

# The Stuart R. Givens Memorial Fellowship

## Personal Statement

Martina Hanulová

“You first have to start with a dream. Without a dream you are not going to get anywhere.” This quote by Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, has always given me much inspiration and power not to be afraid to dream and follow my goals without hesitation. My dream is to participate in work that would contribute to the well-being of mankind as well as to the creation of a stronger and more peaceful global community. However, a dream stays only a vision without an extensive education, desire to make differences, a strong dedication to hard work, and above all, without an understanding and respect for other cultures.

Living abroad offers an opportunity to meet new people and learn about new cultures, which contributes enormously to intellectual and personal growth of every individual. My experience abroad brought me an unimagined self-fulfillment that generated in me a stronger passion to achieve greater accomplishments. Thanks to my experience, the world becomes much smaller and wherever I go, I can relate much more easily to people from different cultures and with different beliefs. Therefore, I strongly believe that with an open heart and mind we can overcome the differences that often separate us and ultimately use these disparities to unite us together for a common goal. These are the values I learned when I traveled abroad.

Each time I left my comfort zone I had to adjust to a new culture and face many new challenges. However, this is what drives my passion towards reaching out into areas where I can use my abilities and experiences to contribute towards creation of a more understanding and peaceful “global community.” Making differences in people’s lives, contributing to their well

being, while sharing my culture, knowledge, and values is what makes my life fulfilled. These goals I cherish and to these goals I am willing to dedicate my life.

In summer of 2006, I spent three months in Burkina Faso, Africa where I taught English at a private school. This experience was exceptionally enriching to me and I consider it as the experience of my lifetime. Thanks to this chance, I met children and adults who opened their hearts and captured mine. My stay in Burkina Faso has not only brought me new perspectives on the underdeveloped world but it has also molded me into a new person with a new mission in life. What I learned in Africa exceeded all my expectations and dreams. I grew intellectually and personally; furthermore, I became a stronger, more respectful, and understanding person. Despite the extreme poverty and harsh living conditions, I found Africa to be a little piece of heaven where I would like to return and to which I want to devote my education and future work.

Thanks to my experience in Africa, I also have much clearer vision of my goals and dreams that I want to accomplish in my life. At Bowling Green State University I have a double major in International Studies and French with a minor in Russian. In my graduate studies I will pursue a degree in International Development focusing on community and social development. This degree interests me particularly because it encompasses a large area, including economic initiatives to assist in political as well as social developmental projects that focus on democratization and strengthening civil society. My goal is to work for an international organization such as the UN or a NGO where I could develop, manage, and take part in developmental projects that focus on providing the population with the skills and knowledge required to effect changes in their own communities during the process of economic, social, or political transformation. These projects are crucial especially for communities that struggle to

increase prosperity, restore dignity and self-confidence of the citizens after long term conflicts due to the lack of basic needs such as education or health care.

In order to accomplish my goals as well as to better comprehend the problems of the underdeveloped world, it is equally important to understand the problems within the African communities. Therefore, I believe that it is crucial for me to gain more experience in this field that would contribute to my personal and intellectual growth. For this reason, I am very grateful to be able to apply for the Stuart R. Givens Memorial Fellowship that offers me a very unique opportunity to undertake new challenges through participation in a project that would be normally out of my reach due to my unfavorable financial situation.

With the Stuart R. Givens Memorial Fellowship I would be able to take part in a volunteer project in the Liberian Refugee Camp in Ghana, West Africa. I am convinced that this experience would change my life profoundly because living and working in the refugee camp would help me to become a much stronger and emphatic person towards the problems the African continent has been facing. At the same time, I would be able to acquire new skills and knowledge that could consequently influence my future professional career in developmental projects in Africa. It is equally important to mention that this experience would offer me an unusual opportunity to interact with people in need as well as the NGO that is operating within the camp. I would be able to put forward my own ideas in the implementation of projects targeted towards peace and conflict preventions that are extremely crucial for maintaining stability within the community.

I am thankful to apply for the Stuart R. Givens Memorial Fellowship because it is a great opportunity for me to show my commitment to hard work, honesty, community service, and character. This award could help me to fulfill my dreams of participating in the volunteer project

in the Liberian Refugee Camp in Africa about which I am very passionate. I believe that this experience would make a great difference in my life since I would have an opportunity to develop and ameliorate my qualities and talents. It would be an honor for me to receive the Stuart R. Givens Memorial Fellowship which values and principles I would proudly respect.

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## **Fellowship Experience Proposal**

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In order to accomplish the goals and dreams mentioned in the personal statement, my experience proposal is based on a volunteer job in the Liberian Refugee Camp in Ghana, West Africa. This project is organized by the Global Volunteer Network (GVN), a private, non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Wellington, New Zealand.

The goal of the Global Volunteer Network is to help communities in need by supporting the work of local organizations in underdeveloped countries through the placement of international volunteers. The work is based on cooperation with local communities because they are in the best position to determine their needs. The GVN was founded in December 2000 and today it supports developmental projects in multiple countries around the world such as Ghana, Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, China, Costa Rica, El Salvador, or Philippines. The number of volunteers participating in the GVN projects has grown in recent years; in 2004 the organization offered a position to 1520 volunteers and a year later there were 1960 volunteers participating in the organization's projects around the world.

I would like to participate in a volunteer project inside Buduburam Refugee Settlement located near by the town of Kosoa, about 30 miles from Accra, the capital of Ghana. The camp was founded in May 2003 by Liberian refugees who aspired to promote peace and reconciliation among Liberians who have been traumatized by the conflict in their home country. This opportunity offers volunteers to be involved in various projects established by the Global Volunteer Network mainly targeted to promote peace education and conflict resolution.

Moreover, this experience enables the participants to put forward their own ideas and talents in the implementation of the already existing projects.

Working in the refugee camp would allow me to interact with children and adults of all ages through several projects such as *Tribal Leaders Reconciliation Forum* where I would be able to assist with the reconciliation forum and act as an eye from the outside world giving people confidence to talk about their experiences. Another project is to conduct classes in basic peace education and also assist with general teaching of mathematics, science, geography, history, and other various subjects. I would also be able to take part in training community peace cell leaders, supporting them with academic expertise, as well as helping in the door-to-door conflict resolution process within the camp. Moreover, *the Refugee Mothers' Skill Training Center* project would enable me to help train mothers in life skills, adult literacy, and micro-business management. Lastly, I would be able to help staff to develop administration and organization skills, establish relationships with universities abroad, and organize workshops and fundraising.

If I receive the Stuart R. Givens Memorial Fellowship, I plan to participate in this project for four months. This program allows volunteers to start working either on the 1<sup>st</sup> or the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. I plan to begin this project on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 and finish on November 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007. This way, I would be able to return to the US and continue with my studies at Bowling Green State University during spring 2008.

Traveling to Ghana requires specific immunizations such as tetanus, polio, hepatitis A and B, typhoid, yellow fever, rabies, and tuberculosis. Fortunately, due to my previous travel experiences, I have already obtained all required vaccines for the mentioned illnesses. Malaria is also prevalent in Ghana and since there is no vaccine for the disease, I will be required to obtain

the necessary medication prior to my departure. This medication can be obtained through the Health Center at BGSU.

Similarly, I will have to obtain health insurance to cover my stay in Ghana. The Global Volunteer Network has arranged a comprehensive travel insurance package specially designed for volunteering. It includes excellent medical and accident coverage as well as a “loss of deposits” coverage which covers all fees paid to GVN, Airlines etc. This policy has been arranged through Accident and Health International on behalf of Allianz Insurance Limited, one of the leading insurance companies in the world.

Other arrangements to be completed before traveling to Ghana include my visa and flight ticket. In order to enter Ghana, every non-citizen is required to have a valid visa that can be obtained through Ghana Embassy in Washington, DC. An application for a visa shall take no more than three business days to process according to the Ghana Embassy website. I would be able to fly from Detroit into Kotoka International Airport in Accra. There are multiple airline companies that fly to this destination from Detroit, for example: Delta Airlines, British Airways, or Lufthansa. Upon my arrival to Ghana, airport pickup to the camp site will be organized by the Global Volunteer Network.

In order to become part of this program, applicants are responsible to fill out an on-line application that will be evaluated by the GVN. In turn the organization will send the volunteer an email with a letter of acceptance. After this step, the candidate is asked to pay a refundable application fee. Throughout this process, the GVN communicates with the applicant to provide a form of help and support before leaving the home country. All the necessary contact information for the Global Volunteer Network can be found at the bottom of this experience proposal.

I submitted my application for this program on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006 and I was accepted into the program on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006.

Traveling and working in Ghana would be an extraordinary opportunity for me. Ghana is one of the safest countries in Africa; hence, this experience does not create any eminent threat to my security or health. Ghana has a democratic electoral process and a stable economy and its citizens are known for warm and friendly relationship with foreigners. According to the Global Volunteer Network, “the atmosphere in the camp is very community oriented; everyone looks out for everyone else and all of the Liberians are very family centered and welcoming.” They love volunteers and are very grateful for all the help they bring to the community. It is also very important to mention that the organization communicates with the volunteers and provides them with help and support during their experience abroad.

I am certain that the experience in Ghana would have a great impact on my life and future career. My passion and anticipation to take part in this extraordinary project in the Liberian Refugee Camp is very strong; therefore, I hope that the Stuart R. Givens Memorial Fellowship committee will consider me as a valuable candidate for this rare award which I highly respect.

**Contact:**

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## Budget Proposal

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Listed bellow is the detailed budget proposal for the volunteer program in the Liberian Refugee Camp in Ghana, West Africa. The budget of \$ 6,000.00 includes the following:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1, Application fee	\$ 350.00
2, Program fee for 4 months	\$ 2,200.00
3, Return flight ticket from Detroit, USA to Accra, Ghana	\$ 2,100.00
4, Health insurance	\$ 450.00
5, Medication	\$ 150.00
6, Weekly personal expenses	\$ 400.00
7, Visa to Ghana	\$ 80.00
8, Emergency funds	\$ 270.00
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 6,000.00</u></b>

## **Explanation of costs for the program:**

### 1, Application fee

\$350.00 - This covers administration, marketing, program information, and communication. This fee is paid to the Global Volunteer Network (GVN).

### 2, Program fee

\$2,200.00 – The cost for the four month stay. The program fee covers administrative charges, airport pickup, transport to placement, meals during stay, and supervision. This fee is paid directly to the GVN at least eight weeks prior to my departure to Ghana.

### 3, Return flight ticket from Detroit, USA to Accra, Ghana

\$ 2,100.00 – This amount is only an estimate since airline companies do not have schedules developed yet for fall 2007. However, I have researched prices for flights to Ghana on the Internet through several airline companies and the prices were approximately \$ 2,100.00.

Delta Airline offers flights from USA to Ghana starting at \$ 2,010.95 round trip. In addition, there is a tax of \$ 91.30, so the total costs of the flight come to \$ 2,102.25.

### 4, Health insurance

\$ 450.00 – The health insurance through the GVN, sponsored by the Accident and Health International on behalf of Allianz Insurance Limited, is \$ 150.00 for the first month and \$ 100.00 for every additional month. Therefore, a four month stay will cost \$ 450.00.

### 5, Medications

\$ 150.00 – I could buy the medication for malaria with a prescription from a doctor in the drug store at the Health Center at BGSU. According to a doctor at the Health Center, the medication for a four month stay would cost approximately \$ 150.00.

### 6, Weekly personal expenses

\$ 400.00 – The GVN advises that volunteers need a weekly budget of approximately \$ 25.00 to cater for all other expenses such as bottled water and internet.

\$ 25.00 a week = \$ 100.00 a month = \$ 400.00 for 4 months

### 7, Tourist visa to Ghana

\$ 80.00 – The Ghana Embassy requires a visa fee for incoming tourists.

<http://www.ghana-embassy.org/>

### 8, Emergency funds

\$ 270.00 – From my own experience, I have learned that it is very wise to have some extra funds in case of emergency and other unpredictable expenses. For this reason, I estimate \$ 270.00 for emergency funds.