D

Advocacy Cycle Stage 1
Issue identification

Section D considers Stage 1 of the Advocacy Cycle. It explores how to identify, and how to prioritise, the potential issues that could be addressed through advocacy interventions. It particularly focuses on envisioning change as a way of establishing which issue to focus on.

Facilitator's notes

This section explores a series of questions and answers. A training workshop facilitator must be familiar with this material.

Tools

This section introduces tools that can help us apply our learning in a practical way. In a training workshop, they can be used as handouts.

Training exercises

This section outlines interactive training exercises that can be used with groups, in order to deepen understanding of the issues that have been raised and to practise application of the tools that have been introduced. They are ideal for use in a training workshop.

SECTION D Facilitator's notes

Why is issue identification necessary in advocacy?

Issue identification describes the process of identifying and prioritising needs and problems in a community. This can be done either by a community themselves or by an organisation or group serving in a community. It is usually done with the assistance of a facilitator.

It is the first step towards undertaking any relief, development or advocacy intervention. It lays the foundations that enable a community, group or organisation to develop and build appropriate projects and programmes, based on a carefully selected issue. If the issue is not well selected, the project or programme may face problems, particularly in advocacy, where everything depends on an appropriate issue being identified.

One person alone is not likely to know the needs and problems of everyone in the community, group or organisation. In a community or group context, care needs to be taken to seek views from a wide range of people, including men, women and children, and not just from the community leader. Poor, vulnerable and marginalised people need to be trusted with insights into their needs and problems, and empowered to identify them. Generally, people from the outside, however well-meaning, will not provide lasting solutions or depth of understanding. In an organisational context, care needs to be taken to ensure that staff members with different roles are involved in the decision-making process, and not just the organisational leader.

CASE STUDY

ZAMBIA

A group of church leaders in Mapalo, Zambia, were passionate about seeing their community transformed. They worked with the community to identify the needs of the area and what contribution the community itself could make to addressing those needs. They did this by bringing together representatives from the children, youth, women's groups, churches, markets, businesses, residents' associations, community leaders and political parties, in community meetings and facilitated discussions. The issues they identified together were paving of roads, establishment of a high school, upgrading of the health clinic to a hospital and pipe work for the water supply.

The church leaders then created a Memorandum of Understanding between the local candidates standing for election as Councillors and MPs and their community, outlining the community needs and calling on the candidates to commit to helping meet the stated needs within three years. Every candidate standing for election ended up signing the Memorandum of Understanding in the run-up to the elections. As a result, the community not only had a united vision of what their needs were, but they also had a powerful lobbying tool, which they used with their newly elected Councillors and MP to hold them to account for fulfilment of their election pledges.

What is an advocacy issue?

An advocacy issue is a problem or need which will only be changed or met if there is a change in a law or policy, or a change in the implementation or practice of a law or policy. For example, an advocacy issue may be the lack of affordable education, where the problem will only be changed when the government policy of free education for all is implemented across the whole country.

The process of issue identification will highlight a variety of needs and problems facing a community, group or organisation. Not all the needs and problems will require an advocacy response.

The main issue is usually a problem that is too large to tackle all at once. Normally it is made up of very many smaller problems. For example, the main issue may be food insecurity, and the smaller problems may be unequal land distribution, poor rains, insufficient investment in irrigation, etc. An important part of the process is to identify the smaller problems and select the one that can be addressed through advocacy with most impact. Sometimes, this will only become obvious in Stage 2 of the Advocacy Cycle – Research and Analysis.

FOOD INSECURITY

Not enough good quality seed stored

Unequal land distribution

Poor rains

Not enough investment in irrigation

Poor pest control

If just one of the contributing problems is addressed,
the threat of food insecurity is weakened.

To use a medical analogy, an advocacy issue is an issue that will only be resolved if the underlying causes are addressed, and not just the manifesting symptoms. For example, what we may see is that the community is suffering from an outbreak of cholera, but what we may need to identify is that the underlying issue is contamination of the water supply.

How do we identify potential advocacy issues?

Issue identification involves two steps. Firstly, we have to recognise and identify potential advocacy issues. Secondly, we have to select and prioritise a specific advocacy issue.

Many factors can contribute to issues being selected for consideration. These include:

- the views of communities and partners
- the views of staff, volunteers and supporters
- programme experience
- organisational priorities
- strategic or time-bound opportunities
- the priorities of funders and donors.

Sometimes, an issue will be obvious because it will be based on our current project or programme work and be widely accepted as an important issue to address. Such issues might include universal primary education or clean water. Occasionally, an issue will require thinking beyond the immediate context, particularly if it is deeply challenging to society's perceptions, norms and practices. The abolition of the slave trade is an example of 'prophetic vision' being needed to bring about change. Modern-day examples include climate change, gender equality or damaging cultural practices such as female genital mutilation.

Potential issues are identified in different ways, depending on whether the advocacy is being done by a community, by a community with an organisation, or by an organisation on a community's behalf.

- **A community** can identify its needs using one of the numerous tools available. It can then determine whether any of those needs requires a change in policy or practice. If it does, then addressing that need may be an advocacy issue.

The tools to do this are contained in other community development manuals, particularly those on Participatory Rural Assessment and Participatory Learning and Action. Examples include: chatting and listening, semi-structured interviewing, focus groups, community mapping, transect walks, seasonal calendars, Venn or Chapatti diagrams, and wealth ranking. All these tools require open, rather than closed, questioning. They are all detailed in other manuals.

Tearfund encourages local communities to identify their needs, in conjunction with the local churches, using a process called Church and Community Mobilisation. These needs may include advocacy issues.

CASE STUDY

KENYA

Tearfund partner Christian Community Services of Mount Kenya East (CCSMKE) trained the churches in a community in the district of Kerugoya to mobilise the community to identify their priority needs. They did this through the process known as Church and Community Mobilisation, by conducting a series of church meetings, Bible studies, facilitated discussions and community meetings, involving children, youth, women, men and leaders.

Initially, the community identified that a lack of single women for their marriageable men was a considerable problem for the community. However, CCSMKE encouraged them to identify what was underlying this problem. It turned out that the women in neighbouring communities were discouraging their daughters from marrying into the community, on the basis of how far they would have to walk each day to collect water.

With the help of CCSMKE, the community lobbied their MP for permission to repair a derelict government water system. When this failed, CCSMKE helped them access funding and permission from the local authority to build their own water system, which they then did.

■ **An organisation** should identify the needs of the communities in which it is working using one or more of the tools listed above. It should also decide, with those communities, which of their needs it will address through its projects and programmes. These are usually set out in an organisational vision or mission statement.

Where the issues highlighted in a vision or mission statement are ones that require a change in policy or practice, they may be identified as advocacy issues, and the organisation may plan an advocacy intervention around one or more of those issues.

The important thing is that an organisation's advocacy work should be consistent with its other relief and development work. It should be based on a related issue, rather than one which does not fit with its existing work.

CASE STUDY

RUSSIA

All across Russia, life-enhancing medicines called antiretrovirals (ARVs) were being purchased by government agencies but not delivered to people living with HIV, who were the ones who most needed them. This frustrated one of Tearfund's partners whose work focuses on help and support for people living with HIV.

The partner discovered that a key issue was that people could only receive medical assistance, including ARVs, in their town of permanent residence. Unfortunately, official documentation showing the permanent residence could only be obtained if a person owned a property in the town, or if they were registered at the property with their family or friends. This severely limited access to ARVs for those who moved away from their home towns to find employment, those with rented or insecure housing, and groups such as recently released prisoners and migrants, all of which are groups with whom Tearfund's partner works.

This caused so much concern that the partner began a campaign, along with other like-minded organisations, to overturn the requirement to demonstrate permanent residency, by mobilising people to write letters and emails, sign petitions and even hold street marches. Their compassion and care for people living with HIV was evident, and the campaign complemented the core of their organisational ethos.

As a result of the campaign, the Minister for Health in Russia issued a decree, stating that because the AIDS epidemic was still on the rise, several measures needed to be taken, one of which was that ARVs would be available to all people who are eligible, regardless of where they live.

Now, Tearfund's partner seeks to ensure that the decree is implemented, so that people living with HIV are able to benefit from vital treatment because ARVs are available to everyone who needs them, without bureaucratic obstacles.

For a diagram showing how different factors combine to identify potential advocacy issues, see **TOOL 17**: Issue identification flowchart.

How do we prioritise potential advocacy issues?

We all have limited capacity, limited time and limited resources to do our work, whether it is relief, development, advocacy or a mixture. Therefore, we have to be strategic in deciding what we will do and how we will do it.

There are various tools available to communities, groups and organisations to help agree priority needs. What is important to remember is that if the priority need requires a change in policy or practice, then it may be an advocacy issue.

Initially, there may be more than one main issue. If this is the case, decisions will have to be made about whether to tackle all the main issues simultaneously or whether to focus on one at a time.

CASE STUDY

THAILAND

Two million migrants from Myanmar live and work in northern Thailand. Many arrive with dreams of overcoming poverty, while some are forced to migrate due to conflict. All of them are easy prey for exploitation and discrimination, and many lack legal papers and are not aware of Thai employment laws.

One of Tearfund's partners, MMF (Mekong Minority Foundation), integrated advocacy into its programmes to respond to the need, and decided to address all the main issues simultaneously.

They built relationships with the companies that employed migrant workers, to help them improve working conditions. They worked with the local government departments responsible for legal paperwork to help the migrant workers register officially so they could claim their rights to basic services while in Thailand. They trained church and community leaders to identify people who may be at risk of exploitation and discrimination. They raised awareness among the migrant communities about Thai employment laws, and the requirements expected of migrant workers. They also cared for migrant children, who were vulnerable to trafficking while their parents were working, by opening a day-care centre.

Sometimes, prioritisation can be difficult, even with tools to help us. For example, we may identify more than one priority issue, or the issue we identify may turn out not to be such a priority. If this happens, even if we have moved on to research and analysis, Stage 2 in the Advocacy Cycle, it can be helpful to return to the issue identification and prioritisation tools to help us clarify or change our direction.

The most strategic advocacy issues usually:

■ Have significance and importance to people in the affected communities

■ Link directly with an organisation's programmatic experience and are consistent with its vision and values

■ Require a change in policy or practice to bring about change

■ Will block progress towards change on other issues if left unaddressed

■ Have potential to unlock possibilities for other changes if dealt with successfully

■ Are issues people feel passionately about and which people agree need to change

■ Have a problem and a solution, which are easy to communicate, in simple language, to diverse audiences

■ Are winnable and/or achievable, at least in the long term, even if not in the short term

■ Make full use of opportunities, such as landmark moments, to influence change.

For a checklist of criteria to consider, please see **TOOL 19**: Issue selection criteria checklist.

What is the relevance of developing a 'vision for change'?

A vision for change focuses on solutions, not problems. It encourages people to dream dreams and provides them with something to aspire to. It enables them to envisage what their community and society could be like if things were to change for the better. It can be very motivational.

Developing a vision for change is important in the issue identification process because it helps communities, groups and organisations think about what changes they want and/or need to see.

Having a clear sense of the change you want to see is critical in determining the issue you will select, the plan you will create, the data you will collect, the progress you will monitor and the impact you will have. One way of visualising change is to imagine what the newspaper headlines will say if you are successful in your advocacy work. This can be helpful because it forces you to use concise and simple language, which is accessible to the public.

As part of the planning process (see **Section F1**) you should consider the steps that will lead to this change, and the markers of progress that will demonstrate that those steps have been achieved.

It can also help to have a vision for change during the other stages of the Advocacy Cycle because people react to change in different ways. Sometimes, people are resistant to change, particularly if power dynamics are threatened, or where there is a misunderstanding about the potential implications, or perhaps fear. When this happens, the people who understand the vision for change will play an important role in persuading and negotiating with those who are resistant.

CASE STUDY

HAITI

Haiti used to be one of many countries where accessibility and affordability were two of the biggest barriers to education. Many poor families did not have schools in their communities and those that did could not afford to send their children there. This caused concern to Tearfund partner Federation of Haitian Protestant Schools (Fédération des Ecoles Protestantes d'Haïti – FEPH). Its vision was for Haitian society to be transformed by every child having a good-quality basic education. So, as part of Haitian Foundation of Private Schools (Fondation Haïtienne de l'Enseignement Privé – FONHEP) and in coalition with others, they decided to advocate for change.

Alongside other civil society representatives, FEPH developed relationships through meetings and conversations with the Haitian Minister for Education and other key government officials, presenting them with the needs of Haiti's poorest children. Their request was simple – they wanted a national policy that would commit to: reduce the cost of private education for poor families in Haiti; improve the access to, and quality of, primary education across the country; and promote community-based schools.

The result of this sector-wide dialogue was the establishment of a National Organisation for Partnership in Education (Office National du Partenariat en Education – ONAPE) and the development of a national policy providing education for all in Haiti. ONAPE became the official institution managing the Haitian education system and established an operational partnership among all those concerned with improving education in the country. And FEPH, as part of FONHEP, is working to hold the Ministry for Education to account for implementing the national policy of education for all. This will continue until its vision for change is fulfilled, and all Haitian children can access an affordable, quality basic education.

TOOL 17 **Issue identification flowchart**

Potential advocacy issues normally arise from a combination of factors. The flowchart below shows how some of the main factors combine to facilitate issue identification.
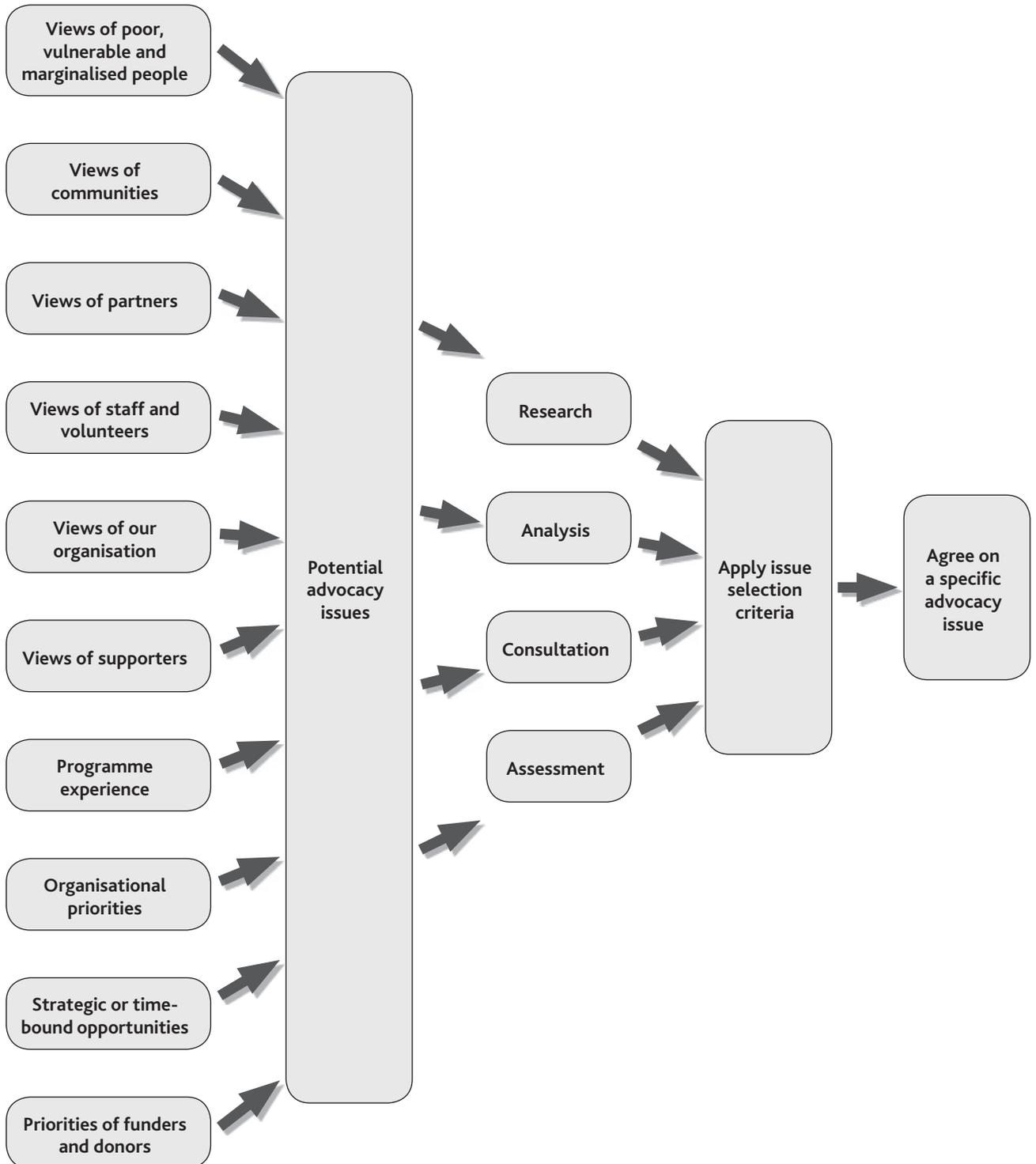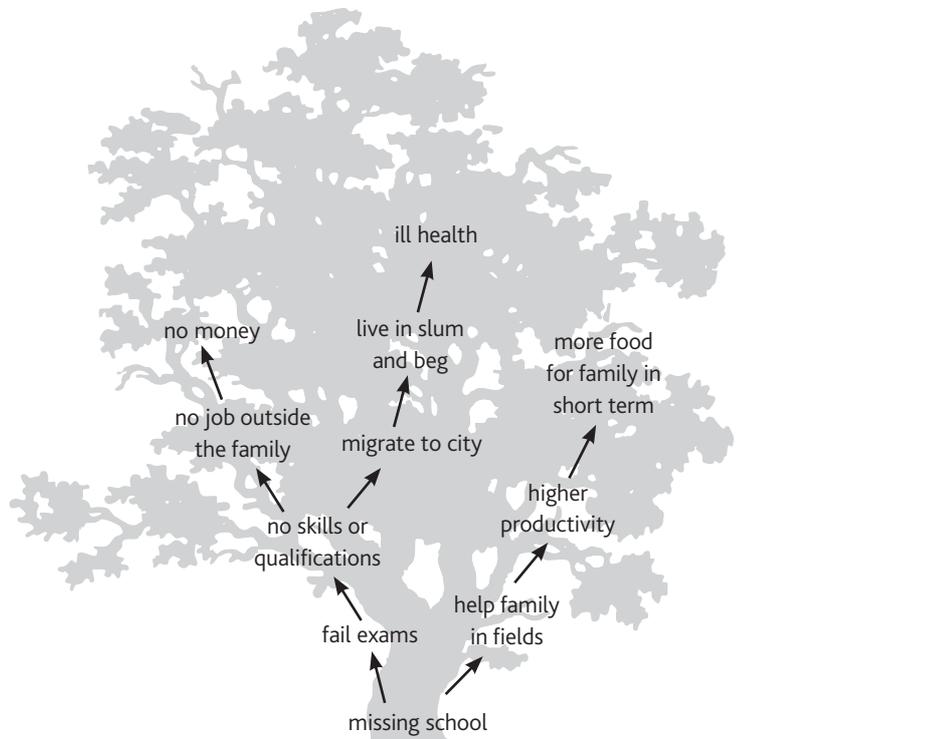
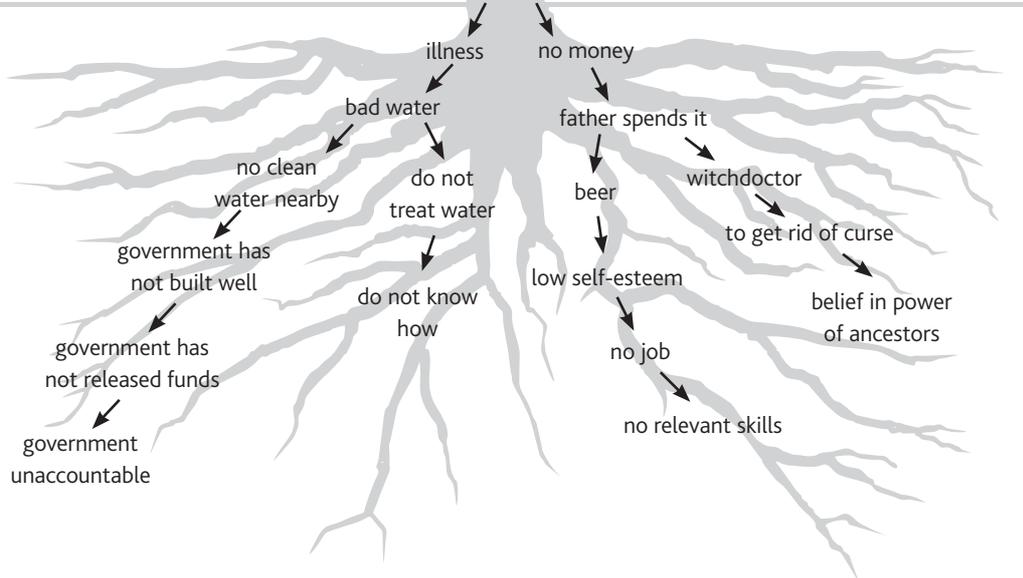## TOOL 18   **Problem tree / solution tree**

STEP 1   A **problem tree** is helpful for analysing a core situation and all the related issues, including the causes of a problem and the factors that are making it worse, as well as the effects of a problem and how they are impacting poor and vulnerable communities. It is a powerful and popular visual mapping tool.

The problem tree trunk represents the core problem. The roots represent the causes of the problem and are identified by asking the question, 'But why?' The branches represent the effects of the problem and are identified by asking, 'So what?'

Example of branch effects in a problem tree

ill health

no money

live in slum and beg

more food for family in short term

no job outside the family

migrate to city

no skills or qualifications

higher productivity

fail exams

help family in fields

missing school

Example of root causes in a problem tree

illness

no money

bad water

father spends it

no clean water nearby

do not treat water

beer

witchdoctor

government has not built well

do not know how

low self-esteem

to get rid of curse

government has not released funds

no job

belief in power of ancestors

government unaccountable

no relevant skills

STEP 2   A **solution tree** builds on the problem tree by suggesting potential solutions to the identified problems, creating an additional layer. It is a valuable tool for working out what needs to be done, and what needs to be proposed, for a problem to be overcome. It is helpful for visualising the change we want to see happen.

The solution tree trunk states the vision for change anticipated if the core problem is addressed. The issues identified in the roots are where advocacy, and other preventative development measures, might be recommended. The issues identified in the branches are where programmatic relief and development measures might be appropriate.

As with a normal tree, there are roots that are hidden and branches that are visible. Trying to work out why the core problem exists is an essential part of finding the right solution, and helps to guarantee the right responses. It is often easier to respond to the effects of a problem because they are visible, like the branches. However, it is the causes of a problem that enable us to see where advocacy is needed.

Examples of branch solutions in a solution tree
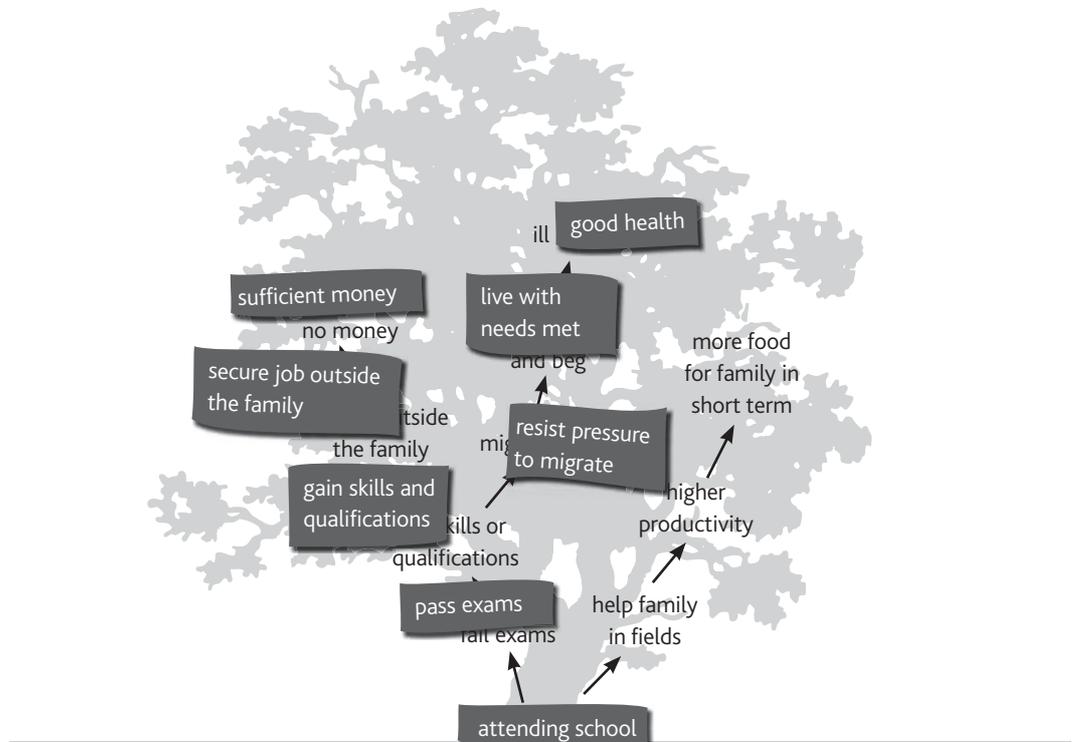
Examples of root solutions in a solution tree
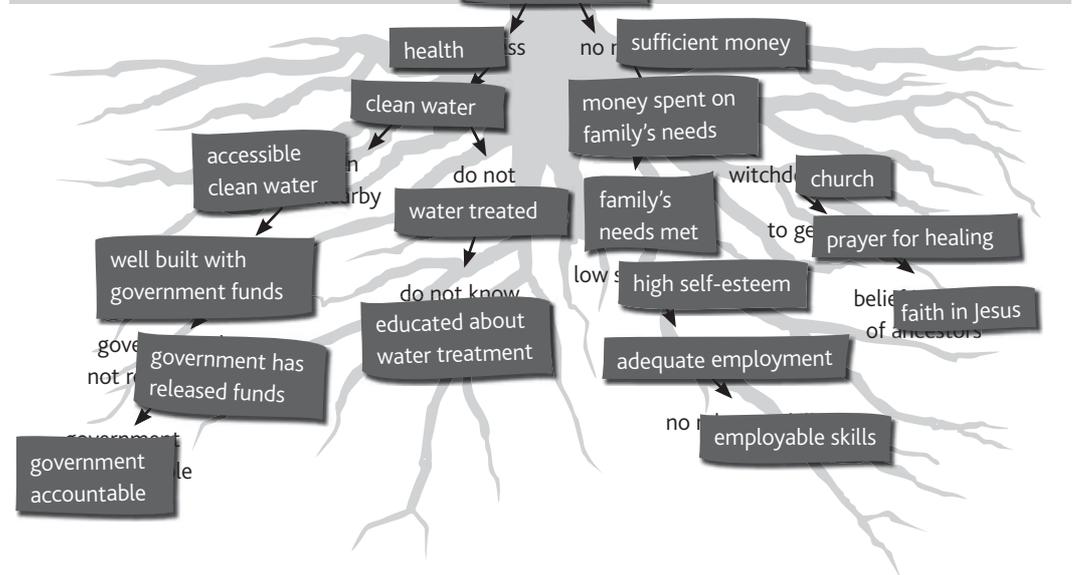
TOOL 19   **Issue selection criteria checklist**

The following criteria can be used to assess the appropriateness of a potential advocacy issue. It is a suggested framework and a source of guidance, rather than a prescriptive checklist.

Is it a priority?	Yes	No
Will addressing this issue help to improve the lives of people who are poor, vulnerable or marginalised?		
Will advocacy contribute to change on this issue?		
Is advocacy the best tool for addressing this issue? Is there momentum around this issue from other groups and organisations?		

Is it achievable?	Yes	No
Does this issue have a specific and achievable goal (whether long-term or short-term)?		
Do effective coalitions exist, or could they be started, to add value to achieving the goal related to this issue?		
Do we have access to the decision-makers who can influence change on this issue, either in our own right or in coalition with others?		

Is it sellable?	Yes	No
Is the issue new and fresh enough to engage diverse audiences?		
Is the issue relevant to our organisational mandate and constituency?		
Could this issue be interesting to the media?		
Are supporters and donors interested in this issue?		
Is the issue on the political agenda or potentially politically topical?		
Are there sufficient stories and examples to engage the public?		
Do a variety of targets exist in relation to the issue?		
Can links be made to other issues to broaden the potential audiences who might engage with it?		

Is it appropriate?	Yes	No
Does the issue fit with our organisational priorities?		
Will advocacy on this issue allow us to meet our organisational aims?		
Are we clear about our particular contribution (ie our 'value added') towards seeing change on the issue?		
If other organisations are working on this issue, how important is it that we work on it too?		
Could advocacy on this issue improve our organisational reputation?		

SECTION D   Training exercises

EXERCISE 20   Identifying and prioritising advocacy issues

Aim	**To practise how to identify and prioritise advocacy issues**
TYPE	This exercise works well in small groups but could be done by individuals or an organisation doing internal training
METHODS	Scenario analysis, small group discussion, brainstorming, prioritisation ranking, plenary feedback
MATERIAL	Scenarios, pens and paper (Version 1), sticky notes or blank cards (Version 2)
HANDOUTS	**TOOL 17:** Issue identification flowchart **TOOL 19:** Issue selection criteria checklist

ADVANCE PREPARATION

■ Ahead of the exercise, develop a set of scenarios, written out on separate sheets of paper. These should be based on the realities of the context in which the training workshop is being conducted. They should also, ideally, reflect the issues that the participants' organisations and communities are facing in real life.

■ Invite participants, in advance of the exercise, to read through the scenarios and select one to work on.

STEPS (VERSION 1)

1. Identify which participants want to work on which scenarios and divide them into small groups, with each group allocated one of the scenarios.

2. Ask the small groups to read through their scenarios together and identify the main needs and problems. One person should write these down in a list.

3. Ask participants to work individually to rank the issues on the list in order of priority. They may find helpful **TOOL 19:** Issue selection criteria checklist.

4. Participants should then present their individual rankings to the rest of their small group, and the group should then discuss and agree a collective ranking for the issues on the list.

5. Each small group should then present their findings to the wider group.

6. Allow time for feedback and reflection.

STEPS (VERSION 2)

1. Complete advance preparation and Steps 1–3 as for Version 1.

2. Write all the identified issues on to separate sticky notes or blank cards.

3. Ask participants to place the sticky notes or cards in order in a line, from most important to least important, discussing and negotiating as they do so. They should use **TOOL 19:** Issue selection criteria checklist if helpful.

4. Invite each small group to present their findings in plenary.

5. Allow time for feedback and reflection.

WHEN PARTICIPANTS CAN BE GROUPED BY ORGANISATION

1. Ask participants to work with others from their organisation.

2. Ask each organisation to brainstorm their organisational priorities.

3. Agree some common ranking criteria and give each participant five votes.

4. Invite them to use their votes to rank their organisational priorities in order of importance.

5. Encourage feedback, reflection and discussion.

EXERCISE 21   'But why?' and 'So what?'

Aim	**In stage 1 of this exercise, the aim is to find and analyse the root causes and effects of a problem, in order to address the problem in the most appropriate way. In stage 2, the aim is to turn a problem's causes and effects into solutions.**
TYPE	Group exercise
TIPS	It is ideal for use after a lunch break, as it is interactive and stimulating. Allow at least two to three hours for stage 1 and another one to two hours for stage 2. It is important to take time getting the correct issue in the tree trunk, as everything else stems from that. The ultimate challenge is deciding which of the many causes and effects to address, and what type of intervention to take.
METHODS	Plenary discussion, small group work, drawing
MATERIAL	Large pieces of paper (such as flipchart paper), pens, sticky notes or blank cards
HANDOUT	**TOOL 18**: Problem tree / solution tree

STEPS (STAGE 1)

1. In plenary, ask the participants for consensus about the main advocacy issues that have been identified, and then divide them into small groups to discuss one issue per group. Give each group a large piece of flipchart paper, some sticky notes or blank cards, and a variety of pens.

2. Ask each small group to draw a tree trunk in the middle of the flipchart paper, and to write their identified advocacy issue in the centre of the trunk. It is vital that they get this right, as otherwise the whole exercise will fail. So allow enough time to agree the wording.

3. Get each group to keep asking 'Why?' in relation to the statement written on the tree trunk. As they identify answers, they should write them, individually, on sticky notes or blank cards, and insert these below the trunk, like the roots of the tree. They need to keep asking 'But why?' until they can go no further with their explanations of the causes behind the problem. By using sticky notes or cards, they can move them around if necessary. Use **TOOL 18**: Problem tree / solution tree to help. Each time they ask 'But why?', there will be a variety of answers that can be given, so they must repeat the exercise multiple times in order to identify as many roots of the problem as possible.

4. When the roots have been identified, invite the participants to work in their small groups to identify the effects of the problem, by asking 'So what?' in relation to the statement written on the tree trunk. As they identify answers, they should write them, individually, on sticky notes or blank cards, and insert these above the trunk, like the branches of the tree. They need to keep asking 'So what?' until they can go no further with their explanations of the effects resulting from the problem. By using sticky notes or cards, they can move them around if necessary. Again, use **TOOL 18**: Problem tree / solution tree to help. Each time they ask 'So what?', there will be various answers that can be given, so they must keep repeating the exercise until they have identified as many of the branches of the problem as possible.

5. Facilitate a plenary discussion about this first stage of the exercise, emphasising the importance of identifying as many contributory factors as possible, to gain a 'big picture' perspective.

STEPS (STAGE 2)

1. Ask the participants to remain in the same small groups as for stage 1, and give each small group a new set of blank cards, ideally in a different colour to those used in stage 1, and a variety of pens.

2. Ask each small group to consider the problem statement that is written on their tree trunk, and to place a blank card over it, stating their vision for the ideal situation that they would

like to see replace the problem. (It is important to get this right, because it becomes relevant when it comes to planning!)

3. Explain that, generally speaking, the roots of the problem tree can be turned into solutions that will be addressed through advocacy work, while the branches of the problem tree can be turned into solutions that will be addressed through development work.

4. Taking one root at a time, ask the participants to turn the causes of the problem into vision statements, by identifying potential solutions, and then discussing how the solutions would improve the situation, and write the consequences on sticky notes or blank cards, to be placed over each cause identified. Use TOOL 18: Problem tree / solution tree to help.

5. For each vision statement, ask the participants to identify what solutions are needed, and where they require advocacy. (For example: an advocacy intervention might involve holding the government to account for spending finances allocated to building a well, and making sure that the well is built and paid for by the government. It might also involve seeking a change in the way that community groups are represented in the local political process, and asking for greater government accountability.)

6. If there is time, do the same for each of the branches of the tree, identifying solutions to the effects, and assessing the consequences of those solutions.

7. Facilitate a plenary discussion about the exercise. Explain that it is not possible to tackle everything at once, so it is important to choose a solution that will have the biggest impact, be the easiest to achieve or be a workable compromise. Consider how realistic the various solutions are and which areas could be prioritised for advocacy work.

EXERCISE 22   Developing a 'vision for change'

Aim	**To practise developing a vision for change**
TYPE	This exercise works well in small groups but could be done by individuals or an organisation doing internal training
METHODS	Individual reflection, small group discussion, plenary feedback, drawing, acting
MATERIAL	Scenarios from EXERCISE 20: Identifying and prioritising advocacy issues (optional)
HANDOUTS	TOOL 17: Issue identification flowchart
	TOOL 19: Issue selection criteria checklist
STEPS	1. Ask the participants to work individually, either to consider the context in which they work or, if they are unfamiliar with thinking about their context in this way, to consider the context as set out in the scenarios used in EXERCISE 20: Identifying and prioritising advocacy issues. For their selected context, they need to consider the following questions:

• 'Where do we want to be?' This means thinking about what a perfect world would look like for the community or society in the given context.

• 'What do we want to achieve?' This means thinking about what we want to see changed for the better in the given context.

2. Where participants have been considering the same scenario as others, divide them into small groups and invite them to share their visions for change with each other. Where they have not been working on the same scenarios, encourage people to work in small groups with others who are concerned about the same or similar issues.

3. Working together in small groups, participants should create a collective vision for change. They need to decide how they will present it, and whether it will be in writing, drawn or acted out. They can use **TOOL 19**: Issue selection criteria checklist to help them.

4. Each small group presents their findings in plenary, using their selected method of presentation.

5. Allow time for feedback and reflection.

EXERCISE 23   Imagine the newspaper headline

Aim   **To understand advocacy issues from the perspective of the solution rather than the problem, and to visualise the change you want to see as a newspaper headline**

CONTEXT   This exercise can help show the relationship between issue identification, research and analysis, and planning. It is useful because it forces a focus on change from the outset, and it ensures that simple and accessible language is used. It works well in small groups or pairs, but it could be done by individuals or an organisation doing internal training.

METHODS   Individual reflection, pairings, small group discussion, presentation

HANDOUT   **TOOL 19**: Issue selection criteria checklist

ADVANCE PREPARATION

1. Find a variety of articles with attention-grabbing news headlines, using newspapers and news websites. Ideally, these need to speak of change – short-term, medium-term or long-term.

2. Cut out or print out a selection that shows different types of change and different styles of language.

STEPS

1. Divide participants into pairs and give each pair at least one news headline.

2. Ask each pair to decide what change the headline is describing, what issue has been addressed, and whether the headline works well or not and why. Allow a few minutes for this.

3. Draw people back together and select some of the pairs to share their findings from their newspaper headlines.

4. Now invite the same pairs to think about either the context in which they work or the context as set out in the scenarios used in **EXERCISE 20**: Identifying and prioritising advocacy issues, and to consider the following questions:

   • If there is significant change for the better in this context (or scenario) over the next five or ten years, what will the newspaper headlines say?

   • If we advocate successfully for change in our context (or the scenario), what will the newspaper headlines say?

   Ask each pair to use only five to ten words, and emphasise the importance of making sure the headline summarises the change well. They can write a sub-headline too if they need to be more accurate or explain their outcome more fully.

5. Gather everyone together and invite them to present their headline (and sub-headline, if appropriate). Ask everyone else to comment on it and suggest improvements.

6. Explain the importance of focusing on solutions rather than problems when deciding on potential advocacy issues, and how this can help when it comes to research, analysis and planning. Use the facilitator's notes to help with this.

7. Stick the headlines in a group together on the wall.