

RECENT MIGRANTS DESTINATION ARUBA IN OUR SOCIETY

Whether it be economic, family-related or good living conditions, or whether they have short- or long term plans, migrants are part of our community. According to the United Nations' estimates¹, in 2017, only 3.2 percent of the total population of Caribbean countries were international migrants. However, there are countries where more than half of their population stock are immigrants. The Caribbean countries with the largest concentrations of immigrants are Sint Maarten (Dutch part), with 70.4 percent of the population being foreign-born, the Turks and Caicos Islands with 69.2 percent and the British Virgin Islands with 64.0 percent.

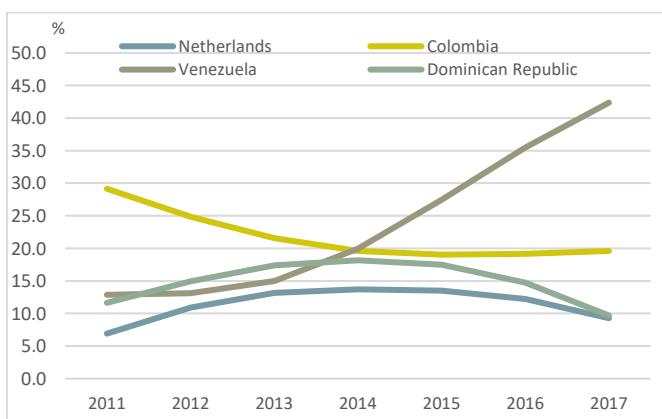
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

More than half of the recent migrants interviewed for the AMIS 2016 were women (52.7%) and 47.3 percent were men. The average age of men was 39 years and of women 38 years.

In general, the majority of recent migrants migrated to Aruba directly from their country of birth, less than 15 percent indicated they were living in a country other than their country of birth prior to immigrating to Aruba. For every 20 recent migrants, 13 originated from neighboring countries, mainly from Latin American countries, such as Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Venezuela.

According to the Population Registry Office, the major countries of origin remained the same since 2004, being the Netherlands, Colombia, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic, in this particular order, except in 2011 where there were slightly more people from Colombia registering in Aruba than from the Netherlands. In 2016, slightly more people from Venezuela registered, when compared to people from the Dominican Republic.

Figure 2. Net migration as a percentage of total migration of the foreign-born from the major countries of origin



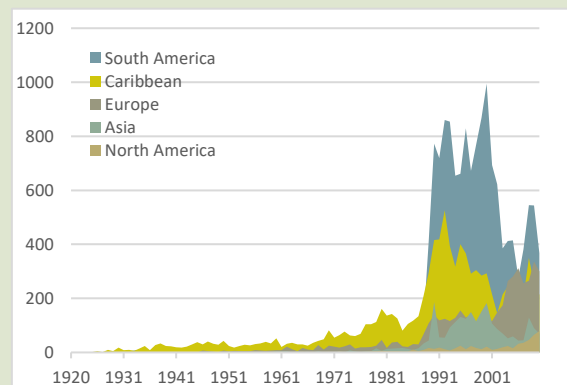
Source: Population Registry Office

However, when looking at the net migration of the major countries of origin of migrants between 2011 and 2017, Venezuela scores the highest, and the only one showing an upwards trend, during the last three years (fig. 2).

According to the general definition, a foreign-born person in Aruba is a migrant, more specifically a first generation migrant. However, of these migrants, 6.4 percent has at least one parent who is born in Aruba, and thus obtained the Dutch nationality at birth.

In 2010, according to the Population and Housing Census, 34.5 percent of the population of Aruba was foreign-born. Migration is a major factor in Aruba's population growth; there are people from no less than 133 different countries living on Aruba, with the earliest reported year of settlement dating back to 1920. In 2010, the majority of foreign-born individuals were relatively recent migrants; many migrated during the last 20 to 30 years as a result of the booming tourism and construction industry, and settled on the island.

Figure A. Migrant population by most recent year of immigration, 2010 Census (abs. numbers)



¹ United Nations (2017), International Migration Population 2017. Migration Wall Chart. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. www.unpopulation.org Population Reference Bureau, Understanding and using population projections

About one third of all recent migrants has the Dutch nationality and 77.3 percent was born in countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Of the recent migrants who were born in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and who had the Dutch nationality, 83.8 percent indicated they obtained the Dutch nationality at birth. Of those who did not obtain the Dutch nationality at birth, 28.1 percent became Dutch nationals during the last 10 years.

Recent migrants from Asia are the least likely to have the Dutch nationality within their first 10 years on the island, which is consistent with the small number of recent migrants from Asia with a Dutch nationality in the Population Registry.

Of all recent migrants with a nationality other than Dutch, more than 90 percent did not apply for the Dutch nationality, of which 82.6 percent indicated they had not applied for the Dutch nationality, as they did not meet all requirements.

INTENTIONS

During the AMIS 2016, we identified 833 MMAs, of which 53 percent were women. The median age of male MMAs was 39 years and the median age of females was 38 years. Taking into consideration their region of origin, male MMAs from North America and female MMAs from Europe were ‘older’ (median age of respectively 56 years for North American males, and 39 years for European females). The relatively ‘younger’ MMAs were Asian males and North American females.

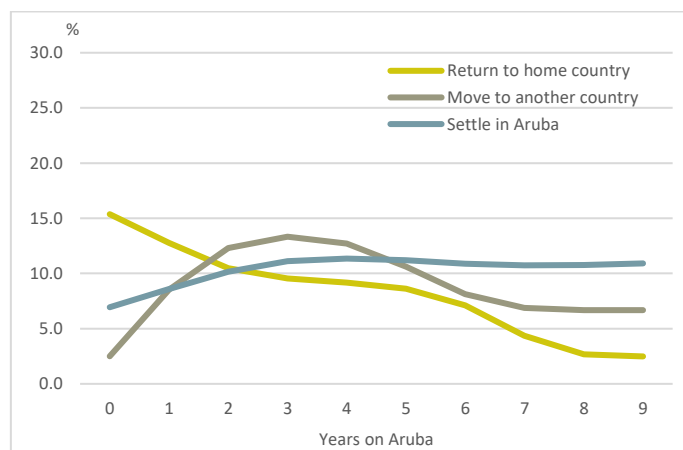
When asked about their intentions, 77.0% of MMAs intended to settle in Aruba, while only a relatively small group intended to return to their home country (19.4%), and an even smaller number intended to move to another country (3.6%). The latter intended to move to either the Netherlands, the USA or Canada. The main reasons for the intention to move to another country were the hope to find a (better) job in the other country, and the thought that it would be better for the education of the children to move to another country to further their studies.

Especially more MMAs from the Netherlands (32% of all MMAs from the Netherlands) and from the USA (50% of all MMAs from the USA) intend to return home. Recent migrants from South America are the least interested in returning home; only 13.2 percent indicated they intended to return home. The most important reason for returning home was “to be with family”, except for the MMAs from Europe whose most important reason was because of the end of an employment contract.

The results of the survey show that as the number of years living in Aruba increases, both the number of those intending

to return to their home country and those intending to move to another country, decreases (fig 3).

Figure 3. Recent migrant population by years lived on Aruba and intentions



Most of the MMAs whose intentions were to settle in Aruba indicated that quality of life and economic reasons were the most important reasons for staying (they like it here, their family lives here, or they have a good job here). MMAs from North America, in particular, reported that the most important reason for wanting to settle in Aruba was the quality of life, and to a lesser extent, economic reasons. This could be explained by the fact that about one quarter of all migrants from North America were aged 60 years or older. MMAs from other regions were relatively younger. Less than 10 percent of MMAs from South America and the Caribbean and less than 15 percent of MMAs from Europe were aged 60 years or older.

CHAIN MIGRATION

About 3 out of 4 MMAs indicated they had either relatives or friends on Aruba before they came to live in Aruba. MMAs from Europe and North America had mostly friends, while MMAs from other countries had mostly relatives (parent(s), siblings and/or in-laws) already living on Aruba. Where MMAs from the Caribbean are concerned, more than 90 percent indicated they had both family members and friends already living on Aruba prior to their own arrival. Interestingly this was the case for both MMAs from countries from within the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Curaçao, Bonaire, St. Maarten) and from other countries in the Caribbean (such as Haiti and Grenada), which reflects the earlier migratory trends during the LAGO days and onwards.

Of the MMAs who had friends and/or relatives already living in Aruba, 73 percent expected help from these friends/relatives, especially MMAs from Asia, South America and the Caribbean. Of the MMAs who expected help from their friends and/or relatives already living in Aruba, 96.7

percent indicated they received the expected help. On the other hand, of MMAs who indicated not expecting any help from their friends and/or relatives on the island, 21.3 percent eventually received help.

MMAs mainly received help with housing. They were offered a space to live in the living quarter of their friends/relatives or they were helped in finding an own living quarter. In addition, MMAs received financial support and/or were offered a travel ticket. MMAs from South America and the Caribbean were offered to stay with their friends/relatives, were provided with financial support, and/or were offered a travel ticket. MMAs from Europe who, as noted before, were the least likely to receive help from friends/relatives already on the island., were mainly helped mostly with, either by offering to live with their friends/relatives or by offering help in finding a house. In total, 67.3% of MMAs from South America, and 67.4% of MMAs from the Caribbean were offered a space to live with their relatives/friends, and 66.3 percent of MMA from South America and 66.3% of MMAs from the Caribbean received financial help and/or a travel ticket. MMA's from Asia were mostly provided with financial help and/or travel tickets, housing and help with obtaining a work permit and residence permit. MMAs from South America received the most help from both friends and relatives who lived here prior to their arrival. Contrary to MMAs from Europe and North America who received the most help from friends who lived here, and MMAs from the Caribbean and Asia who received the most help from relatives who lived here.

About seven out of every 10 MMAs arrived alone in Aruba and more than 80 percent did not bring any other person at a later stage, nor intend to bring any other person.

Nearly half of all MMAs from Europe (45.0%) come to live in Aruba with their spouse and children. MMAs from Europe were more likely to be married at the time of migration compared to MMAs from other regions. For every 100 MMAs from Europe, 54 children migrated to Aruba. MMAs from North America also came with their spouse and children, however to a lesser extent than those from Europe.

MMAs from South America, on the other hand, were more likely to come to live in Aruba with their children and not with their spouse, given the fact that only 37 percent of the MMAs from South America were married at the time of migration. MMAs from the Caribbean mostly came with friends and other relatives and they intended to bring their children at a later stage. Interestingly, MMAs from Asia attracted the largest number of persons to migrate to Aruba, including friends and relatives. In total, for every 100 MMAs from Asia, 23 other migrant friends/relatives migrated to Aruba.

Table 1. Number of other migrants per 100 MMAs who come to Aruba because of the MMA

p/100 MMAs	2003	2016
Spouse		
Came with MMA	13.5	14.8
Came because of MMA	6.8	6.1
Intend to bring	1.6	2.6
Children		
Came with MMA	19.3	26.2
Came because of MMA	-	13.6
Intend to bring	15.6	15.5
All friends/relatives		
Came with MMA	10.6	13.1
Came because of MMA	12.1	7.7
Intend to bring	10.6	12.0

Note: Number of children who came to Aruba because of the MMAs in 2003 is not available.

SITUATION AROUND MIGRATION

The vast majority of MMAs indicated that they incurred in a certain amount of costs when migrating to Aruba. Only 9 percent of MMAs indicated they did not have to pay anything to come to Aruba. This was most likely for MMAs from Europe and less likely for those from Asia. Obviously the further the region of origin, the higher the costs incurred for coming to Aruba. The median amount of money spent by MMAs varied from AWG. 4,200 for MMAs from Asia to AWG. 1,600 for MMAs from the Caribbean islands (MMAs from Europe, North America and South America spent respectively, AWG. 4,000, AWG. 1,900, and AWG. 1,750 to migrate to Aruba).

The usual admission procedure according to the 'Admission and Deportation Act' (LTU) is for migrants to apply, while abroad, for a residence and/or work permit and wait abroad until their permit(s) is(are) ready for pick-up. As soon as the permit(s) is(are) ready, they can pick it(them) up and among other things, register at the Population Registry Office. With the exception of tourists, no one should be on the island pending a request for a residence and/or work permit. However, when MMAs were asked how many months after they arrived on Aruba they obtained a residence permit, about half of all MMAs indicated they obtained their permit within 1 to 3 months after being on the island. A relatively small group of MMAs indicated that it took less than a month to obtain their permit, and 8.3% of MMAs indicated they were already over a year on the island before obtaining their permit. The latter was mainly the case for MMAs from Asia.

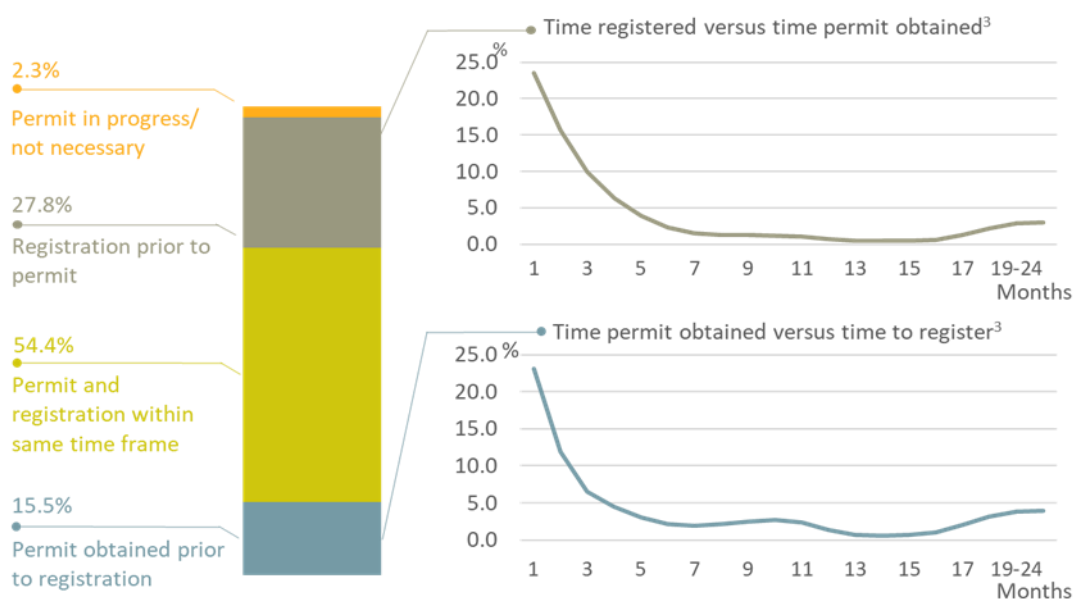
As mentioned before, after obtaining a residence permit, migrants should, among other things, register at the

Population Registry Office. A little over half of MMAs (54.4%) indicated they registered within the same timeframe they obtained their permit, 15.5 percent registered sometime after receiving their residence permit, and 2.3 percent indicated either their permit was in process or that they did not need a permit. Counterintuitively, 27.8 percent of MMAs indicated they registered at the Population Registry Office prior to receiving their residence permit. These MMAs included, amongst others, Dutch nationals (38.1%), MMAs who were married to a person born in Aruba at the time of migration or had been married to a person born in Aruba prior to their migration (13.0%), and MMAs who married in Aruba (15.2%). It is important to mention that there seems to

be a misconception amongst migrants that when a marriage takes place on Aruba, one of both of the partners are automatically registered in the Population Registry, exempting them from going through the normal procedure to obtain the necessary permits. However, when a marriage takes place in Aruba, the marriage is registered in the Marriage Registry, but not in the Population Registry.

The greater majority of MMAs register within 3 months after obtaining their permit (56.6%). Interestingly, still a relatively large percentage of MMAs indicated they registered well after a year of obtaining their permit, and some even after 7 years (19.4%).

Figure 4. MMAs by time permit obtained versus time taken to register



LIFE ON ARUBA

In general, nearly 3 out of 4 MMAs (74.5%) indicated feeling happier at the time of the interview than before they moved to Aruba, especially MMAs from South America, of which 80.8% reported feeling happier than before moving to Aruba. In total, 20.1 percent of MMAs indicated they felt the same as before. This was especially true for MMAs from Europe, North America, and Asia. Where the latter group of migrants is concerned, it is important to mention that although 70.4% of migrants from Asia reported feeling happier than before migrating to Aruba, when compared to migrants from other continents, a relatively larger percentage of migrants from Asia (11.1%) reported not feeling happier than before migrating to Aruba.

MMAs were asked about their satisfaction in seven areas, namely with their life in general, with their present level of education, with their present job, their current living quarter, their family life, their own health and their social life. Overall, most MMAs were satisfied with their situation on Aruba, 90.4 percent indicated they were satisfied with all areas of their life, of which 34.1 percent was satisfied with at least six of the seven areas asked and 16.7 percent were satisfied in 5 areas. In general, the areas with most indications of dissatisfaction were present level of education, present job and to a lesser extent their current living quarter.

About 34 percent of MMAs reported thinking that foreigners are not being treated fairly by policies implemented by the Aruban government. This is not taking into consideration a group of 21 percent of MMAs who had no opinion regarding this question. More than half of MMAs from the other Dutch

Caribbean islands reported thinking foreigners are not being treated fairly by policies implemented by the Aruban government.

When asked whether they feel they are discriminated against, the greater majority of MMAs (81.6%) indicated they did not feel discriminated against as a foreigner in Aruba. Less than 20 percent (18.4%) felt discriminated, of which the largest group was composed of MMAs from South America, where about 24% indicated feeling discriminated against. Most of the MMAs who indicated feeling discriminated against, reported that they felt discriminated against by Arubans. The latter were mostly women between 30 and 44 years of age (38.7% of all MMAs who felt discriminated against). A relatively small group of Dutch nationals (21.2%) also felt discriminated, of which the majority were born in Europe, especially in the Netherlands. Noteworthy is the group of MMAs from Asia who reported feeling discriminated. They accounted for less than 10 percent of all MMAs from Asia. However, they were the only group who indicated that they felt discriminated against both by Arubans and by persons from other countries.

CONCLUSION

For the purpose of the AMIS 2016, 1,092 recent migrants aged 14 years and older, were interviewed. The results indicated that the majority migrated to Aruba directly from their country of birth, being mainly Latin American countries, such as Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Venezuela.

For a more in-depth analysis of the process of migration, a Main Migration Actor (MMA) was identified, being the person who had established himself/herself on the island first. In total, 832 MMAs were interviewed. The results indicated that the majority of these MMAs (77.0%) intended to settle in Aruba, the main reasons being that they had a good quality of life on Aruba (they like it here, their family lives here), and because of economic reasons (they have a good job on Aruba).

In general, nearly 3 out of 4 MMAs (74.5%) indicated feeling happier living on Aruba than before they moved to Aruba. In total, 90.4 percent of MMAs indicated they were satisfied with all areas of their life, and the greater majority (81.6%) indicated they did not feel discriminated against as a foreigner in Aruba. However, about 34 percent of MMAs reported that foreigners were not treated fairly by policies implemented by the Aruban government.

In total, 3 out of 4 MMAs indicated they had either relatives or friends on Aruba before they came to live in Aruba. Seven out of every 10 MMAs arrived alone in Aruba and more than 80 percent did not bring any other person at a later stage, nor intended to bring any other person to live on Aruba.

Interestingly, despite the usual admission procedure, about half of all MMAs indicated they obtained their residence permit within 1 to 3 months after being on the island, and 8.3% of MMAs indicated they were already over a year on the island before obtaining their permit. Misconceptions still exist in the migrant population, for example, where marriages taking place on Aruba are concerned. There seems to be a misconception that when a marriage takes place on Aruba, one of both of the partners are automatically registered in the Population Registry, exempting them from going through the normal procedure to obtain the necessary permits. These misconceptions deserve further attention.

Central Bureau of Statistics Aruba, August 2018

METHODOLOGY

The target population for the Aruba Migration and Integration Study 2016 (AMIS 2016) was recent migrants aged 14 years and over and all other members of their household, regardless of their migrant status or age. A “recent migrant” is a person who came to live on Aruba up to ten years prior to the survey, i.e. between 11 October 2006 and 10 October 2016.

According to the 2010 Population and Housing count, 19.5 percent of all households living in a normal living quarter, was composed of at least one recent migrant, which in total equalled 6,795 households. As of September 31, 2016 there was a total of 31,066 addresses in the Population Register. On 8,689 addresses, there was at least one registered recent migrant. Since the last Census was held in 2010, the Population Register was used as a base for the sampling for the AMIS 2016.

In order to obtain a representative number of recent migrants for this survey, we made a systematic random sample out of all the addresses with possible recent migrants. We sampled a total number of 3,600 addresses, which were assigned to 15 interviewers, 240 addresses each. The interviewers were instructed to interview at least 60 households consisting of at least one recent migrant.

Of the 3,600 addresses that were assigned to the interviewers, 2,951 addresses were canvassed. A total of 868 addresses were visited and 2,371 persons were interviewed. In 21 percent of all canvassed addresses, no person could be reached during the fieldwork and in another 31.9 percent, no recent migrants were found. In total, 9.5 percent of the addresses were, among others, businesses, rentals for tourists, ruins or vacant.

The response rate to the survey was very high, only 8.2 percent of eligible households refused to cooperate. The fieldwork for the AMIS 2016 took place during the months of October-November 2016. The interviews were conducted using digital questionnaires on tablets.

A total of 1,092 recent migrants aged 14 years and older was interviewed with a Long Form, and all other household members were interviewed with a Short Form, to avoid excessively long interviews. A total of 1,279 persons were interviewed with the Short Form, including 591 longer-term migrants and 688 persons born in Aruba.

The Short Form contained the first three sections of the Long Form, i.e. personal characteristics, migration history and economic activity. The other two sections (constituting the Long Form), specifically for the recent migrants, included questions on recruitment and the

situation around migration, as well as migrants’ intentions, knowledge and opinions about Aruba.

In order to prevent from obtaining duplicate information from the different recent migrants within one household, a Main Migration Actor (MMA) was identified. The MMA is the person who had established himself/herself on the island first. When there was more than one person eligible to be categorized as the MMA, the eldest was chosen. A total of 833 households were interviewed, and 832 MMAs completed the Long Form. Where applicable, the MMA is specifically mentioned.

Figure 1. Response rate AMIS2016

