As stated online by GoEco.org India is the seventh largest country in the world and home to more than a billion people. It beautifully blends the past and the present together which can be seen in its rich culture, multiple religions, and magnificent architecture. The landscape is quite diverse, ranging from the snow-capped Himalayan Mountains to jungles and beaches.

The Experience
I took a 7,386 mile journey from Ann Arbor, Michigan to New Delhi, India to learn, grow, and experience a world unfamiliar to me — only to be impacted so immensely by the children I encountered at Kamal Loachan Society. For their hearts are so pure, full of joy, love, laughter, compassion, and generosity. Together, we learned English, mathematics, general health care, played games, and painted rooms, while honoring an upholding cultural humility. I am forever grateful and blessed for this experience.

Agency & Community Partner
Kamal Loachan Society offered opportunities to work with street children. The main focus was to provide love and care for the children while engaging in informal education, homework help, and playing fun, recreational, and therapeutic games, including drawing and coloring.

Outcomes
This experience offered cultural reflections and acknowledgements for social work practices within a developing country. The children were offered a balance of educational and recreational support and services. Together, a bond was formed, instilled with both respect and regard.

Classroom Connections
All of the coursework offered through University of Michigan’s Masters in Social Work program were applicable and relevant for this global special studies experience. In particular, SW 504, Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work and SW 730, Child Maltreatment reminds us the power of privilege. In that, social workers should leave their agendas behind and reserve judgement. Most importantly, we should not act without being asked, because sometimes what we pity may be of great cultural pride.

Skills Utilized & Developed
1. Speaking India’s national language is a skill that was both utilized and developed. The Hindi dialect is different across continents, states, and even communities.
2. A developing country offers the opportunity to practice patience, flexibility, and adaptability.
3. Having and holding an empathetic heart, intellectually, culturally, and emotionally.
4. Speaking India’s national language is a skill that was both utilized and developed. The Hindi dialect is different across continents, states, and even communities.

Career Connections
I have chosen to dedicate my life to assisting the most economically and socially disadvantaged groups in our society — abused and neglected children. The children I encountered touched my life in more ways than one. For this reason, I am writing and dedicating a children’s book called, Family is Friendship, to the children at Kamal Loachan Society in which all of the proceeds will be donated back to the children I served.

Lessons Learned
1. Our privilege can be paralyzing in understanding a community’s culture. We might feel that a community is poverty-stricken accordingly to the luxuries afforded in western society, when in actuality the community is thriving in tradition.
2. What may be viewed as patriarchy, may actually be love and protection.

Date Stamp
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