

International Education Week (IEW) in Bulgaria

November 17-21, 2008

During the International Education week (November 17-21, 2008) a number of useful activities were carried out attracting the attention of students, professors, high-school teachers, educators, professionals and parents.

A highlight of this year's IEW was the participation of Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director of the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission in a Workshop on English/American Studies on October 10, 2008 in the city of Plovdiv. Dr. Stefanova presented on "The Fulbright Program and American Studies in Bulgaria". In addition, over 880 students and professionals visited the Fulbright stand at the QS World Grad School Fair and the CIS (Council of International Schools) Fair in Sofia. EducationUSA adviser Snezhana Teneva presented on "The Fulbright Program in Bulgaria and the Annual Fulbright Grants Competition" at the Technical University of Sofia, the University of National and World Economy and the American University in Bulgaria. During and around the IEW, the Fulbright advising center in Sofia was visited by representatives of five U.S. institutions of higher education: Stanford University, CA; Stanford Graduate School of Business, CA; Green River Community College, WA; Worcester Polytechnic Institute, MA, and Hawaii Pacific University, HI. They presented their institutions and the American educational system to interested students and parents.

Over 1100 individuals and representatives of institutions interested in international education and exchange activities (schools,



Over 616 students and professionals visited the Fulbright stand at the QS World Grad School Fair in Sheraton Hotel Sofia



Snezhana Teneva, EducationUSA adviser, presenting on "The Fulbright Program in Bulgaria and the Annual Fulbright Grants Competition" at the University of National and World Economy

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universities, international organizations, businesses, associations, community organizations, etc.) joined in this year's IEW events and got exposed to study opportunities in the United States.

U.S. University Presentations and Interviews



Worcester Polytechnic Institute, MA



Stanford University, CA



Stanford Graduate School of Business, CA



Green River Community College, WA

Bulgarian Fulbright Alumni Association Membership Form



Full name

Home address

Field, Academic Rank and Degree

Present Place and Address of Employment

Phone, Fax

Type, Year and Duration of Grant

Place and Name of Host Institution

Please complete and return to the Fulbright commission office address.

Final Nominations for Bulgarian Fulbright Grantees in AY 2009-2010

This year the Commission received 31 applications for Fulbright senior scholar and graduate study grants and Hubert Humphrey fellowships. The binational reviewing committees recommended 11 students and 17 scholars for interview. The interviews were conducted on 26 and 29 September, 2009. The applicants represented a wide variety of fields and were well qualified and motivated.

The following candidates for Fulbright scholarships and Hubert H. Humphrey fellowships in AY 2009-10 were nominated by the Commission Board:

Senior Scholars

Principal candidates in ranked order:

1. Georgui Dimitrov – sociology
2. Ivan Mladenov – Bulgarian studies
3. Damianka Getova – pharmacology
4. Petya Osenova – computer linguistics
5. Nikolai Naidenov – political science
6. Svetlana Nedelcheva – applied linguistics (English)

Alternate candidates:

1. Ognyan Kovachev – theory of literature
2. Yonka Parvanova – education

Graduate Students

Principal candidates in ranked order:

1. Antonia Gurkovska – art (Thanks to Scandinavia scholarship)
2. Georgui Tsonchev – law (Thanks to Scandinavia scholarship)
3. Dimitar Kaldamukov – law (corporate business law)
4. Dimitrina Dimitrova – communications
5. Maria Ivanova – law (antitrust law)
6. Kristina Stoyanova – art



Fulbright Interview, September 29, 2008. Members of the nomination committee: Dr. Plamen Tchipev, Fulbright alumnus; ED Dr. Julia Stefanova, Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission; PAO Katherine Ingmanson, U.S. Embassy

Alternate candidates:

1. Lila Macheva – law
2. Veleslava Zhereva – MBA

Fulbright-Oklahoma Scholarship

Principal:

1. Georgui Mladenov – MBA

Alternate:

2. Lyubomir Mladenov – MBA

H. Humphrey Fellowship

Proposed finalist:

1. Ivo Tsekov – public policy

Fulbright Office News

After Three Months in Bulgaria Discussion of U.S. Grantees' Projects for AY 2008-2009

On December 15 the Fulbright Commission staff held a meeting with U.S. grantees to discuss the progress of their projects in Bulgaria. This year we had the honor of hosting special guests to the event: Her Excellency Nancy McEldowney, Ambassador of the U.S.A. to the Republic of Bulgaria; Sherry Keneson-Hall, Cultural Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy; Ana Todorcheva, Cultural Affairs Assistant, U.S. Embassy.

Each of the Fulbrighters reported on their activities during the first three months of their stay in Bulgaria. The topics ranged from contemporary methodology in science education through American literature and cutting-edge human-resource management to computer science, jazz music in Bulgarian context and impressions from Bulgarian high schools. All participants appreciated Her Excellency's continued interest and final remarks.

The program offered a visit to the Boyana Church and ended with a Pre-Christmas party for U.S. grantees, their contact persons and Bulgarian Fulbright alumni.



Meeting at the Fulbright Office: U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria Nancy McEldowney (center), addressing the participants



The AY 2008-2009 U.S. Fulbright Grantees



Ryan McCormack, presenting his Fulbright research project on "Jazz in Bulgaria: A History and Synopsis"

Fulbright Office News

Cultural Enrichment Activities for U.S. Fulbright Grantees



One-day trip to Koprivstitsa, October 18th 2008

A Fulbright Scholar Wins a Sofia University Grand Science Prize

On November 24, 2008 Fulbright alumnus Boris Galabov, Professor of Chemistry, was awarded the Grand Science Prize as part of Sofia University's 120th anniversary celebrations.

The special awarding ceremony took place in the Aula of Alma Mater.

"A total of six professors had been nominated for the prize and the winner was chosen by a two-stage secret vote," explained Professor Ivan Ilchev, Rector of Sofia University.



БЪЛГАРО-АМЕРИКАНСКА КОМИСИЯ ЗА ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЕН ОБМЕН

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www.fulbright.bg

FISI Impressions

Carolyn Emigh

Fulbright Teaching Assistant, English, Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA
First English Language School, Sofia, Bulgaria

What is FISI?

Recently, I found myself trying to explain what FISI is to my friends and family and I kept coming up short. When I found out that I'd won a Fulbright and that Fulbrighters could participate in the two week FISI program, I was ecstatic. I knew a lot about the Fulbright but nearly nothing about FISI. So, I had no idea what to expect and this made it that much harder for me to explain to others where I was going—Tryavna—and what I was going to do there.

I arrived in Sofia a couple of days before FISI and I had no definite plans. My landlord, who speaks almost no English, and his wife met me at the airport and took me to my apartment. After a quick run through on the industrial coffee machine, the air conditioner, the hot water heater (which I have a love-hate relationship with) and the washing machine all in Bulgarian and a tour of my new neighborhood where the “magazines” where I could buy food were all pointed out, I thought to myself: wow, what is it that I am doing here? The following day my landlord came back, this time to play tour guide and we walked all over the city ending at Alexandar Nevski Cathedral and that Saturday I was invited to their home for lunch. Lunch lasted more than six hours and at the end it was decided by my landlord and his son that I would not take the city bus to the Pliska Hotel where I was supposed to meet the bus to FISI. Rather, my landlord would pick me up and take me to the meeting place.

He and his wife came in their little, ancient car to pick me up—me: an American that they had met only days before to take me to a hotel to meet a bus to begin my adventure. Mind you, I hadn't paid my rent, made a deposit on the apartment or anything and my landlord was chauffeuring me around the city. Once at Pliska Hotel, he wouldn't leave me until he had a long talk with one of the coordinators in Bulgarian. Apparently he was satisfied with the answers because he kissed me on both cheeks and left me there. And I was left with the strange sense that I was being dropped off by a parent for summer camp for the first time.

It turns out that this sense that I was going to summer camp wasn't too far off the mark but this time instead of singing songs, going hiking or doing crafts with bits of yarn, old magazines, glue and macaroni, we were taking classes, discussing politics, creating a performance art piece and exploring old Bulgarian towns loaded with history.



The program provided an excellent introduction to Bulgarian history, culture and politics for the Fulbrighters in attendance and gave me a sense of the complexity of life in the Balkans—both in the past as well as today. I knew that Bulgaria was a much, much older country than the United States but sitting in class one day I was struck by this comparison: President Jefferson acquired the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Lewis and Clark made it to the Pacific coast and spent the winter of 1805-1806 there. The state I grew up in Washington State became a territory 50 years later in 1853. Not long after this, in 1889 Washington became the 42nd state in the Union and today the state is 119 years old. However, by the time Washington became a state, Bulgaria had already been under Ottoman rule for the previous five centuries, had fought a number of times unsuccessfully for independence which they eventually received 1908.

This kind of history makes a person think about how long five centuries of foreign rule actually is. It makes you realize how old the country actually is and it made me wonder how does a place keep a common language, culture, and identity through something like this? It's incredible really. This is not to say that Bulgarian culture and identity hasn't changed, grown or evolved but as an outsider I can't help but wonder what is it about this place, these people, the culture, the language and the religion that took root so deeply to guide this place through Ottoman rule, the Balkan Wars, two World Wars and later nearly 50 years of communist rule? This question is clearly absurd for me to try to answer given the fact that experts in the field can't seem to. So I am left to think about this: how is it then that everyone can be so nice to me when things have seemingly gone so wrong for so long?

I think that FISI helps to answer this question. The political, economic and cultural abstractions of countries in and around Eastern Europe become personal and nuanced when you have breakfast with young men and women from Turkey, Albania and Lebanon or when you sit in class with Romanians, Italians and Bulgarians. These students know their extensive histories. They are attuned to similarities and to difference and are keen to talk about this. What stood out to me was the fact that these young women and men don't mince words—they say what they mean and do so backing this up with fact and lot of heart. It

produces a kind of enthusiasm and intensity that carries one from breakfast to the classroom to the pool and later to a club—only to repeat the whole thing the next day.

So how is that all of these men and women can be so nice to me, when they hardly know me? Well, it's not because I can keep up with the partying that my Balkan friends engage in or even because I am full of witty clips and retorts. I think rather in a place like this where the country has been acted upon by outside forces for so long that individual connections matter much more. No one seems to be asking the questions "what can my country do for me" nor "what can I do for my country" rather it is about the personal—the give and take of individual relationships that seem to drive this place.

It is this interest in personal relationships that facilitated mid-morning coffees or late night beers and in the resulting conversa-

tions you get a sense that we're all looking for the same kinds of things—relationships that affirm who we are, friends that laugh at our jokes (often the same joke over and over), jobs that we find fulfilling and the ability to live at home and not worry about our safety and security.

However what makes FISl the most difficult to explain, to define or to name is the fact that ultimately the experience is about more than its individual parts. Yes, it's about class, it's about the social, it's about sleepless nights, it's about meeting new people but it's about what happens when 40 people from all over the world find themselves in a town like Tryavna and the positive energy, enthusiasm and hope that an event like this helps to foster among participants. I think that when two weeks turns out to be enough time for us to create new and I hope lasting friendships—friendships which bridge fairly serious difference, the obvious next questions is what else is possible?

Helen Keezer

Fulbright Exchange Teacher, English, Century High School, Pocatello, ID, USA
 "Bertolt Brecht" Foreign Language School, Pazardzhik, Bulgaria

The Magic of FISl

Before coming to the "beauty spot of the world," Bulgaria, I had read of her mystical powers and healing nature. I admit to some skepticism about the authenticity of these reports. Perhaps, as an American I was just too jaded to believe in magic. After only one week in Bulgaria, I am no longer skeptical. I just returned from a mystical week in the beautiful village of Tryavna in central Bulgaria as part of the Fulbright International Summer Institute (FISl).

The magic I experienced involved no slight of hand or rabbits being pulled from a hat, it was the pure magic of young scholars from Albania, Azerbaijan, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Italy, Lebanon, Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, and the United States meeting together to further the Fulbright goal of promoting global peace and understanding through academic exchange.

Though FISl is a two week program, I was only able to join the group for the second week. By the time I met the vibrant, gifted young scholars, they had already coalesced into such an amalgam, that I could never have guessed they came from such diverse backgrounds or that some of them came from countries who suffered years of animosity towards each other. For these two weeks in Tryavna were not about dwelling in the past but rather moving toward the future. After sharing in these students exuberance for scholarly discussion, enthusiasm for genuine friendship, and irrepressible energy for socializing, I conclude that the future is in quite capable hands!

Following Senator James Fulbright's vision, "We must try to ex-



pand the boundaries of human wisdom, empathy and perception, and there is no way of doing that except through education," FISl offered courses in such topics as "The Philosophical Issues of XXI Century," "American Foreign Policy and International System in the Age of Globalization," and "Logic in Continental Tradition." The young scholars had chosen their core courses of study before arriving in Tryavna and were eager participants, asking engaging questions and contributing perspectives unique to their cultural backgrounds.

These remarkable students demonstrated to the Tryavna locals that something very interesting and unique was going on at the Seasons Hotel. Lead by Theodore Efremoff an artist from the University of Connecticut, the students donned white clothing and marched single file through the town square. At the artist's command, they lay flat on the street, head to toe, while Ted painted the language of conflict and resolution one word per person, on each student's torso using a chocolate "paint." Tourists and locals were leery at first, then puzzled, and finally pleased as the living art piece stood in unison to take a bow.

Though funding is always difficult to find, The Bulgarian Fulbright Commission has sponsored FISl for seven years. Under the direction of Dr. Julia Stefanova, with the able assistance of Rada Kaneva, Dr. Kostadin Grozev, Iolanta Koprinova, Anastassia Miteva, and others, FISl quietly goes about the task of changing the world through international education and exchange. This year, I was one of those lucky enough to participate, and I am changed forever.

Theodore Efremoff

Fulbright graduate student, Installation Art Assignment in Bulgaria: National Academy of Arts, Sofia Project Title: *Temporal Monuments*

As part of my Fulbright Fellowship to Bulgaria I was invited to take classes at the two week Fulbright International Summer Institute in Triavna. Along with fellow Fulbrighters, administration and professors the population of the school consisted of about 40 international students taking courses in a variety of Subjects such as Law, Philosophy, Economics and Bulgarian History and Culture.

During the first week of the school I was asked what seemed like an innocent question:

What do you do?

I am an artist.

Will you show us your work?

Sure.

What kind of work do you do?

I do installation and performance art.

We should do a performance here.

I would be happy to mediate a performance of your making.

At least in my memory the conversation went something like that.

So the following day I showed my fellow students my work and over the next three days they created a performance:

A large group of people comes to a busy town square on a Saturday evening in August in Triavna, Bulgaria. They are wearing white. Having been noticed by the town residents and tourists, they seem conspicuous. They hold an answer not yet revealed. They line up at an outstretched arms length from one another to form a long curved line on the square. A man with a bucket of dark liquid (syrup), a brush on a meter long stick and a blue whistle around his neck stands at the back of the line. As he blows the whistle in a rapid burst the first person in line lies down. The man paints the word INTENSE in Bulgarian on the person in large block letters running the length of the body. Another blast of the whistle and



the next one lies down face up on the ground. This body receives PASSION. This progresses until the following poem is written on all 25 bodies now lying in the street:

СИЛНА СТРАСТ ЗА ЛЕСНА ПЕЧАЛБА
INTENSE PASSION FOR EASY PROFIT

НАДЗЕМНА ПОХОТ ЗА РОЗОВИ БЕЗРАЗЛИЧНИ УСМИВКИ
OVER-GROUND LUST FOR PINK INDIFFERENT SMILES

МИРЪТ СТРАДА, ОБСЕБВАН ОТ МИНАЛО И НАСИЛИЕ, БОЛКА,
РЕВНОСТ, ДИСКРИМИНАЦИЯ
PEACE SUFFERS OBSESSED WITH PAST AND VIOLENCE, PAIN, JEALOUSY, DISCRIMINATION

ВОЕННА МАШИНА, ДРЪН-ДРЪН
WAR MACHINE, BLAH-BLAH-BLAH

НЕВЕРНИТЕ ДРУГИ СЕ БОРЯТ С УЖАСЯВАЩАТА ГЛУПОСТ
UNFAITHFULL OTHERS FIGHT HORRIBLE STUPIDITY

The poem is a result of each participant's one word response to the word HATE. As the man blows another, more elongated sound of the whistle the people lying down extend their left arm at a right angle to their bodies revealing a sentence written in black on the inside of their arm. Each sentence written on the arm is part of a response to the previous sentence written by another. The next whistle prompts the right arm to extend and complete the human sign of the cross. 25 bodies lie in silence in the square forming the line of a sentence. Each person as a word. A group as a poem. An individual's sentence on the arm extending the group story. As the poem is being written the line is active and alive with a beginning in the past and a present still revealing itself. As the poem is completed it should become part of the past, with time frozen in the words, except each word is still an individual. They are talking to people in the square, answering questions, receiving drinks of water or watching people staring at them and walking around and over them. The final whistle blows and the performers slowly get up from the ground, spontaneously join hands and extend their experience into a freeform celebration of their accomplishment.

As I participated, watched and later thought about the performance I remembered the words of the German Artist Joseph Beuys:

*"Every human being is an artist, a freedom being,
called to participate in transforming and reshaping
the conditions,
thinking and structures that shape and inform our
lives"*

This quote is directly linked to the Beuys idea of Social Sculpture, a concept in which each human being exerts influence on the world around them creating an invisible sculpture of social networks and ultimately crafting an evolved social order, "A social organism as a work of art".

Joseph Beuys promoted an "expanded concept of art" and considered politics and activism art. He used the slogan "Unity in Diversity" as a rallying point for tolerance when he ran on the Green Party ticket for Bundestag. His projects "Save the Woods" and "7 Thousand Oaks" spearheaded the ecological movement through direct action in the 1970's by combating pollution and planting trees. While a Professor at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art Beuys overenrolled his classes arguing that those who want to learn should meet with those who want to teach and there should be no restrictions on admission to a school. For this action the Düsseldorf Academy of Art dismissed Beuys in 1972. That same year Beuys started the Free International University, a school that was open to all students. Beuys philosophy of teaching was not based on the hierarchical relationship of teacher above student, but on the equality of the two punctuated by each having the ability to learn from the other.



I was reminded of Beuys because of the nature of the student's request to create a performance. It seemed like a grass roots desire to make a work of art. On the other hand it was an activist gesture of response to global hatred. So this blurring of the boundaries of art and activism was something that Beuys promoted. The ultimate action by the students can be described both as an act of activism and art.

The performance evolved along the lines of a Social Sculpture with students making suggestions, which gradually found their way into the common psyche of the group and became the modus operandi. As I presented my work I remember mentioning the fact that I was a painter in the past. One of the first questions asked after the presentation was whether I was still capable of painting. When I said yes, it was suggested that the painting be on the students themselves. Although initially the painting was going to be an image, eventually another suggestion led to writing words. This led to the idea of a sentence, a poem or a story.

The project consisting of 30 or so creators veered left or right depending on the next suggestion. The hardships of the democratic process were revealed with every suggestion changing the project in our minds. I remember thinking that a dictatorship would be much easier. The participants brainstormed, argued and eventually cooperated. The performance evolved within three days and following a short rehearsal was executed with care and intent.

Each participant affected the artwork by providing a word. Physically arranging the words into a poem created nuances of word interaction by juxtaposition. The sentences written on the performers arms completed in a personal way a story started by others. The living sculpture created by the participants has a beginning and end and implies a metaphoric journey. Interconnections of the bodies or words speak about participation. The physical and visual quality of the spine implies a support or backbone. These students are in reality embarking on a journey that can lead them to being the backbone of their respective countries. The quality of their curiosity and their intelligence can allow them to be the future participants and contributors to world culture, science and commerce.

The performance, crafted and executed by young, educated, primarily Eastern European students who share a common language (English) is a reflection of their world view. The poem they created speaks to dissatisfaction with Corporate and personal profiteering, ethnic and religious intolerance and war. It can be read as an indictment of past economic and political policies the results of which these students are inheriting. This multinational, multi ethnic group has the ability to unite under a culture more global than ever before. At the Fulbright International Summer Institute the students had the empathy and capacity to communicate successfully with one another and work as a team.

The most intriguing aspect of the interaction with the students for me is that they sought to make a connection with me based on my experience as an artist, and the performance created as a result of the interaction was created in a truly collaborative manner. As I was also in the position of a student at the Fulbright International Summer





Institute I did not feel any desire to hold anyone accountable for the kind of work they produced. My role became that of a fellow creator and organizer. This experience has led me to re-examine my own teaching methodology as well as artistic process.

The students sought a guide and a vehicle for their expression with ought being prompted. This to me signifies that this group of young people

can act as creative beings in order to achieve their goals and make the statements they care to make in a democratic way. Their ability to recognize their own power and attain an impact in their joined voice has a quality of confidence and leadership.

Human ability to be creative is not a matter in question. The ability of the students described in this paper to take the chance to tap into their creative force and express themselves as artists is a positive sign for the kind of leaders Europe is capable of producing.

Edward Lorenz, the meteorologist who laid the foundations of chaos theory, explores the idea that any small action in one part of the world can subsequently affect the world on a larger scale. He is responsible for asking the question of whether a butterfly's flapping its wings in Brazil can set off a tornado in Texas. In the delicate balance of human relations and interaction each person's "wing flap" is important.

So the challenges in front of these young people are clear. How do they move forward and create a European and world community that respond in a positive way to the mistakes of their predecessors? How do they capitalize on their experience of empathy with each other as representatives of diverse communities? What will the Social Sculpture built by the flapping of these peoples wings look like?



Participants responses:

Gergana Georgieva, Bulgaria

At the beginning I was a little skeptical about the chosen theme "hatred". I would personally prefer "art", which brings out the good in people. I thought hate would just bring negative emotions. But it turned to be the opposite way. What everybody responded to the theme was very positive. It was hate for hating; hate for the world that hates, for the things and actions, which are morally bad. So the hate brought a lot of good, all the participants were united in caring for each other. Everybody knew what to do and how to be part of the big whole with very little rehearsal. It all came from everybody for every-



body without any conflicting opinions. The organization was very easy because everyone responded. As for the impact we have to ask the locals. What I witnessed I would not change for anything. People were moved. It doesn't matter if they understood it all or liked it but they were put in a situation, which is not common. It was a challenge in a way, which always stimulates different thoughts. The locals asked me all kinds of questions; a woman even said that she hasn't seen so many people in the center of Tryavna for a long time. People were excited, that's always a good thing. I think the team building aspect of the performance brought the participants closer. It was interesting to realize that you and your group did something together almost without any leadership (or lets say a hidden one). And it would not have been true or at least the same if not everybody participated. We can now strongly associate ourselves with the group and say, "WE did this". Last but not least I have to say it was simply beautiful, it was sweet (we used chocolate and berry jam) and it was clean and simple – it was a work of art.

Varvara Kountouzi, Greece/US

In the beginning I did not have faith in the project. I felt there was not enough time to deal with the dissonance of different strong opinions. This was also one of the reasons I chose not to add one more voice to the conceiving process and go with the flow instead. In the end it turned out very differently. The very dissonance that I initially

saw as a problem became the success of the project. Once there was a common goal everybody came together and worked toward it, even the people who were not initially part of it. They offered encouragement, water to those of us who were lying down. This working together, the feeling of camaraderie was the very response to the word hate, in my opinion.

Iryna Zhuravel, Ukraine

My contribution to the project was taking part in the performance and enjoying it. I did not take part in the process of collaboration of ideas, although eventually the performance turned out to be of great value for me. Regarding the message of the performance and the word hate, we the participants were perceived as something different, maybe strange and odd by the people of the local community, we got all kinds of attitudes toward us standing their on the square, but no matter what the attitude was at the end we ended up being just an object with a word written on it, and when people were passing by trying to read the entire sentence they did not pay attention to the fact that we actually were just normal regular people, just stretched in line on the ground. I've smiled to some of them, and then even tried to make faces while no one noticed. And that's how it really happens in real life, when people "just read a label" written on

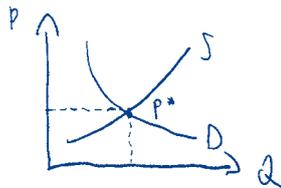


Us, and this one single word, like "Muslim", "Jewish", "Russian" or "Romanian" is the only thing that matter for them, not the smile or anything else. When you are perceived as a part of a group and when personality doesn't matter that is when the stereotypes come in and transform into hate.

Arben Zibri, Albania

The genuine irrationality in creating that performance showed a standard expression of happiness through people of different cultures and educational approaches. I really enjoyed the performance and was left with this perception:

These curves can give sense to every choice in your life, but by having this approach life would have no sense.



Peter Varma, Canada

Misunderstandings, confusion, hate and chaos. We all interpret words differently; especially those with strong emotions like hate. The

project is a collage of what hate means to a group of people with vastly different cultural backgrounds and life experiences. Backbone is an appropriate name for the project because each participant put his/her independent input into his/her perception of hate. Moreover, visually the queue of white bodies on the main square of the city center depicts a spine. The sentences are abstract and convoluted and this mirrors the senselessness of hate put into action.

Novena Radulova, Bulgaria

In the beginning I was not truly enthusiastic about the project. I was observing a lot of chaotic opinions and diverse points of view. What a mess! But in fact very quickly the idea became more precise; participants arrived at a consensus and their motivation raised in a short period of time. I was surprised to observe such a transformation. Our performance was a good illustration of the artistic process from chaos to creation. Everyone's motivation and energy were completely contagious. The creation virus infected us all.

Alexandra-Maria Bocse, Romania

My contribution to the project was to suggest a phrase or word to be used in the performance. It gave the performance a different perspective. The experience was really rewarding emotionally. Maybe at the beginning the viewers were intrigued, amazed and curious about the work, but I believe in time the performance will provide them with food for thought.

Irena Peresa, Croatia

I was really surprised about how quickly everything was set up. The time between the idea and its realization was so short!

It helped us to feel how important we are individually for the group as a whole, how every person in the group was essential to the outcome of the project.

For me personally, this was the very first time that I took part in a performance. The initial embarrassment (once at the square) quickly disappeared because it was shared with my friends.

I was being an object (a message, a word), and it felt really cool. It was funny to look at people looking at us, and to compare the ways in which they reacted to us.



To Chicago and Back

Galina Nikolova

AY 2008-2010 Fulbright Graduate Student
The New School For Management and Urban Policy, New York, NY
MS in Organizational Change Management

"For how long you have been in New York?"
"For three days."

The above conversation was taking place at the end of August 2008. At that time I had just packed my life in two suitcases, left Bulgaria, spent about a week at the Fulbright Orientation in Miami, and used the New York subway for a first time the day before. Can you imagine that feeling? When you can almost see the line that separates the "before" and "now" of your life? When everything that is in front of you is new, unfamiliar and exciting, and you just happened to be the biggest adventurer in your life? That feeling is unforgettable, and the experience is definitely a life changing one.



In Miami

I have decided to apply for a Fulbright scholarship in order to pursue a dream of mine – to study in the field of the Organizational Development in the country of its origin, America. A few years ago that dream just didn't seem possible,

until a friend of mine was awarded with the scholarship himself and encouraged me to apply as well. That was about two years ago. Since that decision a lot of things have changed for me.

Now I am a student at one of the most progressive universities in the United States. I am studying in my favorite field that combines management and psychology – reading and learning a lot already, even though it has only been one semester since I have started. I have met people from all over the world – both through the Orientation in Miami and my classes at The New School, I have made new friends to share my experiences with, I have walked the streets of New York in three seasons – summer, fall, and winter. I have also become a member of the global Fulbright

community and have shared the honor that this brings to everyone who is part of it.

The Fulbright experience is about learning not only in respective fields of study but learning about different cultures and countries as well.

Over the last four months I attended a workshop for becoming a "Global Guide" so that I can share with students in various public schools in New York about Bulgaria and the culture I am coming from. I have also answered many questions about Bulgaria (ranging from "Is it close to Russia?", through "What is the weather like?", to "Is Plovdiv still the second biggest city?"). I was happy to meet people who have visited Bulgaria for various reasons and to speak with them about their most favorable experiences and memories of their trips.

But I have been learning a lot about the American culture as well. I dressed up with a costume and walked the Halloween parade at the very end of October. I spent my first real Thanksgiving with an American family in a small town in Delaware (26 guests and I was the only one not from the family; 2 turkeys, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, 4 different pies, American football in the backyard, and a lot of special moments and shared laughs). And I improvised with fortunes in an apple pie for Christmas since making the traditional Bulgarian "banitsa" was not an option.

In the next couple of months I am going to start my second semester as a Fulbrighter at The New School, to attend an Enrichment seminar in Philadelphia and to see how New York changes its clothes for the spring. And I am looking forward to it.

When I was telling to one of my close friends about all my different experiences, he looked at me and said: *You are now living your dreams.* And he was right.



At a Fulbright reception