

Organizational Role Exercise
The Task Force

The community was devastated by a natural disaster several years ago. Although when the disaster first hit funding was easily obtained, now that the shock of the devastation had worn-off funding for community development work was scarce. A new organization, the Bates Foundation had read an article in the Times and decided to fund community groups in the region. The region was separated into four counties and each county was to create a task force to make a presentation to the Bates Foundation to compete for one of two multi-million dollar grants to extend over the next five years. Each county was given \$25,000 to create a taskforce and develop a proposal. The taskforce sponsor was appointed by the Foundation and in each case was an educational institution (community college) with a local professor as the facilitator. The team had one month to create a proposal. Meet Team A :

Aran, the Executive Director of a large NPO, was getting ready to retire and looking forward to opening up a bed and breakfast near the Canadian border. He has vast experience and likes taking a leadership role. He made millions on his internet company before dedicating his life to public service. He was asked to participate because of his vast knowledge and connections in the community.

Rebecca is multilingual with a degree international marketing and is a project manager with her current NPO. She travels to Europe during the summers. She believes the experience with the task force will help her transcend to an executive position with Save the Babies.

Katie is a financial analyst who has worked with United Way all of her career. She does not know what she wants to achieve long term but she is open opportunities. She does not travel much, is mono-cultural and monolingual. This opportunity is challenging but frightens her because it is so different from her traditional work.

Cameron, the youngest at 23 years old, heads his own internet company. Although not an international traveler, he has lived throughout the United States. He is monolingual. He was asked to participate because of his entrepreneurial achievements. He thinks this is an opportunity learn about the "business" aspect of running a project and believes it will help him expand his business. He is an individualist.

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Pranarisha is participating in the program at the request of her employer, a growing NPO. She came to the United States to attend Big Town University where she received a full scholarship. She speaks five languages and coordinates international health relief efforts. She has experience with disaster recovery and has assisted with UN taskforce efforts in the past.

Professor Chase introduced the group to one another and asked them to begin brainstorming about the programmatic ideas for the grant proposal. The Bates Foundation wanted something innovative and new as a pilot program that could be used as a model in other disaster areas. Once the group was introduced the professor left.

At the first meeting, Aran informed the group that he had the most experience and would be the leader of the group. He assigned Paranarisha and Katie the task of gathering research. Rebecca was assigned to gather information and type up the proposal. Cameron was assigned the strategic planning and Aran gave himself the duty to coordinate efforts and manage. Throughout the meeting Aran used the word "girls" to describe the women. There was no disagreement that he should be coordinator.

Rebecca invited Cameron and Katie to the Lone Star bar and grill. She did not invite Paranarisha because Rebecca felt that Paranarisha did not identify with "Western" culture and had nothing in common with the group. In group discussions everyone but Katie forgot that Paranarisha was part of the group. Although Paranarisha was happy to be acknowledged by one person in the group, Katie could not pronounce her name and just called her "Para". Katie was happy just to be a part of the group but everyone lacked a sense of purpose. Increasingly they became resentful of Aran and his leadership style.

Cameron and Rebecca see the project as separate components that just need to be put together. Cameron knows how to draft a winning proposal because he created a successful business all by himself. He just wants to hand in his portion of the project and get back to his business. Each meeting causes more arguments. If you were Professor Chase, what would you do to help this group move to the next level?