

The “Garbage Lady” Cleans Up Kampala

Turning Quick Wins into Lasting Change

Practitioner Guide

JORRIT DE JONG AND LISA C. COX

Overview

A case study is a story about how a person or group of people faced and dealt with challenges or opportunities. It is based on desk research and interviews with key actors but does not provide analysis or conclusions. Written from the perspective of the protagonist(s), it is designed to raise questions and generate discussion about the issues they faced. Cases are meant to help participants develop analytic reasoning, listening, and judgment skills to strengthen their decision-making ability in other contexts.

A case-based conversation is a way to anchor a conceptual discussion to concrete examples. It can bring a case to life and allow participants to place themselves in the shoes of the case protagonist(s), while also allowing a variety of perspectives to surface. This guide is designed to help you lead a conversation about the case, “The ‘Garbage Lady’ Cleans Up Kampala: Turning Quick Wins into Lasting Change.”

Role of a Facilitator

The facilitator leads a conversation with a clear beginning and end, ensures that everyone is heard, and keeps the group focused. The conversation can be broken into three distinct segments: exploring the case, applying the central questions of the case to your organization’s challenges, and formulating takeaway lessons. Some facilitation tips and tricks to keep in mind are below.

BEFORE the discussion

Make sure everyone takes the time to read the case. Participants also have the option to fill out the attached worksheets to prepare themselves for the case discussion. If you choose to use the worksheets, make sure you bring enough printouts for all. When setting up the room, think about situating participants where they can see you and each other. Designate a notetaker as well as a place where you can take notes on a flipchart or white board. Plan for at least sixty to seventy-five minutes to discuss the case and takeaways and have a clock in the room and/or an assigned timekeeper. Mention that you may interrupt participants in the interest of progressing the conversation.

DURING the discussion

Encourage participants to debate and share opinions. State very clearly that there is no right or wrong “answer” to the case—cases are written so that reasonable people can disagree and debate different

ideas and approaches. Be careful not to allow yourself or others to dominate the discussion. If the conversation is getting heated or bogged down on a particular issue, consider allowing participants to talk in pairs for a few minutes before returning to a full group discussion. Do not worry about reaching consensus, just make the most of this opportunity to practice thinking and learning together!

Case Synopsis

In 2011, at the newly formed Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), Judith Tumusiime, an impassioned technocrat, was charged with transforming a “filthy city” to a clean, habitable, and healthy one. Early in her tenure, she was able to vastly improve Kampala’s solid waste management (SWM) system by creating efficiencies, increasing accountability, and bringing her technical know-how to a team that held little expertise. But by 2015, after several years of strong momentum, Tumusiime felt that her progress was stalling, and she faced political challenges around creating a sustainable SWM system. Tumusiime strongly believed that all residents, no matter their income, needed to pay garbage collection fees.

However, the federal and local elections were approaching in February 2016, and politicians had told their constituents that they would not allow garbage collection fees, leaving Tumusiime with little support for her long-term vision. She was faced with a challenge: she could either dive into a political world that she had never wanted anything to do with to see if she could achieve radical change, or she could continue to make tweaks that might achieve short-term, small improvements at a slow—and even halting—pace.

Conversation Plan

Part 1: Exploring the Case (20-30 minutes)

The goal of this part of the conversation is to review the case from the point of view of the people involved. Suggested questions:

- *What were the complexities and challenges of SWM in Kampala? Why were the SWM system issues so difficult to solve? What did Tumusiime do?*
- *On a spectrum of effective to not very effective, where did Tumusiime stand? In what areas was she effective or ineffective?*
- *What were the trade-offs Tumusiime may have had to make among her personal values, professional values, and public service values if she stayed at the KCCA? And if she left?*

Introduce the general questions raised by the case:

- *What were the root causes of the SWM issue in Kampala?*
- *What else could Tumusiime have done to generate the capacity and support to produce strategic outcomes?*
- *When a leader’s values are being tested, where does she draw the line? What is the low point that persuades someone to leave their position?*

Part 2: Application (20 minutes)

Invite participants to break into pairs or work as a group applying the central questions of the case to the challenges and choices they face in their own professional lives. You may choose to use the worksheets in the appendix for this section.

Part 3: Formulating Lessons (15-20 minutes)

This part of the conversation focuses on the lessons of the case that participants will continue to reflect on and apply to leadership challenges in their work. High-level takeaways to review after a productive discussion might include:

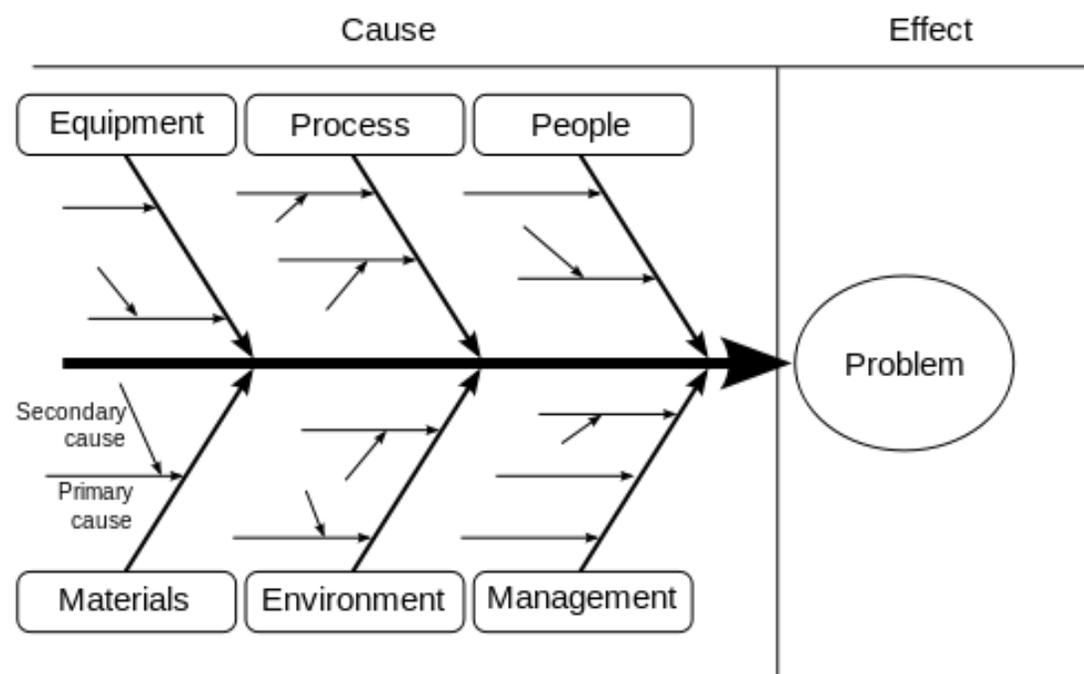
- Even delivering basic services can be complicated; it is important to keep the root causes top of mind. Using a fishbone diagram, as presented in the appendix, can help identify root causes and where to focus, intervene, and allocate resources.
- The Strategic Triangle presented in the appendix can serve as a diagnostic device and conversation tool for teams in times of strategic challenges. Using the Strategic Triangle to its full advantage can lead to better planning, coalition building, and overall effectiveness.
- If you exercise leadership, you are making a change. That change evokes resistance, giving rise to situations that make it difficult for you to abide by your values. As a leader, you need to prepare for that. You must be self- and context-aware. You should know: *What are the breaking points for me?*

Optional Worksheet 2

The Fishbone Diagram

Consider having the class use this fishbone diagram as a model for answering the following question: *What were the root causes of the SWM issue in Kampala?*

Begin by articulating the most obvious element of a problem, e.g., “The streets are filled with garbage.” Then draw a straight line as a spine. Generate a few problems that could be causing this broader problem, e.g., “Individuals and collection companies are improperly disposing of their garbage,” or “There are too few trash collectors/bins/trucks,” etc., and draw them as lines radiating from the spine. Then identify those sub-problems that seem most pressing, and repeat the process with them, trying to understand why they may be emerging.



Source: FabianLange at de.wikipedia / GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>)

Optional Worksheet 3

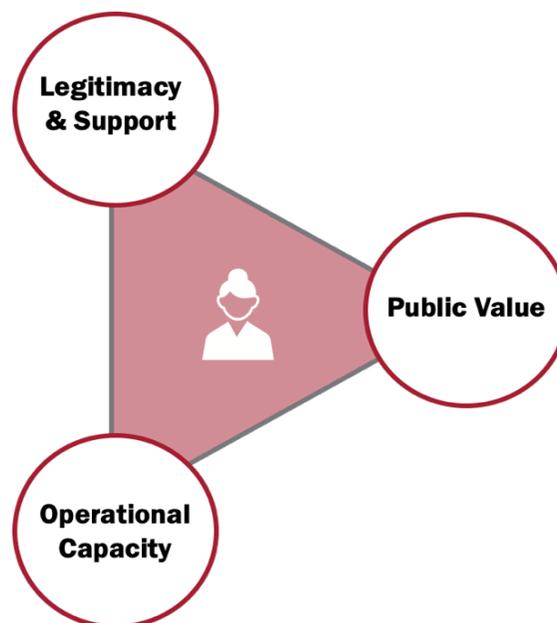
The Strategic Triangle

Use the Strategic Triangle to think through the following question:

- *If Tumusiime wanted to create more public value for her community using her position and the resources with which the public entrusted her, where should she have begun?*

The Strategic Triangle is a diagnostic tool to help public leaders create more public value. The three points of the triangle and relevant questions are the following:

- **Public value:** *What valuable things did the SWM department produce for individuals? For the public?*
- **Operational capacity:** *What activities, outputs, and client interactions did the SWM department at the KCCA undertake to create public value?*
- **Legitimacy and support:** *What actors could have provided the legitimacy and support she would have needed to enact her plan to create more public value?*



The challenge of the Strategic Triangle is using it to navigate a complex and dynamic environment by

- ensuring completeness (i.e., that you have touched all the bases in developing your idea and aligned the different parts)
- ensuring coherence (i.e., diagnosing the particular context in which you are working to confirm that the idea could be politically, legally, and financially supported, and successfully implemented in that context)

Optional Worksheet 4

Leadership Dilemma: To stay or go?

To leave a position in trying times is a personal decision, but it can be approached diagnostically, perhaps organizing thoughts around risk, probabilities, and tolerance.¹ Some questions around risk that Tumusiime might have asked herself in her decision are: *What is the risk of staying? And of leaving? What is my toleration of these risks? Over what time period?*

Have you ever been in a similar situation? Or, can you picture yourself in a similar situation? How might your answers to the questions above differ from Tumusiime’s? How might they be the same?

¹ This line of thought is loosely based on Albert O. Hirschman’s seminal work, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states*, published in 1970.