

Case Seminar Global health: The indecisive assistant

Huy rubbed his forehead. The headache had been slowly increasing since the meeting previously that afternoon. He was now sitting at his desk in the WHO office in Hanoi pondering his options. After a Master's in Global Health at Uppsala University he had managed to get a position at WHO as an assistant to the country director. He was of course excited about this possibility and had started his new career with a lot of energy and enthusiasm. Now he had received his first major assignment and the stress was mounting. An American philanthropy had approached WHO Vietnam and offered a substantial amount of funding, but put demands that the money should be spent on a specific project and could not be added to the overall budget. The country director was a bit annoyed with this, saying that he did not have time to deal with everyone's special needs. Instead he had told Huy to prepare a suggestion for the Americans, outlining focus and implementation strategy. In relation to the overall budget of WHO in the country the offer of 2 million USD from the philanthropy might not be that much, but Huy was not used to handling this amount of money and he started to feel the pressure. It had not become easier after him meeting with the heads of different departments. They all advocated for their area to benefit and the atmosphere in the room had even become a bit hostile towards Huy, as if it was his fault that the Americans had offered funds to WHO. Huy looked out the window. The rain had started again. He turned to his computer not knowing where to start.