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Virgin Islands Festival 2022 Post Event Survey

Introduction

This year’s Festival was celebrated from July 24 to August 5, with main events in Road Town, Carrot Bay and East End. The ultimate objective of the survey was to collect data which would be used to make the decision-makers aware of some of the public's sentiments of the celebrations with a view to identifying actions towards improvement.

The survey was widely circulated but the response rate was very low. There were just over 200 responses which accounts for just around 1% of the 20,000 plus adult population, the potential respondents. However, while this low response rate might not be representative of the entire population, it will serve as a good indication as to how persons in the Virgin Islands feel about the Festival Celebrations and shed some light on what are some suggestions for improvements.

The survey ran from August 2022 to September 2022 and the results are outlined as follows.

Demographics:

Of the 218 persons who responded to the survey, 172 or 78.9% were females while males accounted for only 21.1%. A more even sex distribution of respondents would have provided more varied responses to questions aimed at improving the celebrations. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Sex of Respondent

	Frequency	Percent
Male	46	21.1
Female	172	78.9
Total	218	100.0

The vast majority (97.7%) of respondents were below the age of 65 years old. Therefore, unfortunately, a mere 2.3% of the respondents were elderly persons. As the underlying basis of the celebration is the culture of the Virgin Islands, and as the elderly would be more aware of the origins and the meaning of the celebrations, they can offer invaluable insights and opinions along these lines. (See Table 2)

Table 2: Age Group of Respondent

	Frequency	Percent
15-34 years	68	31.2
35-54 years	120	55.0
55-64 years	25	11.5
65+ years	5	2.3
Total	218	100.0

Practically all Caribbean countries engage in celebrations of some sort which is based on their cultural traditions. As persons would more identify with the culture of their own country, they may be more eager to offer opinions on their own celebrations. This could probably explain why over two thirds of the respondents were persons born in the Virgin Islands. (See Table 3).

Table 3: Nationality Status of Respondent

	Frequency	Percent
Born in Virgin Islands	148	67.9
Not Born in The Virgin Islands	70	32.1
Total	218	100.0

Participation:

Over 47% of respondents to the survey indicated that they participated in the actual activities of the Festival celebrations. (See Table 4).

Table 4: Participated in Festival 2022

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	103	47.2
No	115	52.8
Total	218	100.0

Of those who responded to the survey, 45.9% of Virgin Islands nationals said they participated in the activities of the Festival celebrations. Such was the case for 50.0% of respondents who were not Virgin Islands’ nationals. (See Table 5).

Table 5: Nationality Status of Respondent by Participation in the 2022 Emancipation Festival Celebrations

Nationality Status of Respondent		Participate in the 2022 Emancipation Festival Celebrations		Total
		No	Yes	
Born in Virgin Islands	Count	80	68	148
	% within Nationality Status	54.1%	45.9%	100.0%
Not Born in The Virgin Islands	Count	35	35	70
	% within Nationality Status	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	115	103	218
	% within Nationality Status	52.8%	47.2%	100.0%

Attendance:

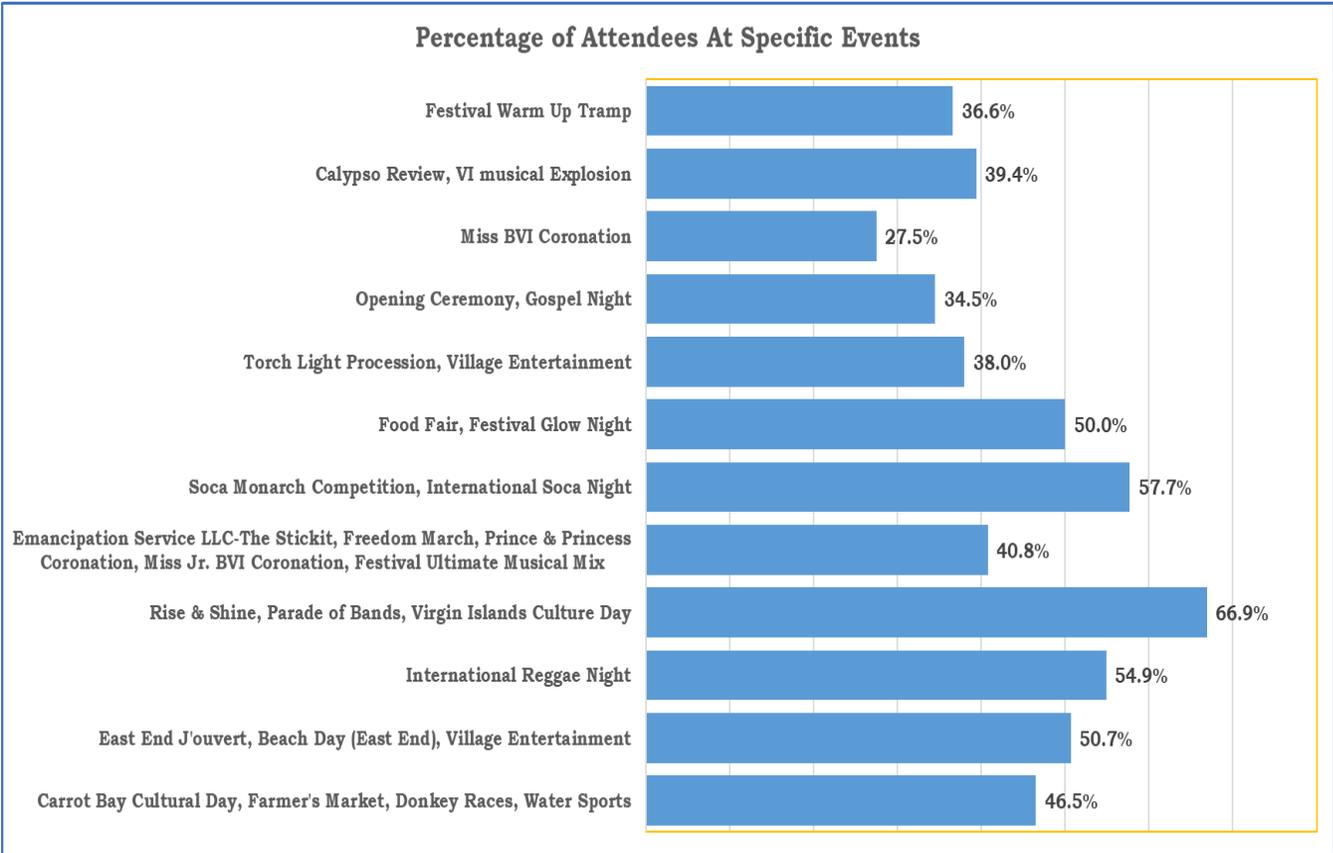
Over 65% of the respondents indicated that they attended the events of the 2022 festival celebrations. Another 22.5% of them did not attend the events but wanted to express their opinions about the celebrations. (See Table 6)

Table 6: Attended Events for Festival 2022

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	142	65.1
No, End Survey	27	12.4
No, but give opinion	49	22.5
Total	218	100.0

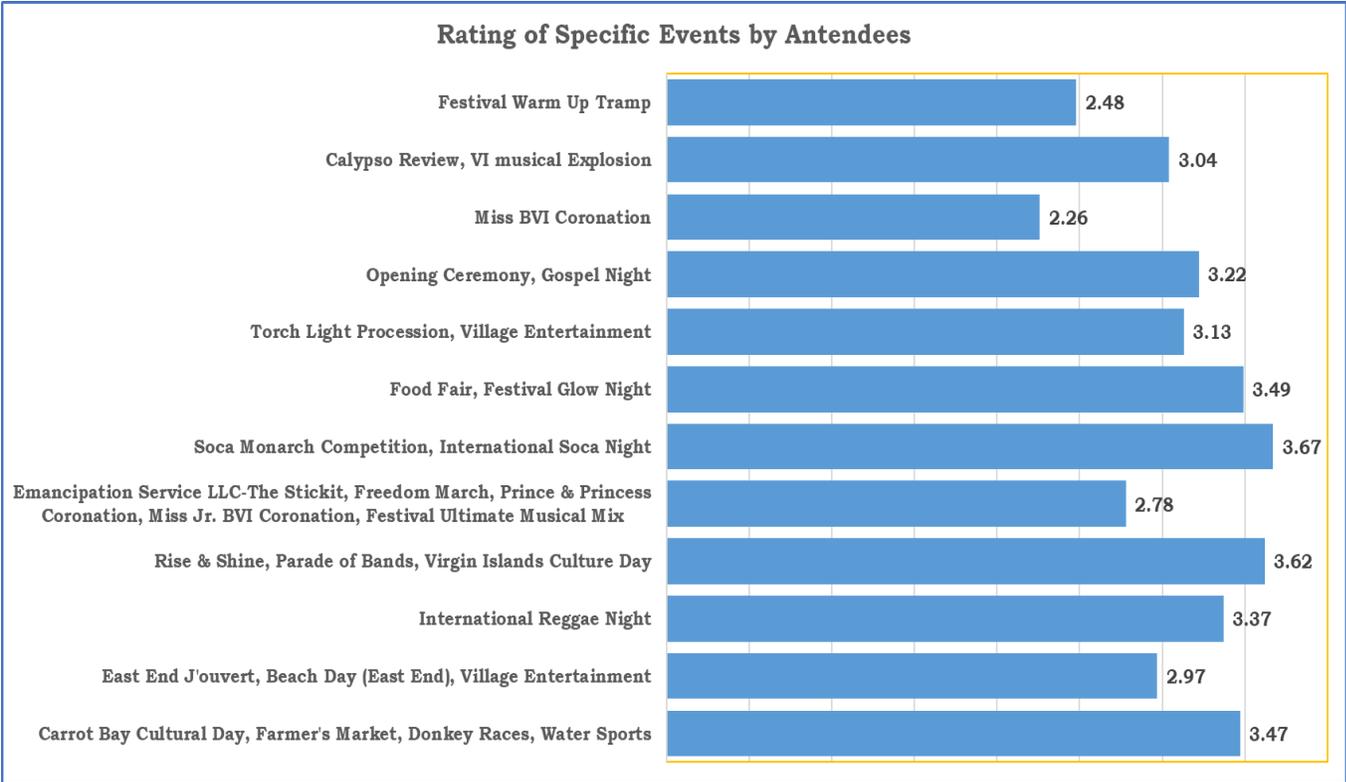
The group of events that included the Rise and Shine Tramp was most popular and saw attendance by 66.9% of the persons that attended events. These events, however, are non-paying events. While 57.7% attended the International Soca Night, a somewhat similar 54.9% attended the International Reggae Night. The Miss BVI Coronation saw the smallest percentage of attendees with 27.5%. The cost associated with this event could have possibly affected its level of patronization. (See Chart 1)

Chart 1: Percentage of Attendees at Specific Events



Attendees were asked to rate the events on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest). The International Soca Night received the best rating (3.67) followed by the Rise and Shine Tramp with 3.62. the Carrot Bay Cultural Day was rated at 3.47. The Miss BVI Coronation was rated the lowest with 2.26 followed by the Festival Warm up Tramp which was rated at 2.48. (See Chart 2)

Chart 2: Attendees’ Rating of Specific Events



Of the persons who opted to give their opinion on the celebrations and related to whether patrons should pay to enter the festival village, only 14.1 % of them thought patrons should pay regardless. However, another 60.2% of respondents also agreed that patrons should pay to enter the village, but this should depend on the event in the village on that specific night. Contrarily, just over one quarter of the respondents felt that patrons should not pay to enter the village under any circumstance. (See table)

Table 7: Should Patrons Pay to Enter Village

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	14.1
No	49	25.7
Depends on the event in Village	115	60.2
Total	191	100.0

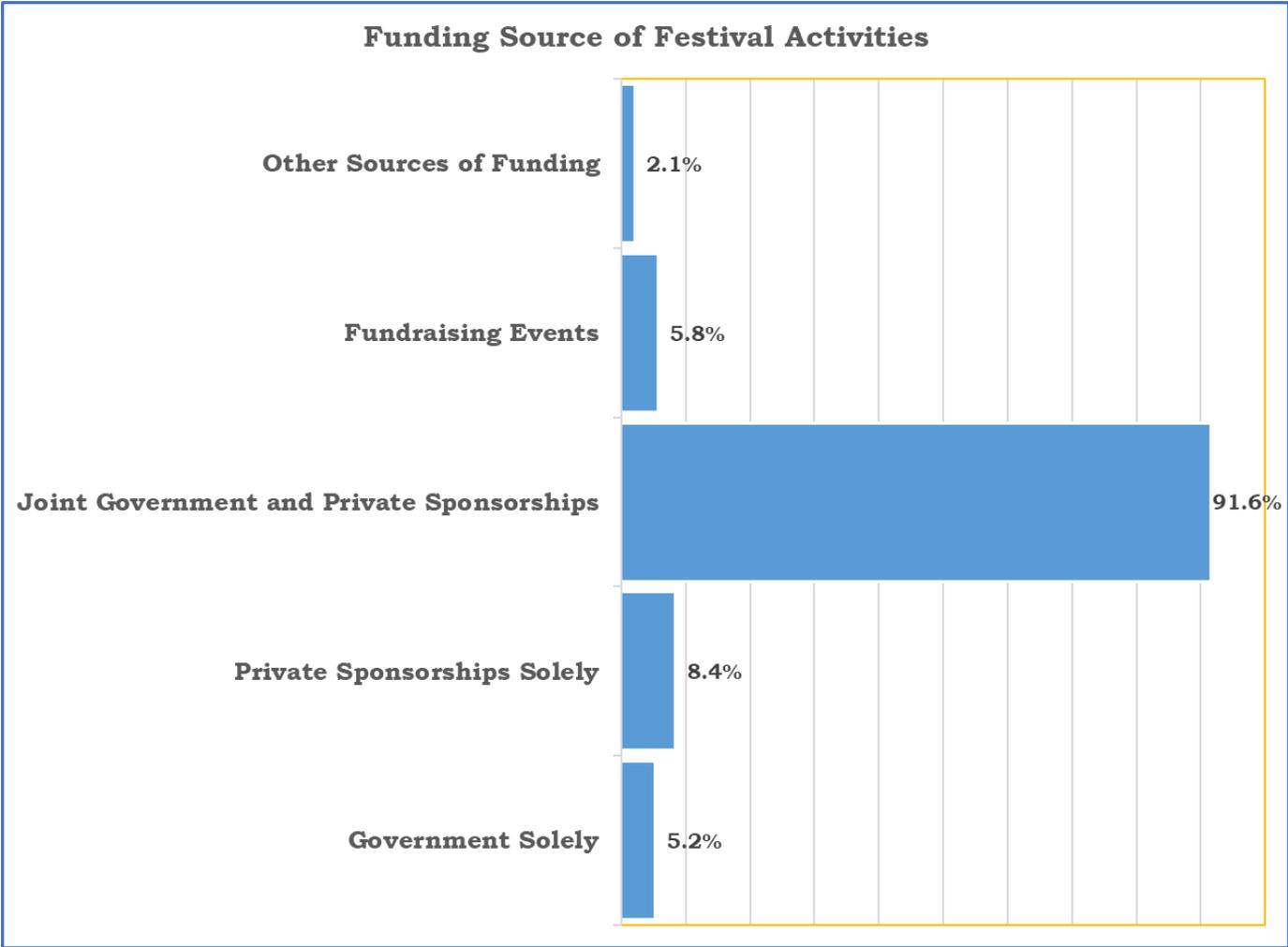
Very few persons indicated that patrons should pay to enter the village whether there was an event or not. However, among those who suggested payment, \$10 to \$20 per night was the most popular amount suggested. (See table)

Table 8: Entry Amount to Village

	Frequency	Percent
10-20 dollars	12	6.3
20-30 dollars	8	4.2
30-40 dollars	2	1.0
40-50 dollars	1	.5
Depend on Event	117	61.3
Amount Not Stated	2	1.0
No Amount to Enter Village	49	25.7
Total	191	100.0

The Festival celebrations in the Virgin Islands is a very expensive undertaking. Currently the Government of the Virgin Islands foots the bill for the all the activities of the celebrations. Persons who responded to the survey, to the tune of 91.6% suggested that funding the activities of the Festival Celebrations should be a joint effort between the Government and the Private Sector. A mere 5.2% thought it was the responsibility of Government, while 8.4% proffered that all funding should be sought from the Private Sector. Fundraising, which was the original approach to fund these types of events, was suggested by only 5.8% of respondents.

Chart 3: Who Should Fund Festival Celebrations



Numerous events form part of the Festival Celebrations. Respondents weighed in on whether events should be excluded from the line-up. Around 21% thought that some events should be excluded from the celebrations. (See Table 9).

Table 9: Exclusions From Festival Celebrations

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	41	21.5
No	150	78.5
Total	191	100.0

A question was posed as to which of the existing events should be excluded from the celebrations. The responses to this question would suggest that the patrons of the celebrations are satisfied with the existing events as a minute proportion of the respondents were in favour of any of the events being excluded. (See Table 10).

Table 10: Event to Exclude from the Festival Celebrations

Exclude Warm Up Tramp	6	3.1
Exclude Calypso VI Review Musical Explosion	2	1.0
Exclude Miss BVI Coronation	1	0.5
Exclude Opening Ceremony Gospel Night	2	1.0
Exclude Torch Light Procession	0	0.0
Exclude Soca Monarch Comprtition International Soca Night	0	0.0
Exclude Emancipation Service LLC-The Stickit, Freedom March, Prince & Princess Coronation, Miss Jr. BVI Coronation, Festival Ultimate Musical Mix	2	1.0
Exclude Rise and Shine Tramp	0	0.0
Exclude International Reggae Night	6	3.1
Exclude east End Celebrations	6	3.1
Exclude Carrot Bay Cultural day	0	0.0

Alternatively, respondents were asked if new events should be added to the Festival celebrations. Almost 56% of respondents indicated that new events should form part of the celebrations. (See Table 11).

Table 11: Add Events To Celebrations

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	106	55.5
No	85	44.5
Total	191	100.0

As per the preceding table, over half of respondents were in favour of new events being added to the celebrations. Following is an unfiltered list of the suggested events. There are repetitions as numerous persons made multiple contributions.

Suggested Events to be Added to the Festival Celebrations

Battle of the Bands (all local)
Town J'ouvert
A COOLER FETE OR BREAKFAST FETE
A sports day event
All events should be focused on worship of the Almighty God who delivered Virgin Islanders from slavery
All Festivals handled by VI Festival & Fairs
An additional night of Gospel Fest
Anything representing BVI Culture: Not Jab Jab
Aquatic sports
Best Booth
Best individual costume depicting festival
Breakfast fete
Bring back Tuesday J'ouvert
Calypso competition
Calypso monarch
Caribbean Musical Artists
Carrot Bay Village/ East End Village/ Coney Island
Children's Kiddies Fiesta
Children's parade
Competitions
Cony Island
Cook off more of a competition on local food dishes instead of food fair but food can still be sold
Cooking competition at Food Fair - Best Peas Soup/Fungi and Fish
Cooney Island

Crossing the stage (parade grand finale)
Cultural Activities (Candle Light vigilant) - Cooking and baking local dishes competition.
Cultural Family Fun Day (Cultural games/activities only)
Cultural Fun Day! - Aqua theme and rides
Cultural games/video documentary or reenactment scripts
Culture night
Day time fete
During the day the festival ground should be a historic site that has actors reenacting the moment up to the emancipation declaration; in the village flags and meals should cater only to the local dish
Evening parade for EE/LL
Event for Kids and young people
Events for all ages. Bring back kiddie's fiesta. Day time activities (entertainment
Events on Sister Islands as well
Family oriented events
Fish Fry
Fish Fry (Fundraiser)
Fish fry events like back in the old days and the Rise and Shine on Tuesdays with the waters sports.
Fisherman's day long-side with the carrot bay festival.
Fungi Band night needs to be brought back
Fungi Day/night in RT Village
Fungi night
Grease pig/ pole
Grease pole
History of Emancipation re-enactment of reading of Proclamation
Holiday to Celebrate Carrot Bay Cultural Day in its entirety
Horse Race
Junior Calypso Competition
Last lap parade
Latin artist known to both English and Spanish speaking residents
Literary Fair
Local night e.g. fungi band only session
More troupes. More activities
More Children activities/competitions or games during the holiday time. If we could have the donkey races and other games such as in Carrot Bay be on other days other than Friday.
More cultural events in the main festival in Road Town that fosters cultural awareness
More cultural relevant events
More day activities like a Soca brunch
More diverse events. Beach fete. Brunch fete.

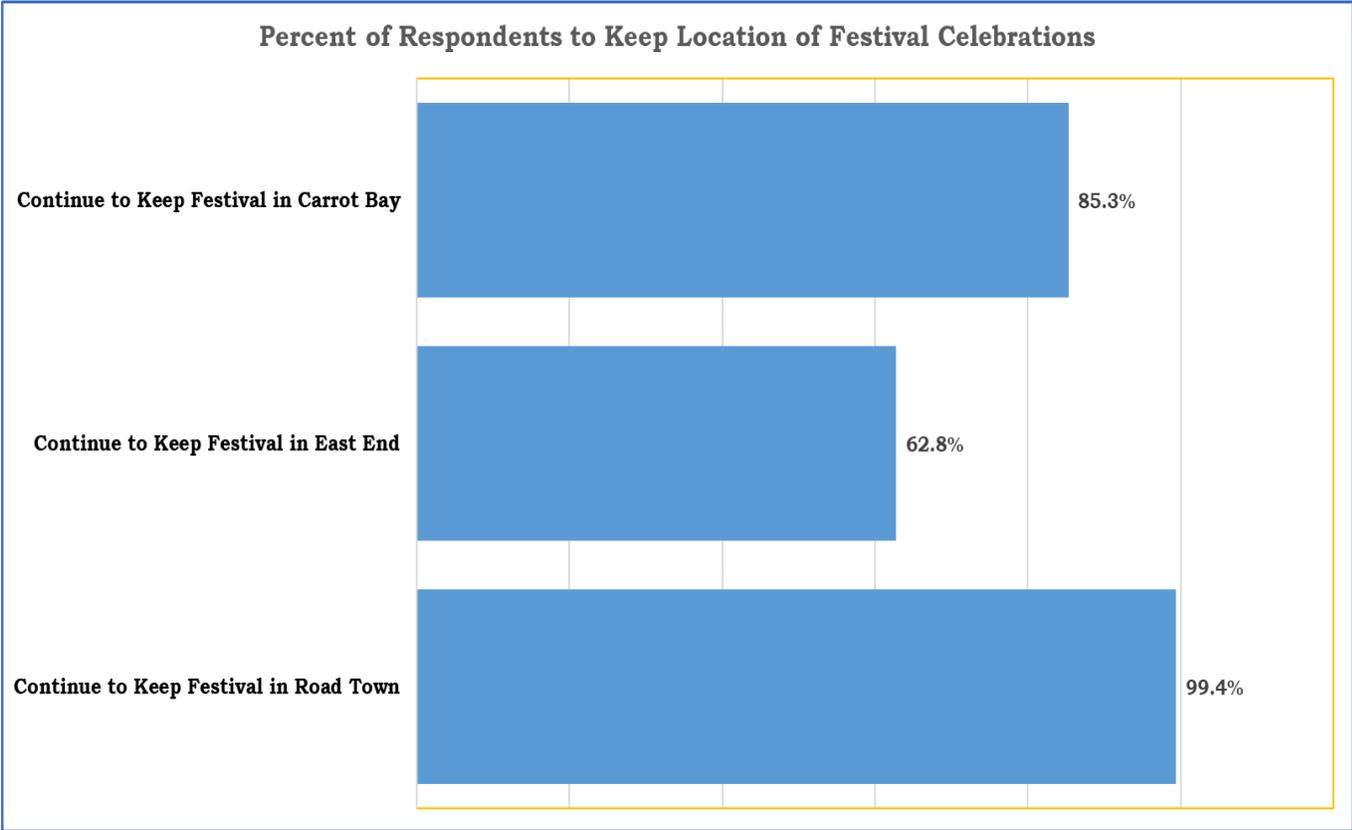
Old time Games in Town
Participation of Schools in the Emancipation Celebration
Plait Pole and water sports before horse race
Plat the flagpole
Praise Marches similar to the original march that was changed to a "tramp"
Pre-festival events to raise funds
Proper water sports
Rides for the kids
Rides for the kids
Steel pan competition
Storytelling from the olden days
Swim races
Tuesday rise and shine J'ouvert in Road Town
water sport
Water sports
Water Sports
Wet Fete
Youths night more entertainment
Cultural Day (historical stories etc. and troupes)
A Jam in collaboration with a venue (Fundraiser)
A night to celebrate(a ball style) the past persons who crowned as queen & king
Adult rides
Always end festival in town
An event similar to Ramp up that's held in Bermuda
An official Last Lap event
As he also delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt Exodus 32. Read it. Emancipation is about God releasing a people from bondage so that they can be free to have an unimaginable supernatural relation
Better line up
Boat rides
Coney island return
Coney Island with rides and games
Cooler fete
Dance Fest
Dancing competition
Dancing events
During the day booth owners can have various competitions
Egg and Spoon
Family feud style competition on festival culture.
Fish fries
Folklore Storytelling at a Kiddies Fiesta
Food tasting/teaching
Fundraisers all year around

Grease pole event
If there is something being prepared outside of our local dish
Junior calypso
Kiddies fiesta
Kids Village
Local performance night with past and present local calypsonians.
More cultural display
More local artists
More pre-events for an effective lead up and no less than 8 months promotion of Artistes and Festival Events
Music playing in festival village during the day
Not powder down
Old time games
Platting and more cultural stuff
Pop up events
Revert back to the initial intent of the emancipation festival
Rise and Shine Water Sports
Slideshow featuring past queens
Spoken word event and day party leading up to festival instead of a warm up tramp
Story telling corner for children
Storytelling
Temptation Island
Traditional sailing boat races and aquatic sports. Culture-building ideas and supporting athletes
Water sports
Water sports at QEII Park
Water sports at the ferry dock
Water Sports Day
Panorama (battle of the steel bands from schools and churches and displayed in the Parade)
An interactive educational event which focuses solely on our history of emancipation but presented in a way that attracts and targets all ages
And more activities for Beach Day at Long Bay Beach EE
And special deals/discounts throughout the Territory during August Festival Week
August Tuesday J'ouvert
August Tuesday J'ouvert
Basket weaving. Cooney island with its own entrance. Plait pole
Beach parties
Blast from the Past VI entertainers on stage
Block Party (Fundraiser). Simply put more fundraisers from the year before to get some money into the accounts as well
But I have since received in my heart

Contests
Cultural Fair Day (showcase of historic/cultural items)
district family events
East end J'ouvert from east to Brandywine bay
Events for children and teens
Keep food fair inside festival ground and have cultural food cook offs.
Kiddies Fiesta
Mandatory participation for schools
More local music
Not Halloween costumes and the like
Ole folk's stories and sayings (e.g. Wa sweet in goat mouth sour in e backside)
Panorama
Sack Races
Soca monarchs
Steel pan night
T shirt jam
Taste of emancipation carnival
The flag and meal being represented should be clear and present; local artist especially those doing well internationally should have priority(it was disappointing not seeing the likes of Iyaz or Mone
Visual Arts Exhibitions
Water sports back in town
Wet fete

The Festival celebrations take place at multiple locations in the Virgin Islands annually. Respondents to the survey were asked at which locations should the celebrations be kept be going forward. While 99.4% suggested that the Virgin Islands continue to keep Festival celebrations in Road Town, less than two thirds (62.8%) agreed that the celebrations should continue to be kept in East End. Over 85% agreed that Carrot Bay was a favourable location for the celebrations. (See Chart 4)

Chart 4: Percent of Respondents Who Think Festival Celebrations Location Should Kept



Respondents were asked to make suggestions as to how the annual Festival Celebrations can be improved. Following is an unfiltered list of suggestions for improvements to the Festival Celebrations. There are repetitions as numerous persons made multiple suggestions.

Suggestions for Improvement of Festival Celebrations

Have barricades along the parade route to prevent persons in the front from crowding the troupes while performing. When this happens only those in front can see. In addition to barricades seating stands would be nice too.
Advertise in advance
Announcements/Messages explaining the true meaning of "Emancipation" and why we are celebrating.
Back to 2 weeks of village
Begin preparation early
Better planning
Breadfruit or cassava cook off
Bring back Coney Island
Bring in more international artists
Carrot Bay should have the cultural events on a Saturday so that more patrons can attend. East End should only have the J'ouvert and Last Lap should always be in Road Town.
change all committees on each respective locations on a yearly basis!
Children Parade separate from regular parade with adults preferably at East End
Cooney Island should be entire separate from village
Create an actual festival and fairs board that functions all year around so that fundraisers could be had and possibly encourage persons to donate to the cause so that once it is time to actually carry out the arrangement of the festivities monies can be allocated correctly. Therefore having more control and organization for these events.
Cultural craft contests (VI based
Cultural events - Carrot Bay
Do not leave the children out with activities and add more emancipation and cultural activities
Dress code for the ladies. They look like harlots
Earlier fundraisers
Earlier Planning
Early fundraisers
Early planning
East end village and parade need to Excluded they are not well attended or you can make east end parade into a children's parade and require all school (including dance schools)to have an entry and invite neighboring islands such as St. Croix and St Thomas to participate.
Find a way to lift the stigma on east end

Focus on what emancipation is really about.
Fundraisers throughout the year
Fundraising Events should be continuous
Get local music out earlier
Have better public relations
Have one committee for all festivals on all islands
Have younger persons in the committee
Hold fundraiser from early.
I do t think it should run for two weeks though unless we are promoting local acts ONLY!!!!!! How it use to be in Jam Band days
I think the east end J'ouvert should always end at the beach and there should be more entertainment to keep persons in east end rather than have to head to Cane Garden Bay for the beach invasion. Beach invasion should be held on another day.
I think you should add the annual boat races to the festival activities
If it is decided that persons will have to pay to get in, please be reasonable.
In advance advertisement
Increase Community Involvement
Involve the schools in the parade.
Keep EE J'ouvert get rid of the parade have a beach picnic with sports
Keep it as short as it was this year to make it more impactful
Keep the festival as we did in 2022 no need to build a festival village in East End and Carrot Bay
Keep the same amount of days as this year
Keep the village central
Kiddies fiesta and rides
Less is more celebrate the Emancipation.
Let East End have kids parade get all the schools involved. Town the grand parade and Carrot Bay what they do
Local artist especially those doing well internationally should have priority(it was disappointing not seeing the likes of Iyaz or Mone in the line up outside of the VI night but as International Artists); all facets that are included in the tourist product should be included in the planning; plans for festival next year should be complete by the end of this festival.
Make it 2 weeks
Make it more about our emancipation from slavery
Marathon from East End to town on Tuesday morning
More cultural activities/events. Becoming more like a carnival and not a festival.
More cultural nights in the village
More culture
More culture activities leading up and August Monday
More History
More lead time

More participation from schools each school district along with the high schools should have an entry
No other permit should be issued to independent businesses
Plan in advance
Proper Planning (On time)
Publicize events more
Quality of entrants in the Parade
Queen Show competition
Radically change the entire celebrations to honour the one who set the VI free. For example, observe the Labour Day. Macy's Parades. People get together without the vulgarity and play on wantonness.
Recommendations: Road Town has the adult parade East End have children or young adult parade Carrot Bay's pretreatment of our cultural activities Coordination of matching the events.
Road Town and East End should collaborate and have one big celebration. Two weeks of celebration is too long.
Schools and organizations should be encouraged to participate in the grand parade
Start parade on time
Start planning from the year before
Start the Parade on time
Start to plan early
Stop Tramps earlier
T-Shirt Mas
The cover charge was ridiculously high should be more affordably.
The East End festival should focus on the Fishing and marine part of our heritage
The vendors need to have a fairer cost to sell & to be in the Village
This year parade was the deadest and shortest parade in BVI history! I came out early morning to watch the parade
Time Management - keep to start and end times
Too many inappropriate dressed people at August Monday parade. Too much inappropriate behaviour at August Monday parade. This event is not family friendly.
Town J'ouvert and parade should not be on the same day.
Tug of war
Use more local music band
Year-long planning
Have reasonable entry prices for village entertainment \$40 is ridiculous especially for mediocre artists singing along to a pre-recorded track. Low ticket price will encourage more persons to come out and they will still be able to support the booths.
A day for the children to have their own parade
Aquatic sport and Cultural competition t

Beach events
Begin pre-events 2/3 months in advance. Stick to a time schedule. Have activities for all ages. Have day time activities
Better organisation of Monday parade (more floats not just cars)
Booth owners should be given an opportunity to remain open after festival ends to sell off stock in their own creative w
Celebrate emancipation
Change things up a bit to make each year memorable
Customer Service Trainings for committee members
Cut back on international performers encouraging local talents
Earlier promotion
Early surveys on who artistes we would like to see
Engage the private sector to actively contribute.
Get feedback from the community for artist they'll want to see
Have distinct events
Have Fundraiser months before
Include all schools to have an entry
Include international artist and charge accordingly for those nights
Include majorettes and steel pans in parade
Local band/artists night or all day event on the beach
Maybe includes the Sunrise service with the East End actives as one. example
More fundraising
More history
More participation from government agencies
More public involvement (host talk shows etc.)
More Structure
Package in the early with the events
Peas and rice contest
Promote early
Sea oriented activities - East End
Start fundraisers from this year so that adequate funds can be available for proper and timely planning of next year's f
Steel pan music.
Stop bringing Destra
Stop collecting at the gate early
Tone down nudity
Upgrade carnival costumes and pomp and pageantry
Waited over 5 hrs for it to start. The traffic was not even closed
Wet fete
Allow different persons to cycle through the planning coordination and execution of the festival.

Bring back the sloops races on August Wednesday instead of the Parade in East End
Announce festival dates earlier and lively up the town with decorations
Beach day
Bobbing apples
Cars still driving past 3pm
Close off how you end with God and fireworks
Collaborate with private and public sector year round to increase available funds for Festival
Encourage schools to have a mandatory festival entry
Encourage troupes to fundraise earlier
Lower cost for booth owners so in turn lower cost for patrons to support booths
Maintain the cultural events during the daytime in East and Carrot Bay
Marketing for tourists
More "grass roots" activities
More dance troupes and starting on time). Provide more events for families. Better offering for children at festival grounds and more reasonable price for the rides
No need for nightly events at Carrot Bay or East End
Parade and J'ouvert should be on different day to allow parade to start on time and allow for more parade participation and viewing.
Peas soup contest
Quarterly band competitions to raise fund and keep them improving their craft
People after work can hang out a little in the Village
Start Parade earlier
Starting events on time
Target diaspora to attend annually. Happy to see surveys like this to capture the public ideas
That way great artists can be secured and any adjustments easily met where last minute.
Wet fete/watersports
Mimic Carrot Bay in Road Town with incorporating local dishes
Stop lights still on. I almost thought the parade was canceled and went home. On top of that when then parade did actually started. It was nothing but a bunch of show cars with speakers blasting different songs at the same time. NOTHING but noise and ear-torture. No good tropes or entertainment and lacked a lot of traditions and culture
Seemed like the whole thing was not organized probably. The only event I enjoyed myself was carrot bay but my problem is why was it set on a work day? Secondly village
Games

I know many who did not went out because there was no Cooney island instead of having to be standing around on their feet all night listening to noise and nothing good to do. Hopefully my constructive criticism helps.
Sports and stories
Encourage packages for locals abroad to return home and participate
Bring back water sports after J'ouvert
Have little to no international headliners as they are unnecessary and costly
Give package prices for village entry and keep fees affordable
Ensure all booth owners serve local cultural foods and drinks

Conclusion

Over the past number of years, the Festival celebrations of the Virgin Islands were interrupted by hurricanes and an enduring pandemic. The year 2022 saw the Virgin Islands' Festival return to some semblance of normalcy. The objective of the survey was to solicit patrons' feedback on the celebrations in an effort to improve the appeal of the celebrations for residents and visitors alike.

The 2022 Festival celebrations were held for two weeks and featured a series of activities and events that traditionally marked the celebrations. Patrons were asked their opinions on a number of issues relating to the celebrations.

On a scale of 1 to 5, patrons rated the appeal of the event from a low of 2.26, to a high 3.67. While 1 in 4 patrons disagreed with having to pay to enter the celebrations venue under any circumstance, the majority welcomed payment but it should be based on the events at the venue. As to who should be responsible for financing the celebrations, patrons resoundingly expressed that it should be a joint effort between the Government and the Private Sector. Patrons were generally satisfied with the events of the celebrations but offered a plethora of other events that could be considered. Of the 3 locations of the celebrations, over one third of the patrons thought that the celebration at East End should be discontinued. Patrons offered a long list of suggestions to improve the quality of the Festival celebrations.

Despite the low response rate to the survey, some pertinent takeaways were obtained from the opinions of the patrons. Many potential additional events were suggested and a long list of suggested ideas for improving the celebrations

were given. Organisers of the Festival celebrations can now critically review the results to chart the way forward for the future Festival celebrations of the Virgin Islands.