

Engaging the world

The Global Colours Photography Contest asked students to submit a photograph that portrays a cross cultural experience they have had and a lesson they learned from that experience. The goal of the World Wise Resources Centre sponsored contest was to help students put into words and images their encounters with the world. Here's a look at what the top three winners saw when they traveled outside Canada.



THIRD PLACE

Title: Preservation Hall
Photographer: Jocelyn Tanner

Preservation Hall in the French Quarter is a quaint little hall well known for its New Orleans style jazz performances. People cram into the building to witness jazz at its best. Through all that the city of New Orleans has endured, the spirit and culture of the people has certainly not been lost. The music was played with great passion and pride and the experience of sitting on the floor wedged between people all engaged in the band's performance was uplifting and inspiring.

SECOND PLACE

Photographer: Matthew Derksen

I spent three months in Uganda during the summer of 2007 working on a project aiming to alleviate rural poverty through community-based tourism. I participated in this project for two reasons: it was a chance to help people that were less fortunate than me and to benefit from the experience. While I am hopeful that my time in Uganda will help the project accomplish its goals, I am certain that it was an invaluable experience that will stay with me forever.

This photograph captures some of the intangibles that have left an indelible mark on the memory of my experiences in Uganda: solitude, simplicity and patience. In Canada, we are surrounded by luxury; however it has come at a cost. The pace of our consumer culture is fast and it is easy to get caught up working for the future and ignore the present. Although we may be aware that this type of lifestyle may be physically and spiritually damaging, it is difficult to remove oneself from it. My time in Uganda offered me the chance, if only briefly, to be immersed in a culture that has not yet wrapped itself up in the endless pursuit of material things; one that is still connected to the land. This was the most valuable aspect of my time in Uganda.



FIRST PLACE

Title: Varying Shades of Gray
Photographer: Dylan Hoemsen

This picture was taken at Banteay Srey; a set of ruins from the Khmer Empire near Angkor Wat in Cambodia.

Cambodia was one of my first experiences with such deep levels of poverty. At the time I was studying in Singapore, and in one particular class we were discussing the role that children hold in some developing countries. Despite an almost unanimous opinion that children should be able to go to school and should not have to work, it is hard to see people living in such poor conditions and think that it is not okay for any member of the family to raise some much needed income.

This girl and her sister would spend their days at these ruins and offer a picture in exchange for a single US dollar.

The whole situation brings up issues of legitimate work, exploitation, begging and the real life effects of a weak education system but provides no clear answers. I learned that for me it is more important to be informed but unsure than make an opinion based solely on ideals vs. real world conditions.

