WHERE IS THE SOLUTION?

It's impossible!
“Where is The Solution ?” is a title of Tiri for the Aga Khan Foundation Development Network Civil Society Project. 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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WHERE IS THE SOLUTION?

Introduction

"Village Help" is an international organisation working mainly in border and mountainous villages in the country. They design projects to help village communities build schools and deliver services. A local public official, Khurshodov Jumshud, the head of the regional municipality (does this title make sense?) is trying to meddle in "Village help’s" projects in order to promote his own projects in the villages.

Characters

1) Gufurov - Director of "Village Help"
2) Khurshodov - Head of Local Municipality
3) Konjolov - Director of External Relations for the Regional Government
4) Kodirov - Construction supervisor at "Village Help"
5) Mirzonabatov - Manager at "Village Help"
6) Ismailov, Turaev, Ikramova - employees of "Village Help"
A local official Khurshodov is calling to the Director of the organisation “Village Help”

Hello, this is Khurshodov (the head of the local Municipality)

Yes, glad to hear you. How can I help you?

I heard that you are engaged in building and renovating schools in six villages of our region

That is right
Why is it that the Ak-Suu village is not on the list?

We have included in the list only the villages where schools are in urgent need of reconstruction or where there are no schools at all. As for Ak-Suu, it does not fall into either of these categories.

However, I insist on Ak-Suu's being included in the list.

But this is not possible....
First of all, this is my home village, I was born there. Secondly, there are many relatives of mine still living there.

It's impossible!

Why?

We only have a budget sufficient for 6 villages.
That's your business. Do as I am telling you or else I won't support your project, and, even worse, I will do my best to stop your work in this region.

I can't.

Good, we will see!

Khurshodov meets the director of external relations for the regional government, Mr. Konjolov who is his nephew.

Something must be done about Gufurov, the Director of "Village Help" to make him put Ak-Suu's school on his list for construction.
But how can we do this? We cannot tell them what we want them to do. They represent an international organisation, and are funded by a famous aid donor.

For goodness sake do something.

KODIROV, RESPONSIBLE FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKS, ENTERS GUFUROV’S ROOM SAYING

In order to help us construct the schools we need to cut those trees which straggle all along the villages on the list.

Well, I am going to check with him right away.
Why don't you just go and cut then?

People say that the trees are very valuable, otherwise they would have been cut down for lumber long ago.

Oh dear! Who is saying this?

The local environmental NGOs are claiming those trees don't grow anywhere else in the world.
Do you believe this?

Whether or not I believe, it doesn't make any difference. What matters is that our works have been suspended until they reach a decision.

Damn! What shall we do next? Can't we construct the schools without touching those trees?

No, I have looked through the maps. Our project is crossing the area.
What harm can those NGOs do to us, anyway?

They threaten to put stories in the press if we go on with our work.

What shall we do now? Try and think of something.

TELEPHONE RINGING IN GUFUROV'S TABLE

Tsling... Tsling... Tsling...
I have heard that your project intends to cut down rare trees. How is this going to be possible?

Yes, this is true, but we did not know that they were rare trees.

I can see you did not. Our local NGOs, and others in charge of environmental protection are going to make a big fuss about this - they may even halt your project.
Isn’t it possible to rectify the situation? We have spent about the half of the budget.

Perhaps I’ll be able to hush up the case, but on one condition.

Which one?

The Ak-Suu school must be in the list.
But this will involve new funding and considerable changes in the project.

Those are your troubles. My problem is that I will have to muzzle the NGOs so that they do not raise problems in the press - and that is no easy task.

I'll just have to pick the brain of my managers.

All right, only don't dilly-dally, otherwise I won't be able to keep NGOs and media under control.
GUFUROV CONVENES AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE MANAGERS OF “VILLAGE HELP”

AN EMPLOYEE ISMAILOV TO GUFUROV

What kind of trees are these?

We have spent huge amounts of money and time, and now our project is on the brink of ruin.

MIRZONABATOV ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE PANEL

I don't know. They are just saying the trees are kind of rare ones and growing here only, and we haven't got right to damage them.

And what if we really let those trees be? After all, they make up the natural wealth of our country.
ONE MORE EMPLOYEE TURAEV IS ASKING

Can't you understand - the only way we can do that is to move to other villages, and we have already spent more than half our funding on those villages.

Isn't there any other way out of the situation?

We have one.

Like what?
Konjolov is offering a deal. If we place AK-Suu village on our list for school construction, he will gag the NGOs and the Press.

But this will mean extra expense, and, moreover, speaking from memory, the school there is in pretty good condition.

You are right, but the relatives of both Konjolov and Khurshadov live in that village and they are insisting on a new school.

If I may offer a suggestion, why don't we agree with Konjolov?
Yes, I believe this is the only remedy.

It is true that including a new village will bring extra expense, but it seems to me a better option than that letting the issue go public and having our project stopped.

However, did you think about the image of our organization? What will the public say, if one day the information leaks that we have done away with those trees?

Rare Trees! Big deal! Don't they grow anywhere else? And besides we cannot be sure that they are so rare - maybe this is dreamed up by the environmental NGOs.
IKRAMOVA, A MARKETING EXPERT, 
JOINS THE DISCUSSION

No way, it is not a dream. I have checked it out in the encyclopaedia and other sources etc. The trees are really rare and old ones.

How about if this is a ploy by Konjolov and Khurshodov to take advantage of our conflicting situation?

I suggest we postpone a decision until tomorrow. Let us think twice before coming up with a solution.

I like nature as much as others. But our job is more important.
GUFUROV IS CALLING KONJOLOV

We have taken the decision

Which one?
QUESTIONS

- What decision do you think the organisation will take?

- What would you do in Gufurov’s place?

- What issues on integrity would you identify relative to this case?