

Social marketing research

Public Health & Safety

How can we gain a profound understanding of the perceptions, challenges and needs related to mental health and safety on Saba?

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Social marketing research looks at the world through the eyes of the target audience. Therefore, this report focuses on the experiences and perspectives of the respondents who participated in this research. Successful social marketing focuses on the target audience's interpretations, rather than on objective facts. This should be kept in mind when reading this report.

About the researches

This report is prepared for the Public Health and Public Safety Department in Saba. The objective of this research is to gain a profound understanding of how respondents on Saba perceive their own mental health and public safety, aiming to achieve a comprehensive understanding of these two subjects. Therefore, we engaged in discussions with n=63 respondents residing on Saba for this study. The insights provide an overview of the attitudes and needs of this specific group of residents who participated in the research. In the first part of this report, we address the topic of mental health. We spoke to individuals diagnosed with mental health issues, those experiencing mental health challenges without a specific diagnosis, individuals without mental health issues, and those who know someone close to them struggling with mental health issues. Simultaneously, we also explore the attitudes, perceptions, and needs of these respondents regarding public safety. By mapping diverse perspectives and experiences related to public safety, the research aims to provide an exploratory view of both mental health and public safety on Saba. During the research, respondents provided their opinions and articulated their needs concerning effective support, service delivery, and safety measures.

SOCIAL MARKETING

This research is a qualitative research based on the social marketing methodology. Social marketing is a form of applied research aimed at gaining deep insights into the target audience's perceptions, to determine what motivates or hinders the target audience in the context of the issue at hand. The purpose of this research is to identify the specific challenges and needs of respondents living on Saba regarding their mental health, and to assess their perspectives on public safety and the opportunities for improvement in this area.

In-depth interviews

Through semi-structured in-depth interviews, insight was gained into the underlying incentives, motivations, barriers, and needs of respondents regarding the issue of mental health.

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Research population Saba altogether

The research involved n=63 respondents. This is the population including the respondents from mental health and safety together. The respondents were spoken to at both public places and organized activities or depth-interviews with the help of Public Health department. Our FCD method, comprising find (1) connect (2) and deepen, serves as the cornerstone of our social marketing research. Here's a concise overview:

- **Find:** This phase transcends conventional research. Through close collaboration with diverse stakeholders, we immerse ourselves deeply in the fabric of the community, essential for understanding the genuine needs of the target audience.
- **Connect:** Our approach is built on equality and respect. Engaging with respondents on equal footing, we invest ample time in conversations. This establishes a genuine connection with the target audience, crucial for comprehending their perspectives, motivations, and needs.
- **Deepen:** By locating the target audience in their familiar environment and establishing sincere connections, we attain profound insights. This method enables us to extract in-depth perspectives reflecting the emotions of the target audience concerning the specific issue.

RESEARCH LOCATIONS FOR RESIDENTS

- Government of Saba;
- Department of Public Health;
- Bakery 'Bizzy B' (both locations);
- Different events on the Cruyff Court;
- Evening church service;
- The harbor when the ferry arrives.

n=63 respondents

Gender		Family situation	
Male	40%	Cohabiting	73%
Female	60%	Single	27%

Age			
18-34 years	19%	55-64 years	13%
35-44 years	32%	65 + years	11%
45-54 years	25%		

Village	
The Bottom	65%
Windward side	22%
St. John's	3%
Zions Hill	10%

Executive summary

Executive summary

This report is prepared for the Public Health and Public Safety department in Saba, with the objective of gaining a profound understanding of how respondents on Saba perceive their own mental health and public safety. The insights gathered from 63 respondents provide a detailed view of the attitudes and needs of this specific group of residents.

Life on Saba | Respondents predominantly describe Saba as a beautiful and tranquil island where nature takes center stage. Many respondents, especially those born on Saba, choose to live here despite its challenges, appreciating the limited happenings on the island. However, the familiarity and limited activities contribute to a perception of dullness and boredom for some. A strong sense of community prevails on Saba, with residents knowing each other well. Mutual respect and support are crucial, and family and friends are seen as the primary safety net. The close-knit community provides a warm and familiar atmosphere, but also creates pressure to maintain a positive image, stifling self-expression and individuality. Despite the natural beauty, respondents face significant financial challenges. They mention that low incomes and high living costs compel many, especially single mothers, to work multiple jobs. Balancing work and family life is described as a constant source of stress, affecting their mental health and ability to give adequate attention to their children.

Mental Health | There is a pervasive negative perception of mental health among respondents, often associating it with being "mentally" ill or "disturbed." This stigma leads individuals to hide their mental health issues to avoid judgment. Respondents acknowledge the impact of mental health problems but struggle to express their emotions due to fear of being labeled as "crazy." Respondents hesitate to seek help from organizations like Mental Health Caribbean or EC2 due to fears of community judgment and privacy concerns. The central location of these services and the quick turnover of local staff exacerbates these issues. There is an opportunity to provide online consultations with professionals not based on Saba to ensure confidentiality. The combination of a lack of self-expression and high dependency on the community contributes to feelings of loneliness, frustration, depression, and anxiety. Respondents express a strong need for opportunities to connect with others and for self-development and independence. They also emphasize the importance of raising awareness around mental health to help destigmatize it. There is a significant need for more anonymous mental health care, such as online consultations or face-to-face consultations with non-resident professionals who periodically visit Saba to offer community support and guidance.

Safety | Respondents generally perceive Saba as one of the safest places in the world, with little violence or crime. The small community and familiarity among residents contribute to this high sense of safety. However, there is a significant difference between perceived safety outdoors and indoors. Respondents in the research indicate that domestic violence is a prevalent issue behind closed doors. Some people feel unsafe in their homes due to fear of violence from partners. Reporting such incidents is challenging due to fear of repercussions, especially when the perpetrator holds a high position within the community or a government organization. Mothers fear that reporting unsafe situations might lead to child protective services taking their children away. This fear prevents them from seeking help. Clear communication from youth care facilities about their guidelines and actions can alleviate these concerns. In terms of public safety, the reporting system is particularly highlighted as a problem. It is perceived as inefficient, primarily due to the central reporting center being located on Bonaire, which causes confusion or delays in addressing incidents. Respondents emphasize that this inefficiency leads to underreporting of disturbances and incidents on the island. However, they also note that the number of such incidents is relatively small, as there is little crime or unrest experienced in public spaces on Saba.

Conclusion | The primary goal of the research was to answer the question: "How can we gain a profound understanding of the perceptions, challenges, and needs related to mental health and safety on Saba?". The residents who participated in this research predominantly describe Saba as a beautiful and tranquil island where nature takes center stage. A strong sense of community prevails on Saba, as the majority of respondents know each other. In cars, friendly waves and honks serve as a form of greeting. The mutual connectedness on Saba is evident as people spontaneously assist one another when needed. The communal involvement and informal mode of interaction reflect the close bonds within the community, imparting a warm and familiar atmosphere to daily life on Saba.

Despite these positive aspects, respondents reveal significant challenges they face in both mental health and safety. They experience difficulties in self-expression and personal development due to the pressures of living in a small, close-knit community. Financial constraints and high living costs increase stress, especially for single mothers. A pervasive stigma around mental health prevents many from seeking help, exacerbated by fears of privacy breaches and community gossip. Domestic violence is a major concern, with inefficiencies in the reporting system further complicating matters. Respondents emphasize that this inefficiency leads to underreporting of disturbances and incidents on the island, although there is generally low crime and unrest in public spaces on Saba. Respondents express a strong need for more opportunities for personal development, anonymous mental health support, and efforts to destigmatize mental health issues.

The life on Saba

Positive aspects of Saba

In the study, respondents were questioned about their overall life experience on Saba. They described Saba as a very beautiful island, yet one filled with challenges. In this chapter, respondents' insights take center stage, highlighting both their positive experiences and the challenges they face.

A BEAUTIFUL AND TRANQUIL ISLAND

The residents that took part in this research predominantly describe Saba as a beautiful and tranquil island where nature takes center stage. A significant portion of the respondents consciously chooses to live on Saba instead of the other Dutch Caribbean islands. These residents appreciate the limited happenings on Saba. This is mostly the case for respondents who are born on Saba. Because these respondents don't know what life is like on other islands, they are also unaware of what they might be missing. While this is an advantage for many, it can also lead to frustrations, contributing to the perception of Saba as dull.

TIGHT-KNIT COMMUNITY AND RESPECT

A strong sense of community prevails on Saba, as the majority of residents know each other. In cars, friendly waves and honks serve as a form of greeting. The mutual connectedness on Saba is evident as people spontaneously assist one another when needed. The communal involvement and informal mode of interaction reflect the close bonds within the community, imparting a warm and familiar atmosphere to daily life on Saba. This, in turn, emphasizes the utmost importance of mutual respect.

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Saba provides tranquility, which is the most beautiful aspect of the island. It's nice that you don't have to worry about your safety here. Saba is truly blessed when compared to the other islands, where much more happens.

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The uniqueness of Saba lies in everyone knowing each other. We wave and honk at each other in cars. People help each other when needed. The flip side of this is the prevalence of gossiping. Gossip starts due to boredom.

”

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The research indicates that respondents highly value their family, friends, or acquaintances on Saba. Individuals are described as their 'safety net.' This means that they can rely on their close connections if they are in the need for help. Family and friends are seen as very important on Saba. It's normal for children or grandparents to live together for a long time. Additionally, people often help each other out, such as by cooking for one another or having grandparents take care of the children. But sometimes, taking care of family can make it hard for the person providing the care. Since Saba is a small island, having strong bonds with family is really important. People think it's tough to live on Saba without family because if you don't have people you can rely on, there's no safety net and you'll have to face challenges on your own.

BEING HEALTHY

The respondents often say that being healthy, mentally and physically, means living without worries and being happy. They believe that mental health involves feeling calm and secure, even when facing life's difficulties. It also means having good relationships, achieving personal goals, and feeling like you belong in your community. There are a few essential factors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. These essentials include having a secure home and an income substantial enough to cover basic necessities. Additionally, they believe that cultivating friendships, personal growth, engaging in hobbies, and being gainfully employed all contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

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My sister is the love of my life, even though she doesn't always understand me. She is intelligent: she has a brain and makes good choices. But she is my safe haven: my guide.

“

The uniqueness on Saba lies in the family bonds that are so crucial here; I believe this is true throughout the Caribbean. For me, it is also a priority to maintain good relations with family. It can be quite lonely on Saba if you don't have these strong family ties, luckily, that's not the case for me. However, this also has some downsides. Precisely because family is so involved, they can occasionally be overly involved. For instance, my grandmother still texts me to ask what time I'll be home; she really keeps an eye on this.

”

Work on Saba

Despite the tranquility and freedom the island provides through its natural surroundings, individuals often face mental challenges stemming from stress and work pressure, driven by the financial necessity to work due to low incomes and limited opportunities for advancement.

LOW INCOMES

The high cost of living on the island compels respondents with young children, especially single mothers, to take on multiple jobs. According to some of the respondents, it's challenging to make ends meet financially, resulting in a constant source of stress. They mention trying to strike a balance between earning enough to get by and working towards a better future for their families. They find that juggling work and family life requires a lot of attention. Respondents who have jobs and young children, in particular, experience extra pressure, as they sometimes need support in caring for their children. Due to the stress, they experience, they find it difficult at times to give their children sufficient attention.

“

Honesty is important too, but you don't see that much. That's because sometimes you have to play the game here to get somewhere. In that sense, it's often unfair and political: you can work hard, but people who have connections get more opportunities

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“

I see Saba as an island with many opportunities. School or education is free, and you can also receive free healthcare. A significant number of people here do not take advantage of these opportunities because they lack the ambition to grow. Consequently, a large portion of the population on Saba is afraid to dream, fearing that there are too many limitations and too few possibilities.

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“

Financially, it brings many challenges on Saba. My income is \$1300, while I have \$1600 in expenses. But I just go with the flow. You can't do otherwise.

”

Challenges on Saba

On Saba, the well-being of the population is profoundly influenced by living in a small community. With approximately two thousand inhabitants, many seldom venture beyond the island's borders, and some respondents admit to never having left the island. This combination of a small community lifestyle and the unique challenges of island living creates problems for various respondents. This is especially relevant for respondents who have indicated in the study that they are currently experiencing mental health issues or have had mental health issues in the past.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO A SMALL COMMUNITY

Within this context, challenges emerge on two fronts: those inherent to life in a small community and others specific to the island's unique existence. The respondents indicate that the social dynamics of the small community can sometimes feel oppressive, with a perceived importance placed on maintaining a positive image. The respondents experience a certain risk of being excluded from the community if one's image is not favorable. The potential consequences, such as loss of face or damage to one's reputation, highlight the necessity of aligning with community expectations. Notably, respondents emphasize the profound impact of community opinion, creating an environment that stifles self-expression and discourages standing out. The fear of exclusion further reinforces a general hesitancy to exhibit conspicuous behavior. Additionally, life in a small community on an island with limited growth opportunities and pervasive poverty cultivates intense competition in the local job market. Respondents have the feeling they can't safely talk about these fears and their personal situations, not even with healthcare professionals. Keeping these emotions inside and being unable to talk about personal experiences makes the situation even more challenging, according to the respondents.

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Mental health deserves more attention, for everyone. The island still has some progress to make in that regard. There's something, but also nothing at the same time. Life here can be suffocating.

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“

The small world on Saba and the lack of distractions really affect my mental health. I have so many more irritations, and I am a lot less friendly. When I first came here, I could handle everything well, but now I often have to walk away to contain myself

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About mental health

Attitudes about mental health

Conversations were held with individuals currently receiving assistance for mental health issues, those experiencing mental health challenges but not seeking support, family members of individuals with mental health problems, and individuals without mental health issues. The insights from respondents who have family members with mental issues are particularly noteworthy, as there is a clear need for concrete assistance.

FAMILY MEMBERS OF RESIDENTS WITH MENTAL ISSUES

Some family members who take care of a person with a mental condition also experience the mental burden it entails, despite their belief in the need to support each other on the island. They feel saddened witnessing the suffering of their family member due to their condition, as well as the stigma associated with mental illnesses. Gossip only further complicates the situation, as does the long road to suitable care for the mentally ill.

Finding an outlet is considered essential by respondents to momentarily escape the constant care and engage in other conversations. This involves a bit of relaxation, emotional support, or social interaction. Some find this outlet by going to church, while others vent to friends. Respondents with a small social network lack this outlet. Some of the female respondents have the need for a women's group so that they can talk to each other.

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The marriage of my parents was terrible because of my mother's illness. She was verbally and physically abusive to my father. This worsened when my mother became an alcoholic. As children, we also suffered greatly from this. It has left its mark on us.

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My mother has been mentally ill for a long time, since I was 15, which is over 10 years ago now. During my teenage years, the problems became very serious, so much so that my father wanted to move away with us. Unfortunately, this was not possible because they did not have the means to survive separately and to take care of me and my brother.

”

ATTITUDES ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

The respondents exhibit a pervasive negative perception of mental health, associating it with being 'mentally' ill. When respondents are asked about their views on mental health, terms like 'insanity' or 'disturbed' are frequently invoked. This negative connotation, respondents claim, is closely tied to the term 'Mental,' which they equate with being 'disturbed.' Consequently, individuals, both with and without mental health issues, refrain from displaying any indications of potential mental problems due to the fear of judgment or being labeled as "crazy." This holds true for individuals with and without mental health issues. When discussions revolve around mental health, specific conditions such as bipolar disorder are frequently mentioned, exacerbating the existing stigma. While the respondents acknowledge that mental difficulties can significantly impact lives, there is a pressing need for coaching individuals on expressing their feelings without an immediate mental health crisis. Respondents who have mental health problems indicate that they have difficulty putting their emotions into words. They need professional support in this area. Interestingly, there is a more nuanced acknowledgment when it comes to stress. While the term 'mental health' carries a broad and stigmatized connotation, respondents are more receptive when addressing specific mental concerns such as stress, work pressure, or challenging home situations. Naming these specific issues seems to foster a greater level of recognition and understanding among individuals.

“

Mental health and mental issues are a significant taboo on Saba. I want this taboo to diminish or be broken. This requires connection. When I was still working at [anonymous], I tried to break this by explicitly stating that there is no need to be ashamed if you sometimes find it mentally challenging. The stigma must be broken; you are not crazy if you are struggling with something.

”

“

There's a real stigma around EC2. People think that if you go there, you have Down syndrome. You get bullied if people see you going there.

”

MENTAL HEALTH CARRIBEAN AND EC2

Navigating mental health support on Saba is challenging, as respondents hesitate to approach services like Mental Health Caribbean or EC2 due to fears of community judgment. Despite potential benefits, many shy away from seeking assistance at these organizations. The central location of Mental Health Caribbean intensifies barriers, as respondents fear being seen entering, leading to immediate assumptions about their need for help. Additionally, concerns about privacy arise, with respondents fearing that other employees may witness their receipt of assistance, potentially impacting their social status within the Saba community.

Seeking help

When seeking help on Saba, respondents hesitate to approach organizations. Keeping secrets is uncommon, making things more complicated. Although the hospital and doctor's office could be places to talk about personal problems, respondents struggle with trusting healthcare workers due to rumors supposedly spread by them.

THE RISK OF RUMORS

The majority of the respondents hesitate to seek help from organizations. They indicate that stories often circulate on the island, and although there may be some truth in them, respondents point out that many details are often added, which sometimes differ from the actual situation. One thing respondents emphasize is that keeping secrets on Saba is rare; if you have something you are ashamed of, the best strategy is not to share it with anyone. These respondents feel that places like the hospital or the general practitioner should be where they can talk about personal concerns. However, they don't always trust these institutions. According to the respondents of this research, rumors are often spread by healthcare workers, contributing to this lack of trust.

The respondents also find it challenging when local staff changes quickly because they have to repeatedly share their stories, and new staff need to familiarize themselves with their situations. This presents a barrier, as trust with the island-based staff needs time to develop. Consequently, respondents are hesitant to disclose their concerns, emotions, and challenges to healthcare professionals residing on Saba. Engaging with professionals from outside the island offers an alternative, reducing the need for a high level of trust in the relationship, as respondents believe there is a lower risk of rumors spreading. Therefore, there is an opportunity to provide online consultations with professionals not based on Saba.

“

I don't feel alone. I still live with my wife, but I can imagine there are people who feel lonely on the island, despite there being many people here. Fortunately, there are plenty of activities to do and I do know there to find them.

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ONLINE CONSULTATION

The importance of online consultation by professionals not residing on Saba lies in fostering a sense of confidentiality and trust, reducing the risk of local rumors, and providing residents with a secure avenue for seeking support.

Consequences after seeking help

During the research, conversations were held with respondents experiencing both mental and psychological challenges. Additionally, individuals diagnosed with behavioral, or personality disorders were interviewed. These respondents express the immense difficulty of living with a mental illness on Saba, as they often face social exclusion within the community. Despite recovery or the use of medication, they report a lack of acceptance and diminished opportunities in the job market. Social connections also dwindle, as individuals feel that others on the island no longer wish to befriend them due to their past mental health conditions. This sense of severe judgment leaves them feeling restricted and isolated, subsequently exacerbating their mental health issues.

THE NEED FOR A SECOND CHANCE

The people with mental problems or a diagnosed mental illness perceive a lack of second chances, even after overcoming mental and psychological challenges. This sentiment extends to those who have not personally faced such issues. The pervasive judgment surrounding mental health issues creates a taboo, hindering individuals from speaking openly about their mental struggles. The prevailing associations with mental health problems are overwhelmingly negative, fostering an environment where people hesitate to seek help when experiencing mental difficulties. Those we spoke to during the research also indicate that on Saba, they are 'known' for the mental and psychological challenges they experience. According to respondents facing mental health issues, this is particularly burdensome, as they feel they are not given a second chance on the island. Some individuals experiencing mental problems express a desire to contribute to the community, but they believe they are not trusted and, as a result, are not afforded the opportunity. This reinforces their perception that they are deemed incompetent. Consequently, respondents with mental health challenges are not motivated to exhibit different behavior or work on personal development, as they perceive that the community on the island is unwilling to give them a second chance.

SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY

In our research on mental health challenges in Saba, a significant pattern emerged: individuals facing psychological difficulties feel judged and condemned by the community, influencing their behavior. This phenomenon is recognized as the "self-fulfilling prophecy." According to this theory, when individuals encounter specific expectations or judgments, they tend to adapt their behavior to align with these expectations, even if the initial judgment was inaccurate or negative.

Within the context of mental health on Saba, respondents describe a recurring cycle where negative expectations imposed by the community lead to behaviors that unintentionally confirm these expectations. This cycle persists, even though the initial judgments may not accurately reflect the true capabilities of the individual. This demonstrates that societal expectations influence the behavior of individuals.

ISOLATION AS A RESULT OF EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS ON SABA

When individuals are hesitant to seek assistance from others and lack a strong support system, they may begin to experience feelings of loneliness due to a lack of companionship. People can experience isolation when they are excluded from their community and lack the resources to leave Saba. This sense of isolation can lead to stress, anxiety, or even severe depression. In an attempt to cope with these challenges, some individuals may turn to substance use, such as drugs or alcohol, which can disturb others in the community.

It is important to recognize that addressing the symptoms related to alcohol and drug use may not be effective, as the underlying problem is caused by loneliness due to isolation and exclusion within the community. Therefore, it is crucial to encourage individuals with mental health problems to connect with others, have the opportunity to leave Saba regularly, and create more job opportunities on the island. This includes offering a variety of choices in employers and jobs, enabling individuals to develop themselves and their talents.

“

The gossip is frustrating and sometimes hinders the feeling of happiness. I think people gossip because they are bored. Whether it's about pregnancy, infidelity, relationships, or burglary. Often, it's fabricated, and sometimes it's real; you sometimes can't tell anymore.

”

Leaving Saba

Some respondents perceive life on Saba as restrictive, feeling "trapped" within the community on the island. They consider it important to leave the island regularly for a change of scenery. A few respondents indicate that they can financially afford to regularly plan trips to other islands, such as Sint Maarten or Sint Eustatius, with the aim of changing their minds and being inspired by a different environment. However, many respondents indicated that they lack the financial means for such trips, resulting in infrequent departures from the island. Despite this, these respondents share the desire to explore beyond the island, but due to low incomes and high transportation costs for the ferry or plane, it is not feasible. They also yearn for variety and new impressions, considering it a crucial developmental aspect, especially for children, as Saba lacks common experiences like the functioning of infrastructure, entrepreneurial landscapes, and the opportunity to create a unique identity. The awareness that Saba will always be "home" remains strong, as many respondents express a desire to return to the island.

It becomes clear that numerous factors influence individuals' decisions to live, stay, or return to Saba. Many prefer the island's tranquility, in contrast to the bustling atmosphere of neighboring islands like Sint Maarten or Bonaire, which they find overwhelming. Additionally, respondents often choose to stay on Saba due to their emotional and financial investment in their homes, which they mostly built themselves. One of the main motivations to remain on Saba is the strong sense of community and responsibility for each other and the island. The safety net of relying on each other is less evident in a larger world, and this requires individuals to transform from being strongly dependent to completely independent. The familiarity of their own community makes it daunting for people to take the step of leaving Saba permanently. These residents want to stay but have the need for more self-development opportunities.

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I have a lovely house, once built by myself, and I find life on Saba peaceful, but it is getting busier due to people from different cultures, which makes life more challenging and reduces the sense of community, especially given the number of people here.

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On Saba, you live in such a small circle. It would be good to have the opportunity to leave the island regularly.

”

TEMPORARILY LEAVING SABA

Some respondents find life on Saba to be stifling and, at times, even suffocating. The respondents indicate that this is due to the limited variety of activities, the familiarity of encountering the same faces everywhere, and the prevailing boredom. Some respondents highlight the importance of occasional escapes from Saba, whether for a vacation or a weekend getaway to nearby islands like St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, Bonaire, or Curaçao. While those who can afford such trips take advantage of these opportunities, other respondents express a sense of entrapment. They mention that financial constraints prevent them from affording these excursions for themselves and their families. They highlight the need of support in this regard, advocating for the introduction of special rates for Sabans to facilitate their ability to escape Saba for a few days.

LEAVING SABA FOR GOOD

Some respondents who have experienced mental health issues express the desire to leave the island as life on Saba has become untenable for them. These respondents note that they face constant judgment from others, and they wish to escape the negative reputation associated with their mental health struggles. Leaving the island permanently is seen as the only solution to evade these challenges. However, these respondents experience a lack of financial means and sufficient knowledge and information to pursue this effectively.

Some respondents who participated in the research recognize the importance of providing comprehensive insight for young adults who want to leave Saba. Two respondents on Saba have shared heartbreaking stories about their family members who moved to the Netherlands and became entangled in criminal activities. These respondents even recounted the tragic loss of these family members due to crime in the Netherlands. This highlights the need for better preparation of people for life outside of Saba, to prevent them from getting involved in crime.

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I want to temporarily leave Saba with my family. We want to go to The Hague. This seems like a good opportunity for a refresh. It's also beneficial for personal development to stay elsewhere. Ultimately, we'll come back: Saba is home.

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My [anonymous] was shot and killed in the Netherlands because he was involved in criminal activities. It was the most heartbreaking phone call of my life. How could this happen? How can we ensure that young adults moving from the small BES islands to the Netherlands are better supported? This should not happen. I have lost my [anonymous], but I hope other mothers never have to go through this.

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Different forms of support

The conversations with women reveal that some female respondents lack trust in other women on the island. Despite this, there's a genuine desire for a positive and supportive space where women can share stories and navigate challenges. Emphasizing the importance of trust, they advocate for a small, close-knit community, acknowledging the need to handle privacy issues in this island context.

WOMAN EMPOWERMENT

Women's empowerment is highly valued by many women who participated in this research, but a notable challenge arises from the prevalent distrust within their own community. This distrust is more pronounced among women compared to men. However, paradoxically, women are the ones expressing a desire for a community where they can engage in discussions free from the shadows of negativity.

They yearn for a space where they can share positive stories and support each other with the challenges they face. Recognizing the importance of trust, they emphasize the necessity of a small, close-knit group to facilitate efficient communication and foster a sense of trust. Trust is not taken lightly on the island, and learning how to handle privacy issues is deemed essential in this context. Therefore, there is an opportunity in organizing women's groups where women can share their stories and emotions. Sharing stories can lead to mutual support, which in turn contributes to reducing mental difficulties.

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I would like to create a women's group to empower each other. This way, we can show that we can talk to each other and be open! We can discuss things we experience, such as abuse, children, and the upbringing of children. Community development should do that, just like they do with sports activities! It is essential that they ensure it qualifies as a confidential environment.

”

PREGNANCIES AND EARLY MOTHERHOOD

For some women on Saba, becoming a mother at a young age is viewed as an opportunity for a better future. This perspective is supported by the availability of child allowances, which provide financial support and enable these women to manage with a single job supplemented by the allowance. The promise of financial stability, as emphasized by these women, greatly influences their decision to embrace motherhood early on. However, this practical choice brings about a host of significant challenges. As these women navigate the complexities of early motherhood, they emphasize the importance of addressing these various issues.

They highlight that traditional sex education often overlooks the complex interplay between financial factors and the motivations behind early pregnancies. For these young mothers, there are two opportunities to prepare them well for motherhood. This includes providing the right education on parenting and teaching them how to wisely manage their budget and practice budgeting skills themselves.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Some parents with children with special needs, such as ADHD, ADD, and autism, indicate that it is not possible on Saba to provide these children with equal treatment. According to them, this stems from the fact that there are too few facilities on Saba, such as special schools, where these children can receive the attention, they need. These parents believe it is important to provide sufficient attention to these children so that they experience as little judgment as possible from other respondents later on. Therefore, according to these respondents, there is an opportunity to develop a special approach for children who find it mentally challenging.

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Social media is used for negative purposes on Saba, not for positive purposes such as promoting a campaign against domestic violence. This is also because social media is so quickly adopted, and people here don't know what boundaries are or what they can use it for. Preventively, more education should be provided, such as a school programs.

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I see in my work at the afterschool care children with conditions such as autism or Down syndrome who need extra attention that we can hardly provide. That is painful to see. These children need extra attention and special treatment that they hardly receive. Fortunately, we have team-building activities here where there is also attention for body and mind.

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SEXTING AND BULLYING

From conversations with respondents, it's evident that parents feel bullying among young people is a significant issue. Bullying can lead to negative emotions, causing them to avoid school or playing with friends. Additionally, sexting among young girls is a problem, which only exacerbates the bullying issue. This can lead to young adults, especially girls, feeling unsafe in the streets. They are bullied and looked at strangely by others, causing them to no longer feel at home in the place where they live. Therefore, it's important to distract children from these activities by organizing suitable activities they enjoy, such as karaoke. Also, providing appropriate education about the consequences of sexting, like sending a nude photo, is essential.

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Social media is used on Saba for negative purposes, not for positive purposes such as promoting a campaign against domestic violence. This is also because social media is so quickly embraced, and people here don't know what boundaries are or how they can use it. Preventively, more education should be provided, such as a school program. Also, to prevent sexting among young people.

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Professionals about mental health

A total of eight professionals from Saba were interviewed in November and December 2023 prior to the research via Microsoft Teams. Professionals who participated in this research say that mental health issues are not discussed enough, largely due to stigma and an older-generation taboo. Limited entertainment options add to the difficulty, and a shortage of resources requires seeking help from neighboring islands.

TABOO

Professionals who participated in this research emphasize that mental health is insufficiently addressed within the community's discourse. The prevalent stigma surrounding mental health issues, often linked to misconceptions of 'craziness,' contributes to a culture of silence. Moreover, a pervasive taboo exists in Caribbean culture, fostering an environment of gossip where discussing mental problems is discouraged. People do not want to talk about their issues, also not about the reasons for mental health problems such as domestic violence. This cultural taboo, originating with the older generation, persists among adults. Consequently, respondents refrain from openly discussing their mental health challenges, as they perceive little value in openly addressing these issues. Some professionals prefer using a different term instead of 'mental health.' 'Welfare' is one alternative.

LACK OF ENTERTAINMENT

Professionals who participated in this research mention that the absence of entertainment options, such as cinemas, parties, and organized sports, poses a challenge for residents in finding outlets for relaxation. This difficulty is compounded by the challenge of finding a partner. Professionals observe that the island faces a shortage of resources and professionals to adequately address more severe mental health issues, including trauma processing and addictions. The available assistance is limited, necessitating reliance on support from professionals on neighboring islands.

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I see a connection between mental health and various factors. It's a combination of leisure time, being part of blended families, and financial situations. People experience traumas, like losing a job or a loved one, as well as abuse, like domestic violence, and mistreatment. There's also a lot of pride, which is part of the culture, but there's also fear of stigmas, like being labeled as crazy if you talk about your mental health. It really takes courage for people to ask for help.

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You can spend time with your family, go to the beach, or at least what we consider a beach. Children can play football or basketball. You can't go to the cinema; there are only a few restaurants. If you don't have a social life with friends, you might go to the bar or have a drink at someone's home.

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Professionals about opportunities related to mental health

Research shows that professionals who participated in this research recognize opportunities to improve mental health awareness and support services. They aim to empower respondents in understanding and addressing mental health challenges while advocating for collaborative efforts and initiatives to enhance accessibility and trust within the community.

RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Professionals who participated in this research identify an opportunity in raising awareness to help the population understand mental health problems, recognize them in themselves, and learn coping strategies for everyday challenges. Distinguishing between common difficulties and mental health issues, and recognizing signs in others, is emphasized. Given the limited support services, professionals see potential in strengthening collaborations, emphasizing expertise and shared goals for a coordinated approach. The need for clarity in this regard is currently acknowledged. Additionally, some professionals envision the opportunity of establishing a walk-in location where a resident's presence is not directly associated with mental health issues. It is important to encourage the independence of Sabans and empower the population.

MORE AND DIFFERENT HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Some professionals who participated in this research indicate that there is insufficient mental health support available on Saba for the population facing mental health issues. They mention that currently, there are only two psychologists who are flown in from Sint Maarten. With just two staff members, they cannot meet the demand of the island, limiting respondents' access to help. Additionally, they mention that some people may not connect well with the welfare professionals, leading them to refuse help from these individuals. Due to the shortage of staff, it is also not possible to engage someone else, resulting in a lack of appropriate assistance.

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Residents of Saba need knowledge about mental health. Mental problems are associated with being considered crazy. However, if you're feeling sad for a certain period, let's say for two months, it is a mental issue. But people here see it as just having a bad two months.

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The number of professionals for psychological assistance should be increased in my opinion. Two psychologists used to come over from Sint Maarten occasionally, but I think that has stopped. There is a high turnover rate among medical staff. A psychiatrist flies in four times a year. More Social Psychological Nurses or at least people residing on the island should be present at the Medical Health Center. There are currently two, one of whom is leaving.

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About safety

Attitudes about safety

Respondents of this research experience Saba as one of the safest islands to live looking at public safety. However, respondents find that safety on the streets is better perceived than safety behind closed doors. They indicate that a lot happens behind closed doors on the island, of which fellow residents have little knowledge.

THE SAFEST ISLAND

The majority of people who participated in the research perceive Saba as one of the safest places in the world. They say there's hardly any violence or break-ins here. It's normal for folks to leave their houses unlocked and cars unattended. They believe this safety comes from the island being small and everyone knowing each other well. Because of this, thieves don't have many chances to hide, so they don't even try to steal. This results in a very high general safety feeling among respondents.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SAFETY INDOORS AND OUTDOORS

The respondents of this research experience a significant difference on Saba when it comes to safety outdoors compared to safety indoors. They mention that outwardly, it may seem like everything is fine with respondents, but they know that unsafe situations occur indoors. These unsafe situations can range from arguments to oppression. People prefer to keep these issues to themselves as much as possible because they don't want others to know that something is wrong.

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My house is always open. Just recently, my WIFI connection went down, and the person who came to fix it could just walk in. My iPad might be under a book, but that's ridiculous. I really feel safe here. In the Netherlands, you don't just leave your house open.

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On Saba, the safety outdoors is fantastic. I can't imagine a safer island. Additionally, you notice that safety indoors is, in fact, quite poor. There is a significant prevalence of domestic violence, mainly involving men mistreating their wives. Just look at her. It's known that she is regularly beaten by her husband. Her husband holds a high position; nobody confronts him or helps the woman. She just comes to work, and no one pays attention. That's just how it goes.

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Domestic violence

As stated before, most of the respondents do not experience a problem where it comes to public safety because most of the people feel very safe with each other. Where some people feel unsafe is within their home situations, as there is sometimes domestic violence between partners and, at times, towards the children. Some respondents are aware, for example, that there are individuals on the island where domestic violence occurs regularly, and yet, no one says or does anything about it. They say this impacts the sense of safety they experience on Saba.

A few female respondents indicate that they feel unsafe in their own homes due to the fear of domestic violence by their partners. There are also respondents who are aware of domestic violence within their families or among friends. They would like to see someone get help but are not willing to report their suspicion of domestic violence. The few respondents who experience domestic violence themselves also state that they are not quick to make a report, fearing more violence or the consequences it may have. When a perpetrator holds a high position within an organization on Saba, the likelihood of reporting is lower because people fear the influence that person may exert.

According to female respondents experiencing an unsafe situation, the perpetrators are usually men. Due to the various power dynamics, these women experience a sense of powerlessness, which has a direct negative impact on their sense of security on Saba. Therefore, there are opportunities to teach women about empowerment, focusing on topics such as how to stand up for themselves, discover their inner strength, and activate it. Additionally, it is very important that women here can also make use of online consultation with a professional who is not residing on the island so that they can express their stories and concerns without it becoming known to fellow residents.

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I feel safe on Saba when it comes to my belongings. I leave my car unlocked, and there has never been a break-in, but it's not safe when it comes to your life. Everyone thinks they know what's going on and who you are.

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I was raped during my job by a resident who also worked there. No one intervened; they left me to fend for myself. The perpetrator was never apprehended; they felt they couldn't do that to him because he has a wife and children. However, they did dismiss me because keeping me on would cause trouble.

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ONLINE CONSULTATION

In the case of domestic violence, it is crucial to provide online consultation by professionals who do not live on Saba. This ensures a secure platform for seeking support and minimizing the risk of local rumors.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IN RELATION TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The research states that domestic violence most often occurs because of alcohol and drug abuse. Heavy alcohol abuse increases the likelihood of arguments escalating to physical violence. This means that arguments and fights between partners are common. A few respondents of this research share a troubling reality in their community, showing that domestic violence is a big issue, mainly because of alcohol abuse by both men and women. This serious problem involves women verbally abusing men and men physically hurting women. Additionally, respondents mention that cheating within relationships, especially when alcohol is involved, can lead to more aggression between partners. This situation highlights the many challenges faced by individuals and families on Saba, including substance abuse and relationship problems leading to domestic violence when fights escalate.

ESCAPING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BY LEAVING THE ISLAND

In the context of domestic violence, we observe that mothers on Saba express a desire to leave the island but face obstacles in doing so. Similar to the situation in the Netherlands, a partner or ex-partner's consent is required to relocate to another municipality with the children. If the ex-partner does not grant permission, the mother is unable to leave the island. Due to the shortage of housing on the island, women often cannot secure alternative accommodation, even after separation. This creates a vicious cycle where women find themselves repeatedly exposed to domestic violence because they are unable to escape the situation. Another reason why they stay is because they cannot leave their children behind if they choose to leave. This makes them feel desperate and stuck on Saba.

This complicates the process of moving to another country. Some respondents would appreciate having a service point or online information center, where they can be informed about the possibilities of leaving the island and how to prepare for such a move. Or a special team which can help them making a plan to escape a toxic environment for their own safety.

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I want to leave Saba to recuperate, but I won't leave my children behind.

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My husband has abused me for years, mostly verbally. I want to divorce, but we share the expenses and own the house together. It's not feasible; we need each other to survive in this way. The government should intervene; they should create a safety net for women trapped in a dangerous situation.

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Men are not punished; there's always protection for them. This is because they all have connections and ties with people working in the government.

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Seeking help and reporting

The research showed that there is a high need for help in the form of discussing emotions on the island. Even though the need is high, people do not find it easy to ask help or report an unsafe situation if they experience one. There are multiple reasons why people do not report on Saba. Additionally, respondents harbor a persistent fear of being judged by other respondents, fueled by the prevalent gossip culture on Saba.

THE REPORTING SYSTEM ON SABA

Some respondents feel that the reporting system on Saba is not efficient enough. According to them, this is due to several factors, including the fact that the reporting center is located on Bonaire and not on Saba. This can lead to confusion because the people working on Bonaire may not accurately assess the situations on Saba. Additionally, many residents are unfamiliar with the street names on Saba, making it difficult to determine the exact location of incidents. Having to coordinate assistance from Bonaire to Saba takes time, resulting in respondents feeling like their reports are not being heard.

THE FEAR OF CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Some respondents on Saba express a pressing need for avenues to discuss their emotions when they encounter unsafe situations. At the moment, respondents are afraid to express their emotions about unsafe situations they experience because they fear it will directly impact their lives. One of the fears that mothers with young children experience is that they are afraid child protective services will take their children away if they become aware of the unsafe situations at home. This is one of the main reasons why mothers do not report unsafe situations, like domestic violence. Therefore, there is an opportunity for youth care facilities on Saba to clearly communicate that they do not arbitrarily remove children from families. It may help to communicate the guidelines and requirements of youth care in this regard.

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I would really appreciate being able to talk one-on-one with someone about my emotions and feelings. We do have a psychiatrist on the island, but I don't connect much with her. Unfortunately, there is no other option with a different person, which I would really appreciate. If this choice were available, it would be crucial for that person to be consistent and not leave the island shortly after

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THE GAP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND RESIDENTS

Some respondents indicate that they have made reports in the past, but no solution or action has resulted from them. They underscore the significance of having their concerns and emotions acknowledged and taken seriously, irrespective of whether they choose to pursue formal complaints or reports against individuals. These respondents especially feel that government officials, such as police officers, do not always take the reports seriously. They also believe that these individuals are biased when the report is made by specific persons, for example, individuals with a certain (bad) reputation. According to them, this stems from the gap that exists between the government and residents.

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Communication on the island is very skewed; when something happens or there's an issue, it's not communicated but rather withheld. The professionals on the island should be giving people more opportunities and possibilities. I have quite a few ideas and I've also shared these ideas, but I'm still not being listened to.

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Professionals about safety

A total of five professionals from Saba were interviewed in October and November 2023 prior to the research via Microsoft Teams. During the presence of the researchers on the island, three additional professionals were interviewed.

VISION OF THE PROFESSIONALS

Professionals who participated in this research have noted that there aren't many situations or incidents that directly cause problems or affect the feeling of safety among respondents. However, they have highlighted certain situations and habits related to the theme of 'safety' that, while not directly impacting how safe people feel, still merit attention. These include the prevalence of numerous cars and the noise they generate, instances of domestic violence between partners and violent parenting, and the feeling of boredom among respondents, which often leads them to engage with each other. While these factors may not directly influence residents' perceptions of safety, they contribute to the overall atmosphere and quality of life on the island.

FOCUS ON STRENGTHS INSTEAD OF CHALLENGES

Some of the professionals who participated in this research feel uneasy when the word 'problem' is mentioned. They prefer to use terms like 'challenges' or 'issues' instead. Most professionals agree that the challenges faced on Saba are not unique to the island or its culture. They note that similar issues exist on other islands in the region. However, these professionals highlight that Saba also has its strengths, such as its close-knit community and the support residents offer one another. They suggest that instead of solely focusing on the problems, there should be an emphasis on highlighting Saba's positive aspects and opportunities. This approach can promote better communication and a more balanced perspective on the island's situation.

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You see a lot of alcohol use, which can lead to violent parenting. Children are beaten, and this was always accepted. This is because previous teachers were Dutch nuns. If the children didn't understand the teachers well, they were beaten. If the nuns were allowed to hit the children, then parents could too. This was about 50 years ago. Today's parents realize it's wrong. There is still domestic violence, but there are no consequences. No one has taught parents how to deal with anger. They are not used to rewarding children when they do something right. Parents' anger is reflected in children's behavior at school.

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Saba has many good things. It's a family-oriented island. People on the island help each other: Sabans for Sabans. Outsiders often view the island negatively. Trying to explain how Saba works to Sabans may be met with resistance, creating a reluctance towards outsiders. People are hopeful to be treated as equals. Therefore, consider shifting the focus of the research from problems to strengths and opportunities!

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Professionals about opportunities related to safety

UNDERLYING PROBLEMS CAUSES UNSAFE SITUATIONS

Professionals who participated in this research have noticed that factors affecting how safe people feel are often linked to mental health concerns. For instance, the combination of low wages and high costs for essential items can push individuals to turn to substances as a way to manage their stress. This reliance on substances can then impact their behavior and mental state, contributing to situations that feel unsafe for themselves and others.

WILLINGNESS TO REPORT

The reluctance to report incidents on Saba is influenced by three main challenges, as highlighted by professionals. Firstly the emergency center on Bonaire, where Dutch is the primary language, creates a language barrier with Sabans, who predominantly speak English. This linguistic difference hinders effective communication. Secondly the absence of street names and signs on Saba poses a challenge for emergency operators in Bonaire, unfamiliar with the island's geography. Residents often choose to report directly to local officers on Saba for quicker and more efficient response. Moreover, respondents' concerns about their safety and the potential for their identity to be revealed hinder reporting. With a small population, maintaining anonymity is challenging, and respondents fear potential repercussions. This is particularly pronounced in situations involving children, where individuals are apprehensive about involvement from child services and the possibility of child removal. Finally, some professionals who participated in the research noted a prevailing distrust among residents towards the government, particularly the police. They mentioned hearing from residents that they were not taken seriously or improperly treated, which has damaged trust. Professionals believe this prevents people from engaging with these authorities and reporting incidents.

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I think there are three reasons why people on Saba don't report to the emergency hotline using the numbers 3737 and 911. 1) The emergency center is on Bonaire. People on Saba speak English a bit differently than the staff at the emergency center in Bonaire, so Saba respondents feel like they won't be understood. 2) Another reason is that we don't have street signs on Saba. The staff at the emergency center in Bonaire don't know the respondents of Saba and don't know where they live. [Anonymous], I know exactly where people live because it has a small population. So, it takes a lot of time for the person reporting to describe where there is a problem or where the incident is happening. 3) The third reason is the identity of the person reporting. When you file a report, you have to give personal information that can cause trouble. People avoid making reports to prevent friction because you'll run into each other anyway. In general, respondents avoid filing reports because the other party will come looking for trouble with the person reporting.

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LACK OF CONSEQUENCES

Improving safety perceptions, as highlighted by professionals, could be achieved by focusing on mental health, which often underlies safety concerns. There is a notable lack of consequences for troublemakers and incidents, indicating a failure to enforce laws and regulations. For serious crimes, it is suggested that offenders be transferred to prison on Bonaire. However, this rarely happens due to the high cost and logistical challenges of transportation.

Additionally, professionals who participated in this research have observed that some residents hesitate to report problems and incidents directly to them due to trust issues. They mention that building trust with residents is crucial, which can be achieved by ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of their personal information. Lastly, it is emphasized that residents need to know in which situations it is useful to report incidents and how to do so most effectively.

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Making Saba safer and more livable could start by changing some rules and laws. Simply put, there aren't many here, so more unsafe situations are tolerated than intended.

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Executive summary

Executive summary

This report is prepared for the Public Health and Public Safety department in Saba, with the objective of gaining a profound understanding of how respondents on Saba perceive their own mental health and public safety. The insights gathered from 63 respondents provide a detailed view of the attitudes and needs of this specific group of residents.

Life on Saba | Respondents predominantly describe Saba as a beautiful and tranquil island where nature takes center stage. Many respondents, especially those born on Saba, choose to live here despite its challenges, appreciating the limited happenings on the island. However, the familiarity and limited activities contribute to a perception of dullness and boredom for some. A strong sense of community prevails on Saba, with residents knowing each other well. Mutual respect and support are crucial, and family and friends are seen as the primary safety net. The close-knit community provides a warm and familiar atmosphere, but also creates pressure to maintain a positive image, stifling self-expression and individuality. Despite the natural beauty, respondents face significant financial challenges. They mention that low incomes and high living costs compel many, especially single mothers, to work multiple jobs. Balancing work and family life is described as a constant source of stress, affecting their mental health and ability to give adequate attention to their children.

Mental Health | There is a pervasive negative perception of mental health among respondents, often associating it with being "mentally" ill or "disturbed." This stigma leads individuals to hide their mental health issues to avoid judgment. Respondents acknowledge the impact of mental health problems but struggle to express their emotions due to fear of being labeled as "crazy." Respondents hesitate to seek help from organizations like Mental Health Caribbean or EC2 due to fears of community judgment and privacy concerns. The central location of these services and the quick turnover of local staff exacerbates these issues. There is an opportunity to provide online consultations with professionals not based on Saba to ensure confidentiality. The combination of a lack of self-expression and high dependency on the community contributes to feelings of loneliness, frustration, depression, and anxiety. Respondents express a strong need for opportunities to connect with others and for self-development and independence. They also emphasize the importance of raising awareness around mental health to help destigmatize it. There is a significant need for more anonymous mental health care, such as online consultations or face-to-face consultations with non-resident professionals who periodically visit Saba to offer community support and guidance.

Safety | Respondents generally perceive Saba as one of the safest places in the world, with little violence or crime. The small community and familiarity among residents contribute to this high sense of safety. However, there is a significant difference between perceived safety outdoors and indoors. Respondents in the research indicate that domestic violence is a prevalent issue behind closed doors. Some people feel unsafe in their homes due to fear of violence from partners. Reporting such incidents is challenging due to fear of repercussions, especially when the perpetrator holds a high position within the community or a government organization. Mothers fear that reporting unsafe situations might lead to child protective services taking their children away. This fear prevents them from seeking help. Clear communication from youth care facilities about their guidelines and actions can alleviate these concerns. In terms of public safety, the reporting system is particularly highlighted as a problem. It is perceived as inefficient, primarily due to the central reporting center being located on Bonaire, which causes confusion or delays in addressing incidents. Respondents emphasize that this inefficiency leads to underreporting of disturbances and incidents on the island. However, they also note that the number of such incidents is relatively small, as there is little crime or unrest experienced in public spaces on Saba.

Conclusion | The primary goal of the research was to answer the question: "How can we gain a profound understanding of the perceptions, challenges, and needs related to mental health and safety on Saba?". The residents who participated in this research predominantly describe Saba as a beautiful and tranquil island where nature takes center stage. A strong sense of community prevails on Saba, as the majority of respondents know each other. In cars, friendly waves and honks serve as a form of greeting. The mutual connectedness on Saba is evident as people spontaneously assist one another when needed. The communal involvement and informal mode of interaction reflect the close bonds within the community, imparting a warm and familiar atmosphere to daily life on Saba.

Despite these positive aspects, respondents reveal significant challenges they face in both mental health and safety. They experience difficulties in self-expression and personal development due to the pressures of living in a small, close-knit community. Financial constraints and high living costs increase stress, especially for single mothers. A pervasive stigma around mental health prevents many from seeking help, exacerbated by fears of privacy breaches and community gossip. Domestic violence is a major concern, with inefficiencies in the reporting system further complicating matters. Respondents emphasize that this inefficiency leads to underreporting of disturbances and incidents on the island, although there is generally low crime and unrest in public spaces on Saba. Respondents express a strong need for more opportunities for personal development, anonymous mental health support, and efforts to destigmatize mental health issues.



Onderzoekshuis 