

GEROS Evaluation Quality Assurance Tool

Version: September 2021

Evaluation of the Cash for Education 2021-2023

REPORT RATING SUMMARY			
Overall Rating	62%	Fair	
●●●●●	Exceptional (96% - 100%)	5	
●●●●○	Highly Satisfactory (87.5% - 95.99%)	4	
●●●○●	Satisfactory (62.5% - 87.49%)	3	
●●○●●	Fair (35% - 62.49%)	2	Meets UNICEF/UNEG standards for evaluation reports in some regards, but not all. Decision makers may use the evaluation with caution. Substantive improvements in some areas are needed
●○○●●	Unsatisfactory (0% - 34.99%)	1	

REPORT DETAILS	
Title of the evaluation report	Evaluation of the Cash for Education 2021-2023
Report sequence number	Lebanon 59-2024-19608
Region	MENA
Year of report	2024
Office	Lebanon
Coverage (countries)	Lebanon
ToRs present	Yes
Date of review (dd/mmm/yyyy)	June 1, 2024
Name of review firm	IOD PARC

CLASSIFICATION OF EVALUATION REPORT	
Management of evaluation (Managerial control and oversight of evaluation)	UNICEF managed
Unicef goal areas (Alignment with strategic plan priorities)	
Every child survives and thrives	No
Every child learns	Yes
Every child is protected from violence and exploitation	No
Every child lives in a safe and clean environment	No
Every child has an equitable chance in life	Yes
Gender equality (cross-cutting)	Yes
Humanitarian action (cross-cutting)	Yes
Evaluation object	Programme
Evaluation type	Summative and formative
Evaluation strategy	Mixed methods
Evaluation design (primary method used)	Theory-based
Evaluation level	Output & Outcome
Geographic scope	National
Primary SDG(s) covered (number)	4

EQA Summary: The rater will provide top line issues for this evaluation relevant for feedback to senior management (positive and negative), summarizing how the evaluation report meets or fails to meet all criteria. As relevant, the rater will highlight best practice/added value elements and the level of complexity of the evaluation.

Summary:

* It is important to note that this is a rapid evaluation (p25) and was completed in three months due to the need for evidence for decision making. This requirement had implications for the selection of methodology and where the evaluation was undertaken in what is a complex operational environment.

Key Strengths:

* This rapid evaluation uses appropriate tools and was undertaken in a complex environment for a programme with 4 cycles whose objectives for targeted support changed over time. The evaluation team had to construct the Theory of Change and to identify more clearly how the Cash For Education (CFE) work linked with wider work being undertaken by UNICEF in relation to Education in Lebanon. The team highlighted the complexity of 'discontinuous funding' and changing objectives - including targeting - in a sensible manner reflecting concerns from Participant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

* There is clearly laid out in Section 3 Footnote 3 the Evaluation Questions that were removed from those given in the ToRs (Annex 1).

* There are 10 Annexes, including the ToRs, which provide important material in relation to the methodology and additional data tables. The addition of the Contribution Analysis approach could have made a useful addition to the Annexes given the centrality of this approach to the methodology - at present only 'hot linked'.

* The report is generally clear and readable but some inconsistency in the way data is laid out e.g. Figures 19 / 20 not disaggregated.

* The explicit focus on children with disabilities is important and to be welcomed. But it is not clear that this leads to a recommendation to focus only on children with disabilities rather than greater transparency around the targeting system more generally. A recommendation to not lose this focus whilst addressing the wider challenges of targeting (linked to resourcing issues) is important to avoid perhaps unintended consequences for other children (girls and boys) from poor families (Lebanese / non-Lebanese).

Main Weaknesses:

* In the operational context there is a difference made between Syrian and Palestinian refugees. However in much of the analysis the non Lebanese are referred to by that name or by Syrian. Whilst it is recognised that the majority of the refugee community who had access to the scheme were Syrian (for example Table 26) from a rights perspective the language could be more 'neutral' and consistent. There is no distinction made between the types of refugees (other than to some extent in the selection of the locations). It is therefore not clear whether there are any differences not only between Lebanese / non Lebanese but between Syrian and Palestinian refugees (or other refugees). For instance in relation to the levels of disability amongst children. This may be an effect of the rapid nature of the evaluation and the small sample size but this limitation could perhaps have been recognised in Section 3.5 on limitations of the evaluation. Given the challenges of the level of data available from monitoring systems (challenges of existing databases) perhaps a recommendation around data disaggregation should be explored - but may be politically sensitive and the distinction Lebanese / non-Lebanese (rather than just Syrian may be found to suffice).

* Too little attention to the challenge of resourcing and hence 'continuity' of children within the education system. The timing of this evaluation, after 2 years of 4 diverse cycles, was not able from existing data to track individuals for continuity and the outcome of improved educational attainment. This could have been linked more clearly to the recommendation on programme effectiveness and ongoing database management etc.

* The recommendations could be made more clearly i.e. the to whom, priority and risks if not taken forward. Whilst there are two strategic recommendations the remaining ones are not well laid out. Given the focus of this evaluation was to aid decision making - including future funding - clarity on recommendations is essential. It is not clear, and this may be due to the rapid nature of the evaluation, whether the recommendations were validated with stakeholders prior to publication.

* As indicated below some editing of the report before publication on the Geros website would have been helpful to ensure consistency in referencing (for document review and beyond) as well as use of Acronyms. This should also include the numbering of evaluation question (consistency with Annex 2 is critical) as in Section 3 Methodology the numbers are the 'paragraph numbers' which can cause confusion.

Recommendations for Improvement: The rater will identify topline recommendations to improve the evaluation, and be specific to the sections of the report where shortcomings were found. As relevant, resources will be cited to assist evaluation managers in overseeing future evaluations.

Recommendations:

Acronyms: Should be in alphabetical order

References: Consistency should be improved. Some references are 'hot linked' and some are standard academic style e.g. page 16. Also on page 17 use of a number in [] which may be reference to the documents reviewed from page 106 onwards? disabilities for the PM shift [58]. Some of these numerical references are 'hot linked e.g. Nos. 55 and 56 on page 18 but others are not. So there is no consolidated reference list but there is an Annotated Bibliography of Coded Documents (page 110) and the list of documents reviewed (page 106). This makes it hard to see a full list of references for this report presented in a consistent format. Some 'hotlinks' usefully link to Annexes e.g. re results framework Annex 10 / Table 10 from page 19. Page 32 also has a problem with referencing - but not obvious ref list to cross-refer to.

Evaluation Questions numbers in Annex 2 and as presented on pages 27 / 28 do not match. This can be confusing to the reader.

Evaluation Question matrix - adding in a final column with a summary of the findings would be a useful action as it then provides a clear summary of the evaluation for decision makers.

Consistency in language including for example figure headings: Fig 8 narrative indicates Syrian children but figure 8 heading doesn't show this - needs to be consistent and clear when presenting data for different groups.

Ensure consistency in use of Lebanese / Non-Lebanese unless specifically addressing data referring to Syrian refugees.

Section 6 Recommendations:

1. These are to be reviewed, more clearly targeted and the first Strategic Learning Recommendation be revisited as this could clearly change the focus of the CFE and it is not clear that this solution to the current targeting and resourcing issue has sufficient evidence to support it. What might the unintended consequences of this be for children (girls and boys) who are not disabled but from families that meet for instance poverty criteria (Lebanese and non-Lebanese). Perhaps this could be more generally worded around a process to base the CFE on clear criteria linked to need and resourcing issues.
2. Recommendations should be more clearly laid out, what their priority is, to whom they are addressed and in what time frame they should be carried out along with the risks for the CFE is not undertaken (assuming resources are available for future cycles and / or a longer intervention programme).
3. A stronger recommendation around the Theory of Change and how the CFE links to the wider work on Education being undertaken by UNICEF and Government of Lebanon and other donors to ensure coherence. If the current strategic recommendation regarding a focus on children with disability was to be taken forward this would also have major implications for the Theory of Change that was reconstructed during the evaluation as it would change the emphasis of the CFE considerably.
4. Ensure that the issues of additional costs for children with disabilities are fully understood so that future CFE design and funding can be based on a clear understanding of the financial (and other costs such as care responsibilities, additional support needs in schools and travel for instance) can be factored into future grants and criteria for selection.

SECTION RATINGS

SECTION A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)		67%	Comments on Rating
Question 1.	Can the executive summary inform decision-making?		
i	Is clearly presented, serves as a standalone document useful for informing decision making, and is of relevant conciseness and depth for key users (Maximum of 5 pages unless otherwise specified in ToR).	Partially	The Executive Summary is the correct length and could be used by decision makers with one caution around the lack of targeting of the recommendations and how one strategic recommendation was arrived at (targeting the CFE only to children with disabilities).
ii	Includes all necessary elements (overview of the intervention, evaluation purpose, objectives and intended audience, evaluation methodology, key conclusions on findings, lessons learned if requested, key recommendations) as per the ToR.	Partially	The ES contains the necessary elements and focuses, as required by the ToRs on relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency. In the ES is the 'hotlink' to the Contribution Analysis explanation (helpful) but perhaps a little more on the limitations of the rapid assessment process could have been laid out.
iii	Includes all significant information needed to understand the intervention and the evaluation AND does not introduce new information from what is presented in the rest of the report.	Yes	ES includes the significant information to understand the interventions and does not introduce new material.
SECTION B: BACKGROUND (weight 5%)		50%	Comments on Rating
Question 2.	Is the object of the evaluation clearly described?		
i	Clear and relevant description of the intervention, including: location(s), timelines, cost/budget, and implementation status.	Partially	The details of the intervention, including locations, timelines, costs/budget, and implementation status, are clearly outlined. One area that could benefit from further clarification is why donors are not providing continuous support to the CFE, leading to challenges in implementing four cycles with varying targeting criteria.
ii	Clear and relevant description of intended rightsholders (beneficiaries) and duty bearers (state and non-state actors with responsibilities regarding the intervention) by type (i.e., institutions/organizations; communities; individuals...), by geographic location(s) (i.e., urban, rural, particular neighbourhoods, town/cities, sub-regions...) and in terms of numbers reached, with disaggregation by gender, age, disability . . . (as appropriate to the purpose of the evaluation).	Partially	This is well laid out - but one area that is perhaps not so clear is the issue of Lebanese / Non-Lebanese and the breakdown of the latter by Syrian and Palestinian. Given the sample size use of non-Lebanese may be appropriate but then this should be used consistently in the narrative (tables / figures as well) to avoid confusion. Given the complexity of the situation and the rapidity of this evaluation the Areas for Future Research (6.1) could, perhaps, include the issue of understanding whether there are distinct differences between Syrian and Palestinian refugee families and their response to the CFE and how these compare to Lebanese families. Particular attention to gender, disability, poverty and perhaps the educational level of the parents (especially mothers) and whether this influences the 'value' they put on education could aid targeting and resourcing decision making.
Question 3.	Is the context of the intervention clearly described?		
i	Clear and relevant description of the context of the intervention (i.e. relevant policy, socio-economic, political, cultural, power/privilege, institutional, international factors) and how context relates to the implementation of the intervention.	Partially	There is material on the issue of alignment with government policies (page 19). Given the complexity of the policy environment (social protection, disability, education) and the changing status / resourcing a possible 'timeline' of when policies and programmes operated might be helpful. Similarly with the 'overlap' between policies / programmes a diagram of this may help those who are not engaged with this sector understand more fully the diverse interventions which affect programme coherence.
ii	Linkages drawn to the SDGs and relevant targets and indicators for the area being evaluated.	No	The CFE is focused on SDG 4. There is however no detail of which of the SDG 4 targets and indicators the Lebanese government are focused on and how the data from the CFE will contribute to achieving stated targets.

	iii	Clear and relevant description (where appropriate) of the status and needs of the rightsholders/beneficiaries of the intervention.	Partially	The rights holders are clearly identified as the parents and care-givers. As the CFE focus is on ECE (in early stages) and education up to the age of around 12 children, whilst seen as rights holders, are not included in the evaluation methodology and discussions. The explicit inclusion of parents and care givers of children with disabilities is an important part of this evaluation and to be welcomed given the rapidity of its implementation. Greater attention to differentiate non-Lebanese rights holders between Syrian and Palestinian refugees may have deepened the understanding of the needs of different rights holders. This may have included aspects such as the education level of the parents (especially mothers) and whether this affected the 'take-up' and 'value' put on the CFE.
Question 4.		Are key stakeholders, their relationships and contributions clearly identified?		
	i	Identification of implementing agency(ies), development partners, right holders, and additional duty bearers and other stakeholders; and of linkages between them (e.g., stakeholder map) (if relevant).	Partially	Table 2, page 23, could have been complemented by a more detailed statement on implementing agencies (where, which cycle, focus...), funding agencies for different programmes along with a map showing clearly what happened, where and when. This would complement the map (Figure 9 page 42) and also perhaps include the Palestinian refugee location.
	ii	Identification of the specific contributions and roles of key stakeholders (financial or otherwise), including UNICEF.	Yes	Table 2 (page 23) lays out the primary stakeholder partners and their role in CFE.
SECTION C:		EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE (weight 5%)	83%	Comments on Rating
Question 5.		Is the purpose of the evaluation clearly described?		
	i	Purpose of evaluation is clearly defined, including why it was needed at that point in time, its intended use, and key intended users.	Yes	The purpose of the evaluation is laid out in section 2 along with the requirement to complete within 3 months to inform decision making. The constraints that this imposes are discussed. The primary users of the evaluation are UNICEF Education Section and the European Union for the future design and implementation of the CFE programme. Secondary users are listed (page 25). Evaluation also being considered by UNICEF Lebanon for advocacy purposes.
Question 6.		Are the objectives and scope of the evaluation clear and realistic?		
	i	Clear and complete description of what the evaluation seeks to achieve by the end of the process with reference to any changes made to the objectives included in the ToR (if applicable).	Yes	The evaluation report is focused on relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency with equity, gender equality and human rights as cross cutting issues. The evaluation questions in the ToRs were revised and those that were removed (duplication) are presented in footnote 2. The evaluation framework is given in Annex 2. The evaluation questions are clearly numbered.
	ii	Clear and relevant description of the scope of the evaluation: what will and will not be covered (thematically, chronologically, geographically with key terms defined), as well as, if applicable, the reasons for this scope (e.g., specifications by the ToRs, lack of access to particular geographic areas for political or safety reasons at the time of the evaluation, lack of data/evidence on particular elements of the intervention).	Yes	The scope of the evaluation, including geographical focus, was determined by two key elements. One was the need for a rapid evaluation (less than 3 months) and the second by the operational context. The scope of the evaluation the 4 cycles (not linked), coverage etc. are laid out clearly. The narrative does not explicitly indicate what is not covered.
Question 7.		Is the theory of change, results chain or logic well articulated?		
	i	Clear description of the intervention's intended results, or of the parts of the results chain that are applicable to, or are being tested by, the evaluation.	Partially	The evaluation team had to prepare a theory of change (EQ2.2) which is presented on page 51 and Figure 17. As the evaluation report indicates the relationship between the CFE and the wider work on education (by UNICEF and Government of Lebanon) is not made explicit. Changes in targeting, funding availability, and operations (including the impact of COVID-19 on teaching), combined with the challenges posed by the 12 databases, result in a relatively underdeveloped Theory of Change (ToC). A recommendation in the evaluation for further work on the ToC and the linkages to the wider education work of UNICEF in particular is made in the report. This would help to increase the Programme Coherence (page 74) and also improve the evaluability of the CFE programme.
	ii	Causal relationship between outputs and outcomes is presented in narrative and/or graphic form (e.g., results chain, logic model, theory of change, evaluation matrix).	Partially	Annex 10, Table 10 presents the CFE Results Framework. What is noticeable is the limited data at Outcome level. Section 1.2.1 (page 18) presents a narrative and diagram on the ToC and Figures 4 (page 19) presents the log frame. Page 20 highlights the resource transfers and number: 'The total number of children targeted varied by programme cycle and donor allocation, however the amount of cash transferred remained the same across the 4 programme cycle' with Table 1 showing numbers / resources across the 4 cycles. The consequences of this variability in funding, targeting, complex databases and unclear linkages with wider educational programme it is not possible for the Evaluation Team, in this rapid evaluation to document from UNICEF documents and other material a clear causal relationship between outputs and outcomes.
	iii	For theory-based evaluations, the theory of change or results framework is assessed, and if requested in the ToR, it is reformulated/improved by the evaluators.	Yes	The Theory of Change (ToC) was not available prior to the evaluation and has therefore been newly constructed and presented in this report. The evaluation design was developed in the absence of an existing ToC (see section 3.2, p. 29). Section 3.3.6 details the process of "reconstructing" the ToC, which resulted in the development of a simplified version for the CFE programme. The term "reconstruction" in point F, section 3.3.6 (p. 30) is somewhat misleading and should be corrected to simply state "construction of a Theory of Change," as no prior version existed for comparison or amendment.

SECTION D:	EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY (weight 20%)	82%	Comments on Rating
Question 8.	Does the evaluation use questions and the relevant evaluation criteria that are explicitly justified as appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation? <i>UNICEF evaluation standards refer to the OECD/DAC criteria - Relevance; Coherence; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Sustainability; Impact (not all are necessarily relevant for all evaluations). Evaluations should also consider equity and leaving no-one behind, gender and human rights based approach (these can be mainstreamed into other criteria). Humanitarian evaluations should also consider Coverage; Connectedness; Coordination; Protection; Security.</i>		
	i Evaluation questions and sub-questions are appropriate for meeting the objectives and purpose of the evaluation. The relevant criteria are specified and are aligned with the questions.	Yes	The Evaluation Questions were laid out in the ToRs but adjusted by the Evaluation Team (questions removed presented in footnote 3 (page 27) and is given in Annex 2 (all questions numbered). The Evaluation matrix lays out the Evaluation Methods and Data Sources as well as the Evaluative Indicators / Analysis approach. It might have been helpful to provide a new column with the summary conclusions to each of the Evaluation Questions for ease of reference.
	ii In addition to the questions and sub-questions, the evaluation matrix includes indicators, benchmarks, assumptions and/or other processes from which the analysis can be based and conclusions drawn.	Partially	Annex 2 presents the evaluation Framework. It lists the Criteria/ Objectives, numbered evaluations questions and evaluation methods and data sources. It also provides some evaluation indicators / analysis approach. The Evaluation Framework (Annex 2) does not provide baseline data (see Annex 10 Table 10 which highlights the scarcity of data for baselines especially at the Outcome level). The Evaluation Framework does not provide any summary of the evidence itself. There is a lack of clarity around 'triangulation of all methods and data sources for EQ1' which is against EQ2 and vice versa for EQ1.
Question 9.	Does the report specify adequate methods for data collection, analysis, and sampling?		
	i Evaluation design and set of methods are relevant and adequately robust for the evaluation's purpose, objectives and scope; and are fully and clearly described.	Yes	The evaluation design and methods are relevant and robust enough given the timeframe of the evaluation, the operational context for the evaluation and are described (Annexes 3 - 7). It would have been helpful to include the description of Contribution Analysis in an Annex in the report rather than a 'hotlink' (suitable in the Executive Summary as 'stand-alone').
	ii Data sources are appropriate - these would normally include qualitative and quantitative sources (unless otherwise specified in the ToR) - and are all clearly described.	Yes	Qualitative and quantitative data sources are used in the evaluation and are well described. These data sources are appropriate to the work in hand and the timeframe for this evaluation. The topics covered are often sensitive and care is required in both obtaining the data and then handling it.
	iii Sampling strategy is provided - it should include a description of how diverse perspectives are captured (or, if not, provide reasons for this).	Yes	Section 3.3 Data Collection and Sample covers, in detail, issues of sampling. Further detail is also presented in Annex 7. The geographical areas enable a range of settings to be examined (rural / semi-rural / urban. Different NGO partners are identified. Males and Females are represented but whilst a balance of parents was sought the majority of the parents in the sample were female. Given gender norms and care responsibilities as well as timing of interviews this was to be expected. What was perhaps not so clear was whether the educational levels of the parents or the female care giver who attended the interviews (for example) made a difference to their engagement in this programme. Attention was paid to Lebanese / Non-Lebanese and issues of children with disabilities.
	iv Clear and complete description of the methods of analysis.	Yes	Contribution analysis is the primary approach for this evaluation. On page 30 this the approach is described as using the following: 'Through an iterative data collection and analysis process, theory-based evaluations permit the identification of the unique attributions of an intervention, as well as its contributions to collective outcomes and impacts.' Section 3.4 (page 34) lays out the steps involved in the contribution analysis and how the evaluation followed this - including Annex 8 Coding Manual for the qualitative data analysis.
	v Methodology allows for drawing causal connections between outputs and expected outcomes.	Yes	As given above the approach could enable causal connections between outputs and expected outcomes. This is however also dependent on the data that is available to the evaluation team. As discussed there were challenges with the 12 databases reviewed as well as the short time frame for the evaluation leading to a smaller selection of field sites than might have been used if time / resources were available. See limitations in section 3.5 and explicit statements on coding manuals (page 35) and registration data (page 61).
	vi Clear and complete description of limitations and constraints faced by the evaluation, including gaps in the evidence that was generated and mitigation of bias, and how these were addressed by the evaluators (as feasible).	Yes	Limitations are well addressed in the report (section 3.5) and throughout. The issues identified as limitations have been used to inform a number of the recommendations that may increase the possibility of tracking and examining the causal links between inputs / outputs and outcomes.
Question 10.	Are ethical issues and considerations described? The evaluation should be guided by the UNEG ethical standards for evaluation. As such, the evaluation report should include:		

	i	Explicit and contextualized reference to the UNEG obligations of evaluators (independence, impartiality, credibility, conflicts of interest, accountability) and/or the principles in the 2020 revised UNEG Ethical Guidelines (integrity, accountability, respect, beneficence).	No	There are no explicit references to the UNEG obligations in the evaluation report other than those in the ToRs (Annex 1).
	ii	Description of ethical safeguards for participants appropriate for the issues relevant to methodology and how they are applied (respect for dignity and diversity, right to self-determination, fair representation, compliance with codes for vulnerable groups, confidentiality, and avoidance of harm). For those cases where the evaluation involves interviewing children, explicit reference is made to the UNICEF procedures for Ethical Research Involving Children.	Yes	Annex 9 presents details of the Ethical Safeguards (note that this is also well covered in the Inception Report) and consent forms are provided. This evaluation did not include children in the focus group discussions and material was kept confidential given the highly sensitive nature of the intervention.
Question 11.		Does the evaluation incorporate innovative practice that adds value to the evaluation process?		
	i	Innovation practice is used to improve the quality of evaluation process. This could be evident in several ways such as the design of the methodology (i.e. use of technology for data gathering, extensive participatory processes, systematic analysis processes such as collaborative outcomes reporting and incorporation of big data, specific strategies to address complexity such as outcome harvesting, strong child rights focus), or ways of sharing of evaluation results.	Partially	This was a rapid evaluation in a complex environment using a clearly identified approach and hence could be seen as innovative in enabling a quality evaluation to be undertaken in a robust and coherent manner. Whilst 'real-time' / 'rapid' evaluations are used in the humanitarian sector regularly, it is more unusual to see a requirement to undertake this type of evaluation in a complex, multi-dimensional programme. This evaluation is a coherent application of a rapid evaluation using 'contribution analysis' as the main analytical tool. This enables some clarity to be obtained where data e.g. from databases / M&E systems may not be robust.
SECTION E:		EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 25%)	67%	Comments on Rating
Question 12.		Do the findings clearly address all evaluation objectives and scope?		
	i	Findings marshal sufficient levels of evidence to systematically address all of the evaluation's questions, sub-questions and criteria.	Yes	Findings are presented in Section 4 around the key evaluation question headings (relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency). The questions are answered with the data available. It would perhaps have been helpful to have added a column to the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 2) that summarised the findings for each question. This would provide a quick summary of the findings from this rapid assessment for decision makers.
	ii	Explicit use of the intervention's results framework/ToC in the formulation of the findings.	Partially	The evaluation itself constructed the ToC and the issue of the ToC is discussed in the answer to Evaluation Questions 2.2 (page 51) and presented in Figure 17. The ToC for CFE needs to be carefully aligned with the wider work in Education (a recommendation) to ensure coherence. As shown in Annex 10 / Table 10 there are many gaps in the results framework data, including from the 12 databases that the Evaluation Team reviewed. Data has been used where available.
Question 13.		Are evaluation findings derived from the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available, objective, reliable and valid data and by accurate quantitative and qualitative analysis of evidence.		
	i	Evaluation uses credible forms of qualitative and quantitative data. It presents both output and outcome-level data as relevant to the evaluation framework. Triangulation is evident through the use of multiple data sources.	Partially	The presentation of the evidence from this rapid evaluation is consistent and credible. The short term nature of the work (4 diverse cycles of intervention across 2 years) as well as a lack of quality data from the 12 databases means that reporting on outcomes e.g. exam success, continuation of schooling, transfer to higher levels of education is not possible at this stage. There are two key areas where consistency in presentation would have been helpful: 1. ensuring that disaggregation is consistent e.g. Lebanese / non-Lebanese or Syrian. The former would be preferable for general data presentation given that a number of the refugees would be Palestinian. Only where data is clearly for Syrian refugees should this descriptor be used. 2. Consistency over disaggregation on gender and disability. Multiple data sources are used in line with the methodology.

	ii Findings are clearly supported by, and respond to, the evidence presented, including both positive and negative. Findings are based on clear performance indicators, standards, benchmarks, or other means of comparison as relevant for each question.	Partially	The Evaluation Matrix (Annex 2) does not contain 'benchmarks' and the Annex 10 Table 10 results framework highlights the lack of baseline data available for a number of key outputs / outcomes. The evaluation covered 4 cycles of diverse interventions within a 2 year period. Consistency in targeting did not take place and data e.g. attendance was not well tracked by the intervention implementation teams. By clearly presenting the findings for each evaluation question, both positive and negative evidence can be observed. For example, EQ 4.2 on payments highlights that while UNICEF adjusted the payment type and currency to suit the context, the rate paid, due to various factors in Lebanon, was noted as 'no longer sufficient to cover all of children's indirect education costs. It was also noted that <i>'There is insufficient data to link resource inputs with the results achieved at this time.'</i> The report provides a high level summary for the main evaluation questions and then more detail for the sub-questions. So for EQ4 the high level summary indicates that <i>'The CFE programme utilized its resource in a manner consistent with the planning documents. However, additional steps are required to ensure greater efficiencies in system strengthening of the attendance data, the payment process, amounts and community-based monitoring.'</i>
	iii Causal factors (contextual, organizational, managerial, etc.) leading to achievement or non-achievement of results are clearly identified. For theory-based evaluations, findings also analyse the logical chain (progression -or not- from implementation to results).	Yes	Whilst this is a theory based rapid evaluation using contribution analysis, the short time frame for implementation of the 4 diverse cycles over 2 years means that issues of outcome and impact are 'too early' to be included. Throughout the presentation of the results against the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency (as well as the cross-cutting issues of Equity, gender and human rights) the evaluation does examine a number of factors that are contributing to challenges in the development and implementation of a coherent Cash For Education Programme. This includes issues of coordination with government and other programmes (EQ 2.1 and Tables 21 - 24), challenges of resourcing (Table 6) and targeting (Table 5).
Question 14.	Does the evaluation assess and use the intervention's Results Based Management elements?		
	i Assessment of the adequacy of the intervention's monitoring system (including completeness and appropriateness of results/performance framework - including vertical and horizontal logic, M&E tools and their usage) to support decision-making.	Partially	The Evaluation team reviewed 12 databases (page 31) but due to the complexity of the databases there was 'insufficient participant data' to assess CFE contribution to learning outcomes (page 36). Page 59 the Evaluation indicates that 'There was no attendance data for the 2021-2022 school year by sex with the databases provided by UNICEF' and UNICEF reported the percentage of children with disabilities who were highly absent was less than 5%, except for pre-ECE students in the month of June, though we were not able to validate this information with the databases provided by UNICEF. The issue of databases is included in the recommendations (page 74) The evaluation also had to reconstruct a theory of change and see how the CFE links with the wider work on education and there is a recommendation to improve programme coherence that includes work on the ToC and related matters. Annex 10 presents useful data sets.
SECTION F:	EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED (weight 10%)	50%	
Question 15.	Do the conclusions clearly present an objective overall assessment of the intervention?		
	i Conclusions are clearly formulated and reflect the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. They are sufficiently forward looking (if a formative evaluation or if the implementation is expected to continue or have additional phase).	Partially	The conclusions and lessons are presented against the three (3) objectives of the evaluation (Section 5). It is a very short section (little over a page) and perhaps needs to be more clearly articulated and linked to the recommendations e.g. around coherence and convergence. The conclusions are set against the objectives of the study - helpful but this does not perhaps encourage a real focus on the critical issues that may inform future CFE design and funding. Whilst the recommendations (Section 6) and areas for future research (6.1) do cover some of the issues needed to understand future needs there are a number of gaps. For instance on page 73 the issue of indirect costs for education of children with disability is rightly mentioned but this is not translated into section 6.1 (same page) in relation to areas for future research. Given the Strategic Learning Recommendations and the recommendation to 'retarget' all children with disability this is perhaps a significant gap.
	ii Conclusions are derived appropriately from findings, and present a picture of the strengths and limitations of the intervention that adds insight and analysis beyond the findings.	Partially	The conclusions and recommendations sections (sections 5 and 6) are presented against the objectives of the evaluation and do follow from the findings. The section does draw out some of the areas where UNICEF has been effective but also draws attention to areas where the limited involvement of rights holders in design as well as changes in coverage for each programme cycle have contributed to a 'perception' (or real issue) that the CFE was inequitable. One issue not addressed sufficiently clearly in Sections 5 and 6 is the issue of short-term funding, lack of continuity for children and linkages with other interventions (both UNICEF and other donors). Coherence in this area, in a fast changing context, is essential given the implications for children and their future lives.

Question 16.	Are logical and informative lessons learned identified? [N/A if lessons are not presented and not requested in ToR]		
	i Identified lessons stem logically from the findings, have wider applicability and relevance beyond the object of the evaluation.	Partially	This section is limited even if one accepts that this is a rapid nature of the evaluation may be sufficient to aid immediate decision making by the funding agency / UNICEF / MEHE and other stakeholders for future interventions around CFE and where to work, with whom and how to track the inputs, outputs and outcomes for different children at different stages of the educational process.
	ii Lessons are clearly and concisely presented, yet have sufficient detail to be useful for intended audience.	Partially	There is a lack of detail in the lesson / conclusion but laying them out around the 3 objectives of the evaluation does enable clarity on a number of important issues.
SECTION G:	RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)	25%	Comments on Rating
Question 17.	Are recommendations well grounded in the evaluation?		
	i Recommendations align with the evaluation purpose, are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions.	Partially	The recommendations are in line with the findings (except the one that recommends a focus only on children with disabilities). The challenge is that the recommendations are not clearly formulated and are not, in their current format, actionable. Given this evaluation was to inform future programme design there is limited attention to this issue - including the question of the need for stability for children and their families in relation to funding for education (girls, boys and children with disabilities). One of the (two) strategic recommendations has a focus on monitoring in relation to attendance data, but no specific focus on how to improve and track the contribution of the CFE to wider educational attainment (exam success) and continuity of education. This could then be a significant element perhaps of any additional funding for CFE and build coherence with other educational and social protection programmes.
	ii Recommendations are useful and actionable for primary intended users and uses (relevant to the intervention); guidance is given for implementation, as appropriate.	Partially	The recommendations are not numbered, targeted nor, other than 2, prioritised. No guidance is given regarding implementation and the risks of not doing so. In their current format additional work with stakeholders and rights holders, including government agencies and UNICEF, would be required to develop them - and resource them. The nature of the recommendations presented may be a results of the rapid nature of the evaluation process itself.
	iii Process for developing the recommendations is described, and includes the Involvement of duty-bearers, as well as rights holders when feasible (or explanation given for why they were not involved).	No	There is no description of the process for 'sense-making' or validation of the recommendations that might have included both rights holders / duty bearers. This is important given the somewhat radical nature of one recommendation around the targeting of the CFE to those children with disabilities rather than the wider (and changing) criteria currently in place. Whilst this is partly a results of the challenge of resourcing and short cycles a focus solely on children with disability would significantly change the nature of CFE and may not be in line with rights-holders (families and children) interests and expectations (Lebanese and non-Lebanese).
Question 18.	Are recommendations clearly presented?		
	i Clear identification of groups or duty-bearers responsible for action for each recommendation (or clearly clustered group of recommendations). Clear prioritization and/or classification of recommendations to support use.	No	Section 6 recommendations is weak which makes it difficult for the evaluation to be used for decision making (e.g. design and funding of CFE in the future) as it stands. The use of these recommendations to inform future design would be challenging as they are currently presented. This may be a risk from a rapid evaluation but: * None of the recommendations is numbered, targeted (to duty bearers, UNICEF, or funding agencies); * Priorities are not made explicit (beyond the two Strategic learning Recommendations (section 6.2) * there is no indication of the risks involved for future decision making if not undertaken It is not clear that the evidence would support the narrowing of focus on children with disabilities (important though this is). The issue of potential unintended consequences for other children is not discussed (for Lebanese or non-Lebanese families). * There is no detail of how the recommendations were prepared / validated with stakeholders or duty bearers e.g. the narrowing of the CFE to only those children with disabilities.
SECTION H:	REPORT STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION (weight 5%)	86%	Comments on Rating
Question 19.	Does the evaluation report include all relevant information?		

	i Opening pages include: Name of evaluated object, timeframe of the evaluation, date of report, location of evaluated object, names and/or organization(s) of the evaluator(s), name of organization commissioning the evaluation, table of contents -including, as relevant, tables, graphs, figures, annexes; list of acronyms/abbreviations, page numbers.	Partially	This is generally sound with three exceptions. 1. The list of Acronyms is a) not comprehensive and b) not in alphabetical order. 2. Referencing is muddled with some links to the Desk Review list (numbered in square brackets) being live whilst others are not. However there are additional references in the text e.g. on page 15 UNICEF and ILO 2022. There is no overarching reference list. 3. The 'hotlink' to the contribution analysis document is useful but given the fundamental nature of this to the methodology it would have been good to have included it in an Annex.
	ii Annexes include: terms of reference, evaluation matrix, list of interviewees, results chain/ToC/logical framework (unless included in report body), list of site visits, data collection instruments (such as survey or interview questionnaires), list of documentary evidence. Other appropriate annexes could include: additional details on methodology, information about the evaluator(s), etc.	Yes	There are 10 Annexes including the Terms of Reference, evaluation matrix and details of methodology etc. Given the sensitive nature of the operational context and the topic names of participants are not used (including for UNICEF) but there is a gender breakdown and role of individuals. Note that the description and adaptation of the Theory of Change is in the main text (pages 18 and 51). The Annexes are 'hot linked' from within the Text for ease of reference and are extensive. Important to see this presented within the report itself.
Question 20.	Is the report logically structured?		
	i Structure is easy to identify and navigate (for instance, with numbered sections, clear titles and sub-titles, well formatted).	Yes	The structure is easy to navigate and there is a comprehensive contents list.
	ii Structure accords to UNICEF guidelines for evaluation reports: context, purpose and methodology would normally precede findings, which would normally be followed by conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.	Yes	Report follows UNICEF guidelines.
Question 21.	Is the report well presented?		
	i Report is of reasonable length; it does not exceed number of pages that may be specified in ToR.	Yes	The ToRs indicate that the report should be 60 pages and it is 61 (there is a 1/2 page gap on page 71).
	ii Report is easy to understand (written in accessible way for intended audience) and generally free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors.	Yes	The report is clearly laid out and is generally free from errors although there is a glitch with the Acronym list (not in alphabetical order), in Section 3 the Evaluation Questions are not numbered correctly as in Annex 2.
	iii Frequent use of visual aids (such as infographics, maps, tables, figures, photos) to convey key information. These are clearly presented, labelled, and referenced in text.	Partially	Figures and Tables are used well. Some additional consideration of a) labelling of figures to be undertaken e.g. Figures 8. Ensuring the headings match the contents is vital to avoid confusion.
SECTION I:	EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 10%)	57%	Comments on Rating
Question 22.	Did the evaluation design and style consider incorporation of the UN and UNICEF's commitment to a human rights-based approach to programming, to gender equality, and to equity?		
	i Reference and use of rights-based framework, and/or CRC, CCC, CEDAW and/or other rights related benchmarks in the design of the evaluation.	Yes	Focus, including for data gathering, clearly on the CRC as applicable to the CFE programme. For instance on page 147 the table lays out the indicators and CRC articles (survey image) and survey statements in a clear manner.
	ii Clear description of the level of participation of key rights holders and duty bearers in the conduct of the evaluation (for example, a reference group is established, stakeholders are involved as informants or in data gathering).	Partially	In the Terms of Reference, the Inception Report and Evaluation Report mention is made of an Evaluation Reference Group. However no membership is laid out. Rights holders (parents / carers) are included in the evaluation - but not children themselves.
	iii Language is empowering and inclusive, avoiding gender, heterosexual, age, cultural and religious bias, among others; use terminology of rights holders and duty bearers; data is disaggregated by marginalized group; differential results are assessed (distribution of results across different groups).	Partially	Language is generally inclusive but there is reference of Lebanese / Non-Lebanese with the latter also being labelled Syrian. There is no breakdown of the Non-Lebanese refugee group between Syrian and Palestinian despite the latter being references as forming a significant group in the operational context. Whilst Children with Disabilities are referenced this is rarely broken down between girls / boys and whether this affects decision making by families when in receipt of CFE funding.
	iv Evaluation assesses the extent to which the implementation of the intervention addresses child rights and Leave No-one Behind (gender and other excluded and marginalized groups). It is disability inclusive.	Yes	For a rapid evaluation, it is highly disability inclusive given the rapid nature of the work and the difficulty with the databases providing school records etc. Child Rights (through CRC) form part of the participatory questionnaire frameworks (Annex 7 page 147 for instance).
Question 23.	Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators? (Note: this question will be rated according to UN SWAP standards with detail provided below)	3	
	i GEEW is integrated in the Evaluation Scope of analysis, and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data will be collected.	Partially integrated	GEEW is included in the methodology and, where appropriate, GEEW data is collected. It should be noted that there are restrictions due to a) the rapid nature of this evaluation and b) the data available to the team from existing databases.
	ii A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.	Partially integrated	In this rapid evaluation gender has been included but the data is not always well disaggregated. This includes around the issue of children with disabilities and whether there are specific challenges that girls / boys face (or choices that families make) when CFE support is available.

	<p>iii The evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations reflect a gender analysis.</p>	<p>Partially integrated</p>	<p>There is a degree of inconsistency and therefore analysis around the gendered nature of decision of families and consequences for girls education - including girls with disability. Given the 2 years, and 4 different cycles of intervention issues of continuity and hence outcomes for girls education is not explicitly addressed. This issue could have been made more explicit in the recommendations for future work to enable greater understanding of the drivers of family decision making and consequences for girls and girls with disabilities educational attainment.</p>
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SWAP Rating Guidance

<p>i GEEW is integrated in the Evaluation Scope of analysis, and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data will be collected.</p> <p>a. Does the evaluation assess whether sufficient information was collected during the implementation period on specific result indicators to measure progress on human rights and gender equality results?</p> <p>b. Does the evaluation include an objective specific to assessment of human rights and gender equality considerations or was it mainstreamed in other objectives?</p> <p>c. Was a standalone criterion on gender and/or human rights included in the evaluation framework or mainstreamed into other evaluation criteria?</p> <p>d. Is there a dedicated evaluation question or sub-question regarding how GEEW was integrated into the subject of the evaluation?</p>
<p>ii A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.</p> <p>a. Does the evaluation specify how gender issues are addressed in the methodology, including: how data collection and analysis methods integrate gender considerations and ensure data collected is disaggregated by sex?</p> <p>b. Does the evaluation methodology employ a mixed-methods approach, appropriate to evaluating GEWE considerations?</p> <p>c. Are a diverse range of data sources and processes employed (i.e. triangulation, validation) to guarantee inclusion, accuracy and credibility?</p> <p>d. Does the evaluation methods and sampling frame address the diversity of stakeholders affected by the intervention, particularly the most vulnerable, where appropriate?</p> <p>e. Were ethical standards considered throughout the evaluation and were all stakeholder groups treated with integrity and respect for confidentiality?</p>
<p>iii The evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations reflect a gender analysis.</p> <p>a. Does the evaluation have a background section that includes an intersectional analysis of the specific social groups affected by the issue or spell out the relevant normative instruments or policies related to human rights and gender equality?</p> <p>b. Do the findings include data analysis that explicitly and transparently triangulates the voices of different social role groups, and/or disaggregates quantitative data, where applicable?</p> <p>c. Are unanticipated effects of the intervention on human rights and gender equality described?</p> <p>d. Does the evaluation report provide specific recommendations addressing GEWE issues, and priorities for action to improve GEWE or the intervention or future initiatives in this area?</p>