



Problem tree

For defining and understanding the issue

WHEN TO USE IT?

- * Brainstorming
- * Idea and knowledge exchange

WHAT IS NEEDED?

Time: 1 hour

Participants: groups of 5-6 stakeholders + 1 facilitator + 1 recorder

Material support: blank version of the Problem Tree (see *overleaf*), pens

> Identify a recorder who will be writing down the comments made during the brainstorming session.

Problem analysis is needed to make sure that a multi-stakeholder group is tackling the right issue - one that has been discussed and agreed with all stakeholders.

One well established technique for working with problems in a group setting is to make a problem tree. This is a simple graphical representation of the problems, their causes and effects.

HOW TO USE IT?

Step 1 List all problems that come to mind related to the main theme. (e.g. youth unemployment or lack of public funding). Problems need to be carefully identified: they should be existing problems, not possible, imagined or future ones. **The problem is an existing negative situation, not the absence of a solution.**

Step 2 Identify a 'Core Problem' (which will be written on the trunk of the tree). This may involve some trial and error before settling on one.

Step 3 Determine which problems are 'Causes' (write them at the level of the roots of the tree) and which are 'Effects' (the branches).

Step 4 Arrange in hierarchy both Causes and Effects, i.e., how do the causes relate to each other - which leads to the other, etc.

WHAT FOR?

- > To list and classify the problems to be addressed.
- > To identify some of the causes.
- > To have a fresh & comprehensive understanding of the existing situation.



> Go further in your problem analysis by using the **Problems & Solutions table**.

