

Ebook adapted from the TV series





ubongo kids

global citizenship

**being responsible towards
the earth and each other,
for present and future generations**



The villagers of Kokotoa were running. Uncle T watched them, wondering where they were going.



Then he heard them talking to one another about a new video hall, the video banda. Movies for only 500 shillings!



Kibena was pulling up potatoes from the field when she and Koba saw a crowd of people...



...gathering around a newly-constructed shed. Koba knew what it was all about. “That’s the new video banda!” he exclaimed.

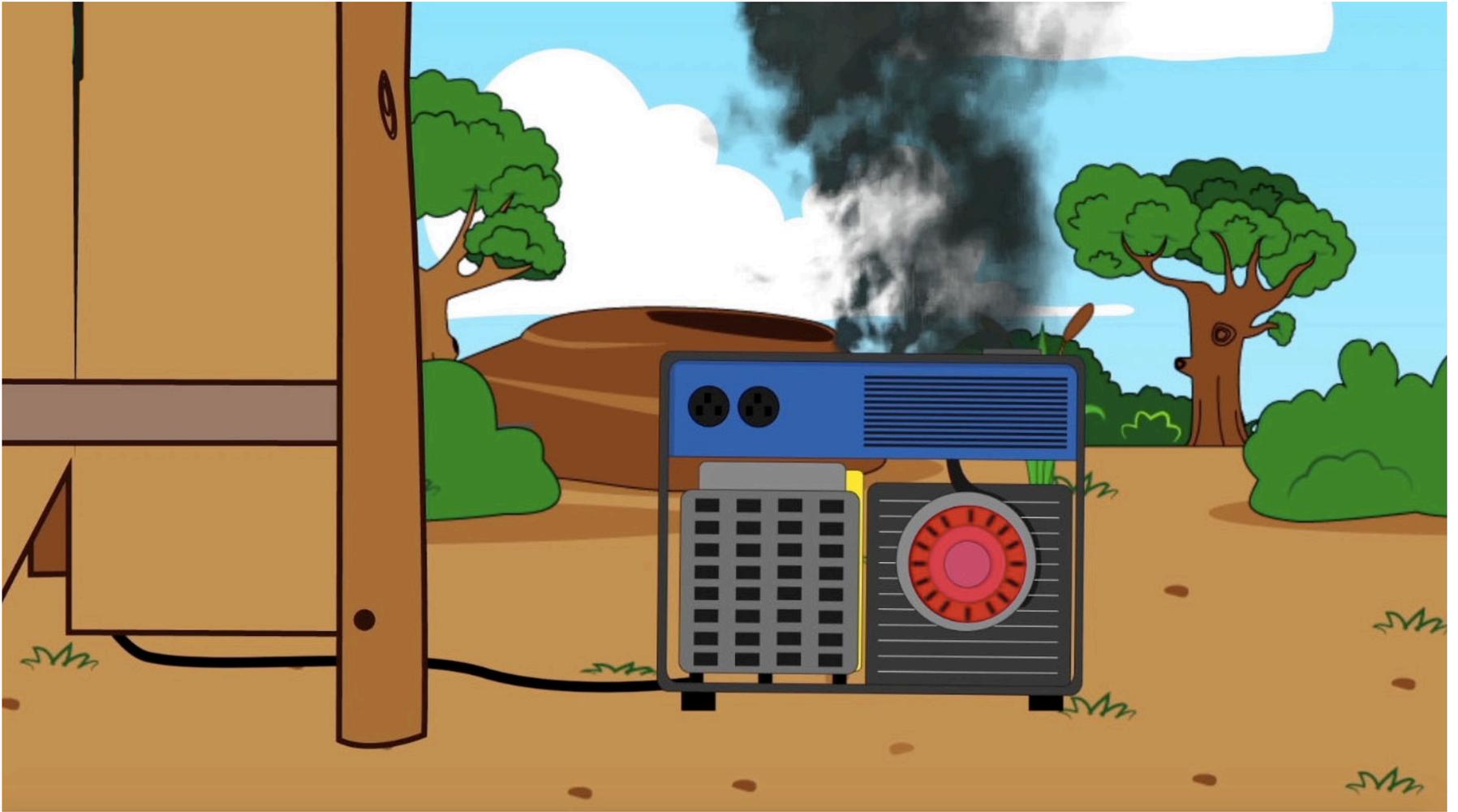


Koba was excited. He could show his film at the video Banda! He teased Kibena, telling her that she should go cook her potatoes while he became rich.

TIME TABLE
2:30 - 4:30 pm
Funny Fruits
4:30 - 6:00 pm
Match: NDALA vs MNYAMA
6:30 - 7:30 pm
Comedy: Mzee Kejo



The sign outside the Banda showed the schedule for the day, while the owner collected money from the line of people waiting to enter.



No-one noticed the generator behind the banda, spewing out thick black smoke.



Uncle T wanted to see the screen inside the banda...



...but the only spot he could find was above the generator. The thick black smoke went straight up his nose.



He watched as an advertisement came on the screen. It announced a contest for groups of kids to enter. Each group should submit an idea for how to make a better tomorrow. The winning group would win a trip to the capital city to visit Parliament!



Uncle T knew a group of kids who should enter the contest! He tried to call out their names – Kiduchu, Kibena, Koba, Baraka and Amani. But the black smoke had entered his lungs, and he could only cough and splutter.



Meanwhile, Koba was delivering the DVD of his film to the banda owner. But instead of paying him for his film, the banda owner wanted to charge Koba to show it!



“Running the generator is costing me money!” the owner said. Koba knew how the generator works: it burns fuel and converts it into electricity. “That fuel doesn’t come free!” said the owner. “That’s why you have to pay me to show your film.”



Uncle T saw Koba and tried to tell him about the contest. But without his voice, he could only use gestures and Koba couldn't understand. Koba thought Kibena might understand Uncle T.



At Kibena's house, Kibena was tending the fire and cooking her potatoes. Koba entered the house, but Uncle T was too tall! He stuck his head into the chimney pipe to see inside, but the smoke from the cooking fire turned his face black and made his cough worse.



Kibena realized that it was the dirty air that was making Uncle T cough. She explained this to Koba...



...and when Uncle T's head got stuck in the chimney, Koba picked up a bucket of water and poured it on the fire to put the fire out.



Kibena was annoyed at Koba. “We can’t eat raw potatoes! Bibi put in the chimney so the smoke would go outside. Uncle T shouldn’t stick his head in there,” she complained.



Uncle T finally pulled his head from the chimney and started to walk away. Kibena and Koba followed him, continuing to argue about energy.



“We need to burn charcoal for the energy that cooks our food,” said Kibena, “and eating food gives energy to our bodies.” As they walked, a bus passed them.



On the side of the bus was an advert for the contest: WIN A TRIP TO THE PARLIAMENT: FORM A GROUP, WRITE A TOPIC ABOUT - BETTER TOMORROW. Uncle T saw it, but Koba and Kibena were too busy arguing to see.



Uncle T chased after the bus all the way to the bus park. Before he could show the advert to Koba and Kibena, the bus pulled away, spewing exhaust fumes.



“All this exhaust from the buses will make us sick!” Koba exclaimed.



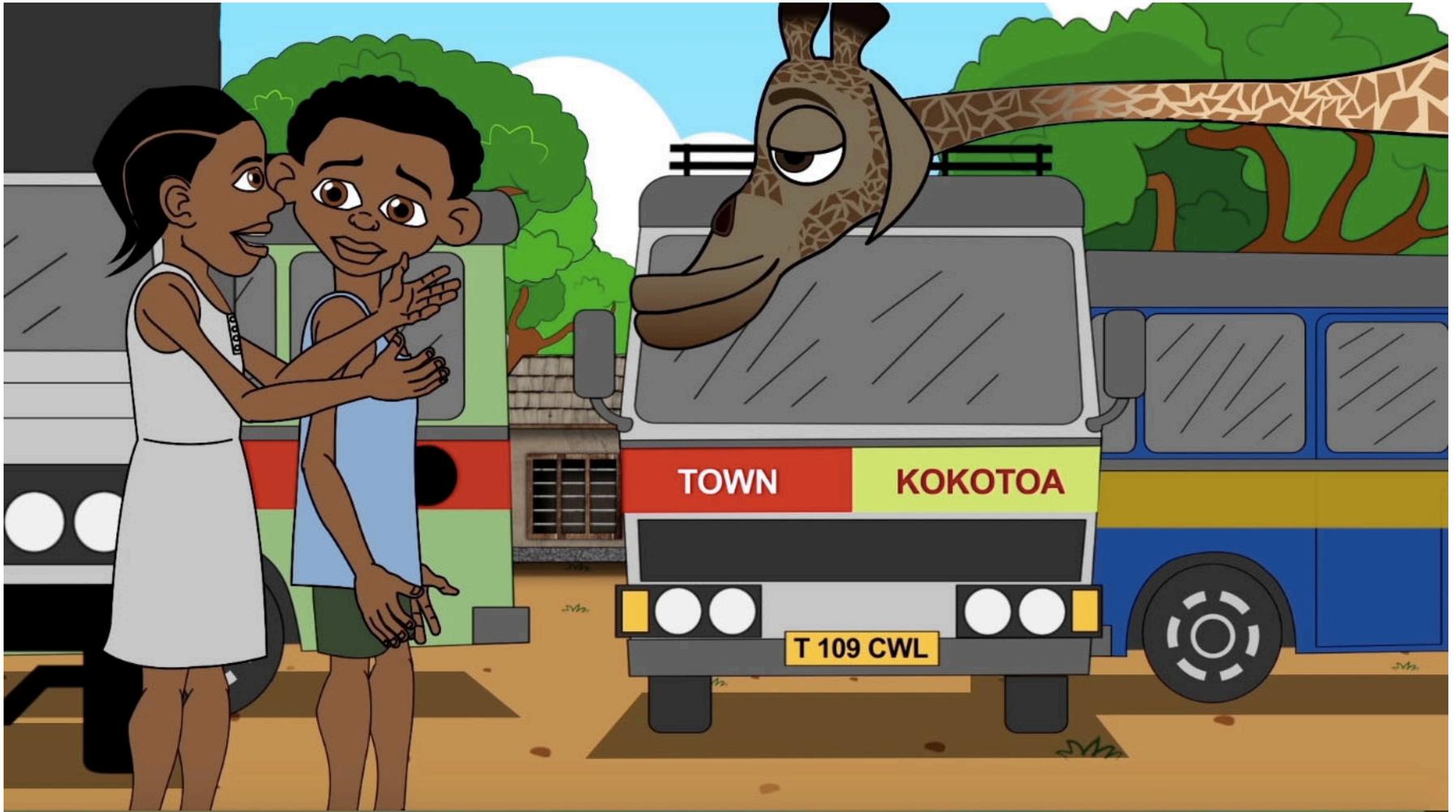
“Let’s go tell them to stop!” Koba tried to stop the passengers but they pushed past him to continue with their daily errands.



“People need buses to get where they need to go,” Kibena reasoned, “but do the buses need to be running when they are standing still?” Koba agreed that even reducing the problem a bit could help keep the air cleaner.



A sleeping driver snored in the seat of a bus with its engine running. Uncle T put his head through the window, startling the driver awake. The driver noticed how the fumes from his bus were affecting Uncle T and decided he should turn off the engine. "I'll save money on fuel, too!" he said.



Meanwhile Uncle T still had not found his voice. Kibena suggested a visit to Mzee Kigo for his throat-soothing tea.



As they walked to Mzee Kigo's farm, they saw Mjusi sunning himself on a rock next to the road.



“I am after solar energy,” Mjusi told them. “I soak up the heat from the sun and it helps me to grow. And the energy from the sun is CLEAN energy. It doesn’t dirty the air or harm our health.”



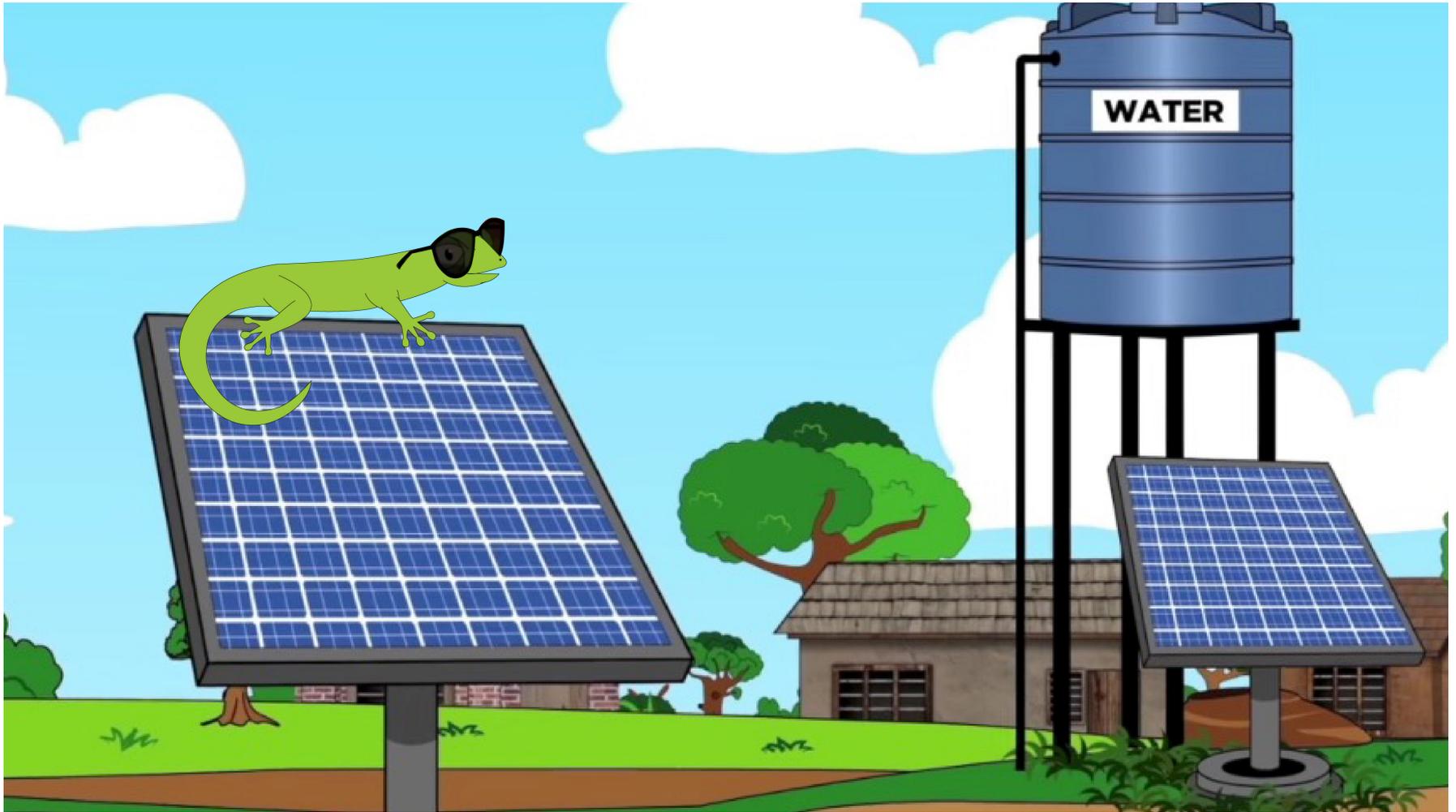
Koba and Kibena wondered how humans could use more CLEAN energy, from the sun and wind and water, and less DIRTY energy from burning coal and fuel.



Mzee Kigo was watering his cabbages when they arrived at the farm. He led them to his greenhouse to get some of his special soothing tea for Uncle T.



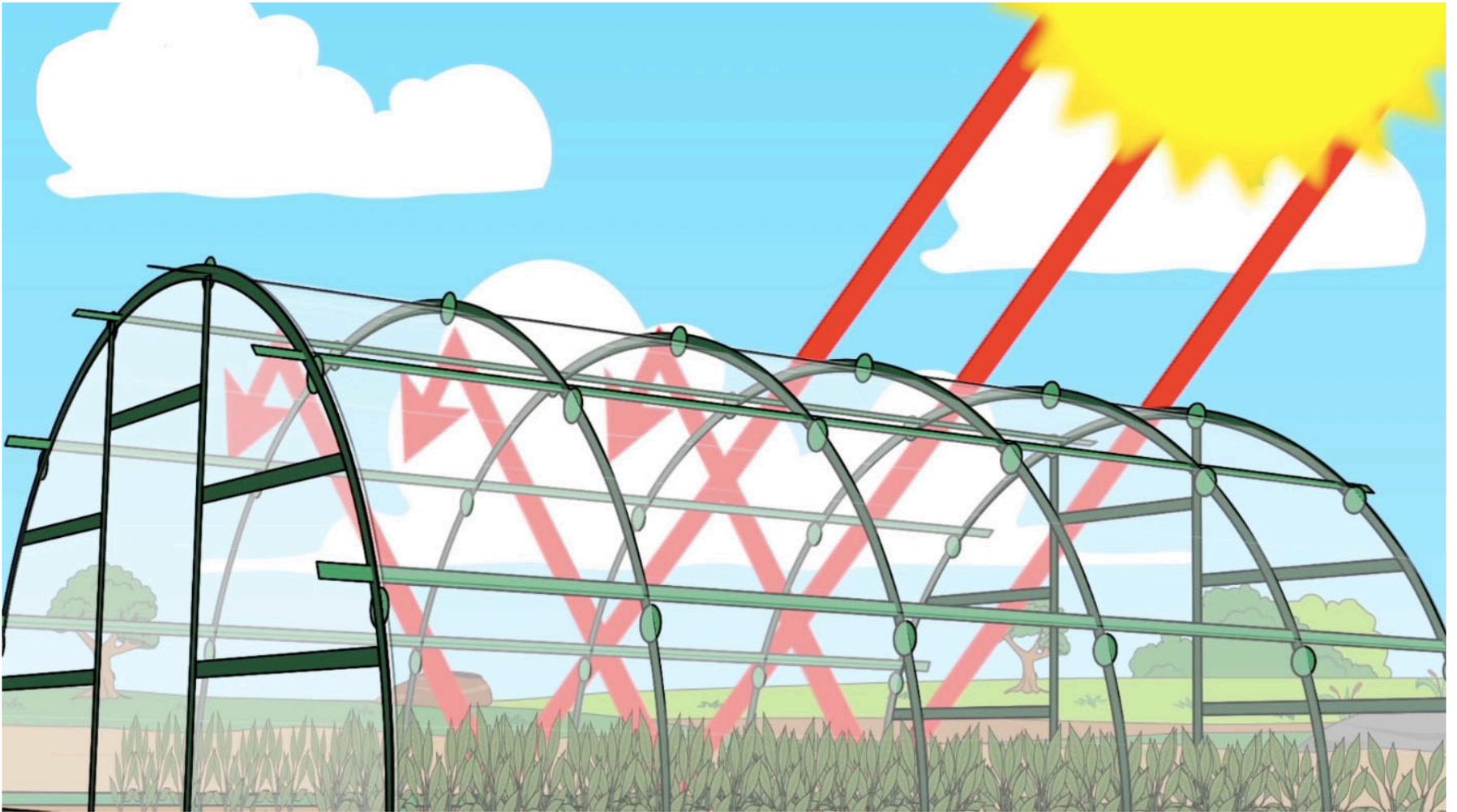
As they walked to the greenhouse, Kibena asked about some funny-looking umbrellas that they passed.



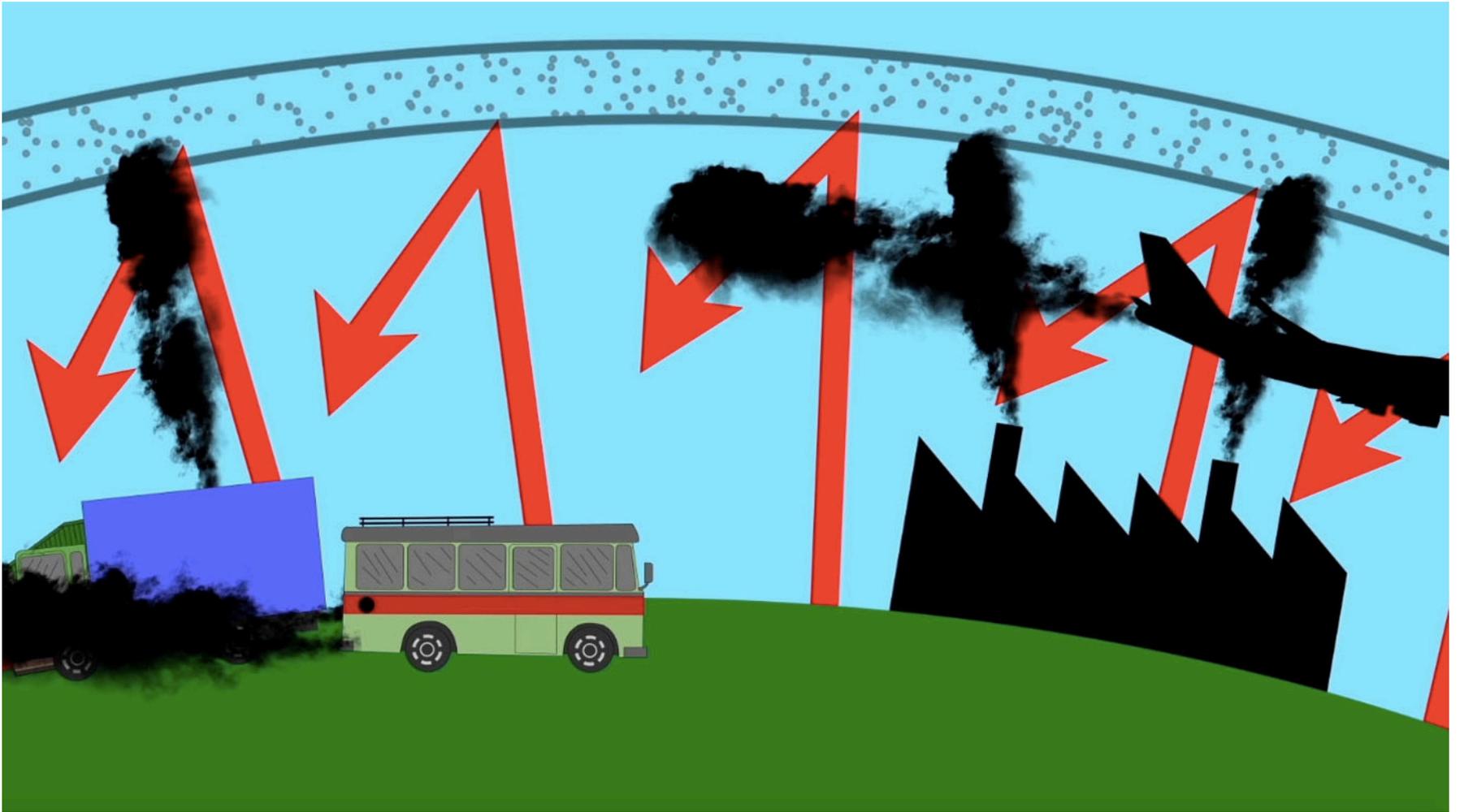
“Those aren’t umbrellas,” Mzee Kigo explained. “They are solar panels. They absorb energy from sunlight.” “Just like Mjusi!” exclaimed Kibena. “Yes,” replied Mzee Kigo, “but my panels convert the energy from sunlight into electricity.”



At the greenhouse, Mzee Kigo picked the tea leaves from the plant and handed them to Kibena. “It’s so hot in here!” exclaimed Koba. “It’s hotter than it is outside!”



Mzee Kigo told them about the greenhouse effect. “The sun’s rays come through the glass and heat up everything inside. The glass stops the heat from escaping, so it stays warm inside.”



“That’s what is happening to the Earth as well,” he continued. “But, instead of glass, it is greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide that stop the heat from escaping. These gases come from all the dirty energy we use.”



“We need to use less dirty energy,” realized Kibena, as Uncle T drank the soothing tea. When he had finished the tea, Koba asked him what he had been trying to tell them.



After an hour, Uncle T still could not speak clearly. Instead, he led Kibena and Koba to the video banda. The entrance price had increased from 500 shillings to 1000, and the people were angry.



Uncle T, Kibena and Koba peered in and saw the advert for the competition on the screen. After watching the advert, Koba turned his attention to the arguing crowd. “Why don’t you just use solar power rather than the generator?” he suggested. “Sunlight is free!”



Kibena calculated: if the 200 people who came regularly to watch TV each paid 5000 shillings, the owner would have a million shillings to buy a solar panel. Then everyone could watch for free. “You’ve found your topic for the competition,” Uncle T told Koba and Kibena with a wink.



The End

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