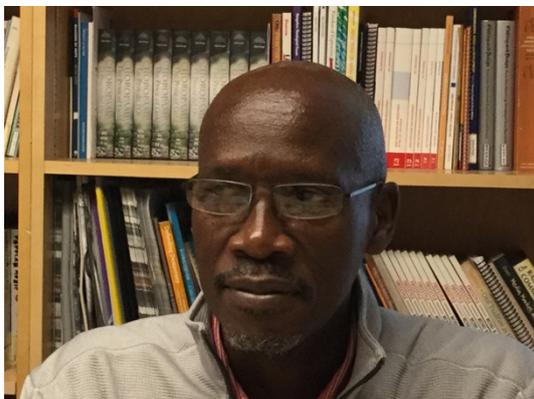


“The Msgr. Patrick Anthony Folk Research Centre (FRC), Saint Lucia – Transformative Programmes on Culture”



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The Msgr. Patrick Anthony Folk Research Centre (FRC) was established in 1973 by a young catholic priest Patrick Anthony and a group of young people of different faiths. The main influences on the FRC were the global black consciousness movement and the discussions on identity and Caribbean civilisation; the proclamation of the second Vatican Council particularly the role of culture in evangelization; the mobilisation of the Caribbean region to address issues of decolonisation, economic and social development, cultural invasion (from North America) and consumerism.

The initiating activities of the members of the FRC included cultural and theatre skills, participatory research techniques, audio-visual documentation, studies in faith and religion, study of cultural forms and the Kwéyòl language, community facilitation and literacy. A Study in theory led to action which guided a further study and a more concrete meaningful response.

FRC founder Patrick Anthony points out “However the real impact of the Folk Research on Development in Saint Lucia goes far beyond what may be superficially judged as archivism. Apart from the legitimation of traditional culture, the promotion of local cultural values and the affirmation of resilience against cultural invasion and penetration, there are development programmes that face the development issue head on”

The FRC facilitated the implementation of community economic projects in its research communities to address the issues related to poverty, cultural, economic and social alienation. The first decade of the FRC work was an extensive participatory research, the development of the Kwéyòl language and the coordination of micro-economic projects. Perhaps the most significant achievement was the establishment of Mouvman Kwéyòl Sent Lisi a national informal organisation of representatives of grassroots communities, linguists, academics, media practitioners and educators all committed to the promotion and development of Saint Lucian Kwéyòl. The movement became formalised into the Kwéyòl language programme of the Folk Research Centre. Between 1981 and 1983, the FRC worked with Creole language specialists from the global creolophone community under the framework of Bannzil Kreole (Group of Creole Speaking Islands). The

members of Bannzil were the Commonwealth of Dominica, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Mauritius and the Seychelles. Also participating in the discussions were creole language specialists from Louisiana and Cayenne (French Guyana). During that period the orthography was developed and promoted.

The FRC is a unique institution in the Caribbean region. It is a non-governmental membership based, governed and registered as a not-for-profit company. The programme portfolio on cultural development is as extensive as the portfolio of the national state-funded cultural departments.

The most significant programmatic achievements of the FRC to date which have major implications for public policy on language and cultural heritage are:

- (i) The annual celebration of Jounen Kwéyòl (International Creole Day) from 1983. This event has become the largest public cultural event created in the eastern Caribbean in the post-colonial era;
- (ii) The development of key resources including the publication of two dictionaries and a cadre of trained professionals at the post graduate level in Creole Studies. Many instructional and creative publications and products are available in the Kwéyòl language;
- (iii) A five-year popular theatre programme which led to the creation of groups island which used the cultural heritage in theatrical productions to research, analyse and propose solutions to community and national development problems. This movement was part of a Caribbean regional popular theatre project.
- (iv) Extensive research and documentation on all aspects of Saint Lucian culture, which has provided critical information for national level programmes of the Department of culture on the folk festivals including Lawòz and La Magwit. One of the major research initiatives was a five-year project with the University of Vienna on traditional technologies and folk belief systems. The documentation of traditional musical forms was also undertaken in collaboration with ethnomusicologist Dr. Jocelyn Gilbault, with one of the outcomes being a musical collection produced under the Smithsonian Institute Folkways series.

Research and education on contemporary cultural manifestations such as calypso and soca music genres, and the Rastafari movement are also part of the FRC programmes. The FRC has trained many Saint Lucian teachers in cultural education. A significant associated achievement was the use of the Kwéyòl language in the delivery of the annual throne speech in the national parliament from 1997 – 2017 by Governor General Dame Pearlette Louisy. The FRC continues in its quest to ensure that following UN year of Indigenous languages in 2019, the use of Kwéyòl is central to national development.