

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 resources affect results-based protection.

#### Resources need to be proactively allocated and managed.



Results-based protection requires actors to purposefully manage and leverage financial, human, material, social, and emotional resources to effectively reduce protection risk for people in crises.

You don't need huge investments in resources to support results-based protection. Adopt some practices now and build toward more enabling resources.

#### Resource barriers to results-based protection:

- ▶ Rigid budget parameters. Short-term grants take a lot of management time, making it harder to focus on quality. They lead to insecurity in staff jobs and partner contracts, often putting stress on community and stakeholder relationships, and contribute to high staff turnover that can disrupt program continuity, quality, and timing.
- ▶ Some donor policies on adjusting budgets within grants, as well as some organizational limitations, make it difficult to be truly adaptive.
- ▶ Recruitment procedures prioritizing formal qualifications at the expense of protection-sensitive soft skills, including analytical skills, relationship-building and negotiation skills, empathy, and integrity.
- ▶ Formal accountability measures that prioritize output measures over outcomes or results.
- ▶ Limited funding, support, and capacity invested in continuous protection analysis and information and knowledge management systems both within organizations and inter-agency forums.
- ▶ Limited or ineffective investment in monitoring and evaluation, including over-reliance on global indicators rather than contextualized indicators.

#### DEDICATED RESOURCES TO ANTICIPATE RISK

Mercy Corps' south and central Syria program includes a Humanitarian Access Team (HAT), comprising five analysts who leverage their networks, including through the program's partners, to provide conflict analysis and forecasting across the response region. HAT draws on **informant networks in Syria, social media reports, the knowledge of Syrian staff on the team, and observations of implementing partners to inform response design and adaptation**. Having **staff dedicated to continuous analysis** has supported a shift away from reactive programming toward a more anticipatory approach that helps to avoid exposing people to potential new risks.

#### Resource mobilization, allocation, and management practices enable results-based protection when they:

- ▶ Use programming materials and resources that equip teams for creative problem solving and methods to effectively engage affected populations.
- ▶ Focus on the way that people think rather than the tools that they use.
- ▶ Explore and adapt low-cost and informal data collection and information management methods and tools (such as participatory community appraisal tools, informal meetings, or tapping into existing knowledge of frontline staff).
- ▶ Build into program design and implementation the means and resources (staff, time, funds) for continuous analysis of the risks being experienced by the affected population and to support prioritization exercises of protection.

- ▶ Prioritize problem-solving skills, facilitation, relationship-building, analytical skills, and character traits such as growth mindsets when recruiting and developing staff.
- ▶ Ensure that budgets allocate appropriate time for staff to build relationships and trust with affected people, parties to conflict, and other relevant stakeholders.
- ▶ 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.

**Humanitarian coordination forums enable results-based protection when they:**

- ▶ Advocate for donors, including pooled funding mechanisms, to prioritize protection outcomes in their funding, and for mechanisms of funding that are sufficiently flexible for this purpose.
- ▶ Use secretariat resources to provide platforms for strategy development for risk reduction.

**Donors enable results-based protection when they:**

- ▶ Make multi-year funding available that allows program design beyond narrow and short-term windows.
- ▶ Provide flexible funding streams that help maintain a focus on protection in rapidly changing contexts.
- ▶ Enable organizations to invest in capacities for analysis, learning, and relationship-building.
- ▶ Support flexible funding modalities that allow for adaptation within a project and an ability to modify activities as needed to achieve an outcome.

**ENABLING FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTIVE PROGRAMMING**

In northern Uganda’s BidiBidi refugee settlement, Caritas Arua and Caritas Uganda were among the **first responders** working with South Sudanese refugees as they arrived. Initially the organizations supported refugees with tools and vegetable seeds. However, they quickly realized that conflicts over natural resources required more peacebuilding work, such as setting up conflict resolution committees, to encourage peaceful co-existence among refugees and host communities. The organizations were guided in their response by their long history and deep understanding of the refugee and host communities. The ability to pivot the entire technical focus of a program stemmed from their access to public donations received through church communities.

Donor and INGO rules on adjusting activities allowed some flexibility. However bigger changes, like shifting the geographic area of operation, triggered major bureaucratic processes (such as terminating a previous partnership agreement), even though changes due to contextual shifts were generally accepted by INGOs and donors. Such mandatory processes took a lot of time out from frontline work, especially for smaller community service organizations (CSOs). CSO access to emergency contingency funds is considered similarly underdeveloped.

Conflict-affected contexts are particularly marked by volatility, so reserves and contingency funds are important for organizations—especially for local NGOs and CSOs—to manage risk and operate in conflict.

It is not uncommon for other sectors, like Shelter, WASH, and CCCM, to include contingency funds in their program budgets. This is much less common or accepted for protection programs.