



World Organisation  
for Animal Health

# **SKETCHING CHANGE**

**TALES FROM VETERINARIANS ACROSS ASIA-PACIFIC**

STORY OF

## **TWICE the BARRIER**

Siti Kurniawati





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

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## 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.

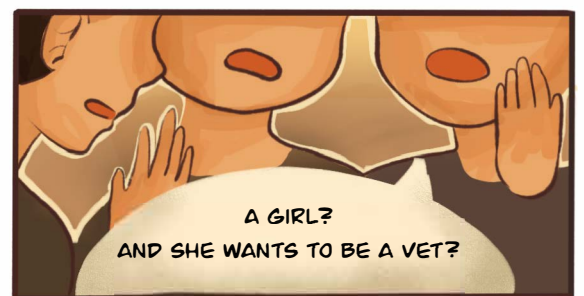
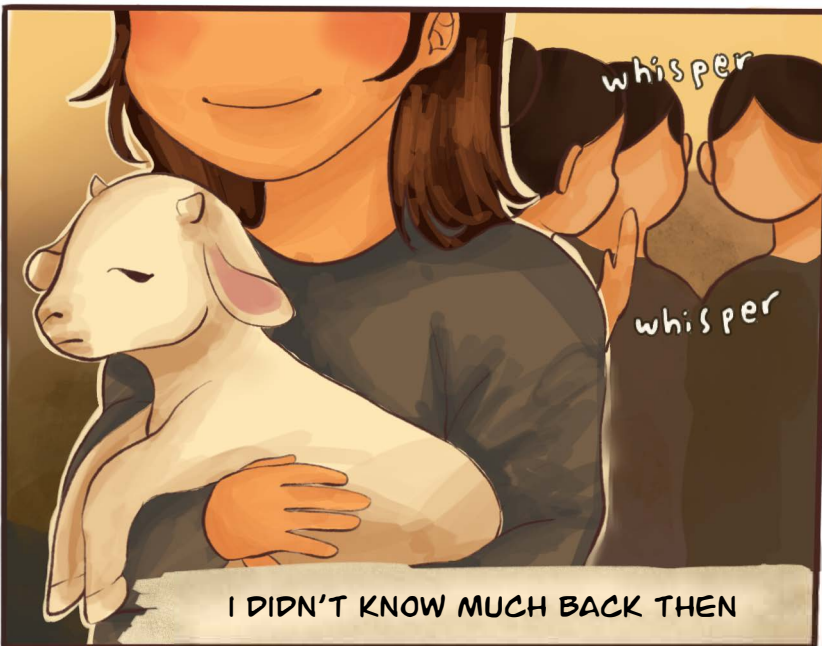


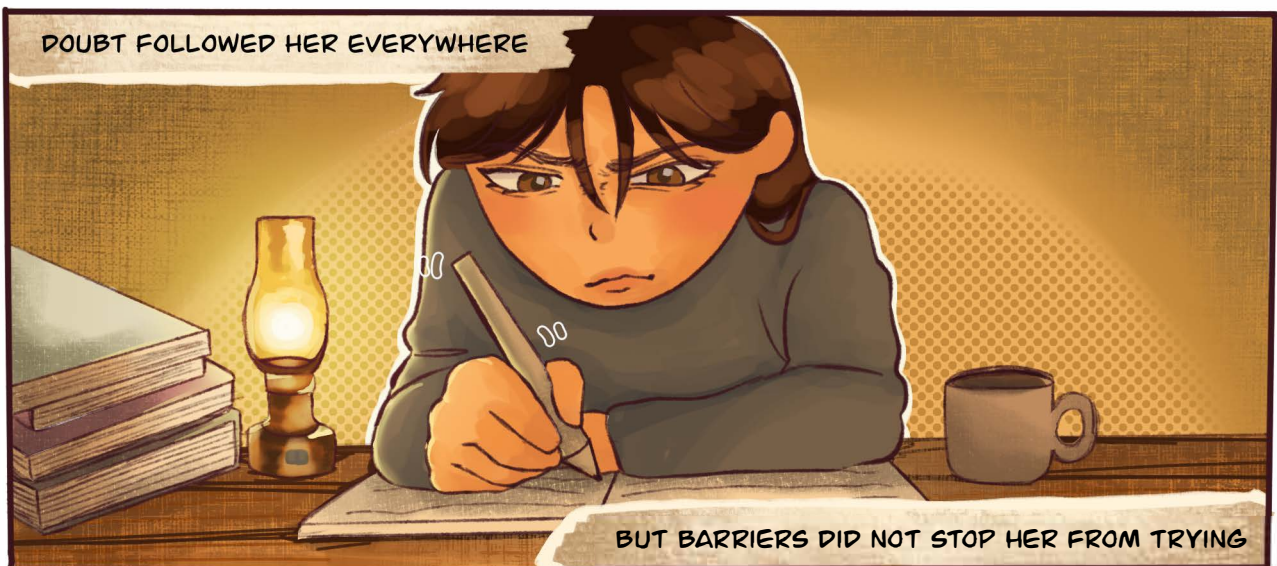
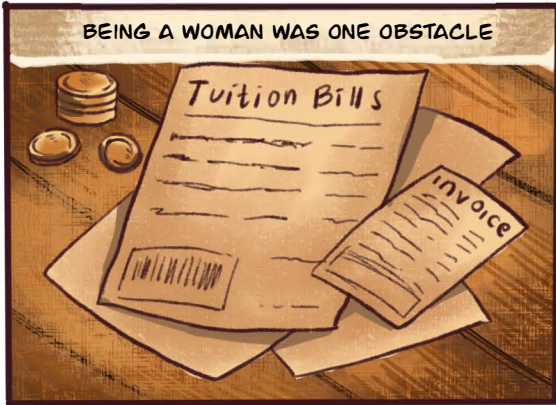
**Dr Tomoko Ishibashi**  
**WOAH Regional**  
**Representative for Asia and**  
**the Pacific**

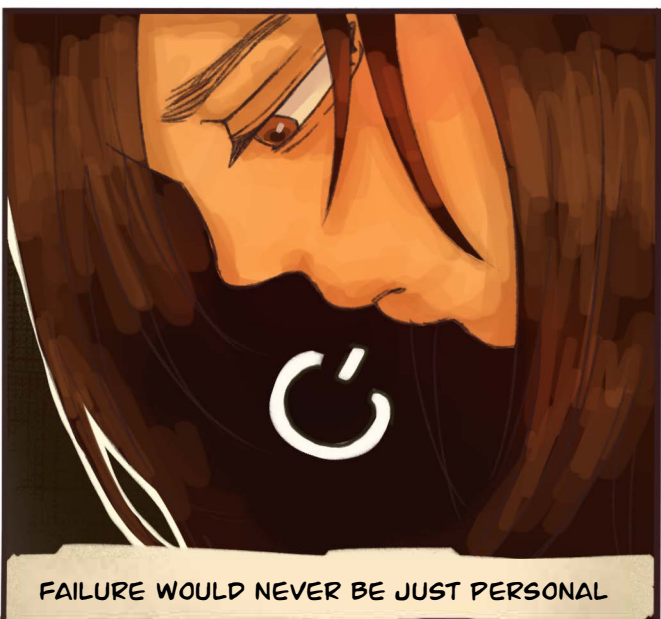
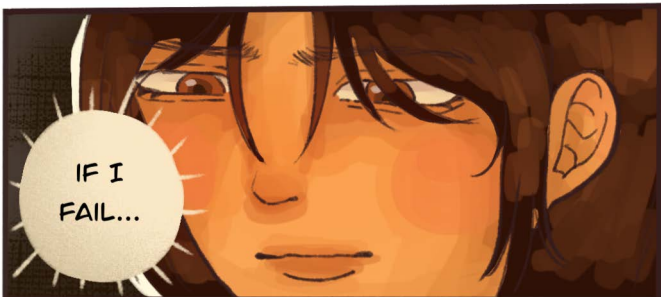
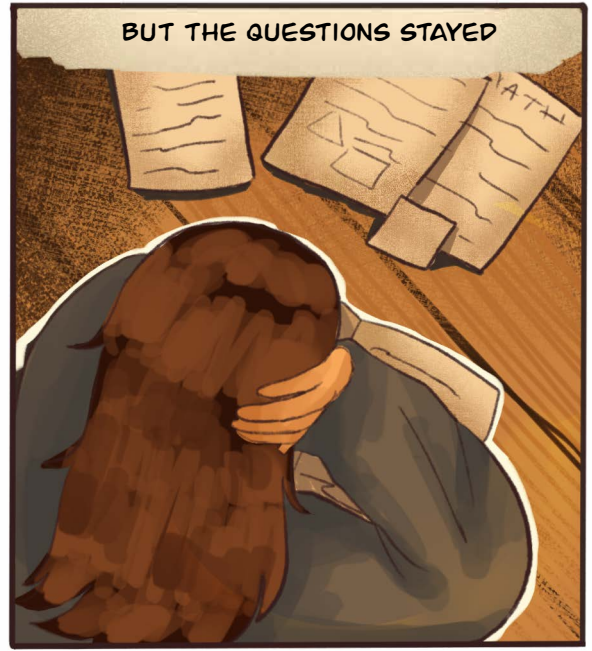


**Dr Naree Ketusing**  
**WOAH Sub-Regional**  
**Representative for South-East Asia**

# Twice the Barrier







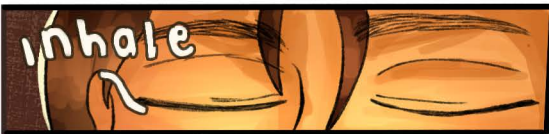
NOT EVERY DOOR OPENS EASILY



BUT SOMETIMES, ONE DOES



inhale



OPPORTUNITY DOESN'T ERASE BARRIERS

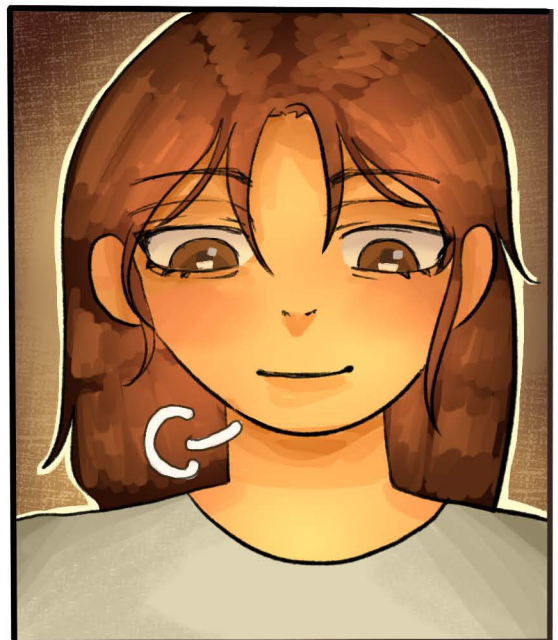
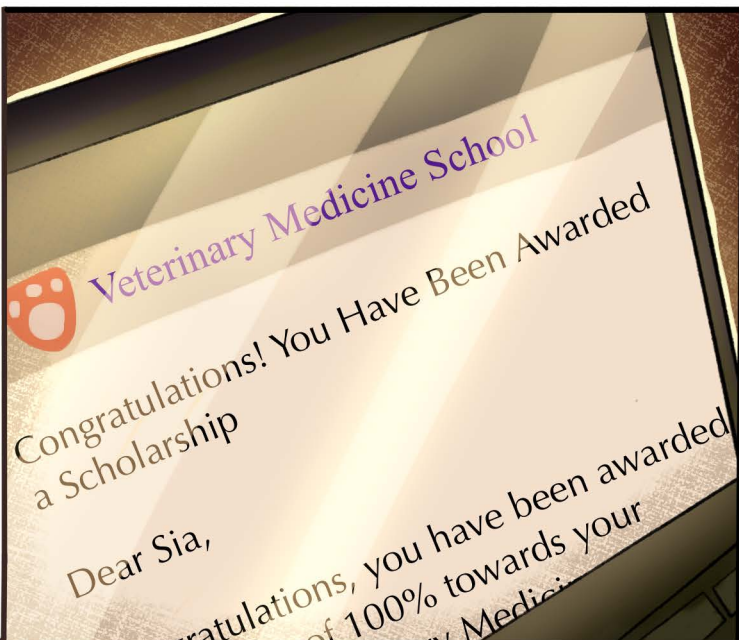
exhale



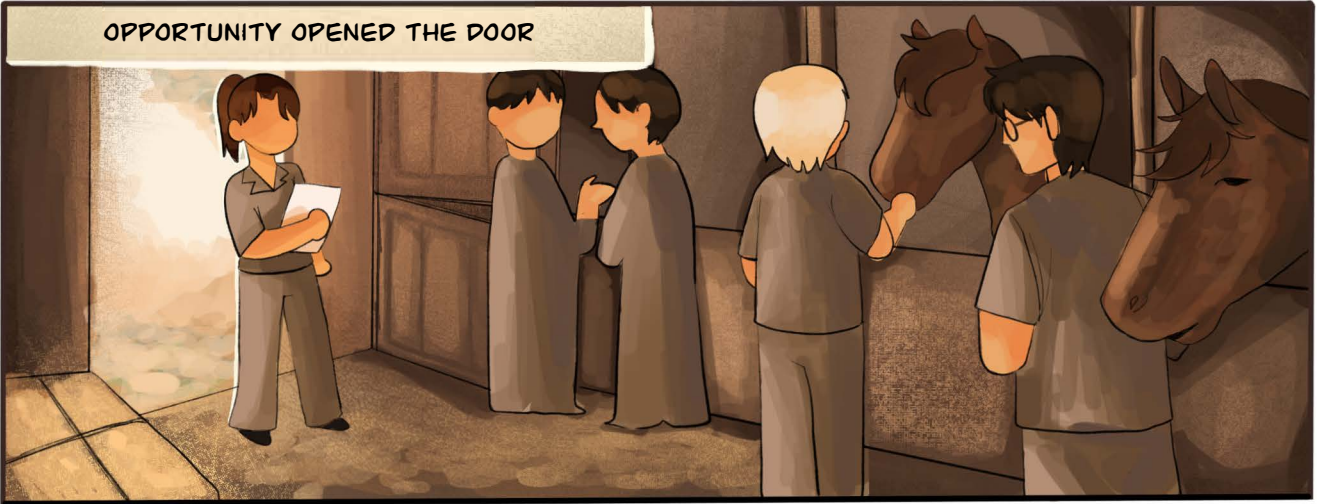
BUT IT GIVES YOU A WAY THROUGH THEM

Scholarship Application Result

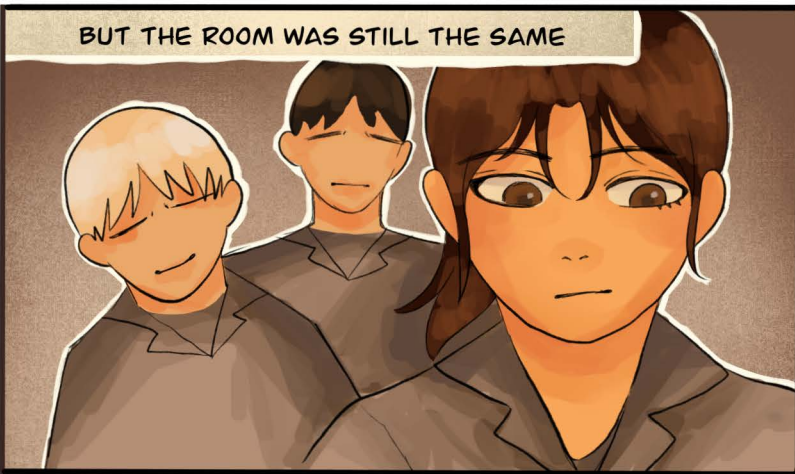
click



OPPORTUNITY OPENED THE DOOR



BUT THE ROOM WAS STILL THE SAME



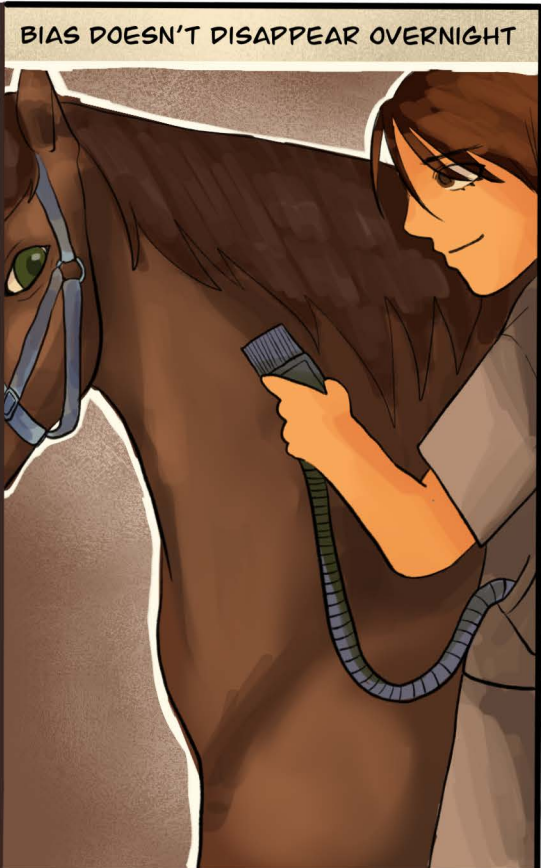
THIS CASE  
NEEDS  
STRENGTH



IT  
NEEDS  
SKILLS



BIAS DOESN'T DISAPPEAR OVERNIGHT



BUT COMPETENCE CHANGES THE CONVERSATION

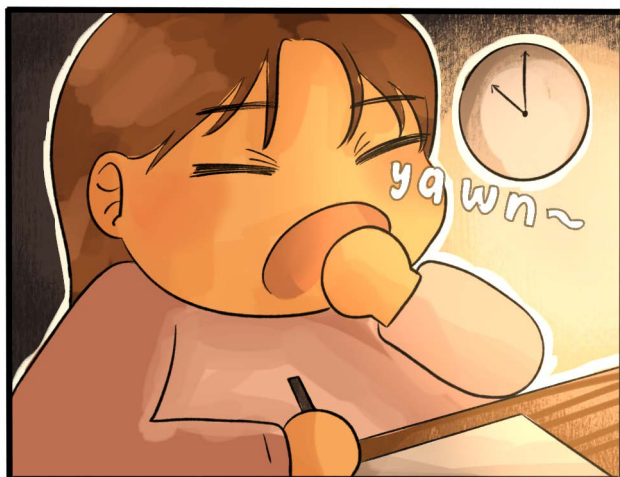
WHILE OTHERS FOCUSED ON LEARNING



SHE FOCUSED ON SURVIVING...



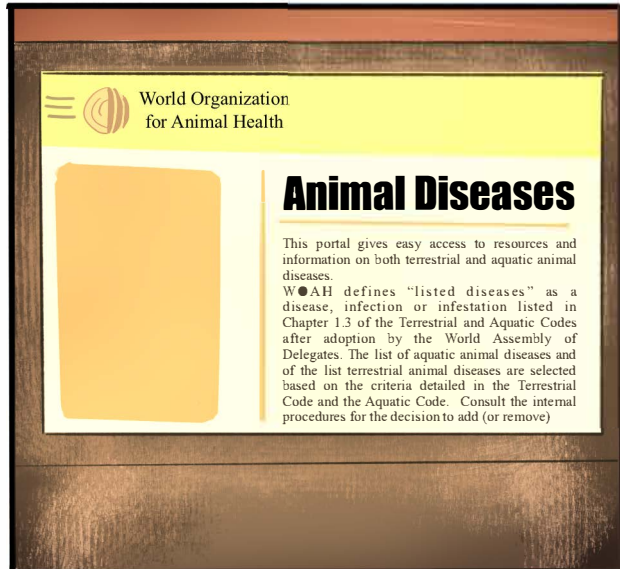
...AND LEARNING



HER DAYS WERE LONGER THAN MOST



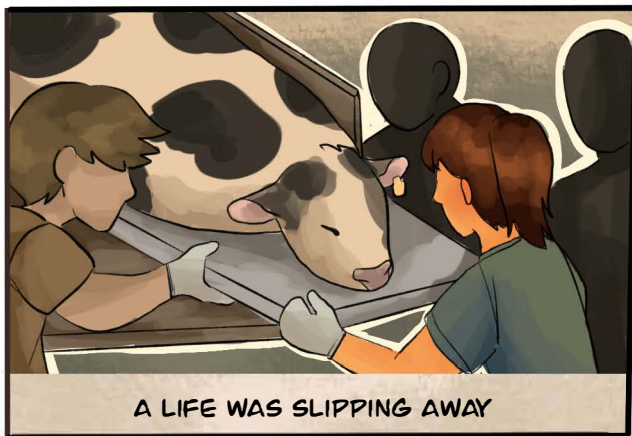
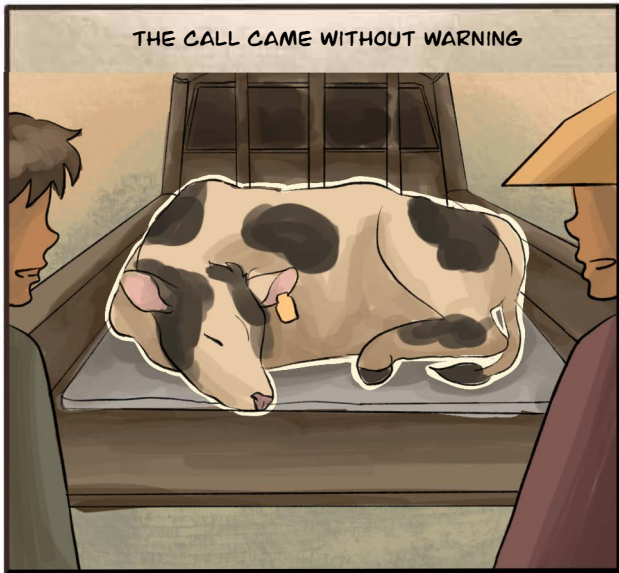
EDUCATION BECAME HER RESISTANCE



World Organization for Animal Health

### Animal Diseases

This portal gives easy access to resources and information on both terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases. WOAH defines "listed diseases" as a disease, infection or infestation listed in Chapter 1.3 of the Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes after adoption by the World Assembly of Delegates. The list of aquatic animal diseases and of the list terrestrial animal diseases are selected based on the criteria detailed in the Terrestrial Code and the Aquatic Code. Consult the internal procedures for the decision to add (or remove)

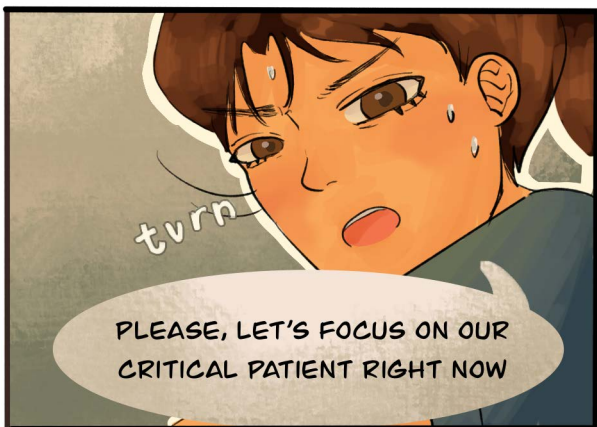


A LIFE WAS SLIPPING AWAY

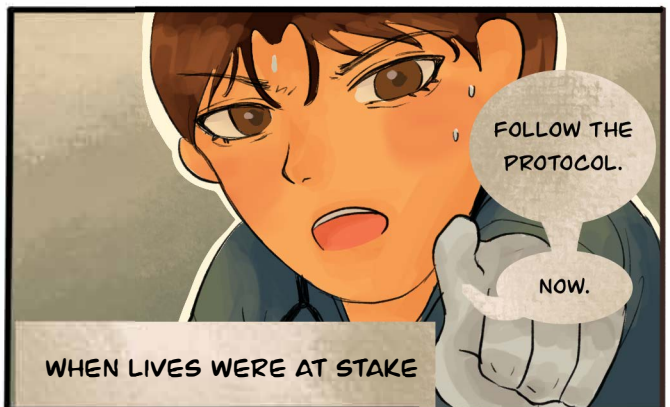


CAN WE REALLY TRUST HER?

whisper



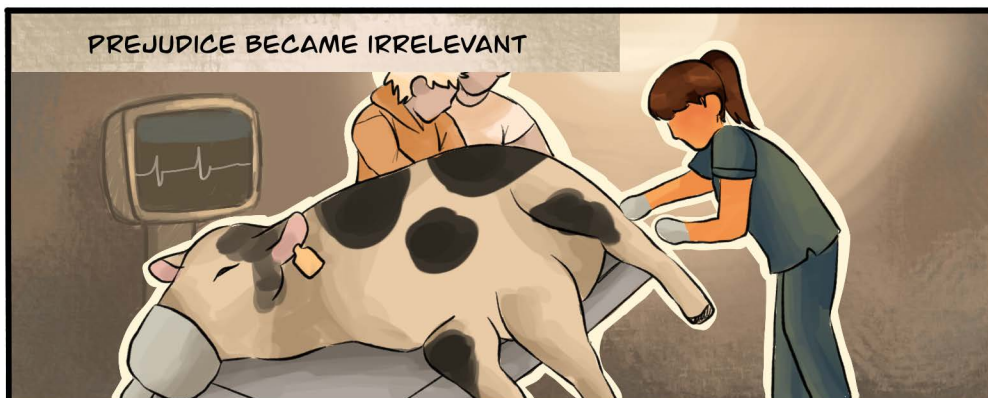
turn  
PLEASE, LET'S FOCUS ON OUR CRITICAL PATIENT RIGHT NOW



FOLLOW THE PROTOCOL.

NOW.

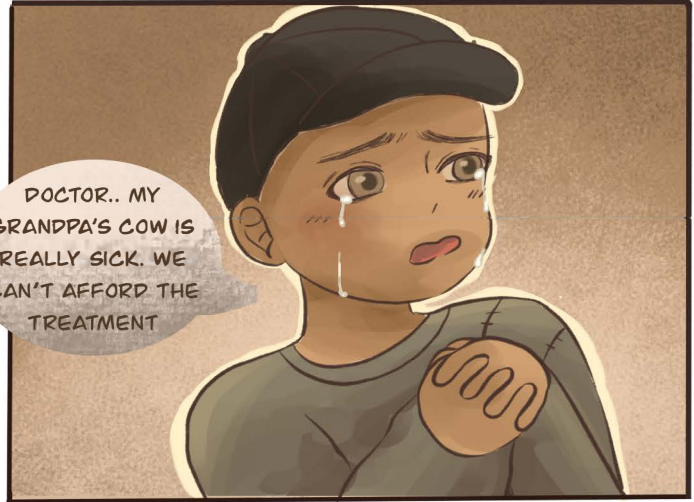
WHEN LIVES WERE AT STAKE



ACCES TO CARE SHOULD NEVER DEPEND ON CIRCUMSTANCE



DOCTOR.. MY GRANDPA'S COW IS REALLY SICK. WE CAN'T AFFORD THE TREATMENT



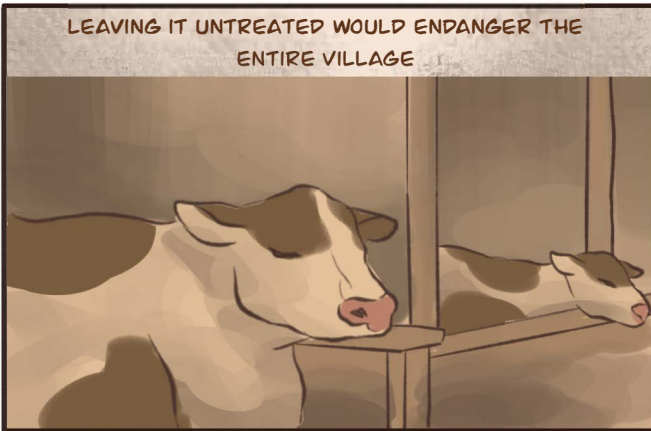
THAT WON'T STOP US FROM HELPING, TAKE ME THERE



THE DIAGNOSIS REVEALED A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE



LEAVING IT UNTREATED WOULD ENDANGER THE ENTIRE VILLAGE



LET ME TAKE CARE OF THE CATTLE HERE. WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER



EQUAL CARE PREVENTED FURTHER SPREAD AND PROTECTED LIVELIHOODS



BECAUSE DIGNITY, HEALTH, AND CARE ARE BELONG TO EVERYONE



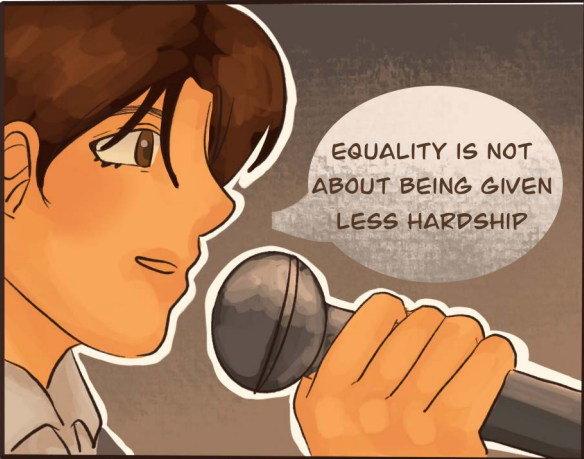
CHANGE DOESN'T ALWAYS START WITH POWER...



...SOMETIMES, IT STARTS WITH A VOICE



EQUALITY IS NOT ABOUT BEING GIVEN LESS HARDSHIP



IT'S ABOUT BEING GIVEN THE SAME CHANCE

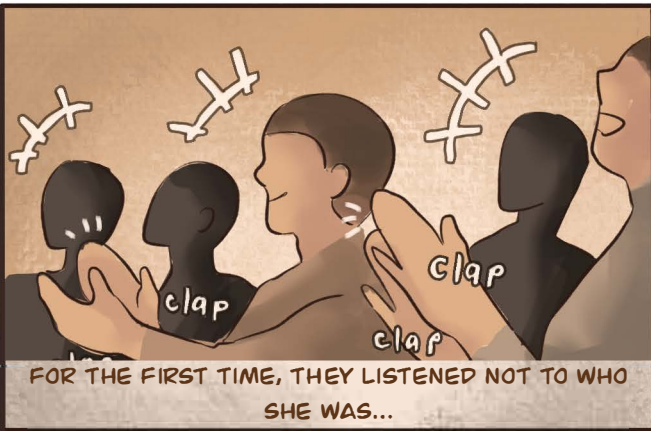


...BUT TO WHAT NEEDED TO BE SAID

teary



FOR THE FIRST TIME, THEY LISTENED NOT TO WHO SHE WAS...



applauding



WHEN ONE WOMAN ADVANCES, COMMUNITIES MOVE FORWARD



WHEN GENDER AND POVERTY COLLIDE, OPPORTUNITY MUST STAND IN BETWEEN

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## Siti Kurniawanti

Siti Kurniawati (Nia) is a veterinarian and lecturer with both educational and work interests in microbiology and immunology, focusing on mycobacterial infection and molecular genetics. She is concerned with matters of gender equity, social inclusion and access to veterinary services, especially in underprivileged and rural setups involving traditional farmers. She seeks to promote creative communication by translating issues such as One Health, workforce equity and access into storytelling that is relatable to broader audiences (students, traditional farmers, practitioners, the public).

## Comic description

“Twice the Barrier” is a graphic novel grounded in reality and sprinkled with a bit of hope, as it tells the story of one woman who has encountered what it means to be female with socio-economic disadvantages, in her quest to enter veterinary school. The comic follows a plucky young girl (Sia) who was brought up in the poor, rural underbelly of the country but who has grand ambitions to become a vet. She contends with discrimination and bias against women, as well as poverty and unequal access to education and career opportunities. In the comic, these adversities are not limited to personal hardship but also have an impact on animal health services, disease control, and the source community's livelihoods. The story includes scenes of veterinary education, professional practice, and the control of infectious animal diseases, highlighting the importance of animal health care and its connection to public health (Manusya Mriga Satwa Sewaka).




In line with the principles of GEDSI, the comic's narrative is not only about hardship, but also about ensuring fair opportunities and access for all. “Twice the Barrier” aims to initiate reflection on how policies and a conducive and system, as well as a professional one, are necessary in delivering enhanced veterinary services for advancing the goals of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

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