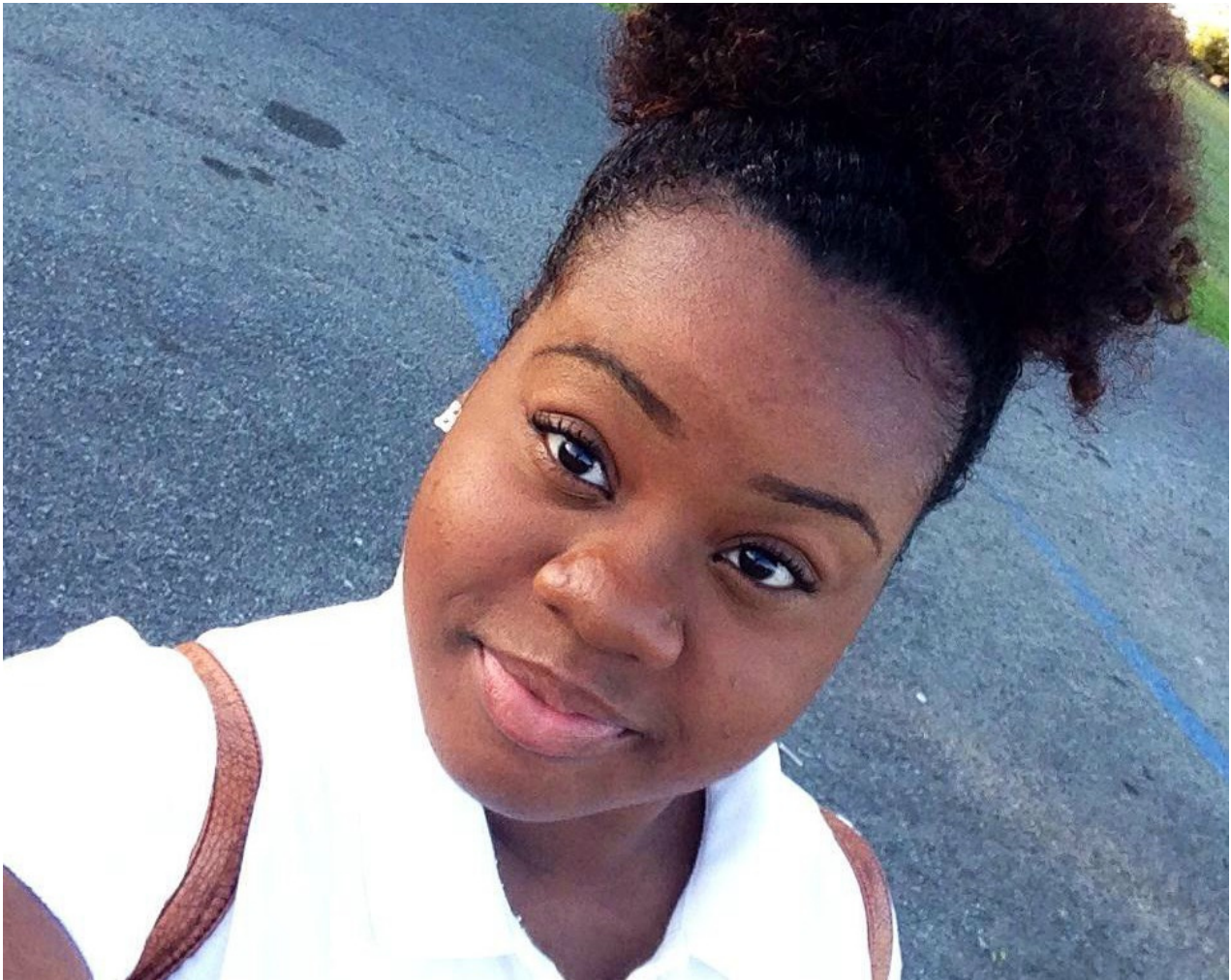


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Op-Ed: Wisdom From A Teen: Dear Government, Listen To Your Community

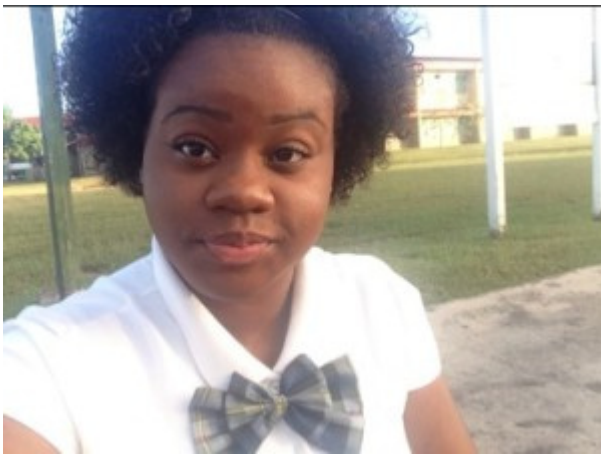
Opinion / **Published On May 21, 2015 01:41 AM /**

Staff **May 21, 2015**



Another article read, another radio broadcast heard, another frustrated V.I. resident pushes her cart down supermarket aisles pointing out community problems.

It makes me think for a minute and ask: Why isn't there a community committee to bridge the gap between the Government of the Virgin Islands (GVI) and the people? Why aren't there more conferences between officials and the community? No, I don't mean showcases where they use complex lexicon to throw off listeners. Residents aren't going to know "government" terms, unless we have a pocket handbook ready.



St. Croix Educational Complex Senior,

Hannah Rantan

What about concentration conferences where they don't make excuses, but take responsibility? I'm tired of hearing, "We don't have funds". Maybe they would, if they had fresh ideas. Maybe they should open up the mic to the community and let us suggest. I don't mean an actual, physical mic but how about each community, (Estate Whim, Grove Place, Mon Bijou, Sion Farm etc) create their own "board of residents" and have their chosen "presidents", sit with senators to relay what exactly needs to be fixed, what is going well, and present ideas to become better.

Test run the community committee by volunteer, and those who are serious may receive payment.

Allow me to use a metaphor to help explain my position: I've never seen a doctor diagnose without first asking/assessing the patient to check for symptoms. Furthermore, you can't help the people if you don't communicate with them. I don't want to be spoken to only around campaign season.

I'm fed up with hearing complains about the problem, I'm ready to hear the solutions. -- Hannah Rantan.

Now, let's address the "impossible problem" of lack of money and the abundance of violence: If the government needs money, and if tourism is our biggest source of revenue, and if violence is displayed by young black teens (males) because of idleness/lack of finances, and if young black teens love horses...why not start a horseback riding ranch where the teens take care of the horses and give these tours? The government gets a new revenue source by offering it as an excursion to cruise ships or independent travel guests, the teens have something productive to do, history and knowledge of culture/tradition is passed down, and they are making money while doing something they love.

Minors in school can take care/groom/temper the horses after school, and graduates/adults can give the tours. Horses may not be everyone's thing. [Remember that bike trail](#)? There are talented teens that can take a bike apart, customize it and put it back together with ease! The custom bikes can be rented for a fee and maintained by teens. Both the needs of the GVI and teen are considered.

I'm fed up with hearing complaints about the problem, I'm ready to hear the solutions.

Submitted by:

Hannah Rantan, St. Croix Educational Complex student

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