



Case Studies Strengthen Academe-Industry Cooperation

Dr. Christianne Nabua noticed that his students were often unprepared for careers in their chosen field—even his stellar students. Employers rarely engaged with his school to provide input or suggestions to improve the work readiness of graduates. As a Professor of Science Education and the Outcomes-Based Teaching and Learning Director at the Technological Institute of the Philippines (T.I.P.), Dr. Nabua knew that his school was recognized as one of the top universities in the Philippines in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math fields, but the academe-industry engagement problem still persisted. In January 2015, he became aware 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), and decided to apply.

The connection between academia and industry in the Philippines has historically been inefficient and unproductive, with a gap between the competency of graduates and the employer’s requirements. Nevertheless, research has shown that Philippine businesses value academic competencies, as well as ‘soft skills’ including experience in research, leadership, communication, and computer skills (Laguador and Ramos, Jr, 2014)¹. If universities and faculty can adjust curricula to train students in these areas, and if industry partners can contribute to this process, students will have more opportunities and be better prepared to contribute to the rapidly growing Philippine economy.

To address this, a key goal of the USAID-STRIDE project has been to help bridge the gaps between academia and industry through engagement with companies and with university leadership and educators through activities such as case study workshops.

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*Dr. John Branch
University of Michigan Ross
School of Business*

Dr. Nabua was accepted to attend the case study workshop held in April 2015. Organized and taught by WDI and case experts from the University of Michigan Ross School of Business, the workshop taught participants to research and write their own teaching case study and prepare it for publication. It also emphasized the importance of teaching cases in the classroom and how this tool can prepare students to think critically and solve problems, once on the job. 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. “Case studies put

¹ Laguador, Jake M., and Ramos Jr, Leon R (2014). Industry-Partners’ Preferences for Graduates: Input On Curriculum Development, *Journal of Education and Literature*, 1(1): 1-7.

the students in the driver’s seat,” said John Branch, the WDI case expert who conducted the workshop. “It is really the next best thing to learning on the job.”

Using what he learned at the workshop, after six months of research, interviews, writing, and editing, Dr. Nabua published his case, [*Nature’s Protector: Proper Solid Waste Management*](#). Designed for faculty teaching environmental management, the case asks students to consider the problem of how local governments in remote areas of the Philippines can follow the country’s legal requirements for waste disposal. It also requires them to evaluate a variety of factors and propose solutions. Dr. Nabua’s case is an excellent example of a teaching tool that will be extremely relevant to Philippine students. Published online as a part of the [STRIDE Case Study Collection](#), Dr. Nabua’s case is free to use by faculty throughout the Philippines.

During the two years following publication of his case study, Dr. Nabua taught the case several times and saw the impact on both students and himself. “This case study made students more creative and critical thinkers by putting them in the scenario of the case, which engages the students to participate actively in the class, hence making them problem solvers and lifelong learners,” he said. “It also enhanced my communication skills both orally and in writing, and I have applied these writing techniques to my other office and academic work.”

Despite the success of the case in the classroom, the improved relationship with an industry partner, and enhancement of his writing and research skills, Dr. Nabua noted a new problem after teaching his case a few times. After holding four case writing workshops, WDI and the USAID-STRIDE project had trained more than 135 faculty throughout the Philippines, and 94 of those workshop participants had gone on to publish case studies. Like Dr. Nabua’s case, these 94 cases cover a variety of disciplines and contexts, especially applicable to students in the Philippines, and possibly other developing countries. However, the problem now was one of sustainability. While 94 cases were now available, most faculty in the Philippines still did not know how to teach a case study and often had not even heard of them.

In order to address this, WDI and STRIDE held a final workshop in April 2017, in which a WDI case teaching expert provided a three-day workshop open to those faculty members who had previously published a case through the program. While WDI and STRIDE held the Train-the-Trainer Workshop and provided participants with



Dr. Nabua attended the second WDI case writing workshop and wrote a case study on Environmental Management

free resources, including Powerpoints and videos, participants committed to organize and hold the echo trainings on their own initiative and with support from their schools. Attended by Dr. Nabua and 33 others, participants left the three-day training with the tools and resources needed to scale up the case teaching method.

In the three months following the workshop, seeing the value of case studies for other faculty at T.I.P., Dr. Nabua gained university leadership approval and exceeded his original target of one echo workshop per 20 faculty. As he saw the demand for the new teaching method, he decided to hold three, one-day echo trainings for his colleagues at T.I.P.'s two campuses. In total, his trainings were attended by more than 100 faculty from T.I.P., most of whom were unfamiliar with case studies but found the teaching method useful and said they intended to use it in the future.

“Providing cases is one way to really practice Outcomes-Based Education and meet its objectives aside from the usual or conventional way of teaching being used nowadays,” said one. Another noted that “teaching case studies is an excellent tool in enhancing students’ ability for critical thinking and problem solving.” In addition, Dr. Nabua met with the Vice President for Academic Affairs at T.I.P. to discuss incorporating case studies into the curriculum at T.I.P.

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*Dr. Christianne Nabua
The Technological Institute of the Philippines*



Dr. Nabua held three echo workshops for more than 100 faculty at T.I.P. on how to teach using the STRIDE case studies

While not all achieved the same numbers as Dr. Nabua, the other 33 attendees of the Train-the-Trainer Workshop reported similar results, and many of them were also able to hold multiple echo trainings. The echo trainings were held throughout the Philippines in Manila, Cebu, Iloilo, and Mindanao, among other locations, and a total of 492 faculty have attended to-date. As usage of the STRIDE cases increases, and the impact on faculty, students, universities, and employers becomes apparent, WDI has seen growing interest in writing and publishing more case studies.



Many faculty have taken the initiative and have reached out to a local company or organization, completed the required research and written a case on their own for use in their classrooms. As Dr. Nabua noted after his case was published, “I have had good and transparent communication with my organization during the time of the interview and gathering of data from my contact person. This is a very good avenue where students can provide ideas to the solution of the case scenario, which in turn can be adopted, as applicable, by the organization featured in my case.”