

ACHOM

AND THE ONLINE BULLIES



A STORY BY SAFE SISTERS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TTAALA PROGRAM UNDER DEFENDEFENDERS



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ACHOM IS A MASS COMMUNICATIONS GRADUATE WHO HAS JUST BEEN PLACED AS AN INTERN AT A HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATION.

NEEMA ALSO RECENTLY JOINED THE ORGANISATION AS A FIELD RESEARCHER AFTER FINISHING HER JOURNALISM DEGREE.

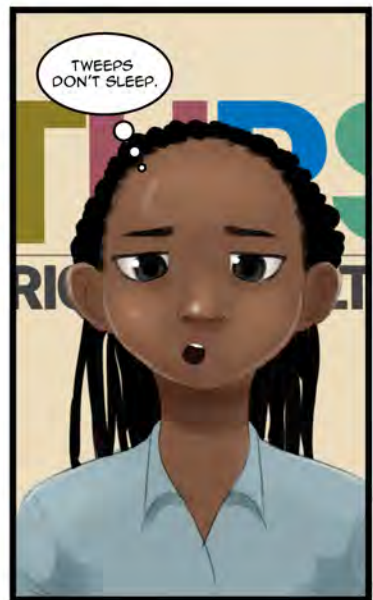
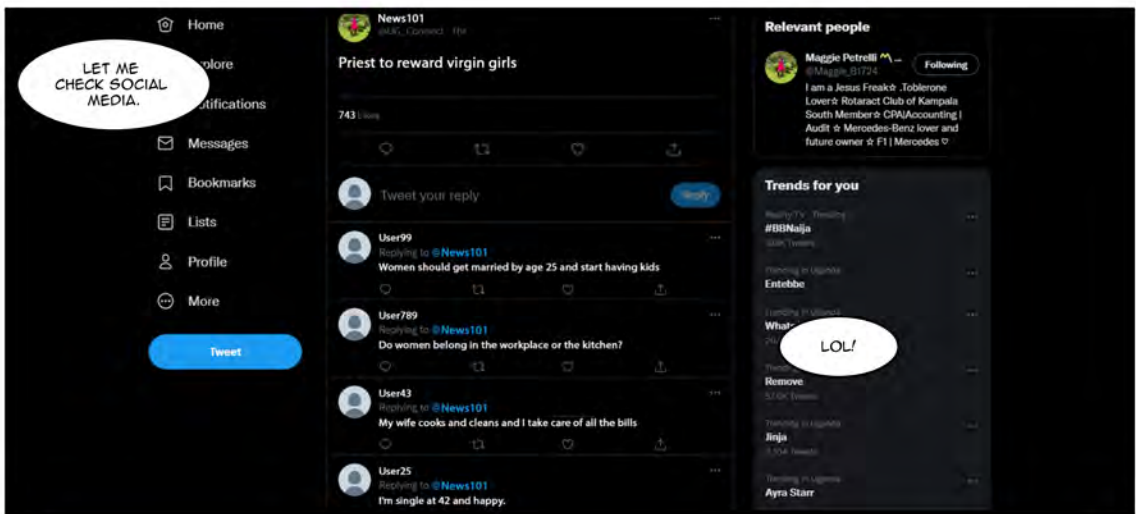


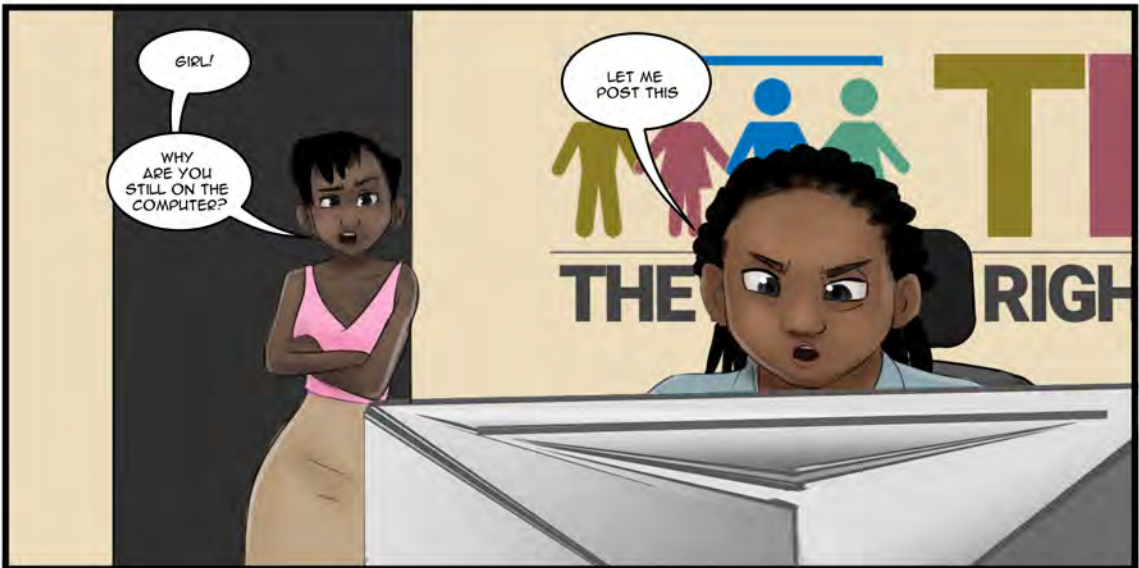
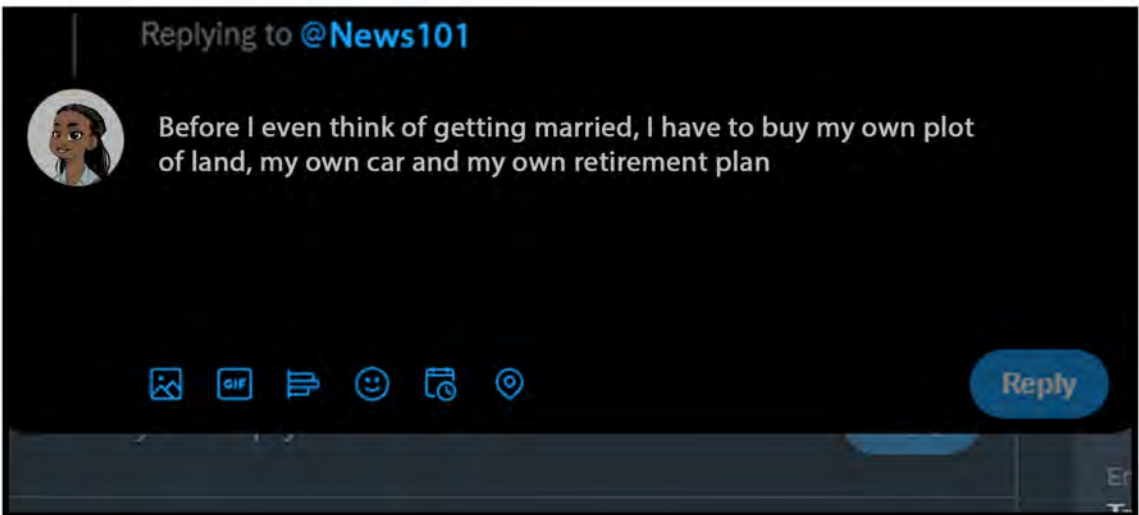
FAHEEMA IS AN ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER WHO HAS BEEN AT THE ORGANISATION FOR 2 YEARS.

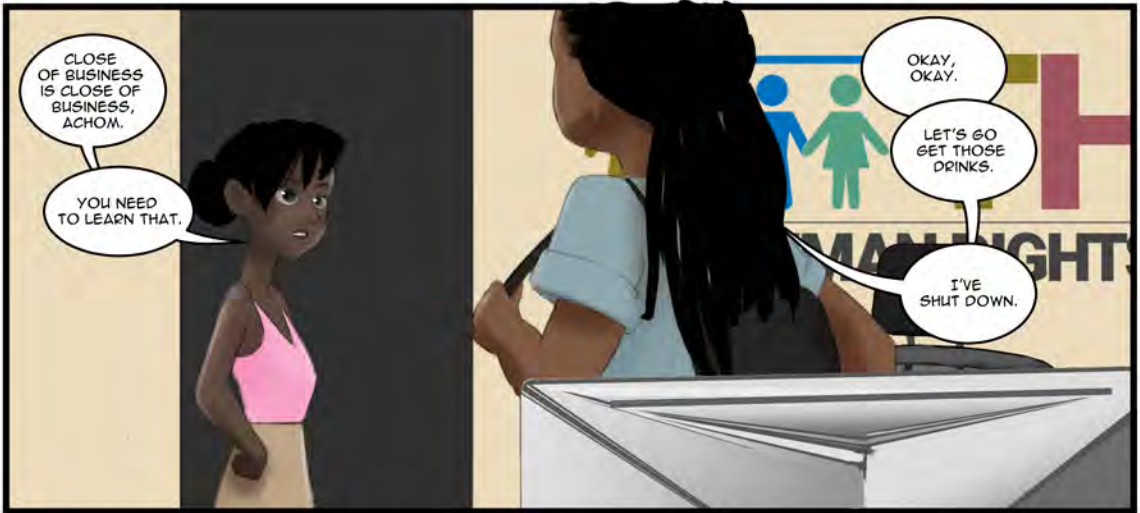
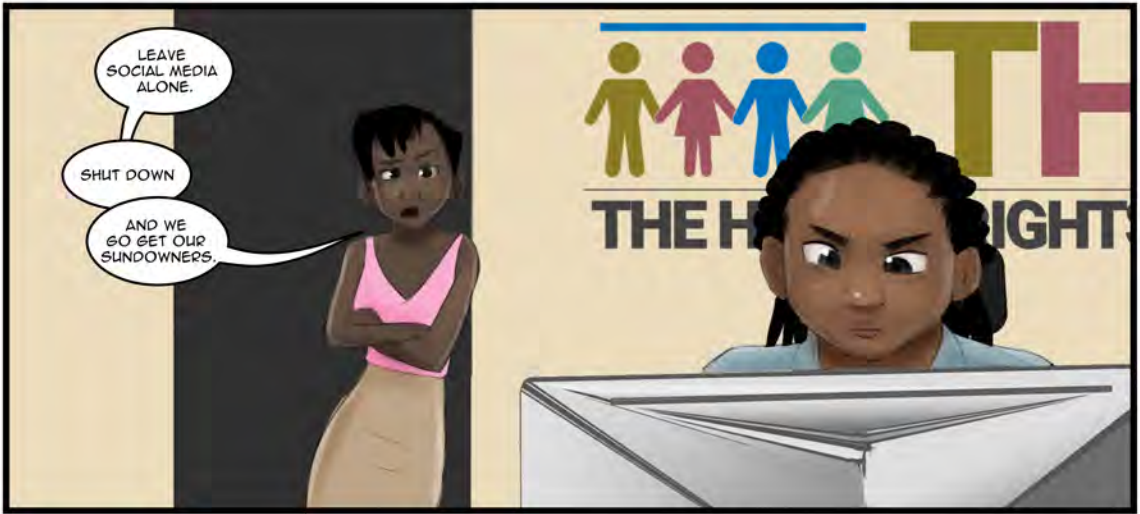


WAIRIMU HAS BEEN WORKING AT THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PAST YEAR AS AN IT SYSTEMS ADMIN.

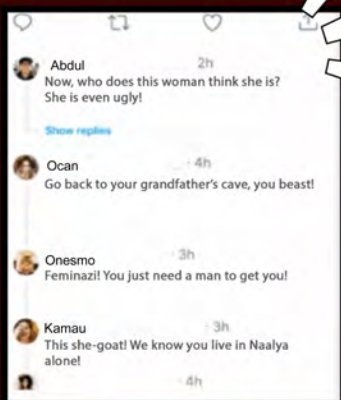




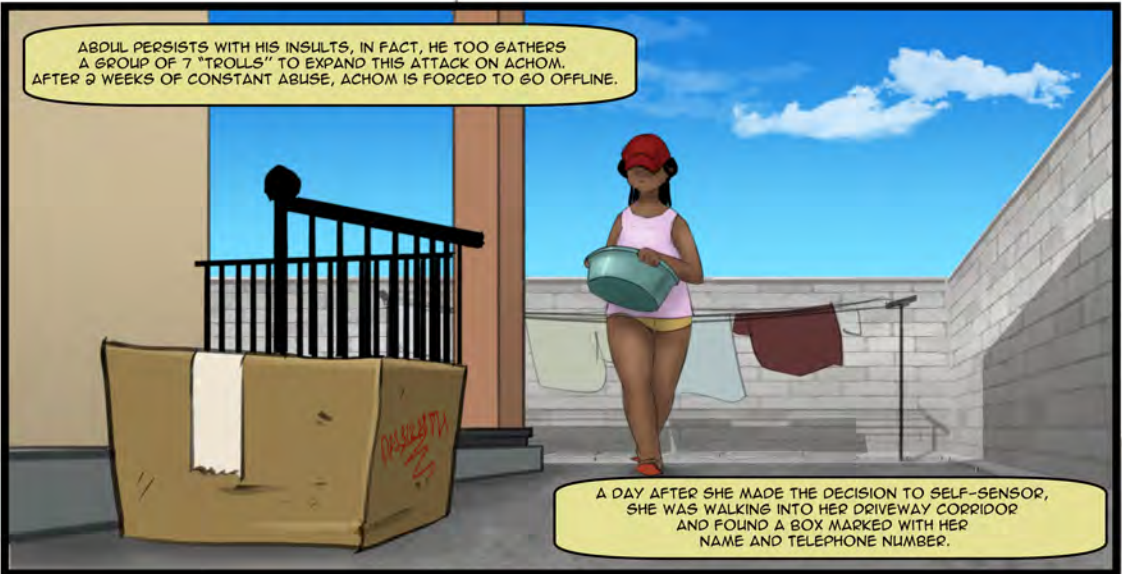




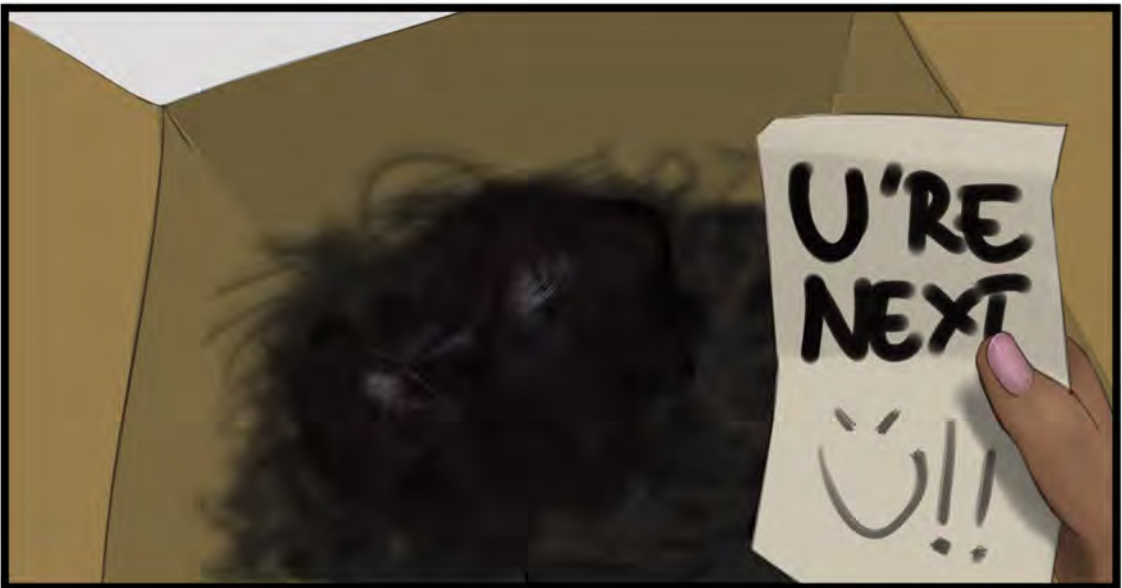




ABDUL PERSISTS WITH HIS INSULTS, IN FACT, HE TOO GATHERS A GROUP OF 7 "TROLLS" TO EXPAND THIS ATTACK ON ACHOM. AFTER 2 WEEKS OF CONSTANT ABUSE, ACHOM IS FORCED TO GO OFFLINE.



A DAY AFTER SHE MADE THE DECISION TO SELF-SENSOR, SHE WAS WALKING INTO HER DRIVEWAY CORRIDOR AND FOUND A BOX MARKED WITH HER NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER.



FOR THE NEXT TWO DAYS SHE WAS CONFINED AT HOME AND WAS VERY AFRAID TO GO TO THE NEARBY SHOPS OR SAY HELLO TO HER NEIGHBORS.

AM I BEING FOLLOWED?

COULD THESE MEN ACTUALLY MAKE A MOVE ON MY LIFE?

SHE REMEMBERED THE TIME WHEN SHE WAS A CHILD AND FACED BULLYING FROM HER CLASSMATES ABOUT HER WEIGHT AND APPEARANCE. IT HAD BEEN A LONG STRUGGLE TO REGAIN HER CONFIDENCE AND SELF ESTEEM BUT EVEN THAT SEEMED BETTER THAN THIS.



AT LEAST THEN SHE KNEW WHO HER ATTACKERS WERE AND HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH THEM FACE TO FACE.

THIS WAS DIFFERENT. FINDING A DEAD CAT ON HER DOORWAY ON TOP OF WEEKS AND WEEKS OF ONLINE ABUSE WAS TOO MUCH. SHE FELT HOPELESS AND ALONE.

SHE THOUGHT AS SHE CRIED HERSELF TO SLEEP THAT NIGHT



TWO WEEKS LATER...

I AM ACTUALLY AFRAID OF GOING ONLINE TODAY.

THAT WAS TRAUMATIZING!



ACHOM!

I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO CALL YOU ALL DAY!

YOUR PHONE IS OFF!

NEEMA, I AM EVEN AFRAID OF SWITCHING IT ON.

YOU DON'T KNOW THE HELL I HAVE BEEN THROUGH!



WHAT IS GOING ON?

THAT TWEET I POSTED TWO WEEKS AGO!

IT FEELS LIKE THE WHOLE WORLD IS COMING AFTER ME EVERY MINUTE FOR IT,

SOMEONE HAS JUST HARASSED ME A FEW MINUTES BACK.





I CAN'T!
IT'S OVERWHELMING!
I AM DROWNING IN ALL THE NOISE!

THE HUMAN RIGHTS SHELTER



YOU GUYS,
I COULD NOT HELP BUT OVERHEAR.

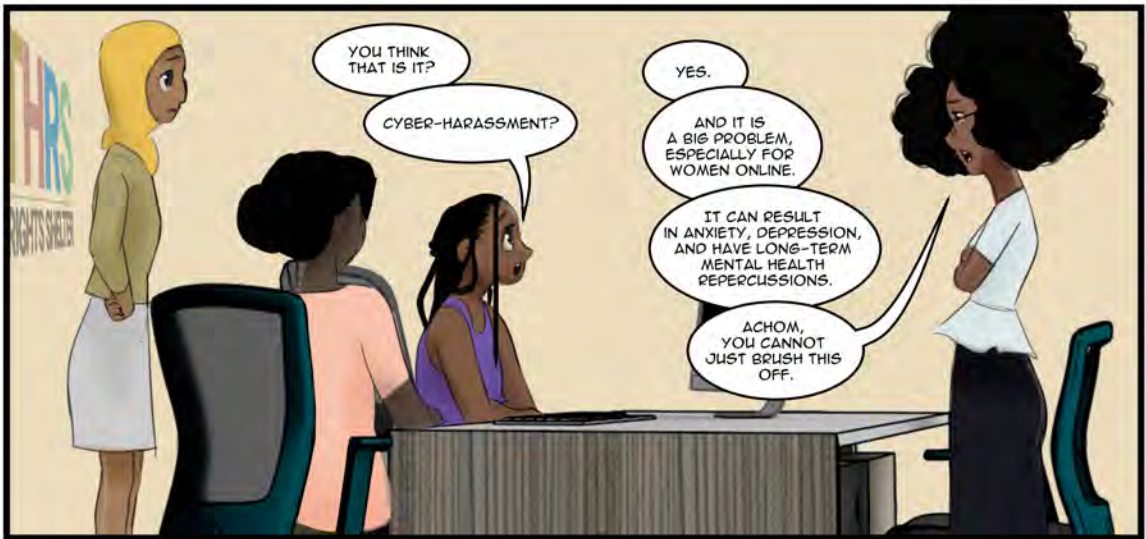
SO THAT IS WHY YOU HAVE NOT BEEN YOUR USUAL CHEERFUL SELF, ACHOM.

BECAUSE SHE IS OVERREACTING.



I DON'T THINK YOU ARE OVERREACTING.
CYBER-HARASSMENT CAN TAKE A MASSIVE TOLL ON A PERSON.

WAIRIMU, DECIDES TO OFFER HER FRIEND SOME ADVICE AND SHARES WITH HER A POST ABOUT SAFE SISTERS. IN 2018 WAIRIMU HAD APPLIED AND ENROLLED INTO THE SAFE SISTER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM WHERE SHE GAINED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ONLINE GBV AND OTHER ASPECTS TO DO WITH ONLINE AND OFFLINE SECURITY.





THIS IS GOOD NEWS.

YES. FORGET WHAT I SAID ABOUT OVERREACTING.

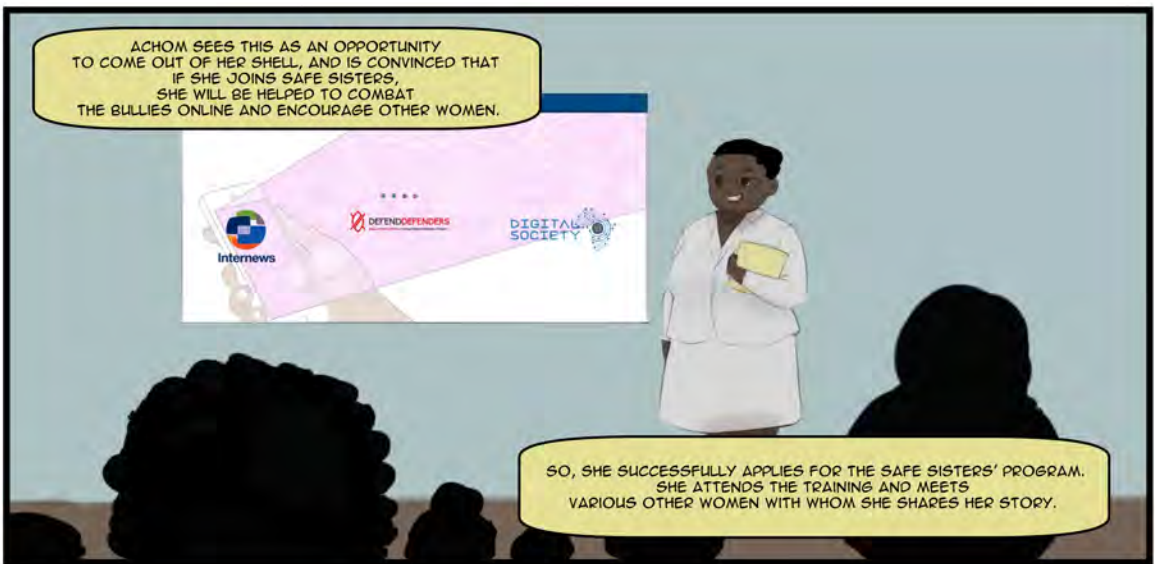
LET US LOOK IT UP

IN FACT, ACHOM, WE ARE HERE WITH YOU.

THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A SERIOUS PROBLEM AND WE HAVE TO STAND TOGETHER TO PROTECT EACH OTHER.

THANKS GIRLS.

LET'S VISIT [HTTPS://DEFENDEFENDERS.ORG/OUR-WORK/TECHNOLOGY-AND-DIGITAL-SAFETY-3/SAFESISTERS/](https://defenddefenders.org/our-work/technology-and-digital-safety-3/safesisters/) AND APPLY TO JOIN THE PROGRAM



ACHOM SEES THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO COME OUT OF HER SHELL, AND IS CONVINCED THAT IF SHE JOINS SAFE SISTERS, SHE WILL BE HELPED TO COMBAT THE BULLIES ONLINE AND ENCOURAGE OTHER WOMEN.

SO, SHE SUCCESSFULLY APPLIES FOR THE SAFE SISTERS' PROGRAM. SHE ATTENDS THE TRAINING AND MEETS VARIOUS OTHER WOMEN WITH WHOM SHE SHARES HER STORY.



THROUGH THEIR SHARED EXPERIENCES AND INTERACTIONS, ACHOM EMERGES RE-ENERGIZED AND MORE RESILIENT TO START A CAREER IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONTINUE HER HUMAN RIGHTS WORK, READY TO CONFRONT BULLIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSERS HEAD-ON.

