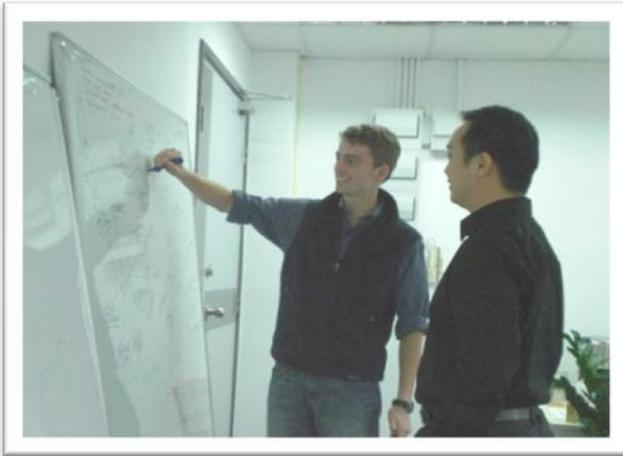


2009-2010 Luce Scholars, who arrived in their countries of placement in late August 2009, share their experiences in Asia:



I'm spending my Luce year in Hong Kong, where I work at a start-up called RESET. The firm, just over a year old, works in the crucial Chinese market to help companies understand and take action on climate change. I support the RESET team in designing and implementing carbon reduction strategies for our clients. I am also consulting for a large international NGO to develop a regional strategy in Southeast Asia. Work has taken me to factories in southern China, gleaming Hong Kong skyscrapers, and on one occasion a nightclub fashion show where I spoke to the crowd about reducing carbon footprints. Outside of work, I've enjoyed making local friends, hiking

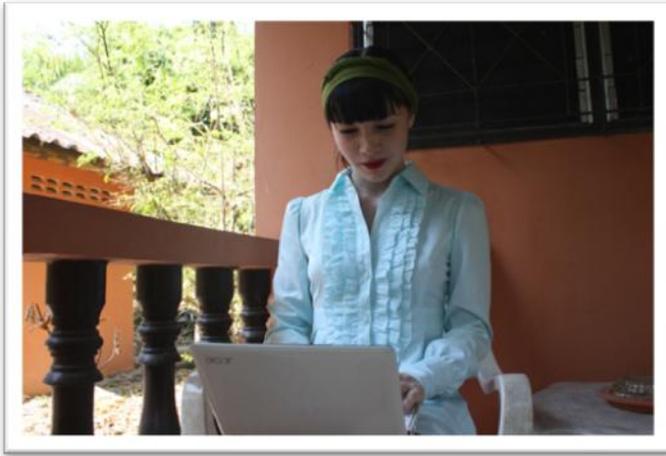
Hong Kong's trails, completing a half-marathon, learning to cook Cantonese dishes, and absorbing the legends of local culture.

– **Nick Anderson, Hong Kong**

I am a visiting scholar at Renmin University's School of International Studies (SIS) in Beijing. In addition to imbibing daily wisdom from my mentors and colleagues, I serve as a curricular, administrative, and financial consultant to SIS's Contemporary China Studies Program, a two-year master's course for foreign students to study Chinese society, politics, and foreign relations in English. In addition to an extensive overhaul of the program's promotional materials, I am helping the Program design a pilot course evaluation system, a new student handbook and course guide, and more formalized disciplinary protocols to discourage plagiarism and cheating. This spring I will guide the Program through its first grant writing campaign and sustain efforts to improve cross-cultural communication between administrators and students. Outside the university I enjoy exploring Beijing's endless offerings, sampling (and failing to cook properly) new and exotic foods, and helping teach ultimate frisbee to local university students.



– **Michael Chaitkin, Beijing, China**



I am working at the Vietnam Institute of Archaeology, a subsector of the Vietnam Ministry of Sports, Culture and Tourism in Hanoi, Vietnam. I am currently designing a sustainable tourism master plan for Quang Nam Province in Central Vietnam. The project is part of the Vietnamese government's 20 year economic plan and focuses on documenting and advertising the intangible heritage assets in the province as a means of poverty alleviation. Quang Nam Province is one of the poorest provinces in Vietnam, with one of the largest populations of ethnic minorities. I am working with Vietnamese craft villages in the area to create linkages among three UNESCO World

Heritage Sites (Cham Island, Hoi An, and My Son), thus encouraging longer stays by foreign tourists in the area. I also teach "English for archaeologists" to my colleagues at the Institute for Archaeology, occasionally gives lectures at Hanoi University about American culture and university life, and studies Vietnamese. In my "off time" I enjoy drinking avocado milkshakes alongside Hoan Kiem Lake, bargaining with tailors on Silk Street in the old quarter, and travelling in Vietnam to the mountains and the coast.

– Jenny Cimaglia, Hanoi, Vietnam

I am working at the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) in Bangkok, a government agency focused on achieving secure tenure for slum dwellers. While my primary focus is conducting an impact assessment of CODI's secure housing program, I have recently become involved in developing English-language public relations materials, giving community tours to international delegations that come to visit CODI, and teaching my coworkers English. Some perks of the job include getting to know local slum communities in Bangkok, attending numerous CODI weddings and learning Thai, as well as bits of Isaan, Lao, Nan and the other dialects spoken in the office. In my free time, I can be found riding boats along Bangkok's canals, eating tropical fruit, and driving a hard bargain in the marketplaces.



– Jelena Djordjevic, Bangkok, Thailand

Taiwan's openness was on full display as 25,000 people gathered outside the Presidential Office on October 31st to celebrate the 7th annual gay pride parade. As host to the largest parade in Asia, Taiwan is increasingly important in the region as an advocate for gay and lesbian rights. As a Luce Scholar in Taiwan, my goal is to learn more about this social movement. This begins with my placement in the Women's Research Program at National Taiwan University. There I work on a number of assignments, including organizing the "2010 International Conference on



Queer Diaspora," which will host over 50 scholars from around the world. In addition, I serve as a guest tutor for an undergraduate course in "Queer Studies." This class offers a wonderful opportunity to engage with the younger generation and hear their views on gay and lesbian politics in Taiwan. What I have found most challenging is making sense of a political strategy much more "harmonious" than I am familiar with in the United States. Outside of the academic setting, I also work with Tongzhi Hotline, the island's first nationally registered gay and lesbian organization. Hotline recently brought me into contact with an entirely different age group for a trip to Ling Jiou Mountain, a Buddhist monastery in Taipei County. The outing was organized to pay respects to Hotline's oldest members, a group of gay men between the ages of 60 and 85. With this group in particular, I was reminded of the importance of studying Mandarin. Indeed, I spend much time at the Mandarin Training Center studying Chinese. In what time remains, I enjoy attending the Taiwanese opera.

– Jason Ferguson, Taipei, Taiwan



My apartment has the fastest Internet connection in the world, according to several online speed-testing services – I checked. I came to Seoul to learn what happens to society where virtually everyone (97% of households) has lightning-fast Internet. Through work, I've given lectures on Internet policy and am co-authoring papers on Geospatial Information Networks (GSINs) – systems that combine real-time location information, physical sensors, and virtual networks. GSINs empower exciting services, such as e-government and environmental monitoring programs, but also more frightening networks that could breathe new life into our

nightmares of big brother. Hopefully, understanding some of the risks and opportunities that they create will be helpful when I return to the United States. Outside of the office, my most memorable experiences have had little to do with technology. I've learned to make 김치, fermenting cabbage for storage in the face of a long winter. I've hiked to the peak of 북한산 – the mountain's slopes, awash in fall colors, looked almost like a picture-perfect New England landscape. Best of all, I've found my way home through Seoul's back-alleys without a map, guide, or GPS. Little-by-little, Seoul is starting to feel like home.

– Nathaniel Gleicher, Seoul, Korea

Before landing in Seoul I was concerned that my language skills would hold me back from experiencing Korea. But I quickly learned that my colleagues and I shared a language: geek. And geek, it turns out, is an excellent entrée to Korean. As the editor of the International section of the Web site at OhmyNews – a citizen journalism organization based in Seoul – I have consistently used technology to talk to my colleagues and make friends. While I often trip up over forms of “to be” – asking if a colleague is a video camera, instead of asking if she had one – complicated discussions about building mobile Web sites or new Twitter-based services seem to roll off the tongue, and help to build meaningful relationships. Talks about the newly launched (in Korea) iPhone have led directly into deeper conversations about the country’s development, politics, and Korea’s future. Our shared language – one defined by interest instead of geography – has opened Seoul in a way I never expected possible. Tears over a crashed hard drive carry precisely the same meaning in Seoul as they do in Minnetonka, Minnesota. Speaking geek has also guided life outside the office. I’ve quickly grown to love an aspect of Korea that many Koreans often take for granted: infrastructure. My wonderment at the Internet connection in my apartment only makes my blogger friends laugh; for them, connections that are 10-12 times faster than in the U.S. are as obviously proper as the health benefits of Kimchi. The same goes for a train system that offers 300kph trips to nearly anywhere in the country, with more than 5 departures per hour. And again for a park system that has miles of running trails and exercise machines just a few steps from most residential areas, in a city of 22 million. But, for me, my 5km loop along the Han Gang Gong Won (Han River Park), rocket-like train trips to Dae Jeon, and the wicked-fast Web just don’t blend in. The health benefits of Kimchee, however....



– Andrew Gruen, Seoul, Korea



I am having a wonderful time learning the ins and outs of Thai culture, especially the amazing cuisine! My placement at the Population and Community Development Association (PDA) has provided opportunities to travel to rural areas around Thailand and Cambodia. At PDA I am developing a community health worker program as well as helping to provide sustainable solutions for PDA’s many development projects; these range from environmental efforts to social and economic development programs. I even got to play a little soccer with donors and villagers! These personal experiences of village life and the amazing, generous spirit of the Thai people have been

highlights of my placement. The office location and my nearby studio apartment in central Bangkok provide wonderful access to culturally diverse neighborhoods. When not traveling, I spend my time in the office getting to know the international and Thai staff and have often been invited to friends’ houses for family gatherings. There is always something going on in Bangkok and my new friends are serving as excellent guides to the many out-of-the-way nooks and crannies that make the city so famous.

– Rachel Harper, Bangkok, Thailand



I came to Korea to practice human rights law at Gong-Gam (Korean Public Interest Lawyers' Group), and see how a new democracy handles questions about citizenship and justice. I wrestle with these issues at work every day, writing briefs for the Korean Constitutional Court, and editing submissions to the United Nations. The most surprisingly meaningful part of my week, however, has turned out to involve not politics but pastries. Every Tuesday after work, my new friend, a chef at a traditional culinary institute in Seoul, meet in my apartment. We alternate weeks, practicing English and Western cuisine one week, and

Korean and Korean food (한국 음식) the next. We share information about politics, culture, and families – but mostly about home cuisine. This week, we took one of my traditions and one of hers, and found they met beautifully. In December, I like to fill my house with delicious smells and holiday treats to share with friends. She does the same thing, but with beautiful Korean rice cakes, colored brightly and filled with bean pastes, and pressed honey cookies made in carved wooden molds called tteoksals (떡살). In her hands, the rice balls became turtles, cherry blossoms, pinwheels, and kites. So this year, I will bring my workplace and our visiting refugee clients some tteok (떡) and dasik (다식) with green tea. Across town, my new friend will do the same, sharing newfound treats like gingerbread men to celebrate the upcoming new year.

– **Brittan Heller**, Seoul, Korea



I am working at the Institute for Population and Development Studies where I have been assisting with grant proposals for regional projects revolving around issues of rural villager health. At LIGHT, a community health and development organization, I have learned about how my colleagues concurrently operate an open clinic for migrant workers, develop programs for reducing the incidence of HIV infections, and work with migrant workers to help them adjust to life in Hanoi. Living and working in Vietnam has given me opportunities to meet Vietnamese friends, attend events at a children's orphanage, play football each week, and continue my passion for running by participating in a half-marathon. As a twenty-two year old, I feel as if I am a child who is constantly learning new aspects of Vietnamese culture

every day. As I learn more and more about Vietnamese life and become more adjusted to the culture, I look forward to new experiences as a much more experienced Hanoian foreigner.

– **Yongjun Heo**, Hanoi, Vietnam

By day I fight crime as a teaching assistant in the photography department of the Tokyo Visual Arts College. Namely crimes of ignorance concerning the unparalleled Edward Weston and Yasujiro Ozu. When night falls and neon lights sparkle the sky, I traverse the tracks of Tokyo's trains, searching. In galleries, izakayas, museums and karaoke rooms I uncover contemporary Japanese culture and hatch up plans to photograph the cinematic stories of the characters I meet.

– **Jeremy Jangord, Tokyo, Japan**



As we all boarded our Asia-bound planes in San Francisco, I will admit I was rather concerned. With new friends heading to such unfamiliar locales as Laos and Vietnam and Indonesia, Hong Kong seemed like it would be a walk in an all-too-familiar, paths-marked-in-English park. I fretted about having squandered my opportunity to experience a culture that was truly different. This was perhaps the most unnecessary concern of my adult life. As a professor in the film department at the extremely local Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, I have, to date, given 23 lectures in English on topics ranging from the history of Iranian cinema to editing technique. I have visited victims of domestic abuse in Kwun Tong, and I have eaten snake soup. I have been to the beach with my colleagues and to the DVD store with my students. Yet, familiar as many of these activities sound, they have been as different from my previous experiences as they could be, though they go by the same names. It is only superficially that Hong Kong is familiar, that I am fluent in Hong Kong English, that I can tell what is going on. In the spring, I will write and direct a short film, in Cantonese, on which my students will serve as the crew. I trust that in the most important ways, it will be an absolutely new experience, though in the end, I hope, we will all recognize it as a film nevertheless.



– **Jeff Miller, Hong Kong**

Upon arrival in Indonesia, I suspected my cultural learning would emerge from the obvious differences - like being an unscarved woman in my Muslim neighborhood. Yet my biggest Luce learning experiences thus far have come from what I thought were similarities. Despite years of experience in the HIV/AIDS field, my new workplace (Rumah Cemara/ Bandung Plus Support, a community-based drug rehab and HIV/AIDS organization) has most meaningfully brought me to better understand Indonesia, Indonesians, and myself - as a traveler, a public health worker, a person. I spend my days with co-workers who are all recovered drug addicts and/or living with HIV. I have learned that their advice - rather than the research I'm used to reading - is a more pure source of effective policy interventions, as everyday they live the experience of the "target



– **Kate Otto**, Bandung, Indonesia

population,” and know exactly what needs to be done to facilitate service provision. I’m as far from a formal policy post as I could imagine. Between hospital and prison visits, stays in Rehab, casual chats with clients, facilitation of needle exchange programs, visits to the methadone clinic, however, I feel as informed and inspired as ever, and far more capable of doing the job I aspire to one day – public health policymaking. The Luce requirement of learning Indonesian has been invaluable, and reflects my trajectory of settling into Indonesia: the more I immerse myself in listening and push myself to speak, the more otherwise inaccessible information comes to the surface.

My internship at the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association (PKBI) has been a valuable exercise in making myself useful in contexts where I have far more to learn than to teach. I am the only foreigner on staff at this dynamic NGO, which provides reproductive and sexual health resources to high-risk communities and the general public. Since only a couple of my coworkers speak English, I have had to find creative ways to contribute non-linguistic skills to PKBI’s activities, as I strive to improve my professional fluency in bahasa Indonesia. One recent project that fit this bill was the re-opening of Griya Lentera, PKBI’s just-renovated community health clinic. I spent the past month helping create a photography exhibit for the clinic’s new community space, featuring pictures of daily life taken by members of the various marginalized groups that PKBI serves (gays and lesbians, waria, sex workers, high school adolescents, and street youth). I accompanied these community photographers into their brothels, religious spaces, and club meetings, showing them how to use a digital camera and observing their perceptions through their own shots. When the pictures were organized, I helped facilitate a community meeting to view and vote on the photos they wanted featured in the actual exhibition. I then helped print, mount, and install all 35 chosen photos in our makeshift gallery— just in time for opening night, when we welcomed over 300 guests from the government, civil society, and local communities! And because we also had to arrange entertainment for the festivities, I ended up utilizing my musical experience, too— singing acapella jazz standards to close out the night’s program (the highlight of which was undoubtedly a drag performance by one of our gay staff volunteers— few gals can compete with a charismatic boy in a hot dress lip-syncing Beyoncé). I’m already looking forward to more challenging adventures in 2010!



– **Lauren Weeth**, Jogjakarta, Indonesia

Two lovers attempted suicide in a small, mountainous village in northern Laos after their parents refused to sanction their marriage. Although the boy survived the suicide attempt, the girl died and her parents wanted the boy prosecuted for murder. Could the legal aid clinic facilitate his prosecution? Villagers in Xay province agreed



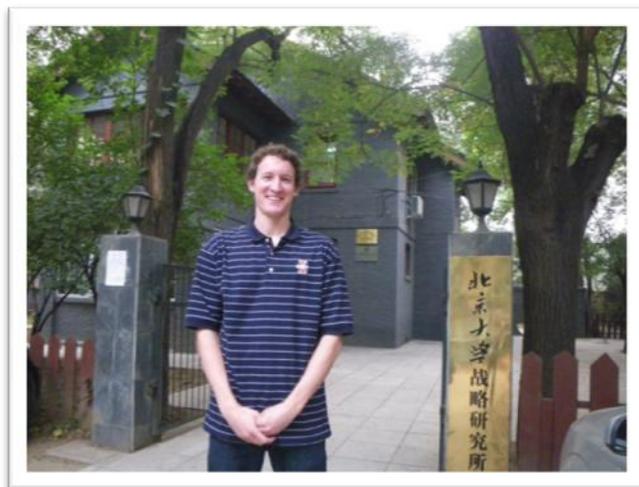
to lease their land to Chinese investors in an area of the country with an increasing Chinese presence. The investors seized the land but failed to pay the farmers any money. Could the lawyers help them secure payment? These represent actual cases from the two legal aid clinics I help support. I recently traveled to the clinic in northern Laos to help educate Hmong, Khmu, and other ethnic minorities about the role of lawyers and the law. I spoke to the villagers in Lao about working to improve the legal system in New Orleans, the role of lawyers, and the generosity and kindness of Lao people. When I'm not traveling, I am helping to develop the knowledge and capacity of the country's 102 lawyers in one of the more challenging places in the world to practice

law (11,000 law students graduated last year; 40 applied to become lawyers). I guest-lectured at the intern training course for the country's newest lawyers, connect lawyers to international organizations, and research best practices to improve our legal aid and paralegal programs. Many of my learning experiences in Laos happen outside of my placement at the Lao Bar Association. I have friendships with farmers, monks, construction workers, judges, and Lao nationals educated abroad. Stay, they say. Stay in Laos forever.

– Micah West, Vientiane, Lao PDR

From the first days as visiting scholar at Peking University's Guanghua School of Management, I joined a team collaborating with Harvard Business School to draft case studies on the successful corporate social responsibility (CSR) of State Grid, China's national power company. Today, two colleagues and I are investigating how small and medium-sized companies in China's immense plastics industry and the associated industrial clusters do – or might better support – responsible business practice.

It's a timely, fascinating topic as China reconciles its appetite for economic growth with its mounting concern for the social and environmental consequences that very growth is causing both nationally and globally. I've also been able to represent the Institute at various forums on the topic of China's CSR. I recently spent a day at a school created specifically for migrant workers' children that we hope to link with corporate partners. It was important to discuss the issues that this important segment of China's population encounters and to discuss areas where the private sector can provide support. At the event I utilized a key skill I've worked years to acquire: my 6'5" height. The children were ecstatic to interact with their foreign Yao Ming; we enjoyed laughs on their basketball playground and in the classroom, the subject of study never straying far from my height. I do play ball with players my own size, as I've now been training with the Peking University Basketball Team, taking in China's emerging basketball culture and making local friends in the process. To prepare for play, I get my daily breakfast fill at my neighbor's humble baozi shop: hands down the best xiao long bao in Beijing. Up next: learning a traditional Chinese instrument!



– Mark Wehling, Beijing, China