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CASE STUDY: "The Board Chair's Son"

Youth Advocate Network Rwanda

Capacity Building Program

THE ORGANIZATION

Future Leaders Initiative (FLI) is a youth-focused NGO in Rwanda. It provides leadership training, mentorship, and educational support to young people across Kigali and rural areas. FLI has grown quickly over three years and now has a strong donor base including international partners, local businesses, and individual supporters.

FLI is governed by a Board of Directors (oversight) and managed by an Executive Team (daily operations).

THE SITUATION

Each year, FLI hosts a Celebration Dinner to thank donors. The event includes a printed program book listing all donors who have not requested anonymity. The book contains names, phone numbers, email addresses, and sometimes donation amounts. This information is considered confidential.

Several months after this year's dinner, you (the Executive Director) receive an angry call from Madame Clarisse Uwase, a long-time donor who values her privacy.

Madame Uwase explains that she received a call on her personal cell phone—a number she does not share publicly. The caller was a young man named Martin, who identified himself as an investment advisor. Martin offered her investment opportunities and mentioned he had "connections" to youth organizations in Kigali. When asked how he got her number, Martin was vague.

Madame Uwase is furious:

"I trusted your organization. Now a stranger has called me. I am considering posting on social media to warn others that FLI cannot be trusted with personal data. Was your Board Chair involved?"

WHAT YOU DISCOVER

After investigating, you learn:

- Martin is the son of FLI's Board Chair, Mr. Jean-Paul Kagabo
- Martin runs his own investment company targeting wealthy individuals
- He attended the Celebration Dinner as his father's guest
- The printed program book was left in the FLI office common area for several weeks after the event, accessible to staff, volunteers, and visitors
- There is no proof Martin took the list, but it was available

FLI's Policies:

- Conflict of Interest Policy: Board members disclose conflicts annually (Martin is not an employee/vendor, so never disclosed)
 - Data Security Policy: Exists, but no specific rules for event materials
 - Confidentiality Agreements: Staff sign them, but no one signed one for the dinner program book
 - The Board Chair never considered his son's business a potential conflict
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KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholder	Situation
Madame Uwase (Donor)	Privacy violated; angry; considering public action
Martin (Board Chair's Son)	Used donor information? Unclear; may not see problem
Mr. Kagabo (Board Chair)	Integrity questioned; must balance family vs. duty
FLI Organization	Reputation at risk; donors may lose trust
Other Donors	May worry about their own privacy

KEY QUESTIONS FOR LEADERS

1. What are the ethical issues here? (List at least 4)
2. Who is affected and how?
3. Which of the "three tests" from training applies?
 - Late Report Test
 - Friend's Request Test
 - Leftover Money Test
4. What should have been in place to prevent this?
5. How should the Board Chair respond? What would a true leader do?
6. Using the 5-step conflict resolution process, how would you handle this?
- 7.

Step	Action
1. LISTEN	
2. IDENTIFY real issue	

3. BRING them together

4. FIND common ground

5. AGREE on solutions

8.

What policies would you create to prevent this happening again?

QUICK REFERENCE: TRAINING CONCEPTS TO APPLY

Concept	How It Applies Here
Conflict of Interest	Board Chair's son using donor information
Disclosure vs. Hiding	Was conflict disclosed? Should it have been?
Authority vs. Leadership	How Board Chair responds will show which he values
The Three Tests	Which test fits this situation?
Ethical Use of Resources	Donor list = organizational resource
Safeguarding	Protecting vulnerable information
5-Step Conflict Resolution	Use this process with all parties
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Refer to your training slides on:

- Ethical Leadership Principles
- Managing Conflict of Interest
- The Three Tests
- Authority vs. Leadership
- Conflict Resolution Process