

London FvL's Methodology

Authors: Fairville London Lab

Community-led co-production of public service provisions and policies

Fairville London Lab (FLL) aims to discover effective mechanisms of co-production that are able to address issues on inequality, and that will be effective in a global city where decades of financialisation and wholesale gentrification have caused widespread public distrust in democratic institutions.

FLL is not starting from “ground zero”; it is building upon existing community networks at neighbourhood, local authority and city wide scales. Just Space as lead partner has been a critical voice in planning for a fairer London since 2006, with the motivation to empower citizens to have a genuine voice in the decision making process, through deep participation, community co-operation and community ownership. FLL's projects aim to demonstrate the deliverability of propositions in the Just Space Community Led Recovery Plan

FLL has three strands of work: street markets, social care and co-production of built environment. The approach adopted by this lab is action research. Multiple methodologies will be used to assess each projects capacity for change: **Participatory Action Research; Ethnography; Case Studies; Qualitative Methods; Dialogic and Collaborative Approaches; Creative Methods and Collaborative Mapping.** Since each project is coproduced with its intended beneficiaries these methods are adapted based on the conversations, concerns identified and approaches agreed by the participants. An outline of methodologies for each strand of FLL are provided below:

Markets

FLL will partner with street market-focused community groups, traders and shoppers to identify the issues causing local markets to fall into decline. Initially traditional East London markets (as opposed to eg more recent Farmers Markets which are generally run by a single firm and bring traders from beyond the locality) have been identified and traders are being involved in both creative methodology and a dialogic approach ie the making of a video to capture market issues and engage traders to share their concerns and open up a conversation for future activity. Understanding there are great complexities with the legal frameworks of markets, FLL will also embark on a community-led legislative initiative aiming to provide a simplified, modern legal framework produced with extensive inputs from community and grassroots groups. A further goal is to establish one or more community-operated markets, through co-production with local authorities that are currently owners and operators of markets.

Co-production of built environment

FLL has entered partnerships (participatory action research) with Park Langley Residents Association and Millbank Community Research Group to develop the local groups' capacity to co-produce planning policies and development projects on a neighbourhood level through collaborative approaches, case studies and qualitative methods. This will involve the active citizen-led development of community spaces, biodiversity, food production and creative regenerative neighbourhood networks. FLL will act as their planning advocate to develop the local groups' relationships with their respective local authorities, and to develop their competences to participate in the production of built environment by themselves.

Social care

FLL is working with Equal Care Co-op to evaluate the cooperative model of adult social care. Analysing the care network as observed from the operations of Equal Care Co-op at Clapton and Clapton Commons, FLL is developing toolkits based on co-design and collaborative mapping to understand an informal and bottom up structure for adult social care, informing existing policy debates on the effective and cost-efficient provision of adult social care by public authorities.

In all three strands of work undertaken by FLL, there is an emphasis on how the provision of services by the state leads to policy dilemma's from the perspective of the grassroots and the emergence of new forms of participatory practices, supported by advocacy and capacity-building.

Horizon Europe provides a funding base for the Fairville London Lab (FLL), whose activities are necessarily co-funded. The three research areas all contain projects funded through other funders, partners and communities interested in exploring coproduction techniques – each of these operate in specific ways (eg advocacy method; sociocratic partnerships; early stage collaborations still deciding their form). The FLL forms a hub at which key players in each project have a decision making role in the hub which is based on consensus decision making.

The Role of UCL DPU

Within the Fairville London Lab the DPU is an active partner, attending the FLL meetings but not a decision making partner. The DPU is occasionally invited to activities taking place within the three project themes where they can bring advice, guidance or undertake their evaluative role or be part of co-assessments. The DPU also share resources where they can and where it will support the advancement of the research activities.