

The Lost Tribe takes step towards forex reduction through Carnival Campus



Gina Granado checks out the costume Night Leader from The Lost Tribe's presentation of the Island Circus at the opening of its showroom on Alberto Street, Port-of-Spain, on July 12. PHOTO BY ANISTO ALVES

Winner of the Carnival Large Band of the Year, 2025, The Lost Tribe, has opened Carnival Campus, a programme aimed at educating youngsters in the business of Carnival and potentially reducing foreign exchange use within the Carnival sector.

In a media statement, The Lost Tribe said, "This programme will not only support local producers in finding employment within Trinidad and Tobago but also open doors for opportunities in other regional Carnivals. The increased local capacity will also benefit Carnival bands by reducing their dependence on foreign producers, thereby saving valuable foreign exchange."

“Carnival Campus is a vital step towards securing the future of mas production in Trinidad and Tobago,” said band leader and creative director Valmiki Maharaj.

“By investing in our local talent, we are not only empowering individuals with valuable skills but also strengthening our cultural heritage and reducing our reliance on external resources.

This programme will ensure that the artistry and craftsmanship of Trinidad and Tobago Carnival is nurtured, developed and retained for decades and centuries to come,” he said.

The training and development programme officially opened its doors on Tuesday.

Under the programme, trainees are being taught to hone their skills in mas-making and the business aspects of the festival.

The mas band explained that the volume of work at the moment is beyond the current local capacity, and as such, this initiative was created.

The Lost Tribe said in the media release, “Trinidad and Tobago boasts the largest Carnival in the Caribbean, with a massive volume of masqueraders and numerous Carnival bands. The unique Trinidad and Tobago style of Carnival has gained international recognition, influencing celebrations from Miami to Tokyo. The TRIBE Group alone caters to over 15,000 masqueraders across its four Carnival bands annually, requiring the intricate production of thousands of multi-component costumes. Despite a significant portion of production remaining local, the sheer scale presents challenges, often necessitating outsourcing to foreign producers.”

Maharaj said the band is aiming to bolster local capacity in Carnival costume production, addressing the critical need for skilled artisans in Trinidad and Tobago’s thriving Carnival industry.

The first edition of Carnival Campus is a ten-day incubator programme designed to facilitate the crucial transference of knowledge from seasoned mas-making veterans to a new generation of producers, the release explained.

The Campus, the Lost Tribe said, will specifically focus on specialised skills like featherwork and wire bending.