

# HOW TO CONSIDER EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (EiE) ASPECTS WHEN DESIGNING AN MEB

## COMPLEMENTING SUPPLY SIDE ASSISTANCE WITH TARGETED DEMAND SIDE SUPPORT

Two factors make educational needs hard to average across households. Firstly, in programming for EiE, the status of provision of supply side educational services – schools, teachers, buildings, curricula, etc., – influences the appropriate response. Secondly, educational needs vary substantially between households according to presence or age of students. This complexity has several implications. When building the MEB, it is critical that education and CWG actors work together to adjust to variation between households and to meet what are agreed to be the relevant and appropriate demand side costs. In addition, the education component of the MEB needs to be reframed to be of use to Education in Emergencies programming (EiE). Finally, the requirements of EiE programmes are often so distinct from those of an MPC response that humanitarian actors should be thinking in terms of separate programming for EiE such as top-ups or conditional cash transfers focused on households with school age children rather than full coverage through MPCA.

## A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS SHOULD DETERMINE THE EiE RESPONSE<sup>1</sup>

Contextual factors such as the quantity and quality of available education services should drive which CVA modality is used or whether CVA is used at all. In fluid humanitarian emergency contexts where education services are weak and cannot be strengthened in a timely manner, multi-purpose cash transfers (MPC) are usually preferred. On the other hand, in protracted contexts where education services are in a better state or can be strengthened, sectoral CVA for EiE is usually implemented.



In Iraq between 2016 and 2019, MPC were used in areas where the situation was still fluid, and issues related to education services could not be addressed in a timely manner. In more stable areas, EiE-specific CVA was predominantly used, and when conditions allowed, was linked with interventions intended to improve schools through the School Improvement Plans (SIP).

## HOW ARE EDUCATION-RELATED COSTS CALCULATED TO BE INCLUDED IN THE MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET?

A review of 20 minimum expenditure baskets in 2018 for multi-purpose cash transfers indicated that eleven of them included education-related costs. However, even if calculated, not all of them were used for actual programming. One reason could be that calculating average costs at household level poses a serious limitation to education programming, which usually takes into account the needs per school-aged child. The only MEB including education and actually used to calculate the MPC transfer value was that of the DRC ARCC programme, perhaps because its design was flexible in terms of expected Education in Emergency outcomes.

Even when calculated, in several instances MEBs were not updated on a regular basis, in accordance with price changes, mainly because of lack of capacity across sectors. In most cases, the Cash Working Group (CWG) led the development of the MEB, making use of technical expertise which existed in large agencies. Where education was included, this was usually because CWGs collaborated with education clusters to determine which items are to be included in the basket, and on some occasions to determine the cost of the included items. Note that coordination and collaboration between education clusters and CWGs has grown during the past few years, and there is still plenty of place for further improvement. School materials were most frequently included in education components of MEBs, (appearing in nine of the eleven MEBs),

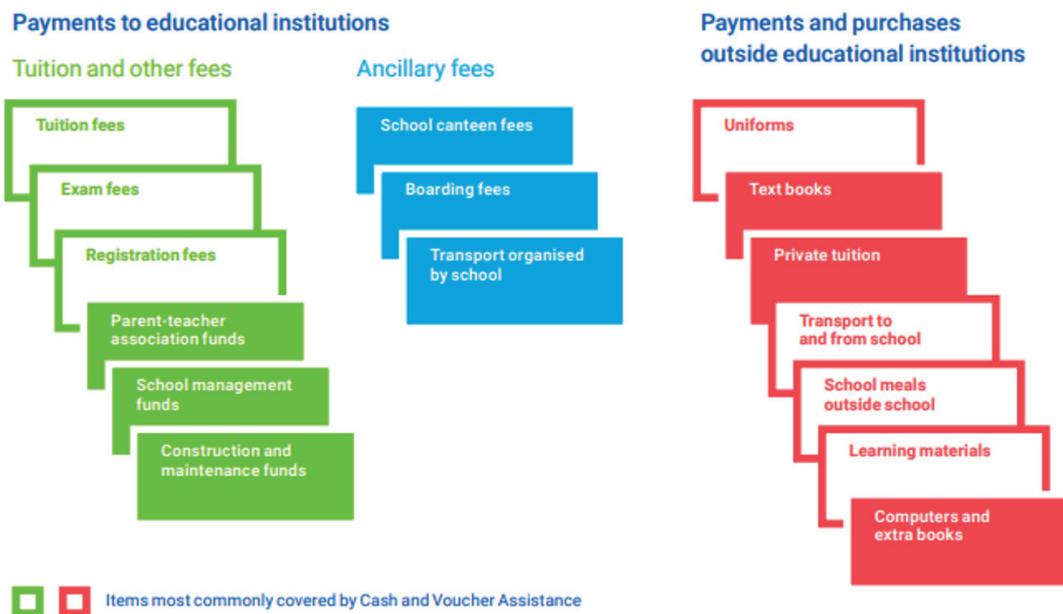
uniforms were next (six out of the eleven MEBs), followed by school fees (five MEBs), and in some contexts, transport costs to and from school, the cost of lunches and of school bags (three to four MEBs). Transport costs appeared in the MEBs for Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey where transport is not only very much needed, but where such services are usually purchased by families. The MEBs calculated costs per household, for an estimated average household size, and an estimated number of school-aged children per household. When expenditure baskets are calculated to be used by EiE-specific cash transfer programmes only, as in Iraq, their composition has been similar to the one described above, with the main difference being that costs are calculated per school-aged child.

Sometimes education was not included in the MEB for reasons such as: education being perceived as non-lifesaving; government resistance due to the high value of the MEB; lack of expertise in the education sector; or concerns that the effort put into calculating the MEB would not be utilised for actual programming.

## WHAT ELEMENTS NEED TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN CALCULATING THE TRANSFER VALUE OF CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES?

The diagram below shows a range of possible education related expenses that households with school-aged children may face, of which only those on white background can realistically be included in MEBs.

### Overview of education-related expenditures



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UNHCR, CaLP, DRC, OCHA, Oxfam, Save the Children, & WFP. (2015). Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants. Retrieved from: <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/operational-guidance-and-toolkit-for-multipurpose-cash-grants-web.pdf>

## HOW MUCH IS NEEDED TO COVER THE IDENTIFIED NEEDS?

Often, school fees, uniforms and backpacks are one-off education expenditures at the beginning of the school year. Expenditures for consumable school materials, transport to school and school lunches are recurrent needs, which need to be considered in the monthly recurring transfer value. Variations of these patterns can be encountered across countries and humanitarian responses.

Despite calculating total needs in the MEB at household level, transfer value for topping up multi-purpose cash transfers with education-related expenses is calculated per child. While inconsistent from a methodological point of view, this mitigates the risk connected to varying numbers of school-aged children per household, and ensures that the needs of each school-aged child in the household are taken into account. This in turn can be limited by a cap put on the number of children per household receiving cash for education.

For example, the Alternative Responses to Communities in Crisis (ARCC) programme in DR Congo estimated the gap by considering the average household expenses, in particular the average expenditure of the last two wealth quintiles of the surveyed households. In a successful effort to integrate into the analysis the impact of the humanitarian crisis, needs assessments in the ARCC programme included a 'crisis level' coefficient to be applied to education expenses in the MEB. The coefficient had three levels, namely stress, crisis and emergency, and impacted directly on the percentage of the education component of the MEB to be covered by the transfer value (UNICEF, 2018).

### KEY RESOURCES

Dana Truhlarova Cristescu. (2021) **Desk-based Review on Cash and Voucher Assistance in Education in Emergencies** Global Education Cluster <https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/desk-based-review-on-cash-and-voucher-assistance-in-education-in-emergencies/>

See the Alternative Responses to Communities in Crisis (ARCC) Tools <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/0ByAgpJuGpThWbUxHZGNMMGF0VU0/edit?resourcekey=0-4v8IDr8NnVjLCK7w4YmCDA#gid=579550373>



### EXAMPLES OF CALCULATING TRANSFER VALUE (IN TOP UP PAYMENTS OR CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMING)

#### How to calculate transfer value based on unmet needs:

In Iraq, UNICEF provided a Child Cash Grant (CCG) as a top-up to the UNHCR multi-purpose cash (MPC) transfer. The CCG was based on the costing of schooling, health, nutrition and other childcare needs, and was calculated per child. The MPC transfer value was based on the MEB, which did not include education related costs, and was calculated per household. The CCG led to an almost double expenditure on school supplies, compared to the period before the receipt of the CCG, and led to increased enrolment, with a stronger effect in the cases where both parents were literate.

#### How programme objective can influence transfer value:

In Lebanon, UNICEF actively combated household reliance on negative coping strategies such as child labour or child marriage. For children of primary school age, the grant value covered indirect costs such as transportation, clothing and school snack. For children older than ten years, the grant value also included compensation for the opportunity cost of lost child labour.

#### How programme objective and acceptability can influence transfer value:

In Turkey, the transfer value of the UNICEF Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) for Syrian refugee children in 2018 was the same as the transfer value of the national cash transfer for education targeted to Turkish children, with a higher value for girls and secondary school students (the higher value for girls was explained by the programme objective to incentivise girls' parents to send them to school). Aligning the transfer value of the refugee programme with the national programme was important for the acceptance of the refugee programme, which has close to 300,000 beneficiaries. However, the value could still not be considered optimal for expanding access to those children still out of school.

