

Accountability Report

Interim report 2015



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Educo, September 2016

Educo moved to bi-annual reporting as of 2015. This interim report gives a progress update for 2015 on aspects highlighted in the feedback on our last report. Our next full report will be published in September 2017.

For any questions regarding the contents of this report, please contact us at accountability@educoco.org.

Statement from the most senior decision-maker of the organisation

In 2015, Educo made significant progress towards ensuring that accountability is an integral part of our strategy as a child-rights based organisation. Our work is guided by our 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, which includes specific objectives for nurturing a culture of accountability, based on effective monitoring and evaluation, and promoting learning and innovation.

Our major achievements over the past year include finalising and publishing Child Rights Situation Analyses (CRSA) in all our program countries, which seek to improve our understanding of the main obstacles to children's full enjoyment of their rights in each country. The analyses will serve as the basis for our work, enabling us to make well-informed, strategic decisions and ensuring that our projects are coherent with the reality of each community.

We were also pleased to launch several important new organisational policies, which will be fundamental in guiding our work and ensuring accountability for our actions and in our decision-making: our Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct; our Partnership Policy and Guide, our Child Participation Standards, our Environmental Policy and our Gender Equity Policy. Educo's primary accountability is to the children we work with and for, and their families and communities, and these tools form part of our drive to implement and improve mechanisms that ensure accountability to children. In working to fulfil our mission, we believe that empowering children, and their families and communities, through participation and information-sharing, is key to fostering effective accountability and improving the impact of our work.

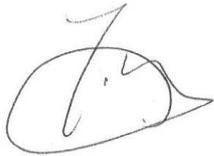
Our priorities for the coming year include working to implement the new policies described above, and to complete and launch other organisational tools that will maximise our impact and ensure our work is aligned with our mission. Our Child Rights Programming Guide, our Education Strategy, our Non-discrimination Policy and our Transparency Policy, for example, are some of the tools we are currently developing. Another challenge is to further imbed accountability in our programs and projects, through the development of an Accountability, Learning and Innovation System (ALIS) centred on a child rights based approach, which aims to ensure that accountability and learning are systematically used to feed decision-making and planning.

We will also be moving to the next stage of our global Theory of Change process, a collective project that seeks to identify the path we must follow to achieve the social impact implicit in our mission. The development of our theory of change will help to reinforce Educo's identity and improve the coherence and quality of our programs over a five-year period, while also improving internal processes to strengthen the organization.

At a global level, and as member of the ChildFund Alliance, we are participating in the ChildFund Alliance Child-Friendly Accountability Initiative, which aims to build a child-

friendly accountability mechanism through which children will be able to hold decision-makers accountable to their goal to end all violence against children, in the framework of Target 16.2 of the SDGs. This is an exciting opportunity for learning and sharing experiences on accountability to children, within a global network of CSOs.

We look forward to sharing more information on our progress in our next full accountability report.



José Faura
Executive Director, Educo

Complaints handling procedures (NGO2)

Comments from the Independent Review Panel:

The response omits to elaborate on the number and types of formal complaints received (e.g. via the email address opina@educoco.org), how they were handled, and whether these complaints have been resolved in a timely and satisfactory manner. It is further important to know how well complaints channels are known among the organisation's stakeholders. Moreover, the Panel would appreciate timeline to roll out the complaints policy to all offices.

It is understood that the Social Action Programme (SAP) functions independently as a social platform/project in its own rights used only in Spain. As asked previously, it is essential to elucidate more about the practical functionality of this collaboration forum: how it is operated, by whom, is it open for use only to organisations participating in the SAP or also for external ones, and what examples can be provided to explain its functionality as an effective mechanism for exchanging feedback? How well known is the forum among Educo's stakeholders? Do they have direct access to it?

Actions taken:

All complaints received via formal channels are registered and are included in a biannual report which is published internally in all the countries we work in. In 2015 we received a

total of 21 complaints, all of which were responded to and resolved satisfactorily. The table below summarises the formal complaints received in 2015:

Summary of complaints received in 2015			
Channel		Issue	
Email <i>opina@educo.org</i>	3	Sponsorship	9
Telephone	3	Contract with supplier	2
Feedback and complaints box	6	Marketing / use of image	4
Social networks	1	Working conditions	2
Other email addresses	8	Office equipment	3
		Internal procedures	1
Total	21	Total	21

Complaints are dealt with according to the established procedure, which includes the timeframe for responding to the complaint, its registration, and the formulation of the response committee.

We are currently implementing our Complaints and Feedback Policy in our program countries, according to the needs and characteristics of each country office. This means that each country is developing action plans for rolling out the policy that are adapted to their size, context and stakeholders, within the timeframe of the current strategic plan (2015-2018) and with the support of Head Office. The implementation of the feedback mechanisms includes ensuring that stakeholders are informed about how to make a complaint, and making sure that the mechanisms are as accessible as possible to our different stakeholders. We are currently testing different methods of doing this, including via face-to-face presentations with children (Bangladesh), meetings with schools and local communities (Philippines) and staff surveys to get feedback on how well the mechanisms are working (El Salvador). We are also developing organisational guidelines which help to ensure the systematization of the implementation process and the sharing of good practice between country offices.

In terms of the Social Action Programme (SAP), which is aimed at organisations in Spain who work with children and teenagers at risk of social exclusion, all of the agencies who participate in the programme previously had access to an online platform (Agora) for sharing feedback and ideas about the programme. Due to resource shortages and technical issues with the platform, for the past year Agora has not been in use. We will evaluate the possibility of reinstating the platform depending on the continuation of the SAP. However, all SAP organisations are informed about, and have access to, Educo's central complaints and feedback channels. Regular face-to-face and online events are organised in collaboration with the other agencies, in which participants are asked for feedback on the programme and our work in general. An anonymous online survey is also sent out to all participants after the event. In 2015, for example, we held face-to-face training sessions on child safeguarding for all SAP organisations, and facilitated different forums for networking and the exchange of good practice, which were highly valued by participants.

Staff appraisals (LA12)

Comments from the Independent Review Panel:

While appraisals are systematised and figures increased in comparison to the previous year, only 42% of all staff underwent a formal review process in 2014. The Panel encourages Educo to improve in this regard. What is Educo's commitment / target in this regard?

It would be interesting to know how the Performance Review and Development Manual ensures human resources' capacities are developed to support the global restructuring process and attainment of strategic goals. As requested in last year's Panel feedback, Educo is encouraged to provide evidence that the current mechanisms developing staff globally as a key pre-requisite of achieving their strategic objectives (i.e. staff performance appraisals) work well in practice.

Actions taken:

As part of our ongoing Theory of Change project, we have identified the need to move towards a more fluid internal structure, built around project-based work. This will have significant implications for how we manage staff development and performance appraisals, which to date have been results-based.

In 2015 we began work with consultants from the Birches Group to implement a new job design, evaluation and appraisal system at a global level, aligned with a project-based approach. This will allow for global, 360° performance appraisals, based on standardised job descriptions and professional categories. Furthermore, the job evaluation standard will ensure that each job is better and more clearly linked to the overall mission of Educo. By the end of 2016 we should have developed and piloted the implementation of the new job evaluation and performance appraisal methodologies in our country office in the Philippines. The next steps, during 2017, will be to roll out the methodology in the other countries we work in, including our head office in Spain.

Our Theory of Change also contemplates important changes to our staff training and development plan, which will follow on from the implementation of the job evaluation system. Once the job descriptions are established under the new framework, the results of the performance appraisals will more accurately feed the training and development needs of staff, and ensure they are in line with our mission. We are working towards a more open, accessible approach to staff development across the whole organisation, and are currently developing a global online learning platform in collaboration with the Open University of Catalunya (UOC), which will give staff across the organisation access to training programmes as well as guidance on different aspects of professional development. The first phase of this platform should be up and running by the end of 2016.

Direct and indirect impact of your activities (S01)

Comments from the Independent Review Panel:

Educo's effective management of entering, operating and exiting campaigns is well noted and their approach to change is comprehensively displayed. However, is there any evidence that this has led to improved management response? What kind of feedback has Educo received from communities? Are there clear exit strategies or post-intervention evaluations in place?

Looking at Educo's Theory of Change, there is a gap between duty-bearers and rights-holders. What can be learnt from this? Finally, the Panel looks forward to outcomes of demonstration of programmes' social values via the Social Action Program.

Actions taken:

Over 2015 we developed new institutional tools which help us to assess and manage the impact of our activities on the communities we work with. Our Partnership Policy and Guide, for example, sets out that our work with partners must be collaborative and participatory, include a commitment to mutual accountability, and be based on the following three concepts:

Proximity: we prioritize local efforts in close collaboration with the communities, civil society actors and public institutions that are in direct contact with children.

Sustainability: we support children and their communities, but in no way intend to substitute or play the role of the State. All of our programs and projects are, from the outset, aimed at addressing structural causes of vulnerability and exclusion so that their positive impact will last long into the future.

Capacity building through mutual learning: if we aspire to achieve and sustain the desired results, capacity building must be an integral component of our partnering efforts.

The policy defines the project management cycle with partners, which looks at all the phases of the intervention, including exit strategies, the continuation of the project, the final evaluation and reflection on mutual learning.

In Mali, for example, in line with our Strategic Plan we have established a five-year sponsorship strategy (2016-2021), which defines conditions and criteria for exiting a number of schools in the Segou area, including the preparation and monitoring of the process, with the local community, students and other key local actors.

Our Child Rights Situational Analyses (CRSA) were conducted with the active participation of children, families, members of the local community and representatives from civil society and public institutions, with the aim of maximising our understanding of the local social, economic, political and cultural context and the capacities of the different stakeholders involved, and therefore the impacts of our activities on that community. Our Child Rights

Programming Guide (currently being developed) will situate the CRSA within the framework of the project management cycle.

According to our Theory of Change, we believe that our work is important in ensuring that all actors assume their responsibilities in promoting and protecting children's rights. These actors are rights-holders (children and adolescents), secondary duty-bearers (families, communities, civil society, the private sector, etc.) and primary duty bearer (states and international bodies). We work to strengthen the capacities of children and their communities to claim children's rights, and to ensure that states fulfil their obligations and are held accountable for their actions. An example of the latter is our work with the ChildFund Alliance Child-Friendly Accountability Initiative.

In terms of the Social Action Programme (SAP), one example of the promotion of social values in 2015 is our work on the Manifesto for the Promotion of Child Safeguarding in Spain, which was created in collaboration with the 52 organisations who participate in the SAP. The document, which was published in October and promoted by the SAP organisations all over Spain, sets out our commitment to child safeguarding, the promotion of children's rights and the protection of children from violence and abuse. It is the result of a collaborative project carried out over 2014-2015 with a participative, networking focus, which established a rights based approach as the basis of our work.

In 2015 we also carried out a study of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of the Social Action Programme, which allowed us to measure the social impact of the SAP; that is, the direct benefits for participants and the social changes achieved. At the same time, it is a way of promoting transparency and accountability to all those involved in the programme. The SROI report (with the full results of the social impact of the SAP) was shared with all participants in the project and is published on our website, and we hope to repeat the experience with this methodology in studies of other projects in the countries we work in.