

Outcome-Oriented Methods

Do you know how you'll solve this problem?

Outcome-oriented methods encourage humanitarians to be clear on the protection outcomes we are trying to achieve, to have a theory about how to achieve those outcomes, and to plot a course of action toward them.

Outcome-oriented methods prompt us to keep learning, adapting, and enhancing our response in light of new learning and changes in the context.

WHY it is a key element:

In complex humanitarian environments, pre-determined or pre-defined activities are unlikely to adequately address protection risks. The interrelated and changeable context-specific factors that contribute to these risks require a flexible approach focused on results.

HOW you can do it:

- Avoid implementing pre-determined activities and instead design programs aimed at achieving measurable outcomes. Ensure monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) programs actively promote learning and measure outcomes, not just outputs.
- When designing a response, use a context-specific protection analysis to identify the desired protection outcomes (see Key Element 1: Continuous Context-Specific Protection Analysis.: [hyperlink to KE-1 Brief](#))
- Importantly, program design should be centered on the affected communities whose lives and futures are impacted by protection risks. Their experiences and perspectives are central and should shape the design process.
- Include MEAL and engage MEAL specialists at the earliest stages of response design and strategy development. Break down the silos between MEAL staff and program teams to ensure they work together throughout the response.
- Develop a theory of change about how you will achieve desired outcomes, including the pathways and milestones between the current protection risks and the desired outcome of reduced risk. This may include changes in behavior, attitudes, policies, knowledge, and practices that need to occur to achieve the desired outcomes in that specific context.

The key elements of results-based protection are:

- 1) Continuous context-specific protection analysis
- 2) Outcome-oriented methods
- 3) Multi-disciplinary strategies

Separate briefs are available for each element.

The desired protection outcome is reduction of the risk, including through improved fulfilment of rights and restitution for those who have experienced violence, coercion or deliberate deprivation. It includes reducing the threats people face, reducing people's vulnerabilities to these threats, and enhancing their capacities.

Results-based protection involves methods and approaches where changes in behavior, attitudes, policies, knowledge, and practices can be measured as intermediate results that lead to comprehensive risk reduction.



Integrated programming based on theory of change

Mercy Corps developed a Youth and Conflict Toolkit (2010) that "presents theories of change around youth and violence, exploring commonly made links between participation in violence and employment, political participation, community engagement, and others."

- Track progress and use this information and continuous context-specific protection analysis to inform decision making, including adjustments to programs. MEAL activities should capture and communicate learning in a timely way to inform decision making and program adjustment.
- Ensure reflectivity, flexibility, and adaptability in programming. Base this on regular reflection on and review of the effectiveness of interventions. Consider whether, how, and why change is happening as you thought it would and how shifts in the external environment might have affected the change.
- Promote learning, reflection, and program adaptation in regular team and cross-team meetings and discussions. Include the details of those discussions in regular internal reports, or ensure MEAL approaches capture and communicate this information.
- Refine and adapt initial or interim strategies that may be based on early information and rapid or limited protection analysis. Similarly, review and refine early protection analyses and the theory of change that underpins them as more information becomes available.

WHAT you need to do it:

- Ensure a common understanding in your own organization and among collaborating stakeholders of the desired protection outcome, and the role of each organizations in achieving it.
- Facilitate efficient two-way information flows between decision makers and frontline staff. Consider formal and informal and written and verbal communication mechanisms.
- Build and strengthen internal mechanisms, policies and resources that support and enable flexibility and adaptability in programming.
- Build linkages across disciplines within your organization, and with other relevant organizations and stakeholders.
- Establish 'fit for purpose' protection information management systems to support ongoing analysis, reflection, learning, and adaptation.
- Cultivate reflective, evaluative, and problem-solving mindsets among staff, and create opportunities for staff to regularly

However, Mercy Corps also undertook country-specific research which demonstrated the value and necessity of context-specific analysis combined with research to develop theories of change.¹ These inform the design of multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary programs where Mercy Corps "adopts an integrated approach to preventing young people from joining violent movements and promotes a wide range of economic, public sector, and community engagement opportunities in our youth and conflict programming."²



Gender-based violence case management outcome monitoring toolkit

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) developed an outcome monitoring tool for gender-based violence (GBV) case management. According to the IRC, "Monitoring and evaluation is an important part of accountable and effective [gender-based violence] response, but traditionally the sector has focused on outputs (number of survivors receiving services, number of staff trained and number of dignity kits distributed). The *GBV Case Management Outcome Monitoring Toolkit* helps users to measure outcomes, not outputs; the impact of gender-based violence case management on psychosocial well-being (measured by women's and older adolescent's ability to carry out important tasks in their daily lives) and felt stigma (both perceived and internalized experiences of stigma). This toolkit was inspired by IRC's commitment to measure outcomes as part of its *Outcomes and Evidence Framework*, specifically the outcome "Women and girls are protected from and treated for the consequence of GBV."³



Results-Based Protection Facilitator's Guide and Materials

Key elements

reflect on the effectiveness of actions to reduce protection risks.

- **Build effective working relationships with donors and advocate for flexible and adaptive programming methods.** See Key Enabler Briefs on Culture (Hyperlink), Systems (Hyperlink), Resources (hyperlink)

Need more guidance and resources about outcome-oriented methods?

- [Hyperlink to KE 3 Module](#)
- [Hyperlink to KE-3 Additional Resources](#)

For more information about results-based protection visit <https://protection.interaction.org/>

1 Mercy Corps *Peace and Conflict Sector Approach*, April 2016, p10. <https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/PeaceAndConflictSectorApproach.pdf>

2 Extracted from Mercy Corps *Youth and Conflict: Best Practices and Lessons Learned*, p3.

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwj0kY2X7pLrAhWg7HMBHdsECAoQFjAAe_gQIAxAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mindmeister.com%2Fgeneric_files%2Fget_file%2F9229962%3Ffiletype%3Dattachment_file&usg=AOvVaw38nQzOhLk5VUsrXIA7i8Dx

3 Extracted from International Rescue Committee, *GBV Case Management Outcome Monitoring Toolkit*, 2018.

[https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2019-](https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2019-07/GBV%20Case%20Management%20Outcome%20Monitoring%20Toolkit%20IRC%202018.pdf)

[07/GBV%20Case%20Management%20Outcome%20Monitoring%20Toolkit%20IRC%202018.pdf](https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2019-07/GBV%20Case%20Management%20Outcome%20Monitoring%20Toolkit%20IRC%202018.pdf) and

<https://www.elrha.org/researchdatabase/gender-based-violence-case-management-outcome-monitoring-toolkit/>