

A case study or personal testimony - highlighting an individual's story or experience - can add human interest to a story and bring your key messages to life in the media.

You can use these to demonstrate and highlight the issues being faced by people in your country. They can also be used more positively to illustrate what your organization is doing on the ground to address these issues.

It's a good idea to have a stock of case studies with accompanying images to support your media activity.

How to identify a good case study:

There are some key things to look out for when sourcing a strong case study:

- Is the story interesting?
- Does the story illustrate or add weight to the point you're trying to make?
- Is there a beginning, middle and an end?
- Is the story dramatic or shocking? If it is, it is more likely to be used in the media

Top tips for writing the case study:

- Keep a case study fairly short and to the point (200-300 words)
- If you can provide a good photo to support the case study, media are more likely to use it
- Case studies of a person's experience are often written in the first person (which is often known as a 'personal testimony'). If you decide to write it in the third person you might want to add a quote from the case study; this way the quote can be pulled out and used in the media

How to treat the subject of a case study

- Seek written permission of all people involved
- Give them the option to tell their story anonymously – this is particularly relevant for stories involving sensitive issues
- Show them exactly how you've written their story up
- Be transparent about why you want to use their story, which media the case study will be provided to and how it might be used
- Ask if they're happy with being interviewed by the media if the opportunity arises
- Ask if they are happy for the story to appear on a website

Example Case study

Rosemary, Colombia

“The realization that I was not alone and there were others in my situation made me stronger and I wanted to be able to link the women so they could help each other”.

Rosemary is the national coordinator of the Sunflower project, a network of women living with HIV and AIDS in Colombia. She found she was HIV positive after her husband and two children died of AIDS related illnesses.

When her second child died the paediatrician told her in a corridor of the hospital that her children had died of AIDS related illnesses, therefore she must be HIV positive too.

“I was devastated, and angry that I was told the news in such an insensitive way. I felt angry that the doctor was making me feel responsible for the situation. My husband had been my only sexual partner.

When I was diagnosed I began looking for women in a similar situation so I could get help, advice and support, and also so I could set up a network to help women in my situation, and women who could identify with each other as they were in the same situation.

When I found out my status I did not tell anyone for a while, I was scared. I then told my sisters who still stigmatize me by saying that only gay men and sex workers get HIV. My husband’s family blame me, saying I must have infected him”.

Through her efforts her sisters are more aware and treat her with more respect.

She says that discrimination comes from ignorance, not malice and that is why their work is so important.

Visit PROFAMILIA in Colombia: www.profamilia.org.co (Spanish only)

How a case study such as this might be used for the campaign...

Case studies and personal testimonies can be uploaded onto the 15andCounting website as well as being provided to media (with appropriate consent) to support a press release and bring your story to life.

As mentioned in the advocacy section, case studies can be a great way of illustrating particular problems in a community when in meetings with parliamentarians and other organizations.

