

Fairville Labs

MARSEILLE 4-5

Facing inequalities and democratic challenges through Co-production in Cities (Fairville) is a Urban Co-Production Research Project Horizon Europe.

Fairville uses knowledge co-production as strategy to address urban inequalities and democratic issues affecting seven urban areas in Europe, and two other mirror cases in Africa.



- ◆ Risk Inequalities
- ▲ Environmental Inequalities
- Planning and Housing Inequalities

Fairville experiments co-production with civil society actors, universities and local authorities to facilitate multi-engagement towards embracing entrenched urban and environmental inequalities with affected residents or community groups. Through coproduction of knowledge and actions-oriented programmes, it contributes to rethinking urban democracy.

Do you want to help? There are many ways to contribute to the project: would you like to participate in the co-production in our project tasks or go on the field in our Fairville Labs?

Contact us!

www.fairville-eu.org

fairville.eu@gmail.com



CONTEXT

Atelier Marseille 4-5 focuses on the 4th and 5th sub-districts of Marseille, analysing municipal projects implemented towards social justice and environmental transition that the new municipality, elected in 2020 thanks to a left-green-citizen led coalitions, aims at addressing. The Atelier Marseille 4-5 has set up a process of dialogue and engagement with local authorities of the 4th and 5th sub-districts as well as interested residents associations and local stakeholders, to analyse and to support through research the making of local policy in this dense urban fabric. It focuses on a number of sites and projects marked by social diversity and public initiatives.

The 4th and 5th sub-districts of Marseille includes an important social diversity in its residential areas and its public places, with areas prone to gentrification whilst others are quite working class, with pockets of poverty. The policies and projects that Atelier Marseille 4-5 has been focusing on are inter alia,

- the opening of public bath houses
- a policy to address food precarity
- (re)development of parks and pedagogic gardens in working class areas
- the revamping of public spaces to make them more inclusive

By doing so Atelier Marseille 4-5 aims to foster public debate and build coalitions around projects with environmental and social justice objectives.



ACTORS INVOLVED

For a period of 3 years, Atelier Marseille 4-5 is coordinated by Aix Marseille University (AMU), Department of Geography Planning and the Environment, in collaboration with AMU Department of Sociology, Ecole Nationale Supérieure du Paysage (ENSP), and MESOPOLHIS (research institution AMU-CNRS-IEP). It involves a large number of students from these institutions, 3rd years and Master students mostly.

Atelier Marseille 4-5 co-defines, together with the district or the central municipality, themes, municipal projects and sites where research could bring perspectives to observe, analyse and support municipal projects related to social and environmental change.

It works in dialogue with a number of specific local councillors as well as local officials, but also engages with resident groups and collectives such as "Jardins Collectifs Longchamp" and "Marseille en Transition" on various study sites.



Figure 1: Location of the municipal projects supported by the Atelier Marseille 4-5

ACTIONS

The main objective of the Atelier Marseille 4-5 is to foster public debate by building and sharing knowledge to support a fairer, more democratic, and more efficient municipal intervention on ecological transition and social justice. This involves engaging academics, students, residents, municipal councillors and officials in knowledge production and debates to create a socially just city adapted to global change.

The main activities of the Atelier Marseille 4-5 include:

- **Research activities** focusing on public space usage, public policy, food security, creation of public gardens and mapping urban wastelands;
- **Public engagement activities** based on the knowledge produced with lecturers and students, such as public urban walks, photo exhibitions, interactive presentations;
- Sometimes **closed workshops** with a smaller number of stakeholders, in particular when issues require forms of mediation;
- **Digital dissemination activities** such as publishing newsletters, blogs, and maintaining a website to disseminate information.
- An important part of the lab is dedicated to **educational activities**: engaging students in real-world projects and internships of students (3 year and Master) within the 4-5th district municipality.

These activities aim to build coalitions of actors around projects with environmental and social justice objectives, fostering knowledge production and public debate.





DOCUMENTING LOCAL PLANNING:

Opening Public Debate on Challenges and Opportunities of public policies

Atelier Marseille 4-5 aims to foster public debate by building and sharing knowledge for public action. There is a degree of co-production between academics and the municipality, though they prefer the term "dialogues." Co-production involves:

- **Jointly choosing study topics and sites** based on councillors' priorities and academics' criteria.
- **Presenting and discussing** research questions and projects with councillors and agents.
- Deciding the format for **disseminating results through dialogue**, considering the topic's sensitivity.
- **Balancing publicization** of research results with municipal confidentiality, negotiating joint editing processes.
- **Managing tensions** between intellectual freedom and municipal confidentiality, especially during public feedback sessions.

Public feedback sessions are crucial for sharing knowledge widely and fostering exchange. Some sessions have influenced municipal action or empowered local organizations and agents.



Documenting the revamp of Parc Longchamp with a specific consideration for low-income park users, the management of public space, and the risk of exclusion (December 9th 2023)

One public feedback session about the redevelopment of parc Longchamp, a huge public park in the center of the city has enabled dialogue to be re-established between the town council and the operators park cafés, public local figures for the population and playing an important role, that the research revealed, in regulating conflict in a very mixed and densely used section of the park. Their contract was going to be terminated after several decades of operation – Atelier shed light on this situation and their contract was renewed.



Figure 2: One of the very popular park café (Claire Bénéit-Gbaffou, 2023)

The research also opened a discussion with the councillor on the social role of those cafés and the need to keep their prices cheap, so as not to exclude low-income families buying from them in the revamped park. It is not clear so far if Atelier's recommendation to have a specific agreement (lower rent in exchange for lower prices) will be followed by the municipality.

Documenting the uses and representation of a large municipal public space and visibilising its fragmentation, under-uses and lack of hospitality: Velten square, Chutes Lavie (may 21th 2024)

Another public feedback session mapped the fragmentation and enclosures of a large public space owned by the district municipality (sports fields and pedagogic garden in Chutes Lavie), in the middle of a low income and quite aged neighborhood. Due to a history of small tensions in the public space and its spatial configuration (it is not a space that can be crossed easily by pedestrians, it has low natural surveillance), and to the pressure of neighbouring residents, the public space has been enclosed with many gates and fences, benches have been taken away. Students mapping, census of users during a whole week, photographs showing families sitting on the pavement waiting for their children, and the vast emptiness of this public space during week-ends, has alerted the councillors and officials that they needed to intervene to revive this public space. Several projects have been planned by the district municipality in order to do so.



Figure 3: Feedback session in Velten Square (Mathilde Jourdam-Boutin, 2024)

Documenting the planning process and daily life of a public bath house in its neighborhood – and opening a space of mediation to deflect tensions (may 2023)



Figure 4: Neighbours and users of the Public Bath House at the exhibition (Camille Floderer, 2023)

A third example: the poster presentation in the public bath house Crillon, inviting all stakeholders to reflect on the history of its opening, the conflict it had given rise to between lower-middle-class residents opposed to the installation of a facility intended for the poorest, and progressive public authorities committed to developing it but having largely neglected mediation. The exhibition showed how public agents worked in it, what public bath users found in it, and the perspective of neighbouring residents and local traders. The exhibition, making space for multiple analyses and voices, contextualising the project to give it perspective, ended up being a moment of mediation between formerly conflicting stakeholders, who were grateful to see their view point presented and recognised, and started being open to hearing and understanding the viewpoint of others. A further workshop is being proposed, between the central and the district municipality, in order to reflect on the articulation between these two scales of action, and two dimensions of justice – distributive and procedural.