Protection Strategies: A Conversation About What We Know So Far
Analyzing what is needed to support results-based approaches to protection

Results-Based Protection Discussion

Webinar
Monday, May 18th, 2015
9:30am–10:30am (Washington)
2:30-3:30pm (London); 3:30-4:30pm (Geneva); 5:30pm-6:30pm (Nairobi); 9:30pm-10:30pm (Bangkok)

The webinar will be followed by a four-week on-line discussion
May 18th – June 12th, 2015

A series of guest speakers will be invited to engage in one-hour webinars throughout the on-line discussion. Speakers will share their perspectives on key areas of protection strategies that support a results-based approach to protection, discuss examples from their experience, and pose additional questions for discussion.

Terms of Reference

The InterAction Results-Based Protection (RBP) Program hosts an online platform that serves as a central point of reference and site for discussion on results-based approaches to protection. As part of the online platform, discussion forums are used as a space to solicit the contribution of key stakeholders, including practitioners and specialized experts, to develop the key elements of results-based protection. Following the conclusion of each discussion, InterAction and the Learning and Steering Group will evaluate and analyze the conversation to incorporate learning into the Program and determine elements for further exploration.

Background and Objectives:
Increasingly there is demand to develop comprehensive protection strategies to respond to violence, coercion, exploitation, and deliberate deprivation people experience in crises. Protection strategies could be developed at four levels: 1) organizational, 2) through the collaboration of 2 or more organizations, 3) through a protection cluster or working group to feed into a humanitarian strategy, such as the country Strategic Response Plan (SRP), and/or 4) a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) protection strategy that may or may not begin with the protection cluster/working group but is endorsed and led by the HCT.

The intention of most protection strategies is to define and shape the scope of a response to protection concerns, make funding appeals, and serve as a tool for monitoring progress against a set of key objectives and indicators. Unfortunately, there seems to be common agreement among a variety of stakeholders that protection strategies too often end up as a list of activities with very little strategic direction underpinning the response. Little is known whether or not protection strategies help to achieve protection outcomes.

Over the past month, the InterAction Results-Based Protection Program carried out several interviews with key stakeholders to explore the development of protection strategies across different contexts. Representatives from eight NGOs, two country-specific NGO coordination bodies, and several ProCap officers from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR), Lebanon, Nigeria, and South Sudan were interviewed and asked to reflect on both the process and content of protection strategies. The scope of the interviews focused on seven components of a protection strategy:

1. **Process** (i.e. ownership, coordination, stakeholder engagement, timeframes, methodology)

2. **Content** (i.e. how a strategy was articulated in terms of outcome-oriented direction, output or activity driven objectives, and/or a process-heavy focus)

3. **Coverage** (i.e. whether or not a strategy included both prevention and response objectives and how both policy and operations are considered within a strategy)

4. **Analysis** (i.e. whether a thorough understanding of threat, vulnerability, and capacity underpin the response)

5. **Contribution** (i.e. how humanitarian and non-humanitarian actors are considered in the response; the role of affected population, and whether the contribution enables a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral response)

6. **Causal Logic** (i.e. whether and how a theory of change underpins the response strategy)

7. **Accountability** (i.e. the need for benchmarks and other tools that could serve to monitor those contributing to the response; should protection strategies be a tool to hold actors accountable or should a protection strategy serve as a roadmap for a collective vision)

The Results-Based Protection Program has also analyzed several existing protection strategies, or draft strategies, using the same criteria above.

On **Monday, May 18th**, the Results-Based Protection Program will hold a webinar to share preliminary findings coming out of the review. This webinar is an opportunity to kick-start an on-line discussion with additional stakeholders including protection coordinators, UN agencies, national civil society, and other sector actors. The objective of this discussion is to capture examples of good practice that demonstrate key elements of a protection strategy that can support a results-based approach to protection.

The online discussion seeks to capture differences in approaches, potential lessons, and proven methodologies that enhance protection strategies.

The scope of this discussion is not focused on a particular protection issue or concern. Participants are welcome to refer to any protection issue or response that may have protection outcomes.

Findings Thus Far and Issues to Explore:

- **Finding: Protection strategies are not based on a comprehensive protection analysis.**
  - Limited time, the quality of data, and poor coordination are some of the reasons that prevent a proper analysis from taking place. Are there examples of good practice for how an analysis is used to shape protection strategies? What is required to make this happen?

- **Finding: Developing a theory of change may be useful in articulating assumptions and causal pathways to achieve protection outcomes. In addition, it may help to identify the contributions of actors outside the humanitarian system necessary to reduce risk. This process is a necessary, but often neglected, step in the development of a protection strategy.**
  - Are there existing examples for the development of theories of change? How should we monitor and reflect on a strategy and its underlying logic and assumptions?
  - How do we change our approach to protection and protection programming to include other actors in addition to protection specialists? How should we describe the roles of other actors towards achieving protection outcomes?
  - How can we engage actors outside the humanitarian community to better understand their contributions to achieving protection outcomes?
  - How can we ensure a strategy is flexible and adaptable to changes in the context?

- **Finding: Effective coordination is fundamental for developing a protection strategy.**
  - What skills and competencies are essential to support the facilitation of strategy development among a set of diverse actors?
  - How should coordination balance the multiple mandates, objectives, and approaches of different actors participating in the development of protection strategies?
  - What are the necessary steps to ensure coordination is participatory and genuinely consultative?

- **Finding: Strategy development is often driven from the top rather than building from the ground up, limiting the involvement and sense of ownership at the field level and among those implementing programs.**
  - What steps are required to ensure strategy development begins with and is shaped by those directly implementing a response?
  - What are the drivers of "ownership"?
  - How does the origin of a protection strategy affect the participation of different actors? Does this impact the purpose, scope, and process of a protection strategy? Will this determine what information is brought into the facilitation process and how objectives are determined?

- **Finding: Opposing views on whether or not a protection strategy should be used as a means to hold actors accountable.**
  - How do you balance the desire for making a protection strategy practical and meaningful to multiple actors with the need for collective accountability that can sometimes be unmanageable, less predictable, and difficult to attribute causation to individual actions?
  - Is a roadmap that builds on a collective theory of change and open to shifts in a changing environment more conducive for inter-agency uptake? Or does this minimize the likelihood that results will be achieved given the lack of any clear lines of accountability?

Moderator & Participants
This discussion combines several live webinar sessions with a four-week on-line discussion forum.

The InterAction Results-Based Protection team will present preliminary findings from its review during the initial webinar and allow time for questions and reflection from participants. Following the webinar, invited participants will be asked to join an on-line discussion for four weeks that builds on the review and questions raised during the webinar. This platform will provide a space to continue the dialogue, share examples, and reflect on challenges and best practice from the broader humanitarian community.

Throughout the four week discussion, a series of short webinars will bring experienced practitioners into the discussion to discuss their perspectives on a particular aspect of protection strategy development (e.g. developing an organizational theory of change to feed into a protection strategy, coordination requirements and the process of cluster strategy development, how to build from the ground up and engage field staff in strategy development). During these short webinars, practitioners will discuss their perspectives, give examples from their experience, and pose critical questions for further discussion over the coming days on the online forum. **The overall orientation and focus of discussion will not simply be to rehash past practice but look to positively shape future approaches to protection strategies.**

Participation is open to all individuals, although practitioners with considerable experience in protection programming, coordination, the involvement/development of protection strategies are encouraged to participate. Although the forum is open, participants must be approved and registered to engage in the on-line discussion.

The discussion forum will take place from **May 18th through June 12th**. Prior to the start of the forum, participants will be provided with a general set of questions to be discussed (along the lines of those highlighted above) and supporting documents. Throughout the discussion (e.g. every three days or so) the moderator will pose a new question/series of questions as well as recap some of the key points arising from the previous question to update and advance the conversation. The forum is open to all participants to engage, pose questions, challenge others, and provide a space for learning to take place.

At the start of the discussion, the moderator will circulate a full list of participants. Participants are expected to actively engage in discussion throughout the full timeframe of the forum. They are requested to make comments, give examples, and pose questions to the group. We ask that any supporting documents, resources, and tools be shared with the group.

Expected Outputs
Following the online discussion forum, InterAction will draft a brief report of the discussion and share it with the participants and Results-Based Protection Learning and Steering Group for additional input. The purpose is to analyze the dialogue and capture learning that is generated from the discussion back into the overall approach of results-based protection. The Learning and Steering Group of the RBP Program will decide how the learning may be used to update the content and materials on the web forum, draft a briefing note, and/or inform future field consultations.

In addition, the RBP team, in consultation with the LSG, will evaluate participation and methods used for the online discussion and adjust the discussion forum strategy accordingly. An on-line evaluation will also be sent to all participants following the close of the discussion.

Background on Results-Based Protection

What is the challenge?
The humanitarian community has come under increased pressure to achieve more meaningful results and demonstrate impact through protection programming. We need to know *if and how* we are contributing to an actual reduction in violence, coercion, exploitation, and deliberate deprivation people experience in crises. For more see The Challenge.

Don't we already do that?
While there are examples of effective results-based approaches within the humanitarian community, they are scattered across organizations without a coordinated effort to gather good practice and develop relevant guidance to systematize a results-oriented approach to protection. For more see Current Practice

What do we know so far?
During the first phase of the Results-Based Protection Program, through the Call for Examples, some key elements supporting a results-based approach to protection were identified. While not all the key elements have been evaluated for relevance and good practice, consultation with practitioners has yielded a strong list of critical factors essential for achieving protection outcomes and measuring results. For more see Key Elements of Results-Based Protection

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