

Your research plan

WHAT ISSUES DO YOU WANT TO RESEARCH?

What questions do we have?



Who do we need to speak to?



How will we carry out the research?



Tools for analysing the information





Understand it

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CHERNOR'S STORY ON YOUTH-LED RESEARCH FOR EDUCATION ADVOCACY

Post-conflict development and education

Sierra Leone was suffering after a brutal war. A post-conflict 'truth commission' process was taking place but children and youth were not involved in these discussions of what the future should look like. Child rights were being ignored, which was a particular issue because of the large amount of ex-child soldiers in the country.

Chernor reflects, "Education is desired and demanded by children. We need to give them a voice so this can be heard by policy-makers... But delivering on education for all is not straightforward. Other rights are interrelated with education, for example protection from early marriage."

Story from Sierra Leone



2

WHAT DO WE WANT FOR
THE FUTURE?



3

THE FUTURE
IS NOT WAR!

THE FUTURE
IS EDUCATION
FOR ALL



5



From all their research through a local children's forum they devised national objectives and lobbied the ministry for policy change...

6

VICTORY!

FREE PRIMARY
EDUCATION FOR
ALL – AND UP TO
GRADE 9 FOR GIRLS
IN THE NORTH
(WHERE 78% OF GIRLS
WERE NOT ATTENDING)



1 CHOOSE YOUR ISSUE

1 WHAT INSPIRES YOU OR MAKES YOU MAD?

As an advocate you'll need to be passionate about your cause and clear about what you want. Let's get specific:

- Are you annoyed that fewer girls are in secondary education than boys? Or that children with disabilities can't attend your local school?
- Do you turn up at school and there are no teachers?
- Have you spotted a great opportunity to improve education in your community?
- Or is there something else?

The information and tools in this section will help you to find out more about what's happening, why it's happening and how to change it for the better.

2 WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

Start by writing down your reflections on the problem or opportunity.

- What is the issue?
- What are the causes?
- What are the consequences?
- What are some people, particularly young people or decision-makers already doing to help alleviate this problem?

See examples on the next page.

Problem or an opportunity?

Throughout this toolkit the language we use is based on the idea that you will be responding to a problem. However, if your advocacy is based on an opportunity you've spotted you will need to alter the wording – for example instead of 'causes' you could write 'things that are working well'.



Tool: Problem to Opportunity Machine

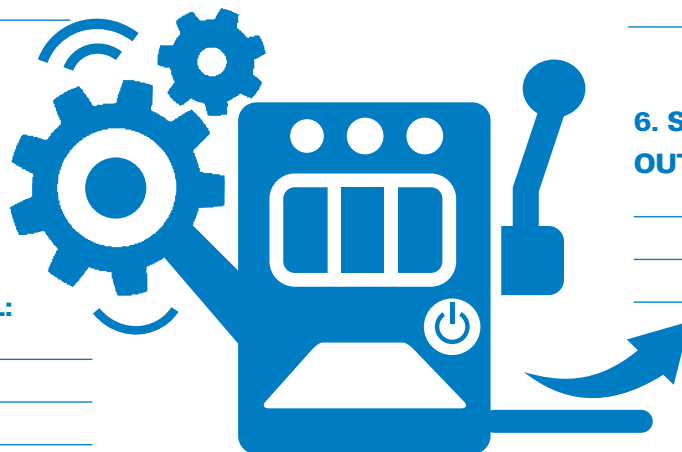
1. Fill in the problem boxes around the machine. Start with writing the main problem above the machine, then write the causes and consequences of the problem Steps 1 – 3.
2. Now imagine someone has flipped the ‘successful advocacy switch’ and all the problem statements were reversed, write each of them as a positive statement, for example if the problem is ‘young people don’t attend school’ you would write the opportunity as ‘young people attend school.’ Steps 4 – 6.

2. CAUSES:

1. THE PROBLEM:

3. CONSEQUENCES:

5. WORKING WELL:



6. SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES:

4. THE OPPORTUNITY / SOLUTION:



Tool: Advocacy-ometer

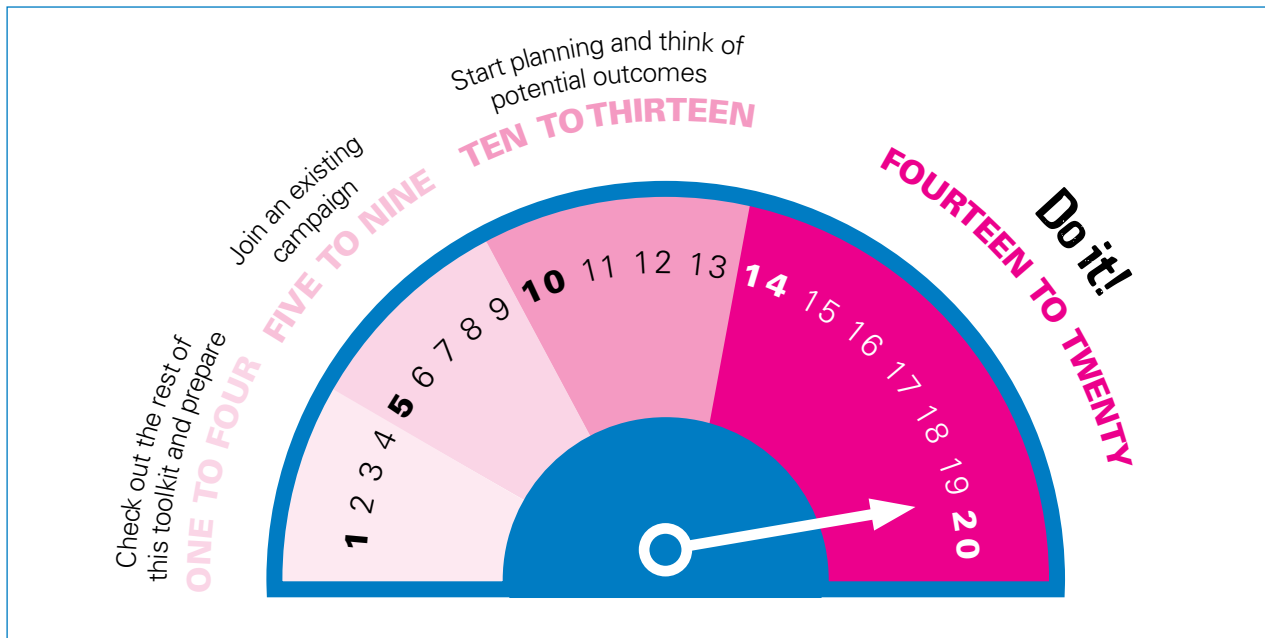
Use the advocacy-ometer to assess whether you've chosen a good issue for advocacy

Choose a number between one and ten.
One = Not at all Ten = Extremely

- How passionate are you about the issue? 1 – 10
- How confident are you that you can make a difference? 1 – 10

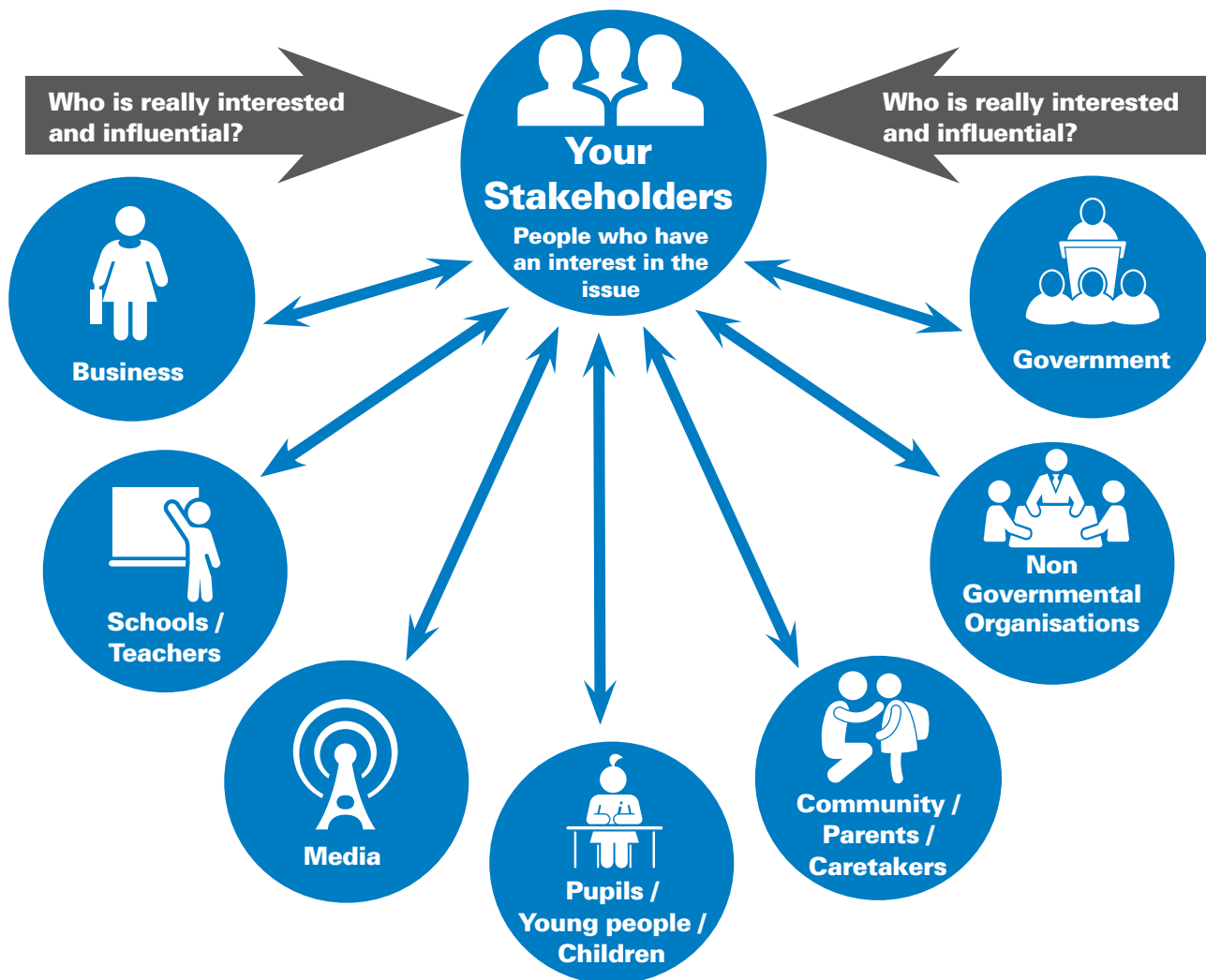
Your total score:

If you're passionate about the issue and confident you can influence change, then what are you waiting for?



CHOOSE WHO YOU NEED TO SPEAK TO

Your education issue





Tool: Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholders are people who are involved in, influence or care about the issue. Through a stakeholder analysis you will identify who's involved in the issue and their perspective.

You'll need to ask your stakeholders questions such as 'what do you think about this issue?', 'who is already working on this issue and are they making a difference?', 'do you have suggestions or ideas on how to improve the situation?'.

- 1.** Brainstorm a list of all the main people and groups who influence or are influenced by the issue. It's a good idea to ask for support from experts or those affected by the issue when brainstorming.
- 2.** Using the grid on page 29, write the name of the stakeholders into each box depending on whether you think they have a lot of power to influence change on the problem you want to address.

The text in the grid on the next page offers some advice on how to work with them during research and advocacy.

Stakeholder analysis grid		
<p>High Power to influence change</p>	<p>Satisfy</p> <p>Find out the position of these people as your advocacy plan develops.</p> <p>Examples: media, other local activists and NGO's</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Influence</p> <p>Consult them, or speak to experts to find out what influences their decision-making.</p> <p>Examples: policy-makers, local decision-makers, private companies</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Little power to influence change</p>	<p>Monitor</p> <p>Low priority, involve only where resources permit or there is potential added value.</p> <p>Example: local businesses affected by the issue</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Inform, consult, involve</p> <p>Those most affected by the issue could be in this this category. If possible involve them in planning and delivering the research.</p> <p>They could also be a target of the research itself.</p> <p>Example: your target group 'girls between 7 and 12 years old in my local community'</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<p>It doesn't matter much to them</p>	<p>It matters a lot to them</p>

DRAFT YOUR RESEARCH PLAN

Write the problem you've identified at the top and fill in columns a, b, c and d. See the example plan below.

- a)** Write out your questions in column 'a' so that they reflect the specific problem you want to address. For example for the problem 'many of the girls in my community are unable to attend secondary school' you could replace the question 'Is there a problem?' with 'Are there are a lot of girls in (name of community) who are unable to attend secondary school? What evidence is there?'
- b)** Identify who you need to speak to in order to find out more, refer to your Stakeholder Analysis (page 31). Write these into column 'b'. Where you find people who are already working on the issue try to consult them at an early stage – you will need to make a decision whether or not to join or work with them during the planning process.
- c)** Choose the research methods you will use to answer each question and write these in column 'c'. See the research methods section of this toolkit pages 40 to 45. You can use a single research method, such as a consultation, to answer several questions.
- d)** Use the tools we've provided to help you reflect, organise and analyse your research information i.e. to help you with question 3 'What needs to change?' you could do a Problem Tree, see page 44.

What's the problem? Example: children with disabilities don't attend school			
a) What questions do we have?	b) Who do we need to speak to?	c) How will we carry out the research?	d) Tools for reflection and analysis
1) Is there a problem? What's the evidence? Who's involved and what do they think? What research already exists?	Key stakeholders: Children with disabilities and their parents / carers. National disabilities NGO. School teachers and head	Interviews Meetings Research review	Stakeholder analysis (page 28) Existing information (page 37) PEST analysis (page 42)
2) What are the causes? What's the situation now?	Above stakeholders and others identified through research	Interviews Meetings Research review	Tool: Problem Tree Objectives Tree (page 44)
3) What needs to change? What are our objectives for the future? How could we achieve the change?	Above stakeholders and others identified through research	Interviews Meetings Research review	Tool: Problem Tree Objectives Tree (page 44)
4) Who do we need to influence? What do we need them to do?	Above stakeholders and others identified through research	Interviews Meetings Research review	Stakeholder analysis (page 28)
5) How can we influence them? What's our message? How do we get our message across?	Above stakeholders and others identified through research	Interviews Meetings Research review	What's our message? (page 58) How do we get our message across? (page 57)



Tool: Get specific – Stakeholder consultation

Get specific by considering your approach to consulting each stakeholder. Use a table like this one below to make a detailed research plan.

Who we need to speak to?	Why we need to speak to them?	What we need to find out from them?	Research method/s	Planning questions
<p>Example:</p> <p>Young people with disabilities</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>If we do not speak to the young people themselves we may miss some of the main causes and opportunities and we will only hear from the parents and school, both of whom have failed to address the problem. It is only right that we should consult them.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Causes: Why are young people with disabilities not attending school?</p> <p>Change needed: How could attendance be improved?</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Consultation interviews</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>How should we contact the young people?</p> <p>How should we involve the parents / carers?</p> <p>What are the risks and how can we manage them?</p> <p>What should we do about confidentiality?</p>
<p>Example:</p> <p>NGO working on the issue</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>By not consulting them at an early stage we may undermine the possibility of working in partnership with them in future.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Causes: Why are young people with disabilities not attending school?</p> <p>Change needed: How could attendance be improved?</p> <p>Is it worthwhile joining or trying to build an alliance with them?</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Meeting</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>What would encourage them to meet with us?</p> <p>How can we make sure that we're prepared and professional during the meeting?</p> <p>What are the risks and how can we manage them?</p>

CHOOSE HOW TO CARRY OUT YOUR RESEARCH

Participatory research

Think about how you can involve those who would benefit most if the advocacy were successful in planning and carrying out research. Find out what would inspire and enable people to get involved. Be sensitive to culture, language and power – try to empower those who are heard less. Here are some suggestions:

- Raise awareness about the issue you're interested in and invite others to join you in tackling it. Build your team (see page 107).
- Make an offer to attract people to get involved and support your research, for example 'you will develop I.T. and research skills.'
- Work with a local organisation to host a research planning workshop in the community.

Evidence

What is evidence and why gather it?

Evidence refers to the facts and information that will support your advocacy message. One of the best ways to get other people to support a course of action is to show them the evidence of why it's in their interest or the interest of others to do so.

How much evidence is enough evidence?

This all depends on who you're trying to influence. A government policy-maker may require loads of national-level data before they're convinced, whereas a school governor could be influenced by a consultation involving just a few pupils and parents. One way to find out what's needed is by speaking to people or organisations who have successfully advocated for change. You could also ask the people you want to influence: 'what would influence your decision-making process on this issue?'

What sort of evidence do I need?

Different types of evidence appeal to different people. The different types of evidence in the introduction to this toolkit are intended to appeal to you (our main audience) and other people who could bring about change (governments and communities).

Data and statistics are good for convincing governments and organisations especially if they are linked to an economic argument. That's why we included statistics at the beginning of this toolkit... Dear President please take note that:



An extra year of primary school education boosts girls' eventual wages by 10–20 per cent.



An extra year of secondary school education raises eventual wages by 15–25 per cent.

(World Bank 2002)

Human interest stories such as that of Malala Yousafzai are vital to motivate people to care about the issue in the first place. Before deciding on the types of evidence you need, think about the kinds of people you'll need to convince. Refer to your Stakeholder analysis on page 28.

**Research tips. Make your research:**

- **Participatory:** this means supporting those who would benefit from the change to share their perspectives, develop strategies and undertake action.
- **Evidence based:** Evidence refers to the facts and information which support your advocacy campaign.
- **Consistent:** Include some of the same questions in every research activity to help build knowledge and evidence.
- **Transparent:** Tell people what you'll do with the information and tell them how they can find out about the final results of the research.
- **Confidential:** Find out if people want to remain anonymous – if it's a sensitive topic make it confidential. Identify how to store information to preserve confidentiality.
- **Manage Risks:** Identify if the research can cause harm and brainstorm ways of preventing this. If it still seems too risky... don't do it.

THINK about how many people you have to do the research with and how much time they have – be realistic!!!





Speak to people

What's their opinion? Listen for ideas. Talk, talk, talk – with neighbours, kids, grandparents, shop clerks, taxi drivers, business people, religious leaders, activists, teachers, those who would benefit if the advocacy were successful and those who are working to change it... If you don't agree, keep listening, you might learn something that could support your advocacy work.

Nobody's interested in talking about the issue?... Why? Is it the way you're asking? Does the problem not affect them? Or is it something else? It's all useful information.



Existing Information

Look for research, reports, surveys, consultations, statistics, policies, testimonies, school curricula. Talk to those who are already working on the issue to find out what's available.

Analyse your findings

- What does the existing information tell you about the problem and opportunities for change? Is the information reliable? Are there information gaps which you could fill?



Surveys

A survey is a way of collecting information which, you hope, represents the views of the group or community you're interested in.

Choose a sample group

Surveying every member of a community would probably take a long time. Instead survey a smaller sample group that is broadly representative of the wider community. If you plan the sample well, the results should be similar to surveying the entire group. For example, say you want to know what percentage of adults in your community agree with this statement: 'if resources are scarce it's better to educate a boy than a girl.'

Getting every adult in your community to fill out the survey would be a huge task. Instead you could decide to survey a sample of 100 people. For the sample group to accurately represent the larger group, you must think carefully about the different identities of people in the community you want to survey and try to ensure they are proportionally represented – if 10% of the community population has disabilities and your sample group is 100 people, you should try to include 10 people with disabilities. It's especially important to include people who are usually marginalised.

Choose how to gather the information

- Involve the local community in planning and carrying out the survey.
- Choose appropriate methods for the group you want to reach. Here's some ideas: speak to people in the street, post questionnaires, send mobile texts, do an online survey, place surveys, along with a box in which to drop them in a popular location, or ask organisations to help you to distribute the survey.

Choose your questions

If you want detailed answers make them open questions: 'what motivates you to attend school?' If you want information that will be easy to analyse make them into closed questions which invite 'yes' or 'no' or a multiple choice answer. Below is an example of a closed question:

'Corruption is a significant problem in this region'.

Choose from the following options:

1. Strongly disagree **2.** Disagree **3.** Undecided **4.** Agree **5.** Strongly agree.



Tips:

- Put easier questions first.
- Keep it short. Make a distinction between what you need to know and would like to know.
- Start by adding what you need to know then see if you have space for more.

Crafting good research questions

Choose questions which invite open sharing and reflection and do not favour a particular perspective.

For example the question 'why do girls never go to school?'

a) suggests that all girls don't go to school and

b) suggests that somehow girls are most likely to blame.

A better question would be 'In this community do girls face obstacles in attending school? 'If so, what are they?'





Interviews

Use interviews to gather personal testimonies about the issue and its impact.

Prepare for your interview by doing some background research on the person you're interviewing as well as the kind of information you want to gather.

The role of the interviewer is to ask questions. You should avoid judging or giving advice. You should also be mindful of body language. Try to remain open but neutral. If the person you're interviewing does not feel comfortable answering, move on to another question or find another way to re-phrase the question.

During the interview Pause, Prompt and Probe. Pause to let people think and expand on the issue, prompt them if they are stuck, probe deeper to really understand what they are saying.



Meetings or focus group discussions

Use meetings to build collaboration with other organisations and decision-makers

- Decide who to invite – who's working on similar issues? Who has influence?
- Set a date and time – consult those attending.
- Organise a venue – if you're inviting organisations they may be willing to host it.
- Agree to agenda – what are the key points that need to be discussed? Share your thoughts with those attending in advance and ask for feedback.
- Facilitate – appoint one person (this could be yourself) to lightly co-ordinate the meeting, try to ensure the group stay on topic and address the key issues within the available time. See facilitating discussions (page 41) for hints and tips.
- Take minutes – identify one person as a note-taker (not the facilitator) to capture what is discussed and decided. Circulate the notes amongst the group after the meeting.

For further tips on what to do during a meeting see page 84 (Do It)



Facilitating workshops

What is facilitation?

Talk shows, book clubs, improvised dance classes, conflict mediation... facilitation skills are being used everywhere. Facilitating means making learning and sharing together as a group easy. Facilitation is a useful skill at every stage of planning and delivering your advocacy.

Workshops are less formal than meetings with participants taking part in activities which help them to consider and discuss topics.

When to use this technique:

Through facilitation you'll be able to support groups to work together, share their perspectives and agree on a way forward.

Tips for facilitating a workshop:

- Identify clear objectives, agenda and timeline and share them with those attending.
- Choose an accessible venue and make the space feel comfortable and friendly.
- Start with activities that help people get to know each other, relax and feel comfortable.
- Avoid being the expert. Remember your role is not to teach people, facilitation is about supporting people to share their perspectives and learn from others.

CHOOSE TOOLS TO HELP YOU ANALYSE



Tool: Political, Economic, Social and Technological (PEST) analysis tool

PEST analysis encourages you to think about what is happening in wider society that is influencing your issue.

1 To complete a PEST analysis look at your research and make a list of the Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors which are having an impact, and write them into the separate boxes.

2 Look at each of the factors and think about the impact they are having. Which are the most influential factors? What research methods (see pages 36 to 41) can you use to find out more?

3 Consider how you will need to respond to the important environmental factors you have identified.



Political factors

e.g.

- Government stability
- Levels of corruption
- Policies

Economic factors

e.g.

- Levels of unemployment
- Income distribution and poverty – leading to child labour
- Cost of attending school

Social factors

e.g.

- Population growth rates
- Population education and health
- Press attitudes, cultural attitudes, public opinion, taboos
- Lifestyle choices
- Attitudes towards child labour

Technological factors

e.g.

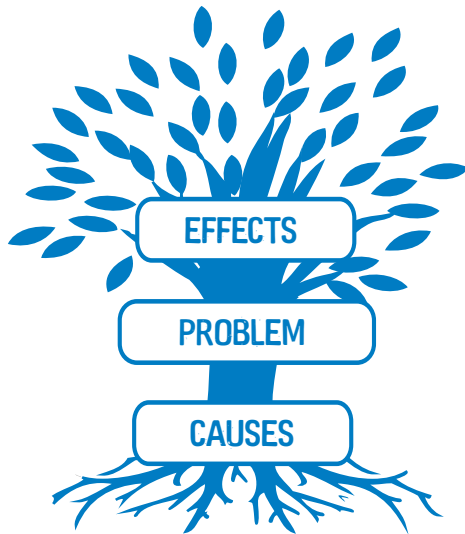
- Access to technology
- Impact of new technologies such as mobile phone technology and the internet



Tool: Problem Tree / Objectives Tree

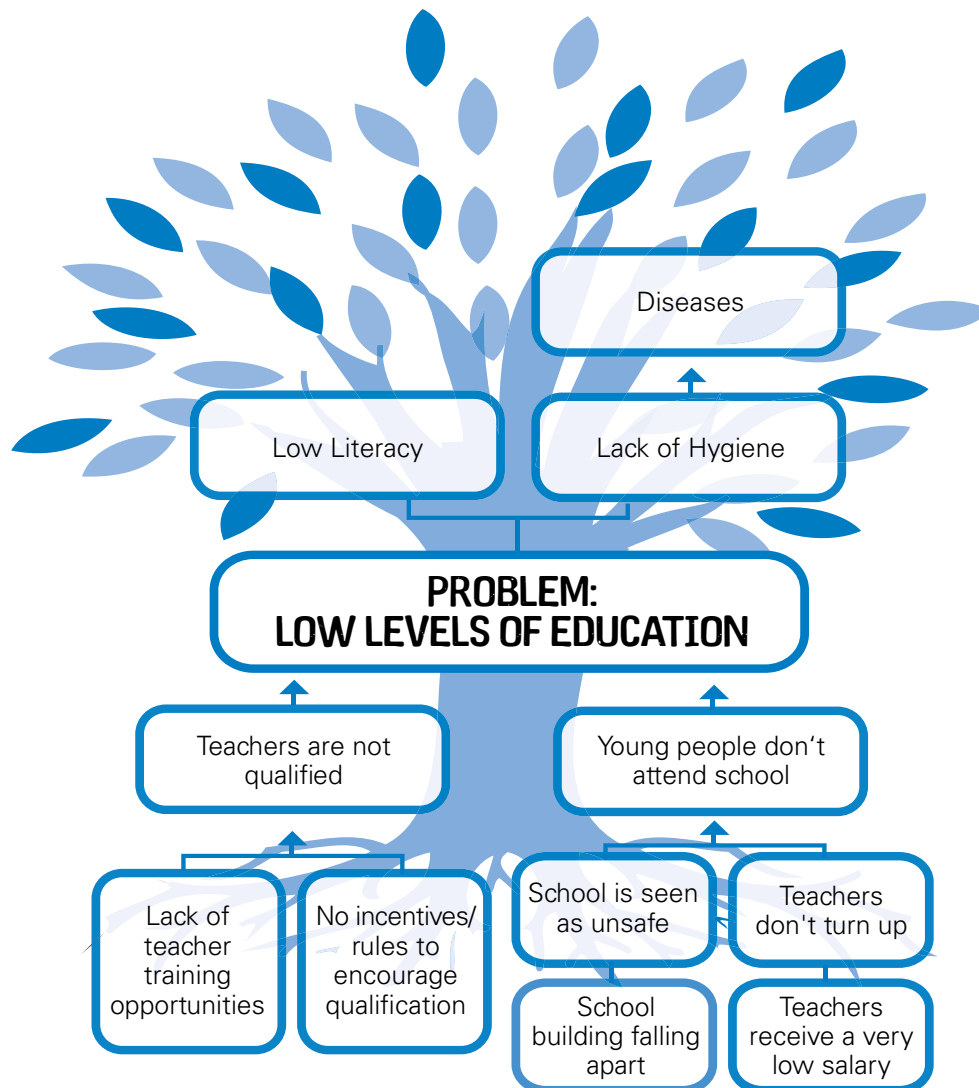
Problem trees are a simple way of showing the causes that lead to a problem. Designing a problem tree allows you to break the problem down and identify possible areas where you could advocate for change.

1. As the name implies, this tool resembles a tree. The roots of the tree, in the lower part of the drawing, represent the causes of the main problem. The tree trunk at the centre of the drawing represents the main problem and the tree branches, on the upper side of the drawing, provide a visual representation of the effects of the main problem.

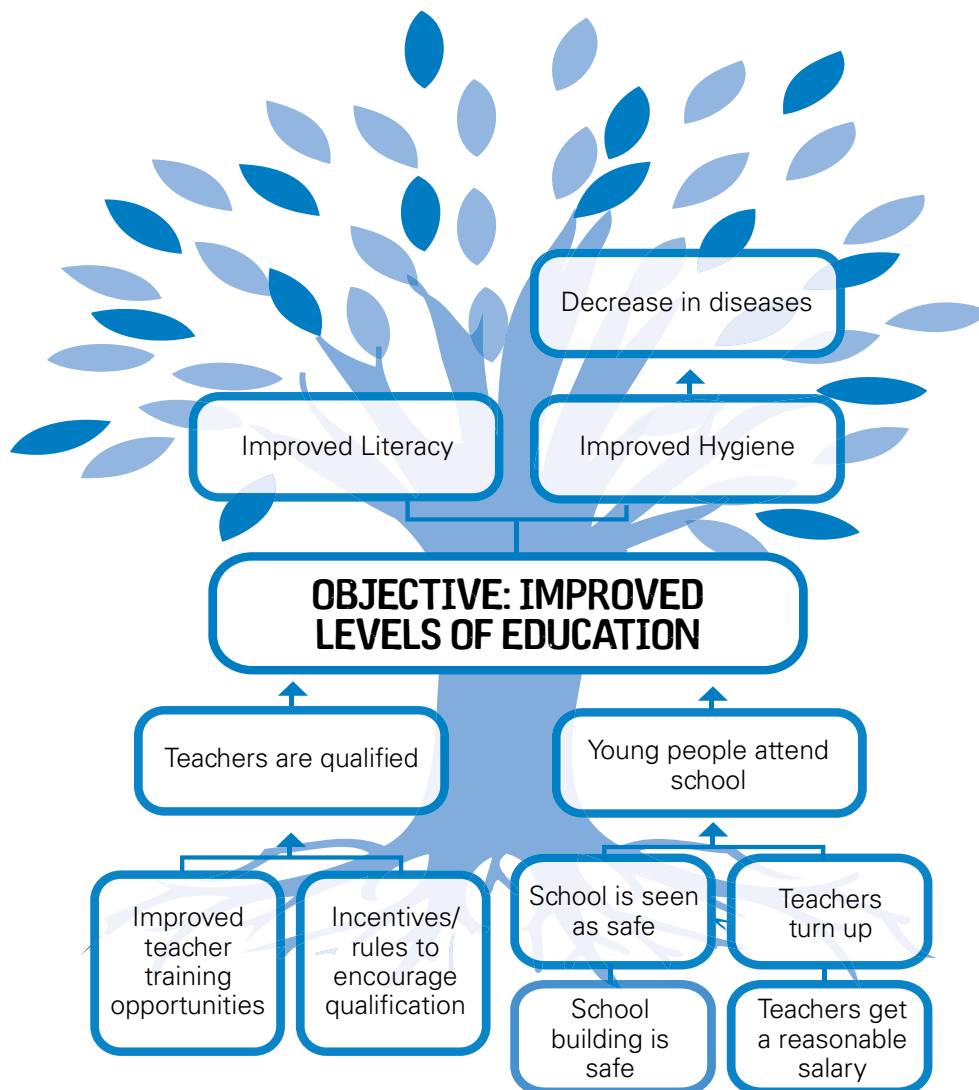


2. First identify the possible causes of the problem and write them down. Use the information gathered in your research to help you. Are people's attitudes or the policies of institutions making the situation worse? What are the other political, economic, social or technological factors? Inviting those affected to help build the problem tree is a great way to ensure that your problem tree accurately represents people's experience.

3. Write each cause onto a separate piece of card or paper and place them beneath the problem. As causes emerge they are often re-written and re-arranged. As you progress you should end up with some big broad causes directly beneath the main problem with a group of specific causes leading up to them. Finally you should write down the effects and place them above the problem.



4. To turn this into a solutions tree, simply simply turn the causes into positive statements. Create positive statements which usually include words like: improve, increase or decrease.



You're now ready to start planning action.





After a successful petition young people hand over \$1 million to the UN to support education for Syrian refugee children



Date

September 23, 2013

Amount

\$1,000,000

Signed by

32,218 citizens
from 143 countries