



Lesson: Define & Refine your business idea

Exercise: Problem tree

Lead In:

Classroom/ Training space
Online

Duration:

20-30 min

Aim:

Create a structural analysis of the causes and effects of an issue or problem. Problem tree analysis exercise helps to find solutions by mapping out the anatomy of cause and effect around an issue.

Type of activity:

Group activity (4-6 people)

Group number:

4-6 people

Recommended age: 18-29

Instructions:

For educator:

This exercise is carried out in a small group of about four to six people using flip chart paper or overhead transparency. As the conversation progresses, factors could be added - this is important. The first step is to discuss and agree on the problem or issue to be analyzed. In this case, it should be the social problem the startup is trying to solve. The problem or issue is written in the center of the flip chart and becomes the 'trunk' of the tree. If the exercise is realizing in the online conditions, the educator write on the chat and after that divided the participants in separate online rooms.

This becomes the 'focal problem'. The wording does not need to be exact as the roots and branches will further define it, but it should describe an actual issue that everyone feels passionately about. Further, the group identifies the causes of the focal problem - these become the roots - and then identifies the consequences, which become the branches. These causes and consequences can be created on post-it notes or cards, perhaps individually or in pairs, so that they can be arranged in a cause-and-effect logic.

For user/ interested participants:

Follow the previous explanation for defining a problem, look the pictures as part of the annex and fill the template.

Keywords:

problem identification, multiple stakeholders identification, social enterprise

Materials, equipment:

Flip Chart/Board/Big white paper, color markers, post-it notes

References:

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Other useful sources:

<https://miro.com/templates/opportunity-solution-tree/>

<https://www.slideshare.net/ncsustainability/developing-a-problem-tree>

Annexes:

Problem tree_template

