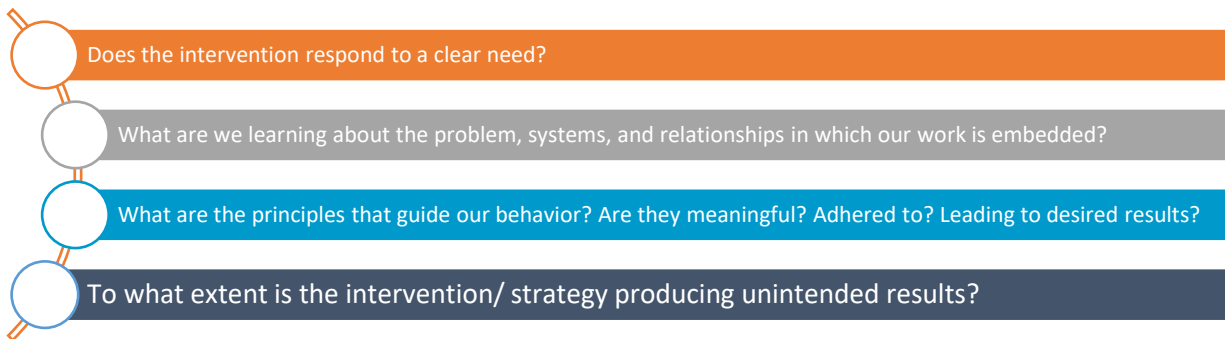


## Iterative Evaluation for Protection Tip Sheet #2: SELECTING OUR EVALUATION APPROACHES AND METHODS

In this series of tip sheets, InterAction highlights helpful considerations, resources, and examples of good practice to cultivate an evaluative mindset and using evaluation to adapt interventions for protective impact. The first installment of this series of tips focused on [establishing “evaluability” for protection interventions, defining the purpose and determining the criteria for success](#). This tip sheet outlines the next stages in the process – from refining our evaluation questions to considering which methods and approaches can help us learn and adapt in an iterative way.

**1.** As we SPECIFY THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS, it is useful to consider:

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- Does the intervention respond to a clear need?
  - What are we learning about the problem, systems, and relationships in which our work is embedded?
  - What are the principles that guide our behavior? Are they meaningful? Adhered to? Leading to desired results?
  - To what extent is the intervention/ strategy producing unintended results?

Asking these types of questions can help us cultivate outcome-oriented habits (*or evaluative thinking*) which reinforce evaluation and learning as an iterative process rather than a one-off exercise in the program cycle.

*“In our experience, promoting [evaluative thinking] is a promising practice due to its ability to: support and nurture ‘reflective practitioners who are able and willing to challenge continuously their own assumptions and the assumptions of their colleagues in a constructive way which generates new insights and leads to the development of explicit wisdom’; build trust between stakeholders to facilitate collective ‘sensemaking’; and elevate tacit and experiential local knowledge as a critical complement to ‘evidence-based’ knowledge.” (Archibald, Sharrock, Buckley, & Young, 2018)*

Evaluative thinking requires:

- Having a good [understanding of the problem and local contextual environment](#)
- Having a good [understanding of the pathways of change \(causal logic\)](#)
- Inquisitiveness and possessing a desire to [continuously test and learn](#) from all levels of staff
- An appetite [to take appropriate risks](#) and [apply learning to make course corrections](#) in their work when needed.

**2. SELECTING OUR EVALUATION APPROACHES AND METHODS:** For any evaluation, you’ll need a combination of evaluations approaches and methods for different aspects of the evaluation, from collecting data, analyzing data, reporting findings, to making decisions about the evaluation. Ideally, the richer the menu of options, the better equipped the evaluator is to come up with a design and specific tools that can make protection work more responsive to diverse and complex contextual environment and to prevailing data and environmental constraints.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more on “evaluability” of protection and components of a causal intervention logic, see ALNAP’s [Evaluating protection in humanitarian action: Issues and challenges](#)

A non-exhaustive list of approaches for evaluating protection could include:

- [Appreciative Inquiry](#)
- [Causal Link Monitoring](#)
- [Collaborative Outcomes Reporting](#)
- [Developmental Evaluation](#)
- [Empowerment Evaluation](#)
- [Innovation History](#)
- [Outcome Harvesting](#)
- [Outcome Mapping](#)
- [Principles-focused Evaluation](#)
- [Utilization-focused Evaluation](#)

Results-based methods are characterized by a high degree of flexibility and engagement of multiple actors, *especially affected people themselves*, playing a meaningful and creative role in informing and shaping the response. For helpful methods which may be incorporated in each approach, see guidance on [Facilitating Intentional Group Learning](#) and Stanford d.school's [Design Thinking Bootcamp Bootleg](#).

Aside from primary learning objectives, results-based methods have secondary benefits which may include developing or strengthening relationships through building group cohesion, norms, trust, and collaboration. Others may strengthen data analysis, active listening, critical thinking, etc.

*Want to learn how other organizations are using evaluation methods to support adaptation?*

[Check out our webinar](#) to listen to practitioners from Mercy Corps, Geneva Call, and Saferworld reflect on their approaches to continuous learning and adaptation for protection outcomes.



### Iterative Evaluation in Practice:

#### Oxfam's use of outcome mapping in their Community Protection Program in DRC<sup>2</sup>

In DRC, Oxfam used the outcome mapping methodology to look at changes they would expect and hope to see in community protection structures, in community members, and in local authorities. The process helped identify project milestones—such as: increase in confidence of community protection structures; improvement in structures' reactions when approached with an abuse; improvement in approaches to undertaking a risk analysis; and improvement in authorities' participation in working sessions. Through continuous monitoring and outcome harvesting, the team was able to collect evidence of what had been achieved and work backwards to determine whether and how the intervention contributed to the change. Team members then captured this learning in an activity/result log which was continuously updated and used to inform advocacy actions.



The next installment of this series will explore the resources, processes, and organizational culture required to **create an enabling environment for iterative evaluation practice**. As we continue to build our evidence base, we'd love to hear from you! How do you approach designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating programs in an iterative manner? **Do you have methods, tools, or stories to share? [Let us know!](#)**

<sup>2</sup> See Oxfam's [Outcome Mapping Presentation](#), 2015 Results-Based Protection Practitioners' Roundtable, and related [blog post](#).