Making the city together

A new way of improving neighbourhoods
and cities through learning loops

The following partners have been involved in the Looper project:

▶ Vrije Universiteit Brussel – Mobility, Logistics, and Automotive Technology Research Centre (MOBI)
▶ University of Manchester
▶ Iuav University of Venice
▶ BRAL citizen action Brussels
▶ Legambiente Verona
▶ S4B Manchester
▶ Municipality of Verona
▶ Pixel Mill

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If you wish to have more information about the project or get in touch, please visit our website: www.looperproject.eu.

What is Looper?

In cities all over the world, local people face the same problems: How can our kids get to school in safety? Where are all the buses? How can we communicate our needs and dreams to our local government representatives?

Meanwhile, local governments also face similar problems, from the other side of the table: How to mobilise the resources of the community? How to find out more about what they want or need? How to use this to provide better services at lower cost?

The **Looper Model** starts to bridge this gap. It shows how community-based visioning and design can lead to better neighbourhoods. We call this **'co-creation'** – active involvement and empowerment of citizens to collect data, design solutions and monitor the outcomes.

About this document

This document is a brief overview of the Looper Model and the project which created it – further details are in the full Looper Synthesis Report.[1] Policymakers, community groups, local government, and providers of housing, transport, security or open space can all use the report and try the methods and tools. The report also aims at professional bodies, civic society, consultants, students, and researchers.

[1] www.looperproject.eu

Co-creation is a form of public participation that focuses on innovation and creativity. Participants often have a high level of influence in the process. Within Looper, the co-creation process includes a series of activities: identifying the problem, collecting data, visualising data, co-designing solutions, evaluating solutions, and implementing and monitoring solutions.

The Looper Model is a set of methods and tools to support local co-creation. It works with 'learning loops,' which bring together local knowledge with local decision-making. The **Looper Toolkit** comprises online and offline tools to support the learning loops. Three **Looper Living Labs** in Brussels, Manchester and Verona developed and tested the Model and Toolkit. All this helps to keep people 'in the loop', and to 'close the loop' so that local knowledge can lead to local action. The Looper Model in each city can then help with practical solutions for air quality, noise, traffic safety, security, greenspace and other challenges in the public realm.

The Looper Model

The **Looper Model** is a new way of improving neighbourhoods and cities. It includes not only data for technical problem-solving, but also the human side of co-creation, via the 'learning loops'.

A **Learning Loop** first sets up a collective debate on priorities, with participatory citizen monitoring. A community-based visioning, and design and evaluation process follows, and then real improvements are made with feedback on the outcomes.

A **Looper Living Lab** can be set up with the structure of the '6-P' – people, place, priorities, policies, platform and process.

The Looper Toolkit includes monitoring kits for air or noise, tools for visualisation, evaluation and decision-making, as well as online or offline tools for citizens to explore ideas and designs.

Overall the Looper Model helps to:

▶ build detailed knowledge (online and offline) of problems and ideas;

▶ increase community empowerment and self-reliance;

▶ make local governance more effective, which is more responsive to local needs;

▶ bridge the 'democratic deficit', the 'trust gap', and the challenge for government and public services to do 'more with less'.

By linking with community issues and ideas, policymakers can focus plans and investments more effectively on the real problems, building trust between citizens and public bodies (i.e. a 'policy loop'). For communities, monitoring problems and co-creating solutions, helps to build empowerment (i.e. the 'community loop'). As to who can use and benefit from the Looper Model:

▶ citizens who want to improve the places where they live and work;

▶ urban planners who are open to new ideas from the community;

▶ local policymakers ready to build trust and co-create solutions with local people;

▶ other public bodies who aim to transform the neighbourhood and city around them.

Living labs are vehicles for co-creation that usually include end-user involvement, open and social innovation, a form of governance (often by a public body), and a real-life setting. A Looper Living Lab is an advanced version of a living lab in which the learning loops are applied.

Looper Living Labs

The Looper Living Lab is where the Looper Model is put into action. It is an experimental zone where new ideas can be tried, and new ways of co-creation can be tested. Inside the lab, there can be any number of loops for different problems, from purely technical issues, to wider social challenges.

The Looper Model and Toolkit were developed and tested in three living labs (Brussels, Manchester and Verona), with very different conditions.

Each lab includes six main components, the so-called '6-P'.

Place: define the place (a local neighbourhood, district, landscape, or other area on the ground), where the lab is to be based.

People: gather the people to be involved (networks, organisations, groups or communities). We need ways to mobilise their energy and commitment, to mediate conflict, and find ways to turn problems into opportunities.

Priorities: work with the *people* in the *place*, to explore their *priorities* (problems, issues, challenges, risks, hopes or fears, ideas or opportunities). This includes both negatives and the positives which can inspire and motivate.

Policies: set the scope of problems and possible solutions towards the policies (local, regional, national) for that area, and aim to engage with the policy process, which can be long and complex.

Platform: develop a system for the exchange of information, learning, debate, analysis and insight. Such online platforms see new and exciting technology every day, but the real purpose of the platform is about improving human interactions.
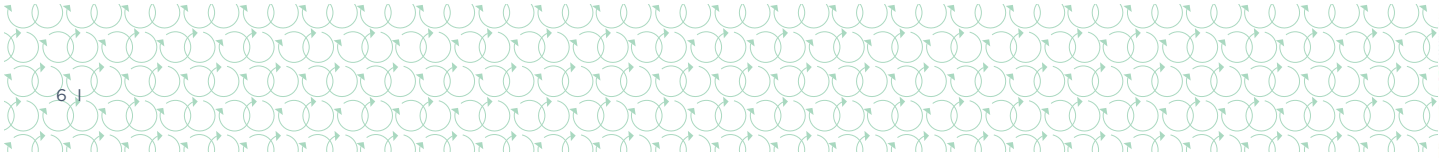
Process: look for the overall insights, from the whole experiment from start to finish, in order to improve and transfer the learning to other places, or other applications such as public services.
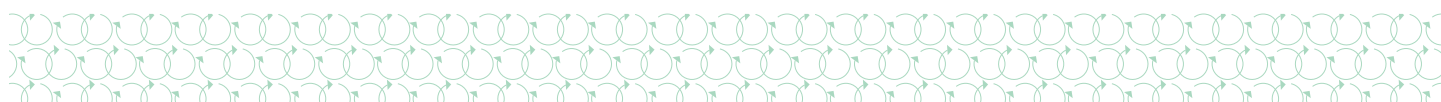
Learning loops

A learning loop is about building the community-based knowledge and creative thinking, which can turn problems into solutions. Each learning loop has three main stages (see figure on pp. 8-9):

▶ **Problems identification**: identify the issue, set up citizen monitoring, visualise and analyse;

▶ **Co-design**: create options and decide which should go forward;

▶ **Action and feedback**: make real improvements (physical or social) and monitor impact.

The Looper project ran a complete first loop, and then started a second loop, building on the results of the first. In an ideal model of community development, these loops would continue as a regular part of local governance. The time for each loop can be months or years, depending on local conditions.

Three levels of learning loops emerged in the Looper project, shown here with the example of a broken streetlight:

Management loop
This 'functional' learning loop works with detailed information on practical or technical problems and solutions. It can use both online and offline platforms (for example to locate the streetlight and get it fixed).
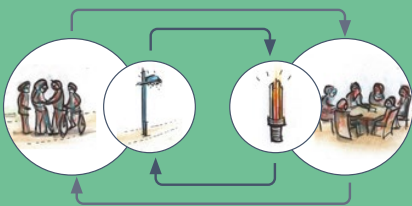
Community loop
Here the citizens are 'in the loop', via local empowerment, social enterprise and self-reliance. We work with 'deep engagement' methods such as active outreach and community visioning as well as with networks and communities of interest (to debate the wider issues of public security).
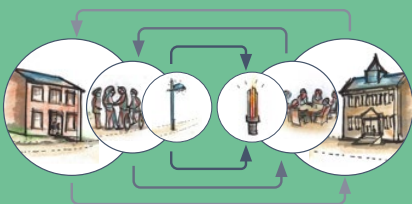
Governance loop
Local government and other bodies can enhance their organisational learning and 'strategic policy intelligence' (i.e. capacity for thinking ahead). This loop helps overcome the 'trust gap' and enables government and public services to 'do more with less' (with better policies on public safety).

Successful local development will bring these loops together, each with its different ways of knowing what, who, how or why:

▶ **information ('know-what')**: what causes the streetlight problem?
▶ **networks ('know-who')**: who to ask for advice?
▶ **skills ('know-how')**: how to set up a neighbourhood security project?
▶ **norms/ goals ('know-why')**: why is this important?
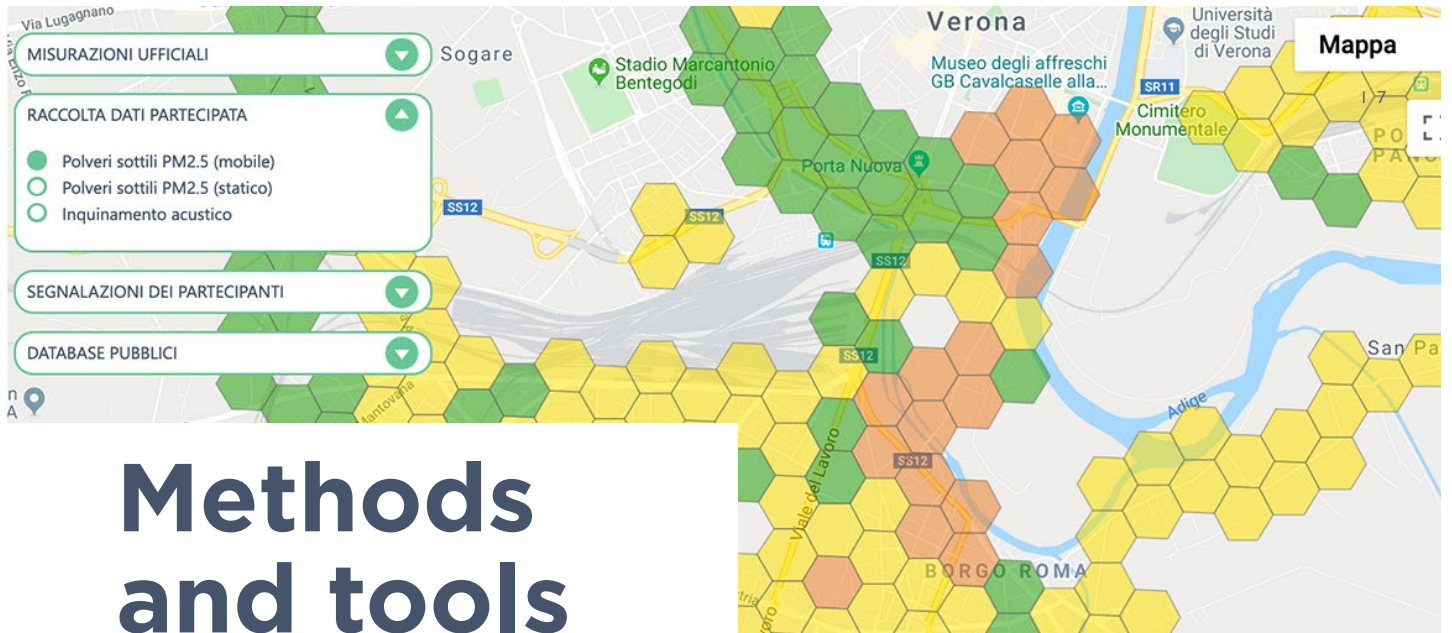
Methods and tools

The Looper Living Lab works with a range of possible interventions for practical problems in urban communities and uses different methods and tools during the co-creation process.

Environmental monitoring

▶ **Air quality.** Mobile low-cost handheld devices, such as AirBeam and Luftdaten, are interesting to understand the general situation of air quality through participatory sensing. Nevertheless, we must be aware that their data collection method is not always precise. It is still better to cross-check these values with official data.

▶ **Noise monitoring.** Noise monitoring can be carried out by using a smartphone, the OpeNoise (or similar) app and a calibrated microphone. Always consider the need to further calibrate the device due to the background noise reduction software in smartphones.

▶ **Traffic monitoring.** Flows and speeds can be manually measured by citizens as well as with low cost, automatic devices such as Telraam. Fixed installations are more accurate but costly.

▶ **Other urban conditions such as crime and security, greenspace, and urban pollution.** Information can be collected with citizen photos or media clips, uploaded to the online platforms or using collaborative geotagging tools.

Visualisation and analysis platforms

▶ **Spatial data platform.** It is crucial to show data collected with participatory sensing, but the visualisation dashboard needs to be as easy and user-friendly as possible, and with no need of registration. Where relevant, interesting data from external databases should be uploaded.

▶ **Multi-criteria analysis.** Evaluation of the impacts of co-designed ideas on sustainability and stakeholders, when the different co-designed ideas are distinct, can be done using Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) and Multi-Actor Multi-Criteria Analysis (MAMCA).[2]
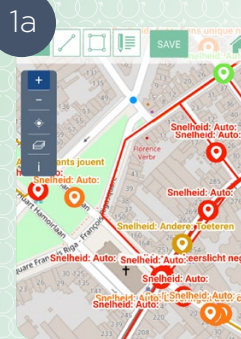
Co-design and engagement

▶ **Co-design tools and methods.** Different offline methods and online platforms for co-design are analysed in the Looper library of tools.[3] Based on our experience, these tools and methods can be integrated with use of large printed aerial views of the neighbourhood.

▶ **Co-design platform.** Online idea-generation tools provide the opportunity for citizens who would otherwise not attend workshops to propose solutions and discuss them online.

▶ **Community engagement.** One of the most successful approach is 'active outreach', where researchers are involved in local activities and networks, with an open door to all local problems and ideas.

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[2] www.mamca.be
[3] www.looperproject.eu/tools/

The learning loop process

Data collection

Low-cost digital monitoring tools can be used by residents for practical issues such as air and noise pollution, traffic, safety or greenspace. The results are then uploaded to an online platform, which can be cross-checked with official monitoring stations.

1c

Visualisation

The results are visualised with online maps, to show the nature of the problem over space and time. For participants who prefer non-digital encounters, we provide physical resources for workshop discussions, on what the collected data means, and how we can respond.
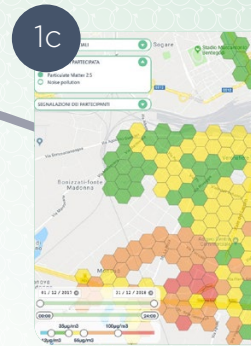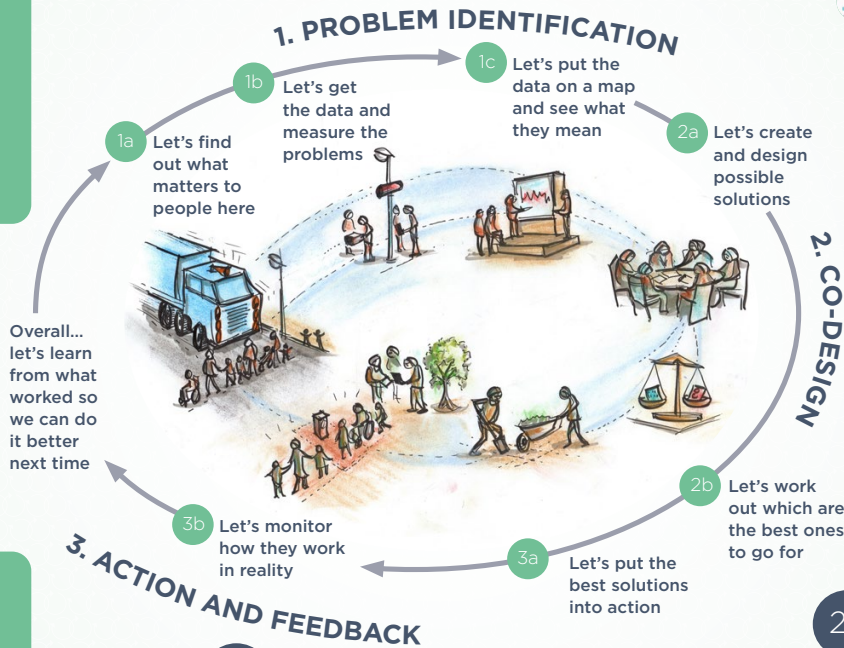
1a

Scoping

Citizens explore and debate on what matters to them in the neighbourhood. This covers both problems and possible opportunities; and physical or social issues. We aim to engage with all parts of the community, particularly those who are excluded in some way.

1. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

1b Let's get the data and measure the problems

1c Let's put the data on a map and see what they mean

1a Let's find out what matters to people here

2a Let's create and design possible solutions

2a

Co-design

Residents and other stakeholders come up with ideas to solve the problem. These can include interventions in public spaces, social actions or special events. We generate a range of design concepts, from initial ideas to sketches of how they would look on the ground.

2. CO-DESIGN

Overall... let's learn from what worked so we can do it better next time

3b Let's monitor how they work in reality

2b Let's work out which are the best ones to go for

3a Let's put the best solutions into action

## 3. ACTION AND FEEDBACK

3b

Monitor & feedback

We monitor closely the effects of the interventions. Where possible, we use the same method used to measure the problem. Then we discuss the results with residents and policymakers. Hopefully we learn from the experience, so that the next round can be improved.

3a

Actions

Actions and 'interventions' are put into practice. These can be physical improvements (traffic calming and street art) or social actions (e.g. walking plan for schoolkids). Some of these may take time to get budgets and permissions.

2b
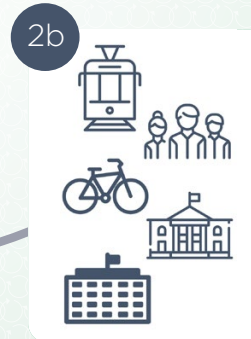
Evaluation

Before going ahead, we evaluate the co-designed options, with a multi-actor multi-criteria assessment. This evaluation helps to form the shortlist for action by checking for possible conflicts and synergies between the people and stakeholders affected.

Typical issues and interventions

Each lab is different in terms of problems, opportunities, design issues, and political context. The Looper Model has the possibility to be adapted to each different living lab. Below are examples from the experience acquired in the three Looper Living Labs in Brussels, Manchester, and Verona.

Air quality. To analyse this problem, citizens can use hand-held monitors, compare their data with official measurements, and analyse them using mapping and visualisation tools. For the co-design of solutions there are local actions (planting trees, retrofitting of buildings) as well as social innovations (travel adaptation). Nonetheless, any major progress would require policymakers to work on radical policies.

Traffic safety. Communities can map the problem with technical tools and compare it with official data. For the co-design of solutions, options include technical responses (e.g. traffic calming by reducing space for cars), policy responses (e.g. more police speed controls), or social responses (e.g. a 'walking bus' to escort children to school). Here a community loop should help to empower the community, mediate conflict, and guide policy.

Noise pollution. This may be a local issue, which calls for local data collection and debate. The co-design process will look at social innovation for collaboration between neighbours and/or different parts of the community. It may also be an issue coming from outside the community, from traffic or industry. This might call for physical solutions (barriers, traffic calming), and/or policy solutions (regulation, enforcement).

Greenspace. This often shows problems of anti-social behaviour and conflicts between users, as well as local pollution, for which data can be gathered and mapped. Greenspace also brings many creative opportunities, not only for physical works, but including nature conservation, education, health, local food, cultural events. For community participation in co-design of the built environment, greenspace is a good place to start.
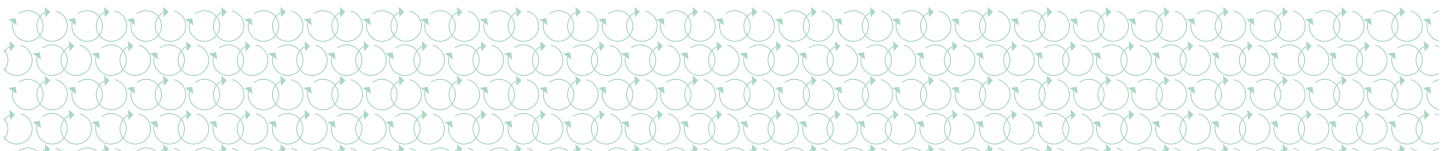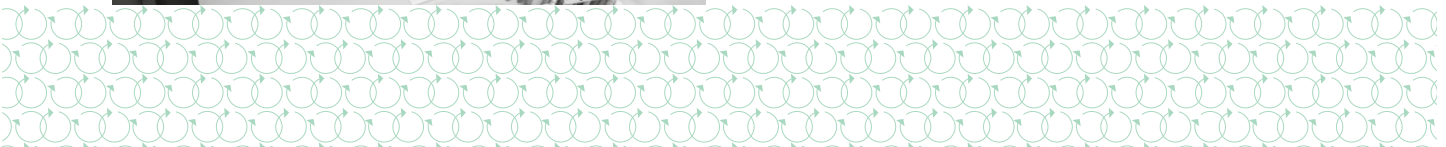
Brussels Looper Living Lab

Traffic safety was the theme of the Brussels Looper Living Lab. The lab is situated in Schaerbeek, a municipality in the north of the Brussels Capital Region and was implemented by the Mobility, Logistics and Automotive Technology Research Centre (MOBI) of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in cooperation with BRAL Citizen Action Brussels with the support of the local government of Schaerbeek and the Ecole 10 school.

When the lab was launched, citizens quickly identified traffic safety as an urgent problem in the municipality, in part caused by a string of deadly accidents. Citizens confirmed the existence of the problem by counting traffic and measuring the speed of cars. Over 40 ideas to improve traffic safety were submitted via the online Looper platform and the workshops. Using participatory evaluation, five selected ideas were evaluated to prioritise the ones with the strongest support from all stakeholders. Due to its support and short-term feasibility, an awareness campaign for the presence of children in the streets was implemented by creating a large street painting. A local artist designed a mandala at an intersection, which was coloured using chalk by residents during a street party. Traffic speed measurements before and after the implementation showed that there was only a small drop in excessive speed (>36km/h) after

the implementation of the mandala therefore further physical measures are needed to reduce speed effectively.

In the second loop, learning from the experience of the first one, the living lab moved to a different neighbourhood and helped an elementary school set up a school street to increase traffic safety for its pupils. A school street is a temporary road closure for motorised traffic in front of a school. The living lab joined an existing initiative that was supported by the municipality and the principal of the school. Residents, parents, pupils were all invited to evaluate, implement, and improve the school street. With a few exceptions, many parents and residents applauded the initiative, especially when they saw it in action. Residents also installed traffic monitoring devices behind their windows to determine the impact of the school street on the traffic flow in the neighbourhood, the results of which have been compared with official measurements. The lab also raised awareness of sustainable travel to school and the co-created ideas are expected to improve the implementation of similar school streets elsewhere.

Manchester Looper Living Lab

The Manchester lab is situated in the Brunswick neighbourhood, a former social housing estate with about 4000 people, adjacent to the university and the city centre. The area is near the end of a 10-year regeneration and housing renewal program. The University of Manchester coordinated this lab, working with the regeneration agency S4B, Brunswick Tenants and Residents Association, University Ardwick Partnership, social housing providers and many community groups.

The neighbourhood has a diverse population, is bordered by major roads with high noise and air pollution and is facing rapid gentrification. Citizen identified five interconnected priorities: air quality, traffic safety, street security, community spaces and greening. While there are policies for neighbourhood improvements and 'active travel', all resources have gone into the housing program, and so local priorities have to somehow generate their own resources.

Much technical data was collected by students in a university-community collaboration. We used a 360° camera to explore particular locations on the geo-tagging tool. The Manchester Urban Observatory also sponsored high-resolution traffic cameras to analyse the impact of a speed limit intervention.

Generally, this lab practiced a 'deep place' engagement, using simple methods such as an aerial map and the Ketso tool. This produced a list of 13 ideas, which were debated in a workshop program. Five projects were implemented: traffic calming, a street mural, street planting, domestic plant baskets and welcome signs and banners. A second loop assessed the outcomes and set the direction for future work.

Overall, the Manchester lab shows the potential of a 'deep place' engagement, to mobilise the vision and energy of residents, and unlock the resources in government and public services. While the Looper Model here cannot solve all structural problems of inequality and exclusion, it can provide ways forward which realize and empower the creative potential of the community.

Verona Looper Living Lab

© Architect Roberto Carollo from Comune di Verona
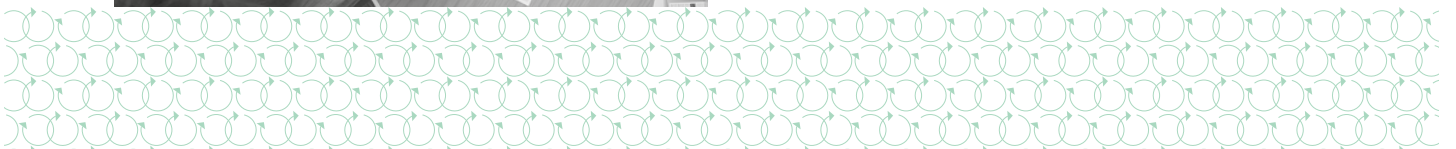
The Verona Looper Living Lab is located in the southern part of the city. The research team of the Iuav University of Venice, together with the environmental NGO Legambiente Verona, the municipality of Verona, citizen association Comitato Verona Sud, and other local actors collaborated in this living lab to find possible solutions to improve air quality, liveability of urban spaces, and to reduce noise pollution.

The problem identification phase lasted about three months and was followed by a three months data collection that included qualitative and quantitative data gathered with official equipment and low-cost participatory sensors. The online interactive visualisation dashboard showed how air quality pollutants spread over larger areas or at neighbourhood scale. Hence, it was possible to evaluate if there were differences between the two scales.

Conversely, noise pollution monitoring was more localised and depends on local urban infrastructures. It was also possible to start an open dialogue based on a more complete set of data with policymakers to co-design possible mitigation solutions.

Following the data collection and visualisation, participants were asked to propose ideas on how to improve air quality during multiple face-to-face meetings for two months. This was supplemented with an online tool on the Looper platform to collect ideas from citizens embedded in the Looper platform. This combined offline and online approach was successful since 36 ideas were proposed in total, such as the implementation of a 30 km/h zone; street closure to create an outdoor community meeting space; and islands for zebra crossings.

Afterwards, based on the experience from the first loop, living lab participants decided that it was better not to focus on small localised solutions that would only affect one street. Instead, they chose solutions that can be easily replicated or that are longer term solutions, such as increasing the area of an existing parks with urban forests.
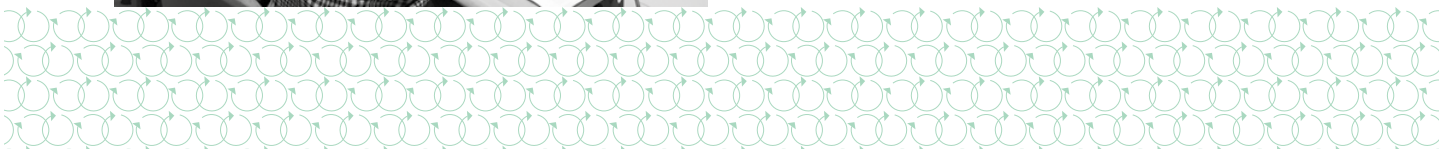
Key learnings

Our experiments in the three Looper Living Labs have generated a number of key learnings and recommendations for future implementations of the Looper Model and co-creation processes in general.

Keep the people on board

People are busy. Not everyone is interested in spending their evening discussing traffic safety or air pollution. Keeping the people on board can therefore be challenging.

A clear goal that comes from a bottom-up initiative can help to keep citizens motivated. A successful co-creation process often builds on a local actor or initiative which is trusted by citizens. Try to keep the co-creation process as compact in time as possible as a long process may lead to participation fatigue and people dropping off along the way. In order to go beyond the 'usual suspects' – people that you know will be interested in your topic – it is important to reach out to others. Success also depends on coordination with local programs for planning and regeneration, to avoid duplication and add value.

Citizens identified traffic safety as their main concern in the **Brussels** Looper Living Lab. However, the issue had already been taken up by a local citizen initiative. It was therefore difficult to attract attention to the living lab, which resulted in a low attendance of meetings. In the follow-up co-creation loop, the living lab joined an existing initiative of local schools and the municipality to pilot school streets. This made the goal of the co-creation process very clear: co-designing, implementing, and monitoring a school street.

In **Manchester,** the living lab took time to make relations and local links, before jumping to a definition of the 'problem'. The living lab neighbourhood was in a large regeneration program with disruption all around, which offered a wide array of possible problems to address. Then followed a period of discussion as to which problems might (not) be in our scope to address.

The co-creation process in **Verona** was partially a continuation of an already existing citizens' movement to improve air quality in the Verona Sud neighbourhood. The municipality of Verona was also a partner in the living lab and different employees from the city council participated, depending on the requested technical skills. The presence of researchers as neutral facilitators of the Looper Living Lab helped in clarifying some misunderstandings that emerged between policymakers and citizens.

Co-creation means sharing knowledge

Citizens have local knowledge that decision-makers may lack and would want their ideas to be implemented as soon as possible. Decision-makers have policy and expertise knowledge that citizens lack, but the complexity of a large administration with competing demands can seem to delay or block local ideas. A co-creation process should therefore enhance the exchange of different types of knowledge between citizens and decision-makers, as well as other stakeholders.

In **Brussels**, citizens co-designed high impact ideas that required major reconstruction of public spaces. The municipality, on the other hand, wanted ideas that could be quickly implemented. These diverging expectations between feasibility and impact led to disappointment with some citizens in the first loop. In the second loop, the living lab team cooperated closely with the municipality in order to ensure citizens and the municipality had similar expectations.

In **Manchester**, after many experiments, the 'ladder of participation' still points upwards to the ideal of 'community empowerment'. But in practice there are complex government processes for decision making on plans and budgets, otherwise well-organided and well-funded communities tend to grab power and resources.

In **Verona**, decision-makers were a project partner since the beginning, and an active citizen association was already working on the topic actively. Sharing the knowledge of the city administration with other stakeholders allowed for a better understanding of the different points of view, criticalities, and agendas. If citizens understand why decision-makers act in a certain way (and vice versa), it can result in a more constructive co-creation process.

The experiences in the Looper project show that a focus on grassroots co-creation can be more effective than direct competition for budgets. For example, physical interventions to improve traffic safety can be very expensive and need time in planning and budgeting, but a social innovation can be low or zero cost. Clearly, there is a more optimal middle ground, which aims for positive synergies between top-down planning/development and grassroots ideas.

Measure stakeholder support of co-designed solutions

The co-creation process should look beyond just involving citizens and the decision-maker to allow local businesses, transport operators, employers, and schools to participate. This way the process can lead to solutions that are supported by most stakeholders, thereby increasing the chances of implementation. Ideally, co-creation will lead to a consensus between these stakeholders about the solution(s) that will be implemented. Finding a compromise between most of the stakeholders may be more realistic, however. Formal evaluation methods can help urban and transport planners and decision-makers to evaluate the feasibility, sustainability, and stakeholder support of the co-designed ideas.
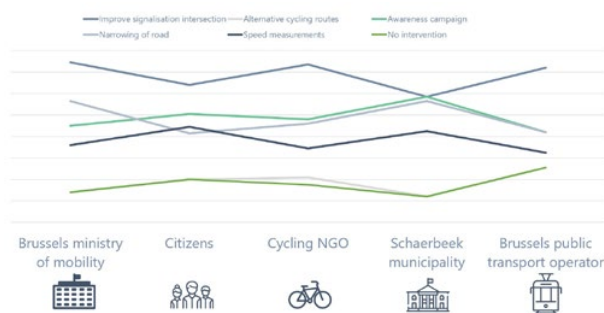
A participatory evaluation method called Multi Actor Multi Criteria Analysis (MAMCA), supported by an online software,[4] was used in the Looper Living Labs to show how different stakeholder groups would be affected by the co-designed solutions. This gives stakeholder groups a good view of their own position towards the co-designed solutions as well as the preferences of other stakeholder groups. This participatory evaluation helps the knowledge sharing process and can be used to reach a consensus between stakeholder groups on which idea(s) will be implemented and monitored.

In **Brussels**, five co-designed ideas were evaluated using MAMCA. This evaluation showed that there was consensus between the stakeholders on the most preferred idea and that therefore no obstruction from a stakeholder was expected when the idea would be implemented.

In **Manchester**, thirteen ideas from the community visioning were evaluated with an offline non-technical version of the MAMCA. In practice, the decision of which ideas would be implemented was based on the limits of time, cost and risk.

In **Verona**, nine main groups of ideas were evaluated using MAMCA. The process was adapted to the Verona situation since different ideas were to be implemented in different places. Results from the evaluation confirmed the three ideas that already had popular support during the co-design activities.

Build trust between local actors, researchers and policy makers

"It's not us who are hard to reach, it's you the researchers" (quote from a resident of Brunswick, Manchester). This demonstrates the potential divisions and differences of language, culture and expectations. When researchers or governments set up living labs or co-creation processes, they may be perceived by citizens as strangers and coming from the 'outside'.

While academics and policy makers may have more technical knowledge on an issue, they may not have the network or capacity to reach citizens. Building trust between citizens and the living lab organisers may therefore take time and effort. A **local anchor** – e.g. a local NGO, business, or school – may facilitate this process because citizens already trust this actor.

It seems crucial to find ways through the typical distrust and alienation of citizens from public authorities, especially for minority social groups, ethnic or cultural groups, and particularly young people.

In **Brussels**, there was initially a lack of successful engagement with minority groups. Although the living lab was open to everybody, it was the 'usual suspects' – people with an interest in and knowledge on mobility – that joined most often. Throughout the project, the living lab organisers decided to visit the hard-to-reach groups instead of waiting for them to come to us. This increased the diversity of participants in the living lab.

In **Manchester**, special effort was made on the 'people' side, with focused outreach works, participation within community groups and initiatives, with an open mind and listening ear. This program also worked closely with the community liaison officer from the housing agency S4B.

In **Verona**, researchers played the role to link different stakeholders, and this could reduce misunderstandings. It is better for the process if organisers are not directly involved as stakeholders, since their neutral position allows a bridge-building chance for other participants and policymakers.

Combine online and offline tools

New digital tools for data collection, visualisation, idea generation and monitoring can help to facilitate knowledge sharing and the learning loops, especially for larger areas. But human contact is still needed to motivate, share and discuss the results, and many communities prefer 'offline' forums and workshops.

With **low-cost sensors** to measure air pollution, noise or traffic, citizen monitoring can be very effective in the first stage of problem identification. In **Verona**, participants used low-cost sensors or hosted an installation in their houses: the digital maps of air pollution were then a 'wake-up' call for the community and policymakers. In **Manchester**, most of the monitoring was done by masters students, as most residents were offline and more solution-focused. In **Brussels** in the second loop, innovative camera equipped, low-cost minicomputers (Telraam) were installed by residents to measure traffic volume and speed.

Direct interaction can work through informal spaces and arenas, and the lab organisers should aim to meet the community wherever they are. Community noticeboards using a wall or whiteboard in a local space are essential for those without digital know-how, as is an open-door office, where lab organisers are on site at certain times.

In **Manchester**, the Brunswick 'Well-being Lunch' worked with volunteers to provide low-cost food twice per week. In **Brussels**, there was a ready audience of school street users.

Experience shows **hands-on tools** are more likely to generate positive synergies between stakeholders. The simplest thing is a large size map or aerial view of the neighbourhood, e.g. Google Earth, as a base for sketching or posting of issues and ideas. In **Manchester**, the Ketso toolkit was the main way to gather and debate ideas[5] and the Synergistic method uses only flipcharts and sticky notes.[6] The **Looper co-design tool database**[7] provides recommendations for such tools, but other database exist.[8] Overall, **visual thinking** is essential to capture visions, ideas, and scenarios, and each team should include for design and drawing skills.
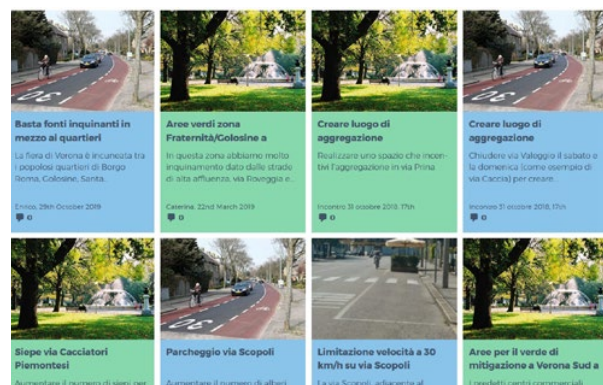
[5] www.ketso.com

[6] www.manchester.ac.uk/synergistics

[7] www.looperproject.eu/tools

[8] ccn.waag.org

Recommendations and next steps

Looper Model principles

The development of the Looper Model has highlighted some general principles:

- ▶ **Principle of the 'loop':** all knowledge should connect users, providers, and decision-makers.
- ▶ **Principle of the 'platform'**: both online and offline for knowledge sharing.
- ▶ **Principle of the 'round table':** the basic structure of collaborative governance ('co-governance'), for participation and co-creation.

These point to recommendations for the different learning loops:

- ▶ **Management loop**: with online as well as offline tools, link the citizens to technical systems.
- ▶ **Community loop**: keep residents and organisations 'in the loop' so that good ideas can be realised.
- ▶ **Governance loop**: use co-design and evaluation for complex problems and creative solutions.

Next steps

This report is a brief summary of the Looper Model, Looper Toolkit, and the Looper project which has developed and tested them. More detailed guidance is available in the project reports and online resources on the Looper website.[9]

If you are working with an urban area, where community-based co-creation could bring new ideas and new synergies between all stakeholders, you can:

- ▶ Set up a Looper Living Lab, with the 6-P (people, place, priorities, policies, platform and process).
- ▶ Use the Looper Toolkit, with online/offline platforms and tools for monitoring, co-design and evaluation.
- ▶ Apply Learning loops, for technical problems, for community empowerment, and/or policy innovation.

And then... explore the potential for urban transformation.

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[9] www.looperproject.eu

Looper used co-creation to help find solutions to urban problems. This was done in three locations with different contexts: traffic safety in Brussels; air quality in Verona; and traffic safety and urban greenspaces in Manchester.

The Looper project is a demonstration of 'learning loops' in the urban realm. A learning loop is a new way of decision-making, which brings together citizens, stakeholders and policymakers to learn how to address urban challenges in a participatory co-creation platform. Citizens and stakeholders debated on topical issues, then framed the problem and collected data on it. The Looper platform visualised the collected data and enabled the co-design of solutions. Following a participatory evaluation of the co-designed ideas, the best ideas were put into practice and their impact monitored. This 'loop' was repeated in order to enable further improvements.

Brussels, Belgium

Manchester, England

Verona, Italy

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