



# Defining the Problem

You need clarity on what the problem is, to be able to determine what system or institution needs to be changed and therefore what strategy you will need to adopt.  
This problem must be at the level of **day-to-day lived reality of a specific population**—not the many ways that parts of the system or institution are not functioning. Fill in the different boxes below to help you get specific on the problem.

What is a particular and observable aspect/experience/service in the life of a specific population that is not working well?

(e.g. Kids are hungry in school, so they do not learn as well as they could)

Who is this specific population?  
(e.g. Kids in public primary schools)

Where are they located?  
(e.g. Kenya)

How many in total are they?  
(not just the ones your initiative is aiming to target)  
(e.g. 8 out of 10 million)

How does the problem manifest among different groups in the population, especially women, girls, non-binary persons, or other relevant marginalized groups?

EXAMPLE OF A PROBLEM STATEMENT

8 million (out of 10 million) kids in Kenya, especially girls and the poor, are not attending or succeeding in public primary school, in part because they have no food / are hungry.



# What Are Your People-Level Outcomes?

Turn the problem you have defined into a set of people-level outcomes. These are your Guiding Star. People-level outcomes are the resulting change in the lives of people once the problem has been solved.

**Example**

*Problem: 8 million (out of 10M) kids in Kenya, especially girls and the poor, are not attending or succeeding in public primary school, in part because they have no food / are hungry.*  
*People-level outcome (change when problem is solved): 8 million kids in public primary schools in Kenya are receiving mid-day meals and are thus progressing better in school.*

What system or institution is responsible for realizing these people-level outcomes? Think of the entity or group of entities that has the responsibility (either by de facto or by law) to deliver the relevant service or rights that are not working well according to your problem. (E.g. Ministry of Education in Kenya that is responsible for public primary school education and outcomes)

| TYPE OF COMPONENT   | RELEVANT COMPONENT IN YOUR SYSTEM OR INSTITUTION |
|---|--|
| Finances  |  |
| Design or Implementation of a Program/Service                   |  |
| Data or Information Flows                                       |  |
| Human Resources   |  |
| Existing Structures/Institutions                                |  |
| Laws, Policies, Regulations                                     |  |
| Incentives or Accountability Mechanisms                         |  |
| Decision-making Processes                                       |  |
| Feedback Loops  |  |
| Informal Levers (mental models, culture, morale, relationships) |  |

Map out the components of this system or institution using this table. Try to widen your angle of view so you can start seeing components of the system or institution that were previously unseen but may be relevant. But don't cover the entire universe! Look at components that are relevant to your people-level outcomes above.



Once you've mapped out the components above, ask: What is it about these components & how they are working together (or not) that is leading to the system or institution producing the problem? Analyze their interactions!



# A Political Economy Analysis of Your Actors



A political economy lens helps us to not only understand the priorities and behaviors of the system or institution, and how these have shaped the system of today, but also how to influence, work with, and/or change them. Map the political economy landscape of your system or institution below, following the step-by-step process through the boxes.

1) Identify the key actors in your system or institution

2) Determine each actor's role.

3) Identify the main hook/concern of each actor that gets them motivated to act.

Fill out these post-its. When you are done, move them to the right spots in the power axis below. Add more post-its if you need to.

Name of actor: \_\_\_\_  
Role: \_\_\_\_  
Hook: \_\_\_\_

4) Plot each actor in the axis by determining their level of power and how much they are for or against your cause.

5) Draw an arrow of relationship between these two actors, writing a few words to describe what that relationship is.

LOTS OF POWER

FOR YOUR CAUSE

AGAINST YOUR CAUSE

**ACTOR X**  
Role: organizes community  
Hook: public approval

**ACTOR Y**  
Role: makes decisions  
Hook: higher budget

NO POWER

## Defining Your System-Level Outcomes



### Crafting a system-level outcome

#### What specific "component"/ "lever" of the system?

Break it down.  
(e.g. "Budget" - amount, allocation, access)



#### How will it change in a way you can tangibly observe?

(e.g. How will people act differently?)



#### Over what period of time?

Think 3-7 years, not because the problem will be solved fully by then, but because this time period will allow you to see and track some progress and help you learn if the strategy for change is working.


#### EXAMPLES from [Breakthrough Trust India](#)

**1. In 4 years, 40% of teachers demonstrate improved gender sensitive behavior/actions in the classroom.**

**Component:** Human resources

**Concrete change in the component:** "Gender-sensitive behavior / action", defined as follows:

- asking girls to raise their hands and selecting them during class Q&A
- making boys and girls sit together
- having the girls speak freely in class
- abstaining from verbal / physical gender-based violence in class
- encouraging more girl participation in extracurricular activities
- encourage girls to take up Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education

**2. In 4 years, 25% of principals demonstrate improved gender sensitive behavior/actions in the school.**

**Component:** Human resources

**Concrete change in the component:** "Gender-sensitive behavior / action", defined as follows:

- taking initiatives in favour of girls' retention
- improved girls' toilet
- gender sensitivity training for teachers
- official circular for abstaining from physical GBV in class

**3. In 4 years, National Curriculum Framework (NCF) incorporates strong gender lens.**

**Component:** Design of an existing program/policy

**Concrete change in the component:** "strong gender lens", defined as follows:

- Issuing of guidelines to states by the national or state curriculum authorities on curriculum design that are in line with Breakthrough's recommendations





## Crafting Your Strategy for Change

1) What are the 3-5 key changes that can be made in the system or institution (system-level outcomes), that if achieved will make the system/institution produce the improvements in the lives of the people we are focusing on? Think 3-5 years.

Write down 1 below:

2) For each of these system-level outcomes, brainstorm 2-4 key things that you believe will need to be done by actors within the system (not necessarily you/ your organization or only you). These 2-4 things together represent what is necessary and sufficient to achieve the given system level outcome.

**EXAMPLE of a system-level outcome: Increase by 20% the government funding for maternal health care**

**3 things that will need to be done to realize the system-level outcome:**

- **Create Return on Investment (ROI) analysis** for the Minister to use with Treasury department for it to increase budget
- **Create a coalition** among the local imams, women's rights groups, health care provider unions, teachers and disability rights groups, to advocate for the budget increase
- **Test and roll out a digital entitlements payment and tracking system**, to ensure that the additional funds do get to pregnant mothers and are accounted for

**3) Then think about the three-pronged stress test for your system-level outcomes:**



What makes you believe that this future system, with the changes you want, will actually work better in the ways that you hope?  
**CHECK YOUR ASSUMPTIONS!**



Is this future version of the system feasible and realistic?



How will these changes in the system endure beyond your organization, your existing funding, or any government in power?



# Drawing Up Your Winning Coalition

Who needs to do what (not just your organization/initiative)  
to achieve those system-level outcomes?  
This is your winning coalition. Why will they do that?

| WINNING COALITION<br>ACTORS |   | ROLE TO BE PLAYED IN THE<br>STRATEGY FOR CHANGE |   | WHY THEY WILL BE MOTIVATED<br>TO PLAY THEIR ROLE |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|--|
|                             | > |   | > |  |
|                             | > |   | > |  |
|                             | > |   | > |  |
|                             | > |   | > |  |
|                             |   |   |   |  |

After looking at the different necessary roles above, what is your organization's role  
in that winning coalition?

Remember your two kinds of role:

- 1) doing the particular work/role you will take on, and
- 2) making sure others do their piece in the strategy for change.



# Unearthing Your Assumptions

### NAME THE ASSUMPTIONS

There are a number of critical assumptions/hypotheses in your initiative. Name 5-7 of them below.

## HOW TO TEST

How will you test this assumption/hypothesis?

## ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE/MUSCLES

Given this assumption that you would like to test, what kinds of organizational practice/muscles in learning will you need to have to be able to grapple with it?

## HOW TO TEST THE ASSUMPTION

**ORGANIZATIONAL  
PRACTICE OR  
MUSCLES NECESSARY**

The diagram illustrates a three-stage pipeline. Each stage is represented by a vertical column of seven light blue rectangular blocks, all enclosed within a single light orange border. The stages are arranged horizontally from left to right. Between each pair of adjacent stages, there is a vertical line of seven dark orange arrows, each pointing from the left stage to the right stage, indicating the direction of data flow through the pipeline.





## Applying Strategic Coherence in Our Organization

**Strategic coherence is about having crystal clarity on your core purpose and arranging all your choices around this purpose. Given this, answer the two questions below.**

**What are 2-3 things you MUST do in your organization to achieve your people-level outcomes through systems/institutional change?**



**What are the 3-5 things you will STOP or SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE to cut out the distraction/fragmentation that keep you from focusing on systems/institutional change?**








## How to Create Your GPS—Your “Dashboard”






### PEOPLE-LEVEL OUTCOMES

| Strategic Priorities  | Indicator | Baseline | Year 1<br>Target | Year 1<br>Actual | Year 2<br>Target | Year 2<br>Actual | Year x<br>Target | Year x<br>Actual | Data Source | Notes |
|---|-----------|----------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|-------|
| 1  |           |          |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |             |       |
| 2  |           |          |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |             |       |
| 3  |           |          |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |             |       |



### SYSTEM-LEVEL OUTCOMES

| Strategic Priorities  | Indicator | Baseline | Year 1<br>Target | Year 1<br>Actual | Year 2<br>Target | Year 2<br>Actual | Year x<br>Target | Year x<br>Actual | Data Source | Notes |
|---|-----------|----------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|-------|
| 1  |           |          |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |             |       |
| 2  |           |          |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |             |       |
| 3  |           |          |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |             |       |



### ORGANIZATION-LEVEL OUTCOMES

| Strategic Priorities  | Indicator | Baseline | Year 1<br>Target | Year 1<br>Actual | Year 2<br>Target | Year 2<br>Actual | Year x<br>Target | Year x<br>Actual | Data Source | Notes |
|---|-----------|----------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|-------|
| 1  |           |          |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |             |       |
| 2  |           |          |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |             |       |
| 3  |           |          |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |             |       |

NOTES/EXPLANATION

