National Cultural Policy for Barbados

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1. Introduction

1.1 In its 2008 Manifesto, the government outlined a vision to:

"...based on unique sustainable values and ways of behaving that are cultural and transmitted from generation to generation, to help people maintain the traditional way of life." 

1.2 This vision is in keeping with what has become a universally accepted definition of civil society, advocated at the World Conference on Culture (MONTEVIDEO, 2003) and the UN meeting in 2004. According to this definition, the concept is based on:

- the belief in human dignity, which can now be recognised as "the set of distinctive spiritual, cultural, intellectual and emotional features that make up a social group. In addition to an ideology, it encompasses lifestyle, beliefs and values, moral sentiments and traditions."

1.2.1 The government's vision is to create a framework for the achievement of positive development of cultural policies and ensure that the development of cultural policies are central to overall national development.

2. The Context for a National Cultural Policy

2.1 The heritage of the people of the Caribbean wall is for the past five hundred years, strongly deplored by African and European influences in the making of a people who are a result of these influences, recognizing the historical context, the impact of slavery, colonialism, and the legacy of the country's history. The impact of these influences is evident in the cultural and social fabric of the country.

2.2 The government aims to celebrate and promote the rich cultural heritage of the Caribbean, recognizing the unique contributions of the communities and their cultural expressions.
3. Definition of Barbadian Culture

It is perhaps appropriate to say that Barbadian culture has undergone a significant transformation over the last few decades. The formation of a cultural identity is essential for the survival and continuity of a nation. In this regard, the Barbadian culture is characterized by a unique blend of European, African, and indigenous influences. The cultural landscape is marked by a rich tapestry of music, dance, art, literature, and cuisine, each contributing to the vibrant cultural mosaic of Barbados.

4. Interconnectedness of Culture and Society

The interconnectedness of culture and society is evident in Barbados, where cultural traditions and social norms are interwoven. The Barbadian culture is not only a reflection of its historical roots but also a dynamic entity that adapts and evolves with the changing times. This interplay between culture and society is crucial in shaping the identity of a nation.

5. Evolution of Barbadian Culture

Over time, the Barbadian culture has undergone transformations, influenced by various factors such as migration, technological advancements, and globalization. Despite these changes, the core elements of Barbadian culture, such as the national identity, language, and values, remain resilient. The recognition and preservation of these cultural elements are essential for the continued growth and development of Barbados.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Barbadian culture is a dynamic and multifaceted entity that reflects the rich history and unique identity of the nation. It is a living, breathing entity that continues to evolve, adapting to the changing times while retaining its core values and traditions. The celebration and preservation of Barbadian culture are crucial for the continued growth and prosperity of the nation.

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4. The Methodology and Fashioning of a Barbadian Cultural Policy - the Consultative Process

4.1 Over the years, there have been a number of consultations and studies on culture and the arts. However, the policy formulation process has been hindered by recommendations coming from the following:

- the National Consultation on the Cultural Policy of the Caribbean Community, 1987;
- the Consultative Committee on Cultural Policies and Activities, 1998 and 2002;
- the establishment of the National Trust for Cultural Industries and the strategic plan of the future;
- various studies and surveys produced by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the University of the West Indies, The National Cultural Foundation, CARICOM, and other cultural agencies within Barbados on the National Cultural Policy.

4.2 The Consultative Committee on Culture in 1998 was organized by the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs, and Culture. The main objectives of the Consultative Committee were to:

- set a focus on cultural development in Barbados;
- promote the role of the arts in the nation’s economic and social development; and
- identify and promote cultural policies and programs.

4.3 Some of the recommendations that emerged from the consultations have been implemented as follows:

- the establishment of the National Cultural Policy and the setting up of a National Cultural Policy Advisory Board;
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4.4 Another National Consultative Committee in 2002 was held with a similar focus on cultural development to further implementation of recommendations and to take into account the latest trends in cultural activities.
5. Objectives of the National Cultural Policy

5.1 A national cultural policy may be seen as an instrument which aims at achieving a balance between the need for development and the need for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the nation. Such a policy is intended to promote self-confidence, a sense of responsibility for one's own heritage and the nation. It aims to foster the development of the Caribbean Regional Cultural Policy, to ensure that our people become

"...our heritage is essential towards

5.2 Its main objective must be the creation of a fully developed, knowledgeable people, a people who can take their place in the world as a people and as a culture.

5.3 The main goal would be the development of the policies and programmes which are appropriate for the development of the community. This is essential for the development of the people.
6. The Role of the Government

6.1 It is the role of government to promote and facilitate positive cultural development, ensuring the protection and respect of the cultural traditions and values of the community. The government shall take appropriate measures to preserve and promote the cultural heritage, art, and traditions of the community.

7. The Framework

7.1 The cultural policy is articulated within the following framework:
   a. Policies in the Global Arena
   b. Cultural and National Development
   c. Planning a Culture of Excellence
   d. Planning National Policy and Identity
   e. Cultural Diversity
   f. Cultural Heritage Protection and Preservation
   g. Culture, Trade, and the Cultural Industries
   h. Culture and Education
   i. Cultural and Economic
   j. Cultural Spaces
   k. Cultural and Agriculture
   l. Cultural and Health
   m. Cultural and Technology
   n. Culture and the New Media
   o. Implementation and Review

8. Barbados in the Global Arena

8.1 Barbados has always played a leading role in international and Commonwealth organizations, taking up its position in an impactful but responsible and proactive manner. Like the United Nations, the Organization of American States, Government will continue to ensure the Barbados contribution to the development of our people and their culture.

8.2 The implementation of cultural activities and projects in Barbados is crucial to the development of the community, ensuring the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage and traditions.

8.3 The government shall take appropriate measures to support cultural education, arts, and cultural industries, and to promote cultural tourism. The government shall establish cultural funds and grants to support cultural development and cultural activities.
9. Culture and National Development

"Development divorced from its human or cultural context is growth without a soul. Economic development in its full flowering is a part of a people’s culture."

Policy Goal

- To ensure the overall development of the nation is done in a manner that integrates cultural and economic development.

10. Promoting a Culture of Excellence

"...it is that strategies be implemented which will encourage Barbadians to reject the acceptance of mediocrity as the norm, and to embrace instead a culture of excellence, seeking to strive always for excellence in everything they do."

Policy Goal

- To encourage and support the development of strategies which are focused on promoting excellence in all areas of life and work.

"...everywhere that Barbadians went, they earned for themselves a reputation for being a hard-working, dependable, law-abiding, resourceful people of integrity."
11. Promoting National Pride and Identity

In order to bring about the social integration and cultural development of the population, it is essential to act on the following fronts:

1. Promoting a sense of national pride and identity. This involves highlighting the contributions of different communities to the national heritage.
2. Encouraging the use of local languages and cultures in education and public life.
3. Supporting community-based initiatives to preserve traditional knowledge and cultural practices.

Policy Goals:

a. To promote and preserve the cultural diversity of the nation, recognizing the unique contributions of each community.
b. To encourage the use of local languages in education and public life.
c. To support community-based initiatives to preserve traditional knowledge and cultural practices.

12. Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity is a cornerstone of national identity. It is important to recognize and celebrate the unique contributions of each community to the national heritage.

Policy Goals:

a. To promote and preserve the cultural diversity of the nation, recognizing the unique contributions of each community.
b. To encourage the use of local languages in education and public life.
c. To support community-based initiatives to preserve traditional knowledge and cultural practices.

13. Cultural Heritage Preservation and Protection

The cultural heritage of a nation is a reflection of its history and identity. It is important to preserve and protect this heritage for future generations.

Policy Goals:

a. To promote and preserve the cultural heritage of the nation, recognizing the unique contributions of each community.
b. To encourage the use of local languages in education and public life.
c. To support community-based initiatives to preserve traditional knowledge and cultural practices.
6. Language and Unity Issues

While acknowledging the need and desire for all people to be able to communicate in standard English, we acknowledge the importance of recognizing and respecting the diversity of our nation's culture and linguistic identity. This diversity has developed over the years in a way that is uniquely shaped by the experiences and traditions of each community. Despite the differences, these communities share a common identity as one people, united in our diversity. This identity is a part of our shared heritage and is a source of our cultural richness. We recognize that our language and culture are integral to our identity as a nation.

b. Religion

Religion is an important and distinctive feature of Canadian culture. It represents a source of moral guidance and a means of expressing personal and communal values. In our society, we respect the freedom of religious expression and the role of religion in shaping moral and social norms.

After the discussion on the importance of language and religion, the next section focuses on the protection of cultural heritage. The protection of cultural heritage is essential for the preservation of our identity and the continuity of our cultural traditions. This section highlights the importance of recognizing and respecting the diversity of our heritage, emphasizing the role of cultural institutions and policies in safeguarding cultural expressions.
young people, a state and respect for their cultural heritage.

1. To implement programs for the training of teachers in the field of education, the Police Department, Cultural Officers and other relevant agencies in order to equip them to deal with issues related to the protection and promotion of cultural heritage.

"...a well-developed cultural sector has both the capacity to express the creativity of people's imagination with its products and services, as well as the potential to generate meaningful employment for individuals and provide opportunities for earning foreign exchange."

14. Culture, Trade and the Cultural Industries

14.3 It is recognized that a well-developed cultural sector has the ability to enhance the economy and create jobs. A strong cultural sector can contribute to the development of trade and the cultural industries, and can provide meaningful employment for individuals and communities, as well as promoting the cultural identity of a nation.

15. Culture and Education

15.1 Education has always been well known for its links with cultural development. A nation that values education, promotes cultural heritage and invests in its cultural institutions is likely to have a strong and vibrant culture. This is because education is the foundation for the development and growth of a country.

Policy Goals

a. To create an environment that encourages the participation of students in cultural activities and initiatives.

b. To promote the use of cultural materials in educational materials and curricula.

c. To encourage the development of cultural industries and promote the use of cultural products in the education sector.

15.2 The role of education is crucial in the development of the cultural identity of a nation. Education plays a vital role in shaping the cultural values and attitudes of individuals. It is important that education is integrated into the curriculum and that cultural values and traditions are taught in schools. This will help to ensure that the next generation of citizens is aware of their cultural heritage and proud of their roots.

Policy Goals

a. To create an environment that promotes the participation of students in cultural activities and initiatives.

b. To promote the use of cultural materials in educational materials and curricula.

c. To encourage the development of cultural industries and promote the use of cultural products in the education sector.

15.3 Young people are the future of any country and their role in shaping the cultural identity of the nation is crucial. It is important that young people are provided with opportunities to participate in cultural activities and initiatives. This will help to ensure that they are aware of their cultural heritage and proud of their roots.

Policy Goals

a. To create an environment that promotes the participation of young people in cultural activities and initiatives.

b. To promote the use of cultural materials in educational materials and curricula.

c. To encourage the development of cultural industries and promote the use of cultural products in the education sector.
16. Culture and Tourism

Tourism offers a significant contribution to the economy of the Caribbean. At the same time, it must be recognized that Tourism, like any other industry, has the potential to enhance the quality of life, foster social cohesion, and improve the well-being of the people. It is important to recognize the need to balance the benefits of tourism with the preservation of local cultures and traditions.

17. Culture and Sports

The role played by sports in Caribbean development is well recognized. On the one hand, sports can provide opportunities for personal development, fostering values such as discipline, teamwork, and respect. On the other hand, sports can also be a source of cultural identity and pride.

18. Culture and Agriculture

For many years, agriculture was the primary source of livelihood in the region. However, the expansion of commercial agriculture and the development of agricultural inputs has brought about a significant change in the way in which agriculture is practiced. There is now a greater emphasis on sustainable practices and the promotion of local, sustainable food systems.
19. Culture and Health

The recent and rapid changes in our technology and society have led to a rise in the rate of suicide in our population. Modern living, which is characterized by rapid change and economic pressures, can lead to feelings of anxiety and depression, and the rise of mental health issues is a concern. Our health care system needs to change, and we must focus on maintaining and promoting mental health.

Policy Goals
A. Promote mental health by providing accessible and affordable mental health services.
B. Support research into mental health issues and their causes.
C. Encourage policies that promote mental health awareness and understanding.

“...an increasing number of tourists, particularly those who are interested in ecotourism, are looking for destinations which produce their own foods...”

21. Culture and the Mass Media

Since the end of colonialism, the media has become an important tool in disseminating culture and entertainment. However, the impact of mass media on culture is not always positive. The availability of mass media has led to the spread of cultural values and practices that are not always appropriate for our society.

Policy Goals
A. Encourage the development of cultural content that is appropriate for our society.
B. Promote the use of technology to support cultural heritage.
C. Protect cultural heritage from the influence of mass media.

“...technological advancement is essential to overall national development.”
22. Implementation and Review

22.1 As important as the formulation of a national cultural policy is the ensuring of a proper basis for its implementation. This means that a concrete implementation strategy is needed in order to guarantee the continuity of state support and financial investments in the cultural field.

22.2 Implementation:

a. Direct the Ministry responsible for Cultural Affairs and Culture to work on raising public awareness about the importance of cultural life in all regions in order to encourage the participation of the general public in cultural affairs.

b. Provide a comprehensive review of the policy within a period of five years.