



Participation

Social Labs: A Shared Participatory Methodology for Fieldwork

Deliverable D3.2

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Summary of the Project

This document provides information about the design and implementation of social labs in the context of the Analysing and Preventing Extremism via Participation project. Social labs are “social” because they address complex social challenges and “labs” because they offer a real-life environment in which to explore problem based solutions. Social labs have an orientation to action, involving interventions, or so-called “pilot actions”, which need to be developed, tested and applied. The following methodology manual is intended as a guiding document for the implementation of social labs. The manual describes the philosophy and development of the social lab method; the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the social labs; it also provides examples of specific activities that can be implemented across online/offline/hybrid formats. These activities are based on three core phases of the social lab process, namely: discussion and diagnosis; design and implementation; and reflection and feedback.

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List of Abbreviations

Acronym	Description
PARTICIPATION	Analysing and Preventing Extremism via Participation
RiConfigure	RiConfigure was a Horizon2020 project which adopted the ‘quadruple helix’ model of open innovation as a general framework for understanding new constellations in which institutions and actors from all sectors of society cooperate on the creation of innovations with the potential to help address grand societal challenges.
NewHoRRizon	NewHoRRizon was a Horizon2020 project that aimed at further integrating Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) in the research and innovation systems on national and international levels.
RRI	Responsible Research and Innovation
SOCI@LL	SOCI@LL, or The Whole School Social Labs project, was an Erasmus+ Programme which supported school-community cooperation and offered new educational solutions for social inclusion.
RoRI	Responsible Online Research and Innovation
T.x.x	Task within PARTICIPATION
WP	Work Package within PARTICIPATION
DMP	Data Management Plan
FAIR	Findable, Accessible, Inter-operable, and Re-usable

Executive Summary

How the manual was created

In developing a methodological model for social labs within PARTICIPATION, we drew upon existing handbooks, reports and articles published in recent years. In particular, we drew upon the RiConfigure and NewHoRRlzon projects—both Horizon2020 projects—the outcomes of which have included a methodological handbook for social labs dedicated to Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) projects, as well as other detailed reports and journal articles dedicated to experiences with designing and running social labs. The authors of this manual were also social lab facilitators and participants in the NewHoRRlzon project, and as such were able to draw directly on their knowledge and experience of social labs within that project.

The social lab methodology for PARTICIPATION not only builds upon the experiences of these prior projects, but contributes to the discussion regarding the value of the social lab methodology by (1) designing an approach that is suited to the digital environment in which some of the PARTICIPATION labs will be conducted and (2) extending the application of the approach to the field of radicalisation research.

How to use the manual

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The goal of this manual is for social lab managers, facilitators, and host organisations within PARTICIPATION to become more familiar with the methodology of social labs. The manual serves as a guide to the process of creating and maintaining social labs, and has been compiled in as clear and straight-forward a way as possible, providing helpful hints and activity ideas, additional resources, and examples.

The activities within a social lab take place over an extended period of time, across numerous sessions, with a core group of participants. The activities are intended to bring together a diverse group of individuals, who will work together on a complex problem, drawing lessons from the difficulties or obstacles they might encounter along the way. This manual has been designed to help project members understand what social labs are and how they can be used in the context of collaborative projects like PARTICIPATION.

If you have any questions, you can contact:

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We hope you enjoy organising the PARTICIPATION social labs and we are looking forward to hearing about your experiences with this method

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WHAT are social labs?

“We have scientific and technical labs for solving our most difficult scientific and technical challenges. We need social labs to solve our most pressing social challenges” - Zaid Hassan

Labs can be thought about in a variety of ways and can be distinguished in terms of various different classifications. For example, you could think about social labs according to their field (e.g. sustainability or security), sector (e.g. academia or industry), or type (e.g. “media”, “innovation”, “social”, or “living”). You might think about labs in terms of who they serve (e.g. funding agencies, governments, researchers, or citizens). Or, you could think about labs in terms of their particular focus, which could perhaps be more oriented towards methods, or more oriented towards products, or solutions. For example some labs might concentrate on specific contexts (e.g. the city, the region, or the campus), or particular technologies (e.g. digital platforms, virtual reality, or App development).

Social labs, broadly speaking, make social change their main *raison d'être*. Within social labs, social actors address social challenges, by *doing* social innovation.

Social labs are local hubs that help to increase the effectiveness of research & innovation actions by fostering local experimental learning processes. As a result, they are increasingly becoming an important tool in policy innovation and design. The social lab concept was initially introduced by Zaid Hassan in 2014 and in addition to overlapping and intersecting with other types of labs (media/innovation/living), social labs also share a number of commonalities with “action research”, and the pedagogical approach of “problem based learning”. This is perhaps unsurprising given each of these approaches are firmly rooted in the philosophy of pragmatism.

Since 2014 social labs have acquired different meanings in academic and non-academic circles, but fundamentally Hassan's three core characteristics still apply.

Social labs are “social”, “experimental”, and “systemic”

Social labs are social because they address complex social challenges (e.g. poverty; sustainability; ageing; or radicalisation); they are experimental because they offer a real-life environment within which social experiments can be carried out; and they are systemic because of the level on which they aim to solve issues, i.e. they should try to focus on understanding and addressing issues which lie at the root of the problem identified (Hassan 2014).

Social labs share much in common with other participatory methods such as focus groups and stakeholder workshops. What is unique about social labs however, is that they are not expert oriented, but cooperative. They are also focused on action, and therefore do not require any specific prior skills or knowledge, just shared experience(s) and a desire to be involved in change-making.

As Marieke Kieboom describes in **Lab Matters**, social labs are more than just a two-day event, or a week-long residential course. They can better be viewed as “containers” within which social experimentation is conceived, nurtured, and developed. In the most simple sense, social labs take a complex societal problem (like radicalisation), connect people who are affected by this problem in various ways (i.e. adults, children, religious leaders, community leaders, policy makers, etc.), and do so in a safe experimental learning space. Within social labs, participants co-create pilot actions (i.e. a dialogue, exhibition, tour, or game) which they then try out within their relevant contexts (i.e. a school, church, or community centre). The social lab then reflects on what they have learned from the process, with as much emphasis (if not more) being placed on the learning process, as on the efficacy of the pilot action(s) carried out within the lab.

Social labs consist of a team, a process and space(s)

Within a social lab, the **team** is made up of societal actors, a social lab manager and a social lab facilitator. As should be clear by now, there is no social lab without participants and therefore including the right individuals is a key part of facilitating a social lab. Participants should ideally therefore represent diverse types of expertise, experience, and knowledge. This is in order to insure that the process benefits from a diversity of backgrounds and voices.

The **process** of a social lab consists of **three** interdependent, iterative phases:

- ❖ *The first phase is discussion and diagnosis of current practices and existing policies. Essentially, in the first part of the process, the idea is for participants to activate and share any and all prior knowledge that they may have on a subject in order that, as a group, they can identify a clear problem statement, or set of goals for the social lab. In the PARTICIPATION project, the problem should fit within the overall goal of preventing radicalisation and polarisation.*
- ❖ *The next phase is the design and implementation of pilot actions. Having identified a problem statement or goal, participants then co-design pilot actions (social experiments/interventions), which in the case of PARTICIPATION, will be designed to serve as strategies for dealing with radicalisation and polarisation.*
- ❖ *The final phase is reflection and feedback. Having conducted the pilot actions designed in phase two, the participants reflect on the outcomes of these interventions and what can be learned from the overall social lab experience. In the case of PARTICIPATION, this will also entail thinking about how to further embed social inclusion into radicalisation policies & funding activities.*

The **space** in which a social lab takes place is just as important as the team and the process. Spaces give shape to particular types of experience, enabling or constraining the possibilities for action. The look, feel, and functionality of a space, whether physical or virtual, are all distinguishing characteristics of a social lab. Collaborative, flexible, and open spaces should be created which help rather than hinder the social lab process.

The three phases outlined above will take place over the course of the project, across a series of social lab activities. Ideally, the spaces in and through which the social lab activities take place will, like every other part of the process, be co-constructed by the participants. At the same time, social lab managers, facilitators, and host organisations have an important part to play in setting the stage.

Previous experiences with social labs

The general methodological approach of the social lab is far from original. However, there are specific aspects inherent to its implementation that have begun to receive increasing attention from scientists and practitioners. This interest can be attributed to the experimental and social nature of the social lab, which makes it particularly relevant as a *trait d'union* between policy-makers and civil society, as well as the variety of fields in which it has been operationalised.

It is possible to find several examples of investigations and experiments that have addressed the social lab methodology, or adopted it to co-design social processes.

The RiConfigure project, for instance, attempted to integrate theories of mutual and experiential learning with action research in their social lab approach. This enabled them to provide further theoretical grounding for the defining features of social labs like, 'what' constitutes a social lab; 'who' should be included in a social lab, 'how' social labs can best be implemented; and 'what' possible barriers might affect the effective functioning of social labs.

With regards to specific examples of social lab implementation, the toolkit created by the Whole School Social Labs project (SOCL@LL) represents a useful tool for local actors interested in finding effective solutions to social inclusion problems within the education sector.

One of the most significant examples in terms of developing and implementing the social lab methodology has been the NewHoRRizon project. Within the project, 19 social labs addressed specific issues and challenges of 20 thematic areas within the H2020 framework programme over a period of 4 years, for example, ascertaining problems and solutions in the areas of security or society. Lessons and experiences within NewHoRRizon have helped form the basis of the experimental activities in PARTICIPATION.

Additional examples of social labs include:

- ❖ *Sitra/Helsinki Design Lab*
- ❖ *Mind Lab*
- ❖ *The Sustainable Food Lab*
- ❖ *The Sustainability Laboratory*
- ❖ *The Finance Innovation Lab*
- ❖ *The Natural Step-Sustainability Transition Labs*
- ❖ *Parson DESIS Lab*
- ❖ *MARs Solutions Lab*
- ❖ *Living Labs*
- ❖ *Kennisland*
- ❖ *IDEO*
- ❖ *Nesta*
- ❖ *Reos*
- ❖ *Harvard Innovation Labs*
- ❖ *MIT Media Lab*
- ❖ *Stanford Change Labs*

For a map of 100 Social Labs see <http://social-labs.org/mapping-the-landscape-of-labs-a-google-map/>

Core features of social labs

As already discussed, social labs have an active orientation, and are aimed at addressing systemic root issues. They do so through the creation of experiments and interventions that will be developed, tested, and applied in real world settings. Because of the complexity of challenges like radicalisation, the involvement of a wide range of expertise, experience, and knowledge on the subject is necessary, as is active participation. Importantly, social labs should not presume their outcomes. The implementation of a social lab is an ongoing, iterative process which must accommodate unplanned developments, new information, shifting constituencies, and changing contexts. Social labs vary according to the fields of application, the problems specific to any given topic, the group and the context. Social lab participants should be empowered to take ownership of the process, as it develops through multiple iterations, over a period of time. Social labs are intended to provide a space for learning and experimentation aimed at producing changes in a specific ecosystem and potentially in the society within which they operate.¹

Social labs...

- ❖ *Are embedded in the real world*
- ❖ *Address systemic root causes*
- ❖ *Require diverse types of expertise/experience/knowledge*
- ❖ *Require active participation*
- ❖ *Give agency to people as leaders of change and innovation*
- ❖ *Have an iterative, agile approach*
- ❖ *Create new models of relationship and engagement*
- ❖ *Offer spaces for learning and experimentation*

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Social labs as “social experiments”

When we talk about social labs as “social experiments” we are referring to the social lab process being of an experimental nature. Within the social lab, pilot actions are a type of social intervention which are co-designed by the participants and then tested within host organisations. Within PARTICIPATION these host organisations may include the municipalities, schools, or religious centres themselves, or any other representative group or relevant stakeholder. Essentially the host organisations should be capable of providing a safe space where various stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, religious leaders, youth workers, and young people can bring their experiences and interests together in order to tackle existing barriers in the prevention of violent extremism.

The central aim of the social interventions within PARTICIPATION, which we refer to as **pilot actions**, is to overcome existing barriers with regards to the embedding and implementation of social inclusion as a measure to prevent, mitigate and reverse radicalisation.

¹ This list combines features highlighted by Timmermans, Blok, Braun, Wesslink & Nielsen (2020), ‘Social labs as an inclusive methodology to implement and study social change: the case of responsible research and innovation’, and Rodrigues, Cubista & Simonsen (2014), ‘Prototyping our Future: Social Labs for a Sustainable, Regenerative, & Thriving Future’

In this sense pilot actions might involve interventions that change the flow of information; reorganise the patterns of operation; challenge the structure of governance; or broaden the societal actors involved. They may propose the addition of new elements to the existing process or change the course of action in more radical ways.

Crucially, pilot actions are built around the input and consensus of the participants. They are based on a non-coercive facilitation by the host organisation(s)—who provide the practical contexts in which the pilot actions will be carried out.

Pragmatist roots of social labs

The social lab concept is firmly rooted in the philosophy of pragmatism, which broadly suggests that problems should be dealt with in a practical way, rather than defining their resolution merely through scientific theories or abstract principles. In fact, the philosopher John Dewey emphasised that it was exactly in the interaction between experience and thinking that we come to understand and make sense of the world around us.

According to Dewey: experience, thinking, and problem orientation are three central concepts that enable us to make sense of how understanding and learning happens.

We initially establish what things mean to us through our own direct experiences. We interpret and organise those experiences by thinking them over, and drawing on the knowledge of others. As such, our experiences are always culturally embedded, and are shaped in and through the relations and interactions we have with the people around us, within the broader social world. This is why communication and cooperation are an essential part of organising desirable communities and societies. According to the pragmatist tradition, education and learning are lifelong endeavours which should be organised around practical problems in order to obtain a creative oscillation between abstract theoretical thinking and the practical matters of the world. As such, education and learning should be used in order to develop reflective learning skills for dealing with societal problems.²

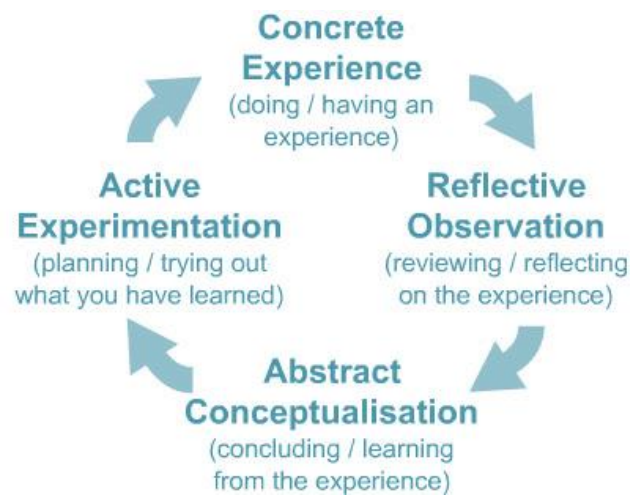
Four steps of experiential learning

In keeping with the pragmatist approach, the social labs within PARTICIPATION will be run according to Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning. Within this approach, learning is understood as a continuous process of transforming experience into knowledge, or *learning by doing*.

In this case, experiential learning involves the design, development, testing, evaluation, and re-design of interventions for addressing radicalisation. Within the theory, there are two dimensions in the learning process. The first involves the way in which we make sense of a situation: do we integrate knowledge from our own concrete experiences, or do we only rely on more abstract conceptualisations? The second, refers to how we transform that knowledge in practice, do we do so through active experimentation, or rather through more passive observation?

² See: Legg & Hookway (2020) "Pragmatism", *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*.

Effective learning happens when we pass through both stages of each dimension, which together form a learning cycle made up of four consecutive phases: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation (Moon, 2004)



Source Moon, 2004

Crucially, this learning cycle is not linear, but rather an ongoing, iterative process that will be different in every single social lab. Throughout the process new participants will arrive and others will depart. Just as the internal space of the lab might change, so too might the external context within which the lab exists. It is important to keep in mind how things like meeting scheduling might affect participant retention, as well as how new members can be integrated along the way. However, there is no one size fits all perfect recipe for a social lab. What is crucial is that the learning cycle remains an important way of grounding how the social lab is designed and facilitated, allowing time and space for participants to analyse and conceptualise a problem from their own concrete experiences, learn what they can take forward from these experiences through discussion with others, and plan actions based upon what they have learned together.

The four phases of the learning cycle are rather abstract, but can be translated into three practical steps which help to make the social lab process more concrete. They are:

- ❖ **Discussion and diagnosis;**
- ❖ **Design and implementation;**
- ❖ **Reflection and feedback.**

These steps can be carried out across different timescales. Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is difficult to prescribe recommendations across the different social labs given the national and regional variation regarding regulations. In collaboration with the PARTICIPATION project leaders and methodology manual team, social lab managers should consider what sort of timeline will work best in their particular context. As an example, steps 1-3 could be conducted within one particular meeting, where each step would then constitute one workshop across the course of an afternoon or full day. Alternatively, steps 1-3 might each constitute a meeting in of itself themselves. Where day 1 focuses on step 1, day 2 on step 2, and so on.

WHY social labs?

*“We need to understand our world views and assumptions,
so we can trust and collaborate for systemic change” – Maria Scordialos*

The ultimate goal of the PARTICIPATION project is to increase awareness of at-risk demographics and to encourage resilience through preventative, countering and de-radicalisation approaches. Developing empowerment and resilience is the general goal of the whole project as well as of every single task and work package. The social labs, focus group discussions, and workshops will generate knowledge of a scientific, as well as practical, value. This will help to increase awareness of innovative ideas that support the prevention of radicalisation; the sorts of difficulties encountered in co-designing new strategies to overcome such challenges; as well as contributing to the resilience of individuals and their communities as well.

PARTICIPATION imagines that social labs can potentially be highly beneficial as an innovative method to address radicalisation. The social labs will ideally increase the quality and quantity of knowledge around radicalisation, as well as its causes, and also point to different ways forward. Social labs also represent a more participatory approach to problem resolution than has formerly been the case in this field. Consequently, PARTICIPATION will test in how far social labs are an effective means of bringing together end-users and practitioners, by directly involving them in the design and implementation of countermeasures.

In order to co-create findings, solutions and tools, within a bottom-up framework, the PARTICIPATION social lab approach has been developed to:

- ❖ **Diagnose** the state of work on radicalisation prevention, collectively and in different contexts;
- ❖ **Create, develop, and test** new agreed pilot actions to promote the uptake and implementation of measures and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate and reverse radicalisation processes/factors by fully recognising the importance of social inclusion in addressing radicalisation phenomena;
- ❖ **Raise awareness** and circulate information, including through (self) assessments, mutual exchanges, and learning;
- ❖ **Demonstrate and promote** the uptake of social labs as a training tool which foster practices of mutual learning and cooperation within radicalisation studies, and beyond.

In total, 15 social labs will be conducted throughout the project, with a focus on three different thematic areas. 5 will concentrate on the municipality dimension (T.3.3), 7 on schools (T.3.4.), and 3 on the analysis and involvement of religious communities (T.3.5.). At the same time, the work in WP6 and WP7 will be strongly integrated with the development of these social labs.

Each social lab will analyse existing experiences and formulate future actions and activities which should be designed to promote the uptake of social inclusion as a key factor to address radicalisation and polarisation specific to the context in which the social lab will be carried out.

Methodologically speaking, the social labs will work in a comparative way in order to capitalise on experiences across the project. With regards to the methodology, despite there being different thematic focuses and different geographical locations across the social labs, there is still much to be learned from

comparing experiences across the project. The social lab methodology manual will therefore initially only be used internally, across the project partners. However, following the implementation of the social labs within PARTICIPATION, the manual will be revised and adapted for publication and distributed to a wider audience. This will be so as to make available what has been learned about the social lab methodology from the experiences across the PARTICIPATION project.

Why a participatory approach to research and innovation?

Calls for greater public engagement within research and innovation began to emerge in response to the changing dynamics between science and society in the 1960s and 1970s. Over time, the “participation explosion”, as it has been called, has come to encompass a variety of concepts, approaches, and schools of thought surrounding public dialogue and deliberation. The ever expanding vocabulary of “engagement” “deliberation” and “inclusion” includes approaches such as “stakeholder engagement”, “citizen juries”, “consensus conferences”, “participatory technology assessment”, “scenario workshops”, and “local community consultation”, to name but a few. The theoretical frameworks which underpin such approaches include: participation, ideas about expertise and knowledge production, and theories of institutional change.

Among the several reasons for adopting participatory processes in the development of research and innovation, scholars like Andy Stirling (2005) have proposed three categories: “the normative (e.g. that dialogue is the right thing to do for reasons of democracy, equity, equality, and justice), the instrumental (e.g. that dialogue provides social intelligence to deliver pre-committed policy objectives, such as those of building trust or of avoiding adverse public reaction) and the substantive (e.g. that policy choices can be co-produced with publics in ways that authentically embody diverse social knowledge, values, and meanings in a substantive manner)” (Sykes & Macnaghten 2013, p. 95, see also Fiorino, 1990).

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Problems and challenges with existing participatory approaches

This participatory-deliberative turn has not been without its challenges. Many have criticised whether rational consensus is ever really possible (Horst, 2007), while others point to an inherent tension between “opening up” discussion through the inclusion of multiple stakeholders and “closing down” in order to be able to move forwards (Stirling, 2008).

Other common issues include: which publics are invited/included, the potential co-option of publics by policy and research institutions, the timing of such exercises (with regard to emerging technologies, i.e. they often occur too late), as well as that they are often used simply as a means of restoring public trust, or as an attempt to mitigate controversy (Parkhill et al., 2013).

More recently, in order for participatory approaches to genuinely foster the co-creation of knowledge, in a bottom up manner, they are increasingly being seen as a form of experimental intervention in their own right (Bucchi and Nereseni, 2008). Within the literature, “experiments” have come to represent both spaces and instruments for participation in public affairs and a growing body of work has begun to explore such activities in terms of their inherently experimental quality (Lezaun, Marres & Teroni, 2016).

WHO is part of a social lab?

“The only way these solutions work is when they’re developed in partnership with the people actually affected by these problems” – Zaid Hassan

Within social labs, the involvement of multiple stakeholders is an integral part of tackling social challenges in different contexts. In order to be successful stakeholder engagement needs to be proactive and part of a broader ongoing dialogue. Within the framework of PARTICIPATION, the creation, fostering and sustainability of social labs will involve different groups of actors across three different contexts (municipalities, schools, and religious communities). In each case, social lab managers will need to identify and involve key actors from different backgrounds, i.e. with different types of expertise, knowledge, or experience on the subject of radicalisation.

Social labs typically include a variety of participants, from social lab managers and facilitators, to researchers and participants with different backgrounds, expertise and interests. In the case of PARTICIPATION, young people will be a key demographic, alongside other stakeholders such as teachers, religious leaders, youth workers, policy makers, police officers, parents etc. The first step in creating the social lab team is thinking about the core team that will be responsible for the social lab throughout the process.

Managers and facilitators

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Managers are effectively the project leaders in charge of the process of the social lab. Managers also help to connect different social labs, and play an important role in relation to the design and implementation of the pilot actions (e.g. providing: background material; information about resources; timelines, and expectations).

Facilitators are responsible for the conduct of the social lab meetings. Facilitators therefore typically have knowledge or expertise of co-creation techniques, they help to shape, support, and motivate the social lab team as they go through the process.

In some cases, both the role of manager and facilitator might be assumed by one person. In any case, both parties are responsible for identifying relevant stakeholders who can contribute to finding solutions and concrete actions to overcome the problems/challenges identified.

Although social lab managers and facilitators need to interact on all tasks, it can be highly beneficial to agree on a distribution of tasks beforehand. Social lab managers usually take care of identifying potential participants according to an overall plan. They have to monitor the whole process and ensure that the activities are implemented in an appropriate manner. The facilitator is usually in charge of arranging logistical aspects (venue, technical equipment) and introducing the different moments of the workshop (topics and discussion). They play an important role in the social lab methodology, in terms of helping to create a safe space and supporting the group with things like agenda setting, leading the discussions, introducing creative tools, etc.

It is not only important to bring together a group of diverse representatives, but also people who can actively participate and contribute. Social labs require a positive and stable commitment. It is crucial that managers and facilitators understand the process well and explain it as clearly as possible to potential participants as well as providing constant motivation (e.g. why they should be involved, what the benefits are of being involved, etc.).

One of the key challenges that managers and facilitators face when enrolling potential participants from different sectors of society, is identifying individuals with relevant backgrounds who also have the willingness to participate in such an experience. It is therefore essential to identify a number of key community representatives who are keen and able to participate actively in the social lab, and who can effectively become members of the core team early on. These individual can then act as mediators with other members of the community. Managers and facilitators should approach people they know and trust, who can then help them to generate interest and commitment from others potential participants within their domain. Given the natural ebb and flow of social lab participants over the lifespan of the project, it is extremely beneficial to have at least one or two members who will remain consistent throughout.

Manager and facilitators need to consider what conditions are required to in order for these stakeholders to step into such a process. For example, by considering what is in it for them/what is their mandate? As for a teacher for instance, becoming a member of a social lab will entail additional time and effort on top of a job which is already quite demanding. It is therefore important to think about how participation can be made attractive for these professionals. What kind of support do they need from their directors for instance? What is it that the organizers of the social lab can do to provide them with the support they need?

Ideally then, the core team will consist of the manager and facilitator of the social lab, as well as a few key participants, and any other administrative or support staff.

Building social labs and involving different stakeholders is not easy. It takes a considerable amount of time and effort. Building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders, and communicating clearly are both crucial when it comes to creating successful collaborations. Previous experience suggests that when establishing a strategy for collaborating with stakeholders, collaborating is more likely to be successful when managers and facilitators: ³

1. **Build** relationships with key stakeholders
2. **Identify** the roles of different stakeholders within the community
3. **Understand** each stakeholder's "language"
4. **Communicate** specific expectations
5. **Demonstrate** the value of stakeholder participation in the process.

With regards to the participation selection process, the list below is an example of a checklist of questions which might be used by managers and facilitators when thinking about the creation of the **core team**.⁴

- ❖ *Who are the people in the community who may be concerned about processes of radicalisation?*
- ❖ *Who else cares and could make a difference?*
- ❖ *What shared understanding/language do participants need to have?*
- ❖ *Who will be able and willing to make this commitment?*

³ This list is adapted from the SOCI@LL manual, p. 8

⁴ These questions are adapted from Rodrigues, et al. (2014).

- ❖ *What sort of diversity of voices need to be included? (Gender, age, ethnic, racial, religious, economic, hierarchical, organisational, etc.?)*

Stakeholders/participants

Once the core team has been identified, they must then recruit the participants who will take part in the social labs. The sorts of stakeholders which will be relevant will vary across the three different contexts of municipalities, schools, and religious communities. It would therefore make sense for each core team to brainstorm together in order to identify potential candidates.

As with the creation of the core team, a basic checklist of questions can be insightful. The questions used in order to identify an adequate range of stakeholders should be informed by relevant literature, where the nature of the problem is understood in its holistic sense. This implies the necessity to include inter and intra-disciplinary perspectives (as much as is possible), and to increase the diversity and inclusiveness of practitioners and end-users. Finally, it is important to evaluate potential motivations of the participants so as to balance highly motivated actors with less motivated ones. A checklist of questions might include:⁵

- ❖ *Who is essential to the process?*
- ❖ *Who is at the centre of the issue?*
- ❖ *Who is at the periphery of the issue?*
- ❖ *Who else could be invited into the conversation?*
- ❖ *What sort of diversity of voices need to be included? (Gender, age, ethnic, racial, religious, economic, hierarchical, organisational, etc.?)*
- ❖ *How inclusive is the social lab design? Are there multiple ways in which people can become involved, and if not, what are the limitations?*

Although there is no fixed number, previous experience suggests that the group should consist of somewhere between 8 and 20 participants—of course these suggestions do not account for when social labs have to be carried out online. Given the multiple different contexts within which the social labs will be carried out, decisions about online/offline/hybrid will have to be made by each social lab team individually, so too will the number of participants they decide to invite.

As already suggested, social lab managers must anticipate that participants may decide to opt out between workshops. It is therefore good to keep recruitment channels open and even consider creating a reserve list. Another strategy is to ask those who are no longer able to attend if other representatives from their organisation might be willing to step in.

Drop-outs are not necessarily a negative event because some participants are not always highly motivated. Changes in composition may also serve to integrate previously absent profiles. Integrations can also be solicited by the participants themselves in order to improve the composition of the social lab.

A crucial aspect in the composition of the social lab is the presence of institutionally relevant actors (e.g. youth workers, teachers, and policy officers). Institutional support (implicit or explicit) is therefore also a crucial factor for the internal and external success of the social lab. Firstly, its presence gives participants the feeling that they can really influence the decision-making process and increases motivation.

⁵ These questions are adapted from Rodrigues, et al. (2014).

Secondly, having a connection to the institutions also increases the chances of external success (e.g. pilot actions).

The core team must focus on how to ensure that the participants reflect as broad and diverse a range of perspectives and experiences as possible. In cases where that might be difficult (e.g. the private sector), the core team can brainstorm over how they might identify representatives of those groups through different channels, e.g. particular organisations or unions.

Recruitment strategies

When it comes to recruiting participants for the social labs, a variety of strategies can be used. These include, but not are limited to:

- ❖ **Direct invitations:** *Mobilising existing networks and contacts in order to invite particular individuals, networks, groups, and organisations.*
- ❖ **Open invitations:** *Using social media, flyers, and other forms of direct engagement to reach new members and encourage them to apply directly*
- ❖ **Direct outreach:** *Asking key community representatives and other leaders and organisations to communicate information about project*
- ❖ **Digital outreach:** *Creating an online application form which can be shared on social media, and via email, which people can share amongst online networks and in other digital spaces*

The advantages of more direct strategies consist of being able to select the appropriate participants that can guarantee an adequate level of diversity. Knowing a participant beforehand can create more support from her/him. However, a friendly participant may be more difficult to criticise if necessary (e.g. in case of insufficient application in the tasks). The advantages of indirect strategies consist of a wider and potentially more sophisticated range of participants. However, motivation may be weaker.

WHERE does a social lab take place?

*“Although temporary, this space is certainly not without obligations. A social lab is not a simulation separate from reality, such as may take place in a technical or medical lab. It is not closed off from the outside world, but it is in fact part of the real world” –
Kennisland Lab Practice*

The social lab process within PARTICIPATION will involve a number of interactive “meetings” or get-togethers. The three phases of (1) discussion and diagnosis, (2) design and implementation, and (3) reflection and feedback, will be carried across and between these meetings.

Given the ongoing global situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, it is highly likely that some of these meetings will have to be conducted online, regardless of how things evolve in the short-term. Ideally, at least one meeting would be organised in a face-to-face environment, but contingency planning will be required, given the precarity of the ongoing situation.

Given the uncertainty surrounding the ongoing situation, it is important to consider various formats through which the social labs might be carried out. Whatever the situation, it is of the utmost important to create a safe space for participation and learning, whether that be online, offline, or in a hybrid format.

As the social labs will also be conducted in a number of different national settings, it is impossible to give standardised advice across the project partners. Social lab managers and facilitators will have to make the decision for offline/online/hybrid settings, in correspondence with the PARTICIPATION project managers and the social lab methodology team (UM) on a case by case basis. The timeline for making that decision should be factored in to the overall schedule of the social lab cycle from the outset. It is important to keep in mind how the different formats enable and constrain different forms of participation in terms of the way they shape the inclusivity, accessibility, and feasibility of the social lab for different stakeholders.

Offline setting

It goes without saying that an offline environment would be the preferred option when it comes to organising a social lab. Especially given the importance of building trust and sharing knowledge and expertise for the successful functioning of the group. Body language and non-verbal clues are an essential part of these sorts of exchanges, and as we have all come to recognise over the past year, despite wonderful platforms and tools being available, exchanges in an online space are just not the same. However, given the uncertainty of the ongoing situation it is impossible to say for certain whether offline meetings will be possible.

Online setting

Organising social labs online during the pandemic will certainly not be without its challenges. So far, experiences with social labs in online settings have been rather limited. This is one point where PARTICIPATION can make a valuable and innovative contribution to the social lab approach. Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, making the most out of the digital tools available will be an essential part of social lab preparation. It is important that project partners across different social labs work together and share best practices as the project evolves.

PARTICIPATION will seek to utilise digital tools that will support the three steps of the social lab process (discussion and diagnosis; design and implementation; reflection and feedback). For example, KLAXOON is a digital tool that offers a shared digital space called a digital board in which different activities can be supported by different predefined templates. These templates can provide supports to design thinking activities such as sharing, classifying, voting, etc. The major challenge is the appropriation of the tool by the animator and the groups so as to choose the most appropriate templates according to the objectives that have been set.

Hybrid setting

The most likely arrangement will be some sort of hybrid format, where the social labs will be carried out in different spaces, both offline and online, in some cases potentially even involving both at once. Over the past year, many of us have gathered experiences in conducting meetings in online/hybrid settings. Numerous blogs, articles, and how-to guides regarding the use of hybrid setting in education, business, and other settings. The most important thing is to build flexibility into the social lab design from the outset, and to be open to experimenting with new/different tools. At the same time, once again, it is important to reflect on the affordances and constraints of different settings and what they might mean for relevant stakeholders in the social labs.

Responsible practices online

As was recently highlighted in an article about the “onlineification” of research during COVID-19, the crisis has, undoubtedly, opened up discussion regarding the use of online tools and the sorts of interactions and collaborations which can be supported by different platforms. According to Braun et al (2020), it is important to reflect on what it means to move what would have ordinarily been offline events (e.g. focus groups and social labs) online. Rather than simply seeing this transition as a pragmatic response to the ongoing situation, it is important to reflect on “What is lost? What is gained, and at what cost?” in the transition to virtual spaces. As social scientists embedded in the RRI community, Braun et al suggest that an RRI-inspired approach to “going online”, draws attention to important questions and issues worthy of consideration, for example, “what does it mean in terms of access and power?”

In thinking about what responsible online research and innovation (RoRI) might look like, Braun et al. suggest applying the dimensions of anticipation, inclusion, reflection and responsiveness (Owen et al.

2013). In preparing and carrying out the virtual social labs within PARTICIPATION, these dimensions should also be kept in mind. Below are some examples of questions and issues which might be considered under each dimension:

- *Anticipation: How accessible and usable are digital tools going to be for social lab participants? What sorts of problems could arise that would prevent participants being able to access the digital environment?*
- *Inclusion: How will online meetings be run? Who will host or be responsible for hosting privileges? Do participants have care responsibilities, or other contextual factors which may affect their participation?*
- *Reflection: How can dialogue, which involves sharing and understanding between participants, be fostered and encouraged when important signals like body language, and moments of exchange, such as small talk over a meal, are lost? How can online sessions be arranged to avoid participants getting fatigued?*
- *Responsiveness: How can the social labs be responsive to issues and questions that arise with regards to anticipation, reflexivity, and inclusion? How can social lab managers and facilitators ensure they are responsive to the social labs needs and concerns?*

Digital tools

PARTICIPATION social labs will be hosted using Microsoft Teams.⁶

An additional tool that will be available for use during the social lab process is KLAXOON.⁷ At least one (optional) training session will be provided for those who would like to make use of/explore this tool in their social lab.

KLAXOON is a virtual workplace to foster collaboration on a common platform. It can be considered as a generic tool for brainstorming, management, meetings but first and foremost live interviews and studies over the internet.

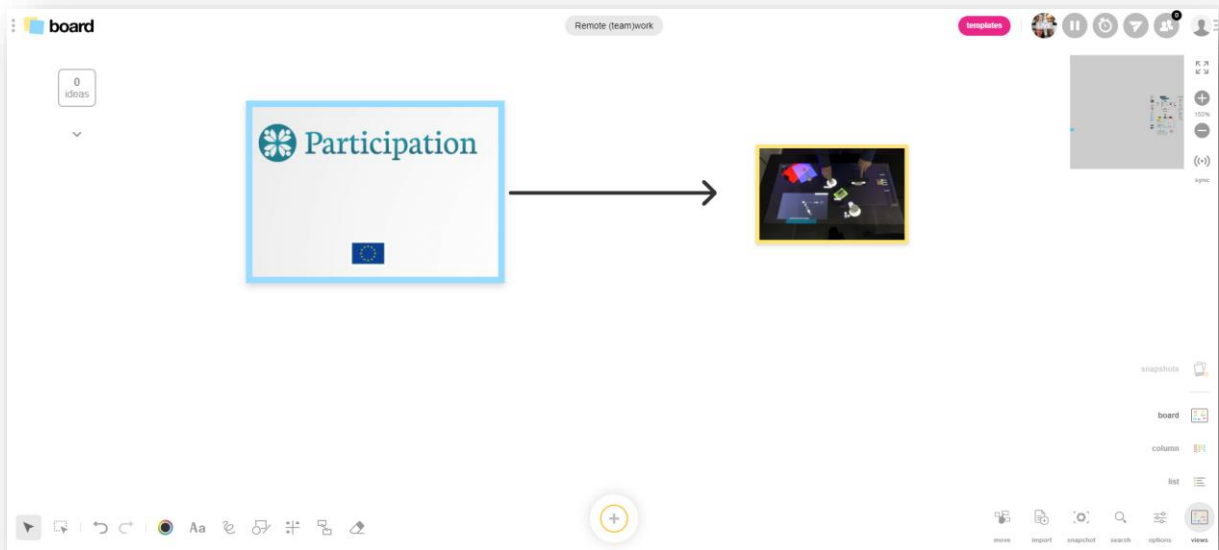
It presents itself as a big white board within which all types of media can be included and arranged; both prior to the meeting and during. The board can extend to a larger size than the screen with the possibility to move around and zoom/expand at will. Interaction with the board can be limited to the host or given to one or all participants.

Attending a KLAXOON meeting does not need any prior installation, a basic internet connection is enough. A simple mail to participants is enough to let them enter the board.

It is simple to use with basic drawing and import functions. From the participant's point of view, the options can be limited to drag and drop ideas/images/concept. Of course, audio and video are also possible with the participants.

⁶ For an introduction to Microsoft Teams, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVMhdugT24A>

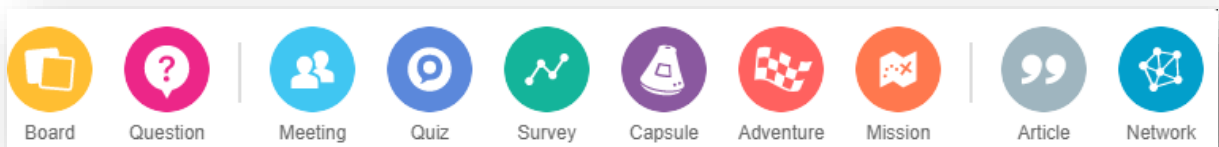
⁷ See <https://klaxoon.com/our-products/klaxoon>



A template can be designed prior to the meeting which would define different zones and concepts on the board. Usually, a rehearsal is recommended to manage each section of the meeting.

However, many templates are available, and the interface is adapted to different kinds of tasks:

Below are the different types of interfaces that are available; the one above is an example of the “board” interface.

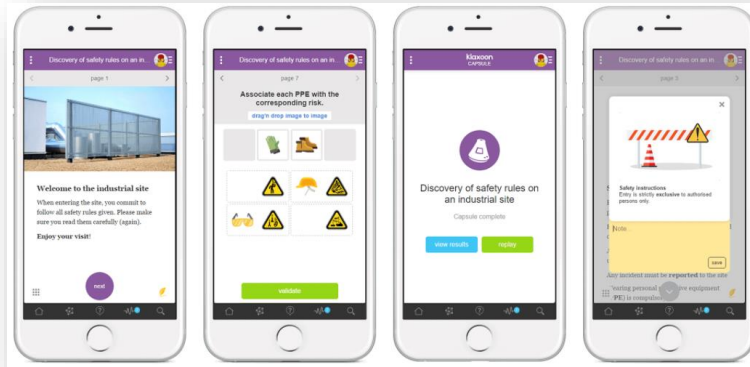


Pre-defined templates include:

- ❖ *Project management*
- ❖ *Strategic analysis tools*
- ❖ *Design thinking*
- ❖ *Brainstorming*
- ❖ *Continuing or initial education*
- ❖ *Organization*
- ❖ *Team meeting*
- ❖ *Continuous improvement*
- ❖ *Agile methods*
- ❖ *Icebreakers*
- ❖ *Team management*

An additional feature is trace and analysis. This allows for up to 20 categories to be defined in order to organise concepts and ideas. The interface can perform a summary of the different classifications, but the main output is the state of the board after the meeting (like in a real-life white board meeting).

Finally, quizzes and surveys can be put together in a “capsule” with up to 300 pages. This also works well with cell-phones.



Pros:

- ❖ *Easy to connect and to use.*
- ❖ *Extremely versatile.*
- ❖ *Great interface*

Cons:

- ❖ *Can be complex to manage for the host.*
- ❖ *Needs a bit of training and rehearsal.*
- ❖ *Privacy policy (to be checked)*

If the decision to carry out some of the meetings of the social lab does have to be taken, it is important to consider what that means for different stakeholders (e.g. in terms of the so-called “digital divide”). It is important to consider issues of access, diversity, and inclusion, all of which may be affected by the differences between the online and offline environment. For example, if young people are considered an important part of these social labs, they are often less inclined to participate online. It is therefore important to provide them with an incentive to come. For example, meetings could be organised around dinner time with pizzas being provided, so as to create a good atmosphere and build trust. Participants will then feel more recognised than during a typical online meeting.

HOW is a social lab run?

“This is still a diverse and emergent field. No two labs are the same and no two participants entirely agree on what a lab is” - Vanessa Timmer

As has been discussed thus far, a social lab is a protected, experimental, learning space which is temporary. It is not an end itself, nor a new player that is there to stay. The lab is generative, in that it produces, and initially sustains new actions and interactions, but the goal is for these to become independent of the lab itself, so that they may continue after the work of the lab is done.

A social lab is not an island. Nor is it a one-off experience. Social labs should be embedded in real world settings, bringing together societal actors who are affected by a social problem, in an ongoing and sustained effort.

Social labs should be welcoming and cooperative spaces, where everyone who participates feels part of the group and can find a space for expression. This can be difficult to create online, especially in a setting where both “experts” and young people participate, where often the “experts” do all the talking and the younger members tend to keep quiet. The manager and facilitator should ensure that the tone is always friendly and if possible jovial, paying attention to the diversity in the group. It is important to try to foster dialogue and maintain a balance in the contributions of the different participants. It is not unusual to find unbalanced interactions in small settings. Actors with different educational competences and different attitudes can generate dynamics of dominance that can endanger the proper functioning of the social lab. For this reason, the manager and facilitator should pay close attention to the emergence of these dynamics. There are various measures that can be adopted to try and prevent particular individuals becoming too dominant. For example, an allocation of speaking time can be provided and communicated to participants in advance.

Should the social lab manager and facilitator identify the emergence of this sort of imbalance, they should also directly call on those who seem to be experiencing difficulties. One strategy that may prove very useful is to select one of the participants (possibly a valued or presumably approachable figure) from the other participants as a moderator. It is important that the person taking on the role of moderator is able to translate concepts appropriately, where the ideas expressed by the participants may have been difficult to understand or too rough. Such a strategy has the double advantage of providing tools to articulate one's own thoughts to those who do not have them, but also of standardising the language, creating a perception of equality and a common sense of belonging.

Though there have been efforts to provide how-to guides and manuals for social labs before, social labs must necessarily always be context dependent. We stress again that there is no one-size fits all model. The real value of labs is their diversity, and the way in which they are co-designed by participants, with regards to a specific problem.

What follows is an example of how the three phases of the social lab methodology could be operationalised in practice, as well as a brief elaboration on each phase, including some examples of activities which might be useful for managers and facilitators to keep in mind. Inspiration for these activities was collected from existing social lab manuals and are adaptable to your contexts. When preparing the sessions feel free to opt for any other activities that will enable you to reach the same goals.

Once again, these three phases are iterative, and take place across the entire social lab process.

Discussion and diagnosis phase

Starting out includes discussing **the current reality of the situation**; and, **diagnosing the key challenge** (or group of challenges) that the lab will try to address. The goal of the first phase is to identify, state and agree on a specific challenge which is necessary in order to provide direction, as well as a shared understanding of what it is that the social lab wants to achieve. Identifying a challenge is crucially important, but can be notoriously difficult; the challenge may become too narrow or too broad.

It is important to put time and effort into this step (and session) of the methodology, especially for the following reasons:

- ❖ **Knowledge Gaps:** *Not all participants in the lab will have the same knowledge, or access to information. The first session is an opportunity for participants to get to know each other, and to begin to establish common ground, to share their knowledge and experience, and to identify common interests.*
- ❖ **Different perspectives and definitions:** *Given that a core characteristic of social labs is their diversity, participants are likely to bring a variety of different experiences and perspectives to the table. Definitions of radicalisation, polarisation, and extremism might differ depending on personal experience and level of expertise. It is therefore important to allow everyone to contribute when identifying the key challenge(s).*
- ❖ **Motivation and commitment:** *Social labs require active participation and commitment. Regardless of how someone comes to be involved in the social lab, the dedication of participants depends on them being motivated and committed to the challenge at hand. The first session is a good opportunity for participants to share their motivations and commitments with each other, as well setting clear expectations both individually, and as a group.*

Activity example 1: Brainstorming

Brainstorming allows the group to gather a broad understanding of what participants consider to be the main drivers of radicalisation and polarisation. It is important that this brainstorming is free and not conditioned by any external factors. It is important to stress to participants that their ideas, know how, and expertise will contribute to co-creating the social lab from the beginning and that this initial brainstorming is a non-judgemental way of enabling all participants to start on the same page. The list below contains a number of questions which could be used to help participants think about and discuss the current situation, as they understand it.⁸

Possible questions when discussing the current situation:

- ❖ *What is really going on now?*
- ❖ *What is needed?*
- ❖ *What kind of solutions/innovations have already been tried?*
- ❖ *What are the challenges/what are the opportunities?*
- ❖ *What resources are available?*

⁸ These questions are adapted from Rodrigues, et al. (2014).

- ❖ *What resources are needed?*

Activity example 2: Framing the Challenge(s)

This activity has been adapted from the SOCI@LL project toolkit. Working out how to frame the key challenge(s) in more depth, means fine-tuning the groups focus so as to have, as an end result, a specific, identified challenge statement that will be the focus of the social lab's activities. This activity can be structured in 5 steps, which allow participants to gradually move from addressing a general challenge to focusing more and more on its specificity.

Step 1: Participants first discuss questions, like those in the list below, as a group.⁹ The goal is for them to begin to identify a number of key themes, or potential challenges which they might like to focus on.

Possible questions when framing the challenge(s):

- ❖ *What is the problematic situation/challenge/opportunity for innovation?*
- ❖ *Who does this involve?*
- ❖ *How can it be appealing for them to join in?*
- ❖ *Does the challenge identify concrete opportunities and barriers?*
- ❖ *What kind of solutions/innovations are required to deal with this challenge?*
- ❖ *Do potential solutions have the potential to endure?*
- ❖ *What is the balance of risk and reward by addressing this challenge?*

Step 2: In pairs/groups, participants discuss their ideas about how these challenges could be met. The facilitator asks participants to write down some of their ideas.

Step 3: Participants are asked to think about being specific: putting some limits to what they can work on in order to approach the challenge in a realistic way (e.g. it's important to have knowledge of and/or information on the area, level of education, target group, understanding of inclusion, etc.).

The pairs/groups write down some of their ideas and explain them using the following format:

We want to focus on

because.....

We want to focus on

because.....

We want to focus on

because.....

Step 4: Participants are asked to look back at the initial framing of the challenge, and try to reframe it, keeping in mind what has been said and covered so far. Participants reframe and write the new challenge statement which is then shared with all the team.

⁹ These questions are adapted from Rodrigues, et al. (2014).

Step 5: Participants then look at their statement and think critically. Does the statement meet the following (SMART) criteria?

The facilitator shares the SMART criteria for setting goals:

- ❖ **Specific** - understandable, unambiguous and leaving no room for loose interpretation,
- ❖ **Measurable** - formulated in such a way that it is possible to quantify the degree of achievement or enable explicit verifiability of its implementation,
- ❖ **Achievable** - goals that are too ambitious undermine faith in the ability to achieve it
- ❖ **Relevant** - an important step forward, representing clear value for those involved
- ❖ **Time-bound** - precisely defined time frame in which it can be achieved.

In pairs/groups, facilitators assess their statement using the SMART criteria. If they are not happy with the challenge statement, they can keep trying!

To conclude all the challenge statements are shared and a consensus should be found by the group to focus on one of the challenge statements. This should be done democratically by the whole team.

Design and implementation phase

This phase is mainly about **designing pilot actions** that can be **implemented in the host organisations**. This involves identifying ideas and concepts from the discussion about challenges, and discussing potential innovative solutions for confronting them. In the context of a social lab, innovation can be thought of as “problem-solving” or a response to the question “what do we need to do, make, or create in order to solve the challenge?”

As already discussed, a pilot action refers to the way in which a possible solution can be tested in an experimental manner, while they are still in the process of being developed. Pilot actions are a crucial part of the social lab approach, they allow groups to test concepts and potential solutions on a small scale, with additional stakeholders, getting feedback that can enrich the original concept. This allows it to be further developed towards a more robust final solution. The design and implementation phase will ideally go through two rounds; where input from the initial implementation of the pilot action will be integrated into its redesign, and from there the pilot action can be tested again.

Within PARTICIPATION, in the context of schools, pilot actions might include the creation of laboratories, exhibitions, or games; while in the context of religious communities a pilot action might involve the design and production of a multi-religious poster condemning violence, or a café-style event/get-together for isolated community members. Within municipalities meanwhile, a pilot action might involve the creation of a short video for policymakers, or an invitation to visit with affected communities.

Once again, the following list contains questions which you can use to think along with as a part of this phase:

- ❖ *What is the purpose of what we are trying to achieve?*
- ❖ *What processes and methods are best suited?*
- ❖ *What flow best serves the process and desired outcomes?*
- ❖ *What methods should be/could be used?*
- ❖ *What are the meeting points on the journey, when do we meet and how do we meet?*
- ❖ *What is the timeline?*

- ❖ *What do we want to achieve in each phase?*
- ❖ *What are the short/mid/long term results we are designing for?*
- ❖ *What results and impact does it make sense to measure and how?*
- ❖ *How can we imagine the current challenge 5, 10, 20+ years in the future?*

The SOCI@LL project toolkit suggests that the design and implementation phase be organised around 5 steps.

1. **Focus:** *Though it is important for the conversation to remain open, it is also important that the groups focus on the challenge statement in order to reach their goals. Briefly re-visiting the challenge and setting the expectations for this phase can help to bring focus to this part of the process.*
2. **Generate:** *For this step, the groups should explore as many diverse ideas as possible, with regards to potential solutions to the problem. Ideas can then be thematised and discussed in terms of how they might translate into pilot actions.*
3. **Design:** *The next step is dedicated to design. Here, the groups can begin to think more specifically about the type of pilot actions they want to organise, it is important to remember that pilot actions are not final solutions, they will be tested and developed over time.*
4. **Evaluate:** *Having identified their preferred pilot actions, the groups should review what they have done so far and, if possible, test the pilot actions, or aspects of them internally with social lab. This can allow for tweaks and adjustments to be made before the pilots are implemented.*
5. **Implement:** *The objective is for the pilot actions to be tested in order that its potential for addressing the challenge and causing impact can be assessed.*

Activity example 1: Refine Ideas and Conceive a Short List

This activity has been adapted from the SOCI@LL project toolkit—this activity relates to step 2: Generate.

Once initial ideas have been generated, possibly during a group brainstorm, this activity can be used to review and assess the ideas and cluster them according to feasibility; anticipating potential constraints or difficulties with regards to the design of pilot actions. In pairs/groups, participants can identify potential constraints or difficulties associated with the different ideas. The facilitator can then list these, asking follow up questions of the pairs/groups. Finally a short list can be drawn up based on discussion with the whole group.

Activity example 2: Design the pilot action

This activity has been adapted from the SOCI@LL project toolkit—this activity relates to step 3: Design.

In order to design the pilot actions, the facilitators can ask participants to brainstorm the necessary features and resources needed for different pilot actions by responding to some key questions. This can be done with the whole group together, or in smaller groups, depending upon how many pilot actions the lab plans to design. For this activity you might want to think about the following.

- ❖ *In which kind of setting would this best take place?*
- ❖ *What are the key features of the pilot action? What do we want to learn?*
- ❖ *Who should be invited to and involved in the pilot action? And how many participants?*
- ❖ *When shall the invitations be sent? And in what format?*
- ❖ *What are the roles of the lab team members during the process? (Observers, experts, advisors...)*
- ❖ *How long shall the pilot action run for?*

- ❖ *How can we motivate participants and turn the piloting into a fun experience?*

Activity example 3: Testing the pilot action

This activity has been adapted from the SOCI@LL project toolkit—this activity relates to step 3: Evaluate.

If applicable, it may be worth internally testing the pilot action, or aspects of it within the social lab team. This can allow the lab team to evaluate and reconsider users' needs and known perspectives, anticipate problems they might face during the testing, and identify improvements or changes to mitigate those problems.

The facilitator can ask a team member to volunteer in presenting the pilot action as if he/she was presenting it in practice. The rest of the team will assume the role of additional participants and identify specific problems or issues that the team might not have thought about.

Together with the group, the facilitator then identifies which aspects arose and a discussion follows (per each aspect). The facilitator lists both the problems, and improvements or changes which emerge to improve the pilot action.

The group decides which suggestions can be implemented easily and saves other improvements on a reserve list, so that they can be incorporated at a later stage, if it is deemed necessary.

Reflection and feedback phase

The process of reflecting and feeding back, like all other phases in the social lab methodology, should be a collective one. The aim of this step is for the entire social lab team to harvest the different results of the pilot actions, but also to learn from all of the experiences generated during the social lab process.

In the reflecting and feeding back phase, the different pilot actions can be tweaked and improved, or discarded, but in either case, the learnings from the process will feed into a thinking tool that can be beneficial for practitioners and policy-makers to reflect on possible measures to help addressing processes and social dynamics leading to radicalisation. More specifically, the tool will be composed of indications about other practitioners; social dynamics facilitating exclusion and marginalisation in specific contexts; as well as signals potentially leading to radicalisation and methods to address these phenomena. Although reflecting and feeding back is clearly important in terms of ascertaining the outcomes of the social lab process, reflecting and feeding back should also be used to help the social lab, at various stages, with regards to assessing what is going well, and what isn't, what (if anything) needs to be changed, and how and why.

Given the constant need for reflection and feeding back, the three examples provided below, outline activities that can be used at different stages throughout the social lab process. Activity one is geared towards reflection on the pilot actions, which involves reflecting on the initial pilot action implementation, as well as the re-design and subsequent changes. Activity two can be used throughout the social lab process, after particular activities or meeting days—whatever facilitators feel is appropriate. Activity three would likely only take place during the final meeting.

Activity example 1: Reporting on pilot actions

Using questions like those listed below, initial reporting and feedback on the pilot actions can follow a similar format to the brainstorming activity outlined earlier. The aim of this activity is to reflect on what has been achieved so far, before then considering what needs to be re-designed or refined as the lab evolves.

Possible questions when thinking about reflection and feedback:

- ❖ *What has been achieved so far?*
- ❖ *What has worked well?*
- ❖ *What has not worked well?*
- ❖ *How could the pilot action be improved?*
- ❖ *Shall we modify the pilot action, if so, how?*
- ❖ *Shall we create/run/try new pilots?*
- ❖ *Are all of the partners still on board?*
- ❖ *Shall we invite new partners?*
- ❖ *Can we articulate a new definition of the refined strategy?*

Activity example 2: Session Evaluation

This activity has been adapted from the SOCI@LL project toolkit.

It is important to allow for regular moments of reflection, particularly with regards to whatever activities are carried out within the social lab. The moments allows both facilitators and participants to establish what they have learned. For this purpose, at the end of each day, or meeting, facilitators could ask participants to walk around the room (or join fellow participants in a digital breakout room) and find two people to talk to and answer 1 question.

After 5 minutes, ask them to start walking again (or mix up the breakout rooms) and repeat the procedure, asking different questions each time.

Listen to what the groups are saying and note down the answers for future facilitators

Evaluation questions that participants can use:







- ❖ *What is my take-away from this session?*
- ❖ *What did I learn?*
- ❖ *What I am most proud of?*
- ❖ *What is my concern for the future sessions?*
- ❖ *What would I change to make the social lab a better and more fruitful experience?*

Activity example 3: Outcome Harvest

This activity has been adapted from the SOCI@LL project toolkit, and builds on the notion of “outcome harvesting” (Wilson-Grau, 2015).

Although the concrete results of social labs will probably remain uncertain, they can nonetheless potentially generate a set of multiple learning outcomes (capitals) which can be collected and utilised within PARTICIPATION.

An outcome harvest can be utilised in order to get a better understanding of what types of learning outcomes (capitals) the social labs have generated.

Multiple Learning Outcomes (capitals)					
Physical/digital	Human	Social	Intellectual	Economic	Natural
 new services or infrastructure	 new capacities and skills	 increased trust and collaboration	 new knowledge and awareness	 new services and financial opportunities	 new ecosystems and services

Source SOCI@LL project toolkit

Step 1: The first step is to design the “outcome harvest”. In this step, the social lab managers and facilitators can develop questions that guide the process. Based on these questions, the social lab team can decide what information needs to be collected, and from whom.

This information could include:

The result: who has the social lab influenced in terms of change, and what have they changed? This can be based, as a starting point, on the multiple learning outcomes (capitals). When and where was it changed? What is being done differently that is significant?

The contribution(s): How (if at all) did the social lab team contribute to this change? What did they do that influenced the change?

Step 2: The next step is to gather data and draft the descriptions of the results, which will help the social lab team share what happened in order to learn from these experiences and thereby enable effective change. This involves reviewing existing documentation (such as proposals, reports, evaluations, interviews etc.). This review process can provide evidence of potential outcomes to which the social lab team may have contributed. Primary data can also be gathered during this stage from different sources, including the social lab team, and other relevant stakeholders.

Step 3: The final step is to learn from what has been collected, and to discuss and decide what to do next. During this step the social lab team holds discussions with the host organisations and other societal actors, if appropriate, based on the analysis and interpretation of the outcomes.

For this final step, it will be necessary for the social lab managers to prepare the findings which emerged during the previous steps. These presentations can be shared in a number of ways such as illustrating the various tools used in each step (e.g. filled in review template, draft description, interview results, multiple learning outcomes, etc.) or gathering all these results in a summary (document, PowerPoint, etc.). The Social Lab team may then suggest specific courses of action, based on the findings.

Social lab contexts within PARTICIPATION

Having explained how social labs should be understood and operationalised broadly across PARTICIPATION, and provided an example of how the three phases of the social labs might be organised, this section provides a brief overview of the three different contexts within which the social labs will be carried out: 5 for analysing municipality dimension (T.3.3), 7 in the schools (T.3.4.), 3 for analysing and involving religion communities (T.3.5). As these three fields concern categories with specific peculiarities, the general indications about the social lab methodology have to be complemented with other suggestions aimed at ensuring the free expression of autonomous actors.

Municipalities

T3.3: Understanding local resilience against radicalisation and polarisation via a participatory approach

Municipalities and local authorities are the forefront in preventing and facing radicalisation. A network of five hubs will be created in Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Greece, representing different side of Europe. Hubs will act at a local level as connecting points between partners and relevant stakeholders, as well as incubators of action-research activities, in order to capitalise good practices and/or challenging approaches and solutions

For this aim, social labs and focus groups will involve:

- ❖ *Relevant local stakeholders to examine and discuss the ways to counteract radicalisation from an urban/suburban perspective (Italy, Poland, Romania and Greece).*
- ❖ *NGOs and associations working in the field of inclusion/integration with the purpose of investigating the solidarity practices milieu and arriving at innovative practices to improve social cohesion.*
- ❖ *Municipality political representatives (or delegates to specific issues related to radicalisation) security and control authorities.*

The social labs and focus groups within T3.3 will analyse local responses to radicalisation risk, and try to build an understanding of the micro-level policy responses to polarisation and radicalisation.

Schools

T3.4: Prevention via education: case studies via a participatory approach

This task will consider schools as one of the key institutional actors in preventing radicalisation and polarisation; school engagement will be based on the relational triangle teachers-students-parents. The research activities in the educational environment will focus in particular on the way polarising views enter and spread into the school relational context, with special attention to the understanding of the main contentious issues teachers face in the classroom on this topic.

To do this, fieldwork will be conducted in 7 countries: Belgium, Italy, France, Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Greece relying on the EFD's network in Belgium and in Italy, the Threats Observatory for Young People Network in Poland, which through its network is able to reach several schools located not only in the regional context but throughout the entire country.

For this aim, social labs and focus groups will involve:

- ❖ *Mapping of specific projects on polarisation or radicalisation implemented in schools;*
- ❖ *Framing the main challenges and controversial issues faced by teachers in the classroom;*
- ❖ *Collecting good and bad practices on how to deal with claims and conflicts, and so on in the classroom.*

Religious Communities

T3.5: Religious communities: analysing and discussing religious polarisation and extremism

The social labs will provide an operative space for engaging religious communities at a local level to gather further evidence on the relation between religiously-motivated polarisation and exclusion. Particular attention will be devoted to the interconnection between societal and socio-economic factors and religious drivers of polarisation and extremism. The research activities will also explore the role of the religious communities in building up the religious identity of the subject.

The fieldwork will be conducted in 3 countries - Italy, Belgium and Netherlands - relying on EFD's network in Belgium and local inter-religious dialogue networks in Italy (UNICT).

For this aim, social labs and focus groups will involve:

- ❖ *Narrative interviews with local religious leaders;*
- ❖ *Discussions around table tops with religious community representatives on possible risk of polarization in local context;*
- ❖ *Working group with inter-religious dialogue networks, in order to elaborate a set of guidelines on how to prevent religious radicalisation and to promote inter-religious dialogue at local level.*

Outcomes of the social labs

T3.7: Identifying the lesson learnt and formulating recommendations via focus group discussions involving experts, stakeholders and young people

All the results obtained through the previous steps will be systematized and discussed in thematic focus groups with relevant societal actors, even young people, to identify and problematize lessons learnt and best practices coming from fieldwork. The fieldwork will be conducted in Italy (all the partners), France,

Portugal, Poland, Netherlands, Greece, and Romania. CEA will develop digital applications such as tabletop.

Starting from participatory activity, partners will formulate policy recommendations at local, regional, national and European level. In order to fully integrate into the workflow of this task, in the final report, based on the results achieved also in WP4 (communication) and WP5 (education), specific recommendations will be formulated to contrast polarization, extremism and radicalisation.

Ethics and data management

Within PARTICIPATION

Social lab managers and facilitators should work closely together with T1.6, who are responsible for managing ethics requirements and data management. Within T1.6, the coordinator together with all of the partners will develop a data management plan (DMP) for the project. The consortium will be guided in its approach by the FAIR Guiding Principles (Findable, Accessible, Inter-operable, Re-usable) for scientific data management. The participation of different types of stakeholder in the project's events means that personal data, or data that could identify participating stakeholders, will be collected by members of the consortium. To maintain the trust of participating stakeholders and to protect their identity, partners will ensure that the personal data collected is anonymised as far as possible. The task leaders will include an update on the project's data management plan in the project interim and final reviews.

UM will also consult with all partners to develop an internal ethics protocol to ensure consortium partners meet adequate ethical standards and take adequate data protection measures. All project partners will be expected to review the protocol and sign a letter of intent for adhering to the protocol throughout the project. UM will monitor the implementation of the ethical protocol and report back during the interim and final reviews. UM will inform the consortium of the societal aspects potentially raised by the activities of the project and will ensure that these are thoroughly integrated. It will make sure that all partners respect the highest standards of research integrity — as set out, for instance, in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. This implies compliance with the following essential principles: honesty; reliability; objectivity; impartiality; open communication; duty of care; fairness; and responsibility for future science generations. UM together with all partners will ensure that the highest confidentiality is respected if sensitive aspects will be raised by the project activities.

A consent form template for participants in the PARTICIPATION project is available in the shared digital workspace.

Within social labs

Working in a social lab means working with people, which by definition means dealing with emotions, values and conflicts. For this reason labs may well give rise to ethical tensions. Especially given the complexity and sensitivity involved when talking about problems like radicalisation. For this reason, it is important to discuss ethics within the social labs. It is important to create a safe and secure space so that people feel open to share and collaborate fully.

Reflecting on ethics should not be seen as a box to be ticked, or a one off activity, it should be an ongoing discussion throughout the social lab process.

It is important to highlight early on, some elements that contribute to a healthy collaboration. These could be discussed in the first meeting, and then re-visited as and when it is deemed necessary:

- ❖ **The goals of the group**—goals should be clearly defined and agreed upon from the outset, though there should also be flexibility for the goals to evolve and develop
- ❖ **The roles of team members**—it is worth considering whether people want to adopt roles as leaders, or moderators and when, why, and how these roles might change
- ❖ **The communication of information**—communication should be open and information should be shared freely within the lab, it is also important to communicate initially about how this will happen and later whether it is being done effectively
- ❖ **Freedom of expression**—everyone's ideas and contributions should be welcomed and valorised, without judgment or criticism, reflection on in how far participants feel this to be the case should be carried out regularly.

Dealing with ethical issues, as they arise, also offers opportunities for learning across the three different contexts. Lab managers, facilitators, and host organisations should keep in close contact with each other as and when issues do arise, in order to learn from each other's experiences and share effective strategies. An important question for managers and facilitators to consider, is where does the responsibility of the lab begin and end?

The Kennisland social lab identified five points of departure with regards to lab ethics which might be useful to keep in mind, these include:

- ❖ **Follow the “do no harm” principle:** the safety and interests of participants should always be paramount.
- ❖ **Always give something back to the area:** through public initiatives, show that you are not simply the latest of many researchers or council officials who arrives with the best intentions and then leaves again.
- ❖ **Focus on action:** don't just do research, proceed as quickly as possible to action.
- ❖ **Create public events:** keep checking findings with end users at collective moments so that energy, and also tension, has an outlet.
- ❖ **With each step, consider long-term perspectives:** the end goal of a lab is to create sustainability and to secure and protect progress. As such, emphasise the temporary nature of the lab so that dependency does not creep in.

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