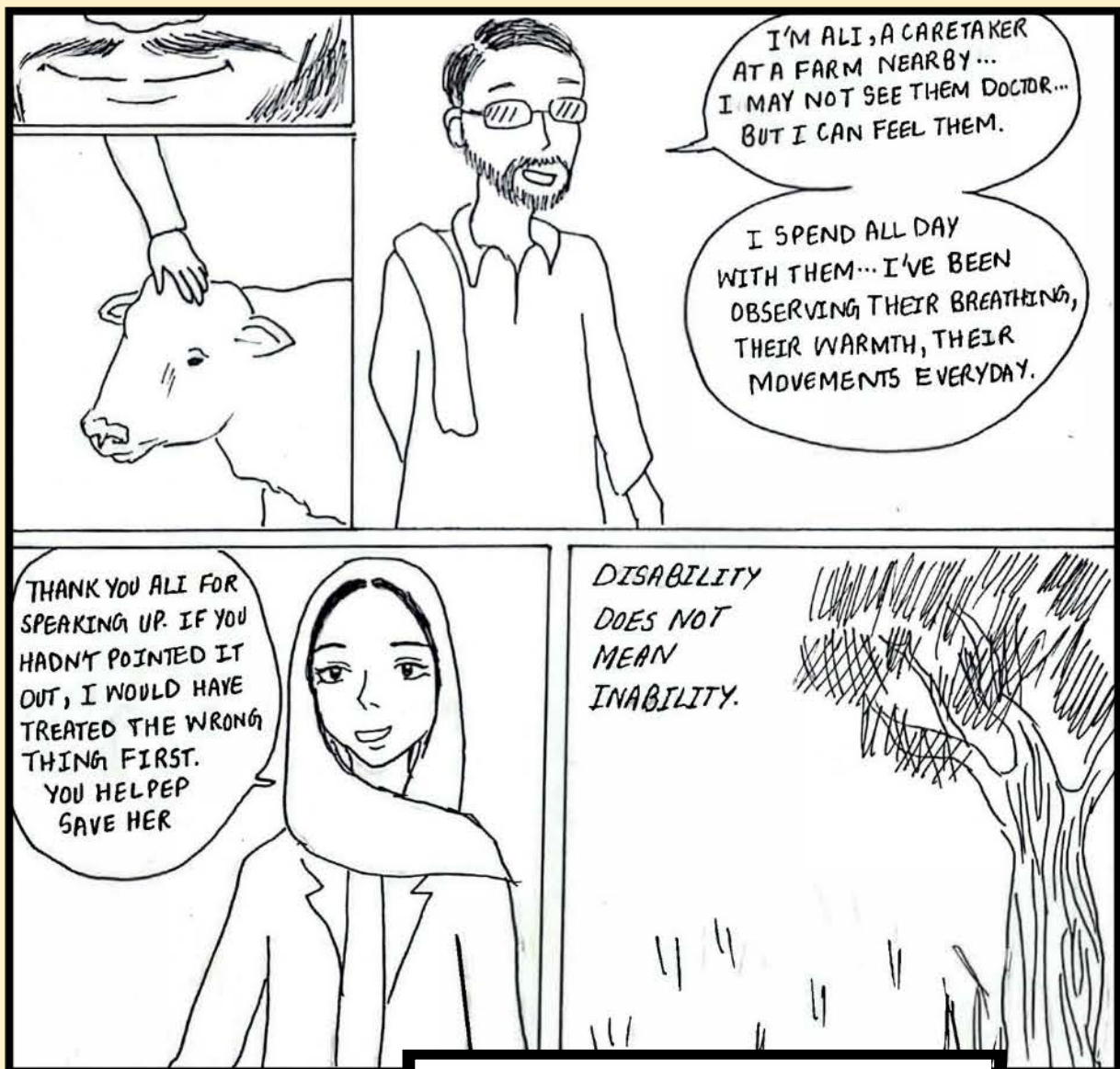




World Organisation
for Animal Health

SKETCHING CHANGE

TALES FROM VETERINARIANS ACROSS ASIA-PACIFIC



BREAKING THE NORMS



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.



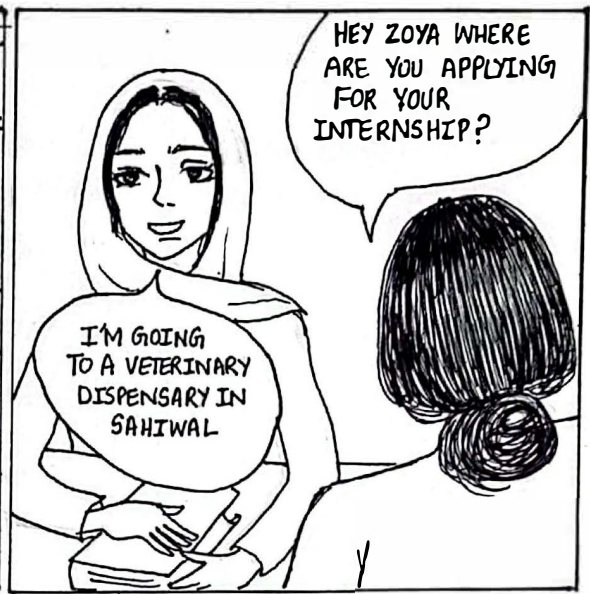
Dr Tomoko Ishibashi
WOAH Regional
Representative for Asia and
the Pacific



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



ALRIGHT CLASS
BEST OF LUCK FOR
YOUR INTERNSHIPS



HEY ZOYA WHERE
ARE YOU APPLYING
FOR YOUR
INTERNSHIP?

I'M GOING
TO A VETERINARY
DISPENSARY IN
SAHIWAL



HAHA! LARGE ANIMAL
HANDLING ISN'T FOR
THE GIRLS

JUST GO
TO A PET
CLINIC

YOU'RE GOING
FOR LARGE
ANIMALS?



GOOD LUCK
FOR YOUR
INTERNSHIP
SARA...

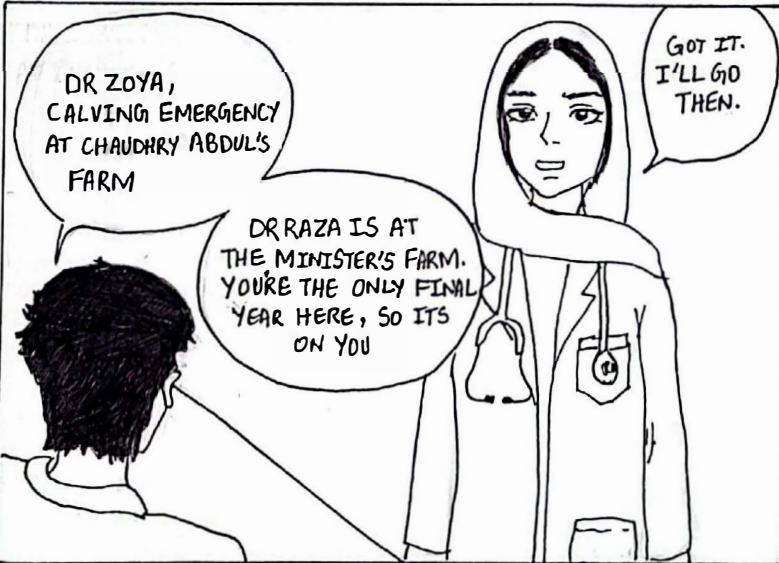
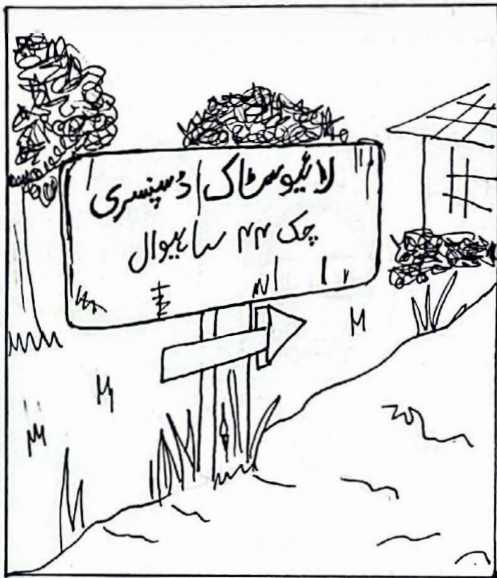
I MEAN...
THEY'RE NOT
WRONG THOUGH

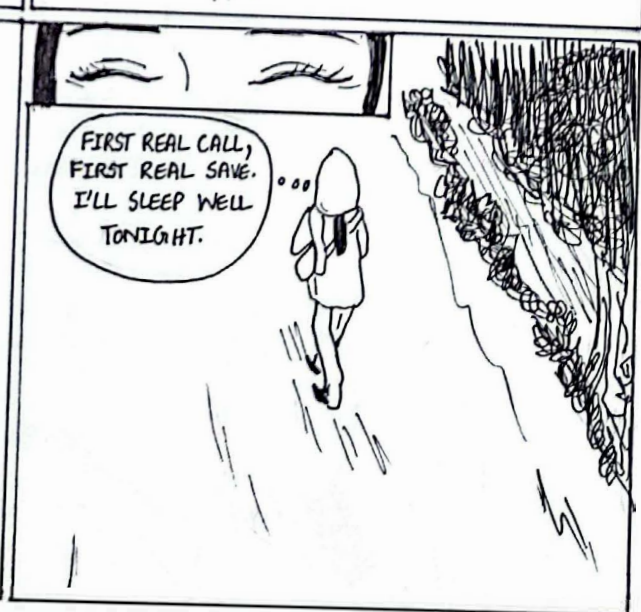
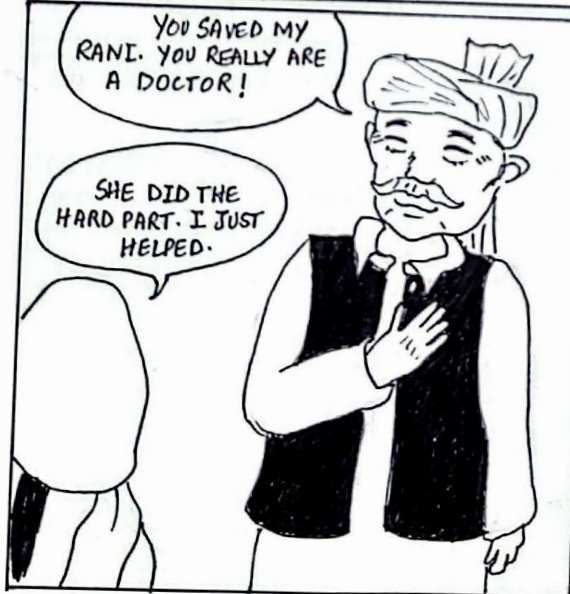
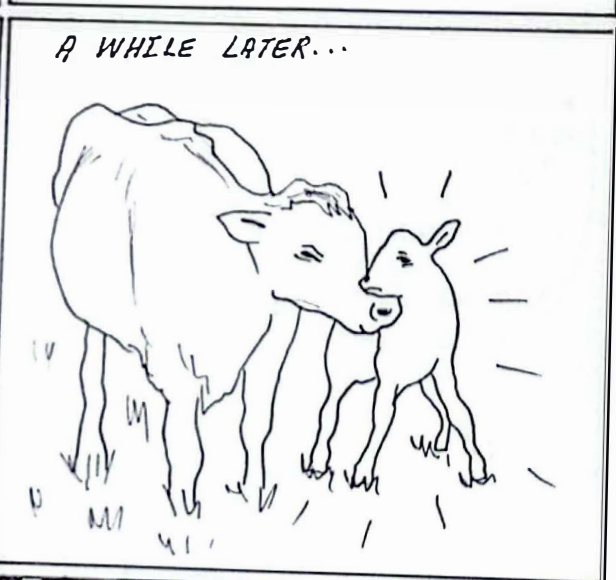


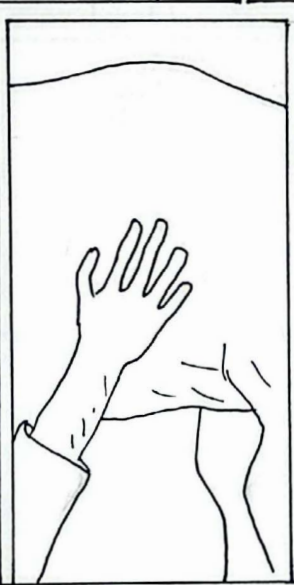
...I'LL
GO NOW

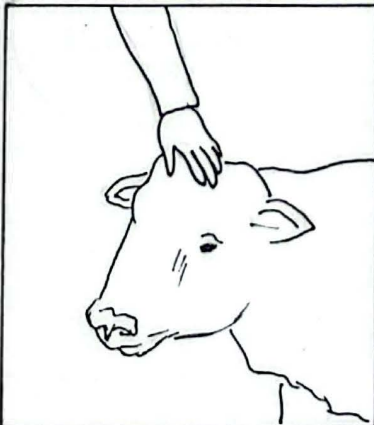
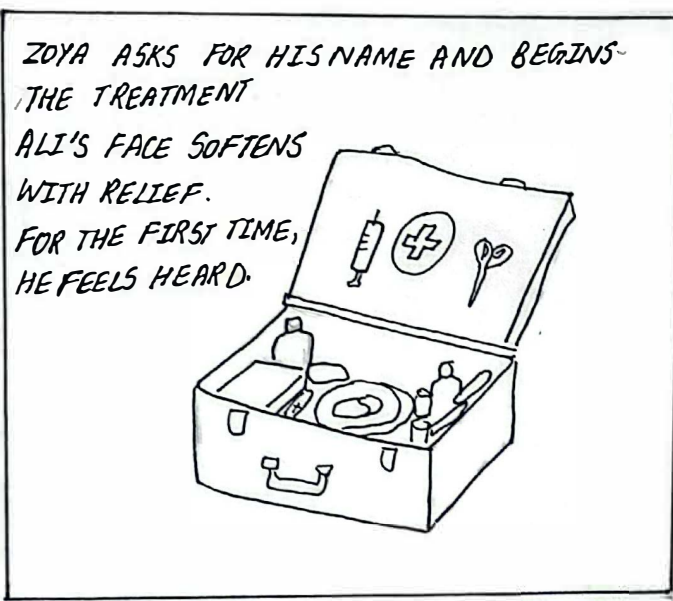


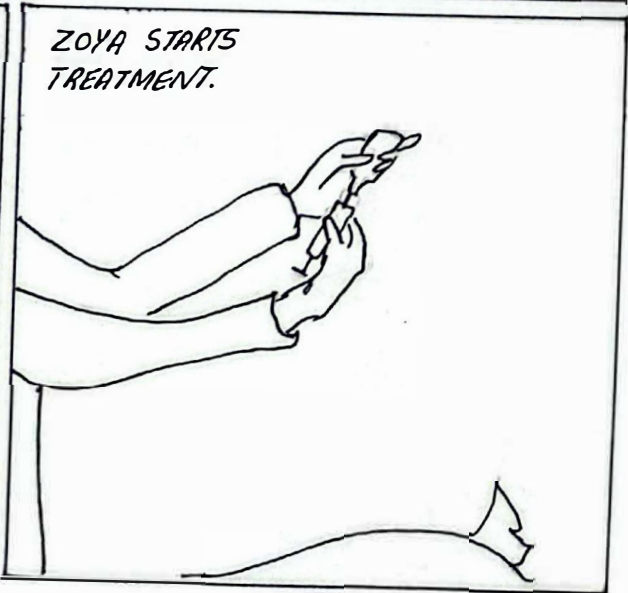
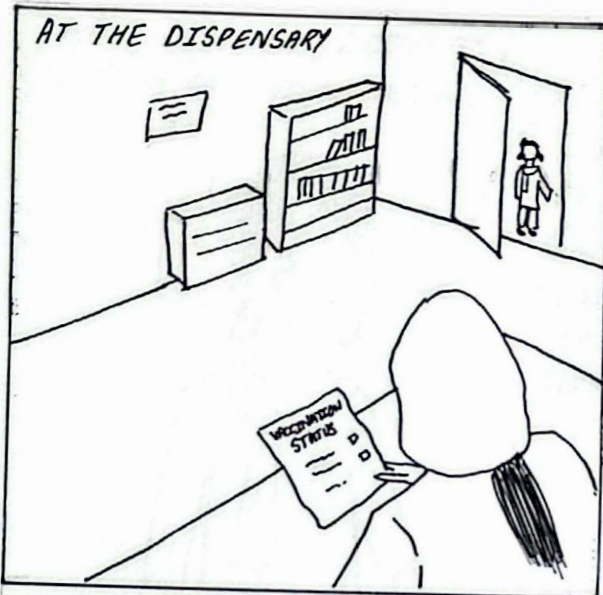
SHE DIDN'T
ARGUE.
SHE
CHOSE.







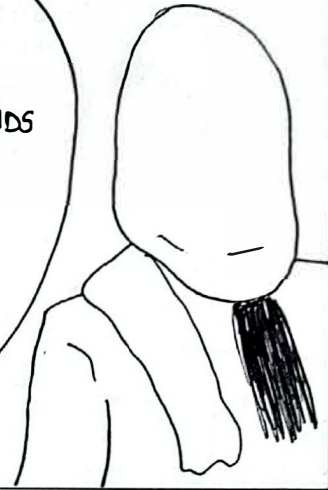




AMINA, RELEIVED, HESITATES,
THEN SHARES HER DREAM



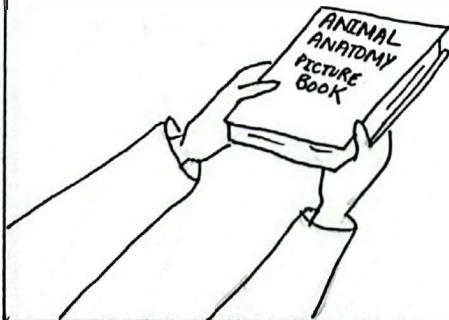
I WANT TO BECOME A
VET LIKE YOU WHEN I
GROW UP, BUT MY FRIENDS
MAKE FUN OF ME. THEY
SAY I'LL BECOME A
FARMWORKER LIKE
MY PARENTS.



AMINA, YOUR DREAMS
ARE YOURS ALONE. WHERE YOU
COME FROM DOESN'T DECIDE
WHERE YOU GO.

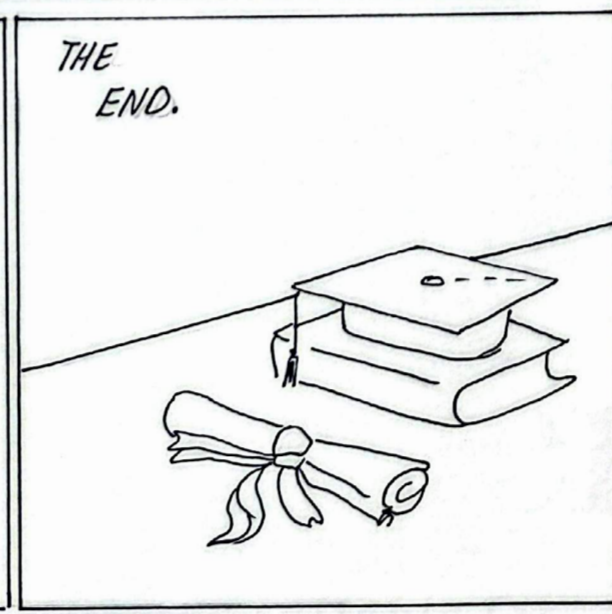
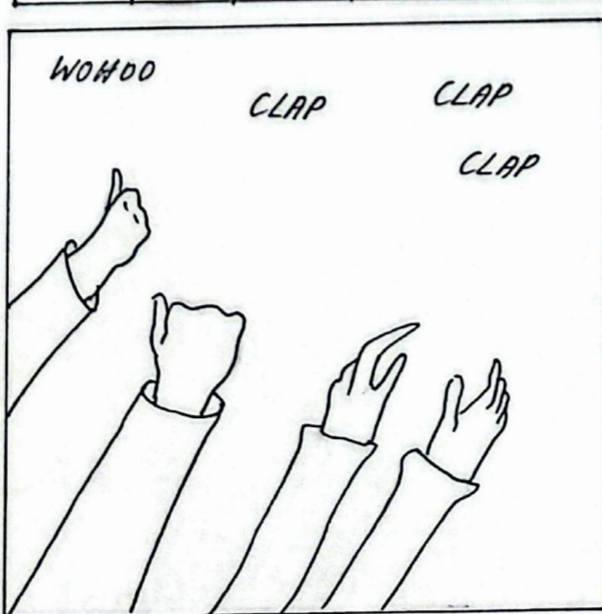
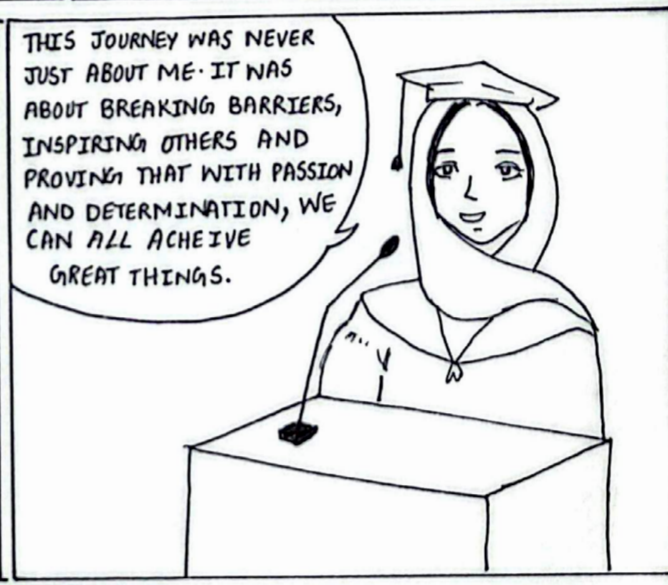
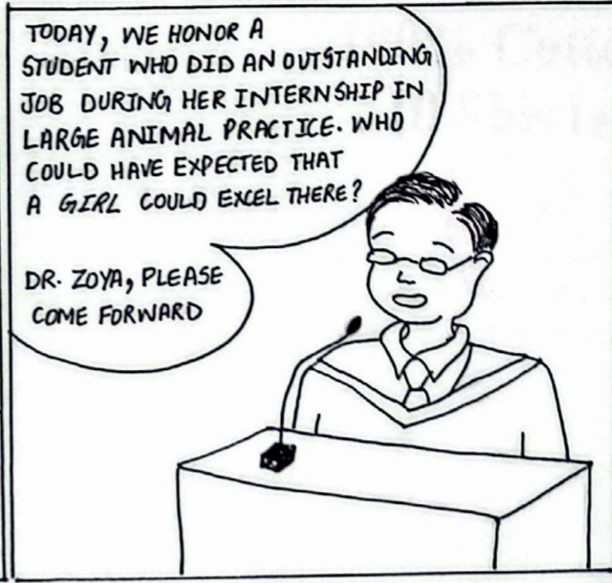
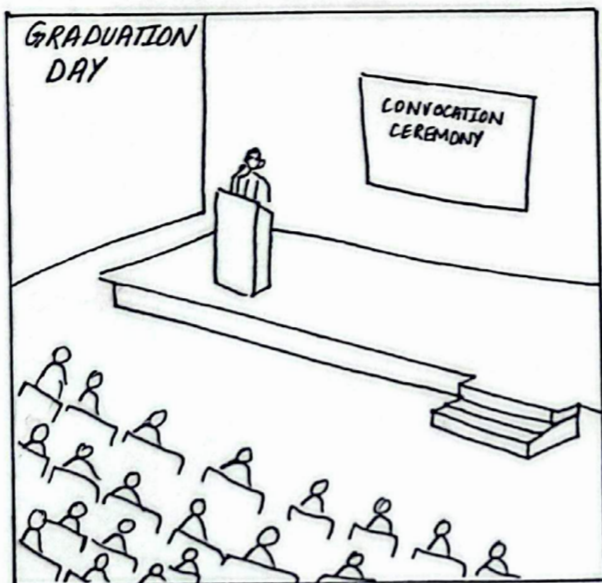


HERE'S A SMALL GIFT FOR YOU
AMINA. IT HELPED ME A LOT
I THINK IT'LL HELP YOU
TOO



THANK YOU DOCTOR!
I'LL STUDY IT
EVERYDAY!





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Syeda Sibgha Batool

I am Syeda Sibgha Batool, a 4th year student at the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan. Growing up, I have seen how gender stereotypes still influence career choices, especially in rural and agricultural settings. Veterinary medicine in large-animal practice is often considered a male-dominated field, while female students are encouraged to choose small animal or laboratory work. Through this comic I wanted to highlight the importance of gender equality, empathy, and inclusion in the veterinary profession.

Comic description

This comic “Breaking the Norms” follows the journey of Zoya, a final-year veterinary student who chooses a rural internship instead of a comfortable urban pet clinic. Despite discouragement from classmates and doubts from farmers, she proves her ability by handling difficult cases.

The story also highlights the role of a visually impaired caretaker, who contributes valuable observations and proves that disability does not limit one’s ability to care for animals. Zoya’s interaction with a young village girl shows how encouragement can inspire the next generation of female veterinarians.




It reinforces the message that when barriers are replaced with understanding and respect, everyone is given the chance to contribute and be valued.

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