



EASG
Education & Academia Stakeholder Group

UN80 REFORM

EDUCATION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND
MULTILATERAL INTEGRITY AT STAKE

2025

The Education and Academia Stakeholder Group (EASG) acknowledges the urgent need for reform within the United Nations system to ensure its continued relevance, effectiveness and credibility in addressing the complex challenges of our time. We appreciate Secretary-General António Guterres' commitment to strengthening the organisation and his recognition that reforms must serve the people and uphold the UN Charter.

However, we are deeply concerned about the current direction and underlying motivations of the UN80 Initiative. While we recognise the importance of improving operational efficiency and resource management, we caution against reforms that compromise core UN mandates, particularly in human rights, non-violence, gender equality and inclusive development. Reforms that are primarily cost-driven risk undermining the essential work that supports the most vulnerable communities and safeguards the rights of future generations.

As a stakeholder group dedicated to the human right to education and the realisation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, we stress that education must be central to any vision for a reformed and future-ready United Nations. Inclusive and quality education is a foundation for sustainable development, peace and human dignity, and goes beyond formal education systems but includes training, public awareness and understanding as a lifelong pursuit.

Education is a universal right, not a privilege. Yet, the proposed mergers of critical human rights offices and agencies and the risk of de-prioritizing education, gender equality and other mechanisms suggest a narrowing of the UN's scope at a time when holistic, cross-sectoral and intersectional responses are most needed.

We are particularly concerned about the lack of transparency and inclusive consultation in the development of the reform agenda. The absence of meaningful engagement with civil society, rights holders and subject-matter experts, including those in the education and academia sectors, undermines the legitimacy and sustainability of the proposed changes.

The EASG urges the United Nations and its Member States to ensure that reforms:

- Protect and strengthen the organisation's human rights architecture, expanding the internal democracy of the UN system. This implies reconfiguring its Security Council to reflect the cultural diversity and multiplicity of interests of member states, overcoming the historical asymmetry of power between countries, and contributing to ensuring processes of non-violent conflict resolution, peace and the fulfilment of human and environmental rights.
- Safeguard gender equality and intersectional approaches across mandates
- Prioritise the role of formal and informal education, peacebuilding, resilience and sustainable development
- Engage stakeholders meaningfully, including academic institutions, educators, students, marginalised sectors and civil society actors, ensuring institutionalised civil society mechanisms are sustained and have a voice in the UN deliberations
- Reinforce, rather than erode, multilateral cooperation and international solidarity.

This reform process must not become an exercise in retrenchment. It must be a transformative effort that renews the UN's commitment to equality, justice and human dignity. We remain open to contributing to reform efforts that uphold the spirit of the UN Charter and the promise of the 2030 Agenda.

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- Ars Socialis, México
- Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education
- Coalición Colombiana por el Derecho a la Educación
- Colectivo Educación para Todas y Todos de Guatemala
- ETIS. Equipo de Trabajo e Investigación Social. Argentina.
- Fundación Colectivo Hombres XX
- Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE)
- Latin America and the Caribbean Group on Education, Academia, Science and Technology (GEACT)
- SEDRA, Chile

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