

Case Studies Catch On in the Philippines

The Philippines is home to more than 2,000 higher education institutions. However, educators at universities in the Philippines often have few tools to promote experiential learning — or “real-world” application of what is being taught. As a result, students are often unprepared for their careers and frequently lack the skills to pass the necessary professional certification exams. Employers have little input into curriculum development and struggle to recruit qualified employees, despite the availability of graduates and high unemployment.



Participants at WDI’s third case writing workshop discuss how to reach out to a local organization to begin the case writing process

To address this issue, as well as improve the connection between academia and industry, USAID’s Science, Technology, Research, and Innovation for Development (STRIDE) project and the William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan (WDI) partnered to hold four workshops with the ultimate goal of having Philippine faculty write and publish teaching case studies.

Teaching case studies differ from research cases in that they promote experiential learning by presenting a real-life problem to students and ask them to resolve it, either individually or in group discussion. While teaching cases are traditionally used in business classes, the cases in the WDI-STRIDE [Philippines Case Collection](#) cover a range of disciplines. The case study method is highly effective because it helps students develop their own knowledge in response to problems, rather than learning from a ‘top-down’ transfer of knowledge from professor to student¹. “The majority of students were very active during the lesson because of this case study. They are not just simply passive and they do feel their part in the learning experience”, said Prof. Frances Magtoto, of the University of the Philippines Diliman, after using a case study in his class.

The four WDI-STRIDE case writing workshops were held in Manila, Iloilo, and Cebu over the course of the four-year STRIDE project. WDI experts from the University of Michigan led each of the three-day workshops, after which the participants worked with WDI’s Publishing division to research, write, edit, and ultimately publish their own case study. The process is time-

¹ Nath, Janice L., (2005). The Roles of Case Studies in the Educational Field, *International Journal of Case Method Research and Application*, XVII(3): 1



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*Dr. Raynante Autida
Western Mindanao State University*

consuming. It involves outreach to a local company or industry partner, research to find a real issue faced by that company, and writing a compelling story that gives students an appropriate amount of information to resolve the problem(s). During the research and writing process, professors gained a better understanding of what challenges their subject company faces, and occasionally they were able to offer solutions. In other instances, the subject company was very interested in following up to hear what solutions students would provide to ongoing problems. “The case study process helped me

view the organization in different contexts,” said Reynante Autida of Western Mindanao State University, “Seeing things in various contexts helped me to better understand their stand/decisions/etc.”

Case Writing Outputs

During the four workshops, held in April 2014, April, 2015, March 2016, and September 2016, the WDI case experts trained 133 Philippine faculty and 94 went on to publish case studies. This 70% completion rate highlights the commitment of the writers to complete the process, especially considering the challenges involved which included the lack of experience of the Philippine writers, the fact that universities did not provide financial or time incentive to research or publish the cases and rarely offered a reprieve from existing commitments, the unfamiliarity of Philippine businesses and organizations with the purpose of a case study, and the difficulties involved in remote technical assistance and editing by WDI. “Case writing and publishing provides great opportunity to enhance teaching capability,” said Ruel Cabahug, professor at Mindanao University of Science and Technology, “students find higher respect when they know that the lesson is derived from well-recognized published material, not to mention that the faculty teaching is the author.” Immediately after publication, the cases were made available free of charge via WDI Publishing’s website. The case authors began teaching cases in their classrooms the semester after publication.

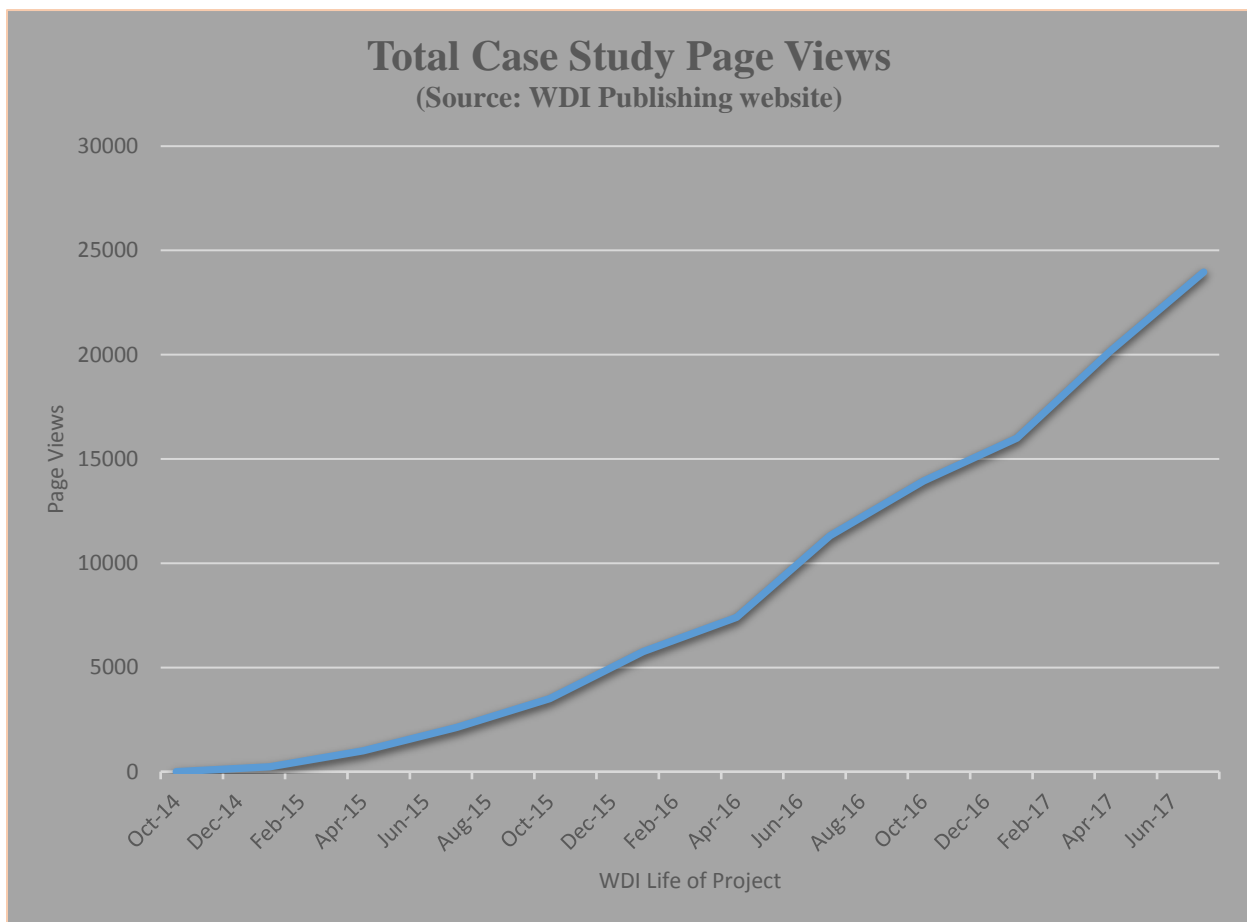
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The WDI Publishing website is able to track the page views of each case study, and the data shows a consistent and increasing interest in the case studies over the course of the project. With nearly 25,000 aggregate page views across the 94 cases, faculty are clearly viewing and using the case studies. Furthermore, the cases will remain available free of charge on the WDI website indefinitely.



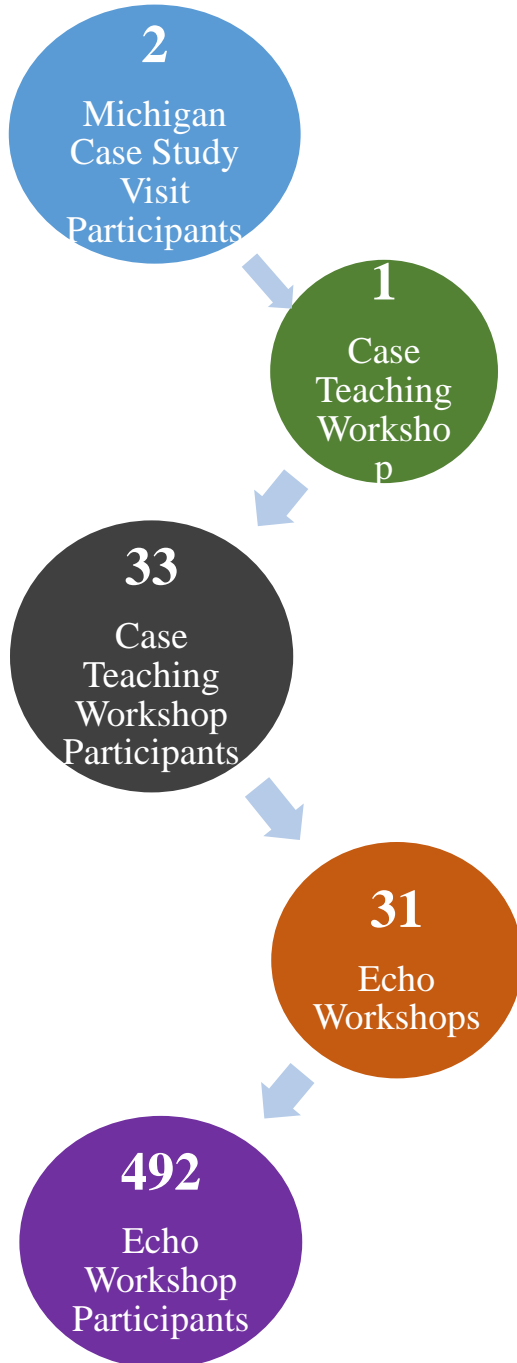
Case Teaching Outputs

In July 2016, WDI conducted a survey of the published case authors and several problems became apparent. First, most faculty who had participated in the workshop were using their own case but were generally not branching out to use any of the other 94 cases. Second, the majority of Philippine faculty were not aware of the published cases or, in many cases, didn't have the technical skills to use them.

To address this problem, WDI and STRIDE initiated two new activities: a visit by two case writers to the University of Michigan and a case teaching workshop following a train-the-trainer format.

University of Michigan Faculty Visit

In February 2017, WDI hosted a University of Michigan study visit for two Philippine faculty members who had published cases. The objective of the study visit was to provide the faculty with an in-depth review of how case studies are taught in the U.S., and to provide them with the resources to become 'case experts' and proponents of the case method after returning to the Philippines. The delegates, Dr. Dinah Depositario of the University of the Philippines, Los Banos, and Dr. Rowena Gelvezon, of the University of the Philippines, Visayas, met with professors, attended classes at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business, visited faculty at Michigan State University, and met with organizations and businesses in the Ann Arbor area. Following the visit, Dr. Gelvezon noted that there are both opportunities and challenges for entrepreneurs and growing businesses in the Philippines. Entrepreneurship is growing in importance in the Philippines, however many small businesses fail due to a lack of access to financing. Dr. Gelvezon also noted that "enterprises need to be supported by strong social and physical infrastructure, which include labor productivity, laboratories, business incubators, business planning,





marketing and branding, and conformance to international standards.” After reviewing how the University of Michigan interacts with its alumni, Dr. Depositario observed that writing case studies and improving the connection with alumni could be mutually beneficial to her school. “Case studies could be written about alumni and potential donor/sponsor companies. This way universities will be able to establish closer links with them and expand their networks.”

Train-the-Trainer Workshop

In April 2017, WDI held a case teaching workshop. The workshop was conducted in a train-the-trainer format, and the objective was for participants to hold echo workshops for their colleagues after returning to their home universities. Because of their experience visiting the University of Michigan, Dr. Depositario and Dr. Gelvezon were invited to help lead the three-day workshop alongside a U.S. case teaching expert. The workshop was attended by 33 faculty members, all of whom had attended one of the four case writing workshops and had published cases. These case authors were chosen to attend because of their experience with the case teaching method and their eagerness to teach colleagues using this tool. By using the resources and tools gained at the workshop, in addition to their previous experience writing a case study, the 33 faculty returned to their universities to conduct echo workshops.

Echo Workshops

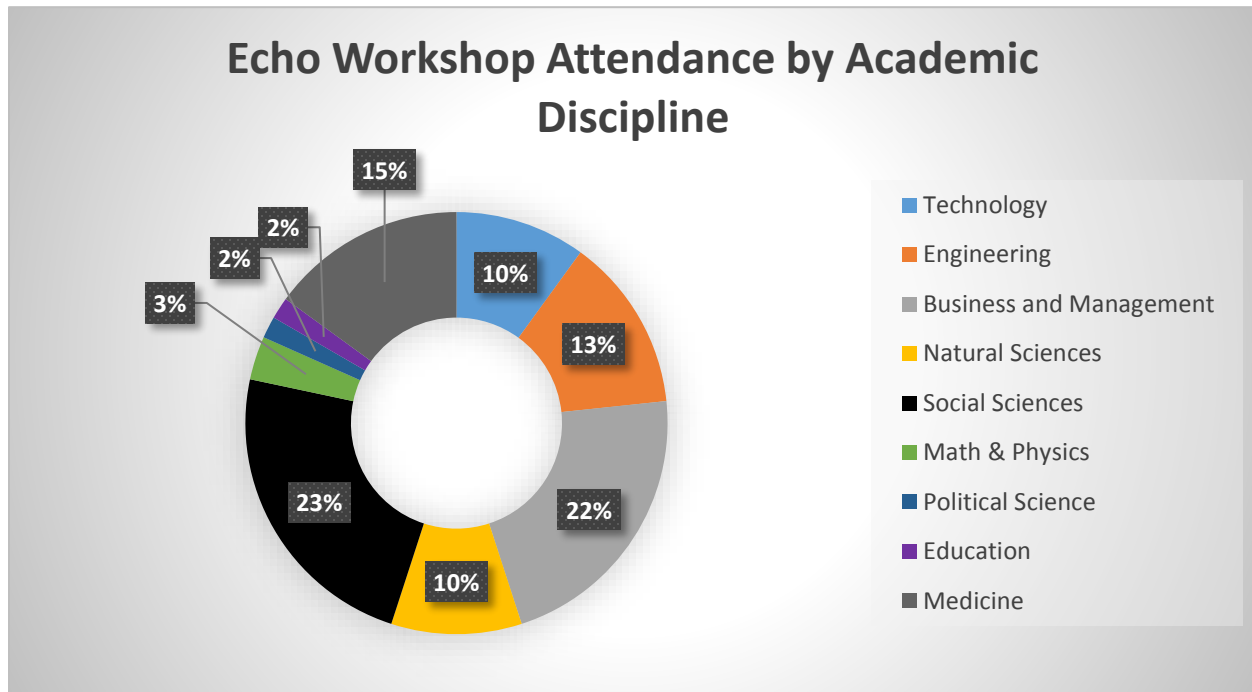
In the following months, the workshop participants held echo workshops at their schools. While WDI and STRIDE provided training materials from the train-the-trainer workshop and access to the case studies is free, the leaders of the echo workshops took the initiative to find time for a workshop, invite colleagues, secure a venue, and meet the necessary requirements from their universities to be able to hold echo trainings.

Despite some challenges, the trainers have held or set dates within the next three months for 31 workshops and have trained more than 460 of their colleagues across 61 disciplines how to teach using case studies. The variety of disciplines represented in the echo workshops shows that

“I’m really glad I was given an opportunity to write teaching cases and conduct an echo workshop. It had been a great experience! I was able to share what I’ve learned with my colleagues and we’re able to impact more students. The echo workshop I conducted didn’t just serve as a venue for learning case teaching but was also a venue for us to share teaching strategies, raise challenges and concerns in facilitating student learning, and find solutions to address those concerns/challenges. The seasoned educators were able to share their best practices and everyone shared techniques on how to maintain students’ interest during discussion. The participants enjoyed the workshop and they were hoping we can do something similar again.”

*Dr. Relanie Eleana
University of Iloilo*

instructors throughout each university are finding case studies to be valuable. In addition, several workshops have been planned within specific disciplines. For example, Dr. Brian Vasquez, of the University of the Visayas, invited faculty from his university’s School of Education to attend his echo workshop. The faculty unfortunately weren’t able to attend but were so interested in the case study model that they requested that he conduct a second echo workshop solely for the School of Education.



Other Outcomes

In addition to the success of the echo workshops, participants at workshops, case writers, and other WDI contacts have reported positive experiences or successes that were not foreseen when implementing activities.

Cases Adopted by Universities outside the Philippines

One example of the unintended effects of the case studies has been their adoption outside the Philippines. In conducting case writing and training, WDI and STRIDE intended the case studies to be used by Philippine faculty. All the case studies are currently being used, but because they are hosted on the WDI Publishing website and access is free, universities outside the Philippines have expressed interest. For example, in June 2017, WDI was approached by a professor from the University of Hong Kong who requested approval to include one of the case studies in a new textbook about “ethical decision making in developing countries.” The case, “A Kidney for a



Life: Julio’s Story,” was written by Professor Jeannemar Yap-Figuera from West Visayas State University and was published in August 2016. The case covers the topic of illegal organ trade, particularly how those in poverty are often convinced to donate an organ for a cash payment, and how the illegal trade can be stopped. Another example of interest outside the Philippines was the adoption of a case for a course being taught at American University in Washington, D.C. The case, “The Curse of the Dead Fish,” was written by Professor Bernice Maliao, who also teaches at West Visayas State University and her case covers the topic of aquaculture on Visayas and some of the environmental and business challenges faced by local farmers.

Mindanao Case Teaching Consortium

Another unexpected result of the project was the formation of the Mindanao Academic Case Developers Consortium (MACDC) by four participants at the train-the-trainer workshop. The four, representing the University of the Philippines, Mindanao, the Mindanao State University Illigan Institute of Technology, and Western Mindanao State University, held their planned echo trainings after returning to their schools. After completing the echo trainings, they decided to expand the impact of the case method to universities throughout Mindanao, of which there are more than 400. To better reach universities throughout the island, they formed the MACDC to combine resources and better coordinate trainings. The leaders of the consortium are also considering the establishment of a more long-term Mindanao Academic Case Development Academy (MACDA) dedicated to case writing as well as teaching. The objective of both MACDC and MACDA would be to use case studies to address the major problems currently affecting Mindanao, namely security, public health, business and entrepreneurship, and economic development.