

STATEMENT OF PROPOSED STUDY

Forced Migration and Refugee Studies
Country of Interest: Egypt
Psychology

As a Fulbright Scholar in Egypt, I plan to attend the American University in Cairo (AUC) as a graduate student in the Forced Migration and Refugee Studies (FMRS) program. My goal is to earn a Graduate Diploma in FMRS to be applied to my future endeavors. The program is multidisciplinary and is ideal for my academic background, which consists of Psychology, Medicine, and Religious Studies. My formal application to AUC is underway. A former Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Elizabeth Coker, will be my mentor and adviser in my FMRS studies. Dr. Coker is a psychological anthropologist at AUC who has conducted research on mental health issues among urban refugees in Egypt. Through the Fulbright grant, I intend to gain a thorough understanding of the psycho-social framework of refugees that will serve as a foundation to be effectively applied in my medical career. Ultimately, my career goal is to practice medicine among demographics of great need, both domestically and internationally. As an American-Muslim, Egypt provides the ideal environment to conduct my proposed study. The experiences gained through the Fulbright grant will provide the necessary education and cultural understanding to accomplish these goals.

The purpose of my study is to prepare myself to focus on the mental health status of refugees. AUC is the only academic institution in the Middle East that provides a graduate diploma in Forced Migration and Refugee Studies. The program has a set curriculum of multi-disciplinary core classes that are mandatory for all students in the series. These classes include an introductory course in FMRS, issues in forced migration, international refugee law, and psychosocial issues in forced migration. There are an additional two elective courses available to complete the graduate diploma requirements. During the first semester at AUC, I plan to enroll in two of the four mandatory classes and an elective course in psychology. This will help me determine which elective to take in the spring of 2008. A possibility could be independent study, which would allow me to specialize in psycho-social issues related to forced migration. I have completed courses in social psychology and psychology of personality that show my interest in this area. The Forced Migration and Refugee Studies library that is located at AUC has an extensive collection to support my work. Among these resources are the FMRS grey files, i.e. primary source documents, and periodicals relating to refugee issues. Moreover, the FMRS program conducts "Wednesday Seminars" which consist of a series of lectures given by professionals involved in the field. I will be attending these lectures both semesters, topics of which deal with present issues regarding forced migration.

During my first semester, I intend to be an active member of Student Action for Refugees (STAR), a campus-based organization that provides English classes and sports activities for refugees, and encourages refugees to be active members as well. Moreover, El Khazendera is a government run hospital that provides services to both Egyptians and refugees. I hope to be able to volunteer with this organization beginning in January of

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2008. There are several other health organizations that provide services for refugees as well as other impoverished populations. I will seek opportunities to volunteer time in order to develop a better understanding of their healthcare system and to interact with professionals in my field of interest. My involvement with student organizations has allowed me to become a dynamic student leader on campus. I have the utmost confidence that this background coupled with my enthusiasm will allow me to contribute positively to the aforementioned organizations.

Forced Migration and Refugee Studies provides students unique opportunities for first hand experience because Egypt hosts refugees from 35 countries, in addition to approximately 70,000 Palestinian refugees. My desire to become fluent in Arabic through the Language Initiative Training is present because it will undoubtedly help to better assimilate within the community. More importantly, the training will allow me to better communicate with refugees through my involvement in the outreach program. Furthermore, with the additional language training I will gain a more encompassing experience in FMRS that the classroom may not provide. I will be able to fully immerse myself in the Egyptian culture by participating in recreational activities within the community. As a basketball enthusiast, I hope to organize basketball games with fellow students on campus at AUC as well as members of the local community.

There are several reasons that I would like to become a Fulbright Scholar and become a student of Forced Migration and Refugee Studies. As a person born and raised in America, I have not been thoroughly exposed to the plight of refugees. The Fulbright grant will allow me to assess and understand the issues revolving around forced migration. My career plan is to pursue a dual MD/PhD degree. I plan to enroll in medical school during the fall of 2008. As a prospective medical doctor, the grant will allow me to incorporate the knowledge and experience gained in Egypt into my future medical career choices. Conversely, I will be able to take my passion for the sciences and apply it to helping refugee populations. In medical school, I hope to begin a student organization that will focus on recruiting fellow medical students interested in providing healthcare to underprivileged communities worldwide. This may come through the means of developing health clinics in needed areas or by working with pre-established organizations, such as Doctors Without Borders. The goal of being involved in migration management and healthcare intervention is set in my mind. A Fulbright grant will provide an unprecedented opportunity to realize my professional goals and instill personal growth.