



# EDUCATE!



Culture Deck

# Purpose

Transform education in Africa to teach youth to solve poverty for themselves and their communities


# Mission

To develop young leaders and entrepreneurs in Africa

# Culture

How we behave in order to get there

Great teams bring the same entrepreneurial energy to improving their culture as they do to improving their programs and products.

A group of African students in school uniforms walking outdoors. The student in the foreground is smiling broadly and gesturing with his hand. He is wearing a white shirt, a purple tie, and a belt with a star buckle. The background shows other students in similar uniforms walking along a path, with trees and a building visible in the distance.

We want to build the organization that has the most impact helping African education systems prepare youth for life after school.

To do that, we need a culture where high-performing people produce exceptional results and impact.

Educate! has already built best-in-class systems to measure and manage results. By continuing to invest in our culture and people, the organization and impact we want is inevitable.

# Three Aspects of Our Culture

1. Our Cultural Tenets are what we value
  - Social Enterprise, not a traditional NGO
  - Strong Educate! Family, Strong Team

Many organizations have nice sounding value statements displayed on their walls, such as:

**Integrity**  
**Service**  
**Respect**  
**Excellence**

But the *actual* organization values,  
as opposed to the  
*nice-sounding* values,  
are the **behaviors and skills** valued in  
those who get hired,  
rewarded, and promoted.



At Educate!, we particularly value the following five cultural tenets in our team members...

...meaning we hire, promote and do our absolute best to retain people who demonstrate these five

# 1. Youth First

We design and manage the organization to ensure every dollar creates experiences that youth value.

## What Else Does it Mean?

The youth we serve come first. Always. In everything. That means we wake up thinking of ways we can better serve youth and get the highest impact out of every dollar that we spend. It means Educate! doesn't own a single vehicle, because we'd rather take the bus if it means one more student can participate. It means making every decision like the future depends on it — because if we get our way, it does.

## 2. Exceed Expectations

We consistently do more than what is asked to achieve the best results possible.

# What Else Does it Mean?

We assume we can achieve the impossible because we already have, year after year. We want our staff to create their own challenges, ask the toughest questions, and dream scary big!

# 3. Always Learning

We are committed to seeking and applying new knowledge through research, books, and people.

## What Else Does it Mean?

When you work at Educate!, educating yourself is part of your job too. We encourage every team member to find the best book on management, share the latest article on how to coach somebody, bring in your favorite mentor, or meet the researcher advancing the field. We are always thirsty for knowledge and love to share.

## 4. Flexible and Open Minded

We are excited by new responsibilities, listen to others/feedback, and change plans when needed.



# What Else Does it Mean?

We thrive on change — in fact, we're driving it. We are growing every day, so we have to adapt quickly to meet new challenges, and our team keeps up.

# 5. Only Solve a Problem Once

We proactively solve and communicate problems, build systems, and create long-term solutions.

# What Else Does it Mean?

We are allergic to band-aids and short term solutions so we love the person who brings the new system to solve the problem for good, even for problems we haven't recognized yet.

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# Educate! as a Social Enterprise

- We're designed to address one specific problem: the mismatch between education and life after school.
- We're focused long-term on building a scalable, repeatable and cost-effective solution to this problem.
- All decisions are made to maximize our ability to solve this problem over the long-term.
- Stakeholder accountability is critical: Our partners contribute to program costs and provide frequent feedback; student participation is completely voluntary.

# Traditional NGOs and INGOs

- Work to address a variety of social problems
- Work in terms of “projects”
- Donor’s desire to implement “projects” is a major driver of program decision making

**So What Does This Actually  
Mean?**

Educate! does not pursue funding to be “bigger” or design new projects to receive donor funding (e.g. we don’t work with out-of-school youth).

We instead look for like-minded partners with a shared passion and desire to find a scalable and sustainable solution to the mismatch between education and life after school.



Educate! will change and iterate on its solution as quickly and as necessary to provide the best solution possible for youth.

We move FAST!!! The problem we're addressing is huge and urgent. We're driven to develop and scale a solution as quickly as possible. Consequently, Educate! is a **VERY HIGH GROWTH** environment.

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# We are the Educate! Family

We have a shared purpose. We have a shared passion. We take time to get to get to know each other personally, celebrate each other (e.g. Monthly Team Meetings), and support one another during hard times. We appreciate each other whenever possible and know personal relationships underpin great teams.

# We Listen

We value everyone's opinion and encourage a culture of open feedback and dialogue. We listen and build feedback mechanisms (e.g. Internal Advisory Board of Scholars, Mentors, etc.), but in return, we ask for understanding that not all feedback can be acted upon.

# We COLLABORATE!

Big dreams are only achieved by great teams, and we live that every day. We don't say 'it's not my job.' Instead, we willingly help each other. We prioritize the organization and our teams over ourselves.

# With Commitment Comes Freedom & Flexibility

Success at Educate! requires commitment to our purpose and mission. In exchange, we do our best to provide the flexibility and freedom to live your life fully and reach your full potential (e.g. days-in-lieu, graduate degrees).

# We set big goals... and sometimes fall short

We dream big and set ambitious goals. We stretch ourselves. As a result, we sometimes fall short, and that's OK, as long as we take every setback as an opportunity to learn and improve.



# We Grow

We continually grow both as an organization and as individuals. We constantly push ourselves to do more and as a result develop tremendously as individual leaders.



Better Together