Problems, Solutions, and Root Cause

Identify/list problem themes
1) Discuss and list the most significant problems in your topic areas and list them below.

1. 2.

3. 4.

5. 6.

7. 8.

2) Work together to try to give titles to the themes of the problems. For example, “lack of access to markets,” “lack of education and skills training” etc. Place these themes into the table in your Framework Tool packet.

Identify/list solution strategies
3) Now that you’ve identified trends, start brainstorming and searching for the most effective organizations and projects in your topic area. While you don’t need to be an expert in your field, if you’re not aware of a few solutions that exist already you may need to do some research to better familiarize yourself with some solutions that are already out there. Whenever embarking on a projectfor social change, it is imperative that you have an understanding of existing or similar efforts. Not only does it help ensure you are addressing a unique need, but also that you can identify the partners you might need in order to create widespread change. Try to come up with 5-15 solutions.

1. 2.

3. 4.

5. 6.

7. 8.

9. 10.

11. 12.

13. 14.

15.

4) Now you are going to try your best to identify the strategies that these solutions use. A strong strategy is not just the opposite of a problem theme. It usually starts with a verb and represents a concrete action. For example, you might identify, “Creates hands on learning opportunity” as a common strategy. Write down your best list of these strategies on the table in your Framework packet.

Map Problem Themes and Solution Strategies
5) Go ahead and map the organizations to their appropriate intersection. You can have an organization in more than one box. Hopefully when you finish, you’ve gained some good insights in the field you would like to make change.

Root Cause
6) This next step is going to help you practice an essential skill for changemaking—searching for a root cause. The ability to pause, dig deep, and search for a root cause is crucial. This is the difference between band-aid solutions and systems changing solutions. Now, obviously it’s important to take lots of time—decades of experience and iteration even—to search for the root cause to problems. But, I’d like you to go ahead and give it a try. Choose one of the problem themes from your table and practice looking for the root cause by asking “Why” 3-4 times in a row. Approach the problem as if you are completely new to the topic area—this is called the beginners mindset.

**Problem Theme:**

**Why?**

**Why?**

**Why?**

**Why?**

Reflection
7) Were you inspired to any new opportunities? Use a “what if statement” to help!
8) What are the main trends or insights that emerged for you today?