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CHEMONICS INTERNATIONAL INC.

**ASSESSMENT OF MOBILIZING THE
GUYANESE EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Background

Many developing nations in Latin America and the Caribbean have an untapped development resource that has rarely been mobilized in a sustained or formally organized way: their expatriate communities in the United States. A skills bank for Haiti and an investment mutual fund for Jamaica are two examples of the few organized efforts to recruit human and financial capital for investment in countries of origin. In general, expatriates of Latin America and the Caribbean make individual rather than organized group repatriations of capital.

With continued reductions in, and uncertainty of, funding for USAID and other donor agencies, more than ever developing nations need to create alternatives to donor assistance. Seeking mechanisms to match developing nation's needs with resources in its expatriate communities is one option. In this study, we examined the feasibility of mobilizing human and financial resources of the Guyanese expatriate community in the United States to invest in Guyana.

B. Findings

- The Guyanese expatriate community has the interest and resources for repatriation, but presently is more willing to provide human rather than financial capital.
- Major obstacles to recruiting financial investment are the political climate, inadequate physical infrastructure, weak management in the public and private sectors, and cumbersome bureaucracy and corruption.
- Investments made in Guyana tend to be "social" and humanitarian rather than economic. And those economic investments generally made are in personal and commercial real estate.
- Several expatriates among those surveyed indicated a desire to return permanently to Guyana, but felt that the salary structure in Guyana is too low for an acceptable quality of life.
- Though a plethora of social associations exist in the Guyanese expatriate community, aside from a half dozen or so, they are not active.
- By contrast, religious organizations and sports clubs, particularly the former, are much more highly organized and effective, and constitute an established community network.
- The Government of Guyana has no organized or visibly sustained effort to promote financial and human resource investment in Guyana. On an irregular basis, the embassy and consulate general do promote investment. But to date there has been little visible success.

- Associations become active primarily around issues and events—holidays, periodic emergency relief needs, sporting events, and beauty contests—although some meet, if not regularly, at least on a sustained basis.
- The organizations help to coalesce the expatriate community and to maintain ties with Guyana. However, links with the “old country” appear to be essentially personal and not institutional.
- Aside from two or three umbrella organizations, there is no widespread lay organizational presence. Mandirs, churches, and mosques are the most highly developed institutions, but even they do not reach more than a few hundred expatriates individually.
- While an organizational infrastructure does exist, it is underdeveloped, atomized, and split primarily along ethnic, political and, in the case of New York, geographic lines.
- Community leadership is informal or “semi-formal.” Leader status is not derived so much from occupying a leadership role in an organization, but rather tends to be ascribed from other factors such as professional stature.
- The leadership structure is not well defined, aside from heads of religious institutions and some aggregate associations. Few persons were identified as “leaders,” certainly not of a “unified” Guyanese community.
- No well-defined or established expatriate community network exists, although on major occasions (such as a visit by the Guyanese president), the embassy and consulate, working with expatriate leaders, are able to mobilize the community.

C. Conclusions and Recommendations

Expatriate Guyanese are willing to invest in their native country, both in terms of financial and human capital. Many already have financial investments in Guyana, donate money and goods for humanitarian and social purposes, and make periodic visits.

While the organizational network in the United States is not well developed formally, it covers a large area through word-of-mouth and media communications. This network could play an important role in mobilizing capital and skilled human resources. Although the embassy and consulate lack initiatives in structured investment promotion, they can serve as focal points for disseminating investment-related information and helping coordinate activities for the repatriation of financial and human capital.

The capital repatriation that already exists is unorganized and not channeled toward sectors key to economic growth and development. No organized repatriation of human resources exists, although the desire to help Guyana is strong. Developing a USAID project to repatriate finances and human resources is a risk, but the payoff could be substantial.

D. Options to Consider

- *Work through existing Guyanese organizations.* The present organizational infrastructure in the expatriate community is limited. The most viable institutions are religious ones, and these may not be eligible for U.S. assistance. This not a viable alternative.
- *Develop a skills bank and investment promotion unit to be managed through the embassy and/or consulate in New York.* Experience has shown this model to be generally ineffective. Such an effort, would need to be relatively free of excessive bureaucratic procedures, something that may be impossible. In fact, with few exceptions, successful investment promotion projects are run by private (not-for-profit) firms, not government institutions. Though technically possible, this option has a high probability of falling victim to the problems encountered by most public agencies engaged in investment promotion.
- *Contract an organization, such as CARIVEST, to manage a financial and human resource repatriation project.* Aside from CARIVEST, which has very limited institutional capacity and does not promote human resource repatriation, no Guyanese organization (other than those identified already) exists to implement the project. Another alternative would be to select an existing, non-Guyanese organization capable of administering a financial and human resources repatriation project. The downside is the difficulty in recruiting an institution with the appropriate experience, credibility, capacity, and interest in operating the project.
- *Develop a separate institution to carry out the financial and human resource repatriation project.* This would probably require more up-front investment, but the payoff could justify the expense. While potential exists for mobilizing investment and human resources for repatriation to Guyana, the Government of Guyana must take into account the kinds of obstacles to investment that presently exist in-country. Thus, any initiative would need to work not only within the expatriate community, but also with Guyanese policy makers to help create an effective investment incentive system.

A new institution created for the purpose of mobilizing financial and human resources should be a community-based private voluntary organization, with a board and staff comprised of members of Guyana's major ethnic and religious groups to avoid being identified with only one community.

- *Have an existing Guyanese organization serve as a vehicle in developing a repatriation effort of capital and human resources.* The scope of work did not include a review of existing organizations in Guyana, so that it was not possible to determine which institutions, if any, could be instrumental in developing a financial and human resource promotion effort. Nevertheless, an organization such as the Private Sector Commission or the Consultative Association of Guyanese Industries could be used. This would permit USAID to support an existing structure, rather than creating a new institution. Under this option, it is essential to select an organization possessing the respect of the different ethnic/religious groups, established relations with the Government of Guyana, and the commitment of the organization's board of directors and executive director

E. Financial Support

Obviously, the amount of support for an investment and human resource mobilization project depends on the option ultimately selected—if any. This is an issue best dealt with in detail in a project paper or other project design document. At this juncture, however, we have outlined the following objectives and functions of a financial and human resource repatriation project.

Objectives. The objectives of the project would be to mobilize financial and human resources for investment in Guyana in those sectors most critical to development. The project would act as a mutual fund—or coordinate with existing funds, perhaps—seeking to channel dollar investments into profitable investments in infrastructure and other areas required to stimulate economic development. To recruit skilled human resources to provide technical assistance and training to local counterparts in the private and public sectors, the project would focus on small business, agriculture, education, health, and public administration.

Functions. The project would be structured into three functional components: investment promotion, human resource recruitment, and local (i.e., Guyana) coordination.

The investment/human resource promoters would conduct typical investment promotion activities. They would target fellow expatriates, many of whom are already disposed to invest in Guyana. Most important, the most effective and appropriate investment vehicle must be developed. Perhaps the investment vehicle should be determined in the project design stage, in which the legal ramifications of the vehicle are examined.

The human resource recruitment function would focus on contacting interested Guyanese and building a computerized skills bank. A counterpart “needs” bank would also need to be developed in Guyana, helping to match skills with needs. And a system for assisting expatriates to travel to and stay in Guyana would need to be created. The focus should be to rely as much as possible on individual contributions, that is, requiring participants to pay their own travel and lodging (many expatriates have families with whom they can stay). Ideally, however, the project would help defray the costs of travel and per diem. But given the fiscal realities at USAID, this may well be impossible. The Government of Guyana could create incentives for participants, for example, working with Guyana Airways to offer reduced fares for expatriate volunteers or provide tax incentives for those owning property in return for volunteer service.¹

¹ Many expatriates reported providing individual assistance to family and friends on visits, outside of any organized effort. Thus, it is not unreasonable to expect skilled human resources who are recruited under the project to provide services at their own expense.

SECTION I INTRODUCTION

A. Background, Scope, and Purpose

Many developing nations in Latin America and the Caribbean have an undertapped development resource that has rarely been mobilized in a sustained or formally organized way: their expatriate communities in the United States. A skills bank for Haiti and an investment mutual fund for Jamaica are two of the few examples of a formalized effort to recruit expatriate human and financial capital for the region. In general, expatriates send capital to their native country on an individual basis rather than as an organized group. For example, in 1994 individual remittances to El Salvador by Salvadoran immigrants in the United States totaled 966.7 million, or 17.3 percent of El Salvador's gross domestic product (GDP).

With continued reductions in and the uncertainty of funding for USAID and other international donor agencies, more than ever developing nations need to create alternatives to donor assistance. Seeking mechanisms to match a developing country's needs with resources in its expatriate communities is one option. In this study, we examined the potential and feasibility of mobilizing the Guyanese expatriate community's resources to help meet Guyana's development needs.

B. Methods and Caveats

We used the following to conduct the study:

- Review and content analysis of documents.
- Structured survey of a selected sample of the Guyanese expatriate community.
- Focus group meetings with Guyanese expatriates.
- Interviews with Guyanese government officials, community leaders, businesspeople, and professionals.

While the persons interviewed were more than generous with their time and information, it is important to note that obtaining additional interviews or responses to the questionnaire prepared for this research (see Annex C) was extremely difficult. Hence, while the size of the survey sample limits the ability to make inferences, the combination of open-ended interviews and the use of focus groups enhances the data.

SECTION II OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

Our research indicated Guyanese expatriates have a strong desire to invest in Guyana, particularly to return for short and even extended stays to provide technical assistance and training. However, the organizational infrastructure to support a community-wide sustained and effective financial and human capital repatriation initiative is presently marginal, although clear potential exists for establishing such a project. Moreover, given the development needs of Guyana, the current lack of USAID and other donor agency resources, and the wealth of expatriate talent and financial resources in the United States, a human resource and financial repatriation effort could be the most compelling development alternative available. The principal findings of this report are as follows:

- The Guyanese expatriate community has the interest and resources for repatriation, although at present it is more willing to provide human rather than financial capital.
- Four major obstacles to recruiting financial investment are the political climate, inadequate physical infrastructure, weak management in the public and private sectors, and cumbersome bureaucracy and corruption.
- Investments made in Guyana tend to be “social” and humanitarian rather than economic. And economic investments are generally in personal and commercial real estate.
- While several survey respondents indicated a desire to return permanently to Guyana, they felt that the salary structure would not permit them to sustain an acceptable quality of life.
- The Guyanese expatriate community has a plethora of social associations, but aside from a half dozen or so, these associations are not active.
- By contrast, religious organizations and sports clubs, particularly the former, are much more highly organized and effective, constituting an established community network.
- The Government of Guyana has no organized or visibly sustained effort to promote financial and human resource investment in Guyana. While the embassy and consulate general, on an irregular basis, promote investment by the expatriate community, there has been little visible success to date.
- The organizational infrastructure is wide, but nevertheless thin. Associations become active primarily around issues and events—holidays, periodic emergency relief needs, sporting events, and beauty contests—although some meet, if not regularly, at least on a sustained basis.
- The organizations serve both to help coalesce the expatriate community and to maintain ties with Guyana. However, interviews strongly suggest links with the “old country” are essentially personal and not institutional.
- Aside from two or three umbrella organizations, there is no widespread lay organizational presence. Mandirs, churches, and mosques are the most highly developed

institutions, but even they do not reach more than a few hundred expatriates individually.

- Clearly while an organizational infrastructure exists, it is underdeveloped, atomized, and split primarily along ethnic, political and, in the case of New York, geographic lines.
- Community leadership is similarly informal, or “semi-formal.” That is, leader status is not derived so much from occupying a leadership role in an organization but rather from other factors such as professional stature.
- The leadership structure is not well defined, aside from heads of religious institutions and some aggregate associations. Few persons were identified as “leaders,” certainly not of a “unified” Guyanese community. In many respects, the embassy and consulate provide leadership, but even that is tenuous. They were, however, described by several respondents as serving as “neutral ground” for different groups (i.e., Indo- and Afro-Guyanese) to come together.
- No well-defined or established expatriate community network exists, although on major occasions (such as a visit by the Guyanese president), the embassy and consulate, working with expatriate leaders, are able to mobilize the community.

SECTION III
ISSUES AFFECTING MOBILIZATION OF GUYANESE EXPATRIATES

A. Demographic and Sociopolitical Overview

A1. Demography

The U.S. Bureau of the Census records the population of Guyanese descent in the United States at 120,698,¹ a figure even Bureau officials admit is far lower than the actual number. The problem is that the statistic includes only "foreign born," omitting the larger number of first- and second-generation Americans of Guyanese descent. If an average family size of three is assumed, along with the historical undercount of minorities, then a figure of more than 360,000 Guyanese-Americans is probably a more accurate estimate. In the New York City metropolitan area alone, community leaders interviewed suggested the population was at least 300,000.

In terms of education, the foreign-born Guyanese population ranks slightly below the total foreign-born population (see Table III-1). Among the 20 to 54 age group, 42.7 percent have post-secondary education, ranging from "some college" to a doctorate degree. Similarly, the rate of unemployment (see Table III-2) among foreign-born Guyanese is almost the same as total foreign born, 7.9 percent and 7.7 percent respectively. As a comparison, the unemployment rate among Guyanese is a full percentage point above that of Jamaicans and is far lower than the 12.1 percent for Hondurans.²

Table III-1. Age and Education (1990)

	Total population	Age	Education			
		20-54 years	High school	Some college	B.A./B.S.	Post graduate
Total foreign born	19,767,316	12,624,752	3,007,301	2,881,481	1,769,356	1,350,097
Jamaicans	334,140	227,738	67,869	65,981	24,868	12,906
Guyanese	120,698	81,913	24,314	21,533	9,119	4,345
Hondurans	108,923	78,125	16,233	14,625	4,322	1,945

¹ This and all other demographic figures come from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Population: Foreign Born Population in the United States*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993, Washington, D.C.

² Comparisons with Jamaica and Honduras help put the situation of the Guyanese in perspective. Both countries were chosen because they are small, located in the Caribbean area, and have established expatriate communities in the United States.

Table III-2. Labor Force and Occupation (1990)

	Labor force		Occupation				
	Employed	Unemployed	Managerial & professional	Technical, sales, & admin.	Service	Farming, forestry, & fishing	Operators, fabricators, & laborers
Total Foreign Born	10,664,979	899,572	2,364,344	2,702,196	1,932,316	403,246	3,262,877
Jamaicans	212,993	19,275	45,950	64,734	56,250	1,598	44,461
Guyanese	71,718	6,255	15,608	26,637	13,716	177	15,586
Hondurans	58,696	8,110	5,391	12,380	17,479	1,324	22,122

The percentage of Guyanese in managerial and professional occupations (21.7 percent) is virtually the same as that for all foreign born and Jamaicans and much higher than Hondurans (see Table III-2). Income figures for foreign-born Guyanese-Americans (see Table III-3) are significantly higher than those for all foreign-born persons in the United States. The median average for the former, as of 1989, was \$36,278; for the latter, \$28,314. Comparative figures for Jamaicans and Hondurans were \$30,599 and \$21,947, respectively.

Table III-3. Average Income (1990)

	Median income	Mean income
Total foreign born	\$28,314	\$38,540
Jamaicans	\$30,599	\$36,844
Guyanese	\$36,278	\$42,396
Hondurans	\$21,947	\$27,590

Table III-4. Income Levels by Households (1990)

	Total Number of Households	Number of households at top income levels			
		\$100K+	\$75-99,999	\$50-74,999	\$35-49,999
Total Foreign Born	7,746,535	392,482	420,676	1,090,907	1,239,473
Jamaicans	141,525	4,437	7,676	22,701	26,138
Guyanese	43,400	1,529	2,701	7,958	9,090
Hondurans	33,644	522	657	3,284	4,494

Yet, although data on disposable income were not available, it appears that despite their relatively high incomes Guyanese expatriates provide little in remittances to Guyana (see Table III-5). In 1983, the latest year data are available, expatriates' remittances to Guyana constituted \$1.2 million, only 0.24 of the country's GDP. However, the reality is that the actual amount of remittances has been virtually impossible to track. Particularly throughout the 1980s, a black market flourished, absorbing hard currency that otherwise might have flowed through formal financial institutions. Given the large proportion of Guyanese living out of the country, it is reasonable to suggest that remittances as a percentage of GDP are significant, somewhere in the order of other countries in the region (see Table III-5). Similarly, it was not possible to identify the amounts invested in businesses and property by expatriates.

Table III-5. Expatriate Workers' Remittances*

Expatriate community	U.S.\$ millions	% of country GDP
El Salvador (1994) Credit	\$966.7	17.3%
Dom. Republic (1993) Credit	\$361.8	3.8%
Jamaica (1993) Credit	\$187.2	4.9%
Net	\$181.2	4.7%
Haiti (1989) Credit	\$122.8	7.6%
Net	\$59.3	3.7%
St. Lucia (1992) Credit	\$16.13	4.1%
Net	\$14.46	3.7%
Guyana (1983) Credit	\$1.2	0.24%

* Years represent latest available information.

A2. Sociopolitical Overview

As with most immigrant groups in the United States, the Guyanese have imported their indigenous values and history, which impact intragroup relationships. Since before independence from Great Britain, an ethnic split developed between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese. This was essentially the product of political ambitions and rivalries. Exacerbated by political forces unleashed after independence, rival political leaders formed parties and partisan loyalties along ethnic lines. What had been primarily a political struggle quickly turned into racial strife, and the Indo and Afro communities became polarized. While the violence of the 1960s has abated, and relationships between the two groups are cordial and even can be, at least on a personal basis, close, in the United States the communities still tend to be divided. Especially in New York City, the physical separation of the two groups—Afro-Guyanese in Brooklyn and Indo-Guyanese in Queens—is pronounced and underscores the ethnic and political rift.

Both a cause and effect of this situation is a distrust of governments by members of the ethnic faction out of power. In several interviews, respondents expressed reluctance to invest in a Guyana led by a rival ethnic group, or to return for any extended period. As one expatriate put it, there is a fear of the *uncertainty* of political stability. By contrast, people do continue to invest in Guyana at modest levels (as will be discussed below).

The ethnic rift is exacerbated to a lesser degree by local loyalties. Expatriates tend to identify themselves first as members of a particular community or area and then as Guyanese. This does not appear to be too pronounced, but is still another, though not uncommon, point of division. Compounding this division, Georgetown is dominated by Indo-Guyanese, while Afro-Guyanese blacks are more dominant outside the capital.

Key questions to be addressed in this analysis are:

- How do the sociopolitical divisions affect actual and potential repatriation of capital and human resources?
- To what extent do these divisions influence community organization?
- Is there potential for mobilizing investment and repatriation of human capital?

These topics are analyzed in the remaining half of this section.

B. Investors and Investment Resources

B1. Investor Behavior

In general, Guyanese expatriates expressed a high level of interest in investing in Guyana. Almost 50 percent of those surveyed said they currently had investments in Guyana, 26 percent reported they had investments in the past. Investment interest and potential, however, are attenuated by concern over political stability, government bureaucracy, lack of qualified managers, and poor physical infrastructure. Another concern is corruption, especially at lower levels of government such as in law enforcement and customs, and problems with foreign exchange. Despite concerns over red tape and the political climate, most respondents believed that the present Government of Guyana has taken effective steps to encourage more investment and evinced abiding interest in business opportunities.

While respondents indicated a preference for “tangible” investments—that is, real estate—they tended to report their actual investments were in small companies. By contrast, the expatriates were more open to human resources capital rather than financial investment, expressing substantial interest in going back to Guyana for short periods of time—even permanently in some cases—to provide technical assistance and training.

The survey revealed a range of investments, including personal and commercial real estate, companies (equity), and savings (which still use the passbook system). Although it was not possible to acquire data on the size of investments per type,³ it is reasonable to suggest that both personal and commercial real estate represents the largest investment.

While these economic investments overall are few, what is best characterized as “social investment” constitutes the bulk of expatriates’ repatriations. Expatriates donate money to meet social needs in Guyana, for example, providing funds for clothing, educational materials, and health care equipment and medicines. They also collect and donate money for disaster relief efforts. Generally, the most frequent type of “investment” is remittances.

Survey respondents indicated the level and frequency of remittances to be between \$50 to \$100 and up to more than \$500 per year. Among the respondents, 56.2 percent said they remit more than \$500 annually. Expatriates also send goods, such as domestic appliances. While it was not possible to quantify the value of human investments, most (91.3 percent) expressed a willingness to provide technical assistance or training if a mechanism existed to coordinate such activities.

B2. Attitudes Toward Investment

In general, those interviewed indicated a strong willingness to contribute their personal skills in terms of technical assistance and training. Indeed, respondents were more disposed (and probably able) to invest time and skills than finances. Nevertheless, most would also place capital in Guyana but only under the conditions already described: improvements in the political climate (i.e., greater certainty of stability), reduced and more efficient government bureaucracy, more competent local managers, and enhanced physical infrastructure.

The major reasons expatriates (i.e., 43 percent of survey respondents) cite for considering financial investments include a sense of patriotism and low labor costs, although almost half did not reply to the inquiry regarding what they felt to be necessary investment incentives.

The Government of Guyana is active in trying to recruit investment and has a quasi-governmental investment promotion agency, GO-INVEST. However, few respondents indicated any contact with government officials outside of the embassy and consulate, and GO-INVEST does not maintain an office overseas. It has, however, contracted CARIVEST, an emerging market consulting firm in New York founded and operated by Guyanese-Americans, to promote foreign and expatriate investment, but not human resources. GO-INVEST provides no funds to CARIVEST, but sanctions its activities on behalf of Guyana and provides it information and contacts.

³ Respondents were reluctant to indicate the amount of their investments, even by order of magnitude.

Most Guyanese interviewed reported they would return permanently to Guyana given certain conditions,⁴ which were essentially the same as those required for financial investment, plus higher salary levels and greater economic stability. The strength of the links with home appears to be strong, and more than 90 percent of respondents said they would be willing to spend time providing technical assistance and training to counterparts in Guyana. Given the relatively high skill levels and technical background (computers, vocational education, human resources management, etc.) of many Guyanese, this willingness represents a significant development asset and potential.

The Government of Guyana, however, has to review the perceived and real disincentives to investment. For example, the government currently charges 15 percent interest on interest earnings, effectively keeping out investment that would otherwise flow into the country and improve the money supply and foreign reserves. Similarly, U.S. dollar savings accounts are prohibited. All dollars must be converted, once again discouraging investors who are concerned about currency stability.

The passbook system in the banks, too, is a disincentive to investment. To check his or her balance, a customer must come to the bank and present the passbook. Given the ease and availability of electronic communication, this is a needless obstacle to encouraging savings from abroad.

C. Expatriate Guyanese Organizations

A plethora of organizations exists at least nominally, in the Guyanese community (see Annex D). The Consulate General in New York has prepared a directory of 109 associations, mostly on the east coast. However, aside from a handful of functioning organizations, the great majority are either associations only on paper or have small memberships that meet episodically around specific events. Even organizations such as the Allied Organizations of Guyana, USA and the Association of Guyanese-Americans, which both boast relatively large memberships, are loosely structured and have no permanent, executive staff. The latter is not formally incorporated and lacks a set of bylaws.

Guyanese organizations in the United States fall into five main categories: (1) religious, (2) sports, (3) education/professional, (4) aggregate, and (5) assistance. Virtually all of the functioning organizations engage in some kind of charitable work, usually raising funds for a social assistance project on humanitarian relief.

C1. Religious

By far, the most developed institutions in the Guyanese expatriate community are religious organizations. Guyanese, both U.S. born and expatriates, are composed of three main sectarian groups: Hindu, Moslem, and Christian. With few exceptions, Indo-Guyanese are Hindu or Moslem, while Afro-Guyanese are Christian, providing an ethnic overlay to the religious split. Mandirs, mosques, and churches are the most strongly organized and visible

⁴ This was true of those above age 40. Caution should be exercised in interpreting this finding. It is reasonable to suggest the younger generation may be more assimilated and therefore less likely to harbor a desire to return to the "old country." This has certainly been the case with most other immigrant groups in the United States.

institutions in the expatriate community, and the impression is that many—likely most—Guyanese attend services on a regular basis.

The religious organizations are active in humanitarian causes, sending clothing, medical equipment, school supplies, and other goods to Guyana on an irregular basis. They also coalesce around specific events or disasters such as a hurricane or flood to collect relief goods. Religious institutions also provide sectarian education to their members, especially first-generation Americans helping to maintain a cultural identity. And they provide a mechanism for socialization and adjustment of new immigrants.

This is not surprising, as shown by a review of U.S. immigrant history. Italian, Irish, and Jewish immigrants in the earlier part of the century, later Vietnamese immigrants, have looked to their religious institutions to assist in adjusting to their adopted country.

While religious organizations play a positive role in expatriate Guyanese life, they also illustrate, paradoxically and unwittingly, the ethnic rivalry between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese, which has been duplicated in the United States. That is, aside from some sports clubs, there are few ethnically mixed Guyanese organizations. An unfortunate byproduct of this split has been to retard development of a pan-Guyanese community organizational infrastructure. While it is important not to exaggerate the differences between the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese communities, it is equally critical not to sweep them under the rug. Indeed, some community leaders have met in an attempt to find ways to bring the community closer together.

However, the two communities do interact, although less on an institutional and more on a personal basis. The large umbrella groups, such as the Allied Organizations of Guyana, are ethnically based and located physically in the Black and Indian communities, that is, Brooklyn and Queens respectively in New York City.⁵ In Washington, D.C., the organizations tend to be smaller and developed.

C2. Sports Clubs

As virtually everywhere, sports are an important part of Guyanese life, particularly cricket. While sports clubs tend to be ethnically based, this appears to be more a factor of geography than intent; that is, as the Afro- and Indo-Guyanese communities are located in different boroughs, they have locally formed their own clubs. However, there are mixed clubs, and teams of both ethnic backgrounds compete against each other. The clubs actually serve as an inter-ethnic bridge, although that is not their purpose.

As with Guyanese religious organizations, the sports clubs are well organized and supported. They form a permanent and credible organizational infrastructure with a contributing membership.

⁵Given the relatively small size of the Guyanese community in the Washington, D.C. area, this kind of significant physical split is not as pronounced as in New York.

C3. Professional/Educational Organizations

There are approximately 16 organizations of professionals and school alumni. They vary in size and organizational strength and on the whole meet irregularly and are institutionally weak. Many are little more than organizations in name only, although some, such as the Bishop's High School Alumni Association, with chapters in both the New York ("tri-state") and Washington, D.C. metropolitan areas, have a reputation for being relatively active. Other groups range from the Ex Firefighters to the Lawyers' Association (see Annex D for a complete listing). Once again, these organizations tend to respond to events and issues rather than sustain themselves on a regular basis with an executive staff.

C4. Aggregate Associations

Among the several aggregate, or umbrella, groups, interviews indicate that two of the most credible and effective are the Association of Guyanese-Americans—which actually began and still serves as a beneficent society—and the Allied Organizations of Guyana, USA. The former is predominantly Indo-Guyanese; the latter, primarily Afro-Guyanese. These organizations, as is the case for most, are concerned about maintaining ties with Guyana and assisting their families and friends back home. They are also very active in raising funds and collecting in-kind donations for humanitarian purposes, although they do not necessarily collect dues. Given the aggregating function they play, they are able to cast a fairly wide net and mobilize resources. Whether they would be able to do this in a permanent and sustained fashion is doubtful. As the strong impression is that organizing in the Guyanese community is basically informal and episodic (with the exception of the religious institutions), the strength and sustainability of these organizations would have to be tested.

C5. Assistance Organizations

Some organizations, including Guyana Medical Relief and the Guyana National Relief Council, have been established expressly for the purpose of channeling assistance to Guyana. GUYAID in Washington, D.C., is perhaps the best example of this kind of organization. Once again, however, it, like so many others, is institutionally embryonic and functions on the margins.

D. Mobilization Analysis

The capacity of existing expatriate organizations to mobilize and manage resources for an initiative to recruit financial and human capital investment in Guyana is marginal, aside from the religious institutions. The review above of the various kinds of organizations indicates clearly that while two or three conceivably might be able to administer this kind of effort, they would require technical assistance and training in institutional development. This, however, should not deter USAID from exploring further the possibility of supporting a capital repatriation project. The willingness of the Guyanese community in the United States exists, as does a wide, if informal, network.

While the organizational infrastructure is weak, it nevertheless operates, particularly in the mandirs, mosques, and churches. In addition, there appears to be a growing number of community-based publications and radio programs addressing the information needs of the Guyanese community. This communications infrastructure would be important to the success of any effort to recruit investors and should be considered a definite asset.

The issue of ethno-political division within the community cannot be ignored. However, the fact remains that both groups share a common interest in helping Guyana to develop. Some even view the possibility of establishing a human resources skills bank and capital repatriation effort as an effective mechanism to bring together both Indo- and Afro-Guyanese. In other words, a key byproduct of this kind of initiative would be to strengthen the entire expatriate community, enhancing the contribution it can make to the development of Guyana. Finally, while the present organizational capacity in the expatriate community is not sufficient to manage a repatriation project, the potential exists. Moreover, it is urgent to reverse the "brain drain" and recruit the human resources required for development.

Conversations with community leaders indicated strong interest in creating and participating in an initiative to mobilize investment and human capital for development purposes in Guyana. Such interest can be seen in the flow of both people and money to the country. What is lacking is a coordinated effort both to recruit human resources and capital and channel them into the sectors most critical for economic growth and development. In other words, the "raw material" exists, but lacks direction.

SECTION IV CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

Expatriate Guyanese are willing to invest in their native country, both in financial and human resources capital. Many already have financial investments in Guyana, donate money and goods for humanitarian and social purposes, and make periodic visits. Moreover, the Government of Guyana has expressed its desire and willingness to promote increased repatriation of capital and human resources, and is presently working to strengthen the private sector.

While the organizational network of Guyanese expatriates in the United States is not well developed formally, it covers a large area through word-of-mouth and media communications and could play an important role in mobilizing capital and skilled human resources. Though the embassy and consulate have not established structured investment promotion initiatives, they can serve as focal points for disseminating investment-related information and helping to coordinate such activities. Given the ethnic divisions in the expatriate community, as the "official family" of Guyanese expatriates, the embassy and consulate in the United States provide neutral ground.

Before developing a capital and human resource repatriation project in the Guyanese community, USAID needs to further explore its feasibility. While interest exists among Guyanese expatriates, so does suspicion. With few exceptions, enlisting the support of existing organizations for conducting the survey was difficult. To determine with confidence if a project should be supported and how best it could be structured, the present study should be used as a starting point for conducting a more extensive feasibility study, with the visible support and blessing of the Guyana embassy.

The concept of mobilizing remains valid. Guyanese expatriates already make capital repatriations, albeit unorganized. These repatriations need to be channeled consciously toward sectors key to economic growth and development. Similarly, though the desire to help Guyana through human resources is strong, as shown by the flow of private humanitarian and social assistance, there is no catalyst to strengthen and better organize these efforts. To develop a project to repatriate resources, USAID would have to be prepared to take a risk. However, the potential benefits in developing a permanent and eventually self-sustaining initiative could be substantial and permanent.

B. Alternative Recommendations

- *Use existing institutions to spearhead the project.* The present organizational infrastructure in the expatriate community is limited. The most viable institutions are religious ones, and these may not be eligible for U.S. assistance. Moreover, given the ethnic divisions among the expatriates, most likely it would be necessary to support three religious institutions—Hindu, Christian, Moslem—for the same purpose, which is not cost-effective. Similarly, with the exception of some of the sports clubs, most of the functioning lay organizations tend to be ethnically divided. This is not a viable alternative.

- *Develop a skills bank and investment promotion unit to be managed through the embassy and/or consulate in New York.* Experience has shown this model to be generally ineffective. Moreover, while the Government of Guyana, which to date has not mobilized expatriate resources in a sustained and organized fashion, may be willing to make such an effort, care needs to be taken to avoid excessive bureaucratic procedures. This may be impossible. In fact, most successful investment promotion projects are run by private (not-for-profit) firms, not government institutions. This option is technically possible, but has a high probability of encountering the problems of most public agencies engaged in investment promotion.
- *Contract an organization, such as CARIVEST, to manage a financial and human resource repatriation project.* Aside from CARIVEST, which has very limited institutional capacity and does not promote human resource repatriation, no Guyanese organization, other than those already identified, exists that can implement the project. Another alternative would be to select a non-Guyanese organization capable of administering a financial and human repatriation project. The downside is the difficulty in recruiting an institution with the appropriate experience, credibility, capacity, and interest in operating the project. Nevertheless, this is a reasonable possibility that should be explored, if USAID decides to pursue a repatriation project.
- *Develop a separate institution to carry out the project.* While this would probably require more up-front investment, the payoff could justify the expense. While potential exists for mobilizing investment and human resources for repatriation to Guyana, it is important for the Government of Guyana to take into account the kinds of obstacles to investment that exist in-country. Thus, any initiative would need to work not only within the expatriate community, but with Guyanese policy makers to help create an effective investment incentive system. This may be difficult to accomplish with a new institution, which would require a presence in both Guyana and the United States or, at the very least, strong linkage with key government and private sector officials in Guyana.

A new institution created to mobilize financial and human resources should be a community-based private voluntary organization, replicating in part existing USAID-sponsored organizations such as BOLINVEST, for example, but focusing only on investment and human capital promotion. It should have a board and staff comprised of members of the major ethnic and religious groups to avoid being identified with only one community. Similarly, staff should be "mixed." While this option is technically feasible, USAID may not want or be able to invest the funds required for its development and initial maintenance.

- *Use an existing Guyana-based organization.* The scope of work did not include a review of existing organizations in Guyana, so that it was not possible to determine which institutions, if any, could be instrumental in developing a financial and human resource promotion effort. Nevertheless, an organization such as the Private Sector Commission or the Consultative Association of Guyanese Industries could conceivably serve as an existing vehicle. This would permit USAID to support a structure already in place, rather than creating a new institution. If this option were selected, it would be essential to select an organization with the following characteristics: respect of the different ethnic/religious groups, established relations with the Government of Guyana, and express commitment of the board of director and executive director.

The advantage of this option is that it would combine a presence both in the United States and Guyana, coordinating activities in both countries to better identify human resource and financial needs, monitor in-country activities, and interact routinely with key government officials. As a "neutral" presence in the expatriate community, the organization would coordinate with existing associations, at least those that function the most effectively, helping to build and, more importantly, manage a network to mobilize financial investment and human resources. This may be the most feasible option, certainly in terms of cost-benefit. The major caveat, however, is to find an organization that meets the criteria outlined above. If this is not possible, USAID should then consider the option to create a new institution.

C. Financial Support

Obviously, the amount of support for an investment and human resource mobilization project depends on the option ultimately selected, if any. This is an issue best dealt with in detail in a project paper or other project design document. At this juncture, however, it is useful to outline the objectives and functions of a financial and human resource repatriation project.

Objectives. The objectives of the project would be to mobilize financial and human resources for investment in Guyana in those sectors most critical to development. The project would act as a mutual fund—or coordinate with existing funds, perhaps—seeking to channel dollar investments into profitable investments in infrastructure and other areas required to stimulate economic development. In much the same vein, the project would recruit skilled human resources to provide technical assistance and training to local counterparts in the private and public sectors, once again focusing on critical areas such as small business, agriculture, education, health, and public administration.

Project structure and functions. The project would be structured into three functional components: investment promotion, human resource recruitment, and local (i.e., Guyana) coordination.

The investment/human resource promoters would conduct typical investment promotion activities, targeting fellow expatriates, many of whom are already disposed to invest in Guyana. Most important is developing the most effective and appropriate investment vehicle, such as a type of mutual fund. The investment vehicle, particularly the legal ramifications, would have to be thought through in detail in the project design stage.

The human resource recruitment function would focus on contacting interested Guyanese and building a computerized skills bank. A counterpart "needs" bank would have to be developed in Guyana, helping to match skills with needs.

A system for assisting expatriates to travel to and stay in Guyana would need to be created. The purpose should be to rely as much as possible on individual contributions, that is, requiring participants to pay their own travel and lodging (many expatriates have families with whom they can stay). Ideally, however, the project would help defray the costs of travel and per diem. But given fiscal realities at USAID, this may well be impossible. The Government of Guyana could create incentives, for example, working with Guyana Airways to offer reduced fares for

expatriate volunteers or provide tax incentives for those owning property in return for volunteer service.¹

Some minimal requirements essential to a project no matter the alternative model chosen include:

- *Staff*: two promoters in the United States and one coordinator in Georgetown, perhaps part time if a staff member of an existing organization.
- *Office space and equipment*: including computers (with email capacity), software, fax machine, telephones, and a copier. Ideally, there should be one office in Brooklyn and one in Queens to assuage ethnic differences and reach out more closely to the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese communities.
- *Travel*: for each promoter, within the United States (among the various larger Guyanese communities, i.e., Washington, Los Angeles, and Miami) and at least two trips per year to Guyana. The in-country coordinator should be permitted two trips to the United States, per diem for a minimum of six weeks for the international travel, and eight weeks for internal trips.
- *Promotional materials*: including radio, TV, and newspaper advertising.

In summary, the expatriate human and financial resources potentially available for investment in Guyana are too large to be overlooked. A serious effort to recruit these resources could have a significant impact on economic growth and development in Guyana. Some actions can also be taken immediately in addition to or in conjunction with a repatriation initiative, including:

- Eliminating the U.S. dollar conversion requirement for savings accounts.
- Replacing the passbook with an electronic statement, deposit, and withdrawal system.
- Instituting deferred tax for dollar savings (such as IRAs and 401ks).
- Instituting one-time tax-free importation of household goods (for repatriating Guyanese).

Eventually, establishing a system to foster private investment and repatriation of skilled human resources will be the most effective and long-lasting strategy for promoting development in Guyana.

¹ Many expatriates reported providing individual assistance to family and friends on visits, outside of any organized effort. Thus, it is not unreasonable to expect skilled human resources who are recruited under the project to provide services at their own expense.

ANNEX A
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ANNEX B
SELECTED LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Eustis Bowen, Allied Organizations of Guyana, U.S.A.

Teresa Bowling, Allied Organizations of Guyana, U.S.A.

John Carter, former ambassador to U.S.A.

Dayan Deonarine, City of New York

Gangadei Deonarine, Estée Lauder, Inc.

Clarence Ellis, former Vice president, Central Bank of Guyana

Bertnold Evans, Consul General to U.S.A.

Julia Forde, Consulate General

Valda Forsythe, GUYAID

Annette Harris, Embassy of Guyana

Odeen Ishmael, Ambassador to U.S.A.

Iman Fazie Khan

Shaheed Khan, Catholic University

B.N. Kumar, Columbia University

Padma Nandkumar, U.N.

Ronald Sukram, Association of Guyanese - Americans

Belle Tyndale, Bishop's High School Alumni Association

Colin Vickerie, CEO, CARIVEST

Contact Information for Respondents

Name/Organization

Purpose of Organization

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Site of one of the focus groups

George Abrams
President
Citizens of Buxton Association
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CIMBUX -- Neighborhood Assoc.
Sends money and other forms of
assistance to neighbors in Buxton,
Guyana.

Dr. Neville Campbell-Adams
President
Guyanese Assisting in Development (GUYAID)
202-626-0431(w)

GUYAID--Human services assoc.
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children, women & elderly in Guyana

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Eustis Bowen
Allied Organizations of Guyana
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AOG --Umbrella association of
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Former representative of the
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Ms. Deonarine assisted in the
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Dayan Deonarine, City of New York

Organization -- Not applicable

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Julia Forde, Executive Officer
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Annette Harris, Assistant to the Ambassador
June Persaud, Assistant to the Ambassador
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Iman Fazie Khan

Dr. Mohamed Shaheed Khan
Pesticide Coordinator
University of the District of Columbia
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Washington, DC
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Mr. Deonarine assisted in the organization of one of the focus groups.

Restaurant popular in Washington Guyanese community which serves as meeting place for various associations and organizations

Central Bank of Guyana

Consulate of Guyana

See Above
Ms. Forsythe provided insight on various past activities of GUYAID

Embassy of Guyana

Organization -- Not applicable

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Dr. Bhual Nand-Kumar
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Organization -- Not applicable

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Tutorial High School Alumni Association
Olive Sampson, Ex-President of GUYAID
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Tutorial --Alumni Association
Sends money and materials to school
in Guyana

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President
The Association of Guyanese-Americans
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718-835-5780

Org. of professionals who raise
money for humanitarian purposes

Elsa Harper, President
Belle Tynsdale
Bishop's High School Alumni Association
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301-595-1943 (Tyndale)

Alumni Association
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in Guyana

Colin Vickerie, CEO
CARIVEST Distributors
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718-462-5884

Survey on Investment in Guyana

Name (optional) _____
Telephone _____
Occupation _____ Education (last degree) _____
Age _____ Marital Status _____

Note: The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Direct questions to Robert Landmann or Vanessa George, CARANA Corporation, 703-243-1700.

Investment Climate

1. How would you characterize the investment climate in Guyana?
 - a. Excellent ___
 - b. Good ___
 - c. Fair ___
 - d. Poor ___

2. What do you feel are the major impediments to investing in Guyana?

3. What do you feel are the major incentives to investing in Guyana?

4. Has any official from the Guyana embassy or official mission ever contacted you with respect to placing investments in Guyana?
 - a. Yes ___
 - b. No ___

5. If yes, please describe the circumstances and how many times you have had contact.

6. If the conditions were right, would you return to Guyana permanently?
 - a. Yes ___
 - b. No ___

7. If yes, please describe what the "right conditions" would be.

8. If your expenses were paid, would you be willing to spend short periods of time (one week to one month) in Guyana providing training and/or technical assistance in your field to local counterparts?
- a. Yes___ b. No___
9. What kind of training or technical assistance would you be able to provide?

Formal Investments:

10. Do you currently have any investments in Guyana?
- a. Yes___ b. No___

If "Yes," please fill out the following; If "No," go directly to Question 16:

11. If yes, what types of investments? (Please indicate the number of all investments)
- a. Business (indicate type: ie, hotel, store, farm, restaurant, etc.)
1. Existing Company _____
 2. New Company _____
 3. Commercial Real Estate/Property _____
 4. Other (please specify) _____
- b. Personal
1. House(s) _____
 2. Residential property _____
- c. Other, including savings accounts in Guyana (please describe)
- _____
12. If the investment(s) is business related, was the initial investment (if more than one investment, please list the total worth:
- a. Less than U.S. \$5,000 _____
 - b. Between \$5,000 and \$10,000 _____
 - c. More than \$10,000 _____
13. How did you find out about these investment opportunities?
14. If the investment(s) is personal, please indicate approximate total market value in U.S. \$:
- a. House(s) _____
 - b. Residential Property(ies) _____
15. Are you pleased with your investment(s)? If no, why not?

16. If you do not currently have investments in Guyana, *did you have* investments in the past?
 a. Yes ___ b. No ___
17. If yes, what type of investment or investments were they?
 a. Business (specify) _____
 b. Personal (specify) _____
 c. Other (specify) _____
18. What was the total market value of all the investments? _____
19. Did you acquire the investment(s):
 a. While still living in Guyana? _____
 b. After moving to the United States? _____
20. Why did you discontinue the investment(s)?
21. If you do not currently have investments in Guyana, *would you consider* investing in Guyana?
 a. Yes ___ b. No ___ c. Maybe ___
22. If yes, what type of investment(s) would it be? (Please describe.)
 a. Business (specify) _____
 b. Personal (specify) _____
 c. Other (specify) _____
23. Please indicate the total amount you would be willing to invest:
 a. Less than U.S. \$5,000 ___
 b. Between \$5,000 and \$10,000 ___
 c. More than \$10,000 ___

Informal Investments

24. Do you currently send money (money orders, checks, etc.) to family and/or friends in Guyana?
 a. Yes ___ b. No ___
25. If yes, what is the annual total (on average)?
 a. US\$25-50 ___
 b. Between \$50 and \$100 ___
 c. Between \$100 and \$500 ___
 d. More than \$500 ___

ANNEX D

GUYANESE PROFESSIONALS AND BUSINESSES IN THE UNITED STATES

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