Sam's Story

My name is Samjit and I was born in Delhi in India. My father was in the Indian Air Force, so we moved every two years. I grew up in places as diverse as Cranfield in England and Chandigarh in India.

At ten I was sent to boarding school in Rajasthan in northwest India, so I would not ever change schools. Then I went to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). Many of the Indians working in the IT field in California and the United States were at this institution. At 21, I then left for the United States.

I wanted to build a good life for myself, find a good job and start a career. Almost everyone in my class has emigrated to Great Britain or the United States. If your parents do not have a business or are in politics, it is very difficult to rise in India and have a real career.

I took an Air France flight to Paris, waited for four hours to move on to New York's JFK airport and from there took a bus to Newark, Delaware. In New York, I also spent a day at a school friend's place.

Newark has a few members of the Indian community who had been waiting for me. I had my two suitcases and $ 200 there. First, I had a student visa, two years later I got a work permit. After three years my green card and after five years, my U.S. citizenship.

Although I came here all alone, there were some classmates who also went to universities on the east coast. Two of them were at the same university as me and we had a shared apartment together. Actually there were many Indian students who all helped us to feel at home.

Today I live in Brooklyn, New York City. I am the senior partner in a management consulting company. I advise large companies on technical innovations.

In New York, I feel connected. I feel like a global citizen. I work for a global company, my clients are global. I meet them in the U.S., Europe and Asia. My friends are spread all over the world. I go all over the world on holiday. On the other hand, I also have strong local contacts. When I lived in Boston, I was godfather to the daughter of a couple of friends. When I moved to New York, I met my current girlfriend. I'm at home in Brooklyn now.

To live in Brooklyn and New York feels very cosmopolitan. People treat me like any other New Yorker here. I never feel "different". I know that there are other places in the country where people say to you: "Go back where you came from ." But it does not happen in New York City. The United States is my home. I am culturally in tune with the country.

Of course I miss my family and they wish that I would come back often. This is the hardest thing: My parents are already getting old and can no longer travel. They always feel lonely and they wish I could look in on them every few weekends - as if I lived a few streets away. Although there is a direct flight to Delhi, it's still a long way off. I rarely visit more than twice a year.