



Case Writer Expands Opportunities Available to Philippine Faculty in Mindanao

By the fall of 2016, Dr. Noel Tarrazona had taught case studies in his business class at Western Mindanao State University (WMSU) for several semesters and had observed increased student involvement and improved learning outcomes. Despite this success, Dr. Tarrazona realized that many of his colleagues were either not aware of the case studies or did not know how to use them. With more than 20 years' experience as an educator and journalist, Dr. Tarrazona hails from the city of Zamboanga in Southern Mindanao. Having visited many public and private universities throughout the island, he knew that case studies were being used at only a handful of the more than 400 universities there.

Although Mindanao is the second largest island in the Philippines with more than 20 million people, it has not seen the rapid economic growth experienced by much of the rest of the country. Poor infrastructure remains a problem and ongoing decades-long conflicts have stalled domestic and international investment. As a result, much of the population remains in poverty and jobs in the formal sector are difficult to find. A recent World Bank report¹ noted that “The central policy challenge for Mindanao, like the rest of the Philippines, is how to accelerate inclusive growth — the type that creates more and better jobs and reduces poverty.”

In January 2015, hearing of a case study training workshop supported by USAID's Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for Development (STRIDE) program, taught and organized by the William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan (WDI), Dr. Tarrazona applied and was invited to participate. At the workshop, he 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. “It has been very

satisfactory knowing that most of my students are actively engaged when case studies are used,” said Reynante Autida, another professor at WMSU.

“The central policy challenge for Mindanao, like the rest of the Philippines, is how to accelerate inclusive growth – the type that creates more jobs and reduces poverty.”

*World Bank
Philippines Mindanao Jobs Report
June 2017*

Following the workshop, Dr. Tarrazona worked for several months with a business near his school and ultimately published a case entitled “Supporting Micro, Small, Medium-Sized Enterprises in the Southern Philippines.” The case featured the provincial director of the Department of Industry and Trade and required students to review the information available and

¹ World Bank Philippines Mindanao Jobs Report, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/395661498616337079/pdf/117354-REVISED-Philippines-Mindanao-Jobs-Report-July-2017.pdf>

determine ways in which the department could support local businesses in partnership with local universities.

Dr. Tarrazona's case was one of 94 to be published by the WDI-STRIDE project and is available as part of the [STRIDE Case Collection](#). Four case writing workshops were held by WDI during the course of the project at locations in Manila, Iloilo, and Cebu. Of the 94 cases published, 14 were written by faculty from universities in Mindanao. Many professors from Mindanao universities had been unable to attend the workshops due to logistical or expense reasons and others had simply not heard of the workshops or had not applied to attend. Poor internet access and difficulties with remote editing and publishing support — provided by WDI to case writers — also posed a challenge and meant that several professors who did attend the workshops were not able to publish their case.

After successfully publishing and teaching his case, Dr. Tarrazona began to look for ways to address the lack of exposure of universities in Mindanao by introducing case studies to his colleagues at WMSU and to other universities throughout the island. Other STRIDE case authors, including some from Mindanao, had provided similar feedback to WDI, noting many of their colleagues could benefit from learning how to teach using the case method and then use existing STRIDE cases. After learning to teach with the STRIDE cases, many also expressed interest in writing new case studies themselves.



Dr. Tarrazona and three colleagues from universities in Mindanao formed the MACDC consortium to train faculty throughout Mindanao in the case teaching method

“It has been very satisfactory knowing that most of my students are actively engaged when case studies are used.”

*Prof. Reynante Autida
Western Mindanao State University*

To address this demand, WDI and STRIDE held a final Train-the-Trainer Workshop in April 2017 for 33 professors who had published cases, including Dr. Tarrazona. The workshop emphasized how to teach using cases and participants committed to conducting an echo training for colleagues at their own university following the workshop. WDI and STRIDE provided training materials for the echo workshops but the faculty trainers were responsible for securing the approval of their administration and a venue, and inviting their colleagues.

Immediately following the workshop, Dr. Tarrazona met with the three other attendees



The first MACDC training was held from September 28-30, 2017 in Davao City for 30 faculty from universities throughout Mindanao

from Mindanao to discuss how to expand on the echo workshop concept. Rather than limiting the trainings to their own universities, he said, they should form a consortium and conduct their own Train-the-Trainer Workshops for faculty throughout Mindanao. The other three participants represented WMSU, the University of the Philippines in Mindanao (UP-Mindanao), and the Mindanao State University Illigan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT). Together, the four faculty members formed the Mindanao Academic Case

Developers Consortium (MACDC).

With some support from STRIDE, the MACDC group held their first training on September 28-30, 2017 in Davao City. The workshop was attended by 30 participants from schools including the Notre Dame of Jolo College, Bukindnon State University, the University of the Southeastern Philippines, and Davao Doctor's College.

In addition to the first successful training held by MACDC, Dr. Tarrazona and his colleagues have expressed interest in forming the Mindanao Academic Case Development Academy (MACDA), a training center which would provide workshops on case writing and teaching methods for faculty and lecturers in Mindanao. The objective would be to teach faculty in Mindanao to write new case studies, in addition to using the 94 available in the STRIDE collection.

“I am very much honored to train top professors and educators of 13 leading universities in the Southern Philippines on case teaching methods sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development-STRIDE program. Case teaching is a method of teaching introduced and developed by Harvard University to promote active learning among students in higher education. The workshop will prepare participants how to write their cases covering major challenges in Mindanao such as the Marawi conflict, violent terrorism, MSMEs, public health, and poverty.”

Dr. Noel Tarrazona, ahead of the first MACDC workshop in Davao