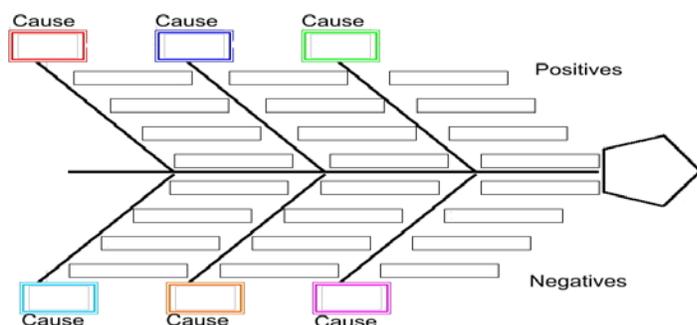


Guidance on Root Cause Analysis

Root cause analysis is a method of problem solving that tries to identify the root causes of problems. The approach aims to solve problems by attempting to identify and correct the root causes of events, as opposed to simply addressing their symptoms. A complete root cause analysis consists of:

- A clear definition of the issue or problem
- A thorough analysis supported by evidence
- A specific action plan for implementing the solutions

A fishbone diagram is often used to show the relationship between different causes (bones) and the effect of interest (the head).



Applying root cause analysis to a private health sector assessment

Employing a root cause analytic approach supports the dual objectives of identifying not only the causes of problems related to the private health sector, but also developing actionable solutions to address these underlying causes. The extensive and varied information gathered in the course of an assessment provides ample—and triangulated—data to facilitate root cause analysis.

Root cause can be implemented as a stand-alone analysis, or it can follow the SWOT technique, wherein SWOT identifies strengths and weaknesses related to the private health sector, and in so doing helps narrow the focus to a manageable set of issues. Root cause analysis then takes it a step further, identifying the underlying causes of those issues, which can be helpful in forming recommendations.

To begin, the assessment team develops a preliminary list of private sector issues or barriers and then identifies the causes contributing to them. The table on the following page can guide the brainstorming exercise. Alternately, teams can use a fish diagram like the one presented above. The team can articulate private sector barriers (Issue #1, #2, etc.) and then explore the different factors contributing to these issues. Once the team has exhaustively examined the root causes for all the private sector barriers identified through the data collection process, then team members prioritize these obstacles to arrive at a short list of three to five that merit action, as discussed in the next step [link to Formulating Findings and Recommendations].

Private Sector Root Cause Analysis Worksheet

Source of Issue by Core Area	Issue #1	Issue #2	Issue #3	Issue #5	Issue #6
Policy Environment					
Health Financing					
Service Delivery					
Supply Chain					
Demand					

As the team examines the root causes of identified private health sector issues, it should consider current conditions facilitating private engagement in health. These might include affirmative policies, partnerships, and market incentives, to name a few. The team repeats the same exercise as outlined above but focuses on enabling factors. The team will then prioritize these enabling conditions, as they will eventually become a potential opportunity to maximize contributions from the private health sector.