

The cover features a dark blue background with several geometric shapes: a blue square in the top left, a red trapezoid in the top right, a large orange shape on the left side, and a white trapezoid in the center. The text 'ANNUAL REPORT' is in the bottom left and '2024' is in the bottom right.

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

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Preface from the Director



Ulrich Hermans

Director Aruba Futura Foundation

As I reflect on 2024, I am filled with pride and purpose. This was not a year of waiting or watching, it was a year of stepping in, stepping up, and moving forward.

Futura was called upon to reclaim leadership of Aruba's eGovernment program at a pivotal moment, and we did so with clarity and conviction. We worked alongside schools, startups, ministries, global partners, and grassroots communities to bring innovation to life in classrooms, code, policy, and public space.

From launching a digital identity collaboration at Mastercard's Tech Hub in New York, to helping a robotics team compete on the world stage in Athens, to supporting creative entrepreneurs in San Nicolas we saw the power of ideas made actionable. We did not just imagine change. We co-created it.

This report tells the story of a team, a community, and a country in motion. It captures the bold experiments, the lessons learned, and the partnerships that made progress possible.

Thank you to all who contributed! Our team, our collaborators, and our citizens for believing in the future we're building together.

Let's keep pushing boundaries. Let's keep designing the Aruba we want to live in.

EduTech Fund

Empowering Aruba's Digital Classrooms



In 2024, the Aruba Futura Foundation's EduTech Fund reached its eighth and final cycle, marking a significant milestone in the digital transformation of Aruba's educational landscape. With a total allocation of Afl. 400,000 for the 2023/2024 school year, the Fund continued to stimulate innovation, technology, and interactivity in classrooms by awarding grants to pilot projects designed by schools, teachers, and students across the island.

This year, the Fund supported a diverse array of projects aimed at enhancing digital literacy and fostering innovative learning environments. Notable initiatives included the establishment of a cutting-edge Tech Lab at the University of Aruba to empower digital literacy and innovation, and the integration of interactive boards and tablets at IPA to facilitate dynamic lessons and collaborative learning.

Additionally, the Fund enabled schools like Trupial Kleuterschool to create inspiring STEM labs, providing young learners with early exposure to technology and interactive educational tools. These projects not only equipped classrooms with modern technology but also emphasized the development of 21st-century skills among students and educators alike.

During the final cycles (7 & 8) of the EduTech Fund in the 2023–2024 school year, Futura awarded approximately Afl. 400,000 in grants to strengthen digital education island-wide.

EduTech Fund

Empowering Aruba's Digital Classrooms

Cycle 7

- **Rosario College** – Acquired smart TVs, tablets, and Chromebooks to expand digital access for teachers and students.
- **IPA** – Integrated interactive boards and tablets to enhance classroom engagement and collaboration.
- **Trupial Kleuterschool** – Introduced tablets and Chromebooks, fostering early digital literacy.

Cycle 8

- **St. Franciscus College** – Awarded 10 iPads and 30 Chromebooks to enhance classroom access to learning devices, supporting both structured instruction and independent study.
- **Maria School** – Selected to receive six interactive electronic boards, empowering teachers to deliver more engaging, multimedia-rich lessons
- **Colegio Felipe B. Tromp** – Chosen to establish a new STEAM lab, complete with science kits, tech tools, and design equipment to spark hands-on exploration and innovation.



EduTech Fund Closing Event

Celebrating Impact

In 2024, Futura hosted the EduTech Closing Event to mark the official conclusion of the EduTech Fund after eight successful funding cycles. Held at the University of Aruba, the event brought together educators, students, school leaders, and government partners to celebrate the achievements of Aruba's most innovative classroom projects.

The event showcased the transformative impact of the Fund, which supported dozens of schools over four years with grants to pilot technology-driven education initiatives. Attendees explored interactive exhibits featuring projects like STEM labs for early learners, digital storytelling tools, smart boards, and immersive tech labs.

Keynote remarks by education leaders highlighted the importance of sustaining innovation in the classroom beyond the Fund's lifecycle. Alumni from winning projects shared firsthand how the Fund helped them rethink teaching and learning from boosting student engagement to creating new models of blended education.

The EduTech Closing Event wasn't just a look back it was a springboard for the future. Futura used this moment to announce its commitment to continuing support for education innovation through new programs and strategic partnerships, ensuring that the momentum built by EduTech lives on in Aruba's classrooms for years to come.



24

Projects

52

eBoards

188

Laptops

157

Tablets

STEM-X Youth Summit 2024

Igniting Innovation in Aruba's Youth



On February 24, 2024, the Aruba Futura Foundation hosted the STEM X Youth Summit at the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino, bringing together over 200 students aged 14–18 for a day of immersive learning and inspiration in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

The summit featured an inspiring keynote by Jillian Oduber, an Aerospace Engineering student at TU Delft, who shared her academic journey and the significance of STEM in shaping the future. Participants engaged in interactive workshops led by local and international experts, covering topics such as 3D printing, robotics, coding, and sustainable technologies.

An expo showcased various organizations involved in STEM in Aruba, providing attendees with insights into educational and career opportunities in the field. The event fostered creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking, aligning with Futura's mission to empower the next generation of innovators and problem-solvers.

The STEM X Youth Summit 2024 stands as a testament to Futura's commitment to cultivating a future-ready generation equipped to lead Aruba's innovation journey.

STEMX Youth Summit

Aruba Innovation Summit 2024

Evolve: AI & Empowering Teams

On March 20, 2024, the Aruba Futura Foundation hosted the fourth edition of the Aruba Innovation Summit at the Renaissance Wind Creek Convention Center in Oranjestad. Under the theme "EVOLVE: Integrating AI & Empowering Teams," the summit convened a diverse group of professionals, entrepreneurs, and thought leaders to explore the intersection of artificial intelligence and workplace transformation.

The summit featured an impressive lineup of speakers:

- **Amy Gallo**, a best-selling author and workplace expert, delivered a keynote on managing workplace conflicts and building interpersonal resilience, drawing from her book *Getting Along: How to Work with Anyone (Even Difficult People)*.
- **Eduardo Sanchez**, Senior Vice President & Head of Cyber & Intelligence at Mastercard Latin America and the Caribbean, discussed the role of AI in enhancing cybersecurity measures and fraud detection.
- **Luenne Gomez-Pieters**, Director of the Aruba Tax Hub, shared insights on leading organizational change and embracing innovation, highlighting her experience in digitalizing Aruba's Tax Department.



EVOLVE
INTEGRATING AI & EMPOWERING TEAMS IN THE WORKPLACE

Aruba Innovation Summit 2024

Panel Discussion: The Evolution of Leadership in an AI-Driven Workplace

A highlight of the summit was the panel discussion titled "The Evolution of Leadership in an AI-Driven Workplace." This session brought together industry leaders to delve into the challenges and opportunities presented by AI integration in leadership roles.

Panelists:

- **Ming Li Chung**, representing KiConnect, emphasized the importance of innovation and adaptability in leveraging AI's potential.
- **Marilinda Mansur-Croes**, Agile Coach and Human-Centric Business Architect at AIB - ENOVIS, discussed designing for user engagement in the digital age, highlighting the need for agile methodologies and human-centric approaches.
- **Marlon Kock**, Team Leader of IT Architecture & Projects at Aruba Bank, shared insights on architecting innovation and the practical applications of AI in enhancing organizational processes.

The panelists explored topics such as the evolving nature of leadership in the context of AI, strategies for fostering innovation within teams, and the critical skills leaders need to develop to navigate the AI-driven landscape effectively.

The Aruba Innovation Summit 2024 underscored Futura's commitment to driving technological advancement and empowering teams to navigate the evolving digital landscape. By bringing together thought leaders and industry experts, the summit provided valuable insights into the integration of AI in the workplace and the evolution of leadership in this new era.



FUTURA

Mastercard & Futura Digital Transformation Leaders Forum

On March 21, 2024, Futura hosted the **Digital Transformation Leaders Forum** in collaboration with **Mastercard**, convening public sector innovators and international experts to explore the future of government services in the digital age. This high-level forum served as a platform for dialogue, idea exchange, and strategic alignment around pressing innovation challenges and opportunities in Aruba and across the Caribbean region. The event opened with remarks from **Carl Gordon**, Director of Government for Mastercard English Caribbean, followed by **Jimena Elia**, Vice President of the West & Dutch Cluster, who reaffirmed Mastercard's commitment to supporting digital transformation in small island states.

The forum featured two key trend sessions:

- **Digital Identity & Payments Innovation** led by **Felix Bialek**, highlighting emerging models in public service delivery, secure payments, and inclusive access.
- **AI & Cybersecurity in Government** led by **Eduardo Sanchez** (SVP Cyber & Intelligence, LAC) and **Maikel Ninaber** (Director of Cybersecurity, EU), focusing on proactive strategies for safe and ethical AI implementation in the public sector.

Participants engaged in rich discussions on real-world challenges and solutions related to digital ID infrastructure, open data, resilience, and cross-sector collaboration. The open Q&A segments provided space for local leaders to voice priorities and co-develop pathways forward.

The forum concluded with closing remarks by **Jimena Elia**, emphasizing Mastercard's interest in deepening its partnership with Aruba on digital governance and fintech innovation. This event marked a pivotal step in building long-term, strategic collaboration between the private sector and government to shape a digitally inclusive future for all.





Digital Literacy Pilot Project

Princes Amalia Basisschool



The Digital Literacy Pilot Project at Princes Amalia Basisschool was established to prepare students for a digital future by introducing structured ICT education. The initiative is a collaboration between the school and the Department of Education, aiming to foster digital skills in a sustainable and scalable way. This pilot supports the national vision of integrating technology into education to improve learning outcomes and digital readiness. The project is being implemented across selected classes and focuses on essential digital competencies, including keyboard use, basic software knowledge, online safety, and responsible digital behavior. Classrooms were equipped with a range of tools including **2 Samsung Flip Pro Smart Boards, 1 Samsung Flip Digital Flip Chart, 30 Samsung Galaxy Tablets, a charging cart, and DIGIT PRO software and licenses.** Additionally, **licenses for all students and teachers** were provided, along with teacher training to ensure effective delivery. Other software used includes Microsoft Office, Google Workspace, Gynzy, and Code.org to support varied learning activities. Monitoring and evaluation are key components of the pilot. Data is being collected on student engagement, learning outcomes, and the effectiveness of instructional approaches. Insights from this process will be used to refine the program and inform potential national rollout strategies. Ultimately, the project serves as a testbed for scaling digital literacy across Aruba's primary education system. It highlights the importance of equipping students with 21st-century skills and ensures teachers are supported with the resources and training they need to succeed. The partnership underscores a shared commitment to innovation, equity, and educational progress.

Innovation Camp 2024

Cultivating Young Innovators

In July 2024, the Aruba Futura Foundation hosted its annual Innovation Camp, a dynamic two-week program designed for children aged 8 to 11 with a keen interest in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM). Held at Princess Amalia Basisschool, the camp ran in two cycles: July 15–19 and July 22–26, both of which reached full capacity.

The camp offered a blend of interactive learning sessions, creative arts and crafts, and hands-on projects. Participants engaged in activities aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), fostering awareness of global challenges and encouraging innovative thinking. Field trips provided real-world experiences, enhancing the educational journey.

A notable highlight was the involvement of Makerpedia, which facilitated workshops on digital design and 3D printing, equipping young learners with modern technological skills.



Innovation Camp 2024



Cultivating Young Innovators

Daily Highlights

- Day 1: Introduction to Innovation
- Campers were welcomed and introduced to the week's themes. Activities included team-building exercises and an overview of STEAM concepts, setting the stage for collaborative learning.
- Day 2: Hands-On STEAM Projects
- Participants engaged in interactive workshops, exploring basic principles of physics and engineering through fun experiments and creative problem-solving tasks.
- Day 3: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Exploration
- The focus shifted to global challenges and sustainability. Campers learned about the SDGs and participated in projects aimed at understanding environmental responsibility and community impact.
- Day 4: Field Trip and Real-World Applications
- A field trip provided real-world context to the week's lessons, allowing children to observe and discuss innovation and sustainability practices within the community.
- Day 5: Project Presentations and Celebration
- The week culminated with campers presenting their projects to peers, parents, and instructors, showcasing their creativity and the knowledge gained. The camp concluded with a celebration of the participants' achievements.

Throughout the week, Innovation Camp 2024 fostered an environment where curiosity, creativity, and collaboration flourished. Campers were encouraged to think critically, solve problems, and express bold ideas laying a strong foundation for their future as changemakers. The overwhelming success of this year's camp reaffirms Futura's dedication to nurturing Aruba's next generation of innovators, equipping them with the skills, confidence, and inspiration to shape a smarter, more sustainable world.

IBISA We Aruba



We Baile

The 2024 edition of WeDance, part of the national WE ARUBA initiative led by IBISA, was nothing short of a celebration of youth energy, culture, and creativity. Hosted as a grand finale to the Weganan Escolar program, the dance competition brought together talented students from schools across Aruba to showcase their hard work and passion on stage. Held before a vibrant audience and an enthusiastic community, the event featured dazzling performances that blended dance, storytelling, and cultural expression. Each routine reflected the commitment of students, teachers, and choreographers who dedicated weeks to rehearsal and preparation. The performances were judged by a panel of local experts an honor and responsibility they described as “incredible,” “emotional,” and “truly inspiring.” Futura proudly supported WeDance by providing digital voting tablets and scoring systems, allowing for a seamless judging experience and real-time results. The event not only celebrated physical activity and artistic development, but also reinforced the power of schools as spaces for creativity and student empowerment.

The overwhelming turnout and positive energy from the community emphasized one thing: Aruba is dancing its way toward a more expressive, connected, and confident generation.

We Mente

Launched in 2024 as part of IBISA’s WE ARUBA movement, We Mente introduced a fresh and engaging way to put mental health on the map for youth in Aruba. This first-ever edition of WeMente took the form of a lively inter-school quiz competition, affectionately described as “hersengymnastiek” (brain gymnastics).

Students formed school-based teams and competed by answering questions on topics such as emotional well-being, mindfulness, coping strategies, and overall mental resilience. The challenge was more than just a game it was a powerful learning experience that opened up conversations about how to manage stress, communicate better, and take care of one’s mind.

Futura’s support through the provision of tablets and digital quiz systems helped create a tech-enabled, inclusive, and interactive experience. WeMente is proof that mental health can be celebrated, learned, and lived with joy and purpose.

eGovernment Program

In April 2024, Futura resumed leadership of the eGovernment Program, stepping back in after a period of project management challenges under the Department of Innovation. With renewed focus, Futura reestablished structure, clarity, and momentum for one of the government's most ambitious and impactful digital transformation efforts.

The eGovernment Program is designed to modernize Aruba's public services making them more accessible, efficient, and citizen-centered through smart use of digital technologies. From digital identity to online permits, automated back-office systems to citizen portals, the program envisions a streamlined interface between government and the people it serves.

Under Futura's guidance in 2024, the program re-engaged key stakeholders, updated its roadmap, and launched critical initiatives that laid the foundation for long-term success. With a collaborative, design-led approach, Futura is committed to ensuring that the digital government experience in Aruba is not only functional but intuitive, inclusive, and future-ready.

Defining Targets for EU Funding



Even before formally resuming the eGovernment Program in April, Futura stepped in to support the initiative at a critical early juncture. In January 2024, Futura collaborated with the Department of Innovation whose eGovernment team was still in formation to define a clear set of targets and performance indicators aligned with European Union (EU) funding requirements.

This early intervention was vital to ensure Aruba remained eligible for external support, particularly in the context of advancing digital public infrastructure and strengthening institutional capacity. Futura's expertise helped translate the broader ambitions of the eGovernment roadmap into measurable outcomes, including key benchmarks around service digitization, user experience, digital ID uptake, and secure data exchange.

By establishing a strong results framework, Futura laid the foundation for both accountability and credibility, ensuring that Aruba could not only secure EU funding but also deliver impact through a data-driven, citizen-first approach to digital transformation.

eGovernment Program | Institutional Strengthening

Supporting the Department of Innovation for Long-Term Impact

In parallel with reactivating the eGovernment Program in 2024, Futura took strategic steps to help build the institutional foundation needed to sustain Aruba's digital transformation in the long run. This included direct support in the setup, structuring, and operational guidance of the Department of Innovation (DVI).

Recognizing that innovation cannot thrive without institutional continuity, Futura worked closely with the Ministry of Innovation and key partners to ensure that the Department of Innovation could:

- Own and manage core components of the eGovernment roadmap,
- Coordinate cross-ministerial collaboration on digital initiatives,
- And serve as a permanent knowledge hub and liaison for both local and international stakeholders.

This work involved defining core roles and mandates, introducing strategic planning tools, and advising on the recruitment of a multidisciplinary team equipped to deliver on Aruba's digital goals. As the interoperability platform (UXP), digital ID framework, and legal transformation agenda advance, the Department of Innovation is now better positioned to serve as the institutional anchor for these long-term initiatives.

By embedding this capacity within government, Futura helped shift the program from one reliant on external leadership to one with homegrown, sustainable governance ensuring that Aruba's digital transformation is not only ambitious, but also durable.



Directie
Voor
Innovatie

eGovernment Program



Mastercard Launchpad Digital ID & Digital Payments

In August 2024, Futura and Mastercard co-hosted the Launchpad: Digital ID & Digital Payments Mastercard's Technology Hub in New York City, a strategic working session that marked a major step forward in Aruba's digital transformation journey. Held under the umbrella of the eGovernment Program, the event convened key stakeholders from government, financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society to co-develop a roadmap for inclusive digital identity and payment solutions in Aruba.

The session was designed to:

- Accelerate the implementation of Aruba's digital ID framework;
- Identify use cases for digital identity integration across government services, banking, and commerce;
- Promote secure, efficient, and inclusive digital payment systems;
- Design a prototype of the Digital ID & Digital Payment Application;
- And align efforts with EU funding compliance and international best practices.

Participants engaged in hands-on strategy design using Futura's human-centered innovation approach. Key themes included identity verification, interoperability, financial inclusion, and the role of public-private partnerships in scaling adoption.

Futura's role in organizing and facilitating the Launchpad highlighted its leadership in bridging policy, technology, and human impact. The outcomes of this session are now being incorporated into the broader eGovernment execution plan, with Mastercard remaining a key innovation partner in making digital payments more accessible for all citizens and residents of Aruba.



eGovernment Program



Change Management Plan - Estonia e-Governance Academy

In September 2024, Futura took a bold step toward revitalizing Aruba's eGovernment ambitions by launching the development of a Change Management Plan in collaboration with the Estonia e-Governance Academy (eGA). This strategic effort aimed to update the existing eGovernment Roadmap, originally designed for 2021–2025, and align it with realistic targets, EU funding requirements, and Aruba's long-term vision: Digital Aruba 2030.

This marked a turning point in restoring momentum for digital transformation after significant delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and administrative transitions. The plan addresses key gaps, identifies institutional bottlenecks, and sets clear priorities and implementation steps.

Key Focus Areas of the Change Plan

1. **Digital Identity:** Introduce a unified digital ID system, supported by a clear roadmap and stakeholder alignment, with a 60% adoption target by 2027.
2. **Interoperability & Digital Services:** Launch and scale the Conexion platform, with integration of five core government services underway by the end of 2024.
3. **Regulatory Framework:** Develop laws and standards for e-signatures, data sharing, digital communication, and secure transactions.
4. **Governance:** Establish a dedicated Center for Innovation with a cross-sector Advisory Council to oversee eGovernment policy and implementation.
5. **Capacity Building & Awareness:** Create a national communication strategy, training programs, and a "One Happy Digital Island" campaign to increase digital literacy and public trust.
6. **Cybersecurity:** Approve a national policy and operationalize a Data Protection Unit to support safe, citizen-centered digital infrastructure.

Key Findings & Lessons

- Several original roadmap goals were overly ambitious, particularly in terms of timeline and legislative readiness.
- Critical areas like digital identity and open data lacked unified direction and legal grounding.
- Without a formal governance body and clear leadership, project implementation was fragmented.
- The success of Aruba's digital transformation depends on a citizen-centric, inclusive, and agile approach mirroring Estonia's globally recognized digital governance model.

Impact and Next Steps

The Change Management Plan repositions Aruba's digital government strategy as pragmatic, sustainable, and collaborative. With a strong foundation now in place, supported by EU funding compliance and expert guidance, Futura is poised to lead Aruba confidently toward a fully integrated digital public service experience by 2030.

eGovernment Program

Gap-Analysis Legal Framework

In September 2024, the Aruba Futura Foundation commissioned the first comprehensive Gap Analysis of the Legal Framework for e-Government in Aruba. Delivered in December 2024 by Soldachi Consultancy, this report served as a foundational step in enabling Aruba to transition from fragmented digital efforts to a cohesive, legally grounded e-Government ecosystem.

Conducted as part of the roadmap revitalization process, the gap analysis identified the critical legal conditions necessary for a functioning digital government including digital identity, data protection, electronic signatures, and access to public information and compared them with Aruba's current legal landscape.

Key Findings

- No overarching e-Government law exists, and many relevant provisions are dispersed across outdated or siloed legislation.
- Digital identity and electronic signature laws are incomplete: While a private-sector law on electronic signatures exists, it lacks implementing decrees and does not yet extend to public transactions.
- Privacy and data protection regulations are inadequate: Aruba's current legislation does not meet international standards such as the GDPR. A Consensus Kingdom Law is in progress but not yet enacted.
- Cybersecurity lacks a statutory framework: There is no legal mandate for cybersecurity standards, reporting duties, or supervisory oversight.
- Access to public services by digital means is not legally guaranteed, and digital communication with government remains optional and poorly defined in current administrative law.
- Archiving and interoperability are unregulated: There are no formal data management or retention standards to support the "once-only" principle or cross-agency data sharing.

Recommendations and Next Steps

The report recommends drafting a dedicated e-Government Ordinance and updating or introducing legislation in at least nine key domains, including:

1. Digital ID and e-signature
2. Privacy and data protection
3. Digital registers and databases
4. Cybersecurity
5. Access to information
6. ICT regulation
7. Interoperability
8. E-procurement
9. Consumer protection in digital contexts

The gap analysis has become a central reference for Aruba's legal reform roadmap and will guide collaboration with Parliament, ministries, and EU partners in 2025.

eGovernment Program



UXP Interoperability Platform - Cybernetica

In November 2024, the Aruba Futura Foundation officially launched the implementation of the Unified eXchange Platform (UXP) in partnership with Estonian cybersecurity leader Cybernetica. This effort marked a transformative step in Aruba's eGovernment journey by establishing a secure, standardized, and scalable interoperability platform for real-time data exchange between government entities.

The first phase of the UXP project set to be completed by December 2025 is focused on deploying the platform's technical infrastructure, building capacity across key government institutions, and formalizing governance structures. Upon completion of this phase, the platform will be transitioned to the Department of Innovation for long-term management and expansion.

Why Interoperability Matters

Digital government is only as strong as its ability to seamlessly exchange data. From tax filings to healthcare, population registries to permit systems, public services depend on reliable and secure information flows. Aruba's fragmented legacy systems and lack of a unified citizen identifier were major barriers to efficiency. The UXP addresses these issues head-on, enabling G2G, G2B, and G2C data flows through a decentralized, secure, and standards-based exchange model.

Key Milestones and Deliverables

- Phase 1 launched with five participating entities: Censo, DIMAS, Impuesto, AZV, and DEACI.
- Registry Server, Security Servers, and the Trust Infrastructure are being deployed.
- Censo's API-based architecture is setting the model for other agencies, while integration needs at Impuesto and DEACI are being supported through tailored onboarding strategies.
- UXP Directory and Monitoring tools will be implemented for transparency and system health tracking.

Governance & Transition Plan

During this phase, Futura serves as the non-technical lead and transition manager, while DIA (Department of Information Technology and Automation) is being onboarded as the future technical Governing Authority. The plan includes:

- Creating standard onboarding processes for agencies.
- Formalizing member roles, naming conventions, SLAs, and security protocols.
- Delivering full documentation and training through Cybernetica and Futura.

eGovernment Program

UXP Interoperability Platform - Cybernetica

Strategic Findings

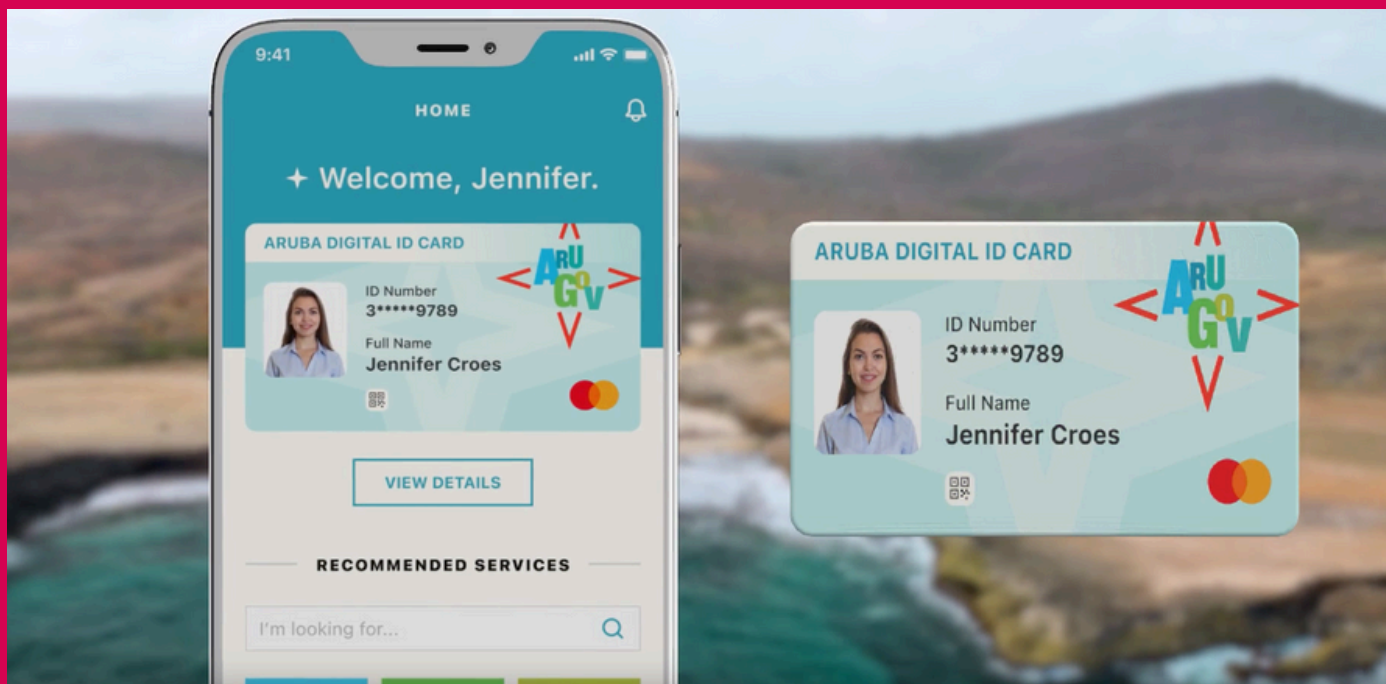
- Aruba's digital maturity is uneven: While agencies like Censo and DIMAS are well-positioned, others face technical debt and staff shortages.
- Lack of a unified citizen identifier and legal digital signature framework are critical barriers to scale.
- Non-technical challenges (bureaucratic workflows, change resistance, unclear data governance) often outweigh technical barriers.
- An agile, human-centered approach grounded in trust, collaboration, and training is essential for sustainable scale.

Looking Ahead

By December 2025, Aruba aims to have a fully functioning UXP pilot across core services. From there, phase two under the Department of Innovation will focus on:

- Scaling membership across ministries and public services.
- Integrating financial systems and external partners.
- Supporting EU-aligned data governance and legal reforms.

The Cybernetica UXP initiative is not just about technical upgrades it's about transforming how Aruba's government works, collaborates, and delivers value to its people.



Mi Mascota ta mi Responsabilidad

Empowering Young Citizens Through Humane Education

In celebration of World Animal Day (Dia di Bestia) on October 4th, Futura proudly supported the publication and rollout of “Mi Mascota Ta Mi Responsabilidad”, a locally developed educational book for Aruba’s third-grade students. The initiative aims to instill values of compassion, responsibility, and animal welfare from an early age.

Developed in collaboration with local educators and supported by the Office of the Prime Minister, the book introduces students to the core responsibilities of pet ownership. It includes a special chapter on the “Dieren Diploma” a widely recognized concept from the Netherlands that teaches children the ethical care of animals, including proper feeding, emotional care, and respectful treatment.

Futura financially contributed to the development, design, and national distribution of the book, ensuring it reached all primary schools across the island. This educational material not only aligns with global awareness days but also supports Aruba’s broader goals of fostering responsible citizenship and empathy through classroom learning.

As part of the launch, all third-grade classrooms were invited to participate in a national campaign, with the goal of awarding the symbolic 800,000th “Dieren Diploma”. Teachers could register their classes to take part, and students were encouraged to complete the lessons by the end of October, with winners announced in early November.

This initiative exemplifies Futura’s ongoing commitment to community-centered innovation merging education, values, and local culture to shape a generation of thoughtful, engaged youth.



STEM Embassy Robotics Club Study Trip

The
STEM
Embassy

Representing Aruba on the Global Stage

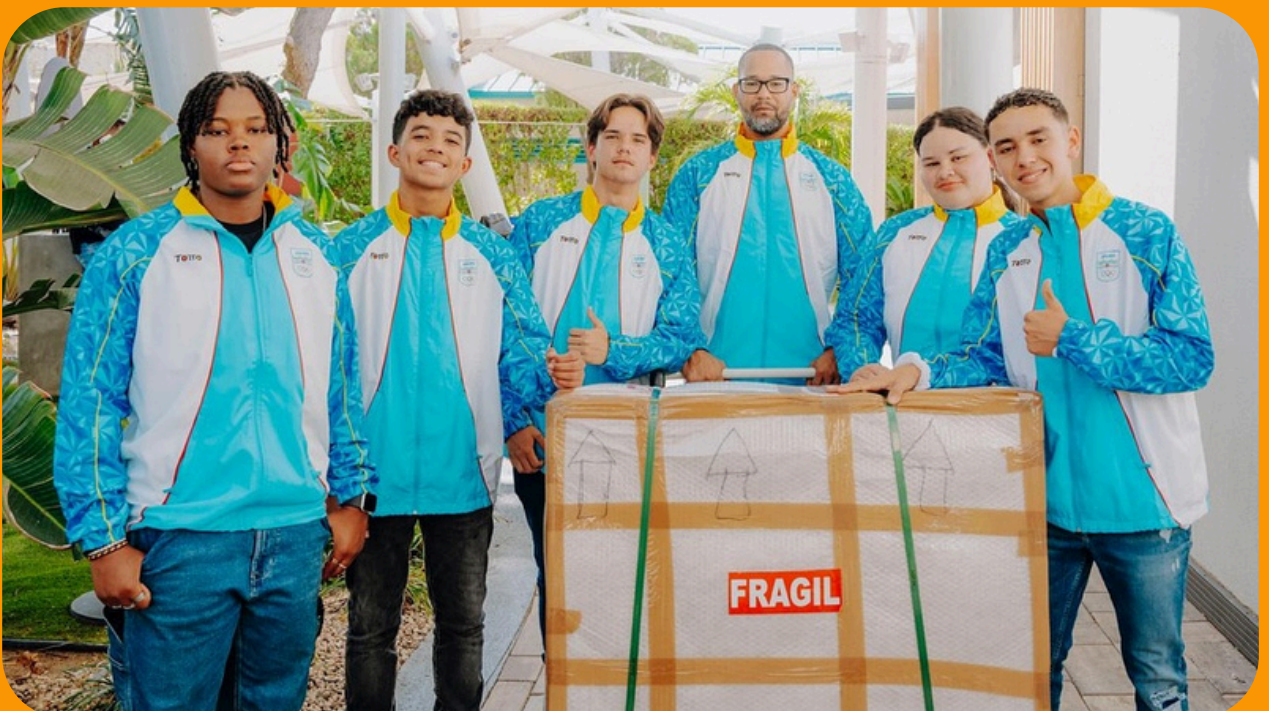
In October 2024, Futura was proud to support the STEM Embassy Robotics Club in sending a talented delegation of young innovators from Aruba to compete in the prestigious FIRST Global Challenge in Athens, Greece the world's largest international robotics competition, with over 190 countries participating.

Held annually, the FIRST Global Challenge is more than a competition it is a global gathering of youth focused on problem-solving, teamwork, and applying STEM to real-world challenges. The 2024 theme centered on renewable energy and sustainability, and Team Aruba rose to the occasion with creativity, technical skill, and national pride.

Futura provided both logistical and financial support to make the study trip a reality, ensuring Aruba's team had the resources and mentorship needed to prepare and compete at an international level. The opportunity gave students access to new technologies, international peer collaboration, and a deeper understanding of robotics in action.

This initiative aligned directly with Futura's mission to empower Aruba's youth through STEM education and global exposure, providing platforms that spark curiosity and build lifelong skills in science, technology, and innovation.

As Team Aruba stood shoulder-to-shoulder with teams from across the world, they did more than represent the island they inspired a vision of what's possible when youth are equipped and encouraged to innovate without limits.



Sint Paulus College Study Trip Estonia

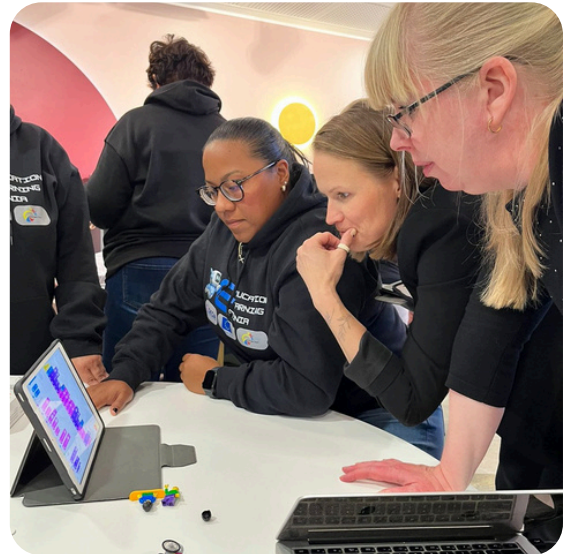
Learning from Estonia's Education Innovation

In 2024, Futura proudly supported a group of visionary educators from Sint Paulus College on a transformative study trip to Estonia, one of the world's leading nations in digital learning and education innovation. The experience provided invaluable inspiration and professional development for Aruban teachers committed to reimagining classroom practices and policy.

As part of the trip, Futura facilitated an intensive program of training and exchange at the University of Tallinn, where the educators participated in hands-on sessions focused on digital pedagogy, personalized learning, and teacher empowerment. The group also engaged directly with thought leaders from the Estonia e-Governance Academy, gaining insight into how education, governance, and digital infrastructure work hand-in-hand to drive national transformation.

This initiative offered more than exposure it sparked concrete ideas for adapting Estonia's best practices to the Aruban context, particularly in areas such as digital citizenship, teacher training, and school innovation strategy.

By investing in the professional growth of teachers, Futura continues to champion a future-ready education system for Aruba one grounded in global learning, local action, and empowered educators.



Technovation Aruba

Team Onboarding



In late 2024, the Futura team completed the official Technovation Team Onboarding Course, marking the start of Aruba's participation in the 2025 Technovation Challenge a global tech education initiative that empowers girls and young women to become technology creators and changemakers.

By completing the onboarding process, Futura established itself as the local host for Technovation Aruba, positioning the organization to guide student teams, recruit mentors, and build the infrastructure for a successful national program. The onboarding included in-depth training on program management, mentorship coordination, and curriculum delivery all aligned with Technovation's mission of using mobile app development and AI to solve real-world community problems.

This initiative reflects Futura's deep commitment to expanding STEM education, digital inclusion, and gender equity in tech. With support from local schools, community leaders, and international partners, Technovation Aruba is set to launch in 2025 with the goal of preparing and inspiring the next wave of young female innovators.

Futura Spaces

A Launchpad for Local Talent and Innovation

In 2024, Futura Spaces solidified its role as Aruba's collaborative hub for entrepreneurship, mentorship, and professional growth. More than just a physical space, Futura Spaces is a catalyst for ideas, ventures, and community impact.

This year, we proudly housed three growing ventures:

- Memoria Digital – a creative digital marketing firm specializing in brand storytelling, content strategy, and digital visibility for local businesses.
- Re-Align – a team of dedicated academic coaches providing personalized support for students through structured learning strategies and mentorship.
- Advanta – a specialist loss adjusting firm in the insurance industry. With expertise in personal injury claims in Aruba and the Netherlands.

Futura Spaces was also a thriving venue for events and learning. Through our Mentor Academy, we hosted workshops and sessions on topics such as real estate, construction, financial literacy, and mindset development, bringing together professionals, mentors, and community leaders to share knowledge and build skills.

Additionally, numerous civil society organizations, entrepreneurs, and public sector teams used the space throughout the year for meetings, trainings, and collaborative sessions making Futura Spaces one of Aruba's most active centers for innovation. Whether fostering startups or hosting meaningful conversations, Futura Spaces continues to embody Futura's vision of a smarter, more connected Aruba driven by community and creativity.

Presentations & Workshops



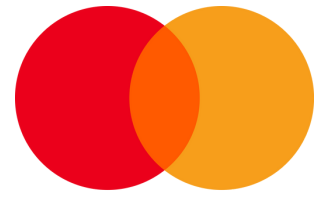
Department of Education Deep Dive Design Thinking Session

In collaboration with the Department of Education, Futura hosted a high-impact Design Thinking Deep Dive in late 2024 an interactive workshop aimed at rethinking the future of learning in Aruba. The session brought together educators, administrators, and policymakers for a full day of hands-on exploration into creative problem-solving and innovation in education.

Using Futura's human-centered methodology, participants engaged in activities that guided them through the full design thinking process from empathy mapping and ideation to rapid prototyping. The focus was on developing student-centered solutions, improving learning environments, and exploring new approaches to curriculum and pedagogy. By the end of the session, teams had generated actionable ideas to transform traditional educational models, with several participants leaving equipped to pilot these strategies in their schools or departments.

This initiative reflects Futura's growing role in capacity-building and systems innovation within Aruba's education sector, fostering a mindset shift toward experimentation, collaboration, and learner-driven transformation.

Presentations & Workshops



mastercard

Mastercard Caribbean SME Summit

In 2024, Futura participated in the Mastercard Caribbean SME Summit, a regional convening dedicated to unlocking the potential of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as key drivers of economic growth and innovation. Hosted by Mastercard, the summit brought together government leaders, financial institutions, development partners, and ecosystem builders from across the region to explore scalable strategies that support the SME sector.

Futura joined the dialogue to highlight the Aruban perspective on SME development, sharing lessons from its own programs focused on entrepreneurship, innovation, and digital transformation. As Mastercard presented global best practices and technological solutions for small business empowerment, Futura emphasized the importance of inclusive ecosystems, digital literacy, and public-private collaboration.

The summit underscored Mastercard's role as a potential partner in helping governments and institutions better support SMEs through tools such as digital payments, financial inclusion strategies, and data-driven decision-making.

Futura's involvement ensured that Aruba remained visible on the regional stage as an active player in the transformation of Caribbean economies through entrepreneurship and innovation-led development.



Presentations & Workshops

San Nicolaas Creative Industry Panel | Shaping Aruba's Cultural Economy

In May 2024, Futura was honored to participate in the Creative Industry Panel hosted at The Hub in San Nicolas, organized by Arina (Aruba Investment Agency) and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Communication, and Sustainable Development. This dynamic symposium brought together a diverse range of voices from across Aruba's creative, cultural, and entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Under the theme "Aruba's Creative Industries", the panel explored the intersection of tourism, culture, economy, and community transformation particularly the role of San Nicolas as a cultural innovation district. Topics included fashion, design, visual arts, sustainability, conservation, and the creation of authentic experiences for both visitors and locals.

Futura contributed insights on innovation strategy, creative entrepreneurship, and the infrastructure needed to support a thriving cultural economy. The discussion highlighted how cultural identity and economic development can go hand-in-hand through targeted investment, education, and storytelling.

The event featured esteemed panelists and cultural leaders, including creatives, policymakers, and industry pioneers, and served as a powerful reminder of the potential that lies within Aruba's creative sector. Futura remains committed to building cross-sector bridges and helping to unlock the economic and social value of the island's creative industries.



Presentations & Workshops

Creative Entrepreneurship in San Nicolas | Design Thinking for Economic Revitalization

In 2024, Futura collaborated with the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) to support a bold and timely initiative aimed at revitalizing San Nicolas through creative entrepreneurship and design thinking. Hosted at The Hub, this series of interactive workshops was developed in response to the economic stagnation the district has faced since the closure of the Lago refinery and served as a call to action to reawaken the "business life" of the community. Futura contributed as a facilitator in the session titled "Know the Future Businesses: Innovation", leading participants through a hands-on Design Thinking workshop focused on how creativity and innovation can spark new business models and economic opportunities in the district.

The broader program covered four key areas:

1. Plan Your Business
2. Launch Your Business
3. Manage Your Business
4. Grow Your Business (Futura facilitated this final module)

The workshops brought together aspiring entrepreneurs, creatives, and community leaders to explore how innovation, culture, and enterprise can drive inclusive regeneration in San Nicolas. Participants developed business concepts, shared stories, and received mentorship all grounded in design thinking as a method for human-centered, sustainable change.

This initiative demonstrated how creativity is not only a cultural asset but an economic engine and how a place like San Nicolas can once again thrive through imagination, collaboration, and strategic support.



FUTURA

Presentations & Workshops

Impact for Innovation Summit Panel

On November 20, 2024, Futura represented Aruba on the international stage at the Impact Innovation Summit in Kingston, Jamaica, participating in the featured panel discussion: “Innovation for Impact.” Held at the Terra Nova Hotel and attended by regional innovation leaders, startups, investors, and policy-makers, the summit explored how innovation can drive real and inclusive progress across the Caribbean.

Futura’s Director joined panelists from Founders Institute and Mastercard to explore best practices in designing and implementing innovation projects with measurable societal outcomes. In a session moderated around the theme of high-impact entrepreneurship and technology adoption, Ulrich shared Futura’s experience engaging both public and private stakeholders to bring about system-level change in Aruba.

Key topics included:

- How public-private collaboration and agile governance enabled the rollout of Aruba’s digital identity initiative.
- Lessons from implementing the eGovernment Program, including stakeholder management, user adoption strategies, and phased infrastructure building.
- The role of human-centered design in building trust and ensuring the sustainability of innovation programs in small island states.

Futura’s contribution emphasized the importance of contextualized innovation solutions that are rooted in local needs but shaped by global insights. The summit also opened the door for new regional partnerships and reinforced Futura’s role as a thought leader in public sector innovation across the Caribbean.



Building the Future, One Bold Step at a Time

2024 was a year of renewal, resilience, and recommitment to our core mission: to drive innovation that delivers real impact for the people of Aruba.

From reactivating the eGovernment program and securing alignment with EU funding standards, to hosting global forums and empowering our youth through robotics, entrepreneurship, and education, Futura demonstrated that even the most ambitious transformations begin with trust, collaboration, and thoughtful execution.

We supported teachers in reimagining classrooms in Estonia, helped local creatives envision businesses in San Nicolas, and brought Aruba's voice to international platforms from Jamaica to New York. Alongside this, our innovation space remained a home for new ventures and bold ideas to grow.

As we look ahead to 2025, we carry forward the insights, partnerships, and momentum built over the past year. The challenges we face whether technological, economic, or social require not just solutions, but shared vision. Futura stands ready to continue building that vision together with government, civil society, educators, entrepreneurs, and citizens.

Our work remains rooted in one powerful belief: **Aruba's future is not something we wait for. It's something we design.**



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