

# Final Report

Independent Evaluation of InterAction’s Results-Based Protection Program

Report by Jane Cocking, Nicholas Finney & Paul Harvey

## Acknowledgements

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## Acronyms

BHA	United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
CIVIC	Center for Civilians in Conflict
CoP	Centrality of Protection
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
FEDO	United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GBV AoR	Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility
GPC	Global Protection Cluster
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HPP	InterAction Humanitarian Policy and Practice team
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JIAF	Joint Inter-Agency Framework
KII	Key Informant Interview
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PEF	Prevention Evaluation Framework
ProCap	Protection Standby Capacity Project
RBP	Results-Based Protection – used to describe the approach developed by InterAction
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme

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## Executive Summary

Every year tens of thousands of civilians are killed, physically injured or traumatized in armed conflict. Millions are forced from their homes and millions more live in fear and insecurity. Women and girls in particular are subject to appalling sexual and gender-based violence. In March 2021 the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator reported that 235 million people were in need of some form of humanitarian assistance, very few of these will require support exclusively for basic needs such as water, food, shelter and health services, the majority will find themselves at risk of threats of violence, being coerced into actions that are harmful or dangerous and being deliberately deprived of their rights, dignity and livelihoods. They have a right to protection from these threats.

Led by awareness of the complex challenges faced by those seeking to offer support in humanitarian crises, over the past nine years InterAction's protection team has developed the Results-Based Protection (RBP) approach for humanitarian actors. This is a problem-solving approach to reduce risk and protect people. It involves targeting interventions on specific risk factors to mitigate threats, reduce people's vulnerability to those threats, and increase capacities to combat them. They have aimed to use their understanding and the RBP approach to contribute to a strategic and cultural shift in the humanitarian sector to bring greater emphasis to improving the safety and security of those affected by protection crises. Recently InterAction's work has expanded to include the development of an evaluation framework for the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV).

This evaluation examines the relevance and efficacy of InterAction's RBP work over the past 9 years and particularly the activities funded by the Swedish Government (Sida) since 2019. It makes recommendations for how InterAction should adjust their work so that they bring about change which will better realize the strategic objective.

In summary the evaluation has found that the InterAction team and the RBP approach are greatly respected within the humanitarian protection sector. They have had measurable influence at a global level and have contributed significantly to key global policies, thinking and language. Their approach is relevant to the challenges which humanitarian agencies face. InterAction's activities have been widely complimented for their thoughtfulness and relevance to current issues in the humanitarian sector. They have convened a wide range of protection stakeholders and in so doing they have promoted knowledge and commitment to protection outcomes within international NGOs, UN agencies and increasingly amongst donors. Their recent activities to support organizations in crisis-affected countries have been appreciated and the materials they produce are widely circulated.

InterAction's strategic objective is bold and ambitious however, it is not clear to many of their colleagues how the different elements of their work fit together to achieve this and exactly what success would look like. In particular there is an absence of clear evidence to demonstrate the practical impact that adopting an RBP approach has on the lives of those affected by conflict.

RBP has the potential to have greater influence than it currently does across the humanitarian sector. In order to achieve this in the next phase of the program the evaluation recommends that InterAction should continue with its current activities including the work on the GBV Prevention evaluation framework. However, they could be more effective by creating a clear theory of change which would shape their future strategy and plans and enable them to make clear choices. InterAction should consider strengthening their partnerships across the humanitarian sector, particularly with non-protection specialists who make decisions on organizational strategy. The team should be prepared to co-create the next phase of RBP with these actors so that it closely complements their plans. With these adjustments to a strong core program, InterAction has the opportunity to build on its achievements and to have an even greater impact.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Humanitarian crises, especially those resulting from armed conflict, are always the result of multiple, complex, and interwoven factors. They result not only in acute physical needs but in vulnerability to the threats of violence, deliberate deprivation and coercion. From this point of view most humanitarian crises are also 'protection crises' and an exclusively assistance-based response is, at best, only partially appropriate and, at worse, woefully inadequate. Over the past three decades the international humanitarian community has debated the place and nature of protection in the humanitarian landscape - what should be done, by whom and how. This discourse has taken place against the backdrop of a growing number of critical instances of protection failure, in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, DRC, Yemen, Syria and Ethiopia to name but a few. Principles and perceptions have been challenged, guidance and policies created, and systems and architecture rearranged but there is no doubt that this is still a live debate with a great many unanswered questions.

There have been significant changes within the humanitarian sector during this period. Multiple debates and reports have reflected a growing commitment to protection. The IASC Principals' Statement on the Centrality of Protection (CoP) in 2013 and the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action in 2016 were key milestones amongst others. The development of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) and the expansion of networks and fora dedicated to protection have demonstrated increasing capacity even if this has not always been as coherent as it might have been. It is important to set InterAction's Results-Based Protection (RBP) program in this context. The program has been designed and implemented in a complex environment, both at the level of the global humanitarian system and within each humanitarian response where InterAction has engaged. Navigating this complexity requires coherent approaches, near-constant iteration and clear communication.

### 1.2 INTERACTION'S ENGAGEMENT AND RESULTS-BASED PROTECTION

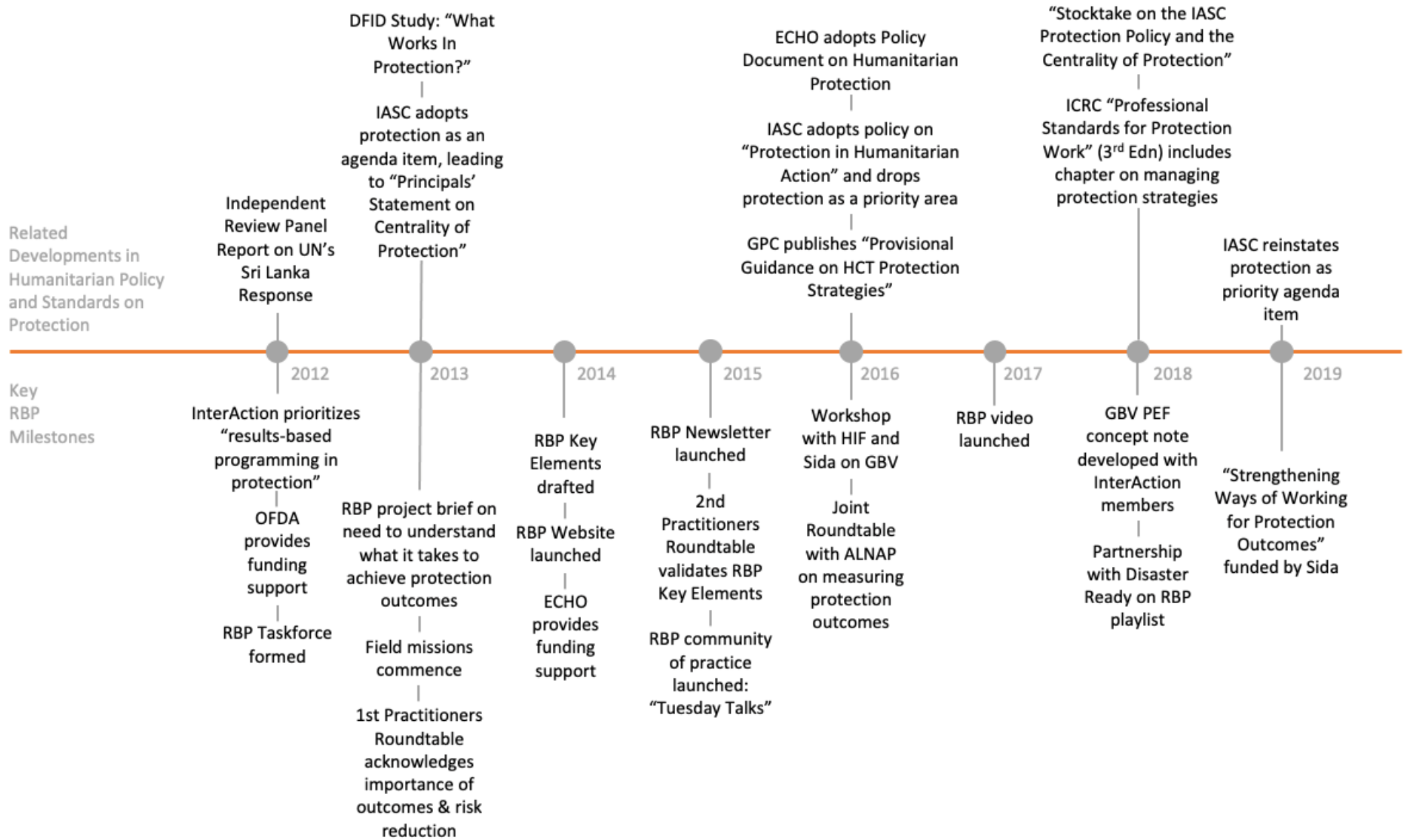
Founded in 1984, InterAction is the largest alliance of international NGOs and partners in the United States. InterAction's mission is to be a convener, thought leader, and voice for NGOs working to eliminate extreme poverty, strengthen human rights and citizen participation, safeguard a sustainable planet, promote peace, and ensure dignity for all people<sup>1</sup>.

Within the humanitarian community InterAction wears a number of hats. It is one of 3 global NGO Consortia with a seat on the IASC representing the NGO community in international humanitarian policy and coordination. It is active in the IASC Principals, Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG), Emergency Directors Group (EDG), and various Results Groups and IASC associated mechanisms and initiatives, including as co-chair/co-lead on some. InterAction's Humanitarian Policy and Practice (HPP) team supports Member NGOs to improve outcomes for affected people through principled humanitarian action by providing a forum for coordination, consultation and advocacy.

Since 2012 InterAction has sought to understand, develop and promote results-based approaches to protection. The initiative was born out of a general concern that the impact of protection actions could not be measured. An initial investigation showed varied understandings of what constitutes a protection result and that the necessary building blocks for effective measurement of outcomes were usually absent. The greatest challenges that practitioners identified were analysis, program design, staff skillsets and rigid funding parameters and timelines.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.interaction.org/about-interaction/>



Timeline showing key RBP Milestones and Related Developments in Humanitarian Policy and Standards on Protection since 2012

As a result of this InterAction developed the *Key Elements of Results-Based Protection (RBP)* which outlined critical ways of working to achieve measurable reduction of protection risks. This was developed through an iterative process of dialogue with humanitarian workers and collaborative development of tools and materials. The RBP approach was validated in 2015 and InterAction has since sought to promote the RBP Key Elements and explore their application in practice. They have also contributed their findings and experience through inter-agency policy discussions including significant inputs to the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action<sup>2</sup>.

### **Box 1. Overview of Results-Based Protection<sup>3</sup>**

Results-Based Protection is a problem-solving approach to reduce risk and protect people in humanitarian crises. It involves targeting interventions on specific risk factors to mitigate threats, reduce people's vulnerability to those threats, and increase capacities to combat them.

For crisis-affected people to be safer, respected, and protected, humanitarian actors must work to reduce the risks people face.

In consultation with numerous practitioners, protection specialists, and other actors, InterAction has identified three key elements of results-based protection:

1. Continuously doing context-specific protection analysis to inform our response
2. Using methods that keep protection outcomes at the center, for example, methods that embrace iteration and adaptability
3. Working with multi-disciplinary actors wherever relevant to solve challenging protection issues.

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<sup>2</sup> IASC (2016) IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action - <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-protection-priority-global-protection-cluster/iasc-policy-protection-humanitarian-action-2016>

<sup>3</sup> Box based on information taken from the RBP webpage: <https://www.interaction.org/topics/results-based-protection/>



In 2018, in response to NGO requests and challenges observed in humanitarian crises, InterAction decided to focus their efforts on the practical application of RBP in humanitarian programming. In 2019 they received a grant<sup>4</sup> from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) entitled “Strengthening Ways of Working for Protection Outcomes” featuring two main areas of work:

- Field support for collective strategies, and
- Development of a Results-Based Evaluation Framework for SGBV Prevention in Humanitarian Crises

The following excerpt shows the overall project logic<sup>5</sup>:

### **PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS**

**Strategic objective:** Contribute to a strategic and cultural shift within the humanitarian community to achieve protection outcomes.

**Outcome:** Increased application of results-based approaches to protection by international NGOs and national/local partners demonstrates good practice to achieve protection outcomes

**Sub-outcomes:**

1. Targeted NGOs and their national/local partners in Nigeria, Myanmar, Iraq demonstrate increased consistency in application of results-based approaches to protection in practice
2. A results-based Evaluation Framework for SGBV Prevention is developed and validated by the humanitarian community

For readers new to Result-Based Protection please refer to the very useful “Needs Analysis” from the Sida project proposal (see Annex 5). This lays out the reasoning behind the design of the project very clearly.

Implementation was planned for 2 years, from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2021. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in February 2020 caused the team to adjust their approach, in some cases significantly. For example, the “field support for collective strategies” component was originally designed with a significant amount of international travel and face-to-face Annual Practitioner Roundtables primarily for individuals in focus countries.

## **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION**

This evaluation reviews InterAction’s RBP program against its strategic objective. It aims to help InterAction to:

- Reflect on the effectiveness of its efforts to contribute to the strategic objective.
- Assess the relevance and efficacy of the scope of work and activities currently being undertaken
- Identify how InterAction should adjust future work and strategic approaches in order to bring about change which will better realize the strategic objective.

While the report focuses on the activities and targeted results of the scope of work carried out under the Sida grant (2019-2021) it references and reflects on the trajectory of InterAction’s engagement in protection issues and

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<sup>4</sup> The grant-holder for this project is IRC UK. A partnership agreement is in place between IRC UK and InterAction to support the delivery of the project.

<sup>5</sup> Excerpt from “Strengthening Ways of Working for Protection Outcomes”, final proposal made to Sida by InterAction / IRC, January 29, 2019, pp4

ambition to achieve a strategic and cultural shift through the integration of protection outcomes into humanitarian action since 2012.

The evaluation has been an opportunity for everyone involved to step back and take time to reflect during a period of intensive project activities. It has been designed on the assumption that it will be most effective if done lightly. It does not seek to answer all questions but aims to draw out the key issues which will make a difference going forward. It is seen as a moment to grow and re-energise for the future.

## 1.4 KEY CONCEPTS

### RBP and Protection Mainstreaming

RBP is significantly different from 'Protection Mainstreaming' which has frequently been the approach prioritized by humanitarian actors. It represents a different starting point for the design of humanitarian action, rather than seeing how humanitarian programs may deliver assistance safely, it asks how protection issues could be addressed, risks can be reduced and positive outcomes achieved drawing on the full spectrum of skills and resources held by humanitarian and other actors.

### Understanding InterAction

InterAction is a membership-based organization with convening and influencing power and access to decision-makers, including roles within the IASC, but without the authority to mandate change. The non-operational status of InterAction is both a benefit and a challenge. On the one hand, InterAction does not face the dilemma of balancing influencing work with operational programming, but on the other it does not have direct and continued presence in key locations. InterAction is a convening platform and thought leader for NGOs but is also a membership organization that serves the diverse interests of its members<sup>6</sup>. The implications of this role are explored further in the evaluation.

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<sup>6</sup> "InterAction is a convener, thought-leader, and voice for NGOs working to eliminate extreme poverty, strengthen human rights and citizen participation, safeguard a sustainable planet, promote peace, and ensure dignity for all people." InterAction Mission taken from <https://www.interaction.org/about-interaction/>, accessed 03/17/21

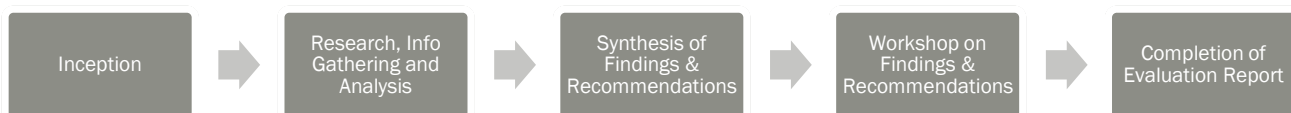
## 2. Methodology and Scope

### 2.1 METHODOLOGY

The design of the evaluation explored how best to accomplish the Evaluation Requirements in the TOR (See Annex 1). The conceptual framework for the evaluation draws on three main areas:

- The disciplines of complexity science, systems thinking, human-centered design, and behavior change communication
- Insights taken from the international aid and development sector on how organizations and systems change
- The key elements of Results-Based Protection

The evaluation was made up of five phases:



A clear methodology and a detailed plan were agreed in the inception phase. The inception report is available separately.

A mixed methods approach was adopted for the research and information gathering phase including document review, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The FGDs took place after the majority of KIIs were completed in order that key issues identified in the interviews could be explored further in FGDs. Draft findings were discussed and validated in a workshop with the RBP Team.

Due to the diverse range of stakeholders with whom InterAction has engaged an attempt was made to speak to a broad cross section of this stakeholder group. This meant interviewing people from different agencies and backgrounds and with varying levels of knowledge of the current project activities and wider program. To assist in selecting participants for KIIs and FGDs areas to focus on were identified and interviewees were invited to ensure knowledge and experience across the full spectrum (see Annex 2).

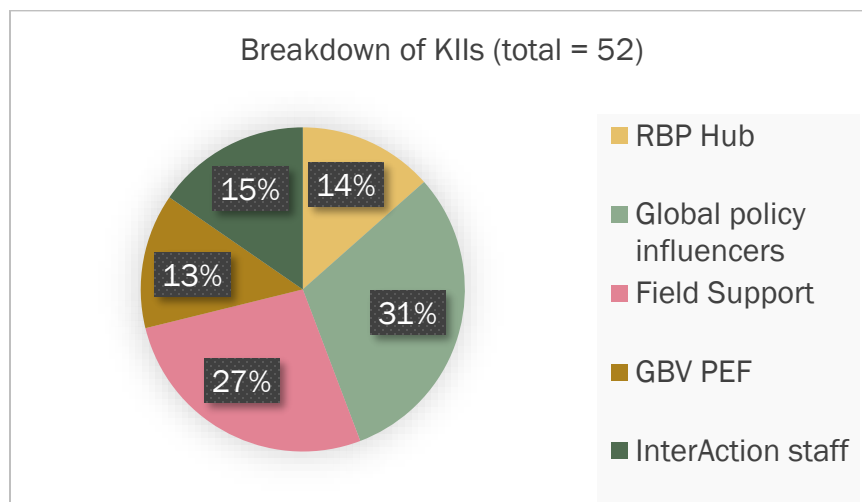
The evaluation team itself was made up of three people – a core delivery team (Jane Cocking & Nick Finney) who together led the majority of the research and analysis, and a quality assurance lead (Paul Harvey) whose focus was giving feedback and advice at the key stages of inception report, development of findings and development of final report.

### 2.2 RESEARCH & INFO GATHERING ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

The research and info gathering process comprised:

- Review of approximately 80 documents provided by the InterAction team
- Conduct of 52 Key Informant Interviews (for list see Annex 3)

- Conduct of 3 Focus Groups Discussions (for list of attendees see Annex 4)
  - 1 Field-Focused Group exploring enablers & blockers of change
  - 1 Global Policy Influencer Group exploring enablers & blockers of change
  - 1 InterAction RBP Team Group exploring relationships and networking



## 2.3 CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

As was expected the remote working situation required by COVID-19 restrictions presented challenges. Whilst FGDs and workshops were well attended and very useful from the evaluators' perspective, there is always a possibility that participation was more constrained than it might be in a face-to-face setting.

The diversity of stakeholders interviewed was notable in terms of background and role. The evaluation set out to achieve a representative cross-section of those with whom the project team had engaged. The KIIs produced a rich dataset which gives a multi-dimensional view of the project. The disadvantage is that the wide range of knowledge and experience of RBP meant that views were often subjective, and it was difficult to develop quantitative data. This was anticipated in the inception report but is worth noting again here.





Due to the current stage of the GBV PEF project activities it was not realistic to evaluate this component in depth. However, the design of the initiative and initial engagement approach with key stakeholders was considered.

Given more time and a wider scope it would have been helpful to explore perspectives on RBP with a wider range of non-protection staff in humanitarian agencies (such as global humanitarian program directors and country directors), in crisis affected governments, national civil society actors in crises and crisis-affected populations. This was not realistic within the agreed scope and resources of the evaluation. There is further analysis on this group in the findings below.

### 3. Summary of Findings

Findings are organized in line with the seven evaluation requirements in the TOR (see Annex 1).

The main findings are labelled as follows:

	Area of strength		Decision required for future project / program development
	Strategic issue which requires further discussion		Critical issue requiring attention

#### 3.1 Is RBP RELEVANT TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION?

Evaluation Requirement:

**Relevance of results-based protection to contemporary issues and challenges in humanitarian crises and the humanitarian ecosystem**

##### Were findings consistent across different groups?

There were two schools of thought amongst those spoken to. The majority of respondents believed that protection was an essential element of humanitarian action and the collective responsibility of the humanitarian sector. Several protection specialists believed that there was still resistance on the part of those engaged primarily in assistance to consider protection issues and saw them as ‘not their job’. All were supportive of the potential for Results-Based Protection to have a positive impact.

##### Summary of insights

###### *Protection as a collective responsibility*

Most humanitarian crises are also protection crises and involve extreme threats to the safety and security of the most vulnerable members of the affected communities, including violence, coercion and deliberate deprivation. The current crisis in Ethiopia is only the most recent example of many.

The vast majority of those interviewed as part of the evaluation agreed that, in the words of the IASC Principals’ Statement on the Centrality of Protection (CoP), ‘protection is everyone’s responsibility’ and that ensuring the safety and security of civilians is a key element of humanitarian action. This has never been more urgent as State and Non-State actors are often failing to comply with International Humanitarian Law, putting civilians at risk. A number of protection specialists queried this commitment by the humanitarian sector as a whole and felt that they experience resistance to engagement on the part of some non-specialists.

.....  
*“InterAction’s strategic objective [to achieve a cultural and strategic shift] is spot-on and what the protection sector needs” (KII)*  
 .....

Most respondents felt that despite their collective commitment to protection it is very unclear how the international humanitarian community, as it is currently organized, will make significant further progress towards ensuring the safety and security of those affected by crises. Barriers to progress include the difficulty of

influencing State and armed actors, limited capacity to accomplish this in the humanitarian community, a coordination approach focused on sector-based assistance and agency strategies that require visible aid delivery at scale.

All agreed that addressing protection issues is sensitive and requires more investment of time and resources. The IASC Protection Policy is not perceived as a 'live' document and needs to be understood and applied more widely if it is to be taken forward by HCs/HCTs in the way it is intended and contribute to changes in behavior in the sector. Unfortunately, at this stage there are only 2 or 3 strong examples of HCs and HCTs implementing the IASC Protection Policy to a significant extent<sup>7</sup>.

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*“InterAction has definitely had an impact, but the situation is not as it should be. It's an uphill battle, like when you talk about IHL compliance. Someone once described RBP and IHL as very similar – like walking up a down-moving escalator, as soon as you pause you get taken back to the bottom” (KII)*

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Despite these challenges, over the past 10 years there is evidence of growth in support for protection-based activities and increased understanding of the issue at a global policy level and within humanitarian action on the ground. Many interviewees described their organizations as 'protection organizations' (e.g. DRC, IRC and CIVIC) while others were clear that they have merged their assistance and protection portfolios. Donors such as ECHO<sup>8</sup> and Sida<sup>9</sup> have adopted policies and strategies that incorporate protection into humanitarian action. There are also clear and growing links between protection as it is understood by InterAction and related endeavors, for example, humanitarian access, unarmed civilian protection in the peace community and civil /military relations.

There is also the potential to develop closer links with the localization agenda and to explore how to maximize the crucial role of local actors in conflict situations. InterAction is trying to address protection within humanitarian action, including the role of development and other actors in achieving outcomes. However, a small number of respondents suggested that InterAction's framing of protection exclusively as a humanitarian system problem could be revisited, specifically looking at the wider role of development actors in protection.

#### *The relevance of Results-based Protection*

Within this context of clear commitment fraught with challenges, InterAction is seen by most as a valued and respected member of the protection community. The RBP approach is thought to be very relevant to contemporary issues and challenges and the continuous analysis element was particularly valued. There were some questions as to why InterAction felt itself well placed to lead in the protection sector when it is not operationally active in humanitarian response, but these views were in the minority.

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<sup>7</sup> Some of the key factors at play are explored in the “Stock-Take on the IASC Protection Policy and Centrality of Protection” based on a workshop convened by OCHA and InterAction for the GPC in 2018:

<https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/wp-content/uploads/Outcome-report-IASC-PP-Stocktake-FINAL-Nov-2018.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> DG-ECHO (2016) Thematic Policy Document no.8, Humanitarian Protection: Improving protection outcomes to reduce risks for people in humanitarian crises: [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/policy\\_guidelines\\_humanitarian\\_protection\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/policy_guidelines_humanitarian_protection_en.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2020) Strategy for Sweden's humanitarian aid provided through Sida (2021-2025)

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*“InterAction offers the full package of interventions from global policy to field which is brilliant” (KII)*

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There is some uncertainty about what InterAction intends the role of RBP to be in the humanitarian community as a whole. Many interviewees stated that it would be helpful for InterAction to be clearer on whether RBP applies just to NGOs or if it is also a recommended tool for UN agencies, CSOs and crisis affected governments. This confusion potentially undermines InterAction’s impact. However, the InterAction team they are quite clear themselves on the definition of RBP which they describe as a collection of methods and ways of working developed on the basis of practical experience to assist humanitarian agencies improve protection outcomes. Given that this is not always understood by key humanitarian sector stakeholders InterAction could consider revising how they communicate their intent for RBP. This is an important as part of their efforts to move towards protection being fully incorporated into the approach of the humanitarian community, rather than being perceived as a niche way of working embraced by a small number of protection-focused NGOs.

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*“Strategies for protection are often very blurry and so bringing InterAction’s perspective to developing them was just what we needed” (KII)*

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One important humanitarian challenge where RBP feels quite distant from the rest of the sector is with respect to the localization agenda. While there is growing focus on the need to deliver on the commitments made in the Grand Bargain at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit it is not quite clear how RBP supports this process. It should be possible and desirable for national and local actors to apply the Key Elements given their detailed understanding of the contexts where they work but this needs to be made explicit in both the design and the practice of RBP<sup>10</sup>.

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*“I hadn’t heard about InterAction’s RBP approach before – it could be helpful, but it needs to fit into what the rest of the sector is doing better” (KII)*

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There is agreement that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in many types of protection risks and in particular the incidence of gender-based violence (GBV)<sup>11</sup>. While the pandemic may be seen as primarily a health crisis a number of secondary impacts are being felt in terms of increased economic stressors and escalation in tension and violence. In this context InterAction’s new focus on GBV prevention is seen as extremely relevant and the results of this work are eagerly sought by a number of persons interviewed.

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<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that InterAction is not at all resistant to supporting local and national NGOs. However, the focus in terms of outreach and dialogue so far has been to INGOs.

<sup>11</sup> Available data indicates a 25% increase in intimate partner violence since the outbreak of the pandemic in countries where a reporting system is in place. Source: Global Humanitarian Response Plan - COVID-19, GHRP May 2020 Update, pp5: [https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHRP-COVID19\\_May\\_Update.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHRP-COVID19_May_Update.pdf)

Conclusion – main findings

	<p>Agreement that RBP is relevant to contemporary issues and challenges in Humanitarian Action.</p>
	<p>Lack of clarity about how the international humanitarian community as it is currently organized will achieve any further progress towards protection goals.</p>
	<p>IA Is seen as a valued and respected member of the protection community.</p>
	<p>RBP is seen as a very helpful contribution to the sector. The idea of better protection analysis has been especially well received and adopted. It would help for InterAction to revisit how it communicates its intent with RBP to InterAction members and to the wider humanitarian community.</p>



## 3.2 ARE THE CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES COHERENT?

### Evaluation Requirement:

#### Coherence of InterAction's concepts, strategies, and theories of change

#### Were findings consistent across different groups?

The views shared by respondents in this area were generally consistent.

#### Summary of insights

##### *Unpacking the Strategic Objective*

Across the spectrum of interviewees there was strong support for InterAction's strategic objective to "contribute to a strategic and cultural shift within the humanitarian community to achieve protection outcomes". It is felt that the ambition is admirable and much needed across the sector. However, this support is balanced by limited understanding of how such a 'strategic and cultural shift' could be achieved. The outcome statement listed in the Sida project design is felt by the evaluators to be a helpful step in the right direction and is a powerful statement of intent. However, it is not well communicated, and for those who are aware of it there are questions on the roadmap for getting there.

InterAction is seen as a very good 'dot connector' and has achieved a great deal by convening different actors and providing a forum for discussion (see also section 3.5). This represents a very significant body of work and the individual elements from policy debates to field support were broadly welcomed. However, there were questions about the wider impact that individual advocacy successes have had and the links between individual pieces of work were felt to be sometimes tenuous. It is recognized that experimentation and a 'trial and error' approach is appropriate to solving such complex problems but better communication and articulation of how the individual actions contribute to the strategic objective would help to strengthen coherence and commitment.

.....  
*"The Sida project is really the first stab at bridging towards the Strategic Objective – it is very ambitious for a small team to do this"*  
*(Interview with RBP team member)*  
.....

##### *Framing the problem*

An important term appears in the Strategic Objective - 'humanitarian community'. This is a broad and inclusive term which implies that InterAction's approach embraces both traditional and non-traditional actors in the humanitarian system and sector. However, it is not clearly defined. Defining who is in the humanitarian community and who is outside it, could be helpful in order to clarify what is envisaged and how to get there.

##### *Project logic*

The Sida-funded project "Strengthening Ways of Working for Protection Outcomes" has a strategic objective and clear logframe with outcomes and indicators, although there are no indicators relating to the strategic objective. The indicators relating to the outcome "Increased application of results-based approaches to protection by international NGOs" could potentially be improved as in their current form they are an amalgam of the indicators for the two sub-outcomes. It is important to note that whilst the Sida-funded project focuses only on INGOs, InterAction maintains a wide variety of relationships with the UN, donors and other actors alongside this project. Reporting is on a quarterly basis against agreed milestones and activities, as well as an opportunity to give a broader narrative update on progress towards outcomes and the strategic objective. All indicators are process rather than impact based.

A key aspect of the project logic is that work in a limited number of countries to influence 14 INGOs will “contribute to a significant cultural and strategic shift in the humanitarian community”. The field support provided in Nigeria has been welcomed by those in the country but it is unclear to those working at a headquarters or organizational-level how it will leverage broader change.

The approaches adopted in order to achieve influence are dissemination of learning, further development of tools/materials and targeted dialogue with key groups such as the IASC, protection agencies and donors. In the view of the evaluation team, further investment in articulating this approach would be helpful in communicating the approach to key stakeholders and identifying steps and milestones more clearly.

Finally, it is important to reflect on InterAction’s strategy of engaging with the GBV community. The approach they have adopted is ambitious in its design. The GBV community has built up a very strong service delivery mindset based on response to incidence of GBV and has designed its tools and processes accordingly. This is quite different from an approach focused on protection outcomes. In the Sida-funded project the RBP team sets out to try to positively engage this community on protection as an outcome and the challenging issue of prevention of GBV. The Needs Analysis (see Annex 5) states: “emerging efforts to prevent Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) present an opportunity to apply results-based approaches to SGBV prevention and, practitioners have expressed a need for guidance related to measuring results and outcomes”. Attempting to tackle GBV prevention is a bold strategy that may sound obvious but involves engaging with a strong community with deeply embedded ways of working focused on addressing the impact of abuse rather than preventing it. As such a consultative and diplomatic approach to engaging such a community is necessary and there are certainly some early signs of positive progress in this regard. This new project activity demonstrates InterAction building on the core principles of RBP and trying to engage a new group of actors with the view to better embedding key concepts in the humanitarian community.

#### *Balancing top-down and bottom-up*

InterAction has based their activities on the assumption that change happens in the humanitarian sector when work at the global policy level is driven by ideas, initiatives and practices emerging from the bottom-up within NGOs. Examples of this process of change include the development of the Sphere standards and the work driven forward on cash programming by the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP).

The question is, does this apply to protection? Over the past decade InterAction has been a key player creating and seizing opportunities to influence global debates and policy making, especially through the IASC. Alliances have been formed, language has been changed and documents have been circulated. The RBP framework has been developed, shared and amended with multiple actors. So, NGO practices have significantly influenced global policy, in particular the IASC statement and policy on protection.

However, this has not yet resulted in a significant change in the dynamics and ways of working of the humanitarian system. It seems that “assistance-based” or “supply-side” dynamics of the humanitarian system are particularly deep-rooted.

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*‘One of the main barriers to change is that the humanitarian system is a supply-side system – we’re trying to become a demand-based system, via localization, accountability to affected people, results-based protection, but it is a challenge. The supply side approach sees itself reflected in the mandates and activities of response organizations. The funding is the same. You get funding to implement, for example, GBV activities even before you are in the location and have done an analysis. Assumptions are used over analysis’ (Interview with InterAction staff)*

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The InterAction team is now tackling this problem by trying to demonstrate what the change looks like by demonstrating the processes, skills, mindset and ways of working required to embed protection outcomes within humanitarian response operations. Since 2019 the work which is now funded by Sida has added to this global perspective by supporting country teams primarily in Nigeria but also in Libya and Honduras with plans to expand into Iraq. The key question is whether this is working. There are certainly positive signs – positive feedback from those involved and some examples of initiatives that are being taken that are informed by an RBP approach. The main challenge being faced is the difficulty of acquiring compelling evidence.

The concerted view of those interviewed for this evaluation is that it is now time to develop and share a more explicit theory of change and to base this on updated understanding of how change happens in the humanitarian sector (see Box 2).

## **Box 2. How change happens in the humanitarian sector**

InterAction aims to contribute to significant change across the humanitarian community. This will require a clear view on how change happens in the sector. The following is recommended to prompt discussion.

Achieving change across the humanitarian system is a complex endeavor for which there is no formal convention or procedure. The 2018 CHS Accountability Report<sup>12</sup> proposed that change requires a critical mass of opinion on the following:-

- 1) Agreement that change is necessary
- 2) Understanding of the actions that are needed, and commitment to these
- 3) The culture, processes and systems to support the change

However, it is common that more is needed, often in the form of a crisis-generated tipping point which brings the need for change into stark relief and draws together the vision for change and the actions and resources required.

### *Theory of Change*

Through the years of developing the RBP tools and materials, theories of change have been frequently discussed by the InterAction team. Whilst theories of change have been an active topic internally, and continue to be, there is no current written version, either for the Sida-project or for the wider goals of the RBP team. Many interviewees expressed the view that this is a gap – they would find a theory of change helpful to understand how the strategic objective of community-wide change will ultimately be achieved. It would also help respondents to understand what they could contribute to it as partners. A theory of change could also enable InterAction to make clear




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<sup>12</sup> CHS (2018) How change happens in the Humanitarian Sector. Humanitarian Accountability Report, Edition 2018 [https://d1h79zlgfht2zs.cloudfront.net/uploads/2019/07/Humanitarian\\_Accountability\\_Report\\_2018.pdf](https://d1h79zlgfht2zs.cloudfront.net/uploads/2019/07/Humanitarian_Accountability_Report_2018.pdf)

choices about where to invest limited resources to maximize the likelihood of achieving the strategic objective. It would help to position RBP in the sector, develop the next phase of the program and allocate resources efficiently. Several organizations' HQ representatives were also clear that understanding a theory of change would enable them to engage more closely and felt it would help NGOs particularly to be 'bolder and more savvy' in engaging other actors on protection. Some interviewees didn't mention a theory of change but referred to the need for a multi-year roadmap which would serve a similar purpose.

A theory of change is just one tool and the overarching point is that InterAction's RBP work would benefit from clearer strategic articulation of the changes it wants to achieve and how RBP will enable those changes and better monitoring of its success.

**Conclusion – main findings**

	<p>More detailed exploration of how change happens in the humanitarian sector, and protection particularly, is needed to develop a theory of change to help the team to position RBP and to engage partners in the process of working towards change and allocating resources in support of this. An outcome mapping approach would be one recommended way to explore this.</p>
	<p>There has been an implicit theory of change running through IA's RBP work over the past 9 years which has allowed the team to be opportunistic and develop and promote the approach widely.</p>
	<p>The linkages between the strategic objective and outcome / sub-outcomes need to be explained in more detail to help maximize the value of the different activities InterAction is undertaking. This may also include building additional steps into the project to make the link between activities and the strategic objective clearer.</p>

**Box 3 Enablers and Blockers of Change**

Throughout the evaluation interviewees were asked for their views on the enablers and blockers of change in the humanitarian sector with regards to results-based approaches to protection. The following summarizes their responses which InterAction may wish to consider as they design the next phase of the RBP Program:-

**Change enablers**

- A clearly expressed, practical picture of what the impact of a change would look like.
- Visionary leadership and commitment to change by key individuals (these individuals can come from any part of the community).
- A culture of confidence and flexibility to try and fail and try again.
- Knowledge and understanding generously shared.
- Resources to support consistent work on change
- A tipping point which makes the change important and inevitable

**Change blockers**

- Groups within the community working in silos without sharing information and experience
- Perceived, exclusive ownership of particular issues by individual groups or organisations
- Short timeframes and narrow expectations driving resource allocation.

### 3.3 ARE WAYS OF WORKING SUITABLE AND ADAPTABLE?

#### Evaluation Requirement:

**Suitability and adaptability of InterAction's methods, ways of working, and activities (including since adaptation of methods as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic)**

#### Were findings consistent across different groups?

Feedback on field support was consistent. Feedback on the GBV PEF was more varied. There was consistent feedback about the global role that InterAction plays. There was quite diverse feedback about the RBP framework.

#### Summary of insights

It is helpful to confirm first what InterAction's methods and ways of working for capturing learning, documentation and tool dissemination are. These can be summarised as:

- a. Implementation of Project Activities (field support and GBV PEF)
- b. Development of RBP tools
- c. Shaping inter-agency humanitarian policy at a global level
- d. Convening role
- e. Ways of working and Team culture.

These are explored in turn below, followed by an observation on how the team adapted to COVID-19.

#### *Implementation of Project Activities – Field Support*

Originally, InterAction intended to work in Nigeria, Myanmar and Honduras however, after discussions with Sida and potential partner organizations this was narrowed down to Nigeria with an intention to establish a support function in Iraq later. A significant amount of progress was made in Honduras and a number of NGOs there made strong requests for InterAction to continue supporting them there. However, this is not continuing currently because Honduras is not a humanitarian priority country for Sida. The Iraq plan has been delayed by COVID-19. The choice of Nigeria was based on sound scoping and a previous visit by two RBP team members. It is proving to be a valuable example of the field support approach and is providing good learning for the RBP team. More work needs to be done to describe how this one example will leverage the greater change anticipated in the strategic objective for the Sida-funded project (see finding 3.2).

Offering direct 'field support' to understand and implement RBP has been a new direction for InterAction over the past two years. A flexible approach to provision of support has been adopted which is tailored to each context. For example, in Honduras and Nigeria organizations report progress towards designing their programs to deliver protection outcomes in the light of InterAction support. In Libya InterAction's workshop supported the Protection Cluster to clarify definitions and approaches to protection in a very complex environment. Overall this support has been appreciated by teams in countries, especially the attitude, facilitation skills and flexibility of the InterAction staff involved.

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*“InterAction is not interested in a theoretical approach, they have tried to understand and articulate the approach many are already attempting in the field. You pick up an issue via your feedback mechanisms and you try and tackle it – this is a problem solving approach to protection - isn't that what we should all be doing?” (KII with Field support participant)*

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There are questions about the sustainability of field support given that InterAction does not have a permanent presence in any country. Interviewees felt that only a limited amount can be achieved through visits from Washington DC. If InterAction is unable to establish staff capacity in key countries, then partnerships could be explored with organizations already in those countries who could act as a host or conduit for support.

A further sustainability challenge relates to the fact that it is not realistic to expect InterAction to scale up to provide support on RBP everywhere, whatever the operating model. Learning was not articulated as specific objective or outcome in the Sida proposal but it is expressed in the narrative and is inherent in the overall working approach of the RBP team. Given that this is central to success it is worth developing more thinking about how to measure the extent to which learning is packaged, disseminated and applied. It would also be worthwhile for InterAction to consider lessons learned from a range of sector mainstreaming and capacity initiatives such as security management, needs assessment, gender, conflict sensitivity, accountability and disability inclusion as part of its future planning.

Beyond the general introduction to RBP, field support needs to be tailored to the specific needs of different contexts and organizations in order to be successful. Organizational representatives in countries have different degrees of flexibility when it comes to designing programs and so they will have different needs at different times. It may be difficult for the RBP team to cater exactly for the detail of these variations but in designing field support they need to be taken into account, for example on some occasions basic information sharing may be helpful and on others more specific program design guidance. InterAction appears to be mindful of this in developing ideas for future field support countries. Indeed, the formation of the Protection Collective in Nigeria is a good example of an intervention designed on the basis of a strong understanding of the context. The protection cluster was not considered an effective forum for NGOs and forming the Protection Collective gave a safe and confidential space for organizations to share their experiences and ideas relating to a very challenging protection environment.

It is concluded that InterAction needs to clarify its approach to country-based work going forward and consider how this could be optimized to influence organizational humanitarian and protection strategies and approaches and country or organizational levels.

#### *Implementation of Project Activities – GBV PEF*

Due to the recent start of the GBV component it is difficult to evaluate its effectiveness at this stage. However, there was generally positive feedback from all who have been involved in the development of the framework and the country workshops. The advisory committee has been formed comprising a steering committee and reference group with clear norms for engagement. Most interviewees agreed that the SGBV prevention scoping study (or 'white paper') was helpful as a foundation. A small minority found it “too basic”. The feedback from country-representatives engaged in the current “field phase” is particularly positive, although this component has only begun in the last few months. The only questions that were raised about this area came from the existing global GBV community. Some interviewees said that it was initially unclear what kind of expertise InterAction could offer to this technical community that would add value. Others welcomed the idea of exploring GBV prevention and

evaluation regardless of InterAction’s technical credentials in GBV. Donors interviewed confirmed that GBV prevention and GBV evaluation are critical areas from their point of view and they are hopeful that the GBV PEF will yield some important results.

It can be concluded that whilst there have been challenges engaging the GBV community initially, there is now more alignment of key stakeholders due to the engagement and consultation processes adopted. Interest in concepts like outcome-oriented approaches and the risk equation amongst GBV staff at a country level is very encouraging. It will be important to track progress closely over the coming year and agree a point at which a systematic review and evaluation will add value.

#### *Development of RBP tools*

One of InterAction’s key activities has been the development of the RBP framework and the promotion of the risk equation which underpins it. Interviewees requested that the RBP framework be simplified if it is to add the maximum value to planning and implementing humanitarian response. This was primarily from the point of view of the language in which the framework is expressed.

In terms of the key elements of RBP, there was a mixed response from interviewees. The continuous protection analysis element of RBP is felt to be helpful to actors on the ground as it is clear and straightforward to implement. There is huge support and excitement around the importance of Protection Analysis and several key actors such as DRC, IRC and GPC are actively promoting the idea and developing tools and support packages.

There is a degree of confusion about “multi-sector and multi-disciplinary strategies” (formerly “design for contribution”) and what it really means. The Nigeria field support appears to be offering an emerging example of what this can look like in practice. It was also acknowledged that multi-sector and multi-disciplinary working is somewhat counter-culture in the way that humanitarian assistance is organized as there is a strong tendency for it to fall into sector-specific silos which are, in turn, reflected in the cluster system

The key element on “Outcome oriented methods” is not clear to a number of stakeholders and doesn’t seem to be getting much traction at this stage. It could be hoped the learning from the GBV PEF initiative will begin to change this but it is too early to evaluate.

The InterAction team has long noted the importance of an enabling environment in organizations alongside the three key elements, but this is not yet a topic that is analyzed in any great detail in RBP publications or materials – see finding in section 3.4 related to this.

The points about language and the desire for simplicity in the RBP tools are important to explore further. On the one hand InterAction has a tendency to use quite complex language, although is cognizant of this and constantly trying to find new ways and better ways to communicate ideas more simply and clearly. A good example of this is the “clocks vs clouds” explanation – intended to show the difference between complicated and complex systems. On the other hand, the InterAction team are sometimes communicating with an audience that is used to simple checklists and SOPs covering every aspect of what they are supposed to do. It is therefore important to take a balanced view of this topic and the critique that came from some respondents. Protection is difficult. It requires understanding of complexity and systems thinking. It may require trial and error and an iterative approach. Output-oriented logframes and deterministic theories of change are sometimes unhelpful in achieving outcomes. Many of these notions are not widely used or understood in the humanitarian community as it stands today. In conclusion, InterAction should continue to develop its language and ways of understanding protection. Language should be as simple as possible but also to encourage organizations to be better able to respond to complexity and engage with systems thinking.

### *Shaping inter-agency humanitarian policy at a global level*

InterAction's consistent focus on protection outcomes in international fora is strongly valued. There is a great deal of respect for the quality of the work they have done and the individuals involved. There is recognition that without their voice both the profile and the quality of the debate would have been significantly lower.

All those who were involved in developing and promoting the IASC CoP Policy agreed that InterAction had brought much added value to the process, especially in how they tried to highlight country-based realities and learning at the global policy level. Some of their work was very hands-on and the language of the CoP documents owes a great deal to InterAction's inputs. Other contributions were less tangible but nevertheless valuable, for example bringing to the table actors who would otherwise not have been involved in the debate, this increasingly includes local and southern actors, which should certainly be encouraged. InterAction's inclusiveness and enthusiasm has been repeatedly praised throughout the evaluation. This combined with a name and brand which is respected across the sector is a powerful combination.

Several interviewees encouraged further engagement between InterAction and the Global Protection Cluster (GPC). While it is recognized that the GPC has been ineffective in the past it is felt that it is now better led and more committed to cross sectoral ways of working. It is important in terms of providing a link to protection actors and specialists and has a formal status within the traditional humanitarian architecture. There is certainly an ongoing relationship with the GPC. This is currently focused on membership of the GPC Information & Analysis Working Group (IAWG) and the IRC/DRC Steering Committee for the Results-Based Protection Analysis Framework (which the GPC will use).

The GPC also provides some degree of linkage to UN Humanitarian Country Teams whose protection strategies should be at the heart of international humanitarian response, but too often fall short. However, the OCHA Humanitarian Leadership Support Section (HLSS) and the IASC Emergency Director's Group (EDG) are also influential channels through which to support HCs and HCTs to strengthen ways of working for protection outcomes. InterAction sits on the EDG and maintains a strong relationship with OCHA. It might be possible in the future to work further upstream with OCHA on the HNO, HRP and JIAF processes which govern how the overall system assesses need (and increasingly, risk) and defines the modality and shape of international humanitarian response. There is also an opportunity to engage ProCap on Results-Based Protection which could be a good way to systematise what has been learned about Result-Based Protection and the IASC Protection Policy in practice, especially given that they will increasingly become an important source of expert advice on protection deployed to HCs.

The core challenge for a small team is where and how to focus efforts and energies for maximum effect. This was explored further in the FGD with InterAction and it was concluded that reconfirming strategic relationships with global-level policy and norm-setting organisations would be an important measure. As part of this, and given the feedback received, it will also be particularly important to reconfirm how best to approach the GPC and what the InterAction-GPC partnership can best be focused on.

### *The convening role of InterAction*

NGO representatives (RBP hub members, donors, interagency staff) consistently highlight the value that InterAction adds when it adopts a convening role – bringing together actors with common interests and joining the dots between diverse groups that might otherwise not talk to one another. Whilst InterAction is a US-based organization this does not appear to prevent linkages being made with other NGOs, including those from the Global South. There was also appreciation of the leadership role that InterAction has taken on protection generally and RBP in particular, especially their focus on learning from what is happening on the ground in



situations of armed conflict, generating guidance and tools based on this, and promoting policy directions that are informed by this field-based learning.

The formation of the RBP Hub is also an important illustration of the convening role. The RBP Hub draws together protection professionals in InterAction member and non-member organizations to share experience and lessons learned. However, if RBP is to be embedded effectively in humanitarian organizations both in the Hub and beyond then it needs to fit into their own organizational strategies. This could be achieved through closer attention to the ways in which different organizations make strategy and working with those who lead strategy development, for example humanitarian directors. This would be both a support to protection professionals and a way of ensuring RBP is given the attention it needs at organizational levels.

Some KIs indicated that the development and promotion of a specific InterAction branded technical toolkit was on the boundary of what they see as InterAction's core role. It is perhaps hard to draw a clear conclusion except to say that it will continue to be important that InterAction continues to encourage other agencies to take the initiative and lead on the development RBP-oriented materials where possible (the IRC-DRC joint project on protection analysis is a great example of this).






#### *Ways of Working and Team Culture*

The RBP has a distinctive team culture and a way of working focused on flexibility and iteration. This has been a key part of the development of the RBP tools. The team also has a strong focus on the need to support frontline humanitarian and protection workers with simple and practical tools. These are all assets from the point of view of suitability and effectiveness. Some interviews indicated that the flexible and iterative working approach is not always welcomed. For organizations not closely following the RBP development process some confusion was reported in terms of (1) knowing which materials are current / relevant and (2) having a desire for a simple plan of action. The logical conclusion is about communication and audience – it would be important to map out and understand the needs of audiences who might only have limited time available or only basic understanding of the RBP concepts and terminology. There is a need to think this through, especially with regard to approaching without a protection technical background.

#### *Adaptation as a result of COVID-19*

There was positive feedback on the speed and effectiveness of the pivot to remote working methods due to COVID-19. The adjustment of a planned meeting in Jordan and the maintenance of Nigeria field support were highlighted. The way the team adapted their use of technology was commended. Adjustments to the GBV-PEF component due to COVID-19 restrictions enabled the InterAction team to shift from 3 focus countries to 6.

Conclusion – main findings

	<p>The language in key IASC protection documents reflects InterAction’s thinking and impact.</p>
	<p>IA’s role as a convener of key actors is very much appreciated and has been a significant factor in maintaining focus on protection outcomes across the humanitarian community.</p>
	<p>InterAction’s approach to influencing strategy in different organizations to include RBP approaches needs to be tailored to reflect the different ways that organizations develop strategy, this means being aware of the timing of organizational processes and where influence lies.</p>
	<p>The experience so far with the field support approach brings an important question into focus – how should InterAction make best use of its resources to influence practice at a country level? Should strategic partnership opportunities with organizations better established at country-level be explored further.</p>
	<p>Operations were successfully pivoted to remote working in response to COVID-19</p>

## 3.4 IS THERE EVIDENCE OF DIRECT, OR INDIRECT, INFLUENCE?

### Evaluation Requirement:

Evidence of direct and indirect influence on key stakeholders, processes, or issues resulting from InterAction's work

### Were findings consistent across different groups?

To some extent. However, protection actors and humanitarian generalists differed in terms of their knowledge of InterAction's work on RBP.

### Summary of insights

#### *A strong global voice*

InterAction is an influential player amongst protection actors working at a global level. Their history in humanitarian protection has been inter-twined with the evolving IASC position on protection over the last decade. The language of the RBP key elements and Protection Outcomes was adopted by the IASC in the Centrality of Protection Statement and Protection Policy. More recently InterAction led the drafting process of a chapter on "Managing Protection Strategies" in the ICRC's Professional Standards for Protection Work<sup>13</sup>. This was also based on RBP. As mentioned in Section 3.1 some of the same language can now be found in donor strategies and policies.

InterAction currently co-chairs the IASC Centrality of Protection group under Results Group 1<sup>14</sup> with OCHA, a position which underlines their influence. InterAction's voice is influential because they focus on the experience and practice of NGOs (not exclusively InterAction members) at country level and because the RBP Framework is a distillation and reflection of this.

InterAction's work on results-based protection is well known and well understood by protection specialists in the UN, INGOs and some donors. Their focus on protection outcomes and RBP is less well known amongst stakeholders in the humanitarian sector whose responsibilities are not focused on protection, this may apply to whole organizations or key individuals, for example, those organizations focused exclusively on "delivery" sectors (such as food, WASH, shelter, health and education) or those working as overall program managers or senior leaders.

#### *Influencing within organizations*

One of the challenges that InterAction is increasingly facing is how to influence change within organizations whether they are InterAction members or others who play a potentially significant role in the sector. It is obvious that organizational strategy, approach, policy and culture are going to be a key determinant of whether or not, and how well, operational agencies incorporate RBP approaches to protection. The RBP team sees the idea of an "organizational enabling environment" as a critical component of RBP. However, thus far the InterAction RBP team has worked predominantly with protection specialists who often do not have the level of influence on organizational strategy that is required to embed a subject as sensitive and potentially wide ranging as RBP. This

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<sup>13</sup> ICRC (2018) Professional Standards for Protection Work, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

<sup>14</sup> Results Group 1 on Operational Response is a key IASC mechanism which delivers on enhancing operational response, particularly with regard to any gaps from the normative/policy perspective:

<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/results-group-1-operational-response>

raises an important set of questions for InterAction's future RBP strategy and highlights the need to strategize on how to reach a wider range of players who are responsible for humanitarian or organizational strategy and practice.

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*“the more people you have within an organisation at different levels that are aligned, the more chance you have of changing the organisation, hence the importance of making links with donors too” (Interview with RBP Team member)*

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### *Influencing language*

There is evidence that some of the language InterAction uses to describe results-based protection is being adopted within organizations, for example, the GPC, DRC, IRC and others have embraced the idea of continuous protection analysis and reflect it in both their policies and practice. DRC/IRC have developed a joint project, “Results-Based Protection Analysis”, with funding support from the US Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs. The focus is to create a package of user-friendly tools to support better protection analysis and subsequent decision-making. This could be seen as a spin-off from the work of the RBP Hub and a good example of Hub members taking leadership to develop further relevant RBP-focused materials for the wider community.

Beyond the specifics of ‘RBP’ terminology the closely related language of protection outcomes has been adopted widely, one very recent milestone being the WFP Protection and Accountability Policy<sup>15</sup>. This policy is infused with the language of protection outcomes and is also symbolic in the sector given that WFP is a very significant humanitarian organization in terms of size and system-influence and that it has historically defined itself on the basis of sector-based service delivery.

### *The need for specific evidence*

An area which was referred to by many interviewees as an important gap in the process of building understanding and application of RBP approaches is the absence of clear evidence of the impact that adopting it has on the lives of those most affected by conflict and crisis. When has the use of RBP methods and approaches led to people feeling safer and more secure? This will require more investment in learning and impact evaluation and is especially important to be able to raise more, sustained funding for results-based protection. There is increasing interest in results-based protection and protection outcomes amongst several prominent humanitarian donors, for example ECHO, Sida, SDC & FCDO. However, they all expressed the view that they needed a stronger evidence base and more examples of the impact that RBP approaches can support.

InterAction is listening to this plea. The current Sida-funded project cycle sets out to provide a stronger package of examples and case studies. However, it is important to pin down what types of examples, case studies and evidence might be persuasive. Some KIIs and FGDs suggested that evidence needs to be framed in a more persuasive way – donors want to better understand the value for money of preventative action, much the same question that the Disaster Risk Reduction community came to terms with over the last decade.

### *Influence in conflict affected countries*

The response in NE Nigeria has been the subject of the majority of the investment and support offered. Most effort and resources have gone into supporting the establishment and functioning of the Protection Collective. This was set up in response to the fact that the Protection Sector Working Group (similar to the cluster) had

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<sup>15</sup> Signed-off by the WFP Executive Board in November 2020





provided a constrained environment for conversations about protection problems. This was largely due to involvement of the state government in their meetings, and the perceived sensitivity of protection discussions. In this context, in the view of protection NGOs and the Nigeria NGO Forum, InterAction has been highly influential and supportive. The Protection Collective has built a clear sense of purpose amongst its members and the training and other activities have been warmly welcomed. InterAction’s analyses on protection problems within the response were seen as particularly helpful. The collective has also been influential amongst donor representatives with an interest in protection. The challenge is moving from a well-functioning and well-aligned Protection Collective for mainly international NGOs to a well-functioning Protection Sector which is engaged with the government system and makes space to welcome national and local NGOs. Without this it will be easy for silos to develop. In summary the work in Nigeria is beginning to offer a valuable ‘proof of concept’ for influence country level but it is very likely that to achieve the level of sector-wide influence that InterAction aspires to that more examples will be required from other contexts.

*“The first time I got to learn about InterAction and the RBP work was when I applied for a position in Nigeria – I found their analysis of the situation in NE Nigeria. It was the best piece of work that I found that explained the situation. One of the things that also struck me was that the RBP framework gave me a tool to reflect on my work in previous humanitarian crises and the analytical process of considering risks, threats and emerging response” (KII with Field Support stakeholder)*

**GBV PEF**

The strategy of engagement to influence with the GBV Area of Responsibility (AOR) for the PEF was generally seen as a positive development for two reasons. Firstly, the choice of topic, focusing on GBV prevention and evaluation was agreed to be strategic - “InterAction is asking a question worth answering” - and secondly, most interviewees agreed that it was useful and important to engage the GBV community. Several interviewees mentioned that this was useful because the global protection community tends to be quite fragmented especially with regard to the GPC and the AoRs which tend to adopt quite specific approaches and any efforts to develop more coherence and to stimulate conversation between different parts of protection community was seen as helpful.

**Conclusion – main findings**

	InterAction has a strong reputation for RBP amongst traditional actors in the humanitarian sector
	There is not yet a strong evidence-base of examples of the impact of RBP to present to donors and agency decision makers.
	It would be helpful to develop an approach for tackling “enabling organizational environments”, bearing in mind the role and strengths of InterAction and its HPP team
	In Nigeria, in the absence of protection cluster leadership InterAction’s intervention has built a strong sense of a community amongst protection actors.

### 3.5 HOW ARE KEY STAKEHOLDERS CONNECTED TO INTERACTION AND RBP?

#### Evaluation Requirement:

#### Connectivity of key stakeholders to InterAction and their familiarity with the RBP Key Elements

#### Were findings consistent across different groups?

Yes, on the whole.

#### Summary of insights

##### *International connections*

In the majority of interviews with the global protection community there was a strong familiarity with the InterAction Team and the RBP key elements. However, many questioned why the team does not have a stronger partnership with the wider GPC, this view is echoed by the GPC leadership. The prevailing view amongst donors, UN agencies and mandated organizations is that this would enable a stronger connection with mandated actors and help build links to the HCTs and HC priorities. The view from InterAction staff is that stepping up engagement with the GPC would require significant time and resources and that they currently feel that there are other, more effective ways to connect with and influence HCs, for example through the Emergency Directors' Group and other interagency fora, as explored in Section 3.3.

At a global level InterAction has formed the RBP Hub which comprises protection advisors from InterAction-member NGOs, working on outcome-based approaches to protection. The purpose of the Hub has varied a little through the years but has mostly been a community of practice and forum for discussion, most recently they contributed to the development of a range of 'accelerators' – a number of proposed initiatives and mechanisms which could speed up the adoption of RBP approaches. These are currently being considered.

InterAction plays a strong convening role which is appreciated by members. InterAction also consults the RBP Hub on its plans and proposals. Whilst inputs from the Hub are appreciated and they act as a valuable sounding board for the InterAction team it is not a particularly active group and could not be considered a forum for co-creating the next phase of RBP work which in the view of the evaluators would be a helpful role for them to play<sup>16</sup>. The core question here is whether InterAction should adopt a role focused on continuously developing the RBP tools, or whether they should build a strategy for change towards the broad intent of those tools.

.....  
*InterAction have built a really close community of protection specialists in the Hub – we gain a lot from the discussions there*  
*(KII)*  
.....

Not all RBP Hub members use the term RBP in their own work although they may draw on RBP Key Elements in their own protection strategies, especially key element 1 (protection analysis). This is in part because the Results-Based Protection language is seen to mostly “belong” InterAction and through various processes other organizations have developed their own terminology. It may not be fundamentally problematic that different organizations use different terminology but greater coherence would be helpful to avoid confusion and build consensus and collective practice. It is certainly important that there is strong mutual understanding of what each agency means by its terms. The Hub is a potential source of much greater support and guidance on issues such as terminology but developing it further will be a significant piece of work requiring careful co-creation of a joint

<sup>16</sup> See recommendations section 4.3, recommendation 5.

strategy for rolling out RBP and associated approaches across the humanitarian community. This would draw on InterAction’s skills as a convening agency and start to develop more shared ownership of RBP.

InterAction’s RBP team is well connected to international NGO networks both at global level and in the countries where they have offered field support. Global consortia representatives expressed an interest in being more engaged in debates on protection and in understanding more about RBP.

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*“Certainly, if InterAction approached us with a proposal to debate protection outcomes, I know our members would be very interested in working with them on this” (KII with international NGO consortium)*

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As discussed in 3.4 above there is increasing connectivity between the RBP team and humanitarian donors and seemingly an appetite from many to engage on RBP. InterAction convened a ‘donor dialogue’ in Nigeria and in October 2020 InterAction and Sida convened a further dialogue for headquarters staff to explore how donors may work with their partners to incentivize RBP approaches, and especially to place more emphasis on preventing protection issues becoming even more significant in the future. There was general agreement that donors could play a key role in promoting a commitment to protection outcomes. If the pre-requisite for more evidence is fulfilled, then donors may be willing to champion RBP-related approaches across the humanitarian sector.

In the majority of interviews with “humanitarian generalists” for example, Program Managers, Country Directors, and Humanitarian Directors there was not a strong connection to the RBP team or familiarity with the RBP Key Elements<sup>17</sup>. For a description of why this is a significant gap in the promotion of RBP see section 3.4 above.

#### *National connections*







InterAction’s RBP team is not currently working with governments in conflict countries. This is a challenging issue especially in countries where government is one of the warring parties. Ultimately protection outcomes will only be achieved if the behavior of parties to the conflict changes. Several interviewees were unclear about the extent to which RBP approaches envisage humanitarian organizations engaging directly with state and non-state armed actors to influence their behavior, some expressed significant nervousness at this prospect. InterAction’s clear view is that RBP should encourage humanitarian actors to influence the behavior of parties to a conflict when this will lead to positive protection outcomes. This point needs to be clarified and communicated as it is a critical element of RBP when seen at a national level.

There has been some involvement with national NGOs through the field support work both for the RBP and GBV PEF, some of this has been facilitated through another of InterAction’s workstreams on national fora. Given the commitments to stronger and more direct support to local and national actors made by the international humanitarian community as a whole, including InterAction members, it would be wise for InterAction to develop opportunities to build stronger relationships with this very important body of actors. This applies not only to national and local NGOs but also to CBOs, human rights groups, faith-based groups, media and other networks all of whom hold a significant amount of knowledge and expertise. It is acknowledged that an understanding of context needs to be carefully considered in designing any strategy to engage local and national actors.

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<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that only a small number of interviews with “humanitarian generalists” were conducted due to constraints in terms of the scope of this evaluation. It is certainly worth considering more engagement with people in these roles to develop a deeper understanding

## Conclusion – main findings

	<p>There are strong connections between the InterAction RBP and protection experts with the global protection community.</p>
	<p>There is encouragement for InterAction from several significant actors to engage more with the GPC and it would be timely for InterAction to review and clarify their desired relationship with the GPC going forward, as part of their engagement with other international fora and actors.</p>
	<p>There is increasing connectivity to humanitarian donors and seemingly an appetite from many to engage (noting the requirement for stronger evidence of impact)</p>
	<p>The current strategy is to target protection experts. On its own this strategy is unlikely to deliver on the strategic objective. There should be consideration of how to reach those in INGOs who lead humanitarian response management, strategy and resourcing (CDs &amp; Global Humanitarian Directors).</p>
	<p>InterAction could consider engaging more with national and local actors, defined in the broadest sense, in line with the localization agenda. This would be an important measure to better align with the overall direction of the humanitarian community. This will take significant investment of time and resources but should be considered as an important element of the next phase of RBP.</p>
	<p>The RBP Hub has potential to become a co-creator and support for rolling out RBP more widely across the humanitarian sector</p>



## 3.6 IS COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVE?

### Evaluation Requirement:

#### Efficacy of InterAction's communication about complex issues and its objectives

#### Were findings consistent across different groups?

There were varying opinions on InterAction's communication. These are hard to characterize by group and depend on professional background, degree of exposure to RBP / InterAction and levels of comfort with non-traditional approaches to humanitarian assistance.

#### Summary of insights

In May 2020 InterAction commissioned a Review of Results-Based Protection Materials. We will not repeat the work of the Review here but will focus on how InterAction's communications have been received and understood by their target audience<sup>18</sup>.

The term Results-Based Protection has been created and promoted by InterAction over the past decade. All protection specialist interviewees understood the term and know the Key Elements of the RBP Framework well. However, although the terminology of RBP has been adopted by some organizations it is not incorporated widely into humanitarian agency policies and strategies, instead organizations use a range of terms to communicate similar ideas, such as "protection outcomes" and a "problem solving approach to protection". These terms have much in common with the RBP elements and although it is difficult to pin down their links to the development of RBP it is likely that they have been influenced by InterAction's work. Nevertheless, as discussed above in section 3.5 greater coherence of language would be helpful, or at least a glossary comparing different organizational language.

Non-protection specialists are not aware of the term 'RBP' and the key elements. They are often knowledgeable about protection analysis and committed to achieving protection outcomes. However, it is not possible to identify whether this knowledge is in any way connected to InterAction's work or whether it is the direct or indirect result of the many discussions on protection which have taken place across the sector in recent years. Some interviewees mentioned that "Results-Based Protection" reminds them of the Results-Based Management approach employed by the UN since the early 2000s and implies the rigorous use of logframes and a focus on outputs and associated planning tools. This is not a useful association given the goals of RBP are to promote thoughtful analysis and flexible outcome-orientated methods which are very different (the RBP key elements are discussed in 3.3).

Many interviewees felt that InterAction has been good at clarifying complex ideas and expressing them in practical terms for those working on the ground, for example, the relationships amongst different actors within a protection crisis, who is responsible and so on. The Results-Based Protection video was frequently cited as an excellent communication product. User feedback on the video taken from the collaboration with [www.disasterready.org](http://www.disasterready.org) was also useful. Other respondents felt less positive and still struggle to understand some of the concepts which are being explained, in particular terms such as 'design for contribution' and 'multi-disciplinary strategies' are felt to be unclear

Over the years the team has accumulated an impressive library of tools and materials. Many of the InterAction communication products are very clear and well produced, for example the 2020 "Embracing the Protection

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<sup>18</sup> Report on Review of InterAction Results-Based Protection Materials. Maria Makayonok & Donna Clay (2020).

Outcome Mindset” briefing paper was frequently referenced as a clear and helpful document and the 2018 ‘Results Based Protection’ video was consistently highly praised. However, the sheer volume of products can cause confusion and sometimes it is not clear what is in the current package on RBP and so this can lead to different language and concepts being shared and used. In particular the Results-Based Protection section of the InterAction website is in need of a redesign and refresh (this is currently being planned). Closer curation of communications products is needed and those which are no longer relevant should be taken out of circulation.



*The RBP Risk Equation<sup>19</sup>*

The Risk Equation has been one of the key ways of introducing and explaining the RBP framework. It is not unique to RBP but it is generally seen as useful. For example, it formed the basis for the analysis, training, coaching and case studies that are part of the field support program in Nigeria and was reported by participants to have been very helpful.

InterAction is diligent in gathering data on their outreach via web and email to understand which publications and events spur interest in RBP materials. However, it is hard to disaggregate this data in a way that drives decision making and strategy at this stage. It is also difficult to see the figures which are gathered in relation to what InterAction would aspire to, the figure below is an example. In future it would be helpful to set targets and assess performance in relation to these. This is a challenge faced by many comparable change initiatives (eg CaLP) and several of the Clusters, it would be helpful for InterAction to share ideas and strategies with others in these areas who are dealing with a similar level and complexity of material.

The number of visits to the RBP website has increased by around 50% since the start of the Sida project in April 2019. However, it is hard to disaggregate how much that increase is due to better communication efforts and growing interest. It is possible that the increase could also be attributed to remote working and internet usage due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is clear that some upticks align with specific report launches or other events. Whilst the web analytics do inform about country and referral point they do not tell us about whether the RBP resources are beginning to gain traction outside of the protection community.

<sup>19</sup> Taken from InterAction (2020) Embracing the Protection Mindset: We All Have a Role to Play

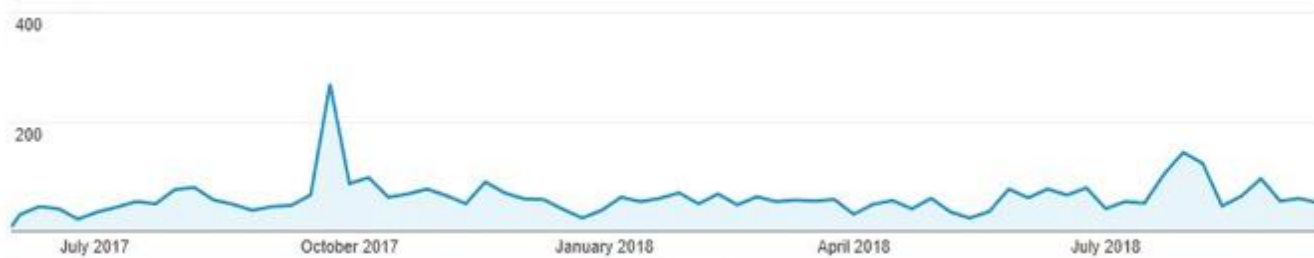


Chart showing spike in RBP website users following release of RBP video in 2017

In summary, InterAction is seen as doing a good job in communicating with the protection sector globally and on the ground where it focuses its work about the concepts and ideas around results-based protection. Ideas are well framed and communicated however, more attention needs to be paid to curating materials so that only those which represent current thinking and practice are available. There is little indication though that InterAction’s communications have reached local and national actors other than in the countries where it has engaged directly. It is recognized that InterAction has invested significantly in translating materials into both French and Spanish and this has been helpful. This would be an area to explore in more detail as a whole, investing in analysis on which channels target audiences use, what format or materials suits them best and how frequently new materials can be fed into these channels. Follow up surveys on how valuable materials are would also help to guide future plans. InterAction’s existing partnerships should prove valuable supporters in this work.

### Conclusion – main findings

	Country based actors find the risk equation to be very helpful and practical for their work.
	InterAction has done a good job in finding ways to communicate potentially difficult and abstract concepts from complexity and systems thinking. Continuing to translate concepts and approaches to a range of different audiences will be important.
	There is a degree to which “Result-Based Protection” is perceived as exclusively owned by InterAction. This may constraint future partnership possibilities.
	The RBP Website contains a huge amount of useful information but some users report that it can be confusing. There is a lot of information on the website and it is not always easy to find the latest core documents and key messages.

### 3.7 IS INTERACTION WORKING AS A COHERENT TEAM IN SUPPORT OF RBP?

#### Evaluation Requirement:

**Internal coherence and conceptual and practical connectivity of results-based protection to the role, objectives, and activities of InterAction’s Humanitarian Policy and Practice team.**

#### Were findings consistent across different groups?

External stakeholders’ views were consistent. InterAction staff member views were also consistent. Each group has a very different viewpoint and stance.

#### Summary of insights from document review, KIIs and FGDs

InterAction’s Humanitarian Policy and Practice (HPP) Team has set itself the goal of contributing to *Humanitarian action that saves lives and alleviates human suffering of disaster-affected people, while abiding by humanitarian principles through improved coordination, professionalism, and global representation by the U.S. NGO community.*

To fulfil this goal the team works to promote policies and practices which respond to NGO trend analysis and enable NGO engagement on critical issues and crises which leverages their collective influence<sup>20</sup>.

The HPP’s strategy is broad and RBP fits clearly within it. Most of the underlying issues which the team is working on are not unique to protection and many of the techniques they use are applied by colleagues in the rest of HPP, for example, working with and holding to account donors, UN Humanitarian Coordinators, government and non-government actors.

InterAction’s work within the HPP spans a range of topics and ways of working. However, interviews with InterAction staff and member organizations highlighted that the RBP project is an outlier in several ways. It adopts an approach which focuses on the delivery of activities as well as convening, influencing and lobbying and this is unusual within the context of the HPP team. Unlike most of InterAction’s work RBP is not focused on specific crises and nor is it led by working groups made up of Washington-based member representatives. This means that it has a different tempo and is perceived differently by InterAction member representatives who were interviewed and was referred to by some as ‘travelling in its own lane’. Strikingly, the field support program is a new way of working for InterAction and raises the question of whether this is an appropriate and sustainable approach for a member-based consortium. These factors distinguish how the RBP program is delivered but do not necessarily mean that it is at odds with the rest of the HPP team’s work.

Members of the HPP are aware of the importance of protection within humanitarian action, the concept of the centrality of protection and the guiding principles which underpin RBP. However, it is noticeable that all InterAction staff interviewed, including those from the RBP team, recognize that there is limited understanding of the RBP approach, its elements and the objectives of the RBP team across the HPP team as a whole. The exception to this is the NGO Coordination Support lead who has worked with the RBP project to connect with national NGO fora as part of the field support element of the RBP project.

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<sup>20</sup> An evaluation of the HPP team’s work between 2015 and 2019 was carried out in November 2019 and has informed the analysis in this section




*"one of the most successful entry points for field support has been via our wider work on NGO coordination – this is one of the ways we could expand the project" – InterAction staff member*

Without greater understanding of what RBP is about InterAction will not be able to maximize the benefit of its engagement with a wide range of humanitarian stakeholders to embed an understanding of protection issues across the sector. It runs the risk of modelling the technical silos that it is keen to break down.

*"InterAction needs an institutionalized approach to RBP – at the moment the external engagement rests on only one or two people" – InterAction staff member*

Several of the NGO representatives consulted mentioned that they did not clearly understand how InterAction selects its areas of focus and as a result were unsure about InterAction’s intentions with respect to RBP. This resonates with the earlier conclusion that there is a need for enhanced communication on the objectives and activities of the RBP project and program. InterAction has 180 members of whom around 60 are engaged in humanitarian programs and 20 play an active role in HPP work. It would help to find ways of involving more of the 60 ‘humanitarian members’ in the HPP strategy as a whole and RBP in particular to maximize the value of InterAction’s unique role as a convener with access to deep well of practical NGO experience. The evaluation team recognizes that this will be dependent on the capacity and willingness of the members, but it would respond to reflections gathered for this report.

### Conclusion – main findings

	There are clear synergies between RBP and the wider portfolio.
	Results-based protection adopts a project-based approach, which is unusual within the HPP team. This can diminish synergies.
	Awareness of RBP across the HPP team is patchy and needs to be developed further to avoid missing potential opportunities to work together to achieve greater impact.

## 4. Conclusion & Recommendations

### 4.1 SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

The InterAction RBP Team have developed a vision for humanitarian protection which centers on those affected by humanitarian crises, reducing the risks to which they are exposed in order to ensure their safety and security. They have developed a framework of key elements for action which encourage humanitarian actors to work together in ways that could support and realize this vision.

InterAction's thinking has informed and influenced the development of humanitarian sector global policies for more than a decade and some humanitarian actors have adopted the RBP language and key elements. The distinctive contribution of the InterAction team is their focus on learning from what is happening in humanitarian response and ensuring that this drives the policy and practice agenda. However, there is still far to go to embed the thinking, policy and practice of RBP in the culture and strategies of the humanitarian community. It is generally seen as a "protection sector issue" rather than being seen as central to all humanitarian action.

There are opportunities to take RBP forward over the next phase of its evolution and implementation to enhance its reach and impact. These include being clear about the role and potential benefits of the approach and working closely in partnership with those organizations and individuals who may not be currently engaged in protection-focused work. There is a desire across the humanitarian sector to embrace protection challenges and RBP presents a thoughtful and practical approach to enabling the fulfilment of this objective.

The following recommendations are based on the underlying assumption that the foundations and core content of the RBP Program and Project are sound and that it is the implementation of these which should be reframed for greater coherence, clarity and impact.

## 4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE CURRENT PROJECT

These recommendations focus on areas where continuation and integration of current RBP project activities are proposed:

### Recommendation 1. Continue to maintain and develop the current project and activities

The field support and GBV PEF activities have been welcomed as positive and relevant approaches to engage InterAction's members and constituencies and are recognized for having their own impact as well as serving as a basis to learn lessons and explore how to facilitate a strategic and cultural shift. They are still being developed and trialed and this should be continued bearing in mind some of the findings above. They should include explicit processes for learning lessons and applying these. The GBV PEF in particular should be evaluated in the next 1-2 years as it has been difficult to draw comprehensive conclusions in this area as part of this evaluation given the relative newness of the work.

#### Suggested approaches

- Maintain current field support activities and explore how these may be sustained over a number of years so that RBP is embedded into programmes and ways of working through changing contexts and programme cycles. This could mean transferring responsibility for the field support to an agency or agencies who are committed to maintaining a presence in the relevant country.
- Develop an explicit process for documenting lessons from the field support and applying these both within existing countries and more widely across the humanitarian sector. The work which has been done to date on possible accelerators to progress in the sector as a whole will be valuable input in this process.
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the GBV-PEF which takes into account not only the programmatic implications of the work but the value of the process in building understanding and relationships within the GBV sector. This should be used as the basis for an evaluation of the GBV-PEF in 1-2 years' time.

### Recommendation 2. Build evidence of the impact of RBP approaches on the safety and security of crisis affected people

The evaluation has shown the need for a strong evidence base to support the RBP approach, demonstrating the positive impact that agencies applying the RBP approach have on people's lives as a result of this. The RBP team has gathered a range of examples of how humanitarian organizations embed RBP in their policies and practice and while these are helpful, they do not demonstrate clearly how the application of RBP approaches has an impact on the lives of those affected by conflict and crisis. An impact monitoring and evaluation process needs to be established as good practice and to build an evidence base to convince donors and operational agencies to adjust their policies. This will involve not only applying stronger monitoring and evaluation to the RBP project but working with partner agencies who apply the approach to understand the impact that it enables their programs to have.

### Suggested approaches

- Work with a range of partner organizations at global level to develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks for assessing the impact of RBP on organizational strategies. How this is done will be dependent on the way in which each organization measures progress against its strategy but may include agreeing institutional / corporate indicators.
- Develop one or two ‘deep partnerships’ with organizations who are committed to RBP to explore the broader impact of building the approach into their strategies and ways of working, e.g. staff understanding of humanitarianism, engagement with communities and non-assistance humanitarian actors etc. This is likely to require an action research approach.
- Work with agencies in field support countries to develop monitoring and evaluation processes to measure the impact of RBP approaches within their programmes.
- Develop field support in up to five more countries representing a breadth of contexts. This will strengthen the experience and lessons learned from the application of RBP but beyond this number would probably represent diminishing returns.

### Recommendation 3. InterAction’s institutional strategy and approach

InterAction has a strong Humanitarian Policy and Practice (HPP) team with extraordinary influence and global reach. Part of the RBP concept is that protection outcomes should be embedded across all areas of humanitarian action and it would be helpful for the HPP team to reflect this in the full range of their external relationships. This means building on the existing general understanding of protection issues across the team and building deeper knowledge and awareness across the HPP of the RBP approach in particular. This should lead to all team members building RBP into their strategies when appropriate and conversely the RBP team being more engaged in complementary work streams across the team.

### Suggested approaches

- Ensure that everyone in the HPP team has a clear understanding of RBP approaches, what the InterAction team has achieved to date and what they want to see in the future.
- Explore with individual groups and teams within the HPP team how RBP could be reflected in their work. This may be especially relevant to those teams who focus on geographical areas and specific crises, opening more opportunities to encourage the adoption of RBP in ‘real time’.
- Build a clear understanding in the RBP team of the objectives and challenges facing other members of the HPP team and explore how these can be reflected in RBP work and materials.



### 4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROGRAM STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIP

These recommendations focus on developing a revised program strategy and partnership for change. The following sequence is proposed:



#### Recommendation 4. Develop a clear theory of change to underpin InterAction’s RBP program and to support its communication

Many contributors to the evaluation have stressed the importance of the development of a theory of change in order to map a clear path between InterAction’s actions and ambition. The purpose of the theory of change is two-fold, to enable the InterAction team to develop the next phase of their work and to communicate their intentions and objectives to the wider humanitarian community. It would be particularly important to examine global strategies, culture and behaviors needed to support RBP and how to move from a coalition of the willing and interested toward “a strategic and cultural shift” in the humanitarian community. The theory of change could be developed with the RBP hub and other interested parties (as per the previous recommendation on brand) in order to build ownership and a movement towards change (see also recommendation 2). Once developed the theory of change will need clear communication to build support and engagement.

##### Suggested approaches

- Convene a cross-humanitarian sector discussion on the current cultures, ideas and behaviours which are currently prevalent with respect to protection as a whole and identify which of these would be particularly helpful in promoting RBP and which are counter-productive and need to be addressed.
- Develop a clear understanding of how decision-makers in humanitarian organisations understand protection within their strategies and what enables or prevents the adoption of RBP as a core part of their work.
- Based on the results of the 2 points above co-create the theory of change and associated road map of actions with a group of key protection actors to ensure that they complement approaches developed by others. This could be with the RBP Hub or a wider group.

#### Recommendation 5. Develop a partnership approach from local to global levels to build co-ownership of the RBP approach

The InterAction RBP team has built strong partnerships with key INGOs who are engaged in protection work. The time is now right to build out from this platform and use InterAction’s reputation and global reach to explore partnerships with a wider range of actors. Partnership may be defined in many different ways and InterAction should be willing to explore a range of models simultaneously to enhance levels of influence. Special attention should be paid to linking to national and local organizations whether through the field support project, the NGO

consortia work stream or other means. It would also be important to revisit the InterAction RBP Theory of Change and confirm whether this might apply to a wider partnership, or whether such a partnership needs a different theory of change. This will not only benefit the RBP program but also contribute to the localization agenda espoused by so many InterAction members.

#### Suggested approaches

- Actively build relationships with key national and local actors in field support countries to ask for their views on RBP, its relevance to their work and any potential risks. This process will take time, those INGOs who are currently engaged with RBP could be a first point of contact to identify key actors. The focus should be not only on NGO but also on faith-based groups, media networks and other civil society initiatives. Ensure that views expressed by national partners are reflected in future iterations of RBP.
- Work with the InterAction NGO Collaboration Coordinator and members of the RBP Hub to identify national networks, consortia and actors in countries where InterAction is not currently offering field support. Use preliminary discussions with these actors as one of the key elements of deciding where to offer field support next.
- Engage more intensively with international players who are engaged in work which potentially has a bearing on protection outcomes and who are not regularly represented in the global humanitarian fora, eg small INGOs, the mine action and disarmament community, private sector actors present in humanitarian crises. The purpose of this engagement would be to ensure they are aware of the protection implications of their work and to encourage them to adopt RBP approaches in the same way as INGOs and other actors who have already embraced RBP.

## **Recommendation 6. Develop a new strand of strategic engagement focused on humanitarian generalist leaders**

RBP is reaching a stage of maturity in terms of its acceptance amongst protection specialists. Whilst there are still areas to be refined there is a degree to which the current approach is preaching to the converted. InterAction should adopt a new strand of work to look at how RBP may be embraced and operationalized in humanitarian agencies through engaging with humanitarian leaders and decision-makers to explore with them specific ways of building RBP into organizational strategies.

### **Suggested approaches**

- So far most of InterAction's time has been spent building relationships with protection specialists and, in some cases, country programmes. It is now the moment to invest time in building an understanding of how organizations who InterAction would like to adopt RBP approaches make strategy and who the key decision-makers are within these processes. Increasingly large and medium-sized organizations are defining their identities more clearly and being more directive with their operational staff as to what is within their scope and what is outside it. Therefore, it is an important starting point to ensure that an understanding of the principles of RBP are understood across target organizations and especially by those in decision-making roles.
- Once an understanding has been built of how organizations make strategy then InterAction should invest in developing plans and materials to influence senior decision-makers. This should include consideration of strategic partnerships with humanitarian leadership training & learning providers
- It is often the case that smaller organizations, both national and international, have greater flexibility but fewer unrestricted resources to devote to developing new approaches such as RBP. InterAction may wish to consider a separate strategy to influence smaller actors and perhaps focus their offers of technical support here rather than on larger organizations which have their resources to employ dedicated specialists.

## **Recommendation 7. With partners consider co-creating a revised brand and language**

At present results-based protection is seen as almost exclusively an InterAction initiative and this may limit its take-up by others. When clarifying the definition of RBP InterAction should be prepared to co-create the next iteration of the framework so that it builds on complementary approaches being used by others. This could mean building a community of practice who own the methodology together, starting with the existing RBP Hub but being open to new players. InterAction is known and respected for its convening skills and this would be a return to the iterative process which originally developed the RBP approach. The first step in the process could be to confirm the lexicon and language of RBP with the RBP hub and other parties invested in helping the humanitarian community to achieve protection outcomes (see also recommendation 6). This should include reviewing the label of RBP and confirming that this is the best 'brand name' for the package going forward to ensure that there is no overlap or potential confusion with other initiatives in the humanitarian sector which currently describe themselves as 'results-based'.

### Suggested approaches

- Explore developing the RBP Hub beyond its current purpose to become an active community of practice and use this group to co-create the 'next version' of RBP based on their organizational experience.
- Continue to use and develop InterAction's role as a convenor to bring together a greater number of InterAction's membership to debate the future ambition and role of RBP in humanitarian response. This could be done through existing channels and events and so should not add to the heavy burden of coordination in the humanitarian sector.
- Consider changing from the headline name of 'Results-Based Protection' to something more closely related to 'outcomes' language, e.g. 'Working for Protection Outcomes or a problem-solving approach to protection. Any name change would need to be carefully and widely communicated but it could distinguish RBP from other 'results-based' initiatives and offer the opportunity to share the ownership of the approach so that it becomes the way everyone in the humanitarian community 'does' protection.

### Recommendation 8. Clarify and communicate the Framework, its definition and the audience it is intended for

The RBP framework has evolved over time and its concepts are sound but its language and explanation still need further refinement and communication to key actors. This was a clear request from all those interviewed and without this it will be very difficult to take the RBP approach forward as effectively as it deserves.

There is confusion amongst some interviewees as to the target audience for which the RBP approach is intended. Whether this is a framework to be implemented by NGOs only or if InterAction's intention is broader and to encourage its application in the work of the "humanitarian community" as a whole. The assumption is the latter, but it will take further definition of the 'community' and the recommendations below to achieve this.

### Suggested approaches

- Follow through with the conclusions of the *Report on Review of InterAction Results-Based Protection Materials*. In particular a concise description of what RBP is, who it is for and what it achieves would be helpful and should be circulated throughout InterAction's extensive networks.
- Ensure that documents that reflect previous versions of RBP are removed from all public fora to avoid confusion.
- Develop a communication strategy for all of InterAction's RBP work, identifying target audiences, messages and means of delivery.

## Annex 1: Evaluation Requirements (based on October 2020 ToR)

<b>InterAction’s Evaluation Requirements</b> (based on October 2020 TOR)	<b>How this will be explored</b> (see Annex 2)
1. Relevance of results-based protection to contemporary issues and challenges in humanitarian crises and the humanitarian ecosystem	Areas of focus 1-7, 11, 12-14, 16
2. Coherence of InterAction’s concepts, strategies, and theories of change	Areas of focus 1-3, 9, 16
3. Suitability and adaptability of InterAction’s methods, ways of working, and activities (including since adaptation of methods as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic)	Areas of focus 1, 10-12, 16
4. Evidence of direct and indirect influence on key stakeholders, processes, or issues resulting from InterAction’s work	Areas of focus 5-7, 11-14
5. Connectivity of key stakeholders to InterAction and their familiarity with the RBP Key Elements	Areas of focus 5-7, 11-15
6. Efficacy of InterAction’s communication about complex issues and its objectives	Areas of focus 1,5,11,12,16
7. Internal coherence and conceptual and practical connectivity of results-based protection to the role, objectives, and activities of InterAction’s Humanitarian Policy and Practice team.	Areas of focus 8, 16

Areas of Focus

<p><i>Program</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program design and strategy</li> <li>2. Exploration of Theory(ies) of Change underlying program design</li> <li>3. Coherence of activities with Theories of Change</li> <li>4. Identification of enablers and blockers to change across the humanitarian system</li> <li>5. Evidence of results-based protection and outcome-oriented language, concepts and ways of working increasingly adopted and implemented by key humanitarian system stakeholders</li> <li>6. Evidence of positive influence as a result of adoption of RBP processes</li> <li>7. Outreach, communication approach, connectivity and key relationships with range of humanitarian actors</li> <li>8. Internal coherence with InterAction’s Humanitarian Policy and Practice Team</li> </ol>
<p><i>Project</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Design process for the Sida-funded project (including monitoring approach and design of indicators).</li> <li>10. Decision making around field support component (selection of target countries and adaptation due to COVID)</li> <li>11. Appreciation and effectiveness of field support offered by InterAction.</li> <li>12. Planning and decision making with respect to the Gender-Based Violence Prevention Evaluation Framework.</li> <li>13. Nigeria field support – to what extent is it contributing to a strategic and cultural shift, and what kind of engagement is most effective</li> <li>14. Examples of work undertaken in the light of RBP field support</li> </ol>
<p><i>Program-Project linkages &amp; complementarity</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Active links and feedback loops between specific Sida-funded activities and InterAction’s broad RBP influencing work</li> </ol>

<sup>21</sup> Final Version, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021

## Annex 3: List of Key Informant Interviews

Lars Peter Nissan	ACAPS	Keri Baughman	InterAction
Colombia Team	CARE	Lea Krivchevna	InterAction
Lee Sutton	CIVIC	Rachel Unkovic	InterAction
Marc Linning	CIVIC	Bob Kitchen	IRC
Bulus Mungopark	CIVIC	Jennifer Davies	IRC
Francisca Vigaud-Walsh	Data Conscious	Katie Grant	IRC
Neil Dillon	Data Conscious	Sarah Mosely	IRC
Deborah Baglole	FCDO	Jenifer Fernandez	JHAHA
Nick Jones	FCDO	Ann Marie McKenzie	Libya Protection Sector
Babette Schots	DRC	Kevin McNulty	Mercy Corps
Kathrine Starup	DRC	Kerri Leeper	Mercy Corps (former)
Laura Sawtell	DRC	Aoife Dineen	Nigeria INGO Forum
Anne Sophie Laenkholm	ECHO	Camilla Corridan	Nigeria INGO Forum
Thomas Conan	ECHO	Tiffany Easthorn	Nonviolent Peaceforce
Liam Mahony	Fieldview Solutions	Ephraim Ali Yidawi	NRC
William Chemaly	GPC / UNHCR	Hannah Jordan	NRC
Jocelyn Kelly	Harvard Humanitarian Initiative	Dina Abou Samra	OCHA
Gemma Davies	HPG/ODI	Rachel Hastie	Oxfam
Victoria Metcalfe	HPG/ODI	Aloysius (Ali) Soyey	PROSpine
Ali Gokpinar	IASC Secretariat	Alon Margalit	Protection Sector WG
Caroline Baudot	ICRC	Ligia Mencia	Save the Children
Guilham Ravier	ICRC	Gareth Price-Jones	SCHR
May Maloney	ICRC	Pia Haenni	SDC
Jenny McAvoy	InterAction	Anna Ramazzotti	Sida
Jessica Lenz	InterAction	Ariela Blatter	Wellspring
Julian Schopp	InterAction	Annelaure Duval	WFP
Kate Phillips-Barasso	InterAction	Dale Buscher	WRC
Katherine Kramer	InterAction		

## Annex 4: List of Focus Group Discussion Attendees

### FOCUS GROUP 1

Alon Margalit	Nigeria Protection Sector Working Group
Ann-Marie McKenzie	Libya Protection Sector
Kerri Leeper	Mercy Corps (former)
Lars Pieter Nissen	ACAPS
Marc Linning	CIVIC
Pia Haenni	SDC

### FOCUS GROUP 2

Anne-Laure Duval	WFP
Dale Buscher	Womens' Refugee Commission
Gemma Davies	ODI
Nicholas Leader	FCDO
Thomas Conan	ECHO

### FOCUS GROUP 3

Ife Akinmade	InterAction
Jenny McAvoy	InterAction
Jessica Lenz	InterAction
Julien Schopp	InterAction
Katherine Kramer	InterAction
Keri Baughman	InterAction
Lea Krivchenia	InterAction



## Annex 5: Needs Analysis (from Sida proposal)

Excerpt from “Strengthening Ways of Working for Protection Outcomes”, final proposal made to Sida by InterAction / IRC, January 29, 2019, pp1-2.

It is often claimed that protection is difficult to measure, and that the complexity of humanitarian crises precludes **planning** for protection outcomes. Protection responses tend to focus on short-term and pre-determined activities and outputs and fail to **build on local initiatives, capacities, and structures**. Insufficient investment in continuous analysis means there is little context-specific strategy development to reduce specific risk factors. There is also, therefore, little basis for monitoring to ensure that interventions are leading to protective outcomes, are implemented in a flexible and **adaptive** manner, are there are few opportunities to distil and internalize lessons to inform future strategy development. It is common to find humanitarian actors and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) reluctant to recognize and address the severe threats to people’s lives and safety, leaving difficult issues and dynamics – such as restricted freedom of movement, forced population movements, attacks on civilian facilities and infrastructure, and systematic discrimination against population sub-groups – to grow more entrenched and problematic over time.

Recent studies have highlighted systemic failures to address the pervasive risks faced by civilians in situations of armed conflict. For example, the 2012 [Internal Review Panel Report](#) on the UN’s response to the crisis in Sri Lanka found inadequate contextual analysis, little investment in local capacities, lack of strategic orientation towards protection outcomes, and poor complementarity among actors. The [Independent Whole of System Review of Protection in the Context of Humanitarian Action](#) (2015) highlighted a “a knowledge and learning deficit on protection across the humanitarian system.”

There is now greater focus on protection as an outcome, and system-wide policies are moving in the right direction in a way that reflects the [key elements of results-based protection](#) developed through InterAction’s results-based protection initiative. The third edition of the [Professional Standards for Protection Work](#) (March 2018) elaborates on a results-based approach in the chapter on “Managing Protection Strategies.” The key elements of results-based protection are also reflected in the [IASC Principals Statement on the Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action](#) (December 2013) as well as the [IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action](#) (October 2016) and the Global Protection Cluster (GPC)’s [Guidance on HCT Protection Strategies](#) (October 2016). In October 2018, InterAction and OCHA, on behalf of the GPC, co-convened a stock-take on the implementation of the IASC Protection Policy and the Centrality of Protection which resulted in a clearer, shared view of core priorities to fulfil the vision of centrality of protection in practice.

With a growing emphasis on “collective outcomes”, the humanitarian community now faces increased expectations to demonstrate meaningful protective impact. However, international NGO’s and their national/local partner’s frontline staff, technical advisors, managers, and humanitarian leadership often lack relevant good practice examples and practical know-how, and there is little effort to systematize the basic ways of working which underpin results-based and outcome-oriented approaches within organizations and in inter-agency collaboration. Throughout InterAction’s consultative efforts to develop and promote results-based approaches to protection, and ongoing discussions with NGOs working in Nigeria, Myanmar, and Iraq following recent visits to these contexts,<sup>22</sup> indicate that there is a high level of motivation among NGOs to adopt ways of working for meaningful and collective protection outcomes. NGOs have repeatedly stated a desire to take concrete steps to *inter alia* deepen

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<sup>22</sup> InterAction’s Protection Team carried out field missions to [Nigeria in 2018](#), [Iraq in 2018](#), and to [Myanmar in 2017 and 2018 \(once in May and a follow-up mission in June\)](#). Through these missions, InterAction established relationships with NGOs interested in results-based approaches to protection and made recommendations on their application in the field mission reports.

their analysis, develop more multi-disciplinary strategies, and take meaningful action to tackle challenging and protracted problems, but they are not certain how to go about it. This interest and motivation will help ensure that workplans and priorities are grounded in the local context and driven by actors in-country. There are two broad types of requests for InterAction support:

- Methods and ways of working – such as protection analysis and establishing a basis for ongoing monitoring, inter-agency collaboration for the development of HCT or other collaborative protection strategies, and advocacy and negotiation for protection; and
- Potential approaches to address critical issues – such as discrimination against internally displaced persons (IDPs), restrictions on freedom of movement, population segregation, ensuring safe and voluntary IDP returns, and influencing the conduct and behaviour of parties to conflict.

In addition, there is a relative lack of investment in the evaluation of protection outcomes, with systematic guidance still at a nascent stage.<sup>23</sup> In this regard, emerging efforts to prevent Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) presents an opportunity to apply results-based approaches to SGBV prevention and, practitioners have expressed a need for guidance related to measuring results and outcomes. InterAction has consulted with 14 international NGOs and other relevant actors (including ALNAP and ICRC) and almost all have explicitly expressed support for the project and an interest in joining an Advisory Group. Evaluation challenges include measuring the counterfactual of violence, the long timeframes involved in actual risk reduction, and difficulties inherent in measuring results beyond indications of change in perception or attitudes.

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<sup>23</sup> See ALNAP's recent guide [Evaluation of Protection in Humanitarian Action](#) which states, "...evaluation guidance focusing on protection in humanitarian action is limited, fragmented and confined to specific programming manuals that often give limited guidance on the overall challenge of looking at protection." (October 2018)