

LIVING LAB XCHANGE

LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING LABS

WHAT

Learning communities drive the acceleration of innovation. Learning communities are public-private alliances with a certain structure, culture and process, consisting of members who regularly interact to achieve a common goal in the context of learning, work and innovation. *

Characteristics of learning communities include:

- Sharing facilities such as labs, machines, manpower (students, researchers, professionals)
- Country-wide exposure
- Strong network in the region; they are part of an ecosystem

** Mennens, Schipper, Hofstra, Tooren van den, Preenen, Vos (2020) Organizing the future of work: a conceptualization of public-private learning communities*

WHY

Learning communities add value for:

- Companies: direct access to research, state of the art knowledge, future talent (students), continuous learning;
- Education: access to state of the art (technological) knowledge, access to companies for co-makership of up to date education programmes;
- Research: access to company knowhow, testing ground, valorization and dissemination channel;
- Public sector: innovative economic ecosystems.

Learning communities provide a win-win-win for all actors involved in a sustainable living lab consortium. In learning communities the three functions of learning: 1. learning for a diploma/ degree, 2. learning in order to work, 3. pro-active learning to innovate are connected and enable us to build futureproof innovative ecosystems.



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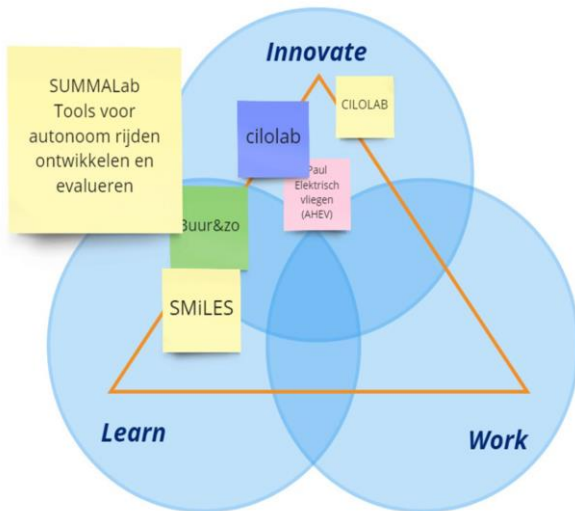


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HOW

To position living labs in the learning community triangle

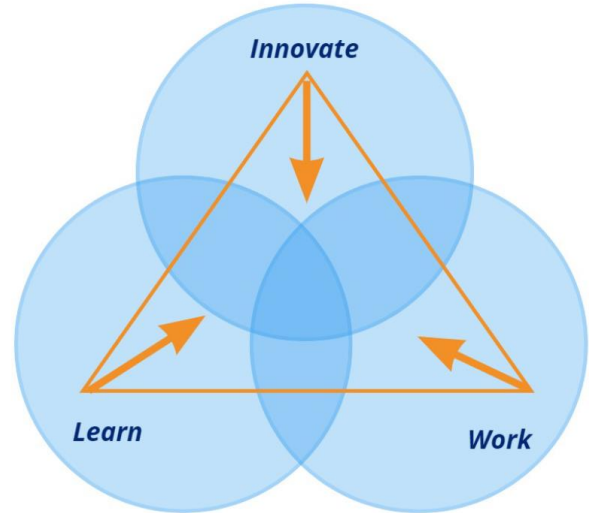
- Learn - Innovate: SUMMALab, SMiLES, Buur & Zo, CiloLab, Spark!.
- Work - Innovate: CiloLab, SSCMH, SUMMALab.
- Learn - Work: none of the living labs.
- Integration of the triangle Learn - Work - Innovate: none of the living labs.



Position of living labs in the learning community triangle – example Miro board session Living Lab Xchange

RESULTS

- Most living labs focus on the axis Learn - Innovate with an emphasis on innovation. Focus is mostly on R&D and less on learning, knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer, especially towards (employees within) organisations.
- The living labs lack a focus on the axis Learn - Work.



How to develop balance in a learning community

- In order to offer maximum return a living lab should be focussing on all three functions of learning.
- The triangle can be used to evaluate the way in which knowledge creation and transfer has been set up.
- People and companies learn more by working together in labs/ communities.
- Do a frequent check on the value of the living lab/ learning community for all stakeholders.
- Do a frequent stakeholder check: are all relevant stakeholders (still) on board?

TAKE AWAYS

Main take aways of the participants to share:

- One living lab works with use cases in learning spaces: this provides more focus on learning
- Exchange and transfer knowledge more within and outside the living lab: transfer and share knowledge with education and companies
- To increase learning, there should be more attention to reflection instead of only analysis
- Make better use of companies in living labs for student assignments
- More focus on learning helps in becoming more sustainable as a living lab or community

Conclusion

- A learning community takes into account all functions of learning; living labs now mainly focus on one function of learning.
- Give learning in living labs more emphasis
- Living labs should be more connected with education to transfer knowledge to education.
- Include more learning-by-doing in education through project-based education in living labs.
- There is a need for more integration of living labs with the work floor of companies. Only then continuous learning receives full attention and transfer of knowledge and innovation is achieved.

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