Example of a Fulbright Study/Research award application
LMU Student: Puja Iyer, 2018 Study/Research to Morocco

Ms. Iyer has granted ONIF permission to share her application materials, which includes an overview of her proposed research project, statement of grant purpose, letters of affiliation, and personal statement.

Please review LMU’s Academic Honesty Policy, especially the section on plagiarism, before reading Ms. Iyer’s application materials. Do not share these documents without the express permission of ONIF or Ms. Iyer.

One final note: Morocco applicants include a Summary of Research in either French or Arabic (not to exceed one page in length) following their Statement of Grant Purpose as part of their Fulbright application package.

Please email fellowships@lmu.edu with any questions.
## Program Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host Country 1</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Region</td>
<td>NEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award Name</td>
<td>Open Study-Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Category</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field of Study</td>
<td>Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Institution (through which applying)</td>
<td>Loyola Marymount University, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Degree Level</td>
<td>Bachelor's: Graduating seniors and bachelor's degree holders with no graduate work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Grant Purpose Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Gender, Language, and Reproductive Health Education in Morocco</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract/Summary of Proposal</td>
<td>This research will focus on the intersection of language, gender, and education to examine how adolescent reproductive health (ARH) is internalized and acted upon in Agadir, Morocco. I will conduct a linguistic analysis of ARH education programs available to youth in the region and will collect both quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (interviews) data provided by youth about their understanding, their perceptions, and their personal practices regarding sexual health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host Country Engagement</td>
<td>I plan on working with the NGO, Dar Si Hmad's gender focused environmental education programs that seek to engage young girls with STEM education that can directly impact their community. As a high school biology teacher, I want to take part in continuing this sustainable work to make water more accessible by cultivating leadership amongst young women and developing their scientific skills through an education that capitalizes on their community's rich social and cultural capital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Affiliation 1</td>
<td>Dar Si Hmad, Jamila Bargach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Affiliation 2</td>
<td>University Mohammed V Rabat, Yamina El Kirat El Allame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Affiliation 3</td>
<td>Morocco Center for Arabic Studies, Ali Besbaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host City/Region</td>
<td>Agadir, Southwest Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans Upon Return To U.S.</td>
<td>Upon returning to the United States I plan on enrolling in an MD/PhD program. I will simultaneously pursue a PhD in medical anthropology, focusing on medical linguistics and its effects on adolescent reproductive health, while working towards becoming a pediatrician. With this education I would like to work with global organizations such as the World Health Organization to implement culturally and linguistically sensitive programs that better serve youth in the Middle East and North Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language 1</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency Level 1</td>
<td>Advanced (more than 2 years college or equivalent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of additional languages to add?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language 2</td>
<td>Modern Standard Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency Level 2</td>
<td>Advanced (more than 2 years college or equivalent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statement of Grant Purpose
Puja Iyer, Morocco, Public Health
Gender, Language, and Reproductive Health Education in Morocco

Language as a tool for social learning is particularly influential in shaping both adolescent gender norms and teenagers’ decisions regarding reproductive health. From official curricula in schools to popular culture images found in media (radio, television, newspapers, magazines), young people are exposed to a variety of sources of information about gender identity, sexuality, and reproductive health. The heterogeneity of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has led to a variety of approaches to reproductive health education. In societies such as Morocco, linguistic diversity can further complicate the landscape and lead to a multiplicity of messages. My research will investigate the significance of multilingualism in reproductive health education efforts for young Moroccans’ understanding of gender and sexuality, exploring whether it enables youth to cultivate their own sense of self-efficacy rather than accepting the norms defined by Arab or Western society.

Morocco was the first MENA country to implement a nationwide reproductive health curriculum. The country’s public school system and several other nonprofit organizations have joined together to make reproductive health education accessible to Moroccan youth. At the same time, the media is another potent source from which youths in Morocco acquire information (correct or incorrect) about sexual health. Exposure to this information varies from region to region. In rural areas, patriarchal family structures push young girls into following the domestic footsteps of their female relatives, while boys are given much more freedom. In contrast, the nuclear family dynamic of urban settings allows young girls more agency to act in accordance with the values they deem most relevant to their lives. Moreover, Morocco is a multilingual nation; young people consume media in, receive instruction in, and speak Arabic (standard), Darija (Moroccan Arabic), and French. Each one of these languages has a unique place and use in Moroccan society; thus, analyzing the intersection between adolescent health and language is crucial to understanding how reproductive health functions in Morocco.

I will undertake a comparative linguistic analysis of the language utilized in adolescent reproductive health educational programs and how this education influences the decisions of young people regarding family planning, contraception, and their own reproductive health. Researching the correlation between the primary language used in reproductive health educational materials (French, standard Arabic, or Darija), the medium by which youth consume this information, and the personal decisions of young adults regarding their own sexual health can help us understand how language can be leveraged to better educate and serve Moroccan youth. My academic and professional experiences have prepared me to analyze both the barriers that keep adolescents from having adequate access to a full range of reproductive health services and the significance of cultural and linguistic diversity for reproductive health. As an undergraduate, I studied the function of language and communication in health care. I worked on a project to create a French curriculum for a community-based family planning program in Niger.

---

3 *Ligue Démocratique pour les Droits de la Femme (LDDF), Droits de la femme marocaine et le code du statut personnel. Synthèse d’une étude élaborée par la Ligue démocratique pour les droits de la femme* (Casablanca: LDDF, 2000).
and subsequently undertook my own research on the intersection of reproductive health, Islam, and language in Moroccan media. As a high school teacher and community health worker, I have seen how culture and language, including influences from social media, family, and peers, inform individuals’ understanding of reproductive health.

Following three months of study in a critical language program in order to improve my skills in dialectal and modern standard Arabic, I will undertake a systematic review of adolescent reproductive health (ARH) education programs available to Moroccan youth, with a particular focus on Agadir. I will affiliate with Dar Si Hmad for Development, Education and Culture, an independent nonprofit center that works on community projects regarding gender, culture, and language, as well as Yamina El Kirat, a sociolinguistics professor at the University of Mohammed V in Rabat, in order to carry out my research. I will inventory reproductive health programs sponsored both by the Moroccan Ministries of Education, Youth and Sports, and Public Health and by nonprofit organizations. With Dar Si Hmad assisting me in the recruitment of subjects, I will then administer a survey, adapted from a similar study conducted among Saudi women, to youths between the ages 18-22 years of age, to get a sense of what other sources they seek out for reproductive health education. The survey will also include questions about young people’s exposure to ARH education, youths’ knowledge on the subject, and their own personal perceptions and decisions about sexual health. Alongside this survey, I will interview young people to get a qualitative understanding of youths’ views of reproductive health and the decisions they make surrounding the issue. Using comparative linguistic analysis tools under the guidance of Professor El Kirat, I will analyze the written, oral, and visual dimensions of the educational materials used in communicating with Moroccan youth about sexual health, comparing and contrasting public sector programs, private-public partnerships, and private resources accessed by adolescents. I will also analyze the differences in language and structure depending on the primary language of the materials. Finally, I will evaluate how this ARH education affects young Moroccans’ perceptions of sexual health and their personal practices regarding the topic, including a gender analysis to ascertain any differences between the responses of young women and men and to consider the ways in which gender socialization affect their understanding of reproductive health.

My research will contribute to the understanding of the effectiveness of adolescent reproductive health education programs in Morocco in order to improve outcomes of maternal and child mortality rates. Dar Si Hmad will help facilitate a presentation of my findings to local community and political leaders in Agadir so that appropriate improvements and modifications can be made in regards to structure and facilitation of existing ARH educational programs and can better inform the development of programs to come. I will also write up my findings and submit my research to journals such as Social Science and Medicine, Medical Anthropology Quarterly, Journal of Public Health, Journal of General Internal Medicine for consideration for publication. Disseminating my research will allow it to be applied to other regions of Morocco, if not other countries, to aid in the creation of culturally and linguistically responsive sexual health programs. After completing my Fulbright, I plan to continue this research through a PhD in medical anthropology and will apply it in my future clinical practice after completing my MD.

---

Le Maroc a été le premier pays à réaliser un curriculum de la santé reproductive qui est utilisé universellement dans le pays. De plus, le Maroc est une nation multilingue; les jeunes consomment les médias, reçoivent des cours et parlent arabe (standard), darija (arabe marocain) et français. Chacune de ces langues a un lieu et une utilisation unique dans la société marocaine; ainsi, l'analyse de l'intersection entre la santé adolescente et le langage est cruciale pour comprendre comment fonctionne la santé reproductive au Maroc. Recherchant la corrélation entre le langage principal utilisé dans les matériaux pédagogiques de la santé reproductive (français, standard arabe ou darija), le moyen par lequel les jeunes consomment cette information, et les décisions personnelles des jeunes concernant leur propre santé sexuelle, peuvent nous aider à comprendre comment le langage peut être utilisé pour mieux éduquer et servir les jeunes marocains.

Je procéderai à une revue systématique des programmes d'éducation de la santé reproductive chez les adolescents qui sont offerts aux jeunes marocains, avec un accent particulier sur Agadir. Je m'affilierai à Dar Si Hmad pour le développement, l'éducation et la culture, un centre indépendant sans but lucratif qui entreprend des projets communautaires visant le genre, de la culture, et du langage, et Yamina El Kirat, une professeure de sociolinguistique à l'université Mohammed V dans la ville Rabat, pour réaliser ma recherche. J'analyserai les programmes de santé reproductive sponsorisés par le ministère marocain de l'éducation, de la jeunesse et des sports et de la santé publique et par des organisations à but non lucratif. Avec le soutien de Dar Si Hmad pour recruter des sujets, j'administrerai un sondage, adapté d'une étude similaire des femmes saoudiennes, aux jeunes âgés de 18-22 ans pour avoir une idée d'autres sources ils cherchent pour l'éducation en matière de santé de la reproduction. L'enquête inclura également des questions sur l'exposition des jeunes à l'éducation de la santé reproductives, les connaissances des jeunes sur le sujet et leurs propres perceptions personnelles et leurs décisions par rapport à la santé sexuelle. Parallèlement à ce sondage, je vais interroger les jeunes pour avoir une compréhension qualitative des opinions des jeunes sur la santé reproductive et les décisions qu'ils adoptent en ce qui concerne ce problème. À l'aide d'outils d'analyse linguistique comparative et Professeure El Kirat, j’analyserai les dimensions écrites, orales et visuelles du matériel pédagogique utilisé pour communiquer avec les jeunes marocains à propos de la santé sexuelle, comparer et contraster les programmes du secteur public, les partenariats public-privé et les ressources privées auxquelles les adolescents ont accès. J’analyserai aussi les différences de langage et de structure en fonction de la langue principale des matériaux. Enfin, je vais évaluer comment cette éducation de la santé reproductive affecte les perceptions de la santé sexuelle des jeunes marocains et leurs pratiques personnelles en ce qui concerne le sujet, incluant une analyse de genre pour déterminer les différences entre les réponses des jeunes femmes et les hommes pour examiner les façons dont la socialisation entre les sexes ont une influence sur leur compréhension de la santé reproductive.

Mes recherches contribueront à la compréhension de l'efficacité des programmes d'éducation de la santé reproductive chez les adolescents au Maroc pour améliorer les résultats des taux de mortalité maternelle et infantile. La diffusion de ma recherche permettra de l'appliquer à d'autres régions du Maroc, ainsi que dans d'autres pays, pour aider à créer des programmes de santé sexuelle adaptés à la culture et à la linguistique.

---

July 23rd, 2017

TO: Puja Iyer  
1603 Russell Street  
Berkeley, CA 94703

Dear Ms. Iyer,

While our organization, Dar Si Hmad for Development, Education and Culture, hosted and continues to host students and researchers interested in this Southern region of Morocco we service, none has, so far, presented such a rich and multi-layered research topic.

Please note that your research is extremely timely and pertinent given that this region of the country has the highest number of ‘abandoned’ children, born out of furtive encounters between a high migrant, volatile and young population. Dealing with this question for the local authorities is dealing with a myriad of complex cultural issues that they are not, necessarily, well-equipped to treat. Moreover, the Souss region, home to the highest number of Tamazight speakers in Morocco, adds yet another layer to the complexity of the situation.

I believe that your larger research question, reproductive health services while examining the significance of cultural and linguistic diversity is sorely needed; and that your specific attention to how language as a tool for social learning is particularly influential in shaping adolescent gender norms, their decisions around sexual and reproductive health, is highly pertinent.

We at Dar Si Hmad have facilitated research and will be glad to do the same for you. In addition to logistical support (language instruction, field-work support, office space... etc.), we also back your research by introducing you to potentially relevant people, institutions, and sites. We also request that you share some of your findings with us and with university students and professors. The idea is to engage into a constructive exchange.

I am in full support of this promising project and will uphold the aforementioned roles to assist you at all stages of the field research process in Morocco during your stay as a Fulbright scholar.

Sincerely Yours,

Jamila Bargach, PhD  
Executive Director  
Dar Si Hmad

---

Agadir  
Association Dar Si Hmad  
App B4 Imm Hamria, Avenue  
Al Moukaouama Agadir 80020 - Maroc  
Tel/Fax: (+212) 528 84 30 65  
Email: info@darshihad.org

Sidi Ifni  
Association Dar Si Hmad  
27, Bd Hassan I  
Sidi Ifni 85200 - Maroc  
Tel/Fax: (+212) 528 78 02 99  
Site web: www.darshihad.org
August 2nd, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter confirms that the Moroccan Centre for Arabic Studies (MCAS) is pleased to accept Ms. Puja Iyer under the passport number 545111106 as a Fulbright scholar in Morocco for the period of 9 months from 2018-2019.

We will support Ms. Iyer’s study of Arabic in order to enhance her comparative linguistic analysis of reproductive health education programs and their influence on Moroccan youth. We firmly believe that ascertaining that way in which language functions in Moroccan society is of the utmost importance when addressing issues in the community, especially one as influential and personal as reproductive health. We believe that Ms. Iyer’s proposed research is both culturally and linguistically responsive, addressing the community needs in a holistic and community-centered manner—the most important quality for conducting research in a foreign country.

We kindly hope this letter will serve as an affiliation for Ms. Puja Iyer to get accepted to do Fulbright research in public health in Morocco. We are very confident that she will do a fantastic job.

Sincerely yours,

Ali Bensebaa
Program Director
Moroccan Centre for Arabic Studies
info@mcas-arabic.com
To Whom It May Concern,

As a researcher in the field of linguistics in general and sociolinguistics in particular at University Mohammed V in Rabat and a former Fulbright scholar myself, I am in full support of Ms. Puja Iyer’s Fulbright grant proposal for the 2018-2019 competition cycle.

Her project focuses on the high need, often under resourced region of Southwest Morocco, where both cultural and linguistic diversity abound amidst very salient public health and social issues. The intersectional approach to studying this region is the most appropriate manner by which to understand reproductive health education and its function. Focusing on young adults in the community is particularly important as they straddle two generations—one that can influence the future of youth and one that can interact with adults in the present. Thus ascertaining their understanding of reproductive health education is important for having a sense of how those programs influence the decisions of all members of their community. The topic of adolescent reproductive health education is one that is quite new in Morocco, but of high interest to the government as well as members of the community as it has the power to influence maternal and child morbidity and mortality rates as well as address issues regarding family planning and gender self-concept.

The culturally and linguistically responsive approach to studying reproductive health education and its influence on Moroccan youth is of the utmost importance when studying a topic that is both this important and sensitive. I will support Ms. Iyer in her linguistic analysis of the adolescent reproductive health materials she studies as well as in her coding and study of participant interviews and questionnaire responses. I will help guide her to using the most relevant and appropriate tools with which to study these social linguistic phenomena and will fill in any support not provided by her affiliation with the NGO Dar Si Hmad.

Once again, I am in full support of Ms. Iyer’s research and would most definitely recommend that her proposal be considered for funding given its relevance and importance in our community.

Sincerely,

Professor Yamina EL KIRAT EL ALLAME
Vice – Dean for Research and Cooperation
Ph.D. in Cultural Linguistics,
Fulbright Scholar 2009 - 2010
Coordinator of Research Laboratory
“Culture, Language, Education, Migration & Society”
Coordinator of Doctoral Program
“Studies in Language and Society”
Faculty of Letters & Human Sciences
Mohammed V University in Rabat. MOROCCO
yelkirat39@gmail.com
Mobile: 0661824647
Personal Statement
Puja Iyer, Morocco, Public Health

The living room of my grandparents’ flat was the best place to observe their busting household. I watched my *thaṭa* ladle the *injera* batter onto a griddle, a remnant of his time living in Ethiopia. I could smell the spices my mother used to marinate vegetables. Most were typical of any Hyderabadi household, but she also added savory *za’taar* and sweet *mahleb*, flavors from her childhood in Mosul. I listened to the often incomprehensible but beautiful melange of sounds: my grandfather humming along to an Urdu *gawali* on a beat-up cassette player; my mother exchanging gossip with my aunt in Hindi; my brother complaining in his California English about the broken AC amidst the cloying heat of the monsoon season. Perhaps my favorite recollection was hearing the Arabic verses of the Qu’ran recited by the *muezzins* of the local mosques, against the backdrop of the city lighting up in celebration of *Ramzan*. Not to be outdone, my grandmother, landline to her ear, spoke in Tamil to relatives an ocean away, then fluidly switched to Telugu, governing the domain of her home, the matriarch of the family.

My grandmother brought this Indian summer with her when she moved to the United States to help raise me and my brother. When I was young, I would get upset that I did not know how to answer questions about my language, my culture, or my religion: How could I be a Tamilian but not from Chennai? How could I practice *Ramzan* when I had a Hindu Brahmin last name? How could I be American when I looked Indian? *What* was I? *Where* was I *really* from? One day, I decided to confront my grandmother with these frustrations. I found her cooking in the kitchen, her favorite room in any home. She looked as beautiful as the she did on the small polaroid picture that hung on the refrigerator: she was wearing her favorite sari, had a large bindi between her brows, and was holding a small American flag in her right hand, as a five-year-old me captured the moment when she became an American citizen. Her English dripping with a thick accent, she said, “Don’t worry *kanna*. There is only one language, the language of the heart, only one religion, the religion of love.” From her, I learned the value of understanding the world from a variety of perspectives in order to cultivate pure regard for all people not in spite of who they are, but because of it.

I view the world through the kaleidoscope my *pati* gave me; the topsy-turvy mixture of language and culture with which I grew up colors everything in my life. From the South Asian-American fusion a capella team I sang with in college, to the 70% non-native English speaker classroom in which I teach, to my undergraduate study of health and language, which I apply to my practice at the Berkeley Free Clinic, my grandmother’s reverence for unity in diversity is a quality I always try to epitomize. Growing up in such a diverse household showed me how language and culture have the power to bridge gaps in understanding between people, change perceptions, and influence decisions, all which are at the core of the research I will conduct through my Fulbright study. In my future plans to pursue clinical work and medical anthropology research as an MD/PhD, I hope to emulate my *pati’s* devotion to cultivating understanding of others and celebrating all identities with unconditional respect.