

Accountability Report

Interim report 2017



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Educo, September 2018

Educo moved to bi-annual reporting as of 2015. This interim report gives a progress update for 2017 on aspects highlighted in the feedback on our last report. Our next full report will be published in 2019.

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

1. STATEMENT FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ORGANISATION

Over the past year, we have taken important steps towards putting in place the structures necessary to ensure that accountability is firmly at the top of the agenda across the whole organisation. The creation of an Accountability and Policy Unit, dedicated to promoting a culture of accountability based on transparency and learning, and the launch of Policy and Standards Commissions in each of our Country Offices, to coordinate and facilitate the global implementation of organisational policies and international standards, are two examples of this.

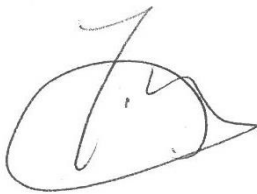
During 2017 we also set up the sixteen working groups which will put our Theory of Change into operation. These groups focus on the different goals established in our pathways of change, which include aspects such as program quality, learning and accountability. Each group has begun work on a number of global innovative initiatives, called "prototypes", which allow for specific ideas to be tested, in order to improve them, learn from them and eventually, replicate them. We have also made important progress in implementing our HR management system, which we hope will help us to understand what steps we need to take to strengthen our organisational structure. After a pilot in our Asia offices, we have begun rolling out the new approach in our Country Offices in Latin America and in our Head Office in Spain.

Amongst our other major achievements in 2017, we are pleased to have been awarded the 'Evaluated NGO' seal by the Spanish Development NGO Coordinator (CONGDE), certifying that we have applied its Transparency and Good Governance Tool and demonstrating our firm commitment to continually strengthening our transparency and accountability to our stakeholders. On the other hand, we consolidated our commitment to our work in humanitarian action, signing an agreement with ECHO which ratifies our fulfilment of ECHO criteria and standards and demonstrates our commitment to its operational principles, which include transparency, accountability and improving the effectiveness of aid, among others. In 2017 we were also accredited by the Spanish International Development Agency (AECID), certifying that we have met 70 qualitative and quantitative criteria relating to areas such as financial solvency, transparency and human resources. The process of integrating these standards into our work has driven important changes throughout the organisation and has reinforced the relevance of accountability as an institutional priority.

Moving forward, we are now completing the final year of our current Strategic Plan; 2019 will be a year of transition between two strategic cycles as we draft our new Plan, which will guide our work for the next four years. We will need to consolidate the new structures

we have put in place, making sure, for example, that the Policy and Standards commissions are fully operational, and completing the roll-out of our new HR management system in all our Country Offices. We will also prioritise, via the Policy and Standards Commissions, the implementation of the Open Information Policy and the Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy, as crucial tools in guaranteeing maximum transparency and good governance.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Faura", enclosed within a hand-drawn oval shape.

José M. Faura
Executive Director, Educo

2. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE ORGANISATION DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

There have been the following significant changes in the organisation during the reporting period:

- At the beginning of 2017, we took the decision to start the process of disassociation from our Peru and Ecuador Country Offices. This process will last approximately two years.
- In the first trimester of 2017, we created a new Development, Planning and Strategy Division to lead on the Theory of Change process and to ensure a more strategic approach to our annual planning and budgeting process.
- In July 2017, ChildFund Cambodia took on the management of Educo-funded programmes in Cambodia.
- During the second semester of 2017, we formally closed our Country Office in Ghana.

3. GLOBAL TALENT MANAGEMENT (LA12)

Comments from the Independent Review Panel:

The Panel notes that the percentage of Educo staff undergoing formal review processes increased in 2016, to 50%. Are there plans to further improve in this area and how?

A new human resources management system was introduced in Educo's Asian Country Offices, and the system is planned to be implemented in all offices by 2018. The Panel would still be interested in initial outcomes and results from the pilot initiative.

The question from last year's feedback letter also remains: does Educo include a human-rights based approach in its reviews? Are questions about participation, empowerment and inclusion integrated into Educo's performance appraisals?

The Panel commends the integration of the Development Room online learning platform into Educo's professional development initiatives, and would be interested in knowing how broadly it has been used and whether positive outcomes have been seen.

Actions taken:

1. The Panel notes that the percentage of Educo staff undergoing formal review processes increased in 2016, to 50%. Are there plans to further improve in this area and how?

In terms of the percentage of staff undergoing formal review processes, our target is to reach 100% of staff by 2019. We have already made important progress towards this goal: during 2017 and the first half of 2018, we carried out training on the performance appraisal process in our Country Offices in Asia (except Bangladesh) and Latin America, as well as our Head Office and delegations in Spain. By the end of 2017, 61,5% of staff were undergoing formal review processes.

For 2019, we plan to carry out the same training in our Country Offices in Africa and Bangladesh, so that by the end of next year, 100% of staff will be fully trained in the performance appraisal process and will be participating in annual formal performance reviews.

2. A new human resources management system was introduced in Educo's Asian Country Offices, and the system is planned to be implemented in all offices by 2018. The Panel would still be interested in initial outcomes and results from the pilot initiative.

In 2016 we piloted a new human resources management system in our Asia Country Offices, as a first step towards ensuring the optimum organizational structure for Educo. Following this first pilot, during 2017 and the first half of 2018, we rolled out the system

in our Country Offices in Latin America, as well as our Head Office and delegations in Spain. The implementation in our Africa Country Offices will now take place in 2019, which is an adjustment to our initial implementation plan.

In terms of initial outcomes from the first phase of implementation in Asia, it's important to note that during this first stage, we made the necessary modifications to the training in order to adapt it to our needs as an NGO, creating a revised, 'customized version' to be replicated across the rest of the organization. This has generated important learning on the system's methodology, which has been enhanced by the fact that the auditing of the new system has been conducted internally, allowing HR staff to gain a much deeper understanding of the methodology.

The evaluation of the first phase of the implementation process is generally positive: we believe that the new system empowers managers, by giving them better tools to identify and evaluate the roles that are needed within their teams, and to make better informed decisions. One of the key learnings has been that, in order to make sure the system is properly imbedded at all levels of the organization, we need to widen the training to all management roles, not just senior management. We have therefore extended the training program to include all management positions. Following the pilot phase, we also identified the need to adapt the system's methodology, which is based on 'standard' roles and categories applicable to any organization, to Educo's specific reality, so that staff are better able to identify with the job descriptions and the process is more effective.

3. The question from last year's feedback letter also remains: does Educo include a human-rights based approach in its reviews? Are questions about participation, empowerment and inclusion integrated into Educo's performance appraisals?

Our new performance review process is aligned with Educo's rights-based approach. The system aims to maximize objectivity by opening the process up so that 4 or 5 people who have worked with the staff member during that year (both internal and external contacts), as well as the manager, evaluate the individual's performance from their perspective. This minimizes the possibility of subjective interpretations, and guarantees the individual's right to a fair, non-biased appraisal of their work. This 360° approach also fosters greater participation and empowerment of staff at all levels, since the appraisals are multidirectional and break with traditional organizational hierarchies.

In terms of the questions themselves, the new system is based around three key factors: purpose, delivery and engagement. The third factor, engagement, looks at how the individual involves others in their work, the collaboration that is established and the partnerships that are built. Those evaluating must assess how the individual inspires, empowers and includes colleagues and other stakeholders, for example, according to the requirements of their specific role.

4. The Panel commends the integration of the Development Room online learning platform into Educo's professional development initiatives, and would be interested in knowing how broadly it has been used and whether positive outcomes have been seen.

The virtual learning platform (Development Room) is a professional development space created for all Educo employees (both at head office and country offices).

The contents are of a technical and specialised nature and come from different sources: online training providers (for languages, for example), companies or consultants specialising in specific subjects (such as a rights-based approach or monitoring and evaluation), international learning networks, MOOCs, agencies that develop specific contents for NGOs and, especially, through the capitalisation of staff knowledge within the organisation itself.

In fact, the capitalisation of knowledge is one of the most notable results of the platform, since the sharing of contents within the organisation makes it a space for participation and international exchange, giving relevance to learning as one of the fundamental pillars of our mission.

In 2016 the platform offered a catalogue of 10 courses on linguistic competences in English (English A1, English A2, English B1, English B2, English C1) and French (French A1, French A2, French B1, French B2, French C1).

The catalogue has been progressively expanded with 39 new courses that are clustered around six topics: wellness, general technical knowledge, induction to Educo, leadership and management, technological tools and communication. These topics were identified through an individual detection of training needs and a needs assessment based on institutional strategic planning.

The onboarding processes for head office and country offices in Latin America are currently carried out via the Development Room. Likewise, we can highlight the experience of the language courses, in which we incorporated the methodology developed by the UOC (Catalonia Open University); however, this was not positively evaluated by our students, so we are looking at other methodologies. Other examples of training carried out entirely on the platform are the courses on the institutional CRM, that 85% of staff in head office have successfully completed, and the IT training that we began to use at the end of 2017, and that 23 people are currently signed up for, which is modular and allows the user to access the specific content they need.

In 2017, Development Room courses accounted for 61% of all the training carried out in head office, which is a total of 5,360 hours of training. At the end of this year we will be able to assess the use of the platform in our country offices in Latin America.