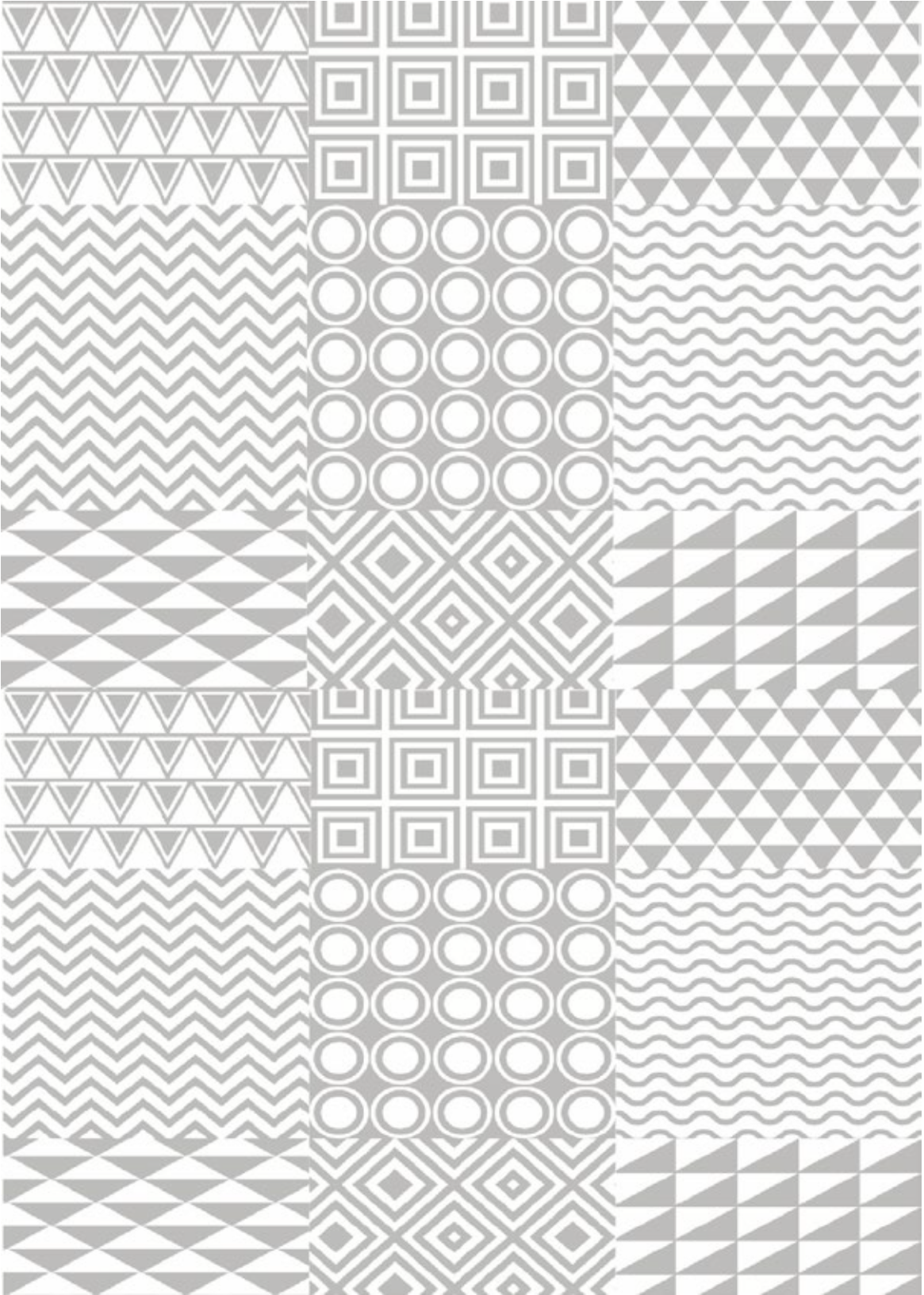


EDUCATING ALINAFE

Story idea by: Dr. Rasha Kelej

Story and Illustrations: Dr. Thomas MUYOMBO





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H.E. Mrs. MONICA CHAKWERA Message

As the First Lady of the Republic of Malawi. I am very excited to share with you this inspiring story of Educating Alinafe.

As you are all aware, in our African communities and countries, girls and women often miss out on the chance to access education.

It is important for you to understand that educating a girl in particular can kick-start a virtuous circle of development. More educated girls, for example, marry later, have healthier children, earn more money that they invest back into their families and communities, and play more active roles in leading their communities, hence contribute to the development of their countries. They become more than just mothers.

That women might have the chance of a healthier and happier life should be reason enough for promoting girls' education. Moreover, there are also important benefits for society as a whole. An educated woman has the skills, information and self-confidence that she needs to be a better parent, worker and citizen. Therefore, I am very happy to work closely with Merck Foundation to empower girls and women in education.

Girls, be dedicated and step into frontiers that are male dominated. You can study everything from science, technology, mathematics and engineering to chemistry. You can be a Doctor, Engineer, Judge, Scientist, Pilot, Banker, Investor, Minister and President. Believe in yourself, you can advance our Africa.

I hope you all enjoy reading this story and understand the message behind it. Women and girls deserve education just as much as boys and men.

H.E. Mrs. MONICA CHAKWERA

The First Lady of the Republic of Malawi

Ambassador of Merck More Than a Mother



Senator, Dr. Rasha Kelej MESSAGE

"As the CEO of Merck Foundation and as an African woman, I am very proud to introduce this story to emphasize the importance of Girl Education. The story of a young girl called Alinafe.

Alinafe represents our African girls who struggle for their education every day. I strongly believe in girl education. When Girls are educated, their countries become more powerful, stronger & prosperous.

Education is the only thing that no one can take away from you. So, for all families out there, support your girl education like what happened in this story. Let's join hands to help them to reach their potential and advance our Africa.

I realize there's need for more support as there are many brilliant girls out there who are struggling financially and socially to meet their educational needs. Therefore, we started "Educating Linda" pan African program which is going to be tailored for each country to contribute to the future of these girls as part of "Merck More Than a Mother". I strongly believe that empowering women starts with education, to enable them to be healthier, stronger and independent.

I hope this story would inspire every girl to fight for her right of education and encourage our communities to support education of young unprivileged but brilliant girls, so that they can reach their potential and pursue their dreams."

Senator, Dr. Rasha Kelej

CEO of Merck Foundation

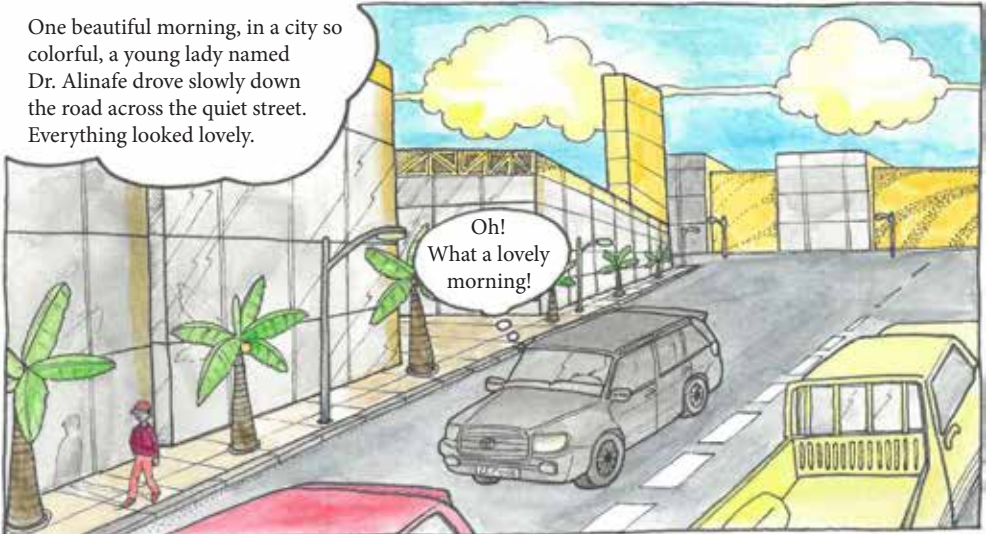
Member of the Egyptian Senate (2020-2025)

Most Influential African (2019, 2020)

African Woman of the Year 2020

President of 'Merck More Than a Mother'

One beautiful morning, in a city so colorful, a young lady named Dr. Alinafe drove slowly down the road across the quiet street. Everything looked lovely.



Dr. Alinafe was heading to a small village, far away from the city.

Alinafe had been invited to give a motivational talk at a school in her village.

Alinafe has won a Nobel prize in Science this year for her achievement. She is very happy and proud.



She reached the school in due time. The calmness of the day was wonderful. Everything was good.



Dr. Alinafe was greeted by the Headmaster of the school and he assured her that everyone was waiting for her.

Hello Dr. Alinafe, welcome to our school.

Thank you, Sir, I am glad to be here.



He then took Alinafe to meet the students.



Thank you, I will be very glad if I can.

The Headmaster of the school welcomed everyone in the room.

Please, you are welcome to inspire all of us.

The moment we have all been waiting for has come.

Let us all join together to welcome Dr. Alinafe.

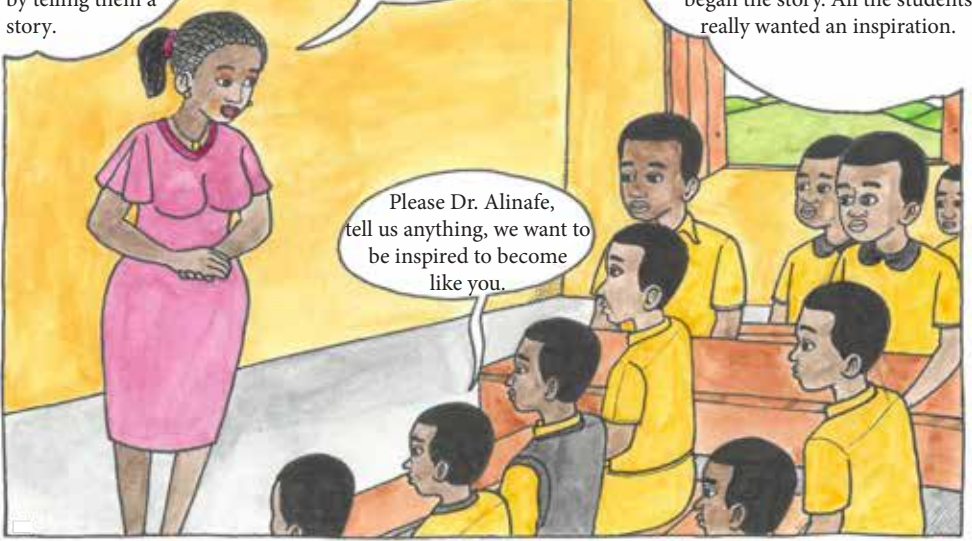


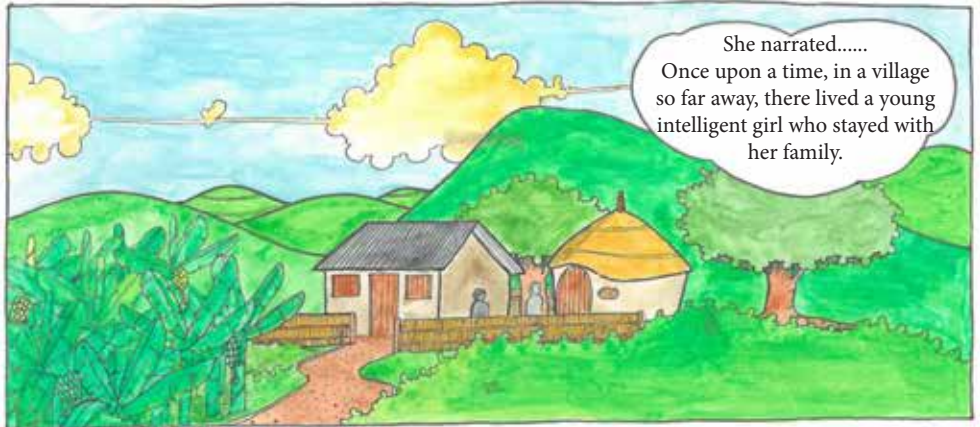
Let me tell you a story of a young girl, whose name I will reveal later.

After greeting them, Alinafe proceeded by telling them a story.

Everyone kept quite and listened to Dr. Alinafe as she began the story. All the students really wanted an inspiration.

Please Dr. Alinafe, tell us anything, we want to be inspired to become like you.





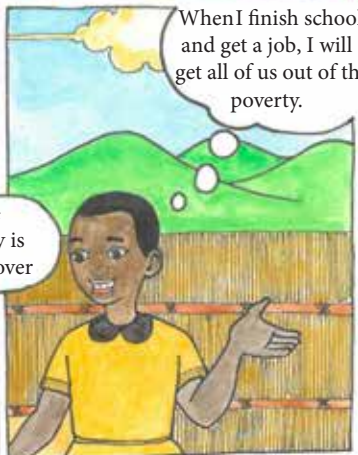
She narrated.....
Once upon a time, in a village so far away, there lived a young intelligent girl who stayed with her family.



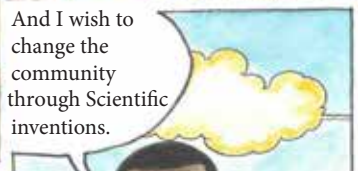
My dear children, when did they say you are going back to school?

We are going back tomorrow.

The holiday is surely over



When I finish school and get a job, I will get all of us out of this poverty.



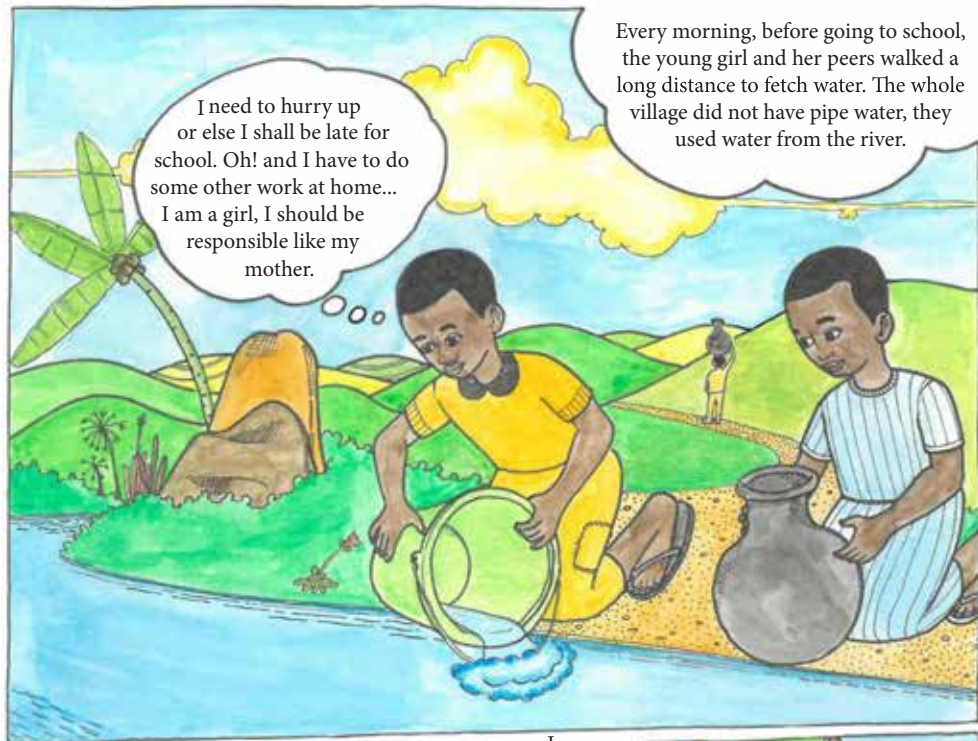
And I wish to change the community through Scientific inventions.



My dream is to study hard and become a Scientist.

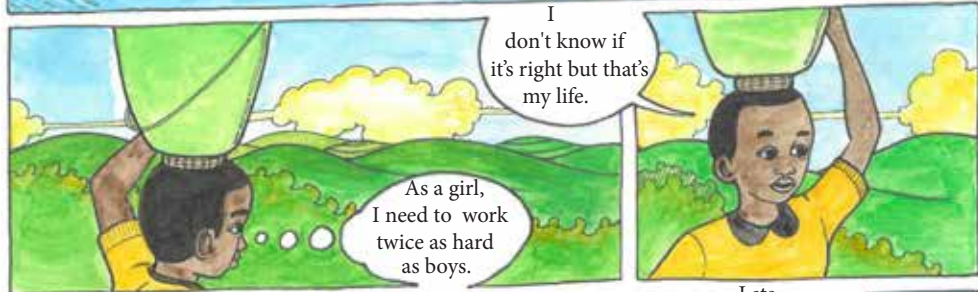
The young girl had a dream at a young age ...





I need to hurry up or else I shall be late for school. Oh! and I have to do some other work at home... I am a girl, I should be responsible like my mother.

Every morning, before going to school, the young girl and her peers walked a long distance to fetch water. The whole village did not have pipe water, they used water from the river.



I don't know if it's right but that's my life.

As a girl, I need to work twice as hard as boys.



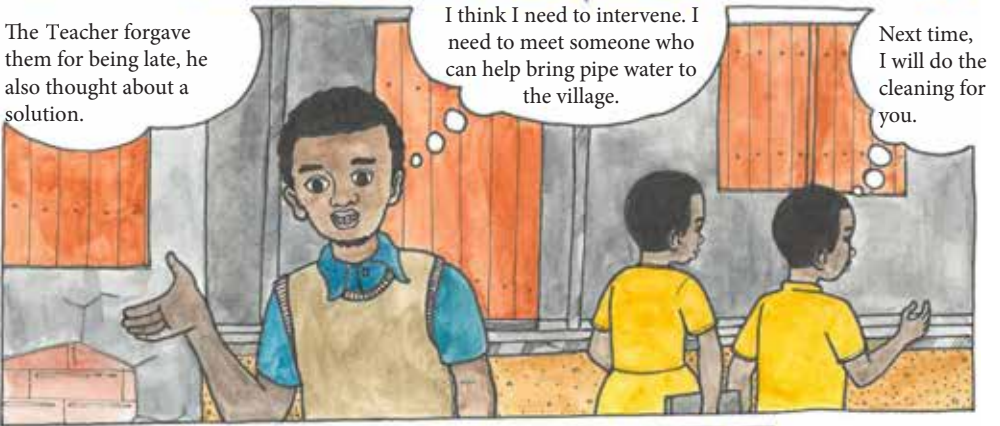
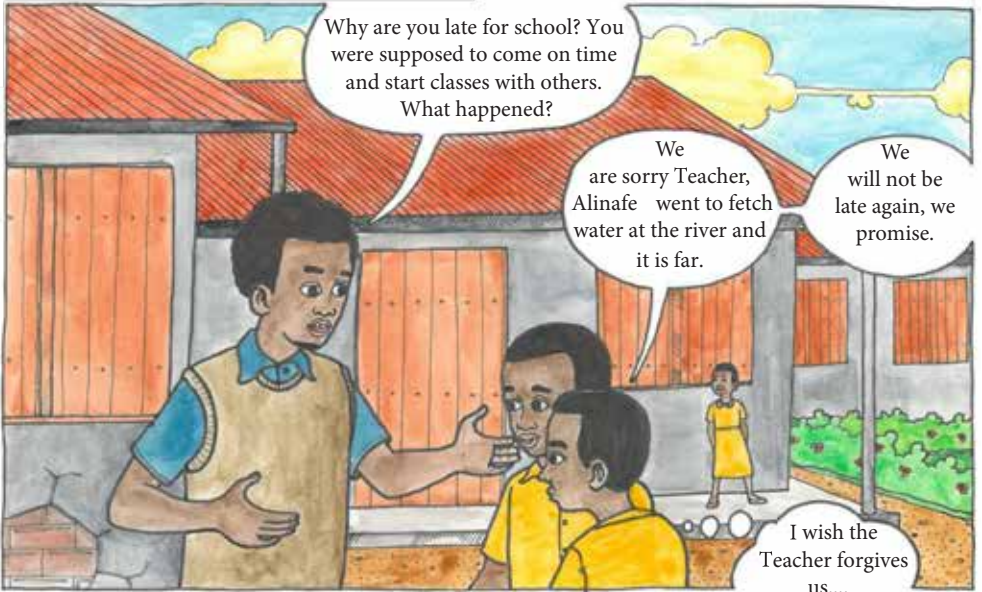
My brothers can't help, they are boys.

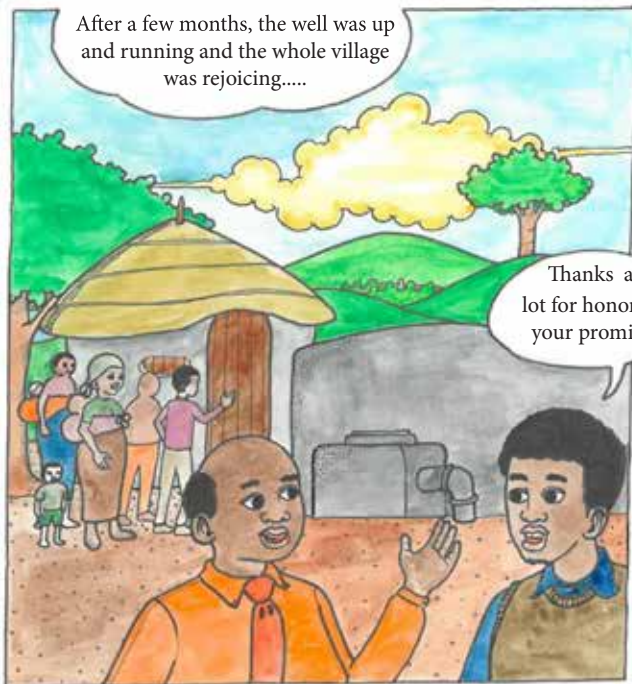
After doing all the work, she would join her brothers to go to school.



Lets hurry up, we are late for school.

Yes you are right.





At the young girl's home...
Food was a problem because
her family was poor and they
had so many children. Their
parents were running out of
answers.

Please be patient, we know
you are hungry. Your father
is looking for a solution.

I
am going
out for a few
hours...

Dad...
Mom... I am
hungry.





Let's patiently wait for your father. He will come back with something.

Let me see if I can get something...

But mom, when shall we get out of this poverty?

I am also hungry. I want food.



Just wait for me, I will be back as soon as I get something.



Their father went to a cafeteria to meet a friend.



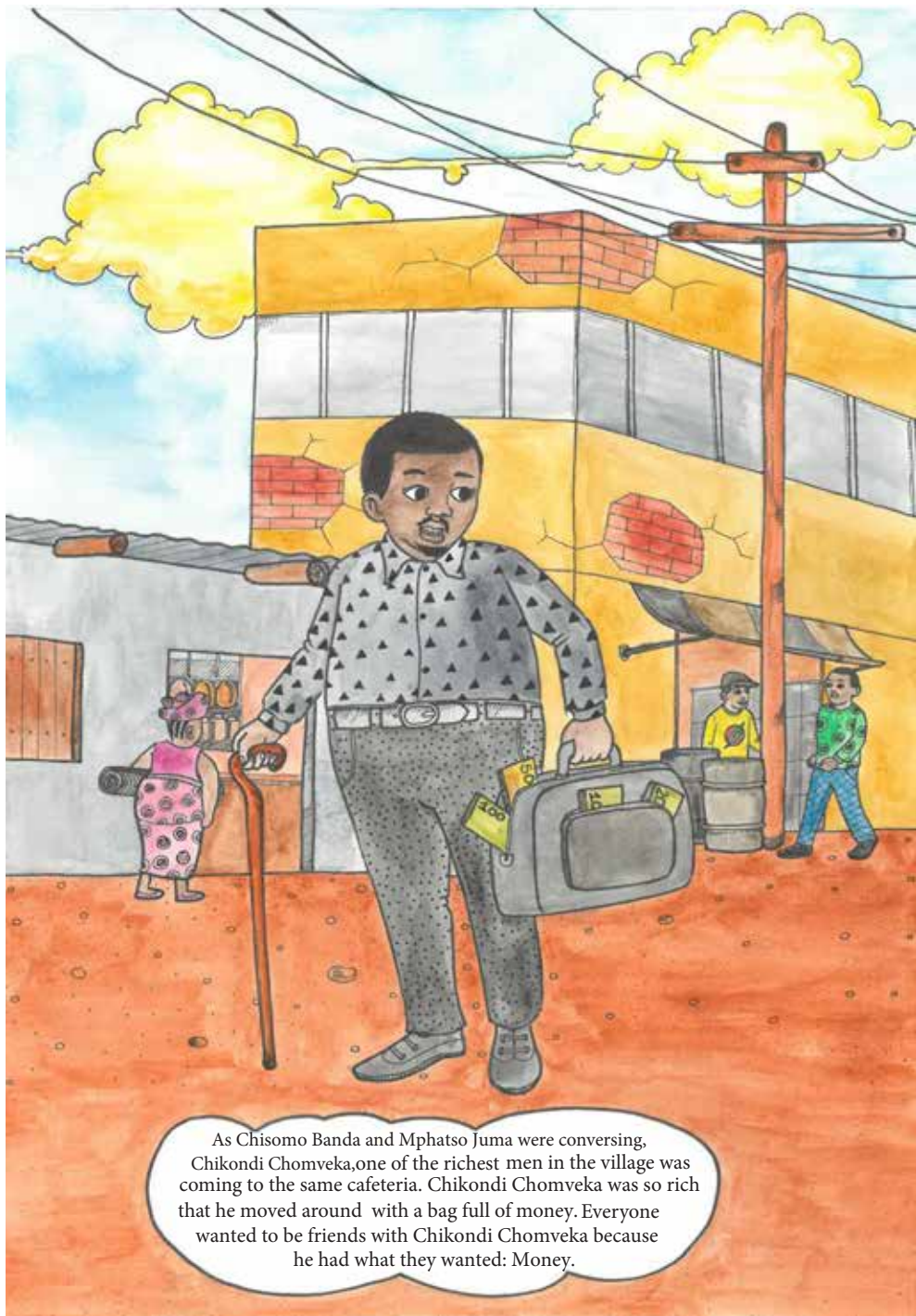
Hello Mphatso Juma, can I talk to you for a minute?

Hello Chisomo Banda! No worries at all, what do you want to tell me..

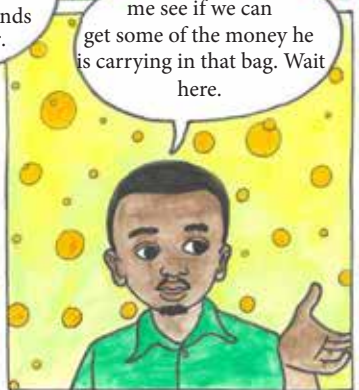
Mphatso Juma, I need to borrow some money from you.

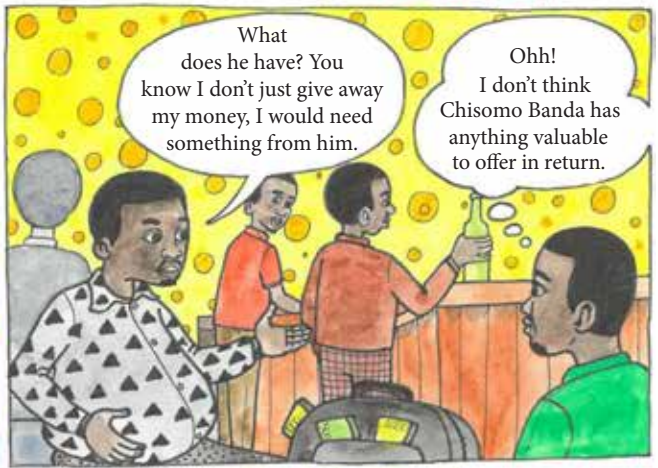
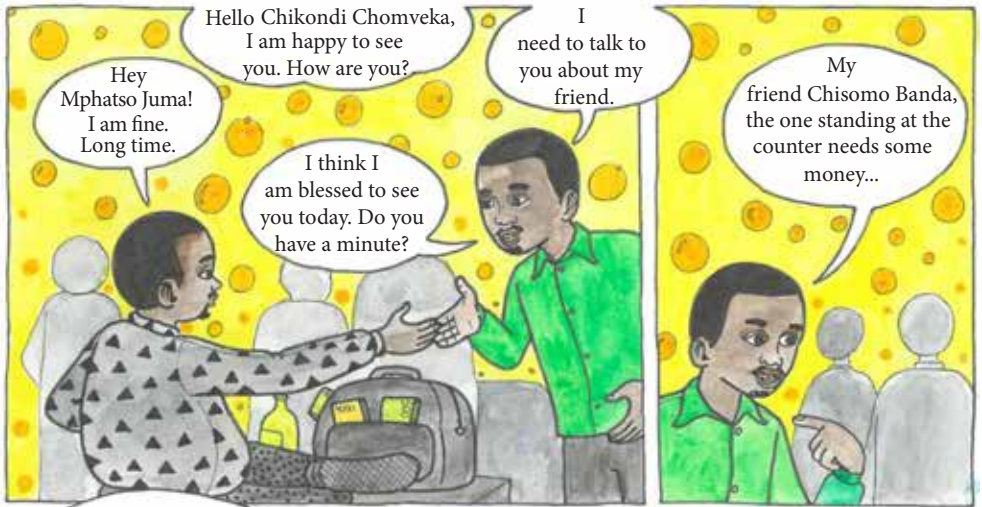
Oh! I don't think I will be of any help. I don't have any money.





As Chisomo Banda and Mphatso Juma were conversing, Chikondi Chomveka, one of the richest men in the village was coming to the same cafeteria. Chikondi Chomveka was so rich that he moved around with a bag full of money. Everyone wanted to be friends with Chikondi Chomveka because he had what they wanted: Money.





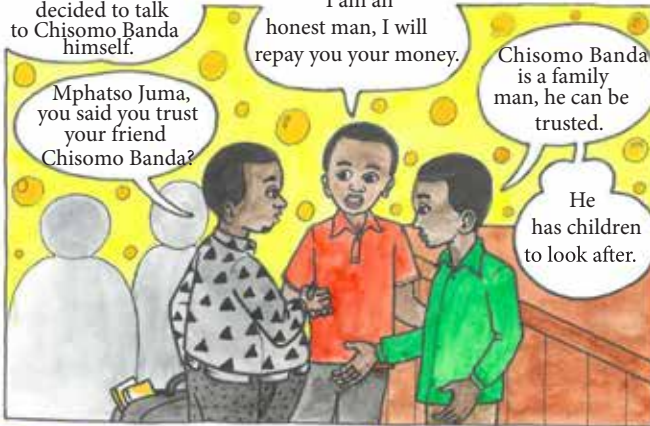
Meanwhile... Chisomo Banda was waiting patiently at the counter...

Chikondi Chomveka made himself clear...

Mphatso Juma explained more...



Chikondi Chomyeka decided to talk to Chisomo Banda himself.



Mphatso Juma, you said you trust your friend Chisomo Banda?

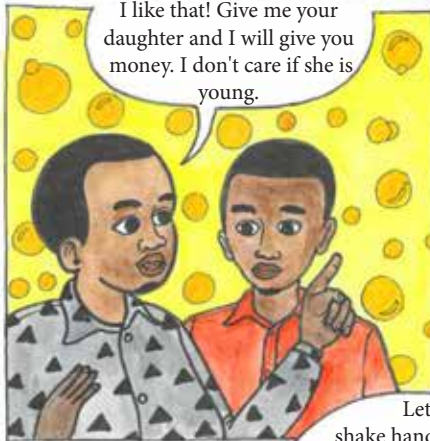
I am an honest man, I will repay you your money.

Chisomo Banda is a family man, he can be trusted.

He has children to look after.



I would give you my daughter as a wife if she was old enough, I really need help.



I like that! Give me your daughter and I will give you money. I don't care if she is young.



Then so be it, come tomorrow and take her.



But you will have to pay cows as dowry for my daughter.



I believe this is a good outcome of a conversation between gentlemen. Let's celebrate it.

Let's shake hands for my new bride.. I don't know you Chisomo Banda but I believe you are a good man.

I believe our future together will be better. You will be my son-in-law. You know!

After celebrating to their agreement, Chisomo Banda was given bundles of money to take home and prepare for the dowry of his daughter which would be brought the next day.

I believe, I made the right decision giving my daughter to Chikondi Chomveka.

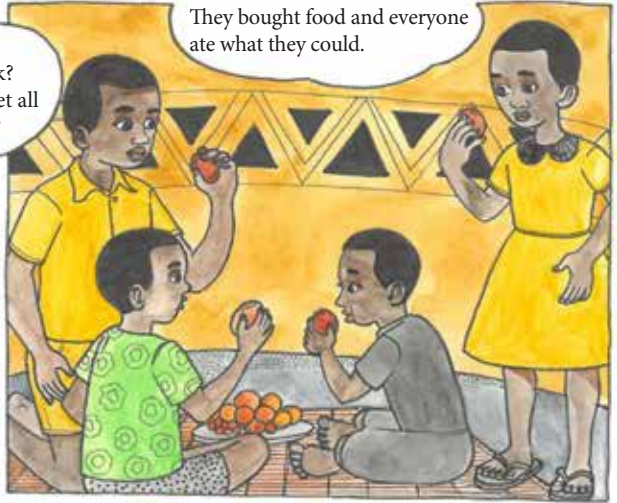
Let me sip my soda, if it finishes, I will buy another one. I now have a lot of money.

Chisomo Banda thought he had made a very good decision but he was giving away a ten year old in marriage.

At home... Chisomo Banda's wife was astonished to see her husband with a lot of money.

Take this money and buy food for every one.

??



The young girl didn't know that her father had betrayed her rights; her future.



The following morning...





Are you serious? Your sister is too young to be someone's wife. She is supposed to be in school with us.





Fatsani Banda's colleagues believed they were making the right decision to report the issue to their school Teacher.

Does anyone see where the Teacher is standing?

I can see him. There he is, let's go.

I can see my Teacher.



But guys, I don't want to sound like I am reporting.



Can we find a good way of reporting this? Otherwise my father will kill me.

Don't worry Fatsani Banda



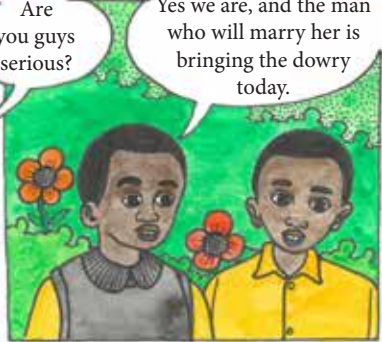
I know how to say it. Don't worry, let's do this.



They explained everything.

That's why she didn't come to school today

It's absurd!

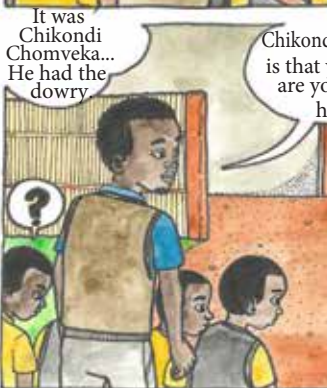
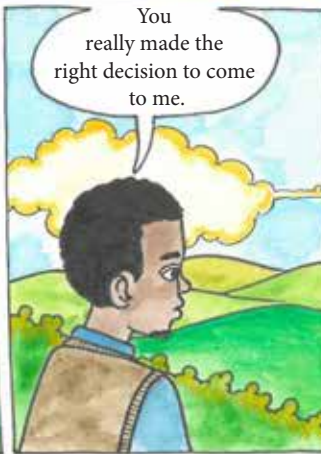


Are you guys serious?

Yes we are, and the man who will marry her is bringing the dowry today.

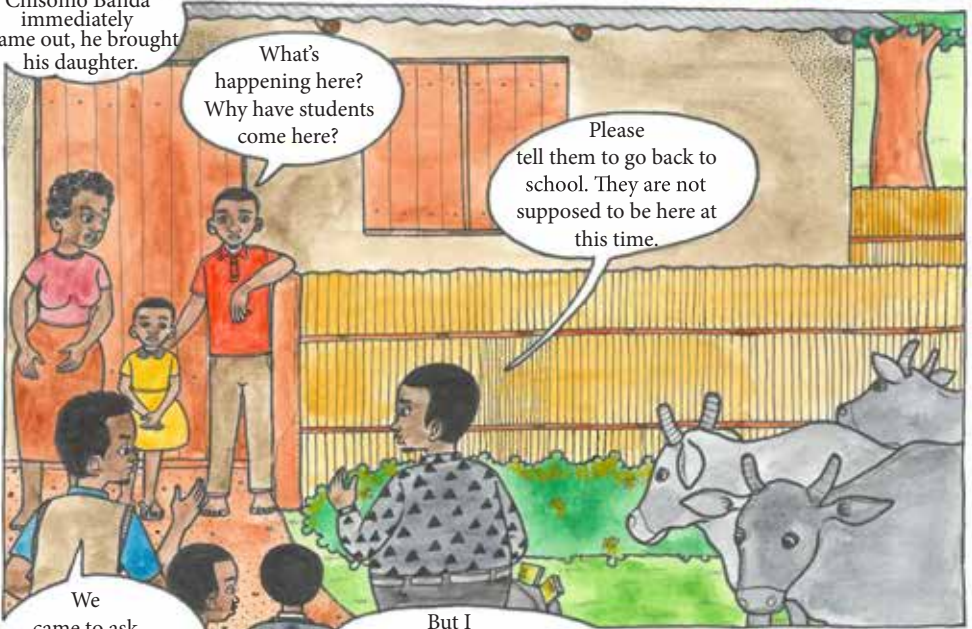


The school Teacher and his students went to Fatsani Banda's home to try and stop his father from giving his sister away.





Chisomo Banda immediately came out, he brought his daughter.





The village Chief and his secretary immediately came...

This nonsense is punishable by law. Let me hope you are all joking. Child marriage is a crime.

I think, I have to reconsider and ask for forgiveness, I dont want anything bad to happen.

Are you really giving away that young girl ?

What about Chikondi Chomveka??

Thank God!

Thank God, her father has decided to reconsider his-poor decision.

This was going to kill your daughter's future. You should feel ashamed.

I had fear of losing my dream of becoming a scientist.

Chikondi Chomveka, you should abstain from this barbaric habit.

I didn't know the magnitude of my mistakes...

I am supposed to take Chikondi Chomveka and Chisomo Banda to my office to make a statement for this crime.

They should be punished to serve as an example to other parents who would do the same.

Let's go... I am not leaving you here. You are supposed to pay for this crime.

I am really sorry, forgive me.

Please forgive me, I now understand the seriousness of my crime. I will never repeat it, believe me.



Take your money back. This is all I have left. You can come back when she is old enough.

Keep it, I know you needed it. I will take this as a lifetime lesson. Never take an underage for a wife. It is a crime.

Guys, thank you for saving my life. I will never forget this for the rest of my life.

Wow! We did it.

You're welcome.

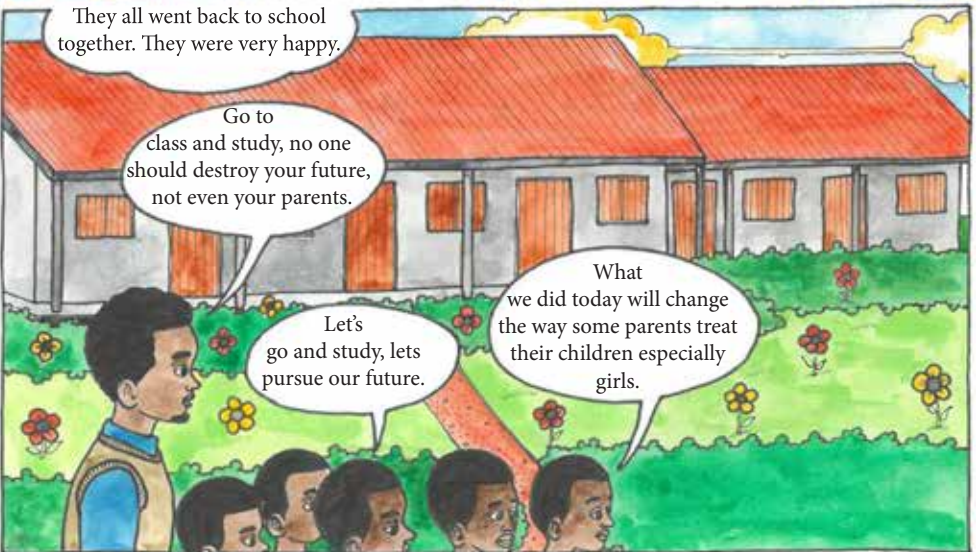


They all went back to school together. They were very happy.

Go to class and study, no one should destroy your future, not even your parents.

Let's go and study, let's pursue our future.

What we did today will change the way some parents treat their children especially girls.

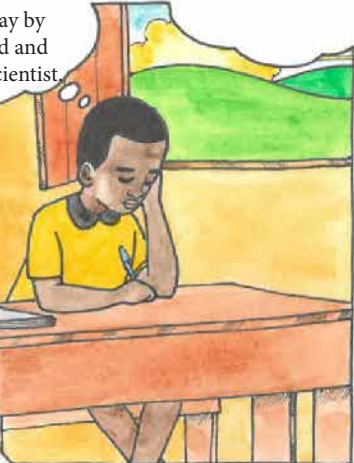


The young girl went to her class, sat on her desk and and wrote her name on it. She promised herself to become whatever she wanted to become in the future; a Scientist.

I will honor this day by studying hard and becoming a Scientist.



Wow! what a story. I wonder if it really happened.



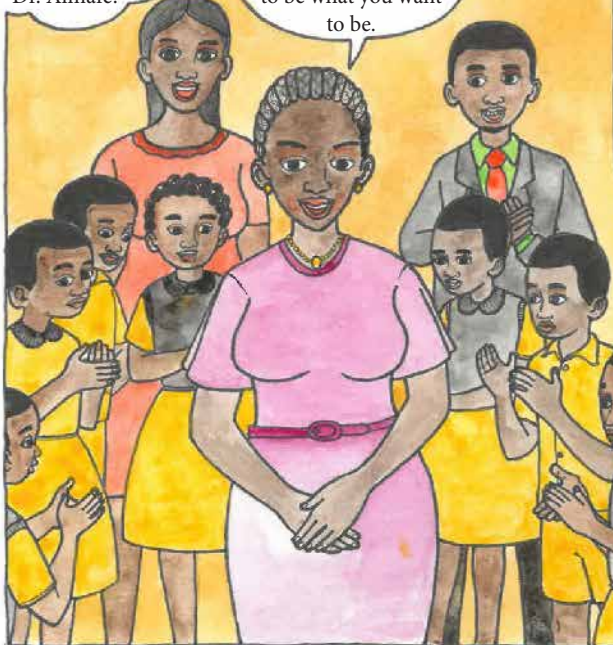
She then went on and revealed the young girl's name.



That young girl is me, I sat on this desk and wrote my name on it; Alinafe.

Every one stood up to applaud Dr. Alinafe.

Thank you. I believe that you all have potential to be what you want to be.



WOW!

WOW!

THE END

EDUCATING ALINAFE

Alinafe, a young girl, born in a remote village nearly lost her right to education and her nation nearly lost an award winning Scientist. Read the book for the full story.

The Author



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Published by Merck Foundation.
First Edition, 2020



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