The STEVE SINNOTT FOUNDATION



MY LIFE CHANGED

A Storytelling Resource Pack For Schools

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We would like to thank The National Education Union Young Teachers, The Gambia Teachers Union and Lucy Lee for developing the My Life Changed Films.

From our earliest days we are compelled to hear and tell stories. We seek them out as we seek food, water and the faces of others.

Stories don't just entertain and delight us – they form the bedrock of our culture, shaping how we see the world. It is from them that we learn to praise heroes, fear villains and empathise with minds outside our own.

SHARING STORIES

They are a kind of magic spell that allows us to experience more of the world than we can touch ourselves. By identifying with Snow White or Iron Man or Winston Smith we can place ourselves into situations and places we would never find ourselves in and feel what it would be like if we did. We can glimpse impossible realms and suffer unbearable sorrows. Stories enlarge our idea of what it means to be human.

The Steve Sinnott Foundation has spent the last decade working around the world to broaden access to education. Our work has taken us to parts of the world where daily life might appear unimaginable to children in Western countries – to The Gambia where a lack of sanitary facilities keeps girls away from school for days at a time every month; to Haiti, where an earthquake in 2010 destroyed nearly 4,200 schools, wiping out half of the country's education infrastructure overnight; to Sierra Leone where war, poverty and disease have left education low down the list of priorities for families struggling to survive.

We could give you lists of facts – and there are facts included in this pack – but we believe that by providing people across the world with a space to tell their stories, by being willing to hear them and by sharing stories of our own we can truly come to understand each other.

Charities and organisations working toward sustainable development like to use the slogan 'Education For All'. It means we want children to have access to education, yes, but it means more than that. It means that everyone, young and old, should have the opportunity to learn and to cherish learning. It means, too, that in the process of others learning, we learn. Education is not a one-way street, we are all the educators of each other.

By sharing our stories, we can achieve this goal, together.

THE BENEFITS OF STORYTELLING

Through stories, adults and children of all ages are able to learn more about their peers, themselves and the world.

Storytelling develops listening skills, social skills and enhances an ability to empathise with others

Storytelling encourages the use of imagination and creativity.

Storytelling develops communication skills and contributes to a broader vocabulary.

Storytelling helps children to develop an awareness and understanding of their own community and culture as well as the cultures of the wider world.

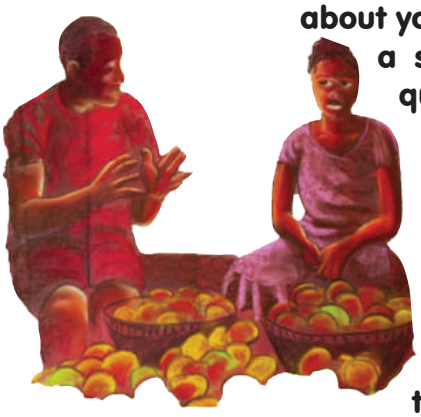
Storytelling can help children struggling to deal with difficult situations and problems.

MY LIFE CHANGED

Three Stories about the power of Education

In 2016, the Steve Sinnott Foundation successfully ran a campaign to crowdfund three short films that would tell three personal stories about the positive power of education. The films tell stories from Haiti, Nepal and Sierra Leone – but the lessons these stories help us to learn can be applied all over the world – as well as in our own lives.

They are stories of resilience, determination, struggle and triumph. They are also stories about young people and their education – something everyone attending a school can find a point of connection with. These stories ask questions: How are these lives like yours? How are they different?



What would you do if you were married at 16 and prevented from attending school by your new husband like Apsara in Nepal?

How would it feel to be separated from your mother because she knew that the orphanage would give you a better education than she could like Billy Jean in Haiti?

If you were selling mangoes on the street like Isata in Sierra Leone, would a teacher be able to persuade you to go back to school?

This resource pack includes:

- **Mp4 files of the three films**
- **Illustrated storybook versions of each film**
- **Notes from film-maker Lucy Lee about how she went about creating the films**
- **Infographics about education in the countries where the films are set**
- **Some key facts about the countries and the hardships faced by their people**
- **Story sheets to print and use for pupils to tell their own education stories**
- **Two pages of story prompts for use in creative writing and other lessons**
- **Ideas for classroom activities**
- **Appendices with examples of story sharing activities from around the world**

The Steve Sinnott Foundation is a charity founded in the name of Steve Sinnott, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers who died suddenly in 2008. A passionate believer in the transformative power of education, The Foundation was established to continue his work in promoting education for all and attempting to secure a future where access to learning is a given everywhere in the world. The Foundation works in multiple countries on projects that are tailored to the needs of educators on the ground. Over the years, this has included training teachers, working to supply girls in The Gambia with sanitary protection and establishing Learning Resource Centres to help meet the needs of teachers in Haiti and Nepal.

We hope you find this resource pack useful and we look forward to hearing the stories you have to share.

STORYBOOK 1

Isata's Story



I am Isata M Kamara and I am ready to receive my degree certificate in development studies.

I am from Sierra Leone and this is my story.



When I was little, I had only dreams of becoming a lawyer and a human rights activist to help bring justice to our country.



At first my father encouraged me.
My parents had separated, and my father remarried another wife, but I was maltreated.

Eventually even my father stopped encouraging me. By the age of thirteen years I had to run away.



I found my mother, but she had nothing, so I had to do some petty trading for us to survive.



Three years later a teacher from EducAid found me on the streets selling mangoes. It was very hard for him to persuade me to go back to school.



But I did go back to school. And, although at first it was very difficult, with perseverance I was able to overcome my challenges.



The saddest day in my life was the day I lost my father. I almost lost hope.

But still, I persevered, and I was able to take my exams and pass with flying colours!



After that, I went to the village of Maronka, just outside Freetown, to work in the safe house. I was nurturing sixty girls!

I wanted to show them how to become strong, beautiful Sierra Leonian women in the future.



The happiest moment in my life was when I was told I had got a sponsorship to go to university.



I feel very proud to graduate!

I have a dream for my country to be the richest in West Africa!

Isata M Kamara

Isata's Story: SUPPORTING MATERIALS

NOTES FROM LUCY LEE

Film-maker and illustrator

Isata lives in Sierra Leone - a very long way from the UK - so interviewing her for the film was a challenge! We tried to overcome the problem of access by using WhatsApp to conduct the interviews. Communicating like this, it was a little bit impersonal and difficult to get to the bottom of things. However, over several months we succeeded and wrote the story collaboratively by piecing together Isata's WhatsApp recordings. The way that Isata overcame everything in her path reminded me of the classic "Hero's Journey" structure - so it seemed only right to call it "Isata's Journey".

As inspiration for the visuals I looked at William Kentridge (South African animator) and Gibril Bangura (painter from Sierra Leone) - two artists with very different styles.

Kentridge makes an interesting observation about using other people's stories as material for a film, he calls it "an appropriation of other people's distress" but goes on to say that the hours spent making an image become a compassionate act, "there is sympathy towards that subject embodied in the labour of the drawing". I used hand drawing for that reason.

Bangura on the other hand talks about his paintings spreading happiness, an escape form the darkness and a belief in a bright future, so I used bright colours to separate the scenes.

EDUCATION IN SIERRA LEONE

is legally required for all children:
SIX YEARS
at primary level and
THREE YEARS
in junior secondary education

BUT <<<<<

a shortage of schools





and
a shortage
of teachers has made this
IMPOSSIBLE

SIERRA LEONE HAS AN ADULT LITERACY RATE OF 45.65%.

(THE WORLD'S AVERAGE IS 91.98%)







In the **Highest Level of Education Index** Sierra Leone is ranked 147th worldwide in literacy.



IN SIERRA LEONE ONLY 25.1% OF GIRLS START SECONDARY EDUCATION.



56% OF GIRLS IN SIERRA LEONE ARE MARRIED UNDER THE AGE OF 18

The greatest barriers to the on-going education of girls in Sierra Leone are school-related costs, poverty, sexual abuse, early pregnancies and teen marriages



NOTES AND REFERENCES:

SIERRA LEONE

- Sierra Leone is a small country in West Africa with a turbulent history.
- A civil war raged in the country for more than a decade between 1991 and 2002 and shaped Isata's childhood. It was the war and its horrors that gave her the desire to work for human rights.
- The woman that the young Isata dreams of becoming in the story is modelled on the Kenyan activist Wangari Maathi who became the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for "her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace".
- The charity EducAid runs a network of schools, teacher training opportunities and tertiary educational programmes in Sierra Leone.
- EducAid's facility in Maronka comprises a primary school, a teacher training centre and safe houses for the girls and boys who live in while attending school.
- In 2017 A US government report estimated that 51.3% of Sierra Leonian children aged 5-14 were engaged in some form of labour, with many working at dangerous jobs in mining, agriculture and on the streets.
- There are 3 universities in Sierra Leone to serve a population of over seven million.
- In 2018 the programme of subsidies for University Students was scrapped and replaced with a sytem of Student Loans.
- The country was hit hard by the Ebola Outbreak of 2014-16. The virus infected 14,000 people and killed 4,000.

STORYBOOK 2

We Don't Give Up In Haiti



I think education is very important – most importantly in a country like Haiti.

I think in the future Haiti will achieve greatness through education.



Not every child can go to school in Haiti because school is not for free most of the time here.



Many parents are in extreme poverty. They know the importance of education, and they will go very far to be able to get an education for their child.



Our educational system is in French. Not even half of the Haitian people speak French – but all of the Haitian people speak Haitian Kreyòl.



My father didn't take his responsibility and my mother was very young, she couldn't afford a good quality education for me.



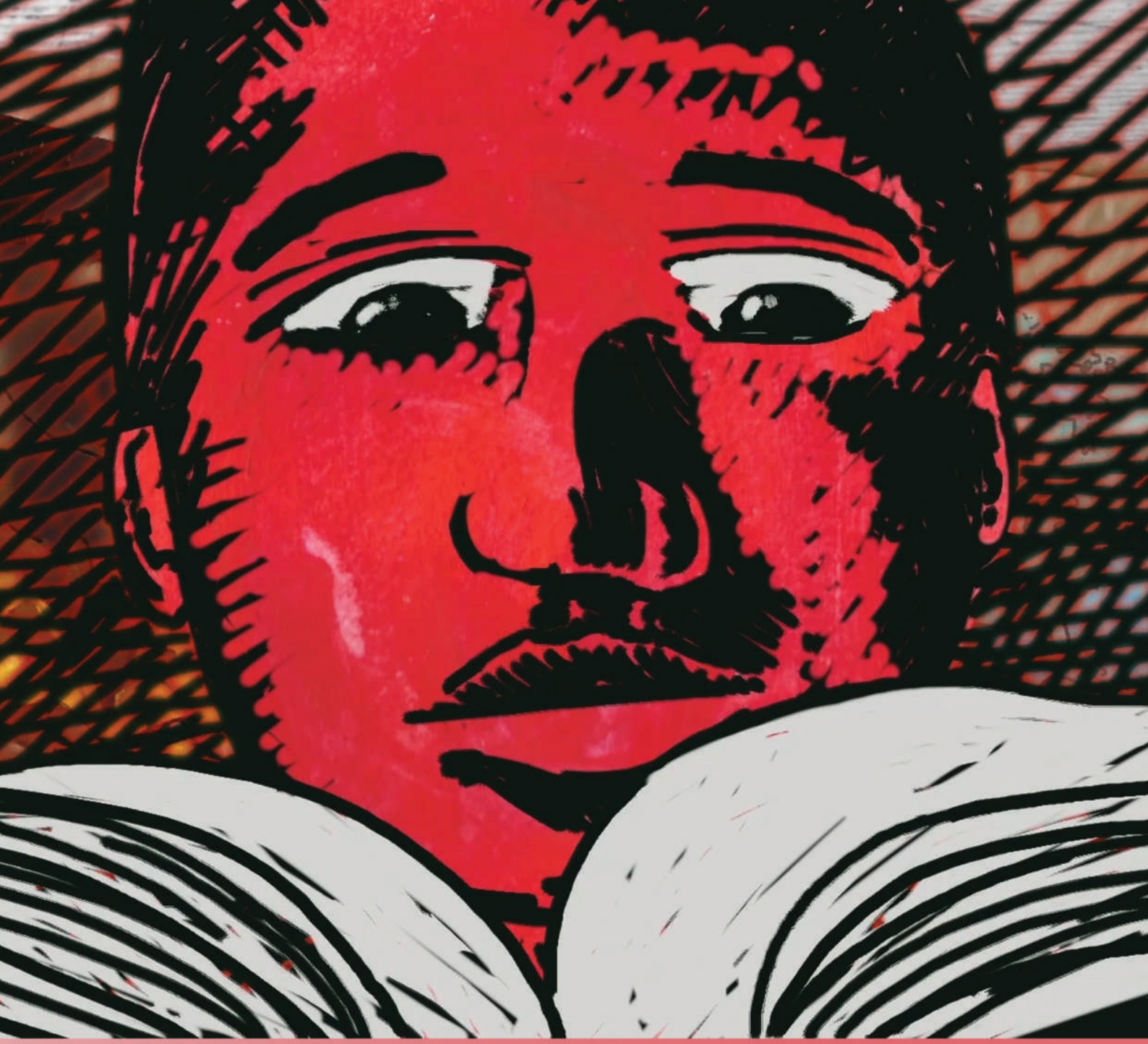
She thought the best choice was to put me in an orphanage run by an organisation called the NPH.

There, I received love, food, shelter, another family and – most importantly – an education which I'm so grateful for.

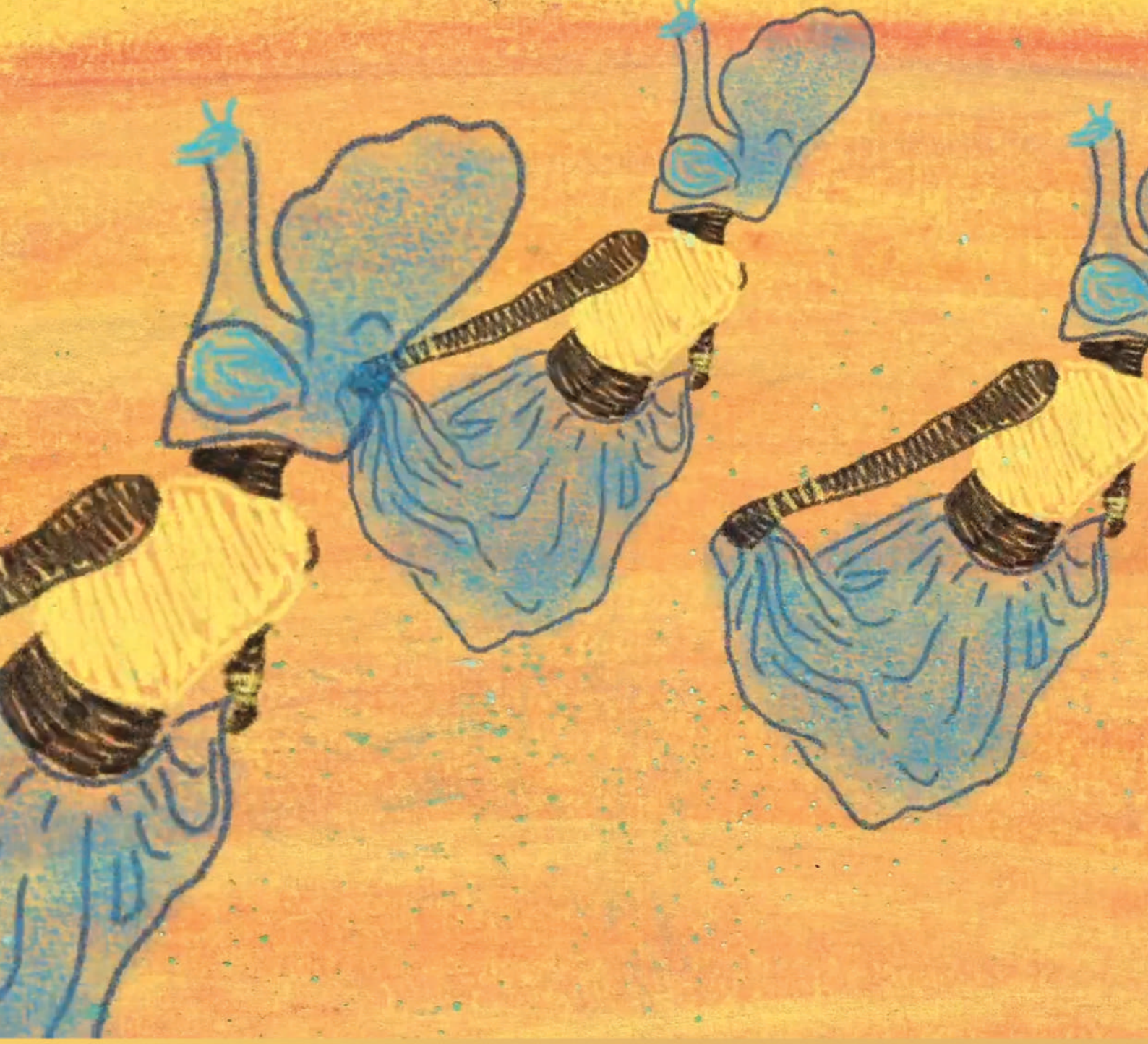


I'm glad to have an education because, as Martin Luther King said: "Darkness cannot put out darkness, only light can do that".

I think education is light where ignorance is darkness.



By continuing to have a good education we banish ignorance from the spirit more and more every day.



Haitian people are very strong because throughout history we were victims of crimes against humanity, we faced natural disasters, political trouble, all kinds of trouble - but Haitian people stay strong, we love living and we don't give up.



We don’t give up.

We Don't Give Up In Haiti: SUPPORTING MATERIALS

NOTES FROM LUCY LEE

Film-maker and illustrator

We wanted the film to celebrate Haiti. Most of what we hear in the media about Haiti is negative and the spirit and determination of the people are rarely celebrated as they should be. I wanted to include the bright colours and carnival spirit that is abundant there, as well as illustrating the Haitian ability to triumph in the face of adversity.

An important way of understanding people is to engage with their culture, so I wanted to reference Haitian painters and Haitian music. I have directly referenced the Haitian painter Philomé Obin, whose work is often charged with political commentary. His famous paintings: Rue 0 (Zero), Due Cap-Haitian, Peasants going to the market, Crossing the Stream on Donkeys, Toussaint L'Overture, and Maison de Odette Lapommeray Acul-du-Nor were particular influences. I was also influenced by the painting style of Claude Dambreville and his celebrations of the ideals of the country.

As a backdrop to the main theme of the film I wanted to make reference to some of the rich and complicated history of Haiti. So we have a tent city, survivors of the earthquake surrounding the statue of Toussaint L'Ouverture (leader of the Haitian Revolution), a group of schoolchildren defiantly making their way to school. In order to understand Billy's mother, I also made reference to what was happening politically around that time in the street behind her and her baby.

One thing we hadn't envisaged was the challenge of access. I wasn't able to directly interview Billy, so I pieced together various parts of this story and the situation of education in Haiti. Some of it was recorded in Haiti and sent to me by mobile phone, so I wove this into the film style, showing the audience that this is like a scrapbook of conversations. There are lots of different aspects of education in Haiti, that's why it is important to let people speak for themselves and find solutions that work for them.

THE ENROLMENT OF CHILDREN IN HAITIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS RATE HOVERS AROUND 30%.





Less than 2% of Haitian schoolchildren pass the certificate examination at the end of grade 5.

In Haiti in the early 2000s, about 90% of schools were private. Being privately owned, these schools usually require tuition fees. Along with the cost of transport, books, and the mandatory uniform, it is very hard for Haitians to send their children to school.

IN HAITI MORE THAN 200,000 CHILDREN REMAIN OUT OF SCHOOL.

THE NATIONAL ENROLMENT FOR FEMALES BETWEEN THE AGES OF SIX AND TEN IS 67 PERCENT, COMPARED TO 78 PERCENT FOR MALES.



Almost 90% of Haitian primary school teachers do not have basic training or support



HALF OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN DROP OUT OF SCHOOL.

Only 10% of total public Haitian spending went on education in 2010



In Haiti, more than half of the population lives in poverty.



More than a third of Haitians are under 15.



Most schools don't have electricity or water in Haiti.



NOTES AND REFERENCES:

HAITI

- Haiti is a small country in the Caribbean. It shares the Island of Hispaniola with The Dominican Republic.
- Haiti is the poorest country in its region and has the lowest Human Development Index score in the Americas.
- Haiti gained its independence in 1804 following a slave revolt against plantation owners. The Haitian constitution was written by Toussaint L'Ouverture, a former slave and rebel leader who established Haiti as an autonomous colony with himself as Governor.
- After the United States, Haiti is the oldest independent nation in the Western Hemisphere.
- In 2010 an earthquake measuring 7 on the Richter Scale hit Haiti. The epicentre was just 25km from the capital city, Port-Au-Prince. Amid the resulting devastation, at least 46,000 Haitians lost their lives. All the hospitals and 90% of the Schools in Port-Au-Prince were destroyed.
- Despite a significant international response to the earthquake, 6 months later it was estimated that 98% of the rubble remained uncleared.
- In 2016, The situation in Haiti was dealt a new setback, by Hurricane Matthew, a category 4 storm that devastated the south of the country, leaving 100,000 homeless.
- Since 2016, The Steve Sinnott Foundation and local partners have operated a Learning Resource Centre in Port-Au-Prince. The Centre provides a space for teacher training, lends classroom equipment and musical instruments and grants easy access to computers and books.

STORYBOOK 3

When You Educate A Woman...



I am Apsara and this is the story of how education changed my life.



Many children have difficulty attending school in Nepal.

I used to walk a long way to go to school. We had to climb steep paths and cross a river. Sometimes it was so dangerous.



Some of my friends moved to the city so they could go to a better school.



We could not afford many books and the school did not have a toilet. It was not easy for me as I got older.



My father had to go abroad for work. He found me a good husband who agreed I could complete my education after we were married.

I was 16.



But when I got married I had to stay in and I didn't go to school.



Not all children will complete their education. Some may have to go to work to help their families and many girls in Nepal are married before they are 18.



Eventually my husband had to go abroad to work too. I was determined to somehow finish my education. And luckily my father sent money for me to go to school.



Because of that, I have a job and I can help my family.



Educating women is most important because one educated woman can make her family educated.

She can do this herself or she can work so that she can pay school fees.

When You Educate A Woman...: SUPPORTING MATERIALS

NOTES FROM LUCY LEE

Film-maker and illustrator

The story we wanted to tell from Nepal was that of the children who find it hardest to access education. These children don't learn English and despite meeting many children with similar stories, language was always a barrier and we had to record their stories through an interpreter.

In my research, however, I found many stories told by people who were in Nepal and who wanted to let the world know what challenges there are there. From these and the original stories I pieced together a story that seemed to encompass the main challenges that Nepalese children face. I then asked people in Nepal to give me feedback on the story to check its accuracy and that it was a fair representation. The feedback was that it was accurate but that the way I was telling it didn't fit the culture, so I changed the wording to reflect this. We then found narrator Sabina Dhaugoda in Nepal and it is her voice that appears in the film.

I looked at a wide variety of Nepalese images and tried to blend together the scenery and styles to make each scene. Each image incorporates details that I discovered in my research and I blended these with illustrations pulled from the story itself.

If you listen carefully you can hear Cicadas, these were actually recorded in a similar part of Nepal that the story originated from.

I used an animation technique that I call "scratched cell". Basically I take a clear acetate and scratch the image into it, then I rub oil paint into the scratches before wiping the oil paint off with a cloth to leave texture lines in the picture to represent clothing and so on.

Each image is later scanned into a computer where I can alter and add different colours and make animations from the images and parts of images.

Girls in Nepal often do not want to attend school.

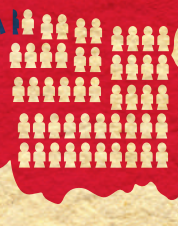
There are no toilets for them to use, and - as they get older - they feel it is not appropriate for them to use the fields to "tend to their menstrual cycles."



Nepal spends 16% of the national budget on education. Nepal's share of higher education in the education budget was 6% in 2004, among the lowest percentages in the world.

FAMILIES IN NEPAL OFTEN DON'T VALUE EDUCATION FOR GIRLS.

THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF FUNDS FOR LEARNING TOOLS SUCH AS EXTRA CLASSROOMS, LIBRARIES, SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT, LABORATORIES, FIELD WORK AND RESEARCH.



An estimated 1 percent of Nepal's population is estimated to leave the country every year for better schooling.



- Landlocked Nepal is located mainly in the Himalayas and has the world's densest concentration of World Heritage Sites including Sagarmartha National Park - the home of Mount Everest, Earth's highest mountain.
- Nepal has one of the youngest education systems in the world. The first modern schools did not open until the 1960s. In 1951, only 9,000 Nepalese children attended primary school.
- Education provision remains deeply uneven. Children in remote areas are far less likely to have access to any kind of formal learning. Illiteracy is far higher in poor and rural districts.
- The divide between rural and urban educational opportunity is even more pronounced among Nepalese women and girls. Recent studies have shown that urban Nepali girls over 16 have a literacy rate of 65.8%; rural girls have a rate of just 53.9%. By contrast, Nepalese boys are 87% and 67.2% literate respectively.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:

NEPAL

- Among other inequalities, 4.3 million people in Nepal are considered stateless because only Nepali fathers are able to pass citizenship onto their children.
- Child marriage is common and 37% of Nepali girls are married before their 18th birthdays.
- A major earthquake in April 2015 took the lives of 9,000 people in Nepal, injured 22,000 and left hundreds of thousands homeless.
- Working with the charity Manisha, The Steve Sinnott Foundation will open its second Learning Resource Centre in Nepal in 2019.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

STORY	PROMPTS
EDUCATION	SCHOOL
WALKING	EARTHQUAKE
MANGOES	NO TOILET
STORM	VICTORY
INVENTION	LOVE

STORY	PROMPTS
VOLCANO	BREAKFAST
ISLAND	ROCKY PATH
MOUNTAIN	RIVER
HUNGRY	SAD
EXCITED	PROUD

STORY

PROMPTS

10 STORY IDEAS

1. The day it was impossible to get to school.

2. A scientist has invented an education machine - how does it work?

3. Two teachers arrive at work to find all the classrooms completely empty! What happened? How do they cope?

4. There are five children who are all best friends - one day, one of them isn't there for registration...

5. An alien arrives at your school in a spaceship and wants to learn all about humans - what do you teach it?

6. The child who knew EVERYTHING.

7. Two pirate children are marooned on a Desert Island but one of them knows a way to get them rescued...

8. What if there was a princess who never left her tower but who could see a school from the window and felt jealous?

9. The cow who could count to one hundred.

10. My first day at superhero college.

ACTIVITIES

1. Cut out the story prompt cards - you can use the two sheets provided or you can duplicate the blank cards and write in prompts of your own. Participants should draw three words from a bag and try to come up with a short story that uses all three.

2. Tell your education story - what does education mean to you? Have you had to face any difficult times at school? Maybe you were shy or injured or found it hard to learn something? How did you overcome your challenges?

3. Is writing the only way to tell a story? Can you tell your story in another way? maybe you could act it out or sing it or draw it or model it or make it into a poem or a dance? As long as the story is shared, it doesn't really matter how you tell it!

MY EDUCATION STORY...



MY EDUCATION STORY...

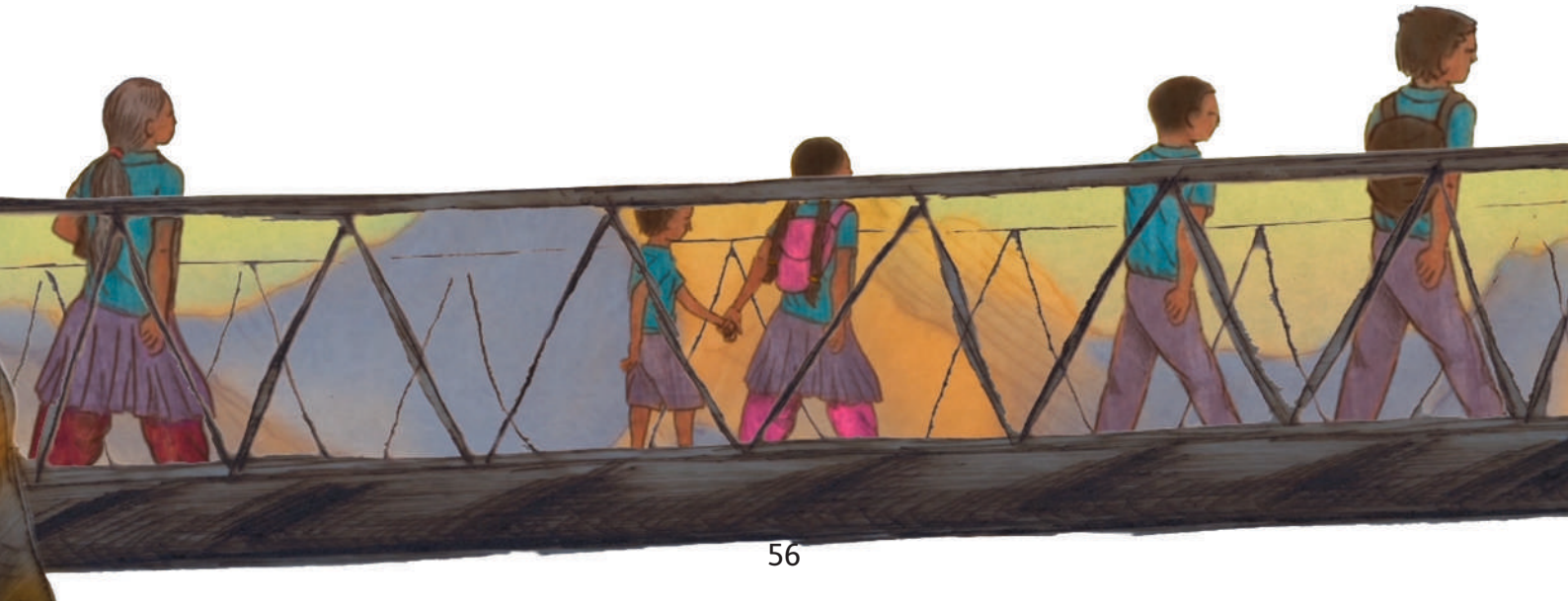
SHARE YOUR STORY

We want to hear your stories!

If you go to our website at:

http://www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk/stories

you'll find a gallery of stories from schools around the world and a form to submit yours.

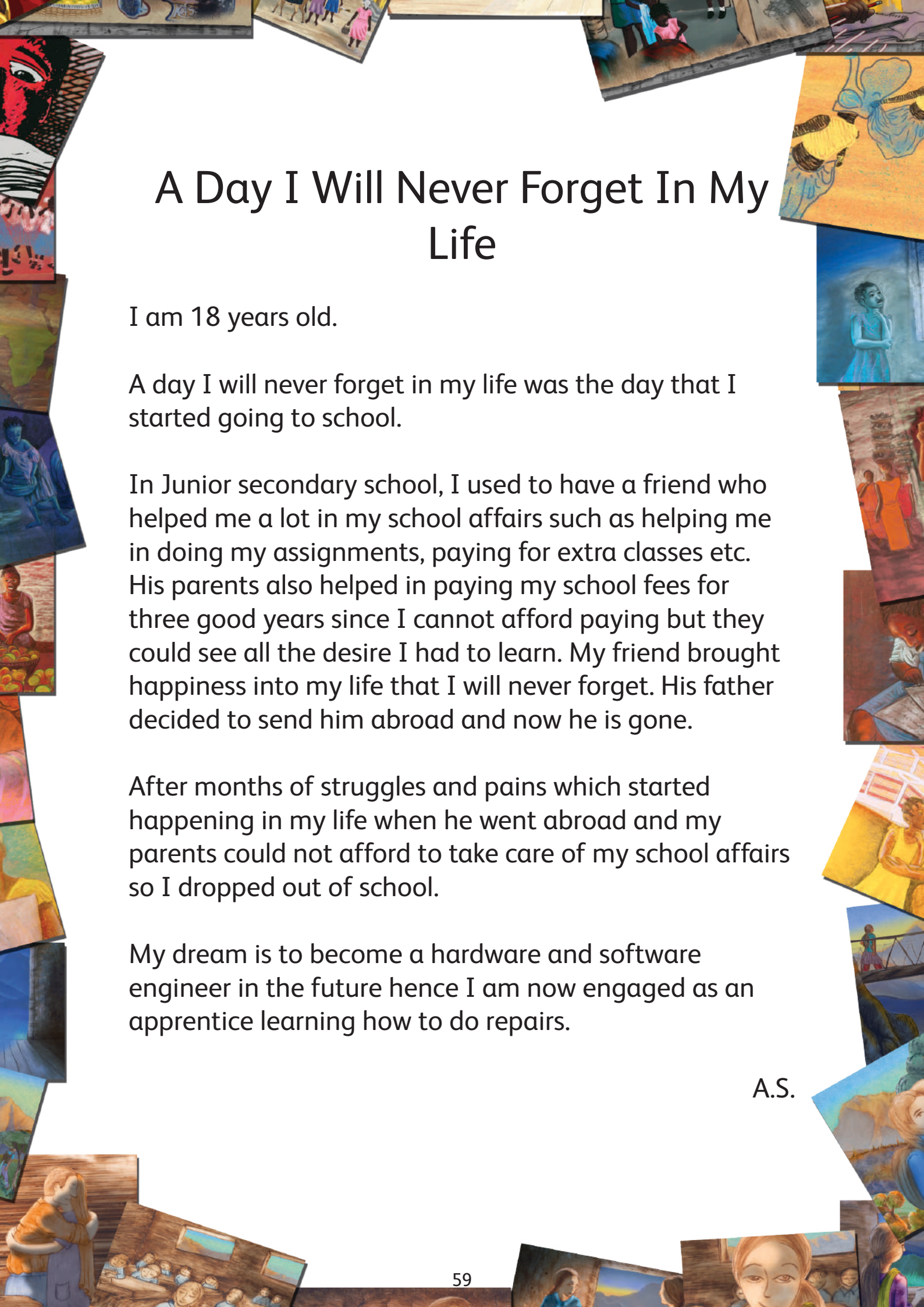



"A STORY
IS
A WAY TO SAY
SOMETHING
THAT CAN'T BE SAID
ANY
OTHER
WAY"
Flannery
O'Connor

APPENDIX 1

Student's Stories From Sierra leone

We asked first year students from a University in Sierra Leone to share their stories for inclusion in this pack.



A Day I Will Never Forget In My Life

I am 18 years old.

A day I will never forget in my life was the day that I started going to school.

In Junior secondary school, I used to have a friend who helped me a lot in my school affairs such as helping me in doing my assignments, paying for extra classes etc. His parents also helped in paying my school fees for three good years since I cannot afford paying but they could see all the desire I had to learn. My friend brought happiness into my life that I will never forget. His father decided to send him abroad and now he is gone.

After months of struggles and pains which started happening in my life when he went abroad and my parents could not afford to take care of my school affairs so I dropped out of school.

My dream is to become a hardware and software engineer in the future hence I am now engaged as an apprentice learning how to do repairs.

A.S.

A Touching Moment In My Life

When I sat for my basic education certificate examination (B.E.C.E) year 2013, at that time my father was a very poor farmer, he did not have the money to pay for me to go to school, so I had to stay at home for two years due to that reason.

At that time when I was in school, I was having a best friend of mine whose name is Abu Bakarr Jalloh. We met with his father and I started to explain to him my situation. He knew a little bit about my story and his father turned and watched me and he said “Oh my son I can feel your pain but I will find a way to help you.” He said let me visit him after two weeks. Later he supported with part of my senior school fees and I took the WASSCE examination and passed. I am yet to further my education, but his help came as a shock as I was feeling hopeless in continuing my studies.

My hopes are now alive for the future and my dream is that I want to become a professional doctor for me to help, cure and save the lives of people.

I.T.

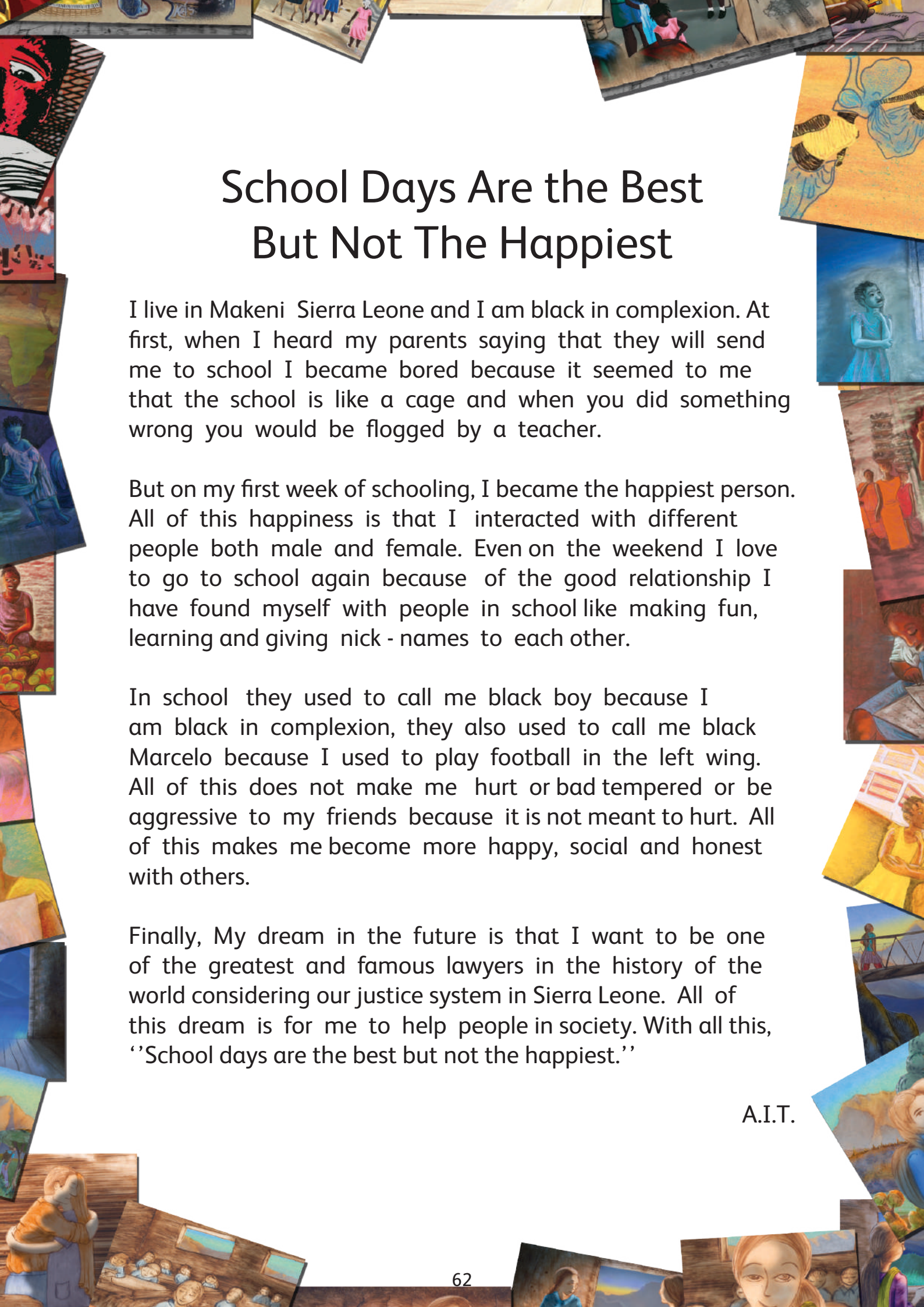
Best Moment In My Life

My first day at the University of Makeni was my happiest moment because it was my dream university. At first I was a little bit nervous because I didn't know the dos and don'ts of the university. Until I met an old friend of mine who attended the same school and was already a second-year student who took me to each and every corner of the university. Education is the only source for me to make money and to be supported and accepted in the society.

My dream is for me to be a developmental practitioner and help change the poor, marginalized and empower the youth in my community through advocacy and community service.

As for me, the University of Makeni is the best university in Sierra Leone because they have trained and qualified lecturers and have the passion to deliver thoroughly to their students but education is very expensive in Sierra Leone and many of us are struggling to meet our financial commitment, so we hope we will make it through to the end of the course.

A.K.B.



School Days Are the Best But Not The Happiest

I live in Makeni Sierra Leone and I am black in complexion. At first, when I heard my parents saying that they will send me to school I became bored because it seemed to me that the school is like a cage and when you did something wrong you would be flogged by a teacher.

But on my first week of schooling, I became the happiest person. All of this happiness is that I interacted with different people both male and female. Even on the weekend I love to go to school again because of the good relationship I have found myself with people in school like making fun, learning and giving nick - names to each other.

In school they used to call me black boy because I am black in complexion, they also used to call me black Marcelo because I used to play football in the left wing. All of this does not make me hurt or bad tempered or be aggressive to my friends because it is not meant to hurt. All of this makes me become more happy, social and honest with others.

Finally, My dream in the future is that I want to be one of the greatest and famous lawyers in the history of the world considering our justice system in Sierra Leone. All of this dream is for me to help people in society. With all this, ''School days are the best but not the happiest.''

A.I.T.



Education Is My Priority

My first day at the university was not easy for me because the environment was new to me and I thought I would not adapt with new friends who are not like my old friends so I was lonely and felt like going back to my parents.

After a week at the university, I met an old friend who has given me courage to continue and hope that life would be easier one day. The university used to invite speakers from different institutions to come and give public lectures, especially on the importance of girls' education. I was inspired and it also helped in building my confidence to continue with my studies.

My dream for the future is to advocate for students who drop out, especially for girls to help develop my country and nation at large as girls are faced with lots of challenges in achieving quality education. Some are raped, sexually harassed and they experience poverty. Looking at my background, I have chosen education as a way of helping my family and community only if nothing prevents me from completing my course at the university.

F.S.F.

My Experience At The University

My experience at the University of Makeni (UNIMAK) has a good and bad side, but the most important thing why I think it is good is because the lecturers are very professional in what they do. They always try to do their best to see that students go through their academic work successfully so as to promote a quality standard and create the correct pace for better future.

The lecturers keep their promise on what they can do and they do it with passion. I have also made some friends who have inspired me a lot.

My bad experience in the university is that the fees are too high. I find it hard to make ends meet and I can only afford to buy small amounts of food as it is expensive. I also spend a lot of money on bikes from my house to the University.

I know I am very lucky to be attending university and I enjoy my course very much as I am stretching my brain but sometimes I feel worried if I will complete the four years for the attainment of a degree considering my poor family background. I hope I can make it.

by F.S.K.

APPENDIX 2

Children's Stories From A School In The U.K.

Students were asked to plan, write and tell a story which reflected their experiences of education.

It had to be about a lesson learned at home by a friend of family member; or be about their time at school.



I Remember

I remember being in Year 3. For the first ever time I was extremely nervous because I didn't have many friends who were in the same class as me. I find making friends really hard

However, I made one amazing friend. I didn't know her before. Eventually we were best friends. We did have occasional arguments, just like everyone else.

One day, at the end of Year 3, my eyes were filled with tears as I read whose class I was going to be with in Year 4. I was to be moved to a different class. I felt like my Year 3 teacher had betrayed me.

After the summer holiday came back to school. Although I didn't have my friend, I decided to carry on working hard. I soon made new friends

Everything was alright in the end.

by M.B.

Tactics

It was 8.15am and I had just walked through my new school gates.
I was extremely nervous. To make friends, I decided upon a few tactics.
The one I used most was to just go up to people and say “hi”.
I soon made a good group of friends who trusted me and I trusted them.

by H.T.

I Miss

I miss my old school because there were...
So many kids.
The chance to be a buddy.
Teachers that understood me.
My best friend Rosie who I never fell out with.

The things I will never miss from my old school...
When I got bullied.
When one girl was mad at me and made me feel bad about myself.

Sometimes I wish could go back because of all the trips we used to have to places like London. I’ll never forget all the times we went to the beach. My friends and I would always run straight into the sea.

by M.D.

I Remember My First Day

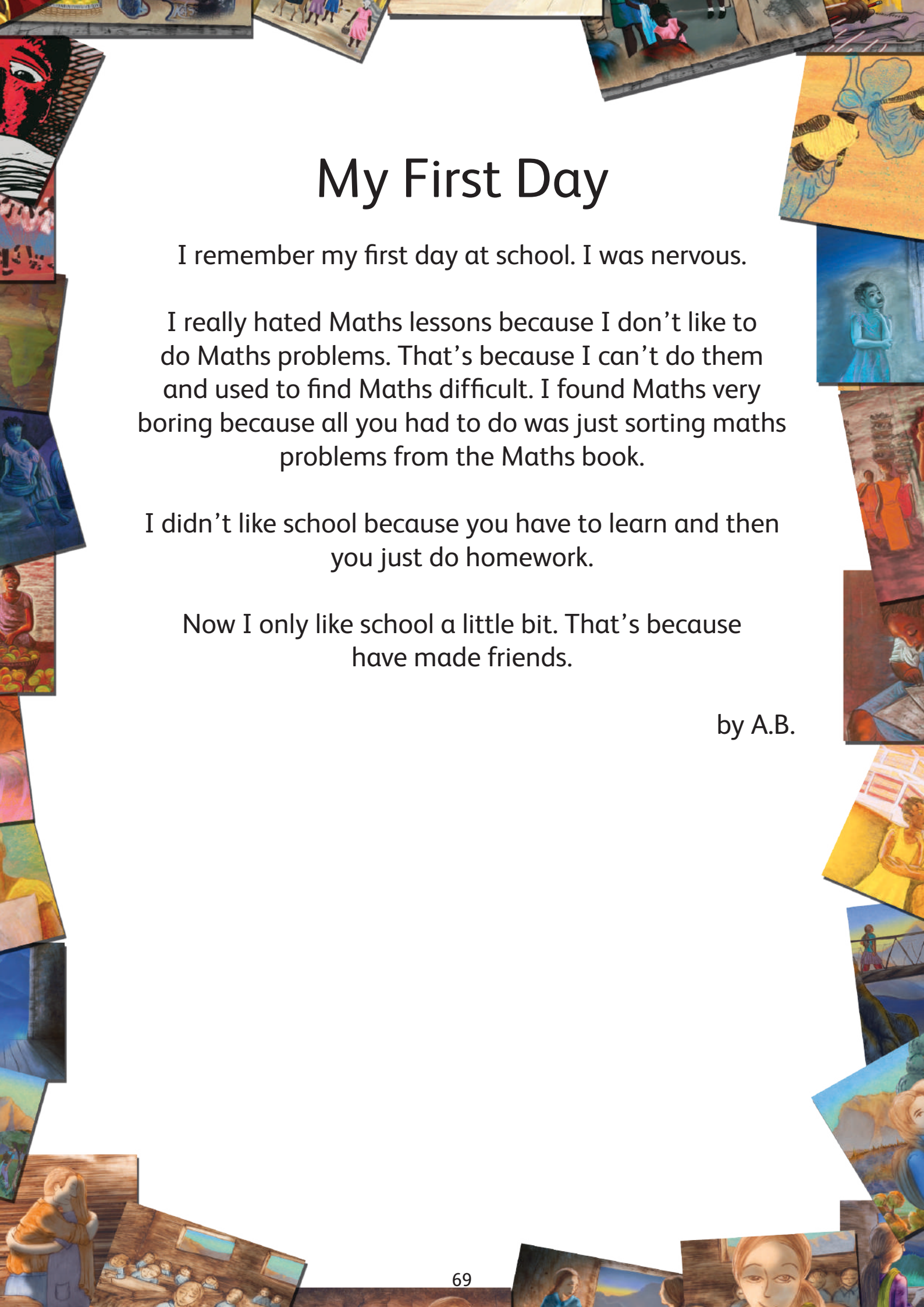
I was so nervous on the first day of school. Going to school was like growing up, working towards exams and maybe getting a job.

My favourite subject was, and is, Maths. I love Maths because it is fun and is one of the most important things you need to learn if you want to get a job. I also love Maths because in my primary school I tried my best to improve my level. It can be really frustrating though!

I met my tutor on my first day. Going to my tutor. I was so nervous but when it came to it, it wasn't so bad. I went to get my timetable. Maths was my first lesson so I was really excited. The only problem was I didn't know where the Maths block was.

When I walked in the class, the teacher raised his hand and told us "when I raise my hand, it means I want you to be quiet". In the lesson we did multiplying and dividing. Some people found it tricky. I found it quite easy and decided to ask for the harder sheet.

by A.G.



My First Day

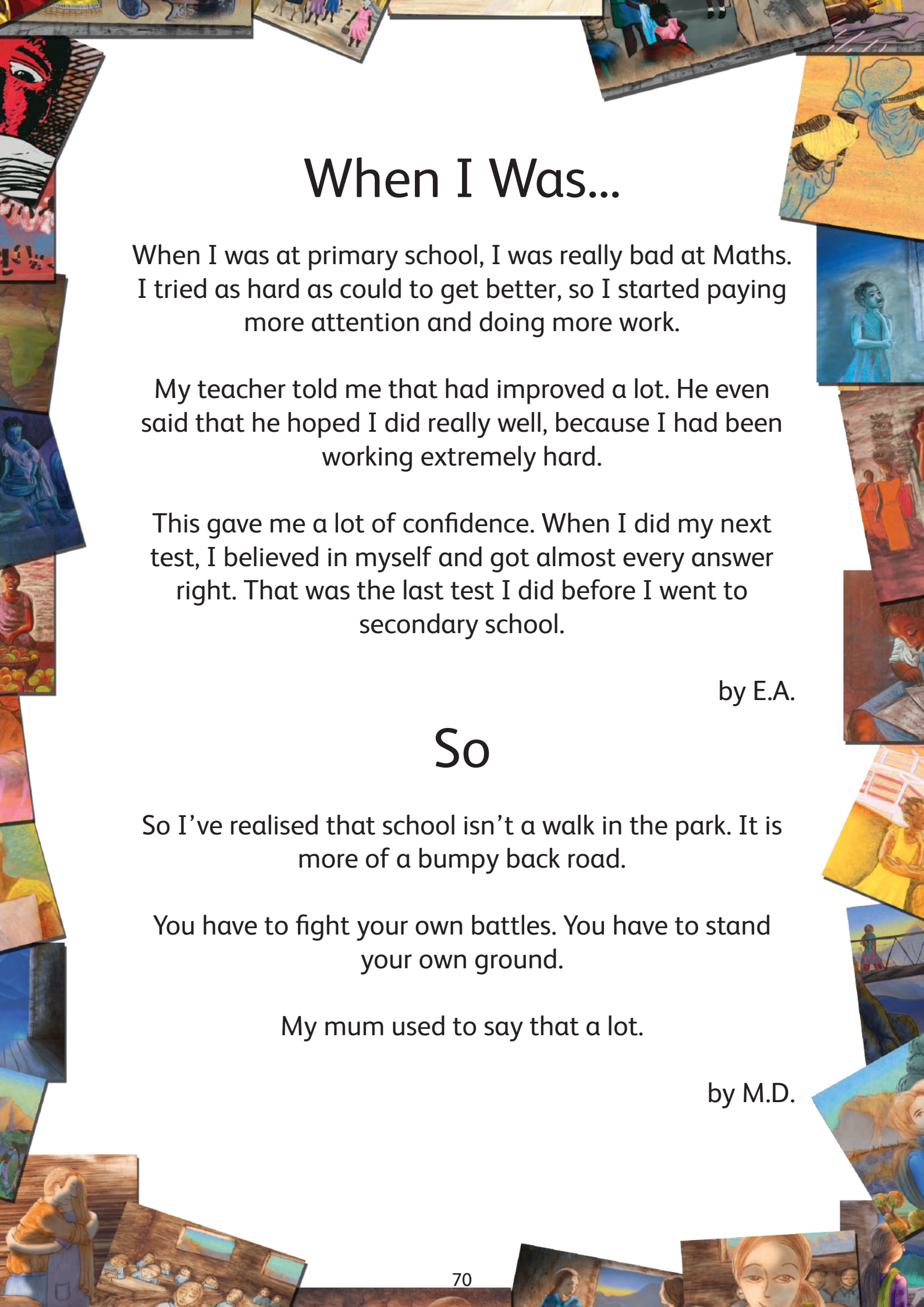
I remember my first day at school. I was nervous.

I really hated Maths lessons because I don't like to do Maths problems. That's because I can't do them and used to find Maths difficult. I found Maths very boring because all you had to do was just sorting maths problems from the Maths book.

I didn't like school because you have to learn and then you just do homework.

Now I only like school a little bit. That's because have made friends.

by A.B.



When I Was...

When I was at primary school, I was really bad at Maths. I tried as hard as could to get better, so I started paying more attention and doing more work.

My teacher told me that had improved a lot. He even said that he hoped I did really well, because I had been working extremely hard.

This gave me a lot of confidence. When I did my next test, I believed in myself and got almost every answer right. That was the last test I did before I went to secondary school.

by E.A.

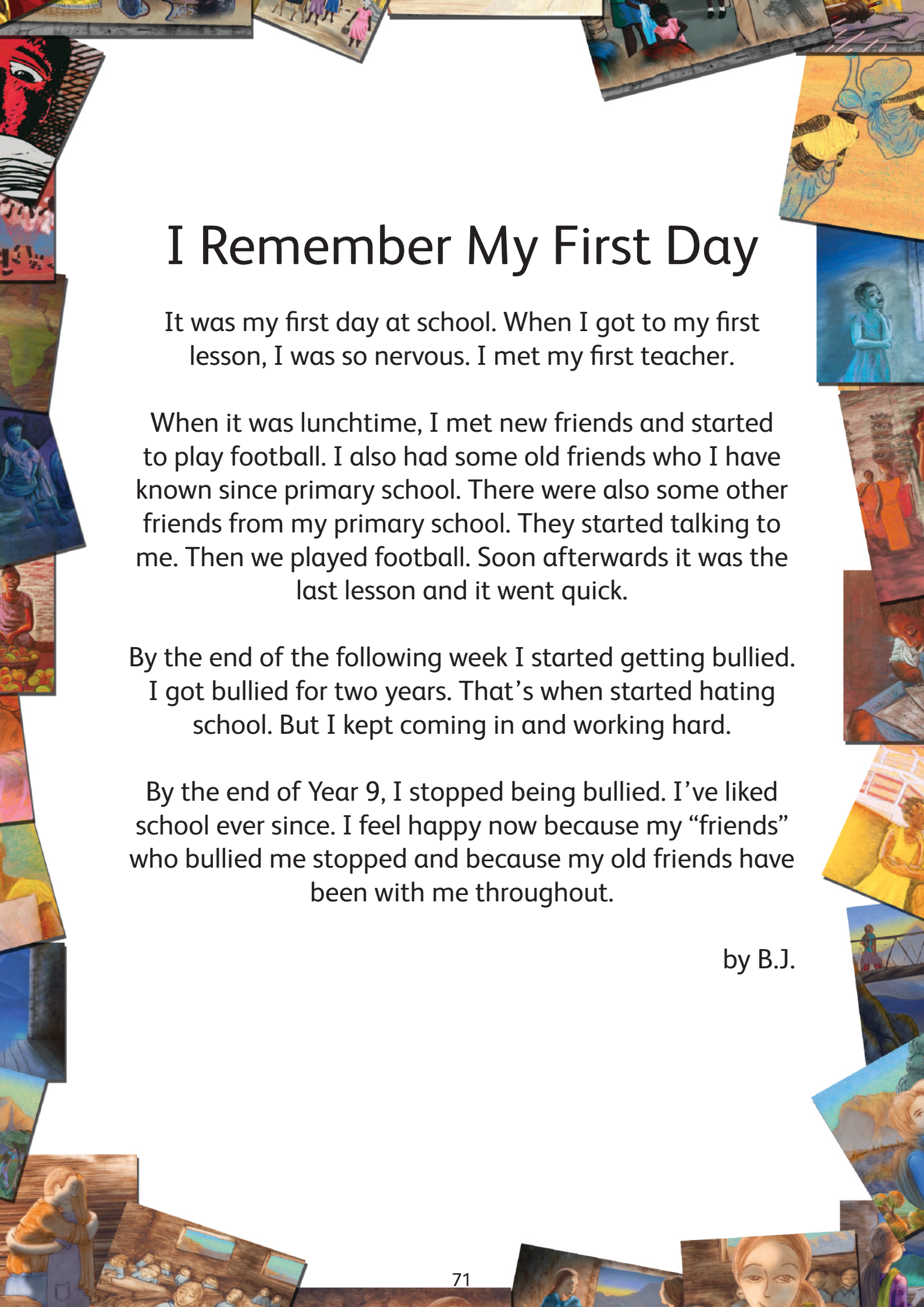
So

So I've realised that school isn't a walk in the park. It is more of a bumpy back road.

You have to fight your own battles. You have to stand your own ground.

My mum used to say that a lot.

by M.D.



I Remember My First Day

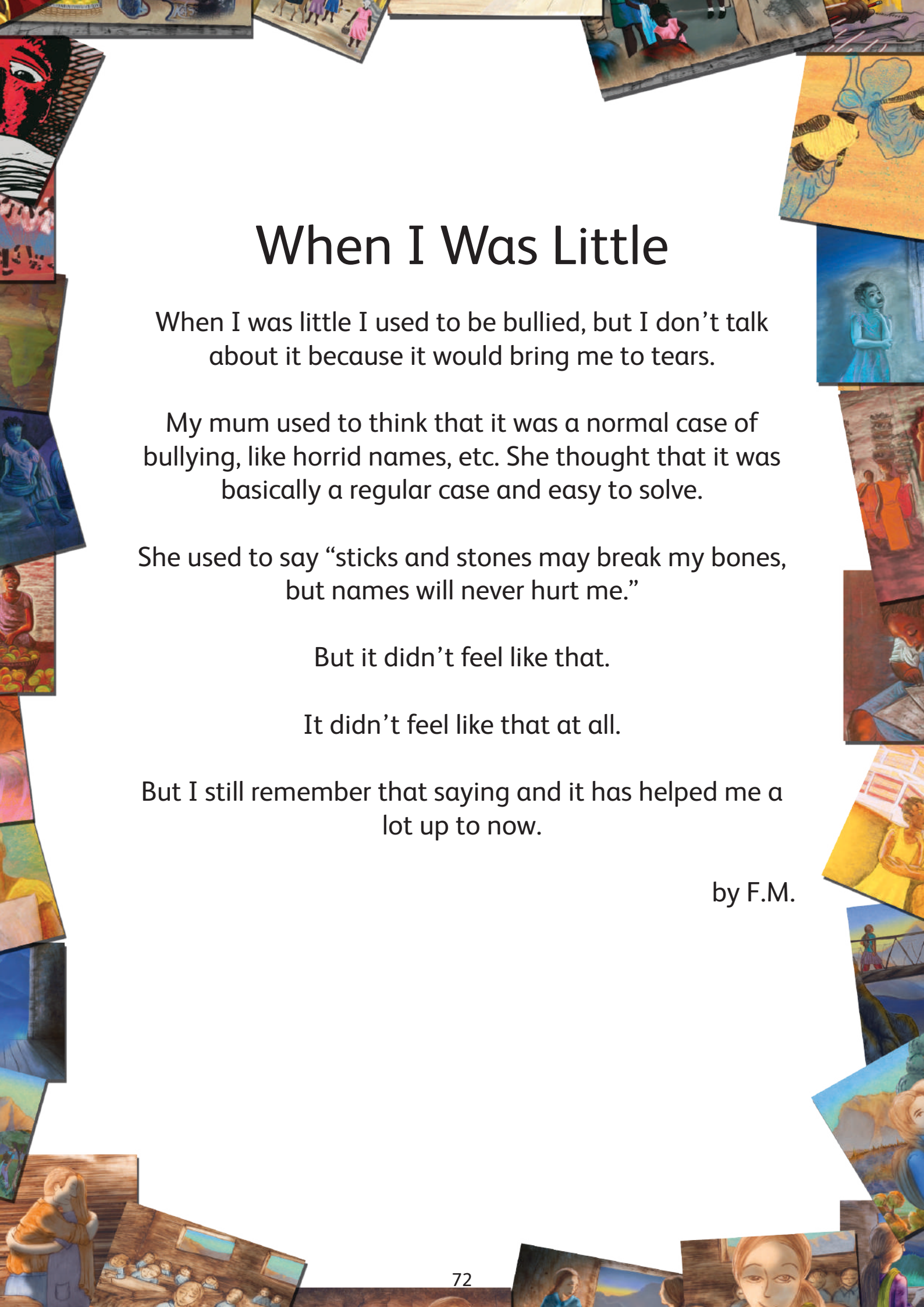
It was my first day at school. When I got to my first lesson, I was so nervous. I met my first teacher.

When it was lunchtime, I met new friends and started to play football. I also had some old friends who I have known since primary school. There were also some other friends from my primary school. They started talking to me. Then we played football. Soon afterwards it was the last lesson and it went quick.

By the end of the following week I started getting bullied. I got bullied for two years. That's when started hating school. But I kept coming in and working hard.

By the end of Year 9, I stopped being bullied. I've liked school ever since. I feel happy now because my "friends" who bullied me stopped and because my old friends have been with me throughout.

by B.J.



When I Was Little

When I was little I used to be bullied, but I don't talk about it because it would bring me to tears.

My mum used to think that it was a normal case of bullying, like horrid names, etc. She thought that it was basically a regular case and easy to solve.

She used to say "sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me."

But it didn't feel like that.

It didn't feel like that at all.

But I still remember that saying and it has helped me a lot up to now.

by F.M.


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