



Philanthropy & Community

Approaching hurricane rebuilding through a holistic, community-based lens.

Philanthropy is

THE LOVE OF HUMANKIND

Philanthropy is

TRANSFORMATIONAL rather than transactional

Philanthropy is

COLLABORATION not competition

In the immediate aftermath of any disaster, nonprofit organizations often serve to fill critical gaps that compromised governmental systems cannot. Today nonprofits in the Virgin Islands are best positioned to *know* and serve their community in very deep ways that are sustainable.

Speak up about

EQUITY

CULTURE

COLLABORATION

EMPOWERMENT

CHANGE

For more information about St. Croix Foundation and our work post-hurricane, please visit us at www.stxfoundation.org or phone 340.773.9898.

St. Croix Foundation for Community Development

Over the course of the next 5 weeks, the Foundation will be publishing a series on the role of philanthropy in the aftermath of two Category 5 hurricanes to emphasize the importance of the nonprofit sector, which ensures a sustainable recovery by (1) recognizing equity in serving our most vulnerable populations; (2) embracing culture and heritage as a critical component of building public will for community development, (3) utilizing collaboration to leverage scarce resources, (4) empowering people to advocate for systemic change and take action, and (5) affecting positive change that benefits *all* members of our community.

Since the hurricanes, nonprofits and countless grassroots movements have proven that their innovation, flexibility, and community-based approach to immediate relief and long-term rebuilding serve to fill vital gaps and, at the same time, build capacity for the future prosperity of the territory. We fundamentally believe that our nonprofits are coalescing around the most holistic vision that is cohesive and involves every segment of our community. That's community development. That's why St. Croix Foundation exists. *That's the power of philanthropy.*

In this election year, the Foundation urges residents, candidates for public office, our private sector, and nonprofits themselves to demonstrate the power of philanthropy by ensuring that the civic sector is sitting at the table to provide data, expertise, passion, and the love of humankind to help inform our collective rebuilding efforts. *Together we can (and do!) make a difference.*





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Equity is
SOCIAL & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Equity
BUILDS PUBLIC TRUST & WILL

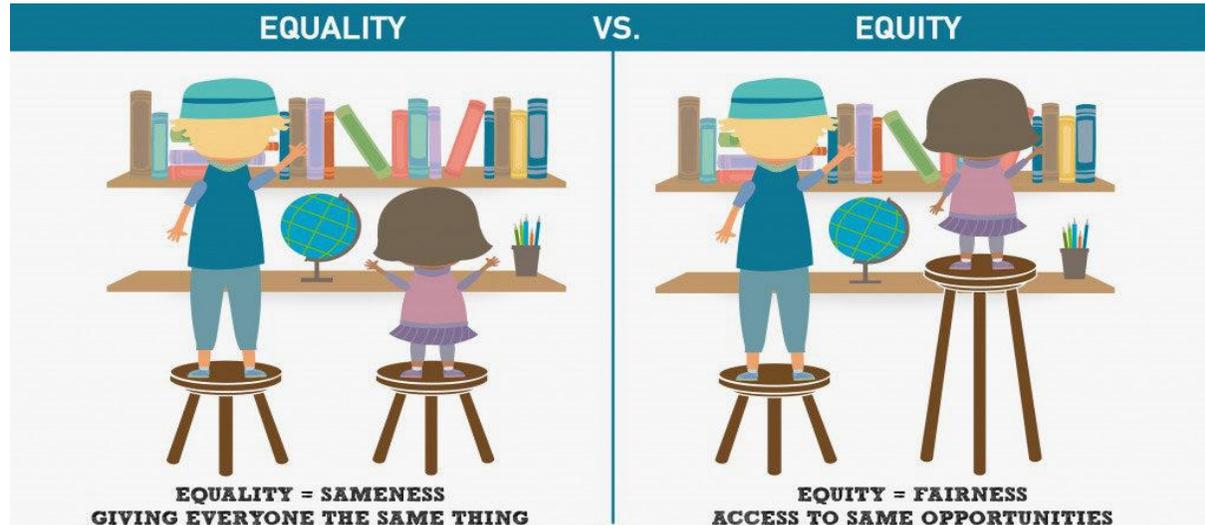
Equity is
DATA-DRIVEN

Natural disasters often exacerbate existing socioeconomic challenges and issues of equity. By using a data-driven approach to rebuilding, our community can focus on an equitable recovery that includes every member of our community. When everyone is healthy, the power of community grows exponentially and we enhance everyone's wellbeing.

Speak up about

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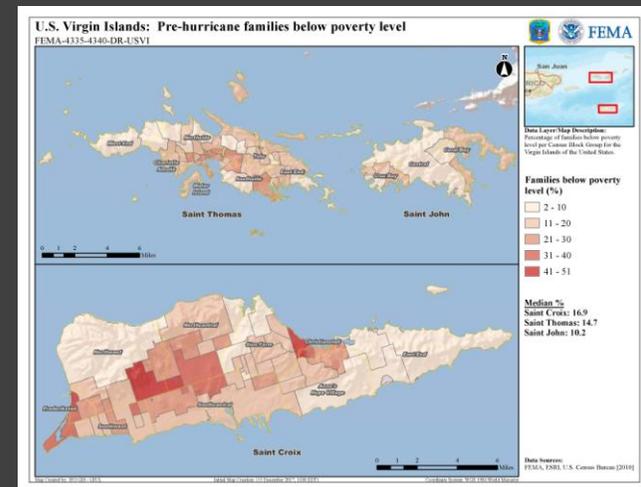
St. Croix Foundation for Community Development

Equity is not about giving everyone the same thing. It's about ensuring *access* to the same opportunities. At the Foundation, we ground our approach to philanthropy in equity by utilizing *data* to identify our priorities and inform our strategic agenda in the wake of the hurricanes. Every single day, it is our nonprofit sector that strives to meet the needs of those most disenfranchised in our community. By strengthening this sector, we are building capacity for our entire community as, together, we address the needs of today while nurturing resilience for tomorrow.

In holistic approaches to community development, equity builds public trust. Taking into consideration the demographic realities of St. Croix, with higher poverty rates and fewer economic resources, St. Croix Foundation is increasingly sensitized to the need for our community to deepen its commitment to a framework of equity. We are, in turn, holding ourselves, our partners, and our policy makers accountable for ensuring that all decisions purposefully support practices and policies that are equitable and just. The formula is simple: direct the most equitable share of resources to those most vulnerable and least served.

As diverse groups finalize their rebuilding plans, the Foundation urges residents, candidates for public office, our private sector, and nonprofits to demonstrate the power of philanthropy by using *data* to make equitable decisions that serve to lift the entire Virgin Islands to greater, sustainable prosperity.

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Culture is the

SOCIAL HERITAGE OF A PEOPLE

Culture

BRIDGES SOCIETAL GAPS

Culture is a

POWERFUL ECONOMIC DRIVER

As resources begin to flow in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the Virgin Islands has an opportunity to rebuild using the inherent assets of each island community. By establishing arts and culture as a cornerstone of our rebuilding efforts, the Territory can preserve the spirit and heritage of our People while supporting an inclusive yet distinctive community plan.

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Culture is commonly defined as the knowledge, beliefs, arts and customs of a People. Today, as the Territory's recovery efforts are framed by abstract concepts like 'resiliency' and 'sustainability', the Foundation believes that grounding our rebuilding strategies in the culture and heritage of our people can serve as a holistic approach to community development.

Over the past two years, St. Croix Foundation has been doing some building of our own—community building! Seeking to nurture and support a community-centric blueprint for the future, we have been convening diverse segments of our community on the island of St. Croix. And there is one common thread that connects our community's vision: *culture*.

Culture documents our heritage, nurturing the social fabric that feeds the young and old. Culture can cultivate understanding, community engagement, and a shared vision. Recognizing and embracing each island's unique DNA can point us to a resilient and sustainable future!

As a place-based community foundation, St. Croix Foundation is charting a radical new course to recovery for our community. We have drawn the conclusion that in small, isolated communities grounding investments in *Community and Culture* presents a viable pathway to a sustainable recovery. Together, We Can (*and do*) Make a Difference!



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Collaboration is
**AN EFFECTIVE
COMMUNITY
BUILDING TOOL**

While Hurricanes Irma and Maria have presented unparalleled challenges for the Territory, the storms have also highlighted the intrinsic value of collaboration in small communities. As we all witnessed our community working together to clear roads; partnering with expats to ship and distribute relief aid; and joining forces to ferry water and food and batteries between islands, there's no question that when put to the test, we are natural collaborators.

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St. Croix Foundation for Community Development

Collaboration is broadly defined as *individuals or groups working together, combining their strengths and negotiating weaknesses to accomplish a set of goals.*

As a hybrid operating foundation - a direct service provider *and* grantmaker as well as a community convener and facilitator - St. Croix Foundation has honed the specialized skill of collaboration over our 27 years of service to our community. In fact, we simply could not have accomplished a fraction of our programmatic and operational successes without a collaborative approach to our work.

We also know that collaboration is a skill that develops over time. Having dedicated many years to building partnerships with both private, public, and nonprofit entities, we have learned in an intimate way how challenging of an exercise collaboration can be when convening diverse sectors around important, complex issues.

Today, we are encouraged to witness a level of organic collaboration that is increasingly becoming the norm in our nonprofit sector. But, we also know that in order for our community to maximize the current flow of federal and philanthropic resources, we have to make it an intentional practice to begin with the end in mind, leveraging every dollar to go farther. There is no question that the storms have afforded us all an unprecedented opportunity to re-assess and re-frame our core values. As we strive to support our nonprofit partners and our community, we know that collaboration is central vehicle for manifesting a collective vision.

The work of St. Croix Foundation begins and ends with a razor-sharp focus on the principle of collaboration. Through collaboration we give equitable voice to partners in our island's critical nonprofit sector thus strengthening our ability to focus resources and ensure deeper impact. We hope you'll join us in enhancing our collective vision for recovery.

In the weeks and months ahead, the Foundation will be fulfilling our role as a community convener by hosting targeted sessions on collaboration and alliance-building as we seek to build real practice around high-impact community partnerships. The end goal is in essence our core mission: **HOLISTIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.**

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Empowerment...

...the process of gaining freedom and power to do what you want or to control what happens to you.

Cambridge Dictionary

...the action of enabling communities to increase control over their lives.

World Health Organization.

...is the idea of power which depends on two things. First, that power can change and second, that power can expand.

The Journal of Extension

Following a holistic community development framework, empowering people to have an active role in their community's recovery and rebuilding is a priority for St. Croix Foundation.



St. Croix Foundation for Community Development

From the day after last season's devastating hurricanes, St. Croix Foundation has had the distinct privilege of playing an active role and having a front row seat to the recovery process. Beginning with the urgent crises in the immediate aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria 9 months ago and expanding out to the subtle emergence of disaster capitalism that is developing today as an unprecedented amount of federal funding begins to flow, the road to recovery is proving to be intricate, nuanced, and winding.

In small, isolated, economically distressed and distracted societies like ours, an influx of capital can serve to either elevate or diminish the power of *people* to determine their own fate and have a voice in their community's development. St. Croix Foundation remains steadfast in our commitment to supporting and advocating for **balance** in our Territory's rebuilding to ensure that as we power up our economy, we are concurrently empowering our *people*.

Leaning on some progressive work being led by national social change partners, we are dedicating considerable time and effort toward building people power. Working shoulder-to-shoulder with our fellow local nonprofit organizations to reach the most vulnerable, underserved and underrepresented residents, the Foundation is supporting the application of non-traditional models of philanthropy which are directing investments in areas like: Civic Engagement, Community Organizing, Political Advocacy, Economic Power and Leadership Development. (Network, 2017)

As we seek to fulfill our role as an apolitical accountability partner and a stabilizing force in our community's recovery, St. Croix Foundation urges our electorate to stay vigilant through the Territory's rebuilding. With elections drawing near, we all have an opportunity to mobilize our collective voting power to bring about equitable and sustainable change in our community.

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Change...

to make the form, nature, content, future course of (something) different from what it is or from what it would be if left alone.

In the aftermath of the hurricanes, St. Croix Foundation is urging our community to consider our recovery as an opportunity to embrace change - change that ushers in economic opportunity for all; that is grounded in equity; that honors culture; that nurtures collaboration and empowers people to use their voice in shaping their future. Today, as federal funds begin to flow into the Territory we collectively have the opportunity to catalyze unparalleled social and economic transformation.

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St. Croix Foundation for Community Development

Over the past several weeks, St. Croix Foundation has been sharing our community-based approach to recovery and rebuilding through a five-week ad series on *Philanthropy & Community*. If you've been paying attention, one thing should be clear: the lens through which we look at community development is *holistic*- focusing on more than just infrastructure and conventional economies.

In this, the final piece in our series, the Foundation would like to take a moment to share the powerful vision which is emerging from our community since the storms. Listening to a broad range of stakeholders including our nonprofit organizations, many of whom are working with the most vulnerable and voiceless, here's what CHANGE looks like for St. Croix:

1. *Comprehensive and differentiated educational opportunities which entail a bona-fide vocational education system*
2. *Diversified economies comprising NEW industries and technologies*
3. *A holistic food system that is rooted in a vibrant and subsidized agricultural industry and in turn, food sovereignty*
4. *Land & environmental preservation which encompasses a respect and reverence for both our natural and built environment as our legacies*
5. *Comprehensive healthcare systems which equally balance primary care with community wellness and walkable spaces*
6. *Arts and culture as an economic driver and social change engine*
7. *And, last but not least, energy independence.*

What we have gleaned from the community vision which is evolving each day as we survey more stakeholders, is that the vision for the future of the Territory must be driven by the will of the people in order for real change to be achieved and sustained. Additionally, having sat through many short-term vision-building exercises that extended out only as far out as the term of the sitting administration, we know this time we must do it differently!

Today, as we head into a high stakes election season, St. Croix Foundation urges policy makers to begin entrusting our civic organizations with 'holding' a *long-term generational vision*. With no term limits and a deep connection to community, to social justice and equity, our nonprofits have the capacity to sustain and hold steady a community vision through any economic, political, or natural storms. What role will you play in building the *community vision*?