

**Background:**

In Kachin State, boarding schools have emerged as a community coping mechanism in some areas, to ensure continuous education for IDP children.

In some boarding facilities, humanitarian assistance from different sectors is required to meet the basic needs of children staying there. However, care must be taken to ensure that humanitarian interventions in boarding schools are supporting a safe environment for children. In addition, in accordance with the *United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*, the Child Protection sub sector recognizes that the family is the natural and most conducive environment for the growth, well-being and protection of children. *Attention should be paid that no pull factor and incentives to send children to boarding school even in a context where local schools are or are becoming accessible is created by disproportionate support or attention to boarding schools.*

This guide outlines key CP questions/issues to explore in Boarding Schools to check that the environment is safe for children. Where concerns are identified, the Kachin Child Protection Sub Sector will need to advise humanitarian actors on ways to address these concerns in a manner that supports improved child protection.

**Purpose:**

The aim of conducting initial CP inquiries and observations at IDP Boarding Schools is to gather information that can help us decide:

- (i) if it is ok to start or to continue humanitarian support to the Boarding School (or if doing so may result in exposing children to harm)
- (ii) what kind of interventions and/or advocacy is needed to better protect children at the Boarding School and to prevent abuse, exploitation and neglect

**Methodology for CP Inquiries & Observations:**

There is no set way to carry out these CP inquiries and observations. The questions/issues listed here provide as a guide and starting point for information-gathering. They may be used in a variety of ways (ie. key informant interviews, informal discussions, focus groups discussions, and direct observations) depending on the time you have available and the people you are able to meet. You should not feel limited to the issues and inquiries listed here. If other issues related to child protection come to your attention, please note them down.

Ideally, if time permits, it is good if a combination of methods are used to gather information. Try to carry out:

1. **Observations of the situation** and conditions inside the Boarding School and in the surrounding area
2. A few **interviews/discussions** with key informants (e.g. teachers, dormitory supervisors, care-givers, headmaster, members of school management committee, parents of children attending the school, members of the host community)
3. A few **focus group discussions** with various students and/or staff (e.g. separate focus groups with male & female students in grades 5 – 7; separate focus groups for male & female students in grades 8 – 10; small group discussions with staff). If conducting focus groups, set a timeframe that is suitable for the participants. As a general guide, try not to exceed 90 minutes for adults/older students; and 45 minutes for children.

## Key CP inquiries and observations

### GENERAL INFORMATION [Note: this information should be gathered through key informant interviews with teachers/staff/headmaster]

- When was the boarding school established?
- Number of students (how many male? how many female?)
- Age range of students boarding at the school
- Are there any children under 10yrs old at the boarding school? Are there any children under 5yrs old at the boarding school? If so, how many?
- Classes/grades covered by the school (e.g. primary, middle, high)
- Total Number of staff at the school
  - Number of teachers (how many male? how many female?)
  - Number of volunteer staff (how many male? how many female?)
  - Number of dormitory supervisors/caretakers per dormitory
- Number of adult supervisors staying overnight (how many male? how many female?)
- Places of origin of children boarding at the school
- Roughly what percentage of students at the school are IDPs?
- Can IDP families choose to send their children to the boarding school or to a local school if they wish?
- Do students have to pay fees to attend the boarding school?
- Who is responsible for managing the boarding school?

Matrix for recording number of students / their age and supervisors

NAME BOARDING SCHOOL/ HOUSE	GRADE	MALE STUDENTS	FEMALE STUDENTS	TOTAL	STUDENT AGE RANGE	TEACHERS	
						MALE	FEMALE
	0						
	I						
	II						
	III						
	IV						
	V						
	VI						
	VII						
	VIII						
	IX						
	X						

### SAFETY: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Are there military facilities, armed groups/forces or soldiers in or around the school? [OBSERVATION ONLY]
- Are the boarding school facilities sometimes used for military activities (eg training; barracks for soldiers; storage of military equipment) [OBSERVATION - DO NOT ASK IF TOO SENSITIVE/NOT COMFORTABLE]
- Are there people or groups near or around the school who may target children for exploitation or abuse?
- Are people from outside the school able to enter the compound? Is there some form of security during the daytime or at night to prevent people from accessing the school compound?
- Safe shelters/dormitories: Do students feel safe at night? Are there any dangers?
- Are there separate dormitories/sleeping places for boys and for girls? How many girls/boys per dormitory?
- Are there separate dormitories/sleeping places for children of different age groups? Or do small children and older children stay together in the same dormitory?
- Are children's sleeping places separated from adult supervisors/caretakers? Where do adult caretakers sleep?
- Are there separate latrines for boys and girls? Are there lights? Are there locks?
- Are there separate private bathing spaces for boys and girls?
- Are there safe places for children to play in the school grounds?
- Can children move freely around the school? Can they move freely in and out of the school grounds?
- Have students received Mine Risk Education through the school?
- Do you have any concerns for your safety here?

**REGISTRATION & FAMILY CONTACT: WHAT TO LOOK FOR [Note: *Save the Children is implementing registration & family links activities with vulnerable children under 10yrs at LNZ and PKT boarding schools. We are not seeking to duplicate that process. These are general questions related to all children attending the school*]**

- Are registration forms completed for each child attending the school?
- Are there any children attending the school who do not know where their parents/primary care-givers are? How many?
- Are parents/caregivers allowed to visit their children?
- Are clear visiting rules in place? If yes, what are the visiting rules?
- Are people who visit the school required to register in a visitor book?
- Do students have regular contact with their parents/families at home? How do they stay in contact?
- Are students allowed to visit their homes on a regular basis?

*[Note: if you do come across cases of separated or unaccompanied children, please note down their name, age, parent's names and place of origin, so that we can refer the case to Save the Children or MRCS for full registration & follow-up].*

**PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT: WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

- How do children feel about attending the boarding school? Are they happy to be there?
- Do students have access to recreation/play/sports activities after school hours
- Who do students go to for support if they have a problem?
- Do students feel comfortable seeking emotional support from teachers/care-givers? Do teachers/care-givers feel able to provide emotional support to children suffering distress

**PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE EXPLOITATION & ABUSE: WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

- What type of daily jobs/chores are children required to do at the school (eg cleaning, assisting in the kitchen)?
- Do some children at the school sometimes engage in jobs/work outside the school?
- Do unknown people sometimes enter the school premises and speak with children?
- What happens to children who misbehave/disobey instructions from teachers?
- Do children from the school sometimes join military groups? [DO NOT ASK IF TOO SENSITIVE]
- Do some children at the school engage in risky behaviour (eg drug use, alcohol use, hurting themselves or hurting others?)

**BASIC NEEDS: WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

- Do children feel that their basic needs are being met while they are at the boarding school
- Do teachers feel that the boarding school is able to meet the basic needs of all children staying there?
- What are their main concerns?
- What humanitarian assistance/support is the school currently receiving?
- Which actors/agencies are providing education support?

Please kindly take detailed notes on your inquiries and observations, and give to UNICEF CP staff who will prepare a summary of findings and recommendations: Kyaw Thu Lwin [ktlwin@unicef.org](mailto:ktlwin@unicef.org) Ph 09 509 3337