



VIDEO SUMMARY

Problem Solving: Identify the Real Problem

Resource person: Uma Oza, with Anurima Chatterjee | Uma Oza is Director, Quality at the Competitiveness Mindset Institute (CMI); Anurima Chatterjee is listed by CMI among its trainers and facilitators.

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Look past the symptom

Uma Oza and Anurima Chatterjee ask learners to examine the first version of a problem before choosing a solution. They return to the Five Whys, using the earlier Pad Man example to show how repeated root-cause questions can uncover the constraint beneath a visible symptom.

They then work through reverse brainstorming: write the problem clearly, reverse it, list ways to cause or worsen it, turn those ideas around, and assess the resulting options. For a clinic trying to improve patient satisfaction, deliberately poor suggestions include double-booking appointments, removing chairs, leaving callers on hold and keeping people outside. Reversing them produces usable ideas: appointment buffers, enough seating, call-handling standards and earlier access to the waiting area.

Solving the problem also requires ownership. In a Myanmar hospital, Oza watches a nurse stay with a patient's request and coordinate the people and resources needed to complete it. Familiar blame-shifting responses include "they did not tell us", "traffic caused it" and "that is not my department". Through Christopher Avery's responsibility framework, the speakers explain how shifting all responsibility elsewhere reduces one's own room to act.

The intended result gives a task its direction. In the speakers' examples, serving food should create hospitality, and laying bricks contributes to a cathedral. In practice: frame the right problem, generate more than one option, and stay with the outcome even when other people must help deliver it.