Cross-Border Coffee Break
Developing Locally-Relevant Case Studies for Africa
In Collaboration with The Case Centre

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1. **With respect to industry cases which cover entire industries locally or globally, does The Case Centre offer guidelines or training, and also, who would be the protagonist in such cases? This is especially relevant for local African industries which target export markets, and also local African entrepreneurship, which targets global scale.**

Koffi N'Da: I think there are many protagonists for this project. We need to be able to change this idea of exporting only, and try to train African entrepreneurs to collaborate with peers locally and in other countries. We really need to change the mentality of the students first, to know that they need to study, what they have here, and be able to stay here. We also need to convince leaders in African countries that we own the necessity to write about what we are doing here in Africa, what our challenges are, and find some solutions. We would take our future into consideration this way. So, there will be many protagonists in this project.

Amini Kajunju: Depending on the case study, the protagonist will be different. Our desire is to have a variety of protagonists. When I go to the Harvard Case Study website, I'm just blown away by the variety of stories; and we want to do the same thing with this project. For people using these case studies for education, we want to provide examples in various sectors, in various industries, and with the myriad of challenges and opportunities facing African SMEs.

Koffi N'Da: Just to add; for example, in terms of the protagonists--the people writing the cases--we are going to target companies in the public and the private sectors as well as those in informal sectors, students from different areas--Francophone or Anglophone countries--and entrepreneurs from different regions. I have realized that educational systems differ from one country to another. For example, in the Francophone system,

there are not many case studies being used. Case studies would be pretty new in the Francophone system, so we need to help these people adopt the case study methodology, and use it efficiently. So yes, we have many targets to deal with.

2. **Why only six schools? If there is a need for quick production, why not call on every school to help? Most of these cases are required to have the most representative diversity of a country's cultures, and stages of economic and social development. I humbly suggest that you cannot reasonably exclude schools that have a strong case writing record, nor can you exclude the countries that have a more intrepid economy.**

Koffi N'Da: Since we are at the beginning of the project, we really need to start small and then grow. This is why we are targeting regions, and within each region, universities are collaborating. So, for a starting point, we are going to make it small because we do not have the budget yet. If we start too big, we will have problems with logistics, and then financial problems. We will expand within regions as the need arises. We do not intend to exclude any country.

Amini Kajunju: Exactly. This is really just to get us started, and then, with some time and more human and financial resources, we can grow. This is not about exclusion--it's about inclusion, when we have additional resources.

3. **Are there any conflicts with publishing clearing licenses that you foresee?**

Koffi N'Da: The main problem that we foresee is copyright issues. First, we need to convince the entrepreneurs to tell their stories, and then we write and publish them. A copyright issue can come up here. Last week we had a meeting with a school of business in Eastern Africa, and they have gone through the process and done wonderful things! We hope to be inspired by them.

4. **Is the plan to attach a fee to these case studies once they are complete? What is your business model?**

Amini Kajunju: We want this to be a sustainable project, and we will not be shy about attaching a price to accessing some of these case studies. I think as the project develops, we will have a better understanding for when and how to do this.

Koffi N'Da: Accessibility is very important, and I think we know how people in Africa are struggling with their finances. So, if we have a grant to help out with the project, we can make accessibility free. Otherwise, we will need to attach fees to accessing these case studies. Our goal is to make the cases available to everyone in Africa.

5. **For subjects like Quantitative Analysis and Accounting, what are best practices in these areas? Can they rely solely on secondary resources?**

Richard McCracken: Yes--you can write about quantitative subject areas. I think there are two approaches: one is to find a story, and have a protagonist take students through the scenario. This is based on discussion. The second approach is perhaps more of an illustrative process where students are given the scenario and asked to apply some quantitative techniques in understanding it. I think we have examples of both types of cases in our collection. We have many examples of cases that are based on both primary and secondary sources. I think the test of the cases has less to do with the source, and more to do with how the case is written, and how it performs in the classroom. The real test is how the case portrays the educational information.

6. **Does the Foundation have a list of willing subjects, so to speak, ready to go in terms of facilitating access--specifically in Francophone countries?**

Amini Kajunju: At this moment, no. There are lots of steps, and one of the key steps is developing relationships with universities, and then through them, accessing the entrepreneurs. As we discussed earlier, we had a really wonderful conversation with a top-notch African business school that went through this process. They started by developing some solid relationships with the local entrepreneurs, and over time, many of the universities started giving them lots of really good information for writing case studies. I believe that about 70 case studies were written as a result of this process. I think that the first step is collaboration with the local institutions (mainly schools, but maybe others—like the Chamber of Commerce, etc.), and then using these institutions to access the entrepreneurs themselves, and incentivizing them to tell us their stories.

Koffi N'Da: I think it is all about collaborating with associations. For example, last week I had a meeting with a representative from an association of businesses in Côte d'Ivoire, and we are going to collaborate with them on training their members. One of the aspects of the MOU to be signed was to facilitate our access to entrepreneurs so that we can work with them on writing cases and share their stories. They are planning to put us in touch with all of their members we can discuss directly with. Through Business Associations, Chambers of Commerce, and all other associations, we are going to be able to reach the people we need.

Additional Questions:

1. **Are you thinking about long, Mini, or Micro, or all?**

 All types of cases because we value diversity.

2. **Can we closely examine the practical value of translating cases from English to French, Portuguese and vice versa?**

Yes of course. Academics and students from the various African regions should be able to benefit from all written cases regardless of which region they are originating from. Therefore, any given case dealing with any given African business, and written in any language should be translated in other languages in order to maximize its impact.

3. **This is from Guy Pfeffermann, GBSN's Founder. There is no question that Africa needs far more locally-relevant case studies. Unfortunately train-the-trainer programs on case writing and case teaching are VERY costly. As a complement, I suggest that "mino-cases" and even "micro cases" be generated all over the Continent. Professor Lou Wells, HBS emeritus, used mini cases, so they are academically accepted. I will be happy to share examples of micro-cases used in training community wildlife conservancy personnel in Kenya. Because the issues are generated by the communities, they are totally relevant and generate passionate discussions. I am happy to supply examples of micro-cases on request. Is this something that should be contemplated?**

Thank you, Guy for your offer to provide us with examples of micro-cases. We would be delighted to work with you.

4. **How could we get our colleagues in the conventional institutions to embrace case teaching in all disciplines, aside from business programs?**

It is beyond doubt that the case teaching approach will be difficult to adopt in certain disciplines. A lot of work needs to be done. Awareness and training are key. If instructors in other disciplines are aware of the benefits related to the case teaching methodology and they are well trained on how to effectively use it, they would be inclined to try it or adopt it.

5. **How do we increase the adoption rate in business programs?**

We could increase the adoption rate by: (1) Making the cases available; (2) raising awareness about case studies among both faculty members and students; (3) training faculty members on how to effectively use case studies in their courses; (4) training students on how to deal with case studies; and (5) providing the appropriate support to both students and faculty members.

6. **How do we increase access of users to the cases now being produced? Would the access cost be pocket-friendly?**

Accessibility for us is very important. Our primary goal is to make the cases available to everyone in Africa. For example, if we have a grant to support our project, we could provide the cases free of charge. However, we want this project to be sustainable, and we will not be shy about attaching a price to accessing some of these cases. As the project develops, we will have a better understanding for when and how to do this.