

# Education Academia Stakeholder Group

## Terms of Reference

### I Background

The Education and Academia Stakeholder Group (EASG) **brings together human rights-based education civil society organisations as well as academia organisations and networks that work on the right to education**, which self-organise to engage with the monitoring and review of the Sustainable Development Goals.

EASG was established in 2016, with initial discussions coordinated by Global Campaign for Education (GCE) with several organisations and networks, based primarily on the different constituencies they represent, as well as on the active working relationships developed since the process of negotiation of the SDGs started. EASG started with four Organising Partners (OP): Global Campaign for Education, International Council for Adult Education, Education International and European Students Forum (all of them umbrella organisation with members across different continents), thus guaranteeing global and regional perspectives and inclusion of various education community actors and their unions (students of all ages, teachers, universities and research institutes), as well as the maintaining a balance of education issues and focuses.

Later on, Education International changed the status of being OP and became a regular member. The European Students' Union was replaced by the Global Student Forum.

Civil society and academic constituencies gathered in EASG promote education as a human right, especially as a State responsibility, and on that background engage with the monitoring and review of the Sustainable Development Goals within MGoS Coordination Mechanism and related spaces.

The EASG is a self-governing body not under the control of any political party, government and ideological or religious grouping. In the spirit of principles enshrined by the SDG/E 2030 Agenda, the EASG organisations embrace principles that include:

- a commitment to promoting human rights and dignity for all,
- working towards the overcoming of all forms of discrimination,
- the peaceful resolution of conflicts,
- the enhancement of democracy and social justice.

### II. EASG membership

The EASG is open to all organisations working for the full realisation of the right to free, inclusive quality education, most important public education, and broad opportunities for lifelong learning for all, and for the full implementation of Agenda 2030, and of SDG 4 in particular.

Membership is not timely limited. Members Assembly can decide about exclusion of a member based on well-grounded reasons.

### **1. Eligibility criteria**

The OPs bring to the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group the representation of their own members, many of which are representative organisations with memberships of their own. All the members of the OP organisation are welcome to become members of the EASG in their own rights if they so wish.

Other education organisations, networks and platforms are welcome to join, in particular academic institutions, organisations which focus on overcoming different forms of discrimination in education, such as sex, gender, age, race and ethnicity, disability, migration, and various thematic groupings.

As well as meeting the above criteria, members must also:

- be a recognised or constituted organisation; network; association; union; academic grouping; or faculty/department of a higher education institution,
- operate at sub-national, national, sub-regional, regional or international level.

### **2. Members Rights and Duties**

Members of the EASG will:

- receive timely information, briefing papers and other relevant materials on the SDG4 accountability processes in order to play an active role in holding governments to account,
- have access to a common mailing list to foster and encourage dialogue among members on SDG4 accountability issues,
- be invited to participate in teleconferences, webinars and face-to-face meetings of the EASG,
- be invited to give input into the EASG's joint statements, reports, research and policy positions for the SDG4 accountability processes,
- be invited to apply for civil society speaker, representative or observer roles in SDG or UN fora to which the EASG and its members have access,
- be invited to participate in drafting groups, task forces or working groups of the EASG,
- have the opportunity to stand in elections and vote for future OPs.

### **3. Assessment of new membership requests**

The OPs will strive to ensure its membership procedures are as open as possible to achieve broad participation.

The Organising Partners will decide on the membership of applicants to the EASG if they are not a confirmed member of one of the OPs. That decision will be agreed upon unanimously by the OPs, based on the criteria defined in these terms of reference. If there is no consensus, the decision will fall to the Members Assembly.

With open collaboration at the heart of our guiding principles, commitment towards the implementation of the full set of SDGs, and in particular SDG4 will be the key criterion for membership of the Stakeholder Group. Other criteria, drawn from the principles enshrined by the SDG agenda, will include a commitment to promoting human rights and dignity for all, working towards the realisation of education as a human right, without any kind discrimination, and broad opportunities for lifelong learning.

Interested organisations will be required to fill in a simple online form, a proof of their status (registration confirmation, constitution or similar document, or the link to the document), which will be assessed by the Organising Partners.

### **III. Governance**

#### **1. The Members Assembly:**

The Members Assembly brings together all organisations participating in the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group (EASG) and is the body designed to make strategic and high-level political decisions related to the:

- the role of EASG and its engagement in HLPF work and related spaces
- the functioning of EASG, most importantly about ToRs changes and appointment of OP's
- ratification of membership requests and exclusion of members

Members Assembly is convened at least once a year, face-to-face or virtually.

The decisions are made by the simple majority of all those present. All members have one vote.

#### **2. Organising Partners**

Organising Partners is coordinating and executive body that works together to coordinate the EASG and its constituencies, and to enable efficient operational work of EASG and the implementation of the decisions of Members Assembly.

##### **Mandate**

The Organising Partners (OPs) mandate is to:

- ensure the coordination of the EASG;
- approve membership and facilitate participation of members in the EASG processes;
- make decisions in the name of the EASG if they don't fall to the mandate of Members Assembly or if the shortage of time doesn't allow the consultations;
- represent the EASG in the Coordination Mechanism – take part in the regular meetings, in the Task Forces, in the events CM organises and coordinates, etc;
- be the voice of the EASG in the UN DESA structures, including but not limited to: participating in conference calls and events, submitting position papers, exhibition and side events proposals, nomination of speakers, etc;
- be the external voice of the EASG (public interventions, media, etc.);
- liaise with other MGoS, by cooperating them in various activities;
- coordinate the representation of EASG in different groups, mechanisms and activities linked to the preparation of HLPF.

Organising partners will convene every three (3) months or sooner, especially when decisions related to the organisation of the HLPF will need to be taken.

Documentation, information and briefings are shared for consultation through members-only mailing lists. Alongside this, OPs facilitate meetings, capacity-building events, teleconferences and webinars, seeking inputs and responses to enable as many members to engage as possible.

### **Current Organizing Partners and the rotation of OPs**

- Global Campaign for Education<sup>1</sup>
- International Council for Adult Education<sup>2</sup>
- Global Student Forum<sup>3</sup>

HLPF and UN related processes are complex and relationship building within the different MGoS is a longer-term process. As the EASG is a relatively 'young' group, the above mentioned OPs will remain the same for the next two years, and then rotate no more than 2 at a time, unless:

- they decide to withdraw from the position;
- there is a unanimous agreement between all the members to review the mandatory rotation terms limits.

### **Designation Process of new Organising Partners**

All organisations already members of the EASG and meeting the above criteria are eligible to stand as an Organising Partner. An election will be organised within the membership, and organisations receiving the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://campaignforeducation.org/en/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://icae.global/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.globalstudentforum.org/>

majority of votes will be designated by mandate from the Members Assembly. The Chief Returning Officer and organiser of the elections will be designated from member organisations not running for the election.

A desirable balance of OPs is intended, which considers: (a) global and regional perspectives and (b) the representation of education community actors (students, teachers and academia).

Each OP should ideally be an international or regional member-based organisation bringing together and working with other organisations and networks, across different continents.

The OPs should have the ability to take on the role of liaising with other key global fora and to ensure the discussions of the Stakeholder Group are taken into the SDG4/Education 2030 Steering Committee in order to ensure dialogue between these crucial elements of the SDG architecture.

### **Division of labour and responsibility of Organising Partners**

The Organising Partners (OPs) are responsible for organizing themselves to share the workload as equally as possible.

The first Co-Chair will be responsible for coordinating consultations, organizing calls for the OPs and EASG, communicating with EASG members, maintaining the mailing list, and sending EASG Updates.

The next Co-Chair will be responsible for actively participating in the work of the Coordination Mechanism, attending meetings and calls, and submitting timely reports and inputs to CM.

The third Co-Chair will be responsible for maintaining the EASG website, updating the members' list, submitting contributions to the UN DESA web page, and providing updates to UN DESA.

All Organising Partners are jointly responsible for preparing position papers, statements, and other similar contributions, participating in the Coordination Mechanism Task Forces, coordinating the work of EASG Task Forces, providing input for EASG Updates, and involving EASG members in these processes whenever possible.

The OPs are also responsible for the costs related to organizing side events, exhibitions, and other activities, according to their respective capacity.

## **IV. Main areas and ways of engagement**

The primary role of the EASG is to ensure and facilitate meaningful participation of human rights-based education and academia organisations and networks in UN policy spaces, including monitoring and review of the SDGs, particularly SDG4.

The EASG seeks to influence policy by ensuring effective participation in UN processes, including SDG implementation mechanisms and spaces at global, regional and national levels. Such participation is brought about through coordinated advocacy at all levels; developing informed research-based advocacy messages, materials, and analysis; and engaging in communications and media work to raise awareness

of critical educational issues – including both progress made and eventual drawbacks – in order to hold governments to account and push for the realisation of human rights.

EASG contributes and engages in three main areas:

- First, by participating in the Coordination Mechanism meetings and activities, which involves engaging with other Major and Stakeholders Group, sharing knowledge and best practices, and providing input on relevant topics;
- Second, by advocating for policies and initiatives that align with EASG's goals and objectives, through the submission of papers, statements, and other relevant materials;
- Third, by actively participating in the events related to SDGs, such as HLPF sessions, side-events, various fora, workshops and panels, as speakers, moderators, and panelists.

EASG may also engage in other types of activities depending on the dynamics and tasks of the Coordination Mechanism and UN DESA.

EASG can create Task Forces for specific areas based on current needs and work pressure. These Task Forces will invite and engage EASG constituencies to ensure diverse perspectives and expertise.

Since participation and inclusion are among the main principles of EASG work, the drafting of statements, position papers, agreements etc. will be produced as inclusive and participatory as possible under the given circumstances.

With specific reference to the selection of speakers on behalf of the EASG in different UN HLPF fora, following criteria will be considered: diversity, openness, transparency and inclusion – as much as the timelines and the frame given by UN DESA.