

# SITUATION ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK IN PRCA

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### Objective

To define situation analysis framework (SAF), explain its various components and role in communication programme planning and implementation

At the end of this chapter you will be able to:

1. Define situation analysis framework (SAF): Purpose and rationale.
2. Apply the problem tree in the cause-effect analysis of critical issues.
3. Use the problem tree in the identification, prioritisation and analysis of focal problems.
4. Apply the main components of SAF in communication programme planning and implementation especially in the preliminary assessment of a project situation in preparing and conducting a PRCA.

## 2.1 Situation analysis framework (SAF): Purpose and rationale

### 2.1.1 What is Situation Analysis Framework (SAF)?

Situation analysis framework (SAF) is an analytical and planning method commonly used in PRCA and communication programme planning and implementation. SAF is adapted from the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and the Objective Oriented Project Planning (OOPP). SAF borrows the problem tree analysis tool from OOPP, and adapts its various logical planning and organising components from LFA. SAF has been developed as a technique, which can easily be used in a participatory manner by field workers and the community for analysing problems and planning effective communication programmes to help in the achievement of the development objectives. For this reason SAF has been incorporated in the communication methodology presented in this handbook.

In Chapter 1, the reasons for the failure of many development projects were presented. The two main causes are the lack of people involvement in the development process and poor project planning. These two problem areas are specifically addressed by SAF through the participatory cause-effect analysis of problems and through a series of worksheets meant to assist in the organisation and management of the communication strategy. SAF is therefore an analytical and organisational technique that can facilitate the whole communication strategy design process. It is particularly useful for the following specific phases of the communication programme:

1. Preliminary assessment of the situation, as perceived by planners and project management, of an on-going project to provide a common framework for identifying and understanding the project's goal, problems, objectives and beneficiaries. This is done before the PRCA in order to have a better picture of the current situation of the project.
2. During field PRCA, SAF, especially the problem tree, is used in a participatory manner with the project beneficiaries to identify and carry out a cause-effect analysis of the main problems the project is addressing in the community. This exercise helps in the identification and selection of the priority focal problems the communication strategy will address.
3. During communication strategy design, SAF provides a framework for the organisation and management of the various elements that form the strategy such as the communication objectives, outputs, activities and inputs.
4. During the planning of the implementation phase of the communication programme, SAF provides the framework for identifying and incorporating indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

This handbook focuses on the first two functions, although it will introduce the reader to the third and fourth phases, which will be fully dealt with in the 'Communication Strategy Design Handbook'.

### 2.1.2. Main components of SAF

SAF includes a number of components, some of which are exclusively used in situation analysis, while others are used during other phases of the communication programme, planning and implementation process. Bear in mind that while keeping a logical sequential relationship among

all its components, SAF has also to deal with the creative factors present in communication. For instance, different from the LFA outputs, SAF outputs ARE NOT directly derived from the communication objectives but rather they are defined after being mediated through the communication design process. This involves a number of steps to define priority interaction groups, communication approaches, design specifications, media and activities.

The major components of SAF are the following:

- **Stakeholders (traditionally referred to as beneficiaries):** These are the people the project is trying to involve and assist through its activities. As the term implies stakeholders are those people in the rural communities who have a specific interest in solving the problem or improving the situation.
- **Development problem:** Also sometimes labelled the grand-problem, this defines a major undesired and negative situation affecting a large number of people. Projects are normally formulated as ways of reducing specific aspects of a development problem. Thus, a development problem can include a number of different problems and issues being tackled by various projects.
- **Project goal:** This is a statement of the overall aim of the project. It describes what the project aims to achieve by addressing the development problem. The goal provides the overall justification for the very existence of the project. It is also called the aim or development objective.
- **Main problems:** These are major specific problems or the undesired situation the project is specifically addressing. Main problems are derived from the development problem. They are the major causes of the development problem, or issues related to it. The definition of the main problems provides the boundaries within which the project can act. As will be explained later, the main problems usually constitute the central boxes in problem trees.
- **Project objectives:** Also known as immediate objectives, these indicate what the project aims to specifically accomplish in relation to the main problems and as a contribution to the achievement of the project goal.
- **The problem tree:** This important tool assists in the cause-effect analysis of a situation. The problem tree is the starting point of SAF as all the other components of the framework are derived from it. The rationale and how to develop a problem tree will be discussed in greater detail in the next section and in the Toolbox.
- **Focal problems:** Often referred to as root-problems, these are factors causing part or most of the main problem. This handbook will concentrate only on those focal problems that can be directly solved through a communication intervention. In order to identify focal problems it is necessary to carry out a cause-effect analysis of the situation, usually starting from the main problem. Focal problems are derived through the drawing and analysis of the problem tree.
- **Communication objectives:** These indicate what the communication intervention aims to accomplish, specifically in relation to the focal problem and as a contribution to the achievement of the project goal. The communication objectives are derived from the problem tree by rewording the focal problems as desirable states and/or as solution- oriented statements. Each communication objective should be expressed in a SMART manner with a specific timeframe for its achievement.

- **Communication Mode Design:** This includes a series of steps through which the Interaction groups, communication approaches, design specifications, media and activities are selected and refined. Most of the communication approaches are derived from the Communication Mode Design. The mode includes discussion theme/message design, instructional design and group mobilisation. The different modes assist to define the outputs. Communication mode design will be dealt with in detail in the 'Communication Strategy Handbook'. Please refer to worksheet 5 in section 2.3.3 of this chapter for some details about the process.

- **Outputs:** These are the measurable results of one or more activities. These are what the project activities are expected to produce so that the project can achieve its objective. The achievement of the outputs is within the direct control of the project and should therefore be guaranteed by the project through the provision of the necessary inputs.

In order to define them more effectively outputs have been divided into two categories: quantitative and qualitative outputs. Quantitative outputs are the physical results of the activities such as the number of workshops held and of people trained, quantity of communication materials produced, for example, number of booklets and flipcharts. Qualitative outputs, on the other hand are the expected results to be achieved as a result of the physical outputs. These are intangible but still measurable results, for example, participants' satisfaction and level of awareness reached. For instance, if the output is 20 extensionists trained in interpersonal skills, the quantitative output will be the actual number trained and the qualitative one will be measured by how well the trained extensionists have learned communication interpersonal skills.

- **Activities:** These are the tasks/actions to be performed in order to produce the output needed to achieve the project's immediate objectives. Activities include such exercises as the training of trainers or the production of audio-visual materials.
- **Inputs:** These are the human and material resources (such as money, equipment, materials, personnel and training facilities) necessary to carry out project's activities meant to produce the outputs thus assisting to achieve the objective.
- **Indicators:** These can be compared to road signs that indicate to a driver whether he/she is on the right road and how far he/she is from the final destination. Indicators should be clearly verifiable and measurable. They are used for monitoring or assessing the effectiveness of each component of the communication programme in terms of quantity and quality. Indicators should be established in advance for each and every programme component (that is objectives, outputs and activities). In the case of a campaign to vaccinate children against polio an indicator may be the number of children vaccinated.
- **Means (or sources) of verification:** These are the sources and nature of information required to measure the indicators. Like the indicators themselves they should be identified and specified in advance. In the example mentioned earlier, official hospital and clinic records can be a means of verification of how many children have been vaccinated.
- **External factors (sometimes also referred to as Assumptions):** These are variables that are outside the control of the project management, but may determine the success or failure of the project. During the planning exercise, it is important to identify as many of these external factors as possible, in order to monitor them in the course of project implementation. For example, during a campaign to vaccinate children hospitals in the area run out of vaccines because a flood has cut them off. When this type of situation develops, the campaign might fail to reach its objective due to the unexpected external factor - the flood.

## chapter II situation analysis framework in PRCA

The box below summaries the logical linkages of the SAF components.

*Box 3: The logical linkage of the SAF components.*

**Development Problem ↔ Goal ↔ Main Problem ↔ Immediate Objectives  
↔ Problem Tree ↔ Focal Problems ↔ Communication Objectives ↔  
Communication Mode Design ↔ Outputs ↔ Activities ↔ Inputs**

Use this logical relationship ‘sequential chain’ among SAF components as a checklist to ensure that no element of the process is omitted and that all the linkages are consistent with one another.

### 2.2 The problem tree: Cause-effect analysis of critical issues

#### 2.2.1 What is a problem tree?

The problem tree is a visual problem-analysis tool that can be effectively used by both field development staff and the community to specify and investigate the causes and effects of a problem and to highlight the relationships between them. As the name implies, this tool resembles a tree. The roots of the tree, in the lower part of the drawing, metaphorically represent the causes of the main problem (Figure 3). The tree trunk at the centre of the drawing represents the main problem and the tree branches, on the upper side of the drawing, provide a visual representation of the effects of the main problem.

As pointed out earlier, the problem tree is an effective tool for the identification and analysis of the relevant causes of the main problems, which will later form the bases for formulating solutions and objectives for the communication strategy. A discussion of the causes can help to identify the segments of the community who are most affected and who should be specifically interested in participating in activities aimed at removing the causes of the problem. Remember that each cause of the problem is also a problem in its own right.

The problem tree can be used in on-going projects as well as in the formulation of new development efforts with a community. In on-going projects, the problem tree is done at least twice. First it is done before going into the field, in order to assess clearly the project perception about the main problem and its causes. Then the problem tree is done with the community to assess if they have the same perceptions of the problem. Quite often the difference in the two perceptions constitutes one of the main obstacles towards the successful achievement of the projects’ objectives.

The whole purpose of the problem tree is to define the main problems present in the community in order to analyse and prioritise their causes as the first step towards effective sustainable solutions. Probably the most important tool to keep in mind throughout this process is a single question or rather a single word: ‘WHY?’ It is amazing how this short word can generate unexpected insights, which greatly help in developing an effective communication strategy. Never be afraid of asking or wondering why something is happening, even if it seems obvious. Looking for reasons why something is occurring is the correct way of investigating an issue. Of course the ‘why obsession’,

as it is sometimes labelled, can be tricky since there is always a why to be asked and this can lead to a never-ending chain of 'why'. Where should it stop?

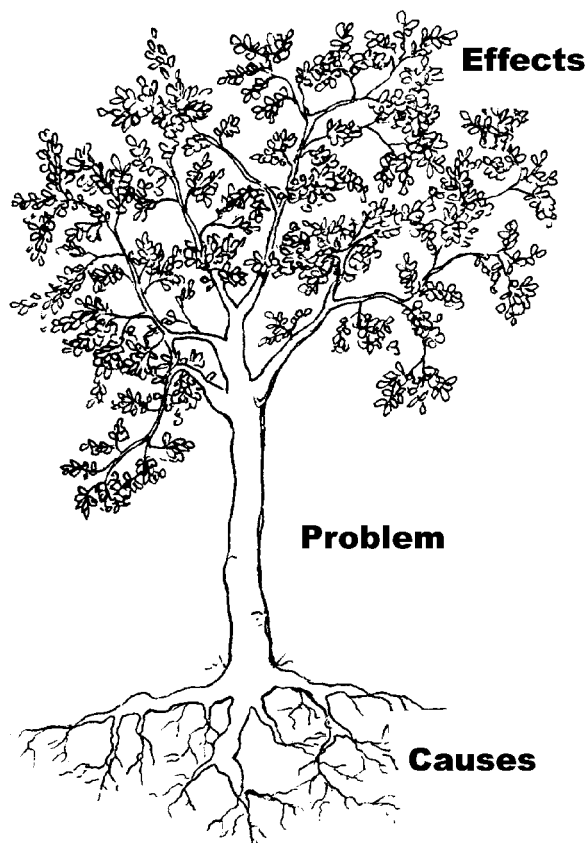


Figure 3: A simplistic view of a problem tree.

Let us consider this story. Tendai was going to work when her car broke down. WHY did the car break down? Tendai checked her car and found out that the fan belt had broken. WHY did the fan belt get cut? Probably because she had driven the car for too long without replacing the belt. WHY? Because she enjoys travelling by car or maybe she lives far away and she needs to use the car to accomplish her daily tasks. This questioning could continue to infinity but when should it stop? The answer is: whenever a point is reached that will allow for the problem to be effectively addressed. In Tendai's case that point was reached when she found out that the fan belt was broken. Since her main problem was that the car would not move and her objective is to have the car fixed to go to work everyday she only needs to find a good mechanic and replace the belt. It is of no use, and of no relevance for solving the problem, to know why she drives long distances by car. Similarly when dealing with development projects and carrying out problem analysis we need to identify the right entry point that will enable us to provide the solutions to the critical problems.

The problems and needs of the communities are at the heart of each development activity, that is why it is crucial to involve the community in the decision making process. This can only start with the identification and definition of the main problem and continue with analysis of the factors causing the undesired situation. From here the problem-solving strategy will pass through all the components of SAF in order to organise the plan of action. The end result should be involving the

people in providing an effective and sustainable solution to address the identified problem. The problem tree is the major tool capable of assisting in this effort.

The starting point of the problem tree is the identification of the main problem. Identifying problems may seem a simple task but it is not. There are often a number of problems, or causes, resulting in adverse circumstances but not all of them carry the same weight. In most aspects of life there are usually a few problems causing a large number of negative factors, while the vast majority of the problems are responsible for only a very small part of the situation. This is known as the 20/80 law. Usually 20 per cent of the tributaries carry 80 per cent of the total water capacity into bigger rivers. In marketing it is known that only a small part of the clients (about 20 per cent) accounts for the vast majority of the sales (about 80 per cent). In a similar way a big problem is usually caused by a small number of all possible causes. Through the cause-effect analysis, identify the main problems and their most relevant causes. These are the focal problems, responsible for most of the adverse situation experienced by the community. The main problem can be identified with the community using brainstorming techniques, focus group discussions, ranking or scoring. A similar approach should be used later on for the selection and prioritisation of focal problems. All the problems coming out of any of these exercises should be listed and prioritised. See the description below on how to develop a problem tree. For a more detailed explanation refer to the Toolbox for the tools and instructions on how to generate and prioritise the main problems and develop the problem tree, especially, brainstorming, focus group discussion, ranking and scoring.

### 2.2.2 Developing the problem tree: Identification and analysis of focal problems

The first question when starting the problem identification process should always be WHOSE PROBLEM? This is to ensure that the problems to be addressed are really perceived as such by the community. The problem tree can be a very useful tool to verify the perceptions of the problem by the community and explore all cause-effects links in on-going projects. Similarly it can also be used effectively in the formulation of new projects, in order to involve the communities in identifying and assessing their priorities.

The following are the basic steps that should be followed with the community, in developing the cause-effect analysis leading to the identification of focal problems and their solutions through the problem tree:

1. Identify, define and select specific main problems or undesired situations within the project scope;
2. For each specific main problem selected develop a problem tree;
3. For each problem tree carry out a comprehensive cause-effect analysis of the situation identifying the focal problems;
4. Based on the analysis carried out define the communication objectives.

In order to carry out these steps successfully develop and analyse the problem tree effectively. Once the specific problem has been identified, the first thing to do is to draw the central box stating the main problem. Draw the box at the centre of the paper (possibly a large one) or at the centre of the space available on the ground (in some communities the best option may be the ground. In this case make sure to copy the problem tree onto paper later). The analysis can be started either by stating the effects on the higher part of the paper or by stating the causes on the lower part. It is more effective to start with the effects as these will help the community visualise all

the negative, undesired effects caused by the main problem. As the boxes are drawn with the effects always ask what is this event/problem leading to? If the main problem is malnutrition one effect is unhealthy children, and what does this lead to? Increased expenditure for medicines, among other things. What does this lead to? Reduced income for the family hence increased poverty.

The method used above is the same kind of approach to be used for drawing boxes as casual events linking them not just to a single factor but to as many as they appeared to be linked to. In other words the same approach should be followed for drawing the lower part of the tree, the one concerned with the causes of the main problem. The question to ask is why is this happening? Or what causes this event? For instance ask what causes malnutrition? One reason may be lack of food in the community. What is lack of food caused by? Poor cropping. Why? Erratic rains. Why? Carry on until an entry point is found for communication. Remember that there is never a single cause responsible for a whole negative situation.

At this point the complete problem tree is drawn full of branches, showing the effects due to the main problem, and with many roots, stating the causes of the main problem. This provides a comprehensive visual representation of the main problem and its cause-effect relationships. Community opinions and analytical judgement must be used to identify the focal problems, which are the communication entry points. These are crucial problems that carry a heavier weight than others (remember the 20/80 law), that can be addressed by communication and that can directly assist in eliminating the main problem. Unfortunately the prioritisation of the focal problem is the most crucial and often the most difficult task to be performed. It is often not easy to decide which ones among the root-problems identified are the most relevant for solving the main problem. This is a crucial part of the whole process, as the priority focal problems selected constitute the bases upon which to build an effective communication strategy. A good way of prioritising root-problems is to assist the community to rank and score them. The example below illustrates the overall representation of the problem tree in a real life situation.

## *Box 4: Case Study of an AP Nutritional Project*

The attached case study of an AP Nutritional Project illustrates the logical use of the components of SAF in a project.

### **AP Nutritional Project**

The AP Nutritional Project is the modified name of a project that participated in one of the AP workshops. Its problem tree, focal problems, objectives and SAF structure have been modified and adapted in order to clarify the issues presented in the training package and assist in making the instructional process easier to understand. The data presented does not therefore provide an accurate socio-economic representation of the situation in reality. Its use is only to illustrate the process and linkages of communication programme planning through SAF.

Similarly the data presented here are by no means to be considered as a full account of all aspects included in designing a communication strategy. On the contrary, for each phase

involved in the process, the strategy design only takes one single factor (which is in bold) in order to keep your attention focused on the sequence and the causal linkages needed rather than on the overall picture.

### **DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM**

Poor livelihood and poorhousehold food security

### **PROJECT GOAL**

Assist in the poverty alleviation effort by increasing food security

### **MAIN PROJECT PROBLEM**

High rate of malnutrition in children under five years of age

### **MAIN PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

1. To improve food processing, preservation and appropriate food storages in the community.
2. To reduce malnutrition among the children under five years.
3. To promote the utilisation of locally available food.
4. To promote and enhance the coordination among the intersectoral teams formed by various ministries, line agencies and NGO related to development in the districts concerned.

**PROBLEM TREE:** malnutrition among under fives (main problem)

### **FOCAL PROBLEMS**

1. Under-utilisation of the feeding schemes.
2. Food shortage.
3. Poor feeding practises.
4. Inadequate knowledge on food processing and preserving.
5. Poor food storage facilities.
6. Frequent incapability by the mothers of identifying malnutrition at its early stage.

Some of these focal problems are interrelated and some could be partially causing others. For instance food shortage could be also caused by inadequate storage facilities. Similarly problem number 1, under-utilisation of the feeding schemes, and problem number 3, poor feeding practices, are most probably related. For the purpose of this training package the latter problem, about poor feeding practices, is going to be regarded as the main one around which the whole communication strategy will be built.

### **COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES**

1. Raise the awareness of proper feeding practises in the district to account for 80 per cent of all women between the age of 16 and 40 years old by the next year.

2. Increase the knowledge of proper feeding practises to cover at least 60 per cent of all the mothers of under fives by the next two years.
3. Raise the percentage of mothers adopting correct feeding practices by 20 per cent over the next two years.

For the purpose of this training package objective number 2 is the one that will be referred to as the main objective. This will also avoid considering other variables that could make the learning process more complex (e.g., if considering objective number 3, lack of food could be an external factor impeding the success of the strategy).

## **COMMUNICATION BRIEF**

In this phase, for each communication objective identify and clearly define the Priority Interaction Groups, the Communication Modes, Approaches and Media. This will allow you to design your strategy and get to the next step: definition of the outputs.

## **QUANTITATIVE OUTPUTS**

1. 200 posters.
2. At least two group meetings for each village of the district.
3. 10 flipcharts on the importance of proper feeding practices and child health.
4. One training workshop for the 8 health workers of the district and their two supervisors.

## **QUALITATIVE OUTPUTS**

1. Posters and group meetings are passing the right message.
2. Flipcharts truly encourage an open discussion among health workers and the women of the district.
3. Health workers and their supervisors effectively trained on how to use the flipcharts and how to dialogue with the women in the district.

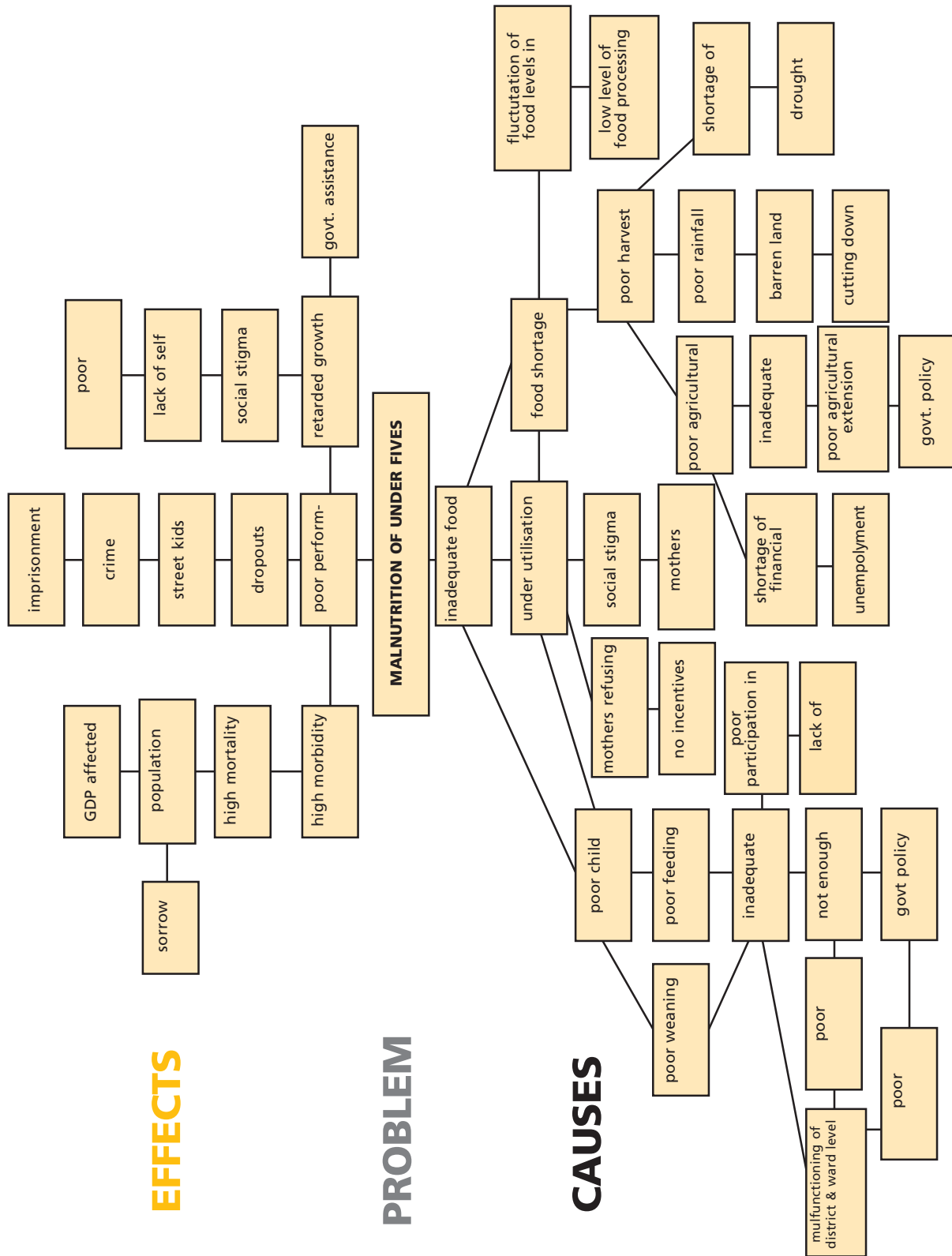
## **ACTIVITIES**

1. Design draft flipchart panels.
2. Pre-test flipcharts.
3. Produce flipcharts.
4. Train health workers on how to use flipcharts.

## **INPUTS**

1. Graphic artist fee.
2. Cost of materials for the flipcharts.
3. Transport costs for pre-testing.
4. Allowances for pre-testing.
5. Production costs.
6. Costs for organising a workshop (premises, transport, allowances, stationary, etc.).

Figure 4: An example of the problem tree.



From the example above it can be observed that some of the causes of the main problem can be tackled with communication strategy while others are structural and might need physical or policy inputs.

Before going to the next section go through this summary outlining the sequence of developing a problem tree:

- At the centre of a large paper, or any other big space as available, draw a square representing the main problem;
- Above the central square draw the branches of the tree (i.e. the effects experienced as a consequence of the main problem) making a box for each effect leading to another one and so on;
- Below the central square representing the main problem draw the roots of the tree (i.e. the factors causing the main problem) making a box for each cause resulting in another cause and so on;
- Use the fully developed problem tree to analyse all events and their causal relationship. Remember that each box, depending on how it is looked at, can be a problem, the cause of a problem (that is, of the box directly above) and the effect of a problem (that is, of the box directly underneath).

### 2.2.3 Identification, prioritisation and analysis of focal problems

Focal problems, also known as communication entry points, are the major causes of the main problem. Communication can be used in order to help eliminate or reduce the focal problems as a step towards solving the main problem, thus assisting in the achievement of the communication and project objectives. To be relevant to community needs and capabilities, the selection and prioritisation of the focal problems should be done hand in hand with the people. This is important because, generally, neither the community nor the project has sufficient financial and human resources to eliminate all the causes of the main problem at the same time. Priority focal problems should therefore be selected on the basis that they are considered to be major bottlenecks to the solution of the main problems, by both the community and the project staff.

Use such PRCA tools as scoring, ranking and focus group discussion for involving the community in this prioritisation exercise. These tools are discussed in detail later in this handbook.

As the relevant priority focal problems are being selected and analysed, the most effective ways and means of eliminating them or reducing their influence are also being identified and discussed. Once decisions on possible solutions of the priority focal problems are reached, the design of the communication strategy, beginning with the formulation of SMART objectives, can start. Instructions on how to design a communication strategy that addresses the identified priority focal problems will be dealt with in the 'Communication Strategy Design Handbook'. It is however important to keep in mind that proper problem identification and analysis are the bases for the design of an effective and successful problem solving communication strategy.

## 2.3 Role of SAF in communication programme planning and implementation

Following the introduction of the main components of SAF in the beginning of this chapter, a more detailed description of the uses of various SAF components during specific phases of the

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communication programme is provided below. The shaded boxes in the SAF and Communication Strategy Worksheets indicate areas addressed with SAF. The specific worksheets in which SAF is used are :

- **Worksheet 1 - Preliminary Assessment of the Situation (before the PRCA)**
- **Worksheet 2 - SAF for Field PRCA**
- **Worksheet 5 - Communication Strategy: Organisation and Management**
- **Worksheet 6 - Communication Strategy: Monitoring**
- **Worksheet 7 - Communication strategy: Evaluation**

Communication Strategy Worksheets 3 and 4 shown below will be discussed in detail in the 'Communication Strategy Design Handbook'.

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## Worksheet 1 - Preliminary Assessment of the Situation (before the PRCA)

Development Problems	Project Goal	Main Problem/s	Project Objectives	Project Stakeholders/ (Beneficiaries)	Project Perceptions (Problem Tree)

## Worksheet 2 - SAF for Field PRCA

Community Perceptions	New View of Problems (Identification of Critical Issues)	Identification of Focal Problems (Issues related to communication)	Prioritisation and Refinement of Focal Problems	(Focal) Communication Objectives

## Worksheet 3 - The Communication Intervention

Portraits of Interaction Groups and Influential Sources	SMART Communication Objectives	Problem Solving Thinking (how to address the problem)	Rough Core -Content (Issues to be addressed)	Communication Approaches

## Worksheet 4A -Communication Modes: Discussion Themes/Message Design

Basic Messages and Discussion Themes	Specifications (objectives of discussion themes and messages)	Appeals	Selected Medium	Basic Treatment	Communication Brief - Creative Mode (including outputs)

## Worksheet 4B - Communication Modes: Instructional Design

Subjects/ Content	Learning Objectives (specifications)	Supporting Media	Basic Instructional Approach	Communication Brief - Instructional Mode (including outputs)

## chapter II situation analysis framework in PRCA

### Worksheet 4C - Communication Modes: Group Mobilisation

Purpose and Rationale of Group Mobilisation	Specifications (group size, objectives and characteristics)	Supporting Media (if any)	Basic Group Mobilisation Approach	Communication Brief - Group Mobilisation Mode (incl. outputs)

### Worksheet 5 - Communication Strategy: Organisation and Management

SMART Communic. Objectives	Quantitative Outputs (derived from Communication Strategy)	Qualitative Outputs	Activities	Inputs (with est. costing)	Responsibility	Timing

### Worksheet 6 - Communication Strategy: SAF in Monitoring the Workplan\*

Topics/Results to be Measured	Indicators	Means of Verification (for each indicator)	External Factors
Quantitative Outputs			
Qualitative Outputs			
Other activities			

### Worksheet 7 - Communication Strategy: SAF in the Evaluation of Communication Impact

Quantitative Evaluation (of the Impact in relation to the Objectives)			
Participatory Evaluation (of the Impact in relation to the Objectives)			

\* In this handbook monitoring and evaluation are always considered at two different levels of measurement:

1. Quantitative: measuring the physical result expected, e.g. number of radio programmes produced or training workshops held, extensionists trained, brochure produced, radio programmes aired, etc.
2. Qualitative: measuring how well the expected results of the activities were achieved, e.g. out of X number of extensionists trained, how many have achieved the intended level of skills and knowledge? Are the Y number of brochures produced of a satisfactory level? Are the radio programmes produced attracting the needed attention?

# PRCA Handbook

Specifically SAF can be used during the various phases of communication programme planning and implementation in the different ways listed below.

## 2.3.1 SAF for preliminary assessment of the situation

### Worksheet 1 - Preliminary Assessment of the Situation (before the PRCA)

Development Problems	Project Goal	Main Problem/s	Project Objectives	Project Stakeholders (Beneficiaries)	Project Perceptions (Problem Tree)

In preparation for a PRCA and prior to communication strategy formulation, SAF is used as an analytical tool to understand the existing situation of an on-going project as defined by its management. The SAF components listed below constitute the minimum attributes of the project to be identified and analysed in order to obtain a clear understanding of the project situation:

- The development problem - the overall major undesired situation indirectly addressed by the project;
- The goal of the project - how the project is supposed to partially address the development problem;
- The main problem(s) to be specifically addressed and solved by the project;
- The project objectives - the targets the project is expected to achieve;
- The project beneficiaries - the people who are supposed to benefit from the project's activities.

This initial analysis defines the on-going activities of the project and provides a common background and terminology for understanding the rationale and purpose of the project. It also lays out a framework for identifying the main issues to be further explored during the PRCA. A problem tree is normally drawn at this stage of situation analysis using information provided by the project management. This initial problem tree will be compared to another problem tree produced by the community on the same issues during PRCA with the beneficiaries.

## 2.3.2 SAF for Field PRCA

### Worksheet 2 - SAF for Field PRCA

Community Perceptions (Problem Tree)	New View of Problems (Synthesis of the two perceptions on critical issues)	Identification of Focal Problems (Issues related to communication)	Prioritisation and Refinement of Focal Problems	(Focal) Communication Objectives

## chapter II Situation analysis framework in PRCA

The most commonly utilised SAF component for a field PRCA is the problem tree, which assists in the cause-effect analysis and prioritisation of problems with the community. The use of the problem tree in the community ensures that the community's perceptions of the main problems addressed by the project are obtained. The problem tree drawn with the community should be compared with the one drawn by the project team during preliminary assessment. This comparison often leads to a new view of the problems and assists in the identification of priority focal problems which are relevant to both the community needs and capabilities as well as the project's mandate and capacity. This in turn leads to the formulation of communication objectives that will address appropriate issues in the community. This ensures that the communication strategy, when designed, will address the most relevant causes of the main problems.

The success of any communication strategy is dependent on the correct identification and analysis of the relevant causes of the main problems. These causes of the main problem are the bases for formulating objectives for the communication strategy. SAF thus assists in the definition of relevant objectives to guide the formulation of the communication strategy. Without relevant communication objectives derived from main causes of a problem, an entire communication strategy might waste human and financial resources tackling the wrong problem. For instance a strategy was implemented for two years to review a school curriculum because it was thought to be the main cause of poor performance at school by village children. At the end of the strategy implementation, the problem still persisted. On evaluation of the strategy and further analysis of the problem, it was found out that the actual cause of the problem was the high rate of malnutrition among the children. Because the children did not feed properly, they paid little attention to what the teachers said in class, hence their poor performance in school.

### 2.3.3 SAF for Communication Strategy Organisation and Management

#### Worksheet 5 - Communication strategy: Organisation and Management

SMART Communication	Quant. Outputs (derived from Communication Strategy)	Qualitative Outputs	Activities	Inputs (with estimated costing)	Responsibility	Timing

During the development of the organisation and management plan for the communication strategy, SAF provides a consistent framework for the organisation of the various elements of the plan for implementation. SAF assists in the specification of the quantitative and qualitative outputs needed to achieve the communication objectives selected during the strategy formulation. These outputs are the results of activities the communication team and the community must carry out during the programme implementation. SAF specifies the inputs, which include all human and material resources, required to implement the activities in order to obtain the outputs.

The process of defining the outputs in SAF is different from the way they are derived in the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), where outputs are derived directly from the objectives. In SAF their selection is contingent upon a number of factors to be taken into account during the strategy design process. Outputs in SAF, therefore, derive from the characteristics of the interaction groups or audiences, the types of communication approaches to be adopted, the specifications of the type of design mode, the media to be used and the activities to be implemented in the strategy. It

is only after going through these processes that outputs are defined in SAF. Table 1 on the next page visualises how SAF linkages assist in getting to the outputs of the communication strategy.

**Table 1: The Process of specifying outputs in SAF.**

Focal Problems	Communication Objectives	Communication Mode Design				Outputs
		Interaction Groups	Communication Approaches	Design Specifications	Media and Activities	

## 2.3.4 SAF for monitoring

SAF can assist in the definition of a monitoring system for checking and verifying, at every step of the communication programme planning and implementation process, how the activities are progressing towards their ultimate objectives. When driving to a new destination most likely the driver will often check a map to confirm that he is on the right way. Similarly when progressing through the communication strategy it is vital that reference is made to checkpoints in order to confirm that the communication programme is on track. The map here is provided by a number of indicators that should be established with the community. SAF provides the framework for identifying and incorporating in the plan measurable monitoring indicators at the quantitative and qualitative levels. For every indicator established, it is necessary to specify how it is going to be measured, i.e. means of verification. (Please refer to section 2.1.2 Main components of SAF for the definitions of the three major elements of the monitoring phase: indicators, means of verification, external factors).

Indicators can be established for every activity or step during the planning and implementation process. However, it is more effective to select the most relevant points that could provide an accurate indication of whether things are on the right course. All factors that should be monitored must always be measured both at a quantitative and qualitative level. At the quantitative level, indicators are easy to determine as they relate to the physical outputs or number of certain activities such as workshops, posters, people trained, booklets, radio programmes and so on. At the qualitative level, however, indicators are more difficult to identify, as they do not deal with visible and physical factors but refer to the quality of the results achieved by the quantitative outputs. For instance, during monitoring, it is not enough to state the number of extensionists trained, it is also essential to measure and determine how much better the extensionists are doing their job since the training. It is therefore advisable not to make the common mistake of assuming that if the planned numbers of outputs have been achieved that everything is going fine. It is still necessary to measure the quality of the production - that is how well those outputs have been achieved. More details on how to measure outputs will be provided in the 'Communication Strategy Design Handbook'.

## Worksheet 6 - Communication strategy monitoring

Topics/Results to be measured	Indicators	Means of Verification (for each indicator)	External Factors
Quantitative outputs			
Qualitative outputs			
Other activities			

Monitoring is therefore an integral part of the overall strategy design, since once the workplan has been finalised, the next step would be to ensure that everything will be carried out according to the plan. This is where monitoring becomes very necessary. Monitoring should be an in-built activity in every phase of the project, since, through the establishment of indicators, it is meant to verify that the project is proceeding in the right direction. An effective monitoring system alerts the communication team to any adjustments required during any phase of the process.

### 2.3.5 SAF for evaluation

Evaluation is the final measurement of the degree of success achieved by the activities of the project, in relation to the set objectives. It measures the amount of change brought about by the project as a direct result of its intervention. Since evaluation is concerned with the impact of the project activities in relation to the set objectives it is also done at two levels: quantitative and qualitative. The impact measurement is a rather delicate issue since it has to include both levels. The quantitative aspect of the impact relates to the communication objectives in a direct, objective and measurable way. The qualitative impact, on the other hand is more in line with a truly participatory assessment, whereby people set their indicators designed to measure their satisfaction and their perception of the improvements in relation to the original problem. Even if the qualitative impact can still be measured it deals more with community perceptions rather than with quantifiable objective achievements. The quantitative evaluation utilises the baseline studies, before and after the implementation, as its main measuring instrument. Qualitative evaluation relies on participatory assessments carried out by the community. Worksheet 7 provides a graphic representation to facilitate the understanding of how to account for the final evaluation of the impact of activities

## Worksheet 7 - Communication strategy evaluation

Topics/Results to be measured	Indicators	Means of Verification (for each indicator)	External Factors
Quantitative evaluation			
Participatory evaluation			