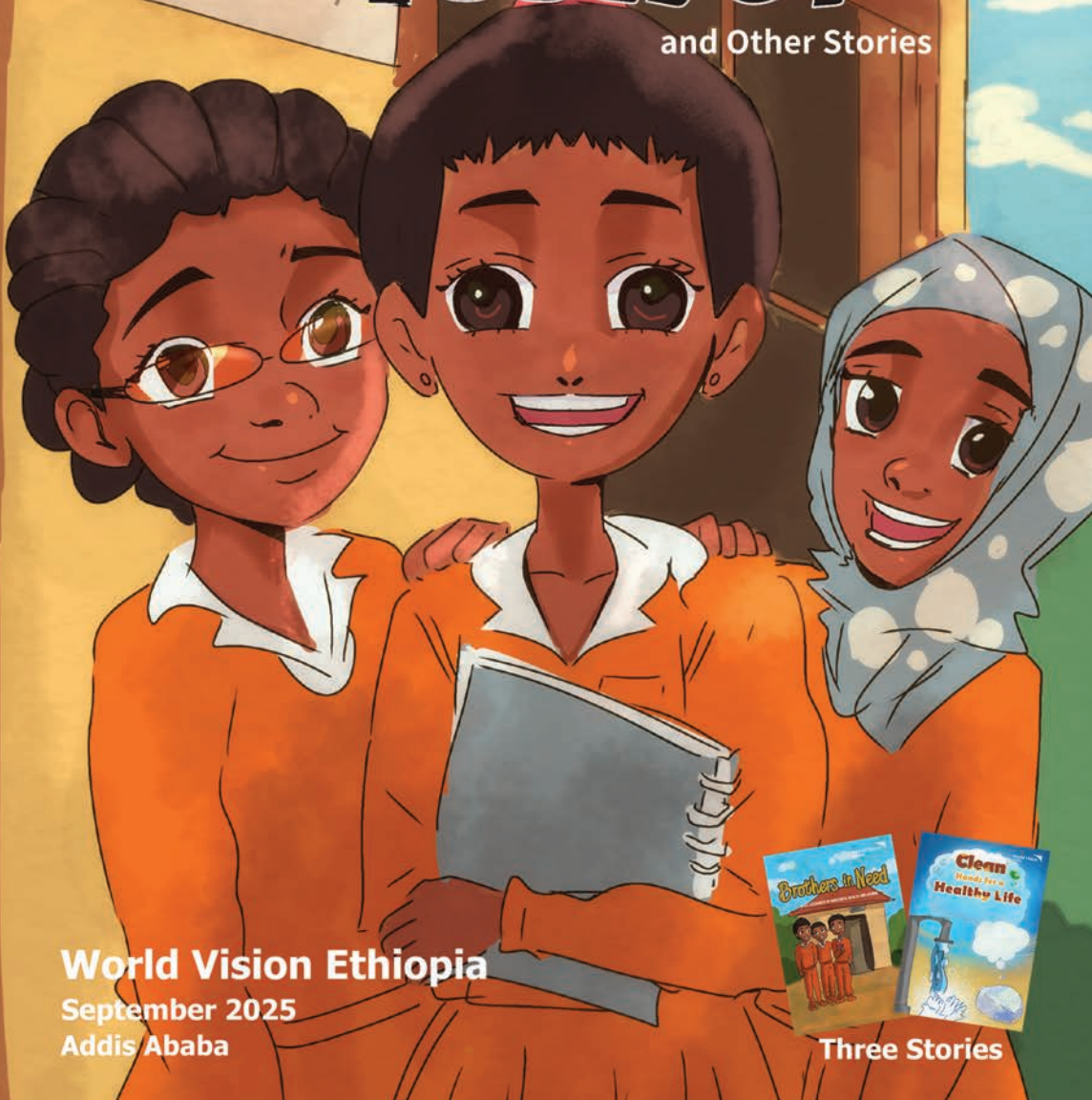


World Vision
ETHIOPIA

Tesfu's Relief

and Other Stories



World Vision Ethiopia

September 2025

Addis Ababa

Three Stories



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World Vision Ethiopia

World Vision Ethiopia began its first intervention in Ethiopia in 1971 with relief and opened the Ethiopia office in 1975. Relief, rehabilitation, and small community development projects dominated the decade that followed. During the 1984/85 drought, World Vision Ethiopia participated in a massive relief operation that saved the lives of millions of people.

Starting its operation with emergency intervention in some parts of Ethiopia, World Vision currently operates in 43 Area Programs (APs) implementing effective programmes, such as Education, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Nutrition, Emergency Response, Faith and Development, Food Security, Economic Development, Climate change, and environmental projects and other cross-cutting programmes.

Our vision for every child, life in all its fullness; Our prayer for every heart, the will to make it so.



Publisher's Note

At World Vision Ethiopia, we believe every child is created with God-given dignity and potential. When a girl can manage her period safely and confidently, she is more likely to attend school, participate fully, and pursue her dreams benefitting her whole community. This series of comic books is one way we stand alongside children, families, and schools to replace silence and stigma with practical knowledge, respect, and support.

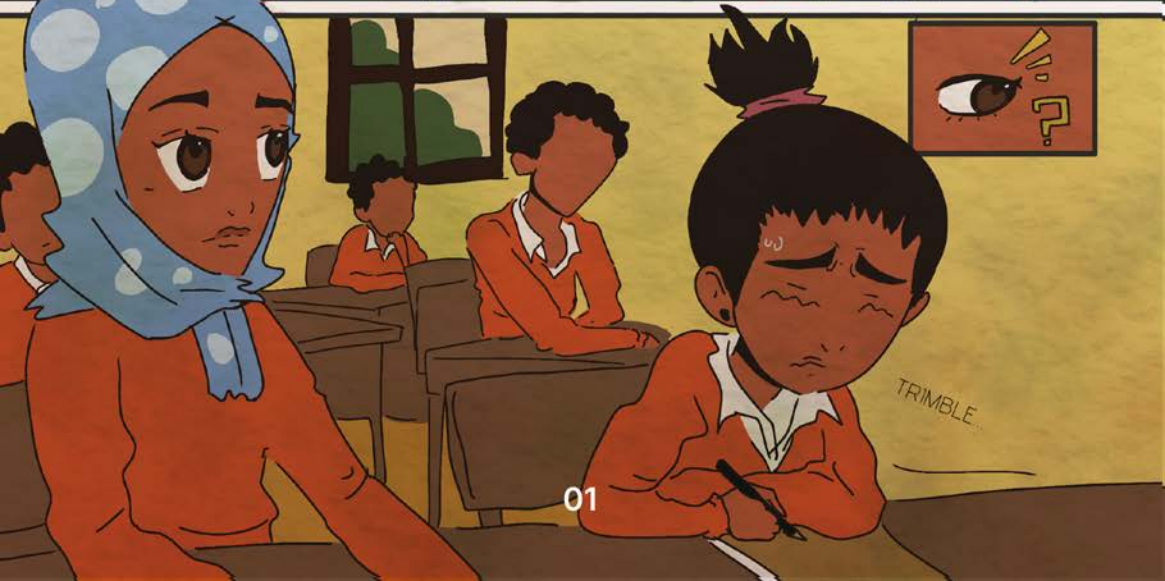
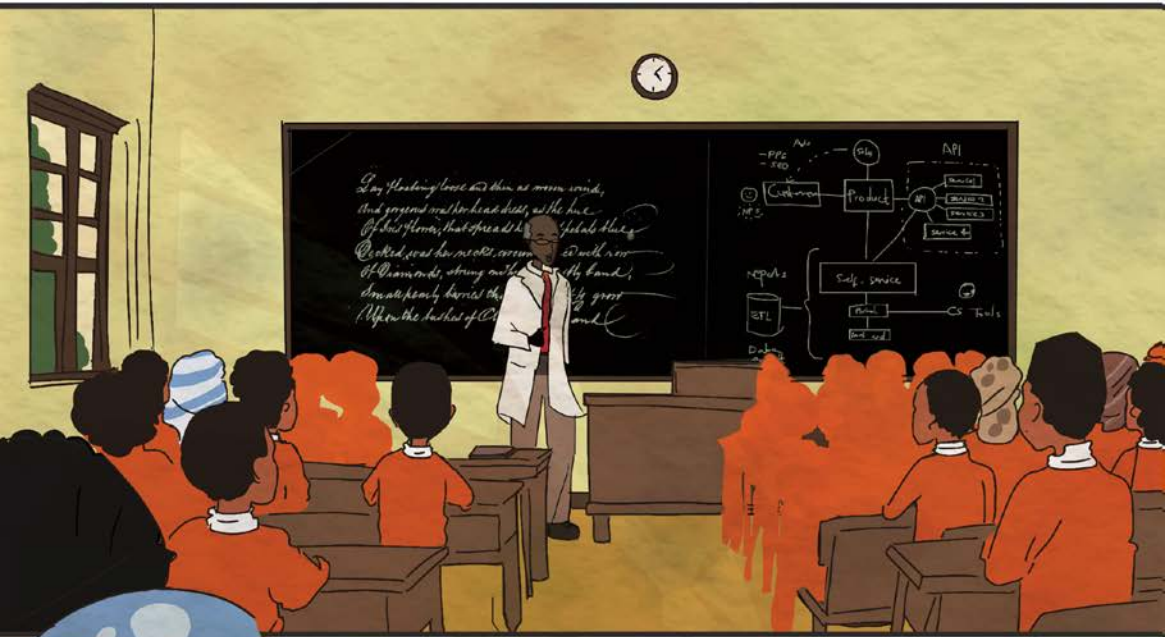
The stories and characters you'll meet here were inspired by real insights from Ethiopian students, teachers, and parents. We invite boys, faith leaders, health workers, and local officials to join hands with girls as allies to improve facilities, share accurate information, and normalize open conversation about menstrual health. Together, with courage and love, we can make every school a place where periods are managed with dignity, and every learner has the chance to flourish.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge World Vision donors from around the world, whose generous support makes this work possible. Our heartfelt thanks also go to Lafto Partners for their creativity and collaboration in producing this comic book in multiple languages with care and excellence. We further recognise our dedicated World Vision Ethiopia staff, who work tirelessly with communities across the country to advance menstrual health and hygiene. Your commitment helps girls learn with confidence and thrive.

This book is dedicated to the Tesfus, Foziyas, and Sebles of Ethiopia the countless girls whose strength, resilience, and determination inspire this story.







**Tesfu?
You?
Are you ill?**



**I think so.
I don't know.
My stomach
hurts.**



**Did you eat
something
bad
this morning?**

**I don't think
it is
breakfast.**



**Let's go outside
and get
some fresh air.**

Stop it.



I can't get up.



My dress is soaked, I think.



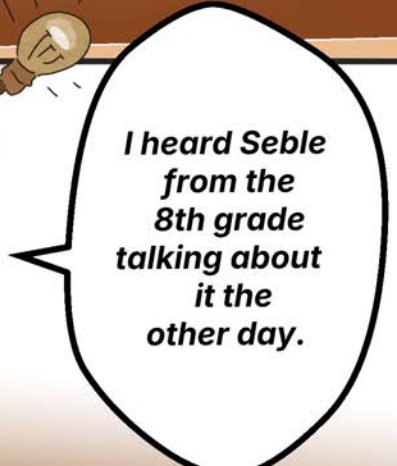
Oh. I think it could be your period.



What? We get that now?



I think so.



I heard Seble from the 8th grade talking about it the other day.



**Oh. Maybe
it is that.
What do
I do
then?**

**How do I
leave the room
then?**

**Let's go to Seble
at the MHH club block
and
ask her what to
do!**

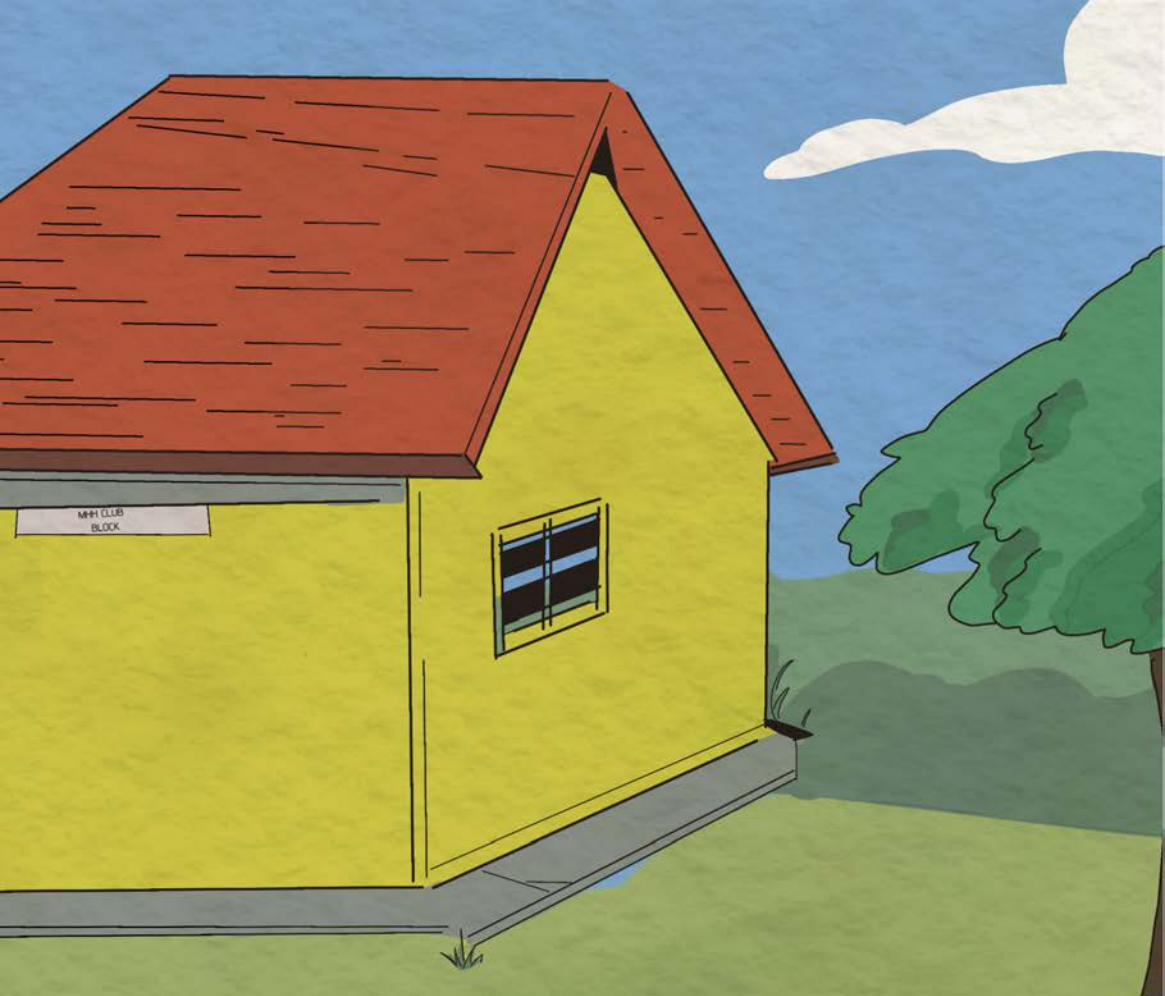
**What's the problem?
Is it the wetness
on your dress?
It's fine.
But you can tie your
jacket around
your waist and we
can just leave.**



**Mr. Kibrom,
we're about to go
to the MHH block
to speak to
Seble.**

**Oh.
Yes, yes.
Go ahead.
Clever girls.**





MHH CLUB
BLOCK



Tesfuye,
I have never seen
you here before.
How are you?

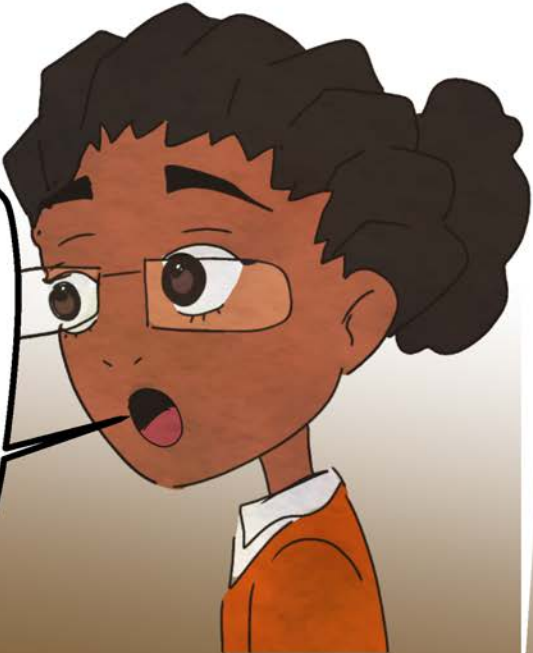
I'm good,
Sebli.
How are
you?


Sebli
how are you?
I think Tesfu
might have
gotten her
period.

Yeah?
I am so happy
for you, Tesfuye.
It was about time.
How does
it feel?

I don't know.
I was sitting
in class and
then I just felt
my dress get wet.
Before that,
I had some
cramps.

Oh yeah.
That's how it usually begins.
I also had my first
period in a classroom.
...Back then we didn't have these
MHH blocks so I had to
leave school and go home to change.
I didn't come to school
the day after either.
It was hard.
...But you and Fozi are lucky.
You have a place designated
for girls to manage their
menstrual health
and hygiene.






**So, that's
what this building
is for?**

**Of course.
This is called
a Menstrual Health and Hygiene
block.
Here, girls get
counseling, support, menstrual pads,
a place to rest, and
a fully stocked hygiene facility
with
a working shower.**

**Really?
You have all of this
in this
small building?**

**Yeah.
Come in and
see.**



Counseling room

This is where our MHH coordinator, our biology teacher Ms. Habtammesh, and members of the MHH club provide advisory services to students. Here we talk about menstrual health and hygiene management and other issues that affect the lives of girls our age.

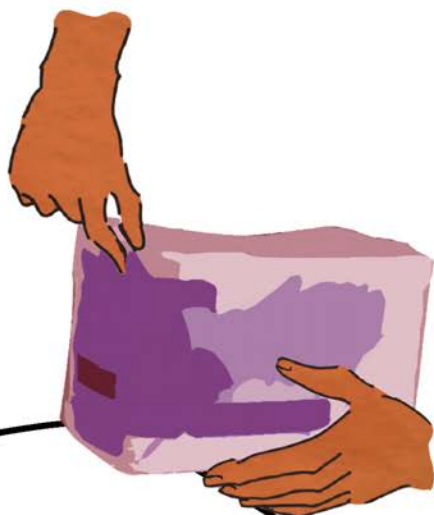


Store room



*This room is
our store room,
where we keep
important items
like menstrual pads
as well as items related to our
fund-raising activities as a club.
...In fact, why don't
we take a menstrual pad
and then I
can show you how to
put it on properly.*





This is a room we use as a place of rest. Sometimes, when girls have their periods they might feel a little sick. Therefore, we prepared this room so they can rest and collect themselves before they go back to class or go home.

*...As you can see we have a mini-library here that you can peruse through as you rest.
...Tesfu, since you need to go into the bathroom, wash up, and put on the menstrual pad, let me show you how to do it.*

This is a single-use menstrual pad.

...An alternative to single-use menstrual pads are reusable cloth options. If you want to use these, you have to make sure to wash it properly everyday.

Even though washing it thoroughly with soap and water will make it clean, you can't keep doing that for too long. The fabric will get too worn and won't be hygienic to use. Therefore, you have to replace it with a new one frequently.

...Single-use menstrual pads like these ones, however, cannot be washed. Once you've used it and had it on for 4 to 8 hours depending on how heavy your flow is, you need to take it off, dispose of it, and put on a new one.


You have to put on a new one every 4 hours?

Yeah. It depends on how heavy your period is, but it is important to change it regularly. ... You see, this pad has an absorbent layer and it fills up depending on how long you've had it on.

It is this absorbent layer that prevents it from leaking.

...When you have this on, you won't have to worry about your clothes getting stained.

Nothing can pass through?



If you put it on properly and make sure to change it regularly, you should be absolutely safe. ...Now, let me show you how to put it on properly.

First you have to unfold these two ends and peel this thin strip of paper off the pad. The underside has glue on it that helps it stay in place. Then you lay the sticky side down on your underwear.

After that, you can take off the piece of paper on the front and then fold these two pieces back on the underside of your underwear.

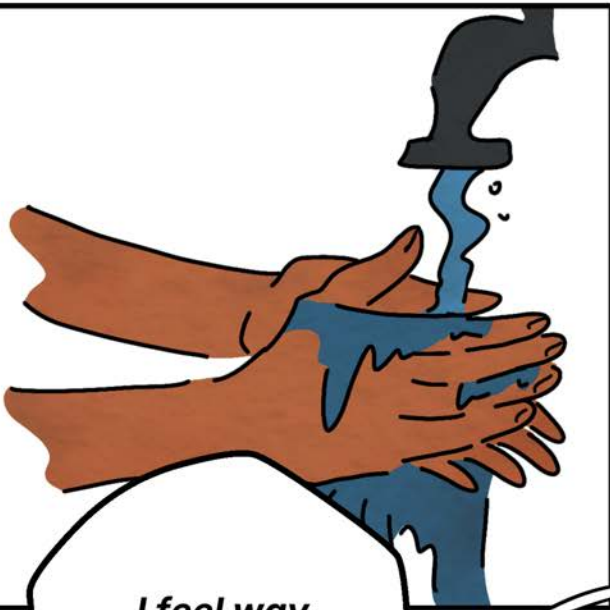
It is important to secure these two tabs properly.

Once you're done with that, you can put on your underwear.

But I have to wash off first, right?

Of course. That's what the shower here is for. In fact, begin by properly washing your hands with soap and washing yourself off with water. After that you can apply the pad.

Okay. I get it now. Thank you, Sebli.



I feel way more comfortable now, thank you.

So? How are you feeling now?

Is the menstrual pad comfortable?

It's different but I feel comfortable.

Do you feel like you're ready to go back to class now or do you want to wait here a little?

Maybe I can wait here and go back to class after the break? But you should go back and attend the last few minutes of the class. Meet me here after that during break.

Okay. I'll see you soon.



See you soon Fozi.

Fozi, bring me my English exercise book so I can finish my assignment before the class when you come.

Sure.

Thank you so much for your help Sebli. I don't know what I could have done without you.

It's no problem, Tesfu. This is what our club and this MHH block are for. I am glad you're feeling better now.

IN THE AFTERNOON...

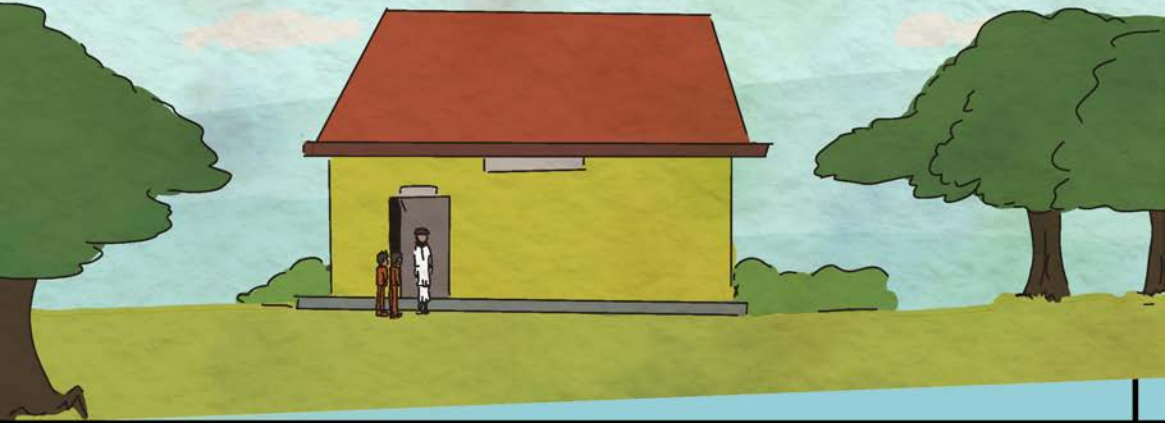
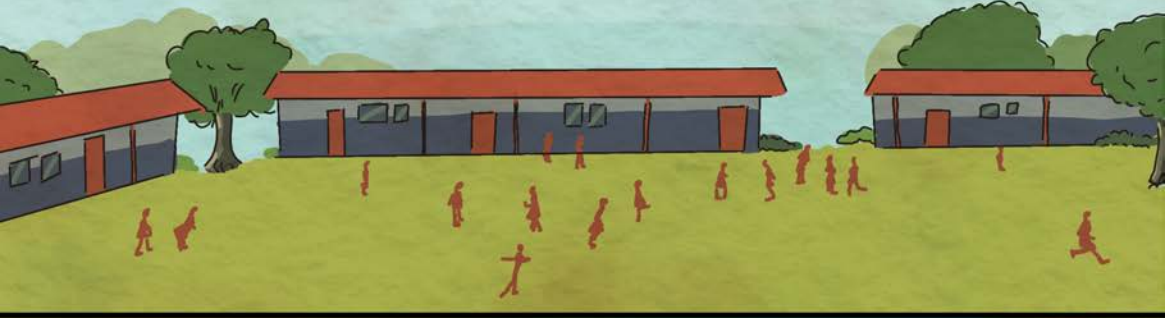


Brothers in Need

MALE SOLIDARITY IN MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE



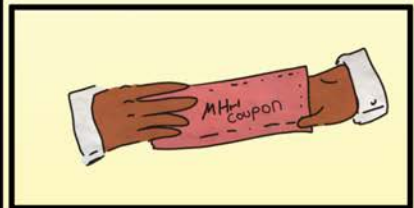
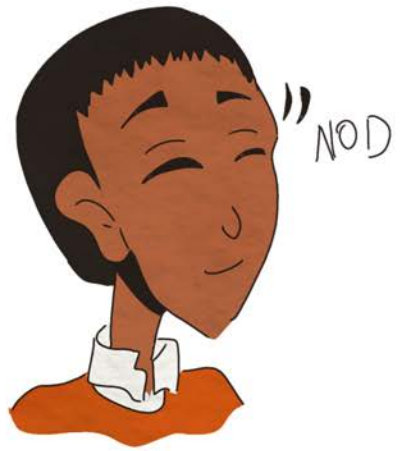
BREAK TIME...





**Boys,
as you know
we're running low
on all of
our supplies and
these coupons are
how we will
purchase
more.**

**Try to sell as
many as you can
today.**





**Eyasu,
Jemal
what are you
up
to?**

**How are you
Leul?
How
is
the 8th
grade?**

**I'm good, Eyasu.
8th grade
is busy.
I just started
studying
for the ministry
exams. What
about...**

**Jemal,
what is it
that
you're
holding?**



It's a coupon we're selling, Leul. Why don't you buy some?



What is it for?



We're trying to raise money for the MHH club. Ms. Habtamnesh prepared these coupons.

Yeah, you see the MHH club provides different kinds of services for girls in our school.




But they also supply things like sanitary pads and soap to help girls manage their menstrual health better.





**Oh.
That's really good.
But
don't most
girls get these
supplies
from
their homes?**

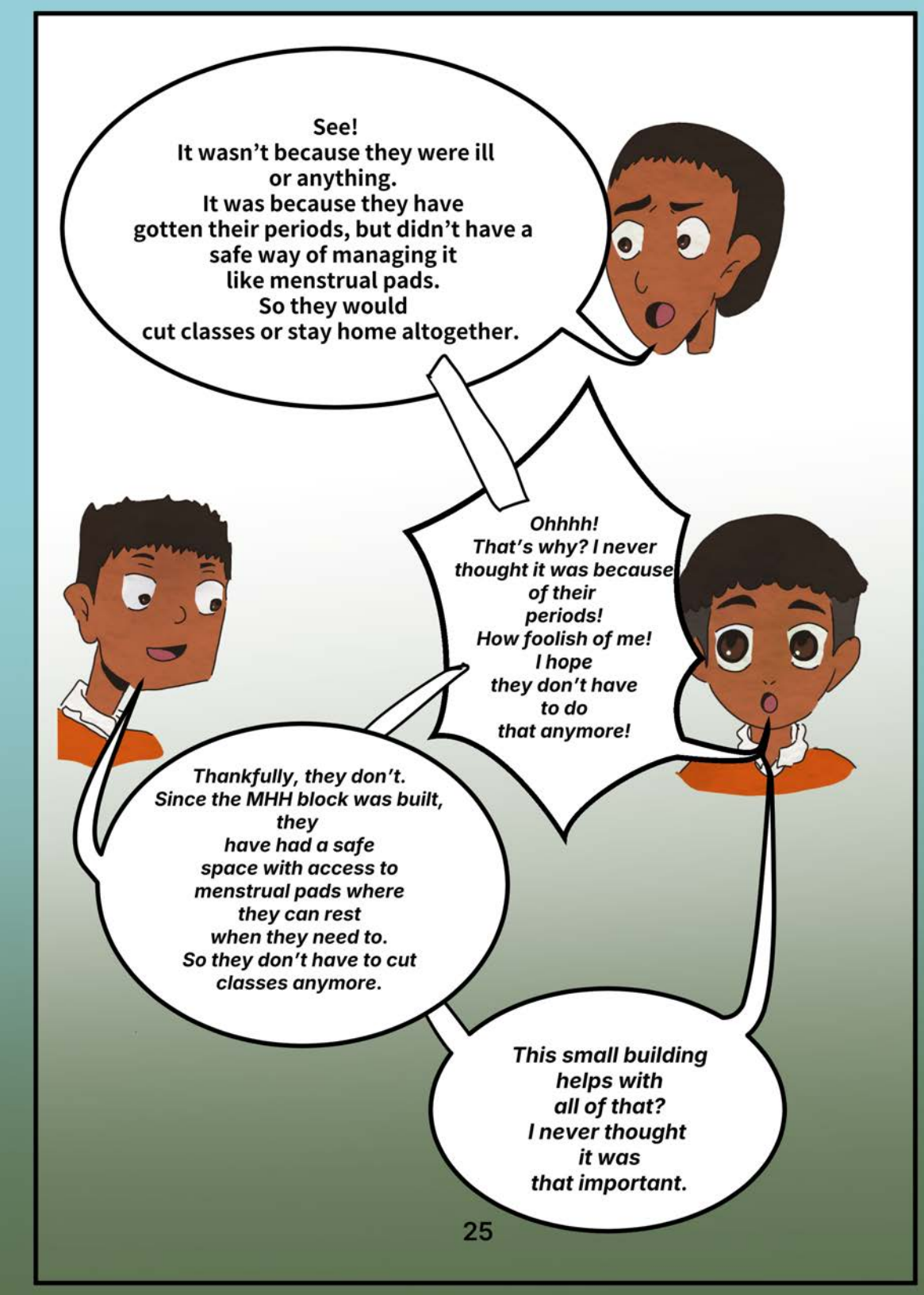


**Oh, no. Not all of them.
Many, actually depend
on the MHH
club for better quality
menstrual pads and
without it they
would
miss school.**



**...In fact,
do you remember
back
before the MHH block was
built how many girls
would cut class and
leave the school
saying they
were ill?**

**Oh yeah! The girls
were always ill
and would miss
classes
all the time.**



See!
It wasn't because they were ill
or anything.
It was because they have
gotten their periods, but didn't have a
safe way of managing it
like menstrual pads.
So they would
cut classes or stay home altogether.

Ohhhh!
That's why? I never
thought it was because
of their
periods!
How foolish of me!
I hope
they don't have
to do
that anymore!

Thankfully, they don't.
Since the MHH block was built,
they
have had a safe
space with access to
menstrual pads where
they can rest
when they need to.
So they don't have to cut
classes anymore.

This small building
helps with
all of that?
I never thought
it was
that important.



Hi

How are you guys?

Tesfu and Fozia,
we're good.
How are you?

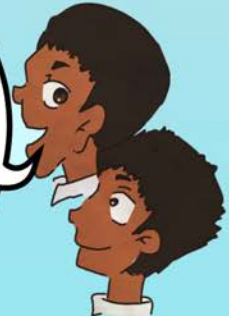


I heard you
guys talking about
the MHH block. Jamal,
are
those the MHH club
coupons?

We're
doing
well.



Yeah.
Eyasu and I
are selling them
and were just saying
Leul should buy some.
We were also
telling him about the
MHH block it supports.





You guys are wonderful!
...Leul, these coupons raise money for something that is very important to all of us at this school.




Yeah,
they were telling me. I didn't know that block was used for such important things.
But now that I think about it, most of the girls our age would be getting their periods now and would need a clean and safe space to manage it. I am glad something like this exists.




Yeah.
Before the MHH block was built, girls back then had to either skip classes or were so ashamed they'd just stay home.
Their education suffered and not many girls were ranked high.



Wow.
I never thought about it that way, but it is only a natural process that all girls go through like growing up.
We even studied it in our biology class with Ms. Habtammesh.
I can't believe girls are shamed because of it.
I am really glad the MHH block exists, and I want to help too.



**Well,
you can start
by buying
some coupons.**

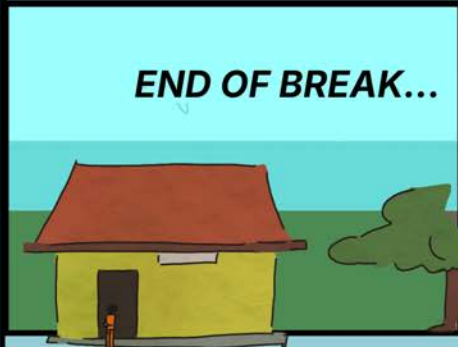


**Of course.
I will even take
a few more to sell to my
friends and parents.
Everyone should chip
in for this.
What
else can I do?**



**Boys are a big part of
the MHH club's fundraising
activities and they help
through many different ways.
...It was boys that
helped dig the hole required for the
incinerator. And when we need
to raise funds, boys help by
cutting grass that we then sell as hay.
... You can also help the club
on the day we sell handcrafts
to raise funds for
menstrual pads for girls
who can't
afford them.**







Leul! What brings you here?



Ms. Habtamnesh, I was just talking to Jamal, Eyasu, Tesfu, and Fozia about the MHH club's fundraising activities. I want to help too.



Oh! That's very good. Did they tell you about the coupons we have on sale now?

Actually, yes. I even bought some. But I was wondering if I could get more to sell to friends and family.



Of course, Leul. We'll take all the help we can get. Thank you so much for volunteering! You are a good student and a good person.

Clean Hands for a Healthy Life



Counselling room



Bathroom





Fozia,
did
you change
your menstrual pad?



Yes, Ms. Habtamnesh.



Did
you
wash your hands
properly?



Yes.



I saw that
there was no
soap in the bathroom
and
I was going to
put
one
in there
just now.



Yeah,
there wasn't.
But, it's fine.
I washed my
hands
with
just water.



Fozia,
washing your hands
with just water is
never enough.
You have to use soap
especially
when you're changing
your pads
and dealing with
menstrual hygiene.



But
it looked like
my hands were
clean after
washing them with
just water.





It might look like your hands are clean, but you can't determine how clean your hands are by just looking at them. After all, we've learned bacteria and other germs are never visible




That's true.

Therefore, you always have to use soap to wash your hands to get rid of these harmful germs. If you don't wash your hands properly before and after changing your pads, the bacteria can cause very bad infections that might require medical care.



Really? Just from not washing my hands with soap?




Yes. Not washing one's hands is one of the most common ways of contracting very dangerous diseases. This risk is even higher when you're dealing with your menstrual health.

Oh, I didn't know.


Well, you know now. Go ahead and take this bar of soap to the bathroom and make sure to wash your hands properly while you're there.

Okay.

You know how to safely dispose of the used sanitary pad after changing, yes?




**I think so.
I should fold
it into
itself and
throw it into
the incinerator
,right?**



**Yes.
And what happens
to it in
the
incinerator?**

**I guess it
gets
burned?**

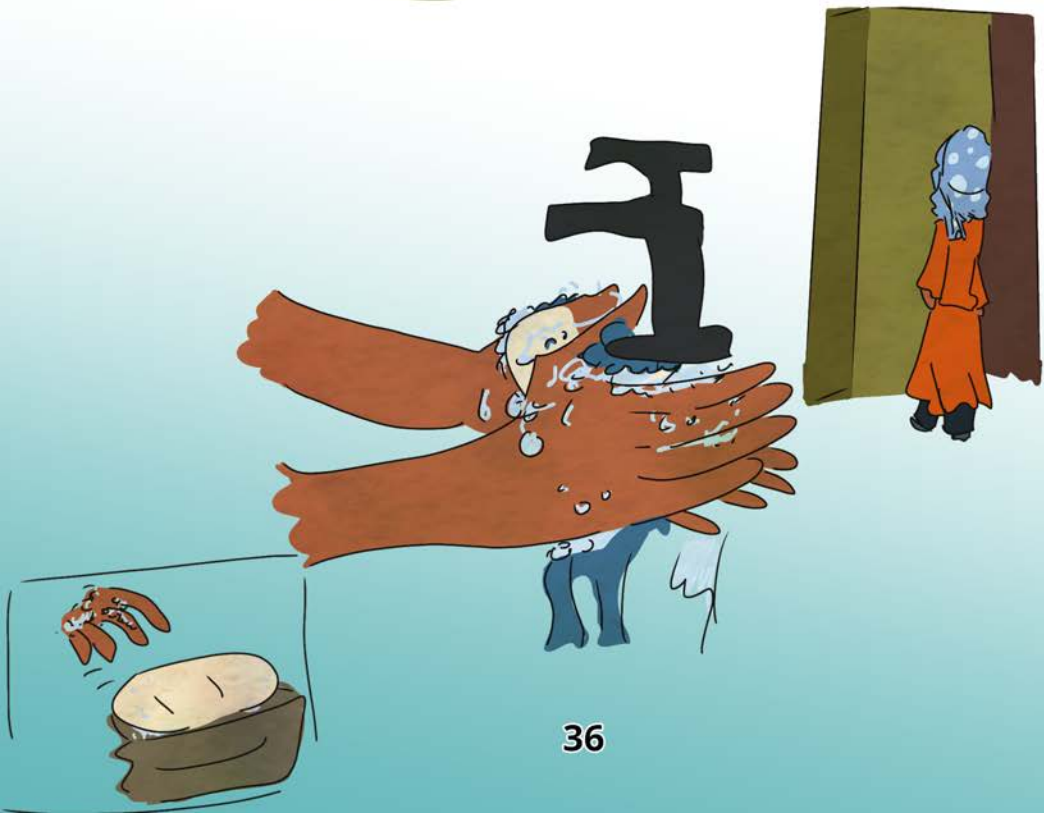


**Yes, it gets burned at
extremely high
temperatures to
ensure no contaminants are
left.**

**Now, go ahead and
dispose of the used
sanitary
pad, and wash your hands
properly as
per our
discussion .**




Used
sanitary
pad





**I am done,
Ms.
Habtamnesh.**



**Did you
wash your hands
properly?**



**Yes,
I washed
both
my hands
thoroughly.**



**Did you
wash the area
between
your fingers?**

I did.

**And
where is the
used
sanitary pad?**



**I dropped it
in the
incinerator.**



**Good.
Fozia, you have to
remember to wash your
hands with soap before
and after you
change your
pads even when
you're at home.
This is not just
for when
you're here in school,
okay?**

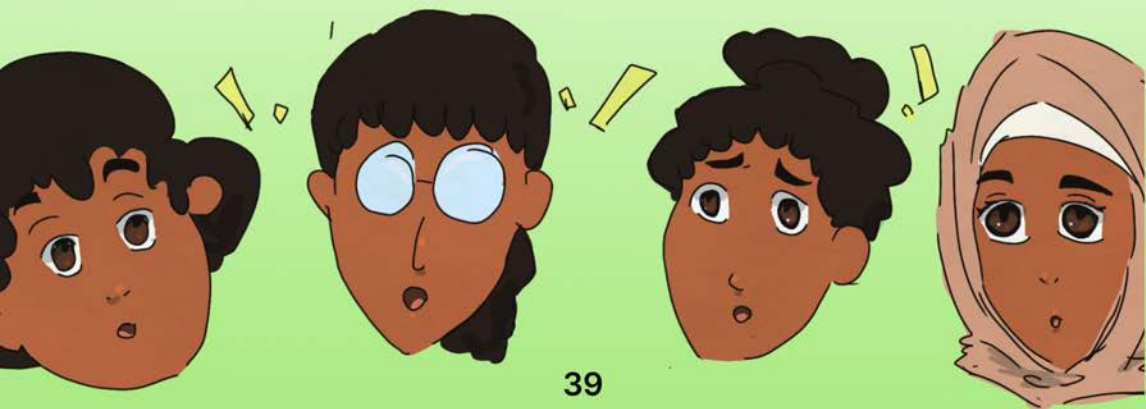








**Yes, Ms. Habtamnesh.
I will
remember to always
wash my hands
with soap and
water before
and
after I change my pads.**

**Clever girl.
Now go to
your class before
it gets
late.**








*Did you guys know
washing your
hands with just
water
isn't enough when
you want to change
your sanitary
pads?*









Menstruation is a normal part of life. It is also a physiologically important process that every girl deserves to manage with dignity. Yet recent assessments done by World Vision Ethiopia across project sites throughout the country found persistent barriers where only a minority of girls feel fully confident managing their periods. Many cited inadequate WASH facilities and the cost of products as major challenges. At the same time, we also understood that there was a strong reliance on schools and teachers for trusted information, and high participation in WASH clubs pointing to the viability of practical, community-led solutions.



This series of comic books turns these insights and peer reviewed information on reproductive health and WASH fundamentals into an engaging story for adolescents and a useful accompaniment to the adults who champion them.



The series targets three key behaviors: (1) washing hands before and after managing menstruation; (2) empowering boys to become informed, respectful allies so stigma fades; and (3) choosing and using safe menstrual products. The primary audience here is adolescent girls and boys as the format is designed to be particularly attractive to them. The secondary audience includes teachers, parents, health workers, religious leaders, and school administrators and policymakers who are expected to reinforce learning and improve facilities.

