This exercise is best when brainstorming in a group and after developing evidence. Here is a guide for creating your own problem and solution tree, corresponding with the sample tree below:

**Problem tree**

1. Start by defining the core problem—in this case, the malaria programmatic and funding gaps. Consider developing a tree for each commodity gap (e.g., LLINs, artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs), rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs), etc.). (Tree Centre).
2. List the effects of the core problem. For example, one effect of a lack of access to malaria commodities is increased child mortality. (Tree Branches).
3. List the underlying causes of the problem. For example, one cause of the funding gaps might be that it isn’t a high priority for policy makers to solve since most health funding comes from donors in the form of grants. (Tree Roots).

**Solution tree**

4. Translate the core problem into a solution. Identify solutions by rewriting negative statements into positive ones. For example, “Global and domestic actions are taken to increase funding and fill gaps.” (Tree Centre).
5. List the effects of the solution. With guidance from the NMC, identify the malaria control commodities and services that are needed but not funded. (Tree Branches).
6. List potential advocacy interventions. Determine the advocacy actions that need to be taken to solve the problem. (Tree Roots).

Sample problem tree

Effects of Problem

People die of malaria.
Malaria impairs children’s learning abilities.
Households lose incomes because of malaria.
Malaria prevents economic growth.
Child and infant mortality is high.
Business loses profits due to malaria-related absenteeism.

Underlying Cases

When deciding the allocation of domestic public sector resources, malaria is not treated as a development priority.

Emerging economies do not have an interest in funding malaria control programmes in Africa.
Funding from traditional donors is insufficient to meet targets.
Domestic public budgets are scarce in resources, having to address a variety of development priorities.

Malaria is not seen as a threat to business development by the domestic private sector.

Bottlenecks to efficient use of resources exists.
**Sample solution tree**

**Positive effects**
- Children stay in school.
- Millions of human lives are saved due to essential commodities such as LLINs, IPTp, IRS, RDTs and ACTs.
- Strengthened health system.
- Increased agriculture productivity.
- Growth of income per capita reaches the level of malaria-free countries, which is more than 5 times higher.
- Increased household income.
- Lower education and business absenteeism.

**Actions**
- Advocate to public and elected officials to treat malaria as a development priority when deciding the allocation of domestic public sector resources.
- Convince traditional donors to maintain and increase their funding commitments.
- Advocate for cost efficiency and better-integrated services to decrease resource needs (effective ways of procuring LLINs, availability of RDTs, integrated health packages including malaria prevention, control and elimination components).
- Advocate to emerging economics to increase aid for malaria control programmes in Africa.
- Advocate to private sector to allocate resources for education and protection of employees, their families and communities.
- Advocate for innovative financing solutions (malaria bonds, air-taxes, alcohol and tobacco taxes) to address the scarcity of domestic public budgets.