In January of 2020, the Virtual Engagement and Materials Development Team in the Office of English Language Programs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State, began to recruit English Access Microscholarship teachers for the first-ever Virtual Exchange Program. Our office wanted to find a way to combine traditional teacher-training with a hands-on approach to using and teaching with materials and educational technology tools. For this pilot, the team wanted to use the recently-published comic book about comics in the classroom, Panels and Perspectives: Creating Comics in the EFL Classroom, to create a program centered on using comics in the classroom to learn English, visual literacy, and empower learners to share their own stories with a global audience. And with that, the first American English Comics Virtual Exchange Program was pilot born.

The original plan was to have Access classes connect online through synchronous meetings on a regular basis over the 10-week period. However, the global spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic began to close schools everywhere, and many of the teachers had no students, or were required for the first time to teach online instead of face-to-face.

The Virtual eXchange (VX) team quickly regrouped and created opportunities and classroom matches between teachers with classes, teachers without classes, and teachers with hybrid classes. By providing support to our teachers in the exchange, they were able to thrive. They learned many aspects of using comics in the classroom. What was magical was the bond between the participants and the facilitators. The sense of global camaraderie during this time of the pandemic.
ABOUT THIS VOLUME

In this anthology volume, you’ll find the stories of our teachers, centered on the topics of access to education, empathy and understanding, healthcare and wellness, gender equity, and climate change.

As the project manager and editor of this anthology, it has been an incredible experience to work with these talented teachers from across the globe. And, a project this ambitious wouldn’t have been possible without the rockstar team of facilitators, Dr. Jennifer Williams, Dan Ryder, and Tim Smyth, and the incredible guidance of Regional English Language Officer and Branch Chief Diane Millar. Last but not least, a huge thank you to the support from the Office of English Language Programs RELO offices around the world, for your support and exceptional nominations of these program participants.

Jacqueline Gardy

EDITOR’S NOTE

Please note the stories you’ll find below contain a variety of perspectives and viewpoints, that may or may not reflect the U.S. Department of State’s foreign policy. The comics have been left un-edited to capture the teacher’s voices in full. We hope you enjoy this collection of stories!
Dariya's mother needed an excuse to object her education, and this time she bursts out on the pretext of coming late from school.

Mama, I am sorry. I will take care of it next time.

How many times do I need to remind you your limit? You're a girl!

When will I be able to convince Mama?

Oh! but I have other important tasks to do.

Someone might need my help.

Dariya noticed the gleam coming out of the drawer.

The glow of the mask! And that was a sign of trouble.

Someone needs my help.

I must go and see.
The girl got scared but before she could say something, Dariya used her powers to know the girl's story.

With the power of mask, Dariya could see a girl sobbing her heart out.

She stopped forward to get into the flash of light.

And the next moment, Dariya was with the girl.

I will not let you suffer the pain.

But... wait! why?? what happened to her?

Yes, I am sure. You will.

Ahh! I wish I can get admission in a good college.

YAY...I got my name on the merit list.

The girl had secured position in school and is looking forward to get admission in college on scholarship.
But I got good marks...

Sorry! We can’t help it.

My daughter name was on top of the merit list.

The college administration apologized for not giving admission due to limited seats.

Make her understand that it’s not possible.

Dariya wants to continue her education.

She should focus on household chores now.

That’s their domain anyways.

I must fix this.

So that’s how you offer admission!

And the man was bribed to give admission to another girl and so has made changes to the merit list.

God! Please help me.

My dream! I can’t be a doctor now!
Faiza Amjad works in Pakistan with 13-19 year-old students and has been teaching for three years. This is her first year in the Access program.

After participating in the program, Faiza anticipates several positive changes for her and her organization. She feels AE Comics VX provided her deeper insight into comics and strengthened her skills, and thus she performs her job in a better way. She believes her acquired knowledge and confidence will benefit her students and their developing language skills.

Faiza was a contributing member of this cohort, always interacting and sharing her amazing ideas. We are excited to see what she and her students create in the future.
Dariya, who is a young, veracious girl. She has a supernatural mask that she found in an old house where she shifted along with her family. It was a framed mask. However, she opens it up as she noticed something unusual about it. And that is how she came to know about its supernatural powers.

Now, we call her the defender of education. She takes every chance to make positive changes to the education system and is always ready to cope up with the related challenges.
Hi everybody. Mother Earth has been aggressed for so long. Mostly by us humans. It's high time we repaired the wrong actions against her. Access students are to act as agents of positive changes to restore the natural balance.

Thank you Green warrior.

I would like to seize this opportunity to thank the tremendous job that has been done to help our community change for the better. It was not easy at the start but we managed to persuade the most reluctant ones. The next panels are illustrative enough....

We need to continue with the momentum for success. By saving a little each time, we make a big difference.

MANSOUR SYNDIAYE
SENEGAL
Mansour Diagne, a teacher since 1996, brought wisdom, kindness, positivity, and creativity from his home in Senegal. Mansour has been an Access teacher since 2008. After attending a recent international workshop in Dakar, he began to see the power of comics in the classroom.

While participating in the AE Comics VX experience, Mansour shared that he believes comics enable students to be better readers. Students can develop interpretation skills, creativity, critical thinking, and collaborative learning. He hopes to share this learning with other access teachers in Senegal through RELO Dakar and by initiating a workshop with teachers of English at his institution.
Upon returning home, Amy a privileged access student had to face strong resistance from some schoolmates.

I am so exhausted and proud of my Access mates. We have cleaned up the whole school. Hurrah!

Amy’s wise and responsible response.

Rome was not built in one day. We are going to visit every class to spread the good news. We are going to raise their awareness and together we will make not only our school the cleanest in the world, but we are going to extend it to our community as well. Do not ask what your community can do for you but what you are ready to do for it.

This speech left them speechless.

Awesome! I have just heard speaking a great leader. I’m impressed, I’m not an Access student, unfortunately, but count me among your supporters for the good of our community.
Hello everyone. Glad to share with you my superhero. He wants to serve his community through raising awareness on how to keep the earth greener and greener every day. He knows it's a huge challenge but he is determined to change the world for the better.

Let me introduce you to: THE GREEN WARRIOR. I used heromachine 3.0 to create him.
ACCESS TO EDUCATION

MANSOUR SY DIAGNE
SENEGAL

In 2011, Massamba S. Diouf Middle school in the city of Louga, Senegal was selected to host the Access program. And Challenger Braveman was one of the lucky selectees.

Congratulations on being selected as Access students!

Hurray, lucky us! We'll be privileged.

You will be trained to be students leaders.

We, leaders? Great!

The instructor’s requirement looked impossible to honor

But, we have never done that. How can this be possible?

Get involved in your English club activities, that would be a good start, right?

Too bad, sir. We have no English club.

Mansour, the instructor gave a piece of advice.

How come? I will talk to your Principal and your teachers about the issue, then I’ll come back to you.

Hey dear peers, that would be awesome to get our own English club, right?

Later on, Mr. Mansour went to see the school Principal

Sir, it's me again. My Access students told me they do not have an English club. Do you mind if I help set up one with their teachers?

Excellent, I am gonna convene a meeting right away.

Please, get involved in the activities to the best you can, that will help.

After the meeting, Mr. Mansour met Challenger Braveman and his peers.

When the teacher left, they assigned themselves roles

But, Challenger Braveman and his peers were thrilled on hearing that they would report their group works before the whole class to foster their speaking skills.
Mansour Sy Diagne of Senegal shared, “This training was unique in the sense that it was multidimensional. We learned about comics, new technology tools, and international culture with our peers.”

As an experienced teacher of twenty-four years and an Access teacher for nine years, Mansour Sy was a mentor and a learner and demonstrated the power of lifelong learning for all AE Comics VX participants. Mansour Sy prepared accounts for students to use digital tools and found ways for students without internet to access the new learning.

“I think there is value in teaching with comics and graphic novels because it is a way to foster learning through fun and creativity. I strongly recommend this program to my colleagues because it enables them to professionally develop. They will learn by doing.”
After a long and intense game, Challenger Braveman and his peers had a narrow win.

Congratulations, guys! We won the first edition of the ‘Who’s the Best?’ contest. You all spared no effort for that!

You really inspired us, Challenger as well.

Back home, Challenger Braveman thinks of one piece of advice for English language learners and lovers.

Keep pushing, you will rock someday!
My superhero's name is Mr. Challenger. He was an Access student. When he started the Access program, he was very shy and got nervous and unconfident when it came to speak before an audience.

Also, there was no English club in his middle school. He also noticed that intermediate and advanced intermediate students were reluctant to express themselves in English inside and outside of the school. He was determined to make a change for the better. So he sought advice from his Access teacher who promised to help to make that dream happen.
HELA CHAABOUNI FOURATI
TUNISIA

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Enjoy the adventures of The Eager Family

The Magic Passage of Eager Reader to Tunisia

created by
Helie Chaabouni Fourati
Access Teacher
Sfax/Tunisia
# AEComics, 2020
Hela Chaabouni Fourati joined the AE Comics VX community from Tunisia. With over thirty-three years as a teacher, she brought great experience combined with a mindset of curiosity and learning.

“To me, any new learning experience is more than welcome. My life motto is ‘when you stop learning, you start dying.’”
Eager Reader is my superhero to combat reluctance to reading with his vibrating, reluctance-to-reading-detecting hair.

Caring about others, knowledgeable with great communication and magical powers, he manages to turn some young students into lifelong happy eager readers and the stars of their nations.

He also involves them in taking a role in the process by passing the flame of reading to others. I tried to make my story convey all I have in mind about the power of books on readers and their nations: pleasure, happiness, quest of knowledge, enlightenment, and transformation to the best.

Eager Reader was one of its most proactive and caring citizens. It had something very special: a hair that detects reluctant readers: The more reluctant, the stronger the vibration and the pain in its head.
NAHLA

GALAL

EGYPT

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Nada grew up in a community where girls are considered inferior and boys annoy them without any punishment and they always show disrespect of the other gender (female) which is very common on this urban town.

Her hate to school led her to fail, her parents got mad at her and decided to push her to stop studying. Nada can not help it, she hates the whole world now.

I invested a lot of money on you, and you scored Zero, Look at your brother.

Teach her to be a housewife, She will get marry soon. But she is only 16, still very young.

you must stay home and learn cooking. Your brother is smarter than you.

I hate everything, My school, this town and every thing.
Her parents announced that soon she will be married because they do not have enough money to spend on two children. Nada got shocked and sad.

They forced her on marrying an old man, more than 20 years older. It is the end of life for Nada who now knows that she would be a copy of her mother and like all the other girls in her town.

Nada's husband passed away leaving her with four dropouts. She wishes they could learn and be good educated people.

Hopelight showed up flying towards them, they got surprised, scared and shocked. Nada tried to run thinking suspiciously about what is going on.

Do not worry, I am Hopelight. I am here to help.

Mom, I want to go to school. I love stories.

I will help at the field, I hate that school, kids hate me.

Let's go all to school. We have a lot to do.

I will go back to school and be an educated woman. My kids will be better, I am sure.

I can't stand that again. I am losing my kids.

I hate school, everyone say I am stupid.

Be nice, stop bullying or, I will turn you into frogs.
Nahla Galal is from Egypt and has been teaching for sixteen years. She is an Access teacher, tutor, and private language school principal for students ages 14-16.

“I believe that teaching using comics and graphics is an extremely enjoyable method for both students and teachers. It has a great motivation as it adds fun and excitement to the educational process and makes students willing to learn.”

After AE Comics VX, Nahla hopes to share the experience with her colleagues and her feeling that comics can make acquiring a new language easy and desirable to students.

My superhero is Ms. Stlightpow. Her name is coming from three elements that make her personality: strength, light, and power.

She represents women who have the strength to fight and they bring their rights by being able to fight for them. She is the light of the world as she bury the darkness and spread out the light. Her power is the pillar for helping the world. Simply, she is every true Mom in
ABEER KOREITEM
EGYPT

ACCESS TO EDUCATION
Abeer Koreitem of Egypt has been teaching for four years and an Access teacher for one. She teaches 15-19 year-old students and joined AE Comics VX to improve her abilities to facilitate the learning process while exchanging different experiences with teachers all over the world.

Abeer thinks comics are a great way to discover students’ mindsets and understand them well. She hopes to push students to make comics and express their personal experiences in pictures and word bubbles.

“It’s an experience of a lifetime for me as I wasn’t a big fan of art and using it in class. However, I feel comfortable and I DID IT for the time of my life to draw.” As a member of this community, Abeer inspires us with her comics. In fact, Inspire is the name of her superhero she created.

**Inspire is my superhero with flying super power. She is a smiling lady who inspires disappointed people and provides them with their needs to learn and to be a success.**

She has mixed colors of the Egyptian flag, red, black, and white. Red refers to hope, power, and shining. Black refers to freedom and liberty. White refers to peace, friendliness, and pureness.
ACCESS TO EDUCATION

SEYDOU SY

OBAMA

SENEGAL

Samp and his friends meet Abba, so he can introduce them to Rina.
Seydou Sy Obama, known to us as “Obama” joined AE Comics VX from his home country of Senegal. He has been teaching for five years and has been an Access teacher for a year and a half. Obama believes, “There is value in teaching with comics and graphic novels because it allows students to work with tools they will inevitably face in real life contexts. If they learn and practice, today they get the opportunity to role play what society will require them to play in the real world tomorrow.” Obama told us that he hopes to share his new learning of comics in the classroom with his students, colleagues, and even on his English talk show on YouTube.

My superhero represents a great man of our community who has patriotism and a love for education. His main mission is to save the community from lack of education and illegal immigration. The role of the hero in this story is to persuade people to believe in education and make them understand that they can stay home and succeed.
ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Students in many public schools were being taught simple things that would not help them to be accepted by a prominent university.

The situation was better for wealthy families. They did not have to worry about their future.

The access to education in many parts of the world has become a mess in recent years. The gap between the private and public school kids has become wider and wider because of governments' ineffective and selfish policies.

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The access to education in many parts of the world has become a mess in recent years. The gap between the private and public school kids has become wider and wider because of governments' ineffective and selfish policies.

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Selda Sarac is a teacher in Turkey where she works with 14-16 year-old students. She has been teaching for six years and as an Access teacher for one.

Selda originally joined AE Comics VX to learn how to integrate comics into her teaching to help motivate reluctant readers and encourage the joy of reading. As she had been previously teaching graphic novels such as *Maus* and *Persepolis*, she brought an understanding of the powers of creativity and story.

My superhero’s name is Derin, the Justice Maker. Derin means “depth” in Turkish. I wanted to emphasize the depth in her character with her name.

She was created during a dangerous scientific experiment. She was helping her professor and things went wrong and she was exposed to highly toxic chemicals. However, it did not kill her but made her physically and mentally stronger thanks to the Professor.

Derin’s uniform includes just three colors; yellow, red and orange. She has a gavel to provide justice for disadvantaged students. Derin reflects such values as respect, sensitivity and justice, and these values are important to my nation.
On a street, Amy and Momo are on their way to school.

Please, some coins! I am so hungry.

Sorry, I don't have money. Here is a candy.

Thanks! God Bless you.

Poor child! His place is in a classroom, not here eking out a living.

Well, this is exactly the topic of your pitch today, isn't it?

Pitching for the Voiceless.

On my way here, my whole world was shattered. A child, who is barely 5, was begging for food.

... Streets are full of them. No one cares! They're in tatters. That's not my child! Their feet get cracked as they sleep outdoors in cold nights. No ointments to soothe their wounds.

The world has gone amok. Is there a beam of mercy and hope left in this place? These innocent lives do not deserve this fate. Please let's act now. We have to help them out.

Now, the question is what are you ready to do? Thank You!

Thank you Amy for your brilliant presentation.

Wauuu! She has really shaken us all.

Now that you all have identified all the problems children face. What's your action plan?
Amadou Abdoulaye Seck joined us from Senegal. He has been teaching for fourteen years, has been an Access teacher for eight, and currently teaches 14-16 year olds.

He joined the AE Global Comics VX experience because he believes comics and graphic novels unlock students’ imaginations, boost language skills, and stimulate critical thinking.

“I would definitely recommend this experience to colleagues because this experience opens up a whole new avenue in teaching with creativity. It will equip teachers at any level of expertise with the right skills and knowledge to use comics in the classroom.”

We thank Abdoulaye for his commitment to supporting students in Senegal and around the world.
Mbargedj Siggi is a superhero who wants to address social justice issues. His family has been discriminated against due to poverty. He is a protector and justicier, a fighter for justice. He is a teacher with superpowers. He has two personalities, ordinary and superhero.

One of the social issues he has in heart to tackle is children's right to quality education. At its worst, this social issue is represented in the phenomenon of street children.
EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING

It was 4:30 PM in Ankara

This driver is just so slow. I need to go home!

Let me pass this car! No turn signal. Here we go!

He'll see me coming fast, changing lanes, and decide not to change lanes...

He'll see me BEEEEEP!

Page 1
“Be open-minded, and get ready to have lots of fun!” These are the words of advice Ismet Cavusoglu has for future AE Comics VX participants.

Ismet has been teaching for ten years and has been an Access teacher for one year. Since he had used memes and GIFs in the classroom, Ismet was looking to add comics for instruction as well.

Ismet’s work inspired a group conversation around ways to create a genderless superhero. He challenged us to think beyond the page and make connections to life and events of today.
I did not want to create a male superhero, because there are lots of them, and I did not want to create a female superhero, because then I have to give her a feminine physical appearance.

Instead, my superhero is genderless.

In English it may create confusions whether to say she or he, but in Turkish it would not be a problem since it is a gender-neutral language.

I named my hero “Hope” which is used as a unisex name in Turkey.

What sparked while I was creating my hero was that I wanted it to be relatable to everyone from every different background regardless of gender, and race.
Once upon a time, there was a little girl named Mai who lived in the jungle with other animals. Everyday, she passed by the river and looked at the mountain with the volcano across the river. She had a special ability that is to predict if any natural disaster would ever happen in the near future. That day, she was so worried to recognize that the volcano was going to erupt.

Two friends were talking with each other:

We are going to do some important work, I really need your help baby!

Can you see the mountain over there? It is a volcano. We need to get the incantation to stop the magma eruption!

You’re my superhero, Gookie!

Let’s go this way!

Finally, they reached the volcano. Mai shouted out when she found a carnation in the bush.

God, please, give me the power to help my beloved people avoid the natural disaster! Thank you!

Standing along side the river, she made a wish after having helped to prevent the lava eruption.

After crossing the river, they ran so fast and the mountain and looked for the carnation!

You’re so quick, Gookie! Just look at the bush in front of you!

Mai was very sad and he went to see her friend, Gookie!

Hi, Gookie! How are you today?
Joining AE Comics VX from Vietnam, Mai Thi Thuy Dung signed up ready for a learning experience that would allow her to meet Access teachers and to learn more ways to teach English. As a teacher of seven years, now in her second year as an Access teacher, Mai believes comics give students opportunities to engage with authentic materials, to have fun, and to build language skills, vocabulary, and an appreciation of other cultures.

For Mai, participating in a virtual exchange allowed her to learn cultures from all around the world with no travel required! She felt the smaller group sizes encouraged interaction and enabled everyone to share their voices and ideas.

My superhero is Libra Princess, who will bring equality to any place where is necessary. People will tend to treat each other with inequality due to the wealth, power, social status influence.

Therefore, wherever there is inequality, Libra Princess appears and uses her magic chopstick to spread the equality. People will receive what they are deserved to receive, including awards, praise, respect and even punishment.

As a result, people become more and more honest and do good things.
MOHAMMAD FATHY
ABUL-HASAN MAHMOUD
EGYPT

EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING

Three months earlier

Why is that old woman sad and alone?

I had a very hard life.

I want to go to school.

I got married at the age of 14.

In ten years, Nefert gave birth to three boys and girls. It was hard to look after six young kids.

RIP

Husband died. Life changed and became harder. Nefert had to work in houses to feed her children. She struggled and succeeded. They all graduated and began their lives leaving her alone.
A teacher with twenty years of experience and three years as an Access teacher, Mohammad Fathy Abul-Hasan Mahmoud joined the AE Comics VX community from Egypt.

Always ready to help and support anyone, Mohammad doesn’t just wait for people to seek him out. He observes with empathy and reaches out selflessly to offer friendship and ideas to anyone was in need.

Now that he has completed the program, he is not wasting any time. Mohammad has already started lessons with his Access students inviting them to express themselves by drawing and explaining, thinking about real-life superheroes, and sharing out in the Facebook group.

“This is unique and new. It is not the traditional way of giving lectures about pedagogical theories or approaches. It is learning wrapped in a sandwich of fun and excitement.”
Ka is a young man who is 17 years old. He came to see Nefert, sad and alone. He is clever at social networking sites. He is a volunteer in a local charity. With the help of his two sisters, they could establish a place for the elderly to have the right care and love.

His name means ‘soul’ in the Ancient Egyptian Language.
Chapter 1: There’s Hope

In a small and humble rented apartment in Bogotá, a single mom, Mary, lived with her three kids: Linda, Andy, and Daniel.

We all miss dad so much, but we’re together to keep life going. You’re what I love the most in the entire world.

We love you too mom

Every morning Mary had to go out to work leaving kids alone at home while classes were resumed and they could go to back to school.

We don’t like to be here alone...

Please, don’t go!

Please, behave! I’ll be back as soon as I can. I love you

DO NOT DISTURB! Get inside and keep quiet!

Let’s get in, bro.

...but, we’re just playing...

The kids tried to have some fun while mom was away. However, Mr. Park, the house owner, often yelled at them because he was always annoyed.

COLUMBIA
Sara Pena joined the AE Comics VX from Bogotá, Colombia where she has been teaching English to youth and adults for fifteen years. She is new to the Access program.

Sara entered the program inspired by teens she had been working with who had developed ideas using storytelling, drawing, and design. After exploring new techniques and approaches to hone her own skills, she is already starting to integrate comics in the classroom with her current Access students.
Let me introduce my superhero, Lady Hope — Kids’ Protector.
Lady Hope is the superhero name given to Yenica, a graceful teen who, after being mistreated and abused at home, was rescued by a senior fairy that turned her into a sweet but brave Kids’ Protector.

Lady Hope has the power to take away suffering and sorrow from children’s hearts and transform those feelings into peace and joy using her magic wand.
Anum Rehman
Egypt
Anum Rehman joined the AE Comics VX experience from Pakistan. This is the second program she has participated in since becoming an Access teacher three years ago. She currently teaches students ages 13-19.

Anum joined this experience to explore new teaching methods that would make teaching and learning in the classroom more fun. She believes comics enhance creative abilities and hopes to use these techniques to foster creative writing with her students.

“I really appreciate this opportunity. It has helped me grow intellectually and develop a network of open communication with teachers across the globe.”

We are grateful for Anum and her contributions to our AE Comics VX community. As you can see, with her comic hero, Sebra, Anum is focused on creating a world that is empathetic and inclusive.
Sebra is a local superhero. She loves to talk to others and listen to their problems. She's against all forms of intolerance including bullying at schools or at home. She's an advocate for being kind to people of all colors, creeds, and religions. She believes that being empathetic can bring huge changes in the way we treat and see others in the society.
In a hot morning...

Some people should take this people to the place they belong to.

What are they doing now?

Why nobody cares about us?

I am hungry and we don't have money.

But, they are not alone...

I cannot see them suffering. We need Faith, here!

A few minutes later...

Woow! Look is Faith!

Faith will help us!

Hey, guys! Here you have a yummì present!

Faith has to say something...

We need to take care of kids and homeless. Help anyone who suffers any kind of violence, in that way we will have a better world and society.

Sorry...

Next week, all have a party in the park to save money for helping children.

We are ready to have a better tomorrow! yeah!

The best party ever!

Thank you Faith!

It is my best idea!

SARA MERINO
MEXICO
Sara Merino lives in Puebla, a state near Mexico City. She has been teaching for fourteen years and mainly works with young adults at the university and with teenagers as an Access teacher, which she has been doing for nine years. Recognizing that many teens love reading comics, Sara joined AE Comics VX seeking a new way to support her students to improve in their writing abilities.

Sara believes virtual exchange through comics enables students to gain new insights on global issues through perspectives of others. “I would like to make comics to raise awareness about ecological problems and I think through the use of comics teens could understand the problem and think about the urgent solutions.”

Here is my superheroine called Faith. She is an intelligent woman who defends women, pets, poor people or anyone in danger of violence.

She loves nature and in her free time she gardens; for that reason, she is a scientist. She promotes the use of eco-products to prevent pollution.

She looks like a strong girl, but she is good at making friends, loves reading and her dog.
HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

A long time ago the Olympian Gods used to meddle in human life on earth, but in the modern era, they prefer not to do it at all... they just observe... but maybe it will be an exception this year.

An emergency meeting is held among the Olympian gods to help the mankind.

Zeus - god of the sky and the king of Olympus.

Hera - Goddess of marriage; Wife of Zeus and the queen of Olympus.

Apollo - god of music and healing

Hades - King of Underworld or dead

Our superhero Healer. He may look ordinary but he is the successor of Apollo on Earth.


The situation of the underworld is out of control. The whole earth is shaken by the pandemic covid 19 virus. Underworld is flooded by the dead. Please order Apollo to help the human.

I have received an urgent message from Hades. He will brief the situation.

Zeus, why did you call for this emergency meeting suddenly?

But this is the age of science. We shouldn’t interfere in human’s matter. They will deal with their own way.

NUSRAT TAHSIN
BANGLADESH
Nusrat Tahsin joined AE Comics VX from Bangladesh. She has been teaching for six years with four years as an Access teacher. Through her experience she learned that that comics are “not just childhood fantasy or means of entertainment. It’s more than that and a useful tool in teaching.”

Nusrat believes learning through comics reduces pressure on students. Her best advice to those who are beginning to create: “Take your time, be patient and you will overcome. The comics world is really interesting.”

Professor Heal is presenting his invention in the press conference.

Welcome to today’s Morning news. Professor Healer’s medicine proves effective to combat the virus.

As this medicine proves effective, I will open it to all over the world. No country will be deprived.

So students... this is the story of Dr Healer or our superhero Healer who almost gave up his experiment but a strange dream inspired him to carry on and saved human from pandemic.

The trial of the medicine is successful. Even the elderly patients are recovering.

Really? Show us please!

Miss, I have drawn Mr Healer as superhero.

Who knows! Maybe!

Miss, was he really Apollo’s son?
My superhero is Mr. Healer, a scientist. But there is a secret that no one knows: he is the son of Apollo — the god of healing.

His real name is Asclepius — the god of medicine. He reincarnated as human on the earth and now working as a scientist. He wants to invent medicine that will cure humans from deadly viruses. His goal is to serve the human by providing his invention free to all.
GENDER EQUITY

SOMAIA HAMDY
ABDELMOTALB Elnaggar
EGYPT
In Egypt, Somaia Hamdy Abdelmotalb Elnaggar is a university lecturer, IELTS trainer, and Access teacher where she works with 15-18 year-old students. She originally joined in AE Comics VX as she was interested in using technology to connect to and learn from others around the world.

“Involving comics and graphic novels in teaching has a very effective impact in the teaching process for many reasons. One of the assumptions is students are having fun while they are learning and we can relate this point to the affective filter and how it reduces the anxiety of our learners and spreads joy and fun in the classroom.”

My hero’s name is Eve. Her name is very symbolic as it refers to life. She represents the woman character in the Egyptian society.

Some jobs are not appreciated but the hero reveals that if you have a passion, just follow it. Make the change that the world seeks, and you never know that you might be the impact that the world needs as the role of our hero during the current issues.
Jasiri's School is about 5km from home.

I am graduating next year! Can't wait to be a teacher.

A lot of information about girls' rights... and their office is in the next village! I wish to visit them one day!

In Jasiri's tribe, fathers make all big decisions.

Jasiri is going to college next year!

...but she wants to be a teacher! College training's important.

She can't go beyond form six level! Besides...

It's enough for her! She might get pregnant and ashamed.

She must get married!

What? But we have spent a...

I've talked to our neighbor. His son is perfect for her.

According to their traditions, children do not question their father's decisions.

Jasiri, your father has a message for you.

Sure, Jasiri. You're the only girl in our village still going to school! All girls at your age are married. So next week...

But she has a different goal. We may support her...

you know our culture!

I've arranged for her marriage next week. So train her how to be a good wife.
Dad has a final say on this! But I want to be a teacher. Dad, how many girls in our village go to school? It’s time to ask that question which deals with girls’ rights, for help!

I hope Dad will listen to her. She is not from our tribe, guess.

If you educate a woman, you educate a nation.

I’m Jasiri. Would you talk to father please? He wants me to get married but I’m still a student. Our culture doesn’t allow me to say anything about it.

I don’t worry, she’ll help you.

How did you know about us?

I read all about you from a book titled ‘If you educate a woman, you educate a nation.’

Jasiri wants to become a teacher. She’s smart, she’ll be a wonderful teacher.

My tribe believes so too, but my aunt took me to school, now a lawyer’s daughter.

Early marriage leads girls to have many children that they can’t feed or educate them. They may die during delivery. Also, many girls married without finishing school have no skills.

Shes getting married next week. It’s shame she says married at her age! No more school for her.

Ms. Jasiri’s class

Who is your real hero?

I’m back here again. A teacher to be.

I made it!
Oliver Kimathi joined AE Comics VX from Tanzania. She has been a teacher for eighteen years and an Access teacher for nearly two.

Oliver feels comics and graphic novels are great tools to develop learners’ creativity, motivation, and problem-solving skills as well as instilling reading habits. She believes comics support students to educate the community and to study art, geography, Tanzanian culture and traditions, and motivational speeches.

Oliver is looking to share the knowledge acquired in this exchange to others through teachings and trainings.

My superhero is Jasiri, a Swahili word for a brave person. She changed the prevailing condition for girls in her community which was practicing arranged and early marriage for girls.

She wears her school uniform and a magic flag behind her back and holds books and a red colored pen. She holds books and a pen to represent education for girls, a peaceful way to modify the traditions and customs that affect girls’ lives. Her magic flag gives her strength to travel quickly and to many places and the heroic glasses enable her to see the ‘unseen’ that is done to girls all over the country.
CLIMATE CHANGE

On a peaceful night, there are two men trying to set fire for land clearing.

Ssshhhh! Just let me do my thing and shut up your mouth! You’re just gonna wake the whole forest!

Ya gotta be kidding me! Why does it take you so long to do this? Just set the fire otherwise somebody will see us!

They didn’t realize that a young girl named Lila was watching them doing their action. As the fire is getting uncontrollable, she immediately asks for help...

I need to find someone who can stop this fire!

Lila immediately rushes to meet Maharati...

What happened, Lila?

When Maharati sees the wildfire, she uses her superpower to make the rain falls and stops the fire.

I’ve been doing reforestation in Borneo for years by using my superpower. However, all people also should take part in it since all of us are responsible to keep our forests safe.

Look what happened to us! We cannot breathe the fresh air like we used to do. I don’t know what to do now!

The local people are affected by the haze caused by forest fires.

Hello friends! I know that this situation is so hard for all of us. We’ve been breathing polluted air for some time and we have lost forests. However, we cannot just sit and do nothing.

Suddenly, Maharati comes. They are totally surprised.

Hello friends! I know that this situation is so hard for all of us. We’ve been breathing polluted air for some time and we have lost forests. However, we cannot just sit and do nothing.

Keep educating people about how important the role of the forests for the Earth’s sustainability.

Then Maharati flies through the sky and stares at the planet Earth. As she smiles, she still has hope that the Earth will get better and become a good place for all living creatures.

The people and law enforcers also need to work hand in hand in order to stop the perpetrators burn the forests.

Thank you for helping us to catch the perpetrators.

We also need to remember that we share this planet with other living creatures. By protecting forests, we also protect their habitat.

Corry P. Antang

Corry ANTANG
INDONESIA
Corry Antang is a lecturer at her university in Indonesia and an access teacher through the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta. She has been teaching for eleven years and with the Access program for two years.

Corry joined AE Comics VX in hopes the program would give her new insights on teaching English in the classroom. Teaching with comics is quite a new method in her city. AE Comics VX also gave her the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences with Access teachers from other countries.

Corry brought her appreciation for different cultures and an eager, positive attitude to our community. Throughout the experience, she was able to connect comics to her students, and she looks forward to using the methods and tech tools she learned about with larger groups in the future.

Maharati is a Bornean superhero who was created by me. She has intellectual giftedness as is her name's meaning. (Maharati means someone who has intellectual ability higher than average in Dayak language.) She is concerned about environmental problems in Borneo Island and she wants to raise people’s awareness before it is too late.
Hi, I'm Riko. I'm a junior park ranger at Ujung Kulon National Park.

This is my office desk. I used to check email and read today's news from this computer. Let's check what happened to the world today.
Weika Barathayomi brought ten years of teaching experience to AE Comics VX. She has been an Access teacher for a year and a half, teaching senior high school students in Serang Site, Indonesia.

Weika believes there is value in teaching with comics and graphic novels, especially in teaching reading.

“After following this course, I can say YES — everyone can make comics!” She plans to create and share an “Image of the Week” with her students as a way to easily curate and distribute content in a visual way.
Once upon a time, deep in the forest, there lived a king of rhinos.
Do you believe that?

What? Rhino story? Of course not! There's no such thing.

I'll check this way. You check that way.

Don't go too far. If you meet bad guys, you can't beat them alone.

OK! See you in an hour!
I saw it ran this way. It ran so fast. Hmm... I never knew this place. Am I lost?

Tttthat's..
When you see him in the eye,...

...magical things will happen.

The rain is falling down.
As the sun shines, magical things are happening.
A new superhero is born.

Dark gray, thick body armor.

Fingers are as hard as rhino horn.

Hands are as strong as rhino power.
I am RHINOMAN.

We are the scariest poachers ever!!! HA.. HA.. HA..
Hey you! Who are you? How dare you block our way!

I am RHINOMAN, the protector of this forest.

What?

RHINOMAN?

Whoa!

Stay there!

Punch!

Kick!

Beep! Beep!

Ugh!

No no...

Ouch!

Help!
My superhero name is RHINOMAN. He is the protector of Ujung Kulon Forest. He obtained his power by looking at the mystical King of Rhino in the eyes. He is strong, magical, and mystical. He has fingers as hard as a rhino horn, hands as strong as rhino power, and a clear mind and pure heart. He wears dark gray thick body armour.

His missions are to protect one-horn rhino and other animals in Ujung Kulon from extinction and from greedy poachers, save the environment by planting more trees, and keep the beach clean.
CLIMATE CHANGE

MI YI YI
CHO
BURMA

PP and her friends are on a short trip to the beach. She is looking outside the window and see a lot of plastic bags among the bushes.

Why those plastics are here?

At the beach, when her friends are enjoying beach activities, she is curious about environment.

There is no rubbish bin.

On the way back home, she can’t help thinking about plastic bags and wants to do something.

She talks her friends about plastic bags when they meet at school next day.

Plastic bags are everywhere. I am worried for our planet. I think we need to do something.

I have some old clothes. We can change them into bags.

I’m also concerned about animals. Sea animals are in danger eating plastic.

Then, what are we going to do with those bags?

We can give them away to people.

People don’t value for the things they get for free. They might throw away when they arrive home. How about selling them in a small price?

That’s good idea.

So, when shall we start making bags with our old clothes?

Next weekend, they make bags with their old clothes. And they sell them on a busy street in downtown with 500 MMK for a bag.

When they meet at school the following week,

We have 20,000 MMK. We are going to grow trees with that money.

Old.

You are doing great job!

They finally start their plan for growing trees.
Mi Yi Yi Cho, known to us as Yee Yee, joined the AE Comics VX experience from Myanmar. She has been teaching for nine years and serving as an Access teacher for six.

Yee Yee shared that she originally applied to the program because she was interested in learning new things for the classroom and to hear from other Access teachers from other countries. She now plans to add comics to her toolkit of final projects, ranging from presentations to role playing to now offering comics as an option for demonstrating learning.

Peace Pie (PP) has the superpower of supernatural vision. With his power, he saves our earth to be healthy again. What made me happy when I created this hero was he is the one who we need and helps us till our next generation.
Aoro, it's very hot out here and there isn't sign that it is going to rain any sooner.

Jaramogi, it’s true. The weather forecast shows that the temperature is going to rise more and more.

How are we going to survive then?

I think we have to dig borehole to get water for ourselves.

I agree. We have to search for a lasting solution then.

Sure. But it is only going to partly solve the problem.

Well! There are number of facts as explained by the scientists...

...they give different reasons including emission from industries, population increase and destruction of natural vegetation as a result of population and industrial investment.

But what has caused that much excessive draught?

Mmm...

No, I did not mean so. May be we should control the amount of fumes from the industries and follow advice from environmental experts.

Do you mean we should ban all industries, stop crop production and stop giving birth? It can't be.

We should then contact the environmentalists and seek their advice.

Certainly, let's walk together.

Hi, I am Mr. Ojwang from Luoland Weather and Environmental Department.

Hello, I am Jaramogi, a Luoland resident.

Hi, I am Aoro, also a Luoland resident.

You are welcome. How can I help you?

Hi, I am Ojwang. It has been very dry lately and the weather forecast shows that the temperature is going to rise in the next few days.

Thank you Mr. Ojwang. It has been very dry lately and the weather forecast shows that the temperature is going to rise in the next few days.
Petro Okoth joined AE Comics VX from Tanzania where he has been a teacher for eight years and a practicing Access teacher for two years.

As English language is the primary language of instruction in Tanzania secondary school classrooms, Petro joined this program to develop new skills to teach his students. During this experience he was able make his dream of connecting Access class to Access class a reality.

“My advice to the future participants is that they should be willing to leave their comfort zone and have fun with their fellow teachers and facilitators. The program is full of fun and enjoyable if one leaves one's comfort zone.”
My superhero is Sibuor the Savior. He has a supernatural power to persuade and transform people’s minds. The name is derived from Luo mythology.

He is a superhero who had a power to defeat his enemies in by physical strength. Unlike the Sibuor in Luo mythology, he uses persuasive superpower to transform the community.
CLIMATE CHANGE

OLGA PORTYANNIKOVA
RUSSIA
Olga Portyannikova represented Russia in the AE Comics VX experience. She has been teaching for eleven years and teaching English for nearly seven years with students of all ages, from 4 to 30.

Prior to joining AE Comics VX, Olga and her Access teacher team in Tula, Russia, had already done work with comics in the classroom examining Russian-American stereotypes.

“I think comics attract students’ attention a lot. You can teach the history of your own country as well as other cultures using them.”
This is the Guardian of Mercy. The product of imagination of a person born not far from Tolstoy’s family state. While I was creating my superhero I was proud of my motherland and my history. It helped me a lot to get the ball rolling. The most challenging was to connect my superhero with the problems we face in our community. To be honest our city is wonderful!
Several participants in the inaugural AE Comics VX cohort were fortunate to have students with which the participants could test new strategies. This space includes excerpts from comics created by Access students around the world.

**STUDENT WORK**

**ACROSS THE ACCESS GLOBE**

Students of Wieka Barathayomi’s Access class, Indonesia

Students of Hela Chaabouni’s Access class, Tunisia

Dasha Denisova, Lisa Vorobyova, Vitalik Khodakov, Russia
Maria Yozhikova and Ekaterina Karavaeva, Russia

Corry Norhidayah Fitriani, Indonesia

Krasnov Artyom and Veronica Boriskina, Russia

Hela Chaabouni’s Access Class, Tunisia

Yessine ben Ayed, Tunisia

When he heard the snake talk: Hey you man! Don’t run away from me. This is the luckiest day of your life. Once you see me, all your life will change for the better. Your life will be easy, happy, and comfortable. Gone is hard life, insecurity, and people’s harshness, and carelessness.

After listening to the snake, he felt so confused and lost that he fell asleep. When he woke up...
We can find a super hero in the field of doctors, and in these difficult circumstances they put their lives at risk for us. They are really deserve this title. (The white army of Egypt)

Farah Aksout, Tunisia

Meena Ashraf, Egypt

Azmi Hairullah, Indonesia

Eslam Emam, Egypt

Yessine Ben Ayed & Khadija Chaahouni, Tunisia
Learn more about using comics in the classroom by downloading Panels and Perspectives, a publication from the Office of English Language Programs, available at http://bit.ly/EFLComics