



DeBola: A Prisoners Dilemma Game for NGOs

TEACHING NOTE

Game Variations

There are several variations for playing the game, each with its own particular 'flavor' and purpose.

In detailing these variations, we will make reference to the materials to be handed out for each one. Here is the list of available material, and where to find it in this simulation package:

General Information and Forms (available on pp. 34-37)

- DeBola - Background Information (1 copy per participant),
- DeBola - Distribution Decision Forms (1 copy per NGO team)
- DeBola - Vaccinations Summary Sheet (1 copy per NGO team)

Private NGO Information (one copy for each player) (available on pp. 38-41)

Individual Role Information for specific participants (one copy for each player) (available on pp. 42-53).

This simulation was written by Noam Ebner, of Creighton University School of Law. It was a winning simulation in E-PARCC's 2016-2017 Competition for Collaborative Public Management, Governance, and Problem-Solving Teaching Materials. The case is intended for classroom discussion and not to suggest either effective or ineffective responses to the situation depicted. It may be copied as many times as needed, provided that the authors and E-PARCC are given full credit. E-PARCC is a project of the Collaborative Governance Initiative, Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration- a research, teaching and practice center within Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

The variations are:

1) Basic Prisoners Dilemma simulation game

Playing this 'light' version involves giving participants only the General Information and Forms - and not the NGO information, or individual information. Explain that players for each NGO are three members of the NGO's decision making team. This form of play leaves out most of the NGO-specific dilemmas, tensions and quandaries, and also the connection between donations and vaccinations. Players tend to treat it like any other Prisoners Dilemma simulation game - they assume that they need to administer as many vaccinations as they can, on their own, and focus on their individual performances.

2) Prisoners Dilemma simulation game, stressing the NGO context

Playing this version involves giving participants the general information and forms - as well as giving each the Private NGO Information for their NGO team. Explain that players for each NGO are three members of the NGO's decision making team. This form of play involves the donation/vaccination connection, and thereby introduces NGO-specific dilemmas, tensions and quandaries.

3) Full version: Prisoners Dilemma simulation-game, stressing NGO context and individual roles

Playing this version involves giving participants the General Information and Forms, the Private NGO Information for their NGO team, and their Individual Role Information. This form of play involves the donation/vaccination connection, and thereby introduces NGO-specific dilemmas, tensions and quandaries. Furthermore, it draws individual players into more active engagement with the game, and adds in the potential for tensions not only between an NGO's survival and its mission, but also between these and its representatives own personal interests. In doing so, it fully captures (or, at least, so far as can be done in a simulation) the multiple tensions affecting decision making in such challenging situations. The game setup and conduct instructions, and the briefing guide included in this simulation, assume implementation of the full version of the game as the default; if you choose a 'lighter' version, accommodate this in your setup, conduct and debrief.

Goals and targets:

Teachers can choose between two different approaches to addressing the practical significance of the numbers on the chart in terms of their effect on the NGO's future.

- 1) The first, and simplest, route to take, is to avoid giving clear target numbers with regards to how many vaccinations NGOs need to target. You might let students simply assume that in terms of each NGO's individual well-being, 'the more the better' - and let them

implement this across the possibilities for individual, joint and communal gains. This can be done either by simply not raising the issue, and letting assumptions fill the void. If asked directly, you can explain that there is no precise science behind $X \text{ vaccinations} = Y \text{ dollars}$, but, in general - the more the better.

- 2) A second option is to provide participants with a numerical scale. Do this, as you walk around the room, as you walk around the room during their initial preparations (rather than announce it out loud):

Inform each NGO, separately (you can hand this out on a separate piece of paper, if you like) that over the anticipated 8 months of the first phase of planned operations, the following vaccination/donation outcomes will be:

- If we administer 30,000 vaccinations -we should be able to raise enough money to survive.
- If we administer 34,000 vaccinations - we should be able to raise enough money to set us on solid ground.
- If we administer 40,000 vaccinations - we are sure to get enough donations to operate comfortably and successfully.

Remember: **Share this information quietly**, with each NGO. As a result, each NGO does not know if the other NGOs face those same numbers, different numbers, or indeed - any financial challenge at all! This reflects real-world practice fairly accurately.

Notifying them of this scale means that prospectively, each NGO can see themselves meeting their minimum standards through a plan to cooperate for all 8 rounds (if everyone cooperates by distributing at the CDP, parties will each conduct 32,000 vaccinations; this, even taking into account that at this point, they do not yet know that some rounds will be doubled and others quadrupled).

Priming for collaboration / competition, or autonomous choice

The basic version of the game is written in a neutral way as possible: It does not intend to nudge parties towards choosing a collaborative approach, or a competitive approach. To be sure, it makes this a difficult choice, but does not actively prime participants to prefer one approach over the other. Indeed, even in the version in which the teacher provides students with a scale/goals for vaccinations= $\$s$ (see above), either collaboration or competition could lead them to achieving at least the lower range of the scale.

Teachers interested in changing the games dynamics, can do so by priming students towards cooperation or towards competition. Below are three methods for doing so, ranging from subtle and gentle to overt and forceful:

- 1) Changing the name of the simulation-game: 'DeBola' is a neutral name, which does not prime parties towards choosing any particular approach towards the game. Participants focus, and

thereby approach, might be channeled through giving the activity a different name, which might serve as an overall frame affecting their decision-making. For example, an overall title of 'NGO Survival' might lead them to prefer individual gains, whereas 'Saving Benunu' or 'Fighting Ebola' might focus them on the overall shared goal. If you require a .doc version of the simulation game in order to make such a change, contact the author at noamebner@creighton.edu

2) Change the individual information you give to one of the players on each NGO team: Tweak the information, so that it might prime that particular player to lean towards recommending a more cooperative, or more competitive, path. One way to do so, which works in without disrupting the overall story line, is by adding one of the following sentences to the Individual Information for the Operations Manager/Director/Coordinator for each NGO:

➤ Priming for collaboration:

You have worked, in the past, with each of the other NGO's operations directors and have found them each to be, on the whole, a dedicated, competent professional who you'd be happy to work with yourself. You think you've left a pretty good impression on them, yourself; perhaps you could build on those encounters.

➤ Priming for competition:

You have worked, in the past, with each of the other NGO's operations directors and have mixed feelings about doing so again. They are each absolutely dedicated to fighting disease around the world, and competent enough professionally - but you think they are likely to look out for their own organization, first and foremost.

If you require a .doc version of the simulation game in order to make such changes, contact the author at noamebner@creighton.edu.

If you want to prime for cooperation, add the cooperative sentence to the Individual Information for all four Operations Managers; if you wish to prime for competition, do the same for the competitive sentence.

Note: If you use multiple, conflicting priming to replicate real-life interactions (in which people are likely to have different opinions about each other), you might only prime some of the players, or prime some for cooperation and others for competition. It is recommended that you do not do so, though, before gaining experience with conducting the simulation-game.

3) Introduce a vaccination=dollars scale such as the one suggested above, only tweak the numbers. Lower numbers are likely to prime participants to higher cooperation, whereas higher

numbers will increase participants' incentive to prefer individual gains, and in particular, to defect in high-value rounds (months 4, 7 and 8).

Additional roles

If more individual roles are required, you can quickly create them on the spot. The author has found that a teacher can quickly assign a student a role, explaining how he or she fits in, and they will fill in the blanks. Easy roles to create, in this regard, which work for all four NGOs, are: head of the medical staff (or 'lead vaccinator'), head of transport, ambulance driver, and head of security.

Additional round

After month #8, you might choose to surprise participants (who expect the game to end, due to the number of offer slips), by announcing:

“The UN has decided to commit a large peacekeeping force, on its way home from the Middle East, to Benunu for a short period of time. As a result, you will be able to distribute vaccines for 10 consecutive days throughout month #9. You have sufficient vaccine kits. **The numbers on your chart are all multiplied by 10 for month #9.**”

Have groups hand in their offers on loose pieces of scrap paper, without time for discussion beforehand.

Do not count this round when tallying up the scores, it does not 'count' in the game; rather, use it to make points during the debrief (e.g., the value of relationships, the potential of future encounters). As you move into the debrief phase, ask participants to tally up their outcomes for months #1-8 only, and keep month #9 separate.

Debriefing Guide

What you might expect during the game. A striking characteristic of this simulation-game is that the whiteboard chart depicted above is rarely identical to other charts formed on the basis of previous games played in different settings. The cause of this is of course the human element coming into play, in what might otherwise be a relatively simple exercise in economics or mathematics. This point can be, in its own self, an interesting point to raise with participants, and indeed - they will usually raise it on their own.

However, hundreds of experiences conducting this and similar simulation-games suggest that certain dynamics will usually manifest, each of which might be noted and discussed in a debrief session. Additional points, to be raised in a systematic debrief, will follow.

- 1) Early initiation of cooperation: One group, or more, will usually decide to arrive at the CDP during one of the first two rounds, in an attempt to signal their desire to cooperate. They will often be disappointed, and the results of this rude awakening is an interesting point for debrief.
- 2) Full-on competition: At some point during the game, there is usually a point at which all groups deciding to conduct distribution in the field, whether as a result of their initial game-plan or due to the more cooperative teams' disappointment with the results of their attempts to work collaboratively by distributing at the CDP. This sometimes plays out somewhat differently in DeBola as opposed to other Prisoners Dilemma games, given the multiple motivations players have with regards to completing the mission and organizational survival (occasionally, you see a strong tendency towards cooperation, or even downright altruism, on the part of a specific team). Even so, more often than not, you will encounter a month in which all four NGOs choose field distribution; sometimes, this will continue for several rounds.
- 3) Agreement: When inter-group communication is permitted (whether between representatives in the training center, or between all participants in the communal meeting before month #6), parties will often reach an agreement to cooperate, on at least one occasion during the course of the game.
- 4) Defection: When such an agreement is reached, one or more parties will generally renege on their promise to distribute at the CDP, at least one occasion during the course of the game.
- 5) No angels: Having conducted Prisoners Dilemma simulation-games hundreds of times with every type of participant group imaginable, ranging from businesspeople and lawyers to teachers, students in peace studies or conflict resolution programs, social workers and religious figures, the author can share that not once has the game dynamic resulted in eight rounds of pure cooperation. DeBola has undergone less extensive testing, but in all of its iterations thus far, this rule has held: Not once, have all NGOs decided to distribute at the CDP throughout the game, beginning to end. To be fair, it is also extremely rare to see a Prisoners Dilemma simulation-game post-game chart showing only competition, by all groups, from start to finish; usually, as noted, at least one effort at cooperation is initiated. However, 'pure competition' has been seen on several occasions. It has yet to occur in the author's experience with DeBola.

Suggested Debrief Process. The debriefing session can be run chronologically (discussion on a month-by-month basis, touching on issues that arose during each month), or topically (focusing on one issue at a time). The following are some of the topics you may choose to raise in debrief. The game will usually provide enough material for in-depth discussion of all of them:

Strategy:

- a. Ask each team to describe its strategy, or general game-plan, going into the game. Try and help them formulate it into one sentence (such as "Protecting our organization",

- “Minimizing losses”, “Sharing with everybody”, “Working to save as many lives as possible,” or “Winning the game”). Some might be able to formulate it into one word (e.g, ‘Cooperation,’ or ‘Competition.’
- b. Did teams discuss this strategy explicitly before the game began? Or is it just a post-facto formulation of what happened? We often enter negotiation situations without a clear strategy - a habit we need to break.
 - c. Explain the difference between a defensive strategy (“Minimizing losses”) and a proactive one (“Maximizing gains”); between a competitive strategy (“Beating the others”) and a collaborative one (“Making sure we all survive”, or “Making sure as many people as possible get vaccinated, overall”).
 - d. How many of the participants saw “Administering more vaccines than the other NGOs” as one of the goals of the game? Perhaps others saw it as a secondary goal, or subconsciously let it affect them? Comment on the ingrained competitive stance we take, viewing situations as a dog-eat-dog environment.

Trust - Relationship - Communication Triangle

- a. Begin by referring to the board, particularly if there was a clear dominant tendency of most teams to distribute in the field during the first three months. Ask participants why they did so. Stress that they all knew that if everybody would distribute at the CDP, they would all have succeeded; why did this not happen? As participants offer answers, capture keywords on the board. Specifically, stress the concepts of trust, relationship and communication, and demonstrate how one affects the other.
- b. Discuss the dynamics of the meetings (in the training center before months #4 and #7, and/or at the communal meeting before month #6): Did all teams participate? If not, ask the abstaining teams why they did not participate. Ask the other teams how they viewed this abstention. What was the first sentence said at each meeting? How did this affect their tone? Were agreements reached during the discussions? Were agreements reached at the meetings upheld? Ask why, or why not. Were later discussions affected by prior discussions and subsequent upholding or breaching of agreements?

Intra-Team Dynamics

- a. If intra-team issues cropped up dramatically during the game, start off by asking: Is anybody feeling frustrated with their teammates? Why?
- b. Did team members assume they shared the same interests? Ask whether they would have done anything differently in order to verify this.

- c. Did team members discuss a decision making mechanism? Did they automatically assume some vertical hierarchy and respect it? Did they naturally fall into some other pattern of reaching decisions?
- d. Do participants think their initial team preparation was sufficient? Ask whether they would have done anything differently.
- e. Were there obvious differences of opinion / approach between team members?
- f. Did any disagreements arise between representatives sent out to take part in the negotiations in the training center, and their teammates (upon their return from the negotiations)? Ask why they think this occurred.

Prisoners Dilemma

This game can be fully debriefed without getting into the details of its game theoretical foundations. I recommend you raise this topic only if you believe that most of the participants are familiar with the Prisoners Dilemma in theory, and wish to demonstrate how it plays out in practice. If this is the case, skip over the next section to the questions posed below.

Alternatively, raise this topic if you have time to effectively teach the highlights of this topic, at some point during the debrief. To this end, here is a short introduction you might give to the topic and its relationship to conflict and negotiation:

We've seen participants' tendencies towards cooperating with each other, or competing with them, throughout the game. Indeed, every offer in the game is an act of cooperation with the other NGOs (through distribution at the CDP) or competition against them (expressed through choice of field distribution). In order to fully understand the tendency to divide sharply between cooperation and competition, we must explain it as a fundamental part of conflict theory. This owes, in part, to conflict theory having developed out of an area of study called game theory in the post-World War II era. Game theory explores how two (or more) actors might conduct themselves, in a variety of situations in which their own outcomes were affected by their counterparts' choices and actions, and vice-versa. In many of these interactions (dubbed 'games') parties' choices boil down to 'cooperating' and working with the other, or 'defecting' - aligning one's self against the other. Essentially, this is a choice between cooperation and competition. Understanding of how players made their choices in such situations was seen as necessary for predicting how decision-makers on the world stage would act in a nuclear arms race, or in deciding whether to launch a nuclear first-strike against an opponent.

The most famous and most widely-studied area of game theory is a scenario dubbed the Prisoners Dilemma. Consider the following scenario:

You and John have been arrested by the police, on suspicion of bank robbery. The police have enough evidence to convict either of you on a minor charge (let's say, parking illegally on the

sidewalk outside the bank, in a parking space reserved for handicapped people) but they cannot prove the more serious charges of robbery and threatening the teller with a dangerous weapon, as your faces could not be sufficiently identified on the bank's security cameras. The police separate the two of you immediately, and you are put in two separate interrogation rooms with no way to hear one another or to communicate with each other. The interrogator gives you two options: You can either confess to the two of you committing the burglary, or you can remain silent. All the police need is for one of you to confess, the policeman tells you, and the same choice is being put to John in the other room. The police interrogator offers you an incentive: If you confess and John does not, your confession will be especially valuable to the police (as it will allow them to convict you both of the crime). They will be so grateful, that they will let you off with no jail time, and send John to jail for a significant chunk of time - five years. If you and John both confess, your confession is appreciated but they could have jailed you without it, so you will both receive only somewhat reduced sentences of three years each. If neither of you confesses, you will both only be sent to jail for the offense of illegal parking, and one year in prison. John, the interrogator tells you, is receiving exactly the same explanation in the other room.

Below, is the chart of outcomes (in terms of years spent in prison) for each action: Cooperation (with John) by staying silent or defecting, aligning yourself with the police against John by confessing.

		John's Behavior and Outcome	
		Cooperate	Defect
Your Behavior and Outcome	Cooperate	1	0
	Defect	5	3

Figure 1. The Prisoners Dilemma

Review the chart, and ask yourself a simple question: What would you do?

Much research has been conducted around this very question. For a good introduction to it, you can read Robert Axelrod's (1981) book *The Evolution of Cooperation*, which explores different strategies for dealing with a number of variations of this dilemma.

Note, that his basic version of the Prisoners Dilemma is not, in itself, a negotiation - for the simple reason, that parties have no way to communicate with each other, influence each other, commit to one another and then keep to their word or break it. However, even thinking about this basic version brings up issues that are very pertinent to negotiation: For one, the issue of relationship: Would your answer to the 'What would you do?' question posed above be any different, if John and you were competing between you for promotion in your criminal organization? Would it change, if in the scenario John was your brother? This ties into another issue, that of trust: What do you think John will do - will he cooperate with you, or defect? Much of your assessment of John's actions will boil down to the essential question of whether or not you trust him.

In this version of the Prisoners Dilemma, there is a clear choice between cooperation and competition - there is no middle action. It is only when the notion of an iterated Prisoners Dilemma - a Prisoners Dilemma involving multiple rounds, all offering the same choice between competition and cooperation - was explored, that the notion of an approach involving a mix of competition and cooperation was raised. Without posing an elaborate scoring chart, picture yourself and John sharing a prison cell for three years. Over the course of that time, you have multiple points at which prison guards arrive to search your cell for contraband material. During each of these searches, either you, or John, can tell the guards about the contraband material you are each hiding in the cell - and be rewarded by the guards, while the other is punished; or, you can cooperate with your cellmate by remaining silent.

In this type of situation, whereas some strategists recommend an all-cooperation or an all-competition approach, other strategists suggest approaches mixing both. Axelrod's own findings suggested that the best approach, over time, was one he called Tit for Tat - in other words - always do to the other, as s/he has done to you. In the prison cell example, Axelrod would recommend beginning with cooperation the first time, and not divulging John's contraband to the guards. If John also cooperates and does not divulge that you are hiding contraband, then the next time guards come in to search you will cooperate again. If he ever defects by pointing guards towards your stash of contraband, then the next time they show up you will show them his own. If, this time, John refrains from defecting, you will stay silent the next time the guards show up. Or, in a nutshell: Begin cooperatively, and every round - do exactly what your counterpart did in the previous round.

The interrogation scenario is an example of a two-party Prisoners Dilemma. The prison cellmates example is an example of an iterated two-party Prisoners Dilemma. As many of you may have recognized by now, the DeBola scenario you just participated in is a four-party iterated Prisoners Dilemma (and, those of you who encountered conflict inside your own NGO group, might realize that calling it a 'four-party' scenario might actually be a simplification of what was, in reality, a more complex interaction.

Questions for participants:

- a. Focusing on your course's substantive material, you might ask students if they recognize Prisoners Dilemmas inherent in any of the cases you have previously studied. Alternatively, you might pose them a case grounded your own topic, and help them identify and map out the Prisoners Dilemma it involves.
- b. Returning to DeBola, ask if any of the participants realized, before or during the game, that they were in a Prisoners Dilemma. Did this realization help them to plan their actions out better or achieve better results? Did it allow them to anticipate their counterparts' moves?
- c. What actions did teams take in order to extract themselves from the primary tendency towards self-preservation (and therefore mutual loss) that characterizes Prisoners Dilemma situations? In hindsight, what else might they have done? Stress answers relating to the concepts of trust, relationship, and communication.
- d. What ethical considerations seem to pertain to individual decisionmaking in Prisoners Dilemma situations? What considerations are particularly relevant in the DEBola situations? Were these issues discussed by each NGO group internally? Were they discussed at any meeting between the 4 NGOs?

The Negotiators Dilemma, and the NGOs Dilemma

If you have expanded on the Prisoners Dilemma, you might choose to explain its relationship to the Negotiators Dilemma. You might choose to introduce this topic with the briefest of forewords (in which case, skip this next section and proceed to the questions below).

Alternatively, you might expand on it and held students to connect conflict theory with negotiation theory, put into practice. To this end, here is a short introduction you might give to the topic and its relationship to conflict and negotiation:

As with regards to conflict, there are those who suggest that one must either choose a cooperative approach, or a competitive approach. However, others have suggested that there will be cooperative and competitive elements mixed in to every negotiation; no process will be purely one or the other. One example of this approach is proponed by David Lax & James Sebenius, in their book *The Manager as Negotiator* (1986). They stress that far from being separate approaches, these two elements are present at every given moment during a negotiation - in the negotiators' minds. According to them, people adopting one or the other as an overall mindset, or as an approach, are ignoring the realities of negotiation practice. As they put it:

'...a deeper analysis shows that competitive and cooperative elements are intertwined. In practice, they cannot be separated. This bonding is fundamentally important to the analysis, structuring and conduct of negotiation. There is a central, inescapable tension between cooperative moves to create value jointly and competitive moves to gain individual advantage. This tension affects virtually all tactical and strategic choice. Analysts must come to grips with it; negotiators must manage it. Neither denial nor discomfort will make it disappear...' (Lax & Sebenius, 1986, p. 30)

Having laid the presence of these two elements of negotiation as an axiom of the negotiation process, Lax & Sebenius dubbed the tension between the two ‘The Negotiators Dilemma’. The tension between cooperative value-creating strategies and competitive value-claiming strategies results in an ever-present, ongoing dilemma for the negotiator, which presents itself at each stage in the negotiation. Trying to advance one element opens you up to risk vis-à-vis the other. The competitive tactics used to claim value - such as attacking, concealing information, and so on - tend to undermine the cooperative tactics needed to create value. Conversely, adopting an open, sharing, and cooperative approach in order to create value leaves one vulnerable to the hard bargaining tactics a competitive negotiation opposite might adopt.

The Negotiators Dilemma is, of course, evocative of the Prisoners Dilemma. In order to explain how it affects a negotiator’s decision-making between cooperative actions and competitive moves, Lax and Sebenius framed the dilemma in story and chart form.

Imagine that you are negotiating with Jim. At any turn in the negotiation process, you can choose to compete with Jim, or cooperate with him. For example, you might compete by making threats or by lying; you might cooperate by sharing information and answering questions truthfully. If both parties compete, explain Lax and Sebenius, you will each reach a **mediocre** outcome; if you both **cooperate**, you will each reach a **good** outcome. However, in this complex situation, should one of you compete and the other cooperate, the one who competed will gain have a **great** outcome, at the expense of the cooperating party who will suffer a **poor** outcome.

Below, is the chart of outcomes (in terms of negotiation outcome) for each pair of decisions - your own, and Jim’s:

		Jim’s Behavior and Outcome	
		Cooperate	Compete
Your Behavior and Outcome	Cooperate	Good	Poor
	Compete	Great	Mediocre

Figure 2. The Negotiators Dilemma

Questions for participants:

- a. A negotiator constantly faces a choice: cooperating with his or her opposite in order to create value that will be portioned out later, or claiming value by grabbing whatever he or she can whenever an opportunity presents itself. In DeBola, each team faced the choice between creating value by distributing at the CDP, or claiming value by distributing in the field (or, by promising to distribute at the CDP, and then actually deciding to distribute in the field). Did participants deal consciously with this dilemma. Were there different approaches to it, inside each team?
- b. Can anyone describe the meeting's between the NGOs' representatives, or the general meeting / conversation, if one was held before month #6, using the terms and framework provided by the Negotiators Dilemma?
- c. NGOs and mission-driven organization face a dilemma that stretches beyond collaboration and competition. It poses a mission-driven organization at a point at which its survival or wellbeing, and its very mission, seem to be pitted against one another, or straining to lead to opposing decisions. Below, are two avenues into discussing this:
 - If all NGOs choose field distribution, they are limiting the distribution to 8,000 vaccines altogether. This, as opposed to at least 12,000, altogether, in any other combination of distribution decisions. Did they consider the potential price in human lives lost, as a result of their choice to distribute in the field?
 - Point out the final outcomes of each team, and then total them up to calculate the joint sum of vaccines administered in Benunu during those eight months. Explain that if they had cooperated by distributing at the CDP throughout all eight rounds, they would each have administered 60,000 vaccines. The math behind this is as follows:

$(5 \text{ regular rounds} * 4000 = 20,000) + (1 \text{ doubled round} * 4000 = 8,000) + (2 \text{ quadrupled rounds} * 4000 = 32,000)$; which boils down to:

$$20,000 + 8,000 + 32,000 = \mathbf{60,000}$$

Jointly, they would have administered 240,000 vaccinations, over the eight-month period.

Is the sum total of their vaccinations below 240,000? If so, this can be measured as a loss - both a mission-related loss (fewer vaccinated people), and a financial loss (in the sense that fewer vaccinations = less donations. Ask them to consider their joint gain/loss, the communal gain/loss, and the mission-related gain/loss. All three are pertinent - and if there are tensions between them, they reflect the very real tensions of operating in such contexts. The NGO's dilemma, of calculating mission and organizational survival, should stand out very clearly. In a more general sense, if no

NGO administered 60,000 vaccinations, this math can be used to make a very clear point about the benefits of creating value, before deciding how to claim it.

Stress that you are not chastising them for acting “wrongly” - the game never plays out with all teams offering distributing at the CDP throughout the game. Instead, you are pointing out how human nature manifests itself in conflict situations and in negotiations, how decision-making in those situations is further compounded when a party is motivated by considerations beyond simply ‘making as much for myself as I can’ - and making observations. This line of questioning and observation might be used to open up a rich conversation on ethics in conflict, negotiation and aid work.

Conclusion

While teaching with DeBola, the author has found it very effective, and intriguing, to open the debrief with a simple question: ‘Were you surprised by anything that happened here? What surprised you? What did you expect to happen? Why didn’t this occur?’

Participants are always surprised. Some by the process dynamics, others by the outcome, and still others by the behavior of other individuals and even themselves.

This shake-up is just as valuable as any or all of the specific insights gained through participating in this simulation-game. An important effect of DeBola is that participants can’t help but to fall into an inquisitive state of mind and to adopt a learning stance: they are open to new ideas, and eager to participate in the next simulation-game that the trainer has prepared.

References

Axelrod, R. (1984). *The evolution of cooperation*. New York: Basic Books

Lax, D. and Sebenius, J. (1986). *The manager as negotiator*. New York: Free Press