

A solution tree analysis provides you with a visual map of the gap you are trying to address. From a justice perspective, a solution tree will help you identify the root causes and core issues that are limiting access to justice, barriers to solving these issues and potential policy solutions.³¹ The results from this exercise should feed into your gap analysis and any future national justice plan.

You should conduct your solution tree analysis with a variety of diverse stakeholders. This will ensure that multiple viewpoints are included in your analysis. This is also a useful way to begin building relationships between different groups who may not otherwise have the means or the opportunity to collaborate with each other.³²

Determining solutions to national justice Issues

4 What are the solutions?
(ask: how can legal empowerment help provide a solution?
What new laws/policies would need to be included in your
National Justice Plan? How can the SDGs support?)

3 What are the barriers to solving these issues?
(ask: what are the social, political and/or
economic barriers?
Why have previous government policies/inter-
ventions failed to address the issue?)

1 What are the
justice issues?
(ask: what,
when, where are
the issues?)

2 What are their root causes?
(ask: why do the issues exist?
Consider the gaps in laws/policies)

31 *Successful Communication: Planning Tools* (Overseas Development Institute). Last accessed September 9, 2016. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6461.pdf>.

32 *Participatory Advocacy: A Toolkit for VSO Staff, Volunteers and Partners*, 35.

IDENTIFY THE JUSTICE ISSUE(S) (THE “TRUNK”)³³

- Identify the justice issue(s) (the “Trunk”)
- Write down the justice issue(s) you identified through your access to justice assessment.
- Brainstorm to determine what the “central” issue may be. Write down and display all ideas.
- Central issues should be actual and relevant, not just possible or hypothetical.
- The central issue (or interconnected issues) becomes the “trunk” of the tree, from which the discussion flows.³⁴

IDENTIFY THE CAUSES OF THE ISSUE(S) (THE “ROOTS”)

- Identify causes of the issue(s) at hand, writing answers on index cards and attaching to the roots of the tree.
- An important part of this portion of the solution tree analysis is the discussion about the causes and gaps in law or policy that led to these issue(s).

IDENTIFY BARRIERS TO SOLVING THIS ISSUE(S) (THE “BRANCHES”)

- Discuss social, political and/or economic factors which prevent the resolution of the core issue. Why have previous government policies and/or interventions failed to address the issue(s)?
- Identify barriers, write them on index cards and attach the cards to the branches of the tree.
- Barriers relate closely to the elements discussed in the access to justice assessment tool. Consider how these elements can be barriers to solving the problem at hand.

IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM (THE “LEAVES”)

- Reverse the previous negative statements to create positive solutions.³⁵ The solutions should be oriented towards empowering communities to participate fully in institutions.

- Brainstorm legal empowerment solutions, focus on solutions that solve the stated causes and barriers.
- Specifically discuss how the SDGs and Goal 16 can help resolve the problem.
- Identify the new laws or policies that will need to be included in your national justice plan to support legal empowerment solutions.
- Identify how these new laws and policies will meet international commitments, including the SDGs
- Identify as many solutions as possible. Solutions should be real and possible. Consider short, medium and long-term priorities.³⁶

CHECK: IS A NATIONAL JUSTICE PLAN WHAT YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS TO DELIVER ACTION?

After you conduct your solution tree analysis, you should be feeling positive and ready to move forward to develop an advocacy strategy that calls for a national justice plan. If you are not, now, is a critical time to stop and reflect on whether you want to move forward with using this approach to advance access to justice in your country. You may want to take a moment to consider the following questions:

- Is the justice issue you identified so sector-specific that it will only require one government ministry to address it (e.g. health, education)?
- Were the solutions you discussed primarily program-centred solutions or policy-centred solutions?
- Do you believe calling for a national justice plan will delay your justice issue from being addressed or dilute its importance?
- Has your government explicitly stated or taken actions that suggest justice is not a priority?

If the answer to any of these questions is ‘Yes’ then it may be better for you to pursue the sector-specific or incremental advocacy approaches discussed in Chapter 2 [page 12]. Remember, SDGs can be useful in promoting reforms of many kinds, not just national justice plans. Also, note that the above questions are not a comprehensive list, but rather a few examples to guide you in making a decision.

³³ *Planning Tools*.

³⁴ *Planning Tools*.

³⁵ National Centre for Sustainability, “Developing a problem tree” (presentation, November 2, 2011), <http://www.slideshare.net/ncsustainability/developing-a-problem-tree>.

³⁶ *Global Agreements, Grassroots Advocacy: Youth and Governance in a Post-2015 World*, 12.