



Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy

2023 – 2028

(DRAFT)

“Building a Nation, Centring Culture and Heritage.”

14 February, 2023

This draft is prepared and circulated by
The Department of Culture
Government of the Virgin Islands
Road Town, Tortola, Virgin Islands
(284)-468-4374
viculture@gov.vg

Culture is seen increasingly as both a means for development, i.e. as a means to the end of promoting and sustaining economic progress, and as an effect of development, i.e. as giving meaning to our existence. It can generate revenues through tourism, crafts and artefacts and contribute to the sustainable development of a region and a country. It is acknowledged that culture influences people's behaviour, their contribution to the process of economic development, their social development and their well-being.

**Excerpt: "Our Creative Diversity"
Report of the World Commission
on Culture and Development.
Paris: UNESCO. (1995).**

Message from the Premier & Minister of Finance



The development of the Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy is a significant milestone for the Virgin Islands and its people, as we continue to chart a bright and sustainable future for present and future generations of Virgin Islanders, which is the dream and legacy of our fore parents.

A policy and strategy is very important for identifying your goals and destination. It helps you to keep focused, to measure your progress, and to quickly identify when remedial action is required to realign with the course during the implementation process. This Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy, I am pleased to say, achieves this purpose. Its vision is *“the development of a vibrant cultural ecology that supports the development of the Virgin Islands and the aspirations of its people”*, appropriately reflected in the theme, *“Building a Nation, Centring Culture and Heritage.”* It is also aligned with the National Sustainable Development

Plan – *Vision 2036: Building a Sustainable Virgin Islands.*

Culture and heritage are the glue that hold a society together. They centre people around shared values and vision, and foster a cohesive spirit through which people come together to achieve great things, like nation building. It inspires them to seek the best interest of the country in everything they do, from work to play.

In the Virgin Islands, culture and heritage are also integral to our economy. Our heritage sites, cultural traditions, food, music and our warm hospitable personality are part of our tourism product and give us competitive advantage in that highly competitive industry. Tourism is the leading contributor to real economic activity and employment. Therefore, it is incumbent on us to protect our heritage sites and our intangible heritage such as our old time sayings and stories, to support and develop our talent in all the artforms, and to unlock the full economic potential of our cultural industries.

It is also important that as we develop our institutions and our infrastructure, as well as policies and programmes, they bear out the distinctive identity of our people, which has been shaped by the unique journey, experiences and circumstances over time. This Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy will guide and continuously remind us to ensure that our development reflects us, our priorities and our aspirations.

I look forward to us a Virgin Islands people working together to implement this Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy. I genuinely believe that as we achieve the goals set in this policy and strategy, we will emerge stronger and more resilient as a people and a nation.

Dr. the Honourable Natalio D. Wheatley
Premier & Minister of Finance

Message from the Director of Culture

I greet everyone with a deep sense of gratitude regarding the Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy because this document taps into, and resonates with, the traditional value system of the Virgin Islands - a deep-rooted sense of community - which is embodied within this document because it is speaking explicitly to unity of purpose. The village must work together to make this policy and strategy a success.

This Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy is dedicated to fostering a unique Virgin Islands national and cultural identity which is based upon its strong heritage. This identity will be able to stand up to globalisation yet be an active part of it, shaping the global world with its own narrative. We will do this through harnessing the tremendous creativity of our people and growing the cultural and creative economies, thus diversifying our economy.



The other enduring commitment of the Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy is to honour the legacy of the ancestors of the Virgin Islands, their sacrifices, their way of life, the foundation they established. We have inherited this foundation upon which we are constantly building – an entire way of life, a value system, traditional knowledge, traditional art forms. We will practise responsible stewardship of the tangible things left behind – historic spaces, buildings, objects. We must never forget. We will share this heritage, our unique story, with the world.

Another goal was to ensure that culture and heritage are ingrained in the daily fabric of Virgin Islands' life – integrated across sectors. For a people who have fought against the oppressive nature of experiences such as enslavement and colonisation, placing culture, and by extension people, at the centre of national development is liberating and truly strengthens democracy.

The responsibilities for culture and heritage have been spread across stakeholders, fragmented, and this has prevented unity in purpose moving forward. The stakeholders and institutions that constitute the cultural institutional framework are diverse, and include governmental agencies, statutory bodies, non-profit organisations, and private sector organisations. It will be critical for these important institutions to work together in a cohesive, integrated manner, guided by policy and strategy. The Department of Culture itself must be properly resourced so that it can facilitate the coordinated policy making, strategic planning and implementation that is required to drive its initiatives forward, fostering cohesiveness across disparate stakeholders.

This also involves every one of us as we work together to create a cohesive, inclusive nation with a strong and dynamic national pride and identity that is built on the solid foundation of cultural heritage. This is a project of nation building, one where there is balance between the traditional knowledge of the elders and the evolving culture as expressed by groups such as our artists and our youth. We are all stakeholders, and must move forward with a sense of unity of purpose.

Katherine Smith (Dr.)
Director of Culture

Executive Summary

Culture and heritage are essential components of a strong sense of national identity, pride and cultural confidence. They are critical to a sustainable framework for development and critical to the project of nation building. The people of the Virgin Islands are on a mission of nation building. Their aim is to realise the dream of their ancestors of regaining complete control of their destiny, and to ensure the success of their future generations. Key to this is building a robust and resilient society and economy shaped in the Virgin Islands image, supported by strong institutions, structures and systems that buttress good governance and drive development.

The evolution of the Virgin Islands economy and the way of life of its people is the unique product of an array of forces and circumstances exerted upon them throughout their history, and continuing. The building blocks for their mission, must therefore be tailor-made to the particular society and clearly articulated. They must be in strategic fit with the internal and external environment, leveraged around the resources of the Virgin Islands, considerate of whatever constraints may exist, relevant to the people's vision for themselves, and refined to suit the inimitable context of the Virgin Islands.

As advised in the Regional Cultural Policy of the Caribbean Community (RCPCC), cultural policy is to be seen as an instrument that aims at empowering people to be liberated in their own creativity and self-development, through which the people are placed at the centre of their own development.

Cultural production can be an effective tool for subverting and contesting threats to the national vision. Additionally, cultural production, and development of the cultural industries, can be a valuable source of national development – not only for cultivating patriotism but also for creating economic opportunities for the population and generating the revenues required for development through cultural products.

In this regard, cultural production assumes a high and urgent level of importance. Thus, a clear policy and strategy for culture and heritage in the Virgin Islands becomes the cornerstone for achieving their vision.

This Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy has built on a significant amount of work that has been done over the years towards the development of a clear and focused culture policy for the Virgin Islands. Some of these milestone events included the establishment of a Virgin Islands Department of Culture by the then named Executive Council in 2006; the establishment of a Committee by the Department of Culture in 2009 to formulate a Culture Policy of the Virgin Islands in consultation with stakeholders; the finalisation of a Virgin Islands Culture Policy in 2013 with recommendations by two UNESCO consultants in 1981 and 1982, respectively, as well as research and consultations with Government ministries, cultural organisations, Virgin Islanders, and artists; and a host of other activities since.

The consultations for *The Virgin Islands Sustainable Development Plan – Vision 2036: Building a Sustainable Virgin Islands* revealed an important priority of the people to be national identity, cultural integration, heritage, cultural education, and nation building. It also speaks to developing the cultural and creative industries internally and globally, thus creating jobs and diversifying the economy. The consultations were conducted from February 2021 to June 2022. It was reported that the consultations were carried out with a broad cross section of the public, and on all four of the major islands, targeting schools and holding public meetings. There were also consultations with the public and private sectors, and with associations. This document has also embedded the great majority of the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals and is aligned with the *Virgin Islands National Sustainable Development Plan – Vision 2036: Building a Sustainable Virgin Islands*, the formulation of which engaged the public in over 60 stakeholder consultations. Through this policy and strategy document, the articulated priorities of the people will be implemented.

The Culture Policy for the Virgin Islands (2013) and the Department of Culture’s three-year strategic plan, “*Programme for the Department of Culture, 2020 – 2022*”, provided a good starting point for the development of this policy and strategy document. This policy also draws on guidance from the Regional Cultural Policy of the Caribbean Community (RCPCC), and has considered a range of policies from other countries with similar economies and demographics. Additionally, it has drawn on the technical definitions and concepts provided by UNESCO, as well as published scholarly articles by experts in the field of culture and heritage.

The methodology included a survey of the internal and external environment and an assessment of Virgin Islands’ cultural and heritage infrastructure and programmes. This policy aligns with the aspirations of the people of the Virgin Islands who are on a continuing mission of nation building started by their fore parents generations ago and guided by the values they inherited.

[Please note the consultations referred to in this paragraph are presently taking place with respect to this document which is a DRAFT. Feedback from the consultations will be incorporated in the final revision of this document.] This Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy was circulated for public and community consultation. Consultations were held with a wide range of organisations and individuals including Government ministries and departments, statutory bodies, non-profit organisations, organisations in the private sector, artists, and culture and tradition bearers. These are all organisations and stakeholders which make up the cultural and heritage institutional framework. Town hall style meetings were organised which included the Sister Islands. Public consultation meetings were organised using the avenue of social media ensure widespread participation. The public were invited to submit comments via email.

The scope of this Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy is broad and diverse by design, as it aims to bridge the gaps and voids that for whatever reasons were not filled over time. In this regard it is meant to also be dynamic in the sense that as it takes life through implementation there is room for it to evolve and adapt in a structured way.

The policy targets the growth and development of the cultural sector, recognizing the connection between culture and heritage and all other aspects of development, particularly in a fledgling nation such as the Virgin Islands. Through a holistic approach, the policy aims to create a cultural ecology where our cultural and heritage assets are protected and developed in a sustainable manner, cultural products can be developed and disseminated with ease, and where there are strong, positive relationships among cultural actors, such as artistes, artists, other cultural workers, cultural and art institutions, the heritage sector, agencies and non-governmental organizations, cultural investors, the communities, the Government and parastatal organisations, the economy and Virgin Islanders, Belongers, residents and visitors. It aims to promote cultural confidence among citizens, and to ensure that Virgin Islands culture and heritage will have recognition and be given the relevant considerations in the formulation and implementation of Government's policies, programmes and overall agenda. The policy will also seek to harmonise all the supporting and regulatory apparatus of the state, and ensure that they are aligned with regional and international commitments.

The Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy sets out specific actions that the Government of the Virgin Islands will pursue through the various Ministries, Departments, Units and Agencies, in the role of an enabler of cultural development. These actions are spread across main focal areas:

1. The Creative and Cultural Industries,
2. Cultural Heritage,
3. Culture, Heritage and National Development Planning,
4. The Administrative and Institutional Framework,
5. The Legal and Institutional Framework, and
6. Implementation and Review.

The Policy Framework was extrapolated from a situational analysis of the various features of the cultural and heritage landscape to identify what has been done and the current state of affairs in the respective areas. From there, policy statements and strategies are presented to create a roadmap for the aspirational goals, which are informed by the data collection process described in the Methodology. Apart from specific initiatives for the cultural domains, measures are outlined for strengthening the administrative and institutional framework such as restructuring and streamlining of the Department of Culture to deliver the goals of this policy, capacity building and training of staff, and development of educational programmes focused on culture and heritage. The policy also provides an agenda for ensuring that the appropriate legislative framework is in place that is aligned with regional and international commitments. Measures are also outlined for development of an implementation schedule and continuous review of progress and evaluation.

Table of Contents

Message from the Premier & Minister of Finance	i
Message from the Director of Culture.....	ii
Executive Summary	iii
Chapter 1. Introduction	2
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Key Concepts.....	4
1.2.1 Culture & Heritage	4
1.2.2 Cultural & Creative Industries, Cultural Production & Cultural Producers.....	5
1.2.3 Identity, the Nation State & Patriotism	6
1.3 Why a Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy	8
1.3.1 Building a Resilient, Cohesive Nation.....	8
1.3.2 Overcoming the Legacy of Colonialism	11
1.3.3 Correcting Gaps in the Historical Records.....	13
1.3.4 Culture, Heritage & Development	13
1.3.5 Diversity, Inclusion and Integration.....	16
1.4 Methodology.....	17
1.5 Mapping the Cultural Landscape of the Virgin Islands	19
1.5.1 Virgin Islands History	19
1.5.2 Virgin Islanders' Connection to their Islands.....	21
1.5.3 Virgin Islanders' Political Aspirations	22
1.5.4 Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage.....	23
1.5.5 Current Legal Framework	23
Chapter 2. Policy Scope.....	25
2.1 Policy Scope	26
2.2 Policy Statement	26
2.3 Guiding Principles	27
2.4 Vision & Mission.....	27
2.5 Policy Goals & Objectives	28
Chapter 3. Policy Framework.....	29
3.1 Cultural and Creative Industries	30

3.1.1	Introduction.....	30
3.1.2	Current Situation.....	30
3.1.3	Policy Statements & Strategies	35
3.2	Cultural Heritage	39
3.2.1	Introduction.....	39
3.2.2	Current Situation - Intangible Heritage	39
3.2.3	Tangible Heritage	46
3.2.4	Current Situation - Museums.....	51
3.3	Culture, Heritage & National Development Planning.....	56
3.3.1	Introduction.....	56
3.3.2	Current Situation.....	56
3.3.3	Policy Statements & Strategies	57
3.4	Administrative & Institutional Framework	65
3.4.1	Cultural Administration.....	65
3.4.2	Policy Statements & Strategies	67
3.5	Legal & Institutional Framework.....	68
3.5.1	Policy Statements & Strategies	70
3.6	Implementation & Review	71
3.6.1	Policy Statements & Strategies	71
Appendices	72
Appendix 1 – VI Constitution Preamble		72
Appendix 2 – History of the Virgin Islands		73
Appendix 3 – National Symbols.....		81
Territorial Badge.....		81
Territorial Flag.....		81
National Anthem.....		82
Territorial Song.....		83
Territorial Tree.....		84
Territorial Flower		84
Territorial Bird.....		86
Territorial Colours.....		86
Territorial Dress.....		87

Territorial Music.....	88
Territorial Dish.....	89

Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy 2023 – 2028

“Building a Nation, Centring Culture and Heritage.”

“Where there is no vision, the people perish”

***(Proverbs 29:18)
Favourite quote of
Hon. Hamilton Lavity Stoutt
first and longest serving
Chief Minister of the Virgin Islands***

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Culture and heritage are essential components of a strong sense of national identity, pride and cultural confidence. Culture and heritage are critical to a sustainable framework for development and critical to the project of nation building. The people of the Virgin Islands are on a mission of nation building. Their aim is to realise the dream of their ancestors of regaining complete control of their destiny, and to ensure the success of their future generations. They hold great ambitions for themselves. Key to this is building a robust and resilient society and economy shaped in the Virgin Islands image, supported by strong institutions, structures and systems that buttress good governance and drive development.

The evolution of the Virgin Islands economy and the way of life of its people is the unique product of an array of forces and circumstances exerted upon them throughout their history, and continuing. The building blocks for their mission, must therefore be tailor-made to the particular society and clearly articulated. They must be in strategic fit with the internal and external environment, leveraged around the resources of the Virgin Islands, considerate of whatever constraints may exist, relevant to the people's vision for themselves, and refined to suit the inimitable context of the Virgin Islands.

The fundamental ingredient of the nation state is the people – people who are firmly bonded in a shared identity and rallying around a common vision, motivated by a strong sense of national pride. As advised in the Regional Cultural Policy of the Caribbean Community (RCPCC), cultural policy is to be seen as an instrument that aims at empowering people to be liberated in their own creativity and self-development, through which the people are placed at the centre of their own development.¹ This empowerment is situated within the framework of the struggle for democratic society, and given the legacies of enslavement and colonialism it is very important. The people must be fully confident in their capacity to develop themselves, becoming “*full, unapologetic, self-confident, sovereign human beings*.”² This process requires a repositioning and restoration of cultural identity.

In developing a Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy, it is necessary to consider the concepts of culture and heritage and their relationship to national development, and in particular the nurturing of a cohesive society driven towards a common vision.

Chapter 1 of this policy and strategy document sets the context against which the policy was formulated. It explores key concepts such as the definition of culture and heritage, the scope of the cultural and creative industries and cultural production, and the importance of culture in the shaping of a shared identity and stimulating patriotism. It also emphasises the

¹ Caribbean Community Secretariat, Regional Cultural Policy of the Caribbean, 1994, p.4.

² Ibid.

importance of culture in countries similar to that of the Virgin Islands as highlighted in published research and academic papers. This chapter also maps the cultural landscape, through exploring the historical antecedents that have shaped the Virgin Islands society into what it is today, the aspirations of the Virgin Islands people carried across generations, the cultural domains and current legal framework. It also explained the methodology which sees the assimilation of years of research, consultations and discourse among the population on the subject of culture and heritage, and how this should be incorporated into policy. Of note, this policy and strategy has been aligned with the National Sustainable Development Plan – *Vision 2036: Building a Sustainable Virgin Islands*, which itself was developed with over 60 public consultation sessions and repeatedly emphasises the importance of culture in sustainable development.

Chapter 2 sets out the scope of the policy and strategy, guiding principles and the vision, mission and goals of the document. The vision of this policy is the development of a vibrant cultural ecology that supports the development of the Virgin Islands and the aspirations of its people. This vision is expressed in the theme, “Building a Nation, Centring Culture and Heritage.” This vision will be achieved through the mission of developing a cohesive, inclusive nation with a strong and dynamic national pride and identity that is built on the solid foundation of cultural heritage, whilst coordinating the cultural institutional framework in order to place culture at the centre of national development.

Chapter 3 maps the policy framework for achieving the vision of the Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy. It itemises specific actions that the Government of the Virgin Islands will pursue through the various Ministries, Departments, Units and Agencies, in the role of an enabler of cultural development. These actions are spread across main focal areas: the Creative and Cultural Industries, Cultural Heritage, Culture, Heritage and National Development Planning, the Administrative and Institutional Framework, the Legal and Institutional Framework, and a mechanism for Implementation and Review. This is done by giving an overview of the relevant components and a situational analysis that summarises major initiatives undertaken in the past in those areas and the current state of affairs in the respective areas. Based on this, policy statements and strategies are presented to create a roadmap for the aspirational goals, which are informed by the data collection process described in the Methodology section of this document.

1.2 Key Concepts

1.2.1 Culture & Heritage

There is no universal definition of culture, nor for the full scope of what it entails, although 19th century founder of cultural anthropology, Edward Burnett Tylor, defined culture - ethnographically – as, *“that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”*³ Subsequent attempts at defining culture have evolved and built on this conceptualization.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), at the World Conference on Cultural Policies in Mexico in 1982, declared, culture, *“in its widest sense”, as “the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”*⁴

A consistent approach is adopted by the RCPCC, which describes culture as *“the distinctive ways in which a particular grouping of people...has responded to, reflected on and expressed their historical and presently continuing experience of life [through]... dance, painting, story-telling or any of the other art-forms... This sum total of intricately connected ways of being worked out by a people in relation to a particular environment and with a particular legacy of ideas, beliefs and practices is what gives a people a sense of cohesiveness, a sense of having a particular irreplaceable value in the world....It is our culture that makes us one people.”*⁵

Culture, in essence, therefore, is the way of life of a people. It comprises attributes, tangible and intangible, that may or may not be unique or exclusive to that population, shaped by the total of experiences, circumstances, geography, resources and other influences, the effects of which have crystallised over generations. The broad combination of potential factors and the impact they have on people can result in infinite permutations, and therefore with respect to any particular group of persons in any particular space, culture is bound to be distinctive.

Cultural heritage is referred to as *“...the collective memory, in various forms, of the people’s response to life and reflection on life, going back several generations.”* It encompasses recorded information, research, documentation, exhibitions, archaeological and historical sites and artefacts, language, ethnicity, religion, and oral traditions broadly categorised as tangible and intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO defines intangible cultural heritage as *“the share[d] cultural expressions that have been passed from one*

³ Tylor, E. (1871). Primitive Culture. Vol 1. New York. J.P. Putnam's Son; reprinted in 2016 by Dover Publications, Mineola, New York.

⁴ https://culturalrights.net/descargas/drets_culturals401.pdf

⁵ <https://caricom.org/documents/12068-regional-cultural-policy-of-the-caribbean-community.pdf>

generation to another, [and] have evolved in response to their environments and contribute to giving a sense of identity and continuity...”⁶

Cultural confidence refers to a “country, [and] a nation fully confirming the value of their own culture and having a firm faith in the vitality of their own culture,” and it is said that, “without firm faith in our own culture we cannot be sure that our culture can stand up to the impact of other cultures, have the courage to forge ahead and have the vitality for growing innovation and creativity.”⁷

1.2.2 Cultural & Creative Industries, Cultural Production & Cultural Producers

Cultural production is “the process by which cultural products (including goods, artifacts, visual and experiential objects, services, and art forms) are created, transformed, and diffused in the constitution of consumer culture.”^{8,9} In this process, the production of culture is “constructed and negotiated by cultural actors... through an interplay of symbolic and sensory modes of experience and their concomitant meaning systems in which the cultural actors are engaged.”¹⁰ Culture is acquired through a person’s membership of a society, which can be through inheritance from previous cultural actors within the said society whose own cultural productions have shaped the social space itself.¹¹

Cultural industries are the collective of “institutional arrangements that produce the cultural order”. They include films, radio, literary publications, buildings and architecture, political systems, monuments, and more.¹² The heritage sector, which includes museums and heritage sites, is now widely accepted in the realm of cultural industries¹³, and are therefore centres of cultural production and transmission to local and visiting audiences such as tourists in the latter instance¹⁴.

The broad range of cultural producers includes the persons involved in the production of cultural products such as artists, designers and architects; cultural intermediaries involved in the distribution or transfer of the product to consumers; and “the consumers themselves, who transform the cultural products into objects of meaningful consumption experiences.”¹⁵ The expanse of the cultural industry, socially and geography, therefore, is not limited to the primary producers in their physical locations but extends to the myriad of persons who partake in the consumption of the cultural product and the far reaches of the Earth to which the purvey the tangible and intangible products.

⁶ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000189113>

⁷ Shan, Y (2011) – Cultural Awareness, Cultural Confidence, Cultural Strength – An Approach for Ensuring the Thriving Development of Socialist Culture with Chinese Characteristics Queshi Journal Vol.3 No.1 January 1,2011

⁸ Lash, S. and Urry, J. (1994) Economies of Sign and Space. London: Sage.

⁹ Venkatesh, A. and Meamber, L. A. (2006) ‘Arts and aesthetics: Marketing and cultural production’, Marketing Theory. Vol. 6. Issue 1. 1 March. Pp: 11-39.

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Tylor, E. (1871). Primitive Culture. Vol 1. New York. J.P. Putnam’s Son; reprinted in 2016 by Dover Publications, Mineola, New York.

¹² Adorno, T.W. and Horkheimer, M. (2002) Dialectic of Enlightenment. Trans. E. Jephcott. London: Allen Lane.

¹³ Nogare, C. D. and Murzyn-Kupisz, M. (2021) ‘Do museums foster innovation through engagement with the cultural and creative industries?’. Journal of Cultural Economics, Vol. 45, Pp: 671–704.

¹⁴ Wu, M-Y., Tong, Y., Wall, G. and Ying, T. (2021) ‘Cultural production and transmission in museums: A social practice perspective’, Annals of Tourism Research. Vol. 87.

¹⁵ Venkatesh, A. and Meamber, L. A. (2006) ‘Arts and aesthetics: Marketing and cultural production’, Marketing Theory. Vol. 6. Issue 1. 1 March. Pp: 11-39.

1.2.3 Identity, the Nation State & Patriotism

Drawing from Tyler's conceptualization (*above*), culture is created and shaped through membership in a society. Society is synonymous with community. Its distinctiveness in the way that it is produced within the social grouping and uniquely shared by its members, in a way that is different to persons who are not members of the group, lends to the creation of identity.

French thinker Ernest Renan characterised a nation as a "*spiritual principle*" created by joint identification with a broad heritage of memory and the desire to live together and form a cohesive community.¹⁶ Austrian philosopher František Weyr said it is generally a part of humanity that shares the same origin, morals and language, and that has common culture and history.¹⁷ Analysing the development of various nations, sociologist R. Emerson concluded that a nation is a community of people who feel mutual solidarity through the sharing of significant elements of common heritage and a common destiny, and a sense of nationhood.¹⁸ G. J. Mangone defines a nation as a group of people connected by a common culture and consciousness, living in the same territory, and sharing a common interest in residency and land. He asserts that nations derive their strengths from senses of appropriation, history, culture and language.¹⁹

Benedict Anderson, however, does not limit the association of people in a nation by geography and territorial boundaries. He describes a nation as "*an imagined political community*", which can form even among people who are geographically distanced but connected by a common ideology or shared beliefs, and can be conceived as "*a deep horizontal comradeship*"; a fraternity bonded by cultural roots who can be very passionate and deeply motivated to go to great lengths in pursuit of the shared ideals and vision.²⁰

A nation is a "*unique community*"²¹, and this uniqueness is shaped in part by its culture and heritage which are themselves inimitable as a result of the conditions under which they are formed.

Philosophically, identity comprises those predicates of a person – those properties that are essential to the person rather than being contingent – such that if changed, it is no longer the same person.²² It is *WHO* the person *IS*, and in the collective sense of a society or community it would be *WHO* they *ARE*. The loss or significant alteration of the predicates therefore renders the individual or the community different, in an essential way, to who they were.

A universal definition of identity has been elusive to scholars, and while there has been divergence in how it is described, common themes occur throughout the various attempts,

¹⁶ Renan, E. (1882) *Qu'est – ce qu'une nation*, Paris.

¹⁷ F. Weyr, *Národ* [in:] *Slovník veřejného práva Československého*, Sv. II, reprint, Praha 2000, p. 761–764.

¹⁸ Emerson, R. (1960) *From Empire to Nation*, Cambridge.

¹⁹ Mangone, G. J. (1964) *Nation* [in:] *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, ed. J. Gould, W.L. Kolb, New York.

²⁰ Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso. Original text 1983. (Chapters 1 and 2)

²¹ Landshut, L.J. (1969). *Nation und Nationalismus* [in:] *Wörterbuch der Soziologie*, ed. W. Bernsdorf, Stuttgart

²² Fearon, J. D. (1999) *What is Identity (as we now use the word)?*, Stanford University, CA, via Researchgate

such as: identity is “people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others”²³; it is “the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others” on the basis of essential attributes of which culture is one²⁴; it is “the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities”²⁵; and as the “location in a certain world [which] can be subjectively appropriated only along with that world”²⁶.

Social identity is defined as an awareness of one’s objective membership in a group and a psychological sense of group attachment.²⁷ It has been associated with “the desire for group distinction, dignity, and place within historically specific discourses (or frames of understanding) about the character, structure, and boundaries of the polity and the economy”.²⁸ National identity “describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols - have internalised the symbols of the nation...”²⁹; it is a subjective or internalised sense of belonging to the nation^{30,31}. Social and national identity, themselves linked, also form a basis for patriotism, which is “a deeply felt affective attachment to the nation”³², or the “degree of love and pride for one’s nation”³³. When in good supply, they result in effects such as increased political involvement and an inclination to conform to group norms among group identifiers.³⁴

It is clear from the abundance of theories and philosophical views that culture and heritage are important for nurturing a united society. It is also important for members of the society to have a strong identity, both on a personal level and as a member of the community. These foster the national pride and camaraderie that are essential for nation building. The cohesion also inspires members to work diligently and passionately towards common goals that would advance and enrich their society, assuring its achievement of development goals. Strengthening culture and appreciation for heritage, together with national identity patriotism, is an escalator for development and progress on the road of nation building.

²³ Hogg, M. and Abrams, D. (1988). *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes*. London: Routledge.

²⁴ Deng, F. M. (1995). *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan*. Washington, DC: Brookings.

²⁵ Jenkins, R. (1996). *Social Identity*. London: Routledge.

²⁶ Berger, P. L. and Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Doubleday.

²⁷ Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human Groups and Social Categories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁸ Herrigel, Gary. 1993. “Identity and Institutions: The Social Construction of Trade Unions in the United States and Germany in the 19th Century.” *Studies in American Political Development*.

²⁹ Bloom, W. (1990). *Personal Identity, National Identity, and International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³⁰ Huddy, L. (2001). From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory. *Political Psychology*, Issue 22, Vol 1. Pp 127-56

³¹ Huddy, L. (2003). Group Membership, Ingroup Loyalty, and Political Cohesion. In *Handbook of Political Psychology*, ed. David O. Sears, Leonie Huddy, and Robert Jervis. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 511-58

³² Conover, P. J. and Feldman, S. (1987) Memo to NES Board of Overseers Regarding ‘Measuring Patriotism and Nationalism’. <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu>

³³ Kosterman, R, and Feshbach, S. (1989). Toward a Measure of Patriotic and Nationalistic Attitudes. *Political Psychology*. Issue 26, Vol 2. Pp: 257-74

³⁴ Huddy, L. and Khatib, N. (2007). American Patriotism, National Identity, and Political Involvement. *American Journal of Political Science*, Jan., Vol. 51, No. 1, pp. 63-77

1.3 Why a Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy

Nation-building is a lot of work, but with the essentials solidly in place, it becomes easier. Strong cultural underpinnings make motivation towards shared objectives second nature.

The Virgin Islanders' unique story – their struggles and triumphs – has shaped their identity, which is incorporated with and supported by their rich culture and heritage, and their aspirations as a people. They strongly desire for their legacy and their identity to continue to live on in their future generations, and not to be forgotten or erased from memory. They recognise that it is important to do everything possible to protect and promote their culture, heritage and identity, in the midst of the tsunami of environmental pressures.

Self-determination is a very vivid element of the aspirations of Virgin Islanders. They recognise that national development, in all its aspects, is critical for a sustainable and successful future. Patriotic spirit, of which identity, culture and heritage are also drivers, is important for fueling productivity and steering progress to key goals. Related to this is a cohesive society.

Cultural production can be an effective tool for subverting and contesting threats to the national vision.³⁵ Additionally, cultural production, and development of the cultural industries, can be a valuable source of national development – not only for cultivating patriotism but also for creating economic opportunities for the population and generating the revenues required for development through cultural products.

In this regard, cultural production assumes a high and urgent level of importance. Thus, a clear policy and strategy for culture and heritage in the Virgin Islands becomes the cornerstone for achieving their vision.

1.3.1 Building a Resilient, Cohesive Nation

Sociologist and cultural theorist Stuart Hall³⁶, notes that identity, like culture, is in a cycle of constantly evolving reinvention through the layering-on of influencing forces, knowledge and experiences among the members of the society. Identity is, therefore, altered based on the influences that are exerted on it, and foreign culture can alter the culture of a society.

Extrapolating from the various propositions of the nation as a community bonded in comradeship and fraternity through shared cultural roots, it stands to reason that divergence of ideologies, beliefs and other cultural ingredients not only erodes a society's culture but unbinds the essential glue that enables the formation and maintenance of the

³⁵ Dirlik, A. (2004). 'Spectres of the Third World: Global modernity and the end of three worlds'. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 1. Pp: 131-148.

³⁶ Hall, S. (2000) 'Who needs "identity"?', in du Gay, P., Evens, J., and Redman, P. (eds.), *Identity: a reader*. 155.2 IDE: Sage Publications Inc, pp. 15–30.

nation state. Stronger bonds reinforce the cohesion of the nation and the comradeship within its population to pursue common goals.

Globally, cultural flows occur across five dimensions:

- i. Ethnoscapes: movements of people;
- ii. Mediascapes: movements of representational and communicative practices;
- iii. Technoscapes: movements of technologies;
- iv. Finanscapes: movements of capital; and
- v. Ideoscapes: movements of belief systems.³⁷

It is important to note that flows across these “scapes” can be inward to the community or outward from it, and once inside it is absorbed into the layering process.

Two main impacts of global cultural flows are homogenization and heterogenization, as forces from metropolises are absorbed and indigenised. Heterogenization is where the original culture becomes subsumed in a melting pot. It becomes diluted in a culture of cultures. Homogenization is where, through the absorption and layering, a single ‘new’ culture develops in the society.

Heterogenization and homogenization need to be managed according to national goals. Layering and re-layering with different cultural influences can change the culture exponentially from what it was originally. On the positive side, this can promote diversity and inclusion, drawing new members of the society into the fraternity and building camaraderie. On the other hand, these forces can undermine the strength and “purity” of cultural identities, and assert pressure on national culture³⁸, thereby dampening nationalist sentiments.³⁹ Same layering on same, however, can strengthen and entrench cultural attributes.

Contesting the “negative” impacts of cultural flows requires management. People who wish to preserve their culture and to derive the benefits from it must be more assertive to achieve a more favourable balance in each of the five the cultural scapes. In a globalised world, this can be a challenge – where the movement of people into and out of the territorial space for business and labour is inevitable; where internet technology makes foreign music, television and products, and ideologies, more easily accessible; and where new technology makes traditional ways of doing things fall into obsolescence.

Among the tools for creating the nation-state, according to Anderson, are stories, monuments, cenotaphs and other cultural and heritage products that connect the present with the past and also with the future being aspired to. This brings into the sphere of cultural industries, and hence cultural production, the legends of great Virgin Islands heroes

³⁷ Appadurai, A. (1990). 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', *Theory, Culture and Society*. Vol. 7. Issue: 2 and 3, July; pp. 295-310.

³⁸ Tomlinson, J. (1991) 'Cultural Imperialism: A critical introduction', Continuum, Great Britain. (Chapter 2)

³⁹ Chatterjee, P. (1998) 'Beyond the Nation? Or within?', *Social Text*, No. 56, Autumn, pp. 57-69.

and their triumphs; immortalizing the memories of the forebearers and the milestone events in the life of the fledgling nation.

Where national development is the core objective of the Virgin Islands people and their Government, then their identity and culture must be strengthened and it must permeate all aspects of the development agenda to assure and expedite success. Time, effort, energy and financial resources must be deliberately invested into striking a viable and practical balance in the cultural scapes.

Regulating the ethnoscape requires managing immigration as well emigration. Improving the affordability of housing, good healthcare and other services, economic development and ensuring that which Virgin Islanders are able to participate in the economy by finding well-paying jobs and opportunities to open viable businesses, and ensuring a high standard of education at all levels and that educational opportunities are accessible, affordable and relevant to the needs of the Virgin Islands, are some of the ways to mitigate brain drain. It can also encourage Virgin Islanders to remain in their beloved homeland and contribute to its development, and reduce the need to import labourers whose culture will become absorbed in the ideoscape and dominate the layering process.

Managing the mediascape involves developing and promoting the various forms of cultural expression and channels for representation of Virgin Islands culture. While this is not limited to the arts, it does include supporting production of dance, art, poetry, literature, music, and other forms of expression, and ensuring that effective systems are in place for these industries to grow and for representations of Virgin Islands culture to be accurate wherever they appear. The Virgin Islands people are the best persons to tell their story, and there must be the means for them to produce and convey their story in film, literature, music, and other expressions. The structures must be developed to empower and facilitate them to do this.

Technology is a product of research and knowledge development, both of which are drivers of innovation. Traditional ways of doing things do not necessarily have to give way completely to imported technology, especially technology that erodes culture and heritage. Virgin Islands people can develop solutions to problems through the vision of their own lens and even export that technology, earning revenue, contributing to development and supporting cultural production.

The Virgin Islands people have developed a system of values and beliefs that have fostered close-knit communities and a society that is envied by others for their peace and harmony. It has also engendered a respect for the environment and a passion for protecting the beautiful beaches, scenic landscapes, pristine waters, birds, wildlife and marine habitats. Cultural flows across the ideoscapes that undermine or conflict with these values can be harmful, while constructive flows can benefit Virgin Islands society. Therefore, it is important to manage the ideoscape.

All of these things need a supportive ecosystem for them to happen, and that requires funding. Structures must be put in place, with the Government in the lead, to ensure

initiatives are financed – whether it is for grants, scholarships and other initiatives to develop the cultural industries and enhance production. This can also include incentives for active participation by the private sector, and particularly in targeted areas.

To assure success, there must therefore be a clear and comprehensive policy that expresses the broad goals and the tactics for achieving them.

1.3.2 Overcoming the Legacy of Colonialism

In the Virgin Islands context, the effects of the colonial experience and its remnants are relevant considerations. Patrick Hogan in *Colonialism and Cultural Identity* defines colonisation as the “*historical encounter between culturally distinct and geographically separated societies where for some extended period one society controls the other economically and politically; moreover, during this period, the dominated society remains numerically and culturally prevalent...and the dominant society justifies its control through the denigration of the dominated culture.*”⁴⁰

In the Virgin Islands, this dominance of the economy on the part of the “*mother country*” - England - was not established in a clear cut, straightforward manner. This was because it took some time for England to be convinced that the colony of the Virgin Islands could make money for the mother country. Britain eventually decided to grant the Virgin Islands a local legislature in 1773 because the colonists were then able to pay a four and a half per cent duty on all imports. In 1819 there was a deadly, devastating hurricane which resulted in the destruction of the sugar economy. The planter colonists could not find capital to rebuild and they left, abandoning the sugar estates. The ex-slaves pooled their resources together and purchased the lands. By the end of the century the Virgin Islands consisted primarily of agricultural holdings. For a century Virgin Islanders were agriculturalists, “*land rich and cash poor.*” The quiet revolution that had occurred in that they had moved from being the labourers, defined as “*property,*” to becoming the owners of the “*means of production.*” They now owned the “*means of production*” – the property, the land, the equipment.

The control of the political machinery and administration paralleled these events it was also not straightforward or clear cut. Yet a local legislature was granted to the colonists in 1773. After abolition and emancipation, as mentioned, the formerly enslaved persons bought the land, and began establishing the foundations of the modern Virgin Islands. Yet according to Pearl Varlack and Norwell Harrigan,

“Commissioners, another word for administrators, or governors came and went. Taxes were levied and collected. His environment had made the Virgin Islander a ‘rugged individualist’ – afraid about what the government might do to affect the little

⁴⁰ Patrick Hogan, *Colonialism and Cultural Identity: Crisis of Tradition in the Anglophone Literatures of India, Africa, and the Caribbean* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2000), p.2.

*he possessed. To the man on the street concerned with the task of raising enough to feed his family and pay his quota of taxes political representation was neither here nor there, for it had no impact on his daily life of which he was aware.”*⁴¹

Hope R Stevens a New York Virgin Islander lawyer returned and spearheaded a petition to the Secretary of State for the colonies for the reconstitution of the Legislative Council. On 24 November 1949, over 1500 people led by Faulkner, L. G. Fonseca and C. L. Decastro marched through the street of Road Town in the “Great March” to the Commissioner’s office to present to the Governor J. A. Cruikshank an address in which their grievances were elaborated. Legislative government was re-instituted in 1950.

Ngugi Wa Thiongo states in *Decolonising the Mind*, “*But colonialism’s most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world.*”⁴² The effects of colonialism are very deep-rooted, and are said to include the creation of a colonised mentality that features “*inferiority and superiority pathologies*” which condition how colonised people “*learnt to think about themselves and others*”. The effect has been that colonised people view themselves through the values of the coloniser, which judge them to be “*inferior and backward*”, and by internalising this they develop insecurities that can feed subjugation, loss of self-esteem, self-hate and the production of a self-fulfilling prophesy of the negative labelling. Such damage is not simply undone by a change in political status.⁴³

Colonialism has featured a one-way cultural flow in which metropolitan forms including language and culture are deployed to assert the values of the colonisers while disavowing the “*cultural and historical specificities of local conditions*”, so that the “*transfers of things, thoughts and people*” can be “*received more readily*” by the colonised people.⁴⁴

The relics and remnants of the coloniser’s power that remain in the society - such as celebrations of the monarch, monarchical honours, governmental patronage, and the retention of legal systems - maintain the former’s reputation and continued influence. This is one of the reasons colonisers “*continued to mark all forms of cultural expression*” in the Dominions, with outcomes such as cultural cringe and reinforcement of imperial patriotism.⁴⁵ It undermines cultural confidence.

Some argue that the colonial project is not ended until its residual structures are dismantled^{46, 47} to allow the colonized people the breathing room to develop and pursue their own aspirations without encumbrance.

⁴¹ Pearl Varlack and Norwell Harrigan, *The Virgin Islands Story* (Caribbean Universities Press, 1975), p. 153.

⁴² Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: James Curry Ltd.,) p.26.

⁴³ Oelofsen, R. (2015). ‘Decolonisation of the African mind and intellectual landscape’, *Phronimon*, Vol 16, No 2, pp. 130–146.

⁴⁴ Steer, P. (2016). ‘Gold and Greater Britain: Jevons, Trollope, and Settler Colonialism’. *Victorian Studies* Vol. 58, No. 3, Spring, pp. 436-463.

⁴⁵ Hopkins, A. G. (2008). ‘Rethinking Decolonization’. *Past & Present*, August, No. 200, pp. 211-247. Oxford University Press on behalf of The Past and Present Society.

⁴⁶ Morgensen, S. L. (2011). ‘The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism: Right Here, Right Now’, *Settler Colonial Studies*, Vol. 1. Issue 1, Pp: 52-76.

⁴⁷ Park, A. S. J. (2020). ‘Settler Colonialism, Decolonization and Radicalizing Transitional Justice’. *International Journal of Transitional Justice*. Vol 14. Issue 2, 1 July. Pp: 260–279.

1.3.3 Correcting Gaps in the Historical Records

Historical records journalise the stories, and positive and negative experiences of people. Researchers have pointed out the existence of gaps in the historical records of former colonised territories.

For example, Christopher Clapham⁴⁸ states that documentary records of African history, especially during the colonisation era, have chasms of missing information. This was due, he posits, because the Western colonisers documented what was important to them; and the African perspective was of low importance to the colonisers and their historians.

This, Clapham says, highlights the importance of knowledge production within the former colonies. Education and research must focus on such areas as history, indigenous political traditions, economics and anthropology, from the perspective of the colonised people. He explains, that academics that belong to Africa will allow Africans to *“re-engage with their own societies, seek to understand where their problems lie, and develop theoretical as well as practical ways to deal with them”*. He opines that scholars and researchers who are excessively enthused by Northern social theory can be blinded to *“the distinctive features of their own societies”*, and knowledge production that is based on Western constitutional structures and cultural assumptions may be out of sync with the African context.

Knowledge production by the (former) colonised people will not only close the gaps in the historical records, but it will also shine attention on the issues that matter to them and approach the problem analysis and development of solutions in ways that will be culturally relevant to them and their needs. Most importantly, it will help them to properly appreciate their history and their place in the world.

1.3.4 Culture, Heritage & Development

As previously mentioned, culture, heritage and the creative industries can be lucrative sources of revenue and job creation, both of which fuel development.

According to Cultural Times⁴⁹, a report by Ernst and Young based on a study commissioned by the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers - the world's leading network of authors' societies, with 230 member societies in 120 countries:

- *Cultural and creative industries generate \$US2,250 billion in revenues and create over 29.5 million jobs worldwide. The top three earners are television (US\$477b), visual arts (US\$391b), and newspapers and magazines (US\$354b). Cultural and*

⁴⁸ Clapham, C. (2020). 'Decolonising African Studies?' The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 58. Issue. 1, March, Pp137-153.

⁴⁹ Cultural Times: The first global map of cultural and creative industries. December 2015.

creative industries employ 1% of the world's active population. The top three employers are visual arts (6.73m), books (3.67m) and music (3.98m).

- *Cultural and creative industries have been described as “a locomotive of the online economy”, contributing US\$200 billion to global digital sales in 2013. Cultural and creative content also powers sales of digital devices, which totaled US\$530 billion in 2013. Digital cultural goods are, by far, the biggest revenue source for the digital economy, generating US\$66 billion of B2C sales in 2013 and US\$21.7 billion of advertising revenues for online media and free streaming websites.*
- *Informal cultural and creative industries sales in emerging countries were estimated to total US\$33 billion in 2013 and to provide 1.2 million jobs. Performing arts are the biggest employers in the informal economy, providing unofficial music and theater performances (street performances, festivals and concerts that do not pay authors' rights, private performances at marriages and funerals, etc.), which are often free for audiences.*
- *World-class cultural infrastructure is a catalyst for urban development. For instance, building a museum often offers opportunities to engage in large urban development projects and to develop a new “city brand” around cultural and creative industries. Such flagship projects boost a city's attractiveness for tourists, talent and highly skilled workers. Bilbao, in Spain's Basque Country, is now an icon of culture-led urban regeneration. Construction of the Guggenheim Museum led to the creation of more than 1,000 full-time jobs, and tourist visits have since multiplied eight-fold. Equally important, cultural and creative industries make cities more livable, providing the hubs and many of the activities around which citizens develop friendships, build a local identity and find fulfillment.*

Tourism is already one of the main economic engines of the Virgin Islands economy, which successive Governments have expressed the desire to broaden and diversify. According to Data Bridge Market Research⁵⁰, the rise in the travel and tourism to unique destinations is fostering growth of the cultural tourism market.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) describe cultural tourism as “a type of tourism activity in which the primary motivation of the visitor is to learn, discover, experience, and consume tangible and intangible cultural attractions/ products in a tourism destination.”⁵¹ Data Bridge Market Research, embracing the UNWTO's definition, further explains that these attractions/products are related to “a set of distinct material, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional characteristics of a society, which includes arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries, and living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs, and traditions.” They forecast that

⁵⁰ <https://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/cultural-tourism-market-report-2022-highlights-on-future-development-trends-growth-demand-opportunities-scope-forecast-by-2029>

⁵¹ <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-and-culture>

the Cultural Tourism Market will grow at a rate of 11.2% during period 2022 to 2029 and likely reach an estimated value of US\$12.3 billion by end of the forecast period.

Recently, the tourism and travel industry has noted the emergence and growing popularity of heritage travel; *“travel that brings someone closer to their roots”*⁵². This includes travelling to a country where their ancestors were born or originated. Travellers find a deeply emotional experience that combines cultural immersion with their own heritage. Heritage travel particularly attractive to younger generations under the age of 55, with travelers between 18 and 34 showing a high desire to get a deeper understanding of themselves and where they and their family came from. It is a huge market. For instance, America is a county of immigrants and over 20% of Americans have it as a bucket list goal. Travel Pulse⁵³ reports: *“Some destinations are already beginning to promote themselves as heritage travel destinations. Germany, for instance, knows that an estimated 40 million Americans consider themselves of German descent and it’s created a microsite just for people to learn about the country’s heritage travel, including genealogical resources and more.”*

With the high potential for economic development and strengthening cultural connections through cultural tourism and heritage travel, the UWTO recognises that this convergence between tourism and culture brings both unique opportunities and complex challenges to the tourism sector. In its Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics⁵⁴, the UWTO advises: *“Tourism policies and activities should be conducted with respect for the artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage, which they should protect and pass on to future generations; particular care should be devoted to preserving monuments, worship sites, archaeological and historic sites as well as upgrading museums which must be widely open and accessible to tourism visits”*

A cultural and heritage policy would serve as a bridge between unlocking the potential of culture and heritage assets, while striking the balance for achieving sustainability. Many countries have seen where cultural policies have helped them to channel their focus on programmes, such as organizing cultural events and heritage attractions, that enhance their tourism product.⁵⁵

It has already been discussed how a strong culture where the shared national values and vision permeates all aspects of society and development will instill pride and commitment among the population leading to enhanced productivity, enhanced consciousness in customer service, and a general civic mindedness where people are motivated to work for the best interest of the country; and how knowledge production will contribute to the development with the distinctive Virgin Islands flavor and in sync with the priorities set by the people.

⁵² <https://www.travelpulse.com/news/features/heritage-travel-another-key-trend-for-2022.html>

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284421671; Art 7, para 2;>

⁵⁵ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/cutting-edge-bringing-cultural-tourism-back-game>

1.3.5 Diversity, Inclusion and Integration

The efficient and effective functioning of the economy requires immigration. The Virgin Islands experiences high levels of immigration; it is often stated that there are over 100 nationalities represented in the Virgin Islands. These numbers constitute a majority of persons who reside in the Virgin Islands, and there is great diversity in culture and nationality. According to a 2010 Population and Housing census, 61% of the population was born outside of the Territory. The presence, contributions, and perspectives of these diverse groups of people who reside in the Virgin Islands, making up the fabric of community, must be valued. There must be a philosophy of inclusion in order to ensure a healthy society.

Many persons have lived in the Virgin Islands for extended periods of time, becoming naturalised as belongers to the Virgin Islands. These persons must be integrated into the society acquiring the memories, attitudes and attitudes of the society, sharing a common cultural life, while at the same time having the freedom to maintain the first identity. Cultural and heritage policy must work with immigration and integration policies to foster this.

It is important to note, however, the enormous impact of this level and rate of immigration on a society's physical and social infrastructures, on housing, public education, and health services. In addition, according to a United Nations' study which included the Virgin Islands, the impact of this new cultural diversity presents a challenge to the matter of national identity; Virgin Islanders are bound to feel as if their culture is being "assaulted, diluted, or transformed to an unacceptable degree. The study recommends managing entry and integration, developing immigration and integration policies.

Virgin Islanders must be developed enough to have an enduring national pride and strong cultural confidence in order to successfully negotiate these socio-cultural dynamics as well as to embrace their role as global citizens, whilst maintaining their distinct cultural identity.

1.4 Methodology

In August 2006, the then named Executive Council approved the establishment of a Virgin Islands Department of Culture. By 2009, the Department of Culture had established a Committee to formulate a Culture Policy of the Virgin Islands in consultation with stakeholders. The Virgin Islands Culture Policy was finalised in 2013 and was based on recommendations by two UNESCO consultants: A. J. Seymour and Neville Dawes in 1981 and 1982, respectively. The Policy was also the result of research as well as consultations with Government ministries, cultural organisations, Virgin Islanders, and artists.

Official interest in cultural policy development continued, and in August 2019 the then Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Sports, Agriculture and Fisheries sent a delegation to CARIFESTA XIV. Members of the delegation attended the “*Journey Round Myself*” symposium held at the St. Augustine University of the West Indies campus CARIFESTA. Members of the delegation attended the two plenary sessions which were roundtable discussions on cultural policies.

Following this, a ministerial mandate was handed to the Department of Culture to restructure the Department in order to more effectively carry out its work, with a focus on the cultural and creative industries, cultural heritage, cultural education and collaboration with relevant agencies and stakeholders. As a result of this a three-year strategic plan, “*Programme for the Department of Culture, 2020 – 2022*” was developed which informed the work of the Department.

In February 2022, representatives from the Department of Culture and the BVI National Commission for UNESCO accompanied the then Minister for Culture, Dr. the Honourable Natalio Wheatley, to CARICOM’s virtual Consultation of Ministers of Culture for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Minister for Culture made an intervention or contribution on the revision of cultural policy in the Virgin Islands under the theme, “*Culture for Peace, Culture as an Element for Social Transformation and Unity among Societies.*” This Regional Consultation was held as one of the steps to prepare for the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies – Mondiacult 2022.

The consultations for *The National Sustainable Development Plan of the Citizens of the Virgin Islands* revealed the top priority of the people to be national identity, cultural integration, heritage, cultural education, and nation building. It also speaks to developing the cultural and creative industries internally and globally, thus creating jobs and diversifying the economy.

The consultations for *The National Sustainable Development Plan of the Citizens of the Virgin Islands* were conducted from February 2021 to June 2022. It was reported that the consultations were carried out with a broad cross section of the public, and on all four of the major islands, targeting schools and holding public meetings. There were also consultations with the public and private sectors, and with associations. Additional consultations were carried out with specific groups which included Permanent Secretaries, fishermen and farmers, nurses, sports personnel, and the private sector.

This Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy has ensured that it is in alignment with *The Virgin Islands Sustainable Development Plan – Vision 2036: Building a Sustainable Virgin Islands*. Through this policy and strategy document, the articulated priorities of the people will be implemented. This document has also embedded the great majority of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals and is aligned.

After ensuring that the Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy was aligned with *The Virgin Islands Sustainable Development Plan – Vision 2036: Building a Sustainable Virgin Islands*, it was then circulated for public and community consultation. Consultations were held with a wide range of organisations including Government ministries and departments, statutory bodies, and non-profit organisations. Consultations were also held with specific groups such as artists and elder culture and tradition bearers. These are all persons, organisations and stakeholders that make up the cultural and heritage institutional framework. Town hall style meetings were organized on each of the four major islands. Public consultation was organised using the avenue of social media in order to ensure widespread participation. The public was invited to submit comments via email.

The Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy has built on the Culture Policy for the Virgin Islands (2013), as well as on the three-year strategic plan, "Programme for the Department of Culture, 2020 – 2022." It draws on guidance from the Regional Cultural Policy of the Caribbean Community (RCPCC), and has considered a range of policies from other countries with similar economies and demographics. It has also drawn on the technical definitions and concepts provided by UNESCO, as well as published scholarly articles by experts in the field of culture and heritage.

The methodology also included a survey of the internal and external environment and an assessment of Virgin Islands' cultural and heritage infrastructure and programmes. This policy aligns with the aspirations of the people of the Virgin Islands who are on a continuing mission of nation building started by their foreparents generations ago and guided by the values they inherited.

Within the community, a consistent outcry over the absence, erosion and loss of Virgin Islands culture and heritage, perceived to have occurred during the transition from being an agricultural society to one based on tourism and financial services. This consistent call has been made in many places including the over 60 consultations conducted with the public for the development of *The Virgin Islands Sustainable Development Plan – Vision 2036: Building a Sustainable Virgin Islands* during the First Sitting of the Second Virgin Islands Youth Parliament unanimously by the members, and during the Special Sitting of the House of Assembly held on December 4, 2020 to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Legislative Council in 1950 by elected members.

1.5 Mapping the Cultural Landscape of the Virgin Islands

1.5.1 Virgin Islands History

The Virgin Islands (VI) is a cluster of about 60 islands and cays located in the Leeward Islands in the West Indies. Its population is approximately 31,200 Virgin Islanders and residents, and per capita gross domestic product of US\$33,294.⁵⁶ The VI economy has a Gross Domestic Product of US\$1.1 billion, and its two main drivers are tourism and financial services. Tourism was propelled by the Hotels Aid Ordinance 1953 and deliberate Government policies since 1961, and contributes to about 55% of overall economic activity and a greater share of employment. The International Business Companies Act 1984 paved the way for the BVI to become a global centre for offshore corporate and financial services, in particular the registration of corporate entities. Financial and allied professional services (including banking and insurance) accounts for 25-30% of the economy.⁵⁷ The VI formally adopted the US dollar as its official currency in 1959.

A somewhat detailed chronology of the political history of the VI is published on the Government of the Virgin Islands' website.⁵⁸ (*See Appendix 2 – History of the Virgin Islands*)

In the pre-Columbian era, the islands are presumed to have been occupied by Amerindian tribes such as the Ciboney and Arawaks, whose artifacts have been found at places such as Soper's Hole, Apple Bay, Coxheath, Pockwood Pond, Pasea, Purcell, Paraquita Bay, Josiah's Bay, Mount Healthy and Cane Garden Bay. The first European contact with the islands was in 1493 during Christopher Columbus' second voyage when he named the islands after the legend of St Ursula. In the centuries thereafter, interactions occurred between the Spanish, French, Dutch and British as they jostled for control and possession of the islands which they saw as having strategic value. This recording notes the presence and activities of Europeans such as the Dutch privateer Joost van Dyk after whom one of the islands is named; Willem Hunthum who purchased Tortola in the 1650's; and the exploits of Sir Francis Drake in the mid-1500's after whom the main channel in the VI is named.

The islands have officially been a possession of Britain since 1735.⁵⁹ Typical of colonised possessions at the time, the VI economy was White-owned plantations with African slave labour. When Emancipation crashed the plantation economy model in 1834, most British estate owners left the VI and the now-freed [formerly enslaved] persons became the dominant occupant group; indigenous Virgin Islanders. The VI was left without a legislature

⁵⁶ 'Non-Self-Governing Territories', The United Nations – The United Nations and Decolonization (C-24) website. Available Online at: <<https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/nsgt>>

⁵⁷ https://bvi.gov.vg/sites/default/files/resources/web_accessible_-_bvi_coi_report.pdf

⁵⁸ <https://bvi.gov.vg/content/our-history>

⁵⁹ Farara, G., Rhymer, E., O'Neal, E., Lewis, V., Maduro, A., Malone, C., Donovan, S., Stouff, P. and Williams-Roberts, J. (2005) 'Constitutional Commissioners Report 2005'. British Virgin Islands Constitutional Review Commission.

as Britain consolidated all the Leeward Islands and Dominica into a single federal colony in 1871, which was to be administered from Nevis with VI having no seat on the Council.

Around 1930, civic-minded Virgin Islanders grew dissatisfied with the poor governance in the VI and began to organise themselves and demand the reinstatement of an elected legislature in the VI. Increased momentum was gained when T. H. Faulkner, an Anegada fisherman, began to vent his frustration in the Market Square over poor healthcare for his pregnant wife and overall poor governance. The groundswell of local support evolved into an historic march in the VI Capital in 1949 and culminated with a petition to the Commissioner, in which residents expressed their dissatisfaction with governance “*where one official, or an official clique, makes decisions for us*” and expressing their desire “*to decide our local affairs our own selves*”.⁶⁰

This triggered events leading to the re-establishment of a legislative body in the VI in 1950, albeit that the configuration of the legislature ensured the British-appointed Commissioner retained control through appointed positions. Further developments over the next 15 years gradually increased the number of electoral constituencies and elected representatives, and incrementally introduced a ministerial system of government, with a Chief Minister from among the elected representatives. The British-appointed Administrator retained special responsibilities for defence, internal security, external affairs, the public service, the courts and finance.

Major constitutional changes in the 1970s further increased the local population’s access to and participation in the legislative and executive processes. By the end of the decade, having realised a US\$1.3 million budgetary surplus under the leadership of indigenous Virgin Islander Dr. Willard Wheatley as Chief Minister, the VI ended “*its reliance on grant-in-aid from the [UK]*”; a milestone in the journey to “financial freedom” and self-determination.⁶¹

While constitutional changes in 1976 and 2007 have led to greater participation of Virgin Islanders in the legislative and governance functions, the UK and its appointed representative, the Governor, retain significant power including a wide range of veto powers.^{62, 63} The UK remains the administrating power for the Virgin Islands and the Westminster model of government is followed in the islands.

The preamble to the 2007 VI Constitution frames the UK Government’s relationship with the VI as a modern partnership “*based on the principles of mutual respect and self-determination*”, consistent with the language of the UN General Assembly Declaration on Decolonization⁶⁴, and recognises the aspirations of the VI people to become self-governing.

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ Shefchik, C. and Rogers, F. (2019). 'Dinner marks 1978 end of grant-in-aid', The BVI Beacon, 1 January. Available at: <<https://www.bvibeacon.com/end-of-grant-in-aid-dinner/>>.

⁶² The Virgin Islands (Constitution) Order 1976. Statutory Instrument 1976 No. 2145. International Foundation for Electoral Systems website. Available at: <<https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/con00025.pdf>>

⁶³ The Virgin Islands Constitution Order 2007. Statutory Instrument 2007 No. 1678. Government of the Virgin Islands website. Available at: <<https://bvi.gov.vg/sites/default/files/constitution.pdf>>.

⁶⁴ UN, 1960. 'Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples'. UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV), 14 December. Available Online at <[https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/152/88/PDF/NR015288.pdf](https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/152/88/PDF/NR015288.pdf?)>.

The UK Government maintains its commitment to the principles of decolonization, continuing to work in a “*modern partnership*” with the Non-Self Governing Territories, and that remaining British is a matter of choice of OT citizens.⁶⁵

1.5.2 Virgin Islanders’ Connection to their Islands

The people of the Virgin Islands have a strong bond with the islands and surrounding waters that goes back centuries. For instance, in the post-Emancipation period, and particularly after the British plantation owners abandoned the islands, the freed slaves who continued to reside in the islands cultivated the land with various crops and engaged in fishing for sustenance. More recently, as tourism became the main economic driver, Virgin Islanders have recognised the land and marine assets as key to their sustainability. They therefore hold tremendous respect for their natural resources and appreciate the need to be protective of these assets and to use them in a sustainable way, guarding against over-exploitation or activities that would harm the environment. They see the land as “the treasure under our feet”; a phrase coined by J. R. O’Neal, a noted BVIlander, entrepreneur and environmentalist.⁶⁶

Unlike most other jurisdictions, the majority of the terrestrial real estate in the VI is privately owned, not Government-owned. This has come about in several ways.

In the late-18th century to mid-19th century, there were several recorded instances of plantation owners granting lands to free Blacks; such as a 50-acre grant at Long Look by the Nottignhams in 1778, a 300-acre grant on Guana Island in 1881 by Edward Harrigan; and a 40-acre grant at East End in 1816 by Miriam Harrigan. Between 1828 and 1831, the Government granted lands at Kingston to free Africans.⁶⁷

In 1841, the legal restrictions on the purchase of land by non-Europeans was lifted. Further, the adoption in the VI of the West Indies Encumbered Estates Acts⁶⁸ enabled the sale of encumbered estates by authorised Commissioners.⁶⁹ These were land holdings that were heavily indebted plantations. The local population pooled their resources and bought most of these lands with security of tenure. For a people whose ancestors had lost all their possessions when they were stolen from their homeland in Africa, stripped of their human identity and declared as chattel, land ownership was a significantly empowering achievement and security of tenure gained them a means for future generations to have hope of a better life.

⁶⁵ C-24 - 'Non-Self-Governing Territories', The United Nations – The United Nations and Decolonization website. Available Online at: <<https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/nsgt>>

⁶⁶ <https://onealwebster.com/british-virgin-islands-a-country-of-proud-landowners/>

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ The West Indies Encumbered Estates Acts 1854-86

⁶⁹ https://bvi.gov.vg/sites/default/files/resources/web_accessible_-_bvi_coi_report.pdf

Virgin Islanders' passion for their land was perhaps most convincingly demonstrated in the late 1960's when they banded together to protest the granting of two 199-year leases to the British Company, Bates-Hill. The leases were signed by then Administrator Martin S. Stavelly in 1967 for Crown Land in Wickham's Cay and more than four-fifths of Anegada, where land had traditionally been treated as common land for farming. Ken Bates, the owner of the company, had proposed to develop the land, but the leases would have resulted in most islanders being excluded from the relevant land – except for maids and other service workers.^{70, 71}

In 1968 Noel Lloyd started a community group, the Positive Action Movement, to protest against Bates' leases and development. The Movement organised several public meetings at venues such as the Band Stand on the Old Recreation Ground in Road Town. The held demonstrations and marches on Government House and the Chief Minister's Office. This led to confrontations with the police and the arrest and re-arrest of Mr. Lloyd and several others. As support grew, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was forced to appoint a Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the matter.⁷² Following the submission of the COI report, the land was repurchased by the BVI Government with funds loaned by the UK Government in 1970.⁷³ The cause is commemorated in the Noel Lloyd Positive Action Movement Park in Road Town, where a statue has been erected in Mr. Lloyd's honour, with the names and likenesses of six other Virgin Islands stalwarts who supported Mr. Lloyd and became the executives of the Positive Action Movement, surrounding the plaque. They are, Patsy Lake, Roosevelt Smith, Vernon Farrington, Cromwell Nibbs, Wilfred Smith and Walter "Lindy" de Castro. The names of many other supporters were also engraved on smaller plaques surrounding the statue.⁷⁴

1.5.3 Virgin Islanders' Political Aspirations

It goes without saying that the enslaved Africans, the ancestors of the majority of present-day Virgin Islanders, yearned for freedom and control of their own destiny. Their ambitions were very clearly discernable post-Emancipation and as they exploited opportunities to purchase land in the 1800's. Throughout the various Constitutional arrangements under direct and devolved British rule, local residents have always clambered for greater involvement in the management of domestic affairs.⁷⁵ But, perhaps the most definitive articulation of the political aspirations of the Virgin Islands people in modern times was in

⁷⁰ https://bvi.gov.vg/sites/default/files/resources/web_accessible_-_bvi_coi_report.pdf

⁷¹ <https://www.bareboatsbvi.com/tortola/noel-lloyd.php>

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ https://bvi.gov.vg/sites/default/files/resources/web_accessible_-_bvi_coi_report.pdf

⁷⁴ <https://www.bareboatsbvi.com/tortola/noel-lloyd.php>

⁷⁵ Farara, G., Rhymer, E., O'Neal, E., Lewis, V., Maduro, A., Malone, C., Donovan, S., Stoult, P. and Williams-Roberts, J. (2005) 'Constitutional Commissioners Report 2005'. British Virgin Islands Constitutional Review Commission.

the petition to the British Commissioner during the 1949 Great March against poor representation.

The petition stated: *“We are imbued with a desire to decide our local affairs our own selves. We have outgrown that undesirable stage where one official, or an official clique, makes decisions for us... We are seeking the privilege of deciding how our monies are spent and what shall be our Presidential laws and policies.”*⁷⁶

Virgin Islanders’ desire for self-determination was further affirmed in the Preamble to the current Virgin Islands Constitution Order 2007⁷⁷; see *Appendix 1 – VI Constitution Preamble*.

1.5.4 Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage

The Preamble to the Virgin Islands Constitution Order 2007 recognises that the people of the Virgin Islands have evolved over centuries with a distinct cultural identity which is the essence of the Virgin Islander. It notes that Virgin Islands society is *“based upon certain moral, spiritual and democratic values”*, that Virgin Islanders have been on a quest for *“social justice, economic empowerment and political advancement”*, that they have a *“free and independent spirit”*, and they have developed themselves and their country *“based on qualities of honesty, integrity, mutual respect, self-reliance and the ownership of the land engendering a strong sense of belonging to and kinship with those Islands.”*⁷⁸

The Virgin Islanders’ traditions and way of life is reflected in their traditional wear, music, dances, food, stories and literary productions, and visual arts. It exists in the camaraderie that is seen among families, how they look out for and help one another, and how they come together to worship and to celebrate the achievements of their sons and daughters. It is also present in the warmth and friendliness of the Virgin Islands people. Virgin Islands culture is also embedded in the monuments, traditional and contemporary architecture, and numerous ruins and wrecks that dot the land and sea scape.

1.5.5 Current Legal Framework

Apart from the current Virgin Islands Constitution Order 2007, there are three pieces of legislation which govern culture and heritage in the Virgin Islands: the Virgin Islands

⁷⁶ Harrigan, N. and Varlack, P. (1975). *The Virgin Islands Story*, Bowker (R.R.) (UK) Ltd. London. ISBN 978-0859350273.

⁷⁷ The Virgin Islands Constitution Order 2007. Statutory Instrument 2007 No. 1678. Government of the Virgin Islands website. Available at: <https://bvi.gov.vg/sites/default/files/constitution.pdf>.

⁷⁸ Ibid

Festival and Fairs Committee Act, the Physical Planning Act, 2004, and the National Parks Trust Act, 2006.

The stakeholders and institutions that constitute the cultural institutional framework are governmental agencies, non-profit organisations and private sector organisations. It will be crucial for these important institutions to work together in a cohesive, integrated manner, guided by policy and strategy.

As an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom (OT), the Virgin Islands has by extension been brought within the ambit of numerous international treaties and conventions to which the UK is a signatory, and which bear relevance to culture and heritage. These include the United Nations Charter, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion and Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and many others. The Government of the Virgin Islands works closely with UNESCO.

Regionally, the Virgin Island is a member of the Organization on American States and an associate member of CARICOM, which have also advanced policies regarding culture and heritage. CARICOM, for instance, has developed the Regional Cultural Policy of the Caribbean Community (RCPCC) which is a guiding framework in the region.

Chapter 2. Policy Scope

“We are imbued with a desire to decide our local affairs our own selves. We have outgrown that undesirable stage where one official, or an official clique, makes decisions for us...

We are seeking the privilege of deciding how our monies are spent and what shall be our Presidential laws and policies”.

Virgin Islands Freedom March Manifesto

24 November, 1949

The Virgin Islands Story

Harrigan and Varlack, 1975, p159

2.1 Policy Scope

The scope of this Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy is broad and diverse by design. It is meant to bridge the gaps and voids that for whatever reasons were not filled over time. In this regard it is meant to also be dynamic in the sense that as it takes life through implementation there is room for it to evolve and adapt in a structured way.

The policy targets the growth and development of the cultural sector, recognising the connection between culture and heritage and all other aspects of development, particularly in a fledgling nation such as the Virgin Islands. Through a holistic approach, the policy aims to create a cultural ecology where our cultural and heritage assets are protected and developed in a sustainable manner, cultural products can be developed and disseminated with ease, and where there are strong, positive relationships among cultural actors, such as artistes, artists, other cultural workers, cultural and art institutions, the heritage sector, agencies and non-governmental organizations, cultural investors, the communities, the Government and parastatal organisations, the economy and Virgin Islanders, Belongers, residents and visitors.

The policy seeks to foster and strengthen cultural confidence among citizens, recognising this as critical to national development, fostering growth of our cultural and creative industries, and building a cohesive society.

It is envisaged that, through this policy, Virgin Islands culture and heritage will have recognition and the relevant considerations will have a place in the formulation and implementation of Government's policies, programmes and overall agenda. The policy will, therefore, also seek to harmonise all the supporting and regulatory apparatus of the state, and ensure that they are aligned with regional and international commitments.

2.2 Policy Statement

The main priority of this Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy is to harmonise and strengthen the cultural environment, through which cultural confidence, the strengthening of national identity, the development of the cultural and creative industries, and the stimulation of social and economic benefits, will be a consequence.

2.3 Guiding Principles

The following principles have guided the development of this policy and will be carried forward in its implementation:

1. **Cohesiveness** – By celebrating the diversity of the people of the Virgin Islands and creative expression, building on values and experiences that we share, we will be able to know each other better, make the Virgin Islands an even more attractive place to live, where all citizens feel a sense of pride and belonging.
2. **Respect** – Virgin Islands culture must be treated with respect by residents and visitors alike.
3. **Inclusion** – All residents of the Virgin Islands, no matter where they live, or what their income, social status or background is must have the opportunity to participate in and experience Virgin Islands culture; and in the Virgin Islands we respect all cultures.
4. **Change** – Culture is not static and with the diversity of persons in the Virgin Islands, it is only natural that cultural exchange will take place and Virgin Islands culture will continue to evolve.
5. **Protection** – All aspects of Virgin Islands cultural heritage must be protected.
6. **Partnership and Collaboration** – The successful development of a thriving cultural community requires a healthy social capital marked by active volunteerism and a strong non-profit sector, solid partnerships and a sharing of responsibility among the Government of the Virgin Islands, the private sector, cultural organizations, other public sector agencies and Virgin Islanders. Through this collaborative approach, positive and powerful commitments can be made and realised.

2.4 Vision & Mission

The vision of this policy is the development of a vibrant cultural ecology that supports the development of the Virgin Islands and the aspirations of its people.

This vision is expressed in the theme, *“Building a Nation, Centring Culture and Heritage.”*

This vision will be achieved through the mission of developing a cohesive, inclusive nation with a strong and dynamic national pride and identity that is built on the solid foundation of cultural heritage, whilst coordinating the cultural institutional framework in order to place culture at the centre of national development.

2.5 Policy Goals & Objectives

The broad goals of this policy are:

1. To raise cultural consciousness among Virgin Islanders, Belongers, residents and visitors to the Virgin Islands.
2. To protect, preserve and develop the cultural and heritage assets of the Virgin Islands.
3. To stimulate cultural production, and support and enable cultural producers.
4. To place culture and heritage at the centre of national development.
5. To provide for the institutional and legislative framework and other resources required for achieving these goals.

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Promote the importance of culture, heritage and cultural confidence to nation building and the development of national identity and pride.
2. Develop, promote and market cultural artists and develop the cultural and creative industries.
3. Preserve, protect and promote and safeguard cultural heritage.
4. Integrate culture and heritage across all sectors in national development planning.
5. Develop physical and cultural administrative and institutional infrastructure to effectively manage cultural and heritage.

Chapter 3. Policy Framework

"Can as much as you can, while you can."

Mr. Elmore Stoutt MBE
Educator
Former Principal (Retired)
of the Elmore Stoutt High School

This Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy sets out specific actions that the Government of the Virgin Islands will pursue through the various Ministries, Departments, Units and Agencies, in the role of an enabler of cultural development. These actions are spread across main focal areas:

1. The Creative and Cultural Industries,
2. Cultural Heritage,
3. Culture, Heritage and National Development Planning,
4. The Administrative and Institutional Framework,
5. The Legal and Institutional Framework, and
6. Implementation and Review.

Of particular note, cultural heritage is considered under the headings of tangible heritage, intangible heritage and museums, for convenience.

Each focal area is treated with through an introduction that presents an overview of the relevant components and a situational analysis that summarises major initiatives undertaken in the past in those areas and the current state of affairs in the respective areas. Against this backdrop, policy statements and strategies are presented to create a roadmap for the aspirational goals, which are informed by the data collection process described in the Methodology section of this document.

3.1 Cultural and Creative Industries

3.1.1 Introduction

The cultural and creative industries contribute to human and sustainable development; through these industries people are able to shape their own development thus strengthening social cohesion while at the same time creating jobs and generating economic wealth. Based on innovation and creativity, these industries include production and dissemination, commercialisation, and focus on the business of the arts. As mentioned before, the cultural domains include the literary arts, the visual arts and craft including multimedia arts, the performing arts, the culinary arts, the traditional arts as well as cultural heritage.

It is important to recognise the creative sector as a special kind of industry, capable of contributing to the economy and to economic diversification. The creative industries are special because they are conduits of cultural identity. Through developing the creative economy, both culture and economy are strengthened. The artist holds a mirror up to society. The artist deals with the inner world, articulating and expressing society's deepest feelings. The arts speak to cultural identity and affirm humanity in a profound way. Through the arts, we express our culture. Through the appropriate integration of cultural policy into national economic planning, foreign trade and investment we not only develop the economy, we develop ourselves. Creativity and innovation are important to every aspect of development.

3.1.2 Current Situation

3.1.2.1 Literary Arts

While there is a tradition of literature in the Virgin Islands, the current focus of writing in the community in recent times is on poetry, children's literature and non-fiction. There is an active poetry group in the Virgin Islands – the Callalou Poets. Through the Department of Culture, there is a vibrant book launch programme. In recent times the “writing with writers” workshop series has been developed by the Department of Culture. It utilises local and international writers in facilitating poetry, poetry performance, publishing, fiction, non-fiction and children's literature workshops. Most importantly, the Virgin Islands' first cabinet approved Poet Laureate was appointed in 2020 – Dr. Richard Georges - an initiative of the Department of Culture. Through the Virgin Islands' Poet Laureate Programme and the collaboration with the H. Laverty Stoutt Community College, the first annual literary festival, the “*BVI LitFest*” was introduced in 2021. By 2022, over 40 writers and speakers from the Virgin Islands, the Caribbean region and the international community were featured in the second literary festival.

Other areas such as the writing of fiction need to be developed. There are limited commercial editing services or commercial publishing companies. Printing locally is

expensive. There is also a greater need to connect literary works with the local and global markets. There is also a great need to document the Virgin Islands' creole, proverbs and stories and safeguard these traditional art forms through bringing them alive, passing the knowledge and the skills onto the younger generation.

3.1.2.2 Visual Arts

The visual arts scene is vibrant with artists who have established legacies as well as young artists who are particularly active in the areas of in the areas of photography, graphic design, film, painting and even innovative artistic work in metal. There is an active film commission attached to the BVI Tourist Board. There are also several businesses which make pottery - The Pottery Garden and Bamboushay Pottery BVI. Workshops have been developed by the Department of Culture in recent times on the topics of connecting younger artists with culture and heritage as well as on the topics of developing artists' statements and developing artists' portfolios. Most recently, the Department of Culture has organised an "*Art is Life*" workshop series, focused on the traditional arts – straw plaiting, pottery making and basket and bottle weaving. In addition, BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission has successfully commissioned local artists and installed signature, artistic signage on a number of islands.

While there is an organization for the visual arts, the Virgin Islands Artists Association, it is not active. It was headed up by Reuben Vanterpool and Desiree Smith, respectively. Younger artists are disconnected from knowledge of culture and heritage. As noted in one of the workshops, artists in general need more opportunities for their products to be displayed, promoted and marketed. They also need training in business development and intellectual property rights. While there are efforts to provide physical infrastructure for performing arts, the artists' calls for studio space needs to be considered as well. Lastly, there is very little documentation of traditional craft such as straw plaiting, basket and bottle weaving, sloop making, and even traditional architecture, among others.

3.1.2.3 Performing Arts

In the performing arts, the field of music is vibrant; almost all forms of diaspora music have been engaged with a developed authentic Virgin Islands' voice. The distinctive sounds of traditional Virgin Islands, fungi music, as well as the upbeat tempo of the younger generations' "*V.I. music*" are alive and well. There was the recent, successful return of the Fungi Fest while V.I. music is showcased annually – in the "*music festival*" that has become a part of the Emancipation Festival. In terms of the theatre arts, there are three groups that are somewhat active. The BVI Drama Society headed by Janice George Harris, and two others directed by Janice Stoutt and newest entry to the theatre arts scene, Via Donovan-Hodge. In terms of cultural dance, the Heritage Dancers is a well-established and active cultural group that has kept traditional dances alive such as the Quadrille, Two Step and

Seven Step. This is led by cultural icon Eileene Parsons, President Varisse Hodge and Choreographer Heather Butcher. There is another cultural group that has been headed by Cecily Malone that has kept the Maypole Dances (Plait) alive. In the recent past, the moko jumbies tradition and group were led by Charlie Turnbull and a recent iteration, BVI Optimum Sky Dancers, is led by Roberto ‘Tico’ Harrigan. In addition, the Department of Culture has re-introduced a forgotten dance from the early 19th century-the camfou/comfoo.

Recently, the Department of Culture introduced a series of workshops on the collection of Virgin Islands’ cultural into the schools entitled “*On Route to our Roots.*” The Department of Culture also partnered with the Heritage Dancers in order to coordinate and organise an event, “*A Cultural Affair – An Evening of Dance.*” The public and private sector came together for this event in order to showcase Virgin Islands’ cultural dances, along with the Bamboula Cultural Group from the neighbouring islands of St. Thomas and St. Croix in the United States Virgin Islands.

The Department of Culture has, through its cultural programming for national events, consistently drawn upon and created spaces for cultural performances. These include the H. L. Stoutt Commemorative Celebrations, the former Territory Day celebrations, the opening and closing ceremonies for the Queen’s Baton Relay, the opening ceremonies and Emancipation Services for the Emancipation Festival, and, of course, Culture and Tourism Month events and activities.

While our musicians are highlighted during the Emancipation Festival, greater emphasis on their development, promotion and marketing throughout the year is needed to the ultimate goal which is that they can become the main features in events such as what is now the Emancipation Festival’s music festival. Greater programming, development, promotion and marketing would also be of benefit to the cultural dances. In particular, there is perhaps the greatest need among the theatre groups for programming, development, promotion and marketing. There is little documentation of these traditional performance arts, and of the cultural groups which have kept these traditions alive.

3.1.2.4 Culinary Arts

The BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission carries out a successful organisation of the Anegada Lobster Fest and the Food Fete events are carried out with creativity and professionalism. Activities are planned abroad as well as on different islands. In addition, there is a cultural village as well as a cultural food fair which are signature events of the Emancipation Festival. The cultural food fair is also a signature event of Culture and Tourism Month. There is also an award-winning culinary team at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.

There is a disconnect between the BVI Tourist Board’s events and the “vendors” who take part in the cultural village and cultural food fair. While the former are presented with creative, modern elements and elegant presentations, the same is frequently not the case

for the latter. In addition, Virgin Islands traditional cuisine, “*local food*”, is not readily available in restaurants.

3.1.2.5 Emancipation Festival

The Emancipation Festival is seen as the grandest cultural event in the Virgin Islands. Yet, the focus and prioritisation has trended away from authentic Virgin Islands culture or the significance of Emancipation to contemporary Virgin Islands experience. For example, in the past the committee has scheduled a “*Culture Night*” as opposed to seeing Virgin Islands culture as necessary to the entirety of Festival. This outlook means that priority of budgeting, time, and energy is focused on international acts.

An examination of the Virgin Islands Festival and Fairs Committee Act which governs the Virgin Islands Festival and Fairs Committee (VIFFC) reveals that the functions of the VIFFC include initiating “*cultural and recreational activities through annual festivals and entertainment activities.*”⁷⁹ The functions of the VIFFC also include “*generating funds in order to provide financial support to any organisation that is engaged in social, cultural or charitable activities.*”⁸⁰

Yet, the VIFFC is funded, for the greater part, by the Government of the Virgin Islands. In addition to this, rather than fundraising for local organisations as the Act requires, a significant portion of the budget is spent on the visiting musical acts and the staging. Furthermore, the Committee has a history of overspending its budget. The largest standing expenses are the rental of the staging for the Festival Village, the sound technician fees, and security. Alternatives must be explored in all three areas as there is a sense that the Committee may not be getting value for money in all cases. The reliance on visiting performers must also be addressed.

3.1.2.6 Need for Cultural Authenticity

The detrimental impact of the current approach of the VIFFC on Virgin Islands culture can be seen in two recent examples. Despite the legislation governing the VIFFC, it funded an International Soca Night while at the same time declining to fund a local Soca Monarch Competition. The VIFFC also rejected the funding request for the Fungi Fest which was organised by the Virgin Islands Studies Institute at HLSCC in recent times and further declined to place the Fungi Fest on its schedule of activities for the Emancipation Festival.

The Emancipation Festival is the ideal opportunity to ensure that the historical and cultural significance of emancipation is recognised in ways that are authentic to the lived Virgin

⁷⁹ Virgin Islands Festival and Fairs Committee Act

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Islands culture. A refocusing of Festival's purpose and the calibrating the Committee's mission more firmly on a celebration of local culture must be done. Local culture must infuse the celebrations and not be relegated to a single night. There must be a more dynamic approach to the festival that includes the literary arts, the visual arts and craft including multimedia arts, the performing arts, the culinary arts as well as cultural heritage. This can be done by ensuring that every night in the village contains a culturally relevant performance or display.

The makeup of the committee has generally not included cultural practitioners in the fields of the literary arts, the visual arts and craft including multimedia arts, the performing arts, the culinary arts as well as well as heritage practitioners and historians and even academics. Such practitioners should be appointed to the next Festival and Fairs Committee. Their input and expertise can be used to lead to greater creative development of the cultural and historical dimension of Festival. This will help improve the cultural focus of the Emancipation Festival calendar and will ensure that the cultural expressions of the Territory are at the centre of the festivities.

3.1.2.7 Spirit of Emancipation Missing

Perhaps the most important point here is the need for the authentic story of Emancipation and its related history to be celebrated and showcased. The events, heroes, and relevance to modern times should all be showcased. This is, and will always be, one of the most profound "moments" in the life of the Virgin Islands, and can never be forgotten. Yet, the meaning, significance and story of Emancipation does not permeate the very essence of the Festival which was organised to showcase it. Relevant events are limited to Emancipation Services and the Freedom March.

In fact, the first "celebration" occurred on the 1st of August, 1834 in our Methodist Churches – the church of our ancestors. The "Proclamation" was read there. The date of this profound, momentous, life changing event is the reason that we have an Emancipation Festival. In addition, it is very well documented that the Methodist and Anglican Churches were organisers of emancipation celebrations in the mid-20th century. Yet the VIFFC recently refused a funding request from the Organisation and Education Committee of the Long Look Methodist Church which was organising the Long Look Methodist Church's Emancipation Service on a national scale to accommodate all Methodist congregations. The VIFFC also declined to place this Emancipation Service on its schedule of activities.

Overall, there needs to be a recalibration of Emancipation Festival to focus on authentic Virgin Islands culture and the authentic story of Emancipation and its relevant history – still relevant to modern times. In addition, the Emancipation Festival needs much more private sector support. Ideally, there should be a close working relationship between the VIFFC and the BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission in terms of marketing.

3.1.3 Policy Statements & Strategies

Policy Statement 3-1-1

The Government of the Virgin Islands will facilitate the development of technical, entrepreneurial and business skills of artists in society.

Strategies

- i. Facilitate training and development opportunities for artists in entrepreneurial, business development, technical and skills areas including workshops, residencies, online avenues, and scholarships, including online avenues
- ii. Encourage and support the formation of a group or organisation that is representative of artists
- iii. Develop cultural industry mentorship programmes
- iv. Develop certification processes
- v. Develop the framework to facilitate high standards and quality
- vi. Develop programmes in order to recognise innovation
- vii. Develop relevant competitions
- viii. Facilitate artists' access to information, market trends, technology, markets
- ix. Develop and promote the status of the artists including freedom of cultural expression, positioning the artists as seer and innovator
- x. Create a database of all cultural practitioners operating locally and abroad. Engage with this community through social media, mailing lists, and strategic personal contact with the purpose of facilitating training and development of their particular crafts and to create a pool from which commissions for future cultural projects can be drawn

Policy Statement 3-1-2

The Government of the Virgin Islands will review the activities of the Virgin Islands Festival and Fairs Committee, ensuring that the activities are focused on authentic Virgin Islands' culture and the story of Emancipation and its related history.

Strategies

- i. Review all activities of the VIFFC in order to ensure alignment with legislation to generate funds in order to provide financial support to any organisation that is engaged in social, cultural or charitable activities as well as with a focus on heritage and culture
- ii. Facilitate a close working relationship with the VIFFC, Department of Culture, BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission in order to market all festivals including literary festivals, Anegada Lobster festivals, Easter festival, Emancipation festival
- iii. Recalibrate the membership of the VIFFC in order to include dance, music, visual arts, multimedia and film, performing arts, literature, and culinary arts as well as heritage practitioners and historians and even academics
- iv. Renew a focus of the Emancipation Festival with a focus and centring on Virgin Islands culture and heritage
- v. Research all heritage aspects of Emancipation Festival in order to ensure accuracy, origin, meaning, and authenticity

Policy Statement 3-1-3

The Government of the Virgin Islands will develop and establish legislation which protects the intellectual property rights of the artists in society.

Strategies

- i. Ratify the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)
- ii. Develop Intellectual property and copyright, industrial designs and trademark legislation
- iii. Develop legislation that would require radio stations, hotels, guest houses and restaurants and other entities to play, display or programme a certain percentage of art (visual, literary, performance), quotas, produced by local artists

Policy Statement 3-1-4

The Government of the Virgin Islands will ensure that artists are promoted and marketed in the local, regional and global marketplace.

Strategies

- i. Collaborate with the BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission to develop authentic cultural experiences that can be included in offerings to both air and cruise visitors
- ii. Coordinate marketing activity with BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission and stakeholders to ensure that all national festivals and major events include participation from all cultural sub sectors
- iii. Facilitate small business creation, design and production, distribution, exhibition and marketing of cultural products in local regional and global marketplace; heighten public awareness and appreciation of contributions artists make to society
- iv. Establish linkages with galleries, book publishers, event organisers in order to facilitate programming
- v. Ensure that subsectors to work in film production- fashion performing arts music beauticians, sound technicians
- vi. Utilise social media and website technologies to increase promotion and marketing
- vii. Designate create and outfit public spaces for artistic and cultural display and expression opportunities to publicly showcase forms of artistic expressions especially in high traffic areas throughout the Island and in common areas of the private sector
- viii. Ensure that local artists and community groups to perform at civic events
- ix. Ensure that radio stations and shows have content requirements
- x. Heighten public awareness and appreciation of contributions artists make to society

Policy Statement 3-1-5

The Government of the Virgin Islands will facilitate investment in the creative industries, including measures to ensure the growth of these industries.

Strategies

- i. Promote concessions and incentives to ensure private sector sponsorship and investment in the development of cultural industries and local artists
- ii. Establish an endowment fund
- iii. Establish criteria for financial resources for artists; challenges in loan financing development funding venture capital from traditional banking and investment sectors
- iv. Facilitate the formation of a committee that sets criteria for the distribution of grants, and distributes grants, to artists
- v. Address discrimination in fees paid to foreign and local artists
- vi. Reduce competition from imports
- vii. Provide relief on import duties for required resources
- viii. Carry out bulk purchasing for required resources
- ix. Develop export records
- x. Facilitate commercial printing facilities and bulk purchasing

Policy Statement 3-1-6

The Government of the Virgin Islands will prioritise the development of the physical infrastructure which is necessary and essential for the development of culture in the Virgin Islands.

Strategies

- i. Develop appropriate physical infrastructure which includes a performance arts centre and national art gallery in which to celebrate and elevate the work of local artists
- ii. Liaise with a National Library in order to ensure space to showcase literary works

3.2 Cultural Heritage

3.2.1 Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage refers to the cultural practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills that are passed down through generations. The categories are oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, traditional craftsmanship, and the cultural sites/sites of memory associated with this cultural heritage.⁸¹ The concept of tangible cultural heritage refers to the physical evidence of a people's past that is considered so significant that it must be preserved for the future, and for future generations. Tangible cultural heritage encompasses historic places, historic sites, historic buildings and structures, historic districts, museums, cultural landscapes, monuments, burial grounds, shipwrecks, maritime and underwater archaeology, and artefacts/cultural objects.

Intangible and tangible cultural heritage provides communities with a sense of identity and continuity. They encompass the collective memory of the life of a people, including everything that has led to the present moment, and hold and provide the roots of a people's culture. Intangible cultural heritage is, in fact, only safeguarded when it is transmitted to younger generations. It encompasses the socio-cultural practices, traditions, and values that a society has inherited. Tangible cultural heritage, spaces of historical and community significance, provide a sense of place. It is the physical evidence of the past that provides meaning to a location.

3.2.2 Current Situation - Intangible Heritage

In recent times, the Department of Culture has completed a few initiatives regarding the oral tradition and oral history. The Department produced a documentary, *"Centenarians of the Virgin Islands"*, as well as a documentary series which highlighted the museum curators in the Virgin Islands as storytellers entitled, *"The Power of Museums: Revealing the Stories behind the Artefacts"*.

The traditional cultural way of life and related activities have been documented in recent times using a variety of writing styles by a collection of authors including Jennie Wheatley, Verna Penn Moll, Reuben Vanterpool, Shirley Walters Faulkner, Andria Smith, Ethlyn Rhymer, and most recently Marilyn Bass, among other authors. There have also been disparate oral history projects such as *"Straight from Us"*, a project carried out by the then named BVI High School. *"Boho put in gol' teet,"* a collection of Virgin Islands' *"old time*

⁸¹ UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage (2003).

sayings” and proverbial expressions was also another project completed by the then names BVI High School. In very recent times, Caribbean Insurers Ltd. and Dean “Sportsman” Greenaway” collaborated on the 50th Anniversary Christmas Reflections Feature Series. Well-known figure and respected elder in the community, Dr. Charles Wheatley, authors a commentary on the current socio-political and cultural climate in the Virgin Islands in a news column, the “Wheatake” series, on a popular online news site.

The Government of the Virgin Islands established a local committee for the Memory of the World programme in 2015 – a programme aimed at preserving and making accessible documentary heritage. The Memory of the World Committee was administered by the BVI National Commission for UNESCO and prepared a significant application to name St. Philip’s Anglican Church as a UNESCO site of memory on the memory of the World international register. In addition, recently before the “COVID era,” the Department of Culture collaborated with the BVI National Commission for UNESCO and the Commission subsequently submitted a request for technical assistance from UNESCO in establishing an intangible heritage sites programme.

The Virgin Islands has not yet developed a formal intangible heritage programme. The development of an oral history programme is related to this programme. While there are disparate oral history narratives, a comprehensive oral history programme has not been established in the Virgin Islands. This results in the privileging of a few select voices and, although valuable, for this reason the narrative is not fully developed or informed.

3.2.2.1 Policy Statements & Strategies

Policy Statement 3-2-1

The Government of the Virgin Islands will develop an intangible heritage programme, ensuring that the cultural traditions of the Virgin Islands are preserved and transmitted to the younger generation.

Strategies

- i. Establish a committee in order to develop inventories of the intangible cultural heritage, ensuring regular updating and providing capacity-building activities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage
- ii. Ensure the recognition of, and respect for, the intangible cultural heritage in society, in particular through educational and non-formal means of transmitting knowledge, awareness-raising and information programmes, aimed at the general public
- iii. Ensure specific educational and training programmes for young people
- iv. Ensure access to the intangible cultural heritage
- v. Foster the transmission of such heritage through forums and spaces intended for the performance or expressions
- vi. Promote education for the protection of natural spaces and places of memory which are necessary for expressing the intangible cultural heritage
- vii. Develop a partnership with the Virgin Islands Studies Institute at HLSCC in order to research heritage for cultural production

Policy Statement 3-2-2

The Government of the Virgin Islands will establish a major, comprehensive oral history programme, capturing the voices of the elders thereby strengthening knowledge of the cultural heritage of the Virgin Islands.

Strategies

- i. Establish best practices regarding effective methodologies and technological ways for collecting oral histories
- ii. Provide for the transcription, categorisation and storage of oral histories

- iii. Provide access to oral histories
- iv. Bring together previous disparate oral histories in one location
- v. Develop programmes to connect the youth with elders
- vi. Develop educational programmes based on the oral histories
- vii. Develop programmes to highlight, raise awareness and appreciation of oral histories
- viii. Encourage the dissemination of oral histories via print and electronic media

Policy Statement 3-2-3

The Government of the Virgin Islands will research and document the Virgin Islands creole language, dialect, folktales, stories and art of story-telling, encouraging their integration into modern life and recognising that language is a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage.

Strategies

- i. Support and encourage research into the Virgin Islands creole and dialect, including the commissioning of a linguist to conduct research on Virgin Islands' creole language and dialect
- ii. Document, record and preserve Virgin Islands folktales, stories, proverbs, nursery rhymes such as the plethora of jumbie stories
- iii. Establish education programmes to teach the Virgin Islands creole language, dialect, folktales, stories and the art of storytelling
- iv. Establish public programmes to highlight, raise awareness and appreciation of Virgin Islands creole language, dialect, folktales and stories
- v. Promote and recognise the efforts of tradition-bearers engaged in keeping the oral tradition alive including storytellers, calypsonians, spoken word artists, and other nontraditional teachers
- vi. Facilitate performance or expression of Virgin Islands creole language, dialect, folktales, stories, and storytelling

Policy Statement 3-2-4

The Government of the Virgin Islands will research and document the tradition of performing arts, ensuring that these traditional arts are well known and documented.

Strategies

- i. Research and document the traditional music of the Virgin Islands, fungi music, along with the musicians and bands. This will include the arrival of Calypso, Steel Pan, Reggae and Spanish Caribbean music to the Virgin Islands and the musicians who added an authentic Virgin Islands' voice to these music forms
- ii. Research and document the establishment and development of Virgin Islands' cultural dances such as the moko jumbie traditions and groups, the Maypole Dance (plait) traditions and groups as well as the Quadrille, Two Step, and Seven Step of the Heritage Dancers, along with the Heritage Dancers as a group
- iii. Research and document the etymology, origin and related history of the camfou/comfoo dance of the Virgin Islands
- iv. Research and document all aspects of traditions of Emancipation festival which includes performative components
- v. Establish educational programmes to teach all aspects of traditional performance arts in the Virgin Islands
- vi. Highlight and develop public programmes to raise awareness and appreciation of these traditional performance art forms
- vii. Facilitate performance or expression of these traditional performance art forms.

Policy Statement 3-2-5

The Government of the Virgin Islands will research and document social practices, rituals, and festive events, ensuring that the significance of these is well-established in society.

Strategies

- i. Research and document the traditional value system of the Virgin Islands and codes of behavior such as a deep-rooted sense of community based on the principle of the village raising the child, family values, respect for elders, the primacy of good manners, customary and respectful greetings, living within means, high standards,

industrious work ethic, respect for the law, orderliness, civility, hospitality, honesty, integrity, respectability, respectfulness, independence, intelligence and frankness

- ii. Research and document Virgin Islands' traditions such as Christmas traditions, church weddings, funerals and wakes, childbirth, courtship, Harvest time, and activities and events such as picnics, boat races, moonlit nights, bonfire nights, and blowing of the conch shell
- iii. Research and document traditional foods, food culture and preparation methods
- iv. Research and document the historic role of the churches in Virgin Islands' socio-cultural development, acknowledging the religious diversity which exists presently in the Virgin Islands
- v. Research and document the Afrikan Studies Klub annual wreath-laying tradition and ceremony
- vi. Research and document traditional games such as rolling hoops, flying kites, spinning tops shooting marbles, swimming and log boat sailing, chucking cherry nuts, moonlight night games, rounders, playing with jacks, catching birds using a "killiwan", and catching crabs or "sherrygoes," among other games
- vii. Facilitate performance or expression of these traditions.

Policy Statement 3-2-6

The Government of the Virgin Islands will document knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, acknowledging the value of these to modern life.

Strategies

- i. Research and document the great legacy of land-owning and how it impacted the character of the Virgin Islander
- ii. Research and document traditional knowledge of indigenous and adapted flora and fauna, local names, and cultural uses
- iii. Research and document knowledge and use of herbal and medicinal plants and herbal teas
- iv. Research and document traditional recycling practices
- v. Research and document agricultural practices and fishing practices during an era of self sufficiency

- vi. Research and document natural or alternative health practices such as midwifery and bone-setting
- vii. Support the continuation and development of maritime skills and traditions
- viii. Facilitate the continuation and existence of these practices

Policy Statement 3-2-7

The Government of the Virgin Islands will document the traditional visual arts and craftsmanship, ensuring that these underpin the visual identity of the Virgin Islands.

Strategies

- i. Research and document the traditional arts and craft such as traditional architecture, sloop making, basket and bottle weaving, pottery, straw plaiting
- ii. Encourage the training of artisans in the skills necessary to preserve, restore, and recreate traditional Virgin Islands arts and craft
- iii. Establish educational programmes in the arts and craft
- iv. Highlight and develop public programmes in order to raise awareness and appreciation
- v. Facilitate performance or expression of these art forms

Policy Statement 3-2-8

The Government of the Virgin Islands will develop and implement legislation to document, safeguard, preserve and ensure the education, practice and continuation of the intangible cultural heritage of the Virgin Islands.

Strategies

- i. Ratify the UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage (2003), and develop relevant legislation

3.2.3 Tangible Heritage

3.2.3.1 Current Situation - Historical Sites

The Virgin Islands has a very rich, powerful and unique history, and this is paralleled by its tangible heritage. This tangible heritage can be found throughout all the islands. For example, while there are tangible locations which showcase the two historic free villages on Tortola, Long Look and Kingstown - so unique during the period of enslavement – as well as the plantation ruins of William Thornton, designer of the Capitol Building in Washington D.C., there are also the plantation ruins of John Coakley Lettsome, founder of the London Medical Society on Little Jost Van Dyke. The traditional architecture that is so apparent during a walk along “Old Main Street” can also be seen in its own unique way during a walk through The Settlement on Anegada. The potential of maritime heritage and underwater archaeology that arises from the fascinating shipwreck stories of Anegada is realised by the popularised dive site near Salt Island, the Wreck of the Rhone. The related burial ground as well as the Salt Islands’ inhabitant’s burial grounds on Salt Island is as equally fascinating as the African Burial Ground at the St. Philip’s Anglican Church ruins.

The Virgin Islands is bursting with untold stories, and there is no shortage of heroic stories. There have been rebellions and a revolutionary conspiracy that rivaled the Haitian Revolution, the burning of Road Town, a Positive Action Movement. The Department of Culture in recent times created and produced a video series entitled “*From Perreen Georges to Noel Lloyd: Heroes and Freedom Fighters*” which chronicled significant moments in Virgin Islands history, the movement for social justice, along with the heroes and freedom fighters of the times. It also included the places of historical significance. The Department of Culture has also, in recent times, highlighted the two historic free villages (Long Look and Kingstown) via video productions.

Several initiatives have been carried out over the years regarding the tangible heritage of the Virgin Islands. A collaborative effort between the Town and Country Planning Department, the Virgin Islands Studies Institute at HLSCC, the BVI National Parks Trust, the Conservation and Fisheries Department, the Rotary Club of Tortola, and the National Geographic Information Systems Committee resulted in a very thorough document entitled “Survey of Historical Sites for the British Virgin Islands.”

The then named Virgin Islands Studies Programme (later to be the Virgin Islands Studies Institute) at HLSCC produced in 2000, the UNESCO-WTO Joint Caribbean Programme of Cultural Tourism on the Slave Route Project for the British Virgin Islands. The programme of cultural tourism on the slave route project was a dimension of the overall UNESCO Slave Route Project that was launched in September 1994. In this document, the Virgin Islands Studies Programme produced a list of eleven historical sites relevant to the transatlantic slave trade – to be established as tourism products. Fifteen years later, in 2015, the BVI National Commission for UNESCO facilitated representation from the then named Virgin Islands Studies Institute at the UNESCO Regional Conference “*Beyond Reparations: Strengthening the Slave Route Project in the Caribbean Sub-region.*”

There have also been initiatives regarding disaster preparedness and tangible heritage. As a part of the Virgin Islands Climate Change Adaptation Policy and Implementation Plan, the Department of Disaster Management has in very recent times completed a hazard risk mapping for historical and cultural sites that are at risk to seismic activity, sea level rise, storm surge, and flooding. In 2020, the Department of Culture along with the Deputy Governor's Office was represented at a UNESCO-CDEMA (Caribbean Disaster Emergency management Agency) Sub-Regional Workshop and were able to report on the state of disaster preparedness in the tangible heritage sector and the impact of the 2017 flooding and hurricanes on the sector.

Despite these initiatives, there has been limited development of the tangible heritage sector in the Virgin Islands. One major issue is that there is no central entity to direct or manage tangible heritage, the stakeholders, or the overarching vision of the Virgin Islands. In addition, enforcement of the limited existing legislation is not carried out. These factors have resulted in the great loss of heritage assets in the community. Responsibility for the management and maintenance for historical and heritage sites appears to be spread across various Government departments, statutory bodies, and private stakeholders on a case by case basis. This lack of acknowledgment that it ought to be viewed as intrinsically important within itself, with its own identity and home, can be argued to be one of the reasons for the lack of progress in providing critical protections and enforcement.

Although the Virgin Islands National Parks Trust Act, 2006 (NPT Act) and the Physical Planning Act, 2004 (PP Act) address the conservation and restoration aspects regarding historical sites, they do not address their management or "treatment." In their administration of sites, National Parks focuses on landscaping, buildings, places, structures, equipment, and furniture while Town and Country Planning focuses on buildings and locating sites. The greater part of these acts is concerned with their central duties – natural history and environmental protection on one hand and regulating the development of the physical (built) environment on the other. There is very little mention of culturally protected objects, artefacts, in the NPT and PP Acts.

Although the NPT Act can facilitate declaration as Historic Site, and "*promote and assist with their conservation and restoration,*" only when the Act references cooperative agreements with public authorities, non-governmental organisations, and others does it grant the authority for National Parks to assist with 'research, maintenance, interpret, display, manage, [and] storage.'⁸² Although the PP Act provides for the generation of a list of sites for protection and conservation and can even issue an "*interim preservation order*", the Historical Sites Register is incomplete, and privileges Road Town.

⁸² Virgin Islands National Parks Trust Act, 2006

3.2.3.2 Policy Statements and Strategies

Policy Statement 3-2-9

The Government of the Virgin Islands will place the responsibility for tangible heritage under the Department of Culture which will be appropriately restructured to legally and materially be responsible for tangible heritage in the Virgin Islands, working as the coordinating body with all stakeholders.

Strategies

- i. Function as the coordinating body for the development, maintenance, restoration, preservation and conservation of historic places
- ii. Develop and implement relevant policies
- iii. Review the existing legislation and develop and ensure the enforcement of relevant legislation
- iv. Protect the maritime heritage and underwater archaeology of the Virgin Islands through education, legislative support and historical research
- v. Ratify the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) and develop relevant legislation
- vi. Provide guidelines for the restoration of heritage sites
- vii. Investigate opportunities for mandating archaeological best practices
- viii. Research, survey and record data on historic properties
- ix. Interpret historical design and significance
- x. Develop historic structure reports
- xi. Develop conservation plans
- xii. Ensure the accuracy of the way the history is interpreted throughout the territory through developments, training and tours of all kinds
- xiii. Provide and monitor licensing and certification for tour operators and other tourism officials
- xiv. Carry out tangible heritage outreach and education efforts by encouraging the production of collateral material such as educational websites, apps, and pamphlets archaeologically significant sites
- xv. Ensure that the Historical Register is updated and completed
- xvi. Develop a World Heritage Sites Programme

- xvii. Develop a National Heritage Sites Programme,
- xviii. Develop heritage trails

Policy Statement 3-2-10

The Government of the Virgin Islands will develop the Programme of Cultural Tourism on the Slave Route Project, carrying out the recommended initiatives and activities.

Strategies

- i. Compile a List of monuments and sites for the purpose of cultural tourism that are significant as a group to tell the story of the memories and the contemporary living expressions of the Virgin Islands' people resulting from the impact on the nation of the transatlantic slave trade
- ii. Select one of the following categories to designate the monument or site as a "cultural landscape" in keeping with the definition by the world heritage committee – place of burial, place of refuge, place of confinement, place of dwelling, place of education, place of maroonage, place of production, place of refuge, place of resistance, place of worship, port of entry/departure, underwater place
- iii. Identify and define related local objects and traditions practised historically such as museums which attempt to convey the "slave route project" experience in an authentic manner and oral and artistic expressions, other manifestations
- iv. Justify each monument and site as being of significance giving historical date with the dates and period of importance as a "slave route project"
- v. Nominate, if desired, any monument or site from the national listing that you believe should be given regional listing, using the Caribbean listing transatlantic slave trade (TST) cultural tourism monuments and sites nomination form
- vi. Complete each survey form and attach the extra justification page and a location map for all sites

Policy Statement 3-2-11

The Government of the Virgin Islands will liaise with the private sector in order to facilitate greater public/private partnerships and encourage the private sector to support heritage initiatives

Strategies

- i. Facilitate public/private partnerships, developing corporate partnerships
- ii. Provide incentives to the private sector to restore and develop heritage sites
- iii. Engage in fundraising and sponsorship activities seeking grants and donors locally, regionally and internationally

3.2.4 Current Situation - Museums

The strength of the museum sector has been the foresight and the initiative of the Government of the Virgin Islands and its statutory bodies to establish significant museums. In addition, innovation and creativity in the private sector has resulted in the establishment of three significant private museums. The five government-related museums on Tortola are Old Government House Museum, Her Majesty's Prison Museum, the Lower Estate Sugar Works Museum, the Virgin Islands Maritime Museum, the North Sound Sub Post Office Museum on Virgin Gorda, and the Theodolph Faulkner House Museum on Anegada. There are three private museums- Genesis Studios and Herb and Fruit Garden, the North Shore Shell Museum, and the Long Look "Pop-Up" Museum . In addition, over the years the Department of Culture has facilitated a significant archaeological digs which have resulted in the development of a number of collections - the Brewer's Bay Archaeological Collection and the John Chenoweth Archaeological Collection. There is also the H. Lavity Stoutt Memorial Collection, developed by the H.L Stoutt Community College.

As a result of these initiatives over the years, the museum sector is in a position where every type of museum is represented in the Virgin Islands. Types of museums include history museums, art museums, natural history museums, and historic houses. History museums include Her Majesty's Prison Museum, the Virgin Islands Maritime Museum, and the Lower Estate Sugar Works Museum. Art museums include Genesis Studios. Natural history museums include the North Shore Shell Museum. Historic houses include the Theodolph Faulker House Museum and Old Government House Museum. There even botanical gardens which are connected to a few of these museums. These are the Old Government House Botanic Gardens and Genesis Studios Herb and Fruit Garden.

The Department of Culture has had a longstanding programme, through its International Museum Day activities, which has highlighted the museums. Recently, the Department of Culture has highlighted the museums through a series of video productions for International Museum Day activities. It has also developed a series of virtual museums. In addition, the Department of Culture has developed and carried out a series of technical workshops for the museum sector on such topics as writing mission statements, developing collections policies, caring for artefacts, and introducing a decolonising paradigm into the museums.

The conservation of historic places is governed by well-established principles and standards, producing conservation plans and historic structure reports. Well thought out collections management policies and practices are some of the most effective tools museums use to ensure continuous collections care and also to ensure that their obligation to the public trust is upheld. Key concepts including interpretation and design are used to effectively deliver an exhibition's story, whether it be permanent or temporary. Museums in the Virgin Islands did not develop these policies and procedures when they were being established. In too many cases, the artefacts have been disconnected from documentation and are now undocumented items. Ownership title is unclear, and issues of provenance

(history of ownership) need to be researched. Certainly, adherence to proper collections care has not been maintained. The museums had never developed revenue streams.

One of the major issues is the fragmented and disparate way in which the museums are managed which has contributed to uneven development. While the Old Government House Museum is governed by the board of governors associated with the Governor's Office, the Virgin Islands Maritime Museum is governed by the H. Lavity Stoutt Community's board of governors. Her Majesty's Prison Museum is managed by the City Manager's Office while the Long Look "Pop-Up" Museum is managed by the Long Look Heritage Society. Both the North Sound Sub Post Office Museum and the Theodolph Faulkner House Museum are managed by the BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission while the Lower Estate Sugar Works Museum is managed by the Department of Culture.

In addition, there is no legislation regarding museums, or the creation of a National Museum. As stated previously, in terms of artefacts, there is very little provided for in these NPT and PP Acts. Artefacts often form museum collections. In fact, an alternative reference to the term "*artefacts*" might be "*protected cultural objects – movable items which are a reflection and expression of continuously evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions, and can certainly provide a frame of reference for future generations.*"

3.2.4.1 Policy Statements & Strategies

Policy Statement 3-2-12

The Government of the Virgin Islands will place the responsibility for museums under the Department of Culture which will be appropriately restructured to legally and materially be responsible for museums in the Virgin Islands, working as the coordinating body with all stakeholders.

Strategies

- i. Develop and implement the museum policies to chart a clear way forward for the development of the museum sector
- ii. Develop and implement a National Museums Act
- iii. Ratify the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Heritage (2001) and the UNESCO Convention for the Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Cultural Property (1970), and develop relevant legislation
- iv. Develop a comprehensive, integrated development would consider a National Museum as well as the thematic museums which have been developed in the Virgin Islands
- v. Ensure that there is a central secure facility where cultural objects or artefacts can be recorded/registered and also deposited immediately upon discovery
- vi. Develop clear, concise mission statements for each museum
- vii. Develop collections management policies for each museum in collaboration with the museum sector. These include the core policies of documentation, appraisals, acquisition, accession, loans, deaccession, access and use, and collections care are augmented by ethics policies, and collecting plans which are framed by the mission and scope of collections
- viii. Develop, and implement standards, manuals and procedural documents
- ix. Develop exhibitions, utilising the appropriate content development, pedagogy, visual design, project management and exhibition installment skills

Policy Statement 3-2-13

The Government of the Virgin Islands will take measures to facilitate and encourage greater revenue streams for museums in the Virgin Islands.

Strategies

- i. Review admission fees, memberships, sponsorships, pursue grants, endowments, donations
- ii. Develop Initiatives for earned revenue through merchandising e.g. museum store. Through this avenue the museum can begin to position itself within the market, and find its strong niche
- iii. Initiate donor campaigns. Once websites are established, they should be used in addition to other methods in order to receive donations. The websites should be looked at through the eyes of a donor in terms of narrative, credibility, trustworthiness
- iv. Ensure that the museums publish their financial reports annually. These reports can be posted to the websites.

Policy Statement 3-2-14

The Government of the Virgin Islands will take measures to facilitate more effective marketing of museums in the Virgin Islands.

Strategies

- i. Ensure greater organization and effort is needed to market the museum sector and its services in order to increase the museums' visitors
- ii. Approach greater marketing strategy through the use of "branding." For example, "branding" or the establishment of a distinct identity, can begin with a logo
- iii. Produce up to date printed materials including brochures and pamphlets
- iv. Utilise web technologies including website and social ensuring that consistent style, design, and content should be maintained in the use of all web technologies.

- v. Upload you tube videos onto the museums' websites. In addition, Facebook and Twitter accounts can be added, and logos posted on the website. Facebook and Twitter are great places to promote the websites and museums
- vi. Utilise an email campaign and e-newsletters would be particularly useful. Once an email list is built, this is an efficient way to convey information which can also be personalised.
- vii. Include a virtual museum is essential to the increase of visitors to the museums
- viii. Ensure that In addition to the presence of adequate web technologies and software, the museums are also well prepared in terms of their technological infrastructure

Policy Statement 3-2-15

The Government of the Virgin Islands will take measures to develop the permanent and temporary exhibitions of museums in the Virgin Islands

Strategies

- i. Re-design, expand, re-interpret and label the permanent exhibitions properly, expanding, while incorporating modern technology
- ii. Identify human resources who can work together in the museums on content development, utilising learning styles, visual design, project management and exhibition installment skills
- iii. Plan special exhibitions and events, featuring exciting, temporary exhibitions can be featured from time to time

3.3 Culture, Heritage & National Development Planning

3.3.1 Introduction

In order to develop holistically and integrate culture and heritage into the fabric of daily life, it is important to understand that the social institutions are an important component of socio-cultural life. It is as critical to integrate culture and heritage into economic development as it is to collaborate with the media and the education sector in this endeavor. It is also important to integrate the voice of the youth and elders while re-examining the roles of families, sports, traditional health practices as well as traditional, sustainable and environmental practices in socio-cultural and national development.

3.3.2 Current Situation

As has been demonstrated, responsibilities regarding culture and heritage are spread across a number of stakeholders. There is no coherent policy and strategy framework which is able to work efficiently with, and engage, stakeholders.

In order to ensure the development of a coherent philosophy regarding the integration of culture and heritage across sectors, it will be necessary to facilitate the coordination of policy and strategy. It will be necessary to integrate culture and heritage into relevant policies, establish formal working relationships, programmes, and memoranda of understanding where necessary. This integration of culture and heritage into national development planning does not only refer to economic development planning. As such, relationships will not only be developed between the Department of Culture and the Department of Trade and BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission but also with the media, education, youth, sports, social development, health and environmental sectors. It is very important to emphasise that this development must take place evenly across the sister islands.

3.3.3 Policy Statements & Strategies

Policy Statement 3-3-1

The Government of the Virgin Islands will develop and promote national pride and identity whilst ensuring respect for diversity, inclusiveness, and integration by increasing public awareness, appreciation and knowledge of national symbols, monuments, and commemorative events, developing new initiatives.

Strategies

- i. Increase public awareness, appreciation, and awareness of national commemorative days/public holidays
- ii. Develop a national heroes programme and ensure public awareness, appreciation and knowledge of the programme
- iii. Develop new initiatives regarding monuments and increase public awareness, appreciation, and knowledge regarding existing
- iv. Increase public awareness, appreciation, and knowledge of the Virgin Islands Poet Laureate Programme
- v. Develop programmes regarding community heroes and increase public awareness, appreciation and knowledge regarding the naming of islands, areas, buildings and roads
- vi. Increase public awareness, appreciation, and knowledge of the national, food, tree, flower, and bird
- vii. Increase public awareness, appreciation, and knowledge of the territorial song, pledge, and gift
- viii. Develop cultural programmes which celebrate cultural diversity and promote mutual understanding
- ix. Develop relevant integration programmes in collaboration with the Immigration Department
- x. Develop cultural and heritage orientation programmes for new persons residing in the Virgin Islands for business or employment in collaboration with the Department of Labour and Workforce Development

Policy Statement 3-3-2

The Government of the Virgin Islands will develop an informed analysis of the creative industries' contribution to the economy of the Virgin Islands, ensuring that these industries are included in economic planning.

Strategies

- i. Develop formal working agreements and programmes with the Department of Trade and relevant agencies
- ii. Analyse the contribution of cultural industries to the economy and to economic diversification, and to the gross national product
- iii. Produce economic impact assessment study
- iv. Include cultural industry development in national economic planning , trade and investment programmes
- v. Analyse percentage of national budget extended to cultural industries
- vi. Link this industrial sector to other industrial sectors
- vii. Analyse the ratio of cultural product to national product,
- viii. Commit a percentage of the budget allotted to tourism toward cultural development

Policy Statement 3-3-3

The Government of the Virgin Islands will develop cultural tourism, ensuring sustainable economic development.

Strategies

- i. Develop formal working relationships and programmes with the BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission and relevant agencies
- ii. Ensure that the development of cultural tourism does not negatively affect the integrity and authenticity of Virgin Islands cultural identity in all of its manifestations
- iii. Ensure that cultural tourism is developed in a sustainable manner and that tangible heritage and cultural assets are protected and safeguarded
- iv. Ensure that cultural tourism is developed while at the same time protecting access for citizens' to their heritage

- v. Recognise the roles and value of eco-tourism and agri-tourism programmes in the development of cultural tourism
- vi. Promote cultural tourism as an important component of the national tourism product and as a significant source of revenue it takes place outside of the tourist season

Policy Statement 3-3-4

The Government of the Virgin Islands will partner with all media, ensuring the use of modern technology in order to develop national pride and cultural confidence

Strategies

- i. Develop formal working relationships and programmes with all forms of media in the private sector including social media, print media, and radio in order to ensure positive messages and images, showcasing cultural excellence in the arts, culture and heritage
- ii. Continue and develop targeted campaigns and programmes regarding culture and heritage with the Government Information Service (GIS)
- iii. Encourage and collaborate with the media in order to foster provoking discussions and public discourse regarding culture, heritage, and national pride
- iv. Ensure that Virgin Islanders and all residents have greater access to Virgin Islands culture and heritage through the media
- v. Ensure that modern technology is used to preserve heritage as well as to develop cultural activities
- vi. Research local technologies and recognise the value of traditional technology

Policy Statement 3-3-5

The Government of the Virgin Islands will place a special emphasis on integrating culture and heritage throughout the education sector.

Strategies

- i. Develop formal working relationships and programmes with the Ministry of Education and the public education sector
- ii. Develop formal working relationships and programmes with the private education sector
- iii. Integrate Virgin Islands culture, cultural arts, and heritage into the national curriculum at all levels of development
- iv. Ensure that Virgin Islands' culture, cultural arts, and heritage are taught throughout the education sector – pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary

- v. Include the education sector into a number of national commemorative events and cultural events
- vi. Encourage cultural events in schools
- vii. Encourage the formation of school clubs for the arts, culture, and heritage
- viii. Incorporate culture and heritage based material and content in schools
- ix. Facilitate the creation of a catalogue of cultural materials that can be disseminated to every teacher
- x. Facilitate the development of grade-specific cultural teaching throughout the educational system
- xi. Institute teacher training workshops on culture and heritage in the Virgin Islands
- xii. Ensure a revised, up to date and more accurate version of Virgin Islands heritage is taught
- xiii. Ensure that the correct and most effective methodologies are utilised when teaching sensitive topic such as genocide, enslavement and colonisation
- xiv. Ensure that social history is taught including the history of Virgin Islands' families, family structures, genealogies, development of social services such as health and education
- xv. Update holidays and celebrations with effective explanations
- xvi. Ensure that the plantation era's transformation into free society is taught; the villages emerged from plantations
- xvii. Ensure that local heroes are taught including the plantation era ancestral heroes
- xviii. Update the content on historical sites including historic places, historic sites, historic buildings and structures, historic districts, museums, cultural landscapes, monuments, burial grounds, shipwrecks, maritime and underwater archaeology, and artefacts/cultural objects
- xix. Promote respect for national symbols, songs, holidays
- xx. Provide opportunities for middle and senior school students to utilise their community service hours for cultural projects

Policy Statement 3-3-6

The Government of the Virgin Islands will facilitate the articulation of the voice of the youth regarding their experience and view of Virgin Islands culture and heritage, recognising that they are the drivers of cultural evolution

Strategies

- i. Develop formal working relationships and programmes with the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports and relevant agencies
- ii. Facilitate the articulation of the youth regarding their understanding, awareness, and daily practise of Virgin Islands' culture and heritage
- iii. Facilitate the articulation of youth regarding their expression of national pride and identity
- iv. Develop opportunities to support and showcase talented youth and their cultural activities and products which result in Virgin Islands' cultural evolution

Policy Statement 3-3-7

The Government of the Virgin Islands will recognise the impact of excellence in sports on the development of national pride, fostering a recognition of the role of sports and cultural games in socio-cultural life.

Strategies

- i. Develop formal working relationships and programmes with Department of Youth Affairs and Sports and relevant agencies
- ii. Acknowledge the role and impact of athletic excellence and accomplishment in and upon the development of national pride
- iii. Research and document the role of sports in the social development of the Virgin Islands
- iv. Encourage greater connection between sporting events and cultural activities
- v. Highlight Virgin Islands traditional and cultural games

Policy Statement 3-3-8

The Government of the Virgin Islands will examine the shifting socio-cultural environment regarding the family structure, promoting traditional methods that lead to increased personal and community wellbeing.

Strategies

- i. Establish formal working relationships and programmes with the Social and Development Department and relevant agencies
- ii. Reconsider and reassess the socialisation and care of children and promote the integration positive and effective aspects of traditional methods of socialisation and child rearing
- iii. Develop programmes to re-establish the traditional Virgin Islands' deep-rooted sense of community
- iv. Develop programmes to re-establish traditional family values such as the value of respect for elders
- v. Develop educational programmes regarding traditional practices such as courtship, church weddings, funerals and wakes, and childbirth
- vi. Encourage research into the social history of families in the Virgin Islands
- vii. Encourage genealogical activities

Policy Statement 3-3-9

The Government of the Virgin Islands will consider acknowledge the role of women and men in the socio-cultural development of the Virgin Islands.

Strategies

- i. Develop formal working relationships and programmes with the Office of Gender Affairs and relevant agencies
- ii. Analyse the roles and participation of women and men in social institutions such as the family, education, churches and religious institutions, and in the community
- iii. Research and document the roles of women and men as culture bearers, including their contribution to culture and cultural institutions

Policy Statement 3-3-10

The Government of the Virgin Islands will acknowledge the value of traditional knowledge regarding health practices and products, developing programmes to bring these cultural beliefs, practices and philosophies into modern life.

Strategies

- i. Develop formal working relationships and programmes with the Ministry of Health and other relevant agencies
- ii. Research and document traditional knowledge of medicinal plants and remedies scientifically developing these in ways that address health issues
- iii. Research and document traditional natural or alternative health practices such as midwifery and develop these into programmes that address health
- iv. Research and document traditional foods, food culture and preparation methods and develop these into programmes that address health

Policy Statement 3-3-11

The Government of the Virgin Islands will ensure that efforts to protect the environment are culturally sensitive, ensuring that traditional knowledge is integrated into modern initiatives.

Strategies

- i. Ensure that cultural considerations are considered while implementing environmental initiatives
- ii. Research and document sustainable, traditional agricultural and fishing practices and other sustainable, traditional practices such as recycling, ensuring that these traditions are integrated into modern initiatives
- iii. Research and document the traditional knowledge of the marine environment, including maritime skills and traditions

3.4 Administrative & Institutional Framework

3.4.1 Cultural Administration

The Department of Culture struggles with a number of issues: qualified staffing, structural inhibitions, office space, and budget limitations. The Department is small, currently comprising five members, three of whom hold higher education qualifications. The Department does not possess the capacity to do the work it has been tasked to do due to understaffing and the under-qualification of its employees.

An examination of the Role Profile for the position of Director of Culture requires a Master's Degree in Public Administration and seven years in senior management but no background in cultural theory, creative entrepreneurship, or cultural heritage management. The Deputy Director's Role Profile contains the same flaw and only requires a Bachelor's degree.

Even though there has been, in recent times, the reclassification of three Senior Executive Officer positions within the Department of Culture to Cultural Officer in order to better reflect work in the areas of the performing arts, the literary arts, the multimedia arts and/or museums, one of them has remained unfunded until very recent times. Previous to recent times, there were only two officers with cultural content responsibilities – the Dance and Drama Instructor and the Senior Executive Officer responsible for museums.

The Dance and Drama Instructor did not need any qualifications in dance or drama and the Senior Executive Officer responsible for museums did not need any qualifications in museum management or curation.

Despite the completion of a strategic plan based on a ministerial mandate in recent times which proposed a restructuring of the Department of Culture accompanied by revised role profiles, this programme has not fully been supported. Although a partial restructuring has occurred, progress has been difficult due to the ignorance and disregard regarding the content or the technical requirements of the positions within the Department of Culture. This ignorance and disregard pervades all levels including junior positions and senior positions. Training and development is needed in this area. This has implications for the staffing of the Department of Culture.

At the present time, the Department of Culture has a Director position, a Deputy Director position, three Cultural Officer positions (which include the multimedia position) an Administrative Officer position, an Office Generalist position, and a Cleaner position. The Department requires an additional Deputy Director position as well as the addition of five additional cultural officer positions. Please see the proposed organisational chart below.

One positive sign is that, despite the lack of support, the current officers are now qualified in the areas of cultural heritage and museum management, cultural education, and cultural and literary studies. The recent transfer of the portfolio regarding the Department of Culture to the Premier's Office is another positive sign.

Yet another positive sign is that it appears as if the Department of Culture might receive appropriate physical accommodations in the immediate future.

In order for the Department of Culture to develop its programmes and objectives, it is critical that the Department is restructured; staff must be suitably qualified and possess the appropriate competencies. In addition, the Department must be further staffed and properly resourced so that it can facilitate the coordinated policy making, strategic planning and implementation that is required to drive its initiatives forward.

3.4.2 Policy Statements & Strategies

Policy Statement 3-4-1

The Government of the Virgin Islands will prioritise the restructuring, staffing, and training of the Department of Culture, ensuring that it is properly resourced and able to lead the coordinated policy making, strategic planning and implementation required of culture and heritage policy.

Strategies

- i. Liaise with the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College to develop and expand its programme of cultural offerings, especially in the areas of certificates, diplomas, and post graduate certification in the creative and cultural arts, heritage and cultural management, entrepreneurship and, cultural industry development
- ii. Locate appropriate training programmes which develop technical capacity within the Department
- iii. Promote the reclassification of positions within the Department that reflect the technical nature of the work required
- iv. Restructure and streamline the Department of Culture in order to efficiently and competently carry out its work
- v. Prioritise continuous capacity building and strengthening of institutions with a cultural and heritage mandate

3.5 Legal & Institutional Framework

There are three pieces of legislation which govern culture and heritage in the Virgin Islands: the Virgin Islands Festival and Fairs Committee Act, the Physical Planning Act, 2004, and the National Parks Trust Act, 2006.

The stakeholders and institutions that constitute the cultural institutional framework are governmental agencies, non-profit organisations, private sector organisations, and specific groups such as artists and culture and tradition bearers. As stated previously, it will be crucial for these important institutions to work together in a cohesive, integrated manner, guided by policy and strategy.

The Governmental agencies include several of the Departments under the Premier's Office including the Department of Trade, the Government Information Service, the Department of Information Technology, the National Archives, the Town and Country Planning Department, the Central Statistics Office, the Department of Agriculture, and the International Affairs Secretariat. They also include the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, and several departments and units under this Ministry including the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Public Library Services of the Virgin Islands, and the BVI National Commission for UNESCO. They also include the Public Works Department under the Ministry of Communications and Works and the associated City Manager's Office. They also include the Ministry of Health as well as the Social Development Department. They also include the Governor's and Deputy Governor's Office.

The non-profit organisations include the BVI Christian Council and other religious organisations, the Virgin Islands Festival and Fairs Committee, the Virgin Islands Communal Association, the Long Look Heritage Society, the Jost Van Dyke Preservation Society, the Callalou Poets, the Heritage Dancers, the BVI Drama Society, and Green VI. These also include various national organisations in the Virgin Islands. These also include the Rotary Clubs in the Virgin Islands.

Stakeholders also include agencies such the BVI Chamber of Commerce and Hotel Association. Statutory bodies include the H. Lavity Stoutt Community Centre and the Virgin Islands Studies Institute and Teacher Training Institute at HLSCC, the Scholarship Trust Fund Board, the Taxi and Livery Commission, the BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission, the City Manager's Office, and the Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park. Stakeholders include the private sector including media houses, the education sector, dance schools, museums, and tour companies.

The Ministries and Offices include the Premier's Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour, Ministry of Communications and Works, Ministry of Health and Social Development, and Deputy Governor's Office. The Governmental agencies include several of the Departments under the Premier's Office including the Department of Trade, the Government Information Service, the Department of Information Technology, the National Archives, the Town and Country Planning Department, the Central Statistics Office, the Immigration Department, the Customs Department, the Department of

Agriculture, and the International Affairs Secretariat. They also include the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports and several departments and units under this Ministry including the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Public Library Services of the Virgin Islands, and the BVI National Commission for UNESCO. They also include the Public Works Department under the Ministry of Communications and Works. They also include the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour and the Department of Labour and Workforce Development, the Department of Land Registry, and the Land and Survey Department. They also include the Ministry of Health as well as the Social Development Department and the Office of Gender Affairs. They also include the Deputy Governor's Office, including the Department of Disaster Management and, of course, the Sister Islands Programme Unit.

3.5.1 Policy Statements & Strategies

Policy Statement 3-5-1

The Government of the Virgin Islands will review the existing legislation which form the legal framework for culture and heritage, creating new legislation where necessary.

Strategies

- i. Combine the aspects that refer to heritage in the Physical Planning Act, 2004, and the National Parks Trust Act, 2006 in order to create new heritage legislation
- ii. Create legislation for a National Museum
- iii. Ratify the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), the UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage (2003), the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the UNESCO Convention for the Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Cultural Property (1970), the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Heritage (2001), and develop relevant legislation
- iv. Develop Intellectual property and copyright, industrial designs and trademark legislation
- v. Develop legislation that would require radio stations, hotels, guest houses and restaurants and other entities to play, display or programme a certain percentage of art (visual, literary, performance), quotas, produced by local artists

Policy Statement 3-5-2

The Government of the Virgin Islands will facilitate the coordination of public and private stakeholders, guided by culture and heritage policy and strategy with the Department of Culture as the lead agency.

Strategies

- i. Develop formal working relationships, memoranda of understanding and programmes with stakeholders in the public and private sector

3.6 Implementation & Review

It is important to develop timelines for the implementation of work plans which will execute the strategic objectives, along with regular, ongoing review periods. Ongoing review will include relevant stakeholders.

The Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy will be reviewed, evaluated, and revised every five years.

3.6.1 Policy Statements & Strategies

Policy Statement 3-6-1

The Government of the Virgin Islands will facilitate implementation and regular reviews of the Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy.

Strategies

- i. Review, evaluate and revise the Virgin Islands Culture & Heritage Policy & Strategy every five years
- ii. Create work plans, within a period of three months, which have timelines of implementation which are divided into short term (12 months), medium term (30 months) and long term (60 months) periods
- iii. Review overall progress with stakeholders on an annual basis

Appendices

Appendix 1 – VI Constitution Preamble

Virgin Islands Constitution Order 2007

Preamble

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Whereas the people of the territory of the Virgin Islands have over centuries evolved with a distinct cultural identity which is the essence of a Virgin Islander;

Acknowledging that the society of the Virgin Islands is based upon certain moral, spiritual and democratic values including a belief in God, the dignity of the human person, the freedom of the individual and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and the rule of law;

Mindful that the people of the Virgin Islands have expressed a desire for their Constitution to reflect who they are as a people and a country and their quest for social justice, economic empowerment and political advancement;

Recognising that the people of the Virgin Islands have a free and independent spirit, and have developed themselves and their country based on qualities of honesty, integrity, mutual respect, self-reliance and the ownership of the land engendering a strong sense of belonging to and kinship with those Islands;

Recalling that because of historical, economic and other reasons many of the people of the Virgin Islands reside elsewhere but have and continue to have an ancestral connection and bond with those Islands;

Accepting that the Virgin Islands should be governed based on adherence to well-established democratic principles and institutions;

Affirming that the people of the Virgin Islands have generally expressed their desire to become a self-governing people and to exercise the highest degree of control over the affairs of their country at this stage of its development; and

Noting that the United Kingdom, the administering power for the time being, has articulated a desire to enter into a modern partnership with the Virgin Islands based on the principles of mutual respect and self-determination;

Now, therefore, the following provisions have effect as the Constitution of the Virgin Islands.

Appendix 2 – History of the Virgin Islands

Source: Government of the Virgin Islands website (<https://bvi.gov.vg/content/our-history>)

The History of the British Virgin Islands is usually, for convenience, broken up into five separate periods:

- Pre-Columbian Amerindian settlement, up to an uncertain date
- Nascent European settlement, from approximately 1612 until 1672
- British control, from 1672 until 1834
- Emancipation, from 1834 until 1950
- The modern state, from 1950 to present day

Pre-Columbian settlement

The first recorded settlement of the Territory was by Arawak Indians who came from South America, in around 100 BC. Vernon Pickering places the date later, at around 200 AD, and suggests that the Arawak may have been preceded by the Ciboney Indians. They are thought to have settled in nearby St. Thomas as early as 300 BC. There is some evidence of Amerindian presence on the islands. Perhaps in seasonal fishing camps, as far back as 1500 BC. There is little academic support for the idea of a permanent settlement on any of the current British Virgin Islands at that time.

The Arawak inhabited the islands until the 15th century, when they were displaced by the more aggressive Carib, a tribe from the Lesser Antilles islands. The Caribbean Sea is named for these people. Some historians believe that the popular account of the aggressive Carib chasing peaceful Arawak out of the Caribbean islands is based in simplistic European stereotypes, and that the true story is more complex.

None of the later European visitors to the Virgin Islands reported encountering Amerindians in what would later be the British Virgin Islands. Christopher Columbus did have a hostile encounter with the Carib natives of St. Croix.

Comparatively little is known about the early inhabitants of this territory specifically (as opposed to the Arawak generally). The largest excavations of Arawak pottery have been found around Belmont and Smuggler's Cove on the northwest of Tortola. Many other archaeological sites have been found with Arawak artefacts, including at Soper's Hole, Apple Bay, Coxheath, Pockwood Pond, Pleasant Valley, Sage Mountain, Russell Hill (modern day Road Town), Pasea, Purcell, Paraquita Bay, Josiah's Bay, Mount Healthy and Cane Garden Bay. Modern archaeological excavations regularly cause local historians to

revise what they thought they knew about these early settlers. Discoveries reported in the local newspapers in 2006 have indicated that early Arawak settlement of the islands may have been more significant than had earlier been thought.

1492 - Early European Exploration

The first European sighting of the Virgin Islands was by Christopher Columbus in 1493 on his second voyage to the Americas. Columbus gave them the name Santa Ursula y las Once Mil Vírgenes (Saint Ursula and her 11,000 Virgins), shortened to Las Vírgenes (The Virgins), after the legend of Saint Ursula. He is also reported to have personally named Virgin Gorda (the Fat Virgin), which he thought to be the largest island in the group.

The Spanish claimed the islands by original discovery, but never settled the Territory. In 1508, Juan Ponce de León settled Puerto Rico, and reports in Spanish journals suggested that the settlement used the Virgin Islands for fishing, but nothing else. Their references may have been to the present U.S. Virgin Islands, which are closer.

In 1517, Sir Sebastian Cabot and Sir Thomas Pert visited the islands on their return from exploring Brazilian waters. Sir John Hawkins visited the islands three times, firstly in 1542 and then again in 1563 with a cargo of slaves bound for Hispaniola. On his third visit, he was accompanied by a young Captain by the name of Francis Drake in the Judith.

Sir Francis Drake visited the islands four times; its main channel was named in his honour.

Drake returned in 1585, and is reported to have anchored in North Sound on Virgin Gorda prior to his tactically brilliant attack on Santo Domingo. Drake returned for the final time in 1595 on his last voyage, during which he died. The main channel in the British Virgin Islands was named in his honour.

In 1598, the Earl of Cumberland is reported to have used the islands as a staging ground for his later attack on La Fortaleza in Puerto Rico, during conflicts between England and Spain.

In 1607, some reports suggest that John Smith sailed past the Virgin Islands on the expedition led by Captain Christopher Newport to found the new colony in Virginia.

English (and Scottish) monarch King James I granted a patent to the Earl of Carlisle for Tortola, as well as "Angilla, Semrera (Sombrero island) & Enegada". Carlisle also received letters of patent for Barbados, St. Kitts and "all the Caribees" in 1627 (the "Carlisle proprietorship"). He died shortly after, but his son, the 2nd Earl of Carlisle, leased the patents to Lord Willoughby for 21 years in 1647. Neither ever attempted to settle the northern islands.

First Dutch Settlements

Dutch privateer Joost van Dyk organised the first permanent settlements in the Territory in Soper's Hole, on the west end of Tortola. By 1615, van Dyk's settlement was recorded in Spanish contemporary records, which noted its recent expansion. He traded with Spanish colonists in Puerto Rico and farmed cotton and tobacco.

Some sources suggest that the first settlements in the Virgin Islands were by the Spanish, who mined copper at the copper mine on Virgin Gorda. No archaeological evidence supports any settlement by the Spanish in the islands at any time, nor any mining of copper on Virgin Gorda prior to the 19th century.

By 1625, van Dyk was recognised by the Dutch West India Company as the private "Patron" of Tortola, and had moved his operations to Road Town. During the same year, van Dyk lent some limited (non-military) support to the Dutch admiral Boudewijn Hendricksz, who sacked San Juan, Puerto Rico. In September 1625, in retaliation, the Spanish led a full assault on the island of Tortola, laying waste to its defences and destroying its embryonic settlements. Joost van Dyk escaped to the island that would later bear his name, and sheltered there from the Spanish. He later moved to the island of St. Thomas until the Spanish gave up and returned to Puerto Rico.

Notwithstanding Spanish hostility, the Dutch West India Company considered the Virgin Islands to have an important strategic value, as they were located approximately halfway between the Dutch colonies in South America (now Suriname) and the most important Dutch settlement in North America, New Amsterdam (now New York City). The Dutch built large stone warehouses at Freebottom, near Port Purcell (just east of Road Town), to facilitate exchanges of cargo between North and South America.

The remains of Fort Charlotte, built on an earlier lookout post erected by the Dutch

At this time, the Dutch settlers erected some small earthworks and a three-cannon fort above the warehouse, on the hill. This was the site where the English later built Fort George. The Dutch also constructed a wooden stockade for a lookout post above Road Town. This site was later developed as Fort Charlotte. They stationed troops at the Spanish "dojon" near Pockwood Pond, later to be known as Fort Purcell. In the 21st century, it is usually called "the Dungeon".

In 1631, the Dutch West India Company expressed an interest in the rumours of copper on Virgin Gorda, and a settlement was set up on that island, which came to be known as "Little Dyk's" (now known as Little Dix).

In 1640, Spain attacked Tortola in an assault led by Captain Lopez. The Spanish attacked again in 1646 and 1647, led by Captain Francisco Vincente Duran. The Spanish anchored a warship in Soper's Hole at West End and landed men ashore. They sent another warship to blockade Road Harbour. After a team of scouts returned a safe report, the Spanish landed more men and attacked Fort Purcell overland by foot. They massacred the Dutch, and next attacked Road Town, killing all inhabitants and destroying the settlement. They

did not bother with the smaller settlements further up the coast in Baugher's Bay or on Virgin Gorda.

Decline of the Dutch West India Company

The Dutch settlements did not return a profit. Evidence suggests that the Dutch spent most of their time more profitably engaged in privateering than trading. The lack of prosperity of the territory mirrored the lack of commercial success of first the Dutch West India Company as a whole.

The company changed its policy. It sought to cede islands such as Tortola and Virgin Gorda to private persons for settlement, and to establish major slave pens to support the slave trade in the Caribbean, as they were importing slaves from Africa. The island of Tortola was sold to Willem Hunthum at some point in the 1650s, at which time the Dutch West India Company's interest in the Territory effectively ended.

In 1665, the Dutch settlers on Tortola were attacked by a British privateer, John Wentworth; he captured 67 slaves and took them to Bermuda. The record of his prize is the first documentation of slaves being held in the Territory.

In 1666, a number of the Dutch settlers were reported to have been driven out by an influx of British "brigands and pirates", although numerous Dutch remained.

1672 - British Colonisation

England took control of the British Virgin Islands in 1672, at the outbreak of the Third Anglo-Dutch War, and has retained influence since. The Dutch averred that in 1672 Willem Hunthum put Tortola under the protection of Colonel Sir William Stapleton, the English Governor-General of the Leeward Islands. Stapleton reported that he had "captured" the Territory shortly after the outbreak of war.

Colonel William Burt was dispatched to Tortola and took control of the island no later than 13 July 1672 (when Stapleton reported the conquest to the Council of Trade). Burt did not have sufficient men to occupy the Territory, but before leaving the island, he destroyed the Dutch forts and removed all their cannon to St. Kitts.

By the Treaty of Westminster of 1674, the war was ended, and provision was made for mutual restoration of all territorial conquests during the war. The Treaty provided the Dutch with the right to resume possession of the islands, but by then the Dutch were at war with the French, and fear of a French attack prevented their immediate restoration. Although the possessions were not considered valuable, for strategic reasons the British became reluctant to surrender them, and after prolonged discussions, orders were issued to Stapleton in June 1677 to retain possession of Tortola and the surrounding islands.

In 1678, the Franco-Dutch War ended, and the Dutch returned their attention to Tortola, although it was not until 1684 that the Dutch ambassador, Arnout van Citters, formally requested the return of Tortola. However, he did not do so on the basis of the Treaty of Westminster, but instead based the claim on the private rights of the widow of Willem Hunthum. He asserted that the island was not a conquest, but had been entrusted to the British. The ambassador provided a letter from Stapleton promising to return the island.

At this time (1686), Stapleton had completed his term of office and was en route back to Britain. The Dutch were told Stapleton would be asked to explain the discrepancy between his assertion of having conquered the island, and the correspondence signed by him indicating a promise to return it, after which a decision would be made. Unfortunately, Stapleton travelled first to France to recover his health, where he died. Cognisant that other Caribbean territories which had been captured from the Dutch during the war had already been restored, in August 1686 the Dutch ambassador was advised by the British that Tortola would be restored, and instructions to that effect were sent to Sir Nathaniel Johnson, the new Governor of the Leeward Islands.

But Tortola was never actually returned to the Dutch. Part of the problem was that Johnson's orders were to restore the island to such person or persons who have "sufficient procuration or authority to receive the same..." However, most of the former Dutch colonists had now departed, having lost hope of restoration. Certainly there was no official representation of the Dutch monarchy or any other organ of government. In the event, Johnson did nothing.

In November 1696, a subsequent claim was made to the island by Sir Peter van Bell, the agent of Sir Joseph Shepheard, a Rotterdam merchant, who claimed to have purchased Tortola on 21 June 1695, for 3,500 guilders. Shepheard was from the Margraviate of Brandenburg, and the prospect of Tortola coming under Brandenburg control did not sit well in Westminster. The Brandenburg claim was dismissed by the British on the grounds that Stapleton had conquered rather than been entrusted with Tortola. The now common delaying tactic of forwarding all correspondence to Governor Codrington for comment was employed. Codrington readily appreciated the risks of a Brandenburg trading outpost on Tortola; as such an outpost already existed on nearby St. Thomas. The Brandenburgs had previously set up an outpost for trading slaves on Peter Island in 1690, which they had abandoned, and they were not considered welcome. At the time they had an outpost on St. Thomas, but they engaged in no agriculture, and only participated in the trading of slaves. Negotiations became more intense, and the British re-asserted the right of conquest and also (wrongly, but apparently honestly) claimed to have first discovered Tortola. During the negotiations, the British also became aware of two older historical claims, the 1628 patent granted to the Earl of Carlisle (which was inconsistent with Hunthum's title being sold to him by the Dutch West India company), and an order of the King in 1694 to prevent foreign settlement in the Virgin Islands. In February 1698, Codrington was told to regard the earlier 1694 orders as final, and the British entertained no further claims to the islands.

In common with most Caribbean countries, slavery in the British Virgin Islands forms a major part of the history of the Territory. One commentator has gone so far as to say: "One of the most important aspects of the History of the British Virgin Islands is slavery."

As Tortola, and to a lesser extent Virgin Gorda, came to be settled by plantation owners, slave labour became economically essential, and there was an exponential growth in the slave population during the 18th century. In 1717 there were 547 black people in the Territory (all of whom were assumed to be slaves); by 1724, there were 1,430; and in 1756, there were 6,121. The increase in slaves held in the Territory is, to a large degree, consistent with development of the economy of the British Virgin Islands at the time.

Slave Revolts

Uprisings in the Territory were common, as they were elsewhere in the Caribbean. The first notable uprising in the British Virgin Islands occurred in 1790, and centred on the estates of Isaac Pickering. It was quickly put down, and the ring leaders were executed. The revolt was sparked by the rumour that freedom had been granted to slaves in England, but that the planters were withholding knowledge of it. The same rumour would also later spark subsequent revolts.

Subsequent rebellions also occurred in 1823, 1827, and 1830, although in each case they were quickly put down.

Probably the most significant slave insurrection occurred in 1831 when a plot was uncovered to kill all of the white males in the Territory and to escape to Haiti (which was at the time the only free black republic in the world) by boat with all of the white females. Although the plot does not appear to have been especially well formulated, it caused widespread panic, and military assistance was drafted in from St. Thomas. A number of the plotters (or accused plotters) were executed.

It is perhaps unsurprising that the incidence of slave revolts increased sharply after 1822. In 1807, the trade in slaves was abolished. Although the existing slaves were forced to continue their servitude, the Royal Navy patrolled the Atlantic, capturing slave ships, and freeing slave cargoes. Starting in 1808, hundreds of freed Africans were deposited on Tortola by the Navy who, after serving a 14 year "apprenticeship", were then absolutely free. Naturally, seeing free Africans in the Territory created enormous resentment and jealousy amongst the existing slave population, who understandably felt this to be enormously unjust.

1834 - Emancipation

Emancipation pamphlet, circa 1815

The abolition of slavery occurred on 1 August 1834, and to this day it is celebrated by a three day public holiday on the first Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in August in the British Virgin Islands. The original emancipation proclamation hangs in the High Court. However, the abolition of slavery was not the single defining event that it is sometimes supposed to have been. Emancipation freed a total of 5,792 slaves in the Territory, but at the time of abolition, there were already a considerable number of free blacks in the Territory, possibly as many as 2,000. Furthermore, the effect of abolition was gradual; the freed slaves were not absolutely manumitted, but instead entered a form of forced apprenticeship which lasted four years for house slaves and six years for field slaves. The terms of the forced apprenticeship required them to provide 45 hours unpaid labour a week to their former masters, and prohibited them from leaving their residence without the masters' permission. The effect, deliberately, was to phase out reliance on slave labour rather than end it with a bang. The Council would later legislate to reduce this period to four years for all slaves to quell rising dissent amongst the field slaves.

Joseph John Gurney, a Quaker, wrote in his Familiar Letters to Henry Clay of Kentucky that the plantation owners in Tortola were "decidedly saving money by the substitution of free labour on moderate wages, for the deadweight of slavery".

In practice, the economics of the abolition are difficult to quantify. Undeniably, the original slave owners suffered a huge capital loss. Although they received £72,940 from the British Government in compensation, this was only a fraction of the true economic value of the manumitted slaves. In terms of net cash flow, whilst the slave owners lost the right to "free" slave labour, they now no longer had to pay to house, clothe, and provide medical attention for their former slaves, which in some cases almost balanced out. The former slaves now usually worked for the same masters, but instead received small wages, out of which they had to pay for the expenses formerly borne by their masters. However, some former slaves managed to amass savings, which clearly demonstrates that in net terms the slave owners were less well off in income terms as well as capital as a result of abolition.

Modern Developments

In 1901 the Legislative Council was finally formally dissolved, and the islands were then officially administered through the Governor of the Leeward Islands, who appointed a commissioner and an executive council. The Territory was not remotely economically prosperous, and social services had deteriorated to a vanishing point. Emigration was extremely high, particularly to St. Thomas and to the Dominican Republic. Both concern and assistance from Britain was in very short supply, not least because of the two World Wars which were fought during this period.

In 1949 another unlikely hero emerged. Theodolph H Faulkner was a fisherman from Anegada, who came to Tortola with his pregnant wife. He had a disagreement with the medical officer, and he went straight to the marketplace and for several nights criticised the government with mounting passion. His oratory struck a chord, and a movement started. Led by community leaders such as Isaac Fonseca and Carlton de Castro, on 24 November 1949 a throng of over 1,500 British Virgin Islanders marched on the Commissioner's office and presented their grievances. They presented a petition which commenced:

"We are imbued with a desire to decide our local affairs with our own selves. We have outgrown that undesirable stage where one official, or an official clique, makes decisions for us... We are seeking the privilege of deciding how our monies are spent and what shall be our Presidential laws and policies."

1950 - Self Government

The Legislative Council building in Road Town, erected about sixty yards from the market where Faulkner roused the crowds.

The voices of the people were heard. As a result of the demonstrations the previous year, the Legislative Council was reinstated by the British Government in 1950 under a new constitution. The reformation of the Legislative Council is often left as a footnote in the Territory's history - a mere part of the process that led to the more fundamental constitutional government in 1967. The 1950 constitution was in fact always envisaged as a temporary measure (it was famously described by McWelling Todman QC as "an instrument minimal in its intent and its effect"). But, having been denied any form of democratic control for nearly 50 years, the new Council did not sit idly by. In 1951 external capital was brought in to assist farmers from the Colonial Welfare and Development office. In 1953 the Hotel Aid Act was enacted to boost the nascent tourism industry. Up until 1958 the Territory had only 12 miles of motorable roads; over the next 12 years the road system was vastly improved, linking West End to the East End of Tortola, and joining Tortola to Beef Island by a new bridge. The Beef Island airport (now renamed after Terrance B. Lettsome) was built shortly thereafter. The Territory considered holding a plebiscite as to whether the British and U.S. Virgin Islands should merge under the U.S. flag.

External events also played a factor. In 1956 the Leeward Islands Federation was abolished. Defederation enhanced the political status of the British Virgin Islands. Jealous of its newly acquired powers, the Council declined to join the new Federation of the West Indies in 1958, a move that would later be crucial in the development of the offshore finance industry.

In 1967 the new constitution with a much greater transfer of powers was brought into effect by order in council, and introduced true Ministerial Government to the British Virgin Islands. Elections followed in 1967, and a comparatively young Lavity Stoutt was elected as the first Chief Minister of the Territory.

Appendix 3 – National Symbols

Source: Government of the Virgin Islands website (<https://bvi.gov.vg/national-symbols>)

Territorial Badge

This symbol consists of the coat of arms, the word, “Vigilate” and the wreath. The coat of arms depicts Saint Ursula framed by eleven oil lamps, which represent the eleven thousand virgins after whom the Virgin Islands were named. Beneath Saint Ursula is a scroll that reads, in Latin, “Vigilate” (Be Watchful). The wreath, an embellished garland of two green branches tied in the centre with a blue bow surrounds them both. The Territorial Badge was officially adopted on 15th November, 1960.

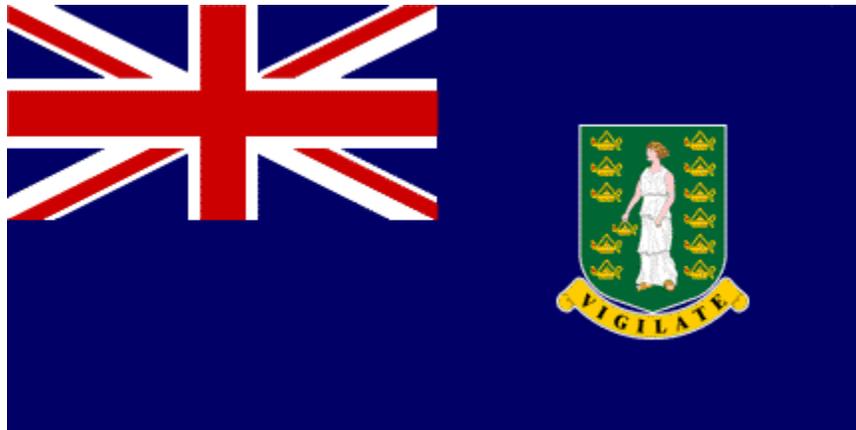


Territorial Flag

The British Virgin Islands flag is a famous symbol of British pride. As the British Virgin Islands is the overseas territory of Britain, the Union Jack makes its proud presence in the flag, which has a blue background with the British flag in the left corner and the coat of arms just opposite to it. The coat of arms present on the British Virgin Islands flag has an image of Saint Ursula with twelve lamps surrounding it.

White signifies peace and honesty. Red signifies hardiness, bravery, strength and valour while blue stands for vigilance, truth and loyalty, perseverance & justice.

The flag of the British Virgin Islands was adopted on November 15, 1960 and in 1967 a new constitution allowed a ministerial system of government headed by a Chief Minister. The British Virgin Islands remain under British control.



National Anthem

“God Save Our Gracious King”

“God Save Our Gracious King” is the National Anthem of the UK and also in some British territories. In countries not previously part of the British Empire, the tune of “God Save The King” has provided the basis for various patriotic songs, though it is still generally connected with a royal ceremony.

The first published version of “God Save Our Gracious King” appeared in 1744 in *Thesaurus Musicus*, in which that version of the song was popularised in Scotland and England the following year. The words and tune are anonymous, and may date back to the seventeenth century. It was recorded in London theatres in 1745.

In general only one or two verses are sung, but on rare occasions three. In sports in which the British Virgin Islands compete, “God Save The King” is used to represent anyone or any team that comes from the United Kingdom. There is no definitive version of the lyrics. However, the version consisting of the three verses reproduced has the best claim to be regarded as the 'standard' British version.

Lyrics

*God save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save the King:
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us:
God save the King.*

*O Lord, our God, arise,
Scatter her enemies,
And make them fall.
Confound their politics,*

*Frustrate their knavish tricks,
On Thee our hopes we fix,
God save us all.*

*Thy choicest gifts in store,
On her be pleased to pour;
Long may she reign:
May she defend our laws,
And ever give us cause
To sing with heart and voice
God save the King*

Territorial Song

"Oh, Beautiful Virgin Islands"

*Out of the huts of history's pain
Our ancestors bled and died!
But with strength and will power we
overcame
To restore Virgin Islands pride!
To preserve your beauty we devised a plan
To retain ownership of your precious lands!
Educating your people is the golden key
To maintain the success of this Territory!*

*We shall protect your bountiful shores
And uphold your dignity!
We shall fight to preserve your culture
Your splendour and integrity!
And we shall never fail to understand
How blessed we are to possess this land!
So we shall unite standing proud and tall
Let none divide us, lest we fall!*

Chorus

*Oh how radiant are your daughters!
And how wealthy are your sons!
Your beaches boast your beauty!
And your success is second to none!*

*Green and brilliant are your hillsides!
They replenish our hopes and pride!
Oh Beautiful Virgin Islands!
Your qualities can never be denied!*

*May God richly bless this country!
May we ask three things of thee...
Courage for our great leaders
That they may rule our destiny!
We ask for wisdom for our people
That we may live in harmony!
And understanding for children
So they may cherish this legacy!*

Chorus

**Composed by Ayanna Hull
Melody by Ayanna Hull & Kareem Hull
Recorded by Deanna Wattley**

**Officially adopted as the Territorial Song of the
Virgin Islands by the House of Assembly on the
24 July 2013.**

Territorial Tree

The White Cedar or *tebebuia heterophylla* is the native cedar on our islands. This tree was important because its wood was used to make the stern, stern posts and frame of our famous Virgin Islands sloops.

White-cedar (*Tabebuia heterophylla*) is a small to medium-size, mostly deciduous tree with showy pink flowers. It grows on any soil type and will adapt to poor or degraded soils if moisture is available. Valued as a timber tree, it has been widely planted for both reforestation and ornamentation.



White Cedar is found on sand, limestone, and heavy clay soils, acidic or alkaline in reaction, and residual, alluvial, or colluvial in origin. It appears to grow best, however, on deep clays. White Cedar is a cosmopolitan species and is found on all soils presently identified within the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. The most common soil order on the island is Inceptisols. Physiographically, it is most common on slopes and ridges but is also found on flats.

In the BVI, White Cedar grows in relatively poor sites to provide cover and to improve the soil. It is recommended for planting on uniform and convex slopes and ridges, where trials have shown it to be a promising species for reforestation. It has also done well on humid, waterlogged sites, such as areas near Sage Mountain, and other mountainous areas.

Territorial Flower

The White Cedar Flower has been chosen as the Territorial Flower. It is the flower of the White Cedar Tree, the Territorial Tree which is indigenous to the Virgin Islands and was integral in the development of the Virgin Islands sloop and in turn, the economy.

Displaying trumpet-shaped flowers when in bloom, the white cedar (*Tabebuia heterophylla*) is a distinctive inhabitant of many islands in the Caribbean region. Also known as the pink trumpet tree because of its characteristic flowers, the white cedar is an evergreen to semi-deciduous tree with furrowed bark and an irregularly shaped crown. It has leathery green, oblong- or oval-shaped palmate leaves with blunt tips, which grow in opposite pairs.

White cedars are often pink, although they may often appear white, cream or light purplish-grey, appearing in clusters throughout the spring and summer.



Territorial Bird

The Mourning Dove is a member of the dove family (Columbidae). The bird is also called the American Mourning Dove or Rain Dove, and formerly was known as the Carolina Pigeon or Carolina Turtledove. It is a medium-sized, slender dove approximately 31 cm (12 in) in length. Mourning Doves have perching feet, with three toes forward and one reversed. The legs are short and reddish coloured. The beak is short and dark, usually a brown-black hue.



The turtle dove is one of the most popular birds of North America. During the breeding season, you might see three Mourning Doves flying in tight formation, one after another. This is a form of social display. Typically the bird in the lead is the male of a mated pair. The second bird is an unmated male chasing his rival from the area where he hopes to nest. The third is the female of the mated pair, which seems to go along for the ride.

These doves get their source of meal by feeding busily on the ground. They tend to eat roughly 12 to 20 percent of their body weight per day. They are also capable of drinking brackish spring water without becoming dehydrated the way humans would.

Territorial Colours

The following colours have been chosen to represent various aspects of the Virgin Islands and its people.

The Territorial colours are:

- Yellow - Representing the rising sun
- Green - Representing our verdant hills
- Blue - Reflecting our beautiful Caribbean Sea
- White - Reflecting our beaches, and
- Red - Representing the feisty nature of Virgin Islanders

Territorial Dress

On 24th July 2012 the Territorial dress of the Virgin Islands was officially adopted by the House of Assembly. At the heart of the Territorial dress, is the Virgin Islands Print to Territorial Print which depicts unique aspects of our culture: The turtle dove, oleander, hibiscus, soursop, sugar apple and the Virgin Islands sloop along with the islands of the Virgin Islands and our name represented in the cloth. The print has been created in white, blue and red fabrics. Mrs. Florence Phillips and Miss Kristin Frazer designed the Territorial Dress while Mr. Kieron Harry designed the Territorial Print.



Like the territorial song, the territorial dress was announced by the Minister of Education & Culture, Honourable Myron V. Walwyn on December, 2011. He stated that the Government of the Virgin Islands would hold a "Territorial Song and Dress Competition. The selection of the song and dress was as a result of a motion that was moved by Honourable Walwyn. The motion stated that an ad-hoc committee on the territorial song and dress would be appointed with the members being: Ms. Eileene Parsons, Chairman, Dr. Charles Wheatley, Mrs. Sheila Brathwaite, Honourable Delores Christopher and the Acting Director of Culture Brenda Lettsome-Tye.



Territorial Music

The music which has travelled with us from Africa through slavery and emancipation and has evolved through to today's Fungi Music, has been chosen as the official music of the Virgin Islands. "Fungi" is the local name for folk music. The word means a "cook up" or combination of. According to local history, fungi music has its roots in our African Heritage. When uprooted from their motherland, our African ancestors took with them as much of their culture as they could. They brought with them the "Bamboula drum" and their dances.



Fungi music evolved in the Virgin Islands during slavery, and was later passed on from generation to generation. After emancipation in 1834, regional scratch (fungi) bands began forming. These bands played for holidays and festivals. The different forms of scratch (fungi) bands are: Bamboula, Quelbe and Cariso (carried like so). They remained the dominant form of music expression through the early 1930's.

Many local fungi artists are self-taught musicians. They use "ukes" made from sardine tins and flutes made from pumpkin vines and papaya stems. Some popular local fungi bands include: The Spark Plugs, Romeo and the Injectors, The Lover Boys, The Originals, Leon and the Hot Shots, Egbert and the Serenaders and The Lashing Dogs.



*Photo credit:
Mural
painting by
Mr. Reuben
Vanterpool*

Territorial Dish

Fungi & Fish

Fish	Fungi
<p>2 ¼ firm white fish. ½ Teaspoon “Accent Seasoning”. 1 cup water. 1 teaspoon margarine. 1 medium onion cut into large chunks. 1 small tomato, chopped. 1 ½ teaspoons vinegar. 4 1/2 teaspoons lemons or lime juice. 1 lime, sliced. ¼ teaspoon salt.</p> <p>Put all the ingredients into a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat, simmering for 20 to 30 minutes or until the fish flakes with a fork. Garnish with sliced lime.</p>	<p>5 ounces frozen cut okra. ¾ cup fine yellow cornmeal. 1 ¼ cup boiling water. 1 tablespoon butter. 1/8 teaspoon salt. Pepper.</p> <p>Bring the water to a boil and add okra. In a separate bowl, blend 2 tbsp of the cornmeal with 6 tbsp water. Pour into the pot with the boiling water and okra and let cook for one minute. Stirring constantly, slowly pour the rest of the cornmeal into the pan. Add pepper, salt and butter and continue cooking for about 6 minutes. Serve hot.</p>

