

# INNOVATION LAB

## ASHOKA EDUCATION



### THE PROJECT IN A NUTSHELL



«LET CHILDREN DARE TO ASK QUESTIONS, BE MORE CREATIVE AND DISCOVER THEIR TALENTS TO BECOME ACTORS OF CHANGE»



#### CHALLENGE

Our children often have excellent and creative solutions for «everyday» problems. They have a natural ability to think «out of the box». But we rarely tap into that potential to look for innovative solutions and solve real challenges of our community. With the Innovation Lab, we want to bring society into the school and make children aware of the change they can create in the world by experimenting, using their creativity and finding inspiration among local entrepreneurs and experts.



#### PROJECT

The Innovation Lab is a set of practices in the classroom combined with a specific room dedicated to experimentation within the school. The main idea is to build the curriculum around questions and interests brought by the children themselves. Once the topic is chosen, the teacher can use the Innovation Lab to make the children experiment and find solutions by themselves. Local entrepreneurs are welcomed in the school to share and experiment with children.



#### STAKEHOLDERS

**School direction:** You can implement part of this project without it, but if you want to have a dedicated space for the Innovation Lab, then you need to have your direction on board.

**Teachers:** As pupils change teacher from one year to the other, it is essential to have other teachers involved to make the project successful in the long-term.



#### WORKLOAD

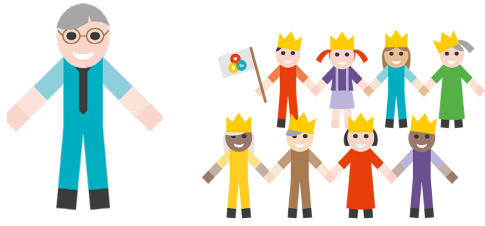
It is an entirely different way to teach, so in the end, it should not bring extra workload. However, in the beginning, it takes a lot of time to set-up the projects and the tools.



#### RESOURCES

The vital element is the space dedicated to the Innovation Lab. The other aspects of the project can be realised with basic classroom material.

# HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT IN YOUR SCHOOL



## 1 - LET THE TOPICS EMERGE FROM CHILDREN

Every day, organise a «morning routine» in the classroom to gather insights directly from the children.

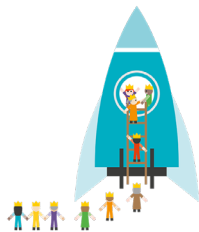
We use a **Question Dice** with questions written on it: what do you want to explore? what did you learn recently and what do you want to share? What makes you curious? Children take the dice one by one, throw it, read the given question and answer it!



## 2 - SELECT THE TOPIC TO EXPLORE

Based on what the children expressed and on the curriculum, select a topic to explore more deeply for the next 2-3 weeks.

To avoid repetition of topics from one year to the other, we create a **Class Book** where children and teachers synthesise the discoveries around each of the topics explored within the Innovation Lab.



## 3 - PREPARE THE EXPLORATION OF THE TOPIC

Make sure that every day of the next 2-3 weeks you will cover a different aspect of the topic in link with the rest of the class curriculum.

Make sure to spend some time in the **Innovation Lab** where children will experiment around the topic with dedicated material.

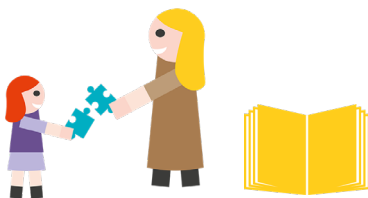
It is also interesting to plan a visit or to invite an expert from the school community!



## 4 - EXPLORE THE TOPIC

Let the children discuss, experiment and share their learnings along the exploration journey. It is also an occasion to spot their strengths and talents.

All along the exploration phase, children use a personal **Exploration Bag** in which they bring materials they want to share around the topic. It is a great way to keep them engaged and proud of their discoveries!



## 5 - SYNTHETISE THE DISCOVERIES

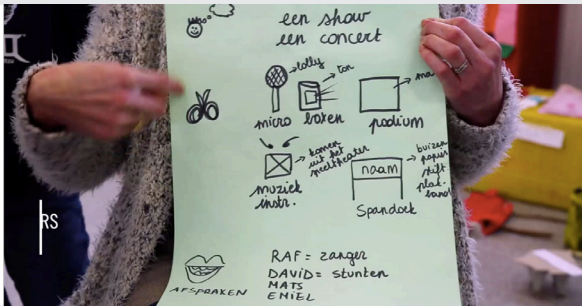
At the end of the 2-3 weeks of exploration, take a moment to synthesise the major discoveries together with the class in the Class Book.



## 6 - PRESENT AND COMMUNICATE THE RESULTS

Make sure that children have an opportunity to present and share their results with their parent! You can also use a newsletter to communicate broadly.

# PRE-REQUISITES OF THE PROJECT



The change of mindset for teachers is significant. Invest in training days to work on collaboration, innovation, creativity and coach posture.

It is essential to create new teaching habits in which teachers move from a position where they know and teach to an attitude where they listen and ask questions. It requires to accept that it is ok not to have prepared everything in advance and not to have the answer to a question.

# BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

## CHILDREN PARLIAMENT

A parallel project in the school is the Children Parliament. Every month, children from 6 to 12 years old discuss problems they observe on the playground in order to find solutions together.

It is a great way to collect insights, issues and questions that will feed the Innovation Lab

## CLASS BOOK

Beyond being useful to collect discoveries and create a shared memory from one year to the other, it is also a great tool to remind children of what they can do. Especially when they turn 10-12, they often think that they cannot be creative anymore and the class book is there to make them realise that they can!



## COMMUNITY

Make sure to federate a group of teachers around you following a similar approach to bring continuity in the journey of the children over the years. Also, avoid going too fast with your fellow teachers so that they don't feel overwhelmed or see it as a constraint. Make sure they have access to clear guidelines to help them!

## SPACE

Try to have a dedicated space in the school that is made for the Innovation Lab and only for that purpose. It is easier to have full access to the material without needing to clean everything to enable exploration from one session to the other. Also, make sure to define clear rules with the children in that space (created by them for them to apply).

# MORE INFORMATION TO GO FURTHER



## CONTACT

Meet with the project owner  
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## VIDEO

Discover the story, the participants  
and behind the scenes of the project  
in video:  
[ashoka.org/en-be/eduinnovation](https://ashoka.org/en-be/eduinnovation)

