

Widening Country Success Story

“Address both the call text as well as specific questions and points in the project template.”

Name of the fellow: Deniz Gündoğan İbrişim
Country of the host: Türkiye
Project Acronym: POGETA
Project start and end date: 1.09.2021 – 31.08.2023
Type of MSCA, Horizon 2020: Individual Fellowship



What is your project about and why is the topic important for science advancement?

This project stands at the nexus of literary studies, trauma and memory studies, gender, and environmental humanities. Departing from the historical perspective on Middle Eastern environments (oil, water and land), this project addresses gender-based violence & trauma and environmental degradation, which are among the world's most pressing challenges. Interlinked and reinforcing, tackling these issues together in Middle Eastern literatures and visual arts (with an emphasis on Türkiye) is crucial for offering powerful opportunities for a more inclusive rights-based transformation beyond anthropogenetic and masculinist orientations.

Why is your project important for society?

There has been a lack of substantial cultural and literary analyses of the gendered experiences and anticipation of environmental loss, whether of ecosystems, landscapes, seascapes, cityscapes, or an inhabitable planet, that cause profound individual and collective trauma as well as the challenge in remembering and demonstrating them. This project aims to fill the gap in scholarship and to serve as the very first

of its kind that tends to the specificity of non-Western formations in the Global Middle East.

What communication and public engagement measures have you foreseen?

Communication measures include scholarly articles, non-scholarly essays, lectures, blog posts and podcasts. The public is actively engaged through civil society organisations and independent research institutes such as KIRAATHANE, Center for Spatial Justice in Türkiye; Columbia Global Centers, Columbia University, NICHE (Network in Canadian History & Environment) and Network for Memory Studies.

Why did you choose a widening country as a host?

As a Turkish citizen and recipient of the Fulbright Doctoral Fellowship, I completed my PhD in Comparative Literature at Washington University. As a Fulbright scholar on J1 visa, I was typically subjected to the two-year home residency requirement. This was one of the major reasons for choosing Türkiye for

the MSCA Individual Fellowship. However, that was not the sole reason. Even before pursuing my graduate studies, I worked as a tenure-track faculty member at the School of Foreign Languages, at Istanbul Technical University (2002-2014). Based on my previous experiences as a scholar-teacher, I believe that academia in Türkiye, although it faces challenges in many different ways, aspires to develop internationally competent and confident individuals, capable of critical and independent thought, who embody a strong sense of social responsibility.

How did you find your host organisation?

Sabancı University is internationally recognised as one of the most innovative and research-oriented universities in Türkiye. In my graduate studies both in Türkiye and the US, I collaborated with scholars and colleagues at Sabancı University (organising joint conferences and literary workshops, etc.) I also contributed to the Purple Certificate, the teacher training program organised by SU Gender and worked to promote gender, feminism and climate emergency in higher education in Türkiye.

What kind of support did you get?

Making use of online resources (MSCA official documents, YouTube videos, Net4MobilityPlus handbook, MSCA Facebook group) was essential. The staff at the Research Projects Management Office at Sabancı University are very well trained and experienced in the management of EU funded projects, and they are available to help the researchers. Sabancı University is a world-class university with extensive experience in managing externally funded projects and the Research Projects Management Office provides one-on-one support regarding the preparation of proposals and project management,

implementation, and reporting as well as relevant training programmes. In addition, a friend who is former MSCA Individual Fellow helped me by reviewing my application and giving me feedback.

What tips can you give other researchers who would like to apply for MSCA?

First, I really encourage researchers to be passionate about their research topics, and at the same time understand the overall logic as well as specific requirements of the MSCA programme. This helps researchers to develop their compelling ideas in the proper context and to successfully address both the call text as well as specific questions and points in the project template. I think researchers should start early with finding their host organisation and get as much feedbacks as possible during the writing process.

More information on the project:



The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) support researchers at all stage of their career across all disciplines. The MSCA also support cooperation between industry and academia and provide innovative trainings and career developments.

The MSCA Individual Fellowships (IF) provide opportunities to researchers of any nationality to acquire and transfer new knowledge and to work on research and innovation in Europe and beyond.

The MSCA-NET project is the MSCA NCP project to facilitate the transnational cooperation to achieve a consistent and harmonised level of NCP support. The scientific community can also profit from our project to support their MSCA application.

