



INVITATION

The online panel “**Changing Mindsets, New Opportunities & New Partnerships through the English Teaching Assistants Program**” is hosted jointly by the Fulbright Commissions from the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland and the Slovak Republic on the occasion of Czech Fulbright Commission Country Day – a celebration of 75 years of Fulbright worldwide and 30 years of Fulbright programs in the Czech Republic.

When: Monday, October 25, 6 to 7:30 pm CEST

Where: Online, on the ZOOM platform

Registration: until October 21, here <https://forms.gle/HSGMfjqs41NBHkDb8>

The panel will present the achievements of Fulbright English Teaching Assistants (ETAs) from four European countries and the long-term impacts that their Fulbright grants have had on themselves and their host communities. Alumni of Fulbright **Czech Republic, Poland, Germany** and **Slovak Republic** will discuss: (1) changing perspectives through art, (2) supporting and promoting diversity, (3) expanding worldviews and future study and career opportunities and (4) the power of international exchange for educators.

The online event will have a mixed format of a moderated panel with Fulbright Commission Executive Directors participating. ETA Program alumni will share their stories and explore their themes in greater detail in four breakout rooms, encouraging a discussion with the audience. Participants will have the option to join the breakout room of their preference.

With this panel we want to demonstrate the public diplomacy impact of Fulbright ETA Programs. Because of its regional reach to age groups ranging from twelve years to university students, the ETA Program embodies the definition of citizen diplomacy. Placed in cities, but also in medium-sized, small-sized towns or in the countryside, ETAs meet people who have never spoken to a foreigner in their life. Throughout their 10-month grants, ETAs become real members of their host communities, while being U.S. citizen ambassadors at the same time.

Meet the Panelists:

Hannah Sachs, Fulbright **Czech Republic** Alum 2016-2017, taught English at the Engineering High School and Business Academy in Frydek Mistek, and used theater, specifically techniques of the "Theater of the Oppressed" to tackle issues of



injustice and expand her students' (and colleagues') critical thinking skills. In her breakout room, Hannah will share (and demonstrate) how one can use theater to tackle issues of injustice, support academic growth, and strengthen interpersonal relationships among students. Her former mentor teacher, **Monika Kochanova**, current headmaster at Gymnazium Pavla Tigrida in Ostrava, will participate in the session together with Hannah.



Lara Steinike, Fulbright **Germany** Alum 2016-17, completed their year as an ETA in Hamburg in 2016-17 after graduating from the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire with a degree in Education. They were then able to stay on as a full-time English and German teacher in Germany. However, finding a community in Hamburg – particularly a queer community – was something Lara and their fellow grantees struggled with during their grants. It was this desire

for a queer community in a new context that spurred Lara and fellow German ETAs Tim Sensenig and Michaela Gill to found Fulbright Prism, an affinity group for queer Fulbrighters. Creating spaces for queer people to feel safe and connect is also something Lara has made a priority in their school environment. Having learned from their experiences with Prism, they have been active in helping establish a queer student group at their school. Their hope is that the group becomes an established part of the school culture and continues to spark discussion and serve as a safe space for queer students and teachers for years to come.



Michaela Gill, Fulbright **Germany** Alum 2016-17, is currently an academic advisor at Northeastern University. She holds a Master's degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Boston University and a BA in American Studies and German Studies from Smith College. During her undergraduate program, she studied abroad in Hamburg, Germany and returned after graduation as an ETA to the same city from 2016-2017. Michaela enjoys reading, taking walks, listening to podcasts, and absorbing as much queer content as humanly possible. Her favorite memory from her Fulbright grant period is meeting, traveling, and collaborating with other Fulbrighters, who taught her so much about teaching and provided her with community while abroad. In their breakout session Lara and Michaela will share their perspectives on creating queer community in new and unfamiliar contexts.



Grace Sprockett, Fulbright **Slovak Republic** Alum 2018-2019, resides and works in Bratislava, Slovakia as an IB teacher and coordinator at Gymnazium Pankuchova. She holds a Master's degree from the University of Edinburgh in Sports Policy, Management, and International Development, as well as a Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education and History from the University of Cincinnati. During her time as an ETA, Grace worked to develop innovative and cooperative teaching techniques within her school and eventually returned to Slovakia to continue her passion of bringing an education revolution to Slovakia. Grace's experiences as an ETA were some of the most influential moments in her life, shaping her into the educator she is today!



Julianne Parayo, Fulbright **Poland** Alum 2014-15 in Bydgoszcz and 2015-16 in Warsaw. Originally from California's San Francisco Bay Area, Julianne Parayo currently works in higher education as an International Student Advisor and Designated School Official for F-1 international students at Fordham University in New York City. She is a graduate of Teachers College, Columbia University in the City of New York with a Master of Arts in International Educational Development, and received her Bachelor of Arts in Music and English from Santa Clara University. As an international educator, vocalist, writer, and performer, Julianne intends to highlight the transnational communicative properties of song and language, and desires to bring a sense of agency to others through her work.

