Problem tree exercise

Length		90 minutes
Difficulty		Intermediate
Group size		Small to medium
Aim	This exercise aims to increase participants' skills in using the Problem Tree tool to analyze the root causes of a problem and its consequences.	
Description	The exercise includes both familiarization with the Problem tree tool and applying it to a specific FORB related human rights violation in their local context, as a first step to creating constructive change.	
Materials	Flip charts and marker pens	

Notes for facilitators

Given that the problem tree exercise is commonly used in development project design, the instructions below don't go deeply into the specifics of the how to use the problem tree. Ideally, the problem tree should be used with the target group who are affected by the problem you want to resolve. You can use the tool with representatives of the target groups, but it is important that they repeat the analysis with the target group to get their input, before developing more specific strategies or methodologies as a basis for projects and programmes. Keep reminding representatives of this!

Outline and instructions

Introduce the model	10 min
Practice using the model	15 min
Group work	40 min
Group presentations	10 – 20 min depending on number of groups

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Theoretical introduction to the model

Facilitator introduces the model by drawing the tree trunk, roots, and crown and explains the relations between those three parts.

Practice using the model

Together with the participants in plenary analyze a made-up problem using the problem tree model, e.g. less people are using our public buses.

Group work

Divide participants into groups of 5-8. Ask each group to identify a problem related to freedom of religion or belief that is impacting their local context. Encourage them to be as specific as possible in defining the problem they want to tackle. For example instead of defining the problem as 'discrimination in society' they might choose "police discriminate against minority X in refusing to document crime reports'. Being specific helps to create results that are useful for the organisation's work.

Write the problem on the trunk of the tree and analyze it's root causes (the tree's roots) and effects (the crown of the tree) using the Problem Tree model.

In the group they should discuss which of the root causes and effects of the problem their organization(s) currently work with. Which root causes would it be strategic to work with in future?

Ask each group to also draw a second tree crown beside the problem tree, this time showing their "vision of success". What will the situation look like when the problem is resolved?

Presentations

Each group presents its tree and thoughts on if and how their organisations work with/could work with root causes of the problem.

Feed-back from participants and facilitators

Participants comment on the process, and the outcomes of the using of the model.