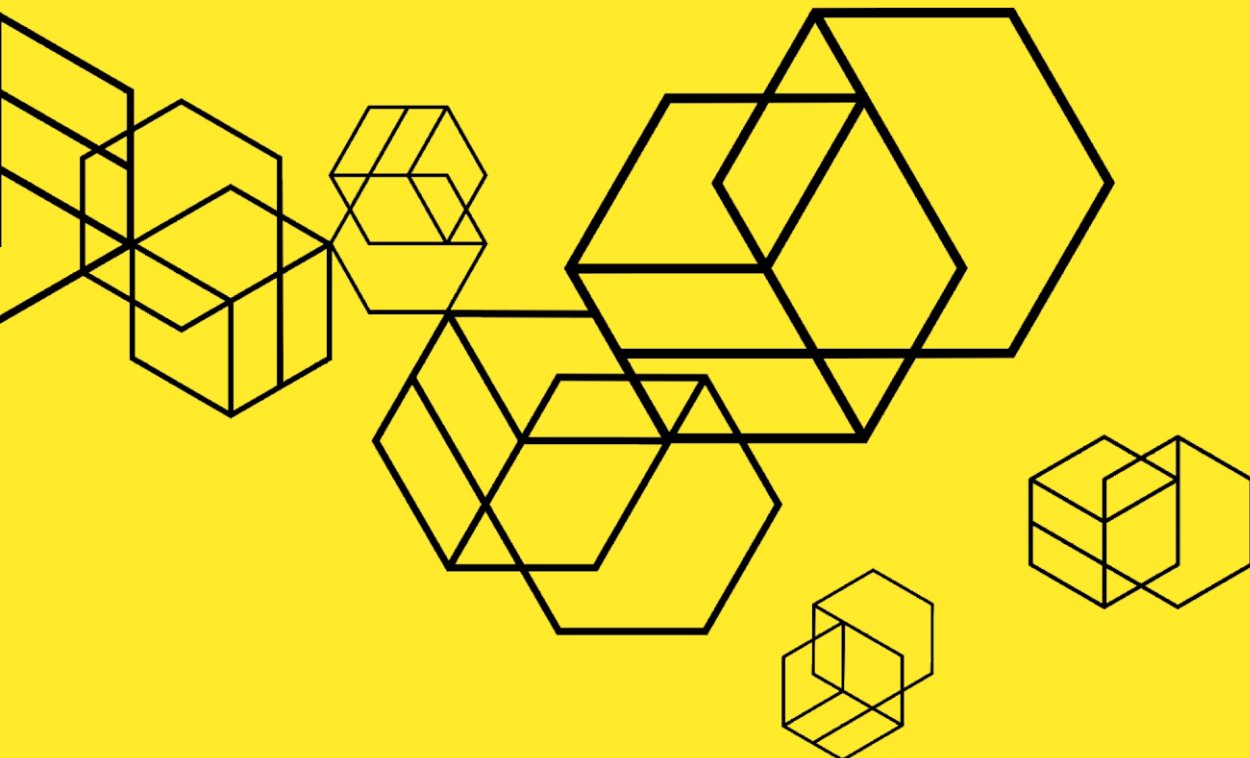




**SOCIAL  
INNOVATION  
COMMUNITY**

# **SIC's Social Learning Relay Toolkit : Concept & Format**





In this document you can find the founding ideas, assumptions and purpose of the Social Learning Relay.

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*“While knowledge dissemination is considered central, establishing personal contacts amongst network members is more likely to result in a change to an innovative approach than dissemination through a report would.”*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

We designed the Learning Relay to boost the transformative knowledge and skills of social innovation practitioners and their networks and to answer the aims specified for task 4.4 that was part of the EU funded project of SIC. Those aims were to: 1) satisfy transversal learning needs identified within the SIC networks; 2) boost and promote cross-fertilization, co-creation and knowledge exchange; and support learning across SIC networks.

Combining an inspiring face-to-face event with digital communication & meet-ups, it's a low budget way of crowdsourcing and strengthening personal connections. One of the ideas behind the relay is that we all have more to offer than we're aware of. Another aspect of the Learning Relay is the Ripple effect assignment: that way the exchange and learning will continue beyond the specific Relay group, out into the world.

During the relay, participants will be stimulated to activate their networks and crowdsource knowledge within the groups. They will also be challenged to organise at least one activity that is explicitly aimed at knowledge sharing amongst networks (= the ripple effect assignment).

## 2. ORIGINS

The Toolkit for the learning Relays has been developed and tested during the SIC project. The topics of the first three social learning relays were Transformative Impact, Experimentation and Crowdfunding. This is the updated version of the Toolkit in which the learnings from these experiences have been integrated into a Toolkit for organising A Learning Relay as a stand alone course. In paragraph 1.6 you can find some tips and learnings with regard to organising a relay, as an add on to an event or as part of a longer learning track.

With regard to offering it as a stand alone activity we strongly recommend offering the relay as a course, with a course fee and a clearer end goal to work towards, such as a certificate of completion. Under the SIC project the three learning relays were offered free of charge. Based on our experience with the relays and many other courses, we strongly feel that it would be easier to attract participants and have them stay engaged throughout the relay if a course fee and certificate are involved. The recommendation for a second face-to-face meeting stems from the evaluations of participants all of whom highly valued the combination between on and offline learning and expressed a strong desire to meet up a second time in person, and/or start with a two day workshop and that this would contribute to their level of commitment throughout.



### 3. WHAT?

In principle the Toolkit has been designed to lend itself to all kinds of different topics and learning needs for people working on societal change and social innovation.

#### Per Learning Relay

1. Online start and closure activity
2. Kick-off workshop
3. A period of four weeks in which participants take turns to crowdsource input to each others learning questions and individually organise a 'ripple effect activity'
4. During the same four week period: several (online) learning activities to boost reflexive learning and knowledge exchange among participants
5. Online support by organising team in relay activities the weeks to come
6. A comeback event / face-to-face meet-up as deadline for the ripple effect activity & to share learnings

### 4. HOW?

#### General communication & attitude

*Always take a friendly, enthusing and stimulating approach when reaching out to the participants. Aim to enable activity, motivation and safety for each individual and for the whole group.*

*Don't expect your participants will be motivated all the time. Keeping them interested is something you should work on all along the way during the process. Make it creative and fun.*

#### General Tips & Tricks

- If you are organising a relay for the first time, put limits on the degree to which you experiment by making sure that the focus topic is one that is one with which you have plenty of experience.
- Slack is a better platform for keeping conversations organized and exchanging documents than LinkedIn.
- The minimum amount of participants should be 15, but a group of 20+ would work better if the format is done in the same way.
- Make sure to learn something new yourself!

#### Prior to online start

- Organising Team confirms registration and sends welcome email with more information
- Participants make online profile, incl. picture & short description of past and present activities
- Participants share one question they want to answer: in line with the theme and focused on how they can contribute to this.

#### Online: first encounter



- One week prior to the workshop participants & organising team will meet up online (e.g. using Zoom) to meet for the first time and go through the process and set up of the Learning Relay.
  - If you use Zoom: always check the link and the recording are working prior to the start of the meet-up.

### Workshop day

Very interactive: focused on participants really connection with one another and practicing with some methods.

- 1/3 of the day:
  - theoretic deepening, incl. experiencing examples of tools
- 2/3 day of the day
  - Participants collectively sharpen their questions using Dare to Ask method\*.
  - Participants form groups of max. 5 people based on interest/ themes or geography. Each group will choose a process supporter.
  - Participants practice with one of the approaches mentioned in theory – individual assignment (5-10 min) with collective step-by-step working through it
  - Systemic thinking in little groups + recap plenary: make relation constellations of questions & answers. For this you could use Kumu, <https://kumu.io/>. At the last page you'll find an example of the Kumu map made in the first Learning Relay.
- Debrief & reflection: what did you learn & take from today

\* The Dare To Ask workshop has proven to be a key part in both the workshop and online parts. We recommend making sure that this part of the programme gets enough time allocated during the workshop so that participants can go more in depth with their learning questions while they are face to face. When that happens, it becomes easier to post succinct learning questions during the online part of the relay. See the Dare To Ask Tool for more information on how to organise the Dare to Ask session during the workshop.

### After workshop: online activities & ripple effect assignment

- Continuing crowdsourcing and group learning on a digital platform. During the relay period the participants will help each other: each week they answer the question of one of the other participants of their group - at the end of the relay period each person has given help to all her/ his team mates.
  - Process supporters will make suggestions as well.
  - The workshop participants that are not part of one's own group can also contribute to help others out.
  - Workshop participants can also help out participants of later workshops (so participants of workshop 1 can assist participants of workshop 2&3 etc.).
- Ripple effect assignment: take action on your question and involve a bigger group in order to share their knowledge and/ or crowdsource. Starts in week 1 of the Relay, until (or after) the online closure meet-up.

### Comeback day

- Deadline for organising / starting the ripple effect activity
- Participants present the results and learnings from their Ripple effect assignment
- Include a moment of reflection on the relay as a whole



## 5. PARTICIPANTS

- SI practitioners with some years of experience
- SI practitioners, highly motivated learners, but with less experience: ‘starters’ - limited number per workshop

### What we expect from participants

- Time investment: around 2 hours a week
- Communication: share experience, knowledge and network publicly at the online platform
- Participation: in workshop and online kick-off & closure sessions
- Organise a ripple effect activity during the two months period of the Learning Relay

### What they can expect of the organising team

- Inspiring workshop
- Online platform to show their initiative and learning process
- Access to people in networks of organising partners
- Support over course of the Relay: 4-6 hours per week by organising team and 2-4 per week hours of group supporters

### Why would people want to join/ what’s in it for them?

Participants feel better enabled and stronger in their professional activities because

- of their knowledge on impact, experimentation or funding
- and they got into touch with people beyond their own network
- and trained with approaches new to them

We promise a different type of learning. Moving from reactive learning that many face during development of SI towards reflective and reflexive learning. Zooming out. Systems thinking lens, most of all a peer-2-peer learning which is aimed at deepening individual learning and boosting the learning capacity of SI networks.

## 6. TIMELINE RELAY

|                 |                    |  |               |               |                |               |               |
|-----------------|--------------------|--|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Online Kick-off | Face2face Workshop | Relay round 1                          | Relay round 2 | Relay round 3 | Online meet up | Relay round 4 | Closing event |
|                 |                    | Ripple effect assignment activities => |               |               |                |               |               |
| Week 1          | Week 2             | Week 2                                 | Week 3        | Week 4        | Week 5         | Week 5        | Week 8        |

\* Five rounds in case of groups of five. Otherwise groups of 4 and four rounds.



## 7. TIPS AND LEARNINGS

### The Learning Relay as an add on to larger events

- Alternatively the format can be combined with an event that is already taking place. In that case the central element to keep is the Dare to Ask session and the online interactions. Possibly with a second meet-up connected to it at a later point in time.
- The advantage of this format is that there would be a very specific target audience and much less PR efforts would be needed.
- The minimum amount of participants should be 15, but a group of 20+ would work better.
- Put limits on the degree to which you experiment by prioritising if the experimentation focusses on new content, new relations or adapted format.
- Keep the format lean and replicable with a very clear structure for the follow-up activity.
- People should register for the relay before the actual event takes place and have a very clear understanding of what the follow up activity is going to be like.

### The Learning Relay integrated into a longer learning track

- Lastly we can also imagine integrating the relay approach into an (existing) course or learning track. The advantage would be that there is already a group of motivated participants and the outcomes can be integrated into the overall learning goals and deadlines of the course.