



# Trinidad & Tobago Nikolai Beharry

*"Imagine you are the Minister of Tourism for your island. What would you do, and what projects could you create, to help bring locals and tourists closer together?"*

In my country, Trinidad and Tobago, there is too much crime and bias against tourists by our citizens. Locals are often considered disrespectful, unfriendly, and hostile. Tourists are sometimes thought of as being wealthy and exploiting our people and natural resources. As the Minister of Tourism, I would try to create a culture of peace in our island through education, cultural exchanges, and creation of jobs for locals. To achieve this, I would introduce several projects to encourage friendlier and hospitable relationships between citizens and visitors.

As my first project, I would set up two permanent cultural villages at the Queens Park Savannah. One would provide cultural entertainment for visitors and also depict the various aspects of our cosmopolitan people's cultures and traditions—our food, music, religious festivities, steel pan, Carnival etc. Another cultural village will showcase the countries, cultures, and traditions of our more frequent visitors. Such cultural exchanges will encourage better understanding and acceptance of each other's cultures and traditions and help reduce discrimination.

Additionally, I would use the television, newspapers, radio and internet to help educate citizens and tourists about each other's customs, traditions and values. I would also ask our religious leaders to educate their congregation about foreign cultures and tourists' needs and ask them to help spread the wonderful message of love and peace to their communities.

I would support teaching Tourism as a compulsory subject in primary schools. Children are our future leaders and they should be taught good etiquette and how to be friendly, courteous, and respectable towards tourists. Here, students would also be introduced to careers in tourism and taught the economic benefits to our citizens and country.

In order to reduce crime and improve the relationship between locals and tourists, I would provide security for tourists during tours. I will increase mobile police patrols and put police security booths at our popular tourist attractions. I will also willingly introduce laws to catch persons found guilty of showing disrespect towards tourists and have a complaints section where tourists can lodge complaints.

I would begin several community projects to show locals how tourists can be beneficial to them. These projects would train people for jobs in the hospitality industry such as tour guides, cooks, maids, bartenders, supervisors and managers paying special attention to good manners, friendliness and customer service. Additionally, persons in rural areas would be taught how to use forestry materials for making souvenirs and handicraft products.

As Minister of Tourism, I would introduce several projects to bring locals and tourists closer together. These projects would show citizens how important tourists are to their families, communities, and country. They would educate tourists about our religious and cultural diversity. By providing education, training, jobs for locals, and better security and cultural knowledge for tourists, we can help reduce bias, hatred, and unfriendliness. As Minister of Tourism in Trinidad and Tobago, I would introduce projects to promote peace and create a more amicable, cordial, and hospitable relationship between our citizens and foreigners.



*"Children are our future leaders and they should be taught good etiquette and how to be friendly, courteous, and respectable towards tourists."*



# Turks & Caicos

# Jesthea Saunders

*"Imagine you are the Minister of Tourism for your island. What would you do, and what projects could you create, to help bring locals and tourists closer together?"*

**H**i, my name is Jesthea Saunders. I'm from the unspoilt, beautiful by nature, Turks and Caicos Islands, commonly called T.C.I. My country consists of over forty limestone islands and cays, lying peacefully in the North Atlantic Ocean. Tourism is our lifeline! Therefore, every one of us has a part to play to sustain its growth. Needless to say, our politicians have a major responsibility in its development. If I were the Minister of Tourism, my approach would be one which involves all tourism stakeholders cooperatively, creating meaningful projects that would bring locals and tourists closer together.

I would work in collaboration with related ministries such as the Ministry of Education, and bring together teams of tourism advisers from each of our eight inhabited islands, along with church leaders and community leaders, to help make my dream a reality. I would share my vision for the true integration of locals and tourists in TCI, and then modifications to my four point plan would be made before they were materialized.

Firstly, if we were to be successful in our undertakings, then sensitization and training would be very important steps in achieving our goal. It is here that I would work with my colleagues in the Ministry of Education and the computer unit to create interactive computer software with easy step learning of basic words in Spanish, French, and English. This would be designed to assist persons in our multi-cultural communities, who would then be more able to communicate with the varying nationalities of tourists who visit our country, and who so frequently seek simple information such as directions for streets and historical sights. On this note, software would also be created to offer historical information on each of our islands, to locals and expatriates, so they could offer the necessary assistance to tourists, creating meaningful interactions. This software would be distributed to every school, business, and household throughout our islands.

Secondly, as the Minister of Tourism, I would seek to convince my team of the need for a monthly Food and Cultural Evening. This is where local restaurants and community clubs would join to showcase our foods. Here, local dishes such as cracked conch, conch fritters, and crab and rice would be displayed and served to our tourists. Locally made candies and ice cream from our smallest island, Salt Cay, would also be highly promoted by Salt Cay residents. This would help promote tourism in Salt Cay and by mingling, bring locals and tourists together.

Tourists would also be able to spend the evening with locals, enjoying cultural presentations outside their hotel rooms. Here, representatives of every major nationality in my country would organize cultural packages to be presented to them. This would cater for regional and international tourists of all ages in our islands, who would be able to join in with the locals and expatriates, singing songs, dancing, viewing amusing dramatizations, story-telling, and poetry.

Thirdly, I would target the media by creating a television talk show called "Religious Reception". This would be geared towards educating and informing religious groups of ways of being hospitable to tourists who visit their churches. With this on stream, someone will be employed in my ministry to work with pastors and priests to coordinate church service visits by tourists.

Fourthly, I would introduce swimming pool sports in every island. Local teens would be spontaneously mixed with visitors to play volleyball and tug-of-war in the pool. Winners would be rewarded with complimentary drinks and souvenirs. While this is going on at the cruise centre, the older tourists would be out sightseeing and relaxing on our beaches to the sound of local ripsaw music.

The end result of these innovations would be an increase in tourists' arrival at our destination, and more revenue through increased spending by them. Also, locals would feel more connected with the tourist and would be less likely to treat them as intruders, while the tourists would enjoy a real island experience. Our country would definitely be a vacation spot with a difference, as locals and tourists would be brought closer together.



*"Tourism is our lifeline! Therefore, every one of us has a part to play to sustain its growth."*

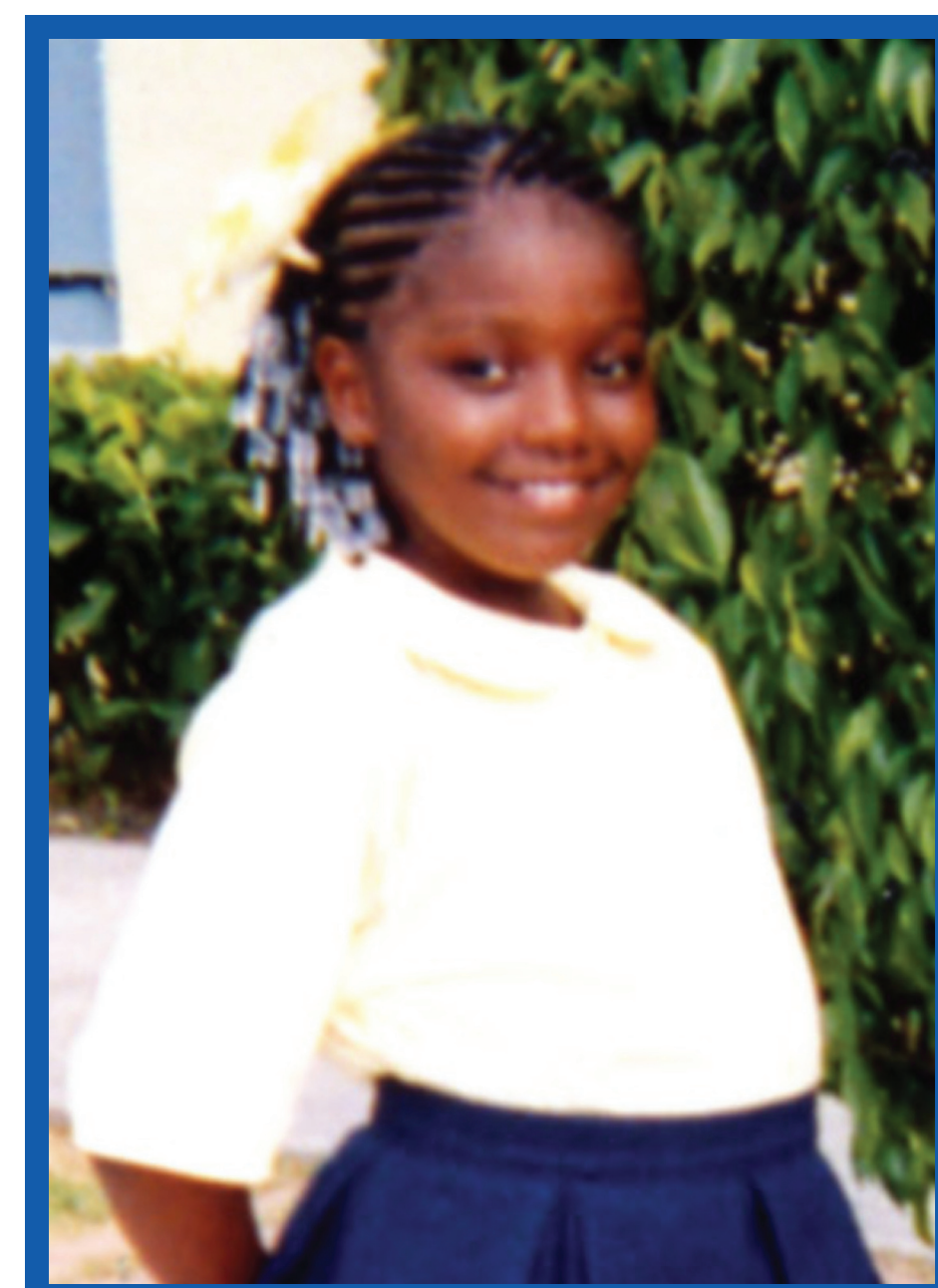


# U.S. Virgin Islands Sh'Nae Carr

*"Imagine you are the Minister of Tourism for your island. What would you do, and what projects could you create, to help bring locals and tourists closer together?"*

**O**ur Virgin Islands are rich in culture, diversity, and beauty. This is why the Virgin Islands are called Paradise. My island, St. Croix, has many beaches, attractions, historical aspects, and friendly people. There are many places to go and people to see. This is why I want to do everything I can to enhance the wealth of my island.

I am the Commissioner of Tourism. When tourists arrive in my island, I, Sh'nae Carr, will hire a tour guide to take the tourists around the island. The tour guide will show them all the locals and what they do all day and for a living. If the tourists like St. Croix and are planning to stay, my tour guide can convince them to enroll their children into schools, giving the principals more funds for the students' education.



While my tour guide is doing that, I can hire a person to advertise on television and on radio that there will be a big party at Cramer's Park. It will be at 12 pm until sunset. There at Cramer's Park the tourists will get an opportunity to socialize with the people of St. Croix. Children are also allowed to attend. There is a history behind Cramer's Park and how it got its name.

The next day, the tour guide will take the tourists on a science tour of the island. There, they will get a first hand account of St. Croix and what it has to offer. They will learn about slavery, the fireburn, different historical buildings, our forts and museum factories, one of our main industries, Hovensa, and the discovery of St. Croix by Christopher Columbus. Did you know that the Caribs called St. Croix "Ay-Ay"?

Like I said, my island is very beautiful and as Commissioner of Tourism, my aim is to expose St. Croix and let everyone know that we are truly an island in Paradise.

*"The tour guide will show them all the locals and what they do all day and for a living."*