# On Assignment with Kerry: Memorable Moments from 40+ Years of Travel to the Developing World

**by Kerry J. Byrnes**

**(kjbyrnes@erols.com)**


**September 8, 2018**

# On Assignment with Kerry: Memorable Moments from 40+ Years of Travel to the Developing World

**by Kerry J. Byrnes**

**(kjbyrnes@erols.com)**


**September 8, 2018**

# On Assignment with Kerry: Memorable Moments from 40+ Years of Travel to the Developing World

## Table of Contents

## Chapter 4 – The Caribbean

## Chapter 5 - Central America

## Chapter 6 – South America

### Andean Region

## Chapter 8 - Looking Back

# Foreword

Flash back to a 1991 episode of the “Murphy Brown” TV series. Two members of the show’s cast, *FYI* program manager Miles Silverberg (Grant Shaud) and *FYI* anchor Jim Dial (Charles Kimbrough) are carpooling to work. Suddenly, Jim begins to reflect on his career working in the news field, recalling anecdotes of things he experienced as a reporter but with some regret as to their significance. Miles (who is driving) interrupts:

> **Miles:** Take it easy, Jimbo. You have other stories.
>
> **Jim:** Yes. Uh…. Let me see. Ah! Da Nang, 1967. I was backstage at The USO Show, talking to that wonderful ventriloquist, Shari Lewis, when just before going on she couldn’t find her little puppet, Lamb Chop.
>
> **Miles:** Really? What happened?

> **Jim:** She found it. The damn thing was in the trunk. That’s the story, the whole incredible, boring story. I once shared a cab with George Gobel. Is that anything? Good God, 30 years in the business and I can’t think of one single anecdote.
>
> (**Source**: *Murphy Brown* – March 4, 1991 - Season 3, Episode 20 – “Driving Miss Crazy”)

As in this *Murphy Brown* episode, this book also takes you along for a ride, this time a ride into my past as I recall memories (anecdotes) about things I experienced during a 40+ year career working in the field of development in nearly as many of the developing countries of the so-called Third World.

Hopefully, I’ll not leave you, the reader, feeling, as Jim said, “Good God, 40+ years working in development and Kerry couldn’t think of one single anecdote.” Yet you may ask if you are the audience for this book, in effect, is this a journey on which you would enjoy the ride? Or, as in the famous beer commercial, is this “Bud” for you? Specifically, would travel to the developing countries of the Third World be, as it were, your cup of tea?

When I started this project, my goal was not to reach an audience looking for a travel guide to the Third World. Nor did I set out to suggest places that you, as a tourist, might want to see or things you might enjoy doing in the Third World. That was not my goal.

Rather I sought to reach an audience that would find it interesting to read about things I saw or did, or that happened to me, during the 40+ years I traveled to and carried out short-term assignments in the developing countries (and, in a few instances, even some anecdotes about my work-related travel United States). But for the so-called developing countries, these are the countries that seek to become more developed by increasing the capacity of their economies, institutions, organizations, and human resources to sustainably raise the standards of living of the poor toward a middle-class life style that is free from poverty.

At the same time, I felt it would be helpful as context to share, albeit briefly, a summary of why I happened to be in a given country and what was the development-related work I carried out during my visit(s) to that country. Thus, if you may have an interest in what a person working in development gets involved in while on a short-term assignment in a developing country, this chronicle shines some light here and there on a variety of tasks I undertook while on hundreds of short-term assignments over the course of 40+ years of travel to and working in nearly as many developing countries.

Unfortunately, the project's scope does not allow me to report in a systematic way what, in the longer term, might have been the developmental impact of my work during those assignments. However, if you are interested in the "how to" of doing development, you may glean, in several anecdotes, "lessons learned" that emerged as I carried out – or tried to figure out how to do – a task that had been assigned to me.

In short, this book is not a travel guide to the developing world, a manual on how to do development, an assessment of the impact of investments in development, or proof of what I may have accomplished as I worked in the field of development. Rather, it shares some of my experiences in the course of trying "to do" development while I was on short-term assignments to the developing countries. In this sense, whether you are a development academic or practitioner, or perhaps aspire to get into development, you'll find that some, if not many, of the anecdotes shed a spotlight on challenges that one as a development practitioner might encounter during a career working in agricultural and rural development and carrying out short-term assignments in the developing world.

However, if the reader is interested in pursuing a career in development, the conclusion of this narrative provides a chapter highlighting some recommendations that one might consider as stepping stones for getting into the practitioner side of development.

Thus, whatever your taste in beers, whether you're a development academic, an aspiring development practitioner, or just have a general interest in development, I hope you'll give this "cup of tea" a try and conclude that it was just the "Bud" for you!

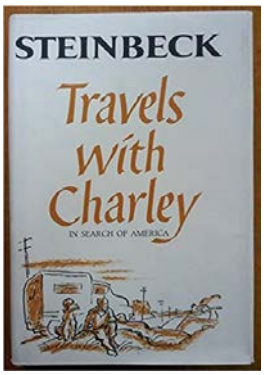
# Chapter 1 - Introduction

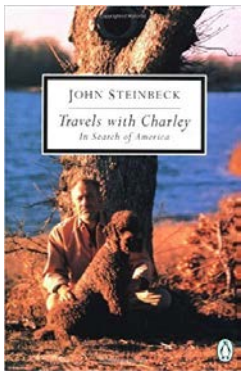
It was the summer of 1955 and, only nine years old, I was accompanying my parents, Francis and Ethel Byrnes, and my four-year old brother Kevin on my first trip overseas, where we lived two months in Paris, France and one month in Bonn, Germany – hardly the developing world that the primary setting for the anecdotes shared in this narrative. Also, we took side trips to other European countries (Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, and even a middle of the night train stop in Luxembourg for a passport check). On our way home, we visited London, England and locations in Ireland, the country from which my father's ancestors had come when they migrated to the United States.

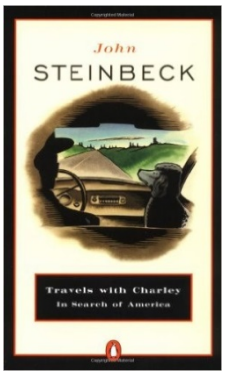
Often, during the ensuing years, I would recall how happy I had been in late summer of 1955, on return from that trip to Europe, to be able to spend time with friends, watch TV, and even go back to school. At the time I had no expectations or aspirations to again travel overseas, indeed, nary a thought about when I might next travel or to where.

In September of 1960, five years after that summer in Europe, I was in the first month of my sophomore year in high school. That same month of 1960, John Steinbeck, one of America's most famous authors, along with his poodle, Charley, embarked on a journey across America, a trip Steinbeck chronicled in *Travels with* Charley, a book that became a best-seller documenting the pair's meanderings "along scenic backroads and anonymous superhighways, moving from small towns to growing cities to glorious wilderness oases."

Steinbeck's journey was published in mid-1982 under the title *Travels with Charley*, several months before being awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. The book reached #1 on the New York Times Best Seller list (Non-Fiction) on October 21, 1962, where it stayed one week, being replaced by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* on October 28.








Two years later, by October of 1962, I was in the second month of my senior year in high school and, though I don't recall exactly, likely read *Travels with Charley* as an assignment in my English class, American Government class, or possibly on my own.

Five years later, in 1967, and inspired by Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley*, American journalist Charles Kuralt would launch *On the Road with Charles Kuralt* as a segment of *The CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite*.

Coincidentally, that same fall of 1962 raised the prospect and then the certainty that by March 1963, the Byrnes would again, as it were, "hit the road," this time, however, not to Europe or even across America as did Steinbeck and later Kuralt. Rather this time the Byrnes "took flight" by plane across the U.S. and the Pacific Ocean to a new home in Los Baños, Philippines, an hour outside of Manila in the province of Laguna. There my father began working with the Rockefeller Foundation as the first director of information services, communication, and training for the recently established International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

If our trip to Europe eight years earlier had failed to enamor me with traveling overseas, living for a short period in the Philippines, from late March 1963 to the early fall of 1963, did plant a seed that would sprout into a lifelong interest in the field of development that would become the focus of my professional career, a field I'd would start to learn about during those initial months (March to September) that I lived in the Philippines. In the evening, at the dinner table, dad would share stories about things he had experienced during the day at work. Often my mother and I drove by car from Los Baños to Manila, travelling along the way through small villages and between those villages seeing one rice field after another, fields farmers were tilling, not by modern John Deere tractors, but rather water buffalo-pulled plows, behind which farmers in their bare feet walked with their hands on their plows.

When our car slowed as we drove through a small town or village, one saw alongside the road a variety of street vendors and small, often open-air, shops selling all kinds of merchandise. These merchants were not the modern A&P or Kroger I had known from living in the more highly developed U.S. economy but rather a marketplace of small-scale farmers and villagers living in a poverty-stricken country struggling to transform its rice-based subsistence economy into a more diversified and productive economy that could deliver a higher standard of living for its population.

On returning to the U.S. in the fall of 1963 to start my freshman year at Michigan State University (MSU), that seed began to sprout and would be nurtured in various courses I took not only at MSU but also during two periods of study in two developing countries, first during the summer of 1964 at the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico in Toluca, and in early 1966 in the Philippines at the College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines, Los Baños.

Little by little the seed that had been planted while living in the Philippines began during my student years to steer me toward a career-long professional interest to work in the

field of development. This interest continue to grow when, on graduating from MSU with a B.A. (’67) in sociology and a M.A. (’68) in communication, I worked for a year (fall 1968 to summer of 1989) in Cali, Colombia, as a research assistant on an agricultural marketing study in Colombia’s Cauca Valley. This study, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), was implemented by MSU’s Department of Agricultural Economics in partnership with Colombia’s Cauca Valley Corporation (CVC). During this period, I lived with my parents who by early 1968 had moved from the Philippines to Cali, Colombia, where the Rockefeller Foundation had reassigned my father to become head of information services, communication, and training at the newly established International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT).

After nearly a year working on the agricultural marketing study, I returned to the U.S., to begin a doctoral program at Iowa State University, completing a Ph.D. in Sociology (with a minor in Economics) by mid-1975. Fortunately, prior to graduation, I landed my first post-doctorate job with the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. There I worked for nine-plus years during which I frequently traveled to numerous countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Over the next 40 years, from 1975 through retirement at the end of September 2014, my work in the field of development under various employers would take me to 38 developing countries, actually more countries than that if one counts plane or overnight stops in Belize, Egypt, Haiti, India, Niger, Japan, and Singapore.

While I toyed with the idea of titling this book “Travels with Kerry” or “On the Road with Kerry,” I didn’t want to draw too much of a comparison with either Steinbeck’s *Travels with Charley* or Kuralt’s *On the Road*. So I chose as an alternate title: *On Assignment with Kerry: Memorable Moments from 40+ Years of Travel to the Developing World*. Each country-specific essay leads with a description of the various tasks on which I working during my short-term assignments, followed by anecdotes about things I saw, did, or that happened to me during an assignment.

In effect, the approach taken herein is a bit like Walter Cronkite’s earlier CBS Television series *You Are There* (1953-1957). At the end of each *You Are There* episode, Cronkite summarized what happened on the day and event on which that episode focused – and then he would remind viewers, "What sort of day was it? A day like all days, filled with those events that alter and illuminate our times... all things are as they were then, and you were there." Similarly, for each country I traveled to, I take you on assignment with me to share a glimpse of the development tasks I undertook as well as things I saw, did, or that happened to me to while in this or that particular country.

Whether this approach will leave you also feeling that “you were there” on assignment with Kerry during those visits to the developing countries, I hope you will enjoy this retrospective journey looking back on 40+ years of my travels to the Third World,

including several dozen countries across West Africa, East Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, and, as a bonus, various assignments carried out in North America (Canada, Mexico, and the United States).

The narrative concludes with a “Looking Back” section including the following sections:

Biographical Context

Development-related Travel

The Downside of Travel to the Developing World

Nearing Retirement

Travel after Retirement

Life in Retirement

Short-Term Travel to Developing Countries Did Not Alone a Career Make

What Did It All Add Up To?

Keeping the Spirit for Development Alive

Conclusion

While Steinbeck kept contemporaneous notes and/or was writing his book as he and Charley traveled the highways and byways of the U.S., and Kuralt traveled with a small crew to film his stories, this essay relies almost totally on my memory of places I visited, what I saw or did, and/or things that happened to me. Nearly all of what I share is based on memory, though in most instances I was able to check places and dates against my *curriculum vitae*. Occasionally, when I couldn’t remember this or that detail, I contacted friends and former colleagues by email or phone to ask for their assistance in helping me nail down this or that particular. I express my appreciation to them but take full ownership for any factual errors that may remain herein.

While I could have provided more detail from my professional papers, by the time I began working on this book, I already had donated those papers (e.g., trip reports, study reports, evaluation reports, etc.) to the University of Illinois’ Agricultural Communications Documentation Center (ACDC).

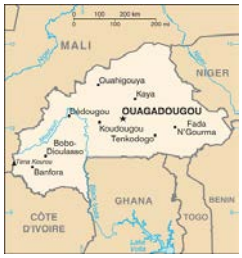
Readers interested in learning more about the professional development activities that I worked on and which are mentioned herein can contact the ACDC to arrange for access to those documents. A listing of my professional papers archived in the ACDC can be reviewed at the following link.

# Chapter 2 - Africa

## West Africa

As a sociologist with the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), I traveled in 1981 to three countries of West Africa: Upper Volta, Mail, and Senegal.

### Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso)




My first stop was in Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), with the next two stops being Mali and Senegal (see further below). During these stops my task was to meet with several agricultural research organizations to explore their potential interest in collaborating with IFDC in developing a program of farmer trials on the use of phosphate rock, leading to tracking farmer adoption and use of phosphate rock fertilizer.


**Aerial View of Ouagadougou & Its International Airport**

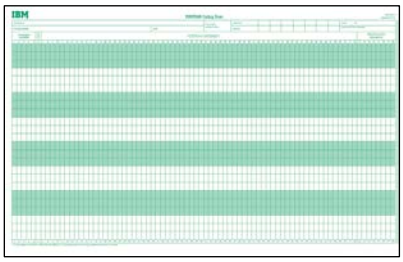
During the visit to Upper Volta's capital, Ouagadougou, my counterparts were staff of the African Union's Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development (AU SAFGRAD) program and also farming systems research (FSR) program staff of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). Today, 35+ years later, I recall little of what was a very short visit, other than that I probably spent most of my time in meetings with IITA and SAFGRAD staff, that my counterparts also took me to visit fertilizer trial sites in the field, and that the visit was very short, perhaps only a day or so. With this very brief introduction to rural Africa, I was looking forward to the next country I was to visit, Mali, and its capital, Bamako.

## Mali


The second stop in my 1981 tour of West Africa was Bamako, Mali's capital, to support an IFDC initiative to include a socioeconomic research component as part of IFDC's farm-level trials of phosphate rock as a phosphate nutrient source. I would return to Bamako in 1983 to work with a counterpart on planning for the coding of survey data collected on farmer responses to the results of the fertilizer trials.


***Development Gone Awry*** - During this first visit to Mali I met a young woman that our counterpart, the Institute of Rural Economy (IER), had assigned to supervise collection of data through a survey of the farmers participating in the phosphate rock trials. I also met Christine Desveaux, a young social scientist from Belgium, who was working with the IER under the French technical cooperation program. On my second visit to Mali, I met again with my Malian counterpart who shared her compilation of the survey data. I was nearly put into a state of shock when she shared the data sheets she had prepared to summarize farmer responses to the survey. Using a separate sheet for each survey question, she had compiled on the farmer responses to each survey question onto its corresponding data sheet. To be clear, she had summarized the responses to the first survey question on one data sheet, the responses to the second survey question on a second data sheet, and so on. With the data recorded in this way, all one could do was calculate the distribution of farmer responses to each question. Nothing could be done from an analytical standpoint to see if the data on a variable recorded on one sheet was in any way correlated with the data on a variable recorded on a separate sheet.

Trying to be helpful, Pierre Rousseau (my IFDC colleague who had designed the trials) and I went to several Bamako stores looking for IBM 80-column data sheets (image below) that my Malian counterpart could use to transfer all the data onto a small number of data sheets, one line (row) per farmer and one column per a farmer's response to each of the survey questions. We located the data sheets in a Siemens business machine store, after which I met with my counterpart to show her how to record each questionnaire's data onto these sheets, so that she could then analyze the data, for example, do a simple correlation analysis by folding a sheet to put the data recorded in the variable X column next to the data recorded for the variable Y column. Then one could enter the data for the two variables into a calculator. Further having the data in this format would make it easy for data entry into a computer-assisted data processing program.



My counterpart seemed to understand and even appreciate how this approach would facilitate IER doing a simple analysis of the data. On the eve of my departure, I returned to IER to meet with my counterpart and the IER director. I was surprised when the latter told me that my counterpart would not be analyzing the data as I had requested. Rather she would analyze the data in some time-honored way that they had learned from the French. The director was so adamant about this that I couldn't do more than nod my head in agreement. But I was so shocked by the director's response that, after the meeting, I stopped by Ms. Desveaux's office to tell her what happened. She told me not to worry and that she would, in a tactful way, step in to get the project back on track.

Months later, back at IFDC, I received an envelope in the mail or perhaps it was given to me by Pierre who had just returned from his most recent trip to Mali. The envelope contained all the data which, apparently, Christine had arranged to be transferred from those single variable data summary sheets onto a few pages of coding sheets. But there was one drawback. Christine included in the package a note sharing that she had learned that some number of enumerators, whose job it had been to interview farmers, had actually filled out the questionnaire themselves while sitting under a tree, without actually interviewing farmers. How much of this had actually taken place was unknown. Nevertheless, I used the data sheets to conduct some analysis sufficient to finish writing a report shortly before I resigned from IFDC to take a job with USAID in Washington, DC. To this day I have no idea what may have become of that report.

But this story took an even sadder turn. Several years later in the early 1990s, I was employed on the USAID-funded “Latin America and Caribbean Agriculture and Rural Development Technical Services Project (LAC TECH), implemented by the consulting firm Chemonics International. One day, walking down the hallway toward my office, I noticed a young woman at her desk. At first I didn’t think anything of it but later began to have the feeling that I had previously met this woman. A few days later I stopped by her office, introduced myself, and told her that I thought we had previously met but I was not able to remember where or when. After some exchange on where each of us had been working, I finally realized she was the same Christine Desveaux whom I had met almost a decade before in 1983 in Mali.

Eventually Christine had married, come to the United States, and begun working with Chemonics. I only got to visit with her one or two times before, on one Monday morning, on coming into the office, I learned that all employees were to report for an all-hands meeting. At that meeting, Tony Teele, founder and chairman of the board of Chemonics, shared the news that, over the weekend, Christine Desveaux had died of a suicide.


**Hotel L’Amitie in Bamako, Mali**

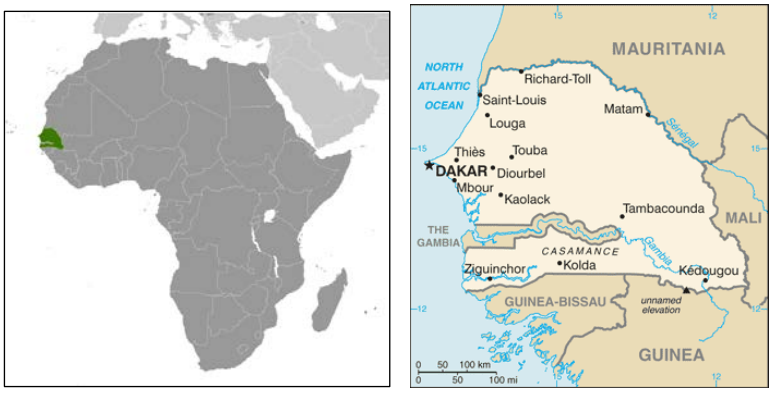
***Hot Dog Malaise*** - A certainly less traumatic incident occurred during my second visit to Mali. On both my first and second visits to Bamako, I stayed at the Hotel L’Amitie. My IFDC colleague, Pierre, and I spent some days traveling to the field to visit the sites of the phosphate rock fertilizer trials he was conducting. However, in the hot and dusty rural areas, getting a bite to eat was always a challenge; fortunately, it often was the case that research collaborators had guest houses where we could have lunch. But it was always good to return to the hotel in Bamako, take a shower, and have a good meal. In fact, I discovered during my first stay in the L’Amitie that its bar had a hot dog grilling machine. Waiting for my hot dog to be ready, I asked the bartender for ketchup and mustard. But the mustard he handed me was not French’s yellow mustard but rather Dijon mustard which is not my cup of tea. When I asked for yellow mustard, he told me he had only the Dijon mustard.


When I was packing for my second trip to Mali, I made sure to include a small bottle of French's yellow mustard. On landing in Bamako and clearing immigration and customs, I took a taxi to the hotel, only to discover, so the driver claimed, that his car had run out of gas a few blocks from the hotel. He wanted me to give him money so he could buy gas. This was not something I was comfortable becoming involved in and quickly got out of the taxi, retrieved my suitcase, paid the driver some money to compensate him for having brought me as far as he had, and hauled my suitcase in the hot sun several blocks to the hotel. I arrived thirsty and hungry and, as soon as I checked in and got my luggage up to my room, I unpacked that bottle of yellow mustard and went down to the hotel bar to order a Coke and a hot dog. On taking my order, the bartender said "Sorry, sir, there are no hot dogs as the hot dog griller is broken."

***Fractured French*** - On an even lighter note, one night, Pierre arranged for us to have dinner with one of his Malian friends at a Bamako restaurant that, at the time, had the name *Aux Trois Caïmans* (The Three Crocodiles). I hardly spoke any French but on my own had been studying French using Foreign Service Institute cassette tapes. But my fluency was very limited, with my spoken French mostly relying on substituting French words into my otherwise fluent Spanish. Where my French was really poor was that I found it difficult to understand what a native speaker was saying in French. Be that as it may, we sat down for dinner and, at some point, I ventured to share with Pierre's friend, a story I had "learned" in French, a story about a man who, married three times, had the misfortune of all three wives suffering tragic deaths.

Our Malian friend so enjoyed the story that ever after it's hard for me not to share the story any time I run into someone who speaks French. In fact, I got so good telling this story in my fractured French that, from time to time, the listener asked where I learned to speak French. I'd reply that I didn't really speak French with any fluency, to which the person would reply: "Impossible, one could not tell that story so badly in French without being able to speak French fluently." Of course, I thank the listener for this comment even if he or she may yet wonder whether I'm really fluent in French or just a struggling novice who badly mangles the language. Indeed, one day, my wife Sonia, listening to me doing French substitution drills with my French language learning cassette tapes, said to me: "You have real guts to speak French with a Spanish accent!"

## Senegal




Following my first visit to Mali in 1981, the last stop of my tour of West Africa was Dakar, Senegal to meet with staff of the West African Research and Development Authority (WARDA) and visit some research trials to determine how well rice responded to deep placement of sulfur-coated urea or urea briquettes as a nitrogen source compared with applying conventional granular urea fertilizers. The objective in fertilizing rice with sulfur-coated urea or deep placing urea briquettes is to slow down the release of nitrogen and better time its availability to the rice plant and, at the same time, reduce the amount of nitrogen that volatilizes, that is, lost into the air rather than absorbed by the rice plant. The trials included collecting socioeconomic information to gauge farmer preference for the experimental urea fertilizers as compared with conventional granular urea fertilizers.

***Senegalese Vision Exam –*** This anecdote, while beginning in Senegal, did not reach its conclusion until many years later back home in the United States. It was while traveling on a highway in rural Senegal that I first realized some deterioration in my sight in the right eye. With lots of relatively barren landscape and not much to look at, I began to pass the time trying to read the road signs as they came into view on the horizon, only to realize that, obviously, signs further down the road were impossible to read and then easier to read as our car got closer. But then I noticed that letters on the signs yet at some distance were blurry and I began to check if I could read a sign more clearly with one eye or the other. This is when I first realized (with my glasses on) that I could more clearly read distant signs with my left eye than my right eye.

**Rural Road in Senegal**

When I got back home from Senegal, I made an appointment to see my eye doctor and, initially, he was able (temporarily) to correct the blurred vision by making a stronger lens for my right eye. But as time passed the problem worsened to the point my eye doctor said there was nothing more he could do but suggest that I see a specialist in Bethesda, Maryland. So I made an appointment to see the specialist and, during the appointment, he ran all kinds of test on my right eye, including the Humphrey field vision test (see left photo below)–and even a test where the technician put on my eye a contact connected to an electrodes that during an ERG exam would send signals to the computer.

**Humphrey Field Vision Test (Left) & ERG Test (Right)**

I then met with eye doctor, perhaps after a second visit, once he had received and reviewed the results of the various tests. At first, he said, he couldn't figure out what was going on, until finally he remembered that he once had a patient, a brain surgeon, who complained about the same problem. In that case, the eye doctor, as it were, kept his eye (no pun intended) on the patient until the problem had worsened to a point that the eye doctor was able to clinically determine that the patient was in the early stage of developing a cataract on the eye in which the patient was having blurred vision. The eye doctor said to me that this probably was what was happening to me; while I was able to tell my vision in the right eye was getting worse, he couldn't clinically diagnose the problem. The eye doctor explained that what I was experiencing was a change in the protein composition in the lens of my right eye that was so early in the process of a cataract forming that no clinical test was yet available to measure that this is what was happening. He said that, going forward and knowing this possibility, my eye doctor should keep his eye on whether my eye was developing a cataract.

I followed up with my regular eye doctor who, on reviewing the findings and conclusions of the eye doctor who performed the tests, said to me: "You know I now remember that I once also had a patient who had the same problem; we waited and eventually I was able to see clinically that he was forming a cataract." I found it a bit curious that two doctors in a row had put me through all these tests only to then remember that each once had a patient with the same symptom I was experiencing. Well, fortunately, my health insurance covered most of the cost of all those visits to the eye doctors, all those expensive eye exams, and helped to keep the eye doctor business booming.

Eventually my eye doctor was able to clinically diagnose that I had a cataract in each eye and scheduled me for cataract surgery to remove the cataract from each eye and implant a new lens, though first doing one eye and a month or so later the other eye. Looking back, I probably had better diagnosed my problem riding in the car in Senegal and trying to read all those road signs, thus my first and only Senegalese vision exam.

***Get Me to the Church (Airport) on Time*** - After having arrived in Dakar and checked into the hotel, I had a nice dinner in the hotel restaurant overlooking the shoreline of the Atlantic Ocean as the sun was setting, I was up early the next morning to accompany my WARDA counterpart on a two-day field trip to visit trials of experimental fertilizers. I checked out of the hotel but arranged to leave my suitcase locked in the hotel's storage room. Off we went, later in the morning and into the afternoon visiting fertilizer trials and eventually arriving in St. Louis where I checked into a hotel for the night. After checking out of the hotel the next morning, we visited more fertilizer trials and after lunch headed in the early afternoon to the airport from which I was scheduled to fly back to Dakar in time to get back to the hotel, claim my luggage, and make it to the airport for my Pan Am flight back to States.

All was going well until it appeared that the flight had been delayed. My counterpart and I began to be a little suspicious when it was time for the flight to arrive and heard the droning of a plane's engine flying high above the airport. My counterpart asked one of the airport officials why the flight I was supposed to catch had not arrived. The response was that the pilot, for some reason (which apparently often happens), had decided not to land to pick up one passenger and just kept on flying directly to Dakar. What to do as there was no later flight to Dakar that day? My counterpart took me back to town where he arranged with a taxi driver to take me back to my hotel in Dakar and then the airport.

**Goats on the Road in Senegal**

We quickly departed as it already was late afternoon and soon would be dark. Indeed, by the time it was dark, we were speeding at breakneck speed down a rural two-lane paved road. Good that it was paved but not good as villagers would let their livestock roam (potentially onto the road), dry their recently harvested rice on the road, or sit on the pavement visiting with each other. Fortunately, not going too fast and the car having good headlights, we made it to the hotel in Dakar without any accidents and with hardly moments to spare in order to claim my suitcase and get me to the airport on time to catch my flight, only to discover that the hotel's reception desk clerk couldn't find the key to unlock and open the luggage room.

After worrisome moments, either the key was found or someone broke into the luggage room and returned my suitcase to me. Off I went in that same taxi to the airport, arriving just in time to check in and make a mad dash to the gate to board the flight, with lots of sweat rolling down my back. While nearly midnight and my shirt soaked in sweat, I was greatly relieved to be aboard that Pan Am flight, almost as good as already being home!

To say the least, I was "Out of Africa," at least for the time being!

## Nigeria

In 1982 I visited my last African country – Nigeria – along with some IFDC colleagues. After arriving in Lagos and spending the night there, we traveled to the city of Ibadan, where we conducted IFDC's 1st Fertilizer Marketing Training Program for the African Region. In the program I participated as a lecturer, case study discussion leader, and manager of the computer-assisted Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation exercise.


***The French Chef*** – Here's a question for you to ponder: Is it better to have safe food from a sober chef, or the promise of savory food from a drunken chef? An initial answer to that question came during my visit to Ibadan. I wasn't thrilled by the cuisine in the hotel where we stayed—the chef couldn't even prepare chicken properly. Being a very picky eater, and not enamored by the cuisine served during my first meal in the hotel, I came up with the following survival strategy. For my lunch or evening meal in the hotel, I ordered Coca Cola, French fries, and peas. At the end of the training program we had an opportunity to move out of the hotel and spend the last night of our stay in Ibadan in a home of one of the staff members of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and, even better, have a couple of excellent meal in IITA's cafeteria that was run by a chef from France. I mentioned to our IITA hosts how lucky they were to have a cafeteria with food prepared by a French chef. Interestingly, they shared their concern about how long the chef would last because he apparently drank too much and often wasn't sober. On the day we ate in the cafeteria twice, the chef was sober, the food tasty and, fortunately, there were no downside after effects!


***The Airline Agent*** - Just before our departure from IITA I received information that an IFDC colleague who once worked at IITA had asked an IITA colleague to ask if I could bring back to IFDC some books my colleague had left at IITA. It turned out that "the books" filled a foot locker. Undaunted, I agreed to check the foot locker along with my suitcase on my flights back to the States. Once we arrived in Lagos we spent the night at IITA's guest house. The following morning we loaded my suitcase and the foot locker in an IITA car and went to the Lagos airport to check in—or at least try to!

**Check in at Mohammad Murtala Airport in Lagos, Nigeria**

The airline agent told me I couldn't check the foot locker unless I paid a penalty of $300 because the foot locker was overweight. The agent beckoned me closer, saying that I surely didn't want to pay $300, at the same time holding his hand out for a bribe. I didn't know how much one should pay for a bribe and didn't want to get caught attempting to pay a bribe. I responded by pulling out my American Express card, saying "I'll pay the $300, just give me a receipt." The agent, perhaps a bit in shock, proceeded to process the transaction. When I got back to IFDC, I forget whether I included the receipt when I submitted my travel expense claim to IFDC or if my colleague reimbursed me directly but I did get back the $300.

# East Africa

## Kenya


My travels to Africa began in 1980 in Nairobi, Kenya, where I served as the assistant program and lecturer for the first Fertilizer Use Efficiency Training Program for the African region conducted by the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), my employer. The program was held in a training center of a local university further up the hill from the hotel where the training program staff and participants were registered.

***Kerry on Safari*** - I recall four highlights of this my first trip to Africa. First, one Saturday afternoon away from the training program allowed for a visit to downtown Nairobi to visit souvenir shops and purchase some jewelry for my wife Sonia. I was struck immediately by the city's modern buildings which certainly were at odds with what one might have expected based on the "darkest jungles" stereotype that I had in my own mind from having watched so many *Tarzan* films on television while I was growing up.

Second, this was one of a few times during 40 years of work-related travel that I took time (on a weekend) to be a tourist, deciding that I'd go on a camera safari one Sunday afternoon to visit a wildlife park that was not too far from Nairobi. I didn't see a lot of wildlife other than some lions sleeping, a few monkeys, and a giraffe or two. But I did take the below photo of the giraffe. Indeed, the park was not far from Nairobi as form a hilltop in the park one could see the tallest buildings miles away in downtown Nairobi.

**Giraffe Photographed by Kerry on "Safari" in Kenya (1980)**

Third, I recall that our Fertilizer Use Efficiency Training Program included a trip by bus to the field, during which we traveled along the ridge of Kenya's Great Rift Valley. This afforded a really spectacular view, a sense of which is conveyed in the photo below.


**View of the Great Rift Valley in Kenya**

A recent article in *The Economist* conveys what I saw on that field trip nearly 40 years ago:

> DRIVE west out of Nairobi and you quickly realise how astonishing the topography around the Kenyan capital is. After an hour or so crawling in traffic past tea fields and farmers selling sheep skins and fresh vegetables, motorists suddenly find themselves on an escarpment from which the land simply drops away. On the horizon, mist clings to the top of Mount Longonot, a dormant volcano. Before it, a patchwork of tiny green farms stretches across the valley floor like a carpet.
>
> This is the central part of the Rift Valley, a vast depression that stretches thousands of miles. It is Kenya's breadbasket and its most densely populated region. Its flower farms, tea fields and coffee plantations provide much of the country's exports, as well as employment for thousands of workers. Its geothermal energy plants provide Nairobi with cheap electricity; its lakes provide water and its farms food (Source).

Fourth, and a sad memory, on waking up the morning of December 8 and going down to the hotel lobby, a TV news program was reporting the death of John Lennon of The Beatles. This was five years before TVs in hotel lobbies of the developing world began showing CNN International.

# Chapter 3 - Asia

## South Asia

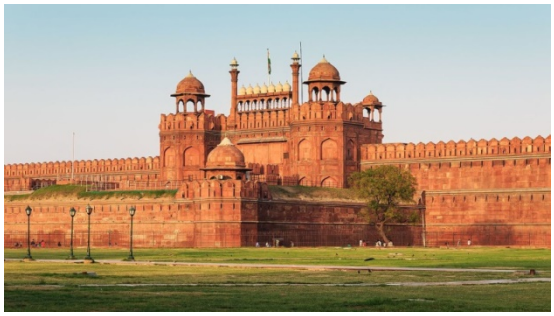
While working with IFDC, I visited two South Asian countries: Bangladesh and Pakistan. But my first time in South Asia actually was over a decade before in 1964. During that year's summer, I traveled from East Lansing, Michigan to Toluca, Mexico, and then to Madrid, Spain; Nice, France; Bangkok, Thailand; and Los Baños, The Philippines, with an intermediate stop in New Delhi, India. My parents, living in The Philippines, booked this itinerary to allow me, after studying in Mexico during the summer and living with a Mexican family, to do some sightseeing on my way home to The Philippines where my father was working at the International Rice Research Institute.

### India


***The Missed Connection*** – By the time I reached New Delhi, India, I was a little beat up, having left Mexico with a bad case of Montezuma's Revenge which basically left me bedridden during my stay in Madrid. I finally recovered in Nice, while staying with my uncle (my mother's brother) who worked with the U.S. Navy as a civilian mathematician. However, while taking a swim in the Mediterranean, I injured my left arm, leaving me without much strength to lift a suitcase. Then, during a stopover in Rome, the health officials discovered one of my immunizations had expired and that I needed to be given a shot for that immunization before going on India. However, the "nurse" administering the shot didn't properly insert the needle into my right arm, leaving that arm about as useless as my left; hence, two bum arms on my arrival in New Delhi.

My father had arranged with a Ford Foundation colleague in New Delhi to meet my flight but, by the time I arrived, the colleague (as I later learned) was away on a trip outside the country and had left to his wife the task of meeting me at the airport. But then she had a family crisis when their daughter had a dental emergency the same day I was to arrive. Tending to the emergency resulted in the wife forgetting that she was scheduled to pick me up at the airport. I didn't have the family's phone number but managed to get a taxi and go to a nearby hotel where I checked into a room.

Later that afternoon, and I don't know how the wife tracked me down, she reached me by phone and told me she would come to the hotel to take me to stay at the family's home. This was a great relief, on top which the next day she and her daughter took me on a sightseeing trip around New Delhi where I saw the Red Fort, the market, a snake charmer working with a cobra, and the city's roundabouts as a way to speed up traffic at intersections.



**The Red Fort, New Delhi, India**

**Snake Charmer on a New Delhi Street**

***The 747 Connection –*** In 1983 I had two overseas assignments back-to-back, the first in Dacca, Bangladesh and the second in Islamabad, Pakistan. As I recall, there was no direct flight between Dacca and Islamabad, so one had to fly from Dacca to Delhi, India, and then catch an onward flight to Islamabad. While in transit in the Delhi airport in the middle of the night, and roaming the airport to pass the time, I looked out on the tarmac and spotted two Pan Am 747s. On inquiring about this, I learned one plane was Pan Am 1 (that originated in San Francisco and was flying west around the world); the other was Pan Am 2 (that originated in New York and was flying east around the world) – and both happened to meet and be on the ground at the same time in Delhi, India. Less than a decade later in 1991, Pan Am filed for bankruptcy in the face of increasingly unfriendly skies (i.e., competition from U.S. based carriers such as Delta and United, plus the airline's inability to establish an adequate route network within the United States).


As I watched those two Pan Am 747 “Clipper Liners,” I thought that it would be nice to have a chance someday to fly in a 747. That chance came just four years later in 1987 when, during the summer, I made two round trips from Washington, DC to Islamabad, Pakistan, flying east on Pan Am 2 and west on Pan Am 1. Not only did I fly the New York – Frankfurt – Karachi portion of these two Pan Am round-the-world flights but also, at the time, World Bank and USAID regulations allowed me to upgrade and fly first (or business) class. Being able to fly an upgraded class on those long flights, some of them overnight, turned what otherwise would have been a miserable junket in economy class into a yet pleasantly memorable experience. The upgraded class was less crowded, had roomier seats with more leg room between rows, and definitely better food service!

Perhaps the most memorable experience was on Pan Am 1’s Karachi to Frankfurt flight. Pan Am had assigned me a seat in the bubble (upper deck). First of all, I noticed that I was the only passenger seated in the bubble. Then, after the plane took off and reached cruising altitude, the stewardess asked me if I’d like to change to a seat on the lower deck. I quickly thought to myself, “what better seat could I have than the one in which I was already seated?” without potential disturbances from other passengers. I quickly thanked her but said my preference was to remain in my assigned seat, which made it possible to get a good night of undisturbed sleep.

## Bangladesh


I visited Bangladesh first in 1976 and then again in 1979 and 1983. The 1976 visit was very short, visiting research institutes to assess the potential for carrying out studies on farmer adoption of fertilizers. During the second visit in 1979, I worked with an IFDC colleague to conduct an equity impact of fertilizer use study in support of the USAID-funded Fertilizer Distribution Improvement Project that was being implemented by IFDC. In 1983, I returned to Bangladesh for IFDC's Fertilizer Marketing Management Training Program co-sponsored by the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation. In the program, I served as assistant program manager, lecturer, Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation leader, and manager of the Green Revolution Game (a simulation of farmer decision making on issues such as adopting and using fertilizer).

***The Fugitive Project Car*** – My second visit to Bangladesh lasted just short of, if not exactly, 42 days. I recall this figure because I was asked if I'd like to stay longer than 42 days, in which case I would be eligible to receive a salary increase for the extra time based on hardship. However, the job was done and I was ready to go home after having spent six weeks in Bangladesh, some of which was under less than luxurious conditions while traveling in the countryside. In fact, at one point I had become so sick that I had to stay in bed for a couple of days for lack of energy. Fortunately, at this point, I had the opportunity to check out of the Intercontinental Hotel and stay a few nights at the U.S. Embassy's American Club in Dacca (now Dhaka) where I felt the restaurant's food service would not do further harm to my stomach. Fortunately, there I recovered quickly.

During off hours as well as while traveling around Bangladesh, I had the opportunity to purchase a rather large – and heavy – collection of objects such as bowl and platters made from bell-metal, so-called because if you flick your finger against the object you hear a beautiful bell-like ring. As the date neared for my departure from Dacca, I packed all the bell-metal objects in my carry-on bag. I weighed the bag, finding it heavier than the suitcase I would check as baggage. On the day I was scheduled to depart Dacca, I loaded my luggage in the trunk of the project's car which then took me to a meeting at USAID before going to the airport. However, at the appointed time, the project car had not returned to pick me up and was not to be found. Further, we were not able to get in touch with the driver as this, in 1983, was a decade before cell phones were to become more widely available.

What to do? I faced two options. The first option was to stay but my flight out of Dacca operated only once a week, so this option implied having to stay another week when I was already anxious to leave and get home to my family. The second option was to go ahead and leave on the scheduled flight, having made arrangements with the airline for my luggage (one suitcase plus the heavy bag full of bell-metal objects) to be sent along a week later. Fortunately, the airline agreed to do this; even more fortunately, I had gone to the meeting wearing my navy blazer with passport and ticket in the vest pocket. I opted to depart Dacca that day. My suitcase and carry-on bag were delivered to me a week later, all their contents yet in place. Interestingly, not long thereafter, we learned that Bangladesh's Government had banned taking bell-metal objects out of the country as these were now deemed national patrimony. These objects (photos below) are now considered quite valuable and can no longer be legally exported from Bangladesh.

**Four Bangladeshi Bell-Metal Bowls**

***The Teachable Moment*** - My third visit to Bangladesh, in 1983, was almost two weeks long to prepare for and conduct the Fertilizer Marketing Management Training Program. This was the first time that IFDC had conducted a country-specific fertilizer marketing management training program rather than a regional program. Since all the participants were Bangladeshi from various parts of the country, the program put the participants up in the Purbani Hotel, a lower-star hotel than the Intercontinental Hotel to which I had previously become accustomed.

**Hotel Purbani & Hotel Intercontinental, Dhaka, Bangladesh**

During one session, several Bangladeshis complained about how much a Coca Cola cost in the hotel, especially if delivered to their room by room service. They felt the higher price was not fair, given that the price of a Coca Cola on the street was much less. This observation presented a teachable moment, as I said to the participants that nothing was stopping anyone from going outside the hotel to purchase a soft drink at a cheaper price on the street. However, I noted, the hotel was charging a premium price to provide product utility (i.e., a chilled bottle of the soft drink) and place utility (i.e., delivering the product directly to the participant's room). In other words, just as in fertilizer marketing, soft drink marketing also depends on the 4 P's – product, place, promotion, and price, a point we emphasized in the training.

**Kerry Speaking to Trainees in Purbani Hotel, Dhaka, Bangladesh**


**Coca Cola Brand in Bangladesh & 4 P's of Marketing**

## Pakistan


I visited Pakistan three times, the first time in 1983 as an IFDC employee on loan to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to conduct the IFDC Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation as part of a Fertilizer Marketing Management Training Program conducted by FAO and Pakistan's NFDC (National Fertilizer Development Corporation). In 1987 I returned twice to Pakistan. During both trips most of my time was focused on interviewing farmers and villagers to collect field-level data for a World Bank-sponsored study on the role of water users association as a vehicle for mobilizing labor for brick-lining of watercourses in Bank-assisted irrigation projects. During the first part of the second trip, I served on a team evaluating a USAID/Pakistan-funded Forestry Planning & Development Project. My role was to evaluate the project's socio-cultural component. On completing that work, I turned my attention to collecting additional data for the World Bank-sponsored study on water users associations.

***Something Stung Me*** - My first introduction to Pakistan was its capital city, Islamabad. During my stay, I shuttled each day between my hotel, the Holiday Inn (now Islamabad Radisson), and the nearby city of Rawalpindi, where the FAO and the NFDC hosted the fertilizer marketing management training program.

**Holiday Inn, Islamabad, Pakistan**

This visit was the second opportunity to run and manage the Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation at an overseas location, the first time having been running that simulation a week or two before in the Bangladesh Fertilizer Marketing Management Training Program that IFDC conducted for BADC. I was very pleased that my work to plan and coordinate with counterpart organizations (USAID and BADC in the case of Bangladesh and FAO and NFDC in the case of Pakistan) resulted in the Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation running smoothly without almost any hitches.

I say almost because, during some free time one morning, I was walking down one of the sidewalks in Rawalpindi when suddenly some type of insect that had crawled up my pants stung me just above my right knee. That so startled me and was so painful that I realized I must have looked like a crazy lunatic jumping up and down in the wake of the sting, trying to get the insect out of my pants. I immediately returned to the hotel to clean and ice the wound, spending the rest of the day resting in bed. Fortunately, while there was some swelling and redness, this subsided in a day or so.

***Meeting Jimmy Stewart*** – In comparison to the support I had provided for the Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation in Rawalpindi, working on the Forestry Planning & Development (FP&D) Project was a more ambitious undertaking, involving not only consultations with USAID, the project implementer (Winrock International), counterpart organizations, and Pakistani farmers, but also the review of project documentation and travel to project sites. The project aimed to promote farmer adoption of on-farm planting of trees and to create an agroforestry market in which local entrepreneurs were to start up tree nurseries, farmers were to buy and plant tree seedlings, and then harvest the trees for sale into a local market (e.g., for firewood). One concern that was motivating USAID/Pakistan to have an evaluation of the project was the Mission's view that the project wasn't moving quickly enough to achieve its objectives. As our team identified potential explanations for project delays, the evaluation team met with both the USAID project officer or the implementer's Chief of Party but these discussions deteriorated all to quickly into a "blame-game" exercise in finger-pointing that the culprit behind project delays lay with another party.

While there was no shortage of potential culprits for project delays, I often share with colleagues a discussion I had with Michael R. Dove who was the anthropologist on the FP&D project. Currently Dove is a Yale University professor. As noted above, one of the project's priority goals was to encourage farmers to plant trees on their farms and local entrepreneurs to start tree nurseries to sell seedlings to farmers once FP&D phased out distributing free and/or subsidized seedlings to the project's beneficiaries (farmers). The project design called for the project anthropologist to conduct a baseline survey of the project's target villages and farmers to generate data for the project to use in developing and refining project interventions as well as for providing baseline data for monitoring and evaluation of the project.

At the time I met Mike, the project was well underway in distributing free seedlings, to the point there was a growing concern the project was raising farmer expectations that the project or government would continue providing seedlings free at the same time local businesses were trying to start profitable seedling nurseries—and hoping that there would be a demand by farmers to buy seedlings. Of course, fledgling nurseries would find it hard to get farmers to buy seedlings that they expected would continue to be available for free. Knowing USAID and project management concerns about this glitch in implementing the project's design, part of my conversations with Mike touched on the issue of the desire of project management that Mike get his report written up so that his study findings, conclusions, and recommendations could be put to practical use in refining how the project was being implemented.

But Mike seemed in no particular hurry to bring closure on his study; in fact he insisted on the need to conduct a few more interviews in this or that village and with a few more farmers in order to have a robust sample. While I expressed appreciation for this, I also shared that I was hearing that project management was frustrated that the project was going to have to move ahead with its implementation without the benefit of his report if that report was not soon available. But Mike persisted, arguing how important it was that his survey of the farmers be as complete as possible.

At this point, I asked Mike if he had ever seen the film *No Highway in the Sky* (1951), starring James Stewart (as a scientist working for a British airline), Marlene Dietrich (as a passenger on one of the airline's planes), and Jack Hawkins (as airline administrator). The film's plot may be summarized as follows:

> James Stewart stars as Theodore Honey, a widower and single parent to 11-year-old Elspeth (Janette Scott). He's also an absent-minded engineer who has formed a scientific theory about metal fatigue in a specific model of aircraft. He tries to convince British Airways that their airplanes will come apart after a certain amount of miles, but no one believes him. Then administrator Dennis Scott (Jack Hawkins) sends him on a flying mission to investigate a crash site in Newfoundland. Along the way [on a flight of one of the airline's Reindeer planes, the same plane model on which Honey's metal fatigue test is being conducted back at his laboratory, Honey]… meets stewardess Marjorie Corder (Glynnis Johns) and movie star Monica Teasdale (Marlene Dietrich) (Source).

**The Rutland Reindeer from *No Highway in the Sky***

**Jimmy Stewart (as Theodore Honey) and Jack Hawkins (as Dennis Scott)**

Early in the film, Scott (Hawkins) visits the home of Honey (Stewart) and the following ensues (which I transcribed from the film when recently shown on cable TV):

**Scott:** Well, I'd better be getting along.

**Honey:** Oh.

**Scott:** I'll look in at your office in a few days' time. I'd like to learn some more about that experiment of yours, the one about the tail falling off.

**Honey:** What did you want to know about it?

**Scott:** Well, just a little more detail, you know, when you expect failure to occur.

**Honey:** Well, I probably have that right here. It's here someplace. [Honey looks through some papers on his desk.] Here it is – 2.76 times K over L. That's the time factor. It's in BTI units, of course. Let's see…that's 1440.

**Scott:** 1440 what?

**Honey:** Hours.

**Scott:** But you don't mean to expect the Reindeer tail to fall off in 1400 hours?

**Honey:** No, 1440.

**Scott:** But, Mr. Honey, a lot of aircraft have flown over many millions of miles without the tails falling off of any of them because of vibration.

**Honey:** But, Mr. Scott, you asked me for the evaluation and time of my U subscript M symbol. Now the mathematical answer is 1440 hours to failure for the specific tail plane on the test on which my calculations are based.

**Scott:** Now, how long has your test been running?

**Honey:** 832 hours 14 minutes, and 7 seconds as of shutdown tonight. They don't allow me to run it more than eight hours a day. You see, the people in the neighborhood would complain about the racket. And I…

**Scott:** Yes, but you know, of course, that an aircraft in commercial service is likely to be flying much faster than in your experiment.

**Honey:** Yes, that's probably quite true.

**Scott:** Then why didn't you insist on a 24 hour basis?

**Honey:** I did insist on it originally but they decided to do it for eight hours.

**Scott:** Yes, but you hadn't given them your 1440 hour figure.

**Honey:** Well, I never include detail in my preliminary report. Science is in no hurry, Mr. Scott. I'm working on a principle which, if I'm correct, it will be true for all time. And whether I reach it a day or so later or earlier is not important.

**Scott:** Well, it might be important to the 50 or so people who take off in these Reindeers every day.

**Honey:** Mr. Scott, you don't understand. I'm a scientist and science is very exacting. It requires the utmost concentration. I can't be concerned about people. I…, if a doctor is trying to find out a cure for a disease, what would happen if he let himself be upset about everybody who got sick and died? He'd never get any work done at all. People must be someone else's concern. I can't let it be mine, Mr. Scott. Now, you can find my preliminary report in the files and I don't wish to add anything more to it at the present time. If you'll excuse me, I think I better be getting home. [Honey already is at his home.]

Upon telling my version of this exchange to Mike, who had not seen or heard of this film, I didn't detect that my recounting of the film's plot had made any impression on Mike. But, having apparently reflected overnight on our conversation, the next day Mike said to me: "You're telling me I'm Jimmy Stewart in that movie!" I replied: "No, Mike, I'm saying you are the Theodore Honey on this project!" In effect, my point was that the farm forestry project was at risk of failing (just as Reindeer planes were at risk of falling out of the sky) because Mike, just as Stewart's Honey character, was committed to ensuring his study was carried out in a scientific manner, at its own pace, to generate knowledge rather than focusing on near-term problem-solving.

The lesson I drew from this encounter was that the right balance needs to be struck between the role of science in generating new knowledge and the role of development projects in fostering economic growth and poverty reduction. The problem, however, is that the risk or reality of planes falling out of the sky – as evident from the March 2014 media coverage of the disappearance of Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 – commands so much greater attention in the public's eye than the risks of ongoing poverty in the world

and the growing menace climate change pose to the livelihoods of not only the poor but also anyone reading this sentence.

***Irrigation or Sanitation*** – Studying the water users associations (WUAs) on Pakistan's watercourses proved an even more challenging exercise than the other assignments I worked on in Pakistan. I began the WUA study in early June of 1987, with a trip to Pakistan, visiting watercourses (W/Cs) that had been improved by brick-lining. My role was to interview project participants and beneficiaries, after which I was to analyze and write up my findings in a report for review by my project supervisor at the World Bank in Washington, DC.

At the time, however, how soon I would get back to Washington, DC was a bit up in the air, pending whether another consulting assignment – working on the FP&D evaluation – would materialize. While I thought I had completed my field work on the WUA study and could begin my work on the FP&D evaluation, there were delays in USAID getting the contract in place with the firm (Associates in Rural Development – ARD) that was to hire me to work on the FP&D evaluation. In fact, while still in Pakistan and ready to start working on the evaluation, ARD was sending messages (via telex) informing me that the contract with USAID was not yet in place and advising me that I was not yet authorized to begin working on the project or, more basically, that I was not authorized to incur any billable expenses for which ARD would be liable to reimburse me.

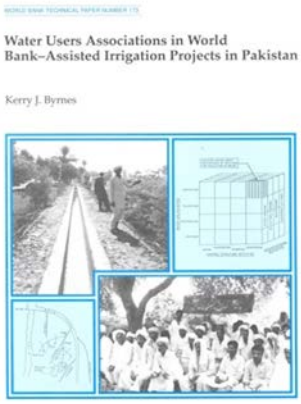
I was faced with having to make a decision either to return home, turn in my WUA study report to the World Bank, and wait for the FP&D evaluation assignment to be approved, or stay in Pakistan for an unknown length of time waiting for ARD to issue a contract for me to work on the FP&D evaluation—or not! In part, the bottom line was I could not just sit around in a hotel waiting for an assignment that might not materialize.

The latter option was too uncertain so I chose to fly home on a Tuesday, submit my report to my World Bank supervisor, and wait until ARD had an approved contract for me to work on the FP&D project evaluation. That approval came through within a day or two after my return home. So I quickly made a reservation to fly back to Pakistan that same week on Saturday. During the few days I was home, I was able to meet with my World Bank project supervisor who provided constructive feedback on my draft of the WUA study report. However, he felt I needed to return to Pakistan and carry out more field work in order to collect the data needed to address the supervisor's expectations.

USAID covered my expenses for the FP&D evaluation, including my round trip ticket to travel to and return from Pakistan. On completing my work on the FP&D evaluation I made arrangements to stay in Pakistan for several weeks after the evaluation work was completed, at which point I returned to the W/Cs to carry out more interviews. Further, having felt that the presence of my Pakistani counterparts from the World Bank-funded

On Farm Water Management Project during my first round of interviews possibly had affected the validity of the data collected (i.e., the responses received from the farmers), I hired a local social scientist, fluent in English and one of the local languages, to work with me in carrying out a new round of interviews in many of the same villages, on many of the same W/Cs, and with many of the same villagers and farmers interviewed during the first round of visiting W/Cs in three Pakistan provinces: Punjab, Sind, and NWFP.

In the end, this additional round of interviews and data collection helped me to improve my study's report which eventually was published by the World Bank.




A year or so after the World Bank had published my report, I stopped by the Bank's book store on Pennsylvania Ave. to see my report on display and available for sale. I looked through all the shelves of publications in the agriculture and irrigation section but couldn't find my report. So I asked one of the clerks if he could look up the report and tell me where it was on display in the store. He checked his computer and said: "Yes, follow me, I'll show you where your report is." I followed him and, after a moment, he pointed: "There it is!" I thanked him but asked myself why I hadn't been able to find the report. I then realized that my report was not shelved in the Agriculture and Irrigation section but rather in the section on Water and Sanitation. This made me wonder what some bookstore employee must have been thinking when he or she shelved my report in the Sanitation section.

# Southeast Asia

## Indonesia


I visited Indonesia twice, the first time in 1976 to consult with research institutions on their potential collaboration in studies on fertilizer adoption; and the second time in 1982 to serve as the program manager, Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation leader, Green Revolution Game manager, and lecturer in the IFDC's 3rd Fertilizer Marketing Training Program for the Asian Region.

***The Seductive Voice* -** From time to time, while traveling overseas, a taxi driver would inquire if I'd like to have a good time. I'd always reply: "Thank you but no as you'd be surprised how my wife's eyes can see me from halfway around the world." A new twist on this arose the first time I was in Indonesia.


**Hotel Borobudur, Djakarta, Indonesia**

On checking into the Borobudur Hotel in Djakarta, I wasn't in my room five minutes when the phone rang. On answering, a pleasant female voice asked if this was room 404. I answered: "Sorry, but you have the wrong number."

Less than a minute later the phone again rang. I answered and the same female voice asked if this was room 404.” I replied: “No, this is room 403.” She quickly said, again in a very pleasant and, if I may say so, seductive voice: “This is not a problem.” Well, I certainly did not want to have a problem, so immediately hung up. Possibly there was some “racket” in place for, say, the hotel bellhop to alert the source of the phone calls that a potential new client had just checked into the hotel. With a busy schedule ahead for field trips to rural areas, I also didn’t have time to enjoy the other amenities that the Borobudur Hotel had to offer such as its swimming pool and surrounding gardens as shown below on the postcard that I purchased.

***The Driver*** - IFDC arranged with my counterpart organization, most likely PT PUSRI, Indonesia’s national fertilizer production company, to assign a driver to take me on a tour of the rural areas. I soon discovered it was a bit scary how fast the driver drove, not only on major highways but also on narrower rural roads. Perhaps mistakenly, I asked him if he had ever seen a film starring Charles Bronson.

**Charles Bronson**

I was prompted to ask this question not only because I recalled films I'd seen with Bronson driving at breakneck speed, but also because this Indonesian driver's face bore an uncanny resemblance to that of Charles Bronson. Having asked the question only made matters worse because, thereafter, the driver seemed to drive even faster – perhaps a clear case life imitating art. Fortunately, I arrived safely at every destination.

***The Painting*** – One weekend in Djakarta, walking around a shopping center, I spotted an art gallery. On perusing the gallery's offerings, one painting caught my eye – a portrait of a young Indonesian woman, similar to the painting shown below.

***Indonesian Woman***

The clerk told me that the woman in the painting was the artist's wife. As the story goes, Indonesia's first president, **Sukarno** (**Kusno Sosrodihardjo** – 6/6/1901 – 6/21/1970), on meeting the wife of the artist, commissioned him to paint a portrait of the wife. That artist was **A. Hasim** (1921-1982) and his works to this day are displayed in the Sukarno art collection in Djakarta. Over the years, other artists were inspired to paint their own versions of Hasim's wife, thus commercial art galleries soon had no shortage of different painters' versions of this famous portrait.

I think the gallery clerk wanted something like US $30 for the "copycat" painting (oil on canvas) I was admiring. My reaction at the time was that this price was too high but the clerk was quick to reassure me the painting was of the highest quality – and suggested that I look in any other art gallery in the shopping center to see that any other version of this painting by other artists would be of inferior quality. Taking up this challenge, I spent about a half hour looking around other galleries, and found that the clerk was absolutely correct in defending that the painting of interest to me was indeed of top notch quality if compared with the same portrait rendered by other artists. So I went back to the original gallery and bought the painting for about $30.

But this purchase came back to haunt me when, on returning home and hanging it on our bedroom wall (big mistake!), my wife Sonia quickly became suspicious, wanting to know who was the woman in the painting. I tried to plead my case, telling her the story of the origin of the painting, but to no avail. Eventually I sold the painting for $60 to an Indonesian engineer from P.T. PUSRI who was at IFDC on a yearlong assignment. That is probably the only painting in the world purchased by a gringo in Djakarta, Indonesia; hauled to Muscle Shoals, Alabama; and then resold to an Indonesian who shipped it all the way back to his home in Indonesia, where he now has the pleasure of it hanging in his home, assuming that his wife was less suspicious than mine.

***A Royal Welcome & A Cultural Faux Pas*** – In 1982 I returned to Indonesia to serve as the manager for IFDC's 1982 Fertilizer Marketing Training Program for the Asian Region, co-sponsored by the Indonesian Association of Fertilizer Producers (APPI) and held at the P.T. Pupuk Kujang fertilizer production facility in Cikampek, located in West Java about an hour-and-a-half from Jakarta. Our hosts really rolled out a royal welcome for the program participants and IFDC training staff when we arrived by bus (see photos further below).


**Indonesian Welcome**

**Presenting of Flowers and Dancing**


**Opening Session (Kerry Speaking & At Head Table on Left)**


**Kerry Explaining Classroom Layout & Use of Flip Charts**

One dynamic of the training program was the participants exchanging and discussing their experiences working in the fertilizer industry. An intriguing exchange occurred between two participants, one from India and the other from Indonesia. At the time, India had a fertilizer industry with a mix of pure private sector (for profit) fertilizer retailers, non-profit cooperatives retailing fertilizers, and government-operated retailers. On the other hand, the fertilizer industry in Indonesia was largely state-controlled from fertilizer production to fertilizer distribution to fertilizer retailing. Further the government managed a subsidized credit program to help farmers finance purchase of fertilizer at below world market prices!

After one of the Indonesian participants had completed his presentation describing how his country's fertilizer sector was organized, an Indian participant raised his hand to ask the following question (which I've paraphrased as best that I can recall):

> "In your presentation you indicated that fertilizer production facilities in Indonesia purchase oil at below the world market price, that those facilities sell the produced fertilizers into the distribution system at a price below production cost, and that the government provides credit to farmers at interest rates below market rates. So, in effect, the government loses money on selling oil to the fertilizer production companies, on the fertilizers sold below cost to the government's distribution system, and at below market interest rates for the credit farmers receive so they can buy the fertilizers sold to them at below world market price. My question is this: How can the Indonesian government continue to run the fertilizer sector on such a non-sustainable basis?"

There was a silent pause in the room as I wondered how the Indonesian, being put on the spot, would answer the question. Surprisingly, the Indonesian came back with the perfect response: “This would be a very good question to ask the Minister of Economy!” The answer prompted immediate laughter throughout the room and we moved on to the next item on the agenda. Actually, as I understood it, what the government was doing was using oil revenues to finance various agricultural and rural development programs, not a bad investment as long as oil prices remained high.

A difficult moment arose one morning when I was introducing IFDC’s Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation. An IFDC colleague on our team, who was not a fan of the Alpha Simulation, had begun making disparaging remarks about the simulation in the midst of my explanation of the simulation to the participants. I don’t recall what he publicly said at that moment but at first opportunity (perhaps it was coffee break), I went to the back of the room and told my colleague: “Look, you may not like the Alpha Simulation but it’s part of this program’s curricula – and while you may have a problem with it, let’s not air our differences in front of the participants!” Fortunately, my colleague made no further issue of it there in Indonesia but, on returning to IFDC apparently shared his negative comments with IFDC’s director. However, my immediate boss said I should disregard that negative feedback as he was supportive of the Alpha Simulation and knew the simulation was always positively rated by our training participants, which had been the case not only in that training program in Indonesia but also previous training programs held in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and at IFDC headquarters in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

However, I found it hard to leave the matter unaddressed and turned to an economist colleague at the University of Missouri to share what I had been dealing with vis-à-vis my IFDC colleague and his behavior in Indonesia. Further, I mentioned that I had tried to defend the Alpha Simulation as an effective tool for helping participants learn about marketing but that my IFDC colleague had taken the position that “the Alpha simulation is as useless as Monopoly for learning about fertilizer marketing!” My Missouri colleague immediately laughed, saying: “That’s interesting because I use Monopoly in economics courses to help students learn the concept of the marginal value of one property over another, say Boardwalk Ave. vs. Baltic Ave.” He continued: “I’m a firm believer in using games and simulations to provide students and training participants a practical way to see the consequences of the decisions they make.” In fact, my colleague developed and was using a Policy Decision Making simulation that was popular with his students in learning about how macroeconomic policies impact on economies and development.

Overall, however, the training program in Indonesia went off largely without any hitches and the training program’s last day arrived, to be celebrated by a dinner, a few remarks at the closing ceremony, and presentation of certificates to the participants. As a special surprise we had arranged for a high up Indonesian official (e.g. chairman of the board of the production facility) to have the honor of presenting the course certificate to each of

the participants. In fact, this official was the last person to give comments before it was time to hand out the certificates. However, in a moment of not being on top of things, I suddenly realized that this official, on concluding his remarks, had returned to his table, before I could signal him to remain at the podium to hand out the certificates. What to do?

For a long time I knew that, in Asian countries, Indonesia included, the proper way to beckon someone was not, as we do in the U.S., to hold one's hand palm up and then repeatedly flex one's finger(s) toward oneself. Rather, the polite way to beckon another person in an Asian country to come toward you is to extend your arm with palm down and then flex your fingers. But, due to force of habit, I totally forgot that in the moment and beckoned the chairman to come back up on stage, everyone seeing my cultural faux paus, with my arm extended, palm up, and flexing my fingers. It made it worse for me to realize what I was doing but, thankfully, the chairman was less put off than he was surprised to be called right back up to the stage after having just been there.

Back at IFDC, one of my training program colleagues, a Chinese man from Taiwan, brought my cultural *faux pas* to my attention. I immediately acknowledged that he was right but in that moment in Indonesia I had totally forgotten my manners regarding what would have been the culturally proper way to call the chairman back up to the stage. Live and learn!

## Malaysia


One of the first countries that I visited in Southeast Asia while working with IFDC was Malaysia. In 1976 I made a brief stop in the country's capitol, Kuala Lumpur to meet with representatives of various Malaysian research institutions to discuss opportunities for collaborative research with IFDC on farmer adoption of fertilizer.

***The Komodo Dragon –*** While my short visit to Malaysia did not lead to a collaborative research project on farmer adoption of fertilizers, for me the visit provided opportunity to achieve a personal objective, namely, visiting Kuala Lumpur's Zoo Negara one Sunday morning to see a live Komodo dragon.


My interest in the Komodo dragon had been piqued years before by listening to The Komodo Dragon, my favorite Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding (Bob and Ray) routine. In this routine, Bob is an expert on the Komodo dragon and Ray a dense reporter who keeps asking Bob questions about the Komodo dragon that Bob has already answered in the previous question.

## Philippines


I had hoped to visit the Philippines twice while working with IFDC, with the objective of the second visit to begin planning for IFDC to conduct the 2nd Asian Regional Fertilizer Marketing Training Program. But, as things turned out, that trip never materialized as, during 1983-84, I started looking for a new job, eventually leaving IFDC in October of 1984. However, four years earlier, I traveled in 1980 to the Philippines for field trips to visit various sites of nitrogen fertilizer trials that FAO was conducting

***Montezuma's Revenge Attacks Intercontinental Manila*** – In the middle of my 1980 visit to the Philippines, I had just returned to Manila from one field trip for a night's stay in the Intercontinental Hotel in Manila's suburb of Makati. FAO had scheduled me to head out early the next morning to visit more fertilizer trial sites. But no sooner than I had returned to Manila, I suddenly felt the return of Montezuma's Revenge, leaving me with an upset stomach, a loss of energy, and the need to run to the bathroom. It was all I could do to check in, get up to my room, throw my stuff down, get undressed, and hop into bed as my body began to shake with the chills. If I couldn't recover by morning, I'd have to bail out of the field trip. I managed to sleep a few hours, awaking in the dark of night and feeling a little better; at least the shaking had stopped. Calling room service, I ordered something light such as chicken noodle soup, bread, and a Coca Cola – and was able to down this light supper. I immediately went back to bed and by morning was feeling well enough that I was able to travel, though I alerted the driver that I would let him know if I suddenly needed to make a pit stop. Fortunately, I didn't and by early afternoon, I was feeling much better, having again beaten back Montezuma's Revenge!

**Intercontinental Hotel, Makati, Manila**

Some 35 years after my 1980 stay in the Intercontinental it was reported that the hotel would close in October 2015, in favor of a new commercial, mixed-use development. Fortunately, I survived my stay in the Intercontinental but its days as a hotel sadly were numbered.

***Revisiting the Old Homestead*** - The opportunity to visit the Philippines in 1980 was most welcome in the wake of my parents having lived there from 1963-68 while my dad worked with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Los Baños. During that period, I spent a semester taking courses at the University of the Philippines College of Agriculture, also located in Los Baños. A trip highlight was visiting IRRI to see its new facilities (e.g., a rice seed bank) and visiting the IRRI housing compound in which our family had once lived.

At the time of my visit, the house's current occupants were Walt Rockwood and his wife. What really struck me though was the main street in the compound, once sunny all day in the early 1960s; now, nearly 20 years later, the street was fully shaded because the trees on each side had grown so much in the tropics that their respective canopies now intertwined creating a tunnel-like effect as one walked or drove up the hill.

**IRRI Staff Housing after Completion of Construction (Arrow indicates Byrnes house)**

**(Photo Courtesy of Carl Johnson)**

## Thailand


In 1981 I traveled to Bangkok, Thailand to run the Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation and provide lecturer support in IFDC's 2nd Fertilizer Marketing Training Program for the Asian Region.

***It Looked Like A Hotel!*** - This fairly intense two-week training program was conducted in partnership with the U.N. Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). While there wasn't much time available for shopping or sightseeing, I managed to pick up some silk clothing (e.g., scarves) for my wife as well as a set of bell-metal tableware in a beautiful teak case. Further, as I had already seen many of Bangkok's tourist sites in 1964 when I first visited Thailand while traveling home to see my parents in the Philippines, I wasn't interested in more sightseeing in Bangkok.

But one day our ESCAP counterpart invited my two IFDC colleagues and me for dinner at his home. Our counterpart picked up the three of us at our hotel and on the way to his home turned into the driveway of what appeared to be a hotel. He parked his car and invited us to come into the building with him. My first thought was that he was inviting us for a drink before dinner.

It quickly became apparent that this was not a hotel but rather a massage parlor. Our counterpart led us into a hallway where the left side was lined with windows through which one could see young women sitting on bleachers. Those sitting on the left set of bleachers wore a number between 1 and 300, while the women sitting on the right set of bleachers wore a number between 301 and 600. If one chose a woman with a number between 1 and 300, the customer received a simple massage, while selecting a woman with a number between 301 and 600 resulted in a full body massage.

In the meantime, all the young women were busy talking to one another or watching TVs hung on the wall above the windows. Our counterpart asked if any of us would like a massage. Without consulting with my colleagues, I replied: "Thank you, very kind, but I think your wife would not be pleased if we arrived late for the dinner." With that, we took our leave and proceeded to our counterpart's home.

***Thai Cuba Libres*** – At the end of our training program, my two colleagues suggested that, before dinner, we go over to a famous hotel for drinks to celebrate a successful training program. I don't recall the exact name of the hotel, possibly it was the President Hotel, but a search on the Internet shows that several Bangkok hotels have "President" in the hotel's name, so I can't say exactly which hotel it was.

We sat in the hotel's lobby bar enjoying our drinks, keeping our eyes on the attractive young women working as cocktail waitresses. One of my colleagues pointed out that these women were not typical of Thai women as they were taller and lighter in skin color, perhaps reflecting that there may have been Europeans among their ancestors. Anyway, we chatted away and ordered another round, mine being a Cuba Libre (Rum Coke). After three Rum Cokes I got up to go to the rest room.

As I made my to the rest room, I realized I was having difficulty walking a straight line, to the point of needing to steady myself by placing my hand on the wall as I walked. When I returned to my seat, both colleagues were having a good laugh, especially when one told me they had told the waitress to make my Cuba Libres with a double shot of rum.

I'd not been that close to being drunk since the evening in 1974 when we had a party to celebrate passing my prelims at Iowa State—and one Colombian friend had generously spiked my Cuba Libres with Ron de Medellín, resulting in the only time in my life when I woke up with a hangover, leaving me having to tell my grandmother a small white lie to explain why we hadn't taken her that morning to Easter Sunday mass.

# Chapter 4 – The Caribbean

## Dominican Republic


Over a period of nearly 35 years, between 1977 and 2011, I traveled eleven times to the Dominican Republic to work on three development issues.

**Agricultural Research Needs** – In 1979 I visited several research institutions to assess their interest in collaborating with IFDC on fertilizer adoption studies. The Instituto Superior de Agricultura (ISA) in Santiago was interested in collaborating with IFDC, until the island was hit by a major hurricane. I was back in the DR in 1979 to review a small farmer fertilizer marketing study and to assess potential for conducting a study on fertilizer adoption. Then, in 1994, I attended a conference on private sector organization support to and collaboration on agricultural research in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region.

**NGO sustainability** – I traveled to the DR in 1994 to plan for an Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) workshop for NGOs. For this workshop, I returned to the DR twice (1995 and 1999) to conduct three-day OMS workshops for Dominican NGOs.

**Trade Capacity Building** – During a 2011 visit to the DR, a colleague and I carried out an assessment for USAID to identify assistance needs that, if addressed, would help the DR to prepare to negotiate a free trade agreement, implement treaty obligations, and adjust the country's productive sectors to take advantage of market opportunities under a FTA with the United States. Our report recommended ways the Mission's economic growth program could be expanded to respond to those trade capacity building needs.

In 2008, during the 3rd round of the Trade Capacity Building Committee meeting for the negotiation of the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), I supported the committee's USAID co-chair by giving a PowerPoint presentation on the conclusions and recommendations of a study that USAID had funded on Trade-Lad Agricultural Diversification (T-LAD).

In 2010, I accompanied a colleague of the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) in visits with the USAID Mission, the Embassy, and DICOEX (the Ministry of Trade office responsible for implementing CAFTA-DR treaty obligations). During this visit I also provided technical support to the USAID Mission, helping with redrafting a scope of work for a tri-project evaluation.

In 2011, during my last visit to the DR, I provided oversight to and assisted a team of contractors with interviews for a “doing agribusiness” assessment.

***The Old Goat & the Speed Trap*** – During my 1979 visit to the Dominican Republic, my IFDC colleague and I attended two days of meetings in Santo Domingo, after which we rented a car to drive to Santiago to meet with Instituto Superior de Agricultura (ISA) staff. My colleague, who was from India, was pleased to discover that the menu in our hotel’s restaurant included a goat entrée that he was most enthusiastic in ordering for his lunch. When the waiter delivered my colleague’s order, he quickly began eating it, until he suddenly stopped and looked up at me, saying with great disappointment: “I think they’ve given me an old goat!”

Our meetings with ISA colleagues went well and they were similarly enthusiastic about the possibility of collaborating with IFDC on a study of adoption of fertilizers by small-scale farmers. The next day, early Sunday morning, we checked out of the hotel to drive back to Santo Domingo. We were about halfway there when I drove our car around a curve and suddenly saw a policeman up ahead flagging our car to pull off the road. On stopping the car, I got out to say hello to the officer who told me I had been driving over the speed limit. At that point I recalled that I had perhaps seen a speed limit sign a mile or two back but had failed to slow down.

I explained to the officer that this was only the second time we had driven on this road and that, not being familiar with it, we had been driving cautiously, even if I had missed seeing the posting of a lower speed limit. The officer didn’t buy it. He explained how a speeding violation is handled. Our car would be impounded until we could go the local court the next day and pay the fine for the speeding ticket. At this point, I told the officer that we’d be happy to pay the fine but that we had to have our car to get back to Santo Domingo that same day. In the back of my mind, I was asking myself how, without the car, were we going to get back to Santo Domingo – and if we didn’t get back that same day, where were we going to spend the night! At the same time, my colleague was nervously whispering to me, as I translated to him what was taking place, “Kerry, what are we going to do?”

It was then that the thought struck me to tell the officer that the reason we had to get back to Santo Domingo was that we had to return our rental car that same day and needed be in Santo Domingo for a meeting early Monday morning with the Minister of Agriculture. When I said “Minister of Agriculture” (the highest level government official I thought I could credibly name drop), the officer’s tone suddenly changed as I explained the meeting’s importance to developing agriculture in the rural areas of the Dominican Republic. The officer then signaled, in effect, OK, you may go but proceed with caution and obey the speed limit. After thanking him for his understanding and signaling to my colleague to get in our car, we waved to the officer and drove off.

As we drove off my colleague asked: “Kerry, what did you tell the officer that resulted in him letting us off the hook?” I replied that I had told him that we had to have our car so that we could get back to Santo Domingo for our meeting early tomorrow morning with the Minister of Agriculture?” My colleague replied: “But we don’t have any meeting with the Minister of Agriculture tomorrow!” I replied: “That’s true but the police officer didn’t know that!”

I should have added: “In any case, I wasn’t going to let that police officer get my goat!” Unfortunately, while we escaped getting a ticket, our goal of getting a fertilizer adoption research project up and running never came to fruition after a devastating hurricane hit the Dominican Republic not long thereafter.

***Don’t Drink the Water!*** – During each of my trips overseas, I carefully avoided drinking water that was not boiled or I drank only bottled water. Similarly, I avoided eating salads since I knew (or feared) that this would be a quick way to come down with an upset stomach or worse. Often when a salad was served, I had to conjure an explanation for not eating the salad that had been placed in front of me.

One time, while on a field trip, we had traveled to a Plan Sierra project site, where our host turned out to be Luis Crouch Sr., whom I had previously met and with whom my father worked closely when dad worked with the International Agricultural Development Service and carried out work to strengthen the Superior Institute of Agriculture (ISA).

Just after we sat down at a picnic table for lunch, the waiters brought not only plates of bread and butter but also plates of salad. All began to eat, with Luis sitting at the head of the table with me to his immediate right. Hungry as I was, I quickly ate some buttered bread but only fiddled with my salad, pushing a leaf of lettuce from one side of the plate to another, and otherwise buttering and eating more bread rolls, I tried to minimize the glaring evidence that I was not eating any of the salad.

Then Luis bent over and whispered to me: “The salads are safe to eat in the Dominican Republic.” Well, he had me, though I did not know for sure if what he said was true in general or, more specifically, true only in the case of the salad sitting in front of me. Knowing that I probably would be close to a rest room later in the day once we reached our destination, I went ahead and ate the salad. Surprisingly, that particular salad did not upset my stomach or lead to a bad case of Montezuma’s Revenge.

Nevertheless, I chalked up this experience as the exception that proves the rule that it’s just not a good idea when traveling overseas to eat salads, in fact, to eat anything that is not cooked or, if fresh, not peeled.

## Jamaica


Over a ten-year period from 1995 to 2005, I traveled six times to Kingston, Jamaica to provide assistance to the USAID Mission or counterpart organizations. The work varied from visit to visit, with no trip entailing travel outside of Kingston. My last four visits were fairly uneventful: in 1997, to discuss a proposed Caribbean Agrobiological Systems Research Program; in 1999, to provide support to a LAC Bureau internal review of the Windward Islands Diversification Project (WIDP) and consult with CARICOM Secretariat technical staff on potential activities to be funded under the USAID-CARICOM MOU for Caribbean Economic Diversification; in 2000, work with USAID Mission staff to amend a USAID grant to the Caribbean Law Institute (CLI) so that work under this grant would be more supportive of the Mission's new Caribbean Regional Strategy; and in 2005, participate in a technical evaluation committee to review contractor proposals for a USAID/Jamaica trade and competitiveness program.

However, what proved the most memorable trips to Jamaica were the first two visits I made in 1995, partnering with a former colleague from Chemonics, to conduct a three-day Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) workshop for Jamaican NGOs; and in 1997, responding to a United States Information Agency (USIA) request to speak to the Jamaica Agricultural Society on "Preparing the Jamaican Agricultural Sector for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

***A Birthday Surprise*** – The only time the Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) workshop was conducted in English took place in Jamaica in 1995. The day that that I arrived in Kingston was not only the day before the workshop was to start but also my birthday. To review local preparations for the workshop, which was to be hosted by the Jamaica Exporters Association (JEA), I met for lunch with Pauline Gray, the JEA Executive Director. When the check arrived, she insisted on picking up the tab, at which point I thanked her and shared that the invitation for lunch was special because that day was my birthday, which of course came as a surprise to her.

But the real surprise actually came two days later in the midst of the workshop when the participants were meeting in small groups to discuss a problem-solving exercise that entailed reviewing a hypothetical case study involving a USAID Request for Proposal for

the Tourist Resources Investment Project (TRIP). The task was for the participants to discuss whether the NGO (FAMA) in the workshop's case study should invest in writing technical and cost proposals to submit to USAID in the hypothetical case study country of Marisol. In the midst of this activity Pauline stopped by the workshop, sat down at the table where I was sitting, picked up a copy of the TRIP RFP, and began reading it with great interest. She wasn't too far into reading the RFP when I saw her eyes open wide and her jaw drop as she said: "This…is…my project!"

After a quick chuckle, I told her "Yes, TRIP is your project." Actually, as I explained to her, I had used the USAID/Jamaica RFP for the Export Support Project that JEA was implementing as a template for creating the TRIP RFP, changing the RFP's "export support" focus to "promoting investment in tourism."

Several years later, I was saddened to learn that Pauline had died in a car accident, her vehicle overturning as she was attempting to ford a stream in rural Jamaica.

***"What We've Got Here Is Failure to Communicate!"*** – A second opportunity to visit Jamaica arose two years later in 1997. At the time, my employer, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), had received a request from the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) for a USDA employee to speak to the Jamaica Agricultural Society on "Preparing the Jamaican Agricultural Sector for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)." At the time, I was working for USAID under a contract with USDA. As it happened, one day my USAID supervisor was talking with a USDA colleague (my boss) who said that USDA didn't have anyone available to respond to the USIA request. But my USAID supervisor said that USDA did have a person who could be sent, proposing that USDA send me, since I was a USDA employee and was working at USAID on USAID's Hemispheric Free Trade Expansion (HFTE) project. Thus, I was very familiar with the ongoing FTAA negotiation process and could speak to potential challenges for Jamaica in entering into a free trade agreement with the U.S. and other LAC countries participating in the FTAA.

I took on the assignment in mid-September and, I thought, completed it successfully. But I was later surprised to receive an October 19th cable from the U.S. Information Service (USIS) in Jamaica to USIA in Washington, DC, with copy to Secretary of State Madeline Albright. The cable's misrepresentation of facts surrounding my assignment compelled me to draft a cable to set the record straight. Information from the USIS cable is shared below in the response cable I drafted to explain my side of the story.

Please note that all of the names (except mine) in my draft cable are fictitious (i.e., I changed the real names to protect the innocent or, as the case may be, the guilty).

DT: December 17, 1997

TO: Cora Tacker, USAID/Jamaica Mission Director

CC: Jerry Bauer, Team Leader, USAID/LAC/RSD/BBEG

Cynthia Garber, USDA/FAS, and Arthur Denton, USDA/FAS/ICD/DRD/IIP

FR: Kerry J. Byrnes, Institutional Development Advisor, LAC TECH (USDA/FAS)

RE: Reference USIS/Jamaica (Fisher) 10/9/97 Cable to USIA/Washington (Smith)

The October 9, 1997 cable from Joseph Fisher (USIS/Jamaica) to Henry Smith (USIA/Washington) contains statements that do not correspond with the facts and, in so doing, unfairly describe my performance in responding to a USIS request for USDA assistance to Post.

The problematic statements are as follows: "Program...failed to meet the expectations of JAS or Post, due primarily to changes made at the last moment by Dr. Byrnes." "Dr. Byrnes had insisted on a number of changes. ... It later became apparent that Dr. Byrnes had been making alternate arrangements for some weeks. Post had simply been uninformed. Post regrets that in the end this program was not what we requested, and not what Dr. Byrnes had agreed to undertake. ... We have conferred with USAID Kingston and are satisfied that they were unaware while pursuing requests from Dr. Byrnes that he was in fact on a USIS program."

The truth of the matter is that Post, through USIS and USDA, failed to make clear to USAID and me, early on, what were "the expectations of JAS or Post." What I had learned, from my USAID supervisor and contacts at USDA, was that Post sought to have someone from USDA speak to the Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS) on "preparing Jamaica's agricultural sector for the FTAA [Free Trade Area of the Americas]." My USAID supervisor had learned of this request from USDA (Cynthia Garber, FAS) and had indicated to her that, based on USDA's concerns about the request, USDA might want to consider asking me to give the presentation. My supervisor told me about that conversation and I followed up with Garber, providing her a description of my work on USAID's Hemispheric Free Trade Expansion (HFTE) project as well as a copy of my CV. She subsequently informed me that USDA/FAS agreed to have me give the talk and provided me a copy of the request USDA had received from USIS/USIA. On reading the information, I was concerned that the request implied that more was being asked (e.g., that the person would be responsible for organizing/delivering a three-day workshop). I checked both with Garber and Smith (USIA) about this point and was assured that the request from Post was only for me to give the aforementioned talk. Subsequently, including weekend time at home, I worked on putting together the talk including a set of overhead transparencies and handouts.

Two administrative points need to be clarified here. First, the costs of TDYs by LAC TECH advisors (the project to which I'm assigned) traditionally have been covered under project core funding. In some cases, in recent years, Missions (under USAID reengineering) did Operating Year Budget (OYB) transfers or other mechanisms to fund some advisor TDYs. However, where the source of the request for technical support was coming from an agency beyond a USAID field mission (e.g., the IDB), LAC/RSD agreed to provide the advisor but

with his/her full costs continuing to be covered by the LAC TECH project. I checked with my USAID supervisor about this and was advised to inform USIA that USAID preferred to cover the costs of my TDY to Jamaica, in part, because this ensured that the advisor was under the auspices of LAC/RSD and that the advisor's mission represented USAID's joint support to the activity in question. USIA (Smith) indicated that this arrangement was acceptable.

Second, I put my travel request (copy attached) into our HFTE Lotus Notes data base to request G/AFS (the administrative unit where LAC TECH is assigned under reengineering) and LAC/RSD approval to carry out the Jamaica TDY. Further, I sent a request by e-mail to the Mission for country clearance to present the talk to the JAS in response to the request from USIA/USIS. I also indicated that I hoped as part of the trip to meet with Mission staff about USAID/Jamaica programs and to follow up with a Jamaican counterpart (Ms. Gloria French of the Jamaica Fair Trade Commission) as regards one of the HFTE project activities on competition policy in collaboration with the FTC/DOJ. The Mission granted the country clearance.

As the date of the TDY approached, Smith faxed to me more information about the seminar with the JAS, namely, a matrix which indicated that Post had arranged to program my time for a full three days, including a one-day field trip and additional meetings beyond that involved in giving the talk, including meeting with the media. I contacted Smith to let him know that the proposed (*de facto*) agenda went far beyond what USIA/USDA had led me to believe was being requested, thus, far beyond what I had agreed to deliver. Second, I indicated, based on previous experience with USAID/Jamaica, not only that I personally did not want to deal with the media but that I could not talk to the media unless USAID first cleared this. Further, I said that I would not talk to the media unless USIA arranged for clearance of this with USAID/Washington (my client), USDA/FAS (my employer), USAID/ Jamaica (the entity issuing the country clearance), and the U.S. Embassy.

I was subsequently informed by Mr. Smith that he had reviewed this with Post and that Post had cut back the program to that which I understood had originally been requested and had been agreed to by me. He clarified that I would not have to deal with the media and that the field trip had been cancelled but that Post would still like me to meet with the JAS for a breakfast meeting the day before my presentation and for a debriefing the morning after the presentation. I agreed to that request.

As regards the debriefing, I felt this was useful but feel that it would be unfair to say that the briefing "may have been the most productive element of the program, because it brought together members of JAS with Embassy agricultural and commercial staff." First, my talk provided the JAS with information about the FTAA process that they had not previously had opportunity to receive in a comprehensive and systematic manner. Second, it appeared that my TDY served to bring together groups (i.e., the JAS and the Embassy agricultural and commercial staff) that apparently, and unfortunately, had not been in active communication with one another. Sometimes, it would appear, it takes the intervention of an outside consultant to help insiders get beyond a communication impasse, but I think it is unfair to leave the impression that my presentation on preparing Jamaica's agricultural sector for the

FTAA may not have been “the most productive element of the program.” Rather the session was catalytic in bring together parties that should have been in communication with one another regardless of whether I came down to give a talk.

It also is unfair for Post to state: “It later became apparent, I am sorry to say, that Dr. Byrnes had been making alternate arrangements for some weeks. Post had simply been uninformed. Post regrets that in the end this program was not what we requested, and not what Dr. Byrnes had agreed to undertake.” Also the cable implies that I misled USAID/Jamaica as regard the purpose of my visit.

I previously had reviewed this “communication breakdown” situation with my USAID supervisor. This past week I learned from Dr. Cora Tacker (USAID/Jamaica Mission Director) about this existence of the subject cable, at which point I provided her a verbal summary of the information reported in this memo. This morning, Dr. Tacker's secretary gave me a copy of the subject cable and I returned to my hotel to prepare this summary.

I did not try to change the USIA program, only to do my best to deliver what I originally had agreed to provide based on the information that had been made available. Where there was confusion in that information as regards expectations, I tried to get that clarified with USDA (Garber) and USIA/Washington (Smith). I at no time “insisted” on changing the program, only tried to get a clarification as regard what I was making a commitment to deliver.

Further, in support of this memo, I’m attaching the e-mails I sent to USAID/Jamaica (Victoria Farmer) and to USIA/Washington (Smith) as regards trying to arrange the subject TDY. These e-mails and the attached copies of my approved trip request and USAID/Jamaica country clearance cable will provide further substantiation of the above summary of the events in question.

Thus, it is not fair to leave me in the position of being made a scapegoat for an unfortunate set of circumstances that were not of my own making. Unfortunately, Post’s cable has unfairly assassinated my professional reputation by reporting misrepresentations of the events that transpired (or never happened) and made assertions about my motives and professional behavior. During my visit to Jamaica, where I met with Mr. Fisher on several occasions, he never made known to me the extent of his concerns. However, I did try my best to assure him that I understood the concerns he did share, while also trying to ensure he understood that I tried to deliver exactly what I had agreed to do (i.e., provide a talk on preparing Jamaica’s agricultural sector for the FTAA).

Those circumstances included my unwillingness to meet with the media unless that was cleared with appropriate bodies (apparently USIA/USIS chose not to pursue getting that clearance with USAID and/or the Embassy). They also included that I agreed to prepare and deliver the subject talk on top of an already busy workload back in my office; I certainly was not looking to make a trip to Jamaica, only to be supportive of U.S. foreign policy as regards providing technical support to the smaller-economy countries to assist them in preparing for the FTAA.

> In closing, in light of the above summary, and after appropriate review of this matter by USAID/Jamaica, USIS/Jamaica, and USIA/Washington, I request USIS/Jamaica (Fisher) to issue a cable to USIA (Smith), with copy of USAID/LAC/RSD/BBEG and USDA/FAS, to clarify the events that transpired, especially as regard the insinuation that I purposively kept USAID/Jamaica in the dark about my TDY's purpose and that I changed the program at the last minute. In effect, Post owes an apology to USAID/Jamaica, to USAID/W, to USDA/FAS, and to me.

The truth of the matter was, as in the film *Cool Hand Luke* (1967), that a communication breakdown had occurred between Post (USIS/Jamaica), USIA/Washington (Smith), USDA, and USAID as regards fully making clear the scope of the program request, the terms under which USAID was making me available, and ensuring that all parties were in agreement on that scope.


I had no contact with USIS/Jamaica in the pre-TDY period and did not know how planning for my visit was handled (or mishandled) between USIA/W (Smith) and USIS/J (Annette Harper) in the absence of Mr. Fisher (who at the time was on home leave), or between Mr. Fisher's office (i.e. Ms. Harper) and USAID/Jamaica (e.g., Ms. Farmer) prior to Mr. Fisher being away from Post in the period prior to my arrival. I hoped that, beyond a cable apology to me, this would facilitate identifying improved communication measures among these agencies in order to avoid future communication breakdowns and negative consequences.

In the end, after sharing this draft with my USAID supervisor, he felt that it would not be in my interest to stir the pot or fan the flames any further, and that it would be best, as it were, to leave sleeping dogs lay. Also, he argued, part of the "blame" was his insistence that the cost of my trip to Jamaica for this assignment would be covered by our project funds rather than by USIS funds. Indeed, although not stated in USIS' cable to USIA, USIS had wanted to use their funds to cover my trip costs because the end of the fiscal year was near and USIS wanted to make sure their books showed that all their funds had been used.

As with any USG agency, ending the fiscal year with unspent funds in your budget leaves that agency at risk that Congress will conclude that the agency really didn't need all the funding they received for that year, with the Congress then deciding the agency's budget can be cut. Thus, perhaps the real reason behind USIS being upset was that their fiscal year ended not having spent their entire budget. So guess who was made the scapegoat for that?

***Gun Shy with the Media*** – My unwillingness to speak to the media during my 1999 visit to Jamaica to give a talk to the JEA on the FTAA, unless that had been cleared up and down the USG chain of command, was based on the repercussions of a similar request I received from USAID/Jamaica during my first 1997 visit to Jamaica to conduct the Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) workshop for a number of Jamaican NGOs.

**Pegasus Hotel, Kingston, Jamaica**

On the day I arrived in Jamaica and went to the USAID Mission to report to my "control officer," she mentioned that a local radio station had a weekly radio program that was broadcast from the Hotel Pegasus where I was staying. That program was scheduled for early the next morning and the station had invited me to be on the program and be interviewed about the OMS workshop. Not knowing better, I agreed to do this. The next morning, after an early breakfast, I went to the hotel's bar (from which the radio program was broadcast) to meet the panel of Jamaicans who would be interviewing me.

When the program went live, I was introduced and the panel asked me a few questions which I tried to answer as factually, constructively, and tactfully as I could, putting the emphasis on describing the types of capacity building for NGO sustainability the workshop would cover. At the end of the interview, the panel thanked me and off I went to prepare for the workshop.

Later that day I received a request from USAID Jamaica to come to the Mission and meet with the Mission's media officer. On arriving that officer told me that I had not been

authorized to appear on that morning's radio program. Apparently, some high placed official in the USG (the U.S. Ambassador, the USIS director, the Agricultural Attaché, or the USAID Mission Director) happened to have listened to the interview and he or she was in a position to know my appearance had not been cleared with the USG chain of command.

However, I felt I hadn't done anything wrong; rather I had been responsive to what my USAID "control officer" had requested. What happened was that the "control officer" was a relatively new USAID hire and also unaware that approval of the request for me to appear on the program needed to be run through proper channels. That had not taken place; hence the "proper channels" were out of the loop and very surprised to hear a USDA official speaking on behalf of USAID. Well, live and learn. After this experience, I always dodged media requests, especially when they came from a USG agency, by saying that I wasn't authorized to respond to the request unless the request had been run through and approved by the appropriate USG channels.

***Rules Are Rules*** – My last trip to Jamaica entailed working on a technical review committee that been convened to review technical proposals that consulting firms had submitted for a new project the Mission was seeking to implement. The panel included two Mission staff (a technical officer and a program officer who was the chair), two Jamaicans, and myself as a representative from USAID's LAC Bureau. On arriving in Kingston and checking into my hotel room on a Monday afternoon, I walked over to the Mission to meet with the committee chair who gave me the set of technical proposal that the consulting firms had submitted, and then I returned to my hotel room to start reading through each proposal, making notes in the proposal or on a comment sheet, and trying to reach my own conclusion as to which proposal was the best.

Determining which proposal was best was based on scoring each of proposals on four criteria: the consulting firm's understanding of the development problem that the project was to address; the firm's proposed technical approach for addressing the problem; the technical quality of the team proposed by the firm to implement the project; and one or another fourth criteria (e.g., the capacity of the firm's home office to backstop or support the Jamaica-based team in implementing the project). Each of these criteria also had a varying number of sub-criteria to consider; overall, as I recall, there was a total of some 97 sub-criteria, although the four general criteria were weighted, say, 15%, 35%, 40%, and 10%, respectively, with each criteria being assigned a score ranging from 1 to 10.

By Wednesday morning I had read all the proposals and had marked each with notes to highlight strengths and/or weaknesses. I then filled in the scoring sheets to provide my estimate of how many points each proposal merited for each of the four criteria, after which I summed each proposal's assigned points to determine the total points for each proposal, thus making it possible to rank the proposals from high to low. Then, for the

highest rated proposal, I wrote a short memo outlining the things that I saw in the highest rated proposal that merited rating it as the best proposal.

So late Wednesday afternoon I went back over to the Mission to turn in my assessment of the proposals and discuss with the committee chair what time the committee was to meet on Thursday to discuss the proposals and try to reach a consensus as to which of the proposals the committee as a whole felt was the best proposal. Then I learned that the committee chair had discovered that the other USAID staff person who was on the committee had been distracted by some other crisis during the week and had not been able to read the proposals and would not be ready to participate in the technical review committee meeting on Thursday. This raised the prospect that my trip to Jamaica was going to be extended into the following week.

The committee chair told me he had reviewed the situation with the contracting officer, proposing that we go ahead with convening the technical review committee meeting on Thursday (without the participation of the member who had not yet read the proposals) and reach a consensus as to which proposal was best – and then that the committee chair could review this decision in the light of how the other staff member ranked the proposals, once those rankings became available, to see if any adjustment needed to be made as to which firm had submitted the best proposal. However, the contracting officer would not accept this “solution” and said that all the technical review committee members needed to be present in order to hold the technical review committee meeting. Rules are rules that need to be followed! At this point, the chair and I agreed I should return home the next day on my scheduled flight out of Kingston.

After a couple of weeks passed, I received a phone call from the committee chair who told me that the contracting officer had reviewed the scoring sheets submitted by the committee members and had concluded that we had not complied with the rules that we should have followed in reviewing the proposals. According to the contracting officer, the committee members had only assigned scores (between 1 and 10) for each of the four general criteria for evaluating the proposals. The contracting officer, however, took the position that we were required to assign a score (between 1 and 10) to each of the 97 sub-criteria—and that the contracting officer needed to reconvene all the committee members so that each could score each of the 97 sub-criteria on a scale of 1 to 10. Notably, contracting officers are the first to want that all the rules be followed so that the risk is reduced of having a consulting firm submit a legal protest that they lost because USAID had not followed the rules. Rules are rules!

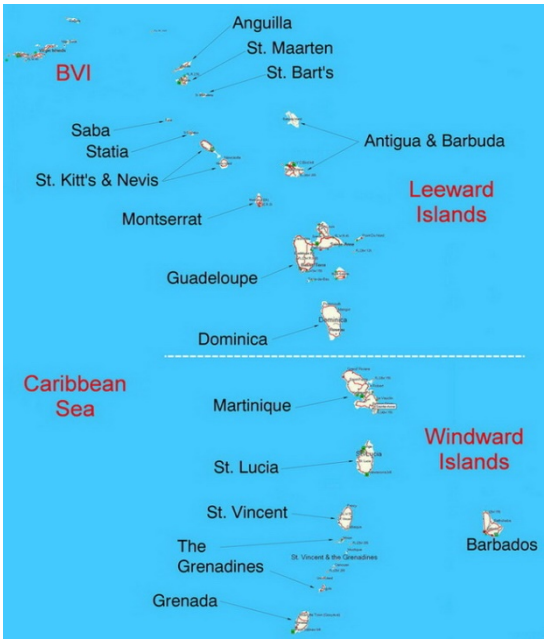
By this time, however, I was busy on another office-based assignment and with other overseas travel pending didn’t see having any flexibility to return to Jamaica, especially if the driving reason for the trip was just so that the rules could be followed. Further, I felt that the contracting office had set up an impossible situation; since I already had

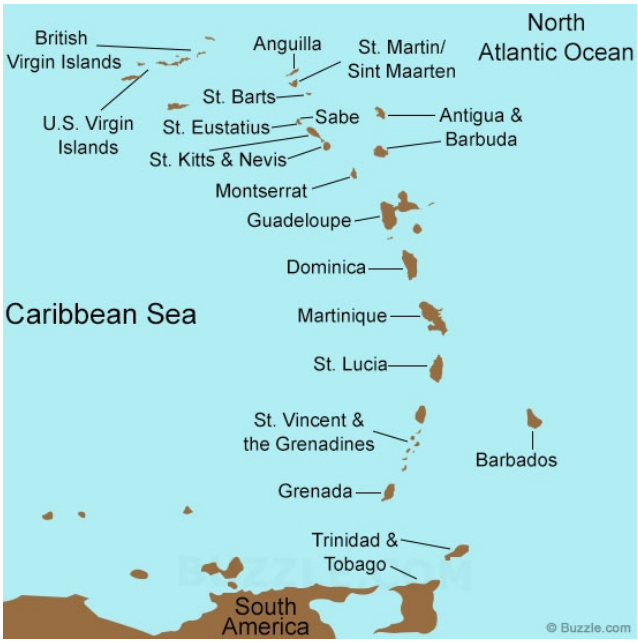
decided which firm had the best proposal, all I was going to do was “fudge” the numbers in my scoring of the 97 sub-criteria and do this for each of the consulting firm proposals, so that the overall result would be the same–which I felt was not exactly being objective, plus would be a really onerous task. What to do?  Rules are rules that must be followed!


Then I realized that there was a rule to the effect that the technical review committee only needed to have three people – and already had four people when one counted the committee chair, his USAID colleague, and the two Jamaicans. In effect, I didn’t need to return to Jamaica in order for the work of the committee to proceed. This I proposed to the committee chair who agreed I was off the hook. Thankfully at times, while rules are rules that need to be followed, following them sometimes works in one’s favor!

## Eastern Caribbean

For many years USAID's assistance to the **Eastern Caribbean** countries was managed by USAID's Regional Development Office for the Caribbean (RDO/C) in Bridgetown, Barbados. My trips to the region generally entailed visiting more than one country to carry out an assignment, sometimes at the request of RDO/C and other times to support activities that USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC Bureau) was managing.




Over a 15-year period from 1989 to 2004, I visited the **Eastern Caribbean** ten times, each trip entailing visits to one or more of six island countries (**Barbados**, **Dominica**, **Grenada**, **St. Lucia**, **Trinidad and Tobago**, and **St. Vincent & the Grenadines**), plus one visit to **Guyana** (located in northeast South America on the southern end of the Caribbean).

***Stop the Presses*** - In the fall of 1989, USAID's LAC Bureau tasked me with putting together and leading a team to conduct a Congressionally-mandated study to identify common problems facing agricultural producers in the Caribbean Basin, and means to address these problems. This study entailed organizing my first TDY (temporary duty) assignment to countries in the LAC region. Working with a team of consultants that we hired for the study, during late 1989 and early 1999, I organized several trips for two different teams to various countries of Central America and the Caribbean, with one team visiting the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic, while the other team (including me) traveled to the Caribbean, specifically, to the island countries of **St. Lucia** and **Trinidad**, plus a visit to **Costa Rica**. Our final report was titled the "Joint Agricultural Research and Extension Feasibility (JAREF) Study."

When all of the information collected by the team was compiled and analyzed into a draft report, it fell on my shoulders to edit the draft into a final document to present the study's finding, conclusions, and recommendations. In the midst of getting the report reviewed by USAID and ready to go to the printer, my USAID supervisor and I made a short trip to Orlando to meet with the Florida Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association (FFVA), a meeting that brought to light that the FFVA had been the impetus behind asking the Congress for greater funding to support agricultural research and extension services to help farmers address problems (e.g., the Mediterranean Fruit Fly) within the Caribbean and Central America before those problems became even bigger problems for the U.S. fresh fruit and vegetable industry.

While our report outlined a rationale for greater collaboration among U.S., Central American, and Caribbean researchers on a range of problems affecting fruit and vegetable production and marketing, our draft proposed as a vehicle for addressing this challenge that USAID fund the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) to mount a multi-country project to foster developing the required research and extension support services.

However, after my USAID supervisor and I had met with FFVA officials and were flying to Miami for a meeting there, my supervisor in the middle of the flight came up with a whole new idea as a vehicle to address the challenge, having USAID foster the creation of a Caribbean Basin Growers Association (CBGA). Realizing that this is not what our draft report had proposed, I bought this to the attention of my supervisor who apparently had not yet read the report, at the same time fearing that a USAID colleague back in the office may already have sent the report to the printer for dozens of copies to be made. I told my boss that our team hadn't proposed a CBGA as a vehicle for USAID support but rather IICA, and asked if I should phone his office to instruct that the report NOT be sent to the printer.

My supervisor agreed and I immediately dashed to a pay phone in the airport to call my USAID colleague in Washington, DC to ask if the report had already been sent to the printer. Fortunately, he had not sent the report and I quickly added: “Stop the presses!” as, based on new information, I needed to revise the report.

***Yet Another Report on the Shelf*** – In 1991, RDO/C in Bridgetown, Barbados asked me to carry out a study to identify human resource development training needs in the agricultural sector of the Eastern Caribbean. After discussing the assignment with my USAID counterpart in Barbados, I worked out a schedule for consultations in **Barbados**, **Dominica**, **St. Lucia**, and **Trinidad**. At the outset, I really didn’t have much of a sense what I would find, conclude, and recommend. After many meetings and consultations in each country, listening to what interviewees voiced as their needs for training, I focused on three key areas where I saw a need for human resource training, prioritizing those as follows: policy dialogue and reform, agribusiness development, and agriculture- and environment- related research.

I submitted my report titled “An Assessment of Human Resource Development Training Needs in the Eastern Caribbean Agricultural Sector.” While I expected the Mission to provide some feedback on the report, no feedback was received. Some years later I ran into the man who was my USAID counterpart on the assignment and asked him: “What became of the report I did for the Mission on priorities for addressing human resource training needs in the Eastern Caribbean?” He replied, perhaps with some truth, “Oh, the same as all the reports we receive from consultants. We put it on the shelf!”

***The Sun Never Sets on the CARDI Empire*** – In 1992, RDO/C asked me to develop a strategy for privatizing selected agricultural research and extension functions of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI). Visits to and consultations in **Barbados**, **St. Lucia**, **St. Vincent**, and **Trinidad** resulted in a draft report. However, before giving a seminar on the report to CARDI staff, I had shared the draft report with CARDI's director general and a few key staff. On meeting with them, I was surprised that none attending the meeting had any real qualm with the report's contents but they were a bit put off by the draft report's original title: "Privatized Technology Generation and Transfer: The Sun Never Sets on the CARDI Empire."

While the DG recognized that to avoid the sun setting on CARDI, the institute and its programs would need to become less dependent on donor funds and more sustainable through a more diverse mix of income sources (e.g., the private sector), he stressed that CARDI never felt that it, in any way, had an "empire." I took that feedback to heart and rewrote the report title to read: "Privatized Technology Generation and Transfer: One Small Step for CARDI, One Giant Leap for Caribbean Agriculture." Of course, in the end, the question was whether CARDI would implement any of the report's "small step" recommendations.


***Arrival of the Cruise Ship*** – In 1998, the LAC Bureau tasked me to travel to **Dominica** to attend a Georgetown University Workshop on "Transforming Small Island Economies and Societies in Preparation for the 21st Century." One morning, on the margins of the workshop, I walked a few blocks to a restaurant overlooking the port where one or more cruise ships arrived daily. A ship had just arrived and was disembarking its passengers by the hundreds. As passengers came on shore, dozens of taxi cab drivers greeted them, trying to pique their interest into booking a tour by car of the port city of Roseau or beyond. While a not insignificant portion of city's economy depends on tourists spending money while ashore, one is left wondering how a small island, with limited employment opportunities other than landing a government job, can develop a more sustainable economy without at the same time destroying the environment. In fact, that was one of the issues discussed during the workshop.

**A Cruise Ship Docked at the Port of Roseau, Dominica**

***Not Our Baby!*** - In 1999, the LAC Bureau tasked me with serving on a team to conduct an internal review of the Windward Islands Diversification Project (WIDP). This entailed travel to **Grenada**, **Guyana**, **St. Vincent**, and **Trinidad**, and meetings with CARICOM Secretariat technical staff on potential activities that could be funded under the USAID-CARICOM MOU for Caribbean Economic Diversification. During stops in each country, we consulted with project beneficiaries to identify project achievements, constraints to more effective project implementation, and potential activities meriting support under the project.

On return home, one of my colleagues in the LAC Bureau took the lead in drafting our report, after which he shared it with me for review and comment. On reading the report I quickly saw that the LAC Bureau's underlying motive in undertaking the internal review was to make a case for USAID to reestablish capacity in the Eastern Caribbean region to manage regional projects, since by this time the RDO/C Mission in Barbados had been closed and management of regional projects was being carried out by staff in the LAC Bureau's front office or by the Office of Regional Sustainable Development in which I worked.

Generally, the review found that the activities managed by my office were highly rated by implementing counterparts and project beneficiaries, whereas the activities managed by the Bureau's front office were not as favorably rated. But the way that the report was written left the impression that those poorly rated projects had been managed by the office in which I worked, not by the Bureau's front office – and that this was additional evidence why USAID needed to reestablish capacity within the Caribbean to manage regional projects from within the region rather than from Washington, DC.

I met with my colleague who wrote the draft report and pointed out that the report was incorrect in stating that the poorly rated activities were being managed by the office in which I worked, since those activities were managed by the Bureau's front office – and our office had not been not involved in the design, implementation, or management of any of those activities. In short, those poorly rated activities were "not our baby!" In the end, the report was rewritten in a way that was factually correct but yet recommended reestablishing, within the Caribbean, a more regionally-based presence to design, fund, and manage projects within the Eastern Caribbean. As it turned out, the authority to manage project activities within the Eastern Caribbean was placed on the shoulders of the USAID Mission in Jamaica.

***Polynesian Cuisine vs. Trinidadian Roti*** – My last trip to the Eastern Caribbean was in 2002, when I returned to **Trinidad** for an OAS-sponsored conference on "Trade-Related Capacity Building: Focus on the Americas." While the conference was held at the Hilton Hotel, I opted instead for the Kapok Hotel, where I had been a guest during previous visits to Port of Spain.

kapok HOTEL TRINIDAD, W.I.

**Tiki Village Restaurant in the Kapok Hotel, Port of Spain, Trinidad**

I preferred the Kapok because of the hotel's Tiki Village restaurant that featured Asian/Polynesian cuisine. As the hotel's website states: "**Tiki Village** puts you in the treetops, serving up one of the most breath-taking panoramic views in Trinidad. This paired with the restaurant's famous Asian/Polynesian cuisine makes Tiki Village a real feast for your senses."

To my taste, given the choice between Polynesian cuisine and Roti, the former wins out hands down over the latter. Indeed, during my first visit to Trinidad in 1989, when I first visited the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), one of CARDI's staff had introduced me to Roti. That day CARDI had sent a car to pick me up at the hotel and take me to CARDI. As the driver turned off the highway to take the road to CARDI, I saw a Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) outlet, taking note that this might be a good place to have lunch.

As the lunch hour neared, and before having a chance to propose that we go to lunch at the KFC, my host insisted on taking me for Roti – and I'm asking myself: "What is Roti?" Roti, popular in the Caribbean, consists of a curry stew folded tightly in a Dhalpuri or Paratha roti (similar to a large wheat tortilla). The stew within a Roti (wrap) generally contains potatoes and a meat such as beef, chicken, duck, goat, conch, or shrimp. For me, no way on the last four of those options! Well, I gave a beef or chicken roti a try but was not impressed; indeed, said to myself, never again!

As in the James Bond movie, sometimes it's hard to "Never Say Never Again." On my next visit to CARDI in 1991, I spotted that same KFC and said to myself that the way to get to lunch at the KFC would be to invite my CARDI colleague to go to the KFC as my guest. When the time for lunch arrived, I said to him: "Let's go to the KFC for lunch, my treat!" But he quickly responded: "No, let me take you for Roti," apparently forgetting he had already introduced me to Roti two years before in 1989.

# Chapter 5 – Central America

## Costa Rica


From 1987 to 2008 I visited Costa Rica nine times for various assignments in support of USAID's LAC Bureau or Regional Office for Central American Programs (ROCAP) that was first managed from Guatemala City and later by USAID's El Salvador Mission with E/CAM as the regional program's acronym. While Costa Rice, las also with Panama, is no technically considered part of Central America, this country is included here along with its Central American neighbors to the north and Panama to the south.

***Was I Ever in Costa Rica Before?*** – Actually, the very first time that I was in Costa Rica occurred in 1986, while serving as Co-Leader of a team working on an evaluation of two USAID/Panama-funded projects — Agriculture Technology Development and Agricultural Technology Transfer, the former implemented by Rutgers University and the latter by Chemonics (a consulting firm). My role in the team was to lead the evaluation of the Agricultural Technology Transfer (ATT) project.

While carrying out the evaluation of the ATT project, I traveled with the project's chief of party to several rural areas to visit project sites. One of these areas was in the town of David in western Panama. It was close to noon and I was getting hungry, so I asked my counterpart when and where we might stop for lunch. He indicated that just up ahead there was a restaurant alongside the road and near the Costa Rican border where we would stop for lunch. On reaching the restaurant, our driver pulled off the road into the restaurant's parking lot and we got out of the car and entered the restaurant that was actually located not in Panama but in Costa Rica. Was I Ever in Costa Rica Before? Indeed, I was; I once had lunch there – and without even having to go through passport control!

***My First Assignment in Tico Land*** – In September 1987 I was, as they say, between engagements, taking on freelance consulting assignments as they came along — and that I had confidence I could complete successfully without falling on my face. At the time ROCAP was supporting PROEXAG, a regional project to promote production and export of non-traditional crops (e.g., melons). The PROEAXG work plan for Costa Rica called for conducting a workshop on extension methods for the extension staff working with the Consejo Agropecuario Agroindustrial Privado (CAAP), the project's counterpart implementing partner in Costa Rica.

PROEXAG was being implemented by a project team in Guatemala City, Guatemala and backstopped in Washington, DC by the consulting firm (Chemonics International) that held the PROEXAG contract. One day I received a call from Chemonics inquiring if I'd be interested in taking on this extension methods workshop assignment. At the time I had no idea how previous connections and contacts were instrumental in landing the assignment. Chemonics had rounded up three potential candidates for the assignment and floated those names with José Oromi, PROEXAG's training officer, whom I had met the year before in Quevedo, Ecuador, while doing an assignment for the Academy for Educational Development (AED).

Of the three candidates for the workshop facilitator, José later told me, the only person he knew personally was me; and, based on having gotten to know me a bit while dining together in Quevedo's Hotel Olímpico, José recommended me for this assignment. On the other hand, Emilia Roberts, the Chemonics person who floated the three names with José, had previously been employed by a competitor consulting firm, Winrock International, where she had been my father's secretary. Yes, it's a small world after all and the stars were aligning in my favor!

Getting this assignment really helped get me over an insecurity hump, as I was able to go to a country I had never been to before (except for that lunch I had in Costa Rica a year before in 1986), bring past training experience and training resources to bear, and in less than two weeks design and deliver in Spanish a two-day extension methods training course for the Tico extension workers employed by a local organization (CAAP) to carry out extension activities in support of helping Tico farmers to learn how to grow and export non-traditional agricultural crops.

Years later my wife Sonia told me something my father had told her about that two-plus year period (1985-87) when I was “between engagements” (i.e., not a full-time salaried employee and otherwise trying to land short-term consulting assignments). Having to become a consultant during that period, my father had told Sonia, was the best thing that had ever happened to me – it forced me to gain a measure of confidence and maturity that I previously lacked.

I was fortunate that during most of this two-year period, excepting two consulting gigs in Pakistan, I was afforded opportunity to carry out all my consulting in Central American and South American countries, where I could continue to apply and develop my fluency in Spanish. This paid off handsomely a couple of years later when I landed a job with Chemonics as a senior advisor working on the USAID-funded Latin America and Caribbean Agriculture and Rural Development Technical Services (LAC TECH) Project.

Five years later, in 1992, again in response to a USAID/ROCAP technical assistance request, I returned to Costa Rica to work with CINDE’s Agricultural Division to design and conduct a four-day Technical Assistance Program Design Course. The visit also included allocating time to prepare a scope of work for a study of the “Organization and Financing of the Agricultural Research Program of CINDE’s División Agrícola.”

***Melons to Markets*** – In 1989, while working with USAID’s Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) under a CDIE contract with Labat-Anderson, Inc. (a small business firm), I visited three Central American countries – Honduras, Guatemala, and Costa Rica – to carry out interviews with entrepreneurs who had been successful in learning how to grow and export melons as a non-traditional agricultural export (NTAE) crop. Based on some initial interviewing of melon growers in Honduras, I developed a detailed survey questionnaire.

However, when I field tested the questionnaire, I found it unworkable in terms of getting respondents to answer each question. After this, with the questions in the back of my mind (and a cheat sheet in front of me), I took a different approach to the interviews. Once respondents gave permission for me to type their responses into my laptop, I took a more conversational approach, allowing respondents to talk about their experiences and using their responses as a basis for asking follow up questions, all the time typing into the laptop as much of their responses as my typing speed allowed me to capture. Later I massaged the information entered in my laptop into a narrative, following an outline for the issues my report was to cover. Eventually, the study became available as "From Melon Patch to Market Place: How They Learned to Export a Non-Traditional Crop" and "Central American Melon Exporters:  22 Case Studies."

One of the most interesting interviews I did while collecting data for my study on melon entrepreneurs occurred in Guanacaste on a farm that traditionally planted much of its land to rice. I quickly realized this interview was not with a typical *campesino* (poor corn-growing subsistence farmer) when the interviewee (owner of the farm) drove up to the location for our meeting in a black Mercedes-Benz sedan. During the interview, I asked him why, with all of the land he had for growing rice, had he gotten into growing melons. He replied candidly and, basically, along the following lines.

> "Well, you see, I do have a lot of land, we do quite nicely growing rice, and we'll always be well off growing rice but, with the costs of production, taxes, and rising prices, we'll never  get rich growing rice for sale in the Costa Rican domestic market. But it's different with melons. They are an export crop and earn U.S. dollars."

Further, at the time, the Government of Costa Rica was encouraging export-led growth, so there were also tax advantages for allocating land to and investing in growing higher-value export crops such as melons, which would earn US dollars in foreign exchange.


***Conferences and Workshops*** – Not surprisingly, in the development field, workshops are frequently being held where development academics, evaluators, and practitioners meet to share their experiences from research, evaluations, and practice — and I had the opportunity to attend several such workshops, including the following:

- In 1989, the IICA/PROEXAG-sponsored Workshop on Priorities for Agricultural Research and Technical Support for Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports.
- In 1991, an ILO/PREALC-sponsored conference Workshop on Socio- Economic Effects of Promoting Non-Traditional Crop Exports in Central America. On the workshop's margins, I collaborated with a ROCAP colleague in writing a concept paper for a proposed Sustainable Environmental Protection and Agricultural Trade (SEPAT) project.
- In 1996, the Fifth International Congress of the Latin American and Caribbean Association of Agricultural Economists (ALACEA).
- In 2008, the International Workshop of Experts on the Contribution of Agriculture and the Rural Environment to Sustainable Development in the New International Context, where I also served as moderator of a panel on "Country Access: Trade Liberalization and Agriculture in the Americas."

In retrospect, as I also realized at the time, attending these workshops was not the most exciting, productive, or rewarding part of my work as all too often it was "work" to have to listen to poorly presented papers that relied on illegible PowerPoint presentations as the result of presenters trying to squeeze more text into a visual by using small fonts – of course, a crime of which I also was all too often guilty!

What I found immensely more enjoyable was conducting training courses or workshops, notably the Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) workshop that I had a hand in designing and conducting for NGOs. Often we told participants that we called a training course a workshop because "you work" while "we shop." Seriously, compared with our adult-oriented learning approach to the OMS workshop, most conferences or workshops I attended, including some of those listed above, were not as engaging as would have been desirable, too crammed with one-way presentations, and not enough interactive sessions that allowed for more discussion that would have been much more valuable to adult professionals.

Unfortunately, by the time I was conducting the OMS Workshops, initially while I was still working with Chemonics on the LAC TECH project, USAID had closed its Mission in Costa Rica, thus, one less Mission to whom I could offer to conduct the OMS Workshop in a Mission's host country. Indeed, as one of my USAID team leaders would later say to me: "Kerry, if you don't have a client, you don't have a program!" Indeed, while I was based in a USAID office in Washington, DC, opportunity to travel to and carry out work in development most always depended on first getting the host country USAID Mission on board as a client (or customer). In effect, this entailed promoting to the Missions that our team of advisors on the LAC TECH project had experience and expertise that would be useful for the Mission to call on and tap in support of helping the Mission implement its own country development strategy and support the development projects the Mission was funding and implementing.

***Launching the CAFTA Negotiation*** – In 2003, I traveled to Costa Rica to participate in the 1st round of the negotiation of U.S.-Central America Free Trade Agreement, held in San José from October 26-28. Each of the subsequent negotiation rounds provided an opportunity for the U.S. and the Central Americans to meet in a non-negotiating group to discuss their trade capacity building (TCB) needs. Interestingly, we consistently found that Costa Rica was the country that least needed assistance from the U.S. on TCB but always did the best job in articulating what they felt were their TCB needs. Those needs were largely for technical assistance to help implement trade agreement obligations (e.g., in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures) or adjust their productive sectors, especially agriculture, to prepare to take advantage of market opportunities once the free trade agreement went into force. Interestingly, for most of the smaller economy countries participating in a FTA negotiation, their representatives often shared that they needed technical assistance in order to identify their TCB needs and priorities!

## El Salvador


Over a 22-year period for 1990 to 2012, the Central American country that I visited the fewest times was El Salvador, carrying out five TDYs to the capital city of San Salvador. Unfortunately, none of the visits afforded opportunity to get outside the capital city to the rural areas.

***The Byrnes Report*** – Aside from my travel to the Caribbean region in late 1989 and early 1990 to conduct the JAREF Study (see *Stop the Presses*), my first TDY on the LAC TECH project was in 1990 to El Salvador to respond to a USAID/El Salvador request to assist the Mission in determining whether and in what way it might support a Government of El Salvador proposal to privatize the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura (ENA – National Agricultural School).

The Mission arranged for me to work with the Fundación Empresarial para el Desarrollo (FEPADE). My FEPADE counterparts made arrangements for me to visit ENA as well as to interview public sector officials as well as representatives of the private sector. A counterpart from FEPADE accompanied me to the interviews and provided feedback on my report I titled “Terms of Reference for the Process to Privatize El Salvador’s National Agricultural School (ENA).” The report proposed that USAID fund a feasibility study to answer a series of questions as a basis for deciding if it would be a sound investment for USAID to support the privatization process.

FEPADE was so pleased with my report that they called it “The Byrnes Report” and my counterparts from FEPADE asked USAID why the Mission had not previously provided consultants like me. When I learned of the positive feedback from both FEPADE and the Mission, I was pleased that my first TDY had been so successful.

But the Mission had an important reservation about proceeding to fund the feasibility study, namely, that the private sector felt that, if ENA was privatized and the private sector began investing in renovating ENA’s facilities, there was no guarantee that the Government of El Salvador, during the current or a subsequent administration, would not suddenly turn around and expropriate ENA. As a result, with no such guarantee in place or forthcoming from the Government, the Mission decided not to fund the feasibility study.

In the end, this TDY's "success" mounted to nothing more than being able to say that the operation was successful (I produced a proposal for a feasibility study that both the Mission and FEPADE liked) but the patient died or at least languished (ENA continued as an inadequately funded institution in support of educating youth in agriculture).

**Preparing Pupusas - El Salvador's National Dish**

***Program Coordination*** – Often the objective of a TDY to a country was simply to stay informed about USAID's program in that country or, in some cases, to participate in an orientation meeting. This was the case with four of the TDYs I made to El Salvador:

- 2007 – Participated in a portfolio review of USAID Mission's bilateral and regional economic growth programs, and met with the Ministry of Trade's Trade Capacity Building lead.

- 2009 – Collaborated with a Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) representative in a workshop to evaluate a diagnostic tool to assess sustainable value chains. Workshop participants included representatives from MCC, FOMILENIO (MCA/El Salvador), USDA, USAID/El Salvador, and Chemonics.

- In 2011 - Participated in LAC Regional Feed the Future (FTF) Meeting, including giving a presentation on the "Doing Agribusiness in LAC Assessment" being implemented by a contractor under our office's sponsorship.

- In 2012 – Attended a USAID-sponsored workshop in support of the Agency's USAID Forward initiative on Implementation and Procurement Reform, focusing on Local Capacity Development. Representatives from various USAID Missions in the LAC region attended, providing opportunity for me to share information on the Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) Workshop as a Local Capacity Development resource that Missions might consider sponsoring for NGOs in their host countries.

I had hoped that my OMS Workshop presentation at this Local Capacity Development Workshop in 2012 would promote greater Mission interest in and demand to host the OMS Workshop in a Mission's host country. But no such demand materialized and, within a year, I had heart surgery in 2013 and retired in 2014. However, before retiring, I updated all OMS training materials, both English and Spanish, to Microsoft applications (Word, PowerPoint, and Excel).

Our original training materials were a mix of Harvard Graphics visuals that we presented as transparencies on an overhead projector; a mix of Lotus 123, Quattro Pro, and Excel spreadsheet files on the FAMA budget for the OMS workshop case study; and various WordPerfect files. Now, all OMS Workshop materials are available, in Spanish and English, in a suite of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files that can be easily shared with an NGO or interested party via a CD-R, a flash/thumb drive, or Dropbox.com. Ideally, an organization such as USAID would make these files available on a download basis from a publicly accessible server.

**Salvadoran Women in Traditional Dress**

## Guatemala


Over a 35-year period, between 1978 and 2013, I visited Guatemala 23 times to support USAID-funded projects, programs, and initiatives, though my first visit to Guatemala in 1978 was for the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) to review progress of a Rockefeller Foundation postdoctoral fellow who was studying fertilizer use decision making by small farmers in Guatemala's Altiplano (highlands). Subsequent visits usually were in response to USAID/Guatemala requests though, in some instances, responding to a request from USAID's Regional Office for Central American Programs (ROCAP) or a USAID/Washington operating unit.

Topically, assistance focused on: Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports (NTAEs), Trade Capacity Building (TCB), or Food Security. In some cases, assistance entailed carrying out Studies and Evaluations or participating in Conferences and Workshops, as highlighted below.

**Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports (NTAEs)** – The USAID Mission in Guatemala and USAID's ROCAP were among the first USAID operating units to undertake projects to help countries, farms, and firms to develop capacity to grow and export non-traditional agricultural crops (e.g., melons). To support this agenda, my work in Guatemala included:

- 1989 – Conducting interviews with entrepreneurs on how they learned to grow and export melons (see *Melons to Markets* under Costa Rica)
- 1991 – Helping to write a concept paper for a proposed project on Sustainable Environmental Protection and Agricultural Trade (SEPAT)
- 1993 – Participating in EXITOS (PROEXAG II) Annual Workshop on sustainability of USAID-assisted export promotion organizations
- 2010 – Providing oversight to and assisting with interviewing by contractor team implementing a "doing agribusiness" assessment
- 2013 – Providing oversight to University of California Davis dissemination workshops on assessment of constraints to growth of the horticulture sector in Central America

**Trade Capacity Building (TCB)** – A second economic growth-related area in which USAID provided assistance in Guatemala and Central America was helping country and regional government units to prepare for and participate in free trade agreement negotiations, including implementing treaty obligations, under the proposed Free Trade Area of the America (FTAA) and ultimately the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). To support this agenda, my work in Guatemala included:

- 2001 – Visited USAID/Guatemala's PROALCA TCB program
- 2001 – Facilitated and participated in the visit of representative of the General Secretariat of the Andean Community (CAN) and CAN country ministries of trade to USAID-funded PROALCA project being implemented by the Central American Economic Integration Secretariat (SIECA), in order to review the project's experience as a basis for design of the Andean Regional TCB Program
- 2001 – Attended Inter-American Development Bank-sponsored "From Puebla to Panama Rural Development Conference"
- 2002 – Participated in U.S. delegation to IV U.S.-Central America Technical Workshop to discuss TCB issues associated with the potential negotiation of an U.S.-Central America Free Trade Agreement
- 2003 – Participated in the "TCB and the U.S.-CAFTA" Workshop in Antigua Guatemala; and TCB planning meeting with USAID (G-CAP) in Guatemala City
- 2004 – Participated in meeting of the Inter-Agency for Rural Development
- 2005 – Participated in International Trade and Rural Economic Development Workshop
- 2007 – Participated in USG delegation to the 1st DR-CAFTA TCB Committee Meeting and met USAID economic growth officers
- 2007 – Participated in discussions to learn about the economic growth portfolio of USAID/Guatemala; and met with the Ministry of Trade's TCB lead
- 2009 – Collaborated with ECLAC in co-hosting a workshop to foster regional discussion on how to advance the recommendations of the "Trade-Led Agricultural Diversification (T-LAD)" study in the CAFTA-DR countries

**Food Security** – A third economic growth-related area in which USAID provided development assistance in the wake of the food price hikes of the late 2000s, was helping Guatemala and other Central American countries to develop and implement food security strategies. To support this agenda, my work in Guatemala included:

- 2010 – Participated in USG Food Security Meeting for the LAC Region
- 2012 – Attended "Cost-Benefit Analysis for Feed the Future Investments" training
- 2012 – Provided oversight to UC Davis team assessing constraints to growth of the

horticulture sector in Central America, including travel in the Feed the Future zone of influence (Western Highlands of Guatemala)

- 2013 – Attended the First International Coffee Rust Summit; and interviewed coffee farmers in coffee fields near Antigua to learn about the effect of the coffee rust outbreak
- 2013 – Conducted an evaluation of the USAID Mission's Policy and Regulatory Support (PRS) project

***Highland Photo & Weaving*** – During the first visit to Guatemala in 1978, I traveled to the *Altiplano* (Highlands) where postdoctoral fellow Christina Gladwin was doing a study on how farmers made decisions regarding adoption and use of fertilizers. One day Christina took me to the field where she was going to interview some farmers. A memory of that day is shown in the photo below.

**Kerry Byrnes (far right) with Christina Gladwin interviewing a farmer**

Many years later, just the day before I retired from USAID, I went to IFDC's 40th anniversary celebration, during which Thomas Hager spoke on how he came to write *Feeding A Hungry World: IFDC's First Forty Years* that chronicles IFDC's history and achievements. Having worked at IFDC for 9+ years during the center's first decade, I listened with great interest to Hager's remarks, during which he projected to a large screen photos from the book. Suddenly I was surprised to see among those photos the same photo that I presented above which also appears on p. 112 of *Feeding a Hungry World*.

Going back to 1978 and during a break in interviewing farmers in Guatemala, we visited a local market, as I recall in the town of Huehuetenango. There I looked through stacks and stacks of weavings until I found one that I liked as shown in the photo below.

***"Grounds in Their Coffee"*** – One of my earliest TDYs to Guatemala took place in 1991 when USAID/Guatemala asked me to assess the effectiveness of a coffee project the Mission was funding to help small-scale coffee growers improve their coffee yields and income. I met in Guatemala City with several representatives of the National Coffee Association (ANACAFE) and in the countryside with small-scale coffee farmers, where I observed a session of the "farmer schools" where a coffee expert provided instruction on growing coffee. After that session, and talking with farmers who were at that session, I learned of their frustration with the assistance that ANACAFE extension workers were providing to the farmers.

The farmers complained that from one season to the next the "farmer schools" they had been attending repeated the same information they heard in prior sessions of the same school. Their concern was not that they didn't know how to grow coffee but rather their lack of access to improved technologies, this due to a lack of credit, their inability to buy fertilizers, and other constraints such as having to sell their coffee raw when they knew they could increase their earnings by doing "on-farm" or village-level processing (milling) of the coffee beans to add value to their product and enable them to fetch a better price when the coffee is sold.

**Harvesting Coffee Beans in Guatemala**

This led me to draft a report that proposed expanding the scope of USAID assistance to provide a more demand-driven response with capacity for diverse assistance responses (e.g., cooperatives that could provide credit) specific to meeting the small-scale coffee farmer's needs. On a Friday afternoon I submitted my draft report, "From Coffeepot to Cafeteria: Toward an Alternative Model for ANACAFE's Extension Program for Small Farmer Coffee Producers," to my ANACAFE counterpart for his review and comment, arranging to meet with him on Monday to discuss the report.

On Monday, when I met with my ANACAFE counterpart, his feedback on the report was positive but with one exception. He opened his desk drawer and pulled out a document and told me that what I proposed in my report was what ANACAFE proposed to USAID in the document he held in his hand. But USAID declined funding it, opting for a project of more limited scope (i.e., ANACAFE extensionists providing information on growing coffee to farmers through the "farmer schools").

As a result, the farmers continued to complain. In effect, as in lyrics of the Carly Simon song "You're So Vain," when she sings "clouds in my coffee," the coffee farmers were not happy about "clouds in [their] coffee" assistance program. Indeed, these farmers had "grounds in their coffee" to complain–and if they couldn't cry about their complaints in a glass of cold beer, at least they could seek some consolation in a hot cup of coffee.

***Not Seeing the Forest for the Trees*** – In 1992, USAID/Guatemala requested that the LAC TECH project, being implemented by Chemonics International, provide a team to write a concept paper to support design of a proposed Integrated Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Agriculture project. On preparing my section, I submitted it to a team colleague who was to incorporate my input into the draft concept paper. However, when I read the concept paper, I found that my colleague had misrepresented what I had written, with the result being that the concept paper put more of an emphasis on a "technological" fix to farmers cutting down trees rather than on an "institutional" fix.

After first trying to correct the problem by simply editing and rewriting the problematic sections of the concept paper, the same problem appeared in the next revision of the paper, since my colleague completely ignored where I was coming from and had not even come to me discuss the differences in our proposed approaches. Rather this led to heated exchanges between that colleague and me, during which I tried to point out the mix of institutional (economic and social) factors leading to farmers cutting down trees. But my line of reasoning was to no avail as my colleague simply was missing the point. Finally, I said to him: "OK, then, why are the trees being cut down?" to which he replied: "Because the farmers are cutting down the trees." I then realized that my colleague's environment and forestry background was blocking him from seeing the tautology of his own argument. Indeed, he figuratively couldn't see the forest for the trees.

I gave up and went to the Chemonics' home office representative on the team to explain what had happened, handing to him the section I wrote, saying that I left it up to him to sort out whether our final concept paper would include what I had written. As a footnote, perhaps part of the problem could be traced back to an internal division in the USAID Mission. Indeed, on the evening I arrived in Guatemala City and checked into my hotel, my problematic colleague called to tell me they had tried to reach me the day before to advise me not to come to Guatemala, noting they had quickly realized during their first day of discussions with the Mission that there was a major difference of opinion within the Mission whether the project should be designed and, if so, what should be its focus. Possibly the different views within the Mission had spilled over into and had taken root within our own concept paper team.


***A UFO Sighting*** – As part of my work to interview entrepreneurs on how they learned to grow and export melons, I traveled by car with a driver to Zacapa, where melons had become a major crop. Late in the afternoon, we were returning to Guatemala City. As the sun began to set behind the mountains, the sky turned to dusk, and the road began to climb up the mountainside, the driver shared that we were entering an area famous for sightings of UFO or, in Spanish, OVNI (Objeto Volador No Identificado).


**Flying Saucer over Guatemala**

He proceeded to tell me about an incident that had occurred to a small farmer living in this region. Late in the evening the farmer noticed a bright pair of lights descending along the mountainside near his home. The farmer's curiosity led him in the dark of night to approach the lights. As he neared the bright lights he could see a small being outlined by the lights. The farmer carefully approached the lights, his arms and hands extended in friendship, saying in Spanish. "Hello, my name is Juan Rodriguez, humble farmer, I welcome you!" A voice from the small being answered Spanish: "Miguel Garcia, a very tired truck driver, taking a dump!"

***Development's Rust Belt*** – Just as the United States has been struggling to cope with the loss of manufacturing jobs in the country's industrial sector, in recent years all of the coffee-producing countries of Central America have struggled with how to cope with the loss of livelihoods in the agricultural sector as a result of the negative impact of coffee rust on coffee quality and yields. After the 1st International Coffee Rust Summit, held in 2013, a colleague (Steven Long – middle of photo below) and I made a field trip outside of Antigua to visit coffee fields, interview coffee farmers, and see firsthand how the devastating impact that the coffee rust disease was having on coffee plants and coffee farmers.

**Guatemalan Coffee Farmers Showing Coffee Rust Damage to Coffee Plants**

One farmer whom we interviewed had, along with his sisters, inherited a coffee farm from his father. The land planted to coffee had been divided up equally among the son and his brothers and sisters. This farmer had fortunately been able to apply fungicides and other recommended practices to keep the rust at bay and save his parcel of coffee. However, none of his brothers or sisters had applied any practices to control the rust and the coffee plants in their fields lay dead, their branches stripped of leaves as a result of the uncontrolled rust.

The situation that poor small-scale coffee farmers in Central America have been facing as they try to cope with coffee rust led me to recall Ray Charles' classic song "Busted" and its lyrics as follows:

*My bills are all due and the baby needs shoes and I'm busted*
*Cotton is down to a quarter a pound, but I'm busted*
*I got a cow that went dry and a hen that won't lay*
*A big stack of bills that gets bigger each day*
*The county' gonna haul my belongings away cause I'm busted.*

*I went to my brother to ask for a loan cause I was busted*
*I hate to beg like a dog without his bone, but I'm busted*
*My brother said there ain't a thing I can do,*
*My wife and my kids are all down with the flu,*
*And I was just thinking about calling on you and I'm busted.*

*Well, I am no thief, but a man can go wrong when he's busted*
*The food that we canned last summer is gone and I'm busted*
*The fields are all bare and the cotton won't grow,*
*Me and my family got to pack up and go,*
*But I'll make a living, just where I don't know cause I'm busted.*

*I'm broke, no bread, I mean like nothing, It's over.*

Even my grandson, only five years old at the time, understood that, at the end of a ball game, one team wins and the other loses. As he says, the losing team "got beat." If we apply this "got beat" analogy to the ongoing situation of thousands of small-scale coffee growers in Central America, they clearly "got beat" in the wake of coffee rust wreaking havoc on coffee quality and productivity in Guatemala and other countries, with the consequences even more devastating when coffee prices drop, which in turn reduces the incentive for farmers to use scarce capital to invest in technologies (e.g., fungicide) to protect their coffee trees. I summarized the despair of Central America's small-scale coffee farmer with my own version of Ray Charles' "Busted" which I titled: "Rusted" (with interpretation of the lyrics in parentheses).

- *My bills are all due and the baby needs shoes and I'm rusted* (I'm always in debt to someone, e.g., the "coyote", and can't afford to buy shoes for the baby.)
- *Coffee is down to a quarter a pound, but I'm rusted* (Coffee prices are depressed, and I can't afford to buy fungicide to spray my coffee trees that are dying of coffee rust.)
- *I got a cow that went dry and a hen that won't lay (*I don't even own a cow and can't afford to buy feed for the few chickens we have.)

- *The county' gonna haul my belongings away cause I'm rusted* (The rural area is so insecure that my coffee fields and shipments are at peril of being robbed.)

- *I went to my brother to ask for a loan cause I was rusted…. My brother said there ain't a thing [he] can do* (As in the case referenced above: Three brothers and three sisters all had small coffee plots, of which all had been abandoned, except for the plot of one brother, due to coffee rust having killed the coffee trees. So far one brother has been able to pull together the cash to buy the fungicide to spray the coffee trees on his parcel. The other five brothers and sisters apparently concluded "there ain't a thing [they] can do.")

- *The food that we canned last summer is gone and I'm rusted* (There probably was no food canned last summer and the upcoming "hunger season," when the food has run out before the next corn harvest, will hit Central America's small-scale coffee producers particularly hard in the coming months as a result of reduced cash income due to depressed coffee yields and sales.)

- *The fields are all bare and the coffee won't grow* (Many coffee fields previously worked by small-scale coffee producers have been abandoned and the coffee trees have now died or are in the process of dying.)

- *Me and my family got to pack up and go / But I'll make a living, just where I don't know cause I'm rusted* (Even before the coffee rust crisis hit Central America in 2012, illegal migration continued from Central America as it has for over the past decade or longer but now, with the coffee rust crisis, the number of Central America's poor going to urban centers and onward to the north, voting with their feet, is likely to increase.)

- *I'm broke, no bread, I mean like nothing, It's over.* (For many the small-scale coffee growers most adversely affected by the coffee rust crisis, they will now face a food security crisis.)

***Convincing the Non-Believer Do-Gooders*** – On various occasions in Washington, DC, I met with representatives of the NGO community. While their hearts were always in the right place, all too often I couldn't say the same for their heads. All too frequently, they believed that the pathway to help poor small-scale farmers (so-called *campesinos*) in the Central American countries is assisting them to grow more corn (i.e., increase their corn yields). Further, some NGO representatives and perhaps also the NGOs they worked for brought to their cause attitudes of anti-capitalism, anti-multinationals, and anti-globalization.

They were not excited by the idea (in which I and many USAID colleagues believed) that the way to help poor *campesinos* who largely subsisted on the *milpa* (corn and beans) they grew was to transition these farmers into growing high-value horticultural crops having demand in local, regional, and export markets. Indeed, on one occasion, one NGO representative, not understanding what we were saying, responded: "Look, we don't want to change these farmers; we only want to help them have a better life!" (Note: Often NGOs providing assistance in agriculture also help villagers in rural communities in other areas such as health and education.)

During one visit to Guatemala I attended a USAID-sponsored seminar in which several of the Mission's project implementers showcased the type of development assistant that they had been providing as well as the positive results being achieved. In the midst of a presentation by a member of the 4 Pinos Cooperative, I suddenly saw in just a single slide the data that I felt would show to any non-believing "do-gooder" the merit of NOT focusing assistance to *campesinos* SOLELY on helping them raise corn yields.

**La reconversión agrícola mejora el ingreso familiar**

| Costos y valor de Ventas | Campesino Tradicional | Nuevo Campesino | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 Mz. | 1/2 Mz. | | 1/2 Mz. |
| | Maíz | Ejote Frances (2 ciclos) | Arveja ( 1 ciclo) | Maíz |
| **Costos** | **6,616** | **24,900** | **12,171** | |
| Insumos | 2,316 | 12,600 | 6,531 | 1,158 |
| Jornales | 4,300 | 12,300 | 5,640 | 2,150 |
| **Ventas** | **8,400** | **35,100** | **18,000** | **4,200** |
| Utilidad (vetas-costos) | 1,784 | 10,200 | 5,829 | 892 |
| Ingresos (jornales + utilidad) | 6,084 | 22,500 | 11,469 | 3,042 |
| **Ingreso Anual Total** | **6,084** | **33,969** | | **3,042** |
| | | **37,011** | | |
| **El Nuevo Campesino genera 6.08 veces más.** | | | | |

Fuente: Cooperativa 4 Pinos. Departamento de Desarrollo. En Quetzales.

The slide (see above) clearly illustrated that a small-scale farmer on one unit of land (e.g., a *manzana* in Guatemala) can earn 6,084 Quetzales per year growing corn; however, if that farmer puts that same unit of land into a mixed cropping system of corn and horticultural crops, he'll earn 37,011 Quetzales, over a six-fold increase in the farmer's agricultural income per *manzana*.

Right after the presentation I went up to the 4 Pinos representative to congratulate him on the great presentation he had given and asked if it might be possible to obtain a copy of this slide. Not long after I returned to my office in USAID in Washington, DC an email arrived with that slide attached. I printed out several copies of the slide and, thereafter, kept those copies handy in my office so the slide would be available when needed.

Not long thereafter, two NGO representatives came to visit our Broad Based Economic Growth team to give a presentation on the good work that the NGO was developing in one of the countries in which that NGO was working – and soon I was hearing the non-believer "do-gooder" song and dance about how important it was to help small-scale farmers increase their corn productivity (yields), the presenter's argument reflecting little to no awareness of or interest in helping their client farmers to shift their land and labor resources into higher-valued horticultural crops. In the midst of discussing what the NGO representative had presented, I interrupted and said "Just a moment, please, I'll be right back."

Less than 30 seconds later I returned to our meeting room and passed out to each of the attendees a copy of the above chart – and proceeded to explain in English what the chart said in Spanish with the data shown. As I recall, and perhaps they were just being gracious, our guest's response was: "Very interesting!"

Of course, I don't know whether they took this newfound discovery back to their NGO and their in-country project to share with other stakeholders. Lesson: If they do not understanding with their "heads," it not likely that they're going to take the message to their "hearts."

***Bargaining for Candles & Bags in Antigua***

The chandlery "Evelia del Pinal" is the oldest candle shop in Antigua (established in 1885). The candle recipes and designs have been handed down from generation to generation. The business was started several generations ago by Evelia del Pinal with a vision of making beautiful candles in all shapes, sizes, and colors. The store also sells pillar-, flower-, bird-, and animal-shaped candles.



I discovered this candle shop during a Saturday daytrip from Guatemala City to Antigua. Indeed, the second time I returned to Antigua to look for this store, I had a difficult time in locating it but after asking several retailers in the general neighborhood, I eventually located the store – so to spare you the same here is a map of where to locate the shop.


But it was on that first visit to the store that I found myself so taken by the variety and beauty of the hundreds of candles on display that I was a like a kid in a candy shop. I spent an hour or so trying to decide which candles to buy and worried a bit how I was going to get them all safely home. Once I had selected the candles I wanted, each of the candles was individually wrapped in paper to minimize the risk of the candle being broken and placed in a cardboard box.

After the purchase was made, I walked out of the store with a rather cumbersome bag, wondering how I could more conveniently pack the candles. When I got back to the central park (Parque Central), in order to catch our ride back to Guatemala City, I saw several Indian women selling weavings and bags of various shapes and sizes.

**Street Vendors near Parque Central in Antigua, Guatemala**

I went from vendor to vendor keeping an eye out for what might be just the bag with the right size and shape until I found the one I needed. Of course, all the time tipping my hand by carrying that cumbersome bag of candles, so I knew the vendor would have me at a disadvantage when it came time to bargain. Finally, I saw just the right one (like the one in the photo below), with the right shape and size to accommodate all of the boxes of candles that I had purchased – and it closed with a zipper to boot!

**Guatemalan Woven Duffle Bag**

When I asked the price of the bag, the vendor told me what I felt was a ridiculously high price, probably $40 or $50. After all, she knew there might be some potential shopper who would pay that much for a beautiful bag like the one I wanted. But I countered with a low-ball offer, say, $10. I always have not liked bargaining or haggling over price. Her counter was, say, $35 so I upped my generosity to $15. “No, very good quality, $15 too cheap” (all of this in Spanish). “Bueno,” I answered, $17. She then came down to $25 but I countered, by shaking my head and saying *quizás (perhaps)*, $19. She must have known that her asking price was falling faster than my offer price was rising – and finally we agreed on $20 – and yet I wondered how much I had probably overpaid for the bag.

**Central Park, Antigua, Guatemala**

The answer to my question came a few minutes later. I had boarded the bus. As the bus pulled slowly away from the Central Park, the same vendor held up to the window by my seat another bag (same size and shape) as she tried to keep up with the bus, saying in Spanish, “Please, mister, please buy another bag, very good quality, only $10!” Yes, she now was willing to sell to me the same bag at half the price I had just paid for the first bag. This left me wondering whether the true value of the bag wasn’t in the labor and materials to make and sell it but rather on the vendor’s need to maximize how much income she could bring home each day to buy food and feed her family.

# Honduras


Over a 28-year period from 1985 to 2013, I visited Honduras 14 times for various short-term assignments. My visits focused on one or another of five areas: Agricultural Research and Extension, NGO Sustainability, Hurricane Reconstruction, Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports (NTAEs), and Food Security.

### Agricultural Research and Extension

- 1985 – Assisted in writing implementation plan for Communication for Technology Transfer in Agriculture (CTTA) Project.
- 1986 – Conducted a farm survey of citrus growers for the Fundación Hondureña de Investigación Agrícola (FHIA), in order to identify constraints to production of citrus.
- 1987 – Assisted in conducting an assessment of the Comayagua Valley.
- 1996 – Participated in the meeting of the directors of Central American public sector National Agricultural Research Institutes to discuss steps to establish the Sistema de Integración Centroamericana de Tecnología Agropecuaria (SICTA), held at the Pan American Agricultural School (El Zamorano).

### NGO Sustainability

- 1995 – Conducted a 3-day Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) workshop for NGOs.

### Hurricane Reconstruction

- 1999 – Met with USAID/Honduras and U.S. Embassy staff to obtain information to support design and implementation of the management component of USDA's hurricane reconstruction program in Honduras.
- 1999 - Attended USDA-USAID/Honduras coordination meeting in support of USDA's Hurricane Reconstruction program in Honduras.

## Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports (NTAEs)

- 1989 – Interviewed growers and exporters of melons for a study on the experience of entrepreneurs in learning how to grow and export melons.
- 1990 – Served as the team leader for a Congressionally-mandated study to identify common problems that agricultural producers in the Caribbean Basin faced and potential mechanisms to address these problems.
- 2009 – Assisted the Honduran Foundation for Investment and Export Development (FIDE) to develop an outreach strategy to nurture developing national ownership of the recommendations of the Trade-Led Agricultural Diversification (T-LAD) study.
- 2009 – Collaborated with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in conducting a planning workshop for the MCC, MCA/Honduras, USDA, USAID/Honduras, and FINTRAC to test a diagnostic tool for assessing sustainable value chains.

## Food Security

- 2012 – Provided oversight to University of California-Davis team studying constraints to the growth of the horticulture sector in Central America, including travel in the Feed the Future zone of influence in the West of Honduras.
- 2013 – Provided oversight to UC Davis dissemination workshops on the team's assessment of constraints to growth of the horticulture sector in Central America.

***"You Name It, We've Got It!"*** – During one visit to Honduras, several colleagues and I were on a field trip to an agricultural area outside San Pedro Sula. It was about time for lunch so we stopped at a roadside restaurant. On entering, a teenage girl showed us to a table, gave a menu to each of us, and asked what we'd like to drink. On bringing our drinks, she asked each for his order and then headed to the kitchen.

After a while, she came back and told me that they didn't have what I had ordered, so I took another look at the menu and ordered something else. After a while, the waitress returned to tell one colleague they were out of what he had ordered, so he ordered something else. When she returned a third time and told yet another colleague the restaurant was out of what he had ordered, I intervened, saying something to the effect: "Wait a minute. The restaurant is open. You gave us a menu. And then you tell us you don't have what any of us ordered. What do you have?" Timidly, the girl replied: "Nothing because the owner went to the market and has not returned yet!" So we paid for our drinks and left to look for another restaurant, hoping that its food procurement officer would by then be back from the market.

Over the years that incident has reminded me *The Jack Benny Show* episode in which Jack and Mary Livingston, on a road trip, get lost late at night. Finally the come upon a restaurant, enter and sit down at a table but the owner says the restaurant is closed. Jack insists that the door was open, they're lost and hungry, and he demands to see a

menu. The owner says there's no menu, so Jack asks: "Well, what can we order?" The owner replies: "You name it, we've got it!" When Mary orders a salad, the owner replies: "We ain't got that." So she asks for a sandwich but is quickly told: "Ain't got that either!" Then Jack says: "Wait a minute. You said the restaurant is not open but the door was open. We asked for a menu and you said you don't have a menu. So we asked what do you have and you said: "You name it, we've got it!"

The owner replied: "You ain't named it yet!" Well, at the Honduran roadside restaurant, there apparently was nothing on the menu that we could have named that they would have had because the owner had not yet returned from the market.

**Carne Asada – A Typical Honduran Food (if they've got it!)**

***The Honduran Magician*** - When my son Shannon was young, and even now for my grandson Braden, from time to time I have tried to demonstrate, all too unsuccessfully, my limited prowess as a magician. Even with simple magic tricks, my son and grandson quickly discovered an illusion was more trick than magic. In this regard, an agricultural technician and I were on a field trip in Honduras. During one of our conversations, I was surprised to learn that his hobby was being a part-time magician. So I asked him if he had a stage name. He responded that he didn't and just went by his own name. "But," I responded excitedly, "I know what your stage name should be!" He looked at me with curiosity and asked: "What would that name be?" I replied: "Well, as a magician, you should bill yourself as "Hondurini - The Honduran Houdini.'" While that got a laugh, I don't know if my companion ever took up "Hondurini" as his stage name.

***The Package*** - While living in Reston (Virginia), a maid came in once a week to help my wife with cleaning the house. The maid, who was from Panama, lived with her sister in the nearby town of Herndon, in a house apparently owned by a third sister and her husband, Donald F. Enos, who at the time, lived in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, where he

worked with the U.S. Embassy as a member of the Contra Task Force. When the maid learned I was going to Tegucigalpa, she asked if I could take a package of mail to give to her brother-in-law at the Embassy. On agreeing and receiving the package (like the one in the photo below), I checked its contents, finding miscellaneous first-class mail and some magazines. This was not that I was nosy but rather because one should not carry packages from one country to the next without knowing their contents. In this way, one can avoid having a customs official suddenly discover that the package one is carrying contains something illegal.

On arriving in Tegucigalpa and checking in at the hotel, I phoned the Embassy and spoke with Enos who asked that I drop off the package with the Marine Guard at the Embassy gate. Later that day I left the package with the Marine Guard and returned to the hotel, a little miffed that Enos hadn't extended the courtesy of personally receiving me, thanking me, or inviting me for a coffee. But, on the positive side, I was rid of the package and turned my attention to preparing for my work assignment.

That trip to Honduras occurred in 1989. Then, some months later in March 1990, I was reading the *Washington Post* (March 17, 1990) and discovered the following:

> **AID Official Admits Accepting Bribes; Contra-Assistance Director Paid for Steering Contracts to Consultant:** Over the last five years, Donald F. Enos, 47, a deputy director of the Agency for International Development (AID), accepted $93,000 in bribes from George Kraus of Kraus International, according to the plea Enos entered yesterday in Alexandria. Based in New York, Kraus International held several consulting contracts in Central America.
>
> While Enos was in charge of developing and implementing health programs in El Salvador, he received $60,000 from the Kraus Company for his help in steering over $2 million in consulting contracts to Kraus. Kraus was approached earlier this year by prosecutors and agreed to plead guilty to one count of bribery and to assist in the government's investigation of Enos, according to an affidavit in the case. Soon afterward, AID investigators videotaped meetings in which Kraus and Enos discussed bribes, some of which they agreed would be made "in the form of house payments and other debt payments," the affidavit said (*Washington Post*, A Section, March 17, 1990).

Subsequently, on May 26, 1990, the *Post* reported that Enos faced a maximum prison sentence of 30 years and fines up to $500,000, though his lawyer (John J. Grimaldi II) sought leniency, portraying Enos as "a family man who was a diligent Foreign Service worker for most of his career." Enos, Grimaldi said, took bribes only after getting into financial difficulty. The article further revealed that the probe of Enos had been initiated in October 1988, after the investigative office of USAID in Tegucigalpa received a tip alleging that Enos was giving George Kraus insider information about contracts and "that Kraus helped Enos finance the purchase of a Panama condominium." Another *Post* article that day (May 26, 1990) – titled "Ex-Official at AID Sentenced to Prison for Taking Bribes" – reported that Enos was sentenced to a year in prison and fined $5,000 for taking $93,000 in bribes while directing an aid program for the Nicaraguan contras. Enos was released from prison on July 9, 1991.

While researching the Enos case, I obtained further insight on him from a colleague who knew Enos. My colleague wrote (personal communication) that the Inspector General criminal investigations unit informed him that they were investigating a reported case of kickbacks involving Enos and Krauss.

> A PSC [Personal Services Contractor] in the Guatemalan Mission had been in El Salvador and had learned of the [kickback] process there. A fake procurement was set up for Kraus to make a payment to the PSC, with the intent of recording the transaction and then putting pressure on Kraus to cooperate in getting Enos. … [The IG] indicated…they had recorded a phone conversation in which Enos asked Krauss if [my colleague] could be recruited to their operation. Happily, Kraus responded that I would never participate in anything like that. Everything worked well [with the fake procurement] and Kraus was arrested. The prosecutor offered a plea bargain with Kraus under which he would get a light sentence if he provided information on all of the illegal transactions and cooperated in getting Enos, who they were really after.
>
> He and his lawyer agreed, a detailed accounting was submitted, and a transaction with Enos was set up and recorded. The only problem for Krauss was that during the transaction Enos got chatty about all of their prior transactions and mentioned ones that Kraus had not included in his report to the prosecutor. So both Kraus and Enos spent time in prison, but apparently not very long. A few years later Enos came through Guatemala representing a [population] sector contracting firm seeking to do business with [a] Guatemalan NGO, which…had USAID support. I phoned the IG to ask about this and was told that since he had served his time there was nothing that should keep him from working for such a firm (personal communication from Retired USAID Foreign Service Officer).

As a postscript, during the time that Enos' sister-in-law worked with us as a maid, she invited my wife Sonia and me to a party at the Enos house in Herndon, where she and her sisters were living. While the house was in a middle-class neighborhood of Herndon, we were shocked by the dilapidated condition of the house's interior, floors without carpet or missing pieces of linoleum, walls dirty and greatly in need of

repainting, and even walls with holes punched through the sheet rock, as if someone had punched a fist or foot through the wall. When I later learned that some of the kickback money was going to pay for “house payments and other debt payments” (including helping to finance the purchase of a condo in Panama), it became clear that the money Enos was “earning” was not going into maintaining his residence (house) in Herndon. Indeed, I’d guess that his “escape plan” was to bail out and retire to a condo in Panama and, in the meantime, he had been doing nothing to maintain his house in Herndon.

As another postscript, the whole incident left me wondering whether the package for Enos that I handed over to the marine guard at the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa may have contained more than innocent first class email; they well could have included envelopes with bribery payments. I’ll never know!

***The Free Airline Ticket*** – During one visit to Honduras, I made a field trip from the capital city, Tegucigalpa, up to the San Pedro Sula, the country’s principal commercial city. For some reason I made a last-minute decision to fly back to Tegucigalpa rather than take the bus. When I got to the airport, I first checked with SAHSA (a Honduran airline that later ceased operations in 1994 and merged into TACA) to find out what a ticket would cost to fly to Tegucigalpa. I was surprised to learn that the ticket’s price in Honduras Lempiras was the equivalent of, say, US$ 100 at an exchange rate of 1 US$ = 2 Lempiras. Thus, to purchase the ticket, I needed 200 Lempiras. Actually, SAHSA was selling the ticket at a price based on the highly overvalued “official” exchange rate (1 US$ = 2 Lempira) that didn’t reflect the “real” (black market) exchange rate on the street where $1 could fetch 4 Lempiras.

I told the agent” “Just a moment, I’ll be right back.” I walked out of the terminal to the adjacent parking lot where several entrepreneurial money changers were doing a brisk business exchanging Lempiras for US Dollars. I asked one of them how many Lempiras I could get for 1 US$ and was told 4 Lempiras per US Dollar. I then asked if he could change $100 for 400 Lempiras. He nodded yes. I handed $100 to him and he gave me 400 Lempiras in exchange. We each counted our money, thanked each other, and I returned to the airline’s check-in counter, putting 200 Lempiras in my pocket and giving the other 200 Lempiras to the agent, saying “Please, a one-way ticket on your next flight to Teguz.” As my son would say “Free Money!” Rather than paying an extra $50 in U.S. Dollars to the airline for a ticket priced at 200 Lempiras, I still had an extra 200 Lempiras in my pocket to help defray local costs such as my meals and incidentals.

## Nicaragua


Over a 16-year period, I visited Nicaragua seven times for short-term assignments to provide technical support to the Mission, conduct Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) Workshops, and address Trade Capacity Building issues.

### Mission Support

- 1994 – Assisted in drafting amendment of the Private Agricultural Services (PAS) project, focusing on a review of the evaluation of APENN, writing a scope of work (SOW) for the project's institutional strengthening component, and identifying ways for the project to strengthen technology generation and transfer capacity for non-traditional agricultural export crops.
- 2010 – Drafted SOWs for (1) a secretariat for the PRORURAL donor coordinating group on food security; and (2) a methodology for an agricultural sector assessment.

### Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) Workshops

- 1995 – Conducted a three-day Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) workshop for NGOs.
- 2007 – Conducted a three-day OMS workshop for NGOs.

### Trade Capacity Building (TCB)

- 2009 – Represented USAID at a meeting of Ministers of Agriculture of the Consejo Agropecuario Centroamericano (CAC), presenting a PowerPoint on the CAFTA-DR Trade-Led Agricultural Diversification (T-LAD) Study.
- 2010 – Met with representatives of the Ministry of Trade to discuss TCB needs.
- 2011 – Provided oversight to and assisted contractor team in conducting interviews for a "doing agribusiness" assessment.

***They Also Serve Who Sit and Wait*** – During one assignment to Nicaragua, I had a dual role, on the one hand, covering for the office director while he was on home leave; and on the other, working closely with two of the Mission's Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) to draft statements of work (SOWs) for two USAID/Nicaragua planned activities: (1) a secretariat for the PRORURAL donor coordinating group on food security; and (2) an agricultural sector assessment.

The first task proved the most productive because my FSN counterpart reviewed what I wrote and provided constructive feedback that helped me to improve the SOW. On the other hand, on the second task, I was left feeling a bit out in left field because my FSN counterpart kept canceling meetings we had scheduled for us to discuss the draft SOW for the agricultural sector assessment. Once a meeting was cancelled or postponed, I'd go back to the word processor and, based on my own judgement, expanded, adjusted, and/or otherwise refined the SOW in ways I felt improved it. In the end, I met only briefly with my FSN counterpart on this task and never received any feedback on whether that SOW ever went further than being put on the shelf or in a file cabinet.

***The Corn Has Ears*** – A couple of months after marrying Sonia in Colombia in 1969, she came to the United States, where we took up residence in Ames, Iowa. Back then, we could go just about anywhere (grocery stores, department stores, restaurants, etc.) and have a conversation in Spanish with little chance anyone would also speak Spanish and understand our conversation. Fast forward 40+ years to Nicaragua to the Managua airport, where a colleague and I were conversing in English in an airport restaurant.


**Restaurant in Managua Airport**

We had just completed an assignment and were venting our frustrations that we had not received as much support or feedback from one Mission colleague during our stay as we felt would have been desirable. The individual whom we were discussing just wasn't the same fireball that my colleague and I had known earlier in his career, noting that it would have been helpful to our understanding of Nicaraguan development issues had that staff member taken time to meet with us for a briefing.

Suddenly, a woman sitting at a nearby table says: “Careful, you’re talking about my husband!” To say the least, this was more than just a bit embarrassing! To put behind what had just happened, we said hello to her but as quickly as possible picked up our carry-ons to retreat to our departure gate, hoping that we wouldn’t run into her again at the gate for the same flight on which we were booked.

# Panama


Technically, Panama is not considered part of Central America but is included here in as the last country of Middle America (or Central America) before one reaches South America. Over a 24-year period between 1986 and 2010, I carried out twelve short-term assignments in Panama to address agriculture, economic, and environment issues; NGO strengthening; and Trade Capacity Building (TCB), as summarized below.

### Agriculture, Economic Growth and Environment

- 1986 – Served as Team Co-Leader, USAID/Panama Agriculture Technology Development and Transfer Evaluation.
- 2010 – Participated in LAC Economic Growth and Environment Strategic Planning Workshop.

### NGO Strengthening

- 1998 – Conducted a review of Panama's NGOs to provide recommendations to the USAID Mission on how its new strategy could advance NGO sustainability.
- 2000 – Participated in the Intermediate Result team for USAID/Panama environmental Strategic Objective to develop draft Request for Assistance for design of an institutional strengthening program for Panama's environmental and justice NGOs.
- 2001 – Conducted half of the first morning of a planned three-day Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) Workshop (suspended due to 9/11).

### Trade Capacity Building (TCB)

The Intercontinental Hotel in Miami, Florida hosted the first negotiation phase for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The second phase was held at the Caesar Park Hotel in Panama City, Panama.

**Caesar Park Hotel**

During eight visits to Panama, I served as the USAID representative to the meetings of the Consultative Group on Smaller Economies (CGSE) to identify ways donors could help the region's smaller economies and developing countries to meet their TCB needs; and to meetings of the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society to discuss ways in which countries could foster greater civil society understanding of and support for the FTAA. During those eight visits, I participated seven times in the CGSE meetings (twice in 2001, four times in 2002, and once in 2003) and two times (2001) in the meetings of the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society.

**Panama – Melting Pot of Races from All over the World**

***Multi-Purpose Project Office*** – My first work-related visit to Panama entailed working two months in the summer of 1986 as team co-leader of the USAID/Panama Agriculture Technology Development and Transfer Evaluation. For the two months I stayed in the Hotel Ejecutivo, where the daily rate was only $50 per night, allowing me to pocket the $50 difference of the total $100 allowed by USAID for lodging. I led the evaluation's "technology transfer" component, while Jean Sussman, a Ph.D. economist from the University of Minnesota, led the evaluation's "technology development" component. Jean, however, for the duration of the evaluation, opted to stay at a home of a friend who was on home leave from the U.S. Embassy. But the problem arose that USAID wouldn't pay Jean the "meals and incidentals" portion of her *per diem* unless she also submitted a hotel bill.

On hearing this I proposed to Jean that she rent a room at the Hotel Ejecutivo (thus enabling her to also pocket $50), continue to "house sit" at her friend's house, and allow us to use her hotel room as the project's office—a win-win situation for all, especially for me as I arranged for Jean's room to be next to mine so, at any time, day or night, I only needed to go through the connecting door to fetch project documents, work on the desktop computer we rented, or hold a meeting with our team, including myself, Jean, and three other consultants. From time to time, Jean, an attractive brunette, stopped by the hotel to meet with me either for lunch or for team meetings in our office (her room).

This arrangement worked out fine until, halfway through the second month, my wife Sonia and son Shannon, on their return from spending the summer in Colombia, made a stop in Panama to spend time with me and see the sights (e.g., the Panama Canal). Sonia, Shannon, and I were having lunch one day in the hotel, when I began to worry what the hotel's reception staff might think about Jean frequently visiting me over the past month-and-a-half – and now all of a sudden my wife Sonia (and son Shannon) were staying in the hotel but in a different room. Indeed, my meetings with Jean often were very short, say, ten minutes (e.g., to pick up or drop off some documents).

**Hotel Ejecutivo & Reception Desk**

Perhaps not quite thinking clearly how to avoid having the hotel's reception staff saying something to Sonia, I approached the reception desk and said. "You know, my wife and son are now staying in the hotel. Please don't mention anything to her about the woman who is renting the room next to mine." The two clerks, a bit surprised, nodded their head in agreement as I thanked them and walked back into the restaurant to finish my lunch with Sonia and Shannon. I then told Sonia what I'd just told the staff at the reception desk. Sonia, a bit in disbelief, said to me: "Well, now what are they going to think of you." I replied: "Well, if they weren't already thinking that, they are now!"

***Marketing Panama's Bananas (or Not)*** – On a field trip that summer of 1986, my Panamanian counterpart mentioned that one of Panama's major banana companies was looking to come up with a name to brand its export-quality bananas. "Well," I suggested, "if I were the company's owner, and since Panama hosts the Panama Canal and each ship is boarded by a pilot to guide the ship through the canal, I'd brand my export-quality bananas as a 'Panama Pilot – A Top Flight Banana.'" To my knowledge, apparently that company never picked up on my recommendation. Perhaps this shows that it was better I continued pursuing my career as an applied sociologist working in development than as one of those Madison Avenue *Mad Men*.

***The Unanticipated*** – Working in collaboration with Chemonics International staff, I had developed a three-day Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) Workshop that we initially conducted successfully in Peru. Subsequently, I was on the lookout for opportunities for a USAID Mission to ask me to conduct the workshop for NGOs in the Mission's host country. Indeed, between 1994 and 2012, I had conducted this workshop in seven LAC countries: 1994 (Peru); 1995 (Dominican Republic, Peru, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and two in Colombia); 1998 (Dominican Republic); 1999 (Colombia); 2007 (Nicaragua); and 2012 (Paraguay).

As a follow up to assistance I provided to USAID/Panama in 1998 (review of Panama's NGOs to recommend how the Mission's new strategy could advance the sustainability of NGOs in Panama), and in 2000 (develop a Request for Assistance for design of a NGO institutional strengthening program), the Mission invited me to conduct the OMS workshop in Panama on September 11-13, 2001.

On the workshop's first day, I took the participants through the morning's first session up to coffee break. At coffee break, and after a quick trip to the rest room, I came back to the area where participants were taking their refreshments. I noticed that several of the participants were huddled around a radio, while my USAID counterpart (Nila Chu) was on the phone with a colleague at the office. When Nila got off the phone, she told me that she had been informed that an airplane had hit one of the Twin Towers in New York City, and that the Embassy had ordered USAID Mission and Embassy staff to go home. Nila and I discussed what this meant for our workshop and decided to announce that, because of security concerns, we were cancelling the workshop.

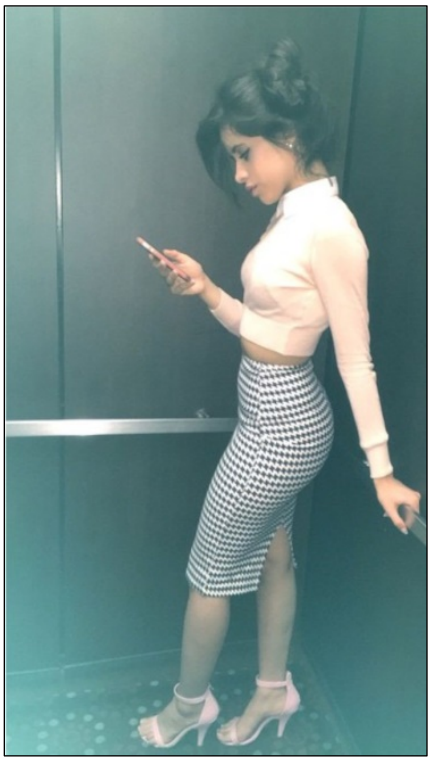
Nila gave me a ride back to my hotel (Caesar Park) where I went up to my room and, on turning on the TV, watched CNN's videotape coverage of the terrorist attack. Having decided to cancel the workshop, I called American Airlines to see if I could get an earlier flight home than my scheduled Friday departure date. But the agent told me that flights into the U.S. had been cancelled. I spent the next two days in and around the hotel watching TV, checking emails, and checking back with American Airlines to find out when I would be able to catch a flight to return home to the United States. Finally, I was happy to learn that my originally booked American Airlines flight would fly to Miami on Friday as scheduled. That flight was American's first post-9/11 flight from Panama to Miami. Fortunately, my flights from Panama to Miami and from Miami to Washington, DC were not delayed, although there were heightened security measures in place in the Panama and Miami airports. I was relieved to be home after a stressful week.

Unfortunately, opportunity to return to Panama to conduct the OMS workshop did not materialize. Over time, the Mission's budget was declining which required having to move funding away from supporting NGOs into other areas of assistance. Further, as it turned out, a similar program for strengthening NGOs was being funded in Panama by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and most of the NGOs that had registered to attend the OMS workshop had benefitted from JICA's trainings.

***An Unforgettable Elevator Ride*** – During one of my visits to Panama and stays at the Caesar Park Hotel, I was surprised to encounter a friend and professional colleague also was staying in the same hotel while he worked on his short-term assignment. This afforded opportunity to get together for breakfasts and dinners as well as an occasional ride up the elevator to the floors on which our respective rooms were located.

One day, after breakfast, we boarded the elevator on the lobby floor and were headed up to our respective floors when the elevator stopped on the second floor for another person to board the elevator. Normally, if you are about to board an elevator and see there already is another person standing on one side of the elevator, you naturally get on the elevator and stand on the other side. In this case, my colleague and I were standing in the back left corner of the elevator (my colleague on the left wall and I on the

back wall). When the door opened on the second floor, the person who boarded the elevator was an extremely attractive young Latina, tall and slender with jet black hair and wearing high heels, a tight skirt, a sexy blouse, and an alluring perfume. We were surprised that she didn't go to the right to stand on the other side of the elevator but rather walked toward the back left corner where my colleague and I were, turned around with her back to us, and pushed the elevator button for her floor.



My colleague and I were so taken aback by this unusual behavior that I think we spent more time looking at each other in disbelief than we did gawking at the vision of beauty standing just in front of us. Just as quickly the elevator reached her floor and she got off, leaving my colleague and I more than a bit perplexed. We never saw this young lady during the rest of our stay – and probably just as well so as to keep us out of trouble. But one is left wondering – what was she thinking? If her behavior was some kind of come on, neither of us took the bait!

And, no, we didn't take a photo of the young lady; rather I happened to stumble on the above photo doing a Google search!

***The Only Place in the World*** – A great trivia question to challenge your friends is the following: "Where is the only place in the world that you can watch the sun rise over the Pacific Ocean and set over the Atlantic Ocean?" The answer, albeit debatable, is that Panama is the only place in the world where you can see the sun rise on the Pacific and set on the Atlantic.

This is due to Panama having the form of an S oriented in the east-west direction (an S laying on its left side). In the middle of the S, a bay of the Pacific is to the east and a bay of the Atlantic is to the west. Thus, in that part of Panama, the sun rises over the Pacific and sets over the Atlantic (see map below).


During a visit to a mountainous rural area in the west of Panama, I was high enough up on one of the mountains in the late morning that, on looking to the west, I could see the Atlantic Ocean and, on looking to the east, I could see the Pacific Ocean. Conceivably, at such a spot, one could witness this unique sunrise-sunset phenomenon from the same location, albeit not at the same moment since the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening.

# Chapter 6 - South America

## Andean Region

### Bolivia


From 1989 to 2002, I visited Bolivia six times for assignments relating to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Alternative Development, NGO Strengthening, and Trade Capacity Building (TCB).

**Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)** – My first trip to Bolivia was in 1989, while working with USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE). During this trip, I assisted a USAID colleague to write an M&E plan for a USAID/Bolivia Child Health Project. Also, I wrote a scope of work (SOW) for case studies of farmer organizations assisted by the Private Agricultural Producer Organizations Project.

**Alternative Development (AD)** – To support USAID's AD program, I visited Bolivia twice (in 1990 and 1991). The AD program focused on assisting farmers who were growing coca to shift their land and labor into legal crops (e.g., fruits and vegetables) for which there was market demand. During the first visit, I prepared a report that identified agricultural research and extension training needs in the Chapare and Associated High Valley Regions of the Department of Cochabamba. I also drafted a scope of work (SOW) for an Agricultural Research and Extension Expert to work on a team to design a follow-on AD project.

**NGO Strengthening** – A few years later, in 1995, I traveled to Cochabamba where a colleague and I conducted a three-day Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) Workshop for a number of Bolivian NGOs.

**Trade Capacity Building (TCB)** – In 2000, during the negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), I led a three person USAID-Andean Community team to identify FTAA-related technical assistance needs in the areas of WTO obligations, FTAA business facilitation measures, and civil society participation in the FTAA process. In 2002, I returned to Bolivia to advance planning for transfer of the Andean Regional Trade Capacity Building Program from USAID/Washington to USAID/Peru. The visit included consultations with USAID/Bolivia, Bolivian trade officials, and the Andean Community General Secretariat, resulting in the drafting of a prospectus for program content and management.

***And the Band Played On…And On!*** – My first trip to Bolivia in 1989 lasted a little over three weeks (May 5-31) and included travel to locations outside of La Paz to visit health facilities while a colleague and I worked on writing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan for the USAID-funded Child Health Project. We stayed in the Hotel Plaza (now closed) that was located on the Paseo del Prado, with my room overlooking El Prado.

**Hotel Plaza, La Paz, Bolivia**

As I recall, it was a Sunday morning and I didn't have any plans other than to rest in my room – until I heard a loud racket coming from the street. I looked out my window and saw hundreds, and as the day progressed, thousands of persons parading and dancing down El Prado. They were all dressed in native costume and accompanied by a variety of musicians playing various instruments, notably, drums!

I was witnessing the Fiesta del Grand Poder ("Festival of the Great Power") that is held in La Paz between the months of May and June, a day on which the whole city of La Paz stops to celebrate one of the most extravagant and unique festivals in Bolivia. The parade begins at 8 a.m. and lasts around 12 hours with partying continuing well into the night.

> Fiesta del Gran Poder is a religious celebration paying homage to El Señor del Gran Poder or Jesus Christ. The dramatic festival features thousands of dancers parading down the sprawling streets of La Paz, flaunting their colourful costumes while thousands of spectators cheer in delight. . . .


Every year, more than 30,000 dancers representing La Paz's neighborhoods and folkloric groups, dance along a 6 kilometer route through the city's streets, show-casing the rich and diverse Bolivian culture.

Inspired by historic events, the conquistador, Inca, slave and Indigenous costumes are bright and beautiful featuring voluminous skirts, hats strewn with ribbons and elaborate masks. The extravagant handmade costumes take around two or three months to make with seamstresses importing fine fabrics, sequins and threads from overseas. . . .

The various dances performed throughout Fiesta del Gran Poder represent themes from both Aymara folklore and Catholic traditions (Source).




There are many videos on YouTube of the Fiesta del Gran Poder; here's one sample:

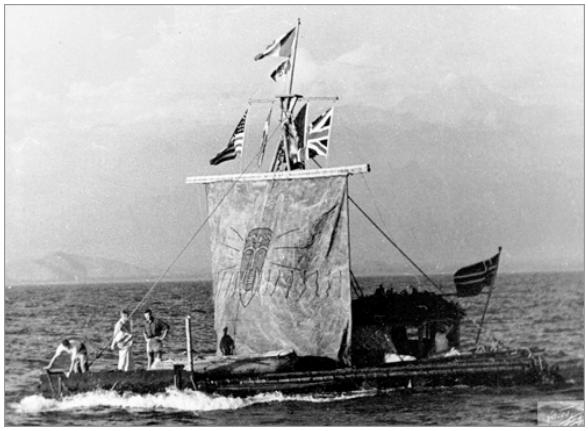
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvZfD9vptTw

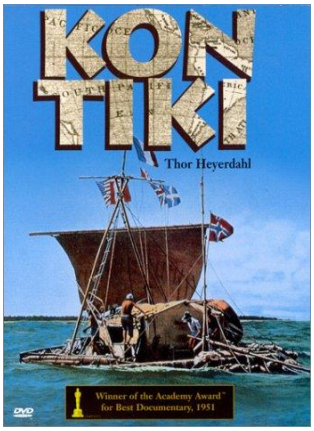

I really didn't have an appreciation at the time what this event was or what it means to the Bolivian people. For me Gran Poder was most memorable for its colorful costumes and the continuous dancing but close behind was that it was a very loud event. With all the drumming and music playing incessantly, I was fortunate to have a room on one of the higher up floors and was able to keep the noise volume to a more tolerable level by closing my room's curtains. But the band did play on and on throughout a very long day!

***My Kon-Tiki Voyage*** – On the first Sunday during that first trip to Bolivia, my colleague wanted to take a day trip to Lake Titicaca. I forget whether we signed up for a tour or rented a taxi but we did make our way up out of the “bowl” in which La Paz is located, crossed over a mountain pass, and eventually arrived on the shore of Lake Titicaca. Our tour included or we arranged to take a motorized boat to an island in the middle of the lake, As our boat got further and further from the shore, and as we looked back to the shore, we saw a spectacular sight on the horizon – the further out we went into the lake, the more the snow-capped mountains of the Andes appeared in the far distance.

**Snow-Capped Andes Viewed from Lake Titicaca**

After about less than a half hour our boat reached the island of Suriqui on the Bolivian side of Lake Titicaca, where there is a small museum about the Norwegian explorer and writer, Thor Heyerdahl, who in the mid-1940s, had hired local Aymara Indians who knew how to build the balsawood rafts, such as the Kon-Tiki (see photo below), using only tools available to pre-Columbian Indians. José Limachi who helped build the Kon Tiki for Heyerdahl and crossed the Pacific with him in 1947, from Peru to the Tuamotu islands in Polynesia, was still living on Lake Titicaca at the time of our visit to the island.





Somewhere along the line during my youth I had read about Heyerdahl's adventures and likely also had seen his 1950 documentary film *Kon-Tiki*. Thus, visiting the island of Suriqui in 1989 and meeting one of the men who had helped Thor Heyerdahl build Kon-Tiki over 40 years before, was an unexpected surprise – and my Kon-Tiki voyage!

***What's That Smell?*** – During the second of my two Alternative Development-related assignments, I was based in Cochabamba in the AD project office located in the Edificio Los Tiempos (see photo below), a building 98 meters and 22 floors tall. Fortunately, the building was air-conditioned as, otherwise, it would have been uncomfortable to sit in an office where the sun heated the building and shone through the windows.

**Edificio Los Tiempos, Cochabamba, Bolivia**

While I found it pleasant to work in the air-conditioned AD office, I gradually became aware of something unpleasant in the office that was bothering me – a pungent odor that seemed to pervade the office. At first, I thought it was just my imagination because I had not been aware of any of the other project staff noticing or complaining about this odor. But, when I had a spare moment, I started to search for the source of the odor, thinking perhaps it was coming through the ventilation system or from a closet but I quickly eliminated these possibilities.

I have a rather acute olfactory ability, so put that to the test to try to pin down the exact origin of what becoming for me an increasingly sickening scent. It didn't take too long to discover that sitting on the desk of the project's chief of party was a monkey, not a live monkey, but rather a dead monkey that had been less than adequately "preserved" by a less-than-fully qualified taxidermist who failed to ensure the full purging of the monkey's innards. Thus, the monkey emanated an increasingly putrid smell. A reminder of what that monkey looked like is illustrated by the below photo.

More amazing, I discovered that the Bolivian staff either had become accustomed to this smell or, worse, were fully aware of it but had done nothing to resolve the problem. So, while the COP was away for several days on a field trip, I took executive action and had the monkey moved off the COP's desk and stored in a closet behind a closed door. That resulted in achieving the near-term result of getting the odor out of the office even as I worried what might happen to the poor soul who happened to open the closet door. In any case, a few days later the COP returned to the office and quickly noticed that his stuffed monkey was missing from his desktop.

How the COP had put up with the smell was beyond me to fathom but he immediately started asking where his monkey was. As I recall, everyone in the office pleaded they were unaware that the monkey was AWOL and, to my knowledge, nobody pointed a finger at me as the guilty party who had hidden the monkey which apparently was then "discovered" in the closet by a janitor or one of the secretaries. Fortunately, my visit was near its end and I was happy to leave that stinky monkey behind in Cochabamba.

But not quite so fast!  On my last day working in the AD project office, I had to stay late in order to finish my report. There yet were a few people in the office when I finished the report and decided to visit the bathroom before walking back to my hotel. When I came out of the bathroom, the office lights were off and, as I soon realized, everyone had left, gone home for the evening. I made my way toward the office door and discovered it was locked. Further, as I recall, either the phone system had been turned off or I didn't know what number to dial to reach anyone (e.g., the reception on the first floor or the security office). I started calling out "Hello!" in a loud voice but nobody answered. As the minutes ticked away, I began to think I might be stuck in the office overnight and, worse, have that stinky monkey as a roommate! I periodically banged on the glass of the office door.

After about a half hour of pounding on the glass door and shouting "Hello," I saw a janitor in the hallway and yelled "Hello!" as I banged on the door. Fortunately, he had a key (or was able to get one) and unlocked the door so I could make my escape. Looking back, the poor monkey who had not escaped from the jungle was now a permanent prisoner in an urban tower of concrete, steel, and glass - Alas!

***Ginger is Not Gold*** – Many of the farmers who were growing coca in the Chapare had come to the region from poor villages in the Bolivian *Altiplano* in search of a better life than what they were able to eke out from subsistence agriculture (growing potatoes, quinoa, and other crops) in their highland villages. The USAID Alternative Development program sought to assist coca-growing farmers to shift their land and labor into crops that, albeit legal, were not as monetarily remunerative as coca. One of these crops on which the project was providing assistance was ginger. I recall one afternoon when I was in the AD project office that the COP received a call from the Chapare field office that the assisted farmers had successfully harvested a huge amount of ginger but now faced a new problem. Where was the market that was ready to buy all this ginger?

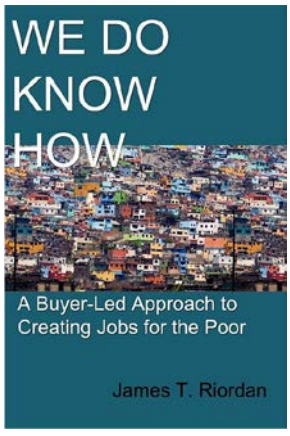
James Painter later noted this problem in *Bolivia and Coca: A Study in Dependency* (1994):

With hindsight, it seems scarcely credible that so much effort has been put into the perfection and promotion of new crops (many of them unknown to the Chapare), and so little attention paid to the identification of markets and selling prices. One of the most infamous disasters caused by the lack of proper market analysis was the growing of ginger, for a time one of the favored alternative crops. In the early 1990s, several tonnes of ginger grown in the Chapare swamped Bolivian markets, causing the price to slump to U.S. $1 per kilo, when the farmers were told they could anticipate a price of between $3 and $4 per kilo. Moreover, the farmers were paid only after a considerable delay.[38]

It took years of experimentation before USAID hired two market analysts (in 1991), finally marking the shift of emphasis away from what can be grown to the identification of crops that can be sold. Again, with hindsight, it is remarkable that private businessmen were expected to invest in the Chapare, which must rank as having one of the most risky investment climates in the world, given its close links to the cocaine trade, its general state of lawlessness, and its high potential for violence. As one USAID official ruefully remarked in 1991, "Marketing was regarded as someone else's concern. Under [President] Reagan, we assumed the private sector would do all these things, but they never showed up."[39]

**Source*: Bolivia and Coca: A Study in Dependency*** **(1994 – p. 116)**

This Bolivian case points to a shortcoming that many non-traditional agricultural export or alternative development projects fail to have a sufficient market orientation. The deficiency wasn't that project staff didn't have a market orientation. Indeed, the projects helped farmers to learn how to grow crops for which there was demand in the market (as any number of studies had shown to be case). The problem, however, was that there was not sufficient market demand at the time of harvest. More specifically, at the time of planting, the project or its assisted farmers had not identified a buyer (with a first and last name) who stood ready to purchase the crop once harvested. This led a former colleague, James T. Riordan, to put into practice and write a book on what he called the buyer-led approach to development.



In the nearby country of Peru, many of the country's farmers had also left their highland communities in search of a better life – or at least making more money – by working in the illegal mining of gold in the Amazon, as I recount elsewhere (see the vignette on Sarah DuPont in my memoir titled "Giants in Their Realms" available on the Okemos Alumni Association website). However, in the case of illegally-mined gold in the Amazon, the market chases the supply, with the miners having ready access to buyers who are eager to purchase the gold that the farmers-cum-miners have extracted from river beds.

But in Bolivia, as the Chapare farmers discovered on harvesting their ginger, there was no buyer ready and waiting to purchase all or even some of the ginger that the farmers had dug out of the ground, thus precipitating the crisis: "Now what the hell are we going to do with all this ginger? Who is going to buy all this ginger?" Hopefully, farmers were eventually able to sell all that ginger into local, regional, or export markets – or, better, switch to growing crops for which there was a market demand, preferably, a buyer with a first and last name!

***Dangers on the Streets of La Paz*** – One Saturday morning I decided to walk around some of the tourist and market areas in downtown La Paz. As I walked downhill, I reached a store on the corner and, as I as turned the corner past the store's front door, I slipped on a mango peel that someone had carelessly left on the sidewalk. Fortunately, while I was able to brace myself against the wall outside the store to avoid falling down, my elbow broke a small pane of glass in a window display. I decided to keep walking but within a block or two a teenage boy caught up with me and told me that he had seen me break the glass.

Well, I didn't know if he was associated with the store or just a smart kid who not only saw the accident but also opportunity for a shakedown. I explained that it had been an accident, the glass breaking when I slipped on a mango peel outside the store – and that the store owner was liable for the accident, and should be happy I wasn't injured. Further, if that didn't settle it, I suggested we perhaps should discuss what happened with a policeman. Perhaps not willing to get the police involved, the boy gave up and walked away.

**Paseo del Prado in front of Hotel Plaza, La Paz, Bolivia**

On another day, as I was leaving my hotel, the Hotel Plaza (now closed) on the Paseo del Prado, I saw an Indian with a llama in front of the hotel on the median of El Prado. The Indian apparently was waiting for passing tourists to pay him for an opportunity to take a picture of the llama or even have the Indian take a picture of the tourist with the llama. Though I didn't have a camera, I walked over to the median, said hello to the Indian, and asked him if the llama was "manso" (gentle) and if I could pet it. The Indian smiled and said yes—and I proceeded to pet the llama—my, what soft fur! When I got home I shared this story with Latino friends who laughed and said: "Yes, the Indian said you could pet the llama but he didn't tell you that llamas spit!" Apparently, llamas have foul tempers and, if frightened or annoyed, react by spitting an unpleasant greenish grassy fluid at the cause of its discomfort.


***"Spit Happens" Even for McDonald's*** – While one colleague alleges that I am "el rey del fast food" ("king of the fast food"), in my travels I "collect" McDonald's in the sense that in each country visited I try to eat a meal at McDonald's. To date, I've eaten at McDonald's in 21+ countries, including Turkey, Spain, England, Canada, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, Peru, Colombia, and Bolivia!

When I stayed in La Paz, there was a McDonald's just up the street (El Prado) from the Hotel Plaza where I was staying. This McDonald's had been installed in what appeared to formerly have been a private residence. For me the food was fine, just like eating a McDonald's cheeseburger in the States. However, McDonald's encountered in Bolivia a demanding clientele who did not find McDonald's fare up to Bolivian taste preferences.

When McDonald's failed to customize its menu offerings to suit Bolivian eating habits, Bolivia became the first Latin American country without a McDonald's. Over a period of less than year (between November of 2002 and July of 2003), McDonald's shut down its eight outlets (three in La Paz, three in Santa Cruz, and two in Cochabamba). However, another burger franchise, Burger King, soon opened in La Paz, taking over the location where McDonald's previously operated, as shown in the photo below.


**Burger King Now Occupying McDonald's Former El Prado Location**

## Colombia


Between 1979 and 2007, I traveled to Colombia 15 times to carry out short-term assignments in such areas as

**Agricultural Research & Extension** – While I had worked for a year (1968-69) with Michigan State University on the Integrated Rural-Urban Marketing Project (PIMUR), my first short-term assignment to Colombia took place in 1979 as a member of a team from the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) that was collecting information for a study on Colombia's phosphate fertilizer market. During the last year I worked with IFDC, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) invited me to participate in CIAT's 1st International Workshop on Seed Marketing in Latin America and the Caribbean. My role in the workshop was to conduct the Green Revolution Game and run a *Comunicación Eficaz* (Effective Communication) mini-course.

Some fifteen years later, while working for USAID through a contract with the United States Department of Agriculture's Office of International Capacity Development (OICD), I attended a Ministry of Agriculture-hosted meeting to discuss the Inter-American Development Bank proposal for an LAC Regional Agricultural Technology Fund. A year later, in 1995, at the invitation of Inter-American Development Bank, I attended the 2nd Ministry of Agriculture-hosted planning meeting for a Regional Agricultural Technology Fund to provide funding for agricultural research in the LAC region, a fund that later came to fruition as FONTAGRO.

**NGO Strengthening** – During June of 1995, I met with USAID/Colombia and a local consulting firm (EVALUAR) to plan an Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) workshop for NGOs working in agriculture and the environment. I returned to Colombia a month later to conduct that workshop. Later that year, in November, we conducted a second OMS workshop, during which trip I also participated in the 4th Central American and Caribbean Seminar on Fund Raising. In 1999, the USAID Mission invited me to conduct a third OMS workshop, this time in Medellín.

**Trade Capacity Building (TCB)** – In 1995, in support of a study a consultant was conducting on Technology Institutions for Agricultural Free Trade in the Americas (TIAFTA), I visited the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). Some years later, in 2000, during the negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), I led a three-person USAID-Andean Community (CAN) team to assess trade capacity building needs of the CAN country members (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela) in the area of meeting

World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations. After the FTAA negotiations stalled in 2004, and in the midst of the Andean Trade Promotion Agreement negotiations, I represented USAID three times in the Trade Capacity Building (TCB) Working Group meetings held in Cartagena, Colombia: Round 1 in May of 2004; Round 7 in February of 2005; and Round 12 in September of 2005.

**Office Coverage** – Finally, during 2006-2007, I visited the USAID Mission three times to provide office coverage while the Mission Economist, who directed the Policy (TCB-related) Component of the Alternative Development project, was away from post. The first time was for a two-week period while the Mission Economist accompanied USAID's Chief Economist to various meetings in Bogota and other Colombian cities. The second and third times were in 2007, the first in June while the Mission Economist was on home leave and recovering from a stabbing that occurred during an attempted robbery; and the third in July-August in between the economist's departure from the Mission and the arrival of his replacement.

**Bogota, Colombia**

**The Progressive Manager** – The origin for my first trip to and professional working assignment in Colombia had its beginnings during the summer of 1968 while I was on the campus of Michigan State University. I was in the process of completing my M.A. thesis in the Department of Communication and was anticipating the Selective Service System (otherwise known as the Draft Board) would soon be inviting me for induction to military service.

Not knowing when that invitation would arrive, I planned to visit my parents in Colombia, where my father was working in Cali on planning the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). One day I received a short telex from my father who reported that

USAID had awarded a contract to Michigan State's Agricultural Economics Department to conduct an agricultural marketing research project in the Cauca Valley Department of Colombia, the capitol of which is Cali where my parents were living. My father proposed that I get in touch with the Agricultural Economics department to explore if there might be a possibility that I could land a research assistant position on this project that was in the process of being launched in Cali.

I quickly got in touch with that department's Kelly Harrison who had been assigned to be chief of party on this project. On meeting with Harrison and his colleague, Don Larson (director of the project's rural marketing component), I told them about my background and asked if there might be an opportunity to work on the project in some capacity such as a research assistant, adding that I would soon be going to Cali to visit my parents. Harrison suggested that we revisit this possibility after both he and I had arrived in Cali.

Soon after arriving in Cali and settling in with my parents, I contacted the project's office and made an appointment to meet with Harrison. That meeting led to an agreement that MSU would hire me at $100 per month to collaborate with project researchers to design and carry out a project component that had not been included in the project's original research design. This component entailed studying the role communication media were playing in diffusing market information and agricultural technology in the Cauca Valley. My research resulted in PIMUR's publications including the report I authored in Spanish titled: *Informe técnico no. 9: Sistemas de información y comunicación de mercadeo en la zona de influencia de Cali* (1969).

I owe a great deal to Dr. Harrison and MSU for having made the adjustment in the original design of the PIMUR project that opened the door for me to contribute to the project. But Harrison was not only my supervisor as the project's Chief of Party but also a friend. On several occasions, I met with Kelly (e.g., at his house for dinner) and we exchanged ideas from the vantage point of our respective disciplines (his training being in agricultural economics and agribusiness, mine in rural sociology and communication) about how agricultural development could be accelerated.

I possibly gained more out of working with the PIMUR project staff, largely economists and marketing specialists, than they did from me as a sociologist and communication specialist. Most valuable to my own intellectual growth was learning about PIMUR's conceptual framework regarding how a more efficient agricultural marketing system, freed of market imperfection constraints, could accelerate agricultural development by improving marketing channels to better link urban areas (as a source of consumer demand) with the rural areas (as a source of agricultural products), could reduce the costs of marketing and, thereby, help bring down retail prices to consumers which, in turn, would increase consumer demand for agricultural products as well as other goods and services produced locally.

This market-oriented (or demand-driven) approach was a new perspective for me because much of what I had studied about agricultural development had been very much supply-driven, for example, the emphasis on increasing productivity through agricultural research to develop high-yielding crop varieties. The PIMUR project – and interaction with project colleagues – had the effect of getting me to think about how supply and demand impact on market prices and, in turn, on the incentive of farmers to adopt new agricultural technologies.

After almost a year with PIMUR, I returned to the United States to enroll in a doctoral program in sociology at Iowa State University and, based on my experience working on the PIMUR project, complemented my coursework in sociology with economics courses sufficient to earn a minor in economics to complement my Ph.D. in sociology.

But one anecdote about the PIMUR project illustrates that the constraints to change in an agricultural marketing system are not driven solely by prices and economic-related constraints on the supply of and the demand for production inputs and agricultural outputs. In the process of designing the information and communication study that I conducted for PIMUR, I came across a study suggesting that change in a marketing system can be constrained by a marketing manager not being “progressive,” that is, a marketing manager or, more generally, an actor in a marketing channel, not being open to looking for ways to make changes that would improve the efficiency of the marketing system.

This reminded me not only of my MA thesis research on the impact of dogmatism on channel preference and learning but also of Everett Rogers’ sociological research on adoption and diffusion of agricultural innovations, and the roles that innovators and early adopters play in accelerating the processes of innovation adoption and diffusion. As I reflected on this, I began to hypothesize that the extent to which actors in a marketing system are “progressive” (or not) could impact on choices made about marketing (e.g., which marketing channel to use) and, in turn, on a marketing system’s overall efficiency. I translated the study’s “progressive manager” instrument into Spanish (“Gerente Progresista”) and proposed to PIMUR’s leadership that this instrument be integrated into the survey questionnaires PIMUR’s teams would use to collect information from actors in the Cauca Valley’s agricultural marketing system.

The leaders of PIMUR and Michigan State’s Latin American Market Planning (LAMP) Center, perhaps being economists and not sociologists, didn’t see how data from the “Gerente Progresista” instrument would be useful to the conceptual framework guiding the project’s research on the agricultural marketing system of the Cauca Valley. So my proposal and the “Gerente Progresista” instrument went no further.

Years later, however, I asked some Colombians about what impact the PIMUR study had on changing the agricultural marketing system of the Cauca Valley. One replied that PIMUR had run into roadblocks in fostering change because there was resistance on the part of marketing actors and political leaders to make change. What the PIMUR project ran into was that it was difficult to get the political and economic leadership in the Cauca Valley to adopt the project's recommended changes. Indeed, even when marketing leaders in Colombia's capitol, Bogotá, requested PIMUR's technical support to identify ways to increase marketing system efficiency in the food system serving Bogotá, PIMUR again ran into similar resistance to marketing system reforms.

Over the years, I wondered if the PIMUR project's conclusions and recommendations might have more swiftly found acceptance (adoption) had project leaders approved including the "Gerente Progresista" instrument in the questionnaires for the project's marketing components, so that this information could have been utilized in designing a strategy to more effectively engage marketing and political leaders to buy into and adopt the study's recommendations. In a recent email discussion on this, Harrison reflected that years later he

> regretfully realized that Nelson Suarez [the project's Colombian co-director] and I made a big mistake by not including the "progressive manager" instrument in our research. In retrospect I now realize that in all the development work I've done it was crucial to concentrate our efforts on individuals who were fanatically progressive, or as I have called it – innovators (Kelly Harrison, personal communication).

Kelly's reflection on how the "progressive manager" instrument could have generated useful information reaffirms an insight that Michigan State's Gordon Sabine shared:

> There has not been that much said, not enough, about our need to know much more about our audiences, to do descriptive studies before we lay on any more prescription, to learn more about the 'downs' [e.g., "the poor, little people"] but also the very high ups, the decision-makers, and what they know or do not know..., and what will persuade them to take the paths we consider right. (Gordon Sabine)

In the PIMUR case, more "descriptive" information, such as the "progressive manager" instrument could have provided, would have empowered the project to learn "much more about [its] audiences," in particular, "the very high ups, the decision-makers, and what they [knew or did not] know" – with that information, in turn, being used to design communication messages that would have been more effective in persuading "them to take the paths" [make the reforms in the Cauca Valley's marketing system that the PIMUR project] consider[ed] right."

One improvement in the Cauca Valley's agricultural marketing system that eventually did grow out of PIMUR was the establishment in Candelaria, a town near Cali, of the

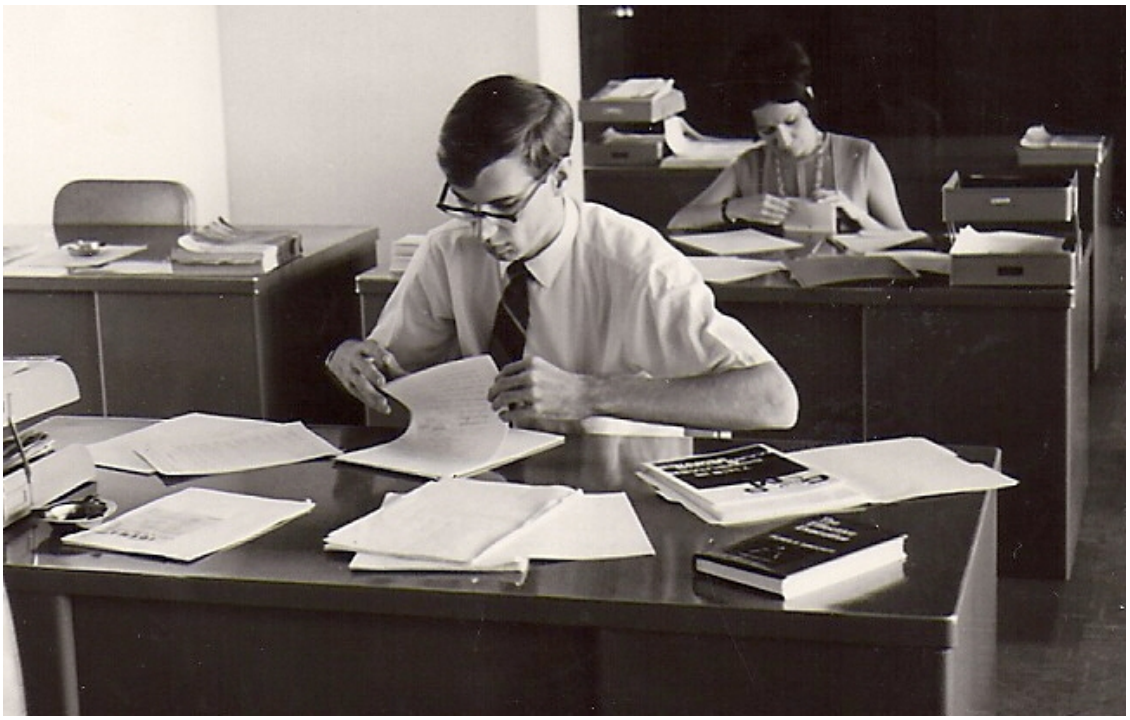
Central de Abastecimiento del Valle del Cauca SA (CAVASA) as the major food assembly and wholesale operation serving Cali's retail food system.


**Central de Abastecimiento del Valle del Cauca SA (CAVASA), Candelaria, Colombia**

During a recent visit to Cali, I had an opportunity to visit CAVASA which actually had been built on the site of Calipuerto, the original airport serving the city of Cali. Seeing CAVASA facility, which is now the principal source for the fresh agricultural produce sold in Cali's grocery stores, led me to reflect on how "poorly" developed the Cauca Valley's agricultural marketing system was back in 1968 when I worked on the PIMUR project. Today, however, a half century later, it is remarkable to see the incredible changes that took place in Cali's food retail system over the past 50 years. Back in 1968, the center for food retailing in Cali was the central market in downtown Cali, plus a few nascent supermarkets (e.g., Carulla) that were small and poorly stocked, fresh produce (fruits and vegetables) all too often not at all fresh.

By contrast Cali's food retail system today rivals that where I live in Northern Virginia, with Cali having a diverse mix of food retailers, from supermarkets to hypermarkets, that drive fierce competition among the city's food retailers, including the following stores and chains: Alkosto, Carulla, Confamdi, Exito, Jumbo (formerly Carrefour), La 14, Makro, Olimpica, PriceSmart (Costco subsidiary), and Super Inter. Back in 1968, only two of these – Carulla and Confamdi – existed in Cali. Cali is indeed a case study of the rise of supermarkets in the developing world, a trend that Thomas Reardon, a MSU economist, has been studying worldwide.

While PIMUR may not in the short run have achieved a dramatic impact on transforming the agricultural marketing system in the Cauca Valley, for me the project was not only a great learning experience but also the venue where I met and fell in love with a recently graduated lawyer, Sonia Gomez Naranjo (see photo below), who PIMUR had hired to work on the project's marketing laws and regulations study. Less than a year later we were married.



**Behind Every Great Man There Is an Even Greater Woman**

**PIMUR Project Office, Cali, Colombia (circa 1969)**

***From Ecofondo to EcoTitanic*** – Some years ago an environmental trust fund was established as a result of the Western Hemisphere governments agreeing to deposit an agreed-upon amount of local currency into the fund in exchange for public sector banks (e.g., the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank) forgiving US dollar loans. As an example, a country owing, say, $US 1 million could have that loan forgiven if the country put, say, 50% of the $US 1 million in local currency into the environmental trust fund. In turn, deposited funds were earmarked to be used to finance environmental protection projects having natural resource protection and conservation objectives.

In turn, each country contributing to the fund would establish a local organization to carry out the process of developing or receiving proposals for environmental projects. In the case of Colombia, a private non-governmental organization, known as ECOFONDO, was established to manage disbursing trust funds in support of environmental projects. USAID/Colombia provided a grant to ECOFONDO to help cover the initial operational costs of the foundation. However, after a period of time, the Mission became concerned that ECONFONDO was using up the grant funds covering operating costs and had not yet funded any projects, because each member of ECOFONDO's board of directors felt that first priority should be given to funding projects in the region represented by that member.


Further, ECOFONDO was requesting additional grant funds to cover the foundation's operating costs. The Mission was also concerned that the foundation was operating in a way that the organization's leadership was doing little to nothing to help the organization become sustainable without continued infusions of USAID grant funding. To reverse this trend, USAID asked me to come to Bogotá to conduct the Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) workshop for ECOFONDO staff as well as staff of other NGOs in sectors where the Mission was providing support. However, on the day the workshop started, ECOFONDO staff were absent from the workshop. On investigating, the USAID project officer for the ECOFONDO grant learned that ECOFONDO's staff had traveled to Germany to participate in a course on fundraising.

Fortunately, USAID had arranged for representatives of other NGOs to attend the OMS workshop and, at a later date, we held a second OMS workshop in Fusagasugá, a town about 40 miles from Bogotá. The reason for this second workshop at a site away from Bogotá was that during the first workshop many participants were taking long lunches, going back to their offices, and/or skipping out early in the day, thus missing out on many of the workshop's training activities. Having the second workshop in Fusagasugá meant that we would have a captive audience.

In the end, even though some ECOFONDO staff participated in the second workshop, the USAID project officer and I were frustrated about ECOFONDO's poor performance in terms of taking any meaningful steps to move toward becoming more sustainable. I joked that, even though one could see the iceberg of non-sustainability looming ahead, ECONFONDO, like the Titanic, continued to steam ahead toward an eventual demise. This, of course, led us to privately refer to ECOFONDO as the EcoTitanic.

Today, some many years later, ECOFONDO continues to function albeit, according to the organization's website, without any USAID funding support although with apparent financial support from Canada and Holland. Perhaps the OMS Workshop and USAID eventually cutting off grant funding to ECOFONDO finally caught the attention of the organization's management and governing body – and maybe today the organization is doing a better job at mobilizing new sources of funding and moving environmental trust funds into supporting worthwhile environmental projects.

***The Five Star Hotel Experience –Twice!*** – A highlight of two visits to Cartagena was not only visiting the original walled city of Cartagena, with its narrow streets and horse-drawn carriages. Another highlight was staying at a government-discounted rate in two of Cartagena's famous 5-star hotels, the Hotel Santa Teresa and the Hotel Santa Clara, both built in the 17th-century to serve as convents.


**Hotel Santa Teresa (left) and Hotel Santa Clara (right)**

While both hotels are steeped in history and contemporary conveniences, what I most recall was the Monday evening that I checked into the Santa Clara, turned on the TV in my room, and discovered the local cable company carrying the *Monday Night Football* game between the Dallas Cowboys and Washington Redskins. But I was so tired from having traveled from Washington, DC that day that I wasn't able to stay awake to watch the game and went to bed.

**Lobby of Santa Clara Hotel, Cartagena, Colombia**

Years later when my wife Sonia and I visited Cartagena – and stayed at a much more affordable hotel (a Hilton) – we visited the Santa Clara Hotel where our spending spree was limited to ordering some drinks (for me a delicious coconut lemonade) in the hotel's lobby and enjoying a pricey dinner in the hotel's restaurant.

## Ecuador


Over a 20-year period from 1986 to 2005, I traveled to Ecuador nine times to carry out various assignments to support agricultural sector development and trade capacity building.

**Agricultural Sector Development** – My initial assignment to Ecuador took place in 1986, when, as a consultant to the Academy for Educational Development (AED), I took on assessing the potential for AED's USAID/S&T-funded Communication for Technology Transfer in Agriculture (CTTA) project to collaborate with ongoing USAID/Ecuador technology transfer and farmer organization projects.

Some years later, as the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Advisor on the USAID/LAC's LAC TECH project, I traveled to Ecuador three times. In 1992, the first assignment focused on writing a concept paper on the technology component for an Agricultural Sector Development project that the Mission was planning to design. The second took place the following year (January 1993), to conduct a "Sustainable Private Agricultural Research in Latin America and the Caribbean (SPARLAC) Workshop" in Quito, for 40+ participants. Further, during that visit, I worked one day with a representative of the USAID/Peru Mission to provide technical support on how the Mission could increase sustainability of FUNDEAGRO (a Peruvian agricultural foundation) the Mission had been supporting.

I returned to Quito in March of 1993 to participate in the Latin American Symposium on Research and Extension in Agricultural Systems. At the symposium I presented a paper that I titled "From Farming Systems to 'Field of Dreams:' Core, Operational and Generic Constraints to Implementing Farming Systems Research and Extension Projects in Latin America." Also, during this visit, I assisted a Chemonics International team in drafting a design concept paper for a USAID/Ecuador Agricultural Sector Development project, my focus being on writing an annex providing an institutional analysis of agricultural research, extension, and education in Ecuador.

A little over a decade later, in 2005, I participated as the USAID representative to a meeting of the Interagency Rural Development Group comprised of staff from organizations such as the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, USAID and other donors.

**Trade Capacity Building (TCB)** – Beginning In the early 2000s, the RSD (Regional Sustainable Development) office in which I worked at USAID in Washington, DC, was developing and implementing, through various projects and mechanisms, some trade capacity building assistance activities for LAC countries participating with the U.S. in the negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). For example, during the FTAA negotiation, our office took the lead in designing TCB assistance for the Andean Region countries. We kicked this off with a November 2000 trip to five member countries of the Andean Community (CAN), including a visit to Ecuador to assess how technical assistance provided under our project could help Ecuador and other CAN countries to meet their World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations, implement such FTAA business facilitation measures as has been agreed by the 34 Western Hemisphere countries participating in the FTAA negotiation, and foster positive (supportive) civil society participation in the FTAA process.

A second area of support was organizing an International Trade Training Workshop, held in Quito in October of 2002, for economic growth officers from USAID Missions in the LAC region, with the training focusing on helping USAID staff to understand trade issues, ongoing free trade agreement negotiations, and discuss ways in which USAID could assist counties in meeting their TCB needs.

Finally, during 2004-2005, I traveled twice to Guayaquil, Ecuador during Rounds 5 and 10 of the negotiation of the Andean Trade Promotion Agreement, with my role being to represent USAID/Washington in the TCB Working Group.

***The Best Flan de Coco in the World!*** – During my first visit to Ecuador, I traveled to the capital city of Quito, the coastal city of Guayaquil, and a rural city of Quevedo, in the latter staying one night in the Hotel Olímpico. One of my favorite deserts is *flan de coco* (coconut flan); when I saw this on the menu of the hotel's restaurant, I just had to give it a try. The hotel's *flan de coco* was like no other I have ever tried, with the flan having just the right mix of coconut flavor and a texture that wasn't like a regular flan or like a cake but rather somewhere in between – simply delicious! In fact, so delicious, that the next morning I ordered *flan de coco* as part of my breakfast.

***Sonia's Trip to Ecuador*** – While employed with Chemonics and working on the LAC TECH project, I benefited twice from company policies to support its employees who traveled frequently to the developing world. The first policy provided for Chemonics to reimburse the employee for the cost of purchasing a suitcase after every seventh trip overseas. At the time I qualified for this benefit, I really didn't need a new suitcase but did need a carryon bag, one with its own wheels, so I didn't have to travel with one of those collapsible wheeled carts on which you place one's carryon and wheel the bag rather than lugging it. I bought a TravelPro which also, being larger than the carryon bag I had been using, allowed me to carry more stuff on board the plane than I previously packed in my carryon. Indeed, eventually with this TravelPro, I stopped traveling with a checked suitcase once I learned how to pack the right mix of clothing and other stuff to get me through a two-week trip to Latin America.

The second policy was that, after every tenth trip, Chemonics reimbursed the cost of a round-trip ticket for one's spouse to accompany the employee on an upcoming trip. So, after ten trips to Latin America while working on the LAC TECH project, I invited my wife Sonia to go with me on my next trip which was to Quito, Ecuador. As neither of us had ever been to Ecuador, we planned to arrive on Saturday, thus allowing us to do some sightseeing on Sunday. On Monday Sonia went sightseeing which included a stop on the Equator. I forget how many additional days she stayed with me in Quito but recall that she soon realized it would be easy to buy a ticket to fly Cali, Colombia to visit her family and then rework her original ticket to fly back to U.S. from Cali rather than from Quito.

I agreed to this change of our planned vacation but the morning after she departed for Cali, I was surprised, on phoning home to check up on our son Shannon, to learn that he had torn his ACL playing basketball. After talking with Shannon, I phoned Sonia at her mother's home in Cali to let her know what had happened to Shannon. As a result, Sonia had to cut short her visit to Cali so she could return home to be with Shannon.

Soon after I returned home from Quito, Shannon had surgery to repair his ACL. The operation proved successful but put a question mark on whether Shannon would be able to play basketball at the college level. But that question was answered a year later when he tore the ACL on his other knee on which he also had to have reconstructive ACL surgery. Subsequently, Shannon switched from playing basketball to coaching basketball. Today he is an Assistant Varsity Coach at the South Lakes High School he attended in Reston, plus does volunteer coaching with younger players.

Well, before another seventh trip (to qualify for a new suitcase) or another tenth trip (to qualify for a round trip ticket to take Sonia with me on my next trip), Chemonics stopped providing these benefits. This was because, during the process of USAID establishing a new indirect cost rate (overhead rate) for Chemonics, USAID ruled that Chemonics was not allowed to include the cost of these two employee benefits as part of the indirect costs the firm had been claiming in tracking direct and indirect costs and in calculating its overhead. With that USAID ruling, Chemonics eliminated those two benefits.

***Origins of the FAMA Case Study*** – During one of my visits to Quito, Chemonics' LAC TECH project sent a colleague to evaluate one of the local NGOs receiving funding under a USAID/Ecuador project. Near the end of our assignments, we met to swap notes about what each had learned in our respective assignments. As I listened to my colleague summarize her findings, conclusions, and recommendations, I saw how relevant those were to a study I was conducting on constraints to the sustainability of agricultural research being conducted under the auspices of a private sector-based nonprofit organization (e.g., a foundation).

Further, when I later read my colleague's evaluation report, I realized it could serve as the basis for writing a "hypothetical' case study that I could use in the training workshop that I was developing on Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS). Indeed, building on that evaluation report, I changed the name of the real organization to FAMA, the Spanish acronym for the "Foundation for Agriculture and the Environment," wrote a narrative highlighting various organizational management problems that worked against FAMA becoming sustainable, and (with my colleague's assistance) developed a budget for FAMA showing that projected costs were quickly rising above projected income.

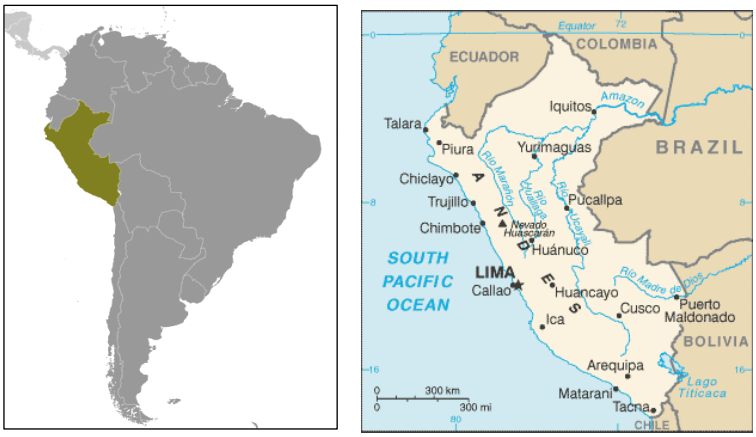
Before each OMS workshop conducted in various countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, we shared the FAMA case study with our USAID Mission counterpart officer so he or she could distribute the case study to the NGOs invited to attend the OMS workshop. The FAMA case study proved one of the most popular and positively rated activities in the workshop, second only to a LEGOS activity we used to focus on building communication, organization, and management skills within an NGO.


***Lack of a Charm School Offensive!*** – In October 2002, USAID hosted an International Trade Training Workshop for USAID economic growth officers in the LAC region. The workshop was held at the Hotel Oro Verde in Quito. The contractor who coordinated with USAID in organizing the workshop invited a private consultant with trade expertise to give a talk touching on several trade issues. Also attending the workshop was a staff member of the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). Suddenly, during the consultant's presentation, the USTR staffer jumps up and, from the back of the room, interrupts the presentation, with the following questions. "Who are you? Are you a contractor?"


This had to have been very embarrassing not only for the consultant but also for the USAID staff (myself included) who had worked so hard to organize this first "trade training workshop" for USAID field officers, both Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) and Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs). While the incident shows a possible slip in USAID's coordination with USTR prior to the workshop, to ensure that USTR would not object to this particular consultant giving a talk on trade during the workshop, there's no doubt that it reflected a total lack of discretion on the part of the USTR staffer who impolitely interrupted the consultant's presentation. As I had already observed in other venues, this was not the first time that this person had demonstrated an acute ability to be "an ugly American" while supposedly representing the United States both overseas and in trade-related meetings held within the United States.

This staffer's lack of any sense of refinement during interactions with others, while at the same time holding the self-perception of being an expert negotiator, strained credulity to the point that, during one round of the Andean Trade Promotion Agreement negotiation, I shared with a colleague: "While our USTR colleague was an Ivy League graduate, she certainly was not a graduate of *Marilyn Hotchkiss' Ballroom Dancing and Charm School* (2005).

## Peru




Over a 18-year period, between 1992 and 2010, I traveled to Peru 16 times to carry out short-term assignments on various issues, including privatization, NGO sustainability, trade capacity building, and poverty reduction and food security.

**Privatization** – My first visit(s) to Peru actually occurred during the first half of 1985 when I traveled to Peru four times as a member of a team to assess and provide recommendations to USAID/Peru on how the Government of Spain loan project (PROCOMPRA) to establish an integrated rural-urban marketing system could be put back on track after the system, having been almost built, ran out of money to move it to an operational stage.

Later, in the early 1990s, “privatization” (of state enterprises) was all the rage in the developing world, Peru included. In fact, USAID/Peru asked me in 1992 to look at what might be involved in privatizing agricultural experiment stations along Peru’s coastal valleys. This led to preparing a report titled “Forward to the Past - Mobilizing Peru’s Private Sector through an Agricultural Experiment Station Foundation: Key Constraints and Action Options.” Apparently, the Minister of Agriculture found the report sufficiently of interest that I was invited to return to Lima later that year to design and conduct a workshop on the privatization of the national agricultural research institute (INIAA). During this trip, the Mission also asked me to develop an action plan for revising FUNDEAGRO’s strategic plan and developing an endowment for FUNDEAGRO, a private agricultural research and development organization that the Mission had played a role in helping to establish and provide startup funding.

A couple of years later, in January of 1994, the Mission invited me to return to Lima to collaborate with a new foundation (Fundación Perú) in preparing a scope of work titled “Assessment of ‘Privatization’ of INIAA Coastal Experiment Stations: Proposed Feasibility Study on the Sustainability of a Coastal Agricultural Research and Extension System.” Later that year, following Fundación Perú’s completion of the feasibility study, the Mission invited me back to Lima to provide feedback on the feasibility study which FP had titled: “Estudio de Factibilidad para la Instalación y Operación de Una Red de Estaciones Experimentales Privadas-REEP en La Costa del Peru.”

**NGO Sustainability** – In 1994 USAID/Peru invited me to Lima to conduct in Spanish a two-day "Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) Workshop" for eight NGOs, followed by providing technical assistance to seven NGOs (one day of TA per NGO). The major thing that my colleagues and I learned from conducting the OMS workshop was that two days was not sufficient time to cover the material we wanted to share with the NGOs, which led us to refine and expand the workshop to a three-day schedule – and being invited back to Peru in 1995 to conduct the three-day version of the OMS Workshop at a seaside hotel in Paracas (a town several hours south of Lima).

The positive feedback we got from NGO participants led to conducting many more OMS workshops in other countries of the LAC region as well as further refining/developing our workshop's training materials. Ultimately those materials were finalized into a matched set of Spanish and English materials in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

**Trade Capacity Building (TCB)** – The evolution of USAID/Peru's support for regional and bilateral TCB assistance is an illustrative case of how a regional program (e.g., the LAC Regional program at USAID/Washington, DC) can play a leadership role in developing new program initiatives that can, if successful, be spun off for management by a bilateral Mission within the LAC region.

When management of LAC Regional TCB program for the Caribbean region was shifted to USAID/Jamaica, the LAC Regional program turned its focus to developing an Andean Regional TCB program. In 2000, we kicked off programming funds for TCB assistance to the Andean region by doing a joint USAID-Andean Community assessment of FTAA-related technical assistance needs regarding WTO obligations, business facilitation measures, and civil society participation in the FTAA process. Once we identified those needs, we began to put in place TA mechanisms to respond to those needs (e.g., an Inter-Agency Agreement with USDA to provide TA on sanitary and phytosanitary measures).

Further coordination with the Andean region on the development of this program was carried forward in 2001, when I attended and observed the Trade Negotiation Committee meetings in Lima in January. In June of that year representatives of the Andean Community and the USAID Missions in the Andean Region met in Lima to discuss and build support for the Andean Regional Trade Capacity Building program that was being jointly designed by LAC/RSD (the office in which I worked) and the Peru Mission. Then, in January of 2002, I returned to Lima to advance planning for transfer of the Andean Regional Trade Capacity Building Program from the RSD Office to USAID/Peru. A program management prospectus was drafted and I returned to Lima in August of 2002 to finalize transfer of management of the Andean Regional TCB program from USAID/LAC/RSD (the office in which I worked) to the USAID/Peru Mission.

The following year, in October 2003, I travelled to Lima for a regional meeting of the USAID economic growth officers in the Andean region (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru) to coordinate USAID TCB assistance responses to the TCB needs and priorities each CAN country had articulated in its national TCB strategy. Those strategies were further discussed in July of 2004 when the Andean countries and USG agencies participated in the TCB

Working Group in Round 3 of the Andean Trade Promotion Agreement negotiation, by which time the USAID/Peru Mission had taken on being the lead USAID representative at the TCB Working Group meetings during each round of the Andean Trade Promotion Agreement negotiation. USAID economic growth officers, myself included representing the LAC/RSD office, again met in Lima in 2004 (February) to take stock of progress in responding to CAN country TCB needs and plan next steps in the development of the Andean Regional TCB program.

Because of political problems between the United States and two Andean countries (Bolivia and Ecuador), both of those countries dropped out of participating in the Andean Trade Promotion Agreement negotiation. In the end, the U.S. signed a FTA with only two Andean countries (Colombia and Peru). By this time USAID/Peru continued to manage the Andean Regional TCB Program but focused most of the assistance on Peru and Colombia, with each Mission continuing to provide some TCB-related bilateral assistance to its host country.

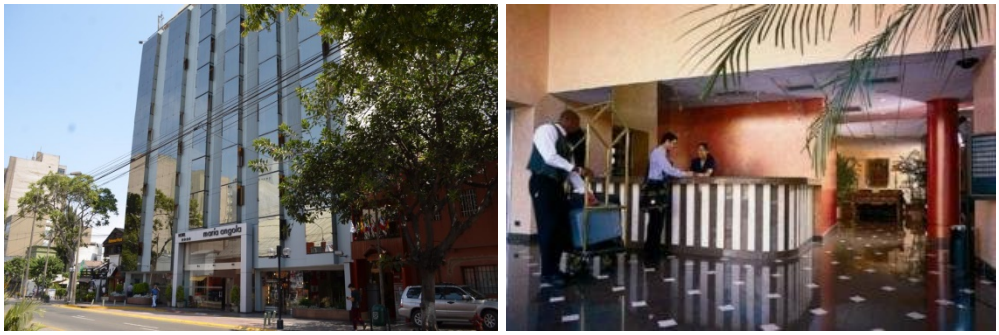
**Poverty Reduction and Food Security** – The last areas in which my travel took me to Peru were poverty reduction (2007) and food security (2010). In 2007, the Mission economic growth officer was to be on home leave but, as it turned out, was hospitalized. I traveled to Lima to help that officer's desk while he was in the hospital and to develop a scope of work to evaluate the Mission's Poverty Reduction and Alleviation (PRA) Project. A few years later, in 2010, I returned to Lima to attend an International Food Policy Research Institute-sponsored conference on "Fostering Growth and Reducing Poverty and Hunger in Asia and Latin America: Opportunities for Mutual Learning and Cooperation."

***That "Damn" Suitcase and the Missing Cake –*** Prior to one of my earlier trips to Peru, a Peruvian neighbor asked if I could carry a shirt or blouse to Lima to give to a family member. I agreed but was taken aback when the neighbor arrived at our front door with a regular-sized suitcase packed with stuff to take to the relative in Lima. I should have put my foot down right then and there but, since I otherwise traveled only with a carryon bag, I accepted the suitcase.

My flight itinerary was DCA (Washington)-Miami-Lima and, after checking in and turning that suitcase over to the airline, I proceeded to the departure gate and, at the appointed time, boarded the plane. Not long after all were aboard and my safety belt was buckled, out pilot announced that the plane had a mechanical problem requiring that the flight be canceled. I made my way back to the terminal to rebook, and was pleased when the agent rebooked me out to the next morning's first flight and upgraded me to first class. I then went to claim that "damn" suitcase and waited and waited for it.

I didn't normally travel with checked bags but, on this occasion, had to reclaim that "damn" suitcase, haul it back to my home in Reston, and take it back to the airport the next morning. To make matters worse, on arriving in Lima, there was a labor strike at the airport as I stood around over an hour waiting for that "damn" suitcase to eventually be delivered to the baggage claim area. Finally, that "damn" suitcase arrived and I was

able to proceed uneventfully through customs and taxied to my hotel, the Hotel María Angola, located in the Miraflores section of Lima.



**Hotel María Angola & Front Desk**

On checking into the hotel, I turned that "damn" suitcase over to the front desk and asked them to hold it until a person came to claim it. I then called the family and left the message that I had arrived at my hotel and had left the suitcase with the front desk at the María Angola Hotel. The person with whom I was talking then invited me to visit the family but I graciously thanked her, indicating that I had a very busy schedule and had no idea when I might be available.

On the eve of my departure, having finished my work with USAID, I returned to the hotel to discover that my neighbor's family had left a package of miscellaneous items for me to take back to the U.S. to give to my neighbor – plus a box containing some kind of a Peruvian cake (but only God knew what might actually be inside the cake). I packed the miscellaneous items into my carryon bag but told the agent at the reception desk that I didn't have room in my luggage to take the cake with me–and asked the clerk to accept the cake in appreciation for the kind service the hotel had given me during my stay. After all, how was I going to take that cumbersome box of cake onto the plane when I already had to navigate my own carryon bag and a smaller "personal item" bag, Further, I didn't want to haul that "damn" box of cake from Lima to Miami and then have some customs official confiscate it.

After returning home to Reston, Virginia, I delivered the bag of miscellaneous items to my Peruvian neighbor who thanked me but immediately asked: "What happened to the box with the cake?" I immediately replied that I had never seen any box with a cake. My neighbor then said that one of the family members had also delivered to the hotel a box with a cake in it to which I quickly said: "I never saw such a box. Perhaps the folks at the reception ate the cake!"

Well, fortunately, that's the end of the story about that "damn" suitcase and the missing box of cake, except that in the future I kept my mouth shut in the neighborhood about any upcoming trip that I was going to take to Lima.

***Machu Picchu or Bust(ed)!*** – During the first half of 1985, I made four trips to Peru in response to a USAID/Peru technical assistance request. USAID/Peru had asked the office in which I was working to mobilize a team to assist the Government of Peru in salvaging the $90 million PROCOMPRA loan project that had been designed and funded by the Government of Spain to establish an integrated rural-urban marketing system of rural assembly centers, an urban wholesaling center, and community-based retail outlets.

While the loan called for the project to deliver a turn-key, operational system, and much of the basic physical infrastructure had been built, the system was not complete, the employees to operate the system hadn't been hired or trained, and the funding for the project had been exhausted. The team's task was to identify a strategy and program to provide options for mobilizing the private sector to invest in turning components of this "white elephant" (PROCOMPRA) into profitable businesses.

In the midst of carrying out this work, two of the team's members proposed that we take a trip to Cuzco to visit a fertilizer production facility, take a look at the corn growing in the fields, and, by the way while we were at it, visit Machu Picchu. I wasn't enthusiastic about going on this trip but checked with my control officer at the Mission to see if there might be a problem with the three of us going up to Cuzco on Saturday morning and flying back to Lima first thing Monday morning. My contact said OK to the trip as long as the two consultants didn't charge USAID for going to Machu Picchu on Sunday,

On arriving in Cuzco I quickly, because of the higher altitude, developed a very severe headache (on top of already having a sore throat), so decided just to stay in bed the rest of the day, while my colleagues went off on a tour of the city. I was feeling better by the next morning (at least the headache had subsided) and the three of us went to the train station to take a train to Machu Picchu. On arriving at the train depot for Machu Picchu, we transferred to a bus that drove us up to Machu Picchu, where we spent a couple of hours exploring the ruins of this amazing once vibrant population center.

At the appointed hour, we got back on the bus, drove down the hillside, and boarded the train. Along the way, the train, for some reason (fortunately not because of bandits that reportedly would rob train passengers), stopped and we got off the train for a short time, during which I saw one of my colleagues (a seed specialist) talking with an elderly man who was wearing a red cap with the word “Pioneer” embroidered on it. After we got back on the train, my colleague later told me the gentlemen with the red hat was the Chairman of the Board of Pioneer Seeds and had been asking my colleague what he was doing or working on in Peru.


Our flight back to Lima was uneventful and the next morning, on arriving at USAID, the director of the Office of Agriculture asked me to touch base with one of his staff (Fred Mann). I went to Fred’s office, knocked on his door, and Fred beckoned me to enter, and just about as quickly asked me what my two colleagues and I had been doing up in Machu Picchu when we were supposed to be trying to figure out how to solve the PROCOMPRA problem. I quickly told Fred, first, that I cleared the trip with our control officer who had emphasized that the consultants could not charge USAID as billable hours for their time visiting Machu Picchu. Further, I mentioned that we also had visited a fertilizer production facility and observed some of the corn growing in the area around Cuzco, before going to Machu Picchu. With these explanations, Fred’s qualms were quickly, and thankfully, put to rest and I left his office.

But that left me wondering how Fred had heard about my two consultant colleagues and me visiting Machu Picchu. While having no hard evidence to confirm this, my guess is that the elderly gentleman in the red hat (the Chairman of the Board of Pioneer seeds) had returned to Lima, phoned the U.S. Ambassador, and asked what USAID was doing in Peru’s agricultural sector with respect to seeds. Well, surely the Ambassador didn’t know the answer to that question and then called the Director of the USAID Mission who likely was also caught off guard. So the USAID Director reached out to someone at the USAID Mission early Monday morning, possibly reaching Fred who also wasn’t in a position to answer the question but passed the message to the Office Director. Then, when I showed up, the Office Director told me to go talk with Fred.

In the end, the problem might have been avoided had my control officer communicated to others in the office that several of the PROCOMPRA team would be going to Cuzco and spending Sunday visiting Machu Picchu – but he apparently hadn't. Further, as if to make matters worse, I wasn't able to call on that control officer that Monday morning to back up my story because he was away on vacation that week. In any case, another example of a communication breakdown and not only Murphy's Law (if something will break, it will) and my father's (Byrnes') corollary to Murphy's Law (something has already broke but you've not yet found out about it). At least in this case I didn't get "busted" for having visited Machu Picchu.

***La Peña Peruana*** – Normally, during all the years I traveled to the developing world on short-term assignments, I avoided leaving my hotel in the evening, figuring I preferred being safe than sorry. During our PROCOMPRA-related trips to Peru, our team worked closely with a counterpart team in the Peruvian Ministry of Agriculture. Near the end of one stay, the Peruvian team invited our USAID team to attend a "peña" – a fiesta (party) featuring food, beverages, and live music (see video), Our team was invited to the peña as the honored guest. Soon musicians began to play their music very loudly, electrically amplified, so loud that, after a period of time, my eardrums could no longer tolerate the music being played so loudly.

So I chose to make a discrete exit from the fiesta, only to find the streets, now late at night, empty of any traffic, most notably, with no taxis at the ready. I remembered that the location of the party was within a few blocks from a more heavily trafficked road, so I walked quickly in that direction. Fortunately, I reached the main road after 15 minutes or so, and hailed a taxi that took me back to my hotel. Ever since I've managed to avoid any number of Latino parties where, invariably, music is played so loudly that one can't hear oneself think. Hospitality is one thing but torture is not my bag!

***The Potato Man*** – In May of 1989, I was on assignment in Bolivia, helping to write a monitoring and evaluation plan for the USAID/Bolivia Child Health Project, and a scope of work for developing case studies of farmer organizations assisted by the Private Agricultural Producer Organizations (PAPO) Project. During that assignment or shortly before, I learned that Manuel Piña, Jr., who had joined the International Potato Center (CIP) in Lima in 1978 as the Head of Training and Communication, was planning to leave that position and return to Texas A&M University. With the prospect that I might be the right person for this job, I arranged to return home from Bolivia with a side stop in Lima. I contacted Manuel to ask him to set up an appointment to visit CIP's facilities, meet CIP staff, and interview for the job with CIP Director General, Richard Sawyer.

**Dr. Richard L. Sawyer**

Prior to the appointed time to meet with Sawyer, Manuel cautioned that Dr. Sawyer was very direct (that is, didn't beat around the bush), so he warned I should be prepared to respond to his questions frankly and truthfully. Not more than a few minutes after entering Sawyer's office and exchanging pleasantries, he hit me with the only question that I remember him asking me during the whole interview: "Why would anyone in their right mind want to work at CIP?"


I responded along the lines that I realized that Peru was yet going through a difficult time in dealing with the Shining Path terrorists responsible for kidnappings, bombings, and various other acts of terror. However, I viewed that as a secondary concern to my

primary interest in identifying an opportunity to work in a developing country with an international agricultural research center such as CIP.

I noted that I already had worked for nine-plus years (1975-84) with the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) where I had been heavily involved in developing, conducting, and evaluating fertilizer-related training programs. The interview ended with Sawyer expressing his appreciation that I had taken the initiative to come to Lima to visit CIP and get my interest in working with CIP on the center's radar screen. CIP was most gracious in offering me lodging for the night in the CIP dormitory until it was time to get back to the Lima airport to catch my flight to Miami and onward to the Washington, D.C. area.

While a job offer from CIP never materialized, over the summer and fall of 1989, an opportunity arose to explore the possibility of working with Chemonics International as Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Advisor on a USAID project on which Chemonics was preparing a bid. USAID chose Chemonics for the project and I began in October 1989 working with Chemonics on USAID's Agriculture and Rural Development Technical Services (LAC TECH) project, providing advisory services to USAID missions in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region and the Office of Rural Development in the Agency's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Soon I was traveling on short-term assignments to various LAC countries including most frequently to Peru, where the Mission requested my assistance in figuring out (1) how to respond to a Government of Peru initiative to privatize the coastal experiment stations of the National Agricultural Research Institute (INIA); and (2) how to help a USAID-assisted foundation (FUNDEAGRO) to become sustainable beyond the life of a USAID project that was funding FUNDEAGRO.

I made two trips to Peru in 1992 to provide the following assistance: (1) researching and writing a report titled "'Forward to the Past' — Mobilizing Peru's Private Sector through the Agricultural Experiment Station Foundation: Key Constraints and Action Options;" (2) designing and conducting a workshop on privatizing INIA's coastal experiment stations; and (3) developing an action plan to revise the strategic plan for FUNDEAGRO (a private agricultural development foundation) and writing a proposal to establish an endowment for FUNDEAGRO.

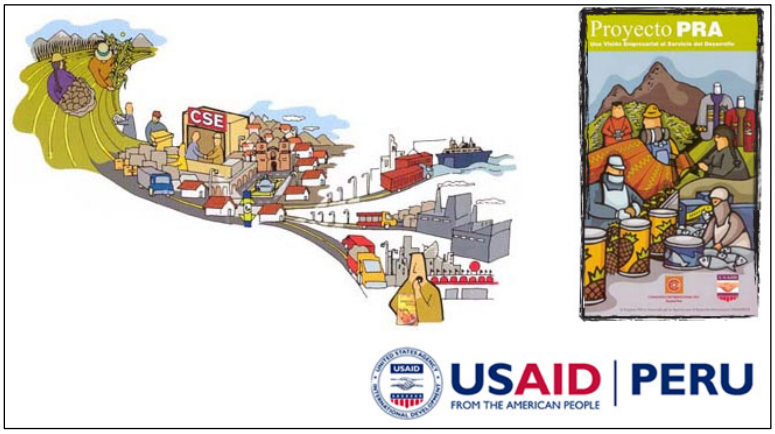
In January 1994 USAID/Peru invited me to return to Lima to collaborate with Fundación Perú, a recently established foundation launched with Richard Sawyer (by then retired from his post as Director General of CIP) as President. On this assignment, I prepared an "Assessment of 'Privatization' of INIA Coastal Experiment Stations: Proposed Feasibility Study on the Sustainability of a Coastal Agricultural Research and Extension System."

Interestingly, while I was back in Peru and working with Sawyer, it was not with Sawyer as the director of CIP as one of the International Agricultural Research Centers but rather as the director of Fundación Perú as a private sector organization. Based on my proposal for conducting the feasibility study on privatizing INIA's coastal experiment stations, USAID provided funds to Fundación Perú to carry out the study.

I returned to Peru in January 1994 to provide comment to USAID/Peru and Fundación Perú on the feasibility study: *Estudio de Factibilidad para la Instalación y Operación de Una Red de Estaciones Experimentales Privadas-REEP en La Costa del Peru*. While the Fujimori administration privatized some of the coastal experiment stations, the next government subsequently "repatriated" those stations back into the public sector. When one looks back on such events with reflection, what can one say but that so goes life, almost predictably and sadly, in the developing world!

But one thing puzzled me during my first meeting with Sawyer in 1989. On returning home, I told my father, Francis Byrnes, how my interview with Sawyer had gone but that something about him as the Director General of the International Potato Center (CIP) in Peru very much reminded me of Robert F. Chandler who had been the original Director General of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines. My father responded: "That's easy – they sound the same because they're both from Maine!"

***Exactly What Is This Project Evaluation to Cover?*** – During a 2007 assignment to Peru, the USAID Mission asked me to cover the economic growth office while the office chief was on home leave. Also, during this period I was to assist in drafting a scope of work (SOW) for an evaluation of the Poverty Reduction and Alleviation (PRA) project. However, on my arrival, I learned that the office chief had not traveled to the U.S. on home leave but rather had been hospitalized after a medical emergency. With the office chief yet in country and available to handle some of his normal duties from his bed, I turned most of my attention to drafting the SOW for the PRA project evaluation, though visited the office chief twice in the hospital to greet him, wish him well, and give him this or that form to sign and bring back to the office.



Based on initial consultations with Mission staff on the economic growth, environment, and alternative development teams, it became clear that I needed to write a SOW that covered three major areas, including agricultural production and marketing assistance, environmental assistance, and infrastructure assistance (e.g., road building). After I had reviewed relevant background documentation on these areas, over a day or so I drafted a SOW of work outlining evaluation questions on which data would need to be collected in order to carry out the evaluation. At this point I didn't focus on the budget that would be needed to carry out the evaluation but rather only on the technical issues that would need to be examined.

I then shared my draft SOW with various parties within the Mission, including not only with the aforementioned technical offices but also the program office. Further, I held a meeting at which I gave a general overview of my proposed approach to the evaluation. At that point, an interesting process began to unfold. Based on discussion with staff after my presentation as well as subsequent meetings with representatives from the various teams and offices, I found that I was, in effect, orchestrating a process that led Mission staff to reconsider what they actually wanted the focus of the evaluation to be.

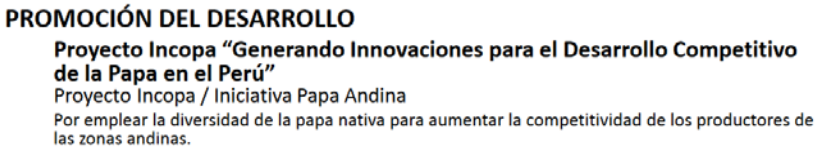
Indeed, at the end of this process, and for various reasons, I dropped from the SOW any requirement for the evaluation to cover the environmental or infrastructure activities, leaving the evaluation to focus directly on the PRA project's various poverty reduction and alleviation assistance activities.

***This Spud's for You*** – During that 2007 visit to Peru to draft the scope of work for the evaluation of the Poverty Reduction and Alleviation (PRA) Project, Eduardo Albareda, a Peruvian economist working in the Mission, asked if I'd like to accompany him to a local event. Normally, the Director of a USAID Mission would represent the Mission in such an event but the Director had a scheduling conflict and asked my colleague to handle representing the Mission.

Basically, I was just tagging along, not really knowing what the event was going to be. At least this was a chance to get out of the office and see more of Lima. I soon learned that the event was to be held at the International Potato Center (CIP). The purpose of the event was to celebrate the achievements of CIP's INCOPA (Potato Innovation and Competitiveness) Project that had been implemented by CIP with Swiss Cooperation (COSUDE) funding. The project started in 2001 and continued through 2011, when the new government of Ollanta Humala (2011- 2016) closed the project.

The goal of INCOPA was to develop innovative ways to improve the image of potatoes, improve customer recognition, and present potatoes as a healthy product, especially potatoes which are native to Peru. As you may be aware, Peru (home of the potato) has some three thousand varieties. Also, the potato is produced mainly by poor smallholder farmers in Peru's highlands. A similar effort was carried out for quinoa and quinoa is now a highly valued product in commercial markets.

The project was successful in developing a commercially viable system to assemble potato varieties, sort the potatoes into variety-specific groups, and clean and package them into attractive retail-sized bags easy for the consumer to buy whichever potato variety caught his or her fancy at the grocery store. On display at the event were sample bags of a variety of potatoes of different shapes, colors, sizes, tastes, and cooking properties. As it turned out, in 2008, the Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas selected INCOPA as the recipient of the Creatividad Empresarial Award in the Development Promotion area.


PROMOCIÓN DEL DESARROLLO

**Proyecto Incopa "Generando Innovaciones para el Desarrollo Competitivo de la Papa en el Perú"**

Proyecto Incopa / Iniciativa Papa Andina

Por emplear la diversidad de la papa nativa para aumentar la competitividad de los productores de las zonas andinas.

The upside of this award-winning innovation was that prices to rural-based producers of these specialty potatoes rose, with these producers becoming more competitive in the marketplace and raising the income of farmers producing the specialty varieties. The downside, prices rose so much that what had once been a product for poor consumers became a high-end food product for urban-based consumers. But higher prices for these specialty potatoes didn't impact adversely on poor small-scale farmers as they sow for their own consumption as well as for sale to the market.

On the other hand, in the potato value chain, some native varieties now find their way into high-end restaurants as well as into other diversified industrial markets. At the airport, for example, one can purchase potato chips made from assorted varieties of native potatoes, with the equivalent of half a potato sold in a very fancy bag for US $2.00. Currently, adds Eduardo (personal communication), the government has been supporting a national campaign to highlight the nutritional values of potatoes. Some restaurants now serve unpeeled fried potatoes because it is the skin of the potato that is rich with vitamins and other benefits. The target is to increase potato consumption from 80 to 90 kilos a year per person.

What struck me at the time that I attended the event at CIP was that for so many years CIP's research had focused on raising potato productivity (i.e., yields) as a path to raise incomes of and improve the quality of life for poor small-scale potato growers in Peru's highland communities. The irony of INCOPA's innovative marketing-based approach

was that the path for raising incomes for small-scale potato growers was not increasing yields of existing potato varieties, but rather devising a value-added system to market even more potato varieties to higher income urban-based consumers. Thus, INCOPA's innovation was based on a "pull" strategy to increase the demand for potatoes in the marketplace rather than a "push" strategy to increase productivity of potatoes in the farmer's field.

Of course, with the higher incomes being earned by small-scale producers of the potato varieties that are in high demand, farmers now have greater incentive (and resources) to invest in increasing the productivity of the potatoes they grow. In the end, you might say that INCOPA was the "this spud's for you" innovation that was a win-win for Peru's potato growers and potato consumers.

***The Walking Dead*** – The last time that I really got "sick as a dog" while traveling in the developing world was at the tail end of a 2004 visit to Lima to participate in the Trade Capacity Building Working Group during Round 3 of the negotiation of the U.S.-Andean Free Trade Agreement. This round was held at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Lima. On the last day of the round, a colleague and I taxied to a restaurant called Mango's in the Larco Mar shopping center overlooking the Pacific Ocean. I thought Mango's was a good choice because the food was served buffet style for a fixed price, plus I knew from having eaten in Mango's before, that the restaurant's offered excellent desserts (e.g. Guanabana Mousse). But, as I was to realize later that night, something I ate got the best of me.

On returning to the hotel and getting up to my room, I did some last minute packing and set my alarm clock to wake early in the morning so that I could get to the airport in time to check in for my flight. But I never made it to early morning as I woke up in the middle of the night with my stomach churning and went to the bathroom where I promptly threw up. I realized I had absolutely no energy and managed, as it were, to "crawl" back to bed. When the alarm went off, I was not feeling any better and a second trip to the bathroom only confirmed that I had absolutely no energy. I immediately began to assess my situation, entertaining the idea of calling the hotel's front desk to ask that they call the airline so I could cancel my reservation.

But then I realized that if I cancelled my reservation I might have to stay in Lima for an unknown number of days before I could rebook flights from Lima-Miami-Washington, DC. So I managed to take a shower, get dressed, and get down to the lobby to check out and catch a taxi to the airport. On arriving at the airport, I discovered an extremely long line for check in to economy class. As I recall, I didn't yet have Gold-for-Life status with American Airlines, so didn't qualify to get into the shorter line for check in at the Business Class counter. Further, given that it was early in the morning, I don't think the air conditioning was on, so I was feeling warm and was beginning to sweat, plus really

didn’t have any energy to be standing there in the line and hauling my baggage forward each time the line moved.

Perhaps it was then that I may have said something to one of the American personnel supervising the line that I wasn’t feeling well and could they possibly move me to a line where I could check in more quickly. I really don’t recall if that happened but eventually I got checked in and, with boarding pass in hand, made my way through emigration and security, finally arriving “dog tired” at the departure gate, where I was happy to be able to sit down to rest until it was time to board the flight.

As soon as my group number was called, I was at the ready to board the plane and, on reaching my seat, stored my carryon bag in the overhead bin and sat down – and fell asleep in the aisle seat as soon as the other two passengers were in their middle and window seats. I slept the whole flight as I felt exhausted and did not have an appetite to eat any of the food being served. On reaching Miami, I hauled my carcass from the arrival gate to the immigration area to the customs area – and then on clearing customs made my way to the departure gate for my flight onward to Washington, DC. When the passengers were called to board the flight and once I was in my seat, I again fell asleep and didn’t wake until the plane was landing at DCA (Washington, DC’s National Airport).

On deplaning the flight and making my way through the airport, still feeling lousy and tired, I took a taxi home, a ride of about a half hour or so. On arriving home and getting my carryon and computer bags up to the front porch, I rang the doorbell and soon Sonia answered. I entered my bags, gave her a hug, and told her I was feeling miserable, and promptly proceeded to the bedroom, undressed, and got into bed. I then slept to the next morning, by which time whatever had done me in was no longer in my system and I was feeling better.

As arduous as was my journey home from Peru, I was glad that I had not decided to cancel my return flights, and thus got home sooner than later! This was only one of five times in 40+ years of travel – once each in Europe, Mexico, Bangladesh, Philippines, and Peru – that I became similarly ill – and each time probably because I wasn’t sufficiently careful about what I was eating or drinking.

## Venezuela


During my professional working years, I visited Venezuela only once, in November of 2000, when I led a joint USAID-Andean Community assessment of FTAA-related technical assistance needs in the areas of WTO obligations, FTAA business facilitation measures, and civil society participation in the FTAA process.

***The Rain in Caracas…Doesn't Stay Mainly on the Plain*** – My flight to Caracas arrived late in the evening in the midst of a heavy rain. This was the last stop of an overall trip that included previous stops in Lima, Peru; La Paz, Bolivia; Quito, Ecuador; and Bogotá, Colombia. During our visits to these cities, my colleague from the Andean Community Secretariat and I met with representatives of various government agencies to discuss what they saw as their priority needs for trade capacity building assistance.

After clearing immigration, claiming luggage, and clearing customs, my counterpart and I located a taxi, got our luggage loaded into the taxi's trunk, and departed for the drive to the city, a drive that took about a half hour, especially in the heavy rain. On reaching our hotel, checking in, and getting our luggage to our respective rooms, I discovered not only that the exterior of my suitcase was wet but also much of its contents were moist, ranging from damp to soaked. Thinking back, I recalled that the door on the taxi's trunk hadn't closed completely, thus leaving openings for the rainwater to seep into the trunk, resulting in the clothing in my suitcase being, at minimum, damp.

To make matters worse, the humidity was terribly high and could only be countered by running the room's air conditioner at full blast which resulted in the room being so cold that it was very uncomfortable. I unpacked my suitcase, hanging up or laying out items of clothing so that they could dry out, at least so I'd have a dry set of clothes to wear to our meetings the next day.

The next day, following those meetings, my CAN counterpart and I went to a nearby mall to look around and have dinner. At this point in time, November 2000, life in the city of Caracas, at least as one could surmise based on bustling activities at the mall, was

not all that different from what one would experience going to a mall in any other Latin American city. Today, however, some 18 years later (as of 2018), after many of the disastrous policies of the Chavez and Maduro administrations, resulting in the country's economic decline, I'm sure one would not be surprised to find that same mall, if even open, somewhat of a ghost town, since Venezuela's economy has been unable to keep store shelves stocked with merchandise with prices rising as consumers purchasing power declines.

**People buy food and other staple goods in a Caracas supermarket**

**(June 30, 2016. REUTERS/Mariana Bazo)**

# Southern Cone

## Argentina


By 1984, the year in which I started working with USAID in Washington, DC, the agency no longer had a Mission in Argentina. Thus, over the years, the opportunities to visit that country were few and far between. But opportunity to travel to Argentina did arise twice. In both instances, the destination was Buenos Aires and the purpose was to attend an agriculture-related workshop or seminar. In July 1995, I participated in a Workshop on Innovative Approaches to Finance Agricultural Research in Latin America, hosted by the Fundación ArgenINTA. Then, in May 2012, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) invited me to attend the "International Seminar on Innovation for Family Agriculture and Food Security," including giving a talk on the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative to address food insecurity in the most food insecure countries of the developing world. As workshops or seminars go they were not all that memorable but being in Argentina did provide opportunity to experience two memorable moments.

***The Other Side of the Iguazu Falls…Almost!*** – My wife Sonia accompanied me on my first trip to Argentina in July of 1995. During free time away from the workshop, we did some sightseeing in Buenos Aires. Following the end of the workshop, we spent the last days of our visit going on a trip to the Iguazu Falls, a spectacular site! It turned out that, by coincidence, we were in Buenos Aires at the same time as a couple of our friends – Lee and Rosemary Emery – and they joined us for our trip to the Iguazu Falls. While the view of the falls was spectacular from the Argentinian side of the falls, we had been told that it was even more spectacular from the Brazilian side, so we decided to see if that was the case.

We arranged for a car and driver to take us to the Brazilian side of the falls. We got as far as the Brazilian border but ran into an unsympathetic border control officer. On looking at our passports, he said that I could not cross the border because my official (USDA) passport did not have a Brazilian visa. To make matters worse, the officer had stamped some kind of rejection in my passport, which then worried me as my “travel orders” hadn’t included any authorization for me to be traveling anywhere else than to Buenos Aires, Argentina—and I had to return the passport to USDA at the end of each trip. This left me worried what might happen to me if the rejection stamp was discovered by someone in the USDA travel office. Fortunately, my “protocol” breach never became an issue. However, back at the border, our driver had to turn the car around and take us back to our hotel without having seen the Brazilian side of the Iguazu Falls.

The day before, during our first day visiting the falls, we had purchased a ride on one of those boats that went up close to the falls, just like you’ve likely also seen in the case of Niagara Falls. We didn’t realize it at the time but there was a videographer on board who filmed the ride, after which we were told we could pick up a copy of the video later that day at our hotel for whatever price they were charging. When we got back home to the U.S., we put the videocassette of our boat ride to Niagara Falls into the VCR and sat back to relive the ride only to discover the tape empty, nothing having been recorded on it. Fortunately, Lee checked his copy of the video and found that it did have a recording of the boat trip on it.

***Nightlife in Buenos Aires*** – During that July 1995 trip to Buenos Aires, my wife Sonia and I took in a bit of the city's after hour's night life, going one evening to the Barracas neighborhood to Tango Mio, a restaurant that featured a tango show. Also with us were several acquaintances, Lee and Rosemary Emery as well as Adolfo Martinez, a former IFDC colleague who also was attending the same workshop.

At the time Tango Mio featured the singer Fernando Soler as its star attraction. Near the show's end, Soler invited audience members to come on stage for the show's closing number. At our urging, we persuaded Sonia to "get into the act" – and just that quickly she was on stage dancing the tango with one of the show's dancers (first photo below). Following the show, Sonia met Soler (see next two photos below).

Soler's *Tango Mio* CD was available for sale and we purchased a copy which Soler kindly autographed. On Sonia's CD, Soler wrote: "*To Sonia with all my heart. Fernando Soler*" (see right photo below). This CD includes one of my favorite tango songs, "Por Una Cabeza" (track 15), a tango with a beautiful melody performed by other artists in Hollywood films such as *Scent of a Woman* (1992) and *True Lies* (1994).



While Sonia was getting her CDs autographed by Soler, I saw opportunity to have a photo taken of me with one of the lovely young dancers. As I stood next to her on my right, she suggested we strike a pose as if we were tangoing. I played along and waited for the photo to be taken when suddenly she wrapped her leg around my leg, a moment quickly captured by the photographer in the following two images.

**"I had no idea that I could dance the tango with such proficiency!"**

## Brazil


I first visited Brazil in 1977 for the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), spending a month there meeting with various agriculture-related institutions to explore collaborating with IFDC in the development of research on farmer adoption and use of fertilizers. Twenty years later in the midst of the negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), I visited Belo Horizonte in June 1977 to attend the 3rd Business Forum of the Americas. Then in November 2002, USAID/Brazil invited me to Brasilia to assist the Mission in writing a Results Framework for a Strategic Objective on trade-led employment generation.

***You Will Have Seen More of Brazil…*** – My month-long visit to Brazil in 1977 for IFDC afforded an excellent opportunity to visit many parts of Brazil, including Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Piracicaba, Viçosa (Minas Gerais),and Recife. What proved most difficult for me during this visit was following discussions during meetings in which only Portuguese was spoken. I recall one meeting held just after lunch on a very hot day. While the room in which the meeting was air conditioned, that machine's monotonous drone made it difficult not only to hear the discussion but also to stay awake, especially as the meeting was held right after having eaten lunch.

As the trip wore on, and where I had opportunity for a casual conversation with one or another of the Brazilians I met, I noticed that they were surprised how much of Brazil I had already seen or was scheduled to visit in the days before my return home. Indeed, one or two times, as I responded to a question about what parts of Brazil I had visited, my Brazilian inquisitor responded: "You will have seen more of Brazil in one month than most Brazilians will ever see in a lifetime!"

***Hot Shower and Close Shave*** – During the spring of 1997, I traveled to Belo Horizonte to attend the 3rd Americas Business Forum (ABF), held prior to one of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiation rounds. The ABF provided an opportunity for representatives of the business community from throughout the Americas to articulate and share their concerns and recommendations with the trade ministers of the Americas who then went into closed sessions to continue negotiation of the FTAA.

In view of the time and distance that would be involved in traveling from Washington, DC to Belo Horizonte, I applied to USDA for approval of business class travel for the overnight flight from Miami to Sao Paulo. When my request was not approved, I then asked if I could use my frequent flyer miles to upgrade to business class – and approval for that was given.

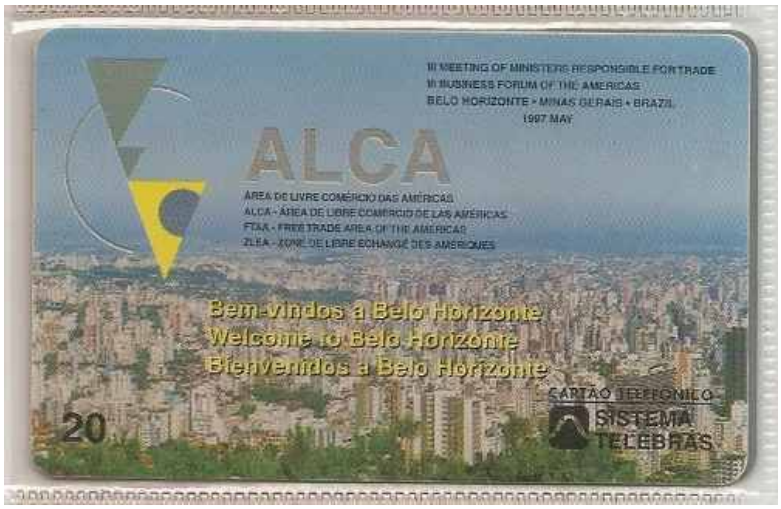
On June 10, the morning of the day on which I was to travel later that afternoon, I was in my car as the last car in a line of cars waiting for the stop light to change to green, with another intersection and stop light just behind me. As I waited for the stop light in front of me to change to green and the cars ahead of me to move forward, without warning I was rear-ended by a car that failed to stop when its driver drove through the intersection behind me. The force of the impact pushed my car into the rear end of the car in front of my car. So strong was the impact that my glasses flew off my head as the impact thrust me toward the steering wheel. Fortunately, my seat belt stopped me from hitting the steering wheel but the force of the belt left black and blue marks across my chest. Further, the impact jolted my legs forward, resulting in cuts and bruises to the front side of both of my legs.

The driver in front of me loaned me his cell phone so that I could call my father to let him know what had happened and I asked him to come to the scene of the accident to take me home. Once the policeman approved leaving the scene of the accident and the tow truck had come to take my car back to my house, my father took me to the hospital emergency room to be checked out. While there were no broken bones and the doctor prescribed some pain killers, the question arose whether I should fly to Brazil later day or cancel my trip. After some discussion, I decided that I was in good enough shape that I could travel albeit with some discomfort. After all, I didn't want to miss being able to fly business class, not to mention forgo completing the mission of my trip which was to learn about how the ABF functioned and how its work fed into the FTAA process.

Of course, as the day, night, and next day wore on during my flights from Washington Dulles to Miami, Miami to Sao Paulo, and Sao Paulo to Belo Horizonte, I realized that I needed to take that pain killer medication. Indeed, by early afternoon of the next day, on checking into my hotel and getting my luggage to my room, I was beat – and ready to freshen up with a nice hot shower. However, when I entered the room's bathroom, I was surprised not only to see how small the bathroom was but that the shower head was for

all practical purposes almost directly above the toilet. Indeed, one could literally almost “go” and shower at the same time.

On undressing, I realized the full extent of my injuries with much of my chest having black and blue marks in the area that my seat belt had covered, even larger bruises on my legs below my knees, and the area around my right ankle totally black and blue. I really took it easy during that visit, attending a *de minimus* of ABF and FTAA sessions, and was greatly relieved to be able to fly home at the end of the week.




My car, however, did not fare as well as the insurance company deemed it a total loss and wrote a check which provided a large percentage of the funds needed to buy a new car. Further, after talking with a colleague at the office, I decided to retain a lawyer to sue the driver for the pain and suffering he had caused. Ultimately, after some delays in that process, the court ruled in my favor, resulting in a payment in the neighborhood of $5000 but with a third of it going to the lawyer.

With respect to the delays, I began to get worried when I had not heard back from my lawyer during what I felt was becoming an exceedingly lengthy process. When she did not answer her phone nor return my calls after leaving messages, I tracked down her office in Falls Church only to find it locked. Finally, out of the blue, one day I received a phone call from my lawyer who reported that she was back in business and soon would submit my suit to the court. When I asked why there had been a delay, she responded that she had been injured in a multi-car accident on the beltway (I-495) that surrounds Washington, DC, resulting not only in her car being totaled but also hospitalization as the result of some burns and broken bones.

Looking back, I now see the parallel – while my lawyer had a close shave, I had a close shower! Yet both of us survived and were able to return to our respective professional lives.

***Tall and Tan*** – Almost everyone knows the song and even some of the lyrics to “The Girl from Ipanema”:

*Tall and tan and young and lovely*
*The girl from Ipanema goes walking and*
*When she passes, each one she passes goes "ah"*

**Helô Pinheiro (the woman that inspired “The Girl from Ipanema” song)**

But it was neither on a beach nor the streets of Rio de Janeiro that I saw the equivalent of this “lovely” young woman. Rather it was in the Recife airport, the last stop on my month-long visit to Brazil in 1977. While my hotel was located on the beach, I didn’t get in any beach time as I was occupied by meetings and the thought that my next flight out, from Recife to Belém, would be the first leg of my trip home to Reston, Virginia.

On arriving at the check-in counter at the Recife airport, I was immediately struck by the beauty of the young woman who was checking in passengers for their flight. Indeed, as the line shortened and as I neared the counter, I looked to the left and the right and saw that all the women working the check in counters were of similarly striking beauty. But, unlike the woman (Heló Pinheiro) who inspired “The Girl from Ipanema,” these young women, all tall and slender, had the natural tan of being of “Mulatta” descent (a mixture of European white and African black). Had they not been working an airline’s check in counter, they easily could have been successful as models in Brazil’s fashion industry.

**Check In Area of Recife Airport**

Momentarily, the thought flashed through my mind – “Why am I leaving this place?” But I quickly came back to the reality that I wanted to return home to my wife Sonia and son Shannon. Getting home quickly, however, came to a halt that night in the Belém airport. As the time approached and passed to board our onward flight to Miami, we saw a flurry of activity by the plane that we were waiting to board. One passenger asked a member of the ground crew why boarding of our flight had been delayed. We then learned that the flurry of activity by the plane was due to one of the pilots having had a heart attack. Eventually an ambulance arrived to take the pilot to a hospital. Not long after a backup pilot was pressed into service and we were able to board what subsequently proved an uneventful flight to Miami.

## Chile


Between 2000 and 2009, I visited Chile four times for short-term visits, the first and second time in 2000 to work with a local NGO on developing a civil society activity related to supporting the then ongoing negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). My last two visits to Santiago focused on representing USAID in an international forum or a technical seminar. In June of 2001, I was the U.S. Government delegate to the OECD Global Forum for Trade: Trade and Development Issues in Non-OECD Countries. In April of 2009, I participated in a seminar on rural institutions in the LAC region, sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and represented USAID at a meeting of the Interagency Group for Rural Development.

***You're Kidding, No Charge for Laundry?*** – While I was on travel status for USAID, I received a per diem comprised of two components – on the one hand, lodging, and on the other, meals and incidentals. The latter "meals and incidentals" component provided funds for one's food and personal expenses, most notably, laundry. For a two-week trip, if one packed enough clothes, including possibly doing some hand washing of clothes in the bathroom of one's hotel room, one had clean clothes to wear throughout one's trip without having to eat into one's "meals and incidentals" allowance to pay for laundry at the high prices hotels charge for laundry service.

But on my first trip to Santiago I ran into a custom called the "*yapa*" which word I didn't recognize when the clerk mentioned it while he was registering me. When I asked him to repeat what he had just said, I told him I didn't know what a "*yapa*" was. He explained that "*yapa*" referred to the hotel's practice of allowing a guest to have up to three pieces of clothing laundered free per day without any charge. Later, I learned that "*yapa*" is widely used in Chile and means like a "free extra" that sellers use to attract more buyers and sell more. As a Chilean contact recently told me, "*yapa*" is

> “an old noun, little used today, that designates something extra (element, service, etc) that you get for free on top of what you have paid for. In the case of the hotel it may be the welcome drink, a ticket for the gym or, as in your case, free laundry for a given number of your garments per day. The word is uncommon today in the middle-upper class vocabulary, where other more sophisticated word are used: prize, free points, mileage, all to keep your fidelity to the brand, store, service provider, etc. The term ‘*yapa*’ is used more by lower class or rural people.” (Hernan Tejeda, personal communication).


Of course, I didn’t immediately jump for joy, saying in Spanish: “You’re kidding, no charge for laundry?” But I took the receptionist at his word and, on settling into my room, filled a laundry bag with some dirty clothing: a dress shirt, an underpant, and a handkerchief. The next morning the bag was picked up and later that day the clothes, now cleaned and folded, were returned to me with no charge to my bill. Each day I sent out a few pieces of clothing. By the end of the week, the “*yapa*” had worked so well that I returned home with almost all the clothes in my suitcase clean. In all of my subsequent trips to other countries, I don’t recall ever again running into this lovely practice.

***The Challenge of Moving the Money*** – During the negotiation of the FTAA, USAID’s LAC Regional program, based in the LAC Bureau’s Office of Regional Sustainable Development (RSD) in Washington, DC, was looking for a way to foster civil society participation in and support for the FTAA. We discovered that USAID’s Democracy Bureau had a grant with a Canadian NGO that had an ongoing project to carry out democracy-related work with a Chilean-based NGO called Corporación PARTICIPA. We realized that we could get a “sub-grant” to PARTICIPA by transferring funds from the LAC Bureau to the Democracy Bureau, and then that bureau transferring the funds into its grant with the Canadian NGO. The Canadian NGO then transferred the funds to the Chilean NGO as a sub-grant.

PARTICIPA
CORPORACION

Aside from the gymnastic of “moving the money” the bulk of my time focused on travel to Chile to meet and work with Corporación PARTICIPA on shaping how the grant funds being provided would be used. Working with PARTICIPA, we jointly prepared a mutually agreed scope of work for PARTICIPA to expand its website to include information about the Summit of the Americas process, including a trade-related page aimed at fostering greater participation of civil society in the FTAA process. Once PARTICIPA had agreed to this scope of work, the grant funding was provided, and PARTICIPA began working on this project, I returned to Santiago in September to meet with PARTICIPA to discuss the progress in creating a FTAA civil society website (www.alcacivil.org – no longer active) and explore possible other initiatives to increase Southern Cone civil society participation in the FTAA process.

While it might have been easier just to do a direct grant from USAID to PARTICIPA, this NGO had not gone through the process that USAID requires for an NGO to establish eligibility to receive direct funding from USAID. Thus, we worked through the Canadian NGO that, in turn, did a sub-grant to PARTICIPA to carry out a delimited scope of work to establish a civil society-oriented web page supportive of the FTAA. Recently, in doing some background research for this vignette, I discovered that PARTICIPA, after having been in existence 25 years, closed shop on June 28, 2013.

***“Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore.”*** – I did so many assignments in the tropical countries of Central America and the Caribbean that, on a few trips to the more temperate countries of the Americas, I got caught making erroneous assumptions about what would be available to eat. This occurred on my first visit to Chile in mid- April of 2001, just the time of year Chile was entering into its fall season. On checking into the hotel and getting my luggage up to my room, I went down to the hotel’s restaurant for a late breakfast. I was looking forward to enjoying fresh tropical fruits like mango, melon, papaya, and pineapple. Only then on surveying the breakfast buffet did I realize that, as did Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, I wasn’t in “Kansas anymore.” That is, I wasn’t in the tropics. Indeed, none of the aforementioned tropical fruits were available on the buffet. However, there was no shortage of apples, canned peaches, and canned pears, fruits widely available in a country with a more temperate climate such as the United States.

Often, in many of the countries I visited, one found that the texture of the breads and pastries on the breakfast buffet didn’t measure up to the standard one had become accustomed to at home. Surprisingly, in Argentina, a major wheat producer, I wasn’t excited by the quality of bread or pastry products served in the hotels or during coffee breaks at conferences. On the other hand, surprisingly, in Guatemala, a country that is not a wheat producer, I found that the Intercontinental Hotel serves a croissant rivaling the tasty croissants one would eat in Paris, Francis – or even those baked in a Costco in the United States. Then again, one would be hard pressed to find better pastries than in Vienna, Austria.

## Paraguay


In December of 2011, I traveled to Asunción, Paraguay for meetings with the staff of USAID/Paraguay and an implementing partner working in the democracy sector, with our discussions focusing on planning an Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) Workshop for Paraguayan NGOs to be held in 2012. Then, in March of 2012, I returned to Asunción to collaborate with Mission staff in conducting the OMS workshop.

***Workaround to Flying Business Class*** – Getting from Washington, DC to Asunción, Paraguay is about the longest – in time and distance – that one can travel from Reston, Virginia in order to arrive at a short-term assignment in a country in the LAC region. So I studied the government's eligibility rules for qualifying for business class and submitted a request to fly business class to Asunción. While I met all the requirements to qualify for business class, my employer (USDA) did not approve my request. However, they offered as an alternative that they'd approve purchasing two economy seats for me which, as it turned out, addressed my main concern. Just a little over six months before, I had undergone left hip replacement and, as a result, felt it important that I have ample room to stretch my left leg during my overnight flights to Paraguay, which included flying first to Miami, then overnight to Buenos Aires, and then a third flight to Asunción – and the same number of flights on the return.

Having that extra leg room was a welcome blessing during the overnight flights from Miami to Buenos Aires and from Buenos Aires to Miami, as on both flights I had two seats on the right side of the plane between the aisle and the window, so I could lean back against the side of the plane while stretching out my left leg toward the aisle. I also was excited by the prospect of earning double miles on all my flights because I had two seats but was greatly disappointed to learn that American Airlines only credits you with mileage for one of the seats you actually purchased. Bummer!

However, with a few subsequent trips I flew on American Airlines, including a couple of post-retirement trips (where I purchased my tickets), I eventually reached Platinum-For-Life status in the American AAdvantage frequent flyer program. I was able to reach that milestone much sooner thanks to all those miles I racked up flying twice to and from Paraguay.

***Two Firsts for the OMS Workshop*** – The OMS workshop I conducted in Paraguay had two firsts. The first of these "firsts" was that this was the first time I conducted the workshop without the assistance of one or more of my former Chemonics colleagues. Early on, at USAID in Washington, DC, I met a young Foreign Service Officer (FSO) who was preparing for her first posting which, serendipitously, was to be Asunción, Paraguay. Working closely with her, while she was in Washington, DC, and then via email once she was at post, we covered most of the preparations for the workshop except for those that we worked on when I made a first trip to Asunción to discuss planning for the workshop. Then, on the second trip to Asunción, my FSO colleague and a Mission Foreign Service National (FSN) colleague helped me in managing the workshop and covering some lectures and other activities. This was a positive in providing Mission staff with experience that would build capacity within the Mission to carry out the OMS workshop in the future without my involvement or presence.

However, the second "first" proved to be a "bummer" that was very distracting to, if not counterproductive, to the workshop successfully covering its curriculum. The increased participation of two USAID staff in the workshop resulted in what one might describe as a more relaxed environment for lots of discussion between the workshop staff and the participants, so much so that lengthy discussions resulted in putting us behind schedule and having to drop some of our formal presentations and activities in order to keep the workshop on schedule.

More disturbing was that, while we felt the workshop's subject matter was relevant to all the participating NGOs becoming more sustainable, regardless of the technical sector in which they worked, this view wasn't shared by the Mission's implementing partner, an NGO working in the democracy sector and hosting the workshop. The representative from this NGO didn't view the democracy sector as one in which an NGO could mobilize funding support from the private sector. He argued that the "democracy" work the NGO was carrying out was a public good that merited continuing support by donors such as USAID. Discussion between the workshop staff and this NGO's representative on this issue put us even further behind and having to drop yet another activity or two from the workshop's schedule.

This was the first time in more than a dozen workshops that we had conducted that we ever ran up against an NGO feeling it had an exemption from responsibility to be more active in generating income from non-donor sources.

***But I Don't Want My Bag Checked to Buenos Aires*** – If traveling with a checked suitcase, one always should plan for the possibility that the airline will find some way to make your suitcase arrive on a later flight or, worse, not at all. Thus as a precaution one should pack a few essentials in a carryon bag and/or so-called personal item that most airlines allow one to carry on board and have access to during your flight. This is not a problem if one is not checking a suitcase and will rely, for the length of one's stay, on the clothing and other items that you've packed in your carryon bag and personal item. For my trips to Asunción I packed only a carryon bag and a personal item (actually a second bag in which I packed my laptop, DVD player, Bose noise-cancelling earphones, medicines, toiletries, and various other items.



When I planned my trips to Asunción, American Airlines didn't operate a flight into and out of Asunción. But American through its One World alliance with other airlines had a partnership with Gol Airlines so one could fly Gol round trip between Buenos Aires and Asunción, plus have the miles flown on Gol credited to one's AAdvantage frequent flyer account. But there was a hitch – it was a lousy connection, both going and coming, that required one to spend a good part of the day cooling one's heels in the Buenos Aires airport between flights. After having "been there, done that" on my first trip to Asunción, the down time in the Buenos Aires airport between flights was more pleasurable during my second trip to Asunción after I learned that for $50 I could purchase a one-day pass to the American's Admirals Club – and get, in the bargain, not only free food, drinks, and wi-fi but also a quieter and more comfortable lounge to pass away the time.

The day after completing the OMS workshop, the Mission sent a driver to take me to the airport. However, on checking in with Gol, the agent told me that I couldn't carry on two items and that the airline needed to check my carryon bag as baggage. But I had not packed for this eventuality, did not want to reclaim the bag in Buenos Aires, and felt for various reasons that I needed to keep the bag with me.

I pleaded with the agent that I already had been on three prior Gol flights and that on none of those flights had Gol required me to check my carryon bag. The agent said I had to check the bag because the flight was full. I countered that the bag was not oversized and easily fit in the overhead compartment on my three prior Gol flights. Yet the agent persisted even as I tried not to lose my cool.

I then asked to speak to the supervisor and, after a short wait, the supervisor appeared – and we again went through the same song and dance. Finally, with the line of waiting customers getting longer and longer behind me, I just stood there frustrated and silent until, finally, the supervisor said “OK, we’ll make an exception this one time and allow you to take your carryon bag on board.” I graciously thanked the agent for this kindness, got my boarding pass, and headed for departure gate, saying to myself “Well, I guess I’ll not be flying Gol in the future!” – also feeling most thankful that I’d now have my carryon bag with me during the day and avoid any chance of having handed it over to Gol, only to learn later that it had gone lost, stolen, or strayed in route to Buenos Aires.

While a third trip to Paraguay did not materialize during my remaining time with USAID before retiring, American Airlines eventually established a Miami-Asunción-Miami route. However, after a two-year grace period of exemption from having to pay Government of Paraguay taxes, American decided in 2015 to suspend its Asunción service because the load factor was not sufficiently high to compensate for the high taxes imposed by the government.

# Chapter 7 - North America

## Canada


In early November of 1999, I traveled to Toronto, Canada to attend the 5th Americas Business Forum (ABF), to listen to private sector discussions and learn private sector recommendations to foster increased trade with and for the smaller economies and developing countries participating in the negotiation process for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

***The Cold & Lonely North*** – At the time that Toronto hosted the ABF in November 1999, I was just beginning to learn about the FTAA negotiation process, had only attended one meeting of the Consultative Group on Smaller Economies (a month before in October in sunny Miami), and was only starting to get to know USG representatives from other agencies, notably the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA). Indeed, my trip to Toronto was the first trip that I made to an "overseas" destination during the FTAA process, with many trips yet to be made over the coming years to Panama City, Panama and Puebla, Mexico when their turns arrived to become host cities for the FTAA negotiation.

**Toronto Skyline**

So, by the time of this trip to Toronto, I didn't have any close friends among colleagues from other agencies, something that later developed during subsequent travels to FTAA negotiation rounds. Also, with no USAID Mission in Canada, I had no USAID colleagues with whom to touch base in Toronto. And this was my first ever visit to Toronto, so I really didn't have any contacts with whom to socialize. Further, as it was November, the weather was certainly nothing to write home about – cold, windy, and rainy if not also an occasional dusting of snow. For sure the stay would have been a bit more pleasant if I had I brought with me warmer clothing, at least a jacket warmer than my navy blazer.

Further, while I sat in many ABF sessions, I really didn't know enough about the issues being discussed to get all that excited about or engaged in the discussions. But, as I was a government (USDA) employee, there really was no defined role for me in the ABF other than to listen and learn, though little stands out in my mind as memorable.

Other than these humdrum memories, I really don't recall anything about this trip that might, for those reading this, be more interesting. My hotel was forgettable and I don't recall dining on any Canadian cuisine that knocked my socks off. Indeed, as I look back on all my travels for USAID, I now view that Toronto trip as having been my short-term assignment to "the cold and lonely north."

## Mexico


Over a 25-year period between 1980 and 2004, I traveled eight times to Mexico, either to (1) participate in or make presentations at conferences, or (2) support trade capacity building (TCB) during the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiation.

***Conference Presentations*** – I first visited Mexico in the summer of 1964 to live with a Mexican family in Toluca while taking courses at the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico. My first work-related trip to Mexico was in 1980, while working with the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), to give a presentation on "A Social Action Perspective on Small Farmer Agricultural Development" at the 5th World Congress of Rural Sociology in Mexico City. My presentation drew on my doctoral dissertation, *A Construct of Social Action for Small Farmer Agricultural Development*, a sociological analysis of the Puebla Project in Mexico.

Years later, while working with USAID, I returned to Mexico three times, each time to give a talk. In 1991, USAID/Mexico invited me to speak at the 1st Mexican National Symposium on Sustainable Agriculture, at the Postgraduate College in Montecillo. My remarks in Spanish focused on "Problems in the Sustainability of Agricultural Technology Systems in Latin America and Options for the Future."

A few years later in May 1995, the Government of Mexico Secretariat for Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fishing, and Food (SAGARPA) invited me to attend a forum on Agricultural Research and Extension, held in Cuernavaca, Mexico. There I presented in Spanish a paper on "Agricultural Extension Worldwide: Challenges and Opportunities." My last trip to Mexico for a presentation was in 1998 when I attended a food safety conference sponsored by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA).

**Trade Capacity Building (TCB)** – I traveled to Puebla, Mexico three times in 2003 and once in 2004 to represent USAID in Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) meetings of the Consultative Group on Smaller Economies. These meetings focused on helping the smaller economy and developing countries of the LAC region to identify their TCB needs and to explore potential ways donors such as USAID and others (e.g., the Inter-American Development Bank) could assist those countries in addressing those TCB needs. The last of these four meetings was held in January of 2004, to define the Consultative Group's work plan for 2004. Unfortunately, later that year, the whole FTAA process stalled when its two major players (Brazil and the U.S.) couldn't agree on the overall negotiation agenda going forward.

***How I Calmed My Nerves*** – For my 1991 talk at the 1st Mexican National Symposium on Sustainable Agriculture, I had cleared in advance my talk with the USAID Mission and was ready to deliver it in Spanish on the first day of the event. However, on arriving at the event, I learned that my talk was not to be given later in the day but was to be the keynote address opening the whole event. Suddenly my nerves were on edge. How did I cope with the pressure?

Similarly, a few years later, I received an invitation from SAGARPA to attend a forum on Agricultural Research and Extension. I was aware of the pending invitation because a colleague (Reed Hertford) had been working with the Mexicans to organize the event and, somehow, my name had been proposed to speak on the challenges to the field of agricultural extension in a global context.

Reed cautioned me that the Mexicans were very sensitive and that my presentation could not focus on the problems facing agricultural extension in Mexico or in any way compare agricultural extension in Mexico with agricultural extension in other countries. For the presentation I took the approach of documenting challenges to extension that developing countries were facing and how they were dealing with those challenges. This resulted in titling presentation: “Agricultural Extension Worldwide: Challenges and Opportunities.” While I was prepared to deliver my talk in Spanish, I faced not only the pressure of speaking in a plenary session with hundreds of Mexicans in attendance but also that I was the only American (“gringo”) invited to speak at the event. Again, my nerves were on edge. How did I cope with the pressure?

In both instances, I turned to the device of using an icebreaker, specifically, telling a story that would, in effect, set the audience at ease, leave them laughing, and hopefully not set me up for a barrage of negative comments. I had told this story on any number of other occasions and, while it always resulted in a positive reaction from my audience, it calmed my nerves so I could more confidently deliver my presentation. The following is an English version of that story that I told in Spanish.

**The Religious Horse**

A man was selling his horse and an interested buyer came to investigate.

The seller said, "There's something you should know about this horse. He is very religious. He will start running when you say 'Praise the Lord.' He will stop running when you say 'Amen'."

"No problem," the other man said, "I'll take it."

The man mounted the horse, which began walking. He decided to test the horse. He said, "Amen," and the horse stopped on the road just as the other man had said he would.

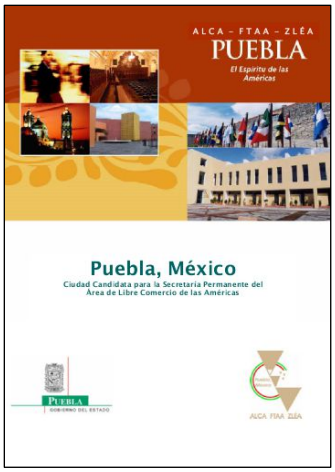
Then the man said, "Praise the Lord!" The horse took off running like mad. The rider held on as tightly as he could.

He soon noticed they were heading toward a cliff. He begin screaming, "Stop!!! The horse kept running. He yelled, "Stop, you stupid horse!! Whoah!" The horse kept running. The cliff was getting closer and closer so he began praying aloud, nearly screaming, "Dear God, please let this horse stop! Please! Amen!"

Just then the horse stopped right at the edge of the cliff.

The man looked over the edge of the cliff. It was a LONG way down to the bottom. The man wiped his brow and, with great enthusiasm and joy, said, "PRAISE THE LORD!!"

***Corn Growing & Capacity Building*** – For me the common denominator of these two topics – corn growing and capacity building – is Puebla (Mexico). On the one hand, in 1974, in Ames, Iowa, I began working on my doctoral dissertation. My research focused on developing and applying a social action model to identify the factors that facilitated or constrained the Puebla Project in achieving its goal of helping small scale farmers to raise their corn yields. On the other, thirty years later in 2004, I was in Puebla, Mexico, representing USAID in discussions on how the rural sector of Mexico and other Latin American and Caribbean countries could adjust their productive sectors to produce a range of crops, goods, and services that would enable these countries to be competitive in export markets. Ironically, growing more corn will not achieve this goal. While small scale corn producers will never be able to lift themselves out of poverty by growing more *milpa* (corn and beans), if they are not able to increase their corn yields, they will not become less risk-averse to shifting some of their land and labor into growing more remunerative (profitable) higher value crops (e.g. fruits and vegetables).




When the negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiation stalled in 2004, the U.S. turned its attention to negotiating a free trade agreement with Central America and the Dominican Republic, and later with Peru and Colombia among the

Andean countries. In the meetings of the Trade Capacity Building (TCB) working group held during each negotiation round, one of the highest priority requests from all of the smaller economy developing countries was for assistance to help their rural sectors to become more productive, especially with the opportunity a free trade agreement would provide to open and expand markets to export rural-sector sourced agricultural crops and products. The representatives of these various Latin American countries referred to the "becoming more productive" process as "reconversion del sector rural."

Ironically, while our developing country trading partners were most concerned about mobilizing U.S. and donor support to address this challenge for trade-led agricultural diversification, USAID found its budget for economic growth assistance in decline at the same time that the Office of U.S. Trade Representative increasingly pushed USAID to give priority to programming declining economic growth funds for technical assistance to help our developing country trading partners comply with the rules of trade as set forth in the free trade agreements these countries were negotiating and signing onto with the United States.

These concerns led USAID's LAC Bureau to contract with David Bathrick to conduct an assessment on *Optimizing the Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Benefits of CAFTA-DR* (Vol. 1 & Vol. 2 ) which we also referred to as the Trade-Led Agricultural Diversification (T-LAD) report.


Just as David and I were mounting an aggressive outreach program to mobilize greater understanding of the T-LAD message and to promote increased budgetary support for USAID Missions to help our developing country trading partners to address the T-LAD challenge, along came the food price hike crisis of 2008. In that crisis' wake, developing country governments and the donor community suddenly refocused on how to respond to the inability of the poor to feed themselves in the face of high food prices. When the dust settled, the efforts Dave and I had made to launch a USG commitment to a T-LAD initiative was lost in the shuffle when the USG responded to the food price hikes with the Feed the Future initiative that, in turn, resulted in LAC USAID Missions having their economic growth budgets reduced or even eliminated. In the end, only three Missions in the LAC region–Guatemala, Haiti, and Honduras–were left with funds for Agriculture.

# United States of America

## Puerto Rico


I had the opportunity to travel twice to Puerto Rico for short-term assignments as recounted below.

***Work and Piña Coladas Do Mix*** – In 1997, in support of the LAC Bureau's assistance to the Caribbean, I traveled to Las Croabas, **Puerto Rico** to attend a meeting on "Farm to Table: Sustaining Caribbean Agriculture through Tourism," sponsored by the Caribbean Culinary Federation that hosted the annual Taste of the Caribbean event. This event was a trade fair showcasing opportunities to source foods and services as well as hospitality industry products and services both from the Caribbean and the United States.

On the margins of Taste of the Caribbean, our office organized a "Farm to Table" meeting of potential partners to discuss the possibility of launching and supporting a project to provide assistance to increase the capacity of Caribbean-based fruit and vegetable products to meet the food product demand of the Caribbean hospitality industry, including cruise ships, restaurants, hotels, and grocery stores. However, on the margins of our meeting, the highlight for me of Taste of the Caribbean was the Island Oasis booth that featured the company's frozen drink blenders, frozen beverage mixes, and free samples such as Mango and Piña Colada smoothies. Those smoothies were so good that I was challenged to occasionally but not too obviously stop by the Island Oasis booth for another free, albeit small, sample of a Piña Colada or Mango smoothie. Indeed, not only a Taste of the Caribbean but also a taste of the tropics!

***No Room At the Inn*** – In September of 2004, for Round 4 of the U.S. Andean Free Trade Agreement (TPA) negotiations, I traveled to Fajardo, Puerto Rico, and stayed at the El Conquistador Resort (see photos below). Located on a hillside overlooking the Caribbean, the hotel was a perfect destination to invite Sonia to accompany me for part of my stay. Indeed, we arranged for her to arrive at the hotel a couple of days after I arrived, so she could enjoy the hotel's facilities for a couple of days, and then, after the round ended, spend time visiting a Colombian couple who lived in San Juan.

However, in the midst of Round 4 and before Sonia arrived in San Juan, the island of Puerto Rico was hit by Hurricane Jeanne, resulting in extensive damage to the hotel, including flooding of rooms, loss of electricity to the kitchen (requiring food preparation on charcoal grills), and a mudslide that left mud not only in the guest rooms on the hotel's lower levels but also in the hotel's swimming pool.

I was fortunate in that my room, located on the hotel's highest floor, suffered minimal damage, in part because I had put rolled up towels on the floor on the room side of the door to the corridor, so that wind-blown rain would not flow into the room. Later that day, the day on which Sonia was to arrive, I was paged to the reception desk to take a phone call. It was from Sonia who was stranded in the San Juan airport. She told me the hotel cancelled its shuttle from the airport to the hotel because no rooms were available.

I asked Sonia to remain on the line while I talked with hotel manager who told me that the hotel didn't have any rooms for new guests because the hurricane had damaged so many rooms that many guests had to be moved from their damaged rooms to other available rooms, resulting in the hotel not having any rooms for new guests. I then told the manager that the woman on the phone was not a "new guest" but rather my wife, that she was stranded in the San Juan airport, and that the hotel needed to instruct the shuttle bus to bring her from airport to the hotel. As I put it, she was welcome to sleep in my room! Within an hour or so, the shuttle bus arrived and disembarked one passenger – Sonia!

## Mainland


Between 1986 and 2012, I carried out 27 short-term assignments to mainland cities of the United States, including Atlanta, Georgia; Burlington, Vermont; Miami, Florida; Niagara Falls, New York; Orlando, Florida; San Diego, California; Tallahassee, Florida; Tucson, Arizona; and Washington, DC. These assignments ranged from writing project proposals, participating in several C/LAA Miami Conferences on the Caribbean and Latin America; during the initial rounds of negotiation of the Free Tree Area of the Americas (FTAA), participating in the meetings of the Consultative Group on Smaller Economies and the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society; during negotiation of the Andean Trade Promotion Agreement (ATPA), participating in the Trade Capacity Building Working Group; providing oversight to USAID investments in building trade capacity; and providing LAC Bureau technical oversight of and support to the USG Feed the Future food security initiative.

**Management Communication for Development Seminars** – Between 1986 and 1992, I participated in eight Management Training and Development Institute (MTDI) seminars conducted in various locations, as follows:

1986 – December 26, 1986 – January 7, 1987 (Orlando, Florida)

1987 – March 16-20, 1987 (Washington, DC)

1987 – May 10-16 (Niagara Falls, New York)

1987 – May 17-28 (Niagara Falls, New York)

1988 – December 26, 1987 – January 5, 1988 (Orlando, Florida)

1989 – February 26 – March 3, 1989 (Orlando, Florida)

1991 – December 26, 1991 – January 5, 1992 (Orlando, Florida)

1992 – August 7-15, 1992 (Washington, DC)

Further, I participated in one MCD Seminar in San Diego, California (but have not yet pinpointed the exact dates of that seminar.)

**Proposal Writing** – On several occasions I provided technical and editorial support to the drafting of project proposals. In 1985, I made four trips to Burlington, Vermont to assist a consulting firm (Associates in Rural Development, now TetraTech) in writing its proposal for the USAID-funded "Development Strategies for Fragile Lands Project" (DESFIL). In 1987, I helped Agricultural Cooperative Development International in writing its proposal to USAID for a "Private Agricultural Producer Organization project."

Finally, in 1991, while in Washington, DC, I collaborated with the USAID's RDOC (Regional Development Office for the Caribbean) and the Inter-American Development Bank, assisting the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute in rewriting a proposal for a "Non-Traditional Agricultural Export (NTAE) Research and Development Network Project."

**C/LAA Miami Conference on the Caribbean and Latin America (Miami Florida)** – Between 1997 and 2000, for four consecutive years, I attended the annual meeting of the C/LAA Miami Conference in Miami. The first time I assisted a colleague who gave a presentation, to USAID officers from the LAC Missions, on the Hemispheric Free Trade Expansion (HFTE) Project that our office was implementing. Also, with another colleague, I participated in a follow up meeting on the "Farm to Table" initiative.

**Negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (Miami, Florida) –** The first phase of the negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) was hosted in Miami. During this period I represented USAID in five meetings of the Consultative Group on Smaller Economies (once in 1999 and four times in 2000) and in meetings of the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society (three times in 2000).

**Andean Trade Promotion Agreement Negotiation** – Once the FTAA negotiation had stalled and after negotiation of the U.S.-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) was completed, the U.S. began negotiating a free trade agreement (Andean Trade Promotion Agreement) with three Andean countries (Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru). During this latter negotiation two of the negotiation rounds were held in the United States in 2004: Round 2 was held in Atlanta, Georgia in June; and Round 6 was held in Tucson, Arizona in December. I represented USAID in the TCB Working Group in both rounds (as well as in rounds held in Puerto Rico; three times in Cartagena, Colombia; twice in Guayaquil, Ecuador; and once in Lima, Peru).

**Trade Capacity Building (TCB)** – During the years the U.S. Government was negotiating free trade agreements with countries of the LAC region, USAID's LAC Bureau provided funding to support a variety of trade capacity building (TCB) initiatives. Two projects that I oversaw were being carried out with U.S.-based partners. In 2000, I traveled to Tallahassee, Florida to meet with Florida State University (FSU) staff and a representative of USAID/Jamaica to negotiate agreement on amendment of a grant to the Caribbean Law Institute (CLI) to work on advancing legislative reforms to foster increased trade in the Caribbean. In 2006, I traveled to Miami to observe the delivery of a three-day training program for managers of small and medium-sized enterprises. This program was being implemented by Florida International University (FIU).

**Food Security** – In 2012, I traveled to Miami, Florida to participate in a Feed the Future Workshop for LAC Region, including making a presentation on the role of resilient markets in supporting greater food security.

***Some Highlights*** –

- ***Kerry, You Just Lost Your Job, What Are You Going To Do Next?*** – Well, my first answer was not "I'm going to Disney World!" However, as it turned out, going to Orlando, Florida was not far off on the horizon. During 1985, almost a year into my first job in Washington, DC, several of my colleagues and I lost our jobs when the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) cancelled the contract under which we were working, due to it having been illegally sole-sourced to a private sector firm (USDA Graduate School) without going through a competitive bidding process. Overnight I found myself "on the street" and without full-time employment, suddenly in the business of being a freelance consultant chasing after consulting gigs and going from one assignment to another – and often, as in show business, when I had no bookings, telling others that I was "between engagements."

  Over the ensuing two years before landing a new full-time job in 1987, I began to line up consulting gigs including with the Management Training and Development Institute as an associate staff member for the Management Communication for Development Seminars (MCD) that MTDI conducted around the U.S. in various locations including Washington, DC; San Diego, California; Orlando, Florida; and Niagara Falls, New York. Indeed, conducting the seminars in Orlando presented the opportunity to turn losing my job in 1985 into visiting Disney World!

  My initial exposure to the MCD seminars was in the late 1950s, when my father and Michigan State University colleagues designed and carried out the seminars for foreign students who were enrolled in universities around the United States. James Evans and I recounted the history of these seminars in The Spirit Lives On: Communication Seminars as a Surprisingly Hardy, Valuable, and Promising Heritage of NPAC, an article published in the Centennial Issue of the *Journal of Applied Communication* in 2016.

  Below I share a couple of the group photos from two of the MTDI MCD seminars in which I participated:

**Bureau of Census – March 16-20, 1987 (Washington, DC)**

**December 26, 1991 – January 5, 1992 (Orlando, Florida)**

These two photos highlight several aspects of the MCD seminars. The number of participants in any given seminar varied from one seminar to another. Generally, these seminars had as many or even more participants than shown in the second photo. However, in the case of the MCD seminar for the Bureau of Census held in Washington, DC (see first photo), there were only seven participants, all from Latin American countries. By comparison, as reflected in the second photo, the makeup of the participants in the majority of the seminars was geographically and ethnically diverse, with participants from many African and Asian countries.

For the MCD seminar for the Latin American participants (who were in a longer-term training program with the Bureau of Census), Bob Morris (MTDI's director) contracted me to translate seminar training materials from English to Spanish and then conduct the seminar in Spanish. By comparison, most MCD seminars included a number of MTDI associates and were conducted in English – which for many if not most participants was not their native but rather second language.

In the second photo, I'm standing on the far right of the back row, with Bob Morris standing to my right and Suzanne Morrison (MTDI's deputy director) standing just in front of my left shoulder. Bob, Suzanne, and an administrative assistant (Ellen Thorburn) kept the seminars running like precision clockwork, while Bob and his seminar associates took the lead in putting the participants through a series of learner-oriented activities ranging from short lectures to case studies to problem-solving exercises to role playing. In this regard, I especially enjoyed working with several associates, notably Don Cushman who led a Legos Competition activity. Similarly, from Jeffrey Katzer, I learned to run the Diffusion Game. Other MTDI associates with whom I worked were Randall Harrison (a specialist in nonverbal communication), Gene Lamb (all-around communication person with experience in Latin America and fluent in Spanish), and Sam Betty (a specialist in interpersonal communication).

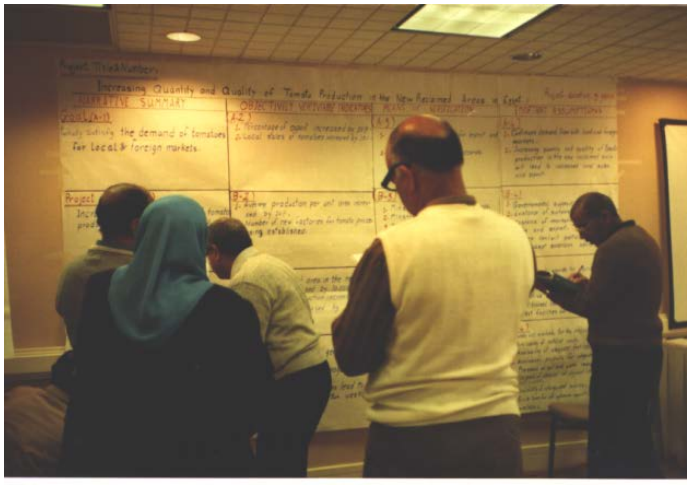
The experience in working in these MCD seminars would later pay off in terms of having the preparation to take on other consulting assignments for USAID such as when I designed an agricultural extension methods training course for Costa Rican agricultural extension technicians and, even more so, when I designed what I called the Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) workshop, in which I applied the same adult-oriented learning activities I had learned during the MCD seminars. Indeed, OMS Workshop evaluations showed that the Legos Competition was the most popular activity during each OMS Workshop.

OMS Workshop participants also highly rated various activities that were based on the case study I wrote about a hypothetical NGO that I often jokingly referred to as the "NGO from Hell" – an NGO called FAMA that was suffering numerous problems associated with failures in its administrative and financial system, its internal and external communication system, its revenue-generating system, and its human resource development system. On several occasions, a workshop participant came up to me and said: "This is our NGO; how did you know about all these things?" Getting participants involved in small group discussions aimed at analyzing FAMA's failures and what steps FAMA needed to take to strengthen its sustainability provided a framework that NGO participants could use to think critically and constructively about steps they could and, indeed, needed to take to address constraints to the sustainability of their own NGOs.

Overall, perhaps the basic "lesson learned" from participating in all of the MCD Seminars and OMS Workshops is that of how much of human behavior depends on communication, organization, and management, regardless of a participant's home country, native language, or ethnicity. Below are several photos that show MCD Seminar participants working on a problem-solving exercise.

**Bob Morris with Malaysian participants in a MTDI Communication Seminar**

**MTDI Seminar for senior educators from Malaysia and Ghana, studying in the United States (MTDI trainer Don Cushman in back left). *"We learned later that they continued to exchange information and consultancies with each other after they returned home."* (Robert Morris, personal communication)**



**Egyptian participants in a MTDI Project Management Workshop work on developing a *logical framework. When the participants put that up, one of the trainers said, 'well…they're the folks who built the pyramids."* (Robert Morris, personal communication)**

- ***Four Trips to Burlington…Not the Coat Factory!*** – During the summer of 1985, I traveled to Burlington, Vermont four times to assist a consulting firm, Associates in Rural Development, to write their proposal for a USAID-funded Development Strategies for Fragile Lands (DESFIL) Project. However, the project was won by another firm (Chemonics). Ironically, in the early 1990s, the DESFIL project staff was located in the same office suite as the staff of the LAC TECH project on which I was working. While I found the area surrounding Burlington beautiful in the summer, green everywhere, that green hid the reality that the city's winters were bleak, indeed, sufficiently dismal that Burlington (at the time) reportedly had one of the highest suicide rates in the United States.

- ***"Roaches check in but they don't check out!"*** – If you think back to the early 1960s you might recall that famous Black Flag "Roach Motel" TV commercial. In case you don't recall or never saw it, here's a link to that commercial:


During one of the early Miami-based rounds of the FTAA negotiation, held at the Intercontinental Hotel, I was not able to reserve a room at that hotel, so made a reservation at the nearby (downtown) Holiday Inn. A State Department colleague, at my suggestion, also reserved a room at the same hotel. The morning after our first night in the hotel, my colleague reported he was moving to a different hotel because his room was infested with cockroaches. A running joke ensued that this was the Holiday Inn where roaches check in but don't check out. My colleague said he could check out and did, taking a room elsewhere. I stayed at the Holiday Inn as the roaches apparently had checked out of my room. As far as I could see, my room had been spared of being roach-infested.

- ***Miami By Day*** – My 2006 visit to Miami, in conjunction with a USAID grant to Florida International University, included both observing the classroom-based instruction for the participants from small and medium-sized enterprises but also touring several import/export-oriented organizations or businesses, such as the Port of Miami, Miami's World Trade Center, Goya Foods, and Sedano's, a major grocery store chain serving Miami's Latin community – all of these in their own way interesting stops that one certainly would not see if one's priority was experiencing, as it were, Miami by Night!



- ***Tiki Time in Atlanta*** – For the June 2000 visit to Atlanta to participate in Round 2 of the Andean Trade Promotion Agreement negotiation, the U.S. delegation stayed at the Hilton Hotel. No big deal except when I discovered that the hotel hosted a Trader Vic's restaurant featuring Tiki ambience, Polynesian food, and as background music the Exotica sounds (albeit recorded, not live) of musicians such as Martin Denny and Arthur Lyman. Over the years I had the opportunity to meet these and other giants of Exotica in Hawaii, a story told elsewhere in the Tiki Encounters in the Realm of Exotica Musicians chapter of my memoir titled "Giants in Their Realms" available on the Okemos Alumni Association website.

**Trader Vic's, Hilton Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia**

- ***The Lowest High in Tucson*** – Round 6 of the negotiation of the Andean Trade Promotion Agreement was held in Tucson, Arizona from December 1-3, 2004. God knows what I was thinking when I packed my bags for Tucson. Somehow I must have been thinking "sunny Arizona" and "it's hot in the desert" and failed to

pack any clothing for cold weather. On arriving in Tucson on November 30, the city to my surprise was in midst of a cold spell. Indeed, it was so cold the first night in my hotel room that I wore my pants and a long-sleeve shirt as a pajama. Further, on waking the next morning, the local news reported the cold would continue. By late afternoon, the news reported that a new temperature record had been set in Tucson – for that date the "lowest high" (about 62 degrees F) in the city's history! It was a relief when I got back home to even colder Reston where I had winter clothing and a heated home.

- ***"Just Lunch" But No Football Game!*** – A highlight of my visit to Tallahassee in 2000 was my Florida State University (FSU) hosts inviting me for lunch in the dining room that overlooks the playing field of Doak Campbell Stadium, the home field for FSU Seminoles football team. It was August 2 and the football season had not yet started, so, as they say, it was "just lunch" but no football game!

**Doak Campbell Stadium at Florida State University**

# Chapter 8 - Looking Back

While working on this book, and as I reflected on all of those years traveling to and from so many of the world's developing countries, I tried to figure out how I could summarize and synthesize what, in the long run, all that travel meant to me. After trying to address this and going through multiple drafts, I found that the following sections do a fair job of summing things up:

Biographical Context

Development-related Travel

The Downside of Travel to the Developing World

Nearing Retirement

Travel after Retirement

Life in Retirement

Short-Term Travel to Developing Countries Did Not Alone a Career Make

What Did It All Add Up To?

Keeping the Spirit for Development Alive

Conclusion

***Biographical Context*** – While I was born on the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, and spent my early years in Dayton and Worthington, it was my father's work that led him, my mother, my brother, and me to travel from Lansing, Michigan to Paris, France in 1955 on what were my first flights on an airplane. In 1963, our family, now with my sister Kathryn, again traveled by plane, this time from Lansing to Manila, the Philippines, where my father began a new job with the International Rice Research Institute in Los Baños.

The pace of my personal travel to the developing world soon picked up with various trips back to the Philippines, including a period of study at the College of Agriculture of the University of the Philippines, while I was yet a student at Michigan State University. This travel also included a visit to Mexico during the summer of 1964, where I studied in a local university and lived with a Mexican family. On graduating from Michigan State in 1967 with a B.A. in sociology and in 1968 with an M.A. in communication, I traveled to Colombia to visit my parents and was lucky to land an assistantship on an agricultural marketing research project (PIMUR) that Michigan State was implementing in the Cauca Valley, the capital of which is Cali, the city where my parents were living and where, in August of 1969, I married Sonia Gomez who as a lawyer had been hired to work on the PIMUR project.

After returning to the United States in 1969 to study for a doctorate in sociology at Iowa State University, that flight path was interrupted for a period from the summer of 1970 to the early 1971, during which Sonia and I served as VISTA Volunteers in Miami, Florida. In early 1971, we returned to Ames, Iowa, where I spent the next several years studying for my doctorate which I completed in the spring of 1975.

In the summer of 1975 I began working with the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, a job that accelerated the pace of my travel to the developing countries – and that pace would quicken over the next 40 years until I retired from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) at the end of September 2014. The bulk of the "travels" reported herein occurred during that period of nearly 40 years between 1975 and 2014.

While I studied to be a sociologist (at Michigan State for my BA and at Iowa State for my Ph.D.), I never was employed in academia as a "typical" sociologist doing research for publication in scientific journals. Also, I complemented my sociological coursework by earning an MA in communication (at Michigan State) and complemented my doctoral studies in sociology at Iowa State by earning a minor in economics. The direction of my studies increasingly was influenced by a growing awareness that what I wanted to do on graduating was to work in agricultural and rural development in the developing world. Yet, while I never succeeded in lining up a full-time job to work overseas for any length of time, the employment opportunities I pursued or that came my way after graduating from Iowa State all provided opportunity for me to travel to the developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

In these various jobs, I did not find myself doing pure research aimed at producing new scientific knowledge for publication in academic journals. Rather my focus was on doing applied research, studies, assessments, or evaluations in order to generate information that could be used to make course corrections in an existing project, assess project impact, design a project or, more broadly, formulate updated or new development assistance strategies or projects.

When a representative of the Rockefeller Foundation interviewed my father for a job at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), he was hesitant, telling the interviewer, "I don't know anything about rice." The response was that my father could always learn about rice on the job but that the foundation wanted to hire him because of his expertise as an editor, trainer, and communication specialist. When I interviewed for a position as a sociologist with the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), I made sure that I was clear that, while I didn't know anything about fertilizers, I was willing to learn – and, indeed, over the next 9+ years spent a lot of time learning about different aspects of fertilizer production, marketing, and use as related to such issues as why farmers

adopt or do not adopt and use fertilizers, or how best to train persons from developing countries in various aspects of fertilizer production, marketing, and use.

Including my years working with IFDC and thereafter for other employers, I went from job to job and from short-term assignment to the next acquiring “jackrabbit knowledge” about various development issues and, in the process, tried to bring my skill set as a sociologist to bear on a variety of issues as illustrated by the following list:

- New fertilizer technologies (e.g., urea briquettes for deep placement in paddy rice in Senegal and Bangladesh; sulfur-coated urea in Indonesia; and phosphate rock in Mali)
- Fertilizer marketing (Bangladesh and Colombia)
- How fertilizer distribution systems impact on whether farmers have equitable access to fertilizer use (Bangladesh)
- Training in fertilizer use efficiency (Kenya and Nigeria)
- Training in fertilizer marketing (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Thailand)
- Agro-forestry (Pakistan and Guatemala)
- Water User Associations (WUAs in Pakistan)
- Training in methods for agricultural extension (Costa Rica)
- Agricultural foundations and endowments (Ecuador and Peru)
- Coffee & coffee rust (Guatemala and Central America generally)
- Melon growing and exporting (Honduras, Guatemala, and Costa Rica)
- Orange growing (Honduras)
- Doing project evaluations (Bolivia, Guatemala, Pakistan, and Panama)
- Designing and conducting Organizational Management for Sustainability Workshop (Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Peru)

***Development-related Travel*** – Other than when I lived with a Mexican family in Toluca, Mexico in the summer of 1964; the semester living in the Philippines with my parents in 1965 while studying at the College of Agriculture of the University of the Philippines; and a year in Colombia (1968-69) while working on the PIMUR project as a Michigan State employee, my travel overseas for work-related purposes was usually for relatively short durations from a week or two up to a maximum of six weeks (in the case of one assignment in Bangladesh).

For each country visited during my short-term assignments, I provided herein overviews of the development-related issues that I worked on plus anecdotes about things I saw, did, or that happened to me—and in some instances anecdotes shared insights on or lessons learned about working in the field of development. Those development-related issues included but were not limited to areas such as the following:

- Developing and/or delivering training in various areas including fertilizer marketing and fertilizer use efficiency; effective communication and leadership; agricultural research and/or extension; management communication for development (MCD); and organizational management for sustainability (OMS) for NGOs;

- Designing trade capacity building assistance (TCB) to help developing country trading partners in the LAC region to prepare for, participate in, and benefit from a free trade agreement; and

- Providing food security- and food safety-related technical assistance to support the USG Feed the Future initiative, including the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) training to help developing country food industries to fully comply with FSMA requirements so as to ensure that they will continue to be able to export food to the United States.

Over 40 years from 1975 to 2014, I made 178 work-related trips, 22 of which were to destinations in the U.S. and Canada (twice) and the remaining 156 to one or another of 38 developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, or the Caribbean. Also, as earlier noted, I lived and worked in Colombia for nearly a year during 1968-69. The following is a list of the countries that I traveled to during my 40+ years of working in the field of development (n = times visited in a work role):

| | |
|---|---|
| **West Africa:** | Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) (1), Mali (2), Senegal (1), Nigeria (1) |
| **East Africa:** | Kenya (1) |
| **South Asia:** | Bangladesh (3), Pakistan (3) |
| **Southeast Asia:** | Indonesia (3), Malaysia (1), Philippines (2), Thailand (1) |
| **The Caribbean:** | Barbados (2), Dominica (2), Dominican Republic (9), Grenada (1), Guyana (1), Jamaica (6), St. Lucia (3), St. Vincent & the Grenadines (2), Trinidad & Tobago (5), Puerto Rico (2) |
| **Central America:** | Costa Rica (9), El Salvador (5), Guatemala (20), Honduras (12), Nicaragua (7), Panama (12) |
| **Andean Region:** | Bolivia (6), Colombia (15), Ecuador (9), Peru (20), Venezuela (1) |
| **Southern Cone:** | Argentina (2), Brazil (3), Chile (4), Paraguay (2) |
| **North America** | Mexico (7), Canada (2), United States (22 including Puerto Rico twice) |

***The Downside of Travel to the Developing World*** – Aside from the time I was busy doing productive work during short-term assignments to a developing country, those assignments to the developing countries were always accompanied by a not small amount of time and hassle spent as follows:

- Planning and working out the travel details for trips;
- Getting vaccinations and medications (e.g., to protect against malaria);
- Packing and unpacking suitcases and/or carryon bags;
- Traveling by taxis or other means (e.g., shuttle, embassy vehicles) to and from airports;
- Checking in at airports for an innumerable number of flights, probably over 500 flights;
- Flying over two million miles with American Airlines just since 1989, with who knows how many miles on multiple airlines between during the prior 15 years (1975-1989);
- Going through immigration, claiming bags, and passing through customs;
- Taking taxi rides on arrival in country from airport to hotel and on departure from hotel to airport;
- Doing hundreds of check-ins to and check-outs of hotels, and eating thousands of times in hotel restaurants, fast food outlets, and/or roadside eateries – and sometimes in rural areas with villagers and always a bit uncertain what I might be served – but taking ill only five times;
- Except for countries with dollarized economies (e.g., Ecuador and El Salvador), coping with different currencies and different (sometimes daily changes in) exchange rates, and having to visit a hotel's reception desk, a money exchange house, or the US Embassy or USAID Mission bank to exchange U.S. dollars for local currency – and even a time or two with a moneychanger on the street;
- Figuring out countless times if the local currency price in a restaurant or store was cheap or expensive compared with an item's likely price in U.S. dollars;
- Taking taxi rides around capital cities for meetings with government officials or private sector representatives;
- On returning home, filling out and submitting countless travel vouchers and trip reports.

Probably these various hassles contributed not only to becoming a bit "burnt out" on working in development but also more than a bit "burnt out" with travel itself. Of course, after so many years and so many trips, a lot of what I saw, did, or that happened to me has blurred in my mind or is so buried in my subconscious that I long ago forgot specific incidents and their associated details. For better or worse, I never started or maintained a diary of my day-by-day activities while on assignment.

In spite of these various travel-related hassles, I did have favorite travel destinations, notably, to countries in Spanish-speaking Latin America. I always looked forward to trips to Colombia (as they provided opportunity to stay in touch with my wife's family) and to the Central American countries as these were destinations close to home, almost in the same time zone, and with lots of agriculture- and economic growth-related development challenges. Trips to Peru always were enjoyable (excellent cuisine), especially as the USAID Mission always tasked me with interesting and challenging assignments and always appreciated my work.

Trips to the ABC countries (Argentina, Brazil, and Chile) were less interesting as these countries are now more advanced in their development or, with the exception of Brazil, no longer had a USAID Mission—and generally visits to these countries were not to do development *per se* but rather to attend a workshop, seminar, or conference. Travel to the English-speaking Caribbean was not as interesting as trips to the Central American countries because USAID Missions in the Caribbean were over the years less and less focused on agricultural and/or rural development. My trips to Africa, 30+ years ago, are now so far in the past that I long since forgot many of the details of my work there.

On the other hand, my travels to South Asia for training-related work in Bangladesh and Pakistan were memorable, with this essay sharing a number of anecdotes from those visits. Unfortunately, I had few opportunities to travel to Southeast Asia but particularly enjoyed doing training programs in Indonesia and Thailand while employed with IFDC.

***Nearing Retirement*** – With all the travel to the developing world during my professional career, plus earlier trips overseas due to my parents' travel to Europe in 1955 and the family moving to the Philippines in 1963, I felt as I neared retirement that I was reaching a point of looking forward less and less to yet another trip overseas. Indeed, between the time of my heart surgery in July of 2013 and retiring on September 30, 2014, my travel was limited to my daily commute to and from the office and didn't make any trips overseas. Indeed, I began to think seriously about retiring—and what I would do after I retired.

Many who retire after working full-time in development soon find themselves back on the job (albeit employed under another mechanism) and on the road carrying out post-retirement consulting trips to the developing world. But did they really retire? When my father retired from the Rockefeller Foundation, he never really "retired" as he continued taking on full-time work with Winrock International and later short-term assignments with Winrock and other clients. He was yet working with Winrock on a short-term assignment in June of 1999, when he took ill and then died less than a month later, just 20 days short of what would have been his 82$^{nd}$ birthday.

Early on, having seen many retire and then for financial reasons needing to continue working – or, worse, having known some who retired and then took ill and died without really having had time to enjoy retirement, I knew I didn't want to find myself in that pickle. So I kept working in a full-time job as long as my own health made that possible. However, my hip replacement in 2011 and heart surgery in 2013 slowed me down and reduced my level of comfort with traveling overseas to the developing world. Plus, as USAID closed out Missions in Latin America and the Caribbean region or downsized or eliminated Mission economic growth programs in the region, I saw opportunities drying up for travel to and providing technical support to USAID Missions in the LAC region.

In addition to health-related considerations and not wanting to keep working until the grim reaper suddenly was at my door, I wanted to have time after retiring to do various things on my bucket list, even though I've not put into writing just exactly what items are on that bucket list! I just knew that, whatever things I wanted time to do, I would not be able to do them unless I bit the bullet and retired. Thus, not surprisingly, since retiring on 9/30/14, I've not chased after consulting work, have turned down several consulting inquiries, and have yet to take on a post-retirement consulting assignment.

Now, nearly three years retired, I find my days in retirement are just not long enough to do all the things I want to take on–and, indeed, taking on consulting assignments would just further reduce my "degrees of freedom" in terms of reducing the time available to pursue my personal and family interests and priorities.

**Travel After Retirement** – For many nearing retirement, who grew up working in their local communities, and whose discretionary income during their working years didn't afford the luxury to travel to foreign destinations, or whose jobs didn't require them or cover the costs for them to travel overseas, their retirement "bucket list" may or often does include a high priority on traveling to exotic destinations.

On the other hand, there are those such as myself whose jobs during their professional careers afforded ample opportunity to travel or required travel to overseas destinations. Thus, in my case, I have become very selective with respect to "where or when" next to travel to a destination overseas or even to distant locations in the United States. Sonia and I have ongoing discussions on where to travel next, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of possible destinations, and what we like or don't like about each, in an ongoing quest for where Sonia and Kerry might travel next. Yet, over the past four years since retiring, Sonia and I have done a fair amount of travel, including twice to Colombia (Cali) and once by myself to celebrate CIAT's 50$^{th}$ Anniversary; once each to Boston, Massachusetts; Cancún, Mexico; and Honolulu, Hawaii.

I really don't have a "bucket list" of country destinations that I yet want to visit. Indeed, I can look back on many countries that I have visited as a tourist, including France,

Germany, Belgium, Italy, England, Ireland, Greece, Austria, Spain, Turkey, and several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Yet, with all the hassles associated with travel today, I rarely look forward to an upcoming overseas trip – and, indeed, passed up an opportunity to travel with Sonia to Dubai and bailed on accompanying her on the trips she made to Russia, though will be traveling with her in the fall of 2018 to Spain, Morocco, and Portugal.

When it comes to travel, one needs to strike a balance because too much travel is not a good thing. I'm reminded of the economic axiom: the more turkey one eats at dinner on Thanksgiving, the less rewarding is the next bite. This "law of diminishing returns" has for me a travel-related corollary: the more that I travel, the less I look forward to it, with all its hassles, dangers, and uncertainties, especially placing one's life in the hands of the airline industry, even if that is one of the world's safest industries.

But safety doesn't automatically translate into comfort, especially as airlines reduce the distance between rows (in order to squeeze more seats onto each plane), charge more for premium seats with extra leg room, reduce the weight allowance and the number of bags you can check free, reduce the allowed maximum size of the bag one can carry aboard and store in the overhead bin, and cut back (if not eliminate) meals or even snacks. So far I've yet to hear that any airline has installed a credit card reader on a plane's bathroom doors!

So a "bottom line" conclusion emerging from *On Assignment with Kerry* is that, when it comes to "travel" there's a personal sense of "been there, done that" and that the time has arrived to stay home and enjoy one's remaining years in a country (United States) that has a lot to offer to those who have retired. First, all that travel didn't leave me with a bucket list of places I yet have any great burning desire to travel to and see. Second, with the not infrequent news reports of terrorist-related incidents in European cities and beyond, one must ask: "Will it be safe to travel to destination X?" Third, while we're not getting any younger, my left hip replacement surgery in 2011 and my heart surgery in 2013 took a toll on my energy level. At least in my case, I'm no longer a spring chicken, rather an aging rooster who no longer has the spring of step and level of energy I once had. So I carefully measure what are my travel priorities for my remaining years—and find it increasingly difficult to be incentivized, as it were, "to fly the coop."

My wife and I have been lucky to afford some of our post-retirement travel because of the frequent flyer miles we accumulated over the years when flying on purchased tickets with American Airlines. At one point I had an American AAdvantage account balance of over 1 million miles available to redeem for travel. But with several post-retirement trips that balance has now dwindled to a little over 720,000 miles—and care must be exercised as regards how those miles will be used to get to which destinations.

Fortunately, for all the travel on American Airlines to Latin America and the Caribbean, I eventually qualified for Platinum-for-Life status which allows one to earn a higher level of miles on a purchased ticket plus other benefits (e.g., higher priority in boarding, being able to select seats with extra leg room without paying extra for them, and qualifying for upgrades on certain flights).

***Life in Retirement*** – As is often said, life is too short and there are things other than travel that I want to do with the time I have left. When I get up early each morning, my burning desire isn't to plan my next trip but rather to pursue activities where I now live. For example, about a year after I had retired and now having more "time on my hands" Sonia and I took on a task we had avoided while still working, namely – "downsizing" - which entailed the search for and purchase of a condo, getting the house that we had lived in for 22+ years sold, and then downsizing our possessions to the point that what was left would fit into the condo comfortably, leaving us with possessing only the things we really need and/or that have sentimental value.

My travels to the developing world over a half century afforded numerous opportunities to purchase souvenirs, knick-knacks, paintings, and other stuff. With the condo having less than half the square footage of the house in which we had been living for over the past two decades, the downsizing to a condo required disposing over half of our stuff (furniture, kitchenware, knick-knacks, paintings, books, etc.) as wouldn't have enough space for all that stuff in our condo unit. Indeed, if we include the stuff (Christmas decorations, suitcases, and other things) crammed into our condo's storage closet, that closet now rivals Fibber McGee's closet.

As you may recall from the *Fibber McGee and Molly* radio show, Fibber always forgot the amount of stuff he had stored (crammed) into that closet. Then, every time that he remembered that he might have stored this or that (e.g., tennis racket) in that closet and went to open it, everything in the closet came crashing out of the closet the moment that Fibber opened the closet door.

Fibber McGee's Closet

Now, over the hump of “downsizing,” I’ve had more time to pursue other interests, one of them being to help my high school’s alumni web site to track down my Class of ’63 classmates and invite them to join the web site. I’ve also been busy writing memoir-type material for the website, including chronicling students from Okemos High School who played basketball for the Chieftains and went on to play basketball for the Michigan State University Spartans.

Perhaps, best of all, I now spend more time with my grandson and go to his basketball practices, summer basketball camps, and games to watch his basketball skills improve through drills and competing in games.

Also on the unwritten bucket list is an objective of allocating time for genealogical research on my parents’ ancestors.

As I reflect on my research/writing projects, I realized that they boil down to writing up and sharing with others topics and experiences of interest to me. Indeed, the process of downsizing brought home the realization of the old adage that it is not things that bring happiness or give meaning in life. Things are nice to have or can make life a little easier but they don’t translate into happiness. In this regard, one hears that what is important in life are the experiences one has in life and the quality of one’s relationships to others.

These are themes I addressed in “Giants in Their Realms” and “Hooked on Gigabytes” (see the Okemos Alumni Association website). Ongoing research/writing projects (e.g., how composers score films with an underwater-related plot; or this memoir on my travel to the developing countries) reflect on and share experiences I have found meaningful. These writing projects, in a sense, are not about travels to a “place” but rather about travels though “time,” recalling experiences over the years that have been memorable to me and, hopefully, of interest to share with others.

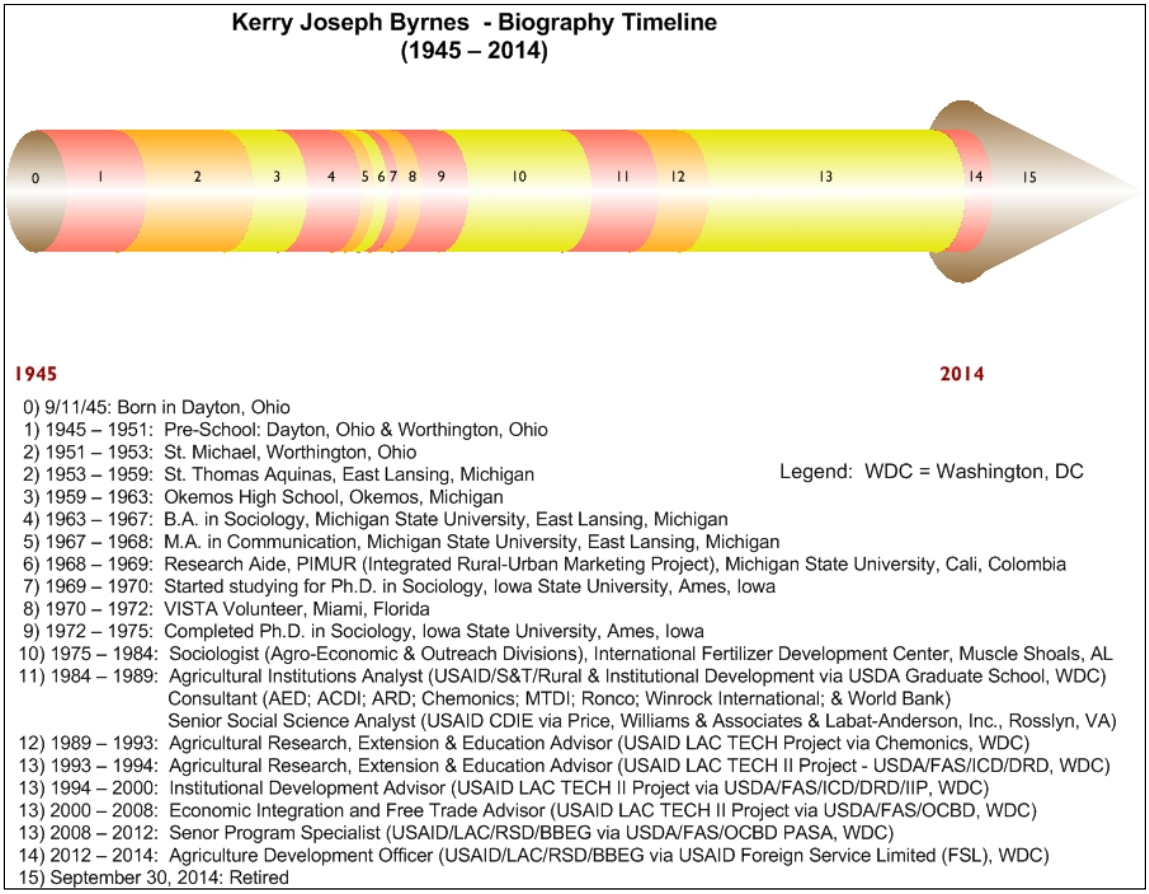
In this regard, one item on my bucket list is to write a biography on Martin Denny and, in this regard, I stay in touch with Martin’s daughter, Christina, who lives in West Virginia. I keep my fingers crossed that the day will come when the stars align to collaborate with Christina in writing a Denny biography. In the meantime, now that I’ve purchased a six-month subscription to Newspapers.com, I collect clippings (articles, columns, ads, photos, etc.) from two Hawaiian newspapers (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin* and *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*) to trace out a more detailed timeline of Denny’s career, from the early 1950s through his passing in early 2005, in order to identify the time periods during which he worked in Hawaii and when was he doing gigs on the mainland.

***Short-Term Travel to Developing Countries Did Not Alone a Career Make***

As I reflected on my travels to the developing world over a 40+ year career working in development, I saw the impossibility of trying to measure what impact all of those visits

had on advancing development in those countries. Further, working on development issues during my career was not comprised solely of short-term assignments but also, in between, working at a desk in my regular job.

This led me to recall various stages in my life and the various jobs I held throughout my working career. To this end, the graph below provides a “Biography Timeline” of the stages in my life from my years in school to my retirement in 2014, noting the different jobs I held with various employers. My short-term assignments to the developing countries occurred within the context of those jobs as a salaried employee or a freelance consultant.




This timeline, however, highlights only positions held and doesn’t provide any insight into what I was doing in those position or on what I accomplished while working in those positions. This led me to look more closely at that 40+ years when my work focused on the challenges to agricultural and rural development in the developing world. Based on that closer look, I prepared the following (roughly chronological) list of some of my work products, including annotations about each product, over that time period.

- **1969** - *Sistemas de Información y Comunicación de Mercadeo en la Zona de Influencia de Cali, Informe #9*, Proyecto Integrado de Mercadeo Urbano Rural, Cali (PIMUR),

Colombia. 1970 - “Information and Communication” (pp. 328-337 in *Market Coordination in the Development of the Cauca Valley Region – Colombia*, Research Report No. 5, Latin American Studies Center, Michigan State University). On completing my Master’s thesis I travelled to Colombia and was lucky to land a research assistant position from 1968-69 on the Integrated Rural-Urban Marketing Project conducted by Michigan State University. PIMUR was of special importance to me as this is where I met Sonia Gomez Naranjo in 1968 and, within a year, married her on August 30, 1969.

- **1969** - “Agricultural Extension and Education in Developing Countries” [pp. 326-351 in R. Weitz (ed.), *Rural Development in a Changing World*, M.I.T. Press, 1971. Also available in Spanish as “La Extensión y La Educación Agrícolas en Los Paises en Desarrollo,” Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical] - I am particularly proud of this paper as it was co-authored with my father, Francis C. Byrnes, as lead author, although I did much of the research for and drafting of the paper during the period I worked on the PIMUR project.

- **1975** - *A Construct of Social Action for Small Farmer Agricultural Development* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Iowa State University) - My dissertation provided a sociological analysis of the Puebla Project in Mexico, analyzing it from the perspective of the Social Action Model earlier developed by George Beal and colleagues at Iowa State University.

- **1980** - “A Social Action Perspective on Small Farmer Agricultural Development” - While working with the International Fertilizer Development Center, I had the opportunity to recycle a chapter of my doctoral dissertation into this paper that I presented in Mexico City at the V Rural Sociology World Congress.

- **1980** - “Content, Criterion, and Construct Validation: Alternative Approaches to Validity Assessment of the Guttman-Type Scale of Community Differentiation,” *Comparative Rural & Regional Studies* (Occasional Paper 2: Research on Rural Structure) - This paper was originally written as a term paper for a Iowa State University research methods course and turned out to be the first – and until recently only – paper that I wrote that was published in a professional journal.

- **1981** - *Diffusion and Adoption of Innovations in Fertilizer-Related Agricultural Production Technology in Developing Countries* – My first task on joining the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) was to prepare a review and analysis of the research literature on the adoption and diffusion of innovations in agricultural production technology in the developing world. This review was inspired by the earlier *Diffusion of Innovations* (1962) literature review and seminal book by Everett Rogers whom I had studied under while an undergraduate student at Michigan State University.

- **1982** - Served as the program manager (Indonesia) and the assistant program manager (Bangladesh) in two IFDC fertilizer marketing training programs, including serving as the leader for IFDC’s *Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation*. A year later, in 1983, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations invited me to conduct the *Alpha Fertilizer Marketing Simulation* in Pakistan as a component of the Fertilizer

Marketing Management Training Program sponsored by FAO and Pakistan's National Fertilizer Development Corporation (NFDC).

- **1985** - "The Potential Role of Farmer Organizations in Increasing the Productivity and Income-Earning Capability of Small-Farmer Agricultural Systems in the Developing Countries: A Concept Paper" - This was the first paper I wrote for USAID after coming to Washington, DC in late 1984. Based on this paper I wrote a prospectus for a research project that was included in a subsequent Congressional Budget Justification; however, USAID decided not to proceed with funding the project because the Agency already was funding the Communication for Technology Transfer in Agriculture (CTTA) project.

- **1986-1992** - Participated in 8 Management Communication for Development Seminars conducted as a Management Training and Development Institute (MTDI) associate, with several of these seminars conducted in Spanish based on my work to translate seminar training materials from English into Spanish.

- **1988** - "A Review of AID Experience: Farming Systems Research & Extension (FSR/E) Projects--1975-1987" (pp. 363-368 in *Contributions of FSR/E toward Sustainable Agricultural Systems. Proceedings of the Farming Systems Research/Extension Symposium 1988*. Farming Systems Research Paper Series Paper No. 17. University of Arkansas/Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development) - At this symposium, the organizers scheduled my presentation as one of two to be given by speakers during lunch on the symposium's first day. As the review's findings and conclusions were a bit critical of work in the FSR/E field, I prefaced my remarks by apologizing that I wasn't sure whether the audience, as they were eating lunch, would find what I had to say harder to swallow or harder to stomach. A couple of years later, in 1990, my assessment of USAID's support for FSR/E projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America was published by USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation as *A Review of AID Experience with Farming Systems Research and Extension Projects* (AID Evaluation Special Study No. 67. Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development).

- **1991** - "Problemas en la Sostenibilidad de Sistemas Tecnológicos Agrícolas en América Latina y Opciones para el Futuro" (pp. 87-103 en *Memorias del Primer Simposio Nacional. Agricultura Sostenible: Una Opción para el Desarrollo sin Deterioro Ambiental*. Montecillo, México: Comisión de Estudios Ambientales, Colegio de Postgraduados y M.O.A. International) - It was a surprise when I received invitation from USAID/Mexico to participate in this symposium and give a talk on constraints to sustainable agricultural technology systems. Even more surprising was learning, on arriving at the site of the symposium, that my presentation was scheduled as the keynote address to kick off the morning session.

- **1992** - "De la parcela melonera al puesto de mercado: cómo aprendieron a exportar un cultivo no tradicional" [pp. 105-130 in Mendizábal, Ana Beatriz and Jurgen Wëller, *Exportaciones Agrícolas No Tradicionales del Istmo Centroamericano: ¿Promesa o*

*Espejismo?*, Temas de Integración y Desarrollo 2. Panamá, República de Panamá: CADESCA-PREALC (OIT)] - This was a contributed book chapter and translation of an earlier paper reporting on research I carried out in the late 1980s for USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation, focusing on the experience of entrepreneurs in learning how to grow and export melons as a non-traditional crop. All of that research is reported in "Central American Melon Exporters: 22 Case Studies to Accompany 'From Melon Patch to Market Place: How They Learned to Export a Non-Traditional Crop'" (1991).

- **1992** - *Water Users Associations in World Bank-Assisted Irrigation Projects in Pakistan* (World Bank Technical Paper Number 173) - This publication was the result of spending a good part of the summer of 1987 interviewing farmers on the watercourses of three of Pakistan's four provinces. This opportunity came about because World Bank sociologist Michael Cernea had favorably reviewed my 1985 paper on "The Potential Role of Farmer Organizations in Increasing the Productivity and Income-Earning Capability of Small-Farmer Agricultural Systems in the Developing Countries: A Concept Paper."

- **1992** - *A Cross-Cutting Analysis of Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education (Ag REE) in A.I.D.-Assisted LAC Countries—Volume I: Technical Report*; *Volume II: Annexes* - This was the first desk study I undertook when I joined Chemonics in 1989 as the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Advisor on the USAID-funded Agriculture and Rural Development Technical Services (LAC TECH) Project.

- **1994-2012** - *Organizational Management for Sustainability (OMS) Workshop* - This was a three-day workshop for developing country NGOs that I designed and conducted thirteen times in eight countries — once in English in Jamaica (1995) and twelve times in Spanish: 1994 (Peru), 1995 (Dominican Republic, Peru, Honduras, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and twice in Colombia); 1998 (Dominican Republic); 1999 (Colombia); 2007 (Nicaragua); and 2012 (Paraguay). My work in this area for USAID proved to be pioneering in that it preceded the emphasis that the Agency later placed on Local Capacity Development (or Local Solutions) during the administration of President Obama.

- **1995** - "Organizing and Financing Sustainable Agricultural Research in Latin America and Caribbean Private Sector Non-Profit Organizations" – This study, co-authored with Susan Corning, known as the Sustainable Private Agricultural Research in Latin America and the Caribbean (SPARLAC) study, was based on four case studies of private sector-based agricultural research programs in Jamaica (Jamaica Agricultural Development Foundation), Ecuador (FUNDAGRO), Colombia (FEDECAFE), and Chile (Fundación Chile). What I learned about some of these organizations was recycled into developing a case study on a hypothetical NGO (FAMA) in a hypothetical LAC country (Marisol). This case study became the core of the OMS workshop.

- **1995** - "La Extensión Agropecuaria Mundial:  Desafíos y Oportunidades" ("Agricultural Extension Worldwide: Challenges and Opportunities") - Presented at the *Foro de Discusión y Análisis sobre Investigación y Extensión Agropecuarias* (Agricultural

Research and Extension Discussion and Analysis Forum) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, this paper was written in response to a request by the Government of Mexico. I was honored in being the only "gringo" invited to speak at the forum.

- **1996** - *Technology Institutions for Agricultural Free Trade in the Americas (TIAFTA): A Study on Agricultural Production Trends and Institutional Dynamics within the Evolving Western Hemispheric Free Trade* Region - This report was co-authored by David D. Bathrick, John G. Stovall, Kerry J. Byrnes, and Donna R. Podems.

- **1998-2005** - In 1998, in the wake of the destruction that Hurricane Mitch (October 29 to November 2) wrought in Central America, I wrote a speech for Mark Schneider who at the time was the Assistant Administrator of USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean. The speech, titled: "From Hurricane Destruction to Hemispheric Prosperity--Looking beyond Short-Term Relief and Longer-Term Reconstruction," was delivered on December 8 at the 22nd Annual Miami Conference on the Caribbean and Latin America. While not enthusiastic about writing speeches, the next Assistant Administrator, Adolfo A. Franco, apparently liked the first speech I wrote for him and came back several times with a request to draft a speech. Each time I tried to find a way to hook the speech's introduction to the venue at which the speech was to be presented:

    - "A Toast to Trade & Investment: USAID Trade Capacity Building Initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean" (presented at a meeting of the Distilled Spirits Industry, Washington, D.C., May 9, 2002).

    - "Harnessing Free 'Trade Winds' from 'Economic Hurricanes': Strengthening Central America for Trade and Investment" (presented at the launch of the negotiation of the U.S.-CAFTA Negotiation, January 8, 2003).

    - "Sewing Trade Capacity Building, Reaping Hemispheric Prosperity: An Idea Whose Time Has Come" (presented at the Association of American Chambers of Commerce in Latin America (AACCLA), Washington, D.C., May 8, 2003).

    - "Building Trade Capacity, Strengthening Trade Corridors: USAID's Role in Fostering Hemispheric Trade and Integration" (presented at the 26th Hemispheric Congress of Latin Chambers of Commerce and Industry, April 27-30, 2005).

- **2001** - "Farmer Organizations: Tapping Their Potential as Catalysts for Change in Small-Farmer Agricultural Systems" [pp. 209-228 (Chapter 13) in Frank L. Brewer (editor), *Agricultural Extension Systems: An International Perspective*, North Chelmsford, Massachusetts: Erudition Books] - This paper was a shorter version of the 1985 paper on farmer organizations that I wrote after starting my job with USAID in 1984.

- **2002-2008** - "LAC Trade Matters" - From 5/17/02 to 12/15/08, I produced 60 issues of this newsletter about trade, development, and trade capacity building in Latin America and the Caribbean. The newsletter's origin was a request by Adolfo Franco, Assistant

Administrator for the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), to ensure that staff of USAID Missions in the LAC region were kept apprised of trade capacity building (TCB)-related issues and resources in connection with negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and subsequent FTA negotiations with Central America, the Dominican Republic, and the Andean countries (Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru). The newsletter was recognized by USAID as a "best practice" and, in 2004, I received the USAID Meritorious Honor Award ("For increasing Agency awareness on free trade and improving the quality of USAID support for trade capacity building assistance").

- **2005-2006** – During this period I collaborated with Dr. Jerry Haar, Florida International University, to develop the Small and Medium-size Enterprises Center of Excellence (SMECE) to provide small- and medium-size enterprises from Central America with an innovative training experience combining on-line learn learning, a classroom-based workshop, field visits to Miami-based export-oriented enterprises, and professional evaluation of business plans developed by workshop participants.

- **2005-2014** - During the last decade of working with USAID, I played a lead, technical support, and/or activity manager role in developing and managing several assessments carried out by consultant teams including:

    - An assessment of constraints to trade-led agricultural diversification (T-LAD) in Central America (conducted by David D. Bathrick under contracts with two consulting firms – Carana and Chemonics);

    - An assessment of constraints to and development of a strategy to advance food security in the LAC region (conducted by Roberta van Haeften under the Equitable Growth Best Practices Project with Chemonics);

    - An assessment of constraints to "doing agribusiness" in three countries (the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Honduras) participating in the U.S.-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) (conducted by Robert Landmann and colleagues under a contract with Segura Consulting);

    - An assessment of constraints to the growth of the horticulture sector in Central America (conducted by Alonso Gonzalez and Tito Livio Zuniga under a grant to the University of California - Davis); and

    - An assessment of constraints to competition in the food security-related markets in Central America (conducted by the Federal Trade Commission).

- **2013-2014** - During my last year with USAID, I coordinated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Food and Drug Administration to develop the "Food Safety and Agricultural Sustainability Training (FAST)" project that USDA began implementing in 2014 to help countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region to prepare for the FDA's implementation of the 2011 Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA),

- **2014** - Also during my last year at USAID, I wrote “USAID Assistance to Agriculture and Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: Origins, Evolution, and Reflections” to share with the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the Bureau of Food Security, and USAID more broadly a retrospective on the Agency’s support to agriculture and rural development in the LAC region.

Readers interested in any of the aforementioned reports can contact the Agricultural Communications Document Center (ACDC) to access documents of interest. A listing of my professional papers archived in the ACDC can be reviewed at the following link.

Generally, over the years, work at my desk fed into assignments in the field or, similarly, what I learned while working on short-term assignments in the field would feed into and help inform work that I carried out back in the office and, in some cases, provided ways to share experiences across countries and from USAID Mission to USAID Mission.

As the date certain (9/30/14) for my retirement drew near, I decided to go ahead and update my LinkedIn profile to read: “Retired but Occasionally Consulting.” Before finally reaching a decision earlier that year to retire, I sat down with a sheet a paper and drew a line down the middle of the sheet, titling the left column “Reasons to Retire” and the right column “Reasons to Continue Working”. It didn’t take long to fill up the left column with more than a dozen reasons to retire. I then turned my attention to filling in the right column, writing as the first item “paycheck every two weeks.” This, of course, would be an important reason to continue working but then I sat there and could not come up with a second reason “to continue working” (i.e., in effect, “to not retire”).

Further, looking at my list and reflecting on trends with the LAC Bureau in which I was working and, more generally, within USAID, I could see that, for various reasons, it was becoming an uphill battle to try to continue working on development from within USAID. Indeed, having worked on development issues for over four decades, the feeling began to dawn on me that I had become a bit “burnt out” on development and that my time had arrived to move on to the next stage in my life.

One can catch a flavor of this in my memoir (*Giants in Their Realms*) where I refer to “passing the baton” to the next or younger generation to carry on fighting the good fight for the development cause. But, as I was beginning to see, that spark or flame to fight was no longer in me. Indeed, perhaps others working in development also reach this point of a “burnt out” threshold as reflected in what a former colleague recently wrote to me in an email: “I have travelled a great deal the last year, giving speeches in various places both to communicate the results from…research and to talk about the world food situation. I am planning to stop that because it has no impact on anything” (Source: email from a former colleague).

This left me wondering what impact my career working the field of development had, in the large scheme of things, accomplished.

***What Did It All Add Up To?*** – It would be presumptuous of me to say, as in the Johnny Mathis song, "It's Not for Me to Say" (1957), what impact my career in agricultural and rural development had in improving the lives of millions of poor in the developing world. But some relief on this account came on reading what my peers wrote as a nomination to support my candidacy for USAID's Outstanding Career Achievement Award.

> For decades now, Dr. Kerry J. Byrnes has been a fixture of trade and agricultural development programming in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Even before coming to USAID as a USDA PASA in 1993, Dr. Byrnes had a long history of collaboration with the Agency, dating back to his days as a student in the 1960s and 1970s. Some of his earliest research, at Iowa State and Michigan State, was supported by USAID funding. In fact, over his 40-plus year professional career, nearly every one of his jobs has been linked to USAID. After nearly 20 years at the Agency as a USDA PASA, he converted to Foreign Service Limited in 2012 and, in a fitting end to his outstanding career, will retire as USAID Direct Hire employee at the end of September 2014.
>
> Dr. Byrnes has made his mark on USAID and the LAC region in a variety of ways. A search of the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) gives a sense of his prolific writing on a range of trade and agricultural topics in the LAC region and beyond. During the 1980s he made significant contributions to the Agency's knowledge base while working as a contractor for the USAID/PPC Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE). His technical pieces covered themes such as agricultural technologies, farming systems, and agricultural research, including a range of case studies that provided evidence of successful approaches to inform future USAID programming.
>
> By the time Dr. Byrnes entered USAID as a PASA, assistance for agricultural development had begun to decline, as he captured in his 1992 publication, "A Cross-Cutting Analysis of Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education in A.I.D.-assisted LAC Countries." While he provided valuable support to Bureau leadership and LAC Missions on agricultural development, he also demonstrated his proficiency in the area of trade capacity building. Over the years he made valuable contributions in the interagency context dealing with trade, including discussions around a proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and agreements like the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). Dr. Byrnes kept USAID/Washington and LAC Mission stakeholders up to speed on the evolving trade context through his quarterly *LAC Trade Matters* newsletter.
>
> While the focus of his work shifted largely toward trade capacity building, Dr. Byrnes continued to draw on his agricultural development expertise. He made insightful contributions by diagnosing and documenting how agricultural development intersected with free trade and impacted on important goals, such as economic growth and poverty reduction. In 1996, he co-authored "Technology Institutions for Agricultural Free Trade in the

Americas (TIAFTA): A Study on Agricultural Production Trends and Institutional Dynamics within the Evolving Western Hemisphere Free Trade Region." Demonstrating the longevity of his dedication to the field, Dr. Byrnes followed this 1996 study by shepherding a 2008 publication entitled "Optimizing the Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Benefits of CAFTA-DR: Accelerating Trade-Led Agricultural Diversification (T-LAD)."

Development work feels cyclical at times, as attention to a given theme ebbs and flows with changing administrations and events. Having witnessed a decline in attention to agricultural development during the 1990's and early 2000's, Dr. Byrnes found himself well placed to offer his expertise in the wake of the global food price crisis of 2007-2008. He was central to the early internal and interagency discussions that culminated in the launch of the U.S. Government's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative, Feed the Future (FTF). Within this fast-changing context of standing up a Presidential initiative, including a new USAID Bureau for Food Security, Dr. Byrnes was a welcome presence and steady source of advice and context for LAC Bureau leadership and Missions.

Reflecting on Dr. Byrnes' importance to USAID, a former LAC/RSD Office Director noted: "Since 2010, with the Feed the Future initiative, USAID has rediscovered the critical role that agricultural and rural development plays in poverty y reduction. But this 'rediscovery' did not happen by accident. Since the 1970s, Kerry Byrnes has been an unwavering voice for agricultural and rural development investments and has played a critical role in helping ensure the success of such investments in the LAC region." A current Mission Director in a Feed the Future focus country notes: "His insights into rural diversification helped forge high impact programs that are improving nutrition and creating higher incomes for people escaping poverty."

In one of his last major undertakings for the USAID LAC Bureau, Dr. Byrnes took the lead on establishing an interagency agreement with USDA to support LAC countries that export agricultural goods to the United States. With a new U.S. food safety law in place, this assistance will be critical to ensuring the LAC countries are able to comply with regulations and maintain access to the U.S. market. Thus, in a sense, this assistance will help safeguard years of earlier USAID investments in the LAC agricultural sector, which Dr. Byrnes helped to shape in so many ways.

Above all, Dr. Byrnes has been a respected and valued colleague to those that have passed through the LAC Bureau and LAC Missions over the years. A former boss refers to him as "one of USAID's strongest Latin American development officers." His presence will be sorely missed by many USAID staff, both personally and professionally. (Dated: 06-27-2014)

I had no awareness that anyone was writing such a nomination; indeed, it was a total surprise at my retirement party, 12 days before retiring from USAID, when it was announced that USAID was honoring me with, the Outstanding Career Achievement Award, the second highest award that the Agency bestows. Later, as I reflected on receiving this honor and with the clock ticking toward my retirement date of 9/30/14, the

lyrics of the song “It Was A Very Good Year,” first recorded in 1961 by Bob Shane but later popularized in 1966 by Frank Sinatra played in my mind:

*But now the days grow short, I’m in the autumn of the year*
*And now I think of my life as vintage wine from fine old kegs*
*From the brim to the dregs, and it poured sweet and clear*
*It was a very good year*

Those lyrics gave me pause to reflect that, for all the “brims” and “dregs” during my years working in development, from Michigan State University to Iowa State University; from living in the Philippines and Mexico to living in Colombia; from working for IFDC in Alabama for nine-plus years to a short-term assignment with the World Bank on the watercourses of Pakistan in 1987; from working 22 years with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (1993-2012) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (2012-2014) to scores of short-term assignments in the developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean over 40+ years; and during thousands of days, hundreds of months, and dozens of years, not always “sweet and clear,” perhaps my years working in development could have been more productive but nevertheless, in the end, “It was a very good career!”

***Keeping the Spirit for Development Alive*** – At the outset, I proposed that, a bit like Walter Cronkite’s *You Are There* (CBS Television 1953-1957), this chronicle invited you to go *on assignment with Kerry* to the various developing countries in which I carried out short-term assignments as part of either my regular “desk job” with various employers from Michigan State University to the International Fertilizer Development Center to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the U.S Agency for International Development – or through short-term contracts with various consulting firms or other organizations such as the World Bank.

While on those assignments, as summarized here, I summarized the range of tasks I worked on and shared glimpses of things that I saw or did, or that happened to me. Hopefully, what I’ve shared herein was sufficiently “real” to you as the reader that you felt almost as if “you were there” on assignment with Kerry!

Whether this chronicle left you as the reader with any real sense that “you were there,” that is, actually “on assignment with Kerry” is up to you as the reader, “the eye of the beholder,” to decide. However, I hope you have enjoyed this retrospective assignment covering 40+ years of my travels to and working in the developing world, including stops in 38 countries of East Africa, West Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, and North America (Canada, Mexico, and the United States).

Finally, while I may have become a bit “burnt out” on travel or, more importantly, on working in the field of development, leaving to upcoming generations to take on how best to address helping the developing countries to reduce poverty and become more developed, I don’t want to leave the impression that the challenges of development are any less important today than over the past half century. In this regard, I can’t think of a better way to conclude this chronicle than to share the reflections of my father, Francis C. Byrnes, on the importance of working in development. During his last decade of life, my father spent some of his spare time developing the outline for and starting to draft an autobiography he planned to title *Experiences in International Institutional Innovation*.

While many books on development authored by academics focus on “explaining” or “studying” development, what was to be unique about my father’s book was that it would focus on his career in “doing” development. The following shares highlights from a draft chapter Byrnes wrote in June 1993. In that chapter he focused on a question that family, friends, and colleagues often asked him: “Why do you continue to do what you do?”

> They ask: Don’t you realize what you do will make little difference in any of these countries unless…the leadership changes… they abandon their traditional ways… they start helping themselves instead of depending on us? What can you, as an individual, really do? Don’t you think it hopeless? These were and are the kinds of questions I frequently confront—in the community, with my neighbors, at church events, even while flying across oceans on international airlines.
>
> But we must realize that conditions in the world are not static. Things are changing. We can help trigger the change, sometimes. Other times, we must anticipate the change and be ready to act with the change. It is easier to guide something moving than one standing still. When I went to the International Rice Research Institute in March 1963, I, as were most people who met him, amazed by the enthusiasm, optimism, and vigor of Dr. Robert F. Chandler, Jr., the first IRRI director. Frequently, visitors would ask him: “Given the condition of the world and its peoples, how can you be so optimistic?” Always his reply would be quick, short, and courteous, “What would be the point in being pessimistic?”
>
> Sometimes I feel the public’s knowledge and attitudes about development stem directly from what they learn about development policies and activities through the mass media. There is a tendency to report the malfeasance of our representatives abroad, to chronicle the millions wasted on meaningless public works, the tons of relief food that fail to reach the starving, and the high jinks and mismanagement of foreign officials.
>
> But stories of successes are rare; not that successes are rare, but someone decides, as they do in the United States in stories about good news, that successes don’t make headlines, sell newspapers, or bolster the Nielsen TV ratings.
>
> When I have had the chance, and it has come my way on several occasions, to document in a popular way development success, the experience has been most memorable. I report one of these in my *No Turning Back* publication on small farmer development successes in

the Bicol area of the Philippines. Another is told in a recent booklet *When Farmers Take Charge*, this based on the success of the Sarhad Rural Support Corporation in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Neither of these would make headline news, but the success of these projects has radically changed the lives of the people in these areas and given new hope to those in others.

No, I'll never quit trying. There so many ways to become involved: You can identify a problem, conceptualize what might be done about it, and, if appropriate, set forth to do it; you can be given a problem statement or project description and develop a proposal to implement a solution, identify and recruit a staff, prepare the budget, and follow up as necessary; you can respond to invitations to go abroad on an assignment to prepare a project, appraise a project, or even evaluate one that is finishing.

But that is not all: You can organize and present courses and workshops to help those less experienced gain from your ups and downs and occasional insight; when all else fails, you can even write a book and hope some publisher will realize that out there is a fairly large readership who probably would derive some benefit from reading it.

Finally, life is never dull. People ask: "What do you really do as a consultant?" My usual answer: "Well, I'm like a fire department. When something is burning, some organization calls me immediately. I may be on a plane within hours. And, when things get dull, I may even start a fire here or there by raising a few burning questions in the right places."

It's not enough to have a suitcase, a briefcase, a laptop, and willingness to travel; you must keep your passport current, your inoculations up-to-date, your credit cards fully paid, and a few traveler's checks in your pocket. These days it's important to carry a current map, at least of the continent to which you are headed; but such maps rarely are available. As I said, things are changing. But rapidly. We must never quit trying." (Francis C. Byrnes, written in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on June 13, 1993)

***Conclusion –*** After some reflection on how to wrap up and conclude "On Assignment with Kerry," the thought came to me that perhaps this chronicle will be read by and most useful to those younger persons who aspire to pursue a career in development generally or even more specifically in agricultural and rural development – and along the way travel on their own for short- or long-term assignments to the developing countries of the Third World.

Thus, to make this chronicle even more relevant to that younger generation who may yet pick up the baton and pursue their own career in the field of development, I thought it would be helpful to provide those readers with access to an interview that I did some years ago to provide reflections on my career in development.

As God is my witness, I tried to answer the interview questions as honestly, helpfully, and humbly as possible but was totally surprised when the interview was posted on the Internet as "The Greatest International Development Job Handbook Ever."

How did this come about? On October 11, 2012, I was checking my messages on LinkedIn.com and read the following message sent by Codrin Paveliuc-Olariu:

> "My name is Codrin. We have been connections on LinkedIn for a while and our paths have crossed in the LAC through our organizations, but we never met unfortunately. I would like to interview [you] (via e-mail would be the easiest way) for the YPLD website [note: as of 2017 no longer active]. We have started a while back a new section called "Inspiring personalities"…where we interview different people that could make a difference in the life of young people (and, why not, in the world). Would you agree to answer to a few questions and to send us 2-3 photos? Usually we try to keep the interview to 5-6 questions so it won`t take too much of the respondent's time. Regards, Codrin"

I didn't immediately respond but several weeks later wrote back to Codrin to ask if he would send the questions to me for review and that I would let him know if I would be able to respond. On receiving the questions, I thought to myself that answering them would be a breeze; I'd just craft a few sentences to respond to each and be done with the task. After writing back to Codrin to let him know I would send him my responses, I turned my attention to answering each question. But, as I wrote, I began to remember things I thought would be of interest to a young professional aspiring to a career in the international development field. In the end, and after two close friends and colleagues–David D. Bathrick and Huntington Hobbs–provided feedback on my draft, I finally was able to answer the seven questions in only eleven pages! I wrote to Codrin to ask if he had any requirement that my answers not exceed some page length, telling him that my draft was eleven pages. When he wrote back that page length would not be an issue, I emailed the answers to him.

Several weeks later, Codrin responded to advise that the article had been posted online and was being promoted through social media. Unfortunately, the ypld.org website is no longer active. However, at that time, when I clicked on the link that Codrin sent, I was surprised to read:

> "**THE GREATEST INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT JOB HANDBOOK EVER** – For those interested in getting started in a career in International Development, we have the greatest career guide ever. We have interviewed USAID's Kerry Byrnes, Agriculture Development Officer with the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean."

The interview (slightly updated and edited) follows below.

**1. Your main specialization is Sociology. How did you become interested in agriculture and, more important, in international development?**

Several role models and life events influenced my interest in Agriculture and International Development. This story begins in East Lansing, Michigan in early 1963 where my father (Francis C. Byrnes) had just completed his Ph.D. in communication as a behavioral science and had accepted an offer from The Rockefeller Foundation to head the Office of Communication at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Los Baños, Philippines. My father's professional career in agricultural communication actually had begun 25 years earlier when he took a job working as the editor of a small-town newspaper in Iowa, following graduation from Iowa State University with a B.A. in journalism. Later, after serving in the Army Air Force, he took a job with Ohio State University to provide communication support to Ohio's agricultural extension service. Then, in 1953, he left OSU to take a job with Michigan State University (MSU) as the Deputy Director for the National Project in Agricultural Communications, which also led to earning his doctorate.

The family's move to the Philippines in March 1963 was my introduction to the developing world and the challenges of agricultural development. During the summer of 1963, I accompanied my father on a number of field trips that afforded opportunity to see lots of paddy rice fields and to gain a glimpse of life in the rural villages of a developing country. At the end of that summer, I returned the States to start my undergraduate studies at Michigan State University, deciding to major in Sociology. It so happened that the Department of Sociology was the university department that required the fewest credits being earned in one's major in order to graduate with a B.A. This opened the door – and provided the flexibility – for me to take elective courses in such diverse fields as history, anthropology, psychology, and communication.

During this period, a second role model was Dr. Everett Rogers who, like my father, had followed an academic path from ISU to OSU to MSU, but had arrived at MSU with a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to conduct a major research project on the adoption and diffusion of agricultural technologies in Brazil, India, and Nigeria. I learned about this study when I enrolled in Rogers' Communication of Innovations course that focused on the adoption and diffusion of agricultural innovations in the developing world. One such innovation – the IRRI-developed IR-8 "miracle rice" variety – would subsequently spark the Green Revolution in Asia in the latter part of the 1960s.

While studying at MSU, I started to consider the possibility of applying to the Peace Corps as a way to get into the field of international agricultural development. Interestingly, while my father worked with MSU, he also served as deputy director of one of the Peace Corps' first training programs, the graduates of which were assigned to Nigeria. As I neared graduation, I applied to and was accepted by the Peace Corps to train during the summer of 1967 for an assignment working in rural community development in Costa Rica. However, eight weeks into the training, the Peace Corps'

psychiatrist and psychologist deemed me unfit to serve as a Volunteer—and sent me packing home.

The experience of getting kicked out of the Peace Corps was a crushing blow that, fortunately, didn't kill my resolve to find a way to move forward. As a colleague recently put it, there are two lessons here: "don't let others define your career aspirations" and "push and define your own destiny." In practical terms, this meant that I had to find another way to get into the international development field—and, as a first step, decided to go back to MSU in the fall of 1968 to study for a M.A. in Communication while continuing to look for another opportunity to find a job in international development. Nearing completion of my M.A. thesis in the summer of 1968, I received a telex from my father who had recently been transferred by The Rockefeller Foundation from the Philippines to Colombia to assist in establishing the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) outside Cali in the Cauca Valley.

The telex informed me that MSU had recently won a project with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to conduct an agricultural marketing study in, of all places, Colombia's Cauca Valley. Coincidentally, I had been planning to visit my parents in Cali after completing my M.A. On learning of MSU's new project, I reached out to MSU's Department of Agricultural Economics – both at MSU and once I arrived in Cali (the site for the project's office) – to explore if it might be possible for me to work on the Integrated Rural-Urban Marketing Project (or PIMUR by its Spanish acronym). This led to an agreement that I would design and conduct a Market Information and Communication study as an integral component of the overall project.

Some highlights of my experience with the PIMUR project were the opportunity to work with professionals in other disciplines, notably agricultural economists; learning about agricultural marketing; and applying research skills (e.g., questionnaire design) that I had learned as a student at MSU. Then, in the late summer of 1969, I received a letter from Iowa State University's Department of Sociology and Anthropology offering me a research assistantship to study for a Ph.D. in sociology. I traveled to Ames, Iowa in the fall of 1969 to take up my doctoral studies at ISU through mid-1975. My period of study at ISU, however, experienced a 1.5 year interruption (mid-1970 to early 1971) as I set aside my doctoral studies program in order to serve as a VISTA Volunteer in a Miami community, where I taught English classes for Spanish-speaking and Haitian residents and also worked with young children in a local primary school Head Start program.

On returning to ISU in early 1971, I continued taking the required sociology courses but also statistics and economics courses, with a view to following in my father's footsteps to become a social science researcher at one of the International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs) such as IRRI or CIAT. One avenue I explored as I neared completion of my doctorate in 1975, was applying to The Rockefeller Foundation's Postdoctoral

Fellowship program that funded recent Ph.D. graduates to carry out research at one of the IARCs. But that option evaporated when I received a letter from The Rockefeller Foundation stating that, given my father's employment with the foundation, the foundation felt it would not be fair to grant me a fellowship—another crushing blow!

But, shortly thereafter, representatives of two IARCs – the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA in Nigeria) and the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC in Muscle Shoals, Alabama) – visited the ISU campus in search of candidates to fill social science research positions at each center. While the interviews with the center representatives went well and I was hopeful of receiving a job offer from IITA, it was IFDC that offered me a job to serve as the Center's Sociologist. After arriving at IFDC during the summer of 1975, I worked over the next 9+ years on various assignments, first in the Center's Agro-Economic Division and later in the Outreach Division, including numerous short-term assignments to various African, Asian, and Latin American countries.

A lesson here for a young professional aspiring to find a career in International Agricultural Development is to keep trying, to keep looking for job opportunities in this field, and, as colleague reflected, "try every door that you can" and "take every international experience that you can."

**2. You first worked in the private field moving then to the government sector, more specifically to USAID. How would you describe these two experiences?**

Over the years, folks often asked: "Do you work for USAID?" My reply: "No, but I try to!" This is because, until recently, my various employers were not USAID, although almost all the jobs I've held were funded by USAID, as the following examples illustrate:

- As a MSU graduate student, I served as one of the trainers in a couple of USAID-funded "Management Communication for Development" training courses (which course had been developed by my father during his early years with MSU);
- As an ISU graduate student, I worked on the USAID-funded "Indicators of Social Development" project, including writing a report on indicators of social development for the small-farmer agricultural sector;
- Working with IFDC for 9+ years under USAID and UNDP funding, including conducting a major literature review on adoption and diffusion of fertilizers and assisting with the development, conduct, and evaluation of the Center's training courses;
- From late 1984 to late 1989, working in Washington, DC as a consultant to private sector firms holding USAID-funded contracts to carry out research

studies, training courses, area assessments, project evaluations, etc., including a major study of USAID experience with Farming Systems Research and Extension Projects; and

- From late 1989 to mid-1993, working as the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education (AgREE) Advisor for a private firm – Chemonics International – on the USAID-funded "Agriculture and Rural Development Technical Services (LAC TECH) Project."

Near the end of phase one of the LAC TECH project, as Chemonics was beginning to prepare its proposal to bid on the project's phase two, I learned that USAID's Request for Proposal for phase two of the LAC TECH project did not include the AgREE advisor position. However, later that same day, I learned that USAID planned to place the AgREE advisor position under an interagency agreement that USAID had with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Once that position was advertised, I applied for it to Office of International Cooperation and Development in USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. On being hired under that interagency agreement in mid-August 1993, I worked as a USDA employee for the following 19+ years until 9/22/12.

While employed by USDA, I worked directly with the Broad Based Economic Growth team in USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (Office of Regional Sustainable Development). As Presidential Administrations – and USAID priorities – changed over the years, I worked on a range of development issues, including agricultural research, extension, and education; institutional strengthening of NGOs (developing a three-day Organizational Management for Sustainability training course); trade capacity building during the negotiation of various Free Trade Agreements with eight different Latin American and Caribbean countries; and, most recently, food security under the Feed the Future initiative – the U.S. Government's program in support of the Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative.

For various bureaucratic reasons, the end of my employment with USDA on 9/22/12 transitioned the very next day, 9/23/2012, into being hired by USAID under the Foreign Service Limited program as an Agriculture Development Officer – an employment option that I had initially explored when I had applied for employment with USAID over 40 years ago in the late 1960s or early 1970s. At that time, USAID sent me two different letters – "Congratulations, you are qualified to serve as an Agriculture Officer" and "Congratulations, you are qualified to serve as an Agricultural Economist." However, both letters continued: "Unfortunately, we currently do not have any openings but we'll keep your application on file." Now, 40 years later, there finally was an opening to hire on as a USAID employee. Now, when people ask if I work for USAID, I can truthfully answer: "Yes!"

One lesson to be drawn from the above is to “keep trying” as each job will provide opportunities to learn, gain experience, and expand your contacts, ultimately opening doors to new job opportunities.

**3. The work in international development presents many challenges, especially in regions confronted with natural disasters and very harsh socio-economic conditions such as the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region. Please share with us a few experiences that you remember most vividly.**

While the LAC region has made considerable progress on development over the years, many countries (or sub-regions thereof) must yet overcome various constraints to accelerating broad-based economic growth and reduction of poverty. While I once did work on a short-term USG interagency response to a natural disaster (1998’s Hurricane Mitch in Central America), the longer-term “disaster” in the LAC region is not one that is natural in origin but rather man-made, this “disaster” being that so many of the region’s countries are underinvesting in Agriculture, hence underexploiting the potential for Agriculture to serve as an engine or driver for economic growth and poverty reduction.

Addressing this challenge is a priority objective of the USG “Feed the Future” initiative which, in the LAC region, is providing agricultural and nutrition assistance in three countries – Guatemala, Honduras, and Haiti. However, as the recent book *Why Nations Fail* highlights, many LAC countries continue to be constrained by extractive political and economic institutions that put a hard brake on more inclusive economic growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development, unless reforms are made to remove anti-competitive practices (e.g., cartels that result in a lack of competitive pricing in fertilizer, transportation, food, and other markets). Looking to the longer term, climate change, as one recent article documented, is now threatening one million small-scale maize and bean producers in Central America. Just as Rome was not built in a day, Agriculture in the LAC region continues to offer many challenges that stand in the way of achieving sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.

Looking back over the past 50 years that I’ve been a student of or worked in the field of International Agricultural Development, there have been “highs” (the Green Revolution of the 1960s-1970s) and “lows” (the fuel and food price crises of the mid-1970s as well as those of the 2000s). In the Latin America and Caribbean region, some developing countries have experienced considerable development (e.g., Chile) while others have continued to languish (e.g., Haiti), a trend that is also readily observed in the diversity of development in the countries of Asia and Africa. As this trend likely will continue over the next 50 years, another lesson that can be drawn about pursuing a career in International Agricultural Development is the following -- Sometimes it will be thrilling. Sometimes it will be scary. Sometimes it will be frustrating. But, ultimately, it will always be rewarding.

**4. In international development and, especially, in agriculture and rural development, work never ends. What would you say to a young professional entering this field?**

What would I say to a young professional entering this field? Below are some of the responses that come to mind:

- First, seize the earliest opportunity to get out into the field as quickly as possible. There is no substitute for obtaining as soon as possible whatever experience you can obtain living and working in a developing country. For example, over the years, I've observed that many returned Peace Corps Volunteers have used the experience that they gained working in the Peace Corps as a springboard for earning a graduate degree and then going on to work in international development in Agriculture (or other development fields such as health, education, or environment) in a variety of employment settings. Remember that the challenges to achieving accelerated agricultural and rural development are not limited to the LAC region but are also present in many countries of Africa and Asia.

- Second, as an aspiring young professional, figure out if you are more interested in generating new, science-based knowledge (in which case, build your engagement with development on a foundation of doing university-based research, teaching, and outreach) or in solving real-world development problems. In the latter case, there is a wide range of potential employment opportunities in development, ranging from donor country government agencies; international and developing country NGOs; for-profit consulting firms; regional and multilateral banks; and even private sector (commercial) firms seeking to expand into developing country markets, demonstrate and practice corporate social responsibility, and explore and enter into public-private partnerships or alliances for win-win sustainable delivery of public and private goods and services.

- Third, keep in mind the advice given by my father's doctoral committee chair – pursue every opportunity to get as much education and diversity of work experience as possible until you turn 40, as this is the best way to build a solid mix of technical knowledge and practical work experience, information processing skills, and interpersonal communication abilities (e.g., to work in teams). Then zero in on identifying the job or career that you want to pursue over the next quarter century – or longer!

At the same time, along the way and at least up to when you turn 40, periodically revisit and answer the following three questions which my father always offered to young

professionals seeking career development advice. Try to answer the first before going to the second, and the second before going to the third:

1. If you could have your wish, what work would you **like** to be doing 10 years from now?

2. Looking at your situation (e.g., currently as a student or as an employee of the organization where you currently are working), what do you **expect** that you will most likely be doing 10 years from now?

3. Looking at your current situation, what do you **fear** that you will most likely be doing 10 years from now?

It is said that there is nothing that so focuses the mind as the thought of one's own execution on the morrow. If, as a young professional, you reflect on these three questions, it is likely that your answers will motivate you to develop – or revise – your career development plan and rededicate yourself to vigorously implementing the plan.

- Fourth, as a former USAID colleague once told me back in 1985, also consider the following three questions (variations on the above three questions):

    1. What kind of work do you want to do?

    2. Where do you want to do this work?

    3. Who do you want to work with to carry out this work?

If you can get a job meeting your answer to one of the questions, you will be lucky! If you can find a job meeting your answers to two of the questions, you will be very lucky!! And, if you can land a job meeting your answers to all three questions, you will be extremely lucky!!!

- Fifth, over the course of a career in International Agricultural Development, you will have an opportunity to "make a difference." Early in your career you will have the opportunity to impact dozens of lives. As you move up in experience and responsibility, you will impact hundreds of lives or even thousands or more. This is a career worth pursuing.

**5. In the past years, interest in agriculture and international development among young people decreased dramatically. How could we motivate young professionals to get involved in this field?**

During a seminar held at a major U.S. Land Grant University, my father asked how many of those in attendance – students and professors – work in Agriculture. He was surprised by how few in the audience raised a hand. So he then asked: "How many of

you eat food each day?" Of course, everyone raised a hand! The point, of course, is that Agriculture impacts on our daily lives in so many ways.

Last night I was looking on the Internet at some web pages providing information on how many merit badges have been discontinued by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). One badge, discontinued in 1975, was the Corn Farming badge I had earned back in the early 1960s on my trek to becoming an Eagle Scout. As I reviewed the list of discontinued badges, it became clear many were Agriculture-related, including:

> Agribusiness (discontinued in 1995); Agriculture (1975); Animal Industry (1975); Bee Keeping (1995); Beef Production (1975); Botany (1995); Citrus Fruit Culture (1952); Cotton Farming (1975); Dairying (1975); Farm and Ranch Management (1987); Farm Arrangement (1973); Farm Record and Bookkeeping (1958); Forage Crops (1975); Fruit Culture (1952); Gardener (1911); Grasses, Legumes and Forage Crops (1958); Hog and Pork Production (1958); Nut Culture (1954); Poultry Farming (1913); Sheep Farming (1975); Small Grains (1975); Small Grains and Cereal Foods (1958); Soil Management (1952); and Veterinary Science (1995), among a few others.

That the BSA would discontinue various Agriculture-related merit badges in the United States only reflects the transition of the U.S. economy away from being largely an agrarian society and toward becoming an economy in which Agriculture is only a small percentage of an economy now largely dominated by the industry and services sectors.

Along the way, many of those discontinued merit badges were renamed, replaced, and/or combined into new merit badges to keep pace with the times as America's population of youth eligible to become Boy Scouts became increasingly urbanized, although some of the newer badges fortunately still do have an Agriculture focus. However, even as modernization entails, almost by definition, that the percentage of a country's population working in agriculture declines, one should not lose sight that Agriculture in a globalized economy, especially when value-added agroindustrial processing is factored into the equation, continues to be a major engine for economic growth through primary production, value-added and agro-industrial processing, and agricultural trade in local, regional, and export markets.

Looked at in this light, today's Agriculture involves a more complex array of disciplines, not just food production but also food processing and packaging, food safety and food science, and the challenge – food security – so many developing countries yet face as a result of failing to invest in developing Agriculture as an engine for economic growth and poverty reduction.

Thus, considering a career in International Agricultural Development does not translate automatically into a "going into farming" career path. Numerous fields offer great

potential to contribute to Agriculture and Development, affording opportunities to have an impact on the challenging issues of our century. Let me cite three examples. (1) As land for Agriculture becomes increasingly scarce, there will be growing job opportunities in the field of how to use land most efficiently and sustainably. (2) As water for Agriculture becomes increasingly scarce, there will be growing job opportunities in the field of how to capture and manage water most efficiently. (3) As more and more of the food that we eat moves across borders, there will be growing job opportunities in the field of ensuring food safety. Further, new technologies are on the horizon or need to be developed for climate-smart agriculture. And, as small-scale farmers in the developing world struggle to diversify their land and labor away from subsistence agriculture and toward growing and marketing high-value crops, there will be various job opportunities entailing helping small-scale farmers to transition from tilling and harvesting their fields to meet their subsistence needs to running their farms as profitable, income-earning agribusinesses.

If you do not find International Agricultural Development appealing as a career, then the next time that your stomach is telling you it's hungry, remember that Agriculture is everything that has to take place to get your food from farm to fork, from plot to plate, and from stable to table. Surely, somewhere in the Agricultural Value Chain, there has to be a point of entry (a job) where you can earn a living, develop your career, and contribute to building the capacity of this planet to feed its population sustainably.

**6. What are the main challenges today in development activities? Should these be seen as obstacles for stopping these activities or should we consider them as motivation for future actions?**

As one might guess from my prior responses, there were a number of individuals along the way who inspired my interest in Agriculture and International Development—my father, Everett Rogers and, not the least of which, President John F. Kennedy whose leadership created the Peace Corps. It was Kennedy who said: "My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Without drawing a comparison that my father was a "Jack Kennedy," my biography does reflect in various ways that my father and others were role models who sparked my interest in a career in Agriculture and International Development.

I recall one discussion with my father that has always stayed with me. Back in the 1960s, when he was working at IRRI in the Philippines, he told me about a cocktail party discussion that he had the night before with another IRRI colleague—a discussion that touched on the above question. The colleague stated something to the following effect: "So much money has been dumped into trying to develop these countries and we're not any further ahead—look at how underdeveloped they still are!" My dad's

response –“That may be true but we can’t quit trying!” – a theme that I introduced in my response to question 1.

Any number of reasons that you or I can quickly list provide a clear rationale for staying the course – that is, to not “quit trying” on International Agricultural Development. These are what I call the BOBs – “The Bag of Bads” – the “Bads” that to one extent or another, in various combinations and guises, are present in many countries of the developing world, as follows:

- Headline hunger (lack of availability of food), Hidden hunger (lack of access to food because of low incomes and lack of purchasing power to buy the food that is available in a local market); and Hades hunger (the food insecurity that is resulting because of climate change and not being more effective to develop climate-smart agricultural technologies and climate-smart agricultural production systems);
- Long-term negative impacts of undernutrition – and inadequate health and education – on a child’s growth, health, and learning;
- Illegal migration;
- Drug and people trafficking;
- Gangs and violence;
- Environmental degradation;
- Destabilization (e.g., food riots); and
- Backsliding on democracy.

Further, these various “BOBs” in one way or another, directly or indirectly, are looming on our doorstep or even knocking at our own front doors or down the street in our local communities. For a more prosperous – and safer – world, “we can’t quit trying” to foster a more sustainable Agriculture in the developing world. Quitting is not an option!  And one key to the solution will be Agriculture.

If anything, the challenges are enduring, the needs pressing, the pressure for better answers overwhelming – and we are only going to be able to make inroads on these challenges if a new generation of smart, well-trained, competent, motivated professionals take up the baton to lead the next generation forward.

**7. What would you say to a young professional asking you for advice regarding possible career choice?**

If you are interested in a possible career in International Agricultural Development, read back through my answers to this article's questions. Ask yourself what you want to do with your life. Do you want to make money (well, we do need money to buy food and pay the rent) or do you want to make a difference? Do you want to see the world other than by joining a branch of your country's military? In what better field to "make a difference" and "see the world" than applying your education/training, knowledge/skills, and youth/energy to hook up with some type of public sector, private (for profit) sector, or nonprofit (not-for-profit) organization that, in one way or another, has an Agriculture-related development mission?

Once you've begun to define your target – in terms of technical area and type of organization – for a job in International Agricultural Development (or the development field more broadly), keep in mind the following three questions:

What are the three keys to successful marketing? **Answer:** Location, Location, Location!

> Looking back, I can see how both personal and professional contacts that I made along the way have played a significant role in opening doors toward future opportunities. To illustrate: In 1986 I worked in Panama on an evaluation of the USAID/Panama "Agricultural Technology Transfer (ATT) Project" that was being implemented by Chemonics International. While carrying out the evaluation, I met Albert "Scaff" Brown who was Chemonics' home office manager for the ATT project. I could not have anticipated then that Scaff would interview me just three years later in 1969 for the LAC TECH AgREE advisor position with Chemonics. In retrospect, I was in the right "location" – the right place at the right time – to meet Scaff as a result of working on the ATT Project evaluation for another firm (Ronco Consulting Corporation) that summer of 1986. Lesson: Try to find ways to be in the right place at the right time. How to be in the right place at the right time lies in my response to question 3 further below.

How do you get to Carnegie Hall? **Answer:** Practice, Practice, Practice!!

> Dr. Gordon Sabine, the MSU Vice-President who took the university to #1 among U.S. universities in recruiting National Merit Scholars in the 1960s, had a formula posted on his wall: "Luck = Opportunity Knocking + Being Prepared". While one cannot conjure up "luck," one can put in lots of hard work in order to "be prepared" for when "opportunity knocks." This goes back to my earlier comments about getting as much education and practical work experience as possible up until you are 40 before zeroing in how you would like to spend the last quarter century – or longer – of your professional career. When "opportunity knocks," it largely will be

how well you are prepared for the prospective job, in terms of having the requisite knowledge and skills, which will determine your chances of landing the job.

To illustrate: When my father interviewed with the Rockefeller Foundation for the job of Director of Communication at IRRI, he was apprehensive that he didn't know anything about rice. But IRRI didn't hire my father because of what he knew about rice but rather because of his knowledge of and practical work experience in agricultural journalism, communication, and training. Similarly, when Opportunity knocked on my door for a job as a Sociologist with IFDC, I didn't know anything about fertilizer. But IFDC told me that they could teach me what I needed to know about fertilizers—what they wanted me to do was to apply my knowledge of adoption and diffusion of agricultural technologies (earlier learned studying under Everett Rogers at MSU), my experience working on the PIMUR agricultural marketing study in Colombia, and my Ph.D. training in sociology (where my doctoral dissertation had been on The Rockefeller Foundation's Puebla Project to promote adoption of a high-yielding maize technology package in Puebla, Mexico) to the challenge of fostering increased adoption of fertilizer technologies in the developing world.

So hone your technical skills through Practice, Practice, Practice! The knowledge and skills that you learn and acquire as a student and the practical work experience you accumulate on the job chart the "map" for getting to Carnegie Hall – that is, they define the path that will play a role in determining the job opportunities for which you are qualified.

How do you hook up with the right job in Agriculture or International Development? In other words, how do you get "Opportunity" to knock? **Answer:** Network, Network, Network!!!

There are many organizations seeking to hire young professionals with the "right stuff" – check out these organizations' web sites for job postings – and keep checking back to see what Agriculture- and International Development-related jobs have been posted. Get to know potential employers through exploring their web sites – what is the organization's mission, how does the organization work toward achieving its mission, and what types of employment opportunities does the organization offer? Write a good resume geared to the job and organization you are targeting. Prepare a strong cover letter to present yourself and what you can contribute to helping the organization achieve its mission. Set up an appointment with the potential employer to "meet and greet" and "get to know one another" via phone, Skype, or best of all in person. Join and explore how to utilize social (professional) networking tools (e.g., LinkedIn.com). You can also Google such

terms as “international jobs” (http://www.internationaljobs.com/) or “international development jobs” (e.g., http://www.devnetjobs.org/).

Remember that the key to “Location” – being in the right place at the right time – is to “Network”! Stay in touch with personal and professional colleagues who can keep an eye out for and alert you to job opportunities that may be of interest to you – and that the key to “Luck” is “being prepared” when “opportunity knocks.”

# On Assignment with Kerry: Memorable Moments from 40+ Years of Travel to the Developing World







# On Assignment with Kerry: Memorable Moments from 40+ Years of Travel to the Developing World