Co-creation of public spaces with teenagers in Lisbon

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C3Places Project Framework

Goals

➢ Gain knowledge on the role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to enhance the attractiveness, responsiveness, and inclusiveness of public open spaces.

➢ Develop recommendations for the creation of more inclusive urban public open spaces and tailored to the needs of different groups.

Methodology

➢ Four case-studies, leaning on Living Labs, developed in different European cities – Ghent (BE); Lisbon (PT); Milan (IT); Vilnius (LT).

➢ Targeting different users’ groups (disabled people, elderly, teenagers) and exploring spatial practices in urban fabric, and needs and preferences on public open spaces.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Methodologies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assess the features and user-friendliness of public spaces in Alvalade –</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
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<tr>
<td>potential, facilities and typologies</td>
<td>Review of development plans of Lisbon</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Field observations in the local public space network</td>
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<td>Field observation #1) features of space</td>
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<td>Explore teenagers’ practices and behaviors to identify perceptions, needs,</td>
<td>Field observation #2) uses and users of space</td>
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<td>and requirements on public spaces, and detect potential conflicts of use</td>
<td>Guided field trips to public space</td>
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<td>Interviews with council experts to collect their perceptions on teenagers’ use of space</td>
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<td>Living labs with teenage students</td>
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<td>Experiment with co-creation/participative methodologies tailored to the</td>
<td>Living labs with teenage students</td>
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<td>context of teenagers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gain knowledge on social and urban policies to help draw recommendations</td>
<td>Interviews with experts</td>
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<td>for more responsive public spaces</td>
<td>Analysis of national and council policies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Framework with objectives and methodologies for case study in Lisbon. Source: C3Places Project (2018)
Teenagers and public open spaces:

Public spaces are important for children and youth development:

➢ Places where they can evade adult supervision and “test” social and individual identities (Valentine 2004).

➢ Places of socialization where they can learn, play, hang-out and grasp the world around them (Jacobs 1961; Aitken 2001; Malone 2002; Owens 2002).

➢ Greenspaces have a potentially positive effect on the physical, cognitive and emotional development of children and teenagers (Strecht 2011; Flouri, Papachristou, and Midouhas 2018).

However, contemporary parenting cultures tend to confine teenagers’ to institutionalised places of interaction and there is an adult hegemony on space (Valentine 2004) imposing (explicit and implicit) restrictions on space use.
Teenagers and participation


➢ Children’s’ requirements and needs on space are often not taken into consideration in placemaking.

➢ Planners don’t have a good understanding how young people can be included (Laughlin and Johnson, 2011).

➢ Participation agenda is often imposed by professionals (Valentine, 2004).

➢ Lack of responsibility, experience, interest, legitimacy and power to participate (Laughlin and Johnson 2011).
Living labs with teenage students – Pilot phase

➢ Students from two classes (N=49; ages from 15 to 18 years old) were engaged in a secondary school in Alvalade neighbourhood (two months; 24 hours of intervention).

➢ Backed by participatory methods and activities.

➢ Activities where developed to allow an active participation of teenagers; to create stimuli for them to reflect on their own on the processes and methods of placemaking; to gain better conceptual tools to reflect on public space issues and to empower them to express their values and ideas (Almeida et al., 2018).
Teenagers’ representations and valued spatial practices:

➢ 94% of respondents stated to use public spaces, and the majority uses them frequently (data from questionnaire handed out to students on the first session)

➢ However, the same students, manifested difficulties in reflecting about public spaces and their own spatial requirements:

1. distinction between public and private space not clear;

2. no need for more public open spaces neither in Alvalade, nor close to their homes, but need for improvements in existing spaces;

3. they are not attached to any of the local public spaces in Alvalade (majority live in other parishes in Lisbon, or even in different municipalities in the outskirts of the city (only 60% are from Lisbon municipality);

4. emphasised the importance a good network of public transport.
Teenagers’ representations and valued spatial practices

Thematic workshops ended with the **design of proposals** by teenagers for the transformation of a valued public open space in front of the school.

*Ideas for transformation of public open space*
Challenges to engage teenagers in placemaking

➢ **Lack of motivation** to take part in participatory processes since teenagers are aware of the temporal gap between actively participating and sharing ideas and benefiting from the implemented changes.

➢ **Lack of understanding** of urban concepts and low spatial representation skills can be explained by the absence of such subjects in the school curricula.

➢ **Prevalence of formal education** that makes it hard for teenagers to fully engage in more informal activities, with a more pro-active setting.
Potential of interactive and non-formal activities to increase teenagers’ awareness of public open space

New education policy “Flexibility and Autonomous Curriculum”, is putting in place mechanisms to provide a wider flexibility in the school curricula, on one end allowing different subjects, as urban planning, to be included the school curricula, and by expanding on the competences and skills to be developed by students, leaning more in citizenship education, proactivity and articulation with the broader community (GSEE, 2017a, 2017b).
**Observations of public space – Rua Marquês de Soveral:**

- From 3 to 23 of February 2019.
- Dimensions and measurements (based on the Project for Public Spaces methodology) and C3Places framework were integrated in observation.
- **Goals:** to identify teenagers’ practices, patterns of use and needs and to evaluate the spatial features of the street in front of the school in Alvalade.
Different times of the day – before school hours, beginning of school hours, intervals and lunch break, ending of school hours, after school hours and weekends

Weekends

Weekdays – school hours

Night
**Street** – mostly used by people that do not necessarily choose to use the space >> **convenience and proximity** << to the school for teenagers, to the home for other groups.

**Activities** – circulation, smoking, hanging out, sitting, walking pets, collecting Gira bicycles, playing with bikes, chatting with peers, using phone.
Need for teenagers – equipment to sit – only place designed to sit is the bench in the bus stops
In the observation was possible to identify parts of the space more used
Interviews with council experts - March and April 2019

- **Goal:** to question urban planning professionals working in Alvalade to get insights on general representations on teenagers’ appropriation of space in the neighbourhood, on public space interventions and on public policies

- **Four** final themes were identified:
  1. How teenagers' use local public spaces
  2. Teenagers remain invisible in debates on public spaces:
  3. Views on urban policies
  4. Future public spaces for teenagers
Tear & Estendal de Ideias – structure put in the school lobby to allow the active participation of the broader school community – collection of ideas for public space used by students in the second phase of living labs to develop proposals
C3Places Living Lab Lisbon

Living labs with teenage students – second phase

- 27th to 30th May 2019 (4 sessions = 6 hours)
- Two classes from professional education
- Aimed at developing a proposal to transform the space in front of the school considering teenagers’ needs and uses
- Tablets were provided and the use of a digital toolkit encouraged
- Proposals were developed by two groups and presented in the last session

Space in front of the street
Reflections on digital co-creation:

• Most students got actively engaged in the activities.

• Teenagers show low spatial representation skills and a weak knowledge of terms and definitions in the context of urban fabric and public realm.

• In the last session a short questionnaire was applied to assess the success rate and overall satisfaction with the labs -- students agreed (60%) that the “co-creation of public spaces is cool”.

Teenage-students working as a group to develop proposals for the space in front of the school
## C3Places Living Lab Lisbon

A snapshot of needs, ideas and proposals identified with and by teenagers in the living labs and Loom of Ideas

Source: C3Places Project (2020).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Proposals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility and safety</td>
<td>Redesign of traffic and the circulation path</td>
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<td>Increase pedestrian security (more crosswalks)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increase public transportation</td>
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<td>Create shared spaces (design interfaces)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban equipment and street furniture</td>
<td>Amenities to socialize and meet (for group use)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sitting opportunities for groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendlier environment</td>
<td>More green or natural areas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Protection from the weather and shading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amenities</td>
<td>Wi-fi hotspot</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Water dispenser</td>
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</tbody>
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Dimensions and features for a teenager-sensitive place. Source: C3Places Project (2020)

For further readings a list C3Places Project publications is available at: https://c3places.eu/publications
Public spaces are common goods – must respond to the needs of people and access to all is a basic need!

Even during lockdown and with restrictions on mobility, public spaces must be part of the response to the pandemic since they’re fundamental for mental and physical health.

Teenagers have suffered during the lockdown and the practices more valued by them in public space – be together, in groups, with peers, sit close by and chat – are now disencouraged. How will this affect the use of public space by teenagers in the future?

C3Places Living Lab in Lisbon revealed the role of public space and participation in granting adolescents a voice and in promoting non-formal learning experiences to empower them to contribute to their community and express their personal needs. What participation in planning will be possible in times of physical distancing?
Co-criação de espaços públicos com adolescentes em Lisboa

CO-CREATION OF PUBLIC SPACES WITH TEENAGERS IN LISBON

Joana Solipa Batista, Marluci Menezes & Carlos Smaniotto Costa

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