

FSD Photography Contest

Why does FSD Have a Photo Contest?

Photography is a highly effective medium for people to contextualize what grassroots development entails. Our photo contest seeks to capture powerful images from the field and distribute those images throughout online networks to mobilize awareness and involvement.

What's the Prize?

Winners will each receive a **\$200 grant** for their host organization. All finalists and contest winners will be featured on the FSD website.

How are Winners Selected?

FSD has six photo contest deadlines throughout the year:

- **Spring:** **April 17th**
- **Summer:** **June 26th**
- **Summer:** **July 25th**
- **Fall:** **October 16th**
- **Fall:** **November 20th**
- **Winter:** **February 27th**

Finalists are selected within one week of the contest deadline. The winning photo will be decided by two factors:

- 1) Number of votes on the [FSD Organization Page](#) (see below for details)
- 2) How extraordinarily awesome the photo is

How Do I Participate?

Step One: If you haven't already, create a **Facebook** profile! We recognize that some people may not appreciate the idea of mixing Facebook social networking with development work in the field. Trust us, we understand. However, we chose Facebook because it provides an excellent platform for a huge number of people to learn from your experience abroad.

Step Two: Go to the [FSD Organization Page](#) and **become a "Fan."** You can also search for the page, by entering "Foundation for Sustainable Development" in the Facebook search bar.

Step Three: In the [FSD Organization Page](#), **click on "add photos" in the "Fan Photos" section.** If you are submitting a photo from your computer, click "Upload Photo". If the photo is hosted on another site, you will first need to save it to your computer. If the photo has already been posted to Facebook, click "Add From My Photos" and select the picture.

Step Four: When submitting your photo, you must enter the following information in the caption box:

- Your first and last name
- Country/City of your intern/volunteer placement
- Start and completion date of your internship/volunteer placement
- The story behind the photo and, if applicable, how it related to your work

Example Photo Contest Submission:

Image By: Preetam Rao

Location: Jinja, Uganda
Dates of Internship: May 24th – August 12, 2007



I took this picture after a microfinance training with local mothers and grandmothers. If the women liked what they learned, they danced and sang at the end of each session. So last Thursday my supervisor Henry and I were dancing with 70 older women as they sang songs! Very cool...so far we have trained about 170 people on savings and are moving on to business administration training soon. For more information, visit my blog at www.preetamrao.blogspot.com

Step Five: Share your contest photos with friends! Once you post a photo, **click "Share."** You can then post the photo to your profile *and* send it to all of your friends. In your message that accompanies the photo, ask your friends to **vote for your photo by leaving a comment.**

Step Six: If you're selected as a finalist, FSD will email you within one week following the contest deadline. You must reply to the email with a **high resolution version of the photo that exceeds 1MB in file size.** Your reply must be received by FSD within five days.

Step Seven: Within a few days of receiving responses from finalists, FSD will email the winner and the prize money will be awarded within 2 business days.

What are the Small Print Rules?

- 1) Submit entries that are your original work only
- 2) By submitting entries in the FSD Photo Contest, you are granting FSD permission to reproduce your photos for professional use
- 3) You can submit photos to the contest while you're in-country or after you return home. Regardless, the prize money will be awarded to your host organization. If you're in-country, you will help design the use of the funds.

How Do I Take Extraordinarily Awesome Photographs?

Most of the photographs FSD receives from participants look like this:



And we get it. These types of photos are fun to look back on. In addition, however, we encourage you to begin taking photographs that capture your experience working in the field and engaging the local culture.

Documentary photography as a means of advocacy for development work is not the same as taking photos for your scrapbook. It seeks to produce truthful, objective, and usually candid photography of a particular subject, most often pictures of people. Powerful documentary photographs:

1. Are emblematic of the empowerment and resourcefulness of the community
2. Are positive in their depictions and do not portray the community as victims who need help. FSD's overarching goal is to empower the communities we support, and we are looking for photographs that convey a sense of empowerment.
3. Are 3-dimensional: Emotive, evocative, and subjective
4. Bring the viewer into a subjective interpretation of a scene
5. Don't necessarily include subjects which are looking at the camera, but rather are candid shots; posing subjects are less informative and descriptive
6. Can be symbolic and metaphoric in meaning, rather than a literal depiction of a scene

Documentary photography works well for two types of photos relevant to your field experience:

1) To depict project work



2) To convey cultural people and scenes



Additional Tips

- 1) DON'T BE SCARED! Taking captivating, emotive photos means you need to overcome any uncomfortable feelings you may have about taking photos of local people. While it is critical that your photographs are respectful of the rights, sensitivities, and culture of the persons depicted, don't allow this scare you from taking meaningful photos that tell the stories of the people you meet.

[This photo essay](#) on Bolivia's cocaine trade demonstrates the power of documentary photography. The photos on this site move people to action. In a similar fashion, don't underestimate the influence you can have in advocating *your* work through photography. [Here's another great example](#) that can inform your efforts.

- 2) Before taking a person's or group's photo, ask for permission. Chances are the person or group will immediately pose for the camera! Let them know that you are not looking for a pose, but rather a more candid shot of their life or work. Tell them to continue about whatever it is they are doing and that you will remain in the background with your camera. What often happens is that the people feel the camera's presence for the first few minutes, but then they relax and eventually stop thinking so much about being photographed.

- 3) When taking Documentary Photographs, ask your self the following questions:

- What is the purpose of this image?
- What story is this photograph telling?
- Whose story is it? Does the photograph help tell the subject's story?
- What does the image give or take away from the human subject?
- How do the people feel about being photographed?
- How might they feel about the way you intend to use the images?
- How will the image reflect your own cultural/ethical/political values and attitudes?

How to Generate Awareness with Photography

All too often, amazing photography gets saved on digital cameras without ever being exposed to communities of people that could be inspired to contribute in some way. Another common occurrence is that the photography gets posted to a blog or social networking site, but the photographer fails to label the photos with information that encourages action. For example, we see participants labeling their albums with "La Plata is awesomeeeee," for example. Or, "Life in Mombasa."

We hope you label your photo albums with some mention of your work and the story behind the picture, akin to a photo essay. As photos often get buried in the masses of on-line albums, labeling your photos allows individuals to more easily identify opportunities to engage development work. Create albums that have titles like "Working with FSD in Kakamega, Kenya" volume 1,2,3,4, etc.

We want to make sure that when someone looks at your photos, they become inspired to learn more about what you're doing and how to take action.

