

Changing the world  
with **women and girls**  
**act:onaid**



**BLACK GIRL RESISTS**



Dear Reader,

This is the story of Nora, a young woman who lives in a country called Sadiya. It is an imaginary country in Africa, purposely created to illustrate what it is like to grow up in a former colony of an Empire and how international financial institutions continue to exploit poorer countries in many ways. Setting Nora's story in an imaginary country allows us to mix fiction and facts without any preconception getting in the way.

This illustrated story of Nora is about the trials and tribulations of a young woman from a working-class family in Africa, bringing to life the huge impacts that social norms, lived experience of gender based violence and country level laws and policies ultimately shaped by global institutions' power have on advancing gender equality.

The aim of this comic is to bring to our readers a visual and accessible representation of decent work, unpaid care and domestic work and how it impacts young girls and women, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

Thanks for reading it and using it for your activism work!



Meet my father, Anthony. He is an electrician in the State Electricity Board of Sadiya





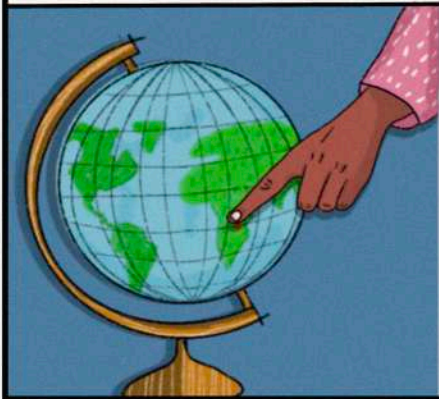
This is my mother, Sabina. She works as a nurse in a primary school.



Sitting in the living room are my baby brother, Akasua and my grandmother, Aba.



We live in Oromoso, the capital of Sadiya, a country located in Central Africa.



Sadiya is rich in culture and African heritage. It was previously ruled by the British Empire.



Now we are a democracy and currently governed by the People's Party of Sadiya under the leadership of Esther Williams.





CIRCA 1980



FREE SADIYA

We want Democracy

FREE SADIYA. We want freedom!!

END BRIT COLON

Simon Go ba

End British Ru

FREE SADIYA



FULL FREEDOM  
OF SADIYA

END  
BRIT  
RULE

British Empire  
Leave Sadiya

WE WANT  
DEMOCRACY

FREE  
SADIYA



END  
BRITISH  
RULE

We demand  
democracy

Free  
Sadiya

END  
BRITISH  
RULE

GO  
BACK  
SIMON

We  
want  
FREEDOM

GO  
BA  
SI

WE DEMAND  
INDEPENDENCE

FREE  
SADIYA

Free  
Sadiya

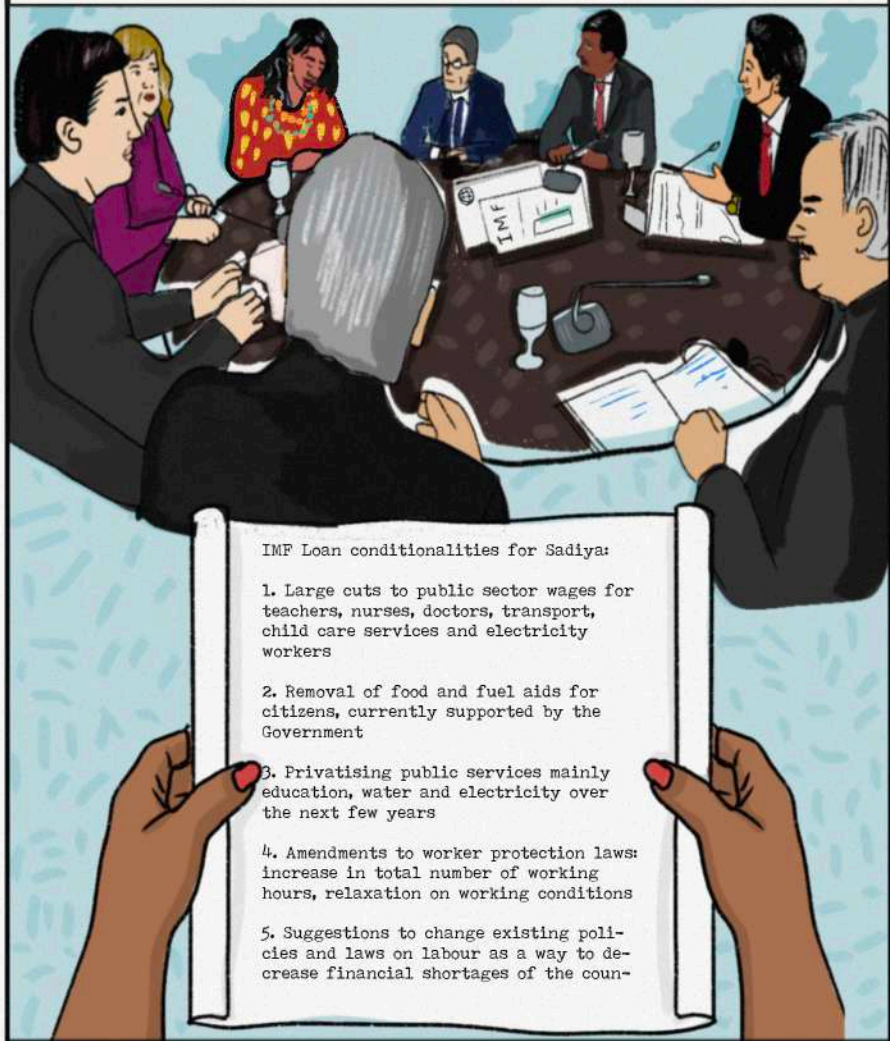
WE WANT  
DEMOCRACY

Esther Williams met with British Governor to Sadiya, to discuss its future with the colonial power.





The IMF has loaned 90 million USD and the World Bank has loaned 30 million USD as structural adjustment packages to Sadiya to rebuild their economy.



IMF Loan conditionalities for Sadiya:

1. Large cuts to public sector wages for teachers, nurses, doctors, transport, child care services and electricity workers
2. Removal of food and fuel aids for citizens, currently supported by the Government
3. Privatising public services mainly education, water and electricity over the next few years
4. Amendments to worker protection laws: increase in total number of working hours, relaxation on working conditions
5. Suggestions to change existing policies and laws on labour as a way to decrease financial shortages of the coun-

[https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/linking\\_global\\_to\\_local\\_imf\\_gender\\_actionaid\\_explainer.pdf](https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/linking_global_to_local_imf_gender_actionaid_explainer.pdf)

The International Monetary Fund was established in 1945.



The IMF is one of the largest and most powerful global organisations influencing the global economy and the economic policies of countries. Its main job is to monitor national economies and the global economy and help keep them stable. It does this by giving policy advice to countries and lending them money ('loans') during times of economic stress.

Key Facts about the IMF:

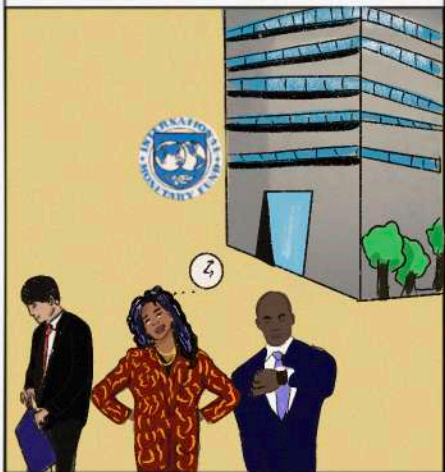
- Created in 1945 after the Second World War by representatives of 45 countries, including Bolivia, Brazil, the British Raj (India under colonial rule), Canada, China, Cuba, France, Haiti, Liberia, South Africa, the UK and the USA.

- It is a membership organisation made up of 189 member countries.

- Its main objective is to promote economic stability and global economic growth.

- Member countries contribute funding based on the size of their economy. They are represented on the Executive Board based on the size of their contribution, i.e. how much money they put into the Fund. This means richer countries have more seats and power.


Esther Williams is waiting with other leaders to get the IMF Loans.



[https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/linking\\_global\\_to\\_local\\_imf\\_gender\\_actionaid\\_explainer.pdf](https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/linking_global_to_local_imf_gender_actionaid_explainer.pdf)

The World Bank is an International Financial Institution, just like the International Monetary Fund and is based in Washington DC, United States, it was established in 1944. The main goal of the World Bank is reduction of poverty in the world by providing low interest loans and interest-free credits and grants to middle and low income countries. Besides poverty, the World Bank focuses on improving education, health and infrastructure, modernizing agriculture and the financial sector of low income economies. The Bank also may demand policy reforms to recipients of loans.



 Washington DC

<https://www.thebalance.com/the-purpose-of-the-world-bank-3306119>





The International Labour Organisation is a United Nations Agency whose mandate is to advance social and economic justice through setting international labor standards. ILO has 187 member states. The ILO's international labour standards aim to ensure accessible, sustainable, safe and productive work worldwide with conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity. All standards, policies, and programmes require discussion and approval from the representatives of governments, employers, and workers.

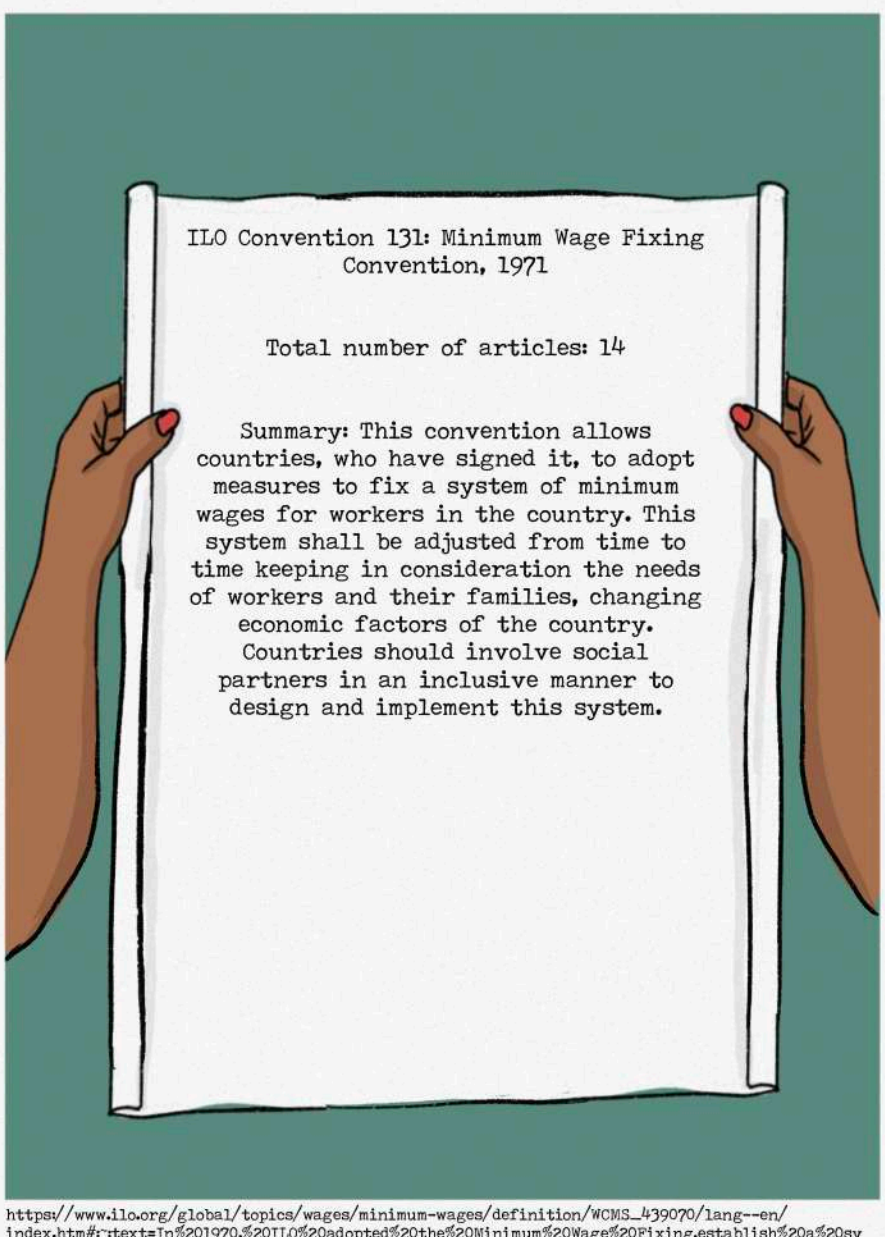
Esther Williams signing ILO Conventions 131, 189, and 190.



<https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/lang--en/index.htm>

Esther reading the ILO conventions 131, 189 and 190.



An illustration of two hands holding a white document against a teal background. The document contains text about the ILO Convention 131: Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1971. The text is centered and includes a summary of the convention's purpose and requirements.

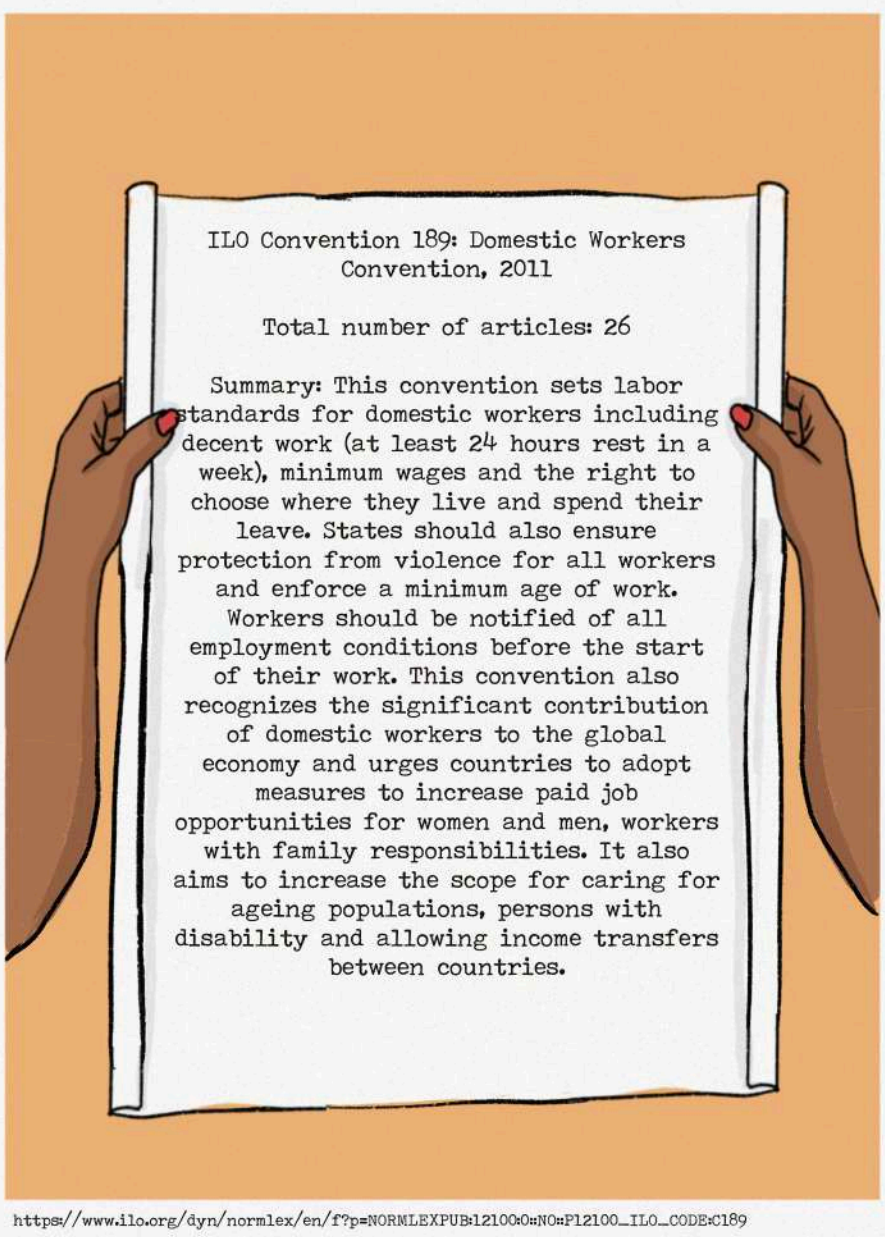
ILO Convention 131: Minimum Wage Fixing  
Convention, 1971

Total number of articles: 14

**Summary:** This convention allows countries, who have signed it, to adopt measures to fix a system of minimum wages for workers in the country. This system shall be adjusted from time to time keeping in consideration the needs of workers and their families, changing economic factors of the country.

Countries should involve social partners in an inclusive manner to design and implement this system.



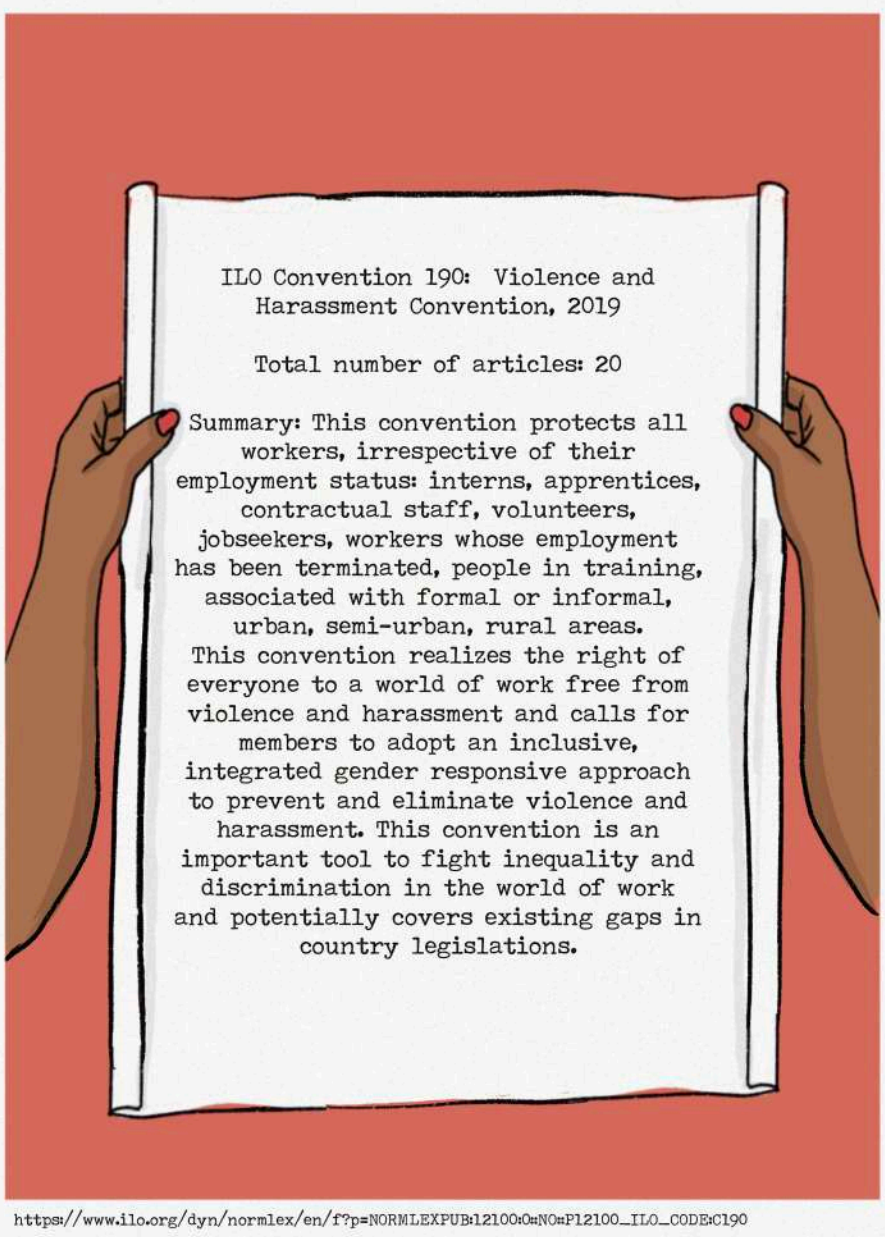
An illustration of a white document with a black border, held by two brown-skinned hands with red nail polish. The document contains text about the ILO Convention 189. The background is a solid light orange color.

ILO Convention 189: Domestic Workers  
Convention, 2011

Total number of articles: 26

Summary: This convention sets labor standards for domestic workers including decent work (at least 24 hours rest in a week), minimum wages and the right to choose where they live and spend their leave. States should also ensure protection from violence for all workers and enforce a minimum age of work.

Workers should be notified of all employment conditions before the start of their work. This convention also recognizes the significant contribution of domestic workers to the global economy and urges countries to adopt measures to increase paid job opportunities for women and men, workers with family responsibilities. It also aims to increase the scope for caring for ageing populations, persons with disability and allowing income transfers between countries.

An illustration of two hands, one on the left and one on the right, holding a white scroll against a red background. The scroll contains text about the ILO Convention 190. The hands are drawn in a simple, cartoonish style with brown skin and red nail polish.

ILO Convention 190: Violence and  
Harassment Convention, 2019

Total number of articles: 20

**Summary:** This convention protects all workers, irrespective of their employment status: interns, apprentices, contractual staff, volunteers, jobseekers, workers whose employment has been terminated, people in training, associated with formal or informal, urban, semi-urban, rural areas.

This convention realizes the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment and calls for members to adopt an inclusive, integrated gender responsive approach to prevent and eliminate violence and harassment. This convention is an important tool to fight inequality and discrimination in the world of work and potentially covers existing gaps in country legislations.

Nora's house in the present day:

Sabina,  
please help  
me with my  
wheelchair.

Yes, I am  
here.  
Don't worry!

Here son,  
have some  
food!

Nora's friend Patricia and her mother come to visit them.

Hello  
everyone!

Feeding Akasua  
isn't your  
responsibility,  
Anthony.

Care work is not  
gendered and  
everybody should  
share household  
responsibility.



Suddenly the TV startles everyone.



Following WHO guidelines, Sadiya is undergoing a lockdown to fight this pandemic.

I am requesting all citizens to kindly cooperate and do what is needed. Stay home, stay safe!

BREAKING NEWS- NATIONWIDE LOCKDOWN DUE TO COVID-19

The deadly Covid-19 viruses are fast spreading, all countries need to go on a complete lockdown!



World Health Organisation Chief

How Covid-19 lockdown looks in different regions:

📍 Europe



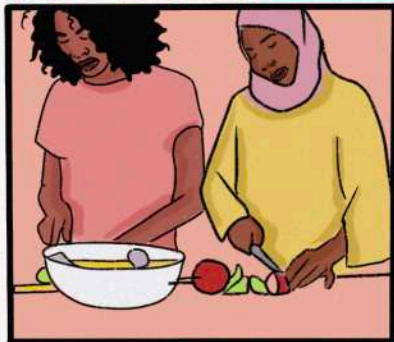
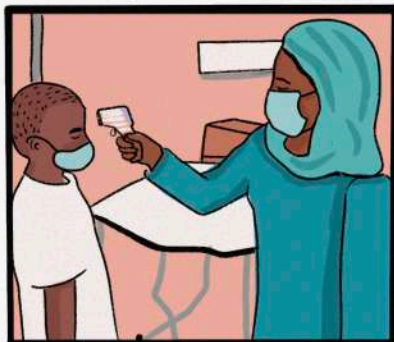
📍 Africa



📍 Sadiya



Nora's family during lockdown





## Unpaid care work



Unpaid care and domestic work refers to work that is currently primarily carried out by women in households, including caring for children, the sick, elderly or people with disabilities. These are called direct care work. Indirect care work done by women include cooking, cleaning, fetching water or firewood. Though these are work, they are not included in the system of national accounts of a country. Because of gender stereotypes and social norms, it is usually seen as work that needs to be done by women in the household.

Most often, across all regions, women are primarily engaged in care work. These activities are time-consuming and physically demanding. They restrict women's access to leisure time, decent work and increases their likelihood of living in poverty. Women living in poverty, as a result of care work, are often not considered in public services or public infrastructure. This limits their ability to purchase goods or services to substitute the labour required for such work and they continue to undertake care work responsibilities.

[https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/linking\\_global\\_to\\_local\\_imf\\_gender\\_actionaid\\_explainer.pdf](https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/linking_global_to_local_imf_gender_actionaid_explainer.pdf)

Meanwhile...

Esther Williams is making special announcements on tackling Covid-19 and new economic changes.



TOTAL VOTES FOR YES: 200  
TOTAL VOTES FOR NO: 130



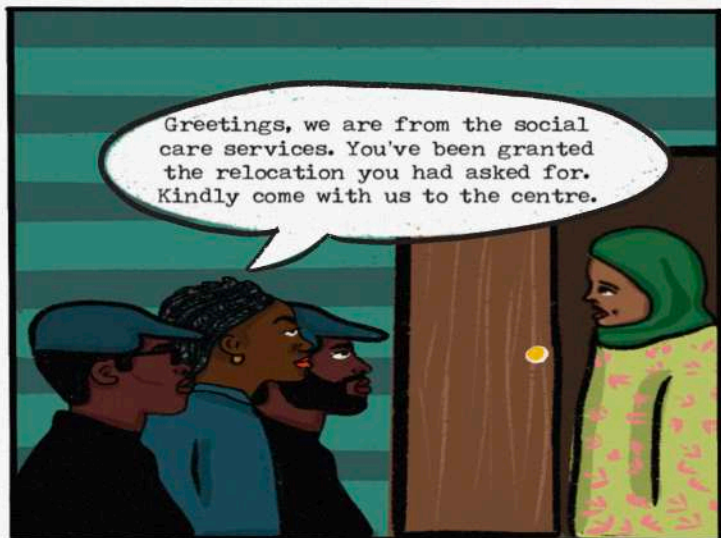
The Government of Sadiya has made massive cuts to public healthcare and education agreeing to IMF conditions. They have waived off minimum wages, labour laws for public services.



Anthony works overtime with no toilet breaks in unsafe conditions.





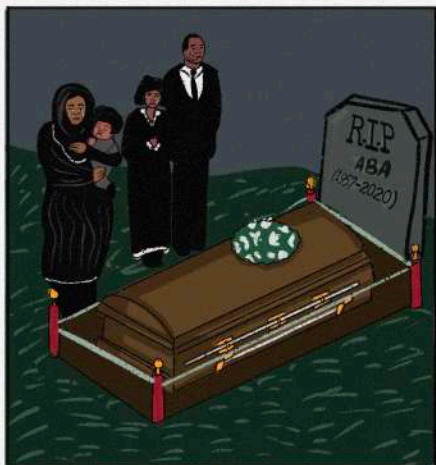
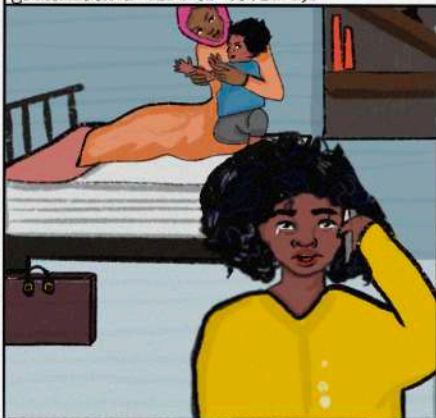


The lockdown has severely crippled Sadiya, and they end up taking more loans from the IMF. This has led to major cuts in public expenditure and slowing privatisations of healthcare and education sectors.



A few weeks later:

Anthony calls Nora to inform that her grandmother died of Covid-19.





I even sought therapy for my anger issues.



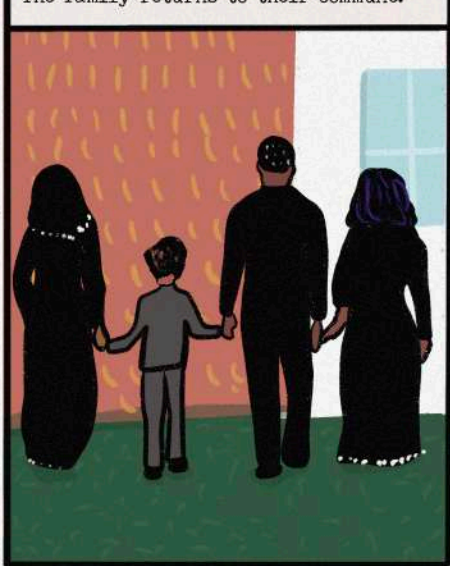
We will work through this together as a family, I am sorry for your loss.



Anthony for the past few weeks:



The family returns to their commune.



A Covid-19 vaccine has been developed. Different countries have started their vaccine drives.



📍 London, December 2020



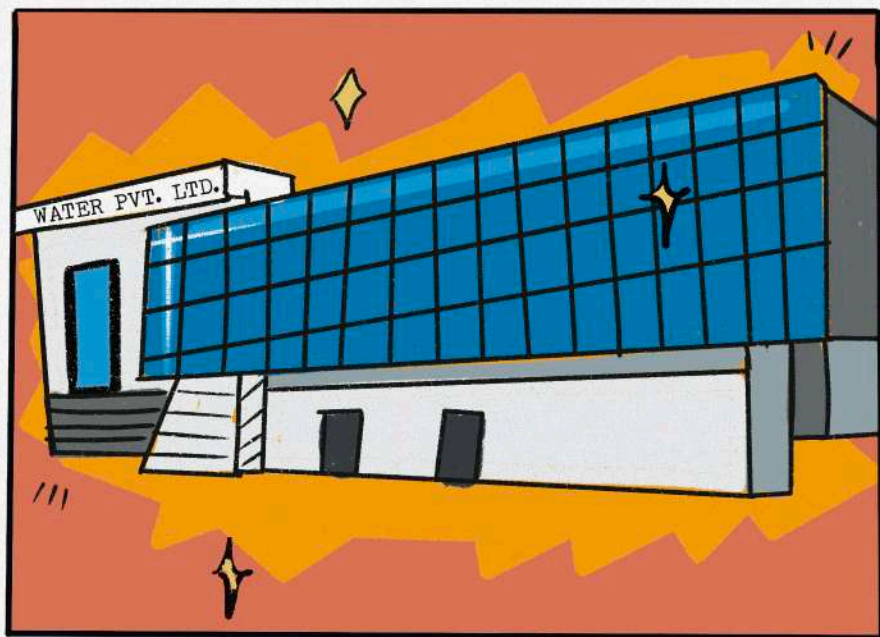
📍 Paris, January 2021

Esther Williams announces Sadiya to be free of Covid-19. However, many citizens haven't received the vaccines even in late 2021.



📍 Oromoso, November 2021

Sadiya continues to struggle with heavy debt repayments. The public sector investments are massively reduced, poverty and inequality continues to cripple the country. There are no stable employment opportunities for the youth as a result of this.





Nora struggles to complete her education and takes up odd jobs





### MANIFESTO FOR SADIYA'S FUTURE

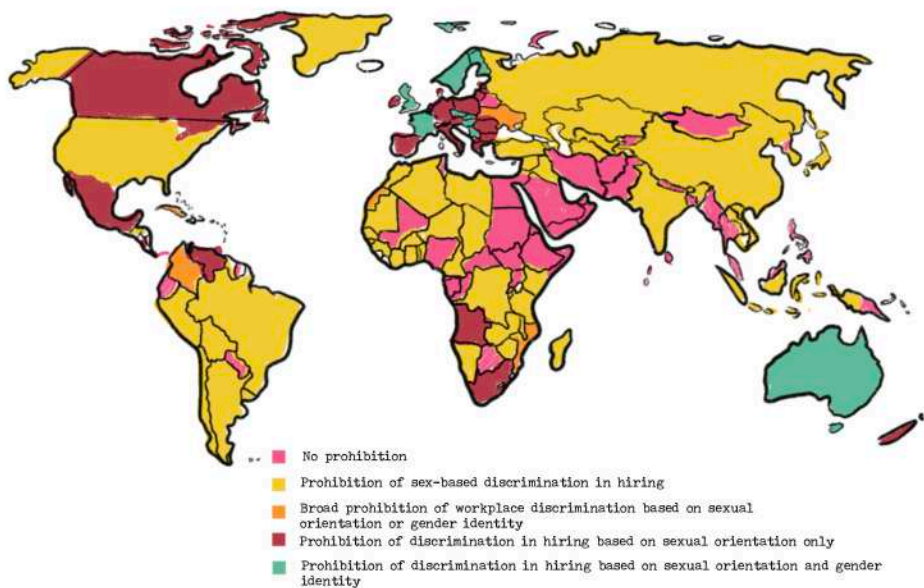
1. We demand more public schools at primary, secondary and senior secondary levels
2. We demand free universal public healthcare, more public hospitals with adequate number of doctors and nurses
3. We demand a new law to ensure safe working conditions for all workers, private, government, formal, informal workers in urban or rural Sadiya
4. We demand a new law to eliminate violence, harassment and discrimination in the workplace
5. We demand a new parental leave policy to ensure that both mother and father share child care responsibilities and also state provisions for child care services.

As Sadiya has signed ILO conventions 189 and 190, the Government has to ensure that new laws are created or old laws are modified to ensure decent, safe working spaces for all workers and eliminate violence, harassment and discrimination in the workplace for all formal, informal, private, public sector employees and workers in urban or rural areas.



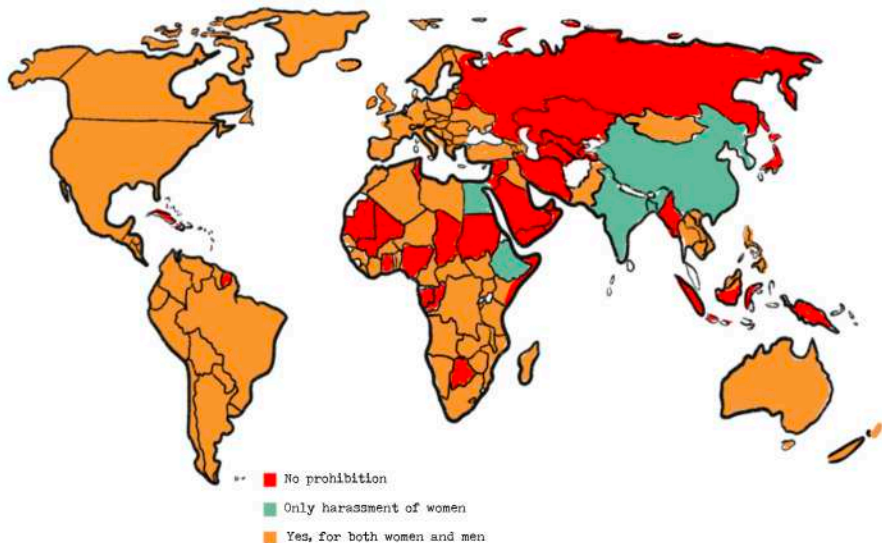


Countries with laws to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual or gender identity:



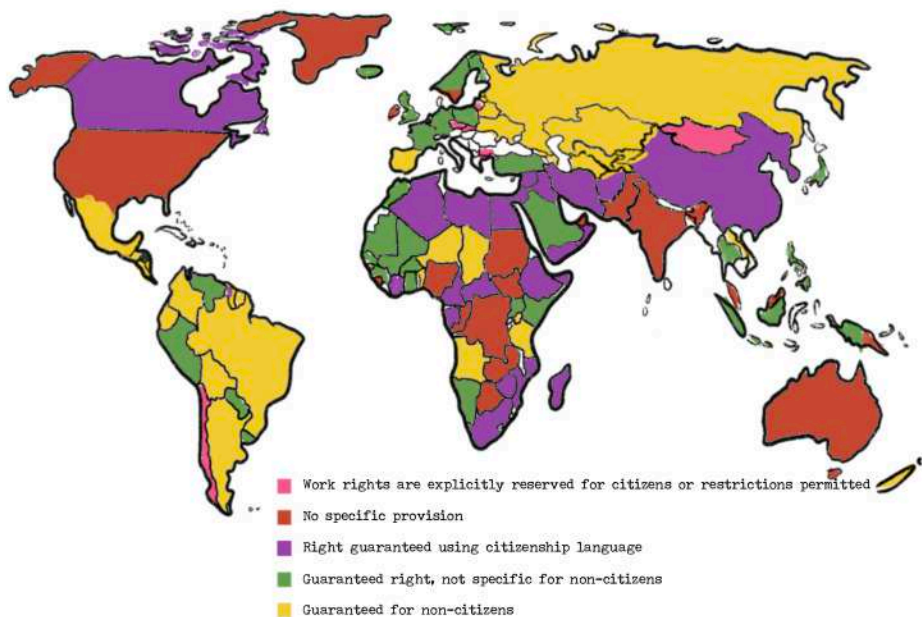
\* <https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/policies/does-legislation-prohibit-discrimination-at-work-based-on-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-/does-legislation-explicitly-prohibit-discrimination-in-hiring-or-recruitment-on-the-basis-of-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>

Countries with laws to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in the workplace:



\*<https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/policies/is-sexual-harassment-explicitly-prohibited-in-the-workplace>

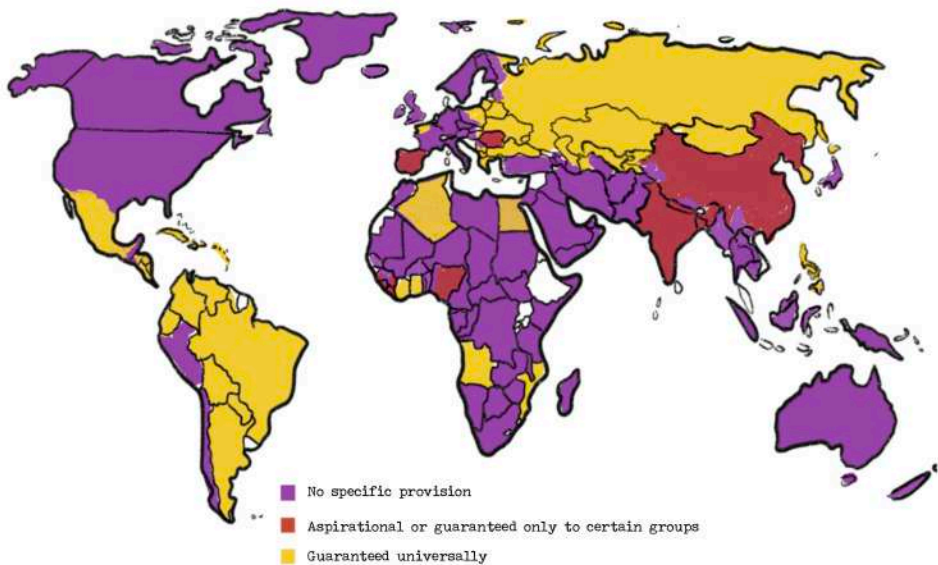
Countries with constitutional rights to equality at work and decent working conditions:



\*<https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/policies/does-the-constitution-take-an-explicit-approach-to-protecting-non-citizens-right-to-equality-at-work-or-to-decent-working-conditions>

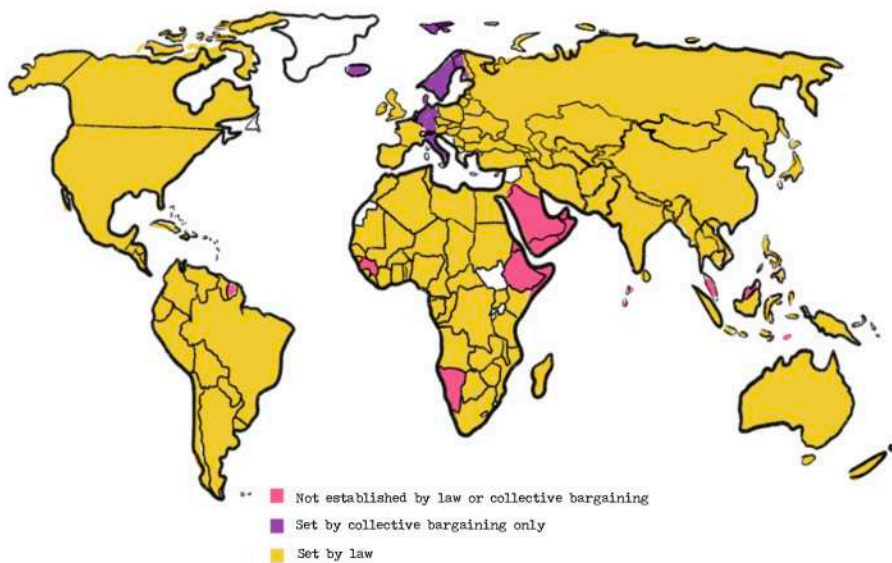


Countries with constitutional rights to safe working conditions:



\*<https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/policies/does-the-constitution-explicitly-guarantee-the-right-to-safe-working-conditions>

Countries that have minimum wage policies:



\*<https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/policies/how-is-minimum-wage-established>

Meanwhile in Sadiya, various advocacy groups are demanding provision of care services, including crèches and services for the elderly, sick and disabled; improved public services like water, electricity, roads, public transport, street lights, improved funding for safer public spaces, better and safer public transport and social care services for women's safety.





Nora comes home to her Mom and shares about her learnings from the meeting.



Nora is sharing with the community what decent work, unpaid care and domestic work are. She shares about the 4 R's.





# The 4 R s:

---

**Recognition:** Recognition of unpaid care work in households means care work should be seen and valued as important work that is also a major contribution to the country's and the global economy.

**Reduction:** Reducing the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women by coming up with smart labor saving technology like electricity provision which allows for appliances that reduce drudgery of women's domestic work.

**Redistribution:** Distributing the responsibility of care work fairly within households and eventually onwards to the community and the state. For example, care for elderly and young children can be done by everyone in the family and the government setting up proper elderly and child care centres will eventually lead to redistributing the care work.

**Representation:** All care givers- especially women and marginalised groups, whose voices are most often not heard- should be given priority while creating new laws or policies that affect the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work.





Nora supports the community to take action with a time-use diary exercise and asks everyone to keep note of what work they do in a day.





A week later the community gets together to share their results.



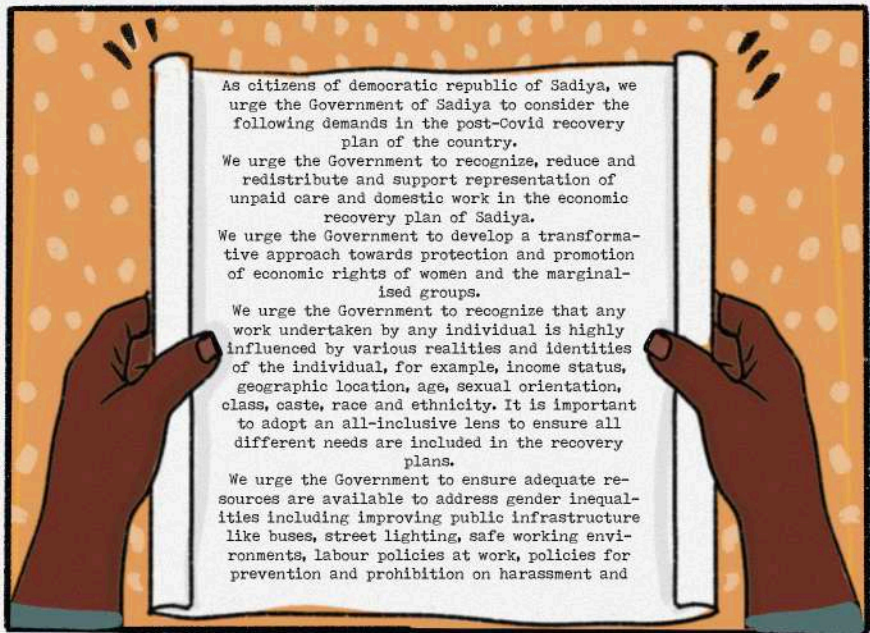
From the results of the time use diary, we all have seen that it is mostly women and young girls who do a lot of work in the households, right from waking up early in the morning to collect water and firewood to doing the dishes late at night and only sleeping for 5 hours. We must follow the 4R s that Nora taught us in our own lives as well, besides asking our Government to apply the same in our country s laws.

We all can decide to meet our local politician and submit a request soon.



A week later Nora leads the community to meet their District Councillor and engages him in a conversation to spend more on public infrastructure in their district.







District Counsellor's Office, Oromoso

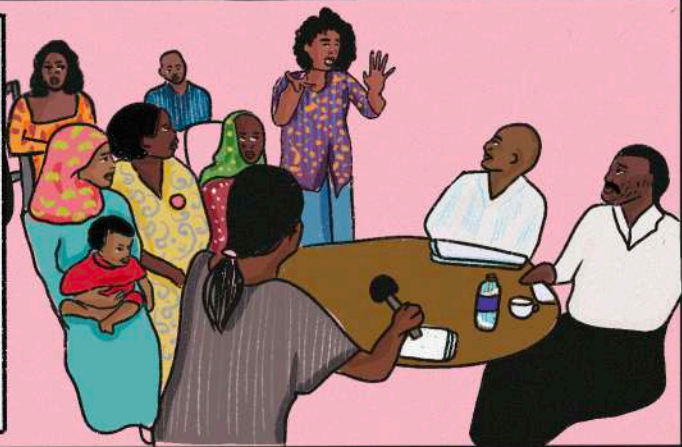
Thank you. I assure you all that I shall take this forward from here and submit these demands to our local elected representative.

DC informs Nora that the local politician who was appointed as the Minister of Social Services with the People's Party of Sadiya, has agreed to meet her, Nora and representatives of the community to hear their requests.



Nora and the members of the community meet the DC and Mr. Dominic, who is the Minister of Social Services of Sadiya. Nora shares about the time use diary exercise and the manifesto.

Minister assures the community that he will table the issue in the next meet-



Total Votes for Yes: 250  
Total Votes for No: 80



Nora's family and the community celebrate their victory!





Good work, Nora!



Designed and Illustrated by



Ipsita Divedi

Story and Concept by



Megha Kashyap  
Policy Specialist,  
ActionAid UK

Contributors & Reviewers



Lila Caballero  
Head of Research &  
Programme Policy,  
ActionAid UK



Wangari Kinoti,  
Policy Adviser,  
Women's Rights,  
ActionAid



Lee Webster,  
Deputy Director, International  
Development  
Policy & Practice  
ActionAid UK



Margaret Brew-Ward  
Women's Rights & Campaigns  
Manager,  
ActionAid Ghana



Thelma Assabre  
ActionAid Ghana



Judy Odour  
ActionAid Kenya



Ella Hopkins  
Senior Gender Equality and  
Macroeconomics Project Officer,  
Bretton Woods Project,  
ActionAid UK



Lauren Messery  
Visual Content Specialist,  
ActionAid UK



Amy Harrison  
Senior Technical Specialist  
VAWG Prevention & Response,  
ActionAid UK



Fatimah Kelleher  
Senior Policy Specialist,  
Women's Economic Rights,  
ActionAid UK



Neha Kagal  
Senior Technical Specialist - Senior Technical Specialist,  
Women's Rights,  
ActionAid UK



Katy Chadwick  
Senior Technical Specialist,  
ActionAid UK





Katherine Robinson,  
Youth Engagement  
Advisor,  
ActionAid International



Amiera Sawas,  
Senior Policy & Research  
Specialist  
ActionAid



Ross Finch  
Independent Artist &  
Designer



Ben Stephens, Multi  
Channel Copywriter,  
ActionAid UK

Inspired and informed by Young Urban Women Groups across countries  
where ActionAid works.

---

**ActionAid**

33-39 Bowling Green Lane  
London EC1R 0BJ

[www.actionaid.org.uk](http://www.actionaid.org.uk)

 @ActionAidUK

 ActionAidUK

 @ActionAidUK

ActionAid is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in

England and Wales (Company number 01296174)

England and Wales charity number 274467

Scottish charity number SC045476

Registered Office 33-39 Bowling Green Lane, London EC1R 0BJ