

Taking responsibility for **YOUR** school

Every parent, caregiver and learner can play a role in holding their school accountable **for providing quality education in a safe environment.**



My school is the worst! Our toilets are broken, so we have to use the bush outside the school when we need the toilet.

My school is the worst! There is a gang of older kids who bully all the Grade One learners and the teachers don't do anything to stop them.



My school is the worst! Namibia has universal primary education now. This means that our parents don't have to contribute to the School Development Fund. But my school is charging a new administration fee and sending learners home if their parents do not pay. This means that learners are being excluded from school.



My school is the worst! My classmate often comes to school with bruises and says her father hurts her when he is drunk. My teacher does not do anything to help, she just threatens to send her home from school if she does not stop crying.

AN OLDER LEARNER HEARS
THE CONVERSATION AND
APPROACHES THE GROUP ...

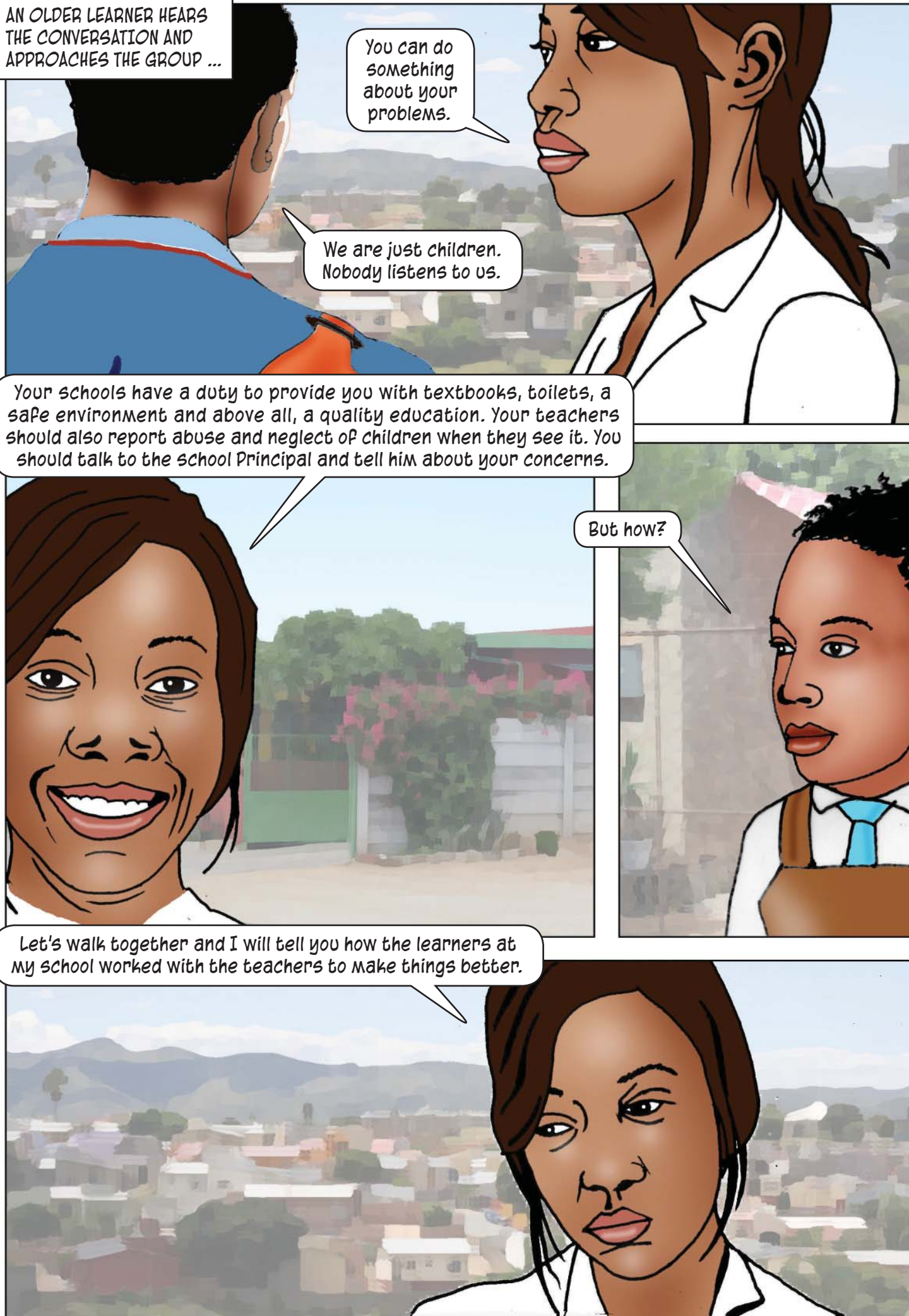
You can do
something
about your
problems.

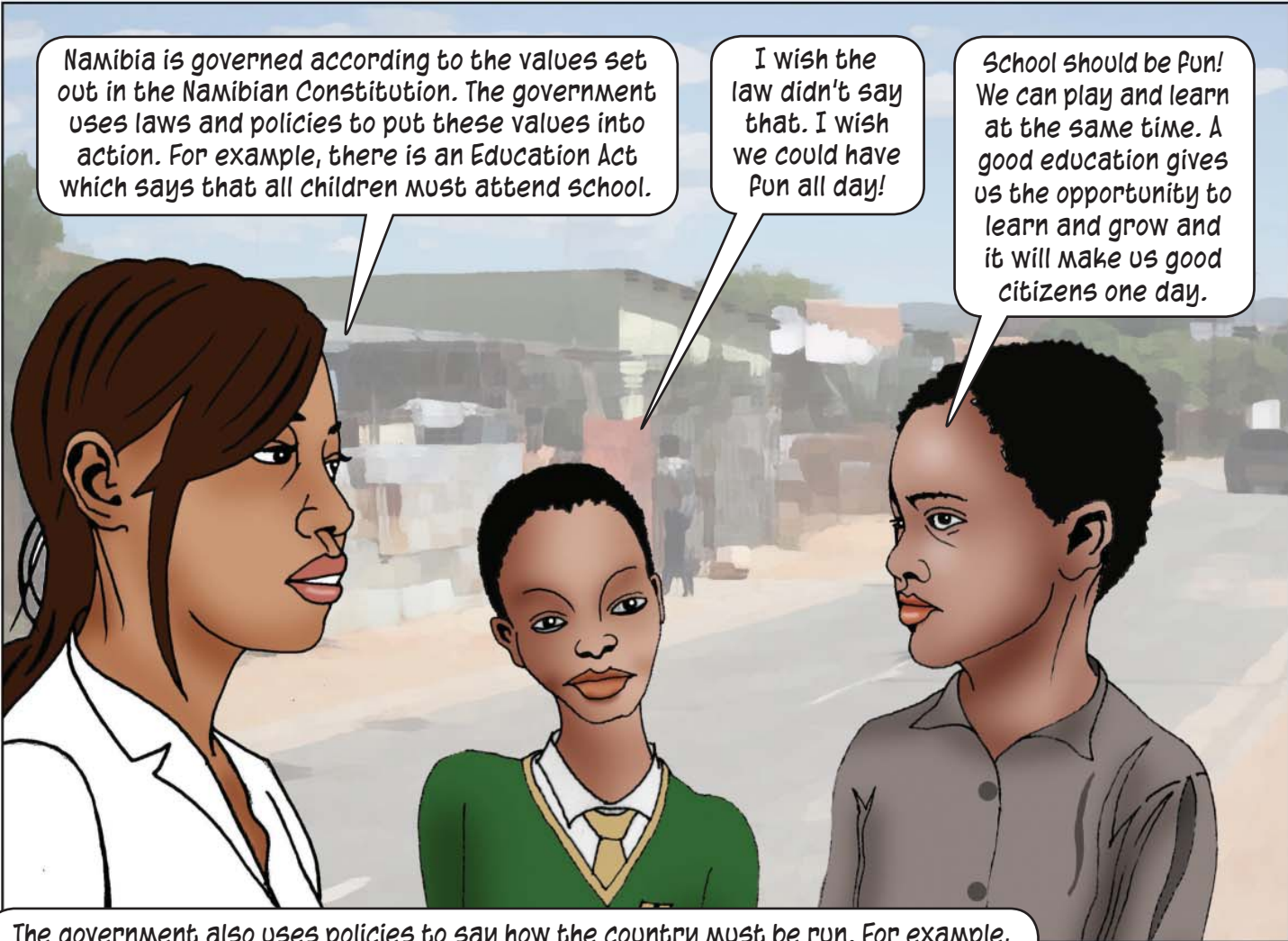
We are just children.
Nobody listens to us.

Your schools have a duty to provide you with textbooks, toilets, a safe environment and above all, a quality education. Your teachers should also report abuse and neglect of children when they see it. You should talk to the school Principal and tell him about your concerns.

But how?

Let's walk together and I will tell you how the learners at my school worked with the teachers to make things better.





Namibia is governed according to the values set out in the Namibian Constitution. The government uses laws and policies to put these values into action. For example, there is an Education Act which says that all children must attend school.

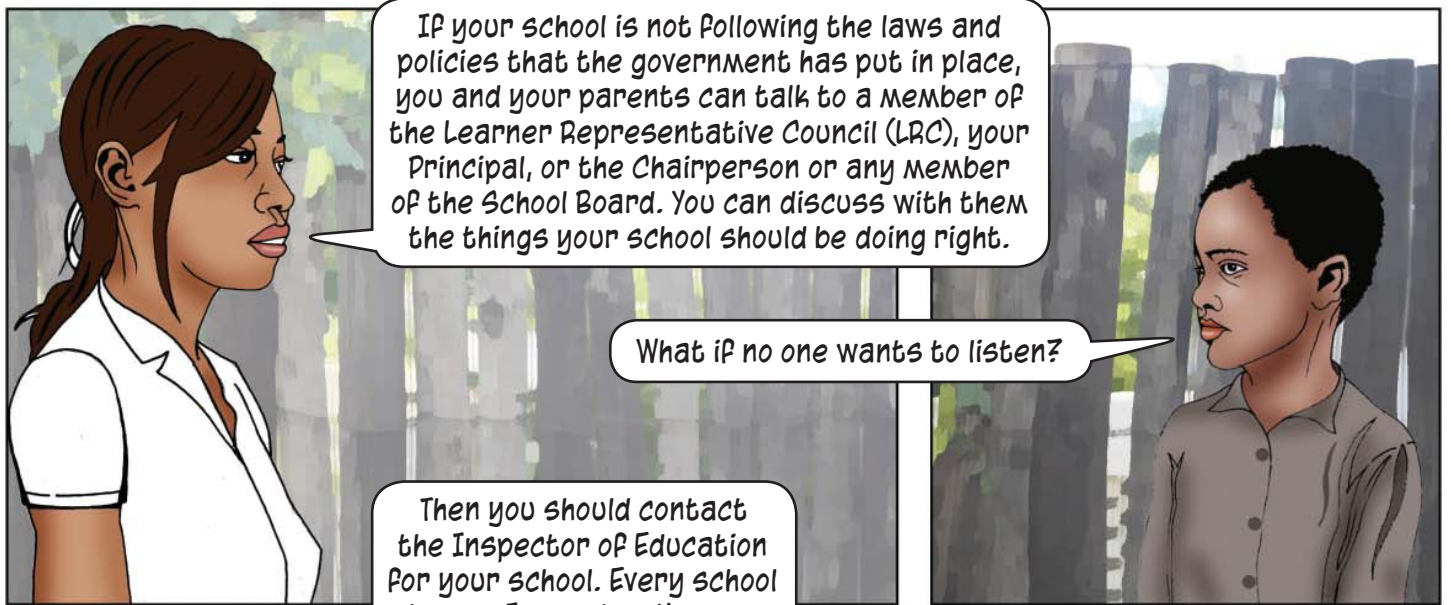
I wish the law didn't say that. I wish we could have fun all day!

School should be fun! We can play and learn at the same time. A good education gives us the opportunity to learn and grow and it will make us good citizens one day.

The government also uses policies to say how the country must be run. For example, there is a National Policy for School Health which says what your school should do to help keep you healthy. Your school, through the Ministry of Education, has a duty to make sure that there is safe water and clean toilets for you to use.

I never heard of that policy! I wonder if my school knows about it? If they were implementing it, our toilets would not be in such a mess!

Schools should also be a place where we can feel safe and protected, and where our teachers help us understand how to remain safe and what to do when somebody has hurt us.



If your school is not following the laws and policies that the government has put in place, you and your parents can talk to a member of the Learner Representative Council (LRC), your Principal, or the Chairperson or any member of the School Board. You can discuss with them the things your school should be doing right.

What if no one wants to listen?

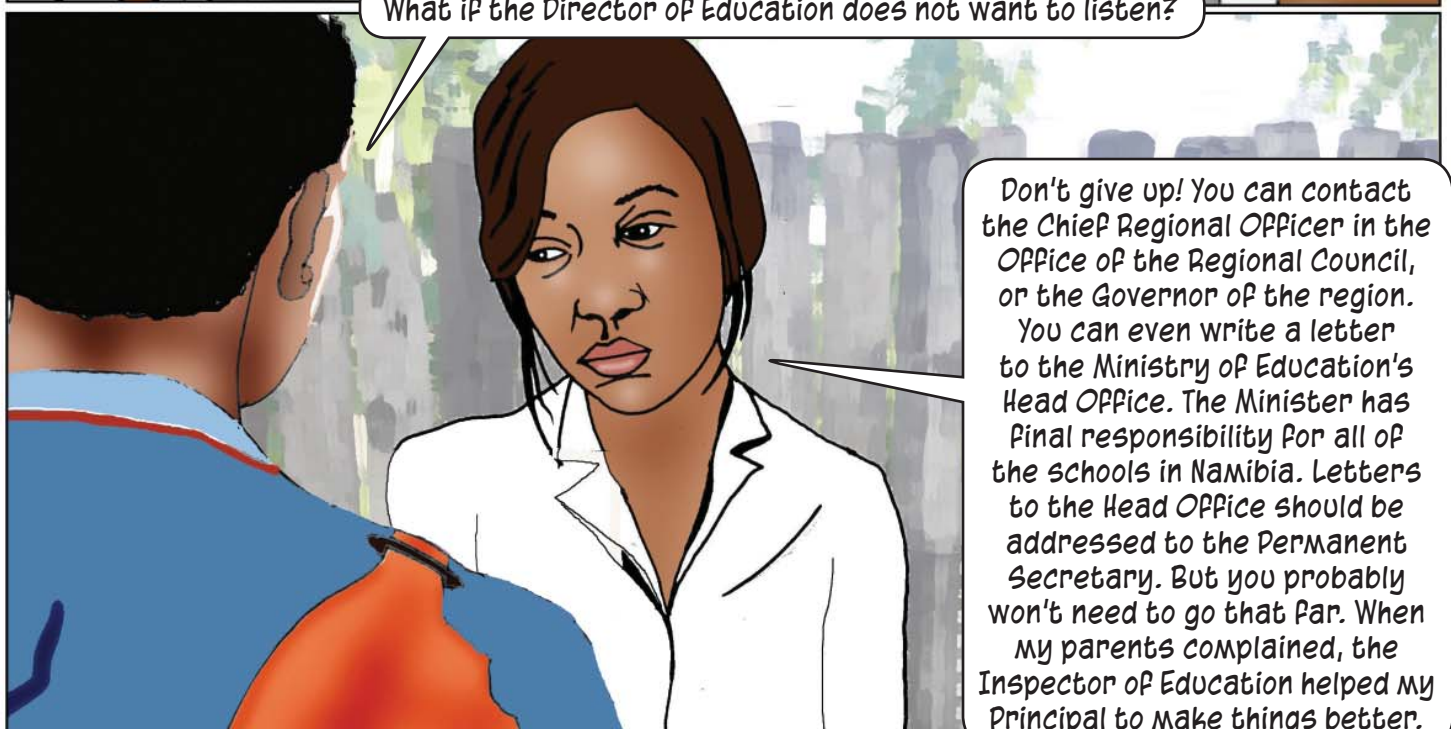
Then you should contact the Inspector of Education for your school. Every school has an Inspector. You can get the Inspector's contact details from your school or from the regional office of the Ministry of Education.




What if the Inspector of Education does not want to listen?

You can contact the Director of Education at the Regional Directorate of Education.


What if the Director of Education does not want to listen?



Don't give up! You can contact the Chief Regional Officer in the Office of the Regional Council, or the Governor of the region. You can even write a letter to the Ministry of Education's Head Office. The Minister has final responsibility for all of the schools in Namibia. Letters to the Head Office should be addressed to the Permanent Secretary. But you probably won't need to go that far. When my parents complained, the Inspector of Education helped my Principal to make things better.



Where can we learn about some of the things our school should be doing right?



The Ministry of Education has produced comics, posters and animations to inform people about school standards. You can get copies of the printed material from your Life Skills teacher or teacher counsellor or regional school counsellor or Inspector of Education.

Other organisations have produced materials about school standards too. You or your parents can also read the policies if you want to. You can ask the school if they have copies of the policies or if they can help you to get them.

I am a child. Why would any adult listen to me? I am afraid to make a complaint about someone in authority who is older than me. Wouldn't it be disrespectful for me to complain?

No, these are our schools. We are part of the school community and if we want our schools to be better, we have to do something about it!

We do not have to do it alone – we can work together with our families, our friends and our teachers. We can also ask our parents to talk with the School Board or the Inspector of Education.



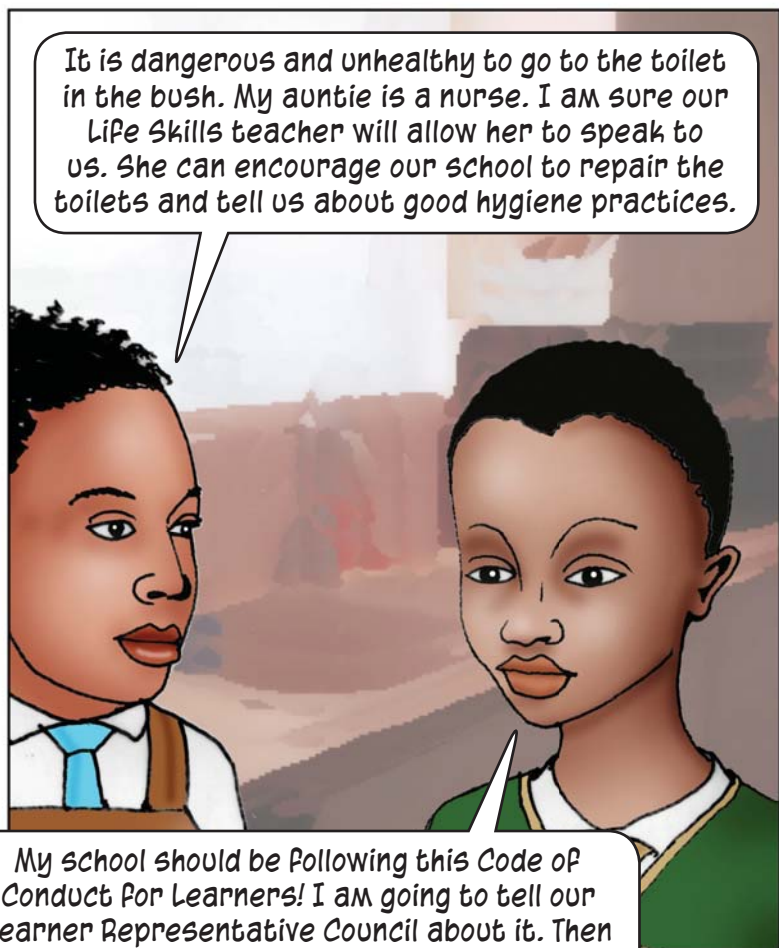


Dad, will you come with me to speak to my Principal about our textbook problem? Each learner should have his or her own books!

Yes son, I will.

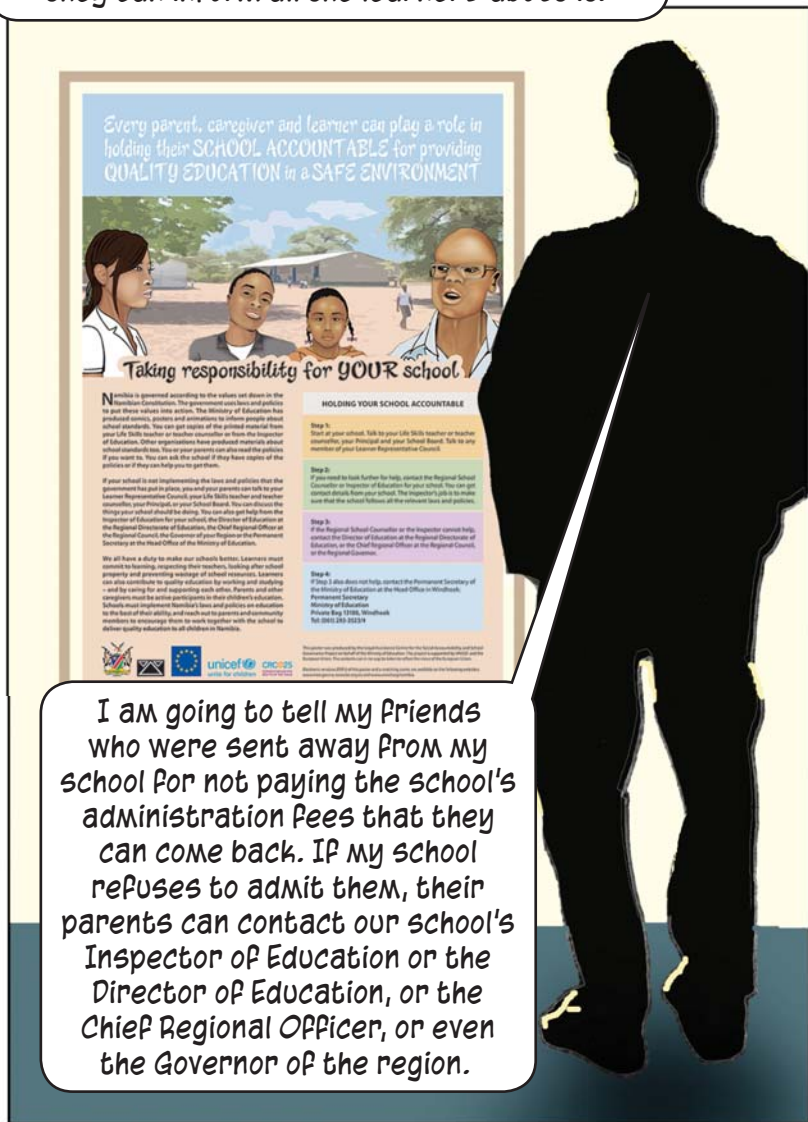


That's a good idea. The Learner Representative Council, with help from the Life Skills teacher and our teacher counsellor, can also talk to learners about the problem of violence and abuse, and what we need to know to protect ourselves.

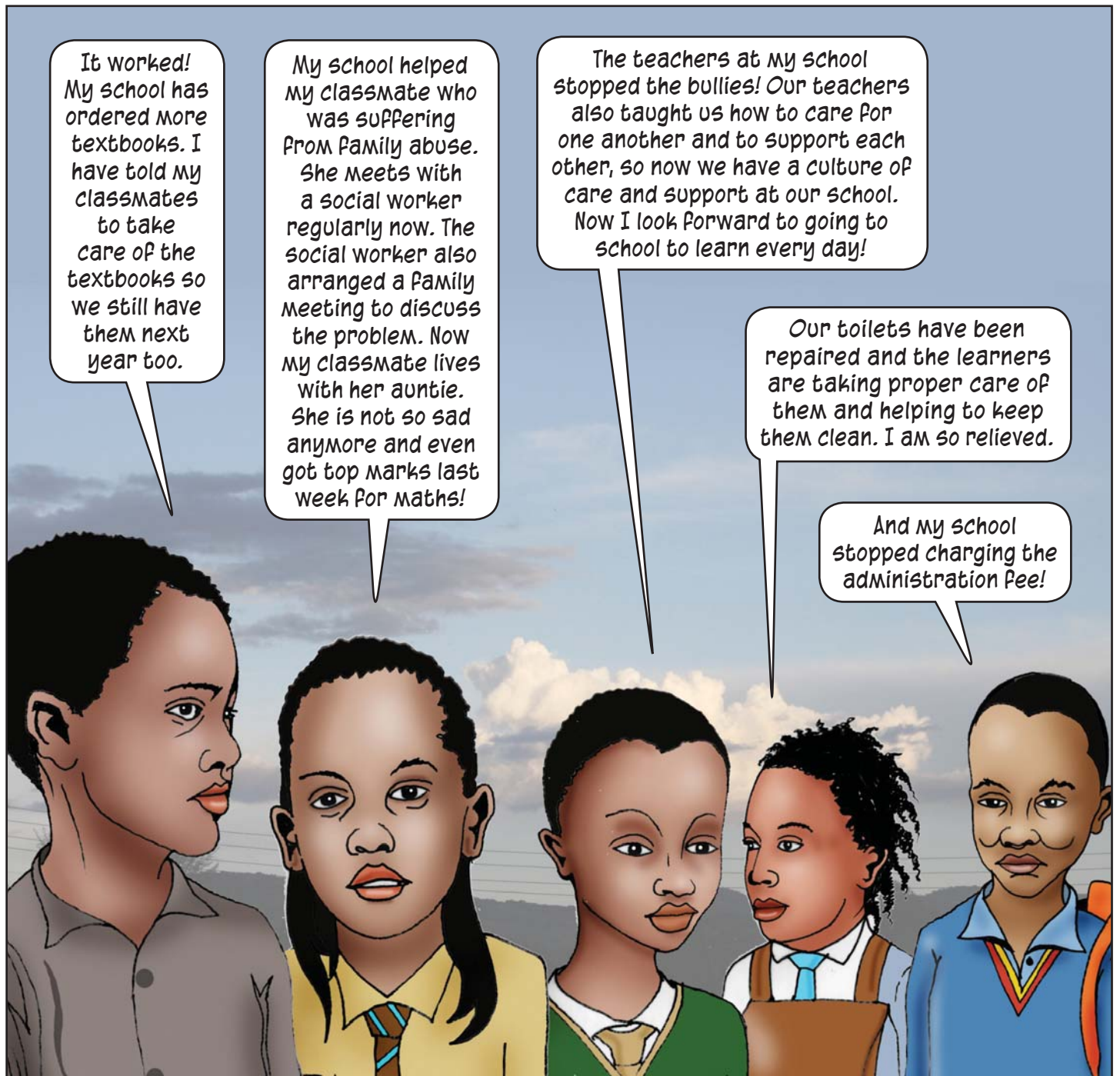


It is dangerous and unhealthy to go to the toilet in the bush. My auntie is a nurse. I am sure our Life Skills teacher will allow her to speak to us. She can encourage our school to repair the toilets and tell us about good hygiene practices.

My school should be following this Code of Conduct for Learners! I am going to tell our Learner Representative Council about it. Then they can inform all the learners about it.



I am going to tell my Friends who were sent away from my school for not paying the school's administration fees that they can come back. IF my school refuses to admit them, their parents can contact our school's Inspector of Education or the Director of Education, or the Chief Regional Officer, or even the Governor of the region.



Every school in Namibia should provide quality education for its learners in a safe, protected environment. Learners, their families and community members can hold schools accountable for meeting this standard. But learners and parents can only hold schools accountable if they know about the standards that the schools should be meeting. The Ministry of Education is working with development partners to provide this information. Learners, their families and community members can then use this information to work with the schools in their community to ensure that every school provides quality education in a safe, protected environment.

We all have a duty to make our schools better. All learners must commit to learning, respecting their teachers, looking after school property and preventing wastage of school resources. Learners can contribute to quality education by working and studying – and also by caring for and supporting each other. Parents and other caregivers must be active participants in their children's education. Schools must implement Namibia's laws and policies on education to the best of their ability, and reach out to parents and community members to encourage them to work together with the school to deliver quality education to all children in Namibia.

This comic is one of the materials produced for the Ministry of Education's **Social Accountability and School Governance Project**. There are three other comics in this range, and three posters. To get printed copies of these and other materials produced under this project, contact your Regional School Counsellor, or the office of the Ministry of Education in your region, or the National Resource Centre (contact details below).

National Resource Centre
Ministry of Education
Government Office Park, Luther Street, Windhoek
Telephone (+264) (0)61-2933004

Holding your school ACCOUNTABLE

Step 1:

Start at your school. Talk to your Life Skills teacher or teacher counsellor, your Principal and your School Board. Talk to any member of your Learner Representative Council.

Step 2:

If you need to look further than your school for help, contact the Regional School Counsellor or the Inspector of Education responsible for your school. You can get their contact details from your school. The Inspector's job is to ensure that the school follows all the relevant laws and policies.

Step 3:

If the Regional School Counsellor or the Inspector cannot help, contact the Director of Education at the Regional Directorate of Education, or the Chief Regional Officer at the Regional Council, or the Regional Governor.

Step 4:

If Step 3 also does not help, you can contact the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education at the Head Office in Windhoek:
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education
Private Bag 13186, Windhoek
Tel: (061) 293-3523/4



unicef
unite for children

CRC@25
CONVENTION ON THE
RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

This comic was produced by the Legal Assistance Centre for the Social Accountability and School Governance Project on behalf of the Ministry of Education. The project is supported by UNICEF and the European Union. The contents can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

Text: Gender Research and Advocacy Project of the Legal Assistance Centre
Illustrations, design and layout: Dudley Viall and Perri Caplan
Printing: _____

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An electronic version of this publication is available on the following websites:
www.moe.gov.na; www.lac.org.na and www.unicef.org/namibia