

OVERVIEW | WHAT ARE TEACHING CASE STUDIES, AND WHY USE THEM?

Strategies for Sustainable Development: Case Studies of Community-Based Population, Health, and Environment Projects documents approaches to the implementation of integrated population, health, and environment (PHE) projects. Written by the project managers themselves, the case studies provide lessons learned from their experiences. Each of the case studies focuses on a different theme, such as building partnerships, participatory planning, and advocacy.

What is the purpose of this guide?

This guide provides basic information and tips for trainers and others who plan to facilitate discussions of the case studies. It provides general suggestions for effective facilitation of the case studies, proposed agendas for workshops of differing lengths, and specific insights on each of the case studies that will help facilitators highlight key learning points.

What are teaching case studies, and why use them?

A teaching case study is a story with a plot, characters, and a setting. Unlike a simple project description or a summary of results, these teaching case studies provide a creative recounting of the writers' experiences and problems that allows the reader to understand, explore, and learn from their stories. They guide the reader through a specific situation in such a way that the reader can understand the complexities and uncertainties confronting the story's main characters and internalize the lessons learned from their experiences. In doing so, readers who use these case studies can build some of the necessary skills and confidence to initiate or expand their own efforts in integrated PHE programming.

What is the format of the case studies?

Each case study is six to eight pages long and is divided into two or three sections. After each section, discussion questions ask readers to analyze the action in the case study and, in some cases, to relate the lessons of the case to their own experiences.

How can the case studies be used?

The case studies are designed for use in a group setting in which individuals can share their ideas and experi-

ences. By providing readers with an interactive learning experience, the case studies can help readers gain a richer understanding of specific aspects of PHE project implementation. While use in a workshop or classroom setting is ideal, individuals who choose to read the case studies independently may also find them helpful.

How much time is required to use a case study in a workshop?

Based on experiences with the case studies to date, a minimum of one hour is required to fully discuss the case study if participants have read it ahead of time. If participants have not read the case studies, a minimum of two hours is required, though in either case the workshop could easily extend to three or four hours, depending on the other materials or issues the facilitator chooses to bring into the discussion.

Who is the intended audience for the case studies?

The primary audiences are practitioners and students with interests in community-based sustainable-development programming, although anyone interested in learning more about creative approaches to community engagement, organizational change, advocacy, or sustainability might find the case studies interesting and useful.

How many participants should there be in a workshop?

These case studies are designed so that they could be read and discussed by just two people, or could accommodate a workshop of up to 30 or more. If you have a group of more than a dozen or so people, discussion and participation is more effective if the larger group is divided into subgroups of five to six individuals for discussion.