

The Education and Academia Stakeholder Group (EASG)

Introduction

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.

It was formally set up in 2016, in the aftermath of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its formalisation is anchored in the 2013 Resolution A/RES/67/290, which first explicitly named this Stakeholder Group¹ in the framework of the High- Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. It is also the result of the concrete articulation of a large number of human rights-based education organisations and networks that worked together during the Open Working Group sessions in 2014 and the Inter- governmental negotiations in 2015, particularly to advocate on Goal 4 and also on common cross-cutting issues that pertained to the full SDG Agenda.

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 in the follow-up and review of the SDGs. 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.

The EASG is human rights-centred and seeks to articulate SDG processes with existing UN human rights conventions, committees and review processes. It recognises that the human right to education is spelt out and interpreted in detail through a comprehensive body of legally binding Conventions and General Observations that have been adopted over the past decade and whose principles the EASG recognise and endorse.

The EASG underlines that the right to education begins at birth and traverses all ages, recognising all people – from Early Childhood Care and Education up to Adult Education, including older persons – as subjects of rights. For the right to be fulfilled, availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability of education must be ensured. Noncompliance with any of these dimensions, will result in violation of the right. The EASG understands that to tackle and overcome structural economic, social and environmental crises as well as intersecting inequalities and multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, age, class, caste, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disabilities, and other status it must work in dialogue and collaboration with all MGoS and Civil Society Organisations from different sectors.

Joining the EASG

The EASG is open to all interested organisations working for a human rights perspective of education, for social, economic and environmental justice and dignity for all and which are committed towards the implementation of the full SDG Agenda, and in particular of SDG4. To register your interest in joining the EASG please visit www.educationacademia.org and complete the form or contact: contact@educationacademia.org.

Governance

Organising Partners

The EASG is facilitated by Organising Partners (OPs), whose fundamental role is to:

- consult, communicate and share information with members on SDG 4 implementation;
- trigger the development of positions and statements regarding UN follow-up and review processes;
- facilitate debate and the establishment of consensus;
- facilitate information sharing and convene virtual and face-to-face meetings regarding core SDG and HLPF encounters; and
- facilitate participation in UN spaces and mechanisms at the different levels.

There are currently four OPs for the EASG, which have been primary responsible for its establishment, namely the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), Education International (EI), the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and the European Students' Union (ESU).

Communication

The EASG will use a listserv and conference calls to communicate with members. Strategy meetings are planned back to back with different UN meetings and events.

Selecting participants and speakers for meetings

The EASG will share out all relevant information regarding participation and speaking opportunities in meetings via the listservs and then request nominations/applications. The selection is made through OPs, according to agreed criteria, which will include regional balance and thematic expertise.

Preparing for participation and advocacy

The EASG strives to facilitate in-person preparatory meetings a day before each of the official sessions, so as to provide guidance and discuss advocacy positions, opportunities and strategies.

Preparing Statements and Position Papers

EASG statements are to be developed collaboratively and based upon existing positions. The EASG strives to reach consensus, aiming for the most ambitious position possible