

Social Media Literacy strategies in school

Designing a capacity building scheme



Social Media Literacy for Change Project Final Evaluation Report



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Project summary

[Social Media Literacy for Change](#) (sml4change) was a one-year pilot project coordinated by [European Schoolnet](#) and co-funded by the European Commission under the [Media Literacy for All pilot programme](#), which aimed to support European school leaders and teachers, particularly those working with young people at risk of being socially marginalised, to foster social media literacy (SML) in both their school and local community, thus reaching not only students but also parents, families and school staff.

The project aimed to co-design tools to guide schools in developing appropriate SML strategies to be better prepared to deal with current and future social media-related challenges, together with representatives of the school community.

Context and background

Social media have become an important part of children's and young people's everyday lives. On the one hand,

they provide different avenues for communication, learning, self-expression, entertainment, creativity and participation, but, on the other hand, they also pose some risks, such as cyberbullying, hate speech, fake news, privacy, and commercial risks. Although parents and educators wish to offer children enough possibilities for learning, participation and personal growth, they often struggle to strike the right balance between providing them with opportunities and protecting them from risks.¹ It has therefore become increasingly difficult for schools, teachers and families to appropriately address the constantly emerging challenges that social media present for young people.

School professionals are uniquely positioned to reach and help children and their families to better understand these challenges, to encourage the healthy and positive use of social media, and to prevent and monitor for potential problems.

Nevertheless, few schools and educational professionals feel well-equipped to support children in developing their digital and social media literacy competences.²

Participants

In total, 25 teachers from 13 countries participated in the project, of which two were IT coordinators and two were deputy heads of school. The participating schools came from Austria (1), Belgium (1), Greece (3), Hungary (1), Italy (5), Latvia (1), Lithuania (1), Malta (1), Poland (1), Portugal (2), Romania (3), Slovakia (1) and Spain (4). Of these 25 schools, 7 offer pre-primary education, ten offer primary education, 23 offer secondary education, 7 have a technical, vocational or artistic specialisation, 23 are public and 2 are private. Throughout this report we refer to these representatives as the project participants.

Approach

One of the most innovative aspects of this project was its fundamental bottom-up and school-centric approach, which involved continuous collaboration with the representatives of the selected schools. The participants actively contributed to the whole project development cycle not only by providing their expert views from the field but above all by supporting the project coordination team to ensure that

all materials and tools developed within the project were truly useful for schools. In this sense, the participants had an important say in the project development and became project co-creators from its inception.

Main achievements

The sml4change project consisted of two main lines of work, namely supporting selected schools in the process of developing their own SML strategic plan and co-creating the multilingual Social Media Literacy for Change Massive Open Online Course (sml4change MOOC).

Out of the 25 participating schools, 22 succeeded in developing an SML strategy and, at the end of this one-year pilot project, many of the SML strategies developed under the project are already being implemented in schools. Other participating schools will start their implementation during the academic year 2019-2020.

As regards the MOOC, this online capacity-building tool aimed to empower school leaders and teachers to develop, implement and assess a whole-school SML strategy. In total, 1,541 participants from 66 countries registered to take part in the course and 947 of them started it. Of all the people who followed the course, 236 participants were awarded a certificate.

¹ S. Livingstone, L. Haddon, A. Görzig and K. Ólafsson, Risks and safety on the internet: the perspective of European children: full findings and policy implications from the EU Kids Online survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents in 25 countries. EU Kids Online, Deliverable D4. EU Kids Online Network, London, 2011 – <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/33731/>; G. S. O'Keeffe and K. Clarke-Pearson, "The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families," *Pediatrics*, no. 127 (2011): 800-804; S. Vandorinck, L. d'Haenens, R. De Cock and V. Donoso, "Social Networking Sites and Contact Risks among Flemish Youth," *Childhood* 19, no. 1, (2011): 69-85; G. Mascheroni and K. Ólafsson, *Net Children Go Mobile: Risks and Opportunities*. Second edition (Milan: Educatt, 2014).

² C. Perrotta, "Do school-level factors influence the educational benefits of digital technology? A critical analysis of teachers' perceptions," *British Journal of Educational Technology* 4, no. 2 (2013): 314-327 – <http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/84260/1/PerrottaBJET.pdf>.

Project design

In this section we present an overview of the project design and methods, as well as key points of reflections related to the evaluation of the processes.

The sml4change project consisted of three main development phases, as illustrated below and explained in more detail in the following sections. The main lines of work (supporting schools to develop an SML strategy and developing the MOOC) took place in parallel at times, feeding and enhancing each other.

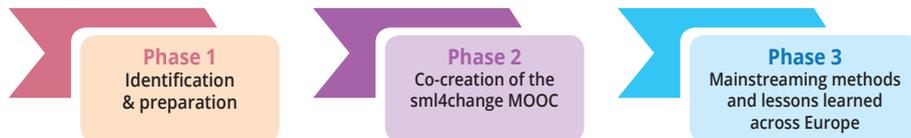


Figure 1 Project Development Phases

Project phases

Phase 1: identification and preparation

During this first phase an evidence base for the development of the sml4change MOOC was set up and the project participants were identified.

Desktop-based research

A thorough review of the available literature, policies and practices was carried out and the resulting report entitled "[Developing a participatory, whole-school social media literacy strategy: Some recommendations from the sml4change project](#)" was published.

Identification and engagement of school leaders and teachers

25 school leaders and teachers from 13 different countries were identified and engaged in the project, in partnership with EUN's network of Ministries of Education.

Meeting with the Digital Citizenship Working Group

A meeting with members of the EUN Ministries of Education network was held to ensure a common understanding and approach, in terms of both focus and method.



Phase 2: Co-creation of a Social Media Literacy for Change MOOC

Throughout the second phase, the project participants developed their own SML strategies and the multilingual MOOC was designed and launched.

Face-to-face co-creation workshop (1)

To kick off the strategy development process, all project participants took part in a three-day training session at the headquarters of European Schoolnet in Brussels.

Design and pilot test SML strategies

Following the first workshop, the participants designed and implemented their

own SML strategy in their school environment, in line with the overall focus and methodology embraced by the project and with the continuous support of the coordination team.

Identify a core group of co-creators

Based on the SML strategies submitted by the project participants and diversity criteria, a core group of eight co-creators for key MOOC materials was identified.

Face-to-face co-creation workshop (2)

The eight co-creators gathered at European Schoolnet for a two-day workshop to exchange feedback and receive further guidance on the development of MOOC materials.

Phase 3: Mainstreaming methods and lessons learned across Europe

This phase included finalisation of the MOOC by further integrating the input

gathered during the co-creation phase, its translation into ten languages, and running the course on the [EUN Academy](#) between April and June 2019.



Methods and processes

The two main lines of work, as mentioned above, were the development of the participating schools' own SML strategic plans and the co-creation of the MOOC. The project approach consisted of a multi-level process involving experts and schools in continuous cycles of feedback and improvements. The following actors took part in these processes.

- A group of experts in the fields of media literacy, online safety, participatory approach, strategic planning for the education sector, pedagogy and instructional design, who coordinated the various activities and facilitated the broader self-reflection and assessment process.
- A group of schools (23) which developed their SML strategies in a collaborative path which lasted

approximately 8 months and that, at different levels, provided input to develop the capacity-building schema at the base of the learning path offered publicly through the MOOC, including ideas and inspiration for the content and for the approach.

- A group of co-creators (8 teachers), who, beyond their general contribution, concretely developed MOOC sub-modules.
- Group of contributors (5 teachers), who, beyond their general contribution, provided the resources they developed for the modules of the MOOC, presented their experience during a live event and helped with animation and moderation of the community tools of the MOOC.

Participant selection

In total more than 80 school professionals applied to take part in the project. Of these, 25 were selected as project participants based on the results of an online application with questions about their school and professional background, as well as their interest and perspectives in participating in such an initiative. Although this sample was not representative of all European schools, special efforts were made to include a wide range of countries, languages, types of schools and educational professionals, to ensure that a variety of needs and contextual aspects were factored into the development of the schema.

Co-design of methods and core content (experts' groups)

The group of project experts co-designed the main processes for each component and the related set of guidelines for participants, co-creators and contributors. This guidance was provided in a progressive and accessible way, to enable participants and co-creators to develop their own perspectives and approaches, step by step. The guidelines were also revised based on the project participants' feedback and provided to the MOOC participants in this improved version. They included, for example, guidelines to support schools in the development of an SML strategy, a template for such a strategic plan, an assessment rubric, as well as guidelines for the development of materials for the MOOC and its moderation and animation.

Development of social media literacy strategies

One of the main aims of the participants' strategies was to provide a framework that would help schools gain a better understanding of social media and of how to foster SML skills within their school community. They were all encouraged to include a set of core elements such as the strategy vision, the focus areas or the strategic goals, as presented in the Guidelines. However, participants had the freedom to develop their own strategy in response to the individual needs of their school. In order to ensure that the strategies were useful for the respective school communities, participants were also encouraged to self-reflect throughout the project and include the whole school community in this process. This included not only teachers, students, families and school management, but also other potential stakeholders such as non-profit organisations or the local police. This whole-school approach went beyond the teachers' own classroom practice and, while described as challenging by some, was one of the project's most important innovative added values.

The continuous and informed self-reflection process aimed also to document the current landscape of SML in the schools, including a short analysis of both internal and external factors affecting social media use, to set the proper context for the strategies.

Project participants were asked to reflect on the following points.

- Are social media being used at your school?

Project - core processes and approach

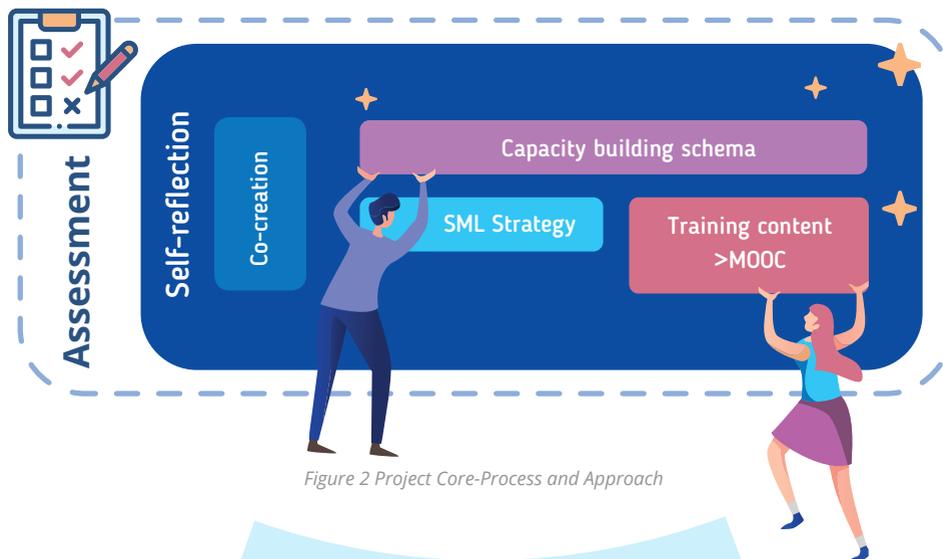


Figure 2 Project Core-Process and Approach

- What social media platforms are being used and why? (e.g. Facebook groups, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc.)
- For what purposes are social media platforms being used? (e.g. to learn about certain subjects, to communicate with parents, etc.)
- Under what circumstances are social media being used at school? (e.g. only in some classes, freely at school, only during breaks, etc.)
- Are there any school policies or rules related to the use of social media or digital technologies at school?
- Has the school ever been confronted with any incidents related to the (mis) use of social media in or outside the school? (e.g. cyberbullying, sexting, etc.)
 - What happened?
 - What did the school do?
- What are the views of the different school actors about the use of social media at school?
- What are the potential benefits, risks and/or disadvantages of incorporating social media at school?

Core elements of the SML strategy

MISSION - a short statement of the school's purpose.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS - helps schools document the current landscape of social media literacy in the school community.

VISION - describes what the school wants to achieve with their SML strategy at a high level.

FOCUS AREAS - the foundation stones of any strategy. Based on a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis, each participant had to select three core areas of social media literacy that would constitute the basis of their strategy.

STRATEGIC GOALS - high-level, specific goals defined under each focus area.

OBJECTIVES - break up the strategic goals into smaller targets. They are the backbone of the strategy and require

a metric and time frame. They are important to monitor the progress of the strategy.

IMPLEMENTATION OR ACTION PLAN - describes the steps, (human) resources and timelines necessary to achieve each of the goals and objectives set in the strategy.

ASSESSMENT PLAN - necessary for the monitoring progress and for assessing the strategy's impact. It gives a clear indication of what elements of the strategy will be evaluated, how and when.

BUDGET AND RESOURCES - refers to all the resources (material, financial and/or human) that are needed.

RISK ASSESSMENT - a summary of the potential risks resulting from the strategy implementation and ways to mitigate them.

MOOC co-creation process

The intense learning process carried out with the 25 schools participating in the project constituted the basis to design the MOOC. This process is explained in detail below.

Strategy mapping and designing of MOOC structure

In parallel with the analysis, revision and assessment process, a content analysis and mapping of the first version of the schools' strategies was carried out. This served to inform the development of the MOOC syllabus, to fine-tune the instructional design approach, and to identify the key contributions to be developed by co-creators and how to embed them in the progressive learning path for the MOOC participants, harmonising the learning content while leveraging the specific experience of each school.

Selection of co-creators based on strategy assessment

The strategies delivered by the project participants were assessed in terms of their quality and effectiveness. This assessment process was essential to select the 8 MOOC co-creators, also taking into consideration representation of various countries, languages and types of schools, focus on diverse areas of interest, coverage of different types of SML strategies and societal challenges and, finally, diverse target

groups (school staff, students, families, other external stakeholders). The final group of co-creators was composed of teachers from primary and secondary schools, from vocational and general schools, from Catholic and non-religious schools from 7 European countries (Greece, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain).

Involvement of co-creators and other contributors

Based on the content mapping and on the first online meeting group reflection, each contribution was co-designed between teachers and the MOOC designer (project coordinator), to harmonise the content and provide real world examples and tutorial-like guidance to other colleagues and schools across Europe.

The key steps of the process to engage co-creators and contributors were as follows:

1. Co-validation of contribution ideas and co-design of the programme
2. Definition of each contribution outline and delivery of co-creators' guidelines package
3. Training on content creation for online learning courses (online webinar)
4. Drafts of learning contents and individual follow-up (cycles)
5. Co-validation of MOOC content drafts and final syllabus (second workshop)

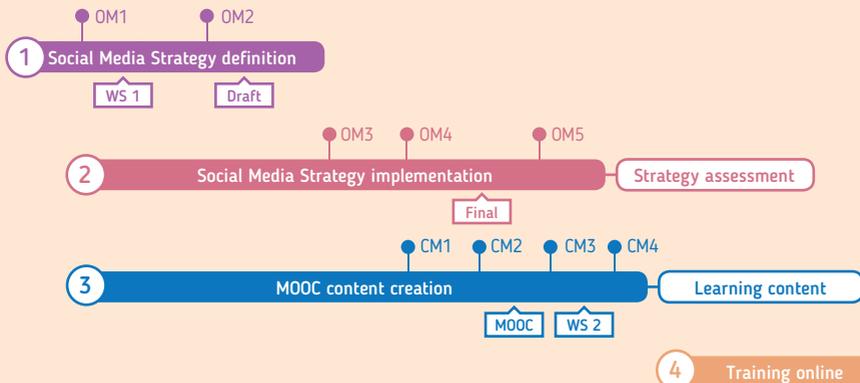
Figure 3 Core elements of the SML strategy

Mentoring and tutoring

The participants received continuous feedback and individual guidance throughout the project, on the one hand for the development of their school strategies and on the other hand during the co-creation of the MOOC materials.

Self-reflection on processes and content

Mentoring



Legend

WS 1	Co-creation workshop 1	CM1	Co-creation online meeting 1: MOOC co-creation kick-off
WS 2	Co-creation workshop 2	CM2	Co-creation online meeting 2: Co-creation training webinar
OM1	Online Meeting 1: Project kick-off	CM3	Co-creation online meeting 3: MOOC contribution feedback
OM2	Online Meeting 2: Strategy progress	CM4	Co-creation online meeting 4: Co-creation finalisation
OM3	Online Meeting 3: Feedback review	MOOC	Launch of the Massive Open Online Course
OM4	Online Meeting 4: Implementation progress	Draft	Draft strategy submission
OM5	Online Meeting 5: Final submission Q&A	Final	Final strategy submission

Figure 4 Mentoring and Tutoring Process

Face-to-face co-creation workshop (1)

All project participants took part in the first co-creation workshop to kick off the project and the strategy development process. The participants received training on social media literacy in schools and data protection, as well as insights into current trends in social media use and an introduction to strategic planning for schools. The training sessions included interactive elements that

allowed for exchange among the participants and questions to the presenters.

Face-to-face co-creation workshop (2)

The second workshop was held to support the eight co-creators in the further development of the MOOC materials and prepare them to animate and co-moderate the course. In order to provide in-depth individual feedback, so-called “co-creation stations” were set up, where participants

could concretely discuss the developed materials with EUN's video production experts, pedagogical advisors and the project team. Finally, the co-creators were trained in online course moderation and community management by the EUN Academy team to prepare them for an active role in the MOOC animation.

Monthly online exchange opportunities for participants

Throughout the project, participants were also offered opportunities for exchange between themselves under the guidance of the project team. For this purpose, six online meetings were organised, each focusing on a different aspect of the SML strategy process, including initial training, a development Q&A, the discussion of the draft strategy feedback, a session on challenges and successes of the implementation, and a revision session of the final strategy submission. Finally, the last online meeting consisted of a focus group where participants exchanged their views on the project and on their individual experiences while developing and implementing their strategy.

Distance mentoring and support to co-creation process

As for the strategy process, online meetings were also offered to support the development of the MOOC materials. There were five meetings, including a kick-off, a co-creation training, a meeting to validate the MOOC contributions, a meeting for the finalisation of the co-creation materials, and a final focus group to gather feedback regarding the co-creation process itself.

The co-creators had the opportunity to share their progress, engage in peer-learning, and receive mentoring and tailored answers to their questions from the project team.

MOOC coordination meeting and moderators' training

An additional MOOC coordination meeting was held with all project participants who contributed to the course in different forms, including the moderation of the course, e.g. on social media, participation in a TeachMeet webinar and provision of additional resources for the course. Thus, the coordination meeting included content on online community engagement, moderation and live events organisation, as well as general training on running a MOOC.

Feedback cycles for strategies and MOOC content development

Finally, the project team provided individual support through structured cycles of written feedback. In the case of the strategy development, participants submitted the strategies in two steps, revising them on the basis of the feedback. The individual feedback focused on aspects such as SML strategy relevance, the whole-school consideration, strategy coherence, attainability and impact, and the quality of the risk assessment and mitigation strategies proposed. Similarly, continuous feedback was provided to the co-creators of MOOC materials after the submission of drafts, focusing on the content of the process outlines, videos and resources and critical aspects such as data protection.

Assessment and self-reflection activities

Given the innovative strategic planning approach and co-creation methodology of the project, assessment and self-reflection were considered crucial throughout the activities, in order to evaluate the processes and underlying rationale. To do this, several measures were put in place.

- Initial survey: An initial school survey was conducted to learn more about the project schools' environment and ICT management, and their plans for the internal strategy management.
- Initial group reflection and needs analysis: In the first face-to-face interaction with the participants, the situation of social media use and literacy in their countries and schools was discussed.
- Continuous group reflection: The online meetings provided opportunities for the participants to assess and share their progress, including potential challenges such as schedule issues or a lack of engagement from stakeholders. This was invaluable for the project teams' evaluation of strategic planning development processes in schools.
- Individual self-reflection: The tailored written feedback to the strategies provided opportunities for improvement for the participants, but it also enabled a structured evaluation of the strategies, their strengths, gaps, and potential difficulties teachers encountered.
- Co-creators' assessment of instructional design and MOOC content: The co-creation workshop not only served to further improve the MOOC materials but also provided an opportunity for the co-creators to share their feedback on the process and potential improvements.
- Final individual reflection: The overall project evaluation by all participants was conducted through an anonymous online survey. It included questions about the theoretical and practical knowledge gain of the participants, their perceived readiness and success in implementing the strategies, and the main enablers the project provided. It also assessed difficulties and potential suggestions for improvement and the lessons learned.
- Final group reflection: Finally, two online focus groups were held, one open to all participants about the overall project and one targeted at the co-creators for a specific review of the co-creation process. Both were conducted in a semi-structured approach featuring open questions regarding the innovativeness of the project/process, main challenges, added value, lessons learned and overall satisfaction with the project/co-creation process.



Project results

Developing a whole-school social media literacy strategy

During the project, 22 of the 25 participating schools succeeded in developing a full SML strategic plan based on the suggested framework.

An analysis of these strategies was carried out by the coordinating team and showed that, although schools share some interests and challenges, their priorities differ significantly depending on the schools' context, their community "climate", existing policies, curricula, and the interest and competences of the staff involved. The SML strategies submitted were tailored to each school's unique circumstances, and this was also reflected in the diverse needs and subsequent priorities expressed by each school.

The full version of this analysis is available in the report "Social Media Literacy for Change: A Whole-School Journey Towards a Meaningful Social Media Literacy Strategy" published on the project webpages - <http://fcl.eun.org/sml4change>.

In the following, a brief summary of each core aspect is provided.

Internal and external factors that could affect the success of the SML strategy

Through an analysis of their schools' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) the participants reflected upon internal and external factors that might positively or negatively affect the development and implementation of their strategy.

A meta-analysis of these SWOT analyses showed that schools especially perceived motivated and qualified staff, engaged parents and students, adequate technical infrastructure and support from the school leadership as internal strengths. By contrast, a perceived lack of motivation or knowledge of colleagues, a lack of financial and technical resources, and the possible engagement of students in risky behaviour were seen as

weaknesses. Regarding external factors, a lack of coherent policy as well as restrictive policies and a lack of resources in local languages other than English were perceived as threats, among other factors. Perceived opportunities supporting a successful strategy included the participation in larger European projects such as eTwinning or the eSafety label initiatives, and the availability of high-quality teacher training and local IT-know-how.

SML strategy areas of interest and proposed activities

The analysis of the SML strategies submitted showed a broad spectrum of focus areas, ranging from awareness-raising for online safety to the development of school policies, enhancing cognitive and emotional skills, or creative expression. Hence, the related activities described in the strategies' implemen-

tation plans also focused on many different topics, such as cyberbullying, privacy, hate speech, disinformation, and others. They targeted students, teachers, parents and the wider school community, and included initiatives to understand the school's social media landscape, raise awareness, (co-)create resources, develop school policies or foster long-term initiatives such as peer education and mediation schemes, teacher training or European projects.

The importance of risk analysis and mitigation plans

As all strategic planning is subject to risks that might impede the successful strategy development and implementation, the project participants were encouraged to identify potential risks early on and to formulate ways to prevent or mitigate them.

The risks identified could be categorised as being staff-, student-, parent- or school-related, and mainly concerned a potential lack of motivation or time, and/or a perceived lack of knowledge about social media and social media literacy, the latter specifically in the case of parents and teachers. It was proposed that these should be mitigated especially through transparent and constant communication with colleagues and parents, finding a motivated group to lead the strategy process, and connecting the strategy to existing school activities, particularly those well attended by parents. Moreover, several teachers feared that social media might be inappropriately used by students, which



could be prevented by agreeing on social media rules together with the students and formalising them, and by introducing mechanisms to prevent, detect and tackle problems early on. At the level of the school, the main risks identified in the strategies were issues to align the strategy with the school calendar, data security and privacy concerns, and a lack of budget. To mitigate those risks, remedies such as thorough planning well in advance, adequate technical infrastructure and protocols, and the attraction of external funding were proposed.

Impact of the SML strategies

Schools described different initiatives to assess the impact of their strategies, formulating various indicators such as the acquisition of knowledge and skills related to SML, changes in students' social media-related attitudes and in their perceptions of social media. The proposals included quantitative tools such as questionnaires, and qualitative tools in the form of, for example, focus groups and interviews. Moreover, the assessment also concerned the success in implementing the strategy itself.

However, although the strategies analysis showed the schools' eagerness to assess these aspects, it became apparent that there is a lack of know-how regarding the assessment of strategic planning as well as social media literacy, and also of assessment tools for schools. Thus, specific training and reliable and user-friendly tools, especially in languages other than English, are needed.

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

Aims and content

The sml4change MOOC was designed as a capacity-building tool to help schools foster critical social media literacy in their school community from a young age, thereby supporting the reference skills framework identified for the project.³

The main aims of the MOOC were to support school professionals to:

- understand and assess the social media landscape of their school community;
- identify relevant social media needs and challenges;
- explore and embrace a more active usage of SML tools, particularly of opportunities for collaboration and content creation on social media platforms;
- develop an SML strategy adopting a participatory and whole-school approach;
- monitor and assess the effectiveness of the SML school strategy they have developed;
- anticipate and identify risks which could threaten their SML strategy and propose ways to mitigate those risks.

By the end of the course, participants were expected to be able to design an SML strategy for their school. To be awarded a certificate, MOOC participants had to submit their SML school strategy following the guidelines and the template provided for this final task. They also had to peer-review other participants' strategies based on the assessment rubric developed for this purpose.

The MOOC targeted heads of schools,

primary and secondary school teachers and also teachers in initial training. It lasted 6.5 weeks and included five modules. The main content of the MOOC (video captions and key documents) was available in ten EU languages: Dutch, English, German, Greek, Italian, Latvian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian and Spanish. The full syllabus for the MOOC is available on the project webpages – <http://fcl.eun.org/sml4change>

Module 1: What is social media literacy?

This introductory module looked at social media literacy, its relationship with media and information literacy and digital literacy in general, and the challenges related to social media use by children and young people at school and beyond.

Module 2: What is a social media literacy strategy?

This module presented the key aspects of an SML strategy and their relevance for educational institutions. It elaborated on how to develop and implement innovative and effective strategies, with both theoretical and practical information on topics such as whole-school approach, school governance and participatory processes.

Module 3: How to develop a meaningful SML strategy at your school

This module focused on the design of SML school strategies and on the first steps of the strategy definition, including the situational analysis, SWOT analysis and goals definitions as well as practical examples.

³ Common Sense Media, "What Is Media Literacy, and Why Is It Important?", accessed September 7, 2018, <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/news-and-media-literacy/what-is-media-literacy-and-why-is-it-important>.

Module 4: Implementing your strategy

This module focused on the implementation of the SML strategy at school, including some good practices and resources developed by the project schools.

Module 5: Assessing the impact of your strategy

This module focused on methods and approaches to monitor, assess and improve SML strategies, linking the initial needs and situational analysis to the progress of the strategic plan.

Apart from having access to audio-visual and written materials co-produced by European Schoolnet in cooperation with the teacher co-creators, the sml4change

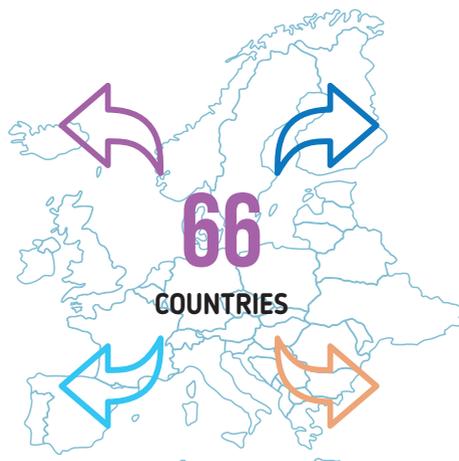
MOOC participants also had the opportunity to:

- receive advice from experts and peers, and concrete suggestions about how to develop an SML strategy for schools;
- access videos of inspiring practice and other support material;
- find a community of like-minded professionals on the course who could support them in improving school practices;
- reflect, discuss and share about these topics;
- use a variety of online tools and social media to communicate and engage in peer-review activities;
- define their own strategy, step by step.



1,541

PARTICIPANTS REGISTERED



66

COUNTRIES



947

STARTED IT

Participation and results

The MOOC was launched on the European Schoolnet Academy in April 2019. The MOOC was freely available to school leaders and teachers from across Europe and beyond.

Participants

In total, 1,541 participants from 66 countries registered to take part in the MOOC and 947 of them started it. Of all the people who followed the course, 216 participants were awarded a certificate. As observed in the table below, the MOOC was particularly popular among participants from Italy, Romania, Turkey, Croatia and Spain.

Top 10 countries by number of participants

Started		Completed	
Turkey	210	Italy	53
Italy	196	Romania	37
Romania	109	Turkey	35
Croatia	72	Croatia	26
Spain	62	Spain	23
Portugal	56	Greece	13
Greece	51	Portugal	10
Albania	15	Serbia	5
Serbia	14	Poland	3
Poland	13	Ukraine	3

Figure 5 Top 10 countries which started and completed the sml4change MOOC

According to data collected via the pre-course survey (N=551), most of the course participants were female (82%), secondary school teachers (77%). Interestingly, only 24% of survey respondents were primary school teachers. Among the respondents, 7% were ICT coordinators and 4% were heads of school. Most participants claimed to have been working in the educational field for more than 15 years with 41% of respondents indicating 20 or more years' experience in the field.

Results

With 25%, the MOOC completion rate⁴ was considerable, but slightly below the average completion rate of European Schoolnet MOOCs. Nonetheless, the fact

that 1 out of 4 participants were able to submit a fully-fledged SML strategy is not to be underestimated.

We acknowledge that this task was intense and more time-consuming than the typical MOOC final activity. It required significant preparation (e.g. carrying out a deep SWOT analysis of the school, drafting an implementation and an assessment plan, as well as a risk assessment). As some of the project participants explained to us during the project assessment focus group sessions, developing a whole-school strategy is highly relevant but not all of them felt prepared to take on such a structured task. Therefore, although the MOOC offered basic tools, knowledge

⁴ The course completion rate is calculated by dividing the total number of participants who completed the course (and were thus awarded a certificate for course completion) by the total number of participants who started at least the first compulsory module of the MOOC.

and practical tips, these seemed not to be enough for the MOOC participants to submit a full SML strategy for review in the given time. Moreover, the fact that the MOOC was launched at the end of April implied that the last task coincided with the end of the academic year, one of the busiest periods for most European teachers. This may have also had an impact in the completion rate.

Lastly, some participants may have had the expectations that this MOOC would focus on classroom level and activities to be directly implemented in their day-to-day classes, like lesson plans or other educational resources, which was not the intended main purpose of this schema.

As illustrated by the positive feedback received by MOOC participants via the post-MOOC survey, 97% of all respondents (N=148) rated the MOOC as very good (69%) or good (28%). Positive comments about the quality of the course were also posted by MOOC participants on the different interactive platforms offered during the course. Most participants also reported that the course has made them more confident in implementing an SML strategy (95% agree or strongly agree with this statement, 93% agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend this course to a colleague or friend and 94% agreed or strongly agreed that the quality of the course met their expectations).

Most MOOC participants agree or strongly agree that they will use the ideas and examples provided in the MOOC in their everyday work (95%) and they report having gained practical ideas on how to improve their professional practice

(96%). Participants also strongly agree (51%) or agree (45%) that the course discussions were useful for learning and strongly agree (61%) or agree (35%) that the learning objectives were clearly communicated.

The fact that this MOOC was co-created with teachers may help explain why most participants agreed or strongly agreed with these aspects.

Engagement and community building

Several interactive features were offered in relation to the MOOC, each with a different function and purpose. As the results of the post-MOOC survey show, 96% of the MOOC participants agreed or strongly agreed that the interactions during the MOOC were useful for their learning experience.

Platform embedded tools: Forum

The forum is a feature embedded in the European Schoolnet Academy platform and was therefore easily accessible to all participants following the course, without the need for registration anywhere else. The forum offered the possibility for all participants to open threads about the course content and share their learning diaries, and it provided a dedicated space for recommendations to the project team. Moreover, notable contributions were shared by the project team every week and any organisational issues regarding the submission of the final strategies and their reviews could be addressed in the forum.

We observed that posts shared by the participants in the forum were also shared in the Facebook group and that participants did not respond to discussions prompted by the MOOC co-creators in the forum to

the same extent as on other platforms, or that discussions remained rather superficial in the forum compared to other social media platforms or other interactive features embedded in the course modules. Overall, 113 posts were published in the course forum by 44 active participants, making the forum one of the less interactive tools. Nonetheless, the forum was an important feature as it was easily accessible for all MOOC participants and it allowed structured communication between the coordinating team and the participants on specific topics.

External community tools: Facebook group

In addition to the forum, a “Social Media Literacy for Change – European Schoolnet Academy” Facebook group was set up. It took the form of a closed group to which participants with a Facebook account needed to request access and be approved, providing a protected space for exchange and discussion. With 371 members, 348 of whom were active members, the group proved to be a popular feature and activity was high, with 946 comments and 5103 reactions recorded throughout the course. All Facebook activities were moderated by the project team, ensuring constructive debate; and no incidents in relation to violations of group rules or code of conduct were reported by group members or Facebook, or observed by the project team.

In terms of content, the Facebook group was used to re-share and discuss MOOC content and share personal experiences with SML, and also to share related external materials and links. Participants seemed to

feel comfortable discussing content, but also sharing issues regarding their submissions, providing useful insights to the project team, e.g. about the perception of the timing of the course. Interactions took place between participants and even administrative questions were answered within the group of participants; thus, the Facebook group succeeded in creating a student-driven community and encouraging interaction among teachers.

Towards the end of the course, participants reached out to the project team regarding the submission of the final strategy through posts and private messages. In turn, the project team used the Facebook group’s potential to spark content discussions and promote MOOC-related content, as well as, for example, the course live events.

In conclusion, the Facebook group proved a popular tool that was used in various ways, both by the project team and by project participants. It encouraged an atmosphere of exchange and praise, leading to fruitful discussions and new insights for the project team.

External tools for individual learning activities and group reflection

Apart from the interactive features described above, there were also external tools embedded in the MOOC modules that allowed for the expression of opinion by participants and exchange of ideas and viewpoints. This included six Padlet walls, i.e. web pages on which participants could share text, videos or images as on a virtual pinboard, and six Tricider pages. The latter is a tool through which participants could share their own ideas in writing, and then comment and vote on other participants’ ideas. While teachers were asked to assess



their own school's context on the Padlets and share their experience with other participants, the Triciders were used for more abstract reflection activities on the course content. Overall, each of the Padlets and Triciders gathered between 144 and 357 original contributions, plus comments and votes on Triciders.

The interactions observed through these tools provided interesting insights into the realities of teachers taking the course, their main challenges and interests. It also allowed the project team to reflect upon the participants' understanding of the course matter and potential gaps.

For instance, the Padlet and Triciders around strategic planning showed that teachers might need additional theoretical and practical training regarding this aspect of school governance, since the concept was sometimes misunderstood, and many comments related to class practice rather than to strategic planning. A similar observation was made about strategy assessment. While many teachers were familiar with assessment methods, there seemed to be a lack of accessible tools to translate that knowledge into their strategies.

In contrast, contributions related to the use of social media in school and the challenges related to incorporating social media literacy in school contexts were very dense and the discussions were rich. A preliminary analysis of the user-generated content showed that the main areas of interest and perceived problem areas include teacher training and motivation, and the lack of coherent (school) policies. Many teachers discussed a lack of strategy regarding social media literacy in their school, and many identified the creation

of leadership teams and teacher training as prerequisites for successful SML strategies that are currently not available. Teachers who did indicate activities on SML in their schools mentioned that they were often connected to larger projects or initiatives, such as Safer Internet Day. Generally, the debates showed that while social media are a much-debated issue in many schools, social media literacy is not yet tackled. Nonetheless, the interactions in the embedded features showed that awareness was raised for the need to address SML strategically, and many teachers supported this position using their own experience. For example, strategic approaches were seen as a chance to protect students from online risks, but also to bridge school and home life, enhance creativity, foster citizenship and stimulate learning environments in which students are not reliant on their teachers' personal interest in the topic, competences, and goodwill. Strategic planning was thus seen as a facilitator of equality for students, but also as a means to distribute responsibility and workload among teachers.

At the level of interactions, both Padlets and Triciders proved popular, possibly because they were embedded in the course content pages and thus easily accessible, and moreover provided an opportunity to post comments anonymously. Regarding the dynamics of exchange, these tools, especially the Triciders, contained useful commenting and voting features. These provided an opportunity for teachers to engage with one another and share their different experiences and viewpoints in relation to concrete ideas and proposals. The function to agree/disagree with or comment on another participant's idea en-

abled the connection of different aspects through the lenses of teachers with different backgrounds, and these functions were used constructively throughout the course.

In conclusion, the interactive features that were most used were the reflective activities embedded in each module of the course and the Facebook group. As mentioned, the former were easily accessible to all participants following the course and invited them to reflect directly upon the course content, even anonymously. The latter seemed popular especially due to the visible and real-time possibility for interaction and the availability of moderators from the project team. Another important

aspect seemed to be the opportunity to build relations online, as several teachers did through repeated interactions throughout the course.

Tools that support learning activities should continue to be embedded in courses in the future, as they provide not only opportunities for peer-learning but also insights into the realities of teachers across Europe that are invaluable for the project team. The course forum remains important as a tool that is accessible to all participants and in which discussions can be structured by topic, but it seems worthwhile to investigate how it can contribute to the building of online relations and thus to a greater sense of learning community.



Assessment of project processes

Overall, the sml4change approach succeeded in maintaining a constant level of engagement.

Involving potential users is believed to result in better insights which could not be obtained if they were not part of the process. Allowing participants and co-creators to have a substantive say in the MOOC development process has made the course a relevant and teacher-friendly tool. By actively involving a group of teachers in this collaborative development process, ideas were shared and improved jointly, and several audio-visual materials were developed including videos in which teachers referred to their own experiences while

developing or implementing an SML strategy at their school.

All modules included teachers' and school leaders' expertise, input and feedback. These teachers had the capacity to better understand the school reality and their contributions therefore focused on sharing the main challenges they had faced and the lessons each of them had learned in the process of developing and implementing an SML strategy for their school. These genuine and self-reflective materials added a new layer of complexity and value to the MOOC, while prompting the project coordination team to continuously reflect on the relevance, usability and usefulness of each learning

component. The co-creators themselves valued their involvement in the MOOC co-creation as an intense and enriching learning experience, which also allowed them to get a deeper knowledge of their own schools and their needs. This was made clear during the focus group held with the co-creators once the MOOC had finalised.

In conclusion, this user-centric, participatory and collaborative approach has made the final product more accessible and user-friendly and, thus, an added value for teachers and school leaders in Europe and beyond, as many of the project participants mentioned in their feedback.

"Objectively, this project was different because we were involved in a workshop and in something we had to implement in our schools, so the level of engagement and involvement was very high [...]. Also designing a strategy for the whole school is important from the organisation's point of view, not only the pedagogical one."

(Teacher, Italy)

"I appreciate that we were given the freedom within the framework of the project and it allowed us to create the content needed for schools."

(Teacher, Latvia)

"[I found sml4change innovative because] first of all, most of the projects are mainly aimed at children's audiences, which means that teachers are assisting and helping students to achieve particular project goals. Here the main emphasis was put on the school as such, on the school culture and the ways to change and implement something from scratch. Secondly, the project was not only about what to do, but rather how to do it. The projects I have participated in usually just set the goals, but sometimes you are left alone on the way. However, with sml4change we were guided, we learned what to do and how to do it, which is the key to success."

(Teacher, Latvia)

"Co-creators' participation with real school examples adds motivation and authenticity to the project, so I think it was interesting to involve teachers in the process. During the MOOC it was excellent to see that our contribution was important and relevant to other colleagues, and to have their supportive comments was very encouraging."

(Teacher, Portugal)

"During the co-creation process, I received guidance and feedback from the project team that allowed me to reflect on my school's strategy. As part of this self-reflection, I gained a much better understanding of my own school. I think the strategy implemented in the school will be positive in the long term."

(Teacher, Spain)

"I grew as a teacher and as a citizen, or maybe a teacher who knows much more the school in which I work"

(Teacher, Italy)



Lessons learned

As a result of the continuous self-reflection and assessment of the project approach and outcomes at all levels, key lessons were drawn which can also be of value for future initiatives.

At system level

More strategic approaches are necessary to foster social media literacy.

While significant time, effort and resources continue to be invested in the development of one-shot awareness campaigns or isolated short-term (social) media literacy initiatives, better results would be achieved if long-term (social) media literacy strategies were developed, implemented and properly assessed with schools.

More sustainable approaches towards social media literacy for the whole school are still lacking and projects such as sml4change have demonstrated that more can be done in this respect.

More resources to support the educational sector to develop meaningful long-term social media literacy strategies are required.

Before this project, the coordinators were not aware of any comprehensive resources or toolkits to support schools, as opposed to just individual teachers, in making strategic decisions about social media and social media literacy at school. Teachers and school professionals are skilled in specific school subjects, they are trained to develop lesson plans and activities and know how and when to incorporate peda-

gogical elements to improve the learning experiences of their students. However, considering the experience of this project, few of them seemed to possess the know-how to develop long-term strategies that will impact the whole school and not just their individual classes.

More initiatives such as the sml4change MOOC seem necessary to cater to the evolving needs of the educational sector as regards social media literacy.

Social media literacy efforts should start from a young age and this requires primary school teachers to be well-prepared to take on this challenge.

Despite the efforts to reach teachers from both primary and secondary schools, only 24% of the sml4change MOOC participants were primary school teachers. Children are going online younger than ever before, so any effort to promote and develop (social) media literacy should start from a young age. This may also require more tailored approaches to tackle such complex topics and social processes with younger children and a stronger involvement of families.

It is therefore important to develop training resources and initiatives to attract more primary school teachers.

School professionals should have access to appropriate and user-friendly assessment tools, to evaluate the impact of their SML efforts as well as guidance on how to use them.

From the analysis of the SML strategies it was observed that schools are eager to assess the impact of their strategies, but they lack the know-how to assess strategic planning in general and SML in particular. Furthermore, access to reliable and user-friendly tools for schools to measure the impact of their SML efforts is limited, especially in local languages other than English. This means that many schools implement activities and initiatives, but after their implementation they are unsure whether these activities have achieved the expected results (e.g. are children able to assess content more critically after these in-

terventions? Or have incidents related to the misuse of social media been reduced?). As one teacher commented: "I would like to know if it all finishes here and now, or if there will be any kind of study or feedback in the future. Will it be possible to see the effects of this project in the future?"

Based on the analysis of these shortcomings, the sml4change project devoted a full module of the MOOC to providing guidance and practical tips on how to monitor the progress of the SML strategy and how to assess its impact. It would be advisable to continue supporting educators with specific training in these areas. It is also important that school professionals have access to appropriate and user-friendly assessment tools and guidance on how to use them.

At school/local community level

One-off initiatives by individual teachers are not enough to foster systemic, long-term changes in (social) media literacy.

It is important that schools understand that the challenges related to social media involve the whole school community. As such, a strategic approach towards social media literacy is required. There are plenty of good quality resources that teachers can use or adapt in their classes to help their students foster specific SML skills or to make students more aware of effective ways to use social media more creatively, responsibly and safely, but these resources usually involve single classes rather than whole-school and participatory approaches.

Developing an SML strategy requires much more than strategic management skills and basic knowledge of social media.

Knowing how to write smart goals and objectives, how to perform a risk assessment or how to define a strategic vision is important. Knowing how to involve all relevant stakeholders in the process of building, implementing and assessing the strategy and monitoring and evaluating the impact of the strategy developed are also key elements of any strategic plan. In the case of an SML strategy, schools also need to identify their specific needs regarding social media literacy and set priorities depending on those needs. For instance: What are the per-

ceptions and expectations of students, parents and school staff about using social media at school? Which SML skills do students and teachers currently possess and which ones are missing? Which human and financial resources will be required to implement an SML strategy at school?

During the sml4change project, participants were periodically confronted with these types of questions. Reflecting on these issues helped them make informed decisions about what they wanted to achieve through their SML strategies and was essential to develop meaningful, realistic and achievable strategies.

At project level

Resources should be invested to assess the long-term impact of the SML strategies developed within the sml4change project.

By looking at the participants' assessment of the sml4change project and at the SML strategies already assessed, participants are better prepared than before to strategically incorporate social media literacy at their schools thanks to the training they received through the project. The coordinating team's evaluations at this point cannot, however, demonstrate the medium- and long-term impact of the project. Therefore, another important reflection from this pilot project is that it would be relevant to follow up on the schools participating in pilot projects and to be able to assess the effectiveness of the SML strategies submitted by the MOOC participants in the long term.

School management and leadership are key to the success of long-term SML strategies.

Despite the efforts of this project to reach school leaders, only 4% of the sml4change MOOC participants were heads of school according to the course survey. As emphasised by the teachers participating in the project, the active involvement of and support from the school management and leadership is key to the success of any SML strategy. It is therefore advisable to continue investing efforts to develop more training materials specifically tailored to this target group and to find effective ways to engage them to "do more".

A strong sml4change community has been created and efforts should be made to make this community of social media literacy-minded educators grow.

Through this project a strong community of educators committed to integrating SML in meaningful ways in their school communities has been created. The potential of this group of teachers is significant and it would be advisable to set up new initiatives in a timely way to make this community grow. Teachers can reach more teachers, pupils and families, school leaders and educational policymakers. It is important to explore potential avenues to extend this cooperation and so reach more schools.



Conclusions

Despite the wide recognition of the need for greater Social Media Literacy, a lot of uncertainty and lack of agreement arise when trying to determine what an effective Social Media Literacy programme should entail. Probably for this reason, many initiatives targeting the development of Social Media Literacy skills are limited to single efforts such as one-shot awareness-raising campaigns or lessons about the topic, which have proven to have a limited effect on the actual media literacy levels of the target population.

Unsurprisingly, many policy discussions and debates end up concluding that schools should aim to enhance and increase (social) media literacy competences. Educators are indeed well-placed to offer guidance to children who may approach them with questions or concerns related to social media, as many currently do. However, although there is no doubt that school professionals are uniquely positioned to reach and help children and their families to better understand social media and to encourage their healthy and positive use, as well as to prevent and monitor for potential problems, many schools and teachers feel ill-equipped to take on this challenge.

Incorporating social media at school in meaningful ways requires much more than the willingness of a few teachers to introduce social media education in their classes. Individual efforts are nec-

essary, but they are not enough to ensure a systemic change at school level and a positive long-term impact on children's social media and digital practices beyond the school.

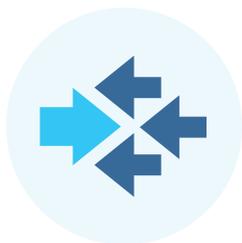
Clearly, the challenges related to improving Social Media Literacy in European schools are numerous and the schools' realities and their environments are diverse. Because of this diversity, no one-size-fits-all Social Media Literacy curriculum or educational programme will cater to the needs of all European schools. In a context where social media and digital technologies are evolving faster than ever before, solid guidance that helps schools to make informed decisions about how to meaningfully incorporate social media education in their school community is seriously lacking.

Bearing in mind these challenges, the Social Media Literacy for Change project aimed primarily to support teachers and school leaders to reflect on the individual social media landscape of their school and to guide them to develop appropriate medium and long-term strategies to enhance Social Media Literacy in their school community. The intense learning process carried out with these schools also constituted the basis for designing the MOOC, which offered theoretical knowledge and practical tips and guidelines on how to develop a whole-school Social Media Literacy strategy.

Thanks to the Social Media Literacy for Change project and its approach, the coordinating team was able to better understand the challenges that schools face when tackling Social Media Literacy at school, and how schools' realities and their environments are diverse in this sense, across Europe. At the end of this one-year pilot project, a powerful capacity-building tool is now freely available online, with the potential to continue

supporting teachers and school leaders so that they can "do more" about Social Media Literacy at their schools, and we hope that these long-term efforts will start to be multiplied in Europe and beyond.

As one of the teachers participating in the project put it: "Such a project can put the school in a situation to change the educational system. It is pioneering."





European Schoolnet is the network of 34 European Ministries of Education, based in Brussels. As a not-for-profit organisation, we aim to bring innovation in teaching and learning to our key stakeholders: Ministries of Education, schools, teachers, researchers, and industry partners.

We are driven by our mission to support education stakeholders in Europe in the transformation of education processes for 21st century digitalised societies. We do this by identifying and testing promising innovative practices, sharing evidence about their impact, and supporting the mainstreaming of teaching and learning practices aligned with 21st century standards for inclusive education.

More information about the Social Media Literacy for Change project:
<http://fcl.eun.org/sml4change>

You can equally follow the social media activity by using the hashtags:
#SocialMediaLiteracy4Change and **#sml4change**

For more information about our project and activities, contact us by email at
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