



STEP 1: DEFINING THE PROBLEM

To achieve change CSOs need to identify 'what' the specific issue is that they would like to see addressed and define the problem behind it. Defining a specific problem increases the likelihood of the problem being addressed, against a realistic, achievable timeframe, and within the resources available.

Using a maternal and new-born health context (as is the focus in E4A-MamaYe) as an example, civil society organisations could first identify a pathway to 'good' maternal health, based on participants' experiences in their communities and presentation of best practice. This sets the standard of what should happen, which can then be compared with what does happen in the real world. Evidence is presented from a variety of sources including the district and health information system (DHIS) and analysis of maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response (MPDSR) data to demonstrate the reality of MNH at the global, national, and local level. Following this, CSOs can adopt a 'problem tree approach': a tool that enables civil society to explore the problem that they want to address and identify its root causes.

TOOL: The Problem Tree

Problem Trees help find solutions by mapping out the anatomy of cause and effect around an issue in a structured way, with the aim to:

- Create more understanding of the issues that cause the problem (which are sometimes interconnected and even contradictory)
- Help establish whether further information, evidence or resources are needed to come up with a solution
- The process of analysis can help to build a shared sense of understanding, purpose and action.

In order to utilise a problem tree, a problem is written in the centre of a flip chart page and that becomes the "trunk of the tree". The causes of this problem become the roots of the tree and the consequences become the branches (see Figure 3: Problem Tree).

Some questions that might be helpful whilst building the problem tree include:

- Which causes are improving, which are getting worse and which are staying the same?
- What are the most serious consequences and what criteria is important as we think of ways forward?
- Which of the causes are the easiest/ most difficult to address? What possible solutions could help?

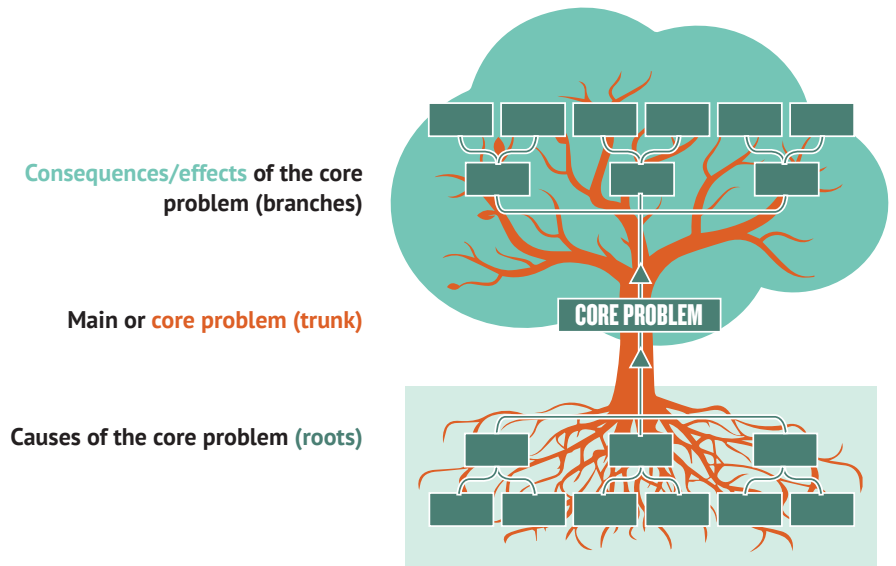


Figure 3, Problem Tree

Person-centred approach

Advocates can explore the consequences of government actions by adopting a person-centred approach. A person-centred approach places people and their needs at the core of programming and interventions. The people the project is meant to serve should be at the centre of its design. By analysing their problem and needs, advocates are equipped with the information they need to confront decision-makers with the consequences of their actions and set out compelling arguments for change.

CASE STUDY: Identifying challenges taking a person-centred approach

CSOs in Kenya identified the reasons for maternal mortality by looking through the continuum of care for a woman from pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, delivery and the postpartum period. Once they had identified a problem using the continuum of care pathway, they then used problem tree analysis to explore the problem further and identify the root causes. CSOs identified that a lack of funding for equipment and training was resulting in poor quality ANC, thus reducing the utilisation of ANC services. Another group identified the high teenage pregnancy rates as the problem they wanted to explore. They identified challenges with the flow of funding for FP commodities, exacerbated by paper-based systems and a lack of monitoring data. This had resulted in reduced availability of FP commodities for young people.