



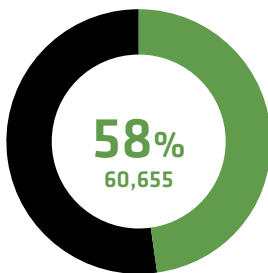
# Diaspora engagement mapping

## SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

### Facts & figures<sup>1</sup>

#### Emigration

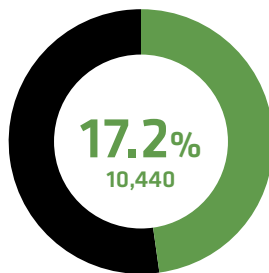
% of emigrants in total population



♂ 48%  
♀ 52%



% of which in the EU



♂ 47.5%  
♀ 52.5%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **7.3%**  
Remittances inflow (USD million): **70**



#### Top countries of destination

United States	27,320
Canada	13,786
United Kingdom	10,277
Trinidad and Tobago	6,922
Barbados	3,143



#### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>2</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad



### Diaspora Policy of the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 2013



St Vincent and the Grenadines' (SVG) diaspora policy has its roots in the Vincy Homecoming 2009 event geared towards engaging diaspora in the National Agenda, under the banner "As one people in Many Lands, we shape our nation with many hands". The policy recognises the contribution of diaspora "to the development of their homeland" as it represents an "important source of external capital for developing economies, and in many instances surpassing revenues for foreign direct investment and overseas development aid." The government considers that "the maintenance of Diaspora identity is tied to the state's ability to promote among emigrants and their descendants a sense of belonging."

<sup>1</sup> According to the High Commission, 24,000 Vincentian nationals currently reside in the UK.

<sup>2</sup> In 2023, the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Parliament amended the citizenship law allowing for "second-generation Vincentians" born overseas to be considered for citizenship. Under the Constitution, a person is automatically a Vincentian at birth – regardless of where they are born – if the person has at least one parent who was born here. Available at: <https://caribbean.loopnews.com/content/amended-law-offers-citizenship-second-generation-vincentians>.

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2013 ● **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013-2025** refers to diaspora under Goal 3 “Promoting Good Governance and Increasing the Effectiveness of Public Administration”, Objective 3.5, Strategic Innovations: “Enhance the engagement of the Diaspora in decision-making and the State’s foreign policy.”

### » Trends

Overall, the diaspora engagement landscape in SVG reflects several key trends and dynamics. The country’s recognition of the importance of its diaspora is evidenced by the establishment of the Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit in 2007, the formulation of a comprehensive diaspora engagement policy in 2013, and the implementation of initiatives such as the Vincy Homecoming celebration in 2009, and ongoing programmes such as the Garifuna Homecoming Rights of Passage and Pilgrimage. Strategic partnerships and crisis management efforts, particularly in response to natural disasters (e.g. the 2021 volcanic eruptions), attest to successful collaboration between the government and diaspora organisations. Furthermore, efforts have been made to enhance consular services, such as the establishment of consulates in New York City and Toronto.

### Obstacles



- **Informal remittances:** The 2013 Diaspora Policy identified that while formal channels, “including the financial institutions (Banks and Credit Union) have been used, remittances to SVG have mainly been through informal channels. As a result, the remittance market is seen as being underdeveloped. The informal nature of transfers and the lack of full and reliable data on remittances make it difficult for developing economies to capture its true developmental impact.”
- **Lack of data:** There is a scarcity of official statistics regarding migrants, including returnees to the country.
- **Lack of opportunities:** According to certain media reports, some Vincentians are hesitant to return due to perceived insufficient opportunities, lack of facilities, and SVG’s poverty levels. They draw comparisons with the opportunities and living conditions in their countries of residence, particularly highlighting concerns about limited job prospects and unfavorable long-term career outlooks.

### SPOTLIGHT: effective practices



#### The Garifuna Homecoming Rights of Passage and Pilgrimage Programme 2008

Focused on the preservation of cultural identities and community engagement, the initiative aims to reconnect Garifuna people with their ancestral roots and traditions. After a hiatus of a few years due to the global pandemic, the programme resumed in 2023.

## The Vincy Homecoming 2009

Organised under the auspices of the Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit Office, the event strategically advocated for the diaspora's involvement in the national agenda, laying the groundwork for the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' Diaspora Policy. In 2022 the VINCY Diaspora Dialogue "Re-engaging the Vincentian Diaspora in a post-Covid & post-eruption era", was organised by the SVG Diaspora Inc of NYC inc. with the cooperation and participation of high-level officials. The action-oriented conferences have facilitated the sharing of experiences, knowledge and ideas, both from individual and organizational perspectives on various issues such as national development, the promotion of cultural heritage, and strengthening a sense of national belonging.

COMMUNICATION,  
ADVOCACY

## Mapping the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Diaspora 2015-2017

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted a mapping in close collaboration with the Government of Saint Vincent's Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit (RIDU). The primary goal of this initiative was to identify capacities and skills within the St. Vincent diaspora. The project registered Vincentian diaspora in North America and the Caribbean, and documented skills, resources, and the diaspora's propensity towards return migration.

DATA

## SVG Disaster Relief Initiative Platform (SVG-DRIP) 2021

Exposed to natural disasters, in 2021 the island endured the severe consequences of volcanic eruptions. Numerous diaspora organizations extended their support through financial contributions and in-kind donations. SVG Relief USA, Inc. dispatched two containers with relief supplies and donated US\$20,000. Other organizations also made contributions, with the UK-SVG Friendship Trust donating EC\$ 330,000 (about US\$122,000) to the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The Trust collaborated with the SVG High Commission, the National Council of St Vincent and the Grenadines Association UK, and over 7000 donors to raise the funds, which were promptly distributed to those affected.<sup>3</sup> One of the first ventures of the integrated platform was to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline healthcare workers in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT,  
HUMANITARIAN AID

## The Vincy Diaspora Dialogue 2023

Organised under the auspices of the Vincentian Consulate in New York and the SVG Diaspora Committee of NY Inc., the event focused on community re-engagement activities post-pandemic and natural disasters. Among other topics of interest, the debates focused on the targeted engagement of youth in the US through social media channels and the establishment of a youth-centred sub-committee, the need for continued community dialogues, leadership transitions in the Vincy diaspora, capacity building for diaspora organisations and accessing new streams of funding.

ADVOCACY

<sup>3</sup> For further information please refer to: <https://www.caribbeanlife.com/svg-govt-grateful-for-volcanic-relief/> and <https://caribbean.loopnews.com/content/st-vincent-receives-volcano-aid-uk-svg-friendship-trust>.

## Annex:

# List of Actors

### Diaspora related institutions

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

#### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade**

The Ministry is responsible for coordinating Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' relations with foreign governments, as well as regional and international organizations. The Ministry oversees the coordination of Saint Vincent and The Grenadines's foreign policy and handles interactions with the diaspora through its network of embassies, consulates, and honorary consuls. Its representatives play an active role in diaspora engagement, participating and contributing to international events such as the "VINCY Diaspora Dialogue" organised in New York in 2022.

#### **Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Sustainable Development and Culture**

The Ministry is actively involved in coordinating events and programs that engage the diaspora, including through its Carnival Development Corporation, promoting cultural identities abroad through dance and music.

#### **Ministry of Finance and Planning**

The Ministry includes the Customs and Excise Department division, responsible for various functions. Notably, in relation to diaspora, this unit is tasked with overseeing the implementation of "Duty-free concessions for returning nationals."

- At sub-ministerial level

#### **The Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit**, RIDU 2007

RIDU functions under the purview of the Office of the Prime Minister. Its director has ambassadorial rank and serves as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines's Ambassador to the CARICOM and OECS. The fully-staffed unit functions collaboratively with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in implementing the Government's regional agenda and is a main point of contact for CARICOM and the OECS. Along with these responsibilities, RIDU was also created to serve as a vehicle through which closer ties with the Vincentian Diaspora could be facilitated.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Office of the Prime Minister. Available at: <https://pmoffice.gov.vc/pmoffice/index.php/historybackground>. Media. Available at: <https://thevincentian.com/ulp-view-caricom-week-reflection-on-regional-integration-p22218-107.htm>.

## Diaspora organisations in Europe



### **SVG Friendship Foundation (UK)** 2020 United Kingdom

#### **Development activities**

The SVG Friendship Foundation replaces the UK-Friendship Trust. The Foundation's objectives remain those to promote and provide for the advancement of education, poverty alleviation and to humanitarian assistance in response to natural disasters in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In 2021, the UK-SVG Friendship Trust donated "EC 330,000 dollars to the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as part of its ongoing commitment to assist with the relief efforts following the series of volcanic eruptions which have had an adverse impact on many lives and livelihoods in the country."<sup>5</sup>

### **Vincy Alliance Mas** 2012 United Kingdom

#### **Integration activities**

The Vincy Alliance was established in 2012 to support the Nottinghill Carnival.

### **Vincentian British Forces Wives/Women Association** 2011 United Kingdom

#### **Development activities**

Focused on women, the VBFWA contributes to the sustainable development of vulnerable communities and the country as whole, through partnerships and ample collaborations. The Group which started as Vincentian Army Wives/Women Association was renamed VBFWA so as not to exclude women who might be serving in the Royal Air Force or the Royal Navy.

### **SV2G (Saint Vincent and the 2nd Generation)** 2003 United Kingdom

#### **Integration activities**

According to its official webpage, the SV2G was established in 2003 as an African and Caribbean Arts & Heritage organisation. Based in High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire, which has the largest population of Vincentians in the UK, SV2G is one of the leading Vincentian organisations in the UK Diaspora. As a registered Charity, SV2G offers a range of creative arts and heritage programmes that empower and develop young people of various diverse backgrounds. The work of the organisation includes managing the School of Steelpan, Wycombe Steel Orchestra, Carnival Arts programmes and a range of African and Caribbean heritage projects.

### **The National Council of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (NCSVGA)** 1993 United Kingdom

#### **Integration activities**

NCSVGA is a philanthropic, non-political organisation involved in providing social and cultural support to those of Caribbean descent. Amongst its goals is to promote charitable activities for the benefit of Vincentians, family and friends, including the relief of poverty, to organise cultural and educational activities and to provide a forum for discussion.

5 Loop, "Saint Vincent receives volcano aid from UK-SVG Friendship Trust", 19 July 2021. Available at: <https://caribbean.loopnews.com/content/st-vincent-receives-volcano-aid-uk-svg-friendship-trust>.

## **Saint Vincent and The Grenadines and Friends Association (Reading)** 1983 United Kingdom

### **Integration activities**

The Saint Vincent & The Grenadines Association (Reading) was founded in 1983 to promote charitable activities for the benefit of Vincentians both in the UK and in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). These include promoting social inclusion for members and beneficiaries who are excluded from society on the grounds of their ethnic origin, age or physical abilities; promoting health and wellbeing among the members; and fundraising to help victims of natural disasters in the Caribbean. In order to reflect the large number of people who are not of Vincentian heritage but who contribute to support the organisation's activities and to reflect inclusivity, the executive board amended the name to "Saint Vincent & The Grenadines and Friends Association Reading."

## **SVGA UK** United Kingdom

### **Integration activities**

SVGA UK functions as an umbrella organization, and has a membership of seven Vincentian groups and community associations. One of its main priorities is to further engage Vincentian organisations active in the UK to promote social cohesion, cultural heritage and overall community welfare.

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