



**Management Response
to the**

***Midterm Evaluation of the
Educaid.be Programme
2022-2026***

September 2024

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1. Introduction

This note outlines the Management Response to the external mid-term evaluation of Educaid’s 2022-2026 programme. The evaluation was conducted by StrategyHouse.dk from January to June 2024, with the objectives of facilitating learning, informing decision-making for the second half of the programme, and inspiring the design of future programmes.

The evaluation was overseen by a Steering Group consisting of Educaid.be’s coordinator, the M&E leads of APEFE and VVOB, and representatives from EdukoMondo and Via Don Bosco, both member organisations of Educaid.be’s Steering Committee.

The evaluation began with a kick-off meeting followed by an inception phase that included a desk review, an online survey, and key informant interviews with representatives from Educaid.be member organisations and other stakeholders. The field phase involved visits to Benin and Cambodia, where Educaid.be members and partner organisations were interviewed and participated in a face to face workshop on Educaid.be’s added value and opportunities for improvement.

A debriefing of the field visits with preliminary findings was held for the Steering Group in May. The findings and recommendations were then presented and discussed with Educaid.be’s Steering Committee and other member organisations during a validation workshop on June 21st. The final evaluation report was received on June 28th, 2024.

The Management Response was prepared based on the feedback from the validation workshop and further discussions within the Steering Committee in September 2024, who also endorsed the response.

2. Overall appreciation

Following the awarded proposal, the review team applied a theory-based evaluation methodology to answer the evaluation questions. While the Steering Group appreciated this approach, they had anticipated a more in-depth analysis of the assumptions and an unpacking of the programme’s Theory of Change. Nevertheless, we are overall satisfied with the quality of the evaluation report and the process undertaken. We appreciate the flexibility of the review team in addressing challenges and concerns throughout the evaluation, especially those related to conducting fieldwork. The evaluation’s findings are insightful and mostly consolidate our monitoring information. The conclusions appropriately reflect the progress made, highlighting both strengths and shortcomings. Overall, there are no critical flaws that impede progress towards Educaid.be’s objectives. The recommendations are valuable, and the proposed scenarios are inspiring, offering an excellent basis for further analysis and a possible next phase of Educaid.be’s programme (2027-2031).

The following sections elaborate on the views and responses of Educaid.be’s Steering Committee to the recommendations and potential future scenarios presented in the report.

3. Response to the recommendations

The review team formulated seven recommendations for the remainder period and/or a future phase of Educaid.be’s programme.

Recommendation 1: Explore what and under which circumstances members are truly willing to invest their time and efforts in Educaid.be	
No network or alliance can sustain itself without the active contribution of its members’ time, knowledge, and efforts to the cooperation, and without the genuine interest of its members to learn and benefit from each other’s support. It is therefore recommended that Educaid.be explores what members are truly willing to contribute with and under what circumstances, as this knowledge will form the basis for a – possible – reorientation or revision of the platform’s mission in the years to come. This will include acquiring a better understanding of members, size, field of expertise, purpose, and needs and a consideration of the strengths and limitations of the platform’s diversity, as well as a reflection on ways to best engage members and capitalize on the size of the membership base.	
Response	Accepted
Recommendation 2: Consider what Educaid.be would want to be in the future	

Facilitate a joint reflection – starting in the steering committee but with engagement of other members in a ‘second phase’ – about who Educaid.be would want to be in the future, what it wants to achieve, and what it will take from members and from the/a coordination respectively. The four scenarios spelled out in this report might serve as a reference point for inspiration.	
Response	Accepted
Recommendation 3: Consider the representation of different types of members in the steering committee	
Consider the representation of different types of members in the steering committee to ensure that the steering committee mirrors the composition of Educaid.be’s member base and represents the different needs and concerns of members.	
Response	Accepted
Recommendation 4: Harmonize expectations about the division of roles and responsibilities between the coordination and Educaid.be’s members	
A network is only as strong and vivid as the contribution and active participation of its members. If members ‘take’ more than they ‘give’, and most work relies on the/a coordinator or coordination, any network runs the risk of soon depleting its resources and losing its attractiveness to members. It is therefore recommended that Educaid.be harmonize expectations with members about the division or roles and responsibilities of members and the coordination respectively. This discussion must be closely linked to reflections about the circumstances, in which members would be committed to invest their time and efforts.	
Response	Accepted
Actions Taken or Planned for Recommendations 1-4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A F2F consultation with the members will be conducted by the Educaid.be coordinator with a view to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore what and under which circumstances members are truly willing to invest their time and efforts in Educaid.be. - Acquire a better understanding of members, size, field of expertise, purpose, and needs, as well as on ways to best engage members and capitalize on the size of the membership base. 2. Data analysis will be made by the Educaid.be coordinator with the support of the Steering Committee. 3. The outcome will be presented by the coordinator to the members.
Timeline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formulation of the questionnaire for the members’ F2F consultation (cf. questionnaire workshops in partner countries by StrategyHouse) – end October 2024 2. F2F consultation round by the Educaid.be coordinator with members – starts in November 2024 3. Presentation outcome of the F2F Consultation - Educaid.be members’ meeting in February 2025
Recommendation 5: Revitalize project groups, possibly around set of ‘how to’ questions that represents lived problems and challenges that members and their partners experience in their daily work and which they have in common	
Revitalizing project groups around concrete issues and mandates would be a way to contribute to strengthen a sense of community and shared purpose, and to meet diverging needs and interests of members.	
Response	Accepted – can be implemented for the ongoing programme
Actions Taken or Planned	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define a clear action plan, outcome of the PG and schedule the meetings for the different PG and SC on annual bases (2025-2026) 2. Give greater prominence to the project groups (composition and action plans + outcomes + meeting minutes) on the website and in the newsletter.

Timeline	1 before end of 2024 2 starting 2025
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Recommendation 6: Consider the strengths and limitations of online and hybrid meeting formats	
This would entail shifting the balance in favor of offline meetings, where face to face contacts and exchanges appear more rewarding and effective. This could typically apply for project group meetings with action plans that must be created or updated during each meeting and situations, where the 'informal encounters' in breaks or after the formal meetings are conducive to cooperation between members.	
Response	Partially accepted – will be considered, but we do not prefer to only hold offline meetings.
Justification	The Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown resulted in a change in meeting practices. As a result, many more meetings and events are held, either as hybrid meetings or as online meetings. Thanks to these hybrid meetings, colleagues and/or partner organisations in other countries can also participate in a project group, thereby reducing the workload in Belgium. Hybrid meeting allow a potential diversification, but we also want to consider the importance of F2F meetings and the networking aspect for the members' meeting.
Actions Taken or Planned	Since 2023 the annual members' meeting is organized offline with interactive workshops Schedule the meetings for the PG and SC on annual bases and alternate between F2F and online meetings in function of the content of the meetings (workshop, brainstorming, strategic discussion...). Make some rules for online/offline meeting that are known by the members.
Timeline	1. February 2025 Members' meeting, the organisation of this 'in person' offline meeting starts in 11/24 2. Schedule online/offline meetings for 2025 SC/PG meetings, before end 2024

Recommendation 7: Create financial incentives for partners' cooperation – e.g. through the provision of consortia grants	
Financial incentives are often the most direct and effective way to promote cooperation between organisations and grant criteria can be used to stimulate different types of cooperation and knowledge exchange, according to Educaid.be's preferences.	
Response	REJECTED for current programme - consider the recommendation for the next programme.
Justification	No budget and in terms of administration, it becomes very heavy and not very efficient to follow up mini grants.
Actions Taken or Planned	Explore what and under which circumstances members are truly willing to invest their time and efforts in Educaid.be - consultation F2F with the members by the Educaid.be coordinator (Recommendation 1). In function of the answers, we can consider this for the next MYP during a SC meeting
Timeline	2025/2026

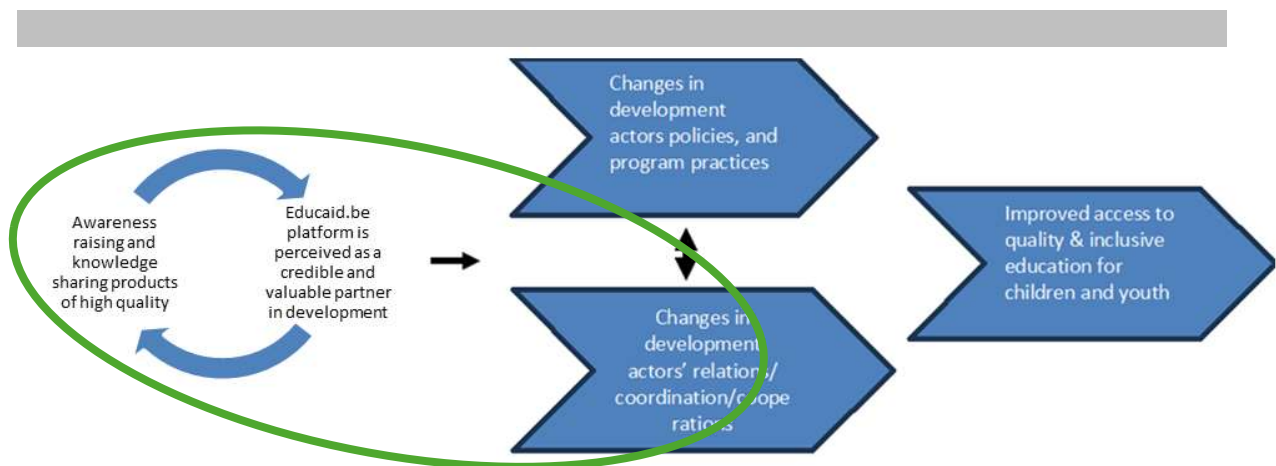
ANNEX: Preliminary analysis of potential future scenario'

In addition to the recommendations, the review team proposed four scenarios aimed at creating more value for Educaid.be's members and optimizing capacity building and synergy between members in Belgium and the Global South. These scenarios, each focusing on a component of the programme's Theory of Change, were presented and discussed during the validation meeting on June 21st with Educaid.be's Steering Committee and other members. This discussion led to an initial analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each scenario. The scenarios, along with this preliminary analysis, will be further explored as part of the formulation of the next DGD programme (2027-2031), a process set to begin in 2025.

1. Status quo scenario

Educaid.be is seen as a key hub for knowledge sharing, inspiration, and networking in the education development sector in Belgium, benefiting from its large membership and close ties with Belgian development authorities. Members appreciate the ability to access Educaid.be's resources without significant time or resource commitments. This satisfaction is reflected in feedback highlighting the value of Educaid.be's conferences and activities, which feature well-chosen speakers and valuable exchanges with actors from the South.

The positive feedback suggests that Educaid.be could continue its current operations, including annual conferences, seminars, and newsletters, allowing members to stay informed and keep networking. However, Educaid.be's influence is mainly on fostering relationships rather than changing member organisations' policies or practices, as these are influenced by members' own priorities and time constraints.



Analysis:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Consistency and Stability: Ensures steady engagement and participation within a very diverse platform.	Limited Impact: Primarily influences relationship-building, not policies or practices.
Low Resource Demand: Requires fewer resources and lower financial investment. This scenario requires no additional resources (HR and funding) so it's very operational.	Stagnation Risk: Lack of innovation might lead to decreased relevance over time. Lack of innovation might lead to decreased motivation over time.
Strong Relationships: Strengthens existing networks with Belgian development authorities.	Missed Opportunities: Underutilized potential for driving significant changes and improvements. Not a lot of influence on the politics and on partner organisations in the partner countries.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Established Reputation: Leverages its reputation as a reliable hub.	Potential decrease of engagement from members (not considered as priority)

2. Problem-solving scenario

Research and experiences from other networks show that members' willingness to invest in cooperation depends on the perceived importance of the expected outcomes and the benefits they might gain. Members are motivated to cooperate when it eases their workload, improves work quality, or enhances access to funding or influence.

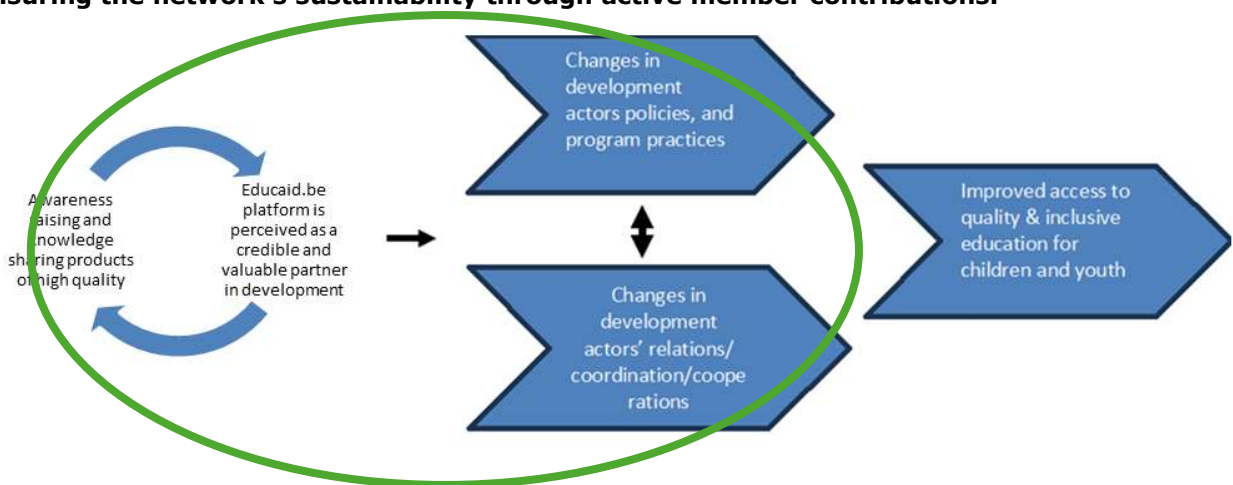
A key informant shared a successful example where Educaid.be members collaborated to create joint strategic frameworks and context analyses for the Belgian Ministry of Development Cooperation, emphasizing the importance of having a concrete goal.

Educaid.be's project groups are intended to address common problems, but reviews indicate most groups mainly share information or brainstorm ideas, with exceptions like the digitalization group and the annual conference group, which have clear goals and deadlines.

To increase effectiveness, working groups need to define common problems, create actionable plans, and have participants become ambassadors for the group's work within their organisations. This approach could help influence member organisations' strategies and policies, especially resonating with feedback from smaller organisations seeking practical tools and methodologies.

The project group on Digitalization for Education found interest in receiving expert advice on integrating digital components into education projects, suggesting a demand for practical solutions.

The 'problem-solving scenario' suggests Educaid.be should continue its current operations but focus on identifying and addressing significant common problems. This approach could revitalize working groups and require members to actively invest in relevant groups, ensuring the network's sustainability through active member contributions.



Analysis:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Targeted Collaboration: Leads to tangible and impactful outcomes by solving specific problems.	Increased Demands: Requires more time, effort, and resources from members
Member Engagement: Increased investment and ownership of initiatives by members.	Dependence on Member Participation: Success relies on active and sustained member participation often related to individual investment. If the person leaves the member organisation, this person must be replaced.
Improved Tools and Methods: Development of practical tools and methodologies for members	Coordination Challenges: Managing multiple project groups with diverse goals is complex

Advantages	Disadvantages
Enhanced Influence: Potential to influence strategies and policies of member organisations	

3. Problem-solving scenario - decentralized

This scenario reflects the second scenario as it visualizes the formation of 'country or regional 'hubs' or country-based project groups for organisational capacity building and learning, piloting of new approaches or for the planning an implementation of joint advocacy initiatives targeting national policy makers.

Piloting and documenting approaches to education and learning – e.g. in the field of digitalization or climate education – would further create an opportunity to use experiences and lessons learnt in evidence-based advocacy, in the country of implementation, regionally – e.g. with the African union – or in Belgium. As in the 'problem solving scenario', this would entail that organisations identify a common problem, issue or purpose to organize their collaboration around.

Analysis:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Local Relevance: Context-specific support and capacity building through country hubs.	Resource Intensive: Requires significant investment in funding, time, and personnel.
Empowerment: Empowers local organisations to lead and advocate for changes.	Complex Coordination: Decentralised operations can lead to coordination and consistency challenges.
Evidence-Based Advocacy: Provides valuable insights for advocacy and policy-making	Variable Outcomes: Success may vary depending on local partners' capacity and commitment
Broader Impact: Potential to influence policies in Belgium and partner countries	Risk of Fragmentation: Efforts could become fragmented without strong central coordination

4. Mission for better education scenario

Educaid.be's large and diverse member base has solidified its reputation as the leading hub for knowledge and inspiration in education for global development. The review highlights the potential to expand Educaid.be into a global hub for research, innovation, learning, and advocacy in international education development, emphasizing the importance of stronger involvement from voices in the Global South.

With existing connections to organisations like UNICEF, to DGD, and various academic and national development practitioners, Educaid.be is well-positioned to influence international education agendas, foster partnerships, and leverage academic research.

Opportunities presented by Educaid.be's size and diversity include:

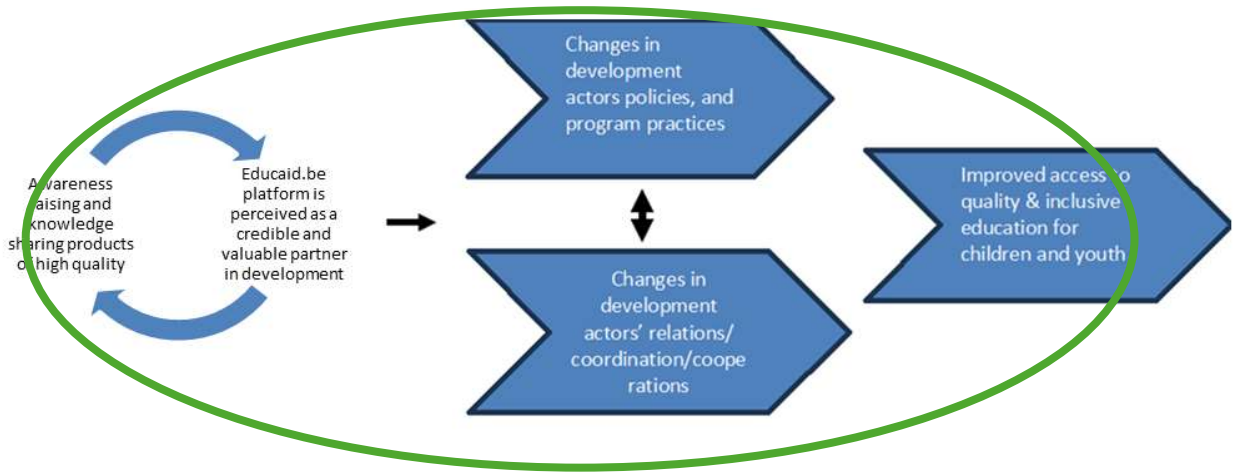
- Building robust networks across sectors and geographies, uniting stakeholders from academia, NGOs, and policy makers.
- Developing and sharing innovative programmes and research to improve education in fragile and development settings.
- Using research findings to advocate for prioritizing education in development, ensuring that the voices of students, teachers, and practitioners are heard by donors and decision-makers.

To achieve this expanded role, Educaid.be would need to invest in fundraising, expand its coordination efforts, and further include youth and Southern members. The coordination would focus on:

- Convening key international actors and participating in significant global discussions.
- Identifying knowledge gaps and facilitating research to address these questions.

- Providing consultancy support and advice based on best practices within the network.

This expansion, while requiring an increased budget, is deemed necessary to extend Educaid.be’s influence beyond member policies and contribute to improved access to quality and inclusive education for children and youth in developing countries.



Analysis:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Global Influence: Potential to become a leading global hub for education development.	High Resource Demand: Requires significant investment in fundraising, staffing, external communication and coordination.
Robust Networks: Strengthens and expands networks across sectors and geographies.	Complex Implementation: Managing a larger and more diverse network can be challenging.
Research and Innovation: Development of cutting-edge programmes and best practices	Sustainability Risks: Increased budgetary requirements pose sustainability risks
Inclusive Advocacy: Ensures diverse perspectives from the Global South and youth	Potential Dilution of Focus: Broadening the scope might dilute focus on specific education issues

5. Analysis of the four scenario's per topic

Following the identified **advantages** and **disadvantages/challenges**, the table below provide a summary analysis of the four scenario's per topic.

Topic	1. Status Quo Scenario	2. Solve the Problem Scenario	3. Solve the Problem Scenario - Decentralised	4. Mission for Better Education Scenario
Consistency and Stability	Ensures steady engagement and participation			
Resource Demand	Requires fewer resources and lower financial investment		Requires significant investment in funding, time, and personnel	Requires significant investment in fundraising, staffing, and coordination
Relationships and Networks	Strengthens existing networks with Belgian development authorities			Strengthens and expands networks across sectors and geographies
Reputation and Influence	Leverages its reputation as a reliable hub	Potential to influence strategies and policies of member organisations	Potential to influence policies in Belgium and partner countries	Potential to become a leading global hub for education development Ensures diverse perspectives from the Global South and youth
Member Engagement and Ownership		Increased investment and ownership of initiatives by members		
Impact and Innovation	Limited impact on policies or practices Lack of innovation might lead to decreased relevance over time Underutilised potential for driving significant changes and improvements	Development of practical tools and methodologies for members Leads to tangible and impactful outcomes by solving specific problems	Provides valuable insights for advocacy and policymaking Context-specific support and capacity building through country hubs Potential to influence policies in Belgium and partner countries	Development of cutting-edge programmes and best practices
				Broadening the scope might dilute focus on specific education issues
Demand and Participation		Requires more time, effort, and resources from members. Success relies on active and sustained member participation		

Topic	1. Status Quo Scenario	2. Solve the Problem Scenario	3. Solve the Problem Scenario - Decentralised	4. Mission for Better Education Scenario
Coordination and Management		Managing multiple project groups with diverse goals is complex	Decentralized operations can lead to coordination and consistency challenges Efforts could become fragmented without strong central coordination	Managing a larger and more diverse network can be challenging
Local Relevance and Empowerment			Empowers local organisations to lead and advocate for changes	
Sustainability				Increased budgetary requirements pose sustainability risks
Global Influence				Potential to become a leading global hub for education development Ensures diverse perspectives from the Global South and youth Strengthens and expands networks across sectors and geographies