

Living on Statia, I notice that many Statians, when asked "how are you?", answer with "not too bad today" or "not complaining" followed by "that doesn't help" at the end.

In the beginning it sounds cheerful, charming. Gradually, however, I began to wonder: why this resignation, this phlegmatic? In the course of the years here it strikes me that the attitude towards "authority" and "authorities" is so resigned, often even submissive. Why does one so easily resign oneself to "situations that are just the way they are"?

Not that there is no complaining: certainly there is. But only among, against and about each other, but not where complaints should be directed. People just don't always know how to find the right way, but there is certainly also a fear of intimidation and associated job loss.

Confrontation is not sought, so little changes and if it does happen, it is usually without input from Statians!

But sometimes it is too much. Then there is a drop that causes the proverbial bucket to overflow. Like about 3 weeks ago with the death of a young man due to a chain of ambiguities, poor communication, not being clear where the responsibilities lie and where the decisions are made.

Thursday, April 21, it was announced by Government Commissioner Francis that hard work is underway to assemble an independent commission to investigate hospital.

I assume (and hope) that in addition to this investigation, there will also be an investigation by the Health Care Inspectorate into the general course of events.

Another organization that is not transparent to me is the Voogdij Raad (Guardianship Council) that falls directly under its parent organization: the Raad voor de Kinderbescherming (Child Care and Protection Board) in European Netherlands.

The activities of this Council include giving advice in juvenile cases, protection of minors in matters of custody, division of care and upbringing tasks, contact with parents and third parties, primary residence of the child, reporting for the establishment of alimony and payment thereof.

On this last point, the payment of alimony, the National Ombudsman was quite clear in his report on poverty: "Alimony is by no means always requested and/or paid" and "Sometimes alimony is

requested but the file is only taken up after four years (!)" (according to the National Ombudsman). Are these incidents? Or is this a structural problem? Who knows may say, but I have my suspicions. This is not a poverty policy but a poor, shabby policy!

Although both parents are obliged to contribute to the cost of living of their children, alimony is not always paid. Most fathers cannot or will not contribute to the costs. And the mothers, in order to avoid hassle, often leave it at that. This is despite the fact that they usually desperately need the money.

Not everyone knows how to go about finding a legal solution or people cannot afford legal assistance. There is unfamiliarity with procedures due to poor or no information.

Furthermore, there seems to be a permanent incomplete understanding of the number of young people who fall under the juvenile justice system, the so-called recidivists. Partly this is caused by the fact that there seems to be no great willingness to report. As a result, juvenile offenders do not receive counseling or do so much too late.

As long as the circle is not broken, it will often be heard that people do not complain because it does not help anyway. How can the circle be broken? It starts with real and sincere attention from the institutions in European Netherlands and with broad and permanent information.

Real involvement and a listening ear (and a writing pen) can make a world of difference. In my opinion, the Dutch institutions also know how best to approach things, but here too the question is: is there real commitment? is there real will to make something of the Caribbean Netherlands? If the European Netherlands were to lend a helping hand more often, if they were to really listen to the needs and requirements on the islands more often, instead of pointing their fingers and saying how things should be done.