



MAD SCIENTIST

WASTE NOT, CURAÇAO EDITION

*Student Science Fair 2026
School Info Pack*



🌐 A WARNING TO ALL WHO ENTER 🌐

This is not a normal science fair.

This is a hunt for the island's most brilliantly bonkers ideas turning garbage into gadgets, goo into gas, and trash into treasure. Read on if you dare.

Proudly part of Science Festival Curaçao

For teachers, mentors, and the wonderfully strange minds of secondary school



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Your Mission (Should You Choose to Accept It — and You Should, It's Mandatory)

Dear Teachers, Mentors, and Future Nobel-Prize-Havers,

Curaçao has a problem. Actually, it has several problems, and they are all currently sitting in a bin, rotting, or floating near a reef looking smug. We need YOUR students to fix this using science, a bit of chaos, and whatever they can find in the recycling bin.

This year's Student Science Fair theme is MAD SCIENTIST: Waste Not, Curaçao Edition. Teams will research a real local problem; energy, sustainability, biodiversity, or technology and build a small, working, wonderfully weird project that helps solve it. Projects will be shown off to the public and real researchers at European Researchers' Night Curaçao.

No lab coat required. A healthy sense of curiosity (and maybe some rubber gloves) strongly recommended.

The Three Mad Science Labs

Every team picks ONE lab to work in (or, for extra chaos, combines two see the Cross-Track Bonus later). Choose wisely. Choose weirdly.

Lab 1: Trash to Treasure

Plastic waste, meet your glow-up. Melt it, press it, mold it and turn bottle caps and shopping bags into tiles, bricks, or actual art. Bonus points if a judge tries to sit on your chair and it doesn't collapse.

Lab 2: Power Up

We can use wind, sun and water to create energy. But did you know you can also make a battery out of a potato? We are looking for more brilliant experiments like that!

Lab 3: Coconut Challenge

We know we can eat coconut and drink coconut water. But that would still mean you are throwing a big part of the coconut away. What else could we do with a coconut? You are challenged to identify and design original products, uses, or innovations from a coconut including its shell, husk, water, meat, oil, leaves, and even its waste byproducts.

How the Judges Will Judge You

Relax it's not a courtroom. Judges are real researchers who genuinely want to be impressed. Here's exactly what earns points, translated from Boring Adult Language into Human:

	Judging Category	In Grown-Up Words	Points
	Did You Actually Investigate Something?	<i>Scientific / Research Approach</i>	20
	Did You Actually Build the Thing?	<i>Execution & Craftsmanship</i>	20
	Does This Actually Help Curaçao?	<i>Relevance & Impact</i>	20
	Is This Wonderfully Weird (Mad in a Good Way)?	<i>Innovation & Creativity</i>	20
	Can You Explain It Without Panicking?	<i>Presentation & Communication</i>	20

Total: 100 points of pure, glorious science.

Secret Bonus Points 🏆

- ♦ **+5 Sustainability Bonus** if your own project is built from upcycled or low-impact materials (very on-brand for Lab 5, but anyone can try).
- ♦ **+5 Cross-Track Bonus** if you sneakily combine two labs (e.g., e-waste parts from Lab 5 powering a sensor from Lab 4).
- ♦ **🏆 Public Choice Award** voted by visitors at Researchers' Night. No judges, just vibes (and votes).

What Actually Impresses a Judge

Real talk: judges have seen a hundred baking-soda volcanoes. Here's how NOT to be volcano #101.

- ♦ Ask a real question first. Not 'let's make a briquette' but 'which local waste makes the best briquette, and why?'
- ♦ Show your fails. Judges love a team that says 'our first attempt exploded, here's what we changed.' Failure with a lesson attached is basically a superpower.
- ♦ Use real Curaçao data or context. Mention actual local waste, water, or energy facts. Judges get very excited when you know your island.
- ♦ Everyone on the team talks. If only one person can explain the project, it looks like only one person did the project.
- ♦ Bring the receipts. Photos, charts, before/after anything that proves you actually tested your idea and didn't just imagine it very hard.

The Not-So-Boring Logistics

Timeline

- ♦ Team formation & project choice: as soon as possible (the good biogas ideas go fast)
- ♦ Research & building phase: several weeks of glorious mess between September 1 and September 25, 7pm. You can start working in the weeks before and finish your project at the Science Fair.
- ♦ Rehearsal / mentor check-in: before the big night, so no one freezes up in front of a real scientist
- ♦ Showtime: Judging is September 25, 7 pm: Mad Scientist Science Fair at the Science Festival

Team Rules

- ♦ 2 - 8 per team, one supervising teacher or mentor
- ♦ All builds must be safe for a public event no open flames, no toxic fumes, no mystery liquids without adult sign-off
- ♦ If your project involves fire, gas, or anything that smells like regret, please loop in a teacher early
- ♦ Posters, props, and working demos are all welcome: the weirder and more hands-on, the better

What to Bring on the Day

- ♦ Your project (obviously)
- ♦ A poster or display explaining your question, method, and results
- ♦ Your sense of humor: researchers ask great questions, and some of them are trick questions





The Mad Scientist Oath

Repeat after us (out loud, ideally in a slightly evil voice):

***“I solemnly swear to look at garbage and see opportunity,
to question everything (especially my own results), and to
leave Curaçao a little less wasteful than I found it.”***

Now go forth. Get weird. Get scientific.

Save the island!

Questions? Ask your event coordinator we promise we don't bite
(we're scientists, not vampires).