



Professor at the University of the Philippines, Visayas, Takes Leadership Role in Case Study Development

By the fall of 2016, Dr. Rowena Gelvezon had taught case studies in her classroom at the University of the Philippines, Visayas, for several semesters. She had observed a positive impact on students' involvement in class and their learning outcomes. Despite this success, few of her colleagues had followed her example in using case studies. With more than 40 years' experience teaching at the university level, and with a background in marketing and supply chain management, Dr. Gelvezon knew the importance of consistently marketing and promoting a successful product, as well as continuing to improve existing products. As a result, she wanted to both increase the number of case studies available and the number of professors teaching those cases.

Back in January 2014, Dr. Gelvezon had attended the case study training workshop supported by USAID's Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for Development (STRIDE) program, and organized and delivered by the William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan (WDI). At the workshop, Dr. Gelvezon learned how to research, write, and edit a teaching case study. Teaching cases differ from research cases in that they are designed to put students in a real-life situation where a problem must be resolved. "A case study exposes students to real-world issues," said Dr. Gelvezon. "If students are exposed early on to these challenges, they may gain some level of confidence that might lead them to establishing their own businesses after graduation."

Following the workshop, Dr. Gelvezon worked for several months with a business near her school and ultimately published a case, ["Trappist Monastic Food Products: Devout Expansion for Enhanced Community Service."](#) The Trappist Monastic Food Products (TMFP) company, a locally owned and operated business in Visayas, had seen significant success in recent years making food products. Dr. Gelvezon examined TMFP's success in the market in the Philippines and the growing interest in their products internationally, especially from Japan. Her case asked students to debate whether TMFP should attempt to scale up its capacity and start exporting. Dr. Gelvezon's case was one of the first to be published as part of the STRIDE project in the Philippines.

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*Dr. Rowena Gelvezon
University of the Philippines, Visayas*

Although case studies have been used in business classes at top universities in the Philippines, most Filipino educators are not familiar with them. Furthermore, before the introduction of the

STRIDE case collection, case studies were usually obtained from US publishers and did not focus on Philippine organizations and companies. Dr. Gelvezon's case, on the other hand, took into account the local context in the Philippines, so it resonated with Filipino students and reflected the real-world problems they might encounter. "The students clearly feel a sense of pride knowing their professor is the author of the case, and the local context is familiar to them," said Mary Chaves, of the University of the Philippines, Cebu. The WDI case writing workshops sought to simultaneously train professors to create and use a quality teaching tool and form a database of cases that would be widely available throughout the Philippines.

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Mr. Aris Cajigal
Mariano Marcos State University

Through four case writing workshops, WDI worked with more than 130 participants, 94 of whom published their own case studies. Many of the professors who published cases reported the impact on themselves and on their students. "I have become more aware of realities in teaching my students, rather than focusing merely on hypothetical events and those published in

textbooks," said Aris Cajigal from Mariano Marcos State University. "Students were receptive to the innovative way of reading real narratives which let them understand the phenomena in their future careers."



Dr. Gelvezon met with Dr. Brent Ross at Michigan State University during the U.S. study visit to discuss how case studies can be used Entrepreneurship and Agribusiness classes

Still, despite these successes, Dr. Gelvezon wanted to ensure the use of case studies would be sustainable following the completion of the STRIDE-WDI case writing workshops. She was also interested in writing additional cases and training her colleagues to do likewise, outside of the STRIDE project. In November 2016, she heard of an opportunity supported by WDI for two Philippine faculty to participate in a study visit to the University of Michigan.

Dr. Gelvezon was selected to participate in the visit, which included visiting classes at

the Ross School of Business to see cases taught in action, visits to companies and entrepreneurs in Ann Arbor and Detroit, and discussions with campus organizations and leadership on how case studies can improve student learning.

Following the U-M study visit, Dr. Gelvezon committed to leading a training at UP-Visayas for her colleagues and was also invited to help lead a Train-the-Trainer Workshop conducted by WDI in April 2017. In response to the problem of sustainability noted by Dr. Gelvezon and others, the objective of the workshop was not to encourage more case writing but instead to scale up the case teaching model by training faculty who were familiar with cases to teach their colleagues. Each of the 33 attendees committed to organizing an echo training after they returned to their universities. Following the workshop, Dr. Gelvezon returned to UP-Visayas and conducted an echo workshop for 19 of her colleagues from engineering, business, environmental management, and information technology disciplines.



Dr. Gelvezon (l) helped to lead the Train-the-Trainer case teaching workshop held by WDI in April 2017

During her echo workshop, a number of Dr. Gelvezon's colleagues expressed interest in learning how to write their own case. Dr. Gelvezon took the initiative to submit a proposal to her university administration entitled "Development of Philippines Case Studies" to support additional seminar-workshops teaching case writing, case teaching, and data collection, with a goal of 10, new, local case studies authored by UP-Visayas faculty. In August 2017 her proposal was approved by the UP-Visayas administration with a budget of PHP 485,000. This commitment is significant as it is one of the first organized initiatives undertaken by a Philippine university to build on the work of WDI and STRIDE to write case studies about Filipino organizations, companies, and challenges. As Dr. Gelvezon said, "the approval signals that officials at the university understand the importance of case studies as a learning tool."