This comic book is a collaboration between two projects: APHIA II Western and Scouting for Solutions.

ABUSI: A REGULAR TOWN, WITH ITS PEOPLE GOING ABOUT THEIR DAILY LIVES. LET'S MEET A FEW OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE.

Editorial Board
Margaret Brawley
Rael Odengo
June Omollo
Annie Thairu
Fiona Walugembe
Kimani Njogu

Appreciation goes to:
Rose Adera
Maina Kiranga
Wamalwa Masibo
Abel Mugenda
Peninah Murunga
Madiang Oluch
Richard Okello
Janet Shauri
Monica Waga
Alfayo Wamburi
Joan Waminja

The students, youth and Scouts in both Kenya and Uganda who gave us feedback on the comic book.

Scriptwriter:
Cajetan Boy

Illustrator:
Elijah Njoroge

© 2009 PATH
The material in this document may be freely used for educational or non-commercial purposes, provided the material is accompanied by acknowledgment line.

This publication is made possible by the generous support of the American people through USAID. The content is the responsibility of PATH and does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the US government.
EARLY ONE MORNING AS SHANI WASHES CLOTHES...

You're day dreaming! I'm going to tell my mom.

Stevo, please don't tell her!

Shani! So Stevo is right. You're just sitting there.

I'm sorry Auntie Martha.

Sorry won't wash the clothes. Go collect the water!
Amanda, how do you do it? Top of the class again.

It's just luck.

An “A” isn’t luck, it’s genius.

I just take my school work seriously.

I’ve got homework and cooking before dark.

Whatever! Hey, why don’t you come over to my place?

I’m sorry I can’t.

Why not?

Why do you have to do all that?
Mom expects me to do household chores before I do my homework.

What are you talking about?

By the way, are you going to enter the Talent Search?

They pick the best talent from here. The winners go to the national competitions which can lead to stardom and lots of money.

I'd have to ask my mother for permission. Then she would have to ask my Dad.

That's so boring! I can go anywhere I want whenever I want.

Lucky you. I wish my life was like yours.
MERCY MAY SEEM LUCKY BUT NOT EVERYTHING IN HER LIFE IS GOOD.

Mom? Dad? Are you home?

I need to speak to someone!

Mom? Dad?

Hi mom. I was wondering...
Sorry dear I can’t talk now.

Okay mom, bye.
What about Dad?

Alone, again.

You're too young to be watching that.

Just mind your own business. I'll watch what I want!

Well supper is ready.

I don't feel like eating.

But.......

Just leave me alone!
I can't afford to pay Amanda's fees.

But she does even better than Banda. Let her continue with her studies.

How will that help her get a husband?

Because they are different. Banda's a man and Amanda's a woman.

But why treat your children differently?

Fine, but if I see any signs of bad behavior she will be out of school.

Nowadays men do not mind women who have had schooling.

Taking you out of school early did not make you a lesser mother or wife.

Baba Banda please just let her continue with her education. I will ensure she learns how to be a good wife.
DAYS LATER...

Good morning Auntie.

Good morning Shani. We need to talk.

Shani, I fear we must make some changes. Starting today, you will have to work for your room, food and clothing.

You can’t do that; this is my father’s place.
Shhh! Don’t let your Uncle hear you. He has done without a lot to look after you and this land.

You’ve sold off the animals my father left. You’ve moved into my father’s house and have me living in the servants’ hut!

You’re annoying me! Anyway I came to inform you that you shall only go to school when there is no work to be done here.

But Auntie that’s not right. Let me go stay with grandmother instead.

We will decide what is right and what is wrong. No school and no going to your grandmother.

I’m sorry, but you’re needed here... besides this scouting takes up too much time.

Let me go to school just for today, please. We have a scouts meeting.
IN THE MEAN TIME MERCY WRESTLES WITH HER BODY IMAGE.

I wish I was small around the waist like Shani... she has a great figure!

Ugh! I look fat.

NOT EVERYONE IN ABUSI GOES TO SCHOOL. MOTO MUST WORK FOR A LIVING.

Do you have it?

I always deliver.
Smells potent

The best pure alcohol. Be careful how you mix it.

Are you going to teach me my job now?

Pay up.

If it's expensive for me, it must be expensive for you.

It's too much... you must be joking.

One of these days I'm going to get myself another supplier.

Hey it's a free country. Do as you wish. For now, pay me.

That's none of your business! Take your money and leave.

Why isn't she at school?
BANDA AND AMANDA ARE TWINS BUT TREATED VERY DIFFERENTLY.

And there’s this music competition. I heard about it. Please let me finish my homework.

You and books! If it was up to me...

Amanda get me something to drink.

Could I just finish this part dad?

You want me to wait to be served because you’re studying?

I’m sorry father. I’ll get it right away.

We were just trying to study.

And you better start behaving like a man and stop hanging around women.
I don’t want to hear that! Women should be in the kitchen!

But dad...

And no amount of education will ever change that!

MEANWHILE AT MERCY’S HOME...

Mercy, what’s the problem?
I wish you were here more often.

Yes, to provide you with all you need...

It's you I need, not things!

SHANI STRUGGLES AS SHE WORKS WITH HER AUNTIE AT THE PUB.
Come on, what's the problem?

Nobody can just touch my body!

It is wrong. You just can't touch me where you want.

But why not?

Hey you, keep off her, she's underage.

That's not important! I'll call the police.

Who made you the prefect here?

And under which act will I be charged?

Behaving in a manner likely to annoy a virgin.
Did you have to do that?

It was a bad touch.

The customer is always right. You will chase off all our customers.

He has no right touching me like that!

BANDA HAS A SECRET THAT HE DOES NOT WANT HIS PARENTS TO KNOW ABOUT.
Banda’s here, now we can start.

Sorry I’m late, I had to find an excuse to cut practice.

You shouldn’t keep your music playing a secret. Sooner or later its going to come out.

Well, let’s hope later... much later.

When it comes out they’ll blame me for misleading you.

Not if they’ve heard our music!

You got that right. Okay, guys let’s hit it.

One, two, one two, three, four...
You sing great. Want to practice with us?

Why not? You guys sound pretty good.

That same afternoon Shani practices tying knots for her scouts badge.

It's so loud...
AFTER BAND PRACTICE...

You sing very well.

Thanks.

How do you manage it?

Lots of practice. I hope I can go into music someday.
Me too. But my Dad would kill me if he knew. I'm skipping soccer for music.

My parents probably wouldn't care.

You must be lucky having such modern parents.

I'm not so sure about that.

My parents won't let Amanda do any of the things other girls do. She's treated as if her only role in life is to become someone's wife.

That's so old fashioned.

I know, but what can I do?

By the way, are you going to enter the Talent Search?

I haven't decided yet. You?

Of course. You should enter, you're very talented.

Thanks, so are you.
AMANDA AND HER MOTHER PREPARE DINNER.

Mom I'd really like to enter the Talent Search, can I?

And what is that?

I see. And who told you about it?

Mercy, she's in our school. She invited me and....
I know her. She's not very well behaved.

But can I go?

I don't think so.

But Banda will be there.

I don't think your father would agree.

What about you? What do you think?

That is not the issue here!

Banda and I are twins. Why are we treated so differently?

It's because...
He’s a man! Do you ever wish you were born a man? I do!

**SHANI TAKES A WALK TO TRY AND CLEAR HER HEAD.**

If only my parents were alive, things would be different. I’m sure Dad left some instructions for my education. He believed that education was important.

Help...! Help! safari ants...
Ehh ... you won't even help a man in desperate need? Shani, hey what's up? Can I talk to you?

Not when you were following me in the bushes, Moto.

Why are you so stuck up? You're no longer the daughter of a rich man. You are an orphan. Accept it. You might have to talk to poor people like me now.

Do you have to be so mean?

Shani, wait Shani!
Shani, it's me.

Uncle?

Yes. What are you doing running around at night?

I had taken a walk to cool off.

What is wrong?

I miss my parents so much.

I realize I can never replace your father, but I will always be here for you.

But why can't I continue going to school? I like it. I want to learn.

Hmm... I can see how much it means to you. Okay, I'll look into it. I promise. Now let's go home.
AMANDA AND BANDA ARE TRYING TO EXCHANGE FAVORS BUT A MAJOR PROBLEM CROPS UP.

So have you managed to finish my homework?

I have to finish mine first and that’s after making dinner. And also Shani hasn’t brought back the book I lent her.

I could help with some of your chores, that will give you time to do my homework and yours.

Fine...but I need a favour from you.

I want you to help me convince Mom and Dad to let me attend the Talent Search.

Like what?

But why?

I think I can give a good performance. Did you like the lyrics I showed you?

Yeah they are good. And you sing well.

So will you help me?
Mercy! Will you please pay attention?

A girl is allowed to daydream especially during these boring class projects!

You could do better if you paid more attention.

I want to be a singer not doing some boring chemistry.
Eh, Amanda, you have to learn to relax, enjoy life a bit.

I enjoy what I do.

If you continue this way you'll end up being a miserable old spinster.

A basic education helps.

Maybe I want to be a spinster... and for your information not all spinsters are miserable.

Have you heard about Shani?

No I haven't seen her for awhile.

Whatever!

Her auntie won't let her come to school.

I doubt it.

Why not? Your brother is going to be there.

That's so bad. We should do something about it. So are you coming to the show?
SHANI CONTINUES TO ATTEND SCHOOL WHEN SHE CAN. AT LEAST THE SCOUT PROGRAM MAKES HER HAPPY.
Hello rabbits. You’re so beautiful. If only my parents were here, but they are now one with the earth.

Shani, you rarely come to school these days and you seem absent minded when you do.

My auntie and uncle said I can only come to school when there is no work to do at home.

Is that so? The exams are a few weeks away, you need to study seriously.

She won’t even buy books for me.

Don’t worry, I will talk to the other teachers and organize for you to get some books and prepare for the exams.

BACK AT BANDA AND AMANDA’S HOUSE...

Hi dad, could I get some money to buy air time for my phone?

Keeping a phone is as expensive as bringing up a baby.
Thanks dad.

Could I have some money for air time too?

Dad I...

I don't want to hear about it! Go do your chores!

And who will you be calling?

Dad, why do you have to treat Amanda differently?

And Amanda's your only daughter.

You're my only son and heir.

Since when have women and men been the same?

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN, MERCY CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE TO GET HER PARENTS ATTENTION.

Mom, we need to talk.

Sorry baby, but I have to go.
Mom!
It's urgent!

I need some money... for girls' things.

Okay Mercy, what is it?

You make it sound like the world is coming to an end. Now I have to go. Be good.

Good morning Mercy, how are you doing?

Not too good.

Bye mom.

What's wrong?

Why didn't you ask your mother?

If you don't believe me you can go buy the stuff for me.

Nothing. I need some money... for girls' things. I just started having my period and...
Ok here is some money. Is this enough?

Well... I need a bit more or I could give you the list of the things I need.

No need for that. Here is some more. Enjoy your weekend and be good.

Always Bye dad.
MOTO CROSSES PATH WITH SHANI AGAIN.

Hi. Can I walk with you?

Sorry if I upset you the other night.

It’s okay.

How come you don’t dress better?

Clothes aren’t everything.

I can see you are very beautiful. Everyone else would notice if only you had better clothes and took care of your hair.

Thank you.
BANDA HELPS AMANDA WITH HER CHORES ONLY TO RUN INTO THEIR FATHER.

Banda, what are you doing?

Helping Amanda.

How many times have I told you not to do women's chores?

I was coming this way and thought it would be okay to assist her.

It is not okay, you are about to become a man and all you do is behave like a woman. Next you'll be telling me you want to sing!

Listen, there are reasons why men do what they do and women do what they do. Each has his or her role. Do you hear me?

Yes father.

Dad, it was just this one trip.

Good, now let your sister head home. It's time you and I had a man to man talk.
ON THE SAME DAY.

Auntie, could you give me some money to go to the salon?

My father left enough.

And how would you know?

He told me so before he passed on.

Do you have any idea how much it costs to keep this place running?

What about his will?

I was only asking.

How can you be so disrespectful and ungrateful?

You misunderstood me.

Do you have any idea how much it costs to feed and cloth you and pay your fees?

Do you know what your Uncle and I have had to sacrifice in order to look after you?

I don't think so! We're here to help you, but you insist on second guessing us. Fine! If that's the way you want it, then that's the way you'll get it!
AMANDA DECIDES TO CONFRONT BANDA ON HIS SECRET.

If you concentrated on your work as much as you did on your guitar you’d probably top the class.

Well, not all of us are cut out for books.

Who told you that?

I hear you’ve joined a band.

I have my sources. It’s only a matter of time before Dad finds out too.

Not unless you tell him.

I don’t have to. He’ll see you at the Talent Search.

I’ll cross that bridge when I come to it.

Banda, I also need a favour. I’ll help you with your assignments but you have to get me the books I need.

Consider it done. Now, I better leave before Dad realizes I’m here.

One last thing, could you please give this to Shani if you pass near her home? Make sure her Auntie doesn’t see you.
Amanda, you have beautiful hair. This will make it more noticeable.

It's really beautiful. But I cannot afford it.

Take it. A gift from me to you.

My pleasure.

Why not?

Once you accept a gift from some people, you're put in a position to be compromised later.

Hey, not everybody is out to take advantage of you.

You just tried to. Bye.

Clever girl.
MERCY'S DISHONESTY IS STARTING HER DOWN THE ROAD TO TROUBLE.

What are you doing?

Nothing.

Why did you just take money from your father's wallet?

No reason is good enough for you to steal.

Are you trying to bribe me... make me a thief like you?

I have my reasons. What are you going to do?

Mine is, so keep your mouth shut.

I'm not a thief. This is more than you earn in a month and I'm the one taking the risks. You in or not?
Don’t think that money can buy everybody.

I can get you fired!

Don’t you threaten me ever.

Will you tell Dad?

I don’t know what I’ll do...yet.

BANDA FACES THE MUSIC FOR HIS SECRET LATER THAT DAY.

So it’s true! This is where you are coming to waste your time.

Dad!
Sorry? What is this noise you call music? And what were you doing with that girl?

I'm sorry.

We were just performing.

You call that performing! Go home....now!

Dad, I enjoy playing music.

No son of mine is going to end up a musician and that's final!

Why are you crying? That changes nothing.

Shani is also having a bad day...

Stevo, if my parents were still alive this would not be happening.
You're an orphan, accept it.

One of these days you'll all pay.

One of these days you won't have my parents to look after you.

You call this looking after me? I have become a slave in my own home.

Then you better look for somewhere to go, shouldn't you?

MOTO IS WASHING CLOTHES TOO, FOR HIS SICK BROTHER

Moto, I need to go back into the house now.
Moto, just burn them.

Why?

You might get infected.

You don’t even know what my brother is suffering from.

Everyone knows he has AIDS.

He has HIV not AIDS.

Same thing.

You can’t catch the virus from clothes or from touching. Learn the facts man!

LATER THAT NIGHT IN AMANDA'S BEDROOM...

Surprise!

Oh Banda. Thank you.

You have something for me?

Of course, your homework all completed.

Thanks.
You should make an effort to do your own school work.

I'm not as bright as you are.

You could be..... if you studied hard enough.

I prefer to sing.

We make a good duet.

We sure do.

Why don't you join me for some practice after school?

You're still doing that? After Dad busted you?

A man's got to do what a man's got to do.

What about women? Are they just supposed to do what men want?

BUT BANDA HAS A LOT OF THINGS IN HIS MIND

What does it mean to be a man? Disrespect women? Control the family? Make a lot of money? Can't a man sing? I want to be a man, to make my father proud; but I want to support my sister. She should be treated fairly like me.

No, they shouldn't. But our traditions seem to say otherwise.
THE BIG DAY OF THE TALENT SEARCH HAS FINALLY ARRIVED BUT DOES MOTO HAVE OTHER IDEAS?

I wouldn’t go with her if I were you.

Of course not, but you are still a young man.

Why?

She goes with any man who pays her.

What’s that got to do with anything?

Do you warn them all?

You have the rest of your life before you.

That’s what they all say.

I’m not a fool.

AT THE ABUSI TALENT SEARCH

Ladies and Gentlemen, parents and teachers, boys and girls. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Abusi Talent Search. Now without further ado, our first group.
Banda isn't bad. Maybe his playing in a band is not a bad thing.

I thought we were going somewhere private.

You call this fun? This is for kids. You need to grow up!

Well, then I'm off.

I told you we were going to have fun.

I am grown up. That's why I have fun that's not risky.

As you wish. I'll just stay here and enjoy the music.

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, now our final contestant,... please welcome... Amanda!
AS AMANDA SINGS ON, SHANI WISHES SHE COULD BE AT THE TALENT SEARCH, BUT HER AUNTIE HAS WORK FOR HER TO DO.
They are under arrest for dealing in illicit brews.
What's going to happen to me.

Where are you taking my parents?

You must have some relatives you can stay with.

What about me? I have my grandmother but she lives far away.

Then what are you doing here?

He is my uncle. My father and mother are dead.

I see. Do you have anywhere to stay?

Sorry, we can't leave you here alone. We'll have to take you to the child welfare office.

Just here.

For how long?

Until we have a responsible adult to look after you.
BACK AT THE TALENT SEARCH, THE EMCEE IS GIVING PRIZES.

And the winners for the Abusi Talent Search are... Banda's Band!

You may not have won anything, but today you and Banda have made me the proudest parent in Abusi!

Excuse me ladies and gentlemen, the judges have decided on a second award for the best solo performance. Her wonderful lyrics and voice prove she is worthy. The winner is... Amanda.

Amanda!

Amanda!

Amanda!

Maybe I should give this girl a chance. Maybe I should also give Banda a chance.

Thank you. I wish to thank the person who wrote the lyrics for the song... Shani.
DRAW YOUR OWN CARTOON STRIP!!

Using the spaces provided below, draw your own cartoon using the dialogue provided at the top of the first two columns. In the third column, put in your own words and a picture to conclude the story. You can discuss and collaborate with your friends in drawing the cartoon strip. Once you are finished, cut off your cartoon strip and send it to:

Kenya
The Editor
The Border Comic
PATH
PO BOX 76634
Nairobi, Kenya 00508

OR

Uganda
The Editor
The Border Comic
Uganda Scouts Association
PO Box 1294
Kampala, Uganda

Please be sure to indicate your name(s), age(s) and address very clearly below the cartoon strip. The most interesting cartoon could appear in a future issue of THE BORDER. It could be YOURS!

Alice is Worried: ‘Oh, it is very late, it is raining and I do not have the money to get home before it is dark. What shall I do?’

Suddenly, Ogopa the boda-boda arrives: ‘Young girl, it is late and you haven’t gone home? This place is bad at night! Come with me to my house, and then I will give you a free ride home. What do you say?’

(Write here what you think Alice should say or do then draw below)

Name(s)

Age(s)

Address