

Starting November 26 I spent two months of the island of Bonaire. This is an island that is located close to Venezuela, and her neighboring islands, Aruba and Curaçao. I did research at a youth center called Jong Bonaire. The main aim of my research there was to examine how an app could contribute to the enhancement of awareness of teens of job possibilities, therefore bringing the supply and demand of competences more together. This corresponds to Sustainable Development Goal 8, dealing with Decent Work and Economic Growth, as their targets focus on enhancing the employment and education of youth. I performed interviews with companies to gain a better view on what competences are needed from the youth in their eyes. Furthermore, I performed focus groups with the youth at Jong Bonaire to see whether the youth is aware of all current job possibilities and if an app could offer a solution in raising awareness on this topic.

With my background of being a Creative Technologist, the creation of an app concept seemed like the logical choice. In the end, the research was more centered around the interviews and focus groups to gather the information for the app. The focus was different than what I am used to from Creative Technology, but I think it was good to have come in contact with this type of research before starting my bachelor's thesis.

Living on an island like Bonaire was in ways strangely similar to living in the Netherlands, and in other ways totally different. The official language of the country was Dutch, so often I could easily communicate with the local people. However, my target group, the teens of Jong Bonaire, often did not speak Dutch or English. Their common tongue was Papiamentu, which created a language barrier between me and them. Also the gap between rich inhabitants, often from the Netherlands, and the poor local people was bigger than anticipated. The wages at the island are really low, although the prices of food and houses are extremely high. The standard was that a whole family would live together in one house, you should not be surprised to find 20 people living in the same house.

Although life was expensive on the island, I really enjoyed the beautiful, well-preserved, nature. I would definitely recommend going to Bonaire. I have met amazing people and have seen the most beautiful places. I learned a lot about myself and how to work in a working situation abroad. If you have any more questions about my experiences you can always contact me via e-mail:

f.t.a.kuipers@student.utwente.nl

