**OBJECTIVE TREE**

This tool has been adapted from:

* *Project/Programme Planning, Guidance Manual*, IFRC, 2010
* *Programme/Project Management*: *The Results-based Approach*, ICRC, 2008

The objective tree (or solution tree) is used *during the strategic planning phase*. It is similar to a problem tree, except that it concerns objectives rather than problems.

Sometimes contexts are very complex, and too many problems have been identified. This can make it difficult to define a single objective per project. In this situation, *a common method of developing, identifying and selecting an objective is to create an “objective tree”*. This tree lists all potential objectives for the intervention, from which you must choose one. To make your decision, you must summarise large amounts of information, then make a complex judgement about the best implementation options to pursue. In practice, a number of compromises often have to be made to balance different stakeholders’ interests, the demands of the population, and practical constraints such as likely resources and time availability.

The objectives tree is a tool simply to *aid analysis and the presentation of ideas*. Its main strength is that it keeps the analysis of potential project objectives firmly based on addressing a range of clearly identified priority problems.

*Tips for designing objective tree:*

* Create an objective tree using the problem tree as a basis;
* ***Step 1:*** Turn each of the problems in the problem tree into positive statements. This means reformulating all the negative situations into positive situations that are desirable, realistically achievable.

***Example:***

* *PROBLEM = High rate of waterborne diseases in the XXX refugee camp 🡺*
* *NEEDS = Access to safe and sufficient drinking water 🡺*
* *OBJECTIVE = the population of the xxx refugee camp has access to a minimum of 7.5 liters per person per day for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene (Sphere Standard / ideal situation: 15L/per/day)*
* ***Step 2:*** Reproduce the shape of the problem tree and place the objectives in the same place as the problems. This will result in an objectives tree.
* ***Step 3:*** Check the logic to ensure validity and the completeness of the hierarchy (cause-effect relationships from the problem tree are turned into means-ends relationships). Will one layer of objectives achieve the next?
* There may be some causes near the bottom of the tree that are very general. They cannot be turned into objectives that can easily be addressed by an intervention. Instead, they act as external factors, constraints that need to be considered and assessed to verify the feasibility of the action;
* The more stakeholders you involve in preparing the objective tree, the more valuable your analysis will be - it helps ensure that the views and perspectives of different stakeholder groups are adequately represented and understood;
* If necessary, the different aspects of an objective tree can be further elaborated through focus groups or interviews.

*Example of objective tree*

