Faculty Highlight -
Benjamin James Lough

REEEC is glad to welcome a new member of its affiliated faculty, Professor Benjamin J. Lough. Dr. Lough joins the University of Illinois School of Social Work from the Washington University George W. Brown School of Social Work, where he earned his PhD in 2010 and where he taught Social Welfare Policies & Services, and Social Work Practice in the Social, Economic & Political Environment. Currently at the School of Social Work, Dr. Lough was attracted to Illinois because of the international composition of the student body and the opportunities for engagement with various regional centers, including REEEC. Although he currently teaches Social Work Practice with Organizations and Communities, his other teaching interests include social welfare policy practice, community practice, international social work, advanced statistics, and evaluation of programs and services.

Dr. Lough has extensive international research experience in community development, international volunteering and service, nonprofit management, and social work education. He has served as an independent consultant to the Department of Human and Social Services of American Samoa and as program evaluator for Mayan Tree in Guatemala, and for the Foundation for International and Community Assistance in Armenia and the Republic of Georgia.

Although Dr. Lough's current research focuses on international service and nonprofit organizations around the globe, much of his previous work was on Eastern Europe. As he explained, “having spent considerable time in the Eastern Bloc and being a Russian speaker, I feel a connection with the region and I am excited to stay on top of events and opportunities through affiliation with REEEC.” As an undergraduate and later as a graduate student, Ben Lough lived in Ukraine for three years during which he completed graduate research on the decline of Ukrainian orphanages and on the emergence of alternative models of child care for orphaned children. Following the completion of his master’s degree, he also conducted research in Armenia and Georgia with a micro-finance organization, the Foundation for International Community Assistance to understand the impact of this program on small business owners.

Interested in exploring new directions, Professor Lough’s future work will focus on the emergence of civil society and volunteerism in Eastern Europe and Russia. This grows out of an experience that antecedes his appointment as Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois. Being a resident consultant for the United Nations Volunteers Program in Germany, Ben Lough participated namely in regional meetings in Eastern Europe and Turkey, during which he sought to understand the current state of civil society in these regions.

In line with his research interests, Benjamin Lough has co-authored two volumes on international volunteerism: Emerging perspectives on international volunteerism in Asia with C. Brassard and M.S. Sherraden (Singapore, 2011) and Perceived impacts of international service on volunteers: Interim results from a quasi-experimental study with study with A.M. McBride and M.S. Sherraden (Washington, D.C., 2010). Dr. Lough has also co-written several articles in prestigious scholarly venues such as the Journal of Social Work Education, the Journal of Community Practice, the International Journal of Intercultural Relations, Nonprofit Management and Leadership Journal, the Journal of Educational Development, International Social Work, Voluntas: The International Journal of Voluntary & Nonprofit Organizations, The International Journal of Volunteer Administration, and The International Journal of Educational Faculty Highlight - Benjamin James Lough
Development. Last but not least, besides his considerable research and teaching experience, Dr. Lough also worked as a clinical social worker.