



SOCI@LL

whole school social labs



Toolkit for leaders

SOCI@LL Week Planning Guide

<http://wholeschoolsociallabs.eu>

1. Introduction to the SOCI@LL planning guide

Welcome to the SOCI@LL Week planning guide – a flexible but robust programme that reflects the commitment of the school to build a more inclusive and democratic school. This section of our toolkit has been developed to help you create and participate in a “SOCI@LL Week” Program in your school.

How should you organise the “SOCI@LL Week” in your school? What activities work best for your school community? How can you engage and excite students? What about civic groups? When entering the process all these questions buzz in your head. In this section, we help you to discover the information, insights and inspiration needed to lead to a successful “SOCI@LL Week” within your school.

We will guide you **STEP BY STEP** in organising, implementing and participating in a “SOCI@LL Week” Programme in order to support educators and students to learn, think and take action on culturally-sensitive and inclusive systems inside and around schools.

Questions and answers about the SOCI@LL week

What is the concept of the SOCI@LL Week?

“SOCI@LL Week” refers to a set of events led and organised by the school in collaboration with school educators and students within and among school to express their ideas, opinions and proposals concerning relevant topics with an inclusive and participatory process. These activities boost students’ skills, conscious, creativity and participation within and outside schools towards a more inclusive and equal society.

Look the SOCI@LL values map!



Figure 1 – SOCI@LL values map.

Does it really need to last THE WHOLE WEEK?

Of course we don't mean school should stop regular teaching and learning activities for a week in order to run SOCI@LL Week for the whole school. **However, the minimum requirement for SOCI@LL Week length is 3 days.**

Keep in mind, many of the activities can be incorporated in the school curriculum (for example, a teacher can organize a workshop during their lesson) or run during the longer school breaks in the school hall. It is important, however, that members of the school community feel they are participating in a bigger, whole-school program. For this reason we believe it is necessary to organize some events which bring together the whole school community. We encourage you to think how can you fit SOCI@LL @ll into your school traditions - if you are organizing a yearly Open Day or school picnic, try approaching it as an opportunity to make it more inclusive and build SOCI@LL @ll Week program around it!

Is there a strict program for SOCI@LL Week or is it up to us as a school?

In order to give a clearer idea about which topics should be included in the SOCI@LL Week and which methods could embody the spirit of inclusivity, we give **a framework related to each of the potential goals of the SOCI@LL Week in the next part of the toolkit.** We also give references to specific workshops and activities teachers together with students can carry out in order to gain a better understanding of different aspects of diversity and equality. However, to be truly inclusive, it is important to base the program on the actual potentials and needs of your school community. You can refer to the program on the next page.

The minimum requirements regarding the program are:

- Incorporating all of the Pillars in the Program
- Incorporating at least 2 activities from each Pillar. Activities are described in the SOCI@LL Week Resources

How is SOCI@LL Week different from many events school participate in like Tolerance Day?

We know school often already do great things when it comes to celebrating inclusion on many occasions. The core of the SOCI@LL Week though is to put HOW before WHAT. That means that topics and issues raised during the SOCI@LL Week events are important, but being truly inclusive in every step of the way, from planning, to organizing and running the SOCI@LL Week, is what makes this program unique.

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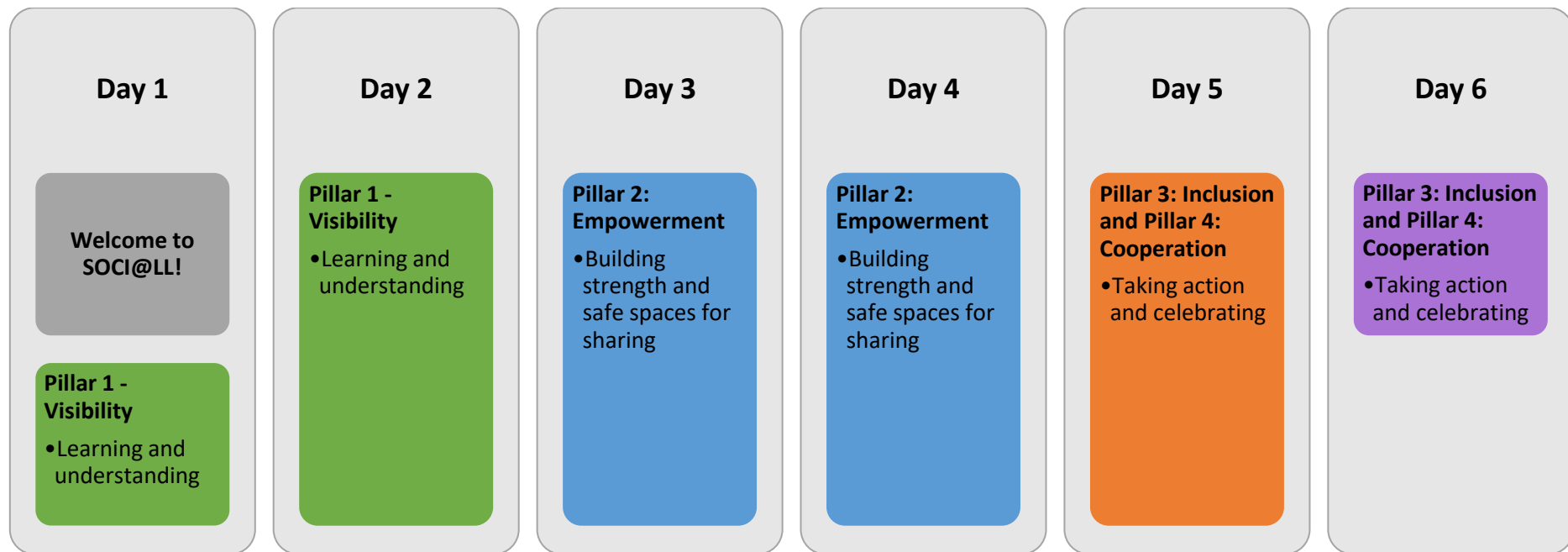


Figure 2 – Possible macro-planning for the SOCI@LL week.

Who should organize the soci@ll week?

Since the whole concept of SOCI@LL Week is to be INCLUSIVE, it is important to take into account that the key to success is DIVERSITY and ACCESSIBILITY. This means different groups and each individual are welcome to organize the events: parents, teachers, students, local community members. The best way to engage your students and educators with the “SOCI@LL Week” planning and participation is to support them by setting up an internal **SOCI@LL Action Team** to take the lead on organising an event during the week. It is an excellent way to kick-start social action projects in your school and help students build valuable skills.

However, even though students self-efficacy and autonomy is key, the SOCI@LL Action Team needs your support as the leader. This means you should use **YOUR PRIVILEGE** to support shares causes and efforts they make, without stepping in when it's not necessary.

What are the goals of the Soci@ll Week?

- The main goals of the event are:
- To create a school-network that will work towards raising awareness on relevant culturally-sensitive and inclusive systems inside and around schools.
- To promote effective and inclusive youth participation and decision making through the SOCI@LL Week Programme of activities, both within the framework of a school's curriculum as well as outside of formal school activities.

2. How to plan and run an inclusive Soci@LL Week?

Step 1 – Form the SOCI@LL Action Team

1. Advertise the opportunity to **ALL students and community members** (posters, social media, sharing information in classes, through student council) and form a team. Make sure you **don't create barriers** to participation. This means you welcome all participants regardless of their grades. Don't exclude kids labelled as "troublemakers". Make sure you give options for how someone can join - they can sign up through a teacher or come to the orientation meeting etc. Invite school staff as well!
2. **Make an effort.** Don't assume people who are not participating are "passive" "not interested" or "uninvolved". However, to feel invited sometimes it takes more than just actually being invited - it takes encouragement and ensuring someone you really need them!
3. **Reach out personally** to students who you feel are less confident or usually don't participate in projects like this. Tell them: "I know you are good at... I thought we could really use your help!"
4. Reach out (or encourage team members to do so) to members of the community who are not represented in the team. For example, if you have students of various cultural backgrounds in your school but they are not represented in the team, make sure they know you really need them in order to have a **truly diverse and representative body!**
5. **Get teachers and adults on board** as well (people who have power within the system). Without their involvement students will most likely hit a wall with some ideas.
6. During the orientation meeting, **present briefly the idea of SOCI@LL Week** and make sure students understand and share its goals. Get students to **identify personal goals** within the overall objectives of the projects (why is this important to me? what is the reason I want to join? what I would like to happen). Gather these thoughts and make them a guiding tool in your SOCI@LL Week journey!
7. Put some effort into integration and team-building. In order to work well together, members of the team need a sense of safety and predictability. Make time for **STRUCTURED get-to-know-each-other games** and establishing a **FRAMEWORK for cooperation** (if you don't like rules, it could be a Wall of Expectations towards Each Other). You can also use SOCI@LL WEEK values map as introductory activity and ask team members to fill it in with examples of shared rules in accordance with values.

Step 2 – Choose your "SOCI@LL Week" event(s)

1. Start with assets. Instead of starting with "what is needed" and "what we lack" approach (deficits), try starting with "what we have as a diverse community" (assets). Get students and educators to **create a map** of individual skills, school traditions, community allies around school. Make sure the map represents the diversity of the school community.
2. **Brainstorm ideas** for the event. Before you do it, remind them of the aims of the SOCI@LL Week. Create an atmosphere of creativity: make sure ideas are not commented and judged in the first step of the process. Narrow down these ideas. In the first round, you can divide students into groups who are responsible for ensuring certain aspects of inclusivity are taken care of. You can do this by giving students short descriptions of potential participants representing different experiences, living conditions, identities and needs. Then, in round 2, you can let students decide based on their own preferences.

3. Let the students have a **final decision** about which events they want to organize. However, remember to BE APPROPRIATE. As a school leader you need to ensure that the activities planned under the “SOCI@LL Week” umbrella are appropriate for the age, interests and ability of students.
4. While deciding about the events, use methods of **participatory decision-making** which take into account voices outside of mainstream (such as sociocracy - aiming for “no-veto” - or creating an umbrella of activities instead of focusing on a single one - usually most popular)
5. You **don’t need to involve everyone in every activity during the SOCI@LL Week**. Some of the activities could be carried out by teachers (for example, leading a lesson on migration) and students could only provide input about the topics they would like to discuss in the class. Focus on involving students into activities they really care about.
6. You can use out suggestions in the SOCI@LL Week Resources for the activities. However, be sure to use this as a framework rather than a fixed structure you need to follow.

Step 3 -Divide roles and tasks

1. Collect contributions. Start by making sure everyone lists activities or roles they would like to work on and assets they could contribute to certain tasks (skills, knowledge, contacts, materials...). Make sure team members know that they will not be working alone and that SOCI@LL Week is about learning - no one expects perfection!
2. If you want to avoid students pairing up solely on the basis of who they already like (this can be problematic for less popular or excluded students), ask students to **write it down individually** on a piece of paper.
3. **Assign roles** and responsibilities based on contributions. This step should be made collectively. Don’t force a role or a task on anyone!
4. Avoid **gendered division of tasks**. For example, if students and teachers volunteer to clean up after the event, make sure boys and girls are equally involved in tasks like sweeping the floor and carrying equipment!
5. **Empower students and teachers** who need this. Often people really don’t feel comfortable volunteering for something, as this implies a certain expectations to perform well. This is why sometimes it is best to approach them personally and say: “I heard you are a great graphic designer. Do you think you could help us with designing the posters?”.
6. In order to give all participants a sense of support and security, make sure every task has a **“task force” team** and no one feels left without help.
7. It is important to **create room for growth and challenges**. Ask each student to choose one task that would be kind of a challenge for them – something they might feel a little apprehensive about. Ask them to decide if they would like to collaborate on that task with someone else.
8. Set up a way to **communicate** between the teams. Even though people are working in smaller groups, it is still important to have opportunities to exchange information, report and consult. This is especially important in terms of diversity at school: if a group is responsible for setting up a space for a workshop, someone who has a good understanding of the needs of people with disabilities should be consulted.

Step 4 – Plan the events

1. Support teams with creating a joint **timeline for events**.
2. Make sure your **venue, date & time, materials are inclusive and accessible** to all potential participants. Avoid thinking “we don’t have anyone using a wheelchair in our school, so we don’t need to think about it”. Perhaps a parent or a sibling of one of the students doesn’t participate for that exact reason! How to be inclusive in planning? You can use the **checklist below**!
3. Schedule specific meetings over the week/month to monitor the progress of the SOCI@LL Action Team.
4. Be sure to **check on the teams and support them**. This means creating space not just for sharing skills and consulting problems, but also structured discussion on collaboration and teamwork.
5. **Stay in your lane**. Although SOCI@LL Week is community-powered and it is important to respect students and teachers’ ownership of certain activities and the overall programme, they still need your support. Reach out to potential allies and stakeholders as school leader! You hold the power to engage other groups, community institutions, experts etc. This is your opportunity to strengthen the collaboration around school, while still giving the whole school community space to shine on their own.

Step 5 – Run an amazing SOCI@LL Week

Finally, it is the time that the “SOCI@LL Week” will take place. Remember about these factors:

1. Launch the day with an **opening ceremony** where everyone gets the opportunity to #BeSoci@ll. It doesn’t need to be very formal - avoid making it a typical presentation with few people talking and most students just listening! You can use some **suggestions below**.
2. **Visualize**. Have a **board** with all of the activities listen for the whole week with colours and categories. It is important for all school community members to understand how different activities (like lesson, workshops, festivals, games etc.) link together as part of the big SOCI@LL Week. Or print a big SOCI@LL Values Map and have students print their palms on it etc. Or decorate the school in the spirit of inclusion.
3. During the “SOCI@LL Week”, do a lot of live Facebook, Tweeting and blogging!
4. **End on a fun note**. Close the SOCI@LL Week with a celebratory event for everyone. Thank everyone involved!
5. Monitor your success: hand out an online survey to all participants who have attended the SOCI@LL Week Programme, track “Likes” and “retweets” of your posts on social media. Have a look at the comments on social media.

Step 6 – Reflect and celebrate

1. Celebrate together. Organize a meeting with the SOCI@LL Action Team to reflect on the successes and difficulties, but most importantly, to celebrate. You can organize the meeting in an informal setting, such as a coffee place or a picnic in the part.

2. Structure a fun reflection activity. It can be built around an evaluation cube, magazine collage, Dixit cards, drawing a thermometer of SOCI@LL Week, Lego game etc. Focus on overall feelings, things that worked and could be considered successes, things that were difficult (lessons learned).
3. Self-reflection. Give space for students to self-evaluate their commitment, learning process, growth. Pair-share!
4. Structure positive feedback session. Ask participants to give each other thank you notes or write each other positive feedback on “Superhero cloaks” etc. This should be honest, but empowering!
5. Reward participants. Students who are part of the Action Team could either receive a certificate that can be incorporated in their CV, or awarded school credits or have or have their involvement recognised as a voluntary work recognition. This should be agreed on in advance, at the start of the SOCI@LL Week project.
6. Avoid singling out specific people and awarding only few. If you want to give awards, you can give everyone a special award for something they contributed (like different categories of “Oscars” etc.). However, remember that what feels like a great success to you can be less significant to a student, and conversely: a person can be really proud of something you haven’t even noticed.
7. Share the results with local authorities, other community members. Promote the effects of the SOCI@LL Week.

SOCI@LL PARTNERSHIP

SCIENTIFIC/ TECHNICAL

SCHOOLS

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Portugal

		
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(Project coordinator)

Poland

		
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(Associated partner)

Cyprus

		
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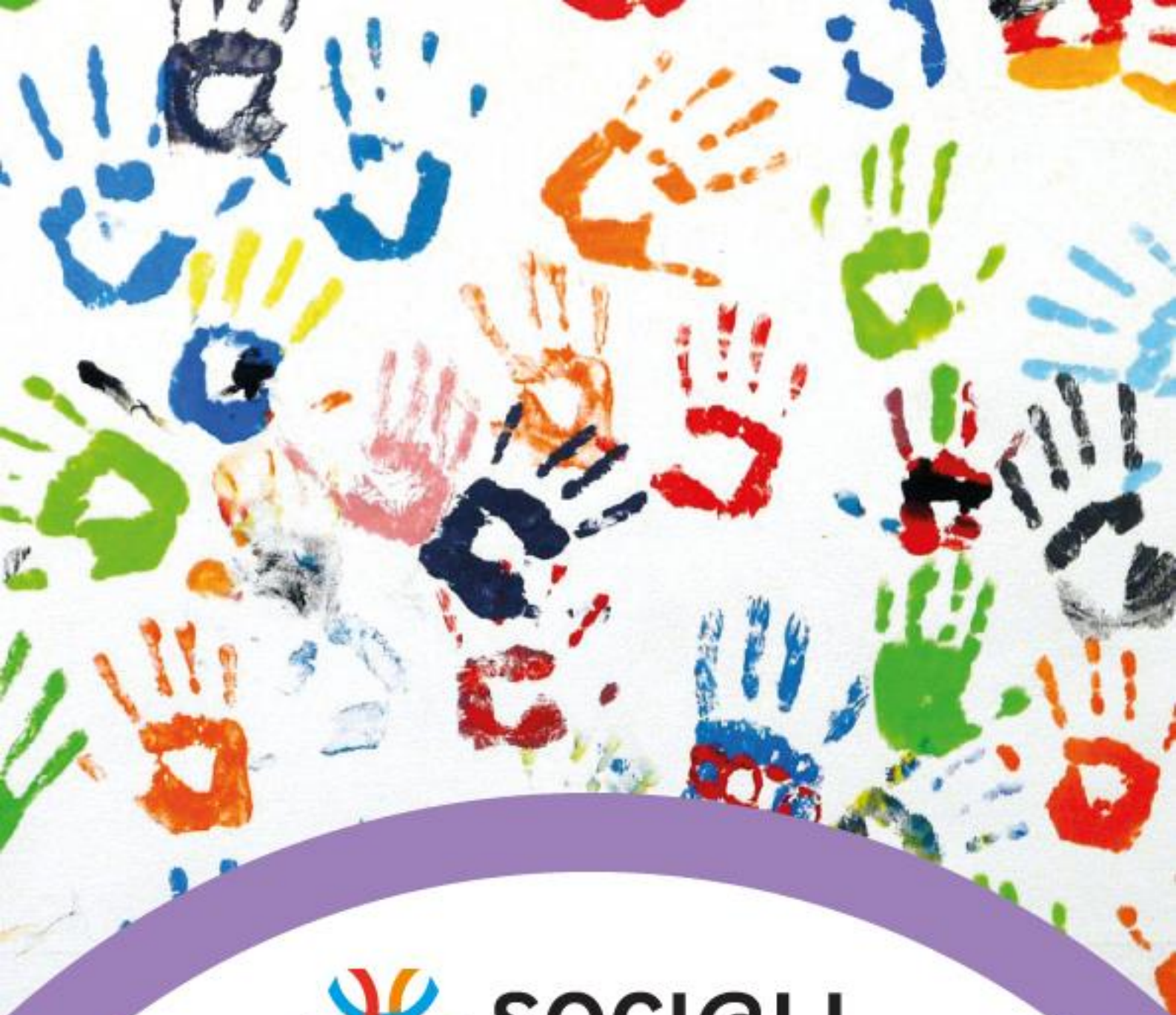
Italy

		
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(Associated partner)

		
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(Associated partner)



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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



SOCI@LL has been approved under the EACEA/07/2017 call - Key Action 3: Support for policy reform (Social inclusion through education, training and youth). This project (592254-EPP-1-2017-1-PT-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN) has been funded with support from the European Commission. This document reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.