

Amidst the Transition: Living the Fulbright Experience

This presentation summary highlights my inspiration in applying for a Fulbright Scholar grant, and my project in the Czech Republic. Brief information about the Fulbright program is also provided.

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Early images from my childhood of the realities and tragedies of an occupied land, and the encouragement of a graduate school professor and his wife sparked me to apply for a Fulbright Scholar grant. In 1989, the Berlin Wall fell, along with the totalitarian regimes of EG and other countries in the region, I knew I wanted to be *amidst the transition*.

In 1991, I applied for a Fulbright award and one was granted. In December of 1992 I moved to Prague in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (the country split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia on 1-1-93). I was with the Institute of Sociology, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. I worked with Jiri Vecernik and his team in the socio-economics group. My project was to examine changes in the distribution of income and expenditures of individuals and households during the early years of the transition, 1989 and 1992.

My dream had come true. However I had planned carefully for this dream, and had received the help of many individuals.

The Council for the International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) administers the Fulbright Scholar program. Every year about 1,000 awards are made for scholars to visit in 135 countries. The program was instituted in 1947.

CIES suggests strategies for a competitive application. These include: prepare an application as an integrated coherent argument for your candidacy; make the project statement the focus; be sure your CV and publications list reinforce the project statement; choose references who can attest to your abilities in terms of the project; and follow the application guidelines closely.

As last words I recommend that you *listen* to your dreams. If you want them to come true, *allow* them to give you direction. Then your dreams can *become* reality.

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Endnotes

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