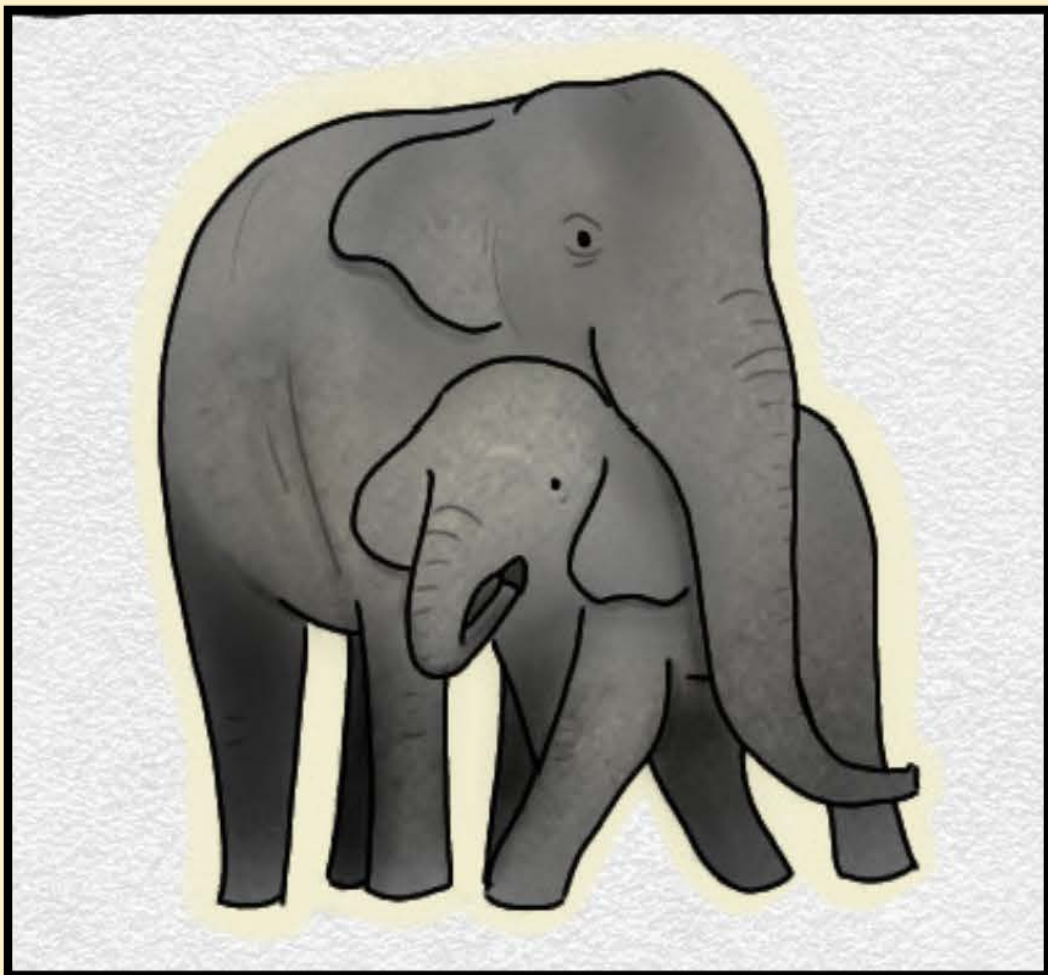




World Organisation  
for Animal Health

# **SKETCHING CHANGE**

**TALES FROM VETERINARIANS ACROSS ASIA-PACIFIC**



**DIFFERENT STRENGTHS, ONE PURPOSE**



Scan the QR code to access the comic stories in this publication in digital format, and to read several others.

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Note: Designations, statements and opinions in the material do not imply any official position of WOA or partner organisations, and responsibility for interpretation lies solely with the reader.

## ABOUT THIS VOLUME

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) is committed to strengthening gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) within the veterinary sector. Our recent work in Asia and the Pacific has shown that, while there is a growing number of qualified women and diverse professionals in the sector, many still face barriers shaped by longstanding norms, insufficient adjustments and unequal opportunities.

As noted in regional studies conducted by WOAH in Asia-Pacific, gender stereotypes influence perceptions within the veterinary sector, and the absence of reasonable accommodations reinforces the exclusion of persons with disabilities. These findings highlight the need for continued awareness and action across institutions, training systems, and professional communities.

To foster this change, WOAH has expanded its GEDSI initiatives, including awareness raising events and partnerships with veterinary associations and networks in Asia and the Pacific region, in particular the Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations (FAVA), the Asian Association of Veterinary Schools (AAVS) and the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA). The Comics Competition Promoting GEDSI in the Veterinary Sector, organised between December 2025 and January 2026, invited veterinary students and professionals to reflect creatively on what an inclusive profession looks like.

The competition aimed to celebrate storytelling, artistic talent, veterinary commitment and GEDSI values, and to inspire dialogue through accessible and engaging narratives. Among the winning submissions, the comic presented here captures the imagination, concerns, and aspirations of veterinarians in different parts of the Asia and the Pacific region. The story reminds us that inclusion is not only a policy goal—it is a shared cultural commitment that strengthens the profession and the communities it serves. While we could not award all participants with prizes, we appreciated all entries and will be sharing additional comic stories of note on our website (see QR code on the cover inner page).

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the winners of this competition, and thank all participants for adding their voices to this important conversation. This comic enriches WOAH's ongoing efforts to promote a veterinary sector where everyone can thrive, advancing our mission to improve animal health and welfare globally and ensure a better future for all.



**Dr Tomoko Ishibashi**  
**WOAH Regional**  
**Representative for Asia and**  
**the Pacific**



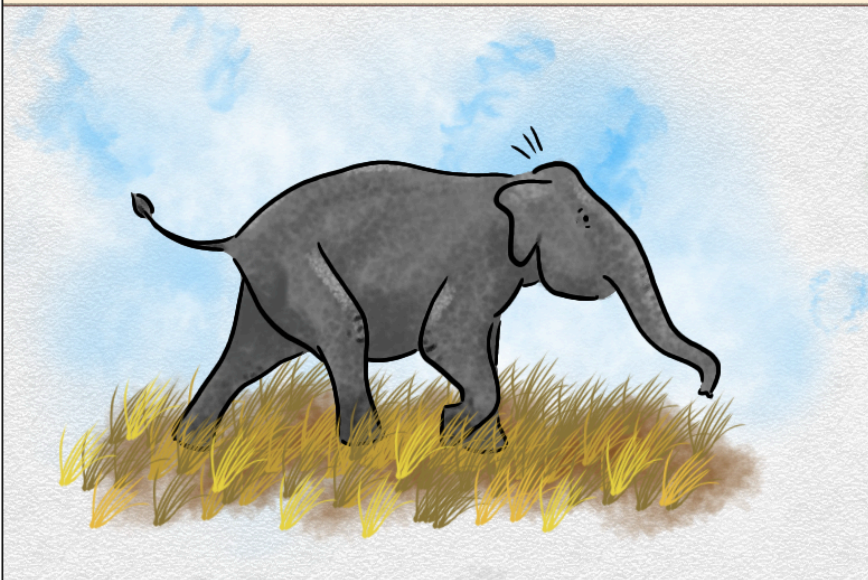
**Dr Naree Ketusing**  
**WOAH Sub-Regional**  
**Representative for South-East Asia**

# Different Strengths, One Purpose

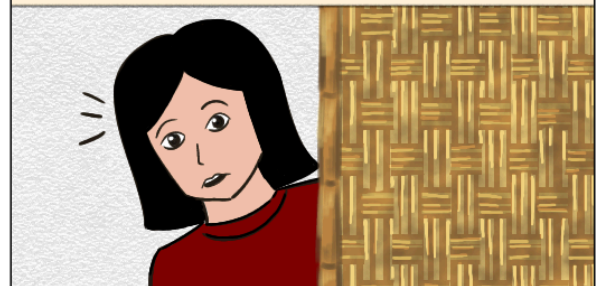
By Chau Yu An



When I was young,  
an elephant wandered into my village.



It caused quite a commotion.



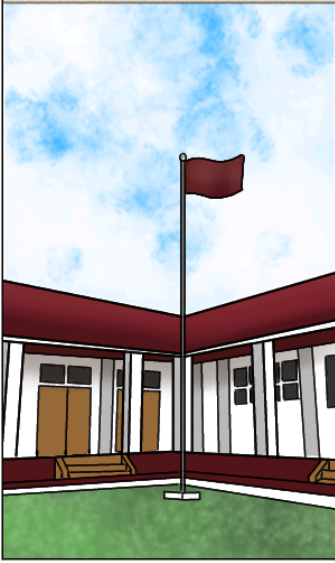
The villagers were frightened...

But somehow, I could tell  
— the elephant was even more afraid.



From that moment on,  
I felt a deep urge to  
understand animals  
beyond fear.

A few years later  
- High school -



Why veterinary medicine?

Did your parents agree to that?

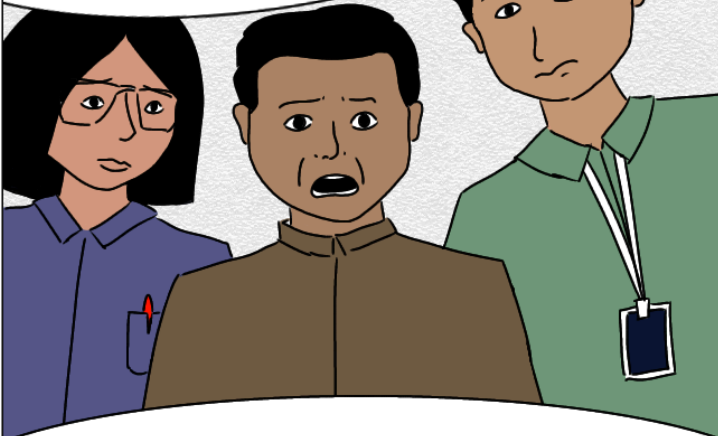
You're applying to veterinary school!?

Are you sure?

I want to be a veterinarian because I want to understand animals better.

I think they're fascinating—and they deserve to be understood.

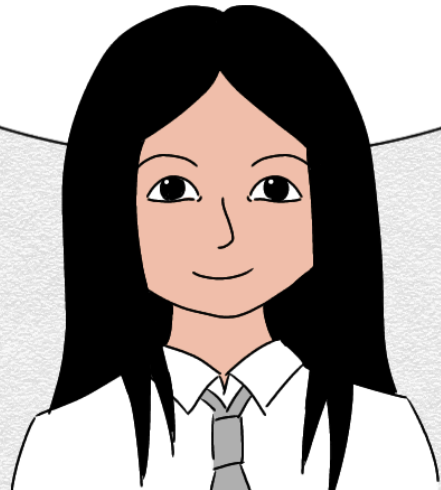
Are you certain? There are... more suitable careers for a girl.



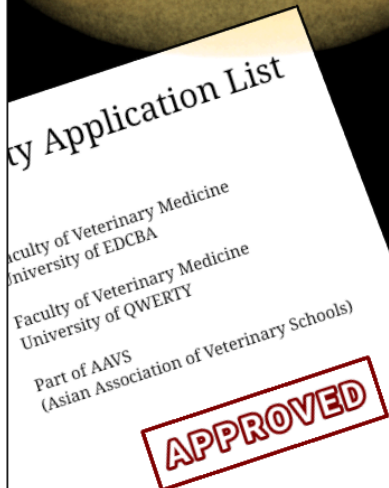
With your grades, you could apply to so many other majors.

Yes. I'm sure.

I studied hard to pursue my dreams — not to choose what others think suits me.



...Alright then.  
Good luck, kid.



I can do this!



*Long story short, I was accepted into veterinary school.*



*It felt like a huge step closer to my dream.*

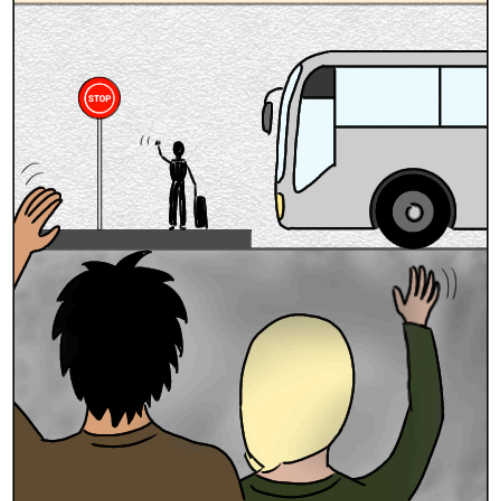
*My parents were so proud.*



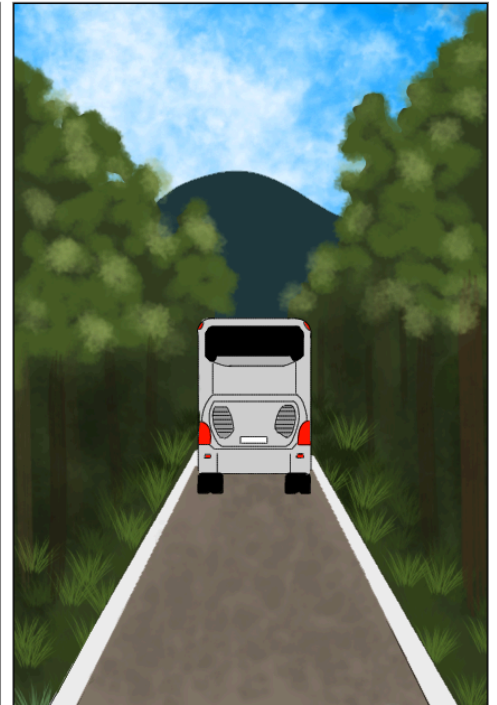
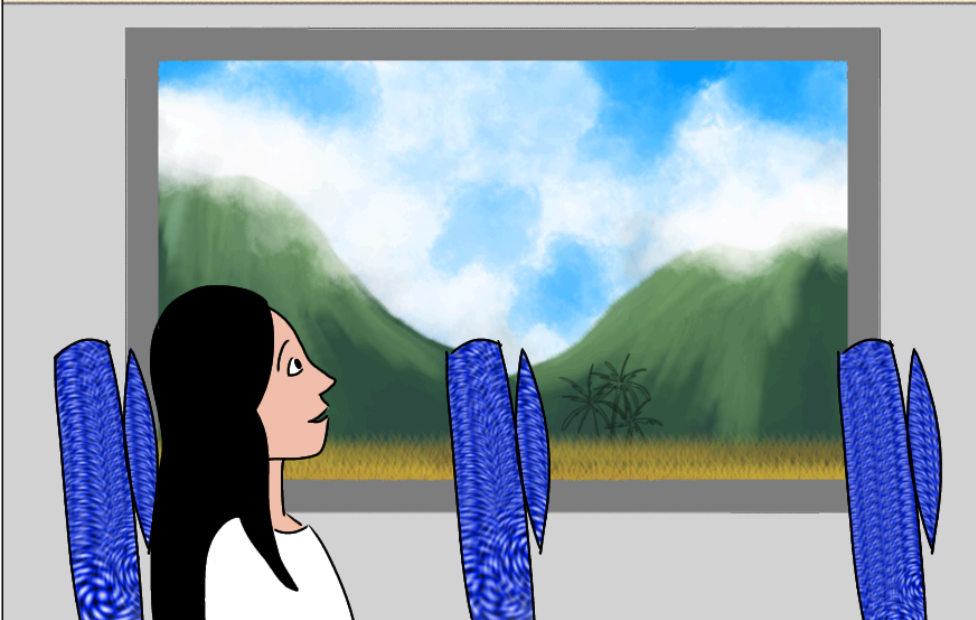
We'll always be here for you. If you ever face any difficulties, let us know.

*The day of departure finally arrived.*

*My family came to see me off.*



*And just like that – I set off to chase my dream.*



*University life was eye-opening... and exciting!*



INTERNATIONAL VETERINARY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

**WELCOME**

**FUTURE**

**VETS**

JOIN US NOW!

@IVSA\_GLOBAL

@IVSA\_ASIAPACIFIC

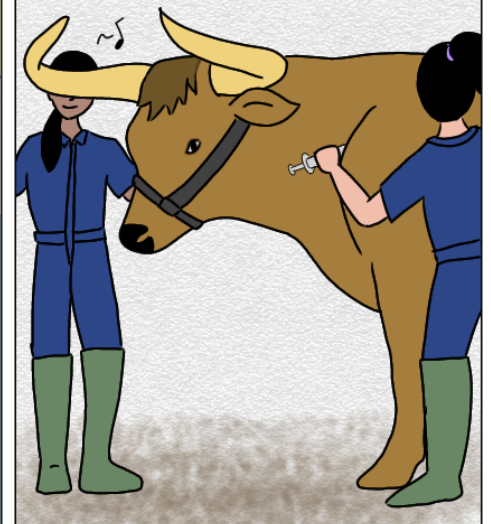
*Of course, there were tough times.*

*Endless lectures.*

*Endless things to study.*

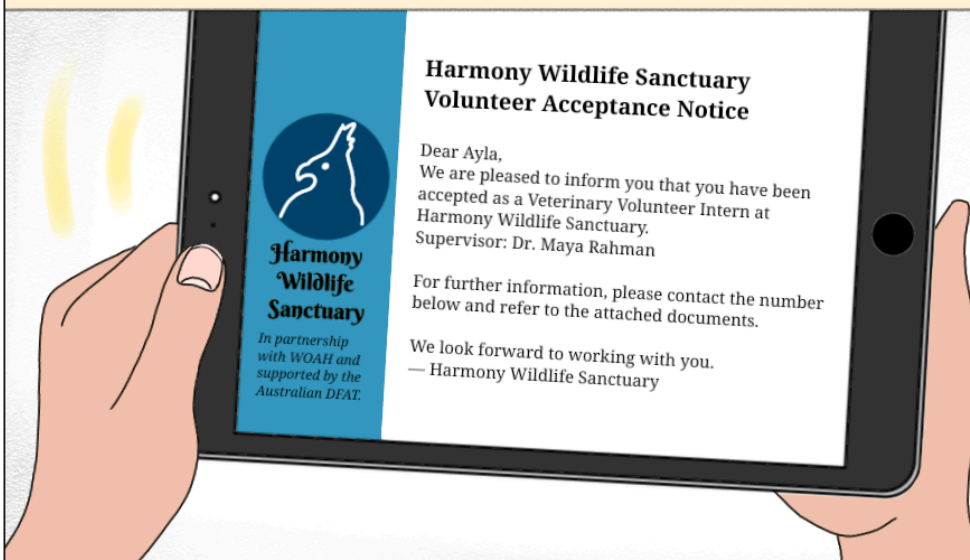


*But thankfully, I found an amazing group of friends.  
I was never truly alone.*



*Being with them gave me the strength to keep going  
— no matter how hard it got.*

*Seeing my passion and commitment, one of my lecturers recommended me to volunteer at an animal rescue and sanctuary.*



*That opportunity would  
change everything.*



*On my first day, I was introduced to the veterinarians, the animal keepers, and the animals who called the sanctuary home.*

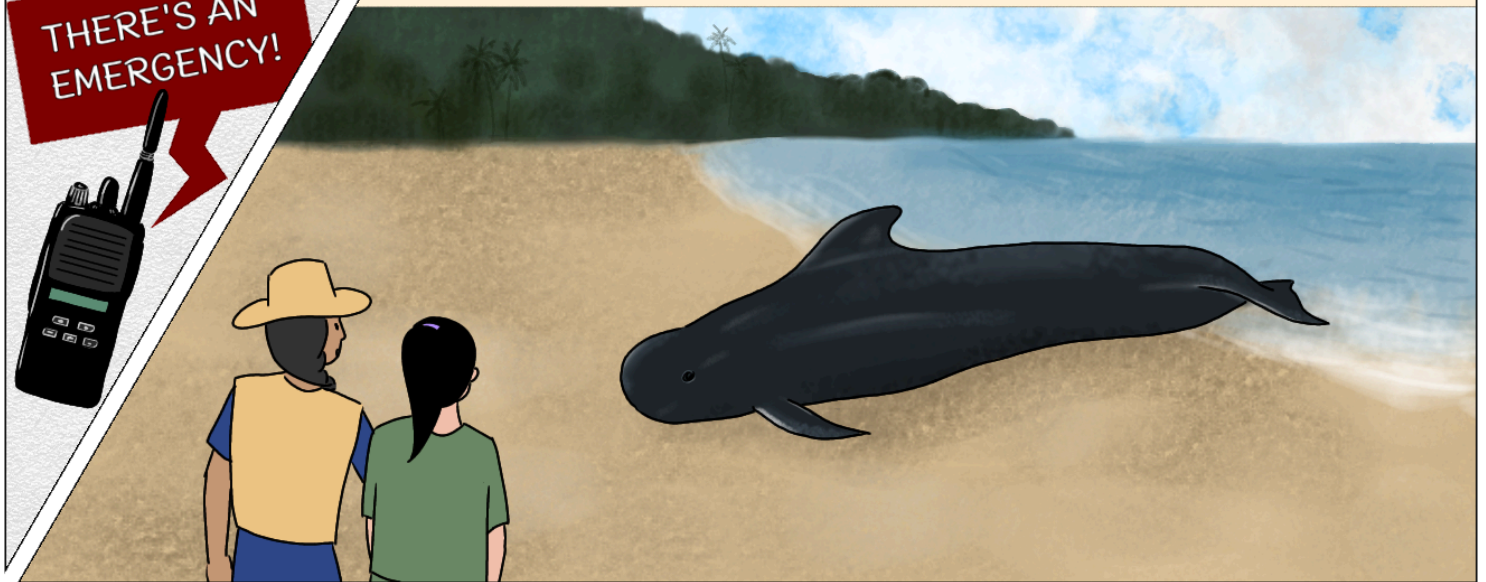


*Suddenly, a call came in.*

**THERE'S AN EMERGENCY!**



*When we arrived, a massive whale had been stranded on the beach. After a quick check, we realized – the whale was still alive.*



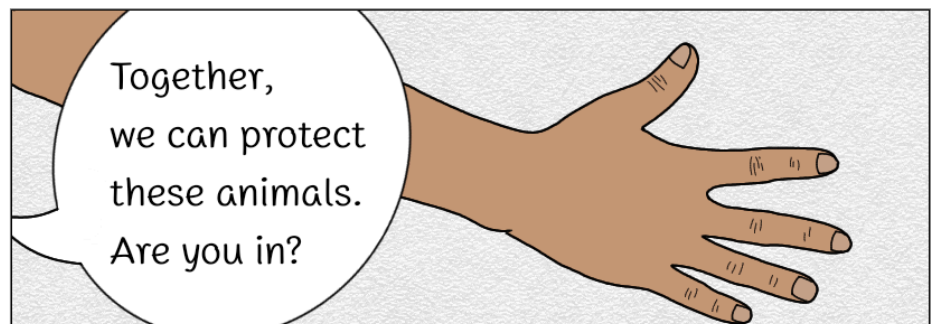
*Working together, we guided the whale back into the sea.*



*Watching it swim away, I felt something new. Animal encounters don't always have to be chaotic.*

*They can be calm... and deeply moving.*





The rest of my days at the animal rescue taught me many things – about teamwork, and about the countless animals who needed care.



And a vision began to take shape...

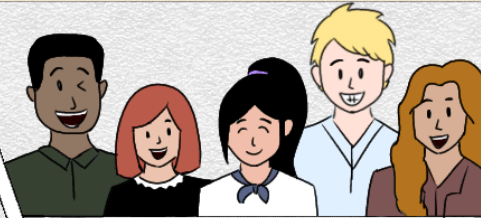


A clinic. A sanctuary. In my village.

I studied harder than ever.



I gained experience, built networks,



Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations (FAVA)

### One Health International Forum

One Health Approach to Raise Wildlife Protection Awareness



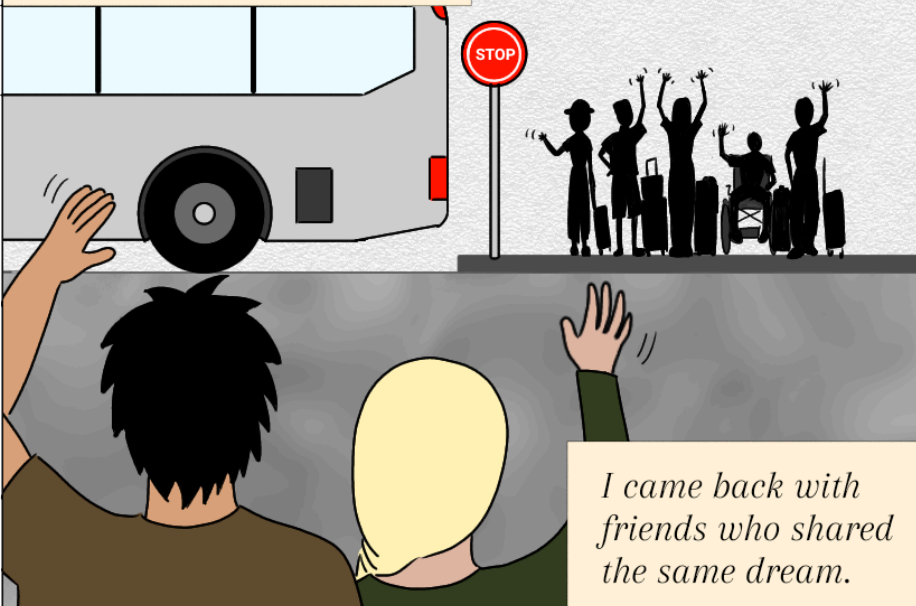
Supported by World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)

and learned from every opportunity I could find.



Before I knew it, I graduated – as the first veterinarian in my village!

This time, I didn't return alone.



I came back with friends who shared the same dream.

Together, we opened a small animal clinic in the village.



*At first,  
the villagers doubted us.*



*But we kept going.  
We answered every call –  
no matter the weather, the  
time, the distance, or the  
animal.*

*Slowly, trust began to grow.*

*More calls came in.  
More animals received care.*



### ZOONOSIS AWARENESS

Diseases that spread from animals to humans

Prevention starts with you:

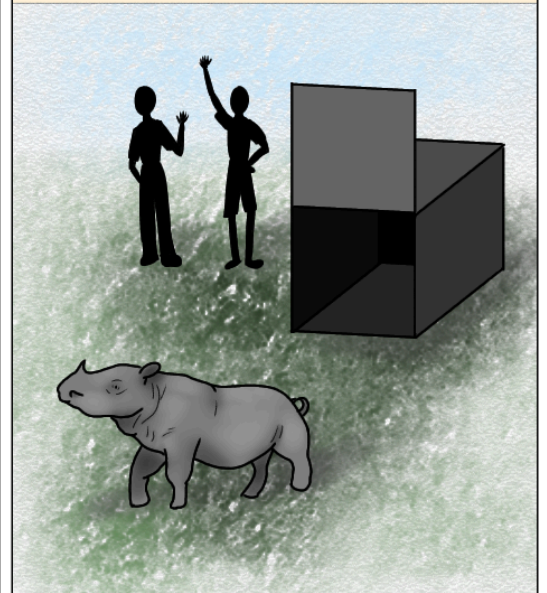
- ✓ Hygiene
- ✓ Animal health
- ✓ Safe handling

Together, we stay healthy.

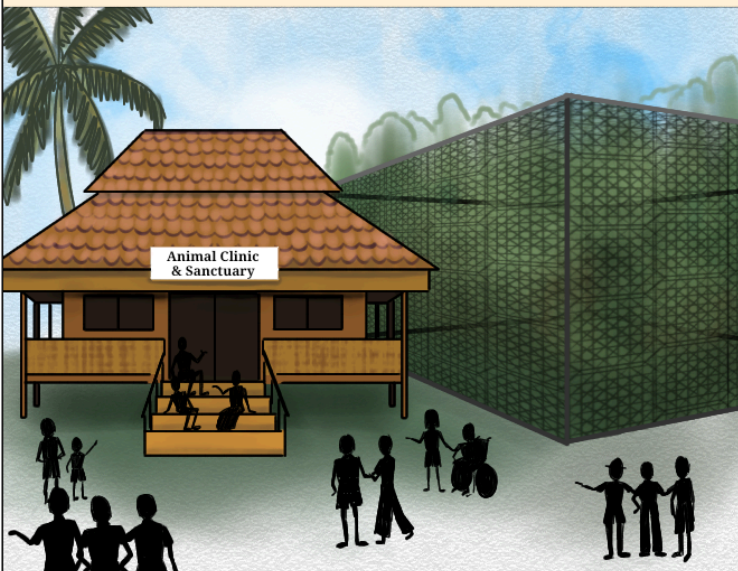


*We partnered with other institutions  
to run regular education sessions.*

*And worked hand in hand with  
conservation groups.*



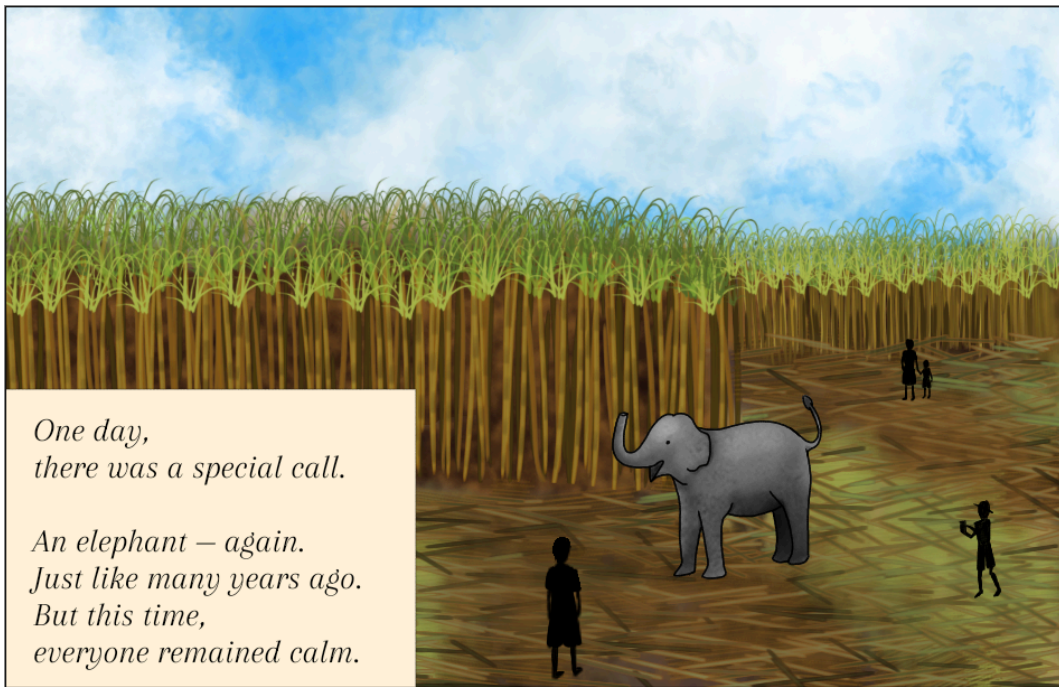
*A few years later,  
our small clinic had grown into an animal sanctuary.*



# Congratulations



*That day, the village gathered to celebrate – even  
those who once doubted us.  
Looking around, I had never felt prouder.*



One day,  
there was a special call.

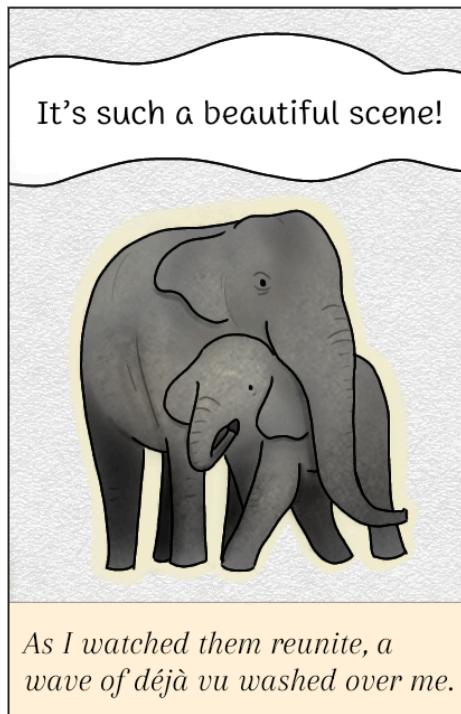
An elephant – again.  
Just like many years ago.  
But this time,  
everyone remained calm.



Look!  
The baby elephant is  
chewing on the sugarcane!  
So cute!

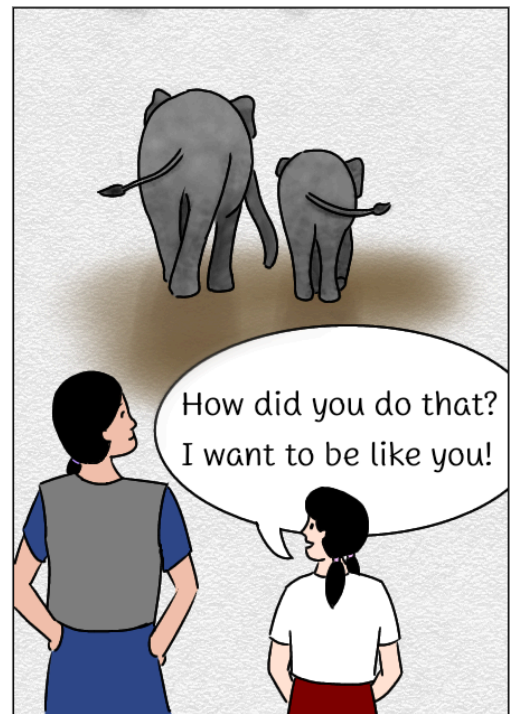


We moved quickly—  
coordinating, communicating,  
and soon found its mother nearby.



It's such a beautiful scene!

As I watched them reunite, a  
wave of déjà vu washed over me.



How did you do that?  
I want to be like you!



We didn't do it alone.  
We did it together.  
And you can do it too.

Really?  
But I'm just  
a girl...



Don't be silly.  
With hard work and  
perseverance,  
you can be anything.  
Gender doesn't matter.

Then...  
I'LL TRY  
MY BEST!



There's another call.  
Want to join us?

Yes!

Then let's go!

The journey continues.

From : [harmonywildlifesanctuary@email.com](mailto:harmonywildlifesanctuary@email.com)

## Talk Show Invitation

Dear Dr. Maya Rahman,

I hope you've been doing well. You won't believe this — a baby elephant wandered into a sugarcane field today. Thankfully, with teamwork and calm coordination, we reunited it with its mother.

I'm writing to share some exciting news. Next month, our team will be featured in a talk show titled: "Animals Come in All Shapes and Sizes — So Do the People Who Protect Them." The forum is supported by WOA, FAVA, AAVS, and IVSA promoting Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) in the veterinary sector.

I've attached an invitation for you — it would mean so much to have you there. Looking forward to seeing you again.

With gratitude,  
Ayla

INVITATION

*Animals come in all shapes and sizes —  
so do the people who protect them.*



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## Chau Yu An

I am a veterinary student from Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia. I completed my Bachelor's degree in Veterinary Medicine in 2025 and am currently undertaking clinical training toward the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM).

I grew up in a family that loves animals, where empathy toward living beings was nurtured from an early age. Although I did not come from a veterinary background, this environment shaped my interest in animal health and human–animal coexistence. As a woman pursuing veterinary medicine, I have encountered both support and gender-based assumptions, experiences that strengthened my resilience and commitment to this profession.

Initially, I believed that being a veterinarian meant working mainly with animals. Through participating in various events during university, I learned that veterinary practice is equally about working with people. Effective animal health depends on communication and collaboration with fellow veterinarians, animal owners, and professionals across sectors.

As I continue developing my clinical skills, I aspire to contribute to a veterinary profession that is inclusive, collaborative, and socially responsive. Together with my interest in drawing, these experiences motivate me to use creative media to advocate for Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) within the veterinary sector. After all, if veterinarians care for animals of all shapes and sizes, we should also embrace people from diverse backgrounds.

### Comic description: "Different Strengths, One Purpose"

This comic tells the story of a young girl from the Asia-Pacific region who dreams of becoming a veterinarian. Her journey begins with a childhood encounter with an elephant, an animal often perceived as powerful and intimidating, yet deeply sensitive. The initial fear and tension between the villagers and the elephant reflect a lack of understanding, setting up the central conflict of the story.

Despite facing skepticism from her community, shaped by gender norms that frame veterinary work as “too difficult” for women, she persists in pursuing her education. During her veterinary training and volunteer experience at an animal sanctuary, the protagonist encounters animals of diverse forms, strengths, and vulnerabilities. Through close interaction with wildlife, fellow veterinarians, and local communities, she learns that differences are not weaknesses, but complementary strengths that require empathy, communication, and cooperation.

Upon returning to her village as its first permanent veterinarian, she works collaboratively with her team, community members, and conservation partners. Over time, trust is built, perceptions shift, and inclusive veterinary care becomes a shared responsibility. Years later, another elephant enters the village, this time met with calm, coordination, and collective action. This contrasting outcome symbolizes how mutual understanding and collaboration can transform fear into coexistence.






### **World Organisation for Animal Health**

Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific  
Food Science Building 5F  
The University of Tokyo  
1-1-1 Yayoi, Bunkyo-ku  
Tokyo 113-0032  
Japan

### **World Organisation for Animal Health**

Sub-Regional Representation for South-East Asia  
c/o Department of Livestock Development  
69/1 Phaya Thai Road  
Ratchathewi 10400 Bangkok  
Thailand

 WOAHAAsiaPacific     @WOAH\_Asia     WorldAnimalHealth

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