Bandwidth management and optimisation – Policy development workshop

Unit 0: Understanding public goods and ice-breaker

Group exercise

This document describes a group exercise that can be carried out at the beginning of the workshop as an ice-breaker. The exercise aims at showing the nature of public goods.

Document Notes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Author: | TENET, Duncan Greaves; INASP, Manuela Bianco, Martin Belcher |
| File name: | Unit 0-Exercise |
| Date submitted: | 28/08/2006 |
| Date last updated: | 20/08/2013 |

Summary

On completion of this session the learner will have:

1. Interacted among themselves
2. Reflected on the nature of problems of collective choice and what the implications for bandwidth management are

Introduction

The exercise is a game originally developed by Michael Taylor. The only materials needed to play it are some toy money of the kind used in the game Monopoly. The amount needed is 200 dollars per person. 100 dollars is given to each player and the bank retains the rest – it will be used during play. The game’s rules are:

1. The game is played in a series of rounds. Each round has two phases.
2. In phase 1 of a round, each player must pay ten dollars into a pool. This amount is the “survival cost” for the round, and any player who cannot pay it is deemed to have died and takes no further part in the game.
3. The bank contributes an equal amount to the pool – thus, if twenty players each pay a survival cost of ten dollars, the initial pool is 200 dollars; the bank adds another 200 dollars, so the pool becomes 400 dollars.
4. In phase 2 of a round, the entire pool is auctioned to the highest bidder. A special feature of the auction however, is that the winner wins not only the pool, but also the bids of every other player. A player who makes a bid has effectively lost it and can only recover it by winning the auction.
5. Only individuals may bid. They may however borrow money from others.
6. To better another player’s bid, a player must bid more: an equal bid is not good enough.
7. Any agreement among players is permitted, but no agreements are binding.

Plenary discussion

Once the game is complete, participants should discuss the following:

1. What outcome is in the best interests of all the members of the group?
2. How could the group have achieved this outcome, if it didn’t do so?