USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

YOUTH POWER
LEARNING

THE FUTURE IS OURS:

A resource for young leaders on how to address vulnerability among youth in Kenya

SHUJAAZ INC.

INTRODUCTION

The Booklet

This booklet provides a mix of entertainment, information, inspiration, and guidance to launch and sustain peer and community discussions. Conversations that help young people transition from surviving to thriving. Conversations that support youth from needing help and protection to contributing to the improvement of their communities and supporting the next generation of young Kenyans.

The booklet is the result of a Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessment (CSYA) aimed at understanding the challenges facing young Kenyans, based on input from youth and their ideas of possible solutions. The assessment was commissioned in February 2020 by the United States Agency for International Development/Kenya and East Africa (USAID/KEA) and conducted by USAID's YouthPower Learning and Shujaaz, Inc.

The full reports can be found HERE.

The booklet is designed as a resource for young Kenyans to take action. It consists of three elements - all contributing to the story of Kenyan youth vulnerability and the ways to address it:

. Facts on Kenyan Youth - A powerful story is always a mix of hard facts and emotional realities. In this booklet, the statistics about young people in Kenya offers credibility to the overall story and highlights the magnitude of the challenge. More facts can be found in the formal report.

. Stories of Six Youth Personas - The Personas are based on conversations with young Kenyans and represent different types of youth: urban and rural, girls and boys, and younger and older. The persona stories leverage facts and insight to establish empathy with the characters and explain how connections between people and events enforce or counter vulnerability in young people's lives. Each story has five components:
   - Short introduction to the persona accompanied by a photo,
   - Illustration of their life story,
   - Overview of the sources of this persona's vulnerability,
   - Collection of potential solutions for the persona designed by young Kenyans, and
   - Link to a video of a real person represented by the story.

   The stories encourage readers to look critically at what is happening around them, stimulate conversations about important issues, and motivate the search for solutions.

3. Talking Points. Change requires action. The last section provides guidance and talking points on how the issue of youth vulnerability can be described and discussed by youth leaders with their peers, county officials, and adults recognized as youth champions.

Using The Booklet

We recommend the users of the booklet to structure peer and community discussions on youth vulnerability by following these steps:

- hoo e the o th eg ent that o t lo el de ri e o ng eo le in o r o nit .
- hare and di the ill trated tor o the eg ent.
- i the ore v lnera ilitie highlighted in the o i ook and agree on the rioritie hen addre ing o ntering the .
- lore o th-de igned ol tion or the eg ent gge ted in the o i ook and rain tor ho the ol tion an e lo ali ed, in l ding identi ing the a tion , a tor , and re o r e that o need.
- ake a lan or ho o an ork together ith eer or o th ha ion to tart i le enting the agreed on ol tion .

We hope you enjoy the stories and find them useful in your work with and for young people in Kenya.

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YOUTHPOWER LEARNING

SHUJAAZ INC.

FACTS ABOUT YOUTH IN KENYA

This section highlights four facts about young people in Kenya that are critical for grounding your work to create youth-focused and youth-led solutions in your communities.

1: Youth are the majority of Kenya's population.

Sixty percent of Kenyan population, or about 30 million people, are below the age of 25 (Figure 1). Youth aged 15-34 represent 36 percent of the population, which is more than 15 million people. Youth are the present and the future of this country; their aspirations and achievements are already shaping the socio-economic outlook of their communities. Investing in youth must become an immediate priority for all development stakeholders, local and international.

2: Too many youth cannot reach their potential because of poverty, inequality, and abuse.

Nearly 70 percent of Kenyans live in or near poverty. Approximately one-third experience multidimensional poverty (Figure 2), including low levels of schooling, poor health, poor access to water and electricity, etc. Both urban and rural households experience monetary and multidimensional poverty, but rural households tend to suffer more. This situation prevents too many youth from reaching their personal and collective potential.

Figure 1. Population pyramid by age and gender

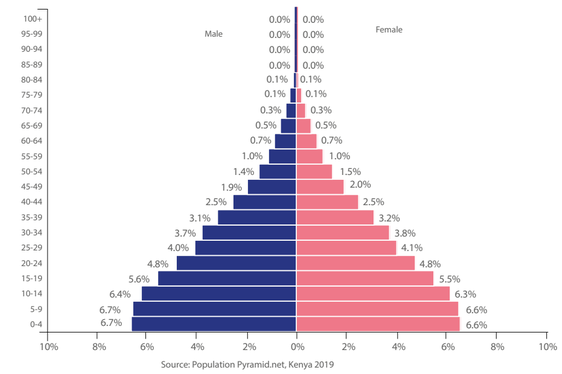
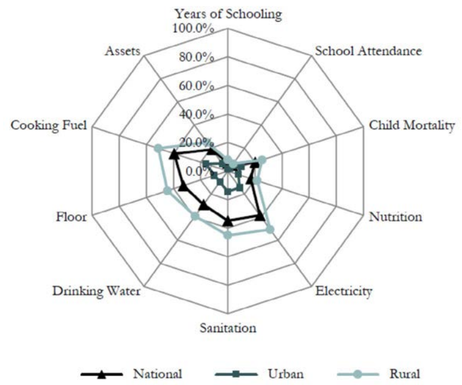


Figure 2. Dimension of poverty/deprivation



3: More young people reside in rural areas, presenting a challenge and an opportunity.

The proportion of youth as part of the population will continue to grow (by age, each new 10-year cohort is slightly larger than the previous one). More youth reside in rural areas. Due to multidimensional poverty at an early age, significant numbers of youth migrate from rural to urban areas in search for educational, social, and income-generating opportunities.

While a large youth population in rural areas present an opportunity to innovate and grow the Kenyan food industry, entrance into this industry for youth is hindered by limited access to land, the lack of startup capital, limited relevant skills and knowledge and the absence of local positive role models and mentors. Additionally, rural youth are harder to reach compared to their urban counterparts; their mobility is also limited, which means initiatives focused on rural youth need to be careful when planning their logistics.

4: Many young Kenyans lack basic education, practical knowledge, and skills to succeed.

Kenya has successfully increased education quality and primary and secondary school enrollment. Youth generally value education. However, one in 10 youth continues to lack formal schooling due to financial or locational barriers. For girls, heavy domestic workloads, menstruation, unintended pregnancies, and early marriages are additional barriers to education. Boys, especially first-borns, are likely to not go to school or dropout to work. In addition to basic education, youth cite the lack of life skills (e.g., financial literacy, communication skills, etc.) and vocational skills as barriers to success. Young people equipped with relevant knowledge and skills are more effective when facing daily challenges and are more likely to take advantage of economic opportunities, which leads to reducing poverty, fostering economic growth, and advancing social development, including gender equality.

Figure 3. Youth distribution by age, gender and urban/rural

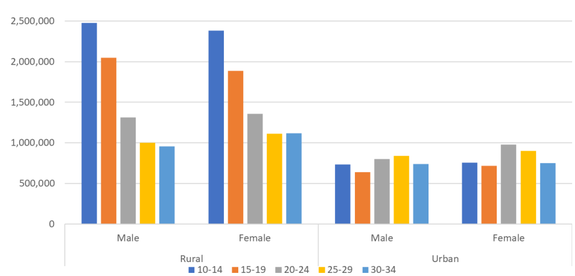
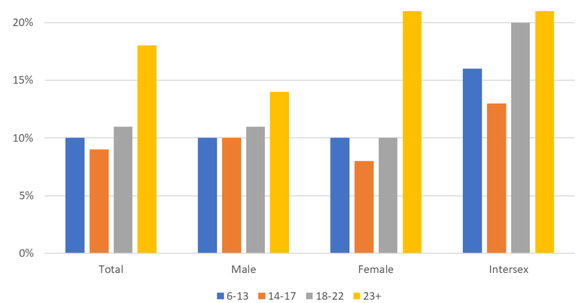


Figure 4. Youth who never attended school by age and sex.



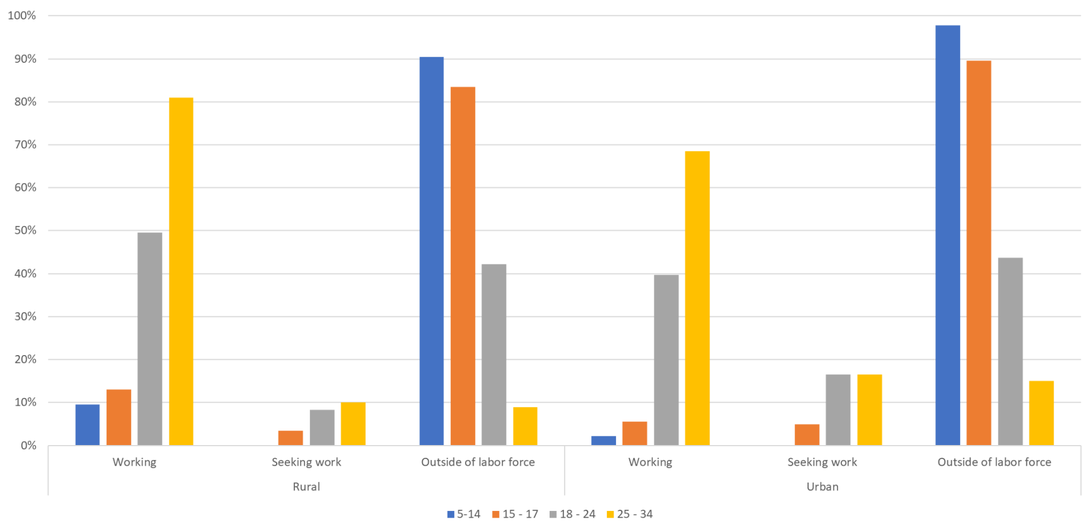
Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census Volume 4: Distribution of Population by Socioeconomic Characteristics (December 2019).
UNICEF. Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Kenya 2017, UNICEF, Nairobi, Kenya. 2018.
British Council. Next Generation Kenya: Listening to the voices of young people. 2018, and UNICEF. Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Kenya 2017, UNICEF, Nairobi, Kenya. 2018.
Ibid.

FACTS ABOUT YOUTH IN KENYA

5: The gap between youth job aspirations and the reality of the labor market is widening.

Nearly one million young people—with various levels of schooling/education—enter Kenya's labor market every year. Yet, less than 10 percent will find full employment, formal or informal, because the market does not create enough jobs to cope with the demand. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, in 2019, the Kenyan economy added 846,300 jobs, of which 767,900 (90.7 percent) were in the informal sector. For nine in 10 young people, micro entrepreneurship (or a hustle) is the only viable solution for earning a living. Youth require multiple "hustles" to make ends meet. Their success is limited by the lack of relevant knowledge and skills, access to capital, and unfriendly regulatory environment. Youth-focused services and policies can help stimulate micro entrepreneurship, which would inject money into the economy and create jobs.

Figure 5. Distribution of Population by Activity and Rural/Urban



6. Young people can transform Kenya for the better if Kenya invests in meaningful, youth-focused and youth-led initiatives.

Healthy, educated, productive, and fully-engaged young people can help break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and are more resilient in the face of individual and societal challenges. Meaningful investment in young people includes protecting their human rights and ensuring their access to quality education and health care, including sexual and reproductive health services. It also includes access to dignified income-generating opportunities whether through employment or entrepreneurship. Such conscious investment will enable today's youth to improve their own lives while creating opportunities for the lives of future generations of Kenyans.

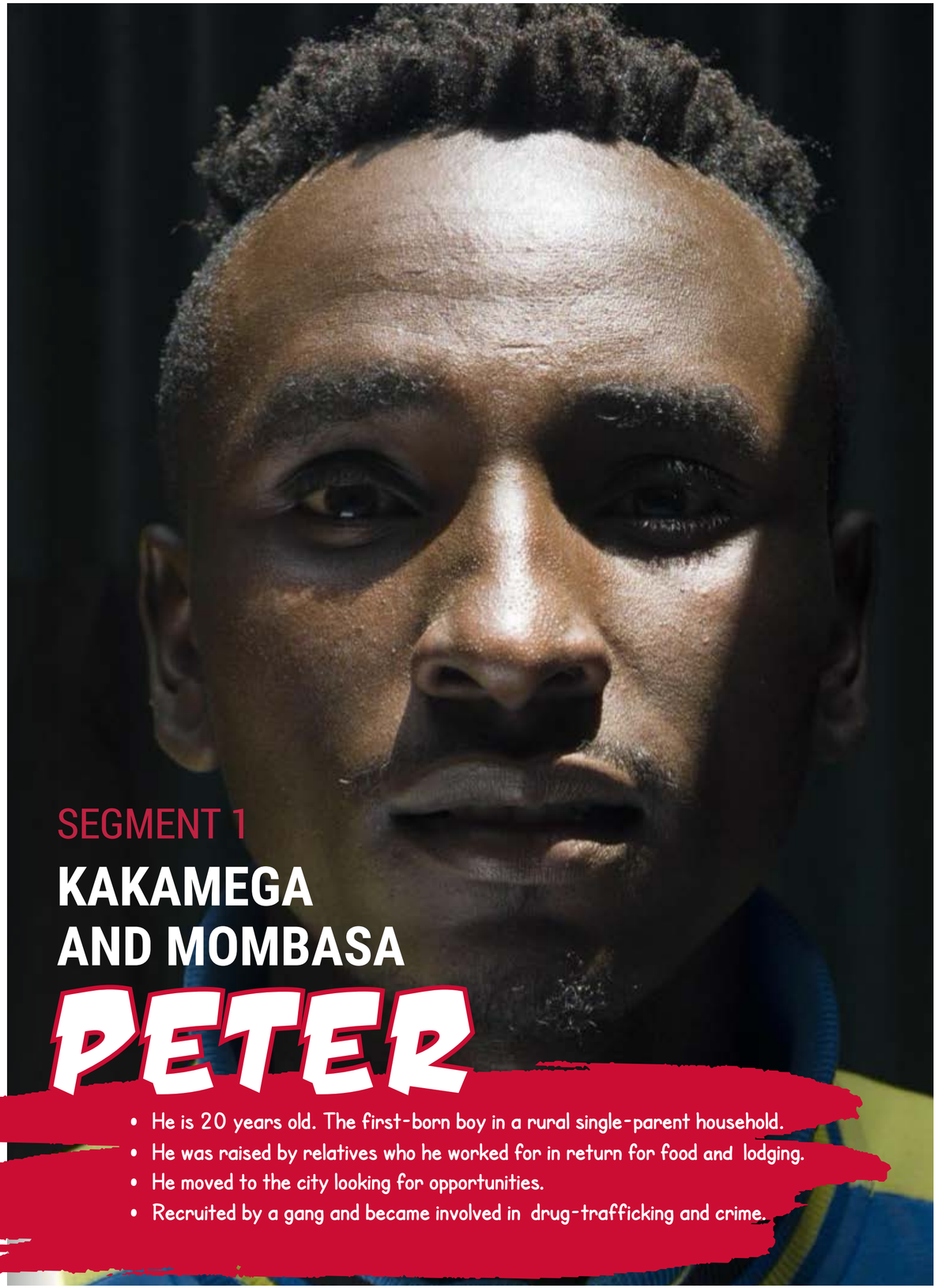
7. Young people are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Despite increased poverty, youth want to be actively engaged in finding solutions in their communities.

In a recent poll (August 2020), 71 er ent of young people said they earned less than $3 last week, up from 40 er ent in a similar survey in 2019. event er ent said they went to bed hungry on at least one-night the week before the survey. With schools, universities and TVET institutions closed, and youth-run businesses slowing down, youth are increasingly idle, which leads to some of them exploring micro entrepreneurship (10 er ent of youth in the SMS survey) even though they were not doing or planning t do it before the pandemic. Despite their overall dire situation, young people continue to aspire to be the champions and change agents in their communities; in the SMS survey conducted in July 2020, 55 er ent of young people said giving back to their communities and mentoring others is what they consider to be the ultimate sign of success. Capitalizing on the energy and ideas of young people at this time, can help Kenya and its youth recover faster with a stronger sense of national and communal identity.

World Bank, Kenya Social Protection and Jobs Programs Public Expenditure Review, 27 June 2019
World Bank, Kenya Social Protection and Jobs Programs Public Expenditure Review, 27 June 2019
https://citizentv.co.ke/business/kenyas-economic-growth-slows-to-5-4pc-as-formal-job-creation-shrinks-331163/

SIX YOUTH PERSONAS

This part of the booklet contains life stories of six composite personas that represent young people in six counties in Kenya: Nakuru, Nairobi, Kakamega, Isiolo, Mombasa, and HomaBay. While the study was only conducted in these six counties, the stories bear many similarities with the struggles and aspirations of young people across the country.



SEGMENT 1

KAKAMEGA AND MOMBASA

PETER

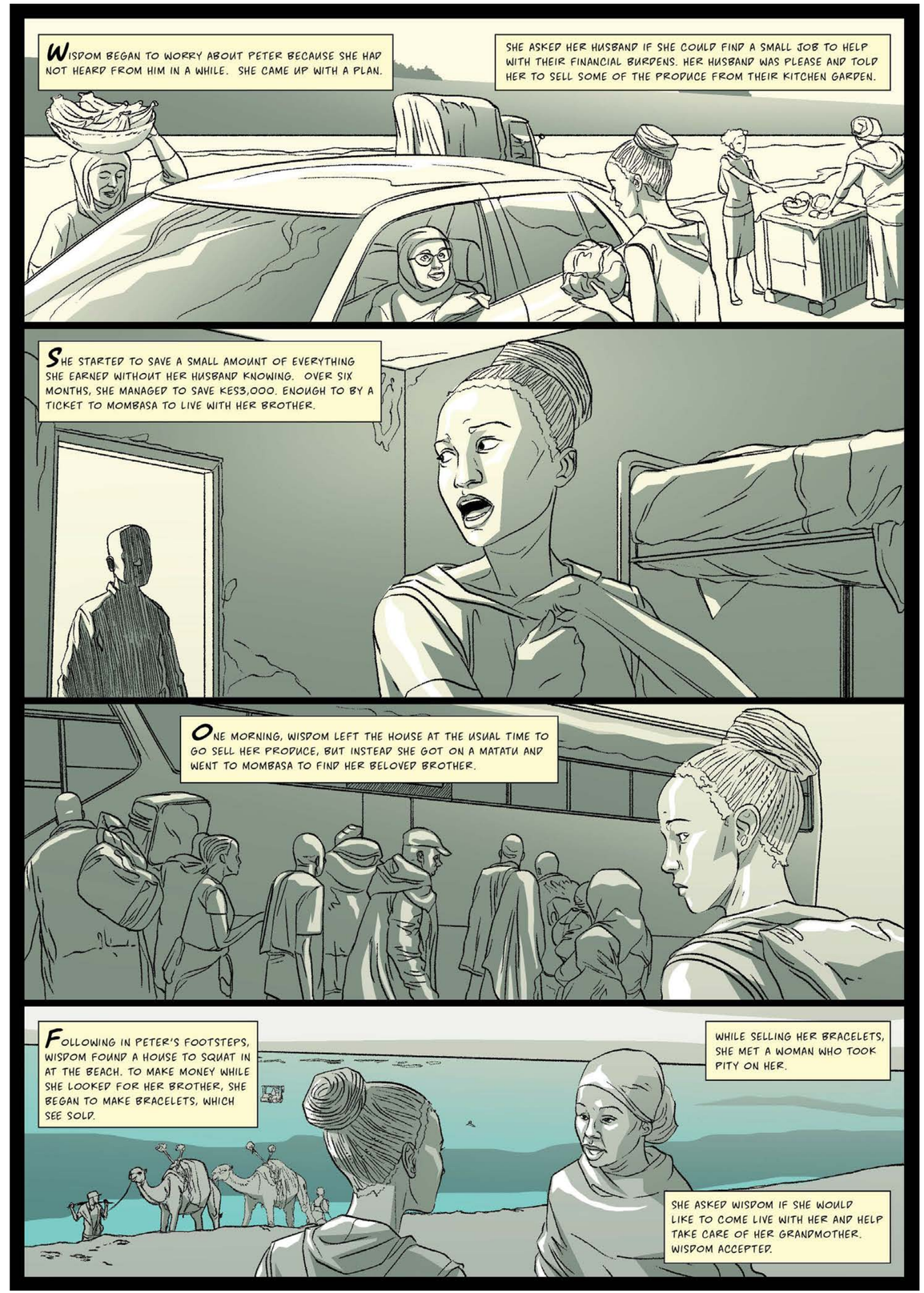
- He is 20 years old. The first-born boy in a rural single-parent household.
- He was raised by relatives who he worked for in return for food and lodging.
- He moved to the city looking for opportunities.
- Recruited by a gang and became involved in drug-trafficking and crime.

SEGMENT 2

KAKAMEGA AND MOMBASA

WISDOM

- She is 18 years old. Second-born girl from a single-parent family.
- She was born in rural Kakamega. Moved to urban Mombasa.
- She was married off as a teenager.



PETER'S VULNERABILITIES

SOCIAL: Children in a single-parent household tend to have weaker social networks, limited meaningful connections.

FINANCIAL: Children in a single-parent household, especially in rural areas, are more likely to be raised by relatives and/or be encouraged to start earning money at an early age and live independently.

EDUCATIONAL: Children raised by relatives often complete primary education only or less.

LEGAL: Poor parents are less likely to request a birth certificate for their children, making it difficult for the children to get a National ID when they reach 18 years old.

LOCATIONAL: In Isolo and Mombasa, young people are recruited by criminal and violent extremist groups (i.e., criminal gangs, drug traffickers, and Al-Shabaab).

PHYSICAL: Homeless people are more likely to be a subject to physical harm from weather, unclean water and food, poor environmental conditions, police and gang violence

PSYCHOLOGICAL: Loneliness, stress

WISDOM'S VULNERABILITIES

SOCIAL: Children in a single-parent household tend to have weaker social networks, limited meaningful connections.

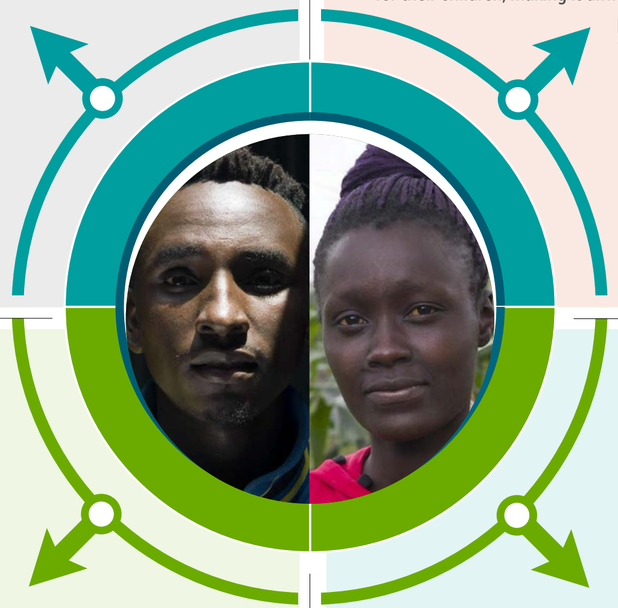
FINANCIAL: Children in a single-parent household, especially in rural areas, are more likely to be married off early.

FINANCIAL: Lack of access to start-up capital and safe savings options are key barriers to young people starting and sustaining micro enterprises and planning for the future.

FINANCIAL: Limited access to sanitary pads creates challenges with education for girls and a the lack of money to purchase them may lead to transactional sex/relationships.

EDUCATIONAL: Teenage marriages and teenage pregnancies lead to girls dropping out of school.

LEGAL: Poor parents are less likely to request a birth certificate for their children, making it difficult for the children to get a National ID when they reach 18 years old.



YOUTH-DESIGNED SOLUTIONS

SOCIAL: Youth/peer support groups and networks can help young people come together and encourage/empower each other during difficult times.

SOCIAL: Role models, successful young people, should be integrated in the committees developing youth-focused activities at sub-county levels

EDUCATIONAL: Youth require vocational and skill training (e.g., tailoring, plumbing, barbering, bakery, carpentry, etc.).

EDUCATIONAL: Youth forums can help young people educate their parents/caregivers on the importance of education and mentorship.

LEGAL: Parents/caregivers need to be educated on the value of birth certificates and National ID through via awareness campaigns.

PHYSICAL: It might be good to give special ID card to homeless young people, so that they are given preferential treatment when applying for jobs.

PSYCHOLOGICAL: Organized town hall meetings may be helpful for young people dealing with stress and depression, allowing them to share their challenges with others and to introduce peer-to-peer and counseling sessions.

YOUTH-DESIGNED SOLUTIONS

SOCIAL: Youth/peer support groups and networks can help young people come together and encourage/empower each other during difficult times.

EDUCATIONAL: Youth forums can help young people educate their parents/caregivers on the importance of education and mentorship.

FINANCIAL: Introduction of youth-focused soft loans for business startup or helping youth organize into groups to access government loans might be a solution for some of the startup challenges for youth.

FINANCIAL: Youth groups can become a channel for distributing sanitary pads, aside from a school nurse.

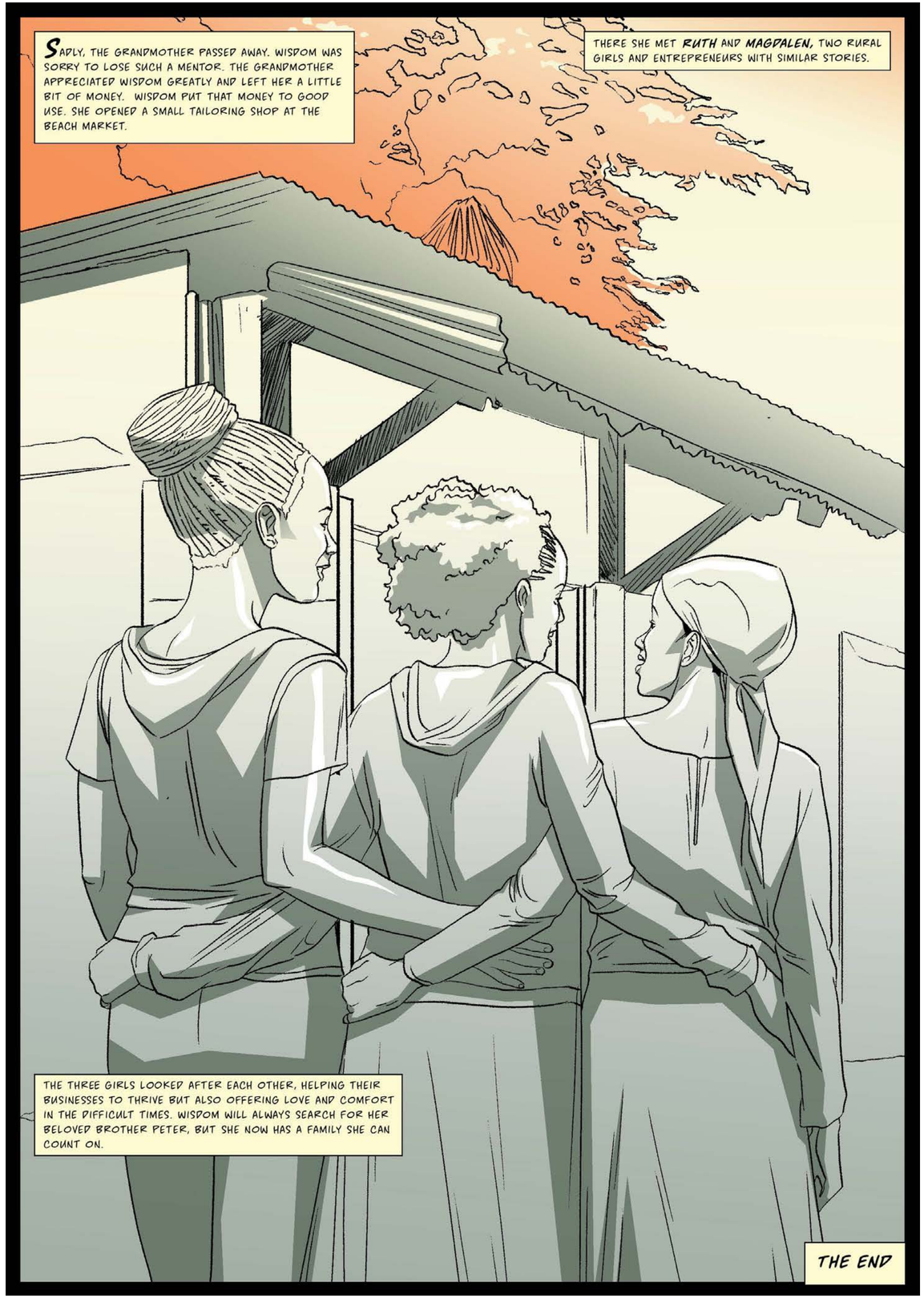
LEGAL: Parents/caregivers need to be educated on the value of birth certificates and National ID through via awareness campaigns.

PHYSICAL: It might be good to give special ID card to homeless young people so that they are given preferential treatment when applying for jobs.

PSYCHOLOGICAL: For young people dealing with stress and depressions it would be helpful to organize town hall meetings to share their challenges with other youth, and introduce peer to peer and counseling sessions.

PETER VIDEO
Click here to watch Peter on YouTube

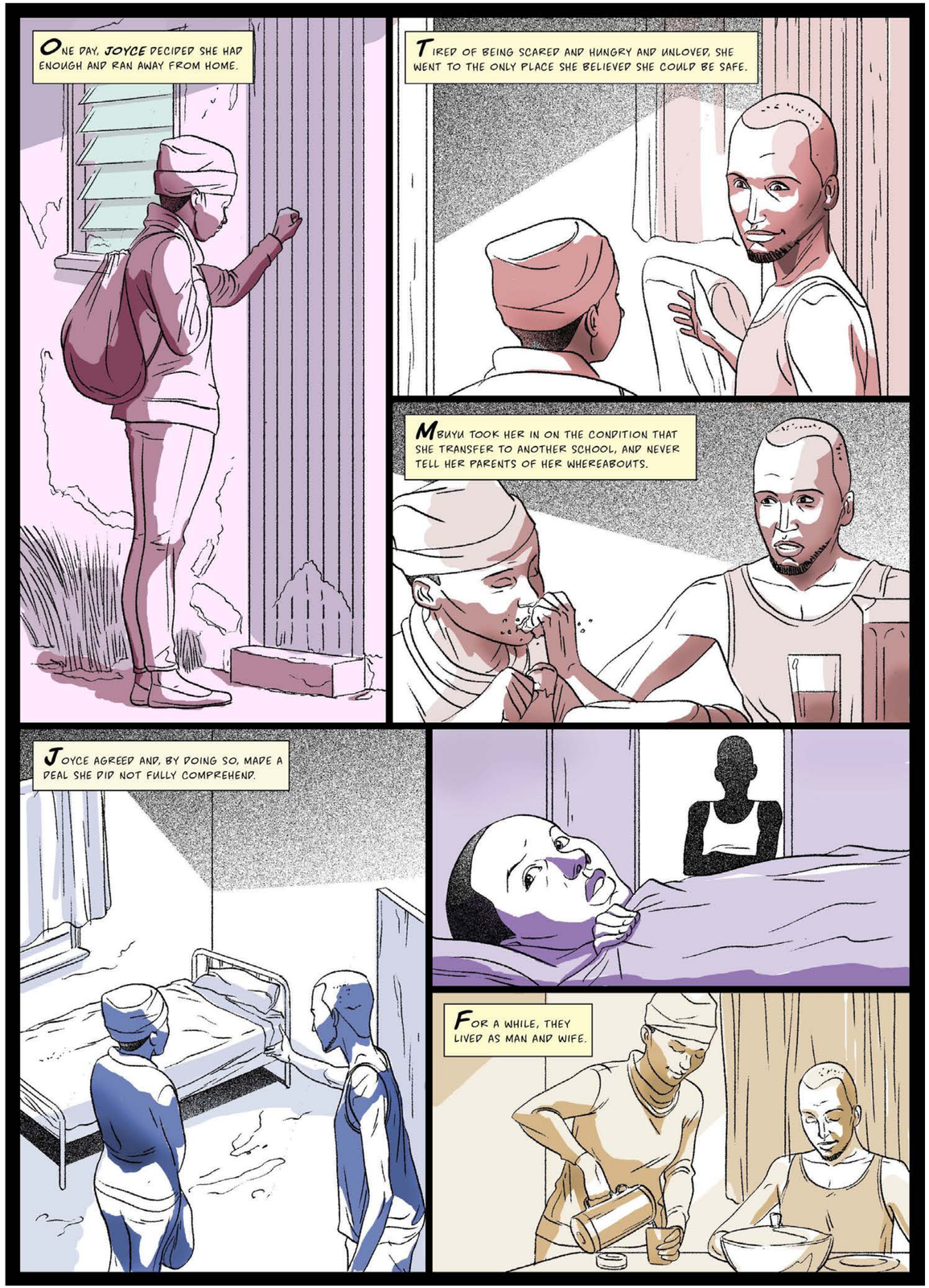
WISDOM VIDEO
Click here to watch Wisdom on YouTube


SADLY, THE GRANDMOTHER PASSED AWAY. WISDOM WAS SORRY TO LOSE SUCH A MENTOR. THE GRANDMOTHER APPRECIATED WISDOM GREATLY AND LEFT HER A LITTLE BIT OF MONEY. WISDOM PUT THAT MONEY TO GOOD USE. SHE OPENED A SMALL TAILORING SHOP AT THE BEACH MARKET.
THERE SHE MET RUTH AND MAGDALEN, TWO RURAL GIRLS AND ENTREPRENEURS WITH SIMILAR STORIES.
THE THREE GIRLS LOOKED AFTER EACH OTHER, HELPING THEIR BUSINESSES TO THRIVE BUT ALSO OFFERING LOVE AND COMFORT IN THE DIFFICULT TIMES. WISDOM WILL ALWAYS SEARCH FOR HER BELOVED BROTHER PETER, BUT SHE NOW HAS A FAMILY SHE CAN COUNT ON.
THE END

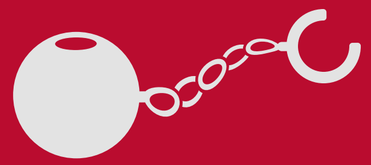
SEGMENT 3
HOMABAY

JOYCE

- Joyce is 18 years old. Lives in rural homabay, where she was born.
- She was born into a troubled family and exposed to domestic violence from an early age.
- She left home to be with a man, who left her when she got pregnant.



JOYCE'S VULNERABILITIES



SOCIAL: Children from broken homes might be ostracized by communities and peers.

PHYSICAL: Exposure to domestic violence at home, especially in households with substance abuse.

FINANCIAL: Limited access to sanitary pads creates challenges with education for girls and a the lack of money to purchase them may lead to transactional sex/relationships.

FINANCIAL: The lack of access to start up capital hinders young people's ability to become independent through micro entrepreneurship.

EDUCATIONAL: The lack of sanitary pads, teenage marriages, and teenage pregnancies lead to girls dropping out of school.

PSYCHOLOGICAL: Girls who do not have proper support during pregnancies, delivery and the first 1,000 days of a child's life, are more likely to experience maternal mental health issues.

OCCUPATIONAL: mall jobs with little pay are looked down at by the society further deepening the divide between youth and the community.

YOUTH-DESIGNED SOLUTIONS

PHYSICAL: Introduce counselling programs for people facing domestic violence, counselling should be empathetic rather than sympathetic.

FINANCIAL: Youth groups can become a channel for distributing sanitary pads, aside from a school nurse.

FINANCIAL: Youth need to be trained on financial literacy, including how to manage their finances, develop a saving culture, and overall use their finances wisely.

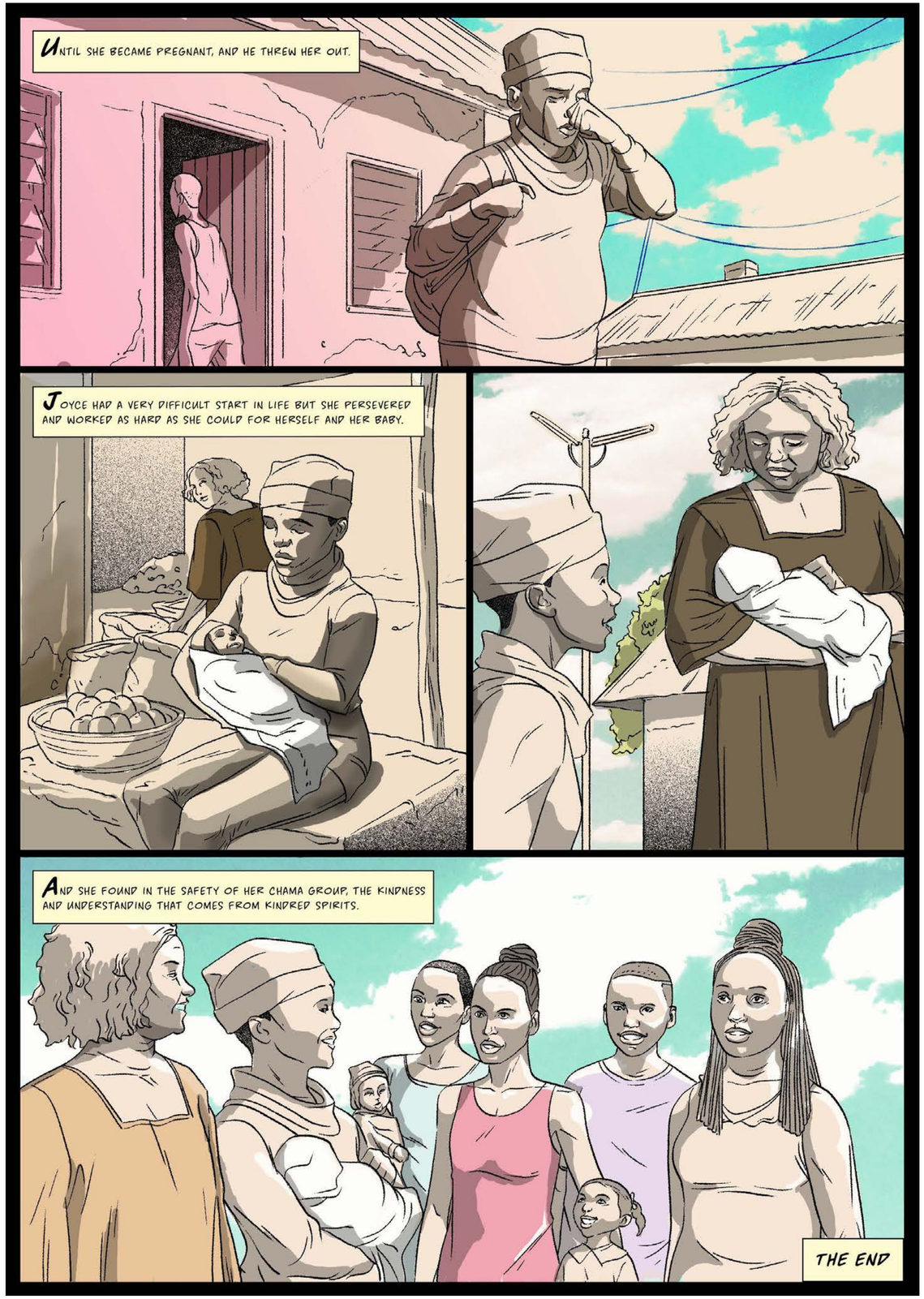
FINANCIAL: It is important to offer young people appropriate loan products and to use digital loan platforms to advise on starting and running a business (e.g., Mazao).

EDUCATIONAL: Introduce comprehensive sex education for both boys and girls, while they are in school.

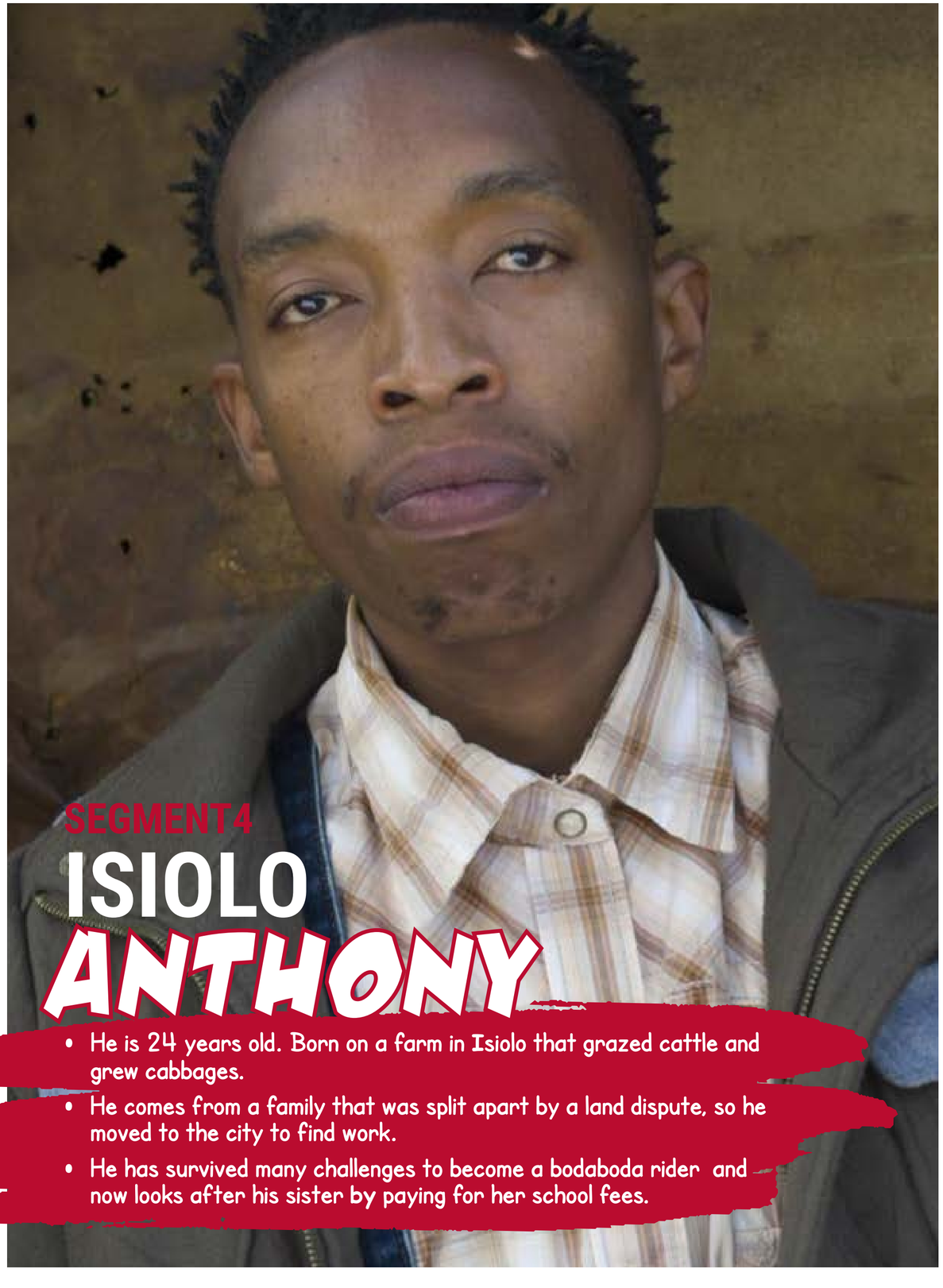
EDUCATIONAL: Create awareness among young mothers on the importance of education; encourage them to go back to school after giving birth.

PSYCHOLOGICAL: Create youth support centers in strategic locations (e.g., market places), where people can come together and talk about the issues they are facing, give each other psycho-social support and share ideas on how to generate income.

OCCUPATIONAL: Change community mindsets by educating people about the value of blue collar jobs. Youth should be at the forefront of this effort, including at informal meet-ups and peer-to-peer sessions.


UNTIL SHE BECAME PREGNANT, AND HE THREW HER OUT.
JOYCE HAD A VERY DIFFICULT START IN LIFE BUT SHE PERSEVERED AND WORKED AS HARD AS SHE COULD FOR HERSELF AND HER BABY.
AND SHE FOUND IN THE SAFETY OF HER CHAMA GROUP, THE KINDNESS AND UNDERSTANDING THAT COMES FROM KINDRED SPIRITS.
THE END

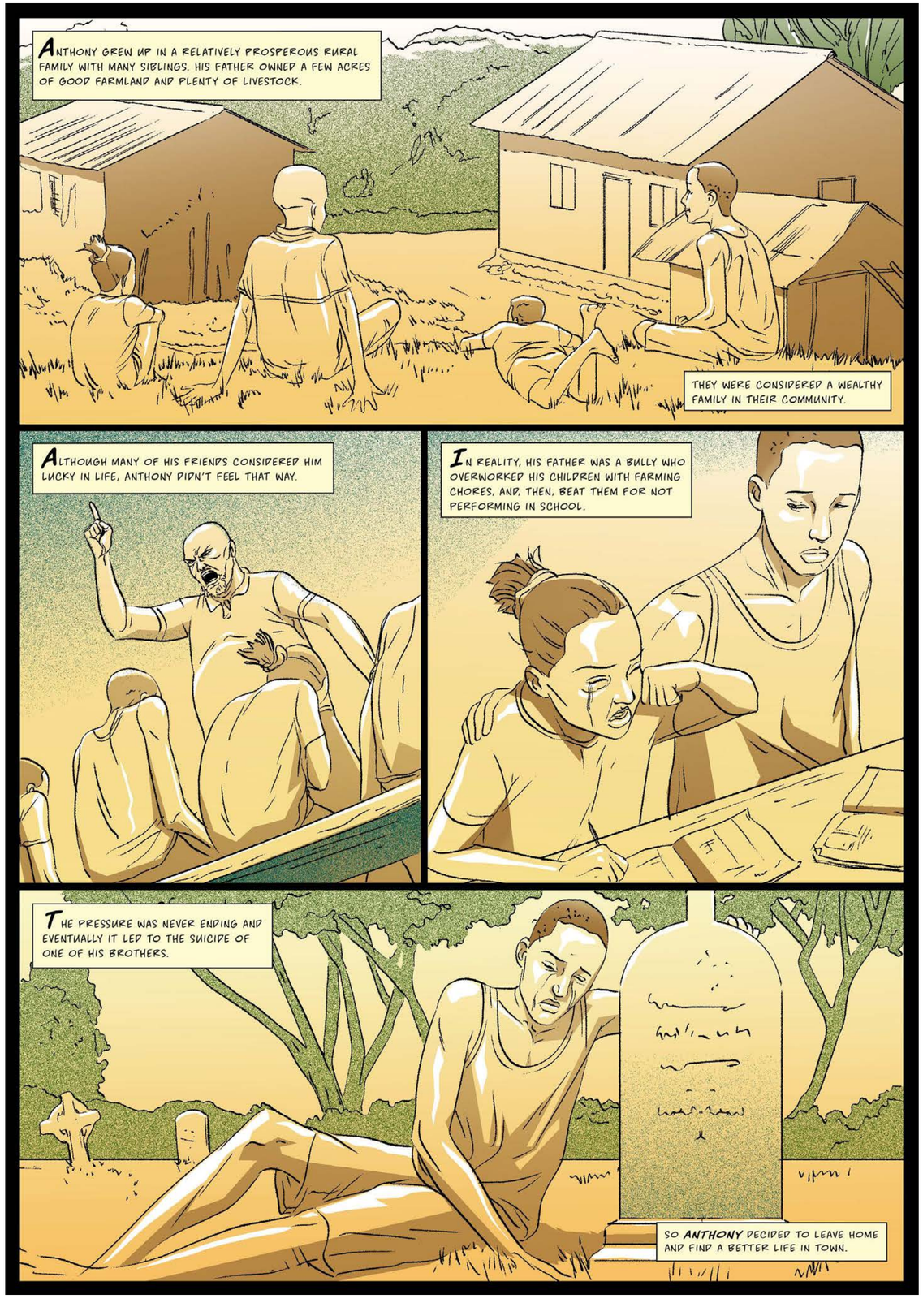
JOYCE VIDEO
Click here to watch Joyce on YouTube

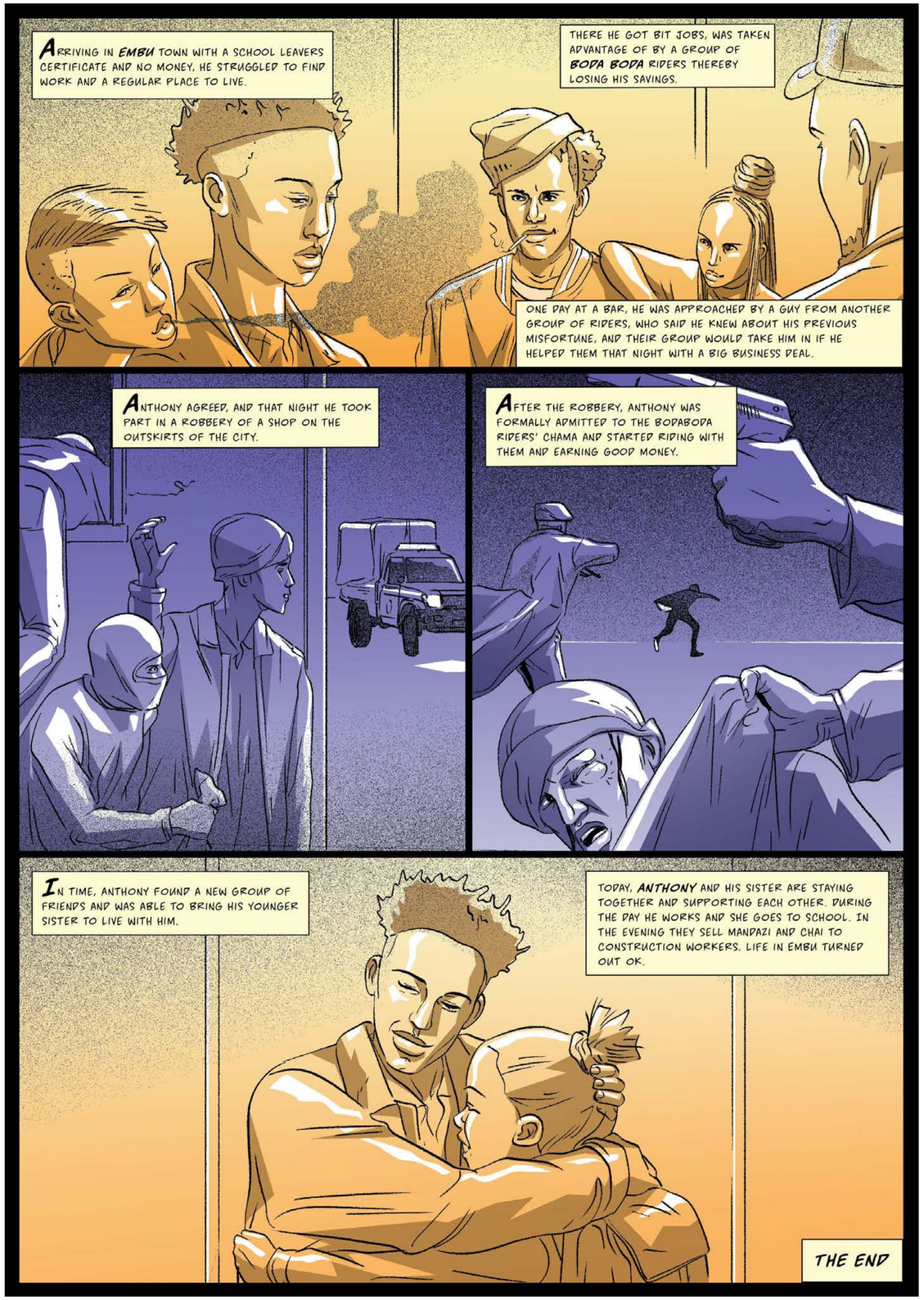


SEGMENT4

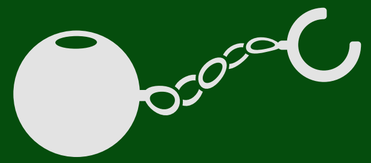
ISIOLO ANTHONY

- He is 24 years old. Born on a farm in Isiolo that grazed cattle and grew cabbages.
- He comes from a family that was split apart by a land dispute, so he moved to the city to find work.
- He has survived many challenges to become a bodaboda rider and now looks after his sister by paying for her school fees.





ANTHONY'S VULNERABILITIES



PHYSICAL: In agricultural areas, children can become victims of family disputes over land.

SOCIAL: In Isiolo specifically, children might be engaged in family businesses (cattle rearing and farm work) and can get involved in tribal disputes, which hinders their ability to develop meaningful networks with peers and adults in their areas.

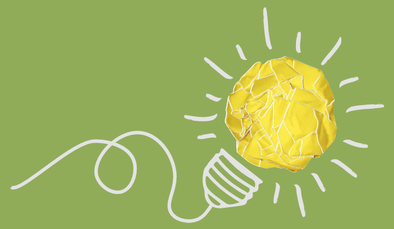
DEMOGRAPHIC: In large rural households, first-born sons are expected to start working early and help with household upkeep.

LEGAL: Young people can become exposed to criminal activities – as victims or as a right-of-passage to be accepted by a particular group.

FINANCIAL: Across the country, there is shortage of jobs for young people, and shortage of organizations linking young people with appropriate job opportunities.

OCCUPATIONAL: In rural areas (specifically Isolo), child labor is common, including on construction sites.

YOUTH-DESIGNED SOLUTIONS



FINANCIAL: Youth need to be trained on financial literacy, including how to manage their finances, develop a saving culture, manage business loans, and develop entrepreneurial skills

FINANCIAL: Youth need to set up their own youth chamas, where they can make savings and borrow.

FINANCIAL: Youth need to be organized in groups, so they can access youth funds and mentors.

EDUCATIONAL: Develop mentorship programs, where home-grown mentors can share their success journey and give advice to youth.

DEMOGRAPHIC: Educate parents about the value of education for all of their children, introduce bursaries to assist children from large families to attain at least high school education.

OCCUPATIONAL: Educate children and youth on their rights, engage community leaders and religious leaders in reinforcing children rights as related to child labor.

OCCUPATIONAL AND FINANCIAL: Assist young people in getting access to land to enable them earn agricultural income and reduce rural-to-urban migration.

LEGAL AND SOCIAL: Organize youth groups around community leaders/mentors to monitor and report on criminal activities in their areas to relevant authorities.

ANTHONY VIDEO

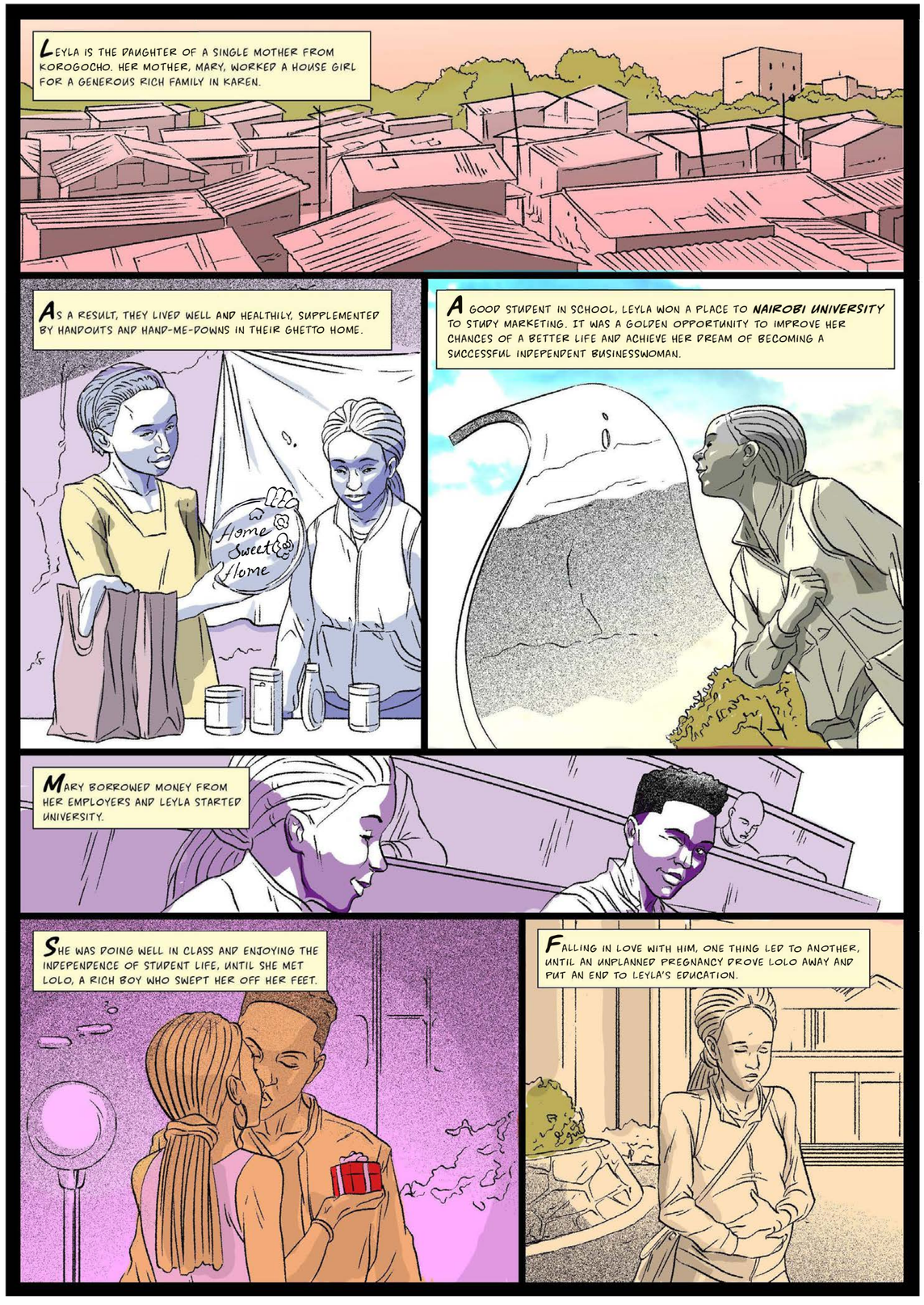
Click here to watch Anthony on YouTube

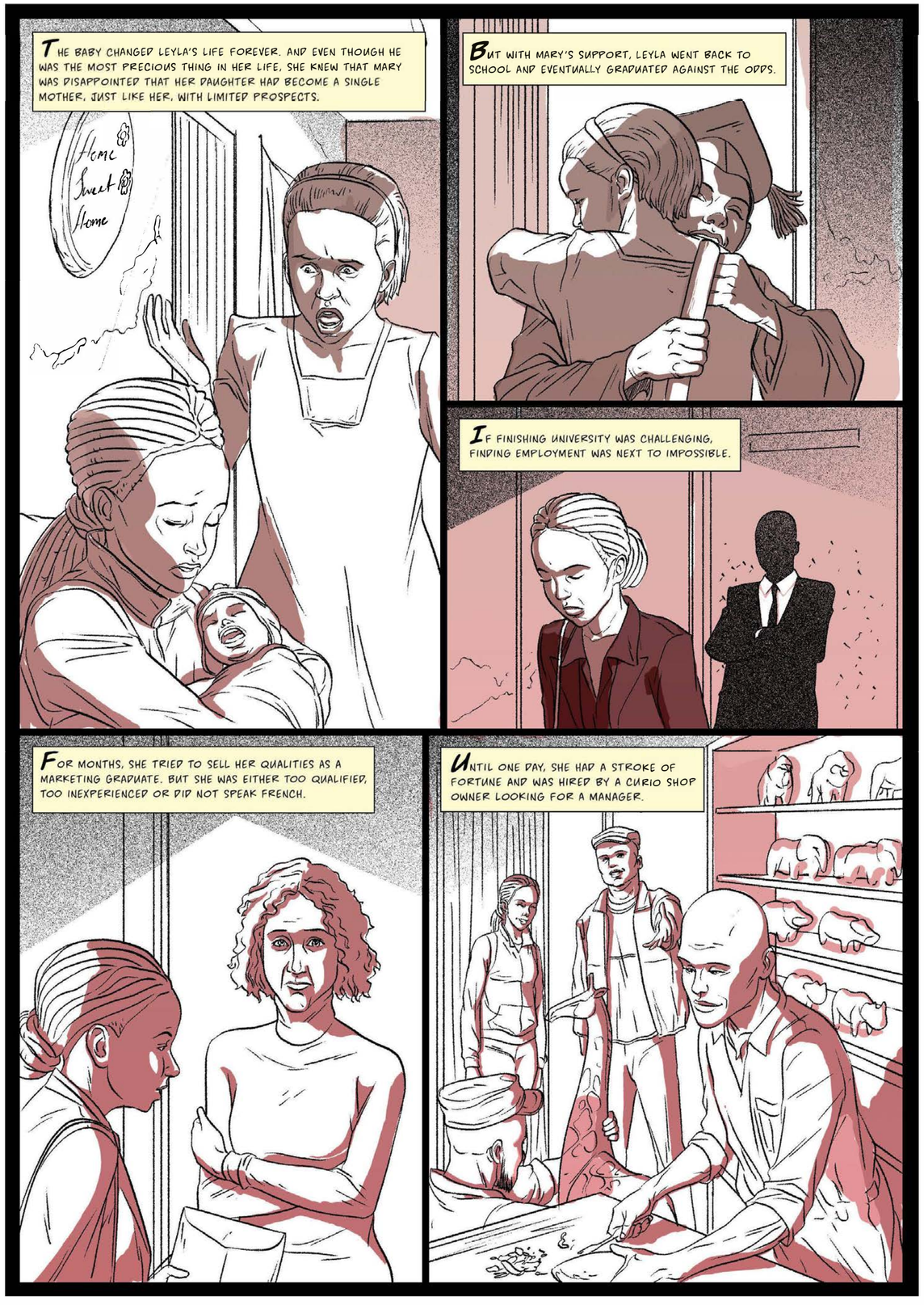
SEGMENT 5

NAIROBI

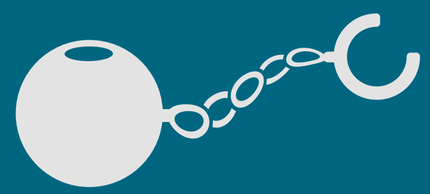
LEYLA

- She is 26 years old. Grew up in Korogocho in Nairobi with her single mother.
- She went to the University of Nairobi to pursue a career in marketing but is now a carpenter selling wooden products.
- She is a single mother and has two children, who she provides for on her own.


LEYLA IS THE DAUGHTER OF A SINGLE MOTHER FROM KOROGOCHO. HER MOTHER, MARY, WORKED A HOUSE GIRL FOR A GENEROUS RICH FAMILY IN KAREN.
AS A RESULT, THEY LIVED WELL AND HEALTHILY, SUPPLEMENTED BY HANDOUTS AND HAND-ME-DOWNS IN THEIR GHETTO HOME.
Home Sweet Home
A GOOD STUDENT IN SCHOOL, LEYLA WON A PLACE TO NAIROBI UNIVERSITY TO STUDY MARKETING. IT WAS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE HER CHANCES OF A BETTER LIFE AND ACHIEVE HER DREAM OF BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL INDEPENDENT BUSINESSWOMAN.
MARY BORROWED MONEY FROM HER EMPLOYERS AND LEYLA STARTED UNIVERSITY.
SHE WAS DOING WELL IN CLASS AND ENJOYING THE INDEPENDENCE OF STUDENT LIFE, UNTIL SHE MET LOLO, A RICH BOY WHO SWEPT HER OFF HER FEET.
FALLING IN LOVE WITH HIM, ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER, UNTIL AN UNPLANNED PREGNANCY DROVE LOLO AWAY AND PUT AN END TO LEYLA'S EDUCATION.


THE BABY CHANGED LEYLA'S LIFE FOREVER. AND EVEN THOUGH HE WAS THE MOST PRECIOUS THING IN HER LIFE, SHE KNEW THAT MARY WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT HER DAUGHTER HAD BECOME A SINGLE MOTHER, JUST LIKE HER, WITH LIMITED PROSPECTS.
Home Sweet Home
BUT WITH MARY'S SUPPORT, LEYLA WENT BACK TO SCHOOL AND EVENTUALLY GRADUATED AGAINST THE ODDS.
IF FINISHING UNIVERSITY WAS CHALLENGING, FINDING EMPLOYMENT WAS NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE.
FOR MONTHS, SHE TRIED TO SELL HER QUALITIES AS A MARKETING GRADUATE. BUT SHE WAS EITHER TOO QUALIFIED, TOO INEXPERIENCED OR DID NOT SPEAK FRENCH.
UNTIL ONE DAY, SHE HAD A STROKE OF FORTUNE AND WAS HIRED BY A CURIO SHOP OWNER LOOKING FOR A MANAGER.

LEYLA'S VULNERABILITIES



SOCIAL: Children in a single-parent household tend to have weaker social networks, limited meaningful connections.

SOCIAL: Familitism and nepotism at the workplace make it difficult for young people to be considered for jobs.

EDUCATIONAL: There is a misalignment between attained education and job opportunities available in the market.

EDUCATIONAL: Young people need practical/ vocational skills training.

EDUCATIONAL: The lack of comprehensive sexual education means young girls do not fully understand their period, the hormonal transition, how they get pregnant, etc.

EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL: Youth complain about the lack of role models and proper mentors.

LOCATIONAL: Exposure to violence in informal settlements can lead to a number of mental and physical health issues.

LOCATIONAL: There is strong discrimination in the job market, social relationships and education because of the background linking a person to an informal settlement.

LEGAL: The lack of formal structures supporting micro entrepreneurship , exposure to corruption/ bribery make it difficult for youth to be successful in entrepreneurship.

YOUTH-DESIGNED SOLUTIONS

EDUCATIONAL: In-school and community career counseling can help young people better understand their career choices.

EDUCATIONAL: Young people need more targeted technical and vocational training, including entrepreneurship.

EDUCATION: Introduce comprehensive sexual education at school.

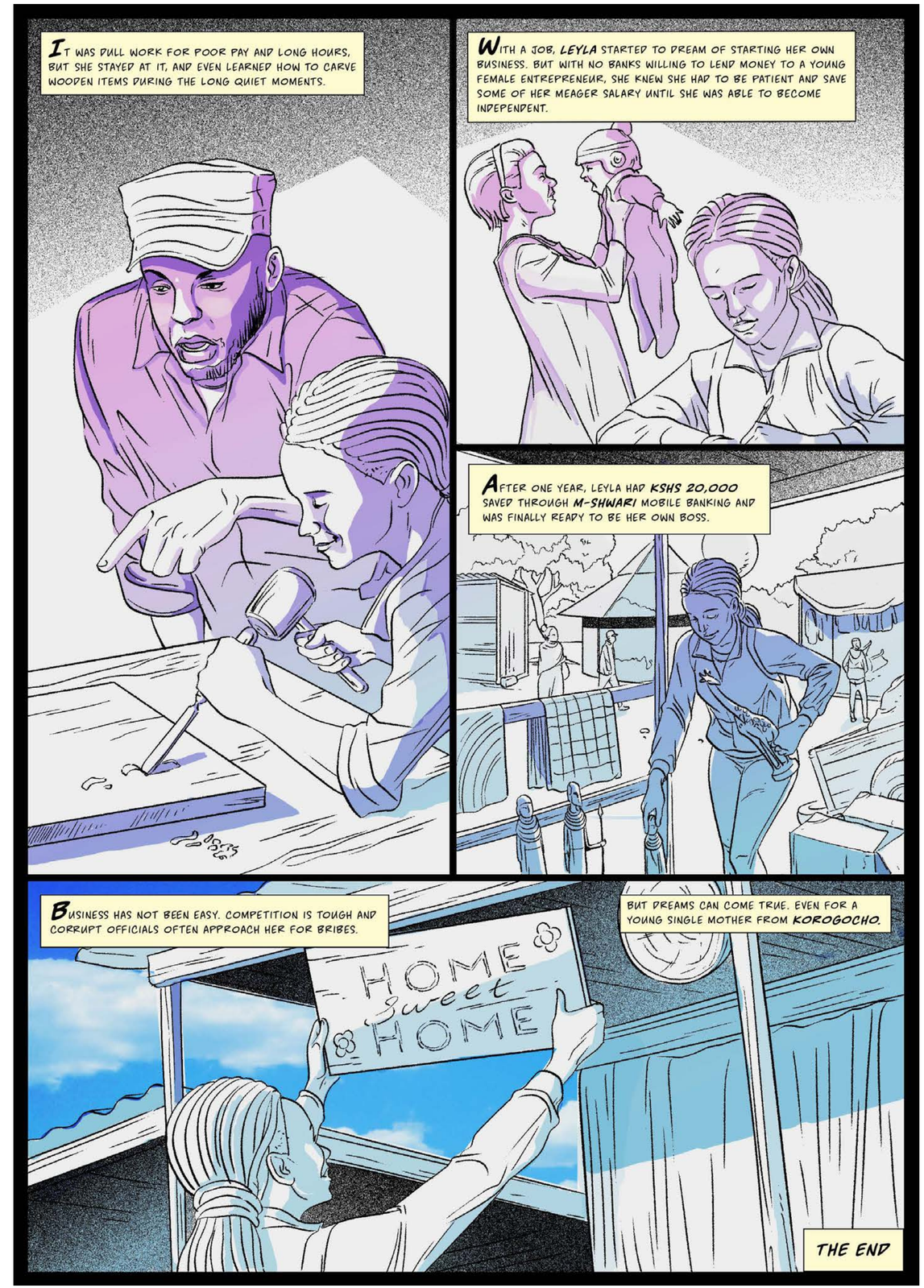
SOCIAL: Organize youth meet-ups for educational purposes and mentorship opportunities (*e.g.*, peer-to-peer and adult-to-youth).

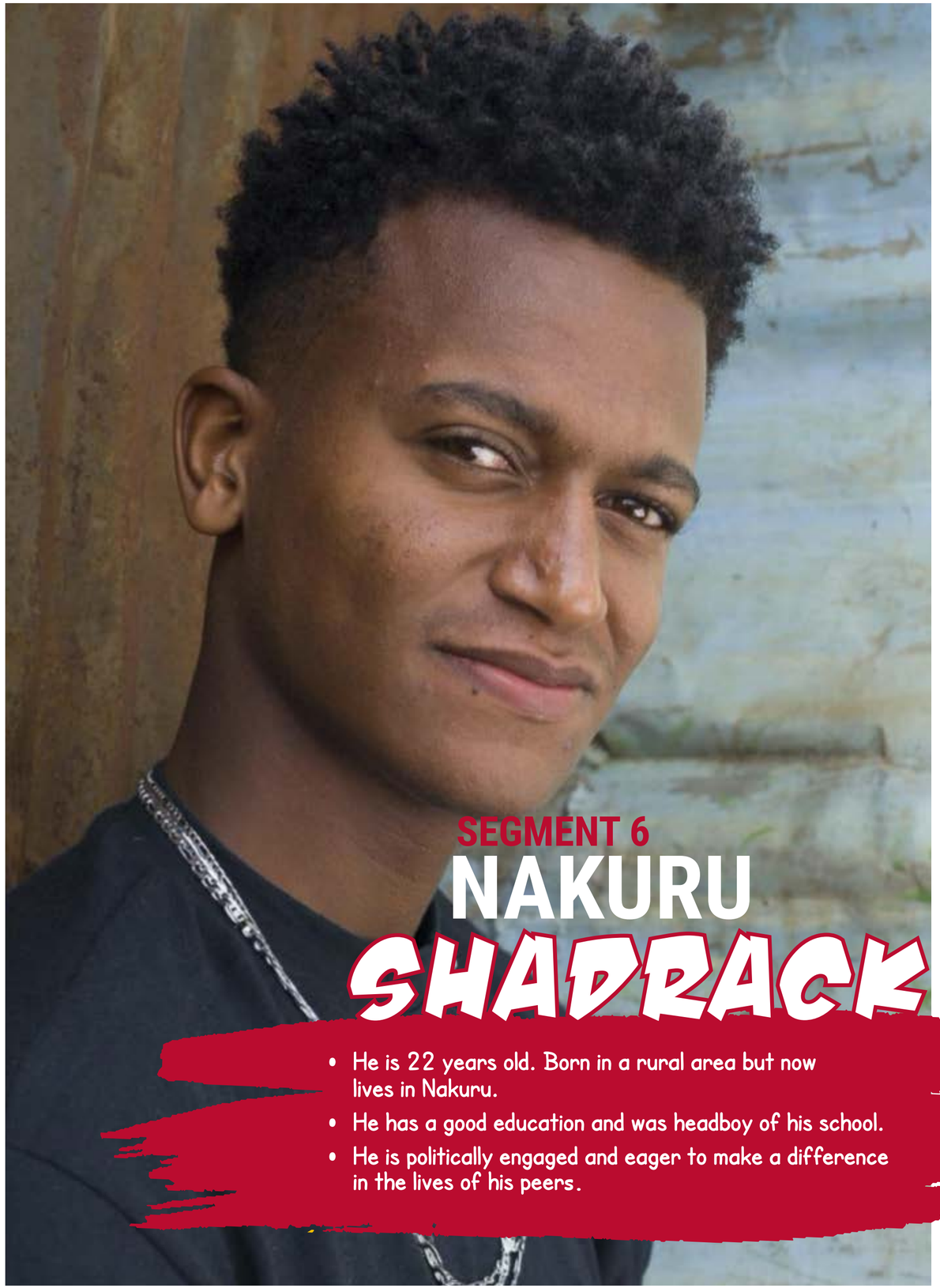
SOCIAL: Youth suggested organizing cultural events and mtaani groups (neighborhood groups) for peer networking and mentorship.

LOCATIONAL: There is a need in a community awareness campaign to highlight that living in slums does not mean one is a criminal.

LOCATIONAL: It might be helpful to introduce cultural exchanges though meetings, sports, social media platforms, at schools and enable mingling of ghetto youths with wealthy youth, so they can learn from each other.

LEGAL: Advocate for legal and financial structures to support youth entrepreneurship.

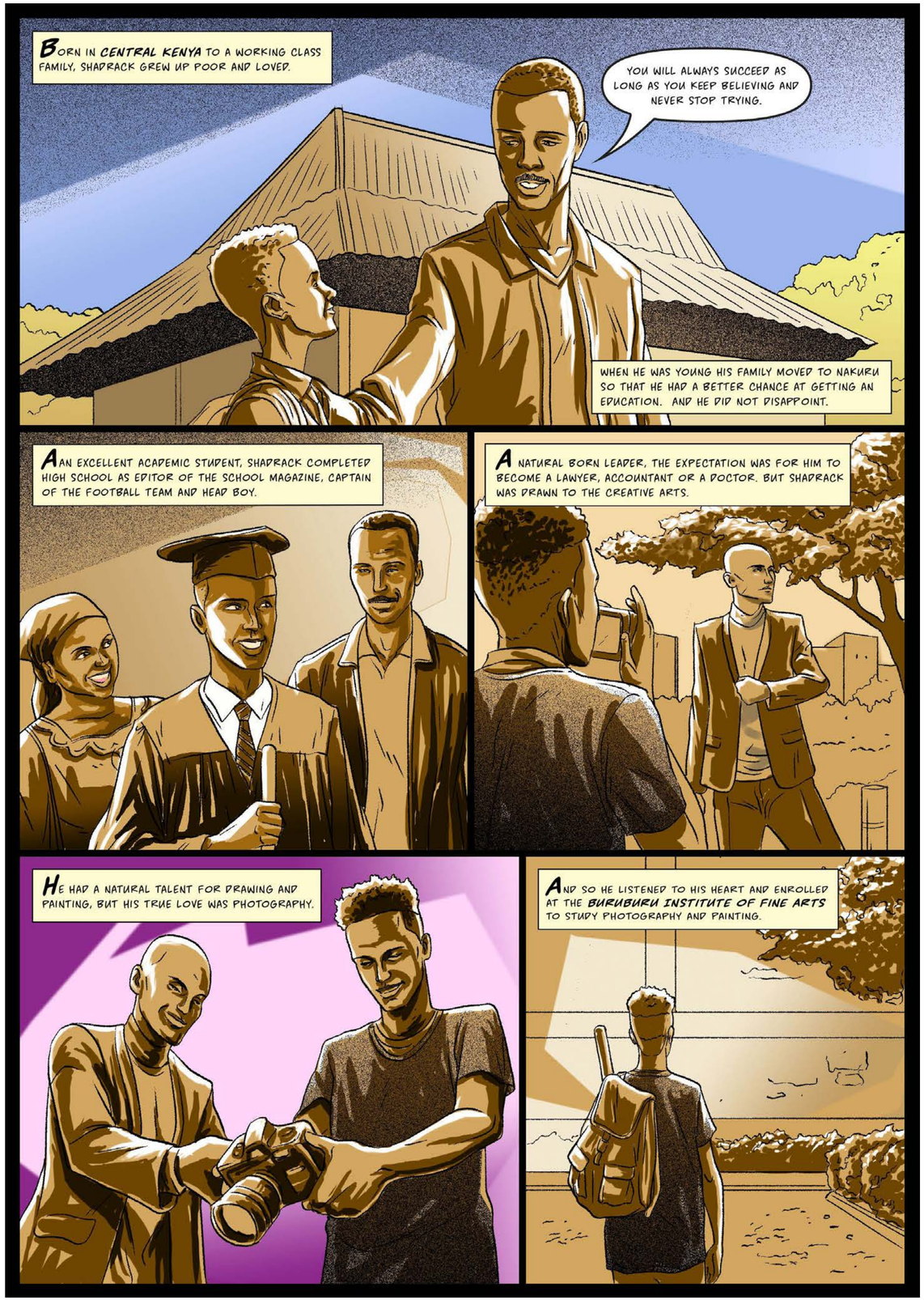


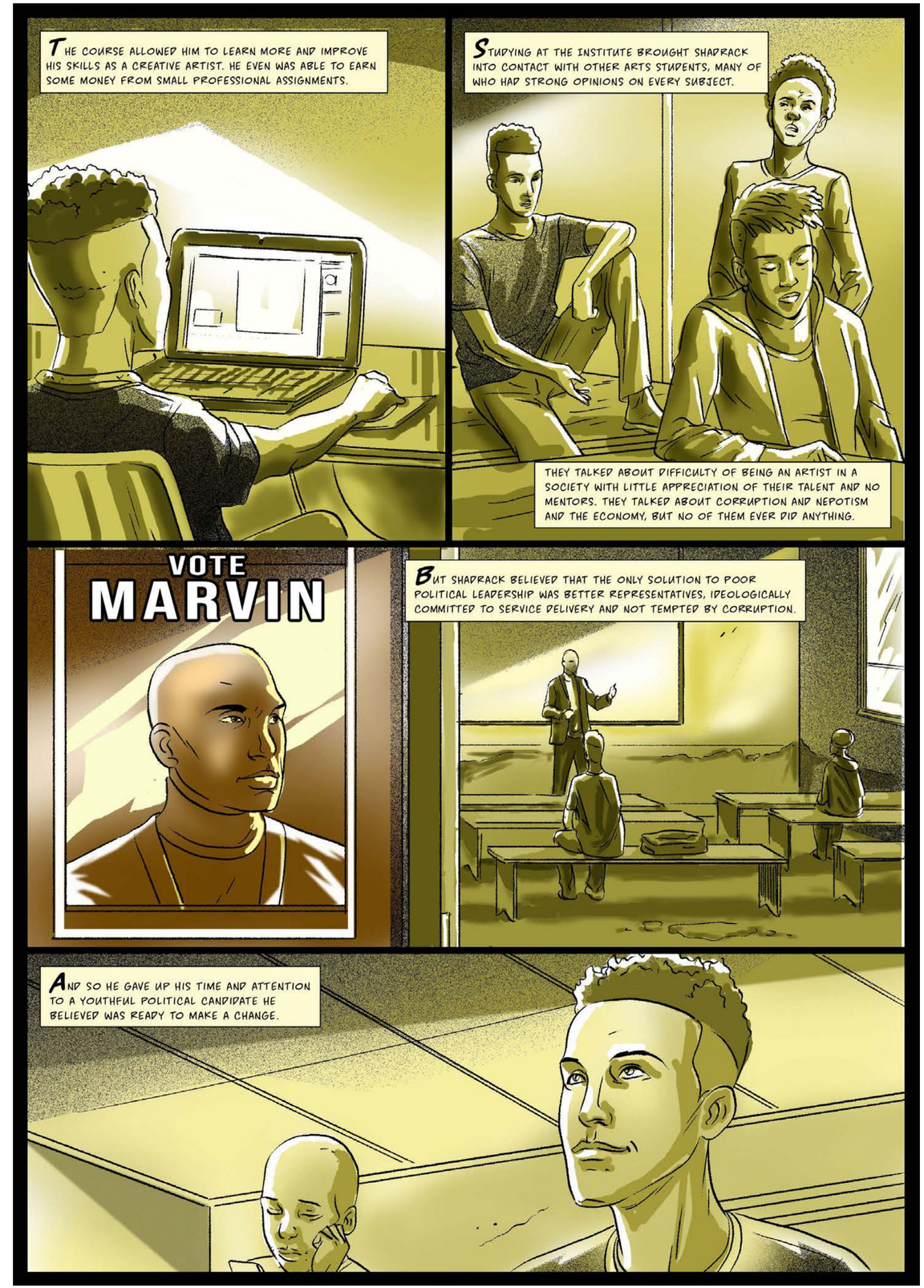


SEGMENT 6

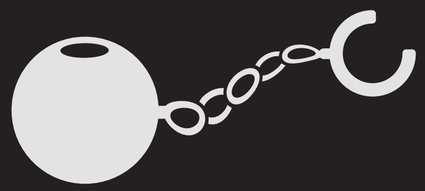
NAKURU SHADRACK

- He is 22 years old. Born in a rural area but now lives in Nakuru.
- He has a good education and was headboy of his school.
- He is politically engaged and eager to make a difference in the lives of his peers.


BORN IN CENTRAL KENYA TO A WORKING CLASS FAMILY, SHADRACK GREW UP POOR AND LOVED.
YOU WILL ALWAYS SUCCEED AS LONG AS YOU KEEP BELIEVING AND NEVER STOP TRYING.
WHEN HE WAS YOUNG HIS FAMILY MOVED TO NAKURU SO THAT HE HAD A BETTER CHANCE AT GETTING AN EDUCATION. AND HE DID NOT DISAPPOINT.
AN EXCELLENT ACADEMIC STUDENT, SHADRACK COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL AS EDITOR OF THE SCHOOL MAGAZINE, CAPTAIN OF THE FOOTBALL TEAM AND HEAD BOY.
A NATURAL BORN LEADER, THE EXPECTATION WAS FOR HIM TO BECOME A LAWYER, ACCOUNTANT OR A DOCTOR. BUT SHADRACK WAS DRAWN TO THE CREATIVE ARTS.
HE HAD A NATURAL TALENT FOR DRAWING AND PAINTING, BUT HIS TRUE LOVE WAS PHOTOGRAPHY.
AND SO HE LISTENED TO HIS HEART AND ENROLLED AT THE BURUBURU INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS TO STUDY PHOTOGRAPHY AND PAINTING.


THE COURSE ALLOWED HIM TO LEARN MORE AND IMPROVE HIS SKILLS AS A CREATIVE ARTIST. HE EVEN WAS ABLE TO EARN SOME MONEY FROM SMALL PROFESSIONAL ASSIGNMENTS.
STUDYING AT THE INSTITUTE BROUGHT SHADRACK INTO CONTACT WITH OTHER ARTS STUDENTS, MANY OF WHO HAD STRONG OPINIONS ON EVERY SUBJECT.
THEY TALKED ABOUT DIFFICULTY OF BEING AN ARTIST IN A SOCIETY WITH LITTLE APPRECIATION OF THEIR TALENT AND NO MENTORS. THEY TALKED ABOUT CORRUPTION AND NEPOTISM AND THE ECONOMY, BUT NO OF THEM EVER DID ANYTHING.
VOTE
MARVIN
BUT SHADRACK BELIEVED THAT THE ONLY SOLUTION TO POOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP WAS BETTER REPRESENTATIVES, IDEOLOGICALLY COMMITTED TO SERVICE DELIVERY AND NOT TEMPTED BY CORRUPTION.
AND SO HE GAVE UP HIS TIME AND ATTENTION TO A YOUTHFUL POLITICAL CANDIDATE HE BELIEVED WAS READY TO MAKE A CHANGE.

SHADRACK'S VULNERABILITIES



EDUCATIONAL: The shortage of job and income-generation opportunities for young people in creative professions is one of the challenges youth brought up in CSYA.

SOCIAL: The lack of meaningful youth network necessary for connecting young leaders and delivering social change slow down positive shifts in communities.

SOCIAL: There is lack of local mentors.

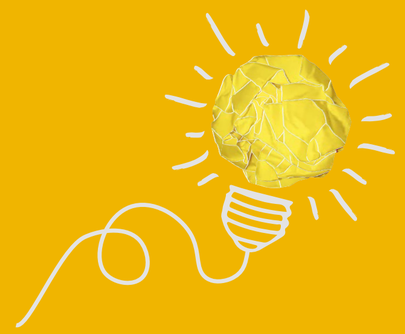
SOCIAL: Youth are not well-represented in the governance system, and youth issues do not receive sufficient attention.

PSYCHOLOGICAL: Youth often feel as a failure, and lose confidence in own ability to achieve own potential.

FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY: Most vulnerable youth struggle to achieve sustained financial independence.

DEMOGRAPHIC: Young people say, they are seen as too young to be taken seriously.

YOUTH-DESIGNED SOLUTIONS



EDUCATIONAL: In-school and community career counseling can help young people better understand their career choices.

EDUCATIONAL: It is important to establish a network of local mentors, who can also advocate for youth representation.

SOCIAL: Youth suggested organizing cultural events, mtaani groups (neighborhood groups) for peer networking and mentorship.

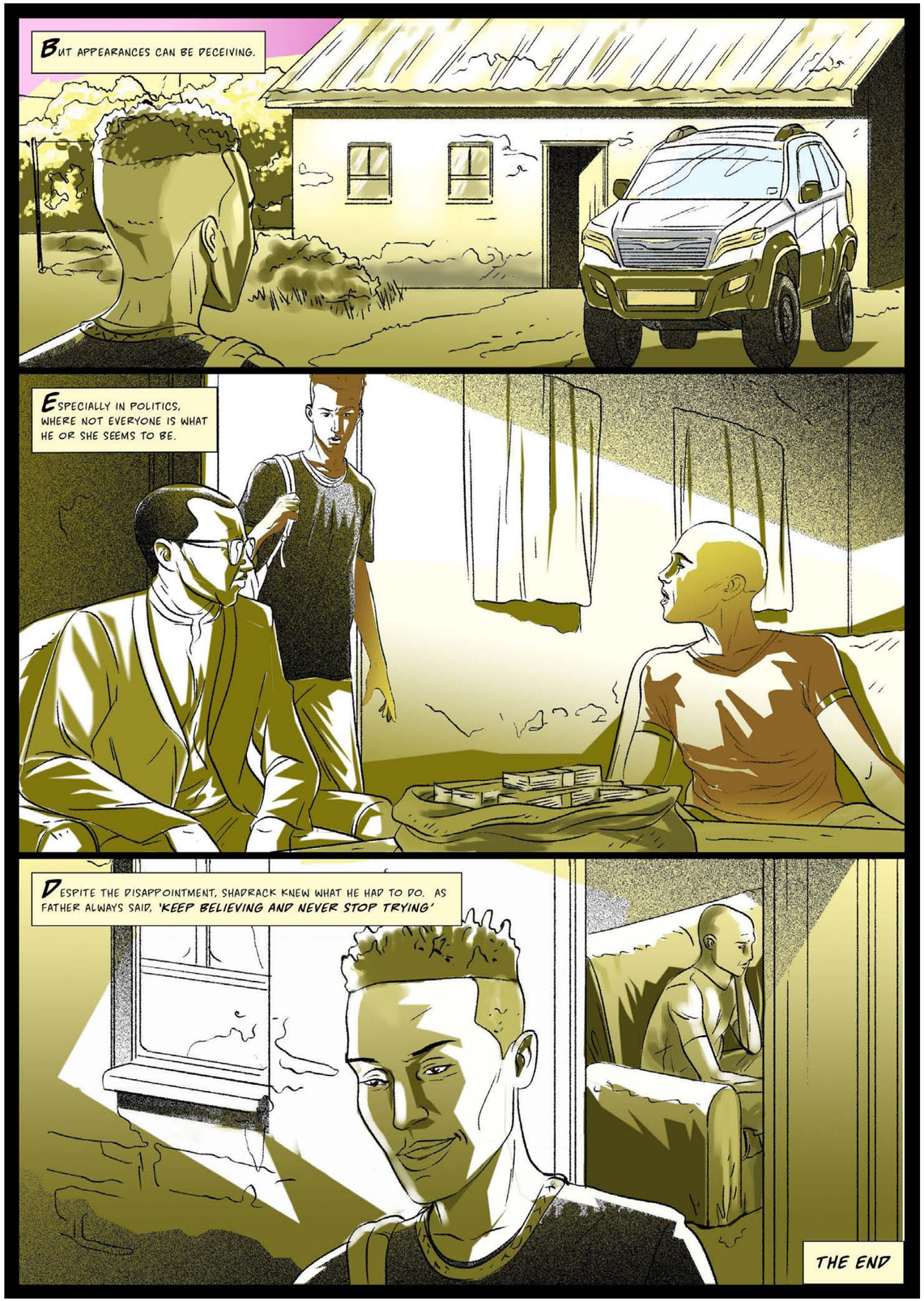
PSYCHOLOGICAL: There is a need in a meaningful mentorship opportunities for adults, who can guide youth.

PSYCHOLOGICAL: Young people suggested establishing open forums and counseling centers, where youth can receive guidance and support, share their struggles with each other, learn from role models. Such forums can also take place on social media.

DEMOGRAPHIC: Young people should make good use of social media by sharing their plights, such as discrimination, and tag the right authorities to stimulate action.

DEMOGRAPHIC: Youth groups need to engage in community project to seek recognition, attention, and get to be known/ be seen as assets for the community.

FINANCIAL: Youth need to be trained on financial literacy, including how to manage their finances, develop a saving culture, manage business loans, and develop entrepreneurial skills.



SHADRACK VIDEO
Click here to watch Shadrack on YouTube

GUIDANCE FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH PEERS AND YOUTH CHAMPIONS

It is important to be prepared when engaging peers, youth champions and community leaders in youth-focused initiatives. In this section, we offer a collection of talking points to assist youth leaders in leading conversations and activities to counter vulnerabilities experienced by youth.

ACTION 1: KNOW YOUR FACTS	
Big picture: Three in five Kenyans, or 30 million people, are under the age of 25. One in 10 have never been to school. 61 percent of those aged 15-24 routinely struggle to cover their basic needs; 31 percent earn a meager income through hustles.	**Your community:** How many youth are in your community? What do you know about them? How many boys and girls? What's their level of education? How do they earn money? Do they have enough money to cover basic needs? How/with whom do they socialize?
ACTION 2: BUILD YOUR NETWORK	
Big picture: No one can be effective alone; by working together, youth can make a difference in their communities. Communities can build strong networks among youth and adults using spaces and events that already bring people together–schools/educational institutions, youth clubs, tutoring services, community activities (e.g., area cleaning), barazas, etc.	**Your community:** How many people in your age group do you know in your community? How many of them do you meet regularly to discuss important issues, challenges affecting youth, and opportunities available to you? How many elected officials and youth champions do you personally know? How effectively do you engage marginalized youth in your community?
ACTION 3: MAKE A CASE	
Big picture: Youth aged 15-24 are 35 percent of the working-age group and 39 percent of the reproductive-age group. Currently, youth are underperforming in both areas, struggling to make money and prevent unintended pregnancies. These struggles spill over to other areas (e.g., two-thirds of those aged 15-24 are eligible to vote but only a half are confident they will vote in the next elections). If young people are underperforming, the community suffers.	**Your community:** How do young people around you feel about their place in the community? Do they feel they belong? Do they feel heard and respected? Do they feel supported? Do they feel their opinion matters? What changes do they want to see? How do they want to be engaged in the community? Do they know how to be engaged in their community?
ACTION 4: UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT	
Big picture: Currently, young people's ability to reach their potential and contribute to their communities is hindered by 10 different types of vulnerabilities: Psychological, educational, social, financial, locational, occupational, physical, legal, demographic, digital, financial, social, and educational vulnerabilities are most critical and often serve as the sources of other vulnerabilities.	**Your community:** Which of the six segments in the booklet most closely reflects young people in your community? Do the highlighted vulnerabil-ities reflect the challenges faced by your around you? What should be removed from or added to the list?
ACTION 5: GATHER AND SHARE INFORMATION	
Big picture: Young people are not helpless, they have ideas on how to address the vulnerabilities in their lives. In each story and in the table to the right, there are solutions proposed by young people. Many solutions focus on taking advantage of the spaces, events, and agents that already exist in communities and turning them into opportunities by gathering youth around inspiring, actionable ideas and each other.	**Your community:** What opportunities are available in your community? What opportunities are available to young people in neighboring communities? What channels can you use to gather information and share it with other youth to get them engaged? Who are the key informants and influencers in your community? Who can help gather and share the information? How can youth support each other during challenging times?
ACTION 6: START CO-CREATING SOLUTIONS	
Big picture: Young people have the energy, the desire, and the creativity to help design and implement innovative solutions for socio-economic advancement. Youth leaders can pull together small groups of youth, working with community leaders, to collectively create ways to address challenges of vulnerabilities in communities. Effective leaders can leverage their networks to share information and engage youth to build their own solutions.	**Your community:** What are the priority areas for you and your peers to address? Who needs to be involved in creating solutions for these areas? What resources do you need? How do you work together? What does success look like?

This table offers a collection of solutions designed by young people during group-discussion sessions. It offers rich ideas on how to address common youth vulnerabilities as well as what channels/agents can be engaged to do that.

WHAT DO THEY NEED?	HOW CAN IT BE DONE?	WHO CAN HELP?
SKILL DEVELOPMENT	Educate about life skills, including financial literacy, at an early age.	Educational system through schools and TVETs.
	Teach soft skills, ability to work in teams with other people.	Youth clubs and networks, especially those led by religious and community leaders
	Teach specific vocational skills and practical business skills through short-term (1-3 months) programs.	Educational system through TVETs, NGO-led programs, apprenticeship through networks
MEANINGFUL NETWORKS	Connections with peers to exchange ideas, listen to each other, partner on projects/opportunities, find role models and successful youth in their communities.	Youth clubs and networks, religious and commu-nity leaders, youth themselves
	Connections with youth champions (youth and adults) to find mentors, get connected to income-generating opportunities.	Youth clubs and networks, religious and community leaders, NGOs, TVET system, Kenyan government agencies
	Referrals to youth-friendly services from mental health support to reproductive health services, financial products/ institutions, job-search, and community services.	Youth clubs and networks, religious and community leaders, NGOs, TVET system, Kenyan government agencies, commercial organizations
SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT	Inclusive community decision-making: youth' opinion should be heard and valued by the immediate family, community and governance structure.	Religious and community leaders, government agencies, NGOs
	Youth-friendly regulatory system, including policies and regulations related to opening and operating a micro enterprise.	Government agencies (Kenyan Police Services, Central Bank, Kenya Revenue Authority), advocacy organizations, including large donor and development organizations
	A collection of ombudsmen organizations for young people to relate their grievances to and to seek protection in case of harassment and abuse.	Youth clubs and networks, religious and community leaders, NGOs, Kenyan government agencies, other private and public organizations

We would like to hear from you on how to help young people reach their potential. Go to USAID's YouthLead website and register as a "Changemaker."
Use the site to share your experiences and suggestions with USAID/KEA their youth communities.
Together, we can make a difference.

The Future is Ours

A Resource for Young Leaders on How to Address Vulnerability Among Youth in Kenya

COMPANION REPORT TO THE KENYA YOUTH ASSESSMENT

August 2020
By:
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Dr. Anastasia Mirzoyants, Head of Knowledge and Learning, Shujaaz Inc.

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Illustration: Maurice Odede Design Layout: John Allosso

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

YOUTHPOWER LEARNING

SHUJAAZ INC.

Transcript of Persona Comic Strips

Peter and Wisdom's Story

Panel 1

A portrait of Wisdom, a young girl, and her older brother Peter.

Narration:

Wisdom, a girl from rural Kenya, grew up in a family with five brothers and sisters. Her mother worked all day and cooked food at night to provide for her family. She never knew her father. Most days, her older brother Peter took care of her. Until he was 12.

Panel 2

A farm landscape. A young Peter is tilling the soil with his pant legs rolled up because he is working hard. There are corn plants nearby.

Narration:

When Peter was old enough to work, his mother sent him to live on his uncle's farm. He would help his uncle work the land in exchange for food and a place to sleep. That meant one less mouth his mother had to feed.

Peter did not want to be a farmer, so he was delighted when he got a scholarship to go to school because of his grades. He knew his uncle would not pay his school fees.

Panel 3

A young Wisdom is in the bottom corner of the panel looking distraught. In the background are two shadowy figures in a discussion. There are two cows next to them.

Narration:

Wisdom missed her brother, but she accepted that he had to leave. She threw herself into her studies and was doing well. She dreamed of going to college. Life had other plans. When she turned 14, a man offered her mother two cows to take Wisdom as his wife. Wisdom's mother thought about her younger children and knew the milk would help to feed them. Against Wisdom's wishes, her mother agreed to the marriage.

Panel 4

A slightly older Peter is walking through a landscape with a backpack on his back. He is wistfully looking out to the distance.

Narration:

When Peter heard that his sister was being given to an older man, he decided he was going to do something about it. He did not like working for his uncle, who was really tough on him.

So, he packed his bag and told Wisdom he was running away to Mombasa to look for a job. Once he found one, he was going to send for her. Things did not go as planned.

Panel 5

The inside of an abandoned house with two shadowy men in the doorway. Another is standing holding a gun above a frightened Peter, who looks like he has just woken up.

Narration:

Peter found an abandoned house on the beach where he squatted while he looked for a job. He had little money. Not even enough to pay for his mobile phone.

He felt alone. One day he was approached by some dangerous people, who told him he was going to carry drugs across the border from Somalia. He refused…at first.

Panel 6

A road with vendors approaching cars. A woman in a car is speaking to Wisdom who is standing outside of the car with something in her hands.

Narration:

Wisdom began to worry about Peter because she had not heard from him in a while. She came up with a plan.

She asked her husband if she could find a small job to help with their financial burdens. Her husband was please and told her to sell some of the produce from their kitchen garden.

Panel 7

Inside a shabby home. Wisdom looks as if she was surprised by a shadowy figure in the doorway. She appears to be hiding something.

Narration:

She started to save a small amount of everything she earned without her husband knowing. Over six months, she managed to save KES3,000. Enough to by a ticket to Mombassa to live with her brother.

Panel 8

Wisdom at a busy bus stop about to board a matatu with a backpack on her back.

Narration:

One morning, Wisdom left the house at the usual time to go sell her produce, but instead she got on a matatu and went to Mombasa to find her beloved brother.

Panel 9

Wisdom speaking with a woman. There is a man leading camels in the background.

Narration:

Following in Peter's footsteps, Wisdom found a house to squat in at the beach. To make money while she looked for her brother, she began to make bracelets, which see sold.

While selling her bracelets, she met a woman who took pity on her. She asked Wisdom if she would like to come live with her and help take care of her grandmother. Wisdom accepted.

Panel 10

Wisdom looking down and ashamed as the woman who helped her speaks with a group of angry women.

Narration:

The generous woman wanted to help Wisdom as much as she could, so she introduced her to a Chama, hoping they would allow her to be part of their savings group.

However, the women in the Chama did not trust her because Wisdom did not have a birth certificate or ID, so it was as if she didn't exist. That meant she could leave, and no one could find her. Wisdom was hurt, but she had larger concerns.

Panel 11

A dark panel that only shows a trembling Peter with a bloodshot, blank eyes.

Narration:

Wisdom still had not found Peter. She found out that he ended up smuggling drugs for dangerous people. In the process, he started taking the drugs and became addicted. All his money went to buy more drugs.

No one had seen Peter for a long time. The last time anyone saw him, he was on the way to Somalia on another drug run. Wisdom was heartbroken.

Panel 12

Panel show three scenes. A portrait of a wise grandmother, Wisdom at a sewing machine, and two girls modeling clothes decorated with shells.

Narration:

Never one to wallow in her fate, Wisdom learned everything she could. The grandmother she was taking care of taught her how to sew, manage money, and make a profit. Wisdom began making small garments decorated with seashells. She started on online business to sell them.

The grandmother also taught her about looking after clients to ensure their loyalty. Wisdom felt blessed to have such a teacher.

Panel 13

Wisdom with two other girls walking arm in arm into a shop.

Narration:

Sadly, the grandmother passed away. Wisdom was sorry to lose such a mentor. The grandmother appreciated Wisdom greatly and left her a little bit of money. Wisdom put that money to good use. She opened a small tailoring shop at the beach market.

There she met Ruth and Magdalen, two rural girls and entrepreneurs with similar stories.

The three girls looked after each other, helping their businesses to thrive but also offering love and comfort in the difficult times. Wisdom will always search for her beloved brother Peter, but she now has a family she can count on.

The End.

Joyce's Story

Panel 1

In the darkened living room of a shack, an angry man has a young woman by the shirt collar with his hand in the air poised to slap her. The frightened woman, with an eye that is swollen shut, is trying to break lose from him. A young girl (Joyce) clasping a baby is cowering in the corner.

Narration:

Born and raised in a rural community in Homabay, Joyce grew up afraid of her father, a cruel drunk who often beat her mother.

Panel 2

Joyce is crouching down covering herself as best as she can. Above her you see the shadow of a man holding a stick.

Narration:

And sometimes, he would beat Joyce too.

Panel 3

Joyce, wearing her school uniform, is sitting at her desk as the young teacher tries to comfort her.

Narration:

Joyce had a schoolteacher, Mr. Mbuyu who wanted to help her.

Panel 4

Joyce and Mr. Mbuyu in the school hallway talking as another girl looks on.

Narration:

She told him about her problems at home, and about the changes she was going through as a young woman.

Panel 5

Joyce protecting her baby sister as her father is beating her mother in the background.

Narration:

And he showed her the kindness she had never had from a father figure.

Panel 6

Joyce knocking on a door with her backpack.

Narration:

One day, Joyce decided she had enough and ran away from home.

Panel 7

Mr. Mbuyu opens the door and lets Joyce in.

Narration:

Tired of being scared and unloved, she went to the only place she believed she could be safe.

Panel 8

Joyce hungrily eats bread while Mr. Mbuyu talks to her.

Narration:

Mbuyu took her in on the condition that she transfer to another school , and never tell her parents her whereabouts.

Panel 9

Mr. Mbuyu shows Joyce the shadowy bedroom pointing towards the bed.

Narration:

Joyce agreed and, by doing so, made a deal she did not fully comprehend.

Panel 10

Joyce lies in a bed with the covers to her neck looking frightened. The shadowy figure of Mr. Mbuyu looms in the doorway.

Panel 11

Joyce serves Mr. Mbuyu dinner as he smiles contently.

Narration:

For a while, they lived as man and wife.

Panel 12

A pregnant Joyce in tears walks away with her backpack as Mr. Mbuyu goes in through the doorway of the house.

Narration:

Until she became pregnant, and he threw her out.

Panel 13

Joyce is seated on a table holding her baby. There is a bowl of fruit next to her and an older woman in the background shifting things from one container to another.

Narration:

Joyce had a very difficult start in life, but she persevered and worked as hard as she could for herself and her baby.

Panel 14:

Older woman holds baby outside while Joyce happily looks on.

Panel 15

Joyce and her baby stand next to the older woman as they speak with other families.

Narration:

And she found in the safety of her chama group, the kindness and understanding that comes from kindred spirits.

The End.

Anthony's Story

Panel 1:

Anthony and his siblings sit on a grassy hill overlooking their community.

Narration:

Anthony grew up in a relatively prosperous rural family with many siblings. His father owned a few acres of good farmland and plenty of livestock.

They were considered a wealthy family in their community.

Panel 2:

An angry man stands over Anthony and his siblings, yelling at them with his hands raised.

Narration:

Although many of his friends considered him lucky in life, Anthony didn't feel that way.

Panel 3:

Anthony consoles his crying sister.

Narration:

In reality, his father was a bully who overworked his children with farming chores and then beat them for not performing in school.

Panel 4:

Anthony weeps in a cemetery, next to a headstone.

Narration:

The pressure was never ending and eventually it led to the suicide of one of his brothers.

So, Anthony decided to leave home and find a better life in town.

Panel 5:

Anthony looks unsure as he is surrounded by a group of mischievous looking young people who are smoking.

Narration:

Arriving in Embu town with a school leavers certificate and no money, he struggled to find work and a regular place to live.

There he got bit jobs, was taken advantage of by a group of Boda Boda riders thereby losing his savings.

One day at a bar, he was approached by a guy from another group of riders, who said he knew about his previous misfortune, and their group would take him in if he helped them that night with a big business deal.

Panel 6:

At night, one of the riders climbs into a shop through the window while Anthony and another rider stand guard outside.

Narration:

Anthony agreed, and that night he took part in a robbery of a shop on the outskirts of the city.

Panel 7:

A man threatens a terrified man with a gun while another man points a gun at a man who is running away.

Narration:

After the robbery, Anthony was formally admitted to the Boda Boda riders chama and started riding with them and earning good money.

Panel 8:

Anthony hugs his sister.

Narration:

In time, Anthony found a new group of friends and was able to bring his younger sister to live with him.

Today, Anthony and his sister are staying together and supporting each other. During the day, he works, and she goes to school. In the evening they sell Mandazi and Chai to construction workers. Life in Embu turned out okay.

The End.

Leyla's Story

Panel 1

The bird's-eye view of a community.

Narration:

Leyla is the daughter of a single mother from Korogocho. Her mother, Mary, worked as a house girl for a generous rich family in Karen.

Panel 2:

Leyla and her mother in their home, looking at a Home Sweet Home sign, with some groceries on their table.

Narration:

As a result, they lived well and healthily, supplemented by handouts and hand-me-downs in their ghetto home.

Panel 3:

Leyla heads to school.

Narration:

A good student in school, Leyla won a place at Nairobi University to study marketing. It was a golden opportunity to improve her chances of a better life and achieve her dream of becoming a successful independent businesswoman.

Panel 4:

A young man sitting next to Leyla winks at her in class.

Narration:

Mary borrowed money from her employees and Leyla started university.

Panel 5:

Leyla and the boy from class kiss, with a nicely wrapped gift box in Leyla's hand.

Narration:

She was doing well in class and enjoying the independence of student life, until she met Lolo, a rich boy who swept her off her feet.

Panel 6:

Leyla is sad as she holds her growing belly.

Narration:

Falling in love with him, one thing led to another, until an unplanned pregnancy drove Lolo away and put an end to Leyla's education.

Panel 7:

Leyla holds her wailing baby as her mother yells at her.

Narration:

The baby changed Leyla's life forever. And even though he was the most precious thing in her life, she knew Mary was disappointed that her daughter had become a single mother, just like her, with limited prospects.

Panel 8:

In a graduation gown and cap and with her diploma in hand, Leyla hugs Mary tightly.

Narration:

But with Mary's support, Leyla went back to school and eventually graduated against the odds.

Panel 9:

Dressed in office attire, a disappointed Leyla walks away from a man in a suit.

Narration:

If finishing university was challenging, finding unemployment was next to impossible.

Panel 10:

Leyla goes home to Mary.

Narration:

For months, she tried to sell her qualities as a marketing graduate. But she was either too qualified, too inexperienced or did not speak French.

Panel 11:

Leyla is shown around a shop with artifacts and animal sculptures hanging on the wall.

Narration:

Until one day, she had a stroke of fortune and was hired by a curio shop owner looking for a manager.

Panel 12:

Leyla carves wood with her boss's guidance.

Narration:

It was dull work for poor pay and long hours, but she stayed at it, and even learned how to carve wooden items during the long quiet moments.

Panel 13:

Leyla works while Mary plays with the baby.

Narration:

With a job, Leyla started to dream of starting her own business. But with no banks willing to lend money to a young female entrepreneur, she knew she had to be patient and save some of her meager salary until she was able to become independent.

Panel 14:

Leyla organizes wooden artifacts in a small store.

Narration:

After one year, Leyla had KSHS 20,000 saved through M-Shwari mobile banking and was finally ready to be her own boss.

Panel 15:

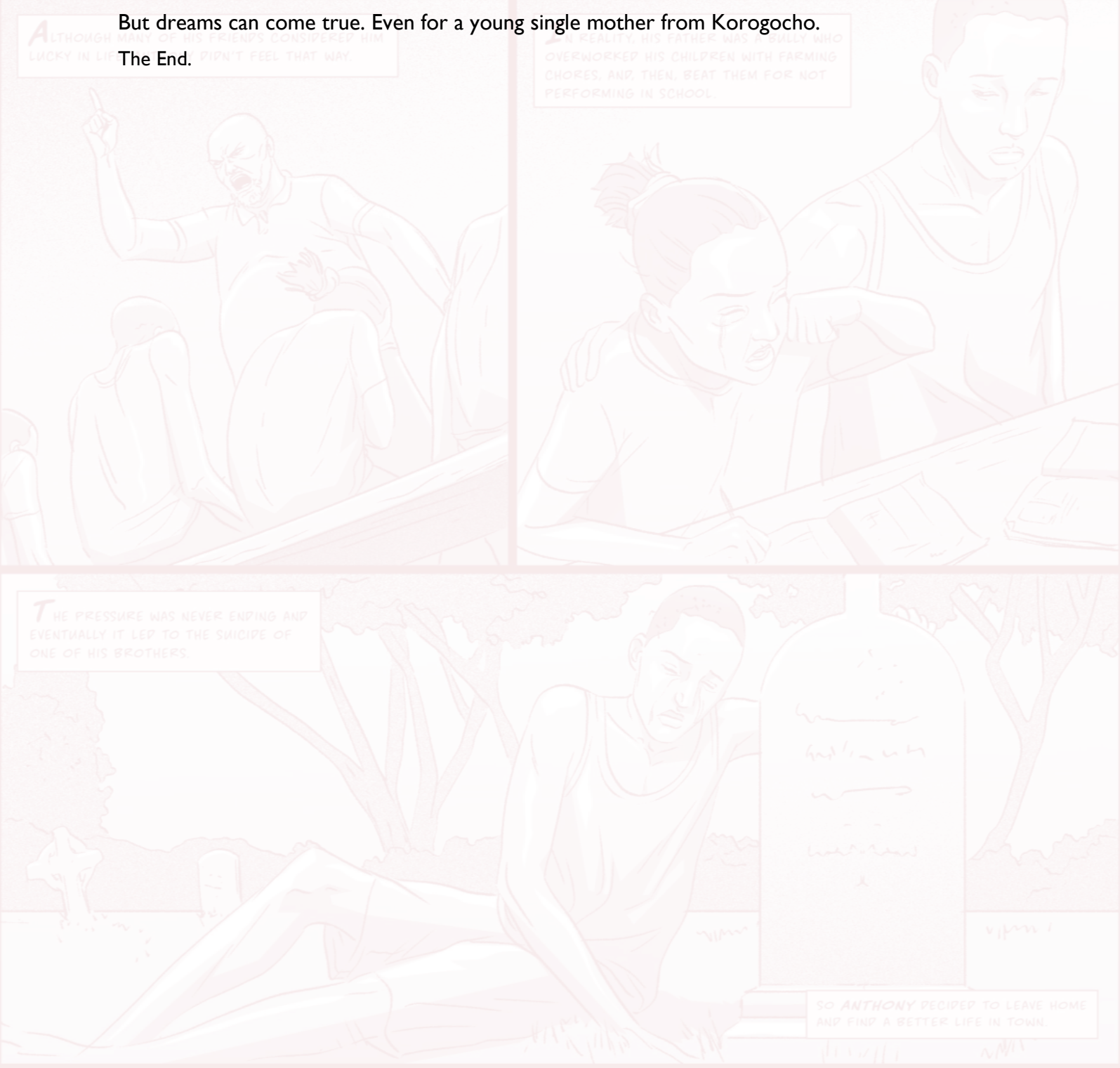
Leyla hangs up a Home Sweet Home sign on her shop.

Narration:

Business has not been easy. Competition is tough and corrupt officials often approach her for bribes.

But dreams can come true. Even for a young single mother from Korogocho.

The End.



Shadrack's Story

Panel 1:

Shadrack stares up at his father adoringly.

Narration:

Born in Central Kenya to a working-class family, Shadrack grew up poor and loved.

"You will always succeed as long as you keep believing and never stop trying" says his father.

When he was young, his family moved to Nakuru so that he had a better chance at getting an education. And he did not disappoint.

Panel 2:

Shadrack poses in his graduation cap and gown and diploma, while his parents look at him with pride and joy in their eyes.

Narration:

An excellent academic student, Shadrack completed High School as Editor of the School Magazine, Captain of the Football Team, and Head Boy.

Panel 3:

Shadrack takes photos of a man.

Narration:

A natural born leader, the expectation was for him to become a Lawyer, Accountant, or a Doctor. But Shadrack was drawn to the creative arts.

Panel 4:

Shadrack shows the photos he took to the man.

Narration:

He had a natural talent for drawing and painting, but his true love was photography.

Panel 5:

Shadrack walks to school.

Narration:

And so he listened to his heart and enrolled at the Buruburu Institute of Fine Arts to study Photography and Painting.

Panel 6:

Shadrack works on his computer.

Narration:

The course allowed him to learn more and improve his skills as a creative artist. He even was able to earn some money from small professional assignments.

Panel 7:

Shadrack has a conversation with his friends.

Narration:

Studying at the Institute brought Shadrack into contact with other students, many of whom had strong opinions on every subject.

They talked about the difficulty of being an artist in a society with little appreciation of their talent and no mentors. They talked about corruption and nepotism and the economy but none of them ever did anything.

Panel 8:

This panel shows two images. The first image shows a political campaign poster that says, "Vote Marvin". And the second image shows two men sitting and listening to a man speak.

Narration:

But Shadrack believed that the only solution to poor political leadership was better representatives, ideologically committed to service delivery and not tempted by corruption.

Panel 9:

Shadrack stares ahead with devotion.

Narration:

And so he gave up his time and attention to a youthful political candidate he believed was ready to make a change.

Panel 10:

Shadrack walks towards a building with the door open and an expensive car parked outside.

Narration:

But appearances can be deceiving.

Panel 11:

Shadrack enters the building and sees Marvin, the political candidate, sitting with another man, with a pile of money in front of them.

Narration:

Especially in politics where not everyone is what he or she seems to be.

Panel 12:

Shadrack walks out the door.

Narration:

Despite the disappointment, Shadrack knew what he had to do. As his father always said, "keep believing and never stop trying".

The End.