



EuroCivic Lab

**Strengthening European
Identity and Citizenship
through SDGs, Social
Activism and Living Labs
Methodology in School
Education**



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the European Union**

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Module 6

**European Identity &
Living Lab Methodology**



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Welcome to the lab of real life!

In this module you'll learn a different kind of “method”:
Living Labs.

A Living Lab is a “lab” you call your school.

Like a physics lab — but instead of test tubes,
you run experiments to make daily school life better.



What you'll get out of this module

- You'll learn the steps of a Living Lab: discover • prototype • pilot • reflect • repeat.
- You'll understand how Living Labs are “science” in real life.
- You'll see how European values (solidarity, equality, democracy) come alive in your actions.
- You'll connect your project to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- You'll feel the “I can do this!” — the first step of an active citizen.



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What exactly IS a Living Lab?

A Living Lab = solving real problems with the people who actually live them.

You don't design solutions from afar.

You design them where life happens: the yard, the cafeteria, the corridor.

One simple loop you repeat:

Discover → Prototype → Pilot → Reflect → Repeat.

Each round is small and safe. Each round teaches you something for the next one.



Why bother?

Because a Living Lab is 3 things at once:

- **STUDENT-DRIVEN** — You drive it, not the teacher.
- **PLAYFUL** — You learn by trying, experimenting, having fun.
- **LOW-COST** — No expensive gear. Just your imagination and a team.

Why just listen to lectures when you could be building solutions?

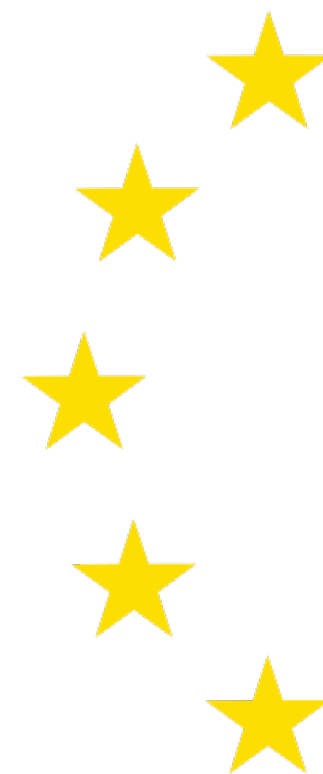




Example: “the yard is boring”

How a Living Lab would solve this:

- ✓ Observe — Watch when and how the yard is used.
- ✓ Discuss — Ask classmates & teachers: “what would you change?”
- ✓ Propose — Brainstorm: benches, paint, plants in recycled containers...
- ✓ Prototype — Set up a 1-week “pop-up” seating area with borrowed chairs.
- ✓ Act — Invite students to use it. Collect feedback.
- ✓ Reflect — How many used it? Did they like it?
- ✓ Decide — Keep what worked. Plan the next small step.
- ✓ **Repeat!**





Key idea #1: repetition IS the method

Just like learning an instrument or a sport:
through repetition.

In a Living Lab, you don't have to nail it on the first try.

Every round is a chance to learn something new — and do it better.

The pressure “be perfect from day one” = the surest recipe for never starting.



Key idea #2: there is no “failure”

In a Living Lab we don't say “it failed”.

We say: “new data → we need creativity!”

Creativity = another word for problem-solving.

When something doesn't work, you now know something you didn't before.

That's fuel for the next, better round.

You don't lose — you learn!



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Living Lab = the scientific method

It's not a game. It's SCIENCE.

The steps are the same as a scientist's in the lab:

- Observe a phenomenon → make a hypothesis.
- Design an experiment (small!).
- Measure what happens.
- Reflect: did it work? why?
- Do it again, better.



The only difference: your “lab” is the school!





Phase 1 — Discovery: what is needed?

Before suggesting solutions, you really understand the problem.

Do short interviews and simple surveys:

- “When is the problem at its worst?”
- “Have you tried something already?”
- “What would a real improvement look like for you?”

Good ideas don't come from nowhere.

They come from listening carefully.





Phase 2 — Prototyping: the first small test

Prototype = the smallest, cheapest version of your idea.

Examples:

- A paper sign with new hallway rules.
- A cardboard mock-up of a new bin label.
- A small change in the break schedule.

Golden rule:

if you can build it inside one class period — it's the right size.

The goal is NOT perfection. The goal is to learn fast.





Phase 3 — Piloting: the real test

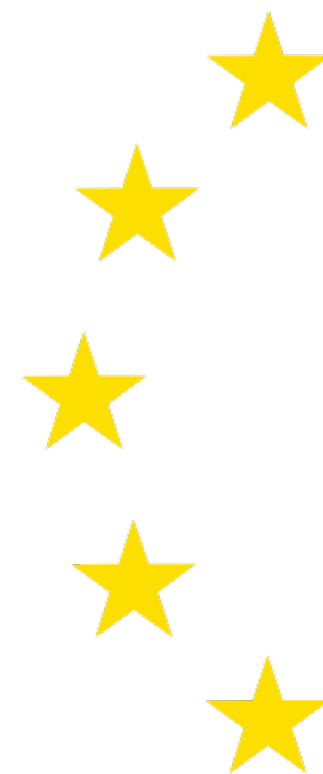
Choose ONE clear measure of success:

- How many lunch trays were wasted?
- How noisy is the cafeteria at break?
- How many students visit the library?

Pilot small:

in ONE class, ONE corner of the canteen, for 1–2 weeks.

Didn't work? Not a failure — useful data for the next round.



Phase 4 — Sustaining: keeping the project alive

Sustainability = your project lives on after the buzz fades.

Plan from day one:

- Who does what? (e.g. who resets the posters each morning?)
- When does it happen? (e.g. every Friday last period?)
- Which SDG does it connect to?

Link your project to an SDG (e.g. SDG 3, 11, 12) —

you fit into a bigger map and your project gets a better chance to last.



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Phase 5 — Repeating: again and again

Iteration = “repeat and improve”.

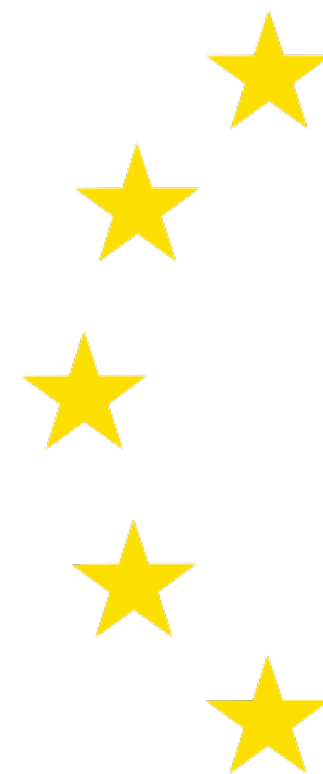
Always better than guessing.

In every round:

- Try again, with one small change.
- Keep notes: what worked, what didn't.
- Discuss with your team what to do differently.

In Europe, the ENoLL network connects schools & communities sharing this kind of experience.

You're never alone in the experiment.



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Living Lab ethics — 3 non-negotiables

Even in tiny pilot projects, these 3 are non-negotiable:

- **CONSENT** — Everyone who takes part agrees to it.
- **PRIVACY** — We don't publicly share data that points to a person.
- **INCLUSION** — We think about who might be left out — and invite them in.



Living Lab = European identity in action

When you take part in a Living Lab, you live European values in practice:

- **BELONGING** — “this is OUR school”.
- **SOLIDARITY** — “we help whoever needs it”.
- **DEMOCRACY** — “we decide fairly and keep our promises”.

You don’t need to do anything “extra” to be an active European citizen.

You just need to keep building small improvements, with respect.



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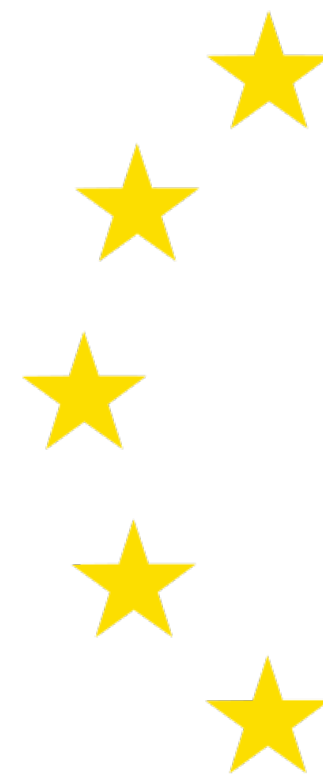


Unity in diversity — your superpower

A Living Lab works best when different people take part.

Diversity is not just nationality or gender. It's also:

- Students from different grades.
- Students + teachers.
- School + neighbourhood.
- Rotating roles within your own team.



Each person brings an idea, a piece of knowledge, or a skill that was missing.



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Types of Living Lab projects

Across European schools, we see 3 main patterns:

- **ECO-SCHOOL — Saving energy, better recycling, less waste.**

Links to SDG 7 & 12.

- **SOCIAL JUSTICE — Accessibility, peer-mentoring, “quiet rooms”, wellbeing.**

Links to SDG 4 & 10.

- **COMMUNITY-BRIDGING — Neighbourhood clean-ups, safe routes,
partnerships with the library or town hall.**

Links to SDG 11 & 17.





Your Do's

- **CO-CREATE** goals with the people involved.
- **START SMALL** — one class, one corridor, one week.
- **MEASURE ONE** thing and show it (poster, dashboard).
- **SHARE** the results and the next steps.
- **PLAN** maintenance: who refills, who tidies, how often?





Your Don'ts



- **Don't skip consent or privacy. Always say what you collect and ask permission.**
- **Don't design something you can't sustain. Needs money or adult hours? Scale down.**
- **Don't assume the first idea is the best. Treat feedback as fuel — not criticism.**
- **Don't forget inclusion. Who benefits first? Who might be left out?**



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Your glossary

Iteration — Repeat with improvement: try, learn, adjust, try again.

Metric — A simple measure of success (count, survey, before/after photo).

Living Lab — Co-designing solutions with the people who live the problem, in cycles.

Prototype — A quick, cheap “first version” of an idea.

Pilot — A small, short test with ONE measure of success.

ENoLL — The European Network of Living Labs.



Quick recap — 5 key ideas

1. Living Lab = science... for making your school better.
2. Loop: Discover → Prototype → Pilot → Reflect → Repeat.
3. Start small. Measure ONE thing. Repeat with improvements.
4. 3 ethics rules: consent • privacy • inclusion.
5. Every project = European identity + one SDG.

Ready to open your own lab of real life?



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