

STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE

Germany, ETA

During my time spent in Germany I developed many relationships with university students, but also felt my initial curiosity to learn about the culture grow into a passion for understanding the people. I am pursuing the English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) in Germany because of my wonderful experiences living and studying there. Part of my time involved conducting German-spoken interviews for research centered on gender-relations, leading to conversations that yielded a deep mutual-understanding and connection. Beyond sharing my native knowledge of the English language and culture, I want to promote equal-gender representation within the classroom. As a woman studying the fields of Math and Computer Science, I want to take the passion and insight that grew from investigating Germany's gender roles to start a Women's Math and Science club, and encourage the advancement of female representation in such fields.

At Kalamazoo College, I spread this empowerment through tutoring students studying Mathematics. There are many different types of learners and it was my job to understand what kind my students were, which allowed me to tailor my teaching methods to accommodate individual needs. I learned how to interact with students in a positive and effective manner, and provide constructive criticism rather than destructive. This equipped me with the social intelligence to interact in an approachable manner—a skill I used while working with refugees in Germany. The majority of children came from Iran, Syria, and Iraq, speaking only Farsi or Arabic, thus a language-barrier stood between us. To overcome this, I implemented charades as a mode of approachable teaching. My experiences as a tutor enabled me to explore other methods of communication and help refugees build a basic German vocabulary set. I plan to utilize this creativity while teaching as an ETA.

Outside of my assistantship hours, I will remain an active member of my community by continuing to volunteer at a Refugee Camp, as well as tutoring refugees (and any other students). Right now, the influx of refugees within Germany challenges the question of integration. The majority of asylum-seekers are fleeing from countries built on conservative and patriarchal beliefs, causing conflict when immersed within democratized Germany. With my insight regarding the gender-dynamic in Germany, coincided with my experience working with refugees, I am able to facilitate the process of integrating cultures influenced by male-oriented societies, into German communities.

The cross-cultural exchanges and research I engaged in while living in Germany led me to discover my deep interest for cultural-contact. I am excited to mobilize the knowledge gained in my Math, Computer Science, and Cross-Cultural studies, and seek a PhD in Mathematical Sociology. As a long-term goal, I hope to achieve a qualified research position relating to the gender-culture specific to Germany. I am confident that by combining my avidity and interest within these fields, as well as ETA experience, I can forge a path toward this goal.