

# Changing the change

Design Visions, Proposals and Tools

An international conference on the role and potential of design research in the transition towards sustainability

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## PROPOSALS

# LOOKING FOR LIKELY ALTERNATIVES (LOLA)

Shifting our society in a more sustainable direction  
through design-based didactic activities

## Abstract

The Looking for Likely Alternatives (LOLA) project is a pedagogical tool for teachers and students, which assists them in the process of identifying, evaluating and documenting cases of social innovation for sustainable lifestyles. The LOLA project's goal is to help teachers and their class to discover, approach and give visibility to new sustainable lifestyles in their surroundings.

New forms of sustainable users behaviours and promising bottom up innovations are continuously appearing. These initiatives have been carried out by communities of people who organize themselves and develop new solutions based on mutual help, collaboration, sharing, etc. On top of facing their own problems, these solutions can be seen as potential seeds of new sustainable lifestyles. ***LOLA's core activity is based on scouting for promising cases towards sustainability. Giving light to this kind of grass-root innovation, the pupils share knowledge, developing a vision about the future and how to change our society in a positive way shifting it in a new and more sustainable direction.***

The project aims to reach the following goals;

1. develop, as a didactic tool to raise sustainability awareness, the process of searching for cases of social innovation;
2. strengthen the processes of identifying social innovation, evaluating promising cases, clarifying the conditions requiring such innovations and reflecting on the consequences of such initiatives;
3. improve the use of ICT and multimedia by teachers and students/pupils in their work of documenting relevant cases of social innovation;
4. facilitate bottom-up social learning as a complement to traditional expert-driven learning;
5. motivate teachers to involve students in learning to learn from real life situations.

Specific tools were designed to reach these goals. The main toolkit was called LOLA ***Teaching Pack*** composed by: the ***student reporter book*** consists in an easy to construct booklet supporting the kids in making the interviews, taking pictures and where they are invited to write down and draw all their

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observations; **step by step cards**, **guide book** and **tips & notes** to facilitate the organisation and presentation of the learning process and the **documentation form**, a form to help teachers to document the process and for the LOLA team to get feedback in order to improve and finalize the LOLA work package. Other tools were developed and will be described in the final paper. Currently, the LOLA project is promoting its implementation in secondary schools in and also outside Europe. For ensuring direct and clear communication paths with participating schools around the world, the role of “ambassador” was created per region or country (to support their work an **Ambassador kit** was created). LOLA connects the work of ambassadors and teachers from several countries and schools through an ICT platform that are being continuously improved.

This paper intends to present LOLA tools and to analyse the potential of the LOLA project in shifting our society in a more sustainable direction through didactic activities. Our final conclusion will be based on the development of the following topics and questions, which have been divided in two sections: LOLA tools and analysis.

LOLA tools, will present a description of the tools and the results of LOLA pilot activities. It will include an analysis and evaluation – from the point of view of the designers who have developed it and teachers and students who have used it.

LOLA analysis will present an in depth view of the project, answering to the following questions:

- what are the basis for LOLA in the theories of social innovation for sustainability?
- what are basis for LOLA in pedagogical theories?
- what is the importance and role of ICT in LOLA?

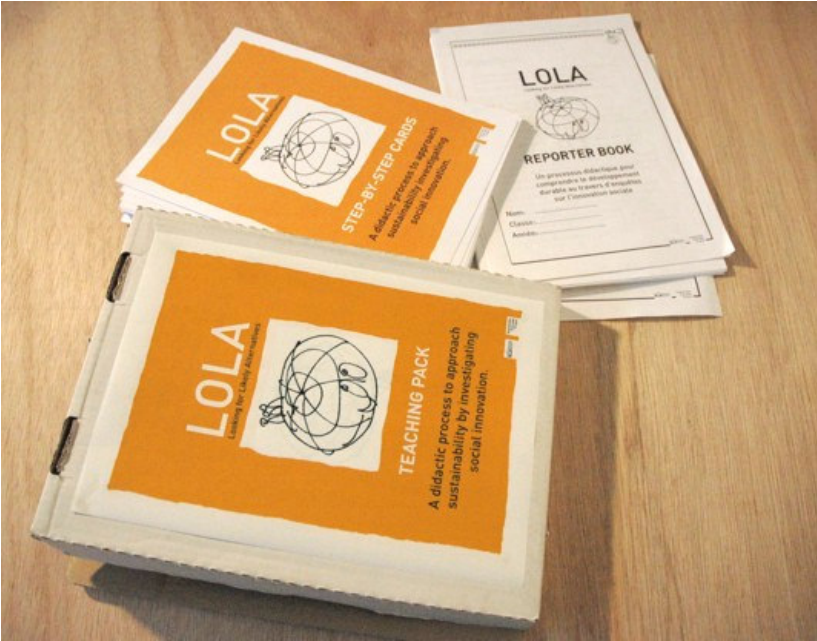
Our final conclusion will be that LOLA is developing in students, a “designerly way of knowing”. Students are stimulated to describe for each promising case collected: “how the initiative start”, “who are the users”, “which user need does it answer”, “what are the aims”, “what works well in the solution”, and other questions that implicitly induce students to recognize initiatives in a “solution-focused way”. It intends to promote in students –so far as possible – the idea that people are able to “design” for themselves, to solve problems and to live in a sustainable way. LOLA is considered here a design-based didactic process in two ways: because the tools have been designed and because it is a design-based didactic activity.

(see please pictures - the next page)

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Picture 1: The LOLA Teaching Pack showing the Step-By-Step Cards and the Reporter Book



Picture 2: The Ambassador Kit and content.