**EXERCISE 2B. PROBLEM TREE**

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| *OBJECTIVE***After this exercise the participants will be able to:*** Explain the causes and effects of problems, and identify possible solutions.
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| *EQUIPMENT NEEDED** Large sheet of paper, marker pens (or blackboard and chalk)
 | *EXPECTED OUTPUTS** Diagram showing the causes and results of a problem.
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| *TIME*1 hour | *PREPARATION** None
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*This exercise enables the farmers to analyze the causes and effects of their problems.*

*SUGGESTED PROCEDURE:*

1. Divide the participants into small groups. Give each group a large piece of paper and some marker pens.
2. Ask each group to select one **crop or livestock** type that they grow or a **product** they produce (such as maize, milk or coffee). Then ask them to think of the biggest problem they face with this product (e.g., a pest or disease, low yields, or problem with processing). Ask them to write this problem (or draw a picture showing it) in the middle of the large sheet of paper.
3. Ask each group to think of the **results** of the problem. Write each result on the paper and connect them with arrows to show how they relate to each other.
4. Ask each group to think of what **causes** the problem. Write this cause underneath the problem on the sheet. If the group identifies several causes, they should write each one on the paper, and connect them with arrows to show how they relate to each other.
5. Ask each group to present their problem tree to the plenary. Invite the members of the other groups to comment on and ask questions about the trees.
6. Ask the groups to save their diagrams so that they can be used in a later session.

*QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION*

* What is your biggest problem with a particular crop or livestock type?
* What are the consequences of this problem? What other problems does it cause? Does one consequence in turn create other problems?
* Why does this problem occur? When does it happen? What causes it? Does something else cause that?

*NOTES*

Instead of writing on a piece of large sheet of paper, you can use several smaller pieces of paper or cards. Write each problem, cause or effect on one card, then put them on the table or on the ground and move them around so they are in the right order. Show the links between them with sticks or pieces of bamboo or string. This makes it easy to adjust the diagram as you go on. Copy the final diagram onto paper to make a permanent record.

To make the diagram easier to understand, first draw a big tree on the paper. Write the problem on the trunk, the causes on the roots, and the results on the branches and twigs.