

“A Difficult Lady”

Shutting Down Pollution in Kampala, Uganda

Practitioner Guide

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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, “‘A Difficult Lady’ Shutting Down Pollution in Kampala, Uganda.”.”

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 have the option to fill out the attached worksheet to prepare themselves for the case discussion. If you choose to use the worksheet, 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, sanitation and environmental management expert Judith Tumusiime joined the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), where she and KCCA Executive Director Jennifer Musisi quickly became a dynamic team, working together to execute a mandate from President Museveni to clean up the Ugandan capital’s unhealthy political and physical environment.

A sprawling soap and petrochemical factory that sat on a hilltop, just across the Nakivubo Channel from the National Environmental Management Authority, was the country’s largest employer—and the city’s biggest polluter. For years, the factory, like many local businesses and individuals, had treated Kampala and its waterways as a dumping ground, burning sawdust all night to power its machinery, and discharging industrial and human waste into the channel with impunity. Environmental regulators from the national government had issued countless noncompliance notices and threats to shut the factory down if it continued to ignore environmental protection laws, but the leadership of the company used its position as a vital source of jobs and tax revenue—as well as its political connections—to evade responsibility and keep its doors open. Dismal labor conditions, choking air pollution, and the destruction of wetlands downstream persisted.

After months of appeals to factory leadership, KCCA inspectors followed up on violations and reported to Tumusiime that the firm’s private security guards had denied them entrance to the facility. She had to decide whether the time had come to use the authority of the KCCA to shut down operations. With Musisi out of the country, her team at their wits’ end, and powerful actors warning her against interfering with the factory, Tumusiime had to weigh lost wages, tax revenue, and political and physical risk against the health and safety of workers, residents, and the local environment.

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 advantages and disadvantages of Tumusiime’s plan to shut down the factory?*
- *What should have been her key considerations as she moved to get factory leadership to comply with environmental laws and regulations?*
- *What alternatives would you have considered in Tumusiime’s place?*

Part 2a: Diagnosing Moral Leadership Challenges (20–30 minutes)

This part of the discussion allows participants to analyze Tumusiime’s decision as a moral leadership problem. Suggested questions:

- *What role did Tumusiime’s personal beliefs and morality play in her decision?*
- *What norms, rules, or expectations associated with her role at the KCCA informed her actions?*
- *What larger cultural, social, and political forces in the city were at play in her decision?*
- *How well aligned were these three realms of her responsibility?*
- *How did she manage any misalignments?*

Part 2b: Application (20 minutes)

If time allows, participants may break into groups to apply the concepts discussed to their own moral leadership challenges, repurposing the questions posed in part 2a.

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 collaborative challenges in their work. Some sample, high-level takeaways to review after a productive discussion:

- Sometimes public leaders facing a moral issue feel compelled to risk operating outside of the usual scope of their authority.
- Sometimes a public leader’s perceived scope of authority is significantly smaller than the actual scope.
- Public leaders must seek a path that
 - aligns their **personal morality** with the expectations and constraints associated with their **role** and
 - affirms shared values within their **community**.

