

*Population and Reproductive Health
Oral History Project*

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Adrienne Germain

Interviewed by
Rebecca Sharpless

June 19–20, September 25, 2003
New York, New York

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Narrator

Adrienne Germain, M.A. (b. 1947) is president of the International Women's Health Coalition, an organization devoted to promoting women's health and rights in developing countries. She was a U.S. government delegate to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, as well as to the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Germain also worked at the Ford Foundation and the Population Council. <http://www.iwhc.org/who/staff/germainbio.cfm>

Interviewer

Rebecca Sharpless directed the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, from 1993 to 2006. She is the author of *Fertile Ground, Narrow Choices: Women on Texas Cotton Farms, 1900–1940* (University of North Carolina Press, 1999). She is also co-editor, with Thomas L. Charlton and Lois E. Myers, of *Handbook of Oral History* (AltaMira Press, 2006). In 2006 she joined the department of history at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas.

Restrictions

None

Format

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Transcript

Transcribed, audited and edited at Baylor University; editing completed at Smith College. Transcript has been reviewed and approved by Adrienne Germain.

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Transcript

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Sharpless Today is the nineteenth of June, 2003. My name is Rebecca Sharpless and this is the first oral history interview with Adrienne Germain. The interview is taking place in her office in New York City, as part of the Population Pioneers Project. Okay, Adrienne, thank you so much for giving me this time today. I'm really very grateful to you.

Germain Well, I'm happy to do it.

Sharpless What I'd like to do—I'm a historian, and historians always believe in context. So what I want to do is start at the beginning and ask you—tell me a little bit about yourself in your growing up years.

Germain I was born in San Francisco. We moved around quite often when I was small. My father was a hospital administrator and when I was about—oh dear, I don't know—I think six or seven, I guess, he was hospitalized with cancer, which in those days was treated like a communicable disease. It was a very stigmatized situation. Anyway, he recovered from it but then left my twin sister, my mother, and me in San Francisco and moved to the East Coast to look for a new job, which he ultimately he found. So we moved from the West Coast to the East Coast and moved several times again after

elementary school and then after high school.

So, we have a very small family. My parents were only children and their parents died young. I knew only two of my grandparents and not well. And then I have a twin sister. And this is a family who has no background in international travel of any kind. My mother became a psychiatric social worker. She went back to university after my father's cancer and ultimately finished her Ph.D. at Columbia and was a pathbreaker in her field.

Sharpless What's her name?

Germain Carol Germain.

Sharpless And your father's name?

Germain William. And my mother faced—I mention this because it becomes relevant to my own history—she faced enormous resistance and opposition from her professional community from the time of her dissertation forward, but mostly after she became a professor at Columbia. So for years she was very deeply opposed because what she tried to do in the psychiatric end of social work was to bring in what was, in those days, as I recall, a very popular [approach]—not popular, but a new—what do they call it? there's a term for it, but it was looking into the biology of human life and how human beings as organisms respond to their environment.

And in the crudest sense psychiatric social work was only and always focused on the individual and did not give much weight to the broader social environment in which the individual developed. Of course weight was given to the parents, but otherwise having this broader social context was not acceptable. Ultimately she made a breakthrough really and was

highly acclaimed and her books were translated ultimately into something like forty-four languages and they're still being used as textbooks and et cetera. But this was a very tiny family and very resource restricted.

Sharpless How old were you when your mother was doing her Ph.D.?

Germain I was—well, it would coincide—well, it came shortly after my father's cancer. She started when we were in New Jersey, when I was in the sixth grade, so I guess twelve. And she commuted to New York and my father commuted from New Jersey to New Rochelle, so we never saw them. We were the original latchkey children, sort of. And then it went in stages because she also had to work. Then we moved to Baltimore. My father took a new job and my mother worked and did her immediate—after she had finished her Ph.D., her first teaching [job was] at the University of Maryland. And I was in high school at this little town outside Baltimore, and then went to Wellesley, and my whole life changed totally.

Sharpless What happened?

Germain Well, first of all I left this very tight cocoon and in particular my twin sister.

Sharpless She didn't go to Wellesley?

Germain No, she went to Smith, which she shouldn't have done as it turns out because she hated the girls high school we'd been in, and to go to a women's college was foolish. And it turns out, I understood many years later, she did that because she couldn't bear being very far from me, but I didn't understand at the time.

So anyway, I went to Wellesley and a whole new world was opened up—you know, a vast diversity of people, total autonomy and

independence, and I just flourished. I loved it. And it was the famous class of '69, Hillary Clinton's class. And we were the last class, I would say, that was primarily educated in the old way of Wellesley, which was the expectation that, Yes, some of us would become professionals but all of us would marry and be upstanding community leaders and good wives. So you were given this very fine educational opportunity, but yet that was sort of the sense of life one had looking forward. And it was a time when they hadn't yet or they were just barely beginning to start cross registration with Harvard and MIT. So, it was really an ivory tower par excellence.

Meanwhile, the Vietnam War was raging around us. Poverty was totally out of control. Some of us did things like tutor disadvantaged children in Roxbury, which is Boston's Harlem, with no training and no tutelage. You know, looking back on those days, I was so—even though my family had had no resources I had lived in sort of a cocoon. Anyway, so, as I said, I loved the independence.

Sharpless To what extent would you say you had a social conscience when you went to Wellesley?

Germain Well, I grew up having a social conscience because both of my parents were in social work, so to speak. My father was a hospital administrator and my mother a social worker, and in fact we were brought up with a very strong ethic of doing good to others. And when I was younger, in fact, until I got to Wellesley, I had always thought I wanted to become a doctor. And then on reflection, as I thought about it, I realized that I didn't want to hold a life-and-death decision over someone else, that I really would not want to

be in that position.

So I majored in sociology. It was the time when Mr. Moynihan released his very controversial study of the black family and there was a broader set of work on urban development going on, which was all very new. And then Marshall McLuhan—*The Medium is the Message* sort of dominated in some ways the sociology that I learned. When it came to your junior year, if you were at the honors level, which I was, you could elect to do a thesis through—well, the normal way to do was the summer between your junior and senior year, but I had the opportunity through friends of friends to consider going to Peru. There was a household survey going on there being conducted by the University of Michigan and these friends of friends had a connection there. And I just thought that would be an interesting thing to do rather than library research. And Lima, as a city, was very much in the center of debates in sociology over patterns of urban growth. And so, I decided I would do my thesis about Lima, but have the possibility of working with these University of Michigan people.

So anyway, I figured out that if I left at spring break, I could actually stay all the way through till Christmas, so six months, and manage that. So I went out and I earned all the money and I made all the arrangements and I presented this as a neat package to my parents and said, “Isn’t this wonderful?” And they were horrified. It was really—my balloon was completely popped. I was devastated. I thought that they would think that this was wonderful. And that followed me for the rest of my years, in a sense that while they were always supportive and they were proud of my

professional work, they just couldn't understand why anybody would leave this country and go and do work with poor people, and so on, outside one's own country. So—

Sharpless What do you think the attraction to the Peruvian situation was for you?

Germain Well, part of it, as I said, is happenstance. There was no planning about this. In fact I haven't planned my life in any way and I didn't have ambition in that sense. And as I say, I was taking urban sociology courses and Lima came up and there were certain—it's hard for me to remember now. But there must have been at least crude versions of aerial maps in the study of urban sociology. We didn't have satellite photos in those days, of course—I'm talking '68. And I don't know, there was something very intriguing about it and I didn't have any other options that I could think of, except doing something in the library, which I could've done but wasn't—I just thought, Well, why not?

Well, I didn't speak any Spanish. I'd earned the money but not enough to live on my own. So, I took a room with a low-income family that turned out—

Sharpless So you did go?

Germain Oh, yeah, I went—the first time ever all by myself. Uh-huh. In those days you had to change planes in Miami, and while I was in the airport the news came on that Martin Luther King had been assassinated.

Sharpless And this was April of '68.

Germain Uh-huh, and I nearly turned around and went back. It was devastating. It was just awful. And in those days, and certainly in my own life, you just

didn't just pick up the long-distance phone and call anybody. So I just sort of sat in the airport and thought about this and decided that I would go ahead anyway. And then when I arrived in Lima, of course, I didn't speak the language and I had never been outside. I had no idea what was going on. And there was some sort of health check at the airport. I wouldn't remember now. Maybe they had a cholera outbreak or something. But it was a huge, long, enormous screening and the air travel, the two flights, had taken a lot of time anyway, so all I remember is being terrified and very bewildered.

And I somehow—I guess the people from Michigan had arranged for me to stay some place a couple of nights, and then, I don't remember how, I found this family to live with. And it was not too bad a commute to the Bureau of Statistics, which is where the Michigan project was. But it turns out that it was a very violent family and I ended up barricading my door every night. And to this day I can't eat papaya because all I was served—had for breakfast was this sort of mashed up papaya. There were really some very bizarre things. Anyway, there was no bus route but there were these *collectivos*, they're called, which are battered old cars and five or six people cram into them and you get off where you're going to get off. And of course I made many wrong turns to begin with, but it was fun.

So anyway, all this was hugely challenging, but what I spent most of my time doing was that I'd go out with the Michigan people as they interviewed, and a lot of the interviews were in the slums of Lima, the *barriadas*, but then a whole lot of it was in smaller towns and also rural

villages around the country. So I traversed the entire country.

Sharpless What were you doing since you didn't speak Spanish?

Germain I just tagged along and I listened and I have, as it turns out, not a bad ear. Of course, the Michigan people were very nice to me and they didn't mind translating and maybe in a way it was better that I didn't know the language because I have a tendency to ask a lot of questions, and so on. But what happened in this situation was observing so much. It was very, very intense. So all the senses were—never having been in any circumstance like this—were all stimulated and sometimes assaulted. And I took some time to climb to the top of Machu Picchu and to go to the Amazon, although some of the interviews were in the Amazon also, and had some unbelievable adventures.

But the point of all this was that—and I wrote a thesis in the end and it turned out that the household data were very interesting from that point of view, partly because the project included mapping of the *barriadas* in Lima. So, really there was a lot that I could use, with their permission, to write up this thesis. And it was fascinating, because it—

Sharpless I'm sorry, what was the title of the thesis and what was the name of the project?

Germain You know, I can't remember, but it has to do with spatial patterns of growth. And the core theory at that time—I'm trying to remember now, because I did something like this when I did my master's work and I just push it out of my brain. I have too much in my head. But as I remember, the core theory about urban growth in the late '60s was that it developed in concentric circles from a rich core, and that the pattern that they

theoretically expected to see—most of these studies were about cities in U.S., Canada, and Europe, but they expected to see the farther out you went, the poorer the population got. That was, as I recall, the theory.

And that wasn't how Lima was developing at all, [in] concentric circles, and furthermore, the core declined very rapidly as the wealthy or middle-class people began to move out to less populated places where they could have gardens, and et cetera. And then it didn't go in circles. It went in wedges. Lima is in a very particular sort of ecological location and that makes part of it very appealing and most of the setting very unappealing, actually. So, it was nothing groundbreaking, but I did end up critiquing these main theories of urban growth, and that was fun.

Sharpless

It strikes me [that] this is amazingly sophisticated for a twenty-year-old.

Germain

Well, I never think about things that way, actually. But this will probably come up later in the interviews because people say that, but I don't see it that way. I just sort of feel like, Well, if I can do it, anybody can do it. You know, it gets me into trouble. But what turned out to be the case, which I didn't realize then until I went to graduate school—I went back to Wellesley to complete my senior year. I decided at that time, as many of my friends also did, to marry the day after my graduation. And meanwhile, I had received and really not understood the value of it or anything else, but it becomes significant later. I hadn't applied for it—because you didn't apply for it—I had applied to go to a Ph.D. program at the University of California at Berkeley in sociology, and when they sent me the acceptance letter, they also sent me a five-year career fellowship, fully paid, with a living

stipend, which is unheard of, funded by the Ford Foundation. And I had no idea who the Ford Foundation was. And I said, “Oh, well, thank you very much. This will help a lot.” Because my husband didn’t have a job and the idea was we both wanted to be in California. And so we went back.

Sharpless Was he also going to graduate school?

Germain No, he had finished a master’s in business administration at Harvard and he, we thought, could get a job in San Francisco, which is where we wanted to be. And we didn’t really have resources. His family was in San Mateo, so we moved in with his parents in essence, which was a disaster. And I was commuting every day from San Mateo to Berkeley and then coming home at night and needing to buy all the groceries, cook all the meals, and iron the shirts, et cetera. This was really interesting.

Sharpless This was 1969?

Germain Uh-huh. And it didn’t go well at all, and I finally insisted that we leave and rent an apartment, which we found in San Francisco. And then just after doing that, he got a job offer in New York, and he came home and told me this and said that he accepted it. And something just cracked—I mean, not even consulting me. I was not a feminist—that’s another point about all this—not a conscious, not an understanding feminist. But it just was completely unfair and inappropriate. Here I was with a five-year scholarship and well started and really loving Berkeley and so on. But I thought I would go because having been raised the way I was I couldn’t even think divorce. So I dropped out at Thanksgiving and I took a job at Macy’s because—

Sharpless And this was the Thanksgiving of your first semester?

Germain Uh-huh. And I took a job in Macy's because my husband turns out not to have been a generous person and I wanted to be able to buy Christmas presents, and so I took this job at Macy's to earn money to buy Christmas presents.

Sharpless And you'd been married six months at this point?

Germain Yeah, not even, as of November. And we were supposed to leave—I can't remember if it was Christmas Day or New Year's Day, one of the two, and everything was packed up and all that sort of stuff and we moved to a hotel the last night, I guess. Well, there wasn't much to pack up. I mean we had very few things anyway.

And we got up very early the next morning to take the flight, and the alarm went off and I just realized, I'm not going. And he threw a fit, needless to say. Fortunately, my sister, by that time, had actually moved to Oakland, and she had a very close childhood friend in the hills above Berkeley whose parents were still there, and the father was a minister. And I just didn't know what to do. I had no idea what to do. So I called her and asked her to come get me. And what she did was she arranged with this friend's parents that I could stay with them until I could sort out something to do.

Sharpless Did he—

Germain And he left.

Sharpless He went on the airplane and went.

Germain Uh-huh, with no—I mean, just total umbrage and outrage. No sympathy, no nothing. I mean, how I married this man, I don't know, but it's life

experience. So it turns out that Sidney's father, this friend's parents, not only was a minister but that he had been, since our childhood, developed church-based housing for students, just across the street from campus. It was for undergraduates, but he arranged for me to have a space in a three-person room there. And it was run as a commune in the Berkeley days, with a common kitchen and all this sort of stuff. Well, being a private person and being, despite the condition of my office, a neatnik, this was really tough. But I said okay.

And I went to Neil Smelzer, who was a very prominent sociologist who had been my professor for several months, and I explained to him what had happened. And he was just wonderful. He said, "Well, we really have to reinstate your fellowship and we'll do that and so just carry on." And I said, "Well, okay." So I did that. And in that period then, I was taking a sociology course from a man who was doing path-breaking work in those days of research methodologies—has to do with participant observation and qualitative analysis. And for that course a major—

Sharpless

What was his name?

Germain

Well, you know, I'd have to go and look at it in my records. I just can't remember his name. It might come to me. And I think he's still there. I'm not sure. But anyway, that course required a major research project. And my friends, when they hear this story, they just think it's totally out of character. And in a way, I guess, it's out of my public persona, but it's deeply imbedded in my character, because what I decided to do was sort of like going to Peru.

Every morning and every evening and all during the day—these were the days of the Hare Krishna groups, and they do all their chanting and begging on the street, and so on, and their temple and house was right behind this housing that I was now in. So I heard them all the time and I became very curious about them because I just couldn't understand how clearly white, middle-class, young people my age and a little bit older could display themselves publicly this way. In other words, I couldn't figure this out at all and I was very intrigued. So, what I did was to decide I would study them.

Now, the only book at that time that had been written on people who choose to lead—what's the word I'm looking for? today we'd call it an alternative lifestyle, but, you know, whatever—was—the theory that existed at that time, and I think it was actually the title of the book that was written, “[A Theory of] Conversion to a Deviant Perspective” [Lorne Dawson, *Cults in Context: Readings in the Study of New Religious Movements*, Chapter 8]. And it analyzed members of very strict religious sects in the Midwest and it had a whole theory about how and why people joined such sects and then what happened to them after they did. And so, what I was going to do was to test this theory with the Hare Krishna.

And as earlier with the urban sociology concepts, it turns out that the Hare Krishna didn't fit this model in a very clear number of ways. And so, the paper that I ended up writing was then modification of the theory on the basis of the patterns of behavior among the members of this temple. And what was telling about it was the methodology, the participant

observation, was such that I attended the temple at all times—day and night, weekends, whenever I could as far as my classes allowed—and I told them from the onset that I was doing a paper for a course and I was interested and were they willing to receive me and they were.

I finally ended the study earlier than I had wanted to because it was obvious that it was becoming more and more distressing to them that I wasn't joining them—you know, months of attendance and so on. They just had this conviction that anybody who came that regularly and participated and so on would be converted to their world view. And that coincided with a time when they lost several members. So it was really a very difficult time for this group of people and I didn't want to exacerbate it, but I had also learned enough to be able to write a paper for this course. And people are amazed that I'd do something like that.

Anyway, then it was getting to be June and I still hadn't resolved anything with my husband and I still couldn't think about divorce and what I decided to do was to drop out again and go back and try the marriage again, to New York. So I started applying for jobs and the demography part of the sociology department was one of the leading demography centers in the States at the time and I studied with two of the leading people who had an enormous impact on my life, Judith Blake and Kingsley Davis. And ultimately they married, but at the moment I think they weren't married.

What also happened at Berkeley that had a profound impact was that I got caught up in the Kent State Cambodia Crisis of the spring of '70, and for the first time in my life was really deeply engaged in mass movement

political campaigning. I did door-to-door work for Ron Dellums. I was taking a public health course that meant that I was advising young girls in a blue-collar public health clinic who came in because they had or feared that they had unwanted pregnancies. And I did a lot of training in crowd control because I don't believe in violence and you may remember that after Kent State the violence was greatest on the Berkeley campus, short of Kent State itself. We had National Guard and state troopers and armed riot gear and the whole business.

And to this day I have trouble A, with crowds, and B, with armed riot police. So, I was the one who learned how to deal with mace, because it wasn't tear gas, it was mace. And I lived right on the main street, Bancroft, that comes down from International House and that's where a lot of the clashes between the students and military took place.

Sharpless Right there by the gate in Sproul Hall.

Germain Uh-huh, just up the block toward International House. So we all learned to carry wet washcloths, but we also learned techniques for crowd control and all. And I sort of got a political education in a hurry, in the sense that I was very idealistic. But when the students started throwing stones and becoming violent, that was when I thought, That isn't my way. Plus—

Sharpless Let me turn—

Tape 1, side 1, ends; side 2 begins.

Germain Well, the sociology department, along with the psych department, was the most radical in its antiwar stance. And the sociology students, including the graduate students, many of them, demanded that the university agree that

everyone should be given blanket pass grades so that they could go out and do their political work. And I was horrified by this. I thought, That is really outrageous. Because here I am doing all this protesting and stuff, going door to door for Ron Dellums and counseling kids in this clinic and doing my coursework and that's fine, but you don't get a blanket pass grade. I mean, that was—and Neil Smelzer was a leader on the faculty side saying that, Look, I'll make every accommodation possible. We'll meet in my home, we'll do whatever you want, but no blanket passes. And I really respected him for that.

Kingsley Davis and Judith Blake, on the other hand, didn't give into the blanket pass but instead of being all accommodating, they insisted, despite the student threats, that their courses be held on campus until the day that Judith Blake waltzed into the class late—a big lecture hall. She's wearing her mink coat. She's just come across from San Francisco or something. She always had nail polish and the whole number—in Berkeley, imagine. And she sort of drapes this mink coat across a chair and walks to the podium and says, “Well, right, our subject for today is”—and at that moment the students—this was a pit-type lecture hall going from—the top level of it was just above ground level, an old building right in that open area beyond the gate.

And just at that moment all hell broke loose between the National Guard and the students outside in Sproul Plaza. And lots and lots of rocks were thrown and the police were throwing mace and all that was coming into our lecture hall. And Judith just stood there and kept lecturing. It was

unbelievable, truly. And finally when we were all coughing and choking, we sort of rose and left the hall and she stayed there. It was really—it was just so characteristic, anyway.

So I finished the nine months and all and applied to several places in New York to try to find a job, thinking that I'd try to make the marriage work and maybe some day I would come back and complete the degree or whatever. I set up interviews with the Ford Foundation—which again, I had sort of not registered or forgotten that my fellowship was paid by the Ford Foundation—and the Population Council, largely because of its name, and maybe Planned Parenthood. I actually don't remember.

That was a terribly hot, sweltering summer in New York where we had what were called heat inversions, because of the pollution. And I arrived and my husband had just then taken a consultant assignment up in the back and beyond in rural Massachusetts and he expected me to go, which I did, and to stay in this dreadful motel day in and day out all day by myself while he was doing his consultant work. Anyway—and so from there I had to travel down to have these interviews, which I insisted on doing. He didn't want me to do it, but I insisted.

Sharpless

He wanted you to be a stay-at-home wife?

Germain

Well, it seems that that's what he did. And, you know, I didn't know enough in those days to actually put that in front of him. Because I—my assumption had always been that I could use my intellect and do useful work. I mean, it wasn't like I ever thought about being a stay-at-home person. You know, not that I had a plan in mind, but it was just in my

nature, I guess. I don't know.

But the reason I mentioned the heat is that I, of course, I didn't have any money and he was so stingy. So I come in on public transport, and I don't know, I somehow find my way to the Ford Foundation. We have a heat inversion and I don't know if you've ever seen the building, but in those days it was fairly new and it was a full block and two sides of it are building and the other two sides are glass walls that encase an internal garden and it's a glass roof, and it won all kinds of awards and so on, and it's eleven stories high and heavily, heavily air conditioned. Those were the days before any notion of conservation existed. Can you imagine air conditioning a twelve-story atrium? But I walked into the air conditioning and I passed out.

So, needless to say, the interview didn't go very well. And the one thing that I remember about it was that a man who later became quite important was interviewing me and he looked at me and he said, "Well, now, I really don't think that we can even consider you for this job because you're married." I said, "Oh?" He said, "Well, yeah. You'll just work with us for a year or two and then you'll go and have babies." I said, "Oh?"—not knowing any better.

Sharpless

It probably wasn't even illegal then to say that.

Germain

It wasn't illegal. So, you know, that I remember. And the other thing I remember was a question which I've used again and again many times in my life, which was, he said to me, "If you had two million dollars to spend in the population field, how would you spend it?" which, of course, is

something I didn't even think about because I didn't really know who the Ford Foundation was or what they did in the world or anything else.

But the interview at the Population Council went better, and John Ross, who was a leading person in the family planning program evaluation arena, hired me as—I don't remember what I was called—a research associate maybe, or something. And I was so thrilled with myself. My husband was horrified—told me I couldn't accept the job because they were going to pay me nine thousand dollars and we'd end up paying more tax or something. Well, that and a few other things pushed me over the edge and I decided, Okay, this isn't going to work.

So, my family was totally against a divorce, but I thought, Okay, so I went to the yellow pages, and I want to tell you I went through the most horrific experience. In those days, divorce lawyers—the law in New York was very strict. You either had to prove adultery with photographs or witnesses or you had to prove physical harm, and neither of those were the case. And I finally called up some social welfare agency—to this day I can't remember what it was—not that I was eligible, but I said to the woman on the phone, I said, “I'm absolutely desperate. I've been to four of these people and it's clear that”—I mean, I couldn't say these words in those days, but these guys were the worst of the sleazebag types. I mean, I just knew I was physically—possibly in danger. And in the most dreadful offices. It was just so awful.

And I said, “This is what I've been through and can't you please recommend—you must recommend for some of your clients,” or

something. Said, “Oh, we can’t do that. It’s against our policy.” I said, “Please, I prevail on you just as an individual. I promise you, I just need to be referred to somebody who won’t hurt me.” So she gave me the name of somebody who wasn’t as bad as the others and I managed to get through it, but I basically went to Mexico and was one of the last people to get a legally recognized divorce in Mexico. And to this day I don’t remember the trip, making it or what happened or coming back.

But then I found a small basement studio on the East Side and took that and the job and paid more than half my salary for the rent, but it was a place that, although it was on a street at the basement level, it was in a townhouse and I felt safe with the family there. So I walked to work every day. I just did things that were free in the city. There were a lot of things like that in those days. And I had such a limited budget to buy food because so much of money was going into rent, but I managed.

And they were doing two things at the Pop Council in those days. One was something called the postpartum program. Somebody had the idea—I wish I could remember their names now, but there were two leading family planning men who’d come up with this idea that the postpartum period, immediately after a woman gave birth, was a very good time to approach women about contraception. So they had this worldwide, multi-country study. I think it was probably AID-funded, so Rei Ravenholt might or might not refer to it—called the postpartum program. And it was all staffed by men.

There were only two other women in the Population Council in

professional positions when I arrived. And then John Ross was beginning the first of what became annual, and later on maybe every two years, but very regular analysis of national family planning programs. Many of them had started—well, '52, India was first and then there were others. Thailand, there was Taiwan, and they gradually became more and more. But they started really in the '60s.

Sharpless

So these would be programs of countries outside the United States who had national programs?

Germain

National meaning governmental. And most of them were in Asia, with large populations and high rates of population growth and areas where demographers had focused on. And so, I was basically a research assistant for John Ross's family planning program evaluations, which just collected mountains of all different kind of data. And these were the days before computers, except I guess in the military and fancy science labs, because I can still remember the day that the Population Council's first computer arrived—this huge machine the size of this room.

Anyway, I'm trying to remember now when this happened, but basically what struck me about all this—and again, it hit my sense of fairness and justice, somehow—these colleagues of mine there, the men in the Population Council and their writings, never referred to women as real people. They referred to contraceptive acceptors or users or postpartum cases. You know, it began to grate on my nerves after a while, because even when I was studying with Judith Blake and Kinsley Davis, I kept having these imagines of the women in Peru and what their lives were like.

And then after a while another serious injustice came to my view, which was, in those days contraceptives weren't as good as they are now, and they still aren't very good. And basically we were asking women to have fewer children using imperfect methods of contraception and I thought that we should provide abortion services or somehow support abortion services for those women whose contraceptives failed.

Sharpless Do you mean Pop Council or women?

Germain Yeah, we the field, we anyone. This was pre *Roe v. Wade*, of course. But I just—law doesn't matter that much to me. From my point of view, how could we morally ask women to take the risk of using contraception, of having fewer children, when clearly their life circumstances demanded that they have as many children that they could bear and not enable a woman who had an unwanted pregnancy to end it? I mean, to me this was just inconceivable, so I started getting into debates, including a famous one with the president of the Population Council, whose name was Barney Berelson. And this is, I guess, toward the end of 1970.

And John Ross, at the same time, was very concerned and had been urging me—it was at the end of 1970, yeah—saying, “Look, Adrienne, you nearly finished your master's degree and at the minimum you need to do that. Basically, you should go back and get a Ph.D., but if you're not going to do that”—there was no way I could do that. I mean, I could hardly support myself, let alone—and, of course, the second time around I really did lose the fellowship. They said, The Council will pay if you go back to Berkeley to complete the master's degree. And I said, “Oh, well, that's nice.

Great.”

So I think it must have been in the fall of '71. And I went back, and it turned out that either they had changed the requirements or I hadn't had good advice earlier, but there were a whole lot of required courses in sociology that I needed to complete. So I worked like a dog to meet all those requirements and I lived in International House. Neil Smelzer was still there and he somehow helped me arrange that. I don't remember how many credits I took, but some enormous number, and whatever. But I completed it and I got it done and then I came back to the Council and—

Sharpless

Did you have to do any kind of project for it?

Germain

No, not that I recall. Those were the days—what you did were these course papers. So the research papers—I had met a number of the—certainly the research requirements and the papers and the statistical work, as I remember it, but there were certain core courses in sociology that I think I somehow hadn't done. And they were exams and papers. There wasn't a thesis in those days. So I came back to New York and into the same job and thought I was getting more and more frustrated because I just felt like there are all these men in the corridors and Jackie Forrest had been hired just before I left for Berkeley and she is now the director or vice president of research at the Alan Guttmacher Institute. She came in at the same time. Also John hired a Dutch demographer called Jerry Von Ginegan, and Jackie and he stayed on quite a while at the Council. I lost track of Jerry, but Jackie I followed because we became friends and she's been at AGI ever since.

What happened, though, was I was getting more and more concerned

that I just didn't feel that the Council was paying any attention to what women's lives were like and that the injustice, the unfairness of putting all the risk on them, not only of contraceptive side effects but of having fewer children than their partners wanted, was just not being addressed—and it needed to be. Plus, there was the continuing abortion question. And I was getting restless enough that I was thinking, Well, I'll leave the program division, as it was called in those days, and move over to the research division, when I had a call from Bud Harkavy, who was the head of the population program at Ford Foundation, and said that he was recruiting for an assistant program officer and would I be interested.

And as I've already said, I had no idea who the Ford Foundation was or anything else, but, you know, I thought, Well, why not talk to him, since I'm not comfortable here. So that's the irony of this is that the man who had first interviewed me and asked me these questions about marriage and all this was still there. His name was—oh, I can remember one of the others who was also still [there]—[it] was Ozzie Simmons.

Sharpless

You can fill it in when we get to the transcript.

Germain

Yeah, well, try to come up with these names because they've been there quite a while. They were younger than Bud Harkavy. Bud Harkavy was still young in those days, but of course considerably older than I was. And this is, I guess, early in '72 and he was interested enough that he had me interview these others who had no memory that I had interviewed previously, the year and half before, or whatever it was. But I got a call back a week later or something saying that he had two leading candidates and I

was one of them, and the only way he could really think to make a decision about them being very different was to ask us each to write a five-page memo on Barney Berelson's latest article, which was called "Beyond Family Planning," which in those days was a path-breaking article.

Sharpless

Was he asking you to critique your current boss's work?

Germain

Yeah, but what he didn't know, and what I said to him was, "Well, actually, Bud, I have"—I guess I probably called him Dr. Harkavy in those days rather than Bud. But anyway, I said to him, "Well, I've just written"—and I think I still have a copy somewhere—"I've just written"—what I think I remember now as a twelve-page memo to Barney about what's wrong with this article. And I said, "I'd be happy to give you a five-page version, but do you want to read the twelve-page version?" He said, "Oh, yeah, sure. You don't need to rewrite it." So I sent it over and he hired me.

Well, in the meantime, while he was reading this article, I thought I'd better find out about the Ford Foundation. And I can't remember who I asked. It must have been colleagues in the Pop Council because I had come to New York with no friends and no community and given the way I was living my life I didn't have outside friends. And I was hired. I think, as I recall, it was nine thousand dollars, which even then was barely livable. And so, I mean, I just didn't have friends. I don't know how I found it out, but before he called me back, what I found out was that Ford Foundation under Bud Harkavy, together with John Rockefeller III, who figures later in this story, had created the Population Council and that Bud Harkavy was responsible for putting Barney Berelson into the presidency, because Barney

had been doing work with the Ford Foundation. But I had no idea. And when I found this out I thought, Well, I guess that finishes that.

But ultimately he called me back and said he'd like to offer me a job. And I was thrilled and I said, "Well, but, you know, Bud, why do you want to"—or, "Dr. Harkavy, why do you want to do that? I just found out"—"Oh," he said, "you know, I've got a large staff. I can afford to have one iconoclast." I said, "Oh, well, that's great. Yeah, so I'll come." And I said, "By the way, I never asked you, why did you call me?" And he said, "Well, I asked the heads of all the population study centers for suggestions and Judith Blake and Kingsley Davis said you were the best student they'd ever had and why didn't I track you down." I didn't know that's how Judith and Kingsley felt about me, but okay.

So then I went over to Ford and they hired me, as I recall, at twelve thousand dollars a year, which still I was barely able to live on but it was better. Then, to shorten the story a bit, I went in October of '72, and they were on a biannual budget cycle and just starting to write papers that would go to the vice president, I think it was [in] like December, January, and then the April or June board meeting would consider the revisions. And I had been hired to make the grants to the U.S. University of Population Studies Centers, which itself was an irony, because here I was, whatever age I was, twenty-three—no, '72, twenty-five—and I had Sidney Goldstein in my office, my windowless closet-size office, at the Ford Foundation negotiating hundreds of thousands of dollars for his study center at Brown University with this kid. It seemed very peculiar to me.

But anyway, the budget exercise—Bud said, well, he didn't really know what to do with me. And since I hadn't had enough experience there yet, he said, "Listen," he said, "I know you wrote this thing about Barney Berelson's 'Beyond Family Planning,' and you clearly didn't like it and you had some new ideas in there, so why don't you write a memo about what the Ford Foundation could do about whatever you think are the most important things."

So I wrote a memo that basically said—I had three months and I looked into all the international division programs and there was only one other woman in the whole division. It was Elinor Barber. And they had eighteen country-based offices around the world. They had no women staff. They never had had. So I looked into—they were funding massive programs in population control, agriculture, irrigation, some urban and community development, higher education. And the only, only activity, at all, that I could unearth that had anything directly to do with women was funding for home economics departments. That and family planning, that was it.

So I wrote a memo which basically said, Guess what? And it was this same message: if you want women to have fewer children—even Judith Blake and Kingsley Davis will tell you that women have good reasons to have large families, and if you want them to change that, then you have to give them some options, which includes employment, includes education, et cetera. Well, the vice president, who was David Bell, a quite remarkable man who had been, like many others at the Ford Foundation, in and out of government, he was the head of OMB under—would it have been

Kennedy? Anyway, he had had a very high level in government and McGeorge Bundy was the president of the foundation in those days.

And Bud sent this memo up with the rest of the budget papers and Bell asked to see me and he said, "I find this very interesting. I'm not sure that you're right and if we're going to do anything about it. The only person who can figure out how to do it is you." So he said, "I'm going to basically change your job." And I became what was called a project specialist and there were only two others at that time, and they worked—I still sat in the population office and they were my immediate colleagues, but the project specialists reported to Dave Bell. There were two others, very senior men. One was Lowell Hardin, who was the senior advisor in agriculture, and the other was Ed Edwards, who was the senior advisor in education.

And so it became my job to figure out how I was going to persuade in particular the country-based offices of the Ford Foundation to support women. And I had a great time.

Sharpless Let me change the tape.

Tape 1 ends; tape 2, side 1, begins.

Sharpless This is the second tape with Adrienne Germain on June 19th. We're talking about your time at the Ford Foundation, but I wanted to back up. You described going to Peru by yourself, leaving your husband against the will of your family, doing various other things. Where do you think this inner courage that you have comes from? That's a hard question, I know.

Germain It is a hard question.

Sharpless But you strike me as a very, very brave person.

Germain Well, bloody-minded maybe. (laughter) You know, in a way I don't—I actually don't know. I only learned much later in my life about some of the dysfunctional dynamics of my family that mean that really, what I described as leaving home to go to college—and that was really my first time away from this very tight little unit and freeing myself from what had actually been a really desperately heavy burden of a disabled twin, which I hadn't understood ever—just was so liberating. I mean it just opened my life.

Sharpless I'm sorry. In what way was she disabled?

Germain Well, it turns out at that time it hadn't developed into a full-blown situation, but she had been what you call a blue baby, a breath holder when we were small. And she was so violent toward me that my parents didn't have resources—they actually had to get two separate playpens, and she was consistently that way. But my parents demanded that I take care of her and that I accept all of this and just do everything I could to keep her calm and happy and not disturb things.

Sharpless You were the responsible party.

Germain Yes, and everything that hurt her and upset her and that she didn't like and whatever, whatever was always my fault and that carried on really for many years of my life. But going to Wellesley, there was a freedom from that. She went to Smith and she hated it and that was also all my fault and I carried that through college, and so on. And then when she followed me to California and landed up in Oakland, even though I was separating from my husband, there was more of that. When I moved back to New York within three or four months, I guess, she came back to New York. But I didn't see

that pattern, really, until years later. So I think that's one thing.

Maybe the other thing might have been that my mother had enormous courage. As I mentioned, my father's cancer was of the eye and it was removed and it seems that it was highly stigmatized and he basically just disappeared. And she carried on supporting us for three years, went back to work, never having thought that would—she worked before they married. And then when he finally turned up again and we moved east she still was very afraid that he would die. People didn't understand about cancer. You know, really it was very little knowledge and she always believed that if she didn't talk about it, it wouldn't exist.

So I lived in this family that denied lots of things. It denied my sister's problems. It never acknowledged that my father had cancer. But I was asked to sort of uphold everything. And my mother realized that if something happened to my father—she had finished a B.A. at UC Berkeley actually, many years before, but she realized without a degree, if something happened to my father, since they were both having to work as it was, that she wouldn't be able to sustain us.

Both of them had very high emphasis on education and I always did very well. And one of the difficulties with my sister is that she did well enough but not outstanding, and I did well because I worked very hard. I'm not one of these kids that just breezes through. But also, I read a lot because I was very, very shy and with my sister being as aggressive as she was but also hyper-energetic and she had lots of friends and so on, I just sort of withdrew. And reading was my salvation. And, who knows, maybe I

just developed that sense of autonomy. I mean, books have been written about this phenomenon I've learned in later years, but basically my family created one reality or asserted a reality that actually wasn't true and I knew it wasn't true, and I would go out into the world knowing it wasn't true but that I had to present it to the world as being true. And yet I could see my own reality. So the strain of balancing those two—I gather now people study these things—but anyway, it was enormous. And then when I went away, of course, I didn't have to deal with the untrue reality that was being presented and I guess that just took a whole load off.

And plus, the day I arrived I formed ten enormously close friendships. There were ten of us in that first dormitory class at Wellesley who just fell in with each other and we went all the way through the four years together—even in the way that dormitory assignments went. We decided to go to the most distant, least sought-after dorm our sophomore year, to apply for that so that we could go as a group. That's how tight we were. And for years we've stayed together and every so often we communicate. The communication has gotten less, but I was so empowered by having all these wonderful friends and just sort of took off like a shot.

Then of course the faculty was wonderful and the whole program at Wellesley was just great and I had not only a fabulous education but a personal growth. Although I do say that if I hadn't gone to Berkeley, I would have ended up being a very different person and I don't know that I ever would have become politicized. Who knows? Who's to say? But the fact that Berkeley coincided with the Kent State Cambodia Crisis and I

really had to come to terms with profound issues like what does it mean if students demand a blanket pass? And what kinds of choices does one make? Do you continue going to classes when most of the kids are saying that that's breaking the bond of solidarity—you know, vis-à-vis the protests against the war or whatever. There were very profound sorts of—at least for me—profound challenges about how one lives one's life.

And even the divorce—in a way it was a good thing my parents didn't offer any help, moral support or otherwise, because I had to do it myself. I had to solve this problem and I did and I think I came out a stronger person because of that. So I don't know. Maybe I just sort of built it step by step, the courage part.

I think the other is just knowing that I wanted to do something useful with my life. That energy was always there. When I was a kid I did volunteer work in the hospitals where my father worked. And when I first came to New York, during the Pop Council days, that job was really pretty much nine to five, more or less. So I volunteered four days a week at Bellevue in the emergency wards where—this is before the renovation there—we had to have police escorts to go through the tunnels to take psychiatric cases. There were rats running in the corridors. They were grossly understaffed and I'd have to move whole beds on my own. I can remember running through corridors to get blood for transfusions in the infant intensive care units. I mean, it was like a hellhole out of Dickens. You know, it was unbelievable. But I loved that work. I felt so engaged, and so I always, one way or another, was orientated toward doing useful work.

Sharpless Say more about the women that you observed in Peru.

Germain Well, there were a lot of things that I observed. First of all, when we asked age, because we always did, I was just stunned by how much younger they were than they looked. These were women who had aged far before their time. Very often, in many of the communities, we would see very few men and when you asked, well, where are they, they'd often either migrated, if we were outside Lima, for work, or they just disappeared. And it also came out a lot of these women were battered. A lot of them were faced with what we these days now would call marital rape—I mean, really heavy-duty stuff. All these kids who were very, very sick, with runny noses and the terrible, deep chest coughs and protruding bellies. Peru was—in many ways, Peru still is—its main parts of its population exceedingly poor, and that was even more true back then. They had a lot of political problems.

And, of course, the other thing that I experienced—and, of course, I had done this tutoring in Roxbury during Wellesley—but the Spanish colonial imposition in Peru was among the most violent and the most destructive of indigenous culture. And I became very, very interested in the Incan civilizations and heritage and in the indigenous communities, of which there are many. And most of them are outside of Lima. It has changed a lot today, but still in those days, the indigenous populations were still concentrated in mountain towns and in the agricultural valleys along the coast and, of course, in the Amazon, which is a whole different tradition.

And what impressed me enormously was, though, for all of these women, living in these various circumstances, how strong they were. I

mean, they there were going through the tortures of the damned as far as I could tell. And they weren't getting any family planning, that's for sure. I mean, it was very strict Roman Catholic country. What options did they have? They had no health care for themselves and almost none for their kids, and that was just not fair. They were doing whatever they could to earn what little income they had.

And they talked about—that's where I first learned about what do men do with their wages. Well, they buy cigarettes, they drink, unless it's a Muslim country like Bangladesh, where they take tea instead of alcohol, and then they beat up their wives and their kids. And so I was very, very profoundly affected by that. And I can still visualize the women. I see them very clearly. I have sort of a visual memory very often. If I can't remember names, I'll remember faces. And those images have stayed with me all these years.

Sharpless You mentioned that the family you stayed with was violent.

Germain Yeah. And there I really was young and I had no idea what to do about it. It had been very hard to find this place to stay and for whatever reasons, I didn't talk to the Michigan people about it. I just thought I had to tough it out. And the room I stayed in was—

Sharpless You wouldn't break the confidence.

Germain I guess. So I stayed in a little room that was hardly big enough for a single bed, and then you don't have closets in many of these houses but a wardrobe, and that was it. And it faced on the street, the back gate, and it was the head of the stairs, before the bedrooms for the family. And it was

one single shared bath. And this guy would come home very late and bang on this outside gate under my window and so on, to be let in, et cetera, and then there'd be all kinds of noise and screams and this, that, and the other—not every night, but often.

And fairly soon after I arrived and I wasn't yet wary, I left my room to use the bathroom and I ran into this guy in the corridor and he had nothing on except his shorts, and I was just horrified because I had only dealt with his wife. And he made some comment to me, which of course I didn't understand in Spanish, whatever it was. But whatever the tone was, it just made me really afraid. So I just sort of pushed passed him and I locked the door in the bathroom and my own room didn't have a lock so I took the chair, which was there, and put it under the door, wedged it under the door every night. And finally this woman threw him out and then the banging on the gates was almost every night because he would come and insist to be let in and she didn't let him in.

Sharpless

How many children?

Germain

Three—and young. Then after she threw him out, of course, my rent, whatever I was paying, which couldn't have been much, was important to her and I felt loyalty to her. And in that sense we couldn't communicate much because of my language problems, but she always talked to me over this dreadful mushed-up papaya that was my breakfast. You know, she'd jabber along and I'd get parts of it. (laughs) So it was another one of those personal developmental experiences, I guess.

Sharpless

But when you saw women being treated in the aggregate instead of seeing—

you would see those faces.

Germain

Yes, and their children, and the girls. Because, of course, we also were asking all kinds of questions about the education, schooling, children in school. It was always the boys who were in school, especially in the rural areas, not the girls. And, of course, the girls were there and you could see them helping their mothers at very young ages, which, of course, that was my first exposure. Now, after all these years of experience, I know that that's the way things are in the world, but at the time I didn't know any of that. So it had a very profound effect.

So when I wrote this budget memo and the vice president said, "Okay, go for it," there was nobody to give me any sort of guidance or what have you. So I undertook self-education. I mean, in the Ford Foundation one thing is for sure. Of course, these days you'd be inundated with electronic information, but in those days it was paper information and it was just mountains of it. So I could just absorb it like a sponge and anything I wanted to have I could order, or whatever. Anybody I wanted to see I could go talk to, because—

Sharpless

Did they give you any kind of time frame?

Germain

Well, I'm trying to remember, now. There's a later time frame that I remember. I don't think they did, and it was okay because soon enough—I mean, for a while, until they recruited another staff person, which actually is an interesting part of the story, I continued to handle the university studies grants. And the Ford and Rockefeller foundations had a joint research fellowship at that time—program. I can't remember—probably at least a

quarter of a million dollars a year in research awards based on applications submitted. We'd call it an RFP [request for proposal] these days but—and so, I was responsible on the Ford end and Mary [M.] Kritz was responsible on the Rockefeller end. Mary Kritz is another name that you've probably come across. And I'm trying to remember, what else did I do. In other words, I still had population work that I did. I don't remember that there was a particular time frame.

Sharpless They just said, basically, Go and do this.

Germain Yeah, but they didn't give me a budget to do it. Of course, at that time I didn't realize how hair-raising it would be to persuade people who did have budgets to spend money on things I thought were important. But I was young and energetic and I said, "Okay, that's good." And maybe that's, again, something that had an enormous impact on how I've now done my professional work and how we designed the Coalition, because the whole point is to get people with more money and power to support these issues in their own work, rather than to do something separate, or to do it for them. And that's carried through from these very beginnings.

So I spent—first of all, I decided what I could tell, and what I remembered from Peru, certainly, was that the economic issues were the most staggering for women. And I didn't know that subject at all. And I decided, because Ford was so heavily invested in agriculture development, agriculture extension programs, all kinds of hands-on-type training, credit, all that sort of stuff. They also were inventing higher-yielding rices and all that sort of stuff in research centers around the world. But the part I was

interested in was the extension services and the credit programs.

And lo and behold, of course, when I looked into it, there were no extension services for women. What they did in agriculture had no technical input. Very often what they were doing was the food processing, what's called secondary-crop production, so not the rice and the wheat but the vegetables and the lentils and so on. They almost always have, whenever it's feasible, if they're not landless, a vegetable patch right by the house. They have chickens, they have all kinds of stuff, but there was no ag extension for them, or credit to enable them to do this work better.

And, of course, the home economics people, all they cared about was, you know, giving them the eight categories of food in a day when these women didn't have money to pay for two categories of food, let alone meat on the table. I mean, please. It was so awful. And I made a critique of the home economics colleges that nearly blew the lid off everybody, because people have been very comfortable for a long time funding these colleges and I decided to investigate and really look at the curriculum. Then I came back and I said, "Hey, this has no relevance—zero. And stop blaming women for their malnourished kids. It's poverty that's doing this. And if the men didn't spend so much money on cigarettes and tea or alcohol maybe things would be a little better."

But this was in the days before any research had been done to document—which is now documented, and we helped fund some of that from the Ford Foundation—but when a woman has income at the family level, she does allocate most of it for her children and the basic survival of

the household, whereas the expenditure surveys with men clearly document the leisure time, the cigarettes, the alcohol, the clothes, et cetera, unnecessary clothes, like western-style shirts or whatever. But in those days we didn't have that, so a lot of what I initiated at the beginning was research on household expenditure, on time allocation in the household.

Then I got into a whole new strain of economics that was developing at the time under Paul Schultz, in Chicago, the Nobel laureate, there. I went out to see him. I talked to him. I worked with his son—T. Paul Schultz is at Yale—on something called the new household economics, which wasn't home economics, but it was micro-level economics that was really groundbreaking at its time, and helping many development economists understand how households make decisions and blah, blah.

There was only one problem. These models all assume that households have one decision maker, which even at the most depressed level, women are not entirely out of household decision making. So what I was challenging them to do—and this went into a whole line of work for quite a period of time, and coming from the Ford Foundation in those days it had that kind of weight, even if I was twenty-six years old—I said, “You know, these models are useless, if you recognize the reality that unless it's a female head of household, every household has two decision makers, not one.” And we struggled over that for years. And finally they told me, Look, Adrienne, if we were to add a second decision maker into our model, the equations would run off the paper. We can't do it. I said, “Okay, you can't do it, so think of an alternative, because the reality is that household

decisions are a negotiation.” They said, But, oh, yes, the household is maximizing their outcome—meaning that they assume that all members have the same motivations and the same desired outcomes and goals. Well, of course I knew from an empirical way that very often the household was the worst discriminator against women in the countries that I knew about, and that in fact all household members benefit and welfare was not maximized. The male household members’ welfare was maximized and that’s what I was trying to get these guys to look into.

Well, at that time a wonderful man named Abe Weisblat was at another institution founded by John Rockefeller III called the Agricultural Development Council, which no longer exists. Abe was in charge of their very enormous fellowship and training program. We met through a mutual friend. And Abe, who was much older than I was—maybe he was late fifties, sixty, at the time that I was twenty-six or something, and he was very intrigued by what I had to say. So he decided that all of his agriculture economist friends should take me seriously.

And literally, I traveled with Abe across Asia, mostly India and the Philippines, Pakistan, parts of Latin America—not Africa. And he introduced me, for example, to Raj Krishna, who is one of the greatest development economists who ever lived. In those days he was younger, too. And through the Agricultural Development Council and with the name of the Ford Foundation we convened a series of meetings with people as high up as Raj Krishna, who was the head of the planning commission at the time, which is a big deal in India, and many other senior economists. Sam

Hsei was the head of the Asian Development Bank. All these people that Abe knew very well—a Stanford economist—oh gosh, what was his name? very prominent, trained all of the Indonesian economists who then in the decades since have run Indonesia, Wally Falcon, and was very big in the agriculture field. Took me out to Stanford, you know, he just supported me all the way. Somehow Abe knew that there was something to this. And Abe spent his life anyway investing in younger people. He was a remarkable man, remarkable.

Anyhow, so we then generated—we, the Ford Foundation, but mostly I was doing the work—a whole series of seminars, publications, you name it, having to do with gender differentials and rural wage rates. Gender differentials in agriculture labor patterns—who produces what?—and these time-allocation studies, which at that time were vital for the development of micro-level economic modeling, and so on. And none of it took into account any gender differentials. None of this ongoing work at that period was gender sensitive. So we created quite a body of work and I think we influenced some people's minds, but it went very slowly.

And at one meeting [with] Raj Krishna, we were in Hyderabad, India—I will never forget it, very beautiful outside the city, and it was sunrise. I love sunrise in the subcontinent. I was having my tea sitting out on a rock and he was going for his morning walk and we got to talking and I expressed my frustration. We've been through two days with all these ag economists who just really were not—we weren't getting anywhere. And I still face that kind of chicken/egg problem. You know, the skeptics and the opponents put the

burden of proof on us: If you demand gender analysis, they say, well, prove to us that it's important enough to invest the money and the time to do it. Well, we can't do it until the people who control the surveys decide to ask women the same questions they're asking men and generate the data. I mean, so you're in a Catch 22 situation all the time.

Well, so Raj Krishna comes up to me that morning and I express my frustration and he says, "Listen, Adrienne, we're getting somewhere. It's better than when we started and we are making progress here. But I, of all people, am going to tell you that there's going to come a point where you can only go so far with the intellectual and empirical, evidence-based work. And you need to do that and it's great that you're doing it. But basically women are going to have to mobilize. You're just going to have to take to the streets." And this is from India's top economist, who I think had extraordinary vision and understanding at that time about the enormous resistance to gender equality in any of its guises. And this was probably about 1970—would have been about '76.

I skipped over other parts of the history which actually are important. We could go back to them. But I've never forgotten that. You know, there are certain quotes, certain people along the way in my life, many of them men, and from the mainstream, who had enormous insight but also really decided, even if they didn't fully understand or even if they didn't see the truth as I saw it, somehow they felt that there was something there.

Sharpless

Well, what about—oh, my tape's about to run out.

Tape 2, side 1, ends; side 2 begins.

You were talking about other things that had happened before 1976 and I was going to ask, what about—and I don't know if this was where you going to head or not—what was going on with you and feminism and the women's movement?

Germain

Yeah, well, what happened in that is I still hadn't read anything in terms of feminist literature. I was never in any consciousness-raising groups. I had no idea, no even realization that feminism was out there. It never occurred to me. So the key things that happened along the way were that first—and I had come to Ford in October of '72. Just about a year later, and after the vice president had asked me to do this work, Bud Harkavy hired another staff person, a young man about my age whose one difference from me when I was hired was that he had a Ph.D. in hand, I think probably from Princeton. And just because I've always been an observer—maybe that's why I liked sociology—sometimes I think I should have been an anthropologist and maybe that's why I was caught up in this participant-observation methodology or whatever—but without thinking about it, I observed his socialization into this office. And it was so entirely different from what I had experienced. And that was the like the first sort of light bulb in an ideological—or political, maybe, is a better word, in a political sense, that I realize that I had been treated differently.

All these years I saw the oppression of all the women that I've been talking about, but I didn't ever feel like I'd ever experienced discrimination, and discrimination wasn't really what I was interested in. It was rather the terrible poverty and the injustice that these women faced, the violence and

so on, but I hadn't conceptualized it as discrimination or whatever. Well, I mean, it was just so dramatic that I noticed and I had my own things to do, so I didn't get angry about it or anything, but it just was interesting to me.

Then along about that same time I met Joan Dunlop, who's a very important figure in all this. In 1973, she had been secretary of the Ford Foundation. She came from England. She had her own very independent life history. She's thirteen years older than I am and she had worked for a wonderful man at the Ford Foundation called Paul Ylvisaker, who died when he was—he was an education specialist. But she, Joan, went to work for John Rockefeller III to manage his population philanthropy, his own individual philanthropy. And he was a remarkable man, but he brought Joan in, having established the Population Council in 1952, and shared his board for all those years, having been introduced by his father to some of the same kinds of scenes perhaps that I had seen. But what he took away from those scenes was masses of people living in too little space on too little land in deep poverty. He didn't see any gender element to it.

So he had established the Pop Council and was a leader, really, along with the Ford Foundation and Rockefeller, in supporting people like Paul Ehrlich and others who said, The world is going to hell in a hand basket: if we don't control population growth, nothing else matters. That was the mentality. Well, J.D.R was a remarkable man. He hired Joan and he said to her, "Joan, there is something wrong with this field and I don't know what it is, but your first job is to find out."

So if you work for John Rockefeller, like being at the Ford Foundation,

you could meet anybody. So Joan started out on this search and she went to all the obvious people in the population field and she came back to John Rockefeller and said to him, basically, “My conclusion is that a very small number of men control all the money and the ideas in this field. They have a stranglehold on it and there is really no innovation. And I don’t know what the innovation should be,” she said, “but whatever you think is wrong, Mr. Rockefeller, probably lies in that fact.” So he said, “Well, okay. That’s interesting.”

And so, her next step then was to try to find iconoclasts. She didn’t put it that way, but she went to Susan Berresford, who was a program officer in the domestic program at Ford in those days, and they had known each other in city government. Joan had been in the [New York City mayor John] Lindsey administration and worked with him in the Port Authority—I don’t know, whatever. So she and Susan knew each other. And Susan was sort of buried under Mike Svirdorf in the domestic urban poverty program. He gave her a budget every year and she spent quite a bit of it on women, but never made any noise. I didn’t really know her.

So Joan made her case to Susan and said, you know, “I have got to find people with different ideas here. Do you have any suggestions?” And Susan is sort of like the Kingsley Davis–Judith Blake situation. Somehow Susan had noticed my work. I have no idea when, how, why, but she said to Joan, “Well, there’s a very interesting young woman in Bud Harkavy’s office. Why don’t you talk to her?” So I get this call from Joan Dunlop and she invites me out to dinner. And again I was so naive and inexperienced—really, truly.

I had no idea what was going on—sort of like Bud Harkavy calling me out of the blue—and I was sort of nervous and anxious. We went to a Chinese restaurant near her house on Third Avenue and Seventy-third Street. And I guess it was sort of like this interview. I don't know, we must have talked for four hours, and neither one of us is a night person. And by the end of the conversation she said, "Well," she said, "That's it." So she went back to Mr. Rockefeller and told him, "Okay, I've figured out what's wrong with this field. It's racist and sexist. And there's this really interesting young woman who I've learned this from and that's what you need to go after."

Well, Mr. Rockefeller, to give him credit—because unlike the sort of rapacious image that attaches to the so-called robber baron families and so on, Mr. Rockefeller was an extraordinary man, deeply humane. And actually his population interest had been in response to the terrible poverty of people that he saw. He was very concerned about people's wellbeing and welfare. It wasn't population control so the rich could have a nicer life. There are those around, but that wasn't Mr. Rockefeller. So he had always been engaged in that arena and in the agricultural development arena to produce food for all these people because he really cared what people's lives were like.

So basically, what he did was set Joan loose. And, of course, Joan upset a whole lot of people when she came out with that message, because J.D.R. was a very powerful figure in the field at the time, and if he hadn't been killed in a car accident in '78, I think we might have actually made a lot of change a lot earlier in the field. Because the next thing that happened was—

this was '73 when Joan and I met and at first, she started—one thing [about] John Rockefeller was that he had invested in a U.S. commission on population growth and the U.S. future, and this I think must have been in the Carter years—my history is terrible, but anyway, the early '70s. And he had chaired the commission. It was a presidential commission. But the presidents changed and I think just about at that moment—I know what the outcome was [but] I can't remember when the changes happened—but basically the new president either downgraded the commission itself or refused to receive its report, I can't remember which. Because the commission basically concluded that really the major population program in the world was in the United States and it had to do with A, with the consumption patterns—that we were consuming so many, many, many more times than a child born in Nepal or whatever. And this ran directly counter to the Paul Ehrlich population-bomb kind of idea, with the neo-Malthusian-type ideas that were driving the field.

And I forgot to mention that during all this political stuff at Berkeley, another thing that I got engaged in was zero population growth. Paul Ehrlich had published his book in '69. He had activists on all the campuses. I was recruited to the speaker's bureau—being this terribly shy person, I don't know how they saw it but somehow they did. I did all kinds of strategy sessions, sitting on the couch in his house. I can't believe this now, looking back on this. And I now know that all the speaking that I did to community groups and high schools and all that, the people who were on the platform with me were what we now call Right to Life people, anti-

abortion types. But in those days you didn't have those labels. And the reason I got involved was that I learned while I was at Berkeley that the only money that was available in the international arena that might assist in any way the women in Peru was the so-called population money. So that much I was beginning to learn about the reality of the world, because there were all these national family planning programs. And if they weren't existing yet, then the U.S. government was pushing them. And so, I thought, Well, okay, zero population growth—if we can persuade people that population is important, then Congress will give more money for the women in Peru or India or wherever else.

So going back then to the story, once Mr. Rockefeller had accepted Joan's analysis that the field was racist and sexist, Joan then had to figure out what to do. And this is mid '73. And at the same time, she was busy matchmaking because she decided that this young golden-haired "boy" who had staffed the U.S. population commission for Mr. Rockefeller should meet me. And there's a reason for this story. She introduces the two of us and I totally, totally—infatuation right off the bat. Just, you know, bingo. So we continued—actually, he was not trained in demography or sociology but the three of us would have dinner all the time and we'd gossip about the field and we'd brainstorm and all this.

And then suddenly what comes on to the radar screen, must have been late '73, is Mr. Rockefeller was asked by the UN to make a speech at the 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest, which was the first really world conference. There had been a meeting in Teheran, Iran, in 1968,

which actually Mr. Rockefeller had attended, I think. But it wasn't a global conference and it was not a UN undertaking. So Joan has the responsibility to write the speech along with Mr. Rockefeller's speech writer. And so, the three of us—the man who became my second husband, Steve Salyer, Joan, and I—wrote the speech. Well, Joan's not the intellect or the writer. I wrote the speech. And then she and Steve worked with Mr. Rockefeller. But in order to write the speech we had many meetings with Mr. Rockefeller.

In those days the Rainbow Room was still his, and you'd go and you'd have this lunch at the top of that tower, in the Rainbow Room of all places—Manhattan at your feet. And who was I? Nobody. Anyway, so we went through I don't know how many drafts of the speech and how many conversations, and the fact of the matter is, the accusations came later, but as we worked this through and I talked with him about the women in Peru and asked him to remember what he had seen in all of his travels and all these kinds of things and told him about the Population Council, and et cetera, we basically framed a speech, which I hopefully still have around—we do have it somewhere—which today would look exceedingly tame. But those words coming out of Mr. Rockefeller's mouth in Bucharest in 1974 were world-shaking, in terms of the population world.

People have gone to their graves angry, and one of them was Barney Berelson. He, first of all, was very annoyed that Mr. Rockefeller didn't ask him to write the speech, and then when he found out that Joan and these two little upstarts, Steve Salyer and Adrienne Germain, were writing the speech, he was beside himself. And he went to Mr. Rockefeller and

complained. And Mr. Rockefeller just said, “Barney, these are the ideas that I’m interested—and what I want to do.” So, he’s a very graceful, gracious man. Barney was rather short, energized, round, argumentative person. And Mr. Rockefeller was very tall and very elegant. I don’t know. I wasn’t there, but I can just imagine, really. And so, there was not for those days a lot of press coverage in Bucharest, and so and so forth. Not too long after that, well, immediately after the speech, the man who had created and who still at that time headed the Alan Guttmacher Institute, which still exists—his name was Fred Jaffe. They were mostly on the domestic side in those days, but nonetheless they had a world view and they were funded by Ford and Rockefeller and all that.

And his second deputy, who took over later on, Jeannie Rosoff—they asked me to sit with them and talk for a while and they proceeded to shred me. They just went on at length about how misguided this speech was, how it would destroy the field, it would destroy all the motivation they had built up in the Congress over the years to fund population work. It would just set back the field who knows how many years.

Sharpless

Why did they think that?

Germain

The speech basically said the message that I set out earlier, which, of course, had been empirically demonstrated in Judith Blake and Kingsley Davis’s research, but what I had seen in Peru in 1968, which is, if you’re going to ask women to have fewer children, when everything in their lives dictates that for their own safety and their own survival they need to have as many children as the man wants, then you really have to give women options.

And at the bare minimum this speech said, you need to be sure that girls can get education and that women can get employment. It was a fairly simple, in my view, very reality-centered perspective. It wasn't about abortion. It wasn't about all of the concerns that we developed later, very soon later, about the abysmal quality of family planning service delivery, the abuses that were happening in these national family planning programs. It wasn't about any of that stuff. It was just making the simple point that you can't just give contraceptives to women. You've got to give them some options in their lives.

That was revolutionary at that moment, and the reason they were so angry about it was that, I think, that the field up until then, in terms of those who were delivering, helping design these national programs and delivering contraceptive services, their only engagement in the research side had been the program evaluation. Are we handing out enough pills? Can we make some calculations that show that this many women are using pills for so long and that means X number of points off the birth rate? I mean, that was the pure demographic view of things.

And the postpartum program that had seemed to me so wrong somehow, when I went to the Council to begin with, I then had begun to understand why it was so wrong, because any woman who was giving birth—first of all, most births aren't occurring in facilities because the women are too poor and the facilities are too hostile and in any case even if they're there, [they're of such] poor quality that women go there to die, basically. I knew that from Peru.

So I was trying to imagine, Who were these postpartum women? Well, the only ones who get there are the ones who have had a really terrible time—obstructed labor, whatever. And the wealthy ones weren't the subject of these family planning programs. The wealthy ones who were delivering in private clinics or hospitals, they weren't part of the postpartum program. Postpartum was public health system. And they'd just been through the whole, very often for them, trauma of birth. This is not necessarily your joyous, chosen moment. They need to breast feed.

Nothing was known at that time about hormonal contraception and breast milk but there were suspicions that you shouldn't breastfeed and be on hormonal contraception. IUDs were so crude at the time that what turned out later on, as I recall it, was that some of these very high failure rates of IUDs were because they were expelled after being inserted immediately postpartum. Well, I mean, anybody with any common sense knowing what birth is about would think, you know, the IUD probably isn't appropriate. It just didn't seem like to me that the woman postpartum, having delivered in an institution, was really a major focus or should be a major focus. What maybe they should try to do would be to ensure that she came back for one-month and three-month checkups and at the three-month checkup or maybe even one-month you could talk to her and say, Look, if you don't want to conceive again soon, then don't count on amenorrhea to protect you. We can give you condoms. We can give you whatever if you're still breastfeeding.

So I wasn't against talking with women postpartum, but the day after

they deliver? I mean, what—ahhh. Anyway, so I think Fred and Jeannie were so angry and, of course, they weren't going to express their anger to—not directly, anyway—to Mr. Rockefeller. They didn't explain their anger to me very well. So I can't really tell you why they were angry. What I can only hypothesize is that the field, as of that time, had designed these very narrow, what we call vertical family planning service delivery programs, that as much as possible tried to avoid the health system, that didn't deal with absolutely any other aspect of women's lives—no child health, no pregnancy care, nothing. They were just straightforward delivery of family planning. And, you know, Rei Ravenholt went so far as—have you heard the story about the blue lady pills?

Sharpless

No.

Germain

Okay, well, these early packets of pills: Rei Ravenholt came up with the idea of packaging them for Pakistan in a white envelope that had the silhouette in blue of a woman's face on it. So that's how it came to be called blue lady. And he was such a fanatic. He used to joke—I don't think they ever did this, but he used to say, "Women in Pakistan are so backward and they're not using contraception. You know, what we really ought to do is just fly airplanes low over the country and drop them from planes." This was the kind of thinking that went on in those days.

So all I can figure about their rage—and Barney was enraged, also. I mean, he was angry because he had been cut out of the speech, but he was also angry because what he really wanted was these incentive schemes. His article about beyond family planning was primarily focused on developing

various kinds of schemes to motivate women to use contraception. Use it for so long and you don't have a pregnancy within two years or something then you get, I don't know, a bank account or you get something. Or if you come and get an IUD, we'll pay you thirty dollars—these various kind of schemes, which, as you know, I mentioned I was very critical of.

But the mentality there I think was such that when I basically said that part and parcel of population programs should be girl's education and women's employment. And I think to them that meant taking money away from population, meaning these vertical contraceptive services, and putting it in something else.

Sharpless Okay, we need to stop for you to go to your next appointment. Is there anything quick that you want to say before you head to the subway? Or we can pick it up exactly here in the morning?

Germain I don't think so. And where we can pick it up in the morning just be easier to help to get restarted is with the UN conference that followed Bucharest, which was the 1975 First World Conference on Women in Mexico City.

Sharpless Okay, okay. Let's do that, then. Thanks, so much.

end Interview 1

*Interview 2***Sharpless**

Today is the twentieth of June and this is the second oral history interview with Adrienne Germain. The interview is taking place in her office at International Women's Health Coalition [IWHC] in New York City. My name is Rebecca Sharpless. The interview is being sponsored by the Hewlett Foundation—Population Pioneers Project. And sitting in with us is Ellen Sweet, who is one of the vice presidents of the IWHC. And today we are going to pick up—when we left off yesterday, Adrienne, we were talking about the speech that John D. Rockefeller made in Bucharest. Do you have any follow up thoughts to that? Actually, you said Fred Jaffe and Jeannie Rosoff had taken you greatly to task over that.

Germain

Yes, and Barney Berelson, the president of the Population Council as well. And sadly, all three of them went to their graves, I think, still angry with Joan Dunlop and me about that speech. So I think what I was going to do [to] sort of try to shorten this history a little bit was to move on to the next milestone. But before I do that, I remember that there were a couple of points that I should have made about 1973 that continue the sort of common themes that were there in my work to begin with and dramatically influenced the steps I took as I moved forward in my work life.

And one of those was that in 1973, a year after coming to the Foundation, I realized that really you couldn't get anything done in the Foundation's international division unless you worked with the country-based offices. And it had become clear to me, in spite of the budget paper I had written, that no representative, no head of a country office, was going to

invite me to come—number one, because I had never met them, and number two, even if I had met them, as I mentioned, our issues were not on their agenda. So I decided I had vacation time coming up by that time and I had saved some money, and I told my—

Sharpless Even on your generous salary.

Germain Well, my salary of twelve thousand dollars, yes. And I told my boss, Bud Harkavy, that I was going to go to Asia, which I'd always wanted to do, for my vacation, and I was paying for it myself and would it be all right if I just wrote to a couple of the country-based representatives to say I'd be in the region and I'd be happy to drop by if they wanted, just to chat. And Bud said fine. So I did that. And ultimately, therefore, my first country-based trip for the Ford Foundation was made during my vacation time with my money.

Sharpless Where did you decide to go?

Germain I went to the Philippines and Pakistan. And what was very interesting was that, at the last minute, the representative in the Philippines—I can't remember. In those days, of course, we didn't have any electronic communication. I suppose he must have sent me a cable, which I received, I think, in Japan, because I was transiting through Japan. But he'd had a meeting come up and he couldn't host me and he had decided instead, given that I had done this work on Barney Berelson's "Beyond Family Planning," which included a lot of incentive schemes, as I mentioned yesterday, that he would send me to Mindanao, by myself, to look into incentive scheme proposals that were being made by American agencies there that he was considering funding.

Sharpless So you could work while you were visiting.

Germain Yes. And the point was actually that was how—I wanted to work so I accepted the job, but of course what he didn't know was that I was very extremely negative about incentive schemes, as Barney Berelson had put them forward. So, Mindanao is the Muslim separatist community. It's an island south of the main island in the Philippines, and in those days it was run by the military. So I got to Manila. I transited and got on the plane and went to Mindanao and I was greeted by the general who was running the island—in his Jeep and with his entourage. And following all the Berkeley conflict with the National Guard and all of that, it was pretty stunning to get off the plane and be met in this way.

And I then spent a week of hell in Mindanao. They put me in a hotel which clearly was one used by the military for, shall we say, assignments. It was full of very beautiful Filipino women and again, I was barricading my door all night and for the first time, came face to face with an Asian waterbug, which I don't know if you've ever seen, but they're the size of a mouse. And there was no way that waterbug and I were going to live in the same room. Certainly I wasn't going to go to sleep. Well, I hadn't had any schooling in this, so I had to teach myself, but anyway, anybody who doesn't know this, they are extremely fast and their radar is such that you really cannot approach them from any direction without their knowing it. So I stayed up all night trying to deal with this little creature, and it wasn't until the second night that I finally figured it out, and it's a technique I've now used in New York City, including in this office. I'm really good at this. It

involves a shoe and a very fast hand.

But in any case, touring that island with the military, and on this subject matter, was truly a formative experience in my life and just rigidified my sense that the people concerned about population control really were, as Joan Dunlop had told Mr. Rockefeller, racist and sexist. And I was aghast at what I saw, truly. You know, women in as impoverished, or more impoverished conditions than I had seen in Peru, and with really no choice, and treated terribly by the people concerned.

And these scenes were to repeat themselves across my work life—in the northeast part of Brazil, which is one of the most impoverished areas of the world, actually, especially in those days, and of course in India and other countries. And again, I didn't have a problem with providing family planning to women, or even a problem with thinking about population growth as an issue, but I did feel very strongly that you could not treat any human beings in this way.

I then went on to Pakistan, which was a completely other kind of experience. It's a very, still is, a very conservative Muslim society. Most women are veiled. I decided that if I was ever going to understand, and really be respectful of the culture, that I should try on the burqa, which in Pakistan generally is the full one. It looks like an upside-down badminton birdie. It goes from the head all the way to the ground and you have just a little woven screen across your eyes. So I had a Pakistan colleague that I met there bring me one. And that's another experience I will never, ever forget. Now, everywhere that I travel I try to be respectful of the culture and tradition.

And unlike many people—including now, I wear in South Asia and Muslim communities very soft, long, flowing clothes, and et cetera.

So I put on this veil, as it's called, which is really a euphemism, and I was simply appalled and terrified because what happens under there is that it's suffocating. You can't breathe, but more important than that, you have no peripheral vision and what little you can see through the embroidered screen is such a distorted view of the world. And that image came up over and over and over, because a lot of work since has been in Muslim societies, in one way or another. And it became an image for me, a very physical tangible image, of how restricted and constrained women's views and opportunities and voices are. So it's another one of these vivid memories. And then when I tried to walk, because you have no peripheral vision and this goes to the ground, you're constantly in fear of tripping and constantly looking down, which makes you even more stooped. And I know that many women in Muslim countries who wear these kinds of burqas, as they're called in South Asia, see them as liberating, because under these they can go out in the world, provided they have a companion. And I've tried to understand and respect that, but it's been one of the aspects of culture, in fact, that I never really could come to grips with and I'm very conscious of it all the time.

And so, anyway, in Pakistan, I also came face to face for the first time with what it means to be a foreign woman, or any woman, in a very strict society who is not following the absolute demands of that tradition—face to face in the sense that I love markets and I went into markets and various places. And without exception—and so I stopped doing it after the third

one—men would confront me fully in the face and run their hands down the front of my body or from the back run their hands open-palm down my spine. And still to this day, even in later years when I was invited to Pakistan by the secretary of health to meet to government officials and all, I felt threatened there as a woman in a way that I have never felt anywhere else.

I have never felt there that—unlike Bangladesh, for example, Indonesia, all over India, anywhere else—men there could not set aside my femaleness and recognize me as a professional, whereas in every other circumstance, really I found people could set aside gender and deal with me as a professional. I met an extraordinary young woman there who was a feminist, and through her, one of the first female members of parliament who was also extraordinary, and was struck by both of their courage and being as—still someone that I meet from time to time, she later went into the UN system and works on peace keeping now in Kosovo, Herzegovina, and is a real character.

But anyway, not to digress too much, that first visit to Asia had obviously its profound effects added onto the Peruvian experience, which had been very different. And when I came back, I wrote a long article trying to pull together all the information I had about rural women from various societies. And as I mentioned yesterday, there wasn't all that much research, but focusing especially on economic role, and so on and so forth, raising issues that a lot of them were doing household production that was extremely valuable but nowhere recognized by economists. Many of them, in practicality, were heads of household, et cetera, et cetera. And—

Sharpless That kind of thing tends to go right below the radar.

Germain Oh, and even today it still is. And Joan Dunlop thought this was an interesting piece and introduced me to Richard Holbrooke, who was then the editor of *Foreign Policy*. And he basically told me—and he comes up again much more recently in my work life, which is why I mention it now—he basically told me it was unpublishable. However, he agreed as a favor to Joan, who was a friend of his, that he would work with me to create an op-ed, which we did, and published in the *New York Times*. I think it was 1973. It might have been '74. And, of course, that was the first time the *New York Times* had ever had anything on the subject at all. It was called “Poor Rural Women”—I’m going to forget the full title, but we have it here. And just the struggle over getting him to recognize the importance of the subject stands again against Abe Weisblat, whom I talked about yesterday, who was just determined that various economists, development-oriented people should take this issue seriously.

So then, skipping back now to Bucharest in '74, right after that we knew that the first World Conference on Women was coming up, and thanks to Joan’s political acumen and her outreach abilities and so on, we got involved with the U.S. State Department on various committees.

Sharpless She was at Rockefeller, right?

Germain She was still with Mr. Rockefeller, yes. And, anyway, together we tried to influence the U.S. policy position, not, at least in my case, really understanding in those days what we were trying to do. Honestly, we really didn’t. But both of us had, because of our base with Mr. Rockefeller and the

Ford Foundation, we could call up these people and say hey. So we went to the Mexico City Conference and it was an astonishing experience. The first time ever women worldwide had had a chance to meet and recognize each other and understand that there are certain universalities in women's condition. And there was, for the first time—well, in Bucharest there had been an NGO forum, but really tightly controlled and more or less attuned to the UN process. The UN—the NGO forum in Mexico City—they had wanted to control, but in fact because so many women came they couldn't really control it to the extent of Bucharest.

And then there were the government delegations. And we worked both sides then, trying to influence what the governments ended up saying, and then also we had a very large role in the NGO forum. And it was there that I met a number of the women, primarily from Latin America and India, who basically taught me the feminism that I know. And it started with—we had had a pre-conference meeting hosted by the American Academy of Sciences [AAS]. A woman named Irene Tinker had convened it and it was before the conference, trying to deal—in fact, bring together anybody who had any interest in women's economic lives and political participation and I don't know, whatever else. And it was a controversial meeting and I was quite exasperated and exhausted by the end of it, partly because the American women there were not at all—it was so obvious to me—not at all recognizing or listening to the knowledge and the experience of the women from the South who were there. So I took a long weekend rest.

I had come across a small yellow booklet in the course of this AAS

meeting that was called “The Status of Women In India” [“A Synopsis of the Report of the National Committee on the Status of Women, 1971-1974”]. And I took it with me to read for the weekend. And if there was ever a feminist tract, that was it. And I thought, Oh, my goodness, where did this come from? And basically what it was, was the executive summary of a commission report started by Mrs. Gandhi. And a number of the women who were senior to me, probably by about fifteen to twenty years, who were on that commission and wrote the report, the big commission report, which was huge, but then this executive summary—three of them in particular came to the Mexico City Conference and I managed to find them: Lotika Sarkar, who was a lawyer; Vina Mazumdar, who was a social scientist at the national social science research council—I don’t remember the exact name anymore—in India; and Devaki Jain, who was a development economist. And we met and I learned something about how this report had developed and was astonished to hear what their own life circumstances had been and how they came to be on the commission and what their response was. And basically, in a sentence, Mrs. Gandhi had one condition for the commission which was, she put all these accomplished, knowledgeable, highly educated women on it and she said, “I want you to spend time finding out really what the mass of women face in India.”

And every single one of these women had been appalled by what she learned. And it changed each of their lives. They left their high-level professional statuses behind in various ways and focused from then forward—and all three are still living and still working and our paths joined

many, many times over the years to promote and advance the lives of the most disadvantaged and discriminated against women. So it was a profound experience, that '75 conference.

And right in the middle of it Mrs. Gandhi declared the emergency in India. And not only was that profoundly disturbing to our Indian colleagues, many of whom left immediately to go home, but basically the emergency was—what she did was to suspend democracy. And that for Indians was just anathema. I mean, it was just an appalling thing to do. And the women rushed home and what they then confronted was Mrs. Gandhi's son's campaign of mass sterilization primarily based on vasectomy. And it was again a profound indicator of what can go so wrong if you only look at demographic control goals and don't understand the human dimensions. To this day, as a result of that campaign, the one country in the world where vasectomy outnumbered female sterilization, namely India, has regressed to a country where vasectomy is very, very low, even though it's a much simpler operation, et cetera, et cetera, and is the one effective way that men in circumstances like India could actually practice—take some of the burden of contraception. So it had profound consequences for all of us personally and professionally.

But even so, in Asia these top-down national family planning policies that Mr. Rockefeller's Population Council had helped put in place and initiate and so on, thrived and continued. And opposition was very limited, largely because many women felt there was no possibility that they could confront the state on these issues effectively. So a lot of the work that many of us did

in the years between 1975 to really '85, had to do with women's economic opportunities.

And I continued to do that sort of work in the Ford Foundation and gradually the first major thing that happened was that in 1975 or so, the Ford Foundation country director in Bangladesh invited me to come there. His wife and daughter were with him. They were strong feminists. They were just deeply, deeply disturbed by what they saw of women's condition in Bangladesh. And George was—George Zeidenstein—was sympathetic but he didn't know what to do about it in his professional life. So he invited me to come and figure out what the Ford Foundation could do. Well, that was the breakthrough really that I needed in order to move forward. And only to say here that I spent months and months of time there, until the middle of '76, and learned enormously. Spent all my time in villages. In between, I was now going to India and Latin America and other countries. In fact, there was a pick up in energy and the country offices were inviting me. But the reason I mentioned George Zeidenstein in this role is that I came to know him really very well.

And when Mr. Rockefeller, in 1975, asked Joan Dunlop to find a new president for the Population Council, because—I can't remember whether Barney Berelson retired and then passed away, or whether he passed away and the Council needed a new president for that reason. We could check that, but I don't remember. Anyway, Joan asked me to—well, who should be candidates. And I said, "Well, there's this wonderful man in Bangladesh. Why don't you think about him?" So we planned that—what we would do is we—

one of my trips we would go together to Bangladesh.

Sharpless You and Joan?

Germain Yeah, uh-huh. And I introduced her to Bangladesh and all that, and to George, and ultimately to make a long story short, she nominated George. And I guess Barney was retiring, because I remember now he was very angry about this. Joan put George forward to Mr. Rockefeller as the lead candidate. And Mr. Rockefeller liked him a whole lot. He was a lawyer. He'd been head of the Peace Corps in South Asia for many, many years. He was always an iconoclast. When men wore their hair short, he wore it long. When men wore their hair long, he wore it short. I mean he was just an iconoclast, and a humane and thoughtful person. So anyway, Mr. Rockefeller chose George Zeidenstein, and then in the early months of '76 he left Bangladesh to take up this job, and Barney Berelson was fit to be tied. Because why? Well, because Mr. Rockefeller, with the urging and support of Joan and myself, agreed that what the field needed to do was bring in people from the outside. Get new blood into the field to re-look at it and rethink what its priorities were and how it should do its work premised on the Bucharest speech, which the core premise of which was, if you want women to have fewer children, this is how we said it in those days, then you have to give them options—education, employment, whatever.

So George came in and really revamped the Council entirely. And another key person, whom I had met and was part of a coven that Joan Dunlop and I had, her name was Judith Bruce, she had been working at FPIA [Family Planning International Assistance]. George recruited her to be

at the Council and she remains one of the leading, most creative people in our field. Her first area of work was to improve the quality of care and family planning services, which I mentioned turned out to have been largely very poor. And then she went on and works today on many of the hardest issues around gender and family planning and so on. And she stayed there all these years. So George, as I say, he transformed the Council. He brought in new themes of concern, new people like Judith Bruce.

And meanwhile, I was beavering away in Bangladesh and all these other countries. And it came to be the late '70s. And I was still based in the foundation in New York office, but doing all this travel and gradually getting reps to do a certain amount of stuff. We still had no women staff in the field on any subject, no women in the international division in New York. And in those days I still wasn't conscious, in an affirmative action sense, a representation sense, that this was a bad thing, but I knew programmatically it was a bad thing, because in so many countries if you didn't have women to talk to women the Ford Foundation really wasn't going to get anywhere in those days.

So I was getting to the point where I was thinking, Okay, I've done what I can do under Dave Bell and McGeorge Bundy and I'll think about doing something else. And before I figured out what it was that I could do, McGeorge Bundy retired and the board recruited Frank Thomas as the new president of the Ford Foundation in 1979. And he was, of course, a dramatic change from the WASP East Coast in government, outside government, in university, into foundation-type male crowd that dominated the Foundation

leadership in those days. So Frank Thomas was brought up in poverty by a single mother from Jamaica, I think, but anyway from the Caribbean, in New York City. Earned his way through, as I understand it, college and law school on sports scholarships and other such endeavors—very tall, very handsome man—and someone totally 180 degrees different from anybody who was leading any foundation at that stage.

So he came in and his very first act was to call all the staff together, every single one in the Ford Foundation New York office. Of course, he didn't call in all the country office staff, but he sent a message. And I mean everyone, I mean the night guards and the mail clerks, everyone into the auditorium in this magnificent building. And he, among other things, the sort of high point of his welcoming speech and clearly the core of his message was, "I have a very strong set of values and I've accepted this job because I think the Ford Foundation can advance them. And those of you who share those values are welcome to stay. I look forward to working with you. If you don't share them, but think you might learn to, then I'm willing to give it a try. If you don't share them and you don't want to share them, then you might just as well leave today. And the values are fundamentally—my core value is nondiscrimination on any basis, including sex, race, et cetera." But sex was the first one out of his mouth.

And I thought, Oh, well, that's interesting. Maybe I should stick around. His second act, very soon into his arrival, was to ask me on the international side and Susan Berresford, who was a program officer on the domestic side, to do a top-to-bottom, east-to-west, entire review of what the Ford

Foundation did with regard to women, ranging from hiring and personnel policies all the way to grant making—every single aspect of any way the Ford Foundation would impact on women. So that was when I really first met Susan Berresford. She had been there all that time and she was the one who had introduced me indirectly to Joan Dunlop. But we worked largely separately on these reviews and it was an enormous task. And the international division people were horrified, hostile, aggressive and perfectly dreadful in this process.

And the more details that came out from Frank Thomas, the worse it got, because basically he decided very quickly that no short list of candidates for any job in the Ford Foundation would come to his desk until Susan or I had interviewed each one of them. Now that's really striking at the heart of where people live. And so, there are other initiatives that he took like that. He put enormous power into Susan's and my hands and both of us were young program officers, not having much status at all, and this is what—he said a lot by doing this.

Sharpless Let me turn the tape.

Tape 1, side 1, ends; side 2 begins.

Sharpless Okay. So Frank Thomas initiatives.

Germain Right, so basically we had meetings time to time with Frank, and I explained to him that I really wasn't getting much response from the country offices, which was, of course, where most of the money was, and what had to be done, and that I was getting a lot of real either open aggressive behavior or passive aggressive behavior. You know, it wasn't in the sense of complaining,

but we had to produce progress reports. So he said to me, “Well, what do you think is the solution?” I said, “Well, money speaks very loudly. So what about thinking of a carrot-type thing. You put up some money on your end, Frank, that they can get on a matching basis if they put some money of their own budget on the line.” He said, “Oh, that sounds good.” So, of course, George Zeidenstein had set up the situation in Bangladesh such that the representative there was a step ahead of everybody else, because that office had started making grants. Several of the others that I had visited had full reports about who they should work with and how they could make grants and there was some grant making going on but it was mostly in women’s education, not in the really hard stuff with of agriculture and credit.

So basically, what we then went into was a budget cycle where we told the reps that he would match—I don’t remember the basis now. Maybe it was one to one, actually. It could have been two to one, but I think it was at least one to one. So, lo and behold, they did put women’s grant making—no specifics—but a women’s line into their budgets and basically we took all that to the board in 1980. And what happened was that we got incredibly—I’ll never forget this—on the international side we got a ten million dollar appropriation and approval for six ear-marked staff positions in country offices. And this was, really, in those days, that was a major deal.

So I said, Okay, that’s good. And I already had in mind people we could recruit. We got some really good people who later on became consultants for my work outside the Foundation. These were people that I knew, not all of them worked out, but some of them worked quite exceptionally. So, I

thought, Okay, that job is done. And there's a president here who is going to continue his commitment and I don't need to do anything and I'll think of doing something else. But again, just about that time Frank called me to his office and he said, "You know, Adrienne," he said, "I need a vice president and it's going to be Susan. But I don't want you to leave. And so, what I would like you to do is become the foundation's first woman representative and you should head the office in Bangladesh. Would you do that?" And I thought about it and I said, "Well, sure."

So then ensued a terrible, terrible struggle. One, because the current rep in Bangladesh at that time, with whom I had worked and continued grant making, doing his staff work and so on, had already decided that one of his resident staff should be the rep. Now, it wasn't his decision to make, but he thought it was. And the vice president of the international division by that time thought that person should have the job, and so on. And there ensued a campaign of real viciousness. Frank had come under a lot of fire by that time, in all directions, for reasons I won't go into. The bottom line here only was that I kept getting called into all these meetings where the vice president and others would tell me, Adrienne, you're thirty-two years old. You're single and female. You can't possibly work in a Muslim country. Nobody has ever gone to head a country office at that age. And you shouldn't take a job you're not qualified for. So I sort of said, "Well, yeah, but Frank offered it to me and I think I can do it." I've had a lot of experience working in Bangladesh by this time.

Then one day I get a call from the legal council. It was a very nice man,

but very straight-laced and all that, and I used to see him in office meetings and stuff. So he says to me, “Can you please just recount for me what’s happened since Frank offered you this job? I said, “Well, what do you mean?” He said, “Well, what meetings did you have and with whom, and what has been the subject, and how did Frank offer you the job, and what’s going on?” Well, now fortunately I’m the person that keeps a calendar. And so, I opened my calendar and I ran through all the dates with all these men who thought it was a terrible idea and the lawyer said, “Well, thank you very much. I’ll get back to you.” What?

Then he came down to visit my office and he basically said, “You know, Adrienne, there are people here who really don’t want you to have this job. And the reason I asked you for all of this—and I want to first of all commend you for having kept this kind of record.” And I said, “Well, I didn’t do it deliberately. It’s just in my calendar.” Said, “Well, it’s turned out to be useful because basically this is what we will use as the case against all of these people who are opposing your appointment.” I said, “Well, it’s gotten that far, has it?” Because I wasn’t into the gossip thing and all that in the New York office, mostly because I traveled so much. But apparently there was an enormous campaign and partly—it wasn’t just to oppose me, it was to oppose Frank, because he stood for all kinds of things that these other senior men didn’t want.

So anyway, I went off to Bangladesh and I took the job for two reasons. One was, I love the country and I really thought that I could contribute. The other was that I was determined to demonstrate that you could transform a

country program into a program that was sensitive to women's concerns and support of their opportunities and in particular that a population program could become a reproductive health program, because I had concluded by 1980 that that really was what was needed, that you needed a reproductive health approach to working with women and families on these issues of fertility and health. And my definition of reproductive health in those days included the child, because clearly most women wanted to be pregnant. Marriage is virtually universal. What women desperately wanted out of the pregnancy was a healthy child who stayed healthy and didn't die.

So it looked like to me what we should be doing was not just offering contraception but care during pregnancy and delivery. And I didn't yet fully see the reproductive tract infection issue, but I soon did. Anyway, so I went off to Bangladesh and probably won't take too long to tell you about that but it was, again, totally against the U.S. government, which had dominated the family planning program in Bangladesh for many years.

Sharpless

This would have been Reagan I, right?

Germain

Yes, this was 1981. And Rei Ravenholt either was still in AID or he was out, but his successor—and this is true until the day that Duff Gillespie retired—every successor to Rei Ravenholt was a clone, as I mentioned earlier. They all were in the demographic mode. They all believed in vertical family planning services and they all believed that population control was the main concern for the world. Anyway, the AID program—and I had watched this happen from '75. I saw it happen, and this becomes relevant later in the story. They were responsible for bifurcating the ministry of health in Bangladesh,

dividing it into two wings, one for family planning and the other for everything else.

Sharpless

USAID was?

Germain

Yes. Because in those days, in the '70s, they were the major donor to the Bangladesh government for family planning. And later on—see, the war of liberation in '71 had destroyed the country terribly and it took a number of years, really, for donor financing for development to come in. I mean, when I first when there in '75, people were still dying on the streets of Dhaka of starvation. Every day going to the Ford office there were dead people on the roads. And in a lot of my village work and so on in those days I witnessed really what a famine is and all of that.

So there had been a lot of resources coming into the country, but it was all relief work. And one of the fights we had in Bangladesh in the '70s was to get permission for women to work on the food-for-work projects—largely road construction, in order to get food. And because of the society, the people—outsiders, including CARE—running these projects didn't think women A, could do the work and B, should do the work because it was a Muslim society. Well, that was crazy because so many women had been left widowed or deserted due to the war, and that's a whole other story. But in any case, the situation when I went to live in Bangladesh on the population program was that AID, having divided the ministry into [two parts], set up all kind of special perks for the family planning staff, whether it was transport, special salaries, you name it. I mean, this was a highly privileged cadre of people who had a very single focused job to do, all the way down to village

level through women field workers.

And I started to make grants to non-government organizations, NGOs, who were also funded heavily by AID, but they came to me at Ford saying that, Look, the women that we're giving family planning—they desperately want child health service and they want advice and support during their pregnancies, so could you give us money for that? And I said, "Happily," because that's what I was interested to do. And so I started making these grants and again, to cut a long story short, actually several months into this—it was a whole series of grants—I got a letter from the U.S. government, AID head of mission, basically telling me to cease and desist from making these grants to their NGOs.

Now first of all, the Ford Foundation has no relationship to the U.S. government. They have no right to tell us anything about how we spend our money. We do have to do it in a way that the IRS requires, but otherwise—And so, this was just a tangible bit of evidence of this running battle and challenge to try to develop a reproductive health approach, when the largest major donor later on and by the early '80s—aided by the World Bank, which was enormous and was determined to continue the vertical family planning—had no interest even in women's education, let alone women's economic activity.

Sharpless

Why did they want you to stop?

Germain

Because they felt it was a distraction from the core activity of family planning that these workers needed to focus on their one single job, period. Now, these were the days when there were abuses in sterilization programs, such

that we had to bring in actually a whole outside contingent of evaluators and set up a surveillance team. And that was partly done by the Ford Foundation, which actually concluded that the reason these women were dying in their sterilization procedures was because they were being over-anesthetized to keep them quiet. Now, I visited a lot of these services and I saw how women were treated and I want to tell you it's an image that does not go away, ever. That doesn't mean however that I'm not entirely supportive of women having access to all possible forms of contraception that are safe and appropriately delivered. I mean—but then, the abuses in the IUD program were so severe that to this day women in Bangladesh won't use the IUD, which is a travesty, because for many women it's the best method and yet the leftovers from that period where no concern was given to quality of service are such that women are afraid of it, and of course they're afraid.

So anyway, I was, in transforming the foundation's population program, trying to bring a reproductive health perspective into it, trying to bring a quality-of-care emphasis into it. Working with both government, because Ford Foundation worked with government heavily, and with the NGOs. I transformed the agriculture program from a program focused on staple food grains—rice and later wheat, which all the donors were pouring money into. I said our comparative advantage would be in the secondary food crops that women control and food processing, which is largely done by women and it's horribly laborious and inefficient and blah, blah, and they get no income from it. So our agriculture program became one of focus on vital, but nonetheless secondary, food crops—the lentils, which give protein in a rice-

based diet; the vegetables, which are essential for vitamins and all that; the chickens and fish ponds that are also vital as sources of protein, et cetera, et cetera. So it wasn't just for women. It was a broader understanding of what the poverty condition was, what nutrition was all about, and a recognition that even if Bangladesh did become self-sufficient in food grains, which they many years later did, that if they didn't at the same time bring up the secondary food crops, that the population would be nowhere in terms of nutrition.

So I added a program, which was fought tooth and nail by my vice president in New York, who was one of the people who hadn't wanted me to go to the position in the first place. Because I said, "The agriculture is never going to sustain the rural population in Bangladesh. There are too many people on too little land and this is both a male and a female problem. And what we need in Bangladesh is something that no other donor was doing, is a program to develop rural employment and diversification of the rural economy." And basically I wanted to hire a specialist, which I fought tooth and nail in that area. I finally got him but over a lot of dead bodies in New York.

And having met Mohamed Yunis in the early days, in the '70s, when he just returned to Chittagong University from Vanderbilt in the United States and was trying to work on poverty issues—which was unusual for a development economist in those times, especially rural poverty—and having made the grants to Chittagong University through George Zeidenstein for a rural economics program that he put together, I stayed a close colleague of

his and actually then made the first grants for what became the Grameen Bank, which is now so well known. And he asked me when I was head of the office in Bangladesh if—and we worked a lot over the years because it very soon became evident, though it was not his original intent, that by far the best participants in the Grameen Bank project were women and by far the bulk of the borrowers ultimately, very quickly became women, for a variety of reasons. I was always very interested in the Grameen Bank as a mechanism.

But anyway, at some point he—I guess it was '83, maybe—he had decided that it could no longer be a project under the Central Bank of Bangladesh. It was just too hard. And he wanted to create a separate, autonomous bank and would I help him do that. And to make a long story short, I found bankers through the Ford New York office in Chicago, very astonishing bank called the South Shore Bank, which invests in very poor communities, and the president and the vice president came out and they just got on like a house afire and the Grameen Bank took off.

And why I mention this is again, people involved, because one of the people working for them at that time in Chicago was Jan Piercy, and she was a member of the class of '69, from Wellesley. And she actually came to work in Bangladesh for about a year and a half or so while I was first there, in '81 or so. And we reconnected there, not having known each other that well in Wellesley. And then she was withdrawn from Bangladesh by the agency she was working for and her name will pop up again later and so will Grameen Bank.

But in any case, what then happened was that we really did transform the Ford Foundation program in Bangladesh. And it also had an influence on some of the other donors but not many in the population field. Basically AID and the Bank maintained its dominance. And I was getting pretty fed up. Then Joan wrote to me and said—this was the fall of '83, but the Reagan—it was rumored, and it was likely to be true that Reagan, in the 1984 Population Conference in Mexico, was going to have an anti-abortion provision. And AID, including in Bangladesh, had increasingly put constraints on what was then called the menstrual-regulation program, which is early abortion using technology that actually Rei Ravenholt had funded to develop. And I will always thank him for that, as well as for his effort to make contraceptives available. Even though I had criticisms about the way he made them available, the fact was that AID leadership in getting contraceptives out was enormous.

What happened with this technology—the so called Karman cannula syringe—was that just as it was ready to be really widely used and to have people trained to use it, various restrictions were imposed in AID. And so, what happened was that the technology and funding to advance it was handed over to some of the USAID cooperating agencies and in Bangladesh that was Pathfinder. And they had developed really a very good training program in Bangladesh, which was orchestrated through a couple of local NGOs, but then also with the government as sort of a quasi-government program. And that program trained primarily government workers and primarily the FWV, this woman village-based worker that I referred to under

the family planning program. And meanwhile the NGOs—the Bangladesh Women’s Health Coalition, which was established at that time because the USAID-funded family planning NGOs were told they could no longer provide MR, menstrual regulation, for their clients.

So Sandra Kabir literally established a clinic across the street funded by what was then the Population Crisis Committee, who had picked up a moribund NGO in the United States called the National Women’s Health Coalition. And basically PCC, the Pop Crisis Committee, put private funds into the National Women’s Health Coalition. And Merle Goldberg, as the director, had the idea that she would set up—and they renamed it to be the International Women’s Health Coalition—and Merle Goldberg decided that she would establish an affiliate group in each of as many countries as she could reach. And Bangladesh was one of the first. And she and Sandra Kabir hit it off like a house afire and basically Merle helped train her and develop a whole clinic for menstrual regulation right across the street from Concerned Women for Family Planning, which was one of the largest AID-funded NGOs in family planning at that time. And it was called the Bangladesh Women’s Health Coalition and I started funding it as the Ford Foundation Bangladesh.

So BWHC was part of this Pathfinder consortium to train all the government health workers to provide safe, early abortion down to the local *thana*, level meaning the county level in Bangladesh, which was extraordinary. Because at that time there was a Ford-funded survey that showed clearly that nearly 40 percent of maternal death, which was very high and remains high,

was due to botched abortion, despite this top-down family planning program. And why was that? Well, because due to the poor quality of the program, women would not use methods correctly or would stop using them because of side effects they weren't warned about or didn't get consistent supplies or whatever other reasons. But there were very high rates of unwanted pregnancy and botched abortion. And the Ford-funded survey had demonstrated that.

So when we heard that the Reagan government was going to take this so-called Mexico City Policy into the '84 conference, all of the AID-funded NGOs were notified on a very short timeframe that they had to totally divest themselves of menstrual regulation, that they couldn't do it through a separate building and separate records and separate staff, which is what they had tried to do. They couldn't do it at all and they couldn't refer, either. So I saw this—and as an American citizen I was outraged and I decided that I would get the money somehow to sustain all of these programs. And I went to all the other bilateral government donors and I couldn't get anyone of them to do this, to act immediately.

So I put together a package of three quarters of a million dollars—which for my office was a large amount of money in those days—to these three NGOs in this sort of quasi-government training institute. And again had a huge battle with New York, because the Ford Foundation had never funded abortion services anywhere, including in the United States. In fact, they had funded really rather little abortion work—mostly public education or advocacy. And they were utterly opposed to my doing this and, of course,

with that amount of money I couldn't just make that decision myself. It had to be approved in New York. I still have that memo and all. I have kept some of these key documents.

Ultimately, after a huge struggle that involved going beyond my vice president to Frank and to Susan Berresford, who was by then the vice president, and saying, "Look, there may be nothing else that I can tell you with a hundred percent certainty saves women's lives in Bangladesh. We have to do this. It's bridge funding. I'll find other funds for this, but if we let this drop now, we'll lose everything." So they agreed and we made the grants and this was in the winter of, early '84.

And then, of course, the Mexico City Policy came out and thank God I had made these grants because it really was one of the few instances—and it became a lasting example and it is today an example of how countries with very strict abortion laws can nonetheless recognize women's need for this service and find a way to provide it through a government system, including through mid-level health care workers who are not medical doctors. Now these principals are ones that most of the Third World countries today need to adopt within their frameworks in order to ensure that we—first of all, that women have the choice of an early safe abortion, but also to reduce continuing high rates of maternal mortality. About this time then it was coming up to four years of my being in Bangladesh, and that was about the time that representatives stayed.

Meanwhile, what was happening back in the United States was that Merle Goldberg, the head of the International Women's Health Coalition, was told

by PCC, the Pop Crisis Committee, her single donor, that they wouldn't fund her any more. So she started to visit foundations to get money and one of the first that she went to was Hewlett, and Anne Murray was there at that time. Now, Anne was very astute and very creative grant maker. And in this case she really went overboard in terms of activist grant making, which generally I'm opposed to, but in this case she was absolutely right. She basically said to Merle, "Look, I agree with you. We need at least one NGO U.S. based who will keep the issue of access to safe abortion alive in this very bad period that's coming down." This was the winter of '83. "And I think the International Women's Health Coalition could be that NGO. But Merle, basically you're not a manager. You've got to resign. And furthermore the board has to agree to a total restructuring and furthermore I will recruit Joan Dunlop as the president"—because Anne had known Joan from her Rockefeller days.

Mr. Rockefeller had been killed tragically in a car accident in '78, and Joan's new job—well, she did various things. She worked for Planned Parenthood for a while, but by this time in '83 she was working with Vartan Gregorian, who was the president of the New York Public Library. And Anne knew that she was getting restless and somehow wanted to have her own organization and do her own thing and Joan had always been very committed to abortion rights because she herself had had an illegal abortion in the UK when she was quite young.

So Anne put this proposition to Joan and Joan said, "Well, I will do it, but I have three conditions. The first is that I want multi-year grants, not just

from Hewlett, but from at least two other foundations for general support.” Joan was very sophisticated on this kind of stuff. You know, that was really a key condition that she set. Second was that Adrienne comes back from Bangladesh to do the program work, because Joan herself has never worked internationally and doesn’t have that background. And the third was that the Coalition would no longer just focus on the dissemination and training in the use of this Karman cannula syringe for menstrual regulation, as we called it.

So, Anne put that whole thing together and Joan agreed to do it and by this time it was—I don’t know—Joan started at the Coalition in June of ’84, and I had already agreed in principal that I would come back and join her in this. However, I wasn’t going to leave Bangladesh until I completed my fourth year. That was until August of ’85. So we kept working sort of long distance.

Joan was horrified to discover not only that there was no money in the bank of the IWHC, but there were no staff. The little office in Washington had basically no files, no systems, and she was desperately trying to figure out what kind of grants Merle had made where and who had what kind of money to do what. It was a mess.

Sharpless

Let me change the tape.

Tape 1 ends; tape 2, side 1, begins.

This is the second tape with Adrienne Germain on June 20th. Now, how did Joan approach you about coming with the IWHC?

Germain

Well, actually she and I corresponded a great deal. You have to remember that, especially in Bangladesh in those days, there was—I was actually,

ironically, since I don't use a computer, I was the one who computerized the Ford office. I did it just before I left in '84, '85. I was the last Ford office to computerize and that was because there were no support facilities or anything of that kind in Bangladesh, even by the early '80s. So our only mode of communication, when I first went and for the first almost three years—if you wanted to make an international phone call you had to book it and you could wait as long as a week to get a line. There was no—what do you call it—fax. All you had were cables, where you had to minimize words—no full sentences, and believe me, there could be some real misunderstandings. We had no air courier service like DHL in those days, and what we would get was a mail pouch once a month, as I recall.

So it was a very different world and I had wonderful friends in Bangladesh that I built up over the years who, by the time I went there to live, had actually quite significant positions in government, which was one of the reasons I thought I could do the job, because I had all those relationships. And I had many personal friends who've remained friends, very dear friends, to this day. However, a very young, single white American woman, living in Dhaka, except for the U.S. ambassador—it's so interesting. The U.S. decided, at the same time that Frank Thomas sent me to Dhaka, they sent the first woman ambassador of any country ever to Bangladesh. So the U.S. ambassador was a woman and turned out to be a huge disappointment. But that's a side story.

In any case, there was no television, no radio. Fortunately my friends had advised me—I had never had music in my life, but my going-away present

was mountains of people's favorite tapes and I got a little stereo set on my way through Hong Kong. I had never had any music and that was a salvation, but the other was letters. And I have all those letters, actually, because I kept Joan's letters to me and I kept carbon copies of letters that I wrote to her. And one day, I'd always thought, well, maybe it would be interesting to go back and read them, but I never have. And I had one or two other correspondents apart from family, but my family really didn't understand my work, so I didn't write much to them. And I wrote air letters, because those could go out of the country very easily. So they got those little folded blue things. I don't know if they exist anymore, but my family did. But Joan got pages and pages of hand-written letters and another friend who was posted in China actually got the other set. He was a male friend, which you could almost say this is a side story.

Anyway, but what I had known before I went to Bangladesh and when I accepted the job—I mentioned earlier that when I'm in someone else's country I try to adopt appropriate behaviors. So I knew that while I was in Bangladesh I would never have any male friends, colleagues or otherwise ever in my house unless there were many people there. And the work load was just enormous, because in fact, when I arrived in Dhaka the man who had wanted to become rep, needless to say, didn't stay. And the other post was vacant and it took quite an effort to recruit, because bringing people to Bangladesh in those days—it was a real hardship post. It was really a hardship post in terms of health, in terms of any imported goods or whatever. So it wasn't easy.

And I'm telling you this only that you asked, Well, how did Joan ask me? Well, we had maintained this close friendship from collegial correspondence over the time that I was in Bangladesh and she and I had felt so much when we worked together from New York that we were largely alone in our conviction, and with Mr. Rockefeller's death—if he had lived, there would have been a seniority of leadership that, I think, could have made change come much faster. But as it was, Joan and I were involved—Joan in the business of headhunting, basically, constantly trying to find people with a broader vision. And I, at least in—well, a lot, but certainly in the Dhaka years, demonstrating how it could be done with governments and with NGOs on the ground. And so, she just wrote me a letter and said, “You've been in Bangladesh long enough. Enough is enough already, and you should come back and do this.”

And as I say, I was beginning to think that anyway, because they were some of the best years of my life and I loved that job and I feel that I not only learned a lot but I accomplished a lot. But it was demanding. So four years, I felt, was going to be enough, and I told her that I didn't want to leave after three years because you didn't get the satisfaction of really bringing some things to fruition. But I would come in a year.

So Joan then moved the office to New York and we were in—she was put it in a little garret office on the top floor of the American Institute, across from Hunter College on Park Avenue, a little rabbit warren of offices. And she hired first—oh goodness, I'm going to—how awful—I'm going to forget her name. A young woman who later went on to become a very effective

staff person at IPPF Western Hemisphere. And then shortly after that another woman in the field, whom I had known for many years, named Judith Helzner, who had been at Pathfinder for years—I forget all of her career, but Joan hired her to start to work as the first program officer of the Coalition and Judith then herself left the Coalition and went back to IPPF Western Hemisphere for a number of years where she did path-breaking work on gender issues and on male involvement and so on. And she is now at the MacArthur Foundation, in Chicago.

So, there are these threads of contacts and she and I think first met—it must have been the late '70s, when she was at Pathfinder and I was at Ford and she was trying to bring some sensitivity to women into Pathfinder, which was dead set against it. And she asked me several times to come up there and speak. So we went back many years even by the time Joan hired her. So Joan tried to sort out the files but there wasn't much to sort out. Meanwhile the three grants came through so that was okay and she had some money in the bank.

And the first obligation she took on was the man, the demographer who had followed abortion for many years and was the only piece of abortion that Barney Berelson was ever willing to countenance at the Pop Council, was statistical data collection on legal abortion around the world. And it was done by a remarkable man called Christopher Tietze. And that work was going on while I was at the Council and those papers were produced and so on. So I had known Chris, a remarkable sort of teddy bear of a man with a big gray beard, and he was a remarkable man. And many people felt he was a

remarkable man. But he died unfortunately early.

And when Joan came into the Coalition, some of the core people who had worked with Tietze were looking for an NGO that could host a symposium in his honor on the issue of abortion, which even in '85, was a very—still very sensitive and difficult issue. And so Joan was preparing for that with Uta Landy and, oh gosh, I should remember her partner's name, another OB/GYN. And actually, that was the focus of a lot of Joan's initial work in '84.

Sharpless

Was the symposium?

Germain

The symposium. And it was to be held in Berlin and it was all arranged and set up and you had these people coming from all over the world and giving papers and doing whatever. Uta and her partner arranged all the program and then Joan was—the Coalition was arranging the logistics. I don't remember why they chose Berlin. But she got there, and the reason I tell this story only is that this was the first incident of what, of course, would become an increasing number, where Joan's leadership and her political acumen was really critically important to the Coalition's work, but also more broadly in the field—because basically what happened was they held the symposium and then they had done some announcements of it and so on, but were sort of pretty relaxed about it.

And they get to Berlin and Joan had the political knowledge that at least some screening should be done of people that came to get into the meeting. And so, she had started a list, as I recall, by which the people at the conference site could check. And on that list was the International Right to

Life Committee, Father Paul Marx. So he shows up. Joan's inside the conference. I don't know who is at the registration desk, but somebody who really couldn't handle it. And fortunately there was somebody else whom she or he sent inside to get Joan.

And there is this classic photograph: Joan comes out of this conference and she's towering over Father Paul Marx, who is tiny, and Joan is six feet tall and a large person—presence. And she basically said, "I'm sorry, you're not invited." And he said, "What do you mean, I'm not invited? Free speech," blah, blah, blah. And they got into a real tangle and he slipped passed her to get to the door of the conference and he's pulling it open and the photograph is Joan towering over him basically slamming her arm against the door and keeping it closed. I mean, it is classic. We should really try to find it somewhere.

So that was like the first encounter. And the Tietze Symposium produced a book, and we have it around someplace and we know we can find it.

Anyway, the next thing that happened was, this was the winter of '84, and—

Sharpless

Were you—

Germain

I was still in Bangladesh. Joan writes to me about this and meanwhile I'm scrambling around trying to get everything done, because to wrap things up and all that was a problem. There had been all kinds of controversy about my replacement and he kept delaying and the Foundation asked me to stay an six extra months and I wrote back and said, "No, I've done all my thing here and I'm just not going to do it." But that meant that there was no replacement and I really had to do a lot of stuff. I didn't pay much attention.

And I had this great plan that I would leave Dhaka and go to Delhi and then spend vacation time in India. And Ford Foundation was wonderful to me. You know, Delhi office provided us this car and all that and I'd go off on my holiday and I'd get back to Delhi to fly to London and go to New York. And there's a cable waiting for me in Delhi saying, "Change your plans. Fly to London and come to Nairobi." This is from Joan.

Well, Nairobi '85 was the Second World Conference on Women. I had missed the five-year one in 1980, which was held in Copenhagen, and it was not really a world conference, it was like an interim one or something. Anyway, and Joan said in this message, basically, "I've organized a really strong group of women to be there, but I think we're going to face some real opposition." So I changed everything—flew to London and down to Nairobi. And this was, in many ways, in August/September of '85, like the classic first public step of the Coalition. I hadn't even joined the staff yet and actually the arrangement was that I was going to be half time at the Population Council and half time with the Coalition. But at that moment, I hadn't started either.

So I get down there and Joan mobilized a wonderful group of people, and Judith Helzner was there. And we have some photographs of this somewhere, because what basically happened was the day I arrived, which was the day before everything started, the conference newspaper and the local Kenyan newspapers just had blast forward anti-abortion headlines and accusations that this conference was about abortion. And the term "right to life," we think that may have been one of the first sort of international public

uses of the term, because while Father Paul Marx was the head of—I think it was something called the International Right to Life. Whatever it is it still exists and I always get these names mixed up. But we saw loud and clear that we were going to have a really terrible time on the family planning and safe abortion issues that the Coalition was bringing into this women's conference.

And Joan is an enormously astute political strategist. And she picked this up very early and we started having strategy sessions with our little group of people, and so on, but we very quickly realized that we would have to basically take over the whole NGO forum, or at least get as many participants as possible on our side. Why? Because it became very clear in the first day of the meeting that the Kenyan groups, led by the Roman Catholic Church, had mobilized we didn't know how many Kenyans to just inundate the campus, the university campus, where the NGO part was being held. So we couldn't figure out what to do because family planning was a never big—well, at least in Mexico, hadn't been a big issue. It was on the agenda because women always know that without contraception, women can't do all their other things and exercise their rights and blah, blah. But it wasn't a major part of the agenda. In fact, Joan had thought that the Coalition's role in the NGO forum would just be to put forward one item on a much broader agenda and just say, Well, what do women want?—and establish the quality-of-care issues, the choice issues in selection of contraception, the access to abortion, whatever.

But what we realized was we had to capture the commitment and the imagination of many more people. And so, I had built a very substantial

number of relationships with women from all different parts of the world in my years at the Ford Foundation, all of whom were focused on economic development issues and many of whom were at Nairobi. So we just basically did a search. I found as many of them as I could. None of them had ever been interested in the family planning, or even the health side. There were women who are now very well known in our field—Carmen Barroso, for example. And we gathered in a hotel room and I basically said, “Listen, I basically never asked you for anything, any of you, but I need to ask you now. I know you’ve got a lot of sessions on your own and so on and so forth, but if we don’t mobilize to push back against these people we’re just going to be drowned. It’s going to be the end.” And they all agreed.

And so, what we did was to develop the first, if you like, inside-outside strategy of the Coalition in its political work at the UN level, which was that we—Bella Abzug was leading a lot of the non official NGO work vis à vis the conference. And Bella didn’t have an interest at all in family planning and reproductive health and that would hold true during later years in the Coalition’s history, but Bella was magnificent. And we basically worked on statements and got to Bella and said that this needed to be integrated into her strategy to influence the government meeting, which we were not trying to do at that conference. So that was one thing. Remember Reagan’s daughter was the head of the US delegation—what’s her name?

Sharpless

Maureen?

Germain

Yeah. Oh my. Anyway, Reagan’s daughter, of all people. So the abortion issue we knew would be on the plate, anyway. What we did then, with all my

colleagues from the Ford Foundation era, was to organize and make sure that they were spread, again, across every possible session at the NGO forum, where the Right to Life people might make a disturbance. So we have the inside route through Bella and, of course, we were verboten to the U.S. delegation. And then we had the outside, so-called NGO route, via all of our colleagues from around the world. And we handled it—we managed it very well and these guys—not guys, they were women. They had the good sense to put women—did make or try to make fusses and disturb and do all the things that they do.

And it culminated in a huge demonstration in the central lawn of the University of Nairobi, where the Right to Life people were trying to mobilize an anti-abortion statement. And this wonderful, wonderful woman from the Caribbean who is now at UNICEF, Joan French—I went to Joan and I said, “Joan, we’ve got to intervene here and can you lead it.” And Mercedes Sayagues from Uruguay is a very diminutive Latina and then Joan would—Joan French was a very tall, very elegant, beautiful woman—the two of them march into the front of the circle. Meanwhile, the rest of us are gathering as many women from all the ongoing sessions—as many people as we can possibly get onto this lawn. And everybody’s in a circle. And Joan French and Mercedes Sayagues are in the center saying, We need to craft here and now a statement on how women see the right to life. And it’s a remarkable statement and it was crafted standing up in the middle of this crowd. We have it here in the archives. We have all the conference newspapers also from that period.

And in the middle of the crafting of this statement, these Right to Life women sort of try to reassert themselves. Again, another visual image—they break into this circle and they start berating and putting out all this disinformation, which persists until today: abortion causes breast cancer and all this sort of stuff, and it's killing an innocent life, et cetera. And so Joan and Mercedes are really tough and they handled this brilliantly, but the crowd suddenly realized that behind each of these women—the antis who were in the audience and kept interfering and trying to shout down Mercedes and Joan—behind each one was a man. And the crowd just got enraged.

And actually what happened was that these women and the men just sort of disappeared and the crowd then stayed on to create this statement, which was presented to the main conference and put into the newspaper and all this sort of stuff. It was a very decisive sort of moment, and thrilling. Of course, we had one of our first of many, over the years, massive celebrations and ruckus, whatever, afterwards, dancing and things women do. So we managed, and in fact that conference document had in it a far more progressive statement about women's right to control their bodies than had yet been achieved in any UN agreement. [It] was a sentence that we went back to to get it repeated ultimately in the Beijing—the 1995 Women's Conference, because it was more progressive in terms of controlling one's own body than we had been able to achieve in the '94 Population Conference in Cairo.

Sharpless

Why did the United Nations—this is going to sound like a naïve question, but I'll ask it anyway. Why did Joan Dunlop consider the United Nations conferences to be a forum to exert effort?

Germain Leadership?

Sharpless Yeah.

Germain What we both felt was desperately needed were tools that would legitimize women's right to control their own reproduction, including, but not limited to, abortion. And in those days we were talking about reproduction. We weren't talking about sexuality. And the Mexico Women's Conference had been such a politically powerful event and Joan is a consummate politician. I mean, she's really good. And she just knew in her gut that these—as I could understand—these meetings could be used for political purposes. And similarly, Bella Abzug understood that and threw herself into them from Nairobi forward. And she was a consummate politician. Now, over the years we had to develop strategies of crafting these documents in such a way and spinning them and putting them forward in the world in such a way that they became useful tools, but was their gut instinct that the forum itself, having that many women in one place, and especially if you could get media coverage, and so on—making the voice of women heard at the global level was politically dynamite.

And I think they also understood that somehow the space for women to meet outside their own countries and in their own way, which is why the NGO forums came up, was also vitally important, because what we had seen in Mexico City was that women as diverse as we all are realize there's certain universalities in women's condition and that there is strength in numbers and there's strength in diversity. So that would be, I guess, about my—what I could say. It also is the case that, you know, by definition the UN is—and

any conference like this—is something that happens with and through member governments. So it's a way, a space, to pressurize nation states, that adds to whatever pressure you might do at home. And that's always been, of course, much more important in other countries than in the United States.

I mean, even when we have been a multilateralist nation, which we're currently not, the U.S. has generally avoided signing onto UN documents, especially the legally binding treaties and conventions, because the U.S. somehow, I don't know, is convinced that national sovereignty would be compromised. They don't want the UN looking over their shoulder.

Sharpless

But other countries do sign those documents.

Germain

Oh, yeah. And we'll get more into that because the Coalition has been very active in making that happen. So, anyway, we went home from Nairobi feeling quite victorious, to this little garret on Park Avenue, and then what needed to be done was to clean up, frankly, the mess that Joan had inherited. There were not very many projects, but as we mentioned there were very few files. And for the most part, Joan had not met any of the project directors. And I certainly hadn't—except for Sandra Kabir in Bangladesh.

So we began—we divided the labor basically and we went to visit these various countries. Joan went to Indonesia and the Philippines first and I then picked up the rest of it. There was, let's see, Indonesia, the Philippines, Bangladesh. Senegal—as I recall, neither of us went to Senegal, but Madame Whatever came to see us and that was a real aberration. This was a private practitioner running her own small clinic, and that was great that Merle had trained her and helped her set up her clinic, but it wasn't a project that

should be continued. So that was sort of an easy decision and that was amicably decided that Senegal wouldn't remain.

And then we sent a board member, Ieda Siqueira Wiarda, who was Brazilian, down to Brazil to look at the Brazil program and Judith and or I visited Columbia and Peru—Judith Helzner.

Sharpless Now remind me, had Joan reconstituted the board?

Germain Well, she and Anne Murray had been able to slightly revise it, and as I wasn't here when that was done, all I can really tell you is that some of the less useful members of the board had resigned. There were still some members of the board who were not really very helpful and who certainly didn't agree with Joan that the Coalition—her third condition, which I think I never mentioned before, was that we wouldn't just deal with abortion, that abortion was one thing that women face in their reproductive lives but by no means the only thing. And also politically, as a strategy, from Joan's point of view, and I entirely agree with her, it didn't make any more sense to go for abortion separately than it did to go for family planning separately. It was just politically not smart. So I don't actually remember, maybe we can find in the records, what the board list was.

What was important, and Joan has often told this story, is that—Frances Kissling, I know, was on the board at that time. Joan had many friends still from city government or from her time at the public library, powerful friends, one of who was Donna Shalala, the president of Hunter College at that time. And she went to Donna for advice and Donna told her basically, “Put your friends on the board, Joan. You're going to need somebody to

protect your back”—literally, verbatim. So Joan added to the board Donna herself—and we all know in the Clinton years Donna Shalala became secretary of health and human services—as well as university presidents and all that. Carol Bellamy, who was in city government, had been on the city council, who later became and is now the head of UNICEF. Marjorie Knowles, who is a lawyer from Atlanta whose husband is one of the best known rural civil rights lawyers in the country, Marjorie is a professor at the faculty of law. She was the chair for several years—used to needlepoint throughout the meetings. It used to drive people crazy but she made some wonderful needlepoints as departure gifts for board members who retired.

So yes, I mean, Joan did reconstitute it and it was very definitely a board of friends. Later on Mathea Falco came onto the board. She was the deputy assistant secretary for drug control in the State Department, et cetera—

Tape 2, side 1, ends; side 2 begins.

Okay, many of these people continue, to this day—I mean, I just saw Mathea yesterday, for example—they continue to be interested and engaged and supportive of our work from whatever power positions they're in. So, the first year that I was back in New York, from September of '85, as I mentioned, I had this half-time appointment at the Population Council and half-time at the Coalition and my salary was paid by the Ford Foundation, which was common thing to do when people left.

And when I arrived at the Population Council, George Zeidenstein, who was still the president, had decided that he was going to hold a big conference in, as it turns out, Nairobi, on the topic of better health for

women and children through family planning. It was the same year—it was held in the fall of '86. In the spring of '86, also in Nairobi, the first international conference on safe motherhood [First Safe Motherhood Conference, 1987] was convened and basically led to a decade of safe motherhood. That's another branch of the story, but it was significant that both conferences were held in the same year and in the same place, because everybody gets them confused.

George asked me to write a paper for his conference, [International Conference on] Better Health for Women and Children Through Family Planning [1987], and gave me carte blanche. And I decided that I would write, now, my first paper on reproductive health. What was the concept? How could you do it? et cetera. And it was a very long paper and the presentation, needless to say, was shorter, but it was printed for all the participants. And it caused an uproar, again, a huge negative reaction, just as bad as the reaction to Mr. Rockefeller's speech. You know, it's 1986, and basically the problem was that the family planning population community, which was really—even though it was a conference, Better Health for Women and Children Through Family Planning, the people were at that meeting were primarily the family planning population people, even though earlier that year, in the same city, a global conference had taken place on safe motherhood. That meeting had been attended by health people and all that, and the two should never meet, kind of thing. So still then in '86, you'd have this kind of reaction.

Sharpless

What did you say that most set them off?

Germain

Well, I think really what they were concerned about was that if we wanted to combine family planning with other maternal health services, that would take money and staff time away from family planning, which had to have the priority, in their book. The family planning field had always tried to avoid the health sector, always avoided the medical doctors, even the clinical services, so-called IUD insertion and sterilization. The emphasis in the population field was to train non-doctors to provide it. And that's fine. I'm very supportive of having non-doctors do things that they can be qualified and supervised to do, so I'm not against that, but the point was that the family planning field was absolutely committed to stay away from medicalization.

So I think all that had to do—one of the people who was very upset with me but also intrigued because he had a severe political problem at home was the secretary of health from Pakistan. I mentioned earlier I was invited by the government. Well, he invited me to come to Pakistan after this meeting to talk with his staff and visit various people in the country to try to see whether, in his country—which had totally failed to persuade women to adopt contraception, unlike Bangladesh next door—by 1986, 1987, you had contraceptive use prevalence rates in Pakistan down around 5 to 8 percent, and at that point, in '86, '87, my guess is that contraceptive use in Bangladesh was at least 33 percent or higher. And nobody has ever fully well understood, to this day, contraceptive use in Pakistan. I mean, I haven't looked at it quite recently but it's still around 10 percent. You know, it's a hugely conservative society. It's not for nothing that I'd go into a market and have these physical assaults. So he was intrigued enough to ask me to come and I had some

wonderful conversations there and it didn't amount to anything in the end, sadly, because we didn't have enough staff really to follow it up and I had to pay attention to countries where the Coalition had its old projects, all of which had to be transformed.

So anyway, this Better Health for Women and Family Planning conference took place. That paper was humongous and I had written it under pressure and it had lots of things wrong with it, including length. And over the next year I worked on refining it and printing it, and it was printed, first by the Coalition, as "Balancing the Scales," which is, I think, the Coalition's first publication apart from the first Tietze symposium report and book. And looking back on that paper now, of course, I understand in a way how inadequate it was, but it reflected the opposition in the field, because basically I was not proposing, at that stage, integration of services. What I was only proposing—I mean, I said that that would be ideal but I recognized it might not be possible. So all I was asking for at that point, or proposing, was that there be better referral mechanisms and coordination between the contraceptive delivery programs and the health system, which provided child health care, not much maternal care except for nutrition and tetanus immunization, but nonetheless at least there was some interest in the woman. And so, I put forward what I thought was a pretty simple framework and suggestions for how to do that. And "Balancing the Scales," interestingly enough, I think is still a paper that's in demand and is read.

So where are we now? We're in '86 and basically what we've decided was that Joan went to Indonesia and the training program there was run by the

worst sort of man who is still very prominent today—OB/GYN-type who dominated the family planning services throughout this period and was responsible for the very poor quality. And Joan took one look at what was going on in Indonesia and made a public speech, which in Indonesia, where you're never supposed to say anything negative and never supposed to have any sort of open conflict, just set everybody on their ear, and basically said, "Unless you do the following things the Coalition is not funding this program anymore, period." That was one piece of the program. Another piece of the program was in the Planned Parenthood affiliate and she basically said to them, "Well, maybe we could work something out here. But basically, I don't like what you're doing." And she got on a plane and went to the Philippines. I mean that's how Joan is. And she left a huge amount of consternation in her wake and so I made the next trip, basically.

And we can come back to the design of that and how that program developed. Joan went onto the Philippines, which was a very different kind of an undertaking. It was a very young woman, with a much more senior woman and her husband, who was a human rights lawyer, who had been prominent in the family planning affiliate there, and through that work, knew that lots of women in the Philippines were having botched abortions and babies they didn't want to have. And they, very courageously, had created an underground abortion service, basically, in Manila, which was a very courageous thing to do—not as courageous by a long shot as some of the work going on in Latin America by that time, but nonetheless important. And they had created a separate institute from the family planning affiliate to

do it and Merle had supported the service delivery part.

What Joan could see in the young woman, whose name was Alexandrina Marcelo, was both the energy of youth and value commitment separate from the population field. So, what we did in the Philippines was really to try to support and sustain what Rina wanted to do. And the **Tadiars** were on the board of this separate Institute for Social Studies and Action, ISSA, (pronouncing) ee-sa, that was created to be more of an education, outreach, advocacy orientation, and underneath was the safe abortion. But ultimately they really didn't know how to develop and manage an underground service and somehow we weren't able to find anybody who could advise them. And over the years—it may even still continue now, I'm not really sure. But the Philippines program we funded for some years. We became very close to Rina and we have maintained contact with her all these years, but our financial support ended, I would say, in the early '90s, because really it just wasn't taking off. It hadn't been well grounded to begin with, I think.

We found in Bangladesh, which basically had been Sandra Kabir in the Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition, which was the only Merle Goldberger affiliate, so-called, that took on the name of the Coalition, but was never affiliated in the way that the International Planned Parenthood national groups affiliate to the center. In other words, there was no structural relationship. Sandra wasn't on the board or anything. IWHC gave her some money, but by no means the bulk of her money, because by that time it had become very large and Ford—during my time I had started Ford Foundation support and other donors came in.

But the reason I mentioned this is that before I left Bangladesh, having made these grants to sustain the national menstrual regulation and training program, until I could find a bilateral donor to take it over, I negotiated with Swedish SIDA [Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency] to take it over. Their condition however, was that there should be a feminist group involved from the outside who would make sure that the program was of high quality and didn't become abusive. And the reason for that was that in Scandinavia at that point there was a huge hue and cry from feminist vis à vis their own parliaments—that their governments were supporting what they considered to be abusive family planning programs in Bangladesh.

So, knowing that I would join the Coalition and with Joan's agreement, the contract that was written up between Swedish SIDA, the government of Bangladesh, and the four NGOs, including Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition, was that the New York International Women's Health Coalition would provide continuing technical support. Actually, SIDA wanted us to have oversight in sort of a watchdog or policing role, which I declined to have. I said, "I don't think it's necessary, but even if it were I wouldn't institute it from outside. If you're concerned about that, then you need an indigenous organization to work it through with."

As it turns out there was never any need for a watchdog, because in this collaboration, which went on for many years, until '93 I guess, the Coalition and these four and menstrual regulation and training organizations had a very extraordinary partnership and maintained and grew and strengthened and improved the quality of probably what is, in the world, now the leading

example of government-provided early safe abortion services. And virtually all of those services are provided by family welfare visitors who are women, who have only ten years of formal education of very poor quality, who have eighteen months training before they go into service in family planning and contraception—basic anatomy and so on. And then, after they've been in service, they're brought in for training in menstrual regulation, in this training program. They're followed up, and they receive refresher training, also on a schedule. It's really quite remarkable.

Sharpless

How much had you dealt with SIDA before this time?

Germain

Well, of course as one of the donors in Bangladesh, I had engaged with their Dhaka-based staff. In order to get their support approved, they had had to go through Stockholm and there were visits from Stockholm people to Dhaka, and so I met some of them. But then once I had left Bangladesh and this contract was set up—again, it wasn't a contract directly with the Coalition. What I had said before I left Dhaka was that we needed to be wanted by the people in Bangladesh. So the formal agreement between SIDA and the government of Bangladesh included the procurement of outside services to do a set of functions, which is basically what the Coalition did. And SIDA managed those funds, because if you put foreign exchange into the government—back then you expected the government to hire external consultants or whatever, using foreign exchange—it would never work. And I was very much against these kinds of procedures, but there really was no alternative at that time. Well, the reporting and all then required that I go to Stockholm, be engaged with those staff.

And what basically happened was, once [I had] published “Balancing the Scales,” the Swedes were the first donor to really think there was something in this reproductive health framework. And there were some key staff people in Stockholm who wanted to try to promote that, but they didn’t really know how to train their staff and what it really meant in terms of their grant making. So, there then began not only the collaboration with SIDA in Dhaka, but they asked me to come and train the staff in Stockholm, and that was a lot of my time for a while. And also at the time, as I trained staff, then the staff that I trained asked for my help in redesigning their population program to become a reproductive health and rights program and my continuing advice on how they should spend their money.

So in the late ’80s—we used to keep track of this, actually—I ended up being directly responsible for SIDA grant commitments of about four and half million dollars, which is a lot of money. And [the programs] reflected again these certain elements of how Joan and I set up the Coalition, certain characteristics. One of them was that it was always [good] to be small. And the idea was not to do the work ourselves but to influence how much bigger actors with money and power did their work and that’s what we called in those days, leveraging, basically. This work with Swedish SIDA was an example par excellence of that.

Another characteristic of the way we set it up was that it would have one foot in the women’s health and rights movement and the other foot in the mainstream—both Joan and I having come from about as mainstream as you can get, the Ford Foundation and John Rockefeller. We knew that if we were

really going to get larger agencies with power and money to do their work differently, then on the one hand we wanted the largest possible political mass backing our two voices, that is, the voices of the women most affected by these population programs, to give credibility and all in the mainstream, but we wanted to be able to do it in such a way that it really engaged people—professionals—in the field and gained their respect. In other words, we knew we couldn't just create another advocacy organization. We were never and we are not now solely an advocacy organization and it's because we wanted to demonstrate what needed to be done. We wanted powerful, growing constituency with voices both in their own countries and in the global arena and, especially from my point of view, the real technical engagement with agencies to continue this work that I've tried for so long to bring to the fore, which was how best to meet women's needs in the area of reproduction and sexuality.

So here we are in 1986. We're still trying to revise the old projects. We're still mostly focusing our work at the country level—in the countries where there were existing IWHC projects and also beginning to think about the possibility of reaching out to other countries.

Sharpless

Maybe that might be a good place for us to stop today and pick it up next time. We can talk about how you chose those countries to move into. Does that sound like a good jumping-off point?

Germain

Well, it could be. There's one more point, I think, to make before we end, which was that, at the same time the work at the global level was beginning to emerge—I mean, the first was the first Tietze symposium and then this

Better Health for Women and Children Through Family Planning [and] the publication of “Balancing the Scales.” But at the same time, here in ’86, as we’re going through the beginnings of training work and all that with Stockholm, getting one major donor in our field really to change to a reproductive health framework, the colleagues and supporters of Christopher Tietze wanted to have another symposium. And basically Joan and I agreed to do that, only this time we designed the content. And it’s so interesting really, because the abortion issue was highly controversial. Not only that the Mexico City Policy was in place and because the U.S. was the largest donor, that policy had all kinds of ramifications very, very broadly—across the UN system, across NGOs, with national governments, et cetera. So abortion was really still a fraught issue, to say nothing about local/national level kinds of concerns.

So we decided on a much more strategic approach to what was the second Tietze symposium, which we held in Rio. It was held immediately after the annual international congress—annual or biannual? I forget, of F-I-G-O, which is the International Federation of OB/GYNs, FIGO. And there were several significant outcomes from that meeting, basically. We held it in conjunction with FIGO to try to get as many of the OB/GYNs to come to it as possible, because in every country—we had already realized that unlike the United States, where OB/GYNs don’t have that much power and prestige, in most countries where we worked and especially on our issues, the OB/GYNs had a stranglehold, especially in regard to how abortion services were delivered—whether they were delivered and how they were delivered.

So we wanted the OB/GYNs, but we also paid to bring from many different countries women who were service providers, program managers, researchers, and activists, because we wanted—again, this was sort of like the first global-level effort of bringing the women's movement together with the establishment and getting them to dialogue and we hoped reach agreement. And this became another characteristic of how the Coalition did its work, which was multiple times over the years, both at country level and global level, to bring together the movement and the establishment in dialogue to see where we could find common ground and where we would agree to disagree and try to work more to reach some sort of consensus later on.

Also what happened at this meeting, however, was that the MacArthur Foundation had just really started up a new population program. It came out of the MacArthur Foundation's interest in environment and it was one of the largest foundations in those days and it was very exciting that they should decide they want to go into the population field. And again, thanks to Joan's connections, she had met the man at the Foundation at that time who was given the responsibility of figure out what population programs should do. And again, this was an example of leveraging. We did a lot of what I call his staff work, which was educating him, traveling with him, and then ultimately convening a meeting of women in Miami to talk with him about women's views and how they perceived this field. And again, we should probably dig out the list of that meeting because it was a classic, all these wonderful leaders, some of whom had been in Nairobi, and et cetera, came together. And it was a core group of women who then stayed and still remain with the

Coalition after all these years for various negotiating purposes.

But anyway, the reason I mention that is that by the time of the Tietze symposium in Rio, MacArthur Foundation had agreed with Dan Martin's proposal, which we'd had a lot to do with, about how to shape that program, and they now wanted to recruit someone to head it. So, naturally, Joan and I, just as in the case of the presidency of the Population Council, decided that we should somehow have a say in who was put into that job. At Rio, we wanted to spend some time and talk with **Jose** Barzelatto, who had been brought into the Ford Foundation program when Bud Harkavy retired. He must have been brought in, I think, about—well, maybe just about this time, '85, '86.

He was a remarkable Chilean OB/GYN, and because of the botched abortion cases he had seen all during his residency in Chilean hospitals, he was very much committed to finding ways to provide access to safe abortion. And he was very active in FIGO and so on. And I don't remember if it was he, or someone else had recommended, maybe—I don't remember how the connection got made. But Mahmoud Fatallah was the president, or the incoming president of FIGO at that time, and he and Jose Barzelatto were very close colleagues and we had invited Mahmoud to write one of the papers for the Tietze symposium, and he's a remarkable speaker and all that. Anyway, so he was going to be involved in the symposium.

But one morning—classic Joan endeavor—we got up early and walked with Mahmoud and Jose on the beach in Ipanima, and basically said to them, Listen, we think Carmen Barrosa should be the person who heads the

MacArthur program, and what can you two men do about it? And ultimately she was chosen to head that program and it became really very critical. Anyway, so the symposium itself, it just recently, someone was saying to me, I guess it was Ruth Dixon-Mueller, who's been a long-standing colleague since way back, since the 1974 Bucharest conference when the UN had hired her to do the review paper and she was one of the people that I reached out to when I was asked to design a panel separate from Mr. Rockefeller's speech on women and family planning at the NGO meeting. Ruth had done all this research and I went to talk to her and figure out the issues and so on. And Ruth just recently said to me—because she still works with the Coalition as a consultant. She had been reviewing the publication from the Tietze symposium, which was issued as a special issue of the *International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, which has very few special issues, and it took a huge manipulation to get them to agree to publish the papers from the symposium. But anyway, Ruth just said to me that all of those articles are still path-breaking. And this is—I don't know—fifteen years later. And she's right. Because we structured the panels, we designed this meeting very strategically. And maybe we could come back to that tomorrow.

Sweet

Is that the first symposium or the second?

Germain

The second, the one in Rio, and it was either '86 or '87. And that was also my first task at editing a volume of papers. And oh boy, why I did it repeatedly again after that, I don't know. But it was a big huge piece, again, of the Coalition strategy in these early years, the late '80s and early '90s, was to do this kind of work.

Sharpless Do you want to stop for today then?

Germain Yeah, uh-huh.

Sharpless Okay, well, we'll come back to it. Great.

end Interview 2

*Interview 3***Sharpless**

Today is September 25th, 2003. My name is Rebecca Sharpless, and this is the third oral history interview with Adrienne Germain. The interview is taking place in her office at the International Women's Health Coalition on 21st Street in New York City. And with us today are Jennifer Block and Sue Hornik. Now, Adrienne, when we were together in June, you were most generous with your time, and we talked a lot about how you came to be involved with the International Women's Health Coalition, your work in Bangladesh—all that wonderful stuff. And we did talk some about the beginning days of the International Women's Health Coalition. So, for today, where we agreed that we might start was for you to go back over where Merle Goldberg had set up work and what you and Joan Dunlop inherited in terms of the country work.

Germain

Uh-huh, okay. Well, as I remember, what we inherited were projects in Indonesia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Senegal, Brazil. I actually think those were the only projects going on. And, slightly before I arrived, Joan had visited one or two—I think only Indonesia and the Philippines—and immediately realized that their leadership didn't hold the values that the Coalition held.

Sharpless

Meaning?

Germain

Meaning that as the projects were constructed, there wasn't a core central commitment to women's health with a rights perspective. They were well-intended people, but without the strong attention to quality of services offered and respect for the women who were coming in for those services. It

just wasn't acceptable to Joan and, of course, to me, to work with people who didn't have that core commitment.

Sharpless

Were they more target-centered?

Germain

Well, they weren't exactly target-centered. They were simply not women-driven. Well, for example, in each case, they involved the provision of abortion services. In the case of Indonesia, they were against the law but above-ground and recognized—known in the government but not prosecuted – provided through the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Federation. And they were also provided through a training program, which was the larger part of it and conducted by a couple of physicians in a free-standing public health clinic. And those physicians happened to be people who really were only interested in fertility control, having women stop having babies. And their reputation in the contraceptive field was not good in terms of respect for women's dignity and rights during services and so on. And then the way that they provided abortion services also didn't really reflect fully informed, free choice about contraception. They didn't respect women's right to be treated with respect, confidentiality, privacy in the service itself—those kinds of variables.

In the Philippines, it was truly an underground service—highly risky but not well designed and managed. So very few women could find their way to the service. And when they did, women were rejected more often than they needed to be, in medical terms, because the staff were really very fragile and afraid. And that's understandable because, you know, Philippines is one of only four countries in the world that prohibits abortion absolutely. And it's

the only country where that's a constitutional provision. And so, there's a very high risk attached to providing abortion services, especially if we're talking about back in the early '80s.

And then, associated with that, above-ground, was something called the Institute for Social Studies in Action, which was led by a very interesting young woman, very committed feminist whom we worked with, actually, for many years. But her board and the umbrella protection for the underground abortion services was provided by two leaders in the family planning movement in the Philippines—Judge [Alfredo] Tadiar and his wife, Florence [Tadiar]. But they're very old-fashioned sort of family planning oriented and, you know, they were wonderful in their courage and support, but there was no room really to grow here toward a women-centered vision.

But in the Philippines and in Indonesia, you have these exceptional individuals—Rena Marcello in the Philippines is the young woman I referred to and then, in Indonesia, it was three people really—Dr. Sudraji, who was the senior OB/GYN in the country at the time and who had, in his own vision as the chair of the Indonesia Planned Parenthood Federation, created a quality reproductive health model. And at the IWHC-supported project within the Planned Parenthood affiliate, which is called IPPA, was a remarkable young woman trained in psychology, one of very few in Indonesia in that profession, and a young male OB/GYN doctor.

Now, when Joan went to Indonesia first (before I had arrived back in New York) to meet with these people, she took one look at the situation and not only told the medical doctors that were managing the main training

program to their face—but she actually said it publicly, which in Indonesia is just not done—that the quality of care and the way that women were treated in the training part of this project was unacceptable, and that the Coalition would not continue support. That was for the public clinic called Clinic Raden Saleh. In the IPPA people, however, she could see some potential in this young psychologist, Ninuk Widyantoro, and in the young OB/GYN, Dr. [Sony] Sarsanto.

So when I arrived, one of my first tasks was to go back to Indonesia and meet with them and then also to go to the Philippines and meet with Alexandrina and the Tadiars. I think I mentioned in the earlier interview, when I was living in Bangladesh and the first Mexico City Policy forced the defunding of the national menstrual regulation training and services program—menstrual regulation being early vacuum abortion—I had, from the Ford Foundation base, given them bridge financing so they could survive and then worked out a partnership with the Swedish government development agency to continue financing the training and service program, the condition from the Swedish SIDA being that the International Women's Health Coalition would continue to work in partnership with that national program.

So, programs in each of these three countries—well, what we inherited in Indonesia and Philippines and what I brought with me from Bangladesh—were extremely different. I mean, you couldn't think of more different country circumstances and nature of projects. Then, in Senegal, it was more different still. Merle Goldberg had met a remarkable woman OB/GYN, I

guess—I'm not sure now whether she was OB/GYN or not, but she was starting up her own personal clinic in which she wanted to support abortion services—again in a country with very restrictive laws. I don't remember her name. And we, by the time we came into it, Joan and I—actually, she was doing pretty well. And it was clear she was charging fee-for-services and so on, and it was clear that financially she could survive without us. And we just didn't see any particular rationale for supporting work in that particular country of sub-Saharan Africa. There was no rationale. So we came to an amicable agreement that we would no longer support her work.

Then, in the Latin America side, the only other inherited work was in Brazil. And that was really two or three isolated providers, as I remember it, including one in a very isolated part of the Amazon region. So my job, when I arrived, was to go back to Indonesia, go to the Philippines, of course keep the partnership in Bangladesh, and then go down to Brazil to check out what was happening there. And I'm not going to remember how many years that took or what have you. But I brought with me into this experience all the Ford Foundation years and connections in these and other countries.

And, basically, the strategy that we decided to pursue at that time, and our main commitment, was to building up women's own organizational capacity, to increase access to or actually provide safe abortion services in the context of a more holistic approach to women's health. What happened in each country took very different shape depending on the individuals that we met. We didn't actually always only support women's groups, in the early days especially. We also were intensively looking for forward-looking medical

doctors, most of whom, in fact, were men, not women, in these various countries.

Joan and I—I mean, I, coming from Ford, I had a particular viewpoint about programmatic strategy and so on, which was that I'd rather invest deeply in a few places and stay in that commitment over time and build real capacity with roots, rather than just spread ourselves over a whole lot of projects. So, the first real change that was made, apart from affirming that we wouldn't just deal with abortion—because women's health rights came into it later. Women's health was, you know, had to be addressed in a holistic way. So, really what I was doing in those first few years on behalf of the Coalition, which at that point had very few staff—um, and I still have to resurrect these names for you. That was the notes that I lost.

But, anyway, Joan hired Judith Helzner, who, I think I mentioned last time, is now the director of Population and Reproductive Health of the MacArthur Foundation. But, at that time [was] a young woman whom I had known for many years. When I was at Ford, she was at Pathfinder in Boston. And she used to ask me to come up and talk with their staff about women and so on. So, Joan hired Judith to do the work in Latin America. And she had one other staff person, Karen Beatty, who helped do the logistics of management for the first Tietze Symposium and then the second Tietze Symposium. Karen later left the Coalition to go to IPPF/Western Hemisphere and actually wound up as the partner of Hernan Sanhueza, who ran IPPF/Western Hemisphere until about a year ago. So, Karen Beatty stayed very much attached to the field and did some very interesting work at

IPPF.

Judith Helzner—I don't remember exactly, but I think she stayed three or four years, and then she went on to IPPF/Western Hemisphere, where she had a steep challenge in front of her. She basically took on issues of gender and, well, their family planning service agenda—trying to broaden it out, encompass a reproductive health perspective and full respect for women's privacy and confidentiality, dignity, et cetera. And also, then, she was responsible for building up their program concerned with men's involvement and also with outreach to adolescents—this is through all the affiliates of the International Planned Parenthood Federation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

So, um, we were in this little attic office at the Spanish Institute on Park Avenue, across from Hunter College. (laughs) And, um, Joan hired a wonderful woman called, um—oh, I'm going to forget her name.

Sharpless You can fill it in when you get the transcript.

Germain Yeah. But, in any case, as her assistant—and then—and for quite a while, that's all the staff that we had. And, as I mentioned, there were no files on any of this and I'm very much a systems person. So I come in there and I'm thinking, Oh my god. So, we had a lot of work to do just to create an organization. And being as small as we were, we didn't have personnel policies or anything. And so, we had to build up all that basically from scratch.

Sharpless And get infrastructure. What about the fifteen thousand dollars in the bank?

Germain Well, then, of course, in due course—and I don't know how many months it

took—but, by the time I arrived (so within Joan's first nine or twelve months, I guess), the three-year core support grants came through. So she didn't have to worry about money. It was really more that the vision for the Coalition and the programmatic strategy was waiting until I arrived. So she came in June of '84, and she inherited the commitment to the Tietze Symposium and got through that. She hired Karen and Judith Helzner and her assistant. She's corresponding with me back and forth about the Mexico City Policy. And I was doing my thing in Bangladesh to try to save the MR training and service program. So her first eighteen months were taken up with a lot of that kind of stuff—plus reaching out to other donors.

And then—I don't remember why, if I ever knew—she decided that she was going to take a group of feminists to the Nairobi Women's Conference in 1985 and to do some panels around women's reproductive health and rights. Now, we weren't using that phrase yet, but in any case, that's what the panels were to be about. And Judith Helzner, of course, was involved in planning that, because she'd been hired by that time. There's a wonderful woman from Uruguay—Mercedes Zayaguez is a journalist that we really should—well, we should find out where she is. The last time I saw her was Beijing in 1995. But, anyway, Sandra Kabir, I think, was there—but there were a number of people. And I think I mentioned the last time—that was where we saw publicly for the first time what we now call this Right to Life, anti-abortion crowd backed really by both, in that case, the Roman Catholic groups in Kenya and the evangelical Christian groups.

So, Joan was really, you know, sort of just trying to sort things out in that

year and a half. And I arrived in Nairobi. We do our thing there, and then we begin to do this program and project review. And, um, I'm not sure what's really most constructive to say. I mean, I could give you a vignette about how each of the projects that we inherited was transformed based on these key individuals. So—

Sharpless

I think that would be useful.

Germain

Yeah, okay. So—and meanwhile, the Coalition also had to deal with the Population Crisis Committee, which I think I mentioned. The IWHC started out its life as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Population Crisis Committee to deliver or disseminate this hand-held vacuum aspiration kit for menstrual regulation—early vacuum abortion—and it was that which Merle had distributed and so on. The PCC financing was critical. And these colleagues that I mentioned or projects across these countries had PCC money in them, still. And so, in my early stages of reviewing what these projects could or should transform themselves into, I also had to work with PCC. And that was the struggle that I mentioned, just on ideological grounds. Because this was the name, and it still is, under a different name—lobbyists in Washington for population funding and U.S. foreign assistance and, you know, for bringing global attention to population growth as a problem.

So, in the Philippines, gradually over just weeks—I decided after spending a lot of time there—and I knew a lot about abortion services. I had been—I think, as I mentioned to you, in Bangladesh—I'd been heavily involved directly in the development of curricula and training procedures, and setting minimum standards and the whole business. And I could just see

that the underground abortion service in the Philippines was highly shaky, we were not going to be able to guarantee quality and real access. And I just didn't want to support that any longer.

But what we did do was to support Alexandrina Marcelo, the young feminist leader of the head of the ISSA—Institute for Social Studies and Action—to do, really, you know, research, advocacy, what little was possible in the Philippines. You have to remember this was the Marcos era. And although he had a population control mentality, access to safe abortion was not part of that at all. So we supported Rena with financial assistance. We stayed with her for many years, until the early '90s. She then left the Philippines feeling somewhat constrained about her own circumstances, joined the regional office of the International Planned Parenthood Federation in Kuala Lumpur. We've kept in contact and back and forth over these years. She came to the Ford Foundation in New York for a while, and then she went back to Manila. We've always stayed in touch. And she is one of our colleagues, I should say. And in Indonesia—

Sharpless

And she's back in the Philippines now?

Germain

Um-hm, she's there now. Um-hm. And gradually we decided that—especially when Rena left the Philippines and given the very strong presence of the Ford Foundation in the Philippines—with program staff there who really didn't see any need or reason for the Coalition to be there supporting reproductive health and rights, since they were doing it—we decided that, Okay, fine, we're not really needed in the Philippines. Also, the women's movement there was highly fractionated. And there was a lot—there is still,

there was then—a lot of anti-Americanism, for good reasons. And it was a very difficult place to work. And by the time we decided that we'd no longer support work in the Philippines, I was no longer doing it myself. And my staff really didn't have sufficient, you know, wisdom and political acumen to navigate a very tough setup.

Sharpless You have to pick your battles.

Germain Yeah. And we needed—that's a good reference point for some of the principles that we began to develop over time about how the Coalition would work. And even today, but certainly back then, we knew that we had to choose for success. You know, when you're on the absolute outside cutting edge of a very difficult issue, if you keep choosing the hardest places and situations and you keep losing, you're not going to make any progress forward for your issues.

Sharpless You need some success.

Germain Um-hm. And clearly, in the Philippines, for all these circumstances, it wasn't going to work. Now, in Indonesia, I followed Joan's visit there. I could see the extraordinary, really, potential for leadership in these two young people I mentioned. They were my age at the time roughly, you know. But, we were all young in those days, anyway. Um, but also, the chair of the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Federation had become this remarkable physician, Dr. Sudraji, who had created his own vision of reproductive health care. So when I went to Indonesia, we sat down and I said, "Well, this vision is really what Joan and I are most interested in. How can we help?" So, at that time, we provided the technical input and the link into the Ford Foundation. They

supported this project inside IPPA for many years.

The Asia program really has never been and really still isn't a grant-making program. It was geared toward trying strategically to invest in such a way that we could have, or our colleagues could have, an impact on these quite draconian population policies in Asia, which you didn't ever see in sub-Saharan Africa or in Latin America. But, the large countries—Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, China—had had these very heavy, top-down, national family planning population control programs. And Indonesia was really one of those. A lot of the stuff was delivered by the military and, you know, it was—um, Suharto and, you know, there's no such thing as the NGOs or community participation or anything else. It was not a democracy. And Sudrajat's vision was just—I was just floored. It's sort of like that early status of women report from India that I mentioned—that this just totally came from his own vision and commitment, which was so rare for us to see in those days.

So, anyway, that led to years of collaboration with them on how to build up, within IPPA, good quality, comprehensive reproductive health services, including early abortion, but not limited to that; how to go about record-keeping systems, counseling—all the elements of a good quality service that had never been part of the Indonesia national program. And the strategic interest there, apart from these wonderful individuals, was that when contraception was illegal, IPPA had led the way to decriminalizing it, contraception. And that was a critical role that IPPA had played. Then, when the government said, Okay, contraception has been legalized, [IPPA said] it's

the obligation of the government to provide it.

IPPA had been the resource that the government relied on to train its family planning workers. It was really the only resource in the country. So in two earlier stages, IPPA had been critically important. But when I came into the picture, they had lost their way, in terms of influence. And the idea was—with Sudraji as the chair and Ninuk and Sarsanto as the sort of leaders of the project—to build up good quality care with all these specific elements, to do it with the government's knowledge, and then to work with the government again to retrain their workers, redesign their policies and approaches toward reproductive health.

Sharpless

And what would IWHC's role be?

Germain

We provided a lot of technical support. We helped them, uh, you know, develop a real work plan and strategy to implement this vision. We brought in special consultants to help them work on the management information systems and all that you need if you're providing health services. We brought in a medical consultant to provide oversight for the training and quality control of their reproductive health services, including the abortion work. The consultant was—on the MIS side, Terry Hall from Australia and still remains a close colleague and part of the Coalition. The medical doctor was Phil Stubblefield, who's one of the United States' leading OB/GYNs but had taken a piece of his time for international work—remarkable man, really.

And so, for years we built up this system in ten of IPPA's clinics throughout the islands of Indonesia. I spent an enormous amount of time, myself, working with them, strategizing, et cetera. And it was really beginning

to flourish, really taking hold. It took an enormous effort to retrain all the staff into a reproductive health mode of thinking and the quality of care—put-the-client-first soft of mentality. But it was built up very carefully, you know, from the beginning.

And then, Dr. Sudraji's term as chair ended. A new chair was elected who couldn't be more different, who treated Ninuk and Sarsanto, as well as the project, terribly. And finally, you know, Ninuk and Sarsanto tried to stick it out, and it was clear it wasn't going to work. I met with the people concerned at their request. Sudraji tried—forget it. So Ninuk and Sarsanto resigned. And the Coalition no longer supported IPPA. And we've stayed in touch with Ninuk, especially, but also Sarsanto, and Sudraji to this day. And we work with them in different ways.

Most recently, Ninuk has asked me to return several times to help her as she develops her strategy on several counts. One is to introduce revised legislation to liberalize the laws restricting abortion. Another is reaching out to the Muslim community. There are two huge Muslim-based organizations in Indonesia that basically dominate social thinking and the political process. And Ninuk has her entrée into both of these. And then, she reaches out and works with all kinds of NGOs, including also young people in many different islands of Indonesia, to mobilize support and concern about reproductive health and rights. She's thinking about maybe creating a stronger NGO base for doing that, that would be fully staffed and not rely on volunteers and so on. And she's looking to us for advice about that. If she decides to go forward, we would help her raise the money. So that's Indonesia.

Then Bangladesh—we continued to support the national MR program, which was implemented through four NGOs there until '97, I guess. And it's sort of a complicated situation. But, to simplify matters—although it was implemented through NGOs and one quasi-government sort of body, all of the people trained in this procedure are government workers. And the bulk of them are non-doctors, deliberately. And the bulk are female. And these would be workers that are assigned down to quite local levels in Bangladesh. We help the organization constantly update and maintain the quality of their training, make sure that, really, contraceptive choices are offered, not dictated, and all these kinds of things. Um, because it was training government workers and doing it in government facilities, government hospitals across the country—there are thirteen of them—we continued ourselves and certainly the NGOs have a lot of interaction with the government.

And my own personal history was such that I was very concerned about national policy, donor funding, priorities, et cetera. So, even though we had program officers, you know, by this time that I would train and introduce to these countries and who carried on a lot of the day-to-day work, the Coalition also had a higher level policy engagement in Indonesia and Bangladesh—not the Philippines—with the government and with the donor agencies.

Sharpless

Okay. Let me turn the tape.

Side 1, tape 1, ends; side 2 begins.

Go ahead.

Germain

That meant then—essentially, clearly, what I'm doing is telling you the whole history of each of these programs, which I won't do in quite so much detail for other regions. But in the case of Asia, I think it's important just to see the trajectory of starting with the core investment in a particular NGO and then trying to move forward in building leadership and, where possible, engaging the government. Those kinds of priorities did not characterize and, to a large extent, still don't characterize the Coalition's work in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

Anyway, on the Bangladesh side, the Swedish funding for the MR program came to an end. So did our role as sort of technical partners in all of that, at the time that the country needed to develop a whole new national program post-Cairo. And so, the Swedish government asked us to be involved in their work with the other donors, the Bangladesh government, and NGOs to design this new five-year program. So that work went on from '96 to '98. And our role specifically, requested by the Swedish government, was to be sure that the design of this new program was participatory, fully engaging civil society and the main stakeholders, that it was gender-sensitive, and that it was pro-poor. So, in essence, Sweden was the only donor who had those core commitments. They knew they didn't have the staff capacity to pull it off. I told them I wouldn't do it by myself, that it was essential in—by 1996—that there be Bangladesh professionals involved. So Rounaq Jahan and I did this work as consultants to Swedish SIDA. Um, and, basically, to this day, that program in Bangladesh, the design of it, is the most comprehensive attempt at national level to design a policy post-Cairo that

would really meet at least the sexual and reproductive health and rights elements of Cairo. Now, unfortunately, as implementation has been very slow and now is in jeopardy because of the change in government, which is taking the position that anything the previous government did must be bad, and we'll throw it out. It's uncertain what will happen with this. But there've been a lot of very good lessons learned about how to do this kind of participatory programming. And we're now being asked to contribute similarly, not by SIDA, but by the World Bank in India as India designs the second stage of its national what they call reproductive and child health program, which was also designed post-Cairo—was not nearly so comprehensive as the Bangladesh one, but, again, was an attempt at a national level to design a policy that would encompass the Cairo standards.

Sharpless

What about Brazil?

Germain

So, now, going on then—therefore to pick up again there. Brazil—we had, as I mentioned, a few service providers, quite scattered. Again, and like the Philippines, a hugely risky situation in terms of legal liability of the providers. So, the first trip that I made to Brazil, I literally—in those days, I did quite a lot of this, especially Latin America; I also did it for Nigeria and Cameroon later—I carried MR kits in my suitcase to deliver. And we had to come up with all these things about documentation and what we would say to the customs people if they opened our suitcases and saw them. This was, looking back on it, really (laughs)—you know, if I'd been more thoughtful about it, I might not have done it. I mean, literally, it really—I did some very foolhardy things, I would say. And I think I mentioned in the last interview that the

Coalition had been given by PCC the equipment and also the copyright on the training materials that Merle Goldberg had developed, because her mandate was to deliver the equipment and train people to use it. And I was very quickly realizing that we shouldn't be delivering equipment. We need to get rid of this. And furthermore, we're not the ones to do training. We should give up the copyright and—but I hadn't quite gotten to that stage in the early visits.

But Brazil was one of the ones that pushed me over the edge on this because, you know, I visited these providers and I knew what I knew from my work in Bangladesh. And, uh, you know, I just thought, we can't be involved in direct service delivery here. This is a not even a drop in the ocean. We have to think of some strategy that's going to change things for more women. This is just not what I'm interested in doing.

Sharpless Yeah, Adrienne can't carry enough stuff in her suitcase to (laughter)—

Germain I mean, you know, really.

Sharpless Yeah. So, hardware could be somebody else's worry?

Germain Yeah. So, basically, in that first visit to Brazil, (laughs) it was the cusp—the late December/early January, New Year's in—so it was '85 December going into January '86. This was before the Tietze Symposium, I guess. I really should check these dates. But, anyway, both those things happened within twelve to fifteen months of each other. So I fly down there. And, of course, I have all my Ford Foundation contacts and so on, I mean, with the few feminists that I've been able to find out about in Rio. And I was invited to a New Year's Eve party by the Ford Foundation representative at that time—

beautiful penthouse apartment on Ipanema. So, you know, we have a nice time and friends were going to drive. We stuffed five of us—well, six of us—in a VW bug, three of us in the back seat, the man driving, the woman with a baby in her arms in the front seat, passenger side. And we go through the tunnel that goes from Ipanema to I-don't-know-what. And some drunk driver runs into us—head-on collision, because they reversed the directions of the tunnel—anyway, head-on car crash. And I was the worst injured—fortunately, not terrible, but—so I had, you know, a broken nose, hugely swollen black eyes, and my legs were a mess because they'd gotten caught under the front seat. So they were terribly swollen and very painful.

But, knowing me, I have a full schedule planned. January 2nd I'm going to go down to São Paulo, and I'm going to finish this trip. So, I fly down to São Paulo. I had a consultant with me, a wonderful woman I knew from the Ford Foundation called Mary Anne Schmink, [who] was fluent in Portuguese—she knows nothing about health, but just wonderful in terms of Brazil—real special. She's great. So she's accompanying me as my translator. And on this trip, that's where I first met the *collectivo* in São Paulo and [Maria Jose de Oliveira Araujo], who was just appointed (2003) by President Lula [Inácio Lula de Silva] the head of the women's health program in his new government, ministry of health. But in those days, they were running a small feminist service which included underground referral to abortion in a lower-income area of São Paulo, right in front of a major bus station where they were robbed all the time and this, that, and the other. Anyway, so we went there. I met all the staff and we identified others that we could meet in São

Paulo, and we did all that. Then we got back on the plane. And, again, you know, this is normal. It's just stupid to go to Brazil at this time of year anyway. I mean, you know, nuts. But, I don't know why I insisted, but we insisted.

Sharpless In the middle of December?

Germain And, so everybody travels, you see. This was like—

Sharpless Was that the monsoon season?

Germain No, it's Christmas New Year's, which is a major shutdown.

Sharpless Okay. It's a holiday period.

Germain You know, second only to Carnival, which is even worse, you know. So, we get to the airport, and all the flights have been backed up. I can't remember why. But, of course, in Brazil, they've all been overbooked. And when we finally get on this plane, everybody is asked to take children in their laps so they wouldn't take up a full seat. So here I am with these swollen legs, broken nose, huge eye—I mean, everybody's looking at me like, you know. And I got a little kiddie on my lap for the flight all the way up to the Amazon, which is very long. I can't remember. We're very late. We arrive there at two a.m. in the morning. Of course, nothing is open. We take a taxi in to find anywhere to sleep—I don't remember what it was, some little hotel—and go back to the airport at five a.m. We'd had no food since we'd left São Paulo to go to the airport—no food, nothing to drink, nothing on this plane. There's nothing in the hotel, zero, because we're getting there in the middle of the night. We're just lucky we can get in. (laughs)

So, then we go to the airport at five in the morning to find out that the

commercial flight to where we're going has been cancelled. And from wherever it was we were going—I'd have to look up the names—we would then have another longer trip from the point of view of the commercial flights. And I said, "Well, I'm going to deliver this equipment, and see who this provider is. I'm not leaving Brazil." So, to cut a long story short, I hired a private plane, which I should've known better. Mary Anne and I get on this thing. We fly out to the back of beyond, wherever it was. We get off the plane. I can see all these clouds. And the pilot says, "Be back in an hour." I said, "What do you mean an hour? I just paid you a fortune. I need two hours minimum." "What are you talking about? Be back." So I said, "Oh."

We go to see this provider, and I'm absolutely horrified. Here's this man, clearly a decent man and trying to do his best in dreadful physical conditions of his office, but the horrifying thing was that Merle had given him an MR kit, which is pieces of plastic. Um, it would've been in 1980. And nobody had ever come back to see him or ever given him another one. He'd used the same one. And he'd sterilized it by boiling it. And you can't do this with this plastic. So, I took one look at this, and I thought, My god. This is what turned me off providing abortion services through the Coalition. There was no way I was going to be any part of this. Because the syringe was yellowed and cracked and the—and I knew a lot about the equipment, which I won't bore you with, by this time. But I could just tell that there was no safe abortion with this kit. So I went through the routine with him about disinfection, cold disinfection. And I gave him the kits that I did have. And I said, "Listen, please."

We go back to the airport. To cut a long story short, we're up in the air, lightning and all hell breaks loose. They lose their radar connection. Fortunately, they found a road that had been started nowhere, and it went nowhere. And it was only water and trees. I mean, it was a miracle that truly—and they managed to set this little plane down. It's a five-seater, four-seater. But we lost the wings and one thing and another. The co-pilot had a severe head injury in the process and one thing and another. So I get Mary Anne and myself out of this. She's traumatized.

Sharpless How did you get you out?

Germain Well I got them out of the plane because I was afraid the plane could have a fire.

Sharpless Oh, literally, okay.

Germain But, then I thought, well—because it wasn't raining at that point. I mean, it was a sea of mud, but it wasn't raining. Anyway, we were in the back of beyond and it was a mess. And, I won't bore you with the details, which are really quite funny. But poor Mary Anne was traumatized. It took us seventeen hours to basically walk out and find a place where there was some sort of communication. And people along the way that we asked had no idea where they lived relative to anything else. I mean, it was just totally isolated. And, finally, we managed. But, we didn't get back, I guess, to—what's the main city on the Amazon? I've forgotten. Anyway, whatever it is, by the time we got back there, Mary Anne's husband, who was in Florida, was frantic, because, of course, we'd gone missing. We were covered with the most appalling bites, which I'm allergic to. So, I was completely swollen up.

Meanwhile—

Sharpless In addition—yeah. (laughter)

Germain To all this stuff. No food and no water still. I mean, we had been going from São Paulo all the way through this. It was just—it's the only experience in my life, and I've worked all over the world, where—I mean, I'm sure if this had happened in Bangladesh, even the poorest of people would've offered us tea or what little something that could be had. But this, apparently, is an area where actually we could've been in a great deal of danger. People are generally very hostile, apparently. And, you know, I mean (laughs)—so anyway, that was Brazil.

But, anyway, what happened with Brazil was, no more underground abortion service. Let's find women who are really interested in working with women, counseling and referring them—

Sharpless And that's what you and Judith Helzner started doing when she came on board.

Germain Yeah, and Judith then started traveling to other countries. And for quite a while, we supported—what we thought at that time was the thing to do for Latin America, given that it's very different from Asia, would be to support two or three, maximum maybe, and even one would do, leaders in several countries. This was sort of the thousand-flowers period. So we supported some extraordinary people in Colombia, Venezuela, Peru—all of them one way or another attached to safe abortion services or referring for them in ways that I could stomach, not like the doctor in this Amazon situation. But I really began to realize that we shouldn't be doing that. We arranged for IPAS

[International Project Assistance Services], the producer of the equipment, to take over the copyright of the training materials, which desperately needed updating. I could see that from my Bangladesh experience and the equipment.

Then, along about—it must have been '86—this same period, we decided that we should consider sub-Saharan Africa. And I was very worried because my experience was least in that region. So we decided we'd have a consultant team. We had three consultants, and they did mountains of work and read piles of files. And, in the end, as Joan would say, in the end, it was back-of-the-seat gut judgment, which countries and what to do. And basically, we decided on Nigeria, because one-sixth of the population of Africa is Nigerian. How can you work in sub-Saharan Africa and not support work in Nigeria?

And we thought we should have some link into Francophone Africa, because that's where some of the problems are the worst. But the inherited French laws, including even still restrictions on contraceptives, let alone abortions, [are] very severe, so we chose Cameroon, which is bilingual, thinking that, you know, there'd be a little bit more room to maneuver in Cameroon. And then again, I did a lot of the early program work there with the initial staff that we hired—Elizabeth Coit. And I made some very serious mistakes, um, in terms of selection of people and things to do.

And it was a reminder to me [and] it's something that I've been concerned about with the Coalition, is being very conscious of being outsiders in other people's countries. While one of the things about that is then how do you get a sense of where people are positioned and whether

those people really are dedicated to working hard and with integrity? And how do you figure out what people really are going to do vs. what they say they're going to do? And so, I had wanted to stay with countries largely where Ford Foundation had country offices. Because, um, what was happening in this time was the recruitment of a new director at Ford for what became Population and Reproductive Health, which was a process that I had started when I was still in Ford. One of the reasons for going to Bangladesh was to demonstrate to the Ford Foundation how you could have a women-sensitive program overall but then, in particular, how you could transform their population program into a reproductive health program.

Um, so, the story that I told at the end of the last tape was about the recruitment of José Barcelato to become the director of the Ford program. And he was recruited for that. And that was another reason that we worked very closely in every country with the Ford Foundation office. It gave us a local resident base for understanding who was who and who does what. And that continues till today, although it's changing once again. So until very recently, that was true for Brazil, for the southern cone part of Latin America. It was true for Indonesia, for Bangladesh until they closed the office, Nigeria. So Cameroon was really the only country that didn't have a Ford office.

And again, we were oriented in those years toward finding leadership, really, to advance women's health in a rights kind of perspective. It was not easy, needless to say. Um, and as I said, I made some real mistakes early on in Nigeria in the selection of people. And so, we had a couple of false starts

where we had to begin again. Mrs. [Maryam] Babangida, the First Lady, was a real force to contend with. Anything having to do with women in Nigeria had to go through her. And no way was she going to deal with abortion and not even really family planning. So, there was very limited room to maneuver.

On the other hand, the OB/GYN friends that we had from the earlier medical advisory board that we inherited from Merle Goldberg were struggling with all of these hospital admissions due to botched abortion, both adult women and adolescent girls. So, we had strong relations with the medical doctors. I had known the secretary of health (Ransome Kuti) from my Ford Foundation days. So I called on him. He was starting a plan to decentralize primary health care across Nigeria and have it at center maternal and child health, which was critical. And so, we were really, for a couple, three years, we were just trying to find where is there room to maneuver in this country. And we met some extraordinary women leaders especially.

And what started to come back from them by the late '90s—well, let me go back a minute. In the early '90s—we had two or three years in the late '80s where we were just trying to find room to maneuver, we were finding leadership and so on—but in the early '90s, we were making grants actually to support not so much safe abortion services, but to support related activities that would help women of different ages get access to services, or that would document the problem in such a way that we could use it or they could use it for advocacy and so on. But then by the mid-90s, what our colleagues began saying to us was, “our children are at risk.” They were beginning to realize that HIV/AIDS was coming and yet the government absolutely refused to

recognize it. Those who had daughters realized how much danger they were in just getting from their house to the school every day.

And so, there grew an interest from several of our colleagues in developing programs to work with adolescents. Not a single one of them had any background or expertise at all. So the first thing they asked for—and Andrea Irvin is now the program officer—was materials. There is nothing in Nigeria about working with adolescents—nothing on sexuality and et cetera. So, Andrea did an enormous piece of work first of all to educate herself, because, you know, we hadn't recruited staff with that expertise and that wasn't her background. She educated herself. She found materials and technical support and all that for our colleagues in Nigeria.

And there was then a whole period where yes, we make grants to support the work. And we continued support for what little there was around abortion. We continued support for the Society of Women against HIV/AIDS, SWA, in both Nigeria and Cameroon. So whatever tidbits there were of a rights-oriented women's health interest, we supported. And so—you know, I forgot to tell you how the Latin America thing developed. I'll come back to that. Anyway, so over these years what basically has happened is a continuing theme to do whatever we can to support access to safe abortion—short of actual services. And there are now coalitions in both countries of a wide range of professionals and others who are working on this. They learn from each other across the borders.

But then this adolescent sexuality education that promotes gender equality and human rights, a very important phrase, has become the center, I

would say, of our programmatic interest. And then, the violins chiming into this orchestra more recently have been on sexual rights—supporting groups that are working on violence against women, honor crimes, imposition of Shari'a law in northern Nigeria, sexual orientation, even. But it's basically been a grants and technical assistance program involving, you know, a core of sort of ten, eight to ten, or twelve key colleague organizations in each country—very different from the Asia scene—for the most part not yet or not until recently connected into national policy.

Sharpless

Let me back up just a second. You had mentioned some underlying principles when you and Joan were just getting started. Could you say a word or two more about that?

Germain

Well, some of these also came out in deciding how to approach the Africa program. One I think I've already mentioned today, which is if you're on the cutting edge of a very difficult issue, you have to basically choose for success—not always go to the hardest places. And, you know, there were many people over the years who said, Well, why don't you support work in India or whatever? Because, after all, it's one billion—well, now it's one billion people. But, you know, there was no real comparative advantage for the Coalition to do that and a lot of disadvantages as a U.S.-based organization. Whereas given connections and so on in Indonesia and Bangladesh, we really could choose for success up to a point. Philippines, I mentioned, we had to give up basically. So choose for success is one thing when you're working on such hard issues as a principle.

Second was the orientation of people—if it was on the service delivery

side, then a real commitment to the woman as the central person and respect for her rights and her privacy and dignity in the service delivery mode. In work with adolescents, what distinguishes us is, again, a commitment to find groups that either already are committed and have gender equality and human rights central to their work with adolescents or who are really interested to develop that orientation. And this does differentiate the Coalition from so many of the groups who've now come into the field and who are working with adolescents. It's more like the old family planning field was. They have a certain service they need to provide and a certain clientele and target group. And they're going to go out and give sex education to X number of adolescents in a certain period of time. Whereas what we're looking for is this underlying value commitment to gender equality and human rights.

Sharpless

You want to change minds and hearts.

Germain

Um-hm, yeah. And then, also, third would be this business of identifying leadership or potential leadership. And over the years, if we look back, it's been quite remarkable, in fact, with the exception of some of the faux-pas I mentioned that I made—not just in Nigeria but elsewhere. It's been remarkable how well we have been able to identify leaders as they're emerging and support them to build their organizational bases so they can get on with their agendas. Uh, so leadership, identification of leaders not as individuals but as those who will create an organizational capacity to define the problems as they see them and to have ideas about how to solve those problems, and test them out and use them, distribute them more broadly.

And in the Nigeria case, you can see how well this has worked in the

sense that we now support groups in very different parts of the country. The government was impressed enough that they asked those NGOs to come together and create a framework for implementing a national adolescent health policy. And then after that, the ministry of education asked the same set to help design a national sexuality education curriculum, which they did, which has been adopted, and which is now being implemented not in all states, but in some states with the assistance of the NGOs in training the teachers, the principals, the communities in this sexuality education curriculum.

Some of these same Nigerian leaders were recognized by the member of our board, Pascoal Mocumbi [H. E. Pascoal Manuel Mocumbi], who is the prime minister of Mozambique. He's very interested to try to start programs for adolescents in Mozambique. So, after meeting our Nigerian colleagues, we worked out an exchange program between the two countries, government and NGOs, regarding adolescents. And both countries learned. We are now supporting a piece of the national program in Mozambique that's focused on really learning from young people what their interests are, what their strategies would be, and helping the other organizations that are involved—find ways to ensure that adolescents themselves participate in designing and implementing the programs that are developed in Mozambique.

Sharpless

Let me turn the tape.

Tape 1 ends; tape 2, side 1, begins.

This is the second tape with Adrienne Germain on September 25th. Okay, anything else about the principles?

Germain

Well, this last example is both in regard to working with our colleagues as they create their own visions and strategies for what they want to do, but also for the Coalition as a whole. The principle from, I would say, probably the second year after my arrival, as I began to get a sense, Oh, okay, here's what we inherited. Here's what I know from my earlier years. What are we going to do?—a very important operating principle was that the support for in-country work would be at the heart of the Coalition's commitment. Because it's those women and others on the ground who know what realities are and who are trying to make solutions. But we should always try to do that in such a way that both in that particular country and then also in the aggregate of all the country-based work that the Coalition supports, that experience, those leaders could have a much bigger impact.

So, um, to come back to the Brazil case, which I left hanging: having decided that we shouldn't be delivering abortion equipment, what we set out to do was to support the really only three feminist health and rights-oriented groups at that time. One was in São Paulo, one in Rio, and one up in the northeast, in Recife. And we provided quite sustained support for them. They identified others that we should support. They became what we call the first generation of women's health and rights leadership in Brazil.

Most of the leaders came out of the struggle for democracy in Brazil. They had lived under the military regime. Some of them had to go into exile as a result. Others stayed in the country. But you'll often find in South America that the roots of any of the feminist leaders and organizations that exist now lie in their struggles to overturn military dictatorships. And it's a

very different dynamic than how NGOs emerged in the sub-Saharan Africa context. And as part of the strength of the Latin America women's health and rights movement is that earlier history in the joint struggle you see for a democratic society.

And that just doesn't characterize the sub-Saharan Africa scene as I've experienced it at all. And it's actually one of the reasons that our African colleagues face such an uphill struggle to do the work they want to do, because they're basically in non-democratic societies. And yet there's no broader base of political movement. There's no experience of—well, even building NGOs, there's much less experience than in Latin America just how to build a non-government organization. But in terms of political movement, also, it's just a very different scene. There are political movements, but they're not working for democracy. (laughs) They're conflicting with each other, you know, in civil wars and et cetera. So, it's just a very different scene.

But anyway, so in Brazil then what happened was these extraordinary leaders who were very early in their careers, they identified some others. We supported those mostly with finance. These were very sophisticated, experienced people. Then there came a time when they decided, Okay, strategically, we're now in the main cities. We want to network so that we can really build an alliance here and get policy work done and so on. And the Coalition was the earliest supporter of that networking capacity. Because by that time—this is the early '90s—the foundations and Novib, the Dutch agency which had been big in Brazil, they were turned off of networks. And they didn't really understand how crucial they are for building a political

movement—which is, in essence, what has to happen if you're going to secure sexual and reproductive health and rights.

So, this brings me to another principle that the Coalition, our staff, and as an organization, we have to be really keenly attuned to political reality in each of the countries where we support work and then also in our global work. We have to understand ourselves as political actors. And, therefore, the way in which we do our work fundamentally has to engage with others, even go beyond collaboration, [to] build alliances, reach outside of our own unity, which is not easy. I mean, Joan and I have been trying to do this together since 1973, and getting other communities engaged and supportive of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights is a really hard task, to this day.

Sharpless

But tell us what text has been most successful in your being able to do that?

Germain

Well, again, there's another principle here. And it was just interesting. I had a meeting this morning that just reminded me of so much of where I used to be and what I've now become. I used to be very idealistic. I'm still an idealist. But I now can differentiate between spending a lot of energy on righteous anger as compared to getting something done. And what Joan and I did was to position the Coalition to get things done but still to be very small, to do that strategically and to leverage your influence on much larger actors. So that's another principle. Basically, we knew that we couldn't do that without the legitimacy, the credibility, and really the partnership from women and the few men working in their own countries. And so, this whole first stage through the early '90s where there was just a really sole focus on investment

in leadership and capacity building in a few countries came about because there was absolutely no credibility for a U.S.-based organization in the global struggle over health policy and resources without that country base. Um, and I think I mentioned this in the first tape. So, that's one part. That's our foot in the women's health and rights movement, apart from Joan's and my and individual staff's own commitment to that health and rights movement.

The other foot of the organization is in the mainstream, which has to have a sort of three-legged support for credibility. One is the collegial relations and in-country experience, the on-the-ground credibility. Second is technical capacity. And we've selected over the years very key technical, what we call, you know, specific elements in reproductive health and rights. And we've gone after them to try to garner global attention. The first one was reproductive tract infections, which we could come back to. But another one, very early one, was to change the priorities in public contraceptive research agendas. Another one, of course, was the reassessment of population policy and to establish what became the Cairo Paradigm. So, we were carrying on an intellectual endeavor with the highest level expertise in our field that we could get to be interested in our subject area. And that was the second sort of leg of this stool for our credibility with the mainstream agencies.

And then, the third one really was—I don't know how to describe it exactly, but it's this political thing. Joan, anyway, brought into the Coalition a certain range of contacts and a political force that—you couldn't ignore Joan. You might or might not agree with her. But, for in a mainstream institution, you don't ignore Joan. Because it's, you know—she doesn't like something,

she's going to make a loud noise. And having worked for John Rockefeller [III] and, in that period, gained all of these diverse relationships that she had in this country, she's just a very powerful person. Gradually, over the years, the political clout became somewhat more diversified, and especially after we succeeded in Cairo. I mean, everybody now has to take us seriously, whether they like our agenda or not. And we've not gone away. You know, it's been ten years since Cairo, and we're still here. So, people have to take us seriously just in a political sense. And part of that is that we've built up this media capacity. Part of it is board membership. We now have a very strong board, and we've gradually built it over the years. And these are people that have aligned themselves with our cause. And you don't just dismiss the prime minister of Mozambique or, you know, whoever.

So, um, that's—I don't know if that's a principle. But it's a key characteristic of how the Coalition was designed and how I see us also going into the future—this business of one foot in the political movement and one foot in the mainstream.

Sharpless Would this be an appropriate time, then, to talk about the declaration on population policies?

Germain Yeah, okay. So I'd mentioned in Brazil that we supported the first few leaders we found. They identified others. Then they created a network. We supported that. In 1992, the UN held the World—oh, god—this summit, you know, meeting of heads of state in Rio on the environment. What was it called? Rio.

Sharpless I know what you're talking about. I really don't know—

Germain

Anyway, global summit in Rio on the environment. I wanted nothing to do with this. Nairobi Women's Conference was bad enough. Joan and I really wanted nothing to do with the UN. We were just fed up—forget it. Meanwhile, Bella Abzug was mobilizing women from all over the world that culminated in a meeting in Florida where they made a statement going into—from women—going into this environmental summit in Rio. Just coincidentally, I needed to go to Peru, Chile, and Brazil with a new program officer, Susan Wood. And that was the time that we needed to arrange it. And I was planning on not paying any attention to the Earth Summit. That's what it was called—the Earth Summit. And so, we worked with one of our Brazilian colleagues.

The idea was to invite and pay for our colleagues and then some others in the movement from all over the country to come to Rio to meet with us. And we were so successful in identifying people who wanted to come and have that discussion, we actually had to have two separate meetings. I mean, it was quite a moment, really. And our question to them was, Okay, we've supported this kind of work in Brazil—well, it was only six years actually, come to think of it, not long, but anyway, six years—what do you want us to do next? So, we were having those conversations.

But, meanwhile, the Earth Summit is going on right across the street, literally, the NGO forum part. That was the first world conference that had a really, really big NGO presence with real activists there. The Bucharest Conference where JDR [John D. Rockefeller, III] spoke on population and the first World Women's Conference had NGOs, but not such a political

force. But, boy, they landed in Rio with a vengeance. And there were thousands. And Bella, you know, had mobilized women to the full extent that she could. She was so great.

Anyway, so we actually went and observed some of these. Out of the summit, a lot of the women that Bella had brought and a lot of the women in the NGO community, as it turns out in that forum, were in the part of the spectrum that's either anti-technology when it comes to fertility regulation—not just for ideological reasons, but you shouldn't take hormonal methods. It's bad for your body, or god knows what. They just didn't want any—barrier method's fine, diaphragm, condom—okay. But none of this artificial stuff. (laughs) So they're anti-technology group. And then, there's these very loud and destructive critics of the national family planning programs, which by that time are all over Latin America, largely run by AID-funded NGOs—and then, in Asia, the government's top-down programs.

And in both instances, there's no concern for equality of services and all that. We have a lot, a lot, a lot of problems—informed consent and all kinds of stuff. And in Africa, really, family planning hasn't taken at all. It's part of MCH [maternal and child health]. Family planning remains free when they start charging for maternal and child care, and creates a lot of anger in Africa—well, why are you giving us contraceptives free, but you won't treat our kids free? You know, bad vibrations, really. And there's a whole segment of the community that was there in Rio that made that argument. Because there were a lot of people in the government conference and also in the NGO side who were saying, People are the problem. There's too many

people for the earth. If we're going to have a healthy environment, we have to have fewer people. So it was a very conflictual thing.

And the sort of moderate voice of women—which says, Yes, we have service delivery problems, and yes, women absolutely have to have the fullest possible access to contraception—was missing. And what happened was that people went home, including—I could name them if you want—even in Washington, in the press, in this country, in Europe, basically saying that women were in bed with the Vatican and anti-family planning, which is absolutely not true. (laughs)

So, we got these calls from some of the women that I most respect in the world—Peggy Antrobus, Jacqueline Pitanguy, Gita Sen, Sonia Correa—saying basically, “We have to do something about this. Cairo is coming up in '94. We're not against contraception. We're going to lose contraception if we don't do something.” So, Joan and I said, “Well, okay, whatever you want to do, we'll support you, but you take the initiative.” So that then led to a meeting, a small brainstorming session in London, which produced the Declaration on Population Policy—which, by that time, we had some electronic capacity. So, each person in that meeting sent it to a gazillion other trusted friends for modification and stuff. Came back. We collated. Oh my god, what a nightmare. This is one of the things that—you know, over the years we took on all kinds of things. And I can tell that Sue is looking at me—(laughs) well, you know, we just don't give any thought to the work that's going to be entailed. It's a good idea: we should just get it done. And I want to tell you—oh my god, it was just—so collating all this stuff and then

finally agreeing a text.

Well, meanwhile, the plan was that we should then, with this statement as a draft sort of thing, convene what was then for us a huge meeting overseas, not in the United States, of women to really make a statement before Cairo that we'd have a tool to go into Cairo with. Well, my goodness. That was really something else. And, we ended up having—the Coalition and Cepia [Citizenship, Studies, Information, and Action], our Brazilian colleague, cosponsored this. We had an international steering committee where we reached far too wide in the political spectrum. Because we encompassed, as it turned [out, both people in the field of reproductive] health and the real anti-family planning people who, you know, just are what I call destructive critics. And it's fine to be constructive critics, but, you know. So, managing that steering committee was just ghastly. I mean, it was really—aye.

But we managed to get, I think it was 210 women—I can't remember—from forty-three countries, something like that—to Rio for this meeting in '93, before the Cairo Conference in '94. And, despite enormous diversity among these women and real conflict—I mean, there was conflict over whether or not there was anything good that you could say or do or try to do with family planning programs because they were all so bad. There was conflict about sexual orientation. We had women from Asia and Latin America at the meeting who felt this was really critically important. And the African women at the meeting threatened to walk out. I mean, it was just, you know, we really—and it's a good thing we probably didn't understand the diversity we reached for. Because, in the end, you know, and largely

because—(laughs)

I don't know if I mentioned this last time, but in the feminist community of Latin America, there's a whole sort of core set of leaders who are very much addicted to the I-Ching, which is this Chinese book of [changes]. And, you know, you throw coins, and you look at the pattern in which they fall. And then this book reads lessons to you, basically. And you never ask a yes or no question of the I-Ching. You always frame the question as, Well, how should I behave under this or that circumstance, or what have you. Oh my god. We were up every night and every morning with Gita Sen, who later on came to join the Coalition's board; Claudia Garcia-Moreno, who is now at WHO [World Health Organization], because we got her the job; and Amparo Claro, who was the head of the Latin America Caribbean Women's Health Network, which has now changed hands. Amparo has retired, and it's shifting directions.

But, anyways, mostly, I guess, the four of us—I'm trying to think of—probably the core. And we started—from day one, we started throwing the I-Ching, because this thing was just totally—I mean, it was unbelievable what was going on. And, Jacqueline, meanwhile, was trying to keep the calm. We had had to have a special meeting (that we didn't even have money for) of the steering committee at one point before this Rio conference, because the breakdown was so bad—meaning that we had two members, that I will not name, in the steering committee who were incredibly destructive, including publicly—so we decided the best thing to do was for Jacqueline to call a special meeting of a subset of the steering committee, including these

destructive people, and basically read them the riot act, which she did. She was wonderfully good at doing that. And they came around, insofar as they didn't destroy the meeting, which otherwise they would've done.

But in the end, on the last day—and we had built the whole agenda so carefully with workshops and report-backs and all this stuff together, in a brief statement, because we needed the tool for Cairo. We'd all agreed on that in advance. And even with all that careful preparation, Gita Sen had to stand up for six hours, I think it was, in the plenary on Friday and negotiate every single word of that policy statement. I've never seen such an action. Gita is extraordinary. She's one of our strongest leaders, really. And it was amazing how she handled it, because the hostility from certain quarters at that time was enormous. And it required every ounce of wisdom and sort of personal centeredness and leadership, really, that she had. I mean, it was extraordinary.

And what was amazing was the I-Ching was right every single time, (laughter) about both what we were going into and how we should behave. It was wonderful. Anyway, and that followed us to Beijing, followed us to Cairo. We used the I-Ching in Cairo and Beijing. But, it was funny. And those days were really something.

Sharpless

Well, let's talk about Cairo, then.

Germain

Okay, so that was the women's thread. Meanwhile, from the relationship that I had with the Swedish government, we entered, with funding from them, we entered into a joint project with the Harvard Center on Population and Development, which Lincoln Chen was directing at that time, to produce an

edited volume of papers on different aspects of population policy and how they needed to be changed. And this was one of several edited volume-type projects that the Coalition undertook. God spare us from any more in the future, although I now have another idea for one. But, you know, really. I mean, talk about a huge project. And Harvard, I'm sorry to say, fell down on the job, really. The Coalition ended up managing most of this all the way through to the final editing. And it produced what we fondly refer to as the Yellow Book, which is *Population Policies Reconsidered*. And I forget now—what does it have, twenty essays in it or something?

And that was a whole—again, it was a process to engage the establishment. So we reached for authors that were both in the movement and in the mainstream. And we had meetings among all these authors to strategize about the book as a whole and about each of their pieces. So it wasn't just a book, it was a whole process. And then SIDA wanted to launch it in Africa in a big way. They planned a launch in Zimbabwe with the Prime Minister. Swedish SIDA has a lot of very high-level relationships with sub-Saharan African governments. Well, we all went off to Zimbabwe for the launching of this thing. And I don't remember what all else was going on prior to Cairo, but we knew a little bit about the UN.

But, by this time, because of the Earth Summit, where Bella had really worked hard to get NGO access, there was a whole set of both rules and opportunities for NGOs to participate in a conference like this. So, we had this core group that had largely planned the Rio approach basically design a strategy about how to do Cairo. And the Coalition raised all the money and

hosted the meetings and all of that. And being based in New York, we got all the inside information from the UN. And basically, these UN conferences, at least up till now, have a process they go through where the secretariat, in this case the UNFPA [United Nations Population Fund], prepares a document for governments to consider. And the Cairo document was a disaster from word one.

The UNFPA had always been on the population control end of this big spectrum. And the draft paper outline that they prepared was unacceptable to governments in what's called a preparatory committee meeting. We ended up having four PrepComs. And I think the secretariat ended up floating at least a second totally revised draft paper and maybe a third one because the governments were so unhappy. And largely, the unhappy governments were the U.S.—and that's because I was on the delegation and I was determined that the U.S. policy would be for women's reproductive health and rights—the Swedes, and the other Scandinavians and Dutch who for long had held that point of view. And, I think I mentioned in the other tapes, I had trained their staff and done all this stuff, you know.

Well, finally, each time there was a PrepCom, we raised the money to bring colleagues from various countries to lobby delegations. We gave them materials and encouraged and supported them to get on their government's delegations if they could, which some people did. So, we went through this whole UN process, which we had to learn everything at that point. We ended up raising and spending for a period of about fifteen months, I think, not counting the Yellow Book, which was another budget, a million dollars to do

Cairo. Uh, we just did such a meeting to defend Cairo in Asia last December. It cost only forty thousand dollars in outright grants, and staff time—I don't know, maybe another twenty-five or something. I mean, we've learned how to do this very efficiently. We have wonderful international colleagues now who are willing to leave their countries and do this thing, and they're highly skilled—as long as we get the inside information and pass it on. So, it's only to say that over time we really have mastered this UN process. And we did it repeatedly.

But, for Cairo—I don't know that there's that much time. I'm trying to think how to say this. Within the U.S. delegation, there was me and a young woman on Tim Wirth's staff—Tim was the deputy assistant secretary of state, I think. I'll have to check the title, but very high-level State Department with the responsibility for this conference and, as it turns out, the Beijing Conference and for the Child Summit and—the original Child Summit, not the one that was finally held—and the HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Summit. Well, anyway, so Ellen Marshall features later in this story. But she was the young staff person. And Susan Sechler was there from the Pew Foundation, because she and Tim Wirth were close. And Ellen and Susan and I, we didn't know each other very well and we hadn't worked together.

And we struggled a lot, but we basically decided we had a common agenda. We were going to make this thing happen and educate Tim. Well, Ellen had to educate his chief-of-staff, who later became her husband, David Harwood. (laughter) And Susan had to keep Tim Wirth on message. And I

was just the one who had the ideas, you know, because I'm dealing with Tim and that's a big challenge. And there're many stories out of this. But I'm trying to pick and choose now. Um, on the delegation there were others. There was a representative of an environmental group. There were others who were representative of the traditional family planning population groups, many of whom are still alive, so I won't name them. When do these tapes become—or transcripts—

Sharpless

You can seal them if you want to.

Germain

No, I don't want to seal them. I don't want to seal them. But I would feel a little awkward naming certain names at this stage. Anyway, so we were building all this momentum in the U.S. delegation for reproductive health and rights. And the fact is that even before Bush, the U.S. was a superpower. Plus, the U.S. had been the largest donor to the population field. It had a lot of weight. So, as I say, we were determined to reshape the U.S. policy. And that was fine with the Clinton White House because, you know, they're—Clinton was a pro-choice president. Hillary and I are classmates. Whenever we got into difficulties with the State Department bureaucrats, I could pass the message to Hillary and say, Hil, you know—and they were great. They were really—it was good. And then, we had all these contacts in other countries. And we really worked hard to support people and help them get on their government delegations, and then brought others who weren't on their governments but from key countries. Because all these negotiations—there are always lead countries of various—I won't bore you with the details.

So, we had a whole thing. And we'd make travel grants and we brought

everybody. And then, the strategy basically is to meet every day. We would all meet the day before and get everybody up to speed on all the issues. And you meet every day at six or seven in the morning and divvy up the work plan—who's going to lobby which governments and do what on that particular day. It's a whole system now that we developed. And we're the only ones really who have done this in our field consistently through this work. In the women's rights arena, Charlotte Bunch and the Center for Global Women's Leadership [Center for Women's Global Leadership], a focal center for women's rights—anyway, whatever it is at Rutgers is the leader on the human rights, women's human rights side.

Sharpless

Let me turn—

Tape 2, side 1, ends; side 2 begins.

Germain

So—

Sharpless

Divvying up the work and lobbying?

Germain

Yeah. (laughs) And there came a clear moment. It was, I believe, in the fourth PrepCom when they were really coming down to the line, you know, the conference is going to be in September. Nafis [Sadik], the head of UNFPA, she didn't have an agreed document. The thing was in disarray. Tim Wirth was doing his best on the leadership thing. He had gotten a standing ovation when he read the U.S. speech which Susan Sechler and I wrote. That had never happened, and especially not for the U.S., because the U.S., even then, didn't have a great reputation in the UN. I mean, you know, and that was really thrilling. That was so thrilling because the U.S. had earlier, through those USAID heavy-handed population control programs, you know,

represented everything that the people in the UN didn't want. And for Tim Wirth, as the head of the U.S. delegation, to read a statement about women's reproductive health and rights—it just blew people away. It was so thrilling. It was just great. (laughs)

Anyway, so in the fourth PrepCom, we still don't have a document, and it's just really a mess. Nafis—I forget who was chairing the PrepCom. Joan would remember. But, anyway, it became clear at some point, we just are not going to have a breakthrough. Nafis basically adjourned the plenary and said, "Listen. You've got to just negotiate it for yourselves. We're getting nowhere in this formal process." In those days—the NGOs [had] more freedom than they do now. (laughter)

God, I'll never forget it. I'm sitting with Tim Wirth in the U.S. delegation, you know, desk. Joan and our colleagues from southern countries come streaming down out of the gallery. You know, Joan is very tall and very noticeable. And she goes storming up to the Holy See and basically, short of grabbing the guy by his dog collar, I mean, really, just clearly was reading the riot act. (laughs) Just—I'll never forget the image as long as I live. And she's totally surrounded and buttressed by all these feminists, you know, Amparo Claro and just everybody from all over. And Nafis still up on the podium sort of looking down on us. And it was really a vital moment, because what happened there was—it was the Vatican largely that had prevented the PrepComs from getting this document. And what Nafis realized in that moment was that it was only the women who had the moral authority to pull this thing off—that the Vatican kept arguing, Why are you talking about

stopping babies instead of feeding babies? And why are you—you know. They were doing their whole anti—certainly anti-abortion, but anti-contraception, anti-everything number.

And in that moment, I know for a fact Nafis saw that if she was going to win in Cairo, the women had to lead. And she, from that day forward, she sent a clear signal not just to her staff but to her coterie of family planning organizations and donors that, Look, women are out front on this. These are women's issues. They have the moral high ground. You fall into line and support them. And from this day—there is resentment still in the community about that. But, on the other hand, the smarter members of the environment and family planning/population groups—could understand that that's really what happened.

So we went into Cairo. Meanwhile, the Holy See was trying to get an alliance with the conservative Islamic states, which they failed to do largely because Egypt was the host government. Tim Wirth was onto that one, basically insisting that he just convey to their Arab brethren that if they made an alliance with the Holy See, it was all over. Plus, you know, the Holy See was premising a lot of their anti-stuff on abortion. And the Islamic countries really are not terribly concerned about abortion as an issue. Under most interpretations of Islam, there's no such thing as abortion until 80 days—120 days, quickening of the fetus. Before that, there's no soul. There's no human being. So, abortion is really not an issue. It's now been made an issue in the years since by the conservative Islamic groups. But, going into Cairo, it was not.

And so, um, we arrived in Cairo. We had written Gore's speech. He flew in Air Force One overnight to Cairo, gets off the plane, and his whipper-snappery young female assistant of some kind had rewritten the speech in a disastrous way. And so we had a horrible all-night negotiation to try to restore the basic principles. Because, meanwhile, Al Gore—this was '94—is worried about the election. And the Catholic bishops had been putting a lot of pressure on the White House. And I'm saying, "Nothing doing. I don't care about the bishops. You know, we have the White House support. We have the NSC [National Security Council]. We've got the State Department's support, you know—don't screw around with this speech."

You might remember that Al Gore had broken his leg or something somehow. So the speech that we cobbled together as a result—instead of being a wonderful, free, and visionary thing—was a big, flat balloon, but at least wasn't harmful. It didn't say any regressive things. He goes hobbling up there on the stage in his crutches. And, you know, it's just a pathetic performance, (laughter) just pathetic. And it didn't need to happen. I was so furious because, really, we had made a good speech. And we wanted a standing ovation for him the way Tim Wirth had gotten a standing ovation in New York—you know, why not? Clinton deserved it by that time.

So, then, Mrs. [Gro Harlem] Brundtland, the prime minister of Norway, arrived. And she brings down the house. She is just absolute and specific about the Holy See not having any citizens anyway and certainly not any women citizens. And they don't speak for anybody and blah, blah. And that's why she later—Mrs. Brundtland was made the director general of WHO.

And we all hope she—let's see, five years, six years, 2003. She was made the director general of WHO in 1998. And we all thought because of Cairo that she'd make reproductive health a cabinet-level priority, which she didn't, which we can come back to. But, anyway, so she made a great speech and we were all thrilled.

We had sixty-five women in Cairo for whom we'd made travel grants. And we fanned out, and we got more people who only wanted to focus on the negotiation. There was a very large NGO forum. And that was a whole program. And everybody did their thing. And it was all over there. But basically, the Coalition focused only on the document—on the negotiation. And that was again something that distinguished us, because we really led the NGO lobby. And we had—again, it's a reflection of how Joan and I have positioned the Coalition—an inside-outside strategy. We had as many women on the delegations as we could get. And then we had this wonderful lobby in the corridors with the huge anti-abortion groups with their pictures of fetuses and their little plastic models in suitcases—with unbelievable stuff written on them in Cairo, let me tell you.

But I'm taking up too much time to describe Cairo. It's such an amazing experience. But I guess one thing I have to say, because one wants to do justice to the Coalition but also since this is supposed to be about contributions that I made—Tim Wirth delegated to me the strategy and the negotiation of the two key chapters in Cairo on sexual and reproductive health and rights—chapters seven and eight, which were the hardest ones, because they were about fertility regulation, including abortions, health

services delivery and all that. This is where all the loaded stuff was. And that meant I couldn't—you know, I could never speak in the formal seat of the U.S., in the plenary. That could only be done by a government person. But what I was delegated to do was the negotiation in the small rooms, which is where the real negotiations happen.

And then when you bring back a document, then as the NGO adviser, you sit behind the delegate and advise about what positions to take in the plenary. So Ellen Marshall, this young staff person of Tim Wirth, and I went off to do these negotiations. And it was day after day after day till two or three in the morning in small rooms hardly bigger than this with selected governments present. And what the chair does when it breaks down like this, a negotiation—because you only do this kind of negotiating when there's a breakdown.

And along chapters seven and eight, there was a total breakdown because of the Holy See. And so you take the troublemaker—you'll excuse the expression—so the Holy See was always in the room. And then, you take other governments that have different perspectives. And the Islamic government has real trouble with adolescents. They just couldn't stomach that. And they couldn't stomach the sexual rights part. They didn't mind about the abortion part, but the adolescents and the sexual rights—big problem. So, we were there with Iran and Pakistan and—I forget. Then, you take some selection of the other countries. And we had a couple of Latin American governments. We had a couple of European donor governments. And most of this negotiation was chaired by a man from Columbia named

Hernando Clavijo, who's really good in this kind of chairing. Now that I've been through so much more of it, I can see really how skilled he was, because everything deteriorated after that in terms of the negotiations in the conferences.

But anyway, in these small rooms basically what happened was that the key trade-offs were made for what got jettisoned and what got kept in these two chapters. And basically what happened was that the opening two paragraphs of chapter seven—first paragraph was a basic description of, Reproductive health is—and it encompasses, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah—and including sexual health and rights. The second paragraph—7.2 originally—was about reproductive rights, framed according to existing human rights principles.

And the opening language that we had going into Cairo wasn't everything we wanted, but it was a lot. And, in essence, what the Holy See did, with support in this case from the Islamic group, was just utterly stymied the work on paragraph 7.1 to refer to all the methods of fertility regulation and even to abortion where allowed by law. And then object, basically, to all kinds of things. Finally we were getting nowhere, so Hernando said, "All right, look. We're really not getting anywhere. So, Iran, Pakistan, and the U.S., go outside and find a solution. And don't come back until you have one"—which is how this thing works. So, Ellen decided that I should go. And I went out into the corridor with the delegate from Pakistan, who's Attiya Inayatullah, an extraordinary woman who's headed the Pakistan Family and the Pakistan Family Planning Association for many years. I didn't know her well,

personally—but she is very much a family planning type who believes that the most important thing to do is to protect contraceptive services—give up everything else. All we really need is contraception.

So Iran, who's not exactly an ally around the paragraph that has sexual health and sexual rights and all the methods of birth control, not just contraception, in its text—the male delegate from Iran was just wonderful. He was a diplomat par excellence, by which I mean graceful and elegant in his thinking and speaking, but also a man of integrity. If he made a deal with you, he kept it. Today all of that has totally broken down, and we can see it break down totally from Beijing forward, unfortunately. But he was really quite outstanding and very tough.

And ultimately what happened was I agreed to give up the term “sexual rights,” which the movement has not forgiven me for, in exchange for the protection of forty-two paras on adolescents' sexual and reproductive health and rights in other parts of the document as well as in chapters seven and eight. And on the condition that paragraph 7.2 would be worded with a very clear linkage to 7.1, which meant that in the UN-ian context of things, by implication, sexual rights were included in the paragraph on reproductive rights. Nobody except somebody inside the UN would really care about this!

But it's only to say that, you know, there's a movement that's really terribly upset with me. And it was an awful dilemma to be in—really awful. But literally, the whole negotiation—the entire document—was held up by this. And the pressure was enormous to find the solution. And I really felt that it was far more important to have the Iranian's agreement that he would

support all the adolescent references, because we knew we were going to have trouble, when we got to those, from the entire Islamic bloc. Just seemed to me that it was of more benefit to have the support for adolescent's sexual and reproductive health. But the negotiation was wonderful.

I always dress—I think I mentioned this earlier—appropriately for the local context. And, you know, Egypt was no exception and it is a Muslim country. So, fortunately, I had worn a long, loose thing with pants that day. Because when we got out in the hall, it was dank and dark, with a terrible filthy jute rug and almost no light. So the Iranian looked at me and says, “Well, where should we go to do this negotiation?” And, of course, I knew that there was no place to go. I mean, this conference center was a mess. I said, “We don't need to go anywhere. Let's just sit on the floor. I'm used to sitting on the floor.” And I promptly sat down on the floor while the two of them—you know, as far as the little vignettes, they were astonished that this American delegate was going to sit on the floor which, in their culture, is normal. You would sit on the floor. That's not a problem.

And here I was—so we sat on the floor and we did this negotiation. We were sitting, literally, the three of us in this corridor. David Harwood, Wirth's chief-of-staff, who is beyond anxious at this stage—I mean, the U.S. is way out on a limb—he comes charging around the corner wondering what the hell is happening to this small-room negotiation. Why doesn't Ellen do something to fix it? Because Tim had been in the main room in the plenary and all hell is breaking loose, and there's no solution. He comes—he's a very large man, David, very large, very tall, he's just big—he comes barreling

around the corner. I'll never forget the expression on his face. Here we are—three of us. And he knows who the two other delegates are because these are prominent in the whole conference setup. These two people are very power—and he does this, like, screeching brake. He just comes to a halt. His mouth drops open. And he just stood there for a minute, and I was terrified. Because, you know, while Tim had delegated the authority to me to do this, it was with Ellen accompanying me. And because of the way Hernando made the assignment, there was no way we could both go. And Ellen knew that she couldn't negotiate it, so she sent me out to do it. Well, David didn't have his confidence in me yet. I mean, you know, he was horrified. (laughs) And I'll never forget it.

But, anyway, we went back into the room and we did our thing. I could tell you so many stories from Cairo, really, but it's taking too much time. So, in the end, it's only sad—you know, one other highlight I always mention and there's something about this that I think doesn't otherwise characterize the UN's setup very much, except the women's conferences. You know, down to the wire, I had to read every draft that came out of every negotiating session, because, whether intentionally or not, often the transcribers and the official people will make errors. And I have this thing for the language. I mean, every comma as far as I was concerned was important. So, we go into the last plenary, we're late. All these negotiations, you know—way into the wee hours, and everybody's exhausted. We had had that kind of night. We went home or to the hotel for a couple of hours only, and we came back to be given the document by the secretary. And I have to sit there and read this

and make sure that everything's right. And I find—I can't remember if it's three or four major mistakes in terms of not a whole lot of words. But either a word is left out or a comma is left out or something that would change the entire meaning. So I said, "Okay. Well, listen, Tim. I know you came here to celebrate, but guess what?"—because this is really, it's the last plenary—"If you're going to try to correct these things, you end up in another negotiation. What are we going to do?"

So he says, "Well, go fix it with your friend Hernando," who's the key rapporteur in all of this. So Ellen and I go down and say to Hernando, "Uh, guess what, Hernando? This isn't going to fly. You gotta fix it." So the thing is delayed and I—you know. He goes back to work with Nafis and try to figure out. And he comes back. I was sure he wasn't going to do it. I really was sure he wasn't going to do it. But he came back. "It's all done. It's fixed. Don't worry, no problem."

So we got to this plenary. One of our closest colleagues we had worked with, Florence W. Manguyu from Kenya, is to make the closing speech on behalf of the NGOs. And it's just extraordinary for an African woman to say, "This is our agenda. We completely support, blah, blah." Kenya's been one of the countries that's had a heavy USAID population program for years before Cairo. And she's a medical doctor. And she's very gentle, you know, again, a graceful person—it was such a powerful statement. And so then, the last gavel was brought down and the thing is through.

And we all just went berserk—never mind UN procedures. We're dancing down the halls and putting human chains and this and, you know,

where you lock arms and you do this. Fred Sai who was the chair of the whole thing from Ghana, you know, he comes walking down the hall with this huge smile on his face and victory signs. It's a whole—it was a moment I never would've thought of in the years of my professional work leading up to Cairo. It was just such a victory for and by women. It was a pushback to the Holy See big time. It was a pushback even to the Islamic group, because of the commitments on adolescents. It was really a big deal. So then that night, we all went out. We'd hired one of these barges, you know, where they have belly dancing and stuff and you go down the Nile. And we had lots of fun. I mean, women know how to have fun. We were doing belly dancing and all that stuff. I mean, it was really hilarious. We had a great time.

Anyway, so then all the hard slogging began—first of all to build up the implementation capacity. Then, of course, right away, we had to prepare for Beijing. And we knew that the Holy See would come back with a holy vengeance. That was very clear, because boy, were they bent out of shape. I mean—and they had tried all their terrible tactics, which I don't remember if I mentioned in the earlier tape. They sent cables to capitals in all the countries, Roman Catholic-dominated countries—so that's Latin America and lots of sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia, Philippines especially—saying, You don't toe our party line, we're basically going to excommunicate the whole country. I mean, not literally, because they can't do that. They threatened to close all of their mission hospitals in sub-Saharan Africa, which provide the bulk of whatever little health care people get in sub-Saharan Africa. It's still true today. They behaved really, I can't tell you, abominably.

It's not the Church. It's the hierarchy. I want to make that clear distinction, because throughout Latin America, the priests at the local levels have always supported women locally to use contraception, not abortion. But, you know, the—what do they call those, the liberal theology, or—
Liberation.

Sharpless

Germain

Liberation theology. Well, part of it really was, I mean, these priests in Latin American neighborhoods could see what I saw when I spent those early months in Peru. The depths of situation of women who had more children than they wanted or could care for, who tried to abort themselves however they could and died in the attempt, et cetera. So it really is the hierarchy I'm talking about here when I say the Church—not the community, the Church.

Anyway, so, well, we all had to prepare for Beijing. We all had this great idealistic notion that we'd get sexual rights back into the document, having lost it in Cairo. And we all had this idea that we'd extend all kinds of agreements, making it better than what we had in Cairo, et cetera. And meanwhile, the Coalition was still carrying on all this other work—producing publications, supporting women's groups in countries, et cetera. So this wasn't taking the full attention of the Coalition by any means. Sustaining all that work was, we felt, really critical, because you don't just stop helping people build their organizations for a couple of years while you do this other stuff.

So, in Beijing, you know, again, I was on the U.S. delegation. We had a real leadership philosophy there—good relations with lots of other countries and et cetera. Our friend from Iran was not on the delegation because they

sent this daughter of the ayatollah—or I don't know, somebody. But he was behind the scenes doing the strategy and so on. And we had wonderful women there. Of course, many more would've been because of the women's conference. Fewer of the delegations were led by men, or dominated by men, but there were still some. And it was a heart-breaking sort of struggle, really. There was a whole segment of mostly—well, I don't know—mostly on the NGO side, but with some sympathetic government support, to at least introduce language on nondiscrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. And that was fought as a threat throughout. No way was the Islamic group going to accept it.

And Mervat Tallawy, the ambassador from Egypt, who had been a key figure, actually, that I didn't mention, in the Cairo negotiation, was chairing the plenary for all of this. And, you know, in the Arab world, never mind that homosexuality characterizes virtually any society, it was just forbidden. It was even worse than adolescents. Because, I have to tell you, I was in small-room negotiations upon that subject, which really made me physically ill. I mean, well, I heard—things were said that were beyond anything I had ever heard in my life, in terms of bigotry. And just terrible things—terrible, just appalling. The NGO lobby wasn't privy to it, because the NGOs were not allowed in the small negotiation rooms. But truly—it was beyond the pale. It was really awful, just awful.

Then another stream was renegotiation, basically, of chapters seven and eight. That was another set of smaller negotiations which again I did. Because, of course, the Holy See wanted to undo all of that. Anytime you

have a conference now, it's an opportunity to undo what you got before. And finally, through the, brilliant really, chairing of the woman delegate from—Guyana, Monique Essed-Fernandes. I'm going to have to look up the country. It's one of the Caribbean countries that's actually on the mainland. But, anyway, she was on her country's delegation. She was assigned to chair the sub-negotiation on sexual rights. And part of that whole playing out of the negotiations for two weeks in Beijing is that on these issues—sexual rights, reproductive health, reproductive rights, sexual health, and that includes sexual orientation—they weren't negotiated simultaneously because you needed the same negotiators in the room on each of these issues or at least some of the same.

So, some of us were just—I guess we must've negotiated twenty hours a day for two weeks. You know, I had learned from Cairo. I never traveled with my own food. But, I just learned from Cairo, Okay, you'd better take some bags of almonds and some chocolate. And just make sure that you have enough for fifteen other people. I had a whole suitcase full of chocolate and almonds. And Ellen Marshall insisted that I bring some power bars. But, oh god, I thought those were disgusting. I never ate any of those. But, it was really—you know, it's physically very grueling. And the Holy See never runs out of energy. They'll be there until the last run. All of the other delegates will be going to sleep at the desk or leaving or sleeping on the floor or whatever, and the Holy See is right there. So, I'd be damned. I was not going to, you know, fall asleep.

Now, anybody who knows me knows I am not a night person. So you

can just imagine by this time. I know I said these really terrible things.

Another tactic they [Holy See] have is just outright lying. They kept asserting in these rooms that, No, that wasn't negotiated in Cairo. And that wasn't what it meant. And this wasn't agreed, and that wasn't agreed. So, I mean, I'm there. Meanwhile, we had to have Ellen doing other things. So, I'm like Cairo out there by myself alone all the time. And you have to know the document upside down and sideways. Plus, in this case, we had to know Cairo for the precedent language. So it was a huge intellectual effort. And the Holy See is very good at it—very sophisticated—in kind of a single-minded way. [They] have nothing else to do.

Sharpless

(laughs) Let me change the tape.

Tape 2 ends; tape 3, side 1, begins.

This is the third tape with Adrienne Germain on September 25th. And we were laughing and saying that she had at least as much energy as the delegates from the Vatican. So, you're negotiating and negotiating on the Beijing—

Germain

Okay, so, um, with Monique's persistent and brilliant chairing—I mean, really, she was remarkable in this process. And it was perhaps only the Caribbean that could have led such a negotiation, because the Latin American countries, you know, were heavily lobbied by the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The Islamic group was preoccupied but tended to project all of that preoccupation with sexual orientation and sexual rights onto every other issue.

The African women and the Arab women were totally in conflict with each other over inheritance rights, where the African women were desperate

to establish their right to property ownership. And that was considered by the Arab women to be a fundamental assault on some of the basic principles of Islam, in which the intent of Islam originally was to provide for the widow and her children, should her husband predecease her. The reality, of course, has been something different. But under Islam, the daughters and the wife receive far, far smaller shares than the sons do of the inheritance. But it's such a fundamental tenet under most forms of Islam that the women from the Islamic countries and the sub-Saharan African women were in a total head-on collision.

So the environment really for this negotiation in Beijing—and then I also remember in the middle of this negotiation, Jim Wolfensohn arrived on the scene. And, you know, the women's movement—bunch of women—was it Jim? You know, Jim was the president of the World Bank by that time. Anyway, he arrives on the scene. And actually, compared to previous presidents, he was more orientated toward women's rights and gender equality and all that by a long shot more than Robert McNamara or any of these other guys. The women's community has often been heavily anti-World Bank. And boy—so there was this huge ruckus going on that Jim Wolfensohn had briefings with women and what was the Bank really doing about women. And this is the context in which, behind closed doors, in small rooms that were no longer small—because as this negotiation got worse and worse, more and more countries wanted to stay in this small-room negotiation. And the chair of the overall meeting, unlike Fred Sai in Cairo, just didn't have a firm hold over governments at all. So we were ending up

now negotiating chapters seven and eight in a room of about—probably, I would say, about thirty governments.

And on sexual rights and sexuality, Monique was—my guess is, you know, probably in the last stages of that negotiation. There might have been forty or forty-five governments in the room. That's impossible to try to—I mean, really impossible. Somehow we made it through. What we got was on chapters seven and eight basically a reaffirmation of all the language in Cairo on reproductive and sexual health and rights. On sexuality and sexual rights, specifically, we did not get the phrase back. The Islamic group was absolutely not going to give in on that. What we did get was paragraph ninety-six, which says, “The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including reproductive health.” And I think there may be another clause in that sentence. And then in that paragraph, there's a second sentence which goes on about the relations between men and women. It's fabulous. (laughs) I mean, that paragraph's unbelievable. It should be enshrined some place.

But there was a whole part of the feminist movement at Beijing which still never got over losing the term sexual rights. And it's a problem that goes on today, actually, an important problem we all need to address. But as far as I'm concerned, that paragraph ninety-six says it all. It doesn't use the term, but otherwise, the human rights of women include their right to have control over their sexuality. What more could you want? I mean, I was just staggered, actually, about that.

We didn't get anything, we didn't even get “nondiscrimination on the

basis of' sexual orientation. And all that that required was inserting those two words, sexual orientation, into a whole long list of things on which you can't discriminate—age, gender, ethnicity, religion—I don't know, whatever, body type, who knows? It's a huge, long list. And all we wanted really—all we had worked for was just to get those words in there. No.

And that was negotiated in the plenary with Mervat Tallawy in the chair again with terrible comments—not as bad as the small room because this was a much bigger, public place—but just terrible statements by the Islamic group. And Mervat, who's really a consummate diplomat—never mind that she's a Muslim woman and she comes from Egypt, but she's a consummate diplomat. She has integrity like the Iranian delegate I referred to. She did her best out there, you know, to be even-handed and fair and try to have a consensus emerge in the room. And basically there was a consensus in the room with the exception of these very outspoken Islamic—strict Islamic countries, and then a couple of the very conservative Roman Catholic Latin American countries. So it really was a minority, a very vocal minority. And they were fighting to the death on this one. So, there was no way that she could negotiate some sort of consensus. They were absolutely determined.

So, anyway, Beijing—one of the big failures there was—not failure, exactly, but, you know, there had been a lot of debate about whether such a conference should even be held in China. Hillary Clinton was supposed to be the head of the U.S. delegation, in title. I mean, she would never be the working head, you know. And there was a huge debate, you may remember, that summer about Harry Wu, who'd been detained. And there was this big

debate about whether she should go. Because if she went, that would support this government who'd locked up a human rights advocate. Her principle held, and that is one of the reasons that I have such regard for Hillary. She basically said, "Wait a minute. You know, if I don't go, then that in itself is also a very dramatic and negative statement. I will go. And I will be explicit that what China has done to trample on human rights is not acceptable. But, at the same time, the world is trampling on women's rights. Women's rights are human rights, and I'm going to go and say that." And she did. And it was fabulous. It was just wonderful.

Meanwhile, the Holy See had put a woman in charge of their delegation. Of course, she never was in any of the negotiations. She sat in a chair and the men told her what to say. It's so pathetic. She's a very prestigious professor from Harvard, Mary Ann Glendon, and, you know, a very smart person. She's written extensively and so on. And she allowed herself just to be a puppet or a—what's a ven—you know, when they have a ventriloquist who speaks through—well. I mean, so it was even worse than the puppet. I mean, it was appalling.

Sharpless

Marionette.

Germain

Marionette, yeah. I mean, really—but the other failure really was that, you know, given the situation that China—the Chinese had decided that the way to handle NGOs, which they were scared to death of, was to put them out in the back of beyond in a rural setting. And I'll never forget this, because I went out there with the advance team—Hillary Clinton's advance team, because they have to check out all of these things. And she was going to

make a speech and an appearance at the NGO site.

So we got to Beijing, I don't know, five days early maybe, or three days early. They're still building the dormitories that they're expecting to house thousands of women in. It was a mess. And it was a total mud puddle because it was land they had just bulldozed. There had been torrential rains, and we had torrential rains throughout the conference. So the whole thing was a sea of mud. And really, the women's NGOs who ended up going there and staying there were real troopers, I have to say. I mean, the physical condition of living there was appalling. Those who had an interest in the government conference had no way of participating at all because of the distance and so on. It was a very—for many women around the world, it was a huge disappointment. They don't care about the UN document. They care about, you know, sort of being there.

But, anyway, so where are we now—'95. Okay. Well, by now, then, the Coalition has basically established all three threads of its world: the continued investment in women's capacity and country level, the UN intra-governmental conference process, and the technical work that backs that up. So, we have longstanding relationships with the World Health Organization, UNFPA, specialists in various areas of expertise, as I mentioned before, publications which are episodic. They were produced out of broader processes. We never had a newsletter or a journal or a regular series, because, basically, I wasn't interested in taking up, in those days, a lot of paper. We went through processes that produced very important documents. But they weren't produced for their own sake at—this is another sort of operating

principle of the Coalition, that on the one hand, every meeting or activity should have a product outcome. And very often it was a publication of some sort. But on the other hand, I didn't want to just become a report-producing organization.

Sharpless

Yeah. You didn't want to publish just for the sake of publishing.

Germain

Yeah. And then starting with Cairo, we realized that we should try to develop some press capacity. So we hired a consultant, Geoffrey Knox, who is just a wonderful man who could deal with all these women. I mean, it's just so great. Geoffrey is fabulous—as a consultant, you know, helped us put us together a strategy. We got more coverage than anybody else—we meaning not just the Coalition, but all of our colleagues—front-page stories in the *New York Times*. Barbara Crosette really got it. She really understood it. And it had a major effect on her reporting from then forward. We had a sort of a breadth—not too much—but a sort of breadth that a couple of European publications, some other major U.S. papers. But it was just the beginning.

So what we were doing then, by the mid-'90s, was also trying to build up some press capacity. But we weren't really staffed for it, and we did what we could. But we began to realize more and more—and then after the Bush administration came into power, we especially realized that we really needed access to the press to get our issues out in front of people. And it is now becoming a major avenue for us to try to if not influence or change what the Bush administration and Republican-controlled congress are doing, at least to expose it to the public and to document how harmful it is. And so I would say, in a way, that's like fourth string to the bow in terms of our

programmatic institutional investments.

Sharpless Tell me about the transition between Joan and you.

Germain Okay, well, let's see.

Sharpless Or is that—

Germain April of '98. So, basically—well, there's another major important thing that happened. Going into Beijing, we had a core of the same women who had been with us in Cairo. And then in Beijing, we added a whole lot more. So there was sort of diversity across the two groups. And coming out of Cairo, a number of us decided—just in our individual capacities—twenty-five of us decided we should stay together and try to work together for Beijing and on implementation of the two agreements. And then, whatever might come down the line and hit us in the face at the UN level—because each of the twenty-five was working in our own country and doing our own thing. There was no attempt at representivity or anything like that. It was just individuals who'd come out of these negotiations and decided, well, you know—and so we called ourselves HERA, H-E-R-A, Health Empowerment Rights and Accountability. And the Coalition was the secretariat for that.

Our first and only real product task was to produce a set of action sheets on the core concepts of Cairo for Beijing around sexual rights, sexuality, reproductive health, reproductive rights, gender equality, et cetera. And by that time we were working on setting up a Web site, which we hadn't had. And down the line we created a space, or whatever you call it, for HERA—its own space in the website. But we learned a lot out of, actually, that alliance. It was very difficult to try to hold it together to produce anything

outside the driving mandate of something like a UN conference, which was time specific. It was a negotiating document to focus on and rally support for or, you know, all that kind of stuff. And really trying to produce a written product together nearly killed me, unfortunately. And it's too bad because, you know, we all still know and love each other, except one has died, and we still interact and work with quite a few of the twenty-five.

But then, except for the initial meeting, there's a whole substantial number—like I think it may be as many as eight or ten—who actually never came to a HERA meeting, even though the Coalition would raise the money so that everybody could meet and participate in drafting all these things and et cetera. So they were there in name only, which wasn't good enough, really, to sustain the effort. So we never really ended HERA as a group. We just decided to let it become dormant. And in the UN negotiations that came up following Beijing, of which there have been five now or six, we drew on HERA members who were interested, and still wanted to be involved in those particular negotiations. But they became more particular. One was on HIV. One was on children. The five-year reviews of Cairo and Beijing did bring together again a lot of the HERA group and the broader groups. But when it came down to the Child Summit and the HIV Summit, then we had to create a new mix.

By this time, we had much more electronic capacity. And we could do a lot more of the mobilizing and all that, the strategizing by e-mail, which we now do. So there's loose and different coalitions that sort of ebbs and flows. And it works well for these negotiations. And HERA members have become

staff at WHO, the UNFPA, and the Ford Foundation—you know, people who've gone on with their lives. But for its time, it served an important purpose. But I think now, in the twenty-first century, you know, with electronic media and so on, you don't need to have a solid stable core, necessarily. You can group and regroup according to the need.

Sharpless You're doing a lot of work by e-mail?

Germain Yes, quite a lot, which for me will never substitute for face-to-face meetings.

Sharpless No.

Germain I'm a Luddite. I don't use a computer in any way, shape, or form, which I'm beginning to realize is a real disability—serious. But, you know, for me, the personal relationships with all these women and being with them in their own countries or being able to come together to create and imagine and strategize, you know, it's part of the fundamental reward of this work for me personally. And sometimes I resent the computer in a way. Other times I love it, because, you know, I can e-mail, or Carmen can help me e-mail Gita in India. And I can get a reply back in a few hours. So it has its ups and downs.

Anyway, Joan's retirement. Well, after Beijing, Joan was developing an earlier interest that she had. She was becoming more and more determined that she, at least personally, wanted to work on constituency building in this country for foreign policy writ large, not just women's health and rights. We'd have to look this up and figure out when this was. Because she created what was for us then a major event in Washington—I think it may have been in '96 or '97. There's a publication from it. It's called *A Women's Lens on Foreign Policy*. And while she was still in the Coalition, under that rubric, she

worked very hard to try to see if she couldn't develop some way for us to be engaged more in D.C. on foreign policy—and then, as part of that, at least in a few major cities, to try to build a constituency, not among wealthy women or what have you, but really among grass-roots women. And this partly came out of Beijing, where a lot of grassroots women went to Beijing from this country. They'd also gone to Nairobi. But in the Beijing case, the Ms. Foundation put an enormous effort into finding women of all different ages, including young women—raising the money to support them to go to Beijing. And there were other efforts. So, in the NGO part of Beijing, you had a lot of grassroots women from this country. And so, I think Joan really thought you could capitalize on that energy and commonality, the universalities that women experienced.

But somehow [it] just didn't gel, in program terms. And I would be the first one to say that Joan tried to get me to think about it. And I just couldn't. I had my hands full doing other stuff. And I was very reluctant. I said, "Joan, I don't know anything about U.S. domestic situation. I don't know the NGOs. I don't know the leaders. I don't understand or I'm not very knowledgeable about the politics. And this is a fundamentally political issue. I mean, I can't do this. I think maybe you should find a consultant or help you develop a strategy or something." But, you know, it never gelled. And I felt that, you know, Joan's interest really lay there.

Plus, she had a very serious recurrence of breast cancer and a year-long chemotherapy that, you know, made her think about life and what she wanted to do and so on. So, in '97, she took quite a lot of time off and did

different things. And then, to my horror, I think in January of '98—maybe it was October of '97—anyway, it was, from my point of view, not very much warning (laughs)—announced that she was retiring. I go, What? I mean, we did this together. And, of course, there always has to come a time. Joan's thirteen years older than I am. And she'd confronted a lot of stuff, including a life-threatening disease. So, you know. Anyway, that she decided. That was that.

So, then we worked with the outgoing chair of the board at that time. It was Judy Lichtman, who's the head of what's now called the National Partnership for Women and Families, which is—you know, Clinton has called Judy Lichtman a national treasure. That organization—I'm forgetting what it used to be called, but anyway, they've really done as much if not more than anyone in this country in terms of the health, welfare, housing, employment—you name it—situation for women, especially low-income women in this country. And she's wonderful. Judy Lichtman is something else. Anyway, we were in transition to a new chair, who was Ellen Chesler. And so, somehow they worked out that—I'm not remembering very well now. I just know that Joan's tenure as president ended in April of '98. And the board decided to ask me to become the president.

And I thought, "Well, it's not something I aspire to—which I honestly mean. On the other hand, who else can do this?" And, really, there wasn't anybody else. So, um, let's see. Then—well, what would one say then from April of '98 until now? It's five years?

Sharpless

Yeah.

Germain

Um-hm. There were all kinds of things that went on, all different kinds of things that we've done to try to build the organization. Joan had had an approach to the board that was a wise one for her period, which was largely powerful friends of hers who could support her and us. But in my incarnation, given the visibility of the Coalition and who we were by April of '98, it was clear that we needed to have a more sort of, I don't know, conventional approach to the board—diversify its membership, create functioning committees, all those kind of things, which actually took a huge amount of time to work out. Um, that's not my forte either, I must say. But, you know, anyway, we now have functioning board committees and we have some holes in membership, and we need to fill those in. But that will always be the case.

During that period, from the late '90s forward, I began to see that having secured reproductive health and rights as the key agenda, we needed to deal with the health sector. Well, the family planning and population field never wanted to deal with the health sector. The whole point of family planning, international family planning, was to stay away from medicalized family planning. So, they wanted to do all this community-based distribution, door-to-door workers, social marketing, where you buy your contraceptives from various commercial outlets. The only clinical medical involvement was for contraceptive sterilization. And even that was pioneered in many countries like India, Bangladesh, Indonesia to be done on a “camp” basis. We had to mobilize a whole lot of women, or in the case of India before the “emergency,” men, for sterilization. So, the family planning field really didn't

want to deal with the health sector at all, because they thought there would put medical constraints on access to family planning, and they didn't want that.

So now we have, basically, a health agenda. We have to engage the health sector. And I was beginning to see that, even in '98, which is one reason that I had agreed that we would do the Bangladesh health policy—sector work that I mentioned earlier in this interview, with Rounaq Jahan, our Bangladesh colleague. Because it was an opportunity for me to see from the inside how the World Bank, the other donor governments, and the government of Bangladesh would function post-Cairo, in terms of redesigning a population control policy into a reproductive health and rights policy—and then have a chance to shape it. So even in '98, I could see that the health sector was going to be something we'd have to contend with.

Meanwhile, our colleagues in country were getting stronger and stronger, especially Brazil and Nigeria. I mentioned earlier their engagement with government on policy level. Our colleagues in Turkey were engaging with their government. They led the civil society effort to revise the civil code, which was just happened in the last year, I guess—marriage, divorce. Um, in Indonesia, I mentioned that my—our colleague Ninuk Widyantoro, even though she'd left IPPA, was nonetheless respected and had access to government and was working in ways to keep that access. And then also, when Megawati [Sukarnoputri] came in as the new leader of the country, to work with the parliament, which for the first time is supposed to function as a democratic body, in writing a new health law. So, all over where we look,

our colleagues are concerned and more and more gaining access into the health policy level of their governments.

Sharpless

So what does that mean for your work, then? Are you growing stronger?

Germain

Well, what's happened basically is that we still have the heart of our work, which is supporting capacity building in a few countries and keeping a broader network of colleagues engaged, um, and keeping these UN intergovernmental negotiations going. Because with Bush's ascendance in January 2001, all of these agreements that we fought so hard for are in jeopardy. And we have to—again, we're playing, in fact, a very central role in the tenth anniversary meetings concerning the Cairo agenda, which are being done on a regional basis. And in every single case, they are under extreme jeopardy from the United States. So, we have to keep that going.

But what's happened on the health sector, basically, is that at the same time that I realized that the health sector is key and we have to persuade them that reproductive health is important, this HIV/AIDS concern has just ballooned. But the health field is dominated by—again, it's just like the population field as Joan identified it for John Rockefeller in 1973. The health sector is controlled. The ideas and the money [are] controlled by a very small number of white northern men who have, in this instance, not a demographic background—either a health economics or an epidemiological skill set and world view. And, basically, the non-disease part of reproductive health loses totally in that world view. The disease part, because of HIV/AIDS, figures very large. But contraception and abortion, pregnancy care, delivery, postpartum support, violence against women, infertility, cervical cancer—

none of that figures in their models and their priorities.

Sharpless Turn the tape—

Tape 3, side 1, ends; side 2 begins.

Germain They also—these economists and epidemiologists—only value interventions that have been demonstrated, in quantitative terms, not only to be effective but to have very high benefit-cost ratios. And we can't do that for the non-disease elements of reproductive health, because they've been neglected for so long, except for the area of contraception. No investment has been made in what we know is the right thing to do for women's health, so we cannot then evaluate and develop benefit-cost analyses of intervention. So we're in, again, a Catch-22 situation. We're really in a no-win situation until we can figure out what the win-win is.

And so, the Coalition is working to try to do that, while still remembering that all of our colleagues are doing their thing at country level. Our grant-making program has increased. Our technical partnership and support work with all our countries and colleagues is there. Once again, strategically, I'm drawing more consultants with specialized expertise back into the mix, like I did in the early years to sort of expand our skills without making us become larger. Because I don't think that's a good idea, not only financially, given the climate, but I'm just not interested in building a big organization. I like being strategically placed to leverage others. But we do need more skills than we currently have.

So, on the global health side, basically, um—actually, I'm doing most of that work myself. And there're many elements to it. One is to try to help our

colleagues in Washington, D.C., understand that at least the HIV/AIDS part of U.S. global health policy and research setting is their business. So, the old population lobbying group should be concerned about how the fifteen billion dollars for HIV/AIDS that the president has authorized gets spent. And it should be spent in such a way that builds up the foundation of reproductive health services, because it's those services where girls and women go in most of the countries that are most affected, or will be. It's those services that don't have stigma in the community, because it's those services that are about pregnancy care and child care and where family planning is accepted. You know, these are accepted things, whereas HIV vertical stuff is highly, highly stigmatized. And to be known to be living with HIV, it's basically a death sentence in too many places, because the discrimination and all that is going on without any balancing—not yet nearly enough, I guess—balancing effort to help communities and individuals understand that this is not or must not be a basis for stigma and discrimination.

But, it's—you know, it's sex again. And the family planning field never wanted to deal with sex and, in fact, didn't deal with sex. I think I told you I commissioned a paper by Ruth Dixon [Dixon-Mueller] years ago to publish—which she did—on the sexuality connection and family planning. Because the family planning people never wanted to deal with sex, like all conceptions are immaculate. I mean, there's no sex. You know, well, the HIV/AIDS community knows they have to deal with sex. But, unfortunately, they're driven by epidemiologists who look at “core group transmitters”—that is commercial sex workers and their clients, largely—and don't look—

and their message is—well, today—is ABC which is, Abstain, Be faithful and use Condoms if you can't.

But the underlying engine for all of this is profound gender inequality. And that includes sexual violence and coercion. It includes intimidation so that women can't negotiate condom use. So what good is an ABC message? They can't abstain either if their husband has an absolute right to sex at any time, in any way. So, the ABC is meaningless for most of the women who are at high risk in this epidemic. So the HIV/AIDS community needs a major overhaul.

The global health policy community, including Jeffrey Sachs, the head of the Millennium Development Goals Project [Millennium Development Project or Millennium Development Goals], and Richard Feachem, the head of the Global Funds to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria—the health systems academics with whom I've just been with in the UK for a conference—the health sector reform people who dominate in the World Bank and the IMF—everywhere you look, the vision is cost effectiveness. And, really, truly inappropriate epidemiological models—they've been proved wrong already in sub-Saharan Africa. And we've been saying—we, the Coalition—since 1986, and I can tell you the date, that South Asia has a chance to prevent catastrophe, but only if they deal with women and girls in the general population and get on to problems—like child marriage to older men, like very common homosexual relationships among men before they marry in sex-segregated societies, like poverty which drives families to sell their daughters or young girls and drives women into the sex trade—on and on

and on and on. If we don't deal with those prevailing engines in South Asia, there's really no hope to prevent catastrophe.

You know, the [UN] General Assembly on Monday, September 22nd, this week, had an all-day session—the first time ever that the UN General Assembly has focused on a health issue. And it was on HIV/AIDS. And they brought in—I mean, we have a—well, I think we have heads of state from 140 countries is what I've heard for the first three days of this week, anyway. And they had high-level panels and so on, like the president of Mozambique spoke, the president of Nigeria, and a whole—all the heads of state, they all had their speeches to make about HIV/AIDS. Now I haven't read all of those speeches. But my staff who attended the panel sessions—first of all, of course, they were poorly attended because everybody's distracted by Iraq. Never mind that we have the president of Nigeria and et cetera. Not a word about girls and women—not one word. Even though those are two heads of state from sub-Saharan Africa—most affected countries—58 percent or more of those living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa are girls and women. Young girls are infected at five to six times the rate of boys their age because of what they call now trans-generational sex.

So, this is the kind of concern now that the Coalition will have going forward. We are keeping the heart of our programs, which is investing in women's capacity and leadership with country level. Um, the international policy program will still include intergovernmental negotiations like these conferences if they continue. But there's a big question in the UN system basically whether and how they would continue. What is clear is that these

various global health initiatives—including the health elements of the Millennium Development Goals framework that Kofi Annan, the Secretary General, has made the framework for the entire UN system and all member governments—um, [is that] there is reproductive health content in those goals. It tends not yet to be given the importance it should be. It's fractionalized.

But the goals on these issues—we have child mortality and maternal health and HIV/AIDS reduction—they're all separate goals. And the way so far that strategies are being developed is not according to the Cairo principle of reproductive health, in which health systems would deal with all these problems together as all are concerned with sex, after all. They should deal with them in a comprehensive way as laid out at Cairo. No, not at all. Instead, it's verticalized. Furthermore, the money that was going for reproductive health from European donors is now being—I've just come back from Europe—is being shifted over into a vertical HIV/AIDS commitment.

Meanwhile, we've got the Bush administration and the Republicans in Congress who want to obliterate the term reproductive health from all UN documents, all government policies, you name it, on the basis that it's a euphemism for abortion—which, of course, it isn't. Plus the Bush administration pushing its, you know, abstinence-only approach to working with young people—deadly. Plus their anti-contraception agenda, et cetera. So, with Bush the superpower in place, and the kind of really unilateral, dictatorial action that the Bush administration is pursuing, we have a major challenge here, in that we have to push back against the conservative

ideologues in Washington as well as in various other countries where fundamentalisms are on the resurgent.

People who ought to be our friends, mainly the health people, aren't in the way I described. And so, our movement—as we earlier had—at least the population community was providing something that women needed very much and wanted—contraception—and also abortion. At least they were providing women something. We needed to change their world view and et cetera. And we did that. I mean, we still have to keep after them to make sure that they don't backslide. But basically we changed that paradigm.

With the health sector people, it's something else altogether to get especially the non-disease part of reproductive health on the agenda, across all of it, to have the health sector understand that they need to deal with sexuality as a positive aspect of people's lives and also in its destructive form of violence and coercion. We have all the UN agreements we need to do this, thanks to all that negotiation we did in the '90s.

So, the Coalition—my concern is that probably the intergovernmental part of our work will be simply to protect what we have for the foreseeable future. I mean, it is an election next year. But who knows? Even if Bush isn't in office, the Republican conservatives are still going to be around. So I imagine we're going to have to work to protect these agreements for some time. But for now, the creative energy needs to go into the global health policy and resource flows. So we're not, in any way, you know, dropping UN conferences and negotiations. But the world has changed. The world doesn't want all these conferences. Kofi Annan, if he has his say, is only going to

have reviews at the level of the Millennium Development Goals. But we've got to get reproductive health and rights securely into that—not just the framework but the implementing strategy.

And then, all the donors are shifting—even their staff structures—in line with these ten Millennium—no eight Millennium Development Goals. So, it's a reality that we're sort of—you know, again, we're in a responsive mode. And we don't yet have enough support from our old, old field—namely the population community. But they're beginning to get it more than they did. At least they're beginning to get the HIV/AIDS thing. Because so much money is going in there. And, meanwhile, both the U.S. government and other budgets for reproductive health are being drastically reduced.

Sharpless Well, you have no shortage of good work to be done, I'm sure. (Germain laughs) And you've been extremely generous with your time in this project. I'm very grateful to you.

Germain Oh, well, I'm grateful to you and the project, really. I think it's a wonderful opportunity. Thank you for listening.

Sharpless It's my pleasure. Thank you.

end Interview 3