

Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Aid



Transparency International defines corruption as,

The abuse of
entrusted power
for private gain.

Facilitation Payments

A type of bribe, often requested or given to speed up a process or approval.

Facilitation Payments: Group Discussion



You are finishing a latrine construction project after your predecessor left suddenly. Unfortunately, things are going poorly. Your main contact in the Water and Sanitation department keeps asking for extra, unofficial fees for the construction permits you need. Each time you refuse to pay, there are suddenly additional administrative barriers to finishing your project, all of which involve fees.

Facilitation payments are common in this region. Your predecessor regularly paid these fees, saying it was more important to finish the project than it was to worry about small payments. Now it seems to be expected, and after two months on the job with hardly any progress, you feel powerless to complete the project without making these types of payments.

Conflicts of Interest

Situations where a person's decisions relating to a primary interest (such as the good of the organization) might be influenced by a secondary interest (such as helping a family member or business associate.)

Conflicts of Interest: Group Discussion



Anh is coordinating the hire of an assistant for her boss Mike, a high-ranking member of the expatriate staff. Two candidates were interviewed and scored by the selection committee. One candidate was clearly more qualified than the other, making the selection committee's decision easy. However, when Anh brought the paperwork to Mike, he refused to sign, saying that he wanted the other candidate.

Anh suspects that Mike's preferred candidate is a personal friend from his religious community, but she doesn't have proof. She has only been working for Mike for a few months, but she has noticed that he becomes angry when challenged. She is afraid that if she doesn't do what Mike says, she will lose her job, which she needs to support her family.

Gifts

Something given, either in an attempt to influence actions or as a small token.

Exploitation

Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability or power.

Exploitation: Group Discussion



Ebele is a beneficiary in a community where your organization distributes food during a drought response. She has serious concerns about the distribution of aid and several of your organization's volunteers. At times, she worries that your organization is doing almost as much harm in her community as it is doing good.

Ebele thinks of herself as a leader in the community and wants to do something to help, but she is worried about the safety of her family if she speaks up.

Do you see signs of corruption?

Even though several people in your department handle procurement contracts, every time that a particular vendor comes into the office he asks to talk to your coworker Paul. If Paul isn't available, the vendor leaves. This vendor's company, Marly Medical Supplies, has won several contracts with your organization to supply medical kits to the field.

You've noticed that Paul often sends emails from his personal email account during work hours. He has recently bought an expensive car.

Bid Documents

Marly Medical Supplies
254 5th St.

500 Mdeical Kits --- \$550

Price good until April 3

Kits Medical
75964 North West Blvd

500 Mdeical Kits: \$600

Total: \$600

Green Care Supplies
325 High St.

500 Mdeical Kits: \$800

"Quality medical
supplies for 50
years"

Outcome

Two weeks later, Paul is let go from the organization and Marley Medical Supplies is added to your team's blacklist. Through co-workers, you learn that Paul had been receiving kickbacks from several vendors

Do you see signs of corruption?

A District Social Welfare Officer has seemed reluctant to have you perform a site visit to a camp in an area he represents, saying that the situation is unsafe. However, you have insisted on visiting the camp. You were told that hundreds of beneficiaries are living here, but the camp looks deserted. You are told that people are away for the day working and visiting friends. The man shows you inside of one of the tents where people are living.



Outcome

You bring the situation to the attention of your manager, saying that it appears the District Social Welfare Officer is trying to give the impression that there are far more beneficiaries in this camp than there really are, perhaps as a way to get excess funds and resources from your organization. Together, you develop a plan to work with other organizations and the local community to conduct a more accurate needs assessment that bypasses this local government official.