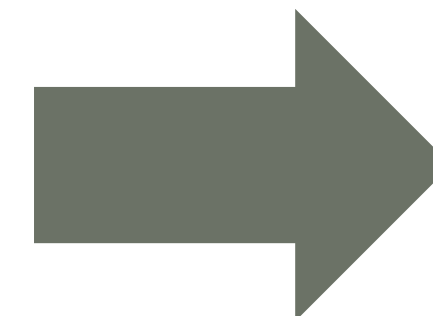


Introduction

Les Jardins d'Haïti in Marseille, France, is a residence for seniors and an intergenerational third-space that combats the isolation of the elderly. As a Leadership-in-Action Central Project, the organization Make_sense connected our group of Laidlaw scholars to Les Jardins. Our group was tasked with introducing new community members to Les Jardins and transforming the underutilized garden space through an artistic initiative. Throughout the project, we were challenged to speak French to connect with residents and outside community members. Inspired by local street art and drawing from the residents' interests, we decided to lead a mosaic workshop. During the design phase, we faced the challenge of making the workshop accessible while working within our low- or no-cost budget. Prioritizing sustainability, we sourced materials from local ceramic artists across Marseille, La Ressourcerie des Futurs (a neighborhood recycling center), and MerTerre (an organization that reduces marine pollution). We also collaborated with volunteers from Kipawa, a French-language learning program for people living in exile in Marseille. We installed the tiles that each resident decorated on the garden wall, a visible and lasting impact of our Leadership-in-Action project in Marseille.

Objectives

- Revive the garden space
- Launch an artistic initiative
- Host an event that introduces new members of the community to Les Jardins d'Haïti
- Take photographs of the event for Les Jardins d'Haïti's social media



Ideation

- **Survey:** Assessed the garden space and noticed graffiti on surrounding walls. Participated in ongoing artistic workshops with residents to understand their access needs.
- **Inspiration:** Noticed local murals at the metro station at Vieux Port and the port at Les Goudes.
- **Discussion:** Conversations with residents to receive their thoughts about our mural idea. Meetings with Marion (our point person at Les Jardins d'Haïti) to incorporate her input and thoughts into our brainstorming.
- **Solution:** Creating a community mosaic to install on the garden wall would reclaim the space for the residents and provide a unique activity for a multi-day artistic workshop.

Taking Action!

1

Gathering materials: For the mosaic, we upcycled ceramic waste from local artists across Marseille. La Ressourcerie des Futurs (a recycling center and shop) generously gave us tiles and ceramic plates that we smashed and sanded down into smaller pieces. We also used glass waste that MerTerre collected from one of their beach cleanups (collaborating with our fellow Laidlaw scholars' LIA project).



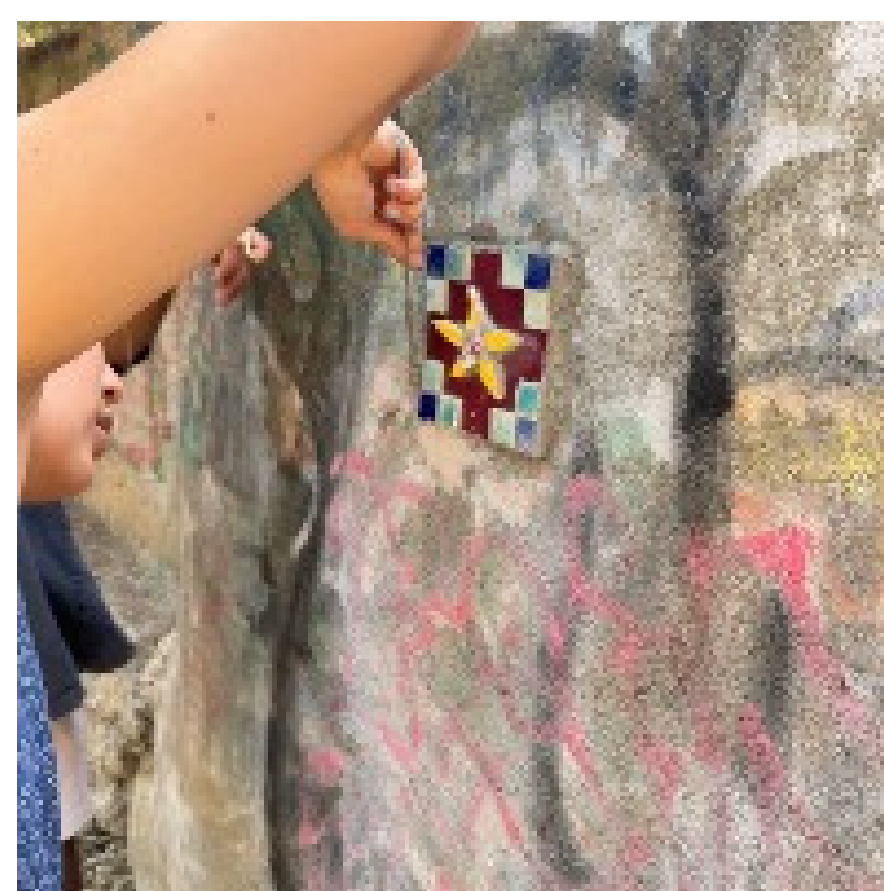
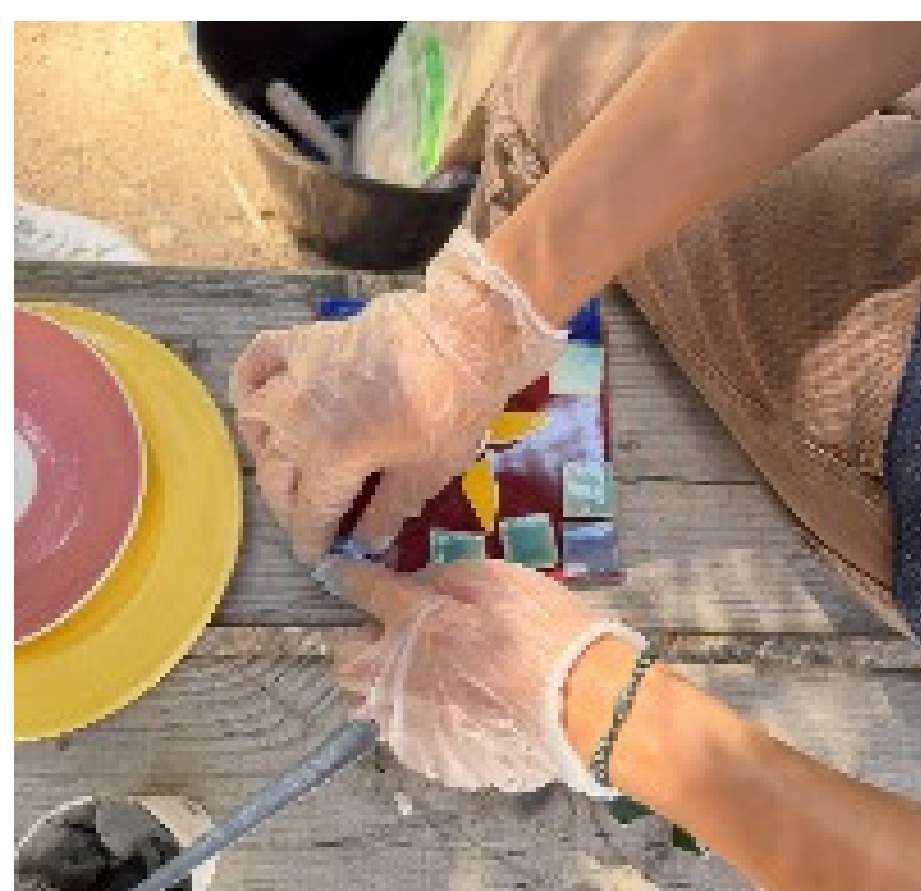
2



Connecting Volunteers: We reached out to Kipawa, a French language learning program for people living in exile in Marseille. Kipawa also connects their students with volunteer opportunities. We presented our workshop to the class, entirely in French, and many were excited to volunteer. This is when the impact of our project extended to new communities.

3

Trial Runs: Developing the workshop activity for the residents and the physical construction of the mural took a lot of trial-and-error and brainstorming. We had to adapt our plan to the recycled materials that we collected. This process taught us how to creatively problem-solve to changing circumstances.



Introducing Team EAK (Evalyn, Alice, Krithik), photo taken at La Bonne Mère during a material collection day. Our backpacks were full of ceramic pieces from a nearby atelier. We walked 25k steps in 37 degree Celsius heat.

Final Results

Never Too Late for Firsts: During the workshop, we facilitated collaboration and conversation between the volunteers and residents. It was rewarding to witness the participants exchange their unique experiences and cultures. For example, Antoinette, who was born and raised in Marseille, worked with Mykola from Ukraine. Andrée, a 98-year-old French woman, asked about Gad's experience in Sudan. The residents marveled at how people from all around the world came to Les Jardins. At the end, we asked residents for their feedback on the workshop. They really appreciated getting to upcycle waste into art, and Gérard said he liked the uniqueness of the mosaic activity since it was his first time trying it.



Acknowledgements

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