

ETHICAL CODE

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Languages:	Spanish, English and French
Applicable to:	The entire organization
Related documents:	<i>2015-2018 Strategic Plan</i> <i>Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct</i> <i>Non-discrimination Policy</i> <i>Gender Equity Policy</i> <i>Complaints and Feedback Policy</i> <i>Partnership Policy and Guide</i> <i>Environmental Policy</i> <i>Policy on collaborating with businesses</i> <i>Quality Management Policy</i> <i>Code of Good Governance</i> <i>Child Participation Standards</i>

CONTENTS

1. General principles of educoco’s action	3
1.1. Our approach	4
1.2. Relationship with other organizations	5
1.3. Relationship with partner organizations.....	6
2. Cross-cutting priorities of educoco’s action	6
2.1. Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct	6
2.2. Gender Equity Policy	7
2.3. Environmental Policy.....	7
3. Principles of human resources management.....	8
4. Principles of communication.....	9
5. Fundraising	9
5.1. Fundraising guidelines.....	9
5.2. Relationship with donors	10
5.3. Relationship with the private sector	10
6. Transparency in management and information	11
7. Anti-corruption principles	13
8. Conflicts of interest	14
9. Dissemination, application and compliance with the ethical code	14
9.1. Dissemination of the Ethical Code aims to:	14
9.2. The Ethical Code should be known by:	14
9.3. Compliance with the Ethical Code	15
Annex 1. Statement to be signed by all Educo staff.....	16

ETHICAL CODE OF FUNDACIÓN EDUCACIÓN Y COOPERACIÓN

The Ethical Code of Fundación Educación y Cooperación (hereafter, Educo) contains the basic principles upon which the organization's activities are based. This code establishes a framework for conduct in order to guarantee coherence between Educo's actions and its institutional philosophy.

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF EDUCO'S ACTION

Educo has drafted this ethical code to contribute to the goals and standards set forth in its mission, vision, values, principles and Theory of Change (hereafter, ToC):

Our Mission explains our identity and commitment, and with whom and for whom we work:

We work with children and their communities to promote just and equitable societies that guarantee their rights and wellbeing.

Our Vision reflects the world we desire:

A world where all children fully enjoy their rights and lead a life of dignity.

Our values inspire our Mission and help us to interpret it.

Social commitment: We strive for the common good, in defense of human dignity, working together to build relationships based on fairness and solidarity between peoples, individuals and cultures.

Equity: Our actions aim to achieve greater justice in social arrangements and to promote people's ability to enjoy their freedom.

Respect: We recognize and defend the richness of human diversity as an essential value for social cohesion, peace and respect for the dignity of all people.

The Principles are operating standards which guide our actions, and their adoption and implementation is obligatory and should be demonstrable.

Participation: All of our actions guarantee and promote the right to participation of children and those who support them, in pursuit of full citizenship. We also foster a participatory culture within our organization.

Non-discrimination: Our work is built upon the belief that all children should have the opportunity to fulfill their rights, irrespective of their or their families' national, ethnic or social origin, language, religion, political opinion, economic position, differences in ability or any other status.

Transparency: We base our work on honesty, responsibility and maximum access to information regarding the management of resources and the impact of our actions, in pursuit of the highest level of social and economic accountability.

Dynamic spirit: We have the capacity to adapt and be creative in our response, seeking innovation and quality in our action.

Our Theory of Change is based on Child Wellbeing and the Child Rights-Based Approach:

Our efforts seek to **ensure the effective fulfillment of Child Rights** within the framework of the international convention that regulates these (*The Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989) and the utmost wellbeing of all children.

In **our vision of child wellbeing**, all children have the opportunity to be and do what they choose by exercising their rights. Thus, child wellbeing provides the ideal framework for evaluating our progress towards building more just societies.

We adopt the Child Rights-Based Approach as the framework that links children's wellbeing with the enjoyment of their rights. We call on those national and international structures whose responsibility it is to uphold those rights to support our development activities, and we particularly underline the need to strengthen States' capacities to fulfill their commitments to Child Rights and to be held accountable for their actions. **The approach implies the application of the four basic principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in all of our actions. These principles are:** 1) non-discrimination; 2) the best interests of the child; 3) the right to survival and development; and 4) the right of children to freely express their views in all matters that affect them and have their views taken into account. This approach also incorporates the concept of equity, which means giving priority to those groups that find themselves in situations of vulnerability and/or discrimination.

We consider that social actors can be classified into three categories: rights holders (children and adolescents), **secondary duty-bearers** (families, communities, civil society, the private sector, etc.) and **primary duty-bearers** (states and international bodies). Each and every one of these actors should be **agents of the desired change** by taking direct action to address rights violations and gaps, reinforce institutional mechanisms and build the capacities of the communities and civil society in their respective spheres. The role that children and adolescents play in this process, that is, their degree of involvement and responsibility, varies in accordance with their evolving capacities.

More than just a right in and of itself, we regard education as a necessary means for fulfilling all other rights and freedoms. For this reason, we believe that education should unquestionably be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable. Only in this way will education be able to transform people's lives while preparing them to transform their local and global contexts, thus enabling them to contribute to building more just and equitable societies.

1.1. Our approach

All of our activity is based on an approach that clearly states our way of working, how we understand and address the existing reality, who we work with and where.

Our approach is characterized by:

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

Sustainability: We support children and their communities; however, under no circumstances do we substitute or play the role of the State. All 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.

We mainly work with the following actors:

Children and adolescents: Children are our priority, particularly those from the most vulnerable and excluded groups, with special attention to girls.

Families and local communities: Our priority commitment to children should be grounded in collaborative efforts with families and local communities to support and guide them along the road to transformative and sustainable local development.

Local, national and international civil society organizations: We prioritize alliances with civil society organizations based on collaboration and mutual support.

Local, national and international governments and public institutions: Our actions are framed by the principles that guide international development initiatives in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (ownership, alignment, harmonization, results and mutual accountability) and are consistent with the development strategies and public policies of our program countries. We seek alliances with public institutions that contribute to achieving our objectives within a framework of promoting human rights.

Support base: As an organization driven by concepts such as social justice and solidarity, Educo relies on the support of its collaborators. To strengthen this relationship, we work to establish closer ties and communication with our supporters, seeking to increase their commitment to solidarity, as well as their active participation in the organization's work.

1.2. Relationship with other organizations

To generate a greater impact, our relationship with other organizations shall be based on coordinated efforts and the building of synergies. This will avoid isolated efforts, competition and the duplication of tasks. Coordinated efforts between different organizations should:

- Respect each member organization's independent goals, human and financial resources and philosophy.
- Facilitate communication between the organizations and the sharing of information about common areas of interest.
- Favor joint actions between the organizations.
- Encourage the joint study and debate of development principles, actions, goals, approaches, etc.

- Advance the promotion and defense of development interests among third parties (international bodies, governments, countries and other federations or institutions).
- Coordinate actions that target national and international public opinion, social and political forces, international bodies and Public Administrations.

1.3. Relationship with partner organizations

For Educo, working in partnership with other organizations is essential for building a more just world for children. Only by building effective partnerships based on commitment, equity and respect will we be able to achieve our strategic goals and have a lasting impact.

The **partnership relationship** shall not be limited exclusively to projects and/or programs, but rather shall extend to joint reflection and analysis, the exchange of experiences, the establishment of joint strategies, the development of joint campaigns and/or actions, and mutual accountability.

The minimum requisites defined by Educo for **establishing partnerships** are:

- Commitment to the **guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child**.
- Compliance with the **commitments and standards** set forth in Educo's **Child Safeguarding Policy** and **Gender Equity Policy**.
- **No political affiliation.**
- Commitment to **transparent management**.
- **Compliance with** the program country's **local laws**.
- **Mission, vision, values and principles that are aligned with those of Educo.**

2. CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES OF EDUCO'S ACTION

2.1. Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct

Educo's Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct is based on the principles set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), resolution S-27/2 *A world fit for children* (2002) and General Comment num. 13 (2011) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on *The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence*, all of which regard child protection as an absolute priority.

Educo is committed to creating and maintaining a warm, protective environment that fosters its guiding principles and, at the same time, prevents and takes an active stance against all forms of violence and physical or psychological maltreatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation which causes actual or potential harm to children's health, development or dignity, or which endangers their survival, irrespective of their sex, religious beliefs, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or any other factor which may serve as the basis for discrimination, with special attention to the particular conditions of vulnerability faced by children with different capacities.

We strongly condemn all type of child abuse and exploitation both within and outside our organization, and we respond diligently and accordingly within our sphere of influence to all cases of intended, suspected or proven abuse. To that end, we establish mechanisms for awareness-raising, preventive support and reporting.

2.2. Gender Equity Policy

Educo's Gender Equity Policy expresses our commitment to gender equity not only as a part of our internal identity, but also as an intrinsic part of our strategies and courses of action.

It manifests our pursuit of justice and equity between women and men and is intended to be living document upon which to base our ongoing internal training and reflection towards achieving this aim. In this sense, the scope of the policy is not limited to its design, but rather represents a first step, one that establishes our commitment to further developing ourselves in this area.

That said, gender equity is indeed an inseverable part of Educo's identity; it is intrinsically tied to our institutional cornerstones (mission, vision, values and principles), the goals we set, and to the tools we use in our work.

This strategy considers that all development actions should seek gender equity and take into account their differential impact on men and women. It makes it possible for gender equity to permeate all levels of the organization, since it requires the commitment of the entire management and staff to develop capacities and attitudes that make it possible for gender equity to become an essential part of all institutional activity.

2.3. Environmental Policy

It is becoming increasingly apparent that environmental degradation places decades of development efforts at risk: human activity over the last one hundred and fifty years has altered ecosystems and their ability to support life, wellbeing and human development. As a result, when ecosystemic functions (provision of natural resources, natural sanitation, atmospheric regulation, protection against disease, etc.) break down, this inevitably leads to a reduction in available life options and an increase in the vulnerability of affected populations.

It likewise becomes evident that disadvantaged populations are the most affected by the quality of the natural environment in which they live, given that their subsistence often depends directly on the natural resources or assets and services that ecosystems provide. They also tend to face greater exposure to environmental threats (contaminated water, harmful chemical products, etc.); to live on more marginal and infertile land; and to be particularly vulnerable to natural disasters (floods, droughts, hurricanes, etc.), whose frequency and intensity are increasing as a results of climate change.

Within this framework, it is important that Educo be fully aware of the impact we have on the environment in pursuit of our mission, not only through the development of our programs and projects, but also through our day-to-day activities. It is for these reasons that it is essential to integrate—in each

and every one of our activities—the necessary considerations for proper environmental management and protection, in order to give coherence, integrality and sustainability to our work.

This policy manifests our firm commitment to protecting the environment, both in the implementation of our programs and projects and in our everyday activities. It is based on three basic principles:

- Effective and efficient fulfillment of current environmental legislation that applies both in the countries where we work and at an international level, as well as of the other environmental commitments we have voluntarily assumed.
- Coherent integration of this policy in all decision-making processes and in all of the organization's actions, in compliance with the principles of preventing and reducing environmental impact and promoting the ongoing improvement of our management and actions in this area.
- Dissemination of this policy among our Board of Trustees, team members, partner organizations and suppliers, as well as among any other interested party and among the general public.

3. PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Educo's human resource management principles are applied to hired staff, volunteers and interns through established methodologies and procedures, in accordance with the following standards:

- Work for equity to uphold institutional standards of equal opportunity and diversity through different mechanisms such as salary policies, procedures and personnel policies.
- Respect the rights of all employees, including their freedom of association, thought, expression and worship. All staff shall be treated with respect and dignity. "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy (...) nor attacks upon his honor and reputation (Article 12, Universal Declaration of Human Rights).
- Build a positive working environment by fostering respect among all members of Educo and identifying and denouncing any conduct which poses insult or injury to any person.
- Foment professional development to reconcile the professional interests of the team members with the goals of the organization:
 - Recruit and select staff through competency management based on the basic principles of objectivity, non-discrimination and equal opportunities.
 - Give preference to the hiring of local staff in those countries where Educo implements and/or develops its projects.
 - Implement a training plan to develop staff competencies, thus improving performance in pursuit of Educo's mission.
 - Maintain the professional staff necessary for delivering quality work.
- Promote internal communication to enhance staff performance, improve the work environment, reinforce professional qualifications and foster staff members' identification with organization's mission and values.

- Encourage staff participation in identifying and managing goals.
- Guarantee employees' workplace health, safety and wellbeing by providing them with the utmost possible protection and respecting current labor legislation.
- Work to professionalize the volunteer program, as an effective and enriching form of collaboration. The volunteers form part of Educo's human team and represent an added value for the organization by reinforcing our relationship with society. Volunteer work does not substitute the work of Educo's professional team and is an altruistic contribution.

4. PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication, as an instrument for social and political change, guarantees transparency, accountability and good governance and should encourage mobilization and social participation in favor of development.

Educo shall foster objective knowledge of different realities and circumstances by reflecting diverse situations and obstacles to development, the efforts undertaken in its favor and the progress achieved.

It shall also publicize the progress and milestones achieved in the interest of accountability and demonstrating our outcomes with respect to on sustainable human development.

Educo applies the following standards in all of its communicative actions:

- Create messages that depict the reality of the people, communities and countries where it works in collaboration with local teams and/or partner organizations.
- Prevent all types of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, culture, religion or social position, among others.
- Prevent reverting to generalizations and stereotypes and show respect for all cultures.
- Promote the gender perspective and disseminate images and messages that reflect ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Prioritize the direct participation of the people and communities who are the main actors of the publicized situations. Include their opinions or direct accounts within the corresponding context.
- Try to reflect the capacities of the teams, people and communities with whom Educo works.
- Take special care with the images of minors (see Educo's Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct).

5. FUNDRAISING

5.1. Fundraising guidelines

- All fundraising activities shall be based on equity, honesty, integrity and transparency in order to earn society's maximum trust in our professional work.
- Educo's mission and that of participating groups shall precede personal and professional interests, and we shall always be guided by our mission and by the pursuit of common good and the improvement of the quality of children's lives.
- Educo's fundraising materials and messages shall respect the communication principles set forth in this Ethical Code.
- Educo shall reject donations, both personal and corporate, that are in conflict with the organization's aims and values.
- Educo shall be accountable to its donors and will not use messages or images that may be considered an affront to anyone's dignity.
- Donors have the right to receive complete and timely information about how their funds are used.
- Telephonic fundraising shall be respectful of the interlocutor. The act of donating is born of the donor's willing commitment to a cause.
- Educo shall ensure the proper development of direct fundraising campaigns (Face-to-Face) in order to guarantee that clear information is provided verbally and in writing; that the fundraisers are acting in a polite way; and that the public does not feel pressured in any way that may make them uncomfortable.

5.2. Relationship with donors

In its relationship with donors and collaborators, Educo undertakes to:

- Respect donors' decisions regarding the allocation of their contributions. If, for any reason, particular circumstances make it necessary to modify this allocation, donors shall be informed of these changes in a timely fashion.
- Work to optimize available resources, which donors and collaborators have contributed in support of the institutional mission.
- Promote mechanisms for donor and collaborator participation and feedback.
- Guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of the data and information of its donors and collaborators, and request prior consent before making this public.
- Provide precise and truthful information and ensure that accountability to donors, undertaken through Educo's own means—annual reports and activities or results reports, magazine, mailings and emailings, social networks, etc.—faithfully reflect the management of the funds raised, as well as their impact.
- Provide donors and collaborators with customer service via telephone, postal mail, electronic mail, fax and online social networks. All requests, incidences and complaints presented to Educo shall be received and handled through the above channels (see our Complaints and Feedback Policy).

5.3. Relationship with the private sector

Educo shall ensure that its relationship with corporate sponsors, which includes national and multinational companies, small to mid-size business and business associations, etc., does not influence the independence of its decisions and activities and does not enter into conflict with its mission, vision and values.

As such, Educo will require its corporate collaborators to engage in socially acceptable and responsible conduct and will ensure that its corporate sponsors comply fulfill the following requirements (see Educo's Policy for Collaborating with Businesses in Spanish):

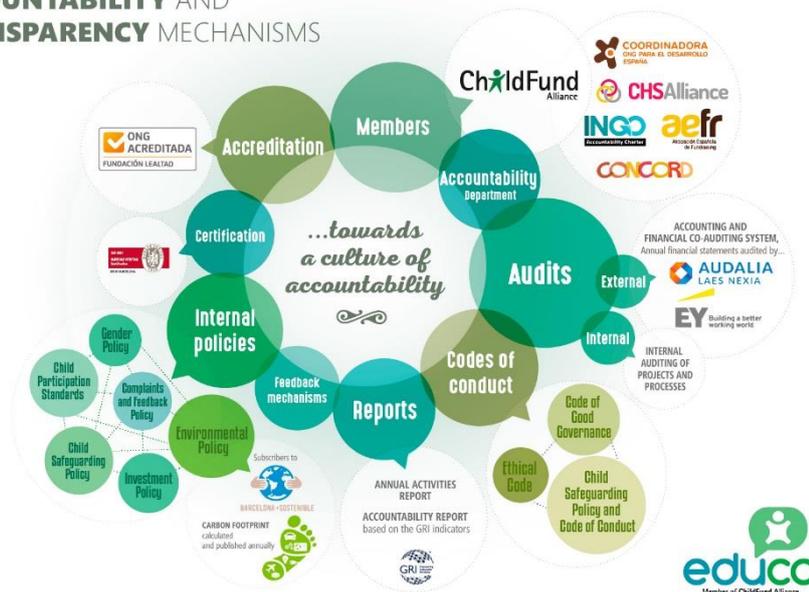
- Respect human rights and international treaties and conventions regarding migrant workers and their families and regarding the fight against racism, xenophobia, homophobia and gender inequality in all daily operations and in their communication policy, both in the country of origin and any other countries where they act.
- Comply with the fundamental Conventions of the ILO regarding forced labor, child labor and the right to organize and collective bargaining.
- Comply with environmental legislation and regulations; more specifically, observe the principles set forth in Spain's Environmental Responsibility Act, upholding the same standards in all places where they act.
- Respect public health both in terms of their products and their production processes, in compliance with current legislation in the country of origin. Educo will not establish relationships with companies that promote the consumption of products like tobacco, distilled alcohol, gaming machines, games of chance or pornography.
- Educo will not establish relationships with companies whose purpose is to engage in speculation.
- Respect the dignity of people with disabilities and fulfill the obligations established by the LGD (Spain's General Law on Persons with Disabilities).
- Educo shall not establish relationships with companies that produce, traffic or finance the production of weapons.

6. TRANSPARENCY IN MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

Transparency is one of the guiding principles of Educo's work. We base our work on honesty, responsibility and maximum access to information regarding the management of resources and the impact of our actions, in pursuit of the highest level social and economic accountability.

Educo applies mechanisms to ensure transparency in its management in the interest of being accountable to its donors, collaborators, rights holders and society at large.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY MECHANISMS



Educo has implemented a system of economic-financial control to guarantee the utmost transparency and traceability of the economic resources derived from different funding sources and their allocation to its projects.

Educo is committed to being transparent in terms of its structure, policies, goals and activities, as well as in the organization's administrative and financial management. As such, it shall provide accurate, comprehensible, regular and accessible information regarding all of these aspects.

All of Educo's fundraising activities shall comply with the legal regulations, be truthful, avoid misleading messages and accurately describe the organization's identity.

To ensure compliance with standards of responsible and transparent management before its donors, collaborators, rights holders and society in general—and given its status as a foundation registered in Barcelona—Educo is accountable to the **Protectorate of Foundations of the Generalitat de Catalunya**.

The institution submits to an annual **external accounts audit** and we undergo internal and external audits of our country offices. As the recipient of public funds, Educo is subject to Spanish **Law on Grants and Subsidies and to the control of** the national and international **Public Administrations** granting these subsidies; it is also subject, when applicable, to the control of the Spanish Comptroller General's Office.

Educo is a development NGO accredited **by the Spanish Agency for International Development (AECID)**.

As a member organization of the CONGDE, Educo subscribes to the **Code of Conduct of the Spanish Coordinator for Development NGOs and we are required to use its Tool for Transparency and Good Governance**.

Educo is accredited by **Fundación Lealtad**.

We are a member of **ChildFund Alliance**.

We undertake **external evaluations** of our development programs in the field. We also conduct audits of the funded projects when so required by donors.

Educo publishes up-to-date information about its activities and projects on its **institutional website** (<https://www.educo.org/>), **online social networks and other available communication channels**.

The following is some of the information that is available on the institutional website:

- The Financial Audit Report.
- The Annual Activities Report and Educo Magazine.
- The Accountability Report.
- Educo’s organizational structure and the governance bodies.
- The networks and coalitions to which Educo belongs.
- Educo’s Strategic Plan.
- Institutional policies and codes.

To demonstrate our commitment to transparency and accountability, we voluntarily subscribe to the principles set forth by international, national and local initiatives such as Accountable Now, Keeping Children Safe, CHS Alliance and the United Nations Global Compact.

Educo also employs a Quality Management System which complies with the ISO 9001:2008 standards in fundraising and the control of funds to development projects, and the Head Office holds a certificate issued by Bureau Veritas.

7. ANTI-CORRUPTION PRINCIPLES

Educo shall not tolerate any type of corrupt behavior. By corruption, we mean *any abuse of entrusted power for private gain*¹, including the following practices which may affect Educo: fraud, bribery, misappropriation or embezzlement.

Educo undertakes the following activities to avoid, detect and reprove possible bad practices which may be carried out both within and surrounding the organization:

- Implement and maintain procedures that are appropriate for the size, activity and complexity of the organization.
- Communicate, both internally and externally, Educo’s zero-tolerance policy regarding corruption.
- Supervise and evaluate compliance with the organization’s procedures as part of the internal control processes, in order to avoid corruption.

¹ Transparency International

- Apply control measures aimed at correcting and repairing any damage caused by fraud or corruption when necessary.

8. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

By conflict of interest we refer to any situation in which a member of the organization's governing body or operating team, in the performance of his or her functions, can influence in the taking of a decision that may provide him or her with a direct or indirect benefit.

In keeping with the organization's zero-tolerance policy regarding corruption, Educo is committed to preventing conflicts of interest. As such:

- The members of Educo's team, including volunteers and interns, shall abstain from participating in any business or financial activities that may produce a conflict of interest with their work in Educo.
- The actions of Educo's team members shall not, at any time, be conditioned by interests other than those of the organization.
- The members of Educo's team shall abstain from intervening and voting on those issues in which a conflict of interest may exist; that is, in those situations in which there is a direct or indirect conflict between the personal interests of the member and the interests of the organization.

9. DISSEMINATION, APPLICATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE ETHICAL CODE

The Ethical Code, including all modifications made to it, shall be approved by the maximum governing body of the organization.

The Ethical Code shall be signed by all Educo staff, volunteers, interns and members of the governing body.

9.1. Dissemination of the Ethical Code aims to:

- Explain the concept, goals and practices of Educo.
- Guarantee the principles of transparency, internal democracy and the proper application of resources to the institutional purpose.
- Make Educo's institutional purpose and goals public.

9.2. The Ethical Code should be known by:

- Donors, partners and other collaborators who so desire.

- The partner organizations with which Educo collaborates.
- The public administrations that collaborate with Educo and any other public administration that so desires.
- The communication media, companies and any other institution that habitually collaborates with Educo.
- Public opinion, in general.
- The Coordinators, Networks and Platforms with which Educo has a relationship or in which Educo has membership.
- Staff, volunteers, interns and the members of the governing body.
- Prior to induction, new staff shall sign a statement by which they accept the principles of the Ethical Code.

It is Educo's responsibility to disseminate the Ethical Code.

9.3. Compliance with the Ethical Code

To guarantee the proper monitoring of and compliance with the Ethical Code, Educo will form an internal committee whose will ensure fulfillment of all of the Code's principles. This committee will also be responsible for analyzing possible non-compliance with the Code and proposing any necessary modifications.

The Ethical Code Monitoring Committee will be comprised of members of the governing body, Executive Committee and technical staff from different divisions or departments, in order to guarantee diversity in participation.

The functions of the Ethical Code Monitoring Committee are:

- Foster the dissemination, knowledge and monitoring of the Ethical Code among all people and organizations associated with the organization.
- Ensure compliance with the Ethical Code.
- Gather and follow through on recommendations or proposals for improving and modifying the Ethical Code.

The Committee may act on its own initiative or upon request by Educo's governing body.

Annex 1. Statement to be signed by all Educo staff

I, (Enter name) have read and understand Educo's Ethical Code and **declare that I accept the principles set forth therein.**

I understand that non-compliance with the Ethical Code may result in the immediate adoption of disciplinary, and even penal, measures against me.

I understand that it is my responsibility, as an Educo employee or service provider, to use common sense to avoid actions that run counter to the principles established in the Ethical Code.

I agree to use the channels established in the Feedback and Complaints Policy (specifically, the email address opina@educoco.org and the physical feedback boxes), to report any breach of the standards or norms set forth by the Ethical Code by third parties.

Name:

Job title:

Signature:

Date: