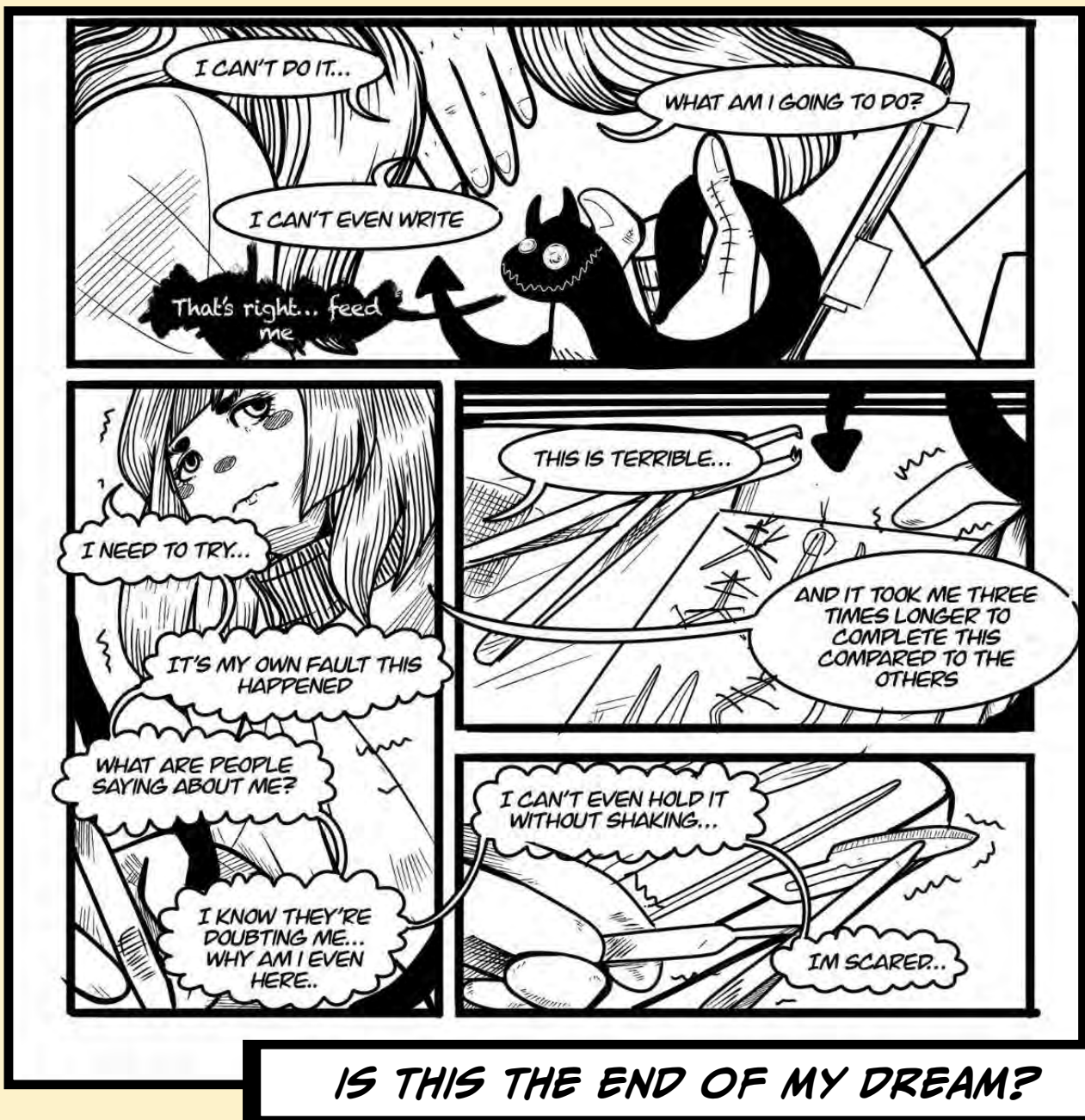




World Organisation
for Animal Health

SKETCHING CHANGE

TALES FROM VETERINARIANS ACROSS ASIA-PACIFIC





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

© WOA, 2026

Some rights reserved. This work is made available under a CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO licence.



This publication was possible thanks to the support of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

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

THIS STORY IS DEDICATED
TO MY FAMILY, FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES
LECTURERS

♥ AND ANIMALS ♥
THAT HAVE BEEN A PART
OF MY JOURNEY

Thank you

THE NEWS CAME INTO THE MAIL AND OF COURSE MY MOM WAS EXCITED



We are sorry to inform you that you do not meet the requirements for this position.

Perhaps a different career would suit you better.

Sincerely yours,
Signed

Unfortunately you are

concerned about your ability to handle the stress of veterinary training.

THEY ALWAYS DOUBT ME...

JUST BECAUSE I HAVE A CONDITION... IT DOES NOT MEAN I CAN'T DO IT...

SOME DAYS... IT FEELS LIKE I CAN TAKE ON THE WORLD



I NEED TO PROVE MYSELF FOR REAL, I CAN DO THIS



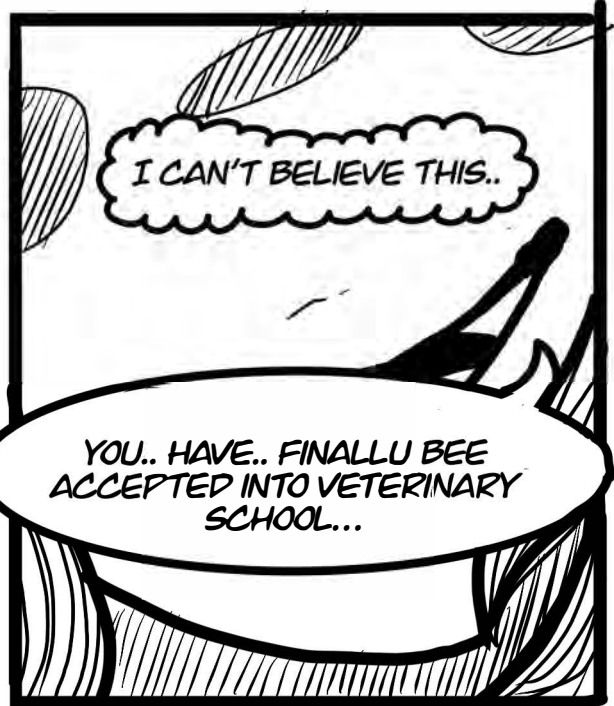
SOME DAYS IT FEELS LIKE THE WORLD IS AGAINST ME

I CAN'T GIVE UP YET, I NEED TO TRY AGAIN!



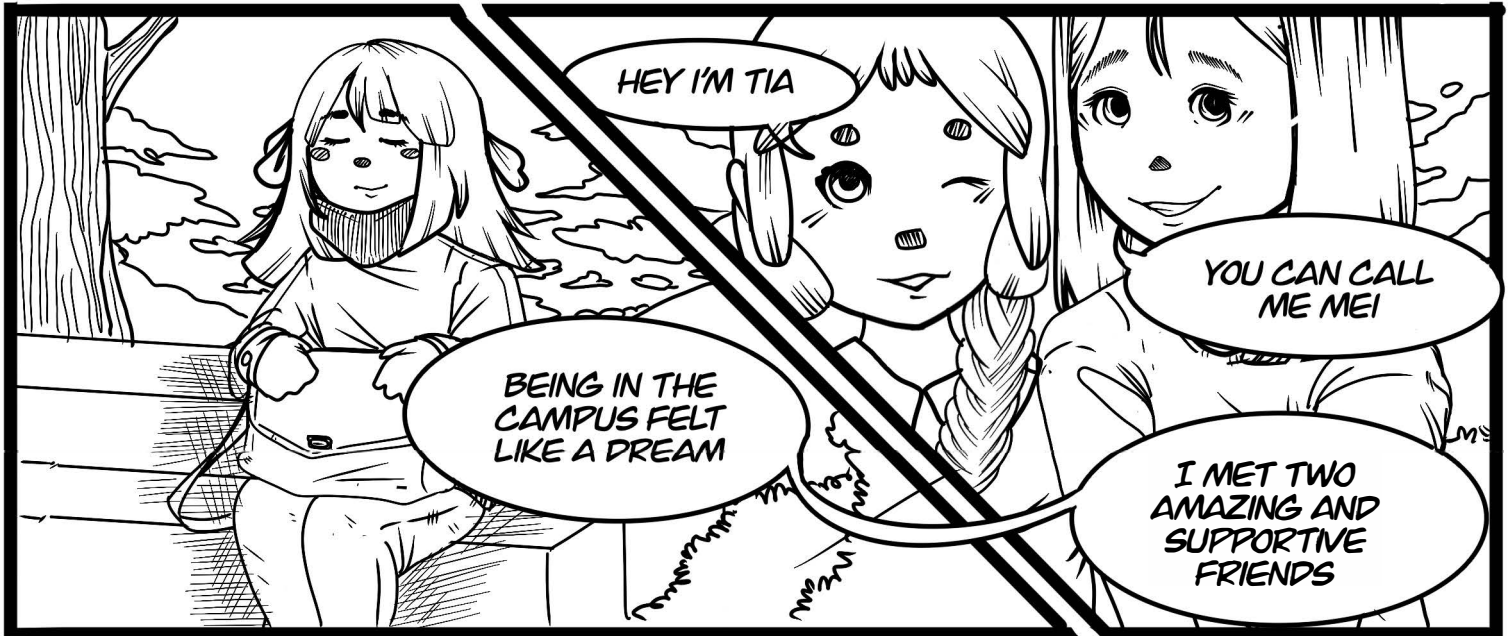


SO I WROTE IN ANOTHER APPLICATION



I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS..

YOU.. HAVE.. FINALLU BEE ACCEPTED INTO VETERINARY SCHOOL...



HEY I'M TIA

YOU CAN CALL ME MEI

BEING IN THE CAMPUS FELT LIKE A DREAM

I MET TWO AMAZING AND SUPPORTIVE FRIENDS



DR. DAVE, I NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE WI THTHIS SURGERY

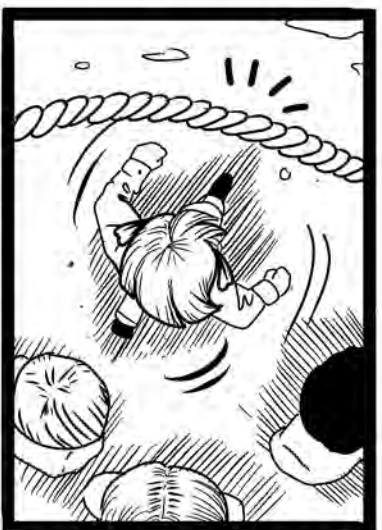
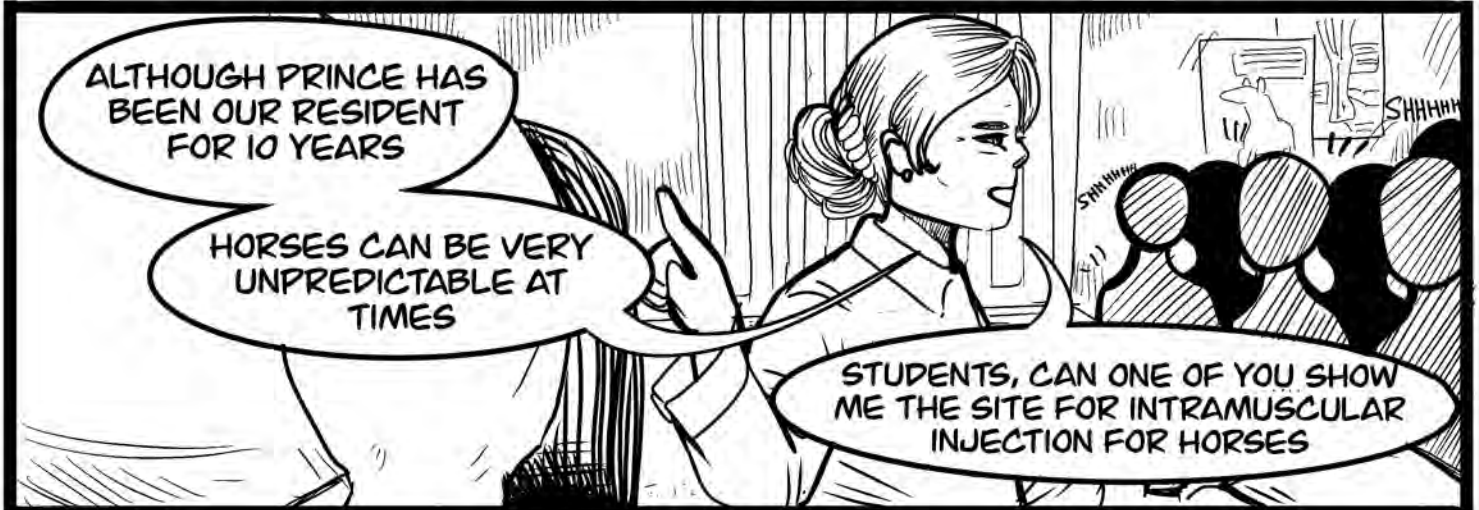
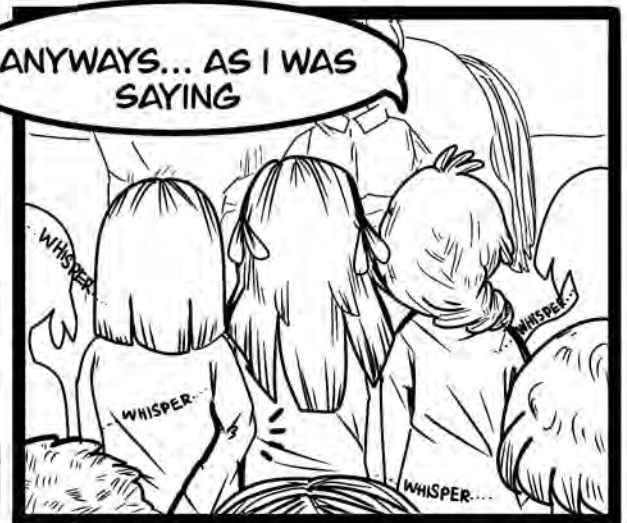
STEADY... BE GENTLE WI THTHE SURROUNDING TISSUE

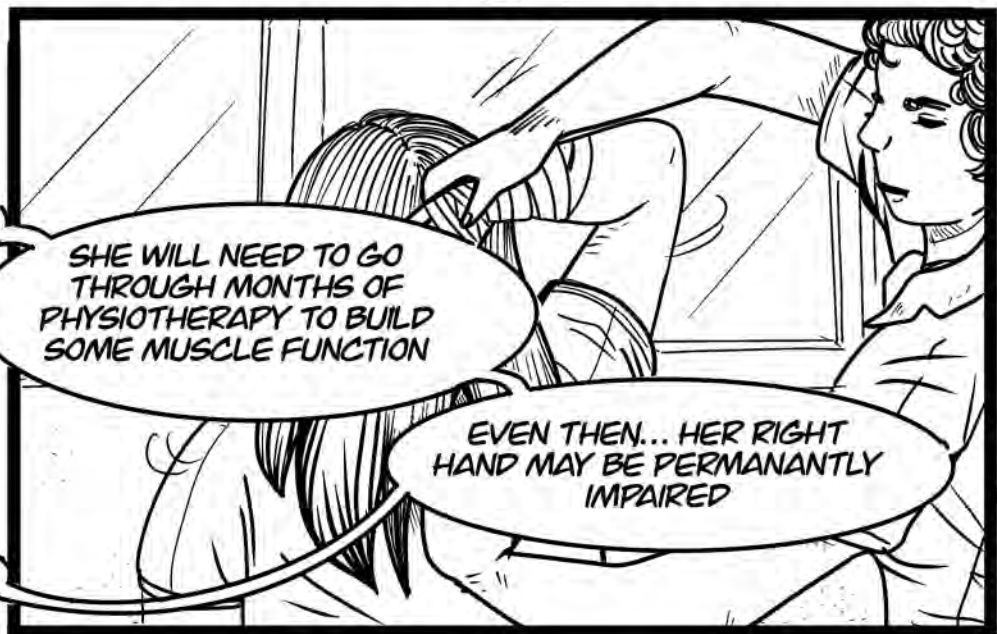
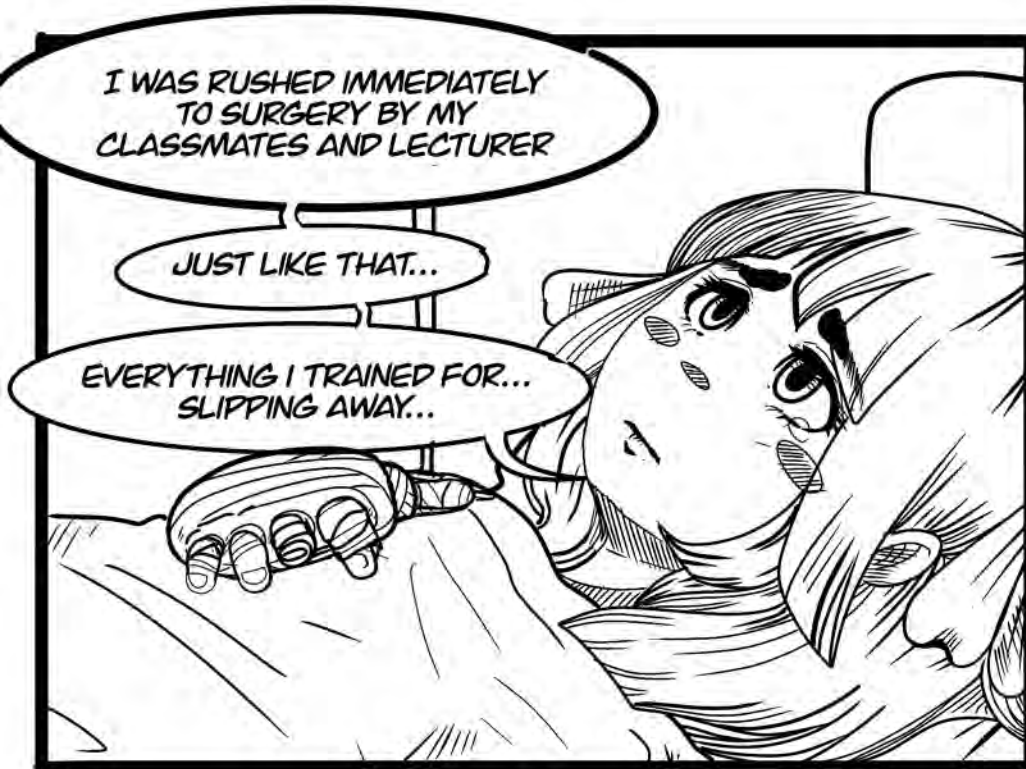
YES DOC

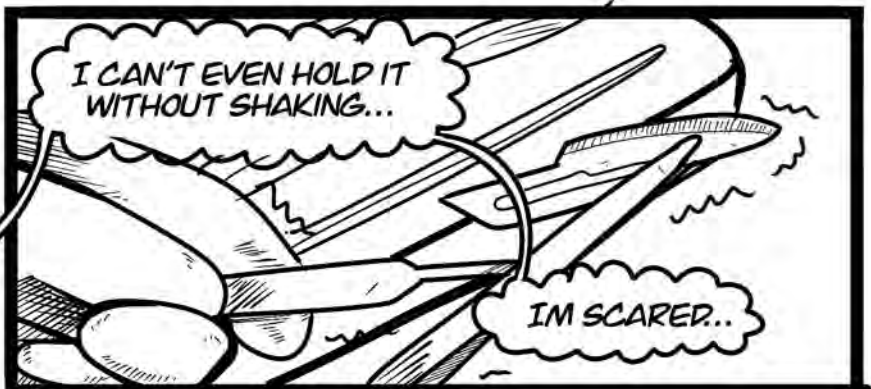
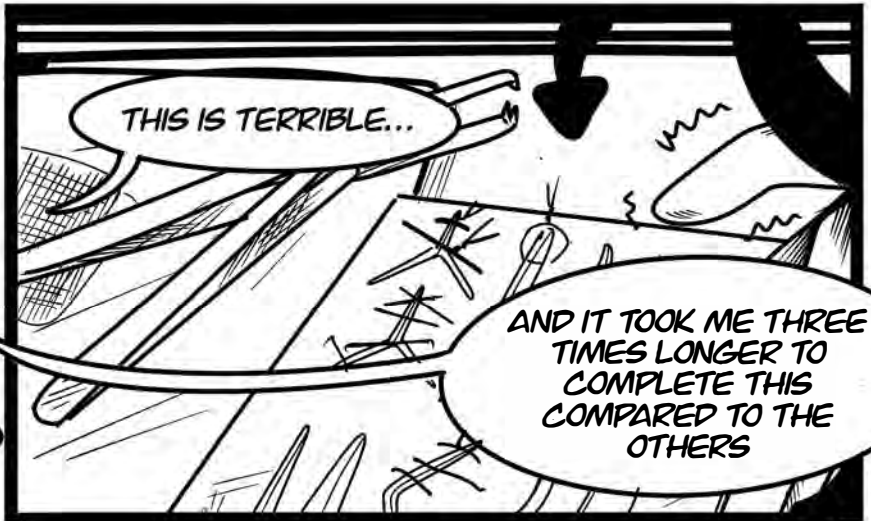
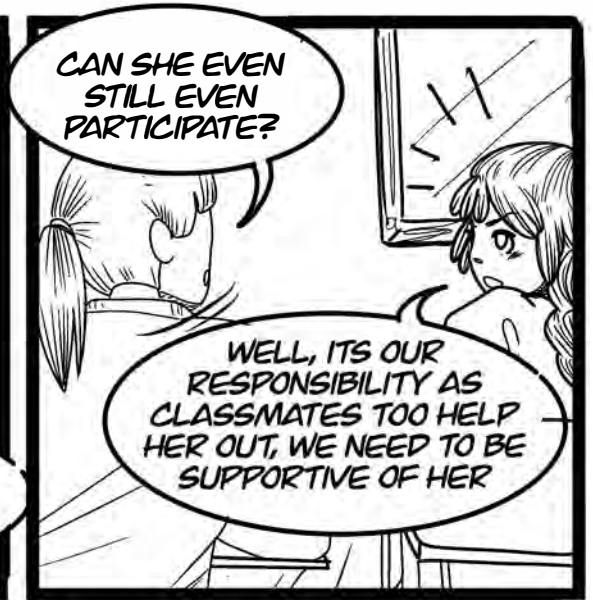
THIS PATIENT IS TO UNDERGO AN INTESTINAL ANASTOMOSIS DUE TO A TORSSED ILEUM

BE READY TO MILK THE CONTENTS AWAY

SURE, I SEE THE NECROTISED AREA









What makes you think you can be like the rest... i'm here to stay..



LARA...

LARA, YOU DIDN'T LOSE YOUR MIND OR HEART. YOUR INJURY CHANGES YOUR TECHNIQUE, NOT YOUR CALLING

I KNOW YOU FEEL LIKE YOU CAN'T CATCH UP...

BUT IN THIS SCHOOL, WE INCLUDE AND HELP THOSE AROUND US

REGARDLESS OF BACKGROUND, GENDER OR DISABILITY

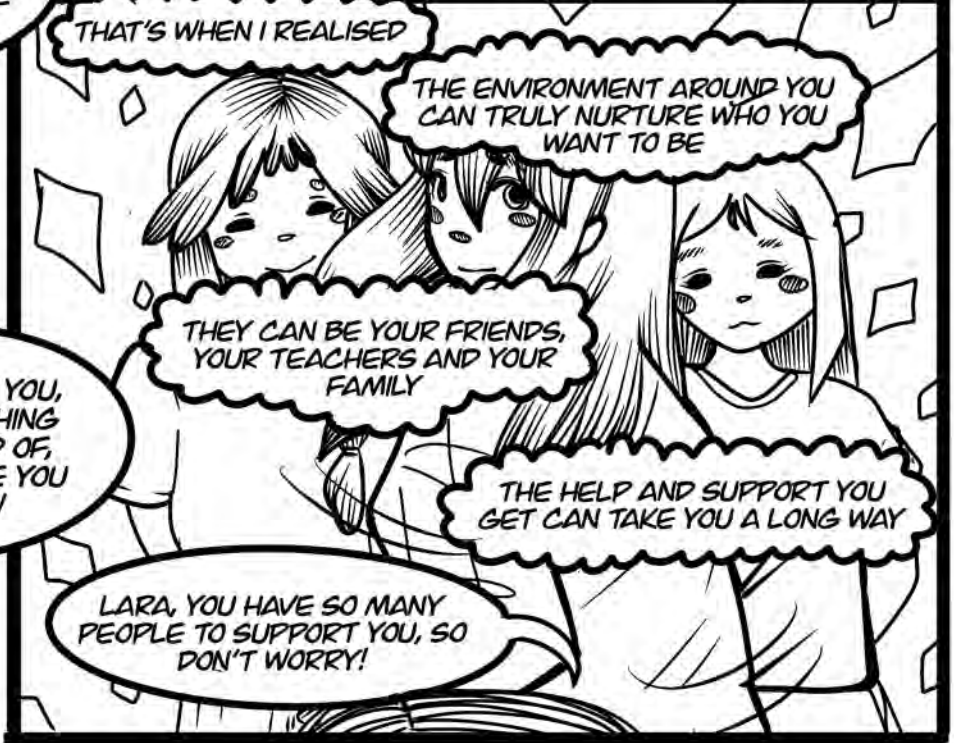
IT TEACHES US COMPASSION, TO ALWAYS INCLUDE THOSE AROUND US



LARA TRY THIS OUT, I THINK IT WILL HELP YOU IF YOU HOLD YOUR NEEDLE DRIVER LIKE THIS



OH WOW... I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD DO IT LIKE THAT



THAT'S WHEN I REALISED

THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND YOU CAN TRULY NURTURE WHO YOU WANT TO BE

THEY CAN BE YOUR FRIENDS, YOUR TEACHERS AND YOUR FAMILY

THE HELP AND SUPPORT YOU GET CAN TAKE YOU A LONG WAY



GIRL! WE GOT YOU, THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF, WE STILL LOVE YOU YOU KNOW

LARA, YOU HAVE SO MANY PEOPLE TO SUPPORT YOU, SO DON'T WORRY!



THAT'S RIGHT, I'M GOING TO KEEP PUSHING FORWARD.

I KNOW I HAVE TO WORK A LITTLE HARDER

BUT THAT'S OKAY

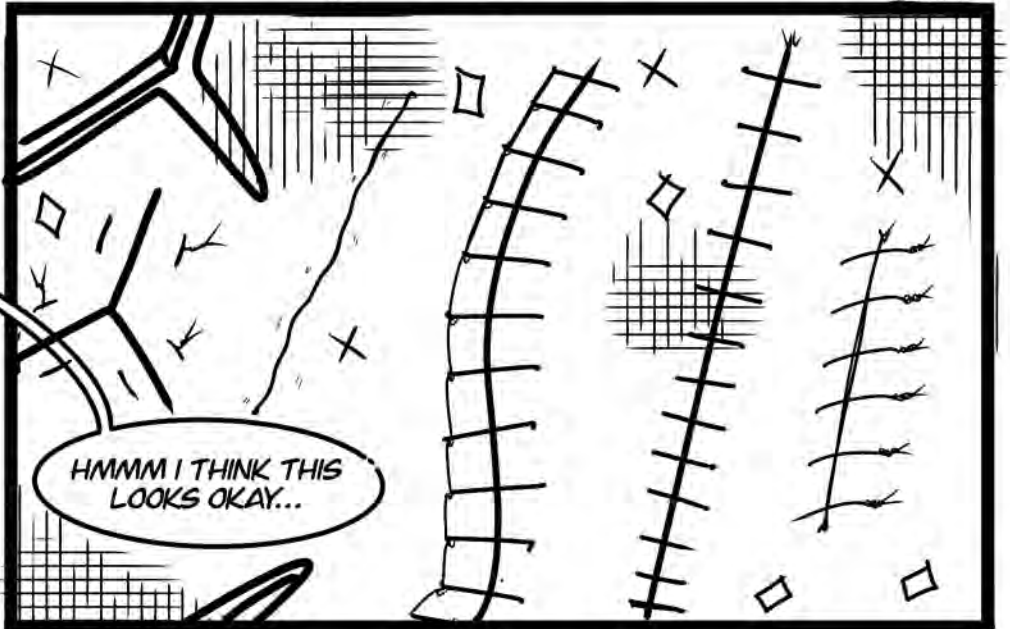


I WILL KEEP PRACTICING

KNOWING THAT I AM SUPPORTED AND INCLUDED BY MY PEERS HELPS A LOT



URGH.. I'M SO TIRED



HMMM I THINK THIS LOOKS OKAY...



LARA, WE ARE REALLY PROUD OF YOU! YOUR SUTURING SKILLS HAVE IMPROVED TREMENDOUSLY



I CAN SMILE BECAUSE I KNOW THEY HAVE ME

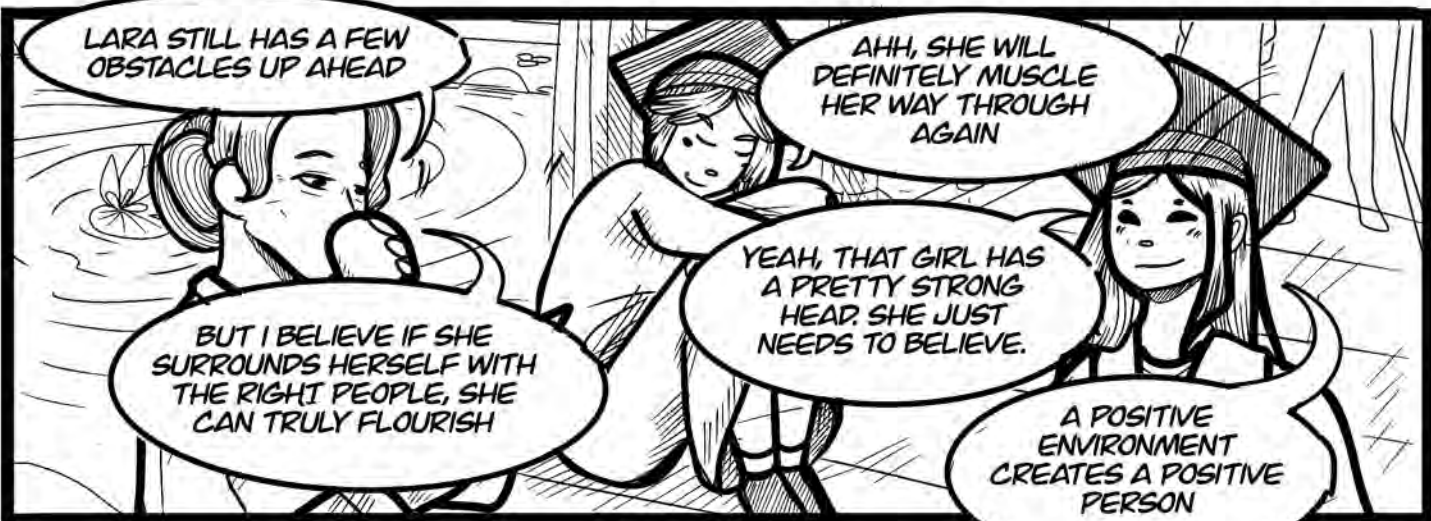
YEARS LATER...



EVENTUALLY WE GRADUATED



I MADE IT!



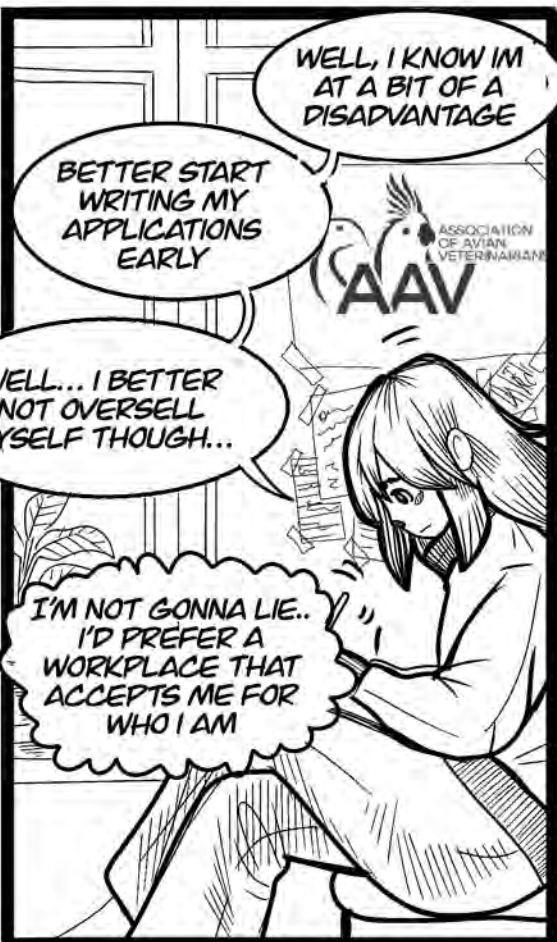
LARA STILL HAS A FEW OBSTACLES UP AHEAD

BUT I BELIEVE IF SHE SURROUNDS HERSELF WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE, SHE CAN TRULY FLOURISH

AHH, SHE WILL DEFINITELY MUSCLE HER WAY THROUGH AGAIN

YEAH, THAT GIRL HAS A PRETTY STRONG HEAD. SHE JUST NEEDS TO BELIEVE.

A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT CREATES A POSITIVE PERSON

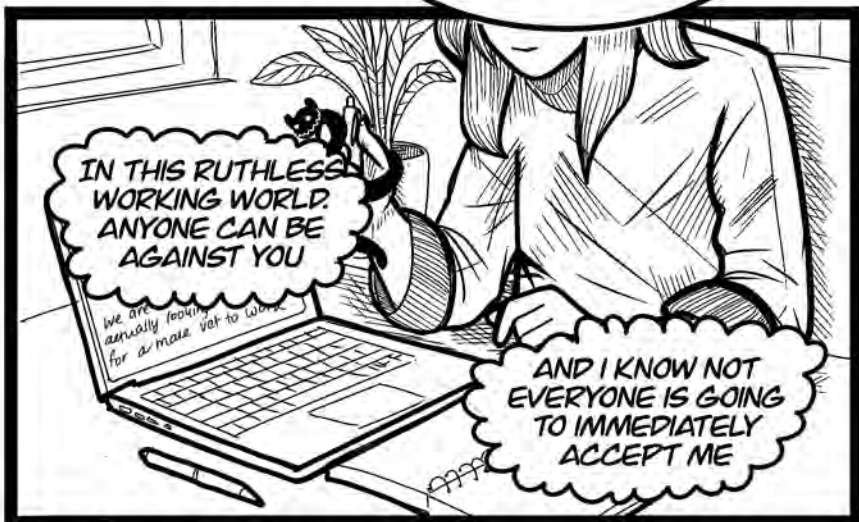


WELL, I KNOW IM AT A BIT OF A DISADVANTAGE

BETTER START WRITING MY APPLICATIONS EARLY

WELL... I BETTER NOT OVERSELL MYSELF THOUGH...

I'M NOT GONNA LIE.. I'D PREFER A WORKPLACE THAT ACCEPTS ME FOR WHO I AM



IN THIS RUTHLESS WORKING WORLD, ANYONE CAN BE AGAINST YOU

We are currently looking for a male vet to work

AND I KNOW NOT EVERYONE IS GOING TO IMMEDIATELY ACCEPT ME

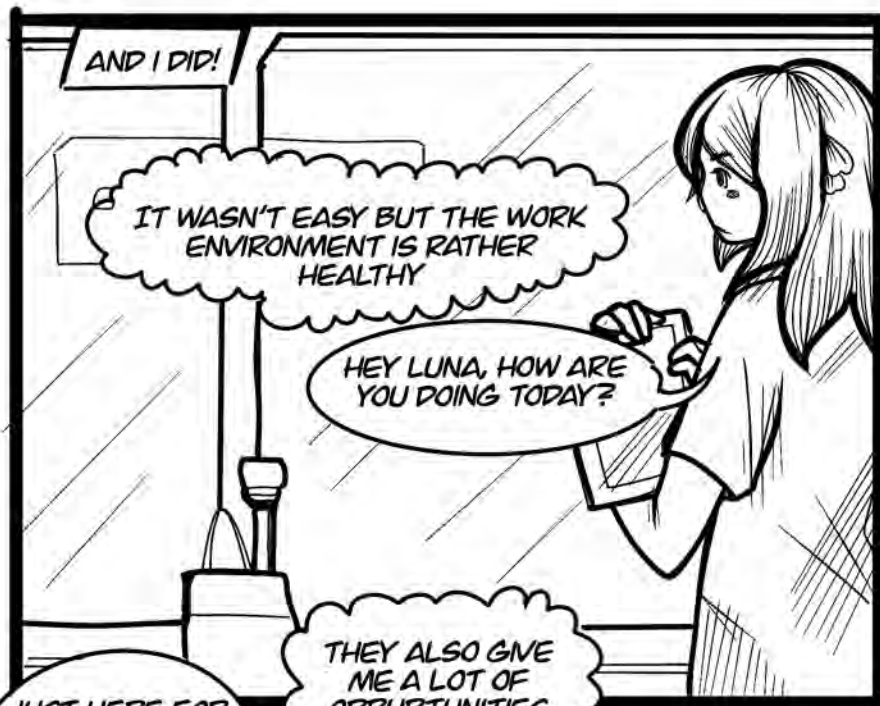


THEY'RE GOING TO DOUBT ME

QUESTION MY ABILITIES

MY EMOTIONAL CAPACITY

-I WILL PROVE MYSELF AGAIN



AND I DID!

IT WASN'T EASY BUT THE WORK ENVIRONMENT IS RATHER HEALTHY

HEY LUNA, HOW ARE YOU DOING TODAY?

THEY ALSO GIVE ME A LOT OF OPPURTUNITIES TO CONDUCT CONSULTS

JUST HERE FOR VACCINATIONS, WILL MISSY BE OKAY? WILL IT HURT HER?

IT'S SIMPLE PROCEDURE SO THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANYTHING TO BE WORRIED ABOUT

WE DO NOT DISCRIMINATE HERE, WE HAVE TO UPHOLD OUR PRINCIPLES OF NURTURING OUR JUNIOR VETS

DOC, DO YOU REALLY THINK SHE WILL BE FINE? SHE DID MENTION SHE HAS A HISTORY OF "CONDITIONS" DURING HER INTERVIEW

SORRY DR AHMAD, WELL, SHE DOES SHOW A LOT OF POTENTIAL



MY FIRST SURGERY WAS VERY WELL GUIDED

ALRIGHT DR. LARA, JUST WTCH AND LEARN AND IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS DON'T HESITATED TO ASK

I'M NOT GONNA LIE DOC, I AM FEELING A LIL NERVOUS

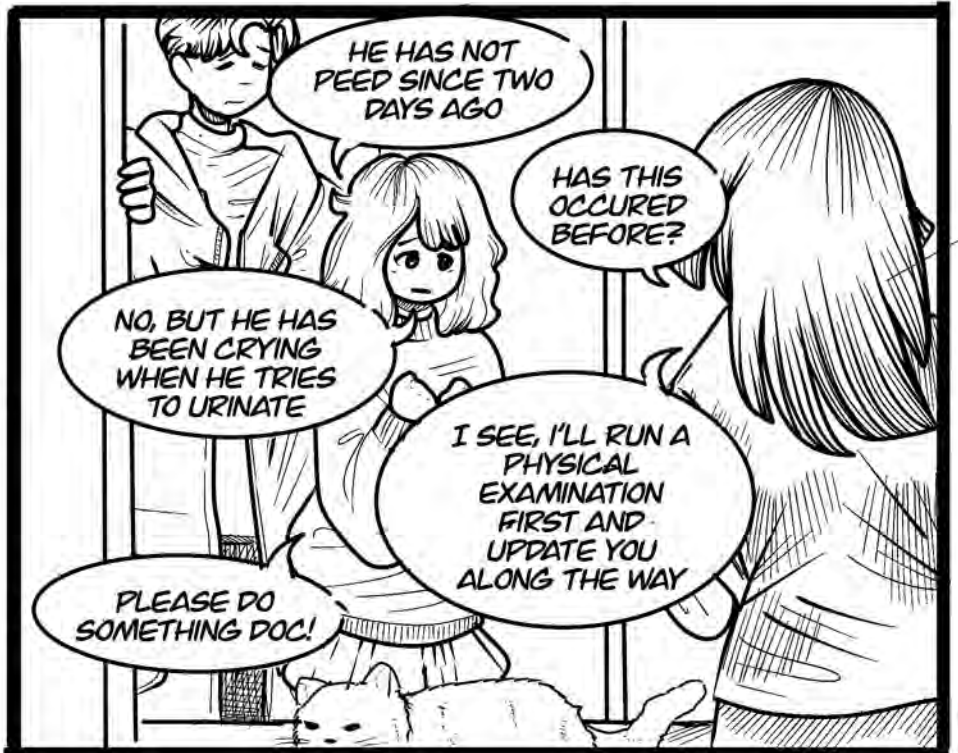
DON'T WORRY, JUST BREATHE THROUGH IT



HELP US! IT'S AN EMERGENCY!



WE WILL GET A DOCTOR TO ATTEND TO YOU SHORTLY



HE HAS NOT PEED SINCE TWO DAYS AGO

HAS THIS OCCURED BEFORE?

NO, BUT HE HAS BEEN CRYING WHEN HE TRIES TO URINATE

I SEE, I'LL RUN A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION FIRST AND UPDATE YOU ALONG THE WAY

PLEASE DO SOMETHING DOC!

IN A COMPETITIVE INDUSTRY...

MONTY HAS BEEN BROUGHT INTO THE SURGICAL PREPARATION ROOM

WILL HE BE OKAY?

BE REST ASSURED, YOU WILL KEEP YOU UPDATED

NURSE, PLEASE PREPARE MONTY FOR A CYSTOTOMY, THE RADIOGRAPH SHOWS THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME SORT OF STONE WITHIN THE BLADDER...

...IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO NURTURE...

ALRIGHT, FIRST WA NEED TO STABILIZE THE CAT

ESTABLISH AN IV PORT FOR VENOUS ACCESS

OKAY STAY STILL MONTY

...AND MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE REGARDLESS OF GENDER OR DISABILITY...

VITALS ARE STABLE FOR NOW DR LARA

THAT'S GOOD, WE WILL PUSH HIM TO SURGERY AFTER

GOOD EVENING MISS, THE SURGERY WAS SUCCESSFUL AND MONTY IS CURRENTLY RECOVERING WELL POST-SURGERY

THIS IS GOOD, THIS IS MANAGEABLE

THAT'S A REALLY BIG STONE

...IS INCLUDED...

GLAD WE ACTUALLY GOT IT OUT

WHAT A RELIEF IT MUST BE FOR HIM

...TO CREATE A FUTURE GENERATION OF CAPABLE VETERINARIANS THAT PRACTICE GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSIVITY

GOOD JOB LARA, I KNEW YOUR POTENTIAL, WE AS A TEAM ARE VERY PROUD OF YOU

HONESTLY DR AHMAD, IF IT WEREN'T FOR A SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND AN INCLUSIVE TEAM THAT BELIEVED IN ME, I WOULD NOT HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO BE ABLE TO PUSH THROUGH

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zara Nadhirah binti Shuhairi

Zara Nadhirah binti Shuhairi is a junior veterinarian from Malaysia who created this comic based on her own experiences during veterinary training. She lives with a hand injury that is not visibly apparent but affects movement in her index finger, particularly during fine motor tasks such as surgery.

Navigating a rather invisible injury challenged her confidence and raised fears about her ability to meet professional expectations. With the support of a supportive school environment, mentors, and friends, she was able to continue pursuing her goal of becoming a veterinarian.

Through this comic, she hopes to raise awareness about Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) and the importance of recognizing invisible challenges in the veterinary profession.

Comic description



Set in the demanding world of veterinary education and clinical practice, this comic explores the often unseen challenges faced by individuals striving to belong in a high-pressure medical profession. Through the journey of a veterinary student navigating personal barriers and institutional expectations, the story highlights the importance of Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), emphasizing resilience, adaptation, and the role of inclusive support in redefining what capability and professionalism truly mean in the veterinary field.

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

 [WOAHAsiaPacific](#)  [@WOAH_Asia](#)  [WorldAnimalHealth](#)

Visit us: woah.org | rr-asia.woah.org

