

Accountability Report 2023









Content

Introduction from the Executive Director	3
Answers to key questions	4
Action plan	10

Accountability Report 2024

© Educo, June 2024

Total or partial reproduction of this work is permitted as long as the source is mentioned and it is not used for commercial purposes. The photographs used in this document are for illustrative purposes only and are in no way to be taken as a representation of the content.

For more information about the issues covered in this document, please contact: meal@educo.org

Introduction from the Executive Director

As an organisation focused on children's rights, accountability to children and the promotion of their active and meaningful participation are key priorities for Educo. We support children and adolescents so that they can defend their rights and demand that the adult population, who are the guarantors of those rights, fulfil them. At the same time, we encourage child participation in all phases of our projects, from design to evaluation, to ensure that we fully respond to children's needs and are truly accountable to them. During 2023, we have formalised this commitment through our new Child Participation Policy, which sets out our institutional positioning, guides our teams in the process of fulfilling this commitment, and highlights our willingness to continue to offer training and capacity building, so that child participation is increasingly integrated into our work.

Children's participation is also fundamental to understanding the impact of our work. That is why the voice of children and adolescents is at the heart of our impact measurement system, which we continue to develop as an essential tool for Educo. During 2023, we made significant progress in implementing this system globally, with more than 5500 children participating in consultation activities. It is not easy to ensure these activities take place, but we are convinced that they are key for understanding children's opinions about our work, the changes they perceive after their participation in the project and how it has impacted their lives and the lives of their peers, families and communities. The impact measurement system is a key part of our accountability approach and one of the tools that enables us to be an organisation that listens and responds to its stakeholders, especially children and young people.

On the other hand, in 2023 we completed the new Educo 2024–2026 Global Organizational Development Plan (GODP), which sets the course for the type of organization we want and need to be. The GODP includes several commitments related to dynamic accountability, including a specific commitment to define and adopt Educo's localisation model. We have already set out on this path, and we look forward to continuing to deepen our cooperation work with local partners, building transformative relationships based on empowerment, co-responsibility, trust and mutual accountability. This year we also plan to launch our new Transparency Policy, which seeks to ensure access to information about the organisation and its work, as well as a review of roles and responsibilities in project cycle management, in order to ensure greater mutual accountability between country offices and head office.

At a time when social innovation, impact investment, funding challenges, etc. are driving us to evolve in the NGO sector, it is important to remain strongly committed to dynamic accountability in the different areas of our work. We appreciate, as always, the IRP's review and feedback on our report.

Pilar Orenes CEO, Educo



lilar Orenes

Answers to key questions

1. What have your most significant achievements and impacts been this year and how have they been validated by your stakeholders?

We have carried out monitoring and evaluation for the projects we have implemented, including the progress achieved in terms of process indicators and achievements, and final evaluations for the projects that have come to an end during the year. The evaluations we carry out in the field, either through external or internal staff, follow a participatory methodology which involves stakeholders, especially children and their families. Focus group discussions, surveys, semi-structured interviews and the collection of life histories are carried out according to group type.

<u>Outcomes:</u> we understand outcomes as attaining the results and objectives of the project, without becoming impacts. Our projects respond to different needs and contexts, therefore we do not have an overall system of achievements, but each project measures, reports and evaluates its results and objectives. Here are some specific achievements from 2023:

Specific achievements from some of our projects:

- Burkina Faso, project BF3070: 634 girls and adolescents have received vocational training, and 542 savings and income-generating groups have been created, such as agriculture, trade, etc.
- Bangladesh, project BD2195: Education Empowerment: conducted 300 group-based study cycles, involving 3056 adolescent girls and 2734 adolescent boys, fostering a culture of learning and knowledge-sharing.
- Niger, project NE3127: support for the transfer of 176 pupils (2022-2023) and 200 pupils (2023-2024) affected by the security crisis in the Tillabéri region of Niger to safe areas to complete their school year, with a high exam pass rate.
- El Salvador, project SV2217: 260 adolescents have received training in sexual and reproductive health (SRH), 160 adolescents have received scholarships and 158 adolescents have received support to develop their life plans, 13 enterprises led by women have been strengthened, 242 women, 152 adolescents and 90 family leaders have effectively completed training in sexual and reproductive health to provide them with tools to take care of their bodies and make decisions, 61 people in situations of violation of rights have been attended to and/or referred.

Impacts: we understand impact as those changes in the lives of children and adolescents and their environments that contribute to improving the exercise of their rights and wellbeing.

At Educo we have developed a social impact measurement system, which collects information directly from participants. We started to apply this system in 2022 and 2023 as part of the testing phase in a total of 40 projects. A total of 5501 surveys have been carried out with children (and 778 with adults), through which we have collected their opinions and their own perceptions of their rights and wellbeing, the changes they perceive following their participation in the project and how this has impacted their lives, those of their peers, families and communities. In addition, we have collected their opinion on the elements they value most and least in the project, their suggestions, complaints and commendations, and their overall level of satisfaction with the project, which was 88.23% for a total of 13 projects.



We have a digital platform for visualising the results that facilitates the analysis, but at present we cannot take the data as representative of the progress of impacts in our organisation, as it is a test and does not reflect a representative sample at either a geographical or thematic level. Based on the example of the projects introduced on the platform (18), we have been able to observe over 85% progress in the following indicators for these projects: 1.1.1. C&A are able to learn what they need to know; 1.1.3. C&A report having broadened their capacity to aspire and perceive their transition to adulthood positively; 2.2.1. C&A with a confident and secure attachment; 2.2.2. C&A who feel safe and respected in their daily life; 2.3.1. C&A with capacities for self-protection.

2. If applicable - How have your organisation's accountability processes been affected by significant internal or external changes during the reporting period?

In response to the alarming increase in humanitarian needs in recent years, Educo has been expanding its work in humanitarian action, especially in the field of <u>Education in Emergencies</u> (EiE). This change involves ensuring that our accountability mechanisms are adapted to the needs of humanitarian action projects, and to working in countries where we do not have an Educo office. We continue to move forward in this process, testing out the MEAL tools and adjusting them so that they can be used in different humanitarian contexts.

At the end of 2023, our Board of Trustees approved the new Global Organisational Development Plan (GODP) 2024-2026, as well as Country Organisational Development Plans 2024-2026 for each country office. These plans set out the organisational development outcomes and corresponding targets, both at global and country level, that we must meet in order to respond to the challenges we set for ourselves in our 2020-2023 Global Impact Framework and 2021-2025 Global Programmatic Framework. The new GOPD has a number of implications for accountability. On the one hand, it integrates the specific commitment to define and adopt Educo's localisation model, which includes the promotion of an open and broad debate on localisation and decolonisation in order to achieve a common understanding at institutional level. This commitment will have implications at all levels of the organisation and will be key to driving dynamic accountability to the people we work with on projects. On the other hand, the GOPD includes a goal on child participation and empowerment, another on transparency and access to information, as well as a new KPI to measure the satisfaction of the participating populations (with special emphasis on children and adolescents) with the quality and social impact of our action.

In January 2024, the merger of Fundación Comparte with Educo was completed, a process we had been outlining together since mid-2022. Fundación Comparte is an NGO focused on promoting education in Latin America which, like Educo, uses sponsorship as a basis for its programs. As a result of this merger, Educo has expanded its interventions from 14 to 18 countries, with the incorporation of projects in Argentina, Chile, Honduras and Ecuador. This change obviously involves integrating the projects in these countries into our monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning processes, which is something we will be working on this year in preparation for the accountability of our work in 2024.



3. How has your organisation learned from the incidents, complaints and claims received in the last year? (These may include safeguarding, fraud, corruption, whistleblowing, integrity violations, etc.)

Educo has two separate systems for communicating and managing complaints and feedback. They are independent but interconnected channels, to ensure that all stakeholders have access to a mechanism for communicating an issue or providing feedback.

On the one hand, we have a <u>specific complaints channel</u>, which is managed through an external platform called Whispli. It allows confidential and, if desired, anonymous reporting of possible legal or contractual breaches, or the reporting of illicit conduct and/or conduct contrary to Educo's principles and codes. We take all reports we receive seriously and respond as quickly as possible. We work closely with the person filing the report to find the best solution.

During 2023 we received the following incidents through our whistleblowing channel:

ISSUE	NUMBER OF REPORTS
Abuse of authority	2
Hostile environment	3
Code of Conduct	1
Fraud	5
Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP)	5
Policy on Protection Against Sexual	1
Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment	
(PSEAH)	
CSP and PSEAH	1
Theft	1
Security	24
TOTAL	43

In 2023, the incidents received have alerted the organisation to weaknesses in some departmental processes, which has led to the design and implementation of new preventive control measures that contribute to ongoing improvement. For example, following a complaint received, a new Conflict of Interest Policy for the Foundation was drafted, approved and shared. Similarly, in its annual plans, the Audit Unit will include a review of the implementation of the corrective measures derived from the reports received and a review of their effectiveness in all the country audits carried out during the year. During the report handling process, we keep the person making the report informed about the progress of the resolution and take into account their feedback on the management of the process.

An annual report on regulatory compliance and conduct is drawn up with the aim of describing the actions that have been carried out during the current financial year, to learn from them and to foresee the actions for the next financial year in relation to the operation of the Foundation's Compliance Risk Prevention System. The report is subsequently reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees before being shared with all staff in Educo's three working languages. Elements of the report also appear in the institutional Activity Report, which is shared externally.



On the other hand, we have a system of feedback mechanisms through which we receive, record and manage feedback from all our stakeholders, in accordance with our Suggestions, Complaints and Commendations (SCC) Policy. During 2024 we registered 691 SCCs, 111 of which were complaints. Of these 111 complaints, 42% were related to programs and projects, 37% to fundraising campaigns, 10% to administrative issues, 7% to human resources, and 4% to other issues.

Many of the complaints (and SCC in general) received have enabled us to identify lessons and introduce improvements in our work, both in the projects we set up and in our internal management processes. For example, we have changed aspects of projects, such as the type or format of activities, we have coordinated with other actors to strengthen children's safety or to encourage their active participation, and we have modified internal procedures to better respond to stakeholder needs.

4. Internally, how has your organisation practised a dynamic accountability approach?

The first outcome of the new 2024-2026 Organisational Development Plan (PDOG) addresses the organisational culture we want to promote, emphasising the need to create a space of wellbeing and security, which fosters, celebrates and nurtures our diversity with inclusive and decolonising conviction; on the other hand, it reaffirms the need for shared leadership that will be based on mutual trust, transparency and learning.

During 2023 we have continued to promote and expand the Child-Centred Leadership (CCL) program, a training program created by Educo, inspired by children and focused on the organization's purpose, which seeks personal, organizational and social transformation. The CCL promotes values such as flexibility and adaptability, inclusiveness, collaboration between individuals and teams, trust, and ongoing learning, among others. It is a program with a global reach, which we have been implementing through 68 volunteer ambassadors in nine countries we work in (during 2023). These people receive specific coaching sessions in order to be able to lead the process. It is an approach that is part of our commitment to a shared and decentralised leadership model, which promotes autonomy and adaptation to changing contexts. In 2023, we will hold 3–4-day workshops in Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Spain, the Philippines, Guatemala and Nicaragua. We would like the learning and tools acquired through the program to have an impact on the personal and professional development of the participants, as well as on the relationships between individuals and teams, and, ultimately, on the performance of the organisation.

As part of the Child-Centred Leadership program, we plan to produce a publication that will report internally and externally on the results of the program. This is something we will continue to work on in 2024, with the aim of having a study that measures the impact of the CCL approach, and that shares good practices that have produced transformations aimed at improving internal relational wellbeing. We also provide quarterly internal reports on the progress achieved through the CCL program, within the framework of Educo's internal monitoring and accountability system. We report on the one hand, on the results of the training, and, on the other hand, on developments in social research on the CCL.

Additionally, Educo conducts an organisational culture survey in which data is collected from the entire team on topics such as leadership, gender equity, efficiency, organisational learning, participation, decision-making, communication, and empowerment, among many other things. The survey is confidential, voluntary and anonymous, and allows us to establish the organisation's strengths and areas for improvement at the global level, and for each region, country and department. The results are shared



in PowerBI format with all staff, allowing responses to be filtered and analysed as needed. The results of the survey are an input for identifying measures to be taken to improve our organisational culture.

5. How has your organisation worked to apply a dynamic accountability approach with external stakeholders (i.e. partners, communities, project participants, etc.)?

Children and adolescents are at the heart of everything we do. Here are some examples of how we have been pushing for dynamic accountability to them over the past year.

Throughout the year, Educo carries out 'Open Days' (OD) in the different countries it works in. These are sessions aimed at the people involved in our projects, especially children, in which we promote transparency, dialogue and feedback for ongoing improvement. The Open Days meet certain minimum requirements, but the format and activities are adapted to the needs of the participants and the context of each country. Here are some examples of the ODs carried out during 2023:

- o In March 2023, Educo India held its first OD. To prepare it, a committee was set up consisting of representatives of Educo India, its local partner (in this case Matruschaya Social Welfare Society) and the people involved in the projects, including, of course, the children. This commission was responsible for coordinating the implementation of the OD, from its design to its implementation. During the OD, information about Educo's work and the local partner was presented, and activities were organised in order to receive and respond to feedback from the participants.
- o In November 2023, Educo Guatemala's second OD was held alongside five local partner organisations. Children participating in the projects were involved in the different aspects of planning the event, and during the day they presented sessions, shared their learning and replicated workshops they had received. At the end of the day, participants' opinions were collected, including recommendations for improvement, which will be taken into account for future ODs.

In addition, we held consultation and accountability spaces with participating children at different times throughout the project cycle. Below are some examples:

o In Bolivia, an accountability event was held towards the end of a project, in which the Educo Bolivia team presented all the work carried out in the framework of the three program areas using specific information and group dynamics. Children and adolescents presented proposals for future work based on what they had learned from Educo Bolivia, and a joint reflection was held on everything they had learned, identifying individual and group needs and strengths. The children's needs for access to more information on the environment, discrimination and violence were incorporated into the design of the training sessions and the children's suggestions, such as "Better use of time", "Spaces for recreation", "Visits to institutions that work on the issues addressed" have been taken into account in the design of the second phase of the project. We also continue to strengthen the Children's Advisory Councils, an initiative to promote children's participation in decision-making, and have begun to replicate this model in other countries we work in.



- Consultations were carried out in Educo Benin to define/revise the mechanisms for suggestions, complaints and commendations (SCC) in 21 schools participating in one of the projects in the Borgou and Alibori areas. The consultations were carried out with children, educators, families and local leaders and have helped to identify the most appropriate SCC mechanisms, taking into account the needs of children, as well as to define the key elements of the mechanism management procedure, and to agree on the channels for sharing the mechanisms among the different actors.
- At Educo Philippines, an Annual Participatory Program Review was held in December 2023 to assess the impact achieved during the year. Children and adolescents as well as adults from the community, volunteers and partner organisations participated in the event, with the aim of identifying challenges and lessons learned around the different program areas, as well as gathering feedback to improve processes and strategies, and to find innovative solutions.



Action plan

The following action plan sets out five commitments that will contribute to improving our accountability practice. We will report on progress on these commitments over the next two years.

	Action 1
Objective + What does it mean to succeed?	Develop a guide for child participation in the project cycle to guide the implementation of Educo's new Child Participation Policy.
Justification and context	Educo, as an organisation that works in favour of children's rights and wellbeing, has the responsibility to comply with, respect, protect and demand the right to participation. During 2023, we worked on the development of a new Child Participation Policy, which seeks to formalise this commitment and promote the ongoing improvement of our knowledge and capacities in the area of child participation. As part of the policy development, we also mapped the level of integration of child participation in the project forms, which helped us to understand the current situation in Educo. After sharing the policy and collecting feedback from our country offices, we will develop a guide to ensure effective implementation of the policy throughout the organisation, and especially to guide children's participation in the different phases of our projects.
Success indicators	 Guide based on consultations with children Guide translated and shared globally Positive feedback from Educo staff regarding the guide's usefulness
Key steps for achieving the objectives	 Carry out consultations with children on their participation in the project cycle, in Bangladesh, the Philippines, Benin, Mali, Spain, El Salvador and Bolivia. Review existing documentation (guides, manuals, etc.) on this topic. Develop, validate and translate the guide Carrying out presentation sessions by region
Calendar	 2024: First semester: consult with sponsored children in Bangladesh, the Philippines, Benin, Mali, Spain, El Salvador and Bolivia. First semester: analysis of consultation results Second semester: develop first draft of the guide Second semester: review of the draft guide by the Child Participation Commission and other Educo experts. 2025: First semester: translation, layout and distribution of the guide.
Available human and financial resources	Educo internal team: - Global Child Participation Commission - Sponsorship teams in Bangladesh, Philippines, Benin, Mali, Spain, El Salvador and Bolivia - Communication Team

	Action 2
Objective + What	Consolidate Educo's impact measurement system to better understand, adjust and
does it mean to	account for the impact of our work.
succeed?	



Justification and context	Following the construction of Educo's Social Impact Measurement System, and the first applications to 40 projects for testing purposes, we are now finalising the digital data model that facilitates the global visualisation and analysis of the information in an efficient and dynamic manner. During the next period we want to finalise the digitisation and visualisation of the information for better access and use of the information; and to consolidate the use in a larger number of projects.
Success indicators	 Improvements made on the basis of testing experiences Data model finalised and visualisation in Power BI available Number of projects that have applied impact measurement Impact measurement is applied in countries that have not yet implemented it. The information collected is used in the final evaluation of the Global Programmatic Framework.
Key steps for achieving the objectives	 Socialisation of the updated version of the questionnaire Finalisation of the data model and digitalisation Sampling of projects that will apply impact measurement in 2024 and 2025 Technical support and training for teams Data processing, quality review Analysis of the information
Calendar	 First semester: finalisation of the data model and digitalisation. First semester: project sampling. Ongoing: technical support and training of teams, data processing and quality review. 2024 and 2025: Application and analysis of information
Available human and financial resources	 Educo internal team: HO team: 1 MEAL and impact coordinator, 1 data monitoring and analysis specialist, 1 digitalisation and information management specialist, 1 accountability specialist, 1 evaluation and learning expert. Country teams: 1 MEAL officer in each country (x 14), program teams and project leaders External resources: evaluation teams in the case of external evaluations of projects with impact measurement. Financial resources: budget for projects scheduled for evaluation

	Action 3
Objective + What does it mean to succeed?	Define and adopt Educo's localisation model through a process of reflection that will conclude with institutional positioning and implementation of a roadmap for the entire organisation.
Justification and context	One of the debates that is gaining increasing momentum within the sector, and within the ChildFund Alliance itself, is that of localisation. As Educo, we consider it important to carry out an analysis of our current situation with regard to this issue and, from there, to promote an open and broad internal debate on localisation and decolonisation in order to achieve a common understanding at an institutional level. It is important for Educo to reflect on this approach in order to take actions that promote the process of decentralisation and transformation both internally in our relations between country offices and the global team, and externally with local actors. A working group on localisation was set up in 2023, which carried out a global internal survey to understand the current situation at Educo in relation to this issue.
Success indicators	 High level of representativeness of Educo staff (job title, country) and local partner organisations in the internal reflection on localisation and decolonisation. Institutional positioning on localisation and decolonisation developed



	 A work plan to guide decentralisation actions and transformation of internal relations developed Educo subscribed to the Charter for Change
Key steps for achieving the objectives	 Global reflection on localisation through surveys and focus groups Development of an internal position on localisation and decolonisation Development of a work plan to guide decentralisation actions and transformation of internal relations Sharing of the position paper and work plan Updating of the relevant documents and tools to align them with Educo's positioning Subscribe to Charter for Change
Calendar	 2024: Internal reflection on localisation and decolonisation Subscribe to Charter for Change 2025: Development of institutional positioning on localisation and decolonisation Development of a work plan to guide decentralisation actions and transformation of internal relations Inclusion in the Global Programmatic Framework (GPF) of the agreed localisation issues 2026: Sharing of the position paper and work plan Updating of the relevant documents and tools to align them with Educo's positioning Inclusion in the Country Programmatic Frameworks of the agreed localisation issues
Available human and financial resources	Human resources: - Global working group, with people from head office and country offices

	Action 4
Objective + What does it mean to succeed?	Launch the implementation of Educo's new Transparency Policy, with the aim of promoting transparency and access to information for all our stakeholders.
Justification and context	Transparency is one of the fundamental principles that guide all Educo's actions. In 2023, we updated and expanded our Transparency Policy to respond to the current needs of the organisation. The new version incorporates the following main changes: - It prioritises transparency towards the people we work with in projects, making explicit mention of the imbalance of power that exists in relations with them. - It encompasses our commitment to both external transparency and internal transparency. - It incorporates a more holistic approach to sharing information, which goes beyond what we publish on the global website. With the new version of the policy now published and shared, we must now put in place the necessary actions to ensure its proper implementation.
Success indicators	 Transparency Commission renewed, to align it with the overall approach of the new version of the policy Commission's terms of reference updated 2025 action plan for the Commission developed Educo staff are aware of the Transparency Policy Key actions of the policy implementation are incorporated in the action plans of the relevant teams.
Key steps for achieving the objectives	 Addition of new members to the Commission Updating of the Commission's terms of reference Development of the 2025 action plan for the Commission



	 Coordination with relevant teams to ensure that key actions are incorporated into their action plans.
Calendar	 2024: Renewal of the Transparency Commission 2025: Updating of the Commission's terms of reference Development of the 2025 action plan for the Commission Coordination with relevant departments to ensure that key actions are incorporated into their action plans.
Available human and	Human resources:
financial resources	- Global Transparency Commission

	Action 5
Objective + What does it mean to succeed?	Integration of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Framework into Educo's organisational culture
Justification and context	At the end of 2023, Educo developed a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework to outline Educo's overall approach to diversity, equity and inclusion and the promotion of a safe and inclusive work environment for all staff. The Framework reinforces our Code of Conduct, our Policy against Sexual Abuse, Harassment and Exploitation (PSEAH) and our Gender Equality Policy, with an approach that takes into account the different factors of discrimination and their intersectionalities. Now it is essential to ensure the integration of this Framework into Educo's organisational culture.
Success indicators	 All Educo staff are aware of and understand the DEI Framework. The DEI Framework distributed globally All new recruits are familiar with the DEI Framework. Training for all staff on the DEI Framework
Key steps for achieving the objectives	 Translation and design of the DEI Framework Digitalisation of training on the DEI Framework Launch of the new e-learning platform, Campus Educo Sharing of the Framework through institutional channels Global launch of training on the DEI Framework Inclusion of the DEI Framework in the induction process for new recruits to the team. Follow-up of training courses and awarding of diplomas
Calendar	 2024: Translation and design of the DEI Framework Digitalisation of training on the DEI Framework Launch of the new e-learning platform, Campus Educo Sharing of the Framework through institutional channels Training (online) for the entire active team 2025: Inclusion in the induction process for new recruits to the team. Follow-up of training courses and awarding of diplomas
Available human and financial resources	Financial resources: - Budget for the creation of digital training Human resources: - Communication Team - People and Culture Team - Digital Transformation Team

