



# Rutu Foundation Annual Report

# 2020

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# Message from the Executive Director

The year 2020 was an extremely challenging year with a global pandemic forcing schools to move online or close altogether. It was also the year when the murder of one man resulted in worldwide protests against racism, and increased awareness about racial disparities in education.

Both the corona pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protests brought into sharp focus that our education systems have never worked for and continue to exclude large groups of children.

Institutionalized inequalities in education are not only *visibly* shutting out millions of children (who have no access to internet or laptops or even electricity) but also work invisibly by erasing the histories, languages and contributions of black, indigenous and other historically marginalized groups.

*How many schools in Europe, for example, offer education programmes in the Creole languages that students from their former colonies speak?*

Languages like Haitian Creole, Papiamentu in the Dutch Caribbean or Sranan in Suriname were created as a direct result of European colonizers who kidnapped and sold Africans into slave labour throughout the

Caribbean. The enslaved, who came from different regions and spoke many different languages, were forced to create new languages that allowed them to communicate with each other and helped them ultimately to survive three centuries of enslavement.

Yet even today, if students are not outright punished, they are almost certainly discouraged from using their home languages at school. Creole languages are widely considered to be inferior or not even languages at all, a viewpoint that is sadly internalized and adopted by many of the speakers themselves.

Yet, the international community has long recognized that all cultures and all languages should be equally respected in education.

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# Message from the Executive Director (cont'd)

Article 29 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) – the international treaty which is signed by almost every country in the world - provides that all children have the right to an education that is directed towards respect for their cultural identity including their languages.

The mission of the Rutu Foundation is closely aligned to this fundamental human right: helping to ensure that the linguistic and cultural diversity that students bring to school becomes the norm, rather than the exception.

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## Participation is key

This goal can only be achieved by working together. Policy makers, school principals, researchers and teachers as well as textbook developers; parents and members of indigenous and ethnic minority communities... we need everybody to raise awareness about the economic, social and racial disparities that are systematically baked into the education system. And then we need to work to change them.

This is why participation is also one of the key principles of our flagship programme, the **Language Friendly School**. This is a network of schools who welcome and value all the languages spoken by their students. To make it work, the participation of the whole school community is required: administrators, teachers, parents as well as the supporting staff.

The Language Friendly School is focused on the whole school environment and not on one individual. It does not benefit one or two children only who speak a different language, but *all* students and even their teachers gain when all languages and cultural backgrounds are allowed to be present and celebrated.

And participation, working together, is also what made the year 2020, despite the difficulties we encountered, another inspiring year for the Rutu Foundation.

As always, I thank everyone for their support. In particular our students, volunteers, donors and all the teachers, principals and parents of the Language Friendly Schools who joined our network this year.

Ellen-Rose Kambel,  
executive director

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# Vision and Mission

All children have an equal right to an education that respects their cultural identity including their languages (art. 29, Convention on the Rights of the Child).

The mission of the Rutu Foundation is to make linguistic and cultural diversity the norm in education.

By 2030, all children should have access to a language-friendly learning environment and no child should be punished for using their mother tongue at school.

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The Rutu Foundation believes that all children, especially indigenous children and children from migrant and minority backgrounds, should have every opportunity to learn in and through the languages they and their families use and understand well. They should be educated in a way that allows them to grow and flourish, well-rooted in their own languages and cultures.

## What we do:

- We support schools to value the cultural and linguistic diversity of their students, among others through the Language Friendly School-network.
- We provide training, develop multilingual learning materials and build networks of educators, parents, researchers and policy makers that support our mission.
- We advocate for full respect of article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to reach Goal 4 (quality education for all) and Goal 10 (reduced inequalities) of the Sustainable Development Goals.

'Since SDG4 is so foundational to the other Sustainable Development Goals, without mother tongue-based multilingual education the other 16 goals will remain unachievable.' ([UNESCO 2017](#))



# Impact

In 2020, **9 schools** were certified and more than **30 schools** from 11 countries expressed interest in joining the [Language Friendly School](#) Network.

The certified schools include:

- ❖ 6 public schools
- ❖ 3 private (international) schools

They provide language friendly learning environments to **2700 students**.

The schools are located in:

- ❖ Toronto, Eindhoven, Hoofddorp and Amsterdam

Most of the schools (90%) are primary schools, but the network is open to all types.

## Reach

**3,500 people** attended our online workshops, webinars, guest lectures and presentations.

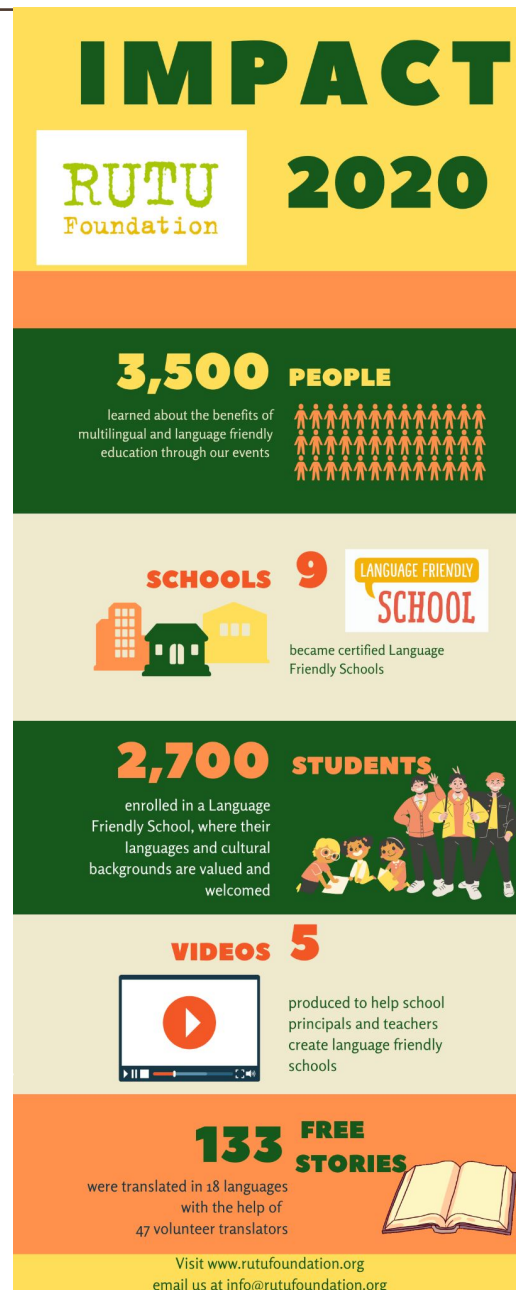
**5,900 people** followed, viewed, and/or interacted with us via our websites and social media channels.

## Publications:

Our staff and advisory board members wrote four **articles and book chapters** and we produced **five instructional videos** on Language Friendly learning.

➡ Visit our [Youtube channel](#).

As part of our [#giveatranslation](#) campaign, volunteers translated 133 freely available stories in 18 languages.



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# Activities 2020

*Language Friendly School*

*Pass it on! Global Network on  
Indigenous-Led Education*

*Distance Learning for  
Multilingual Children*

*Give A Translation*

*Research and Advocacy*

# An answer to the increasing number of multilingual school children worldwide



In 2019, the Rutu Foundation started the [Language Friendly School](#) as a pilot project: two schools in Amsterdam received the label from the hands of Prof. Jim Cummins, also known as the 'godfather' of multilingual education.

The Language Friendly School addresses in a positive way the harmful but still widespread practice of punishing indigenous and ethnic minority children for using their mother tongue at school.

There is **abundant research evidence** that when children's full identities are welcomed at school, including opportunities to use their home languages in the classroom, they feel better about themselves and are more motivated to learn. An additional benefit is that their parents are able to help them with school work.

All this contributes to **improved performance and greater student well-being**.

In 2020, the network expanded to **nine schools in four cities**: Amsterdam, Hoofddorp, Eindhoven and Toronto.

Certified schools have access to:

- a toolkit with language friendly activities
- a research library
- school portraits of member schools for tips and ideas
- regular network meetings

## Watch: Language Friendly Schools in Action

*Click on the pictures to watch a short video of the **Optimist International School** (upper video) and the **Salto-School Floralaan** in Eindhoven, both in the Netherlands.*





## Selected for HundrED's Spotlight: Top 10 Most Inspiring Bilingual Education Innovation

Image: Children from the St. Janschool, our first  
Language Friendly School.

In 2020, the Language Friendly School was selected by HundrED as one of the [world's top ten inspiring education innovations](#) in Bilingual Education.

HundrED is a global education non-profit based in Finland, whose mission is to help improve education through impactful innovations.

### From the Jury Report:

*"Language Friendly School addresses a clear need to encourage and promote multilingualism and the diversity of their community. Working at a school-wide level **ensures the sustainability and success of the model** as there is a collective mindset. This can be **adapted and scaled around the world.**"*

*"This innovation is scalable because it is not connected to any definite languages, but is rather a model of a whole-school approach to multilingualism and respect to different languages."*

- HundrED Academy Member



add picture of ER  
& EM at  
presentation, link  
to  
slideshow/webinar

# Pass it on! A Global Network on Indigenous-Led Education



Together with indigenous organisations and NGOs based in Asia, Africa, Latin-America and Europe, the Rutu Foundation initiated a new global collaborative network in support of **Indigenous-Led Education (ILED)**.

The aim is to create more support for **education projects initiated by indigenous peoples** that uphold, preserve and pass on cultural ecological knowledge, language, customary laws and practices, and connection to land to new generations.

The focus is on educating **indigenous children and youth in tropical forest regions**. Activities include: a small grant fund, facilitating local and regional exchanges and an annual award.

Our joint objective is to make indigenous communities, especially indigenous youth, more economically and culturally resilient and sustainable for the future.

[Read more](#)



Sengwer of Embobut  
Community-Based  
Organisation



Forest Peoples  
Programme

# Covid-19 response

## Give a Translation

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced school closures around the world, the Rutu Foundation responded in two ways: Give a Translation and Digital Resources for Multilingual Learners.

With the **Give a Translation** campaign we asked volunteers to translate stories from the vast repository of intercultural storybooks provided by Storyweaver, an open source platform based in India. The stories are free to read online or can be downloaded and printed.



#GiveATranslation #GivingTuesdayNow #GivingMultilingualStories



133

Translations



18

Languages



47

Translators

Within one month, we surpassed our goal of 100 translations.

Together with 47 translators from around the world, 133 stories were translated in 18 languages!

A big **thank you to all the translators** who responded, including flight crew of the KLM who volunteered their multilingual skills when flights were grounded.

# Covid-19 response

## Distance Learning: Free Digital Resources for Multilingual Children

Digital technology has proved extremely beneficial for multilingual learning.

But many teachers and parents find it difficult to find good quality materials.

Our second Covid-19 response was to curate a comprehensive series of free [digital learning resources for multilingual learners](#)



We collected materials in **four different categories**:

- Reading (available in English and Dutch)
- STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
- Language and Arts
- Language Resources for Indigenous Peoples



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# Research and Advocacy

## Language Based Discrimination, Punishment and Exclusion in Education

Banning the practice of punishing children for using their home language at school – whether this happens explicitly or implicitly – starts with awareness. In 2020, the Rutu Foundation undertook several actions to raise awareness among both human rights and children's rights advocates, as well as educational practitioners and parents:

- In March 2020, we submitted a [report](#) on the Netherlands to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).
- Deena Hurwitz, JD, international advisory board member of the Rutu Foundation and Ellen-Rose Kambel published a peer-reviewed article on the [human rights implications of language based discrimination in education](#).
- Together with SIRIUS, European Policy Network on Migrant Education, we organized a series of online [National Roundtables on Language Friendly Education Policy in the Netherlands](#).



## Children's Rights and Racism in Dutch Education

The year 2020 was not only characterized by the global pandemic but also by the year of worldwide protests against racism, sparked by the murder of George Floyd in the U.S.A. This also created **momentum in the Netherlands to discuss racism and racial discrimination in education** in the Netherlands.

Jointly with the Children's Rights Coalition and the Amsterdam South East City Council, the Rutu Foundation organised an [expert meeting on Children's Rights and Racism](#).

The results are included in a report on Dutch compliance of **the Convention on the Rights of the Child** to be discussed by the United Nations Children's Rights Committee in 2021.

# Research and Advocacy

## SIRIUS National Roundtable on Language Friendly Education Policy in the Netherlands

Together with SIRIUS the European Policy Network on Migrant Education, the Rutu Foundation organized a series of online [National Roundtables on Language Friendly Education Policy in the Netherlands](#).

The approach in Dutch education towards migrant students' multilingualism is generally regarded as a deficit-approach. While multilingualism in high status languages such as English, French or German is encouraged, languages spoken by migrants who are perceived as low-income and low educated (e.g. Turkish, Arabic, Polish or Albanian), are considered parasitic languages which are detrimental to students' acquisition of Dutch or English and which should be removed as soon as possible.

Fortunately, there is increasing recognition that migrant students' multilingualism is not a problem but rather a solution to enhance their well-being, improve parental participation and to create more inclusive schools.



To encourage educators, policy makers and migrant parents to continue on this path, the Roundtables brought together **good practices on 'language friendly-learning'** at three levels:

- classroom level: teachers shared ways of integrating home languages into classroom practices;
- school level: school principals discussed their motives and the results of becoming a Language Friendly School;
- policy level: the case study of a Dutch city council (Zaandam) was presented

where encouraging multilingualism was recently introduced as a new policy for multilingual children with a migrant background.

More than 60 people participated in the three online meetings and proposed a number of recommendations.

Among others, participants expressed the need for **more information sharing** and to make **multilingual education mandatory for teacher training**.

# Research and Advocacy

## Global Education Monitoring Background Report: Inclusion and Education of Indigenous Peoples in Suriname

Rutu director Ellen-Rose Kambel was commissioned by UNESCO to write a [background study on education and inclusion of indigenous peoples in Suriname](#) as part of the 2020 UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report on Latin America and the Caribbean.

The study recognizes that "Remoteness poses serious challenges for any government seeking to ensure the right to quality education of each child."

The long distances and high costs of transportation impacts almost all aspects related to the education system. Few teachers are willing to work in the Interior because of the lack of infrastructure and basic facilities, including electricity, safe drinking water, and adequate housing and communication facilities for teachers.

Local community members lack proper training however and professional development of teachers is extremely limited.

But it is not only finances: the lack of a mother tongue-based multilingual curriculum with locally adapted content that respects indigenous cultures and histories is a serious impediment to indigenous self-determined development.

### Recommendations

Recommendations include the introduction of a strong mother tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) programme; developing culturally relevant vocational tracks for indigenous and maroon students and long term investment in professional development of teachers working in the Interior.



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# Publications & Events

- Hurwitz, D. & E.R. Kambel (2020). Redressing Language-Based Exclusion and Punishment in Education and the Language Friendly School Initiative. In: [Global Campus on Human Rights Journal](#), Vol. 4 No. 1.
- Kambel, E.R. & E. Le Pichon (2020). Kieliystävällinen koulu [Language friendly school]. In J. Alisaari et al– Oppimateriaali kielitietoiseen perusopetukseen [Catch the language – A studybook for language sensitive basic education], pp. 293 - 298. [University of Turku](#).
- Le Pichon, E., Siarova, H. & Szonyi, E. (2020). The Future of language education in Europe: Case-Studies of innovative practices. [NESET II report](#), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Kambel, E.R. (2020). Rurality and education in Suriname: education and inclusion of remote populations in Suriname. Background paper GEM Report Latin America and the Caribbean, Inclusion and education: [All means all](#), UNESCO, 5 November 2020.

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## In the Media:

- De poppenhoek heeft wat kleur nodig. [interview with Ellen-Rose Kambel]. In: [NRC Handelsblad](#), 26 June 2020.
- Language Friendly School. In: [Holland Times](#), edition 4, 2020.
- Floralaan is een Taalvriendelijke School. [Article](#) and [video](#)
- No learning without understanding: plurilingual practices in the classroom. [Erasmus+ School Education Gateway](#), 2020.
- Een taalvriendelijk sausje. [Didaktief](#), 7 Oct 2020.
- Taal is echt hun ding. [Didaktief](#), 6 Oct 2020.
- Dutch Teachers get to grips with multilingualism. [Eindhoven News](#), 12 October 2020.

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## Webinars and presentations (selection):

- Innovative language teaching methods, and school networks and labels as ways to promote multilingualism and language education. [NESET](#), June 2020
- Een avond vol stimulansen op Internationale Dag der Moedertalen, 21 februari 2020, [VIDS](#).

## Radio:

- Etnische en culturele verschillen in ons onderwijs [interview with Ellen-Rose Kambel]. [NPO Radio 1](#), 22 July 2020.



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# Finances

Our annual financial statement for 2020 is published as a separate document and can be downloaded [here](#).

Our work was made possible with grants and (in kind) donations from:

Social Capital Foundation



**More Life**

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Estate of Elzemarieke Velthuisen van  
Zanten

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# Organization

*The Rutu Foundation was established in 2011 and is registered with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce.*

*Rutu is recognized as a Dutch charity (a 'stichting' with ANBI status).*

*Management*

*Supervisory Board*

*International Advisors*

*Partners*

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# Management & Staff

*Rutu is governed by a supervisory board (Raad van Toezicht) of three to five members who appoint the board and the executive director. The board/executive director is responsible for the overall management of the organization. An international advisory board gives advice to the executive director and supervisory board.*

*The salary of the executive director is conform the Good Governance Code for Charities (Commissie Wijffels).*

The majority of our work is done on a volunteer basis by student interns and volunteers.

In 2020, the core Rutu team based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, consisted of:

- **Dr. Ellen-Rose Kambel**  
executive director
- **Saskia Bosch**  
financial manager
- **Hilda Heyde**  
programme officer, Language Friendly School

## Interns & volunteers:

**Alessia Osio**  
Sept 2019-December 2020

**Nidhi Sachdeva**  
University of Toronto, Sept 2019-April 2020

**Wanda Hoogerbrugge**  
May-August 2020

**Jonathan Silver**  
University of Toronto, May-August 2020

**Aroha MacKay**  
Tufts University, May-July 2020

**Priscilla Boyce**  
Erasmus University, Sept 2020-April 2021



***A warm welcome (back) to Hilda Heyde***  
*who joined our team in 2020 as programme officer for the Language Friendly School. Hilda who holds a double Master's in Multilingualism and European Studies, previously completed an internship at the Rutu Foundation in 2018.*

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**Christopher Gradin**  
Univ of Toronto, Sept 2020-April 2021

**Justine Jun**  
Univ of Toronto, Sept 2020-April 2021

**Reshara Alvarez**  
Univ of Toronto, Sept 2020-present

**Serena Quintal**  
Univ of Toronto, Sept 2020-present

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# Supervisory Board

*The members of the Supervisory Board are appointed for four years and can be reappointed twice. They may be suspended or dismissed by the Supervisory Board. Members of the Supervisory Board are not employed by the foundation and receive no remuneration. A member of the Board/ Executive Director cannot be part of the Supervisory Board.*

## **Paul Wolvekamp (Chair)**

Paul is Advisor with Both ENDS. He is vice chair of the Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme Asia, member of the Board of Governors of RSPO (Round Table on Sustainable Palm Oil), co-chair of the RSPO Dispute Settlement Facility Advisory Board and serves on the IUCN-NL Members Council.

## **Dr. Salim Vally**

Salim is the director of the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation and an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg, South-Africa. He is also the coordinator of the Education Rights Project. He has been a visiting lecturer at the Universities of Virginia, Columbia and York. He is a visiting professor at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

## **Carrie van der Kroon**

Carrie obtained her Master's in Law at the University of Utrecht, with specialization in children's rights. She is programme coordinator at Defence for Children-ECPAT in Leiden, the Netherlands where she coordinates child rights programmes in the global south with regards to sexual exploitation and gender. She holds several (supervisory) board positions.

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# International Advisory Board

*Rutu's international advisory board gives advice to the executive director and supervisory board and is composed of internationally recognized experts in the fields of education, linguistics, human rights and indigenous rights.*

*In January 2019, five members of the International Advisory Board met with Rutu director Ellen-Rose Kambel in New York to discuss the new Language Friendly School programme. The meeting was facilitated by Carol Anne Spreen at New York University.*

## **Jenne de Beer, Philippines**

Jenne is an award winning anthropologist, the founder and former executive director of the Non-Timber Forest Product Exchange Programme for South and South East Asia. Jenne is based in Manila, The Philippines where he works as advisor of the SPNKK, an umbrella group of the indigenous Negrito peoples.

## **Prof. Carol Benson, USA**

Carol is an international consultant on language issues in education currently at Teachers College, Columbia University, USA, after many years at Stockholm University in Sweden. She has guided the development of curricula by national professionals, trained teachers and researchers in mother tongue-based multilingual education and provided technical assistance to educational reform programs that emphasize learner-centered pedagogy and democratic participation. Her work experience spans the globe and she has published extensively.

## **Prof. Carol Anne M. Spreen, USA**

Carol Anne is Professor of Education at New York University. Her research centers on political and socio-cultural studies of educational change, particularly the influences of globalization on teaching and learning. Internationally, she has worked with many educational development and planning organizations, and assisted numerous schools, districts and educational Ministries with various reform innovations.

## **Prof. Deena Hurwitz, USA**

Deena is an international human rights law consultant based in Charlottesville, Virginia, USA. Her work is broadly focused and includes the right to education and other social and economic rights; indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples' rights; legal literacy and empowerment; Islamic law and gender justice. She taught international human rights law clinics for over 15 years, and was professor of law and founding director of the International Human Rights Law Clinic at the University of Virginia School of Law.

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# International Advisory Board (cont'd)

## **Dr. Martha Many Grey Horses, Canada**

Martha is member of the Kainai First Nation, Blackfoot Confederacy, Alberta (Canada) and a fluent speaker of the Blackfoot language. Her doctoral thesis focused on the reading performance of American Indian children in secondary public schools in the USA. Martha was Director of the First Nations Métis and Inuit Centre, University of Lethbridge, Canada. She currently works in Toronto.

## **Dr. Emmanuelle Le Pichon-Vorstman, Canada**

Emmanuelle is Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto, OISE. Previously, she has worked at the Department of Languages, Literature and Communication and at the Utrecht Institute of Linguistics, in the Netherlands. Since 2009, she has led several projects on the inclusion of minority students in education. Emmanuelle has worked as a consultant, researcher, evaluator and reviewer for several international organisations and international journals.

## **Prof. Sabine Severiens, the Netherlands**

Sabine is full professor of Educational Sciences at Erasmus University, The Netherlands. The main theme in her scientific work is educational inequality. One of the focal points in her current work is teaching in classrooms with students from diverse backgrounds and strengthening professional capacity in this particular area. This includes projects on culturally responsive teaching and citizenship education. She is involved in the OECD TALIS project, a large scale international project on teaching and quality of education. Another focal point in her work is mentoring in urban areas. She currently supervises several research projects that aim to investigate the effects of mentoring in different subgroups of urban youth. She manages the bachelor programme Pedagogical and Educational Sciences. She is one of the leading figures in so-called route on Youth in the Dutch Research Agenda, a large national programme aiming to bring together science and societal and economical questions.

# Partners

*The Rutu Foundation relies on an extensive network of partners from around the globe*

## Asia:

Keystone Foundation (India)

Non-Timber Forest Product Exchange Programme (Philippines)

Sentrong Pagpapalakas ng Negritong Kultura at Kalikasan (Philippines)

Storyweaver (India)

## Europe:

Both Ends (Netherlands)

Risbo - Erasmus University (Netherlands)

Utrecht University (Netherlands)

Hogeschool van Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Universiteit van Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Lokomotywa Pools Centrum voor Onderwijs en Cultuur Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Sirius European Policy Network for Education of Migrant Children (Belgium)

Forest Peoples Programme (UK)

Network of Education Policy Centers (Croatia)

Praxis (Estonia)

Terremondo società cooperativa (Italy)

## South and Central America

Association of Indigenous Village Leaders in Suriname (VIDS)

Foundation for Intercultural Bilingual Education in Suriname (ITOS)

Christelijk Pedagogisch Instituut Paramaribo (CPI) Suriname

The Autonomous University of Querétaro (Mexico)

## North America

Columbia University, New York, USA

New York University, USA

University of Toronto, Canada

## Africa

University of Johannesburg, South-Africa

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# Acknowledgements

Every year many people contribute to our work in kind or with financial donations. We cannot name them all, but we are extremely grateful for their support.

We would like to extend a special word of thanks to our students and volunteers and to:

Astrid Janssen (our graphic designer  
at [met-dubbel-s](#))

Bozena Kopczynska

Danielle Nijboer

Diego Gonsalves (More Life)

Fadie Hannah

Gerard Essed

Hans Kaufman

Jeannette Sibma

Pamela Mercera

Tineke Kambel-Hout

Thomas Prade (More Life)

Tom Tudjman

And to all the **translators** who so  
generously 'gave a translation'!

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**Elzamarieke Velthuijzen van  
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Indigenous-Led Education Network  
and the Mobile Forest School in the  
Philippines.





# Contact

Rutu Foundation for Intercultural Multilingual Education

R.J.H. Fortuynstraat 185

1019 WK Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Phone +31 638300886

Website: [www.rutufoundation.org](http://www.rutufoundation.org)

Email: [info@rutufoundation.org](mailto:info@rutufoundation.org)



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