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## EAST-WEST CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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# Shabbir Cheema Interview Narrative

## 8-31-2009 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

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The **East-West Center Oral History Project** strives to capture the Center's first 50 years as seen through the eyes of staff, alumni, and supporters who have contributed to its growth.

Co-coordinators: Terese Leber and Phyllis Tabusa

Narratives Editor: Susan Yim Griffin

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## **Shabbir Cheema**

8/31/2009 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

### **Personal Background**

I'm Shabbir Cheema. I was born and raised in Pakistan, in a small village in the rural area of Pakistan. I have two sisters and five brothers, large family, you will say. My elementary school was in the village and my high school, about four miles from my village.

After my high school, I received the National Talent Scholarship from the government of Pakistan to go to Government College University Lahore to do my B.A. The amount of scholarship was 35 rupees a month, which was so much money that I could live comfortably and still entertain my friends. So, that was great, and I even bought nice presents for my sisters and brothers from my scholarship. I studied political science in B.A., and did my M.A. in political science from Pakistan as well.

I think I received a very good education in Government College University. It was a public university, like the American public universities, but it was a very good one and to get to that university you needed to have very high level score in a competitive examination during the last year of your high school. Because everybody in Government College University Lahore had high score, students learned from each other a great deal.

### **Life at EWC**

#### ***Accepting EWC Scholarship***

In those days, the dream of most Pakistani young men used to be to become civil servants. And their second dream was to become a diplomat, and their third dream to get a Ph.D. I applied for civil service exam. I also applied for scholarships for Ph.D. program

including Fulbright, Colombo Plan and East-West Center, three different scholarships, and SEATO scholarship.

When I received the offer from East-West Center, I consulted my professors and my mentors in the university whether I should give up my chance to appear in civil service before going to the East-West Center or I should turn down East-West Center. And my mentor told me, that because of my academic orientation, it would be better for me to go for Ph.D. So, I followed his advice and ended up at the East-West Center.

### *Orientation, Late '60s*

I arrived at East-West Center on August 31, 1969. The first few days in Honolulu were memorable. The Center arranged for the orientation of the new students from the U.S. and Asia. The orientation lasted for about two weeks. There were two or three events organized by the host family.

I recall that when I arrived at Honolulu Airport, the first person I met was my host family who were there waiting for me. The Host Family [*Mr. and Mrs. Don Kyper*] took me to their house, driving through Waikiki. They used to live in Hawai'i Kai. We had supper and exchanged gifts and, then, they brought me to Hale Manoa. Since I was so tired, after so many hours on PanAm flight from Karachi all the way direct to Honolulu, I slept the next like 12 hours.

### *Student Life, Late '60s/Early '70s*

My experience at East-West Center was wonderful. Basically, some of my fond memories of East-West Center are the orientation, and those two weeks were memorable. I remember very much the inter-island tour, and my field visit to the U.S. mainland, as well as my field visit to Pakistan to collect data for my dissertation. In those days, if you

were a Ph.D. student and you had a proposal which your department liked, East-West Center used to send you back to your country to collect data for your dissertation, and that was very helpful to me to finish my degree in time.

My dissertation was on local leadership and development performance in India and Pakistan. I looked at the different communities in the rural and urban areas to examine as to why some communities do better than others in articulating and managing local development projects. Can it be attributed to the local leaders? I looked at the attitudes and values of local leaders in selected local communities to determine the impact of the leadership values and attitudes on the "development performance" of the local communities. So, it was a study of what we call the political psychology and development performance, linkage between the two which was very, very interesting for me to do.

So, anyway, another good memory of East-West Center is some of the dialogue sessions we organized by the students and the staff. I remember actively participating in a seminar in which Lee Kuan Yew, the former Prime Minister of Singapore, was a speaker. And he and I had a 10 minutes back-and-forth debate. I kept on telling him how he could achieve development with democracy also. Why does he have to control and suppress people's expression, and he kept on telling me that, look, you need to have stability first before you open up too much and, of course, now that I'm much older than I was at that time, I see his point of view more clearly than I did at that time.

So, those kinds of dialogue sessions on development issues and democracy issues, on culture exchange issues were great -- I remember, we had a showing of the movie called "Phantom India." This movie showed two sides of India: India very rich; India very,

very backward; and after showing the movie, we had a one- or two-hour dialogue and very interesting debate. This dialogue was very interesting because there were no grades, you had dialogue and discussions and you learned to appreciate points of view which were different than yours.

I have great memories, of Jefferson Hall and Saga cafeteria. Saga cafeteria is where I met my lovely wife of 37 years. And Jefferson Hall was, at that time, the core of the East-West Center activities.

Finally, the most important memories are memories of the East-West Center staff, who were so helpful to me, to all of us. I remember Sumi Makey very well. I remember program officer Mr. Wong, Ms. Roberts, really going out of their way to help.

I did my best to make as much use of East-West Center facilities as I could. So, I was on scholarship for two years, then I got a teaching assistantship in the department and I wanted to get some teaching experience. I took leave from East-West Center and became a teaching assistant. My friends would ask me, why are you giving up this free money to teach? And my point was that it's good to get practical experience, and my program officers liked that a lot as well. So, in that sense, there was a lot of flexibility in the East-West Center programs and the program officers were always keen to work with you, to see what your issues are. They were being very helpful.

### ***UH Studies***

Now my experience in the Department of Political Science, University of Hawai'i at Manoa was also good. I think I got a very good education there. When I came to East-West Center in 1969, the Department of Political Science at the University of Hawai'i was ranked as one of the top 30 political science departments in the United States.

We had some big names on the faculty, like Fred Riggs, Glenn Schubert, Philip Jacobs, Glenn Paige and Rudy Rummel. These and some other faculty members were nationally known in their fields. There were also some young faculty members such as Michael Shapiro who were very helpful.

So, I worked with Phil Jacobs, Harry Friedman and Riggs in public administration reform. I remember, in the first week of September, I went to my first graduate seminar. It was called “Linkage Theory,” offered by Professor Bob Stauffer. It was between 7 to 9 p.m. There were about 15 students in the class, half of them from East-West Center, others from outside the East-West Center. I remembered the first evening, the confidence with which all the American students participated in the discussion. Some of them had come back from Indonesia, Malaysia and other countries, after being there for two years in the Peace Corps. They knew the country, they knew the language and they talked with a lot of confidence, and I had initially a sense of inferiority complex. I felt, my God, am I going to be able to compete with these people? My English wasn’t that good. It’s still not good, but it was bad at that time. I had to take English as a second-language course. In those days some of the students from South Asia who went to local language medium schools had some difficulty to effectively communicate ideas in class – even though they could draft good papers. Sometimes there was a problem in communication. Despite the initial difficulties I strongly felt that I could do it. I took four courses in the first semester, got A’s in three and B+ in the fourth, and as a result of that, the department changed my status from M.A. student to Ph.D. student, because at that time, the East-West Center’s requirement was that if you were an M.A. student and you obtained three A’s in the first semester, the Department would change your status from M.A. to Ph.D. Based on that,

the East-West Center used to increase your scholarship from two years to four years.

So, there was this incentive system. I got admitted after one semester to Ph.D., and with a four-year scholarship. The Department of Political Science provides invaluable academic guidance. They really cared a lot for the students, and I made some good friendships in the Department, as I did at the East-West Center.

### ***Problem-Oriented Institutes***

During the first year [*as a graduate student*], there was not that much interaction [*with researchers*]. But in 1970, East-West Center structure changed to what they called at that time, problem-oriented institutes. And, I was assigned to an institute called Technology and Development Institute, TDI. So, we had very close interaction with the researchers. I worked closely with Dr. Hahn Ban Lee from Korea, who was at that time the director of TDI, and research fellows including Bruce Koppel, Gary Hanson and Dr. Ahn from Korea.

I had useful substantive discussions with them about the topic of my Ph.D. dissertation. Their input to my research proposal was very valuable, especially Dr. Lee who had authored many articles on attributes of effective local leaders. They were not members of my Dissertation Committee or directly involved in granting degrees to me. But they were senior people who provided me guidance. In fact, Dr. Hahn Ban Lee influenced me in changing the direction of my work.

The first two years, I studied international relations and comparative politics. After taking all these courses for two years, I thought to myself that international relations was too abstract. I wanted to do something practical such as public administration and public governance. So, I went to my professor, Harry Friedman, and asked him: "Harry, you

know, I like international relations and comparative politics, but I think for my country, it would be helpful if I had skills on how do you improve public administration and local governance, how do you provide services to the people more effectively, how the government can perform better, how do you evaluate the performance of government, how do the leaders at different levels make a difference?” He said, no problem.

I took a six-credit directed readings course with Harry Friedman, one semester. I reviewed a lot of books on public administration. Sometimes I would read two, three books a week on that. And after that, I prepared my proposal on local leadership and development performance which really examined the changing patterns of local administration. The study of local leadership and development performance was very helpful to me in my career at the United Nations.

## **Life After EWC**

### ***UN Work in Regional Development***

After I graduated from East-West Center, I taught for a year in Honolulu Community College. I taught political science, but that was a temporary appointment. My first real job was as assistant professor of political science at Universiti Sains in Penang, Malaysia. I taught there for four years and after that, I was selected by the United Nations to go to Nagoya, Japan, as a Development Administration Planner working on institutional reform and urban and regional planning in Asia. I spent nine years in Japan with the UN Centre for Regional Development.

At the UN Centre for Regional Development in Japan, I did basically what East-West Center does today. I organized collaborative research projects for Asian countries. As the coordinator of Regional Programs, I used to give small grants to institutions and

researchers situated in Asia. Then I would organize technical workshops and policy seminars, leading to the publication of books in collaboration with scholars in the Asian region.

Each project cycle would last for two years. I was there about nine years and coordinated four regional projects. Each project cycle included such tasks as the preparation of research proposal, technical workshop, giving a grant to scholars from developing countries for collaborative research, organizing a policy seminar with senior government officials and publishing a book. It worked very well. I was able to contribute to strengthening capacities of training and research institutions in Asian region.

There, I focused on urban management and low-income housing largely in Asia. The purpose was that, in many of the Asian cities, for example, at that time, 20 to 40 percent of the residents in the cities lived in slums and squatter settlements. The issue was how do you improve the living environment of the urban residents.

So I focused on that. I undertook the state-of-the-art research and examined the practice of slum upgrading and squatter settlements improvement. I evaluated ongoing projects, and provided policy advice to governments, when requested.

## **Return to EWC, 1988**

### ***Work with EWC Population Institute***

After my stay in Nagoya, I came back to Population Institute of East-West Center, in mid-1988. I had a joint appointment at East-West Center and the University of Hawai'i, Department of Urban and Regional Planning.

I used to have an on-going collaboration between my project in Japan and East-West Center, and when East-West Center came to know that I was interested in spending a year

or two here, Dr. Lee-Jay Cho invited me. Then the Department of Urban and Regional Planning said that since you're coming to Hawai'i, why don't you teach in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning as well?

My appointment was "home-based" at the University of Hawai'i with half-time appointment as Research Associate at East-West Center. I came and bought a house in Honolulu. I was going to stay a long time in Hawai'i, and then one day I was sitting in a conference, and my assistant came to me and said that somebody from New York is calling, and said that he was the Assistant Secretary-General of the UN and needed to talk to you urgently. So, I left the conference room. The UN offered me a senior level job at the United Nations Development Program based in New York, and this is the job that I had been dreaming about. A few months after I moved to Hawai'i, they selected me. Then I told them that I was already here. I had to complete a year before I leave.

## **Career at the UN**

### ***Developing Governance Program***

I completed the academic year, and went to the UN in New York, where I spent close to 18 years. Toward the end, for six years, I worked as the Director of Governance of UN Development Program, and for five years, as the Program Director of UNDESA, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. And, so that was my fourth major job in my 25-year career.

In the UN in New York, I helped the developing countries of Asia and Africa, in improving the quality of their governance and public administration programs. I had projects to support electoral processes, projects to strengthen parliaments, to support civil society organizations, to support local governments, and I had projects to provide training

to senior government officials in order to improve their performance. I used these six entry points in a program called UN's Governance Program. And that was at the country level.

At the global level, I worked with, under the Clinton Administration, with the former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, and we started a new initiative called Community of Democracies -- these are a group of countries that had established democratic setup (including the U.S. and India), and they joined together to promote democracy in the world. I was directly involved in the establishment of this group. My role was to prepare technical documents for the Community of Democracies which was then endorsed by the member governments of the United Nations through their ambassadors at the UN. I also prepared the United Nations Development Program's first policy paper on governance. It was done in 1997. In the past, the UN did not work on governance issues, because it was considered too politically sensitive. But when Kofi Annan became Secretary-General, the UN started to argue that we should help the developing countries to promote democratic governance, and I was the first Director of the Governance Division of UNDP to do that.

## **Return to EWC, 2008**

### ***Asia Pacific Governance & Democracy Initiative (AGDI)***

In 2007, I came to participate in the 40<sup>th</sup> reunion of the grantees of 1970s. And, when I was here, the management of East-West Center informed me that the position of senior fellow dealing with governance issues had been advertised and that if I was interested, I can apply for that. And I applied, and they went through a normal recruitment process. After being short-listed, I was asked to come back from New York and make a public

presentation. I was one of the four short-listed persons invited to make a presentation. I think in this very room I made a presentation. And, two months later I was offered the position. I moved back to East-West Center on January 3, 2008.

I believe it's a good idea to make a transition to different institutions. Staying in one institution for too long, at least for me, it's not that desirable, because going to different situations brings different perspectives. It makes you grow professionally much more.

At the East-West Center right now, I have launched a project called Asia-Pacific Governance and Democracy Initiative(AGDI).

This is a program that aims to promote democracy and good governance in developing countries of Asia and the Pacific.

Through ADGI, we undertake collaborative research, organize technical workshops, organize country-level outreach activities and, finally, publish books and policy dialogue, or policy papers.

Right now, we have a specific project on civil society engagement; we have a project on cross-border governance, that looks at the governance dimensions in Asia-Pacific region of illegal migration, the human trafficking, cross-boundary water management and regional trade. So, these are the two ongoing projects that I'm focusing on.

A third project that started about two weeks ago is on electoral and parliamentary process and we are going to have our first project launch in Pakistan, where I'm going in a couple of weeks to launch that project.

It's in collaboration with the Pakistan Institute for Legislative Development and Transparency.

## **Ties That Last**

### ***Life-long EWC Friendships***

I made friends with a lot of grantees. One of them is my life-long friend, Kem Lowry, who is a professor and previously was the chairman of the [*University of Hawai'i*] Urban and Regional Planning Department. Another of my contemporaries was Phil Estermann, who was known at the East-West Center. Another of my very good friends was Bill Crowley who is in Oregon now, he's teaching. Jack Dukesberry went to Indonesia and spent many years there. He worked for USAID for many years. I kept contacts with them, and because we were both grantees and students of political science.

I have been in touch with my friend Michiko from Japan for the past 40 years. When I was posted in Japan for a few years, I met her and her lovely family several times. When I lived and worked in Japan, I used to travel a great deal to Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia and kept contact with former grantees including those at the Asian Development Bank. Also I made life-long friends from my own country of birth as well as other South Asian countries. There are too many names to mention here.

So, to answer your question, I think it was one of the best periods in my life, those four years at the East-West Center. When my son was in college, I used to talk a lot about my time at East-West Center telling him how great it was during my university days. When I talked too much about East-West Center, my son would say, "Dad – not again!"

When I came to East-West Center, I was already a graduate student, and I had a reasonably good understanding of what I wanted in my professional life. I came from a very different culture, so it was not only education, but it was a new cultural experience, new for me, it was exciting and everything was different. The ICT revolution had not

reached the stage where it is now. The change was real.

### ***Jefferson Hall & Saga Cafeteria***

So, now that I'm back after many years, I do miss really the former meeting points of East-West Center, which is Jefferson Hall and Saga cafeteria, because now I feel there is no one central place that can bring all of the participants together on regular basis.

One idea I have for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of East-West Center is to open up some of the doors of Jefferson Hall, and change that into a reading room for at least a week. I have no doubt in my mind that the grantees of the '60s and '70s and '80s will love that.

And, you know, I'm not saying that we should get rid of the Imin Conference Center, but to create the original environment through Jefferson Hall lobby for a short period. I'm hoping that the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary will give much visibility to East-West Center in the region, in the United States, and then we look forward to next 50 years of East-West Center.

### ***EWC's Impact***

#### ***On Career, Perspectives***

There were really no negative memories, except to say that Hawai'i was and is somewhat an isolated place. So, it was a little bit harder for me to establish myself as a scholar in my field, because of this location and fewer professional networking opportunities, even though the University of Hawai'i was very helpful in giving me a grant to attend the American Political Science Association Convention in Chicago.

I know that getting my Ph.D. from an Ivy League university on the U.S. mainland would have made it easier for me to establish myself as a scholar. But if I had to do it all over again, I'd still undertake my studies at the East-West Center.

I think the reason is the society in Hawai'i, the people. Coming from South Asia -- I never had any bad experience of any type living here. Also, there are many places that offer scholarships, but East-West Center's value-added is that it also provides a setting for the sharing of cultures and experiences, which is equally important to lead a life with purpose. So, that was very good. And third reason why I think I'd do it all over again is that I got good education in Political Science Department.

You know, when you're young, in your early 20s, and you have a lot of dreams, yes, you want to have lot of fun, yes, you're interested in learning about other cultures, but at the same time, you also want to get a few skills that help you in your professional life as you move forward, and I think East-West Center's scholarship provided me with good opportunities both in my academic pursuits and in enhancing my understanding of different cultures. So, in that sense I would say, coming to East-West Center was really a transforming experience for me, both personally and professionally.

The East-West Center experience affected my professional career a great deal because I studied development here, I studied democracy here, I studied public administration here, and I have been applying the skills learned here in my career over the years. There's a direct linkage between what I did here as a student, and what I've been doing for the last 25 years in my professional career.

### ***On Inter-Cultural Understanding***

In terms of my values and personal life, East-West Center had a major impact. I met my lovely wife of 37 years here at East-West Center. It also, being at the East-West Center, enabled me to appreciate and understand the need for cross-cultural, multi-cultural understanding and cooperation. So, the values of intercultural understandings were

inculcated very strongly in my younger days here at the East-West Center.

I think it was very helpful when I went to Japan to work, and I was there for nine years. I felt very comfortable living there.

I could partly understand the spoken Japanese. I appreciated the Japanese culture. I attempted to understand why the Japanese act the way they do. I had a very pleasant time there, and I got along very well with my Japanese colleagues. My stay there was pleasant both personally and professionally.

In the United Nations, when I became the Director of Governance Division, I had about 30 staff working with me directly in my division, in New York, and about 200 around the world, who worked indirectly with me. They were from 70 to 80 countries, all these people, and it was very essential to understand and appreciate cultural sensitivities, and respect for different cultures is an essential factor in being a good manager. And that helped me a lot.

I remember when I was a manager, I could see conflicts between the staff. Because I had some understanding of different cultures, it was easier for me to mediate and reconcile any differences among the staff. Certainly, in the United Nations, you cannot be effective as a manager unless you are culturally sensitive. And spending four years at the East-West Center helped me to accomplish that.

*[Editor's note: Cheema is asked if he thinks the UN approached him about the job in part because of his experience at EWC, interacting with people from different cultures.]*

Yes, I think they definitely did. I would say that when I look back, there was no job advertisement. They asked a head hunter to identify some suitable people who had technical background, experience in the field in Asia and an understanding of the UN

system. This head hunter identified me along with some other persons, and they invited me for two weeks as a consultant to assess my performance, technical capacity and human skills.

I strongly feel they selected me, and they gave me this senior job, at that level, for the following reasons: one was that I had lived and worked in different cross-cultural settings. I'm South Asian, born and raised in Pakistan. I spent five years in Malaysia, traveled a lot in Southeast Asia. I spent nine years in Japan, traveled a lot in Korea and Japan, and other East Asian countries. I spent four years at the East-West Center, as a student, living with students from all parts of Asia and the Pacific Region and the United States. The UN recognized my cultural sensitivity, and ability to live and work in different cultural settings.

Another reason the UN had in mind when they recruited me was that I already had some UN experience, and I had a lot of publications. But certainly, my experience in living and working in different cultural settings was definitely an important factor to them.

### ***Bridge Between Developed and Developing World***

My experience at the East-West Center influenced other people in my country, and other countries as well, because for the last 25 years, that's what I've been doing, I've been attempting to contribute by serving as a bridge between the developed world and the developing world, to exchange knowledge and good practices to improve democratic governance for human development.

I went on missions to many of the developing countries to provide technical support, technical assistance, whether it's the design of a research program, or it's the design of a project, or it's the initiation of a new activity, or evaluating the government programs. I

think my whole career has been communicating what I've learned to my counterparts in the developing countries, mostly Asia.

I keep on telling my wife, and my children, I really feel I'm one of the most blessed persons, in the sense that for the last 25 years I've been working on the topics that I studied for four years at the East-West Center, at the University of Hawai'i, and it's very unusual to have that kind of opportunity.

I know I've worked very hard to get to where I am, and along the way, some people came who helped me a lot, you know. But, in that sense, I thank East-West Center for being a transforming institution in my life.

### *On Management Style*

I feel strongly that as human beings, we need to help each other to enable us to fulfill our capacities -- to utilize fully our potential and capabilities. I know, in my life, at the University of Hawai'i, people like Professor Harry Friedman, Professor Fred Riggs and Professor Phil Jacobs went out of their way to help me in this process. So, when I got the opportunity, I became manager in UN Development Program, I never forgot that.

When I was one of the senior managers at the United Nations, I was on the other side, and I think some of the things I did -- it's presumptuous on my part to talk about it, but I'm going to do it anyway, because you asked me.

I'll give you a few examples. Kendra Collins, a young woman from the UK, comes as an intern for two months to work in my division. One day one of the senior staff was on leave, and she had some experience in that field so we asked her to prepare a short paper. In 48 hours, she wrote something which was so good; I asked my staff, who wrote that? And they said that this is the new intern who wrote that. After her internship ended, I

gave her a four- months contract as a junior consultant. She performed outstandingly.

The result is that today, just five, six years later, she is a senior UN official in the UN Political Affairs division - just because I gave a very young person an opportunity based purely on merit.

The other example is Rob Work. One of my colleagues for about 20 years. He had lived and worked in Korea, Jamaica and Malaysia, and various other countries doing community level development. My assistant scheduled an appointment for him to see me. I interviewed him for 45 minutes. I realized how much potential he had. I gave him an opportunity, he became the head of the UN Governance and Decentralization Program, and now he's a professor at New York University.

There are so many other young persons I recruited to work for me who are now in senior positions at the United Nations and contributing to the noble UN mission. One other thing, as a manager what I did was to give lots of opportunities to young people. Young people who deserved that, and who worked hard. I know when I was young, at that time, seniority sometimes was considered too important and the young people were not treated the same way.

And there was one event that really influenced my thinking on that. I worked once in the UN in Malaysia for six months as a junior consultant, and the first day I went there I was asked to meet the deputy director. The director wasn't there.

I was 28 years old, young, just finished my Ph.D. So, I went to introduce myself as the new young consultant. He said, "Sit down Mr. Cheema. It took me five years to set up this center. And my image of this center was the very, very senior people would come here." So you can imagine, a young man, going to work, the first day is asked to go and

say hello to the deputy director, who indirectly tells the young man that he is too young to be working as an expert in the institution. Anyway, I felt bad about it, but when the director came, he saw what I was doing, he really appreciated my work, and I had a good time there.

Fifteen years after that event in Malaysia, I became the Director of Governance Division of the United Nations Development Program in New York. One day someone walked into my office asking me for project funding. It was the same person who had told me indirectly 15 years ago that I was too young to be there, and when he came to see me I was friendly to him and treated him with respect. I had been rapidly promoted and he was still at the same level where he was many years ago. That really left a strong impression on me, that as a manager it's your responsibility to treat the staff as family, particularly the young people, particularly deserving young people, and I'm very proud of that.

And the UN rewarded me for that type of management style. I was identified as one of the three most effective managers in 1999 by the UN Office of Project Office Services (UN-OPS), because of my interest in the welfare of the staff and project management skills. I used to take time to learn what everybody was doing and when somebody came to talk to me, I already knew what that person was doing, and the people felt great that I was showing interest in their work. So, yes, I think I've been doing my best to influence other people, mentor other people the same way that I have been privileged to be mentored by many people.

### **EWC Mission**

When I came here, East-West Center's mission was: one, to support grantees from Asia and the United States to get degrees; two, to promote cultural exchanges and

understanding among different countries; and three, to promote better understanding of the United States in the region.

I think that mission to a considerable extent still remains, stays the same, which is fine but, of course, I do understand that with the passage of time the mission ought to be modified a little bit, because Asia is not what Asia was 40 years ago. Now countries like Japan, Korea, China have a lot of resources. They do not need scholarships for degrees as much as they need more dialogue and more seminars and more understanding, in that sense. So, there's a little bit change in the focus. The focus is more on dialogue and discussion.

At the same time, I feel that education program should still be the core of East-West Center's mission, because the dialogue and research should be built around that education and research programs. In that sense, I would like to see, as a former grantee, continued expansion of degree fellowships to the students, especially from the South Asian countries.

I think the mission is basically the same. Some modalities are a little bit different.

There's more focus on policy dialogue, there's more focus on regional-level activities.

There are fewer grants for degree from the core resources of East-West Center, although the extra budgetary resources are being mobilized for that purpose. As I said earlier, Asia has changed, so naturally the modalities have to change a little bit.

But the core missions still remain the same: to promote a sense of Asia Pacific community, to promote better understanding between the United States and the countries of Asia, and to promote better understanding for different cultures in that sense.

## **Personal Legacy**

*[Cheema is asked how he wants people to remember him.]*

One is that Shabbir Cheema who came to East-West Center from a small village in Pakistan, ended up as the director of the United Nations Governance Division in New York, and in that capacity, he wrote UN's first policy paper on governance, which has been publicized in more than 170 countries around the world and is very widely used by governments and national and regional institutions. So, the contribution to the UN's work on governance he made will hopefully be remembered.

The second is that he tried to promote better understanding between the United States and the Asian countries. My daughter was born in Malaysia, my son was born in Japan, and my wife was born in the U.S. I was born in Pakistan and raised as a Muslim. My wife was born and raised as a Catholic, and we have been happily married for 37 years. So, these are all personal parts of global village we live in.

And the third is that Shabbir Cheema provided support and assistance to Asian countries in improving their governance and public administration systems including their electoral systems, their programs to improve slums and squatter settlements in the cities.

So, in a way, for 25 years, I tried to serve as a bridge between the Western advanced world and the developing countries, as a broker of ideas, bringing our partners from the Asian countries, with our partners from the Western countries.

To conclude, my limited contributions include putting the concept of governance on the global agenda, promoting better understanding among different cultures, religions and societies and, finally, my work in the trenches to provide support to the institutions in the developing countries. I passionately feel about each of the three dimensions, and I'm

happy that I've been able to contribute in a modest way.