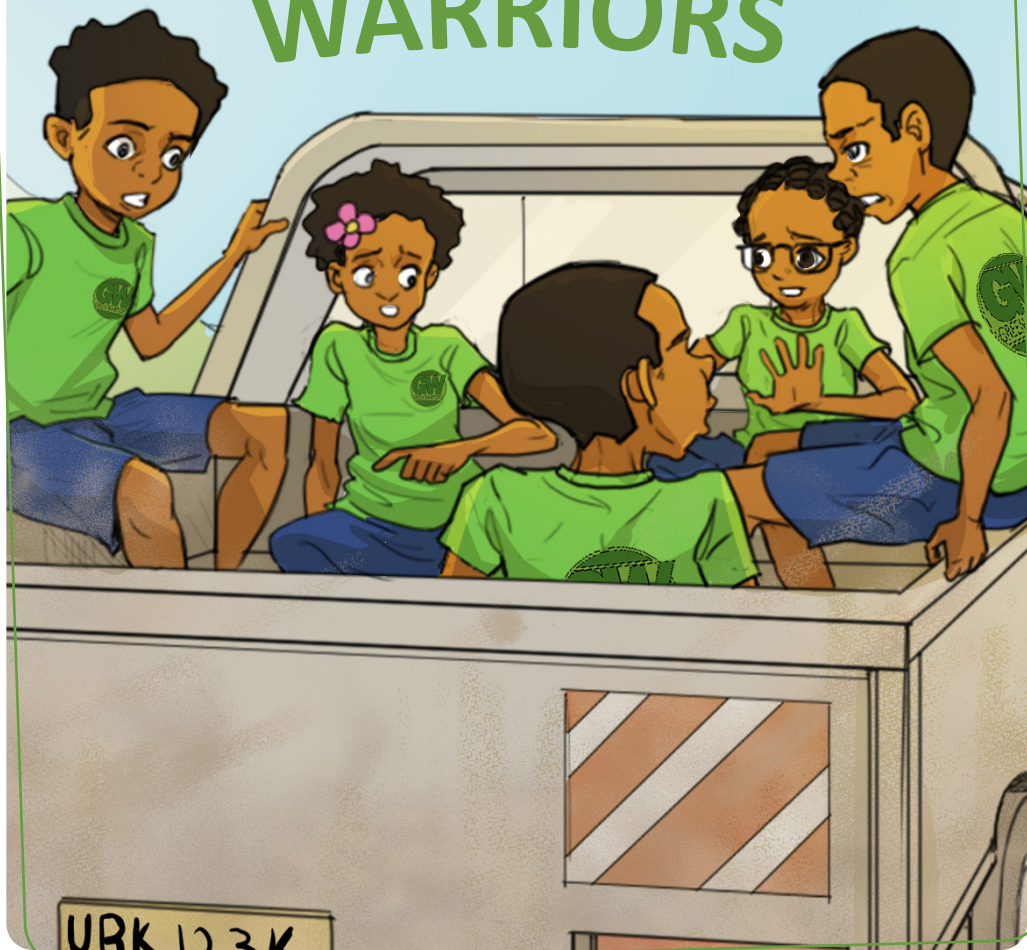


Adventures of the **GREEN WARRIORS**



A children's story book about environmental literacy
authored by staff working in Uganda for
CRANE (Children at Risk Action Network) and Viva Africa



Adventures of the GREEN WARRIORS

THE GREEN WARRIORS

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This book was authored by staff in Kampala, Uganda, working for CRANE (Children at Risk Action Network) with support from Viva, an agency that supports networks of grassroots organisations working with children at risk.

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CRANE wants to see children safe, thriving and learning, fulfilling their God-given potential. This book was written to raise awareness about how issues related to the natural environment impact children.



Chapters

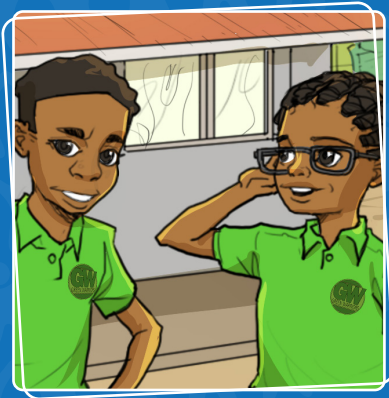
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CHAPTER 1: Preface

Since March 2016, various countries worldwide have been working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These statements call for action by all countries to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. One of the Goals, number 13, says:

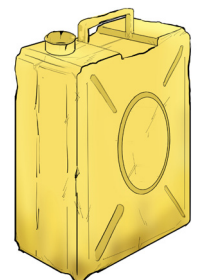
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

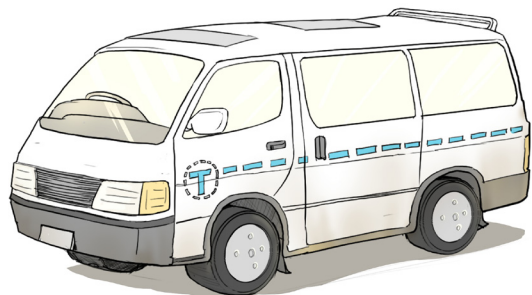
<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13>



This book tells the story of a group of children and their journey to understanding issues related to climate change and how it affects the world today. The story is set in Rushaka, in Uganda, East Africa. Rushaka is not a real place, but it is typical of many small towns in Uganda. There are some words in the story that are common in Uganda but might be new to some people, so they are explained below.

- **Boda boda:** a motorbike that acts as a personal taxi to take a passenger to their destination
- **Buvera:** plastic bags
- **Jajja:** a grandparent, either male or female
- **Jerry can:** a 20-litre plastic container used to store water
- **LC:** LC is short for Local Councillor, who is an elected leader in a village
- **Mandazi:** delicious fried doughnuts





- **Matatu:** a 14-seater van which acts as a passenger vehicle
- **Matooke:** a savoury banana that is a bit like plantain but mashed up and eaten with a sauce or gravy



- **Mzee:** a respectful term for an older gentleman
- **Taata:** the name for father, and used together with the name of a child to donate parentage (e.g. Taata Mary is Mary's father). The same format can be used for mothers with the word, 'Maama' (e.g. David's mother can be called Maama David).

A dictionary at the end of this book also explains some of the environmental phrases used in simple language.



Being 'green' means caring for the environment and its natural resources like water, air, plants and soil, and a warrior is someone who fights for their cause. This book is all about something very important called "climate literacy." We hope that as you read it, you will learn more about the world in which we live, the problems it faces, and things we can all do to make a positive difference.

Are you ready to be a Green Warrior and join millions of people around the world in the fight to protect our environment?





CHAPTER 2: Rain, Rain, Go Away

Pablo and his big sister Upendo live with their father and mother in a small village called Rushaka. It is on the foothills of a mountain, close to a forest and off a main road a few kilometres away from a big town. Their Jajja lives right beside them. Their house has two bedrooms, brick walls and the roof is made of iron sheets. The kitchen is right beside the house, just off the verandah.

It was very early on a Monday morning in April and still dark outside. Pablo was in a deep sleep, dreaming about his football team, the Rushaka Rangers, who had won a big match on the weekend. In his dream, he was the captain and scored the winning goal in the cup final! He had just completed a very long victory slide on his stomach to celebrate the goal, which was very easy because the grass was soaking wet.

“That’s odd,” he thought groggily, **“it wasn’t raining while we were playing football.”** Struggling out of his dream, Pablo woke to realise with horror that it wasn’t the grass that was wet – it was his mattress! He slept on the floor on a good, thick mattress close to the wall and near the window, but it was now acting like a sponge, soaking up water that was flowing across his bedroom floor.



“UPENDO! UPENDO! Wake up!” He yelled at his sister, who was soundly sleeping across the room against the other wall. The water was still shallow on that side of the room, but, hearing her brother’s loud cry, she sat up dozily

and, seeing the water creeping around her, jumped to her feet, exclaiming, **“EH! Where has this water come from? Mummy! Daddy!”**

The children splashed out of their room into the corridor, the water to their ankles. On peeping outside the window, they could see rain cascading down from the grey skies. Even more alarming was the big brown river of dirty water flowing from the low-rising mountain slopes near their home, and it was clearly this muddy water which had entered their house.

Their parents came out of their bedroom, wading carefully through the water. Taata Upendo's long pyjamas were rolled up to stop them from getting wet.

“Daddy, what is happening? This feels like the flood that Noah in the Bible went through!”

Taata Upendo laughed. **“That rain was much more, Pablo! And God sent a rainbow as a promise never to send such a flood again, remember? No, I think the problem is that people have been cutting down bushes and vegetation at the bottom slopes of our Rushaka Mountain for some time. That means there is nothing to soak up the water when it rains a lot ... so here it is, flowing into our house.”**



Maama Upendo added, **“It is a shame! People are clearing the land for other purposes, but forgetting what grows from the ground is very important. Plants and tree roots help prevent soil erosion.”**

Pablo nodded. **“We learned about soil erosion in school.”** Looking back into his room at the water on the floor, he sighed. **“Daddy, I always wanted a swimming pool! Though just not**

INSIDE the house!” The family all laughed and then set to work with mops and rags to dry up the water. Thankfully, after a few more minutes, the rain stopped, and the sun started to rise. It wouldn't take long for things to dry.

When the children went to school that day, they discovered the same thing had happened to some of their classmates. At break time, Upendo and Pablo sat down with three close friends, Nelson, Oscar and Prisca.

Pablo said, **“Guys, this flood made me think. Mummy said it was because people are cutting down bushes on the slopes of the hill. Maybe they don't know that is causing a problem?”**

Nelson agreed. **“It's true. My uncle has some land there and has been cutting down all the shrubs. He wants to keep cattle there and plans to put a fence around a cleared part of the land.”**

“So, we need to tell them about erosion, like we learned in school. But how can we get grown-ups to listen to us?!” wondered Prisca.

“What if we were to do this as part of our school work? Like a homework project?”

“Eh, Oscar, you want to add us more homework!” protested Nelson.

“Well, if it means we can try to help our village, it's worth a little effort.” As Upendo spoke, the four friends nodded. **“Let's talk to Teacher Godfrey. He's always interested in things to do with nature.”**

Teacher Godfrey was Upendo's class teacher, and he was sitting in the classroom as break time was soon ending. When the children told them of their interest in helping the environment, he clapped his hands together with a big smile.

“YES! What a great idea! Why don't we form a Club in School to look at issues affecting our natural environment? You five can be the first members.”

“Cool! I've always wanted to be a Club Captain!” Pablo said, remembering his football dream.

“No way! I'm the Club Captain because I'm the oldest!” Upendo said determinedly, and Pablo, sighing, nodded. He knew she was the best person to captain their Club.

“We need a name,” Prisca interjected. **“All Clubs have a name!”**

“True. How about ...”

“Caring for the World Club?” – Eh! The world is too big!

“Save our village Club?” – From what? People may get confused and think of other dangers from which we need to be saved!

“Stop cutting down bushes and other bad things that cause erosion Club?” – Really, Oscar?!

Upendo, having been thoughtful for a while, spoke up. **“The Green Warriors Club.”** – YES! The children knew this was perfect; they would fight to make their village green once more!



The children were very excited. With Teacher Godfrey’s encouragement, they were bold enough to approach the Headteacher to seek his approval, which he gladly gave. Within a short time of announcing the start of the Green Warriors Club, fifteen other children had signed up on the sheet on the noticeboard. The five core Club members would investigate problems related to the environment in their community to share with the whole Club during arranged meetings.

Around one week later, Pablo and Upendo were sitting with their Jajja. Pablo was looking at a book with her. There were pictures of a beautiful village with lush flowers, banana plantations, fruit trees and many insects.

Pablo said, **“Jajja, I love the pictures in this book. I especially love the bananas ... the mangoes ... well, all the things to eat, really! Was Rushaka also like this when you were young? It seems that there is less green now than in these pictures!”**

Jajja, who had lived in Rushaka all her life, nodded. **“Rushaka has certainly changed, Pablo. People have been cutting away at nature for business and other reasons. They forget that God planned all of nature in a purposeful and organised way. They don’t always think about the consequences of what they do.”**



“Like flooding!” Pablo remembered. **“Jajja, wasn’t it because of natural things being cut down that we had a flood in our house last week?”**

“Yes, Pablo, that was one reason, as well as the heavy rains. These days, the weather is far less predictable than it once was. The weather patterns have changed; some people say this is because of pollution. The seasons are not like they used to be. So now, you must leave home with an umbrella every day, not knowing if you will use it to give yourself shade from the sun or keep yourself dry from the rain!”

Before they slept that night, Pablo suggested to Upendo that they go to the slopes of the mountain and have a look for themselves. Seeing that this seemed a wise idea, Upendo asked Teacher Godfrey to accompany them which he quickly agreed to do. The next Saturday, once their homework and chores were done, they set off with Oscar, Nelson and Prisca. Once again, it had rained the night before, so the air was cool and the ground damp. As they went, they saw people inspecting their crops in fields of maize, while others walked goats to find pasture. As they headed towards the foothills, it was very noticeable that there was less green and more sparse fields. It was clear that lots of trees had been cut down, and bushes too.

“Can you see over there?” Teacher Godfrey pointed to a part of land which had a lot of surface water. **“When it rained a lot that day, water flowed down and then because there weren’t any trees or bushes to soak up the rain, it kept flowing towards your house and other people’s houses.”** Oscar, Nelson and Prisa, whose houses were a little farther away and hadn’t been so affected, could just imagine water flowing without anything to stop it.

“I hear that Mercy’s home was much worse!” Prisca said. **“She lives just over there.”** The children could see that Mercy’s home, which was on flat land near the mountain base, would indeed have been badly affected by the heavy rains. They could only imagine what it must have been like, with their houses almost swimming in the floodwaters.

The children noticed that the land was still very watery, as if it had just rained, yet it had been sunny since morning. Oscar noticed a fat frog jumping away from near where the children stood to hide in the green reeds. When they asked Teacher Godfrey why the grass was wet, he nodded. **“Yes. This is a partial wetland. It acts as a sponge, and water can soak into the ground. And as people are building on the wetland, the water has nowhere to go**

except straight ahead ...” The Green Warriors saw that the problem would only worsen, especially as the rains were not stopping any time soon.

“What can we do, Teacher Godfrey?” asked Pablo.

“Well, first of all, people need to understand more about erosion. Do you remember how it was explained in class, Pablo? I am sure Teacher Stella did a great job.” Pablo nodded, remembering his class teacher had explained it very well, but then looked a bit worried. **“It’s a bit scary, though, talking to other people, especially grown-ups! I’m not good at talking in front of adults!”** The others nodded, feeling the same.

“Perhaps we can make posters with drawings showing what happens when we cut away vegetation? We can at least share these with our family,” suggested Prisca. She loved art and was very good at drawing.

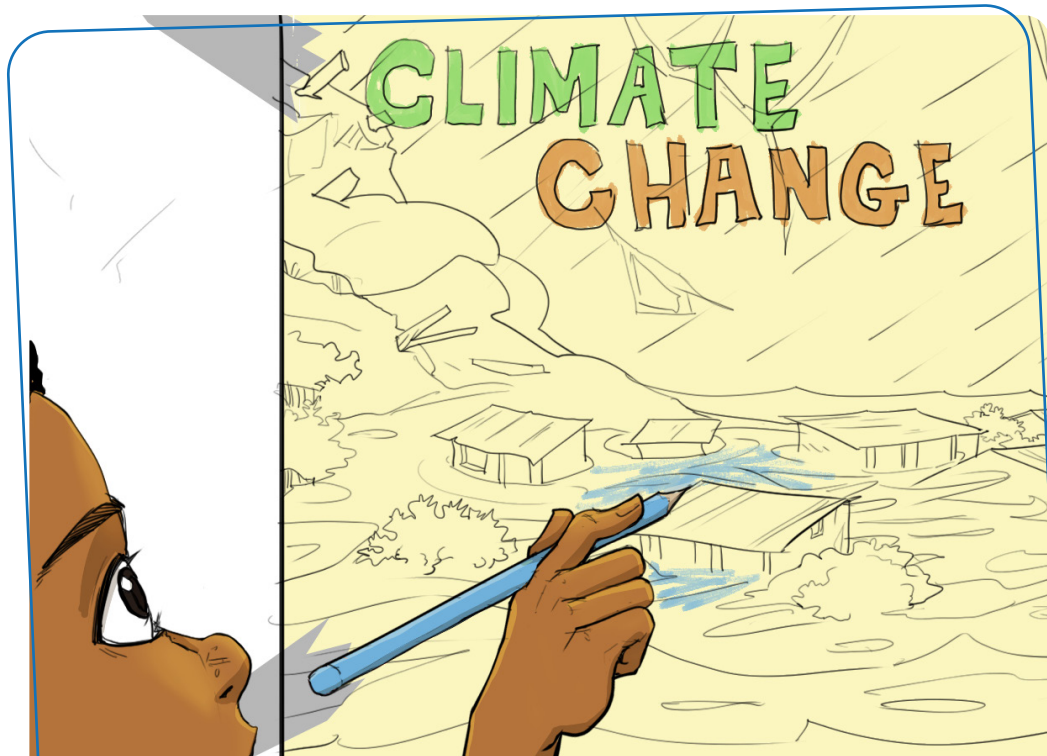
“Good idea! Then you can also show some neighbours the posters, which might encourage them to think more about it. Drawings are not as hard as talking. And sending a message through art is a very good way to make people think.” The Green Warriors nodded, realising that what Teacher Godfrey said was true.

“What about diverting the water flow? Can we try to make drains so that the water doesn’t go towards people’s houses? My sister Uwera is an engineer. I know she has learned things like that,” suggested Nelson.

“Another good idea!” acknowledged Teacher Godfrey. **“I will meet with the LC. There are some channels in place over there, see? But it looks like they have been blocked by rubbish and debris. So I will ask if he can arrange for the drains to be cleared and some more channels to be dug to help with the water flow next time.”**

Upendo nodded. **“And maybe you can tell him about the dangers of building on wetlands, too?”** she suggested. **“Maybe next time people ask, he can tell them it’s better to leave the wetlands to do their job, and to build somewhere else?”**

The Green Warriors had made their first plan of action! They walked home feeling very encouraged that there was something they could do to help.





Growing as Green Warriors!

Pablo and Upendo personally experienced the problems that cutting away vegetation can cause, as it was soil erosion that triggered the flood that entered their house. Below are some activities you can do to learn more about how our natural habitat has changed over the years.

1. **Draw two columns on a big bit of paper or in a notebook. In one, write down all the problems you can think of that may happen if there is TOO MUCH rain. In the other column, note the problems that will be seen if there is TOO LITTLE rain.**
2. **Using a dictionary, look up the definitions of:**
 - Wetlands
 - Erosion
 - Pollution
3. **As Prisca suggested, draw a poster showing the problems that might come due to soil erosion.**

To find out more, look up these websites:

- Nema is the National Environment Management Authority and has rules and regulations related to things such as wetlands.
https://www.nema.go.ug/new_site/
- Did you know the Ugandan National Meteorological Authority is responsible for weather forecasts? Predicting the weather is very important for people like farmers, who need to know when to plant their crops!
<https://www.unma.go.ug/>



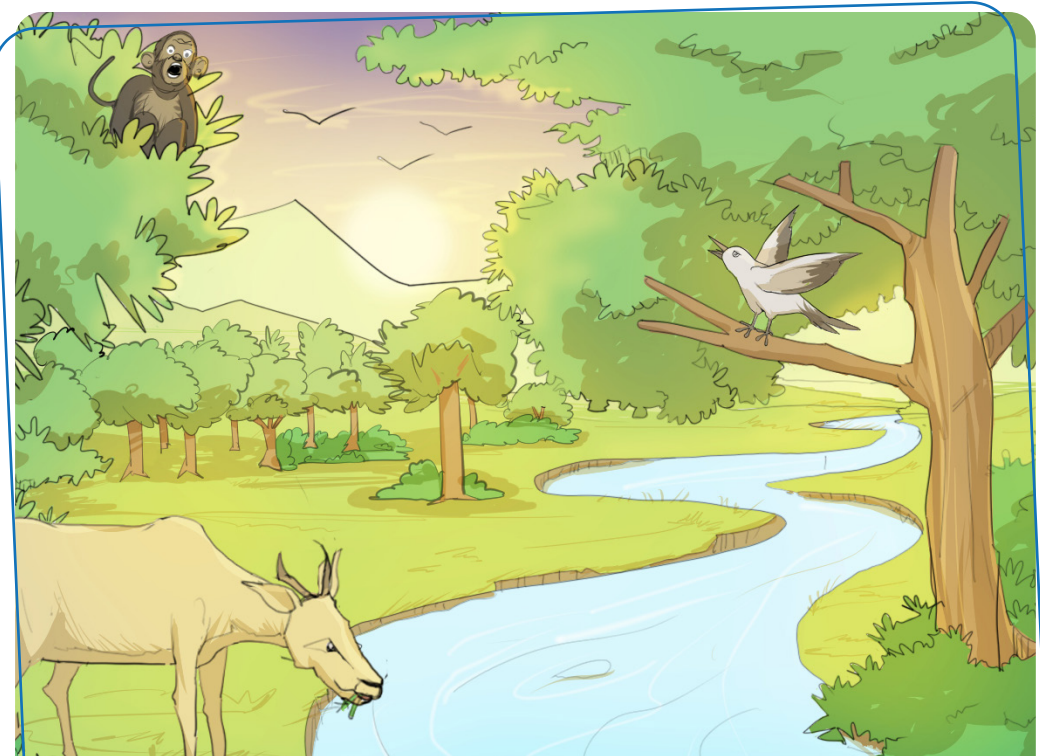
CHAPTER 3: Rescuing Rainbow



The forest near Rushaka village was filled with all sorts of creatures, big and small – flying, climbing, running and crawling. Pablo and Upendo's house was around one kilometre away from the forest. One evening, Pablo's homework was about different kinds of trees, and as he wrote down the answers to the questions, his mind drifted towards the forest.

Pablo asked, **"Jajja, was the forest there when you were young like me?"**

"Yes, Pablo, it has always been there!" Jajja responded. **"I pray it always will be. Some of God's most beautiful creatures live in that forest! Though, my child, you must be careful not to go very deep into the forest, where big**



creatures may be. I hear even some big baboons have been seen there before. And it's always better if you go with your big sister and a grown-up. Perhaps your father will take you one day."

Pablo eyes widened with excitement. "You mean we can actually go? Daddy? Please can we go? Please, Daddy!"

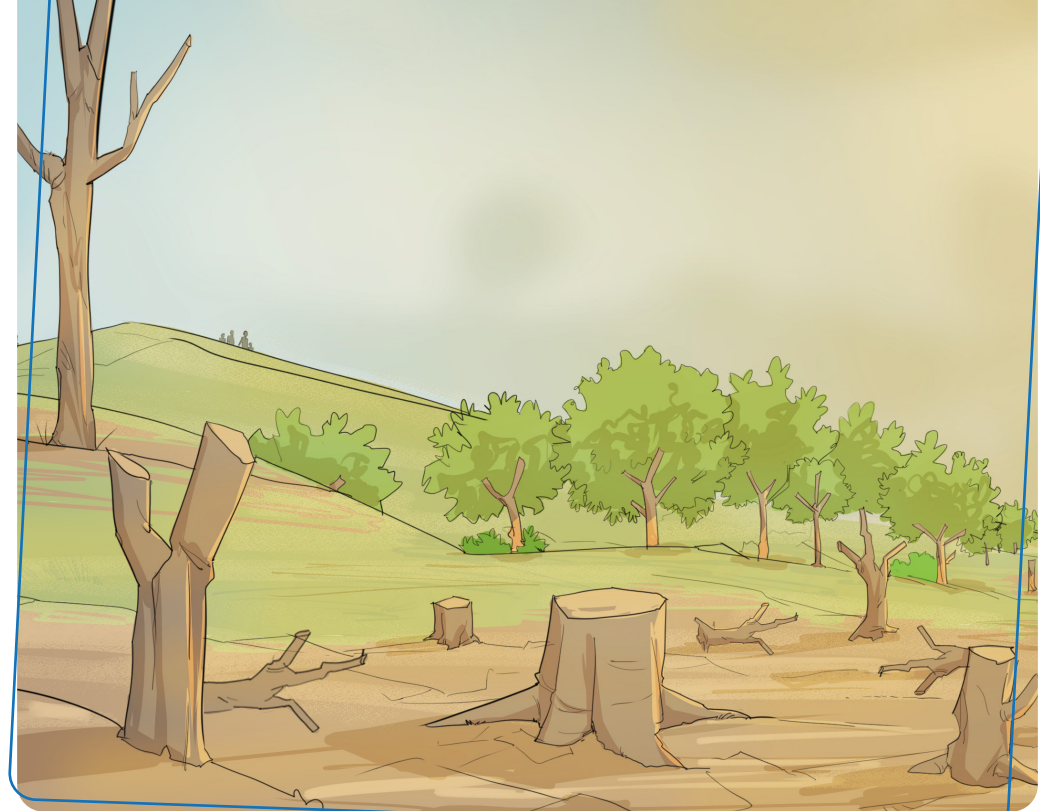
Taata Upendo laughed. "I used to enter that forest when I was younger – but as Jajja says, you must be careful not to go very deep! Mzee Kaggwa, who lives close to the forest, always used to warn me and my friends as well ... But why not? Yes, Pablo, I can take you and some of your friends next weekend." Mzee Kaggwa was a very old neighbour who walked with the help of a big stick whom Pablo and Upendo respected and feared in equal measure – they definitely did not want to do something he advised children not to!

Pablo punched the air with joy. "Yes! It will be so much fun running around and climbing trees! Maybe we'll find berries to eat, too!"

Pablo and Upendo and their three good friends from the Green Warriors Club, Oscar, Prisca and Nelson, were very excited about the planned nature walk through the forest. Maama Oscar packed them plenty of drinking water, knowing they might get hot. As they walked along the path among the tall trees, they were amazed at all the things they saw. Taata Upendo showed

them some wild berries that were safe to eat, much to Pablo's joy. Oscar was amazed when he caught a glimpse of a chameleon as it changed its colour from green to red.

"Guys, guys, look, look! A chameleon! It was green and now it's red-ish!" The others looked where Oscar was excitedly pointing. "We should call him Rainbow!"



They saw countless butterflies and birds fluttering around. Nelson even spotted a monkey high up in a tree swinging on a branch! They all agreed that the trees made a perfect home for many incredible creatures.

"I hear there are tree-climbing lions. Are we going to see any of those?"

Oscar asked excitedly.

Nelson scornfully said, "Don't be silly! Lions are on the prairie lands. They don't climb trees. Only other cats like leopards can climb."

Taata Pablo shook his head. "Well, actually, it is true that some special lions in this country do climb trees, but that is many miles away from here."

As they walked, they suddenly noticed something very strange ... right in the middle of the forest, all the trees had been cut down!! They could see the sky and no trees! They had seen some trees and vegetation cut down near the foothills, but this was a large area where obviously many trees had been removed.

Upendo was the first to speak. **“Did you guys hear that trees were going to be cut down?”**

Nelson responded, **“NO! Nobody in the village made mention of this!”**

Pablo lamented, **“This is terrible!!! All the birds and animals are going to run away! I wonder who is cutting the trees and why? Don’t they care about the wildlife?”**

Prisca looked miserable. **“We cannot afford to lose these beautiful birds and animals. We need them! The whole ecosystem depends on them!”**

Oscar agreed. **“I learned in my science class that the birds help forests grow. When they eat the fruits on the trees and then excrete them, they enable another tree to grow elsewhere. Deforestation is a serious problem in the world. I didn’t know it had come to us here in Rushaka too!”**

Taata Upendo was as shocked as they were. He knew that people needed wood for various reasons, including fuel for cooking and light. But he also had fond memories of the forest and couldn’t believe that some part of it had been cut down. As they headed back home, they talked about how sad it was that the trees were being cut down, which meant that the animals would be affected and no longer have a home to live in. Oscar worried about what may happen to Rainbow if more trees disappeared! The Green Warriors knew they must do something.

It was almost time for the second term holiday to begin. Upendo, Pablo and their friends called a meeting of the Green Warriors to talk about the importance of trees to birds and animals.

Upendo reminded the Green Warriors about the posters they had created after their visit to the mountain foothills. **“We have already helped people to understand the dangers of cutting down trees and vegetation and how that increases soil erosion and the risk of flooding. But now, we need to talk to our parents and neighbours about the importance of keeping the forest alive, especially for the creatures.”**

Oscar thought hard. **“I remember learning that animals do lots of special jobs when they live in, near or around trees. Without trees, so many insects, birds and creatures like monkeys and squirrels wouldn’t have a home and would stop playing their part in nature.”**

“Yes. Why don’t we encourage every family to plant a tree in the forest so the trees can grow back again? Maybe even people can grow trees in their compounds?” suggested Nelson.

“Yes! Great idea! But we must make sure there are mango trees to plant! I love mangoes!” grinned Pablo.

They all agreed that they could choose a day to go to the forest and plant trees where they had been cut. They tasked each member of the Green Warriors to ask their parents if they were allowed to go and also invite them to join in.

Taata Upendo knew a man who owned a tree nursery, and he was happy to provide seedlings for the children to replant trees in the forest once he heard about their Club. He also offered subsidised rates if families wanted to buy trees for their own compounds. Everything was set.

The day of the tree planting came. The twenty Green Warriors were all present, with ten or so parents, along with Teacher Godfrey. Even the LC came along. When Teacher Godfrey had spoken to him about the erosion and wetlands, he had realised how serious the issue could be, and he really loved Rushaka. He didn’t want to see nature disappearing or people’s property getting destroyed. Prisca’s mother, who also loved art and colour, had suggested that the children get Green Warrior T-Shirts printed up, and even designed a logo, so the children felt very smart all wearing their green shirts.

Each family had carried a spade, and most people wore gumboots. They made quite a scene, walking along towards the forest, their





spades like rifles over their shoulders! It was a merry group, full of laughter, led by Taata Upendo and the LC. However, when they entered the clearing where the trees had been cut, the laughter and chatting suddenly stopped. It looked so bare and empty without the trees. Oscar was keeping a close eye out for Rainbow (or at least, a relative of his). He felt terrible, thinking how such a beautiful animal like Rainbow could lose its home.

Breaking the silence, the LC spoke up. **“So, here we are. Let’s get to work. As we are many, it won’t take us so long.”** Everyone nodded. He picked up a spade and, demonstrating what to do, instructed the group: **“Let’s start digging like this ...”**

Everyone got to work, digging deep holes for the seedlings at the agreed distance apart, putting the young trees in the ground, and patting the earth around them. They came across some strange ants scrambling as they dug. Oscar found some worms, and Prisca was not amused when he held one in her face to look more closely!

“UGHHH! GET THAT AWAY from me!!!”

Oscar grinned. **“But it’s part of nature too, Prisca!”**

It was hard work but very satisfying. Each child and adult felt pleased as they imagined how all the creatures would benefit in future.

As planned, the Green Warriors encouraged their parents to plant trees in their compounds. Upendo and Pablo helped their parents plant several trees along the compound wall at their house – and yes, even a mango one! They were excited to imagine that, in time, they might see birds or even a chameleon, such as Rainbow, make one of their trees their new home!





Growing as Green Warriors!

The National Geographic Society is a global non-profit organisation committed to exploring, illuminating, and protecting the wonder of our world. It tells us that an ecosystem is a geographic area where plants, animals, and other organisms, as well as weather and landscape, work together to form a bubble of life. Oscar and the other Green Warriors love animals because of their beauty and unique qualities, but they also understand that they and trees play a vital role in nature.

1. **What is the animal that you like best? Can you draw it, and then find five important facts about it and how it benefits the ecosystem?**
2. **Can you find out at least one example of an animal or insect which is a ...**
 - Pollinator
 - Prey
 - Predator
 - Decomposer
3. **Together with your parents or guardians, plant a tree every holiday. You can call them 'LOVE' trees to remind you of God's love for us in giving us a beautiful home.**

To find out more, look up these websites:

- This video shows a chameleon changing colour and explains how it does so!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQggDnScsvI>
- This organisation's mission is to explain why trees are so vital in our world and encourage people to give to this cause, with work in countries worldwide, including Uganda.
<https://onetreepanted.org/collections/africa/products/uganda>





CHAPTER 4: Rancid rubbish!

It was a bright and sunny Friday. Upendo and Pablo were walking home from school, talking excitedly about how their tree-planting project was spreading throughout the village.

“Do you know, even Mzee Kaggwa planted a tree yesterday?” Pablo marvelled. It felt very good that someone so old with so much experience could join in with their project.

As they walked, they passed a big field which children used as a football pitch, and some friends were starting a match. Pablo noticed that they had put the sticks they used as goals much closer together than normal because of a big heap of rubbish piled up where they normally placed one of the goals. This had shortened the pitch, so they were playing seven on each side instead of the normal eleven. Suddenly, Abraham, the goalkeeper, cried out and started limping.

“What’s wrong, Abra?” called out Pablo. Abraham sat down on the side of the home-made goal, and his team crowded around him. Worried, Pablo and Upendo went over to see what was wrong.

“I cut my foot on some glass!”

Abraham showed them a wound on his foot. He had been playing barefoot, not wanting his school shoes to get spoiled. It was clear that whoever had thrown the rubbish in the field had not cared that some items were sharp and dangerous. As his friends comforted



him and helped him to his feet, Pablo and Upendo looked at each other. They were both thinking the same thing – this was a problem the Green Warriors needed to talk about.

The next day was Saturday, so they walked to Nelson’s home for a meeting of the Green Warriors. Pablo loved going to Nelson’s house because his mother was a wonderful baker and cook. As this meeting was taking place in mid-morning, around breakfast time, he was pretty confident they would get something nice to eat. Settling down for their meeting, Upendo explained the problem of the rubbish on the village pitch, and the other children realised this was an issue in many other parts of the village too.

“Rubbish can block drains – remember? It probably contributed to that flood that started our Club!”

“It looks really ugly and makes our environment messy.”

“And it STINKS! Do you remember how badly it smelt being near that rubbish pile when we checked on Abraham?”

After more discussion, the Green Warriors decided to organise a community clean-up. In school the next week, Upendo asked for Teacher Godfrey’s help. He thought it was a great idea and suggested they go together to the LC to ask his permission and agree on a suitable date. Later that day, she and the four Green Warriors visited his office with Teacher Godfrey. Upendo was a bit nervous because Teacher Godfrey had told her it was up to her to do the talking – she agreed with Pablo that talking in front of adults was not easy! However, she felt a bit braver because the LC had been with them when they planted trees, so at least he was aware of their desire to help the environment. She was very pleased when he not only welcomed the idea but said he was happy to make an announcement to invite the whole village. Prisca whispered something to Upendo, and she nodded, then gave a voice to Prisca’s suggestion.

“Sir, if it’s OK with you, can we make some posters to put around the village? That will let people who may miss the radio announcement know about the clean-up and how they can help.” He nodded, making Prisca very happy.

As they left the LC’s office, Teacher Godfrey encouraged them to ask the lady

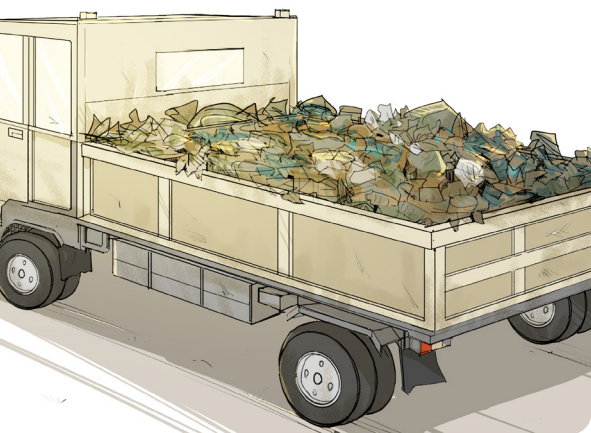
who owned the pharmacy, Maama Sylvia, for some gloves and masks. Upendo realised it wasn’t that hard speaking to a grown-up once you had done it once, and she was very happy with the outcome; when Maama Sylvia heard why the children wanted the masks and gloves, she gave them plenty for free!



At home that evening, they told Jajja about the clean-up day. She was pleased. **“When I was young, we didn’t have the same problem with rubbish as today! Eh, I don’t know why, but people seem very thoughtless these days. We didn’t just throw things anywhere when I was young!”** Pablo wondered how things could have changed for the worse, yet people had more information and knowledge than ever! **“This Green Soldiers Club of yours ... (Warriors, Jajja! Warriors!) I hope it can force people into action when they realise you are serious like real commandos!”**

On the clean-up day, 50 community members gathered alongside the Green Warriors and many of their classmates at the school. The Green Warriors, each smart in their T-shirt, gave out the gloves and masks. They were delighted to see some community members had carried along wheelbarrows, rakes, and hoes. They divided the village into different zones and assigned groups led by a Green Warrior and an adult to clean each area.

The clean-up campaign was a huge success as the group collected a vast amount of waste. Some parts of the day were not so fun – like picking up the things that really stank! Even though there was a lot of food waste, Pablo was not in any way tempted to eat even a bite of what he came across! Oscar was a bit concerned that by removing all the rubbish, some insects would be affected as perhaps they used old cans or bottles for shelter, but he realised the natural world had far better nooks and crannies for insects to hide in. Seeing how much better the place looked when the rubbish was cleared away was very satisfying.



Teacher Godfrey had organised a large dump truck to collect all the garbage. It was incredible to see such a huge pile of things that had previously been littering their village on the back of the truck. Upendo looked at all the rubbish: there was paper, plastic bottles, cloth material, buvera, banana peels, and lots of other things.

“Teacher Godfrey, what will happen to all this rubbish now?” she asked.

“The truck will take it to a rubbish landfill.”

“And then what happens? Does it just stay there forever?”

“Well, sometimes people may go to see if there are any things they can use that other people have thrown away. Otherwise, it just sits there ...”

Thinking of large piles of stinking rubbish made her feel uncomfortable. Surely it was possible to use some of the rubbish for other things? She decided to talk to the other Green Warriors about this so they could do some research.

A week or so later, Upendo and Pablo were walking to school again past the football pitch. To their horror, they could see that the pile of rubbish that had encroached on the field had started building up again! They rushed to school, feeling very disappointed.

“Teacher Godfrey! People are throwing rubbish again!” Upendo cried out as soon as she entered the classroom.

Teacher Godfrey shrugged, not that surprised. **“Well, people don’t have any other options for their rubbish, and some of them have only ever thrown it on the ground, so they don’t think there is any other way.”**

The five core Green Warriors had another meeting the next weekend to think about how to inspire people to stop throwing litter. Upendo told them how she had noticed all the types of rubbish on the truck. The team began to brainstorm.



“Perhaps we can divide rubbish up into different kinds so that some can be re-used?”

“Don’t people in gardens need compost to help their crops grow? Why don’t we encourage people to keep the rubbish that can disintegrate like vegetable peels to use in their gardens?”

“What about putting rubbish bins around the village so people can use them instead?”

“We can make signs reminding people not to litter?” This was Prisca, of course!

All of these seemed great ideas! The Green Warriors planned to ask Teacher Godfrey how he could help them. They were confident the LC would be willing to put up bins because he had been part of their clean-up. Prisca was excited about being able to design the signs they could erect to remind people not to litter. They were determined to make sure their now-clean village stayed clean!

Growing as Green Warriors!



Litter on the ground not only looks terrible but can also be dangerous, causing people harm and making a negative impact in many ways. People need to understand why proper rubbish disposal is very important and be able to do so easily.

1. Investigate whether your school has bins and signs encouraging people to use them. If not, can you talk to the school leadership about this?
2. Can you find a way to create a rubbish bin for your home? Perhaps you can make one using other materials or adapt a container that is not in use (see an idea below!).
3. Plan what you might say the next time you see someone littering to remind them of the benefits of using a bin instead of throwing rubbish on the ground.

To find out more, look up these websites:

- Some people have been very innovative by making litter bins OUT of litter!
https://web.archive.org/web/20170916032330/http://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1458687/dustbin-plastic-bottles
- Learn about 'trash mountains' and how to make them smaller through recycling in this video from Ubongo kids.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRfXbu-IDk8>



CHAPTER 5:

Rewards of Recycling

As Pablo and Upendo were walking home from school with their friend Nelson, they were very pleased to see one of the newly placed rubbish bins on the side of the road as they passed. However, someone had still thrown some litter on the floor right beside the bin! Upendo sighed, and, bending down, picked up the water bottle and put it in the bin. **Some people just don't get it!** she thought.

Pablo was reminding her of the upcoming Green Warriors Club meeting.



“Remember, we need to find out more about recycling? To see if there is anything we can do about all that rubbish instead of throwing it away, because then it just piles up in landfills!”

“True. It seems so hard, though. I wonder what we can do?”

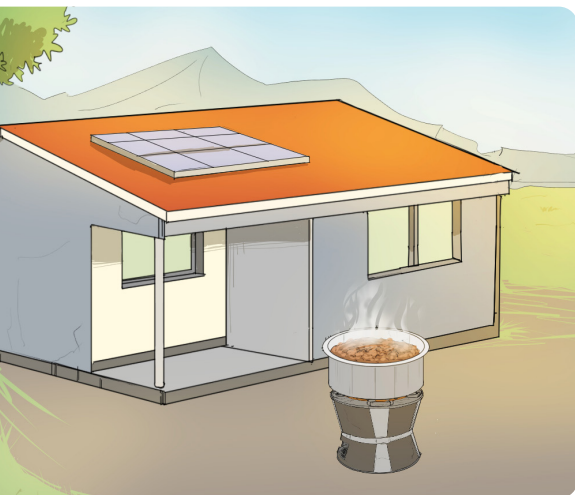
As they walked, Nelson suddenly called out, **“There’s my sister! Uwera! Over here!”** He waved hard as he called out, and a lady who was standing next to a big white pickup looked over. She was wearing a reflector jacket with a helmet on her head. She walked over to the children, carrying a clipboard.

“Hi, Nelson! Hi guys.” Pablo and Upendo only knew Uwera a little bit, as she had been many years ahead of them in school. They knew she had gone to the best university in the country and lived in the capital city, where she worked as an Engineer. Upendo thought she looked very smart and clever.

“What are you doing at home? Mummy never told me you were coming to visit!” Nelson asked, very happy to see his big sister.

“Actually, it’s not a visit, Nel! We are here for work. We are planning a hydroelectric power plant not so far from here, near the Rushi waterfall. The water flows so strongly that we believe we can use it to generate electricity.





HEP is the best kind of power, you know, because as long as the water flows, electricity continues. It doesn't run out like coal or paraffin does."

"Cool!" Pablo loved the thought of rushing water being so powerful that it could make electricity! They said farewell to Uwera, who promised Nelson she would spend the night at their home so she would see him later.

That evening, at their own home, Pablo sat with Jajja, waiting for the beans to get ready for supper. They always took a long time as they bubbled in a saucepan over the charcoal stove. Although he wished the beans would get ready faster, Pablo loved using the cooking time to ask Jajja questions. He told her about meeting Uwera and about the hydroelectric power plant.

"Jajja, it seems like magic! How can fast water make electricity?!"

Jajja laughed. **"My boy, God is even better than magic! He gives people wisdom to create machines to do amazing things. Nature has so many uses! God is a perfect designer."**

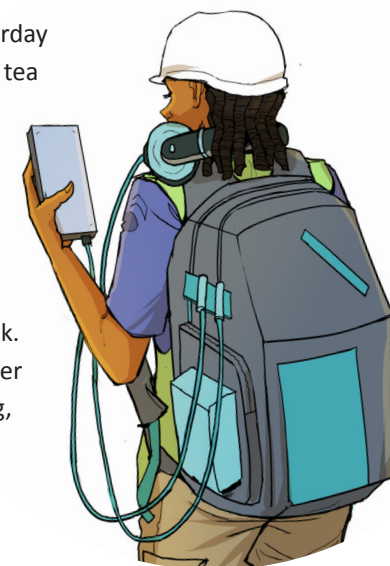
Pablo nodded. **"Uwera is an engineer. So God is even more clever than a chief engineer?"**

Jajja laughed again. **"Absolutely, Pablo! The best engineer there could ever be! But we humans are not very good at looking after what God has designed. We throw away so much, and yet everything God created is of use!"**

Upendo, who was listening in as she peeled the matooke, again realised that recycling was something they really needed to understand more about. Suddenly, she realised that perhaps Uwera could help them. Surely an engineer like her knew about technology that could help in recycling?

The next day, she asked Nelson if Uwera was still around. He confirmed that she was going to stay until the weekend. They agreed that the five core Green

Warriors would meet at Nelson's house on Saturday and speak to her. Nelson's mother served them tea and mandazi as they sat and waited for Uwera to finish what looked like an important phone call. As they waited, Upendo rolled her eyes at her brother as Pablo asked for another serving. Finally, Uwera finished her call, and then, to Upendo's surprise, she plugged her phone into a wire that came out of her backpack. **"Interesting,"** thought Upendo. Uwera came over and sat down with the five children, taking a big, deep breath as she did so.



"AH, I do love the village! The air is so much cleaner than in the city!" Uwera smiled at her brother's friends. **"Sorry about that. My boss wants to know about the plant. We are going to be able to start very soon. We will be able to produce a lot of power with little or no damage to nature, which is very encouraging. And because it is reusable energy, we got a big grant to help us build it very fast."**

This was indeed exciting news! The children looked at each other with big grins on their faces. They were thrilled to hear that electricity might come to their homes in future, as they all used charcoal for cooking and lanterns for lighting. There were some power lines, and some buildings had electricity, but not every household could afford it, and it was not very stable.

Uwera continued: **"You guys also helped plant trees in the forest, didn't you? Nelson told me about that. You know, a lot of people cut down trees for firewood and charcoal for cooking and lighting."** All the Green Warriors thought back to the forest, hoping the trees they planted were growing well!

"Electricity will help as some people can use that instead. It's going to take some time, though. And not everyone will be able to get it very fast, even when the plant is built. So, unfortunately, people will still need to use consumable methods for a while. Now, how can I help you? Nelson says you have a question for me."

Upendo explained about their clean-up and the rubbish pile and their belief that

perhaps some of it was still useful. Uwera listened carefully, nodding. She went and unplugged her phone, typed on the screen, and briskly scrolled for a few minutes.

“Briquettes!”

“Huh?” Pablo asked. **“What are they? Can you eat them?”** Everyone laughed.

“Pablo!” groaned Upendo. Would he never stop thinking about food?

Uwera smiled at him. **“Not very nice to eat, I’m afraid! No, briquettes are alternatives to charcoal and wood, which means less cutting down of trees. Also, as you burn them, they let out heat more slowly. But, even better, they can be made using all sorts of things – like charcoal dust, which is sitting around ... and even animal pooh!”** Here, all the children groaned with disgust, Oscar the loudest; even though he loved animals, he was thinking about the amount of charcoal his mother used and imagining looking for the same amount of droppings! **“And also rubbish like banana peels.”**



“Banana peels?!” Upendo exclaimed. There had been a LOT of banana peels in the rubbish pile after the clean-up. Upendo also thought about her cooking last night and the pile she herself had created as she prepared the matooke. They had just thrown them in the rubbish pit near home, ready to be burned. Whenever they burned the rubbish, the smoke stung their eyes and smelled very bad. **“Can we really make something that people can use for cooking out of rubbish? Then they wouldn’t cut down so many trees. That would be wonderful!”**

In no time, the Green Warriors had made a plan with Uwera. She said she would share some knowledge with Teacher Godfrey so the school could teach a special lesson on making briquettes. She recommended a friend of hers, Trainer Tonny, who specialised in this area, and he agreed to come and hold a practical class to demonstrate how briquettes could be made. Then, the children could start making them in their homes and encourage their parents to try them as an alternative to charcoal.

The day the children had a practical briquette-making class was messy but great fun! The children got to understand how easy it was to make them. As Uwera had explained, Trainer Tonny emphasised that the briquettes would last much longer than charcoal, which also had to be bought, so briquettes were a more affordable way of cooking.



Some families were not interested in trying the new method of fuel, but around half of the Green Warrior’s parents were willing to learn, especially when they heard it could save them money. Teacher Godfrey engaged Trainer Tonny to come along another day and help the parents learn the skills of briquette making.

Shaking her head in wonder at the end of the session, Maama Prisca summed up the feelings of all the parents: **“Amazing! How can waste lying around become useful and save us money? This training has been so good for me!”**



Over the next few weeks, the Green Warriors were encouraged to see several families embrace briquettes instead of charcoal. Trees were also benefitting, as fewer would need to be cut down!

Upendo was determined to learn more about renewable energy and planned to work even harder in school, paying more attention than ever in science classes.

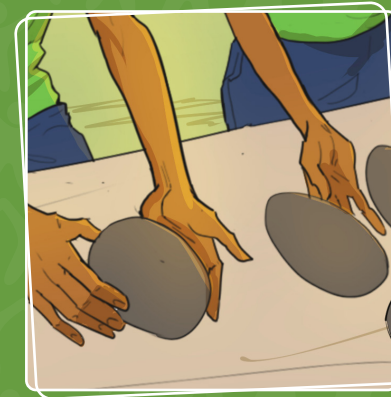
“Perhaps one day I can be as smart as Engineer Uwera and also work on big projects!”



Growing as Green Warriors!

Life is much easier when we can light our homes, charge phones and cook efficiently. However, some fuel types like charcoal, paraffin and candles run out and must be replaced each time. This makes them expensive and bad for the environment, especially if they come from natural resources such as trees. People are being very creative in finding new ways to generate heat and light in a renewable manner.

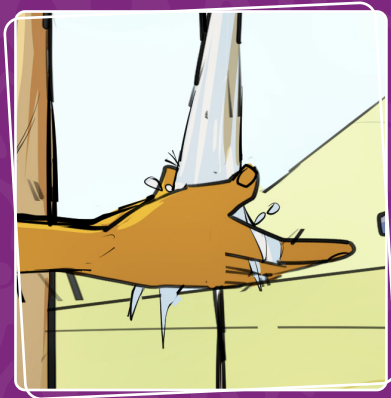
1. Look back at the pictures in this chapter. How many examples of fuel-efficient things can you spot? There are at least three!
2. Do some research about how each of them works and the benefits, and see if you can find out any other way to save energy.
3. Create a toy for yourself or a younger child out of things unused at home (e.g. bottle tops).



To find out more, look up these websites:

- This company re-uses plastic to make lots of new things like bricks and even furniture!
<https://www.ecobrixs.org/>
- This Ubongo kids video teaches all about reusable energy and recycling.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUbCfbe1Y90>

CHAPTER 6: Roaring River

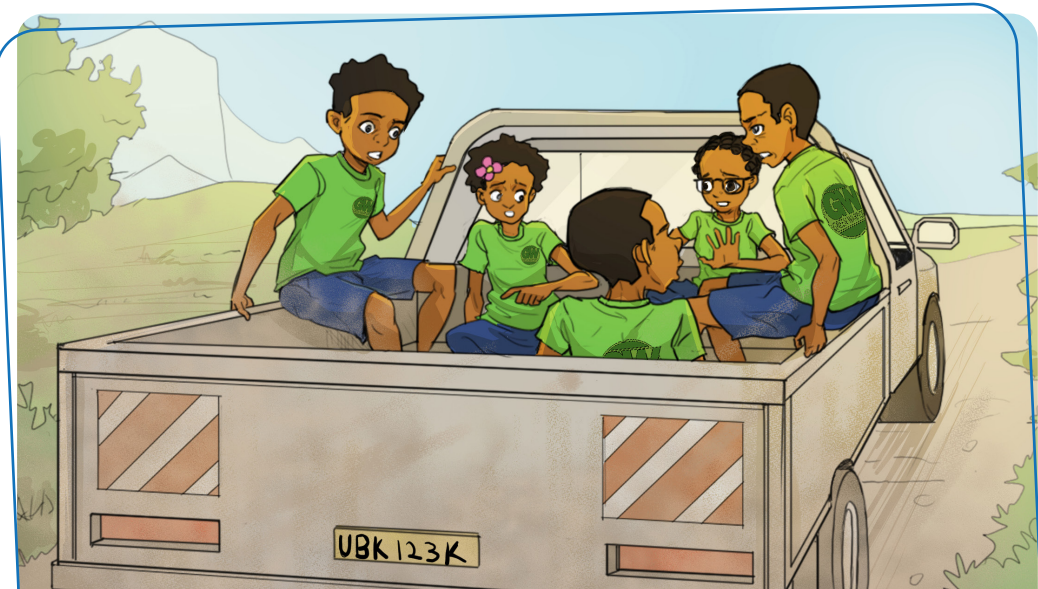


“Guess what! Uwera is home again!” Nelson excitedly told Pablo and Upendo this good news as they sat eating their lunch at school. It had been around four months since they had last seen her. Work on the HEP plant had started, and the village was buzzing with the idea of electricity.

“I’d love to see the plant,” Upendo mused. **“I wonder, can we go with her to see it?”**

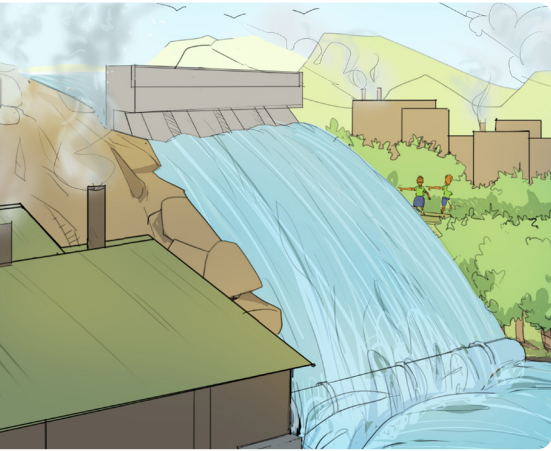
“I can ask!” Nelson promised to ask and get back to them. When they saw him at break the next day, he came with good news; Uwera was very happy to bring the children to see the plant and even better, they would ride in a pickup truck! The day of the trip couldn’t come soon enough.

“Can we sit behind? In the pickup part?” begged Prisca. The others all thought that sounded a lot of fun. Uwera told them it would be uncomfortable, but they insisted, thinking the bumps would make it all the better! They quickly



regretted their decision, though, as the truck bumping up and down made them all feel very queasy!

“I even regret eating breakfast!” Pablo groaned. **“That’s the first time ever in my whole life!”** The friends only laughed a bit, as they also felt rather sick!



The drive took around 30 minutes, and then they reached a large river. It rushed along, deep and cold and clear. It looked so majestic. The HEP plant was near some waterfalls further upstream. The children were brought as close as it was safe, marvelling at the machinery that would turn water into electricity. **God’s an amazing designer, indeed!** thought Pablo, remembering Jajja’s words.

Uwera told them they could wander around nearer some smaller streams but not to go too far and definitely on no account to enter the water. This made them a bit disappointed, as the idea of jumping in the water was very tempting. They knew better than to disobey, though. Nelson had a watch, so she told them to be back at the truck in one hour.

The children followed a big stream and came across some cows standing in the water, drinking from the coolness. One then started to pee in the water, much to their surprise! **“YUCK!”** Prisca exclaimed, as the cows also let off a terrible smell, though they weren’t sure if it was just the cows or other rubbish they could see lying by the river bank. There was also lots of junk in the water. They walked along the river and around a corner where some children were bathing and some older girls were washing clothes.

“But ... the cows ...” Nelson didn’t finish the sentence, but everyone knew what was bothering him. Playing in that water was not their idea of fun anymore! Even worse, they saw some jerry cans along the river bank, which meant that other people must also fetch water from the river for cooking,

bathing, or, even worse, drinking. **“YUCK, YUCK!”** Prisca put into words what they were all thinking. Imagining animals and people sharing the same water source so closely was not a nice idea! Even Oscar was not amused.

As they continued, they could see some other places where it looked like streams had once flowed, but they were now dry.

“What happened here, Upendo?” Pablo asked.

“I don’t know for sure, Pablo. Rubbish on the ground can impact waterways, but I also know that because of how the earth is getting hotter, some water sources are drying up.” The children were not happy. Water was so precious and vital for life! It was not good to think of water being scarce. Realising their hour was up, they walked back to the pickup, wondering if this was something the Green Warriors could help with.

That evening, back at home, Pablo told Jajja about the animals, the pollution, and the dried-up river. **“It’s a pity, for sure. We all need water for so many things. God gave us plenty of water, both salty and fresh, but we have not realised what a gift it is!”** Jajja explained how when rivers get polluted, it can even cause fish to die.

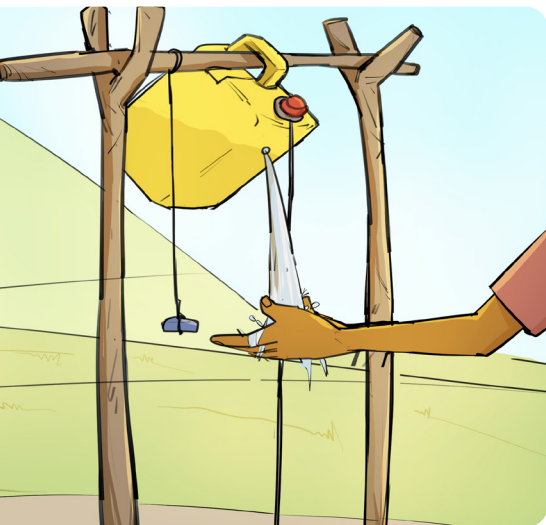
“As well, water shortages are becoming more common because it’s not so easy to find clean water any more. When I was young, we had a spring that only the people used, and animals were kept away. And you know, in some places today, it’s not just animals that use rivers as toilets!” YUCK YUCK YUCK!

“Speaking of toilets ...” Taata Upendo walked in just at that moment. Even Oscar, who loved cows, was not amused. **“Daddy! Really? Do we have to?”** He laughed at his son’s discomfort.



“Well, what I have to say is actually related. Please be very careful when you go out and are at school. I hear there is a cholera outbreak in the next town. You need to ensure you wash your hands very well before eating – yes, Pablo, every time you eat! – and don’t take water unless it has been boiled.”

Pablo and Upendo had learned about cholera in school and didn’t like the sound of it one bit. They were determined to be careful and help others to be safe, too.



At the next Green Warrior meeting, the children knew their message was critical: use water sparingly and ensure that animals don’t use the same water sources as people.

“The poster idea was good before, but what about this time?” Oscar wondered.

Upendo nodded. **“You’re right. Preventing water pollution is really important. We need many people to act if we are going to make a difference.”**

After some more discussion, they decided that, even though it was a bit frightening, they should hold a meeting to explain the problem so the adults in the village could understand and take action. Teacher Godfrey, as always, was very eager to help them and encouraged them by noting, **“The good thing is, some of them are already seeing the benefits of using the briquettes, so they may really be open to other ideas.”** The children hadn’t thought about that. To speak in front of grown-ups was scary, but at least if they were going to hear good news, that made it a little easier. **“Can we have snacks at the meeting?”** Oh, Pablo!!

The school Headteacher was happy to allow the meeting to go ahead. Teacher Godfrey and some other teachers organised it for a day when the market was not on, so people were not very busy. When the meeting started, Upendo swallowed hard. She was the Club Captain, so she knew she had to speak first.

It was so nerve-wracking, seeing all the adults in front of her!

“Ladies and gentlemen, I welcome you all here today. Thank you for coming. Let’s have an opening prayer as we start our important meeting about how we can use water more wisely in our homes, schools and places of work ...”

As she spoke, Upendo saw Jajja and her parents smiling reassuringly at her. Her nerves disappeared as she realised this was important work and she was proud to play a part in it!

The meeting was a great success. The children had done some research and described the dangers of animals and humans sharing water sources. They also gave statistics about how water was becoming scarce and what people could do, explaining how the water cycle was the perfect way to ensure everyone had proper water. They performed a skit that featured the cows they had seen by the river, and everyone laughed at the right parts.

As the presentation came to an end, Upendo stood on the stage, very pleased with her fellow Green Warriors, who had done a fantastic job. **“Let’s all be Water Heroes!”** she encouraged the crowd. **“That will benefit you now and generations to come as well!”**

By the end of the meeting, everyone pledged to try to find creative ways to use water better. The LC even said he would declare a ‘Water Saving Day’ in the future. He thanked Upendo, Pablo, and the Green Warriors for their actions.

Back at home, Upendo started collecting rainwater in a bucket and used it to water the trees planted in her garden, with her mother showing her how to do it carefully so no water was wasted. Pablo decided to take short baths instead of long ones. In every home, people began to boil water for drinking, understanding that some water sources may be dirty. People with animals were encouraged to give them water away from the rivers that people preferred to use. Some people began to re-use laundry water to mop the house.



Even Mzee Kaggwa asked Upendo's father to fix the gutters on his roof so that the rain that fell could be directed to enter a big water tank that had been sitting there but never filled because of the broken gutters. Villagers, young and old, were determined to be water heroes!



Growing as Green Warriors!

Due to many different reasons, including pollution, poor usage, and wastage, clean water is not always available to everyone, and yet a human cannot live without fresh water. You may be lucky enough to have running water at home, and having a tap can bring even more risk when it comes to wasting water.

1. **Can you think of some ways you can be a Water Hero by conserving or harvesting water in your home?**
2. **Is there a water source in your community not functioning well? Perhaps there is a broken tap, a leaking pipe, or it is very dirty. Could you speak to your LC or an elder about how to make it cleaner?**
3. **Make a poster about handwashing and put it near bathrooms at your school or home to remind people to wash their hands.**

To find out more, look up these websites:

- These organisations in Uganda improve access to water through drilling wells and helping people harvest water.
Living Water Uganda: <https://water.cc/country/uganda/>
The Ugandan Water Project: <https://ugandanwaterproject.com/>
- Did you know you should sing 'Happy birthday to you' twice as you wash your hands – front, back and between the fingers – to take enough time to ensure they are really clean?! More details on good handwashing can be found on the page below.
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>





CHAPTER 7: Radiant Rushaka

It was time for the long holiday! Upendo and Pablo were so excited. They were going to nearby Kyoga to visit their Aunt Prossy and cousins Harriet and Bernard. They would travel by matatu with Jajja, who would then leave them there to stay for a whole month. Kyoga was around one hour away and similar to Rushaka but had many more people, houses and shops. Aunt Prossy and all their neighbours had electricity in their homes, and people used cars and boda bodas a lot more than in Rushaka, where people more often walked or used a bicycle.

Although they missed their parents and Jajja at first, Upendo and Pablo loved staying in Kyoga. Pablo especially liked the fact that his cousin's house had a big fridge that always had something tasty to eat inside! Aunt Prossy also had a lovely compound in which she didn't grow many vegetables like Maama Upendo did, but had countless flowers of every colour and type. The bees buzzing around reminded Pablo and Upendo of the lessons they had learned about pollination all those weeks ago.

Around one week into the visit, as they all washed plates together, Pablo and Upendo decided to share with their cousins about their Green Warrior Club and told them all the different activities they had done.

"We told our neighbours about the dangers of cutting down vegetation and how erosion is a real problem and dug trenches to help divert floods."

"We planted trees in the forest and at home. The mango tree I planted has nearly doubled in size already!"

"We did a clean-up day, and then put up bins and signs reminding people not to litter in the community."

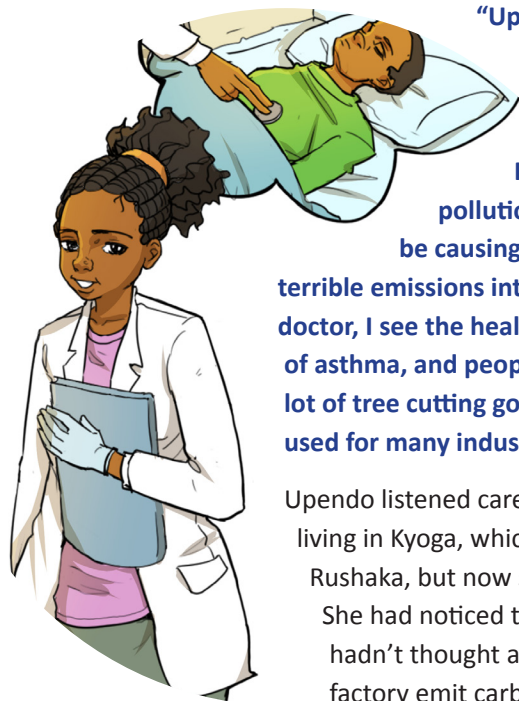
"We learned how to make briquettes from rubbish and charcoal dust."

“We now harvest all our rainwater so we can re-use it for so many things.”

Wow! What a busy year it had been for the Green Warriors!

All this time, as she sat nearby, Aunt Prossy was listening. She was an important lady in the town, a medical doctor and a senior councillor. She also knew the MP of the area very well.

The next day, she came and asked Upendo if she could speak with her about something. Upendo felt very important. She respected her Aunt very much and had decided if she wasn't going to be an Engineer, she would be a doctor and councillor.



“Upendo, I think what you have done with the Green Warriors is fabulous! You know, Kyoga has other problems even more than Rushaka. That factory of ours lets pollution into the river, and I know it must be causing a lot of problems. There are terrible emissions into the atmosphere, too. As I am a doctor, I see the health issues people have; there is a lot of asthma, and people often get coughs. There is also a lot of tree cutting going on, as charcoal and wood are used for many industries.”

Upendo listened carefully. She had envied her cousins for living in Kyoga, which was more developed than Rushaka, but now she also saw it had many problems! She had noticed the big factory by the river. She hadn't thought about how the vehicles and the factory emit carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

“I think it would be good for you to share at our next council meeting about your activities in Rushaka. Here, we may need to think bigger. Perhaps we can find ways that the factory can be less harmful.” Upendo's heart dropped. Share at a council meeting! The parents' meeting had been hard enough, but at least she had seen friendly faces in the audience! This was a whole other

thing. She knew, though, that the work of the Green Warriors was critical, so a little reluctantly, she agreed to speak at the meeting.

The next week, she and Aunt Prossy drove to the meeting together. As it was going to be quite late, Pablo stayed home with Bernard, with Harriet coming with Upendo for moral support. Upendo and Harriet found the first part of the meeting quite boring; they were talking about many things to do with planning and permission. Soon enough, though, the next item on the agenda was 'The Environment'. This was Upendo's most frightening challenge of all! Yet once again, she realised that her message was significant enough that it was worth being scared for.

What a fantastic time it was! Upendo had no idea that her words could have such a big impact. After her brief presentation about how the Green Warriors had tried to do things in a more environmentally friendly way, Upendo ended by encouraging them, above all things, to plant trees.

“We have found out that trees have so many uses! They house animals and other creatures, prevent soil erosion, provide food, create shade, give us nice places to walk, and, of course, make our gardens and compounds look nicer. But not only that, another benefit of trees is that they help suck the carbon dioxide out of the air and turn it into useful oxygen. This is very important because pollution from cars and factories makes our air dirty, and my Jajja told me it also affects our weather patterns. She told me that God created our world in a perfect way, but we have done things that are bad for it, and now it is up to us to help restore it back.”

After she finished, the councillors gave her a huge round of applause. Upendo sat down, feeling amazed that she had been the one talking! The Council Chairperson spoke up, nodding to Upendo with approval. **“Your Jajja is very wise and very correct! We have seen the problems for a while, but today is the day the Council will take some action!”** The members then went on to discuss many different ideas for how to address the problems they saw in Kyoga, especially air pollution.

“Let's speak to the factory owner to switch to greener, cleaner energy sources instead of charcoal.”

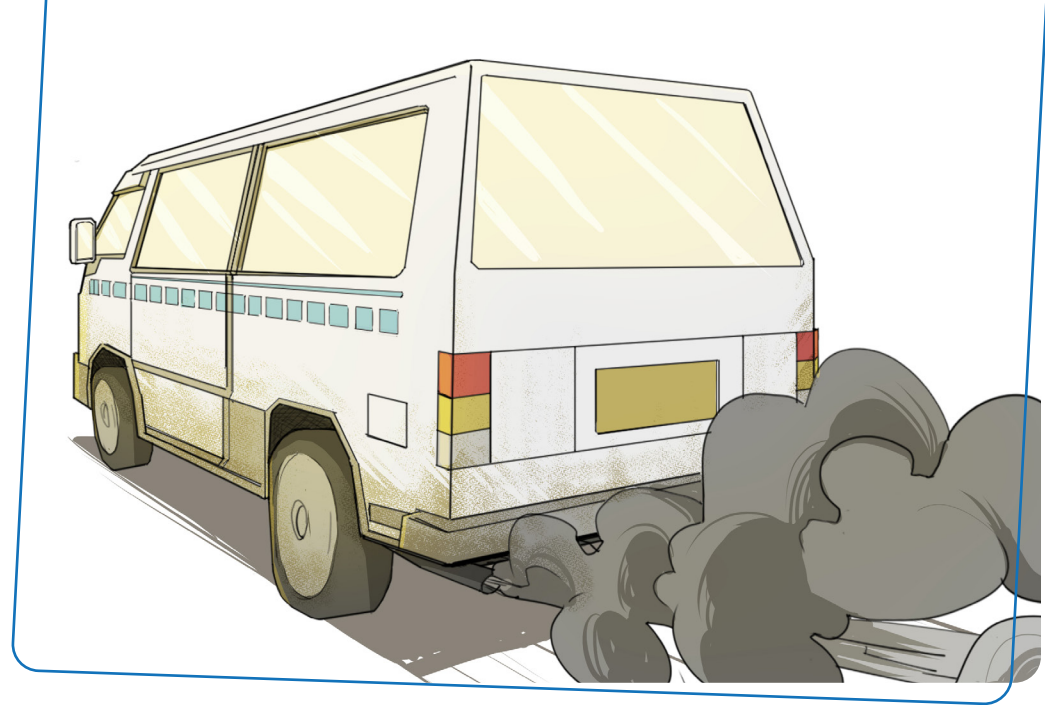
"I think there is even some new technology related to air filters to reduce smoke emissions, so perhaps the factory owner could try this."

"Perhaps we can get government bicycles for community members to limit the use of boda bodas and taxis to reduce how much carbon dioxide is produced."

"Let's do a campaign on the benefits of walking to reduce our carbon footprint!"

As they drove back home, Aunt Prossy congratulated her niece. **"You see, Upendo! What you have done is marvellous! You are encouraging us here in Kyoga to also do something!"** Harriet nodded. **"Even us! I promise that me and Bernard will set up our own Green Warriors Club as soon as we can!"**

When they returned that night, Upendo found Pablo asleep and badly wanted to wake him up to share the good news! Aunt Prossy told her to be patient and wait until morning, though Upendo thought she would barely sleep with the exhilaration of knowing she had achieved something very significant. Pablo was just as excited as she was when she updated him.

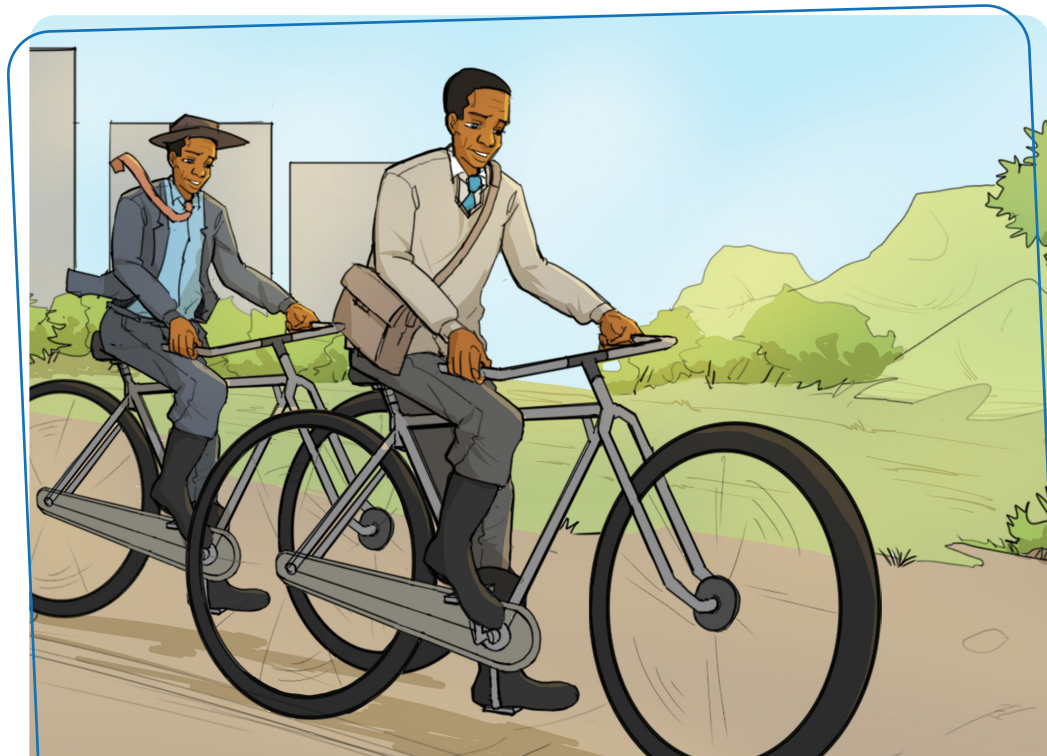


The rest of the holiday flew by. Upendo and Pablo were the guest speakers at the very first Green Warrior Club meeting that Harriet and Bernard set up. Upendo even went to the MP's office with her Auntie Prossy to share more ideas about how Kyoga could address its air pollution issue.

They were happy to see Jajja, though, when she came to escort them back home. They were looking forward to getting back to Rushaka and creating new action plans with the Green Warriors. As they sat squeezed on the back row of the matatu, Upendo noticed as she glanced back that dark fumes spilt out of the exhaust. **Pollution really is everywhere!** she thought in dismay. They shared all their stories with Jajja the whole ride back home as the matatu bumped along the dusty roads. She was delighted to hear their enthusiasm.

"I'm very proud of you both! God told us to be stewards of His earth, but we have not done this very well. You, however, are taking the job He gave us of looking after His world seriously. If they could talk, the trees, flowers, animals and rivers would thank you!"

"Even the berries God created for us to eat would thank us for eating them?" Pablo laughed as his sister shook her head at him.





“Flowers. Jajja, you’ve reminded me. Aunt Prossy’s compound was so lovely with different coloured flowers. She gave us some seeds to plant in Rushaka. Can you help us later?”

“Of course, Upendo! Flowers are one of the very best parts of God’s creation!”

As they entered Rushaka, Upendo remembered the deep breath that Uwera had taken and how she said the air was fresher there, and she recognised it was true. Rushaka’s air seemed cleaner and fresher than in Kyoga, which she realised was another reason she loved her village!

Pablo and Upendo couldn’t wait to tell Oscar, Nelson and Prisca, Teacher Godfrey, the LC, and Uwera about their time in Kyoga. Who knows where else might the Green Warriors take their message? Maybe next time, all the way to the capital city! They had seen that taking action and doing something small could lead to something much bigger, and the sky was the limit!



Growing as Green Warriors!

Did you notice that at the start of the book, Upendo was nervous speaking to just one adult – and by the end, she could speak in front of strangers in a new place? She had the courage because she started small, which built her confidence, and she knew her message was important, so it needed to be shared with people who could make a positive difference. The problems in our environment can best be solved when we play our part to the best of our ability and encourage others to do the same, with each person looking to help others, not just themselves.

1. Think about how the following people benefit the community:

- Police
- Farmer
- Teacher
- Local Councillor

2. What do you want to be when you grow up, and how will you help your community?

3. Gather some friends and have a debate on the motion “Village life is better than town life when it comes to being green.”

To find out more, look up these websites:

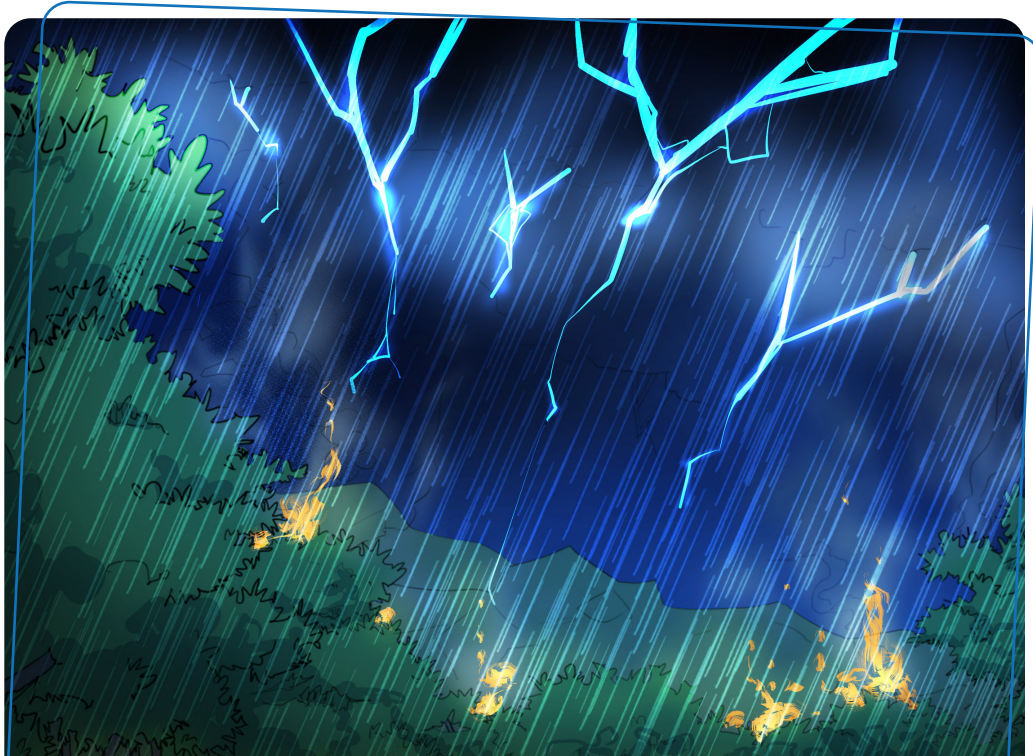
- This Ubongo kids video explains dirty and clean energy.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHVS09bsKs8>
- The Joint Energy and Environment Project (JEEP) has information on projects and ideas like energy-efficient stoves and solar power.
<https://jeepfolkecenter.org/>

CHAPTER 8:

Why is this so important?

Some of the major issues related to climate change are as follows:

- People wasting resources in areas like technology, transport and in areas manufacturing, mainly in the developed world, has led to increased energy-related carbon emissions (CO₂) and to increased warmer temperatures across the globe.
- Hotter temperatures cause problems like drought or lead to flooding due to rising sea levels.
- Extreme weather conditions lead to natural disasters like storms and cause wildfires.



Very worryingly, often it is people living below the poverty line in the developing world and who have fewer resources to cope with the problems who are the ones who suffer the most. A big organisation called Oxfam put it like this:

The climate crisis is already wrecking the lives of millions of people, and those who did the least to cause the problem are the worst affected.

<https://www.oxfam.org/en/5-natural-disasters-beg-climate-action>

- This Ubongo video explains how problems created in rich countries affect poorer ones:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTizIzJsXs>
- There are lots more ideas for how you can help protect the environment in this link:
<https://wehavekids.com/parenting/26-ways-your-kids-can-help-protect-the-environment>
- Green Peace is one of the biggest organisations related to the environment:
<https://www.greenpeace.org/global/>

God provided for all human needs in His perfect creation. As we consider the scale of the crisis, Christians believe we must keep our eyes fixed on the God who loves what He created – sky, sun, moon and stars, land, sea, mountains, trees, plants, animals, birds and people. Christians also believe that as He is the God of love, justice and mercy, His desire is not for people to suffer but to live harmoniously with and benefit from all the natural resources He has provided.



CHAPTER 9:

Environment Words Dictionary

Below are some important terms related to nature and the environment which can be found in this story, some of which may be new. Have a look below to understand them better.

Word	Definition
Carbon dioxide	The gas formed when carbon is burned, or when people or animals breathe out. Too much carbon dioxide is bad for the environment as it raises the earth's temperature.
Carbon footprint	Someone's carbon footprint is a measurement of the amount of carbon dioxide that their activities produce.
Cholera	A serious infection of the bowels caused by drinking infected water or eating infected food, causing diarrhoea, vomiting and often death.
Decomposer	An organism such as a bacterium or fungus that makes dead plant and animal material decay.
Deforestation	The cutting down of trees in a large area, or the destruction of forests by people.
Emissions	An amount of a substance that is produced and sent out into the air that is harmful to the environment, especially carbon dioxide.

Word	Definition
Erosion	The fact of soil, stone, etc. being gradually damaged and removed by the waves, rain, or wind; erosion of a natural feature or physical object is damage caused by the effect of weather.
Hydroelectric power	Producing electricity by the force of fast-moving watersuch as rivers or waterfalls.
Landfill	The process of getting rid of large amounts of trash by burying it, or a place where trash is buried.
Pollinator	Something, such as an insect, that carries pollen from one plant or part of a plant to another.
Pollution	Damage caused to water, air, etc., by harmful substances or waste.
Predator	An animal that hunts, kills, and eats other animals.
Prey	An animal that is hunted and killed for food by another animal.
Recycling	The process of collecting and changing old paper, glass, plastic, etc., so that it can be used again.
Renewable energy	Energy that is produced using the sun, wind, etc., or from crops, rather than using fuels such as oil or coal.
Water cycle	The way that water is taken up from the oceans, rivers, soil, etc. and then comes back down as rain or snow.

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/>

One final task!



Ask your Jajja or another elder if there have been changes in their community since they were young, such as rivers drying up, or trees being cut down. How have weather patterns changed? What is different about how to manage our environment then and now? As Pablo and Upendo's Jajja has shown us, our elders have a lot of wisdom and experience that we can learn from, so get asking one today!





Join Pablo and Upendo as they lead their friends on a journey to become more environmentally friendly!

This book is part of a child rights project and written to raise awareness about
how issues related to the natural environment impact children.



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