

“Children under Threat”

Child Rights Assessment Report

Based on consultations with
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
in Kachin and Northern Shan States, Myanmar

20th April 2020

Conducted by



Funded by

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Acknowledgements

This report has been possible thanks to the contribution of many actors. Most importantly all Internally Displaced Persons, children, parents, caregivers, teachers, and many other Key Informant Individuals who gave their time, and share their experiences and thoughts enabling us to get a report well-grounded in their realities.

Thanks to the numerous staff from KBC, KDG, KMSS, Metta and WPN, that conducted interviews and collected data, sometimes under complex environments; and appreciated and recognize of WPN Organization who organized and leading to implement this report. WPN would like to say thanks to the donor who made it possible the realisation of this assessment.

Executive Summary

This executive summary highlights only some key findings and recommendations of this report; for a better understanding the full document must be read.

This report is the result of the assessment conducted by KBC, KDG, KMSS, Metta and WPN, to analyse the situation of children, boys and girls in Kachin and Northern Shan State from a rights and gender equality perspective.

Context: The nine years of armed conflict in Kachin and Northern Shan State has displaced over 120,000 people; children are one of the most vulnerable victims of this conflict and its consequences. The sample taken for this Child rights assessment, consisted in 703 persons of which 56% were children. The assessment covers four children's perception areas and seven thematic research issues.

Findings: Children's perceptions:

Self-awareness and coping capacity: children have enough or good self-awareness of their rights and protection issues, as well as the services and support they could get. Most children can identify their strengths; most of them feel that they can cope with issues not harming themselves or others; but 20% indicated that they do not express their feelings to their family and caregivers. One third of the children cannot cope with their problems without harming themselves. Several children refer to domestic violence. Girls are very vocal about the sexual harassment they are exposed to, and many of them suffer. Girls expressed how these sexual abuses are translated in a feeling of shame and getting out of social participation, affecting their social behaviours and self-esteem.

Feelings of integration, being cared and participation: The school is the place where children identified more clearly as their own space; anything that happens and goes through the school is highly relevant to children. In general, children's feelings of integration are high in most areas; but boys and girls staying near host communities or attending public schools in GCA feel discriminated or being regarded as "lower people" because of their condition as IDPs. Domestic violence, corporal punishment against children by parents, or caregivers is a very common practice recognised and somehow "normalised". In some cases, the brutality of the punishment could reach to torture. Children with disabilities, confronted the highest challenges of integration and inclusion in the community. The degree in which parents and caregivers know their children varies from 63% in GCA, to 28% in NSS. In several camps children said that their parents consume drugs or alcohol, making the relationship at home very difficult.

Negative feelings and low self-esteem: Children expressed deep sadness and internal suffering. More than a quarter of them felt hopeless and 23% said they feel angry frequently and without control. About a fifth of them feel useless and recognise that there is nothing that could calm them down and they feel scared. The lack of conditions to study in the camps, lack of space, lack of time, lack of educational materials affect the performance of the children at school, and their feelings of self-esteem. Frequently these negative feelings are translated into risky behaviours of drugs and alcohol consumption.

Safety within the community: In NSS 16% of children perceive that the camps are not safe; in KCA it is only 2%. Girls expressed more anxiety in terms of safety. There are several cases of girls being systematically raped at domestic level. Human trafficking of girls in China is also reported. Girls and women are the main victims of domestic violence. Children, who work outside the camps are frequently exploited and not paid for the work done. The presence of Myanmar army near some camps in GCA, increases the feeling of insecurity of children. Forced recruitment of children when moving outside the camps, is mentioned as a main safety and security issue, particularly by boys. Behaviours of drugs' users in nearby camp areas, is also a factor of unsafety for children in the camps.

Parents' and Key Informants perceptions:

Health and Nutrition: The most significant diseases affecting children are: seasonal flu, and diarrhoea. Sore eyes and skin diseases associated with poor hygiene and sanitation conditions are very common, as well as skin burns due to proximity to fire. Malnutrition is widely spread on children under five. Drugs' addiction is affecting many children, particularly those who quit the school, or whose parents are addicted too. Access to health services is limited and parents cannot afford the payment of medical services. The lack of access to health services is translated into high children's morbidity and mortality, this also brings feelings of guilty in many parents, who feel hopeless and unable to take care of their children's health.

WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene): In some camps, drinkable water is not sufficient or not clean enough. Children have got good hygiene behaviours, handwashing is a regular practice of children in most camps, but there is a lack of soap and other hygiene items, available for the families. The limited number of toilets and limited bathing facilities, made them insufficient or inappropriate for children's needs. Children with disabilities do not have accessible toilets in most cases, making their lives and hygiene conditions very bad.

Education: Drop out from school is high in many camps, the lack of financial means of parents is one of the main reasons for that. Girls' education is not prioritised by some families, which creates discrimination in terms of access to education for them. Myanmar education curricula is not oriented to stimulate children's knowledge; this reduces children's interest to go to school. The lack of adequate educational means, and the low ratio of teachers per student, impacts on the quality of education in many camps and on the performance of the students. Domestic violence and lack of conditions for study at IDP shelters, affects negatively the educational progress of children. Education opportunities vanish as children grow up; beyond grade 8 or 10 there are very limited opportunities for children to progress to higher studies.

Participation: Children's participation in the camps is mainly limited to sports, dance, and other type of competitions, or some religious events. Most parents acknowledged that they are still weak in listening to their children and taking responsibilities on their initiatives or desires, in terms of community participation. Cultural gender discrimination affects girls to participate more actively in community's activities and taking responsibility on them.

Politics, safety and economic situation: The conflict situation and the unstable political environment have many negative effects on children's daily life; as parents cannot access their land or hillside for cultivation this affects the income capacity of the family which impacts directly on children's health and educational opportunities. The lack of safe environment and lack of perspectives is bringing some children, (mainly adolescents' boys) to the consumption of drugs, which ends in taking part in robbery and other criminal acts, which perpetuates their marginalisation in the society.

Child protection: Children's corporal punishment is practiced across the camps. The lack of family's financial means, forces children to work, some go to China looking for job opportunities, where child labour exploitation takes place extensively, involving human trafficking too. There is a trend of increasing domestic violence, emotional abuse, children and parents' relationship's deterioration, and gender based violence affecting girls specially. There are many children with no National Registration Card (NRC), which limits the exercise of their rights. The existence of child protection focal persons in some camps, has been very helpful in responding to child protection cases.

Service Mapping: Assistance in the camps is provided by a wide range of actors, mostly Local NGOs and Faith Based Organisations members of the JST, covering several child protection sectors. The services provided in the camps are coordinated through the Camp Management Committees at camp level.

Key recommendations:

- Children must be consulted more deeply and widely. This consultation must be translated into real participation of children, according to their needs and interests.
- Girls' and boys' differentiated contexts, needs and priorities, ought to be carefully understood.
- Children protection programmes, should be done within a "family approach"; understanding the family environment of children.
- Taking care of a good and sound school environment in all its aspects is fundamental to protect children's rights.

- Pay high priority to the impact that drugs' addiction is having on children and their families in many aspects.
- The culture of normalising physical violence against children must be stopped.
- Child Protection programmes must be designed according with the conflict-political-social context in which they take place, (GCA, KCA and NSS).
- Nutritional programmes for children and teenagers, must be included as an essential part of children's rights.
- Sexual reproductive health education and services must be extended to the camps.
- Psychosocial support to children, must be included as part of children's right to health; incorporating these experiences at school level, through arts.
- Hygiene practices must be reinforced and significant resources must be invested in the following months, taking into account COVID-19 context.
- Toilets and bathing facilities must be improved, making appropriate adapted facilities for children living with disabilities.
- Invest in ensuring safety of drinkable water in the camps, by doing filtering and chlorinating.
- Girls must be supported to get access to education up to the highest level.
- Improve educational facilities, and setting up safe and equipped studying environments for children.
- Set up safe sports and play grounds facilities, in IDP camps, for children of different ages.
- Support teachers, with pedagogic, educational materials and financial support, to enhance the quality of teaching at IDPs schools.
- Implement specific programmes addressed to girls' participation and integration in community life; particularly for those girls affected by sexual abuses or domestic violence.
- Integrate and promote participation of children into ethnic culture and cultural events, to promote their own ethnic values, identity and social cohesion.
- Develop vocational and job oriented educational programmes for teenagers, boys and girls.
- Child protection programmes should link with livelihoods programmes and economic development programmes addressed to adults.
- Reactivate and increase, child protection programmes, particularly those related with awareness raising among adults, setting up focal reference persons for Child Protection.
- Stopping harmful works and labour exploitation of children. Specific programmes on child labour protection must be set up, including Child migration and child trafficking.
- Legal support services for children and their families must be set up to protect children's fundamental rights as citizens.
- International actors (INGOs, and UN agencies), must work hand in hand with duty bearers and transfer their Child Rights service provision to principled, reliable and accountable LNGOs.
- LNGOs must have a joint strategy on Children Rights.

Introduction

This report is the result of the assessment conducted by KBC, KDG, KMSS, Metta and WPN, to analyse the situation of children adolescents, boys and girls in Kachin and Northern Shan State of Myanmar from a rights and gender equality perspective.

The outcomes of this report are designed to improve Child Rights Protection project activities with conflict affected populations in Kachin State and Northern Shan State.

The report is based on the analysis made of the interviews conducted with children, parents and key informant individuals, through individual and focus groups discussions, which WPN and JST members collected directly in IDPs camps, in the three geographical areas where the assessment focused, in November 2019.

Context

After 17 years of ceasefire, the conflict in Kachin State resumed on June 9th, 2011. Intensified fighting since then, between the Myanmar armed forces and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), has caused hundreds of casualties on both sides, significant damage to the infrastructures and displaced over 120,000 civilians, living in 177 camps¹. The prolonged stay in the camps and the intensification of Myanmar Army attacks nearby IDP camps, have decreased the IDPs protection and deteriorated living conditions in many camps, this affects particularly children and other vulnerable groups. The lack of humanitarian access to KCA for several humanitarian actors has also worsened the situation in the conflict area.

Children at IDP camps have experienced the suffering, social and economic problems and have been absorbing those over the last nine years; shaping their own physical and psychological development. Displacement has become a key element in their personalities, for good and bad, bringing with them hard experiences that will condition their future as adults, for their full life.

International conventions and principles on children and girls rights², are not honoured by authorities and duty bearers, this expose children and particularly girls to strong abuses of their rights. Children Rights are not at the centre of Government's interests, Media usually portrays them as passive victims, and in most cases Humanitarian programmes designed by INGOs, UN agencies such as UNICEF or ILO; or even local NGOs, do not include children as a key stakeholder, that should be involved in consultations from the very beginning of the programmes' design. Therefore, frequently children are an object of attention rather than the subject of attention, that gets ownership and an active role in expressing and protecting their own rights.

The spread of COVID-19 that started after the interviews were made, but which are impacting in the camps at the moment of writing this report, did not emerge in the findings of the report, but necessarily has been taken into account in the recommendations for the future work that organisations will carry on to protect Children's Rights.

¹According with data available from JST

²Such as: Convention on the Rights of the Child Adopted on 1989, of which Myanmar is signatory. The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, (CEDAW); and IASC Policy (and Accountability Framework) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action, 2017.

Objectives of the Assessment

The main objective of the Child Rights Assessment is to provide a reliable overview of IDPs children's rights situation, with a particular focus on equality for girls; to inform and guide future works on Child Rights Protection of KBC, KDG, KMSS, Metta and WPN and JST members, with a Rights Based Approach that will make duty bearers accountable on Children's Rights protections.

This is translated into the following specific objectives:

1. **Incorporate the voices of children** and get a better understanding of what they feel are the greatest violations of their rights and what are the gaps in girls' equality.
2. Analyse the extent to which **children's rights and girl's equality is realised in IDP camps** in Kachin and Northern Shan States.
3. Analyse the extent to which duty bearers, key actors and stakeholders **are able to protect** and fulfil children's rights and equality for girls.
4. Identify any **opportunities and constraints** for NGOs to make a significant contribution to the fulfilment of children's rights and equality for girls in the conflict area (IDPs Camp and host communities) over the next years

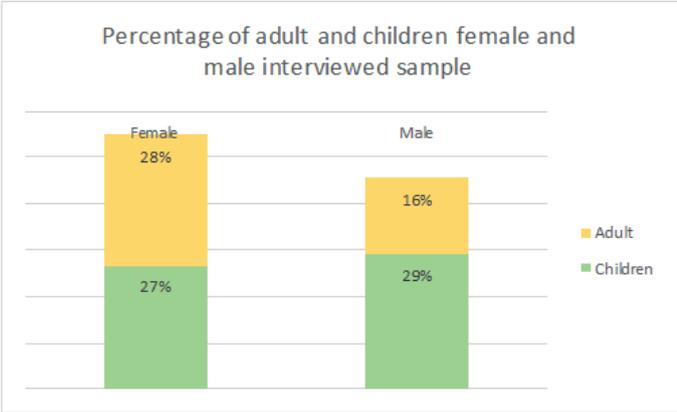
Scope, outreach and sampling

The assessment covers a total population of 36,509 people (equivalent to 7,046 Households), distributed in 30 camps of 10 townships of three geographical-conflict areas: Kachin State Government Control Area (GCA); Kachin State KIO Controlled Area (KCA) and Northern Shan State (NSS).

The sample taken for this assessment consisted in 703 persons of which 384 (55%), were women or girls and the rest, 319 (45%), were men or boys. Children represented 56% of the total people interviewed, and adults the remaining 44%. Children interviewed were within the ages of 12 to 18-year-old.

Interviews were done through: 28 Children Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and 23 FGD of parents. 53 children and 33 parents and caregivers were interviewed individually. In addition to this, 36 Key Informants interviews were done individually.

For more details on the samples and locations of camps interviewed, please refer to Annex 3.

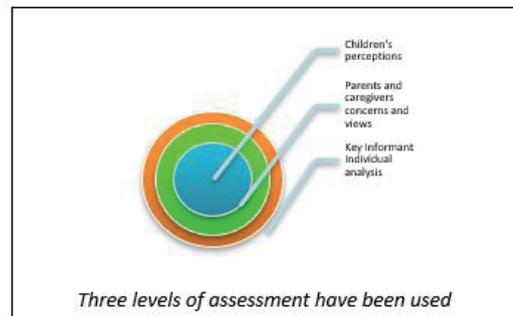


Methodology

The assessment was designed to understand the reality of children's rights, starting from children's perceptions and experiences, as this is at the end of the day, the final test of Child Rights fulfilment. In this regards, different techniques were used to ensure children could express themselves freely. Groups' dynamics, "problem-solving tree" drawing representation, and the creation of trustful environments for the interviews, were carefully taken into account.

As a second layer of understanding Children's Rights reality, parents and those taking care of children more directly, were consulted with a thematic approach, so that the main issues of concern and their views were taken into account.

As a third layer to understand children's reality, Key Informant Interviews were conducted following the same thematic approach. These consultations included: teachers, camp committees' members, school principals, religious leaders, etc. The objective of these interviews was to get a more analytical approach of Children's Rights reality, from the different angles in which these persons interact with children.



Therefore, the assessment was divided into four children's perceptions areas:

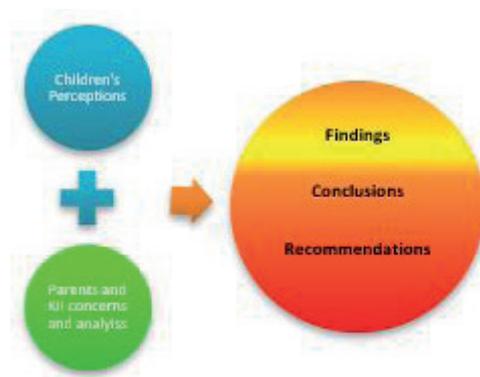
- A. Self-awareness and coping capacity
- B. Feeling of integration, being cared and participation
- C. Negative feelings and low self-esteem
- D. Safety within the community

And seven thematic research issues:

1. Health and Nutrition
2. WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)
3. Education
4. Participation
5. Politics, Safety and Economic situation
6. Child Protection
7. Service mapping

As said, each perception area and thematic issue was covered by samples of Individual Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Children's dynamics (Problem Tree dynamics) and Key Informant Individuals' interviews.

From the analysis of these two blocks of perceptions and thematic issues, main conclusions emerged, that led to the main recommendations presented at the end of the report.



Limitations and Constraints

The wide range of issues covered in the interviews and the interconnection existing among all of them, has required a detailed analysis of the inputs received from children, parents and Key Informant Interviews (KII).

Confidentiality, and preserving children respondents' data, has been taken into account in order to protect them; therefore, some quotations in this report are referred with limited source identification's details.

The way in which data were collected at field level, did not allow to make a detailed statistical analysis based on gender, or subgroups of ages. The lack of gender disaggregated data collection has been a major obstacle, that has been mitigated by doing a careful analysis of the interviews' reports, and doing a very gender sensitive reading of the outcomes of the interviews.

Nevertheless, detailed analysis is provided by geographical-conflict areas, and gender analysis has been done based on the individual interviews which provide very rich analytical content.

The initial assessment design did not include any systematic collection of data or interviews with key duty bearers to analysis their understanding, engagement and translation on policy and legislation, this has created a vacuum of information in this area of analysis that should be remedied with additional research if required.

The assessment analysis was initially commissioned to a consultant who quit the job unexpectedly, a second one took over but could not do it, and finally a third consultant took responsibility on all the material developed during the interviews and with the assistance of the commissioning organisations did some additional interviews, did the analysis and produced this report.

The assessment took place just before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, this has conditioned the next steps of compilation of data and reporting.

Findings

As indicated, the findings of this assessment are based on children's perceptions and parents and KII concerns, views and analysis. Findings are presented in global terms and also by geographical-conflict areas, in the case of children perceptions.

Children's perceptions

Children were interviewed in the camps in Kachin State in GCA and KCA, as well as in Northern Shan State. A total of 324 children participated in the interviews.

The results are presented in four main blocks:

- A. Self-awareness and coping capacity
- B. Feeling of integration, being cared and participation
- C. Negative feelings and low self-esteem
- D. Safety within the community



A. Self-awareness and coping capacity

The overall results indicate that a large majority of children, up to 83% have enough (44%) or good (39%), self-awareness on children's rights and protection issues, as well as the services and support they could get within the community.

Rights' awareness in the school is a main source of information for many children.

A significant part of them declared that they can identify their strengths and they feel they can cope with issues not harming themselves or others.

Nevertheless, when looking more in detail to the different components, children expressed that they have a fair knowledge of their strengths, almost 90%, as well as their rights (91%) and the services they could get (93%). But 20% indicated that they do not express their feelings to their family and caregivers. Attention should be given to the many children who live with relatives, stepparents, or neighbours, due to many different reasons; in most cases the displacement and lack of resources have affected the stability and caring capacity of families and couples. This has brought many children out of their parents' care.

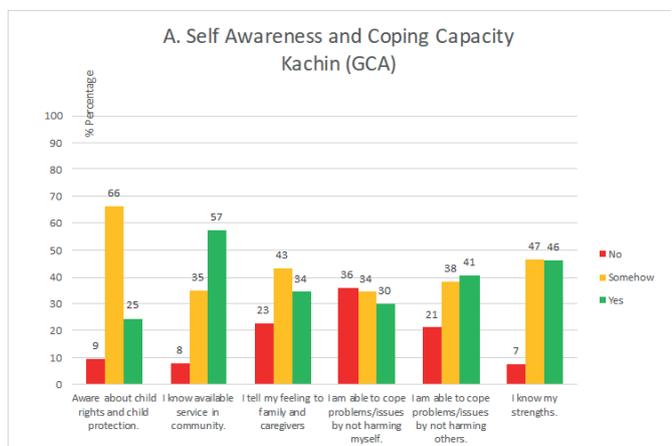
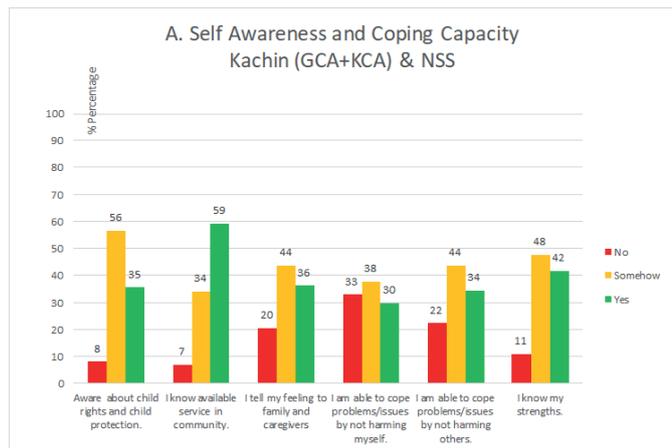
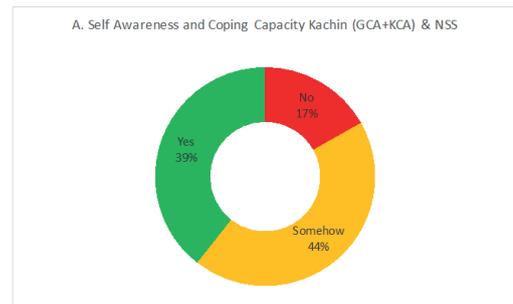
"We know about our rights. However, in reality, we do not have any rights, so there are more and more adults and children who are becoming disappointed. We have an increasing number of children who use drugs". **IDP boy**

Also one third of the children cannot cope with their problems not harming themselves, and 22% recognised that they are unable to do so without harming others. This is probably the most alarming result of this assessment chapter.

Several children refer to domestic violence, and being with stepmothers or stepfathers, as their parents could not take care of them due to financial issues, family problems or parents being drug addicted. This brings them to a domestic environment where they do not feel at home and frequently they suffer from corporal and verbal abuses.

Girls are very vocal about the sexual harassment they are exposed to, and many of them suffer. Girls expressed how these sexual abuses are translated into a feeling of shame and getting out of social participation, affecting their social behaviours and self-esteem.

"Now, we live in a tiny place which is difficult. When we arrived at this place, we were discriminated against at the school. We feel depressed because we are IDPs. We do not have enough time at school because we need to participate in various types of activities. Because of those activities, our school marks are low". **Girl, 14-year-old**



There is a cycle of alcoholism - drug addiction, domestic violence and sexual abuses and underage forced marriages, that provokes deep suffering and trauma in many girls as they expressed in the interviews. Several girls expressed a deep feeling of

empathy and sorrow for their mates under these circumstances, making the individual suffering a collective one for young girls.

Some boys expressed assertive attitudes and strong desires to build their future according to their own interests and wishes.

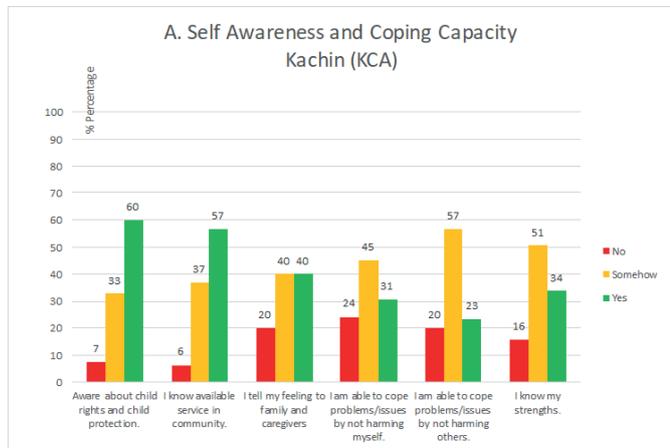
Most of boys and girls are aware of the importance of education for their lives, although the hard environment in which they live is not conducive for studying.

So, as an overall picture, children know about the rights and problems and the resources available to protect their rights; but for many children, this knowledge does not correlate equally with the capacity they have to address their issues positively, as most of them do not have a domestic or communal environment where they feel heard, listened and respected.

“There are a lot of students in the classroom, and in our community, there are those who smoke, chew betel nut, and drink alcohol”. **Girl from camp in GCA**

The analysis in the three areas; GCA, KCA and NSS, brings some differences.

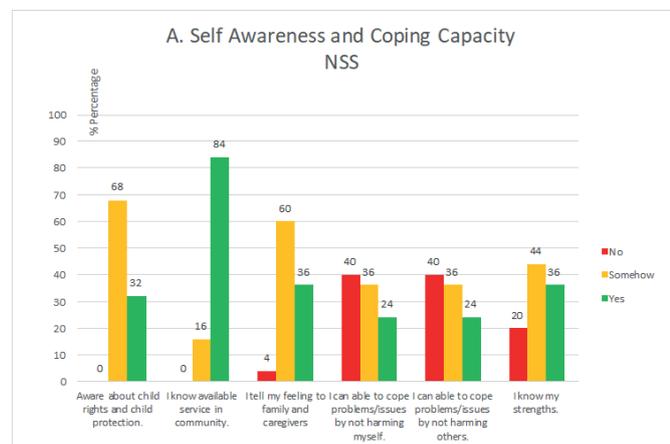
In Kachin State GCA, the results give similar trends as in the overall assessment, as shown in the graph. The main difference could be found on the capacity of sharing their own feelings to parents and caregivers, which in GCA is lower than in other areas. The reason behind this could be that in general IDP children in GCA, are more open to the hosting society, as most camps are within towns or nearby towns, and the interaction of IDP children outside the camp is higher, bringing them more distant from their parents or caregivers.



In Kachin State KCA, the results show a different trend as the percentage of children having good knowledge of Child rights and available resources is significantly higher than in the other areas, but on the contrary the percentage of children that do not know their strengths is 16%, higher than the average of 11%. Probably a reason behind this, is that children in KCA, have a more collective sense of resistance and being part of a collective effort of survival; rather than a more individual approach to this. The collective dimension in KCA is greater than in GCA as shown in different aspects of this assessment.

In NSS, the situation indicated that children are aware of their rights and services available to protect them; but on the contrary the number of children that expressed that they can't cope with their problems in a positive manner, without harming themselves or others, is almost double (40%) than in other areas. Looking at these data most probably the first information on knowledge of Children rights and access to services, should be researched more in detail as probably answers do not reflect the reality.

In any case, it is significant the frustration that children showed in NSS, regarding their capacity to cope with their own problems. For sure, the conditions in the camps and in their homes, the lack of perspectives, drugs use, force recruitment and other serious problems that children raised during the interviews, portray a very suffocating environment which explains this “disability” expressed by children in NSS, to cope with their own problems.



B. Feelings of integration, being cared and participation

The second block of the assessment done directly with children, addresses how children perceived their own environment and how they feel integrated and cared on it.

The overall picture shows that school is the place where children identified more clearly as their own space, (almost 99% of children, of which 86% expressed this in absolute terms). Therefore, anything that happens and goes through the school is highly relevant to children. This pattern is repeated with minor variations in the three areas; being in KCA the area where it is a bit lower, having 3% of the children not feeling that school is their place. This could be explained as some children in KCA are in boarding schools, far away from their homes and relatives, making their feelings less attached to the school than in other places where children stay at home or with relatives.

In general, children's feelings of integration are high in most areas; the aspect in which children expressed they have less participation, is in prevention and response activities to combat abuses and violence against children.

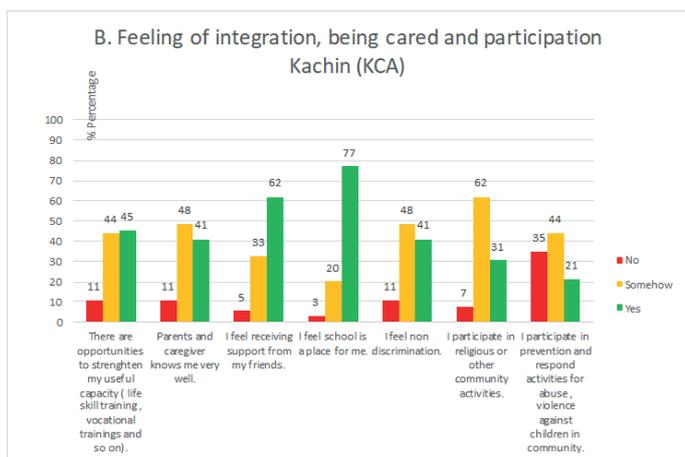
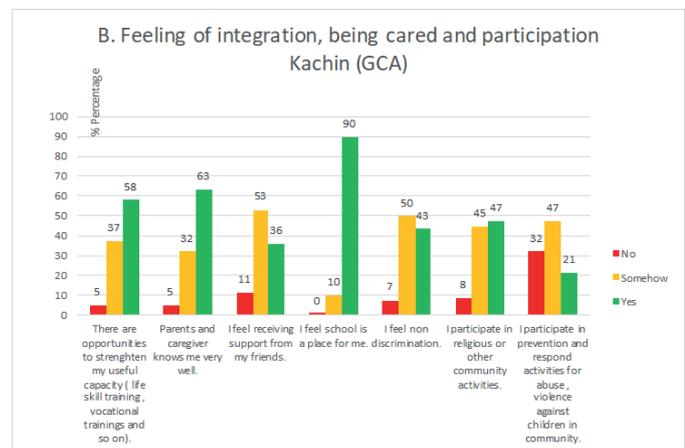
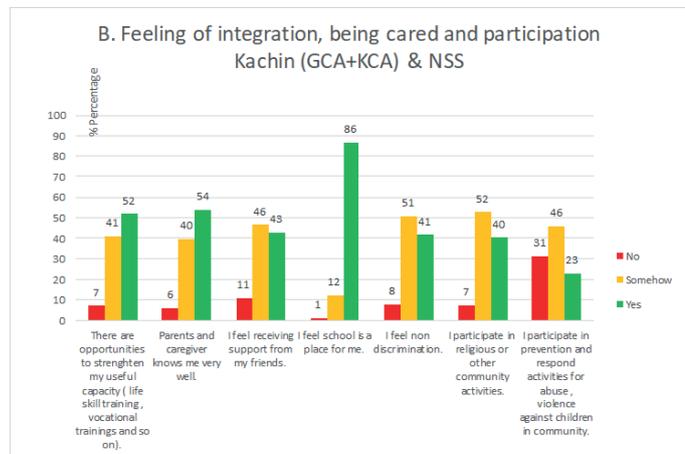
Boys participate generally in sport activities and other camps' activities. Girls participate in some sports but also in other activities which they chose on their own, such as flowers' arrangement, which is culturally very embedded in Kachin tradition, and religious community activities.

Girls and boys staying near host communities or attending public schools in GCA expressed being discriminated or being regarded as "lower people" because of their condition as IDPs.

Domestic violence, corporal punishment against children by parents, or caregivers is a very common practice recognised and somehow "normalised" by parents, caregivers and children in most families. Even elder children beating their younger siblings, seems to be quite a normal practice.

"I do not have enough time for my studies because I need to help with housework as my family is facing difficulties. The community and friends also look down upon us and bully us because I do not live with my parents". **Girl in GCA, 15-year-old**

shared that a grandmother was torturing his grandchild in this way, when she found the boy had stolen something: "she pricks his fingertips with needles until they bleed and hits him in public while he is naked")

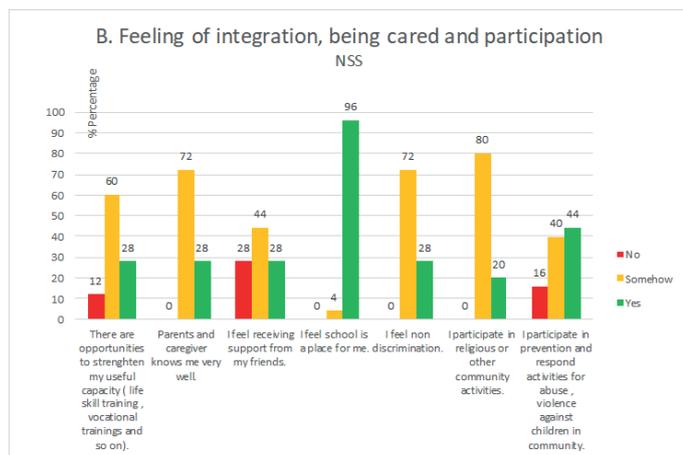


In some cases, the brutality of the punishment could be very high, as reported by children; not only beaten but also suffering some torturing acts and public humiliation. (e.g.: a 15-year-old, girl

Children with disabilities, confronted the highest challenges of integration and inclusion in the community. Most of them suffer from passive and active discrimination, ending on dropping out from school or communal participatory activities. Mentally disable children are sometimes abused and humiliated by other children; some children expressed this presenting concrete cases.

It is also to be noted that one of the parameters where there are more significant differences it is in the degree of cohesion among children; or in order words, the feeling of receiving support from their friends. In KCA only 5% declared they do not receive support from their friends, while in GCA it is 11% and in NSS reaches up to 28%. Conversely, those getting full support from their friends are 62% in KCA, 36% in GCA and 28% in NSS. These data are very eloquent and talks about the cohesion of groups in the three different areas. No doubt the extremely unsecure environment in NSS, is also reflected in children’s social life. The results on KCA reflect once more, the dominant collective feeling that children do have in that area, as part of the “war resistance mind-set” which creates more social cohesion than in other areas. This parameter correlates perfectly with the results presented below, regarding camps’ safety, (block D).

Other significant differences in the three areas is the way in which children have assessed the degree in which parents and caregivers know them. While in GCA, 63% declared that their caregivers and parents know them very well, in KCA this is only 41% and it goes down up to 28% in NSS. Once more, the conflict reality shows up. The fact that in NSS and in KCA some children are not with their parents for several reasons, including those children in KCA that spent years of their life in boarding schools, may contribute to these huge differences of perceptions. It is remarkably sad to see that in KCA, up to 11% of children declared that their parents or caregivers do not know them very well, this is 5% in GCA.



In several camps children reported that their parents consume drugs or alcohol, making the relationship at home very difficult, and generating domestic violence and mistrust within the family.

C. Negative feelings and low self-esteem

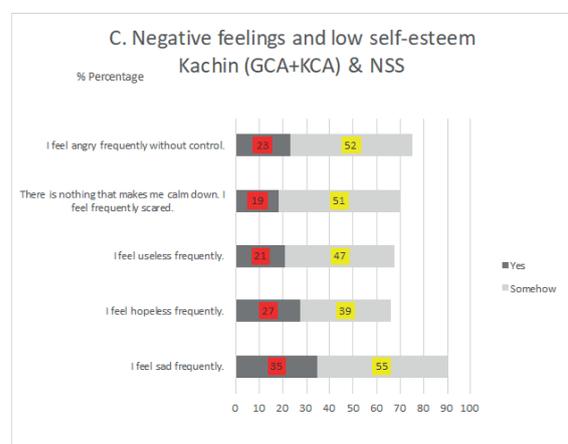
The interviews with the children revealed extensive sadness and internal suffering of the children. Overall, 35% of the children expressed, that they are sad frequently and another 55% somehow or sometimes.

27% of children felt hopeless and 23% said they feel angry frequently and without control, this goes up to 75% of the children when adding those that feel angry sometimes.

About 21% feel useless and 19% recognise that there is nothing that could calm them down and they feel scared.

These figures vary a lot in the three regions, reflecting the intensity of the conflict in each area.

For instance, in NSS 48% of the children feel sad frequently, this is 43% in KCA and 29% in GCA.



This pattern is repeated in almost all parameters, being NSS where there is more feelings of sadness and frustration followed by KCA and GCA. It is obvious that the hardship of the contexts, impacts proportionally and negatively in the feelings of children.

The only parameter where children in GCA are worse than in KCA or NSS, is the one related to the feeling of hopeless. Almost one third (31%) of children in GCA feel hopeless frequently, being significantly lower in KCA which is 21%, and in NSS which is 24%.

Another significant difference between GCA and KCA and NSS, is in the feeling of being scared and not being able to calm down; while in GCA this affects only to 12% of children, in KCA this is 29% and 28% in NSS.

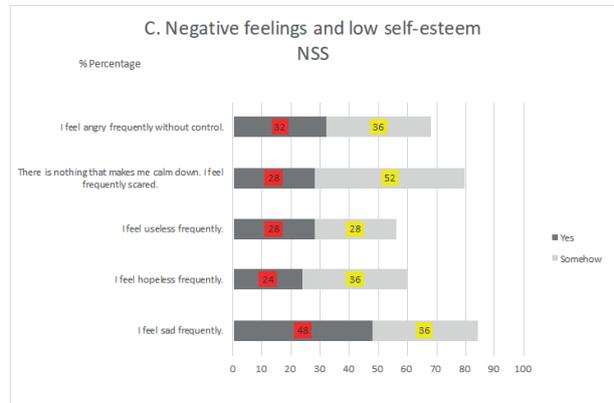
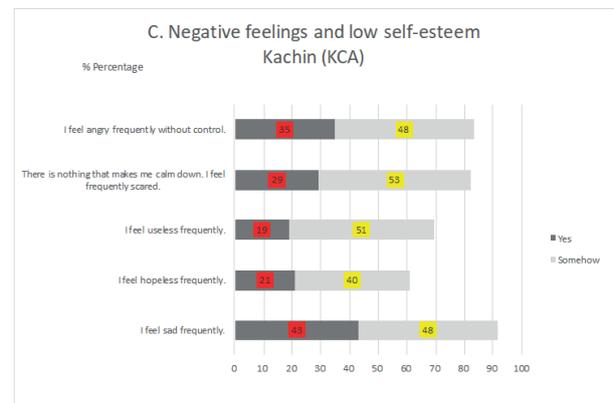
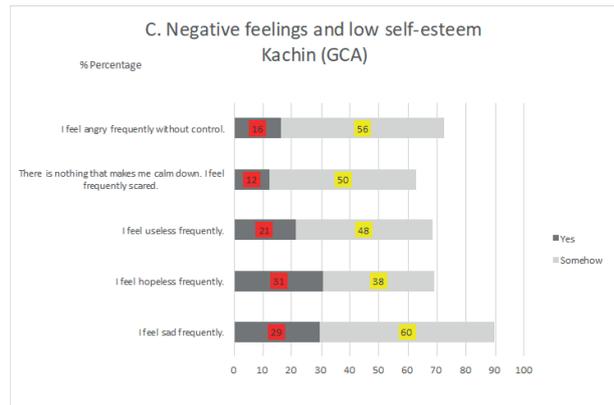
The lack of conditions to study in the camps, lack of space, lack of time, lack of educational materials and in some cases even lack of electricity, (as in Mai Hkawng camp), affects the performance of the children at school and as a consequence their feelings of self-esteem.

The lack of nutritious and tasteful food is raised by many children as a factor of unhappiness and sadness, as well as a factor that conditions their healthy development.

Several children expressed they cannot sleep well and have a feeling of “missing something”.

In many cases these negative feelings are cumulative, bringing children to deep sadness and frustration. Frequently, these negative feelings are translated in risky behaviours of children and teenagers; some of them declare they consume drugs or alcohol as a way to evade these feelings.

In the positive side, it has to be acknowledged that some children reported that they get encouragement and support from their parents and teachers to overcome these negative feelings.



“We have to go to school without eating anything because the dishes are not good. We cannot breathe well in the room because it is always filled with smoke. There are times that I cannot sleep at night.”
Girl 13-year-old

D. Safety within the community

Children have different perceptions regarding safety in the camps. Overall, children have a perception that the camps are safe enough or fully safe, only 7% feel they are not safe.

This perception varies in the three areas researched. In Northern Shan the percentage of children perceiving that the camps are not safe reaches to 16% while in GCA is 8% and in KCA is only 2%.

Girls expressed more anxiety in terms of safety. Many girls interviewed expressed their fears and experiences related to teenagers' pregnancies, early marriages, rape and sexual abuses, particularly perpetrated by boys under drugs, or done under labour exploitation of girls.

There are several cases of girls being systematically raped at domestic level, (mainly by stepfathers); in some cases, reaching to girls committing suicide due to this situation, as reported in some individual interviews with children; (e.g. at Je Yang IDP camp).

Human trafficking of girls in China is also frequently reported in the interviews held with children; although this was much more present in interviews with parents, caregivers and Key Informant individuals

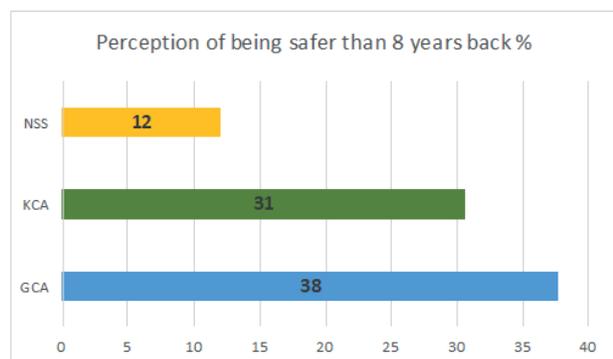
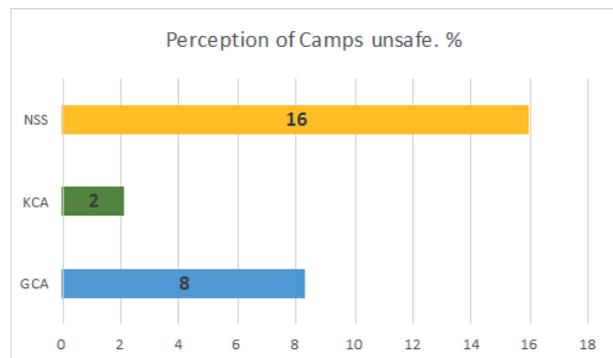
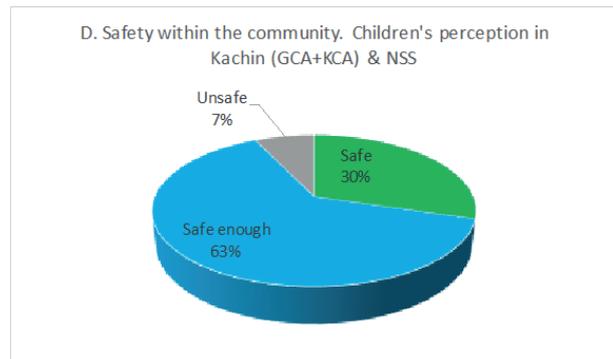
As referred above, different types of domestic violence are frequent in the camps, children particularly girls and women are the main victims of this violence, in some cases this reach to extreme brutality affecting the safety and health of children.

"My stepfather hits and curses at the whole family except for my youngest sister who is his real daughter with my mother. My elder sister is starting to lose her hearing because of his abuse".
14-year-old girl

Children perceptions on the improvement of the safety in the camps over the last 8 years, also reflect the intensity of the conflict, while in NSS only 12% of children think the camp is safer now, in KCA and GCA this is much higher, 31% and 38% respectively. Nevertheless, more research should be made to understand the way in which children value this improvement; as 8 years in their lives is a long period of time to have an objective comparative parameter. In any case, it reflects perceptions based on memories and traumas.

Child labour exploitation happens in different ways; as some children declared, there are a lot of students who need to be "yemase" (jade mine workers) out in the mines; working as day labourers during the school holidays, in order to earn some money for their schooling because their families have financial difficulties.

Children, particularly boys, who quit the school and work outside the camps are frequently exploited and not paid for the work done, while they are exposed to very unhealthy environments (working exposed to pesticides, cement, chemical mining products, etc.).



Violence among male children is not rare in the camps, (particularly among those who go under drugs), reaching to brutal aggressions in some cases, making boys feeling also insecure within the camps.

The presence of Myanmar army near some camps, in GCA, increases the feeling of insecurity of children. Forced recruitment of children, when moving outside the camps is mentioned as a main safety and security issue, particularly by boys. This affects all the three areas researched. Many cases are reported on child forced recruitment, as well as boys taken by by the army as occasional forced porters.

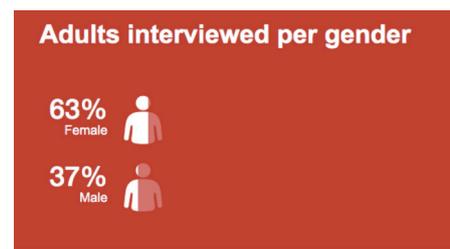
An important aspect related to safety in the camps, comes from the lack of health services, particularly the lack of medicines available in most camps. Several children, particularly girls, refer to this as a concern and feeling of unsafety in the camps.

Behaviours of drugs' users in nearby camp areas, is also a factor of unsafety for children in the camps and surrounding areas. In some camps drugs consumption is high and syringes used are dropped at any place, putting at risk small children who play with them. Despite the programmes that some organisations are implementing on harm reduction, this is not sufficient to ensure a safe environment in the camps.

"My older brother quit school and works as a "yemase" miner because we have a very difficult financial situation. We are always afraid of the security soldiers who work for the companies. There are so many cases where the security soldiers shoot the "yemase" miners to death, even though they have done nothing wrong." **Girl from Hpahkant**

Parents' and Key Informants perceptions

Interviews were conducted with parents and caregivers in 23 Focus Groups Discussions (FGD); which included a total of 156 women and 85 men; among those there were parents, grandparents and caregivers); plus 33 individual interviews with parents, relatives, etc., of which 21 were women and 12 men; plus interviews with 36 Key Informant Individuals, of which 19 were women and 17 men; (these included teachers, community and religious leaders, school Principals, etc.). All these interviews brought up the following findings, organised by thematic blocks:



1. Health and Nutrition

In terms of health, parents in all IDP camps³ described similar patterns of children's' health.

The most significant diseases affecting children in all camps are: seasonal flu, diarrhoea, and sore eyes. Skin diseases associated with poor hygiene and sanitation conditions are very common as well as skin burns due to proximity to fire. Tuberculosis and hepatitis B and C are frequent in children and youth. In cold areas, such as Laiza, children suffer from coughing and fever.

In some camps, (e.g.: in Bahmo township), many children also suffer from malaria, dengue and chikungunya fever, which in some camps affect the full population over summer and in rainy season. There are some cases of children having HIV/AIDS, transmitted from their parents.

In some camps, air pollution is also affecting children's health, such as in Lana Zup Ja camp in Mai Ja Yang township, where the chemical smell coming from the paper factory near the camp makes children sick.

Malnutrition is widely spread on children under five, despite in some camps there are some nutritional support programmes for children, but the coverage and continuation of these programmes is limited. Parents cannot afford to provide regular nutritious food to children, this is affecting negatively children's physical and mental development.

"There are two pregnant women and two children under the age of five who have died. Children die mostly because their families do not have money, and there is not enough medication at the clinic".

Father from Mai Hkawng RC IDP camp

In some areas (e.g.: Nam Hkam township in NSS) children's physical development is limited due to the lack of nutritious available food and the abuse on the consumption of low quality Chinese readymade food; this affects particularly those with biggest financial problems.

In some camps pregnant women and children under the age of two, receive supplementary nutritious food, but this doesn't not reach all camps and there is not capacity within the families to buy other nutritional foods by themselves. Most families cannot afford to buy meat or eggs.

Despite in some camps there are educational programmes on sexual reproductive health, there are many teenagers pregnant and very young mothers, (below 18 years old, in several cases).

Not only parents, but also several girls, expressed the lack of adequate care for babies and under-five years old children, due to the lack of nutritious food in the camps, and lack of knowledge of very young girls that got pregnant, not being prepared to take care of their children.

Mortality rate of children under five is high in the camps. A large number of families reported they have lost one or more children under five in the last years in the camp.

Drugs' addiction is affecting many children, particularly those who quit the school, or whose parents are addicted too. Drugs are widely available in many areas around the camps, particularly in GCA.

³Parents were interviewed in IDP camps from the following townships: Man Wein Gyi, Mai Ja Yang, Loi Je, Laiza, Bahmo, Wai Maw, Putao township, Tanai, Hpakant.

Access to health services (clinics) in the camps is only possible in few camps, but even those camps having some clinic services, do not have enough medicines, they are not adequate for treatment or in some cases they are expired. Moreover, parents cannot afford the payment of medical services, due to their financial constraints. Obviously the duty to protect IDP children's rights on health is not assumed by Government in GCA; and in KCA, although the commitment is more explicit, the lack of resources makes very ineffective the implementation of this right to health and nutrition.

In some areas the access to clinics is very bad, as roads are not good and this leads to miscarriage of some pregnant women when they try to reach health services.

The lack of access to health services is translated in high children's morbidity and mortality, this also brings feelings of guilty in many parents, who feel hopeless and unable to take care of their children's health.

2. WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene)

Water: In some camps, drinkable water is not clean enough. In some cases, the water is not clean because there are no filters in the sources or tanks; in other cases, the lack of proper installation of bathing facilities is affecting the drinking water wells, that get polluted with the bathing outlet water, increasing the risk of diarrhoea and other diseases.

In some camps there is no capacity to test the suitability of drinking water or make chlorination of it.

In certain camps, such as the RC IDP camp in Man Wein Gyi township or Lana Zup Ja in Mai Ja Yang area, the presence of sugar plantations reduces the quantity of clean water available in the camps. In other places, water is not sufficient in summer as the sources dry up, (for instance in Lawng Hkang Sha-it Yang camp in Hpakant township, Mai Na RC camp in Wai Maw township, and Lung Sut Yang camp in Putao township).

Hygiene: Adults' perspective on hygiene, indicates that in general, children have got good hygiene behaviours since they are in the camps. Handwashing is a regular practice of children in most camps. Despite so, in many camps there is a lack of soap and other hygiene items, available for the families, which impacts negatively on children's hygiene and health.

In most camps children are involved regularly in camp cleaning activities, as part of their duties.

Sanitation: The limited number of toilets, (not enough toilets in several camps) and limited bathing facilities, or the lack of renovation of these installations, made them insufficient or inappropriate for children's needs.

Location of toilets and enough separation of female and male toilets is an issue in some camps, increasing concerns on women's and girls' security.

Children with disabilities do not have accessible toilets in most cases, making their lives and hygiene conditions very bad.

Right to water, sanitation and hygiene is mainly provided by solidarity groups, CSOs, NGOs and churches. In general Government in GCA do not take this as a major duty. In KCA, IRRRC works closely with CSOs supporting them on this right. In NSS, the extremely violent context and the multiple number of armed actors active there, leaves this right on the hands of civil society supporting structures.

3. Education

Drop out from school is very high in most of the camps, as parents and other adults declared during the interviews. There are many factors explaining this, according to the adults who participated in the assessment. Classrooms are crowded some of them having more than 50 students in the room, and there are not sufficient teachers in most camps. The lack of financial means of parents to afford the tuition fees and other extra education costs is a limiting factor.

In KCA The Education department (Hpaji Dap), gives a lot of attention to this children's right and try to cover as much as possible the educational gaps, despite the resources available limits extensively their capacity, particularly regarding higher school and University access, despite the efforts done by KIO to open a university in Mai Ja Yang. The educational support provided by several JST members is remarkable in KCA.

In GCA, IDP children educational rights are protected in theory, as they can get access to public schools; nevertheless, lack of recognition of curricula of those coming from KCA; language barriers, and social discrimination, limits de facto access to this right.

In NSS, once more, the volatile and violent situation, makes this right very weak, and its fulfilment varies camp to camp, depending on the specific context of the places where camps are located.

Several parents do not have regular income and therefore children cannot attend school and moreover, those children on working age, ought to contribute to the economy of the family, by getting casual works. Usually the elder child, and particularly the elder girl, are the first to quit the school to take care of their siblings.

Girls' education is not prioritised by some families, which creates discrimination in terms of access to education for them, this is more frequent on GCA, rather than in KCA, where the education of children is a "collective-national" priority.

In some boarding schools the conditions are very precarious, with limited space to study, no space to play or doing sports; very congested bedrooms, and not enough toilets for boys and girls, (e.g.: Nama Phyt RC Camp, boarding house). This limits the progression capacity of students, while increases their unsafe.

Another factor, is the drugs' dependency of some parents, which disable them to take any responsibility on their children tuition.

In several camps the distance to the school, was an argument that demotivate children to attend school, particularly boys, who are afraid of being victims of forced recruitment in their way to the school, in those camps with military presence nearby.

In addition to this, Myanmar education curricula is not oriented to stimulate children's knowledge; this reduces children's interest to go to school. The lack of adequate educational means, and the low ratio of teachers per student, impacts on the quality of education in many camps, and on the performance of the students.

"Drop out school rate increased among young boys in recent years after middle school, as they believe they can find money as daily wagers to support their family without education completion."
Parents in Hpakant township

Some of them are unable to catch up with the lessons at school, and require extra support attending classes run by teachers after school hours, under payment of monthly tuition fees; but most families cannot afford paying extra classes, which impacts directly on the learning capacity of their children, bringing them to dropping out from the school.

Domestic violence and lack of conditions for study at IDP shelters, is another factor mentioned by the parents, that condition the educational progress of their children.

In many camps children under five-year-old can attend ECCD centres, although this does not exist in all camps.

Education opportunities vanish as children grow up; beyond grade 8 or 10 there are very limited opportunities for children to progress to higher studies. It has been reported that drop out of school grows proportionally to grades' levels. Therefore, in many cases, the drop out happens once middle school is completed, as in many camps there is no opportunity to attend high school and parents cannot afford sending their children to another village, to complete their studies. In general, drop out among boys seems to be higher than in girls.

The very limited vocational training opportunities that exist for children in the camps, doesn't help to create alternative educational choices for children.

For children who passed primary education from KIO schools, they find many difficulties to transfer to Myanmar governmental schools, as there is no formal recognition of KIO certificates, and they confront languages, cultural and legal barriers; this frustrates children that have to repeat the same courses and share classrooms with children younger than them, creating a feeling of humiliation and discrimination that pushes children to abandon school.

"Because we are closed to the neighbouring countries, that changes what our children wear and the way they speak, it is very concerning for the future generations. If we do not know about our culture and traditions, our ethnicity will disappear".
27-year-old father from Pa Kahtawng Camp

For many parents the lack of educational opportunities for their children and their exposure to Chinese ways of doing things, is becoming a key concern in terms of children's behaviours and lack of values and respect of their own culture.

4. Participation

Children's participation in the camps is mainly limited to sports, dance, and other type of competitions, and in some religious activities in certain camps. In general children participate willingly in all the celebrations held in the camp, with performances like dancing and group songs. Participation in sports like volleyball, chin lone, football events, etc., is common among children in the camps.

There is, also, mandatory participation of children, in certain activities, such as camps' cleaning, and also in some kitchen and domestic activities.

This participation, as parents themselves declared, is not encompassed with genuine children's initiatives; as most parents acknowledged that they are still weak in listening to their children and taking responsibilities on their initiatives or desires, in terms of community participation.

Youth groups exist within the church programmes, but not outside that sphere, which limits participation of children and youth in the overall social life of the camps.

Cultural gender discrimination affects girls to participate more actively in community's activities and taking responsibility on them.

"People look down on women. When people are given responsibilities, men get to do more".
Father from Sha-it Yang

Children who suffer from domestic violence and particularly girls who have been victims of sex abuses, are embarrassed to go out and participate in community's activities, increasing their isolation and discrimination within the community. In some cases, these girls ask to be taken to another village to live there, or they run away by themselves.

5. Politics, safety and economic situation

The conflict situation and the unstable political environment have many negative effects on children's daily life, as parents declared.

One of the most recurrent comment by parents, is that they cannot access their land or hillside for cultivation due to the military presence or the existence of landmines; this affects the income capacity of the family which impacts directly on children's health and educational opportunities.

Moreover, parents declared that children can't move around the camps to collect firewood or doing other domestic activities, as Myanmar Army soldiers will take them, as forced porters or even for forced recruitment.

In some camps, like in Taang camp in Man Wein Gyi township, host communities do not allow IDPs to collect firewood in their areas and even threaten them physically, if they do so.

"Most of the people are working as daily wages for their income and selling amber as they are not allowed to work in their hillside cultivation and paddy fields for security reasons and are not able to fully cover children education."

IDP Parents from KBC camp in Tanai township camp

In some camps, schools are located in places where the children have to get exposed to heavy traffic and some children get hit by vehicles. This increases insecurity for children living in those camps.

The lack of a safe environment and lack of perspectives is bringing some children, (mainly adolescents' boys) to the consumption of drugs, which ends in taking part in robbery and other criminal acts, which perpetuates their marginalisation in the society. In most cases boys act in gangs, creating a strong feeling of insecurity among girls, boys and parents. These situations make unsafe for adolescents' girls to go to school and move freely around the camp.

In some camps located in "grey areas" (two government controlled areas), such as Loi Je camp, the political situation results in lack assumption of duty bearers responsibilities and lack of services and support for those IDPs leaving there.

Military check points on the way to certain camps, impedes aid delivery to IDPs, affecting very negatively their economic and social situation, which impacts directly on children's lives.

6. Child protection

Lack of child protection, is a critical aspect in all IDP camps, as adults declared; this is translated in physical abuses, labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, domestic violence against children, human trafficking, legal insecurity, forced recruitment and being victims of landmines.

Physical abuses: there is systematic and continuous physical abuse of children at family level and among children themselves; in some cases, even some teachers practice physical punishments to students. Children's corporal punishment is practiced extensively across the camps.

In GCA, children from the camps and children outside the camps from host communities, fight very often, injuring physically themselves.

In most camps the space for children to play is very small or non-existing, limiting their physical development, increasing unsafety and constraining children's appropriate psycho-motoric development.

Labour exploitation: The lack of family's financial means, forces children to work in gold and jade mining, paddy fields or constructions sites, etc., several children, between 14 to 18 years old, that drop out from school, go for casual work inside Myanmar, in markets, workshops, restaurants, etc.; others go to China looking for job opportunities, where child labour exploitation takes place extensively, involving human trafficking too.

Adults said that children are exploited at work, as they only get half of the payment they should get, or do not get paid at all. On top of that, there is gender discrimination between girls and boys, as girls do not get paid the same as boys get, for the same work. (Currently ILO is planning to conduct some assessment on labour child rights in Myanmar, under the context of COVID-19 pandemic, which could add more detailed information on this critical aspect of children's rights)

Domestic violence: Parents acknowledged that the child protection programmes that some NGOs conducted in the camps⁴, yielded very positive results in terms of awareness raising and change of behaviours; but as some of these programmes were suspended in the last years, there is a trend of increasing domestic violence, emotional abuse, children and parents' relationship's deterioration, and gender based violence, affecting girls specially.

Sexual exploitation of girls is also takes place in some areas, (e.g.: near Hpakan, where some female "pwesars" (i.e. brokers) pretending to be jade stone brokers; are selling young women to prostitution places.

Forced child marriage cases are also reported due to the limited knowledge on sexual reproductive health, by IDPs children, who get pregnant and are forced to be married.

Human trafficking: trafficking of IDP girls in China is broadly reported by adults interviewed, bringing them to forced marriages; or forcing them to deliver a baby before they are released.

Parents reported that in some camps, as Loi Je camp, the presence of children in gambling areas is increasing, exposing them to all kind of abuses. Several JST members work actively on protecting victims from Human trafficking, in KCA, KWA among other local NGOs is active on this area of work.

"... after that, she was sold to a Chinese man to be his wife.... the house that she was being held at, said that they would let her go back home after she gave birth to a child."

KII Maina RC Camp Waing Maw.

In GCA the Department of Social Welfare and Police, cooperates in addressing human trafficking cases with China.

⁴Such as the ones supported by KBC in Lawng Hkang Sha-it Yang camp, or by Save the Children in RC IDP camp in Man Wein Gyi township.

Legal insecurity: Some parents informed that there are many children with no National Registration Card (NRC), which limits the exercise of their rights.

Getting birth certificates is not easy in all camps within GCA; parents complained that it is difficult and expensive. In other cases, like in Lana Zup Ja, in Mai Ja Yang area, getting birth certificates is also very difficult and expensive, as they need to go to Nam Kham village through China to get it. In Lai Za area, IDPs only get birth certificates from the Kachin Independence Organisation, as it is very difficult to get a birth certificate from the Myanmar government, in KCA, because of distance, ethnicity discrimination and lack of recognised documents issued by KIO. Therefore, children cannot get a NRC card easily, because they cannot get the Myanmar birth certificate; as a consequence of this it is difficult to transfer KCA students to schools in GCA, limiting their rights of pursuing further education studies.

Forced recruitment: In some camps near Lai Za township, parents confirmed that child recruitment cases took place, and thanks to the support of child protection organizations, children were discharged. Forced recruitment is also reported in GCA and NSS.

The existence of child protection focal persons in some camps, has been very helpful, according to the parents, in responding to child protection cases.

"To report anything related to child protection, we can report to the Child Protection Case Management team from KBC."

Father from Lung Sut Yang Camp.

Landmines: Cases of children's landmine victims are reported; as it happened in 2017, when one child from Lawng Hkang Sha-it Yang camp was killed by a landmine. Also some children became orphans, as parents were killed by landmines or by the Myanmar Army; making them more exposed to child abuses. Landmine cases are also frequent in Northern Shan State, were JST members support landmines' victims as much as possible. Landmines and mortar shelling cases are referred every year, sometimes affecting a full family. In 2019, in NSS a full family was affected by mortar shelling, the father died, the mother was severely injured in her leg, one child died, another got deaf due to the explosion, and a third one experiences psychological disorders since them.

7. Service Mapping

Assistance in the camps is provided by a wide range of actors, mostly Local NGOs and Faith Based Organisations (KBC and KMSS) members of the JST⁵, covering several child protection sectors.

The services provided in the camps are coordinated through the Camp Management Committees at camp level and by the IRRIC more globally in KCA.

Education, WASH, health (mainly for urgent needs), psychosocial support, and food is provided by several JST members, such as KMSS, KBC, Metta, KDG, KBC, WPN, Nyein foundation and some INGOs such as Solidarités International on WASH.

UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNHCR, or WFP also provide educational support or food assistance in several camps.

Several LNGOs within JST, as well as some international NGOs, such as Save the Children or Plan International, provide awareness sessions on child protection.

Legal support is provided by several Local NGOs from JST. Child recruitment cases, are taken care by several LN-NGOs, such as KMSS which helps in the release of children and support them in their reintegration process.

DRC provides support for getting National Registration Card. DRC also provide educational support.

⁵ JST members are: Bridging Rural Integrated Development and Grassroots Empowerment (BRIDGE), Dai Fin Social Services, Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC), Kachin Relief and Development Committee (KRDC), Karuna Myanmar Social Services (KMSS), Metta Development Foundation (Metta), Nyein

In Putao, children could report their cases to the Putao Legal Aid Association, which was established by the government in 2018, and provides free legal support.

Health: Village clinics and township municipal offices, also play a role in some camps.

In some camps Governmental hospital is providing health care.

MAM (Medical Action Myanmar) provides care service for tuberculosis (TB) and malaria patients. In Lai Za area, in addition to the Health department of KIO, MSF provide assistance for HIV and AIDS.

Landmine victims get support from some organisations such as Metta or DRC.

In several camps, it is reported that a decline in the number of organisations providing services, and the quantity of aid provided, has taken place in the last years

“There were quite a few organizations who came to the camp to help, but now most of them are gone”
Mang Wing Gyi RC Camp Committee Member

Foundation (Shalom), Kachin Development Group (KDG), Kachin Women Association (KWA), and Wunpawng Ninghtoi (WPN).

Main Conclusions

This chapter, presents the main conclusions that could be extracted, from the above findings. These conclusions are presented in a similar structure of the findings, but they are more interconnected in order to provide a more integral perspective by integrating children's and adults' inputs; so conclusions do not link always directly with the Findings chapter.

Conclusions on children's perceptions

Self-awareness and coping capacity:

1. In general children have enough knowledge about their rights and services they may access to protect them, nevertheless the aggressive environment in which they live is not conducive to protect their rights effectively.
2. A significant number of children, do not share their feelings with their parents and caregivers. The lack of a stable family and domestic problems, hampers them to have a trustful environment where they could share openly their feelings.
3. Domestic violence is present in many households, drugs and alcoholism are behind this in many cases.
4. Girls are particularly exposed and suffer from sexual harassment and rape, sometimes even within their domestic environments.
5. Girls as a group, have a feeling of empathy and collective suffering, for those girls having being raped, assaulted or being victims of corporal punishment.
6. Despite most children declared they know sufficiently or well their strengths, the fact is that a significant part of them, can't cope with their own problems without harming others or themselves.
7. Differences expressed by children from GCA, KCA or NSS, reflects clearly the environment in which they live. Children absorb the environment in a very porously way, translating the insecurity and violence of their environment, into their own lives and feelings.

Feeling of integration, being cared and participation:

8. School is the place where most children identify as their own place, this is similar in all the areas, and underlines the importance of the school environment for anything related to children's rights.
9. Relationship and cohesion with their children's mates, is very different in the three areas. The way in which children live together and the sense of fellowship in KCA gives the highest cohesion; while in NSS the violent environment makes children's cohesion much lower.
10. The degree of cohesion with friends seems to be inversely proportional to the level of knowledge that parents and caregivers have on their own children.
11. The stigma of being IDP is strong in most children and this makes them feeling discriminated, frequently.
12. In general, participation of children in camp activities is significant, (such as cleaning, church activities etc.), but not necessarily addressing the interests, needs and rights of children.

Negative feelings and low self-esteem:

13. Feeling of sadness among children is widely spread in all areas, due to the hardship of the IDPs' environment and the lack of perspectives for them.
14. The absence of simple things that makes life enjoyable, such as tasteful food, are perceived with great sadness by children.
15. Being aware that the difficulties they are confronting at present, (for instance lack of adequate education opportunities), makes children feeling useless and hopeless, and some of them fail into addiction of alcohol or drugs.
16. Dealing with their own anger, and fear is difficult for many children and they can't calm down easily. Some of them somatise these feelings experiencing problems to sleep or having other psychological disorders.

Safety within the community:

17. Safety in the camps is perceived very differently in the three areas, being KCA the area where children feel safer and NSS the area with less safety for children.
18. Several factors affect children's feeling of safety: Military presence, domestic violence, Gender based violence, labour exploitation and unhealthy environment.
19. Girls feel more unsafe than boys. Sexual violence against girls and women is a major fact in all camps that brings girls to extreme situations of fear and social shame.
20. Boys' violence, mainly under drugs consumption is a major factor of unsafe in the camps.

Conclusions by relevant themes

These conclusions are built up on the findings emerging from interviews with adults including also children's perspectives. They are organised by themes.

Health and Nutrition

21. Children are exposed to several diseases and health problems, some of them related to lack of sufficient and nutritious food, others due to hygiene and shelter conditions in the camps, others to weather conditions and inadequate protection, others due to the presence of mosquitos and other insects; and others related to social behaviours.
22. Lack of enough knowledge of sexual reproductive health is affecting many young girls who have premature pregnancies.
23. Health services are extremely poor, unequipped and not easily accessible in most IDP camps.
24. Nutritional problems are affecting mainly children under five-year-old, but also young children and teenagers, compromising their psychical and physical development.
25. Financial problems in most families, is having a direct impact on the high ratios of morbidity and mortality within the camps
26. Despite COVID-19 was not present in the camps when the interviews were made. The current conditions in the camps, will make them very vulnerable to coronavirus. Since the virus affects more acutely elderly people, it is foreseeable that many more children will become orphans or will lose their caregivers, in the following months.

WASH

27. Drinkable water is not sufficient or there is a lack of control in terms of its suitability, due to different constrains: lack of adequate installations and location, not regular stable springs, and lack of resources to do chlorination and maintenance. This affects children's health, particularly affecting large numbers of children suffering from diarrhoea.
28. In general children have good hygiene practices, such as handwashing; but the lack of soap and other hygiene materials compromise children's hygiene. In the context of COVID-19, this is particularly preoccupying as hygiene and social distancing are the most important measures to control the spreading of Coronavirus disease.
29. Toilets and bathing facilities are not adequate in most cases for children, not enough for girls and not properly located. Maintenance of toilets' cleanness is also a recurrent issue. This puts at risk health and safety of children and specially girls.
30. Children with disabilities do not have specific adapted toilets or bathing facilities, making them more vulnerable to diseases related with hygiene.

Education

31. Quality of formal education is very low, which impedes children to make good progress as they evolve in their studies.
32. The lack of financial capacity of the families to support their children, bring a lot of them to get some casual works, taking care of domestic chores and not having enough time to study, which ends in low performance or dropping out of school.
33. Girls and especially elder girls within the family are marginalised in their educational rights, as they have to take care of their family and domestic duties, being forced to abandon their studies.
34. Family shelters' conditions, and domestic dynamics are a big impediment to have an appropriate studying environment.
35. Classrooms and boarding schools are unequipped and congested in most cases.

Participation

36. Children's participation in the camps is limited to camps' events and camps' communal needs.
37. Children's participation initiatives are not heard and not taken into account by adults.
38. Girls are more vulnerable to exclusion on community participation, as they receive less recognition and responsibilities than boys do.
39. Girls affected by sexual violence, get double discrimination, making their participation and integration in the IDPs communities, extremely difficult.

Politics, safety and economic situation

40. The conflict situation has deprived most IDPs from their access to their land and doing their traditional livelihoods; impoverishing IDP parents and conditioning their capacity to support their children's needs.
41. Military presence nearby the camps conditions the security and access of several IDP camps.
42. Addiction to drugs of young people is a big problem in many camps, increasing insecurity mainly for girls and other young boys, and perpetuating a cycle of marginalisation for those addicted.

Child Protection

43. Physical violence against children is normalised within IDPs reality, and it happens at domestic and external levels.
44. Children are exposed to a broad range of abuses and exploitation in all three areas. This exploitation is affecting differently girls and boys.
45. Girls are victims of sexual exploitation within the camps and outside the camps. They are also victims of human trafficking in China.
46. Teenagers boys are exposed to labour exploitation and forced recruitment very extensively.
47. Child protection mechanisms are effective and have addressed, with positive results, many cases of child rights violations, but the decline of support for these mechanisms is deteriorating the protection of children in the camps.

Service Mapping

48. There is a broad range of actors providing services to children in IDP camps. Coordination among these actors is stronger within LNGOs, through the JST platform.
49. Camp Management Committees are the focal coordination point of services within each camp.
50. In KCA the IRRC, plays a key role of overall coordination of the services provided across the camps.
51. Child protection services have declined in the last years.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the conclusions presented above. They are intended to build up on the opportunities and constraints that should be taken on board to make a significant contribution to the fulfilment of IDPs children's rights in the medium term.

Intentionally and in order to focus on the most important aspects, recommendations have been limited to 26: 7 general recommendations and 19 specific sectorial recommendations, (with no more than 4 per sector). Readers may bring other recommendations from the reading of the report, that they may find it relevant for them.

General recommendations

1. **Children must be consulted more deeply** and widely in the design and implementation of any humanitarian-social programme in the camps, as their lives are directly affected by those; adults' involvement is not sufficient. This consultation is a children's right and must be translated into real participation of children, according to their needs and interests, in the social life of the camps and host communities. All duty bearer must include this into their work.
2. **Girls' and boys' differentiated contexts, needs and priorities, ought to be carefully understood** and gender data disaggregation must be assessed in any project, always.
3. **Children protection programmes, should be done within a "family approach". Understanding the family environment of children, whatever it is, or is not,** is essential to provide them with an integral support that covers all aspects of their human needs: emotional, psychological, intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, material, etc.
4. **School is the main place of interaction for children,** and where they develop more strongly their identity and feeling of belonging. **Taking care of a good and sound school environment in all its aspects,** not just the academic part, is fundamental to protect children's rights.
5. Organisations working on Child protection, (Government, authorities, NGOs, churches, etc.) must pay **high priority to the impact that drugs' addiction is having on children and their families,** in many aspects. **Prevention, mitigation, treatment and rehabilitation programmes must be promoted and reinforced** in coordination with other child protection programmes.
6. **The culture of normalising physical violence against children must be stopped.** Parents' education is essential; revisiting the understanding of values of discipline and respect, under a non-aggressive approach against children, must be done. Involvement of religious communities is essential to succeed on this change of cultural behaviour.
7. Child Protection **programmes must be designed according with the conflict-political-social context in which they take place.** The differences observed in this report among Kachin GCA, Kachin KCA and NSS, must be taken into account in any further programme design. Including the way in which the main duty bearers are involved in each area.

Specific sectorial recommendations

Health and Nutrition:

8. **Nutritional programmes for children and teenagers, must be included** as an essential part of children's rights. Students should always be included in nutritional programmes to ensure their adequate intellectual and physical development. Governments' duty bearers, UNICEF and other International agencies should pay more attention to this fundamental right.
9. **Sexual reproductive health education and services** must be extended to the camps, reaching teenagers and parents. Health authorities in the three areas must give higher priority to this right.

10. **Psychosocial support to children**, must be included as part of children's right to health. **Incorporating these experiences at school level, through arts**, as already experienced in some camps, would be very beneficial for the psychological wellbeing of children and for the increasing of their resilience.

WASH:

11. **Hygiene practices must be reinforced and significant resources must be put in this area**, in the following months, **taking into account that COVID-19** will impact dramatically in the IDP camps. The most effective way to protect the lives and rights of children, will be by protecting them from the potential devastating effects that Coronavirus could have. Hygiene awareness, and providing enough soap and other essential hygiene materials is essential and must be done with no delay. A collective joint effort of Civil Society and authorities is essential here for the success on combating COVID-19 in the camps, as well as to protect health in general, through preventive hygiene measures.
12. **Toilets and bathing facilities must be improved**; with enough distancing from clean water sources; enough distance between male's and female's facilities, making **appropriate adapted facilities for children and other people living with disabilities** and with adequate maintenance, to ensure cleanness and safety for children.
13. All duty bearers must invest in **ensuring safety of drinkable water** in the camps, by protecting water sources (springs and wells), **filtering and chlorinating** and doing regular maintenance of water distribution infrastructures.

Education:

14. Children's education must be a top priority to protect their rights. Promoting a culture of education among parents and children is very important. **Girls must be supported to get access to education up to the highest level**, avoiding cultural and family discrimination, based on traditional homecare assigned roles; particularly to elder daughters in the family. Special programmes must be designed to support girls affected by these circumstances. Myanmar Government must protect IDPs Education rights effectively by recognising KIO Education certificates, facilitating inclusion of children in GCA public schools and combating any kind of social discrimination against IDP children in the schools.
15. **Improve educational facilities, and setting up safe and equipped studying environments** for children, (libraries, studying halls, etc.); so that students' performance will improve.
16. **Set up safe sports and play grounds facilities**, in IDP camps, for children of different ages; and provide them with the required equipment; in order to ensure psychological and physical development and wellbeing of children.
17. **Concerned authorities must support teachers**, with pedagogic, educational materials and financial support, to enhance the quality of formal teaching at IDPs schools. This is particularly relevant in KCA, where the educational facilities are extremely limited.

Participation:

18. All organisations and duty bearers working with IDPs must implement **specific programmes addressed to girls' participation and integration in community life; particularly for those girls affected by sexual abuses or domestic violence**, which suffer deep trauma, inhibiting them from social interaction.
19. All Child Right concerned actors should integrate and promote participation of children and youth into ethnic culture and cultural events, to **promote their own ethnic values, identity and social cohesion**.

Politics, safety and economic situation:

20. Develop **vocational and job oriented educational programmes** for teenagers, girls and boys, that could stimulate them and make them self-reliant economically and useful and integrated into their society; while giving alternatives to children not accessing university.
21. Child protection programmes should **link with livelihoods programmes and economic development programmes addressed to adults**; as the poor economic situation of the parents is behind many of the constraints and abuses of children's rights. The role of Government and Ethic authorities in this regard is vital.

Child Protection:

22. Reactivate and **increase, child protection programmes, particularly those related with awareness raising among adults, setting up focal reference persons for Child Protection** and providing services specially to those affected by sexual abuses, human trafficking and forced recruitment. Coordination among all stakeholders is essential for the effectiveness of child protection.
23. Child labour conditions must be limited and controlled within the contextual reality they are, protecting children rights and **stopping harmful works and labour exploitation of children. Specific programmes on child labour protection must be set up**, in coordination with duty bearers, the private sector in host communities and other economic stakeholders in nearby areas. **Child migration and child trafficking** should be part of these programmes. Involvement of ILO is advisable to get know-how and resources from them.
24. **Independent legal support services for children** and their families must be set up to protect children's fundamental rights as citizens; ensuring access to legal documents and access to public services, regardless of their ethnic origin or place of residence.

Service Integration:

25. International actors (INGOs, and UN agencies), must work hand in hand with duty bearers and **transfer their Child Rights service provision to principled, reliable and accountable LNGOs**; such as those in JST, working in the IDP camps. This is fundamental to ensure the impact, efficiency, ownership and sustainability of the services provided to protect children's rights.
26. LNGOs must have a **joint strategy on Children Rights**, based on the above recommendations, and integrating and making synergies among the different services provided by the organisations.

Annex 1.

List of acronyms

Acronyms:

DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EAO	Ethnic Armed Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GCA	Government Controlled Area
HH	Household
HVI	Highly Vulnerable Individuals
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International NGO
JST	Joint Strategy Team
KII	Key Informant Individual
KIO	Kachin Independence Organization
KCA	KIO Controlled Area
KWA	Kachin Women Association
LNGO	Local NGO
MSF	Médecines Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	National Registration Card
NSS	Northern Shan State
R&R	Return and Resettlement
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

Annex 2.

Children compiled data.

(in separate file)

Annex 3.

Targeted camps and sampling selection.

(in separate file)