Do you believe your project has a chance to be accepted and we could get the grant?
“Gender Equality and Education” is a title of Tiri for the Aga Khan Development Network Civil Society Programme. It includes a series of other comic strip booklets that challenge the reader on the role of ethics and integrity as contributors to success in the conduct of business.

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Introduction

The New Kabul University is a newly established university in Afghanistan, which intends to increase its student numbers by obtaining new funds. Most of the university’s students are male. The new head of the Extended Education Department, Nafav Bashir, seeks funding for new projects. He gets an announcement from an international NGO, which intends to make investments in gender initiatives, particularly in educational support projects in universities.

Nafav Bashir writes a proposal, in which he seeks a grant to support the preparation of female students for admission to the University. To submit the grant proposal however, he needs official approval. He goes to the Director of the Investment Department, Mahmud Ali, to ask for approval.

Characters

1) Nafav Bashir - Head of the Extended Education Department
2) Mahmud Ali - Director of the Investment Department
3) Andard Hasan - Vice-Rector of the university
4) Umar - Nafav Bashir’s colleague
NAFAV BASHIR IS TALKING TO MAHMUD ALI, THE DIRECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY INVESTMENT DEPARTMENT.

NAFAV TO MAHMUD.

Mr. Mahmud, I need your approval for my grant proposal, to submit it for a competition run by "Gender Equality", an international organization.

A competition? What's that?

It's a grant competition to fund higher education for females.

I see. And why females specifically?
Many families can’t afford to send their daughters to proper elementary or secondary schools, let alone a university or college.

Mahmud to Nafav, crossly.

Even so, I don’t think it’s a good idea to expand opportunities for female education at our university, funding or no funding.

Nafav to Mahmud, baffled.

But why?

It’s simple. If we start to subsidize female education, few parents will continue paying for their daughters’ tuition.
NAFAV BASHIR IS DISAPPOINTED. HE IS TALKING TO HIS COLLEAGUE, UMAR.

It beats me how some people can be so short-sighted as to miss a remarkable opportunity for promoting female education at our university.

Why don't you go to Vice-Rector Andar Hasan?

Of course, but not our budget, not by a long way. As I am the one responsible for the budget and investments, my answer to your request is 'no'.
You think it might work?

It's a possibility. At least his signature will give you approval. You'll have to motivate it to him, though.

All right then, I will go see him right away.

NAFAV BASHIR GOES TO THE OFFICE OF ANDARD HASAN, VICE-RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY.

Mr. Hasan, I’ve heard about your interest in educational projects.
They are among my responsibilities, yes.

Actually, I've been working on one such project. It's a grant proposal for the promotion of gender education.

HASAN TO NAFAV, WARILY

Yes, and where do I come in?

I took the project to Mahmud Ali for approval, but he won't sign it. He says it might discourage some parents from paying for their daughters' tuition.
There is more to it than that...

What else?

The progress of female students at the university is rather poor. The more female students we have, the poorer the overall progress will appear to be. This could seriously damage the university’s image.

Shouldn’t we find ways to improve their progress, rather than limiting their access to the university?
We have enough headaches as it is. Let's leave female progress alone.

But, Mr. Hasan, who is to promote gender equality for students in the country, if not us?

It's not exactly our problem, is it? Why don't we let other universities worry about it? Besides, gender equality is not an issue I am happy with.

What do you mean?
NAFAV TO HASAN, PERSUASIVELY.

Our university is one of the most advanced and forward-looking, isn't it? What harm would it do if we tried to promote free education for females?

HASAN TO NAFAV, ANNOYED.

Why are you so insistent; may I ask, and what does all this have to do with me?

Your signature could help me submit my grant proposal to the competition.
HASAN TO NAFAV, UNEXPECTEDLY.

Do you believe your project has a chance to be accepted and we could get the grant?

NAFAV TO HASAN, ELATED.

Oh, yes, I've actually asked a number of experts and they have all approved of it! They believe our chances are much better than those of other universities.

NAFAV TO HASAN, TAKEN ABACK, WARILY.

In that case, here is what I suggest...

Yes?
NAFAV TO HASAN, SURPRISED.

When we receive the grant money, you'll submit a quarter of it to the chair of traditional cultural studies.

Why the chair of traditional cultural studies?

NAFAV TO HASAN.

We must promote an appropriate balance, rather than simply opening the door to who-knows-what unwanted influences...

I thought we were an advanced university, not a constrained one.
Why don't you go see what those "advanced" female students are doing at the campus: partying and dancing round the clock? They are one big headache for us.

NAFAV TO HASAN, HOPING TO MAKE HIM SEE REASON.

But the issue at stake is the funding of their education...

HASAN TO NAFAV, CUTTING HIM SHORT.

You've heard my conditions. When you are ready to accept them, you will have my approval.

NAFAV TO HASAN, UNCERTAIN.

Could I at least sleep on this, and give my answer tomorrow?
HASAN TO NAFAV, IRONICALLY.

Yes, but don't delay, in case I change my mind about signing your proposal.
QUESTIONS

1. What would you do if you were in Nafav's place?

2. Are there any other ways to have the project approved?

3. What might the consequences be, if the project is approved and the university gets the grant?

4. What ethical norms have been infringed in the above situation?

5. What aspects of stakeholder trust in the university will be affected and how, depending on the course of action the university adopts?