators and food workers will be hit hardest, the report says.

Poorer countries that have less money to invest in automation will not be affected as much, according to McKinsey (BBC News, 2019).

50% of bosses plan on replacing workers with automated systems.

1.7 million jobs created by 2022, compared to 984,000 eliminated.

54% of workers must re- or upskill by 2022.

The workforce is likely to shift towards part-time, freelance work. We're essentially heading towards a two-tier society. There will be a lot of unemployment – and perhaps no impetus to help these people. There will end up being a division between the few jobs that need humans, and those that can be automated. (Seager, 2016).

It used to be that experts believed labour-intensive jobs were the only ones under threat from technology. However, developments like artificial intelligence have made clear that even knowledge workers will be affected in the future. The most threatened jobs are those in the financial sector. The least threatened jobs are those in the creative sector (orange economy)<sup>1</sup> (table 8) (Hutt, 2016).

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<sup>1</sup> A creative economy is based on people's use of their creative imagination to increase an idea's value. John Howkins developed the concept in 2001 to describe economic systems where value is based on novel imaginative qualities rather than the traditional resources of land, labour, and capital (Wikipedia).

### Skills Stability, 2015–2020, industries overall

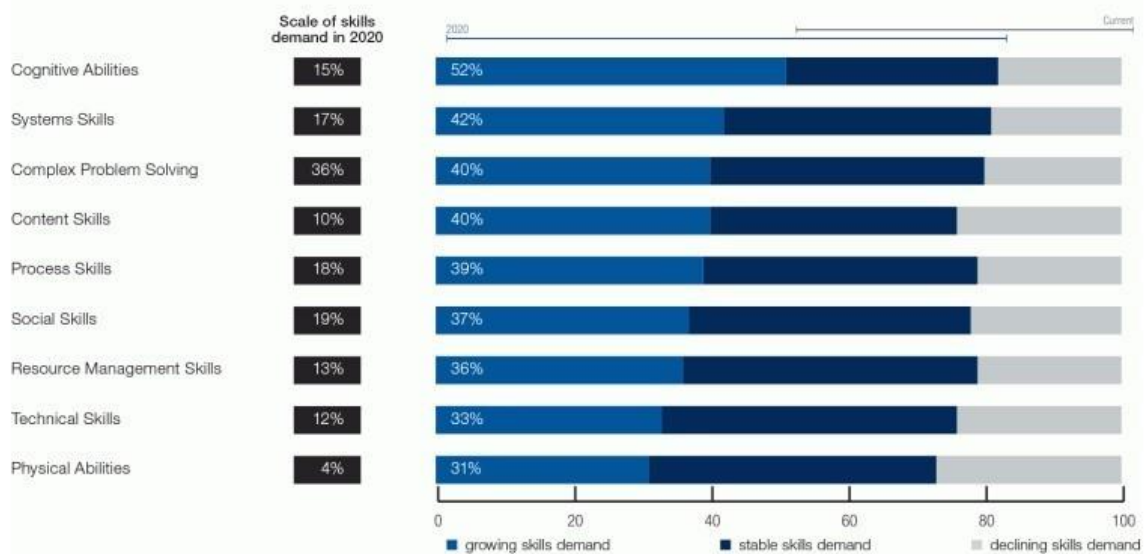
| Industry group                           | Unstable   | Stable     |
|--|------------|------------|
| <b>Industries Overall</b>                | <b>35%</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Media, Entertainment and Information     | 27%        | 73%        |
| Consumer                                 | 30%        | 71%        |
| Healthcare                               | 29%        | 71%        |
| Energy                                   | 30%        | 70%        |
| Professional Services                    | 33%        | 67%        |
| Information and Communication Technology | 35%        | 65%        |
| Mobility                                 | 39%        | 61%        |
| Basic and Infrastructure                 | 42%        | 58%        |
| Financial Services & Investors           | 43%        | 57%        |

Source: Future of Jobs Survey, World Economic Forum.

Table 8: Skills Stability, 2015 – 2020, industries overall (Hutt, 2016)

In the future, the following skills will be in demand (graphic 2):

**Figure 10: Change in demand for core work-related skills, 2015-2020, all industries**  
Share of jobs requiring skills bundle as part of their core skill set, %



Source: Future of Jobs Survey, World Economic Forum.

Graphic 2: Change in demand for core work-related skills, 2015 – 2020, all industries (Hutt, 2016)

The International Labour Organization Committee on the Future of Work has presented the findings of two years of work and has come to similar conclusions (ILO, 2019). The future workforce will be about creating the conditions and institutions to enable people to make the transition into the new jobs and new skills.

Nobody has a crystal ball to predict the future, though it is clear we are entering a new era. In this context, we hold to the prediction of John Maynard Keynes back in the 1930s: The workweek could be reduced to fifteen hours a week (Elliott, 2008). The reason we are not there yet is because we consider this outcome socially undesirable. This has led to a reality of many senseless jobs—a challenge created entirely by human sensibilities. The future of work also poses the question of where we will work and how long we will work (“Veel werken is niet meer van deze tijd,” 2019; Mijn bullshitbaan, 2019).

## 4 The Dialogue

Even before the *Startnotitie*, the dialogue on the future of work started within the community, the conversation was incentivized by local and global events. Locally in a short period, many jobs were lost in several industries such as banking and financial services, airline, media, and retail. The jobs in the oil industry are unsure, due to the fact that the contract with the current Venezuelan operator expires this year and the search for a new operator is still going on.

On a global level, publications of the ILO and World Economic Forum have triggered dialogue in Singapore and Estonia as well, specifically regarding e-government.

### 4.1 Platforms with foresight

A few platforms should have a top-down view on the future of work. One of these is the Social Economic Council, which is very active on all social and economic issues and very early on taking the initiative to enable the dialogue on the future of work. In this capacity, they instituted a monitoring group to capture the dialogue in society presented in this publication.

A second one is *Diálogo Nashonal*; however, there is an impression that the topic of the future of work is not very high on their agenda. We are not quite sure because we are under the impression that this platform operates as a sort of black box.

In January 2017, the Smart Nation Platform was introduced. In June 2018, the platform was back in the public eye (“Proyecto Smart Nation no ta kanando manera ta spera,” 2018). The platform remained a black box until the Social Economic Council and a member of the taskforce future of work were invited to attend their 7<sup>th</sup> meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2019. There is also a Vision Paper Smart Nation Platform (2018) in which the future of work is indirectly addressed.

Another such platform is the media, which has been confronted with disruptive technology. Several newspapers stopped. Many media outlets shifted their business model to now operate under the umbrella of new media.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2018, Pais Television opened its new studios in downtown Willemstad and organized the mega event ‘Biba Willemstad’ (BIBA Willemstad, 2019). One of the themes was the Future of Work, because the CEO of the station was involved in the process of preparing the *Startnotitie*. Apart from Pais, only a few talk shows addressed the topic of the future of work. A few newspapers have a section discussing technology and hence the future of work. The topic is also in the media when organizations like the Social Economic Council (SER) have a media roadshow on related topics.

### 4.2 Government

In January 2019, the *Groeistrategie* (‘Growth Strategy’) of the government was published. It does not elaborate specifically on the future of work. It is based on traditional sectors like industry, oil refinery, international financial sector, and tourism. Innovation, alternative energy, and agriculture are mentioned but not further elaborated upon. Flexibility in the labour market and privatization of the state-owned telecommunication company and harbor form an essential part of the strategy. The topic of the labour market is directly related to the future of work. The strategy mentions flex-



security, a new approach of social security and the privatization of telecommunication industry is noticeable as it is essential in shaping the future. The Government is of the opinion that telecommunications are better when governed via the market because that is the only way to invest continuously. The position regarding the labour market is not new and was also brought back into focus by the International Monetary Fund in their country report in January 2019 (IMF, 2019). The strategy states in the near future, 1,800 vacancies will be available in the hospitality sector (“Nu 300 banen in toerisme,” 2019).

The *Bon Bini for Business* is based partly on the implementation of the *Groeistrategie* policy document. The objective is to pull Curaçao’s economy out of recession. On the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2019, a conference was held on the initiative of Prime Minister Rhuggenaath. A significant group of businesses from the Netherlands assisted. Among the topics addressed were Curaçao as a living lab, the future of the harbor, and transitioning to alternative energy (*Bon Bini for Business Curaçao – Investment Summit*. 2019).

The follow-up of the *Bon Bini for Business* will be a conference on Smart City Willemstad, scheduled for later in 2019.

On the 14th and 15th of March 2019, *The Road to GES2019 Caribbean*, an initiative by former US President Obama, was held in Curaçao. The future of work had a special place on the agenda (*The Road to GES2019 Caribbean 14-15 March 2019*, 2019) and was hosted by the SER.

The refinery operation is in jeopardy after a hundred years of uninterrupted operation. This is also addressed in the *Groeistrategie*. The unions went on a strike to demand job security. Although the refinery is a private business and the facilities are property of a state-owned enterprise, this issue is a matter of national interest so the government is closely involved.

At the end of March 2019, the state-owned telecom company UTS was sold to Liberty Latin America as was stated in the *Groeistrategie* (“Curaçao houdt netto 95 miljoen over aan verkoop van aandelen overheidsnv UTS – Koninkrijksrelaties,” 2019). This is also part of the *Groeistrategie*. This process placed the topic of the future of work on the national agenda. Due to the accelerated pace of technological innovation in the industry, UTS could no longer keep up with the global competition and had to look for a partner. The process ended when the partner bought all shares of UTS. It is clear the Future of Work was happening in Curaçao. The old economy is fading away. In some cases, the old economy was jeopardizing its own existence. An example of this is the refinery, with the union and the workers striking when there were only a few months left to attract a new strategic partner.

The Central Bank is leading the local discussion on Fintech. A white paper on block chain and crypto currency was presented. The status of the paper is unknown (Taskforce voor cryptocurrency, 2018). There is no explicit link made with the future of work.

The concept of e-government was introduced in the 1990s by a consultant. After a long period waiting for results, there are some results like e-tax and some processes that have been redesigned and automated. In November 2018 the government was visited by an expert from Estonia who was astonished that there was no CIO (*chief information officer*) appointed. In March 2019 the Minister Policy, Planning and Service in charge stated that he is about to rollout almost sixty new e-products.

CBS published a study on the demographic developments till 2050 (CBS, 2019). The question is if the future of work was taken in to consideration. Whatever the case, this study serves as valuable input for the dialogue on the future of work.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2018, Cinex hosted their third summit. The theme was smart nation. The future of work was not directly addressed but was implicitly on the table. Cinex could be the leader in promoting innovation by attracting investors. However, up to now many key figures do not attend their summits. This was compensated by good coverage by Antilliaans Dagblad<sup>2</sup>.

In April 2019, the Minister of Public Health, Nature, and Environment hosted an event, *Curatech*, to create awareness on the future of work in the agriculture sector.

### 4.3 Private sector

The future is already here if one looks at the banking sector. Due to the introduction of technology, many jobs are disappearing. The banks postponed this for a long time, but in the last two years, this was no longer possible.

There are others in the financial sector contributing to the dialogue. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2017, the Algemeen Pensioenfonds van Curaçao (APC) organized a conference on the future, to celebrate its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Implicitly the future of work was addressed. After the event, it was business as usual.

The Chamber of Commerce conducted research among its members. The results indicate that businesses expect that technology will impact their industry but that most are not considering a change to their business model.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2019, the chamber announced that they will soon publish a paper on the economy and the future of work and that they wanted to assume a leadership role. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2019, the paper *Ban Sembra Awe, pa Kosechá Mañan!* was published via social media. It states that the island has been disconnected from global trends for thirty years and that new sectors need to be developed. In spite of this several sectors they endorse are traditional sectors. Much emphasis is placed on the educational system that should prepare people aligned with the new economic sector.

It is remarkable that the Vereniging Bedrijfsleven Curaçao (VBC) does not really participate in the dialogue on the future of work till May 2019, given the fact that VBC is a social partner. From sources from the International Federation of Employers, we understand that this is the global trend private and union leaders are lacking in.

There are other initiatives within the private sector. On 11 October 2018, the think tank *Think to Do* was launched. One of the initiators is Bas Kooyman. The main theme is the fourth industrial revolution. Not much is known about the people involved and after the launch it remained quite.<sup>3</sup>

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, the newspaper *Antilliaans Dagblad* reported on the event Embrace The Digital Future. It was opened by the Prime Minister and focused on innovation in several sectors. The event was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2018 by the IT-companies Infotrans and VMWare as a marketing and information session<sup>4</sup>.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2019 the bankruptcy of the Insel Air looked imminent. Significant number of jobs were lost. In April 2019, the Ministries of SOAW and Economic Development created an entity

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<sup>2</sup> <https://antilliaansdagblad.com/Curaçao/18541-hoog-niveau-op-cinex-congres>

<sup>3</sup> <https://thinktodoinstitute.com/>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://infotransgroup.com/embrace-the-digital-future/>

to aid workers who lose their job due to collective dismissal. The workers are supported psychologically, socially, financially, and they are assisted with creating new perspectives by either looking for a new job or starting as an entrepreneur.

Small and Medium Enterprises do not get much attention although there is policy on paper and there are facilities in place. A start-up community has emerged. It is a mixture of self-employed people, pop-up entrepreneurs, software developers and others. One of the entities is *Creative Lab' Scharloo Abou* ("Wandeling door Scharloo Abou," 2016). It is a network that lives the future of work and on occasions organizes events to dialogue about the future of work.

Only a few SMEs are involved in e-commerce. The island is still on the level of hosting conferences on the subject but might be on the verge of a breakthrough. The local market is too small and export is extremely difficult and costly because of the logistics involved with moving packages but mainly because of the lack of a good electronic paying solution. In this context, it is positive that the local available paying solution CX Pay is evolving. Despite this, there are success stories. Goisco.com and CPost are collaborating offering consumers to shop online locally.

In the travel and tourism sector, e-commerce is very common. Under the radar, Air BnB has taken off on the island. In their annual meeting, the Curaçao Hospitality and Tourism Association (Chata) addressed the issue of digitalization of the business by having Rob Westers, a general manager of KLM, as the keynote speaker ("De digitale wereld van Rob Westerman," 2019).

Alternative energy is another driver of the dialogue on the future of work. The utility company Aqualectra is transforming. A new strategic plan is in the making. The production of green energy is rising and smart technology is being introduced (smart meters, smart lanterns, and a smart grid) and also e-cars.

In Otrobanda, a Sea Water Air-Conditioning SWAC system is being implemented. Many participants of the project will be cooled in a sustainable and less expensive manner (Zakito District op Curaçao wordt gekoeld met zeewater, 2019).

On May 15<sup>th</sup> 2019, a conference on the electric car was held. It was organized by several stakeholders, including the government and Aqualectra.

All these initiatives stimulate the dialogue on the future of work.

#### 4.4 Labour unions

With the exception of a few individual union leaders, the issue of the future of work is not on the agenda. On April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the president of the ABVO union explained the consequences of the fourth industrial revolution for unions. The number of self-employed people will increase even more and the union must adapt to this new reality, otherwise the union will continue to lose members.

The unions are preoccupied with the saving of current jobs in the old industries like the oil refinery.

Another concern of the unions is the adaptation of the labour laws as mentioned in the *Groeistrategie*. They are afraid that this will lead to a situation of rapid hiring and firing on the island.

#### 4.5 NGO sector

To avoid confusion, the NGO sector is divided into sections.

#### 4.5.1 Political parties

Political parties are also involved in the dialogue on the future of work. The PAR conference was about 'the next 25 years'. During this conference, the future of work as well as education of the future was addressed. PIN organized a conference on the educational system of Finland. It is about preparing the educators to prepare learners for the future of work. It is also about entrepreneurship. In May 2019, PIN announced their house of innovation.

#### 4.5.2 Other NGOs

On March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS) held its annual board meeting in Willemstad, Curaçao (Dutch Caribbean), which was followed by an open workshop for all members.

The workshop was attended by international observers and regional and local institutions. The workshop focused on the theme *The Digital Revolution and Its Impact on the Future of Mankind*.

During the workshop there was an interchange of ideas and information regarding specific aspects related to the main theme, e.g., robotization, big data, and artificial intelligence (AI) and the way these developments affect the economy in terms of employment arrangements and working conditions. A debate was held on the way public policies should be formulated and implemented to effectively regulate the effects of the digital economy and the role social partners should play in this regard. Proper attention was given to related issues like reform of education and training systems, changes in labour legislation, the reconciliation of personal and work life, and the protection of privacy in the new economic and social environment.

Additionally, there was some review of labour and the social aspects of the digital economy, e.g., changes in work (the example of digital platforms) and opportunities to promote women's work and equality.

A smart city is an urban development vision to integrate information and communication technology (ICT) and Internet of things (IoT) technology in a secure fashion to manage a city's assets. In January 2019, the Platform Smart City 3.0 was launched. The objectives are to support the development of Willemstad as a smart city as part of the smart nation strategy and to create a shared office for entrepreneurs in the upcoming Pietermaai area. It is integrated in the platform of art *Kura di Arte*. The motivations of the entrepreneurs were that they were tired of all the talk about smart nation, smart city, and future of work. They wanted to just do it (Goede, 2018).

Curaçao Innovation & Technology Institute (Citi) foundation annually presents the famous *innovation award* as part of the strategy to stimulate innovation. In 2018, a new category Social Innovation was introduced. It was awarded to a group of inmates from the prison (Curaçao Innovation Award 2018, 2019).

Up to now, Citi and their partners did not succeed in enabling the introduction of all conditions for e-commerce. The biggest challenge is the introduction of an internet-based paying solution like PayPal. Getting Curaçao on *pull down menus* of websites also remains a challenge.

On October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Citi organized a hackathon to generate ideas to get the economy of Curaçao going. The outcome of the event is unknown.

Citi: Future of Living is a project involving the Dutch organization TNO, which is also involved in improving public transportation. On the 21st and 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2019, *Smart Cities Roadmap; Koninkrijk der Nederlanden* was presented during the *Bon Biní for Business* conference.

In November 2018, the influential Association of Accountants held their annual meeting. One of the themes was sustainable entrepreneurship. In a sense, it is a subtheme within the theme of the future of work.

The Dutch Caribbean Economists is an association of local economist. They are very active, organizing monthly meetings and publications in newspapers but have not yet addressed the issue of the future of work.

The Network of HR specialists is important in the dialogue but until now they have not presented their thought on the matter publicly. They have been invited to formulate their point of view during the mini-conference on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2019.

In the context of HR, on the 18th of September 2018, JCI organized a conference with the theme *digital nomads*. It is about attracting workers who work remotely as long as there is a good internet connection. It is unknown how many nomads flock to the island (Steven Martina, 2019).

The new hospital that will start its operations at the end of 2019 is the manifestation of the future of work. The healthcare system is being further digitalized. The new hospital is in the area of Otrobanda with an oceanfront view on the second mega pier and the construction of two new hotels. The old hospital will be transformed into a building with a mix function: residential and commercial. This is real indication of the jobs that will be created in the hospitality industry.

Last but not least, the Stichting Vluchtelingen should be mentioned. They address the issue of Venezuelan refugees on the island (Drayer, 2018).

#### 4.6 Education

It is already hard for the educational system to keep up with the future of work. This is not only due to the lack of resources but also to the lack of deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Although the system is gradually implementing 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills, the mindset of many is still one belonging to the industrial age (Goede, 2017).

On the 21st of January 2019, the author met with the committee in charge of a new institute for vocational training *Instituto nashonal di desaroyo laboral*. Due to this conversation, the future of work will be at the core. There is no information about the progress.

In March 2018, it became apparent that the University of Curaçao has adopted green methodologies. The technical school runs several labs: robots to 3-D printing labs (ICT (block chain), Drone, and Building Information Modeling), and labs for green energy (batteries, sun energy, deep sea water air-conditioning, energy generated by sea waves).

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2018, ICUC held a conference on the economic crisis, seeking answers for the question of whether layoffs were unavoidable. Later, on 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2019, ICUC organized a panel on the future of work.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2019, thirty-nine students and three faculty members of the technical department traveled to Toronto Canada on a study trip with the theme Smart City Technologies and Sustainable Technology Development.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2019, sixteen students and five members of the faculty of the technical department attended a workshop on Eco Structures in Brazil.

#### 4.7 Demographics

In May 2019, the SERs of Curaçao, Aruba, and Sint Maarten organized a conference on demography.

The Central Bureau of Statistics did a little-known projection study in 2015. This study presents five scenarios. The most optimistic scenario regarding population growth states that by 2050, the population will be 220,000 due to immigration. The opposite scenario states that the population will shrink to 146,000.

The topic of demography is discussed in several ways:

- Recently it was recorded that more people are leaving the island than new people establishing themselves (Curaçao .nu/Redactie, 2019).
- For decades, brain drain has been discussed. Due to the design of the educational system, bright minds leave the island and often do not return and are not available for work on the island. Though connectivity makes it possible to avoid this in the future.
- In the last two years, the number of refugees from Venezuela increased and it is difficult for the island to cope with this phenomenon.
- The population is ageing with the consequences of the need of more facilities and the increased cost of care.
- The legal age to retire has been increased to sixty-five years.
- Youth unemployment and how to involve the current generation that is finishing schooling.
- This topic is also discussed when some state that the population must grow till at least 250,000 or 350,000 inhabitants to have a volume for the economy to work.

All the above topics directly or indirectly relate to the future of work.

#### 4.8 Climate Change

The topic climate change is directly discussed by a small group consisting of professionals working at the meteo and the activists. Indirectly, the topic is relevant when it comes to preparation for the hurricane season. The quality of the climate impacts the future of the refinery.

## 5 Analysis

There is more than one Curaçao. There is a Curaçao that has not experienced economic growth for a long time, where jobs are lost every day. The government and other stakeholders are impotent to handle the problems. This Curaçao is in crisis and the end is not in sight yet.

There is another Curaçao where startups are taking off, where mainly young entrepreneurs operating on digital platforms are very successful and even the sky is not the limit. Government is a partner and these entrepreneurs experience no red tape. When one is in this universe, the other seems not to exist.

Have you experienced this too? I wonder which of these Curaçaos is real or if they co-exist. I wonder if this parallel universe is hiding and tries to stay as far as possible from the other universe. (“Het cirkeltje rond: de Entrepreneur op Reis,” 2019).

Another conclusion is that the dialogue on the future of work is scattered and uncoordinated. There is no real dialogue on the future of work taking place. This document presented dialogue on the future of work reconstructed based on what organizations and stakeholders are communicating in the broadest sense of the word: conferences held, press releases, news items, projects planned, and in execution. All social partners (government, private sector, and unions) are concerned on current pressing issues regarding work and have insufficiently defined their position on the future of work.

In fact, this dialogue is not new at all but a replay of the previous one of over ten years ago, in 2008. The previous conversation was contrary to the current dialogue well-structured and orchestrated. That dialogue resulted in the report: *Labour Force Development Policy and Structural Proposal; A Herculean Proposal with Herculean Tasks!* (Rhuggenaath, Alcala-Wallé, Davelaar, 2008). The objectives were:

1. A community of wealth creators: persons who have personal savings
2. National prosperity
3. Economic stability
4. 95% employment by 2026 and in some sectors by 2016
5. Reduction of poverty
6. No more that 5% of the citizens living below the poverty line
7. A workforce that sees meaning in its work and has the latest globally competitive skills
8. A workforce that is flexible and responsive
9. A workforce that has positive work ethics, attitude, and motivation
10. A workforce that includes a balance of local and guest workers, temporary and casual workers
11. A workforce that has person in the right place with the right skills, attitudes, and beliefs to contribute to their family, the community and the labour and economic sectors they have chosen

12. A workforce that works for a globally competitive wage that contributes to increased economic growth
13. A safe and healthy work environment
14. A clear, measurable concept of the household “basket of goods”
15. At least one person in every household is employed
16. An increase in minimum wage
17. A comprehensive labour policy that is world renowned and a workforce that is renowned in the region
18. Globally competitive economy
19. Direct link and synergy between labour and education policy
20. Life-long learning with synchronized formal and informal learning for persons of all ages
21. Youth who are either at school or at work
22. More competitive entrepreneurs
23. A shift in mindset toward “saving for the future”
24. Motivating pay schemes that reward for productivity
25. A synchronized transportation system that enables working parents for school and work hour coordination and childcare.
26. A capital-based national pension plan for every worker, and risk insurance that supports healthy work and family environments
27. A lean and synchronized social welfare system that is able to meet the needs of those who need it most
28. Compliance with long-standing ILO and OECD recommendations
29. Continued and improved tripartisanism
30. A national skills bank that informs conscious decisions about planning in targeted sectors of the economy
31. Clearly defined and synchronized long-term targeted sectors for growth for the next 10-15 years
32. Synchronized policies

These objectives are the same as the dialogue on the future of work in 2019.

Even before 2008, in 1999 *Vishon Kòrsou* discussed creating incubators, cultivating entrepreneurship, training programs, reducing red-tape, and jobs in the agricultural sector.



In 2013, there was a new opportunity to discuss on the future of work when the Member of Parliament Mrs. Leeflang presented the *Landsverordening tot de oprichting van een Jeugd Agrarische* (Jeugd Agrarische Brigade, JAB), a brigade with the objective to introduce over nine-hundred young people to modern agriculture. It was considered unrealistic.

In 2016, the National Development Plan was ratified by the government. At that moment there was more optimism about the future of work:

Other important export businesses, Marine, Logistics, Freezone, Transnational Education, Clean Energy and ICT, have focused plans for dealing with current challenges, including the need for capital investments for aging infrastructure, consideration of alternative business models, and other targeted solutions. This will require examination of Public Private Partnership (PPP) options which could provide the capital to expand markets for several State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) as well as introduce productivity and innovation. Thousands of new jobs stand to be created in the next five years (Government of Curaçao, 2016).

The conclusion is we are having this discussion periodically but not much is undertaken between the new discussion and the previous one. Often, the last discussion is not even revisited.

Good governance is a *conditio sine qua non* for economic development and hence the creation of jobs. The deficiencies of good governance might explain the lack of economic growth. Fighting corruption is urgently needed to shape the future of work. One example is the way jobs are lost because banks are de-risking in the fight against potential money laundering. For example, gambling businesses have a hard time staying with their current banks and finding an alternative. The consequences are that jobs in this sector are unsure (Gaspar, Mauro & Medas, 2019; Transparency International, 2013).

## 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

There is no director (regisseur) of the process of dialogue on the future of work. Actually, there is not a real dialogue taking place but a number of parallel monologues. The National dialogue on future of work must be taken to the next level and the future of work must be seriously addressed.

There is not an actual plan focusing on the future of work. Maybe the plan of the Smart Nation platform is such a plan? Or the *Groeistrategie*? Or the ICT Master plan of the past might be an option.

The number of self-employed workers is rising. These workers have little protection and have to take care of their pension and healthcare themselves.

The new generation and the disabled workers must get a seat at the table to discuss their future.

The policy on the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector must be implemented more aggressively.

There is an unofficial economy of which little is known with current estimates that 2,000 people work in this sector (“Werkloosheid stijgt,” 2018).

Education, especially vocational training and STEM, are of essence.

|                                  | <b>Recommendation</b>  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Platforms have a helicopter view | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Diálogo Nashonal</i> must address the future of work more explicit. All social partners should present their position on this matter.</li> <li>• The social partners should address the labour laws.</li> <li>• The media should cover the theme more fundamentally.</li> </ul>  |
| Government                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing National Development Plan should be enriched by incorporating the future of work. The <i>Groeistrategie</i> should add new economic sectors to the plan and focus more on work and not primary on investments and economic growth. This can be achieved by combining the strategy with the Smart Nation initiative. Collaboration with Cinex is important.</li> <li>• The government should further intensify the efforts to be data driven. The further implementation of e-government should contribute to this objective.</li> <li>• The further exploration of Fintech is in line with the future of work.</li> <li>• The government should evaluate and adjust the labour laws.</li> <li>• The Smart City project is an innovative way to stimulate the creation of new jobs. This should be combined with implementing an effective SME policy.</li> </ul> |

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
|                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A realistic policy on migration should be developed focusing on the future of work.</li> </ul>   |
| Private sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The sector should develop a vision on the future of work. In this vision, SMEs and start-ups must be at the center.</li> <li>• The protection of the self-employed workers should be developed.</li> <li>• An electronic paying solution is a priority to enable e-commerce and export by SMEs.</li> <li>• Start a business incubator for SMEs/ Start-ups in an old school building.</li> <li>• Offer SME a tax holiday of two years.</li> <li>• Alternative energy could be developed as a cluster.</li> </ul>  |
| Labour Unions  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The unions should articulate their vision on the future of work. In this vision they should formulate their strategy for the new economy and the future of work.</li> <li>• Unions should help come up with alternatives for the existing labour laws.</li> </ul>  |
| NGO sector     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs should collaborate more and join forces.</li> </ul>   |
| Education      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The institutionalized dialogue between stakeholders on education should be further developed.</li> <li>• Execution of a plan is essential. Many plans are not executed.</li> <li>• Vocational training is essential. This type of education is like a crisis within a crisis.</li> <li>• Bold digitalization of schools is of essence.</li> <li>• 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills and STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) must be introduced right away.</li> <li>• Teach programming at all levels.</li> <li>• Start a university degree ICT program.</li> <li>• Adapt the scholarship policy to meet the needs of work of the future.</li> </ul> |
| Demographic    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A policy on demography (population size) should be developed and implemented. The target should be realistic.</li> </ul>   |
| Climate Change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The national dialogue on climate change must be started.</li> </ul>  |

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# The Future of Work in Curaçao 2019



The world of work is undergoing a major process of change. In order to understand and to respond effectively to these new challenges the International Labour Organization (ILO), in commemoration of its 100th anniversary this year, has launched a 'Future of Work initiative' in order to be able to advance its mandate for social justice. As a member state of the ILO, Curaçao is working hard on finding a better way to promote a future of work based on inclusive growth, social justice and decent work for all.



MINISTERIO DI  
DESARYO SOCIAL,  
LABOR I BIENESTAR

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Sociaal-Economische  
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# INVITATION

The  
*Future of Work in*  
**Curacao**  
2019


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DESARROLLO SOCIAL,  
LABOR I BIENESTAR  
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 Social-Economische  
Raad Curacao  
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## UITNODIGING

MINICONFERENTIE 'FUTURE OF WORK'

In de aanloop naar de 108ste sessie van de Internationale Arbeidsorganisatie ILO, die van 10 tot en met 21 juni 2019 zal worden gehouden in Genève, Zwitserland, en die in het teken zal staan van de viering van het honderdjarig bestaan van de ILO, zal op 11 mei 2019 een miniconferentie worden gehouden in de conferentiezaal van het Ministerie van Bestuur, Planning en Dienstverlening (BPD) in het World Trade Center (WTC). De miniconferentie concentreert zich rond het thema Toekomst van Werk.

Datum: 11 mei 2019  
 Tijd: 9:00 – 12:00  
 Locatie: WTC, zaal Ministerie van Bestuur, Planning en Dienstverlening, op de derde verdieping (Piscadera z/n)

### Programma van de Miniconferentie:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Vanaf 08:30 uur: | Inloop en registratie   |
| 09:00 uur        | Openings toespraak door de Minister van Sociale Ontwikkeling, Arbeid en Welzijn (SOAW)<br>Dhr. Hensely Koelman  |
| 09:05 uur        | Presentatie door de fungerend Voorzitter en de Algemeen Secretaris van de Sociaal-Economische Raad (SER) over het traject 'Future of Work'<br>Dhr. John Jacobs<br>Dhr. Raúl Henriquez |
| 09:20 uur        | Presentatie van de conclusies, bevindingen en aanbevelingen uit het concept-rapport 'Future of Work'<br>Dhr. Miguel Goede   |
| 09:35 uur        | Presentatie 'Future of Work en educatie' door de Minister van Onderwijs, Wetenschap, Cultuur en Sport (OWCS)<br>Mw. Marilyn Alcalá-Wallé  |
| 09:50 uur        | Vakbondsperspectief op 'Future of Work'<br>Dhr. Wendell Muelen  |
| 10:00 uur        | Bedrijfsleven perspectief op 'Future of Work'<br>Dhr. Clark Russel  |
| 10:10 uur        | Koffiepauze   |
| 10:25 uur        | Economische dimensie van 'Future of Work'<br>Dhr. Rony Calmera  |
| 10:35 uur        | 'Future of Work' vanuit HR-perspectief<br>Mw. Veronika de Sampayo Garrido   |
| 10:45 uur        | Perspectief van een entrepreneur op 'Future of Work'<br>Dhr. Denneth van der Veen   |
| 10:55 uur        | Samenvatting perspectieven<br>Dhr. Miguel Goede   |
| 11:05 uur        | Paneldiscussie met inbreng van het publiek  |
| 12:00 uur        | Sluiting  |

Inschrijving via [www.ser.cw](http://www.ser.cw).

Het Ministerie van SOAW De Sociaal Economische Raad



## Appendix

## Speech Mini-Conference “Future of Work”

**Minister SOAW, Hensley Koeiman**

**May 11<sup>th</sup> 2019**

Excellences, distinguished guests, good morning,

### **What is the future of work?**

It is May 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 when I write this speech. There is no better day to reflect on the future of work than this day. It is as inspiring as the thought that the ILO is commemorating 100 years of existence and invited our country to start this dialogue on the Future of Work.

The issue of decent work is very personal to me. Not only because I am a passionate worker and come from a family of hardworking people, something I also installed into our own children but also because of all the young people I engage with.

Due to technology work has changed and will continue to change. Many jobs disappeared and new jobs are emerging. People need to prepare and adapt to these changes. As the government we must enable this change in dialogue and collaboration with all partners in society and also on an international level.

### **Will there be more or less jobs in the future?**

We do not know the future. They say the best way to predict the future is to create it. One thing is for sure work of the future will be different from today. It is our responsibility to make sure that there is decent work for everyone. We should avoid senseless jobs. In this context I am positive because the fact that we are living longer creates the need for jobs to take care of elderly people. There is nothing more noble and rewarding than caring for a human being. Given my age you can imagine I take a special interest in the policy area.

### **What is your story of the past two years of Curaçao?**

As minister of SOAW the last couple of years I have been confronted with this issue in many ways. Many citizens had to start looking for another job: Insel Air, UTS, to mention a few. Opportunities for vocational training disappeared. Many jobs are still uncertain, currently especially the refinery. We responded by supporting these people and create hope and alternatives. This is not easy because for the last couple of years the economy has barely seen growth and the unemployment rate, especially the youth unemployment, is high.

### **What is the point of view of the group you represent on the future of work in Curaçao?**

The government is well aware of the situation and that is why we are implementing the *groei strategie*. We believe that direct foreign investment like Damen and Corendon will create new jobs for our people. Of course the people must be prepared. We are working on that too.

**How do you see the effects of the factors, Innovation, Demographics and climate change?**

Innovation will come up with solutions for the challenges we are now facing.

Being an island of immigrants demography was always a factor. On the short term we have to handle the Venezuelan crisis. We must help our fellow human beings within our possibilities.

Climate change is not addressed enough in our society. This has to change because SIDS will be impacted the most. There are NGO's working on raising awareness on this matter and the government should support their work.

**What is your sector doing or what will it do in the future and what do you expect from the other sectors?**

I am pleased to notice that the private sector and labour unions also have evolved their vision on the future of work and there is a common ground to work together. I invite all of us to create our future together.

Thank you for your attention. I do wish you all a pleasant and - above all - effective conference.

Mr. Hensely Koeiman, Minister of Social Development, Labour and Welfare



## Speech Mini-Conference “Future of Work”

**Acting President Social, Economic Council of Curaçao, mr. John Jacobs**

**Director/Secretary-General of technical staff, mr. R. Henriquez**

**May 11, 2019**

Excellencies, distinguished guests, good morning,

### **What is the future of work?**

Being here on your free Saturday morning indicates that you are well aware of the impact and changes that awaits us in the near future. Not only based on the impact that the fourth Industrial Revolution will have on all of our lives, working or not, but also based on climate change, demographic changes, and the like. That is, for our Social Economic Council, the sum total of the meaning of the Future of Work.

### **Will there be more or fewer jobs in the future?**

Some of you may have experienced firsthand or in your circle of friends or family what the future of work entails and what kinds of consequences it can have when a company, a branch, or sector goes digital. It can range from losing your job to working more efficiently and getting more results and having happier employees or colleagues as they do not have to perform repetitive tasks. So, the future of work entails some people losing their jobs, some people getting to produce more and becoming efficient, and new jobs being created that do not exist today. Overall, I think work will become better.

The Future of Work being a global challenge has been the theme of a wide array of reports: Technological Innovation, supply chain trade, and workers in a globalized world (April 15<sup>th</sup> 2019) issued by World Trade Organization (WTO), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank Group<sup>5</sup> just to mention one. Though of course we must not forget the International Labour Organization (ILO) of which her Global Commission on the future of work issued her report not so long ago entitled: Work for a brighter future<sup>6</sup> on this theme.

### **What is the story of the past two years in Curaçao?**

Just as in other countries, all sectors in Curaçao will experience some degree of impact on all aspects of the future of work, though on our island it was mostly felt in the telecommunication sector (UTS), the bank sector, and the insurance sector. These sectors have had to deal with laying off personnel due primarily to technological advancements, which of course has had an impact on our social-economic situation.

### **What is the point of view of the group you represent on the future of work in Curaçao?**

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news19\\_e/publ\\_15apr19\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news19_e/publ_15apr19_e.htm)

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/publication/wcms\\_662410.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/publication/wcms_662410.pdf)

Though of course those working have also had to deal with changes in their work, some professions (accountants) have organized seminars to address the changes and using technology at all hours of the day is becoming more common. Needless to say, the foregoing also has an impact on our society. As our Social-Economic Council had observed the huge social-economic impact of all this, we have **teamed up with the Minister of Social Development, Labour and Welfare to organize sessions with all relevant actors in society to discuss this theme**. After those sessions we noticed a range of activities with this as theme.

**How do you see the effects of the factors, innovation, demographics, and climate change?**

Although the challenges because of the future of work are evident some countries have been able to use these changes to their advantage, so why not us? I am convinced that we can use that also to our advantage given of course if we have the conditions in place. One of the conditions that we do have in place is that our internet speed and connectivity should be used better to our advantage, portraying ourselves as using our human capital (including innovation strength) to contribute to the global supply chains. Given the dimensions of our demographic development and the climate change predictions for island states and Small Island Development States the foregoing might be our best bet to work for a brighter future in social-economic perspective.

**What is your sector doing or what will it do in the future and what do you expect from the other sectors?**

Considering my role at our chamber of commerce and to address what my “sector” is going to do and what is expected from other sectors, I would like to end by referring you to our recent vision on the future entitled: “Ban sembra awe, pa nos kosechá mañan”.<sup>7</sup> There we stress, just like the aforementioned ILO report, the importance of people and especially investing in them.

Mr. Raul Henriquez is Director and Secretary General of the Social Economic Council (SER) of Curaçao



Mr. John Jacobs is acting President of the Social Economic Council (SER) of Curaçao

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/company/curacao-chamber-of-commerce/>

## Future of Work: An economic perspective for the small island developing state of Curaçao

**By Runy Calmera**

### **What is Future of Work?**

A child is born today. Congratulations. In about fifteen years, she will enter the labour market officially and will spend fifty years of her life working. She is a worker. She will be part of the active population between 15-65 years old.

She will be part of the labour force, either as employed or unemployed. She could be either working as a private employee or a public employee. Receiving a wage, paying premiums, becoming part of a labour union, paying taxes, a pension. And then after 50 years, she spends her time until 80 years of age and dies. A life well deserved. However, that is not likely to be the future of work for the average born on Curaçao today. Let me define what a worker will be in the future.

A *worker* is a software program on a computer, server in the cloud, performing massive amount of work on data, information, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It could be chatting with people on a website, supporting them through a sales channel helping them pick the best book out of a collection of 1 million books. It could be a program crunching millions of data points of electric cars connected to the internet through the Internet of Things (IoT), it could be a medical digital program collecting and processing sleep patterns and health patterns of millions of people in the USA, or it could be an artificial learning program that has just be trained by sending 1 million of photos of the beautiful island of Curaçao, and categorizing all the beaches.

Millions of workers at your disposal all day long, a huge staff of digital workers. Everybody can become a boss. You can switch off these workers whenever you want. You can scale them up whenever you need more working power. There are no labour unions between you and these workers and there is no minimum wage. The “wage” of these workers is minimum; you pay per second of processing power and per kb of storage.

Everybody will be able to have hundreds of workers working for them. But not everybody will have a job.

We do not live in a static world. We live in an interconnected world where technology has and will have a huge impact on the lives of everybody born on a small island developing state of Curaçao. Let's explore some trends.

### **Will there be more jobs in the future?**

Everything that can be automated will be automated. Today, in all areas of our lives computers are taking over repetitive tasks from humans.

Curaçao has a mainly service based economy. We have importers of goods, retail (restaurants), banks, commercial services, tourism and international financial services. These are processes that can easily be taken over by computers that can process data, information, without human intervention. Banks and insurance companies nowadays have huge paper-based processes. Outside Curaçao, these processes have already been automated. These workflows have been automated by

processes. The driving force is cost reduction, improvement on performance, and higher returns on investments. This technological innovation will also be felt on Curaçao. Companies will use more online software and proven systems outside the world. This will lead to a huge eradication of repetitive jobs that can be automated.

While repetitive jobs will be obsolete there will be a demand for people that can automate these jobs. Process architects, information analyst, data scientists, programmers will be highly in demand.

The companies taking the lead in this innovation will see a huge cost reduction and improvement of their efficiency and return on investment. And become the new leaders.

The government has a huge opportunity to improve its processes. People in paper processes will lose their jobs as these processes will be digitized, will be online and will be automated. This means that there will be an exodus of public servants.

The people employed will be fewer and will have higher wages. There will be more people unemployed and this will create social unrest. Unless we invest highly in education.

### **What is my story of the past two years of Curaçao?**

The story of Curaçao over the last two years is a story of a small island in recession, accumulating debt at a flipping point. Our oil refining business that used to generate a huge amount of foreign reserves and well-paid jobs is closing down. I doubt if it can be revived for the next 50 years, while at the same time maintaining the same amount of jobs and income. If we revive it, it will be a worse deal for our people.

The international financial services business is not increasing either. With the reparation laws passed, our E-zone businesses for services is dead.

Tourism is the only flourishing business keeping us alive.

We are becoming a tourism island. Whether we like it or not, whether we think we are diversified or not. We are a tourism-based island.

There are signs that our standard of living is decreasing. This is shown by a decrease in the income per capita. This is the first sign of an economy that is breaking. This picture is the culmination of a process of the last 20 years, where we have not grown.

The economy is transitioning to a new path. We are at the end of an era of high consumption and we must transform to an era of high production if we want to keep our standard of living.

### **What is the point of view of economists about the future of work on Curaçao?**

There are many people that do not see the sense of urgency on Curaçao for transformation. They think that this is a "perfect storm." A coincidence of external factors. All the things happening now at once have been mentioned years ago. The refinery is not a coincidence. The budgetary challenges are not a coincidence.

Economists do not agree on what needs to be done. Some believe in a larger role for the government. The government will kick start the economy. I believe that the private sector is the only one that can kick start the economy. And especially the private sector that is focused outside Curaçao.

Most economists are hanging on global macro labels like “Red tape”, “Cost of Doing business”, “investment climate”. They refer to reports of the International Monetary Funds, the LTES (TAC) report, the Growth strategy, the National Development Plan. Most of those reports state that the economy is not working. It is not flexible enough. It is not adapting to external trends.

I think most economists are not focused on what is happening in the world outside us and around us. Technological trends are not picked up. We do not see the impact of external trends on us and we do not act on them. We are afraid to be the first to try new things, to experiment, to focus outwardly. Most economists focus internally.

### **How do I see the effects of the factors?**

#### **Innovation**

The effect of innovation is huge. It is disruptive. Proven technologies, if not adopted quickly, will mean that we cannot add value to the world. I believe that the main reason why our economy has been stagnant is that we do not quickly adopt proven technology. We do not quickly convert proven technology into dollars. Entrepreneurs and governments on small islands do not need to be innovators (creating innovations) but they should at least quickly use proven technologies to upgrade their processes. If this is not done it will inevitably mean, less jobs, higher unemployment for more people. Because all my systems and programs in my businesses are online, I can hire virtual assistants everywhere at globally competitive prices. A well trained virtual assistant costs \$6 an hour. Whether we have a minimum wage on Curaçao or not, this is the current price. We could raise our minimum wage and not our productivity. But this means we put ourselves out of the market. There is no isolated labour market on Curaçao. I could hire five hundred virtual assistants all over the world in the next two weeks to work for me in Curaçao, in the Netherlands, in the UK, or Australia.

The government of Curaçao has a huge opportunity to innovate. Instead of investing in physical assets like roads, the government should invest in its digital infrastructure. Because only then will it be able to deliver world class international services. Without this investment and transformation, the government will be a heavier weighting burden for the private sector that is responsible to create jobs. With this investment and innovation, the government will be the enabler of growth and transformation of the private sector.

We need to understand all government processes. We need to make a shift towards processes. We need to understand the information passed from one ministry to the other. We have organized our work in nine isolated ministries. These are silos and any functioning business has to link all these ministries together. The reality is that we often have one process that goes beyond one single ministry or minister. A simple license is a produce of two or three ministries. To set up a business on Curaçao (like a hotel) we need collaboration of multiple ministries. This innovation is an investment in the future of work.



To solve problems with the youth, we need the collaboration of multiple ministries. A youth “criminal” in the top C, had to be already screened and known and invested in at the age of seven. This can only be done when you shift to a process view and see everything connected in a single process of the Ministry of Health, Education, Justice, Economic Development. All these ministries work in one single process. The process is called: Making the people of Curaçao happier.

When we shift to this single process view instead of managing the government through single isolated ministries and invest in processes, systems architectures, and information architectures, we can increase the productivity of the public service by a factor of ten. Innovation is the best investment in the future of work.

## Demography

We are becoming older and the younger active population is not working. This is a recipe for disaster. Because the people responsible for paying premiums are fewer than the people dependent on premiums. As older people have a higher demand for healthcare services, this demographic unbalance will mean that we cannot afford our standard of living. The only way to push this in the right direction is massive entrepreneurship that is outwardly focused. To counterbalance the demographic circle, we need to strengthen the economic circle through entrepreneurship.

## Climate change

Small island developing states like Curaçao are very vulnerable. Willemstad could be literally under water in the next 50 years. Our capital is close to water and the oceans are rising. Fortunately, we are not in the hurricane belt, but our twin island nation Sint Maarten, part of our monetary union is. A higher incidence of hurricanes means that our capacity to generate foreign exchange is threatened. A hurricane on Sint Maarten means that the economy is devastated for two three years and that means no export earnings. This could affect our stability of our currency. Climate change can mean huge poverty for our people if we do not build sufficient foreign reserves.

## What will economists do?

I do not know what other economists will do. I can tell you what I think you should do, as any change starts from within.

We need to have a massive focus outside Curaçao. We need to have a massive focus on becoming international entrepreneurs. We need to tell and raise each child born today that there will **be no work in the future**. The illusion that you get work when you become 15 and you work for 50 years should not be passed on to the next generation. If you pass it, you are creating an unemployed person, a person who cannot adapt to forces around her. You are creating a victim of the future of work. What you should pass is entrepreneurship. Creating new things. Having a vision of where to add value in the world, creating a plan for achieving that vision, forming a mastermind of likeminded team of people all over the world and putting massive action behind it. What do you want to be when you grow up? The answer used to be: Accountant, public servant, educator, working at the Isla like my dad, offshore, doctor. Change the script. The answer should be: an international business owner.

We need to create and raise up entrepreneurial people. People who go out, collaborate with others internationally, and create value for themselves and for their families. This should be done through businesses not people dependent on work and jobs. Because in the future, you cannot depend on a job.

We need to raise up children who can program and hire a massive amount of digital bots (the new workers) to process massive amount of data. We need to raise our children to become aware that everything is related, that caring about the environment is caring about yourself. People who understand climate change and the effects on raising levels of the ocean. We need to create people who accept clean energy (solar, wind, hydrogen energy) as the new norm. We need to invest massively in your education system, not a system creating “robots” that can repeat what you have thought them, and obey, but people who can use the massive amount of information already existing and create new things out of it. We need to flip the classroom, flip our minds. We need to transform ourselves to keep our standard of living.

### **What do I expect from other sectors?**

I expect you to collaborate. I expect you to work together. I expect you to not compete on the 444 square kilometers called Curaçao, and fight for a decreasing piece of pie. I expect you to see how you are related to me and I am related to you. I expect you to not see me as a bad messenger or a pessimist, but a realist. I expect you to put aside your differences with me and look outward, pick a piece of the world to excel in, and work together to take our stake.

*Runy Calmera is a macro economist, online business owner, producer of live shows and past president of the Association of Dutch Caribbean economists.*

*He inspires you and helps you turn your dream into a profitable business system that gives you financial freedom.*

*He also helps governments, investors and business owners in the Eastern Caribbean turn data into strategic analysis and create sustainable policies.*

*He has created macro-economic spreadsheet models for all the islands of the Eastern Caribbean, Curacao and Sint Maarten and has three live shows a day on his Facebook channels regarding inspiration, business, financial freedom, data, analysis and policy.*

*He is interested in the use and impact of internet technology in small island economies*



*and small businesses and solar energy on small island economies.*

*Find out more about his live shows and communities he leads at:*

*[Curacaoschoolofmanagement.org/join-community](http://Curacaoschoolofmanagement.org/join-community) (Papiamentu)*

*[Mydreambusinesscoach.com/join-community](http://Mydreambusinesscoach.com/join-community) (English)*

*[Calmera.nl/join-community](http://Calmera.nl/join-community) (English)*

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## Future of Work: A private sector perspective

**By: Clark Russel, CEO of IBIS Management Associates Inc.  
Chairman of VBC (Curaçao Association of Trade and Industry)**

### **What is the Future of Work (FoW)?**

Work is what we do to financially sustain ourselves and/or others within our modern economic framework. Work is anything which contributes towards our society. We have been brought up with the idea that work is needed to get higher up the social ladder, to compete with others, to give meaning to your life, to weave prosperity.

We also perceive working more hours in the week as being more productive. While in fact the definition of being productive (efficiency & effectiveness) is to find the best ways on how to have a higher output while maintaining the same level of input.

Furthermore, we see that the governments and social partners are keen to continue to stimulate the old school 'false' security of the permanent jobs while technology always disrupts and goes its own way. It is also not smart for employees themselves to derive certainty from the "permanent job," which we created more than a hundred years ago.

We are now at the dawn of the fourth industrial revolution. Just when everyone thought we finally understand the internet its capabilities and reach, we stand before yet another major leap that will again fundamentally change our personal lives, the way we do business, and of course the way we will perform work. Rapid technology developments in various areas will further drive our lives and specifically the way we do things to unthinkable change. The further maturing of the Internet of Things (IoT), 3D printing, easy access to free knowledge, AI, Blockchain & Smart contracts, Crypto and Digital currencies, Decentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAO's), just mention a few, will drive changes in human behavior and work for the next coming years.

### **Will there be more or fewer jobs in the future?**

In the future, it is expected that the more repetitive job types will be replaced by technology solutions, while there will be more need for purposeful jobs that will require creativity & self-leadership. The starter work force of Curaçao will have to adopt more flexible skills to be able to adapt and contribute in this changing environment. However, it is also expected that in the end, the NET effect in job numbers will remain similar.

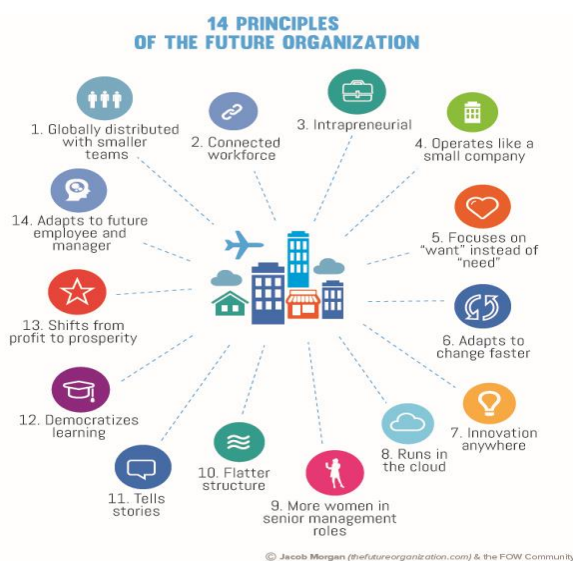
### **What is your story of the past two years for Curaçao?**

Change is inevitable so we need to go out there and embrace it. Darwin's, 'it is not the Strongest that Survive, but the most adaptable to change will' remains the important key here.

With this said, we need to create and foster a learning environment of adaptability and flexibility. We have to make sure students are not studying for jobs that will not exist anymore when they finish. Adding subjects which create the flexible & adaptive worker that can navigate the market in the near future is important.

Education cannot keep up with this new need is globally undergoing massive changes themselves. Various major universities have already announced that they will start placing most of their books online for free. Businesses and corporations will need to step up, evolve and play an important role in the re-engineering of their human capital. Schools will not be able to deliver to demand anymore.

Corporate offices should start to transform their spaces in co-working spaces inviting workers from different sectors to work in the same location. Encourage remote workers (work not limited to a specific location) in communities & network-based organizations. A paradigm shift from structured work to flexible work, Power pyramid to self-organizing systems, and from predict and control to sense in purpose.



Being in the fintech industry myself, I realized early on that blockchain technology will bring fundamental changes to our industry and our business model. Thus adapting was not enough; we needed to transform. And the only way to achieve business transformation in the technology sector is to attract and collaborate with young new bright minds. And of course, carefully listen, observe, and learn from their way of thinking, collaborating, and working.

**What is the position of your organization on the future of work for Curaçao?**

Education reform but also labour law reform is required to create the right environment for companies as well as skilled human resources to contribute to existing and new organizations and the economy of our island. As a country we will have to open up our borders to the skilled knowledge worker. So he or she can settle here and make a living while contributing to the economy of Curaçao and to help it grow.

## **How do you see the effects of:**

### **Innovation:**

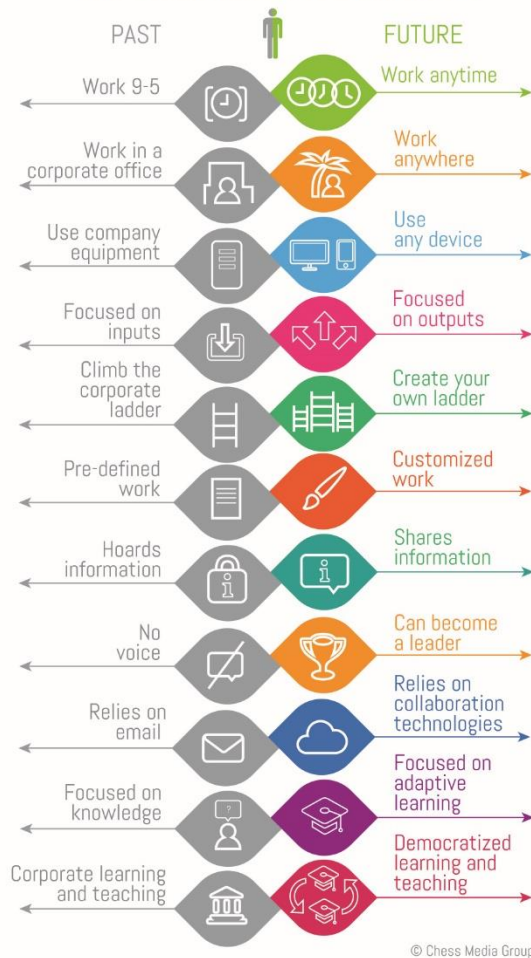
Technological innovation is unstoppable. We cannot stop nor resist innovations, not even with regulation nor law. It is more important to think about the question: what will we be doing as humans with the time we have left if we implement technology for our benefit?

In order for us to prosper, we should innovate the way we think about the location of the worker. In creating a great place to live, automatically knowledge workers will establish themselves here.

### **Demographics:**

Our population and workforce is aging fast. It is imperative that we change and, where possible, abolish our old labour and immigration laws to open up our island and make it attractive to young, flexible, and skilled workers for the fourth revolution to establish themselves here. At this point, our current educational system will not be able to leapfrog its curriculum to produce the required resources for the future of our jobs. Opening up our borders will attract these new required resources and will help corporations to further develop and transform themselves to compete and cater to regional and global markets. Local corporations must and will also play a major role in the formation / development of the locally acquired worker of the future.

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE EMPLOYEE



### Climate change:

Climate change is already impacting the way businesses establish themselves and operate. Adhering to sustainable ways of work and policies will further make organizations adopt newer technology and production techniques.

"The future is here. Jump on board the train is leaving the station."

Clark Russel is the CEO and founder of IBIS Management Associates Inc. IBIS Management (for short) was established here in Curaçao almost 20 years ago as an advisory firm on operational excellence in payment processing for Financial Institutions. IBIS Management from early on focused on exporting its knowledge and solutions to the greater Caribbean and Central America. IBIS steadily grew into a regional leader and expert on Straight-Through Processing (STP) for banks and corporations providing both self-authored in-house solutions and advisory services. Currently, over 70% of the Caribbean indigenous banks use payment technology solutions developed and delivered by IBIS Management. The company continuously evolves to respond to global demands in digitization and is currently working on Blockchain pilot projects for Caribbean commercial banks and Central Banks. This is along with research and development to guide the regulators in the process of creating and implementing local digital currencies.



As of September 2018, Clark took on the honor and challenge of Chairman of Board of the VBC, the Association of Industry and Trade of Curaçao. VBC represents the largest employer's association of Curaçao and holds official seats in various policy influencing bodies and organizations, such as the tri-partite National Dialogue Platform as well as other boards in an effort to convey the voice of the business community when it comes to policy matters.



## Future of Work: A perspective of a labour union

**By: Wendell Muelens**

Future of work is a changing concept, in some cases due to new technology. The workers must be prepared for the changes. Training, motivation, and an open mind to learn, are key. The more you can do, the more you participate and the more motivation you have, the better the future of work. One should not exclude becoming a good entrepreneur.

### **More or fewer jobs in the future?**

Dependent on the government's vision, a plan for the economy, we can create more employment in the future.

The refinery industry and other industries like tourism and the finance sector are very important to create more jobs.

My opinion is, there will be more jobs in the future.

### **The past two years of Curaçao.**

At the moment, the Curaçao economic situation isn't good. In the last two years, there was a lot of unemployment in different labour sectors.

Investors are still waiting for an economic jumpstart.

Venezuela politics situation and PDVSA refinery are the most important discussion in the last two years.

With a bad economy situation on the island, it's difficult for the unions to negotiate a better working condition for the workers.

How to protect the workers from losing their jobs was the biggest challenge for the unions for the last two years.

The government failed to change the old labour laws and they also couldn't manage to check the enforcement of these laws.

### **The rank and file's position on the future of work on Curaçao?**

Unions must motivate the members to be prepared for the future of work.

It is obvious for everybody in the labour sector that one must be motivated for the changes in their sector.

Coaching continuously, a learning process is important for everybody in the labour process.

### **The effect of the factors: Innovation, demographics, and climate change.**

Innovation and changes in demographics and climate are concerns that everyone must be prepared for it.

Some effects are good for the human being and some are bad.

Our sectors must put the spotlight on these issues and the awareness for the workers and their

family.

**What will we do and what do we expect other sectors to do?**

Work together, participate in the national dialogue, and creating nation building is good for our island Curaçao.

Wendell Muelen  
President Ugtk-Cadmu  
Vice president Ssk

## Future of Work: A Human Resource perspective for the small island developing state of Curaçao

**By Veronika de Sampayo Garrido**

**Member of the Board at HR Network Curaçao**

### **What is the Future of Work?**

The Future of Work is where innovation and collaboration will be keys to success. The way we work is changing constantly. The world is changing fast. Everything is expected to speed up and more and more teams see the added value of working agile, creative solutions are being found to keep up in very competitive surroundings.

To succeed, we need to improve how work is done, meetings should be more efficient, we need to share our ideas and information and reach goals, quickly. Therefore we need the technological improvements we see being developed all over the world. But this cannot be reached without human potential. Organizations need to strive for the right culture, to attract and retain top talent, and know how to combine the best teams based on individual talents.

Our working environment is not only changing because of expectations of the worldwide environment; it's also changing due to the expectations of the employees. When organizations do not live up to their expectation, employees can get dissatisfied, less motivated to put their best foot forward.

More and more employees are no longer expecting to work for one employer the rest of their lives. There is a shift to seeing employers as a means to develop further in their career and competencies. The moment the employer no longer lives up to their expectations, the self-motivated employee starts searching for one that does.

For many years, employers believed they could and should dictate the way their employees work. This has changed to using the employees to where their talents lie. The employees want more autonomy, they like to question the status quo and the long-used working methods. The younger employees no longer see the employer as the all-knowing entity; they like to be involved in the discussions about the future of the employer, about the products/services provided, and the improvements that can be made. More autonomy is demanded.

Worldwide, there is a shift in how employers develop teams. Due to the use of performance management and different HR tools, employers have gained insight into the different competencies they need for different roles. They also gained insights in which competencies are better developed in which employer. Wise employers who acknowledge the difference between the colleagues can put these talents to good use, form complementing teams and profit from this.

In the last decade we have also seen a rise in the amount of people who strive for a better work/life balance.

They are no longer searching for a job; they are also searching for an employer who will provide a good working environment. A place where there is room for flexibility, where their work is appreciated, where they can further develop their competencies and gain new knowledge. Worldwide, the number of part-time jobs have risen; it is time for Curaçao to follow suit and offer

more part-time opportunities. Technology has made it possible that many jobs can be done from many places, employees can log in from home and are no longer constricted to working at the office.

### **Will there be more jobs in the future?**

Some state that “everything that can be automated will be automated. Today, in all areas of our lives computers are taking over repetitive tasks from humans.” I agree with this. All employers are striving to work more efficiently and automation will be a big part in this. So yes, certain jobs will become obsolete.

But this does not have to mean that there will be less jobs, there will be different jobs, and there will be different needs. Employers who invest in automation should also invest in developing and training the employees whose jobs affects the automation. This way, after implementing the more efficient way of working, some of the potentially redundant employees can be offered one of the revised jobs of even new jobs. The others will have an up-to-date training and this will enhance their chances at finding new employment.

Also due to the technological developments, more and more people will be able to be self-employed, offering their services online to various clients. Think of virtual assistants, designers, and programmers for example. Their clients can be situated anywhere in the world.

Unfortunately, many employers on Curaçao do not see the added value of providing and investing in training and development of their employees and this needs to change. Not only do they deprive themselves of the enhancements of their own organizational improvement, they deprive their current employees of further development and thus contribute to their unemployability in the future.

Areas that need improvement are the way organizations look at their people/talent, the way work is accomplished, organizational structures, the culture within companies (values, diversity, work/life balance, individual growth) and the way the workspace is organized.

### **What is my story of the past two years of Curaçao?**

We have seen organizations who want to improve the way they work, who acknowledge the need in further development of their HR and working procedures. However, we have also seen that many organizations lack the financial budgets to implement the improvements. The economic situation on Curaçao has declined and unfortunately continues to decline.

In situations where the financial means were available, not all involved parties were on board with the suggested change, fearing loss of work. The fear of and resistance against change is very present on the island. Even when the survival of the organization is at stake. This has led to the use of short-term solutions, which by no means attribute to the long-term solutions desperately needed for survival.

It is time to start looking at long term solutions, being open for change, understanding that organizations and the way of working need to change in order to adapt and survive. People will need to change; jobs will need to change and sometimes it's better to give up on securing jobs for few in order to ensure jobs for the majority.

## **What is the point of view of HR professionals about the future of work on Curaçao?**

The HR professionals on Curaçao has been shifting their focus from Personnel & Work to Human Resource Management. From administrative work to advising their organizations how to develop their workforce. The shift is still behind on worldwide HR developments, but it's aiming to catch up.

Due to technological developments, which only need to be implemented, it is possible for HR professionals to contribute to development of productivity and efficiency of the employees. Their approach will be more output-related and performance driven. They will no longer expect the employees to be at work from 9 to 5, following all procedures as dictated by the employer. The employees will be given goals to strive for, to the benefit of the employer. The employee will be asked to reach that goal in their own most efficient way. The employees will be given more autonomy, so they will need to step up and not only be but feel responsible for their own work output.

How do I see the effects of the factors?

### **Innovation**

Innovation should be welcomed, not feared. Many people think that innovation only concerns the technological changes, of jobs being made obsolete by automation.

But innovation can also mean improving the way people work, making it easier to work from home, working flexible hours, and/or working for companies that are not situated on Curaçao. This means that certain employees are no longer limited to local employers, which will make them less dependent on local economic situations.

And improving the way people work also means organizations can work more efficiently, lowering the costs, and thus having the means to invest in further improvements.

### **Demography**

As an HR professional, I worry about the amount of uneducated, unemployable citizens. There are too many educational institutes that do not provide high quality education, some due to lack of funding, some just don't realize how their educational program does not meet the needs of employers. Many employers know that when they hire locally educated candidates, they will need to invest in further education for these possible employees immediately. This will influence their decision. Local education needs to be improved.

Many older people in the workforce lack education themselves. Having signed on for their first job straight out of high school and being content with the few training possibilities provided by their employer, they were expecting to work for their employer their entire working life. These are the people that will endure during the technological changes that are already happening. I have seen a trend of people who cannot find a new job due to lack of education, who otherwise would have been of added value to many other employers, being the hard working and loyal employees that they are. Again, I would like to stress the importance of educating your employees, not only will they

be of a bigger added value during their employment, they will have better changes at the labour market when they are no longer needed in your organization.

### **Climate change**

Curaçao can work on a smaller environmental footprint. Too little is being done to recycle, reuse, and reduce. Small steps are being taken, but bigger ones are within easy reach.

Again, education can be improved. Teach our younger generation that it is not wise to throw out your trash out of the window of your car, that it is unacceptable to leave your trash at illegal dumping areas. The use of clean energy should be promoted not ridiculed.

With the shift of many services, the island used to provide to being a tourist destination we should make sure that we excel at it. Improve our reefs, stop overfishing, make sure that our marine life and nature stay as clean as we can. Clean and friendly destinations are preferred by tourists, ensuring the future of Curaçao as a tourist destination and broadening our target group.

### **What will HR professionals do?**

We see a change in functions and roles. Organizations will have to become flatter in order to gain the flexibility and resilience to adapt to the changes. Leadership will change to more facilitating and supporting leadership. Being a coach and mentor instead of dictating how work needs to be done.

Organizations will have to be able to make quicker decisions; they need to be more transparent and share more information across department/functions in order to survive, but also gain and retain top talent.

Curaçao needs to get up to speed with performance management. There are still companies that have not even implemented it yet, others are still using old fashioned versions, where worldwide organizations are ready to let go of the performance management cycle because on the job/ day-to-day coaching has become to embedded in the way or working that it is no longer necessary to hold on to the cycle to ensure it is used. Curaçao needs to learn how to give and receive feedback, as it is meant as a tool to improve where necessary, not as a tool punish and or belittle someone who has made a mistake of done something differently than what is expected.

HR professionals shift the focus on competency management, aka talent management. Put people to use where they can excel, making sure the team complements each other so everything that needs to be done is done to their best ability.

We see the need for flexible contracts, flexible workspace, and flexible working hours. The work force will ask for personal growth opportunities, for better work-life balance. Not complying will enlarge the change of losing your employee or getting a demotivated employee who will not be as efficient as he or she can be.

The role of the HR professional will change as well, they will grow into a sparring partner for the managing board.

### **What do I expect from other sectors?**

I expect an open mind, focused on long-term goals and gains. We need to talk with and listen to each other. Work together to a better future of this beautiful island. We need to invest in our current and future workforce.

Thank you for your attention.

Veronika de Sampayo Garrido – April 2019

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*Veronika de Sampayo Garrido, MSc. International Business Science, is a HR professional who has lived on Curaçao for the past ten years. As a HR Professional she has consulted on various HR development plans within the SME market. She is a certified DISC consultant, also certified in individual profiles by Management Drives and has a broad experience with performance management, project management, describing functions, outplacement and career coaching. She is able to quickly oversee and gain insight in order to provide practical solutions in line with the organizational needs. She dares to make choices and take action.*

*More about her company Plan B HR services can be found at [www.2planb.com](http://www.2planb.com). She is also proud to be a network partner of Balance Consultancy*



## What is the future of work here on Curaçao according to an Ictualizer?

**By: Denneth van der Veen**

First, I must explain who or what Ictual is and then you will understand who is or can become an Ictualizer. Ictual was founded 26 years ago and started as SQL-Integrator, a software development company with expertise in Oracle Db Management & Application development. This company has seen various changes in the technology sector and has managed to stay successful till today. This was done by having the right vision but important the right people and culture within the company. We don't call ourselves employees but Ictualizers. Within Ictual, we have mottos like continuous improvement, this not only to the solutions we build, but on personal development areas. Our True North Thinking approach is not just about continuous improvement and problem solving. It's about an entire management philosophy about how to organize, lead and empower the organization to compete and succeed! This integrated approach is centered around people and improving your business's ability to learn and adapt quickly to changing conditions.

When I hear the "Future of Work," it sounds like all the fancy buzz words to renew an old concept and have adoption/acceptance of people. I think about automation, digitalization, AI, robotics, and so on. But digging deeper, I came across a few definitions that caught my attention.

The **future of work** is all about people—the way they **work**, where they **work**, and even who is at **work**—and the way technology is driving change (Deloitte Insights)

What seems new this time is the speed in which the development is taking place and the motive behind the innovation. It's not only cool to do it but also essential to become or stay relevant in the future.

Based on studies conducted by World Economic Forum and McKinsey & Company, we can conclude that there will be more jobs in the future. The difference is though that elements as lifelong learning needs to be part of the mentality change. As technologies change so will new opportunities arise. Because technology will keep developing, this time on an accelerated pace this brings concerns about job security and for business people regarding skilled resources. Employment in some sectors can decline sharply, but new jobs created elsewhere have absorbed those that have been displaced. All advanced economies have experienced profound sectoral shifts in employment, first in agriculture and more recently in manufacturing, even as overall employment has grown.

Being a small economy, you can take advantage of new developments. But the most important thing is to have a vision. The past two years Curaçao has experienced various challenges in the labour market, e.g., instability of our local aviation company. Changes and layoffs at our local telecom provider. New parties in government. Nevertheless, we see new technologies being adopted by interest groups like Blockchain, and crypto groups exploring the possibility to understand and or build new business cases locally.

We are true advocates that a fourth pillar is essential in the new future for Curaçao to be besides sustainable also competitive globally. With Globalization all markets are open. People are/or are becoming digital nomads. One of the main factors to thrive in the "New Era" is not access to infrastructure anymore, this has become a commodity. Elements as quality of life, entertainment, culture, and sports are of higher importance. For Curaçao to thrive we must make sure we attract the type of people or create the type of citizens we envision that live on such an Island. Looking at



other communities without taking action how and what we want to become cannot be part of the plan. We must do or are doomed to fail.

We can all agree that the educational systems have not kept pace with the changing nature of work, resulting in many employers saying they cannot find enough workers with the skills they need. In a McKinsey survey of young people and employers in nine countries, 40 percent of employers said lack of skills was the main reason for entry-level job vacancies. Sixty percent said that new graduates were not adequately prepared for the world of work. There were gaps in technical skills such as STEM subject degrees but also in soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and punctuality. Conversely, even those in work may not be realizing their potential. At Ictual, we take our social responsibility very serious by engaging in youth in different aspect. At this moment we are mentoring also the first e-Sport team of Curaçao. Normally, we would look at gaming as waste of time but by understanding the nature of this new industry we also acknowledged its potential.

The Future of work means grasping new opportunities and putting uncertainties aside.

Denneth van der Veen

This report is prepared by Dr. Miguel Goede

*Miguel P. Goede is a scientist, strategist, author, and a management consultant, but when you talk to him, you will find he is also a trend watcher and philosopher. His area of research is Good Governance for Sustainable Development of Globalizing Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean. His specialization is to coach governments and organizations to adjust to Society 3.0. He is the founder of the University of Governance 3.0.*

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