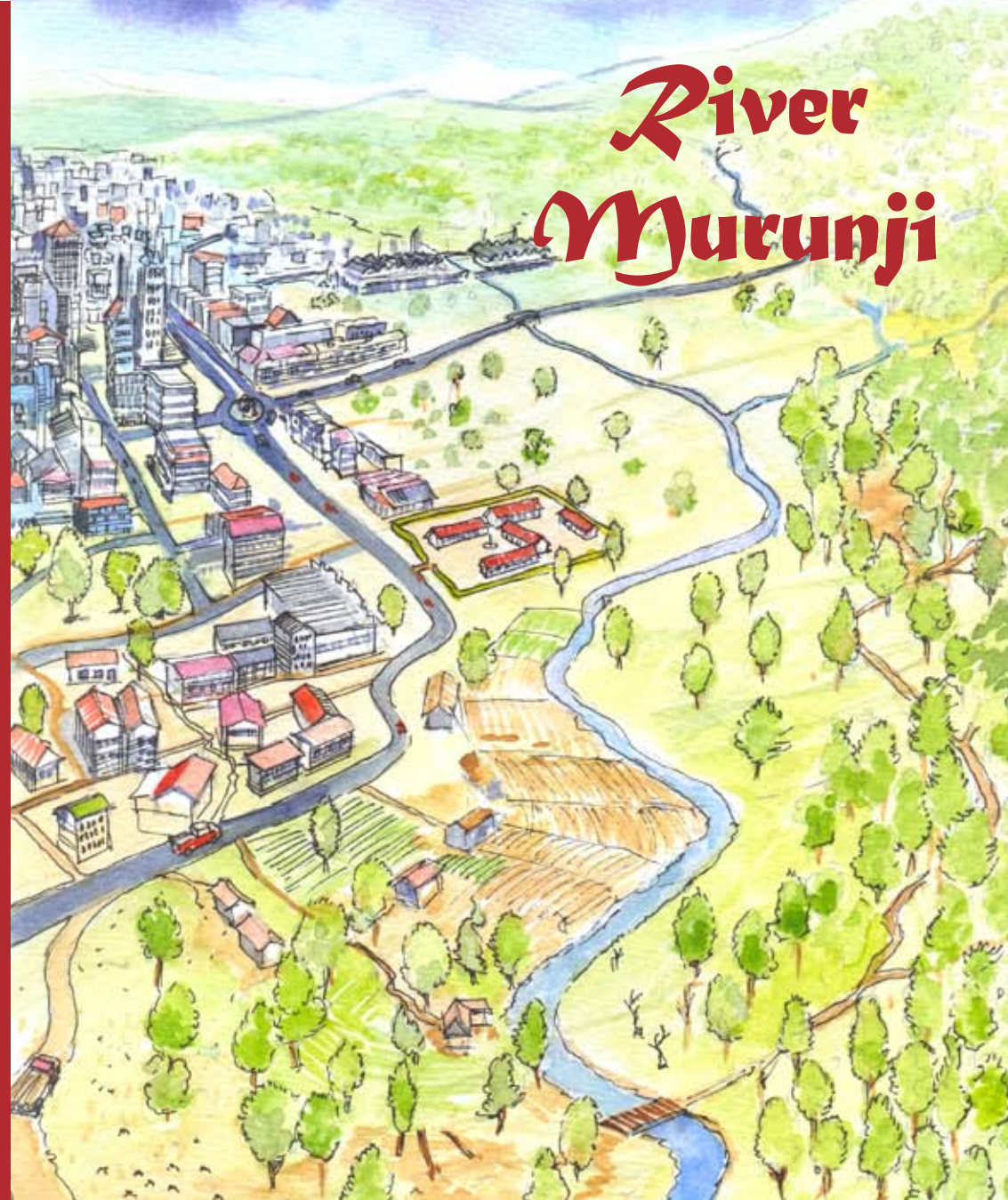


River Murunji

River Murunji has become dirty. Its water is drying up. However, one girl named Susana and her classmates fight for River Murunji. They set out in an exciting journey to get River Murunji to its original status of glory. Will they succeed? Read and find out!



River Murunji

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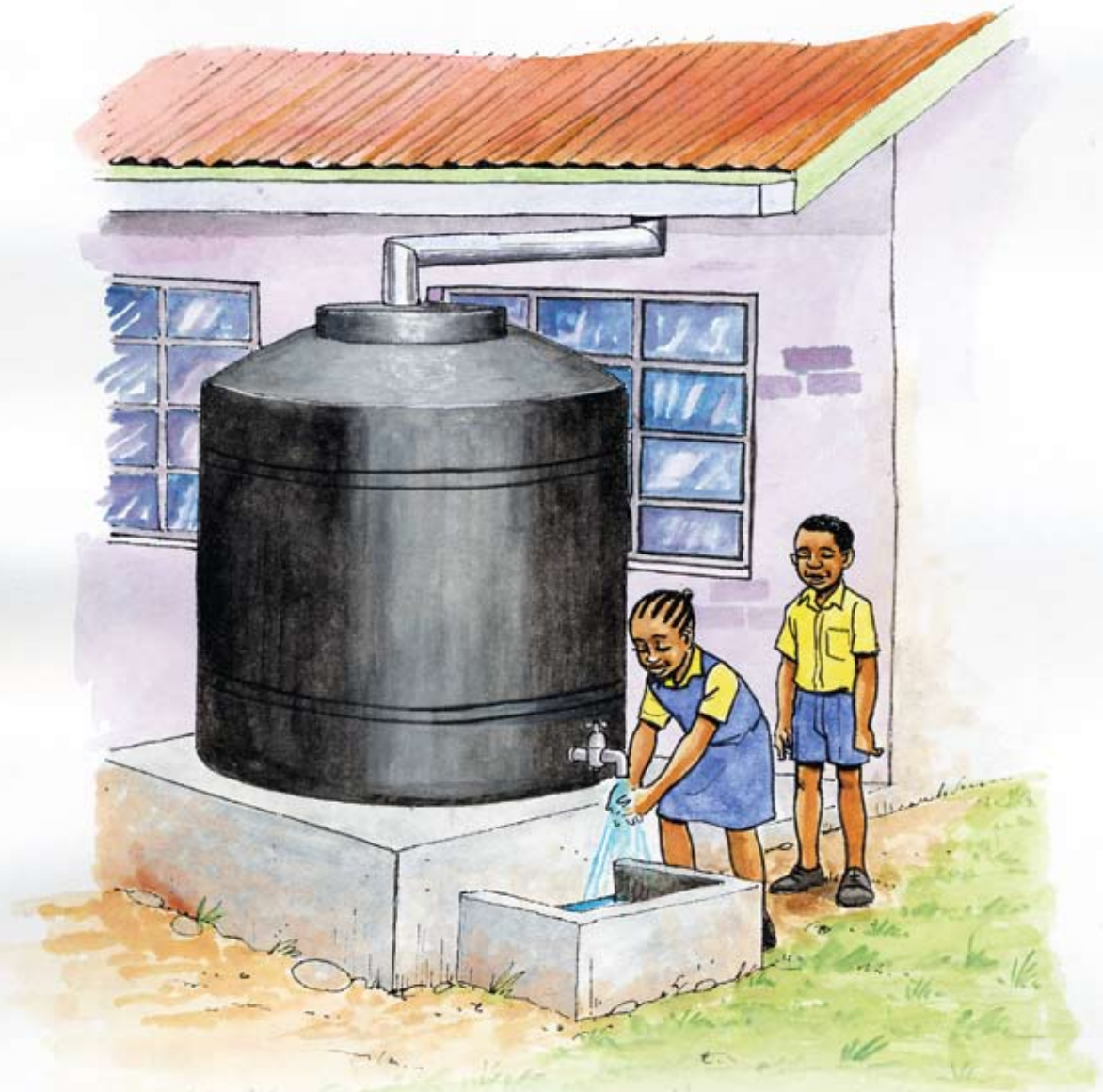


RIVER MURUNJI

UN-HABITAT
Series on Water and Sanitation
Lower Primary

My name is Susanna. I go to Sumati Primary School. I am in Standard Four. I like going to school because I learn many things. I also like to play with my friends when we are not in class.





We have a large tank of water in our school. All rain water from the school roof collects in the tank. The water is used for cooking our lunch. We also use the water to wash our hands before we have our lunch.

We have many clubs in my school. Every pupil is a member of a club. I am a member of the Environmental Club. The club grows tree seedlings in a tree nursery. Tree seedlings need water to grow. Every day a club member waters the seedlings. Today, it is my turn to water the seedlings.

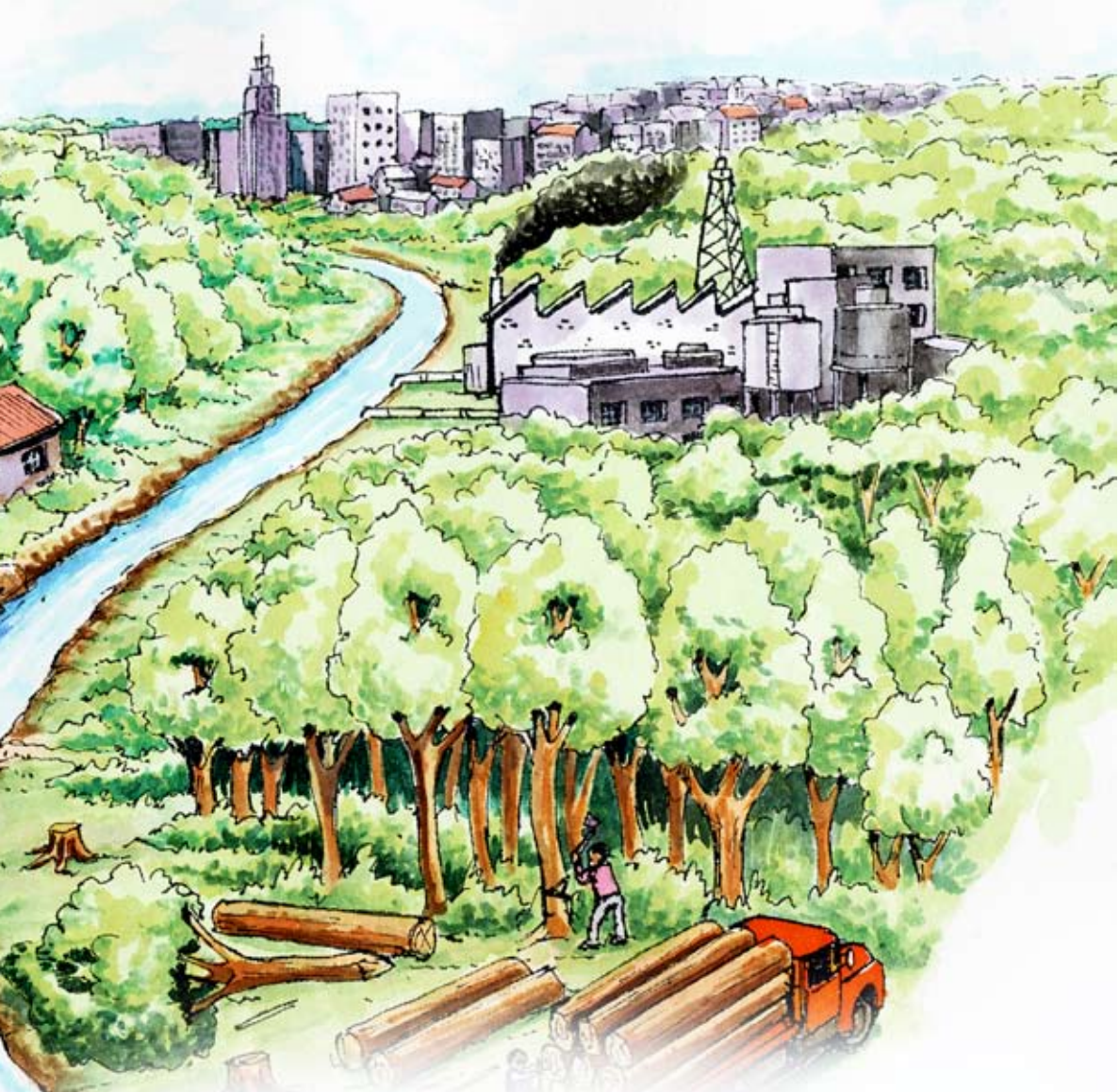




Mrs Kijani
is our
Environmental
Club teacher. She
is also in charge of
Social Studies. One day,
she gave us homework to
find out the history of our
village.

I live in Sumati village. It is a very
nice one on top of a hill.

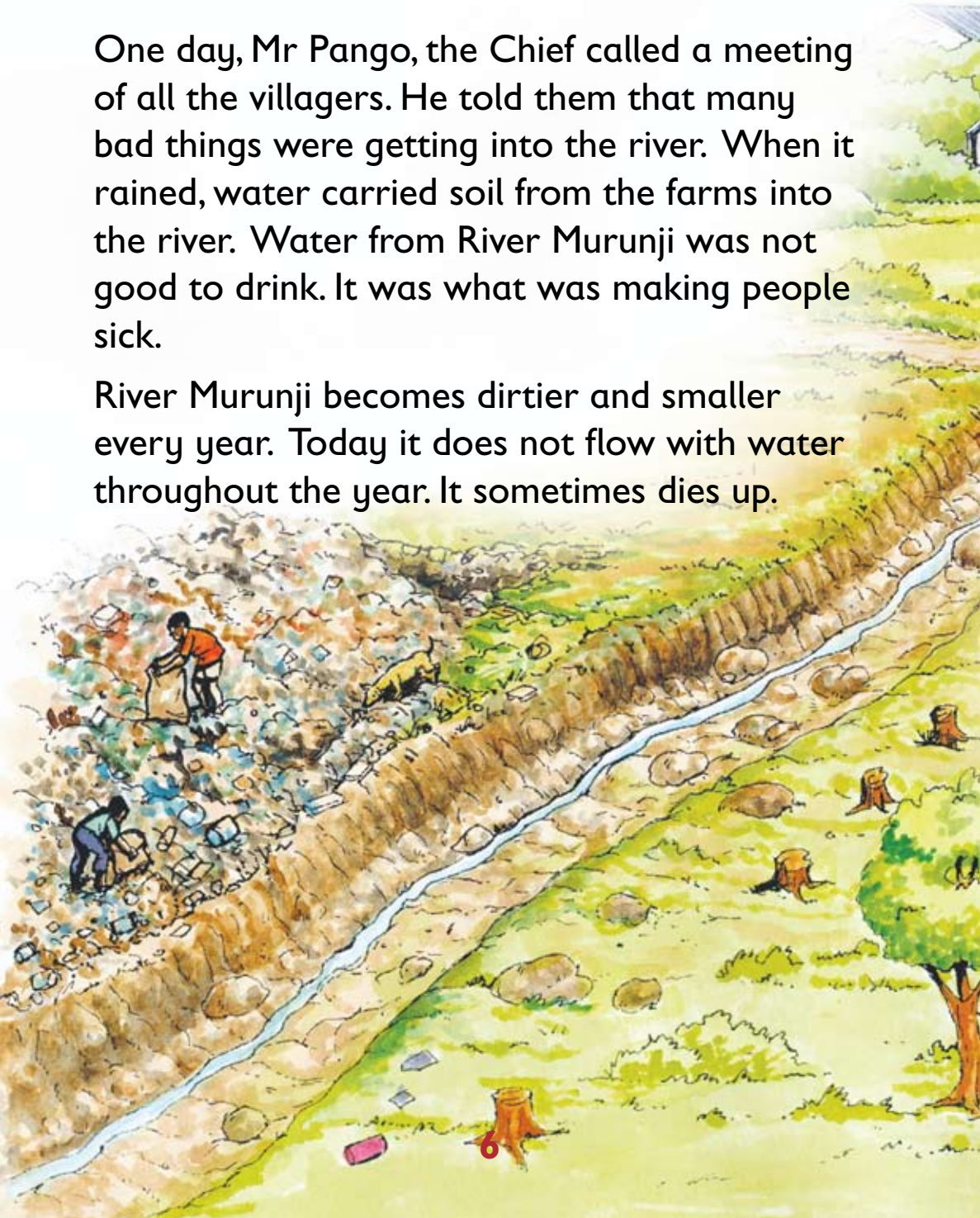
My grandmother is a very old woman. I
asked her about our village.

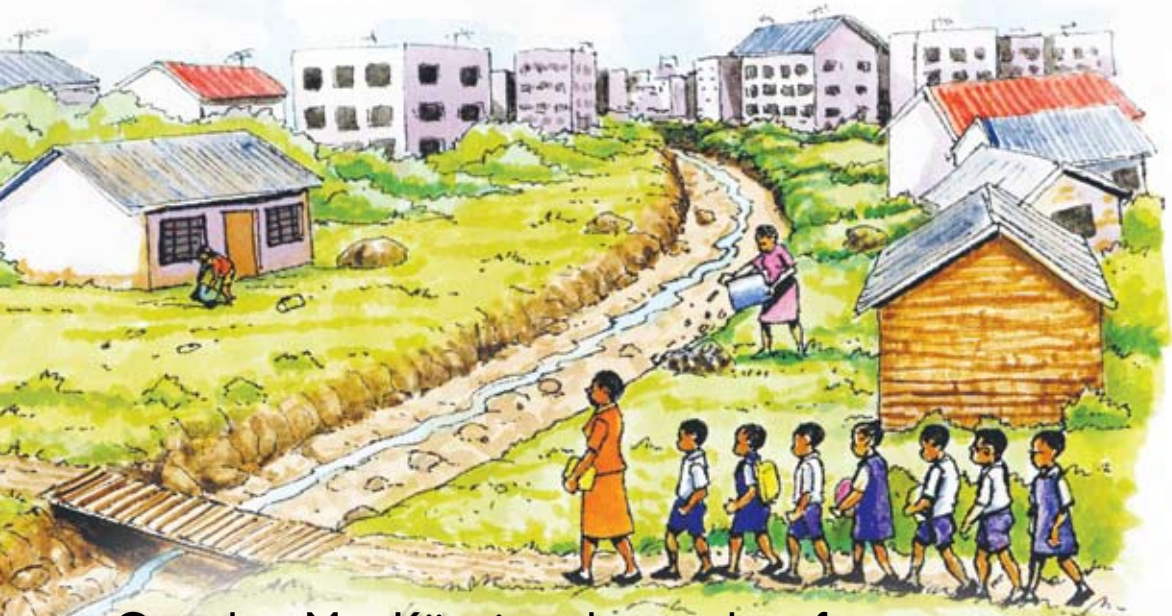


She said that before the village was built, there were many trees. River Murunji used to have very clean water all the year round. However, later trees were cut and River Murunji became dirty. It was a sad story.

One day, Mr Pango, the Chief called a meeting of all the villagers. He told them that many bad things were getting into the river. When it rained, water carried soil from the farms into the river. Water from River Murunji was not good to drink. It was what was making people sick.

River Murunji becomes dirtier and smaller every year. Today it does not flow with water throughout the year. It sometimes dries up.





One day, Mrs Kijani took our class for a nature walk. We went all the way down to the river.

It was in the dry season. We spent the day collecting rubbish on the river bed.

Later, Mrs Kijani taught us about the water cycle. She told us that forests hold a lot of water under them. Forests release a little water at a time which forms clouds and later rain.

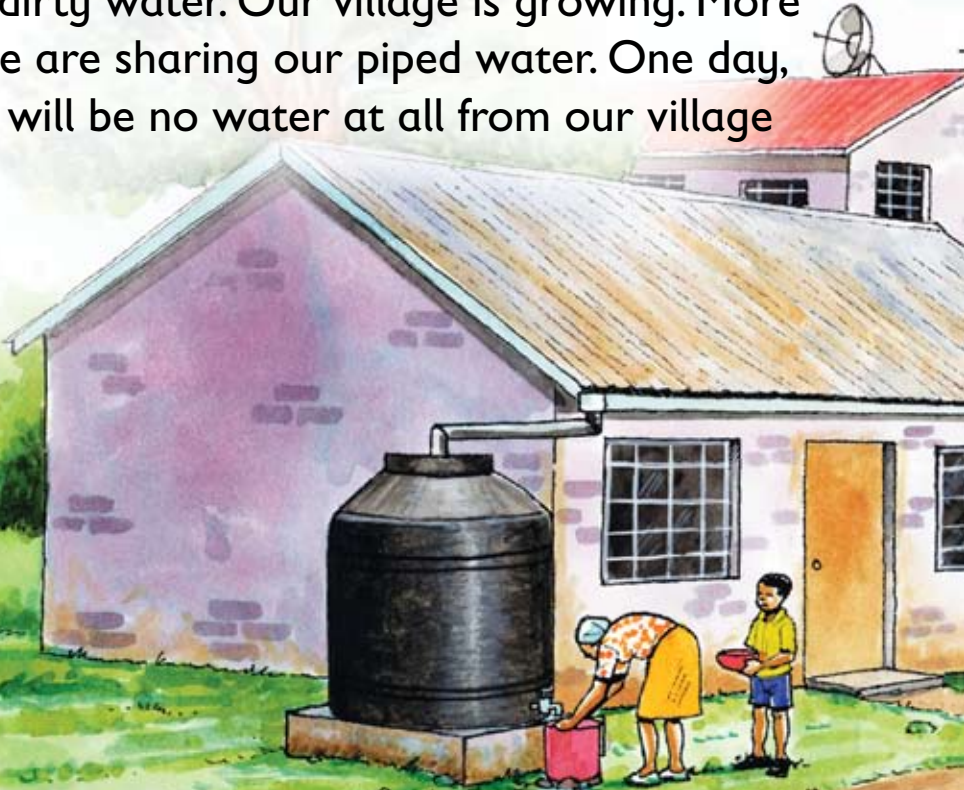
When forests are cleared, there is no rain and rivers dry up. That is what had happened to River Murunji. We decided to plant trees on all open parts of the hillsides. We also decided to ask our parents to plant trees in their farms.

Our village also has piped water. People line up and wait for their turn to fetch water.

One day, the Chief called a meeting.

“Listen people,” he said. “I have something important to tell you.”

“People get very many diseases by taking untreated water from the river.” He said, “We have piped water so that we do not get diseases from dirty water. Our village is growing. More people are sharing our piped water. One day, there will be no water at all from our village tap.



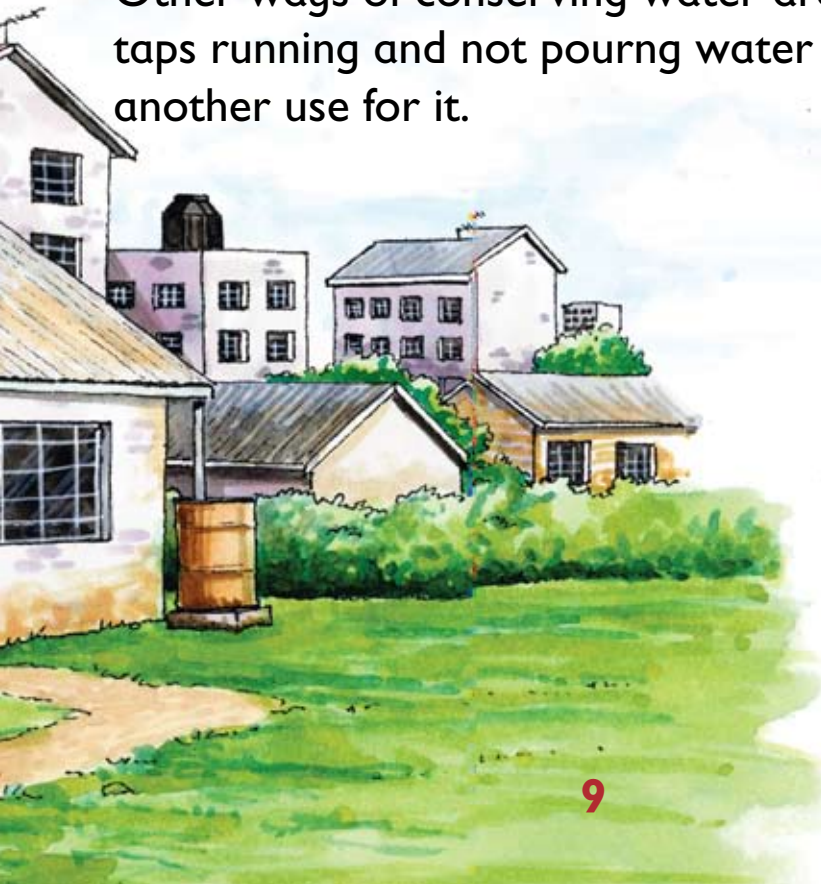
We must look for ways of conserving water”.

“How?” someone asked.

“One way is to harvest rain water from our roofs,” the Chief said.

The Chief explained how rain water falling on iron sheet roofs can be collected using gutters and directed into tanks. He gave an example of Sumati Primary School’s water tank.

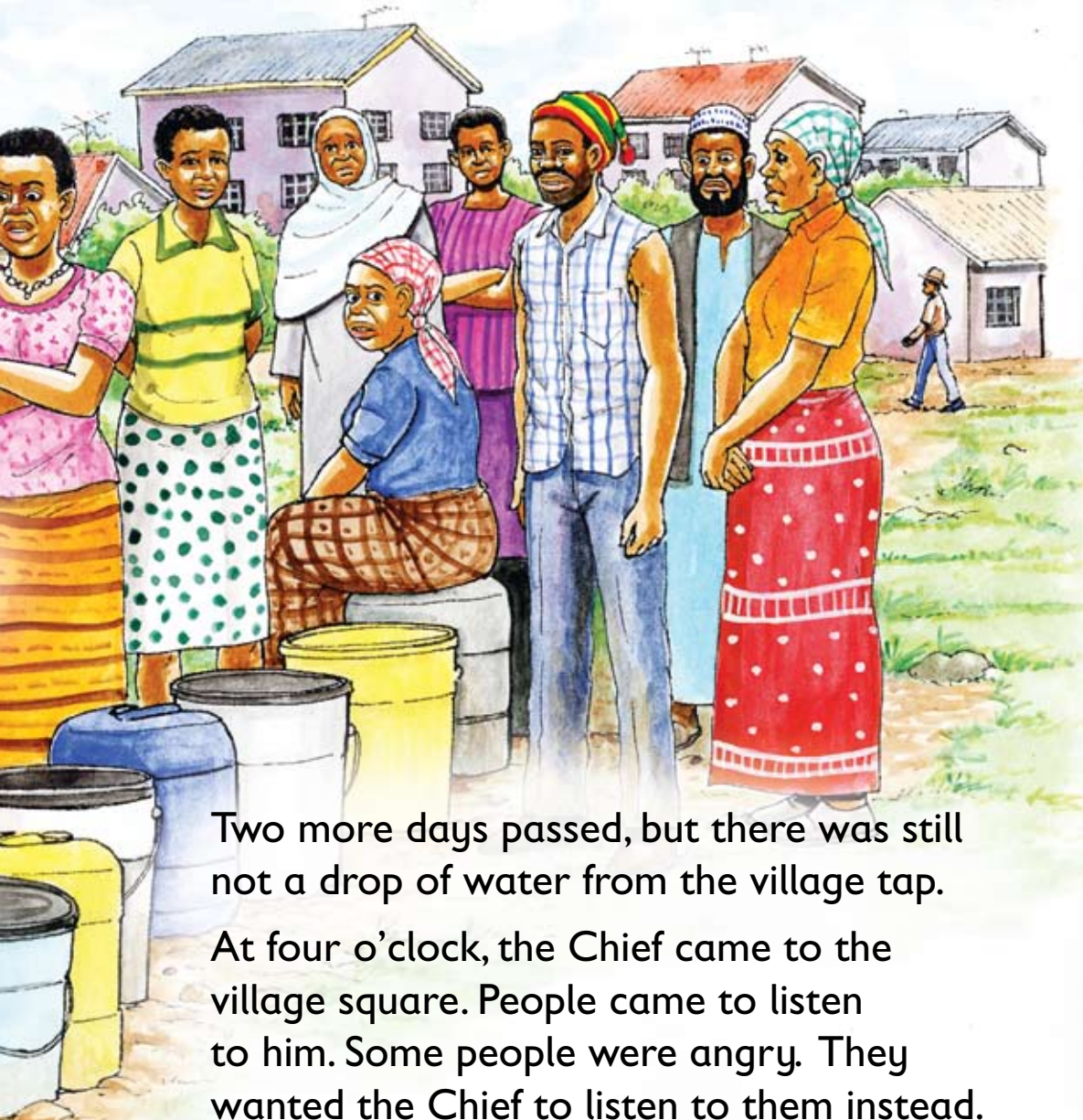
Other ways of conserving water are not leaving taps running and not pouring water if there is another use for it.



The Chief also explained how we could bring River Murunji to its original state. He explained, “If we plant trees on the hill slopes, the river will start flowing again. If we stop letting dirt get into the river, the water will become clean again.” However, people did not take the Chief seriously.

The next day the whole village was shocked. People went to fetch water from the tap but the tap was empty.





Two more days passed, but there was still not a drop of water from the village tap.

At four o'clock, the Chief came to the village square. People came to listen to him. Some people were angry. They wanted the Chief to listen to them instead.

“Give us water. We want water!” one person shouted.

“I can’t give you water,” the Chief replied.

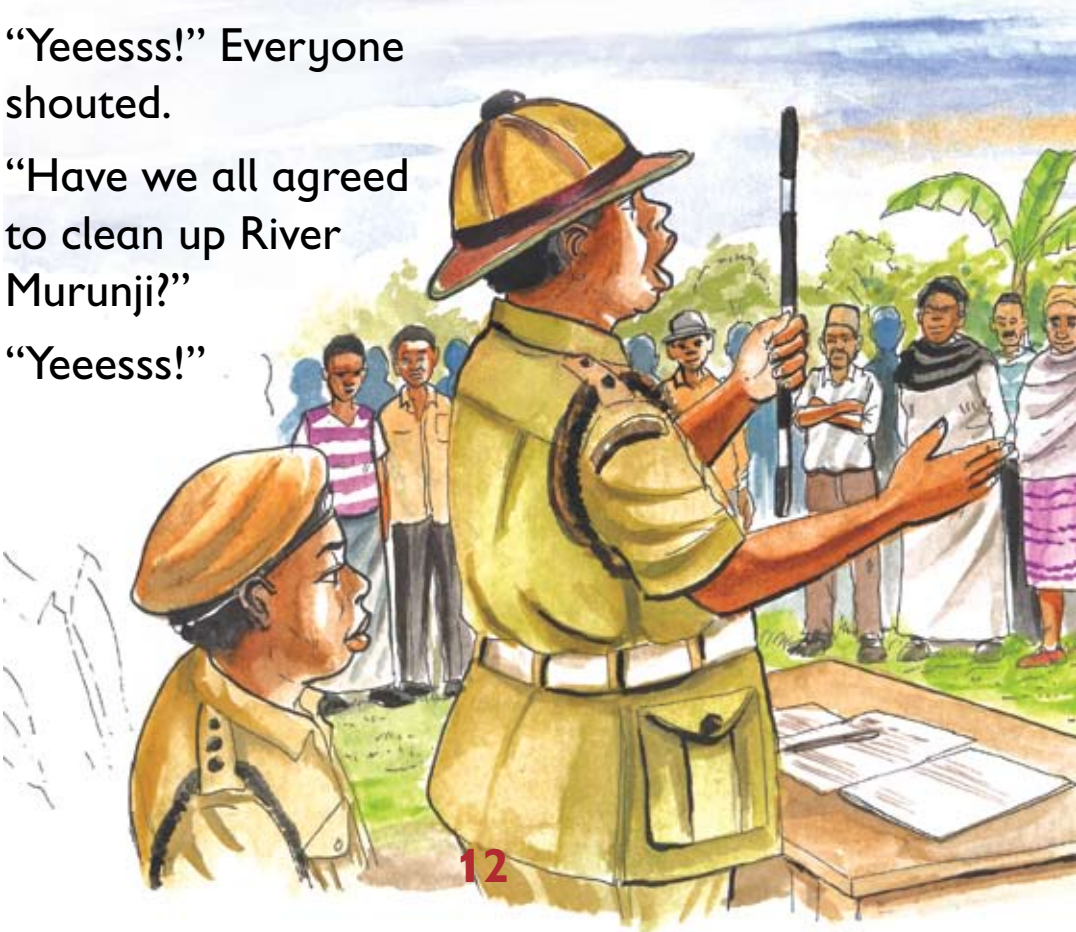
Then he added, “A tanker will bring us water tonight. But that does not solve our problem. Remember my advice on how we can conserve water”.

The Chief then asked, “Have we all agreed to build tanks in our homes and to plant trees on the hillsides?”

“Yeeesss!” Everyone shouted.

“Have we all agreed to clean up River Murunji?”

“Yeeesss!”

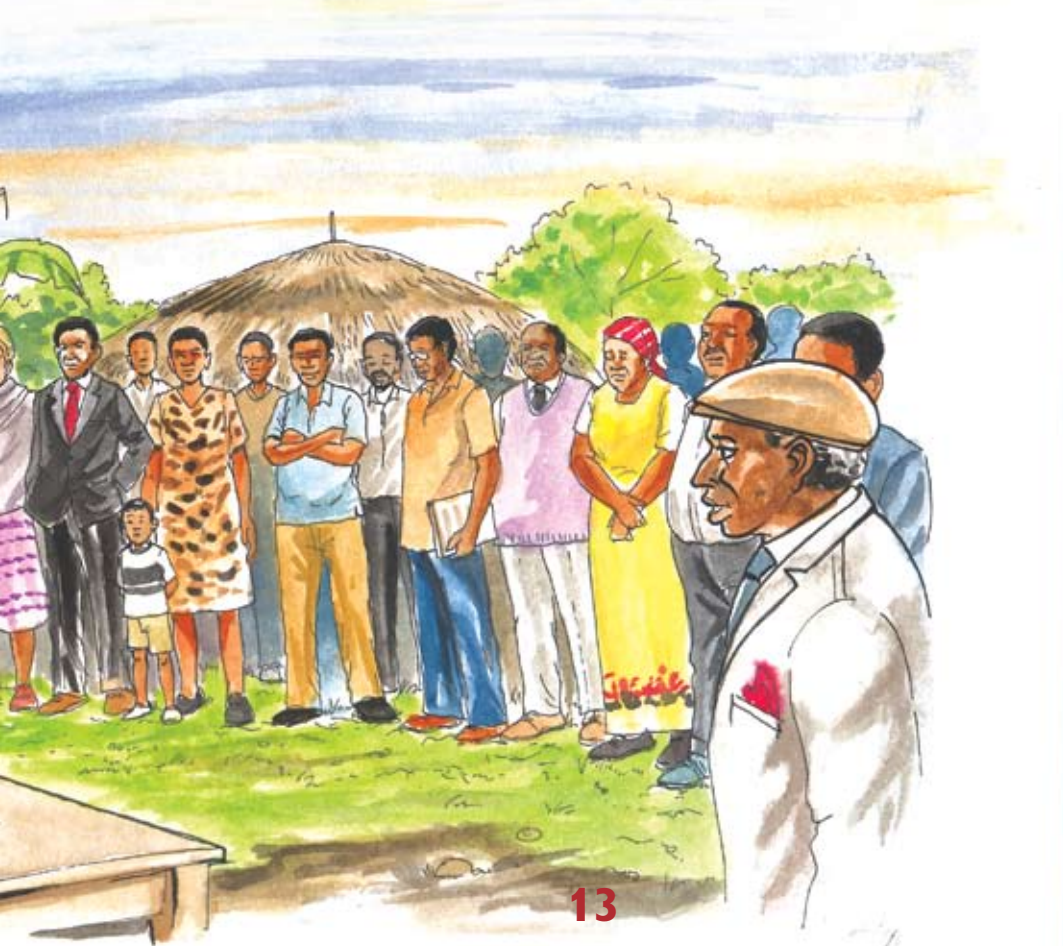


“Have we all agreed to plant all bare parts of the hillsides with trees?”

“Yeeesss!”

“Excuse me Chief!” Mrs Kota called. “Where are we going to get so many tree seedlings?”

The Chief asked Mrs Kijani, “Do you have an answer for Mrs Kota?”



“Yes,” said Mrs Kijani. “The Environmental Club of Murunji Primary School has many seedlings. The club will sell the seedlings for the very low price of a shilling a seedling”.

I was sitting next to Hannah. She is a member of the Environmental Club. “How many seedlings do we have in our nursery?” I whispered.

“Thousands,” Hannah said smiling.

I smiled back and said, “then we shall have thousands of shillings.”

“And a forest and a clean river!” Hannah said.

