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URBAN INNOVATIVE ACTIONS

The Urban Lab of Europe !

# The OASIS Schoolyards project Journal N° 1

*Project led by the **City of Paris***

CLIMATE ADAPTATION

European Union
European Regional Development Fund

Région Hauts-de-France

# The OASIS – Schoolyards project

The **OASIS** project aims to create a new solution to design and transform urban spaces to adapt to climate change effects. 10 pilot school playgrounds across the city of Paris will be converted into cool islands using a combination of innovative technical and nature-based solutions. Each playground will be transformed following a comprehensive co-design approach with pupils and educational communities. The project ambition is to contribute to address health risks associated with heatwaves while fostering social cohesion at neighbourhood level.

By developing a methodology of co-design with the schools' pupils and educational communities, adapting urban authority working methods to the transformation of these spaces and applying a protocol of contributory democracy, OASIS aims to raise awareness, educate and engage citizens of all ages in the improvement of their living environment. The transformation of the playground will also be an opportunity to involve local residents in a collective reflection in the possible uses as well as collective management of this new cool spaces through the establishment of 'oasis collectives'.

**Partnership:**

- City of Paris
- ESIEE
- LIEPP
- CAUE de Paris - Architecture, Urban Planning and Environment public service provider
- Ligue de l'enseignement - Federation of Paris (LIGUE)
- Meteo France

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Journal aims to introduce the project OASIS Schoolyards, explore the initial challenges that occurred during the first year of implementation and analyze the different approaches employed during the process.

The heatwave that hit Paris in June 2017 and resulted in closing down schools for 3 days due to the record-high temperatures, triggered the idea of rethinking the schoolyards as a new type of a green shared space. The available surface area that could be converted in a green space as well as the proximity of every Parisian to a school – less than 250m - led to the conclusion that schoolyards could become a "cool island" for every neighborhood during days of extreme heat.

The OASIS concept initiated as an Action Plan of the city's long-term resilient strategy, aiming to protect the most vulnerable populations from environmental threats, adapt the City's infrastructure to their specific needs while at the same time build inclusive and cohesive communities. Considering the forecasting by Météo France for further increase in temperature, frequency and duration of the heatwaves in the coming years as well as the pressing need for more green areas in order to relief the city's overbuilt neighborhoods from the Urban Heat Island effects, the OASIS project was rapidly elevated among the city administration's top priorities.

Until today, 31 schoolyards have been transformed with Municipal funding and the city is planning to step up the pace of the schoolyards' transformation processes in order to have all 760 public schoolyards transformed into neighborhood oases by 2050. In the city's resilient strategy, Paris had envisioned an urban oasis as a place that would benefit the school's and neighborhood's community in multiple ways and not only as a permeable landscape. However, due to the limited resources, the pressing timeframe for implementation, the workload of city's departments and the need of interdisciplinary expertise, the current OASIS transformations have not yet fulfilled entirely the initial vision.

Now in parallel with the ongoing city's planning for another 15 schoolyards' transformations, Paris was selected to receive funding from the Urban Innovative Actions Initiative in order to explore and leverage further the full potential of the OASIS concept. In other words, the city has now the opportunity to team up with a cross-disciplinary group of experts in order to explore in depth the multiple benefits across the environmental, social, educational, public health and governance domain. The true resilient value of the OASIS lies beyond the environmental challenges. The OASIS schoolyards aim to strengthen the neighborhoods' social cohesion, by becoming the neighborhood's meeting place as well as to promote civic participation, by fostering the development of citizen initiatives; the envisioned "OASIS collectives". For the purposes of the UIA project, the city has selected 10 representative schoolyards to become the first pilots that will not only be transformed into "cool islands" but will also be open on a regular basis to the neighborhood after school hours providing a recreation area for residents of all ages.

This first journal provides a general overview of the seven main challenges established by the UIA Secretariat for all the urban innovative projects. For OASIS, the current pressing challenges are linked to the required cross-departmental processes and interdisciplinary expertise for the appropriate construction of the OASIS infrastructure as the construction work is scheduled to begin in summer. In the following chapters the reader will find valuable insights and details on how the UIA partnership is progressing with the implementation and overcoming foreseen and unforeseen barriers during the process.

# 2. POLICY CONTEXT: EU AND LOCAL LEVEL

Climate change consequences are already apparent in Paris affecting the overall life quality in the French capital. Average temperatures are set to rise by 2°C to 4°C in the coming decades, requiring preparedness for risks such as heatwaves, droughts, extreme storms, flooding, and water scarcity. Realizing the emergence of current environmental conditions, and in line with the targets set by the EU Adaptation Policy, Paris has developed the following complementary strategic plans that include short, medium and long-term innovative solutions aiming to become a leader in action against climate change: Paris Climate Adaptation Strategy (2015), Paris Resilient Strategy (2017), new Air, Energy and Climate Plan (2017), new Paris Biodiversity Plan (2018). The OASIS Schoolyards approach fulfills the broader vision of the aforementioned strategies and more specifically responds to the following key objectives:

- ***By 2020, all Parisians to be within a seven-minute walk of a cool island.***
- ***By 2030, the City will create or open to the public at least 300 cool islands and routes***
- ***The City has set a target for 40% of Paris to consist of permeable green space***
- ***Transform schoolyards into cool islands: "oases"***

According to the findings of the EUROBAROMETER 490 on climate change, published in April 2019, "almost eight in ten European citizens think climate change is a very serious problem". The percentage is notably increased from the same survey conducted in 2017 proving that more and more people are becoming aware of the urgency for changing the way we plan and the way we live in cities today.

The increasing awareness of the citizens can be a determining factor for effective dissemination of the OASIS framework in other European cities, as it largely relies on the common understanding of the importance to integrate more nature-based solutions in our densely built urban environment and adopt a climate-friendly behavior. The well-structured participatory approach and the educational material produced by the UIA partnership for the needs of the OASIS implementation can significantly contribute to the European Commission objective (2.2.4) for **"activating education and training on climate change and sustainable development"** as described in chapter 2 "Mainstreaming sustainability in all EU policies" of the recently announced EU Green Deal.

# 3. THE OASIS JOURNEY:

## 3.1 The project in a snapshot

The OASIS concept emerged as a climate adaptation Action Plan from the city's long-term resilience strategy which was published in 2017. The city of Paris envisioned an urban oasis that will improve the citizens' life quality in the neighborhood scale. The OASIS schoolyards is anticipated to contribute in alleviating rising temperatures and minimizing the Urban Heat Island as well as the risk of storm water flooding effect by making city's infrastructure more permeable and absorbent. Furthermore, OASIS aims to strengthen the social cohesion by co-designing together with pupils and local community the schoolyard and converting it into a neighborhood meeting place.

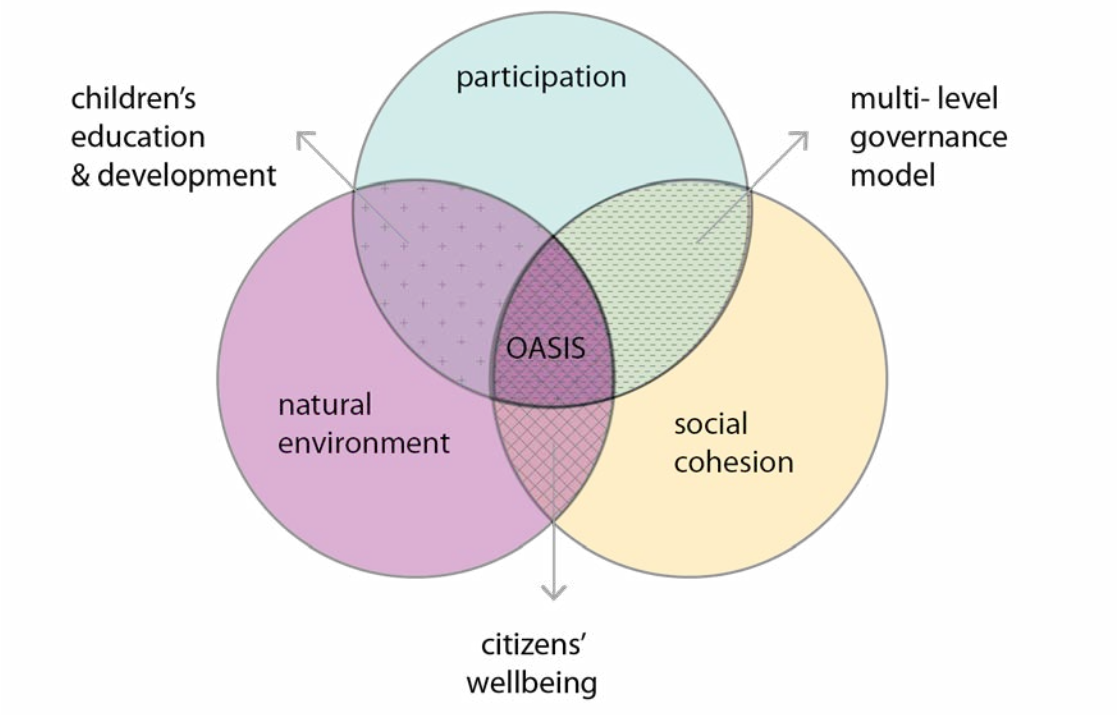
The idea has been already piloted in 2 rounds (3 schoolyards 2018, 28 schools in 2019) but due to the limited resources, pressing timeframe for implementation, workload of city's departments and need of interdisciplinary expertise, the completed OASIS Schoolyards transformations focused mainly on the following two aspects:

- Spatial re-design of the schoolyard using sustainable materials and nature-based solutions.
- Co-design process with children

*Green zone test at école 16 Riblette*
*Photo credits: CAUE de Paris*

*Children's conceptual plan, école Riblette*
*Photo credits: CAUE de Paris*

Nevertheless, the true resilient value of the OASIS concept lies beyond the environmental challenges as the OASIS schoolyards aim to also strengthen the neighborhoods' social cohesion as well as promote citizen participation by building the citizen initiatives; the envisioned "OASIS collectives".

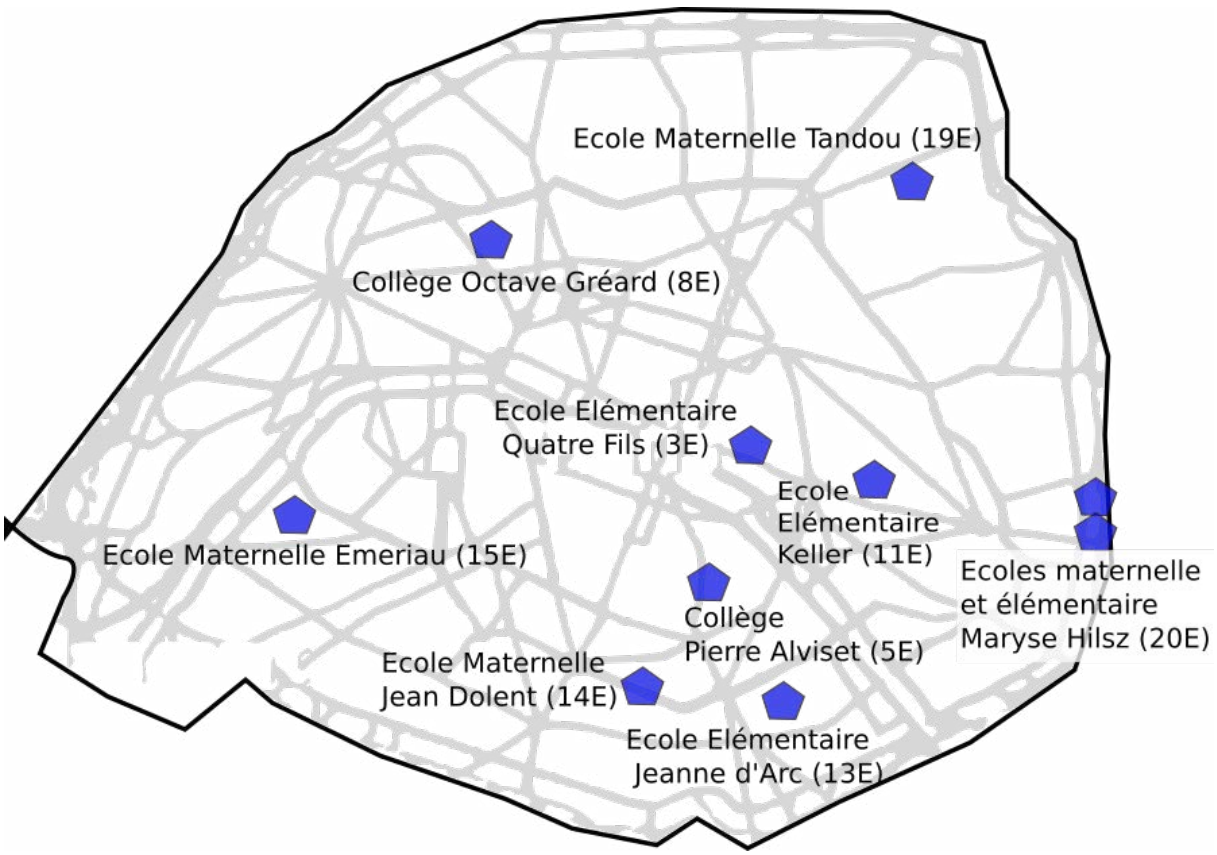



*The OASIS resilient approach*

While the city was seeking for ways to optimize the quality of the OASIS schoolyards, in 2018, the project was selected alongside with another 21 projects to be funded by the Urban Innovative Actions Initiative under the topic "climate adaptation". The city gained the opportunity to team up with a cross-disciplinary group of experts in order to explore in depth the OASIS multiple benefits across the environmental, social, educational, public health and governance domain. Moreover, the city is leveraging this opportunity to reflect on the generated experience from the previous OASIS transformations and put the newly acquired knowledge into practice. For the purposes of the UIA – OASIS Schoolyard project, the city has selected 10 representative schoolyards to become the first pilots that will not only be transformed into "cool islands" but will also be open to the neighborhood after school hours providing a recreation area for residents of all ages.

The selection criteria for the schools were the following:

- **Direct access from the street**: all selected schools provide a direct access point from the street. (either through the vehicle gate, or through an amenity room separated from the school building)
- **Location**: all 10 schools are located in the different city districts
- **Spatial characteristics:** the selected schoolyards meet minimum surface area requirements for measure of climate impacts
- **Demographics**: the selected schools are covering areas with different demographics
- **Children's age**: schools of both primary and secondary level of education (kindergarten, elementary school, middle school)




*The 10 selected UIA - OASIS Schoolyards, image credits: City of Paris*

In a nutshell, the inspiring O.A.S.I.S. (O- Openness, A– Adaptation, S – Sensitization, I- Innovation, S- Social ties) concept can be interpreted to the following 6 objectives:

1. Integrate nature-based solutions to the schoolyard design as a mitigation measure for the Urban Heat Island effects and storm water flooding.
2. Adopt a bottom-up design approach by co-designing the schoolyards with their everyday users; the children as well as by engaging the broader neighborhood to the process.
3. Design the schoolyards as a learning landscape for children and raise awareness on climate-related challenges
4. Open access to the local residents of all ages after school hours making the schoolyard an area of respite for days of extreme heat but also converting it into the neighborhood's hub
5. Establish a shared understanding of the co-use and co-ownership of the schoolyards by introducing an innovative governance scheme based on the principles of participatory democracy.
6. Monitor and evaluate the pilot process in order to develop a replicable OASIS framework

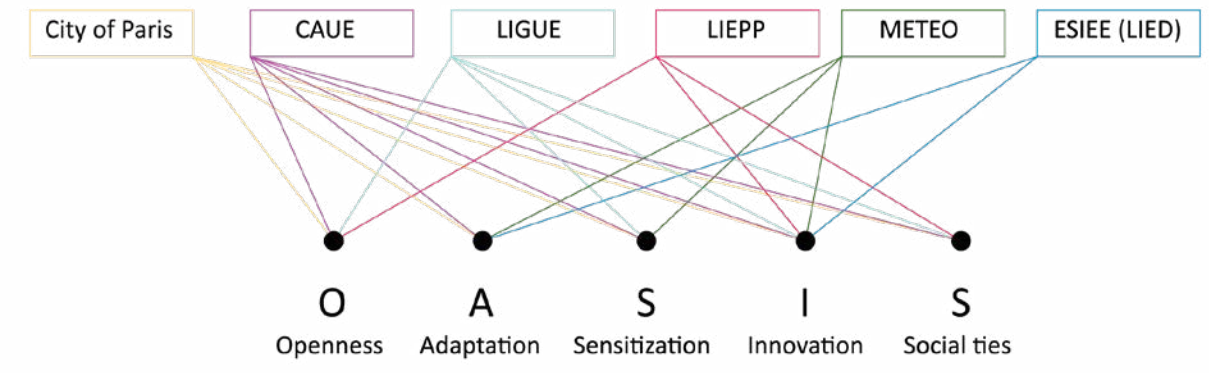
## 3.2 The UIA – OASIS Schoolyards milestones:

The UIA project duration is three years, from 2019 to 2021:

- The project began with the co-design phase of the OASIS schoolyard with the school community, through workshops that focused in unlocking children's creativity, developing their soft skills while also raising their environmental awareness.
- Throughout the project, the UIA partners are coordinating trainings for education teams (teachers, extra-curricular activities instructors etc.) and city's staff on the newly developed OASIS educational material and technical solutions.
- The transformation of the schoolyards is scheduled for the summer of 2020. The newly constructed OASIS Schoolyards will be multi-use spaces with gender-neutral play settings and nature-based solutions.
- During the last year of the implementation (2020 – 2021), the newly constructed OASIS Schoolyards are planned to open to the broader local community after school hours. Towards this vision, the local community has been engaged from the beginning of the project. The engagement method provisions a number of citizen assemblies in all 10 OASIS school neighborhoods and its objective is to co-develop a participatory democracy scheme for the OASIS Schoolyards' operation and management.
- The overall environmental and social impact of the OASIS project as well as the developed approach and outcomes will be monitored and evaluated in order to capitalize on the generated knowledge and allow the project to scale up.

## 3.3 The UIA Partnership: A cross-disciplinary collaboration

The UIA Partnership brings together the necessary multidisciplinary expertise for the development and implementation of the OASIS Schoolyards concept. As shown in Table 1, each partner holds a specific yet complementary role towards fulfilling the OASIS vision.




*OASIS required multi-disciplinary expertise*

**Table 1: UIA Partners and roles**

| Partner | Role |
|---|---|
| City of Paris<br>[Directly involved Departments]<br>- Resilient Office -General Secretariat<br>- Head Department of Education – DASCO & local divisions (CASPE)<br>- Head Department of Architecture – DCPA & local divisions (SLA) | responsible for the project management, overview of the project, final implementation and upscale |
| CAUE<br>Council of Architecture Urban Planning and the Environment | responsible for co-design phase, design innovation, trainings |
| LIGUE de l'enseignement<br>Paris Federation of the Education League | responsible for broader local community engagement, soft skills trainings, development of the participatory democracy scheme |
| Météo France (METEO)<br>The French National meteorological and climatological center | responsible for the coordination of the OASIS environmental monitoring and evaluation process as well as for the educational activities on raising environmental awareness. |
| ESIEE Paris (LIED)<br>Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory for Future Energies | responsible for the microclimatic and thermal evaluation of the OASIS Schoolyards project |
| LIEPP<br>Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Evaluation of Public Policies, Sciences Po | responsible for the coordination and implementation of the OASIS social impact and the overall participatory approach<br>evaluation process |

## 3.4 A brief update

The project is just about to complete its first year of implementation, which has been the preparatory phase for the construction of the newly designed schoolyards. Main focus during this period has been the meaningful engagement of the OASIS target beneficiaries and users. All co-design workshops both with children and educational community adults (teachers, extra-curricular instructors, parents) in the 10 schools are completed. Additionally, during the co-design phase, a number of engaging activities were coordinated with the teachers and the city employees from the Municipal departments of Education and Architecture, in an attempt to establish a common understanding of the OASIS objective and convince for the applicability of the OASIS innovative solutions. These activities included both trainings on either new educational material or technical solutions as well as insightful study visits and meetings with their counterparts in other cities that are implementing similar projects (Barcelona, Brussels, Antwerp).

At this moment, the OASIS project is in front of its biggest challenge, CAUE has already processed

and presented two scenarios for the concept Schoolyard plan of every school and now they are working closely with the city of Paris on the public procurement process and the transition from the concept plans to the technical construction drawings. This stage is further analyzed in chapter 4.2 C.2 Public Procurement.

A highlight of the last few months has been the concept plan review meeting (December 2020). The purpose of the meeting was to bring together local and international cross-disciplinary expertise in order to review and provide feedback on the presented schoolyards' concept plans. Such an initiative shows the commitment of the UIA partnership to deliver a high quality of outcomes that respond to all challenges (environmental, social, organizational and operational). The meeting was coordinated by the CAUE and brought together all relevant Municipal Departments – either already involved in the OASIS process or not – all UIA partners as well as invited external local and international experts who have a long experience in similar projects (urban designers, architects, landscape architects, natural play facility experts).

Meanwhile, LIGUE has already begun the children's soft skills workshops and the series of citizen assemblies in most of the schools. The aim is to conclude the broader community engagement process by summer in order for the local community to be adequately prepared to take initiative and use the OASIS Schoolyards once they are ready. Furthermore, the responsible partners for the monitoring and evaluation process (LIED, Météo France, LIEPP) have already completed the pre-OASIS assessments (environmental, social) and have set up their procedures, mechanisms and equipment to monitor the ongoing implementation process.

# 4. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

## 4.1 Overview of the Implementation Challenges

Regardless of how well-thought the planning of a project might be, when testing innovative ideas, it is anticipated that a try and error process will be followed in order to deliver the optimal outcome. The UIA Secretariat has identified the top seven challenges that are likely to occur. For the purpose of learning from experience, we will be revisiting the UIA implementation challenge grid in order to assess and analyze the progress made by the project and to highlight the lessons learnt.

| | Challenge | Level | Key Observations |
|---|---|---|---|
| **C.1** | **Leadership** | **Medium** | - Strong political support at the highest level<br>- Upcoming Municipal elections (March 2020) might become a roadblock<br>- Need of a streamlined communication and collaboration between the Municipal Departments.<br>- Leadership structure at school/ neighborhood scale is yet to be explored |
| **C.2** | **Public procurement** | **High** | - Support is needed in the design phase<br>- Restricted timeframe. The process is not yet chronologically aligned with the design phase.<br>- Need to review the existing procurement guidelines for building schoolyards<br>- Collaboration with other city departments with similar procurement guidelines can be a time-saver. |
| **C.3** | **Organizational arrangements within the urban authority (cross-department working)** | **High** | - Not all relevant departments are actively engaged and involved in the process yet<br>- Pressing need for breaking down silos and develop a common process, time schedule and budget line.<br>- Well-structured tools and methods have been developed during the 1st year of the project implementation in order to facilitate cross-departmental collaboration<br>- trainings of city employees |

| | Challenge | Level | Key Observations |
|---|---|---|---|
| C.4 | **Participative approach for co-implementation** | Low | - well-structured method for co-design workshops with children<br>- cohesive strategy for educational community engagement<br>- innovative approaches for broader neighborhood engagement<br>- coordination with the broader stakeholder network (teachers, community leaders etc.)<br>- development of appropriate tools to keep the participants engaged (pedagogical bag: my OASIS School course) |
| C.5 | **Monitoring and evaluation** | Low | - No risk identified for the environmental monitoring and evaluation process<br>- Innovative social evaluation methods, tailored to the age of schoolchildren<br>- Social evaluation methods are fine-tuned with the structure of the community engagement activities |
| C.6 | **Communication with target beneficiaries and users** | Low | - Cohesive communication strategy<br>- Threat of letting people down if the OASIS Schoolyard expectations are not met. |
| C.7 | **Upscaling** | Medium | - Lack of standardized cross-departmental process from design to implementation phase<br>- UIA partners are developing tools and frameworks that will enable replication and upscaling. |

## 4.2 C.1 Leadership

Early on, the OASIS concept enjoyed a strong political support at the highest level as it addressed multiple pressing issues for the city with a promising solution. Since the project emerged from the city's resilient strategy, the first rounds of pilots were led and closely supervised by the Paris Resilient Office. Currently, the leadership structure has been modified in an effort to embed the OASIS initiative into the directly responsible departments for its implementation. The UIA OASIS Schoolyard project is led by the Head Department of Education (DASCO) with the strong support of the Resilience (General Secretariat) office and the Head Department of Architecture (DCPA). Yet, the aim is to develop a collective leadership structure for OASIS. This structure will be developed through the participative approach throughout the project and the coordination model of the UIA partnership. The leadership challenges will be further analyzed in the next Journal.

Furthermore, upcoming Municipal elections (March 2020) can become a roadblock on the continuation of the fast pace progress of the project as in order to achieve the cross-departmental coordination and sharing information, political support is highly needed. It is common that during a pre-election period, decisions are not being made. Currently, there

are no delays noticed, however, this is something to monitor closely in the following months.

## 4.3 C.2 Public Procurement

Public procurement has been one of the top challenges in the OASIS implementation for the first two rounds of piloting the approach. The restricted timeframe for public procurement didn't allow enough time for research of new materials and skillful workforce and therefore, it led in simplifying the design elements and using rather typical and low-maintenance material instead of innovative solutions as the construction work was executed by contractors who have experience in constructing traditional schoolyards and playgrounds.

The three parameters that are anticipated to affect the quality of the final outcome are:

- OASIS technical construction plans
- Restricted timeframe
- Need for detailed expertise in implementing innovative nature-based solutions

### OASIS technical construction drawings

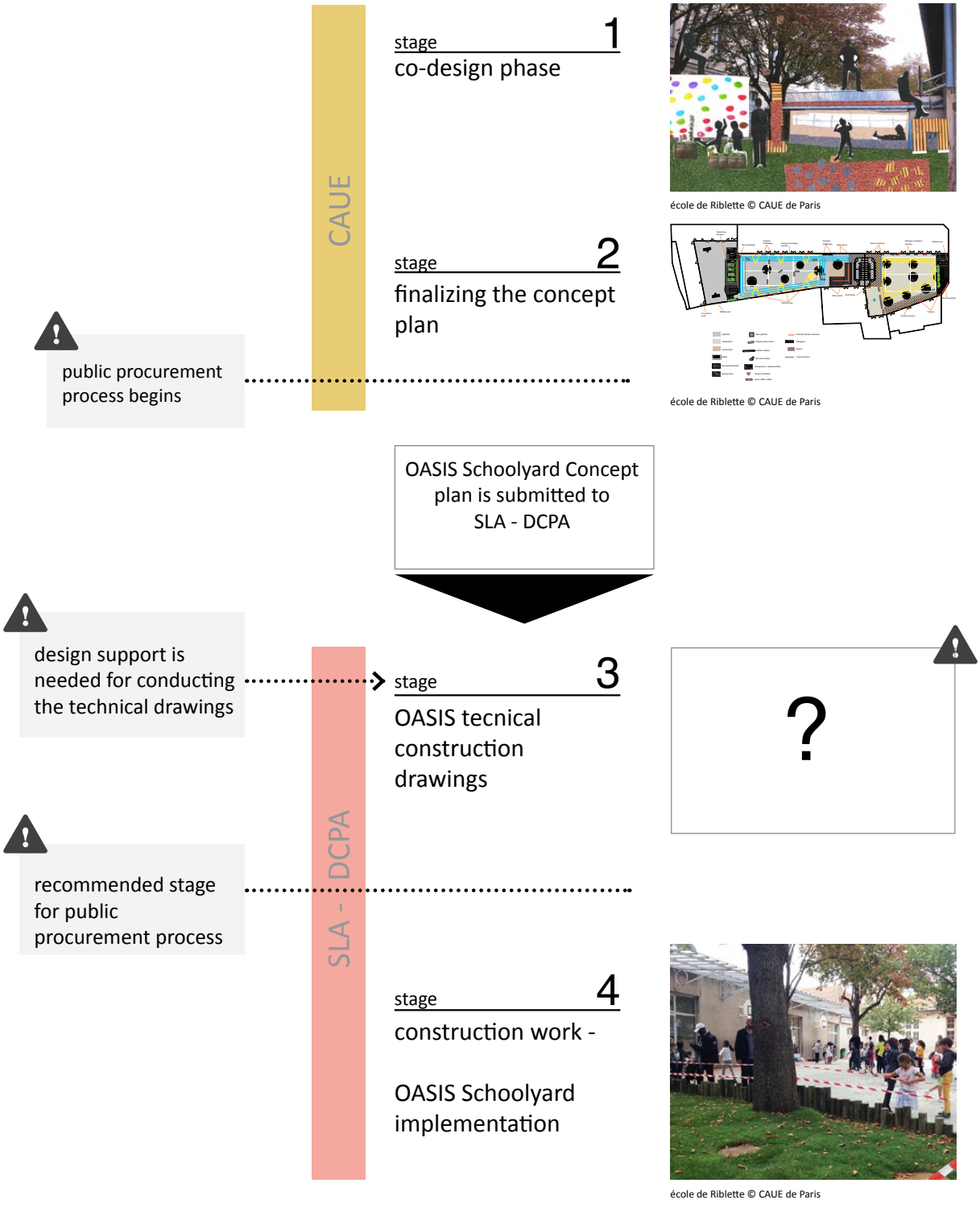
The transition from the concept design drawings that were generated by children's ideas into technical construction plans is a pivotal moment of the OASIS process and determines the success of the project.

CAUE has been coordinating the co-design phase but their role is limited to deliver only the concept plan of the schoolyard, which will be further processed by the engineers of the local division of the Department of Architecture (SLA). For the purposes of the construction drawings, the concept needs to be adjusted to the technical characteristics (dimensions, utility networks etc), unexpected technical issues on site (e.g. soil pollution) or irregularities of the space. For example, the ground level inclination might become a barrier in building a construction that was initially designed. At this stage of the design process, the issue that occurs is that due to the workload of the city's engineers as well as the non-established communication channel between the external partner (CAUE) and the city's department, those design barriers are solved by simplifying the initially proposed solution. Therefore, the final construction drawings of the schoolyards might not correspond to the plans that were produced during the co-design workshops with the educational community. There is a risk that the valuable insights and innovative ideas that emerged from the participatory process will get lost along the way. Moreover, a common threat in participatory projects are the consequences of raising expectations that are not met in the end of the project. In this case, the trust between citizens and local authorities will be significantly affected. This issue is linked to challenge C.6 – Communication with target beneficiaries and users.

The city must seek for applicable solutions that would fill in the missing link that appears in stage 3 (see diagram). Potential solutions would be to provision the external service of an architect at this stage of the project or to appoint a team of city's architects that will focus on the OASIS and similar urban projects. This issue has yet to be resolved by the city.

For the progress of the 10 UIA OASIS Schoolyards transformations, the contribution of CAUE in the

development of the technical construction drawings as well as in the supervision of the construction work can be extremely beneficial for ensuring the high quality of the final outcome.




*Project stages from design to implementation: current processes and observations*

### Restricted timeframe

Time is a challenging parameter for the public procurement process. The construction works for the schoolyard transformation can only take place during summer months, when schools are closed. Therefore, the public procurement process needs to begin soon in order to meet the summer deadline although the design phase is still not completed yet as technical drawings are still in progress. The city is now working on creating a set of flexible procurement requirements aiming to allow design changes in the final plans.

### Need for detailed expertise in implementing innovative nature-based solutions

The proposed OASIS schoolyards' design approach implies a transition from an asphalt and sports field dominated space to a multi-use and nature-based place. Therefore, the materials and the construction techniques that are required for building an OASIS Schoolyard are different from the construction work type of a traditional schoolyard. It is crucial to review and update the tender guidelines and the entire procurement process in order to align them to the requirements and specifications of the OASIS technical description. This is an opportunity to reflect from the previous pilots (completed in 2018 and 2019) and inform the guidelines accordingly. By updating the procurement guidelines, the city aims to ensure the appropriate expertise and experience of the hired contractors who will execute the construction works.

As the OASIS concept shares the same vision with contemporary urban landscaping there is a significant overlap with the requirements and specifications used by the Department of Environment (DEVE) for landscape projects. The exchange of procurement guidelines, material specifications and market research between the different city departments who are even partially implementing similar projects can be a real time-saver for developing the updated procurement process for schoolyard construction. This topic is further analyzed in C.3 – Organizational arrangements within the urban authority (cross-department working).

Moreover, the OASIS design leader (CAUE) has already coordinated training sessions for the city employees (Department of Architecture - DCPA, Department of Education – CASPE) aiming to develop their skills further on the design, implementation and operation of innovative and nature-based technical solutions.

## 4.3 C.3 Organizational arrangements within the urban authority (cross-department working)

The OASIS project by definition (Openness, Adaptability, Sensitization, Innovation, Social ties) calls for a cross-departmental collaboration as it aims to involve departments from Education and Architecture to Environment, Social Affairs and Public Health. Consequently, it is a necessity to develop an integrated procedure between all relevant Municipal departments. In other words, the 12 identified Municipal Departments that should be involved in the planning, implementation and sustainability phase of the OASIS schoolyards should be using a common process, time schedule and budget.

In this respect, there is a need for redefining the Municipal Department roles. Until today, schoolyards were being designed and maintained in a certain manner that implies a vertical

governance geometry with an imposed linear process. According to the current governance structure, schoolyards are owned and managed by the Head Department of Education (DASCO) through the local divisions (CASPE) in their respective arrondissement and they are constructed by the local divisions (SLA) of the Head Department of Architecture (DCPA). The horizontal process that OASIS is suggesting requires the rearrangement of not only the roles of the involved departments but also the development and adaption of a new mindset on how schoolyards are being designed and managed.

For example, the inclusion of the co-design activities in the designing process could be perceived as a disruption in the regular procedure since it implies the involvement of other Municipal Departments or stakeholders that will contribute to the holistic approach of the design proposal. Moreover, in order to integrate the co-design phase into the planning process, it means firstly the rearrangement of the project's timeframe, secondly budget allocation for this procedure and last but foremost, it requires the enrichment of the architects' existing design palette with new design approaches, tools and materials. In the next Journals, we will be exploring in detail the potential models of cross-departmental coordination for the OASIS project cycle.

There is a reasonable reluctance in changing the regular and already tested procedures due to the daily workload and the uncertainty of an innovative approach. Nevertheless, cities are systems that evolve and so should the methods and strategies that are being employed in order to design and manage them. In order to overcome this challenge and foster fruitful collaboration between the different departments, the UIA Partnership has been developing useful processes that can facilitate a horizontal coordination and equip the Municipal Departments with practical tools and methods for executing the innovative OASIS approach. CAUE, who is responsible for the co-design phase and the delivery of the OASIS Schoolyard concept plans has already coordinated 2 trainings with more than 70 civil servants from the directly involved departments (DASCO, DCPA, SLA, CASPE).

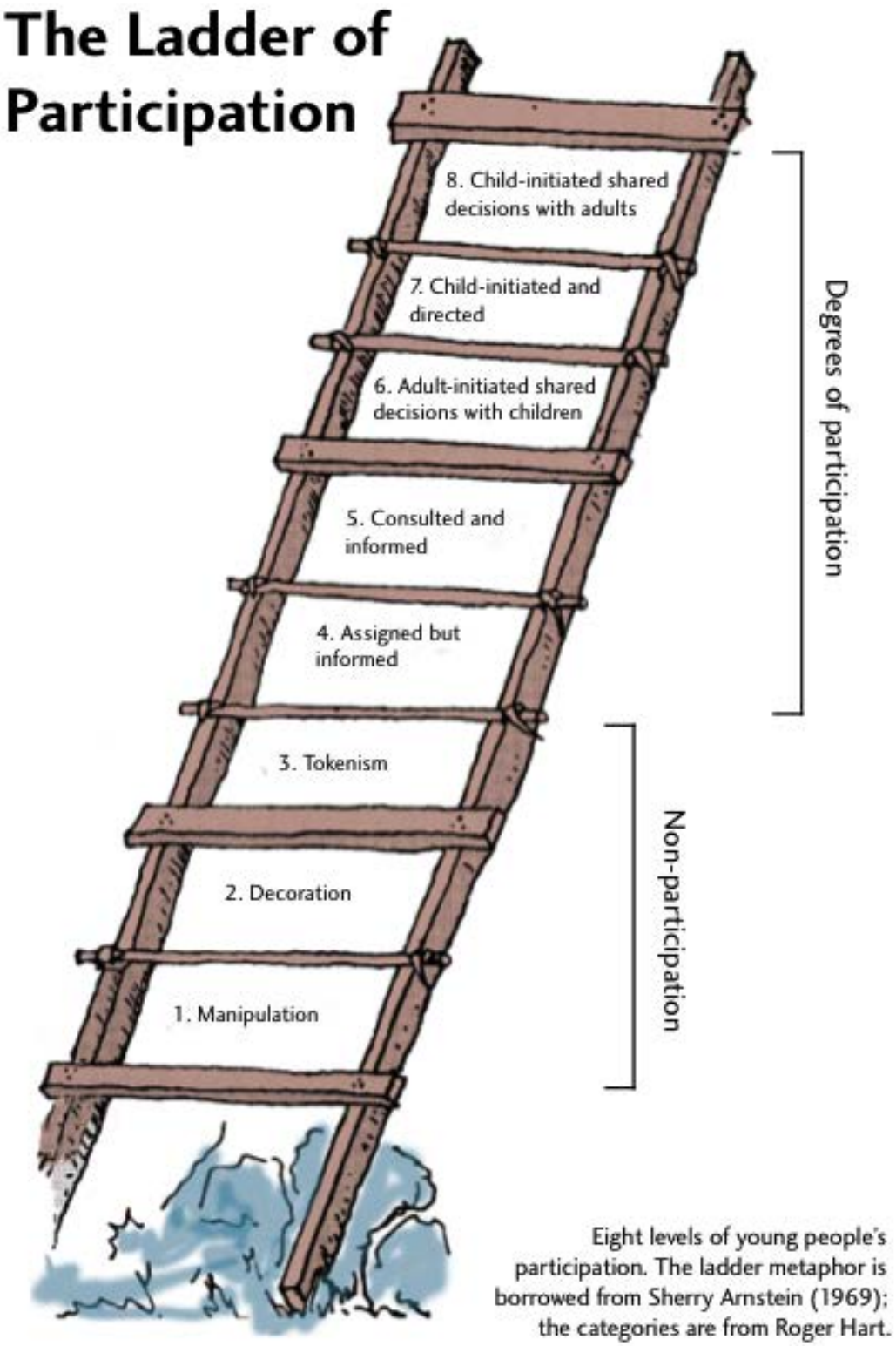
Additionally, in order to inspire civil servants to think differently and effectively convince them for the doable outcomes and multiple benefits of the OASIS approach, the UIA Partnership has coordinated study trips to Belgium (Antwerp, Brussels) and Spain (Barcelona) where similar projects are being implemented.

## 4.5 C.4 Participative approach for co-implementation

Participation stands in the heart of the OASIS Schoolyards concept. The educational community is already engaged from the first stage of the project as children are the priority users of the space. A comprehensive co-design strategy has been developed by CAUE that fulfills all degrees of children's participation as they are defined by Roger Hart in his research on Children's Participation[1]. The co-design phase lasted 7 weeks, it was implemented simultaneously at the 10 UIA- OASIS Schools and was led by an

[1] Hart, R. (1992). Children's Participation: From tokenism to citizenship (no.4). Florence, Italy: UNICEF International Child Development Centre.

experienced team of urban planners and architects for every school.




*The Ladder of young people's participation developed by R. Hart*

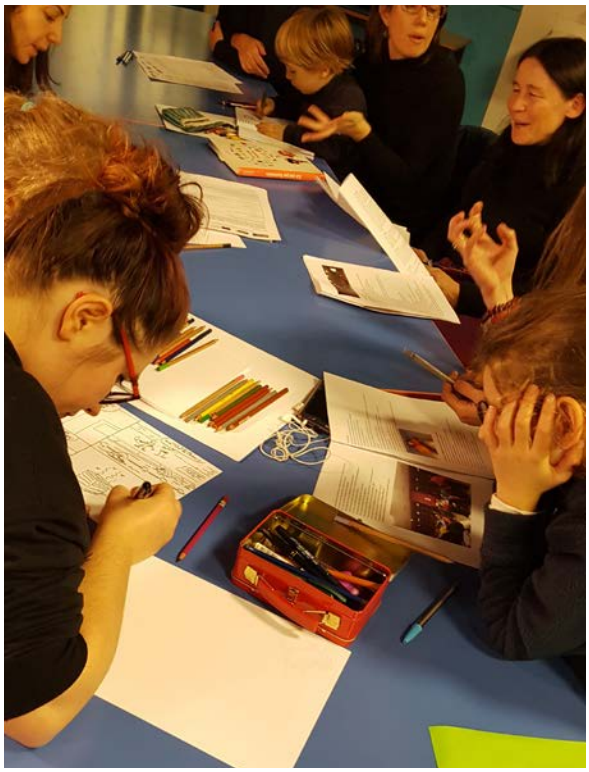
In the beginning, children are introduced and familiarized with the purpose of the OASIS Schoolyards and then gradually are encouraged to take action and become the schoolyard planners through discussing, drawing, building models and presenting their ideas. This process contributes significantly to the children's development and education by unlocking their creativity, boosting their confidence, developing their soft skills and raising awareness on issues that will affect their lives such as the climate crisis.

The UIA Partnership has worked on building a trustful relationship with the broader educational community (teachers, extra-curricular activities facilitators, parents) which secures the long-term commitment to a shared goal. This also links to challenge C.6 "Communication with target beneficiaries and users".

Furthermore, the co-design process is complemented with the OASIS educational kit developed by the UIA Partners CAUE, LIGUE and Météo France. The material is tailored to the different ages of the school children and it suggests that teachers also use it as part of their teaching curriculum aiming to integrate the OASIS mindset in the everyday school-life.

At the same time, LIGUE has developed a 3-step strategy for engaging the broader local community in the OASIS project. The objective of this engagement approach is to familiarize the community with the concept of an open schoolyard, inspire them to participate and support the initiative and empower them to become active local actors by forming the "OASIS Collectives". The ultimate vision of this engagement strategy is to co-shape a model of participatory democracy at the OASIS Schoolyards in order to convert the schoolyard into a community hub after school hours.

LIGUE has developed an innovative approach to engage adults into the discussion by using a mobile application, coordinating neighborhood events and collaborating with artists (actors, illustrators) for the facilitation of the citizen assemblies. The aim is to spark the interest of local residents to join the assemblies, to break the ice during the meetings and foster fruitful discussions. The effective and long-term commitment of the broader community is an ambitious attempt that will take time to be assessed. The level of the local community's active involvement is yet to be explored as at the moment the level of participation is limited to the consultation process. Currently, the citizen assemblies are about general questions regarding concerns and opportunities of the schoolyards as a shared space and ideas on potential activities that could be coordinated at the schoolyards after-school hours.



*Artists are illustrating the ideas shared by the participants during citizen assembly*


*Sample of Illustrations from Jeanne d'Arc elementary school citizen assembly*
*Photo credits: LIGUE*

A matter that needs to be clarified in respect of this challenge is that only the educational community (pupils, teachers, parents) is actively participating in the spatial design of the schoolyards (vegetation, equipment, materials etc.) whereas the broader local community is engaged only for the programming of the space after school hours (activities, events). Due to coordination issues, the citizen assemblies are not fine-tuned with the co-design phase. This might bear a hidden risk for the inclusiveness of the schoolyard concept plan, as needs that will emerge from the citizens' assemblies (e.g. sitting areas, tables, accessibility etc.) might not be integrated to the final schoolyard plan. The UIA partnership is handling this issue by one-to-one feedback communication between the relevant partners and basic facilities such as toilets for public accessibility after school hours are already being provisioned.

## 4.6 C.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The OASIS project will be monitored and evaluated for both its environmental and social impact. At the moment, this challenge is considered low risk as specific methodologies and protocols are being followed for a comprehensive assessment of the project. This challenge will be further analyzed once the OASIS Schoolyards will be constructed and open to the neighborhood.

## 4.7 C.6 Communication with target beneficiaries and users

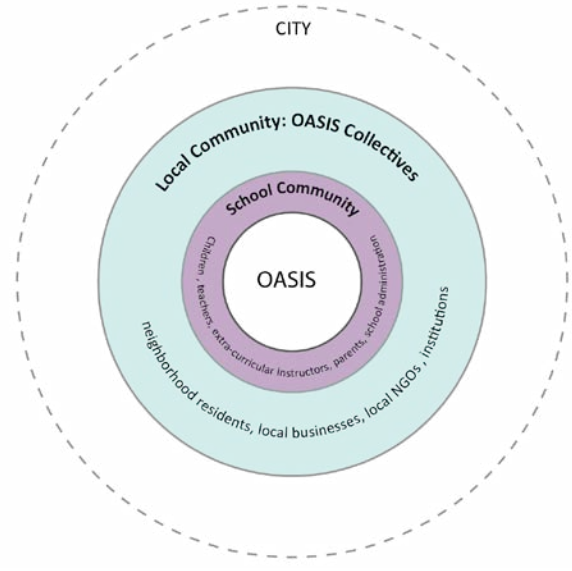
The project's success relies largely in the active and long-term involvement of the local community. The UIA Partnership is working on building a trustful relationship between the project and its target beneficiaries and users. A cohesive communication strategy is in place with a recognizable project branding which provides the required credibility for participants to be engaged in the process.

The two main threats for the communication with target beneficiaries and users are:

1. reaching out to limited audience
2. raising higher expectations than the project can fulfill

### Reaching out to limited audience

The OASIS Schools play a key role in communicating the project to the neighborhood as the school community is the first circle of influence of OASIS. Informative material and invitations are distributed through the school networks (letter to parents, posters at school entrances etc.). The extent of engagement of school families is yet to be explored.




*The OASIS multi-layered community*

### Raising higher expectations than the project can fulfill

The key to the successful communication in projects that require the active and constant participation of citizens is clarity, adequate information and acknowledgement. The OASIS project is an innovative approach and therefore, it is reasonable that not everything will go according to plan. Nevertheless, all the challenges need to be expressed from the beginning of the project to avoid misunderstandings and eventually lose the trustful relationship with the participants.

Every participatory project faces the "high expectations" challenge. In the case of OASIS it is likely that children, teachers, School Directors, parents, local residents have different expectations of the final OASIS Schoolyard. It is important to be clear throughout the process on potential limitations, timeframes, project phasing as well as the required user responsibilities in order to secure the sustainability and the high quality of the envisioned OASIS schoolyard. Moreover, as discussed earlier in chapter C.2 – Public Procurement, if the newly constructed schoolyard is completely different than the concept plan that was designed by the participants, it is very likely that those who participated in this initiative will not be engaged again in similar initiatives as they feel that their time and effort were not appreciated.

All UIA partners who lead the engagement and educational activities (CAUE, LIGUE, Météo France) have employed a set of creative methods to maximize the impact. The success of those methods is yet to be proven, however the excitement of children as well as the notable participation in the community assemblies have been a good sign. The overall OASIS engagement

approach will be discussed in an upcoming OASIS Web Articles.

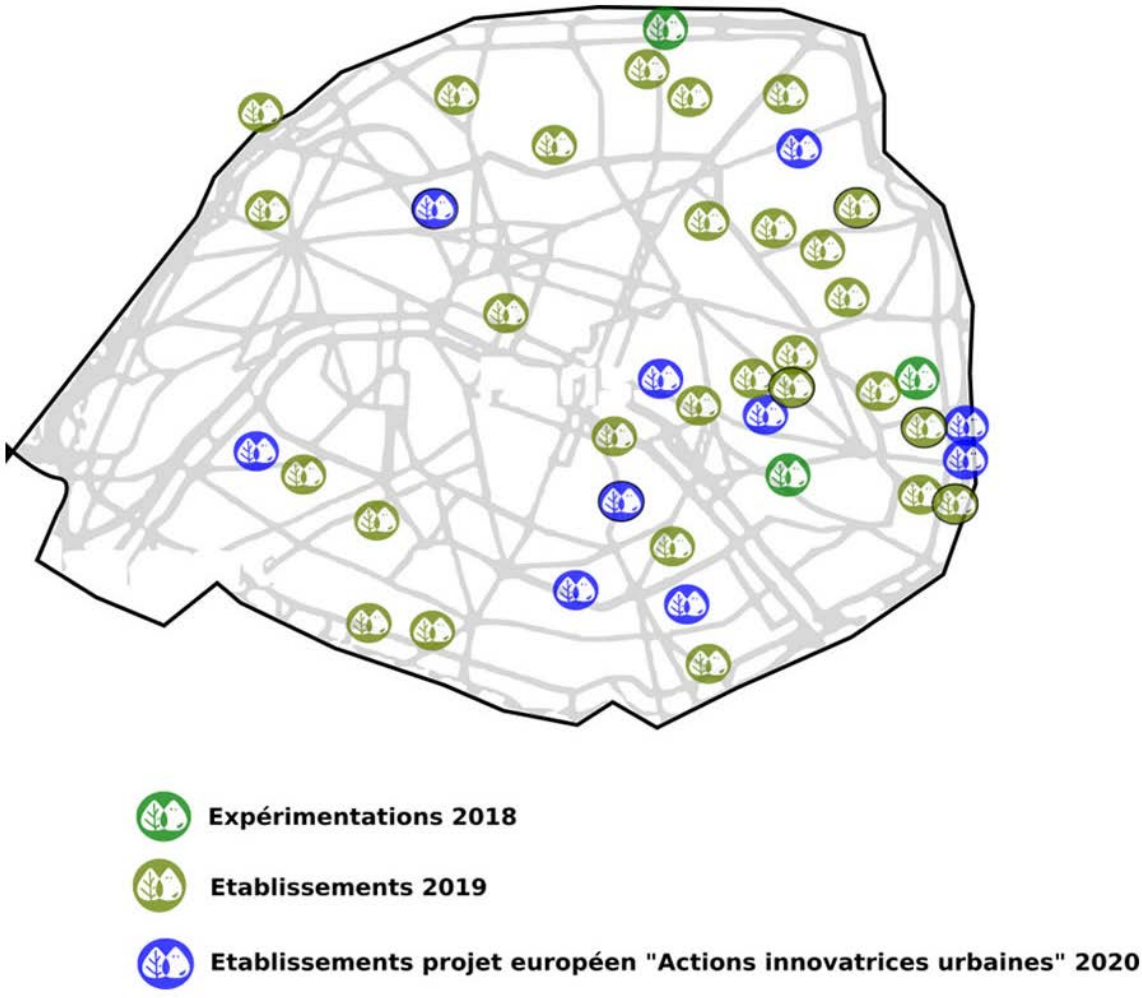
## 4.8 C.7 Upscaling

The OASIS Schoolyard approach has been already piloted in 2 rounds (2018, 2019) at 31 schools in total and in 2020 is planned to be implemented in another 25 schools, 10 of which are within the frame of the UIA- OASIS Schoolyards project. The map shows the upscaling trend, however, the challenge of the optimal quality of the final spatial transformation actually being delivered remains and it relies on the consistency between the co-created OASIS Schoolyard plans and the actual construction.

One of the main objectives for upscaling the UIA-OASIS Schoolyards project is to establish the following:

1. a standardized cross-departmental process from design to implementation
2. a set of guidelines and specifications for securing the high quality of the project.

The UIA Partnership is already working towards that direction by producing tools and methods that will enable the standardization of the process. Moreover, the UIA partners are coordinating trainings for both teachers and civil



servants in order to work together in integrating the OASIS educational material in class as well as to discuss and optimize the technical innovative solutions that this project has produced and their replicability in other city projects as well.

What's coming up next in OASIS?

This first Journal has provided an introductory overview of the project and its current status of its progress and its challenges. The coming months OASIS will be moving forward with the following steps:

**1. Finalize technical drawings of the Schoolyards**

This will be a challenging step as it requires coordinated multi-stakeholder collaboration (CAUE and DCPA) in order to preserve the initial concept and ideas while adjusting it to the site specific technical requirements. The goal is to ensure that the final technical drawings will be consistent with the concept plans that emerged during the co-design phase with the educational community.

**2. Carry out an effective and flexible public procurement procedure**

This will be a demanding task as it implies changes in an existing procedure. Reflecting from the previous OASIS pilots (2018, 2019) the city has identified the weaknesses in the procurement and is currently working on optimizing the process. However, timeframe

is an extra barrier for this task as the city needs to move forward with public procurement although the final drawings are not ready yet. Therefore, flexibility is the key in the procurement description in order to be able to accommodate changes in the final plans.

**3. continue the engagement process with school and local community**

It is crucial to keep the already engaged participants (educational and broader community) informed and active during the months between the co-design activities and the schoolyards' construction in order to strengthen the emerging trustful relationship which will enable the development of the OASIS Collectives.

**4. complete construction works in schoolyards during summer 2020**

The construction of all 10 OASIS Schoolyards is planned to be completed by the end of summer 2020.

In the next Journal, scheduled for October 2020, we will be analyzing the lessons learnt from the construction phase as well as the city's progress in developing a standardized cross-departmental process that will ensure that the newly constructed OASIS Schoolyards will function as breathing spaces in the heart of every neighborhood, co-designed and co-managed by its users. Essentially, through the OASIS approach, the city of Paris aims to lead the way in a much-needed radical change in the way public spaces are being planned and managed in cities today. Stay tuned to learn how!

**Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) is an Initiative of the European Union that provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and unproven solutions to address urban challenges. Based on article 8 of ERDF, the Initiative has a total ERDF budget of EUR 372 million for 2014-2020.**

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