

Summary: Problem tree analysis (also called situational analysis or problem analysis) is a method to identify and understand the main issues around a specific local situation and to visualise cause-effect relationships using the symbolic of a tree (CLUES, 2011).

Description

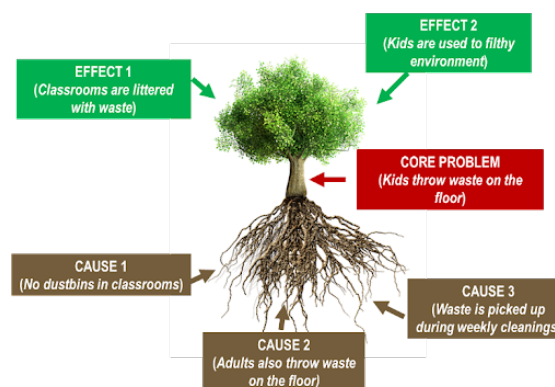
Problem tree analysis helps stakeholders to establish a realistic overview and awareness of the problem by identifying the fundamental causes and their most important effects. The main output of the exercise is a tree-shaped diagram in which :

- Trunk: represents the focal problem
- Roots: represent its causes
- Branches: represents its effects.

Such a problem tree diagram creates a logical hierarchy of causes and effects and visualizes the links between them. It creates a summary picture of the existing negative situation and allow prioritising objectives by breaking down the problem into manageable units.

Problem tree analysis is best carried out by a group of stakeholder in a workshop setting (1/2 day is usually sufficient to come up with a coherent problem tree).

Key steps to create a problem tree are described in the table below.





Steps

- Step 1.** Identify existing problems
- Step 2.** Define the core problem
- Step 3.** Formulate the causes of the core problem
- Step 4.** Formulate the effects
- Step 5.** Draw a tree-diagram
- Step 6.** Review the logic and verify the diagram

Resources

Guide 2.B1 Problem tree analysis – Procedure

Additional resources:

-  Lüthi et al., 2011. *Community-Led Urban Environmental Sanitation Planning: CLUES, Tool T8*
-  JICA, 2019. *Guidebook for Environmental Education on Solid Waste Management in Africa, Chapter 2.2, (2)*