



Educo

Independent Review Panel Feedback

Interim Accountability Report 2021
Review Round September 2022



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Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

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September 26th 2022

Dear Pilar Orenes,

Thank you for submitting your accountability report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate your efforts to strengthen accountability to communities, local partners, supporters, staff, donors, or other key constituencies. Our key focus is on accountability to those you serve. It is against this background that we critically discussed your report and came to the individual assessment below.

Educo's eleventh accountability report is an interim one that fully addresses the areas raised by the Panel in the last review round. The report indicates that the organisation is progressively implementing a more comprehensive accountability system, as reflected in its revised policies, tools and structures.

The Panel's feedback responds to the interim report by pointing forward to the next full report from Educo and sets out a series of points the Panel would like to see addressed, especially as the organisation gradually places greater emphasis on humanitarian response.

We look forward to discussing our feedback with you in a follow-up call, which the Secretariat will be in touch to schedule. This conversation will form the basis for your response letter, which will be made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report and this feedback letter.

If you have any other feedback or comments on our work, please share them with us by sending them to the Accountable Now Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Accountable Now's Independent Review Panel





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Opening Statement from the Head of Organisation

The opening statement from the CEO reaffirms Educo's commitment to accountability and transparency, especially in regards to the five areas of improvement that the Panel identified from the last report.

The statement summarises the steps that the organisation has taken and plans to take to improve its accountability, including: Finalising and rolling out the [Social Impact Measurement System](#), promoting children's agency for social change, and strengthening expertise and capacities in humanitarian action.

The statement details how COVID-19 continues to impact operations, all the while pushing the organisation to create new opportunities for engagement with stakeholders in general and children in particular. The statement notes that operations are returning to more normal pre-pandemic modes of working and that the learnings from the past two years will continue to inform the organisation's work.

The role that accountability plays in Educo's 2020-2030 Global Impact Framework and 2021-2025 Global Programmatic Framework is well noted. Additionally, the changes made towards being more of an impact driven organisation are commendable.

The statement says that the organisation now has a clearer picture of the type of dynamic accountability that it wants to achieve but without stating what this approach is. The Panel would be interested to see the organisation's approach to dynamic accountability if it can be succinctly encapsulated.

Significant Changes During Reporting Period

Over the last couple of years, the organisational has been developing frameworks that feed into their Institutional Planning Cycle (IPC) to drive further impact and innovative solutions, these include: the 2020-2030 Global Impact Framework (GIF), the Global Programmatic Framework 2021-2025 (GPF) and the Global Organisational Development Plan 2021-2023 (GODP). Educo emphasises the complementarity between the GPF (which



guides Educo's priorities and programme design) and the GODP (which outlines how the organisation builds and optimises capacity). The same frameworks are replicated at country-level.

There has been greater emphasis on humanitarian response in the reporting period, especially regarding education in emergencies, which is relatively new for Educo. The effort is complemented by the establishment of new committees and policies that support coordination. Other updates include the creation and appointment of a new Advocacy, Social Mobilisation and Social Research Department at their head office, and the consolidation and creation of a new country office in Niger.

Educo may need to address additional accountability expectations related to its humanitarian response. This depends to some extent on the type of response Educo is providing; i.e. is the education in emergency response in essence the same type of programming the organisation typically provides, but in this case in a humanitarian or emergency that may require rapid response?

In any event, to align itself with good practice in humanitarian response, Educo may need to make explicit how it adheres to humanitarian principles in its policy documents and how it integrates itself into a coordinated interagency emergency response (e.g. education in emergencies). The Panel suggests that this is covered in Educo's next full report.

Cluster A: What We Want to Achieve

A. The Impact We Achieve

A1	<p>What are your mission statements and your theory of change? Please provide a brief overview.</p> <p>The adoption of increasingly advanced accountability tools shows Educo's continued commitment to collecting high quality evidence of its accountability to the 12 AN commitments.</p> <p>Educo's Global Impact Framework 2020-2030 (GIF - in Spanish) defines the Theory of Change for this decade and establishes the Social Impact Measurement System. The System was developed based on the Sustainable Development Goals, associated with the Social Impact Results of the GIF and the objectives and results of the three programmatic areas of the Global</p>	3
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	<p>Programmatic Framework 2021-2025. Within the GIF, Educo's theory of change is well developed and was first set out in the GIF 2020-2030.</p> <p>A set of 26 global impact indicators was established through linking the GPF and the GIF. It is commendable that the indicators and the system place emphasis on child-wellbeing and rights based approaches. It is also good to see that the system is flexible and adaptable to different operating contexts. The interim report shows considerable progress in setting in motion the application of the strategic indicators in its programming</p> <p>With the next steps that the response details, it seems that exciting times are ahead. The Panel is looking forward to seeing Educo's learning from the results of piloting the new System. We note that the system includes space for providing feedback from focus groups in age-appropriate formats, and intention for further adaptations.</p> <p>In line with the Panel's comments on Educo's 2020 accountability report, the Panel suggests that the next full report reflects on the organisation's capacity to adopt and meaningfully use the new instruments it has introduced, using feedback from the country offices/projects themselves. Additionally, the next report can also helpfully make the link to the previous feedback from the Panel that is not fully addressed in this report regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The progress of the 42 'ambassadors' who are helping to operationalise organisation values;• Some of the key documents seem to be available in Spanish only. The next report could helpfully indicate the progress in providing them in French (especially as a new office has opened in francophone space) and English. <p>Lastly, while not obligatory under the reporting framework, the Panel would like to understand whether Educo's Theory of Social Change includes causal pathways between the inputs, outcomes and impacts of Educo's intervention areas.</p>	
A2	<p><i>What are your key strategic indicators for success and how do you involve your stakeholders in developing them?</i></p> <p>The Global Programmatic Framework is already published on the organisation's website and the Global Impact indicators are discussed in section A1 above. Given the importance of these indicators, and the need to establish the internal capacity needed to support their effective use, the Panel looks forward to a progress report on their implementation and evidence of</p>	3



the organisation applying the learning generated from their application, to see measurements against the indicators (at least a representative sample) and how performance is being enhanced based on the results.

The process for monitoring and measurement between headquarters and country-offices is outlined. The efforts to streamline these processes through reviewing and adapting based on suggestions from country-offices have strong potential as a means to refine the implementation of the global indicators.

Educo is working towards integrating its monitoring matrix with the new framework, and linkages are being established within new projects.

The Panel would like to suggest that the next report could helpfully clarify:

1. 'The reports contain very complete information'. Does this mean that the reports already contain such information or that, once implemented, the reports will contain very complete information;
2. How Educo describes the difference between impacts and outcomes, and how well country teams are able to delineate these two elements;
3. How Educo meets the requirement to involve stakeholders in the development of indicators.

Cluster B: Stakeholder Involvement

E. We listen to, involve and empower stakeholders

E3 **Main likes/dislikes from stakeholders and organisation's response**

The organisation updated its Suggestions, Complaints and Commendables Policy (in Spanish) in 2021 in conjunction with its country offices; this update brings the policy in line with internal structures which includes Global and country-office SCC Committees.

The efforts to support country offices and programme staff with training and guidelines on how to handle and implement SCC mechanisms are commendable. The report states that these efforts are bearing fruit as the number of SCCs received has increased.

In addition to the table provided with details for SCCs received, the [SCC Report for 2021 is now online](#), and it provides clear details on the nature, type, origin as well as recognition of areas for improvement within the mechanism. The Panel

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notes positively the much larger proportion of SCCs coming from countries other than Spain. Educo's transparency in this area continues to be [a good practice](#).

The next report could expand the *country* graphs of SCCs to include columns showing the figure for S, C and C separately.

It can be challenging for AN members to collect and address different types of feedback that need to follow different routes through the organisation, and carrying different levels of confidentiality; feedback on projects, complaints, reports of sexual abuse, whistleblowing, etc. It would be helpful for Educo to detail in its next report how it manages these different channels, while making it simple and seamless for the communities and individuals providing the feedback.

G. We are transparent, invite dialogue and protect stakeholders' safety

G1 *Are your annual budgets, policies (especially regarding complaints, governance, staffing/salaries and operations), evaluations, top executive remuneration and vital statistics about the organisation (including number of offices and number of staff/volunteers/partners) easily available on your website in languages accessible by affected key stakeholders? Please provide links, highlight membership in initiatives such as IATI and outline offline efforts to promote transparency.*

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In 2021, Educo initiated a review of its external transparency, aiming for a more holistic approach rather than focusing on the information published on its website. The work is currently ongoing.

Furthermore, Educo is working to systematise all their ongoing work on the promotion of information access, doing so through working on transparency tools. It is also well noted that the transparency tools further factors' programme participants' needs and preference in terms of transparency and access to information.

Beyond the processes mentioned in this report, key documents such as annual budgets, policies, and audits are all available on the organisation's dedicated "[Transparency](#)" webpage (in Spanish). Other relevant information is also included in the [2020 accountability report](#).

The report did not touch on the availability of these key documents in multiple languages (especially in the languages of the countries that Educo works in, beyond Spanish), it would be good to understand progress to this end.



Likewise, the Panel looks forward to hearing more in the next full report about the progress made in making the financial information 'more accessible to the people we work for and with'.

Cluster C: What We Do Internally

K. Leadership is dedicated to fulfilling the 12 Commitments

K3 *What is your accountability report's scope of coverage? (i.e. are you reporting for the whole organisation or just the international secretariat?) What authority or influence do you have over national entities and how, specifically, are you using it to ensure compliance with the accountability commitments and to drive the overall accountability agenda?* **3**

Building up on the response within the last report (2020), this report relays further information regarding incentives for staff to participate in the processes necessary to fulfil all existing policy and reporting requirements. These include how the organisation has been working to make roles and responsibilities within its commissions/committees more clear, and encouraging staff to actively participate and coordinate with these bodies.

The organisation has also been strengthening its internal communications mechanism. It is very well noted that the newly rolled out IRIS system enables information to be shared and translated in English, Spanish and French instantaneously.

The Panel would be interested to gain a better understanding of whether committees and commissions have roles relating to accountability beyond staff engagement and learning, and their relationship in terms of accountability to the Executive Committee and the Senior Management Team.