GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Students Empowered with Lifesaving Skills Through Street Doctors Training Programme

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Fourteen secondary school students from across the Virgin Islands have successfully completed the Street Doctors training programme, an initiative designed to empower young people to become peer leaders, positive influencers, and advocates for safer communities.

Students from Elmore Stoutt High School, Bregado Flax Educational Centre, Claudia Creque Educational Centre, St. George's Secondary School, the Virgin Islands School of Technical Studies (VISTS), and the BVI Seventh-day Adventist School participated in the three-day training experience which focused on youth leadership, peer facilitation, violence prevention, and equipping students with the confidence to guide and support their peers.

The programme is a United Kingdom-based initiative founded by Chief Executive Officer Mr. Martin Tilbury and funded through the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). The initiative works with young people to address youth violence by placing them at the centre of solutions. Students develop leadership skills, learn how to facilitate meaningful conversations among their peers, and gain practical knowledge that enables them to respond effectively in emergency situations.

Mr. Tilbury explained that the programme is grounded in the belief that young people are powerful agents of change within their own communities."Street Doctors is a charity that supports young people by providing education and training about the physical and psychological impacts of violence," Mr. Tilbury said, adding, "One of the key things we believe in is co-designing our work with young people and having them be part of the solution. That's why we empower young people to train their peers."

Mr. Tilbury noted that the initiative began in the Virgin Islands with focus group discussions that allowed facilitators to better understand the perspectives and realities of local youth before delivering the three-day training programme.

"The group here in the BVI have been absolutely awesome," he said. "They came in on the first day quite quiet, but by the end of the programme they had developed greater knowledge, skills and confidence and now want to go out and help others."

Acting Governor Mr. David D. Archer Jr. welcomed the initiative and highlighted the importance of partnerships in delivering programmes that support youth development and community safety. “I extend my sincere gratitude to our partners in the United Kingdom for their continued support in bringing programmes like Street Doctors to the Virgin Islands. This initiative represents a meaningful investment in the future of our young people — equipping them with lifesaving skills, leadership abilities, and the confidence to guide and support their peers,” Mr. Archer said.

Mr. Archer Jr commended the strong collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Health and Social Development, whose partnership was instrumental in ensuring that programmes like this reach young people in meaningful and impactful ways. “When we empower our youth, we strengthen the foundations of our communities, and I am incredibly proud of the positive role these young leaders are already poised to play in shaping a safer, healthier Virgin Islands,” He added.

Chief Education Officer Mrs. Orlandette Crabbe encouraged the students to see themselves as leaders and role models within their schools. Mrs. Crabbe said, “We are pleased to see you here thriving and sharing that this was a productive experience. When you return to your schools, we hope you will tell others about what you have learned and ensure that the lessons from this week do not end here. Pay it forward and pour into someone else.”

Director of the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports Ms. Debra Hodge also commended the students for their participation and growth throughout the programme. “Young people, you all are phenomenal and we are beyond proud of the work that you have done,” Ms. Hodge said.

Students presented group projects highlighting the lessons learned throughout the programme and the ways they intend to engage their peers when they return to their schools during the closing ceremony on March 4. Participants also took part in a reflective exercise where they attached “roots” and “leaves” to a symbolic tree. The roots represented the foundational lessons gained during the programme, while the leaves reflected the knowledge, values, and positive messages they

intend to share with others.

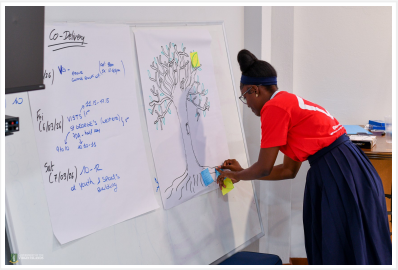
Initiatives such as the Street Doctors programme reflect the Virgin Islands' commitment to empowering young people to become leaders and active contributors to safer, healthier communities. The students who completed the training are expected to return to their schools and share their knowledge with their peers, helping to strengthen a culture of leadership, responsibility, and positive influence among youth across the Territory.

For Additional Information Contact:

Ms. Angelique Lettsome
Information Officer I
Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports
Telephone: 1-284-468-9448
Email: anlettsome@gov.vg

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