PROTECTION OUTCOMES
Moving from theory to practice—what will it take?

This document summarizes key points and questions that have emerged after 4 years of exploring results-based protection. Additional information on results-based protection can be found at: http://protection.interaction.org

There are some fundamental questions to grapple with: How can we leverage our collective efforts to achieve protection outcomes? How do we build pathways which meaningfully and measurably reduce the most critical risks people face, particularly in armed conflict? What changes do we need to make, and at what level, to better utilize results-based methods to enhance protection?

What do we mean by Protection Outcomes?

"The expected changes in behavior, knowledge, policy, practice, or decision of the duty bearers or any other relevant stakeholder." —ICRC Professional Standards for Protection Work

"Outcomes involve clear changes in the experience, safety and well-being of affected civilian communities.” —ALNAP Guidelines for Protection

"Outcomes are what needs to happen so that people can lead safer, more dignified lives. The outcomes directly relate to the threat that is being addressed (e.g. gender-based violence, forced labor).” —Oxfam Improving the Safety of Civilians: A Protection Training Package

What is a protection outcome? For the purpose of this discussion we look at short, medium, and long-term outcomes, with comprehensive outcomes defined and measured by a reduction in risk. Changes in behavior, attitudes, policies, knowledge, and practice are intermediate results that lead to comprehensive risk reduction.

However you define it...

The aim is to reduce risk

Violence such as killing, torture, maiming, rape, etc.

Coercion such as forced recruitment, sexual exploitation, forced/prevented population movements, etc.

Deliberate deprivation; discrimination in law and practice, destruction of livelihoods, obstruction of access to aid, etc.

Consequences that may arise from risk (e.g. displacement, loss of assets, discrimination, physical or mental injury, exclusion)

For this discussion, we are not looking at risk arising from basic humanitarian standards not being met (e.g. such as access to services by the elderly or disabled; lighting in latrines, etc.) but rather ongoing severe and prevalent risk causing and arising from the humanitarian crisis (e.g. trafficking of children, slave labor by armed groups, acts of genocide, rise of intimate partner violence as a result of humanitarian crisis, deliberate exclusion of certain people from entitlements and resources by parties to conflict).
What is the problem?

- Obtaining data to establish prevalence is challenging. There is high risk of misinterpretation; people will not report for lack of knowledge of how to report, shame, lack of confidence, fear of retribution.
- The evidence for protection in practice is lacking.

If we can’t agree among ourselves what protection is, how can we expect others to understand?

- Protection can’t be measured.

We are too supply driven (service delivery) and neglect addressing the threat.

- Protection programming focuses too much on activities and trainings and very little on whether or not these services result in actual reduction of risk.

How is the humanitarian community confronting this challenge?

- **Studies and Reviews**
  - Study on Protection funding in complex Humanitarian Emergencies (GPC, 2013)
  - What works in Protection? (DFID, 2013)
  - Independent Whole of System Review on Protection in Humanitarian Crisis (IASC, 2015)

- **Asking the difficult questions**
  - Why is protection so misunderstood?
  - Why is it so difficult to develop and coordinate an inter-agency protection strategy?
  - Why can’t we look at prevalence?
  - What about abuse experienced by men and boys?

- **Self-Reflection**
  - Do we have the right policies in place?
  - How can we overcome short funding cycles?
  - Do we have the right people and structures in place to tackle all aspects of risk?
  - Are we questioning our assumptions enough?
  - Are we communicating effectively?

- **Investing in learning & evaluations**
  - Impact evaluations on child-friendly spaces
  - Evaluating community-based protection mechanisms
  - Organizational investment in Learning Units

- **Communications & Dialogue**
  - IASC Statement on the Centrality of Protection
  - GPC/Oxfam Communication Survey
  - GPC-Donor Dialogue

- **Exploring outcome-oriented approaches**
  - Results-Based Protection Program
What is Results-Based Protection (RBP)?
Results-based protection involves certain methods and approaches to reduce risk and achieve protection outcomes. Changes in behavior, attitudes, policies, knowledge, and practice are intermediate results that lead to comprehensive risk reduction.

What results are we measuring and how are they measured?
The problems we’re trying to solve are the risks people face in crises, manifested as violence, coercion and deliberate deprivation. The starting point for problem-solving is to break down the problem into more specific – and measurable – pieces. By disaggregating specific threats, who is vulnerable to a specific threat and why, and what capacities can be brought to bear on these, we establish the parts of the problem that can be measured. This gives us a baseline to track whether the specific risk factors -- and therefore the risks -- are increasing or decreasing. The causal logic for our intervention sets out the pathway for changes in policy, practice, behavior and attitudes that we need to bring about in order to reduce the threats as well as reduce the vulnerability and enhance the capacity vis a vis these threats. The results we seek – and what we are measuring -- are changes in these risk factors and progress along the pathway towards reduced risk.

What about indicators and better evaluations?
While measurement is critical to know whether interventions are reducing risk, three key elements have been identified as essential for the overall approach to results and protection outcomes. These key elements help us make informed decisions about measures to mitigate threats, reduce vulnerabilities, and enhance capacities in a timely manner while making course corrections along the way. The approach promotes stronger collaboration and complementarity among relevant actors to achieve comprehensive protection outcomes. The key elements are brought to bear when supporting values and culture enhance how we implement a results-based approach to protection.

What are the Key Elements?

Do you know what problem you are trying to solve?

Do you know where you are going and how you will problem-solve?

Continuous Context-Specific Protection Analysis
Outcome-Oriented Methods
Design for Contribution

Review the Key Element One-Pagers to learn how to apply these throughout the program cycle.

It takes more than one actor to solve a problem.

What does this look like?
Through a comprehensive context-specific protection analysis that disaggregates the unique patterns of risk, start with some basic questions:

- What are the drivers that influence the attitudes, behavior, practice, and policy in relation to the specific threat, vulnerability, capacity?
- How do you change attitudes, behavior, practice, and policy in relation to the specific threat, vulnerability, capacity?
- What actions are necessary to support this change?
- What actors and at what level are needed to carry out these actions?
- What assumptions and evidence support these actions?

For Example...
In a certain community, school-going boys between 10-17 are at risk of child recruitment by rebel forces before and after school hours and while boys are walking between home and school. Recruitment is done by male youth out of uniform. Parents have established watch networks; local clubs are created to build self-esteem and help boys resist enticements to join the rebel group. National laws prohibit children from joining armed forces before 18; however, local tradition encourages boys to attend military pre-schools. This pattern may be manifested in locally-specific ways in multiple communities across the conflict-affected area, affecting thousands of boys and their families.

After disaggregating the problem, articulate the pathways to change the risk factors. Engage multiple actors, at multiple levels, and identify various actions to address the issue. Determine sequencing based on priority decisions. Decide what components that reduce risk can be measured vis-à-vis the threat, vulnerability, and capacity.

Recognize that the pattern of recruitment can change—perhaps it takes on new levels of violence involving abduction and killing family members. Be flexible, ready to adapt, and shift action along the way to monitor the pattern of risk. An iterative process of continuous analysis is essential to real-time decision-making.
Let’s take a look...

Establish your Pathway and Sequencing of Action

- Establish regular dialogue with non-state armed groups
- Invoke sense of accountability to civilian population
- Use int’l accountability mechanisms to develop incentives for adherence to basic norms

Address the physical environment surrounding schools where recruitment takes place

- Establish parent watchdog groups around school during hours of high risk
- Develop a trigger mechanism that alert teachers, law enforcement, when rebels are in area

Strengthen peer support groups to build skills and positive coping mechanisms

- Reinforce existing boys clubs
- Identify youth leaders and role models
- Build in safety lessons into school curriculum

Vulnerability

- Boys aged 10-17, School-going; Tradition/belief

Capacity

- Community watch group
- Local Boys Club- peer support; self-esteem

Threat

- Out of uniform youth rebel forces recruiting boys

Multiple Levels

- International
- Regional
- National
- Sub-National
- Community
- Family
- Individual

Protection Outcomes

Reduction in Risk

Measurable Components = RESULTS

Measure the changes in specific threats, vulnerabilities, capacities

What Now?

- Are we set up to collectively engage and respond to the reduction of risk? (System, Organizations, Funding, Capacity, Coordination)
- How should we monitor and measure results and the inter-relation between results along the way?
- What happens if we collectively do not agree with the pathway and/or priorities to reduce risk? How does this affect decision-making and funding to achieve a protection outcome?

To find out more about the Results-Based Protection Program visit us at: [https://protection.interaction.org/](https://protection.interaction.org/)  

December 2016