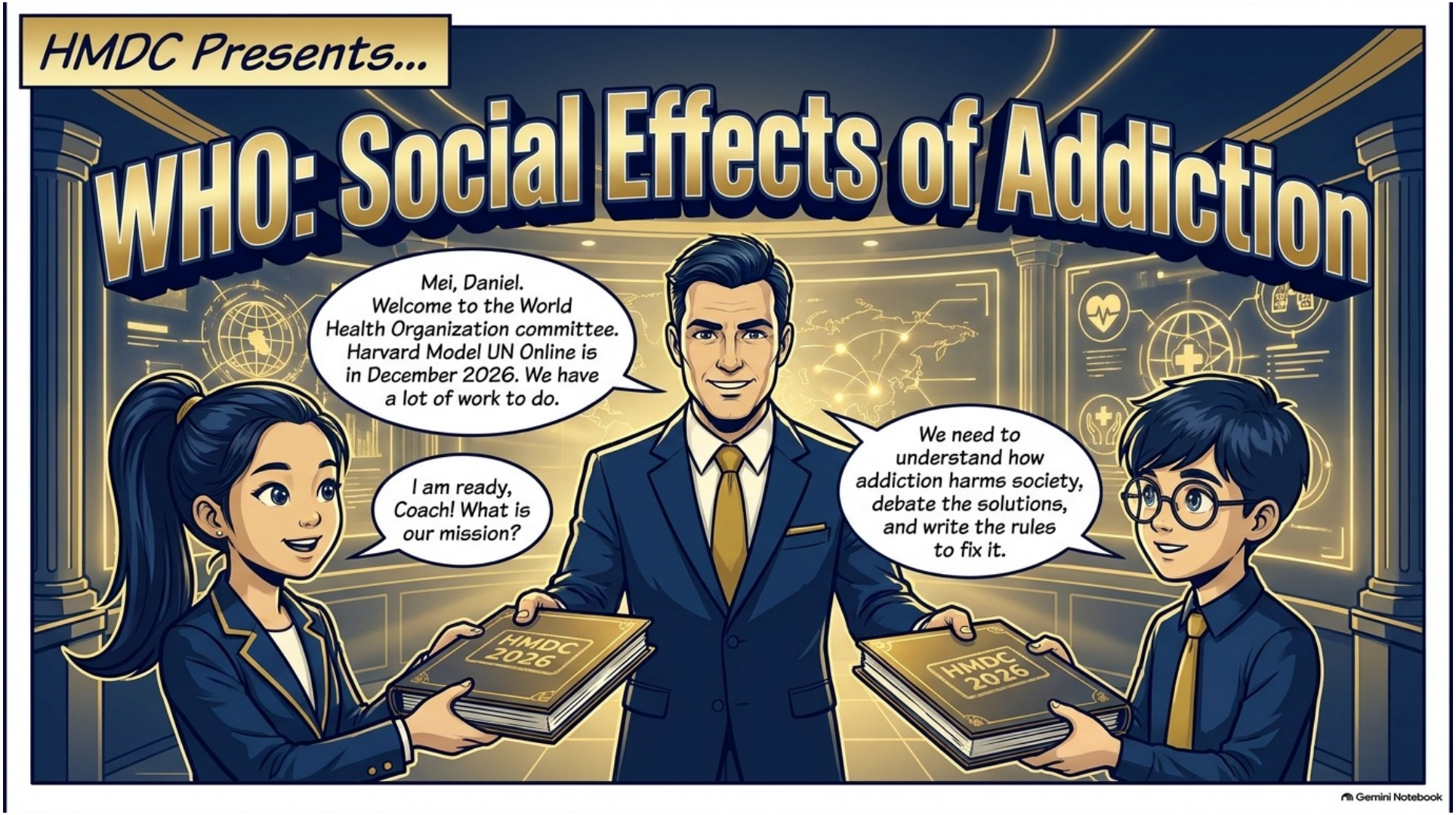
HMDC Presents...
WHO: Social Effects of Addiction
Mei, Daniel. Welcome to the World Health Organization committee. Harvard Model UN Online is in December 2026. We have a lot of work to do.
I am ready, Coach! What is our mission?
We need to understand how addiction harms society, debate the solutions, and write the rules to fix it.
HMDC 2026
HMDC 2026
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The numbers are huge. In 2024, 331 million people used drugs. That is going up, not down.
Exactly. It is a global crisis. But the harm does not stop with the user.
And the deaths are worse. Alcohol kills about 2.6 million people every year. Other drugs kill 600,000.
Case File Source: World Health Organization, June 25, 2024.
Case File Source: UN News, June 26, 2026.
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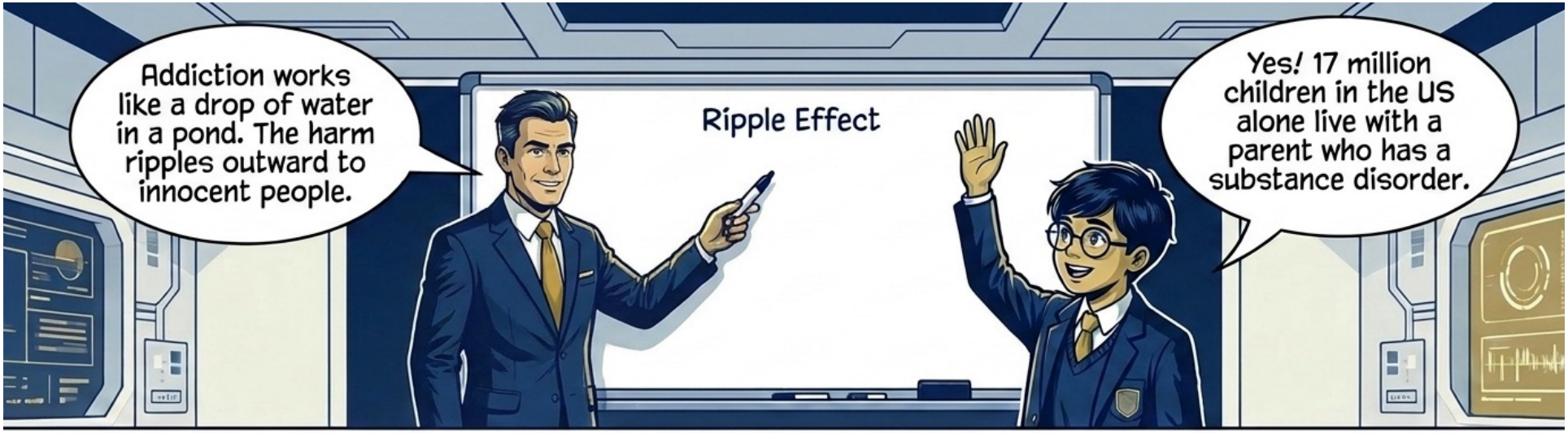
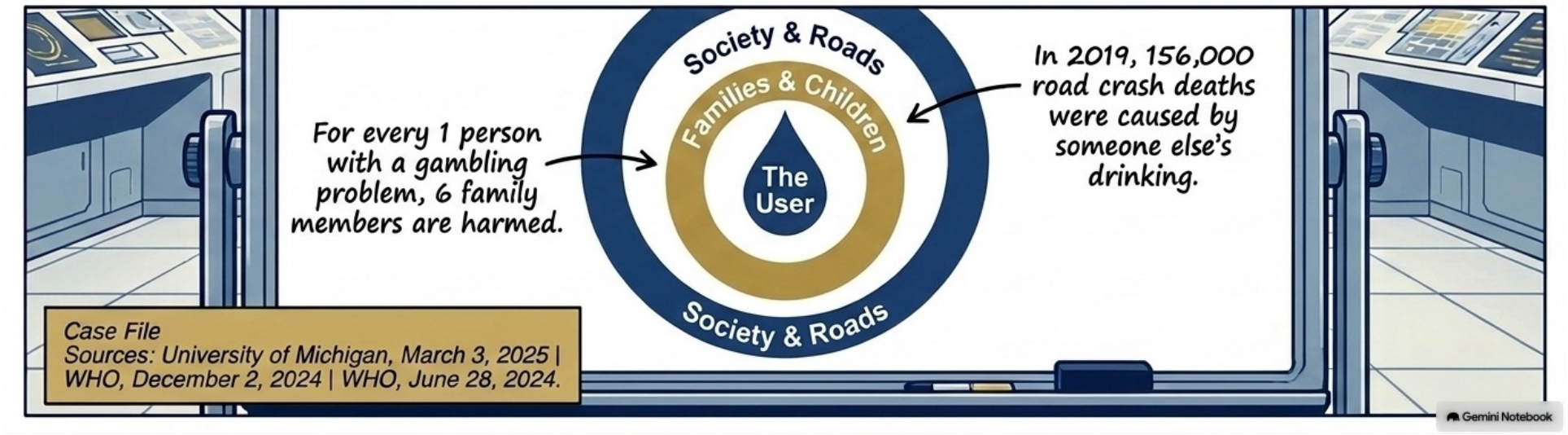

Addiction works like a drop of water in a pond. The harm ripples outward to innocent people.
Ripple Effect
Yes! 17 million children in the US alone live with a parent who has a substance disorder.


For every 1 person with a gambling problem, 6 family members are harmed.
Society & Roads
Families & Children
The User
Society & Roads
In 2019, 156,000 road crash deaths were caused by someone else's drinking.
Case File
Sources: University of Michigan, March 3, 2025 | WHO, December 2, 2024 | WHO, June 28, 2024.
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Solution 1: Treatment & Overdose Response
The first solution is medical treatment. A medicine called naloxone stops opioid overdoses.
We should expand this! WHO says overdose deaths are preventable. Methadone treatment saves lives.
But other delegates will say it costs too much! Only 1 in 12 people with a drug disorder gets treatment. Poor countries lack trained doctors.
Sources: WHO, August 29, 2025 | UNODC World Drug Report
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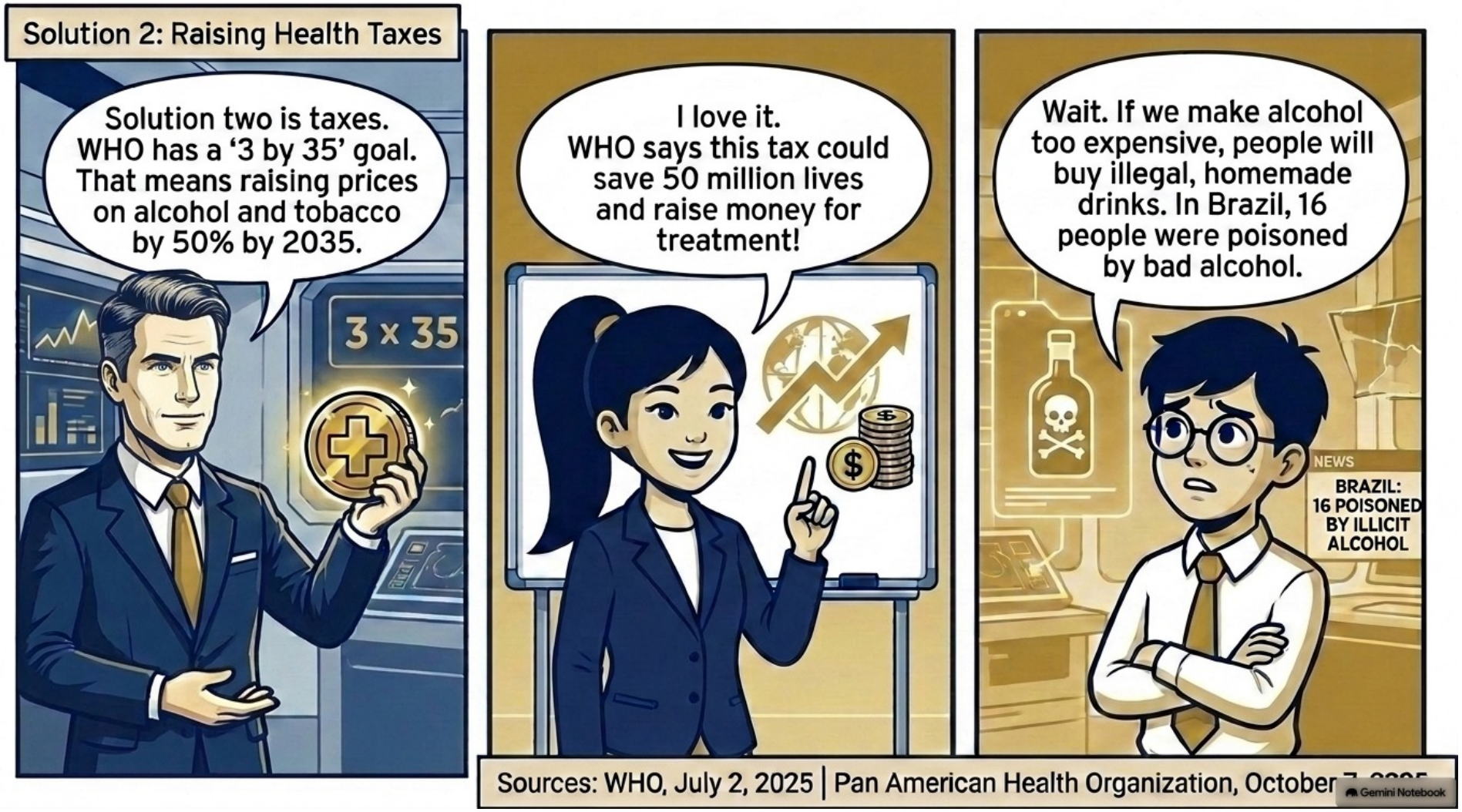
Solution 2: Raising Health Taxes
Solution two is taxes. WHO has a '3 by 35' goal. That means raising prices on alcohol and tobacco by 50% by 2035.
3 x 35
I love it. WHO says this tax could save 50 million lives and raise money for treatment!
Wait. If we make alcohol too expensive, people will buy illegal, homemade drinks. In Brazil, 16 people were poisoned by bad alcohol.
NEWS
BRAZIL: 16 POISONED BY ILLICIT ALCOHOL
Sources: WHO, July 2, 2025 | Pan American Health Organization, October
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Solution 3: Health, Not Crime
Solution three is treating drug use as a health issue, not sending users to prison.
It works! In Portugal, the share of prisoners held for drugs fell from 44% to 21%.
DRUG PRISONERS
44% TO 21%
But Oregon removed penalties and overdoses just kept rising. Voters wanted the law cancelled.
OVERDOSES
CANCELLED LAW
I get it! Changing the law only works if you **pay for treatment services** first.
Case File
Sources: UNSW Sydney, November 2024 | Brookings Institution, September 17, 2024.
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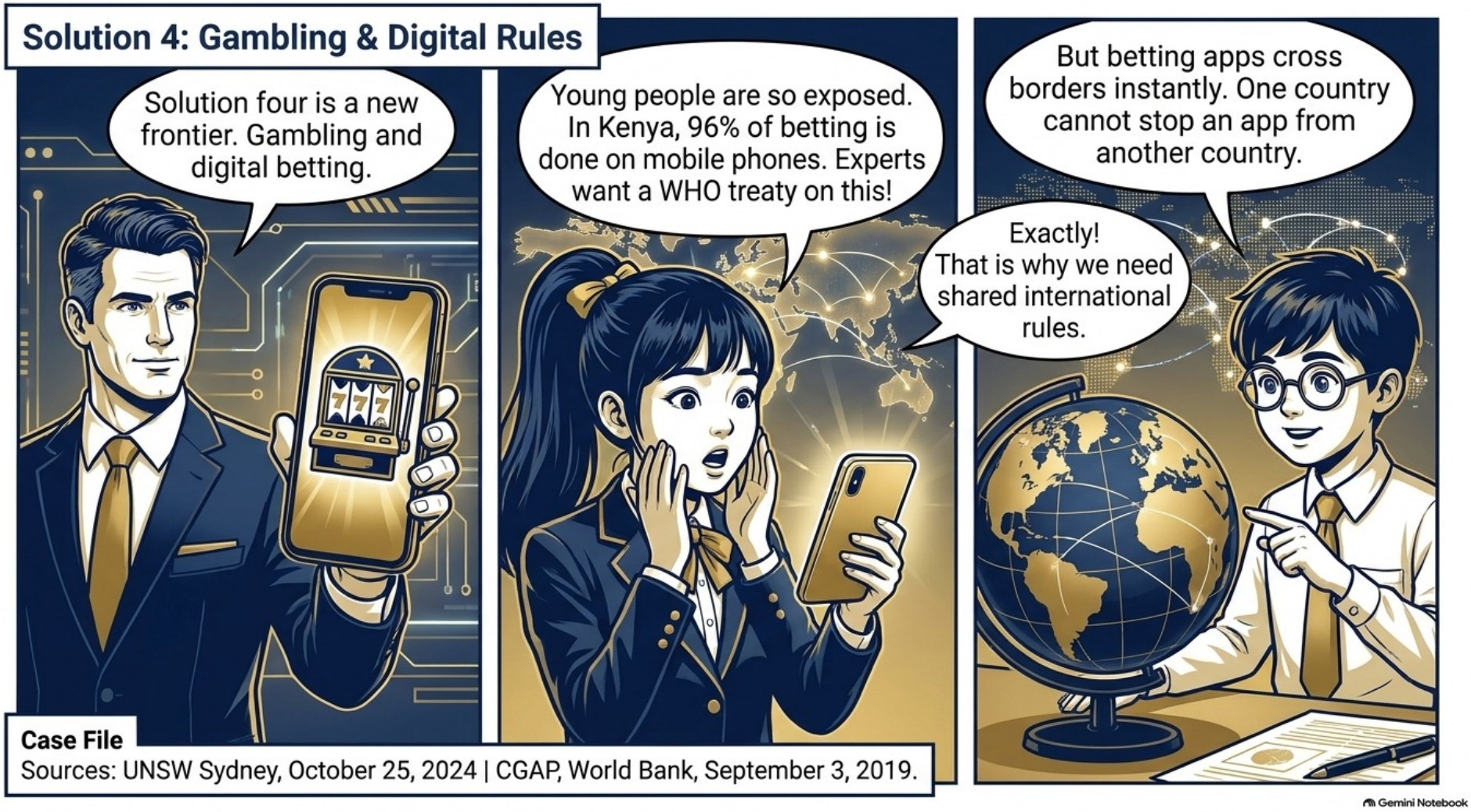
Solution 4: Gambling & Digital Rules
Solution four is a new frontier. Gambling and digital betting.
Young people are so exposed. In Kenya, 96% of betting is done on mobile phones. Experts want a WHO treaty on this!
But betting apps cross borders instantly. One country cannot stop an app from another country.
Exactly! That is why we need shared international rules.
Case File
Sources: UNSW Sydney, October 25, 2024 | CGAP, World Bank, September 3, 2019.
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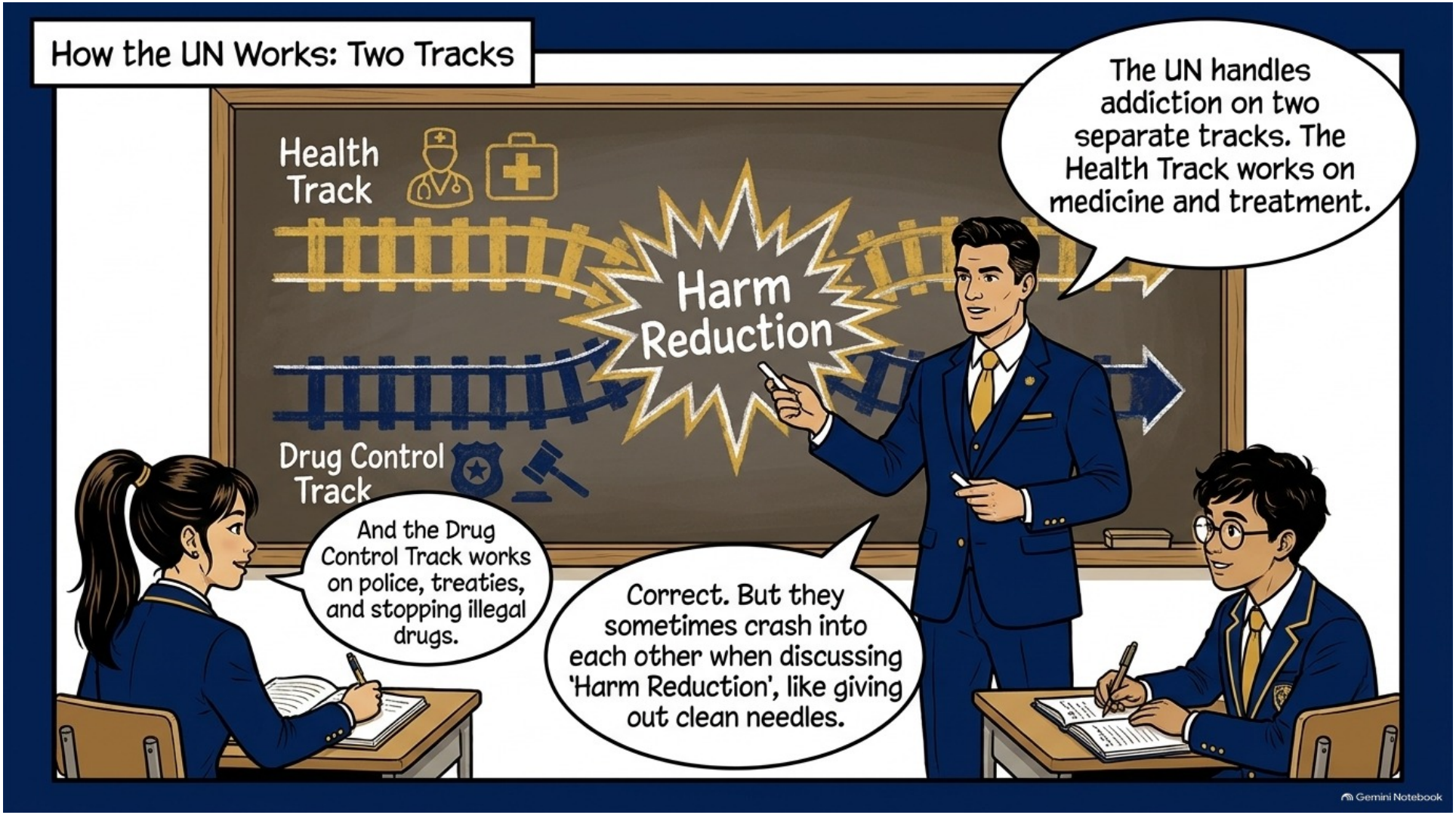
How the UN Works: Two Tracks
Health Track
Harm Reduction
Drug Control Track
The UN handles addiction on two separate tracks. The Health Track works on medicine and treatment.
And the Drug Control Track works on police, treaties, and stopping illegal drugs.
Correct. But they sometimes crash into each other when discussing 'Harm Reduction', like giving out clean needles.
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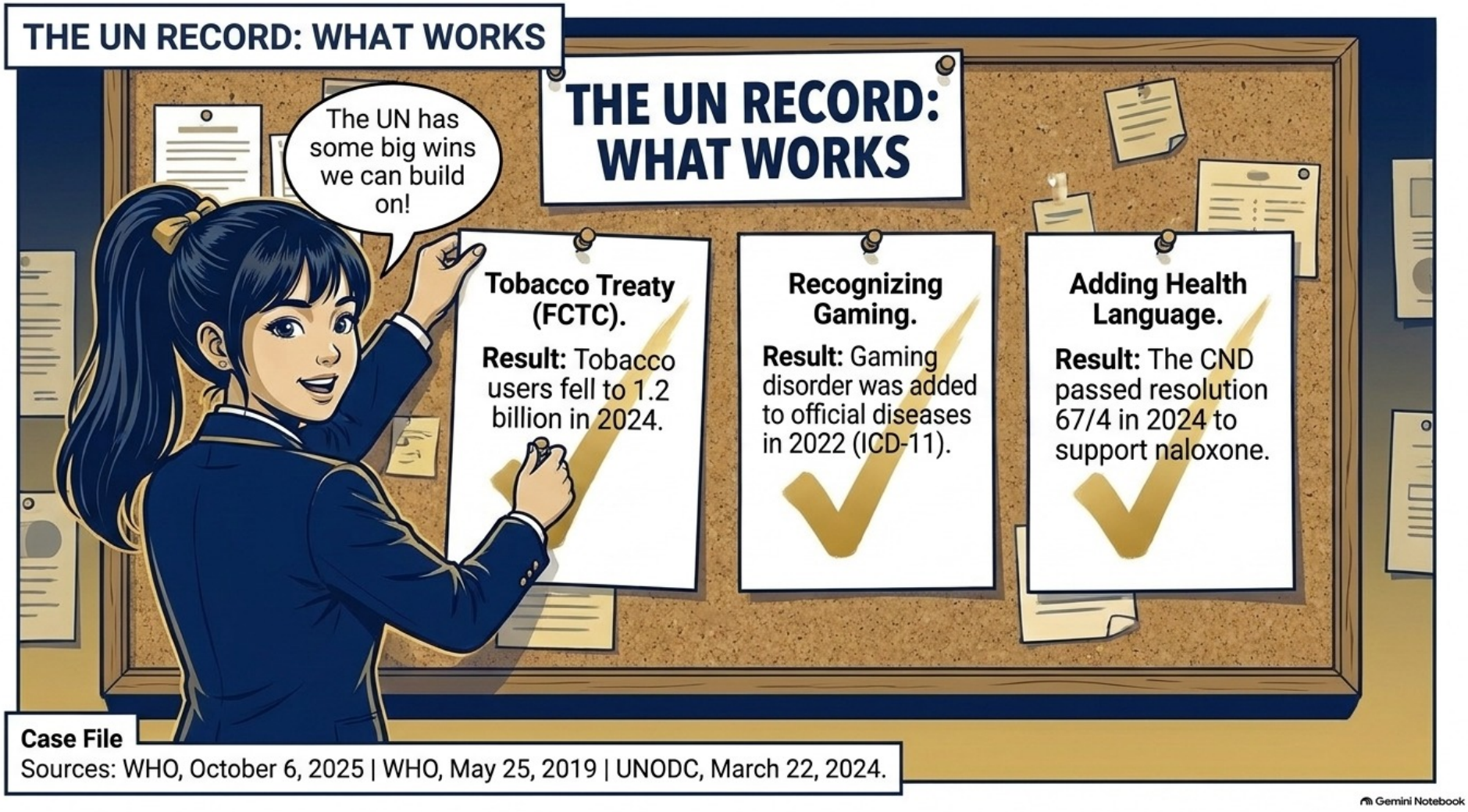
THE UN RECORD: WHAT WORKS
The UN has some big wins we can build on!
THE UN RECORD: WHAT WORKS
Tobacco Treaty (FCTC).
Result: Tobacco users fell to 1.2 billion in 2024.
Recognizing Gaming.
Result: Gaming disorder was added to official diseases in 2022 (ICD-11).
Adding Health Language.
Result: The CND passed resolution 67/4 in 2024 to support naloxone.
Case File
Sources: WHO, October 6, 2025 | WHO, May 25, 2019 | UNODC, March 22, 2024.
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The UN Record: What Is Missing
But there are huge gaps for our committee to fix.
The UN Record: What Is Missing
Missed Targets.
Result: The world missed its 2025 goal to cut tobacco use by 30%.
Zero Gambling Treaties.
Result: The UN has no global rules for the $700 billion gambling industry.
Divided Member States.
Result: A recent drug policy vote was highly split: 124 to 9, with 45 abstentions.
Case File
Sources: WHO, October 6, 2025 | UNSW Sydney, October 25, 2024 | UN Digital Library, December 15, 2022.
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Outside the UN, charity groups do the hard work on the ground. But they are at risk.
Filling Gaps:
NGOs track services.
34 countries now provide take-home naloxone.
Failing Funding:
Funding is too low.
When the US cut aid in 2025, 5,000 people in South Africa lost methadone treatment.
Case File
Sources: Harm Reduction International, Dec 12, 2024 & Nov 19, 2025.
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MUN Skills: Writing Your Speech
Now, how do you persuade the committee? Use the 3-Step Framework.
3. CALL TO ACTION. Tell the committee exactly what to vote for.
2. POINT. Explain your country's main argument clearly.
1. HOOK. Grab attention with a shocking fact or human story.
Honorable Chair! 17 million children are hidden victims of addiction. My country believes we must act. We urge you to support health taxes today!
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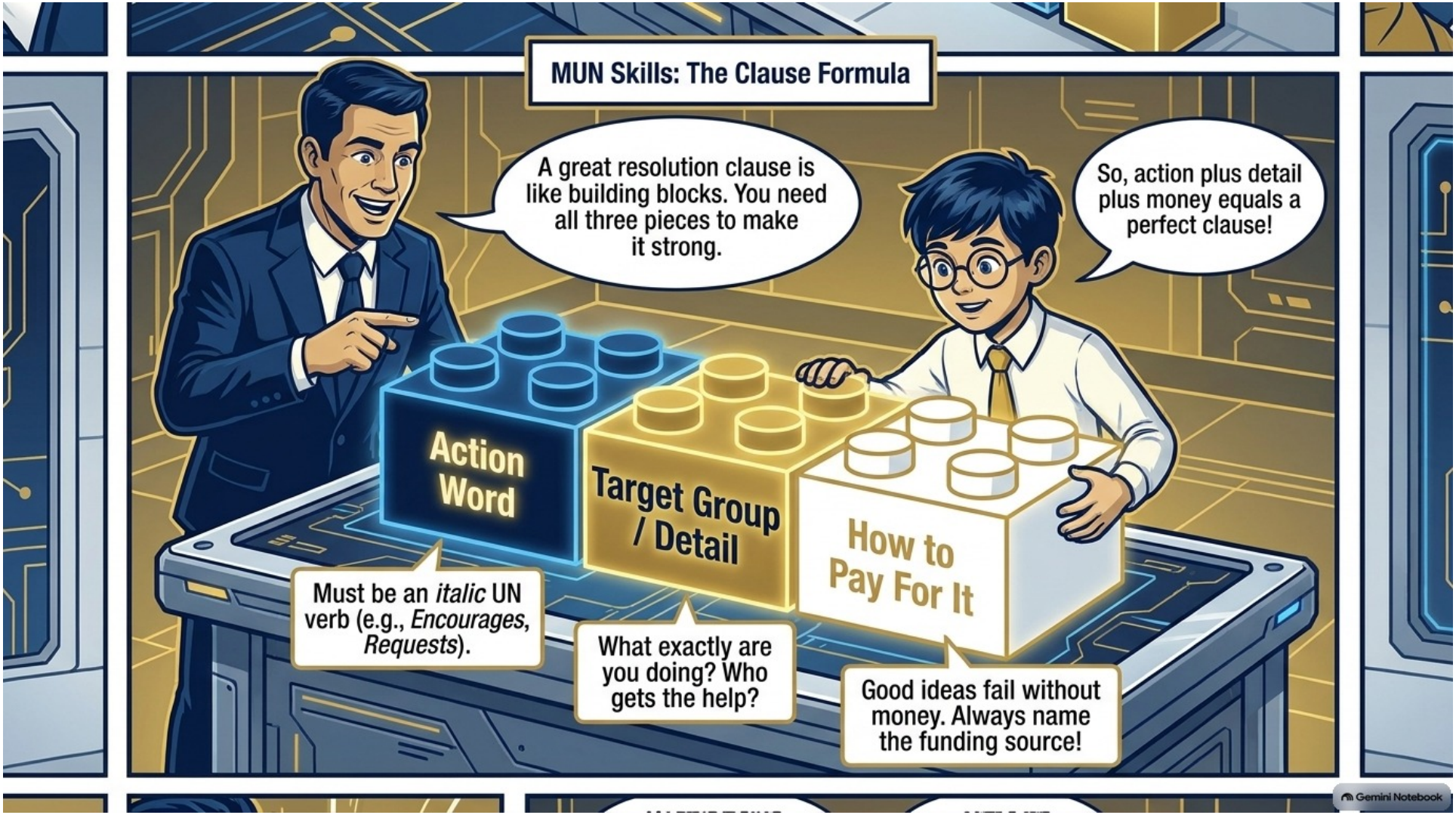
MUN Skills: The Clause Formula
A great resolution clause is like building blocks. You need all three pieces to make it strong.
So, action plus detail plus money equals a perfect clause!
Action Word
Target Group / Detail
How to Pay For It
Must be an *italic* UN verb (e.g., *Encourages*, *Requests*).
What exactly are you doing? Who gets the help?
Good ideas fail without money. Always name the funding source!
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MUN Skills: Proposed Solutions - The 4-Point Plan
TREATMENT: Requests member states to make naloxone available to families, funded by national health budgets.
TAXES: Endorses the '3 by 35" tax initiative, directing new revenue to stop illegal alcohol sales.
GAMBLING: Develops the first global guidance on gambling harm and phone-based betting.
FAMILIES: Includes child protection services in addiction plans so hidden victims are supported early.
Excellent work, team! These are solid, well-defined clauses ready for debate.
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You know the facts.
You know the solutions.
You know how to write the clauses.
We are ready to protect families and communities.
We are ready for committee.
SEE YOU AT HARVARD MODEL UN ONLINE!
DECEMBER 5-6, 2026.
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