doulab

Write the draft of your one line problem statement

A well defined problem statement identifies the negative aspects of an existing situation, while defining a boundary (time, finance, geography) around that specific situation or challenge.

Example: "The quality of easily accessible water is declining 10% every year globally".

The problem analysis identifies the negative aspects of an existing situation and establishes the "cause and effect" relationships between the identified problems.

Creating a problem tree should ideally be undertaken as a participatory group event.

It is suggested to use individual pieces of paper or cards on which to write individual problem statements, which can then be sorted into cause and effect relationships on a visual display.

STEP 1.1 – Identify major existing problems, based upon available information. Openly brainstorm problems which stakeholders consider to be a priority. Write down each problem on a separated visual support (paper/cards/strategyzer)

STEP 1.2 – Select an individual starter, a focal problem for analysis

STEP 1.3 – Look for related problems to the starter problem: identify substantial and direct causes/effects of the focal problem

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STEP 1.4 – Begin to construct the problem tree by establishing a hierarchy of cause and effects relationship between the problems: Problems which are directly causing the starter problem are put below / Problems which are direct effects of the starter problem are put above

STEP 1.5 – All other problems are then sorted in the same way – the guiding question being 'What causes that?' If there are two or more causes combining to produce an effect, place them at the same level in the diagram.

STEP 1.6 – Connect the problems with cause-effect arrows – clearly showing key links.

STEP 1.7 – Review the diagram, verify its validity and completeness and make necessary adjustment: Ask yourself/the group – 'are there important problems that have not been mentioned yet?' If so, include them at an appropriate place in the diagram.