

MicroCanvas Framework v2.0 - Problem Analysis

MCF-Tools-Core-1.1-Problem Analysis v2.0 - EN

2023.12.20

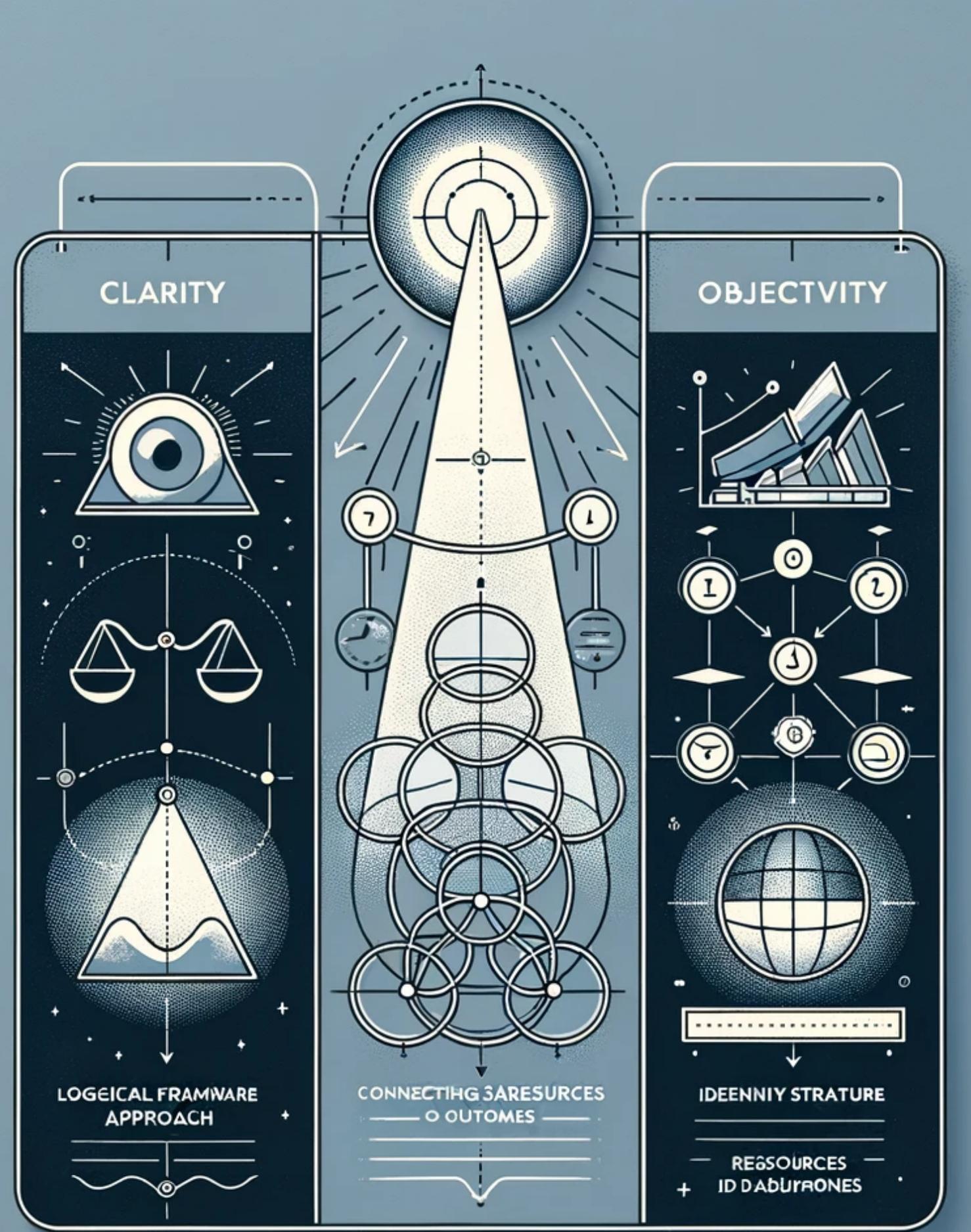


by Informatik LLC

Accelerating innovation and entrepreneurship

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Organizational context



Process objectives

Problem analysis employs the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) for systematic, tool-assisted examination of projects. This approach ensures:

- **Clarity and precision:** Projects are clearly articulated and precisely defined.
- **Objectivity:** Allows impartial assessment and evaluation.
- **Structure:** Establish a well-organized framework.

This step helps you with the following:

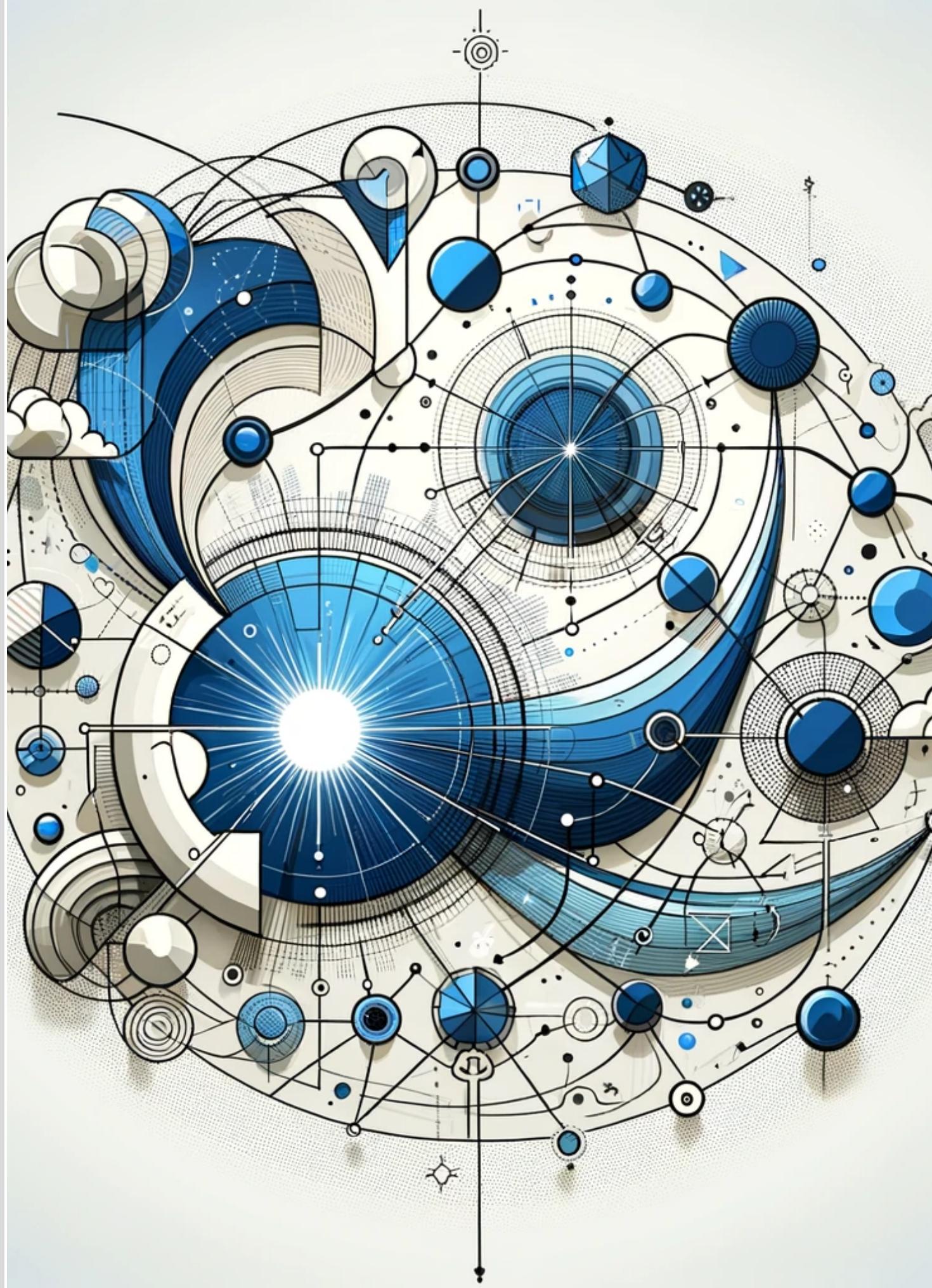
- Evaluate the current scenario, identifying the needs of interested parties and establishing clear objectives.
- Create a direct connection between resources, actions, results, goals, and general objectives (vertical logic).
- Identify the underlying assumptions critical to the project logic.



Process requirements

Before starting the Problem Analysis, let's start with the '5W Technique'. This approach uses five questions to understand the situation fully:

- **Who:** Identify the stakeholders affected by the problem and can influence it.
- **What:** Clearly define the issue, its symptoms, and its impact.
- **Where:** Locate the situation in specific physical spaces or organizational processes.
- **When:** Determine the timeline of the problem to discover patterns or triggers.
- **Why:** Explore the root cause for deeper insights and practical solutions.



General description

With this process, you and your team will efficiently analyze and structure your understanding of the current situation, culminating in a concise one-line problem statement.

Organizational context



Answer the question: "What problem are we solving?"

A clear problem statement highlights problems in a current or possible future scenario and sets clear boundaries (such as time, budget, or location) for the situation or challenge.

For example: '*Urban households in Latin America face a 2% annual drop in their savings, leading to growing economic instability.*'





Brainstorm priority problems

Instructions: Identify and list the key issues stakeholders consider a priority for the main problem.

Examples: Topics like "*rising cost of living*," "*inadequate financial education*," and "*rising unemployment rates*."

Use visual aids such as cards labeled "*High Rental Costs*" or "*Lack of Affordable Financial Services*."



Find the root cause.

Instructions: Select the core problem and repeatedly ask, "*Why does this specific problem occur?*" to find its root cause.

Example: For the core problem "*Decline in savings among urban households,*" asking "*Why?*" may reveal a root cause such as "*inflation outpaces income growth.*"

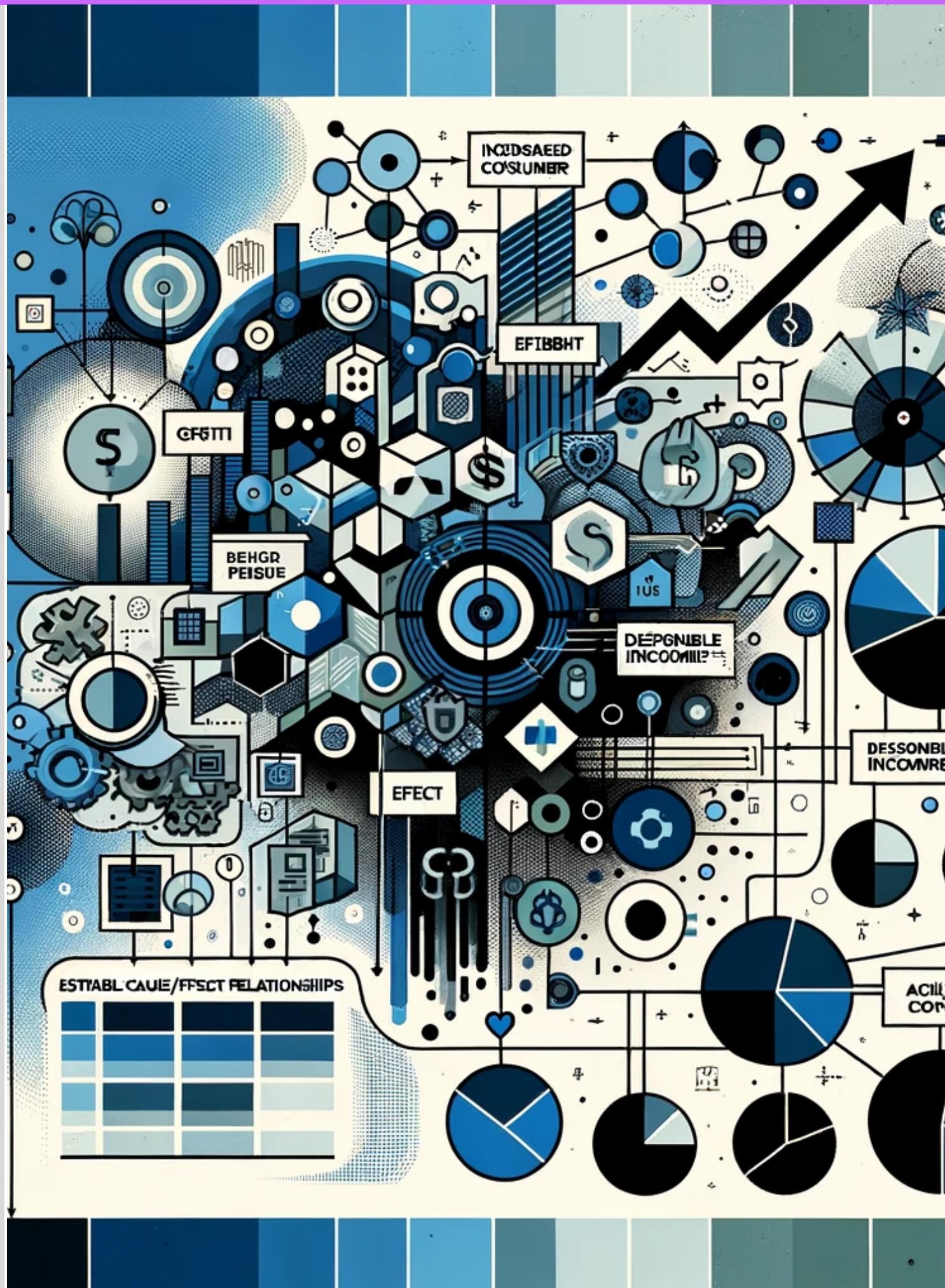


Identify related problems

Instructions: Find and list problems directly related to the main problem.

Evaluate each by its relationship to the main problem.

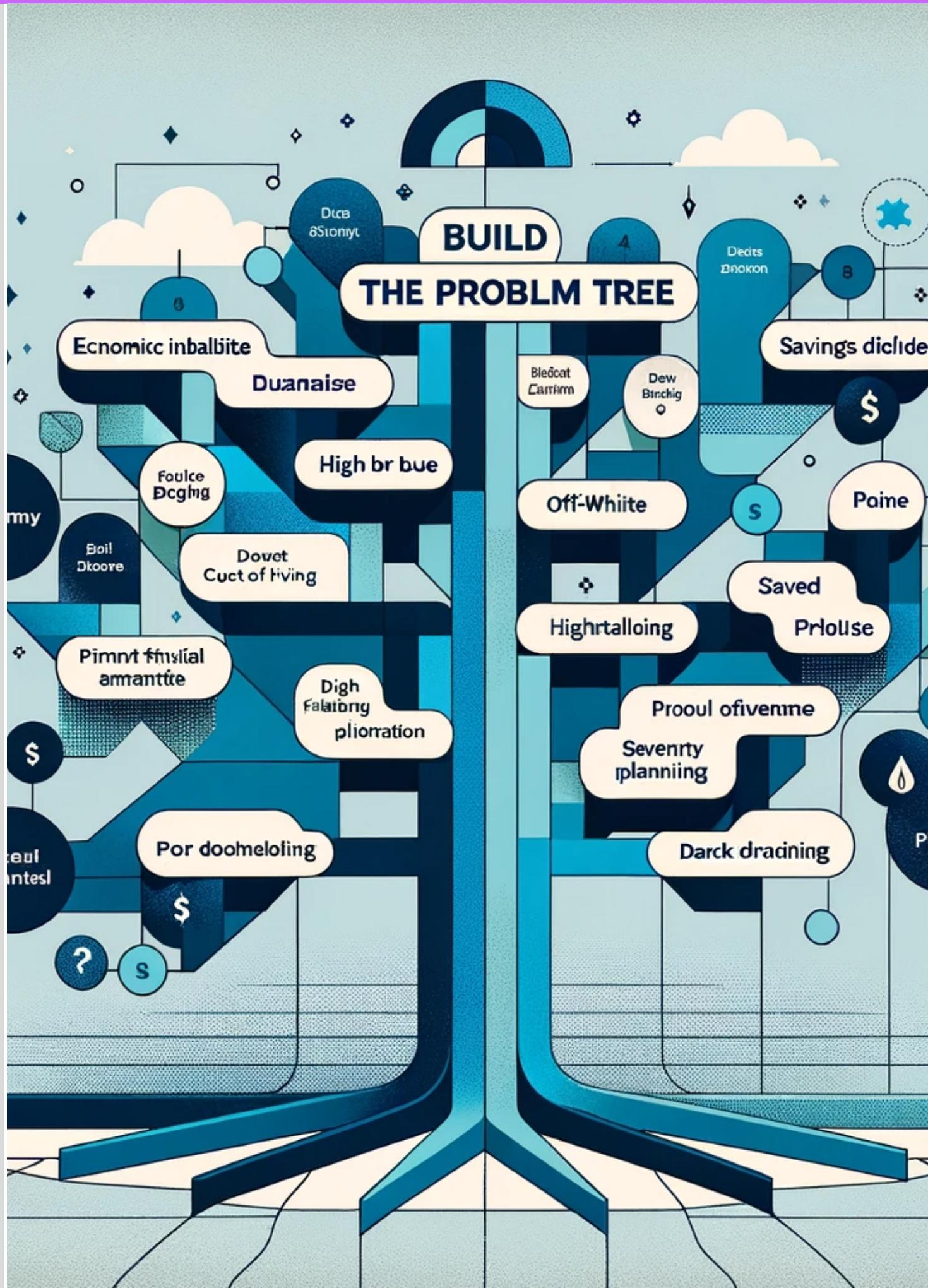
Examples: Issues such as "*Inadequate access to affordable housing*" or "*High levels of consumer debt*" determine whether they are causes or direct effects of the drop in savings.



Establish cause/effect relationships.

Instructions: Identify significant direct relationships between each problem and its causes and effects.

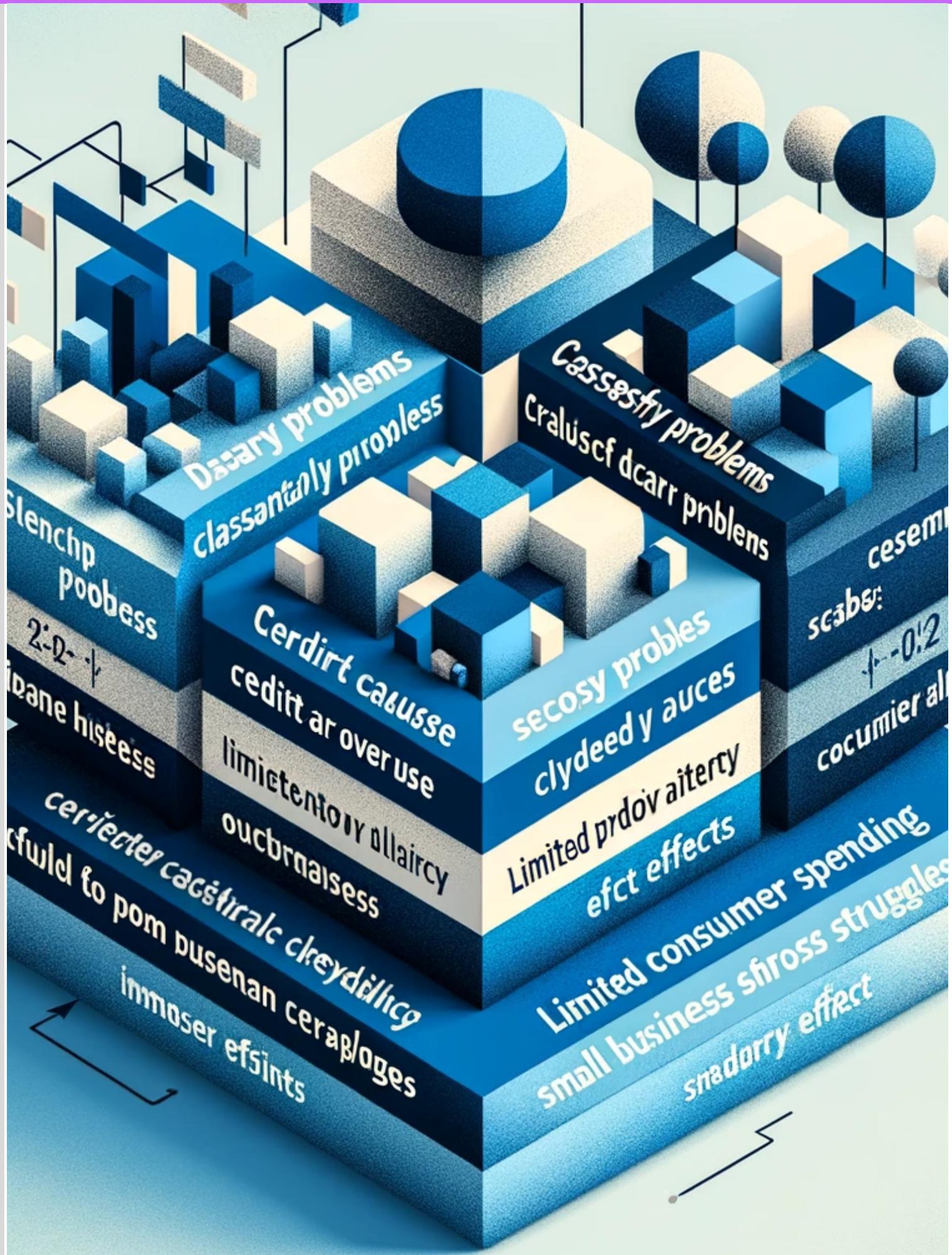
Example: A relationship like "*Increased consumer debt results in less disposable income to save.*"



Build the problem tree.

Instructions: Build a problem tree, showing how the problems directly cause or result from the main problem.

Example: a tree with "*Economic instability due to declining savings*" at the top, branching down to "*High cost of living*" and "*Poor financial planning*."

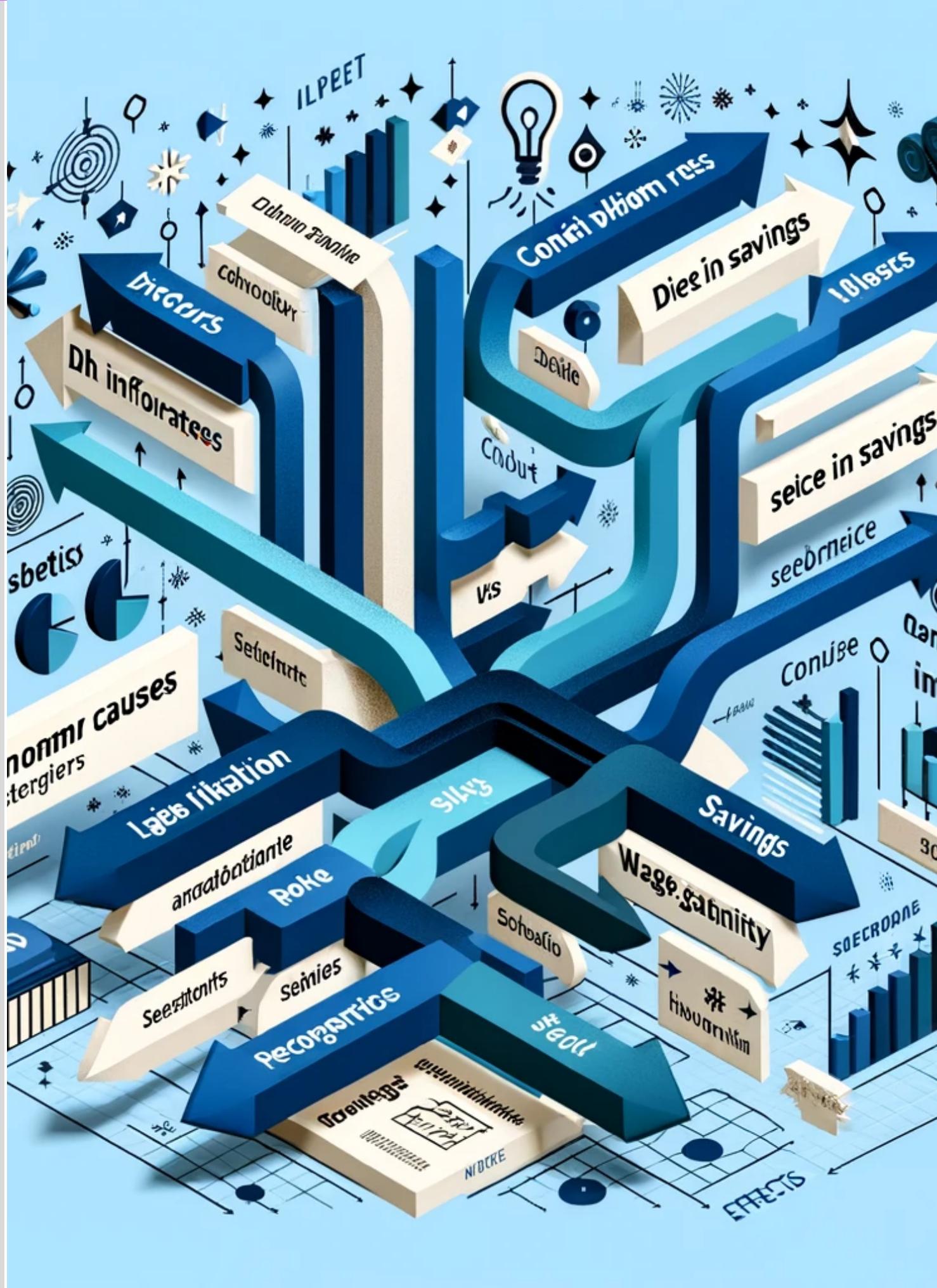


Classify secondary problems.

Instructions: Sort all other problems by their causes and effects, defining primary and secondary categories.

Examples: Secondary causes such as "overuse of credit cards" and "limited financial knowledge."

Classify effects such as "*Reduced consumer spending*" as a primary effect and "*Small business struggles*" as a secondary effect.



Finish the diagram.

Instructions: Review the diagram for completeness and accuracy. Make any necessary adjustments.

Example questions: "*Have we overlooked any crucial issues?*" Add any overlooked problems to the diagram.

Final check: Make sure the vertical logic of the diagram is consistent and clear.

Problem format: Confirm that each problem, cause, and effect identified not only highlights the negative aspects of the situation but also defines clear boundaries (such as time, financial boundaries, or geographic scope).

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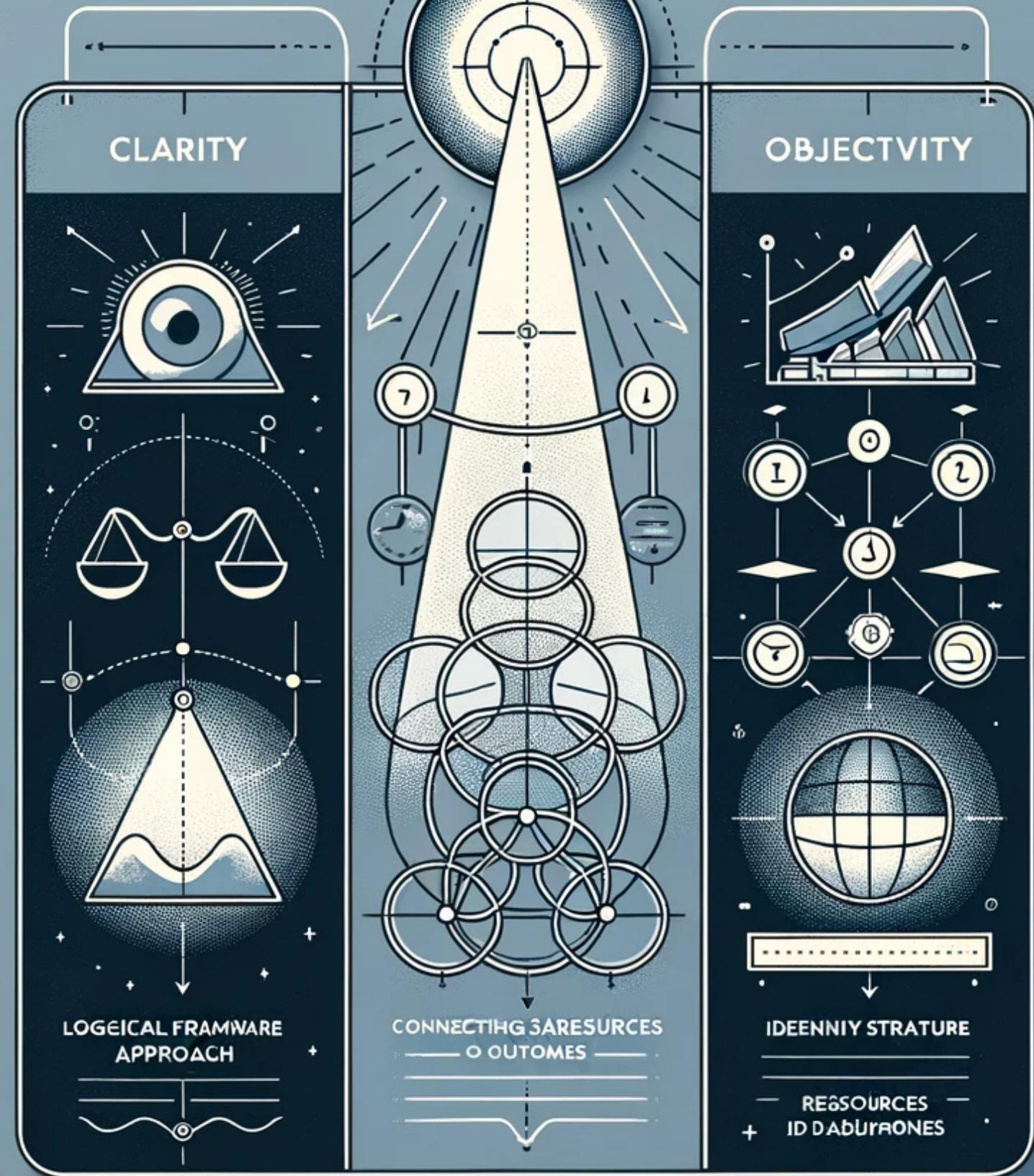


Finish the diagram

Example: Ensuring that issues such as "*High inflation rates*" or causes such as "*Limited financial education*" are framed in specific contexts.

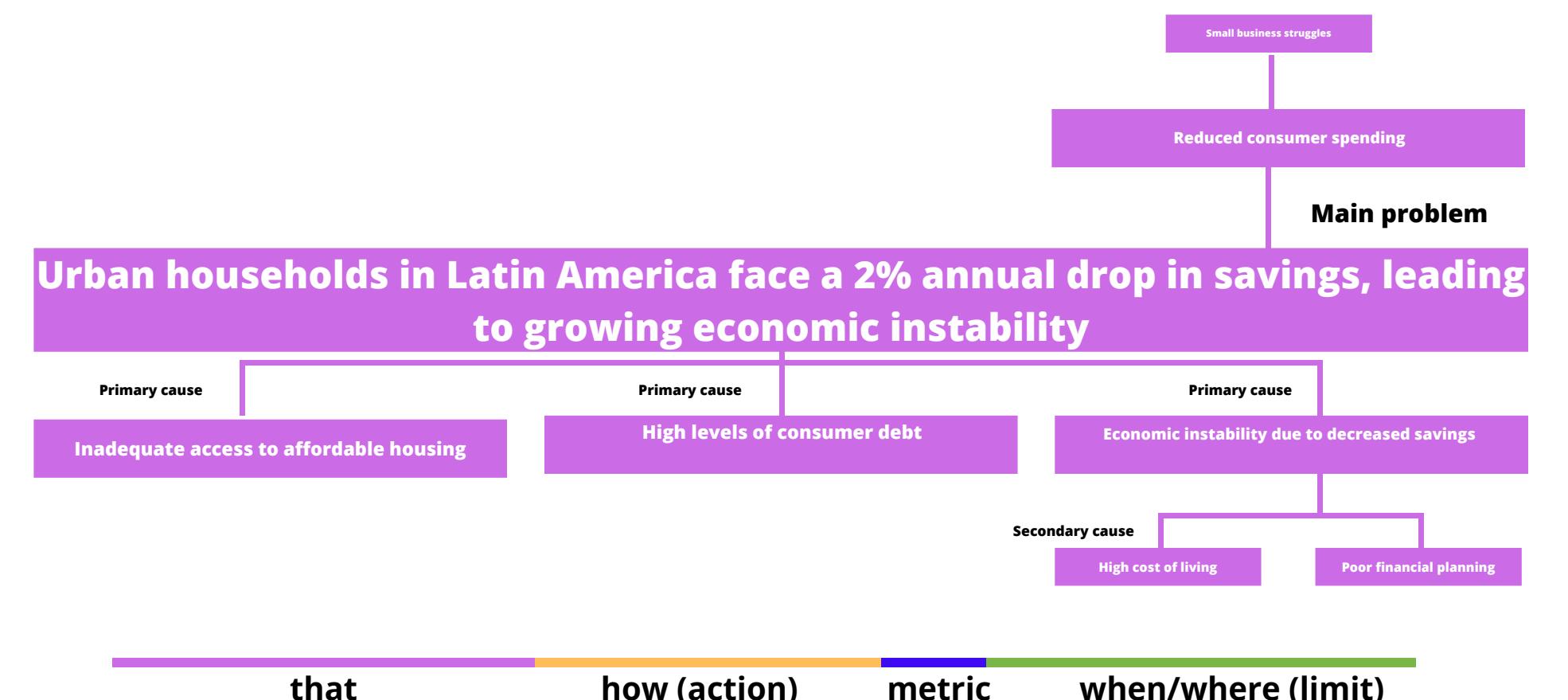
(e.g., "*Inflation rates outpacing wage growth in urban areas*" or "*Lack of accessible financial education in cities*")

Organizational context



Write a draft of your one-line problem statement.

PROBLEM ANALYSIS USING THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH



Organizational context



Assessment

Clarity of the problem statement: Is there a concise, one-line problem statement that defines the limitations (geographic, temporal, economic, social, technological) and identifies who is affected?

Understanding Causes and Effects: Does the organization clearly understand the causes and effects of the primary problem?

Definition: Are there clear metrics to measure the main problem, its causes, and effects?

Additional evaluation questions:

Stakeholder alignment: Do all key stakeholders agree with the problem statement and its identified causes and effects?

Solution relevance: How directly do the identified causes and consequences relate to the possible solutions?

Data support: Is there sufficient data to support the causes and consequences of the problem?

Impact assessment: How do the problem and its causes and effects impact stakeholders?

Integrity Check: Have any potential secondary issues or indirect consequences been overlooked?

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