

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project
Foreign Assistance Series

WENDY STICKEL

*Interviewed by: Carol Peasley
Initial interview date: March 28, 2018
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This oral history transcription was made possible through support provided by U.S. Agency for International Development, under terms of Cooperative Agreement No. AID-OAA-F-16-00101. The opinions expressed herein are those of the interviewee and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Childhood and Early Background	
Childhood in New Jersey	
Korean Brothers and Sister	
Mt. Holyoke College – Comparative Political Science -- BA	1971
Fletcher School of Law And Diplomacy – MA	1973
Graduation and Travel – And Evacuation from Egypt	
USAID International Development Intern (IDI) – Hired	1973
Only Woman in Her IDI Class	
Assignment to Chiang Mai, Thailand Cancelled	
IDI Training Focus on Teamwork and Collaboration	
Assignment Changed to Peru – Mission Program Ramping Up	
Learning the Loan Officer Craft	
USAID Peru – Assistant Capital Development Officer (IDI)	1974-1977
Janet Ballantyne as Mentor	
First Design: Highland Irrigation Project	
Learning about Section 611(e) of the Foreign Assistance Act	
Host Country Leadership/Ownership	
Maintenance – Elinor Ostrom and “Managing the Commons”	
Book Allowance for IDIs	
Washington Project Review Process – Pros and Cons	
Embassy – USAID Relations	
Treasury Department – International Affairs Office	1978

International Development Banks Interagency Processes Learning	
World Bank – Young Professionals Program Rural Development Division – Mexico Project Design Thailand Desk – Provincial Decentralization Design North Africa – Middle East Program Missing USAID’s More Entrepreneurial Culture	1979-1983
USAID/W – Latin America Bureau, DR Office – Caribbean Affairs Return to USAID as LAC/DR Division Chief Jamaica Cash Transfer – Debt Relief	1983-1985
USAID/W – Africa Bureau – Project Development Office Division Chief for Southern Africa Building a New Project Development Office African Economic Policy Reform Program (AEPRP) Real Development Work – Intellectual Integrity South Africa U.S. Constructive Engagement Policy U.S. Public Support for a New Approach in South Africa – Reverend Sullivan and Others Reagan Executive Order – A Start Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) – Balanced and Strategic Legislation Passed in October 1986 Over Presidential Veto Zambia AEPRP – Safety Nets to Soften Structural Adjustment Impact South Africa – Pre-CAAA Programming Administration Efforts to Preclude CAAA with Sept. 1985 Exec Order Program: Lots of Bits and Pieces One-Person USAID Office in Johannesburg Consulate South Africa – Post-CAAA Supporting a New USAID Mission and New Management Arrangements Being More Strategic Tim Bork, Mission Director	1985-1987
USAID South Africa – Assistant Director Bare Bones Operation – And Keeping Some Distance from Embassy CAAA: “American Peoples Foreign Policy” – New Goals Husband Peter: From State/GC to USAID/South Africa Building Relationships and Programs with South African Community Groups – Supporting Their Goals Labor Union Training Human Rights and Legal Assistance Use of Umbrella Projects to Provide Grants to S.A. Groups Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) – Key to Understanding	1987-1990

Early Grantees – Leaders in the New South Africa
 Early Coordination with USAID/Inspector General Office
 Clear Financial Management Expectations for Community Grantees
 Support Services from Swaziland
 Managing Varying Geographic Political Dynamics
 Black Consciousness Movement and United Democratic Front
 Early AID/W Resistance to the South Africa Program
 Delmas Treason Trial
 Ambassador Perkins – Active Reaching Out and Supporting Program
 Education: Supporting Community-Based Alternatives
 Measure of Early Success: USAID Role in Lead-Up to 1994 Election
 Protecting Grantees Against Government of South Africa

USAID/W – Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) 1990-1992
 Deputy Director
 Administrator’s Evaluation Initiative – Reinvigorating Evaluation
 Managing for Results
 Government Performance and Accountability Act (GPRA)
 Building on Regional Bureau M&E Approaches

USAID/W – Policy, Planning, and Coordination Bureau (PPC) 1993-1995
 Revising Agency Policy Handbooks – Strategy and Evaluation
 Chief of Staff to Assistant Administrator PPC
 Socializing “Managing for Results” and “GPRA”
 Learning How TO and How NOT TO Manage Change

USAID Regional Center for Southern Africa – Deputy Director 1995-1998
 Husband Peter Seconded from State to USAID as Democracy Officer
 Rebuilding a Regional Program – Rationale?
 Natural Resources Management – Community-Based Approaches
 Challenges of Botswana Location
 Recruiting Third Country Nationals from the Region
 Trade Facilitation Work
 Strong Support from Government of Botswana – President Mogae

Post-USAID Direct-Hire Consulting
 USAID Global Development Alliance (GDA) – Training and Procurement Reform
 Building New Evaluation Framework for USAID
 “Local Solutions” Initiative – Theory of Change
 Evaluating Institution Building and Capacity Building Programs
 Innovative Use of Fixed Amount Reimbursement Agreement (FARA) for Liberia Health Project – Disbursing Against Performance Targets
 Assessing Institutional Performance
 Health Government-to-Government Program Assessment – Challenge of Control
 Programmatic Risk Assessment Framework

INTERVIEW

Q: This is Carol Peasley and it is March 28, 2018, interviewing Wendy Stickel. And thank you, Wendy, for agreeing to do this.

STICKEL: It's a pleasure. It is a real pleasure.

Childhood and Early Background

Q: Good, good. Well, let's get started. Could you please tell us a little bit about where you were born, where you grew up and your educational background and maybe what sort of things that happened early in your life that put you in the direction of working in international development?

STICKEL: All right. I think that's one of the most interesting questions you could ask people today because it's always sort of surprising to me how few Americans really do travel and find the rest of the world an interesting place. So, I ask that question to a lot of people in my travels and I'm always interested by the answer. In my case, I grew up in Chatham, New Jersey, a suburb of Newark and New York City. And my father was a small-town lawyer and his family was also in Northern New Jersey so that was a natural place for him to settle. My parents had five kids and there are three more that came later. A big family, and yes, my mother's quick to point out that no, they were not Roman Catholic; they just liked children. But they had five children of their own and then they adopted three Korean children.

Q: When you were all grown up?

STICKEL: When we were all growing up.

Q: Oh, growing up.

STICKEL: I was in middle school when the oldest of the three adopted kids joined our family. And I do remember waiting at Kennedy Airport for the flight from Korea bringing our new brother.

Q: How old was he?

STICKEL: He was six months old. And so, he was just a little bundle of baby wrapped up in cloth and towels and whatever they could scrounge together. He had come from an orphanage, a church-based missionary-run orphanage. And then, another adopted boy joined our family several years later. He was four or five when he joined us. And then, the last of the family was a little girl who was seven years old whom my parents met at an orphanage when they visited Korea. They wanted to understand more about the boys'

background and were taken to an orphanage where they were introduced to a young girl who was the oldest child in the orphanage. Because of her age, she was not going to be able to stay much longer in the orphanage and was facing a very uncertain future. So my father said I think we can find room for her back home. So, that's how we became a family of eight children altogether.

Q: And what is the male/female breakdown of children?

STICKEL: Of the five birth children, there were four girls and one boy.

Q: Four girls, okay.

STICKEL: Yes. And then the two boys and Mia, our adopted sister.

Q: So, I assume that may have piqued some of your interest in the world?

STICKEL: Well, I think it was partly that. But also throughout my middle and high school years I remember that my mother was just fascinated by the world out there. I don't know where she got it; I often asked her but she really couldn't put her finger on it. But she wanted to travel. She was also interested in people, and curious about their backgrounds. Before my parents were able to do much international travel themselves, she was always opening her home to foreign students. Each of us kids as we were growing up had an AFS (American Field Service) student when we were in high school. So, my oldest sister had a wonderful young woman from Norway who became the ob-gyn to the queen of Norway and she is still flying around the world; she is probably in her mid '70s, flying around the world setting up childcare programs and pre-natal health programs all over the world with charitable funding. And then my brother went to Greece as an AFS student. As a sophomore in high school I had an AFS student from Cairo who actually tracked me down about three years ago. She's a very successful manager for Deloitte Touche's business training programs in the Middle East and is doing very, very well.

Q: Wow. And still in Egypt, in Cairo?

STICKEL: No, she's moved around. She's living in Dubai with one of her sons. But she tracked me down through LinkedIn and email. It was just a delight to see her show up on my phone. And then, my two younger sisters also had AFS students during their high school years. So, that was a big part of family life. And then the AFS always would have summer bus trips for their students and when they came through town we would always have one or two or three stay with us for a couple of days. I remember a young man from Laos and another from Turkey. And my mother would keep up correspondence with all of these people through her long parenting years and she just loved it. She felt a real connection to all these young people.

Q: Wow, that is great.

STICKEL: So, I think that was a big part of what drew me into international work. I was also fascinated by these people who came with different clothes and different ways of speaking and different stories about their families. These experiences sowed the original seeds of my interest in the larger world.

Q: Yes; I remember how important the AFS students were to my high school experiences, as well. I wonder if it is still as large a program.

STICKEL: Yes, yes. And it's also an active program but I think it is much smaller in scope. And a lot of the programs now for American students are much shorter.

Q: Yes.

STICKEL: I think there's less of an interest in the long-term programs, you know, for a full year away.

Q: When your brother went to Greece did he go for a year?

STICKEL: Yes, he did.

Q: And when the students came to the U.S. they were there for the academic year?

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: That's how you can really develop real relationships rather than these short four or six months.

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: Well, that's wonderful.

STICKEL: So, my little hometown of Chatham all of a sudden started getting very small as I got closer to college. From high school I went on to Mount Holyoke College, where I planned to major in political science. I started out in international law, as a student of Ruth Lawson, a somewhat intimidating woman who was quite well known in her field, a scholar-warrior, and a real draw for many of us. But then I took a class in comparative politics with a woman named Jean Grossholtz, who had studied with Clifford Geertz in Indonesia, a larger-than-life figure in anthropology and much respected. And I was just blown away by the excitement of learning about other political and social systems and I knew before even finishing that course that that was going to be my focus, that that was what I wanted to do. I didn't know what it would look like, you know, what do you do with that, but I continued to take her classes and when I graduated I applied to -- I was still considering international law -- I applied to a couple of international law programs, but was accepted into the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and that just looked just right, exactly what I wanted. I wasn't necessarily interested in an academic career, but knew I wanted to study more, and learn more about non-Western societies.

Q: And when would this have been? When did you graduate?

STICKEL: I graduated in '71, and I went right into graduate school. I toyed with the idea of Peace Corps after graduating from college and I think was accepted but chose to go on for a graduate degree instead. I have been a little regretful of that decision because I think living overseas is such an enriching experience and everybody I came to know in USAID who had such a good way of going about the work had come from a Peace Corps background. I think it must have been great preparation.

Q: Yes. There were a number of people who ended up going to USAID who were at Fletcher around that time. Is that correct?

STICKEL: A good friend of mine did, Todd Crawford, who was in my IDI (International Development Intern) class. I think he went on to Senegal. He left AID at one point and went to Treasury and I don't remember exactly when. But there has been a stream of others too--

Q: I think someone told me once that AID in the 1960's or perhaps earlier had invested money in graduate programs in the U.S. to help train people in international development and that Fletcher might have been one of those schools. Did you ever hear that when you were there?

STICKEL: No, I didn't.

Q: Yes, because I was very surprised, and I can't remember where I heard this recently. But, okay.

STICKEL: But there was a lot of other support. I was on a scholarship from the Shell Foundation and we had the top foundations supporting some of the scholarships. I don't know if there was any US Government assistance.

Q: Anyway, you weren't aware of it.

STICKEL: But that was a good experience, Fletcher.

Q: And was that a two-year program?

STICKEL: It was a two-year program and I can't imagine a better preparation for USAID work at the time. As a professional school they were looking to build a broad base of knowledge in a variety of disciplines that would come together in a professional setting. And so we had to meet requirements in three of four distinct academic disciplines; for the development studies program those three were politics, economics, and social science methods. And I think the fourth category was diplomatic history. We also had professors who themselves had professional experience in international work and were able to infuse a practical, problem-solving dimension into the classroom. Professor Bob Meagher, an

international lawyer with years of experience advising the Indian Government and consulting for the UN, stands out to me in this regard. I took two of his classes that were absolutely great preparation for anybody coming into the development business. One was on the use of law as an instrument of social change where we did case study analysis of real examples of governments trying to legislate social change. Another was on international organizations -- the UN and UN agencies, the World Bank and IMF, regional economic organizations-- how they were set up, what tools they had and didn't have, how they could be effective and in what circumstances, what were their key constraints. He was a brilliant teacher who believed learning was a conversation between teacher and student, using probing questions to make us think. He taught us to be critical and to think creatively, and to start from the premise that understanding context was everything, from organizational norms, to local power structures, and political and social culture. It was great analytical preparation for working on development issues, at a time before international development was such a popular arena for study.

Q: Yes. I'm trying to think back because this is about the time when the Congress and others were pushing for a more "basic human needs" approach, that economic growth strategies for development weren't reducing poverty and therefore you had to have more direct poverty-related programs. It ultimately led to new legislation. Was any of that beginning to bubble up when you were in graduate school – or it may have been a little bit later than that.

STICKEL: I think it was a bit later. But there was at the time serious academic attention given to growth and equity. And the economics professor in the development cluster was a real taskmaster who wanted us to learn the traditional models of economic development, which required pretty rigorous understanding of economics. That was a struggle for me because I didn't come prepared. But there was considerable debate on whether growth could be achieved without increasing concentration of wealth, and what policies could contribute to more equitable growth trajectories. Taiwan was always looked at very closely for its success in land reform.

Q: Okay. So, when you were at Fletcher, is that when you decided you wanted to work with USAID?

STICKEL: Yes. But it wasn't so focused. Once I finished my degree, we started looking for work. Some of my close friends were on their way to dissertation research under programs sponsored by Fletcher, often with USAID funding. At that time there was considerable research underway in Ethiopia and West Africa, in agricultural economics research.

Q: So, those people were going off for PhDs and doing dissertations--And you determined that you did not want to do that? Didn't want to be an academic?

STICKEL: I didn't want to be an academic and, frankly, I was ready to get out of school. Besides that, I wasn't interested in the kind of research they were doing. But I don't recall how I saw that AID was hiring. It might have been a suggestion from my faculty advisor.

AID was always in the picture and I had become very close to one of the professors who was still in touch with several former students who were working with AID. Nancy Tumavik was one. And Harry Petrequin.

Q: Was Larry Hausman one?

STICKEL: Yes, Larry was also at Fletcher at the same time, but I think he might have been a year ahead. And Helen Soos was in my class. And some people who were in my class went on to do different things after Fletcher before joining AID a few years later. So, I remember applying but had no expectation of being accepted. I was astonished when I got the offer letter and accepted without a second thought. I simply wouldn't have considered wanting to do anything else. It sounded to me like a great adventure.

Q: So, you finished in sort of June of '73 from the program?

STICKEL: '73, yes. Well, it was probably closer to September because I was also doing some work for one of the professors so I wound up my time in Cambridge around September. And then I went on a personal trip to visit a friend who was doing research in Ethiopia. On the way back I circled through Cairo to see my AFS sister and the day after I flew into Cairo the Yom Kippur War broke out, on October 6, 1973. Now, fortunately my AFS sister was savvy enough to have thought to sign me in with the U.S. embassy in Cairo. So, within 24 hours or so after the war broke out, the Embassy phoned her to say that the Embassy had lined up several buses to evacuate American citizens and they didn't think that we should stick around very long. So, I was evacuated from Cairo, you know, with planes flying overhead.

Q: October 1973. Wow.

STICKEL: And we were bused across the Libyan Desert and we saw the remains of planes that had crashed in the desert, which I admit was a bit unsettling. It was about a two-day trip, if I remember. And then we were flown out of Benghazi.

Q: What a ride.

USAID International Development Intern (IDI) – Hired – 1973

STICKEL: This is all by way of saying I was late to report to work at AID.

Q: Oh, you were late for your-

STICKEL: To join my IDI class in Roslyn and I arrived with a bit of notoriety.

Q: Well, you still decided to join the Foreign Service. You were evacuated before you joined the Foreign Service.

STICKEL: That's right. So, I had already checked that box!

Q: Okay. And how big was the- It was an IDI class, International Development Intern class? Do you remember how large it was?

STICKEL: I don't but I would guess 15 people, 15 to 20 people.

Q: What was the gender breakdown, by chance?

STICKEL: Well, by chance I was the only woman out of the whole class and I was surprised by that but somehow not intimidated. I was glad to be there, and all my colleagues were very welcoming, and I do think that the woman who was running the program--

Q: Shirley Marino?

STICKEL: Oh, my goodness, thank you. I've been racking my brains trying to remember her name. She was wonderful. She was really an institution and I think we were treated extremely well and she was very welcoming and looked out for us and fought for us when we needed it. And she was a real gift to all of us newbies.

Q: Interesting that you were the only woman because when I came in in 1970 that was the case; I was the only woman in my IDI class, but I thought by '73 that things had improved.

STICKEL: Right. And surely, a couple of years later it was quite different.

Q: When you were hired did you know what backstop you were going to be in and what country you'd be going to?

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: Did you have a voice in that selection process or were just kind of advised that you probably fit these qualifications best?

STICKEL: Well, I didn't have a clue about what the alternatives were, but -- and you may have the same memory -- I have a distinct visual memory of two numbers that stood out in the offer letter -- one was the salary, which was totally unbelievable, \$27,000 or something. And the other number I remember was 94-- my backstop. I hadn't a clue what it meant but I wasn't going to ask any questions; I figured they knew better than I did, so.

Q: Did it have the country assignment as well?

STICKEL: It did and that was part of why I was so excited to go because the country assignment was Thailand. And I had spent all my college work and much of my graduate school work on studying Southeast Asian history and politics so that was a big part of my excitement. But-

Q: That shoe's going to drop at some point because I'm wondering when you ever went to Thailand?

STICKEL: I never did but my original assignment was to Chiang Mai.

Q: You were assigned to Chiang Mai?

STICKEL: There was a regional mission, I think it was Chiang Mai, that was providing support to border refugees and I was just thrilled. But I went through my IDI training, which I think was first-rate, absolutely first-rate, and I--

Q: Can you describe some of the training? What were things that you thought were particularly good for training?

STICKEL: Well, you know, those were the days before colleges and high schools started preparing their students in group process and teamwork and collaborative learning, those kinds of skills. I had gotten none of that and it had never even been explained to me that these things were important. We spent a lot of time on that and I thought that was really, really important. We also did an off-site in West Virginia where we were given some basic information about demographics and the basic economy and then sent off to interview people and figure out what the problems and opportunities were, come up with some imaginative solutions, and work out a strategy; it mimicked the key elements of a country strategic planning process, which I thought was also hugely helpful. And of course, it was time to learn about our colleagues. Most of my colleagues had Peace Corps experience and so it was very helpful for me just to hear their stories. I thought it was all a wonderful experience and we all really bonded. And it was a mix; there were program people in there, there were some IT- whatever they were called at the time -- IT people and there were some finance people and everybody was all together. And that also, I thought, created a very good foundation for mission work because then you understood and appreciated the skills that were being brought from other backstops.

Q: And how long did the training last? Was it a couple months?

STICKEL: Yes, I think so.

Q: And then did you get assigned to a desk in Washington?

STICKEL: Yes. Then I went to the Supporting Assistance Bureau.

Q: Ah, right.

STICKEL: Yes. And worked for-

Q: You did Vietnam and Thailand?

STICKEL: Yes, and Laos.

Q: Laos.

STICKEL: I don't think we had anything going on in Burma but everything in the Bureau was funded from Supporting Assistance and Thailand was in the bureau, too. And I was working for one of the older loan officers, Jay Nussbaum, who I think had quite a long career with AID. Soon after starting there I learned that the mission was closing, and the position was going to be eliminated. So, this sent me into a bit of a downturn and, since I didn't know how to play any of that part of the game, I simply waited to hear what was going to happen to me. And when I learned that they were going to reassign me to Vietnam, that was very troubling. I had been a fairly active anti-war protestor in my college days and I didn't feel I could carry out that work in Vietnam at that time. And so, after some soul-searching over a couple of days and a weekend -- not very long -- I paid a visit to Shirley Marino and I said you know, I really don't think I can do this. I think I'll have to leave the agency because I just really can't go to Vietnam. And she was very understanding, very accepting, and didn't bat an eye. She said don't do anything yet; let me see what I can do. And it just so happened at that time the U.S. and Peru had successfully concluded negotiations following the expropriation of the International Petroleum Corporation, IPC, an oil exploration company whose facilities had been expropriated or nationalized when the Juan Velasco military junta came in a year or two before, which would have prompted Congress to invoke the Hickenlooper Amendment. And Hickenlooper Amendments required all aid to be terminated if there was an expropriation of American property that had not been adequately compensated. So, the United States Government and the Peruvians had been negotiating for a year or more, and had finally reached agreement. So the USG wanted to ramp up the program very quickly. The government in charge in Peru at the time was a left-leaning military government, which was sort of a unique model. They were very committed to development and to redressing the deep inequalities in the Peruvian economy, and there were lots of opportunities for AID to play an important role. Anyway, the mission had been given a couple of slots to jump-start the ramp-up.. Then Deputy Mission Director Chuck Weinberg was in Washington and looking for people to fill these slots and he hired me practically on the spot. And I practically accepted on the spot! It happened all very quickly and within days I headed off to FSI (Foreign Service Institute) for Spanish training.

It was a great relief. And as you know, the joke is that the Foreign Service sends you to the one area of the world you have absolutely no preparation for and that was definitely the case for me. But I was delighted to have a chance to learn about Latin America.

Q: Yes. So, how long were you at FSI? Was it-?

STICKEL: I think they give you three months to get your 2/2?

Q: They often do about 20 weeks, but it may have been less than that. I think in 20 weeks they expect you to get a 3/3 so it might have been less than that.

STICKEL: Yes. Well, FSI training was like a small miracle. After you spend so many years in high school and college learning to speak a foreign language and getting nowhere and then you have 10 weeks, 20 weeks at FSI and all of a sudden you can speak Spanish. It is a wonderful asset.

Q: So, you got your 2/2.

STICKEL: I got my 2/2 but before going to FSI I spent some time in the LA Bureau.

Q: The Latin American Bureau.

STICKEL: And that was an education. And that was when we were still making loans. So, I remember spending time looking in the loan files to find repayment schedules, the cost benefit analyses. These projects had been developed on the basis of very serious design work -- economic feasibility analysis, financial payback period, legislative and regulatory provisions, contracting.

Q: In fact, that was- the capital development officer did loans; is that correct?

STICKEL: Right, that's right.

Q: They designed loans and there was very rigorous analysis that was done to justify them. I believe that Catherine Balsis was the first woman capital development officer and you were the second?

STICKEL: Yes, yes.

Q: Okay. Because it was not a field that women were usually in at AID generally and certainly not in the Latin America Bureau, so you were groundbreakers in that way, also.

STICKEL: It was really configured more as a finance job than a design job.

Q: They referred to them as finance officers, as I recall.

STICKEL: For a period there was finance in the title. But I remember, for example, reviewing the repayments for a loan to an electric utility in Bolivia and my job was to make sure that they were up to date on their payments and to assess the financial viability of the utility because they were changing their rate structure. This was hard-core financial analysis and I didn't learn that sort of thing at Fletcher but there were some experienced finance officers around, as you will remember. One of them, Dick Seifman, was very helpful to me. At that time, a lot of the folks in the senior positions in the LAC Bureau were out of New York finance companies, investment companies, so there was a very distinguished group of investment experts in Bureau management.

Q: At that point in time was the Latin American Bureau organized with the development resources office in two halves, the technical half and the finance half, do you know?

STICKEL: Yes, I think that's right. There was LA/DR and LA/DP--

Q: Yes, and there was the program office, DP, Development and Planning, and then the desks. But the desks at that point, were they combined with State as part of the original the Alliance for Progress mechanism?

STICKEL: Oh, ARA. Yes, I think they were.

Q: Yes, I think the desks may have been combined- I don't know when that ended but it ended sometime in the '70s.

STICKEL: Yes. I believe that's right. Yes, so LA/DR was a very disciplined office, staffed with officers who understood finance and investment, and where the procedures were very clear, people worked really hard. And yes, I was the only woman, but I don't remember that being ever an issue. It was a very professional operation. People were helpful and welcoming and it was a terrific professional experience and a great introduction to a wonderfully-run part of AID.

USAID Peru – Assistant Capital Development Officer (IDI) 1974 - 1977

Q: Well, when did you- do you recall when you specifically then went to Peru?

STICKEL: Yes. June of 1974. And I remember sort of being thrown into this. I hadn't-- you know, things had moved pretty fast -- and I never really thought about what I was doing; I was just kind of on this conveyer belt of an adventure. And I remember waking up in this somewhat ordinary hotel in downtown Lima my first morning there after flying in the night before thinking, you know, what was I thinking, was I totally crazy. There was nothing on the walls and the usual 15-watt light bulb that you could barely read by and I didn't know anybody, and you know, what have I done. But everything looked a lot better after I got to the mission and was introduced to Janet Ballantyne. She took me under her wing and remains one of my heroes to this day.

Q: She was in the mission as a personal services contractor, as an economist.

STICKEL: Yes. She had been there doing her dissertation work in Peru and had worked for the Central Bank so she knew how things worked in the country and USAID was lucky to grab her. And we just had the best time.

Q: Yes. How big was the capital development office? And who was the head of the office?

STICKEL: I think it was Greg Smith. Carl Leonard came, I think, maybe a year into my tour. There had been no program, virtually, for the preceding two or three years so they had no portfolio, except for earthquake reconstruction. So, it was Greg Smith and I, and

Janet, who was a part of the office but worked on the economic side. And an FSN (Foreign Service National) financial analyst who did work well beyond her job title. She was, like so many of our FSNs, simply amazing. She really kept everything going, had great contacts, and read us into how things really worked in the Peruvian government.

Q: So, you were- did you then get involved with designing new programs, new loans?

STICKEL: New projects. We were moving into-

Q: Oh, sure, they- okay, so at that point, then, capital development officers would be working more generally and doing grant projects as well?

STICKEL: I think.

Q: Well, that would probably make sense because that was what I perceived in Nepal, it was by the late '74-'75 that they had generalized a bit more.

STICKEL: I'm trying to remember if there were any loans -- we did have an Intermediate Credit Institution (ICI) program. It was a development bank that made sub-loans to small and mid-sized enterprises. That might have been a loan.

Q: Yes, that probably was, I think, and most of those would have been.

STICKEL: My first design project was an irrigation project and it was really a classic. We were partnering with a mid-level engineer in the agriculture ministry who was in charge of small and medium scale irrigation. And his dream had been to generate support for a program he'd been trying to work on for years to refurbish and extend existing small-scale irrigation, gravity-fed irrigation systems in the highlands, many of which were built on structures and arrangements that had been operating for hundreds of years.

Q: By the Incas originally?

STICKEL: Yes, in some cases. And so, the idea was to support very modest investments that could dramatically change the income earning potential of some of these highland farmers. And it was really a great opportunity because he was an enthusiastic champion of the program. We worked very closely with him and his staff. On the USAID team were an engineer, Dallas Dale Fowler, and Rollo Ehrich, an ag economist. We put together a great project and took it to Washington. This was the first project I'd worked on and when it got to Washington everybody said oh, how innovative. But it ran into some legal problems.

Q: Oh, it was too innovative.

STICKEL: It was taking the ICI concept and applying it to an engineering project, really.

Q: Ah, so you didn't have everything spelled out.

STICKEL: Exactly. The idea was the project was going to finance an on-going program of small-scale investments within an overall funding envelope, with a specified list of criteria agreed with the Ministry for determining eligibility of sub-projects for funding. The Ministry was to be responsible for conducting simplified cost-benefit analysis and cost estimates of each sub-project, and then rank order them and use the money until it ran out. Well, then I learned about Section 611. And the GC (General Counsel) for Latin America -- could it have been Norm Williams? -- was given the task of making this work, somehow. And I remember at the DAC (Development Assistance Committee) review, everybody said it was a great project and everyone was all ready to go but there was just this one little problem.

Q: Ah, yes, the 611e is saying that you have to have detailed plans to justify the amount of money you're putting in for infrastructure activity.

STICKEL: For engineering construction.

Q: Engineering, that's right, engineering.

STICKEL: And it was really hard to make it all work. I don't know how they did it.

Q: But ultimately what you all did became the model. If you used defined criteria, then you could cascade it back-

STICKEL: It made so much sense.

Q: You set in motion a whole new way for AID to operate.

STICKEL: Now it is called sector or program assistance. But there was this small legal problem, and somebody had to solve it and I to this day do not know how. Ultimately we got our approval and we went back and implemented the project and I never really appreciated how intractable an issue it was until much later.

Q: Much later, yes. Interesting because then you began to see more programs taking this approach.

STICKEL: Yes. Well, and it may be that the solution was generalized but I don't remember what the solution was. Because we didn't do any re-design.

Q: Yes, yes, because they began to do a lot more small, municipal infrastructure work that couldn't be defined in advance.

STICKEL: No, we just had good criteria.

Q: You just had criteria and you verified there were systems in place.

STICKEL: Right.

Q: You did all that and your funds would be used appropriately.

STICKEL: Right. And there was a pari-passu drawdown; the government was co-funding it with us.

Q: Yes. Everyone should feel so good about their first project. Well, and you did it very collaboratively with the Peruvians, as well.

STICKEL: That was really thrilling.

Q: And again, that's a model that, I think, broke down a little bit over time. But I think in the '70s there were those kinds of strong, direct relationships between AID staff and host country officials.

STICKEL: Absolutely. We were in their offices for days on end. What I don't recall clearly is how the project came to our attention, but it must have been at the higher level, you know, proposed to the mission director perhaps. But it was definitely their project that we funded and that's where all good projects begin, I think -- something that I have believed all my life. I'm sure you have, too.

Q: Well, it's great to be in a mission where you get that early model before you . I think it makes a big difference how one's career unfolds.

STICKEL: Well, and at the time, too, and I remember this very vividly; there was a lot of work going on in other parts of the world on the question of how do you design operation and maintenance arrangements for small-scale, community-managed irrigation systems. And part of the project design was to use the project as a vehicle for organizing the communities to carry out ongoing maintenance requirements. Elinor Ostrom and some of these great figures were engaged in the work around "managing the commons" that was just burgeoning at that time so I remember -- I don't remember how -- learning about what was going on in the Philippines and being very excited about the prospects for applying those lessons in Peru.

Q: Right, yes. There was no internet then.

STICKEL: Maybe I got help from CDIE's predecessor information service.

Q: It didn't really get created until '74 or '75, I think, CDIE.

STICKEL: But you know, there was something else the IDI program did -- they gave you a sum of money to buy books to take with you to your field assignment so you could learn about the country and its history. I don't know whether they still do that, but I mean, it was a wonderful gift. And it reflected a commitment to learning about where you were working.

Q: Yes, that's the first I've heard that. I don't think they did that for us but that is a great idea. So, are there other sort of important things from Peru, other projects that you did that are memorable or other experiences from there that-?

STICKEL: We tried to design an ag marketing project and found it was not possible to figure out how to do that. We got to the PRP stage, the intermediate stage, and it became obvious we just didn't have it together.

Q: Well, that in itself is an interesting lesson because not many missions would recognize that they didn't have it.

STICKEL: Well, I think the DAEC helped us recognize that one.

Q: These are the reviews that took place in Washington.

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: You did it in stages in those early days, yes.

STICKEL: That's right.

Q: Having outside critique is good.

STICKEL: Well, and there is a sort of momentum in the mission. You know, we've told the government we're going to work on this, so we are going to work on this. And if it doesn't come together we'll keep working on it until it does. And so, having that intermediate stage of well, you know, this is what we've looked at and this is what we've discarded and why and this is what we think we can do based on the commitments we were able to get and the status of marketing policy and institutions. And it took maybe the Washington crowd to say you know, really, I don't think you're there. And it wasn't the project wasn't there; it was just the circumstances to make a project in ag marketing successful weren't in place. And I think it was pretty clear in the review that that that was the case so why go forward.

Q: To me it's an interesting dilemma because most people believes in decentralization of authority to the field but at the same time there's a recognition that having an outside perspective looking at ideas is also really important because it can force one to be more honest than you are if you're insular. So, it's a dilemma. How else can that friction be created?

STICKEL: I would also say the reviews in Washington were also a great learning vehicle for young officers because you would be sitting at this table and these tables would have 30 people. And they were very carefully staged. There were issues meetings to take care of the issues that people had that maybe could be answered, leaving only the questions that really needed discussion to the larger group. But the larger group consisted of so

many people with different perspectives and experience in different arenas that a young officer would sit around and learn a lot from listening. And I think that was maybe the genius of the LAC review system because we learned a lot from people with diverse country- and sector-experience.

Q: It was a real training, yes, training mechanism, really, and all those IDIs that came through and then young people from the field coming in, yes, no, absolutely. I think it's how many of us learned the practical stuff about development.

Just, when you talk about ag marketing and irrigation, was coca an issue during this period? I know that it became a focus of the Peru program later on, so I'm curious, was there, at that point in time any discussion of coca?

STICKEL: I don't recall but it did come up. I do remember being involved on a team tasked with a design in Bolivia shortly after I left Peru, so I think maybe. I can only speculate. The military government was probably pretty much on top of that, but I do remember it occurred in every other South American mission at one point or another in that time period.

Q: Yes. Okay. I was just curious. And these were the ARA days; were relationships good with the embassy?

STICKEL: Yes. I don't remember any problems. Our first director was Don Finberg and Chuck Weinberg was the deputy. And then Len Yaeger came in and I think it got a little rougher then. The military regime was socialist in orientation and so I can only look back now and imagine that there was a little bit of tentativeness about our relationship with the regime and indeed, they went on to mismanage the economy terribly. There was a coup while we were there. I remember Janet and I driving home from the mission office and passing tires in flames on the street in the next lane over. My knee was shaking so badly I didn't think I was going to be able to push in the clutch! It turned out to be a failed coup. But Velasco finally was pushed out after I left. Things didn't go terribly well for that regime.

Q: Okay. So, it wasn't an idyllic situation in that sense.

STICKEL: Yes, and I think the embassy probably was a little uneasy about where things were going.

Q: Yes, right. And how long did you stay in Peru?

STICKEL: It was two-and-a-half years, almost three.

Q: Right. And anything else on Peru you want to mention that was important?

STICKEL: No, no.

Q: And then you went back to Washington, I gather--because you said something about TDYs to Bolivia. Did you move back to the LA Bureau?

STICKEL: I did, and worked in the South America division. I think I was division chief at that point for about a year before I got restless.

Q: Got restless, a restless young person. So, you went off- You left AID and went to-

Treasury Department – International Affairs Office 1978

STICKEL: The Treasury Department.

Q: Treasury Department? What attracted you to the Treasury Department?

STICKEL: Well, a chance encounter with a Fletcher colleague who was working in Fred Bergsten's International Affairs office. And it quite fascinated me. This is a period when all the international banks were throwing money at developing countries and the countries got into trouble for it. So, there was this level of international financial goings-on that I didn't understand, and I felt it was relevant to development and I was interested to learn more. So, I followed my intellectual curiosity and ended up in a job working for Lannie Atlas, a wonderful woman and mentor. She was probably the only woman in Treasury for a long time before some of the rest of us joined. And she was really a wonderful supporter and helped me learn the ropes.

But policy work in Washington is really different and it took me a while to figure that out. Treasury was filled with very smart people. What we did in my office was to prep people who were going to summits and the G-5 meetings to discuss what the development banks should be doing. The U.S. participation in the development banks was managed out of that office. But our work as junior policy people was basically to rewrite old talking points, put them to paper one more time and freshen them up. And, at least at my level, there wasn't room for much innovative thinking or explorations of new approaches to things. It was a very kind of rigid and a fixed way of doing business.

Q: Was there much engagement with the State Department, the economic bureau of State? I'm just curious because with preparation on some of this stuff I would think there would have.

STICKEL: Yes, there were always interagency meetings to hammer out talking points. And from that perspective it was a great learning opportunity. In retrospect it makes sense to offer positions like that as a secondment, because of the education available from the interagency process. It's such an important part of our work. You learn about what the policy issues are, and I think it empowered me to think differently about some of these things that AID was doing and be aware of any issues we might be encountering with the other agencies later on in my career.

Q: But even though you learned, and your intellectual curiosity was fulfilled in some way, I assume it wasn't an entirely satisfactory experience since you didn't stay there very long.

STICKEL: No, I was there maybe a year-and-a-half or so. And I realized that I really liked the project design work. I mean, it was in my blood by then and I loved bringing different disciplines together, I loved the problem solving, I loved having the opportunity to work from the very high policy level all the way down to what's going to make things different for people in their lives. And I wanted to go back and do more of that.

But I did want to be in Washington. I was a single woman and I wasn't eager to go back out to the field by myself. And so, I applied to the World Bank and again, I thought that was a real longshot, but I was accepted into their internship program.

World Bank – Young Professional Program 1979

Q: The young professional program?

STICKEL: Young professional program.

Q: And how many were in that program? Did they come in groups?

STICKEL: No. But there was a coordinator, a woman from Ireland, who was very enthusiastic and engaged.

Q: And so, this must be 1977-'78?

STICKEL: No, this was 1979. The YP program at that time assigned you for six months to one assignment and six months to another and then after that year you're available for assignment for a full three-year term, or longer. And I worked in the central office of the Rural Development Division of the central technical bureau during the first six months and then for the Thailand program desk the second six months. I was interested in institutional development and the first project I worked on was a huge rural development program that was being carried out in Mexico, the PIDER program. We were designing the fourth in a series of PIDER loans, and it was a nightmare of a design. It involved a number of different technical sectors. The Mexican counterpart agencies were in disarray. The appraisal team had to do design work in five different states making for very complex mission logistics. It was a very difficult assignment for everybody, never mind for somebody who didn't know what was going on.

The second assignment was to work on the very early stages of the Thai government's efforts in provincial decentralization. The Bank didn't have clear operational guidance on projects of this kind, and so there was a lot of ambiguity. Everything that we did was trying to work things out for the first time. And it wasn't easy to make things move through the system. Fortunately I was working with a distinguished and very patient and

knowledgeable officer who was patient and truly Zen-like in his handling of the challenges. But I found it all very frustrating and confusing.

Q: Did you go out to Thailand to do any work on it?

STICKEL: We did. We had lots and lots of meetings. And I have to say, it was the work while “on mission” (when you were working in the field) that made me realize that the Bank approach was a hard way for me to work. It’s far harder to build relationships for genuine collaboration. The personnel of every appraisal team changes, sometimes every six months, and likewise, there would often be personnel changes in our counterpart agencies. I just found it very difficult as a young officer to feel like we were able to really partner and collaborate. And I couldn’t find my way to change things for myself; I was too junior. But I hung in there. After the YP year I took an assignment with the North Africa-Middle Eastern program (EMENA), which was, in hindsight, probably not the best choice. It was a difficult region for women to work in. In addition, I was taken on as an ag economist, which was a bit of a stretch. And I never got used to Bank’s culture and way of working.

Q: The way the bank worked.

STICKEL: Yes.

I missed the entrepreneurial character of the AID culture. The AID organizational culture is very creative and oriented to solving problems, not necessarily rule-bound. I think you could see that contrast in very high relief working at the Bank. At the Bank at that time things were pretty much by the book and there were reasons for that. But it made project design a lot less creative and I think very confining. So some solutions and designs were probably not as good as they might have been.

Q: Yes. So, you stayed at the bank for a couple of years?

STICKEL: Three years.

Q: Three years total?

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: And then, you made another brilliant decision and that was to return to USAID.

STICKEL: I’d come full circle.

USAID/W – Latin America Bureau, DR Office – Caribbean Affairs 1983 – 1985

Q: And so, that was in 1983 that you came back into AID?

STICKEL: Yes. And I never regretted it. Organizational culture really affects your professional life and work in important ways and I felt that USAID was my

organizational home. I felt like it was a place where I could be effective. I knew how things worked, I could push for things that were important to me, and that I knew were important to the agency as well. Perhaps sometimes more than others and with some directors more than others but there was still an alignment of my values and the organization's values that just made me feel more at home.

Q: And when you came back in in 1983, you came in on the Foreign Service side?

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: Did you think- did you try on the Civil Service side, just out of curiosity, or did you-?

STICKEL: That's a good question. I don't remember.

Q: And you went into the Latin American Bureau, the Development Resources office?

STICKEL: I did.

Q: As I recall, you were the division chief for the Caribbean.

STICKEL: That's right. You have a good memory, Carol.

Q: That's when I met you.

STICKEL: That's when we met, that's right. I'd been hearing your name ever since I joined the agency and finally, finally, I met you in person.

Q: Yes, finally in '84, but you were well established in running the Caribbean program. And as I recall, this was early in the Reagan Administration, there were a lot of big ticket ESF (Economic Support Fund) policy reform programs in the Caribbean and the Caribbean Basin Initiative and so, you were working on a lot of high priority stuff.

STICKEL: I remember the cash transfers.

Q: I remember one issues meeting on a Jamaica program, an economic policy program, so it was a cash transfer program, you're right. There may or may not have been any reforms that were completed but--

STICKEL: I don't remember that meeting so well. Though I do remember working with Sam Skogstad who I believe was the mission economist and was enormously capable and very astute. I also remember the urgency around the disbursement timing and manning the phones with Julio Schlotthauer -- I think it was a Thanksgiving weekend and somebody had to be around -- because the Jamaicans needed that money to meet an end of November bank loan deadline.

Q: Ah; debt relief was driving a lot of these cash transfer programs?

STICKEL: Yes, right. So, it was very high profile --

Q: And I think you were doing privatization programs, as I recall, in Jamaica.

STICKEL: Ah, yes.

Q: I remember, now that I think of it, telecommunications and things like that.

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: I think ultimately the programs were successful because I think much of it was ultimately privatized.

STICKEL: Yes, that's right. I'd forgotten that. Privatization was very much the thing. And I think DR (the Dominican Republic) had a transfer, too.

Q: Probably, yes.

STICKEL: Well, the Jamaica one doesn't loom large in my memory because I may have repressed it -- I came very close to committing the ultimate sin of a Washington finance officer, which was to obligate funds when you didn't have obligation authority.

Q: The anti-deficiency?

STICKEL: The anti-deficiency act. I mean, it was very edge-of-the-cliff exciting. The embassy was desperate to have news that funds had been transferred, but the accounting office in Washington hadn't sent the accounting codes....

Q: The numbers.

STICKEL: The numbers, right. But yes, it was pretty high wire stuff. And I remember Julio Schlotthauer being really salt of the earth, steady and professional.

Those were interesting days.

Q: Was Grenada then or was it later? Was Grenada under your watch?

STICKEL: Yes, the invasion of Grenada also, yes. I didn't participate in anything on that. I think there was a cash transfer there, too, but I don't think it involved much policy reform.

Q: Right, were these all ESF cash transfers as well?

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: Right. So, it was an interesting, interesting period. And you stayed there for a year or two; then you made a break to go to the Africa Bureau. But you were the second of the stars of the Latin American Bureau who made the break.

STICKEL: Scott Smith?

Q: Right; he had gone to Swaziland.

STICKEL: Well, I like to think that I didn't leave LAC, but that I wanted to spread its gospel...

Q: Right.

USAID/W – Africa Bureau – Project Development Office 1985 – 1987

STICKEL: To extend the LAC/DR lessons learned and strengths, the management strengths, to a new bureau. And I was not convinced at first but Larry Hausman gave me a very effective sales pitch and I was intrigued. So, I did accept his invitation and was very excited. Part of what made it so attractive was that it was for the Southern Africa portfolio.

Q: This would have been 1985 or late 1984?

STICKEL: I think 1985.

Q: I went over in September of '85 and you were already there so it might have been early '85.

STICKEL: Yes, I don't think I went much before you did. But they were trying to build up the technical capacity of the project development shop because it had never been staffed really well in terms of numbers or experience. A lot of design analysis and implementation management had migrated to the desks, which wasn't ideal, as there wasn't much staff experience in project implementation on the desks. So, Larry was really motivated to correct that imbalance and I was really hooked. I think it was a very exciting time for the Africa Bureau. I don't remember when the African Economic Policy Reform Program (AEPRP) program was-

Q: It began at that same time because that was the first thing I worked on when I got there, and I went in either August or September, something like that, and so the African Policy Reform Program was just starting. I think it was like \$80 or \$100 million of ESF money and they had asked the field to submit ideas; believe you had some from Southern Africa.

STICKEL: I do remember Zambia's. The whole AEPRP concept was really brilliant, I thought, just brilliant. So, that was very exciting. I also remember early on, before even getting involved in the AEPRP, that the Africa Bureau program office was so good. It

was filled with people who were really thoughtful, very creative and articulate; and they were not doing anything by the book. They were really deliberative, thoughtful analysts and there was a lot of conversation about what should be done, how should we do it, and is this the best way. There was an intellectual integrity and excitement to it. So, that was also part of the draw, to be in a Bureau where that was going on. And I don't remember that being so much the case in Latin America because we were so tied to foreign policy in Latin America. In Africa Bureau we were really doing development work.

Q: Right, yes. It was an exceptional group of people during that period.

The Southern Africa you led that was overseeing program design and implementation also covered Lesotho, Swaziland, and South Africa. Was this before the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act in South Africa?

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: So, it was before. So, there was just- they were doing participant training in South Africa, is that correct?

STICKEL: Right, a lot of bursaries, or scholarships. There was also a labor training program. These were the programs that were being managed by the desk.

Q: And they were, yes, out of Washington.

STICKEL: Out of Washington.

Q: Was there a USAID person resident at the embassy? I think there was, but it wasn't the USAID office, it was just a USAID person who was seconded there.

STICKEL: That's right. His name was Jimmy Philpot, and he worked out of the US Consulate in Johannesburg. And I remember working with Jimmy. He had a tough job. I think that the limited program focus was mandated by one of the precursors to the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA). There was an executive order that preceded the CAAA that established an AID program for disadvantaged South Africans.

Q: And that had been during the Carter Administration?

STICKEL: Well there was a long history to USG-funded bursaries for South Africans but the Executive Order was under Reagan.

Q: It was Reagan?

STICKEL: Yes. I believe so because I think the whole thing was triggered by Reagan's announcement of the policy of constructive engagement that prompted a pushback from the public. So Congress was very intent on finding some way of communicating that that was not the only approach that the American public wanted, that it did not fully reflect

U.S. interests and objectives in Southern Africa. That constructive engagement was only one stream of thought about how the USG should conduct itself in the region, and that there were others. So, in response to the policy of constructive engagement, the Congress started lots of conversations and I am sure AID people were involved. I don't know most of the background, but people like Reverend Sullivan were in the lead, and the African-American Labor Center was actively involved.

Q: The African American Institute, AAI?

STICKEL: AAI was involved. TransAfrica and Africare were actively involved. And of course, at the time, too, there was a great deal of sanctions and disinvestment lobbying going on in the country.

Q: Right. And Reverend Sullivan was an important part of that.

STICKEL: Right.

Q: With working with companies to try to do things in-country which would be more sensitive.

STICKEL: It is fascinating political history and it certainly pre-dated any formal involvement by AID. But all of this was brewing, and the initiative came from the Hill, from the House side, spearheaded by the Congressional Black Caucus, to develop something that would clearly state what the USG should embrace as policy toward South Africa. So earmarks were added to AID funding in 1982, 1984, and 1985 to support bursaries and human rights programs, then an Executive Order that was Reagan's attempt to pre-empt legislation from the Hill. That's how Jimmy got to be there. I believe I have this right.

Q: Okay, no, that sounds right because I know that they were doing bursaries for this kind of work and that there was an AID person.

STICKEL: And they'd been doing bursaries for a long time, originally under State Department maybe and probably under USIA (United States Information Agency). There was a long history of USG-funded bursaries in South Africa, which eventually were restricted to South Africans who were disadvantaged by the apartheid laws.

Q: Okay, so that was certainly bubbling around when you went into the Southern African project development division. The African Economic Policy Reform program was starting, and several missions in Southern Africa, were interested in participating. Mozambique had not yet started. I don't think we had AID people in Mozambique yet, or did we? But they were basically at war there and in Angola. Interestingly, we had different positions on how we treated both countries: we liked the rebels in one and the government in the other. So, it was a busy time with a lot of high foreign policy priority stuff as well.

Do you recall when the CAAA, the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, began to be drafted? Do you remember-

STICKEL: The bill was introduced in May of 1986 by Rep. Gray, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. It was enacted into law in October of 1986, when both houses overrode President Reagan's veto. The bill was the first to authorize broad economic sanctions against the South African Government, and also established the policies and objectives that guided the initial years of AID's program.

Q: Okay. When did you go to South Africa?

STICKEL: I went in August of '87. The mission had opened several months before I got there so I think there had been people there from the beginning of 1987.

Q: I have always thought that there probably was some behind the scenes discussion between AID people and the Hill as that legislation was being drafted. Is that a correct assumption?

STICKEL: I would think so. I would expect so because it provided very good guidance for AID programming and, while it created some problems for us, it was very thoughtful and specific about what sectors we were to focus on, and particularly in terms of the goals of the program. It was very balanced and very strategic. And I have to imagine that there were AID people involved in the negotiation. I would like to know more about that part of the story.

Q: Right, yes, I know. I think in Tim's oral history, I think he indicated that he'd had some discussions on the Hill. And Bob Lester as well.

STICKEL: Good.

Q: So, I think there are indications that folks were talking to the Hill even though the administration policy might have been somewhat different. Those things happen.

STICKEL: It really is a shining light of our foreign policy history and it's just a shame that not more people know about it.

Q: Let's leave South Africa for just a minute because we're going to come back to it at greater length. But other things that you were doing on the Southern Africa projects division, and we spoke a little bit about the African Economic Policy Reform Program and I know that Zambia was one of the countries that submitted a proposal, and did they then implement a program?

STICKEL: They did. I remember the technical issue for that proposal revolved around the costing out of a safety net that was going to be recommended by AID for the Zambian government to implement to soften the impact of price increases--

Q: From structural adjustment.

STICKEL: Yes, from structural adjustment. The World Bank had a structural adjustment loan that was going to require, as many of them did, abandoning price controls on agricultural inputs -- fertilizer, I believe it was in Zambia. The proposal was to structure the AID funding around the cost of a safety net that would mitigate the impact of the price increase on small-scale, poorer, farmers. And the government was a little uneasy about it and we were uneasy about it, too, in terms of whether they had the capacity to implement that kind of a program. But it was, I think, a very smart way to use AID resources. We could never have done that kind of work without having the incentive, you know, the competitive process in the way AEPRP was set up. As I remember, there was only a limited amount of money and the best program would win the additional funding. It was like a race to the top. So that empowered the missions to be a little tough with their ministries of finance: if you are willing to do this we can give you more money to implement these difficult things.

And the other thing, I think, that was brilliant was the way the Africa Bureau used the AEPRP to fund programs that would soften the political and social impact of structural adjustment programs that had been agreed with the World Bank. There are ways of softening the impact of those programs -- safety net programs, extending the timetable for reducing subsidies, etc. -- that have real dollar costs and we wanted to use our money to facilitate the carrying out of these difficult adjustments. So, I think it was a great example of finding our niche in the aid landscape. You know, we had the flexibility and the money and the gravitas as a major donor in Africa, and we had the economists in the bureau that were super, super smart and had real credentials to navigate these waters, both with the bank economists and with the ministries of finance. And so, it was just a great program. I think there are evaluations though I can't say that I've read them.

Q: I think there were some done, and this really was the brainchild of Larry Saiers and Jerry Wolgin. It also laid the groundwork for the Development Fund for Africa legislation that came on a bit later. The AEPRP helped demonstrate that the bureau could do policy-based non-project assistance, thus paving the way for such work under the eventual DFA.

STICKEL: Well you know, the other piece of that is there were no earmarks. I think that was also part of the AEPRP, I believe.

Q: Yes, it was ESF so there were no earmarks. That was the beauty of it. But how we ever negotiated with the State Department to get that much money to do this work must have been difficult.

STICKEL: That was a good time to be part of the Africa Bureau.

Q: Yes, right. So.

Okay. Well, why don't we stop for now and then we'll reconvene in a couple of days.

STICKEL: Okay.

.....
Q: This is Carol Peasley. It is April 2nd, continuing the interview with Wendy Stickel.

In our last session, we began to talk a little bit about South Africa but maybe we could begin there. And if you could take us back to 1986 when a lot was bubbling, both within the administration and on the Hill about what to do about South Africa and maybe you could lead us through a little bit of the timing of when certain things happened.

STICKEL: Okay. Well, there was a lot bubbling and it was not just in Washington, D.C. but all over the country. If you remember there was a lot of pressure to impose sanctions on South Africa and for American companies to divest all their holdings in South Africa as an act of resistance to the apartheid regime and support for the anti-apartheid activists in the country. And a lot of American actors were involved in this. The foundations were very much in the forefront and there was a lot of pressure on Congress for something with real teeth in it to express the concerns about the apartheid government's policies. The Reagan Administration was not comfortable with these more demanding measures and fought them very hard. And so, it was an effort, really, to force the administration into a position that was more supportive of the anti-apartheid movement than they wanted. And to pre-empt that there was an Executive Order issued in September 1985 that expanded AID funding for South African bursaries to \$20 million in FY86, to increase to \$25 million in FY87. But that came along with only limited sanctions and the Congress was not satisfied. They continued to press for their legislation, which would have married the idea of broad economic sanctions with a program of assistance to the "victims of apartheid". And so that executive order was followed in 1986 by the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, which increased funding levels for the program, and included more extensive sanctions measures as well.

Q: Right, okay.

STICKEL: And now, preceding that there had been some U.S. Government programs that went back into the early '80s and even earlier, which were focused on scholarships, not really with political intent at all. And it was very low key. I think USIA ran the early scholarships, and they were run out of Washington relying on U.S. PVOs (Private Voluntary Organizations) for day-to-day operations. There was also a small human rights fund that was managed by the embassy in Pretoria. At some point, and I don't know when, these devolved to AID oversight and were managed primarily by the USAID desk office for Southern Africa. Sometime in 1985 there were a number of us who were asked to work on cleaning up the implementation of what had become a very diffuse program of activities, bits and pieces here and there with no real strategy. And the funds were moving very slowly, there wasn't much reporting and there was, for most of the time leading up to maybe mid 1985 there was no one in the field looking after these except maybe the embassy on very much a part-time basis. But after the Executive Order was

signed I believe that is when the first AID officer was assigned to the field and he operated out of the consulate in Johannesburg.

Q: And that was Jimmy-

STICKEL: That was Jimmy Philpot and he had the task of leading the catch-up that we were trying to do on where were these projects, who were they with, what impact were they having, what were they all about -- because they had been very *ad hoc*. And so, in that time period I went down to South Africa with other folks. I can't remember who else was on that TDY. Mike Feldstein was also very involved.

Q: Because he was on the desk, right?

STICKEL: That's right. He was at the desk and he had very good contacts in South Africa. And the Ford Foundation was also very helpful to us. They also had a lot going on in South Africa and I think Mike and others had created good relationships with the Ford Foundation folks who were working there, who were knowledgeable. So, then in the fall of 1986, I remember Tim Bork asked me if I would be interested in the deputy position in the mission that was being set up to run the AID program there.

Q: So, it would have been about the same time as the anti-apartheid act. And so, Tim at that point knew that he would be going out as the first mission director?

STICKEL: That's right. I didn't know him very well but he did present himself as going out to South Africa as the director, so that much had been established. That's the best of my recollection. I don't know for a fact that AID was involved in any of the drafting of the legislation. But I'm quite confident that there was a lot of conversation because the way it was written strongly suggested that they were trying to send a message that we did not want to operate in South Africa the way we had been, all these bits and pieces, run out of Washington, and with no real strategic focus. And so, I suspect that Tim was part of those conversations. Tim also had a lot of connections with the Ford Foundation, and those turned out to be very, very helpful to us as we started our work on the ground in South Africa.

Q: So, the initial Executive Order talked about \$20 million for fiscal year '86. Then the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act was passed in October- well, it was passed and then vetoed and then the veto overridden in- by the first of October of 1986 and that then upped the ante to \$40 million, is that right?

STICKEL: \$40 million. Though I don't know that we ever got up to that level while I was there. The strategy we wrote within the first year established a level of about \$25 million a year.

USAID South Africa – Assistant Director 1987 – 1990

Q: And you went out to South Africa as the assistant director in spring of-?

STICKEL: In the summer of 1987.

Q: Summer of '87.

STICKEL: Right.

Q: And Tim and several other people had- were there before you, is that correct?

STICKEL: That's right. Tim was there and Carlos Pascual and Mark Johnson. And we had a couple of PSCs (Personal Services Contractors) whom I remember; Aileen Marshall and Chris Merklung.

Q: So, they were all there when you- by the time you got there?

STICKEL: They were all there, but they were basically squatting in a very bare-bones rented office space and operating from phones and PC work-stations. Most of the work was actually out meeting people. Meeting a lot of people; meeting as many people as would meet with us. But materially, it was a very bare bones operation.

Q: And you were not at the embassy, you were at a commercial rental space?

STICKEL: Right. And that was a very important choice, that carried a lot of symbolism. It also created difficulties with the Embassy. We had to bend over backwards to reassure the Embassy that we were going to stay in touch and not do anything that they wouldn't know about. But it was very important for the credibility of the AID program that we demonstrate a bit of distance from the Embassy. The CAAA was invaluable to us as our authorizing legislation because it enabled us to say this is not part of the administration's foreign policy; this is part of the American people's foreign policy. And were it not for that we would have gotten nowhere. It was very important for us to be able to invoke that separate source of authority because there were the very politically motivated groups, the leadership really, of the ANC (African National Congress) and their in-country partners in the United Democratic Front had a clearly defined policy of opposition to any governments that were seen as destabilizing governments in Southern Africa. And so, it wasn't just constructive engagement with the South African Government that was creating problems for the USG.

Q: It was what was going on in Angola as well.

STICKEL: That's right. And Namibia.

Q: And Namibia, yes.

STICKEL: So, there were a lot of obstacles arrayed against us, and the CAAA was our calling card. And it was very important; the language in that legislation made it really clear what the people of America wanted to see happen and there were, basically, two goals: one was to end apartheid, which was a statement of support for regime change, a pretty bold statement from the USG about any foreign government; and second, to build a foundation for non-racial democratic majority rule in South Africa. So, the clarity of the goal statement and the fact that it came from the U.S. Congress was what made it possible for us to carry out the program.

Q: That's a very interesting point, that separation between administration policy and a legislatively driven approach that gave you all the entre into the communities. And you were located in commercial space in not fancy digs?

STICKEL: Right.

Q: And were you in Johannesburg or were there issues about where you could be located as well?

STICKEL: Yes. And I can't be certain of this, but I believe there had been the proposal that we base ourselves in Johannesburg. But the Embassy was not prepared to accept that and so we did locate in Pretoria, but we were physically separate from the Embassy. We did make a point, and this was one of my major responsibilities, to stay in touch with the Embassy and keep our line of communication open, and make sure that they knew what we were doing, that they were comfortable with what we were doing and that we were prepared to share information about our work. And we did build a good relationship over time. I think another great benefit for us was Ambassador Ed Perkins.

Q: Yes. But he was not there initially, was he, when you-?

STICKEL: He was there when I got there.

Q: Oh, he was there when you got there. Okay.

STICKEL: But I believe he may have arrived not much before I did. I do know that the preceding ambassador was difficult for the program. He was not a welcome presence for much of the anti-apartheid community. He represented constructive engagement and he did present himself as an administration spokesperson. And Ambassador Perkins was more nuanced in his presence in a number of different ways.

Q: He had a better understanding of what the American people wanted.

STICKEL: That's right.

Q: Well, let me just go back one minute to before you left Washington. We skipped over your personal life. You'd gotten married several years earlier; you had your first child in the spring of-

STICKEL: April of 19 87.

Q: April of 1987. And that was one of the reasons you didn't get out as early as you might have to South Africa. Your husband was working for the State Department in the general counsel's office and so you also had to go through the process of trying to identify employment for Peter during this period as well.

STICKEL: That's right. And when Tim came and spoke to me about the position I said I would love to accept but that I would need to have his assurance that there could be something for Peter. And Tim was quite open to that, in fact welcomed it because of Peter's legal background, since one of the identified sectors in the CAAA was legal assistance. There was a lot of help coming from the GC (General Counsel) in Mbabane at the time but there was nobody on staff who had a legal background besides Tim. So, it was actually a very good match. That didn't mean it was easy to make it happen. There were a lot of bureaucratic delays, mostly around how do we do this, how is this done, how can we make this happen. And it gets into the sort of bloody details of regulation and personnel law and so forth, which I won't bother you with, but it was complicated. But it did happen, and I think this is one thing that I will always credit USAID with and that is they're very creative and they will make things happen if they want to make it happen. And it was thanks to the AID personnel folks who worked with their State Department counterparts with great patience.

Q: Because he was Civil Service and then he got a time limited FS (Foreign Service) appointment with USAID?

STICKEL: I believe that is right, yes.

Q: Yes, right, okay. Just for the record we want to show how flexible AID was and how responsive they were.

STICKEL: Yes, they were very responsive. And Tim was also patient while we waited for all this to happen.

Q: Okay. So, then you, Peter and-

STICKEL: Anna.

Q: -Anna arrived in the summer of 1987 and folks have been there for at least several months and they've started the process of trying to develop grants and partnerships and stuff.

STICKEL: Yes. I think the basic shape of the project portfolio was pretty well defined in large part by the CAAA itself, by the sectors identified in the legislation. There was a focus on education but we tried to establish education programs that were based in South Africa. Although we retained a lot of the foreign scholarships, the bursary programs, we did want to move more programs into the hands of South African community groups. So we had an education program. And we had a program in what was called Community Outreach and Leadership Development, which was a bit of a catchall for community-based organizations that were seeking to provide services of a variety of sorts to their constituencies in the townships and throughout the country. We also had a private enterprise program, and also a labor union training program, which was a legacy program run from Washington for primarily domestic political reasons. There had been an earmark earlier that had locked that in. And then, of course, the human rights and legal assistance fund. So, those four programs were our bread and butter. All of the programs had the basic shape, umbrella projects under which we provided individual grants. And the great struggle was to figure out a way to manage the grant-making process through intermediaries so we weren't doing individual grant-by-grant reviews, approvals, and oversight. But at the beginning we were unable to find any intermediaries that would have really met the intent of the CAAA. And so, we did all the work ourselves and the staff was limited which meant 15-hour, 16-hour days every day, while also hiring as fast as we could. Personnel was a continual problem. Getting slots was a problem. I know the first year we were in constant conversation with the Embassy to get an additional USDH (United States Direct Hire) slot for a controller. You may remember that. But we were also -- and this was another piece of great luck and hugely important to the success of the program -- able to hire some really wonderful and exceedingly talented FSNs (Foreign Service Nationals), South Africans who were willing to jump in and work as hard as we all did and help us understand the political landscape, help us run interference with the shifting sands of the domestic South African community politics and interpret the meaning of things, and, of course, putting us in touch with organizations that were doing good work. So, we were hiring South Africans as fast as we could into professional positions.

Q: Was Farouk Mangera one of the?

STICKEL: Farouk was one of the first. And I can't tell you how we met, how we learned he was interested but there were-- I think Tim and Carlos and Aileen's work in the early days--

Q: In the townships, yes.

STICKEL: --was just super important in making the program more widely known. One of the rules by which we operated was not to publicize too much because we couldn't be, didn't want to be, about advertising the U.S. presence -- it had to be more subtle and nuanced. We needed to convey our genuine commitment to support their objectives -- the CAAA made this very clear -- and that we were there to fund South African ideas and programs and not come in as donors so often do with their own solutions and their own

ways of doing things. So, in the first months, this early crew of folks were out meeting and talking and listening and introducing themselves to a wide array of people.

Q: And to try to make judgments of these groups we're trying to support.

STICKEL: Right.

Q: And I believe that most of them turned out to be good choices, but do you recall whether you had to terminate any grants early or were the choices pretty sound?

STICKEL: I think they turned out to be pretty sound. In preparing for this conversation I reviewed the names of people we consulted, including many who weren't necessarily going to get any grant assistance but who were knowledgeable about what programs were doing good work and which we might not have otherwise known about. I was struck by how many of the younger community leaders we chose to work with went on to become mayors and parliamentarians. There were so many young leaders who went on to much bigger responsibilities. One of our earliest and most important partners was Buti Thiglae, who led the Educational Opportunities Council, the organization which ran our bursaries program. Buti ultimately became the archbishop for Johannesburg. And some of our grantees went on to be named to cabinet positions and to serve on the Supreme Court.

Q: Right.

STICKEL: And so, I think if you evaluate the program using that metric and I think it's not an unfair metric to use, the early AID mission should get some high marks.

Q: yes, given what the goals of the act were.

STICKEL: Right. And given how badly tainted the U.S. Government brand, if you will, was at the time we established the program, owing to other US foreign policies in Southern Africa. So, it's really quite a story, what was able to be done.

Q: I remember that during this period there were concerns about meeting normal AID methods of doing work and documenting project; also I vaguely recall that you all put in place some systems in South Africa to provide some form of bureaucratic seal of approval to the grant making process. Do you recall that? And then I recall that you all had early consultations with the inspector general's office to make sure that you were doing things in a way that wouldn't prompt negative critiques by the IG (Inspector General) afterwards.

STICKEL: Right. No, there was an early concern with meeting AID audit standards. I recall a meeting with Jim Durnell, a senior officer in the IG office, I believe, confirming an informal agreement that the USAID auditor-general would grant the mission a grace period to allow us time to work out an approach that could meet Agency expectations. I don't think it was ever put in writing but it was an understanding that the mission was going to be given a year to test things out and to kind of try to get a better understanding

of what the capacity was of these groups that we were working with to honor the requirements of good accounting as required by AID grants. And it was important to be totally transparent about what we could expect and what we couldn't expect. As it turned out, for a variety of reasons it was really important to apply our standard accounting requirements.

Our mantra with these groups was, from the very beginning, that we're not going to tell you what to do -- we believe your program makes sense, we think it is an appropriate response to the problems you're trying to address and we're not going to try to fine tune it -- but we will require you to report on every penny you have spent. And this isn't just for USAID's benefit but it's for your benefit as an organization. At the time, and I don't think it was right away, but a year or two after the mission opened, the South African government (SAG) launched an effort to try to curtail these groups using their own financial accountability requirements defined in the Fundraising Act. It had been in place for years, and not ever used in this way, but the SAG began to use it to confine and control and intimidate some of the community groups, especially those that the SAG saw as threatening. So, it was very important for these groups to operate completely aboveboard. And we provided a lot of help to them; that was one of the biggest contributions I think the project officers made in working with these grantee organizations -- walking them through what internal controls and financial accounting requirements were, how they could adapt them to their needs and implement them in their organization -- and following up with oversight and review.

Q: And was this the USAID staff doing it directly-

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: -so it wasn't that you contracted with someone to work with them.

STICKEL: At first it was the project office staff. Over time we did regularize this and normalize it through an outside contract, but I don't think that happened for two or three or four years. It would have been nice to have had a controller in our office, but we had good support from Mbabane.

Q: Okay, from Swaziland, that's right, they provided some of your support services. Did they also provide a contracting officer and a controller?

STICKEL: Yes, and EXO and legal.

Q: Wow. So, you got a lot of support.

STICKEL: I remember Mike Trott was involved in the program pretty early on, and Ed Spriggs from Mbabane.

Q: Okay. So, that was, yes. Because you- man, there weren't more than five, six, seven direct hires, right?

STICKEL: Right. Seven was a full complement during that time period.

Q: No wonder you were working 15 and 16-hour days.

STICKEL: Well, actually there were seven more PSCs. Well, there were PSCs, there were four to five PSCs and then there were seven and eventually many more FSNs.

Q: Do you recall how broadly spread geographically the program was? Was it fairly broadly spread around the country or were you confined more to the Johannesburg area?

STICKEL: Well, certainly in the beginning we had more connections and contacts in the Johannesburg area. And it also made sense because a lot of the national level programs were operating out of Johannesburg. But we tried really hard to extend the outreach of the program and establish more geographic balance in the portfolio.

But there were other problems. Every area had its own political landscape and the Eastern Cape, for example, was very much more anti-U.S. than the Johannesburg/Pretoria area, and parts of Transvaal. So, we were slow in getting started in that part of the country. It took us a long time, many months of conversations before we established much of a presence there. In Cape Town we were able to get a foothold a little earlier, mostly through the legal assistance and human rights portfolios. There were some very good political lawyers down there -- representing unions, farm workers, activists -- and they evolved over time into some of our most effective grantees. And there was a multiplier effect -- once we established *bona fides* with one well-regarded group in an area then the word would get out and we would have more groups willing to talk with us.

Q: And did it also get complicated when you moved further the other direction towards Durban and Buthelezi and did you get caught up in the domestic politics between- I can't remember-

STICKEL: Inkatha.

Q: Inkatha and ANC?

STICKEL: Yes. Although, while I was there that had not yet become so politicized. It was to be much more serious a problem later on before the election. But yes, it was very complicated. Everything was complicated. And we had complications in Johannesburg because there was the Black Consciousness movement, which was distinct from the UDF (United Democratic Front), and that was another measure of balance we needed to watch. The UDF was the in-country partner to the ANC's leadership-in-exile, and they were strongly in support of an non-racial agenda. But the BC (Black Consciousness) Movement was more interested in promoting black leadership and so, at the beginning, they were more inclined to accept our assistance because they saw the value of resources to meet their objectives. The UDF was, however, more reluctant because of the ANC's

position on U.S. foreign policy in Angola and Namibia, and they came onboard a little later once we had demonstrated convincingly that we supported their ultimate objectives.

Q: Okay. So, you were balancing all kinds of politics, between the government of South Africa and the various groups and then within the various groups the political background.

STICKEL: Right.

Q: And U.S. politics as well.

STICKEL: Right. And the Embassy.

Q: And the Embassy.

STICKEL: And then Washington. And so, it was-

Q: I'm surprised that you didn't work 16 to 20 hours a day.

STICKEL: We had to be sensitive and sensitized. As you know, in the end, a lot of our work in any country is building relationships and that's what we were doing. And we didn't have to make it up -- the CAAA had laid out our objectives for us and it was really about conveying that message and reaching out, and allowing time for people to understand and trust us.

Q: Yes, right. Well, I know you guys were very strong. I also still feel guilty about trying to get you all to use a U.S. intermediary to help manage the multitude of small grants.

STICKEL: Right.

Q: Fortunately, you all helped me understand why that was a bad idea and you all prevailed so I didn't mess up the whole program. I'm sure there were others in Washington who equally gave equally ill-advised advice.

STICKEL: Well, one thing I wanted to mention in this context was that there wasn't a lot of support in AID for this program. Do you remember that? There was resistance because there was a sense that South Africa was a rich country, and that the program was taking scarce AID resources away from other countries that needed them more. So, we sometimes felt we didn't have support from HQ, which was often a little uncomfortable. Sometimes it was hard even to get AID officers to look at our program and to bid on positions in the early days because there was a lot of resistance to this program being carried out at all.

Q: Because when they did the \$40 million there wasn't any additional money; they had to reallocate money within the Africa Bureau.

STICKEL: You know, I don't know the answer to that but that must be. But there was also a very short-staffed mission, and there was a sense that we were taking away resources of various sorts and putting it into this program. And I think it took awhile for the rest of the AID community to see it as a valid and important part of the AID portfolio and what could be accomplished.

Q: Yes. I remember you and Peter talking about one very famous legal assistance activity; there were three defendants -

STICKEL: The Delmas Treason Trial.

Q: Yes, right. And that was where USAID provided the defense attorneys? Because I think that would be an interesting one to just lay out.

STICKEL: I don't remember the details. One of the features that you reminded me of the other day is that everything in the human rights and legal assistance portfolio had to be signed off on by the ambassador. So, the Embassy had a very, very important role in managing that portfolio, at least keeping an eye on things. So, I can only imagine there was a lot of conversation about whether this was something the U.S. Government wanted to do but I do know that the ambassador sat in on that trial and sat in on other important trials and established that the U.S. Government had an interest in how these trials were being conducted. So, yes, that was very important, and I think it helped crack open the resistance of some of the activists to our program. It was in the early days so it helped illustrate our seriousness and the flexibility of our resources.

Q: And this was providing legal assistance to defense counsel, basically?

STICKEL: That's right.

Q: It's interesting the ambassador sat in on a trial. So, he was no longer, I mean, he began to be a representative of the CAAA as opposed to a representative of the government.

STICKEL: He was a man of principle and immense integrity, and was committed to keeping an active dialogue with all parties throughout his time in South Africa. When he left in early 1989, he briefed the AID staff and shared with us that the most highly regarded among South African black leaders had commented to him how impressed they were with how the AID program was launched. And he was very proud of that; he worked very hard to help us make that a reality. And I know he had his own battles, I'm sure, back in Washington. He was a friend of the program, a very important actor.

Q: Yes.

STICKEL: One of many that made it work out so well.

Q: If you sort of retrospectively went back, was there one program that you were particularly proud of or that you might have paid more attention to than others?

STICKEL: Not really. I think the most engaging thing for me was, more broadly, the challenge to do this political work with an eye to creating things that were going to last, that were going to, as Tim would say, stand the test of time. And the debate was always whether it was more important to do work with people who were going to be important leaders in the future or was it important to build the institutions or the community groups that they were working with. And ideally, we found organizations that had both. The fact is, we weren't able to do economic development, and the program evaluation that was done of the program understood that in how they mapped out their own evaluation methodology. And it's something that I think is too bad but I'm not sure that we could have done any better on that front. There were so few points of leverage to work from. The legislative framework for the program gave us no room to work with the government at all; we could not work in the homelands because they were run by the South African government. We even had big debates about whether we should provide humanitarian assistance in the homelands. So, we were bound on so many sides that it was hard to do the kind of economic development work that you normally do in a setting like that. So, I think it's fair to wonder if we might have done more to advance economic development.

Q: Because there were some programs on black entrepreneurship development and wasn't there a bank or something that I think you all might have been at some point in time working with?

STICKEL: There was a microcredit operation and I think there might have been a bank that maybe came a little bit later.

Q: Right. Did you-

STICKEL: I think that the education portfolio was very exciting. I think there was a lot of curriculum development work going on. We did some really interesting pre-school work. This was an area where there was very strong grass-roots support in the townships -- to help the kids get some preparation for school.

Q: Do you recall who was responsible for education in the townships -- from the South African side? Was there a public-school system?

STICKEL: We weren't allowed to-

Q: To work with the government -- right. So, we were working with community organizations that were doing supplemental work or after school programs or other things. Was this the period when some kids were pulled out of school too?

STICKEL: The schools were all segregated by color and were dreadful. More important, there had come to be a highly political cast to all public schooling. When the government mandated education in Afrikaans, that set off the famous Soweto riots of '76 and

poisoned the well. And there continued to be protests. So, there had been, in effect, no education going on for the previous decade and few prospects for that to change.

Q: Right, so you all were supporting private, more informal educational mechanisms. Okay; that makes good sense. So, you were in South Africa for three years?

STICKEL: Almost three years. We left South Africa in December of '89 and Mandela was released in February of '90. And when I look back and think about how you would evaluate the program, one of the things that I think is very important to consider is how well prepared AID was in '94 to help all of the parties involved get to that moment. And I wasn't following it at the time, but I did read that we were asked to fund support for voting registration processes and facilitating a lot of the preparation for a smooth election and transition. That would not have happened had we not established a reputation by then for being on the side of what all the key actors and their supporters wanted. And the funding levels just shot up between the time I left and 1994. Staffing went up by a factor of seven and funding quadrupled, and the USAID/South Africa staff were dealing with over \$100 million within a pretty short period. So, I think a lot of the work that we did, painstakingly meeting people and learning about how things worked and what to stay away from and how to present our AID requirements in that setting were very useful to folks who followed.

Q: Right. Was Tim Bork there the entire time you were or did Tim leave? I'm trying to remember; Dennis Barrett came in but was that before?

STICKEL: Yes. Tim left in the fall of '88 and Dennis came in shortly afterward. And shortly after that, in early 1989, the new ambassador, Ambassador Swing, arrived.

Q: Okay, okay. Well, I think you've put it very well that evaluate the success of what you all did by what the U.S. was in a position to be able to do when it really counted in '94.

When you left did you have any inkling that Mandela would be released? Or, did that come as a complete surprise then?

STICKEL: No, it didn't come as a surprise, but we were not privy to the negotiations. The ambassador may have been, of course.

Q: Right. Obviously the South African government, particularly early on, was not happy to have you all doing what you were doing. Was there ever any extraordinary pressure on you all? Did you ever feel any sense of intimidation or any issues from the South African government?

STICKEL: No, not intimidation although Tim was pretty cautious and advised us to be cautious too. And the general assumption was that we should not use the phone too freely, that we should assume that we were being wiretapped and even followed in some instances. And so, we were very, very careful. And we were careful also in sharing the

names of our grantees because in the early days there was some concern about what might happen to them. So, we had very strict rules with the Embassy that we would be willing to share the names, but they were not to share them with anyone else. So, they were treated with great care and confidentiality in the beginning.

Q: That was probably also true with the bursaries, as well, right? The individuals were not identified.

STICKEL: Yes. Early on, there was a lot of infighting about whether to take U.S. money and people's reputations were at stake, before things started to ease up. But it was important to people's lives and reputations to navigate their dealings with us well and to be careful.

Q: Yes. Well, many of us envy the fact that you were there and the success that you had; I hope you still feel very proud about what you all had done.

STICKEL: Well, it was a great privilege. We met some wonderful people, really amazing people. It was very special.

Q: Okay. If at any point you want to go back to South Africa we can, but perhaps we should move on for now. When it came time to leave South Africa, were you given some interesting options?

USAID/W – Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) 1990 - 1992

STICKEL: I went back to Washington and I had lined up a position in CDIE. I can't remember how it happened but basically it was, I think, just a personal communication with Janet Ballantyne. I had been in touch with Janet on and off and at one point when she learned I was due back to Washington she asked if I would be interested in coming in as her deputy. And I jumped at the chance.

Q: And that is the Center for Development Information and Evaluation in Washington, D.C.

STICKEL: Right. At the time it was an institution and you didn't have to spell out the name but now you do; it's part of history. It was a big operation at the time and Janet had mobilized a lot of interest in the evaluation function. She was working hard to reinvigorate the impact evaluation series that her predecessor, Haven North, had made a priority at an earlier stage. But shortly after I arrived she was pulled out and I don't remember where she went but she left me acting with barely a month or two of experience. So it was a big jump and a lot of responsibility all of a sudden. Then it soon became an even bigger job when CDIE became the focus of a new policy initiative from the Administrator. Do you remember John Blackton? He was a deputy administrator under Administrator Roskens.

Q: Yes, I was in Malawi, but I knew John.

STICKEL: I remember this so clearly. He called me into his office one day, I think a Thursday or Friday, and he said the Administrator wants to do something big in evaluation and I want you people to think about what makes sense and have a plan ready for me to review on Monday (or something close to that). And this is what turned into the Administrator's Evaluation Initiative, which was a big deal. This must have been late '90 or early '91. It was one of Administrator Roskens' signature initiatives. And so Annette Binnendijk and I scurried about and put together a program of initiatives that became a major, and very well-funded, program.

Q: Was it to do impact evaluations, sectoral evaluations, multi-country evaluations; what was the initiative?

STICKEL: It was a variety of things. And one of the important features was that it was a program which balanced project-level evaluations with continuous performance monitoring, and we proposed investing in both. At that time there was in place an innovative program called the PRISM project, under contract to MSI.

Q: Ah, yes, I remember that.

STICKEL: PRISM was a conceptual and operational forerunner of Managing for Results. It became the methodological and programmatic foundation for the shift into the Managing for Results work.

Q: Okay, so this was more of a monitoring function of how a program was being implemented and whether you were achieving targets and expected outputs and results?

STICKEL: Right. The focus was on how to define and measure program progress not just at the end of the project but all the way through. That was one focus of the initiative. The other focus was to strengthen the evaluation work itself, by developing new methodological approaches, establishing standards to ensure analytical rigor, increasing staff, increasing funding for mission evaluations -- investing in evaluation across the board.

Q: And I remember the field missions had to do- as part of their budget submission - an evaluation plan of what they were going to be evaluating over the next year.

STICKEL: Yes, the initiative sought to reinvigorate the role of evaluation throughout the program cycle, from informing budget allocations to sharing evaluation findings to improve future project designs. We were also looking at how to get these findings into circulation so more people learned about them. There were some initial efforts to incorporate that into the annual budget programming process, and these were soon overtaken by the Government Performance Results and Accountability Act (GPRA) of 1993. We didn't know GPRA was coming, although in hindsight I wonder if perhaps John Blackton may have, but the work we did under the Evaluation Initiative

unquestionably helped position the agency to respond to the new GPRA requirements. It was very hard to meet those requirements for an agency like ours, but the measurement piece was important. A lot of smart people were thinking about it. And Larry Cooley and his staff at MSI, along with Gerry Britan in CDIE, were providing leadership to the PRISM project so we had great minds working on these questions.

Q: Do you recall specifically the approaches taken by the Africa Bureau under the Development Fund for Africa as well? I'm just curious because I know Jerry Wolgin and Emmy Simmons and others had done a lot on monitoring and reporting on performance. Were you familiar with that at all?

STICKEL: Yes, absolutely. You're reminding me that we depended heavily on that work. We used Africa Bureau/DP as a spearhead, a model for what the monitoring and reporting system might look like, and an illustration of what was possible and how it might be used.

Q: For the agency thinking.

STICKEL: For the Evaluation Initiative as a whole, we relied a lot on the AF/DP team. They were definitely the thought leaders for the Agency on this front and we fed off a lot of the thinking they had already done. We used the Evaluation Initiative and the funding that came with it to support and advance that work. As a corollary to this, I also remember that Marge Bonner and others had concerns about the implications of some of this measurement work and I think about this part of the conversation even now. Marge was concerned about the capacity of AID as an organization to do this kind of monitoring -- whether it had the staffing and the skills to do it well -- and she was also concerned about what it would do to technical assistance programs and institution-building programs, which, of course are very difficult to measure. And I'm not sure she wasn't right about the risks of results measurement in the development business. I think there's an element of organizational overperformance, too, you know -- how the pendulum always swings too far and a lot of the nuances get lost in the implementation of many of the ideas that we were interested in. And the aid industry itself still hasn't come up with any clear consensus on an approach for measuring institutional change.

Q: Right. It's interesting; I mean, one of the challenges that I'm sure you faced too is that each of the regional bureaus developed their own culture and approach to all of this. I know the Latin American bureau and Dwight Ink had had some sort of system and the Africa Bureau had its, so for you at the center trying to come up with something agency-wide would be very challenging because we all know the regional bureaus can be obstinate.

STICKEL: Well, it was a mixed review. I do think there was a great relief that the agency was putting resources into evaluation but there was also a certain degree of resistance that it be centralized all in CDIE. The office itself had been understaffed for a long time and we didn't have a strong representation of Foreign Service staff, and the field experience that comes with that, among CDIE staff, so it was a tough sell Agency-wide. But there

was great interest and excitement about the revitalizing the role of evaluation in the Agency.

Q: Right, right. Okay. So, did someone else come in ultimately as the new director?

STICKEL: John Erickson. And he came with great credibility and a lot of field experience. He helped make it a much smoother process once he was in.

Q: Right. Okay. Is there anything sort of else specific on this CDIE experience that you'd like to mention? You were there for two years and so it was 1990 to 1992. In 1993, a new administration had come in and Brian Atwood was the administrator and he asked Terry Brown to come head up his PPC (Policy, Planning, and Coordination Bureau), right?

STICKEL: That's right. On the personal side I needed to go to part-time because I had two young children at home at that time and so I chose to go part-time for a couple of years.

Q: Is that one of the things that prompted you to leave CDIE?

STICKEL: Yes, right.

USAID/W – Policy, Planning, and Coordination Bureau (PPC) 1993 – 1995

Q: Okay. And then you were discussing with the agency what kind of a position could you go into as part-time.

STICKEL: Right. And I think that's when I did the handbooks. I think Larry Saiers helped me out by offering me this opportunity to work part-time on the handbooks with Catherine Balsis and Christina Shoux and so we became the-

Q: Triumvirate.

STICKEL: Right, the three crazy Horsewomen of the Apocalypse! People were not interested in doing this work, but I needed to dial back my work hours and it turned out to be a very interesting assignment. The task was to throw out the handbooks and replace them with something far simpler. They had become just too burdensome and hard to read, and the theory was that when they were thrown out we would cull down the regulations that we had to a bare minimum.

Q: Was this in conjunction with the re-engineering effort that was taking place or was this happening before?

STICKEL: It may have been inspired by that. All I remember was that there was a period when there was a lot of turmoil. There was re-engineering and a quality council -- a lot going on at the same time. And I think it could have been associated with that. What I remember was that Larry Saiers had taken on the project and was very keen to do it and

we three were all former project officers and we were asked to be in charge. We collected a lot of other people who were seconded from their full-time positions to help us out. Joe Lombardo worked on it, Tony Pryor put a lot of work into it, so some really good, thoughtful people were involved.

Q: And which functional areas were you redrafting?

STICKEL: We were responsible for Handbook 3 on Project Design. So, it was what became ADS 100, 200 and 300. 100 and 200, maybe. 300 too, I think. What we worked on mostly was strategic planning and budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and project design.

Q: Okay, so those three pieces. Was this all done in the context that we no longer had projects, we have results frameworks?

STICKEL: Yes. And that happened, I think, midway through.

Q: Okay. And you probably started on this and then the re-engineering started.

STICKEL: It could have been like that because the re-engineering, it went on for a while and I don't think they arrived at- you know, all of this conversation ended up in a place that we then had to reflect in the handbooks. And my involvement was mostly on the strategic planning and evaluation sides. I never really understood what results packages were, so I was very glad Joe Lombardo took that one on. But I know we worked very hard on the strategic planning and socialized it well. I mean, we had a lot of good people from all the bureaus working on it and it hadn't changed all that much when it was picked back up and reinvigorated by the PPL Bureau. I don't think the basic principles have changed too much.

Q: Right, right. And I know they keep sort of fine tuning it all but that was an expert on processes stuff.

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: So, you did that for a couple of years then, all sort of out of PPC or were you-

STICKEL: It was in PPC.

Q: Yes, where Larry was the DAA, deputy assistant administrator.

STICKEL: Right. And then after that I went and worked with Terry as his chief of staff, still part-time. What I did for Terry was really help socialize the Managing for Results initiative in the Agency and help facilitate an Agency-wide process for working out the rules of the road on how the bureaus were going to implement it to meet the GPRA requirements, including how it was going to factor into budget allocations. That was a

very contentious subject, as you can imagine. And I don't recall that the ADS (Automated Directives System) really incorporated this aspect of Managing for Results.

Q: I think it's easy to forget that there were multiple streams of work. I certainly had forgotten all about it, but there were multiple sources for those kinds of changes that were taking place.

STICKEL: That's right. We had GPRA. We had the Reinventing Government initiative. And there was Customer Focus. All inspired by President Clinton's 1992 campaign promise to streamline and modernize government.

Q: Okay. And so, there were changing processes and changing terminology and language; all of that was taking place in that period from 1993 to 1995, and you were embroiled in that in various ways.

STICKEL: That's right. And a lot of the work we had done in CDIE on building out PRISM helped us respond to these new standards for program measurement and performance assessment and the challenge was to integrate these ideas and new procedures across the Agency. And I remember many difficult meetings trying to explain concepts. It was imposing a lot of new ideas and processes in a time period when there were too many new ideas all at once.

Q: A lot of change.

STICKEL: A lot of change and a lot of work for people and it was unfamiliar, and it was coming from the center. Anyway, it was a hard go.

Q: It wasn't the most fun position to get.

STICKEL: Well, it taught me a lot about how to manage change and how not to manage change. It was another growth experience....

Q: So, you were doing that for a couple of years and then did you come back to be working full-time? I know people were talking to you about various overseas assignments starting in 1995 and you were looking at a number of options. Is that when you came back to be working full-time?

STICKEL: Yes. I went back full-time when I went overseas again.

Q: Okay, right.

STICKEL: I was working in George Hill's Program Coordination shop in PPC for a while before going out to Botswana.

USAID Regional Center for Southern Africa – Deputy Director 1995 – 1998

Q: Okay, okay. And for context, Botswana had been selected as a closeout bilateral mission when 20 some missions were closed in that 1993-1995 period. At the same time we were ramping up the South Africa program in 1994 after the election of Mandela. The Administrator, Brian Atwood, proposed a new Initiative for Southern Africa to show that we were not just interested in South Africa but I the broader region. He made the decision to move the Southern Africa regional program from Zimbabwe, where they had been housed for a number of years, to Botswana. And so, you were going into creation of a new regional office.

STICKEL: That's right.

Q: And you went out as the deputy director, is that correct?

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: And Valerie Dickson-Horton was the director? Had she been out there already or did you both arrive more or less at the same time?

STICKEL: I think she was there.

Q: Because she had been in Swaziland as Director of the bilateral mission.

STICKEL: Right. I think she was there. She was very eager for me to get out there and I know I went out a couple of months ahead of my family. So, we got a running start.

Q: Oh, this again is another case where a job had to be found for Peter.

STICKEL: That's true. And this was a little harder. But there was a DG (Democracy and Governance) office in the regional program because there was going to be a DG portfolio, so that was the one that made sense to match up with Peter. And this time it was a little harder and I can't remember why. This time it was set up as a secondment and it was more involved and took even longer. But again, ultimately it worked out.

Q: Yes, right. But again, AID figured out a way to take him from the State Department. Were there ever discussions with the State Department about creating a political office job or something that Peter could go into? I assume there were but-

STICKEL: Not that I remember.

Q: So, anyway, you went out a few months before the family but again, creating something brand new.

STICKEL: Absolutely, from the ground up. Howard Handler had been director for Botswana and he had the difficult task of closing out the Botswana bilateral program.

Q: Right. Was he still there closing- he was still resident. That must have been a nightmare.

STICKEL: I couldn't move into a residence because Howard was still living there. But yes, it was a tough time. I had gone out in the summer and then Peter came a couple months later, and that was soon followed in November with a shutdown of the US Government for 22 days. And so, it felt all a bit chaotic. Here we were trying to gear up a brand-new mission in the context of a set of newly re-engineered processes. And people were already kind of scratching their heads about this new regional mission: Are we doing regional services? Or is it a regional program? What does a regional program look like in Southern Africa? How will we do that, who will we obligate funds with? These were all difficult questions and I don't think we ever really showed what could be done. I think there were just so many obstacles along the way. Some of them were intrinsic to the idea, some of them were just happenstance and timing. But the core struggle was to partner with the regional organizations which turned out to be really hard because these regional organizations were so under-resourced and short of capacity and legitimacy themselves.

Q: Right. Because the old regional program had been tied to the Southern African Development Community -much of that was focused on transport-

STICKEL: Yes, and infrastructure.

Q: -and infrastructure and to help countries find alternate transport routes so they wouldn't have to go through South Africa which now with the new South Africa didn't make any sense, right, so there was kind of a residual portfolio that was somewhat nonsensical.

STICKEL: Right. And there wasn't the money for those kind of programs, and AID wasn't doing that kind of thing anymore. I think there is a legitimate role for regional programs to partner with an organization like SADC. There was also COMESA, a common market for East and Southern African states, that we did some work with; there was some overlap between them, and hence some competition between them that made things even more complex. But SADC itself was, like most regional organizations, very slow-moving. The programs didn't require money as much as they required staff and ideas that had buy-in from all the partners. And so, the essential limitation was that it was hard to construct programs that had enough momentum and buy-in and support from our partners.

But we did some good things in natural resource management. We were able to support some exciting programs in Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana that were trying out different approaches to community-based natural resource management, so there was a lot to learn. We built mechanisms for a free and continual flow of information among the

implementing partners to ensure lessons were learned and widely shared. And there were examples in other arenas too - telecommunications policy, human rights advocacy. So, a lot of good things happened but it was a struggle to build that mission and it didn't help that we were paralyzed that first year from the shortage of resources and then the government shutdown.

Q: Right, yes. I think the shutdown happened and then there was snowstorm immediately afterwards. But it was several weeks of everything on hold. And yet you were simultaneously also making Botswana a support center – and moving some of those functions from other missions to Botswana for the RCSA. That was also a huge task..

STICKEL: That's right. And travel was not easy from Gaborone. There was a lot of head scratching about that -- like, why didn't they set this up in Johannesburg? The travel requirements for the regional service staff made it hard to staff up. I remember having a very hard time recruiting badly needed contracting and controller staff.

Q: Right, because there'd be a lot of travel and difficult travel because you'd always have to go down to Johannesburg regardless of where you were going, yes.

STICKEL: I think one of the outstanding legacies of that program was building up a staff of really terrific professional FSNs from the region. And that was itself a battle because we were essentially creating a new personnel category, a hybrid for which the existing personnel rules did not fit well since these folks were neither US nor Botswana citizens. They were, typically, Third Country Nationals, a category which was relatively unfamiliar and for which there were few applicable precedents. Recruiting TCNs at the professional level required creatively interpreting some of the regs while also establishing a common set of standards across the mission. I don't have a clear memory of the details but I think we had to create a whole new pay scale to cover the upper end of the technical and professional pay-grades.

Q: Right. Do you recall whether there were tensions between them and the Botswanan FSNs? Because they were probably at a higher pay scale?

STICKEL: Probably right. Most of the secretarial staff, I'm sure, were on the FSN pay scale. Yes, I'm sure that was a problem. But we did succeed in attracting some amazing professionals who got some great experience working in the mission. One who stands out in my memory was a first-rate transport economist from Zambia, who single-handedly carried our portfolio in customs reform, trying to facilitate movement of goods across borders.

Q: Yes, I think some of your early work on trade ended up much later becoming a main part of the Southern Africa program, set some things in motion that ultimately got built up.

I vaguely recall that one of the reasons the program was put in Botswana was because the Botswana government wanted to make some offers to help share some of the costs of either with the building or doing something; do you recall that?

STICKEL: I don't recall in detail, but I do know that the government was very supportive of the mission being there. And I recall we moved into a very nice office building. It may have been more than we wanted to pay in terms of rent, but office space was very scarce. We had looked at a number of properties but nothing we found would work for us. So, this one property became available and I do remember Valerie agonizing over it because it was expensive, and I think in the end, if I'm not mistaken, the Botswana government gave us a break on the rent. It worked out very well and it wouldn't have happened without the help of the government.

Q: And I know we had very close relationships with the government of Botswana.

STICKEL: Yes. President Mogae was a real supporter in all ways. I think he was a good spokesperson for us and when we needed something to happen he would often go to bat for us. Valerie and he had a very good relationship.

Q: Did you have any involvement with the Southern African Enterprise Fund?

STICKEL: Not directly, no.

Q: I think Valerie may have handled much of that; I was just curious because it was an interesting set of issues.

STICKEL: We had some interesting issues emerge around an endowment in Swaziland.

Q: I think that didn't turn out so well.

STICKEL: No, it didn't. It was a good lesson in why we don't do endowments.

Q: Right. Is there anything in particular that you'd like to highlight on the couple of years there? You were there three years or close to three years?

STICKEL: Not really. It was just sad that it never really took because, on paper, there's such a strong case to be made for better integration in that region. Maybe it was too early for that to happen, but it was also made harder given AID's bureaucratic culture and regs that are all built around bilateral programming. I don't recall -- did the mission close in the end?

Q: Well, they ended up moving the regional program to the extent there is one to South Africa ultimately, at least the support services, I know. There may have been a trade hub in Gaborone.

STICKEL: Well, I guess another factor is just the way we think about development-- we think about it on a national basis. When you're asked to think outside of that paradigm it's very challenging for all sorts of AID staff, I mean, not just project people but everybody has trouble thinking about operating on a regional level. And I think there's probably a lesson there. I don't know that it is ever an easy fit.

Q: And some of that is conceptual but some of it is also because resources- you end up with resource competition.

STICKEL: Right, yes.

Q: Okay. So, '98 comes and did you come back to Washington?

STICKEL: No, I retired.

Post-USAID Direct-Hire Consulting

Q: You came back to Washington and retired and left AID as a direct hire employee.

STICKEL: And at first I just basically took time off. I think I was exhausted. And then, I guess maybe two or three years in, after the family had gotten settled, I got restless again and I think I contacted one of my colleagues, one of the MSI employees whom I had loved working with, and he passed word onto Larry Cooley. As it happened, they were looking for somebody to work on the contract to support the Global Development Alliance (GDA) program, which provided staff support for Holly Wise who was in charge of leading the GDA initiative. So I accepted a position on the GDA contract team maybe two or three years after I left AID.

Q: Okay. Doing what --you were helping put together the public-private partnerships?

STICKEL: The contract was mostly for training and providing other kind of support to mission staff who were identifying and putting together partnerships.

Q: Well, that took you to Moscow, as I recall.

STICKEL: Right. We did a lot of curriculum development and trainings. There was some TDY work but not a lot. And we produced a training manual. Procurement was a sticky wicket for public-private partnerships: what kind of contracts and what kind of grants did we want to use. So, there was, again, some work in reforming some of the ways we did business to make this new approach possible.

Q: Right. But you were able to do it in a way that eliminated the demand for competition.

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: So, that you could enter into a public-private partnership without having to compete it.

STICKEL: Yes. I forget what it's called but it is essentially a public call in the recipient country for proposals that would be reviewed according to specified criteria. One or more proposals would be grant-funded. That approach was used a lot but I've forgotten what it's called.

Q: Where you could do multiple awards; that was what you could advertise for- get any ideas from people and so you could do multiple, you could do no awards, one award, six awards, whatever.

STICKEL: That's right. That's what we did.

Q: Right. So, that was important stuff. Were AID folks receptive to the ideas of public-private partnerships? Did you find that it was an innovation that people thought was positive?

STICKEL: They were very skeptical, and I think rightly so. I think there was concern that staff didn't have the experience to assess the contractual nature of what the private partnership was going to be bringing and how to make sure that the private partner was actually bringing something of value. There was, as always with an initiative like this, concern that they were being asked to do things that were not developmentally sound, that were being done for political reasons, to support the administrator's initiative, and I think it took a lot of conversations in these trainings to identify and sketch out how valuable private participation might be, in what context, how to think about a private partner and how to think about what value they bring. And it was all new; I mean, this was all very new. And by that time AID wasn't doing a lot of projects in the sectors where private partnerships might be more logical, like infrastructure development. So, I would say it was a hard sell. And to this day there are, I think, some partnerships that probably shouldn't have been funded that have been shown to be a little less developmentally beneficial than we might have thought. It's a tricky business.

Q: Yes. Okay. So, you were doing- at MSI you also did some other work with MSI in other sort of- you'd really been doing a variety of different kinds of consulting work with different groups and some independently, some through MSI, some through other consulting firms over the last 10 years.

STICKEL: Yes. And in addition to the consulting work, I came back to work with Cindy Clapp-Wincek in 2011 after she had been named Director of Evaluation in the new PPL Bureau established under Administrator Rajiv Shah. Cindy was succeeding Ruth Levine and she asked if I would come and help them think through how to develop an approach to evaluating Agency efforts to channel more USAID funding to host governments and local organizations, an initiative that was originally called Implementing Procurement Reform (IPR), but which eventually became known as Local Solutions. She wanted some help in conceptualizing a framework for how would we monitor the effectiveness of this

initiative, of this shift to increasing use of local governments and local organizations in carrying out USAID programs.

Q: Something beyond that- whatever that percentage was that was laid about by the administrator?

STICKEL: Right. The initiative drew on principles formulated in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and further articulated in the later Accra and Busan agreements, to improve the quality and effectiveness of donor assistance. Administrator Shah wanted in particular to reduce USAID's dependence on external consultants and increase the share of USAID funds that were channeled to and through host country governments and local organizations. Initially he had set out very ambitious targets that missions were asked to meet which required a minimum percentage of its new obligations to be directly with the host country government or with local organizations. This was a heavy lift for most missions and there was a lot of pushback. It got the policy off to a very poor start.

What I was asked to do was to design a framework for evaluating the results of shift to direct obligations with local governments or local organizations, which was a huge challenge. It was a challenge not just conceptually, but also operationally, because there was no clear locus of responsibility in the Agency for implementing these reforms, and the policy had not been clearly defined. PPL was just newly back on its feet and there were no staff assigned to this project. Nevertheless, it was very exciting and important, and I have always been deeply committed to using local institutions for project implementation. Moreover, that was how AID carried out all of its projects when I began working as a project officer, and so I was familiar with all of the mechanisms and procedures that we had used to operate in this way. There were still gaps, however, in particular, in knowing how to evaluate the impact of capacity- and institution-building projects, as I mentioned earlier. Even after looking closely into what the other donors, who had never really left the field of capacity- and institution-building, had been doing, I was quite surprised to learn that there was still no consensus on how to measure and document institutional change and capacity development.

Q: How do you show you've made progress.

STICKEL: How to show that you have created and institutionalized something -- a policy-making process, say -- or built capacity to deliver basic health care to a target population. Much of the work I did, and related work by others in the same timeframe, ultimately came together in a policy paper titled Local Solutions, which mapped out the theory of change that justified the use of local organizations, and which became the more detailed framework for the Agency's new policy. That paper mapped out why using local solutions had developmental benefits, and the mechanisms for how that happened, which then provided the analytical frame for evaluating whether those benefits were in fact being achieved.

Q: Okay. So, that whole effort during the time Raj Shah was administrator on local solutions, local systems development and all of that; you were helping to define the parameters around that.

STICKEL: More so identifying the key evaluation research questions, and the options available for measuring organizational change. There had been some earlier work done to develop an organizational capacity assessment and a protocol for using it, although there were some folks who wanted something different. But when I began the work there remained many open questions about the policy so I also helped to frame some of the questions that the agency needed to answer for itself.

Q: Okay. And I know another big- sort of related to this was a big piece of work that you did in Liberia which was something that was quite significant. And controversial, I think. And maybe you can fill me in on some of the subsequent controversy.

STICKEL: While I was working with Cindy Clapp-Wincek in PPL, there was considerable debate over how USAID could work with host governments and still work within the Agency's limited tolerance for fiduciary and programmatic risk. One of the mechanisms that was being developed was the FARA (Fixed Amount Reimbursement Agreement) that was thought to be an option in situations where governments didn't have much capacity or where corruption was a concern.

Q: Maybe you could explain how- just in- well, in the old sense that was- let's say someone was building a road. There was a certain amount that the cost per kilometer would be and you gave a fixed amount reimbursement for every kilometer as it was built. So, it was designed initially for infrastructure.

STICKEL: That's right, yes.

Q: So, it's something where you could easily cost out what the estimated cost was. And you all were creatively thinking about- or someone else had already started thinking about using this mechanism for policy-based programming.

STICKEL: Right. The Health FARA was in place in Liberia and when the new mission director, Pat Rader, arrived she wanted someone to take a look to see how it was going. It was later on that other questions emerged about whether it was an appropriate use of the mechanism. We were a small team of three from Washington, including Sarah Sheening of the Global Health Bureau, an IDI, and myself. I was included because of the work we had been doing on how to work with governments. So, it was a very small team, and we worked very closely with the mission. They put at our disposal their two health officers, the senior officer, Randolph Augustin, who had designed the program with the Liberian Ministry of Health (MOH), and an FSN who managed the project on a daily basis and knew the project inside out and had close working relationships with her MOH counterparts. And we did what I think you might call an implementation assessment of the program, which ultimately raised a lot of questions in Washington about whether this was an appropriate use of a FARA. It was a very popular mechanism in Liberia because it

allowed USAID to support the government's efforts to take greater responsibility for directing and overseeing delivery of basic health services in the country. Basic health services in Liberia were being delivered by international NGOs, an approach that had been put together on an emergency basis at the end of the civil war. The government now was in a position to be able to resume responsibility for directing that work and wanted also to establish their own credibility as a newly elected democratic government, to show that they were committed to providing healthcare, that this was a government program. And so, the mission was challenged to figure out a way to help them do this. The government was understaffed, there were allegations of corruption, there had been patterns of corruption in the past, and meeting the audit readiness standards required to allow USAID funds to be disbursed to the government was going to be a stretch.

So, the mission's health officer undertook to explore the FARA approach. As I understand it, Randolph had had some experience with this approach during an earlier assignment in Afghanistan, and thought it may have value in the situation he was encountering in Liberia. So he began consulting with folks in Washington and was encouraged to float the idea with the Agency CFO at a conference in South Africa. When he did, he got the go ahead to try it out, and proceeded to design it with great care and extensive consultation. The idea was to design performance targets to be met on a quarterly basis that would constitute the conditions for disbursement of USAID funds. These targets would be described in terms of the results of work that had to be performed by government staff to deliver healthcare services as required by the program. They costed out each quarterly package of activities which then constituted the amount of funds that could be disbursed for that quarter. Then they defined very specific performance targets that corresponded to those activities -- these constituted the conditions that had to be met to permit those disbursements to be made.

In conducting the assessment we learned that early in program implementation, the government missed one of the quarterly performance targets, which meant that the quarterly disbursement could not be made, and the government basically lost the money. After this experience, performance targets were not missed. As part of our assessment, we interviewed managers at different levels of the Ministry of Health to evaluate what effect the FARA program had on their ability to perform. And every single person we spoke to said the incentive was very powerful. Staff at all levels were motivated to perform in a way they never had before because they understood that this was the government's money, the country's money, at stake, and if they didn't perform they would lose access to these resources. So, it was pretty clear that this was proving to be a very effective way of making an institution perform.

We also had interesting stories from some of the senior managers about the power of the incentives to promote organizational learning. These senior managers made it a priority to closely analyze the work flow because they had compelling reason to make their operations as efficient as possible. So, they told stories about specific instances where they and their staff re-engineered work processes that made everybody work more efficiently in order to meet the performance requirements. Unfortunately it was too early at that point to determine what impact the program was having on health outcomes, but it

was very clearly an effective way of reinvigorating a sense of mission and purpose and re-engineering processes inside the government to improve service delivery. We were pretty convinced, but I think in the end there are still questions in Washington about whether that's a legitimate use of that mechanism.

Q: Yes, right. I know when I looked at it at one point part of it is I see it as- I'm a great proponent of non-project assistance and I actually see this as quite similar to that, but no one likes the term non-project assistance or program assistance and the Hill doesn't- Congress doesn't like it and so this was a very clever way of doing something quite similar with a different name.

STICKEL: And I think it's better way in some settings than program assistance because it is so tightly tied to specific outputs, intermediate bureaucratic work products or service delivery outputs.

Q: Right.

STICKEL: And when you're trying to improve capacity it focuses the mind of the middle managers on processes and it requires the AID designers to really get inside that ministry and understand exactly how it works.

Q: Right, which is, yes, the beauty of any kind of government to government work is really having those discussions about budgets and all of that which when you contract out projects because I think that was the difference of what AID did. It wasn't just contracting out technical assistance anymore; it was contracting out the projects.

STICKEL: Right. And this was an ideal setting to do this because the delivery chain was well established but the personnel were going to be changing so you had the delivery mode fixed and you were only changing who was in charge.

Q: The ownership of it.

STICKEL: The ownership of it. And now, that meant that the Ministry headquarters staff had to master a lot of new skills needed to manage procurement, the timeline; they needed to oversee the monitoring. These were functions that had previously been performed by the NGOs but properly belonged to government, and which the Ministry now had motivation to do so because they were going to be held to account for their performance in a very tangible way.

Q: Yes. And I think you're absolutely right that this- whether one calls it a fixed amount reimbursement type of program or whatever one calls it this is the kind of detail work that needs to be done collaboratively by AID and its counterparts.

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: And designing a program and implementing a program.

STICKEL: And the AID staff did do that. The Ministry staff, they were closeted for days working out exactly what work products were going to go into these performance measures that the disbursements would be tied to and so both sides had to really understand what was going into that. And in the process, they did improve it and they did identify the skills that were needed and made sure they were staffed up to supply those skills.

Q: So, going back to your earlier work in- when you were trying to define results and parameters for evaluating capacity building and institution building programs, in a way you can't come up with generic things, but you can- What this Liberia program illustrates to me is you have to define them for the specific case in which you're working, that's how you define how you evaluate.

STICKEL: That's right. But one conceptual thing you can say generically is that it's not just about capacity, it's about the performance of the organization.

Q: Right.

STICKEL: Typically we have measured capacity building by how many people can pass the skills test after take training. That's only latent capacity which ignores the fact that there are whole systems, processes, norms and incentives in the bigger context that can inhibit the application of those skills. So, it's really about the performance-

Q: The institution doing X, Y and Z.

STICKEL: Right. And it's functional, and needs to be based on the functions that they perform or are expected to perform and that is absolutely on a case-by-case basis. So, it is very hard to identify anything generic, but the point is that you have to focus further down the chain, but you have to design up the chain. You have to really know exactly what the functions are and then build a staff, build a personnel, build the skills, build the systems around it and then understand the incentives that are operating to support or inhibit the actual application of those. And you have to think about what targets are realistic to set in each stage as you move up the chain of this capacity-building process.

Q: So, that means a substantial amount of work in the project design process.

STICKEL: Yes. You can't just say we want you to deliver this outcome. In some countries, yes, you can. But in the countries where we're really trying to build capacity and institutions, and I've been using them interchangeably, I know I shouldn't and I don't mean to, you can't do it that way in all settings.

Q: And where AID is today increasingly working in more fragile countries this is even more important than this kind of ____ which shows how hard the work is.

STICKEL: And how important it is to have an in-country presence, and continuity of an in-country presence.

Q: Right and staying more than a year in the countries.

STICKEL: Yes. Because so much depends on relationships and it takes a long time for organizations to change, as anybody involved in any of the AID reorganizations knows -- actual change is painful, and it takes a long time to see it through to the result.

Q: Right. Well, that's really very important work that you've done on that front and I know it's fed into a lot of guidance that AID has issued in various ways. I know it's constantly being used.

You also- and sort of related to this was your most recent work to look at government to government programming in the health sector. In doing that did you see this Liberia work as being, again, one of the best examples of the kind of government to government work that you did? Or is it-

STICKEL: The issue for the Global Health (GH) folks was that they are held accountable under the terms of their funding to deliver actual health outcomes. And they felt very uneasy shifting their implementation responsibilities to governments because they felt that they didn't have control over the outcomes; they felt they had more control using contracting partners. And you know, it's a fair concern. The work I did for them was to describe the range of vehicles there were for providing funding directly to governments that helped address their concerns with accountability and control over outcomes. But in the end, they felt they just couldn't make that shift.

Q: And much of that being driven by PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief), right, with a very specific target.

STICKEL: Yes. And that was getting in the way of GH programs because GH was trying very hard to work on health systems development and they saw the need to have health systems integrated and so they had come around to understand that it needed to be integrated in a government context, in government-to-government (G2G) assistance and were trying to get their PEPFAR colleagues to join in. Otherwise there would be a separate stream for HIV/AIDS services that would undermine the effort to integrate health services. But we didn't make any headway. They were very interested in the performance-based disbursement mechanisms and there was a lot of interesting potential in what the World Bank has been doing in that regard which combined performance-based disbursements with very detailed, real-time evaluation of short- and medium-term performance indicators that allowed reporting on very short-term turnaround that would be posted online for everybody to see -- very specific milestones, very detailed ways of measuring change -- all of which was pre-negotiated. And outcomes also would be posted on a quarterly basis, even a monthly basis, such as health participation rates, pre-natal visits, hospital deliveries. So you could see very quickly how things were going. The program was very integrated around evaluation, performance assessment and

performance-based disbursements. That seemed very promising and gives you more control. So, they were looking at those kinds of approaches pretty closely, but they didn't resolve it in the time I was working with them.

Q: It's interesting. I mean, you've done probably as much work on the conceptual process side of how one does development of anyone I know. But it's- And trying to make- you referred earlier to the importance of common sense.

STICKEL: Well, it's just there are some interesting mechanisms out there and AID is one of the most creative organizations around. But I think our procurement regulations are still hampering us and I'm a little surprised that we haven't been able to keep up with our colleagues in other donor organizations in exploring some new ways to design and implement projects directly with governments.

Q: Right, yes, yes. Some of the procurement issues, I think, have made it very difficult for AID to be the kind of creative, responsive donor it needs to be.

STICKEL: Well, and the accounting requirements, the auditing standards. I think that zero tolerance for waste, fraud, and abuse, is a tough standard for our business, and we may need to be more nuanced in applying that standard. I do understand that the agency is engaging in a larger conversation about how it should assess the different kinds of risks it faces in its programs, and developing a risk assessment framework, which I think is a very good way of approaching it.

Q: Do you think if -- turn back the clock -- if we were- South Africa was still under an apartheid system and you were going out there now with the USAID that you know today, would you all be able to do what you did?

STICKEL: That's a tough one. We might have because we were worried as much about the South African government and the pressures on the organizations for accountability from their own communities and from the hostile government they were working under. So, maybe we could have. And we did do some things that mimic what could be done, what is being done now and that is we didn't give out a lot of advances -- a lot of our work was done using very tightly prescribed advances for very short periods of time, very specific funding purposes -- and then we were on a reimbursement basis. So, we were pretty cautious, also. We didn't do any program lending, no program assistance; we were pretty conservative. Now, as time went on and we learned that we could trust the systems of the organizations we were working with we did become more flexible.

Q: But early on you- But it's interesting because I think what you all did was say we will take the risk of working with these organizations, we'll manage it very carefully to minimize that risk but I think in today's world you would have had to have done 18 assessments of their accounting systems and stuff before you could even enter into an agreement with them because there's so many- it's so complex now to be able to work- to do a grant with a local organization. In that way it probably would be even more difficult.

STICKEL: Yes.

Q: But you all accepted the risk but managed it very stringently--and I'm not sure you'd have that flexibility today.

STICKEL: Right. Well, that's an important difference and that we could not have done.

Q: They wouldn't have wanted you going in and looking at everything beforehand, a pre-grant assessment.

STICKEL: And they may not have had-

Q: Had as much.

STICKEL: But you know, that's part of capacity building, to provide these organizations the opportunity to learn as they go.

Q: I think that's a very important lesson -- to take risk, to manage that risk -- and I'm not sure that's as easily done today as it used to be.

STICKEL: And it's very staff intensive.

Q: Yes, right.

STICKEL: As you remember. And you need to have those people on the ground.

Q: I don't know whether you would want to hire that out, either. I don't know whether you would want to outsource that responsibility of managing risk. So, it means more people on the ground.

STICKEL: Right. And again, there's so much less security these days. It's a much more complex world.

Q: Are there other of the various consulting jobs that you've done that you would like to highlight?

STICKEL: No. I think I was very lucky to have the chance to work on these topics. These are really difficult issues. No one has figured them out, how to design and how to monitor capacity-building projects and how to evaluate institutional development. But these are what is at the core of the work of development, that is the development enterprise. And I do hope -- as this mantra of measurement takes hold -- that there'll be many more people working on this question and I'm hopeful. But it needs to be wrestled with; there's no way around that.

Q: Yes. Are there any just sort of, in terms of kind of concluding your final thoughts, the things that you might feel best about and that you're most proud of with regard to your career or other things that you kind of regret might not have happened the way you'd wanted them to happen on either side of that coin?

STICKEL: Well, when I reflect on my career and compare it to others. I think I was lucky to have had an interesting career and worked on such challenging issues. If I have a regret it would be that I did not have the kind of field experience that affords you the pleasure of looking at what happened 20 years later. I am currently working on the board of a non-profit organization in Portland that does overseas development work and one of my board colleagues is a former Peace Corps volunteer who recently went back to his Peace Corps village. He travelled with his son and saw what had happened in 30 or 40 years and said he was deeply, deeply moved. And it wasn't just his program, of course, but the people with whom he had worked had been inspired by a succession of things that had happened, his program being one, and it's a changed place. Life is so much better for everyone there. I've never had that pleasure and I think it's something that would be a hugely meaningful reward for anybody who lives and works with AID overseas. I think you've probably had the benefit of that.

Q: Maybe go back to your evaluation days. I mean, do a- I've often thought it would be great to, before someone retires lead an impact evaluation in that first country that they worked in, to go back and look at it 20, 30 years later to see what happened because you'd really be invested emotionally and trying to capture as much as possible.

STICKEL: That's a great idea. Of course, by then it's not that project. But you can benefit from the storytelling about how people make things happen with the benefit of whatever is out there, whatever resources they have.

Q: And looking at the institutions that AID supported. I mean, are they continuing, are they doing better than they did before or are they doing worse than they did before.

STICKEL: And who are the people that they've trained or inspired and what are they doing.

Q: We need to send you back to Peru just to see how much better their lives are.

STICKEL: I'm sure they are better.

Q: Well, that's something to plan.

STICKEL: Yes, indeed.

Q: So, any final thoughts or-?

STICKEL: I would like to add that I think this is a great project, Carol. It's been fun to have this chance to reflect on my work for AID, and wonderful to do it in conversation

with you. I realize too that it took a lot to make it happen and we all thank you and all the others you've been working with. And I am looking forward to reading everybody else's interviews.

Q: Okay. Thank you very much, Wendy.

STICKEL: My great pleasure, Carol.

End of interview