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SATISH SHAH

*Interviewed by: Carol Peasley
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INTERVIEW

Q: OK, this is Carol Peasley, and it is January 19, 2018 and I'm starting an interview by telephone with Satish Shah, who is currently based in Plano, Texas.

So, thank you very much Satish for agreeing to do your oral history, and I'm really very excited about this chance to learn more about your life and career.

SHAH: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share information about journey of my life and career.

Childhood, Education, and Early Background

Q: OK, and maybe if we could start a little bit about your childhood: where you were born, what your family background was, and your early education. Let's get started with that, and then I might push you on a few questions related to that.

SHAH: I was born January 1937 in Nairobi, Kenya. My parents migrated to Kenya in early 1930s from Gujarat which is in the western part of India. My father joined his cousin brothers' business in Kisumu, which is a town on Lake Victoria.

Q: Was he a businessman or was in in another profession? What did he do?

SHAH: He was running a business which imported merchandise from several countries and sold to retailers in Kisumu and surrounding villages..

Q: OK. Got you.

SHAH: The business was owned by four cousin brothers who were sons of my grandfather and his two brothers. After about four years my father moved to Nairobi where he along with his cousins opened another store. And after a few years, he moved to Mombasa, which is a coastal town in Kenya. This was around 1940.

In 1942, my parents, I and my two siblings went to India. I remember the journey was on a steamship crossing the Indian Ocean. And this was at the time of World War II.

Q: Yes, right.

SHAH: And the ship could not display any lights at night. Complete darkness was observed to avoid sightings by the U-boats. We arrived safely in Bombay (now Mumbai) and then moved to Gujarat and stayed there about three years.

Q: Can I interrupt for one second, Satish? When your family left Kenya to go to India, was it with the intent of resetting back to India? Was that the intention?

SHAH: That's a good question. No, it was not with that intention. Kenya, being a British Colony, was being threatened from countries in the north and the south. This was at the time of the World War II. In the north Italians were in Somalia And in the south there were rumors that the Germans were coming to Tanganyika (now Tanzania) which was until World War I ruled by Germans..

Q: Yes, right. OK.

SHAH: And Kenya being in between— lots of Indians, including my father, went to India for safety of their families.

Q: OK, but your father's business continued in—

SHAH: My uncle stayed, and he ran the business in Mombasa.

We stayed in India for three years then returned to Mombasa - back to my father's business. I joined school and finished my high school certificate examination in December 1953. And at the time, Kenya being a British colony, all schools followed the British system of education. When we finished high school, we had to appear for an examination which was conducted by the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom (UK). This was recognized by universities in UK and India as equivalent to a High School diploma and those who passed were eligible to join a college/university to pursue further studies.

In 1954, Kenya didn't have facilities for studies leading to a degree in Engineering or Medicine; therefore I, like many others, went to India. Some went to the UK. I preferred India. I joined the University of Pune which is about 100 miles south of Bombay (now Mumbai). Pune had well established Engineering and Medical Colleges which were affiliated with the University of Pune. I successfully completed the Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) degree program in 1959.

Q: Satish, just one other just question about education. When you were in Kenya studying, before going to university, were you in schools primarily within the Indian community in Kenya, or were they mixed schools, or were there British?

SHAH: The schools were segregated. Basically there were three types of schools - those which catered to Indians, Whites (mostly British) and Blacks (Kenyans). Most were operated by the government, there were a few operated by religious organizations or individuals.

Q: Oh, everything was segregated? OK, thank you. And so then you went off to university in India. Was it civil engineering you studied?

SHAH: Yes, I studied civil engineering in Pune. In the final year, an Indian classmate originally from Pune suggested that we join a University in the USA for graduate studies. Fortunately his elder brother had just completed a Civil Engineering program at the University of Arkansas and he recommended that we should try for admission into a Master of Engineering program at Stanford University, California. This was first time I had heard of Stanford. I did not know where exactly it was located and its standing..

Q: (chuckles) Well, that's a very good and prominent school to suddenly decide you want to go to!

SHAH: Yes, The cost at that time was about \$2,500 for tuition and boarding for the one year Master's program. I asked my father whether that it would be affordable, and he encouraged me to apply for admission. So, we applied, and fortunately my friend and I got admitted. And so, I went to Stanford.

This is how I ended up at Stanford. I had some knowledge of opportunities for graduate studies in the USA. I knew that some joined the University of California, MIT and the University of Illinois. But I had never heard of Stanford.

Q: (chuckles) Yeah, we won't tell the Stanford Alumni Association you'd never heard of them.

SHAH: (laughs) When I reached Stanford, I realized that there were some prominent Kenyans who had been to Stanford. There was a Kenyan who studied medicine partly in South Africa, and then he went to Stanford and was supported by a Stanford family. And he finished his medical degree and returned to Kenya. He became a personal physician of independent Kenya's first President, Jomo Kenyatta.

When I was at Stanford, there was another Kenyan who came there for studies. And he finished his studies, and returned to Kenya. After working for few years with the Kenya's Agriculture Department, he became a member of Kenya's Legislative Assembly (Congress) and eventually and a Minister.

Q: Were these African Kenyans?

SHAH: Yes, they were African Kenyans.

Q: And relations with them were good? Because I know at various times in Kenya, there have been tensions between Africans and Asians in Kenya. But when you were all at Stanford, was that all good?

SHAH: Yes, in fact Stanford was a good place to experience racial harmony. The dormitory in which I was staying was for graduate students and there were students from many countries such as Russia, India, Kenya, South Africa, Afghanistan and Turkey in addition to from several parts of the USA. All international students were given the opportunity to spend a week with an American family in the area before commencing classes. Staying with a host family was a very unique experience for me. After spending a week with the host family I moved to the dormitory. I was sharing a room with a white American from Michigan. His father had come to drop him off. They were very nice. I spent the whole day with them. In the evening, my roommate invited me and my friend from Pune to drop his father off at the airport as he was flying back to Detroit.

The Kenyan that I mentioned earlier was also rooming with another white American. We used to talk a lot about the political situation in Kenya at that time. In Kenya a strong liberation movement was going on and we used to exchange information about progress being made in Kenya's independence struggle. Also, there were some South African students. Most were white except one who was an Indian-South African.

Stanford had International Center which was used by foreign students for socializing and meetings. It was like a club for them. Once a month foreign students would meet to discuss ongoing issues in South Africa and Kenya. It was very interesting and educational to see how South Africans looked at the apartheid. Some of them defended the government's policy.

Q: So, there are a lot of different ideas floating around.

SHAH: Yes. In addition to several opportunities to discuss Kenya and South Africa affairs, I got to hear President John F. Kennedy when he visited Stanford before he opened his campaign for presidency in 1960. He emphasized international cooperation.

I truly enjoyed my stay of nine months at Stanford and successfully completed the Master of Science degree program. I then moved to Southern California to work for a consulting engineering firm. I stayed there for a year.

Q: (chuckles)

SHAH: My plan was just to complete the Master of Science (Engineering) program and then move on.

Q: And start working.

Let me just ask one other question about Kenya that I should know and don't. But when did Kenya gain independence from Britain?

SHAH: On December 12, 1963.

Q: So 1963.

SHAH: It was when Kenya got independence. Uganda got independence in 1962 and Tanzania in 1961. As all three countries were ruled by the British, many services such as customs, income tax, transportation were managed jointly under the East African Federation.

The Federation was dissolved in 1967/1968. But they continued to implement certain regional activities such as locust control and training programs.

Q: Was that— Had Britain created the Federation the three, or—

SHAH: Uganda was a protectorate of the British empire. A large portion of Uganda consisted of the Buganda Kingdom . And Tanzania was formed with the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964. Tanganyika was part of German East Africa until 1919 (World War I) when it came under the League of Nations which gave a mandate to the British to rule it.

Q: German colony, and then had—

SHAH: But Zanzibar was independent under a sultan from Oman. Zanzibar was also protected by British, but the sultan had lots of say what could be done there.

Q: OK, but during the time you were at Stanford, Kenya was still part of the Federation and was still a colony?

SHAH: Yes. Kenya was officially called Kenya Colony and Protectorate as a 10 mile wide coastal strip was owned by the Sultan of Zanzibar.

When I came to the USA to study, I had told my parents that I would return to Kenya in two years. Several friends including my Pune friend stayed on to complete a Ph.D. degree in Civil Engineering, I never considered extending my stay in the US. (laughs)

Q: Right, you were a good boy, and you abided what you'd told your parents.

SHAH: Yes It was important for my parents to know that I would not stay in the US more than two years.

Q: When you were working in Burbank, was that with a large engineering company?

SHAH: It was a small company. But it was good experience to work with this one engineer. He was the owner, and I was his assistant. And we worked on some interesting, small projects.

Then I moved on after one year; I stopped in London on my way to Nairobi. In London, I worked for a large British engineering firm to get some experience which would be more acceptable in Kenya.

And that's where I met my wife, Surya! She had come to London from Nairobi to study, and we met at a friend's house where we were invited for dinner. I didn't see her again, and after four months I returned to Nairobi. That was our first meeting.

Q: Ah, yeah. I was going to ask you about how you two got together. So that's good to know. It started in London.

SHAH: That's where we met first time. So that stop at London was very rewarding for me— (chuckles)

After four months in London, I returned to Kenya, and joined, again, a small engineering firm in Mombasa. The owner was my father's friend. The owner wanted some help in the design of a gas station and a school. He was very nice to me; he was an Indian who had studied in India and had returned to Mombasa. His father was a big contractor. Instead of joining his father's firm, he started his own consulting firm. I completed two projects in six months

Then I started looking for a more permanent job in Nairobi, since Nairobi was the capital of Kenya and there were more engineering related activities there. The U.S. Embassy had advertised in a local newspaper for services of an Engineer and I sent my resume to the Embassy. At the same time I had put an ad in a local newspaper that I was looking for a job. My ad mentioned that I had a Master of Science degree from a U.S. university.

The chief of Regional Engineering Office who was working out of USAID-Kenya wrote me a letter and said, "Please come to Nairobi. I'd like to meet with you." I had also lined up three other interviews. I travelled to Nairobi and met the Regional Engineering Officer. His name was Lawrence Whearty. He was in his late 50's. And he immediately said, "Go and see the HR (human resources) person in the embassy, and come join us."

Q: Yeah, a Stanford master's degree engineer. They were going to grab you quickly.

SHAH: Yeah, you're right. That's what happened. I met with the HR people and agreed to a grade (position level) and started working there from July 1962.

Q: Did you know USAID? Had you hear of USAID before?

SHAH: No, I had never heard about USAID. I had heard of some activities financed by the U.S. such as a scholarship program. When I was in U.S., there was a lot of talk about the U.S. financing education of Kenyans. In 1960, the Kennedy family had provided money for transportation of students from Kenya to the US. Tom Mboya, a well-known Kenyan labor leader, was instrumental in arranging scholarships for Kenyans at several U.S. universities. Private donors including the Kennedy family provided funds for transportation. One of the Kenyans who benefitted from this program was President Barack Obama's father.

Q: Ah!

SHAH: Yeah: Obama, Sr. Tom Mboya and President Obama's father knew each other as they were from the same province in Kenya. And he got a scholarship to study at the University of Hawaii in 1959, the same year I joined Stanford. I met him first time in 1982 when I was working for USAID/Kenya as the Project Officer. He, as Government of Kenya's economist, and I travelled to Western Kenya for three days for a pre-feasibility study to improve Rural Market Centers.

Q: Barack Obama, Sr., or Tom Mboya?

SHAH: Barack Obama, Sr.

Q: OK, good. Let's talk about that when we get to your work. That would be interesting.

SHAH: Tom Mboya was a very dynamic leader and was aligned with the west. Unfortunately he was fatally shot in July 1969 at a Nairobi pharmacy. There was another leader who was aligned with Russia and he also made arrangements for several Kenyans to study in Communist countries.

I joined USAID's Regional Engineering Office in July 1962. The office was responsible to provide engineering support services to USAID Missions in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. It was staffed by the US Direct Hire Regional engineer and myself.

Q: Was there a bilateral Kenya program as well?

SHAH: Oh, yes. There were a lot of things going on. When I joined, Kenya's Ministry of Education, was expanding several secondary schools. The British were still the ruler, but there was already an agreement between U.S. and Britain about providing assistance to these countries through USAID.

Q: Wow, so we started—

SHAH: USAID was given all the diplomatic privileges, We started with the extension of several secondary schools.

Q: So just to clarify, this is an interesting point that I had not realized. So we had started the assistance program in Kenya even before—

SHAH: Independence, yeah.

Q: So our negotiations, were they more with the British or the colonial authorities to decide what we would be doing?

SHAH: With the colonial authorities. When I joined in 1962, this was a transition period from ICA—International Cooperation Agency—to AID. And the first director at that time in Kenya was Victor Skiles.

I believe Kenya had a drought 1961, and the U.S. provided wheat and milk powder under its PL-480 program (U.S. Public Law 480 "Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act"). The Colonial Government sold wheat to local population and the funds were deposited in a special account. These funds were used to expand secondary schools in Kenya.

A major project that came through in about a year's time after I joined the Regional Engineering Office was the expansion of the Nairobi Water Supply System. Nairobi was growing and there was a need to expand the water supply whose source was a dam about 50 miles from Nairobi. The Kenya government first went to the World Bank for assistance, and the Bank turned down the proposal. And then they came to USAID, and we worked on it. Mission Director was Bill Wild. I don't know if you heard of him.

Q: Yeah, they called him "Wild Bill", right?

SHAH: I remember him walking into my office when he arrived in Nairobi. He stopped by office and introduced himself and shook my hand. And as he walked out, I started wondering, whether the person was Yul Brynner? His head was shaved and his build was like that of Yul Brynner, the movie star. (chuckles)

Q: Yeah. (chuckles)

SHAH: We reviewed the technical and economic feasibility of the proposed Nairobi Water program managed by the Nairobi City Council. The Regional Engineer Lawrence Whearty travelled to Washington and presented it to the senior staff of the Africa Bureau. A loan of about \$1.2 million was approved. One component of the project was to raise the height of the Sasumua Dam to increase the reservoir storage capacity. It was designed by a British firm. The city council were taken back when we said we wanted an American firm to review the plans, including the design of the dam as required under Section 611 of the Foreign Assistance Act..

Q: Right.

SHAH: We hired an American firm to review the plans and the firm gave its approval.

Q: So one question: This was—

SHAH: Mr. Terzaghi, a world famous American Soils engineer, reviewed the design of the dam and approved it..

Q: Satisfying, was this before independence?

SHAH: Yes, this was before independence. This was in mid-63. Kenya became independent in Dec. 63. It was a two-step loan. The U.S. government loaned money to the Kenya's colonial government which was under the British rule. Kenya government re-loaned it to the City of Nairobi.

Q: OK, this is interesting to me. I had not realized that we were doing loans to a British colony. But I guess everyone knew that independence was coming, so—

SHAH: Yes. The British Government and the two major Kenyan political parties had been negotiating for freedom and agreement was reached for a self-government and eventually independence. Two neighbors, Uganda and Tanganyika (now Tanzania), were already independent. When Tanzania became independent, President Kennedy committed a \$10 million loan for infrastructures as a good will gesture from the people of the US.

The USAID program in Uganda included expansion of several Secondary schools. USAID also financed the construction of a major secondary school for girls in Tororo, at the border of Kenya and Uganda. It had boarding facilities which enabled girls from all parts of Uganda to enroll.

Coming back to Kenya, USAID provided grant funds to build a veterinary school, a laboratory for the School of Engineering and dormitories for the University of Nairobi students. In 1966. USAID and the African Development Bank provided loan funds for upgrading of two major roads connecting Kenya with Uganda and Tanzania.

As USAID's assistance for infrastructure construction and improvement projects increased two additional direct-hire engineers were assigned to the Regional Engineering Office by 1964.

Q: And how many Americans? Were you the only FSN (Foreign Service National)?

SHAH: I was the only FSN, and there were three American engineers at one time.

Q: Satisfying, just a question about— These were all loan projects?

SHAH: No, there were some grants. Funding for the expansion of the Nairobi Water Supply System and upgrading of two roads linking Kenya with Uganda and Tanzania were loans. Whereas funds for the construction of several facilities for the University of Nairobi such as the veterinary school, engineering laboratory and dormitories were grants.

Q: And was the actual construction contracted out?

SHAH: Yeah. All construction was by local contractors except the two roads linking Kenya with Uganda and Tanzania. At that time, building materials which were not manufactured in Kenya would have to come from United States. And that was one of the major challenges. When we were building the veterinary school, we had to identify local

suppliers for items such as locks, sanitary fittings, electrical fixtures who would import these items from U.S. and provide them to contractors and carry spare parts for maintenance.

Q: Did USAID have to do that importation, or did the contractor have to do that?

SHAH: No, what we did was set up a system of local suppliers who would contact American suppliers and be their agent. A local supplier would contact the American supplier, get quotations for the item from the American supplier for which specifications were prepared by a local consultant, add their overhead and profit and submit a bid. Successful suppliers for materials were identified and the contractor would have to contact them for the supply of imported items. This procedure established links between local businesses and American suppliers and this practice continued for all major construction programs in East Africa.

Q: So in some sense it helped to build up the local industry as well.

SHAH: Yes.

Q: OK.

SHAH: In late 1967, USAID/Kenya and the African Development Bank jointly financed upgrading of two roads linking Kenya with Uganda and Tanzania. The project was managed by Kenya's Ministry of Works. The Ministry contracted with an American firm from New York with an office in Nairobi to design the roads and supervise construction. As the African Development Bank was a co-financier, international construction contractors were eligible to bid. However, there was a requirement that the successful contractor must purchase heavy equipment worth about \$1.2 million from the US. The lowest bidder was an Italian contractor.

A year after the work started, we found that the contractor was not making much progress. Since this was a capital project, the responsibility for implementing it rested with the Africa Bureau's Capital Development Office. The Office was advised of our concern with the lack of progress, so a legal advisor from AID/W was sent to Nairobi. He stopped in Rome, met with a representative of the bonding company and alerted the bonding company about the lack of progress by the contractor. After reviewing the situation the Ministry advised bonding company's representative in Nairobi about the need to get another contractor. The bonding company negotiated with a Nairobi-based contractor to complete the work and paid the contractor a bonus. The work was completed without any additional cost to either the U.S. or Kenya government—and in a timely manner.

Q: Sure, that the local contractor was better than the Italian.

SHAH: There were several construction contractors in Nairobi who were capable of handling the work.

Q: Satish, can I ask just a question about this period between 1962 and 1969 when you were an FSN engineer in the Kenyan mission working on these regional activities? But on the Kenya side, did you from your position, see any significant differences after independence of the three countries of Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya? As their status changed, did you see any difference in how you all operated?

SHAH: All three countries maintained their ties with the British and several British Civil servants were retained. Their salaries were paid by the British Office of Overseas Development. Kenya had adopted the policy of Africanization of the Civil Service but the transition was handled well.

For example, in Kenya's Ministry of Works, the Chief Roads Engineer was a Kenyan but there was a British advisor working with him. During the crisis of the roads project mentioned earlier, the Kenyan Roads Chief Engineer chaired all meetings but there was a British advisor assisting him.

Q: OK, OK.

SHAH: I will now briefly describe activities in Tanzania and Uganda that were receiving support from the Regional Engineering Office. When Tanzania became independent in 1961 President Kennedy promised a loan of \$10 million for infrastructures as a goodwill gesture from the people of the United States. Several ministries of the Government of Tanzania were involved with programming of the \$10 million for infrastructure projects. Projects that were implemented included expansion of the Dar es Salaam Water Supply system, construction of several rural water supply systems, upgrading of roads, expansion of the University of Dar es Salaam, construction of facilities at the Morogoro Agricultural College..

Because of the sudden increase in capital project activities in all three East African countries, the number of American engineers increased from one to three in 1964 and I was the FSN engineer. By 1968, all American engineers left and I remained in Nairobi as the FSN engineer supporting the Kenya mission. The Regional Engineer's position was transferred to Dar es Salaam and one American engineer was posted there as the Mission was financing a major highway project. He was also responsible for supporting missions in Kenya and Tanzania. The Dar es Salaam office also had one FSN engineer and an IDI Engineer.

The major infrastructure activity in Dar-es-Salaam was improvements to the road linking Dar es Salaam port with Zambia. After Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), a British Colony at that time, declared Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, sanctions were imposed with a trade embargo. Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia) was landlocked and most of goods were transported through Southern Rhodesia to a sea port. Zambia had to find an alternate route to a sea port through Tanzania. This created considerable traffic on Tanzania's highways and required upgrading of approximately 500 miles of the road linking Port o Dar es Salaam to Zambia border. USAID provided

financing for one section linking Mbeya to Zambia border. Other donors and World Bank financed other sections of the road.

Q: Yeah, and that was Zambia, right? Northern Rhodesia was Zambia, correct? And Southern Rhodesia was Zimbabwe, I think, wasn't it?

SHAH: Yes, Zambia was Northern Rhodesia and Zimbabwe was Southern Rhodesia

Q: Yes, right.

SHAH: The issue was what would be the economic route - railroad or road. AID/W contracted with the Stanford Research Institute to undertake a feasibility study of the transportation system in Tanzania, and the SRI concluded that the road was a better alternative compared to the railroad.

Tanzania did not agree with the findings of the SRI and it approached China for assistance. The Chinese agreed to finance construction of the railroad—linking Dar-es-Salaam with Zambia.

Q: So this is an interesting point. So, USAID actually funded a feasibility study of this transport, and recommended against a railroad from Dar to Mbeya and then to—

SHAH: Yes. The US Government advised Tanzania that it would finance upgrading of a section of the road linking Dar es Salaam to Zambia to provide access to Zambia to a sea port. An American engineering firm designed the road link and an American construction contractor was awarded a contract for upgrading the section from Mbeya to Zambia border.

On the other side, the Chinese started building the railroad. The Chinese, in a rush to complete the railroad earlier than the upgrading of the road was completed, took some short cuts. Within a year or two, some railroad tracks were washed away and after a few years all the locomotives were in disrepair and had to be replaced. In 1987/1988, at the request of the Government of Tanzania, AID provided assistance to replace the locomotives and USAID/Tanzania managed the project..

While looking after Kenya activities, I got involved in an Integrated Development Project. Kenya government identified several Provinces for Integrated Development. Each donor was given a province where the donor will finance development activities in all sectors such as agriculture, health, education, etc.

USAID/Kenya was assigned Western Province. After reviewing constraints for development in the region, USAID in consultation with Kenya Government identified access from farms to markets as one of the major constraints.

I visited the area several times and working with the local government officials, identified several potential rural access roads that would improve access to market centers. To

provide income to local people it was proposed that the roads should be built using labor intensive technologies. I prepared a project paper for review by the Africa Bureau. The Bureau sent a team to Nairobi to review the program. It was headed by the Deputy Assistant Administer, Phil Birnbaum. Have you heard of him?

Q: Yes.

SHAH: He came out with Ed Fei, Chief Economist of AFR/DP (Development Planning). They reviewed all the components of Integrated Development program which in addition to the rural access roads, included activities in Agriculture and Health sectors. The rural access roads component was justified on two grounds - it would provide income to the people working on the roads and it would provide better access and reduce travel time to market centers.

The team approved the program.

Q: (chuckles) Good economic analysis, Satish.

SHAH: Thanks. Soon after approval of the project, the USAID/Kenya Engineering Office was merged with the newly established East African Regional Capital Development Office (EARCDO) and I moved to the new office as Engineer.

USAID Kenya contracted with an American engineer who had worked on a labor-intensive road construction project in Thailand or Nepal. He managed the implementation. The Kenya government liked the concept and decided to expand the program of building rural access roads using the labor intensive technology to all parts of Kenya.

I also worked on several small but highly visible activities in Kenya. These self-help activities were funded with what was known as “Ambassador’s fund”. Every year AID/W would allocate about \$50,000 to missions which could be used to provide support to local projects such as schools which were built with funds donated by local people. Many times there was need for additional funds to complete schools. My responsibility was to visit schools for which AID or the Ambassador received requests from local leaders. I would visit in company of local leaders (including some Ministers), estimated quantities of materials required to complete the school and prepared specifications for inviting quotations from local suppliers. USAID would issue purchase order to the supplier whose quotation was lowest. While working on the self-help activities, I came to know many Government Ministers and local leaders. Once during a visit to one project in Nyanza Province, Jon Sperling who was Assistant Program Officer joined me. We stayed at a hotel in Kisii and the next day we travelled by a ferry to an island which had requested USAID’s assistance. USAID/Tanzania also had a similar program and I assisted the Mission, but after a year, the Mission recruited an FSN engineer as it was getting difficult for me to spend more time in Dar es Salaam as I remained busy with USAID/Kenya activities.

In 1969 AFR Bureau decided that some of the functions of its Capital Development Office should be moved to the field to facilitate design and implementation of the projects. The East Africa Regional Capital Development Office (EARCDO) was established in Nairobi with responsibility to provide support services to Missions in East and Southern Africa - from Ethiopia to Lesotho. A similar office was established in Abidjan, Ivory Coast to provide support services to missions in West Africa. EARCDO's initial staff consisted of John Withers, Director; Owen Cylke, Project Development Officer; Robert Meaghan Legal Advisor; and Peggy Moe, Secretary. The office opened with four Americans and I was the fifth one as an FSN engineer.

Q: Just, Satish, if I could interrupt for one second. Because previously, the regional work had been covered under USAID-Kenya. Although some got shifted over the Tanzania when the chief engineer went over. Then in 1969, Washington decided to create a new office based in Kenya, which would be a regional office.

SHAH: Yes, Other regional offices such as the regional supply advisor who was stationed in Kampala with USAID/Uganda, the regional housing office in Nairobi and regional program office which had moved to Arusha, Tanzania from Nairobi did not become part of the EARCDO. However, when the Regional Economic Development Services Office (REDSO) was established in 1971/1972, EARCDO and other regional offices became part of it.

Q: Right. So that was the beginning of thinking regionally, was the Capital Development Office.

SHAH: Yes, that was the beginning. As the mandate expanded several people with technical expertises were assigned to the office and the office was renamed: Regional Economic Development Services Office (REDSO).

EARCDO started with four Americans. In about two years the staff went up with a Deputy Director, Project Development Officer, a direct hire Engineer and an FSN secretary.

My work as the only engineer for nearly two years was challenging. We had capital projects in several countries and I was on the road almost 50 percent of the time. For example, AID was financing a water project for the City of Mogadishu, Somalia. This was authorized before the US terminated all programs except the water supply system and pulled out the AID staff except for one person who worked out of the Embassy. The water project consisted of drilling about 22 bore holes to supply fresh water to the city, construction of a water distribution system and technical assistance to train the Water Agency's staff in the operation and maintenance of the system. The Project Development officer, the Legal advisor and I visited Mogadishu from Nairobi to review the progress of the project. At the Mogadishu airport, I was asked to take my bag to another room. I was a British citizen at that time. I travelled on a British passport. My two colleagues started wondering what was happening.

Q: (chuckles)

SHAH: The Somali security officers took me inside and looked at my suitcase, and they found nothing. They said, “OK, go.”

But the Embassy got concerned and it was decided that no one would travel alone in future.

Q: Yeah.

SHAH: Anywhere we went, we were escorted by an Embassy security officer. On the first day or second day of our visit the Ambassador invited the Somali General Manager of the Water Agency to his house for dinner to meet with us. The next day, while we were having dinner in a restaurant, we were told that the General Manager was replaced.

Q: Did he get sacked because he went to the U.S. ambassador’s house?

SHAH: Yes, most likely as association with people from the West particularly from the US required prior clearance. Irony was that there were four Americans, under a technical assistance contract between AID and a firm in Chicago, working in the Water Agency. Fortunately the project was completed without any further incident.

I visited Malawi accompanied by a newly assigned Project Development Officer to review progress on the Lake Shore Road which was being improved to an all-weather standard.

Q: Yes! Drove on it many times.

SHAH: The Government of Malawi had contracted with an American firm (which was working in Tanzania) to manage the construction; this was a cost plus fixed fee type of contract instead of a fixed price contract. The plan was to improve the road to an all-weather standard. We reviewed the work and were satisfied with the progress. Next day we had a meeting in the ministry. The chief engineer was a British national who used to work in Tanzania. And I knew him. We reviewed the construction and the standards that were followed. There was a suggestion to surface the roadway with bitumen to control dust, but this was ruled out as the traffic did not warrant higher standard and spraying bitumen over the surface would make it difficult to maintain the road, particularly grading.

In Tanzania, USAID was financing upgrading of a section (Mbeya to Zambia border) of the Dar es Salaam to Zambia road. The construction contractor was the same American firm that was working in Malawi. It was noticed that the portions of the road that the contractor had completed were breaking up in about six months’ time. We found the problem was that the trucks which were transporting goods from Tanzania to Zambia or copper from Zambia into Dar-es-Salaam were overloaded exceeding the road design load.

The American engineering firm that had designed the road and was supervising the construction recommended that the road base should be strengthened. Robert Meaghan and I flew to Dar es Salaam to meet with the Ministry of Works officials and the consultant's representative. The consultant recommended a soil-cement stabilized base and a thicker surface course. The engineer recommended mixing seven percent cement with soil and rolling it but had not carried out actual tests. When I enquired basis for his recommendation and he responded "intuition"

And I said, "There's no place for 'intuition' in engineering."

Q: (laughs)

SHAH: I told him that was not acceptable to us. He needed to do more tests. The Ministry of Works' Chief Roads Engineer agreed with my recommendation. He also told me that he was skeptical of the Chinese design and construction of the railroad, but could not interfere.

Q: But there were people within the Tanzania government that understood that mistakes were being made.

SHAH: Yes, mistakes were being made, but they couldn't say anything.

Q: And the railroad was parallel to the road we were building, so—?

SHAH: Almost parallel. This was one of the reasons why our consultants (Stanford Research Institute) recommended improvement to the existing road because to construct and operate a railroad in that terrain was going to be difficult.

Q: There's a road there now. Is that just an upgrade of what was done in the '60s, early '70s?

SHAH: What? The railroad?

Q: No, the road.

SHAH: The AID financed section of the road (Mbeya to the Zambia border) was upgraded to a better standard after experiencing failures in some patches. We had to pay the contractor additional money to complete the road.

Q: But is that the same road that's there now?

SHAH: Yeah. I don't think they built a linkage to Malawi when I was there.

Q: Ultimately there was, because I went up from Northern Malawi to Mbeya by road.

SHAH: OK, OK. Mbeya.

Q: It was a big train center in Mbeya

SHAH: I made several visits to Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana to assist in the design and implementation of capital projects. There was no direct air link to these countries. To visit these countries one had to fly into Johannesburg and then travel either by road or fly. Flying required spending a night in a hotel at the airport and flying out the next day. At that time I was a British National and travelled with a British passport. Being of Indian ancestry, I was not allowed to leave the airport except for spending a night at a hotel near the airport which was open for all international travelers. One time a Project Development Officer and I were visiting all three countries and we had to spend a weekend in Johannesburg. At this time, the US Embassy made a special arrangement for me to leave the airport area and stay in the center of Johannesburg. The Project Development Officer and I managed to stay in one hotel which accepted me as I was a British national.

In Swaziland, I worked on two programs: Physical facilities to expand capacity of the local University and procurement of farm equipment. In Lesotho, I mainly worked on constructing of new facilities for the University.

In Botswana, USAID was financing improvements to a road linking with Zambia and passing through a mining town which was operated by an American company. In early 1970's there was only one US Ambassador, Charles Nelson, serving all three countries, He was stationed in Botswana. Before he was posted as Ambassador he had served in Tanzania as USAID Mission Director. The road linking Francistown to Zambia was an alternate route as the UN had imposed economic sanctions on Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe now) in response to the UDI by Southern Rhodesia. The road was designed by a New York consulting firm. The Government of Botswana engineers and we jointly reviewed the bidding documents. I pointed out to the Ambassador that bonding requirement should be changed, a higher bond to assure completion was advisable.

The next day we met with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and the Ambassador attended the meeting. The Ambassador asked me to explain to the PS why the bonding requirement should be higher than what was proposed. I recommended that the bond should be 50 percent of the contract value and not 20 percent as proposed in the bidding document. I explained to the PS that recently we had to replace a construction contractor in Kenya and the bond was large enough to engage another contractor with funds available from the bonding company. The government accepted the recommendation.

Q: So Satish, can I ask a slightly awkward question? Because you obviously, as the senior engineer for this office in Nairobi, and you were traveling all over the region and had a lot of responsibility, and yet in bureaucratic terms, you were still a Foreign Service National, correct?

SHAH: Yes

Q: Did that present any challenges for you? Or were you able to— Because you made, obviously, a lot of difficult decisions about making changes—

SHAH: Yes, one incident that comes to mind, is the design of a Public Administration building in Kampala, Uganda. USAID/Uganda was financing the construction of the building. The Government appointed a local British architectural firm and a Structural Engineering firm to design the building. I reviewed the architectural and structural plans and questioned the structural engineer's design. There were classrooms and the engineer proposed load bearing walls between classrooms. I believed that the load bearing walls would make it almost impossible to make any changes in the size of classrooms.

So it became quite an issue, and mission had to ask Washington to send an engineer to Kampala and talk with the Structural engineer. The Africa Bureau engineer met with the engineer who had designed the building and agreed upon a solution that all walls would be partition walls making it easy to make changes in the size of classrooms in future. I had put my career with USAID online but I was confident that my recommendation was the right one.

Q: That's good, OK.

So this, we've been talking about the period in which you, the senior engineer in really the predecessor to REDSO (Regional Economic Development Services Office), which was, again—

SHAH: Yes, EARCD, the East Africa Regional Capital Development Office, was established in 1969

Q: And that was until 1970—

SHAH: One.

Q: '71, '72?

SHAH: Yeah, '71. And then function of the office was expanded and renamed REDSO. Also additional personnel such as project development officers, economists, engineers, legal advisors, several technical officers, etc. were assigned.

Q: So, REDSO was created in the—

SHAH: '71

Q: In 1971.

SHAH: Yes,

Q: And became REDSO? That's what I'm trying to understand: the change from the East Africa Regional Office to the REDSO that we know today. That was 1971-72 it became REDSO?

SHAH: Yes, '71.

Q: And who was the first director of the REDSO?

SHAH: It was John Withers.

Q: Oh, so John Withers stayed on. He was the first on the East Africa Office. He stayed on?

SHAH: He stayed on. I think he went from there to India as Mission Director, if I'm not mistaken. A very gentle and caring person who trusted the staff. One of the best manager I came across. And the Deputy was Robert Fedel. He was an engineer, and he came from Washington. This was his first overseas assignment. And there was a Legal Advisor. In 1972 two more engineers and a third Project Development Officer were assigned to the RESO.

Q: And was there a separate engineering office? Or were the project development and engineering all together in one office?

SHAH: All were part of REDSO and under the leadership John Withers.

Q: Right, but the specific office within REDSO with the engineers, I mean.

SHAH: Yes, there was an Engineering Office with three engineers, two Americans and I. When I resigned at the end of 1972, the FSN Engineer in Tanzania moved to Nairobi. Robert Fedel, the Deputy Director, acted as Chief Engineer.

Q: But when the regional office was first created, you were the only engineer, and then it expanded significantly over the next two years or so. Was it difficult for you to suddenly have a bunch of American engineers come in? Because it must've changed your role somewhat.

SHAH: No! It was fine. Robert Fedel who was working for AFR Bureau's Engineering Office was assigned as the Deputy Director. He was a de-facto Chief Engineer and we three engineers worked as a team. We consulted with each other. I never felt threatened - may be because I had been there longer than anybody. Also, I did not feel threatened by other officers. Once when an officer intervened on a technical issue being discussed with a host government engineer, I requested him to let me handle technical issues with the government and he never again intervened.

Q: Right, OK. And Fedel was the Deputy Mission Director and the Chief Engineer?

SHAH: Yes.

Q: So he had two responsibilities. This is so amazing for anyone who knows USAID today to know this much infrastructure work was being done.

SHAH: Yeah, and it evolved over time. I resigned in December 1972 as I had already reached the top of the FSN grade level, and I would not have any opportunity to move up. I already had the U.S. immigrant visa, so we moved to the US. As regards the immigrant visa, soon after the Civil Rights Act came into force in 1974/75, the Immigration quota system was changed allowing more immigrants from developing countries. In 1966, I applied for the US Labor Department certification that my qualifications (Master of Science degree) was in demand in the US. The Labor Department issued the certification and I qualified for the US immigrant visa.

Q: Oh, OK. And meanwhile, when did you get married? We forgot. You met Surya in London earlier. When did you get married?

SHAH: In December 1964.

Q: OK, and that was— Was she from Nairobi as well, from Kenya as well.

SHAH: Yes, our parents were originally from Gujarat, western part of India. Surya's family and my family had many common relatives as we were part of a 'Shah' community who had settled around Jamnagar when they moved from Rajasthan. We also had many common friends.

Q: OK, and you got married in 1964.

SHAH: In '64, yes

Q: SO then you went off to— Did you still carry a British passport?

SHAH: Yeah, I had British passport. When Kenya became independent in '63, there was a two-year grace period during which the Indians residing in Kenya and other non-Africans, were eligible to become citizens of Kenya. I did not opt for the citizenship of Kenya. I kept my British passport. And that, in a way, made my stay in Kenya temporary. (chuckles)

Q: Yeah, it's interesting that you were hired as an FSN. (laughs) You weren't really a citizen.

SHAH: Yeah. (laughs). At that time, all legal residents of Kenya were considered FSNs. When we got our immigrant visa in '72, Surya and I went to the US and toured several parts of the US for a month so that she would be able decide whether or not to immigrate to the US. During that visit, we met many former AID officers and stayed with some of

them. All of them were very hospitable. Another choice was to settle in the United Kingdom; however, when I visited London in 1961 I found that it was racially intolerable. While looking for an apartment, I noticed 'To Let' signs in newspapers and kiosks that said "colored not preferred".

Q: Yeah, no. Right, I remember seeing those in London.

SHAH: And my experience of the U.S. was very positive when I was in U.S. from 1959 to 1961. I had once asked my friend from Pune who travelled from Arkansas to Stanford by bus in 1959 whether he experienced any segregation, and he replied "no".

Q: So you really wanted to explore coming to the United States.

SHAH: Yes

Q: And obviously, Surya must have been OK with the one-month tour?

SHAH: Yes

Q: And where did you decide? Where did you end up?

SHAH: I had offers from two US firms to join them. One was in Washington, D.C., and another was in New York. And I liked D.C., and being in the same town as AID/Washington and the World Bank was attractive to me as I had ten years' experience working with AID. Therefore, I joined the consulting firm in Washington, D.C. The firm had an office in Baltimore, Maryland and another office in McLean, Virginia. And the original agreement was that I would work in both locations basically to develop new business. I rented an apartment in Columbia, MD. But then I found that I was spending most of my time in McLean. So I moved to Virginia.

I worked with this firm basically to develop new business and coordinate several ongoing projects with several development agencies and the World Bank . The firm had considerable experience of working in Asia and in Africa. So that was a good experience.

In 1977, AID asked me whether I would like to go to Kenya on a personal services contract, and I said I was interested but I would prefer to go with an American passport. AID made sure I got my citizenship immediately after I qualified for it. Surya and I became US citizens, and immediately we travelled to Kenya with our two daughters, Seema and Shilpa.

But before I left for Kenya, I applied for a Direct Hire position with AID. However, no action was taken as there was a hiring freeze in 1977.

Q: Yes.

SHAH: I arrived in Kenya about June 15, 1977. Charles Nelson whom I had met when he was the Mission Director in Tanzania and then the American Ambassador to Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho, was the USAID/Kenya Mission Director. He was familiar with my work on capital projects. He wanted me to manage a major road program. USAID had given a \$24 million-loan to Kenya government to improve its rural roads and secondary roads. I was assigned to the Multisector and Engineering Office headed by Kevin O'Donnell.

The Ministry of Works was responsible for implementing the rural roads program. The Government of Kenya was impressed with the construction of rural roads using labor intensive technologies in Western Kenya as part of the Integrated Rural Development Program financed by USAID. Based on the success of the Western Kenya program, the Government of Kenya expanded the program throughout Kenya with the assistance from several countries namely the U.S., U.K., Canada, Netherlands, Sweden, etc. USAID program consisted of two parts: construction of rural access roads using labor intensive technologies and upgrading of secondary roads to an all-weather standard. The following is a brief description of the implementation of the rural access roads and upgrading of secondary roads:

Rural Access Roads: The Provincial Development Committee in each Province selected rural lanes for improvements using labor intensive technologies. The Ministry of Works prepared a report and submitted to USAID for approval. To meet USAID's requirement that each road should have no adverse environment impact, a social scientist and I visited all the proposed roads and we prepared an environment report for Director's approval. The process worked well, except in one case I had recommended that two to three roads should not be approved as they passed through designated forest areas and there was a likelihood that this would ease access to trees that could be converted to charcoal. The Ministry did not like AID's comments, but when we pointed out negative impact if the roads were built, the Ministry accepted AID's recommendation. As several donors were involved in the financing of the roads, the Ministry used to hold an annual conference for donors to discuss issues and progress being made.

Improvements of Secondary roads: This program was implemented using heavy road construction equipment from the US and technical assistance provided by a U.S. engineering firm. The procurement of equipment was managed by the Ministry of Works with a technical advisor provided by USAID.

In early 1978, the Government of Kenya requested USAID's assistance with the expansion of an agricultural college, Egerton College, situated about 100 miles from Nairobi. The objective was to provide funding for doubling its capacity. The Mission's Agricultural Officer and I visited Egerton several times to prepare a plan for the expansion which would involve construction of several teaching and housing facilities and training of staff. The total cost was estimated at \$30 million. AID/W approved the program and the Mission was given authority to approve final plans.

Q: Right, but you went initially as a Personal Services Contractor as an engineer to manage the rural roads project.

SHAH: Yes, —

Q: First, let me ask, did you always see the one-year Personal Services Contract as kind of a bridge to becoming a direct hire, that you knew it was—

SHAH: I'd been interviewed for joining the Agency as a direct hire. I didn't know when it would happen as there was a hiring freeze in 1977. So I'd gone to Kenya on a two-year contract.

Q: But always with the expectation that when the hiring freeze lifted, you would be hired as a direct hire.

SHAH: Yes. The AID engineers in Washington knew me. I was in contact with them. So I went to Kenya with that expectation. In July 1978, the hiring freeze was lifted and I joined USAID/Kenya as a Direct Hire Engineering Officer.

Q: And it was originally an engineering position you went into.

SHAH: Yes. When I went to Kenya as a PSC, USAID/Kenya had a Project Development Officer who was assisting the Mission in implementing all projects. He left in 1978. He was replaced by another Project Development Officer.

Q: Who? Who came in '79?

SHAH: The Project Development Officer. He did not find the work challenging. A senior position opened up in Egypt and he left for Egypt. He was replaced by another Project Development Officer. But he stayed only for six month and then moved to Egypt. In the meantime I continued to manage the rural roads project and the Egerton College expansion.

Q: And those were project development officers or engineers?

SHAH: Project development officers.

Q: But you were hired in June of 1978 as an engineer, but then, because of other vacancies, you began to do other, broader project development officer work.

SHAH: Yes, that is right.

Q: So there wasn't another project development officer there.

SHAH: No. When the second Project Development Officer left, the position remained vacant.

Q: Because I think at some point you said your responsibilities expanded into project development work as well.

SHAH: In 1981, I requested that my backstop be changed to Project Development Officer. AID/W approved this change.

In July 1982, the Multisector and Engineering Office was reorganized when Kevin O'Donnell left for AID/W, and a Projects Division was created. I was appointed Division Chief. The Division was responsible for the design of all Mission Projects and the management of 30 active projects. The Division consisted of a DH (American) engineer who was assigned in 1980, a DH social scientist, a FSN Training Officer and a FSN Engineer. It also managed several Private Sector activities. The Division coordinated Mission's project activities with GOK Ministry of Finance External Aid Division.

Q: Wow, so you had to quickly take on a lot of responsibilities.

SHAH: Yeah. I was there until '83.

Q: So six years, is that correct?

SHAH; Yes, In 1982, the Mission had received a request from the Government of Kenya for assistance with improvements of rural Market Centers to provide better services for farmers to market their produce and at the same time would be able to access government services such as agriculture extension agents and primary health care providers. The GOK's economist Barack Obama Senior and I visited several potential sites in Nyanza and Western Provinces but we did not see a major role for USAID in improving market centers – i.e. we concluded the GOK could implement the activity with its own resources. Also at that time AID was de-emphasizing 'Brick and Mortar' activities.

Q: And where was he working at? What was he doing there? What was his responsibility?

SHAH: Since his returned to Kenya, he worked as an Economist for few years with the Ministry of Economic Planning and then worked in Private Sector. He was engaged by the Ministry of Economic Planning on a contract to work on the Rural Market Centers.

He and I travelled to Nyanza and Western Provinces to review the conditions of existing Market Centers and the feasibility of improving them. This is when he told me that he joined University of Hawaii in 1959, married and had a son in Hawaii. He later studied at Harvard.

When I was in Kenya, several congressional delegates visited Kenya to see AID financed projects. I took them around. One of them, a congressman from San Antonio, Texas, looked at the work we were doing at Egerton College and he complimented the mission on the House floor (U.S. House of Representatives) for the good planning and

management of the activity which would benefit the Kenya in improving its agricultural services.

Also, several congressional delegations visited Kenya to see effect of droughts in Ethiopia and Sudan. There was one unfortunate incident: Mickey Leland, a congressman from the Dallas area, along with two USAID employees were killed in an aircraft accident when they tried to visit a refugee camp in Ethiopia.

Q: Yes, but that was later, though. That was in the 90's, wasn't it?

SHAH: You're right. That was in 1990s. In 1982, we had a delegation looking at the Sudan drought and they came to Kenya talk to with NGO's who were working in Southern Sudan. To facilitate transport of food to the drought affected areas, AID improved the road linking Western Kenya to Southern Sudan

In 1982, Kenya experienced a coup by a small section of the Military. It lasted for only three to four hours but several private properties were damaged and businesses were looted. There was a need to provide loans so that affected businesses can restock merchandise. We worked with the Government of Kenya and a local bank to set up a lending program for the local businesses who needed assistance

Q: Was this looting that happened within the Asian communities and the shops?

SHAH: Yes,

Q: And so AID tried to help the local businesses recover after.

SHAH: Yes. However, AID's grant was tied to a policy reform program. We were discussing certain restrictive policies that were affecting Kenya's economy. One was Kenya Government's onerous import licensing requirements that made it very difficult for businesses to plan for importation. The government relaxed the requirement. Total USAID assistance amounted to \$4 to \$5 million.

Q: Right, and that would've been, yeah— Because the (former U.S. President Ronald W.) Reagan administration had started, had come in in 1981, right? And so that was USAID then had a new—

SHAH: Yeah '82, because—

Q: —a new Private Sector Bureau. So you started doing more work in this area.

SHAH: Yeah, private sector and policy reform programs.

Q: Just a question on the infrastructure side: in the early 1970s, when global development theory began to change, and the legislation in the United States changed to be basic human needs-oriented. Did you see feel these changes as you were doing

infrastructure projects; did you have to work hard to draw the linkages to the poorer majority? Did you have to change your arguments in justifying infrastructure projects, or not?

SHAH: 'Brick and Mortar' projects were discouraged and focus had changed to basic human needs. AID moved away from major infrastructure projects, except in Egypt. Other exceptions were AID financing of replacement of locomotives in Tanzania and improvements to the Kismayo Port in Somalia as it served human needs for transporting drought relief goods. The World Bank and regional banks such as the Asian Development Bank, the InterAmerican Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development were actively financing infrastructure projects. The last project I worked on before I retired from USAID was the construction of several apartment buildings in Gaza as part of the peace accord between Palestinians and Israel.

Q: Well Satish, we've gone on for quite a long time, almost two hours. I was thinking we should stop and reconvene. Because after 1983, you then moved from USAID-Kenya to REDSO, is that correct?

SHAH: No, In 1983, I moved to Washington and joined Africa Bureau.

Q: OK, then that's when I met you. So what we can do is, if you think about anything else you want to say about that earlier period in Kenya, you can do that. Otherwise, we can restart when we reconvene next week with your assignment in Washington.

SHAH: OK.

Q: It's January 24th 2018 and this is Carol Paisley and this is the second interview by telephone with Satish Shah. Satish, if we could go back a little bit from where we ended last week and maybe if you could talk a bit more about the process in which you went from an FSN to the United States, became an American citizen, went to Kenya as a PSC (Personal Services Contractor) and then ultimately a direct hire. If you could talk a bit more about that process and whether you had any specialized training or any particular issues that arose during it. Because it's a really quite interesting process that not too many people have ever gone through.

SHAH: To begin with when I was working with USAID as an FSN at that time I believe the US government had a policy that all FSNs were eligible to join the US Civil Service retirement program. I was able to join the Civil Service retirement program. When I resigned from USAID/Kenya and REDSO/ESA as the FSN Engineer after ten and a half years, I kept my Civil Service retirement contribution with the Civil Service Commission. When I eventually retired in July 1994, I received credit for the FSN service.

When I came back to Nairobi to work with USAID/Kenya as a personal service contractor in 1977, the contract was for two years. However, before leaving the US to join USAID/Kenya, I applied for a Direct Hire engineering position with USAID. Even though I had several years' experience working for USAID, one of the requirements for

the Engineering position was that I had to have a Professional Engineering License from a State in the US. Fortunately while working with a private consulting engineering firm in the Washington area from 1973 to 1977, I had successfully passed the Professional Engineering examination of the State of Virginia. That qualification made me eligible for a Direct Hire Position. Also, I had taken several courses in Business Management and Economics at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and this additional studies made my entry into several management positions easier.

When I joined AID in 1977 as a Personal Service Contractor to manage the implementation of a major Rural Roads program, I worked very closely with the Ministry of Works to procure all heavy road construction equipment from the US and to contract with a U.S. consulting firm to manage implementation of the Rural Roads Program.

Q: Was that a USAID host-country contract?

SHAH: Yes.

Q: Okay good.

SHAH: In early 1978 the Government of Kenya requested USAID assistance to expand the capacity of Egerton College, an agricultural institution. This was a 30 million dollar project with loan funds for capital development activities and grant funds for technical assistance. The planning of the capital development activities was handled using expertise of a U.S. architect and a local architectural firm and all the construction was performed by local contractors. All were host country contracts. An innovation in the design of the facilities was installation of solar panels for heating water in dormitories. At that time, there was a lot of emphasis on renewable energy. Egerton College was the first one to introduce a solar water heating system.

Q: This was the Carter Administration in the late 70s, correct? And they were very interested in renewable energy.

SHAH: Yes. In fact, Kenya hosted a major conference on renewable energy at that time. USAID/Kenya had authorized a renewable energy project. Under this project, assistance was provided for reforestation activities and introduction of new technologies. In Kenya, charcoal stoves were extensively used. Thailand was working on the design of a new stove which had better ventilation and was more efficient. Philip Leakey, a member of Kenya's parliament (Congressman) and a son of Mr. and Mrs. Leakey, the world famous archaeologist, was interested in introducing this new technology to his constituents in Nairobi. So he pushed that and we helped him introduce this new technology. The stoves were made locally by the Kenyans.

Q: Did the production of these continue? Do you know?

SHAH: The technology has been used widely throughout Kenya. Just as a side, a Charcoal pizza oven with three tiers has been developed and has become popular for outdoor parties.

The Projects Division also managed a participant training program which was headed by a FSN training officer.

Q: Where were you doing sort of generalized participant training programs at that point in time where you were sending off large numbers of people for either undergraduate or graduate study?

SHAH: When I joined AID as an FSN in 1962, the head of the USAID/Kenya Training Office was an American and he asked me why I had not joined Kenya government as an engineer. I told him that before joining USAID I had met with the Chief Engineer of Kenya's Ministry of Works and he asked whether I had any British qualification. I responded that, I did not have British qualification, but had a master's degree from Stanford University. He said he was looking for somebody with British qualifications. That ended my interview.

Q: So, it wasn't good enough, your Stanford degree.

SHAH: Yes.

In late 1950s and early 1960s just before Kenya's independence, the Russians were training Kenyans through a Kenyan leader. And they were coming back and joining the government. USAID also had a very active participant training program. In addition,, Tom Mboya, a very active Kenya Labor Union leader had arranged for scholarships with several US universities for the benefit of Kenyans. Barack Obama, Sr. was one of the beneficiaries.

Q: Yeah, that's interesting. Satish can I ask a question? You had mentioned earlier that at least one of the projects that you talked about had been a host country contract. In one of my earlier interviews with someone from USAID Egypt, he spoke very positively about the host country contracting process and I'm just wondering how much it was used in Kenya and whether you thought it worked well or did not work well.

SHAH: It worked very well.

There were a few USAID checks. Contracts would be negotiated by Government of Kenya, but USAID approval was needed. All engineering and constructions contracts were negotiated by the Government of Kenya except in one case there was a Direct AID contract. All contracts were reviewed by a REDSO Legal Advisor and Contract Officer to safeguard USAID's interest as a financier.

Q: Do you think that in the process of that, that helped to strengthen Kenya government capacity to do its own contracting?

SHAH: Yes. It did. For example, Kenya government's, Central Tender Board, was introduced to international contracting procedures.

Q: I think it's interesting because the people I've spoken all seem to have felt it was very positive and yet we abandoned it.

SHAH: It requires a little more patience. Based on my personal experience, I believe that it is much easier to have a host-country contract. The ownership will be with the host country and they will manage it properly. And, if there are any issues this will be between the host country and the contractor. We won't have any pressure from any congressman.. That was one of the advantages. When I was with REDSO, I kept emphasizing host country so that the benefitting country would have the ownership of product provided by the contractor.

Q: Okay. Let me just ask another question on that transition from FSN to going to the US, becoming an American citizen, coming back as a PSC, and then moving on to direct higher status. You had said earlier when you were an FSN, in those earlier days Foreign Service Nationals were part of the Civil Service Retirement System and that changed. So, when you became a Foreign Service officer were you able to then transfer your civil service retirement in? Or did that add to your time, was that counted as time as U.S> direct hire?

SHAH: Yeah, it did. So my total service, I had about 10 years as FSN and about 15 years as a direct hire; so 25 years in all.

Q: So, you were credited as 25 years as a Foreign Service officer?

SHAH: Yes.

Q: That's very good.

SHAH: I attended an environmental training course at Clark University, in Massachusetts. I also attended a senior management course. There wasn't any other special training or any special event orientation.

Q: Were there any special challenges with personnel? With any of the FSNs you had worked with earlier? Or, did everyone just say, this is great and there were no issues associated with the transition?

SHAH: When Personnel Office offered a Direct Hire Engineer position in 1978, the grade level did not take into consideration the substantial raise in salaries of Foreign Service officers since I had signed the PSC. This was sorted out with the help of the Mission.

Q: Yes. When we became commissioned officers and I think we went into the same Foreign Service system as the State Department.

SHAH: Yes, the grade levels were changed.

Q: Yes, because an old FS-7 became an FS-5.

SHAH: Exactly. So, in my case, they looked at my salary history and offered me a new lower level FS status and the mission was very sympathetic and helped me send a cable to Personnel Office pointing out the offer was not fair. Personnel Officer agreed and offered me a FS-4 grade which became FS-2 after the changes in grade levels. I was fortunate to get promoted to the next grade in 1980.

Q: Very good. So they credited your experience.

SHAH: Yes. An FSNs who worked in Controller's Office, Rashmi Amin, had joined AID almost the same time as I did in 1962. He saw the advantages of being a US citizen and getting hired as a DH officer. He also met the US citizenship requirements by taking one year's leave to establish the US residency. He eventually became a US citizen and rejoined USAID as a Direct Hire officer..

Q: So, you set the example and then he went and did the same thing?

SHAH: Yes.

Q: How much of the FSN staff was, just out of curiosity, in Kenya was Asian versus African Kenyan?

SHAH: There were three Asians in Controller's office, two in Executive office and two to three secretaries. There were about 50 African Kenyans who were professionals, semi-professionals and secretaries.

Q: Okay, I was just curious. We had discussed that earlier. Is there anything else we need to talk about on Kenya or at what point should we take you on to your next assignment in Washington.

SHAH: AID has emphasized the role of stakeholders in the design and implementation of any development assistance program. Two examples of the role of stakeholders stand out for me: One was the design of a primary health care project. USAID was carrying out several development activities in one of Kenya's arid and semi-arid regions - Kitui District. One of the projects USAID believed would have a tremendous impact on the lives of residents of the area was improvements to primary health service centers which would improve services provided by health centers. USAID designed a Primary Health Care Project which it believed would meet needs of the local population; however, the Ministry of Health was not completely on board. USAID cancelled the project when the

Ministry did not show much interest. Whereas the \$30 million Egerton College expansion project was designed with full collaboration of the College administration. This project was a success - the construction of the all facilities were completed in a timely manner and training of additional staff was accomplished so that trained staff was available as the college increased enrollment. After few years, the College was upgraded to a University.

Q: Now, this this rural health project you said was designed by the mission and then authorized and funds were obligated?

SHAH: Yes.

Q: And, it wasn't very successful?

SHAH: The design was well received. However, during a small party to launch the project, a senior Minister for Health, said that it was AID's "baby". This was a signal to us that there was not sufficient interest in the Ministry and AID de-obligated funds.

Q: So, it didn't work and you ended up de-obligating funds. Wow!

SHAH: Yes, de-obligated, and didn't spend more time on it.

Q: That's a very good example of a lesson learned.

SHAH: Yes.

Q: Unfortunately people still are learning.

SHAH: And that is even true with the host country contracts. The ownership should be with the recipients of the services. That was better than AID negotiating and signing a contract with a technical assistance contractor and expect the host country Ministry to diligently manage the contract.

Q: That's very good and if you think of other examples as we proceed of how to really be sure of host country ownership and host country interest in a program, be sure to mention them.

SHAH: Okay. Now to continue my career with USAID, after finishing my tour, I left Kenya in June, 1983 and returned to Washington. I was assigned to the East Africa Projects Division of Africa Bureau Office of Project Development as the deputy chief of division. The chief of the division was John Heard. He was very nice, very supportive. I really enjoyed working with him. My responsibilities were to backstop country project portfolios for Somalia, Tanzania, Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros and the Seychelles.

I wanted to go back after more than five years in the field just to get the flavor of how Washington worked. I had never served in Washington, so I wanted to work in Washington. I was being considered for an assignment with USAID/Sudan as Project

Development Officer to replace Steve Mintz, but this was cancelled as he decided to stay one more year in Sudan.

Q: Bruce?

SHAH: No Steve Mintz who I believe replaced you as Deputy Director in Thailand.

Q: I was the deputy director in Thailand, yes.

SHAH: During the first year with AFR/PD/East Africa, I visited Somalia to assist the Mission in the design of three new projects and to get familiarized with Mission's portfolio. One major issue was implementation of improvements to the Kismayo Port in Southern Somalia. While working for REDSO I had gone there several times. Somalia had changed from what it used to be in early 1970's. The country was more friendly and it was easy to go around the country.

Q: And this was in part for foreign policy reasons. Wasn't there a big U.S. military base or something there?

Yes, the Kismayo Port was an important entry port for Red Sea, and it was improved under the supervision of the Corps of Engineers. However, the infrastructures (piers and deck) started falling apart in about five to ten years.

Q: So, then USAID came in?

SHAH: Yes. It was an important port and we had to make sure that AID got it right this time. To assure good quality construction, we needed to have a better supervision. The Mission contracted with a former AID engineer to prepare a detailed implementation plan. This assured that the construction was properly supervised and completed in a timely manner..

I also I visited Tanzania. USAID was reducing its program in Tanzania because of some policy differences between the US and Tanzania. I helped the mission to prepare a phase-down plan.

After an year with AFR/PD/EA , I was approached by Mr. Robert Bell who was head of the Near East Bureau Project Development Office. He asked me if I would be interested in joining his office as the Chief Engineer. His office had Agency's largest infrastructure program in Egypt.

Q: Yes, Robert Bell.

SHAH: When I mentioned this offer to Larry Hausman who was heading the AFR Bureau Office of Project Development, he passed on the message to Ray Love who called me and offered me a position as the Division Chief of the AFR/PD/SAHEL. I accepted it.

Q: In order to keep you in the Africa Bureau. And Ray Love was the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator at the Africa Bureau.

SHAH: Yes.

Q. Before we move on to Sahel, as I recall there was an Africa Bureau Development Resources Office that had two wings: a technical wing and a projects wing and then they split it up and became the Office of Project Development headed up by Larry Hausman and then there was an Office of Technical Resources headed up by adding either Keith or Ken Sherper. Keith Sherper I think.

SHAH: Keith Sherper.

Q: When you came in was it the Office of Project Development or was it before the split?

SHAH: No. When I came in there was the Office of Project Development. Norm Cohen was Director and Larry Hausman was Deputy Director

Q: Okay.

SHAH: Larry and I were together in Nairobi. Larry was Chief of REDSO Project Development Office and I was head of USAID/Kenya's Projects Division. When Norm Cohen, Director of the Office of Project Development, retired Larry was appointed Director of the Office.

Q: And I came in in 1985 as the deputy.

So, you moved in 1984 to become the division chief for the Sahel?

SHAH: Yes. There were eight countries. To plan and implement economic development activities in these countries was challenging because of difficult economic and climatic obstacles. As Division Chief, I supervised four DH professional staff, one PSC and one secretary. In the first year I chaired issues meetings for 22 Project Identification Documents, Project Papers and Project Amendments and took lead in presenting these documents to the Bureau's Executive Review Committees. I used to meet regularly with the Director and Deputy Director of the Geographic office to keep them up-to-date with the activities of the Division and Mission needs. During the two year period in this Division, I attended the annual REDSO/WCA workload scheduling conference in Abidjan. I also traveled to Senegal to help the Mission in the design of two projects and to Niger to review its Projects portfolio.

Q: Because in those days almost all projects were approved in Washington, so you were coordinating the project review process.

SHAH: Yes. But one of the major ones was a Manantali resettlement scheme in Mali which included relocation of over 1,000 Malian families because of the construction of

the Manantali Dam. The construction of the Manantali Dam was a multi-donor project and USAID elected to assist with the resettlement of Malians who would have to move as a result of the reservoir. I am not sure how much the resettlement was costing but it was important that the project should not create social and economic hardships.

Q: Was the World Bank doing the dam? The World Bank and the African Development Bank?

SHAH: Yes.

Q: And then so we were doing the resettlement. Was that a major agricultural area too? Where they were.

SHAH: Yes, a major agriculture area for Mali.

Q: Were you involved at all Satish in Senegal and The Gambia? Weren't there a couple of major river development programs there also?

SHAH: I worked with missions in the Gambia and Senegal. There was river development but I did not get involved as it was before my time. I visited Mauritania to review progress on a road project USAID/Mauritania was financing. The project needed additional funds because of cost overruns. I was satisfied that the road was serving an important link. While returning from the visit, the Mission's four-wheel drive vehicle got stuck in a river bed. We spent the whole night in the car stuck in the river bed.

Q: Was it dry or wet?

SHAH: It was wet, knee-deep mud. We were pulled out by a tractor in the morning. When I returned after that visit to Mauritania, the Assistant Administrator chaired a meeting to consider Mission's request for additional funding to complete the road project. He wanted to know whether we should proceed with additional funding. The Bureau's Chief Economist, Jerry Wolgin, and I had done a benefit-cost analysis for the additional funds and we concluded that the cost and benefit ratio was positive.

Q: So, did we put the additional money in?

SHAH: Yes. We finished the project.

Q: Actually, I never made it to Mauritania. I think it must be probably one of the most difficult places on earth.

SHAH: Yeah. I think the Mission had one participant training program and this road project.

Q: As I recall it was a very small mission.

SHAH: Yes, very small.

Q: Satish, when I joined the Africa Bureau in 1985 it was right towards the end of the big drought and there was a major relief programs in the Sahel. Were you involved at all in that or was that mostly done through OFDA?

SHAH: OFDA.

Q: So you weren't involved at all?

SHAH: No, not at all.

Q: Do you recall whether the missions made any adjustments to their strategies as a result of that major drought or any anything that affected their programs?

SHAH: I don't think so. Niger mission had a small development program and it continued. I think only change was that we pulled out of Burkina Faso at that time.

Q: That was later, I think, when we pulled out of Burkina Faso, I think. But okay, one other question that again when I first went into the Africa Bureau in 1985 one of the first things that I was asked to do was to work with Jerry Wolgin on the Africa Economic Policy Reform Program, AEPRP. And I believe that there were some of the Sahel missions that submitted proposals for that.

SHAH: Mali came in with a very good proposal. This was developed by an Agriculture Economist – what's her name?

Q: Emmy Simmons.

SHAH: Yes. Emmy Simmons developed that. Two missions in the Sahel region - Senegal and Mali - submitted proposals, . I believe Kiert Toh was the Mission Economist in Niger.

Q: Yes, that's right, Kiert Toh started in Niger. I'll be interviewing him later in the month. I'll ask him about that.

SHAH: We played tennis several times in Washington. [laughter] He loved playing tennis.

Q: So the Sahel office, so you were there for two years?

SHAH: After two years in the Sahel office, I was ready to go to a Mission. I had two options: Owen Cylke who was Mission Director in India asked me if I would be interested to head up Mission's Projects division in India. Then I heard about a possibility of going to Nairobi as REDSO Deputy Director. Art Fell, who was REDSO Deputy Director, moved to the director's position when John Koehring left. I saw Larry Saires

who was a deputy assistant administrator in Africa Bureau and I asked him whether I could be considered for the REDSO deputy director position. After a month, my assignment to REDSO/Nairobi was approved. However, just before finalizing plans, Ray Love called me and Howard Handler, who was going to REDSO/Abidjan as deputy director, and informed us that State Department wanted to reduce field staff and both REDSOs were targeted.

Q: Howard was?

SHAH: Yes. That would mean closing both regional offices. The Agency wanted a good rationale for keeping them open. So Howard and I worked on a memo showing that it was economical to keep both REDSOs in the field to support Missions.

Q: So, you and Howard did that?

SHAH: Yes. I and Howard.

Q: And that was for both?

SHAH: Yes, I had worked for REDSO before so I was able to put together justification based on economic and better efficiency grounds.

Q: I had forgotten all about that. But I now recall, I do remember that being done, yeah.

SHAH: We did that and State Department relented and my departure for Nairobi was finalized. I left in June 1986 to join REDSO/ESA in Nairobi as Deputy Director. It was like coming back home in a sense. It was easy to settle in as deputy director. The director, Art Fell, left for home leave two weeks after my arrival and this give me an opportunity to get operational immediately.

Q: Which four countries were you actually managing?

SHAH: We started with Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius and the Comoros. After about two to three years Madagascar program was expanded and a Mission Director and a Project Development Officer were assigned to run the program..

Q: So, you opened a small mission in Madagascar?

SHAH: Yes. But, about the same time Washington wanted to close Djibouti mission. The embassy was not happy with that. I went to Djibouti twice to explain to the embassy why we were closing down, and assured the embassy that the Djiboutians would receive some support from regional projects.

Q: In these four countries where there wasn't a bilateral program and it was just managed by visits from the staff at the regional office from Nairobi.

SHAH: Seychelles, Mauritius and Djibouti were ESF countries. Madagascar was receiving development assistance.

In addition, Comoros had a development program which was basically a soil conservation activity. This was a PVO activity implemented by the Catholic Relief Service (CRS).

REDSO was also providing support to 16 Missions in East and Southern Africa. Out of those 16, four Missions required to get REDSO director's concurrence for all project activities Mission's approval or submission to AID/W for approval..

Q: Do you remember which four those were?

SHAH: Tanzania, Mozambique, Burundi and Rwanda. They all had small staff.

Q: It's hard to think that, Tanzania is so big now that it's hard to think that they were that small.

SHAH: In Tanzania, the staff was reduced considerably during 1980s because of policy differences. But it was gradually rebuilt.

Q: How did this work in those four missions where the REDSO director had to concur?

SHAH: For example, REDSO staff would assist the Mission in preparing a Project Identification Document or a Project Paper. These documents would require REDSO Director's concurrence before they were submitted to AID/W for approval. Also, the Mission Director would require REDSO Director's concurrence before approving a host country contract. This wasn't difficult because REDSO staff would have been involved. REDSO Director provided concurrence after consulting with the staff. I do not remember any incident where REDSO Director withheld concurrence.

Q: Okay. So it worked smoothly then.

SHAH: The procedure assured that all actions were properly vetted by qualified staff. such as Project Development Officers, Legal Advisor, Supply Advisor, Environmental Officer.

Q: Maybe, just saying a word about what the services were at REDSO for someone reading this if they're not familiar with the REDSO. What kind of, I mean you had the full gamut of technical and support offices?

SHAH: Yes. We had altogether about 43 direct-hire positions and personal services contractors with all the skills needed for successful implementation of a project. Skills varied from project development officers, legal advisors, contract officers, food-for-peace officers, private sector advisors, social scientists, engineers, environmental officer and

technology officer. Missions can call upon expertise needed to design or implement a development activity in that country as all Missions could not usefully employ all skills.

REDSO/ESA also managed 27 Regional Projects with LOP funding of \$30 million. One project provided support to East and Southern Africa Management Institute based in Arusha, Tanzania. At one time, AID had stationed two Regional Program Officers in Arusha, as it was a headquarter for an institution that managed several common services which were part of the East Africa Federation, however the Federation was dissolved in 1980's as three members countries Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania preferred more national organizations such as airlines, currency, customs, etc., but the organization managed several regional activities which benefitted East and South African countries.

REDSO also managed a Project Development and Support Fund with the annual budget of \$875,000 for support to the Missions in the region.

In the later part of my tour, the Regional Finance Management Center with a staff of four DH and about 35 professional and semi-professional FSNs was merged with REDSO and One Management/Executive Officer who supported Missions that required expertise in Personnel and Property management was added to the REDSO staff

Q: And this was all pre-email days. Is that correct?

SHAH: Yes. All correspondence was handled by cable. We had laptops that the staff would take with them when they went to any country. This helped staff in drafting documents when they were in any Mission.

Q: Right. Now, maybe you could talk a minute or two about the scheduling workshop? And how you convened the missions together? And how you scheduled people's time? And how you managed it? Because some people were probably on the road more than they wanted to be. How did you manage some of those kinds of issues?

SHAH: The REDSO scheduling conference was held every year at the beginning of a fiscal year. Before the conference we would ask each mission to provide us information about staff support they would need from REDSO during the fiscal year for design and implementation of projects. The Mission requirements of staff support would be reviewed by our project development officers who would take the lead and then consult with other REDSO technical and support staff such as lawyers as to how they would fit in with the Mission's requirements. All the requests would then be reviewed in a three day conference which was held in Nairobi. One representative from each Mission and a member of the AID/W AFR/PD office would attend. In most cases it was possible to meet the needs of Missions but in a few cases where REDSO staff was not available, we would then ask get help from AID/W or a contractor. One of the objectives of the scheduling conference was that no REDSO staff member would be in a travel status, that is out of Nairobi, for more than 50% of the time to avoid burnout or demoralization due to excessive travel and separation from the family. We had an informal arrangement that if a person had been out on two weekends, he or she would return home for at least one week before returning to the Mission he/she was helping.

Q: Yes.

SHAH: After two weeks, if the staff member would like to come back home, we would pay for it. I believe we were always successful in scheduling our staff to meet needs of the missions in the region. By the end of three days we would have a complete program. In some cases a team of two to three offers would travel together. That is, we would have a project development officer, a technical officer, and a legal advisor or a contractor. They would go as a team if that was what was needed for implementation of an action such as approval of a contract. As Deputy (then as Director) I would visit some Missions with staff members. For the four countries for which REDSO was the mission I would visit all countries every year to consult with the ambassador and host country officials.

In June 1987 Art Fell was assigned to REDSO West Africa, Abidjan. So he moved there and Robert Bell was assigned to REDSO/ESA. He was from the Near East Bureau and had been with REDSO before. He arrived in July 1987. But, unfortunately he suddenly passed away in November 1987. I was appointed Acting Director and I continued as an acting director until April 1988 when I was formally confirmed as REDSO Director.

Q: Was Mauritius the largest of the programs of the four that you directly managed?

SHAH: Yes.

Q: I think it would be useful to describe what we were doing in Mauritius.

SHAH: The Mauritius program was basically a CIP.

Q: Commodity Import Program.

SHAH: Yes. Under the program, AID provided funds to the Government of Mauritius to buy American goods and the Government deposited an equivalent amount of local currency in a Special Account. That currency was used to improve infrastructures such as Industrial Centers. This worked quite well. After two to three years, the program's focus was changed.

Mauritius was a success story. In early 1980's the Government decided to diversify its economy from export of agriculture products, mainly sugar, to export of locally manufactured merchandise and thus create more employment. They set up a program to encourage private sector participation in export based industries. Industrial parks were built to attract export-oriented industries such as garment manufacturers. This was a successful strategy as Mauritius became a major center for garment industries. They were very careful not to have industries that would have an adverse impact on its environment such as textile mills.

To help Mauritius, now an advanced developing country, continue with its industrialization policy, AID provided program funds to Mauritius to introduce several

policy reform programs that would encourage private sector's participation in export-based industries. REDSO initiated collaboration between the private sector and the Government of Mauritius in managing several feasibility studies for electronics and information service industries and human resources training. Based on these studies REDSO encouraged innovative collaboration between a U. S. University, the University of Mauritius, Government of Mauritius and private sector.

Q: Did we then do a program that was with an American university? In the Seychelles?

SHAH: In the Seychelles, USAID provided cash and the government deposited an equivalent amount of local currency in a special account. The local currency was used to improve infrastructures such as roads and housing. After two to three years the embassy and the Seychelles government wanted a training program. We encouraged the government to link up with an American university to manage the program.

Q: Okay, but earlier it had been a commodity import program.

SHAH: Yes.

Q: Before we leave Mauritius, were there any other donors involved with that? Because I think Mauritius really has made the transition from being an agricultural based economy to more of a knowledge-based one. Where there other donors involved with that? Or was it primarily USAID?

SHAH: Just USAID and I believe the World Bank. I do not remember if the United Kingdom and France actively supported any development activities. Mauritius was formerly a colony of France and then the U.K. so they and India were closely linked with Mauritius.

Djibouti was basically an ESF country. They wanted a participant training program. Earlier we had a Commodity Import program and the local currency from this program was used for development activities. But then they wanted to make it simpler. So they opted for a participant training program.

Q: I have a questioned Satish about these ESF programs. Because Djibouti, as I recall, also had a U.S. military base there. This is why we provided the ESF. Did that mean you had to coordinate closely with the embassies there? And if you were making a change from a commodity import program to participant training did you have to get the approval of the embassy?

SHAH: The embassy was fully involved just as in other ESF countries - Mauritius and the Seychelles.

Q: Okay.

SHAH: Now, we got to what we used to call schedule B missions. Those were four missions that required to obtain the REDSO Director's concurrence for designing and implementing projects under a delegation of authority by AID Washington. They were not fully delegated missions as they did not have critical staff for design and implementation of projects, particularly Project Development Officers.

In Tanzania we worked with the mission closely. One of the major things that happened was the mission was approached by the Tanzanian government to provide assistance with replacing locomotives for the railroad that was built by the Chinese in 1970s. All the locomotives had broken down after about 15 years and they had to be replaced. We worked with the Tanzania Railway Authority who prepared documents for the procurement of locomotives. This was a host country contract. The procurement was open to U.S. manufacturers of locomotives. One of the requirements was that the successful firm had to set up a parts depot so that the Railway Authority would have an immediate access to parts. Two major US locomotive manufacturers competed for the procurement and after intensive review by the Railway Authority, USAID and REDSO, the contract was awarded to a responsive and responsible bidder. The whole procurement process was handled well by Railway Authority. It was very satisfying that there was no protest.

In Burundi REDSO staff assisted the Mission in developing a multi-year \$33 million policy program to stimulate economic growth.

In Mozambique, REDSO staff, working closely with the Mission Director, identified a policy reform agenda for the \$25 million Africa Economic Policy Reform program.

REDSO actively helped coordinate the U.S. government involvement in relief operations for Southern Sudan. I negotiated a tricky food swap agreement with the Government of Kenya to provide Kenyan corn to Southern Sudan and in return Kenya received the US wheat. I used to meet with the US Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission in Kenya every week to review progress being made to provide support to countries that were affected by the drought.

Q: What kind of agreement? I'm sorry.

SHAH: Food. We agreed to provide food or grain to Southern Sudan because of drought. Kenya, at that time, had excess corn. We negotiated an agreement whereby Kenya corn was sent to Southern Sudan and we replaced it with US wheat of the same value. So Kenya got U.S. wheat and Southern Sudan got Kenya corn, satisfying needs of both countries. Two groups were in control in Southern Sudan. One part was under the government of Sudan and another part was under the SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army). I can't remember SPLA's leader.

Q: John Garang.

SHAH: Yes.

Q: Well, just food swap. Was that one of the earliest of those kinds of food swaps where we were able to buy food locally to use for an emergency?

SHAH: Yes, probably the earliest food swap.. Kenya government was agreeable to release its corn, and send it to Sudan. And instead of paying for it, we would provide them U.S. wheat.

Q: Was this the first time that was done in Kenya? Or is that a practice that had been done before by the food people?

SHAH: It was the first time.

Q: First time. Okay, because it was very creative.

SHAH: Yes

Q: Do you recall who initially proposed it? Was it someone from the Food for Peace Office?

SHAH: Food for Peace Office. We had two Food for Peace Officers; David Rhodes and Lowell Lynch who proposed it and I supported it. It was an innovative way to get food to people who needed food urgently and the country swapping it had a surplus of the food needed by its neighbor.

Q: So they're the ones that proposed the idea of a swap and got Washington to buy into it as well as and then negotiated it with Kenya government.

SHAH: Yes, and also we had to make sure that the Private Volunteering Organizations (PVOs) stationed in Nairobi who were managing food aid were on board.

Q: Were we doing any other work in Southern Sudan at that point? Or was it just the food aid?

SHAH: I believe it was just the food aid. American firms were involved in exploration of oil. But we were just involved in food aid. AID had also financed improvements to a road linking western part of Kenya with the Sudan border to facilitate transport of food and other relief supplies from Kenya to Southern Sudan.

Q: Right. And that was when you were still in REDSO?

SHAH: Yes. I was the REDSO Director.

Q: Now there was American staff that died in that as well. But they were USAID Ethiopia staff, not REDSO staff?

SHAH: Tom Warrick who was working with USAID/Ethiopia as Agriculture Economist and his wife who was working on a relief program died in a plane disaster while visiting a refugee camp in Ethiopia with the US Congressman, Mickey Leland. I had met Mickey Leland when he visited to review disaster relief programs with PVOs working out of Nairobi. I also knew Tom and his wife. Tom was in USAID Kenya when I was there.

Q: Yeah. Another thing I think you all were doing in REDSO in Nairobi was regional programs. Is that correct?

SHAH: Oh yes.

Q: Could you talk a little bit about which regional institutions you were supporting?

SHAH: There were 27 Regional Projects with LOP funding of \$30 million such as support to East and Southern Africa Management Institute (ESAMI) based in Arusha, Tanzania.

Others were locust control program, International Center of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) in Nairobi and a climate monitoring laboratory.

Q: Was that a remote sensing lab?

SHAH: Yes, we supported the Remote Sensing Center that was in Nairobi.

Q: Had the famine early warning system project in Washington started by this time?

SHAH: Yes

Q: Yes, okay.

SHAH: Remote Sensing Center provided support to the Famine Early Warning System..

Q: Okay, this is January 31st 2018 and this is Carol Peasley continuing the telephone interview with Satish Shah. So Satish, when we finished last week you were leaving from the regional office in Nairobi and heading to Washington. I don't recall whether we discussed this or not but was that your intention to want to return to Washington? Was that your choice or how did that happen?

SHAH: When I was in REDSO I was being considered for a position in Zambia as the Mission Director. The Mission Director in Zambia was going to go to Somalia and the director in Somalia was going to go somewhere. But, that did not materialize because the director in Somalia stayed on. There was no other mission that had a director's position open. I said I don't like it, but I'll go back to Washington. I was looking forward to working in a different bureau. That's how it came about.

Q: And that was in the summer of 1990?

SHAH: Yes. Summer of 1990.

Q: So that was the end of the George HW Bush administration, the election was coming up in November.

SHAH: No, George HW Bush was President until January 20, 1993 when Bill Clinton was sworn in as President.

Q: Yeah. Oh, 92 that's right, sorry.

SHAH: I was assigned as Deputy Director of the Office of Projects Development and Planning of the Europe and Near East Bureau. The Bureau, had merged the functions of a project development office and a development planning office. The director of the office, Robert Nachtrieb, paid attention to project development planning matters and I managed the Project Development side of the Office. The Office had 18 professionals, and 11 support staff. The professional staff comprised of PDOs, financial analysts, engineers, and program analysts. At that time the Europe program was growing: Several Eastern Europe countries are coming out of the communist influence.

Q: Had that just begun? Or they'd started in 1989?

SHAH: Yes, 1989.

Q: Okay, so there it was still the very earliest stages.

SHAH: Yes, the very earliest stages, AID didn't have any presence in the field at that time. This put pressure on the PD office to design projects and keep up the obligation schedule.

Q: So there were no, there were no missions yet in Europe.

SHAH: No mission yet.

Q: But we were doing? We were doing projects?

SHAH: Yeah. We had some regional activities basically participant training and environment related activities. The total OYB in FY 1991 was \$370 million dollars. I went to Czechoslovakia for three weeks as part of an environmental team from the EPA and the World Bank. The purpose was to assess environmental issues and make recommendations for mitigating adverse impacts that had been created during the communist occupation of the country.

Q: Satisfying, at that point with there was no USAID mission in Czechoslovakia?

SHAH: Yes, there was no USAID mission.

Q: So you coordinated with the embassy to do your work?

SHAH: Yes..

Q: Okay.

SHAH: The team recommended industrial audits to determine cost-effective ways to reduce pollutants, clean up several sites which were used to store Petroleum, Oils and Lubricants (POL), and a policy reform program to liberalize prices and tariffs in order to reduce consumption of subsidized coal, electricity, water and minerals and improve their efficiency. AID authorized an environment project to implement recommendations of the team.

Q: Who led the team that went out to do this?

SHAH: I represented AID. There was a World Bank representative and an EPA representative and two contractors. One was a specialist in cleaning sites that were polluted with POL products. Another was a specialist in industrial pollution and clean-up process.

Q: And who was responsible for preparing the report and who coordinated the review in Washington?

SHAH: The team leader was a World Bank representative and I was the deputy leader. We jointly prepared the report and presented it to the Government, AID, World Bank and EPA.

Q: Did it end up in a project?

SHAH: Yes. An Environment Support project was authorized based on our recommendations.

Q: Was it a joint program with the bank and USAID?

SHAH: USAID went on its own with some technical assistance to the Government to implement recommendations of the report. AID assigned one person to the Embassy to manage the implementation of the project.

When we were in Czechoslovakia, the World Bank team leader visited Romania and developed a separate report for that country. The Bank also looked at Poland. But AID did not get involved with any development activity in Romania or Poland. The World Bank provided some assistance.

Q: Was that common to do a joint assessment with the World Bank in Europe in the early days?

SHAH: I think this was the first time.

Q: During this period in USAID who was leading, from Washington, the development of the Eastern Europe program? Since it was part of this Asia-Near East Bureau who was in charge of the Europe side?

SHAH: This was part of Europe and Near East Bureau, ENE Bureau. Clifford Lewis was the DAA for the Eastern Europe but I do not remember if any other person was assigned except that the PD office had an Environment Officer who provided support in initial stages..

Q: Okay. That's fine.

SHAH: The Near East part of the Bureau included Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, Yemen, and two countries in Asia - the Philippines and Pakistan.

Soon after I started working in the PD office, I chaired a PID review for the Philippines Local Infrastructure Project. One of the issues was whether the project should focus its activities in the capital city or local areas. It was decided to decentralize the activities to local areas. Another issue was how to assure compliance with the "Buy America" policy. This was resolved by using dollars for importing commodities from the US and generated local currency would be used to implement the project activities. The Pakistan program was being phased down because of its policies concerning development of nuclear capability.

On the Near East side, I visited Morocco to review several projects including Project Papers for a \$25 million New Enterprise Development Project and a \$20 million Agribusiness Development Project.

Assistance to Israel mainly consisted of ESF funding. Every year US Government provided funds for its budget support. The requirement was that Israel would have to show that it had imported goods worth that much money from the U.S. The supporting documents were reviewed by AID auditors.

Q: So there were some checks on the check-writing for Israel?

SHAH: Yes

Q: So the bureau at that time in 1990 was Asia the Near East and Eastern Europe. So it was a huge bureau.

SHAH: Yes, a huge bureau. I don't know why it was called Europe and Near East Bureau even though it included two Asian countries - Pakistan and the Philippines with huge programs.

Then in May 1991 the Europe and Near East bureau was split up into two Bureaus - Europe and Near East. I went with the Near East bureau. The Near East bureau consisted of Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, West Bank Gaza, Lebanon, Jordan, Oman and Yemen. I was assigned as Director of the Office of Development Resources. This office combined functions of a project development office and a technical resources office. I reported directly to the Deputy Assistant Administrator.

Q: Do you recall who the deputy assistant administrator was during that period?

SHAH: Fritz Weden.

Q: Fritz Weden, okay.

SHAH: Dennis Chandler replaced Fritz after about a year when Fritz went to Indonesia as the Mission Director.

Q: Was that the deputy or the assistant administrator?

SHAH: He was the deputy. The assistant administrator was Reginald Brown. I was the director of the Office of Development Resources. The office became fully functional in October 1991. This was a new office; my first priority was to recruit staff for several new positions the Office had created. When fully staffed, the Development Resources Office consisted of 26 professionals and 11 support staff. The staff included both technical and project development officers, engineers, social scientists, environment officer, PVO coordinator and Governance officer. Missions in Morocco, Egypt and Jordan were fully staffed, the rest had one or two AID officers. These countries with limited staff were supported by DR staff.

Q: Was this the beginning of, or how long had the West Bank Gaza program been in operation? Did it start about that time? Or did it start earlier than that?

SHAH: It started earlier than 1990. However, the first AID representative was assigned in 1991. She used to live in Jerusalem and worked out of the Consulate office. The West Bank Gaza program expanded considerably during the Clinton Administration. On September 13, 1993 an accord signed by Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization granted limited autonomy to the Palestinians. The US government made a commitment to provide \$400 million to the Palestinians over the next five years. This required USAID to design and implement several quick response activities. One of the first actions was to send a joint AID and World Bank team to Gaza and West Bank to meet with Palestinians and identify potential projects. I represented USAID. World Bank team was headed by a project officer. We went out for a week. We met with Palestinians and identified several potential projects.

Q: At this point in time do you remember who was the mission director at West Bank Gaza?

SHAH: I do not remember the name of the Mission Director. If I am not mistaken, her last name was Rice. She was from the General Consul Office of AID/W and had served in several missions.

Q: Okay. Was the mission located in Tel Aviv then? Or was it in Jerusalem? Because I understand it's gone back and forth and there have been issues at various times.

SHAH: The mission director was in Jerusalem along with the US consulate officer. David Rhoad, who was a Food for Peace Officer in REDSO when I was the REDSO director, was assigned as the Project Officer. They were working out of the consulate office in Jerusalem. I don't remember visiting the embassy during this trip. I had been in Tel Aviv on an earlier trip and met with a staff member who was handling the Regional Cooperation project which encouraged close working relationship with Israel scientists and scientists in Middle East countries.

After the visit, it was decided to do a highly visible, quick response type activity. I chaired the Infrastructure Development group in Washington. Based on our program discussions with Palestinians, we recommended funding of two hundred apartments in Gaza at a cost of approximately twenty five million dollars. The construction of the apartments would be managed by USAID/W and we would hand them over to the Palestinian Authority when completed. The Palestinian Authority would manage them and provide mortgage financing to buyers. All repayments in local currency would be deposited in a bank account managed by the Palestinian Authority. These repayments funds were to be used for improving infrastructures.

To expedite the process of designing and constructing apartments, AID contracted directly with a U.S. A & E firm and a construction contractor. Another factor was that the Palestine Authority did not have the expertise to manage the host country contracting process. The land was provided by the Palestine Authority . The groundbreaking was performed in March 1994, just six months after the signing of the Declaration of Principles.

While designing the project a politically sensitive issue of whether Israel firms should be allowed to participate in the design and construction of the project. This would have required a waiver of the USAID's source/origin rules. This issue was resolved as AID did not believe a waiver of source and origin regulation was justified. However, Israel was allowed to supply building materials which were normally available in West Bank and Gaza.

Q: So, we built an apartment block and then did the government sell them and do what it was supposed to do in terms of investing the funds in infrastructure?

SHAH: I hope. Because I left in June 1994. There was an issue of Palestinian authority wanted us to pay for that land. We said we won't pay for the land because of problems with determining a reasonable price.

It is possible that the Palestinian Authority received some funding from the European Commission to pay for the land.

Q: Was it easy to work with the Palestinians to identify program activities in that first visit? How did you find it?

SHAH: There were several things they wanted to do. I really don't remember what World Bank decided to do there. But we did visit both Gaza and West Bank and looked at several potential activities. AID had initiated a private enterprise development project. We were doing some PVO activities. One PVO was providing health care services in Gaza. We were providing funds annually to support the activity. However, in 1993 AID asked all PVOs to provide a plan to become more self-sufficient and reduce reliance on the AID funding. The PVO that was providing the health care services did not agree with AID's position as it was not possible to function without a donor support. There was an impasse. There was pressure from the Congress to continue support to the program. I met with the PVO and developed a plan that would be acceptable to both AID and the PVO. We continued assistance to the program.

Even though the Egypt Mission was a fully staffed mission, it required support from AID/W particularly in disputes relating to contract awards. In one case, the low bidder for the construction of a large housing project in Egypt was disqualified as the quality of work on a similar contract that was completed earlier by this contractor was not considered satisfactory by both the Government and USAID. The contractor filed a suit against AID in Washington and the judge issued a restraining order that we could not sign the contract with the second low bidder. AID/W General Counsel's office requested the judge to lift the restraining order. The GC's office depended upon the DR office for technical interpretation of Mission's finding that the contractor's work was unsatisfactory. Fortunately the restraining order was lifted and the contract was signed with second low bidder.

In another case, there was an issue with the procurement of electric generators for a \$200 million power plant in Egypt. Two major U.S. manufacturers of generators were competing for this procurement and there was a lot of congressional interest. Even though USAID/Egypt had the primary responsibility for monitoring the procurement, I had to remain fully informed so that Congressional enquiries were answered fully and expeditiously. I also advised the AA why Mission's decision to award the contract to a U.S. firm was sound and defensible.

Q: So lots of complexity with the procurement process.

SHAH: Oh yes.

Q: The one where you had to handle a protest, how long did that delay the project?

SHAH: The one involving the construction contractor for the apartments took about two months to resolve the issue including court's restraining order.

Q: It must have been very frustrating for the mission to have its decisions second guessed.

SHAH: Yes.

The DR office was managing several regional projects. One of them was the Middle East Regional Cooperation Program (MERCOP). The purpose of this program was to improve cooperation between Israel and its Arab neighbors in addressing technical issues such as agriculture development in harsh environment and proper management of scarce water resources. The newly formed Global Bureau wanted to retain management of MERCOP but the NE Bureau was successful in convincing the decision makers that it made better sense for the NE Bureau to manage the MERCOP as all countries participating in the Program were part of the NE Bureau.

The San Diego State University had the contract to manage the program with universities in Arab countries and Israel. Israelis were working on several innovations of using salt water even for irrigation. That was a good joint effort.

Q: Did all of these regional programs' joint efforts involve Israel?

SHAH: Not all of them. This was the only one.

Other regional projects managed by DR office were as follows:

Regional Private Enterprise Development Project. The purpose was to support Mission programs in private sector and provide resources for innovating approaches to increase private sector growth in the region. This project supported activities in Morocco and West Bank and Gaza. One of the activities was to increase exports of olives from West Bank to the US through private sector channels.

Environment and Pollution Prevention Project: This project supported activities in Jordan and Tunisia.

Democratic Institution Development: Under this project a regional conference was held in Cyprus to provide guidance to USAIDs and US Embassies how to tap support under this project. This conference was also attended by representatives of the Lebanon government. Another major issue that we addressed under this project was management of the Jordan River water. A two-day conference was held to develop Tract 1 (diplomatic channels) and Tract 2 (Water users participation in negotiations) approaches.

Q: You had mentioned earlier that with the reorganization that took place in 1993 during the Clinton administration in the creation of the Global Bureau did all of these regional projects end up being shifted to the Global Bureau?

SHAH: All these projects stayed with NE Bureau except for MERCOP.

Q: Okay.

SHAH The MERCOP was managed by Central Bureau which had the technical expertise. Therefore when the Global Bureau was created all technical offices moved to this Bureau along with regional projects managed by the technical offices.

Q: Yes, right. But, were your regional projects moved to the Global Bureau?

SHAH: No. As for the MERCOP, it was designed and managed by the Central Bureau and therefore moved to the Global Bureau when it was created.

Q: Okay, so you got them back.

SHAH: Yes, because it made more sense for the NE Bureau to manage the program as it benefitted several Middle East countries.

Q: Okay.

SHAH: It was never perfect, there were exceptions.

Q: There had been, at one point there was the technical office. They had different names. I don't recall in that period what was before Global Bureau.

SHAH: Yeah. When Global Bureau was created all the projects which were benefiting countries in more than one Bureau passed to Global Bureau.

Q: Okay, but those that concentrated on a region were able to stay in the regions then.

SHAH: Yes.

Q: Just on the regional programs, because I know there's always a bit of a tension between the missions and the programming of regional activities. Was there good collaboration with the missions as you moved forward with regional programs?

SHAH: Yes. Tunisia didn't have a bilateral program, but through the Regional Environmental Project, it received some support. Even though AID did not have presence there the government was happy to get this assistance to look at some of the environmental issues it was experiencing.

Q: Okay, so many of the regional activities were actually in places where you didn't have an AID mission but where we still were interested in those countries like Tunisia?

SHAH: Yes. Some countries/missions received support in the area of governance from the NE/DR's regional project

Q: Right. Where they would have very small bilateral portfolios. This would be a complement to them. Okay.

SHAH: In Jordan, the Mission liked the Environment and Pollution Prevention Project as they were able to access assistance from this project whenever needed.

I don't think Egypt used any.

Q: They had enough money.

SHAH: Yes.

In Oman we had authorized a school construction project and the government of Oman didn't want to go ahead with it after the funds were obligated, and there was an issue whether we could use those funds for another project.

Q: Wait a minute. You have to go back and explain this.

We obligated funds for an education project in Oman.

SHAH: Yes.

Q: But then the government didn't want it?

SHAH: Yes.

Q: But the funds were obligated so the government had signed the project agreement?

SHAH: Yes.

Q: But they really didn't want it.

SHAH: Yes. The Mission asked the Government if they had something else in mind and they said they would like AID to use the school funds for a water project in Salalah which is the second largest city in Oman. This was feasible as the fiscal year (FY) had not ended. This required a new PP. I went out there with a consultant to look at the planning and to make a determination that they had sufficient information to meet the requirements of section 611 of the Foreign Assistance Act.

Q: Did we deobligate the other funds and then re obligate them for this project? Or were these new funds?

SHAH: We deobligated the school construction funds and re-obligated in the same year. We didn't lose money.

Q: Okay.

And this was a very small mission. How large was this program and did it involve construction and how would a small mission manage a program like that?

SHAH: It was about a five million dollar project. A consulting firm was engaged to supervise the construction and the NE Bureau engineers monitored the progress. The mission was basically involved in a training program.

Q: I didn't even know we ever had a mission in Oman.

SHAH: We had a mission director. I don't remember whether we had any other DH staff member. The Mission was supported by the NE Bureau.

Q: As I recall, early in the Clinton administration in '93. '94 there was a global effort to reduce the number of AID missions and a number of missions were closed. Were some in the Asian, Near East Bureau affected by that and did you get involved in that at all?

SHAH: The NE Bureau was merged with Asia Bureau and reorganized as Asia Near East Bureau.

One of the missions that the Bureau wanted to close was USAID/Pakistan. The assistant administrator at the time asked me to go to Pakistan and close the mission. And I said I had already submitted my retirement papers. That was one mission that was definitely being closed.

Q: Right, right, okay, so you weren't as involved in having to... Because during that period in the Africa Bureau we were quite busy closing missions.

SHAH: Yeah. Africa Bureau had some that were closed.

Basically, the whole merger did not get completed until I left. That was about June, 1994.

Q: Okay, so that merger took place, so it didn't really take effect until the time you were leaving.

SHAH: Yes. There were changes being considered when I retired. The deputy assistant administrator was George Laudato. I think the administrator was a lady worked in San Francisco.

Q: Yeah, Margaret Carpenter.

SHAH: Yeah, Margaret Carpenter.

Q: I think we never ended up closing it, actually. But anyway, I think we reduced it but not closed.

SHAH: There was pressure to close down. It's difficult to close, and then reopen.

Q: Yes. Well, it sounds like, I mean certainly you had a busy time that final assignment in Washington and then decided to retire. Did you stay in Washington for a while after you retired? Or did you go off to Texas immediately?

SHAH: I stayed in Washington for 18 months. I worked for a private environmental firm as a consultant to keep myself busy until I could decide on a second career. I moved to Texas in late 1995. The reason for retiring early was to look for another career and spend more time in social activities.

Q: How did you happen to pick Plano, Texas?

SHAH: My younger daughter got married when I retired and her husband lived in Plano. He didn't want to move to Washington. So, my wife said, she would like to live near one daughter. Elder daughter was in California, the younger one in the Dallas area. So we decided to come to move to Plano, Texas.

Q: Okay.

SHAH: Better to be near one family member.

Q: Right, absolutely, absolutely. No, I was just wondering if you had some secret Texas blood or something in cowboy boots.

SHAH: It has been a good move.

Q: I know that you've done a lot of community work. Could you talk a little bit about that?

SHAH: We are part of the Halari Oshwal community whose origin was in Rajasthan, India. Most of them use "Shah" as their last name. Almost 99 percent of Oshwals are Jains and their ancestors had settled in about 52 villages around Jamnagar, Gujarat, India. At present the total population is about 75 thousand spread all over the world, but most of the people are in India, East Africa, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and the United States of America. There are about 2000 Oshwals in the U.S. and 600 in Canada. Soon after I retired, I prepared a Directory of Halari Oshwals in the U.S. and Canada. I maintain it and issue updates every three to four years. The purpose of the Directory is to facilitate communication with fellow Halari Oshwals. We also maintain a web site.

I have been an active member of the Jain Society of North Texas since I moved to the Dallas area in 1995. This is a faith-based organization with over 350 families as members. The organization provides religious education, conducts social and cultural activities and maintains facilities for Jain faith worshippers. I have served on the Board of Directors. Until 2017, I was the Leader of Facility Management Committee which was responsible to renovate a 18,000 square feet building the Society purchased in 2010. I

have continued to provide technical support for maintenance of facilities owned by the Society. My broad experience with managing several USAID financed infrastructure projects has been a great asset in implementing management procedures for the Society's property.

In 2001 a friend and I started working on a book to record the history of Halari Oshwals who originated from Rajasthan, India, and have now settled in various parts of the world including Kenya, U.K. and USA. I researched and wrote various sections of the book. I also edited the book. The book was published in 2005. It has been posted on the following web site: www.oshwal-usa.org

I was an active member of the Dallas Indian Lions Club (DILC). I received President's Appreciation Award in years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. In 2014, I was awarded the Certificate of Recognition for outstanding spirit exemplifying the Lions Motto "We Serve" by Lions District 2-XI, which covers North Texas.

I was Treasurer of DILC in 2012-2013. During my tenure the Club raised over \$60,000 to support several charities in the USA, India, Nepal, the Philippines, etc. I had been a co-leader of DILC's monthly activity at the Samaritan Inn in McKinney, Texas, where about 150 homeless people are provided meals. I also participated in an eye care camp for school children. I was Vice President of DILC for the year 2014-2015.

Q: So, is there a Jain community in the Dallas area?

SHAH: Yes. There are about 350 Jain families in the Dallas area. We meet every Sunday for about an hour.

Q: Are Jains prominent in Gujarat?

SHAH: Yes. Jains are very prominent in Gujarat. There are Jain temples which are about 2,000 years old all over Gujarat. Also, there are some in Punjab and Bengal.

Q: Now, since you said you were keeping track of the Shah community in the United States does that include Rajiv Shah, the former administrator of AID?

SHAH: No. His parents are from a different part of Gujarat.

Q: Okay.

SHAH: I think he is a Jain. I have never met him.

Q: He's not in your network.

SHAH: No, he's not. We are a different group whose ancestors settled around Jamnagar, Gujarat..

Q: Okay, well Satish before I'd like to do maybe now is turn to just a couple of sort of final concluding thoughts on really a quite remarkable career that you had with USAID starting as a foreign service national working for USAID before Kenyan independence which also fascinated me. I had no idea that we'd started programs before independence. And then becoming a U.S. citizen, and then becoming an AID mission director. So it's really quite a remarkable career.

SHAH: Yes, it's something I could not have ever imagined. I was really fortunate to have had several mentors during my career with AID. They supported me and guided me.

Q: When you went back to REDSO as a senior officer did other – I'm just curious whether FSNs in either USAID Kenya or in REDSO -- whether they sort of looked at you as kind of a role model. Did they ever come to you and ask how you went about doing your quite incredible career path?

SHAH: There was one who did follow me, and that was Rashmi Amin. He became a U.S. citizen and rejoined AID as a Direct Hire. I am not aware of any other Kenyan who became a U.S. citizen and rejoined AID. When I went back to Kenya after becoming the US citizen, they all were happy to see me back.

Q: Do you have thoughts on just in general about how USAID uses foreign service nationals and whether you have any recommendations for Americans going out to AID missions?

SHAH: USAID missions treated all FSNs well and gave opportunities to them to advance their careers.

When I decided to immigrate, all my colleagues were very supportive. They said that was a good move. USAID is a unique organization in that all Officers were sympathetic to inspirations of local staff. The Officers had respect for local staff and they loved to work and live in foreign countries.

Q: Right.

SHAH: They were there because of their choice - they liked to work with foreigners.

Q: That's good to hear. Do you have any thoughts on major accomplishments or things that you're most proud of that you did in your USAID career? And any lesson learned that you'd like to share?

SHAH: As an FSN engineer in East Africa, I worked on several development projects, When I went back to those countries after five/ten years. I could see the progress. For example, one of the first major projects I handled with USAID in Nairobi was the expansion of the water system for the city of Nairobi. The net result was that Nairobi was able to service several new industries. I saw changes in rural areas brought about by the rural roads program.

Q: You had the unique advantage of being able to see things, you know, five, ten years later.

SHAH: Yes. It was the foresight of AID that it focused on the participant training programs in countries like Kenya and Uganda before independence and train the nationals of these countries so that they were ready to take over when the British left. The transition from British Civil servants to Kenya Civil Service was smooth because the right cadre of people were available.

Q: Yes.

SHAH: Economists have seen great strides made by many countries in Africa.

Now people say, would this have happened if there was no AID? I believe whatever progress was made in five years with AID assistance would have taken much longer fifteen to twenty years without AID.

Once I was in Mauritius where we had a policy reform program financed with the Economic Support Fund (ESF). The Finance Minister had presented in the Parliament a budget for the fiscal year in the afternoon and at night he was being interviewed on a local radio. One listener called in and noted that the Minister had removed tariffs from textiles used to manufacture garments but the Minister had not made any changes in the tariffs of ancillary items such as buttons, threads that are used in the manufacturing of garments. The Minister noted that was an oversight and he promised to remove tariffs on all ancillary. The policy reform programs and openness helped Mauritius to make excellent progress in improving the quality of life of its people.

Q: Yeah.

SHAH: In all countries where USAID played a major role in improving infrastructures have benefitted from the economic growth. I believe AID had done an excellent job of expediting economic development in all countries.

Q: And you should take pride that you contributed significantly to it.

SHAH: Yes. Working in developing countries and improving lives of people was the most satisfying part of my life and I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with and make some contribution in improving lives of people in developing countries..

Q: Right, absolutely.

SHAH: Yeah, you worked on things and they show the results.

Q: Any final thoughts before we finish up?

SHAH: I enjoyed this and I look forward to seeing the draft. I think this is a good exercise. AID has contributed to improve the quality of life in all developing countries and to record the achievements and contributions of its staff would be always appreciated

Q: Absolutely.

SHAH: It will there for the people to learn about the role the US Government played.

Q: Okay, well I'm going to turn off the recorder and say thank you.

End of interview