

UNIVERSIDAD DE LOS ANDES  
FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES Y EDUCACIÓN  
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS MODERNOS

AN ECLECTIC INTERNSHIP IN MEH SWEET T&T:  
A MULTICULTURAL ISLAND WITH LOVELY PEOPLE

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Informe final de pasantías presentado por la Br. Sayda Mayerly Rosales Calderon  
como requisito parcial para optar al título de Licenciada en Idiomas Modernos.

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An Eclectic Internship in meh Sweet T&T:  
A Multicultural Island with Lovely People

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## INTRODUCTION

“A language is part of a culture and a culture is part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture” (Brown, 1994, p.165). Consequently, especially with regards to foreign language learning, language and culture go hand in hand. In fact, some literature about language teaching and learning refers to culture sensitivity and awareness as the fifth language skill (Tomalin, 2008). In this respect, as students, we can notice that the professors from the School of Modern Languages at the University of Los Andes are aware of this reality. Through their teachings, they have been trying to expand our world view by opening a window to the vast quantity of cultures attached to the languages we have been learning. Equally important, they have taught us that there are no better or worst cultures, only different ones. Thus, we would be open to new ideas and world views and our learning process would be significant. Therefore, we are conscious that learning a language is much more than learning grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Mere linguistic competence is not enough to be competent in a language; with this in mind, my main goal was to do my internship abroad, in an English speaking country, and to take advantage of the immersion and cultural benefits for my English learning process.

Eventually, I had the opportunity to do my internship in Trinidad and Tobago, a country which, in spite of the fact that is located just seven miles from Venezuela, and due to its multicultural nature, offers Venezuelans and Latin-Americans a quite different perspective of the world. In this way, my multicultural adventure got started;

and I must admit that I was privileged of having the opportunity to do my internship in one of the most important organizations of our country in the Caribbean region: the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

This Diplomatic Mission through the Venezuelan Institute for Culture and Cooperation “Andrés Bello” (IVCC, by its Spanish acronym) takes into account the importance of culture awareness in the language learning process. Consequently, it offers its students the opportunity to practice Spanish by communicating with native speakers whilst getting an insight into its inherent socio-cultural aspects. Furthermore, the agreement between the IVCC and the School of Modern Languages of the University of Los Andes enables the students from both institutions to experience the socio-cultural perspective of the languages they are learning. Thanks to this agreement, I was pretty fortunate to do my internship working as a Spanish teacher at the IVCC and supporting the Cultural Section of the Embassy while having the chance to experience Trinidadian culture at first-hand.

Along this report, I will talk about my internship experience at the Venezuelan Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago. First, I will briefly describe the host institution; its historical background and how it is organized internally. Then, I will specify the tasks I had to accomplish as an intern under the supervision of Mr. Gilberto Jaimes Correa, who is the Second Secretary and Trade and Commerce Attaché of the Embassy. Next, I will reflect on the personal and professional growing that entailed my experience as an intern. Thereupon, I will present my conclusions and I will offer some

recommendations to our Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago and to the School of Modern Languages of the University of Los Andes, as well. Finally, I will submit a cultural essay about the impact of East Indian culture on Trinidad and Tobago's cultural diversity.



**MY HOST INSTITUTION: THE EMBASSY OF THE BOLIVARIAN  
REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA IN THE REPUBLIC OF  
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

Diplomacy is a tradition that dates back to ancient Greece, where the heralds became the first diplomats. But, what does diplomacy stand for? Basically, diplomacy is the practice of negotiation between nations through representatives of the governments. They are in charge of defending the interests of their nations and maintaining profitable relationships with other nations which is the main goal of a diplomatic mission (Roberts, 2006). A diplomatic mission is known as an embassy, and Venezuela, as a member of the international community, has several embassies around the world to further its national interests by means of its foreign policy.

The Caribbean region comprises a group of small nations which lie in the Atlantic Ocean, juxtaposed to the North American mainland and the Latin American continent in the South. Recently, several Caribbean countries have experienced a significant positive growing of their economies. This fact is due to the agricultural sector, light manufacturing, tourism, and mainly to a shift in emphasis from a predominantly agricultural base to mining; for instance, petroleum in Trinidad and Tobago and bauxite in Jamaica (Prime, 1992). In this way, the Caribbean region became one of the most important areas to maintain diplomatic relationships with. Indeed, Venezuela maintains diplomatic missions in the fifteen member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), being the Venezuelan Diplomatic Mission in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago the most important one in the Caribbean region.

This is a result of Trinidad and Tobago's strategic location which functions as a gateway to Latin America and the Caribbean region; and the fact that this country has one of the most industrialized and diversified economies of the Commonwealth Caribbean.

The Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is located in 16 Victoria Avenue, Port-of-Spain. It is set in a three-floor building, bought by the Venezuelan government in 1962. This building holds the Consular Section and the Venezuelan Institute for Culture and Cooperation "Andrés Bello" on the first floor, the Military Attaché and the headquarters of the Embassy on the second floor; and the auditoriums "Simón Bolívar" and "Francisco de Miranda" on the third floor.

**The Consular Section** is the representation of the public administration of the Venezuelan Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago, and deals with issuance and renovation of passports, birth, marriage and death certificates to the nationals, and visas to the foreigners, among others. Similarly, it monitors the judicial processes of its national detainees in the Republic of Trinidad in Tobago.

**The Political Section** has as its main goal to maintain the flow of information regarding all political subjects that affect both countries: from Trinidad and Tobago to the Venezuelan Political scene, and from Venezuela to the Trinidadian political development.

**The Commercial Section** is in charge of maintaining and improving the economic and trade relationships between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela by identifying key factors that could lead to an increase of the bilateral trade exchange.

**The Cultural Section** is in charge of the coordination of all types of cultural and educational activities such as conferences, lectures, workshops, and exhibitions among others. It also facilitates cultural and educational visits to Venezuela; all this with the purpose of promoting our culture in Trinidad and Tobago and linking both countries by bonds of friendship and cooperation. Another important Section at the Embassy is the Venezuelan Military Attaché; and its functions are strictly related to military affairs between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

**The Venezuelan Institute for Culture and Cooperation “Andrés Bello”**

The Cultural Institute “Andrés Bello” was created on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1963, just a few months after the achievement of Trinidad and Tobago’s Independence from Britain. This was an initiative of the then Minister of Education Juan Manuel Siso Martínez, and the Consul-General Humberto Egui Luna, as an expression of friendship and cooperation to the Trinidadian People.

In January 1985, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela assumed responsibility for the Institute and expanded its scope of action to include assistance and cooperation programs in other areas. That is when the Institute “Andrés Bello” adopted the name of “Venezuelan Institute for Culture and Cooperation.” The same year, due to the success of this project and its growing demand, an extension of the Institute was created in the city of San Fernando, located in the South-western region

of the island of Trinidad. Since then, it has operated every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. up to the present time.

Finally, in 1993, the name “Andrés Bello” was restored and the Institute is now known as the Venezuelan Institute for Culture and Cooperation “Andrés Bello.” The IVCC Port-of-Spain along with its extension in the city of San Fernando offers Spanish courses to about 700 Trinidadians, usually in twenty (20) groups ranging from Basic I to Advanced Conversation.

It is important to remark that this Spanish Teaching Program of the Ministry of People’s Power for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela is not only carried out in Trinidad and Tobago. It is also set in the Caribbean countries of Dominica, Curaçao, Bonaire, Suriname, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname. Moreover, it is based on a bilateral agreement between the host countries and our Embassies in those nations.

The staff of our Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago consists of civil and military servants, namely Venezuelan chancery staff (diplomats) and local staff (Venezuelan and Trinidadian employees). Venezuela already has a designated Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago. She is her Excellency María Eugenia Marcano Casado who, by the time I did my internship, had not taken up her office because our government was dealing with her credential proceedings. For this reason, in the meantime, the Head of Mission was Mr. Maikel Moreno, Counsellor Minister and Chargé d’Affaires. For details about the internal organization of the Embassy, please refer to the flowchart of

this Diplomatic Mission (Appendix A) which includes the placement of the intern within it.

## **NATURE OF MY WORKING EXPERIENCE**

My internship at the Venezuelan Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago officially started on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Beforehand, my original institutional advisor: Ms Dexy Galué, coordinator of the IVCC and Cultural Attaché of the Venezuelan Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago, let me know that my main role at that Diplomatic Mission would consist of being a Spanish teacher at the IVCC (see Appendix B) and supporting the Cultural Section of the Embassy. Likewise, she told me that my working schedule would be from Monday to Thursday: 11:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. with an hour lunch (1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.). Owing to the fact that the classes at the IVCC are carried out just from Monday to Thursday: 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., on Fridays, I was supposed to attend the Embassy at the same time like the rest of its staff: 08:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

On my first day at the Embassy and first day of classes at the IVCC, the other interns (Adriana Ortíz and Jabier Portillo) and I were asked to help Miss Elisha George, IVCC assistant and secretary, filing the about 150 new students register forms. It is important to point out that the groups at the IVCC range as follows: Basic I, Basic II, Basic Conversation, Intermediate I, Intermediate II, Intermediate Conversation, Advanced I, Advanced II and Advanced Conversation. Besides, there is a Conversation Club which gathers Trinidadians interested in practicing their Spanish, and Venezuelans interested in practicing their English to discuss about social and cultural topics. In this way, I was given three groups: Basic Conversation “C”, Intermediate II “A” and Advanced I “U”. So, my schedule at the IVCC was the

following one: Mondays and Wednesdays: Intermediate II from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays: Advanced I from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Basic Conversation from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

To perform my tasks as an assistant of the Cultural Section, I was placed in the library “Concepción Mariño”. It is located in the Consular Section and has six computers with Internet access available to the public and the IVCC students. There, I was allowed to use one of those computers which was very useful, since Internet was a significant source of documentation to prepare my classes and do some translations. Likewise, I had access to a printer and a photocopier to reproduce all the material I needed for my classes.

The IVCC Spanish teaching programs, which in the main were created by previous interns from the University of Los Andes, were very helpful to plan the classes. Taking into account that there is no teaching program for the conversation levels, in order to plan the classes for my Basic Conversation Group, I read Basic I and Basic II teaching programs. Then, I focused on the most important communicative objectives of both of them to prepare the activities that enabled us to review those already learnt contents and strengthen their communicative skills. Furthermore, based on the teaching programs, I created an evaluation plan for my groups in which I included the contents, the type of evaluation (oral or written), percentage and tentative date for each evaluation. Next, I gave my students the evaluation plan to ask them if they agreed or had suggestions to modify it. To fulfil the requirements of the teaching programs and mainly to motivate and familiarize the

students with our culture, in the classes, I included material regarding Venezuelan history, geography, food, music, and customs, and the trimester project and final evaluation consisted of an oral presentation about one outstanding topic from Venezuelan culture. In the last classes, we reviewed all the contents we had been practicing the whole trimester given that they had to do a final oral exam the last week of classes. This evaluation was very important since it represented thirty percent of their final grade and if they did not pass it, they would not go forward to the next level. It is important to notice that to add objectivity to this evaluation, it was done by another professor; in this case, I evaluated four groups of Basic I and Basic II levels.

As I mentioned before, aside from the academic duties at the IVCC, I had to support the Cultural Section of the Embassy. Henceforth, I will mention the duties and tasks of this nature:

The other interns and I were the hosts of one local primary school in a guided visit through the Embassy. Previously, we were asked to prepare a speech in English about Venezuela, regarding our geography, history, political system, food, music, and customs. At the end of this visit, Mr. Gilberto Jaimes Correa offered a speech about the similarities between Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago's peoples.

Ms Dexy Galué took the other interns and me to San Fernando. There, we visited San Fernando Senior Comprehensive School where the extension of the IVCC operates. We had the opportunity to meet its teachers and students, who were preparing the ornaments for the May Cross event. Likewise, all the teachers of the IVCC Port-of-Spain worked together with the students in the elaboration of the



crosses and practiced a May Cross song that would be sung at Lopinot Complex, a palatial estate and cocoa plantation, where this event took place (see Appendix C).

I, along with another intern, was asked to make an inventory of some books that had been donated to the library “Concepción Mariño”. Similarly, the following week, another intern and I made an inventory of the Spanish videos, documentaries and films that they have at the IVCC for didactic purposes.

At the end of the month of May, the interns were notified that our original institutional advisor, Ms Dexy Galué, had been transferred to Venezuela. From that moment, Mr. Gilberto Jaimes Correa took on the office of the IVCC Coordinator and our institutional advisor.

In mid-June, our designated Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago visited the Embassy for a week. She asked the other interns and me to translate, from English into Spanish, several newspaper articles related to Venezuela / Trinidad and Tobago political and economic relationship. We had already acquired experience doing team work in that field since we had been working as a group doing the translations of some letters from English into Spanish and even translating, from Spanish into English, an important business agreement between Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago.

On occasion of the commemoration of the Venezuelan Declaration of Independence (on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July), the Venezuelan Week was celebrated at the Embassy from June 29<sup>th</sup> to July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Alfredo Orozco, diplomat in charge of the Cultural Section, asked the other interns and me to help in the organization of the

following events: books and Venezuelan handcraft exhibitions, a chess tournament, a showing of a film about Francisco de Miranda's life and his expedition to Trinidad and Tobago, and an Afro-American festival. To close the celebration of the Declaration of our Independence, there was an official event at the Embassy on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July: the placement of a flower arrangement before the bust of the Liberator Simón Bolívar. Some Latin American Ambassadors, Trinidadian press, and Trinidadian and Venezuelan citizens attended this event. The staff of the Embassy and I were requested to collaborate with the protocol of that event.

A couple of weeks before the end of my internship, the Head of Mission, Mr. Maikel Moreno, told me that the diplomat in charge of the virtual data of the Consular Section had been transferred to Venezuela and nobody was in charge of that labour. Thus, in order to update the data base of the Venezuelan citizens in Trinidad and Tobago, he asked me to help with the transcription of the registration forms dated from April to July 2009.

## **REFLECTING ON MY WORKING AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

Since I started to study Modern Languages at the University of Los Andes, my dream was to travel abroad and experience the cultures attached to the languages I was learning. I dreamt about doing my internship abroad; specifically in the United Kingdom, through the agreement between the British Council and the School of Modern Languages of the University of Los Andes. Time went by and, during the last semesters, I got a little confused about what I wanted to do for my internship; this was due to the fact that I had chosen Translation as my professional minor and I was finishing my other studies in Modern Languages Education, as well. So, I did not know if I had to do an internship in Translation or Education. However, the idea of going to the United Kingdom was still on my mind, but I could not apply for that place due to some personal reasons. Then, I got the opportunity to do my internship at our Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago. Although it was not the internship I dreamt about during my studies, I consider myself fortunate because it became my most rewarding experience from the professional and personal point of view.

### **I faced up to my insecurities in real communication situations**

Before I got this internship, I had hardly heard about Trinidad and Tobago. So, I researched about this country and found interesting information. However, nothing compared to experiencing it by myself and I was about to live one of the most important experiences in my life so far.

My main concern about this internship was how my performance would be. I knew that I would be representing my University and my country abroad and I was

aware that I had serious oral communication problems in English. Nonetheless, I realized that challenges involve insecurities and it is only in our hands to confront and defeat them. Anyhow, I was ready to work hard and give my best.

The first time I had to speak English in Trinidad and Tobago was with an immigration officer at the airport. I was really nervous; at the beginning, it was difficult because he was speaking really fast and his accent was very different to all accents I had listened in the past. But at the end, I answered all his questions and it felt good to pass that short test. However, the story was not very pleasant the following times I had to talk to a Trinidadian. During the first weeks my only contact with English was in the supermarkets and with some locals when my internship mates and I were looking for a place to live. I was literally scared to death, especially when I had to talk and my institutional advisor was around. I felt that, compared to my internship mates' English proficiency, mine was the worst and that perception made me feel very insecure and uncomfortable to talk. Then, time to give the guided visit through the Embassy arrived, and I practiced a lot the English speech I had to give to the Trinidadian students for the lecture on Venezuela. At the end, I think I did not do it so badly but the problem then was how I felt while I was talking to them: I felt that I was doing it terribly. When the event finished and everybody was gone, my feelings of frustration got the best of me and I could not help to cry. However, this was an enriching experience since it made me realize that I was not there to compete against my internship mates, that we all had had different English learning processes; and more importantly, that my only opponent was myself and I could not let my fears and

insecurities hinder my performance there. From that moment, my attitude changed and I accepted that I had to prove to myself that working at what I like and doing what I want was more powerful than any kind of insecurity.

### **Teaching Spanish as a foreign language: my first teaching experience**

As I previously stated, one of the reasons why this experience was very important to me was because I would have the opportunity to apply, for the very first time, the theoretical knowledge I had acquired at the University while I was doing my studies in Education. I could not have done that before because I had been focused on my studies. Before my internship, I took all the theoretical education subjects and two levels of the practical subject, Professional Teaching Practice, which are based on observation and are basically theoretical. However, I had not had the experience of being in front of a classroom as the official professor and with all the responsibility that it implies.

Since the first class, I got concerned about the proper preparation and development of my classes. I realized that my knowledge about Spanish grammar was very poor. Hence, I planned all my lessons well in advance to study and be prepared to answer properly all the questions of my students, who were very analytical, by the way. Nevertheless, anything may happen in a classroom, and sometimes their questions took me by surprise. Something really useful that I learnt from one of my Education professors was not to let this kind of situations made me weak. Thus, when I did not know the answer, I just told them the truth: that I was not sure and I would take note, research on that and, in the next class, I would clarify

their doubts. I do not think that this made me look insecure; on the contrary, I think my students noticed how important was to me to be sure about what I was teaching them. Indeed, in this regard, H. Douglas Brown (2001, p. 43) states: “the role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing bestower of knowledge”.

Due to the fact that my students were placed in the last Basic, Intermediate and Advanced levels, I mainly talked to them in Spanish in the classroom. In this respect, I tried not to speak fast, to articulate properly the words, and to use a suitable vocabulary for their level. Some grammatical points such as the verbs “Ser y Estar”, the tenses “Pretérito e Imperfecto”, the “Subjuntivo” mode, and the prepositions “Por y Para” are hard to teach and to learn. To practice these contents, I combined the grammatical explanations with exercises and focused on the exercises to analyse grammatical aspects. Apart from that, it was very useful for us the use of drawings, poems, readings, games, role playing - such as renting an apartment, looking for a roommate, and shopping - and translation exercises from English into Spanish and vice versa, that I found on Internet and some textbooks. My students were aged from twenty to fifty five years old; some of them were working as language professors, secretaries, executives, government employees, housewives, and students among others. Thus, taking into account that the three groups I taught were very heterogeneous, I consulted with them about most topics and activities to be carried out in class; and their opinions helped me a lot because they felt more interested and involved in the classes.

At the beginning, I looked for information in Spanish to create the guidelines for the grammatical explanations about the points that we were practicing. Then, I realized that this was not working for my students, since the content was already complex and reading it in Spanish made it more difficult to understand. Consequently, I decided to look for the information in English and discuss it in Spanish.

With reference to evaluations, we had an oral and written evaluation for each topic. In this respect, the evaluation plan helped us a lot. If they missed one or more classes, which usually happened due to their jobs, they would know which topics we were practicing and they could review them at home.

In regard to teaching planning, this experience made me confirm that, without doubt, in order to plan, teachers have to take decisions on several aspects, such as the subject matter, the information, the procedures, the materials and exercises. In doing so, we have to take into account students' interests and needs, the availability of materials, the syllabus, the timetable, and so on. Teacher's planning is not an easy task but it can provide invaluable benefits to the teaching-learning process and can facilitate significant learning. Teachers cannot afford to improvise and wander in class; unquestionably, the educational labour cannot be based on improvisation. If we want to facilitate a significant learning to our students, we have to conceive planning as the base of our profession. Consequently, effective teachers must develop planning abilities in order to prepare lessons, activities, and evaluation instruments that suit in a determinate situation and with a particular group of students. We must be aware that

the time we devote to plan is an investment and not a waste of time and it will be of advantage not only to our students, but also to us.

H. Douglas Brown (2001, p. 196) affirms that “Ideally, language classes should have no more than a dozen people or so. They should be large enough to provide diversity and student interaction and small enough to give students plenty of opportunity to participate and to get individual attention”. Therefore, and fortunately for my students and I, the size of my groups was an advantage. They were small: My “Basic Conversation” group had twelve students, the “Intermediate II” one eighteen students and the “Advanced I” one ten students.

At the beginning of the trimester, I got a little bit nervous at the classroom but progressively this feeling disappeared. My students complemented me in class; it was such a nice experience to teach them since they were very respectful and interested in learning Spanish. They loved our language and knew how important was for their careers to know Spanish. This is due to the fact that the Spanish as a First Foreign Language (SAFFL) initiative was adopted by the government in 2004. Said initiative is one among several programs that aims to position Trinidad and Tobago to a developed country status by the year 2020 (Fact, Fiction SAFFL, 2008).

At the IVCC, I could also experience how different it is to teach adults compared to teenagers. Before my internship, I had the opportunity to observe some English classes at “Alberto Carnevali” High School, in Mérida, Venezuela. Comparing both situations, I can say that I admire the foreign language teachers at



High Schools because to teach a foreign language while dealing with all kind of day to day situations related to adolescence must be pretty difficult.

I tried to make my students aware that just three hours per week were not enough to learn a foreign language. They had to study at home and practice constantly because perseverance is the key factor to learn a foreign language for communicative purposes, and they were there to do that, and not just to “pass a test”. Thus, we made most of the time which got shorter, owing to the fact that we missed several classes because of the public holidays and a problem with the air conditioner. This usually happens at the IVCC, and the coordinator previously suggested the teachers to be prepared for that, to try to cover as much as we could, and to focus on the main requirements of the teaching program.

Having been playing the teacher’s role made me reflect on my language learning process given that I had some students who were like me when I was taking the English and French subjects at the University. I was very shy and, at the same time, I was so afraid of making mistakes in front of my classmates that I preferred to avoid participating in class. I realized that this behaviour hindered my learning process and, for this reason, I encouraged my students to participate especially the shy ones, not to be afraid of making mistakes because that is something natural and inherent to the language learning process. I used my own experience to exemplify that to them and I became aware of the fact that to be in a language classroom is different from to be in a science classroom, for instance. That is to say, a language classroom must have a special energy, empathy and companionship that allow

everybody to feel free and comfortable to participate and help each other. In my opinion, to accomplish this environment in the classroom is one of the biggest challenges for a foreign language teacher.

### **Practicing English at the Embassy**

As I previously pointed out, the staff of the Embassy consists of local and Venezuelan people. The Venezuelan staff is considerably more numerous than the local one; in that way, the language that predominates at the Embassy is Spanish. This represented a problem for me during the first month of my internship. It was terrible to feel that I was not practicing English as I should have been. Until that moment, I had not had big opportunities to do it because I spent most of my time at the Embassy socializing with Venezuelan people, at the IVCC by teaching Spanish, then at home my roommates were the other interns and in our residence the landlord and our neighbours were Venezuelans too. It was frustrating to be abroad, in an English speaking country and to feel that I was still in Venezuela. Thereby, I decided that I would avoid becoming friends with more Latin-American people and do my best to make more Trinidadian friends. In this regard, I noticed that Venezuelans who go to Trinidad and Tobago to learn English usually make the same mistake: they just share with Latin-Americans and, at the end, it is like if they were taking an English course in Venezuela.

### **PCS Silver Stars Steel Orchestra**

In mid-June, I attended a Steel Band festival. I had never heard about Steel Pans before but when I heard that music, I just loved it. I was accompanied by some

neighbours and we stayed by Silver Stars Band because my landlord's wife was a fan. "PCS Silver Stars" is the best Steel Band in Trinidad and Tobago; they are the Panorama Champions 2009 and 2010, which is the most important Steel Band Competition in Trinidad and Tobago. In this way, I met "Silver Stars"; they were friendly to us and invited us to the panyard where they practice. From that time, I became close to them. I started to assist their practices from Monday to Thursday after I finished my work at the Embassy. They were so kind and friendly to me, especially the eldest. I think this was my first significant contact with English in Trinidad and Tobago. At the end of each practice, they just stayed at the panyard to "lime" (hang out) and to talk about anything. Just to be there and to hear them was excellent for me to practice. At the beginning, it was hard to understand them but this gradually changed. I was so happy I had this real contact with their language and culture. Definitely, this experience was totally different from sharing with my other Trinidadian friends. Most of them were my students and if I did not know how to say something in English, I could say it in Spanish. However, with my "Silver Stars" friends there was not another way, I had to find a way to express what I wanted to say in English. Having the opportunity of sharing with "Silver Stars" definitely helped me to improve my English and to know much more about Trinidadian culture. I will always be grateful to them because of that.

### **Experiencing Trinidadian Culture**

Trinidadian culture fascinated me; I did not miss any opportunity to ask questions about cultural aspects that caught my attention to my Trinidadians friends

and Venezuelans who have spent a long time there. In spite of the fact that just seven miles separate Trinidad and Tobago from Venezuela, it was pretty interesting to experience how different our nations are. Two countries with quite different histories and, at the same time, with some aspects in common. Some traces of Venezuelan culture still remain in Trinidadian culture and vice versa. On one hand, our Spaniard roots are present in Trinidad and Tobago, where there are some characteristics of it, such as the name of some towns and streets, some families' last names and the most outstanding one: the Trinidadian "Parang" (See Appendix D) that comes from Venezuelan "Parranda". On the other hand, in some areas of the eastern region of Venezuela; for instance, Carúpano, Cumaná and Güiría to name a few, we can notice the strong influence of Trinidadian culture in some aspects, such as the importance and organization of carnivals, the Steel Pan and Soca Music in Spanish.

However, it is important to add that the first characteristic that caught my attention when I arrived Trinidad and Tobago was its cultural diversity. In the past, I had hardly heard about this country and I used to think that its population was mainly African descent. There, I realized that there is a vast population of East Indian descent. Both are the major ethnic groups in Trinidad and Tobago, East Indian representing the 40% and African the 37.5% of a population of 1,056,608 approximately (McNair, 2007). I also noticed that there are other ethnic groups such as: Chinese, Filipinos, Syrians and Latin-Americans, especially, Venezuelans. To see all those different cultures, customs, world views and religions converging and

coexisting in such a small country was new for me and constituted an enriching experience.

With regards to music, Soca is one of the most outstanding genres, particularly during the carnival season when the “International Power Soca Monarch Competition” takes place. In addition, they also have Calypso, Chutney Soca, Steel Band and Parang; for me, said genres are the most representatives of Trinidadian culture. In addition, Jamaican music has a strong influence on Trinidad and Tobago; and the most popular genres are Reggae and Dancehall. I already knew Jamaican Reggae and particularly, Bob Marley, who is famous all around the world; however, dancehall caught my attention because it was something totally new for me. In my opinion, the most famous dancehall artists in Trinidad and Tobago are “Vybz Kartel”, “Mavado” and “Busy Signal”. I got interested in the Creole English they speak, so I used to ask some of my Trinidadian friends for the meaning of the lyrics and they translated some of them into proper English.

As regards food, it is ethnically marked. A typical Creole Dish can be Barbecued, Stewed or Jerk Chicken with Rice, Red Beans, Macaroni Pie and “Callaloo”. Indian food is mainly represented by “Roti” – a flatbread stuffed with Curried Chicken, Potatoes, Mango and Channa (chick peas) – “Buss up Shut” and “Doubles”. The latter are like our “Arepas”: one can eat them for breakfast or early in the morning after one finishes partying. Besides, they also have two Venezuelan dishes: “Empanadas” and “Hallacas”, the former are called “Arepas” and the latter “Pastelles”. Finally, when we talk about Trinidadian cuisine, it is necessary to name

“Bake and Shark” – a pocket sandwich of fried batter called "bake" stuffed with fried shark – and to eat it by Maracas Bay is a tradition (See Appendix E).

On the whole, instead of continuing pointing out aspects of this rich culture, I just want to say that the most valuable characteristic of Trinidad and Tobago is its people. I was very lucky because all the Trinidadians I met were such a good, friendly and warm people; I am very fond of them and they have a special place in my heart. In this way, I travelled to Trinidad and Tobago just as a Venezuelan and I came back as a Venezuelan and a “Trini” in my heart.

### **But the story continued**

Due to some peculiar situations, after I finished my internship on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009, I had the great opportunity to continue working at the IVCC as a Spanish teacher for the trimester September – December 2009 (see Appendix F). I was truly fortunate because this opportunity meant the continuation of my personal and professional growing abroad. At the IVCC, I could teach four more groups: Basic I “G”, Intermediate I “A” and “B” and Intermediate “II”. Likewise, I continued supporting the Embassy translating Press Notes, economical and military agreements, contracts, letters, newspaper articles from English into Spanish and vice versa; translating four articles from Spanish into English of the magazine “Amazonía”, published by the Amazonian Parliament; and performing as a Protocol Staff Member and as a Bilingual Master of Ceremony in several official events (see Appendix G).

## CONCLUSIONS

Having had the opportunity to have done my internship in Trinidad and Tobago, working at the Venezuelan Embassy to this country and the IVCC is one of the most important and enriching experiences in my life from the professional and personal point of view. Now, I can see how important the internship experience is, with regards to the occupational training of the students. Its importance lies on the significance of putting into practice the knowledge acquired and developed during their studies within a real work environment which allows them to grow personally and professionally.

I can describe my internship experience as an eclectic one, since I could put into practice the translating and educational skills that I have been developing at the School of Modern Languages and the School of Education while I was practicing English language and experiencing Trinidadian culture first-hand. During the three months of internship plus the almost four months of extra time that I spent in Trinidad and Tobago after finishing my internship, I discovered the diplomatic world and I could learn several aspects about the operation of an international organization, its functions and goals. I confirmed that within it, no matter how insignificant the work of someone can seem; at the end, everybody's work, from the cleaning staff to the diplomat corps one, is a key factor in the general operation and success of a common enterprise. Similarly, I learned that human relationships in a work environment are fundamental because they have great influence on the performance of the employees; since in all work environments one has to socialize with people who have different

personalities and interests. Likewise, I confirmed that aside from intellectual skills, a professional must develop responsibility, punctuality, patience, respect, empathy, solidarity, and team work skills.

Equally important, I learnt a lot about my culture, my native language and myself. Having been away from my country and my people for the very first time made me realize that they are of great worth for me; and it was gratifying to be abroad representing my country and my University. I corroborated what I heard once from one of my professors: when we are abroad, we all are ambassadors of our country, so we must give the best of ourselves.

Furthermore, this experience led me to know that the biggest obstacles to overcome are those that, without realizing it, one sets oneself. In this way, my lack of fluency and accuracy in English stopped being my biggest disadvantage and the source of my fears to become my motivation to work harder and to get over it.

On the whole, in the last stage of my undergraduate studies, I considered myself quite privileged of having the opportunity to grow professionally and personally in one of the “few professions (that) can offer the fulfillment of knowing that your seemingly insignificant work really can make a difference in a world in need of communication that transcends national borders and interests” (Brown, 2001, p. 2).



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

First, the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago should create a web page with all the information regarding the services offered by the Consular Section, the Cultural Section, and the IVCC. This is due to the fact that the public is constantly calling to ask for the same basic information and sometimes the staff cannot cope with all the work that entails carrying out their duties and attending all those numerous phone calls. Likewise, they should change or repair the computers located at the library “Concepción Mariño”, because they are not working well and the public, the IVCC students and interns benefit from them. With regards to the agreement between this Diplomatic Mission and the School of Modern Languages of the University of Los Andes, they should continue welcoming interns since this represents a great opportunity for intellectual and cultural exchange between both institutions. In this respect, the Embassy should send the acceptance letters well in advance. In this way, the interns could speed up all the proceedings to travel.

Second, the Venezuelan Institute for Culture and Cooperation “Andrés Bello” should buy a new photocopier since there are only two photocopiers and none of them works well. This is important for the teachers to reproduce teaching materials due to the fact that just Basic I and Basic II levels work with a textbook. Likewise, they should make an inventory of the audiovisual material and equipment in order to repair the equipments that are not working and take advantage of the audiovisual material that they already have, which is not being used because it is not well

organized. In this regard, to install a Wi-Fi network at the IVCC would be a good opportunity to improve the audiovisual area, given that some teachers and students have access to a laptop computer and they could use pedagogical on line tools – such as podcasts, videos and web pages – to make the classes more interesting and effective. Equally important, taking into account that the IVCC grammatical and cultural contents for all levels were updated recently, it is indispensable to compare them with the original teaching programs, in order to make the necessary adjustments to articulate them. In addition, several students expressed their wish to travel to Venezuela in a kind of guided trip supported in some way by the IVCC. They are very excited about the idea of visiting Venezuela and having the cultural experience. Hence, the IVCC and the Cultural Section should help them providing information and contacts in order to facilitate this trip which would be a great experience for its students.

Finally, the School of Modern Languages of the University of Los Andes should review and reformulate the Study Plan in order to include more subjects related to the professional minors. From my point of view, in spite of the fact that the professional minor does not represent a major, if it were possible to do that, this would improve the graduate profile and prepare graduates for a better performance in the work field. Moreover, the School should continue promoting internships abroad and keep trying to provide a broader variety of placements for the students who aspire to do their internship abroad. To help making this possible, they should contact the

other IVCC sections along the Caribbean region to establish a similar agreement to the one they have with the IVCC in Trinidad and Tobago.

## **CULTURAL ESSAY: TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO SPICES UP CARIBBEAN FLAVOR WITH AN EAST INDIAN TOUCH**

India is a country that has one of the oldest cultures in the world enriched by consecutive waves of migration along its long history. Located in South Asia, India is considered the second most populous country and the most populous democracy in the world. Moreover, having one of the vastest amounts of religions converging in the same country, India houses Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Sikhs, Zoroastrians and Jains<sup>1</sup> among others. For this reason, India is widely recognized by its historical, linguistic and cultural wealth. However, what is the relationship between India and the Caribbean twin island Trinidad and Tobago?

One of the most outstanding aspects that caught my attention about Trinidad and Tobago's culture was the significant impact of East Indian Culture on this Caribbean island. Before I got my place to do this internship, I hardly had knowledge about Trinidad and Tobago and, from my point of view, I, like many Venezuelans, thought that Trinidadian population mainly consisted of people of African descent. Then, during my stay in the island, I found out that I was mistaken and I got interested in dealing with the relationship of Trinidad and Tobago and India in depth.

These countries are directly related since a great quantity of Trinidad and Tobago's inhabitants is East Indian descent. To illustrate, East Indian descents represent the 40% out of a population of 1,056,608<sup>2</sup> approximately. Hence, together with African descents, East Indian population is one of the major ethnic groups in Trinidad and Tobago. Looking backward, Indians were taken to Trinidad and Tobago

to work in sugarcane plantations due to the abolition of African slavery. The ship “Fatel Razack” docked in the Port-of-Spain harbour, on May 30<sup>th</sup> 1845, with the first indentured labourers from India to Trinidad and Tobago. From that moment to 1917, over 140,000 Indians were transported to the island. In spite of the fact that the original plan was to go back to their country, most of them stayed in the island<sup>3</sup>. In this way, the East Indian diaspora that settled in Trinidad and Tobago not only represented a new labour force for that young country, but also a quite different culture that preserved its different manifestations - such as cuisine, music, dance, costumes and festivals - and, at the same time, got absorbed into the Caribbean way of life.

Indian Arrival Day is a public holiday in Trinidad and Tobago; it is celebrated on the 30<sup>th</sup> May, to commemorate the arrival of the “Fatel Razack” with the first indentured labourers. In addition, most of East Indian descents in Trinidad and Tobago are Hindus or Muslims. Thus, the main commemorated religious festivals are: “Divali”, “Eid-ul-Fitr”, “Hosay” and “Phagwa”; being Eid-ul-Fitr and Divali public holidays. These Hindu and Muslim festivals are timed taking into account local astronomical observations and local sightings of various phases of the moon, and generally the actual dates are declared one or two weeks beforehand.

### **Phagwa**

Phagwa, known in India as Holi, is the Hindu festival of colours, which is celebrated at the end of the Winter season in March or April, on the last full moon day of the lunar month Phalguna and the beginning of Chaitra in the Hindu calendar<sup>4</sup>.

Dhulandi, the main day of Phagwa, is celebrated by people throwing coloured powder and water at each other (see Appendix H). Holika Dahan is celebrated the day before when bonfires are lit in memory of the miraculous escape of young Prahalad (son of the king Hiranyakashipu) from his aunt Holika, who carried him into the fire to kill him by order of his evil father. Holika was immune from destruction by fire but her powers were reduced to naught by Prahalad's faith in God. Then, she was burnt to death while Prahalad escaped without any injuries because of his unshakable devotion<sup>5</sup>. Phagwa officially starts on the day after the burning of Holika and lasts about five days. On the first day of Phagwa, people put ash on their foreheads and eat Chandan (sandalpaste) with young leaves and flowers Mango tree to promote good health. Finally, the last day of Phagwa: Rang Panchmi - fifth day of the full moon - represents the end of festivities involving colours.

In Trinidad and Tobago this festival has been commemorated since 1845, when the Hindus who migrated from Bihar<sup>6</sup> started to celebrate it; and nowadays, it is celebrated at a national level. A special type of folk songs called "Chowtal" is sung when these festivities are carried out and the music is regularly played with only two instruments: The "Dholak" (hand drum) and the "Majeera" (percussion instrument)<sup>7</sup>. On the whole, the musical and dance manifestations represent a rich cultural blend of talents and skills.

### **Hosay**

This Muslim festival commemorates the martyrdom of Hussain or Hussein the grandson of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. In the year of 680 AD, Hussain was

against Yazid's succession as Caliph (Muhammad's successor) and in favor of the appointment as Caliph of Muhammad's first cousin and son-in-law, Ali. When Hussain and his supporters were on his way to meet Yazid, they were intercepted by Yazid's forces in Kerbala (Karbala), Iraq. There, Yazid's forces tried to capture Hussain's party who defended itself and after ten days all the men of the party were slaughtered. Furthermore, Hussain's martyrdom is commemorated in different ways by the Shiites around the world during Muharram (the first month of Islamic lunar calendar). The remembrance of Muharram was taken to Trinidad and Tobago by Shia Muslim indentured labourers from India and the first observance of Hosay in the island dates back to 1854<sup>8</sup>.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Hosay consists of nine days of fasting and prayer and, on the tenth day, known as Ashura, the street celebration takes place. Hosay parades are organized in two Shiite communities in Trinidad: St. James in the west of Port-of-Spain and Cedros in the South<sup>9</sup>. The procession in the Western Main Road of St. James is the largest and gathers people from all religions to see the multi-coloured miniature temples (Hosays and Tadjahs) that represent the tomb of Hussain. The Shiites spend a great amount of time and money to build these temples, their height varies between 10 to 30 feet<sup>10</sup> and they are accompanied by the beating of Tassas - drums - (See Appendix I). On the thirteen day of Muharram, the Hosays and Tadjahs are taken to the seaside in Cocorite and ritually offered up to the sea<sup>11</sup>.

## **Eid-ul-Fitr**

Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated on the first day of Shawwal, the tenth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. It is often abbreviated as “Eid”, and represents the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting. Ramadan has a special meaning for Muslims since the Quran - the holy Muslim scripture - was revealed to Muhammad during this month<sup>12</sup>. This holy month of fasting implies refraining from eating, drinking, smoking, having sex, and indulging in anything in excess, from the sunrise until the sunset. Hence, Muslims not only celebrate the end of fasting, but also thank Allah for the patience, modesty, spirituality and strength they gained during the month of Ramadan by practicing self-control.

In Trinidad and Tobago, on occasion of the celebration of Eid, Muslim families clean and decorate their houses, donate food or money to buy food for people in need, then everybody will have a holiday meal, exchange Eid cards and gifts, sweets and other delicacies with families and friends. Likewise, they buy or make special clothes to attend to a special Eid prayer (Salah) which takes place at the mosques or large open areas like stadiums<sup>13</sup> (see Appendix J). This celebration is full of joy and peace; thus, Muslims make the most of Eid by sharing their blessing and good wishes with neighbours, relatives and friends.

## **Divali**

Divali, also known as Diwali, Dipavali and Deepavali<sup>14</sup> among other names, is popularly known as the “festival of lights”. Divali is a Hindu five-day celebration that occurs between mid-October and mid-November which is dated according to the



lunar Hindu calendar<sup>15</sup>. Its spiritual meaning lies on “the awareness of the inner light” and symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance and good over evil<sup>16</sup>.

According to Dr. Kumar Mahabir, chairman of the Indo-Caribbean Cultural Council, “the Hindu Festival of Lights has become Trinidad's second largest national open-air festival after Carnival”<sup>17</sup>. A significant amount of events are organized by public and private organizations to commemorate this occasion (see Appendix K). However, the center of all the celebration is the Divali Nagar site, headquarters of the National Council of Indian Culture, where numerous East Indian cultural events are held during a whole week and culminate with a splendid firework display. Likewise, one of the most important legends of Divali, the mythological epic “Ramayana”, is depicted throughout Trinidad and Tobago to celebrate the return home of Lord Rama to Ayodhya. “Ramayana” is the story of Lord Rama, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu and the eldest son of King Dasharath of Ayodhya, who emerged victorious at all the challenges he had to face after a fourteen years exile in the forest of Lanka. His return was celebrated by illuminating his path with numerous earthen “deeyas”<sup>18</sup> (oil lamps) which became the main Divali symbol. Similarly, Hindu families get involved in this celebration by cleaning and decorating their homes, and wearing special clothes to welcome Mother Lakshmi - the Goddess of prosperity and wealth -<sup>19</sup>, they also illuminate their homes and streets with several “deeyas” (See Appendix L), and exchange Divali cards and Indian delicacies - mainly sweets - with relatives, friends and neighbours. In this way, in Trinidad and Tobago, Divali represents an important

festival not only for East Indian descents, but also for people from all religions and nationalities that can take part of this celebration and experience the mysticism of one of the most significant cultural manifestations imported directly from the Indian subcontinent.

Although this essay is focused on the four most important East Indian cultural manifestations in Trinidad and Tobago, it is important to remark that East Indian Culture has influenced Trinidadian culture in many other ways. For instance, in the cuisine, the music and the architectural field. We cannot talk about Trinidadian cuisine without mentioning “Doubles”, “Roti”, “Buss up Shut”, “Phoulorie”, “Baigane”, “Saheena”, “Fry Chana”, “Kuchela” and “Kurma”, which are all of East Indian origin. Similarly, Chutney songs are very representatives of Trinidadian music. Chutney, originated from Indian "breakaway"<sup>20</sup>, evolved into Chutney Soca which incorporates Soca elements to the Hindi – English lyrics and the Indian musical instruments. Likewise, the Trinidadian architecture is characterized by several imposing Hindu and Muslim temples. To illustrate, the Temple in the Sea, the Lion House, The Port-of-Spain Hindu Mandir, the Dattatreya Yoga Center, The Charleville Highway Mosque and the Haji Gookool Meah Mosque, to name a few.

In this way, during the almost eight months I spent in the island, I had the opportunity to visit various Hindu and Muslim temples, to try quite a few East Indian delicacies, to attend some Divali events and to share with Hindu and Muslim people who were open to explain some aspects of their religion to me. It was amazing to see how the whole Trinidadian people get involved in East Indian Festivities and feel

proud of Trinidadian links with India. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, there is no way to talk about Trinidad and Tobago's national identity and avoid mentioning East Indian influence. It is not only manifest through East Indian descents, but also through the rest of the people. In other words, although East Indian diaspora kept numerous aspects of its original culture, it also got absorbed into the Caribbean way of life and the other way around. Hence, East Indian culture got incorporated into each Trinidadian's everyday life, no matter the colour of skin, religion or descent, it helped to shape what a "Trini" is.

On the whole, when I arrived to Trinidad and Tobago, I never expected to experience such a multicultural adventure. I could experience how Trinidadian culture reflects the influence of African, East Indian, Amerindian, Spaniard, French, and British Cultures. Being East Indian culture one of the cultures that have made the most significant contributions to shape the melting pot of cultures that represents Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, Venezuelans and Latin-Americans interested in East Indian culture do not need to travel to the Asian continent. We all can take advantage of Trinidad and Tobago's location and travel to this direct gate to the Indian subcontinent without leaving America. Isn't that wonderful? We can have the opportunity to take part in Divali, Eid-ul-Fitr, Hosay and Phagwa festivities while sharing with Hindu and Muslims, trying a large number of East Indian delicacies and visiting magnificent Hindu and Muslim temples. Therefore, the sunny shores of Trinidad and Tobago offer a quite different cultural experience to tourists who can taste the Caribbean flavour with a remarkable East Indian touch.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The historical society of Pennsylvania. (n.d.). *History of India's Religions*. Retrieved March 15, 2010, from <http://www.hsp.org/default.aspx?id=109>

<sup>2</sup> McNair, L. (2007). *Country Study: Trinidad and Tobago*. Retrieved February 18, 2010, from [http://search.conduit.com/Search.aspx?ctid=CT2431232&octid=CT2431232&eid=128939392600756264&name=google Translate&q=&SearchSourceOrigin=10](http://search.conduit.com/Search.aspx?ctid=CT2431232&octid=CT2431232&eid=128939392600756264&name=google+Translate&q=&SearchSourceOrigin=10)

<sup>3</sup> Mahabir, K. (n.d.). *A glimpse into the past: East Indian indenture ship*. Retrieved March 15, 2010, from <http://www.natt.gov.tt/uploadedFiles/Indian%20Arrival%20Brochure1.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Harrylal, N. (2009). *The true meaning of Phagwa*. Retrieved March 15, 2010, from <http://guardian.co.tt/features/life/2009/03/14/true-meaning-phagwa>

<sup>5</sup> *Holi or Phagwa*. (n.d.). Retrieved March 10, 2010, from <http://www.search.co.tt/trinidad/phagwa/what2.html>

<sup>6</sup> Society for the Confluence of Festivals in India. (n.d.) *Holi Festival*. Retrieved February 18, 2010, from <http://www.holifestival.org/holi-in-trinidad-and-tobago.html>

<sup>7</sup> Harrylal, N. (2009). *The true meaning of Phagwa*. Retrieved February 11, 2010, from <http://guardian.co.tt/features/life/2009/03/14/true-meaning-phagwa>

<sup>8</sup> Emrit, R. (2000). *Hosay (Hussain)*. Retrieved February 18, 2010, from <http://bestoftrinidad.com/hosay.html>

<sup>9</sup> Emrit, R. (2000). *Hosay (Hussain)*. Retrieved February 18, 2010, from <http://bestoftrinidad.com/hosay.html>

<sup>10</sup> Emrit, R. (2000). *Hosay (Hussain)*. Retrieved February 18, 2010, from <http://bestoftrinidad.com/hosay.html>

<sup>11</sup> Emrit, R. (2000). *Hosay (Hussain)*. Retrieved February 18, 2010, from <http://bestoftrinidad.com/hosay.html>

<sup>12</sup> *Eid ul-Fitr*. (n.d.). Retrieved March 11, 2010, from [http://www.theholidayspot.com/eid\\_ul\\_fitr/](http://www.theholidayspot.com/eid_ul_fitr/)

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<sup>13</sup> *The Muslim Festival of Eid ul-Fitr*. (2002). Retrieved March 15, 2010, from <http://www.islandevents.com/cgi-bin/exec/view.cgi/2/279>

<sup>14</sup> National Library and Information System Authority. (2008). *The Origins of Divali*. Retrieved March 15, 2010, from <http://library2.nalis.gov.tt/Default.aspx?tabid=98>

<sup>15</sup> National Library and Information System Authority. (2008). *The Origins of Divali*. Retrieved March 15, 2010, from <http://library2.nalis.gov.tt/Default.aspx?tabid=98>

<sup>16</sup> Desh-Videsh. (n.d.). *Diwali: The Victory of Good over Evil*. Retrieved March 10, 2010, from [http://www.deshvidesh.com/Back\\_Issue/10252008/BackIssue\\_1.html](http://www.deshvidesh.com/Back_Issue/10252008/BackIssue_1.html)

<sup>17</sup> Mahabir, K. (2009, October 19). *Diwali Festival in Trinidad and Tobago*. The Saturday Express. p.8.

<sup>18</sup> Roopchand, A. (2009, October 19). *The story of Lord Rama*. The Saturday Express. p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> National Library and Information System Authority. (2008). *Diwali in the Caribbean*. Retrieved March 15, 2010, from <http://library2.nalis.gov.tt/Default.aspx?PageContentID=37&tabid=98>

<sup>20</sup> Gosine, S. (1998). *A cultural heritage of song and dance: inspiration and wonder over the years*. Sunday Express. Retrieved March 15, 2010, from [http://www.nalis.gov.tt/Festivals/Culture\\_IndianArrivalDay.html#origin](http://www.nalis.gov.tt/Festivals/Culture_IndianArrivalDay.html#origin)

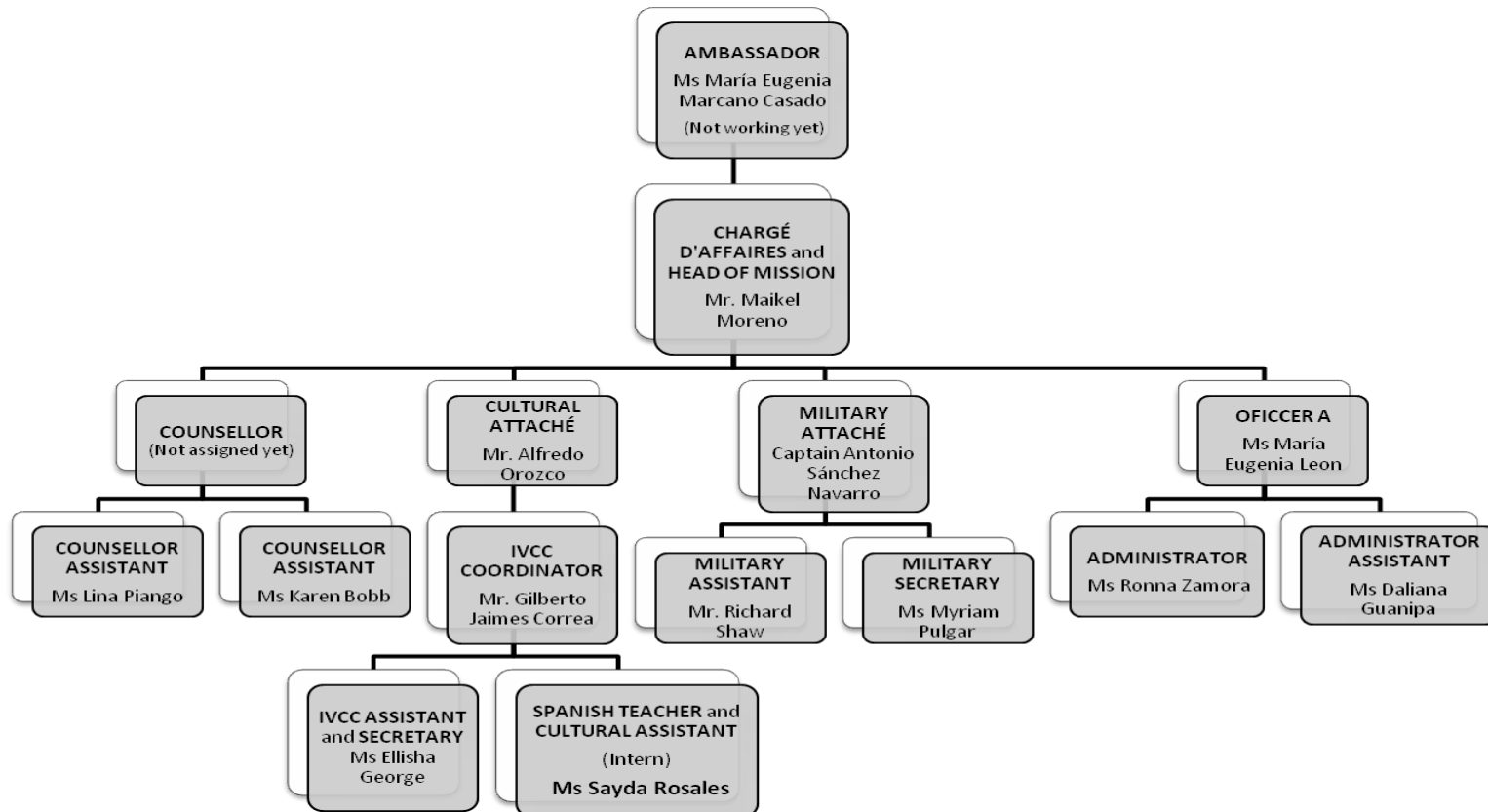
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## **APPENDIXES**

## APPENDIX A

### Placement of the Intern within the Embassy





## APPENDIX B

Venezuelan Institute for Culture and Cooperation “Andrés Bello” (IVCC)



## APPENDIX C



### Lopinot and Venezuelan Institute host May Cross day

**Trevor Burnett**

Published: 20 May 2009

<http://guardian.co.tt/features/life/2009/05/20/lopinot-and-venezuelan-institute-host-may-cross-day>

The May Crosses (“Cruces de Mayo” in Spanish) form a Spanish tradition which dates back to Roman times. Apparently, as far back as Emperor Constantine the Great, who is best known for being the first Christian Roman Emperor.

The Hispanic heritage of May Cross or Cruz de Mayo is to be celebrated next Sunday May 24 at 4 pm, and the community of Lopinot, in collaboration with the Venezuelan Institute of Culture, will be hosting this event. According to Hispanic teachings the month of May is traditionally held to be the month of fertility when honour is given to God’s magnificent creation in observing the seas of pink and yellow poui flowers in parks and savannahs. Among the committee



honouring this event are Lopinot resident Victor Salina and Spanish historian Ricardo Rambally. Promises made to the Cross that have been fulfilled are also offered up and new promises will be presented as well as God’s invocations for a good harvest and good health. Decorated crosses are placed on altars while on the steps leading to the altar the faithfuls would place fruits of the harvest, candles, flowers and whatever decorative theme may seem as fitting to the sacred Cross. Unlike Spain the celebrations of May Cross is accompanied with music of rosaries to the Cross and not necessarily conducted by priests or ecclesiastic officials. In honour of the Blessed Virgin and the sacrifice Christ made for mankind in various parts of South America the worshippers would sing Fulas, Decimas or Galerones,

In Trinidad the Spanish influenced peoples favoured the Galeron, Rosarios a la Cruz and Parang. In the La Pastora Shrine the reverence to the Virgin Mother of Christ is of great significance especially with the Decimas or forty worded extemporaneous Spanish verses. After a person sings he passes a flower to any another person who will in turn have to sing a verse and then pass on the flower. The relevance of Spanish music to the rural cocoa-panyols is essential like the vibrance of the parang season. The many songs sung while dancing cocoa is quite a wonder, alike “Moliendo Cafe” (grinding coffee.) Parang of yesteryear, according to Pedro Marcano of Matelot, was never restricted to the Nativity and Christmas, but stretched to the Ascension of Christ into heaven and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. May Cross celebrations are for prayers of a magnificent crop, Corpus Christi—planting in the Body of Christ—and the Harvest in reaping and giving thanks.

For this occasion parang bands are invited to participate and help restore the heritage of Lopinot, 203 years since its founding in 1806. The May Cross tradition began in old Europe when a young girl would be adorned with flowers in commemoration of the goddess Maya the “splendour of nature” representing eternity as spring is the time of renewal. There was celebration of dancing around a log which symbolised Christ’s Cross which is today recognised as the May Pole.

APPENDIX D



# Parranderos

You're Invited to

# MAY CROSS

## Veille Croix

**A celebration of Creation in Parang**

**FEATURING:**

Los Alumnos de San Juan,  
Rebuscar, Maracas Serenaders,  
La Bendicion All Stars,  
San Jose Serenaders,  
Jose y Amigos,  
from Venezuela -  
Sabor Venezolano.



**Traditional Cuisine & Craft on sale.**



This event is a celebration of life and creation in Parang Music. It was a tradition held by our Hispanic forefathers to invoke rain and a good crop. This year's May Cross Features some of our Parang Icons performing music that we have not heard for many a year. These traditional songs along with well known Parang gems will leave you with an unforgettable feeling. And, like those that attended last year, you will never be able to put behind you the memory of those hauntingly beautiful Parang songs.

Miss this and have the rest of the year to regret it!

**Info**  
**355 5649,**  
**669 5556**

Monday 31st May, 4 pm  
at the Historical Complex, Lopinot

# ADMISSION IS FREE



**APPENDIX E**

Trinidadian Cuisine



Jerk Chicken with Rice, Macaroni Pie,  
Callaloo and Salad



Roti




Bake and Shark



Buss up Shut

## APPENDIX F

 **República Bolivariana**  
de Venezuela

Embajada de la República Bolivariana  
de Venezuela en Trinidad y Tobago  
Carretera Com. de El Valle, San Juan de los Rios, P.O. Box 20000  
87001, Trinidad y Tobago. Teléfono: +592 623 2222

**Venezuela**  
  
AHORA ES DE TODOS

### MEMORANDUM

**PARA:** Maikel Moreno, Ministro Consejero  
Encargado de Negocios a.i.

**DE:** Segundo Secretario Gilberto Jaimes Correa

**ASUNTO:** En el texto

**FECHA:** 5 de agosto de 2009.


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Como es del conocimiento del Jefe de Misión, el suscrito en el lapso de dos semanas cumplirá con el proceso de traslado a Venezuela, por lo que queda vacante y sin reemplazo las funciones de Coordinador del Instituto Venezolano para la Cultura y la Cooperación (IVCC) y la Sección Comercial de esta Misión. En virtud de lo anterior el suscrito se permite sugerir, en el caso particular del IVCC, crea un equipo de trabajo encargado de la coordinación de dicho Instituto conformado por el Sr. Jabier Eduardo Portillo Castillo, la Srta. María Antonieta Ramírez, y la Srta. Zayda Mayerly Rosales Calderón y la Srta. Elisha George.

En el caso del Sr. Jabier Eduardo Portillo Castillo y la Srta. Zayda Mayerly Rosales Calderón, una vez cumplida su pasantía en la institución demostraron la capacidad profesional y académica para llevar a cabo la tarea arriba descrita, igualmente dichos profesores se encuentran actualizando la programación entera de enseñanza del IVCC, por lo que el suscrito se permite sugerirle al Jefe de Misión que los mencionados profesionales se mantengan al frente de dicho proyecto durante el mes de agosto y luego, en septiembre retomen sus funciones de profesores en el Instituto. Para este planteamiento se requiere la aprobación del Jefe de Misión a los fines que al Sr. Portillo Castillo y la Srta. Rosales Calderón se les asigne una compensación por sus servicios profesionales durante el periodo en referencia.

GJC

Decisión y/o comentarios:





## APPENDIX G

**Embajada de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela en la República de Trinidad y Tobago**  
16 Victoria Ave., Port of Spain Tel: (1868) 627-9821 Fax: 624-2508 embaveneztt@tstt.net.tt

Nº II.2.T7.E1/SCP/2.9/ 1553

Port of Spain, December 17<sup>th</sup> 2009

### Constancia

*Mediante la presente, hago constar que la ciudadana **Sayda Mayerly Rosales Calderon** se desempeñó como profesora de español en el Instituto de Cultura y Cooperación "Andrés Bello" en la Embajada de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela en la República de Trinidad y Tobago durante los términos Mayo-Julio y Septiembre-Diciembre. Además, durante este tiempo, realizó distintas traducciones de cortesía en ambos idiomas (inglés – español y español – inglés) de notas de prensa, acuerdos económicos y militares, contratos, cartas, artículos del periódico y una de las secciones de la revista Amazonia publicada por el parlamento amazónico. Así mismo, prestó su servicio de interpretación oral en reuniones, foros y exposiciones; también como maestra de ceremonia durante actividades interculturales coordinados por esta misión diplomática.*



*Atentamente*

*Mario Eugenia Marcano Casado*  
**Mario Eugenia Marcano Casado**  
**Embajadora**



## APPENDIX H

Phagwa: Festivity involving colours



Retrieved from:

[http://guardian.co.tt/files/imagecache/article\\_main\\_image\\_stretched/articles/images/tobago%20pagwa1.png](http://guardian.co.tt/files/imagecache/article_main_image_stretched/articles/images/tobago%20pagwa1.png)

## APPENDIX I

Hosay: Hosays and Tadjahs are accompanied by the beating of Tassas



Retrieved from: <http://bestoftrinidad.com/hosay.html>



Retrieved from: <http://bestoftrinidad.com/hosay.html>



## APPENDIX J

### Eid-ul-Fitr: Eid Prayer (Salah)



Retrieved from: <http://www.moe.gov.tt/cyberfair/websites/Secondary/NGHS/images/eid%20pic.jpg>

## APPENDIX K

### Divali in T&T: “Shiv Shakti” Trinidadian Dance Group



Retrieved from: [http://triniview.com/gallery/main.php?g2\\_itemId=90743](http://triniview.com/gallery/main.php?g2_itemId=90743)

## APPENDIX L

Divali: Trinidadians illuminate their homes and streets with several “Deeyas”



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