

Activity: Solution Tree: Identifying Solutions and Outcomes



Have students carry out research to begin developing an understanding of specific issues and topics related to their broader issue. For example, access to clean water is a big umbrella for many sub-issues (that are equally large, but more focused) that ladder up to the issue of access to clean water.

This is best done by having student groups carry out research on organizations that are working to combat this issue. Students should use the Needs Assessment Worksheet to carry out an analysis.

Have students use the solutions graphic organizer to keep track of current solutions that are in use to combat the issue of access to clean water. Model how to go from the center of the proposed solution graphic organizer to the more specific details of the key elements to the solution and the possible outcomes of the solution.

Encourage students to revisit and work in parallel with their Problem Tree cause and effect graphic organizer, which can help to ensure that their solutions are addressing actual problems. Students should develop four solutions, and their accompanying key elements and possible outcomes. They should keep track of any sources they used to fill out the graphic organizer.

Walk students through the Solution Tree, starting in the middle.

- ▶ **Goal:** This is the problem from their Problem Tree, but re-framed as a goal.

Then go to the roots, which is the investigation of the solutions.

- ▶ **Solutions:** These are the actions needed to solve the problem and achieve the goal stated at the center of the solution tree. When exploring solutions, students should ask, "How will this solve the problem?" Have them dig deeper to think holistically, so that they are looking beyond the short-term and addressing not only the symptoms of the problem but the root causes as well.

And finally to the leaves, which explore the outcomes.

- ▶ **Outcomes:** These are the results created by the solution. Results may appear as straightforward as having achieved goals, but when students consider the ripple effects and outcomes of sustainable results, the impact is far-reaching and long-lasting. Always ask, "Then what happens?"

Using the example of access to clean water from the Problem Tree graphic organizer, here is sample Solution Tree content that you may want to work through with your students.

- ▶ **Goal:** Provide families with access to clean water.
- ▶ **Solutions:** Providing an emergency supply of water to the community will help meet their needs in the short-term, but building a well or rain catchment system will ensure that people have access to clean water long into the future.
- ▶ **Outcomes:** Families have access to clean water through a local well. Girls can more easily collect water for their household. Girls now have time to go to school while also completing their chores.

Look for this activity online at [WE.org/ap/problemtree](https://www.we.org/ap/problemtree).

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NEEDS ASSESSMENT

NAME: _____

TEAM MEMBERS: _____

The following series of questions helps you to analyze and identify ongoing areas of need within organizations addressing your issue.

1. Identify 3-5 organizations that are working to address the issue your team is focusing on.

2. What does the organization do well in responding to the issue and/or related issues?

3. What could each organization do better in its response?

4. What areas of need related to your issue have you learned about that the organization is NOT addressing?

5. Considering all 3-5 organizations, where are there ongoing needs that are not being adequately addressed?

6. Considering all 3-5 organizations, where are there ongoing needs that are being addressed successfully, and to which you can add further efforts to support the issue of clean water access?

7. If you are able to resolve the issue/problem so that it no longer exists, what does the world look like as a result (this should be your team's vision)?



SOLUTION TREE

NAME: _____

TEAM MEMBERS: _____

In your Solution Tree graphic organizer, start by re-writing the problem from your Problem Tree, and reframing it as a goal at the center of the tree. Then consider the different solutions (the roots) and possible outcomes of the solutions (the branches).

LEAVES/BRANCHES: Outcomes

These are the results created by the solution. Results may appear as straightforward as having achieved goals, but when you consider the ripple effects and outcomes of sustainable results, the impact is far-reaching and long-lasting. Always ask: "Then what happens?"

TRUNK: Problem

TRUNK: Goal

ROOTS: Solutions

These are the actions needed to solve the problem and achieve the goal stated at the center of the solution tree. When exploring solutions, ask yourself "How will this solve the problem?" Dig deeper to think holistically, so that you are looking beyond the short-term and addressing not only the symptoms of the problem but the root causes as well.