



# **Lacking Motivation, Legitimacy, and Structure**

## **The Case of Être Une Femme, a Cote d'Ivoire Non-profit**

This case was written by Aynsley Dunham while a graduate student at the University of Delaware, with the supervision and guidance from Professor Amanda Bullough, and based partly on classwork conducted by undergraduate students Jack Mastronardi, Grace Ruoff, and Lynn Jones.

It is intended to be used as the basis of class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a management situation. The case was compiled from published sources and interviews with the business leader.

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## Abstract

This case study examines Être Une Femme, a nonprofit organization in Côte d'Ivoire, known in English as the Ivory Coast in West Africa, to defend the right to education for women and girls, to empower women and girls to be financially independent and to speak out against domestic violence and defend the victims. Topics discussed in this case include difficulties in motivating leadership in a non-profit, considering limited success from their efforts and an inability to receive monetary incentives and support. This case also explores interweaving needs and structures to ensure tasks can be completed to realize the organization's mission and goals.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this case, students should:

- Understand the importance of motivation among the leaders of an organization and how to motivate others
- Appreciate clear professional procedures and internal structures for a non-profit's ability to carry out its mission.

## The Challenge

The darling girl is so bright! At 13 years old, Eliza already has so much potential that can be harnessed if she stays in school. Eliza has just explained to Daphne that her parents believe all their children should be educated. The problem is that they cannot afford school fees for her and her two brothers. And her mother needs her help at home with household chores and caring for her 5-year-old sister. Daphne knows that the chances of Eliza returning to school are slim if she does not get assistance from somewhere or someone. Also, the chances of getting pregnant or married off at a young age, thus leaving her to raise a family in poverty, are high.

Daphne Soro is the Vice President of Être Une Femme (EUF), a community-based organization in Côte d'Ivoire that, in part, works hard to help women and girls receive an education. She is reminded every day that stories like Eliza's are too familiar. It is lives like hers that Rachel Kouassi, EUF President, originally founded the organization to help—a passion for helping drives the leadership team.

However, Daphne and Rachel have noticed lately that their motivation has been waning under the constant pressure to secure funding, which is always challenging, particularly in impoverished communities. Their volunteers' hearts are in the right place. They are, after all, wonderful people, but they have their own lives and paid jobs, and the excitement for the volunteer work seems to be wearing off. 2 understands because she has a job, a husband, and young children while also attending graduate school. How can Rachel and Daphne get the funds they need and business practices in place to run this organization effectively and reenergize their team?



## Background and Problem

Women and girls face significant disadvantages in Cote d'Ivoire compared to men. According to Human Development data reported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the country ranks 153<sup>rd</sup> out of 162 countries on the Gender Inequality Index, with only 18% of women having at least some secondary education compared to 34% of males. 36% of females experience genital mutilation/cutting—female circumcision known globally as FGM—and 26% experience violence at the hands of an intimate partner (UN, 2021).

Être Une Femme (EUF), which means “Being A Woman” in French, is a non-profit organization located in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on the western coast of Africa, borne to existence to address some of the problems that women face. Their mission is to defend girls' rights to education, empower women to be financially independent, and denounce the various forms of violence against girls and women. Être Une Femme was founded in August 2017 by Rachel Kouassi and has grown a little by recruiting volunteers, expanding its outreach, and fundraising. The organization has had some successes, including earning a United States Embassy grant, and has hosted multiple events.

Unfortunately, EUF's growth and efficacy have been hampered by issues facing the organization. First, perhaps most importantly, is a lack of motivation among the founders and EUF's community. The organization's limited success and growth have left leadership feeling unmotivated. In addition, the paucity of funds has been a disincentive for its founders and volunteers, thus making it difficult to retain quality help to run its activities. Their lack of motivation has also spread to EUF's volunteers. Motivation among leaders and staff is vital to the success of an organization, so this is a significant hurdle to EUF's future.

EUF lacks funds since it relies on grants and donations for income as a nonprofit. This lack of funding directly results from the second major problem the EUF faces: the need for proper business structures. EUF has no strong internet presence, making it challenging to attract suitable bodies to provide funding through grants and donations. EUF also does not have a bank account for the organization or other official policies that would allow it to function more efficiently.

Rachel and Daphne are aware of the organization's problems. They know that if they cannot proffer a solution, the EUF will close operations. After all, no organization can function without motivated leaders to guide its mission or funds and structured processes to execute its activities.

## Low Motivation

Lack of motivation is a crucial issue within EUF, particularly among the leadership. The leaders are discouraged by the inability of the organization to take off. They are also demotivated by their



struggles with recruiting and energizing volunteers. As a non-profit organization, EUF does not have money for volunteer incentives and does not offer promotions or raises for a job well done. This is a significant problem for EUF because Rachel and Daphne know that motivation is a crucial difference between successful and unsuccessful organizations. Organizations and companies with motivated employees have a better chance of survival because people are excited about the work and want to see the organization do well. Conversely, unmotivated people work slower, get distracted, and spend less time doing assigned tasks. This can lead to wasted resources, harming the organization's growth. Rachel and Daphne understand this but do not know what to do about it.

Motivated members demonstrate increased productivity, are less likely to leave the organization, and want to do good work. "Finding ways to increase motivation is crucial because it allows us to change behavior, develop competencies, be creative, set goals, grow interests, make plans, develop talents, and boost engagement (Souders, 2020)." Overall, having motivated workers leads to a better work environment and higher performance.

While Être Une Femme's volunteers believe in their mission, the immediate tasks on their To-Do Lists take precedence. Essentially, they are dealing with other problems they see as more important. Another potential reason for low motivation is that EUF's leadership does not seize opportunities, which can be a demotivator. Other organizations with similar goals have received grants and donations, while EUF has received only minimal funding and has not made many attempts to change this.

### **Lack of Basic Business Procedures**

In addition to the motivation problem, EUF needs more structured internal business practices. For example, EUF has no organizational bank account, so most funding bodies and grant-gifting organizations will not donate to them. This is because, without a business account, only some people feel that the funds given to EUF are protected and will be used for the intended purpose. Moreover, there is the need for procedures such as accounting, bookkeeping, and other financial record keeping mechanisms.

The lack of the company's financial information makes it hard to ascertain its leadership's financial transparency and accountability, and obtain an operating budget to allocate funds. Corporate governance issues such as these cast doubt on the legitimacy of the non-profit organization and jeopardizes EUF's chances of being awarded much-needed funds in the future. To attract funding from global funding bodies, "the organization must be legally constituted (UNDEF, 2022)."

Another problem is that the EUF needs a codified mission statement or vision. Vision and mission statements are vital because they help organizations focus their efforts and identify what they genuinely want to do. They also inspire and motivate employees and company leaders and give



them something to strive for. These are also vital to explaining to stakeholders, such as donors, volunteers, and the community it serves what EUF stands for and does. Without a mission statement or vision statement, EUF is directionless—and its leadership and volunteers are unmotivated.

## Looking for Answers

Rachel and Daphne realized that EUF needs more structure and motivation. They also realize that these issues are deeply intertwined. So, the question is, how could EUF start solving its problems? Should they start with the motivation problem, or should they start with creating an internal structure and legitimacy? How would they tackle these issues? There were so many questions but no easy answers.

## References

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