

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Program
Fulbright Stories Project

ERIC LOPEZ

*Interviewed by: Fran Leskovar
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INTERVIEW

Q: All right, today is May 8, 2025. This is Fran Leskovar. This is interview part one. Will you state your name for the record and spell it out?

LOPEZ: Sure. Eric Lopez, E-R-I-C-L-O-P-E-Z.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? Where did you grow up?

LOPEZ: I grew up in the South Bronx, in the '80s, in New York. I moved to D.C. in 2010.

Q: What is your current occupation?

LOPEZ: I'm currently the owner and principal of GlobeServe Consulting.

Q: What was your Fulbright project and when did you apply for Fulbright?

LOPEZ: I applied for Fulbright in 2008 to look at the post-*Brown v. Board of Ed* situation in Hungary. Hungary had just done its *Brown v. Board of Ed* case, outlawing the segregation of the Roma there. And right before I had gone, one of the lawyers for *Brown v. Board of Ed*, Jack Greenberg, went to Hungary to consult with the lawyers there. So I was looking at the outcome of the case and seeing whether or not Hungary was implementing any policies to do better than the United States did in the post-*Brown v. Board of Ed* era.

Q: Any international experience prior to Fulbright experience?

LOPEZ: I did a couple of study abroad programs to Europe and Mexico prior to doing the Fulbright.

Q: How did your Fulbright experience make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous?

LOPEZ: One of the things that I think Fulbright does really well is help us all learn the lessons and share those lessons, right? In the case of my Fulbright, what I was hoping to find out was that Hungary was looking at the United States experience in the 1950s in desegregating the schools here and taking those lessons and improving that process in Hungary as they were going through their desegregation process. [That exchange, of learning from each others' breakthroughs and mistakes, makes our countries and allies safer, stronger, and more prosperous.]

Q: What does Fulbright mean to you?

LOPEZ: A bunch of things come to mind. One is international prosperity, American prosperity. It means peaceful relations internationally. The coming together of ideas to make not just one country or another or even a group of countries better, but to make the world a better place.

Q: Were you volunteering by any chance or doing anything during the Fulbright that was extracurricular that might have helped also make America more prosperous, stronger?

LOPEZ: There were some lessons that I learned. So one of the things that I did as part of my research was not just spending some time in libraries and interviewing lawyers, but also spending time in schools and seeing what it was like there, seeing what their lessons were, and what their impressions of the United States were. You know, it never ceases to surprise me how much people outside of the United States see the United States as a beacon of light and hope. And that was something that was very surprising to me. I was in what's called the Hungarian Rust Belt. So this is a very rural area, with very low resources. But even there, when I told the students that I was from the Bronx, they were like, "Oh, is it like that Jackie Chan movie?" I was like, "Not exactly." But they had some sense and they had some curiosity. I think that programs like Fulbright have very high potential to create those kinds of beneficial relationships. We have good will. The good will is there and the Fulbright program helps us leverage that good will.

Q: Alright, anything else you want to add?

LOPEZ: No, I don't.

End of interview