GROUP WORK: BUILDING A MALNUTRITION PROBLEM TREE
Objective of the group work

To use a participatory methodology to understand the principal causes of malnutrition and how these are related to people’s livelihoods, in order:

- To improve the understanding of the nutrition and food security situation
- To design a comprehensive food security and nutrition information system using the problem tree to identify relevant indicators to assess the nutrition and food security situation
- To sensitize professionals from various sectors and institutions as to their role in improving nutrition and how they can work together.
What is a problem tree?

Have you ever worked with or built a problem tree?
What is a problem?

Is it a problem if someone does not have access to land?
What is a Malnutrition Problem tree

• A tool to systematically **analyze the causes of malnutrition problems**.

• Should be **specific to one livelihood group**

• The malnutrition problem tree is represented visually by a ‘tree’.
For ease of building the problem tree, we propose to have the causes above the problem (usually causes are represented by the roots of the tree).
Example of a Malnutrition problem tree

1. Plant diseases → Low crop & vegetable production
2. Drought → Poor access to market
3. Lack of cooperation of authorities → No health clinics
4. High prices → Poor access to enough foods
5. Low income → No possibility to find job
6. No education facilities → Poor access to health facilities
7. No information about useful foods → Low consumption of diverse food
8. Dirty water → Diseases
9. Poor hygiene knowledge → Poor hygiene

MALNUTRITION

Example of a problem tree: peri-urban farmers in Herat province, Afghanistan
Exercise step-by-step:

Before building the problem tree:

– Precisely define the features of your 
**Livelihood group (HHs’ assets and characteristics)**

– Try to be quick (no more than 15 min)

– Write main features on a flipchart
Building the Malnutrition Problem tree

1. Brainstorm all problems related to malnutrition for your specific livelihood group
2. Write them on cards (one problem per card). Make sure that the **problems are well defined**.
3. Cluster the cards by theme (e.g. food security, care, health issues etc)
4. Put cards into order and stick them onto the large piece of paper displayed on the wall (start with the card ‘malnutrition’ at the bottom of the tree)
5. Draw lines to show links between the different problems.
– If one problem has several causes, place them on the same level, above the problem

– Use the magic word **WHY** to make sure that your problem tree is logical
Problem tree or Why-Why tree

problem  problem  problem  problem  problem  WHY ?

problem  problem

Malnutrition

WHY ?  WHY ?  WHY ?
4 livelihood groups

- Host communities living in highland area group: main room
- Besieged areas HHs group: main room
- Female and children headed HHs group: other room