

Executive Summary

Educate Together undertook a detailed and robust review of its operations during the summer of 2006. This review has been undertaken by the directors, staff, and volunteers of Educate Together and has been assisted by professional consultants. This document is the result of this process.

The plan covers the following areas:

- The context in which we intend to build a network of 400 excellent Educate Together schools
- Our options in addressing this objective
- An examination of each option in detail
- Our operational plans for the next three years.

All business plans are works in progress. If used correctly they drive and are grown by the thinking and work of a dynamic organisation. This one is no exception. We look forward to implementing it with our staff, supporters and partners.

Context

In Ireland today, there is an encouraging environment for the substantial growth of a network of Educate Together Model schools. Our study showed key social factors that can sustain this growth, attract potential partners for our progress and drive positive changes in State policy and planning.

COURAGE AND CONFIDENCE

Our analysis shows that Educate Together should be confident and courageous in advancing its model of education in Ireland. It should build partnerships with other providers and remain focussed on its central mission to ensure that those who seek its model of education can enjoy it in excellent schools.

EDUCATE TOGETHER'S RESOURCES

The plan is based on a careful and detailed analysis of the resources available to Educate Together. The organisation's income has significantly increased over recent years, but this has not kept pace with the cost of providing adequate professional services in the increasingly complex business of running schools.

During the same period, Educate Together has dramatically increased the size of its network. Whilst there have been some improvements, the government has neither delivered on promises of improved provision of new school buildings nor has it brought forward a properly funding system for school opening. This has resulted in escalating costs for new school promoters. Consequently, Educate Together's resources have become over-stretched and with this has emerged a danger to the cohesion of the network as a whole.

GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGE REQUIRED

Our review has clearly shown that Educate Together cannot efficiently 'scale up' without major changes to the State's regulations governing the provision of buildings for new schools and support for the school opening process.



DELIVERING HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES

Further growth of the network can only take place if the Educate Together schools retain high-quality support from their national organisation, especially in their early years and in areas of ethos, curriculum, leadership and community building. The quality of the Educate Together Model or 'brand' must be maintained as the network expands. A major objective of this plan is to deliver enhanced levels of services to Educate Together schools. This will strengthen the network, build its reputation, garner friends and alliances and bring increased resources.

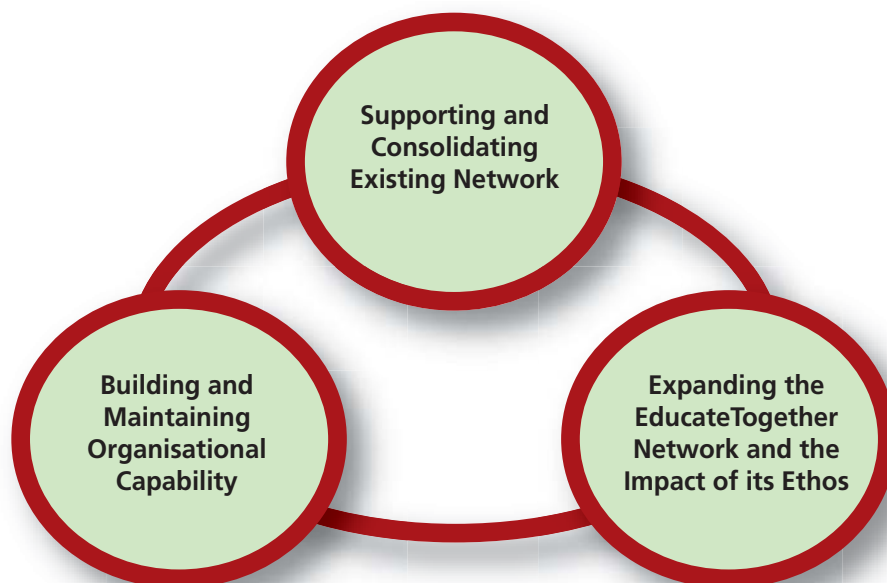
Goals

This plan sets out specific targets for Educate Together in the long, medium and short terms.

Long Term
There will be sufficient Educate Together Model schools to allow everyone in the country to have access to such a school within a 30-minute commute. Current estimates indicate the need for approximately 400 schools. This network will be configured in clusters with enhanced support services and be integrated with complementary pre-school and second-level provision.
10 Years
There will be an Educate Together Model primary school in every urban area with a population greater than 20,000 or with growth of more than 2,500 people since the last census. The Educate Together network will be configured in clusters through which enhanced support services will be delivered. In at least three clusters there will be integration programmes with pre-school and second-level provision.
5 Years
Educate Together schools are of perceived high quality. There will be a major improvement in State policy towards new schools. There will be at least 50 Educate Together primary schools, 1 pilot Educate Together Model second-level school and a feasibility study completed for the establishment of Educate Together Model pre-schools.

The plan sets out three clear areas of focus for the activity of the organisation.

Areas of Focus



Strategic Objectives

Being based on a realistic analysis of Educate Together's current resources, the plan identifies those objectives that can be achieved within current income and fundraising projections for the period 2007-2009. It also identifies a set of exciting priority options that can be achieved if and when additional funding becomes available.

Core Objectives 2007-2009

1.	Develop a full training programme for members of Educate Together school Boards of Management.
2.	Strengthen Educate Together's role in supporting the leadership and management of its schools.
3.	Train all teachers in the Educate Together network in the 'Learn Together' ethical education curriculum.
4.	Work with the Department of Education and Science and other partners to bring forward an efficient system of new primary school opening.
5.	Pursue potential partnerships with other providers with the view to increasing the number of Educate Together Model schools.
6.	Work with the Department of Education and Science and the Colleges of Education to introduce the 'Learn Together' ethical education curriculum as a formal element of all teacher education.
7.	Provide appropriate and high quality administrative, logistical and other support services and functions for the Educate Together organisation.
8.	Develop and implement focused and aligned communication, PR and lobbying strategies to enable the achievement of these objectives.
9.	Develop and implement a robust fundraising strategy so that these objectives can be achieved.

The business planning process showed that these strategic objectives can be achieved within the current human and financial resources of the organisation.

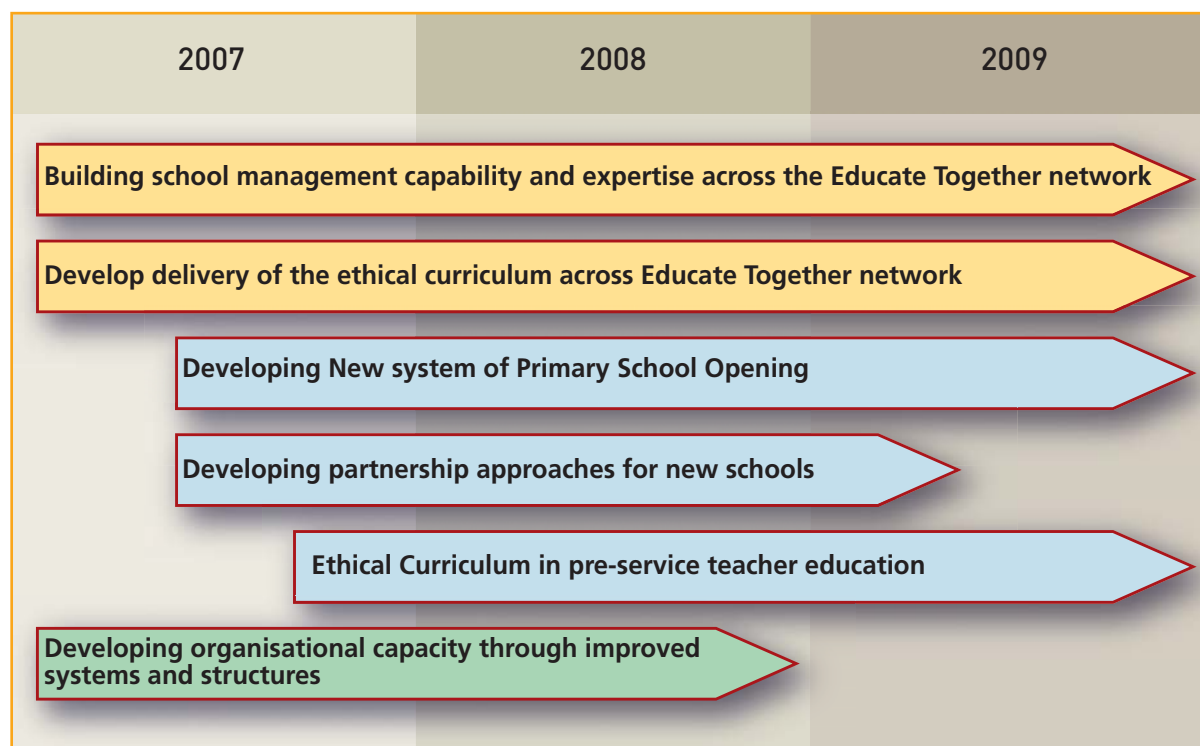
Priority Options

The plan also identifies a set of exciting priority options that can be achieved if and when additional funding becomes available to the organisation. These options are those programmes that will accelerate Educate Together's progress to achieve its goals. We are actively seeking supporters and investors to assist us in developing these programmes.

Programme	Outline Cost
10. Enhanced School Support Programme	€200,000 p.a.
11. Enhanced Ethical Curriculum Development	€150,000 p.a.
12. Ethos Assessment Tool for Schools	€50,000 p.a.
13. Enhanced System of Primary School Opening	€75,000 p.a.
14. Piloting the Educate Together Ethos at Second-level	€350,000 p.a.(5 years)
15. Develop Transformation Model for schools	€10,000 p.a.
16. Membership Promotion (expanding the network)	€10,000 p.a.
17. Pre-school and After-school Facilities	€50,000 p.a.
18. Enhanced Advocacy & Lobbying Package	€50,000 p.a.
19. Enhanced Communications Package	€60,000 p.a.
20. Research Programme	€50,000 p. a.

Operational Plan

A full set of key performance indicators, progress benchmarks and cost estimates are provided for each of the Core Objectives. This will provide a robust framework, which will be used by our board to monitor progress. This information will be made available to our membership and supporters.



Critical Factors for Success

This strategy sets out realistic and attainable targets for Educate Together during the next three years. In order for this strategy to be effectively implemented and to achieve the strategic objectives, a number of critical success factors have been identified:

INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication within the organisation Time and effort (staff and volunteers) Organisational structures Governance and management Evaluation, monitoring and review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External communications Funding and fundraising Stakeholder relationship management

Appeal for Support

The implementation of this plan over the next three years will position Educate Together for major development and growth. Strengthening the Educate Together Model of education and making it widely available throughout Ireland will make a real difference for future generations. This plan will allow us to play our part in ensuring that Ireland's future social space will be one of equality, respect and stimulating engagement of a diverse populace. The staff, Directors and members of Educate Together are committed to this task and we invite you to join us in this exciting work.

Paul Rowe, CEO, Educate Together