



**Educo**

## **Independent Review Panel Feedback**

**Accountability Report 2022**

**Review Round August/September 2023**



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## **Feedback from the Independent Review Panel**

**Review Round August/September 2023**

**26th September 2023**

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 assessment below.

Educo's 12th report is a special interim report due to Accountable Now's transition between frameworks. This report serves as a clear update on the organisation's accountability journey. It prominently highlights Educo's deliberate efforts to incorporate stakeholder-appropriate engagement methods into its operations. Moreover, it succinctly articulates high-level commitments to accountability, bolstered by examples that demonstrate strong dedication.

As an organisation, it is clear that Educo proactively seeks out inputs from programming and diverse stakeholders. However, the Panel notes that there is an opportunity for improvement through greater clarity and emphasis on the mechanisms through which the organisation takes up, responds to and shares back the inputs gathered from stakeholders through its diverse feedback channels. In particular, how monitoring and stakeholder consultation inputs are shared back, including how unaddressed issues are managed and discussed with concerned parties.

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 via the Accountable Now Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Accountable Now's Independent Review Panel





## Educo

# Interim Accountability Report 2022

Review Round August/September 2023

### Opening Statement from the Head of Organisation

The opening statement from the CEO Pilar Orenes shares about the current operations within the organisation. Despite the long-lasting challenges of the pandemic, she also notes that there were some new approaches developed during this time which the organisation will look to capitalise on going forward.

She further highlights that accountability continues to be an integral part of Educo's strategy, with the organisation being engaged in internal and external conversations around localisation and partnerships. She continues by outlining the three key areas of focus in terms of accountability: Finalising and rolling out the Social Impact Measurement System, promoting children's agency for social change, and strengthening expertise and capacities in humanitarian action.

### Significant Organisational Changes

Key significant changes are listed in the report, including:

- the expansion to humanitarian work, through a series of collaborations with the ChildFund Alliance, the Spanish Emergency Committee, and local partners in Ukraine. In this line of work, Educo continues to focus on children's rights and education, and raising awareness about the importance of Education in Emergencies (as shown through three publications). Other crises that Educo responded to were earthquakes in Indonesia and Turkey/Syria;
- a new [Environmental Policy](#), alongside an all-staff roll out, which renews and reinforces organisational commitment. Notable within this policy are its understanding that a healthy environment is a crucial part of children's wellbeing and its incorporation of environmental protection as a cross-cutting aspect of management (Objective 3);
- the restructuring of Educo Philippines to align its strategies with a global approach and adapt to local conditions, aiming to enhance impact and sustainability. This involves shifting to a mixed project implementation model (implementation through partners and direct implementation), increasing external funding sources, and narrowing the geographical focus to amplify effectiveness;



- its Barcelona office becoming a part of the Impact Hub network, which will support Educo to further exchange and welcome like-minded education focused organisations to work from the Hub.

## Cluster A: What We Want to Achieve

### A. The Impact We Achieve

A2	<b><i>What are your key strategic indicators for success and how do you involve your stakeholders in developing them?</i></b>	3
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The report follows up on the [previous year's report](#), noting that the development of the Social Impact Measurement System (SIMS) is now completed. The Panel notes positively the inputs of children in the process of developing these indicators, alongside the organisation's efforts to collect and triangulate data measurement concepts. After the testing phases and further consolidations, it would be good to share some examples of these key indicators and how the organisation has been working to measure them.

The organisation continues to use the MEAL Manual to track and measure their progress, after having made adjustments based on country offices', field teams' and partners' feedback. Additionally, the Panel suggests that it would be good to clarify how the evidence they are generating through this system is being streamlined and used at various levels (organisation, country office, project, local stakeholders). This would support a more equal data relationship, sharing back consolidated evidence with those that contributed to them and providing opportunities for shared sense making with local stakeholders.

### C. We Lead By Example

C1	<b><i>How does your organisation demonstrate excellence on your strategic priorities?</i></b>	3
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The response provides multiple examples of Educo's leadership in the sector, including various campaigns (Web Safe & Wise, Global Campaign for Education and Global Action Week for Education), learning and training initiatives (PROTEGEmos, Joining Forces for Africa), networks (CLADE) and even a film festival on child's rights alongside Anna University in Chennai, India.



Going beyond the current framework, it would be useful to know more about whether and how Educo offices in the global south are playing a leadership and learning role in their contexts.

## Cluster B: Stakeholder Involvement

### E. We listen to, involve and empower stakeholders

**E1** ***What avenues do you provide your stakeholders to provide feedback to you? What evidence demonstrates that key stakeholder groups acknowledge your organisation is good at listening and acting upon what you heard?***

Educo continues to advance and expand their [Suggestions, Commendations and Complaints](#) mechanism (previously recognised by the Panel as a good practice) through further consultations and improvements. Notable here are the consultation sessions and Open Days initiatives which the Panel deem to be strong ways to raise awareness alongside understanding the best feedback mechanisms.

In addition, Educo has been strengthening its Post Distribution Monitoring methodology (for use in humanitarian actions) through regional workshops and consultations, leading to the creation of a guide.

Educo furthermore consolidated a standardised tool for partners to assess the organisation's work. This tool marks an important step towards enabling an environment where partners can hold Educo to account. Considering the tool's pertinence to the ongoing localisation initiatives within the sector, it would be valuable to disseminate more comprehensive details once the testing phase concludes.

Overall, Educo continues to develop and maintain channels for engagement with its various stakeholders, especially with partners and communities. The Panel also suggests that the organisation expand in future reports about how the feedback loop is being closed (i.e. how inputs from stakeholders are shared back with them) and what happens when feedback or inputs cannot be taken up. Another point for consideration is how can the inherent power imbalances among various partners be effectively minimised to ensure that the feedback received remains candid and forthright.

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**E3** ***How do you ensure you reach out to those who are impacted or concerned by your work? What evidence confirms a high level of external stakeholder engagement in your activities and decisions from beginning to end?***

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Educo has fully revised its Child Participation Policy, which also includes inputs from children in the countries that they work in. This is a very commendable step towards ensuring that children have safe spaces to meaningfully participate in the organisation's work.

Separately, an example from Bolivia showcases how children's voices (through Educo Bolivia's Children Advisory Council) have been incorporated meaningfully, with their inputs having shaped La Paz's Environmental Management and Renewable Energy Policy. Another example comes from the "Active Listening" (original 'Activa la escucha') programme in Spain.

Through these instances, Educo showcases how children as primary stakeholders can be engaged, particularly in shaping decisions spanning from organisational policies to program implementation. The Panel encourages Educo to further share the challenges that it faced and how the organisation tackled them. This will be an important step in further solidifying Educo's leadership in how to collaborate with and work alongside children in a safe and creative manner.

Additionally, other areas in the report allude to how the organisation engages teachers, parents, guardians and the wider community. Further elaborations on this end would provide a more holistic picture of how the organisation is collaborating alongside its stakeholders.

Finally, two overall considerations are: firstly about the overall intensity of consultation across mechanisms that might be able to be coordinated or streamlined to lessen the overall burden on Educo staff and stakeholders; secondly, given these commendable monitoring and consultation efforts, clarifying and emphasising uptake into decision making and sharing back to stakeholders who were consulted.