EDULAB, CO-CREATING AND SHARING INNOVATION PROJECTS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Estonia, the Baltic country with less than 1.5 million inhabitants, has long been positioned as a European leader in digital innovation, highlighting its commitment to the digitisation of governance and public services. The co-creation of innovation projects also reaches the classrooms of Estonian schools through the participatory methodology **EDULAB**.

The EDULAB methodology or model, launched in 2017, aims to establish and strengthen the **ecosystem of cooperation between Estonian universities and schools** to enhance the continuity and transfer of flourishing educational innovations. This process is framed under a governance structure known as "**Living Lab**" and aims to generate an ecosystem (teachers, researchers and other stakeholders) that promotes continuous evidence-based educational innovation through the exchange of ideas, learning, co-creation and evaluation of novel classroom practices. School teachers are involved from the early stages together with the university system in the creation and research of new educational tools. Based on "**The Knowledge Appropriation Model**", the university and the rest of the educational agents collaborate closely in the creation, transfer and scalability of the practices developed as a result of educational innovation.

In order to generate an innovative collaborative educational ecosystem, the EDULAB methodology is based on four phases where universities work together with teachers in the process of knowledge generation.

1. **Development phase**. University professors and researchers co-create innovative educational methods together with teachers and other school stakeholders. By observing international experiences, visits or research, new ideas and educational methodologies are identified or emerge.

2. **Research phase**. It brings together teachers and students to test the innovative method together with the university. Together with the university researchers, the teachers organise a lesson, syllabus etc. based on the use of the innovative method. The lessons are monitored by researchers, who collect direct feedback from the participants through interviews or short questionnaires.

3. **Expansion and diffusion phase**. An attempt is made to apply the innovation in daily school activity. The university collects data from teachers and students for analysis in order to evaluate the impact of a methodology or approach over time. In this phase, university researchers support teachers with knowledge and receive feedback from them. The knowledge is transmitted through the innovation labs, which function as a training module for

the whole school or as a training course for teams of teachers from different schools. The duration of the innovation lab is usually one term, one semester or one year.

4. **Appropriation of knowledge**. Educational innovation is a continuous practice in schools. Researchers no longer focus on evaluation and performance in the classroom and innovation processes run more smoothly.

This is an interesting initiative to take as an example in order to create and share innovative knowledge in relation to new practices, all through the co-creation and participation of various agents. This methodology can also be an opportunity for research teaching staff, allowing them to innovate with new practices and supporting the processes of setting up and implementing them.