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CASH FOR EDUCATION

Direction and Key Considerations

This document outlines the key direction and considerations for cash and education to be pursued by UNHCR staff and partners when delivering humanitarian assistance.

BACKGROUND

UNHCR is committed¹ to double the use of cash by 2020 and provided in 2016-2017 some US 1.2 billion in cash to 10.5 million refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless people and internally displaced persons in more than 95 countries worldwide. Cash assistance now exceeds in-kind assistance. Yet, mid-way through the implementation of UNHCR's [Cash Based Interventions Policy](#) and [Strategy](#), the use of cash for education and its inclusion as an integral part of cash for basic needs remain fairly limited.

Cash is a critical modality in education and should be used – along with other core education activities – to **facilitate access to education at all levels**. Increasing evidence exists of the positive impact of cash assistance on school attendance and educational outcomes. The ultimate aim of cash for education is to increase access and retention in government led education systems.

¹ UNHCR's Grand Bargain commitment is to double the use of cash as a proportion of its assistance by 2020.

MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations for cash for education include:

- **Use cash (when payment for education is required)** whenever possible to **facilitate access** to and retention of all persons of concern (including host populations) in education at all levels (from pre-primary to tertiary and non-formal education).
- **Make cash for education part of cash for basic needs** and thus include it in the minimum expenditure basket as a top-up. Engage internally in the multi-functional team and externally with the other clusters and sectors from the onset of the response in the design of the cash transfer. Be aware that a large part of the education expenses occur at the beginning of the school year or term and the timing and frequency of the education support must be adjusted accordingly.
- **The size, timing and durability** of the cash transfers significantly **influence long-term impact**. Consider these elements early on when planning cash for basic needs and/ or education and align them with investments in **livelihoods and economic inclusion for which education is a pathway**.
- **Move from conditional to unconditional cash transfers**, in particular when the barriers to education are financial. Conditional cash is costly, impractical and time-consuming and should be avoided. It may be considered a) when **aligning the cash with social protection systems**; and b) to address barriers to education that are not financial (cultural, behavioural).
- **Always monetise school supplies** (school kits, uniforms etc.) in situations where a cash transfer mechanism and markets are available. The use of in-kind education supplies is then not acceptable. Engage with supply on market assessment to ensure school supplies are available.
- **Provide support to school fees and PTA levies directly to the household** when possible to empower refugee parents and caregivers to engage in the school community and PTA at the same level as host community members.
- **Implement cash for education directly**, i.e. use the existing cash transfer mechanism available in the country rather than having a partner provide the cash. Maximise partner engagement in the quality aspects of education, including assessment, referral, targeting, capacity-building and monitoring.
- **Targeting for education should be based on universal access to education. Consider targeting** for cash for education as part the larger targeting approach/ plan for **cash for basic needs** and other education activities.
- **Ensure a communication strategy for cash for education** so that the targeted population is clear on the payment schedule, targeting, timeframe and expectations.
- **Include 2-3 indicators on education** on enrolment and retention in the **post-distribution monitoring template** to complement your regular monitoring of education outcomes.
- **Maximise the use of cash for innovative technology-supported education opportunities**, for example enrolment in blended learning programmes, using cash to support tuition and purchasing necessary tools and materials.
- **Coordinate cash for refugees, including cash for basic needs or education**. In IDP contexts, ensure to engage the education sector and promote the use of cash, with partners using UNHCR's cash transfer mechanism for them to benefit under the same conditions.
- For **guidance on cash assistance**, please see [UNHCR Cash-Based Interventions webpage](#).²
- For cash and education examples from the field, please see [Cash for Education: A global review of UNHCR programs in refugee settings](#).³

For more information on cash and education, please contact the UNHCR Education Section at hqeduc@unhcr.org.

² <http://www.unhcr.org/cash-based-interventions.html>

³ <http://www.unhcr.org/5a280f297>