



Gather Gender-Specific Information on the Current Situation

Activity 2.1: Identifying the Core Problem

Objectives:

- Know the difference between direct causes and the underlying causes of a problem.
- Explore the gender-related social and behavioral determinants to identify direct causes and underlying causes of a public health problem.
- Determine and rank the program and communication challenges.

Preparation:

Review the **key concepts** and **background research** to be sure your team has a good understanding of **behavior change and gender** and is aware of the gender-related social and behavioral determinants.

Gather the following program documents to help you go through this activity:

- Current strategy or marketing plan
- Formative research results (if available)
- Monitoring and evaluation results (if available)
- Other programmatic documents
- Activity Template (see below)
- Relevant resources from the I-Kit

Be sure you have enough copies of any templates, handouts or resources needed for this activity. Consider printing the **Gender-Related Social and Behavioral Determinants Handout** from the step page to use as reference during the activity.

Expected Outcome:

Understanding of the gender-related root causes of the problem.

Purpose:

The purpose of this activity is to guide you on how to conduct a root cause analysis that examines the gender-related social and behavioral determinants and to validate that your current situation analysis has identified the underlying causes and that your program is addressing this core challenge.

Introduction:

A root-cause analysis is a process used to identify the primary source of a problem. In social and behavior change communication (SBCC), a root cause analysis is used to examine why there is a difference between the desired state of a health or social issue (vision) and what is happening now (current situation). A root-cause analysis helps you to break down a problem into more manageable components or parts and to design your strategy accordingly.

Instructions to complete this activity:

Your root-cause analysis helps to identify the challenges a program should address to reach its vision. SBCC strategies that only address the obvious or most visible aspects of a problem are not likely to succeed. The root cause may be as a result of one or more of the social and behavioral determinants, especially those that impact gender. For example, a family planning campaign that only raises women's knowledge of contraceptives will likely not result in increased family planning use if husbands or mothers-in-law are the primary decision-makers regarding family planning use. Identifying the sources – the root causes – of a health problem helps programs develop a more effective strategy to overcome it.

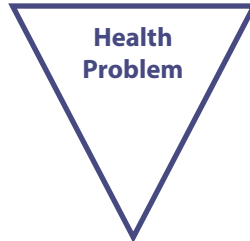
Social and Behavioral Determinants:

How men and women act, and are expected to act, is complex and influenced by cultural, political and historical factors. Gender norms are often played out in people's everyday thoughts and actions and the opportunities afforded to them, be it in accessing employment or perspectives on gender-based violence. When designing plans to measure the impact of your SBCC intervention, you should consider the gender-related social and behavioral determinants. These include, but are not limited to:

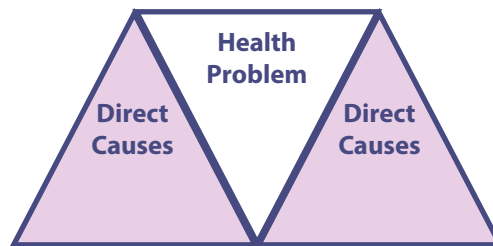
- Women's and men's involvement in household decisions, including health and family planning.
- Freedom of movement.
- Women's social status: employment, education or age at first marriage.
- Attitudes toward gender-based violence.
- Attitudes concerning roles within the household, including childcare.
- Attitudes about sexual norms, such as the ability and/or right of women to refuse sex, men's perceptions of sex and number of sexual partners.

Key Steps:

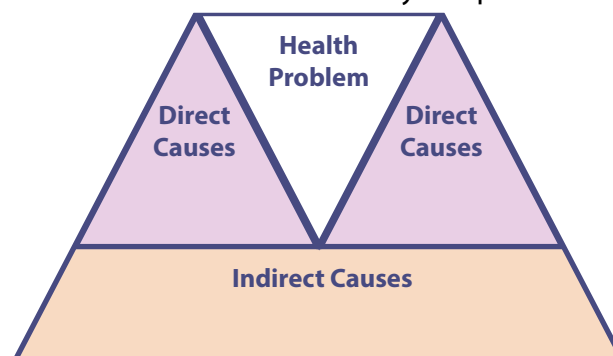
1. In a group, state the health problem that your program aims to address. Write this down in the activity template.



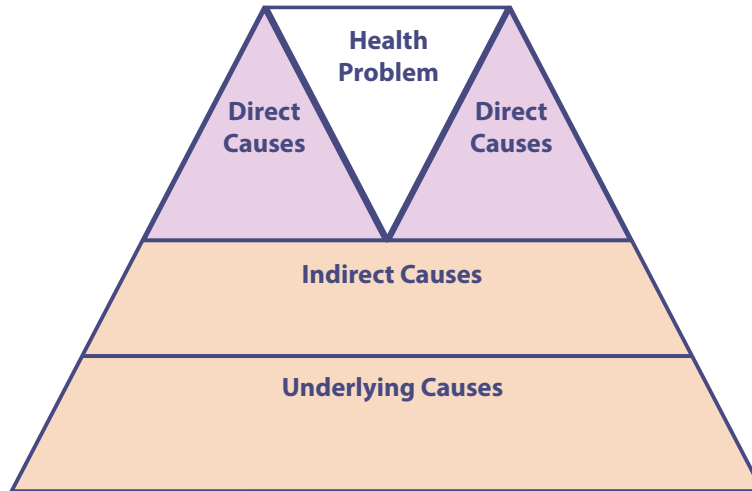
2. To find the underlying causes – the primary sources of the health problem – start by identifying the direct causes (those things that cause or contribute to the health problem). By identifying the direct causes you will begin to understand “why” we have this health problem. For example, if the health problem is that couples are not using modern contraceptive methods, ask “why are couples not using modern contraceptive methods.” Write your responses on either side of the problem in the activity template.



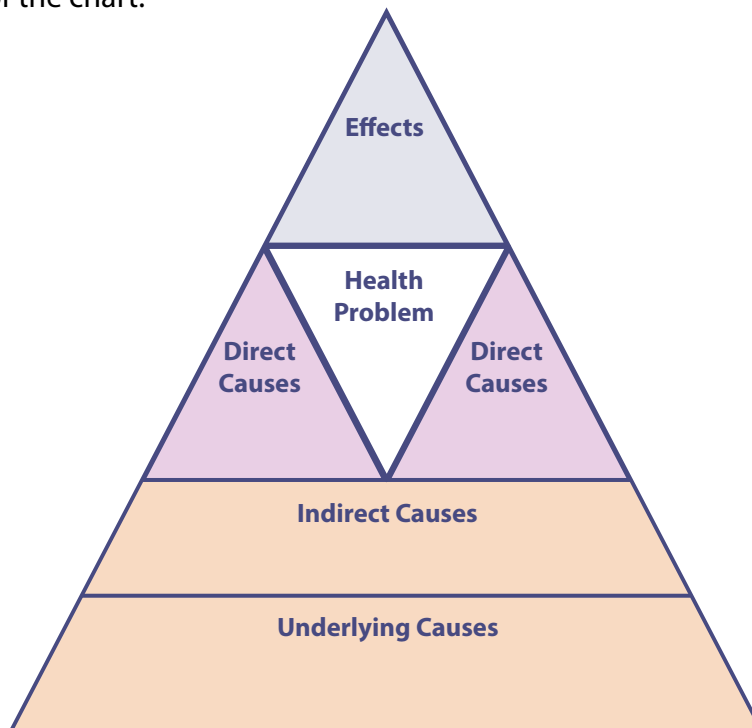
3. After you determine the direct causes, brainstorm the indirect causes by asking “why do we have these direct causes?” Since you are focusing on applying a gender lens to your analysis, try to direct the group to specifically think about the gender-related causes. You may want to consider the following:
 - What is the level of knowledge or understanding of the health problem among men and women?
 - What are the traditional gender-related norms, values and/or practices that allow the problem to occur?
 - What problems co-exist with the central problem and might contribute to it, for example, is there also a lack of health facilities or higher risk because the population is mobile (or not mobile)? Record the group's answers in the “indirect causes” of the activity template.



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4. Root or underlying causes are seldom found in the most obvious causes. It is important to dig deeper and continue to ask “why?” until nearly all responses have been exhausted or roots that seem important to address are reached. If there are underlying causes that impact the health problem, you may need to address those before you can address the direct causes. When thinking about the gender-related causes, think about whether underlying factors such as mobility, household decision-making, and power dynamics within the household or community are at work. List those underlying causes in the space provided.



5. Once you have identified the underlying causes, determine the effects of the problem. These may include issues such as high rates of mother and child mortality, loss of manpower hours or other effects. List these at the top of the chart.



6. Now that you have identified the underlying causes, determine which of the causes can and should be addressed through SBCC. These are the communication challenges. If you identify more than one communication challenge, decide which challenge to address first. Rank them in order, starting with the main cause (key communication problem). To determine rank, consider:
- The potential impact of addressing the communication challenge. The greater the potential impact,

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- the more important it is to address.
- How difficult it will be to reach the audience associated with the communication challenge.
 - The mandate attached to the funding.
 - Other resources available to address the communication challenge. There may be other partners working on that communication challenge or additional funding streams available.
 - Whether there is a logical order in which to address the communication challenges. It may make more sense to address negative provider attitudes before generating demand for provider services.
 - If more than one causal factor is linked to the root cause. When a root cause is the source of multiple causal factors, it indicates that addressing the root cause can have far-reaching effects.

This activity was adapted using the following resources:

HC3. How to Conduct a Root Cause Analysis. <http://www.thehealthcompass.org/how-to-guides/how-conduct-root-cause-analysis>

<http://www.thinkingdimensions.com/services/industrial-problem-solving/problem-solving-decision-making/thinking-technology>



Template 2.1.1: Root-Cause Analysis Pyramid

