Template tool

Protection analysis | Theory of change

Global

Theory of change for community-based protection programmes

Introduction

A community-based protection (CBP) programme's theory of change (ToC) helps describe:

- The desired impact of the programme;
- How this impact can be achieved;
- The steps needed to make the change happen.

A ToC can be simple or very detailed; presented as a graphic or described in a written narrative. It serves as a basis for the strategy and focus of the CBP programme and can be useful when explaining the programme or approach to stakeholders including communities, partners, authorities, donors and other organizations. ToCs should build on context and protection analyses, including a strong gender analysis.

This document offers tips on how to develop a ToC diagram, including a template (Annex 1) and an example (Annexes 2 and 3).[1]

How to develop a theory of change

It is recommended that everyone involved in the CBP programme contributes to the ToC. This could be achieved through a participatory workshop (in plenary or smaller working groups, depending on the number of people) or a number of smaller discussion and reflection sessions.

As the different elements of the theory are likely to change during its development, it can be a good idea to first develop a diagram using post-it notes or pieces of paper that can be moved around, removed or added, until everyone agrees on the result.

Step 1: What is the protection situation?

- Present the results of the community profiling that you have undertaken previously to participants, with a focus on the elements of the protection analysis.

1 This global tool builds and further expands on existing guidance documents produced by Oxfam's protection teams in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Lebanon.

Step 2: What is the overall impact sought to be achieved through the CBP programme?

- Discuss with all the participants what protection impact they want to see in the lives of women, men, girls and boys.
- This is usually a change that the CBP programme will not be able to achieve on its own; other groups will need contribute independently of the programme.

Step 3: What are the necessary 'sub-changes' that need to happen to make the overall change possible?

- Identify the necessary changes in practices, ideas, beliefs and policies that will lead to the overall change.
- Identify **who** must change **what** and **where**.

Step 4: How will these changes be achieved?

A programme's sub-strategies or pathways lay out the actions that will contribute to the overall change in the protection situation of target communities. For each pathway, there must be an identified sub-change to which it will contribute, a person or group to be targeted, and a description of the type of action. Types of action can include, but are not limited to:

- training;
- material support;
- analysis;
- advocacy;
- sensitization;
- facilitation of access to services;
- strengthened social cohesion; and/or
- support to community members' own self-protection strategies.

Choose the pathways that respond to the most important needs of the women, men, girls and boys in the communities that are not yet covered by other actors, and for which Oxfam and partners have the necessary expertise and capacities.

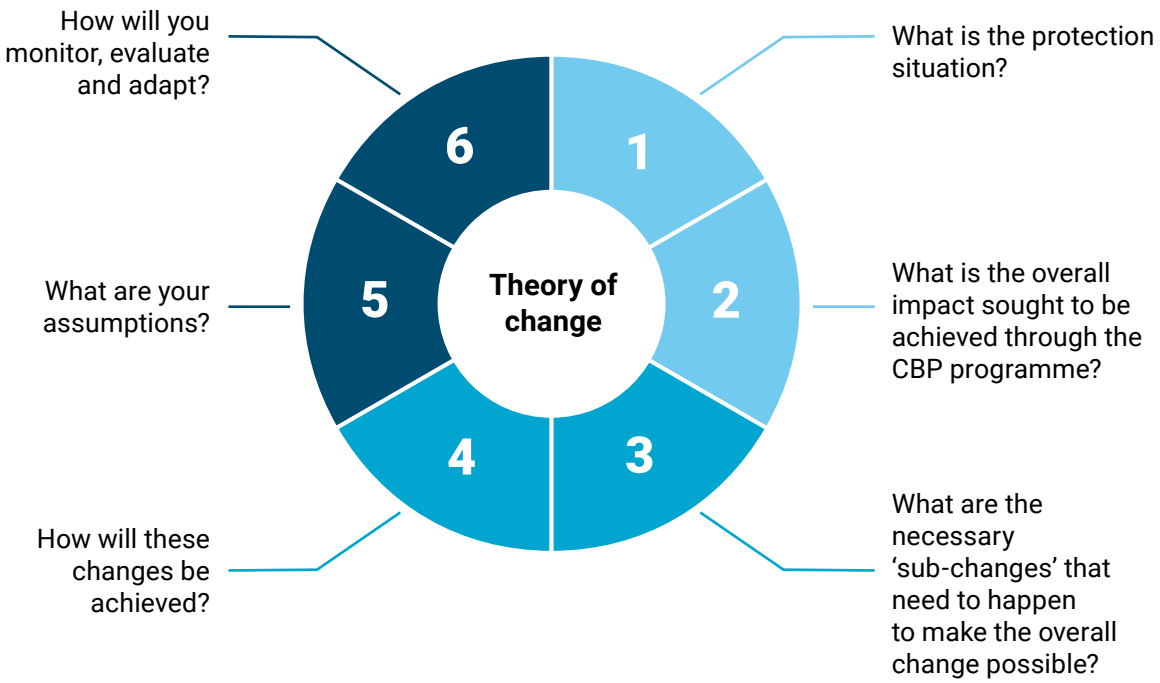
Step 5: What are your assumptions?

The ToC will necessarily be based on a number of assumptions. In this step, identify those assumptions, analyse the risk of them not being met, and measures needed to mitigate such risks. Examples could be 'community members are willing to join community protection structures as volunteers', and 'in the communities, we will be able to find influential allies that are willing to engage and actively promote change to harmful practices'.

Step 6: How will you monitor, evaluate and adapt?

During the implementation of the programme, changes will happen in the context or as a result of programme activities. The ToC should be updated in line with these changes and be adapted as necessary.

Test the ToC and assumptions by monitoring and evaluating the programme to verify whether change is taking place in the way anticipated. Adapt the ToC and assumptions if and when necessary.


How will you monitor, evaluate and adapt?
What is the protection situation?
What are your assumptions?
Theory of change
What is the overall impact sought to be achieved through the CBP programme?
How will these changes be achieved?
What are the necessary 'sub-changes' that need to happen to make the overall change possible?
1
2
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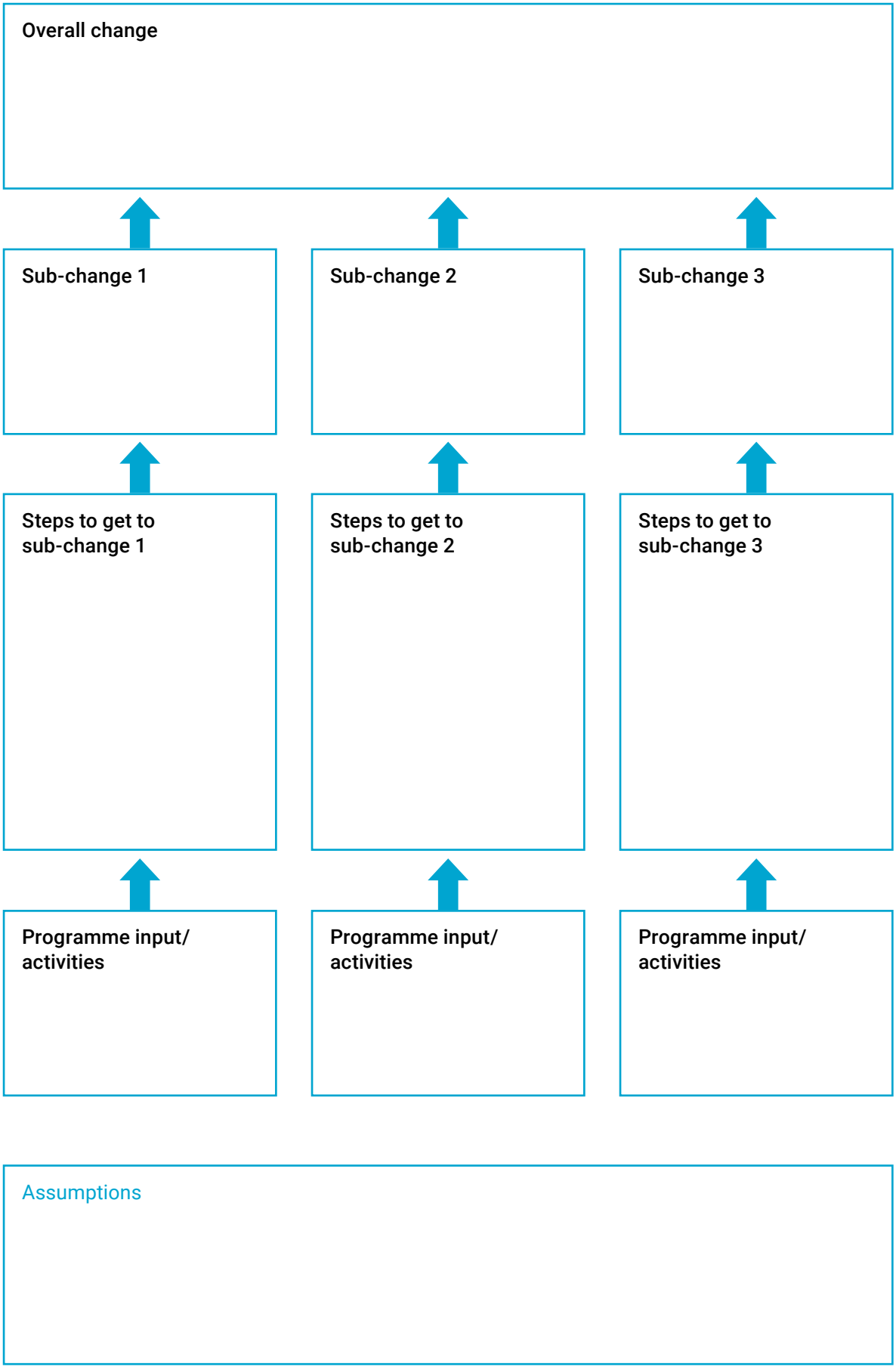
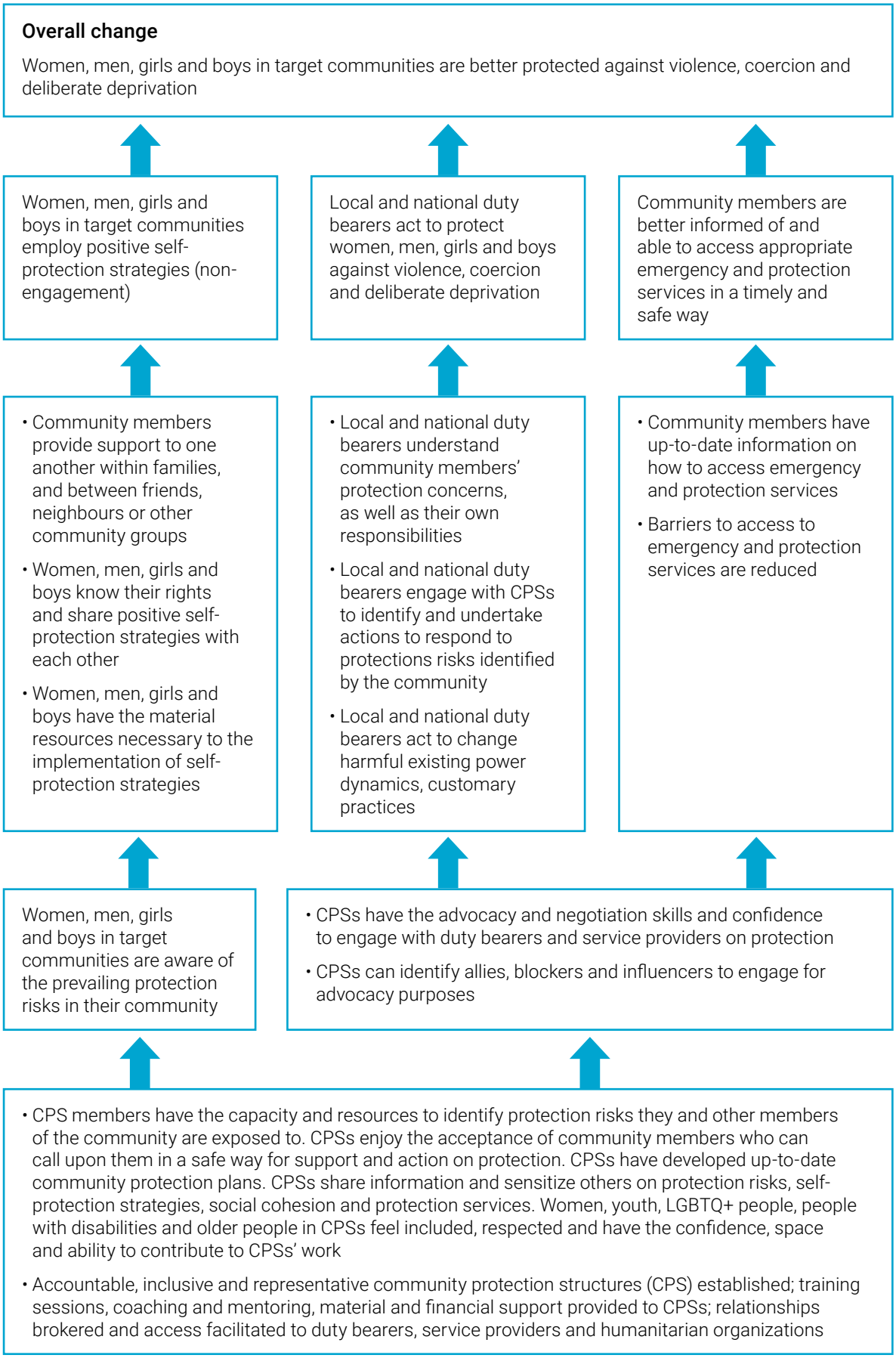
Annex 1: Template for developing a theory of change



Annex 2: Example of a theory of change for community-based protection programming



Annex 3: Example of a theory of change narrative

This is the narrative version of the theory of change diagram displayed in Annex 2.

The **overall change** that this community-based protection programme seeks to achieve is that women, men, girls and boys in target communities are better protected against violence, coercion and deliberate deprivation.

If accountable, inclusive and representative community protection structures (CPSs) are established in target communities and training sessions, coaching and mentoring, material and financial support is provided to these CPSs and relationships are brokered and access to duty bearers service providers is facilitated by supporting humanitarian organizations, **then**, CPS members have the capacity and resources to identify protection risks they and other members of the community are exposed to.

If, CPSs enjoy the acceptance of community members who can call upon them in a safe way for support and action on protection and if CPSs have developed up-to-date community protection plans, they share information and sensitize others on protection risks, self-protection strategies, social cohesion and protection services and if women, youth, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities and older people in CPSs feel included, respected and have the confidence, space and ability to contribute to CPSs' work, **then**, women, men, girls and boys in target communities will be aware of the prevailing protection risks and self-protection strategies in their community. This will lead to community members providing support to one another within families, and between friends, neighbours or other community groups; to women, men, girls and boys knowing their rights and sharing positive self-protection strategies with each other; and them having the material resources necessary to the implementation of self-protection strategies. **As a result**, women, men, girls and boys in target communities employ positive self-protection strategies (non-engagement) **(sub-change 1)**.

In addition, CPSs will be able to identify allies, blockers and influencers to engage for advocacy purposes and they will have the advocacy and negotiation skills and confidence to engage with duty bearers and service providers on protection. CPS member will thus be able to make local and national duty bearers understand community members' protection concerns, as well as their own responsibilities, get them to engage with CPSs to identify and undertake actions to respond to protections risks identified by the community and to take action to change harmful existing power dynamics, customary practices. **As a result**, local and national duty bearers will act to protect women, men, girls and boys against violence, coercion and deliberate deprivation **(sub-change 2)**.

Moreover, thanks to the CPSs' actions community members will have up-to-date information on how to access emergency and protection services and barriers to access to emergency and protection services will be reduced. **As a result**, community members will be better informed of and able to access appropriate emergency and protection services in a timely and safe way **(sub-change 3)**.