PROBLEM/ISSUE STRATEGIC ANALYSIS TOOLS

PROBLEM TREE: ANALYZING THE PROBLEM, ROOT-CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Rottenly, we confuse between the problem, its root causes and its consequences. The problem is expressed in how people see it, whereas the root-causes are what cause this problem to happen, and the cons.

To elaborate on these distinctions, please examine the following cartoon.

Like in the cartoon above, quite often we work on a side issue that will not address the root cause of the problem promising the problem to get worse, and we get exhausted.

Figure 1: Ignoring the Root Cause Is a Sure Path to Failure!

Cartoon contributed by Transparency Morrocco

The Problem Tree, which many of you are likely familiar with, is a useful tool that helps us distinguish between these three distinct aspects: the problem, root causes and consequences.

The following diagram of the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Egypt Problem Tree\(^2\) illustrates how Problem Trees can be used to identify the problem, root causes, and consequences.

Figure 2: FGM in Egypt Problem Tree. Nader Tadros, 1997.