

## THE VILLAGE HEAD AND HIS PEOPLE



As usual, people in Chakanika village were busy preparing their lands ready for early rains. Nearly every household relied on farming except Chief Chakanika. He oppressed his people in many ways. Life was not easy for the villagers. It was hard to find the seeds and fertiliser that they needed to grow their crops.

The Government decided to do something to help but only the very poorest families would benefit. The government gave out coupons so that people could get what they needed. Many people were hopeful that they would get some help but in Chakanika village things did not go well.

Chakanika got hold of the coupons so he could get the lion's share. He wrote names of his relatives on the list for the government. Then he wrote names of people who had never even existed in his community. He wanted to get as many coupons as he could so that he and his family could have as much food as possible. He did not think for one moment about the vulnerable, the orphans and the elderly. The villagers were disappointed and frustrated.

There was a man however in the same village who was known as Duli. He was famous for being proud and confident. He went to ask the chief respectfully where the coupons were for the villagers but the chief took no notice of him at all.

Duli together with the villagers decided to take the issue to the Traditional authority (TA). The TA was angry when he what chief Chakanika did. The Traditional Authority summoned chief Chakanika to his court. He challenged him to resign from the chieftain and give it to people who care about the community they are serving. Chakanika had to apologize. From there onwards he started doing things right. He thought about the villagers first. He also learnt not to oppress his subjects but to treat them fairly.

He became a very powerful and successful Chief.

(the Traditional Authority is the person who is responsible for looking after the values of the local community. He (or sometimes, she) can settle local disputes and is a very influential person.)

When the students in Malawi discussed this story, they decided that it shows some very important principles.

- In order to have development global wide, it starts with the communities.
- Responsible citizens have to take part in addressing things that are not right.
- We all have equal rights despite positions and countries

In what way does the story show these three statements? Do you agree with them?

When people in authority take the money (or in this case coupons) that is meant for other people we call it corruption.

What happens in the UK if someone on the council is behaving unfairly towards the people?

People often complain about things that the council or the government does? Is that enough?

What kind of actions can they take to improve things for themselves?