

Healthy Animals, Happy People



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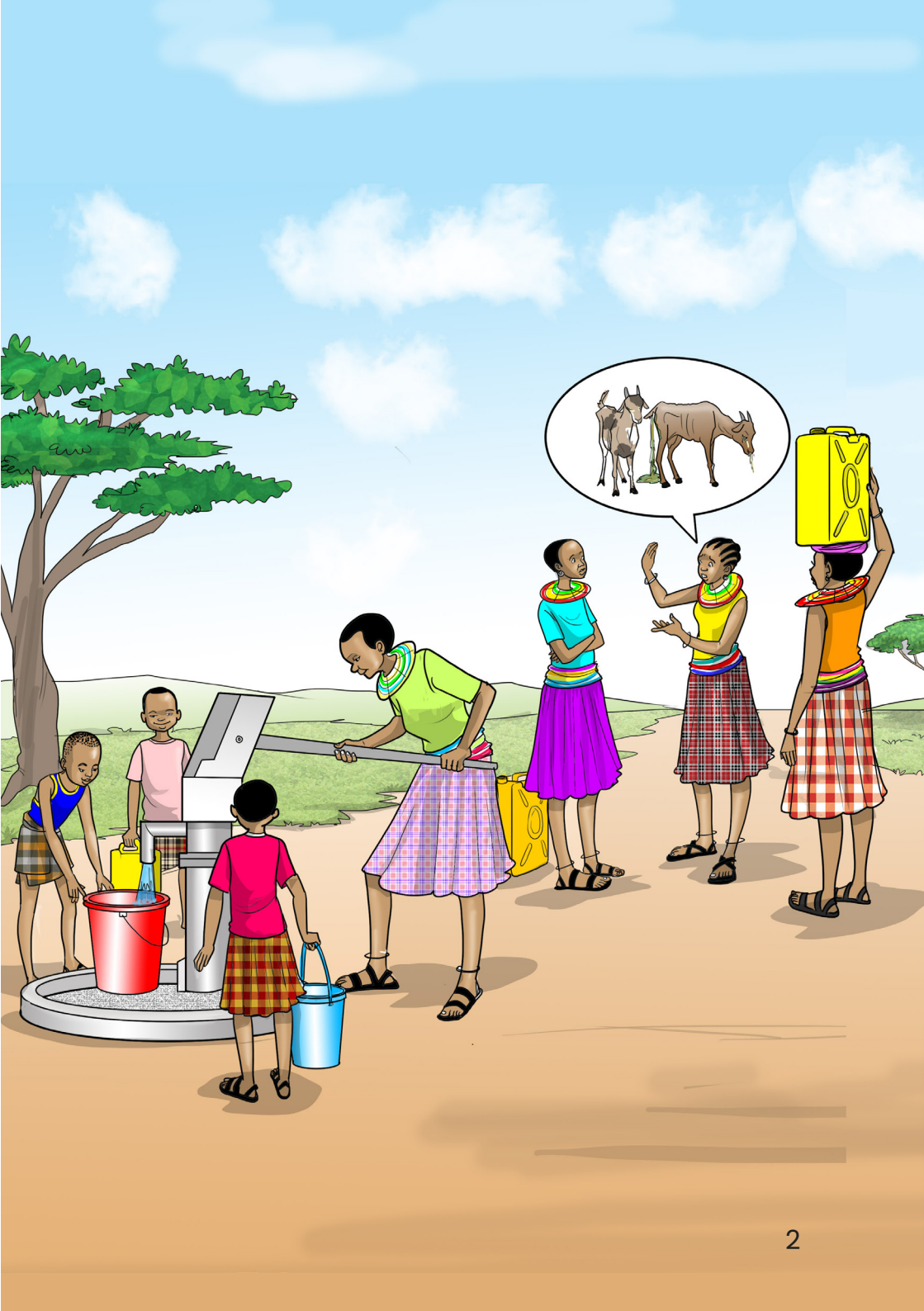
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Chebet looked worried as she fetched water at the borehole. "Some of my goats are having discharges from their noses and eyes," she said.

"Mine too. Do they have diarrhoea as well?" a woman next to her asked. Chebet nodded.

"I have tried different herbs but there has been no change," she sighed.

"I lost a goat yesterday," another woman cried. The women were worried for their animals.



Three days later, it was a market day. Chebet went to the local market. She heard a voice on the radio saying that when the goats and sheep had discharge from their eyes and noses or had diarrhea, they were sick with the peste des petits ruminants (PPR) disease.

The voice asked people to take their goats and sheep that were not sick for vaccination against the PPR disease.

Chebet had never heard about vaccination. She decided that she would take her goats for it.



The next day, Chebet woke up very early in the morning and assigned house chores to the older children.

She asked Cheptepelel, her neighbour, to watch over her children and house while she took the goats to the vaccination site.

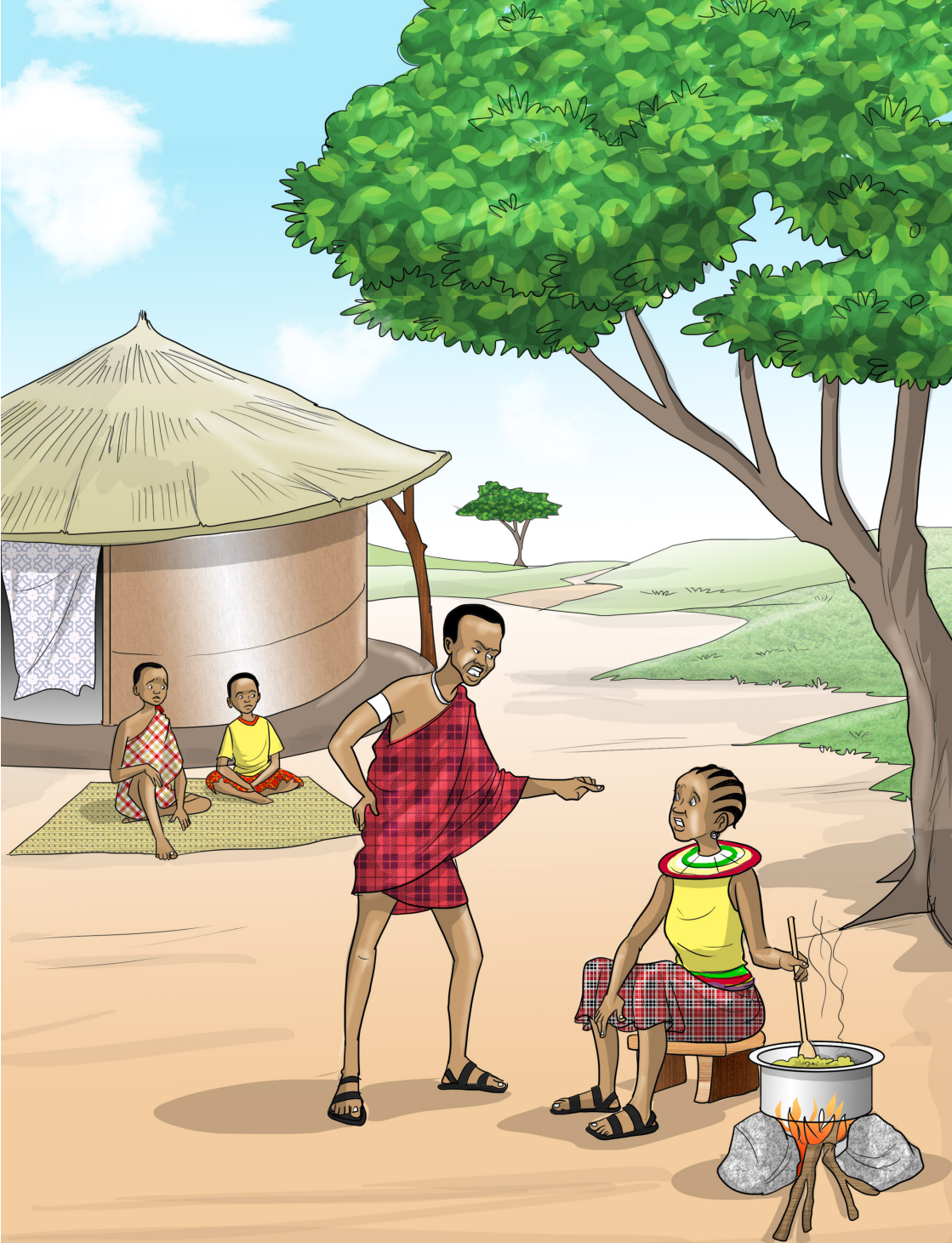


In the evening, Chebet's husband, Meri rushed to where Chebet was sitting.

"Why did you go to the livestock crush?" he shouted.

"I wanted to vaccinate my goats," Chebet answered. "We lost two more goats yesterday."

"Don't ever do that again without my permission!" Meri warned her.



After a few days, Cheptepelel came to see Chebet. "I can see your goats are still alive. I thought they would die from the vaccination," Cheptepelel said.

"They are healthier than they have ever been," Chebet responded firmly. However, Cheptepelel did not trust the vaccination. She did not want to risk her goats.



A month later, Meri was telling his friends, "All my animals are healthy. I can sell any of them at a good price."

"How is that possible when our goats are sick and dying?" Lodengo, one of his friends asked. Lodengo was Cheptepelel's husband.

"Do you remember what Losiwa, the community animal health worker, said about vaccinating all the animals? Well, Chebet took the goats for vaccination and all the animals at home are as healthy as they could be," Meri said.



Lodengo could not sell any of his animals because most of them were sick. He wanted to buy a motorcycle. When he went back home, he complained to Cheptepelel. "I can't even sell any of my animals at a good price!"

Cheptepelel thought about Chebet's goats which were very healthy after the vaccination.

Lodengo and Cheptepelel agreed that Cheptepelel should visit Chebet the next day.



"I have lost many goats in the past month and my husband's sheep are sick. What should I do?" Cheptepelel cried. Many other women had asked Chebet for help too.

"I will call Losiwa to visit our village," Chebet replied. Chebet mobilized a lot of women and her husband mobilized the men to attend the session with the community animal health worker. After some days, Losiwa came to Chebet's village.



Losiwa talked to the women and men about the benefits of vaccination. "Vaccination is one of the measures to control the disease outbreak among livestock," he said. However, Cheptepelel had her fears. "The other day, I sent my son to take the sick goat for vaccination, but it later died. Won't all my goats die when I vaccinate them?" she asked.

"Vaccination does not treat sick animals. It helps to prevent the disease from spreading to healthy animals. You must treat all the sick animals first," Losiwa said.



After the session, the women asked Chebet how she managed to take care of her home and still take her goats for vaccination.

“You should share the house chores among household members; your husband and the older children. For some of you who have older children, ask them to help you take the animals to the vaccination site. Remember to discuss livestock vaccination benefits with your husband,” Chebet told the women.



Days later, some women walked in groups to the livestock crush site to treat their sick goats. Some to vaccinate their goats. Some husbands helped their wives take their goats to the crush site. Most of the animals became healthier and the PPR outbreak subdued in the area.



Chebet was identified and trained as a Community Animal Health Worker in her village. She supported the women to take part in the trainings that happened in her community. She also made sure that more and more women engaged in animal health activities.



