

# Problem Trees

**Time:** 1 hour

**Activity Objective:**

Conduct a gender analysis.

**Materials:**

- Prepared Flipchart: Example Problem Tree
- PowerPoint Presentation: Introduction to Gender Analysis

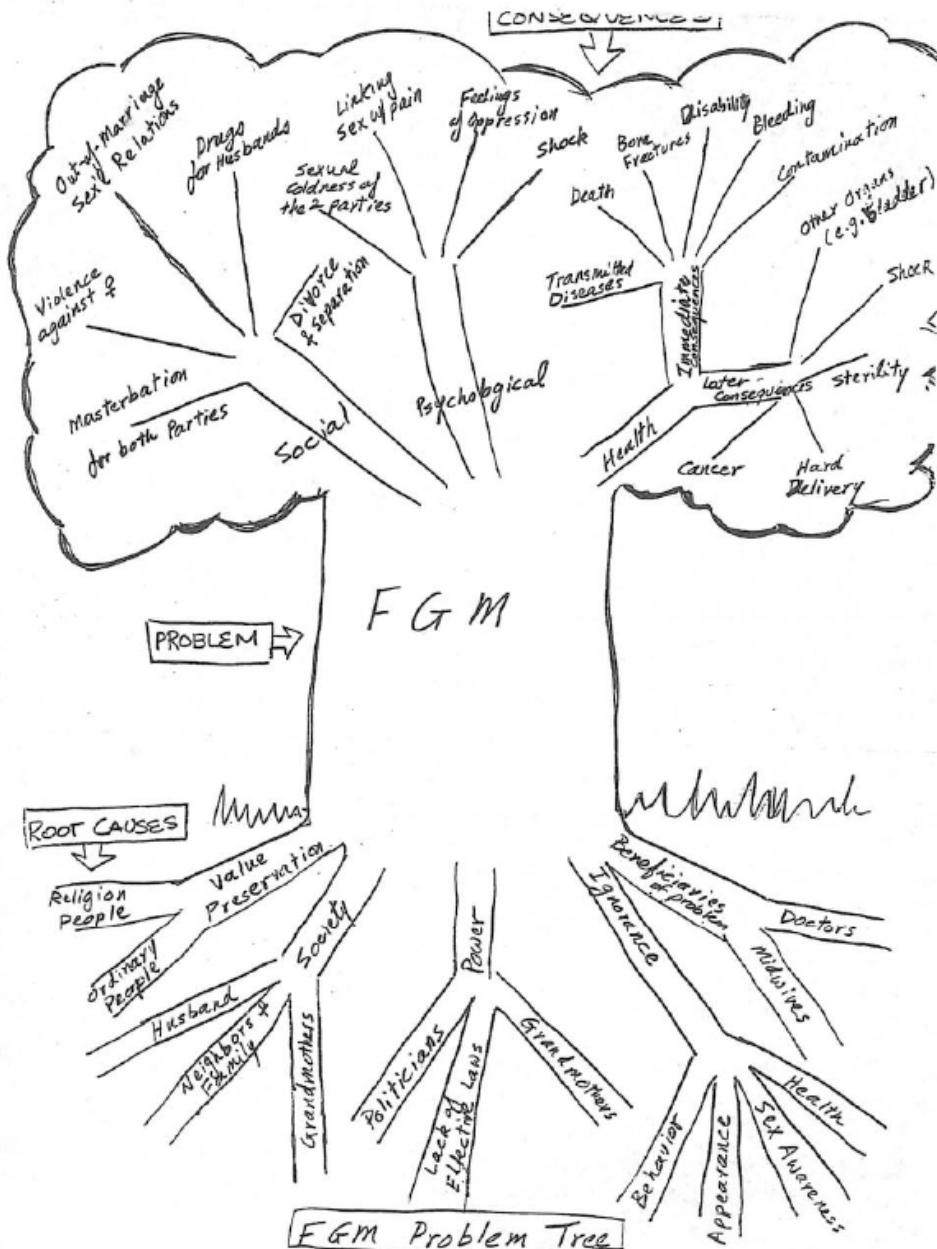
**Activity:**

1. Draw an example of a problem tree based on the description given below and the example problem tree on the next page. The problem tree should depict at least one primary and secondary cause of the problem you are illustrating and at least one primary and secondary consequence of this problem.
2. Explain to the group that before we even think about how to program for integrating gender into projects and programs, we need to do a gender analysis. Explain to the participants that this exercise will help them explore the underlying gender-related issues that can contribute to different health problems.
3. Divide the participants into groups of three. Ask each group to pick one person who can report back to all the participants at the end of the session.
4. Explain to each group that it will use a tool called a problem tree in this activity. Each group will focus on a different health problem: Group 1 will focus on obstetric fistula; Group 2 will focus on the lack of male involvement in family planning (FP); and Group 3 will focus on early childbearing.
5. Provide a flipchart and a few markers to each group. Ask one person in each group to draw a large tree trunk and to write their assigned problem on the trunk. For example, Group 1 would write obstetric fistula on the trunk. Explain to the participants that this picture represents a "problem tree" and it will graphically help to illustrate the different causes and consequences of their assigned problem.
6. Ask the groups to brainstorm some of the causes of their assigned problem. This can be as broad or as narrow as the group desires. On the problem tree, each cause should be depicted as one of the roots of the tree. After mentioning each cause, the group should think about what else can contribute to that initial cause. For example, if a cause is "lack of education among women," then the group should think about what causes lack of education among women. One of the causes could be the "social norms" that "education is less important for girls than boys"; this would be depicted as a subroot of the original cause. Use the problem tree that you prepared earlier as an example for participants. Give the groups 15 minutes to do this exercise.

7. Explain to the participants that now they will focus on identifying the different consequences of their assigned problem. In their picture of a problem tree, the consequences will be depicted as the branches of the tree. As they did with the causes, the groups should brainstorm and identify the primary and the secondary consequences of their assigned problem. Again, use the problem tree that you prepared earlier as an example for participants. Give the groups 20 minutes to complete the exercise.

8. Once they are done, ask them to use a different colored marker and circle the causes and consequences of their assigned problem that are in any way related to gender.

**Example Problem Tree**



Source: Lisa Veneklasen and Valerie Miller. 2002. *A New Weave of Power, People and Politics: the Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation*. Oklahoma: World Neighbors.

9. Explain that we will look at a framework to organize and better understand these gendered causes and consequences. Tell the group that there are many frameworks out there, and today we will present a framework that the IGWG has adapted based on the Liverpool Framework for gender analysis.
10. Tell the group that you will explain the framework through a presentation and then we will practice conducting a gender analysis using three illustrative programmatic areas.
11. Begin the PowerPoint presentation. Facilitator Note: The notes for each slide are included in the notes pages of the presentation. Try to be as interactive as possible, asking the group questions along the way.
12. After the presentation has ended, ask the participants if they have any questions.
13. Ask participants to return to the problem trees and decide under which domain or domains each root problem and consequence falls. Bring all the groups together again and ask one person from each group to summarize the results of their problem tree. After each summary, ask the group to include any additional causes or consequences that had not been included so far. Next, ask the participants to consider if they agree with the causes and consequences that were identified as being gender-related. Ask the group to identify which domain they believe that cause belongs to. Discuss these and identify any additional gender-related issues with the group. Continue this methodology with all three problem trees.
14. Conclude this activity by discussing the following questions with participants:
  - How many of the causes and/or consequences were gender-related? Was this surprising to the participants? Why or why not?
  - What were the common gender-related causes identified by all the groups? Was this surprising to the participants? Why or why not?
  - What were the common gender-related consequences identified by all the groups? Was this surprising to the participants? Why or why not?
  - As an organization, what gender related-causes could you address? What gender-related consequences?