

SIMULATION EXERCISE

When managing our work, we constantly need to balancing efficiency, effectiveness, economy and equity in decision making about program implementation. Although this can be particularly challenging in humanitarian work because of the urgency, we must make similar quick decisions in the development context. Lack of information, missing community voices, unsafe programs, unused local capacity, influence on the environment, human resource shortage, limited budget can lead to unexpected results.

In the following simulation exercise, you will try your hand at balancing responsible management of resources taking into account participation, information, timeliness with impact in the delivery of a specific program.

Scenario:

The context is a country in the Horn of Africa which was at war for many years, but where a tentative peace has now been established and a number of development programs are starting. This is the first time your organization is working in the country, so you are first going to have to set up an office and recruit a staff team. You have funding for a two-year program, for which the objective is to deliver a quality basic (primary) education to the maximum number of pupils possible in Elephant State in the east of the country. The population of Elephant State is widely scattered. The terrain is swampy, and there are many places which can only be reached by boat (or helicopter, in the rainy season). There are no tarmac roads at all in the State. Fortunately, security has not been an issue, and international organizations are being welcomed by the communities for the assistance they bring. You are taking over from an organization which decided to exit the country after the peace agreement was signed. Their funding was more limited than yours, and the main achievement of their engagement was the refurbishment of the primary school in the State capital, which is functioning well and has an enrollment of 500 pupils.

Each team has a budget of 100 pounds. Your goal is to gain the most quality points you can before you exhaust your budget. There are 13 **decision stages** altogether. For each decision you make, there is a set cost and a set number of quality points. Each decision made can incur a cost of between 0 to 10 pounds. If you go for the most expensive option at every stage, you will exhaust your budget before you complete the project. The decision cards indicate the cost of the action, but the number of quality points to be awarded will only be revealed by the facilitator after you have made your decision.

As in real life, there are unforeseen challenges and hard-earned successes. These are represented by the **'Risk Cards'** which add extra costs (or deduct quality points) depending on the previous decisions you have made, and **'Bonus Cards'** which give additional money and/or quality points. Altogether, each team will take three Risk Cards and three Bonus Cards. The maximum deducted by any Risk Card is 10 pounds, and the maximum added by any Bonus Card is 10 pounds.

Record your decisions, the cost and the number of quality points in the table overleaf.

If you spend all your funding before the simulation is finished, you must inform the facilitator at once. You may not then participate in any further decision stages (or risk or bonus cards).