



## ANDREA TESE'S CAUSE: DOCUMENTING A JOB-TRAINING PROGRAM AND TEACHING PHOTOGRAPHY IN MALAWI.

I began my trip in Malawi's capital city, Lilongwe, on behalf of Goods for Good (G4G), which donates surplus materials from American companies to children in Africa.

The actual distance to the village of Mchezi, my home during my stay, from the capital was not vast in terms of miles, but in modern amenities they are a world apart. Telephone lines and streetlights disappeared and the few people I saw were usually gathered around communal wells. Each day at 6:30 A.M., I woke to the sound of the village beginning to stir. My shower routine consisted of pouring water, which had been collected and boiled beforehand, over my body one cup at a time. I dressed in a way that respectfully covered my legs (Malawians are modest about this part of the body), checked my camera equipment, and walked to the CBO (community-based organization) where G4G's Tailor-in-Training program is taught. There I saw the apprentice tailors creating school uniforms for orphan girls from fabric

that would have otherwise gone unused by fashion houses in the U.S. Before my eyes I saw waste transformed into opportunity. With a uniform, the girls can receive access to an education, while simultaneously the apprentices learn a craft and a way to earn a living.

After documenting their progress, I also taught a photography class to the apprentices, the CBO volunteers, the Support Group (individuals living with HIV), and teachers in a room lent to me by the local school. The class ended with me distributing 100 disposable cameras (generously donated by B&H Photo in New York). In each case, this was the first camera my students had ever held. They had three days to shoot 35 frames. It was fascinating to see how they chose each precious shot; most took pictures of their family and themselves, as this might have been their only chance to have such a luxury item. I plan to stay in touch with some of my students, send them disposable cameras, and provide tutorials and critiques via mail. I hope the act of capturing their life and surroundings will be empowering and give them a new, inspiring perspective. □