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Evaluation report on the participative process for the Oasis playgrounds

Summary

As part of the collective dynamics of the Oasis project, the Ligue de l'Enseignement implemented a participatory democracy protocol to determine the terms and conditions for the opening of OASIS schoolyards to new uses by the actors of the neighborhood. The LIEPP team observed these public assemblies in four Parisian schools during the winter of 2019-2020: the Jeanne d'Arc school (13th arrondissement), the Tandou school (19th arrondissement), the Maryse Hilsz school (20th arrondissement) for three sessions, and then the Emeriau school (15th arrondissement) for two additional sessions. These assemblies were marked by two complications: the transport strike during the winter of 2019-2020, and then the health context, which led to the cancellation of the last assembly scheduled in the Emeriau school.

Approximately one hundred different people participated in the three cycles of citizens' assemblies, and two-thirds of the participants came from the assemblies organized at the Jeanne d'Arc school. In the Tandou and Emeriau schools, contacting neighborhood stakeholders to encourage them to participate in citizens' assemblies was not very effective. It seems important to rethink the methods of contact in order to encourage wider participation in the future.

The working classes were relatively absent from these citizens' assemblies (including in working-class neighborhoods) and the public mainly came from more affluent socio-economic classes. The organization of these citizens' assemblies was not understood by the participants or at least, they did not appear very enthusiastic about it. The participants did not necessarily show resistance to the OASIS project and the opening of schoolyards, but they expressed a need for information and interlocutors capable of formulating answers to discuss the projects. The report highlights the confusion around the role of the artists participating in the animation of these assemblies, a theater group and a photographer. There was a lack of institutional actors capable of providing answers to questions from the public.

The report also underlines the inadequacy between the temporality of the citizens' assemblies and the project, since the project did not yet have a concrete existence for the public during the winter of 2019-2020. A more advanced project would have helped to provide precise answers to questions from the public. The materialization of the project through transformed courtyards will constitute a powerful asset to mobilize the public around these transformations.