

Results-Based Protection Cheat Sheet: Key Terms & Concepts



What do we mean when we say protection outcome? What is meant by reduced risk?

This cheat sheet is intended to serve as a reference guide for key terms and concepts frequently used when talking about results-based approaches to protection (RBP).

PROTECTION:

Protection is commonly defined as **FREEDOM FROM violence, coercion, and deliberate deprivation.**

Violence

- Killing
- Torture
- Maiming
- Beatings
- Rape
- Bombings, raids, and military strikes that target civilians and civilian properties

Coercion

- Restricted freedom of movement
- Forced or prevented return
- Human trafficking
- Forced participation in conflict (i.e., child soldiers)
- Slavery
- Forced marriage

Deliberate Deprivation

- Denying access to humanitarian aid
- Destruction of—or deliberate denial of access to—critical infrastructure, property, assets, and means of livelihood, etc. by parties to a conflict as a war tactic to restrict or deny people these services and necessities

PROTECTION OUTCOME:



“A protection outcome is a reduction of risk for people affected by crises. In this case, “risk” is people’s exposure to all forms of violence, coercion, and deliberate deprivation.” (InterAction 2020)

Achieving a protection outcome of reduced risk means the component parts contributing to risk (threat, vulnerability, and capacity) must be addressed. To reduce risk, we must reduce the threat, reduce the vulnerability to the threat, and increase the community’s/individual’s capacity to the threat so that specific forms of violence, coercion, and deliberate deprivation are reduced, prevented, or stopped.

A protection outcome is different from an output. An output is the manifestation of an activity, e.g., the number of people trained. While outputs are useful to track, they do not say anything about changes in risk patterns and the problem we are trying to solve.

RBP KEY ELEMENTS:

There are three main elements, or actions, that are essential to results-based protection: (1) continuous, context-specific protection analysis, (2) multi-disciplinary strategies, and (3) using outcome-oriented methods.

KEY ELEMENT 1: Continuous, Context-Specific Protection Analysis



Risk patterns should be examined in their specific contexts, including their specific historic, political, socio-economic, and linguistic realities at the local, regional, and/or national level. This analysis should be comprehensive and begin from the perspective of those affected. It should also be updated regularly based on new information and changing dynamics.

KEY ELEMENT 2: Multi-Disciplinary Strategies



Most protection concerns require more than one actor for effective problem-solving. To achieve a protection outcome, each actor needs to be aware of their role and responsibility towards meeting the outcome and design their intervention in relation to their specific strengths and contribution.

KEY ELEMENT 3: Outcome-Oriented Methods



Humanitarian action should be based on a context-specific causal pathway with the goal of measurable reduction in risk. Methods such as outcome mapping, systems-thinking, design thinking, and foresight analysis can be used to help define how to go about changing behavior, attitude, knowledge, policy, and practice for protection outcomes.



RISK EQUATION:

THREATS, **VULNERABILITIES**, and **CAPACITIES** are distinct factors that, when taken together, equal **RISK**. Through continuous, context-specific analysis, we can avoid generalizations and break down risk patterns into threats, vulnerabilities, and capacities. This is then used to develop the causal pathway for interventions to reduce risk and achieve a protection outcome.



THREAT

A threat represents the source of the risk.

EXAMPLE: an armed non-state actor who recruits young boys as a military tactic

CAPACITY

Capacities represent the person's or community's ability to mitigate that threat. This is not about humanitarians' building capacities, but about existing individual/family/communities' capacities to overcome the threat.

EXAMPLE: a community watch group that serves as an alert system when armed groups are in the area

VULNERABILITY

Vulnerabilities are the distinct factors that make a person or group of people susceptible to that threat.

EXAMPLE: local boys of a certain ethnic group aged between 10-17 that are specifically targeted by the armed group

REDUCED RISK:

Measurable reduction in identified threats, reduction in people's vulnerabilities to those threats, and/or people's increased capacities to manage threats so that a specific form of violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation is reduced, prevented, or stopped. It should be noted that threats, vulnerabilities, and capacities are interlinked and always evolving. When one piece of the puzzle changes, this will impact the other parts. Ultimately, reduced risk means that the affected population faces fewer incidents, to fewer people, with lower impact over time.

RISK PATTERN:

Trends in specific threats that affected people face. Specific threats should be voiced by the affected people themselves and identify who exactly (e.g., adolescent boys, young women, elderly men and women, LGBTQIA+ people, etc.) is vulnerable to the threat, when, and why. Risk patterns should be disaggregated wherever possible to include gender, ethnicity, time, location, political affiliation, religion, disability, economic status, and other factors which have implications for exposure to threats. Generalizations should be actively avoided.

EXAMPLE: Local boys of a certain ethnic group and poor economic status aged between 10-17 are specifically targeted near football fields for enlistment by the armed group as a war tactic.

CAUSAL PATHWAY:

This describes the context-specific pathway and milestones (i.e., changes in behavior, attitude, knowledge, policy, or practice of duty bearers or other stakeholders) between the specific risk factors affected people are facing and the desired protection outcome (reduction in risk). A context-specific causal pathway serves as the underlying strategy of interventions that are designed to address a specific risk pattern in a specific context. Causal pathways should clearly identify at what level (individual, household, community, etc.) interventions need to be undertaken and results should be achieved and observed; describe the sequence of actions at different levels of intervention; describe the roles of various actors; and explicitly articulate the assumptions and rationale behind the desired change, sequence of actions, roles of different actors, and expected results.