

# CASE STUDY GUIDANCE TOOL

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supported by



**“Since time began, teachers have taught other people by drawing on stories from real-life experiences. In a way, then, telling stories taken from real life can be seen as case teaching.”<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Fossey, R., Crow, G.M. (2011). The elements of a good case. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership* 14(3) 4–10. The University Council for Educational Administration. Sage Publications.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this case study guidance tool ('guide') is to stimulate reflection and learning within the international community of preparedness practitioners through the development and sharing of case studies. The tool is designed to help humanitarian practitioners navigate a process for case study research and development; to explore, capture and share experiences, knowledge and insight with other practitioners be they in another office, a neighboring state or across the world. Focused on specific projects, interventions or activities the tool can hopefully facilitate the development of case studies that:

- Define the context and challenges of disaster preparedness and other humanitarian work;
- Explain key decisions, solutions or approaches used to overcome those challenges;
- Identify key learnings, insights and innovations.

While primarily focused on text-based cases the tool presents options for the use of video and multimedia in the development of case studies.

**With this guide, case developers should understand that they are being encouraged to go beyond the creation of traditional “success stories” and showcase-type cases.** The tool encourages case teams to drill down during the research process such that the final case is a balanced, rich and detailed story that conveys the real-world complexity, tension and excitement of project work. By exploring the rationale for decisions made along with the strengths, weaknesses and trade-offs of an intervention or approach a case will hopefully stimulate critical thinking and analysis on the part of case developers as well as with members of their target audience.

Ultimately, the guide is meant to be a suggestion, and as adaptable and flexible as users need it to be. The guide is also meant to evolve over time as it is field tested. Feedback on how the guide is helpful and what sections can be further developed or refined, will be an essential part of the application process.

## II. INTRODUCTION TO GUIDE

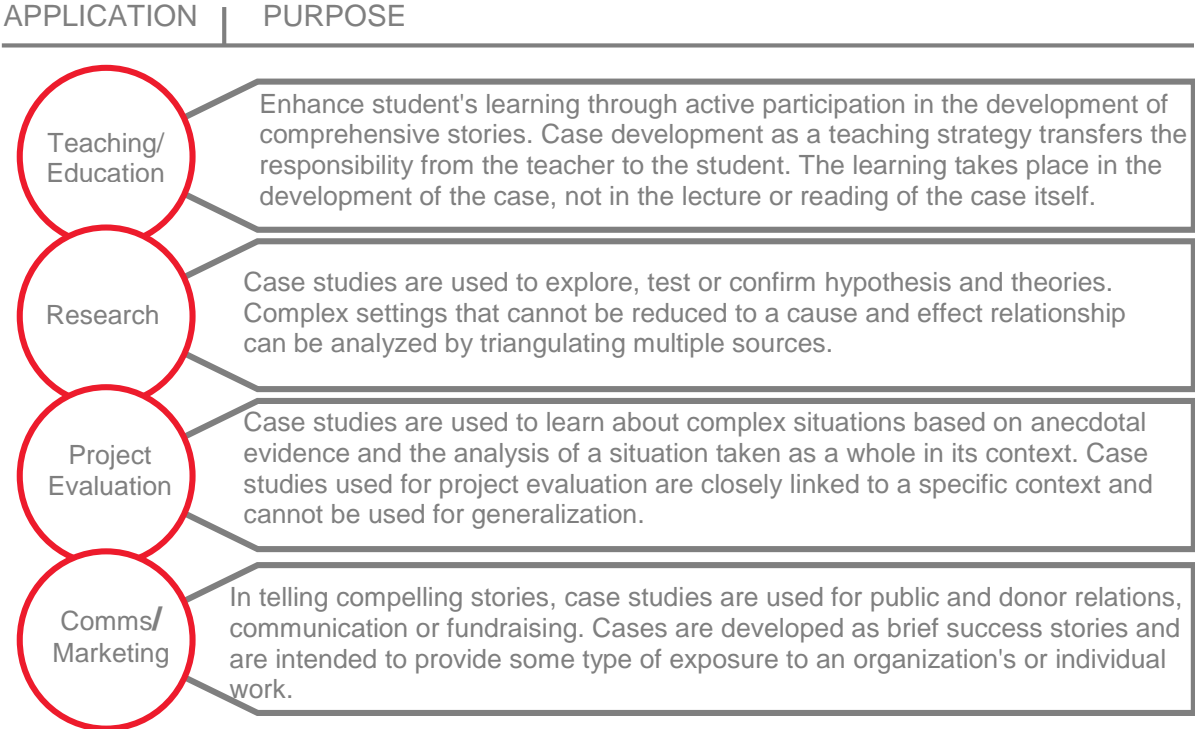
There are many different concepts of and definitions for a case studies, and they are used widely across many disciplines and industries. The definition and content of a case study often depend on its intended use. Three commonly understood uses for the case study include:

- Research to explore or confirm theories,
- Project evaluation, and
- Learning or teaching in practitioner-focused disciplines such as business, law, medicine, public health, social work or design.

Beyond learning and research, case studies are also used by organizations for the purposes of marketing, public and donor relations, communications or fundraising. Cases developed for these purposes often resemble something of a brief success story and are intended to provide some type of exposure to an organization’s or individual’s work.

Case studies typically provide an in-depth description of place, people involved, local organization and project (or some aspect of a project), and context including cultural, political, religious components, local norms, customs, attitudes, and a brief background on the industry sector. The case is written as an interesting story and provides the reader with the experience of “being there” and knowing the characters involved. Teaching cases are created for purposes of learning and development of analytical, leadership, decision-making and creative problem-solving skills. These cases focus on the “how” and “why” of one or a small number of critical decisions.

In the context of humanitarian work, case studies are used to share experiences and enable others to learn about the challenges faced and solutions developed by their colleagues around the world. It is important, then, that **these case studies help readers understand how and why certain decisions and actions were taken in the course of a project, and the consequences of those actions.** These cases do not offer some kind of “universal truth” or generalizable findings but can provide useful learnings for other practitioners about what solutions may be better than others.



**FIGURE 1 Application and purpose of case studies**

In addition to the learnings that can take place through developing a story-based case study, the approach lends itself to the development of video components to the case, to help convey practitioner and stakeholder experiences, tell stories about complex situations, and provide the viewer with a strong sense of “being there” in the story with the characters.<sup>2</sup>

Developing a story-based case study offers its authors the opportunity to not only describe a project intervention, decisions and outcomes, and lessons learned but authors can also benefit from their role as quasi-researchers. They can reflect on and analyze decisions taken by themselves and/or their colleagues; explain the thinking behind decisions; discuss what prior knowledge, skills, experience and concepts informed the development of options and final decisions; explain how solutions were implemented and how the results from those decisions compared to what was expected. This depth of inquiry and analysis can be used to foster learning at individual, team and organizational levels within the case-writing organization itself. These cases could be used in local or regional workshops, in online events with moderated discussions, or as part of e-learning projects.

Another valuable aspect of the story-based approach is that the case can provide the reader with the realism and excitement of being in the field in that situation, with some understanding of the people involved, the many perspectives at play, the ambiguity and complexity of the situation, and the trade-offs that have been made. This type of case offers something of a “day in the life” of a colleague or project team in their environment, making it easy to envision the creation of video-products that capture the stories, experiences, challenges and problem-solving approaches of the people involved. A dynamic story that includes video can be more interesting (and fun) to write and film and be more engaging for the audience than traditional written report.

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<sup>2</sup> Case developers can also consider digital photography, audio recording, and voice-over narration to be compiled as a video as reasonable alternatives to actual video footage if that seems more appropriate.



## SECTION ONE: THE CASE STUDY

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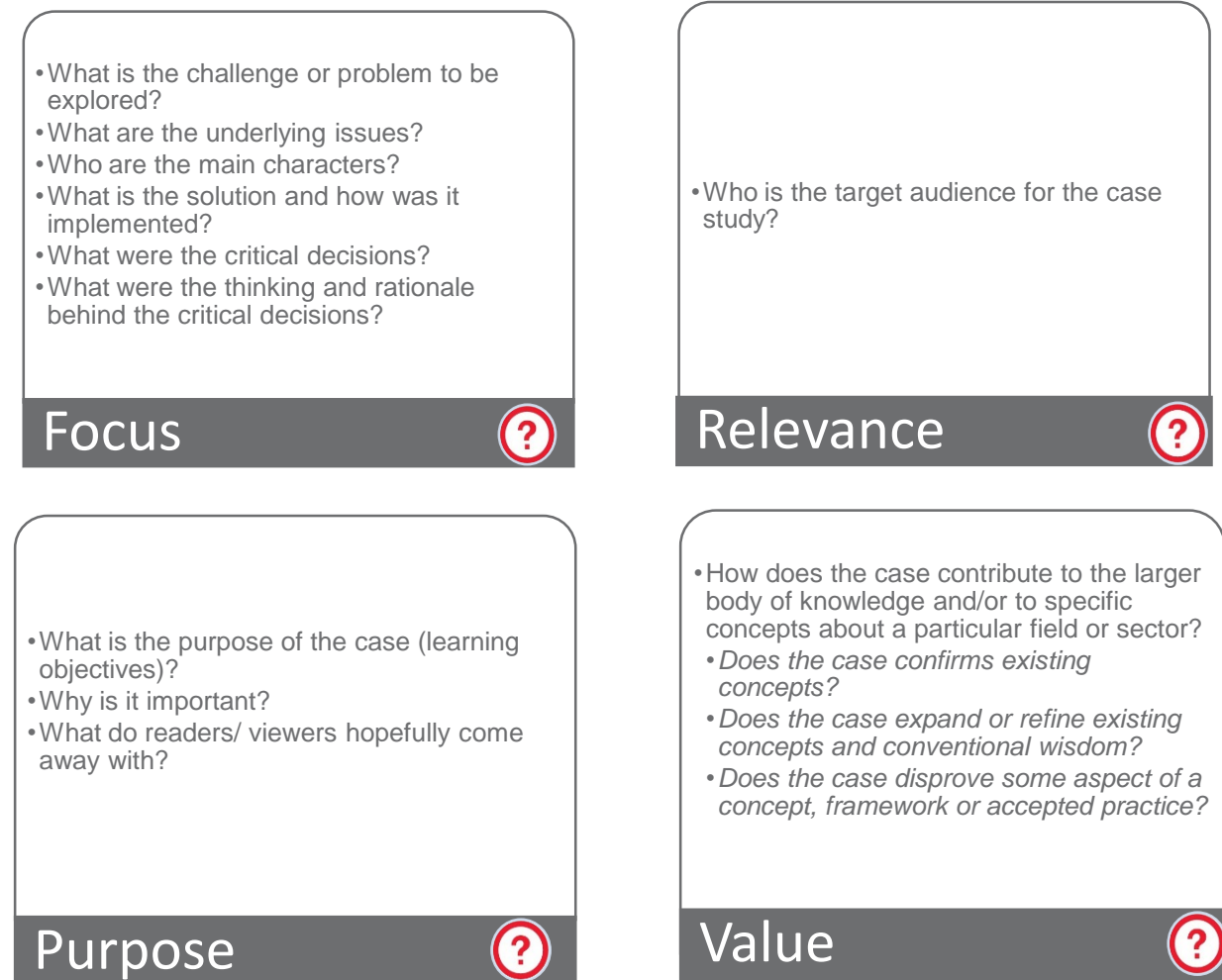
As a very first step, case developers need to get a good idea about the format they want the case study to take. The format of a case study has important implications of what kind of data and information is collected and how, e.g. video or audio recordings of interviews. Generally it can be distinguished between text based and video case studies. The multimedia format combines both text and video or other multimedia elements, for example by including photos, text, and video clips in an e-document. In addition other mixed forms like posting some short video clips together with a text based case study on the website can be considered. During the planning process and by assessing their own capacities, the case developers will be able to refine the format of the end product.

### **1.1** TOPIC SELECTION AND STORY DEVELOPMENT

The selection of a topic for a case study and the actual development of a case can be approached from different angles. For example, cases can be written to reflect on a completed project, with an emphasis on presenting a problem and the actions, decisions, leadership that helped a team overcome that problem. This kind of case development could serve as a learning tool for the individual or team and could contribute to a broad base of knowledge in that topic area or sector.

Case studies can also be used to document the different phases throughout the lifecycle of a project, starting from the planning phases and following the project to completion over time. This type of case can be even more exciting and insightful when presented in a video format, with project footage and interviews captured over time as the intervention unfolds. Given that a case study of an entire project would require a significant amount of time, effort and research, depending on the size and scope of the project, it is reasonable to think of a case as targeting some smaller, critical aspect of a project or intervention.

In selecting a topic, focus and purpose of the case study, it is important to consider a few basic questions.



**FIGURE 2 Considerations for the development of a case study topic**

Existing reports or evaluations might also provide the basis for a good case study. In this case the task might be to repackage the information in an interesting way to fit the format of a case study rather than to go through an entire case research and interview process from the very beginning.

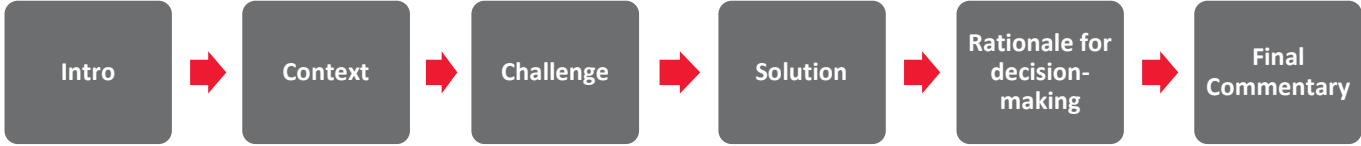
It is also useful (though not essential) at this initial stage of case development to determine what forms the final case will take. Various types of cases include:

- Text case
- Multimedia case – integration of text and digital media consisting
- Standalone video case<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Some very basic tips for developing video and multimedia components for cases are offered in Section 2 'Video and Multimedia' of this document.

# 1.2 CASE STUDY STRUCTURE

Case studies ('cases') can follow a basic structure as described below. Cases will vary from project to project and certain elements may lend themselves to more emphasis than others based on the most important aspects of the case story.



**FIGURE 3: Case study structure**

## 1. Introduction

- This is a very brief opening for the case, offering a few words to present the issue and the major characters involved in decision-making. The introduction is meant to quickly lay out the issue that is being addressed and its context, and the main characters in a way that grabs the reader’s interest to continue reading the story.

## 2. Context

- A good case provides the reader with rich contextual details that situate the challenge or problem and help the reader understand how contextual factors can inform the decision-making process. Context description can include the following background information:
  - Organizational setting, structure and mission
  - Details of a specific humanitarian sector
  - Project history and objectives
  - Description of the communities, stakeholders and partners involved
  - Description of the environment, local context, legal structures, political environment and cultural norms or values
- It is important that all contextual details have a direct relevance for the issue that is being discussed and are presented in the most concise way possible.

## 3. Challenge or problem

- This section describes the primary challenge or problem being faced and the underlying issues that impact a solution to the problem. Major characters involved in the case story are introduced.



#### 4. Solution

- Before presenting the final solution, writers could discuss the potential courses of action that were considered as part of the process, why they were considered and the pros and cons of each alternative.
- The final solution is then presented, along with a description of how it was implemented, and some of the challenges involved in the implementation and outcomes.

#### 5. Rationale for final decision making

- It is important that the case not only presents the final solution, but also explains the rationale behind the final decision. Writers may want to explain what the main characters were thinking and the concepts, frameworks, and 'accepted wisdom' that informed their decision-making.

#### 6. Lessons learned and final commentary

- This section can cover a few different issues such as what the characters learned; how concepts, frameworks and 'accepted wisdom' were affected (reinforced, expanded, proven wrong); and what could have been done differently and why. The section could also present factors that might have made other potential solutions more feasible.

### 1.3 INCLUSION OF CHARACTERS IN CASE DEVELOPMENT

The major stakeholders or characters who play an important role in the telling of the case study should be identified to determine who will be interviewed as part of the research process. One way to convey the real-life challenges and problem-solving experiences of humanitarian work to an audience is to include main and secondary characters to help bring the case to life.

A 'main character' is the person facing the problem and whose decisions are the central focus of the case. The case can be written around this main character with the inclusion of secondary characters to provide a more complete picture of the story.

If the case's storyline involves a team of people, then all major players can be written into the case. Important decisions and actions can be explored with all of the major characters, and explaining team interactions and dynamics will help create a realistic story for the audience.

When writing characters into the story the reader should come away with a good sense of who these characters are, how they think and behave and how their individual perspectives may influence the decision-making process. **Writers can help bring team members to life in the case by using actual quotes from the characters** that are obtained during the interview process.

Writing characters into the story also facilitates the development of video components for the case. Practitioners interviewed for the video will be discussing their own challenges and experiences on camera as opposed to talking about the project as passive observers.

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*“Rather than observing participants, you find yourself jumping into the decisions that are of greatest interest to them. Rather than constructing an argument, you are writing a story.”<sup>4</sup>*

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## 1.4 CASE RESEARCH (DATA COLLECTION AND INTERVIEWS)

To build a story, case writers can use any combination of data collection methods depending on what makes most sense in their situation and for their particular case. The list includes:

- Interviews
- Observation
- Personal experience, i.e. as a participant in the project/intervention
- Participant observation
- Document review, including evaluations or case studies on a similar topic
- Archival research

One of the primary research tools will be interviews with the case’s main characters, which can provide necessary details to the story and explore the characters’ insights and reflections. Interviews are most successful when interview guides are developed beforehand. In developing interview guides, writers should target some questions for each interviewee given that person’s particular role and area of expertise in the story. The questions developed for the interview guide should all be relevant to focus of the case study. It is important, however, to also maintain wide paths of inquiry with each interviewee in order to gather a comprehensive perspective of the story. Interviews are an opportunity to discover the characters’ insights and reflections of a story that can reveal new perspectives and relevant details. Successful interviews probe for explanations about *why* certain aspects of the story are significant and *why* certain decisions were made. Interviews may also offer an opportunity to better understand what the major characters consider “conventional wisdom” or “accepted practice” and

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<sup>4</sup> Gill, T.G. (2011). *Informing with the Case Method: A guide to Case Method Research, Writing, & Facilitation*. Informing Science Press, Santa Rosa, CA.

the conceptual frameworks about humanitarian work that come into play in a variety of scenarios.

If a case is being developed as a project unfolds it will be important to have multiple interviews with major characters at designated points in time. Interviews over time can provide interesting information about how a character's thinking and perspectives change and potentially influence decision-making and approaches to problem solving.

In addition to information collected through interviews, other sources like document review or archival research can be used to provide information on context and for fact checking and triangulation of information.

## INTERVIEWS AS PRIMARY INFORMATION SOURCES

**Interviews are one of the main sources of information for developing case studies. While interviews are of particular relevance in the development of video case studies, they can also be used to collect information for text based case studies.**

### **In developing cases, interviews can serve different purposes:**

- **Recording for internal research:** A case developer may record interviews for later review and analysis. The recordings have no use beyond the internal research process and is done for the convenience of the case developer.
- **Recording for use in a multimedia case study:** A case developer may record interviews as part of the content development and filming for a video or multimedia case.
- **Post-interview recording:** After an initial interview, a case developer may schedule times to film interviewees, focusing on abbreviated versions of the same topics covered during interviews.

It is important for case developers to know which approach they want to take and when they plan on conducting (audio/video) recordings before beginning the interview process. This will determine how interviews and interviewees are prepared, and help ensure that the right equipment is available during the recording.

### **Audio recording interviews**

Many case developers audio record their interview sessions for their own internal work purposes. It is important to obtain permission from the interviewees before beginning the audio recording and to explain how the recording will be used.

### **There are various advantages to audio recording interviews:**

- Recordings can be turned into accurate text transcripts for further consultation, review and analysis after the interview.
- Case developers can focus on their discussion with the interviewees, being completely present in the conversation. This makes it easier to go **in-depth in**

an interview, to respond with thoughtful follow-up questions, rather than being distracted with extensive and accurate note-taking.

Many mobile phones have the capacity to create voice memos or other generic digital audio recordings. Handheld voice recorders and tablets are also good tools to record interviews. When using a more informal recording device, the audio recording is intended for use by the case writer, as part of research notes, and not for inclusion in any type of external multimedia product.

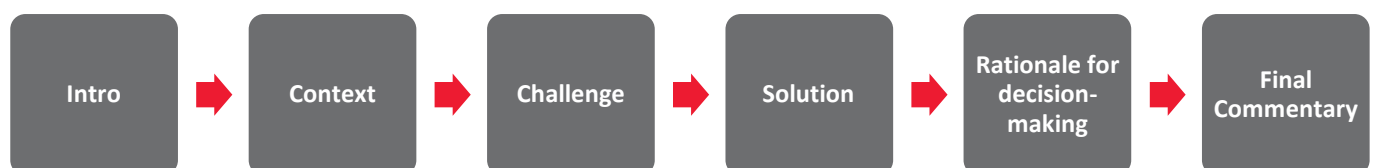
On the other hand, a case writer might plan to include small parts of the recorded interview (audio snippets) in a multimedia case product. In this situation it will be important that the audio recording be of an acceptable quality for external use. The device used for audio recording should be tested in advance, to confirm that it can produce an acceptable quality recording. Optimum placement of the device, in relation to the person speaking, will need to be determined in advance. Use of an external microphone might be considered.

*Still photographs from interviews will be useful to have even if it is not exactly clear how they will ultimately be used. Again, permission is necessary.*

## 1.5 DATA REVIEW

As the case developer continues to review and analyze interview materials, details for the case will emerge and the writer can begin mapping out the story. Information from documents and other data sources will progressively fill in the story and help to clarify potential contradictions between interviews. During this process the case developer can also start to pull the most interesting and illuminating statements from interviewees to include in the case as direct quotations.

The case components suggested in section '1.2 Case Structure' can serve as a basis to start organizing interview findings and to outline the case.



**FIGURE 3** Components to case study structure to be used as outline

Interview guidelines, based on general and probing questions focused within each of the case components, can also help manage and categorize interview findings for the outline.

## 1.6 WRITING THE CASE

Although **cases should be written in the third person** it is useful to include direct quotes from the various characters in the case to help illustrate internal thought processes, values and other key factors to decision-making. Here are a few other things to consider when developing the narrative:

- As a case writer be as objective as possible and avoid promoting or supporting a particular point of view.
- Readers should be able to see the problem from multiple perspectives and appreciate various viewpoints.
- Presenting multiple or conflicting viewpoints helps convey the complexity and context of the situation.
- In-depth context and background also helps give a sense of the complexity of the setting.
- Include the ambiguities associated with the project, decisions, and/or solutions and how those ambiguities were addressed. Good problem solvers learn how to deal with ambiguity.

### Transparency and Sensitivity

Comprehensive, detailed and engaging case studies often illustrate the complex realities of humanitarian work and can expose elements of controversy or conflict. Some of these elements, which make the story interesting and valuable for learning, however, might be considered too sensitive or private to share with outsiders. When describing the complexities and challenges of humanitarian work, case developers need to balance transparency and candidness with an individual's or organization's perception of confidentiality. Individuals might be uncomfortable sharing information that they consider sensitive, especially if it has the potential to harm the people who may be benefiting from the described intervention. An objective presentation of the complexities involved and the lessons learned, however, can help present valuable, but potentially sensitive information, in ways that are not seen as negative. Also, demonstrating the lessons that were learned from addressing problems or correcting mistakes can be greatly valuable to readers of the case study. Having a robust internal review process can ensure that a case study is not revealing detrimental information for any one person or organization.

### Length

There are no strict guidelines for the length of a case study. A shorter case study may not contain enough information to be very useful for the reader. A longer case study (over 10 pages) may be too long to hold the reader's attention unless it is a compelling and well written story. Understanding that every situation and case story will be different, a recommended guideline for a case study is between five and 10 pages. Case developers should have a sense on the length and format of the end product in order to estimate how much information can be included. The real substance of the

case will be the sections dealing with the challenge, the solution and the explanations behind decision-making and actions.



## SECTION TWO: VIDEO AND MULTIMEDIA

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This next section of the guide focuses specifically on video and its potential use in case study development. The section starts by introducing a few options for using video or digital media to document and present a case study. Some basic questions are presented to help case developers assess their abilities and resources to work with video or digital media and decide which media option is most suitable.

The guide goes on to offer some basic process and media production information to illustrate key aspects of developing a video case. Considerations regarding the development of a plan for production and editing as well as technology, equipment and needed capacities are presented.

### 2.1 TYPES OF VIDEO/MEDIA COMPONENTS

A video case study can be a great way to engage a project team in a process of reflection, critical thinking, learning and skill enhancement. The video case can be a very dynamic and engaging way to share that critical thinking and learning with fellow practitioners around the globe.

Video and other digital media products can be used in different ways to support the development of a case study. Before starting with any production efforts, it is important that case developers decide in which format the case study will be developed. The priority should always be the development of rich, engaging and relevant content. The format of the case study and the use of different media types should serve to enhance the story and content, and facilitate the engagement with the material and learnings that are presented. It is important not to make technology and digital media elements more of a distraction than a useful knowledge delivery system.

The different video or multimedia formats that can be used for case studies include:

- **Video case study** (with or without text case) that contains all the elements similar to a text case. The length of a video case study can vary, and shorter versions of the case can be created to show highlights or use as a teaser for the longer video.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> No strict rules apply for the length of a video. Generally a maximum length of 12 – 15 minutes is recommended to not lose the viewers' attention.

- **Video components to a text case.** This approach provides an opportunity to post selected clips of interviews, site visits or key visuals of the story on a website along with a text case.
- **Multimedia case.** Selected video clips are integrated into an e-document combining text and video. Still photography, audio recordings, voice-over narrations can be assembled to create a slideshow (with or without text elements), and used in place of video as a less complicated option.

## 2.2 CONSIDERATIONS IN DECIDING WHICH VIDEO COMPONENTS TO DEVELOP

To decide if a video or multimedia format should be used it is helpful for the case developer to assess the video-making capacities like manpower, time, skills, experience, and equipment. There is no minimum amount of experience or exposure required to develop a video case. Cameras and basic editing software can be quickly learned. Challenges for video production can be the access to equipment and software, available time to learn hardware and software, and the actual time to conceptualize, plan, film and edit the video case.<sup>6</sup>

A few factors for the case developer to consider when assessing the capabilities and resources, to determine if and what type of video product is most feasible include<sup>7</sup>:

### Video production experience of team member(s)/ willingness to learn and experiment



- mapping out the story (interviewees, interview questions, visual components)
- filming
- interviewing
- capturing additional visuals for video (project sites, equipment, communities)
- audio (using external microphone)

### Video editing experience of team member(s)/ willingness to learn and experiment



- familiarity with editing software on laptops/ desktops
- familiarity with editing software on mobile devices
- ability to add voice over and/or subtitles if different language versions needed
- see Appendix for a list of possible editing programs

<sup>6</sup> Case developers can also consider engaging the services of outside expertise (local or remote via internet, paid or voluntary) to support the planning, implementation or editing process of video case studies.

<sup>7</sup> All of these media questions are based on the assumption that the case team will be starting with a solid case story which itself requires an investment of time for planning, research and analysis.

### Availability of video equipment and accessories

- video phones (capacity/storage space)
- video tablets (capacity/storage space)
- handheld cameras (in-house or available for rent)
- video storage cards (SD cards)
- external microphones (to assure best sound quality)
- tripod or other camera stabilization tools
- spare batteries, battery chargers, electricity
- video footage download-and-editing capable laptop/desktop computer
- external hard drive for video storage

### Translation capabilities

- voice translations for versions not in local language (voice overs)
- written or audio transcripts of translations (for text subtitles)

### Existing video and digital media

- existing materials reduce the need to newly create all video/digital materials
- focus efforts more on locating and editing existing materials into a case
- existing digital materials can also influence the type of multimedia product a team decides to undertake (more about existing materials in section 2.4)

### Other

- availability and willingness of people to be interviewed on camera
- local (or remote) video and editing support as needed

After assessing the capacities of the team and available technology a case developer has to determine whether a video case study, shorter video components as accompaniments to a text case or a multimedia case using any combination of still photography, text, audio, voice-overs/ narration is feasible to capture the case.

## 2.3 MAPPING OUT CONTENT AND LOCATIONS

Development of a video requires the same basic planning, research and analysis as a text case in order to create the case study. An outline of the content including the different elements of a case study as explained under section '1.2 Case Study Structure' will serve as a guidance for the development of the content. Each case study element like introduction, description of the context, challenge or problem, solutions, and key decisions can be thought of as a section in the video.

The following elements should be considered for each section:

- Main characters in the section who need to be filmed.



- Key points and statements on what needs to be discussed in each section. The developed interview guideline(s) will help to hone on the important topics.
- Identify the best location for the filming so the visual backdrop helps to convey the story. Lighting, noise, and possible sources of distraction have to be taken into consideration.
- Identify visual elements that help convey the story and can be laid over the main character's "talking head" during editing (b-roll) as the character is speaking<sup>8</sup>. Both photos and archival footage can be used for this.
- What language(s) are needed for the end product, and are there needs for translations, transcripts, subtitles, or 'voice overs'<sup>9</sup>. If interviewees are multilingual they may be asked to do multiple camera takes of the same content in different languages.

To plan filming session and consolidate some of the preparation work, the case developer can create a grid to associate

- a specific spoken element of content (what needs to be said),
- with a specific interviewee (who is filmed discussing that piece of content),
- with that person's associated backdrop (best interview location), and
- additional visual elements associated with what is being said to help show what the person is talking about (b-roll).

This kind of mapping can be done for each section of the video case as well as for smaller individual video components used as supplements to the text case. The same mapping process can be used to incorporate still photography, audio clips or voice over narration.

	What needs to be said	Who needs to say it	Good location for interview	Associated visuals (b-roll)
<b>Section 1</b>				
<b>Section 2</b>				
<b>Section 3</b>				

**FIGURE 4 Grid Template**

If interview sessions have been filmed during the case research phase and most of the content has already been captured, the grid can be used to help identify which interview clips to use in the final product. The grid can also be used to identify any additional visual shots or interview segments that need to be captured to fill gaps.

<sup>8</sup> When possible, be sure to select video editing software that allows multiple visual tracks so b-roll (the additional visual elements of the story) can be layered on top of the "talking heads."

<sup>9</sup> 'Voice over' refers to a production technique where a pre-recorded voice is placed over the video footage to explain information.

To keep the interest of the viewers it is recommended that the video footage includes visuals (e.g. b-roll and photography) in addition to interviews. In planning a video case it is important to leave sufficient time for refining the video footage with additional visuals or audio clips. The need to include such additional elements may only become apparent during the development process, so it is crucial that the case developer can accommodate the need for additional material.

## **2.4 INTERVIEWS AS DATA COLLECTION METHOD FOR A VIDEO OR MULTIMEDIA CASE STUDY**

The data collection methods for a text case (mentioned in ‘Section 1.4 Case Research’) can also be used for video-based cases. Given the audiovisual nature of a case presented through video, however, it is reasonable to expect that video cases will use interviews as the core of the story, and additional video footage to provide the visuals for the case story. If the main characters for the case are also the case developers, then colleagues can be recruited to undertake the filming and to conduct the interviews.

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*A video case may also include text elements like banners, captions and charts to use information collected from a document review and archival research. Similarly, this kind of information and data can be used to provide background and triangulation of facts to help shape an interview guide.*

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The first step in doing a video recording is to obtain written permission from the interviewees that they agree to be filmed as part of the case study. If video recording is going to be used then case developers need to decide at what point they will conduct video interviews. Similar to audio recordings, there are a few options for this component.

**1) Film interviews during the research process** itself. This allows the case researcher to have an audio visual record of the interview to consult while reviewing the data. Another advantage is that the interviewee’s responses will be fresh, genuine and spontaneous as opposed to over-thought, scripted, and stiff. This can often happen when an interviewee tries to re-create pieces of their initial responses during a subsequent interview session on film.

There are a few disadvantages to this option. First, taping a high-quality interview will require significant storage capacity on the camera, particularly if filming on a mobile device. Footage will need to be off-loaded to a computer and/or to an external storage drive. It’s important to determine what the video storage requirements will be over the entire series of interviews. Power and battery constraints need to be considered as well. Finally, all of the footage will need to be reviewed multiple times during review and editing, meaning there will be a substantial amount of footage to deal. These

considerations will help determine if recording of research interviews makes sense and is feasible for the case developer.

**2) Develop video footage at some later time after the actual research interviews are done**, and the video story has been identified through the creation of an outline or “storyboard”.<sup>10</sup> Once case developers determine which statements are important to include in the video, they can go back to the interviewee for a taping session. The case developer will provide the interviewee with specific talking points (identified from the interview data) and record those statements and explanations. This approach will require much less filming time and storage space for raw footage since case developers are only taping select parts of an interview.

One potential drawback with this approach is that case developers will not have the raw video footage to refer back to as they review and analyze interviews. This issue can be mitigated if case developers take detailed written notes or if interviews are audio recorded. Another potential drawback is that the spontaneity from the initial interview will be missing. The interview may be seen as a “recording session” rather than a conversation, and the subject may feel self-conscious about being on camera. Statements and style of delivery may seem stiff and scripted which does not help create that sense of realism writers are looking for in the case.

Despite these challenges, the second approach may be the most feasible and practical solution in some cases.

## **2.5 USE OF EXISTING/ARCHIVAL DIGITAL MATERIALS**

Using existing video footage or photography can reduce the efforts to develop a video or multimedia elements for a case study. A few places to look for existing materials include:

- Other Red Cross Red Crescent national societies
- IFRC projects and media galleries (e.g. the IFRC digital collection available at <https://av.ifrc.org/>)
- Local television stations, newspapers, magazines
- NGOs in the community
- The internet, from places such as YouTube<sup>11</sup>

Any of these organizations might be willing to share their media which could reduce the effort to create new media for the case study. For example, photos could be used as b-roll to show the environments of a project or a community, and possibly even the development over time.

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<sup>10</sup> See FIGURE 4 Grid Template in ‘Section 2.3 Mapping out Content and Locations’ as an example.

<sup>11</sup> Software and websites exist that enable downloading of video from the web. [www.clipconverter.cc](http://www.clipconverter.cc) is one example of a site that can be used to download from YouTube. Screen capture programs, such as Quicktime or Camtasia, are also useful ways to screen recorded videos from the computer screen.

## 2.6 SHORTER VIDEO COMPONENTS

Rather than a complete video case, writers could develop a set of short video components to complement a text based case study. This option offers a great deal of flexibility in terms of what and how much needs to be filmed and the level of effort and resources needed to film and edit. Video components can be used to highlight certain aspects of the case and include a few clips of the main characters. Editing of short video components is much less complicated than the editing required for a full video case, and could potentially even be done on a mobile device. Such video components can be presented on a web page along with the text case, or they could also be used as a teaser to attract interest in the case.

## 3. TIPS FOR PRODUCTION AND EDITING<sup>12</sup>

Without previous experiences, video production can seem like a complicated process, however, by following a few basic tips it can easily be done even by not experienced people. A good preparation of the content and settings of videos as described in the previous sections will also greatly enhance the outcomes.

Before capturing interviews on video, it is crucial to obtain written or recorded permission from interviewees, this is especially important when taping non Red Cross Red Crescent personnel. Before taping community members the project should be explained, and it should be made clear to anybody who is being filmed, especially the interviewees, that the case study is a non-commercial production. When interviewing persons under the age of 18 year, the written consent from a parent or guardian needs to be obtained.

When conducting an interview it is highly recommended that the case developer keeps detailed records of names and titles of interviewees as well as the location, date and time when the interview was recorded.

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<sup>12</sup> Thanks to Fernanda Baumhardt for her insights and enthusiasm for innovating with video. Her work with IFRC helping communities develop disaster response video stories was helpful in understanding production in the field.



## KEYS TO SUCCESS FOR VIDEO RECORDING

### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RECORDINGS

- **When filming interviews or other sections, keep eyes open for potential locations for additional visuals (b-roll).**
- **Make sure all equipment has sufficient storage capacity:**
  - cameras
  - SD cards
  - computers
  - external hard drives



### TIPS FOR MICROPHONE AND AUDIO RECORDING

- **Audio quality is extremely important.**
  - Built-in microphones of cameras and mobile devices can be used if the device is held very close to the interviewee and there is no background noise (e.g. people talking, cars, trucks, wind, street noise, room noise)
  - An external microphone plugged into camera or mobile device (if available) will provide better quality; microphones that clip onto an interviewee's shirt are most convenient
  - do test recording, make sure equipment is working and getting proper sound
- **If thinking of filming with mobile device test for audio quality before deciding.**
  - test in a location and situation that will simulate the real interview
  - download test video to computer to compare the audio quality on device versus on computer
- **External microphones for mobile devices are available but not very widespread.**
  - verify specs and that the smartphone/ tablet external microphone is compatible with the specific mobile device (e.g. iOS, Android)
  - external microphones for handheld video cameras can work with some mobile devices but require a specific adaptor- verify microphone and adaptor specs, and compatibility (e.g. iOS, Android)
  - be sure to have spare batteries for the microphone if required
- **Use head/earphones plugged into the camera when filming to make sure the camera is recording sound and that sound quality is good.**



## TIPS FOR VISUAL RECORDING

- **Handheld filming can work fine when capturing b-roll and has the advantage of being highly mobile, e.g. to walk around the community or take shots of project sites.**
  - It is very important to keep a steady hand and avoid shaking, moving too quickly or sudden movements
- **Mobile devices are fine to capture b-roll and have the advantage to be easy to move around and are more likely to be available when spontaneous opportunity to film presents itself.**
- **Tripods or other stabilization devices or ways to stabilize a camera are highly recommended to ensure good quality of visual.**
- **To prevent camera shake which leads to bad video quality consider the following aspects:**
  - small handheld cameras can become heavy quickly when filming an interview even if only a minute or two in length
  - mobile devices are very small and every hand movement will produce visibly shaky footage
  - try to stabilize a camera or mobile device by resting it, while still holding it, on an even and hard surface (e.g. arm rest, table)
- **Be very careful about zooming.**
  - avoid zooming in or out while filming a shot unless essential
  - zoom in or out very slowly when it is necessary to zoom
- **Be aware of lightning in the location of the interview.**
  - avoid shooting an interview in a dark location with poor lighting
  - use natural light and outdoor whenever possible, however, be careful with background noise
  - avoid shooting into the sun or a background that is too bright since the subject will disappear
  - offices often have bad lighting conditions, consider adding light sources





## KEYS TO SUCCESS FOR EDITING

### TIPS FOR EDITING VIDEO FOOTAGE

- **Verify computer planned for editing has capacity for editing:**<sup>13</sup>
  - can accept raw footage downloads
  - can save footage and files to external drives
  - can operate editing software and output videos
- **Take the time to learn editing software:**
  - many programs are easy to use, visually based, provide many templates
  - many programs import footage easily and automatically label
  - user needs to understand how footage is labeled by programs/ how to track and
  - find footage and clips when necessary
  - adding descriptions/ tag words to clips makes file management easier
- **Backup drives provide additional level of security:**
  - useful to have main and backup storage drives if possible
  - back up video editing files on regular basis
- **Explore sources for production and editing support:**
  - local schools/ universities
  - local media companies
  - online resources (see Appendix for examples)
- While b-roll can make a video more interesting, it is important to remember that the visuals layered over a **speaking character need to relate to what is being said otherwise it can create confusion in the video and disrupt the story.**



To support and guide the editing process, the case developer can also refer back to the grid mentioned in section '2.3 Mapping out Content and Locations'. Part of the editing process will require that the editor trim down raw interview footage and select the best sequences from the interviews that go into the video case based on case outline. Whether pulling from newly filmed interview sessions, the set of complete research interviews, or existing digital materials, the grid will let the case developer and editor of the video know which clips to pull and drop into the video from which characters, overall sequence for the clips, and what if any associated visuals go with each clip.

In addition to the above mentioned tips, the internet, particularly YouTube, is a great resource for instructional support for video production and editing. Recommended links are offered in ANNEX II. Educational institutions and online courses open to the public

<sup>13</sup> Before selecting an editing program verify that its system requirements (hardware and software) are compatible with the computer being used.

are also a good place to look for support. The manufacturers of editing software also offer varying degrees of online support.

Case developers should consider sharing their final video products with local communities, particularly if community members and other stakeholders were involved in the video. Another consideration is that by re-editing, raw footage can be re-purposed for initiatives at the local level, i.e. other video or multimedia productions. Though beyond the scope of this guide practitioners might find a number of other uses for the video materials developed for the case study in their work on the ground.



## ANNEX I VIDEO EDITING PROGRAMS<sup>14</sup>

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Multiple searches for top-rated desktop-based video editing programs yielded the following results (2014):

<b>Adobe Premiere Elements</b>	<a href="http://www.adobe.com/products/premiere-elements.html">http://www.adobe.com/products/premiere-elements.html</a>
<b>Pinnacle Studio 16</b>	<a href="http://www.pinnaclesys.com">http://www.pinnaclesys.com</a>
<b>iMovie</b>	<a href="http://www.apple.com/mac/imovie/">http://www.apple.com/mac/imovie/</a>
<b>Cyberlink Power Director</b>	<a href="http://www.cyberlink.com">http://www.cyberlink.com</a>
<b>Corel Video Studio</b>	<a href="http://www.videostudiopro.com">http://www.videostudiopro.com</a>
<b>Magix Movie Edit Pro</b>	<a href="http://www.magix.com/us/movie-edit-pro/">http://www.magix.com/us/movie-edit-pro/</a>
<b>Windows Movie Maker</b>	<a href="http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-live/movie-maker">http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-live/movie-maker</a>

### Cost Free Products

<b>Ezvid</b>	<a href="http://www.ezvid.com/">http://www.ezvid.com/</a>
<b>VirtualDub</b>	<a href="http://www.virtualdub.org/">http://www.virtualdub.org/</a>
<b>Wax</b>	<a href="http://www.debugmode.com/wax/">http://www.debugmode.com/wax/</a>

One of the interesting features to look for in editing software is the ability for the software to correct issues with the raw footage, for example, color, shake, focus, audio. Many of the programs offer tools that enable the editor to correct or at least improve some of the problems with the footage.

## ANNEX II ONLINE RESOURCES FOR VIDEO PRODUCTION AND EDITING SUPPORT

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YouTube (search for specific questions/ instruction)

<http://www.videomaker.com>

<http://www.digitalvideomagazine.com>

<http://lifehacker.com/5785558/the-basics-of-video-editing-the-complete-guide>

<http://video101course.com>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kr1qB96Q62M>

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<sup>14</sup> Based on a 2014 online search for top-rated video editing programs. A good source for these types of review is PCMag ([www.pcmag.com](http://www.pcmag.com)).

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