



A Role Playing Exercise of a Wheelchair Program in Central America

Wheelchairs for the World

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This sheet of paper describes your role and gives you instructions. In order to achieve the intention of the exercise, please do not share this paper or discuss the contents with anyone else unless directed to do so by an instructor or these instructions.

After reading these instructions, you will get together with the other people who have been assigned your role to discuss it and make sure everything is clear to you. After this, you will join a group of the other players in this exercise. Your role is listed below:



Wheelchair Donation NGO Manager:

Donald (or Doreen) Do-gooder

You are a middle-manager in a global humanitarian relief non-governmental organization (NGO). You have been assigned to lead a wheelchair donation project focusing on Central America. The goal of this program is simple: deliver wheelchairs to people in Central America who need them but cannot afford them. You will be evaluated within your organization based on the number of people you serve and the time it takes you to do it. For some reason, funding for these programs seems to be hard to find lately. Your predecessor was fired two months ago for not producing results. You have been working night and day to find donors, but have thus far had no luck in securing funding for your operation. A portion of the funding you raise goes to pay the overhead, which includes your salary. If you can't get your project funded, you will lose your job.

After many dead-ends, you have managed to secure a meeting with a grants officer from a wealthy foundation that has a reputation for being generous in the cause of international disability assistance. You are aware that there will be other parties at this meeting who may be competing for the same money.

You have to make your case and convince the grants officer to fund your project, or it will not go any further. You are encouraged, however, by the hundreds of pictures of smiling recipients of chairs that have been helped by your program, taken at previous distribution events and included in past reports. From the reports you've read, mobility allows them to go to school, get vocational training, get jobs, and become participating members of the economy and society.

Your offer seems unbeatable: 1,000 brand-new Everest and Jennings wheelchairs at 10% of their cost. E&J was under contract to produce chairs to fully outfit all of the hospitals in Massachusetts. However, a production run of 1,000 chairs had an error in their painting step and the color of the frames and fabric does not match. They are offering you chairs that normally sell for \$1,000 for only \$100 a piece. Shipping to get the chairs to Central America is another \$10 per chair. Since you want the people who receive the chairs to really value them, your organization does not just give them away, but rather charges a \$50 fee per chair. You can send a lot of chairs down south for the \$100,000 this funder is offering. As you are going over the numbers, don't forget the 15% overhead your organization charges for providing this service (including paying your salary, warehousing the chairs, and paying other administrative staff, etc.).