

Transcript – A Reflection from Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad (FRA) Fellow Morgan Liu

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00;00;21;00 - 00;00;51;09

My name is Morgan Liu, and I was a Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad fellow to Kyrgyzstan. I was focused on the organization of Uzbek Muslim communities there. I applied to Fulbright-Hays because I'm an anthropologist. And so my research requires me to go out there into the world, meeting people, trying to understand what they're doing, thinking and saying and why.

00;00;52;04 - 00;01;25;05

So, this was the beginning of my work beyond my dissertation. And so Fulbright-Hays provided me the funds and the connections for six months in Kyrgyzstan. And I ended up going to a city called Jalalabad. So Jalalabad is a ethnically diverse city. It's rather small. Parts of the city are very Soviet. As you can tell from the architecture and the statues, you might recognize this fellow as Lenin.

00;01;25;21 - 00;01;55;25

And they're still there even almost three decades after the fall of the Soviet Union. I would visit various institutions like mosques. Uzbeks are publicly pious and religious observance since the Soviet collapse as part of community life. And what made an impression on me was how the different ethnic groups would live together in the city, which is under political rule by ethnic pierogies.

00;01;57;29 - 00;02;14;29

But social gatherings are an important part of the ethnic communities in Jalalabad. And the funny thing about being a foreigner hanging out in the neighborhoods is that I regularly met people for the first time who seem to know everything about me.

00;02;18;05 - 00;02;39;18

You would meet somebody and they are there talking with each other. And it's rather unusual for an American, an American from Chinese background to be speaking their language and hanging out in their neighborhoods. So that was sort of a novelty. So word spread about me But these groups were turned out to be quite important in my research.

00;02;40;17 - 00;03;05;06

And I sometimes would meet a group of people who've been together all of their lives. These are men in their sixties, and they would be meeting weekly, the same group of 15 friends, all of their lives. And I just felt that really a level of deep community that you don't see in the United States. But yeah, so what has Fulbright done for me?

00;03;05;12 - 00;03;56;09

I haven't had a Fulbright sort of put me in a special community of people ever since. Our university holds annual gathering of alums that the President and deans attend. We're part of a national network. I've spoken at events promoting Fulbright and I've served for three years on the Fulbright application as an evaluator for applications. And so the research in Kyrgyzstan has allowed me to publish a number of academic articles, pieces for general audiences, radio interviews, webinars, public talks, I'm now associate professor at the Ohio State University, and I've been better able to advise graduate students on field research because of my experience and even helped a few get their own Fulbrights.

00;03;56;29 - 00;04;16;05

And with the invaluable guidance of Ohio State's Fulbright program, Director Joanna Kukielka-Blaser, Joanna <So I'm really proud to be called a Fulbright graduate. And so I very much recommend applying to this program. Thank you.