Organizational culture, systems, and resources can either enable or block a shift toward results-based protection practices. This handout for humanitarian managers and staff explains how systems affect results-based protection.

Systems should enable iterative and adaptive problem solving.

The various systems and processes that characterize an organization and the wider humanitarian community can enable or block the achievement of protection outcomes.

Iterative and adaptive processes that stimulate creative problem solving to achieve protection outcomes are key to solving complex protection problems.

System barriers to results-based protection:

▶ Program design focused more on activities and outputs than on measurable changes in people's lives; "cut-and-paste programming."

▶ Theory of change for response is influenced by institutional interests and funding conditions, not context-specific patterns of risk.

▶ Pre-defined program modalities mean little investment in supporting a community's own strategies and capacities.

▶ Most protection programming consists of remedial services in the aftermath of abuse; there is little investment in efforts to tackle big problems and develop preventative strategies.

▶ Processes that prioritize efficiency and programmatic effectiveness over engaging in the analysis and creative problem solving.

▶ Disconnect between the response and information and data collected to address the protection issue. There is too much data and too little analysis, and a lack of clarity on what information and analysis is needed to inform decision making.

▶ Resistance to the notion that risks and protective impact can be measured.

▶ A belief that specific do-no-harm or safety measures (commonly referred to as protection mainstreaming or risk mitigation) equate to protection.

▶ Notion that protection (including child protection and protection from gender-based violence) is the sole responsibility of specialized actors, which means that issues can be delegated to those specific actors rather than engaging a broader range of capabilities and modes of intervention.

> **ADAPTING DESIGN TO A CHANGING CONTEXT**
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> An INGO program in Nairobi included a review process with **multiple stakeholders**. Stakeholders included diverse individuals from the refugee community, local partners, UNHCR, and the Kenyan Department of Refugee Affairs. This periodic review made the stakeholders more responsive to community-defined priorities. This enabled the response to adapt to the changing context and be shaped by diverse actors. **As the crisis changed, the INGO shifted its role from implementer to convener, to respond better to the changing environment.**

Organizational systems and processes enable results-based protection when:

▶ Operating systems enable collaborative strategic planning, design, and review and promote collaborative, creative, multi-disciplinary problem solving.

▶ Program design allows for shifts in the approach and structure based on specific strategies in place for risk reduction.

▶ Human resources systems and policies prioritize soft skills, analytical thinking, cross-team collaboration and learning in recruitment processes and help build these capacities among staff.

- Systems for capturing institutional memory allow for high rates of frontline staff turnover.
- Information management systems are intentionally designed to monitor and detect changes in protection risk patterns and challenge assumptions. They also allow for efficient information flow between decision makers and frontline staff, using verbal as well as written information flows, and including informal and formal reporting mechanisms.
- Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) systems are part of the program design from the start, use creative ways to measure changes in risk factors, and capture learning.

Humanitarian coordination forums enable results-based protection when they:

- Allow for genuine participation and give voice to local as well as international actors.
- Build trust among different actors to promote mutual learning, shared analysis, and collective problem solving.
- Promote flexibility and adaptability in formalized systems such as the humanitarian response plan.
- Encourage cross-sectoral investment in protection outcomes, identifying shared goals.
- Maintain a flat coordination structure that encourages participation from actors close to communities
- Create coordination structures (including terms of reference, strategic plans, and workplans) that allow for adaptability.
- Keep institutional interests low and make the lead from communities a priority.

Donors enable results-based protection when they:

- Establish grant agreements that allow for flexible design and approach, including moving funds within budgets, project timeframes, reporting requirements, and other internal processes that impact programs on the ground.
- Allow adaptive indicators as opposed to requiring pre-designed indicators that may not be appropriate for the specific strategy of risk reduction.

DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY: RETHINKING MONITORING & EVALUATION TO UNDERSTAND CHANGE

Saferworld has put in place a way of monitoring, evaluating, and learning focused on behavior and relationship change. Over the years, the organization has gone through a process to adapt, embed, and embrace an approach inspired by outcome mapping and outcome harvesting and has transformed the way staff understand, monitor, and collect evidence of change in their work. **Saferworld's approach is centered on collecting and analyzing evidence about what others do differently— and determining how Saferworld's work has influenced those approaches.**

The approach is flexible and straightforward enough to be used in complex, rapidly changing contexts. It empowers frontline staff, communities, and partners to monitor what matters to them. Bringing frontline staff and partners into wider conversations with others increases cross-organizational learning. Like most change processes, using the approach requires leadership, guidance, and practice.

A SIMPLE PROCESS FOR IMPROVED LEARNING & ADAPTIVENESS

In Sierra Leone, IRC's field teams systematically reviewed their project's progress toward goals. They also discussed challenges encountered and identified solutions and best practices, in consultation with community stakeholders. These sessions occurred at least monthly and were initially established by the field-based project manager to encourage staff to reflect on successes, obstacles, and ways to mitigate problems. The iterative approach to project learning, alongside management's efforts to empower and mentor staff, has given field staff and the affected population great ownership over the project.