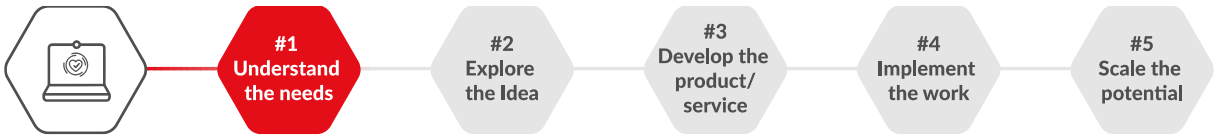


1.1 Define the problem

1.2 Validate needs
1.3 Map stakeholders
1.4 Analyse the context

What?

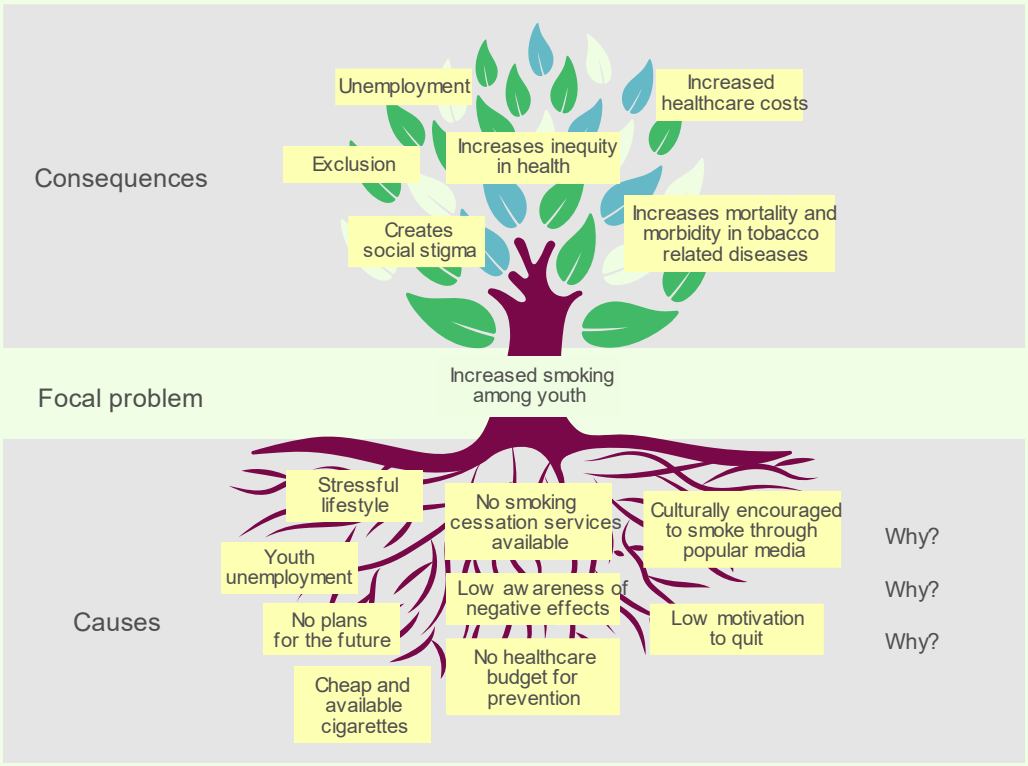
Defining and describing the problem/challenge that your innovation is addressing in a clear problem formulation.

Why?

The purpose of this first activity is to make sure you and your team members have a clear understanding of the challenge you are addressing, and that you are avoiding preconceptions about causes and effects. By formulating the problem together, you and your team members will obtain consensus on what you want to achieve and for whom the innovation development is for. A clear formulation of the problem is an important starting point for the needs analysis, which is the next step in the innovation process.

How?

“Problem tree” analysis (also called Situational analysis or just Problem analysis) helps to find solutions by mapping out the anatomy of cause and effect around an issue in a similar way to a Mind map, but with more structure.



Picture: Example of problem tree exercise

Step by Step!

Problem tree analysis is best carried out in a small focus group of about six to eight people. The more different perspectives within the group the better.

Draw a simple tree with branches and roots (see illustration). Make sure everyone has a bunch of post-it notes and a pen.

1. The first step is to discuss and agree on the problem or issue to be analysed. Do not worry if it seems like a broad topic because the problem tree will help break it down. The problem or issue is written in the centre and becomes the 'trunk' of the tree. 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. For example: *Increased smoking among youth*

2. Next, each one will individually formulate negative statements related to the focal problem, for example *There are too few*, *There is no access to*, *decreased health etc.*
   At this stage you can just brainstorm, without considering if the statement is a cause or a consequence. Write one statement / post-it note, preferably 4-5 statements each.

3. Now it's time to present the statements to each other. Cluster or delete statements that are doublets. Group the ones that are related.

4. Start organising your statements in what **causes** the focal problem (these become the roots of the tree) and what the focal problem **results** in (the branches of the tree). Try to place the post-its in logical chains, and if needed draw arrows between them. Try to expand the tree as much as possible by asking "Why is that?" many times, to really get to the root causes of the problem.
   The heart of the exercise is the discussion*, debate and dialogue that is generated as factors are arranged and re-arranged, often forming sub-dividing roots and branches (like a Mind map). Take time to allow people to explain their feelings and reasoning and record related ideas and points that come up on separate flip chart paper.

5. When you're satisfied with the tree – start to define and narrow down what to focus on when moving forward*. The discussion might lead to a change of focal problem than the one you originally started off with.

Note: The Problem tree can be converted into an objectives tree by rephrasing each of the problems into positive desirable outcomes - as if the problem had already been treated. In this way, root causes and consequences are turned into root solutions, and key project or influencing entry points are quickly established. These objectives may well be worded as objectives for change. These can then feed into your Theory of Change, which we present in 2.3.

Resources/Sources:

https://odi.org/en/publications/planning-tools-problem-tree-analysis/

https://effektfullt.se/

1.2 Validate needs →